

AIKEN COUNTY SOUTH CAROLINA



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2014 - 2024

Sponsor(s) : County Council
First Reading : June 21, 2016
Committee Referral : Development Committee
Committee Consideration Date : June 21, 2016
Committee Recommendation : Approval
Second Reading : July 19, 2016
Public Hearing : June 21, 2016
Third Reading : August 16, 2016
Effective Date : June 6, 2016

I *Laura Sullivan*,
Council Clerk, certify that this Ordinance was
advertised for Public Hearing on 6/5/16.

ORDINANCE NO. 16-08-14

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR AIKEN COUNTY

(To Amend the 2004 - 2014 Comprehensive Plan.)

WHEREAS:

1. The General Assembly of South Carolina enacted in 1994 an amendment to the Code of Laws of South Carolina by adding Chapter 29 to Title 6, "South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994", and repealing all previously enacted planning Acts and Codes; and
2. The 1994 Enabling Act requires that the local governing body develop and maintain a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continued reevaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction; and
3. The Aiken County Planning Commission has reviewed, reevaluated, and updated all of the elements essential to continue Plan maintenance; and
4. The Aiken County Planning Commission held a public hearing on the updated plan at its December 18, 2014 meeting followed by a 12 month public comment period including public input meetings; and
4. The Aiken County Planning Commission upon review of the public comments has by resolution recommended amendment of the 2004 - 2014 Comprehensive; and
5. The Aiken County Council duly advertised and conducted a public hearing on June 21, 2015 on said updated Comprehensive Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED BY THE AIKEN COUNTY COUNCIL THAT:

1. County Council hereby adopts by Ordinance the amendments to the 2004 - 2014 Comprehensive Plan entitled Aiken County Comprehensive Plan Update, 2014 - 2024.
2. Under the pending ordinance doctrine, this ordinance will be effective after advertisement for public hearing.
3. All provisions in other County Ordinances in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed.
4. If any provision of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application and to this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are severable.

This Ordinance shall become effective on June 6, 2016

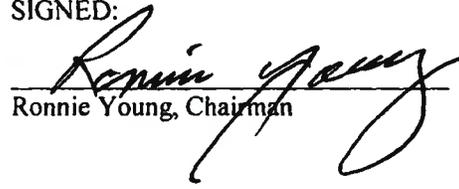
Adopted at the regular meeting of Aiken County Council on August 16, 2016

ATTEST:


Tamara Sullivan, Council Clerk

Reviewed By: 
James M Holly, County Attorney

SIGNED:


Ronnie Young, Chairman

COUNCIL VOTE: Unanimous
ABSENT: McKenzie

INTRODUCTION

Aiken County's Comprehensive Plan provides the framework and guidance for the County's comprehensive planning process. It identifies the basic elements of the planning process, describes them with an inventory of each element's existing conditions, when appropriate includes forecasts of future conditions, and includes goals that the planning process must achieve in order to meet identified issues and needs.

The Comprehensive Plan must also comply with the requirements of the *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994*, S.C. Code § 6-29-510.

This is a technical revision of Aiken County's Comprehensive Plan Update, 2004-2014, County Ordinance No. 05-06-17. As a technical revision, the emphasis is on updating data used in the Plan and making changes to the text only as needed to reference the new data. The previously adopted goals and issues in the Plan are also revised only as needed to reference the new data. The adopted plan was also reviewed and, if needed, revised to comply with changes to the State planning law that have been enacted since 2004. This revision also includes analysis of County health data and statistics and recommends policies that address chronic disease and obesity through promoting health eating and active living for Aiken County citizens.

The adopted plan relied heavily on data collected during the decennial U.S. Census. Beginning with the 2010 Census, much of the data used in the adopted plan was no longer collected. Data on such topics as housing, education, and income is now collected by the U. S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. This change presented significant challenges in the preparation of this plan revision. Some data is no longer collected. Some data characteristics are not the same as those previously collected by the decennial census. Additionally, a sampling technique is used and often it produces three or five-year estimates rather than annual figures. South Carolina state agencies have similarly revised their data collection and reporting. When applicable, the effect of the change in data availability is identified in the revised plan.

The sections of the Comprehensive Plan address the various elements required by State planning law, establish goals for each element, and conclude with implementation strategies.

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Green Highlighted items indicate the newly incorporated Health + Planning Initiatives

SECTION 1

POPULATION ELEMENT

This initial element of the Comprehensive Plan will profile the population of Aiken County and its several Census Divisions, past, present and future. This includes a look at how the population is distributed throughout the County and future projections.

Characteristics of the population also are studied over time to determine trends and composition changes. Income distribution and educational attainment levels are viewed from a land use planning perspective. And social characteristics are assessed to determine lifestyle and conditions responsible for "the quality of life" in Aiken County. Health data related to chronic disease and obesity is given to assess the health and well-being of the population.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND DISTRIBUTION

How many people live in Aiken County? Is it growing and, if so, what is the rate of growth? Have there been significant changes in the composition of the population, i.e. age, sex and racial characteristics? Are social indicators such as education and income up or down? How many people are we planning for? Where within the County are population changes taking place, or likely to take place in the future?

The answer to these questions and more will tell us much about what to expect in the way of future land use and facility needs, and help us understand the population for which we are planning.

Aiken County has recorded increased population during each 10-year Census period over the past 110 years, growing from 39,032 in 1900 to 160,099 in 2010.

The County has grown at an annual average rate of two percent since 1970, increasing by about 1,700 persons per year. The growth rate for the decade between 1990 and 2000 was 17.9%, the highest since the 1950's, when the County had a 53 percent increase. The County now ranks eleventh in South

Carolina in total population. And the population forecast indicates that the County is on course to grow another 12.3% by 2020.

Growth has not been uniform however. In fact, it is quite distorted, with most of the growth taking place, as expected, in the Aiken and North Augusta urban area.

The County's population has shifted from a predominately rural to predominately urban population since 1970, when 55% of the total was classified as rural, or residing in a rural environment. By the year 2010, the rural population had fallen to 37% of the total. Even so, it sustained an 18% increase during this period. But this growth was far outdistanced by movement of the urban population, which increased by 60,010 or 162%, primarily in the Aiken-North Augusta urban area.

Table 1						
Population Distribution/Trends						
By Urban/Rural Residence, 1970-2010						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1970-2010 No. (%)
Urban	40,854	64,061	72,044	86,786	100,864	60,010 (162%)
Rural	50,169	41,564	48,896	55,766	59,235	9,066 (18%)
Total	91,023	105,625	120,940	142,552	160,099	69,076 (76%)
% Urban	45%	61%	60%	61%	63%	

Source: Us Census, Selected years.

Two-thirds of the population growth since 1970 has occurred in the unincorporated area of the County, due largely to suburban movement and South Carolina's restrictive annexation laws. While lagging behind, Aiken County's five municipalities have managed to maintain over time about 37% of the total population, increasing by 73% since 1970. Still, growth within the unincorporated area is increasing at a rate of about two-to-one when

compared to municipal growth. And this relationship is not likely to change in the future based on past trends. As a result, most new growth and development precipitated by increased population likely will occur in the unincorporated area of the County.

Things could change of course, as annexation, though difficult in South Carolina, generally is politically motivated. Cities adopting a more aggressive position could well increase in size disproportionately to the current 37%. But the prospects for significant upward movement in the number of municipal residents compared to those residing in the unincorporated area are not likely. In fact, the opposite is more likely, with an even larger percentage of the future population residing in the unincorporated area.

Table 2						
Population Distribution/Trends						
By Incorporated/Unincorporated						
Place of Residence 1970-2010						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1970-2010 No. (%)
Inc.	32,609	35,228	41,637	49,506	58,873	26,264 (81%)
Uninc.	58,414	70,397	79,303	93,046	101,226	42,812 (73%)
Total	91,023	105,625	120,940	142,552	160,099	69,076 (76%)
% Uninc.	64%	67%	66%	65%	63%	

Source: U. S. Census, Selected years

Seventy percent of the County's population is concentrated in the Aiken-North Augusta County Census Divisions, CCD's. And while the population of these census divisions increased between 1970 and 2010 by 45,023 persons, they actually declined from 74 to 70% of the County total during this period.

This trend speaks volumes to the issue of urban sprawl. Previously rural divisions, including Beech Island, Aiken NE (Previously Edisto-Shaws), New Ellenton, and Windsor, have more than doubled in population, with Windsor growing by 314%. The population of the Monetta CCD has nearly doubled.

While still classified as rural by the US census, parts of Beech Island and New Ellenton are now considered urban, as the population continues to move out, exacerbating the sprawl issue.

Table 3 Population Distribution/Trends By County Census Divisions, 1970-2010							
CCD's	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1970-2010	
						No.	%
Aiken	31,445	38,195	45,009	52,858	58,691	27,246	87
N Augusta	36,267	40,041	44,059	47,453	54,044	17,777	49
Beech Island	3,884	4,839	6,146	7,895	8,312	4,428	114
Aiken NE	2,186	2,994	3,920	4,776	5,817	3,631	166
Jackson	2,929	2,650	2,843	3,362	3,464	535	18
Monetta	2,460	3,138	3,097	4,305	4,830	2,370	96
New Ellenton	5,276	5,940	7,197	9,573	11,388	6,112	116
Salley	2,149	2,562	2,537	2,576	2,589	440	21
Wagener	2,942	3,355	3,278	4,480	4,815	1,873	64
Windsor	1,485	1,911	2,872	5,274	6,149	4,664	314
Total	91,023	105,625	120,991	142,552	160,099	69,076	76

Source: Ibid.

DEMOGRAPHIC FORECAST

Aiken County's population is forecast by the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics, to reach 171,200 by 2020, adding about 11,100 persons from 2010. As in the past, the bulk of this increase is projected to remain concentrated in the Aiken-North Augusta urban area. But an increasing portion of this increase is projected to take place in the urbanizing County Census Divisions of Windsor, New Ellenton, Beech Island, Wagener and Aiken NE, as shown on Table 3.

Table 4 Aiken County Population Forecasts 2010 - 2030					
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	160,099	165,600	171,200	176,800	182,500
No. Change	---	5,501	5,600	5,600	5,700
% Change	---	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2

Source: SC Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics.

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Numbers and growth alone do not sufficiently dimension the population. For planning purposes, we need to know much more. We need to know about the various components of the population, and understand their impact on the planning process.

Is the population aging? Are the numbers of school age children increasing, if so, where within the County? Are households changing? If so, how? Is the racial composition changing? Answers to these and related questions are critical to understanding the population and planning support facilities such as schools, parks, housing, transportation, etc.

Racial Composition

Approximately 70% of the County's population is white, down from 75% in 1990. Some of this loss may be attributed to the question of race, which has

changed since the 1990 census. In the 2010 Census, respondents were given the choice of selecting one or more race categories to indicate their racial identities. Those indicating only one race are referred to in the 2010 Census as the race alone population. The term “White” refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa, and includes people who reported “White” entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab or Polish. Overall, however, the White (alone) population in Aiken County increased by 9,712 people or 9.5%.

Table 5 Racial Composition/Trends 2000-2010					
	2000		2010		
	White	% Total	White	% Total	% Change
Aiken County					
White	101,745	71.4	111,457	69.6	9.5
Black	36,442	25.5	39,354	24.6	8.0
Other	4,365	3.1	9,288	5.8	112.8
South Carolina					
White	2,695,560	67.2	3,060,000	66.2	13.5
Black	1,185,216	29.5	1,290,684	27.9	8.9
Other	131,236	3.3	274,680	6.9	109.3

Source: US Census, 2000, 2010

The largest single minority population in Aiken County is “Black” or African-American, which numbered 36,442 in 2000, and 30,354 (Black alone) in 2010, up 2,912 or 8.0%.

The most significant change in racial composition has been the increase of other races: Asian, and other non-white or non-black populations alone. These minorities now account for 5.8% of the total, a nearly 113% increase since 2000.

Because of locational preferences, income, housing costs, transportation facilities, employment opportunities, and other factors, racial distribution is not balanced. Minorities generally are concentrated in the Aiken-North Augusta urban area.

In sum, racial composition of the population has changed over time, and likely will continue to do so. But what all this means in terms of planning for the future is very little if the County maintains an open housing policy and ensures equal accessibility through planning and development to all public facilities and programs.

That the minority population likely will continue to concentrate in the more urbanized Aiken-North Augusta area of the County, the cities of Aiken and North Augusta should stay alert to the growing housing and facility needs of an enlarging minority population in this area.

Age Composition

Aiken County’s population is aging. But it is not unexpected or out of line with what is happening nationally. People are living longer, and generally retiring in place as opposed to migrating with age to retirement oriented locations.

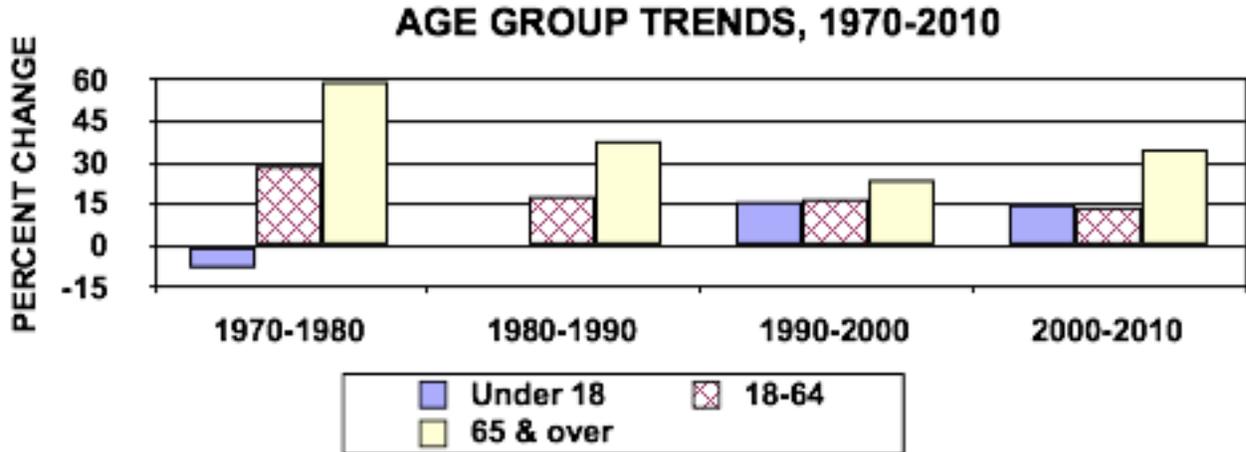
The County's elderly population (65 and over) increased by 268% in just 40 years, between 1970 and 2010. It also increased as a percentage of the total population from seven to 15%.

<p align="center">Table 6 Age Group Trends 1970 - 2010 Aiken County</p>						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1970 - 2010 No. (%)
Under 18	34,790	32,190	32,106	37,348	42,828	8,038 (23)
18 - 64	49,549	62,760	74,176	86,917	98,652	49,103 (99)

Table 6 Age Group Trends 1970 - 2010 Aiken County						
65 & Over	6,684	10,675	14,709	18,287	24,619	17,935 (268)

Source: US Census Bureau

Conversely, the younger population, under 18 years, had only a modest gain. In fact, there were fewer young people in Aiken County in 1980 than in 1970, and the decline continued through 1990. Since then, the younger population group has increased by 33%, adding 10,722 persons.



The more productive and procreative age group, between 18 and 64, increased from 54 to 61% of the population, adding 49,103 persons over the same time span.

Significantly, the growth of the elderly population, while increasing disproportionately to the other two age groups, has slowed over time, as indicated by the following graph. The growth rate between 1970 and 1980 was nearly 60%, compared to 24% between 2000 and 2010, although the actual increase was about the same. The elderly population has increased on average about 448 persons per year since 1970, roughly four times the growth of the under 18 age group.

The planning implications of all this are significant for a number of reasons. The decline in the number of young people will show up in future populations, unless off set by in-migration precipitated by economic development. It will also reduce the need for school facilities and result in school closings and

consolidations in time, if not curbed. And it will impact park and recreation planning.

On the other end of the population chain, the rapid and projected growth of the elderly population is perhaps of even greater concern. By 2020, one in six South Carolinians will be at least 65, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That compares with nearly one in nine in 2000.

In the next 21 years, the State's elderly population will grow 200 percent faster than the State as a whole, according to census predictions.

Contrary to the notion that most elderly retired people migrate to places like Florida and the coast, 85 percent of elder Americans prefer to stay in their homes and never move, according to a survey by AARP. **Aging in place** is a trend that is here to stay says AARP. Only 13 percent of older people wish to move and the reason generally is to be closer to family as opposed to preference for a resort retirement community.

With many older people electing to age in place, Aiken County may expect much of its older population to stay home as well. But staying home does not mean business as usual. A lifestyle change accompanies growing older. And the County should be responsive to the changing needs of an aging population.

Two of the principal concerns of the elderly are (1) the environment and (2) housing. In response to these concerns the County should consider and this plan should address the following issues as they relate to the County's enlarging elderly population.

Environmental Issues

- **Transportation** - Make getting places easier. Focus on alternatives to private vehicular transportation, i.e. sidewalks,

bikeways, and public transit. Require installation of easy to read directional signs, and ramps and hand rails in all public buildings.

- **Social** - Increase the variety, accessibility and attractiveness of places where people meet, whether by accident or appointment.
- **Safety** - Focus on different ways to increase safety and crime prevention.

Housing Issues

Few issues are more fundamental to the quality of life than where and how people live. Housing, one's most immediate physical environment, should be responsive to one's changing social, economic, and physiological characteristics. Housing can and should be made to do this by offering a broad range of options to address the full spectrum of shelter and service needs and the preferences of people throughout their lives.

Unfortunately, the majority of suburban areas are devoted exclusively to single-family detached housing on fairly large lots, which is the situation in Aiken County. Alternatives to this lifestyle are needed to more fully address the changing needs and preferences of an aging population. Such alternatives should include the following, among others:

- Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs)
- Accessory Apartments
- Shared Housing
- Assisted Housing

- Congregate Housing
- Retirement Housing Projects, Subdivisions
- Smaller Housing Units

Also critical to the planning of environments and housing more suitable to the elderly population is proximity of housing alternatives to health care facilities and commercial services.

Health Issues

The United States has the highest obesity rates in the developed world (behind four tiny Pacific island nations). In 2014, SC ranks 10th in the nation for obese adults; 31.7% have a Body Mass Index (BMI) ¹ of 30 or greater (Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). Aiken County Ranks 19th highest in obesity among SC counties. Obesity disproportionately affects certain racial and ethnic minorities, residents of rural areas and those with low socioeconomic status. Risk factors for obesity include physical inactivity and improper nutrition. Obesity is a risk factor for many chronic diseases.

- Obesity is associated with more than 30 major diseases. Obesity can lead to such health risks as elevated cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, orthopedic complications, mental health problems, coronary heart disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer (such as endometrial, breast, prostate, and colon) and arthritis. (Surgeon General). According to the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) data, compared to those of normal weight, obese individuals have 90% higher risk of having coronary heart disease and 40% higher risk of having a heart attack.
- Of those South Carolinians who are overweight or obese, 37.5% have high blood pressure, 11.7% have diabetes, and 5.1% have coronary heart disease. (Eat Smart Move More SC - ESMMSC)

The 2011 South Carolina Obesity Burden Report (ESMMSC) records a disparity in the burden of obesity and the severity of related health conditions among different population groups. Whereas obesity is of national health concern in the general population, research has shown that persons within certain population sectors are more susceptible than others to this health problem:

- Ethnic and racial minorities
- Mentally and physically disabled person
- Residents of rural areas
- Low socioeconomic status

Overweight and Obesity Rates for Adults By Race/Ethnicity						
Location	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaskan Native	All Adults
South Carolina	63.5%	75.4%	73.0%	NSD	60.1%	66.5%

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

- In 2012 the number two cause of death in Aiken County was heart disease
- In 2012 Diabetes was the seventh highest cause of death in SC and the eight highest cause of death in in Aiken County
- In 2012 In SCDHEC Region 1 (including Aiken) 11.2 % of adults had diabetes.
- In 2012 in Aiken County 375 emergency room visit were directly related to diabetes as were 164 hospitalizations

(Source SDHEC Epidemiology Data)

2010 Percentage Adults - Aiken ranked 19 th highest in obesity among SC Counties			
	Aiken County	SC	US

Obese ¹	34.7	30.3	27.7
Not meeting recommended physical activity ²	56.1	54.6	49.4
Not eating recommended fruits and vegetables ³	80.7	82.6	76.6

SCDHEC

NOTES

¹ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines overweight as having a body mass index (BMI) between 25 (lbs./in²). and 29.9 (lbs./in²). Obesity is defined as having a BMI greater than 30 (lbs./in²). Simply stated, BMI is a ratio of a person’s weight to height.

² The CDC physical activity recommendation is that adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or a combination of the moderate and vigorous-intensity physical activity. 25.4 of Aiken County adults engaged in **no** leisure time physical activity – 20th highest percentage among 46 SC counties

³ Recommended fruit and vegetable consumption is 2+ fruits and 3+ vegetables daily. Aiken County ranked 5th among 46 counties in percentage not meeting these recommendations.

2007 – 2009 Percentage of Adults by Race		
Aiken County	White	Black
Obese ¹	26.2	44.2

Not meeting recommended physical activity ²	54.6	60.0
Not eating recommended fruits and vegetables ³	79.9	82.6

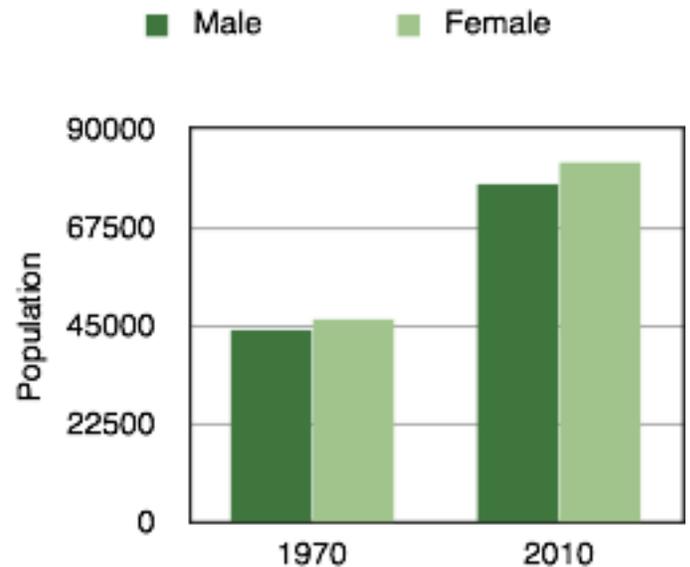
SCDHEC

Healthy Eating and Active Living

- Healthy eating can play a major role in the prevention of many chronic diseases. These diseases include cancer, cardiovascular disease (e.g. congestive heart failure, hypertension, stroke), diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders (e.g. diverticular disease, irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, hemorrhoids), and osteoporosis. A healthy diet that is well-balanced and varied reduces your risk for all of these diseases. (ESMMSC)
- Aiken County residents recognize the connection between poor diet and lack of exercise and poor health. A December 2011 County health assessment survey conducted by Eat Smart Move More Aiken County revealed that according to survey participants, the three most common “risky behaviors” or “bad habits” that personally pertain to them are:
 - Lack of Exercise (59.5%)
 - Poor Eating Habits (51.9%)
 - Being Overweight (48.1%)
- According to the U.S. Surgeon General, adults can obtain significant health benefits by including moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Engaging in regular physical activity is one of the most important steps to reduce risk for chronic disease, build physical and mental health and prevent overweight and obesity.

Gender Composition

As a general rule, the female population is larger than its male counterpart. In 2010 the female population in South Carolina accounted for 51.4% of the total. Aiken County by comparison had a slightly higher ratio of females, 51.6%. The ratio of females to males in the County has increased slightly over the last 40 years, since 1970, from the State average of 51.4%.



Nationally, the sexes are about evenly divided in the pre-teen and teenage years, but with age the ratio generally becomes imbalanced on the female side. While the process is gradual, females at age 65 and over are in a majority position. This pattern is also prevalent in Aiken County where in 1990, the female population 65 and over (8,183) comprised 59% of the elderly population.

From a planning standpoint, this trend has little effect on the process, except for the obvious housing implications. More people of any one sex generally produces more one-person households, favoring smaller units, and congregate housing facilities, shared housing accommodations, and other housing alternatives identified in the previous report section. There are obvious social ramifications however with greater gender imbalance, some of which are addressed through housing alternatives, such as shared housing.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Suffice to say, there is a positive correlation between education and income, and a subsequent correlation between these social barometers and land use, housing and environmental conditions. As education and income improve, environmental conditions generally improve. Here we shall examine this correlation and its impact on the environment.

Educational Profile

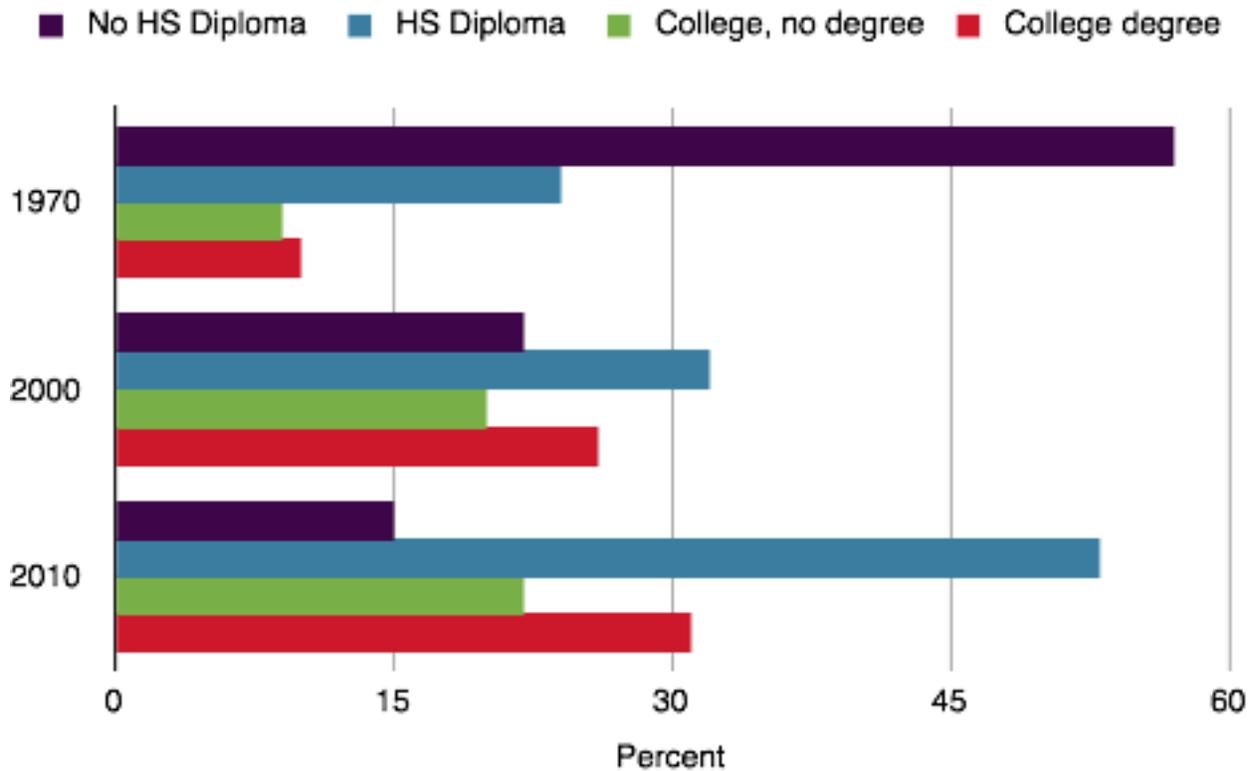
Educational attainment has an indirect influence on the use of land and the quality of development. Higher education attainment equates generally to higher incomes and standards of living, which in turn translate into quality housing and development and enhanced living environs. Lower or inadequate education attainment, on the other hand, generally produces much less in the way of quality environs and living conditions.

Educational attainment levels of County residents 25 years and older improved greatly between 1970 and 2012. From 57% of the population in this category not having completed high school in 1970, the ratio declined to 15% of all such persons by 2012.

Educational attainment levels have improved across the board. Higher percentages of the adult population (25 years and older) have finished high school, attended and completed college.

	<u>1970</u>	<u>2012</u>
No high school diploma	57%	15%
High school diploma	24%	32%
College, no degree	9%	22%
College degree(s)	10%	31%
Total No. of Persons	46,782	92,921

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 1970 Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey Five Year Estimates.



Educational Trends

Educational Attainment, Persons 25 Years and Older

Aiken County

1970, 2000, 2010

Source: US Census 1970, 2000, 2010

Educational attainment levels are not up uniformly, however. Over 33% of all African-Americans 25 years and older still had not completed high school in 2000. And only 25% had graduated from college.

That this situation impacts income and the capacity to earn is shown on Table 8. Persons in South Carolina without a high school education earn on average 22% less than those who have graduated. Persons attending college earn about 17% more than high school graduates who do not move on to college. And those who graduate from college generally earn about 44% more than those who do not, according to the U.S. Bureau of Census. Studies show that each year of post-secondary education or training--- whenever it occurs in the course of a career---boosts earning power by six

to 12% on average. Education also pays off for employers. A recent employer survey found that a ten percent increase in worker education is associated with an 8.6% increase in productivity---well over twice the payoff from investments in physical capital.

Table 8
Educational Attainment/Income Correlation
Persons 25 Years and Older

<u>Level of Education</u>	<u>Percent Population</u>			<u>Annual</u>
	<u>County</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>Average Income</u>
	<u>Total</u>			<u>South Carolina</u>
No high school diploma	22	19	33	\$14,282
High school diploma	32	31	35	17,418
College, no degree	20	21	17	20,448
Bachelor's degree				29,536
Master's degree	26	29	15	31,790
Doctorate degree				52,925

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 2000, Census of Population, Income data from 1990 Census.

While the gains in educational attainment have been impressive, still one in five White adults and one in three Black adults has less than a high school education. And the low educational attainment level of such a large segment of the population has contributed to a less than desirable state of social and environmental conditions in parts of the County. While many factors contribute to social and environmental ills, one of the principal factors is the lack of an adequate education, which equates to lower incomes and lower standards of living.

Income Profile

Educational attainment levels of Aiken County residents have risen over time and so have incomes. Per capita income of County residents in 2000 was \$18,772 or slightly less than the State average. But median household income was 2.1% higher and median family income was 3.4% higher than the State median. Per capita income of African-Americans was only 59% of that for Whites in the County, but nine percent higher than that for Blacks statewide. Median family income of Blacks also was 59% of the median income for Whites in Aiken County.

Poverty impacted 13.8% of County residents in 2000, down from 15.1% in 1990. Poverty among the Black population also was down from 27.4% in 1990 to 25.8% in 2000. Unfortunately, poverty still impacts over one-fourth of the African-American population and nearly 10% of the White population, despite the advances in educational attainment levels.

Overall, incomes among Aiken County residents are about on par with the State average. Incomes of Whites track the State average, but incomes of Blacks are generally higher.

Table 9 Median Household Income by Race Aiken County and South Carolina 2000, 2005-2009, 2008-2012		
	White	Black
Aiken County		
2000	\$42,063	\$25,547
2005-2009	\$51,400	\$29,629
2008-2012	\$51,848	\$31,283
South Carolina		
2000	\$42,068	\$25,032
2005-2009	\$50,851	\$28,462
2008-2012	\$51,830	\$29,676

Source: US Census 2000, 2005-2009 and 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

CONCLUSIONS AND GOALS

Conclusions

From the preceding, it may be concluded:

- (1) That Aiken County will continue to increase in population, although there was a 20-year decline (between 1970 and 1990) in the under 18 age group.
- (2) That the County's elderly population is increasing at disproportionately higher rate than other population segments.
- (3) That females outnumber males in Aiken County, as in most places, and that the imbalance increases with age.

- (4) That educational attainment levels of County residents have improved over time.
- (5) That improvement in educational levels notwithstanding, poverty is still a major social problem in Aiken County.
- (6) That the County's population is increasingly moving into the rural areas, contributing to urban sprawl and premature development of its rural and natural resources.
- (7) The Aiken County population has a high risk of chronic diseases due to not having healthy diets and lack of engaging in physical activity.
- (8) Obesity is a major contributor to health risks in Aiken County.
- (9) County and State statistics indicate that there is a higher incidence of obesity among African Americans and Hispanics, and the low socioeconomic population.
- (10) Although chronic disease due to poor diet and inactivity effects all age groups, the growing elderly population is particularly vulnerable

Goals

GOAL: Accommodate in an orderly, environmentally, and fiscally responsible manner the additional population projected for Aiken County in the year 2030.

The population forecast for the County is for an additional 22,400 persons by the year 2030. This is more people than currently reside in eight of the State's 46 counties.

The County is challenged to meet the needs of this additional population without compromising existing environmental resources and living conditions, at the lowest possible cost, and in such a manner as to enhance physical, social and economic conditions. To this end, a comprehensive planning approach and process are essential.

GOAL: Eliminate all vestiges of poverty from Aiken County.

While seemingly beyond the reach of the County, improved educational attainment, continued economic development and pending State and Federal welfare reform could enable the County to meet this goal. The prospects of a better life for all, and a social and physical environment void of poverty is not only laudable, but attainable if it has the full support of the County.

GOAL: Retard urban sprawl and premature development of rural and natural resources.

Combating urban sprawl is an issue and challenge facing most growing American communities. It is the spark that has led to “Smart Growth” initiatives sweeping the country. The components of smart growth include maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, infill development, business retention and promoting job opportunities in urban centers. In short, it is about fully utilizing existing urban resources before prematurely moving on to surrounding rural and natural resource areas.

One way in which the County may slow sprawl is to restructure its Land Development Regulations, to better preserve and protect its rural and natural resource areas. Currently, there are no land use restrictions in the rural areas. And this is an invitation to sprawl. That this situation be adequately addressed is fundamental to the achievement of this goal.

GOAL: Promote an “age sensitive” environment, meet and accommodate changes in age and gender composition of Aiken County residents.

The focus here is on developing more facilities and programs, and providing more housing alternatives and opportunities for an aging population.

The vast majority of people prefer to age in place in single-family homes as opposed to migrating to retirement communities. This is the most preferred housing type for 85 % of older people in the United States, according to a study on Expanding Housing Choices For Older People, sponsored by AARP.

In light of this phenomenon, a three point program is recommended to make the community more age sensitive.

(1) **Provide a diversity of housing.** This should include apartments, townhouses, small and large single-family residences, manufactured homes, accessory apartments and condominiums, all available at a range of costs. Ideally, diversity should be found throughout the County, and in most neighborhoods. The availability of affordable housing alternatives in one's own neighborhood will enable older people to make adjustments without leaving their community and foregoing all the relationships they have established over time.

(2) **Provide pedestrian and/or public transportation linkages.**

The environment within which a person operates needs to be viewed as a series of links from one place to another.

If this environment is only partially accessible, then it is essentially inaccessible to someone who is age impaired.

In the absence of adequate sidewalks, a resident in a well designed assisted care housing project or neighborhood may be unable to reach a nearby park or other social or commercial outlet without a car. The ability of older persons to maintain their independence is dependent on linkages.

(3) **Adapt the environment to meet changing needs of the elderly.** Universal design is a significant innovation within the housing sector; the same approach should be applied to the community at large in building design, site planning, and land uses. A long-term perspective should take into

account the reuse and adaptability of schools to serve the needs of the elderly as senior centers, or senior housing and converted back as necessary. Also city parks should be redesigned to emphasize passive recreation opportunities, more attuned to the needs of the elderly.

GOAL: Raise the educational attainment level of all adult persons in Aiken County to or above that of a high school diploma.

Dedication to improving education and subsequently improving earning power and the environment in which one resides is not the sole responsibility of the County's school districts and boards. It will take the combined efforts and support of the larger community (County), both financially and politically. A quality environment starts with an educated populace.

GOAL: Decrease the incidents of obesity and chronic disease related to poor nutrition and lack of physical activity among all segments of the Aiken County population.

- Remove barriers and promote access to healthy food throughout the county.
- Promote programs that encourage active living and support the development and distribution of trails, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities throughout the county.

In October 2014 SCDHEC announced a five-year Obesity Action Plan. The mission of the plan is: “to educate, engage, and mobilize partners to help make the healthy choice the easy choice for South Carolinians. The state plan aims to build on the success of current efforts and offers new strategies to reduce obesity rates in the Palmetto State.” The plan focuses on strategies in four main areas to reduce and prevent obesity:

- **Communities**
 - **Worksites**
 - **Healthcare**
 - **Schools and Child Care**

Eat Smart Move More Aiken County (ESMMAC) is utilizing Options for Action (OFA), the how-to guide for implementing the SC Obesity State Plan on the local level.

Support the implementation of the State Obesity Plan

- Keep apprised of and support ESMMSC as it develops the Options for Action plan for Aiken County
- Consider implementing healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco-free campus policies at all Aiken County facilities for the health of the county employees and as an example for the Aiken County workplace.

SECTION 2

HOUSING ELEMENT

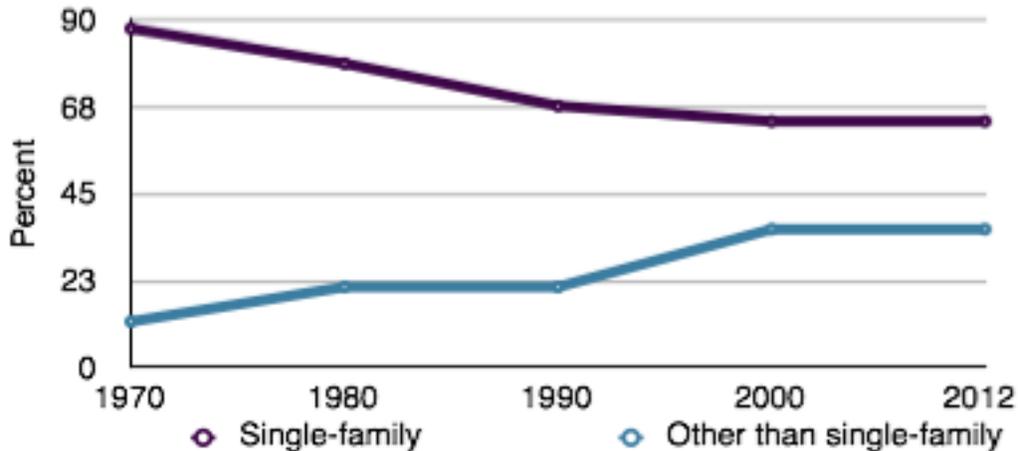
Probably no other element of the Comprehensive Plan is as indicative of lifestyle as is housing. It is therefore essential from a planning standpoint to fully dimension housing trends, conditions and needs and to understand the relationship of housing to land use planning, physical and economic development.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Types of Housing

Detached, site-built single-family dwellings constitute the primary source of housing in Aiken County, but not to the extent they once did. The composition of housing is changing, due largely to economics and “life style” preferences.

