



destination
oconee:
REALIZING THE
FUTURE OF
OCONEE COUNTY

Acknowledgements:

OCONEE GREAT OUTDOORS TEAM:

South Carolina National Heritage Corridor Staff:

Michelle McCollum, *President and Chief Executive Officer*

Grace Nelson, *Director of Marketing*

Lauren Ponder, *Director of Special Projects*

Anna Joyner, *Director of Advertising & Creative Design*

Yuka Greer, *Director of Business Operations*

Ken Sloan, *President, Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitor's Bureau*

Phil Shirley, *Director, Oconee County Parks, Recreation & Tourism*

Josh Stephens, *Deputy Director of Community Development, Oconee County*

Richard Blackwell, *Executive Director, Oconee Economic Alliance*

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Table of Contents

The contents of "Destination Oconee: Realizing the Future of Oconee County" are provided in chapters by topic. To provide ease of reading and navigation of the information, links are provided within the body of the chapters to applicable appendices.

1	INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1-10
2	BRANDING.....	11-36
3	MARKETING.....	37-84
4	TOURISM DESTINATION RECOMMENDATIONS.....	85-102
5	GUIDELINES FOR GROWING OCONEE	103-144
6	FUNDING OPTIONS.....	145-158
7	CASE STUDIES.....	159-198
8	APPENDICES.....	199-339



1

introduction



Tourism is one of South Carolina's largest industries. Many communities around the state are working diligently to protect, create and promote the resources and products that will allow them to be competitive in this industry. Smart communities recognize that increasing their tourism capacity involves much more than catering to the tourists. These elements of smart tourism growth are linked closely with overall development practices which touch the lives of local people every day — their homes, their health, the economic vitality of their community, the natural environment that surrounds them, the taxes they pay and ultimately, the overall quality of their lives. How communities plan and grow tourism will affect their residents' lives for generations to come. Tourism is simply one component in a comprehensive approach to better development and improved quality of life. But it doesn't happen by accident. It requires careful thought, strategic investment and innovative marketing.

Oconee's place in the South Carolina Tourism Industry is based on the dynamic history, culture and natural resources of the area. For centuries, people have been drawn to Oconee to live, work and play based on these undeniable assets. Many visioning and planning sessions

have been held over the past decade have not only recognized the importance of these resources to the county's past, but through large-scale community input they issued a call to action to protect and utilize them for Oconee's future.

Oconee is not alone in its desire to protect and promote what makes it special. Successful communities across the country are using creative development strategies that preserve natural lands and unique environmental areas, improve public access to resources, protect water and air quality, enhance the livelihood of downtown areas and maintain the sense of place that differentiates them from "Anywhere USA." Through innovative approaches to growth, communities are creating vibrant "places" and the high quality of life in these communities creates business opportunities, makes them economically competitive, and improves the local tax base.

The charm and character of our downtowns is fading fast. We need leaders who are willing to step up and change this before it's too late.
 - Response from citizen interviews

We should do a better job of business recruitment. Remove hurdles, keep the threshold for starting up a business low, provide help and make them feel welcome, show them we are also willing to invest in our downtowns.
 - Response from citizen interviews





What started as a partnership between the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor and the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitor's Bureau to brand and market the county's outdoor recreation opportunities has organically grown into a much larger initiative. Due to the fact that the county's tourism success is so intimately and critically tied to its' natural, cultural and historic resources, a more comprehensive approach to tourism development has emerged. There were several fundamental questions that guided our work:

1

Who are we?

2

Who do we want to become?

3

Who are we most likely to become based on our willingness to do what is necessary to get there?

4

How do we grow tourism in a way that doesn't destroy what we love about Oconee?

5

What is our brand?

6

What steps are critical to reaching our goals?

7

Where do we place our priorities and our resources?

To answer these questions, the process began by reviewing the 2008 South Carolina State Tourism Action Plan conducted by Tourism Destination International, LLC., for the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism. This plan indicated the "Upstate is failing to realize its tourism potential. It has unspoiled natural resources without parallel in the state." The plan also identified fundamental challenges that must be dealt with for the Upstate to reap the economic and social benefits of tourism. These include:

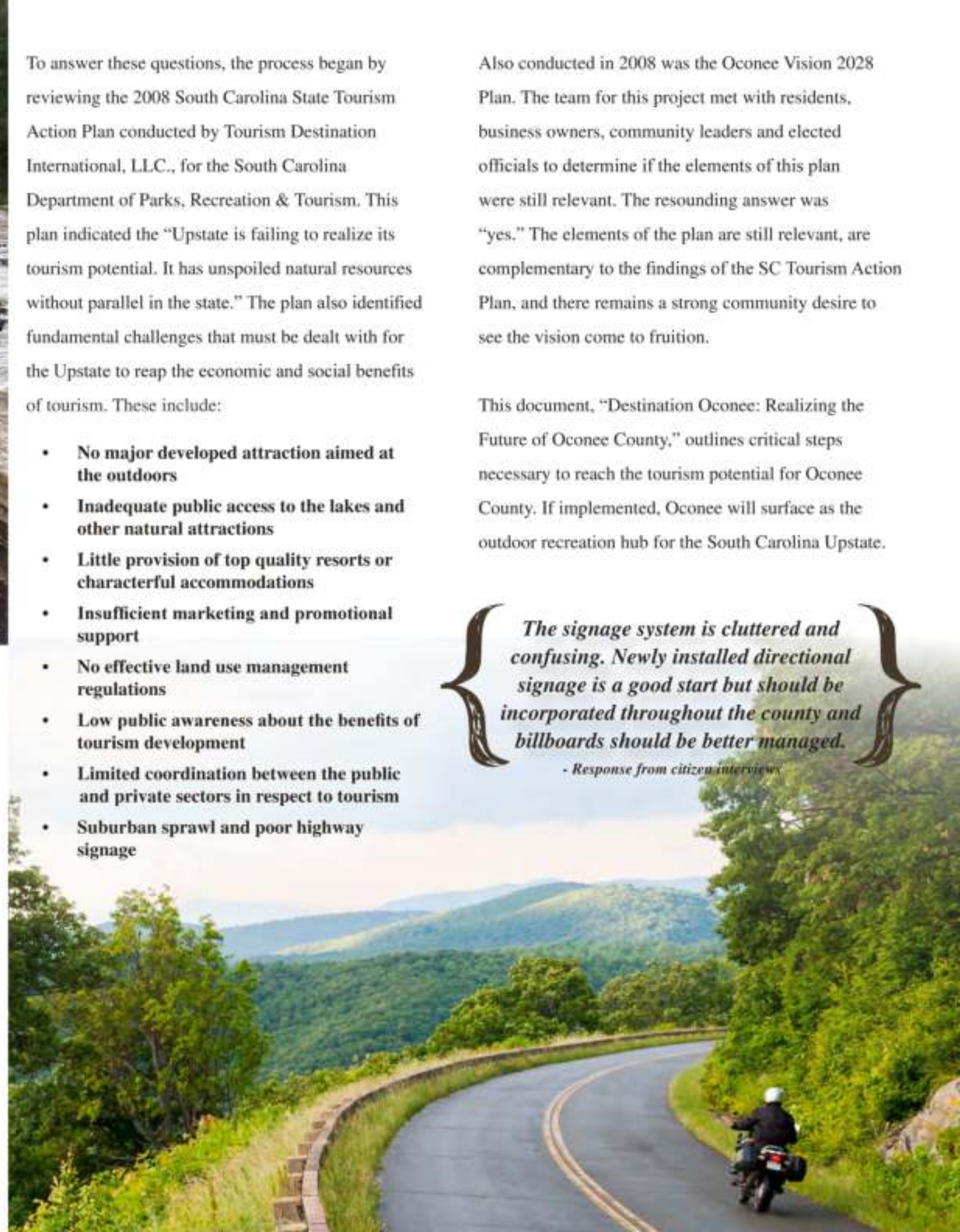
- **No major developed attraction aimed at the outdoors**
- **Inadequate public access to the lakes and other natural attractions**
- **Little provision of top quality resorts or characterful accommodations**
- **Insufficient marketing and promotional support**
- **No effective land use management regulations**
- **Low public awareness about the benefits of tourism development**
- **Limited coordination between the public and private sectors in respect to tourism**
- **Suburban sprawl and poor highway signage**

Also conducted in 2008 was the Oconee Vision 2028 Plan. The team for this project met with residents, business owners, community leaders and elected officials to determine if the elements of this plan were still relevant. The resounding answer was "yes." The elements of the plan are still relevant, are complementary to the findings of the SC Tourism Action Plan, and there remains a strong community desire to see the vision come to fruition.

This document, "Destination Oconee: Realizing the Future of Oconee County," outlines critical steps necessary to reach the tourism potential for Oconee County. If implemented, Oconee will surface as the outdoor recreation hub for the South Carolina Upstate.

The signage system is cluttered and confusing. Newly installed directional signage is a good start but should be incorporated throughout the county and billboards should be better managed.

- Response from citizen interviews





executive summary

This Executive Summary is for quick reference and simply outlines the primary recommendations of "Destination Oconee." In order to fully understand the vision and recommendations, a more thorough review of the document is necessary.

Oconee County is blessed with an abundance of natural resources which are already utilized for outdoor recreation, yet it is falling short as a recognized outdoor recreation destination. Just as Charleston, SC, has become the premier historic destination of South Carolina, Oconee has the ability to surface as the premier outdoor recreation destination for the state.

Tourism market trends, as well as increased trends in healthy living, are a perfect recipe for building, marketing and economically benefitting from outdoor recreation in Oconee County. The Outdoor Industry Association reports that outdoor recreation is essential to the American economy and that every year Americans spend an estimated **\$646 billion** on outdoor recreation - on gear, vehicles, trips, travel-related expenses and more. This creates jobs, supports communities, generates tax revenue and helps drive the economy. Throughout America, people recognize that outdoor recreation and open spaces attract and sustain families and businesses, creates healthy communities and fosters a high quality of life.

"Americans want and deserve access to a variety of quality places to play and enjoy the great outdoors. Outdoor recreation can grow jobs and drive the economy if we manage and invest in parks, waters and trails as an interconnected system designed to sustain economic dividends for America."
 - The Outdoor Industry Association

An Overlooked Economic Giant

Annual Consumer Spending, in Billions¹

PHARMACEUTICALS	\$348B
MOTOR VEHICLES AND PARTS	\$374B
OUTDOOR RECREATION	\$646B
FINANCIAL SERVICES AND INSURANCE	\$807B
OUTPATIENT HEALTH CARE	\$801B
GASOLINE AND OTHER FUELS	\$428B
HOUSEHOLD UTILITIES	\$307B

¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis, Personal Consumption Expenditures by Type of Product, based on available 2011 data.

Outdoor Recreation Employs America

Job Comparisons by Industry, in Millions¹

OIL AND GAS ²	2.2M
INFORMATION	2.5M
EDUCATION	3.5M
TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING	4.3M
CONSTRUCTION	5.5M
OUTDOOR RECREATION³	6.1M
PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	7.7M

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011.
² American Petroleum Institute, direct jobs in 2009 from The Economic Impacts of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry on the U.S. Economy: Employment, Labor Income and Value Added, updated June 2011.
³ Direct employment in the outdoor recreation sector — as opposed to indirect, implied, multiplier or ripple effects that include impacts of spending, jobs and wages as they circulate throughout the economy.

Nationally outdoor recreation is bigger than you might think and a significant economic driver in the United States.

6.1 million American livelihoods depend on outdoor recreation, making it a critical economic sector in the United States.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Mountains, mountain lakes, rivers, waterfalls, hiking, biking, fishing, watersports and more are part of the allure currently present in Oconee for outdoor enthusiasts. Oconee is strategically located near the metropolitan areas of Charlotte, Atlanta, Greenville and Columbia and is fortunate enough to own claim to a National Scenic Byway and a National Wild and Scenic River. The resources are present, but how does Oconee utilize these resources for increased quality of life and economic vitality of its communities?

The resources alone will not make a tourism destination. There must be investment into public access points, tourism infrastructure, and downtown development in Oconee's communities to provide for top quality visitor amenities and services. By following the recommendations outlined below, Oconee can become a one-of-a-kind outdoor recreation destination for the Southeastern United States. It will require leadership from elected officials, collaboration among the county and cities, cooperation among the public and private sectors and an understanding by the residents that local investment is crucial.

There are a number of critical steps that we recommend as a priority. These are listed in no particular order and all should be considered as immediate needs. Those are:

Support the development of Sanctuary Pointe Resort and the SC Great Outdoor Center at Exit 1:

This resort complex satisfies the #1 recommendation in the SC Tourism Action Plan for an Upstate Flagship Project. It will provide upscale overnight accommodations for extended length of stay and will also serve as a hub to introduce visitors to the natural resources, small towns and special events throughout the county. It will produce an estimated 350 construction jobs and 400 permanent jobs. Once open, this facility will greatly increase the tax base in the county through sales and accommodation taxes. It will also increase tourism traffic throughout the entire county which is needed to encourage new business and sustainable growth in downtown areas.

Conduct Street Audits in Downtowns: (See Appendix A p. 199 for Street Audit Forms)

A group of stakeholders including, but not limited to, elected officials, chambers, merchants associations and key attractions in the downtown districts should complete a street audit of their individual communities. This audit will guide participants through a personal assessment of the downtown areas which will provide the necessary backdrop for understanding steps that need to be taken to protect and promote vibrant downtowns.

Pass a Design Review Committee Ordinance: (See Appendix D p. 295)

For Oconee County and its municipalities to move forward in a meaningful way, a Design Review Committee must be put into place. Communities that maintain and reap the benefits of "sense of place" and "community character" must guard and protect that character.

Create a Three Year Action Plan for Managing Growth:

It is recommended that the County Planning Department facilitate coordination with the cities to review and strategically consider which of the presented growth management techniques best fit the future goals of Oconee. The result should be a Three Year Action Plan implementing practices that will provide continuity of the "*Appalachian Rustic Elegance*" brand across county and city boundaries, ultimately creating a strong sense of place and a distinct, cohesive destination.

Immediately adopt a Scenic Overlay Ordinance for Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Byway: (See Appendix D p. 266).

Highway 11 is a key resource for the county. With infrastructure now available along this stretch of scenic road, growth will come. A Scenic Overlay Ordinance will not hinder growth but, instead, will ensure proper growth that will protect the intrinsic qualities of the byway and enhance the character of the county. Similar ordinances should be passed for state and county scenic byways as well.

The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor collaborated closely with a core group of stakeholders to assess the current condition of tourism in Oconee County and to ultimately create a series of recommendations that have been vetted by local residents, existing and potential business owners, government entities and non-profits. Numerous one-on-one interviews, committee meetings and public presentations were conducted over a 9 month period to ensure the contents of the document complement the vision of those who will be ultimately responsible for its implementation.

● **Immediately adopt a Downtown Overlay Ordinance for Westminster, Seneca and Walhalla:**

(See Appendix Appendix A p. 207)

Oconee is blessed with communities that are culturally and historically unique, yet meaningful steps have not been taken to protect the quality, charm and historic integrity of these communities. A Downtown Overlay Ordinance in each city will direct revitalization efforts and manage growth in a manner that is complementary to the character and personality of each.

● **Adopt a more detailed County and City Signage Ordinance: (See Appendix D p. 223)**

Signs can either enhance or detract from a community. Currently, signage throughout the entire county is cluttered, often times confusing, and in many cases outdated and in disrepair. A more detailed county-wide signage ordinance that is created in cooperation with the cities will provide a cohesive look and feel to the county, while also protecting the view sheds and scenic vistas so important to Oconee.

● **Conduct a Condition Assessment of the public access, structures and signage at lakes, waterfalls, rivers, scenic vistas and other key natural attractions:**

If Oconee is to surface as the premier outdoor recreation destination for South Carolina, there is much needed work to improve access and experiences at key tourism sites. It is recommended that the County Parks, Recreation and Tourism Office and Convention and Visitor's Bureau create a Task Force including US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, SC State Parks, SC Department of Natural Resources and Duke Energy to conduct this assessment. (More detailed information is included in the Tourism Destination Recommendations Section of this report).

● **Develop a plan for improving public access and experiences at lakes, waterfalls, scenic vistas and other natural attractions:**

Upon completion of the Condition Assessment the County PRT Department should lead an effort with stakeholders to create a Three Year Action Plan to deal with findings of the assessment. The plan should include action items, potential funding sources, and responsible parties for each item.

● **Execute all marketing recommendations outlined in this plan:**

Consistent, quality marketing executed in a strategic manner by the CVB and the Cities will build a "top of mind" impression as a premier tourism destination.

● **Identify a person or organization to oversee the implementation of "Destination Oconee":**

As this document is approved and implementation begins, there should be one person or organization responsible for the coordination of efforts moving forward. This could be one person hired directly under the County Administrator, a collaboration of county agency heads or an independent contractor. The responsible party should be identified and given the resources and authority to implement the program. Otherwise, the momentum will be lost and the creation of this plan will become simply another exercise. It should be noted that one person or entity cannot shoulder the full responsibility for enacting every element of this plan. Instead, they should provide leadership, oversight and continuity in the process. Implementation is everyone's responsibility!

● **Identify sources and commit funding to support tourism projects:**

The need for tourism infrastructure is great and currently funding does not exist to meet this need. However, there are numerous avenues for securing funding. This could be accomplished through innovative approaches such as targeted efforts to increase accommodation offerings (thus increasing A-Tax funding), grants, foundations, and corporate support. Or, it could be through more traditional methods such as instituting a county-wide Hospitality Tax. (See Chapter 6 for a case study of how the City of Greenwood has utilized a Hospitality Tax to fund downtown development projects). Regardless of the method, the county and cities must make tourism a priority, equal to the quest to attract and build traditional industry.



A serene landscape of a lake at dusk. The sky is a mix of soft purple and blue, reflecting on the calm water. In the distance, a range of mountains is visible under the twilight sky. In the foreground, several dark, weathered logs are scattered on the shore. The overall mood is peaceful and quiet.

2

branding

Bill Baker, an expert on community branding, points out that “in the USA there are approximately 20,000 cities, 2,000 Main Street Communities, 126 National Scenic Byways and 12,800 National Historic Districts. That does not include states, regions, large-scale destinations and resorts that are all fighting for attention.” So, how does a destination get noticed in all of this clutter? How do communities differentiate themselves and convey why they are a valued option in this highly competitive environment?

There is a direct correlation between a community’s image and its reputation. Therefore, it is critically important for communities to shape the way they wish to be perceived. In the book *Destination Branding for Small Cities*, the author emphasizes “the level of esteem that a city’s name evokes with key audiences has a direct impact on the health of its tourism, economic development, prestige and respect. With so much riding on its image, doesn’t it make sense to have a plan to cultivate and protect this most valuable of city assets?”

Successful companies spend millions of dollars managing their image. The Nike “swoosh” and the McDonald’s “arches” bring immediate thoughts and experiences to mind. A company’s values can be seen through their brand. For example, Coca-Cola is about making the world happier, Disney is about providing more magic, Facebook is about connecting more people. Communities have been successful with this as well. For instance, consider Asheville, Myrtle Beach, New Orleans, or New York City. These communities have created a “brand” that brings an image or feeling immediately to mind.

An effective community brand is much more than a simple logo and should be utilized by more than the marketing agency. A true brand is a principle that will affect everything your community does. With every change, with every opportunity and with every decision, the community should always ask the question, “Will this action enhance or detract from our brand?”

This chapter will define the most important elements of Oconee County’s brand.

Your vision, values, the identity of your audience, and your promise to them.

BRAND VISION

To become a premier destination in the Southeast, known for its unique culture and incredible outdoor experiences.

CORE VALUES

Our unique southern Appalachian culture and vast natural resources deep within and surrounding the Blue Ridge Mountains are unlike any other and through our efforts will be protected.

We believe that sharing is caring.

Our amazing part of the country should be shared with the world for generations to come. Not only through reaching them through branding and marketing, but also through providing ease of access through signage and interpretation once they get here.

We believe we have a story to tell.

From Native American legends and German immigrants, our history has shaped our future and is an invaluable part of who we are today.

We believe that we are special.

*Oconee County offers some of the best outdoor recreation opportunities in the country.
Period.*

INTRODUCING YOUR AUDIENCE



Meet **TAYLOR**

-The Adventure Traveler/Eco-Nature Tourist (Primary)

Taylor is known as the “outdoorsy” guy. He has a close circle of friends that are like-minded. He enjoys a challenging hike and a good craft beer. He works hard and plays hard. He has nothing to do next weekend and picks up his phone to start searching for options.



Rachel and Dan have been married for 20 years and they have two teenaged sons. Dan and his sons love to fish, and Rachel is a bit of a foodie and history buff. Rachel likes to be prepared, so in planning their next fishing trip, she goes online and searches for “best fishing in the south.” She might request a travel guide from any websites she comes across. She will pick out restaurants and historic sites to enjoy along the way.

Meet **RACHEL & DAN** from Charlotte, NC - The Heritage Traveler (Secondary)



BRAND PROMISE

Our promise to our citizens and visitors is to provide an unforgettable experience that is authentic in our Appalachian culture, exhilarating through our waterways and trails, and quaint in our downtown districts.

THE NEW OCONEE BRAND: *Appalachian Rustic Elegance*

The “Appalachian Rustic Elegance” style speaks to the mountainous and rolling countryside throughout Oconee County, with the touch of sophistication found in its people and places. Beautiful forested settings, rural pathways, quiet streams and peaceful mountain lakes are the backdrop to this brand and should guide the architectural style of its built environment and public spaces. Buildings should complement the natural elements of Appalachian style with stone, wood and rustic accents.

In addition to moving the “Appalachian Rustic Elegance” brand throughout the built environment and public spaces, businesses should also adopt this brand through their store facades, products and customer service.



Meet HEIDI & PERRY

from Pennsylvania - The Turbo-Tourist (Tertiary)

Perry is a military veteran that is now living off successful oil investments. Heidi will retire this year, after a long career in the medical field. They have four grown children and 6 grandchildren. They are contemplating a second home in warmer weather, but are in no hurry. They love taking leisurely road trips and checking out new places, but they also go back to their favorites often. They usually make their travel decisions through word-of-mouth recommendations from their friends and family, and sometimes a magazine ad or story will catch their eye. Once they decide on a place, they may do a little research online.



Appalachian Rustic Elegance speaks to the simplicity and elegance of the area and complements the natural materials and color found within the Blue Ridge Mountain range, forests and surrounding lakes. It communicates quality outdoor experiences, with a hint of rustic mountain culture. When incorporated into the design elements of buildings, streetscapes, signage, and landscaping, it creates a solidified image and sense of place that will differentiate Oconee County from “Anywhere, USA”. The brand can also translate into friendly, down-home, Southern hospitality and visitor experiences through shopping, foodways, music, art, festivals and special events. So, it is important that this brand not simply be confined to marketing or even contained to the outdoor attractions. It must permeate into the very fabric of the community, including the people visitors will come in contact with in their travels. “Appalachian Rustic Elegance” speaks quality in the place, in the people and in the experience.

OCONEE BRANDING STATEMENT

There is history in these hills. The deep blue haze of the mountain escarpment whispers hints of an eclectic past. The pines tell tales and the waters of raging rivers, quiet streams and peaceful mountain lakes add their voices to the story of the place the Cherokee called Oconee – land beside the water.

There is something spiritual about this land where forests were once hunting grounds, fields were once battle grounds and waterways were once valleys. The waters of mountain lakes now sit as protector of the places underneath. Some who dare to go deep below the surface will see glimpses of this history. Others are drawn to the mountain paths dotted with waterfalls, caves and the flora of a faraway rainforest.

Years of history have shaped this once native landscape. People of Native American, German, Scots-Irish, English, African-American and Hispanic descent have added unique ingredients to this cultural melting pot. They were drawn here by the allure of the mountains. These same mountains still call out today to those who are eager to experience the mystery of Oconee - Land Beside the Water.



- **Logo Sizing and Spacing:** It is important to ensure the logo is displayed at the appropriate size and spacing to preserve consistency and reinforce the brand identity. In order to preserve legibility, maintain a minimum height of 1.3”.



Color Palette: The provided color palette below should always be used on all branded materials such as logos, advertising, collateral and web presence. Accuracy of color is critical in design. The standardized color matching system (Pantone Matching System) is the most widely used and preferred process for color matching.



Color selection tool for Orange:

- H: 15 * L: 59
- S: 84 % a: 57
- B: 95 % b: 58
- R: 241 C: 0 %
- G: 90 M: 80 %
- B: 39 Y: 96 %
- # f15a27 K: 0 %

Color selection tool for Brown:

- H: 57 * L: 70
- S: 60 % a: -7
- B: 70 % b: 51
- R: 179 C: 33 %
- G: 173 M: 23 %
- B: 72 Y: 88 %
- # b3ad48 K: 1 %

Color selection tool for Yellow:

- H: 57 * L: 70
- S: 60 % a: -7
- B: 70 % b: 51
- R: 179 C: 33 %
- G: 173 M: 23 %
- B: 72 Y: 88 %
- # b3ad48 K: 1 %

Color selection tool for Green:

- H: 53 * L: 90
- S: 25 % a: -3
- B: 91 % b: 26
- R: 233 C: 9 %
- G: 226 M: 6 %
- B: 174 Y: 37 %
- # e9e2ae K: 0 %

Color selection tool for Blue:

- H: 196 * L: 50
- S: 35 % a: -11
- B: 55 % b: -12
- R: 90 C: 69 %
- G: 126 M: 41 %
- B: 139 Y: 37 %
- # 5a7e8b K: 6 %

Typography: The following fonts have been selected as the approved typeface for all logos. This will once again reinforce the brand identity.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Hooverville

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Woodring

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Times New Roman

Advertising: Paid advertising for Oconee County and each municipality all showcase their uniqueness while simultaneously feeding back into the overall brand. For Oconee County specifically, advertising is recommended to be scheduled in phases, focusing on one advertising campaign at a time. Mini-campaigns (see Less Salty Side example) can be used cooperatively while targeting specific outlets.

The examples on the following pages showcase a variety of designs that have been created.



Who says the BEST SEAT
has to be in a house?

THERE'S MOUNTAIN RAIN FOREST AND ROCKY GORGES.
TRAILS, TRAIN WHISTLES AND SWIMMING HOLES. APPLE ORCHARDS,
WHITEWATER RAPIDS AND SECRET FISHING SPOTS. HERE IN THE
"LAND BESIDE THE WATER" WE HAVE THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
AND PLENTY OF SEATS TO CHOOSE FROM.

www.SCMOUNTAINLAKES.com



OCONEE COUNTY *Phase I: Best Seat in the House*

Typography: The following fonts have been selected as the approved typeface for all "Best Seat in the House" marketing materials.

1

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Sacramento

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Thin Skinned



Phase II: Breathe Easy.

Typography: The following fonts have been selected as the approved typeface for all "Breathe Easy" marketing materials.

2

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Thin Skinned

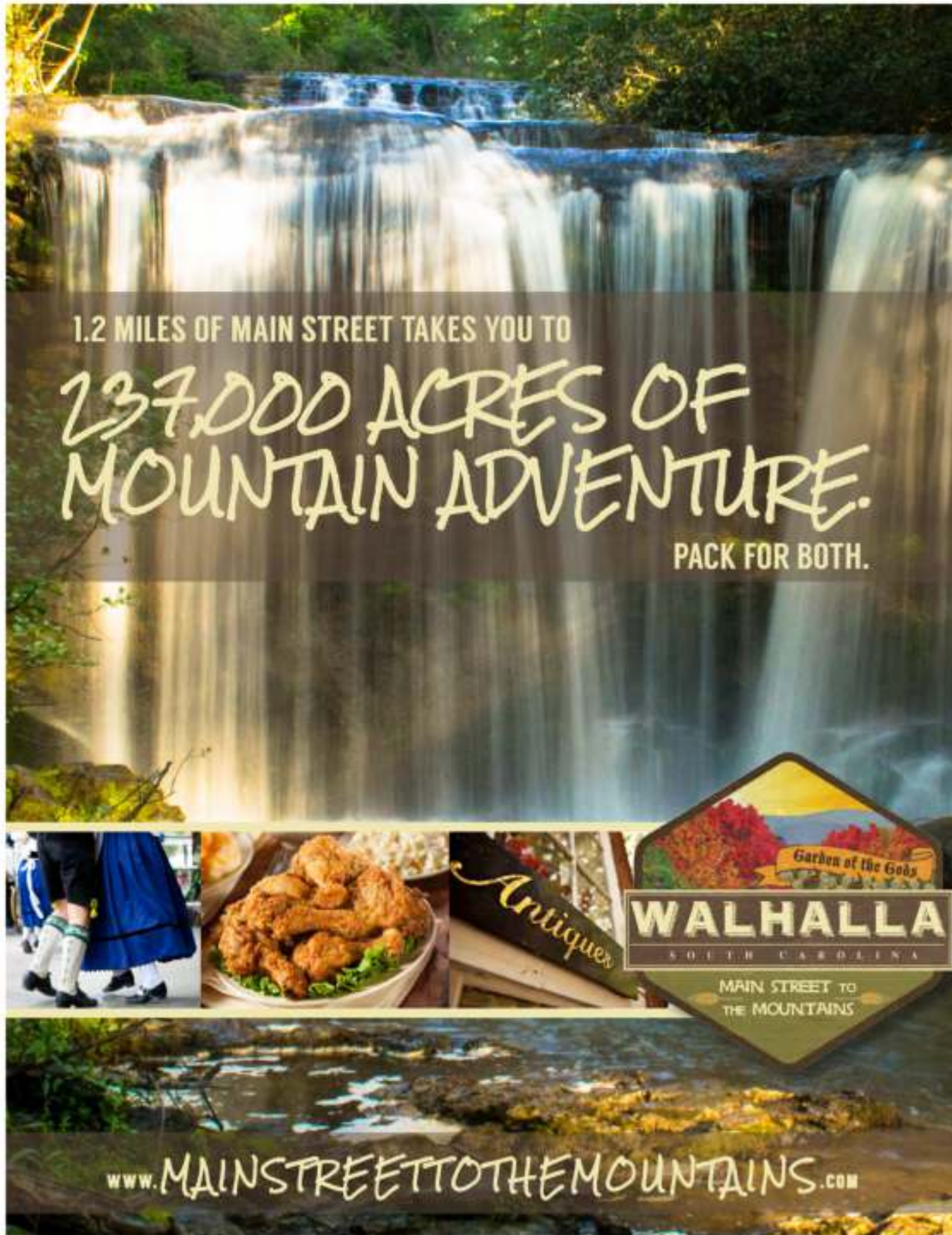
A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Cracked Johnnie



As an extension of the current marketing strategy for Oconee, the Heritage Corridor and the Mountain Lakes CVB partnered on additional ads to promote the area as part of the South Carolina Great Outdoors Initiative.





