

our family



# our future



our upstate

working together today for generations to come





Whether we have lived in South Carolina's Upstate region for six months or 60 years, we recognize that this is a unique area that provides us with a great place to raise a family, go to school, develop a career, and enjoy retirement.

From the natural beauty of its landscape to our pride in working together to create a special place to live, learn, work and play, the Upstate has a wide range of amenities that enhance our quality of life.

While the Upstate has endured many of the same economic struggles as the rest of the United States in recent years, we have fared better than most and are well positioned for a strong future.

Recognized nationally as a high growth area for more than 30 years, the 10-county Upstate region (Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg and Union) is projected to continue attracting new residents and businesses for many years to come.



## a desired place to live

Once a hidden gem, the region has seen a steady population increase over the last 80 years as more people have discovered the charm, beauty and spirit of the Upstate.

In 1930, 545,974 people called the Upstate home. The region reached 800,000 residents in 1970 and eclipsed the one million mark in the 1990 census. In the last two decades, the region has added more than 300,000 new residents for a population of 1,362,073 in the 2010 census. This represents nearly one third of the entire population of South Carolina living within the 10-county Upstate region.

If current projections are realized, by 2030 the region will have more than 1.6 million residents and one million jobs.

The recent growth has been from a combination of residents' growing families as well as people moving to the region from other parts of the country and world. The minority population in the Upstate has risen from 20% in 1990 to 28% in 2010. The fastest growing ethnic group in the region has been the Hispanic community with a 138% increase between 2000 and 2010, accounting for 5.5% of all residents in the region. African Americans are the largest ethnic minority in the region account for 17.5% of all Upstate residents.

Roughly 45% of all residents of the Upstate are either under the age of 20 or above the age of 60. This results in the need for a wide array of services in the areas of education and public health. It also puts pressure on the remaining 55% to provide the workforce needed to sustain job growth across the region.

The Upstate consistently ranks as a desired place to live for a large majority of residents. In a recent survey of more than 6,000 Upstate residents, 75% called the region an "Excellent" or "Very Good" place to live with only 5% characterizing it as "Poor" or "Fair".



# the power of good Ideas

As our region continues to grow, the challenge is to ensure that we receive the positive benefits of this increased population in terms of additional jobs, commerce and cultural enrichment while mitigating some of the potential negative results associated with growth that is neither properly planned nor thoughtfully constructed.

As part of that recent survey, Upstate residents reflected a concern that traffic congestion and increased land use for development are starting to negatively impact their quality of life.

More than two years ago, over 400 Upstate residents gathered for an all-day session to begin the discussion of what growth in the Upstate could look like if we work together and plan for the future.

That session served as the kickoff for a regional "visioning" initiative during which nearly 10,000 Upstate residents provided counsel through participation in regional surveys, community forums and organizational presentations. Through this engagement residents shared what they value about living in the Upstate and what they see as the key elements to work on as we look to maintain and grow the quality of life for those who live here today and those who will be coming here in future years.

A committee of more than 70 residents representing all aspects of life in the Upstate spent months analyzing, reviewing and studying this counsel, developing from it the "Shared Upstate Growth Vision."

This vision represents a picture of what residents want the Upstate to aspire to over the next two decades. It is a bold vision that also outlines five elements that can help make it achievable.

The vision is not a plan and does not have regulatory power or authority over communities or jurisdictions. Instead, it is an idea – several good ideas – representing an overview of what residents across the Upstate value as we look toward the future. Strategies and action items and a tool kit accompany the vision; but at its core, the vision is designed to serve as a guide and inspirational goal for what we can be as a region if we seize the opportunity to work together today for the generations to come.

## together we are stronger

While there are actions related to the vision that can be undertaken by every single resident of the Upstate, ultimately for us to be successful in aspiring to achieve the vision, we must work together across jurisdictional boundaries and business sectors.

Strategies outlined include opportunities related to air quality and water quantity, transportation, land use, workforce development, education and recreational activities, with each having components that cross jurisdictions and sectors. If we are to reach our full potential in any area, we must think outside of our typical boundaries and identify opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.

There have already been many excellent examples across the Upstate of business and community leaders coming together to address a need or opportunity, including the creation of the Greenville–Spartanburg Airport, the location of BMW to the Upstate and most recently the addition of Southwest Airlines to the region.

As we look toward the future, our region will be stronger and advance further if we create a culture where collaboration is not an occasional event, but an interwoven thread that knits together the social and business fabric of our community.





The development of the Shared Upstate Growth Vision is an initiative of Ten at the Top.  
[phone:864.283.2315](tel:864.283.2315)   [website:www.tenatthetop.org](http://www.tenatthetop.org)

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# "What I like about living in the Upstate"

## Regional Vision Survey Responses - May 2010

"Having spent time living and traveling to other parts of the country, I cannot imagine living and raising my family anywhere other than the Upstate."

"I grew up here, my family is here. I love the area, it's not too big or busy. It is a beautiful part of the country and has all four seasons as well as being close to mountains, lakes and the ocean and not too far away from major cities if need arises."

"I feel that the most positive thing about living in the Upstate of South Carolina is that we do have an eye toward the future with an effort to balance growth, conservation, and quality of life."

"The Upstate has a spirit of possibility, where challenges are met head-on 'we just have not figured out the answer yet' as opposed to other regions that see challenges as reminders of past failures 'we tried that, it didn't work.'"

"We must control suburban sprawl from overtaking the beautiful open land that is a huge part of our signature as an incredible place to live."

"The Upstate has an excellent mix of jobs/ community/ education/culture that must be maintained."

"The Upstate is industrious. We value our traditions as a manufacturing area but we are also aware and hopefully open to emerging industries. At the same time, we stay busy by remaining connected to the area through cultural events, our parks, and the natural environment."

"It is a feel good place. Neighbors helping neighbors, going to church with friends and family. It feels good to be small town USA."

"The Upstate is a wonderful place to raise a family. Small town living with easy access to major cities and airports."

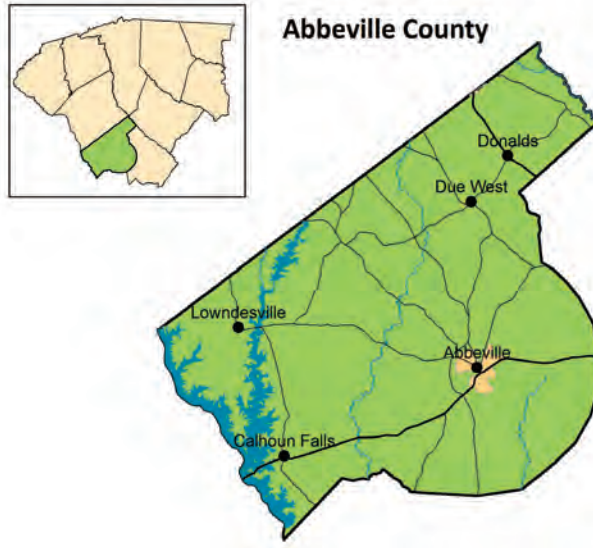
"There is ton of potential with this area, but smart strategic planning will ultimately decide the outcome. Location to nature and the ability to manage our resources are critical. We are still a blank canvas, in regards to what we will turn into...but the future looks bright. Lots of opportunities...."

"One of the most positive things about living in the Upstate is the desire of many residents to see change; job growth, education and industry."

"The Upstate is one of the most beautiful areas of the country. I feel proud to live here."







## abbeville

upstate-south carolina

Abbeville County, founded in 1785, is the "Birthplace and Deathbed of the Confederacy" and claims John C. Calhoun as a native son. Abbeville County covers 508 square miles and encompasses Calhoun Falls State Park and Marina, Richard Russell Dam, and Sumter National Forest. Historically, Abbeville County includes the Abbeville Opera House and historic district, the Burk-Stark Mansion (circa 1841), and Erskine College, located in the town of Due West.

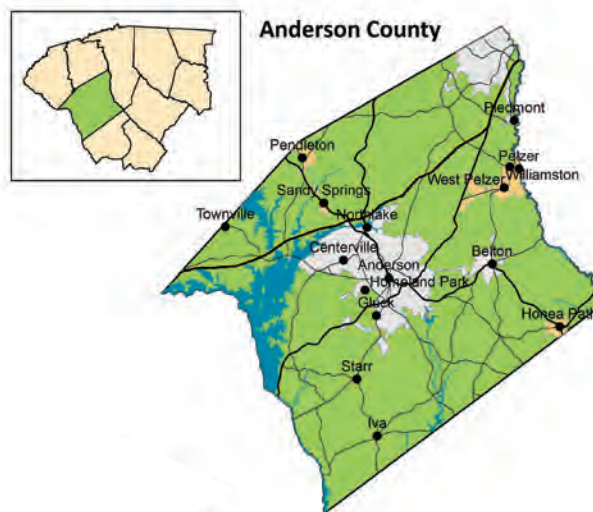
- Population (2010): 25,417
- Population projection (2030): 29,070
- Decrease in population since 2000: 2.9%
- Top Employer: Prysmian Power Cables & Systems NA

## anderson

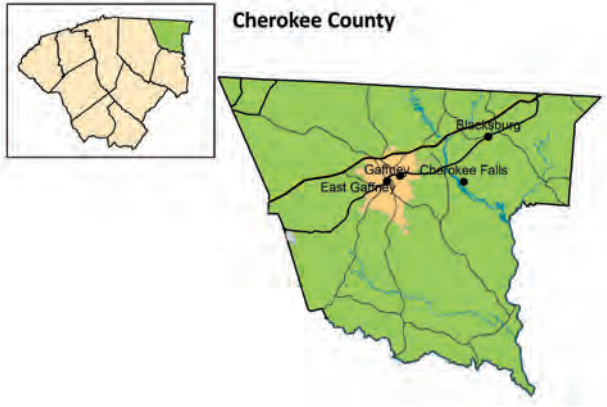
upstate-south carolina

Anderson County has been able to merge its historic past with a business-minded present. Anderson County's 230 manufacturers have led the way for the theme of "Making News... Making Progress" that has developed Anderson County into the state's number one capital investment location. The county is also renowned for the inviting Lake Hartwell, its state parks, and waterfalls.

- Population (2010): 187,126
- Population projection (2030): 218,520
- Increase in population since 2000: 12.9%
- Top Employers: Anderson County School Districts and AnMed Health







## cherokee

upstate-south carolina

Cherokee County was founded in 1897 and named after the resident Native American tribe. It is situated directly between the Greenville-Spartanburg and Charlotte metropolitan areas, with easy access to the international airports both areas boast. Gaffney, the county seat, is home to the famous "Peachoid" water tower and has a wide variety of shopping opportunities. The nationally known Peach Festival is held there each July.

- Population (2010): 55,342
- Population projection (2030): 67,350
- Increase in population since 2000: 5.3%
- Top Employer: Nestle USA

## greenville

upstate-south carolina

Greenville County is the most populous county in South Carolina. Over the past thirty years, Greenville County has diversified and expanded to become the commercial, cultural, and recreational heart of the Upstate. It is the home of many international and national corporate offices, and boasts such attractions as Falls Park, the Peace Center, Caesars Head State Park, and the BI-LO Center.