In 1970, single-family, site-built housing accounted for 88% of all housing in the County. By 2000, site-built, single-family housing had dropped to 64% of all housing where it remained in 2012. The big gainer has been mobile or



Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 1970 - 2000; 2008-2012 American Community Survey

manufactured housing, increasing from six percent of the housing in 1970 to 23% of all year-round housing by 2000 where it also remained in 2012.

One of every four houses in Aiken County is now manufactured, and the bulk of it is found in the unincorporated area, where land use regulations are less restrictive and attitudes are more accommodating.

Multi-family housing grew from 6% to 13% of the county's housing stock during this 42 year period, further highlighting shifts in the housing market.

These changes, shown on Table 10, are attributed principally to the demand for alternative lower cost housing and the provision of such housing in the form of mobile or manufactured units and higher density multi-family dwellings.

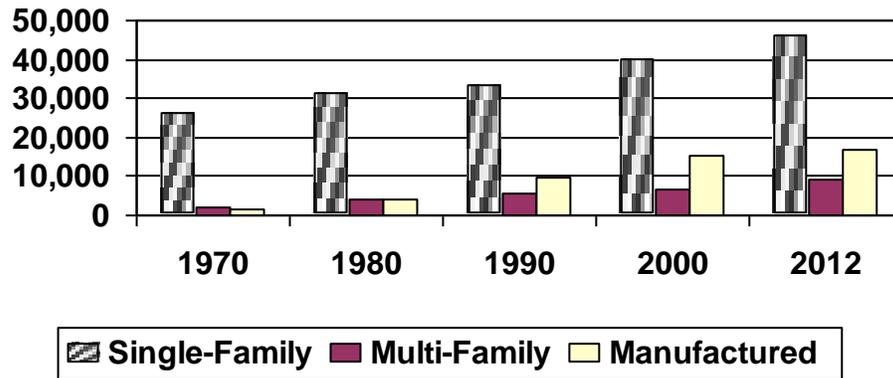
Change and the juxtaposition of alternative housing in a predominately single-family housing environment has not been without problems however, particularly from a land use perspective. Multi-family housing generally is considered incompatible in single-family environs because of density, increased traffic, and/or design. And the issues of design, maintenance, and siting are the sources of concern with mobile and manufactured homes.

Table 10
Aiken County
Housing Trends, By Type, 1970-2012

	1970	%	1980	1990	2000	2012	%
Single-family	25,811	88	31,154	33,341	39,950	46,152	64
Multi-family	1,866	6	4,207	5,842	6,724	9,110	13
Mobile/mfg.	1,656	6	4,260	9,720	15,139	16,895	23
TOTAL (yr. round)	29,333		39,621	48,903	61,987	72,157	

Source: U .S. Bureau of Census, General Housing Characteristics, Selected Years; 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimate.

HOUSING TRENDS, BY TYPE, AIKEN COUNTY



That these issues be addressed and resolved is essential to achieving an orderly development process and ensuring land use compatibility. Housing composition and lifestyles are changing. But change need not be disruptive to those who have invested in a single-family lifestyle. If properly addressed and planned, change in the housing market may be accommodated without compromising prevailing environmental conditions.

That the housing market has and will continue to change does not signal the end of single-family site built dwellings. In fact, single family housing construction has been brisk over the last 42 years, from 1970 to 2012, increasing by 80%, with the addition of 20,341 units. But other forms of housing have made an even larger contribution to the existing housing stock. Multi-family housing increased by 390%, adding 7,244 units. Manufactured housing increased at an even higher rate 920%, producing an additional 15,239 units. In combination, these alternative forms of housing produced 22,483 units, or 53% of all new housing since 1970, the impact of which has greatly altered the landscape and tax base of Aiken County.

In the past, mobile homes have depreciated like cars, to the point of generating disproportionately lower tax revenues than required to off-set even partially the cost of essential public services received, i.e. fire and

police protection, recreation, etc. As a result, the cost is shifted to others.

Because of the way most municipal zoning ordinances are written---to virtually exclude mobile and manufactured homes---the responsibility for accommodating such housing has shifted almost exclusively to the County.

The distribution of alternative housing is far from uniform, although there is a definite pattern. Mobile and manufactured homes, a form of single-family housing, are found predominantly in rural areas, often without community sewer systems. Conversely, multi-family housing is located predominantly in urban areas, complete with urban infrastructure, including sanitary sewer systems.

While neither housing type - multi-family, mobile or manufactured housing - is neither designed nor intended exclusively for low-income occupancy, such housing frequently is linked to low-to-moderate income residency because of economics. Multi-family housing often is associated with public or subsidized housing, and mobile or manufactured homes, costing about 30% less than site-built housing, appeals principally to lower income households. Both forms are designed to meet the need for lower cost housing. As such, the housing market and, indeed, Aiken County may expect an even larger inventory of such housing in the future, based on the trend line data presented in this section.

Size of Housing

There also have been changes in the size of housing. Larger homes, with seven or more rooms, increased substantially from 17% of all housing in the County in 1970 to 30 percent by 2000. Conversely, three, four, and five room dwellings declined from 58 to 46% of all housing. Smaller, one and two room units remained steady at two percent of the housing. That smaller one and two room units have not declined like the more moderate size dwellings is likely in response to the growing number of one person households, which make up 25% of all households in the County.

The housing market is trending toward larger homes, which appears to run counter to the trend of smaller households. What the data do not show, however, is the impact of mobile and manufactured homes, generally

containing four to six rooms. They are not computed in the above. Yet, in 2012, manufactured homes accounted for 23% of all housing in Aiken County.

Contrary to the data presented herein, the demand for four to six room-housing units remains high. But much of this market is now being met by the manufactured housing industry.

Preferential differences in housing size take on even greater significance when viewed from an owner-renter perspective. Smaller units generally appeal to renters, and larger units to owners, primarily because of economics.

Table 11
Housing Units, By Number of Rooms

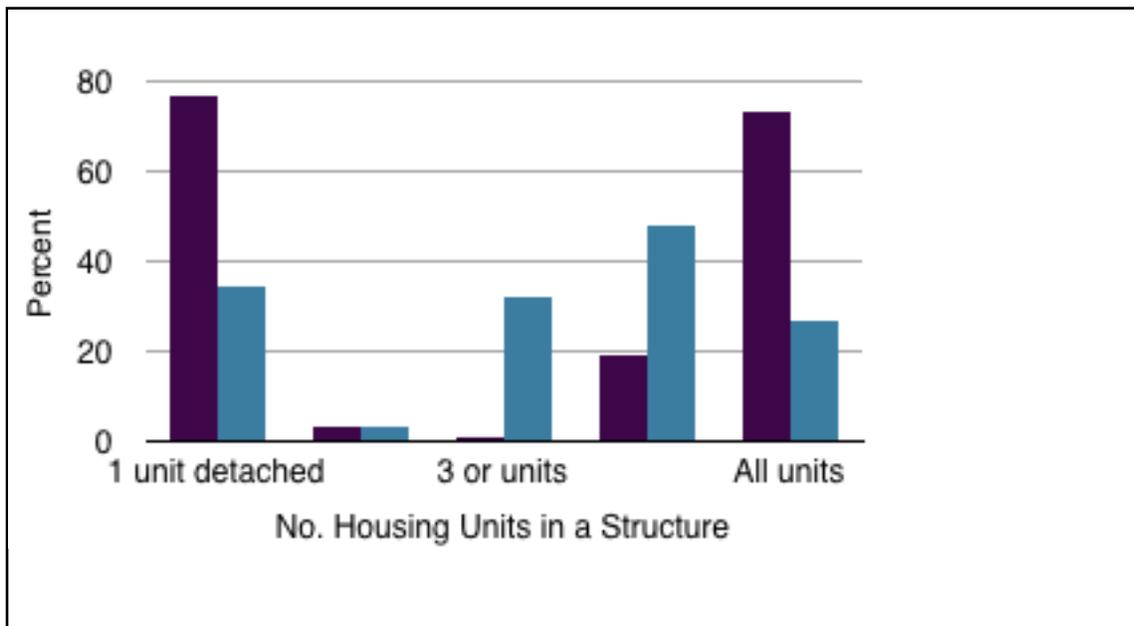
<u>Rooms</u>	<u>1970</u>		<u>2012</u>		<u>Change</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Change</u>
1 & 2	608	2.1	1,150	1.6	542	1.3
3	2,126	7.2	4,415	6.1	2,289	5.3
4	6,704	22.9	10,176	14.1	3,472	8.1
5	8,318	28.4	15,996	22.1	7,678	17.9
6	6,466	22.0	15,756	21.8	9,290	21.6
7	3,078	10.5	11,219	15.6	8,141	19.0
8+	2,033	6.9	13,566	18.8	11,533	26.9
TOTAL	29,333		72,278		42,945	

Source: US Census 1970, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Smaller one, two and three room units comprise one fifth of all renter occupied housing, and larger units (seven or more rooms) make up only five percent.

In sum, changes in the Aiken County housing market are a direct reflection of economics, changing lifestyles (preferences) and occupancy characteristics, examined elsewhere in this report section. Clearly, these changes should be recognized in the future practice of land planning and regulations.

**Aiken County Occupied Housing Units
Owner-occupied & Renter-occupied
By Number of units in Structure
2012**



Source: US Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Value of Housing

Housing values tell us a lot about living conditions. They also are reflective of economic conditions. The most recent comprehensive measure of housing values is found in the US Census Bureau's American Community Surveys.

As incomes and purchasing power improve, the inclination is to move up or build a better or more expensive home. In fact, the correlation is such that lending institutions generally cap borrowing capacity for housing purchases at 2.5 times income, or 30% of gross housing expenses.

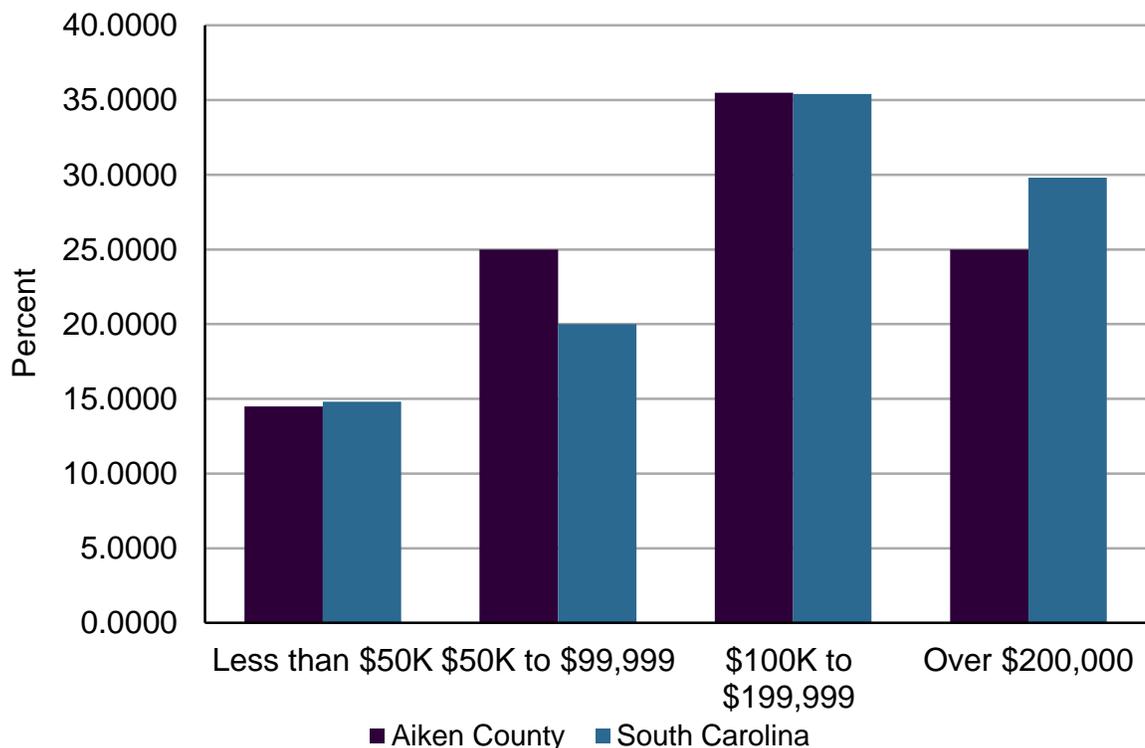
Housing values in Aiken County generally are a bit lower than the State average. The County had, in 2012, 4.8% fewer homes valued more than \$200,000 than the State. It also had a significantly higher percentage of its housing in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 range than does the State.

Comparison Housing Values

Owner-occupied Housing

2012

Source: US Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (Aiken County), 2013 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates (South Carolina)



These data in no way suggest that a larger share of Aiken County's housing stock is inferior or providing less than adequate accommodations. It is simply a measure of value, which is relative to local conditions and economics.

Age of Housing

Age of housing is indicative of growth and housing conditions. Nearly one-sixth of all housing in Aiken County was constructed since 2000. This is indicative both of growth and structurally sound housing conditions. But on

the whole, the County's housing is relatively older than the State average. For example, the County has substantially more housing constructed in the 40's and 50's, probably due to the building boom associated with the construction of the Savannah River Plant.

However, a larger share of 40's and 50's housing does not signal that it is deficient in any way. To the contrary, it may say something about the quality of construction during that period.

Overall, the age of the County's housing stock suggest that housing conditions are generally sound.

Table 12 Age of Housing in Aiken County Percent of Housing by Age, Aiken County & South Carolina 2012			
Year Built	Number	Percent	Percent State
2010 or later	476	0.7	0.4
2000 to 2009	12,220	16.9	20.0
1990 to 1999	14,531	20.1	20.4
1980 to 1989	12,695	17.6	17.0
1970 to 1979	12,110	16.8	16.2
1960 to 1969	7,837	10.8	9.7
1950 to 1959	7,457	10.3	7.7
1940 to 1949	2,356	3.3	3.5
1939 or earlier	2,566	3.6	5.1
Total Housing Units	72,248		

Source: US Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Facility and Service Barriers to Habitable Housing

One final barometer of housing conditions and change is the extent of housing without basic services and/or facilities. In today's housing market, it seems almost implausible that there are still homes being lived in without complete plumbing or kitchen facilities or rudimentary telephone service. Well there are. But they are far fewer in number today, and decreasing rapidly, almost to the point of extinction.

The 2012 Census Bureau estimates show less than one-half of one percent of the homes in Aiken County with incomplete plumbing facilities, and less than one percent with incomplete kitchen facilities. These numbers are down sharply from the 1990 Census, as shown by Table 13, and reflective of improvements taking place not only in Aiken County, but across the State as well.

Table 13						
Facility and Service Barriers to Habitable Housing						
	1990		2012		Percent change	
	Aiken Co.	South Carolina	Aiken Co.	South Carolina	Aiken Co.	South Carolina
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	1.0	1.3	0.5	0.4	-0.5	-0.9
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.7	-0.3	-0.7
Lacking Telephone Service	8.5	9.1	2.9	2.3	-6.2	-6.8

Source: US Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (Aiken County), 2013 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates (South Carolina)

The lack of telephone service, on the other hand, has become difficult to evaluate. In today's age of communication and technological advances,

telephones are now mobile rather than land-based. While the percentage of housing without telephone service has dropped dramatically to less than two percent in 2012, the percentage of households without some sort of telephone service is likely to be much lower.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Household Size

Nationally over the last several decades the number of households has increased at a higher rate than has the population. The reason for this has been a sustained reduction in the size of households.

From 1970 to 2000, the average size in Aiken County dropped from 3.35 to 2.5 persons per household. This represents a loss of almost one person per household over a 30-year span, effectively reducing the size of the average household by 25%.

During this period, the number of households more than doubled, increasing by 28,597, bringing the total to 55,587 in 2000. The increase in households was 106%, compared to 57% increase in the population. As the household declined in size and the population increased, it has created a disproportionately higher number of households. And more households need more housing, producing a stronger housing market.

Moreover, households are projected by the U. S. Census to get even smaller in the future. Using national trend lines as a measure of what to expect in Aiken County, the future household size was projected to further decline to 2.35 persons per household by the year 2014. Unfortunately, current data compatible with earlier data is not available.

Households include all persons who occupy a housing unit. But not all households are composed of families. A family by definition consist of a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage or adoption. A household may contain only one person.

Household Composition

Household composition has changed over time. Families accounted for 86% of all households in 1970, but only 71% three decades later, in 2000. By the year 2014, families are projected to make up only 66% of all households, based on trend line projections.

Much of the projected change will be in one-person households, which increased over 300% between 1970 and 2000. One-person households accounted for just over 10% of all households in 1970. Thirty years later (2000), one person occupied 25% of all households. The trend is projected to level off during the next 10 years, between 26% and 28% of all households.

The impact of one-person households on the housing market is obvious, and is reflected by changes discussed previously in the makeup of the County's housing stock. The rise in one-person households also is largely responsible for the decline in the average number of persons per household, again contributing to changes in the housing market.

That the household is shrinking is an indication of a reduction in population density and a corresponding need or preference for smaller housing units commonly found in multi-family and manufactured housing. This, coupled with the more affordable aspects of such housing help explain their growing presence in the County.

Household size and composition changes are the result principally of:

- (1) declining births,**
- (2) an aging population,**
- (3) divorces and separations,**
- (4) delayed marriages,**
- (5) increasing singles, never married, and**
- (6) increasing female labor force participation.**

The increase in singles is due largely to delayed marriages. The median age of first marriages reached new highs in 1990's, moving to 26.7 years for men and 24.5 years for women, as reported by the U.S. Census.

This is one of the nation's largest and fastest growing new groups---never married adults---accounting for almost one in four Americans older than 18. In 1994, there were more than 44.2 million never-been-married adults in the United States---more than twice the number that existed in 1970. While many Americans appear to be foregoing marriage altogether, most of the growth has come from people who are delaying a wedding date in the interest of finishing school, launching a career, finding the perfect mate, or just hanging out.

The impact of these changes on the housing market is significant indeed. Between 1970 and 1994, the number of men older than 18 living alone mushroomed from 3.5 million to 9.4 million, an increase of 167%, according to the Census Bureau. And 14.2 million women over 18--- approximately 6 in 10---are living alone today. That's almost double the number of women who lived alone in 1970.

These figures are part of a new portrait of the American household issued by the U.S. Census, and fleshed out in a recent report by the Population Reference Bureau Inc. in Washington, D.C. Both reports depict a dramatically changed American family that may have begun to stabilize in its new patterns.

Future household composition is projected nationally to increase among four basic groups, as follows:

Elderly family households	25%
Non-family households, i.e. singles and individuals	30%
Husband-wife family households (with or without children)	25%
Single-parent family households	20%

If we assume that national household projections offer reasonable estimates of probable trends in Aiken County, changes in the number of households by type may be extrapolated in the form of "internally generated" households, i.e. households formed from the existing population base via marriage, divorce, separation, children leaving home, etc.

Also, household growth will result from net in-migration, i.e. households moving into the area. The composition of those moving into the community likely will differ from internally generated households, as indicated by the following distribution pattern.

Elderly family households	5%
Non-family households	23%
Husband-wife family households	69%
Single-parent family households	3%

In summary, the Comprehensive Plan should take into account not only the growth of households relative to population, but be sensitive to household composition and size. In this regard the Plan should recognize the need for smaller, more affordable housing based on household changes and economics, and the juxtaposition of such housing in a predominately single-family environment.

OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS

Home ownership or the absence of it tells us a great deal about the tenure and economic status of the population. While many people prefer rental housing to home ownership because of their transit station in life, many more reside in such housing for economic reasons. Conversely, home ownership generally equates to a more stationary and stable population, with financial strength to secure and carry a mortgage. Of course, this is not always the case, but it is generally representative of factors influencing home ownership.

Home ownership generally has been on the rise in Aiken County. There were in 2013, 26,877 more owner-occupied houses than in 1970. But the rate of home ownership has remained relatively flat, at about 75%. Still, the rate of ownership is above the State average of 68.2 percent in 2013.

Increased home ownership is a positive sign of economic development and income growth.

Table 14
Aiken County
Owner-Renter Occupancy Trends, By Race

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2013</u>
Owner	19,951	27,751	33,491	42,036	46,828
White	16,800	22,614	27,285	34,260	36,297
Non-white	3,151	5,137	6,206	7,776	10,531
Renter	7,022	8,707	11,392	13,551	16,156
Percent	26.0	23.9	25.4	24.4	25.7
TOTAL	26,973	36,458	44,883	55,587	62,984

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Housing, Selected Years; 2013 American Community Survey 1-year est.

HOUSING FORECAST

What does the housing industry hold in store for Aiken County? With projections for increased population and smaller households, the future looks bright.

New housing construction is projected to add 10,000 units to the existing housing supply by the year 2020. This forecast, calculated in Table 15, is based principally on an enlarged household population (projected to increase by 26,648 persons) and smaller households.

That the County is in for such an increase in housing raises several issues, not the least of which are land use and infrastructure (community facilities). More importantly from a housing perspective is the potential make-up of the future housing stock. Will it meet the needs of a changing population in terms of location, price, and style?

Housing development generally is market driven. But not all development is preceded by a market analysis. As a result, there may be missed opportunities and unfulfilled needs even in a projected growth market such as Aiken's. The biggest challenge facing the County will be to absorb and facilitate such housing in an orderly and cost effective manner.

Table 15			
Housing Forecast, Aiken county			
	2000	2013	2020
Population	142,552	164,176	171,200
Occupied Housing Units	55,587	62,984	65,686
Additional Housing Units	---	7,397	2,702

HOUSING GOALS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the current state of housing in Aiken County, housing trends over the last 40 years, and projections to the year 2020, the following goals and support initiatives are recommended.

Goal: That every Aiken County family is able to afford a decent home in a suitable environment.

The realization of this goal is contingent on:

- (1) continuous economic growth and job development.
- (2) increased educational attainment and job training.
- (3) targeting housing development to meet low and moderate income housing demands, and
- (4) optimizing use and distribution of public housing assistance monies and programs to supplement “market driven” housing opportunities and inventories, as described by the following goal.

Goal: Optimize delivery of public and private housing to meet housing demands (needs) of low to moderate-income families/households.

In order to optimize delivery we need first, to inventory and identify what is available, both from the public as well as the private sector. Presently, nobody knows.

A central, computerized accounting of where and what is available, by whom, and the terms of availability would be an invaluable resource in terms of meeting the housing needs of low and moderate income persons and households. It would also help identify market opportunities for the private sector, including joint public-private opportunities.

Goal: Reduce residential (urban) sprawl.

Residential sprawl is expensive. It will result in higher cost for police, fire and emergency medical services. It will stretch the County’s ability to keep pace with needed street and road improvements. And it will consume inordinate amounts of the County’s rural and natural resources.

The current development pattern of residential subdivisions results in housing units isolated from work, shops, schools, and services with no means of safe and efficient transportation available other than by automobile. Those without or with limited access to an automobile are often limited in their access to healthy foods, health care, and other essentials. And lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities discourages active lifestyles. As already noted, pedestrian access is key to the healthy independence of the elderly. There is a clear link between the development and design of the built environment and public health; and this link is particularly evident in the consequences of residential sprawl.

Proper planning and land use regulations, coupled with policies governing the extension of urban utilities and school facilities into rural areas, can be a substantial deterrent to urban sprawl.

Goal: Protect and maintain existing supply of quality housing.

Housing is the single largest investment for most families and individuals. Quality housing and residential environs also represent one of the county's greatest resources. It follows therefore that housing investments are adequately secured from conditions and circumstances that would compromise their value and contribution to the County.

Currently, protection and maintenance of housing in the rural areas are accomplished almost exclusively by private deed restrictions and buffer yard requirements. Noticeably missing from the list of protective tools are land use controls and growth management regulations. In response to this situation, reassessment of the County's rural development regulations is in order.

Goal: Provide a full range of housing alternatives in quality residential environs, in response to changing market conditions and affordability demands.

Insuring or maintaining the quality of residential settings is the key here. The market has and will continue to change based on demand sales and rentals. But these changes can and have produced less than quality environs in

some areas, highlighted by much of the earlier mobile home development and public housing projects.

Both the housing and life style of occupants have created problems of community acceptance and land use compatibility.

In response to these problems the manufactured housing industry has done much to improve the quality of manufactured homes (regulated by HUD since 1976) and the County has enacted mobile home regulations to ensure proper siting and development of mobile home parks and subdivisions. Continued monitoring of these regulations and the results produced therefrom are essential to eventually resolving the potential problems associated with such development.

Goal: Upgrade and revitalize deteriorating neighborhoods and substandard housing.

To meet this goal, the following strategy is recommended.

- Implement systematic housing code enforcement programs throughout the County using a targeted neighborhood approach.
- Establish grant and loan programs with the use of CDBG and/or HOME funds to assist low income residents living in substandard and overcrowded housing.
- Improve conditions of existing housing stock by providing for owner and renter rehabilitation initiatives and assistance in targeted neighborhoods.

- Consider rezoning of housing rehabilitation areas to allow for mixed use including “neighborhood” commercial development to increase residential access to essential services including healthy food retail, farmers markets, and community gardens.

- Include sidewalks, walking and bicycle trails, bike lanes, and other bike/ped facilities in the redevelopment plans.

SECTION 3

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

This element of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on the local economy and economic issues and opportunities facing Aiken County.

LABOR FORCE

The argument may be made that the local labor force is the most important element in the economic equation. Certainly, it is one of the more critical in terms of sustaining and expanding economic and industrial development.

Aiken County has the 11th largest labor force in South Carolina. It increased by 9,683 persons over the last 10 years, between 2003 and 2013. During this period, unemployment rates peaked during the 'Great Recession' that began in 2008. They have gradually declined to the current 5.8% level which is below the 7.5% unemployment rate for the State.

These trends -- an increase in the labor force despite the significant economic problems of the last six years and an unemployment lower than that of the State are indicative of a strong economy. All the more so considering the severity of the 'Great Recession'.

Table 16

Aiken County Labor Trends

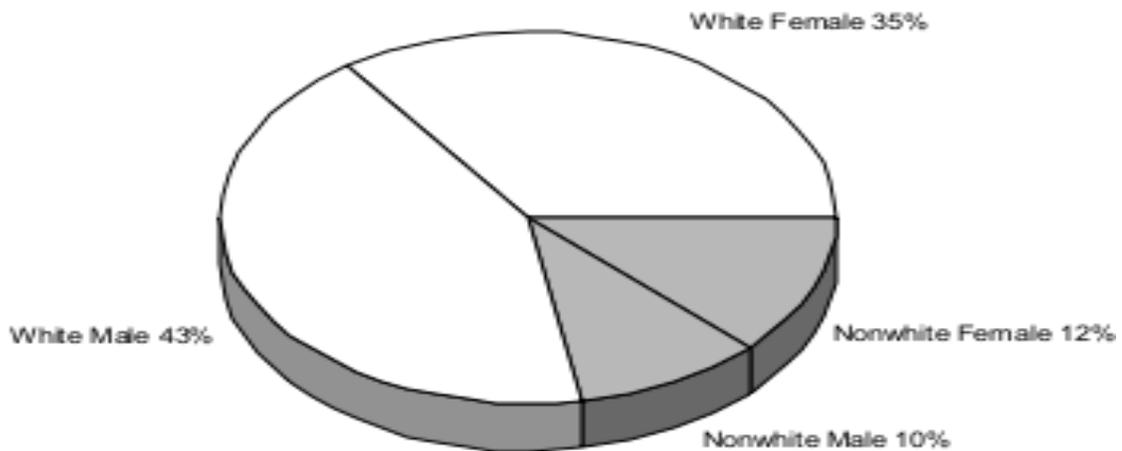
	<u>1993</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2013</u>
Civilian labor force	64,610	67,734	67,090	76,773
Employed	59,350	63,736	63,210	71,312
Unemployed	5,260	3,978	3,880	5,461
Percent County	8.1	5.9	5.8	7.1
Percent State	7.6	5.9	7.1	7.5

Source: S. C. Department of Employment & Workforce, S.C.'s Labor Force and Industry, Selected Years, S.C.'s Employment Situation, August 2014; 2000 Census.

Currently, Aiken County's labor force is comprised mostly of males (52%) with females making up 48% of the total. This is a slight change from labor force participation rates by sex from the 2000 Census. Based on the most recent data available, the 2000 Census, whites account for 78% of the labor force, compared with only 22% by nonwhites.

Nonwhite males form the smallest sector at 10%. Observing a pattern statewide, nonwhites have a higher unemployment rate than whites, while nonwhite males have the highest rate in the County.

Labor Force, 2000



WORKER COMMUTER PATTERNS

Worker commuting patterns reveal a great deal about the relative strength and size of the County's economic base. Is Aiken County a worker importer or exporter?

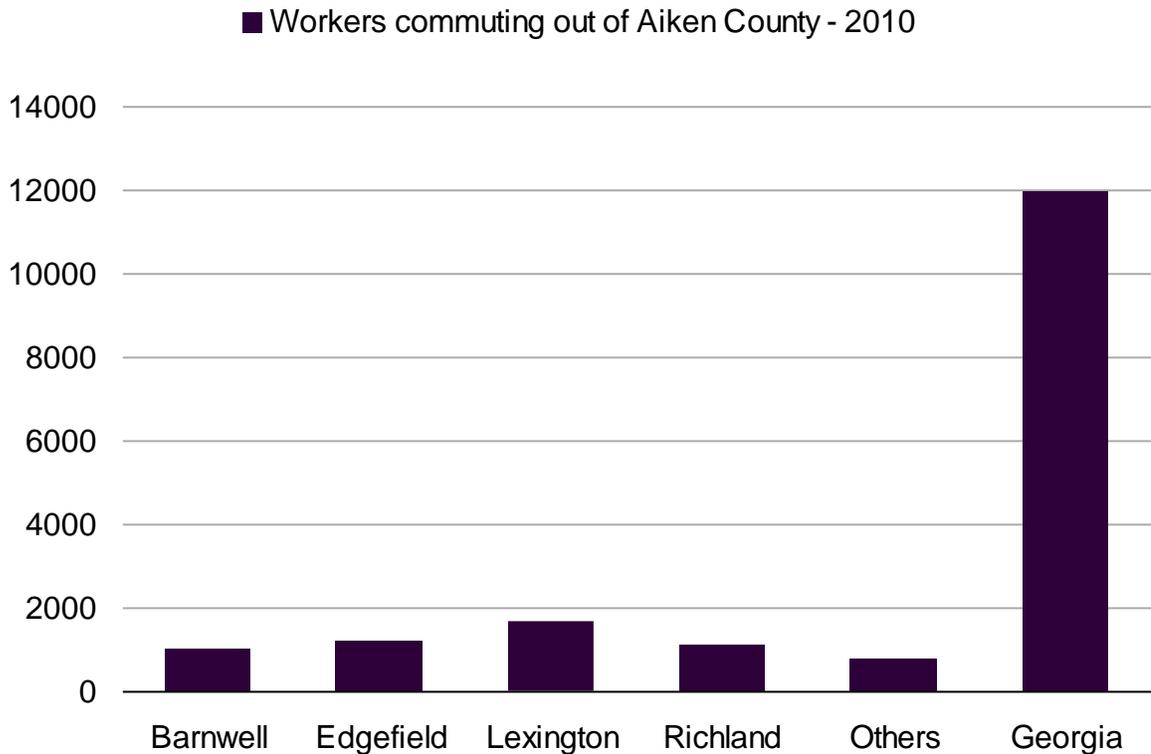
Generally speaking, the larger the job market, the more likely an area (city, county, region) is to be a worker importer. And given the size of Aiken's economic base, it follows that the County is an importer. Not so. In fact, Aiken County has a history of exporting more workers than it imports.

Dating back to 1970 the County exported 5,011 more workers than it imported. By 2010, the number had been reduced to 1,395. But the County continued to export more workers than it imported, albeit fewer.

Table 17
Worker Commuting Patterns, Trends
Aiken County

	Commuting into Aiken Co. from:			Commuting out of Aiken Co. to:		
	<u>1970</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
	South Carolina					
Barnwell Co.	553	1,451	1,234	181	912	977
Edgefield Co.	718	2,762	3,320	155	1,339	1,201
Lexington Co.	413	613	816	389	1,428	1,643
Richland Co.	193	118	---	662	1,073	1,097
All Other counties	465	---	1,147	867	1,293	775
Total SC	2,342	2,458	6,517	2,254	6,045	5,693
Georgia						
Columbia Co.	277	---	3,840	69	1,522	1,664
Richmond Co.	1,790	---	5,699	6,864	10,262	10,269
All Other Counties	100	---	175	15	423	---
Total GA	2,167	---	9,714	6,948	12,207	11,933
Elsewhere	87	---	---	405	307	---
Total	4,596	17,458	16,231	9,607	18,559	17,626

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1970, 2000, and 2010.



In South Carolina in 2010, 72.4 percent of workers age 16 and over were employed in their county of residence. The rate was higher in Aiken County, where workers age 16 and over were 79.8% of the workforce. Of the balance employed outside the county, 20.2% were employed in the State of Georgia.

Sixty-eight percent of all residents working outside Aiken County in 2010 were commuting to the State of Georgia for employment. This is down from 72% in 1970. Perhaps more significant, the total number of Aiken County residents commuting to Georgia decreased by 274 persons between 2000 and 2010. Although there is evidence to suggest this is result of an overall decrease in commuting during that decade

Between 2000 and 2010, commuting into Aiken County from neighboring counties of Barnwell, Lexington, Edgefield, and Richland increased significantly, 165%. Meanwhile, commuting out of Aiken County to these counties decreased by 6%. This has provided more in-state job opportunities, helping off-set the draw of the Georgia market.

ECONOMIC/JOB PROFILE

The local economy consist of three broad based sectors:

- (1) Manufacturing
- (2) Nonmanufacturing
- (3) Farming

Manufacturing Sector

Since the industrialization of the South, manufacturing has driven the local economy, previously in the form of textiles. That neither textiles, in particular, nor manufacturing, in general, dominate the County's economy as they once did in no way diminishes the importance of manufacturing to the economic well-being of the County. To the contrary, the significance of manufacturing in an evolving economy is magnified.

Studies have shown that the creation of 100 new manufacturing jobs can have the following impact on the local economy:

- (1) Create 68 new non-manufacturing jobs,
- (2) add one (1) retail establishment,
- (3) add to bank deposits,
- (4) add to retail sales, and
- (5) add to personal income.

Additionally, 100 new industrial jobs will produce about 67 new families, and add approximately 350 people and 80 school children.

Manufacturing jobs declined statewide by approximately 5.8% between 2000 and 2012, despite intensive recruitment efforts by the State. From 20% of all non-farm jobs in 2000, manufacturing jobs dropped to just 13.7% across the State in 2012.

Unfortunately, this situation is mirrored in Aiken County, where manufacturing jobs declined by 1.1% between 2000 and 2012. This resulted in a loss of 1,572 jobs. During this same period, job loses were also confirmed in the construction, wholesale trade, transportation/utilities, and professional sectors. It should be noted, however, that these figures do not

include the increased manufacturing employment resulting from Bridgestone Americas' expansion of its Aiken County plant and construction of an off-road tire plant in the Sage Mill Industrial Park, nor the expansion of the MTU Aiken Plant. These projects will produce nearly 1,000 new manufacturing jobs.

The good news is that the job market increased in most other sectors of the local economy.

Table 18				
Employed Civilian Population, Age 16 and over, 2012				
	Aiken County		South Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	1,161	1.7	20,730	1.0
Construction	4,911	7.3	141,930	7.1
Manufacturing	9,600	14.4	272,400	13.7
Wholesale Trade	987	1.5	54,341	2.7
Retail Trade	7,598	11.4	241,153	12.1
Transportation/Utilities	4,087	6.1	93,612	4.7
Information	1,231	1.8	35,607	1.8
F. I.R. E.	3,298	4.9	119,240	6.0
Professional	7,840	11.7	185,894	9.3
Services	17,192	25.7	529,744	26.6
Arts, Entertainment, Accommodations, Food	5,257	7.9	199,865	10.0
Public Administration	3,700	5.5	100,706	5.0
Total	66,857	100.0	1,995,222	100.0

Source: US Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.

Non-manufacturing Sector

Evolution of the local economy has witnessed unprecedented and disproportionate growth in the non-manufacturing sector, relative to the manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

Not surprisingly, growth in the non-manufacturing sector has accounted for most new jobs, increasing nearly 9% between 1995 and 2012. The non-manufacturing sector added 3,357 more jobs during this period compared to the manufacturing sector where there was a loss of jobs. However, it has not been uniform.

There were gains in finance, insurance, real estate and services, including government services, but losses in construction and trade.

Table 19

Distribution of Non-manufacturing Jobs

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>%Change</u>
NONMANUFACTURING	37,600	36,500	38,395	40,957	8.93
Construction & Mining	9,100	4,900	4,775	3,391	-62.73
Transportation, Utility	1,600	1,700	1,552	1,977	23.56
Wholesale/Retail Trade	10,200	10,200	7,017	7,923	-22.32
Finance, Ins., R. E.	1,500	1,400	2,418	2,298	53.20
Services	8,800	11,000	15,424	18,226	107.11
Government	6,400	7,300	7,209	7,142	11.59

Source: State of South Carolina, Employment Security Commission, Selected Years; US Census Bureau, 2012 Business Census

That the County's job market is becoming increasingly service oriented is not surprising. The service industry has become the driving force of South Carolina's economy. Point in fact, the service industry is projected by the South Carolina Employment Security Commission to provide one out of every two new jobs in the State through 2005. But this is not likely to be the case in Aiken County, as Aiken's economic base is not predicated on tourism-based activity. Still, the service sector is expected to gain

disproportionately to other sectors of the economy because of its role in all aspects of business, including legal services, child care services, and many other business services in support of other industries in one way or another.

Of the six major categories in the non-manufacturing sector listed on Table 19, service and service related industries account for the bulk of the increase. Jobs in construction and mining also have decreased rather substantially, and jobs in transportation and utilities have increased slightly.

As shown in Table 20 over a 12 year period, between 1990 and 2002, employment increased in most trade and service categories in line with population growth. Health services led the way with an 80% increase.

Also notable were job increases in amusement and recreation services, an indication of increased leisure time and money.

The largest increase in retail trade employment has been in the eating and drinking industry. This industry has been the recipient of increased household income and changing lifestyles.

Growth in non-manufacturing jobs has been accompanied by an increase in the number of establishments, as expected, but not to the same extent. This means there were numerous enlargements, consolidations, and replacements.