WALHALLA

Typography: The following fonts have been selected as the approved typeface for all Walhalla marketing materials.

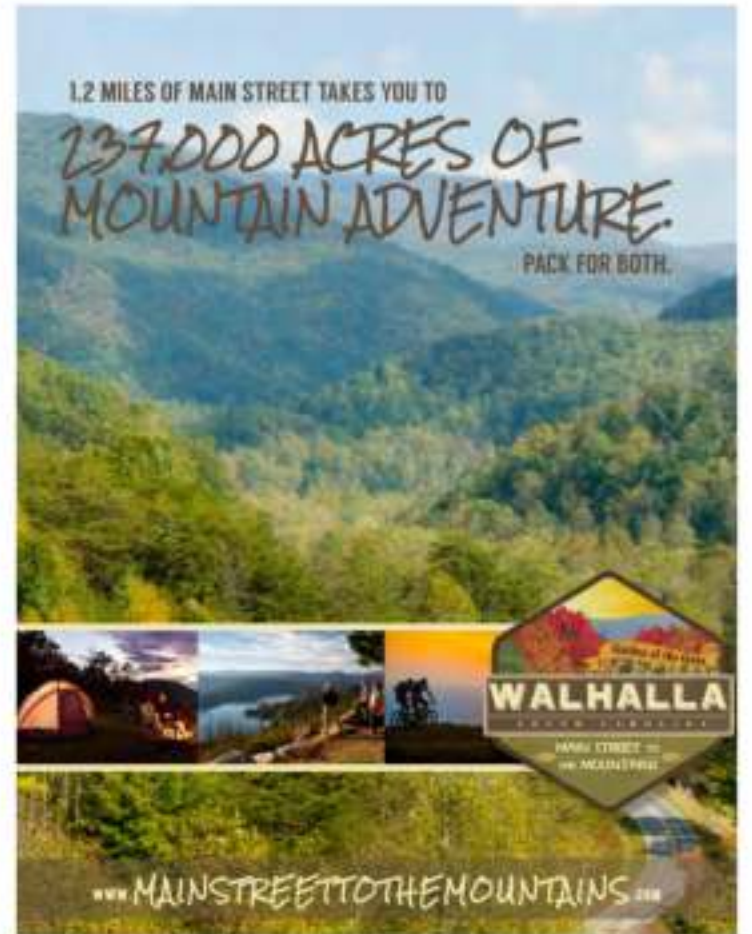
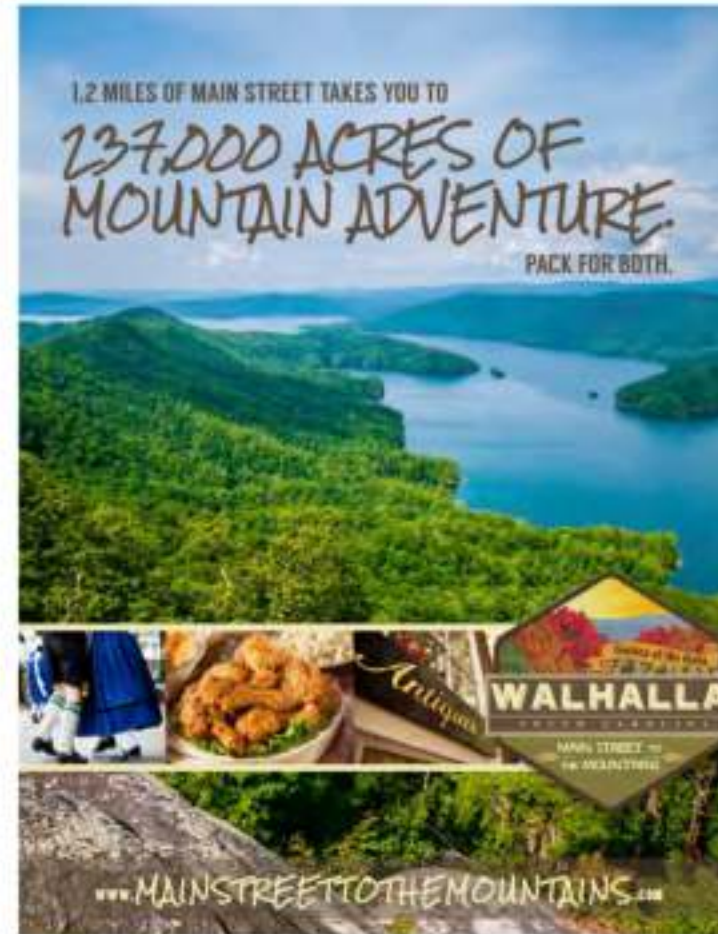
1

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Rock Salt

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Langdon





OUR LITTLE TOWN IS FULL OF SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY AND SMALL TOWN CHARM. YOU PROBABLY EXPECT THAT FROM MANY PLACES IN THE SOUTH. BUT WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT EXPECT IS THE BIG ADVENTURE FUN THAT AWAITS YOU JUST BEYOND MAIN STREET. ALL WE HAVE TO SAY IS, EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!



2

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Vince Hand

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Tw Cent MT

3

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Seagram tfb

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Trajan Pro

WESTMINSTER

Typography: The following fonts have been selected as the approved typeface for all Westminster marketing materials.



Our little town is full of Southern hospitality and small town charm. You probably expect that from many places in the South. But what you might not expect is the big adventure fun that awaits you just beyond Main Street. All we have to say is...

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED



1

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Strawberry Avalanche

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Vince Hand



OUR LITTLE TOWN IS FULL OF SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY AND SMALL TOWN CHARM. YOU PROBABLY EXPECT THAT FROM MANY PLACES IN THE SOUTH. BUT WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT EXPECT IS THE BIG ADVENTURE FUN THAT AWAITS YOU JUST BEYOND MAIN STREET. ALL WE HAVE TO SAY IS... EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!

www.SMALLTOWNBIGADVENTURE.COM



2



A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Jenna Sue

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Artistamp



3

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Artistamp

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Strawberry Avalanche



ON THE EDGE OF IT ALL

WHERE THE SUN RISES ABOVE THE BLUE RIDGE AND THE COOL MOUNTAIN WATERS RUSH DOWN TO MEET THE FOREST, YOU'LL FIND A PLACE ON THE EDGE OF IT ALL. SENECA IS EVERYTHING FROM THE ULTIMATE LAKE EXCURSION ON A HOT SOUTHERN DAY TO THE QUINTESSENTIAL CHARMING DOWNTOWN AND THRIVING EVENTS.

VISIT SENECA... WE'RE ON THE EDGE OF IT ALL!



SENECA.SC.US



SENECA

Typography: The following fonts have been selected as the approved typeface for all Seneca marketing materials.



1

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Dakota

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

WALKING ON SUNSHINE

Where the sun rises above the Blue Ridge and the cool mountain waters rush down to meet the forest, you'll find South Carolina's little pocket full of sunshine. Seneca is everything from the ultimate lake excursion on a hot southern day to the quintessential charming downtown and thriving events. Visit Seneca... we're on the edge of it all!

www.SENECA SUNSHINE.com

2

A B C D E F G H I J K L M A B C D E F G H I J K L M
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Orlando

Strawberry Avalanche

WALKING ON SUNSHINE

Where the sun rises above the Blue Ridge and the cool mountain waters rush down to meet the forest, you'll find South Carolina's little pocket full of sunshine. Seneca is everything from the ultimate lake excursion on a hot southern day to the quintessential charming downtown and thriving events. Visit Seneca... we're on the edge of it all!

www.SenecaSunshine.com

3

A B C D E F G H I J K L M A B C D E F G H I J K L M
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Rainbow Mansion

A B C D E F G H I J K L M A B C D E F G H I J K L M
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

GatsbyFLF



3

Marketing

With a fresh and exciting brand in your corner, this marketing strategy provides a framework for Oconee County to work in unison and create an overall marketing plan for the future. With momentum building, it is important to never lose sight of the goal. You are essentially providing your own residents and potential visitors with the necessary information they need in order to understand what you already know to be true about Oconee County. It is a place waiting to be discovered by thousands who would cherish it as much as you do. The below strategy provides an assessment, industry research, and objectives that will allow Oconee County to be discovered. As budgets change and road blocks are thrown your way, this information will provide a compass to keep you constantly moving forward.

Marketing Strategy (the what):

An explanation of the goals you need to achieve with your marketing efforts.

Marketing Plan (the how):

How you are going to achieve those marketing goals.

GOAL

To provide compelling and accurate information to residents and visitors in order to increase awareness of and visitation/engagement with Oconee County as a premier outdoor travel destination of the Southeast focusing heavily on the unique cultural and natural assets already in place.

MARKETING ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive look at the current initiatives from Oconee County and an evaluation of the particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the challenges involved in moving forward in accomplishing marketing & branding goals.

Current Initiatives

- Visitors Guide
- Website
- Mobile App
- Social media
- E-newsletter
- Monthly column in local newspaper outlet
- Conferences/trade shows/training

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Current successful marketing tools and assets for Oconee County include...

- An abundance of natural resources for outdoor recreation, particularly lakes and rivers
- Several charming small towns
- An authentic history & culture
- Visitors guide has a yearly outreach of 65,000
- Social media audience steadily increasing

Weaknesses

Obstacles that may prevent improving marketing efforts for Oconee County include a...

- Limited marketing budget
- Lack of conference center for business travelers
- Lack of a variety of unique lodging
- Municipalities need downtown improvements

Opportunities

Oconee County is in prime position to...

- Emerge with a new brand, vision, and message that creates synergy with visitors and the local communities
- Explore and develop tourism through sports and recreation including biking, hiking, water skiing, etc...
- Lay the framework for increased tourism through necessary community development projects

Threats

Oconee County tourism is affected negatively or challenged by...

- Proximity to more established tourism communities including Highlands (NC), Clayton (GA), Greenville (SC)
- Cities/Chambers failing to work cooperatively for the greater good and benefit to all

OBJECTIVES

Objective A. Research

For any marketing strategy to be effective, tourism behavior, trends, and potential target audiences need to be identified and evaluated in order to acquire greater return on investment. This will give you laser focus for all of your marketing efforts.

Strategy 1: Identify Current Tourism Trends & Behavior

STATEWIDE

Domestic Travel to South Carolina

Source: South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, 2014

BY THE NUMBERS



29.5 MILLION

DOMESTIC VISITORS TO SOUTH CAROLINA



14.9 MILLION

DOMESTIC TRIPS



2 MEAN PARTY SIZE



20% INCLUDE CHILDREN



2.6 AVERAGE NIGHT STAY



\$608 AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER PARTY



86% DRIVE THEMSELVES



32% ARE DAY TRIPS

OVERVIEW: Domestic Travel to South Carolina

- Top trip purposes range from visiting friends and family (36%) to general pleasure/personal reasons (20%), business (19%), and entertainment/sightseeing (10%)
- The top season for domestic travel is Summer (30%) followed by Spring (26%), Winter (22%) and Fall (22%)
- Most domestic visitors stay in a hotel/motel/B&B (4.9 million) followed by a private/second home (3.9 million)
- Visiting relatives (30%), the beach (28%) and shopping (24%) are the top activities followed by fine dining/visiting friends (16%), urban sightseeing (11%), rural sightseeing (10%), historic sites/churches (8%), old homes/mansions/museums/gardens (6%), and golf/parks/wildlife viewing (5%)
- Oconee County receives an estimated 453,000 visitors per year

ESTIMATED VISITATION TO SC BY COUNTY

SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY	ANNUAL VISITORS (PERSON-TRIPS)*
ABBEVILLE	96,000
AIKEN	1,100,000
ALLENDALE	40,000
ANDERSON	863,000
BAMBERG	42,000
BARNWELL	66,000
BEAUFORT	2,700,000
BERKELEY	799,000
CALHOUN	13,000
CHARLESTON	5,600,000
CHEROKEE	262,000
CHESTER	208,000
CHESTERFIELD	143,000
CLARENDON	506,000
COLLETON	459,000
DARLINGTON	204,000
DILLON	383,000
DORCHESTER	198,000
EDGEFIELD	39,000
FAIRFIELD	122,000
FLORENCE	2,100,000
GEORGETOWN	539,000
GREENVILLE	3,900,000
GREENWOOD	436,000
HAMPTON	32,000
HORRY	7,600,000
JASPER	283,000
KERSHAW	342,000
LANCASTER	135,000
LAURENS	228,000
LEE	41,000
LEXINGTON	1,500,000
MARION	82,000
MARLBORO	84,000
McCORMICK	198,000
NEWBERRY	208,000
OCONEE	453,000
ORANGEBURG	1,400,000
PICKENS	597,000
RICHLAND	3,500,000
SALUDA	12,000
SPARTANBURG	1,500,000
SUMTER	669,000
UNION	94,000
WILLIAMSBURG	42,000
YORK	1,300,000
STATEWIDE TOTAL**	29,000,000

453,000
Annual
Visitors

*Estimates were derived using multiple models and averaging multiple years of data. Due to the difficulty of estimating visitation volume exactly, these estimates should be considered ballpark and inexact. Estimates reflect day and overnight travel of all types (e.g. leisure, business, visiting friends and family).

**Visitors may visit more than one county on a single trip so the sum of visitors by county will not equal the sum of visitors to the state overall.

Source: South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRD). SCPRD reserves the right to update these estimates as additional data becomes available. Additional information about these estimates may be obtained by emailing

BY THE NUMBERS



OVERVIEW: Domestic Leisure Travel to South Carolina from Out-of-State

- Pleasure/personal (59%), Entertainment/sightseeing (24%), and Outdoor recreation (17%) are the top primary purposes for these visitors
- Summer (1.2 million) is the top season for overnight trips, followed by Spring (890,000), Fall (780,000), and Winter (350,000)
- 54% of these visitors come for the beach
- Top states of origin are North Carolina (34%), Georgia (11%), Virginia (7%) and New York (5%)

BY THE NUMBERS



OVERVIEW: Domestic Business Travel to South Carolina

- Personal business (32%), general business (24%), client meetings (12%), training (8%), and conferences (7%) are the top purposes for business travel
- Winter (27%) and Spring (27%) are the top seasons for business trips followed by Fall (26%) and Summer (20%)
- The vast majority of business travelers stay in a hotel/motel/B&B
- Top states of origin for business trips (both overnight and day trips) are South Carolina (53%), North Carolina (16%), Georgia (7%), Florida (4%), and Ohio (2%)

NATIONAL

Sources: U.S. Travel and Tourism Trends and Policy Issues for Congress 2014, the Southeast Tourism Society, and the U.S. Travel Association 2014

BY THE NUMBERS

5.7 MILLION

PEOPLE DIRECTLY EMPLOYED BY TOURISM IN 2013

2.8%

OF THE UNITED STATES' GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

\$644.9 BILLION

IN SPENDING ON LEISURE TRAVEL DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

1.7 BILLION

PERSON-TRIP* FOR LEISURE PURPOSES IN 2014

\$283 BILLION

SPENT ON BUSINESS TRAVEL DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

452 MILLION

PERSON-TRIPS* BY U.S. RESIDENTS FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES IN 2014

\$2.1 TRILLION

ECONOMIC OUTPUT GENERATED BY DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

15 MILLION

JOBS SUPPORTED BY TRAVEL EXPENDITURES

#1 RANK

TRAVEL RANKS AMONG ALL U.S. SERVICE EXPORTS

1 OUT OF 9 JOBS

U.S. JOBS DEPEND ON TRAVEL AND TOURISM

OVERVIEW: National Tourism

- Southern states such as Florida (758.7 thousand jobs), Texas (555.9 thousand jobs), and Georgia (238.4 thousand jobs) are in the top 10 list of states for tourism employment & expenditures
- The top 5 international markets visiting the USA are Canada (23 million), Mexico (17.3 million), The United Kingdom (4 million), Japan (3.6 million) and Brazil (2.3 million)
- Southeastern states in particular account for 24.6% of total travel spending and 28.4% of direct travel jobs

Strategy 2: Compile and Inventory of Assets

An inventory of tourism assets is necessary to evaluate what makes Oconee County a desirable place to visit and live. This inventory is meant to be updated on a regular basis and is a valuable marketing tool for future collateral planning.

Full inventory in Excel format has been provided to Oconee County.

Strategy 3: Target specific audience demographics most aligned with Oconee County

Considering the current tourism climate and the particular assets of Oconee County, these target audience segments are identified as the most likely to visit Oconee County, based on their interests:





THE ADVENTURE TRAVELER

Source: Passport to Adventure Industry Trend Report, 2010 and Adventure Tourism Market Study, 2013

- Average age of 36
- Single professionals
- Affluent active families
- Inquisitive
- Males and females
- Confident, well-traveled who want more than the sun, sea & sand experience
- More likely to use professional services such as guides, tour operators, etc...
- Demands an authentic “off the beaten path” experience not found in guide books
- Geographically and environmentally aware
- Active (ranging from walkers-mountaineers)
- 25% book activities online



THE RECREATIONAL MOTORCYCLIST

Source: Travel Preferences of Recreational Motorcyclists, Appalachian State University 2014

- 85% male
- Average age of 56
- 68% work full time
- 30% retired
- Majority finished some type of college
- Majority visit the Blue Ridge Mountain Region during the Summer and Fall months
- 58% travel with a partner
- Average group size of four people
- Find information from the internet, a previous visit, a friend, or brochure
- Average trip is 1,531 miles and spending four nights
- \$1,032 average expenditure
- Stay in motel/hotels that cater to this clientele
- 88% enjoy sightseeing, historic sites, and parks

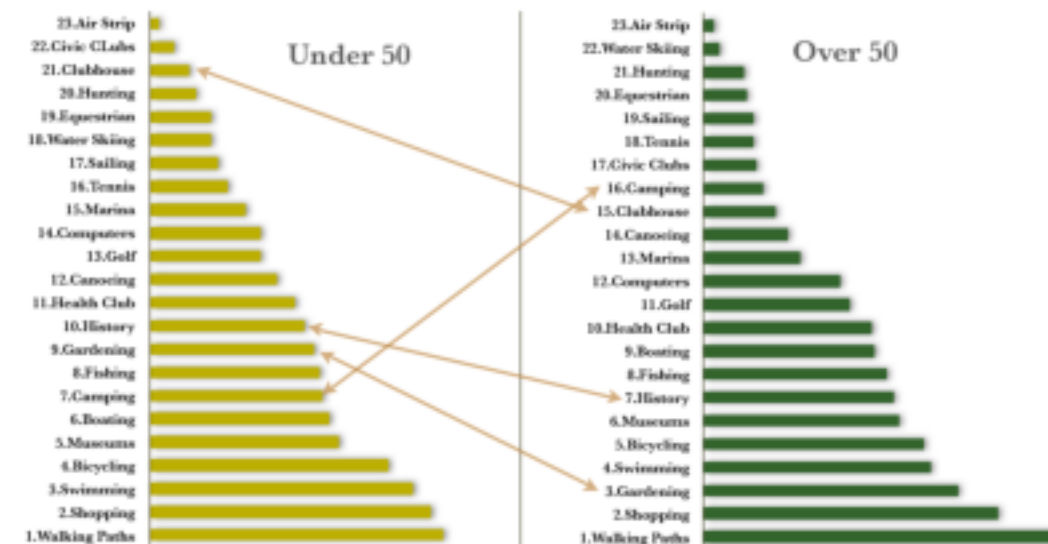


TURBO TOURIST

Source: The Center for Carolina Living

- Out-of-state visitors planning relocation, business, or second home investments
- Return more often, stay longer, spend more
- Once moved, they spend 83% of travel dollars in the Carolinas and 14% will start or move a business
- Upwardly mobile, affluent, educated, entrepreneurial and/or retirement motivated
- Ages 24-64
- Average Household Income \$950,000+
- Northeast & Midwest frost belt, Florida & California
- Motivated most by scenic beauty, climate, recreation and cultural amenities
- Those Turbo-Tourists who do move to South Carolina gravitate towards the following areas (in order of most to least): Charleston, the Grand Strand, Greenville/Spartanburg, Beaufort, Columbia/Midlands/ the Northwestern SC, Aiken, Orangeburg, Florence and Sumter
- The top 10 amenity & activity preferences for Turbo-Tourists over the age of 50 include (in order of most to least): Walking paths, shopping, gardening, swimming, bicycling, museums, history, fishing, boating, health clubs, and golf
- The top 10 amenity & activity preferences for Turbo Tourists under the age of 50 include (in order of most to least): walking paths, shopping, swimming, bicycling, museums, boating, camping, fishing, gardening, and history

Amenity & Activity Preferences



Source: N= 4,000 most recent responder households.

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THE ECO OR NATURE TOURIST

Source: Passport to Adventure Industry Trend Report, 2010 and Adventure Tourism Market Study, 2013

- 35-54 years old
- 50% male/50% female
- 82% College Graduates
- Experienced nature tourists prefer trips lasting 8-14 days
- Nature tourists willing to spend more than general tourists
- Nature tourists name wilderness setting, wildlife viewing and hiking/trekking as important elements of their trip
- Nature tourists name enjoying scenery/nature and new experiences/places as motivations for taking their next trip



THE HERITAGE TRAVELER

Source: A Development and Economic Impact Study of the SC National Heritage Corridor prepared by the University of South Carolina-Clemson University Tourism Research Partnership 2010

- Female or male
- Between 45-60 years old
- Well educated
- Household income over \$60,000
- Prefers authentic history, culture & cuisine and back roads over interstate



THE BUSINESS TRAVELER

Source: The United States Department of Transportation

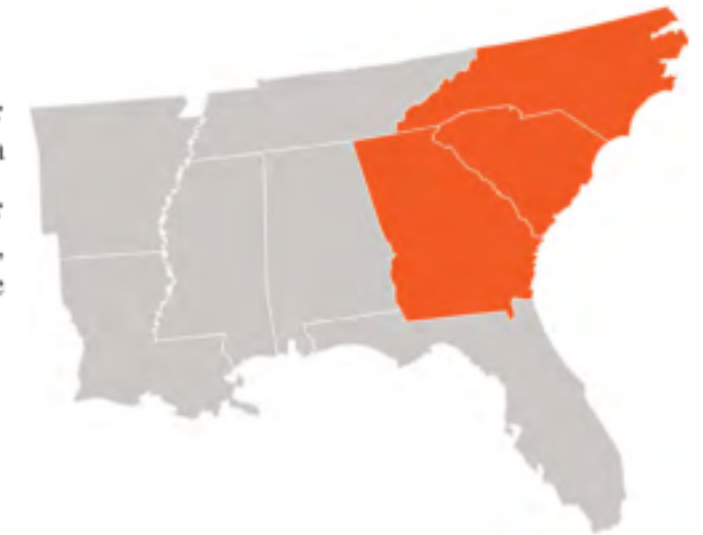
- 55% are 30-49 years old
- Income well above population average
- 77% are men
- Usually professional, managerial, or technical positions
- 79% drive
- 74% of destinations are less than 250 miles from point of departure
- Majority is less than 100 miles from point of departure
- The South is the largest destination for outbound business trips

Strategy 4: Identify Target Geography

The recommended target geographic area is the Southeast, within 120 miles or closer to Oconee County and an in-state overlay.

Target States:
North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina

Target Markets:
Atlanta, Greenville/Spartanburg/Anderson, Columbia, and Charlotte



Strategy 5: Prioritize content and potential media outlets for both Public Relations and Marketing efforts to reach your target audience & geographic partners

Media Outlets:

The following outlets meet criteria for reaching the previously identified target audiences for Oconee County. This list samples the type of outlets that could be included in marketing and public relations efforts, but any outlet should be considered if they meet the previously mentioned target audience and geographic specifications.

National Examples:



Regional Examples:



Online examples:



Industry Specific:



Supporting Organizations:



Content:

The following is a sample editorial catalogue, which is meant to be a marketing tool to pitch to media outlets, supporting organizations, and to potentially include in future collateral. Stories should be developed and researched continuously, and can be presented within different angles. References to complementary photos and sources should be noted. Editorial pitches should be done ideally a year ahead of time, especially for National publications.

Subject	Description
South Carolina's Rainforest	A close-up look into the wild side of Lake Jocassee and what makes it a true rainforest environment in the Southeast. See photo XXX
Bluegrass, Bikes & Bites	Best hiking trails and watering holes in Oconee County, bluegrass music in Westminster or at Oconee State Park.
The Dark Side of the Mountain	The intriguing legends in Oconee County, and the real history behind them all. See historic article XXX

Objective B. Identify Budget Parameters

After thoroughly reviewing the target audiences and media outlets, a budget should be created to identify long term goals and priorities. The following is a sample guideline for a 12-month time period. Emphasis on flight times for advertising should be heavily focused on Spring and Fall.

Media	Type	Theme	Estimated Budget	Total
Print	Regional	Outdoor advertising	15%	30%
	National	Outdoor advertising	15%	
	Local	Local events, industry conferences, workshops, seminars & presentations	1%	
Digital	Social Media	Outdoor advertising, Mobile APP	1%	21%
	Website, including add-ons with print materials	Outdoor advertising, Mobile APP	20%	
OOH	Billboards	Outdoor advertising	20%	20%
TV	Crossroads	Outdoor advertising	20%	20%
Content Development	Design concepts, website updates, video production, executive production, etc...	All	20%	1%



Objective C. Increase Social Media Engagement

Oconee County's most valuable free tool is social media. However, with algorithms changing on a regular basis, it is imperative to identify your goals and implement specific strategies in order to make an impact on your audience.

Identify Social Media Goals

Strategy 1: Assess Current Social Media Standings

An in-depth look at who your audience is and successful engagement with them will help lay down a road map for your future endeavors.

- Evaluate social media audience engagement statistics and demographics for your previous FY
- Investigate the timeframe and content that has received the most engagement

Strategy : Create meaningful content & incentives

Your success in social media relies solely on the content you create and the value it gives your audience. These tools will lay a foundation to make your social media efforts more effective.

Content Calendar

Create an on-going calendar that will help you organize your social media efforts month-by-month.

This is especially helpful for pre-posting content or if multiple people provide administration assistance.

Include national events, local events, specific campaigns, spotlights for each municipality and filler ideas.

Implement a variety of content categories listed below to ensure variation.

2015 Editorial Calendar			
June			
Hooks to Consider	Description	More Info	
Year-long	Breathe Easy	Incorporate this month into National Great Outdoors Month	
Month-long	National Great Outdoors Month	The perfect time to highlight all of the top great outdoor spots in Oconee County! Use #orgreatoutdoors and #breatheeasy	
21	Father's Day	Mention gift ideas	
21	Summer begins	Mention	
	Year Hook - A	Breathe Easy	
	Year Hook - B	Local Events	

Content Categories

No matter how amazing your content is, a variety of different approaches is needed to keep your audience captivated.



1. Informational Example:

This list informs your audience of the several waterways in Oconee County in a fun way, and it also utilizes the hashtag to better track results.



2. Storytelling Example:

This is a great approach to include the countless stories from the past in Oconee County and to involve the local historians and museums to provide meaningful content.



3. Emotional Example:

Oconee county is full of inspiration, especially the breathtaking views. According to a Buzzsomo study, awe, laughter, and amusement are most likely to generate engagement. A simple quote and a great photo is really all you need.



4. Interactive Example:

Interactives can be as simple as prompting the audience to go to your website, a fill-in-the-blank type question, a "what would you do," or as complicated as a bracket for the "best of Oconee" voting campaign. A fun spin on the interactive approach is to set up photo booths at key places around the county. This will create a high level of engagement from both visitors and residents.



5. Organic Example:

These posts should be un-staged and completely organic, which will always resonate with your audience and will most likely be some of your top engagement-getters.



Social Media Engagement Tools

Social searches: There are free tools that enable you to quickly see what conversations fans are having around your brand. Some allow you to find user-generated content to showcase with the user's permission. A simple look on Search.Twitter using your town name or the names of area attractions will connect you directly to people tweeting from Oconee County, allowing you to respond in real-time. You can also do this by creating alerts.

Scheduling and organizing: Tools allow you easy access from your smartphone or computer to post to multiple platforms and pre-schedule posts so you can manage your time.

Do your research: Follow industry leaders on national, regional, and state levels. Also, find a social media newsletter or blog that has meaningful updates and subscribe for the latest trends and updates in the social media world. Adapt your strategy as necessary.