- Population (2010): 451,225
- Population projection (2030): 542,290
- Increase in population since 2000: 18.9%
- Top Employers: School District of Greenville County and Greenville Hospital System







## greenwood

upstate-south carolina

Greenwood County is an economic leader in South Carolina and is home to the Greenwood Genetic Center, which provides clinical genetic services, diagnostic laboratory testing, educational programs, and research in the field of medical genetics. In recent years, Greenwood has seen an increase in the number of homes built for vacation and retirement as people discover the beauty of the county's lakeshore, including Lake Greenwood State Recreation Area. Greenwood's natural assets are showcased each June during the South Carolina Festival of Flowers.

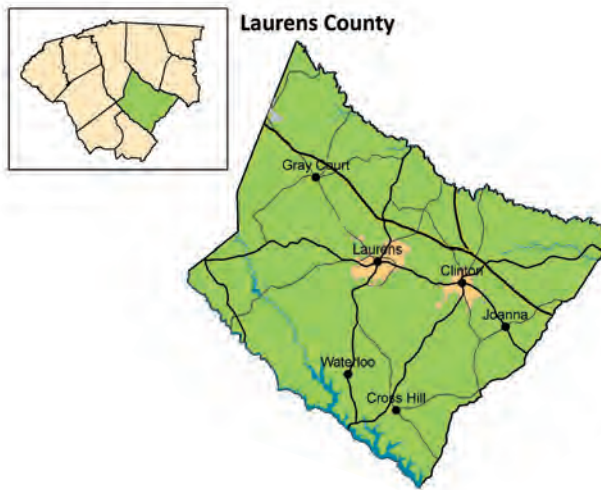
- Population (2010): 69,661
- Population projection (2030): 79,750
- Increase in population since 2000: 5.1%
- Top Employers: Self Regional Healthcare; Fujiphoto Film

## laurens

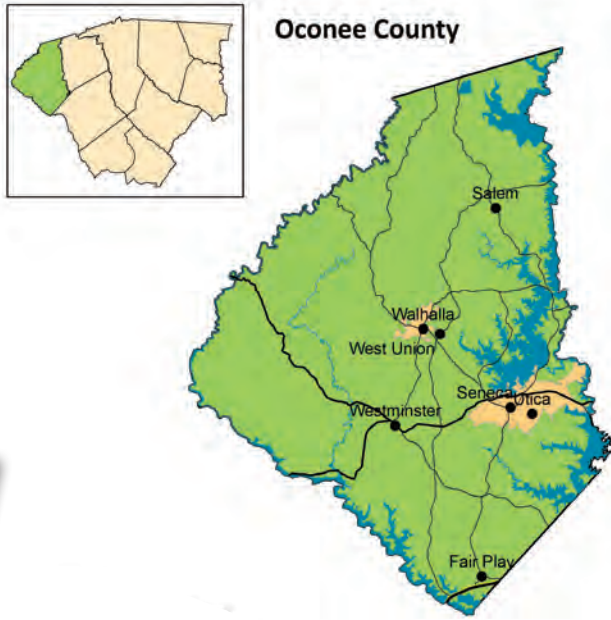
upstate-south carolina

Considered to be the gateway to the region, Laurens County welcomes visitors to the Upstate. Organized in 1785, Laurens County was established as an area centered on textiles. Today, textiles have been replaced by a mix of industries, including plastics, automotive, and advanced manufacturing. Laurens County is also home to the Musgrove Mill State Historic Site.

- Population (2010): 66,537
- Population projection (2030): 87,660
- Decrease in population since 2000: 4.4%
- Top Employer: Wal-Mart Distribution





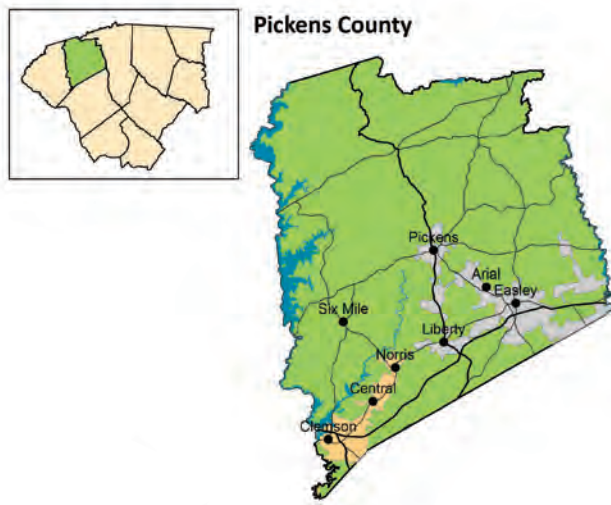


Oconee County is now a proven performer for business and industry, where Fortune 500 companies such as Duke Energy Corporation have invested more than \$220 million in recent years. From this solid economic base has come many new occupational opportunities in Oconee County. The county is centered on the countless rivers, lakes, and forests that give Oconee County its natural beauty. The county is home to numerous waterfalls and hiking trails. Oconee County hosts the South Carolina Apple Festival, Oktoberfest and the Spring Heritage Festival.

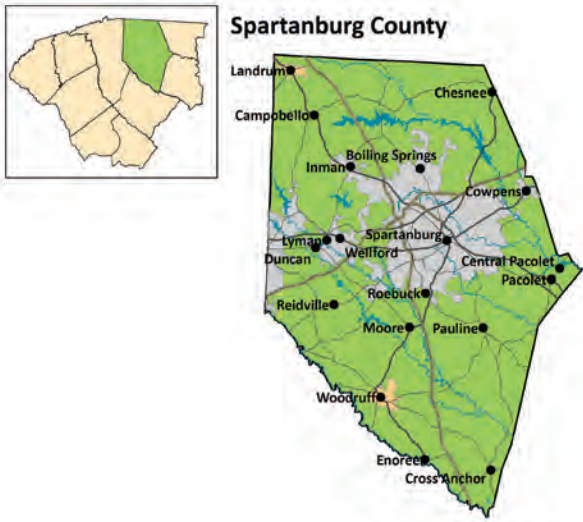
- Population (2010): 74,273
- Population projection (2030): 91,070
- Increase in population since 2000: 12.2%
- Top Employers: School District of Oconee County, Duke Energy Corporation, Oconee Medical Center and ITRON

Pickens is the former home of the United States' seventh Vice President, John C. Calhoun. The land became the home of Clemson University, which was named the "Public School of the Year" in 2000 by Time Magazine and has brought many industrial gains to the county. Pickens County hosts the Pumpkin Festival, Heritage Day at the Hagood Mill, and Dacusville Farm Days. The county also boasts such beautiful natural sites as Lakes Keowee and Jocasse, Sassafras Mountain and Table Rock State Park.

- Population (2010): 119,224
- Population projection (2030): 150,420
- Increase in population since 2000: 7.6%
- Top Employers: State of South Carolina Government and Clemson University







# spartanburg

upstate-south carolina

Spartanburg is the home of more per capita international investment than anywhere else in the country. Centered along the intersection of two major interstates, the area has become host to more than 110 international firms, including the American headquarters of BMW manufacturing company and Milliken Company. Spartanburg County is also rich in the preservation of natural wonders and historical sites, including Cowpens National Battlefield, Walnut Grove Plantation, and Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve.

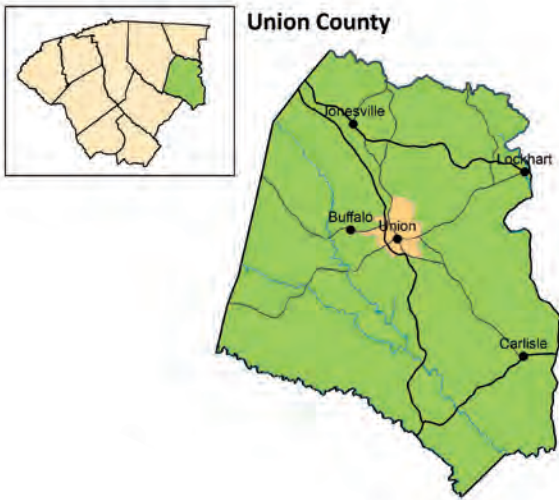
- Population (2010): 284,307
- Population projection (2030): 336,810
- Increase in population since 2000: 12%
- Top Employers: Spartanburg Regional Health Services, BMW Manufacturing Corporation, Denny's, and JM Smith Corporation

# union

upstate-south carolina

Union County was named for Union Church, erected in 1765 to serve the predominantly Scotch-Irish settlers from Virginia and Pennsylvania. The area contains a wealth of natural resources, including long stretches of the Broad and Tyger Rivers, five lakes, and 55,000 acres of preserved land in the Sumter National Forest. History buffs can tour the home and gardens of the antebellum Rose Hill Plantation State Park.

- Population (2010): 28,961
- Population projection (2030): 26,570
- Decrease in population since 2000: 3.1%
- Top Employer: Union County School District





Ten at the Top Executive Committee & Board of Directors

Officers:

Irv Welling (Chair)  
Welling Strategic

Ingo Angermeier (First Vice Chair)  
Regional Advocate

Steve Navarro (Second Vice Chair)  
The Furman Co., Inc.

Neal Workman (Third Vice Chair)  
Trehel Corporation

John A. Miller, Jr. (Secretary)  
AnMed Health System

Erwin Maddrey (Treasurer)  
Maddrey and Associates

Board of Directors:

Richard Baines  
Broad River Electric Cooperative, Inc.

William Barnet III  
The Barnet Company

Carol Burdette  
United Way of Anderson County

Foster Chapman  
Johnson Development Associates, Inc.

Auvis Cole  
Union County Tourism Commission

James A. Coleman  
Laurens County Council

Jim Cook  
Cherokee County Development Board

Charles Dalton  
Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Chandra Dillard  
SC House of Representatives

R. Thornwell Dunlap III  
Countybank

David N. Edwards, Jr.  
GSP International Airport

Samuel Erwin  
Palmetto Bank

Jim Evers  
AT&T

Don Gordon  
The Riley Institute at Furman University

Ben Haskew  
Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce

Phil Hughes  
Hughes Investments, Inc

Torance Inman  
Union County Chamber of Commerce

Executive Committee Members:

Rick Danner  
Mayor, City of Greer

Mike Forrester  
Spartanburg Community College

F. Lee Garrett  
Mayor, City of Calhoun Falls

Minor M. Shaw  
Micco Corp.