Unfortunately, changes in data collection and reporting has made updating the employment figures in Table 20 difficult. No comparable data has been located for the selected employment sectors.

Table 20
Aiken County
Profile of Selected Service and Trade Sectors
Employment: 1992 - 2002

No Employees*	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	Change	
			<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Amusement, recreation	500	700	200	40
Health services	2,365	4,264	1,899	80
Food	1,843	1,850	7	<1
Auto dealers	580	721	141	24
Gas stations	355	561	206	58
Apparel & accessories	598	621	23	04
Accommodations & Eating	2,618	3,830	1,212	46
Drug	277	271	-6	<1

* Establishments with payrolls

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Service Industries, Geographic Area Services, South Carolina, Selected Years.

Agricultural Sector

Although small by comparison to the manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors, the County's agricultural sector is still important. Farming is trending downward with regards to employment, as illustrated in Table 21. However, in all other respects, particularly financial, the decline of farming in Aiken County during the 1990s has been reversed with significant increases in both total sales and sales per farm.

Perhaps of more significance, the estimated market value of farms grew substantially during this period, increasing the vulnerability of farmland for more profitable alternative uses.

One potential reason for the resurgence in the agriculture sector is the increase in equestrian facilities in Aiken County. Pasture land in Aiken County increased from 9,736 acres in 2007 to 13,758 acres in 2012. Significantly, during the same five-year period pasture land in the State decreased from 264,049 acres to 56,904 acres.

Table 21 Economic Changes In Agricultural Profile, 1997-2012				
	1997	2012	Change Number	%
Total Farm Product Sales	\$66,878,000	\$96,343,000	\$29,465,000	44
Average Sales Per Farm	\$69,810	\$87,426	\$17,616	25
Hired Farm Labor	781	723	-58	-7
Market Value of Farms	\$225,322,000	\$596,547,000	\$371,225,000	165
Average Value Per Farm	\$234,955	\$532,257	\$297,302	127
Number of Farms	729	1,102	373	51

Source. Census of Agriculture, 1997, 2012

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES/PROJECTIONS

Between 2000 and 2010, South Carolina was projected to add over 300,000 jobs, according to the S.C. Employment Security Commission. The service industry, as expected, is projected to lead the way, with an increase of 178,660 new jobs, a 24.4 percent increase. Jobs in wholesale and retail trade also are expected to increase substantially, with over 56,000 new jobs. Agricultural service jobs are projected to increase by about 39 percent, but the actual increase will make up only two percent of the total number of new jobs created statewide, and most of the increase is expected to occur in more agriculturally oriented counties.

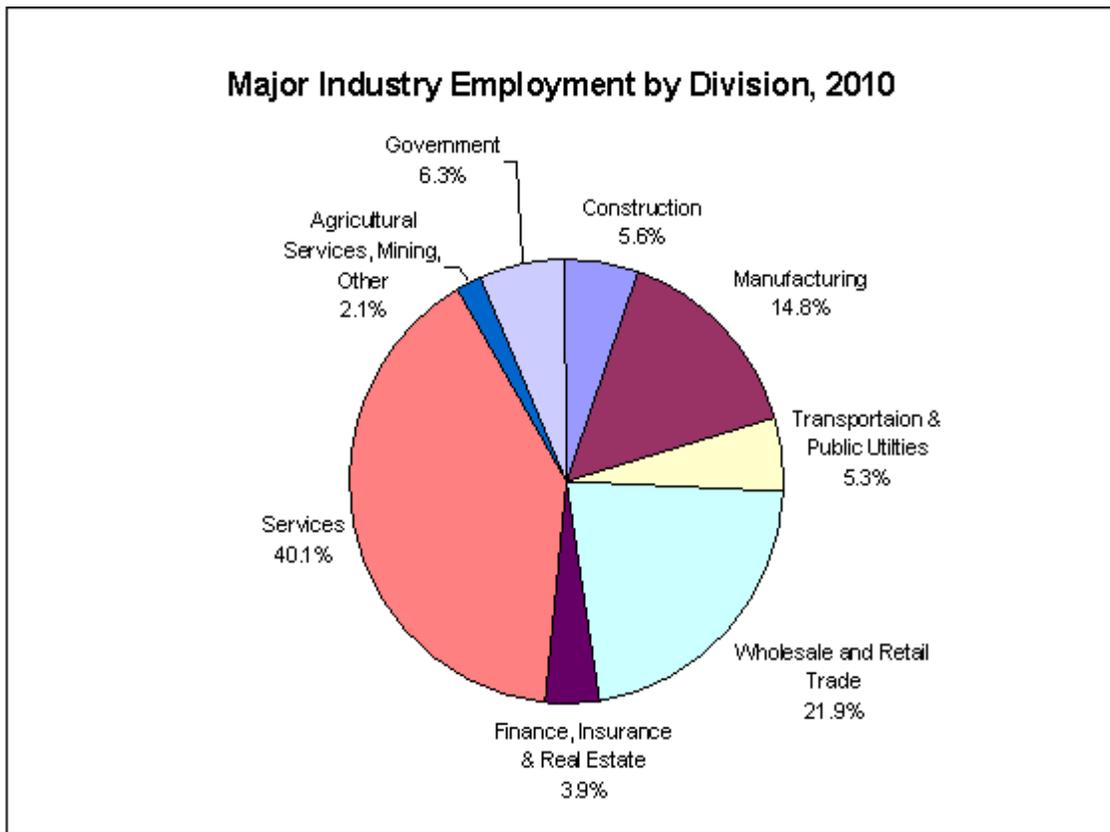
The manufacturing sector, following past trends, is projected to lose nearly 9,000 jobs during this period. Jobs in the mining industry also are projected to decline.

Once again, changes in data collection and reporting has made updating the employment figures in Tables 21 and 22 difficult. No comparable data has been located for the selected employment sectors.

Table 22
EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS BY MAJOR INDUSTRY DIVISION
2000 - 2010

Industry Title	2000		2010		Change	
	Base Employment	Percent Employed	Projected Employment	Percent Employed	Employment	Percent
Total, All Industries	1,968,330	100.00	2,267,870	100.00	299,540	15.2
Agricultural Services	12,590	0.64	17,460	0.77	4,870	38.7
Mining	1,830	0.09	1,820	0.08	(10)	-0.5
Construction	113,060	5.74	126,940	5.60	13,880	12.3
Manufacturing	345,140	17.53	336,520	14.84	(8,620)	(2.5)
Transportation and Public Utilities	101,870	5.18	119,840	5.28	17,970	17.6
Wholesale and Retail Trade	440,480	22.38	496,630	21.90	56,150	12.7
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	79,450	4.04	87,680	3.87	8,230	10.4
Services	731,580	37.17	910,240	40.14	178,660	24.4
Government	131,130	6.66	141,790	6.25	10,660	8.1

* "Educational Services" includes state and local schools, while "Health Services" includes state and local hospitals. Therefore, "State and Local Government" excludes both schools and hospitals. "Nonclassified Establishments" are included in "Total, All Industries" but not reported.



Following is an analysis by the Employment Security Commission of selected segments of the economy and the future job market.

Transportation and Public Utilities

The main contributors to this industry's growth will be trucking and warehousing, adding 7,218 new jobs, followed by air transportation with 2,443 jobs. Access to five major interstates and eight major airports serving the State, make transporting materials from place to place convenient for businesses. Companies developing a network of suppliers throughout the State will lead to job development. The communications area is expected to add an additional 3,000 new jobs, with cable and pay TV leading the way. The utilities sector will see most of its growth in combination utility services and sanitary services as increased infrastructure needs and environmental concerns shape future development plans.

Wholesale and Retail Trade

Trade was projected to contribute 19 percent of overall job growth between 2000 and the year 2010. Both durable and non-durable wholesale trade are in line with the State in terms of percentage growth. Those expected to contribute the most wholesale jobs are in machinery; equipment and supplies; and grocery products. In the area of retail trade, eating and drinking places are projected to increase by 18 percent and provide the most employment opportunities (24,058) within this sector. An anticipated upturn in tourism and resident population will be a drawing card for more restaurants and retail shops. Additional industry sectors driving retail trade also include apparel, food and furniture stores.

Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

Mergers and closings have been buzz words for the banking industry over the past few years, ultimately leading to job losses. Technology has also played a part with the implementation of automated teller machines (ATM) and phone access to account transactions, which lessen the need for workers to process transactions. Since 1991 depository institutions have eliminated 1,830 jobs, with the majority of losses coming from savings institutions and commercial banks. By 2005, areas such as personal credit and credit unions were expected to show the greatest gains in employment (1,010 and 470, respectively). In the area of insurance, insurance agents and brokers were expected to add the most jobs (1,410) based on projected population gains. Real estate employment was expected to rise 13 percent by 2005.

Services

The service industry has become the driving force for South Carolina's economy and provided nearly one out of every two new jobs in the State through 2010. The service industry covers a wide range of employers including hotels, hospitals, data processing firms and child day care facilities. The commonality among these industries is that they are primarily engaged in providing services to individuals, businesses, government establishments and other organizations. Others worth noting are social services, legal services, miscellaneous repair, and business services. Eight of the top ten sectors projected to add jobs by 2005 are in services.

GOALS

GOAL: Develop and maintain a balanced economy of sufficient size and strength to ensure a sustainable quality of life for all Aiken County residents.

The following strategies are recommended in support of this goal.

- Provide technical and financial assistance to existing industry, where needed, to help adapt to a changing world economy.
- Promote industrial diversification, with emphasis on high paying growth industries, and white collar businesses with national or business unit head-quarters of firms and/or product engineering and research operations associated with manufacturing plants and companies in Aiken County, or in surrounding more rural counties such as Edgefield and Barnwell.
- Coordinate economic development activities with infrastructure and service providers, and County planning proposals.
- Foster an entrepreneurial environment that encourages economic development.
- Know and market the County's strengths, and improve on its weaknesses.

GOAL: Maintain or increase the current ratio of manufacturing to non-manufacturing jobs.

The significance of this from a development standpoint is in the multiplier effect on non-manufacturing jobs, retail sales and establishments, bank deposits, and higher wages.

The fact that like uses (manufacturing) attract like uses (manufacturing) is undeniable. The County's existing manufacturing base should aid in attracting additional manufacturing companies, provided the proper emphasis is placed on recruiting and accommodating such development.

GOAL: Create new economic markets to benefit from South Carolina's emerging recreation and retirement image.

To this end, economic development efforts should be expanded to include tourist and retiree markets. The State has placed great emphasis on promoting South Carolina as a tourist destination and retirement place. Even the new vehicle license plate promotes tourism.

With so much free advertising by the State, it should be relatively economical for the County to cash in on these initiatives and enjoy the benefits of an even broader based economy.

To capitalize on the State initiatives, the development of a more aggressive tourism promotion program, together with educational programs for individuals involved in tourism, and the integration of infrastructure development in support of tourism is recommended.

INDUSTRIAL RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The South Carolina Department of Commerce is the lead state agency for industrial recruitment, development and maintenance. The Economic Development Partnership Serving Aiken and Edgefield Counties is the local agency responsible for these duties.

In their combined approach to economic development in general and the above goals in particular, the focus is on recruitment of industries that are:

- (1) Environmentally sound;
- (2) Non-unionized; and
- (3) Pay high wages.

Industry meeting this criteria would be a welcome addition to almost any community. Higher paying industries equate to higher standards of living, while effectively precluding the need for unions. Environmentally sound industry generally is compatible with its surroundings and therefore unopposed by environmental groups.

But what kind of industries meet the three criteria?

High Paying, Non-unionized Industries

Technology industries, emphasizing research and development (R&D), generally meet this criteria. In fact, the South Carolina Department of Commerce has assembled a list of technology industries based on their growth potential and above average wage scales. Included in this list are the following:

SIC*	INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION
281	Industrial Inorganic Chemicals
282	Plastics materials and synthetic resins, synthetic rubber, cellulosic and other manmade fibers, except glass
283	Drugs
284	Soap, Detergents and Cleaning Preparations, Perfumes, Cosmetics, and other Toilet Preparations
285	Paints, Varnishes, Lacquers, Enamels and Allied Products
286	Industrial Organic Chemicals
287	Agricultural Chemicals
289	Miscellaneous Chemical Products
348	Ordnance and Accessories, except Vehicles and Guided Missiles
351	Engines and Turbines
353	Construction, Mining and Materials Handling Machinery & Equipment
355	Special Industry Machinery, except Metalworking Machinery
356	General Industrial Machinery and Equipment
357	Computer and Office Equipment

359	Miscellaneous Industrial and Commercial Machinery & Equipment
361	Electric Transmission and Distribution Equipment
362	Electrical Industrial Apparatus
365	Household Audio and Video Equipment and Audio Recordings
366	Communication Equipment
367	Electronic Components and Accessories
369	Miscellaneous Electrical Machinery, Equipment & Supplies
371	Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicle Equipment
372	Aircraft and Parts
376	Guided Missiles and Space Vehicles and Parts
379	Miscellaneous Transportation Equipment
381	Search, Detection, Navigation, Guidance, Aeronautical and Nautical Systems
382	Laboratory Apparatus and Analytical, Optical, Measuring and Controlling Instruments
384	Surgical, Medical and Dental Instruments and Supplies
385	Ophthalmic Goods
386	Photographic Equipment and Supplies
387	Watches, Clocks, Clockwork Operated Devices and Parts
737	Computer Programming and Related Services
739	Commercial research and laboratories
891	Engineering services

*Standard Industrial Classification System (SIC)

Environmentally Sound Industries

This is an area in which the County must be very careful. Air quality standards enacted in 1999 limit ozone, an ingredient of smog, to 0.08 parts per million compared with the previous standard of 0.12 parts per million.

States and counties that do not meet the standards will have to implement rules to improve air quality or face losing federal funds.

In addition to being mindful of industries impacting the State's guidelines for air emissions, industrial recruiters should closely scrutinize chemical industries - SIC 28 and primary metal industries - SIC 33. While it is unfair to categorically define industries on the basis of their environmental relationships, the inherent production process of many of these industries is such that the potential exist for environmental conflict.

However, the real gauge should not be industrial classification, but the track record and history of a given industry, particularly small chemical mixing plants and industries impacting air quality.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Development policies in support of the stated goal herein include the following:

- (1) Encourage the development of industrial uses in areas which will maximize the potential for safe, efficient and compatible operations while minimizing excessive infrastructure improvements and service costs to both industry and government.
- (2) Promote the development of planned industrial parks and discourage the location of industry other than agri-industry in rural or natural resource areas.
- (3) Encourage the development and/or expansion of environmentally sound industries that do not produce excessive noise, smoke, dust or other particulate matter, vibration, toxic or noxious waste materials, odors, fire and explosive hazards or other potentially detrimental emissions.

- (4) Promote the location of industrial uses in areas which have compatible soils, drainage and other site characteristics which minimize the cost of site preparation.
- (5) Coordinate the location of industrial development with the provision of appropriate road, rail, and utilities and information regarding potential impacts on the Comprehensive Plan, community facilities and services, adjacent and nearby land uses, and environmental resources.
- (6) Identify and reserve where possible appropriate lands for future industrial development and protect these lands as well as existing industry from encroachment by interim land uses which would detract from, would be incompatible with, or would preclude their future industrial utility.

MARKETING PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Following is a five point program designed to aid in the recruitment and/or expansion of industry and business in Aiken County.

- (1) **Product Development:** Direct economic development efforts toward improving the County's weaknesses and maintaining its strengths.
- (2) **Process Development:** Create new partnerships and processes to introduce or expand the role of groups in the public and private sectors in presenting the County's case either directly to prospects or indirectly through participation in the creation of marketing materials.
- (3) **Marketing Materials:** Create or modify specific marketing collateral pieces such as proposal presentations, brochures, multi-media presentations, advertising copy, etc.

- (4) **Marketing Programs:** Initiate proactive activities such as ad placement, direct mail programs, trade show attendance, etc. designed to generate industrial and business prospects.
- (5) **Internet Marketing and Social Media:** Create and use internet websites for distributing the marketing materials that are developed. Use social media such Linked In to further distribute marketing materials and communicate with interested individuals and organizations.

SECTION 4

NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Aiken County, created in 1871 by Act of the General Assembly, is the fourth largest county in South Carolina, with 1,096 square miles.

It is situated in the southwest portion of the State, midway between the mountains and the ocean, and is bounded by Saluda and Edgefield Counties on the north; Barnwell and Orangeburg Counties on the south; and Lexington County to the east; with the Edisto River serving as the county line. The state of Georgia lies to the west with the Savannah River serving as the county-state line.

A large portion of the southeastern corner is occupied by the Savannah River Site, which is owned by the Federal government and not available for public or private use. Aiken County sits just below the fall line separating the Piedmont Province from the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

CLIMATE

Aiken County, like much of South Carolina, is characterized by a humid temperate climate. The winters are mild and the summers are hot and humid. Average annual temperature is 64.5 degrees with July the warmest month, averaging 79.6 degrees and December the coldest month averaging 44.6 degrees. The average date for the first freeze is November 13 and the average date for the last freeze is March 22. This provides the County with a growing season of 235 frost-free days.

Average annual precipitation is 47.09 inches. Summer months (June, July, August) are the rainiest accounting for 29% of the annual average. Most of this rain comes in the form of afternoon thundershowers. Winter months (December, January, February) are characterized by steady rains accounting for 25% of the annual average. March, April and May produce 26% of the annual average precipitation. The spring months also are characterized by severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. Autumn months (September, October, November) are the driest producing only 17% of average annual precipitation.

Climate conditions are conducive to a wide range of year-round outdoor recreational and economic pursuits, enhancing future growth and development.

GEOLOGY

Land forms in Aiken County include those normally present along the inland margin of the Atlantic Coastal Plain adjacent to the Piedmont Province, along with others found normally farther down this plain and closet to the coast. The major physiographic division of the Atlantic Coastal Plain within this area is divided into the Aiken Plateau, the Congaree Sand Hills and the Coastal Terraces. These subdivisions have relatively soft sediments and are more easily eroded than the hard crystalline rocks of the adjoining Piedmont Province; therefore, the general level of the Coastal Plain is lower than that of the Piedmont. For this reason, the boundary between these two provinces is commonly referred to as the fall line.

TOPOGRAPHY

Topography, or slopes characteristics, is important to the overall land use scheme in that it can influence development costs and potential environmental deterioration. As slopes become steeper and steeper, development costs can rise accordingly due to extensive grading and excavation needed to prepare a site. When we talk about development limitations caused by steep slope, we usually mean economic limitations; development that is economically feasible in, say, San Francisco or Pittsburgh, might not be practical in Aiken County.

The major environmental problem associated with new development on steeply sloped land is soil erosion.

Topography is also an important factor to consider in selecting a well site, according to geologists. Wells with the largest yields are usually located in valleys or draws. Wells located on slopes or flat areas produce somewhat smaller yields, while wells located on hills generally have low yields. For these reasons alone, a cognizance of the topography is essential to land use planning. But equally important is the need to identify drainage areas and

extreme slope conditions. These factors, too, can greatly influence or deter development.

USES AND LIMITATIONS, BY SLOPE

Percent Slope

Uses and Limitations

0-2%	Suitable for all types of urban uses including large factories, shopping centers and so forth; also for extensive agriculture and forestry. This is “prime” land for most uses.
2-6%	Suitable for most medium scale urban uses, but possibly not for large scale factories and shopping centers as slope approaches 6%. Suitable for forestry and most agriculture, but erosion preventive techniques are needed in the latter. This slope range makes very attractive residential subdivision property.
6-10%	Not suitable for larger scale construction, but fairly well suited for most residential and small commercial development. Street grades over 8% are impractical, except in purely residential environments. Any urban development would require a well-conceived layout plan or storm drainage and construction costs would be problematic. High density development should probably be avoided. Erosion is a real problem for agricultural uses and row crops should be avoided in many cases. Severe erosion in this slope range is fairly widespread. The land is suitable to grazing and woodlands, some crops, and low to moderate density urban development.

- 10-15% This slope range is suitable only for low density residential development among urban uses. Agricultural function is usually restricted to pasture. Most of this land is better left for silviculture or natural woodlands. Severe erosion may result any time larger acreages in this slope range are cleared unless preventative techniques are used.
- 15 % and This slope range is suitable only for very low density over residential use and woodlands. The erosion potential is high for all soil types. This land may meet some park needs, since it is often aesthetically attractive. Road construction and all forms of development are expensive.

Aiken County is generally characterized by gently rolling terrain, with slopes between zero and twenty-five degrees. A four-pronged narrow ridge extends southeastward into the County dividing it into two primary drainage basins. The west and southern portions of the area are drained by the Savannah River; the remainder of the County by the North and South Forks of the Edisto River. This dividing ridge ranges in elevation from about 600 feet where it enters the northwestern part of the County near Eureka, to about 530 feet near Aiken, to just about 400 feet in the southeastern portion of the County. The general topographic features of the County include narrow, flat-bottomed, steep-sided valleys and broad gently rolling terrain between the numerous creeks and rivers.

Slope conditions are severe in only about 1% of the County, but present moderate to severe constraints to development in a much larger area, comprising nearly 57%. Thus, care must be taken to overcome such conditions and address erosion in over 50% of the County, a large part of which is consumed by urban development.

SOILS

The County is composed of many different soils, with varying influences on development. It is essential, therefore, from a planning standpoint, to know the location, limitations and capabilities of each, especially those posing problems to development.

Unfortunately, most soils best suited to farm operations are also best suited to urban development. This has accounted for massive conversions of farmland to urban use. Conversely, poor soils or soils with constraints to agricultural use generally present problems to urban development. As a result, there is a pressing need for planning to help resolve these conflicts, and to better address development constraints posed by poorer soil conditions.

PRIME FARMLAND

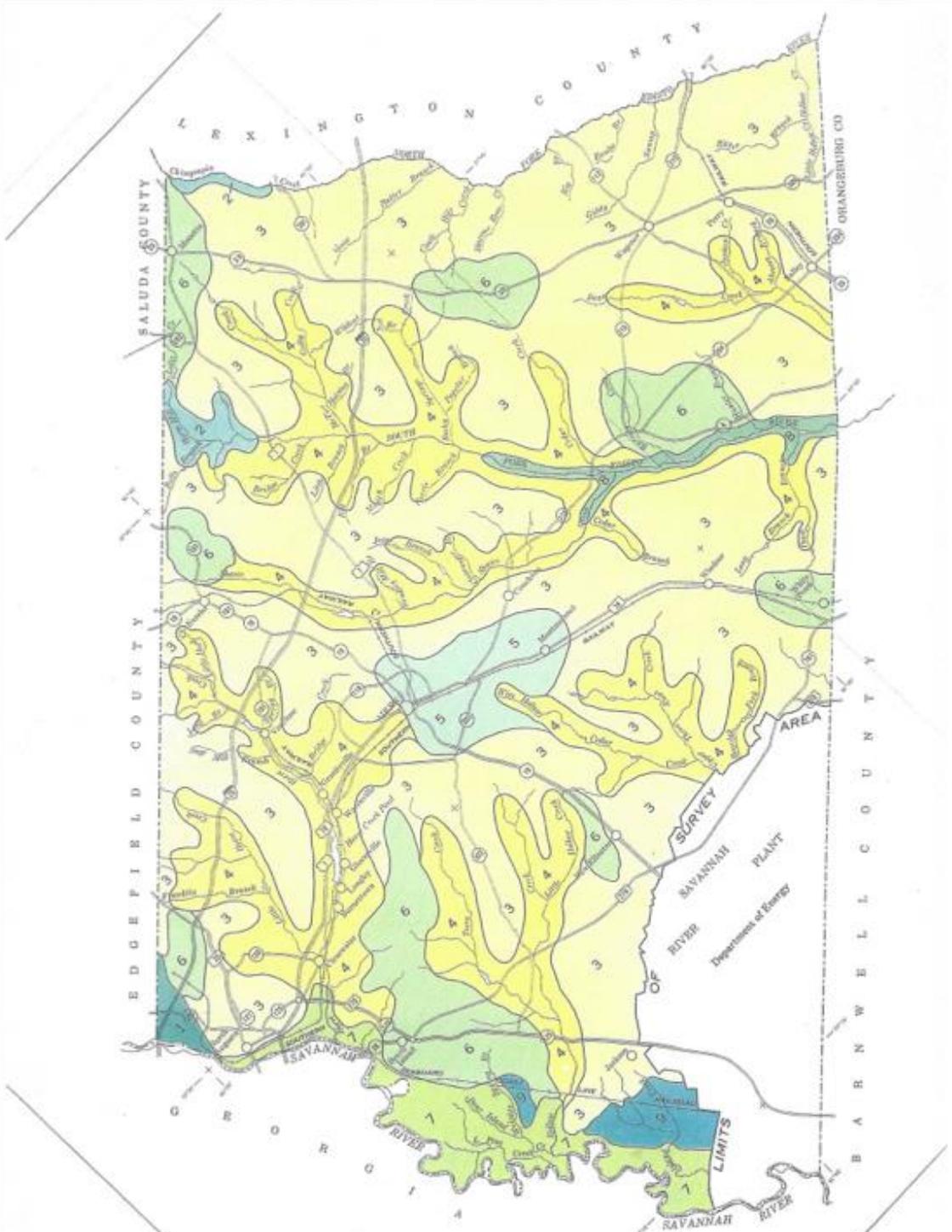
Prime farmland is one of several kinds of important farmland defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as soils that are best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Prime farmland soils are of major importance in meeting the nation's short and long range needs for food and fiber. The acreage of high quality farmland is limited, and the USDA recognizes that government at local, state, and federal levels, as well as individuals, must encourage and facilitate the wise uses of our nation's prime farmland.

Prime farmland soils have properties that are favorable for the economic production of sustained high yields of crops. The soils need only to be treated and managed using acceptable farming methods. The moisture supply, of course, must be adequate and the growing season has to be sufficiently long – both conditions are present in Aiken County. Prime farmland soils produce the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources. The farming of these soils results in the least damage to the environment.

A second tier classification of soils suitable for agriculture is "Soils of Statewide Importance." These are productive soils, but may have express characteristics of steep slope, high water table, presence of gravel, low water holding capacity, or susceptibility to erosion or other concerns.

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service farmland classification for Aiken County (Appendix 4) - excluding the Savannah River Site - classifies only 8.2% of the county as 'all prime farm land.' An additional 16.7 % is listed as farmland of statewide importance. These limited acreages of high production farmlands should be preserved and protected from development pressures.

There are nine general soil groups or associations in Aiken County, with differing characteristics. The units are general by definition, requiring more site specific analysis for individual properties but are helpful as a guide to development, which is the intent of this Plan. A brief description of each follows.



Generalized Soils Map of Aiken County

This Generalized Soils Map of Aiken County shows the locations of the nine general soils groups in Aiken County. The numbers on the map correspond to the following numbers on the soils groups.

1. Gundee-Wateree

The landscape is characterized by marked relief. The soils in most places are sloping to very steep and are highly dissected by drainage ways. They are in a single area in the extreme western corner of the County adjacent to the Savannah River. This map unit makes up less than 0.25% of the County.

Most of the acreage is woodland. The forest cover consists of mixed hardwoods and pines. A high percentage of the woodland is unimproved. Some very small areas are used as cropland and pasture.

The soils in this map unit are poorly suited for crops and pasture because of the slope. They are suited to use as woodlands, however. Erosion is a moderate to severe hazard because of the slope. The soils are poorly suited to most urban and recreation uses also because of the slope. Slope, the hazard of erosion, and the rocky subsoil are the chief problems in management.

2. Pacolet-Vaucluse-Alley

The landscape here also is characterized by marked relief. The soils are dominantly sloping to moderately steep. They are in two well separated areas adjacent to streams in the northern part of the County. The land use is mainly woodland of mixed pines and hardwoods. On some of the ridgetops the soils are less sloping and are used for crops or as pasture.

This map unit makes up about 0.75 % of the County. These soils are poorly suited to crops and pasture because of slope, permeability, and droughtiness. However, some of the minor soils are suited to crops. They are poorly suited to most urban and recreation uses as well. The slope is the main limitation for all of the major soils; the slow permeability, restricted root zone, and sandy texture of the Vaucluse and Alley soils are also concerns in management.

3. Troup-Lakeland-Fuquay

These soils are characterized by moderate relief. The nearly level to gently sloping soils are on fairly broad ridgetops, and the more sloping soils are on the side slopes of drainage ways. Areas of this map unit extend widely throughout the County. Most of the acreage is woodland. The forest cover varies from native turkey oaks and longleaf pines to planted pines.

This map unit makes up about 57% of the County. For the most part, these soils are poorly suited to crops because of droughtiness, low available water capacity, and rapid leaching of plant nutrients. The soils generally are suited to use as pasture. The soils are suited to most urban uses, however. Some soils are too rapidly or too slowly permeable for septic tank absorption fields to function properly. The sandy texture is a limitation for some recreation uses. Droughtiness, low available water capacity and rapid loss of nutrients, thick sandy surface material, and low content of organic matter are the chief problems in management of these soils.

4. Vaucluse-Alley-Troup

Like the previous association, these soils are characterized by moderate relief. The areas are scattered throughout the County, bordering the major streams and drainage ways. The soils are dominantly sloping to moderately steep. The forest cover is dominantly pines on ridgetops, the soils have been cleared and are used as cropland or pasture. Several towns are located in one area of this map unit in the western part of the County.

This map unit makes up about 24% of the County. The soils are poorly suited to crops, pasture and woodlands because of slope, partly restricted root zone, droughtiness, and low available water capacity. They are suited to most urban uses, however. Rolling slopes, slow permeability, the partly restricted root zone, sandy texture, and droughtiness are the chief problems in management.

5. Faceville-Fuquay-Marlboro

The land surface is typically undulating. The soils are dominantly nearly level to sloping and form a broad ridge to the south and east of Aiken. They are mainly in crops.

This associated comprises about 3% of the County. The soils generally are well suited to crops and have a high percentage of prime farmland. The soils are well suited to use as pastures, hay lands, and woodlands. They are generally well suited to most urban and recreation uses.

6. Dothan-Fuquay

The land surface is characteristically undulating. The soils are on broad ridges dissected by shallow drainage ways. These areas are scattered throughout the County. In most places they consist of open fields and occasional tracts of woodland. Commonly, the more sloping and sandier soils are used as woodlands.

This map unit makes up about 10% of the County. About half of the acreage is in crops. The rest is divided about equally between pasture and woodland. They are suited to use as crops, pasture and woodland. They generally are suited to urban development; however, in most places there are moderate problems because of permeability which, along with sandy texture, droughtiness, and the low available water capacity, are the chief problems in management.

7. Shellbluff-Chewacla-Johnston

The landscape is characterized by slight relief with the soils nearly level. They are in a single large area adjacent to the Savannah River. The vegetation is dominantly hardwoods and pines. Some areas of the better drained soils have been cleared and are used as cropland or pasture.

The soils in this map unit make up about 3% of the County. The soils in this map unit are suited to crops. Frequent flooding is a hazard, and the seasonal high water table is a limitation. With the exception of Johnston soils, the soils are well suited to use as pasture and woodland. The soils generally are poorly suited to urban and recreational development because of flooding and wetness. The major problems in management are flooding and the high water table.

8. Johnston

Johnston soils are characterized by slight relief. They are nearly level and are located in one long, narrow area on the flood plain of the South Fork Edisto River. The vegetation is dominantly hardwoods and pines. In a few

small areas that have been cleared, the soils are used as pasture. The soils in this map unit make up about 1% of the County.

9. Bethera-Ogeechee-Angle

These soils too, are characterized by slight relief. They are found in the southern part of the County near the Savannah River. Dominant use of these soils is woodlands, crops and pasture.

The soils make up only 1% of the County. Wetness severely limits the use of equipment on these soils and is a cause of seedling mortality. The soils generally are poorly suited to urban and recreation development. The chief problem in management is removal of excess water.

Summary

Historically and for economic reasons, land with the fewest limitations to urban development generally is the first to be developed. Such is the case in Aiken County. As may be seen on the accompanying map, the more urbanized sections of the County are situated on lands posing only slight/moderate restrictions to development. The type and degree of restrictions posed by the various soils associations are shown by Table 23. Of particular note is the fact that few areas of the County are without some type of soil limitation. To the extent practicable, policies and regulations should be designed to channel future development away from areas with severe soil conditions or impose building requirements that would properly overcome such limitations. Such development guidelines should:

- (1) discourage or prohibit large scale urban development in areas without public sewage facilities;
- (2) insist that existing urban-type development be tied into existing municipal sewage systems, where feasible;
- (3) require developers to satisfactorily “overcome” severe soil conditions so as not to adversely affect surrounding properties.

In many areas with severe soil limitations, some marginal lands may still be suited for timber and pasture land. Since these lands may also present development constraints, measures should be taken to preserve the more productive agricultural uses and to dissuade urban development.

Table 23 Soil Characteristics and Constraints
 - Page 1

Association No.	Name	Soils	Percent Association	SLOPE	Constraints To Urban Development			
					Local Streets	Buildings	Septic Tank Absorption Fields	Sanitary Landfill
1	Gundee-Wakere	Cundy Wakere	40 10	10-25A 25-50	Moderate-Low strength, slope	Severe-Slope	Severe-Slope	Severe-Slope
2	Paclet-Vaucluse-Alley	Mivawsee	50	6-25	Severe-Low strength	Severe-Slope	Moderate-Slow perc. slope	Moderate-slope
		Fuquay						
		Troup						
3	Troup-Lakeland-Fuquay	Alley	44	6-25	Moderate-Slow perc. slope	Severe-Slope	Severe-Slow perc	Severe-Slope
		Vaucluse						
		Fuquay						
		Troup						
4	Vaucluse-Alley-Troup	Lakeland	21	0-15	Slight	Slight	Severe-poor filter	Severe-seepage
		Fuquay						
		Dothan						
		Orangeburg						
		Lucy						
5	Vaucluse-Alley-Troup	Bibb	8	0-5	Slight	Slight	Moderate-slow perc	Slight
		Nemert						
		JOHNSTON						
6	Vaucluse-Alley-Troup	Vaucluse	29	2-6	Slight	Slight	Severe-Slow perc	Severe-seepage
		Alley						
		Troup						
		Fuquay						
		Orangeburg						
7	Vaucluse-Alley-Troup	Dothan	29	2-6	Slight	Slight	Severe-Slow perc	Severe-seepage
		Lake Land						
		Johnston						
		Bibb						

Table 23 Soil Characteristics and Constraints
- Page 2

Association No.	Association Name	Soils	Percent Association	SLOPE	CONSTRAINTS to Urban Development			
					Local Skema	Building	Septic Tank Absorption Fields	Sanitary Landfill
5	Faceville-Fuquay-Marlboro	Faceville	27%	0-10%	Moderate-Low strength	Slight	Slight	Slight
		Fuquay Marlboro	26 10	0-10 2-6	Slight Moderate-Low strength	Slight Slight	Moderate-slow perc Slight	Slight Slight
6	Dothan-Fuquay	Orangeburg Dothan Greenville Lucy Rambert	37					
		Dothan Fuquay	45 45	0-10 0-10	Slight Slight	Slight Slight	Severe-wetness, slow perc Moderate-slow perc	Slight Slight
7	Shellbluff-Chewacla-Johnston	Alley Lakeland Lucy Orangeburg Troup Vaclusa	10					
		Shellbluff Chewacla	38 32	nearly level nearly level	Severe-low strength, flooding Severe-low strength, wetness, flooding	Severe-flooding Severe-flooding Severe-flooding Severe-flooding	Severe-flooding, wetness Severe-flooding Severe-flooding	Severe-flooding wetness Severe-flooding Severe-flooding
8	Johnston	Johnston	24	nearly level	Severe-low strength, ponding, flooding	Severe-flooding low strength, ponding	Severe-flooding ponding, poor filter	Severe-flooding seepage ponding
		Toccoa Bibb	6					
9	Bethera-Ogechee-Angle	Johnston	75	nearly level	Severe-low strength, ponding, flooding	Severe-low strength, ponding, flooding	Severe-flooding ponding, poor filter	Severe-flooding, seepage ponding
		Dasher Ogechee Bibb	25					
10	Bethera-Ogechee-Angle	Bethera	33	nearly level	Severe-low strength, ponding	Severe-ponding	Severe-slow perc, ponding	Severe-ponding
		Ogechee Angle	30 20	nearly level 0-2	Severe-ponding Severe-low strength, shrink-swell	Severe-ponding Severe-shrink swell	Severe-ponding Severe-slow perc	Severe-ponding Severe-wetness
11	Ocilla-Bayboro-Eunola-Johnston	Ocilla Bayboro Eunola Johnston	17					

In sum, the soil information presented herein is valid for general planning purposes, and measures should be taken to channel development into the various areas best suited for a given use. However, because each association has several different soil types with varying properties, it is imperative that detailed soil borings and tests be made to determine specific limitations and the degree of such limitations before building on or abandoning a potential site. Additional information and assistance are available from the local U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service Office.

WATER RESOURCES

Aiken County has an abundance of both surface and ground water.

Surface Water

A dependable and adequate supply of surface water is available from the Savannah River and the North and South Forks of the Edisto River. Other sources of moderate size include Shaws, Bridge, Horse and Town Creeks. The largest single source of fresh water is the Savannah River, which averages a flow of 16,500 cubic feet per second. In the eastern portion of the County, the South Fork of the Edisto River averages 235 cubic feet per second.

Ground Water Supply

Ground water is obtained from geologic formations of excellent quality and suitable for most uses. Indications by the U.G. Geologic Survey are that the aquifers in the area are productive and could provide in excess of 15 million gallons of water daily.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are considered by State and Federal governments to be important to the public interest. As such, they are protected by State and Federal laws.

Not until April 1986, however, were these laws extended to cover fresh water wetlands. Heretofore, they were confined to marine and estuarine areas.

This change to the Clean Water Act effectively extends the authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to control wetlands well beyond its previous jurisdiction, to include headwater wetlands and isolated or perched wetlands.

Definition

According to the Federal Register, “the term wetlands means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.”

The principal criteria for determining wetlands are (1) hydrology, (2) soils, and (3) vegetation.

Hydrology

The soil is either inundated permanently or periodically at mean water depths of 2 meters (6.52 feet), or the soil is saturated to the surface at some time during the growing season of the prevalent vegetation. The period of inundation or soil saturation varies according to the hydrologic/soil moisture regime and occurs in both tidal and non-tidal situations.

Soil

Soils are present and have been classified as hydric, or they possess characteristics that are associated with anaerobic soil conditions.

Vegetation

The prevalent vegetation consists of microphytes (species that can be identified without use of ocular magnification) that are typically adapted to habitats having the hydrologic and soil conditions described above. Hydrophytic species due to morphological, physiological, and/or reproductive adaptation(s) have the ability to persist in anaerobic soil conditions.”