Share the love: Many small towns either lack the knowledge or staff resources to establish an effective social media presence. Hold a free social media workshop for local businesses and organizations in Oconee County, and close out the meeting by setting up an email list of people to connect with on social media and share content with you. If the majority of the county is better introduced to social media, the more impact you have.



Strategy 3: Integrate paid social media

Paid social media only magnifies what you do well organically. Paid efforts going only towards boosting your content to your specific target audience demographics will ultimately lead to an engaged audience that is most likely visit Oconee County. Any other type of paid social media (i.e. paying for fans) is essentially ineffective in the long run.



Strategy 4: Measure

Develop an on-going social media report (at least every six months) that evaluates the progress you have made towards each goal. These elements should measure at minimum:

Rate of audience increase and decrease: How much has your audience increased over the last six months? Compare to the statistics you compiled in Strategy 1. Even if you received thousands of new Facebook “Likes” over the course of a year, it is also important to track the audience you lose. Compare it to the timeframe of your marketing efforts to see if there is a pattern.

Audience engagement: Use the tools social media platforms provide to put a number to the engagement you receive. Look at specific hashtags and campaigns that you are using.

Audience trends: If you received a dramatic increase in engagement or audience during a certain month, what were the key factors to that? Is there a particular time of day that increases engagement? What type of content did your audience most respond to? How does that compare to the research in Strategy 1?

Audience demographics: Evaluate your social media audience age and their location periodically. Take note of any patterns of increase that may match up to your marketing efforts. For example, if you run a TV campaign in the month of June that reaches a certain demographic, specifically look to see if there is an increase in that particular area. This will assist you in measuring your return on investment, and if you should participate in that particular campaign in the future.

Social Media Quick Reference

**This data reflects research from May 2015 and is subject to change. Review social media regulations before you implement a paid strategy, as text limits apply. Due to staff time and resources, it is recommended for Oconee County to limit itself to Facebook & Twitter as their main social media platforms.*



AUDIENCE: PERCENTAGES AMONG ONLINE ADULTS

Source: Pew Research Center Social Media Update, September 2014

71%	OF ALL ONLINE ADULTS USE FACEBOOK	74%	OF COLLEGE DEGREE OR HIGHER
66%	OF MALES	72%	OF USERS WITH A YEARLY INCOME OF \$75,000 OR HIGHER
77%	OF FEMALES	70%	OF FACEBOOK USERS DO SO DAILY
87%	OF AGES 18-29		
73%	OF AGES 30-49		
63%	OF AGES 50-64		
56%	OF AGES 65+		

Types of Paid Facebook Promotions:

- Boost Post: Quick option for when you see a post is getting traction
- Promoted Post: Strategic buys, giveaways, opt-in for email list, when you want to reach your current fans only, when you need more targeting and budget options
- Ads: Promotion of a product or coupon



ADS: PROMOTION OF A PRODUCT OR COUPON

Source: Pew Research Center Social Media Update, September 2014

23%	OF ALL ONLINE ADULTS USE TWITTER	30%	OF COLLEGE DEGREE OR HIGHER
24%	OF MALES	27%	OF USERS WITH A YEARLY INCOME OF \$75,000 OR HIGHER
21%	OF FEMALES	36%	OF FACEBOOK USERS DO SO DAILY
37%	OF AGES 18-29		
25%	OF AGES 30-49		
12%	OF AGES 50-64		
10%	OF AGES 65+		

Types of Paid Twitter Promotions:

- Promoted Tweets: Promoting multimedia content, increases engagement
- Promoted Accounts: Grows your followers, call-to-actions
- Website Cards: Drives traffic to a specific product landing page
- Lead Generation Cards: Experiment with messaging, images, and targeting audiences

Objective D. Local Public Relations

Aside from social media, there are many public relations efforts that are effective in raising awareness for your new brand and image within your own county.

Strategy 1: Develop downtown initiatives to strengthen county-side pride, including a Buy Local campaign



Tactic 1: Develop a contact list for all locally owned tourism-related business including restaurants, accommodations, retailers, and markets.

Tactic 2: Create incentives for the businesses to join by compiling your promotional plan that includes social media promotion and unique hashtag.

Tactic 3: Create a registration form (online if possible) with all requirements of the campaign, including timeline. A trial campaign for Fall 2015 or Spring 2016 is recommended. Solicit photos from the establishments or take your own.

Tactic 4: Create a mass email to all businesses promoting the campaign

Tactic 5: Promote heavily on social media, and track any usage through the unique tagline.

Strategy 2: Create a program for empty storefronts

Tactic 1: Research all empty storefronts and ownership on main thoroughfares in the downtown districts.

Tactic 2: Design and fabricate sticker signage.

Tactic 3: Contact owners for permission.

Tactic 4: Evaluate empty storefronts every six months.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 When creating a marketing plan for 2015-2016, compare your target audience to that of each media outlet for paid advertising. Billboards are highly recommended as they have a high impression rate that is imperative for launching a new brand.
- 2 Continuously develop your photography and content. Photography is at the heart of any marketing and public relations initiative and should be considered for an on-going item in your budget.
- 3 Begin your planning stages by setting firm goals with success measures in place. It is recommended to focus on (short term) increasing visitor guide requests, website visits, social media engagement, mobile app downloads, and booking business conferences (long term).
- 4 Strategize your social media with a content calendar, and touch on each content category.
- 5 Measure all efforts at the end of each FY and evaluate the progress of reaching your goals and success measures.
- 6 Integrate the new logo in all platforms including social media, websites, and all collateral.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT FOR SENECA

A comprehensive look at the current initiatives and platforms promoting Seneca and an evaluation of the particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the challenges involved in moving forward in accomplishing their marketing & branding goals.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Current successful marketing tools and assets for Seneca include...

- Proximity to Lake Keowee
- Arts & culture
- Unique events that complement local assets, including Jazz on the Alley and Seneca Fest
- Quaint downtown atmosphere
- Ram Cat Alley

Weaknesses

Obstacles that may prevent improving marketing efforts for Seneca include a...

- Limited marketing budget
- Need for updated downtown streetscaping and downtown development beyond Ram Cat Alley
- Little success measures are in place, except for event attendance

Opportunities

Seneca is in prime position to...

- Capitalize on the expected influx of travelers from the Sanctuary Pointe/SC Great Outdoors Center by preparing a solid brand and the necessary community development projects
- Identify itself as an arts & culture hub of the area
- Capitalize on the visitation already present at Clemson University and Lake Keowee

Threats

Seneca tourism is affected negatively or challenged by...

- Overshadowed or overlooked by Clemson area visitors

OBJECTIVES

Objective A. Research

Evaluate the research noted in Oconee County Objective A. to identify a target audience, media outlets, and content specific to the City of Seneca.

Strategy 1: Identify Current Tourism Trends & Behavior

Though Seneca has the potential to attract all of the segments listed for Oconee County, the Turbo-Tourist, the Heritage Traveler, and Oconee County residents should be the main focus as they would be most interested in the specific assets of Seneca.



The Turbo-Tourist: These affluent visitors are drawn to the picturesque setting of Seneca and the sophisticated atmosphere of Lake Keowee in particular. They would also be most likely to become permanent residents or regular returning visitors to Seneca.



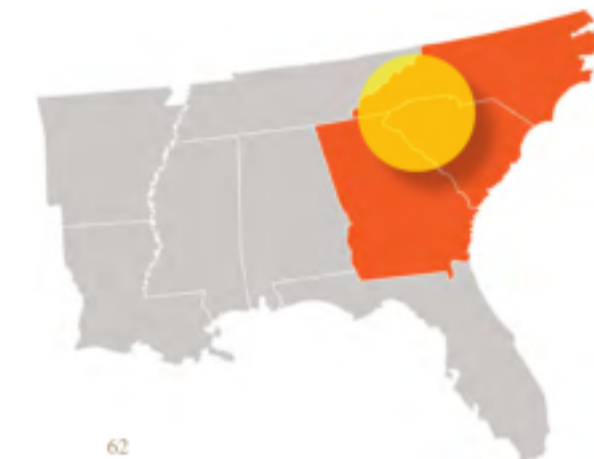
The Heritage Traveler: These visitors will be drawn to the art & culture aspects of Seneca, while also enjoying the rich heritage, the downtown, and the outdoor assets.



Oconee County Residents: Residents will be a main focus when marketing special events.

Strategy 2: Identify Target Geography

With limited marketing funds, Seneca's focus area should be within Oconee County and no larger than 90 miles outside of Seneca.



Strategy 3: Prioritize potential media outlets and content for both Public Relations and Marketing efforts that reach your target audience & geographic parameters

Media Outlets:

The following outlets meet the criteria for reaching the previously identified target audiences for Seneca. This list samples the type of outlets that should be considered with marketing and public relations efforts, but any outlet should be considered if they meet the previously mentioned target audience and geographic specifications. We suggest National outlets for public relations efforts only, due to budget constraints.

Regional Examples:



Online Examples:



Supporting Organizations:



Content:

The following is a sample editorial catalogue, which is meant to be a marketing tool to pitch to media outlets and/or include in future collateral. Stories should be developed and researched continuously, and can be presented within different angles. References to complementary photos and sources should be noted.

Subject	Description
On the Edge: Seneca	A profile of Seneca, highlighting its proximity to the mountains and its edgy artsy culture.
Jazz up your weekend in Seneca	A road trip idea for Seneca, highlighting Jazz on the Alley, shopping, dining, and Lake Keowee.
Seneca Spotlight	Monthly column dedicated to highlighting a business, event, or destination in downtown Seneca.



Objective B. Identify Budget Parameters

After thoroughly reviewing the target audiences and media outlets, a budget should be created to identify long term priorities. The following is a sample guideline for a 12-month time period. Emphasis on flight times for advertising should be heavily focused on Spring and Fall and surrounding your special events.

Media	Type	Theme	Total
Print	Local: Newspaper print ads & Direct Mail Regional: Magazine Print ads	Local events, industry accolades, development projects & announcements	30%
Digital	Social Media buys, Print add-ons	Local events, outdoor adventure on the lake	20%
Content Development	Design assistance & production costs, geography	Print ad design	10%
OOH	Clemson University	General visit - Seneca highlighting jazz, arts, and the lake	20%

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Streamline all digital platforms with new logo/brand.
- 2 Create and update editorial and photography catalogue on a consistent basis.
- 3 Create social media content calendar that uses all categories to highlight local businesses and their products, local culture, history, and events.
- 4 Create a yearly budget and prioritize. Focus on free public relations efforts and minimal paid. Plan with the Mountain Lakes CVB for any national/regional efforts. Either concentrate your budget during the Fall and Spring or pick one.
- 5 Regularly update your supporting organizations by acting as a channel for information and content for everything Seneca related.
- 6 Support key development projects that will further enhance your marketing efforts including any updated streetscaping and the creation of an arts/culture festival.
- 7 Implement metrics for each objective to accurately assess your progress. This may include website hits and social media engagement.



WALHALLA

MARKETING ASSESSMENT FOR WALHALLA

A comprehensive look at the current initiatives and platforms promoting Walhalla and an evaluation of the particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the challenges involved in moving forward in accomplishing marketing & branding goals.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Current successful marketing tools and assets for Walhalla include...

- German heritage
- Historic venues: Oconee Heritage Center, Cherokee History Museum and Patriot's Hall
- Social media and website engagement is increasing

Weaknesses

Obstacles that may prevent improving marketing efforts for Walhalla include a...

- Limited marketing budget
- Lack of strategy and resources to reach visitors outside of Oconee County
- Recruitment of small businesses along Main Street that will support tourism traffic
- Currently more of a pass-through town instead of a stop and explore type of destination

Opportunities

Walhalla is in prime position to...

- Capitalize on the expected influx of travelers from the Sanctuary Pointe/SC Great Outdoors Center by preparing a solid brand and the necessary community development projects
- Capitalize on the motorcycle and biking communities by developing content and resources specifically for them
- As the only true "German" town in the state or region, Walhalla should capitalize on this heritage through downtown design elements and special events

Threats

Walhalla tourism is affected negatively or challenged by...

- Promimity of other more established "mountain destinations"

OBJECTIVES

Objective A. Research

Evaluate the research noted in Oconee County Objective A. to identify a target audience, media outlets, and content specific to Walhalla.

Strategy 1: Identify Current Tourism Trends & Behavior

Though Walhalla has the potential to attract all of the segments listed for Oconee County, the Heritage Traveler, the Eco-tourist and the Adventure Traveler, along with the Recreational Motorcyclist are the most likely to visit this particular area.



The Heritage Traveler: These visitors will be drawn to the unique German heritage, especially if specific elements of this heritage become prevalent in streetscape, events, architecture, etc. The name “Walhalla” itself provokes a question in one’s mind, and they want to know more about the story behind it.



The Eco-tourist & the Adventure Traveler: These visitors will all be attracted to the surrounding outdoor recreation opportunities and will be drawn to unique downtown destinations for their accommodations and amenities, such as breweries and locally owned restaurants or B&Bs.



The Recreational Motorcyclist: These visitors will be drawn in by the breathtaking views in Walhalla and the surrounding areas. More development needs to point out specific routes, sites along the way, and accommodations that cater to this clientele.



Oconee County residents: Local residents should always be a focus area when promoting local events and industry happenings.

Strategy 2: Identify Target Geography

With limited marketing funds, Walhalla’s focus area should be within Oconee County and no larger than 90 miles outside of Walhalla.



Strategy 3: Prioritize potential media outlets and content for both Public Relations and Marketing efforts that reach your target audience & geographic parameters

Media Outlets:

The following outlets meet the criteria for reaching the previously identified target audiences for Walhalla. This list samples the type of outlets that should be considered with marketing and public relations efforts, but any outlet should be considered if they meet the previously mentioned target audience and geographic specifications.

National Examples:

RoadRUNNER
MOTORCYCLE TOURING & TRAVEL

Online Examples:



Regional Examples:

PALMETTO THE HEART & SOUL OF SOUTH CAROLINA
Atlanta MAGAZINE
carolinaliveing.com

Supporting Organizations:



Content:

The following is a sample editorial catalogue, which is meant to be a marketing tool to pitch to media outlets and/or include in future collateral. Stories should be developed and researched continuously, and can be presented within different angles. References to complementary photos and sources should be noted.

Subject	Description
Main Street to the Mountains	A profile of Walhalla, including the German history, downtown shopping/dining, and outdoor adventure.
Bikes & Brews	Best biking trails near Walhalla, and the best dining options to end the day!
Riding the Blue Ridge	A look at the best motorcycle routes surrounding Walhalla and points of interest along the way.
Autumn Adventure	Oktoberfest and Fall Foliage set the stage for fall fun.

Objective B. Identify Budget Parameters

After thoroughly reviewing the target audiences and media outlets, a budget should be created to identify long term priorities. The following is a sample guideline for a 12-month time period. Emphasis on flight times for advertising should be heavily focused on Spring and Fall and surrounding your special events.

Media	Type	Theme	Total
Print	Local & Regional print ads	Local events, industry accolades, development projects & announcements	30%
	Local Direct Mail	Local events	20%
Digital	Social Media buys, Print add-ons	Local events, outdoor adventure on the lake	30%
Content Development	Design assistance & production costs	Print ad design	20%

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Streamline all digital platforms with new logo/brand.
- 2 Create and update editorial and photography catalogue on a consistent basis.
- 3 Create social media content calendar that uses all categories to highlight local businesses and their products, local culture, history, and events.
- 4 Create a yearly budget and prioritize. Focus on free public relations efforts and minimal paid, and plan with the Mountain Lakes CVB for any national/regional efforts. Either concentrate your budget during the Fall and Spring or pick one.
- 5 Regularly update your supporting organizations by acting as a channel for information and content for everything Walhalla related.
- 6 Support key development projects that will further enhance your marketing efforts including any updates to the downtown structure such as German elements.
- 7 Implement metrics for each objective to accurately assess your progress. This may include website hits and social media engagement.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT FOR WESTMINSTER

A comprehensive look at the current initiatives and platforms promoting Westminster and an evaluation of the particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and the challenges involved in moving forward in accomplishing marketing & branding goals.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Current successful marketing tools and assets for Westminster include...

- Close proximity to high adventure opportunities on the Chattooga River
- Agri-tourism opportunities

Weaknesses

Obstacles that may prevent improving marketing efforts for Westminster include a...

- Limited marketing budget
- Need for updated streetscaping
- Recruitment of small businesses along Main Street that will support tourism traffic

Opportunities

Westminster is in prime position to...

- Capitalize on the expected influx of travelers from the Sanctuary Pointe/SC Great Outdoors Center by preparing a solid brand and the necessary community development projects
- Continue to build off of the Music Hall with added events and opportunities.

Threats

Westminster tourism is affected negatively or challenged by...

- Budget
- Lack of reasons for passing motorists to stop

OBJECTIVES

Objective A. Research

Evaluate the research noted in Oconee County Objective A. to identify a target audience, media outlets, and content specific to Westminster.

Strategy 1: Identify Current Tourism Trends & Behavior

Though Westminster has the potential to attract all of the segments listed for Oconee County, the Heritage Traveler, the Eco-tourist and the Adventure Traveler, along with the Recreational Motorcyclist are the most likely to visit this particular area.



The Eco-tourist & the Adventure Traveler: These visitors will all be attracted to the surrounding outdoor recreation opportunities and will be drawn to unique downtown destinations for their accommodations and amenities, such as breweries and locally owned restaurants or B&Bs.



Oconee County residents: Local residents should always be a focus area when promoting local events and industry happenings.

Strategy 2: Identify Target Geography

With limited marketing funds, Westminster's focus area should be within Oconee County and no larger than 90 miles outside of Westminster.



Strategy 3: Prioritize potential media outlets and content for both Public Relations and Marketing efforts that reach your target audience & geographic parameters

Media Outlets:

The following outlets meet criteria for reaching the previously identified target audiences for Westminster. This list samples the type of outlets that could be included in marketing and public relations efforts, however any outlet should be considered if they meet the previously mentioned target audience and geographic specifications. Supporting organizations should be continuously updated with any new collateral, initiatives, and story ideas.

Regional Examples:



Online Examples:



Supporting Organizations:



Content:

The following is a sample editorial catalogue, which is meant to be a marketing tool to pitch to media outlets and/or include in future collateral. Stories should be developed and researched continuously, and can be presented within different angles. References to complementary photos and sources should be noted.

Subject	Description
Small Town, Big Adventure	A profile of Westminster, including history of the area, small town charm highlighting businesses, Agritourism and outdoor adventure nearby.
A Mountain Weekend	Road trip idea including bluegrass show at the Music Hall, outdoor adventure ideas and accommodations/dining options
Navigating the Chattooga	A complete guide to experiencing the Chattooga River, including the history of the Chattooga, and all recreational opportunities it offers.

Objective B. Identify Budget Parameters

After thoroughly reviewing the target audiences and media outlets, a budget should be created to identify long term priorities. The following is a sample guideline for a 12-month time period. Emphasis on flight times for advertising should be heavily focused on Spring and Fall and surrounding your special events.

Media	Type	Theme	Total
Print	Local Newspaper	Local events, industry accolades, development projects & announcements	15%
	Local Direct Mail	Local event	15%
	Regional	General visit Westminster, key event promotion	20%
Digital	Social Media buys, Print add-ons	Local events, Westminster Social Media	30%
Content Development	Design assistance & production costs	Print ad design or photography development	30%

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Streamline all digital platforms with new logo/brand.
- 2 Create and update editorial and photography catalogue on a consistent basis. Showcase in particular Agritourism, outdoor adventure, and local events that showcase local culture.
- 3 Create social media content calendar that uses all categories to highlight local businesses and their products, local culture, history, and events.
- 4 Create a yearly budget and prioritize. Focus on free public relations efforts and minimal paid, and plan with the Mountain Lakes CVB for any national/regional efforts. Either concentrate your budget during the Fall and Spring or pick one.
- 5 Regularly update your supporting organizations by acting as a channel for information and content for everything Westminster related.
- 6 Support key development projects that will further enhance your marketing efforts.
- 7 Implement metrics for each objective to accurately assess your progress.

PROFILE SHEET

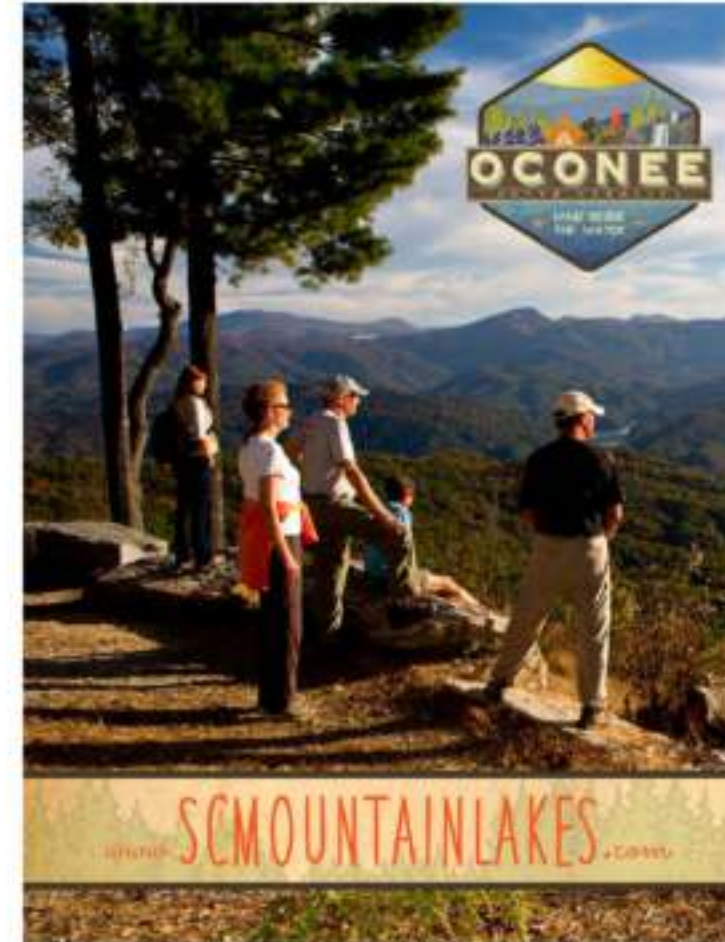
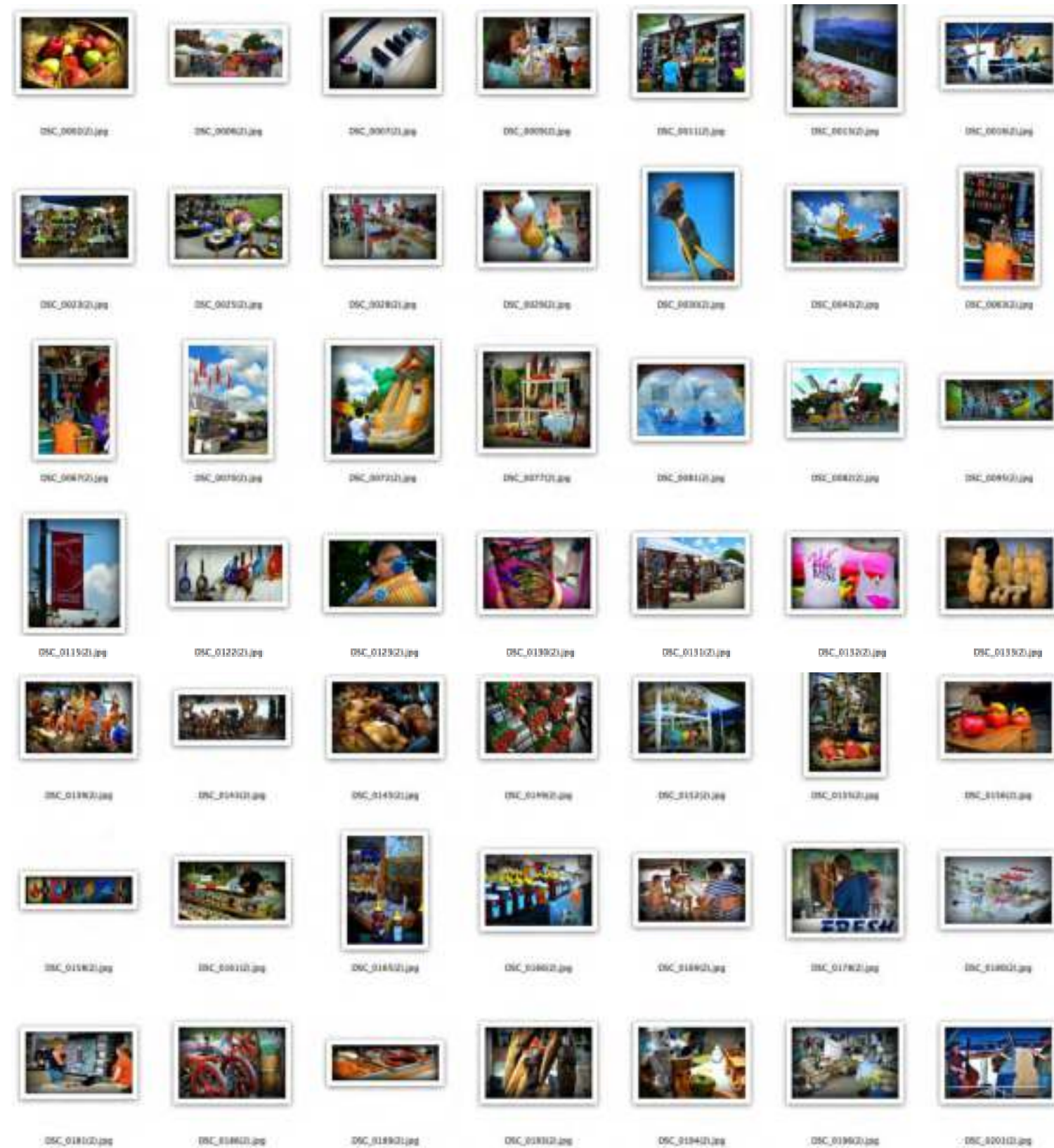


PHOTO GALLERY

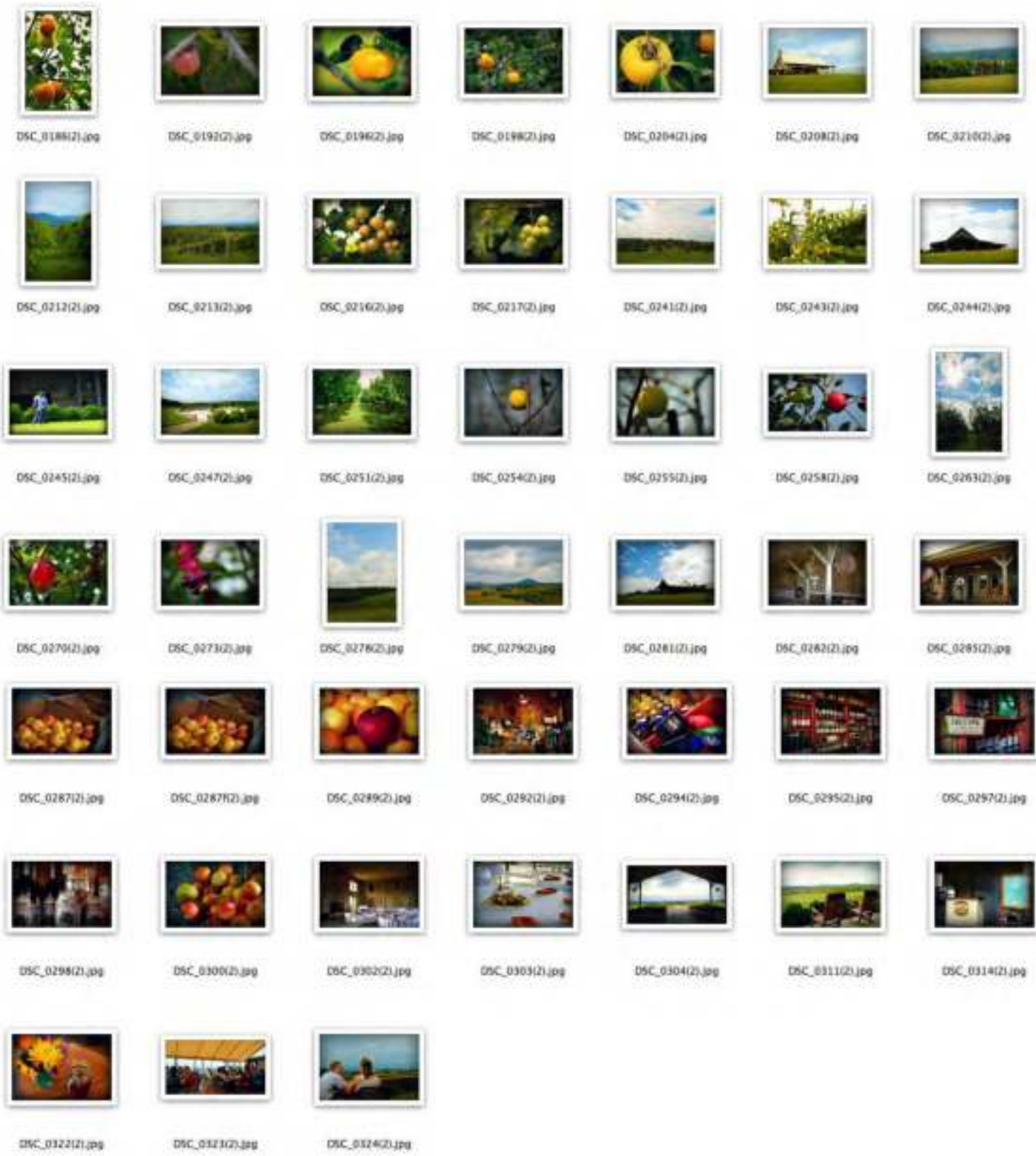
WESTMINSTER APPLE FESTIVAL 2014 (By M. Greer)



BRYSON'S U-PICK APPLE ORCHARD (By M. Greer)



CHATTOOGA BELLE FARM (By M. Greer)



GENERAL STORE MUSEUM (By M. Greer)



JAZZ ON THE ALLEY (By M. Greer)



WESTMINSTER MUSIC HALL (By M. Greer)

OKTOBERFEST (By M. Greer)





DSC_0588(2).jpg DSC_0591(2).jpg DSC_0621(2).jpg DSC_0641(2).jpg DSC_0708(2).jpg DSC_0741(2).jpg DSC_0781(2).jpg



DSC_0793(2).jpg

(By Peter McIntosh)



Carolina Plaza 4.jpg Carolina Plaza.jpg Carolina Pony 1 4.jpg Chattooga Campers 4.jpg Chattooga Campers.jpg Chattooga Narrows 4.jpg Fly Fishing Chattooga 4.jpg



Fly Fishing Chattooga.jpg Foothills trail sign 2 4.jpg Foothills trail sign 2.jpg Foothills trail sign.jpg Jocassee Boaters 4.jpg Jocassee Boaters.jpg Jocassee Sunset 4.jpg



JOR 1 4.jpg JOR 1.jpg JOR 2 4.jpg JOR 2.jpg JOR 3 b.jpg JOR 3 4.jpg JOR 3.jpg



JOR 4 4.jpg JOR 4.jpg Keowee Bike 2 4.jpg Keowee Bike 2.jpg Keowee Bike 3 4.jpg Keowee Bike 3.jpg Keowee Bike 4.jpg



Keowee Bike.jpg King Creek Falls 11 - 2 4.jpg Lake Jocassee 2 4.jpg Lake Jocassee 2.jpg Lake Jocassee 4.jpg Lake Jocassee.jpg Licklog Falls 4.jpg



Oconee Campers 4.jpg Oconee Campers.jpg Oconee General Store 2 4.jpg Oconee General Store 2.jpg Oconee General Store 4.jpg Oconee General Store.jpg Paddle Board 2 4.jpg



Station Cove Falls 4 sc.jpg Station Cove Falls.jpg Trout Fisherman 4.jpg Trout Fisherman.jpg trout fishing 2 chattooga 4.jpg trout fishing 2.jpg Watauga Bike 4.jpg



Watauga Bike.jpg Westminster Depot 4.jpg Westminster Depot.jpg Westminster Music Hall 1 4.jpg Westminster Music Hall 1.jpg Westminster Music Hall 2 4.jpg Westminster Music Hall 2.jpg



Westminster Music Hall 3 4.jpg Westminster Music Hall 3.jpg Westminster Music Hall 4 4.jpg Westminster Music Hall 4.jpg Westminster Music Hall 5 4.jpg Westminster Music Hall 5.jpg Woodall Shoals 4.jpg



Woodall Shoals Park 4.jpg



4

tourism destination
RECOMMENDATIONS



The overwhelming consensus expressed to the team was that the primary tourism appeal for Oconee is the outdoors (See Appendix C p. 200 for Interview Responses). This includes everything from the lakes, mountains, rivers, parks, trails and the experiences they provide. The secondary tourism appeal is the history and heritage of the area. The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor agrees with this assessment and believes that Oconee is perfectly positioned to brand itself as the premier outdoor destination for South Carolina.