John C. Stockwell  
University of South Carolina Upstate

Hal Johnson  
Upstate Alliance

Henry Jolly  
Mayor, City of Gaffney

Phillip Kilgore  
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, PC

Lee Luff  
Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce

Evelyn Lugo  
SC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Hank McCullough  
Piedmont Natural Gas

Barry Nocks  
Clemson University, Dept. of Planning & Landscape Architecture

Steve Pelissier  
Appalachian Council of Governments

Andrena Powell Baker  
Union County Economic Development Board

Ivan Randolph  
Abbeville County School District

Terence Roberts  
Mayor, City of Anderson

Michael Sheriff  
Mayor Pro Tem, Liberty

Russell Stall  
Greenville Forward

F. Bogue Wallin  
Pacolet Milliken Enterprises, Inc.

Jeanne Ward  
Oconee Medical Center

Ann Wright  
American Red Cross of Upstate South Carolina

Brad Wyche  
Upstate Forever

Ten at the Top Funding Partners

Continuing Partners -three-year commitment

Regional Steward

Blue Cross Blue Shield of SC  
Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System

Regional Partner

AnMed Health System  
Pacolet–Milliken Enterprises, Inc.  
ScanSource

Regional Advocate

Barnet Development Corporation  
Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
BMW Manufacturing Company  
Erwin Maddrey  
Furman Co. Inc.  
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart PC  
Upstate Carolina Medical Center

Regional Patron

Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce  
BB&T  
Broad River Electric Co–Op, Inc.  
City of Greer  
Coldwell Banker Caine  
Community Foundation of Greenville  
General Wholesale Distributers, LLC.  
Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce  
Greenville Technical College  
Hughes Investments, Inc.  
Johnson Development Associates  
Liquid Inc. Marketing– Heather Clark  
McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture  
Minor Shaw  
Northwestern Mutual Financial Network  
Piedmont Natural Gas  
SC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Trehel Corporation  
Tri–County Technical College  
USC Upstate  
Welling Strategic

Annual Partners-one-year commitment

Regional Steward

Advance South Carolina  
GSA Business

Regional Partner

Business Black Box  
Entercom Upstate Radio  
Fairway Outdoor

Regional Sponsor

Anderson Independent Mail  
Oconee Medical Center  
Spartanburg Herald Journal  
The Greenville News

Regional Advocate

Carolina First  
City of Mauldin  
Hughes Agency, LLC

Regional Patron

Bon Secours St Francis Health System  
Erwin–Penland, Inc.  
Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Inc.  
House of Technology  
Hughes Development Corporation  
People’s National Bank  
Spartanburg Community College  
The Riley Institute at Furman University  
Brad Wyche

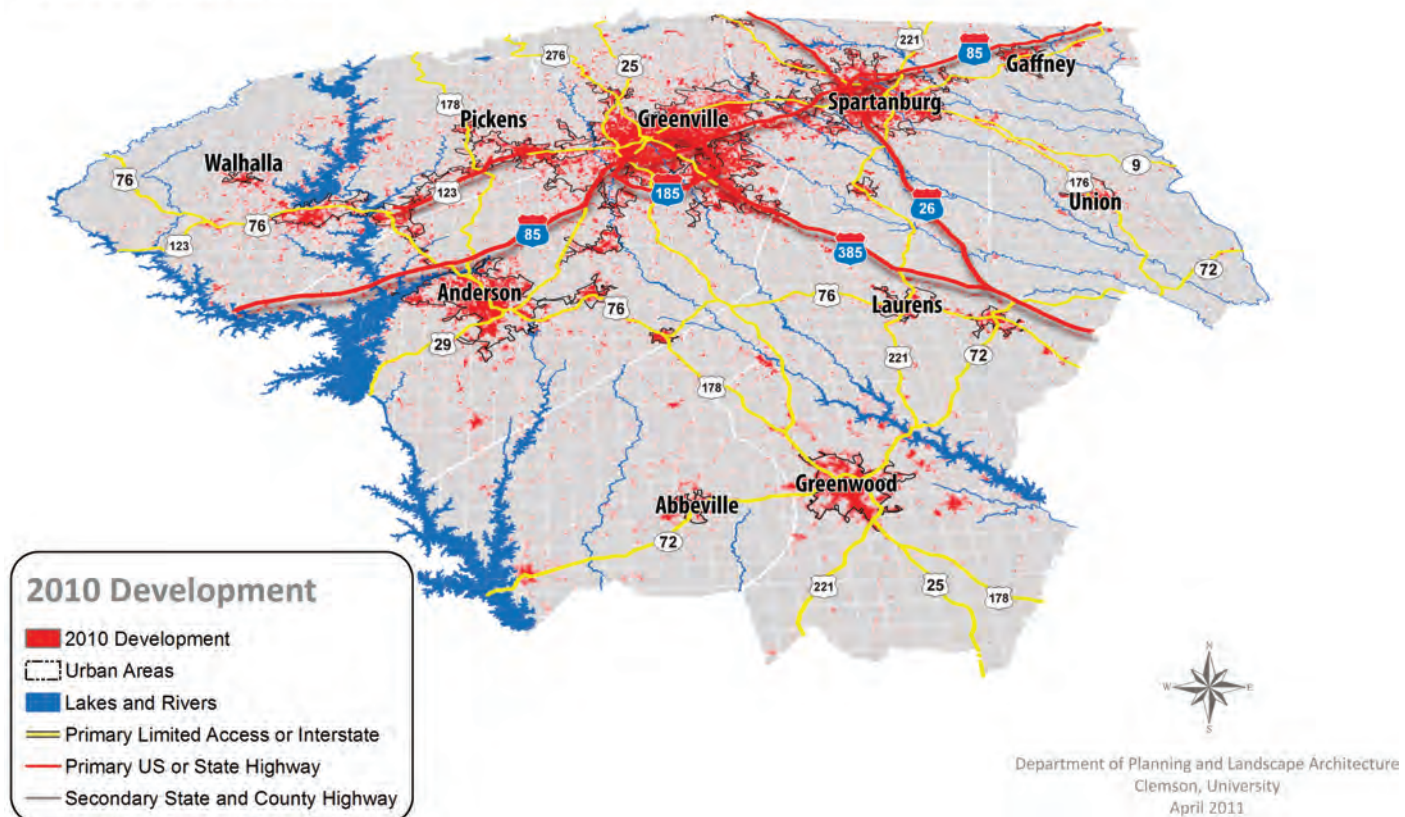


# Where are we now...

The Upstate has been consistently growing and increasing its urban footprint for the last 50 years. In recent years, traffic congestion, air pollution, water quality and quantity and the amount of land being used for new development have reached levels that threaten to impact the daily activities and quality of life for residents across the Upstate. In addition, the region continues to struggle to field a competitive knowledge-based workforce.

the upstate  
in 2010

## TEN AT THE TOP SOUTH CAROLINA



## indicators...

### transportation



Like many other parts of the Southeast, the Upstate is very dependent on personal cars for travel and thus as the population continues to grow and the number of vehicles increases, it will continue to take longer to travel from place to place. One of the important measures for road travel and congestion is the roadway capacity level of service, which is determined through the average annual daily traffic count (AADT). From this data, roads are graded to illustrate the level of service that the road provides. Roads that are easily traveled with no delay or congestion are classified as "A" level roads with a decrease in grade down to an "F" for roads that are beyond capacity and regularly congested. Currently, only roughly 10 miles of roadways in the Upstate are classified as "F" or beyond capacity. However, based on the projected increase of AADT across the Upstate over the next 20 years, by 2030 it is estimated that more than 50 miles of Upstate roadways will be classified as "F," overcapacity and unacceptable. The number of roads moving from "A" and "B" to levels of "C" and "D" is also projected to significantly increase, meaning that if there is not a significant increase in public transit or other avenues that strategically reduce or reroute vehicles across the region it will in general take longer for residents across the region to travel from place to place.



# indicators...

## air quality

Residents and visitors of the Upstate have enjoyed its natural quality for generations. However, with increased air pollution, certain groups within the Upstate have a greater risk of being affected. Poor air quality can influence decisions of people with asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema and diabetes. Larger groups at risk are those under the age of 18 years old and over the age of 65 according to the American Lung Association. For the Upstate as a whole, this means that over 30% of the population is at risk on days that air quality is poor. The Upstate averages more than 30 days per year in which the air quality is at an unhealthy level. Changes made to improve air quality can insure that everyone in the Upstate can enjoy living in the Upstate.



## education



Statistics consistently show that the higher level of education a person has completed, the more money they will make over the course of their time in the work force. Nationally, around 84% of the population over the age of 25 has earned at least a high school diploma or the equivalent. In South Carolina the number is slightly lower at 82.3%. In the Upstate, 81.7% of residents 25 and older have a high school diploma or equivalent. In addition, roughly 23% of those residents have a four-year college degree. The Upstate is on-par with the average for the state of South Carolina, but well below the national average of 27%. In addition, only 50.3% of all Upstate residents have received any education beyond high school.

## land use

Land use change refers to the management and conversion of natural geography to built areas utilized by human activity. Over the last two decades, the Upstate has nearly doubled the amount of land used for development (homes, shops, businesses) while seeing a 34% decrease in the amount of forest land in the region. In 1992 there were more than eight miles of forest land in the region for every one mile of developed land. In 2010 there is now less than three miles of forest land for every mile of developed area.



## water



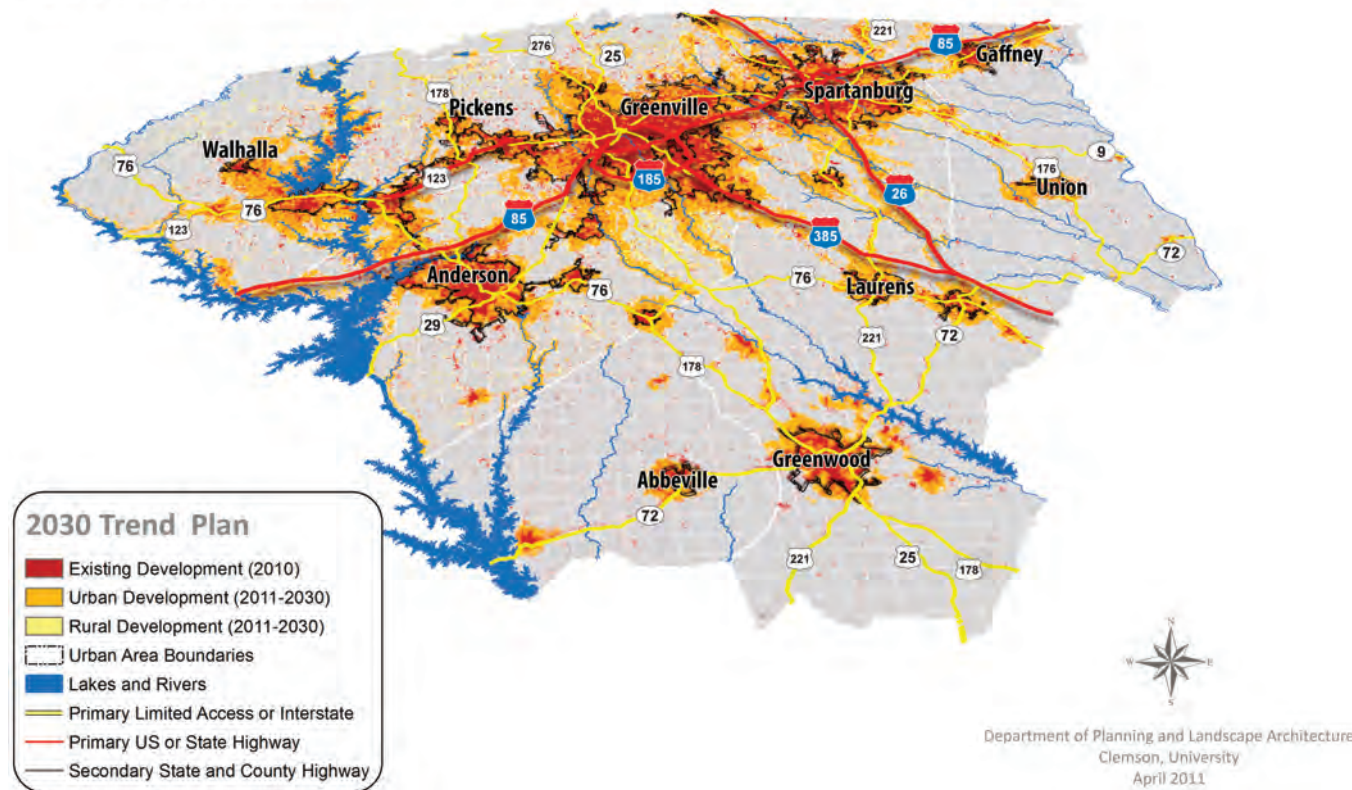
In the State of South Carolina's 2010 Integrated Report Listing of Impaired Waters, 183 point sources in the Upstate were identified as having water quality that does not currently meet State water quality standards. The report tests a water body's ability to support aquatic life and the degree to which a water body is swimmable. With nearly 170 square miles of the Upstate classified as "open water" the health of water ecosystems and safety of human contact with water is especially vital across the Upstate.