Evidence of a minimum of one wetland indicator of each of the three parameters must be found for a site to be designated a wetland. This technical approach should always be applied, unless indicators of one or more parameters cannot be found due to human activities such as land clearing and deposition of fill.

Wetlands generally are found in low lying areas around creeks and rivers. Also certain soils such as Enoree are common to wetlands, but the precise location of such soils has not been determined for Aiken County.

The U.S. Corps of Engineers, in conjunction with other Federal and State agencies, is in the process of mapping all such areas in South Carolina, and has completed mapping for the coastal counties. However, wetlands mapping of Aiken County has yet to be scheduled.

This does not relieve developers of the responsibility under the new law of securing a “determination of wetlands” from the Corps in the event of their existence. Persons intending to engage in activities involving development within or adjacent to wetlands, as herein defined, should contact the Corps of Engineers for a precise determination of jurisdiction and the consequences of such development.

Jurisdictional Wetlands

Not all wetlands development will require a permit from the Corps. However, no permit will be issued where wetlands are considered and have been determined by the Corps to perform functions important to the public interest. This includes:

- (a) Wetlands which serve significant natural biological functions, including food chain production, general habitat and nesting, spawning, rearing and resting sites for aquatic or land species;
- (b) Wetlands set aside for study of the aquatic environment or as sanctuaries or refuges;
- (c) Wetlands that the destruction or alteration of which would affect detrimentally natural drainage characteristics, sedimentation patterns, salinity distribution, flushing characteristics, current

patterns, or other environmental characteristics;

- (d) Wetlands which are significant in shielding other areas from wave action, erosion, or storm damage. Such wetlands are often associated with barrier beaches, islands, reefs and bars;
- (e) Wetlands which serve as valuable storage areas for storm and flood waters;
- (f) Wetlands which are ground water discharge areas that maintain minimum base flows important to aquatic resources and those which are prime natural recharge areas;
- (g) Wetlands which serve significant water purification functions; and
- (h) Wetlands which are unique in nature or scarce in quantity to the region or local area.

Where such conditions are found to exist, the Corps will evaluate each request for development on the basis of projected benefits to be derived from the proposed development in relation to the damage to the wetlands resource.

Suffice to say, the new freshwater wetlands legislation makes development of these areas considerably more tenuous. Where, in the past, development was constrained principally by the simple presence of wetlands, now it is further constrained by the need to plan around or mitigate the use and circumstances of development to the need for a "wetlands determination" before proceeding with any project, irrespective of the issuance of related local or State building or use permits. Failure to secure a wetlands determination and permit, if required, could result in work stoppage, restoration of the project site to its original State, fines or other compensatory action.

While the extent of wetlands is not as extensive in Aiken County as in some of the coastal counties, care must nonetheless be taken where such lands exist.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

Flood plains or flood hazard areas, like wetlands, have always restricted the movement of development. And like Federal wetlands legislation, Federal flood plain legislation has restricted the development of such areas even more.

Floodways have been identified in Aiken County on maps prepared by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Insurance Administration. Areas indicated on the maps generally parallel rivers and creeks including the Savannah River, Town Creek, Sand River, Savage Mill Branch and Pole Branch. Also subject to flooding but not identified on the Floodway Maps are the Edisto River and most tributaries in the eastern part of the County.

The largest of these areas parallel the Savannah, near the Savannah River Plant and at the mouth of Horse Creek. Within these areas, development is controlled and restricted by the County's Flood Drainage Prevention Ordinance, adopted in 1986. The purpose of the ordinance is to flood proof development to the extent possible and make Federal flood insurance available to the property owners and developers in such areas.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL: Conserve, responsibly utilize, and properly integrate Aiken County's natural resources within the County's urbanizing environment.

The three key words in this goal statement are conservation, utilization, and integration.

- (1) **Conservation** – for the future generation to enjoy.
- (2) **Utilization** – by the present generation.
- (3) **Integration** – into an urbanizing environment for purposes of conservation and utilization.

Both regulatory and non-regulatory measures will be required to fully implement this goal, including:

- (1) **Creation by Aiken County of a resource information repository** utilizing GIS Technology to help property owners and developers identify site specific resources and development limitations, to include:
 - * Wetlands
 - * Soil conditions and limitations
 - * Flood plains
 - * Forest resources
 - * Rare and endangered plants and wildlife habitats
 - * River utilization classification
 - * Slope
 - *
- (2) **Preparation and distribution of educational materials** and information relating to the need for and value of incorporating site present natural resources into proposed projects and developments.

Natural resources sell. The public appreciates natural areas. And conservation and integration into their projects stand to benefit monetarily. Such things as preserving, and integrating into development projects, mature trees, natural visual amenities, water resources, endangered floral species, historical cemeteries and grounds, and other unique natural features where present, greatly enhance project ambience, acceptance, and sales potential.

- (3) **Retention of floodway and flood plain regulations.**
- (4) **Protection of wetlands**, unique to many parts of the County, by:
 - Defining and identifying the location of such lands,
 - Alerting developers of the need to consult the U.S. Corps of Engineers for a wetlands determination should local data indicate the presence of such lands,
 - Establish a **wetlands bank** as a means of compensating for loss of bottomlands caused by development and subsequently expediting the development process.

- **Review the County's Subdivision Regulations** in an effort to promote resource conservation and integration of natural resource areas and amenities into new subdivisions.
- **Establish a review procedure at the planning stage** to mitigate conservation efforts where natural and historical resources are involved or threatened.
- **Pursue the use of conservation easements** as a means of perpetual protection for certain unique and/or natural resources, including riparian buffer zones.
- **Maintain natural or comparable buffers** in the riparian zones paralleling the County's rivers and creeks, where practical and feasible.
- **Provide for land development and zoning regulations** that:
 - Preserve and protect soil and water quality through regulations for storm water control and watershed protection best management practices.
 - Provide sustainable farming and ranching best management practices
 - Provide quality, to-code, housing for the agricultural workforce
 - Work with the County extension agents to encourage diversification of crop and livestock species
- **Support small food producing farms** through the support and promotion of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farmers

SECTION 5

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

Community facilities, particularly water, sewer and transportation, greatly influence the direction and intensity of development. It is essential from a planning standpoint, therefore, to be cognizant of existing and planned infrastructure in order to assess the development potential of the county. It is also essential to identify the providers in an effort to influence the development process in an orderly manner.

WATER AND SEWER FACILITIES

There are 77 water suppliers within Aiken County, according to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Twenty-one are public suppliers, serving over 100,000 people. The Valley Public Service Authority took over the Avondale Mills system in 2010. The remaining 56 are private, averaging 70 per provider.

With the transfer of the water system in the Town of Jackson from the Water Company to the Town, 10 of the 21 public suppliers are now municipally owned and operated. Special Purpose Districts make up 9 of the remaining 13.

Twelve of the water suppliers also provide sewer services: 3 municipalities, 5 special purpose districts and 4 non-profit water companies. The Edgefield County Water & Sewer Authority provides sewer service in a small portion of northwestern Aiken County.

The role of the county in water and sewer service is that of providing major sewer lines and treatment facilities for the Cities of Aiken and North Augusta, seven water and sewer districts in the western half of the county, and several industries. Smaller collection lines within the system are owned and operated by smaller, direct provider-retailers. The County Council operates the county system – Aiken County Public Service Authority (ACPSA).

TABLE 24

Aiken County, South Carolina		
Public Water and Wastewater Service Providers		
Name of Entity	Service(s) Provided	
	Water	Wastewater
City of Aiken	X	X
Aiken Co. Public Service Authority		X
Bath Water District	X	X
Beech Island Water District	X	X
Breezy Hill Water & Sewer Co.	X	X
Town of Burnetown	X	
Clearwater Water & Sewer Dist.	X	X
College Acres Public Works Dist.	X	
Edgefield Co. Water & Sewer Authority		X
Town of Jackson	X	
Langley Water Dist.	X	X
Town of Monetta	X	
Montmorenci-Couchton Water Dist.	X	
New Ellenton Comm. of Public Works	X	X
New Holland Water Dist.	X	
City of North Augusta	X	X
Town of Perry	X	
Town of Salley	X	
Talatha Water Dist.	X	
Valley Public Service Authority	X	X
Town of Wagener	X	X
Warrenville Water Dist.	X	X

Source: SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, 2004.

TABLE 25

Aiken County, South Carolina Public Water Systems, Capacity, Plant Expansion in Last 10 Years, Water Source			
Name of Entity	Capacity (MGD)	Plant Expansion	Source
City of Aiken	12.9	Yes	Shaw Creek
Bath Water District	0.5	Yes	wells
Beech Island Water District	2.5	Yes	wells
Breezy Hill Water & Sewer Co.	8.3		Clearwater Pond, wells
Town of Burnetown	0.5		wells
Clearwater Water & Sewer Dist.	3.0		Valley Public
College Acres Public Works Dist.	0.6		wells
Town of Jackson	1.6		wells
Langley Water Dist.	0.7		wells
Town of Monetta	0.3	Yes	Ridge Spring
Montmorenci-Couchton Water Dist.	1.5	Yes	wells
New Ellenton Comm. of Public Work	1.6	Yes	wells
New Holland Water Dist.	0.1		wells
City of North Augusta	25.5	Yes	Savannah
Town of Perry	0.4		wells
Town of Salley	0.5	Yes	wells
Talatha Water Dist.	0.7		wells
Valley Public Service Authority	4.2	Yes	wells, Horse Creek
Town of Wagener	0.6	Yes	wells
Warrenville Water Dist.	0.1		Valley PSA

Source: SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, 2004, supply agency updates.

Of the 21 public water providers, 1 has upgraded and expanded its facilities and increased its capacities since the Comp Plan update in 2004. Breezy Hill Water & Sewer Co. constructed a 4.7 MGD water treatment plant. These upgrades help ensure the county's ability to accommodate future growth and development.

The situation is not as accommodating where wastewater and sewer systems are concerned. In fact, public sewer systems are restricted to much smaller areas, with the majority of households relying on on-site disposal systems.

In general, however, Aiken County is well situated with respect to both water resources and wastewater treatment plant capacity. The two most populated areas, Aiken and North Augusta, have water resource capacity beyond their current needs or usage, as both have enlarged their systems and capacity in the past. With regard to wastewater treatment capacity, the Aiken County Public Service Authority has a design treatment capacity to meet future needs of the county as well.

From the preceding inventory, we find that all intensely developed areas are served by or accessible to public water and sewer systems. Moreover, these systems have the reserve capacity to meet projected demands through and beyond the life of this Plan. Therefore, with most development forecast to occur in areas with existing systems, it would appear from a land use planning standpoint that the necessary water and sewer infrastructure is in place to accommodate most projected growth.

A brief description of the various water and sewer providers follows.

Montmorenci-Couchton Water District, Inc.

The Montmorenci-Couchton Water District, Inc. is a nonprofit company. Its service area is located southeast of the City of Aiken. Water service is provided to a population of about 2,500. Sewer service is not available.

Town of Burnettown

The Town of Burnettown provides water service for a population of approximately 1,200. No wastewater service is available, although strong interest exists in obtaining a sewer system.

Town of Jackson

The Town of Jackson, following transfer of the water system from the Jackson Water Company, provides water service within the Jackson community. A population of approximately 3,000 is served, with well water being the potable water source. No wastewater collection or treatment services are available.

Town of Perry

The Town of Perry serves a population of about 900 with groundwater obtained from wells. The town has no wastewater treatment or collection facilities. All customers are on septic tanks.

Town of Salley

The Town of Salley provides water only to a population of approximately 500. Sewerage treatment is by individual on-site septic tanks.

Town of Wagener

The Town of Wagener serves water and sewer inside its corporate limits and to a very limited area outside of town. There are over 1,700 water customers and a much smaller sewer customer base.

Aiken County (Aiken County Public Service Authority)

The Aiken County Public Service Authority is an arm of county government under the direct control of the County Council. ACPSA operates the Horse Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facilities consisting of major trunk lines and a 20 million gallon per day (MGD) plant situated on Horse Creek, south of the City of North Augusta near the creek's juncture with the Savannah River. These facilities serve industrial customers as well as the following public entities:

City of Aiken

City of North Augusta

Edgefield County Water & Sewer Authority (through North Augusta)

Breezy Hill Water & Sewer District

Valley Public Service Authority

Warrenville Water & Sewer District

Bath Water & Sewer District

Langley Water & Sewer District

Clearwater Water & Sewer District

Service is not provided by ACPSA on a retail basis to individual households or commercial customers. This is done by the above-listed agencies. ACPSA provides the major collection and treatment facilities, with the cities and various water and sewer districts constructing, operating and maintaining the collection facilities within their respective service boundaries.

Bath Water District

The Bath Water District, formed in 1954 and located within the Midland Valley Area, provides both water and sewer service to a population of approximately 1,100. Water service is provided from wells. For those areas served by sewer, the Aiken County Public Service Authority provides wastewater treatment service.

Beech Island Water District

Beech Island Water District, organized as a rural community water district in 1966, provides water service to approximately 7,500 people. Sewer service is unavailable. All residential and commercial concerns are on septic tanks. The service area is located in western Aiken County, stretching from just south of North Augusta down to Jackson and over to Aiken. The system has experienced significant growth since 1980. Water use is just less than 30,000,000 MGD.

Clearwater Water & Sewer District

The Clearwater Water & Sewer District delivers both water and sewer services to a population of approximately 800. It purchases its potable water from the Valley Public Service Authority, and all wastewater collected within the district is treated by ACPSA.

College Acres Public Works District

College Acres Public Works District is a multi-purpose district providing garbage collection, street lighting and fire protection (contract basis with Aiken), in addition to water service. It serves an area of about 1,400 people just southeast of the City of Aiken. The District does not provide sewer service.

Langley Water and Sewer District

The Langley Water and Sewer District, like others in the Midland Valley area, was formed to assume responsibility for operating and maintaining a water and sewer system formerly operated by a textile mill. A population of approximately 1,500 people is served. All wastewater treatment is performed by ACPSA.

New Holland Water District

The New Holland Water District is a special purpose district located in eastern Aiken County. The district provides water service only to a population of approximately 1,500. Sewer service is not available.

Talatha Water District

The Talatha Water District is a rural community water district. It serves a population of approximately 1,500. All water customers are on septic tanks.

Valley Public Service Authority

The Valley Public Service Authority is a special purpose district formed in 1969. It serves an area south of U.S. 1 to the southern boundary of Horse Creek Valley and from the Savannah River to the City of Aiken. In 2010, Valley Public Service Authority took over operation of the facilities formerly owned by Avondale Mills Company. Both water and sewer services are available to a population of about 7,500.

Warrenville Water District

The Warrenville Water District, also located within the valley, was organized in 1956 and serves approximately 600 people. Both water and wastewater services are available, with all wastewater treatment performed by the ACPSA.

Breezy Hill Water & Sewer Company

The Breezy Hill Water & Sewer Company is a nonprofit corporation. Organized in 1968, the company provides water to about 9,000 people, but only about 20% receive sewer service.

WATER AND WASTEWATER GOALS

Growth of the county is contingent on the availability of water and sewer; and while prevailing low-density patterns over much of the county preclude countywide coverage, such facilities are essential to higher intensity development.

With the county being responsible for sewer trunk lines and treatment facilities, and the municipalities and commissions responsible for expansion and maintenance, the need for a close working relationship is obvious. One cannot properly function without the other. Cooperation and mutual support are essential to the orderly, planned development of the county, at the most efficient scale.

FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection is one of the more essential community services provided in Aiken County. It has a direct bearing on the security of life and property, as well as the cost of fire-related insurance premiums.

Background

Historically, fire suppression and fire-related insurance have worked hand-in-hand. The first fire companies were organized in the United States around 1700, and these same people organized the first fire insurance companies. This worked well because fire companies would put more effort into putting out or controlling fires in buildings that the insurance companies covered, thus limiting the losses of the insurance company, while saving property and sometimes lives in the process.

Today the primary purpose for fire suppression service is the same: to protect lives and property, and to reduce losses for fire insurance companies. Since insurance companies must make a profit to stay in business, they must charge rates that more than offset their losses.

So basically, the lower the fire losses in the area, the lower the fire insurance premiums charged to property owners. This premise, realized back in the eighteenth century, still holds true today: the better the fire suppression service, the lower the fire losses, and therefore, the lower the premium charges for fire-related insurance.

While insurance companies no longer sponsor fire companies, they write fire-related insurance based on a schedule that is tied to the level of fire suppression in that area. Many of today's companies prepare their own schedules, but most use a fire protection classification system similar or identical to one published by the Insurance Services Office/Commercial Risk Services, Inc. (ISO/CRS). The fire protection classification system now used by ISO/CRS was originally developed by the National Board of Fire Underwriters (organized in 1866) and has since been improved and revised, in keeping with the state-of-the-art in fire suppression.

ISO Classification System

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) classification system includes rankings from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the best possible protection or suppression and 10 signaling the absence of any protection. Insurance rates are then established to reflect the prevailing classification: the lower the classification, the lower rates, theoretically. But there is a vast difference between theory and practice in today's insurance market. Premium differences once observed between classes no longer exist. The differences now generally are between groups of classes, grouped along the following lines:

Major Class Groupings	Characteristics
Class 10	No recognized fire defenses
Class 9	Recognized fire department but no recognized community water system
Class 4-8	Recognized fire department and recognized community water system
Class 1-3	More complete and sophisticated systems, based entirely upon individual grading of suppression

Companies using the classification system for fire-related insurance are usually called “ISO companies”. In South Carolina, about 30% of the market share is held by ISO companies for homeowners insurance, 72% for dwelling insurance, and 51% for commercial insurance. The rest of the companies doing business in the state are known as “non-ISO companies”. Even though these companies do not use rates identical to ISO rates, their system is based generally on the ISO system and is usually similar. An ISO rate reduction schedule is shown in Table 27. From the table, several things are apparent:

- (1) The largest rate reduction for homeowner’s insurance is from Class 10 (no protection) to Class 7.
- (2) Homeowner’s rates are reduced by about 50% from Class 10 to Class 7.
- (3) The largest rate reduction for fire insurance (dwelling) policies is from Class 10 to Class 8.
- (4) Fire protection policies are reduced by about 67% from Class 10 to Class 6.
- (5) Reductions below Class 6 generally are not cost effective for class rated properties.

Service Providers

There are 22 fire departments in Aiken County. Ratings range from 2 to 9, with the City of Aiken having the best rating in the county (Class 2), followed by the City of North Augusta with a Class 3 rating.

Coverage is comprehensive or county wide, but the level of protection varies considerably, as illustrated in Table 26.

Table 26 Aiken County Fire Department: ISO Classification	
Department	ISO Rating
Aiken City (in and outside)	2
Bath	4/9
Beech Island	4/9
Belvedere	3
Clearwater	6
Couchton	6
Center	7
Eureka	9
GVW	4
Hollow Creek	9
Jackson	5
Langley	6
Monetta	8/9
Montmorenci	7/9
New Ellenton	6
New Holland	7/9
North Augusta City	3
Salley	7/9
Sandy Ridge	8
Silver Bluff	7/9
Wagener	7/9
Windsor	9

FIRE PROTECTION GOAL: Promote the most cost-effective countywide fire protection and prevention service with minimum Class 6 ISO rating for all areas of the county, where practical.

Toward this end, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Prepare and adopt written SOPS for every fire department with a training schedule for all department personnel.
2. Institute countywide computer system.
3. Continually monitor and upgrade equipment on all trucks.
4. Institute minimum officer/fire fighter qualifications program.
5. Institute individual written and adopted fire department preventive maintenance programs.
6. Investigate the feasibility of district consolidation and pursue, where feasible, on an incremental basis.

**Table 27
Insurance Rate Reduction Table (ISO)**

Homeowners:	
Class 10 to Class 9	20% Reduction
Class 9 to Class 8	21% Reduction
Class 8 to Class 7	9% Reduction
Class 7 to Class 6	2% Reduction
Class 6 to Class 5	0% Reduction
Class 5 to Class 4	0% Reduction
Class 4 to Class 3	4% Reduction
Class 3 to Class 2	0% Reduction
Class 2 to Class 1	0% Reduction

Shown below are the average reductions between classes for dwelling fire policies:

Dwelling Fire:	
Class 10 to Class 9	21% Reduction
Class 9 to Class 8	32% Reduction
Class 8 to Class 7	0% Reduction
Class 7 to Class 6	15% Reduction
Class 6 to Class 5	0% Reduction
Class 5 to Class 4	9% Reduction
Class 4 to Class 3	0% Reduction
Class 3 to Class 2-1	0% Reduction

RECREATION FACILITIES

Recreation facilities seldom influence development, but they do complement it. They are essential to a balanced social environment and contributing to an active lifestyle. Growth will create demands for more parks and recreational facilities.

Recreational facilities in Aiken County are available from state, county, city and private sources. The county currently has a well maintained inventory of private facilities, including nine golf courses, five polo fields, three equine training facilities and 156 campsites. South Carolina maintains two state parks within Aiken County. Redcliffe Plantation is a restored antebellum home open to the public on weekends for picnicking activities. Aiken State Park is a more traditional state park, providing opportunities for camping, swimming, fishing and picnicking.

The county’s recreation facilities and services are managed and maintained by the Aiken County Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department (PRT). The Department consists of three divisions, plus a grant-funded extension of the school lunch program, referred to as the Summer Food Program. The objectives of these department divisions are as follows:

- (1)The **Parks Division** includes 24 parks in all areas around Aiken County, including athletic courts and fields, a pool, a pond and several community centers. All are in rural communities, including the towns of Graniteville, Gloverville, Langley, Clearwater, Beech Island, Jackson, Wagener, Salley, Perry and White Pond. In 1998, the

Department added the Aiken County Veterans Memorial Park in the City of Aiken. Boyd Pond Park was added since the 2004 update.

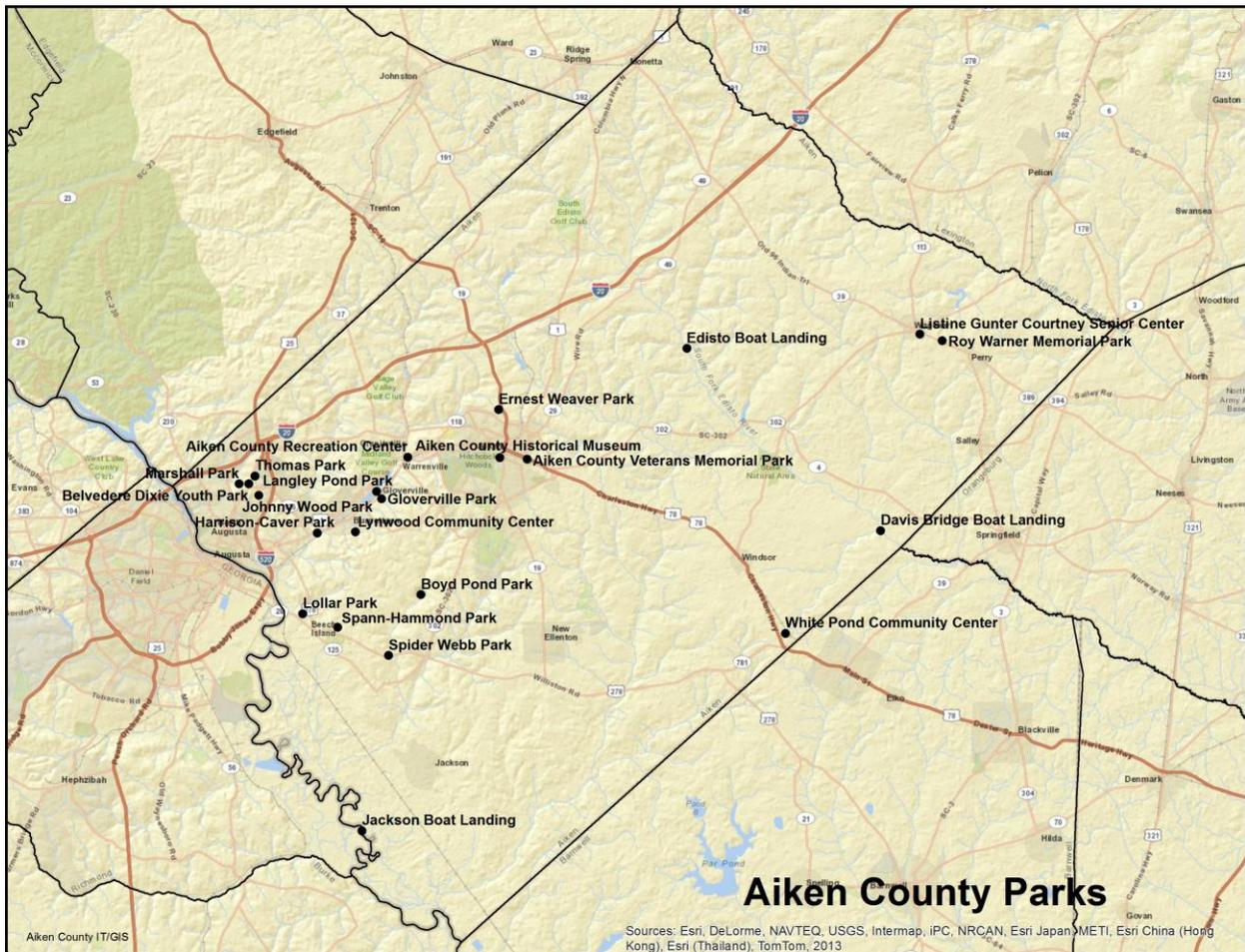
- (2) The **Recreation Division** provides recreational opportunities every year. Among these are a road race, golf tournaments, day camps, swimming lessons, a Dixie Youth baseball program and various other events and leagues.
- (3) The **Tourism Division** develops and implements promotional programs such as brochures, and places advertisements that attract visitors and new commerce to Aiken County. This program also helps promote interest in local history, resource conservation and further development of Aiken County.
- (4) The **Summer Food Program** is a federally funded extension of the school lunch program. It operates during the summer months to ensure that children, particularly those of households in low-income areas, are provided with no-cost, nutritious breakfasts and lunches. This is accomplished at as many as 150 sites around the county. Aiken County PRT operates the largest program of any other agency in the state. This program follows the Federal nutrition guidelines for schools (Healthy Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010).

RECREATION GOAL: Develop an equitable countywide system of parks, recreation facilities and programs to meet the diverse needs of Aiken County residents and visitors.

To better meet the current and future recreational needs of the county, in 2012, the Clemson University Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management prepared a Strategic/Master Plan for Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department. This plan, which is contained in Appendix 1 is guiding PRT in the development of its facilities and programs. The plan calls for divestment of many of the below-standard recreational facilities and recommends agreements with the City of Aiken and/or North Augusta for joint use of the municipalities' facilities. PRT may also wish to explore entering into agreements with the Aiken County Public School District for joint use of the District's sports, playground, and recreational

facilities. Such agreements have been successfully used throughout the country and model joint use agreements are available. Should the divestment plan be implemented, such agreements would allow for a more equitable distribution of facilities throughout the county and aid in achieving availability to all citizens.

Figure 28 - Aiken County Parks



Staffed Facilities:

Boyd Pond Park
Harrison-Caver Park
Listine Gunther Courtney Senior Center
Aiken County Recreation Center
Roy Warner Memorial Park
Aiken County Visitor Bureau

Unstaffed Facilities:

Earnest Weaver Park
Gardner Key Park (Belvedere Dixie Youth)
Gloverville Park
Herb Marshall Park
Horse Creek Water Park
Johnny Wood Park
Langley Pond Park
Lollar Park
Lynwood Community Center
Spann Hammond Park
Spider Web Park
Thomas Park
Veterans Park
White Pond Community Center

Boat Landings:

Davis Bridge Boat Landing
Edisto Boat Landing (Rocky Springs)
Jackson Boat Landing

Source: Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department

SECTION 6

CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

This element of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on horses, history and the arts.

HORSES

Aiken is home to many breeds of horses and to a wide variety of equestrian events. Polo, steeple chasing, three-day eventing, hunting and sanctioned horse shows are part of the cultural fabric of Aiken County.

The economic impact of the equine industry accounts annually for over \$72 million in financial transactions. Aiken County and the Aiken City area in particular have a higher concentration of thoroughbred farms than any other place in the Central Savannah River area. The number and type of equestrian facilities have increased significantly in recent years.

The county is most noted for its contribution to the sport of polo, which is the most ancient of games played with a stick and a ball. It is believed to have its origins in Persia long before the Christian era. The sport combines all the elements for a perfect sport: horses and riders – mallets and a ball – strong teamwork and stamina – versatility and courage.

Polo has been one of the older chief features of the winter season in Aiken since 1882 – just six years after it was introduced in the United States by James Gordon Bennet, an American multi-millionaire, publisher and sportsman. It was first played indoors in New York City in 1876.

As the news spread, scores of enthusiastic polo players came to Aiken and eventually the town became known as the polo center of the South. Recently, there has been a resurgence in interest in polo. There are now more than 40 polo fields in Aiken County.

Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock, the wife of one of America's first ten goal players and the mother of another, is credited with starting a boys' school with a polo program which eventually turned out some of the best players in the country.

Thomas Hitchcock built the first polo field in Aiken which was later acquired by William C. Whitney. The field, deeded to a board of trustees to be used for the purpose of playing polo, has become a landmark in Aiken.

Today, polo is still played at Whitney Field, the site of the longest consecutive period of play on one field in the United States. Polo is also now part of the Aiken Triple Crown of equestrian events held every March.

The Aiken Polo Club (est. in 1882) is one of the oldest clubs in America. Renowned as the winter capital of high goal polo until the 1960's shifted activity to Florida, Aiken currently has a fall and spring season. Club polo interspersed with exciting medium goal tournaments on five top quality Bermuda fields makes Aiken's future secure in its second century of play.

THE ARTS

The Aiken Center for the Arts is the facilitator for cultural events and presentations in Aiken County. The Arts Center features monthly gallery exhibits by local, state and regional artists. A variety of local artists and Center members display works for sale year-round. The Center hosts art shows and festivals throughout the year and offers instruction in a variety of mediums.

HISTORY

History is very much a part of Aiken County. Created by an act of the General Assembly in 1871, Aiken County was formed out of territory taken from Orangeburg, Lexington, Edgefield and Barnwell Counties. The county is named after William Aiken, a leading cotton merchant in his day and credited with establishing railroad communication between Charleston and the town of Hamburg.

Aiken's history predates the creation of the county, and is evident by such surviving structures as:

Structure	Location	Date of Construction
Chancellor Carroll	Aiken	1854
House Chapel of St.	Aiken	1867
Claire Chinaberry	Aiken	1824
Coker Springs (Site)	Aiken	1791
Crossways	Aiken	1815
Edgewood	Aiken	1829
Fredrick Engle's House Fairfield	Aiken	1808
Holly	Aiken	1830-50
Joye Cottage	Aiken	1830-42
Legare House	Aiken	Early 1800's
Let's Pretend	Aiken	1837
St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church	Aiken	Mid 1800's
Graniteville Mill	Aiken	1835
St. John's Methodist Church	Graniteville	1846
St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Graniteville	1840
Zubly <i>Cemetery</i>	Graniteville	1855
Redcliffe Plantation	Beech Island	1765
All Saint's Church	Beech Island	1850
Old Hamburg Depot	Beech Island	1829
Elm Grave	North Augusta	1833
Charles Hammond House	North Augusta	1840
Rose Cottage	North Augusta	1775
Star of Edgefield	North Augusta	1843
Hemrick House	North Augusta	1859
Tabernacle Baptist Church	Salley	1867

Aiken's history is on display at the **Aiken County Historical Museum**, which contains a large collection of artifacts.

The museum is housed in a 1930's Winter Colony mansion named Banksia. It was built by a northern millionaire, Richard Howe. Over thirty rooms of exhibits are on display. Also on the grounds are a circa 1808 Ergle log cabin and a circa 1890 China Springs one-room schoolhouse.

The Wagener Museum, located in Wagener, also exhibits items related to political science, economic, and military history relevant to the Wagener community and Aiken County. The Kitchings Library building has recently be relocated to a location in Wagener.

GOALS

The importance of history both economically and culturally may not be overlooked. The future is built on the past.

GOAL: Promote and encourage interest in all aspects of the history of Aiken County.

In support of this goal, there must be a commitment to preserving and maintaining historically accurate properties and increasing public awareness.

GOAL: Encourage the preservation of historical sites, materials and records of Aiken County.

Strategies designed to help implement this goal include:

- (1) Restoration of selected properties
- (2) Education on the importance and benefits of historic preservation

GOAL: Ensure a secure financial base for Aiken County's cultural resources.

Without sufficient financial resources, implementation of most goals is difficult to accomplish. As a result, established funding goals are essential. Targeted sources should include both private and public, city and county.

SECTION 7

LAND USE ELEMENT

Land use and development patterns in Aiken County are the result of a complex interaction of demographic trends, economic circumstances and social attitudes. Technological changes in areas such as transportation and construction, and the availability and cost of natural resources, including land, water, and energy, also have helped shape existing development patterns.

The forces that influence land development are constantly evolving. Consequently, factors impacting land use form are dramatically different today (2014) from those which acted to shape land use patterns in the past. Lifestyle preferences, size, and configuration of households, levels of personal income, available transportation modes and the composition of the economy are a few of the variables responsible for the current geographic distribution of land use and activities.

PHYSICAL FORM

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources has prepared a digital land cover map of the state, including Aiken County. Land cover in Aiken County generally is divided on the map into four broad categories:

- Farmland
- Urban/Built up land
- Forestland
- Barren Disturbed land

From an aerial perspective, these four land use groups present a physical form. The urban/built up land form represents a continually changing land mass, fluid like quick silver, running into agricultural, grasslands and forested

areas, continually altering its boundaries in response to changes wrought by growth and development.

That the County's urban form will continue to change and expand over time is undeniable. After all, projections show an increase of roughly 11,100 people every ten years until 2030. The impact of this increase will change the existing urban form, which in turn will alter the entire physical form. How prepared the County is to accommodate and influence these changes may well depend on its commitment to the comprehensive planning process, not just this Plan.

Comprehensive planning is more than a plan, it is a process, according to the **Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994** (6-29-510), which will result in the systematic preparation and continual reevaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of Aiken County.

Currently, urban/built-up areas are concentrated in the Aiken-North Augusta area extending east to New Ellington. Not all of this area is urban or built-up, but it is within the core urban area.

The physical form of Aiken County in the future will remain largely unchanged. The degree of departure, if any, will depend in large measure on decisions and policies made today, particularly those relating to infrastructure and land use regulation. Withholding infrastructure from agricultural and woodlands, for example, will effectively control and contain the urban form, which will result in rural resource conservation of agricultural and woodlands. Land use regulations also can work to shape development patterns and intensity.

Containment in this context does not equate to *zero movement of* infrastructure and development into agricultural areas and woodlands. It means planned, orderly expansion of urban/built-up areas, cognizant of:

- the impact on natural and historic resources,
- the cost of extending or upgrading infrastructure to serve new areas, as opposed to optimizing the utility of existing infrastructure and urban land resources, and
- the role of agricultural and woodlands in a balanced environment.

Clearly, the County's physical form will change over time, but the extent of change should relate to land needs for urban development within an enlarged urban environment, as opposed to *hop-scotch* intrusion into rural, agricultural, and wooded areas.

EXISTING LAND USE/TRENDS

Land in Aiken County is used for a multitude of activities, and includes everything from farms to golf courses, houses to fast food establishments, and hospitals to grave yards, each of which interconnected. The location of any given use impacts in some way the larger environ of which it is a part. It has been demonstrated throughout this plan that the use of land as working lands and for the built environment has a profound impact on the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Aiken County. Land use policies can result in the continuation of the trend towards poor diets and physical inactivity which leads to obesity and chronic disease. Land use policies can also provide for the production, distribution, and easy access to healthy foods and promote active lifestyles. SCDHEC reports that in 2009, the state spent an estimated \$1.2 billion in healthcare due to obesity and projected an increase to \$5.3 billion in 2018. If land use policies that contribute to today's current rate of increase could be halted, \$858 per adult could be save in 2018.

Although the various types and kinds of land uses are almost limitless, they are categorized by this study by major type, i.e., residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, woodland, etc.

In order to plan for the future, it is essential to have an understanding of the past and the existing use of land produced by it. This will help determine future expectations and dimension the degree of departure, if any, from established patterns of growth and intensity which may be applied in presently undeveloped areas. Consequently, existing land use data and patterns play a major role in planning for future development.

Aiken County consist of 686,772 acres, or approximately 1,073 square miles. It has the fourth largest land area of the state's 46 counties. As in most counties, forest land constitutes the largest single use, followed by cropland. Aiken County has another major user in the Federal government. The Department of Energy owns in the Savannah River Plant site approximately

69,000 acres or about 10% of the County. Other major generalized uses are pastureland and built-up areas.

Generalized patterns of development presented on the following map show the largest concentrations of forest land east and west of the built-up areas of Aiken and North Augusta. Farmlands generally are located north of Aiken, but also comprise a substantial portion of the area between New Ellenton and the Savannah River.

Farmland

As the County grows and continues to develop, more and more land is being diverted from farmland and woodland to urban built-up land: residential, commercial, and industrial use, supported by more roads, schools, churches, and other public and semi-public uses.

As Table 30 shows, between 1982 and 2002, there was a general decline in agriculture in Aiken County. Since 2002, however, the trend has significantly changed. Acres in farmland and the number of farms has increased. Surprisingly, the acreage in cropland has decreased. This could be the result of more farmland being left fallow. As discussed in the Economic Element of this plan, pastureland in Aiken County increased by more than 4,000 acres in the five years before 2012. The significant increase in the number and size of equestrian facilities in Aiken County could explain why farmland has increased while cropland has decreased.

Much of the County's "lost" farmland has been developed in one way or another. But the conversion to woodland also has accounted for part of the loss.

Farmland is characteristically suitable not only to farming but to urban development as well, generally posing fewer constraints than other idle or undeveloped land. As a consequence, urban or more intense development generally occurs at the expense of farmland, which is apparently the case in Aiken County.