Although these resources are present, Oconee is not sophisticated in terms of developed tourism facilities, amenities and services. If Oconee is going to promote itself as a premier outdoor destination, visitors will expect a higher standard for not only the outdoor experiences, but the support services provided by the communities in terms of accommodations, restaurants, shopping, and special events. There are a number of glaring issues that must be addressed if Oconee is to reach its tourism potential.

● **The Lack of Quality and Distinctive Accommodations:**

The type of visitor that will be targeted from the metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Charlotte, Greenville and Columbia are middle aged, affluent, well-educated and well-traveled. They will expect a variety of quality accommodations that range from a resort experience to charming bed and breakfasts and cabins with a rustic elegance design.

The county and cities should aggressively seek developers/operators to fill this gap. The same assistance and incentives offered to traditional industry should be offered to hotel/resort developers interested in investing in Oconee. This type of development is cleaner, has less of an impact on noise, roads and other infrastructure and encourages outside dollars into the county through sales and accommodations taxes.

● **Public Access to Natural Attractions:**

All agree that the natural resources of Oconee is the primary tourism “hook,” yet many of the most popular natural attractions lack adequate public access and visitor infrastructure. There are issues with signage, parking, footpath clearance, viewing obstructions and safety.

(In moving forward careful consideration should be placed into balancing the promotion of visitation to natural sites with ensuring that visitation does not destroy the very resources people seek to enjoy.)

One of the differentiating attractions of the Oconee outdoors experience is the number of waterfalls and scenic vistas in the county, yet access to these areas suffers from a number of issues.

- Poor directional signage – in many cases there are signs directing visitors to a waterfall or scenic vista, yet the signs fail to provide information on the length or difficulty of the hike to reach the destination. This can cause visitor confusion and an overall poor experience.
- Lack of adequate parking – parking at many of the most popular locations should be improved. Gravel parking lots are less expensive and more environmentally friendly than paved parking lots and should be considered. However, care should be taken to properly grade and drain gravel lots and ensure they are properly maintained. Litter should be regularly cleared from parking lots and scenic pull offs.
- Poor footpaths and viewing obstructions – to provide for a more safe and pleasurable experience, footpaths and viewing areas should be cleared of vegetation and debris. Also, when necessary, safety features such as railings and steps should be added.

Lake Access:

Access to Lakes Jocassee, Keowee and Hartwell are vitally important to the image of Oconee as an outdoor recreation destination. In order to ensure a great lake experience, an audit should be conducted by a team of stakeholders to include the following at a minimum:

1. A condition assessment of all roadways, paths, tracks and entrances to the lakes
2. An assessment of all access structures such as gates, ramps and piers
3. If signage is present, an assessment of its condition and purpose

At a minimum, site signage should:

- let visitors know they have arrived
 - give the visitor knowledge of what facilities are available on site
 - notify visitors of where to go and pertinent information such as what time the car park closes
 - let visitors know who manages the site and emergency contact information
4. An assessment of the accessibility and condition of any buildings and structures present
 5. An assessment of the availability of put-in and take-out points for canoes and kayaks

Information for visitors before they even arrive at the site is important, especially for first-time visitors who are not familiar with the lakes. Knowledge of accessibility into the site is very useful, including facility hours, number of parking spaces and the terrain of roadway. This is information that could potentially affect a visitor's travel plans and should be coordinated and available on the CVB, county and Duke Energy websites.



Create a "Buy Local" Campaign. There are many benefits for promoting locally owned businesses:

- One-of-a-kind businesses are an integral part of the distinctive character of any place. This is true not only for tourists, who seek out destinations that offer a sense of place, but also for locals. Where people shop, eat and gather together helps to build an active, vibrant community.
- Locally owned businesses generally are located in a downtown area which means contributing less to sprawl.
- Small local businesses are the largest employer nationally and provide valuable jobs to residents.
- Local businesses often hire people with a better understanding of the products they are selling and greater pride in their work, which leads to better customer service.
- Local businesses are owned by people who live in the community, are less likely to leave, and are more invested in the community's future.
- Local businesses in town centers require comparatively little infrastructure investment and make more efficient use of public services as compared to national, big-box stores.
- A growing body of economic research shows that in an increasingly homogenized world, entrepreneurs and skilled workers are more likely to invest and settle in communities that preserve their one-of-a-kind businesses and distinctive character.

The Westminster, Walhalla and Greater Oconee County Chamber should partner to create a Buy Local Campaign for Oconee. For the biggest impact, this should be coordinated as an "Oconee" campaign and not be segmented into the individual communities. A strong campaign will level the playing field by making "locally owned" a strong brand that can counter the advertising advantages the chains enjoy. **Lowcountry Local First** is a very successful organization in the SC Lowcountry that could serve as an excellent prototype moving forward.

The logo created complements the new county and city brands and should be utilized for all elements of the campaign including membership stickers, advertisements, social media, etc. See p.x for specific marketing strategies for a buy local program.



Create and Implement a local ambassador awards program:

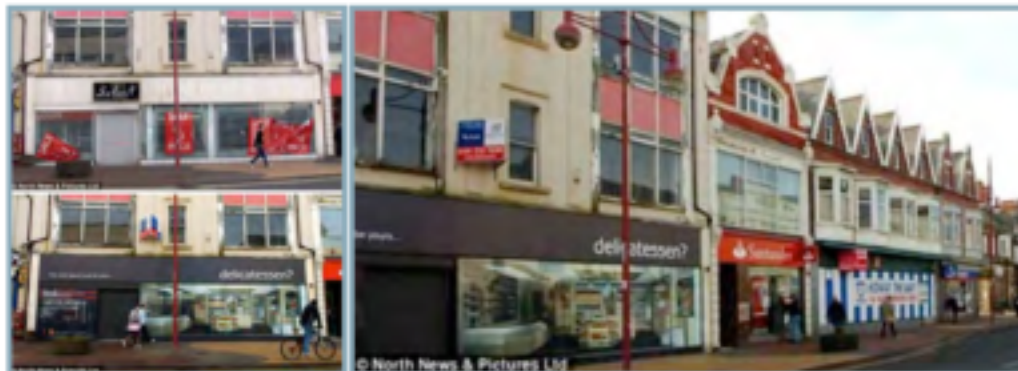
One of the most valuable assets of Oconee is its people. A county-wide ambassador awards program would recognize local individuals, businesses or organizations who have made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of Oconee County as a tourism destination and/or have provided a quality visitor experience. These ambassadors should also have a track record of demonstrating leadership, professionalism, integrity, and engagement in the tourism industry. A quarterly winner could be recognized via local print media and social media outlets. An additional option would be to solicit votes from the public to choose an overall annual winner from the quarterly winners to be recognized at an annual event, such as the State of Oconee Luncheon. This would not only provide well-deserved accolades for all who work in the local tourism industry, but it would also encourage engagement of residents through the voting process.



Downtown Building Recommendations

The Cities of Walhalla, Westminster and Seneca all struggle currently with empty store fronts. There are a number of creative ways to lessen the impact of vacant retail spaces in downtown that will not only assist with visual appeal, but can also assist with the rent or sale of the property. The cities should coordinate with property owners to organize programs similar to the ones below.

- **False Store Fronts:** A deserted shopping area can discourage other businesses from moving and can make the downtown area look blighted. Creating a fake business district through simple storefront images is a creative way to ease the effect of closed stores and can be utilized as an innovative method for recruiting potential business.



<http://bebarbaritz.com/2010/03/05/advertising-information-how-to-fake-a-business-district/>

- **Start-up Competitions:** The City of Anderson, through its Economic Development Division and with the participation of numerous local businesses, recently announced its first ever Accelerate Anderson Downtown Challenge. This is an entrepreneurial start up competition which takes place over a period of eight months and is for the purpose of generating additional retail occupancy in Downtown Anderson. It provides a means by which local, area, and regional entrepreneurs can advance their desire to expand or open a new business with an incentive package including \$12,000 and additional in-kind services to open a store in Downtown Anderson.



<http://www.cityofandersonsc.com/economic-development/accelerate-anderson-downtown-challenge.html>

- **Creative Business Recruitment:** Empty storefronts can be an opportunity and not a negative. Building owners should work with the city on a program to more creatively announce the availability of buildings. Large "Business Closed" or "For Sale" signs add little to the aesthetics of the downtown and certainly do not give the appearance of a vital downtown to potential business owners. Empty buildings are also great opportunities to recruit the types of businesses that fit the goals of your community. The City of Anderson, SC, innovatively works with owners to display "I wish I was a...." signs.



<http://www.cityofandersonsc.com/business/checklist.pdf>



Building owners should work with the city on a program to more creatively announce the availability of buildings. Large "Business Closed" or "For Sale" signs do little to add to the aesthetics of the downtown and certainly do not give the appearance of a vital downtown to potential business owners. The City of Anderson, SC, innovatively works with owners to display "I wish I was a...." signs.



WALHALLA

1 Capitalize on German Heritage. It is natural for Walhalla to build off of this heritage. Otherwise it would be equivalent to Cherokee, NC, failing to include Native American heritage in their brand. At a minimum the city should do the following:

- As one of few cities in the Southeast that can truly claim a strong German heritage, grow Oktoberfest to a weekend long festival. We recommend the traditional Walhalla Oktoberfest remain on Sertoma field and the festivities extend to Main Street for high-end vendors, beer, German music and food. This will help support downtown merchants and businesses, which should be a top priority. Overtime, the goal should be completely move the event to Main Street.
- For a community named “Garden of the Gods”, it is vitally important that the image fit the promotion. Main Street gateways and the downtown area should always have seasonal flowers and attractive landscaping. The city park should be a showpiece for the city. Right now the park is overgrown and not utilized effectively. If resources were placed into landscaping and upkeep, the park would be enjoyed more by residents and visitors alike.



The City of Greenwood trained their Public Works staff on proper landscaping techniques and the staff takes great pride in the benefit they are bringing to the community. This is a recent posting on the City social media page praising the Public Works staff.



The pond area of the Walhalla City Park is overgrown and not well kept. Signage is uninviting.



The “bones of a great park are present, but upkeep needs to become a priority. There is also ample space for an outdoor amphitheater which should be considered.

- Incorporate German Design elements into downtown architecture and design.



Small but subtle, architectural features add charm. This is a corner business in Highlands, NC, with unique architecture.



Quaint German touches, coupled with the new Rustic Elegance brand will add character to Main Street. Areas like this one, also in Highlands, NC, will encourage people to linger and enjoy the business district.

2 Take the success of Oktoberfest into the Spring with either a Maypole Festival (again highlighting the German heritage) or an International Festival highlighting German, Scots-Irish, African-American and Hispanic heritage. A permanent maypole could also be placed somewhere along Main Street as a centerpiece to be decorated with the seasons, but utilized for a maypole dance/festival to kick off the summer season.



A maypole in Brentwood, California

3 Open a German inspired "Beer Garden":



A "Beer Garden" on Main Street should be created for Oktoberfest and the Spring International Festival. However, a permanent "Beer Garden" would be ideal as a small business opportunity.



4 Create an "Antique District" along Main Street. The City should actively seek out high end antique dealers and existing businesses should be encouraged to move "trinket" items to the back of their stores and create attractive displays in store windows. Businesses along Main Street should be required to remove cluttered items from their lawns.

5 Encourage existing businesses to engage with and promote the new brand (Rustic Elegance) and the new Tagline (Main Street to the Mountains). The Chamber should encourage creative ways to help businesses speak to the customer/visitor through small scale Main Street events and joint social media campaigns.



Elements like this one at Carolina Pizza are charming and inviting.



1 Ram Cat Alley has been very successful for Seneca. Steps should be taken to move this success beyond Ram Cat into other areas of downtown. For this to happen there must be cooperation among the City, the merchants and the Chamber. It is recommended that the Chamber facilitate a meeting among the stakeholders to create a strategy for moving forward. An outside facilitator may be necessary for the meeting to be productive. The meeting should focus on implementing the elements of this plan and should be a 3 year strategy.

3 Create an Art and Culture District downtown. Seneca is blessed with a great art and culture community. From the Blue Ridge Arts Council to the Lunney Museum and events like Jazz on the Alley, Seneca should embrace and grow this element of their community.

2 Create and implement a downtown streetscape plan. Work has previously been done on Ram Cat and Main Street. The new plan should focus on Business 123/76, N. Fairplay, N. Townville, N. Walnut, N. Depot, and N. Cherry. The street audit listed in the Primary Recommendations will draw attention to needed sidewalk improvements, building facades and other issues that should be addressed in a future plan.

4 Seneca/Clemson Cooperative Agreement. Consider holding Jazz on the Alley (or create a different event) on Friday evenings during the fall in order to capitalize on the high volume of visitors to Clemson University. Partner with the local hotels in the surrounding area to offer free transportation to and from the event. Once these visitors have experienced Seneca, they will be more likely to tour/shop/dine here on a return visit.



https://clemsontransport.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/555260_37692991579677_1267928780_n.jpg

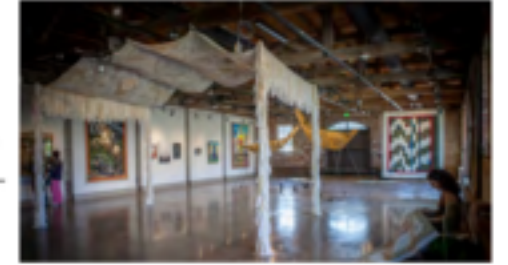
5 To enhance the newly created “Art and Culture District,” Seneca should hold an annual arts festival showcasing juried high-end mountain-made crafts, music and foodways.

EXAMPLES: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EVENTS

Artisphere (Greenville, SC)
 Population: 61,397 in 2013
 Economic Impact: \$5.5 million
 Event attendance: 95,000 over 3 days



Artfields (Lake City, SC)
 Population: 6,724 in 2013
 Economic Impact: \$5.3 million
 Event attendance: 22,000 over 10 days



Carmel, Indiana is a perfect example of what an Art and Culture District designation can for for a small town
 (www.carmelartanddesign.com/home)

WESTMINSTER



- 1 Main Street.** Westminster's Main Street is very quaint and charming, newly installed signage, landscaping and building facades add to this character. However, Windsor Street, the backside of Main, is in need of improvements. This is critically important for Westminster due to the confusing traffic patterns that guide most people along Windsor instead of Main.



Front of Main Street



Back of Main Street

- 2 Visitor Services.** Westminster is the main thoroughfare for travelers seeking high adventure (rafting, zip-lining, etc.) and agricultural experiences (Chatooga Belle Farm and apple picking) found in Long Creek. The City and the Chamber should partner with these attractions to promote services, special events and seasonal experiences through visitor information kiosks and/or outdoor displays along Main Street. This will support the "Small Town, Big Adventure" theme for the City. A long-term goal would be to establish a presence for travel assistance on Main Street, such as within a Market Village (see #5).

EXAMPLES: EXTERIOR INTERPRETATION



Area map in downtown Highlands, NC



Informational panels and a stand-alone kiosk in a downtown area of Naperville, Illinois.
Source: Photo via www.dombocapital.com by SAA Design Group and Fabricated by Globe Signs & Graphics, Inc.

3 Market & Music. Because of the agritourism opportunities in and around Westminster, a large scale farmer's market should be built along or near Main Street. The market should hold a regular event, such as "Market and Music" on the same night as the Music Hall performances and feature food and craft vendors, music, cooking competitions and tastings featuring local farms and wineries. These events have the potential to be larger scale and seasonally themed, and would need to be coordinated around other local events (such as Seneca's Jazz on the Alley) to complement the offerings to visitors.

EXAMPLE: ANDERSON AREA FOOD & FARM ASSOCIATION



Val from Friends Farm is able to connect with customers at the farmers market. *Photo Courtesy of the Anderson Area Farm & Food Association.*



The Carl Neil Duo offers up local entertainment at a farmers market event. *Photo Courtesy of the Anderson Area Farm & Food Association.*



An entry to the Chef's Cookoff at a farmers market event. *Photo Courtesy of the Anderson Area Farm & Food Association.*

4 Stay & Play. The charm of Westminster and its close proximity to mountain adventure makes it an excellent location for a boutique hotel or Bed & Breakfast community. Establishing "Stay and Play" adventure packages with outfitters that would include charming accommodations, transportation to and from the adventure, and wine and cheese service in the afternoon, topped off with the evening "Market and Music" event would be an offering unique to the region.

5 Market Village. With many storefronts on Main Street being privately owned and inaccessible to community efforts, a unique alternative would be to create a Market Village. These quaint and inexpensive villages act as a platform for showcasing local products and culture. It also provides a low threshold financially and therefore encourages local entrepreneurs to create "mom and pop" establishments that would build charm and character in downtown Westminster.

EXAMPLE: TIONESTA MARKET VILLAGE



Tionesta was a bustling small town in 1800s Pennsylvania. Gradually, the wears of time and a devastating fire caused a need for rejuvenation. Tionesta is in close proximity to outdoor recreation opportunities, but the population (just over 470 in 2013) and the lack of foot traffic did not attract developers for their main street. A partnership of concerned citizens and the Forest County Industrial Development Corporation resulted in the creation of the Tionesta Market Village, which now boasts 11 storefronts and has become a destination for both tourist and residents alike. Rent for the shops range from \$50-\$70 per month, depending on the chosen model and are responsible for electrical costs. Tenants have also created their own merchants association to set collective hours and marketing strategies. The Market Village now enjoys an attendance from 300 on a slow weekend to up to 1,000 on a busy one. The new interest has inspired nearby properties to make their own improvements, and the rate of new businesses is increasing.

Source: Tionesta Market Village www.tionestamarketvillage.com Article: www.keystoneedge.com/features/pawildsTionesta082814.aspx

A scenic landscape of a lake at sunset. The sky is filled with large, colorful clouds in shades of blue, purple, and orange. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water. In the foreground, there are large, smooth rocks and several trees with green foliage. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

5

guidelines
FOR GROWING OCONEE COUNTY



Oconee County is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, historic landmarks, quaint downtowns and cultural diversity. These are all “must haves” for building a sustainable tourism industry. Yet, without proper planning and careful consideration for managing growth, the very essence of what makes Oconee special will be lost. The lack of design guidelines and growth management are already present throughout the county in the proliferation of signage, traffic congestion, poor building and parking lot design, and destruction of the view shed along the Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Byway.

To truly engage and solidify the *Appalachian Rustic Elegance* brand for the county, these guidelines will provide direction for builders, developers, homeowners and City/County government to invest and build in a manner that contributes to the overall success of the brand. These guidelines offer resources to ensure that open space, agricultural lands and natural sites maintain their integrity and that historic structures and downtowns can best express the true character and personality of Oconee.

By following these guidelines and utilizing the resources and tools presented, Oconee County and its municipalities can grow in a manner that enhances, not erodes, its charm. Future development, as well as the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures should be harmonious and create the sense of place that attracts residents, businesses and visitors.

Downtowns are the economic engines for thriving communities. People want to live, work and play, not just any place, but some place special. The most successful downtowns include a mixture of shops, restaurants, public greenspace, nearby homes and civic structures that each work in unison together to create that sense of place. Future investment is drawn to communities that invest in themselves. Good growth does not happen by accident, and not all growth is good. It takes thoughtful consideration, careful planning, and ultimately, action.

These guidelines are provided as a framework for moving Oconee forward. It will require the county and cities to work in collaboration to build the “Appalachian Rustic Elegance” brand throughout the county and action will be required for these guidelines to be meaningful. It is recommended that the County Planning Department facilitate coordination with the cities to review and strategically consider which of the presented techniques best fit the future goals of Oconee. The result should be a Three Year Action Plan implementing practices that will provide continuity of the “Rustic Elegance” brand across county and city boundaries, ultimately creating a strong sense of place and distinct destination.

These guidelines are presented in five sections and speak to the processes of Smart Growth, which is defined in more detail on the following page:



**Growth Management
Techniques for Land**



**Revitalization
Techniques for
Downtown**



**Techniques for
Incentivizing
Future Growth**



**Techniques for
Improving
Signage**



**Sample
Ordinances for**

- Scenic Byway Overlay
- Downtown District Overlay
- Signage Ordinance
- Cell Tower Ordinance
- Design Review Committee

SMART GROWTH

Smart Growth: is a term for policies that integrate land use and transportation decisions into one plan. The less “technical” view of smart growth is that growth is smart when it gives us great communities – communities that are attractive, safe, convenient and healthy.

There are ten standards principals of this technique:

1. **Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place:** Smart growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation.
2. **Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices:** No single type of housing can serve the varied needs of today’s diverse households. Smart growth encourages local communities to increase housing choice by modifying land-use patterns and increasing housing supply in existing neighborhoods.
3. **Create Walkable Neighborhoods:** Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore a key component of smart growth.
4. **Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration:** Involving the community in the creation of growth plans builds greater vision and consensus.
5. **Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective:** Communities should provide leadership that encourages private investment by making smart growth more timely, cost-effective, and predictable for developers.
6. **Mix Land Uses:** Placing residential, commercial and recreational uses in close proximity to one another, walking or biking become viable methods of transportation which eases traffic congestion and parking issues in downtown areas.
7. **Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas:** Land preservation protects animal and plant habitats, places of natural beauty, and working lands by removing development pressure and directing new growth to existing communities.
8. **Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices:** Multi-modal options ensure connectivity between pedestrian, bike, transit, and road facilities which eases a variety of issues related to traffic congestion, parking, and road maintenance.
9. **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities:** Encouraging development in existing communities creates a stronger tax base in downtowns, provides connectivity to jobs and services, increases the usage of already developed land and infrastructure, which in turn conserves open space and irreplaceable natural and rural areas outside of downtowns..
10. **Take Advantage of Compact Building Design:** Smart growth provides a means for communities to incorporate more compact building design as an alternative to conventional land consumptive development.

The below images showcase how Beaufort, South Carolina, incorporated Smart Growth practices into the plans for their downtown over a period of years by enacting the principal of Compact Building Design.



Beaufort, SC 2006



Beaufort, SC 2009



Beaufort, SC 2011



Beaufort, SC 2015

GROWTH MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR LAND:

Community Development Code: allows units of local government to upgrade their development laws to remove barriers, create incentives and fill regulatory gaps based on a core set of sustainability objectives. Unlike traditional zoning, community development code is contextual and place-based, enabling communities to customize their land use and development rules according to their own particular political, economic and environmental circumstances.

Example:



Beaufort County Eliminates PUD's in Favor of Walkable Neighborhoods!

After several years of analysis and discussion, the Beaufort County, SC, Council voted 9 to 1 to adopt the Community Development Code, a comprehensive overhaul of the county’s zoning code. The CDC is a hybrid code, incorporating new zoning regulations for both walkable urban and drivable suburban areas. The Code will encourage pedestrian-friendly mixed-use neighborhoods in urban areas, preserve the natural environment in rural areas, and simplify and expedite the development and approval process for new projects.

Beaufort County followed the Town of Port Royal to become the second of three local jurisdictions to adopt a shared, Form-Based Coding platform. Opticos was commissioned in 2010 to create a multi-jurisdictional Form-Based Code that Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal could share in order to better coordinate growth between the three jurisdictions, help channel future growth toward existing urban areas, and protect the county’s rural character. Opticos worked closely with all three communities to create a shared framework of Transect zones and related standards that could be adapted to the needs of each community.

County Planning Director Anthony Criscitiello said that the City spent a tremendous amount of time going over each line in the code with a special committee composed of four planning commissioners and four county council members. “We also tested the code with actual projects on the ground and then applied the code to see how it compared to the old ZDSO. From that effort we found tweaks to the code that we incorporated into the final draft,” he added.

The code is holistic in that it provides standards for public realm components, such as streets and civic spaces as well as regulations for private development, and includes a special article to regulate complete, pedestrian-friendly communities. The adoption of these new tools has led the County to consider eliminating planned unit developments (PUDs) in favor of walkable neighborhoods.

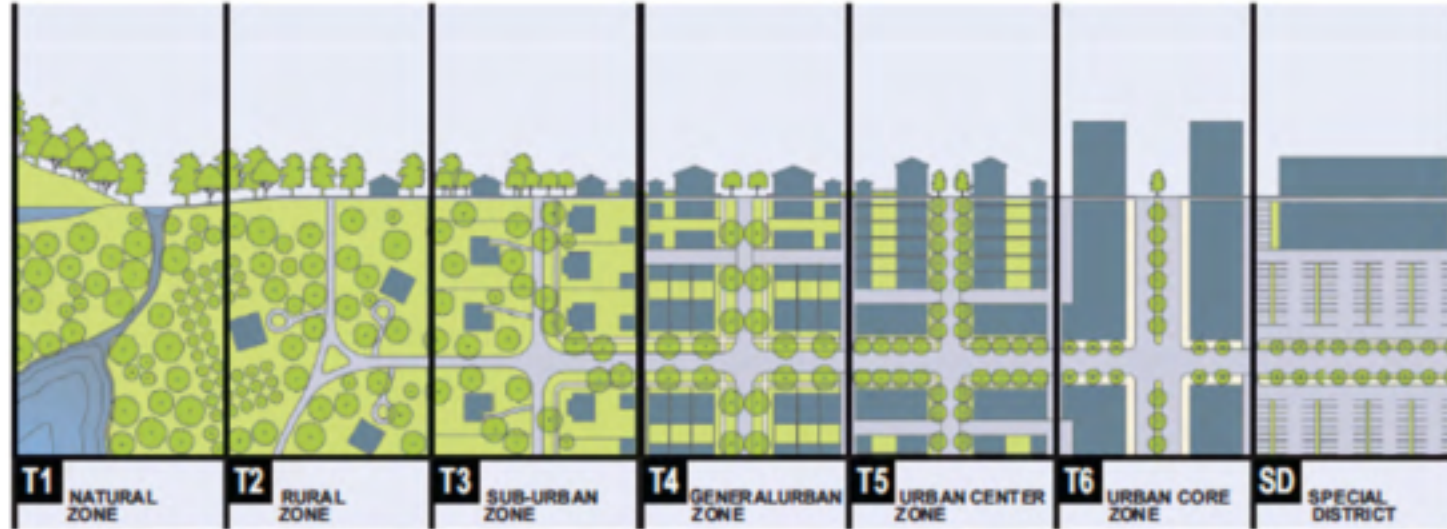
For the past 20 years, developers have often used PUD agreements to negotiate the look and density of certain projects with county staff, rather than following the county’s outdated zoning rules; nearly all of the county’s gated communities and many commercial developments were built as a result of such agreements, exacerbating auto-oriented sprawl.