# Where are we going...

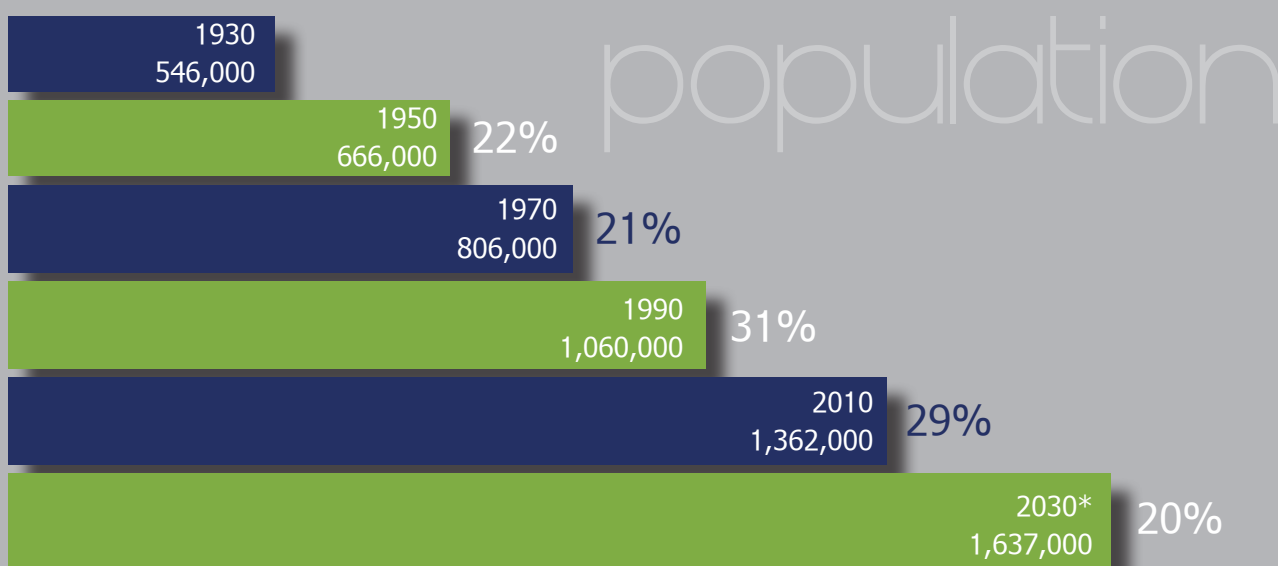
TEN AT THE TOP  
SOUTH CAROLINA

the upstate  
trend in 2030



If left unchecked, by 2030 the amount of land being used for development in the Upstate will be very close to the amount of forest cover in the region. In addition, traffic congestion, air pollution, water quality and quantity and other issues that are just starting to impact our daily lives today will be very noticeable. While the projected population increase for the Upstate has some impact on these issues, the reality is that population growth is just one factor. Like other places across the country, we are seeing a trend of sprawl, congestion and increased pollution even in places where there has been no significant change in the population.

The 2030 Trend Model is based on current land use trends and anticipates that much of the land used for development in the next 20 years will be focused around Greenville and Spartanburg. Sprawling development expands to the north and south of the two larger cities and consumes much of the current available land in both counties making the boundaries for individual cities and between the two counties very difficult to distinguish. The foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains will experience significant large lot rural development. The lake edges of Lake Keowee and Lake Hartwell also will see extensive residential development. The plan reinforces the corridor development along Interstate 85 at the expense of most of the other counties in the Upstate. All of the development is very low density and spread out, continuing the sprawling development patterns of the last twenty years.

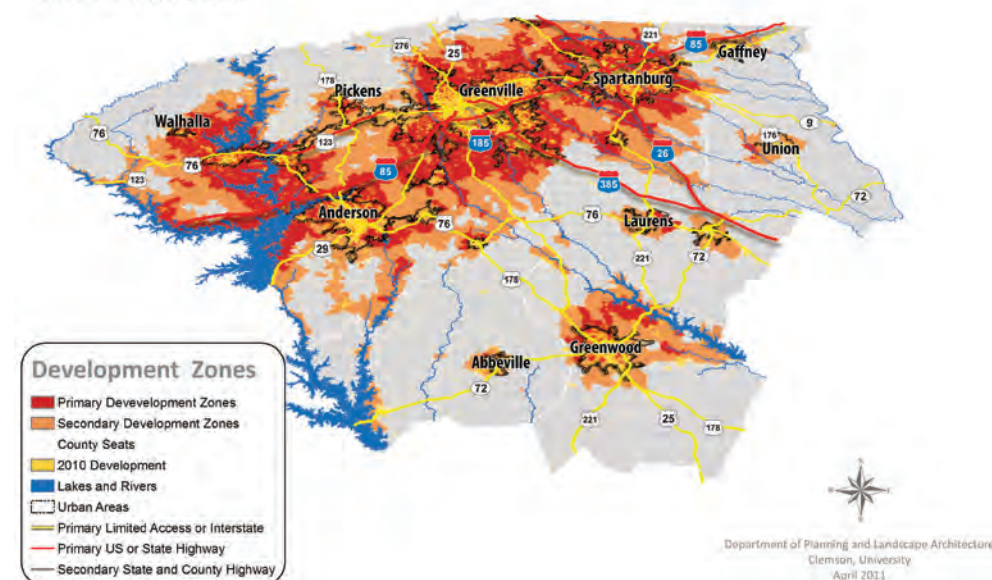


The Upstate has seen population growth of between 20% and 30% over every 20-year period since 1930. Between 2010 and 2030 the region is projected to add more than 275,000 new residents and 200,000 new jobs, which would reflect an increase in population of 20%. This would be the lowest percentage increase, but the second largest increase in total population over the last 100 years.

\* 2030 is projected population



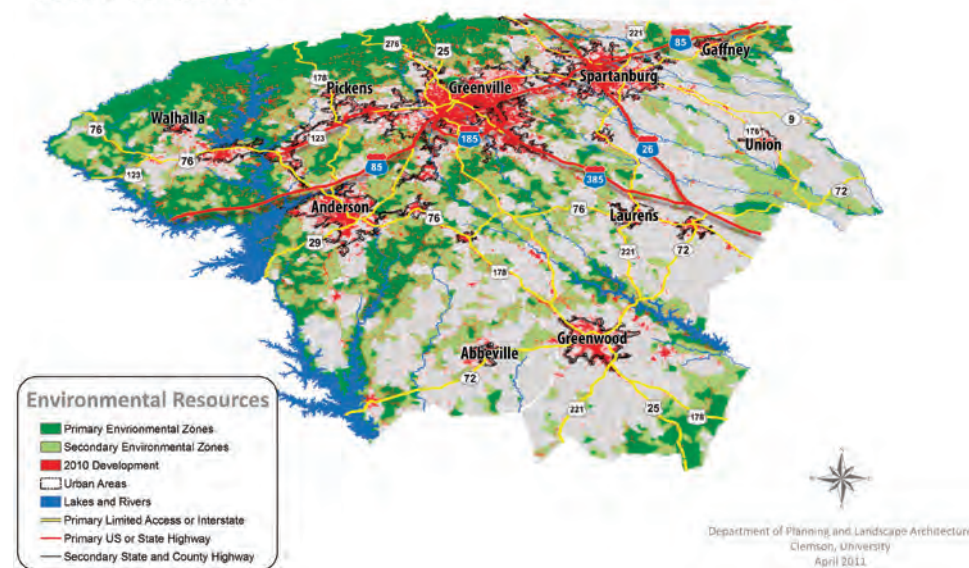
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## Development Elements

The development zones represent the areas that are most likely to be developed over the next twenty years. The darkest colors are the top 20% of the potential development sites. The lighter shades indicate the next 20% of likely sites. These zones are a summary of the models locating industrial, commercial, mixed use, and residential housing sites. The models are based on transportation access, economic and demographic factors, and existing government services. The primary cities in Abbeville, Laurens and Union need better access and services. Greenwood appears to have the right economics and demographics to overcome limited transportation access.

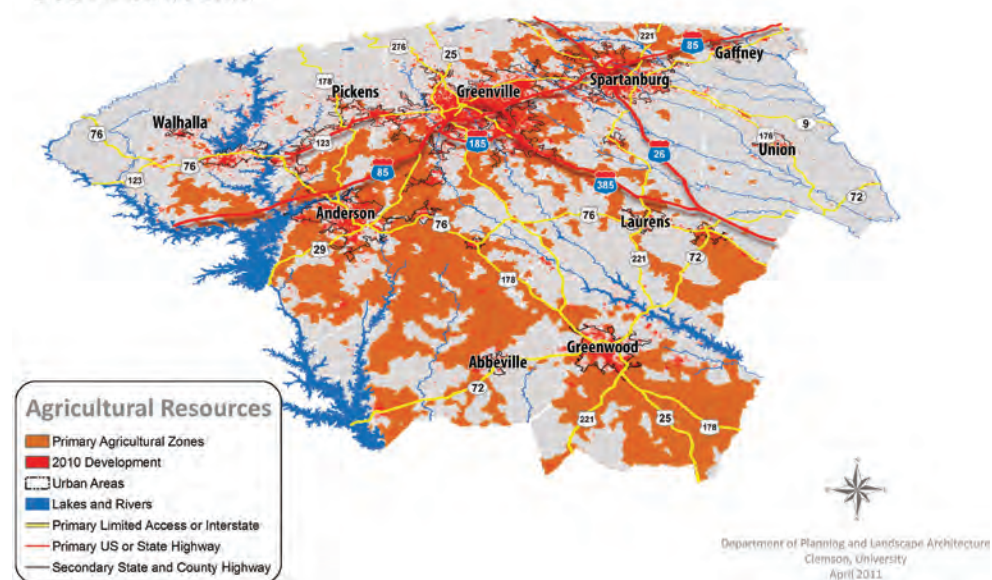
# TEN AT THE TOP SOUTH CAROLINA



## Environmental Elements

The environmental resources depicted represent the most environmentally sensitive areas in the region. The darkest colors represent the top 20% of the environmentally sensitive lands. The lighter green represents the next 20% of the sensitive sites. The zones are based on the summary of environmental models depicting water quality, natural habitats, agriculture access, and visual resources. The most sensitive resources are located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Lake Keowee and Lake Hartwell, as well as the land between SR-123 and I-85. The other zones in the south are the agricultural resources in southern Anderson and Greenville counties. The need to protect these sensitive lands must be balanced with the need for further development expansion.