Table 30
Farmland Trends, 1982-2012

	1982	1992	2002	2012	Change 1982-2012
Farmland (acres)	146,842	148,747	143,942	154,351	7,509
Cropland (acres)	81,609	68,094	56,872	55,847	-25,762
Number of Farms	680	958	929	1,102	422
Average Size (acres)	216	155	155	140	-76
Percent County in Farmland	21.2	21.5	20.8	22.3	

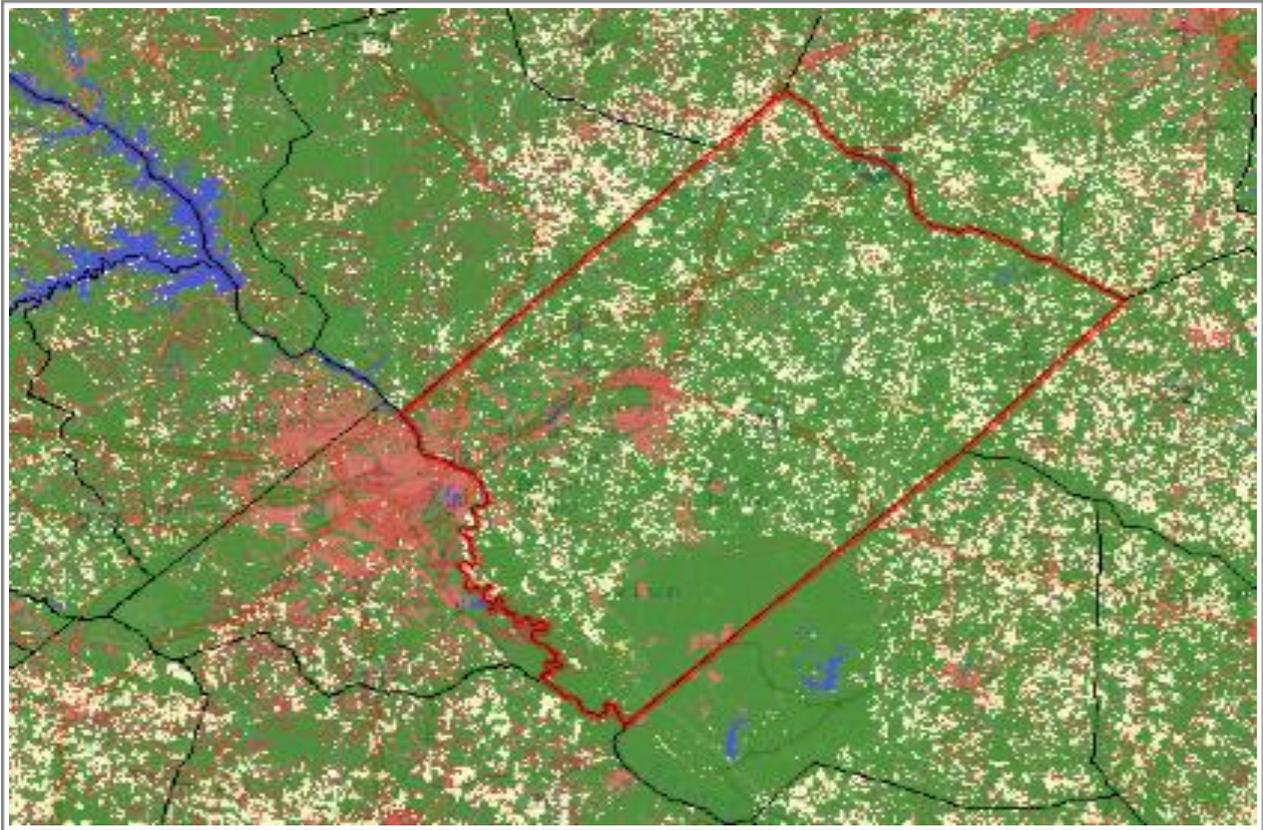
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, Selected Years.

The County's population increased over the last 20 years by approximately 39,100, while farmland decreased by approximately 12,000 acres. Continued population growth may reverse the recent trend in growth of farmland and decrease cropland even further.

These trends are not out of line with what is happening statewide, however, as the state has experienced similar losses.

Obviously, farming has played an important role in the economy and lifestyle of the County in the past, and just as obvious, the future of such operations is cause for concern.

Generalized Land Use Map
Aiken County



Farmland  Forestland  Built-up Land 

8.2 percent of land under cultivation is classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "prime farmland." Such land is defined as having the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing crops. Much of this land is situated in and around the City for Aiken and extending eastward to and beyond Montmorenci, again, emphasizing that conditions favorable to farming also favor urban development. And where there is conflict, farm use is generally lost. Such is the case regarding losses around Aiken and North Augusta. Elsewhere in the County, the loss may be attributed to the "economics of farming," represented by declining trends statewide.

Forestland

Approximately 70 percent of all land in Aiken County is forested. Surprisingly, there was more forested land in 1993 than in 1986. What makes this surprising is the amount of urban development that has occurred in the County during this period and the resultant loss of forest land.

Loblolly, long leaf pine, oak, and hickory trees make up the majority of the forested lands in the County.

For all its forests, the forest industry is not as heavily vested in Aiken as in many other counties in the state. In fact, forest land owned by the timber industry declined during the past several years. Farmer owned forest land also has declined while corporate and individual ownership has increased. These ownership trends point to development speculation and investment in forest land.

Forest land, while evidently diminishing as an economic commodity, based on decline in timber industry holdings, remains an important component of the County. The loss of forested lands generally means:

- more storm water runoff
- poorer water quality
- higher temperatures
- deteriorating view spaces, and
- greater demand for wooded recreation areas.

Forested lands harbor a store of important natural resources and provide valuable wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge areas, and open space. As a result, the future use and development of these lands should be based on a policy:

- (1) That discourages, if not prohibits leap frog development which prematurely preempts their resource contribution;
- (2) That preserves green space and perpetuates significant forest stands for future generations to enjoy;

- (3) That minimizes the destruction of forest lands through prudent infrastructure and land use planning;
- (4) That preserves visual buffer areas or strips where clear cutting is proposed;
- (5) That encourages best management practices (BMPs) in the harvesting, developing, and care of forested lands.
- (6) That minimizes storm runoff;
- (7) That prevents damage to significant trees when interfacing urban and rural development.

Built Up Land

Built up areas are located principally in and around the Cities of Aiken and North Augusta, and to a lesser extent, the New Ellenton, Jackson, and Belvedere communities.

Following is a general description of land use and development in the unincorporated areas surrounding and extending from these communities.

Unincorporated Aiken Area

We will begin our description of the Aiken Urban Area at the U.S. **1/120 interchange northeast of Aiken**, where land use is decidedly mixed, ranging from residential to industrial, and flea markets to airports. The trend however is toward commercial use of the type normally associated with high visibility interchanges.

The area just off U. S. 1 at this location is characterized by mixed use, i.e. mobile homes, metal works, single-family dwellings, junk yards, poorly designed and landlocked parcels, and narrowed unimproved roads.

Moving south along U.S. 1, past the site of the airport, residential use becomes more prevalent in planned subdivisions such as Summer Lakes, Northridge and Northbrook. Closer to Aiken it again takes a more diversified character.

Development to the east of U. S. 1 falls off sharply in intensity, as conditions take on a more rural flavor, while to the west, land is intensifying with industrial as well as residential development. Here the airport, I-20, relocations of the corrections facility, and rail access have teamed together to boost economic development potential.

The **area southeast of Aiken**, between Cooks Bridge Road and U.S. 78 is sparsely developed except for a few small subdivisions in the area around Couchton, and the vicinity of Owens Corning.

Many of the same conditions present in the U. S. 1 corridor are present here, such as landlocked and poorly platted lots, mixed land use, especially the mix of mobile homes and conventional single-family dwellings, and street design.

Most of the area is rural/residential, but development along U.S. 78 and 302 is dominated by large scale industrial and commercial uses.

The **area south of Aiken** is characteristically residential. It includes numerous high income, quality subdivisions, including Woodside Plantation, Huntcliff, Woodvalley, Green Lakes, Brookhaven, River Bluff, Heathwood, Mallet Hill, and College Acres, among others. But it is not without problems. Development outside these planned and deed protected subdivisions is largely unplanned and mixed. Junk yards and commercial uses, mobile homes, and a few multifamily projects are in evidence, particularly along Whiskey, Silver Bluff, and Pine Log Roads.

Platting problems also are evident outside of planned subdivisions.

One of the more significant aspects of development in this area is its influence on future development. Like uses tend to attract like uses. Prestigious quality subdivisions tend to attract similar development, along with commercial and service support uses, such as the Aiken Mall.

The **area west and northwest of Aiken** extends roughly from Pine Log Road to the Southern Railway tracks east of S.C. 19. Much of it is in the Midland Valley area of Aiken County. Until recently it was typically unplanned mixed development, with commercial concentrations along U.S. 1, in the vicinity of the Aiken Community Hospital, in the large residential complex north of Richland Avenue, and in the area south of Lincoln Avenue.

For the most part, these are older established residential areas ranging in quality and value of housing. Lot sizes and densities also vary from subdivision to subdivision, as do storm drainage and street conditions. Over 20 subdivisions are found in this area, including Central Park, Highland Pines, Pinecrest, Colonial Woods, Cherry Hill, Gregg Forest, Woodland Hills, Kalmia Forest, Kalamia Estates, Green Acres, Wicklow Heights, Colonial Heights, Westmount, Mountain View, Smith Golf Club, Aiken Heights, and several smaller ones. Also, included in this area are a few outlying subdivisions such as Shilo, Forest Park and Balltown.

There has been a significant change in this pattern with the development of Trolley Run north of University Parkway and Sage Creek on Bettis Academy Road. When built out, these residential developments will contain several thousand new dwelling units and a variety of residential formats, i.e. single-family detached, townhouse, apartments.

Beyond these concentrations development is relatively sparse and typically rural, except for emerging industrial development west of I-20 in the Sage Mill Industrial Park on Bettis Academy Road. As in other rural areas of the County, land use is mixed, lots are irregularly shaped and sometimes land locked, and streets are poorly designed.

Unincorporated North Augusta Area

Areas surrounding North Augusta have been divided for purposes of this assessment into the following subareas:

Southeast,

Belvedere,

North West, and North East.

Development **southeast of North Augusta** is characteristically mixed. Large scale commercial and industrial uses are prominent along the U. S. 178 corridor between the Savannah River and the Clearwater Community. Service related commercial uses also comprise most development along S.C. 125 (Atomic Road) and Edgefield Road from U.S. 78 into the City of North Augusta. Unfortunately, some of this development is less than complementary, particularly along S.C. 125, dotted with junk yards, truck terminals, vacant and deteriorating commercial buildings. Also within this

area are pockets of substandard residential development, with scattered commercial uses.

Two of the more notable uses in this area are mobile homes and junk yards. Mobile homes proliferate the area, many of which are substandard and located in hodgepodge fashion, often blighting the landscape. Large junk and salvage yards on S.C. 125 and Radio Station Road also tend to stand out.

The **Belvedere Community** is virtually surrounded by the City of North Augusta. It consists primarily of several large subdivisions and strip commercial development along U.S. 25.

For the most part, these subdivisions contain detached single-family homes, but change over time has permitted encroachment by potentially incompatible commercial and small scale industrial uses. Mobile homes also have filtered into much of the area west of Fairview Avenue.

Residential uses along U.S. 25 are giving way to commercial development, which has greatly intensified over the past several years, extending in an almost unbroken strip from North Augusta to I-20. Still much of the development along this strip appears to be marginal and subject to further change in the future.

The completion of I-520 from the Savannah River to I-20 just west of US 25 is already having an impact on development north of US 25 at its interchange with I-20. Several commercial developments are underway along US 25. With an I-520 interchange in the 'Blanchard Tract' that parcel, which is over 1,000 acres in size and is already part of the City of North Augusta, could be the site of development as well.

The **area northwest of North Augusta** is bounded by the Savannah River, North Augusta, the county line and U. S. 25. It is an area characterized by "quality" residential development, growth potential, and an increasing presence by the City of North Augusta. It is also relatively free of mixed and incompatible land usage. Accessibility via I-20 to the larger Augusta/North Augusta market, and infrastructure in support of development, i.e. water and sewer facilities, bode well for the future growth and development of this area.

But for commercial development along U.S. 25 into Edgefield County and along Martintown Road to I-20, this area is characteristically residential, the vast majority of which is single-family. The area is not closed to commercial or industrial use however. Much of the land along I-20, in the City of North Augusta, is "planned" for general purpose development, meaning commercial and business uses may be established at these locations.

The availability of raw land and infrastructure, coupled with the gravitation of development toward and beyond the interstate greatly enhance the growth prospects of this area.

The **area northeast of North Augusta** extends north and east of U.S. 25 and the North Augusta City Limits to Little Horse Creek. Major roads in this area are Sudlow Lake, Ascauga Lake, Ridge and Old Ridge, Square Circle, Whaley Pond, Rainbow Falls and Chalk Bed.

With few exceptions, land use in this area is predominantly residential. The exceptions may be found in commercial development at the intersection of U.S. 25 and 120, and at the entrance of Ascauga Lake Road, off U. S. 25.

Most of the subdivisions in this area are exclusively single-family, including several new subdivisions: Camden, Gregg Mills, Horse Creek, and Midland Pines subdivisions. Mobile homes provide much of the housing outside of subdivisions, in concentrations along Ridge Road and Rainbow Falls Road. Single-family, site built homes and mobile homes also are found scattered throughout the more rural areas.

Due to the relative absence of commercial and industrial development from this area, there are few instances of land use incompatibility, except perhaps where mobile homes have been established in single-family subdivisions. But even here, the extent of "residential mixing" is such that compatibility is not seriously compromised, as such mixing is commonplace in rural settings throughout South Carolina.

Unincorporated New Ellenton Area

The New Ellenton Area is characterized by strip, mixed development along the major roads, and scattered pockets of mixed residential use (i.e. mobile homes and conventional single-family housing).

Whiskey Road South (S.C. 19) and U.S. 278 are lined with various and sundry uses. Whiskey Road, north of New Ellenton, is lined with an assortment of commercial uses, single-family dwellings, mobile homes, mobile home parks, a cemetery, a utility substation, and farm land. South of New Ellenton mixed usage continues with mobile home parks, mobile homes on individual lots, single-family dwellings, a few commercial and industrial uses, and New Ellenton Middle School.

U.S. 278 is less developed east of Whiskey Road; it picks up appreciably to the west however. Development along this route is predominantly residential (single-family and mobile homes) with a few small commercial uses scattered along the way. Also found on this route are two cemeteries, a few churches, and Silver Bluff High School. There is considerable undeveloped land as well, particularly west of Chime Bell Church Road.

Dry Branch Road, to the north of New Ellenton, also is heavily developed with mobile homes and single-family dwellings. And, true to form, a few commercial uses are located along this route as well. The major use of land in this area is residential, but not the conventional single-family type; it is mobile homes.

Pasture and woodland comprise a great deal of the area, but active agriculture is more concentrated in areas south of U.S. 278.

Generally, development is sparse and decidedly rural except along the previously described corridors and in a few scattered subdivisions, which are not well planned. Unimproved dirt streets are commonplace in nearly all older subdivisions, as is mixed residential use (mobile homes and conventional single-family dwellings). In fact, dirt surfaces are the rule, rather than the exception for most minor streets and roads in this area.

Additionally, traffic circulation is very poor in most subdivisions due to the use of dead end streets with inadequate turn arounds. Conditions at the intersection of U.S. 278 and S.C. 19 are particularly troublesome during peak periods due to the high volume of traffic generated by the Savannah River Plant.

Unlike street conditions, housing conditions are relatively sound throughout, but for two substandard concentrations off Dry Branch Road.

Unincorporated Jackson/Beech Island Area

The Beech Island Jackson Area is characterized by sparse development, agricultural use, two large industries, a State Park, and strip development along much of S.C. 125. The area is anchored to the north by Beech Island and to the south by the Town of Jackson, separated by rural development, and a few low density subdivisions.

The area is bordered to the west by the Savannah River and a substantial flood hazard area, almost void of development. To the north, above Beech Island, it blends into the North Augusta urban complex and to the northeast it is being impacted by the expansion of the Aiken Urban Area. The Savannah River Plant is located to the south.

Spillover from the Aiken and North Augusta areas is changing the rural face of the area with scattered large lot, low density subdivisions not requiring community sewerage systems. Change is also made possible by the Savannah River Research Campus, east of Jackson on US 278, bringing urban infrastructure and new jobs to the area.

The major use of land in this area is agricultural and forestland, followed by sparse residential use, primarily mobile homes.

That the use of land in this area is changing and will continue to do so is cause for concern, in that:

- (1) New large lot subdivisions are replacing agricultural uses at a higher rate than is necessary to accommodate projected growth because of inadequate infrastructure, i.e. sanitary sewerage facilities.
- (2) New subdivisions are changing the rural character of much of the area in a "hopscotch" fashion, without regard to the impact on existing lifestyles and resources.
- (3) Mobile homes have changed the traditional residential landscape, and will continue to proliferate the area undaunted unless checked by zoning regulations.
- (4) Mixed use subdivisions have become commonplace in all but a few deed restricted subdivisions.

Forecasting Urban/Built Up Area Land Needs

Vismor & Associates, Inc., the firm that prepared the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, used a Land Area Needs calculation in its preparation of that plan. It has been retained and used for the 2020 land use forecast in this update.

The Vismor & Associates, Inc. Land Area Needs calculation:

“The addition of 29,400 people will create a need for approximately 10,000 acres of development land, based on land use-to population ratios, common to South Carolina.

Over the years, our firm has compiled land use and population data from over 30 local surveys. We have found the average consumption of land in unincorporated areas to be approximately .34 acres per person, allocated among the four basic land use classifications as shown on Table 31.

Using these allocations for Aiken County, we are able to estimate not only the amount of land required to meet development demands, but general acreage requirements by land use classification as well, Table 32.

Table 31		
Population to Acreage		
Land Use Classification	Land Use Requirement (acres to person)	Percent of Development
Residential	.21	62.0
Commercial	.01	3.0
Industrial	.08	24.0
Public & Semi-public	.04	11.0
Total	.34	100.0

Source: Vismor & Associates, Inc., based on measurements compiled over a 30-year period.

“Not all land for future development will come from the rural register, of course. There will be in-filling of existing subdivisions and new development in built-up areas, effectively reducing the need for raw undeveloped land. Still, the impact on currently undeveloped areas and land resources will be measurable.

Residential use will comprise the bulk of all new development, occupying approximately 6,200 additional acres by the year 2014.

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 32 Land Use Projections By Type (additional developed acreage)</p>		
Land Use Classification	Average Annual Consumption	2014 Total Consumption
Residential	440	6,200
Commercial	20	300
Industrial-Business	170	2,400
Public & Semi-public	80	1,100
Total (acres)	710	10,000

Source: Vismor & Associates, Inc.

Future industrial land use is perhaps the most difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy, due to a multitude of factors, not the least of which is the County’s ability to secure and accommodate new industry. The County’s existing industrial record notwithstanding, who is to say how successful it will be in its quest for new industry and business development?

In all likely hood, most future industrial development will occur in the unincorporated area, as in the past, due to the added overhead (taxes) of municipal locations.

However, commercial expectations in the unincorporated area are relatively low because of the traditional role of cities as commerce centers. But stagnant city lines, and the outward movement of residential development have created an enlarging commercial market in the unincorporated areas. And, it may well exceed the three percent share allocated by Table 31 to future development.

The amount of public and semi-public land needed through time is directly related to the amount of residential development. The need in the County is projected to be 1,100 additional acres by the year 2014. This includes social, recreational, governmental, religious, and related uses. Many of these uses will continue to be found in the corporate areas, thus minimizing their impact in the unincorporated area.”

Applying this land need forecasting technique to the population forecast for Aiken County in 2020, which has the County population increasing from 165,500 in 2015 to 176,800 in 2020, we find that an additional 1,904 acres will be developed to accommodate the additional population: 1,176 for residential development, 56 acres for commercial development, 448 acres for industrial development and 224 acres for public/semi-public development. That is approximately three percent of the total County land area.

LAND USE ISSUES

Issues are defined as problems or concerns, both real and perceived. During the course of this study, the following issues were identified:

- **Conservation** of quality of life, historic resources, natural resources, property rights, residential areas, and a balanced physical environment.

- **Compatibility** among and between different land uses.
- **Growth** concentration and management.
- **Housing** development, cost, options/alternatives, and location.
- **Infrastructure** development and timing or concurrency.
- **Appearance** of land use and development.
- **Land use development practices** that produce illogical lot configurations (i.e. flag lots, land locked lots, etc.), contribute to off-site problems (i.e. storm water runoff, traffic hazards, lower property values, etc.), and are insensitive to natural resources.
- **Urban Sprawl** and the consequences thereof.
- **Food Access**
- **Corridor Development.**
- **Transitioning uses/areas**; including intensity/density, use, and structural condition transition.

Issue: Conservation

The conservation issue is broad in scope covering a host of things, including quality of life, historic and natural resources, residential areas, and a balanced physical environment.

As development inevitably impacts and changes the look of Aiken County, these are the things that need to be monitored to ensure their longevity.

In reality, everything that contributes to quality of life should be preserved and enhanced, not just the resources listed herein, but everything that makes Aiken County an attractive living environment.

Preservation is not always an easy sell however, especially where regulatory measures are proposed, as it impacts property rights. But preservation may be accomplished in a number of ways that may assuage the situation, including:

- (1) **Educating** the public, property owners and developers on the aesthetic, social and economic importance of local resources, and the need for their preservation.
- (2) **Incorporating and integrating** natural and historic resources into the development process to uniquely signature projects and preserve resources.
- (3) **Identifying** precisely the location, nature and extent of a resource to be preserved, so that developers and property owners can mitigate or adjust development plans to avoid or incorporate the resource into the planning process, thus preserving it for future generations to enjoy.

In addition to appealing to one's sense of appreciation of his surroundings, there are regulatory means of accomplishing preservation, including federal wetlands and flood plain regulations, currently in effect.

Issue: Compatibility

Public support for planning generally is based on the concept of land use compatibility.

Home owners and land owners, environmentalists and the general public alike are concerned when new development creates an incompatible situation, i.e. lowers property values, heightens traffic congestion, emits pollutants, alters accepted environmental conditions, scars the landscape, or is just plain ugly.

How this Plan responds to the issue of land use compatibility may well mirror the future profile of the County.

Not all land use is complementary to or compatible with its surroundings, existing or proposed. Any infringement by uses adversely impacting prevailing environmental conditions generally is met by resistance from effected property owners.

Land use compatibility is a universal issue. It is no less an issue in Aiken County, surfacing every time a new use or project impacts an existing residential area or environmental resource. Depending on the nature of the project, the compatibility issue ranges from non-controversial to NIMBY proportions (not in my back yard).

To address this issue, the County has enacted a Land Management Regulations Ordinance, with bufferyard, density and development controls. It has also attached to several NIMBY's additional development standards designed to promote land use compatibility, i.e. junk yards, race tracks, sexually oriented businesses, recycling facilities, waste disposal sites, etc.

Additional compatibility measures will require a more inclusive approach to land use regulations, as currently under study.

Issue: Growth

Aiken County will continue to grow and develop, as projected by this Plan. The manner in which this additional growth and development takes place will directly impact most of the other issues identified herein. In a broad sense, concern over future growth is closely related to concern over the future quality of life.

Growth management practices and policies seek to accommodate growth while directing the location and patterns of new development, based on a foundation of rational land use, facility, and policy planning. At issue are three concerns:

- (1) Concurrency,
- (2) Preservation, and
- (3) Concentration.

Concurrency is the ability of the County and other service agencies to finance in a timely manner service and facility needs generated by development.

Preservation includes the retention and maintenance of natural, historic, cultural and related quality of life resources.

Concentration of urban development equates to a balanced environment, providing for both rural and urban lifestyles. While continued development will diminish rural resources and lifestyles over time, it need not do so prematurely through urban sprawl.

By concentrating development in areas facilitated with or planned for infrastructure improvements, cost of development is minimized, and rural lifestyles and land resources are preserved.

Growth management practices and policies include a variety of traditional and evolving techniques, tools, plans, and activities to purposefully guide local patterns of land use, including the manner, location, rate, and nature of development.

Ideally, managed growth consists of a well-integrated, efficient, and affirmative system where choices or decisions are made explicitly and with full knowledge of the variables and tradeoffs involved, and where the programs are coordinated in furtherance of clear community growth and land use objectives.

The extent to which growth management practices are brought to bear on the issue of growth will depend on the perceived severity of the issue as it impacts quality of life, resource preservation and development concentration.

Issue: Housing

Housing is the principal non-agricultural use in the County. As a result, it is viewed in this context as a land use issue.

Choice of housing (i.e. site built, manufactured, single, multi-family, etc.) and location is a concern. Proliferation of mobile and manufactured homes is a concern. Compatibility among and between the various types of housing is a concern.

Issue: Infrastructure

This issue is the subject of the Community Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. But it is also a land use issue in that land use and development are contingent on infrastructure, i.e. water, sewer, roads, etc.

The extension and/or improvement of infrastructure will determine the carrying capacity and influence the use of land. Decisions and policies to withhold or extend urban infrastructure, for example, may do more to shape the future of the County than any other thing, including zoning. Without urban infrastructure, rural areas of the County will remain rural. And with upgraded infrastructure, urban areas may become more concentrated and land utilization more efficient.

Also, there is the matter of financing infrastructure improvements, and getting the most efficient return on investments. Planned and orderly extension and/or upgrading of infrastructure, concurrently with development

will guarantee immediate return on investments, making the process more cost effective.

In sum, the infrastructure issue is one of where and when to extend and/or upgrade, as this issue more than any other holds the key to the future form and intensity of land use.

Issue: Appearance

There is a saying “you don’t get a second chance to make a first impression”. This is true for counties as well. How Aiken County is perceived to prospective residents, industry, business, and visitors is critical to its future well-being. Existing land use projects a visual image of the County and plays a major role in future development by attracting like uses. Quality development generally attracts quality development and blight begets blight. This is not always true, of course, but rarely does quality development take place in a blighted area, unless major resources have been committed to renewal.

The physical image of Aiken County is tempered by a number of features, both negative and positive. Based on survey observations they include:

Negative Features

- Signs and Billboards
- Commercial Clutter
- Strip commercial development along most major highways
- Poorly sited manufactured and mobile home parks

Positive Features

- Cultural and Historical Resources
- Savannah River Site
- Woodlands
- The Equine Industry
- Rural Areas
- Quality Neighborhoods
- Quality Commercial Areas

These and other features combine to form a mosaic of the County. The key to improving the image is to eliminate or reduce negative features and expand and accentuate the positive. Each may be improved or expanded, or in the case of strip commercial development, limited.

Appearance is a County issue, but in reality it is confined principally to those areas burdened by negative physical features. Quality developers and responsible land owners routinely address the issue of appearance. It is a matter of individual and community pride. For others, the issue of appearance may need to be regulated or mandated.

Issue: Land Development Practices

Most if not all land use problems are created by development practices

- that are insensitive to surrounding development and natural resources,
- that create illogically configured lots and parcels, and
- that produce or contribute to off-site problems.

This issue is currently addressed in the County's Land Management Regulations Ordinance.

That this issue is still with us is evidence that these documents have had less than the desired effect on development practices. As a result, each should be reviewed in light of a common objective to enhance the outcome of development and ameliorate the impact on its surroundings.

Issue: Urban Sprawl

The term *urban sprawl* refers to several distinct urban development patterns. In its broadest definition, it refers to a pattern of low-density suburban development that has spread out around most cities in this country during the postwar era. More narrowly applied, it refers to premature leapfrog or “highway ribbon” development or low-density scattered development that occurs beyond the current perimeter of contiguous development. A synthesized definition of urban sprawl drawn from planning literature is:

unplanned, uncontrolled, and uncoordinated single-use development that does not provide for an attractive and functional mix of uses and/or is not functionally related to surrounding land uses and which variously appears as low density, ribbon or strip, scattered, leapfrog, or isolated development.

Urban sprawl is viewed by most as wasteful of land and resources, costly to serve, damaging to the environment, and unsightly, among other things.

To better manage and address the issue of sprawl urban growth boundaries and more stringent rural development regulations are recommended.

Issue: Strip Corridor Development

Most roads in the urban area of the County have been stripped by development, with little evidence of commercial and business concentrations in nodes or centers separated by open space and low density use. As a result, this issue is not as much about limiting strip development in favor of strategically located business nodes, as it is about addressing traffic congestion, appearance, and development intensity.

For purposes of this study, strip corridor development is defined by two or more of the following conditions:

- (1) High traffic volumes,
- (2) Continuous line of development, with relatively few unbroken stretches,
- (3) Frequent curb cuts accessing small lots,
- (4) Public sewer availability.

Low intensity corridors also are defined as carrying large traffic volumes, but with fewer curb cuts, more open space, sparser development, and limited sewer service, if available at all.

The application of open space, landscaping, curb cut controls, signage controls, and related design, and aesthetic measures are recommended for designated corridors to help retain the carrying capacity and improve the appearance and safety of such roads.

Issue: Food Access

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food deserts as “urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. The lack of access contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.” The USDA uses census tracts with a substantial share of residents who live in low-income areas that have low levels of access to a grocery store or healthy, affordable food retail outlets to identify food deserts. According to this data, 9,377 Aiken County citizens live in food deserts (Appendix 5). This is not only a health issue, but an economic development issue. The S C Food Access taskforce reports that statewide, residents in food deserts spend \$311 million annually on groceries outside of their local community and that untapped local markets could support approximately 529,000 square feet of grocery retail. This directly results in job creation, savings in transportation costs, increased tax revenue, and most importantly improved access to healthy food.

Zoning and land development regulations should be examined to remove impediments to appropriately located and scaled urban agriculture; private residential agriculture, including regulations on domesticated animals in urban and residential areas; and community gardens. Grow-your-own is the most immediate access to healthy foods. Zoning and land developments should be examined to allow for farmers markets, fresh produce vendors; small neighborhood healthy food stores; food distribution centers (food hubs); and food processing facilities that prepare farm produce for marketing (i.e. washing, sorting and packaging; canning, commercial kitchens).

Issue: Transitioning Areas/Uses

Transitioning areas in the County offer a unique challenge to the Planning Commission: how to transition these areas for the best results?

Three types of transition are in evidence:

- (1) Transition involving **use**, such as single-family subdivisions being compromised by mobile homes, businesses, or other seemingly incompatible uses.
- (2) Transition involving **intensity / density** of development, such as low density residential areas changing to high intensity commercial or multi-family areas, impacting traffic conditions, compatibility and community facilities.
- (3) Transition involving **structural conditions**, such as deteriorating housing and commercial buildings, streets, and neighborhoods.

Zoning and land management controls, when properly applied, can resolve the issue of use and intensity/density transition. CDBG block grant funds, coupled with application of housing and building codes, may help address the issue of structural transition.

LAND USE GOALS

Faced with the challenges of the 21st Century, the County needs to have a clear vision of its future---a growth plan supported by goals and policies. The essence of such a plan is captured in the following vision statement.

Vision: Provide for all Aiken County residents a sustainable quality of life, in a physical environment characterized by:

- * **Quality housing** and residential areas with opportunities to exercise choice in meeting the diverse needs of families and households with regard to location and type of housing irrespective of race, social or economic status;

- * **Adequate infrastructure** concurrently provided in support of projected growth and development;
- * **Safe neighborhoods** and environs;
- * **Healthy Communities**
- * **Greenery**, open space and recreational opportunities; and
- * **Optimal use**, development and conservation of the County's natural resources and proper integration of such resources into an urbanizing environment.

Goals in support of this vision follow.

GOAL: Position the County to be proactive in seizing development opportunities, mitigating threats, and acting , rather than reacting to inevitable land use changes.

The Comprehensive Plan and the planning process are directed toward implementing this goal. The Plan itself is intended to serve as a guide for officials to make informed land use planning and development decisions.

GOAL: Maintain a balanced environment providing for both rural and urban lifestyles

That the County is becoming increasingly urbanized in no way lessens the need for a balanced environment: rural and urban.

This goal is directed at the heart of planning, deciding what land will be developed and the intensity of that development. It is a matter of directing growth and development in such a manner as to preserve and perpetuate both rural and urban environs, neighborhoods and natural resource areas.

GOAL: Enhance the outcome of development and promote land use compatibility

Not all development is good, nor is it compatible with or complementary to existing land use. Unless properly screened and mitigated, the development process could compromise prevailing lifestyles and environs. This goal is

intended to avert such a compromise. The County's development regulations and process should be evaluated periodically with regards to their ability to achieve this goal. They should be revised as necessary improve their ability to do so.

GOAL: Create and sustain a healthy, livable land use pattern

A healthy livable land use pattern is characterized by:

- Stable, attractive and diverse neighborhoods,
- Quality employment parks and centers, properly integrated and disbursed within the urban, built-up areas,
- Convenient, accessible, diverse and attractive retail and business nodes and complexes including markets, vendors, and other outlets for fresh, health food,
- Pedestrian-friendly and ADA-compliant building and site design,
- An interconnected network of bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian facilities that promote an active access to live, work, and play destinations,
- Supports compatible urban agriculture, community gardens, and private farming,
- Supports farmers markets
 - Support local farmers
 - Provide for the ability to expand existing markets and locate new markets where needed

- Support the use of SNAP/EBT and SNAP Healthy Bucks, WIC, Senior Nutrition, and other federal food programs at farmers markets
- Points of identity and places where people want to visit or live near,
- Quality public services and facilities which provide a framework for the land use pattern. Proposed locations for new public facilities such as government offices, libraries, schools, etc. should consider safe and convenient public access including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access, and
- An arrangement of land uses which optimizes investments in existing infrastructure, and minimizes investments in new and expanded infrastructure. This includes:
 - **infill development**: developing vacant parcels surrounded by developed land
 - **redevelopment** of dilapidated, poor-quality, and/or underutilized residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

People residing in rural areas are there generally for one of two reasons. They appreciate rural life styles, or they are engaged in agriculture. Change, though often inevitable, usually is accompanied by resistance. The question, therefore, is how to accommodate more people and more development without compromising rural values. It is not easy.

It will require changes in development principles and practices. Land is not an infinite resource. More people will have to share the same amount of land. Continuation of past development practices will spread development even more densely throughout the County, gradually changing the rural character of the landscape.

An alternative approach---one designed to maintain better balance between rural lifestyles and growth---is set out in the following strategies.

- Amend the County's subdivision regulations to promote cluster housing development in rural areas, thereby minimizing land coverage for residential use.
- Establish maximum lot size (1/4 acre) for subdivisions of a certain size, as opposed to minimum lot size, and allocate in perpetuity through lease, trust, common ownership, etc. up to 80 percent of cluster subdivisions to open, agricultural or wooded use, thus retaining rural, open character.
- Establish design criteria for integrating cluster subdivisions into rural setting.

GOAL: Protect Aiken County's watershed

Currently, the County's watershed is vulnerable to development that may adversely impact the water supply. That the water shed be protected from development which would compromise the supply of water is imperative. All proposed development and existing uses within the water shed should be monitored with regard to the potential impact on the quality and supply of water. Toward this end, the County should adopt protective watershed legislation.

GOAL: Provide a framework for land utilization and development to ensure an orderly, efficient, equitable, and compatible arrangement of Aiken County's physical resources

Toward this end, the County should:

- Coordinate proposed development with the provision of adequate transportation, infrastructure systems, and required services in support of such activity.
- Implement policies and/or regulations necessary to accomplish Plan Map compliance.
- Evaluate development regulations with regard to accomplishing the goals and issues identified in the plan and the planning process. Revise them as necessary to implement those goals and address those issues.

PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The Plan Map is an expression of geographic objectives. It establishes land use and development objectives for various areas of the County.

Future land use and development designations are identified on the County's Plan Maps by the use of colors. They are based in part on factors influencing development, i.e. growth projections, existing land use, land use trends, land use potential, land use constraints, land use issues, and land use goals.

The objective of each land use designation is as follows:

Map Classification: AP, Agricultural Preservation

Map Objective:

The intent of this district is to conserve, sustain, and protect from premature urban encroachment rural areas and resources, particularly agricultural and forested lands; and maintain a balanced rural-urban environment without interfering with the entrepreneurial abilities and endeavors of local residents.

Map Classification: RRC, Residential Rural Commercial

Map Objective:

The intent of this district is to preserve the residential and agricultural nature of an area while allowing limited number of agricultural uses, small-scale commercial uses, and recreational uses.

Map Classification: RH5, Residential-Horse 5

Map Objective:

This district is intends to promote and accommodate low-density residential development on large lots of at least five-acre size by prohibiting multifamily residential, industrial, and commercial activities.

Map Classification: RH5B, Residential-Horse Business

Map Objective:

This district is intended to promote and accommodate low-density residential development on large lots of at least five-acre in size in prohibiting multifamily residential, industrial, and most commercial activities except those related directly to equine and equestrian uses and selected agricultural uses.

Map Classification: RUC, Rural Community District

Map Objective:

The intent of this district is to sustain existing rural-community values and environments, and to facilitate future development which will strengthen the economies of these areas, making them less dependent on outside services

and resources, while ensuring land use compatibility and fostering a sense of community.

Map Classification: RC, Residential Conservation Areas

Map Objective:

Areas designated RC on the accompanying Plan Maps are intended to protect existing single-family residential uses and nearby areas with residential potential, exclusively for single-family residential purposes, and to restrict or prohibit any use of land which would compromise or otherwise infringe on the prevailing character of established and/or planned residential areas. This need not prohibit the development of walkable communities with appropriately located, small scale neighborhood commercial establishments that provide needed food and services and are easily and safely accessible to the residents.

Map Classification: RD, Residential Development Areas

Map Objective:

The objective of this designation is to identify for future development areas suitable to residential use and to protect such areas to the extent practical and feasible exclusively for such development, irrespective of the type or density of residential use.

Map Classification: UD, Urban Development

Map Objective:

The objective of this designation is to permit land use and development flexibility in an effort to meet market conditions and demands to encourage the "highest and best use of land", while protecting existing land uses and

environmental resources from any negative byproducts or fallout from new and expanded development. The principal use is expected to be commercial and business, but other uses, including residential and industrial may be accommodated herein as well.

Map Classification: IND, Industrial Development

Map Objective:

The objective of this classification is to preserve and protect existing industry and potential industrial sites from encroachment by incompatible and inappropriate development. While not excluding all other uses from these areas, they are recommended principally for manufacturing, warehousing, wholesaling, research, business, technical operations, and similar uses.

SECTION 8

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Traffic congestion on Aiken County's roadways is perhaps the most tangible and noticeable indicator of the impact on quality of life caused by new development. Both Aiken County residents and visitors rely heavily on private automobiles as their sole means of transportation. This automobile dependence can largely be attributed to historical growth patterns in the county that favored low-density decentralized development. As a result, a vast majority of the resources devoted to addressing transportation issues have been directed towards road projects.

While both the County and CSRA region will continually need to improve a common road network to accommodate new growth, several factors challenge the sustainability of the current levels of commitment to fund and implement transportation improvements as follows: (1) the magnitude of funding needs for large-scale transportation improvements; (2) other growth related capital improvement needs (schools, parks, libraries, general government, etc.) that are competing for the same funds; and (3) the potential degradation of the county's environmental and aesthetic qualities.