As part of the approved ordinance, the council agreed to eliminate PUDs. The code will be reviewed after six months and a year to decide whether or not to consider bringing back what the County perceives as an outdated and unnecessary tool.

“They are not included in the new code because we wanted to see how the code will work without them,” said Criscitiello.

“This is a living work that will govern our county hopefully for the next several years,” said Councilman Brian Flewelling, chairman of the city council’s natural resources committee. “We will be changing this and molding it and shaping it so we can better guide our county in the planning process.”

- **Land Use Planning:** identifies allowable uses of land and defines proactive management actions that give priority to the designation and protection of areas of environmental concern, considers present and potential uses of land and weighs long term benefits to the public against short-term benefits.



http://40.media.tumblr.com/0a29b6d895ca3389b8a997583707425/tumblr_mfo5N9GivK7cx9dswel_1280.jpg

- **Zoning:** is a growth management technique of land-use planning used by units of local government. The practice harmonizes the number of people living and working in a smaller area allowing governmental services to be delivered more efficiently.

- **Overlay:** is generally used when a particular area requires special protection (as in a historic preservation district or National Scenic Byway) or has a special problem (such as steep slopes, flooding or earthquake faults). This approach is used to establish alternative land development requirements and is usually in addition to already established regulations within a County. Overlay Districts are independent and do not need a base ordinance. It is recommended that Oconee County give serious consideration to a Scenic Overlay along the National, State and Scenic Byways throughout the county (See Appendix D p. 207; Appendix D p. 266).

- **Conservation Subdivisions:** gives flexibility to tailor development to the land and the community's natural and cultural features. In general, conservation subdivisions require 50% of the total acreage, including developable and undevelopable land, to be designated as open space for natural habitat, active or passive recreation, and/or conservation or preservation, including conservation for agricultural and forestry uses.



Landchoices, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving farm lands and natural areas, outlines the advantages to communities of enacting Conservation Subdivisions:

- Conservation subdivisions preserve *50% to 70% or more of the buildable land
- Conservation subdivisions preserve a much higher quality and percentage of land than “clustering”
- Protects clean water in lakes and rivers by eliminating or reducing storm water runoff and pollution
- Conserves groundwater and reduces flooding: Natural areas infiltrate water
- Clean air: Most trees and vegetation are left intact, helping combat climate change
- Creates community-wide interconnected network of protected meadows, fields and woodlands
- Saves money: Preserves land at no cost to your community
- Same number of home sites as conventional subdivision development
- Fair to developers and landowners: Proven more profitable, faster selling and less costly
- Beneficial to homeowners: Higher home appreciation rates
- Trails through natural lands: Children and adults exercise, improve health and connect with nature

Conservation Subdivision with trails, greenspace, and natural barriers from the highway.



<http://www.Landchoices.org/conservationadv.htm>

- **Cluster Development:** represented specifically in Conservation Subdivisions is a design technique or zoning strategy that involves grouping development (houses, businesses or industrial sites) in a condensed area while preserving the remaining land on the site for recreation, common open/green space, or protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Linking the open space of several cluster developments can also help spur “environmental corridors” within and between communities. Both developers and developed areas benefit since designs usually reduce the costs of site development and increase market price while reinforcing the local rural character.

- **Large-Lot Zoning:** limits the number of houses that can be built in rural areas, and aims to preserve open space and keep rural land viable for agriculture or forestry. Among its benefits, large lot zoning can leave wooded landscapes relatively intact and protect water quality, depending on how developments are sited and designed. However, with definitions of “large lots” ranging from 5 to 25 acres, large lot zoning can also result in a waste of rural land for tracts that are “too large to mow and too small to farm.” Some counties use variations of large-lot zoning in an effort to alleviate this negative effect. For instance, some counties allow landowners to create a limited number of small lots from a tract of land, after which only large lots can be created.



- **Sliding Scale Zoning:** helps to keep large parcels of land intact by allowing fewer building rights per acre for large tracts of land than for smaller tracts. For example, a parcel containing between 40 and 80 acres is allowed three houses while a parcel containing over 1,030 acres, no matter how large, can have only 15 houses. The theory is that the larger the parcel, the more of an agricultural resource it represents and thus the potential for non-agricultural use should be more limited.

- **Green Space/Open Space:** is any open piece of land that is undeveloped and is accessible to the public. This valuable land provides recreational areas for residents and helps to enhance the beauty, environmental and economic quality of neighborhoods. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), open space can include:

- Green space (land that is partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation). Green space includes parks, community gardens, and cemeteries.
- Schoolyards
- Playgrounds
- Public seating areas
- Public plazas
- Vacant lots

- **Setback:** is a minimum distance required to be maintained between two structures or between a structure and property lines or roads, rivers, or any other place which is deemed to need protection or accessibility. These are ordinances that outline where construction or modifications can occur. They are used to keep landowners from crowding neighboring properties, and they provide common areas where pipes may reside below the ground.

- **Buffer:** is an area of land separating two distinct land uses that acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other. For example, a screen of planting or fencing could be used to shield surrounding spaces from noise or visual aspects of an industrial zone or junkyard.



- Green Industrial Parks:** sometimes referred to as Eco-Industrial Parks (EIP), Green Industrial Parks are a community of manufacturing and service businesses located together on a common property where the businesses seek enhanced environmental, economic, and social performance by collaboratively managing environmental issues.



<http://www.ahangar.com.net/en/>

- Rural Preservation:** reflects the general rural character of Oconee County. Residential densities should be low, not surpassing one dwelling unit per 10 acres of land. A variety of rural uses should be permitted, including less intensive agricultural forms. This segment of County should serve as a buffer between areas planned for intensive agriculture and other land use categories. Residential development should be restricted to conservation subdivisions in areas with this designation.

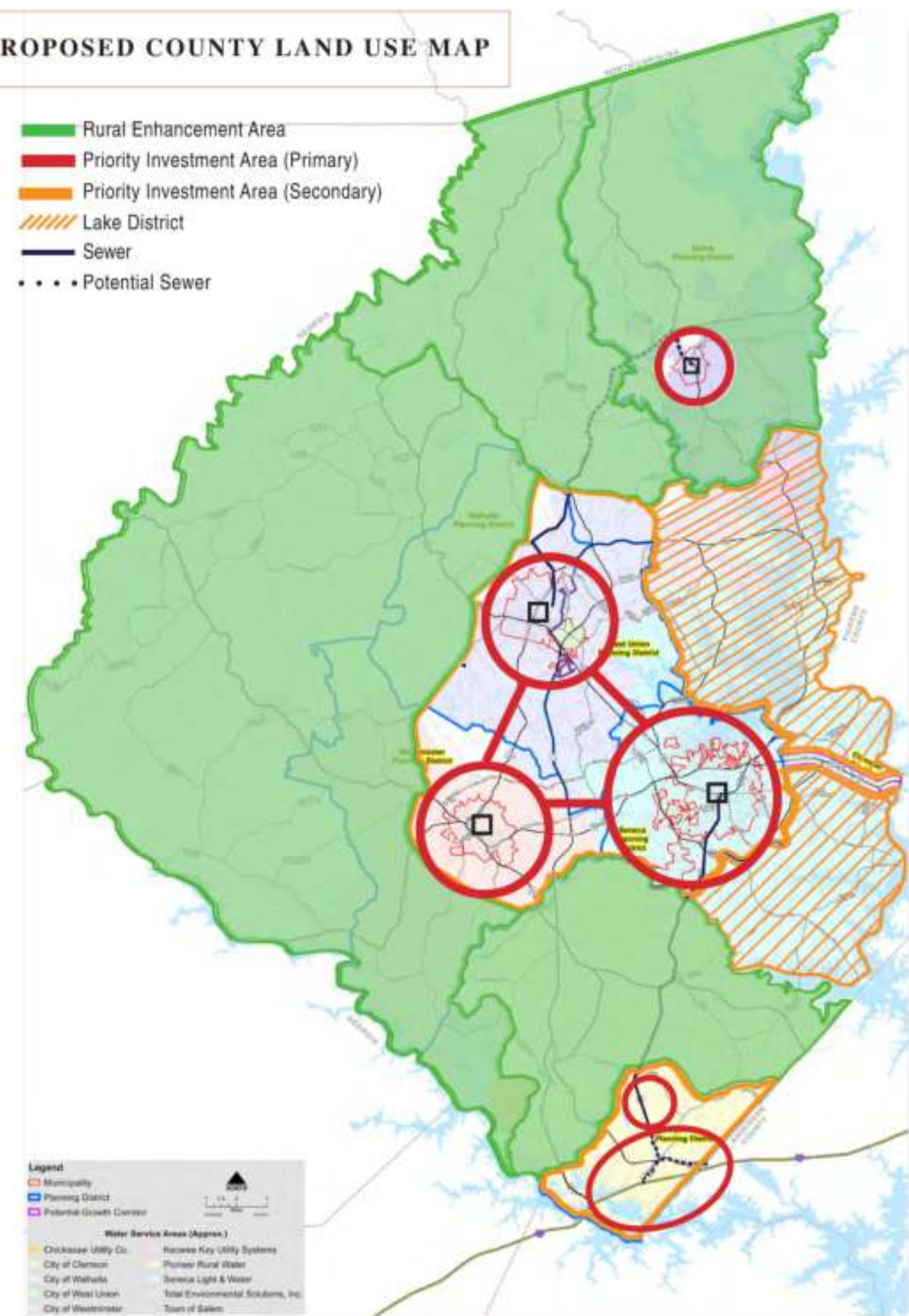
- Natural & Agricultural Preservation (NAP):** is a designation intended to encourage economic development while preserving natural and agricultural land for the viability of the County. These regions promote orderly and responsible growth for, and surrounding areas of, natural and agricultural spaces. Residential densities should be low and generally not exceed one dwelling unit per 25 acres of land. Land use regulations should protect and give preference to agricultural and forestry uses over other uses and support citizens of the County working and maintaining and attracting visitors to these spaces.

- Priority Investment Area (Primary):** include properties that have already been developed or have the potential for “infill” development. These are areas that are already served by centralized water and sewer or could be provided with water and sewer easily and for modest cost.

- Priority Investment Area (Secondary):** include properties to which urban services could be extended within the next twenty years, but with greater difficulty and at a greater cost than for properties in the Priority Investment Area. As development in these areas occurs, a pattern known as Neighborhood and Village Communities should take precedent. This scenario allows for land areas most suited for development to receive more intensive, neighborhood type development, while surrounding, less suitable land areas remain in parks, greenways or other permanent open space. Secondary Investment Areas should be applied to areas of Oconee County, both incorporated and unincorporated, that could expect to be served by the water and sewer services in the foreseeable future.

PROPOSED COUNTY LAND USE MAP

- Rural Enhancement Area
- Priority Investment Area (Primary)
- Priority Investment Area (Secondary)
- ▨ Lake District
- Sewer
- Potential Sewer



Legend

- Municipality
- Planning District
- Potential Growth Corridor

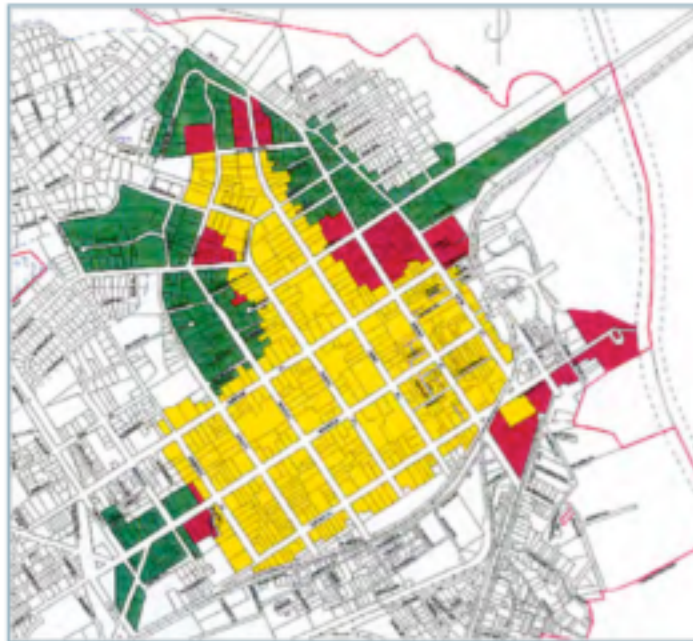
Water Service Areas (Approx.)

■ Chickasaw Utility Co.	■ Hance Key Utility Systems
■ City of Claxson	■ Pioneer Rural Water
■ City of Waffala	■ Service Light & Water
■ City of West Union	■ Total Environmental Solutions, Inc.
■ City of Westminster	■ Town of Salem



REVITALIZATION TECHNIQUES FOR DOWNTOWNS:

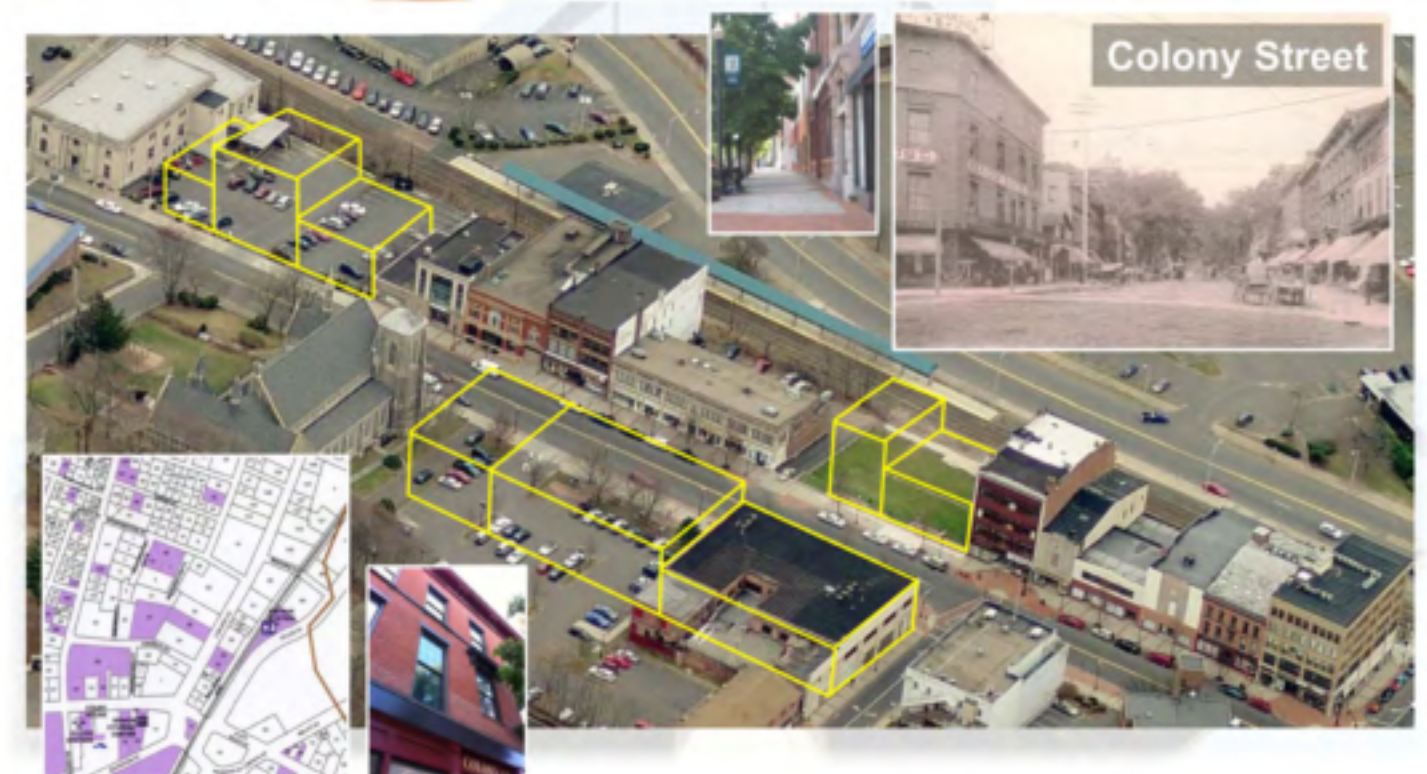
- Overlay:** is generally used when a particular area requires special protection (as in an historic preservation district or National Scenic Byway) or has a special problem (such as steep slopes, flooding or earthquake faults). This approach is used to establish alternative land development requirements and is usually in addition to already established regulations within a County. Overlay Districts are independent and do not need a base ordinance. It is recommended that Walhalla, Westminster and Seneca give serious consideration to a Downtown District Overlay (See Appendix D p. 207; Appendix D p. 266).



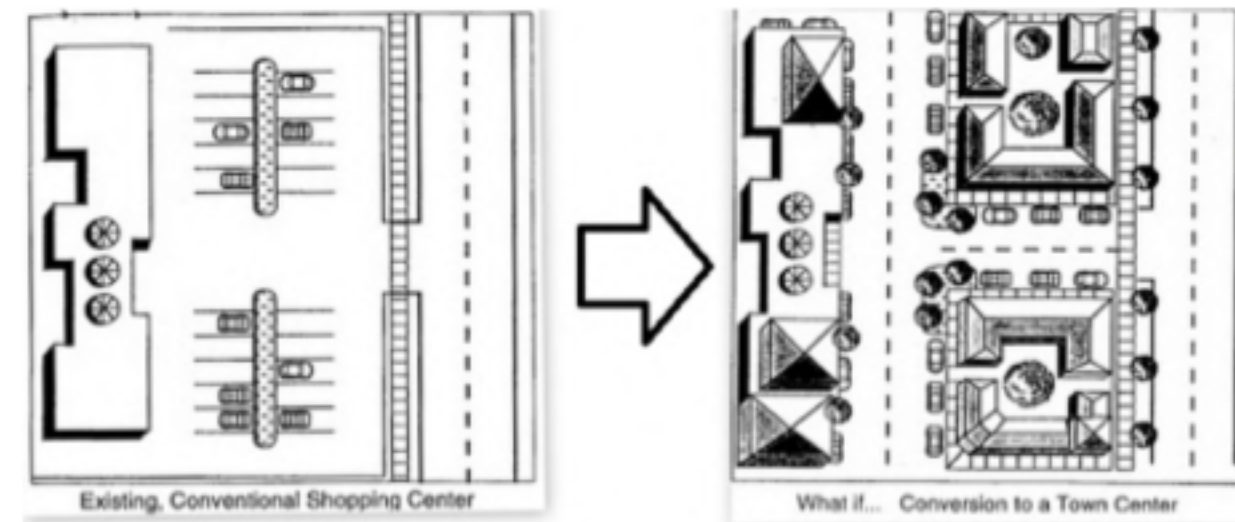
City of Cheraw, SC - District Overlay Map
<http://skpa.sc.gov/programs/locgov/Pages/PresOrd.aspx>

- Density:** from the American Planning Association (APA), in the context of planning, is the amount of development within a given area. As part of a long-range planning process, stakeholders often discuss the most desirable densities for different areas of their communities. Density can be divided into two categories: people density and building density. People density is expressed as the number of people or household per given area, while building density is defined as the ratio of building structures to an area unit.

- Infill:** is the new development of vacant, abandoned or underutilized land within a previously developed area of the community where infrastructure is already in place. This also includes the construction of a new building on vacant ground in a developed area. It is recommended that vacant and underutilized properties in the Priority Investment Areas be eligible for infill with any new development, adaptive reuse or redevelopment opportunities. The ideal situation for downtown areas is to fill empty buildings and vacant lots, creating a mass of businesses, residences and public spaces. However, infill should be sensitive to the character of the downtown and keep with the *Appalachian Rustic Design* theme.



Colony Street, Meridan, CT - Infill Development
<http://formandplace.com/visioning/>



Form Based Code: focuses on elements of structure, not what it is used for. This approach typically looks at two or three stories in height, appealing to the human scale which in turn creates unique places for community gatherings while promoting non-motorized modes of transportation. If traditional zoning segregates uses, forcing inhabitants to rely on cars or buses to get to their destination, Form Based Code creates a sense of place through mixed use design while establishing an accessible and sustainable living environment.



Click the icon to the left to view video definition of Form Based Code



CONVENTIONAL ZONING

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified

formbasedcodes.org/definition



ZONING DESIGN GUIDELINES

Conventional zoning requirements, plus frequency of openings and surface articulation specified.



FORM-BASED CODES

Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to-lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified.

Mixed Use: requires three elements according to the Urban Land Institute: 1) three or more significant revenue producing uses 2) significant functional and physical integration 3) conformance to a coherent plan. Technically, if someone builds a building in an urban neighborhood with retail on the ground floor and apartments above, it would be called mixed use. The term however depends on scale and should be considered the practice of allowing more than one type of use in a building or set of buildings.



- **Facade Grant Program:** Grants can be provided to property owners or tenants to improve the exterior appearance and functionality of the facades of buildings. Grants may require a minimum of a 50% match by the property owners.
- **Sign Grant Program:** A grant to provide business signage on the exterior of buildings. All signs must be approved by the Design Review Board and be compatible with the historic character of the overlay district. Businesses may or may not be required to provide a match.



www.trail.ca/en/work/downloads-revitalization.asp



sarasotate.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/sarasotate-lp-village.jpg



www.makingtheforhealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/DSC08925.jpg



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Design Assistance Grant: Grants may be provided for architectural work required to create scope of work or design services for building facades. A match may or may not be required.

Interior Renovation Grant: Provides a 50/50 match grant with a maximum grant amount of \$3500 to any owner of a building located within the Central Business District, who intends to retain ownership or occupancy for a significant length of time and at least two years have elapsed since a grant of this kind was awarded or circumstances have changed to such a degree regarding the ownership, use of the structure, damages related to accidents, or other situations that the board may seem appropriate to consider.



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 Right: assets.tumblr.com/top-content/blogs/01/01/01/2013/02/Alpine-Room-7-117x117.jpg

Downtown Residential Incentive Fund (DRIF): the purpose of the program is to provide a catalyst for new and accelerated residential development in the downtown area by providing a loan guarantee that would become a grant if used to cover the construction interest (only) for new downtown dwelling units, after completion (after Certificate of Occupancy) until the time of sale or lease, up to one-year. Projects would qualify for grants up to \$5,000 per unit or 4% of the construction loan, times the number of units in the development. The initial program suggested should be funded at \$40,000.



Left: www.historicdowntownmonroe.org/incentive-programs.php?cat=27
 Right: http://img14.mlive.com/home/active-media/width/660/img/01/01/01/2013/02/Alpine-Room-7-117x117.jpg

Low Interest Loan Pool Program: Low interest loans are available for property purchase or building renovations. The program is in partnership with local financial institutions and borrowers must meet the loan credit and underwriting requirements of the participating bank. Traditionally, 40% of the loan will be at a fixed 2% per annum rate with 15 year amortization, 50% shall be at 1% under prime with a floor of 4%. The remaining 10% will be the required equity by the borrower. The terms of this program are subject to change.

Micro-Enterprise Loan Program (MELP): A micro-loan program providing loans up to \$15,000. The loan can be used for building renovation or for operational purposes.

USDA Loan Programs: USDA Rural Development has several different low interest loan programs available.



USDA programs include:

- Business & Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Programs
- Rural Economic Development Loan Program (REDL)

Appalachian Development Corporation: provides access to funding through:

- Regional Loan Funds
- Are certified lenders of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) monies
- Small Business Association (SBA) dollars

Community Works Carolina: maintains similar capabilities as a certified lender for micro loans through USDA and SBA.



Private Banking: National and local financial institutions also provide small business assistance programs.

Federal & State Historic Preservation Tax Credits: The National Park Service in cooperation with the IRS provides financial incentives in the form of tax credits for the renovation of qualifying historic properties. A Federal income tax credit equal to 20% of rehabilitation costs and a SC State tax credit equal to 10% of the rehabilitation costs is available for work on qualifying buildings. In general, each dollar of tax credit earned reduces the amount of federal and state income taxes owed by the investor by one dollar. The City will work with property owners and developers in assessing if tax credits are appropriate for their project and assist them in working with qualified architects and tax credit consultants.



Goldsboro, North Carolina - Preservation Tax Credit

The Landry Block (1879) on Railroad Street in St. Johnsbury, Vermont was saved and rehabilitated with the aid of federal and state rehabilitation tax credits.

SC Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act: The General Assembly passed legislation at the end of the 2013 session that gives cities a new economic development tool that incentivizes private investment in downtowns for the “rehabilitation, renovation and redevelopment” of empty storefronts. Abandoned buildings are routinely safety hazards that cost cities and towns precious resources by using additional fire and police services, while decreasing area property values.

Definition of an abandoned building:

- At least 66 percent vacant for the past five years
- Nonoperational for income-producing purposes
- May not be a single-family residence
- A building listed on the National Register for Historic Places when used solely for storage or warehousing
- Investor using the tax credit may not be the owner at the time of the abandonment
- Investment threshold to use tax credit
- More than \$250,000 investment within jurisdictions (cities or counties) with a population over 25,000

Type of Tax Credit Available: Income tax credit - Investor files Notice of Intent to Rehabilitate with the Department of Revenue. The credit equals 25 percent of actual expenses but the credit may not exceed \$500,000. The credit must be taken over five years beginning with the tax year the building is placed into service after rehabilitation.

Bailey Bill: The SC Legislature permits local entities to assess qualifying historic buildings on the pre-rehabilitation fair market value for the length of the special assessment. The period can be up to 20 years and the length of time is set by the local government. If the downtown district is a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, the use of the incentive will not typically apply and when utilized must receive the approval of both the City and County Councils. The Bailey Bill incentive may be considered for any eligible historic property.

Federal Income Tax Incentives for Easement Donations: Rehabilitation work is not required for this incentive. The incentive is based on the charitable contribution of a partial interest in a historic property (i.e. easement) to a government or nonprofit organization. When donors donate partial interests—or easements—on historic buildings, they pledge to preserve significant historic features and agree to obtain the easement holder’s consent before making alterations.



Business License Credit: Businesses locating Downtown could receive a credit towards their first year business license fees. If their first year liability is less than the credit provided, any remaining credit balance could be carried forward to the second year.

Business License Exemption for Property Management Firms: Lessors of nonresidential buildings, apartment buildings, dwellings other than apartment buildings, and real estate not otherwise classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) are specifically excluded from the Business License Ordinance requirement for obtaining and paying a fee for an annual business license.

- **Waiving of all Commercial Municipal Solid Waste Charges:** For five years from the date of the certificate of occupancy for the new or renovated building, the City could waive all commercial municipal solid waste charges for services.

- **Utility Incentives:** The following utility incentives could be made available to projects involving the renovation of a historic structure where the renovation investment is equal to, or greater than, 30% of the value of the renovated building. An example of incentives for those qualifying projects could include:

- **Reduction in initial water and sewer connection fees:** The City could provide a 50% reduction in initial water and sewer connection fees (physical tap and unit contributory loading fees).
- **Reimbursement for costs to connect building to the City's water, sanitary sewer or storm sewer system:** This incentive could provide a direct reimbursement for actual construction costs (not connection fees discussed above) necessary to connect the new or renovated building to the City's water, sanitary sewer or storm sewer system, not to exceed \$25,000. Reimbursement would be available to the developer when the certificate of occupancy is issued.
- **Note:** Except for sanitation fees, no other monthly fees (water, sewer or storm drainage) should be waived or discounted.

- **Purchase of Development Rights Program:** Localities can proactively support land conservation by establishing a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. Publicly supported PDR programs pay landowners (usually working farmers) to limit the development potential of their land through a conservation easement. Many farmers depend on the occasional sale of house lots--or the eventual sale of the entire farm--to supplement their incomes. PDR programs create a conservation option, allowing farmers to bring in needed income while keeping their land. Since state and other matching funds are available to leverage local investment and since conserving rural land prevents development-related expenses such as new schools and roads, these programs can save localities more than they cost. See Lexington, KY Case Study p. 190.



Left: Nine Times Forest, Upstate SC
Right: Ramsey Farm, Upstate SC
www.ocneeforever.org

- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):** is a way of controlling land use to complement zoning and strategic planning for more effective urban growth management and land conservation. It offers landowners financial incentives or bonuses for the conservation and maintenance of the environmental, heritage or agricultural values of their land. TDR is based on the concept that with land ownership comes the right of use of land, or development. These land-based development rights can in some jurisdictions be used, unused, transferred or sold by the owner of a parcel. TDR is also known as transfer of development credits (TDC) and transferable development units (TDU). See Lexington, KY Case Study p. 190.



- **Conservation Agreements:** will help a landowner protect his or her land forever by donating a conservation agreement. A Conservation Agreement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a government agency or a non-profit organization that places permanent limits on the future development of the property in order to protect its conservation values. Each easement is unique, depending on the needs of the landowners and the specific features of the property. Because conservation easements provide considerable public benefits, landowners become eligible for state and federal tax incentives when they donate an easement.

- **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program:** The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide matching funds to help purchase agricultural conservation easements on productive farm and ranch lands.



Click the icon to the left to download the full presentation.

Agricultural and Forestal Districts: An Agricultural and Forestal district results from a voluntary agreement between one or more landowners and the local governing body to temporarily protect forests and farmland. Landowners agree not to develop their property for a certain period of time, usually eight years. During this period of time, the property will be eligible for land use taxation, if it is not already eligible.