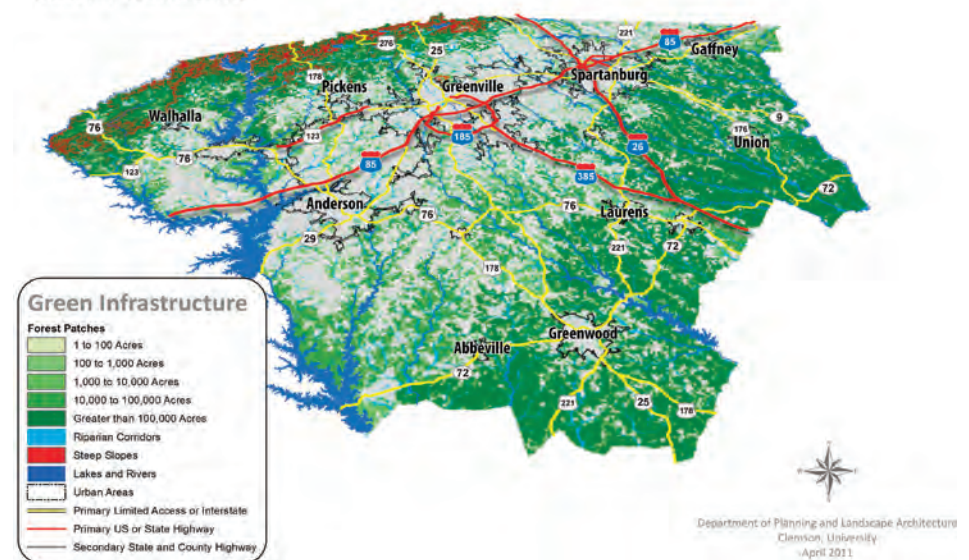
# TEN AT THE TOP SOUTH CAROLINA



## Agricultural Elements

The agricultural zones represent the prime areas suitable for agriculture in the region. There are significant areas running along the I-85 corridor. These areas are threatened by new sprawling development because they have transportation access and desirable building slopes. The other area of prime agricultural soils is south of I-85 in Anderson, Abbeville and Greenwood counties, and to a lesser degree in Greenville and Laurens counties. These lands include cultivated crops and pasture lands for cattle. In the future, protecting these soils offers opportunities for local organic farming and biofuels agriculture.

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## Green Infrastructure Elements

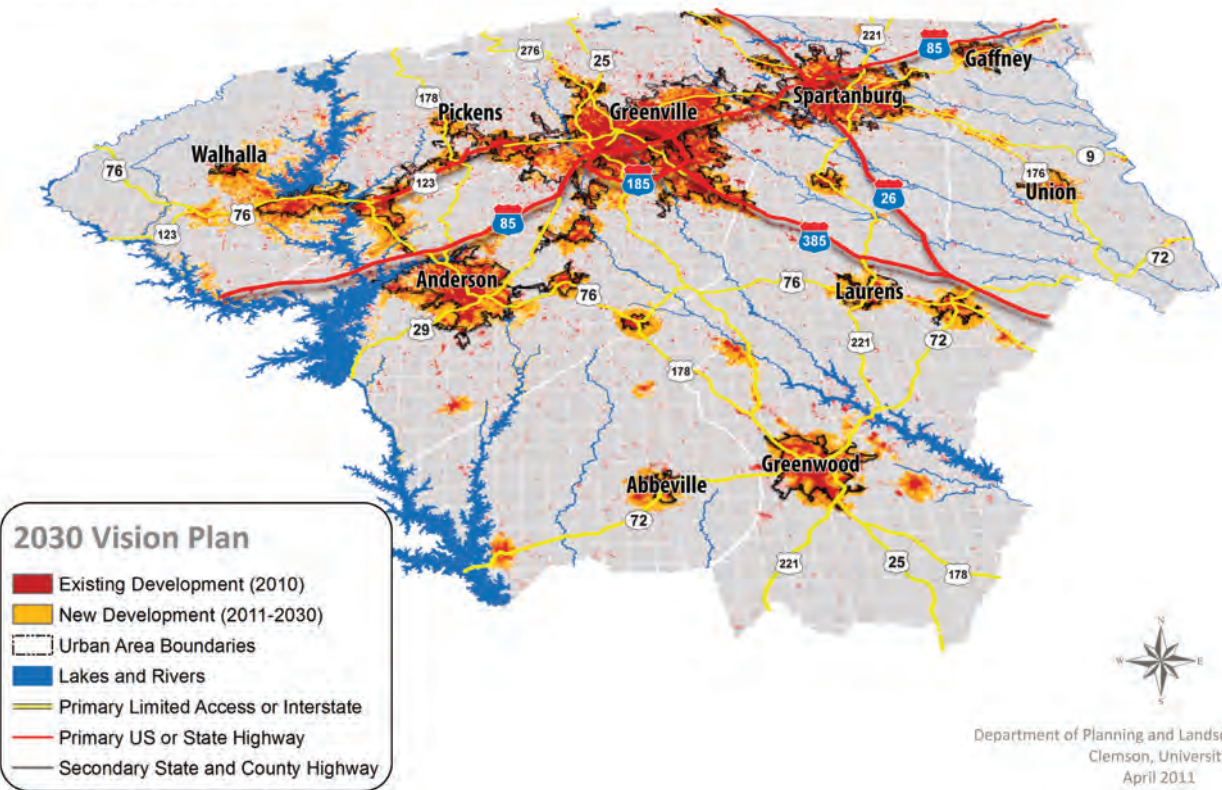
The green infrastructure map depicts the amount of green space and natural areas that currently exist across the Upstate. The largest contiguous forest lands are in the Blue Ridge Mountains on the northern ends of the region, as well as forest lands in Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, Union and Gaffney counties. Discouraging development in the riparian corridors allows for connectivity that encourages wildlife movement while protecting our wetlands and floodplains. The region's steepest slopes, that encourage wildlife movement though out the forest lands, are in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.



# shared upstate growth vision

## TEN AT THE TOP SOUTH CAROLINA

### the upstate vision in 2030

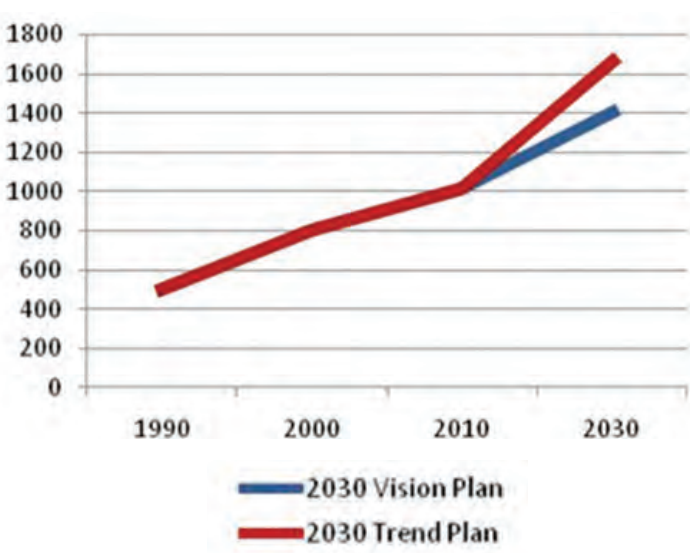


### moving in a different direction

As was clearly and consistently articulated during the development of the regional vision, residents across the Upstate desire a future where the Upstate is universally recognized as a great place to live, learn, work and raise a family. This future includes an emphasis on job growth, education, maintaining our natural resources, public safety, public health and other issues that impact the daily activities and quality of life for Upstate residents.

Residents also desire a different physical pattern of growth than our current trend projection – A pattern that accommodates the projected 250,000 residents coming into the region over the next two decades while still reducing the amount of land consumed for that development by 40% compared to the trend. Our desired future will see our urban communities and rural cities and towns all develop or enhance vibrant downtowns with commerce, jobs, homes and entertainment focused within close proximity to the center of the community with the edges of each jurisdiction clearly noticeable and invitingly leading into the countryside and natural areas across our region. This desired future will also encourage appropriate growth that is targeted along primary transportation corridors and potentially includes transportation options that would provide safe and efficient alternatives for use of the personal automobile. By making strategic choices for how we will grow as individual communities and as a region, the burden on our natural resources will be lessened and we will be able to create and maintain long-term solutions to preserve our natural lands and resources for generations to come. The vision is not intended to create regional control over growth decisions, but instead should serve as a guide for individual communities that ultimately can lead to a desired pattern of growth across the region.

County	2010 Developed Land	2010 Water and Wetlands	Total Square Miles	2030 Trend Developed Land	2030 Vision Developed Land
Abbeville	38.8	29.5	510.9	49.4	45.2
Anderson	148.5	50.7	757.2	243.3	205.4
Cherokee	47	8.6	396.9	79.8	66.7
Greenville	226.4	21.1	794.5	373.3	314.5
Greenwood	69.9	18.1	462.2	106.4	91.8
Laurens	83.3	29.5	723.1	125.2	108.7
Oconee	79.3	47.2	673.8	145.7	119.2
Pickens	87.8	18.6	511.8	136.5	117
Spartanburg	197.4	25.6	818.8	351	289.6
Union	36.7	23.2	515.9	53.7	46.9
Total	1015.6	272.1	6165.1	1664.3	1405







# vision & values committee



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Healthy Greenwood Neighborhoods

Jim Alexander  
Oconee Economic Development Commission

Carol Andersen  
Appalachian Council of Governments

Ann Angermeier  
Upstate Workforce Investment Board

Wendy Bell  
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2030 Shared Upstate Growth Vision: “The 10–county Upstate South Carolina region is universally recognized as one of the leading places in the United States to live, learn, do business and raise a family.”



community vibrancy



economic & entrepreneurial vitality



sustainable growth



natural beauty & resources



human potential

In order to assure that we achieve this Vision while the state continues to experience substantial growth, it will be necessary that we continually strive to enhance these five vision drivers.