Therefore, this Element offers the following strategies to maximize the efficiency of the county's road network while promoting policies and alternative transportation choices to reduce our dependency on automobile transportation.

EXISTING AND PLANNED ROAD NETWORK

Aiken County has several thousand miles of roads ranging from principal arterials such as I-20 and SC-19 to unpaved private roads. The County has adopted a Road Functional Classification Map (Appendix 8) for the purposes of establishing the role of key roadways and intersections; to help in the establishment of access management standards; and to help in prioritizing project funding.

Roadway Functional Classification

Aiken County's road system is comprised of sparse rural highways and local roads, and an urban network of principal arterials, collectors, and residential streets. A road network is created by a range of different types of facilities, from freeways that serve high-speed, longer-distance trips, to collector and local streets designed for lower speeds and shorter trip lengths.

Two important variables that define roadway function are mobility and access. Where mobility is of primary function, as in Freeways, access is fully controlled to allow vehicles to enter and exit only at interchange ramps. At the other extreme, local streets allow numerous driveways and connections, because their primary function is to provide direct access to businesses and residences.

Functional Class Definitions

(Source: City of Cheyenne Community Plan, www.plancheyenne.com, 2007 via Dorchester County, SC Comprehensive Plan – Adopted 11/17/08))

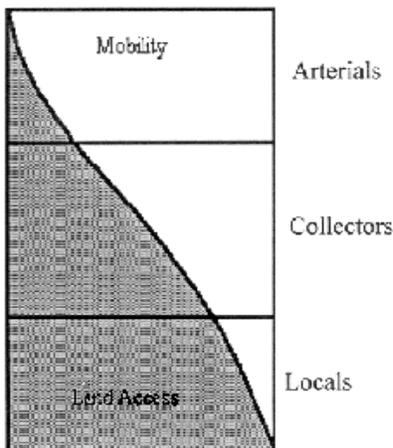
Interstates: Roadways that serve high-speed and high volume regional traffic. Access to a Freeway is limited to grade separated interchanges with mainline traffic signals (e.g., I-20).

Principal Arterials: Roadways that serve high-volume traffic over long distances. Access is highly controlled with a limited number of intersections, medians with infrequent openings, and no direct parcel access. Adjacent land uses are served by other network roadways, service roads and inter parcel connections (e.g., US-25, US1/US-78, SC-19).

Minor Arterials: Roadways that serve high-volume traffic over medium distances. Access is restricted through prescribed distances between intersections, use of medians, and no or limited direct parcel access (e.g., SC-230, SC-118, SC-302, SC-421).

Collectors: Roadways that serve as links between local access facilities and arterial facilities over medium to long distances, outside

of or adjacent to subdivision developments. Collectors are managed to maximize the safe operation of through-movements and to distribute traffic to local access (e.g. Ascauga Lake Road).



Locals: Roadways that provide direct parcel access and deliver parcel generated trips to the collector network; neighborhood streets.

The depiction in this figure charts access versus mobility in roadway functional classifications.

Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) is a term used in describing how well a particular roadway or intersection is functioning in terms of speed; travel time; freedom to maneuver; traffic interruptions; and comfort and convenience. Six LOS letters designate each level of quality of vehicular flow, from A to F, with LOS “A” representing the best operating conditions and LOS “F” the worst. Aiken County has decided as a matter of policy that in order to maintain an acceptable quality of life in the region, conditions on its road network should not fall below LOS “D”. However, environmental and community constraints limit the capability to improve some areas of the County. Thus, it is not feasible or practical to provide LOS “D” conditions on all roads. In these cases, improvements to complementary travel modes such as transit, pedestrian, or bicycle, as well as efficient use of the existing infrastructure through signal coordination and access management can provide significant benefit to reducing congestion and/or providing travel alternatives. Levels of service are described below.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Highway traffic congestion is expressed in terms of Level of Service (LOS) as defined by the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). LOS is a letter code ranging from "A" for excellent conditions to "F" for failure conditions. The conditions defining the LOS for roadways are summarized as follows:



LOS A

Represents the best operating conditions and is considered free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream.



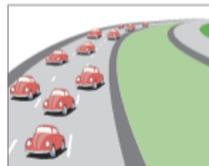
LOS D

Represents traffic operations approaching unstable flow with high passing demand and passing capacity near zero, characterized by drivers being severely restricted in maneuverability.



LOS B

Represents reasonably free-flowing conditions but with some influence by others.



LOS E

Represents unstable flow near capacity. LOS E often changes to LOS F very quickly because of disturbances (road conditions, accidents, etc.) in traffic flow.



LOS C

Represents a constrained constant flow below speed limits, with additional attention required by the drivers to maintain safe operations. Comfort and convenience levels of the driver decline noticeably.



LOS F

Represents the worst conditions with heavily congested flow and traffic demand exceeding capacity, characterized by stop-and-go waves, poor travel time, low comfort and convenience, and increased accident exposure.

Source: *Dorchester County Comprehensive Plan – Adopted 11/17/08*

Traffic Volumes and Trends

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) annually reports traffic counts for state roads and for road segments presumed to carry significant volumes. These are average annualized daily counts, and are useful to show the demands placed on these systems. They are found at www.SCDOT.org.

Committed Road Improvements

In order to address existing and projected road deficiencies, various projects are committed (planned with funding identified) to address transportation needs in Aiken County. The committed improvements are included in the ARTS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Table 33, which is a staged, multi-year intermodal program of transportation projects consistent

with ARTS area long range transportation plan. The TIP is the critical link between planning for transportation needs and addressing those needs.

The ARTS TIP covers a four-year period for the Georgia portion of the study area and a five-year period for the South Carolina part. The TIP is updated each year with input from the general public, the ARTS committees and other stakeholders in the region. The TIP is adopted by the ARTS Policy Committee and then approved by the governors of Georgia and South Carolina. Projects in the ARTS TIP are then included in the Georgia and South Carolina State TIPs.

The ARTS TIP includes all transportation projects, or identified phases of a project within the study area, proposed for funding with federal highway and transit funds. The following information is included for each TIP project: description, estimated total cost, amount of federal funds allocated each program year, proposed sources of funding, and responsible implementing agencies. The TIP must be financially constrained for each program year. The TIP financial plan must demonstrate that the identified projects can be implemented using current and proposed revenue sources. In the ARTS TIP, projects are grouped by state (GA and SC) and by type of project (road, transit). The TIP also lists projects from the previous TIP that have been implemented, and identifies any significant delays in the implementation of major projects.

When projects are added to the TIP, they are prioritized based on area-wide needs. Project priorities result from the placement of the project in the long range plan, funding availability, and the scheduling requirements of the state and federal governments. A project is included in the TIP to reflect activities ranging from pre-construction activities to actual project construction scheduled within the scope of the TIP years. Whether a project is scheduled to be completed in one year or phased over several years, it must advance to the TIP in order to be eligible for funding. By advancing to the TIP, a project completes what can be a long and difficult trip through the planning process. The remaining action to be taken is implementation. Bringing projects to this point is what makes the TIP such an important part of the transportation planning process.

Table 33
ARTS Transportation Improvement Program
South Carolina Portion
FY 2015 - 2018

Project Title	Description	Fiscal Year Construction
North Augusta Greenway	Extend from Bergen Rd. into Woodstone development	FY 2015
Robert M. Bell Pkwy./University Pkwy. (SC 118)	Widen to 4 lanes, US 1/78 to SC 19	Long Range
Dougherty Rd. (S-419)	Curb, gutter, & third lane, Whiskey Rd. to Silver Bluff Rd.	Long Range
University Pkwy. (S-2131)	Widen to 5 lanes, US 1 to SC 118	Long Range
Resurfacing Projects	Resurfacing of various roads	FY 2015-2018
Park & Ride	Construct 200 vehicle lot at I-20, Exit 5	Completed FY 2015
Belvedere-Clearwater Rd. (SC 126)	Widen to 5 lanes, US 1 to I-520	FY 2017
Whiskey Rd. (SC 19)	Drainage improvements, Ola Hitt to Brookhaven	FY 2015
Edgefield Rd. (US 25)	Widen to 7 lanes I-520 to Walnut La.	Completed FY 2014
Silver Bluff Rd. (SC 302)	Intersection and corridor improvements, Indian Creek Tr. to Richardson Lake Rd.	FY 2016
E. Buena Vista Ave. (S-120)	Widening with intersection & corridor impm'ts, Brookside Ave. to Barton Rd.	FY 2016
LeCompte Ave. (S-125)	Intersection improvements on LeCompte @ Old Edgefield Rd. (S-197)	FY 2015
Pine Log Rd. (S-65)	Intersection improvements on Pine Log @ Storm Branch Rd. (S-145)	FY 2015
Williston Rd. (US 278)	Intersection improvements on US 278 @ Silver Bluff Rd. (SC 302)	FY 2015

Project Title	Description	Fiscal Year Construction
Whiskey Rd./Powderhouse Rd. Connector	Build new 2-lane connector road	Long Range
Bridge Rehab/Maintenance	On Sand Bar Ferry (SC 28) @ Savannah River & Bettis Academy Rd. @ I-20	FY 2018
Interstate Rehab/Maintenance	On I-20, MM 1 to near MM 2	FY 2016

Source: Augusta Regional Transportation Study, Transportation Improvement Program, FY 2015-2018

EXISTING TOOLS AND POLICIES TO ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION DEMAND

Congestion Management Process

The Augusta Regional Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization (ARTS MPO) includes the urbanized area of Aiken County, which is also a transportation management area (TMA). TMAs must also prepare a Congestion Management Process (CMP) Report by federal law.

The CMP requires that all reasonable alternatives be identified and evaluated for their ability to alleviate congestion and enhance mobility. Furthermore, when the addition of general purpose traffic lanes is determined to be the appropriate solution for a particular corridor, the CMP requires that appropriate demand and operational management strategies also be implemented to increase the efficiency of the corridor and extend the life of the improvement.

ARTS prepared its first CMS (now CMP) work plan in August 1994 in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SC DOT). Since then this work plan has served as the basis for the area's annual CMP report and ongoing CMP process. The CMP work plan is tailored to meet regional needs and is evaluated and adjusted periodically to meet changing needs and priorities. The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission coordinates the CMP process and the work on the annual CMP report.

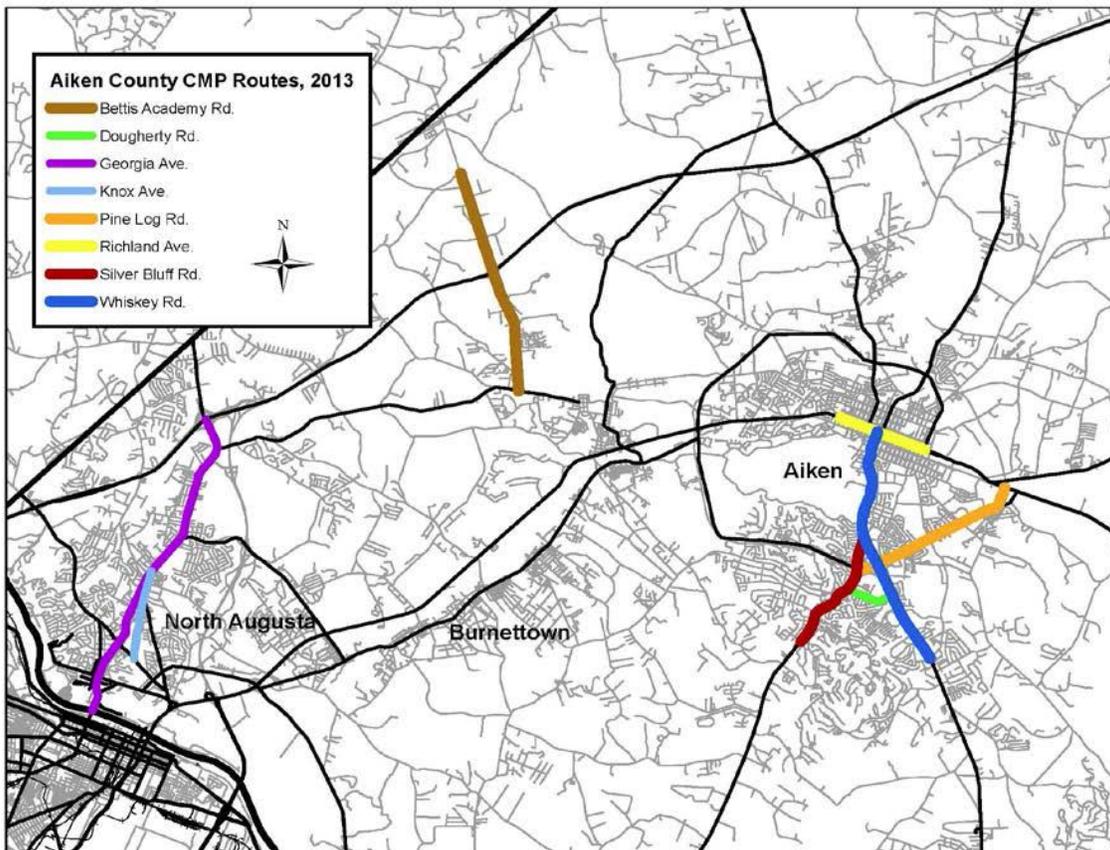
According to the CMP work plan, each corridor is divided into links, which corresponds with major signalized intersections. The length of, and the time taken to travel, each link is measured. The deviation from the posted speed limit is the measure of congestion on each corridor. The travel times for six runs are collected on each route. Corridors are run in both directions during AM peak hour and PM peak hour on three separate days (2 runs per day x 3 days = 6 total runs). Some corridors are timed during noon, school release and on Saturday peak shopping times (2:00 pm to 4:00 pm). The run begins approximately from the starting point. The recording unit is turned on and the driver drives the length of the corridor while keeping pace with the traffic. The files from each run are then exported to Microsoft Excel® format where each link of the route is timed and recorded. The average speed on each link and corridor is calculated. Appendix B contains the corridor segment sheets. The corridors are rated based on the performance measures listed in Table 34.

Table 34
Performance Measures
ARTS Congestion Management Process
Category Average Speed

Not Presently Congested (NPC)	\geq Posted speed limit.
At Risk of Congestion (ARC)	1% - 15% below the posted speed limit
Borderline Congested (BC)	15% - 25% below the posted speed limit
Marginally Congested (MC)	25% - 30 % below the posted speed limit
Seriously Congested (SC)	$>$ 30% below the posted speed limit

In Table 34, LOS A through C are classified as “As risk of Congestion” or “Borderline Congested” ; LOS D & E as “Marginally Congested”; and LOS F as “Seriously Congested.”

Presently 52 corridors are included in the CMP travel time survey. Of those, sixteen (16) are located in Aiken County and they are as follows: Bettis Academy, Dougherty Road, Laurens Street, Pine Log Road, Richland Avenue, Highway SC-118, Silver Bluff Road, US 1 (York Street/Columbia Highway North), US 1/US 78 (Jefferson Davis Highway), Whiskey Road, Atomic Road, Buena Vista Avenue, Clearwater Road, Georgia Avenue, Knox Avenue, and Martintown Road. The remaining ones are located in Richmond and Columbia Counties in Georgia. Two major variables produced in the process are the forecasted volumes and roadways capacities, which can be used to derive LOS. Road segments identified as being potentially congested include the following eight (8) corridors in Aiken County which were surveyed as part of the 2013 CMP Travel Survey as shown below.



Congestion Management Process Travel Time Survey Routes

Survey conducted in 2013 by Aiken County Planning & Development Department.

The average speed and deviation from the speed limit for the eight (8) corridors located in Aiken County are summarized in Table 35.

Table 35
Congestion Management Process
Travel Time Survey Results
Aiken County, 2013

	Average Speed				Posted Speed
	SB/WB AM	NB/EB AM	SBWB PM	NB/EB PM	
Dougherty Rd.: Whiskey to Silver Bluff					35
Ave. Speed (MPH)	25	19	25	20	
% Deviation from posted speed	-28.57	-45.71	-28.57	-42.86	
Category	MC	SC	MC	SC	
GA Ave.: Savannah River to I-20					35/45
Ave. Speed (MPH)	33	30	29	27	
% Deviation from posted speed	-12.00	-20.00	-22.67	-28.00	
Category	ARC	BC	BC	MC	
Knox Avenue					35/40
Ave. Speed (MPH)	28	29	28	25	
% Deviation from posted speed	-25.33	-22.67	-25.33	-28.57	
Category	MC	BC	MC	MC	
Bettis Academy: Ascauga Lake to Fields Cemetery					45/55
Ave. Speed (MPH)	43	46	44	45	
% Deviation from posted speed	-14.00	-8.00	-12.00	-10.00	

	Average Speed				Posted Speed
Category	ARC	ARC	ARC	ARC	
E. Pine Log: US 78 to Silver Bluff					35/45
Ave. Speed (MPH)	31	34			
% Deviation from posted speed	-22.50	-15.00			
Category	BC	BC			
E. Pine Log: US 78 to Silver Bluff 3:15 pm					35/45
Ave. Speed (MPH)			30	29	
% Deviation from posted speed			-25.00	-27.50	
Category			MC	MC	
Richland Ave.: Vaucluse to Beaufort, Noon					25/35
Ave. Speed (MPH)			18	19	
% Deviation from posted speed			-40.00	-40.00	
Category			SC	SC	
Silver Bluff: Whiskey to Savannah Dr.					35
Ave. Speed (MPH)	23	19	23	19	
% Deviation from posted speed	-34.29	-45.71	34.29	45.71	
Category	SC	SC	SC	SC	
Whiskey Rd.: Richland Ave. to Powderhouse					30/45
Ave. Speed (MPH)	28	29	22	24	
% Deviation from posted speed	-25.33	-22.67	-41.33	-36.00	
Category	MC	BC	SC	SC	

The Aiken County data was collected by a passenger in a vehicle equipped with GPS.

LAND PRESERVATION

A variety of approaches are utilized in Aiken County in the effort to preserve greenspace. The County has currently allocated \$100,000 for the preservation of greenspace.

In addition, the County has secured the possession of both Boyd Pond and Langley Pond Parks. Boyd Pond Park is a 210 acre park. It is heavily wooded and includes, among other things, two miles of hiking trails, mountain bike and walking trails and a 30 acre fishing pond. Langley Pond Park is the fastest growing venue for rowing in the Southeast. It is the world's largest pond and the only Olympic size rowing course in South Carolina.

Aiken County also is a part of the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor. The "Rivers, Rails and Crossroads Region", Region 3, of the Corridor is partially inside the geographical limits of Aiken County.

A popular non-profit organization, the Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC), is dedicated to the preservation of undeveloped land for expanding greenspace throughout Aiken County. ALC presently owns approximately 548 acres of land. Additional acreage protected under ALC results from conservation easements donated by private landowners.

COMPLETE STREETS

For the last fifty years, the prime consideration in road design and construction has been the automobile. This has led to a road system that is unsafe if not unusable for walking and cycling and is automobile dependent for transportation to work, food, shops, and any other destination. Complete streets is a different way to think about designing, building, and using our streets. Instead of a single user – the automobile – complete streets are designed to accommodate all users: pedestrians, bicyclist, transit, and the automobile. Complete streets make for livable, walkable, healthy communities.

The South Carolina Department of Transportation supports the complete streets concept. In February 2003, the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission approved a resolution affirming that bicycling and walking accommodations should be a routine part of the Department's

planning, design, construction and operating activities, and will be included in the everyday operations of its transportation system.

Thirteen South Carolina cities and towns and four South Carolina counties have adopted complete streets resolutions and/or regulations.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Bicycle, Pedestrian, Trails Plans

The Aiken County Urbanized Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is focused on the Aiken County portion of the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) Bicycle and Pedestrian (Bike/Ped) Plan. ARTS is the transportation Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for greater Augusta Georgia metropolitan region which encompasses Richmond County, Georgia and portions of Columbia County, Georgia and portions of Aiken and Edgefield Counties in South Carolina. As the name implies, the Aiken Bike/Ped plan focuses on the urbanized areas of Aiken and includes the municipalities of North Augusta, Burnetown, and Aiken. The South Carolina Subcommittee of ARTS (SC ARTS) represents the interests this urbanized area with ARTS and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). SC ARTS does not lead the implementation of transportation projects, including bicycle and pedestrian improvements, but serves as the formal agency that plans and programs transportation improvement within the SC ARTS area. Improvement projects and programs are implemented by County, municipal, and State jurisdictions.

In November 2013 a new Aiken County Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) was chartered by SC ARTS to serve as a citizen's advisory committee on implementation of the Aiken County urbanized Area Bicycle Pedestrian Plan.

The Lower Savannah Council of Governments Bicycle and Pedestrian Regional Plan provides planning for bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the more rural portions of Aiken County outside of the SC ARTS urbanized area.

The Greater Aiken Integrated Trails Foundation (GAIT) was formed in October 2011. GAIT is focused on and committed to the development and

operation of a county-wide, integrated recreation trails system to serve the interests of the equine community, hiking, biking, jogging and walking enthusiasts, and to restore streams for small water craft - all shared greenway, where feasible.

“Among the chief benefits of an integrated Trails System is the ability to connect people to nature and promote good health while providing enjoyable, worthwhile and wholesome recreation. Other benefits include connecting parks, communities and neighborhoods to encourage broader citizen use, promoting tourism, and enhancing economic vitality, protecting watersheds and flood plains and providing recreational transportation alternatives.” (gaitfoundation.org).

As the name implies, GAIT’s goal is to integrate all forms of non-motorized transportation – sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities; hiking, biking and horse riding trails; bicycle lanes and other facilities; kayak and canoe “blue” trails”, etc. – into an interconnected county-wide network. To further this goal, GAIT will take all opportunities to reach out to the BPAC, LSCOG, SCDOT, and Aiken County and its municipalities to coordinate planning efforts to achieve interconnectivity among the various plans. Aiken County has entered into a memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with GAIT “to encourage and assist GAIT with its mission of expanding recreational trails in Aiken County.” The first project completed under this MOU was the GAIT 2.8 mile equestrian/pedestrian Langley Pond Loop Trail which opened November 15th at the Langley Pond Aiken County Park.

In communities that have adopted a bicycle and pedestrian plan, the SCDOT will coordinate their road improvement and construction designs when practicable with the local plans.

Safe Routes to School

South Carolina is the only state in which the State Department of Education owns, operates, and maintains the fleet of school buses that service all South Carolina public schools. This bus service is not required to provide pick-up and drop-off within a 1.5 mile radius of schools. For students living within this 1.5 radius who walk and bike to school with non-existent or inadequate facilities such as sidewalks and bike lanes, getting to school can be unsafe.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a growing movement across the US that brings together parents, schools, and community leaders to encourage students, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school. SRTS activities and resources focus on improving walking and biking conditions around schools while building healthy habits and safety skills.

The South Carolina Department of Transportation created the Safe Routes to School Resource Center in the fall of 2010 to help schools, school districts, and communities throughout South Carolina to build and sustain SRTS programs. Partners of the Resource Center receive technical assistance and program support at no cost. Individualized plans are developed for each participating school. Currently four Aiken County schools participate in the SRTS program: Aiken Middle School, East Aiken School of the Arts, Mossy creek Elementary, and North Aiken Elementary.

Plan Considerations

- Prioritize the construction of sidewalks, bikes lanes, trails, etc. that will create connectivity between and among existing facilities.
- Plan for bike/ped connection between residential, commercial, and industrial developments and redevelopments. For developments where there are no current connection opportunities, include dedication of right of way for installation of facilities to facilitate future connections.
- Plan for facilities that allow for real alternate transportation opportunities, not all solely for recreation.
- Plan for Complete Streets design considerations for all new roadway construction and existing roadway improvements.
- Plan for enhanced bike/ped facilities when designing new roadway construction and existing roadway improvements within 1.5 miles of all schools within the County.
- Limit where practicable the design of dead in streets and cul-de-sacs which not only increases vehicle miles traveled (VMT) but which discourages bicycle and pedestrian travel.

- Revisit parking standards during building and site design which discourage bicycle and pedestrian access, consume valuable space, and contribute to stormwater runoff. Consider maximum parking standards as opposed to minimum parking requirements and include provisions for bicycle parking.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION ISSUES: EMERGENCY EVACUATION & AIKEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

Emergency Evacuation

The aggressive management of evacuating motor vehicle traffic during the threat of, or immediately following, an emergency or disaster incident is critical to the life safety of all state residents and transients. This function must be planned and executed in a coordinated manner that will ensure the most timely and orderly movement of the impacted populace to an area of safety. Evacuations may occur as a result of natural or technological hazards faced by the State and will require planning and coordination within all geographic areas of the Southeast.

Aiken County's emergency responsibility will primarily include providing for transportation infrastructure repair in the event of damaged roads, bridges, runways, etc., in the County, and to provide transportation assets, to include processing all transportation requests from federal, state and local government agencies. Furthermore, the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs)-1 will provide transportation damage assessment information. Hazards that will require traffic management/evacuation and the corresponding geographic areas, which will likely be impacted, include but are not limited to the following:

1. Hurricanes: Heavy traffic may route through Aiken County during coastal evacuations. In addition Aiken County has two named sites listed with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) as designated shelters: South Aiken High School and North Augusta High School. Source: www.scemd.org.

2. Nuclear Power Plants: 10 and 50 mile Emergency Planning Zones from nuclear facilities may result in evacuation of populations in the county, or populations from other counties to Aiken.
3. Hazardous Materials: Populated areas. Incidents countywide.
4. Flooding: Areas vulnerable to inundation from tidal, ravine, and storm induced flash flooding.
5. Dam Failure: Areas downstream from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regulated and other high hazard dams.
6. Earthquakes: Densely populated areas countywide.
7. Weapon of Mass Destruction: Densely populated areas. Incidents countywide.
8. National Security Emergencies: Densely populated areas statewide.
9. Tornados: Countywide
10. Winter Storms: Countywide
11. Fires: Countywide

The Aiken County School District Transportation Office will assist in evacuating the residents of Aiken County in an emergency situation if requested. SCDOT will provide technical assistance, operational guidance, and access to the Intelligent Transportation System Network through the presence of a Senior Traffic Engineer and Senior Maintenance Engineer assigned to the State Emergency Operations Center during all activations involving evacuation/re-entry actions. Aiken County EMD can access this assistance through coordination with SCEMD.

The Aiken County Sheriff's Office will develop and execute measures intended to gather information on traffic flow and highway usage and disseminate the information to the public through electronic files, government and private television/radio networks, and other suitable methods. (*This information was obtained from the Aiken County Emergency Services Department.*)

Aiken Municipal Airport

Aiken Municipal Airport is a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City of Aiken. The airport generates \$1.9 million in direct output, of which \$295,000 is paid to approximately 12 direct full-time jobs. Additionally, more than 12,300 general aviation visitors arrive at the airport each year, generating another \$1.0 million in indirect aviation-related output. Including the multiplier effect, the airport tenants and visitors at Aiken Municipal Airport generate \$5.0 million in total economic output, of which \$1.9 million in payroll is paid to 66 full-time equivalent jobs.

The airport, located in western South Carolina, is in close proximity to Interstate 20 and five miles north of Aiken's central business district. Aiken Municipal Airport has two asphalt runways: Runway 6/24, measuring 5,500 feet long by 100 feet wide; and Runway 18/36, measuring 3,800 feet long by 75 feet wide. Airport activities include flight training, aircraft maintenance, aircraft sales, recreational flying, and various aviation services that support the community. As one of the region's major general aviation airports, Aiken Municipal Airport supports business activities throughout the Central Savannah River area making it an attractive home for several corporate flight departments. *(This information was collected and prepared from a report by the City of Aiken.)*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aiken County should continue to work cooperatively with the local municipalities, neighboring counties, ARTS, SCDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHA), and other organizations to identify, fund, and implement needed road improvements. The County should continue to preserve road capacity by adopting, applying and enforcing policies to manage access and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT's). The County should support and fund projects and programs that promote a diversity of transportation choices. The County should promote land use policies that encourage internal trip capture and promote development whose location and density are suitable to support public transportation and other alternative modes of transportation. The County should require new road projects to minimize their adverse environmental impacts and enhance the county's

aesthetic qualities. The County should support SC ARTS, LSCOG, Aiken BPAC, GAIT, and other planning efforts to provide for non-motorized transportation facilities. The County should include bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the design of roadway improvements and construction by adopting a complete streets policy. Finally, Aiken County should encourage funding projects to purchase “open” land and preserve it from development in furtherance of ongoing efforts, such as the Aiken Land Conservancy and the South Carolina National Heritage.

SECTION 9

PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENT

LEGISLATIVE INTENT

In June of 2007, the South Carolina Priority Investment Act (PIA) was enacted to address additional requirements for integrating capital improvement projects within local government into an overall ten-year comprehensive plan under the 1994 Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act. One of the PIA amendments adds a Priority Investment Element to the list of required elements for local governments' comprehensive plans. The following language specifically addresses the PIA's requirements as follows:

“A priority investment element [is required] that analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools. The recommendation of those projects for public expenditure must be done through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. For the purposes of this item, 'adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies' means those counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over the public project. For the purposes of this item, 'coordination' means written notification by the local planning commission or its staff to adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies of the proposed

projects and the opportunity for adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies to provide comment to the planning commission or its staff concerning the proposed projects. Failure of the planning commission or its staff to identify or notify an adjacent or relevant jurisdiction or agency does not invalidate the local comprehensive plan and does not give rise to a civil cause of action." South Carolina Code of Laws Section 6-29-510 (9).

In order to comply with the PIA's intended requirements, this Element must first prioritize certain public infrastructural and facility based projects within Aiken County that are funded over a five year period. Secondly, the Priority Investment Element must compare and forecast revenues needed for additional capital improvements as specified by other elements in the ten-year Aiken County Comprehensive Plan 2014-2024 (Comprehensive Plan). Finally, this Element must identify potential gaps in funding for priority investment projects and develop strategies to enhance coordinated efforts between local governments in achieving their long term planning objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Planning and Development Department has prepared a list of public infrastructural and facility based projects within Aiken County, the Priority Investment Projects (PIP) list contained in Appendix 2, which have been prioritized for funding under relevant elements of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Department has obtained information from other South Carolina State agencies, Aiken County offices, and local municipalities to assess capital improvement needs that conform to priority investment projects specifically identified by the Community Facilities and Transportation Elements. Additional existing facilities and infrastructure in need of funding for future maintenance, repair, or replacement have also been incorporated into the projected revenue analysis for both the PIP and Comprehensive Plan.

PRIORITY INVESTMENT PROJECTS

After preparing a list of priority investment projects, the project list both incorporates and ranks them in accordance with the criteria established under the PIP. The projects are listed by priority number, department, project name/type, annual costs, total costs and funding source. By prioritizing a list of approved projects that are directed to enhance infrastructural and facility based needs for the PIP, Aiken County is able to use its best efforts to assess existing deficiencies in funding for future planning. The incorporation of a priority investment projects list into the PIP or Comprehensive Plan, however, does not connote de facto approval of these items or their respective ranking. Further analysis, prioritization and review of projects on a case-by-case basis will be required prior to any actual or final approval for funding. Despite that, substantial progress in being made in completing the projects in the PIP.

PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Aiken County has developed a prioritization tool to be used in its Long Range Transportation Planning process. The Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool provides a new process for prioritizing transportation projects in both the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. This tool could provide a framework for developing tools for prioritizing other types of capital improvement projects. The Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool is contained in Appendix 3.

FUNDING GAP **

Based on the total amount of allocated funds (\$125,638,961) identified in Appendix 2 and an average annual projected revenue base [REDACTED], Aiken County will have an estimated funding gap of [REDACTED] between Fiscal Years [REDACTED] through [REDACTED]. According to the [REDACTED] Aiken County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, however, the County's net assets exceeded its liabilities by [REDACTED].

A primary source of revenue for county capital projects are General Obligation Bonds (G.O. Bonds). G.O. Bonds are secured by the County's

projected future property tax revenue stream. The State of South Carolina limits the amount that local governments can borrow through G.O Bonds to 8% of the assessed value of the County's taxable property. As of [REDACTED], Aiken County had [REDACTED] in bonds, notes payable, and capital lease obligations outstanding. In order to issue bonds in excess of the 8% limitation the County would be required to hold a public referendum. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] * Awaiting Winter Storm Pax Figures.

**** Funding gap information will be updated as it becomes available from the Aiken County Finance Department.**

Impact fees are another major revenue source for county capital projects. While Aiken County has enacted impact fees for roads, parks and libraries, revenue from impact fees can only fund the cost the County will incur to provide capital improvements to accommodate new development. Impact fees cannot be used to address existing capital deficiencies. Impact fees also cannot be used to establish a higher level of service for future projects than what is currently being provided.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING STRATEGY AND COORDINATION

Aiken County has taken substantial steps in developing a funding strategy to minimize future financial liabilities within the framework of its Comprehensive Plan. The County continues to implement a Capital Projects Sales and Use Tax Program for road paving, street resurfacing, open space preservation, and park development. In addition, the County has allocated funds for continual improvements to several major water drainage projects, solid waste and recycling facilities, and other public utilities.

The County has also made significant progress in promoting coordinated efforts with surrounding government entities by establishing multi-jurisdictional group projects, such as the Aiken/Edgefield Economic Development Partnership, Savannah River Site Center for Hydrogen Research, Aiken County Public Service Authority, Augusta Regional Transportation Study, and educational/employment programs with the University of South Carolina at Aiken and Aiken Technical College.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aiken County department heads should continue to meet to further refine the Priority Investment Projects. County staff will need to develop a methodology to rank priority investment projects that are required to achieve and maintain desired levels of service and to repair and replace public facilities. The Priority Investment Tool that has been developed for transportation projects could provide the framework for this methodology. County staff will also need to identify additional sources of revenue to fund the refined list of priority investment projects. This methodology should take into account both capital costs and the cost to operate and maintain proposed capital improvements in order to achieve the best use of funds and potential overall cost savings.

When developing a methodology for ranking priority investment projects, the County should consider the relative criteria among various types of public facilities as follows: (1) New public facilities and improvements to existing facilities that eliminate public hazards, (2) The repair, renovation or replacement of obsolete or worn out facilities that are necessary to achieve or maintain existing levels of service, (3) New and expanded facilities that reduce or eliminate existing deficiencies in levels of service, and (4) New and expanded facilities necessary to serve new development and redevelopment projected during the next five years.

Aiken County should continue to foster a coordinated funding strategy to capitalize priority investment projects through additional funding from G.O. Bonds, impact fees, the Capital Projects Sales and Use Tax Program, County service fees where appropriate or feasible, and private, state and federal grants.

Aiken County should further develop and annually update its five-year PIP that plans for needed capital facilities that are within its fiscal capability. As part of the annual budget process, a Capital Improvements Budget (CIB) should list appropriations to fund priority investment projects derived from the ranking methodology.

Finally, Aiken County should continue to coordinate the provision of capital improvements with other relevant agencies and jurisdictions relating to public infrastructural and facility based needs in accordance with applicable laws.

SECTION 10

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The following action agenda is recommended for implementing the Plan.

- (1) Broadcast the Plan,
- (2) Re-adopt the Plan,
- (3) Continue to maintain the Plan,
- (4) Amend the County's Land Management Regulations Ordinance to conform to the objectives of the Plan and comply with the Local Comprehensive Planning Act of 1994, and
- (5) Coordinate the plan with plans of other agencies operating in Aiken County.

(1) Broadcast the Plan.

Broadcast the Plan to gain community support.

Developers, realtors, institutions, and the general public alike are responsible for the many individual decisions affecting future development. They must feel that the Plan offers sound solutions to growth problems. If so, Plan compliance and implementation may be expected.

To secure needed confidence and acceptance by the public, their participation in the planning process is essential. First, public participation can promote public understanding and solicit support of the plan. Second, it can expose the Plan to a broad spectrum of interests whose reaction may make significant improvements in the original.

There are several ways in which to broadcast the Plan for citizen involvement. It may be accomplished through public hearings, announcements, citizen advisory meetings, selected contacts with community leaders, etc. Also, the dissemination of draft copies of the Plan to interested groups and conducting informal discussions have proven to be successful. The Plan should also be placed on Aiken County's internet website in a downloadable format.

(2) Re-adopt the Plan.

The Plan must maintain "official" status to satisfy the requirement Section 6-29-530 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended. Official status means it must be re-adopted by the County Council, upon recommendation of the Planning commission.

With re-adoption of the Plan, any changes or deviations should be preceded by amendment, as in the past. This will mandate Plan compliance on all local development matters, and fully infuse the Plan and the planning process into the zoning and land development process.

(3) Maintain the Plan.

No Plan is truly comprehensive, and no long-range Plan provides more than approximate guidelines to the future. A Plan is an organized selection of what appears at a particular time to be the best means to reach what seems to be desirable goals and objectives. Both the goals and the means of reaching them may change however, and accordingly, there must be continuing assessment of the Plan if it is to retain utility. Also there must be an enlarging scope of planning in response to a growing awareness that socio-economic as well as physical improvements lie within the realm of public planning.

This document represents what now appears to be desirable goals and objectives based on the best knowledge available. As new data become

available, it should be analyzed to see whether revision of the Plan is needed. As new means of implementation are known, the Plan should be reviewed to determine what might be expedited without compromising the Plan. As change evolves, it should be reflected by the Plan.

Only in this way will the Plan retain credibility. In fact, the Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (6-29-510) requires that the “Planning Commission review the comprehensive plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan. The comprehensive plan, including all elements of it, must be updated at least every ten years.” More realistically, it should be an annual, on-going process.

(4) Revise the Land Management Regulations Ordinance in Support of the Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan is or should be the basis for zoning and development regulations. It follows therefore that all regulatory documents be amended and modified once the Plan is updated, to ensure Plan compliance and implementation.

In response to this Plan update, all regulatory documents will be revised accordingly.

(5) Coordinate the Plan with Plans of Other Agencies.

Cooperation and coordination with other decision-making agencies and institutions in the area, especially the county, the school district, and the highway department often may spell the difference between success and failure. Interaction with “outside” agencies active within the community also will help to ensure implementation of the Plan.

Copies of the Plan update should be forwarded to these agencies and institutions for their use and understanding relative to the County’s position regarding the development and redevelopment of its environs.

Appendix 1

Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Strategic/Master Plan

Aiken County PRT Strategic/Master Plan

Final Report and Recommendations

Dr. Bob Brookover, Dr. Bob Barcelona, and Ms. Kate Evans

Clemson University - Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
Management

Acknowledgements and Contact Information

Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management would like to thank Aiken County Council, county administration, PRT staff, and the individuals and groups that represented the public and provided valuable input during this process.