Land Use Taxation: Under land-use taxation, some rural properties are taxed at their land use value instead of their fair market value. This two tier system makes sense for farmers and other rural landowners, since they make few demands for tax-funded services. It also makes sense for all taxpayers, because if high taxes pressure the people who work the land to sell off lots or develop their property, everyone will have to pay more. This is because, on average, residential properties cost localities more than they pay in taxes, while farms, forests, and open space cost less than they pay in taxes.

The state allows localities to offer land use taxation for eligible properties in any of the following categories: agricultural, forest, horticultural and/or open space. It is important to note that even on properties eligible for land use taxation, houses, farm buildings and other structures are always taxed at their fair market value. When the land changes to a use no longer qualifying for land use assessment, the landowner must pay back the difference between use value tax and the fair market value tax for a certain number of years, depending on the locality.



From gateway entry points to directional signage and interpretative panels, signs are one of the principal methods to welcome, advise, direct and educate travelers in your community. Signage is important not only for conveying information, but also for representing your community. More practically, a well-organized sign system helps create a more pleasurable traveling experience. Designing and implementing a sign system specifically for individual communities and effecting changes to signs that are already in place is an extensive and complex project. Its complexity however, is matched by its importance to the success of becoming a viable tourism community. For a sample signage ordinance for Oconee County, Walhalla, Westminster and Seneca, see Appendix D p. 223.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SIGNAGE

Current County Gateway Signage:

Gateway signage across Oconee County is inconsistent. Some signs are vandalized, inappropriately placed, sorely out of context, have been destroyed by automobile accident or are all together missing.



These gateway signs let travelers know they have arrived in Oconee County, but they do not speak with the "Appalachian Rustic Elegance" brand, nor are they visually appealing.

Current Municipality Gateway Signage:

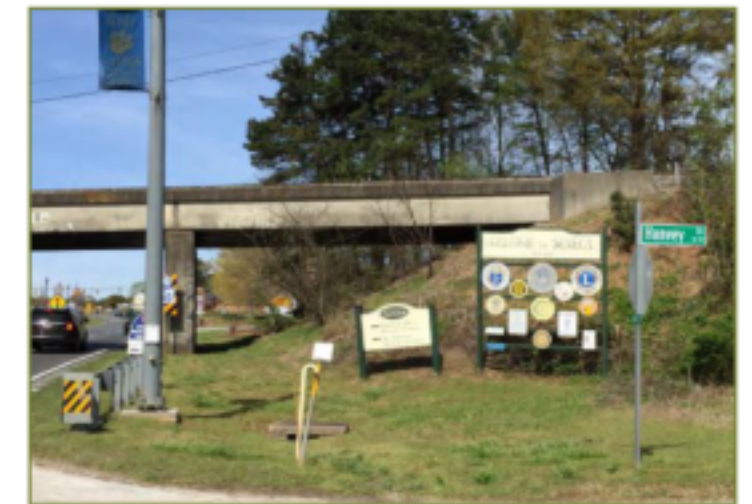
Westminster has currently placed excellent gateway signage and coordinated visitor information kiosks in key locations throughout the City. It is a perfect example of how quality signage adds to community character. Walhalla and Seneca do not lack for gateway signage into their individual communities, however, when placed into context of their surroundings, these signs usually lose their appeal. Often they are grossly undersized for the development around them even though they may fit the small town feel of the community.

WALHALLA SIGNAGE



Entering into Main Street Walhalla, it is very difficult to see the gateway signage because of the sign clutter.

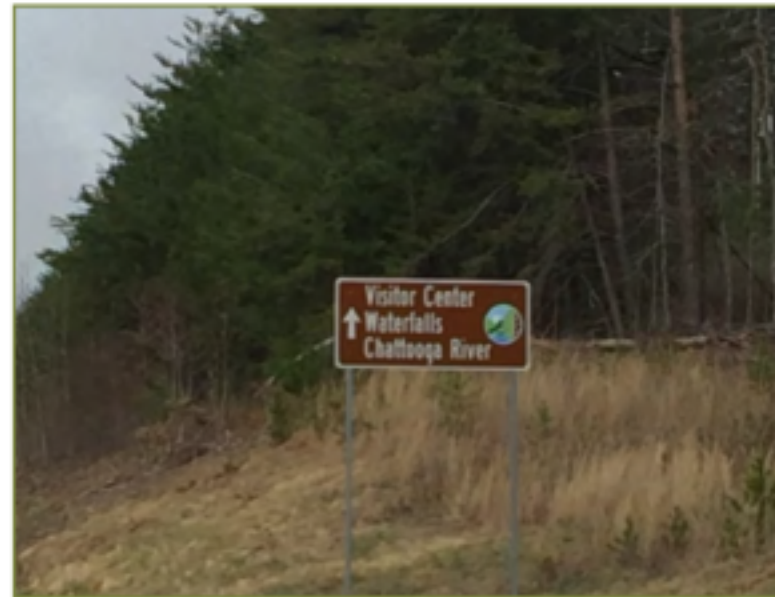
SENECA SIGNAGE



The City of Seneca has three different gateway signs in place that speak little to the character of the community.

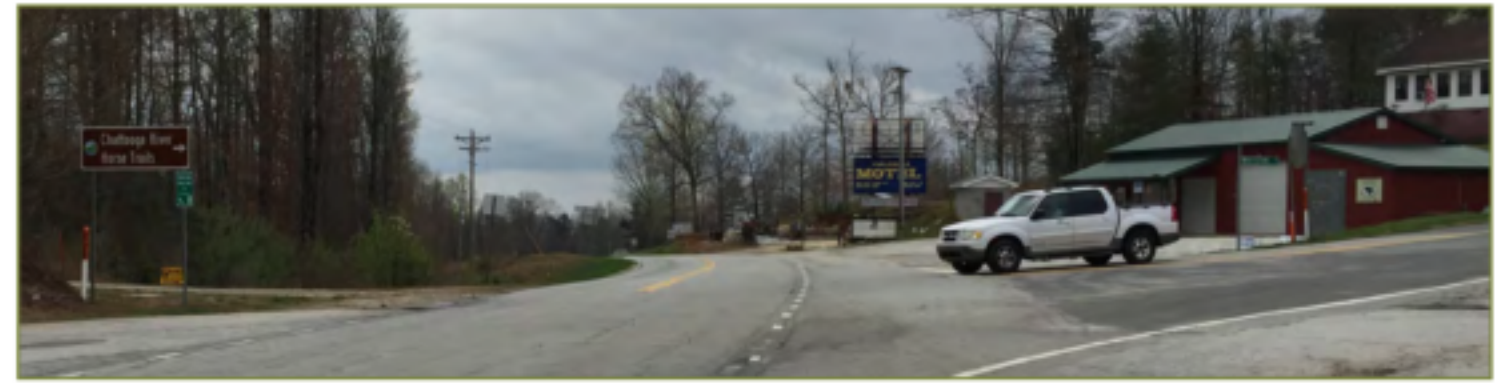
County Wayfinding:

County wayfinding in general is accessible and helpful. However, there are multiple examples of duplication of efforts already in place, confusing directional arrows with regard to placement of signs, confusing wording, and signage that is lacking follow up directions.



This arrow should be straight as the turn for the scenic pull off is approximately 1,000+ feet ahead (1/4 mile). A follow up sign with an arrow pointing right should be installed at the actual turn within 100 or less feet of the actual turn.)

There is no signage for the scenic pull off even though wayfinding signage has guided people to this location. Wayfinding should always have follow-up signage that lets the traveler know they have arrived.



This is an example of proper placement of wayfinding, since there was initial signage prior to this signaling drivers ahead.



Left: There is no follow up signage after the driver turns right.



After driving down a long road, this indicates "Parking for Hikers".



Trailhead signage at the parking lot which does not include Lick Log or Pig Pen Falls.



If the visitor continues down the dirt road, passed the parking for hikers, where there is no follow up signage for Lick Log or Pigpen Falls (both on wayfinding), they arrive at a fork in the road for two private drives. Are they supposed to hike to find these destinations at the trail head? This leads to visitor confusion and a poor travel experience.

Examples of Current Signage Fitting Local Culture:

Moving towards a *“Appalachian Rustic Elegance”* brand for Oconee County, there are signs currently in place that represent this design theme. Some are gateway signs, others are business signs located on and off of building structures. They incorporate the elements of wood and stone and contain colors found in the mountain and forest areas of Oconee.



Examples of Current Signage NOT Fitting of Local Culture:

Consider yourself a visitor to a community that has branded itself as an upscale outdoor destination. Look around the community at different types of signage to see if the brand is being supported through signage placement, design and structure.



These images are examples of the result of not having signage ordinances in place. Signage is cluttered and not visually appealing.



Franchise businesses should fit into the character of your community. Cookie-cutter approaches to building and signage design adds little quality to your community's sense of place.



Signs with LED lighting and cheap materials should be discouraged.



Although it is important to let visitor's know how to find key tourism locations, this sign is grossly over-scaled to surrounding structures.

Billboards:

There are currently 32 billboards beginning at Oconee's gateway from Clemson and running 7.5 miles on Highway 123 until the Highway 28 intersection. From Highway 28 and 123 intersection to Walhalla City Limits, with the exception of the County Scenic Byway, there are 33 billboards welcoming you to town. In total, there are 65 billboards in less than 15 miles of road on two of your major tourism traveled routes bringing people in to your community.





Consider how these billboards add value to your community.



Do these billboards enhance the scenic view of the mountains in the distance, or detract from it?

BILLBOARD CONTROL IS GOOD FOR TOURISM

www.scenic.org/billboards-a-sign-control

Billboard control is especially important for communities that depend on tourism. The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors reported that natural beauty was the most important criteria for adults choosing a site for outdoor recreation. The more a community does to enhance its unique natural, scenic, historic, and architectural assets, the more tourists it attracts.

Consider the following:

- Vermont took down its last billboard in 1975. From 1976-1978, tourism revenues increased by over 50 percent. According to Christopher Barbieri, President of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, "Although there was some initial sensitivity that removing billboards might hurt tourism, it has had the opposite effect. Tourism is up for all businesses large and small."
- Vermont Country Store founder Lyman Orton said: "The billboard ban provided not only a level playing field for all of us, it opened the roadways to scenic vistas and created more than compensating publicity. The absence of billboards in Vermont is the best billboard for all of the tourist business."
- Many prime tourist nations prohibit new billboard construction even as their tourism revenues keep rising: Palm Springs and Big Sur, California; Key West, Florida; Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts; Kitty Hawk and Nags Head, North Carolina; South Padre Island, Texas; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Aspen and Boulder, Colorado; Holland, Michigan; and Portland, Oregon.
- Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, and Vermont all prohibit billboards statewide and still draw people from around the world to their scenic wonders. The Hawaii Department of Transportation commented that "Tourism is important to the economy of our state and the state's business community understands the need to protect and preserve the beauty of the islands."



These examples represent how signage should maintain the look, scope and architecture of the site.



These two images showcase how poor signage can detract from the good design of the structure.



Unregulated sign clutter is displayed at most corners across the county which substantially diminishes the appeal of a naturally/environmentally conscious community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENT:

The following sign designs for gateway, wayfinding and interpretive signage can be utilized by the county and the Cities of Walhalla, Westminster and Seneca. These designs are general in nature and are provided to showcase the possibilities for a comprehensive approach to signage utilizing the "Rustic Elegance" brand. It is recommended that the county and cities cooperate to create a master signage plan that would provide detailed schematic design renderings as well as a SCDOT approved plan for the appropriate placement of wayfinding signage.

Although the design of the signage should be consistent, the images placed on individual signs should include the appropriate county or city logo, depending on the location. For an example of a comprehensive signage plan click the links below.

[TOWN OF EDGEFIELD](#)

[DORCHESTER COUNTY](#)

County Gateway:



Wayfinding:



Municipality Gateway Signage:



Interpretive:



SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Apply Signage Ordinance to all major thoroughfares in Oconee County. (Appendix D p. 223)

This would:

- Allow business signs characteristic of the *Appalachian Rustic Elegance* brand to create the sense of place Oconee is striving to develop.
- Meet visitor expectations as they drive into the quaint communities they are anticipating
- Create immediate appeal upon entrance into Oconee County.
- Billboards should be removed from major gateways and, as money permits, thoroughfares.
- Duplicate signage should be prohibited for businesses.
- Unpermitted signs or sign clutter should be prohibited and reinforced along major thoroughfares and especially along county, state and national scenic byways.



GATEWAY AND WAYFINDING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Gateway signage should be substantial and made of material that complements the Rustic Elegance brand.
- Signage should either completely mirror that of the SCDOT signage (brown with no logo) or have a look all its own.
- Signs with arrows pointing right or left should be within 100 feet of the actual turn.
- Signs with arrows pointing right or left within 2,000 feet of turn, should be replaced with a straight arrow, then followed up with a directional sign pointing right or left within 100 feet (contingent on right of way) of the actual turn to destination.
- Mileage can also be placed on the signage eliminating driver confusion
- If a destination such as the scenic pulloff has been signed guiding people to the spot, the actual destination should be signed.
- All installed wayfinding should have followup signage directing drivers specifically to their location or access point
- All access points and destinations should be signed, either through County Wayfinding initiatives or in partnership with US Forestry Services when boat ramps, trails, camping or waterfalls are involved.
- All wayfinding signage to trails, camping and waterfalls are at the discretion of the US Forestry Service design guidelines.
- Interpretive signage should be placed at trailheads for trails, camping or waterfalls specifying length of hike to destination, intensity of hike to destination and disclaimer from the County specifically stating that all trails, camping and waterfalls signed are at the discretion of the US Forestry Service.
- Reassess wording for all wayfinding ie waterfalls could be replaced with waterfall hikes.
- Each municipality should develop an individual wayfinding system for their downtown area if one has not been outlined and designed.
- Oconee County should complete a thorough wayfinding plan for the entire county with remediation of the current plan based on this assessment.

ORDINANCES:

The following ordinances were created for this project as a starting point for discussion. The language in these model ordinances should be reviewed by your county and/or municipal attorney and other appropriate professionals before enactment. The model should be modified to address special local conditions and to conform to local laws and codes. These models are provided for guidance only and not as a substitute for legal counsel or to serve in place of effective county/city planning. The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor has not consulted with an attorney in drafting this document or these ordinances and do not purport to be qualified to give legal advice. See Appendix D p. 207.



**SIGNAGE
ORDINANCE**



**BILLBOARD
ORDINANCE**



**CELL TOWER
ORDINANCE**



**SCENIC BYWAY
OVERLAY ORDINANCE**



**DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
OVERLAY ORDINANCE**



6

funding
OPTIONS



The plan has been written, the community supportive and elected officials are engaged. The next, and often hardest step, is implementation. For smaller, more rural communities, the challenge is typically in the funding of the proposed projects. This chapter will outline local options for funding as well as grant opportunities available from varied sources. The important thing to remember moving forward is to simply keep moving forward. Do not stop progress because an issue is hard or funding is a challenge.

FUNDING OPTIONS:

Local Hospitality Tax: is a tax on the sales of prepared meals and beverages sold in establishments or sales of prepared meals and beverages sold in establishments licensed for on-premises consumption of alcoholic beverages, beer, or wine according to South Carolina State Law. It must be voted into adoption by the majority of County Council or the City or Town Council trying to instate. Concurrently, an entire county can collect a Hospitality Tax, as well as individual municipalities. (See Hospitality Tax State Law Appendix E p. 302)

The revenue generated by the hospitality tax must be used exclusively for the following purposes:

- tourism-related buildings including, but not limited to, civic centers, coliseums, and aquariums
- tourism-related cultural, recreational, or historic facilities
- beach access and re-nourishment
- highways, roads, streets, and bridges providing access to tourist destinations
- advertisements and promotions related to tourism development
- water and sewer infrastructure to serve tourism-related demand.

Greenwood County's Hospitality Tax: Funding their Uptown Market amongst other capital projects.



Click the icon to the left to read the full article.

LOCAL HOSPITALITY TAX IMPOSED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

County	Local Hospitality Tax - % Imposed
Abbeville	No
Aiken	North Augusta - 2%
Allendale	No
Anderson	City of Anderson - 2%
Bamberg	No
Barnwell	No
Beaufort	City of Beaufort - 2%; City of Hilton Head - 2%; Unincorporated area only - 2%
Berkeley	Moncks Corner - 2%
Calhoun	No
Charleston	City of Charleston - 2%; North Charleston - 2%; Mt. Pleasant - 2%
Cherokee	Gaffney - 2%
Chester	
Chesterfield	City of Chesterfield - 2%
Clarendon	Unincorporated areas - 2%
Colleton	Entire county area - 2%; Town of Edisto Beach - 2%
Darlington	Hartsville - 2%
Dillon	Unincorporated areas only - 2%
Dorchester	Summerville - 2%
Edgefield	No
Fairfield	No
Florence	Unincorporated areas only - 2%; City of Florence - 1%
Georgetown	Unincorporated areas only - 2%; City of Georgetown - 1%
Greenville	Unincorporated area only - 2%; City of Greenville - 2%; Fountain Inn - 2%; Simpsonville - 2%; Mauldin - 2%
Greenwood	No
Hampton	No
Horry	Entire county area - 1.5%; Unincorporated area only - 2.5% (4% total)
Jasper	Unincorporated area only - 1%; Hardeeville - 2%; Ridgeland - 2%
Kershaw	No
Lancaster	City of Lancaster - 2%
Laurens	City of Laurens - 1%; City of Clinton - 2%
Lee	
Lexington	Town of Lexington - 2% - REPEALED
Marion	City of Marion - 2%
Marlboro	City of Bennettsville
McCormick	
Newberry	City of Newberry - 2%
Oconee	City of Seneca - 2%
Orangeburg	City of Orangeburg - 2%
Pickens	City of Clemson - 2%; City of Easley - 2%; City of Pickens - 2%
Richland	Unincorporated area only - 2%; Columbia - 2%; Forest Acres - 2%; Arcadia Lakes - 2%; Blythewood - 2%; Eastover - 1%; Irmo - 1%
Saluda	No
Spartanburg	Entire County Area - 2%; City of Spartanburg - 2%; City of Woodruff - 2%
Sumter	Unincorporated area only - 2%; City of Sumter - 2%
Union	Unincorporated areas
Williamsburg	
York	Unincorporated Areas Only - 2%; City of York - 2%; Fort Mill - 2%; Rock Hill - 2%

Revised 5/2012

http://www.sccounties.org/Data/Sites/1/media/services/research/local%20taxes/local_hospitality.pdf

● A special-purpose local-option sales tax (SPLOST): is a financing method for funding capital outlay. South Carolina counties, upon local referendum, are authorized to impose various Local Option Taxes in addition to the 6 percent sales tax imposed by the state. These options include: Local Option; Capital Projects; School District; Transportation; Capital Improvement

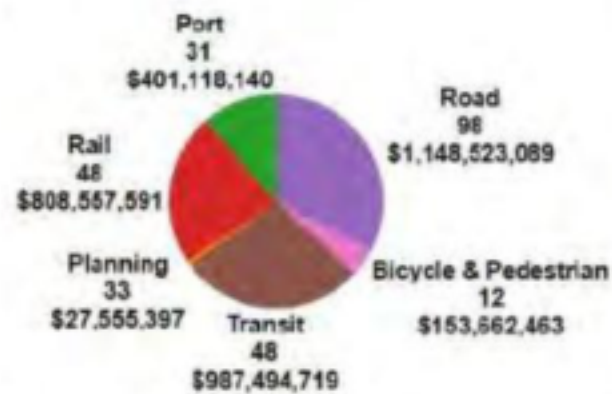
SALES TAX IMPOSED AT THE COUNTY LEVEL (IN ADDITION TO THE 6% STATEWIDE SALES TAX)

County	Local Option	Capital Projects	School District	Transportation	Educational Capital Improvement
Abbeville	1.0%				
Aiken		1.0%			
Allendale	1.0%	1.0%			
Anderson					
Bamberg	1.0%	1.0%			
Barnwell	1.0%				
Beaufort				Ended 6-2012	
Berkeley	1.0%			1.0%	
Calhoun	1.0%				
Charleston	1.0%			0.5%	1.0%
Cherokee	1.0%		1.0%		
Chester	1.0%	1.0%			
Chesterfield	1.0%		1.0%		
Clarendon	1.0%		1.0%		
Colleton	1.0%				
Darlington	1.0%		1.0%		
Dillon	1.0%	Ended 9-08	1.0%		
Dorchester				1.0%	
Edgefield	1.0%				
Fairfield	1.0%				
Florence	1.0%	1.0%			
Georgetown					
Greenville					
Greenwood		Ended 06-12			
Hampton	1.0%	1.0%			
Horry		Ended 04-14			1.0%
Jasper	1.0%	Ended 11-02	1.0%		
Kershaw	1.0%				
Lancaster	1.0%	1.0%			
Laurens	1.0%				
Lee	1.0%	1.0%	Ended 9-11		
Lexington			1.0%		
Marion	1.0%	1.0%			
Marlboro	1.0%		1.0%		
McCormick	1.0%				
Newberry		1.0%			
Oconee					
Orangeburg		1.0%			
Pickens	1.0%				
Richland	1.0%			1.0%	
Saluda	1.0%				
Spartanburg					
Sumter	1.0%	1.0%			
Union					
Williamsburg	1.0%				
York		1.0%			

Source: South Carolina Department of Revenue; SC Information Letter #14-5; www.sctax.org.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES:

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery : or TIGER Discretionary Grant program, provides a unique opportunity for the DOT to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. Since 2009, Congress has dedicated more than \$4.1 billion for six rounds to fund projects that have a significant impact on the Nation, a region or a metropolitan area. **As can be seen below, a variety of project types have been awarded:**



<http://www.dot.gov/tiger/about>

Community Development Block Grant : (CDBG) can fund a wide variety of projects from revitalizing neighborhoods to improving community infrastructure, providing public facilities and creating or retaining jobs. The state program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD. State CDBG grants are made to eligible units of local government, under programs of funding which include competitive community development programs, as well as regional planning and economic development. Funded projects are expected to create measurable results, must help achieve the objectives outlined in the State's Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development, and must address one of three priority needs:

- Availability and sustainability of a suitable living environment
- Availability, affordability and sustainability of decent housing
- Availability and sustainability of economic opportunity



Rural Infrastructure Authority : (RIA) was created to help close the gap in financial resources for infrastructure improvements and lay the groundwork for economic development. RIA programs and assistance are designed to meet the following objectives:

Increase community sustainability by targeting the most distressed areas that lack adequate resources for infrastructure needs;

- Improve the quality of life by addressing public health, environmental and regulatory concerns and;
- Create opportunities for economic impact by building the infrastructure capacity to support economic development in rural areas.

RIA makes grant assistance available in two program categories:

- **Basic Infrastructure** - Funding will assist communities in bringing facilities into compliance with environmental quality standards or providing necessary environmental facilities to protect public health concerns, thereby contributing to community sustainability.
- **Economic Infrastructure** - Funding will help build local capacity to support economic and employment opportunities through the provision of publically owned infrastructure and facilities



Transportation Alternative Program : TAP projects are federally-funded community-based projects that expand travel choices and improve the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure.

Although the program is a “grant” program under Federal regulation, is not an “up-front” grant program and funds are available only on a reimbursement basis. Only after a project has been approved by the State Department of Transportation or Metropolitan Planning Organization and the FHWA division office, can costs become eligible for reimbursement. Costs must be incurred after FHWA division office project approval, or they are not eligible for reimbursement. An LPA (Local Public Agency) is required as is 20% match to the Federal Government’s 80% commitment to the eligible project. Eligible Activities include:

- Pedestrian Facilities
- Bicycle Facilities
- Streetscaping Projects

Preserve America: For eligibility, you must apply to be a Preserve America Community of which Oconee's diverse municipalities have all the requirements. However, once designated, Preserve America Grants make you eligible for monies to fund research and documentation, planning, interpretation/education, promotion, and training. Successful projects involve public-private partnerships and serve as models to communities nationwide for heritage tourism, historic preservation, education, and economic development.



American Battlefields Protection Program (ABPP): supports projects that lead to the protection of battlefield land and sites associated with battlefields. The goals of the program are 1) to protect battlefields and sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of our history, 2) to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and 3) to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefields and related sites for future generations. The ABPP focuses primarily on land use, cultural resource and site management planning, and public education. Grants run between \$5,000 and \$80,000.



National Trust for Historic Preservation: Grants from National Trust Preservation Funds (NTPF) are intended to encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money for preservation projects. These grants help stimulate public discussion, enable local groups to gain the technical expertise needed for particular projects, introduce the public to preservation concepts and techniques, and encourage financial participation by the private sector. The National Trust is particularly interested in projects that relate to the preservation priorities listed below. A National Trust membership is required to be eligible for grant application.

- Building sustainable communities: Does your project demonstrate that historic preservation supports economic, environmental and cultural sustainability in communities?
- Reimagining historic sites: Does your project use innovative, replicable strategies that create new models for historic site interpretation and stewardship?
- Promoting diversity and place: Does your project broaden the cultural diversity of historic preservation?
- Protecting historic places on public lands



Hart Family Fund for Small Towns: is another opportunity from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It is awarded to communities with a population less than 5,000 also intended to encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money for preservation projects in small towns. It should help stimulate public discussion, enable local groups to gain the technical expertise needed for particular projects, introduce the public to preservation concepts and techniques, and encourage financial participation by the private sector. Grants from the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns generally range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 and applications are due May 1st. Membership to the National Trust for Historic Preservation is required for application eligibility.

Preservation Tax Credit: A 20% income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to be "certified historic structures." The State Historic Preservation Offices and the National Park Service review the rehabilitation work to ensure that it complies with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Internal Revenue Service defines qualified rehabilitation expenses on which the credit may be taken. Owner-occupied residential properties do not qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit.

The 10% tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936. The building must be rehabilitated for non-residential use. In order to qualify for the tax credit, the rehabilitation must meet three criteria: at least 50% of the existing external walls must remain in place as external walls, at least 75% of the existing external walls must remain in place as either external or internal walls, and at least 75% of the internal structural framework must remain in place.



- **SC Water and Land Conservation Fund:** LWCF is a federally funded reimbursable grant that is for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreational use purposes. It runs on a two year cycle, requires a 50-50 match and creates legacy by mandating perpetual park management.



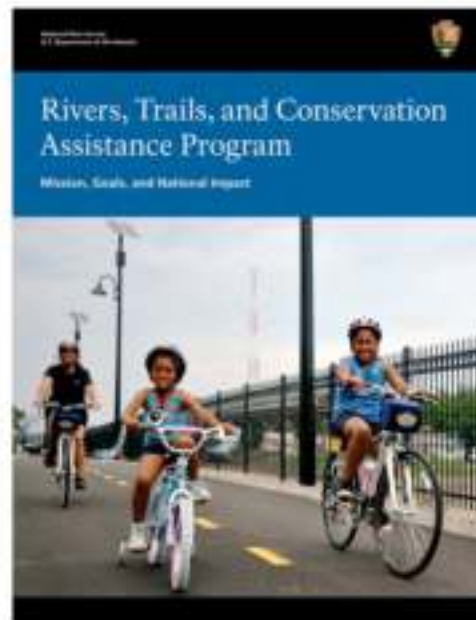
- **Challenge Cost Share Program:** supports local projects that promote conservation and recreation, environmental stewardship, education, and engaging diverse youth participants. Local project partners work with National Park Service parks and programs to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. NPS administered parks and programs are eligible such as National Trails, Heritage Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers. The maximum Challenge Cost Share grant is \$25,000 and the project must be completed within 1 year of receiving the award.

- **National Park Foundation:** All 2016 Centennial projects have been chosen however this will be a viable option beginning 2017.

- **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program:** RTCA is a program through the National Park Service who provide free, on-location facilitation and planning expertise. Technical assistance provided guides a project from conception to completion and allows communities the accessibility to planning modalities without the expense. This program allows funding to be allocated to the implementation rather than planning, so projects can be on the ground and accessible in a cleaner time frame.

Project Assistance includes:

- Define project vision and goals
- Inventory and map community resources
- Identify and analyze key issues and opportunities
- Engage collaborative partners and stakeholders
- Design community outreach and participation strategies
- Develop concept plans for trails, parks, and natural areas
- Set priorities and build consensus
- Identify funding sources
- Develop a sustainable organizational framework to support the project



- **Special assessment district:** or special service districts, are a means for local governments to finance specific infrastructure or services in a pre-defined area. Special assessment and special service districts have been in use since the early 20th century to finance local public improvements. They are authorized in various forms in all 50 states. Financing mechanisms vary by district; the local government may issue bonds for large infrastructure projects, or it may choose to assess separate fees through property taxes or other assessments on a per unit (acre, square foot, etc.) basis. If bonds are issued, the district may be dissolved once the bonds are paid off.

Special assessment and special service districts have several benefits. They provide infrastructure and services for a specific group of taxpayers who will benefit from the projects, rather than burdening the entire community with costs for local projects. In addition to improving a specific area within a community, these projects may raise revenue or enhance economic development across the community as a whole.

Special assessments might be levied for projects such as the following examples:

- Waterworks or water supplies
- Sewer and water system improvements
- Roads and streets
- Cleaning, mowing and dilapidated building demolition
- Sidewalks
- Public utilities installation
- Fire protection districts
- Irrigation districts

- **Tax increment finance district:** (TIF) has no effect on taxpayers and no decrease in tax revenues to governing entities. It is a tool to spur redevelopment that enables developers to forego certain increases in taxes brought about by the improvements.