# human potential

## Creating opportunities for all Upstate residents to succeed

- Creating an educational culture that values providing quality opportunities for everyone to learn and develop to their fullest potential from early childhood through college and into the workforce
- Cultivating the creativity, capitalizing on the diversity and harnessing the determination of Upstate residents that makes this a special place to live and raise a family
- Encouraging activities in a safe and healthy environment that provide all Upstate residents with opportunities to enjoy the positive qualities of life in the region

**THE** greatest strength of Upstate South Carolina is its people. However, our greatest challenge is to ensure that all of our residents have the opportunity to reach their full potential. We must promote and support a culture that enhances human potential through educational achievement, workforce training, cultural and creative activities and healthy living.





# We can continue to cultivate human potential by:

**1. Promoting a culture that values education.** For many generations, our region experienced an abundance of living wage jobs that did not require significant formal education, thus the Upstate has failed to fully value the critical role that education plays in developing human potential and economic prosperity. As the job market and economy have shifted in recent decades, we must recognize and embrace the importance of education in enhancing economic opportunity. According to the SC Commission on Higher Education, there will be roughly 630,000 job openings in South Carolina in the next decade with 56% of them requiring post secondary education. If we are to reach our full potential as a region, we must cultivate a culture that values education to the level of each individual's potential. We must focus on early childhood education, on quality public schools, on high school graduation for all, and on college degree completion for a much larger portion of our population than is currently the case. We must promote continuing education for all who seek to enhance their knowledge and education beyond high school and college. In a knowledge economy, our future depends on a culture that deeply values education.

**2. Recognizing that education is everyone's responsibility.** It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child. Parents, guardians or other involved family members must be engaged in a child's education, aided as needed by mentors, teachers, volunteers, churches, community centers and others. For our children to reach their full potential, we must encourage and provide opportunities for supportive adult engagement in all aspects of a child's education. We must demonstrate that, as we take these active roles, success in educational attainment will be enhanced and a culture that values learning will flourish.

**3. Promoting physical well-being.** An often overlooked area that hampers individuals' ability to reach their full potential is health and physical well-being. The United States is experiencing an epidemic of obesity resulting in a significant increase in reported cases of diabetes and other diseases, especially among children, and costs billions of dollars in additional health care. Unfortunately, South Carolina has one of the highest rates in the nation. Nearly 30 percent of all South Carolina adults are classified as physically obese to rank the state fifth in overall obesity among the 50 states. The percentage of children in South Carolina who are considered

obese is even higher at more than 30 percent (2009 data). Changing this reality will not happen overnight, but it can be changed if the Upstate supports and promotes programs that encourage physical activity, healthy nutrition, safe, walkable communities and a culture that values physical well-being. The high teen pregnancy rate in our region also has adverse affects on physical health and well-being. From the negative educational affects of premature and low birthrates, to the increase in poverty and family support for good preschool education. Many of these children are not ready for the academic challenges in today's classroom. This is often a pattern that repeats itself so working with the SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and our local health care providers to educate and foster a culture to meet these challenges is vital to assisting our residents in maximizing their human potential.

**4. Encouraging and fostering creativity.** The Upstate possesses a very broad range of arts and cultural facilities and programs, a range traditionally found only in much more heavily populated regions. Communities within the Upstate annually rank among the highest in per capita giving for arts and cultural programs. This generosity provides an extraordinarily rich range of creative opportunities for residents of all ages. With population growth, the further expansion of cultural and creative opportunity will be increasingly important to our attractiveness as a region in which business wishes to invest and people wish to live.

**5. Embracing our similarities and our differences.** Upstate South Carolina believes in personal rights and freedoms and the ability of individuals to create their own success. As the region has grown from slightly more than 500,000 residents in 1930 to over 1.36 million today, and with projected growth beyond 1.6 million by 2030, we must aim to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to prosper. We must also recognize that this growing population puts increased pressures on city, county and state governments and on our public education systems to provide adequate services. We are blessed to have a growing international population that brings new energy and perspectives to the Upstate. As our population continues to grow and diversify, it is important to ensure that no groups or individuals are left out as decisions are made about our future. With residents bringing differing backgrounds and interests to the table, deliberations will be enriched, services improved, and the tools needed to succeed will be available to everyone.

## Local Example: The College Hub of Spartanburg County

Recognizing the importance of increasing the percentage of community residents with a four-year college education (currently 19% of all adults living in Spartanburg County), local partners created the College Hub of Spartanburg County with the vision that Spartanburg will be the best educated county in South Carolina. The organization has set an ambitious 40/30 goal by which 40% of all adults living in Spartanburg County will have a four-year college degree by 2030. The College Hub will assist the community in increasing its degree attainment by providing educational resources and information.

## National Example: The Pittsburgh Promise

The City of Pittsburgh recognizes the importance of education and of enhancing educational opportunities for students in urban areas. The Pittsburgh Promise is a concrete commitment to all children who graduate from Pittsburgh Public Schools and who live in the City of Pittsburgh. If they maintain an average GPA of 2.5 and an attendance record of 90% they will earn up to a \$40,000 scholarship to attend any accredited post-secondary institution in Pennsylvania. The Promise is not need-based—the family's income does not factor into the decision. It is not a competitive process—if they are eligible, they receive the scholarship. Once they are declared eligible, students will receive up to \$10,000 per year for four years based on how long they have lived and attended schools in the city. They only need to maintain a college GPA of 2.0 and a fulltime class load. And, the scholarship is a scholarship, it is not a loan—it does not need to be paid back. In addition to providing financial support for attending college, the Pittsburgh Promise also is committed to enhancing the quality of urban schools in the Pittsburgh area.



# economic & entrepreneurial vitality

## Growing the competitiveness of the Upstate in the Global Economy

- Promoting and cultivating a spirit of entrepreneurialism that makes the Upstate an attractive destination for small and emerging businesses and industries
- Strengthening the opportunities for manufacturers and industries in sectors that are already strongholds within the Upstate
- Focusing energy and resources on enhancing the job skills of Upstate workers to provide support for emerging opportunities

Once known as the world's textile capital, the Upstate's economy has greatly diversified in recent decades to become better positioned for growth in the Global Economy of the 21st Century. The Upstate is now home to both traditional manufacturing and a growing stable of national and international companies focused on research and innovation. In addition, an expanding legion of entrepreneurs and small businesses are dotting the landscape to take advantage of the amenities and opportunities the region offers. As we move forward, the Upstate must strengthen its business-friendly climate while also targeting workforce development to meet the ever-changing needs of business and industry. In building a sustainable, growing economy for our region, we must also remember that entrepreneurial ventures build a base of wealth as those new ventures mature. This wealth spreads beyond the business owner to include others who were involved in building and growing the company. It also grows faster than income brought to the area by existing firms through greater job and leadership opportunities and potentially higher wages.





# We can continue to grow the entrepreneurial vigor and strengthen the economic vitality across the upstate by:

**1. Identifying innovations and opportunities that complement the current strengths of the region.** In today’s economic climate, companies are incubated and thrive in places where there is already a base of knowledge that allows them to be successful and cost effective. The Upstate is already considered a global leader in a number of sectors including advanced materials, biosciences, automotive and energy. We must continue to strengthen the process, technological and service innovations within these areas of expertise by cultivating new companies and assisting those that already call the Upstate home to grow and prosper.

**2. Embracing new technologies and building companies around them.** The spirit of innovation related to research and the development of technological advances is at an all-time high as entrepreneurs look to capitalize on new technologies and advances that were unthinkable just a decade ago. The Upstate has already become known as a place where new ideas can be incubated and grown to their full potential. Whether it is in an emerging industry sector or in an area with a long history, the Upstate should provide companies that are creating cutting edge technology with the resources they need to commercialize and grow their reach. The region must also look to transfer the excellent research capabilities that are available through institutions of higher learning as well as private companies in the region to new markets and venture opportunities.

**3. Using education as a tool for building leaders to grow the economy.** Entrepreneurial vigor and economic vitality are built on bright minds questioning the status quo: how can this be done better? According to Jonathan Ortman, President of the Public Forum Institute and a senior fellow at the Kauffman Foundation, “Clearing the path to market for primary research ... through a combination of regional ecosystem development, faculty engagement and streamlined technology licensing” is one of three areas where growth can be fostered to achieve the greatest impact. There are currently 19 public and private universities, colleges, community colleges and technical colleges in the Upstate with a combined enrollment of more than 78,000. While each institution has a distinct purpose and role, collectively they can create the ecosystem to develop new innovations with substantial market potential. It is vital that the Upstate continue to promote and enhance the education opportunities provided by these institutions and develop and grow high-impact entrepreneurship educational programs that build the skills necessary to recognize market opportunities and provide the resources necessary to realize success with new ventures.

**4. Bridging existing and building new networks to strengthen and provide support for entrepreneurs and their ventures.** Building a network of colleagues and businesses is critical to a successful business and even more so in the early stages of the business cycle. Working with collaborators, incubators, angel investors, local vertical meetings and

casual networking events of interest make up the web of connections that can assist each other in various business functions. Building the connections within the local business community and utilizing them as resources is important as the monetary exchange for services will stay within the community thus feeding into the system repetitiously. There is new age of networking in entrepreneurship and the colleagues in this group are sharing space, ideas, practicing elevator pitches (on a regular basis) and looking for partners with complimenting skill sets with this approach having huge potential and speed. Regardless of the groups and people that come together, it is important to have structure, respect and a collective objective. The group should also continually evaluate the program and contribution s (time/efforts) to the rewards yielded individually, collectively or a community as a whole. The Upstate should encourage efforts that tap into this new age and promote activities that enhance the growth and creativity of entrepreneurs and their ventures.

**5. Facilitating access to capital in the Upstate for funding innovation, commercialization, business development and education.** Capital, knowledge and time are the top constraints to new venture and existing business growth and development. Increasing the awareness of and types of capital needed for each stage of growth provides for a continuation of funding for the emerging businesses in our region. The risk of not being able to capitalize the next stage of growth severely limits the vigor and economic vitality of a region wanting to strengthen its economic base. Seed funds provide the base for testing innovations in the marketplace. Angel capital steps in as those innovations are borne out as having market potential. Following that, short-term credit lines or long-term financing support expansion into additional markets and new products. Success breeds success and putting Upstate businesses together with Upstate funding sources will lead to 1) growth in our new and existing businesses and 2) new funding sources and businesses discovering the Upstate.

**6. Recognizing the connection between economic development and quality of life.** Whether it is in attracting new businesses to the region or encouraging growth and expansion internally, the fact that the Upstate is generally recognized as a quality place to live, learn, work and raise a family often plays an important role in the decision making process. Quality of life is often leveraged by those who promote the region, but not always taken into account internally when decisions are being made related to specific components of that overall quality. Factors such as school quality, natural resources and beauty, traffic congestion, quality of healthcare and arts, culture and entertainment all play a role in making the Upstate a great place to live and are often evaluated by businesses that are looking to locate to the region. Our residents, business leaders and elected officials must understand that investing in improvements in any of these quality of life areas is in essence an investment in the economic vitality of the region.