For more information about this report, contact:

Dr. Bob Brookover
263 Lehotsky Hall
Clemson, South Carolina 29634
864-656-2231
bob@clemson.edu

Introduction and Method

Aiken County PRT funded a grant to Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management Department to complete a strategic/master plan. Input sessions were held October 22-24, 2012 with the public, county staff, representatives from municipalities, media, business and industry, and special interest groups. Input sessions were also conducted in Wagener, SC and Jackson, SC on November 5 and November 12, 2012

~~Public sessions were held in Aiken, SC on October 22-24, 2012 with the public, county staff, representatives from municipalities, media, business and industry, and special interest groups. Input sessions were also conducted in Wagener, SC and Jackson, SC on November 5 and November 12, 2012~~

- A brainstorming and mapping exercise aimed at identifying improvements, renovations, repairs, upgrades, or new uses for existing parks, recreation, and tourism amenities and identifying areas for future development of new parks, recreation, and tourism amenities
- A "Headlines" exercise where participants outlined headlines that describe the accomplishments of Aiken County PRT in 5 and 10 years
- A willingness to pay exercise for the maintenance and operation of current facilities and amenities and the development of new facilities and amenities and willingness to support a general obligation bond referendum for the development of new PRT facilities and amenities

Introduction and Method

A total of eight separate focus groups were held to gather community input across two days, and included 44 participants representing the following organizations, agencies, and special interest groups:

- ▣ Churches
- ▣ Education
- ▣ Government
- ▣ Healthcare
- ▣ Media
- ▣ Municipalities
- ▣ Nonprofit Organizations
- ▣ Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Staff

In addition to the eight focus groups, four community input sessions were scheduled and were open to the general public. Three meetings had enough participation to be held. Meetings were held in the following communities:

- ▣ Aiken (n=32)
- ▣ Jackson (n=13)
- ▣ Wagoner (n=25)
- ▣ New Ellenton (meeting did not have enough participants to be held)

Introduction and Method

Members of the general community were also invited to participate via an online version of the needs assessment survey. Online survey data were merged with data collected via iClickers at the four community meetings. A total of 87 community members took part in the iClicker sessions or online survey component of this project, representing all corners of Aiken County, including the city of Aiken, Wagener, Jackson-New Ellenton, Beech Island-Gloverville, and North Augusta-Burnettown. Approximately 65.3% of community input participants reported that they use Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism facilities, programs, and/or resources at least once per month. Demographic profiles of community input participants are included Table 1 on the next page.

Introduction and Method

Table 1 - Demographic Profiles of Community Input Participants

<u>Demographic</u>	<u>Data</u>
Age	18-25 = 1.3% 26-34 = 8.0% 35-45 = 14.7% 46-55 = 20.0% 56-over = 56.0%
Sex	Female = 49.3% Male = 50.7%
Race/Ethnicity	Black or African American = 8.0% Hispanic or Latino = 1.3% Asian/Pacific Islander/Native American = 4.0% White = 84.0% Other = 2.7%
At least 1 child under 18	Child/ren under 6 years old = 9.7% Child/ren between 6-12 years old = 9.5% Child/ren between 13-18 years old = 12.1%

Introduction and Method

Two faculty members and a PhD student from Clemson University made up the project team. During input sessions all three team members took notes. Researchers used and compared their notes, the notes of participants, and the quantitative data from the iClicker sessions to outline the major themes and ideas that emerged from this process.

Observations

- ▣ Strengths
 - ▣ Langley Pond Park
 - ▣ cities of Aiken and North Augusta and non-profits have strong programs and facilities
 - ▣ availability of special events in the county
- ▣ Opportunities
 - ▣ potential at Boyd Pond Park
 - ▣ cities of Aiken and North Augusta and non-profits have strong programs and facilities

Observations

- Weaknesses
 - facilities and programs operated by county are not of particularly good quality and many are in bad shape
 - lack of brand identity, poorly marketed/executed brand
 - satisfaction with current situation is low
- Threats
 - cities of Aiken and North Augusta and non-profits have strong programs and facilities
 - funding level for PRT is inadequate – an approximate 50% increase in funding would take county out of sole possession of last place and put it in a tie for last place

Observations

Aiken County PRT should either focus on quality - focus resources on doing a few things really well - or consider divesting of PRT facilities and services. York County, for example, made this decision and relies on the municipalities to provide recreation services. With the City of Aiken and City of North Augusta providing very high quality programs, a total divestment is a viable strategy. Aiken County took on a large number of facilities during the mid-1980's and early 1990's that were inherited from municipalities and companies who were unable to maintain those facilities. While great efforts were made to upgrade and continue to operate those facilities while providing programming and other services, it has become apparent that operating such a large number of facilities (very few of which are attractive or located where people are likely to use them) is inefficient and unsustainable with current budget levels (budget comparisons and recommendations are included later in the plan). If a complete divestment is not the course of action chosen, the following recommendations are intended to focus resources on providing a small number of high quality facilities and programs that compliment what is currently offered by the municipalities, managing some of the unique resources available, and providing basic services and facilities to the rural areas of the county.

Observations

This observation is underscored by the fact that only 12.2% of community input session participants reported being satisfied or very satisfied with Aiken County PRT facilities, programs, and services. While 40.5% were indifferent, almost half (47.3%) reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Community input participants generally felt that a variety of parks, recreation, and tourism resources were largely important to themselves and their families, yet there were significant importance-satisfaction gaps for five categories of recreation amenities – parks and open space; recreation programs; athletic fields/sports complexes; greenways and trails; and indoor recreation facilities. Table 2 shows the percentage gap between importance and satisfaction with these Aiken County PRT amenities.

Importance-Satisfaction Gaps

Table 2

Amenity	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Parks and Open Space	98.5%	35.6%	-62.9%
Recreation Programs	93.0%	19.5%	-73.5%
Athletic Fields/Sports Complexes	93.1%	23.3%	-69.8%
Greenways, Trails, Complete Streets	86.8%	16.5%	-70.3%
Indoor Recreation Facilities	82.2%	10.9%	-71.3%

Funding Comparison

Agency	Per capita funding
City of Aiken	\$150.00
City of North Augusta	\$152.38
Average of 10 SC Municipalities*	\$123.20
Greenville County	\$36.30
Spartanburg County	\$20.23
Horry County	\$19.45
Florence County	\$12.90
Aiken County	\$8.61

*10 SC Municipalities include Aiken, North Augusta, Orangeburg, Rock Hill, Clemson, Goose Creek, Imo-Chapin, Greer, Greenville, Cheraw

Funding Recommendations

Aiken County PRT is significantly underfunded as compared to other county recreation agencies in South Carolina.

Even considering the current condition of facilities and services, focus group participants indicated a willingness of **\$167.20** per capita/per year to maintain the status quo and **\$418.08** per capita/per year for improved facilities and services.

It is recommended that Aiken County commit to increasing the PRT budget to **\$12.00** per capita or a total of **\$1,311,084** per year based on a population of 109,257 (county population minus City of Aiken and City of North Augusta). This is the budget level necessary to operate and maintain the 5 remaining renovated, expanded, and upgraded parks/facilities outlined in the plan, provides “headroom” to allow for contingencies and begins to fund additional programs, facilities, and services identified by residents in this process.

Funding Recommendations

It was noted by the consultants that Aiken County has not implemented the 2% hospitality tax. Hospitality tax has been used extensively to fund PRT projects throughout the state and should be studied as a viable future option to improve PRT funding levels. The consultants understand the county's use of the Capital Projects Sales tax. However, hospitality tax can create significant revenues (Greenville County's \$75 million TRAC Plan has been funded by hospitality taxes) while having a minimal impact on taxpayers. For example, an individual or family who spends \$100 a month on prepared food and beverage would only see an increase of \$2 per month in taxes.

Options

- ▣ Partial divestment, increase funding, create a recreation cooperative with City of Aiken and/or North Augusta, and county continues to operate a scaled back menu of high quality facilities and services
- ▣ Partial divestment and contract with City of Aiken and/or North Augusta to operate and maintain remaining facilities and services
- ▣ Total divestment of PRT facilities and services - not an attractive option
- ▣ Maintain status quo - not an attractive option

Partial Divestment & Create Recreation Cooperative

- Aiken County contracts with cities of Aiken and North Augusta to allow county residents to participate in city programs without being charged differential fee
- Aiken County continues to operate (including renovations and improvements to) a scaled back menu of high quality programs and facilities – Langley, Boyd, Roy Warner, and Harrison-Caver Parks, the Indoor Recreation Center plus targeted programming for youth and seniors in outlying areas of the county
- Conduct strategic planning exercise (Clemson University will complete this task as part of the current project for no additional charge) to determine vision, mission, and goals for department, recommend organizational structure, etc.
- Implement recommendations as deemed appropriate and in support of the strategic plan

Partial Divestment & Contract with Cities to Operate and Maintain Facilities and Services

- Aiken County contracts with cities of Aiken and North Augusta to allow county residents to participate in city programs without being charged differential fee
- Aiken County contracts with the City of Aiken and/or the City of North Augusta to operate and maintain a scaled back menu of high quality programs and facilities – Langley Pond, Boyd Pond, Roy Warner, and Harrison Caver Parks, the Indoor Recreation Center, plus targeted programming for youth and seniors in outlying areas of the county
- Aiken County would be responsible for initial and future capital improvements to remaining facilities

Recommendations

If Aiken County chooses to continue operating PRT facilities and programs, the following recommendations should be considered:

Create Strategic Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

Take a back to the basics approach starting with creating a coherent vision and mission and strategic goals and objectives for the Aiken County PRT Department. Clemson University is willing to facilitate this recommendation as part of the current project with no additional fee.

Recommendations

Rebrand and aggressively market PRT

▣ Very few people we spoke with could name any county-owned or operated facilities or programs. In fact, when asked to name Aiken County PRT facilities and programs, the most common answers included Citizen's Park, Hitchcock Woods, and Riverview Park – none of which are owned or operated by Aiken County PRT. Just 21.9% of community input session participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were “well aware” of the programs, facilities, and services offered by Aiken County PRT, whereas 54.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were well aware of what Aiken County had to offer its residents.

Recommendations

Rebrand and aggressively market PRT (continued)

- Additionally, focus group participants noted that the current logo/brand identity of a smiley face with the phrase “Your Happy Places” is inappropriate given the current quality of most of the places operated by PRT, and feedback received indicated that it is viewed as somewhat of a joke.
- We recommend that Aiken County hire a consulting firm to assist with developing a coherent new brand identity for Aiken County PRT. This brand identity should be two pronged and have components aimed at both county residents and visitors/tourists. Arnett-Muldrow & Associates in Greenville specializes in creating brand and marketing strategies for municipalities, counties, CVB's, and non-profits.

Recommendations

Rebrand and aggressively market PRT (continued)

- Focus group participants consistently suggested that Aiken County should create and manage a centralized, one-stop shop website that aggregates all recreation and tourism related programs, events, and services available in the county. This recommendation was underscored by the 56.9% of community input session participants who stated that they preferred receiving information about Aiken County PRT in an electronic format. In addition to the development of a one-stop shop website, community input participants stated that they prefer to receive information via e-mail (42.9%), social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (21.4%), and through text messaging and mobile devices (10.0%).
- It should be noted that more than 4 in 10 (43.1%) community input respondents stated that they prefer high quality print materials with information about Aiken County PRT amenities. Suggestions included working with local newspapers and print media (37.7%), community newsletters (23.2%), utility bill inserts (10.1%), and fliers/brochures delivered through schools (5.8%).

Recommendations

Facilities

Based on feedback from focus group participants, we recommend that Aiken County sell-off, repurpose, or turn all existing parks and facilities over to municipalities, non-profits, or other organizations with the exception of Langley Pond, Boyd Pond, Roy Warner, and Harrison-Caver Parks and the Indoor Recreation Center. Focus group participants noted that almost all of the properties managed by Aiken County PRT suffer from deferred maintenance, and many of the local neighborhood parks were unsafe, unappealing, or unknown. Whereas 98.0% of community input participants felt that parks and open space were important, only 35.6% were satisfied with existing Aiken County parks and open space. In addition, when asked to imagine what Aiken County PRT should look like in the future (the "What If" exercise), one of the five overarching themes included, "enhancing and maintaining existing facilities to include eliminating and/or re-purposing some parks."

Recommendations

Facilities (continued)

As mentioned above, the exceptions to this include the potential that exists at Langley Pond, Boyd Pond, Roy Warner, and Harrison-Caver Parks, and the Indoor Recreation Facility. All five of these could be signature facilities for Aiken County PRT, and all were mentioned as assets by focus group and community input session participants. We recommend that Aiken County PRT should continue to invest in, develop, and operate Langley Pond and Boyd Pond as the county's two flagship, destination/regional parks, and repurpose/re-develop Roy Warner Park and Harrison-Caver Park to serve as a regional parks. Based on the input of focus group and community input participants, interviews with Aiken County PRT staff, and site visits by the evaluation team, we recommend the following specific improvements to the five properties.

Recommendations

Facilities (continued)

Langley Pond:

- ▣ Develop better signage on the highway leading users to the park.
- ▣ Create a formal entrance to the park, as the current entrance is nondescript.
- ▣ Upgrade the boat launch, parking area, beach, and rowing docks.
- ▣ Add an additional picnic shelter.
- ▣ Work with the owner of the Food Lion to add landscaping to screen the grocery store adjacent to the property.
- ▣ Explore the possibility of creating a baseball/softball facility on the site and including multipurpose field space for other traditional sports.
- ▣ Create a site-specific master plan and preliminary design work for expanding the park to include walking trails, expanded picnic shelters, improved playscape, and an events center and cabin-type lodging options.
- ▣ Provide on-site staff at Langley Pond Park.

Recommendations

Facilities (continued)

Boyd Pond:

- ▣ Develop better signage on roads leading users to the park.
- ▣ Create a formal entrance to the park.
- ▣ On the right side of the road (the side with the current office, soccer field, and planned disc golf course), continue with current plans and convert the existing soccer field to a multi-purpose field space.
- ▣ On the left side of the road - develop as nature/environment/outdoor education center to include an expanded nature trail, primitive camping, picnic shelters, restroom facilities, and a small education/event center; explore the possibility of installing a group initiatives and high-ropes course. This portion of the park could cater to the scouting community who in turn, could be partners in assisting with making improvements to the park.
- ▣ Convert existing softball fields to create a multipurpose field space, picnic shelter, improved and expanded trails, and a playscape structure. These amenities should be included to make Boyd Pond the regional park to service the Jackson/New Ellenton area.
- ▣ Continue to provide on-site staff at Boyd Pond Park.

Recommendations

Facilities (continued)

▣ Roy Warner Park

- ▣ Repurpose/re-develop Roy Warner Park to serve as a regional park for the Wagener area
- ▣ Roy Warner Park should include multipurpose field space, a picnic shelter, a playscape structure, a walking/jogging trail, and restrooms
- ▣ Provide on-site staff at Warner Park.

Recommendations

- ▣ Harrison-Caver Park
 - ▣ Replace light poles and fixtures for all ball field lights; replace wiring and breaker boxes as needed.
 - ▣ Finish the development of the soccer field, to include fill/grading, fencing, lights, and amenities such as bleachers.
 - ▣ Resurface the basketball court and improve the lighting.
 - ▣ Maintain a reliable concessions operation, whether it is with an outside vendor or operated by County staff.
 - ▣ Improve ball fields with leveling of infields and outfields.

Recommendations

Facilities (continued)

Additional Recommendation Regarding the Aiken County Rec Center

□ Keeping the Rec Center should be carefully studied. At this point, the recommendation of the consultants is to include this facility on the “cut” list. While there is some history associated with the Rec Center, it is in a significant state of disrepair and like many of the Aiken County PRT facilities, suffers from deferred maintenance, particularly on the outside. The indoor facility has been renovated and the interior is functional. However, the restrooms and kitchen could still use some attention for the facility to be an attractive venue for meetings, rentals, and special events. If the decision is made to keep the Rec Center, the outdoor facilities (pool, basketball courts, etc.) should be demolished and a new entrance, landscaping, a splash pad, and renovations to the exterior of the building and restrooms should be completed.

Recommendations

Facilities (continued)

Data related to indoor recreation facilities

Of the five major park and recreation amenities rated by community input session participants, “indoor recreation facilities” were seen as the least important, and just 1 in 10 (10.9%) reported that they were satisfied with existing indoor facilities. When participants were given a scenario that asked them to allocate \$100 of funding to each of the five park and recreation amenities, only 12.5% prioritized indoor recreation facilities for funding. However, community input session participants identified the development of an indoor multipurpose recreation facility as a future priority for Aiken County PRT in the “What If” exercise. Given these conflicting findings, and considering that a new YMCA facility has recently been developed to serve the area, careful deliberation should be taken in making a decision on renovating or eliminating the current Rec Center.

Recommendations

Greenways, Trails, and Connectivity

Greenways, trails, complete streets and connectivity were chosen by 37.5% of community input participants for funding when asked how they would allocate \$100 among five park and recreation amenities in Aiken County. In addition, there was a gap of -70.3% between the importance community input participants placed on greenways, trails and complete streets (86.8%) and resident satisfaction with these amenities in Aiken County (16.5%). “Linkable multi-modal trails” was one of the five priorities that residents identified during the “What If” exercise. Because of this, we recommend that the development of greenways, trails, complete streets, and connectivity should be a priority for Aiken County.

Recommendations

Greenways, Trails, and Connectivity (continued)

- ▣ Focus group participants and PRT staff discussed the recent trails study that was completed by Greenways, Inc. Since this study is still new and applicable, and Aiken County invested time and resources in its development, it serves as a worthy blueprint and plan for future trails development and maintenance.
- ▣ While there are trails in Aiken County that are open to the public, many trails (particularly equestrian trails) are located on private property. Focus group and community input participants consistently expressed a desire for increased access to trails, and better connections among different trail systems. In addition to equestrian trails, focus group participants indicated a desire for trail projects similar to the Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County.

Recommendations

Tourism

- Work to partner with the City of Aiken to consolidate and create efficiency in the area of tourism.
- Focus group participants spoke often that a major focus for Aiken County PRT should be the “T” – serving as the central hub for promoting and facilitating tourism opportunities in the County. One recommendation that emerged was the development of an online portal system to market these opportunities in Aiken County, and to consolidate information from a variety of community partners to serve as a “one stop shop” for tourism opportunities in the area.

Recommendations

Tourism (continued)

- At the present time, the city, county, and Chamber of Commerce maintain and operate separate separate visitor's centers within the City of Aiken. Focus group participants talked about their confusion with this system. This situation is inefficient, creates confusion for visitors, and is unsustainable.
- Therefore, we recommend closing the Aiken County Visitor's Center and reinvesting those operating funds into partnering with the City of Aiken and other tourism partners to create a web-based tourism portal that can serve as the "one stop shop" mentioned above.

Recommendations

Programs and Services

▣ The largest gap between the importance residents placed on park and recreation amenities and their satisfaction with Aiken County PRT's performance, was in recreation programs, where the importance-satisfaction gap was -73.5%. Focus group participants and community input participants were largely unsatisfied with the quality and quantity of the recreation program offerings. However, when asked about future priorities for funding, developing and running new recreation programs by Aiken County PRT was not one of the five emergent themes during the "What If" session. In fact, only 12.5% of community input participants chose to allocate their \$100 to the development of recreation programs.

Recommendations

Programs and Services (continued)

■ One of the assets of Aiken County is the presence of excellent municipal parks and recreation departments in the cities of Aiken and North Augusta. We believe that Aiken County should consider creating a recreation cooperative or contract with one or both of these cities to provide increased access to recreation programs for Aiken County residents who do not live in either city. The cities and county would continue to provide parks and programs within their current systems that focus on serving the needs of the immediate population in an area. However, the cities and county would work together to build new facilities that focus on specialty areas that would be available to all citizens. For example, within the current system, Aiken County would provide Langley Pond as the water sports park, North Augusta would have the premiere basketball facility, and the City of Aiken provides a large senior center. The main point is that the entities can and should begin working together to provide future facilities and programs that compliment each other.

Recommendations

Programs and Services (continued)

- At a minimum, Aiken County should enter into agreements with the City of Aiken and City of North Augusta to allow county residents to participate in programs without charging a differential/premium fee. All areas of the County are not necessarily best served by the Cities of Aiken and North Augusta. Recognizing this, Aiken County should focus on providing recreation programs and services to core constituencies such as youth and senior age groups in rural, underserved areas of the county. The programming focus should be to fill in the gaps that are unavailable or inaccessible to County residents, and providing programs to those residents who lack the means to travel to Aiken or North Augusta. New programs should only be developed following an extensive needs assessment, and after studying the potential impacts and outcomes.
- Another alternative would be to contract with one or both of the municipalities to operate all remaining programs and facilities for Aiken County including Langley Pond, Boyd Pond and Roy Warner Parks.

Recommendations

Programs and Services (continued)

Needs assessment data from the community input sessions identified the following recreation program areas as needs for Aiken County residents. At least half of the community input session participants stated that the following recreation program areas were either “available but inadequate” or “important but not available”:

- ▣ Fitness Programs (72.6%)
- ▣ Aquatics Programs (69.3%)
- ▣ Concerts (67.2%)
- ▣ Nature or Environmental Education Programs (66.6%)
- ▣ Recreation Programs for Adults (61.3%)
- ▣ Recreation Programs for People with Disabilities (61.2%)
- ▣ Sports Instruction Programs
- ▣ Outdoor Adventure Activities (60.3%)
- ▣ Cycling Programs and Opportunities (60.0%)
- ▣ Adult Sport Programs (59.7%)
- ▣ Youth Sport Programs (59.4%)
- ▣ Informal Sports or Open Gyms (59.4%)
- ▣ Youth/Teen Programs (56.0%)
- ▣ Senior/Older Adult Programs (54.7%)
- ▣ Arts and Cultural Programs (52.0%)
- ▣ Afterschool Activities (50.0%)

Recommendations

Equestrian

Following the focus group and community input sessions, it was apparent that Aiken County has a strong and well-deserved reputation as “horse country.” This is a pivotal aspect of the Aiken County brand identity for both residents and visitors alike. However, while there are many equestrian activities for residents who own horses, feedback received from focus group participants highlighted several issues:

- ▣ The Aiken area is known as horse country, yet there are very limited or no opportunities for visitors or residents who do not own horses to ride.
- ▣ While there are a multitude of equestrian events, people do not necessarily understand what they are seeing when attending events, and many focus group and community input participants indicated they do not feel welcome at certain events.

Recommendations

Equestrian (continued)

- ▣ It was expressed that the different disciplines within the equestrian community do not necessarily get along very well, and that collaboration and communication between groups is often lacking.
- ▣ Trail riding, and the trail riding community, appears to be the most welcoming, open, and most likely avenue to explore for future development. This recommendation also fits in with the recommendation to work on further development and creating connections among trail systems that are open to the public in Aiken County.
- ▣ Aiken County should consider creating or providing incentives for private businesses to provide services to residents and visitors wishing to participate in equestrian activities - particularly trail riding.
- ▣ Aiken County PRT should work closely with existing equestrian-related events and organizers to better market these opportunities, provide a welcoming environment for visitors, and provide interpretation for these activities.

The consultants are not necessarily recommending that this be the sole responsibility of the county. However, it is definitely an area that should be addressed through a partnership of all stakeholders – both public and private.

Recommendations

Special Events

- Aiken County PRT has a long and successful history in developing, promoting, and delivering special events that attract out of town visitors. The events at Langley Pond, including the annual regatta, and the Starlight Cinema (“movies in the park”) were mentioned as success stories by focus group and community input participants. These are ideal opportunities to invest in, because they provide recreation opportunities for residents and out of town visitors alike.
- Aiken County PRT should continue to grow special events like the regattas and other activities at Langley Pond that are geared towards attracting tourists to the area. Further investment and development of the facilities at Langley Pond will help to better facilitate the staging of these events, and will provide a showcase recreation facility for visitors to Aiken County. Community input participants identified “Concerts” as a needed programming area. An upgraded Langley Pond facility could be an ideal place for staging a community-wide concert series that has the potential to attract visitors.

Recommendations

Special Events (continued)

▣ In addition, Aiken County PRT should create events at Boyd Pond geared towards engaging the public in the planning process for renovating and improving the park. Boyd Pond is an ideal setting for nature and environmental activities. Consideration should be given to creating nature or environmental education programs and events at Boyd Pond, given that two thirds (66.6%) of community input session participants identified these types of programs as a need for Aiken County.

Appendix 2

Aiken County Priority Investment Projects (PIP)

PROJECTS IN PRIORITY ORDER/FUNDING SOURCES

Priority	Department	ProjectName	Type Project	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	TotalCost	Funding
1	Detention Cntr	Dim Cntr Gate Relocation	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$13,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,500	Detention Cntr
1	Library	LbrStairwell	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	General Fund
1	PW/E	Landfill Gas Flare/Recovery Sys	Infrastructure	\$30,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$230,000	SW Fund
	TOTAL PRIORITY 1			\$53,500	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$253,500	
2	Alken & North Augusta	Dispatch Consoles	Equipment	\$160,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$160,000	911 Fund
2	P & D	911 Conversion	Computer or Technology	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	911 Fund
	Subtotal 911 Fund			\$235,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$285,000	
2	Detention Cntr	Dim Cntr Video	Equipment	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	Detention Cntr
2	EMS	Council Bldg EOC Imp	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$10,000	General Fund
2	EMS	Defibrillator	Equipment	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$210,000	General Fund
2	EMS	Hazmat Garage	New Construction	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	General Fund
2	IT	EMS Mobile Call Entry	Computer or Technology	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$100,000	General Fund
2	IT	Fault Tolerance	Equipment	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$150,000	General Fund
2	IT	IT Storage Facility Climate	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$35,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,000	General Fund
2	IT	Victim Svcs Software	Computer or Technology	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	General Fund
2	Library	Library Book Security Aiken	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$12,500	\$0	\$0	\$12,500	General Fund
2	Library	Library Book Security NA	Equipment	\$12,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,500	General Fund
2	P & D	Telephone System Planning &	Equipment	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Bldr Annex Demolition	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$125,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Boat for Pond	Equipment	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Gloverville Pk Play Area	Equipment	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Harrison-Caver Bball Court	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Harrison-Caver Conc Bldg	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$25,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,800	General Fund
2	PRT	Park Fencing	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$40,000	General Fund
2	PRT	PRT Rplcmnt Mowers	Equipment	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$75,000	General Fund
2	PRT	PRT Tractor	Replacement Equipment	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$60,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Recreation Cntr Renovation	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$0	\$33,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$33,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Roy Warner Pk Ling	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$0	\$32,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$32,000	General Fund
2	PRT	Saider Web Pk Play Area	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	General Fund
2	PW/E	Fire Escape	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$35,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,000	General Fund
2	PW/E	HVAC Replacement	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$135,900	\$135,900	\$135,900	\$135,900	\$135,900	\$679,500	General Fund
2	PW/E	Kennel Expansion	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	General Fund
2	PW/E	Painting	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	General Fund
2	PW/E	Parking Lot Rerfng	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$20,016	\$20,016	\$20,016	\$20,016	\$20,016	\$100,080	General Fund
2	PW/E	Restripe Parking lots	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	General Fund
2	PW/E	Roof Replacement	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$173,928	\$173,928	\$173,928	\$173,928	\$173,928	\$869,640	General Fund
2	Sheriff's Office	Sheriff Office Gate	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,000	General Fund
	Subtotal General Fund			\$1,064,144	\$742,844	\$510,344	\$497,844	\$572,844	\$3,378,020	
2	Detention Cntr	Detention Center Expansion	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	\$2,050,000	\$500,000	\$3,000,000	GO Bonds
2	EMS	EMS Detention Cntr EOC	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$470,490	\$0	\$0	\$470,490	GO Bonds
2	EMS	New Ellenton EMS Stn	New Construction	\$278,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$278,000	GO Bonds
2	PRT	Pool Replacement	New Construction	\$600,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$600,000	GO Bonds

PROJECTS IN PRIORITY ORDER/FUNDING SOURCES

Priority	Department	ProjectName	Type Project	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	TotalCost	Funding
2/PRT		Roy Warner Pk Prking	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$81,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$81,000	GO Bonds
2/PW/E		Shop Expansion	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$56,000	\$504,000	\$0	\$0	\$660,000	GO Bonds
2/Sage Mill		Sage Mill Wtr Line	Infrastructure	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,500,000	GO Bonds
		Subtotal GO Bonds		\$2,611,004	\$1,806,000	\$2,426,496	\$2,082,007	\$502,008	\$9,389,490	
2/IT		Computer Mobile Dvcs	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	Grants
2/PRT		Ernest Weaver Pk Basketball	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	Grants
2/PRT		Recreation Cntr Play Area	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	Grants
2/PRT		Weaver Pk Play Area	Equipment	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	Grants
2/Sage Mill		Sage Mill Road	Road Const	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	Grants
2/Sheriff's Office		Body Armor Repl	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$65,000	\$65,000	Grants
		Subtotal Grants		\$40,000	\$200,000	\$70,000	\$0	\$65,000	\$375,000	
2/PW/E		Road Resurfacing	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$674,400	\$674,400	\$674,400	\$674,400	\$674,400	\$3,372,000	RM Fund
2/PW/E		Baler	Equipment	\$148,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$148,000	SW Fund
2/PW/E		Cleanwater Dropoff Cntr	New Construction	\$0	\$21,000	\$137,000	\$0	\$0	\$158,000	SW Fund
2/PW/E		Electric Ln Rlcm Barden	Infrastructure	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	SW Fund
2/PW/E		Hshld Hzdrous Waste Facility	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$38,176	\$254,566	\$292,762	SW Fund
2/PW/E		Land Blvdr Dropoff Cntr	Infrastructure	\$20,000	\$69,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$89,000	SW Fund
2/PW/E		Langley Expansion	Infrastructure	\$110,640	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$110,640	SW Fund
2/PW/E		Silver Bluff Drop-off Center	New Construction	\$0	\$21,000	\$0	\$142,000	\$0	\$163,000	SW Fund
2/PW/E		Water Line-Lngly Dropoff	Infrastructure	\$16,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,500	SW Fund
		Subtotal SW Fund		\$300,140	\$111,000	\$137,000	\$180,176	\$254,566	\$982,902	
		TOTAL PRIORITY 2		\$5,014,688	\$3,586,249	\$3,818,240	\$3,404,427	\$2,068,838	\$17,892,412	
3/Registration/Elections		Voicing Equipment	Equipment	\$1,555,700	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,555,700	50 % Grants
3/Sheriff's Office		911 System upgrade	Equipment	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$220,000	911 Fund
3/IT		Video Conf Det Cntr	Computer or Technology	\$10,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	Detention Cntr
3/IT		Video Conferencing Mag	Computer or Technology	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	Detention Cntr
3/IT		Video Conferencing Sher	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	Detention Cntr
		Subtotal Detention Cntr Fund		\$20,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	
3/IT		Web software	Computer or Technology	\$50,000	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000	\$100,000	General Fund
3/IT		Computer Imaging	Computer or Technology	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$400,000	General Fund
3/IT		Computer Imaging	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$65,000	General Fund
3/IT		GIS	Computer or Technology	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$100,000	General Fund
3/IT		IT Storage Facility Bay Door	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	General Fund
3/IT		Network gear replacement	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$55,000	\$15,000	\$60,000	\$20,000	\$150,000	General Fund
3/IT		PC Replacement	Equipment	\$0	\$240,000	\$240,000	\$240,000	\$240,000	\$960,000	General Fund
3/IT		Permits Software	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	General Fund
3/IT		RMC Software	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	General Fund
3/IT		Server replacement	Computer or Technology	\$190,000	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$170,000	\$470,000	General Fund
3/IT		Tax Office Software	Computer or Technology	\$400,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$500,000	General Fund
3/IT		WAN Upgrade	Computer or Technology	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$60,000	General Fund
3/IT		WAN Upgrade	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$30,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$102,000	General Fund
3/P & D		ARC/INFO	Computer or Technology	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	General Fund
3/P & D		Scanner/Plotter Combo	Equipment	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	General Fund

PROJECTS IN PRIORITY ORDER/FUNDING SOURCES

Priority	Department	ProjectName	Type Project	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	TotalCost	Funding
3P & D		TOPO/LIDAR	Computer or Technology	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	General Fund
3PRT		Gloversville Pk	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	General Fund
3PW/E		Brick Repair Offc Cplx	Repair	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	General Fund
3PW/E		Water Sys Upgrd	Repair	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	General Fund
3SRRC		SRRC Suite Upgrade	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$22,000	General Fund
	Subtotal General Fund			\$824,004	\$722,006	\$654,008	\$611,007	\$561,008	\$3,362,000	
3IT		Computer Mobile Dvcs	Equipment	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$25,000	\$300,000	GO Bonds
3IT		Computer Mobile Dvcs	Equipment	\$0	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$24,000	GO Bonds
3IT		Computer Mobile Dvcs P&D	Equipment	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$44,000	GO Bonds
3IT		Computer Mobile Dvcs TA	Equipment	\$54,000	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	\$128,000	GO Bonds
3IT		GIS (GPS)	Equipment	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$120,000	GO Bonds
3IT		Vehicle Locator EMS	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	GO Bonds
3IT		Vehicle Locator Sh	Equipment	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$150,000	GO Bonds
3IT		Library Storage	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	GO Bonds
3PRT		Herb Marshall Pk Pkng	New Construction	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	GO Bonds
3PRT		PRT Maint Facility	New Construction	\$80,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	GO Bonds
3PRT		Recreation Cntr Parking	Road Const	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	GO Bonds
3PRT		Barden Recycling Cntr Bldg Exp	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$109,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$109,000	GO Bonds
3PW/E		Drop-off Imp	Infrastructure	\$120,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$120,000	GO Bonds
	Subtotal GO Bonds			\$362,000	\$441,000	\$269,000	\$149,000	\$119,000	\$1,330,000	
3PRT		Harrison-Gaver Pkng	Infrastructure	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	Grants
3PRT		Johnny Wood Pk Seating	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$17,000	\$0	\$0	\$17,000	Grants
3PRT		Thomas Pk Upgrade	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$23,000	\$0	\$0	\$23,000	Grants
	Subtotal Grants			\$0	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$90,000	
3PW/E		Rd Maint Shop Imp	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$23,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23,600	RM Fund
3		Judicial Center Addition	New Construction	\$0	\$2,500,000	\$12,250,000	\$12,250,000	\$1,000,000	\$28,000,000	Sales Tax
3EMS		South Aiken EMS Subsln	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$287,360	\$0	\$0	\$287,360	Sales Tax
3	General Government	New Office Complex	New Construction	\$0	\$1,250,000	\$7,964,000	\$7,964,000	\$168,000	\$17,346,000	Sales Tax
3Library		Nancy Carson Libr Add	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,250,000	Sales Tax
3Library		New Ellenton Library	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$410,000	\$0	\$0	\$410,000	Sales Tax
3Library		Wagener Library Add	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$250,000	Sales Tax
3PRT		Roy Warner Pk Fields	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$45,000	\$0	\$45,000	Sales Tax
3PW/E		Attnl Drainage	Drainage	\$0	\$50,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$550,000	Sales Tax
3PW/E		Hunters Gln Drnge	Drainage	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	Sales Tax
3PW/E		Road Construction	Road Const	\$4,045,600	\$4,045,600	\$4,045,600	\$4,045,600	\$4,045,600	\$20,228,000	Sales Tax
3PW/E		Vanderbuilt Rd. Drng	Drainage	\$0	\$9,000	\$51,000	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	Sales Tax
	Subtotal Sales Tax			\$4,095,600	\$7,854,600	\$25,507,960	\$25,554,600	\$5,463,600	\$68,476,360	
3PW/E		Barden Area 3 Excav	Infrastructure	\$248,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$248,000	SW Fund
3PW/E		Barden Landfill Entr Rd	Road Const	\$54,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$54,000	SW Fund
3PW/E		Barden Landfill Trck Pkng	Road Const	\$0	\$27,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$27,000	SW Fund
3PW/E		Pave Couchton Dropoff Cntr	Road Const	\$16,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,800	SW Fund
3PW/E		Pave Monetta Drop-off Cntr	Road Const	\$16,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,800	SW Fund
3PW/E		Pave New Holland Drop-off Cntr	Road Const	\$16,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,800	SW Fund
3PW/E		Pave Perry Drop-off Cntr	Road Const	\$16,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,800	SW Fund
3PW/E		Pave Windsor Drop-off Cntr	Road Const	\$16,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,800	SW Fund
3PW/E		Recycling Facility Rd Pving	Road Const	\$9,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,000	SW Fund

PROJECTS IN PRIORITY ORDER/FUNDING SOURCES

Priority	Department	ProjectName	Type Project	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	TotalCost	Funding
3	PW/E	Recycling Process Cntr Pllng	Road Const	\$0	\$30,664	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,664	SW Fund
3	PW/E	Recycling Sorting Sys	Equipment	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	SW Fund
3	PW/E	Yrd Waste Facility	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$530,000	\$0	\$530,000	SW Fund
		Subtotal SW Fund		\$397,004	\$159,669	\$2,006	\$532,007	\$2,008	\$1,082,664	
		TOTAL PRIORITY 3		\$7,354,308	\$9,385,874	\$26,487,972	\$26,846,614	\$6,145,616	\$76,180,324	
4	IT	Video Conf Jud Cntr	Computer or Technology	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	Detention Cntr
4	IT	Credit Card Software	Computer or Technology	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$40,000	General Fund
4	IT	Probate Ct Software	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	General Fund
4	IT	Video Conferencing Complex	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	General Fund
4	Museum	Banksia Fence Repairs	Repair	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	General Fund
4	Probate	Records Strge/Probate	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$73,683	\$0	\$0	\$73,683	General Fund
4	PRT	Blvd Dixie Youth Play Area	Scheduled Maintenance/Replacement	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	General Fund
4	PRT	Gloverville Pk Plcnc Shlr	New Construction	\$0	\$19,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$19,500	General Fund
4	PRT	Roy Warner Play Area	Equipment	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	General Fund
4	PW/E	Jud Cntr Security	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	General Fund
4	PW/E	Sign Shop	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	General Fund
4	PW/E	Toole Circle Paving	Road Const	\$0	\$360,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$360,000	General Fund
4	Sheriff's Office	Gun Replacements	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$45,000	\$0	\$45,000	General Fund
		Subtotal General Fund		\$25,000	\$494,500	\$178,683	\$65,000	\$0	\$763,183	
4	EMS	EMS Detention Cntr	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$449,885	\$0	\$0	\$449,885	GO Bonds
4	IT	Computer Imaging	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$275,000	GO Bonds
4	IT	Computer Mobile Dvcs Anim	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000	GO Bonds
4	IT	Computer Mobile Dvcs Misc	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$50,000	GO Bonds
4	IT	IT Storage Facility	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	GO Bonds
4	IT	Vehicle Locator Misc	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	GO Bonds
4	IT	Vehicle Locator PW/E	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	GO Bonds
4	IT	Voice Over IP	Equipment	\$0	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$200,000	GO Bonds
4	IT	WAN Upgrade (Fiber)	Infrastructure	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$200,000	GO Bonds
4	Magistrate	WAN Upgrade Det Cntr	Infrastructure	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	GO Bonds
4	PW/E	Magistrates' Buildings	New Construction	\$0	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$1,200,000	GO Bonds
4	Sheriff's Office	PW/E Center	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$170,000	\$1,944,200	\$22,000	\$2,136,200	GO Bonds
4	Sheriff's Office	Sheriff Office Exp	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$197,475	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$197,475	GO Bonds
4	Sheriff's Office	Sheriff Office Exp	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$103,732	\$0	\$0	\$103,732	GO Bonds
4	Sheriff's Office	Sheriff Stor Garage	New Construction	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	GO Bonds
		Subtotal GO Bonds		\$60,000	\$797,475	\$1,338,617	\$2,539,200	\$447,000	\$5,182,292	
4	Museum	Protective film	Repair	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	Grants
4	PRT	Brodie Park Upgrade	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$44,750	\$0	\$69,750	Grants
4	Sage Mill	Sage Mill Signage	Infrastructure	\$0	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	Grants
4	Sage Mill	Sage Mill Water Line Connector	Infrastructure	\$0	\$142,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$142,000	Grants
4	Sheriff's Office	Detection Equipment Sh	Equipment	\$0	\$260,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$260,000	Grants
4	Sheriff's Office	Forensic Equipment	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000	Grants
		Subtotal Grants		\$0	\$642,000	\$35,000	\$104,750	\$0	\$681,750	
4	PW/E	Rd Maint Office Exp	New Construction	\$0	\$31,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$31,000	RM Fund
4	PRT	Harrison Caver Expansion	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$65,000	\$1,260,000	\$0	\$1,325,000	Sales Tax