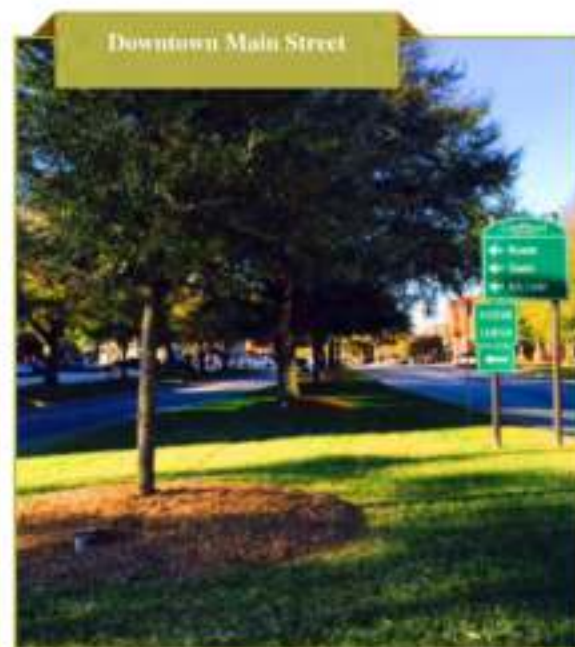
Successful, sustainable communities have recognized the crucial need to capitalize on their assets to create a brand, inspire development and grow in a manner that connects people to the place.

There are always challenges to change, but the reward of pushing through those challenges can be seen in the following community case studies.

7

case studies

Increased Vitality in Uptown Greenwood can be attuned to forethought, vision and implementation. Completion of their City Center Master Plan in 2004 paved the way for new ordinances to be passed and funding sources such as Hospitality & Accommodations Taxes to be enacted. In a mere decade, the litany of accomplishments and strategic decisions may be seen in this showpiece of successes.



1983

- Special Tax District
- Interior Renovation 50/50 Loan

2002

- Federal Building donated to City & County through Department of Interior Federal Lands to Parks Program

2004

- City Center Master Plan Completed
- Downtown Facade Ordinance Passed
- City adopted a revised zoning ordinance allowing for creative design alternatives
- City adopted a Sidewalk Cafe Ordinance
Allowing beer/wine to be served to seated patrons on City sidewalks

2005

- Uptown Overlay District Passed
*added City Board of Architectural Review with three overlay districts, one being Uptown Design Overlay District
- County passed Accommodations Tax
First Year Collections: \$96,548
- City passed Accommodations Tax
First Year Collections \$143,390

2006

- April 1, 2006 - City passed 2% Hospitality Tax
First Year Collections: \$1,193,639
- Renovation of the Arts Center at the Federal Building
- South Main Gateway
\$108,827 Hospitality Tax Match; SCDOT Enhancement Grant

2007

- Greenwood Community Theatre
\$350,005 Hospitality Tax Match; Emerald Triangle Grant
- Oregon Avenue Streetscape
\$473,699 Hospitality Tax Match; CDBG Grant

2008

- Greenwood Museum
\$596,227 Hospitality Tax Match; HUD EDI Grant
- Main Street Crosswalks
\$159,999 Hospitality Tax Match; SCDOT Enhancement Grant

2009

- Maxwell Avenue Streetscape and Facade
\$1,219,909.61 Hospitality Tax Match; RIF Opportunity Grant
- Arts Center Performing Courtyard
\$37,146.19 Hospitality Tax; Match; Heritage Corridor Grant

2010

- Greenwood County Library
\$500,000 Hospitality Tax Match; 1% Capital Sales Tax
- Maxwell Street, Long Parking Lot, Facade Enhancement
\$358,262.22 Hospitality Tax Match; RIF Grant
- South Main Gateway Phase II
\$36,286.13 Hospitality Tax Match; SCDOT Enhancement Grant
- Sidewalks, Art Center at the Federal Building
\$34,612 All Hospitality Tax

2011

- Art Center Courtyard Phase II
\$26,027 All Hospitality Tax
- West Court Avenue
\$112,359.15 Hospitality Tax Match; CDBG Grant

2012

- Greenwood Mill Cleanup
Myriad Pending Components
- 2011-2012 Countywide wayfinding installed
\$146,598.13 All Hospitality Tax

2013

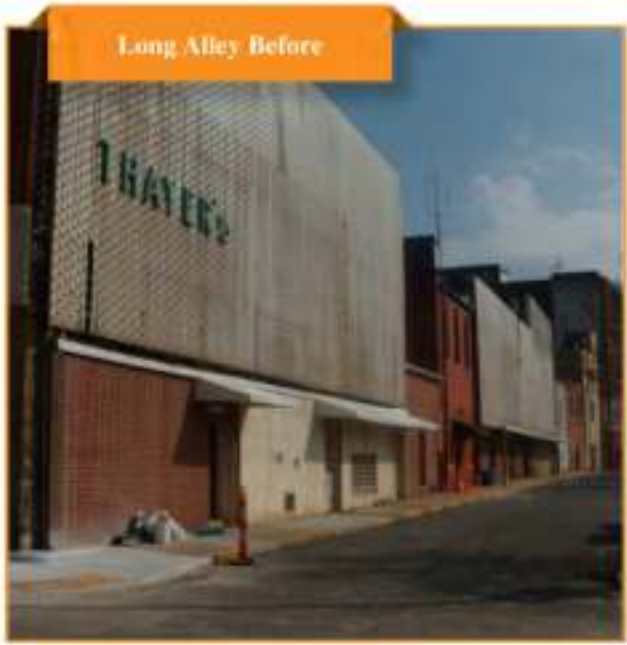
- Oak Main Streetscape
\$552,154.28 Hospitality Tax Match; CDBG Grant
- 2006-2013 Greenwood Commission of Public Works
-commitment of \$522,000 for gateway and streetscape electrical
- 2007-2013 - 1% Countywide Capital Project Sales Tax:
\$9,027,871.28 Completion of Greenwood County Library
\$32 Million Lake Greenwood Dam Repairs & Seismic Improvements

2014

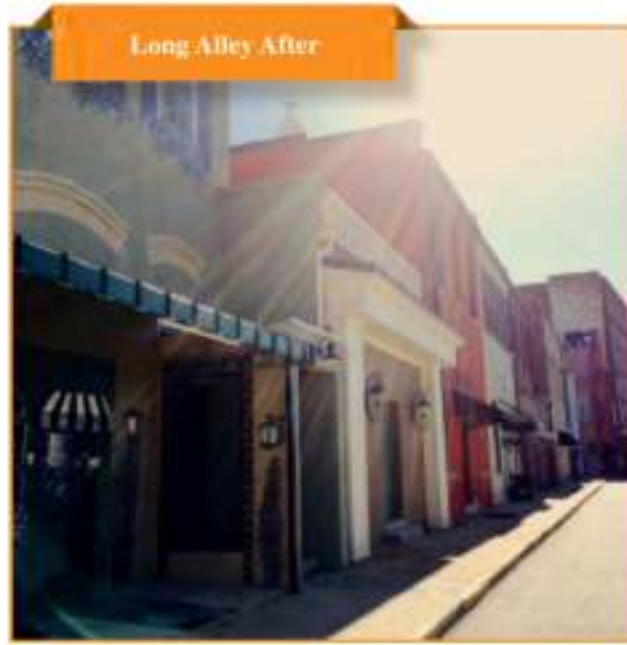
- Arts Center Courtyard Soundsystem
\$16,000 All Hospitality Tax
- Edgefield Parking Lot
\$326,797.00 All Hospitality Tax

2015

- January 1, 2015 - Greenwood County passed
County Hospitality Tax



Long Alley Before



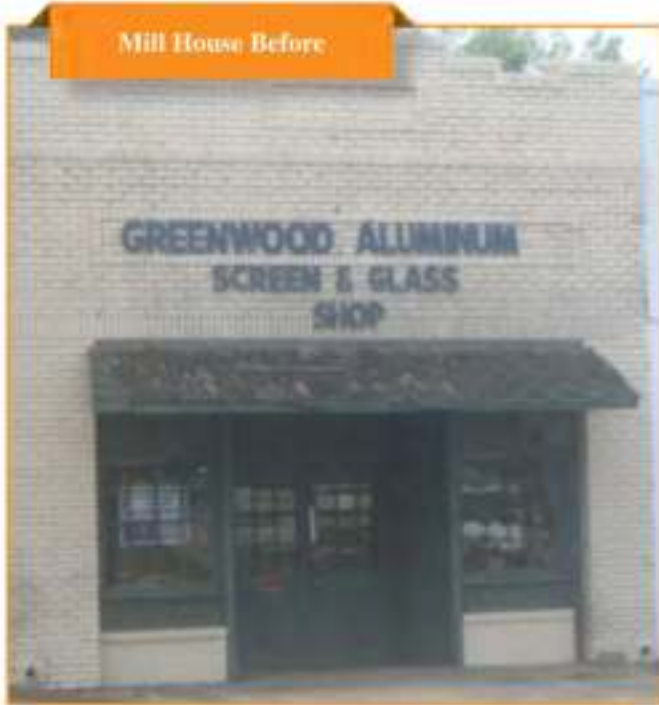
Long Alley After



Long Alley Parking Before



Long Alley Parking After



Mill House Before



Mill House After



120 Maxwell Before (2000)



Before (2003)



After (2013)



120 Maxwell Street Business Row - After



120 Maxwell Street Business Row - After 2



Lower Maxwell Street Before



Lower Maxwell Street After



Oak Main Before



Barksdale Before/After

Before

Barksdale in Context



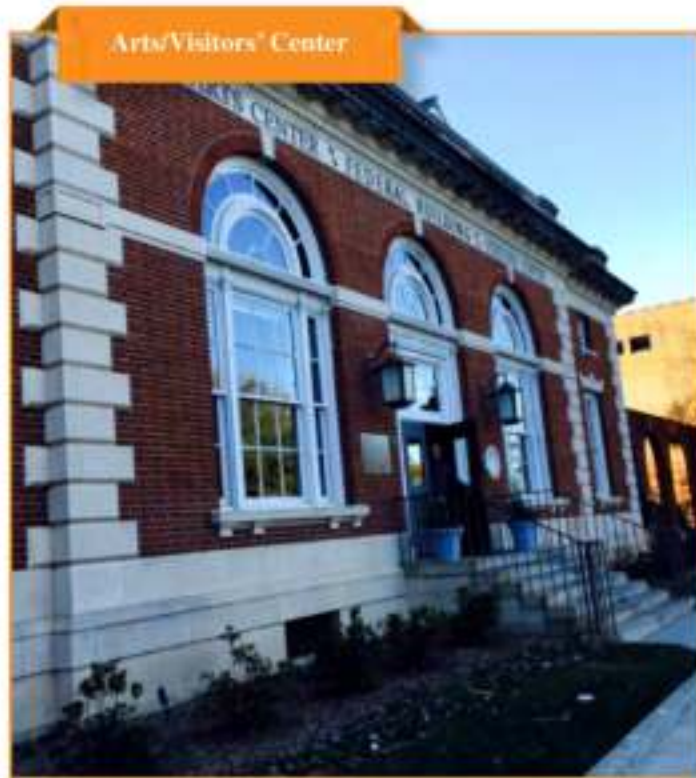
Parking Lot off Maxwell/Oregon Street
-Pavers/Wall Garden/Greenscaping



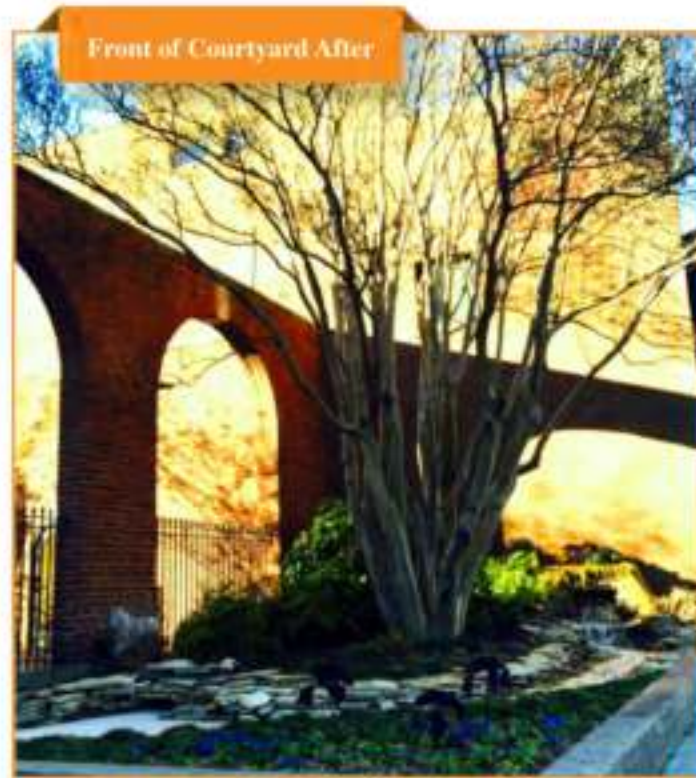
Oregon Avenue Streetscape Left



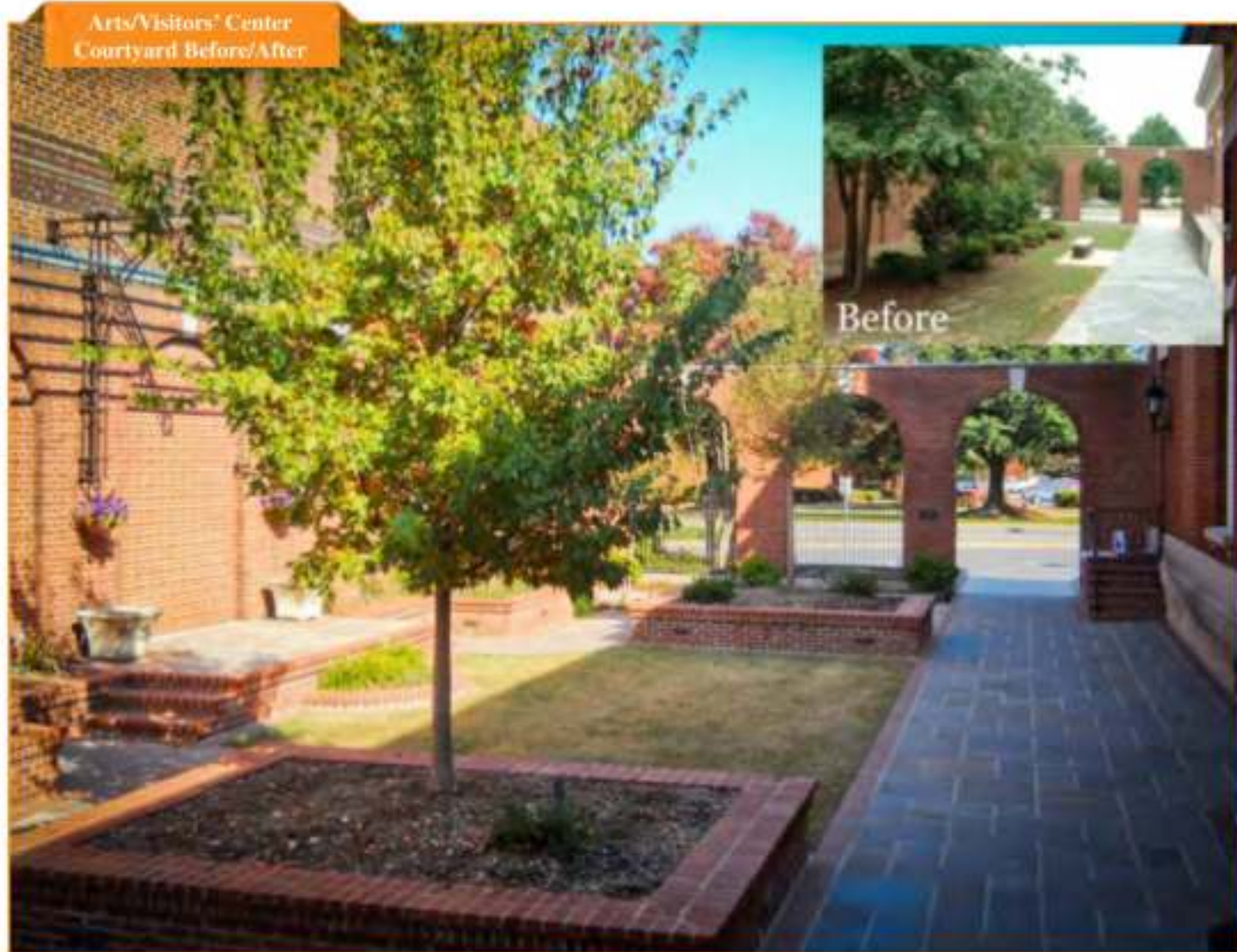
Oregon Avenue Streetscape Right



Arts/Visitors' Center



Front of Courtyard After



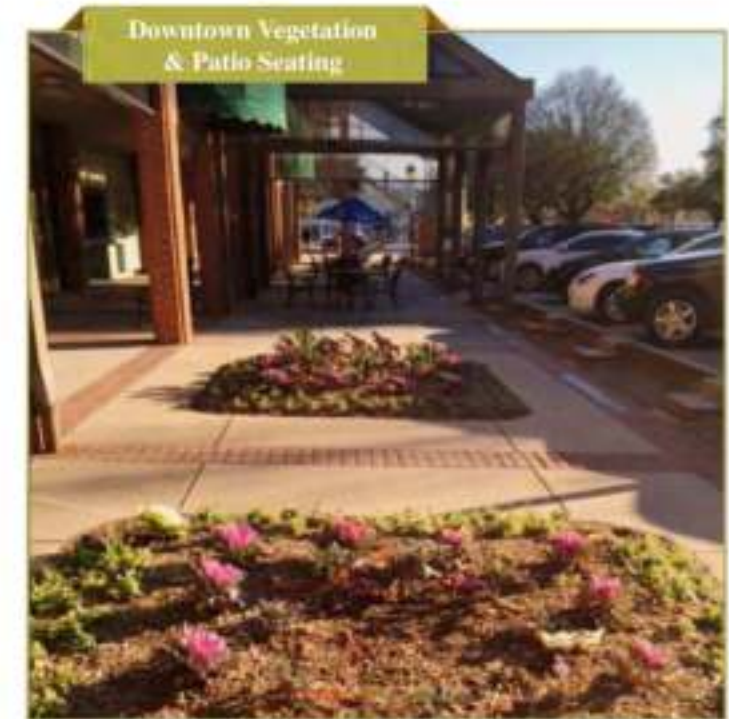
Arts/Visitors' Center
Courtyard Before/After

Before

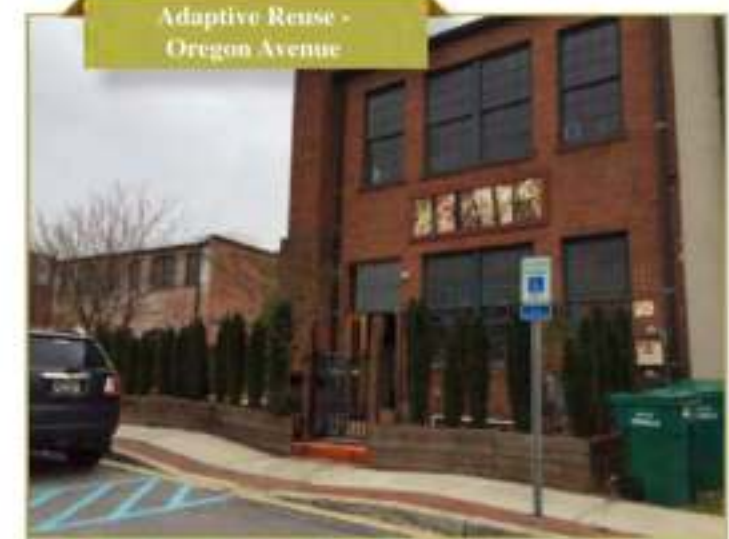
ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF GREENWOOD PLANNING AND REDEVELOPMENT



Adaptive Reuse -
Main Street Downtown



Downtown Vegetation
& Patio Seating



Adaptive Reuse -
Oregon Avenue



Adaptive Reuse -
Oregon Avenue



Adaptive Reuse -
Oregon Avenue

FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

GREAT THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN DOWNTOWN FLORENCE

Cultural

FMU Performing Arts Center



Drs Bruce & Lee Library



Florence Little Theatre



Coming in 2015-2016



FMU Health Science Facility



Hope Health Facility



\$10 Million Renovation Project - Kress/Kuker Guaranty Bank Buildings



\$8 Million Apartment Project



\$3 Million Royal Knight Building

City Initiatives



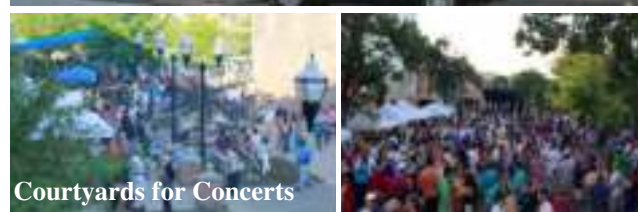
New Streetscapes in Progress



Plans Underway for Parking Garages



North Dargan Innovation Center Business Incubator



Courtyards for Concerts

Progress continues in Downtown Florence as work continues to transform it into a dining and entertainment district that will include niche retail and downtown living.

Construction will begin at the corner of West Evans & Irby in May on the new FMU Health Science Facility that will train doctors from the USC School of Medicine as well as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other healthcare professionals. Hope Health has started construction of their new facility on N. Irby and will be completed by Fall 2015. These projects will put more “feet on the street” in the downtown corridor and will add another \$25 to \$30 million to the public investment in the downtown area.

The private sector has also been extremely active in the downtown revitalization process. The beautiful Hotel Florence which opened in 2013 will be adding additional rooms as they expand into the second floor of the former Royal Knight building at the corner of Evans & Dargan which will be known as 100 West Evans. The multi-million dollar renovation will also incorporate new offices for the Chamber of Commerce and Key Architecture. The renovation will also create public restrooms that will open onto the James Allen Plaza and be open during downtown events. Construction has also begun on the opposite corner of Evans & Dargan as the the former Kress & Kuker Buildings are undergoing an \$11 million renovation. The project will have a restaurant, retail spaces and loft apartments. Other dining and drinking destinations that have opened in the past several years are The Clay Pot Coffee Shop, Dolce Vita Wine & Chocolate Bar, 1031 American Grill, The Library, a tapas and martini restaurant/bar and Wholly Smokin. At least two more restaurants are also in the planning stages and will open in the near future.

The Waters Building \$4 million renovation was completed and it now houses two law firms, a brokerage firm and other professional offices.

These private sector investments total over \$25 million.

In addition to the \$25 million, negotiations are being finalized on a \$7 million, 85 unit upscale apartment project adjacent to the new museum on Chevas. Plans should be finalized in the next several months.

Med-Enroll is a company that will make the Rainwater Building located at 151 West Evans its new headquarters. The company will employ 150 people and invest almost \$3 million dollars into the renovation of the historic building.

Another corporation that is currently only being identified as “Project Morgan” will also locate their headquarters to downtown Florence. The actual corporation will be made public in the near future. The project will involve a \$4 million renovation of the building at 185 West Evans that currently houses the Art Trail Gallery. The gallery will move to a new location that has not yet been finalized.

The North Dargan Innovation Center, located at 150 N. Dargan serves as a small business incubator for new business startups or an opportunity to transform a home based business into a larger enterprise. Currently five new businesses are housed in the center.

In an effort to make the historic downtown a truly special place to spend time, two public plazas were constructed in 2013. The James Allen Plaza and the William H. Johnson Renaissance Dining Courtyard are both located adjacent to one or more restaurants and monthly events with live entertainment occur in both courtyards.

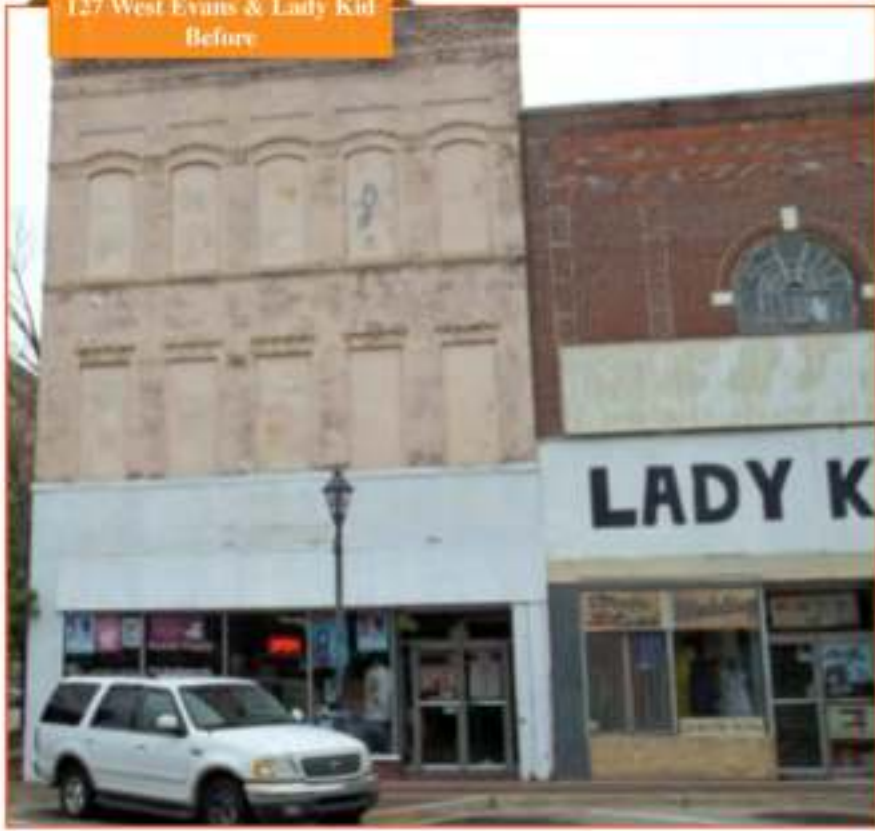
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues will fund a new parking garage, basketball facility adjacent to the Barnes Street Recreational facility, as well as additional streetscape enhancements on Dargan, Evans and Irby Streets. It is estimated that during the remaining 12 year period of the TIF, it will generate in excess of \$20 million.

Downtown Florence is very quickly transforming into “the place to be” in Florence. Thousands attend the numerous street festivals and other downtown events including the weekly Farmers Market in the West Evans Breezeway, the Florence After Five concert series which now attracts over 1000 people each month on the final Friday of each month, April through October. Other events include First Fridays in the James Allen Plaza and Third Thursdays in the Renaissance Dining Courtyard.

Basically, if it is happening in Florence, it is most likely happening downtown as a result of the vision presented over a decade ago, the leadership of the community to pass design ordinances and funding capacities such as hospitality and accommodations tax in order for success to beget success!



127 West Evans & Lady Kid
Before



Florence Pharmacy
Before



Florence Pharmacy
After



127 West Evans After



Lady Kid After



174 West Evans
Before



174 West Evans
After





NDIC Building
Before



NDIC Building
After



Waters Building
After



Waters Building
Before



Rogers
Before



Rogers
After



Theatre
Before



Theatre
After



Victor's Building Rear
Before



Victor's Building Rear
After



OTHER EXEMPLARY OUTDOOR COMMUNITY AREAS



YORK COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

A CASE FOR HOSPITALITY TAX:

Similar to Oconee County where Seneca, Walhalla and Westminster all currently collect Hospitality Tax, York County too had three of their major municipalities taking advantage of this additional revenue prior to passing countywide Hospitality Tax. With the cities Rock Hill, Fort Mill and York already implementing HTax accumulating major return on community investment, the sell to County Council for countywide collection "wasn't hard". The only stipulation from County Council was that time be allotted for two incorporated areas, Clover and Tega Cay which had not yet passed HTax for their jurisdiction, to have the opportunity to instate Hospitality Tax prior to York County as a whole moving forward in the unincorporated areas. Allowing these two communities to pass HTax independently would stream revenue directly back into their municipality budget rather than back to the county.

After this decision, York County passed Hospitality tax within 5 months in January 2007. All municipalities were established in their own HTax efforts at this point – Rock Hill since 1998. The results, which can be viewed in the expenditure chart on the following page, are astounding.