## Local Example: Mountain Lakes Business Development Centers

Currently being developed through a partnership between Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties, the Mountain Lake Business Development Centers will eventually establish business incubators in the area and collaborate with Tri-County Technical College to provide experience for the young “for profit” entrepreneurs. These centers will also partner with Anderson University, Clemson University, University of South Carolina and Southern Wesleyan University to enhance opportunities for combining education with business development.

## National Example: Florida High Tech Corridor Council

The Florida High Tech Corridor Council (FHTCC) is a 23-county regional economic development initiative of the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida and the University of Florida whose mission is to grow high tech industry in the region through research, workforce development and marketing programs. Over the last 14 years, the FHTCC Matching Grant Research Program has funded collaboration between more than 300 corporate partners and participating universities. The program has leveraged \$54 million to create more than 3,300 jobs and direct or indirect economic impact of \$1.3 billion.



# sustainable growth

## Encouraging future growth in appropriate locations by means that enhance livability in the Upstate

- Creating a culture that values living and growing in a sustainable manner
- Implementing reasonable approaches to land use planning and development that support orderly and sustainable growth that is innovative, attractive and fits the landscape of the community
- Maintaining roads and promoting other transportation enhancements such as bike paths, walkability and public transit that make it easier for all residents to travel across the region for work or play

**Creating** a balance between available resources and our consumptive society is an ongoing challenge that will continue to persist and become even more difficult in the future. It is important to recognize that maintaining the status quo related to how we are growing and using our land and natural resources is leading us down a path that is unsustainable and unhealthy. Until the economic crisis, we were developing land at five times the rate of population growth. If this pattern resumes after the crisis is over, the economic and environmental consequences could be devastating.





# We can move toward a culture of sustainable growth by:

**1. Creating and supporting fair land use policies.** Residents of the Upstate are passionate about their personal freedoms and, as a result, zoning policies that attempt to shape how land can be developed have been incorporated sporadically throughout the region. This has resulted in a piece-meal development strategy that includes unattractive development with a disjointed land use pattern often referred to as urban sprawl. If we are to create an Upstate that is visually attractive and provides sustainable land uses, we must strike a balance between the rights of individual land owners and the overall needs of the community. If applied correctly and fairly, zoning and land use policies can enhance property values and uses for all land owners. Residents and government agencies should work together to create policies, plans and enforcement authority that provides the best overall opportunities. When there are regional-scale growth issues, agencies and residents should be encouraged to work together to identify the best ways to manage and enhance growth across the entire Upstate. Creating regional standards can help ensure that development in one county or municipality does not adversely impact other counties or municipalities while providing continuity to developers and citizens as our region becomes more interconnected.

**2. Developing a regional strategy to relieve traffic congestion, respond rapidly to energy supply changes, and promote greater connectivity.** There was a time when it was generally very easy to travel from place to place across the entire Upstate. Though the region is still generally less congested than Atlanta or Charlotte, the time it takes to travel from place to place is definitely increasing and in danger of reaching severe levels for both residents and businesses. Rising and unstable petroleum prices also put citizens and fleet owners at financial risk. Local municipalities, county governments and transportation agencies across the Upstate should collectively identify opportunities to work together to develop strategies designed to maximize current roadways, reduce traffic delays, increase connectivity, promote alternative transportation and explore how increased travel options can best serve the Upstate.

**3. Recognizing the connection between land use and infrastructure.** When new developments are created, general services, including roads, schools, parks, fire and safety, water and sewer, are often given little advance consideration, but are significantly impacted. Conversely, when utility infrastructure providers extend their services, it is often in areas where the existing road network may not be able to support the projected development. Similarly, when new schools locate in more rural areas of the region, it often encourages

residential development prematurely before adequate roads are in place and most likely will contribute to sprawl. Currently, counties within the Upstate fail to meet recommended levels of service for many of these infrastructure elements. In addition, schools in some areas are overcrowded while others are well below capacity. When developments are built in places where services are either already at capacity or where they do not exist to the extent needed to accommodate the new growth, providing adequate service levels is often extremely costly and primarily absorbed by taxpayers. There must be a better understanding of the fiscal impacts growth has on other services within a community. Dialogue is also needed to address the impacts of growth that spill over city and county lines.

**4. Encouraging a diversity of housing options.** Residents are attracted to communities for different reasons depending on their personal needs and interests. The Upstate should encourage and promote development options within towns and cities that reflect the character and diversity of the people and economy of the community. Some may focus on enhancing family friendly communities that encourage walkability and provide good schools and child care; others may appeal to active retiree populations by providing accessible health care and recreational and cultural amenities. Housing opportunities within close proximity to schools, public services, shopping and employment centers should be encouraged.

**5. Promoting the implementation of Green Buildings.** Green buildings use considerably less energy and water, are built to last, provide healthier environments for their residents and use a higher percentage of recycled building materials. Promoting green buildings would transform the way buildings are designed, built and operated enabling an environmentally and socially responsible healthy and prosperous built environment that improves the quality of life in the Upstate and encourages sustainability.

**6. Encouraging sustainable agriculture.** Agricultural food production has long been an important component of the economy for the Upstate. Agriculture should remain an integral component of our economy to provide part of our food supply and to serve export markets. Local governments, land owners and farmers should work together to promote the value of agriculture to the region and to ensure that farming remains economically and environmentally viable across the Upstate. The value of using agricultural resources for bio-fuels should also be explored.

## Local Example: Clinton Streetscape

The Clinton streetscape project was implemented with the goal of improving several factors within the city's downtown. It was expected that the project will improve downtown by making sidewalks safer, adding additional landscaping, and creating additional parking in a new public parking lot on North Broad Street. When combined with the recent opening in downtown Clinton of the Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy, the project will help reinvigorate and revitalize the historic downtown core of the community.

## National Example: Salt Lake City Mobility and Transportation

Rapid growth in the Salt Lake City region resulted in sprawling suburbs and increased use of personal automobiles rather than public transportation, biking or walking. Realizing more driving leads to more air pollution, traffic, and accidents, Salt Lake City has created safe, highly connected, and walkable neighborhoods while continually working to create a transportation system design to move people, not just automobiles. Salt Lake City enjoys numerous transit options and routes, which enable a significant number of people to come into the city each day for work, school, shopping, and recreation. In addition to its successful light rail and bus systems, the city has established more than 150 miles of bike and pedestrian ways, a robust car share program, and incentives and access to efficient vehicles and alternative fuels.



# natural beauty & resources

## Serving as reliable stewards of our natural environment and resources

- Protecting the natural beauty of a region that includes a number of diverse and environmentally critical natural assets
- Maintaining opportunities for residents to enjoy the parks, lakes, mountains and natural amenities of the Upstate
- Ensuring that measures are put in place to protect vital resources such as clean air and water for generations to come

To many, one of the first things recognized as an important component of life in the Upstate is the significant natural beauty that includes mountains, lakes, parks, farms and forests. There are examples across the country and world of communities that have struggled with balancing the desire to maintain their natural beauty and resources in the face of economic and growth pressures. It will be vital to the future for the Upstate to recognize that the two goals are not mutually exclusive. Serving as reliable stewards of our natural environment and resources is a vital element of the economic well-being of the region.





# We can ensure that we are maintaining our natural beauty and resources by:

- 1. Continuing to identify the special places in the region.** Inventories of special historic and environmental places in some Upstate counties have been conducted, but a list needs to be compiled for the entire region. This list can be used to prioritize areas for protection as well as by communities in land use planning.
- 2. Investing in preserving natural assets.** Through outstanding public/private partnerships, more than 150,000 acres of environmentally significant lands in the Upstate have been protected over the last four decades, but tens of thousands of acres of other important lands remain at risk. It is important to continue these partnerships and to establish local funding sources so additional properties can be preserved. Opportunities to include private sector businesses in environmental protection should be explored as preservation of the natural beauty of the region is vitally important to the economic future of the region.
- 3. Promoting recreational and tourism opportunities for using our environmental assets.** While it is important to conserve land, we must also make sure that residents have access to the mountains, trails, lakes and other environmental areas that make our region special. Creating and expanding nature-based tourism opportunities would enhance the public profile of the special environmental and historic places within the region and also provide communities with opportunities to promote their natural and historic assets. Hunting and fishing are important recreational activities that benefit the region and require continued land conservation.
- 4. Capitalizing on farming and agriculture for land conservation.** In addition to serving the important role of food production, farming also serves as an important component of land conservation. Conservation easements are an important tool to accomplish the land protection of private working farms and forests. Programs

- such as the South Carolina Conservation Bank and county level funding should be supported and expanded to provide incentives for landowners to invest in the protection of their properties.
- 5. Planning for future water needs.** It has always been taken for granted that the Upstate has an abundance of clean water. As we have seen in recent years, because most of the water supply for the region is from surface water sources, the region is susceptible to water shortages during drought conditions. When looking forward to the next 20 years, whether there is enough clean water to support new growth across the Upstate is an important issue that must be addressed. In addition, we share two key river basins in the Upstate with our neighbors in Georgia and North Carolina. Regional water management will be a vital concern as we grow. The Upstate should lead efforts to study future growth demands and how this will impact water needs and then develop a regional strategy to ensure that the needs of all communities can be met.
  - 6. Making needed improvements to ensure we have clean air across the Upstate.** Because of a combination of geographic factors that are out of our control and land use and transportation factors on which we do have some impact, many areas across the Upstate are in jeopardy of being designated as non-attainment areas for air quality based on federal ozone standards. Being designated as a non-attainment area would not only illustrate that air conditions are potentially dangerous for our residents, but could also have significant economic implications for the region. New business growth and expansion is more tightly regulated and significantly more expensive and difficult to secure in non-attainment areas. We must come together regionally to identify and address areas where we can make improvements to reduce the ozone levels and ensure that clean air is abundant across the Upstate.

## Local Example: Lake Conestee Foundation

The primary goals of the Conestee Foundation reflect the diversity of the land comprising Lake Conestee Nature Park and its location near the heart of Greater Greenville. These goals consist of environmental stewardship, recreation and tourism, environmental education and research, watershed stewardship, and community enhancement. The long term care plan for the lake is to keep the sediments in place, minimizing disturbance, keep the Lake Conestee dam in excellent condition, and monitor sediment, water quality and biota for contaminant mobility and ecological impacts. South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and Clemson University, in collaboration with the Conestee Foundation, are involved in a variety of monitoring activities. Detailed reports are available for review through SCDHEC or through the Conestee Foundation.

## National Example: Seattle Urban Trails

The goals of the Urban Trails system is to facilitate bicycling as a viable transportation choice, afford citizens the opportunity to experience the City's unique scenic and natural amenities, provide access to healthful recreational activities, and link major parks and open spaces with Seattle neighborhoods. When completed, the City will have established a bicycle facility network linking neighborhoods and activity centers, as well as providing connections with recreational and natural areas within the region.



# community vibrancy

## Embracing the importance and heritage of the Upstate's urban areas and small towns

- Continuing the movement to reinvigorate the downtowns and urban areas within the Upstate
- Maintaining and growing the vibrancy of the region's small towns and special places
- Embracing our rich history and heritage while continuing to grow opportunities to enjoy and participate in cultural, entertainment and recreational activities

**Recognizing** that each city, town and village within the Upstate has its own unique charm, character and history, it is important as we look toward the future to embrace and enhance these individual characteristics and features while also understanding how they collectively help promote the region. Creating pockets of activity is vital to the vibrancy of a region as these centers often serve as local gathering places and provide opportunities for residents to conduct business, shop and enjoy entertainment. Communities that include a mixture of homes, businesses, shops and restaurants can also help reduce the pattern of sprawl as well as traffic congestion. They can also become magnets for entrepreneurship and cultivate economic success.





# We can maintain and grow the vibrancy of our individual communities by:

**1. Encouraging and supporting the revitalization of individual communities.** There was a time when the downtown was the focal point of every city or town. The migration of many residents to the suburbs and the trend by government agencies to move core services from downtowns to areas outside of city limits turned many once thriving downtowns into economically depressed, run-down streets with empty storefronts and sparsely populated sidewalks. Now, many of the suburban strips that drew retailers and shoppers out of downtowns in the 1970s are suffering the same type of decline in activity and appeal for new businesses that downtown areas experienced decades ago. Over the last two decades, several communities in the Upstate have worked to return economic viability to their downtowns by making them walkable, safe and beautiful – this, in turn, has attracted shops, restaurants, and other businesses to the area. This practice should continue to be embraced across the Upstate with communities taking advantage of grants and other opportunities to regain some of the charm and economic vitality of their communities.

**2. Making it easier for residents to enjoy activities across the Upstate.** Many of the communities across the Upstate hold festivals, concerts and other activities that generate local and regional interest. Currently, there is no central calendar for Upstate events and therefore it is not uncommon to have multiple big events happening across the region at the same time. Greater coordination and promotion of events across the Upstate would likely give residents additional opportunities to enjoy local entertainment while enhancing the events for local communities.

**3. Targeting activities for youth and other specific groups.** While the Upstate is known for offering family friendly activities with an emphasis often on adults with young children, many have identified a void in safe and organized activities for teenagers across the region. This gap is even more pronounced in rural areas where malls and movie theatres are not adequate entertainment options.

Increasing the number of non-school specific events and activities available for teenagers would likely have multiple positive impacts as it would give teenagers more of a sense of local pride and give them alternatives to traditional activities that can lead to crime. Youth athletic leagues should make a stronger effort to retain teen participation. Expanded outdoor recreation activities like hiking, camping, fishing and bicycling also should play an important role in keeping teens physically fit and focused on positive recreational activities. Creating targeted events and activities for other age and ethnic groups can also provide communities with additional opportunities to generate revenue while exposing new audiences to their communities.

**4. Utilizing the strength of our faith based and community organizations.** A valuable strength across the Upstate is the number of vibrant churches, faith based and community organizations that are active parts of local communities. The network of communications and influence that many of these entities have created can be very important to the vibrancy of local communities. Engaging these organizations both in communicating events and also in participating in local activities will help increase community involvement and increase local cohesiveness.

**5. Cultivating the synergy created by the economic, cultural, and social diversity of our region.** The growth of international investment in the Upstate over the last generation has not only brought increased economic vitality to our region but also increased cultural and social diversity. Together, these three elements have helped energize many of our communities and created opportunities, which, when taken advantage of, have enhanced the lives of Upstate residents. As we move forward, we must actively cultivate these opportunities by celebrating our region’s diversity to ensure that the synergy that has allowed so many of our communities to flourish also invigorates our region.

## Local Example: City of Gaffney Visitors Center and Art Gallery

Illustrating that iconic buildings, regardless of their age, can still serve important community functions, in 2010 the City of Gaffney opened their new Visitors Center and Art Gallery in the former Post Office Building on North Granard Street. Originally completed in 1913, the building served as the Gaffney Post Office until 1991. In recent years the structure had fallen in disrepair, but instead of suffering the fate of many older buildings that have been demolished to make way for more modern facilities, the City of Gaffney decided to renovate the building and use it for important community functions. The building now serves as the Visitors Center for the City of Gaffney and includes community meeting space. It also will provide local artists with a great place to display their talents as the facility includes an art gallery, two arts studios and serves as home to the Cherokee County Alliance of Visual Artists.

## National Example: Downtown Denver: Redevelopment of the Dry Building

Embracing a rich heritage and industrial and commercial background, the City of Denver has transformed the Denver Dry Building into an appealing and useful mixed used project. The Denver Dry Goods department store opened in 1894 and was a premier retailer for nearly 50 years. As the city shifted away from industry within the downtown, the Dry Goods building was vacated and left empty. With combined efforts of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority and Affordable Housing Development Corporation, the once thriving business building will be restored and used in a variety of ways. The redevelopment offers affordable and market-rate housing, multiple office spaces, and retail shops. Offices and retail are located at street level for easy access for pedestrians. The variety of uses contained within this historic building is an effort to improve Denver’s downtown while capturing and preserving the city’s historical heritage.



# next steps....

1. **Work Together.** For the Upstate to be successful in implementing a shared vision for the future, sustained commitments will be required to grow relationships across sectors and boundaries. By formally convening business and elected leaders from across the region on a regular basis, regional partners must continue efforts that have been started, building trust and increasing the opportunities for collaboration and partnerships. Additional forums engaging public, private and civic organizations, together with interested residents, must be encouraged and cultivated.

2. **Think Regionally.** In partnership with organizations across the Upstate, Our Upstate–SC will create task forces focused on the five elements of the “Shared Upstate Growth Vision.” These Task Forces, which will include subject experts, stakeholder groups and interested residents from across the Upstate, will be regional in focus as they look to identify regional–scale opportunities to impact areas identified within the regional vision.

3. **Implement Locally.** Some items associated with the regional vision call for actions that will best be implemented at the city or county level and that will vary somewhat depending on the size and location of the community. Individual governments should review the actions outlined in the vision implementation guide and then identify those that are consistent with their own comprehensive plan or local vision. The more communities engaged in implementing actions that are consistent with elements of the vision, the greater the positive impact on the entire region.

4. **Act Boldly.** As opportunities for regional collaboration are identified and developed, we must not be afraid to act boldly and together in implementing initiatives that are beneficial across the entire region. History has proven that breaking out of the status quo can provide greater opportunities for everyone while reducing individual burdens. When it is clearly identified that working together regionally will have a positive impact for the wider region, decision makers must not get caught in the trap of staying on the path of least resistance. Rather, they must be willing to make bold decisions that will have positive long–term implications for the region.

5. **Make a Difference.** While many components of the vision can be achieved through the combined efforts of our cities and counties or by working together on a regional scale, there are also opportunities for families and individuals who call the Upstate home to help make this region an even better place for generations to come. If all Upstate residents identified the “Top 10 Things” that they personally could do to help move forward the Shared Upstate Growth Vision, the combined effort would have a noticeable impact on the future of the Upstate.

6. **Measure, Review, Improve and Communicate.** Finally, as we move forward in implementing elements of the Shared Upstate Growth Vision it is important to develop and maintain measurements that help us understand where we are falling short and where we are having success. Ten at the Top will work with other partners to develop measurements and a progress report that will allow us to monitor the work being done regionally and make adjustments as needed. It is also essential to communicate with a clear message not just how we are doing related to specific measurements, but also the stories that illustrate what is being done across the Upstate to maintain and enhance the region for generations to come.

our family

our future

our upstate



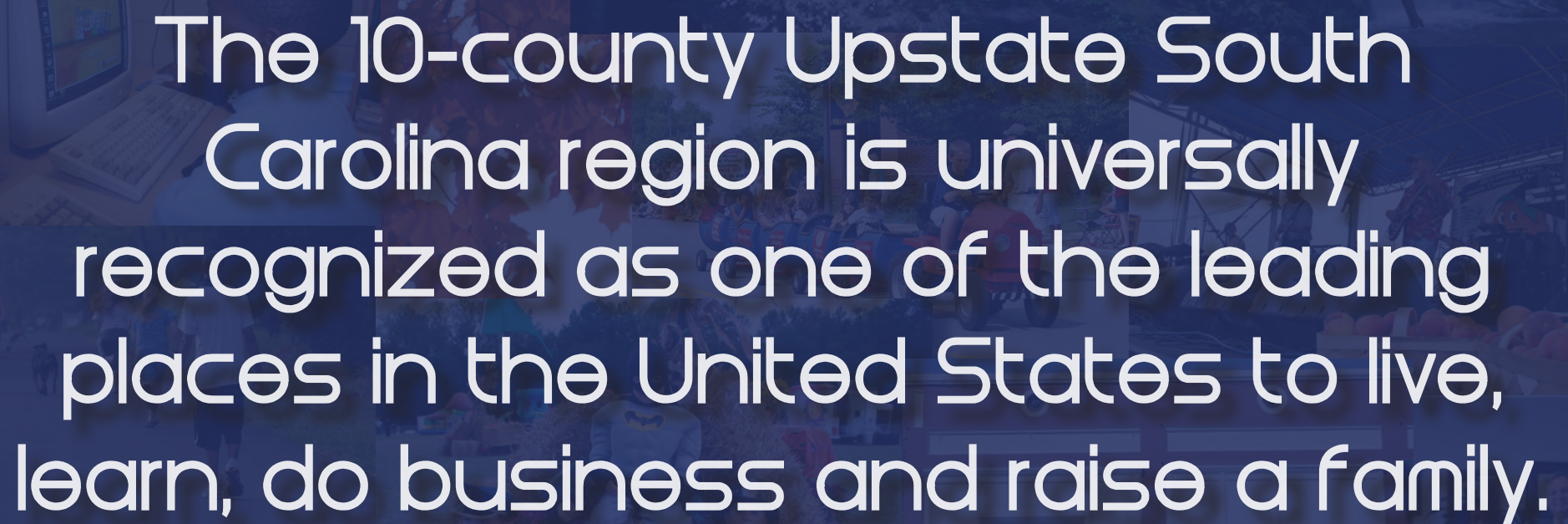
Ten at the Top would like to thank the nearly 10,000 Upstate South Carolina residents whose thoughts, ideas and values assisted in the creation of the Shared Upstate Growth Vision. We also want to acknowledge and thank everyone who provided assistance and support for the development of the vision through their donations of time, facilities, resources and expertise. Creating this vision has truly been a regional effort and would not have been possible without the involvement of many committed individuals. It is through this regional partnership that we now have a clear vision for what Upstate residents value as we look toward the future. The actions we now take individually, as businesses and institutions, as cities and counties and collectively as a region will help ensure that the Upstate remains a great place to live, learn, do business and raise a family for generations to come.



together we are stronger

[www.ourupstatesc.org](http://www.ourupstatesc.org)





The 10-county Upstate South Carolina region is universally recognized as one of the leading places in the United States to live, learn, do business and raise a family.