APPROVED HOSPITALITY TAX EXPEDITURES THROUGH FISCAL YEAR JULY 2014

EXPENDITURES	Approved Through FY 2014	Total by District	% by District of Total	% of Non-Countywide Funding
Town of Fort Mill Parks and Recreation-Dylan Mitchell Memorial Criterion	\$3,852.95			
Town of Fort Mill - Marketing/Promotions for Strawberry Festival	\$76,750.00			
Fort Mill History Museum - Cyber Promotions	\$2,260.00			
Nation Fort Greenway	\$8,000.00			
Tega Cay Croquet Court	\$19,000.00	\$109,862.95	1.4%	3.6%
Lake Wylie Chamber of Commerce - Map Project	\$22,000.00			
Lake Wylie Chamber of Commerce-WebSite	\$5,450.00			
Lake Wylie Chamber of Commerce-Promotion and Events	\$121,400.00			
Town Of Clover - New Centre Park (Phase 1)	\$300,000.00	\$448,850.00	5.0%	14.6%
Museum of Western York County-Capital Repairs	\$25,000.00			
Museum of Western York County-Preservation and Education Project	\$6,790.00			
Broad River Basin Historical Society (Back in the Days Celebration)	\$3,355.52			
Greater York Chamber of Commerce-Summerfest	\$66,894.00			
Greater York Chamber of Commerce-Caboose Restoration	\$42,000.00			
Greater York Chamber of Commerce-Historic District Markers	\$5,377.00	\$149,416.52	1.9%	4.8%
Culture and Heritage Museums-Children's Museum - County Allocation	\$450,000.00			
Arts Council of York County-Blues Festival	\$25,000.00			
Arts Council of York County-Capital and Marketing-Performing Arts Center	\$50,000.00			
Arts Council of York County-Tourism Marketing Projects	\$140,000.00			
Rock Hill Economic Development Corp-Old Town Amphitheater	\$24,000.00			
The Main Streets of Old Town Association-Christmasville	\$80,000.00	\$769,000.00	9.6%	25.1%
Culture and Heritage Museums Capital Costs-Brattonville Visitor Ctr.	\$24,068.02			
Culture and Heritage Museums-Huck's Defeat Project	\$96,300.00			
Culture and Heritage Museums- Brick House Porch	\$45,000.00			
Culture and Heritage Museums- Brickhouse	\$130,550.00			
Catawba Cultural Preservation-Capital Repairs	\$56,849.88			
Catawba Cultural Preservation-Trail Improvements/Come See Me Event	\$96,400.00			
Catawba Cultural Center - Center Improvements	\$88,401.00			
Catawba Cultural Center - Come See Me Pow-Wow	\$215,843.38			
Catawba Cultural Center - Preservation Project	\$188,955.50			
SC Horsemen's Council	\$999.00	\$943,366.78	11.8%	30.7%
Culture and Heritage Museums- Planetarium	\$250,000.00			
Ebenezer Park Shoreline	\$75,000.00			
Ebenezer Park Shoreline	\$200,000.00	\$525,000.00	6.6%	17.1%
Winthrop Athletics-Queen of Diamonds (Fence)	\$7,000.00			
United States Disc Golf Championship-United States Disc Golf Championship	\$40,945.20			
Thomas Gymnastics	\$76,100.00	\$124,045.20	1.6%	4.0%
RH/YC Convention and Visitor's Bureau-Adv/Promotions	\$1,906,088.96			
RH/YC Convention and Visitor's Bureau-Operations	\$2,254,949.52			
RH/YC Convention and Visitor's Bureau-Kiosks/Brochure Racks	\$51,602.42			
RH/YC Convention and Visitor's Bureau-Design Work for Visitor Center	\$10,000.00			
RH York County Convention and Visitor's Bureau-Tour Bus/Pavilion	\$21,600.00			
RH York County Convention and Visitor's Bureau-2009 Meeting Planners	\$15,000.00			
RH York County Convention and Visitor's Bureau-Lake Wylie Sport Master Plan	\$30,000.00			
RH York County Convention and Visitor's Bureau-Wayfinding Signs with Public Works	\$86,400.00			
Culture and Heritage Museums-Motor Coach Transportation for Conf.	\$2,175.00			
Culture and Heritage Museums Capital Costs-Marketing and Promotion	\$38,461.00			
Herald - Notice for RFP For Sports Master Plan	\$48.70			
Come See Me Festival	\$21,953.00			
Populous - Agritourism Consulting - Review of Sites	\$13,567.90			
Olde English District - Golf Promotion	\$79,500.00			
Olde English District - Golf Promotion/Visitor's Center	\$25,000.00			
Catawba Riverkeeper - Riversweep	\$34,582.64			
Carolina Thread Trail	\$300,000.00			
Clemson University (Ag+Art Tour)	\$17,190.00	\$4,908,129.14	61.5%	0.0%
Total Approved Expenditures	\$7,977,670.59	\$7,977,670.59	100.0%	100.0%

ALL PROJECTS BELOW WERE FUNDED THROUGH HOSPITALITY TAX



ROCK HILL, YORK COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

THE VELODROME AT RIVERWALK

Project Description

The City of Rock Hill's Velodrome project is a small, but transformational piece of an economic development project known as Riverwalk. Riverwalk is a 1,008 acre tract of land located on the Catawba River that was once owned and occupied by Hoescht Celanese Corporation of America. At one time this site was the largest cellulose acetate manufacturing facility in the United States. The plant began operations in 1948 and at its peak employed 2,500 people in Rock Hill. The facility closed in 2005 after 57 years in operation. Shortly thereafter, the site was purchased by a private development firm which began demolition and environmental cleanup of the site in 2005, with the initial phase completed in December of 2007.

The concept for construction of a Velodrome - a banked track used for cycling races and other events - began around this same time frame, with a few cycling enthusiasts approaching the developer with their dream of a Velodrome. The Velodrome quickly became identified as the catalyst for the future development of Riverwalk, and spurred a vision of a cycling and outdoor recreation focused area. The developer partnered with the City of Rock Hill by pledging 250 acres of the site for public ownership and use. In line with Rock Hill's plan for attracting economic development through the development of quality places; along with the Velodrome, four other venues – BMX Supercross, Cyclo-cross, Mountain Biking and Criterion road course - were added to the public portion of the development. Each facility was designed in cooperation with USA Cycling to meet Olympic standards. The overall development vision includes housing, shopping, entertainment, office, and light manufacturing. Eventual employment on the site is projected to bring 4,000 jobs to Rock Hill, with private investment totaling \$600 million.

Community Need Addressed

The Celanese site, an industrial chemical plant for 57 years, occupied prime real estate along the Catawba River. Now defunct, this area was in desperate need of revitalization. In fact, there had never been pedestrian or recreational access to the river in this area for the entire life of the plant. The greater Rock Hill community needed access to the river, in order to enjoy its natural beauty. Protecting nature and the environment was also a community concern that needed to be addressed. In addition to the 2.5 million square foot manufacturing facility, there were significant problems with the site because of environmental issues caused by operations at the plant. This eastern area of Rock Hill, with its close proximity to the interstate, was also ripe for continued business and industrial use. However, the community needed a balance – between business, industrial, residential and recreational uses.

From the effort to find this balance sprang the vision for Riverwalk. The plans included a river village concept, distinguished by more than three miles of waterfront, intended to produce a development plan like no other in the Charlotte metropolitan area. The ultimate development proposal would create a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly community that emphasized employment, connectivity, recreation, and open space uses. The plan would incorporate industrial, commercial, and a diversity of residential products, all connected by greenway trails and parks to link the Catawba River to the various neighborhoods and public centers within the property.

Outcomes

Since its completion and opening in 2012, the Velodrome has become a focal point of activity in the Riverwalk area. It has hosted 5 National, 6 Regional, and 82 League Race Nights – for a total of 1760 competitors, and over 21,000 spectators. The impact on local cyclists, both seasoned and those new to the sport, has been great as well. To date, over 1000 riders have been certified to ride on the Velodrome with over 500 youth participating in cycling clinics. In addition, the facility has hosted approximately 450 middle school-aged students from 7 local schools to learn about how science and math play a role in sports.

The BMX Supercross track opened in August of 2014 and enjoyed instant success and praise from the local, national, and international cycling communities. The BMX Supercross was chosen to host the UCI BMX World Cup in 2015 and 2016, and the UCI BMX World Championship in 2017 – an event expected to draw 3,500 riders from 40 different countries and as many as 25,000 spectators. In addition to these major international events, the BMX will host 34 events annually, drawing a total of 30,000 attendees, resulting in an estimated annual direct economic impact of \$4million.

The Riverwalk development as a whole has also been making great progress. In 2014, it was voted one of the top two mixed use developments in the Charlotte Metro area. Approximately 100 homes are completed or in process, with 150 apartments completed by early 2015. Business has also been moving in to Riverwalk, with 1.1 million square feet of industrial space completed, resulting in 450 new jobs and \$60 million in new investment. Additional planning and negotiations for restaurants, an assisted living facility, office space and other retail is also on going.

Collaboration

The City of Rock Hill has a close working relationship with the developer of Riverwalk, The Assured Group and its local subsidiary named The Greens of Rock Hill, LLC ("The Greens"). Representatives from the Greens attend monthly project team meetings with City staff concerning the overall Riverwalk project. The City worked in very close coordination with Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), the international governing body for cycling, as well as USA Cycling on the design of the Velodrome and USA BMX on the design of the BMX Supercross track, to ensure that each venue would meet Olympic standards.

For financing, the City partnered with TD Bank to undertake the NMTC financing. Support from the State of South Carolina was also secured in the form of designated Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds. In the early stages of planning, the City partnered with Clemson University to undertake an economic impact study that added confidence to the ultimate successfulness of the project.

Sources

TIF Bonds served by Hospitality Tax Proceeds <small>(Designated as New Market Tax Credit and Recovery Zone Development Bonds)</small>	\$ 5,000,000
Total Sources	\$ 5,000,000

Uses

Roadway Design and Engineering	\$ 186,319
Roadway Construction	\$ 808,681
Track Design and Engineering	\$ 440,000
Track Construction	\$ 3,205,000
Building Construction	\$ 360,000
Total Uses	\$ 5,000,000

Project Cost: \$5,000,000

Less: \$1,200,000 Forgiven through New Market Tax Credits
 Less: \$787,500 Recovery Zone Development Bond Subsidy
 Less: \$875,000 Hospitality Tax Escrow over term of interest-only period
 Less: \$721,000 Sponsorships

Revised Cost: \$1,416,500 Total Projected Borrowing at Year 7

Financing

The innovative financing employed to bring the Velodrome into reality, and the further development opportunities it created, make this a truly unique project. The cost for the Velodrome and infrastructure related to the additional cycling facilities totaled \$5 million. The City considered all forms of financing such as General Obligation Bonds, Tax Increment Financing, Revenue bonds, and Recovery Zone Bonds.

In an effort to think outside the box on funding, staff began researching, and eventually applied for, New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC). The NMTC Program was established to incentivize new development in communities facing high unemployment rates, resulting in low-income population areas. Staff found that with a NMTC, approximately 25% of the project costs could be forgiven after seven years. In addition, the City applied for a "Recovery Zone Designation" and submitted an application for the reallocated funds from the State, which provided a 45% interest cost rebate.

With this innovative financing plan in place, the City issued \$5 million in TIF bonds, served by Hospitality Tax proceeds. The NMTC will forgive \$1.2 million of the original loan after 7 years, with an additional \$787,500 subsidized through the Recovery Zone Development designation. Additional Hospitality Tax proceeds placed in escrow by the City over the 7 year period will total \$875,000, and an additional \$721,000 will be collected through sponsorships of the venues. In summary, after 7 years of nominal interest-only payments, the City will refinance only \$1.4 million on a total \$5 million project. All of this was accomplished without spending any property tax money. Innovative financing resulted in an overall savings of over \$2.7 million on the Velodrome, which hastened the ability to finance four other complimentary cycling venues, and jumpstarted development of Riverwalk as a new, vibrant community for all the citizens of Rock Hill to enjoy.



Riverwalk VISION:
 Provide a dynamic riverfront community with a distinctive and active outdoor lifestyle.

<p>2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brownfield Site purchased by City's Development Partner 	<p>2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •City Vision Session for Development Mixed Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential • Commercial • Light Industry • Pedestrian Friendly
<p>2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •MOU between City of Rock Hill & Developer distinguishing goals of project: land use plan, zoning and financial commitments •Land Development Agreement Began/Financing Agreement began •Annexation of property to city opening opportunity for TIF •First TIF to Finance Public Infrastructure on private property to benefit a private development •Environmental Cleanup completed 	<p>2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •GAP Financing; Model developed by City's Economic & Urban Development Department •Municipal Improvement District (MID) established for the site and fee structures to support •City of Rock Hill changed Zoning of Property from Industrial to: 1) Residential 2) Commercial 3) Major Development •Land Development Agreement approved by the City
<p>2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reimbursement resolution for initial public improvements •City approves Riverwalk Municipal Improvement District •Public Amenities Plan established •Financing Agreement approved by City •General bond ordinance for TIF bonds approved; First TIF bond for \$10.5 million approved 	<p>2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Velodrome completed: 5 National; 6 Regional; 82 League Races; 1,760 Competitors; 21,000 Spectators
<p>2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •BMX Supercross Track Opened: Hosting 34 events annually; drawing 30,000 attendees annually; economic impact of \$4 million annually 	<p>2015 & 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hosting UCI BMX World Cup
<p>2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hosting UCI BMX World Cup; expected to draw 3,500 riders from 40 countries and 25,000 spectators 	

Exhibit 1: Riverwalk Master Plan



“Riverwalk would create a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly community that emphasized employment, connectivity, recreation and open space uses.”
 - David Vehaun, Rock Hill City Administrator





LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

Lexington, Kentucky States that a well-defined urban and rural form creates an iconic sense of place; minimizes conflicts between urban and rural uses; and ensures there is sufficient rural land for a thriving agricultural and natural economy.

Lexington began its success in 1958 with forethought to designate the first Urban Growth Boundary in the country gaining National recognition from the American Planning Association (APA). This is one of three major milestones enabling their community to preserve rural land for rural uses.

How does a well-defined urban and rural form shape what is Lexington?

- Creates an iconic sense of place
- Minimizes conflicts between urban and rural uses
- Ensures there is sufficient rural land for a thriving agricultural economy

The Urban Service Area (USA), designed as a way of managing wastewater infrastructure expansion and rural land preservation, ensured that development in Fayette County would be compact and contiguous. The boundary has been expanded and contracted over the years and now is sized at about 30% of the county. The last significant expansion occurred in 1996 when 5,400 acres were added.

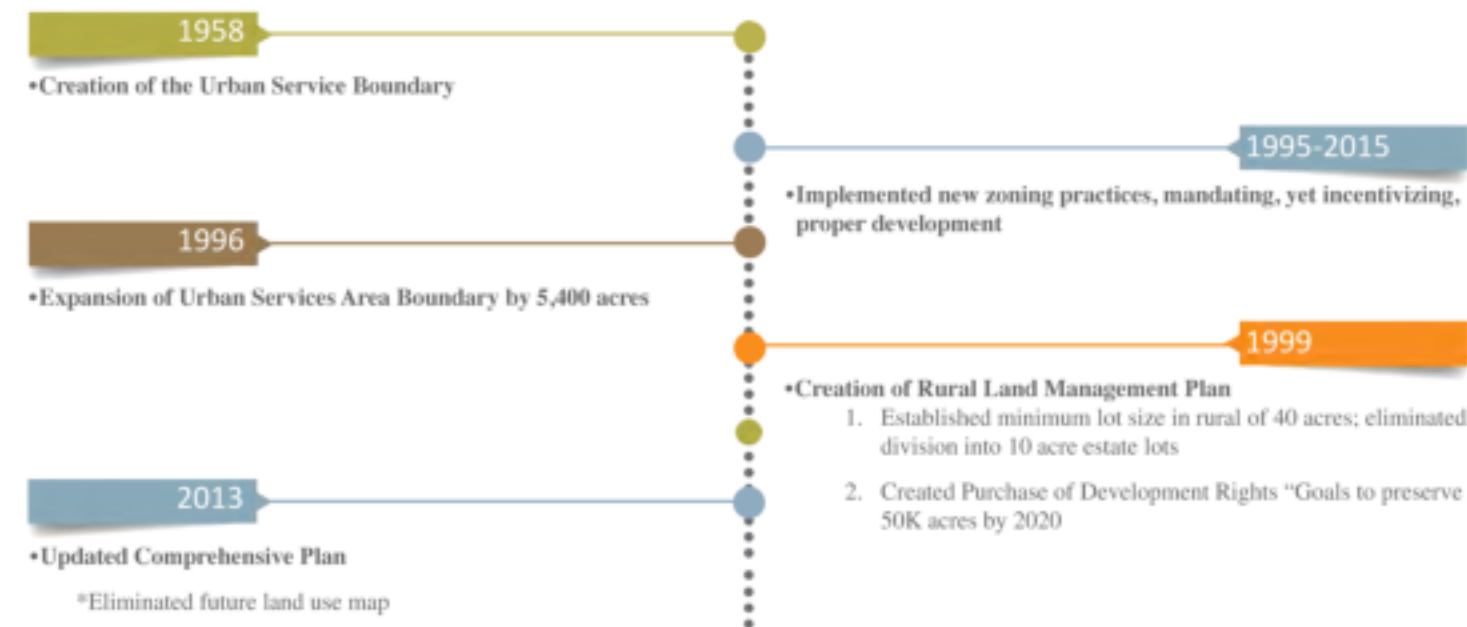
Landmark resolutions came again in 1999 with Lexington's Rural Land Management Plan. Following the 1996 expansion of the Urban Service Area (USA) Boundary, this plan resulted in two key rural preservation strategies. 1) It established a minimum lot size in the rural area of 40 acres. This size was agreed to by farm interests as the minimum size for a fully viable farm and eliminated the division of land into 10 acre estate lots. 2) The plan also led to the creation of the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program that funded a permanent conservation easement on qualified land, ensuring that the land would forever be preserved for agricultural purposes. The goal of the PDR is to set aside 50K acres through PDR and other conservation easements. Lexington is presently holding 30K acres of preserved land.

In 2013, Lexington completed its work thus far by amending their Comprehensive Plan. With this endeavor, they eliminated the future land use map that before had all but served as the pre-zoning map. Without the map and with the Goals and Objectives of the Plan and other Plan elements, they are enabling creative development throughout the USA. Over the past 10 years, new zoning tools have been developed to mandate, yet incentivize proper development, encourage infill development, including adaptive reuse, a defined I/R area allowing for concessions across all zones, the expansion of I/R concessions to other parts of the USA.

As a result of the 2013 master plan, all future planning is the discretion of the planning and zoning department and approval conducive to the goals and objectives of that document and smart growth principles in general.

To offset the higher cost of land due to constrained supply, there are a number of incentives encouraging farm preservation, infill and affordable housing. PDR helps qualified farms to make improvements and remain viable, thus relieving the pressure on farmers to sell out to development. Tax Incentivized Financing (TIF) is a fairly recent option available in Lexington being used on specific active developments, including a suburban lifestyle center.

In general, mandated, yet incentivized, zoning encourages creative development throughout the urban area and not just in the predesignated land use area. Freeing the developer to propose a land use anywhere it if meets a community need and is compatible with the surrounding land uses. The Urban County Council recently funded an affordable housing trust to fund affordable housing construction. The mayor is backing a proposal in the Kentucky state legislature that would allow a local sales tax for targeted projects.



Purchase of Development Rights in Lexington, KY

PDR is now in its 14th successful year of conservation easement acquisition and has become an award winning and nationally recognized farmland preservation program. Protecting their world famous rural landscape from urban sprawl has been a community goal in Fayette County for over 50 years.

There are six main goals of PDR.

- 1 In accordance with the Urban County Government Charter and the Rural Resource Service Area Land Management Plan (adopted in 1999), the PDR program supports integrity of the Full Urban Services District. Concentrating growth in an urban center reduces the cost of public services to local government.
- 2 To support the purpose of the Urban Services Boundary (adopted in 1958) as described in the Rural Service Area Land Management Plan.
- 3 To protect the agricultural, equine and tourism economies of Fayette County by conserving large areas of rural farmland.
- 4 Conserve and protect the natural, scenic, open space, historic and agricultural resources of rural Fayette County.
- 5 Use conservation easements to protect 50,000 acres of rural Fayette County by the year 2020.
- 6 Provide funding of \$140 million (local, state and federal funding).

“Rural preservation along with dense and mixed-use developments are keys to managing growth. And, so far, we’ve managed to garner widespread public support, perhaps the most important element.”

- Jim Duncan, Director of Planning Lexington, KY

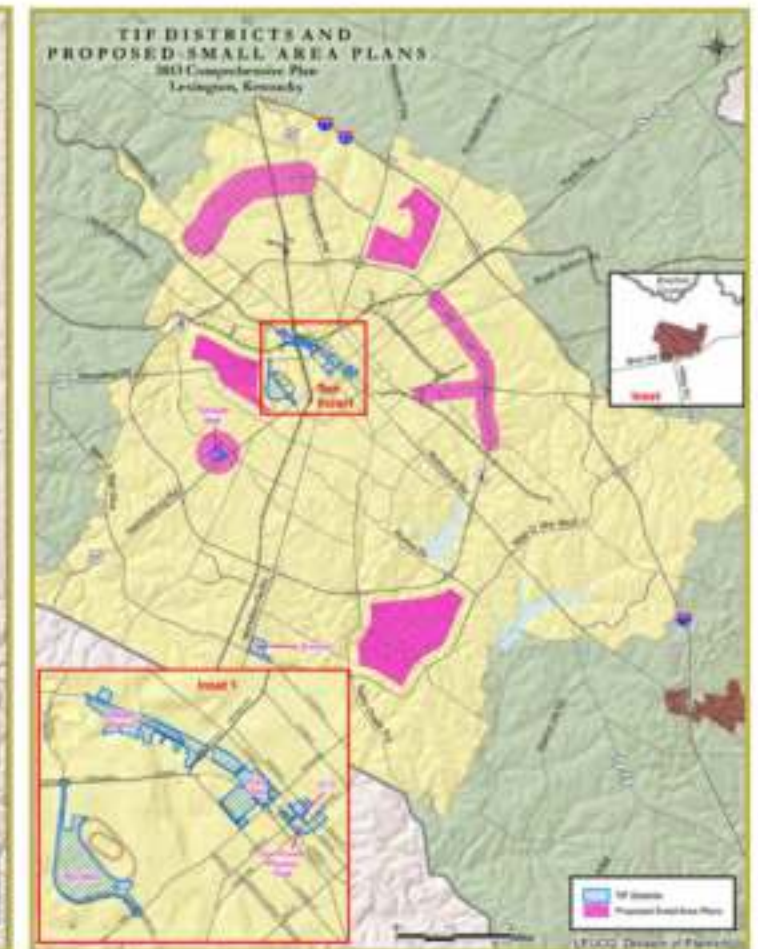
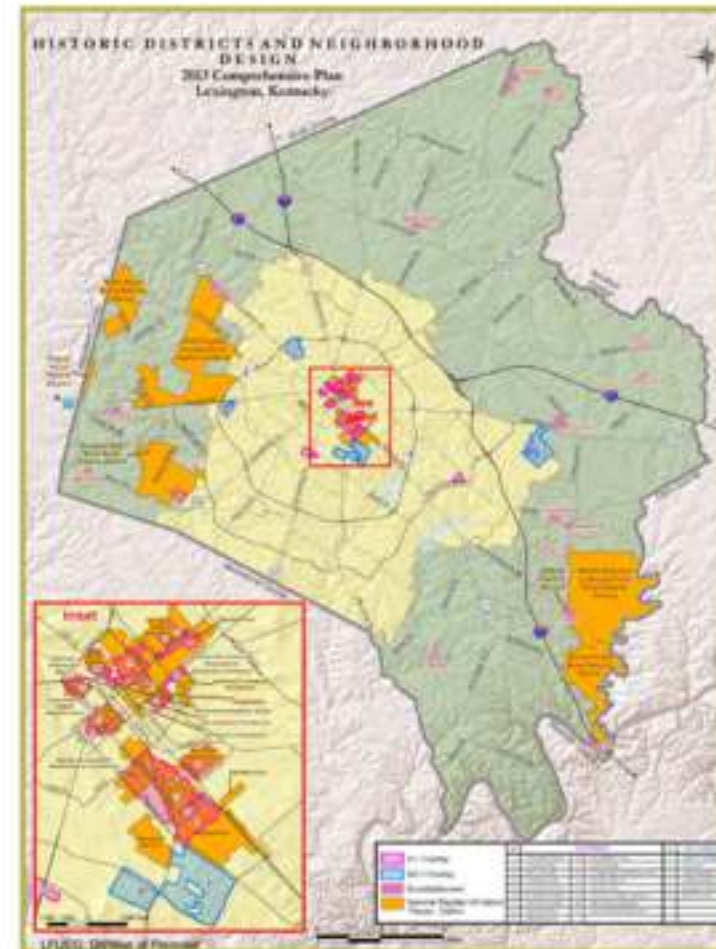
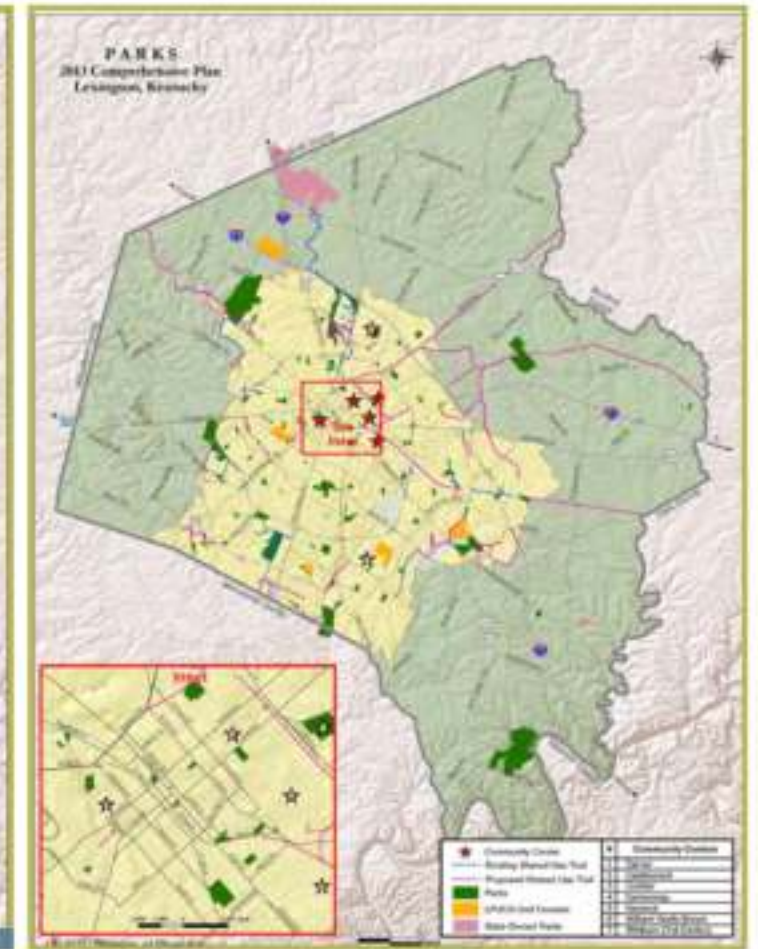
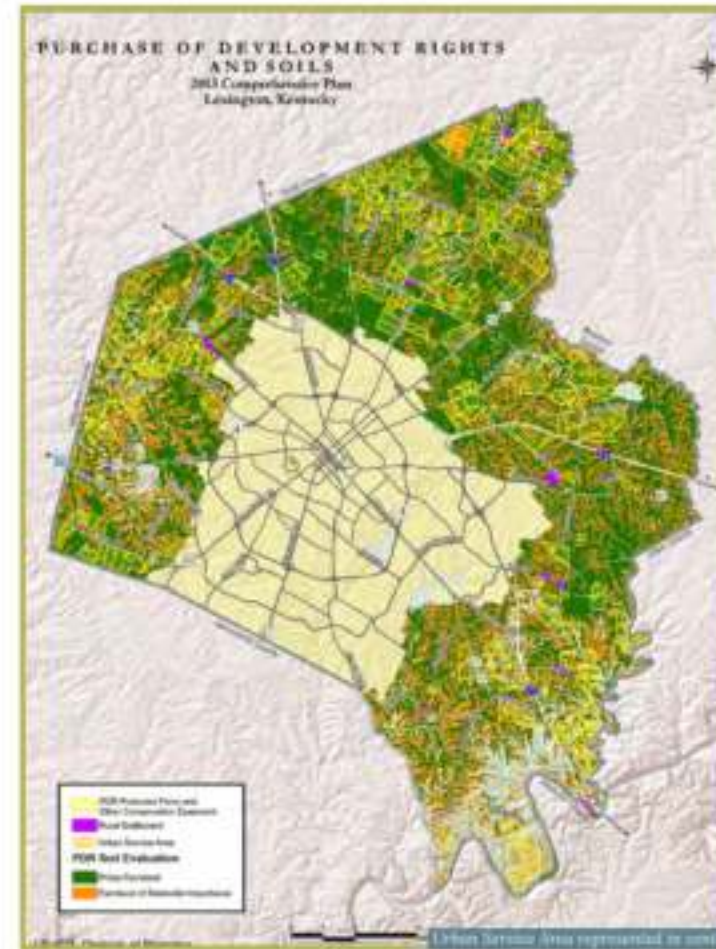


Click the icon to the left to view the PDR video from Lexington, KY

50,000 acres of farmland is required in order for Fayette County to support the existing agricultural infrastructure and to protect their global brand identity as the “Horse Capital of the World.” 50,000 acres is only 27% of all the land in Fayette County. According to a 2013 University of Kentucky College of Agriculture economic impact study, this finite resource supports an agricultural cluster that generates \$2.4 billion in annual output and provides 1 out of every 9 jobs. It also provides \$1.3 billion in additional income, profits, and dividends.

PDR has a staff of LFUCG employees who direct and administer this voluntary program. The Fayette County Rural Land Management Board, Incorporated is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. Applications to the PDR program are evaluated and the farms are visited by the staff. The applications are ranked by the staff and approved by the Board. The farms are appraised in rank order. The Board makes offers to purchase the development rights on the farms and places conservation easements on the properties, subject to available funding. Once a purchase contract is signed, a closing is scheduled. The farms are monitored annually for conservation easement compliance. The farms may be sold or bequeathed, but the conservation easement runs with the title of the land in perpetuity.

244 farms with over 28,169 acres are protected by conservation easements, 56.34% of the 50,000 acre goal. The types of farms in the program include 98-general agriculture, 133-equine and 13-‘other’. The total includes 39 farms with donated conservation easements on 1,732 acres.



Urban Service Area (USA)
City Center



Urban Service Area (USA)



Urban Service Area (USA)



Urban Service Area (USA)



Urban Service Area (USA)



Urban Service Area (USA)



Urban Service Area (USA)
University of Kentucky



Rural Land Management



Rural Land Management



Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)



Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