PROJECTS IN PRIORITY ORDER/FUNDING SOURCES

Priority	Department	ProjectName	Type Project	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	TotalCost	Funding
4PRT		Herb Marshall Field	New Construction	\$0	\$73,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$73,000	Sales Tax
4PRT		PRT Office Complex	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$426,200	\$478,200	\$0	\$903,200	Sales Tax
4PRT		Recreation Center	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	\$2,305,000	\$0	\$2,505,000	Sales Tax
4PRT		Recreation Cntr Expansion	New Construction	\$0	\$450,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	Sales Tax
4PRT		Roy Warner Pk Exp	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$129,300	\$0	\$0	\$129,300	Sales Tax
4PW/E		Audubon Drainage	Drainage	\$0	\$0	\$32,000	\$288,000	\$0	\$320,000	Sales Tax
4PW/E		Woodwardia Dring	Drainage	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	Sales Tax
		Subtotal Sales Tax		\$2,004	\$525,005	\$853,306	\$4,483,207	\$2,008	\$5,865,500	
4PW/E		Perry Dropoff Cntr Exp	Infrastructure	\$16,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,000	SW Fund
4PW/E		Solid Waste Oper Folly	New Construction	\$0	\$14,890	\$203,120	\$0	\$0	\$218,000	SW Fund
		Subtotal SW Fund		\$16,000	\$14,890	\$203,120	\$0	\$0	\$234,000	
		TOTAL PRIORITY 4		\$108,004	\$2,409,860	\$2,608,726	\$7,192,157	\$449,008	\$12,757,725	
5EMS		EMS Billing	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$55,000	\$55,000	General Fund
5EMS		Fire Equipment	Equipment	\$15,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	General Fund
5IT		Mgstr/Clerk Crt Computer	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	General Fund
5IT		Microsoft Agreement	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$600,000	General Fund
5IT		Network Intrusion	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	General Fund
5IT		Video Conferencing EOC	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	General Fund
5IT		Voice recognition software	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	General Fund
5PRT		Ernest Weaver Walking Track	New Construction	\$0	\$44,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$44,000	General Fund
		Subtotal General Fund		\$15,000	\$304,000	\$225,000	\$150,000	\$255,000	\$949,000	
5County Council		Council Bldg Imp	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$80,000	\$620,000	\$0	\$0	\$700,000	GO Bonds
5Federal Offices		Expnshn Ag Building	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	GO Bonds
5IT		Electronic filing software	Computer or Technology	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	GO Bonds
5IT		Kosks	Equipment	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000	\$90,000	GO Bonds
5IT		Akn Libr North Wing	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$27,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,027,000	GO Bonds
5IT		Banksia Elevator	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$37,500	\$0	\$15,000	\$86,000	\$100,000	GO Bonds
5IT		Recreation Cntr Walk Trk	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	GO Bonds
5PRT		Firing Range and Training	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$225,000	\$0	\$0	\$225,000	GO Bonds
5PRT		Technical Equip	Vehicle	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000	GO Bonds
5PRT		Sheriff's Office	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$0	\$175,000	GO Bonds
5PRT		Sheriff's Office NA	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$0	\$175,000	GO Bonds
5Taxing Offices		Satellite Offices W/Ag	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	GO Bonds
		Subtotal GO Bonds		\$0	\$147,500	\$1,452,000	\$1,095,000	\$165,000	\$2,859,500	
5DSS		Wagener DSS	New Construction	\$550,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$550,000	Grants
5EMS		Communications	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000	Sales Tax
5PRT		Eastern Regional Park	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$1,835,000	\$0	\$1,985,000	Sales Tax
5PRT		Harrison Caver Gym	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$900,000	\$0	\$900,000	Sales Tax
5PRT		Harrison-Caver Fields	New Construction	\$0	\$144,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$144,000	Sales Tax
5PRT		Silver Bluff Regional Park	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$1,835,000	\$0	\$1,985,000	Sales Tax
		Subtotal Sales Tax		\$0	\$144,000	\$300,000	\$4,570,000	\$250,000	\$5,264,000	
5DHEC		DHEC Space	New Construction	\$50,000	\$1,607,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,657,000	State
5DHEC		Health Department	New Construction	\$470,000	\$2,115,000	\$2,115,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,700,000	State
5DSS		Alken DSS	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	State
5DSS		North Augusta DSS	New Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	State
5SRRC		SRRC Turn Lane	Road Const	\$28,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$28,000	State
		Subtotal State		\$548,000	\$3,722,000	\$2,115,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,385,000	
5PW/E		Solid Waste Trnsfr Facility	New Construction	\$162,000	\$162,000	\$1,821,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,983,000	SW Fund
		TOTAL PRIORITY 5		\$1,113,000	\$4,479,500	\$5,913,000	\$5,815,000	\$670,000	\$17,960,500	

PROJECTS IN PRIORITY ORDER/FUNDING SOURCES

Priority	Department	ProjectName	Type Project	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	TotalCost	Funding
6	Clerk of Court	Vacuum Pay System	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000	General Fund
6	PW/E	Treas Vacuum Pay System	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	General Fund
	Subtotal General Fund			\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$0	\$90,000	
6	Clerk of Court	Jud Cntr Mezz	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	GO Bonds
6	PRT	Lynnwood Imp	Facility Improvement or Addition	\$16,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,500	GO Bonds
	Subtotal GO Bonds			\$16,500	\$10,000	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$86,500	
6	PRT	Jackson Bt Lndng Shelter	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	Grants
6	PRT	Spann-Hammond Pk Trk	New Construction	\$16,500	\$10,000	\$162,500	\$40,000	\$0	\$229,000	Sales Tax
	TOTAL PRIORITY 6			\$16,500	\$20,000	\$162,500	\$40,000	\$0	\$239,000	
V	Library	Library Van Rplcmnt	Vehicle	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	General Fund
V	Library	Library Vehicle	Vehicle	\$18,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18,500	General Fund
	Subtotal General Fund			\$18,500	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$38,500	
V	P & D	Bus Replacement	Vehicle	\$0	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$116,000	\$58,000	\$290,000	Grants
V	P & D	Replace Transit Vehicle	Vehicle	\$17,000	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$116,000	\$58,000	\$307,000	Grants
	Subtotal Grants			\$17,000	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$116,000	\$58,000	\$307,000	
	TOTAL PRIORITY V			\$35,500	\$78,000	\$58,000	\$116,000	\$58,000	\$345,500	
	GRAND TOTAL ALL PRIORITIES ALL FUNDING SOURCES			\$13,695,500	\$20,129,483	\$39,048,438	\$43,414,198	\$9,391,462	\$125,638,961	

Appendix 3

Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool

Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool

In 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted Act 114, which requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to follow legislative guidance on prioritizing transportation projects. Act 114 provides a framework for evaluating road widening, intersection, and new construction improvements, based on the legislative guidance. Within the law, MPOs have the discretion of using the statewide list to establish local priorities or they may use SCDOT commission-approved criteria consistent with Act 114, in addition to other criteria that address local desires and/or concerns related to transportation improvements.

During the development of the ARTS 2035 LRTP, the Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee developed the following Act 114 compliant rankings for widening projects (**Table 1**), intersection projects (**Table 2**), and new construction projects (**Table 3**), which was approved by the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission.

The ranking criteria included in Act 114 reviews, traffic and congestion, safety, financial viability, economic development, pavement condition, truck traffic, and environmental impact. However, Aiken County added Livability measures to the project prioritization process and developed a transparent tool to store the data and rank the projects. The maximum score a project can receive is 100 points and the higher the points, the higher the priority. The data required to prioritize South Carolina projects was provided by travel demand model outputs, traffic counts, crash data, planning level cost estimates, aerial and field collection, and state and local agency staff.

The new process changed how projects are prioritized in Aiken County and included the following enhancements to the project prioritization process that ranks projects included in the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- Added “Livability” measures to elevate projects that improved modal connectivity, improved access, incorporated Complete Street concepts, and discouraged urban sprawl.
- Revised the Traffic Volume and Congestion measure to include examining future roadway conditions rather than existing conditions.
- Revised the Economic Development measure to include local job creation, sales tax increases, and increased assessed property value.
- Revised the Financial Viability measure to ensure projects did not to exceed the five-year federal Guide Share total allocated to Aiken County. If a project exceeds the five-year Guide Share total, the project can only receive ranking points if other funds are available to construct the project and the project can be phased. If additional funding is available and the project can be phased, then the project is assigned financial viability points.

- All projects must support local Comprehensive Plans.

Table 1: Aiken County Road Widening Project Prioritization Process

Criteria	Score	Aiken Methodology
Traffic Volume and Congestion	30%	A maximum of 30 points will be awarded based on the projected congestion rate sliding scale.
Public Safety	10%	A maximum of 10 points will be awarded based on crash data (fatalities, injuries, and property damage) from the SCDOT Public Safety Office and traffic volume.
Financial Viability	14%	A maximum of 14 points will be awarded, based on cost per vehicle mile, including maintenance costs and resurfacing costs. Project cannot exceed 5-years of federal Guide Share unless the project can funded through other sources and can be phased.
Potential for Economic Development	10%	A maximum of 10 points will be awarded based on SC Department of Commerce (50%) short-term, intermediate, and long-term development score as a result of the proposed improvement. Local review includes job creation, increased assessed property value and increased retail sales tax (50%).
Truck Traffic	8%	A maximum of 8 points will be awarded based on estimated average daily truck traffic volume.
Pavement Quality Index	6%	A maximum of 6 points will be awarded based on the SCDOT Pavement Quality Index score.
Environmental Impact	10%	A maximum of 10 points will be awarded based on 22 environmental criteria.
Livability	12%	A maximum of 12 points will be awarded based on the project increasing accessibility, connectivity, and mobility.
Alternative Transportation Solutions	Yes/No	Documented and considered for each project, points not assigned.
Serves to Implement Comprehensive Plan	Yes/No	Project must support Comprehensive Plan
Serves to Implement L RTP	Yes/No	Project must be in L RTP

TOTAL	100%
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Table 2: Aiken County Road Intersection Project Prioritization Process

Criteria	Score	Aiken Methodology
Traffic Volume and Congestion	25%	A maximum of 25 points will be awarded based on the growth between the current AADT and future AADT.
Public Safety	20%	A maximum of 20 points will be awarded based on crash data (fatalities, injuries, and property damage) from the SCDOT Public Safety Office and traffic volume.
Traffic Status	20%	A maximum of 20 points will be awarded based on assessment of the intersections functionality and operational characteristics.
Truck Traffic	10%	A maximum of 10 points will be awarded based on current volume and average daily truck traffic estimates.
Potential for Economic Development	7%	A maximum of 7 points will be awarded based on SC Department of Commerce (50%) short-term, intermediate, and long-term development score as a result of the proposed improvement. Local review includes job creation, increased assessed property value and increased retail sales tax (50%).
Environmental Impact	8%	A maximum of 8 points will be awarded based on 22 environmental criteria.
Livability	10%	A maximum of 10 points will be awarded based on the project increasing accessibility, connectivity, and mobility.
Financial Viability	Not Ranked	Documented and considered for each project, points not assigned.
Pavement Quality Index	Not Ranked	Documented and considered for each project, points not assigned.
Alternative Transportation Solutions	Not Ranked	Documented and considered for each project, points not assigned.
Serves to Implement Comprehensive Plan	Not Ranked	Documented and considered for each project, points not assigned.
TOTAL	100%	

Table 3: Aiken County New Construction Project Prioritization Process

Criteria	Score	Aiken Methodology
Financial Viability and Maintenance Cost	15%	A maximum of 15 points will be awarded based on cost per vehicle mile, including maintenance costs and resurfacing costs. Project cannot exceed 5-years of federal Guide Share unless the project can be funded through other sources and can be phased.
Potential for Economic Development	20%	A maximum of 20 points will be awarded based on SC Department of Commerce (50%) short-term, intermediate, and long-term development score as a result of the proposed improvement. Local review includes job creation, increased assessed property value and increased retail sales tax (50%).
Traffic Volume and Congestion	40%	A maximum of 40 points will be awarded based on by calculating the average level of service change to existing roadway facilities.
Environmental Impact	15%	A maximum of 15 points will be awarded based on 22 environmental criteria.
Livability	10%	A maximum of 10 points will be awarded based on the project increasing accessibility, connectivity, and mobility.
Alternative Transportation Solutions	Yes/No	Documented and considered for each project, points not assigned.
Serves to Implement Comprehensive Plan	Yes/No	Project must support Comprehensive Plan.
Serves to Implement LRTP	Yes/No	Project must be in LRTP.
Improves Air Quality	Not Ranked	Documented and considered for each project, points not assigned.
TOTAL	100%	

Based on the new project prioritization criteria and process, the Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool was developed. The user-friendly tool contains the updated rankings, imbedded databases, mathematical calculations, look-up tables and provides areas for project related inputs. The Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool was exclusively used to rank Aiken County LRTP and TIP projects during the development of the ARTS 2035 LRTP.

The following section provides guidance to use the Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool.

Project List Screens

Project Listing Screens - When starting the program the following screen appears. The default projects listing screen is for Intersection Projects. Program navigation is handled via buttons at the top of the program screen as shown below. Pressing the appropriate project type button will change the list to Intersection, Widening or New Facility projects. The functions for the buttons on the main screen are noted in the diagram below:

Select Intersection, Widening or New Facility buttons to view the project listing for each category

Select Reports or Utilities to access system reports and to view/modify program defaults.

Score	County	Intersection	Improvement Type
80.5	Aiken	Georgia/Knox Avenue at Five Notch/ Bradleyville Road	Georgia Avenue - add turning lanes and realign. Close one curb cuts.
77.0	Aiken	Interstate 20 at Martintown Road	Reconfigure to a diamond interchange and add signals.
71.2	Aiken	Knox Avenue at Martintown Road	Realign intersection and pedestrian improvements.
70.2	Aiken	Whiskey Road at Pine Log Road	Bicycle and pedestrian safety median, reassess signal functions and add turn lan
70.0	Aiken	Richland Avenue West at University Parkway	Lengthen and add dual left turn lanes east bound on Richland Ave. Rewarrant si
70.0	Aiken	Silver Bluff Road at Hitchcock Parkway	Bicycle and pedestrain crossing safety median, singal functions reassesses and a
68.0	Aiken	York Street/Columbia Hwy at Rutland Ave and Aldrich	The two intersections are separated by 440 ft. Operational and signal improvem
55.3	Aiken	Five Notch Road at Pisgah Road	Realign intersection and add turn lanes.
54.8	Aiken	Pine Log Road at Collier Street	Realign and add double left turn lanes from westbound Pine Log to Collier and ac
49.6	Aiken	Five Notch Road at Walnut Lane	Realign intersection to a T intersection.

Red/Green lights indicate whether or not sufficient information has been entered to calculate a score. Always check entries to make sure that they are correct and complete even if the light is green.

Select the Open Project Button to review/edit detailed project entries.

Select the Add or Delete buttons to add new projects.

Widening - Add
Add New Widening Project
 County: Aiken
 Functional Class:
 Route Type:
 Project Name:
 Project Limits:
 Beg Milepost: End Milepost: Length (miles):
 Existing Lanes:
 Improved Lanes:
 Base AADT:
 Future AADT:
 Capacity:
 Is the project an Alternative Transportation Solution?
 Does the project serve the Comprehensive Plan?
 Does the project serve the L RTP?
 EXIT Add New Widening Project

Project Details Screens – After selecting the open project details button on the project listing screen, the project details screen will appear. This screen contains several sections which must be completed to ensure that project calculations are accurate. These sections are described as follows:

Project identification information - Critical elements of this section should be completed when adding a new project from the project list screen. Remaining elements should be completed prior to running priority calculations.

Prioritization Tab – This tab contains a button for each of the priority measures. Clicking on a measure button (left side) will display the data elements needed to calculate the specific measure score (right side). Individual project measure scores are displayed next to the corresponding measure button. These scores are updated by pressing the

‘Calculate’ at the bottom of the screen. Note that a green light to the left of each measure indicates that there is sufficient information to perform the calculation while a red light indicates that additional information is needed. Always ensure that values are correct even if there is a green light beside each measure.

Project Identification Information

Intersection - Details Latest Update: 5/24/2010

Project Identification Information

County: Aiken City: North Augusta Project Number: Completion Year:
Major Route Func. Class: Urban - Principal Arterial-Other Minor Route Func. Class: Urban - Collector Cost Estimate: \$4,600,000
Major Route: US 25 Minor Route: CR 3 Pavement Quality: 2.02
Major Route Name: Edgefield Road Minor Route Name: Walnut Lane
Improvement Type: Edgefield Road (US 25) from four to six lanes with center turn lanes (7th lane) between Sweetwater Boulevard to past Walnut Lane
ATS:
Comp Plan:

Traffic Volume and Congestion

Projects will be evaluated by using the base year volume and base year capacity to determine the current congestion rate and horizon year volume and base year capacity to determine the future congestion rate to determine which roads are expected to need improvement. Please enter the following to calculate scores.

Base Year AADT: 21,700
Horizon Year AADT: 28,056

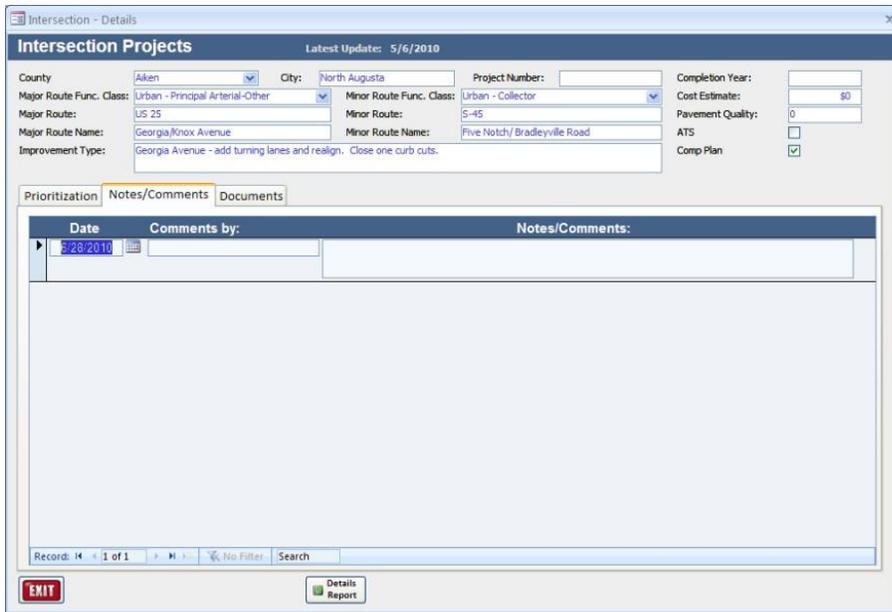
Future Growth	Score
0 Percent	0.00
1 to 10 Percent	8.30
11 to 25 Percent	16.80
Greater than 25 Percent	25.00

Criteria	Project Score
Traffic Volume/Congestion	25.0 of 25
Public Safety	16.0 of 20
Traffic Status	14.3 of 20
Truck Traffic	7.7 of 10
Economic Development	3.5 of 7
Environmental Impact	8.0 of 8
Livability	6.0 of 10
TOTAL SCORE	80.5 of 100

EXIT Details Report Changes have been made. Press Calculate Button to view results Calculate

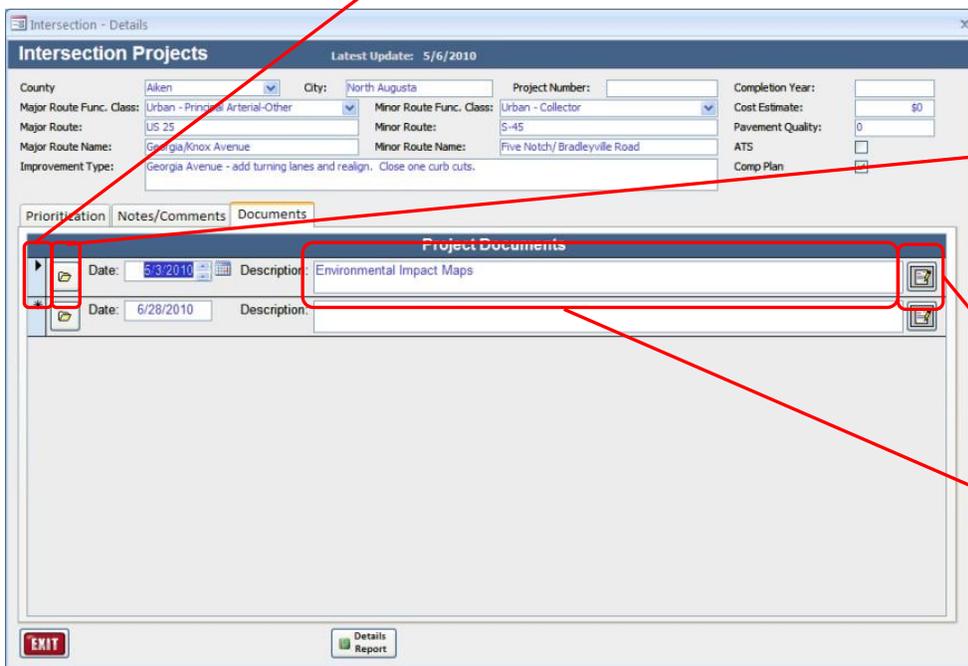
Red/Green lights indicate whether or not sufficient information has been entered to calculate a score. Always check entries to make sure that they are correct and complete even if the light is green.

Notes/Comments Tab – This tab provides users with the ability to store any commentary about each project. This feature is especially helpful when the project data is stored on a server in a multi-user environment.



Project Documents Tab – This tab allows users to store and retrieve PDF documents for a project. Example documents could include contracts, correspondence or project plans and specifications. Documents should be copied into a common documents folder. The path of this folder should be entered in the ‘System Paths’ screen of the system Utilities.

To Delete: Press the record selector button and then press the ‘Delete’ key on your keyboard



To Add a document – press the open folder button and locate the document. Remember that most documents should be stored in a central folder.

To View a document – press the open document button.

ALWAYS enter a description of the document.

Reports

In addition to the project details report available on the project details screens, the system provides a project listing report for each project type. The user may specify the sorting criteria and whether or not to include projects that have not been completely scored. By default, only projects that have been successfully scored are included in the report.

To view a report, first press the button to the far left that corresponds with either intersections, widening or new projects. Next select the sorting criteria and whether or not to include un-scored projects. Finally press the 'View" button and the report will appear in a separate window. The user will have the option to print the report to a local printer or export to a PDF document.

Main Menu

 **S.C. Act 114
Transportation Project
Prioritization Tool**

 Intersection
  Widening
  New Facility
  Reports
  Utilities
  EXIT
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System Reports

Intersections
Project Listing Report

Widenings
Project Listing Report

New Projects
Project Listing Report

Sort by: **Project Ranking** Sort Order: **Ascending** Show Unscored Projects:

Project Ranking
 Project Number
 Project Cost
 Improvement Type
 Major Route
 Minor Route

Widening Improvements

 **Project Prioritization
Roadway Widenings** 7/21/2010

Rank	Score	Route Name	Project Description/Description	Length	Cost
1	88.4	Aiken-Augusta Highway (US 1)	Savannah River to I-520 (Palmetto Pkwy) Widen Aiken-Augusta Highway (US 1) with improved median between Savannah River to I-520 (Palmetto Pkwy), including martintown Road interchange improvements.	1.550	\$6,227,589
2	87.1	Hitchcock Parkway (SC 118)	US 1/78 to SC 302 (Silver Bluff Road) Widen Hitchcock Parkway (SC 118) from 2 to 4 lanes between US 1/78 to SC 302 (Silver Bluff Road), with full landscaped median and turn lanes as needed and multi-use path along the entire project limits.	4.850	\$18,205,871
3	85.6	I-20	Savannah River to US 25 (Edgefield Road) Widen I-20 from 4 to 6 lanes between Savannah River and US 25 (Edgefield Road)	5.020	\$12,945,496
4	80.5	I-20	US 25/SC 121 (Edgefield Road) to Bettis Academy Road Widen I-20 from 4 to 6 lanes between US 25/SC 121 (Edgefield Road) to Bettis Academy Road	6.180	\$22,574,684
5	79.0	Edgefield Highway (SC 19)	Hampton Avenue to S-153 Shiloh Church Road Widen Edgefield Highway (SC 19) from 2 to 4 lanes between SC 118 (University Pkwy) and S-153 Shiloh Church Road, with full landscaped median and turn lanes as needed. Add median between University and Hampton	6.030	\$22,120,516
6	76.7	East Buena Vista Ave and Atomic Road	EBV from Brookside Road to Barton Road; Atomic Road from EBV to Old Edgefield Road EBV - Widen to 2 through lanes and turn lanes as needed. Atomic - narrow to 2 lanes from E Buena Vista Ave to Martintown Rd and widen to 4 lanes between Martintown Rd and Old Edgefield Rd, with full landscaped median and turn lanes as needed.	1.310	\$5,250,000
7	74.9	Rudy Mason Parkway (SC 118)	S-912 (North of Willow Run Rd) to S-783 (North of Old Wagener Road) Road widening to two lanes to four lanes, with full landscaped median and turn lanes as needed.	1.530	\$6,000,000
8	74.5	Five Notch Road (S-45)	US 25 Business (Georgia Avenue) to Walnut Lane Widen Five Notch Road (S-45) from 2 to 4 lanes between US 25 Business (Georgia Avenue) and Walnut Lane, median and turn lanes as needed.	3.720	\$20,255,490
9	74.4	Belvedere - Clearwater Rd (SC 126)	US 1/78 (Jefferson Davis Hwy) to I520 Widen Belvedere/ Clearwater Rd (SC 126) from US 1/78 (Jefferson Davis Highway) to I-520 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes, with full landscaped median and turn lanes as needed.	2.510	\$6,416,566

Page 1 of 3

Pages: 1 | 1 | No Filter

System Utilities

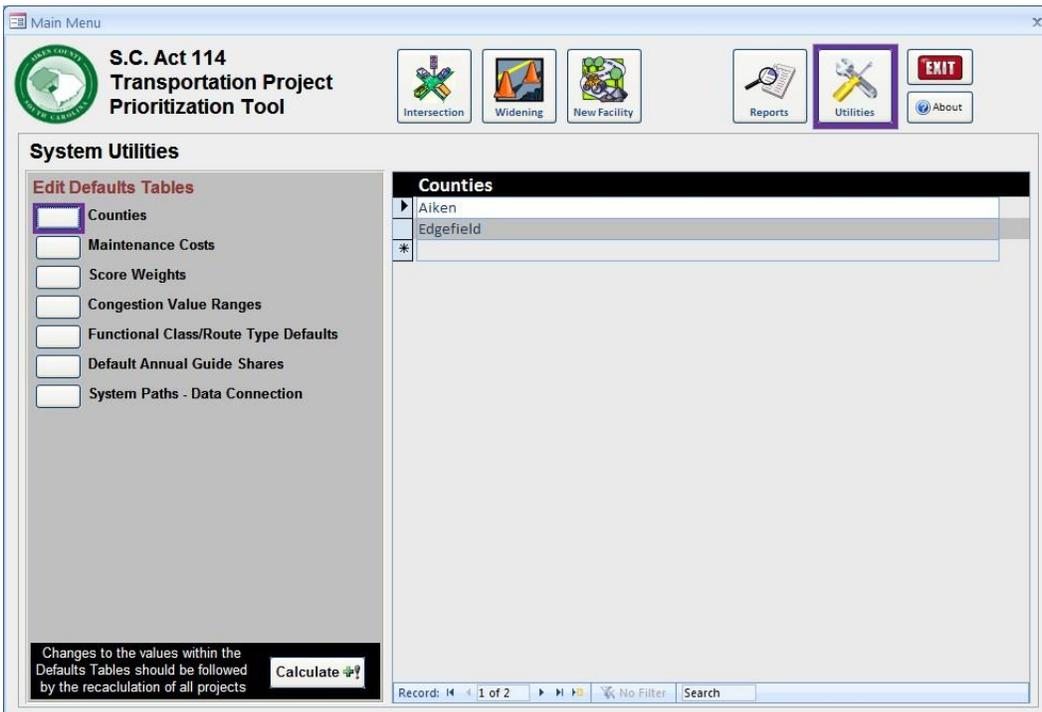
The System Utilities module contains features allowing users to control certain parts of the program as well as provide users with the means to control some default data inputs and lookup values.

To access the System Utilities, users must enter the correct password. Initially, the password is simply the word **“password”**. The user may change this at any time.



Once the correct password has been entered, the following utilities menu will be displayed. Click on the button beside the item you wish to view/edit. Changes to the defaults may impact entries and/or scoring in existing projects. Therefore the user should always run the calculation routine after any changes have been made to the defaults. The following is a brief description of each utility:

Counties – The Counties utility provides the means to control the drop down list choices in each of the facility type



modules. The initial list contains Aiken and Edgefield counties. Adding to the list has no influence over projects that have already been entered but gives the users additional county choices.

Edits to existing county values are not automatically transferred to existing project entries and must be edited individually.

Maintenance Costs – Maintenance costs were provided by the South Carolina Department of Transportation and represent an average annual maintenance cost per mile. The numbers vary between counties due to the averaging

S.C. Act 114 Transportation Project Prioritization Tool

System Utilities

Edit Defaults Tables

- Counties
- Maintenance Costs
- Score Weights
- Congestion Value Ranges
- Functional Class/Route Type Defaults
- Default Annual Guide Shares
- System Paths - Data Connection

County	Primary Roads	Secondary Roads
Abbeville	\$2,185.63	\$2,466.28
Aiken	\$4,215.54	\$1,759.06
Allendale	\$1,257.30	\$2,800.69
Anderson	\$3,229.18	\$2,005.64
Bamberg	\$2,867.41	\$2,204.67
Barnwell	\$1,018.49	\$2,223.94
Beaufort	\$1,631.11	\$3,328.33
Berkeley	\$5,176.91	\$1,635.23
Calhoun	\$2,561.37	\$3,133.80
Charleston	\$2,449.70	\$3,400.38
Cherokee	\$2,812.27	\$2,074.46
Chester	\$3,439.39	\$3,061.37
Chesterfield	\$2,999.75	\$2,024.93
Clarendon	\$5,356.23	\$2,026.93
Colleton	\$3,599.21	\$2,553.63
Darlington	\$3,796.87	\$1,823.10
Dillon	\$2,973.05	\$2,030.67
Dorchester	\$5,393.49	\$1,809.78
Edgefield	\$4,480.88	\$1,561.37
Fairfield	\$1,882.40	\$2,769.03
Florence	\$4,730.72	\$2,128.86
Georgetown	\$1,618.61	\$3,320.18
Greenville	\$1,455.60	\$2,607.53

Record: 1 of 46 | No Filter | Search

Changes to the values within the Defaults Tables should be followed by the recalculation of all projects. **Calculate**

processes and road classification mileage within each county.

It is recommended that these numbers be updated annually and a recalculation performed on the database.

Modification to the numbers and recalculation will impact any projects already in the system.

Score Weights – Weights for the various measures were decided upon at the beginning of the development of this tool. These weights have been approved by SCDOT although they differ slightly from the SCDOT standards. While it

is not

Category	Intersections	Widening	New Facilities
Traffic Volume and Congestion	25	30	40
Public Safety	20	10	
Financial Viability		14	15
Potential for Economic Development	7	10	20
Truck traffic	10	8	
Pavement Quality Index		6	
Environmental Impact	8	10	15
Livability	10	12	10
Traffic Status	20		
Totals	100	100	100

** Note that Totals for each column must equal 100

suggested, the weight values may be adjusted by the user.

When modifying the score weights, the total weight score should always equal 100. The system will warn the user if this is not the case.

Modifications to the numbers will be reflected in all projects after the calculation process is executed.

Congestion Value Ranges – Congestion is a significant factor when scoring any of the three facility types. This screen allows the user to adjust the scoring for each facility type. The category breaks are NOT adjustable. After making any

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**S.C. Act 114
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Intersection Widening New Facility Reports Utilities About

System Utilities

Edit Defaults Tables

- Counties
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- Congestion Value Ranges
- Functional Class/Route Type Defaults
- Default Annual Guide Shares
- System Paths - Data Connection

Changes to the values within the Defaults Tables should be followed by the recalculation of all projects **Calculate**

Intersections	
Zero Growth	0.00
1 to 10 Percent Growth	8.30
10 to 25 Percent Growth	16.80
More than 25 Percent Growth	25.00

Widening	
V/C less than or equal to .70	0.00
V/C from 0.71 to 0.75	5.00
V/C from 0.76 to 0.80	10.00
V/C from 0.81 to 0.85	15.00
V/C from 0.86 to 0.90	20.00
V/C from 0.91 to 0.95	25.00
V/C greater than or equal to 0.96	30.00

Widening	
Zero Growth	0.00
1 to 10 Percent Growth	13.20
10 to 25 Percent Growth	26.40
More than 25 Percent Growth	40.00

adjustments, the user should run the calculation to see any impacts. Please note that executing the calculation with revised congestion value amounts will make permanent changes to the project scoring and can only be reset by readjusting the congestion value amounts to the original amount and re-running the calculation.

Functional Classification/Route Type Defaults – The current SCDOT model uses a set a route classification table to allocation default truck percentages. This screen will allow the editing of these defaults. After making any

Main Menu

**S.C. Act 114
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Intersection Widening New Facility Reports Utilities About

System Utilities

Edit Defaults Tables

- Counties
- Maintenance Costs
- Score Weights
- Congestion Value Ranges
- Functional Class/Route Type Defaults
- Default Annual Guide Shares
- System Paths - Data Connection

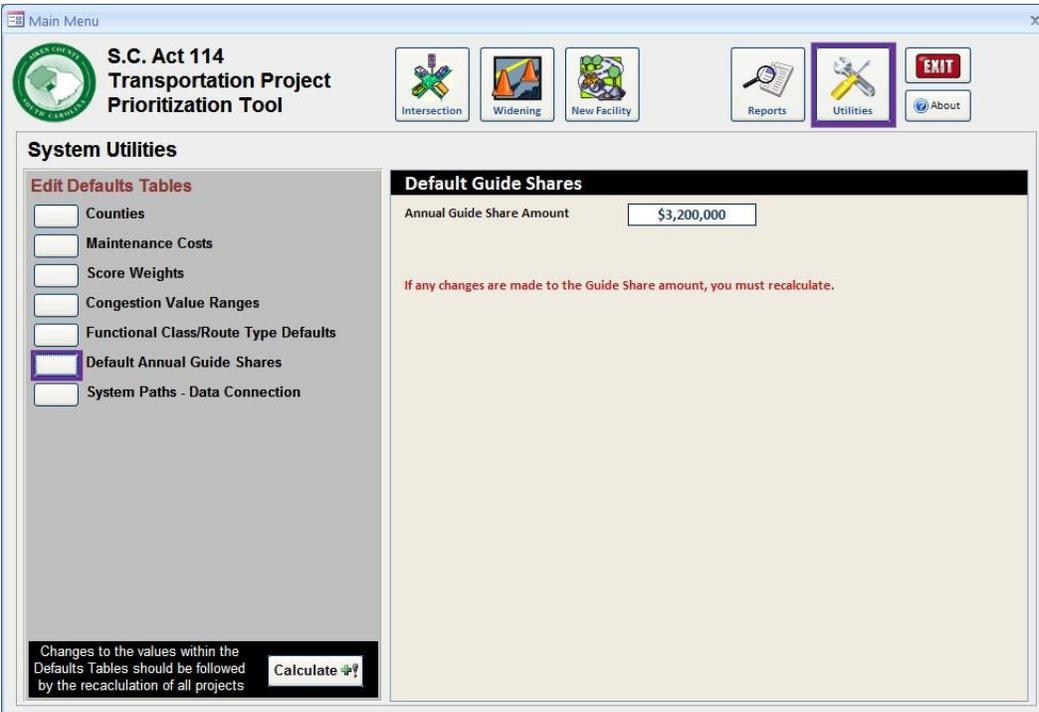
Code	Functional Class	Route Type	Default Trk %
01	Rural - Principal Arterial-Interstate	Primary	12.0%
02	Rural - Principal Arterial-Other	Primary	9.0%
06	Rural - Minor Arterial	Primary	8.0%
07	Rural - Major Collector	Secondary	9.0%
08	Rural - Minor Collector	Secondary	7.0%
09	Rural - Local	Secondary	6.0%
11	Urban - Principal Arterial-Interstate	Primary	12.0%
12	Urban - Principal Arterial-Freeways/Exp	Primary	8.0%
14	Urban - Principal Arterial-Other	Primary	7.0%
16	Urban - Minor Arterial	Primary	6.0%
17	Urban - Collector	Secondary	11.0%
19	Urban - Local	Secondary	3.0%

Changes to the values within the Defaults Tables should be followed by the recalculatation of all projects **Calculate**

Record: 1 of 12 No Filter Search

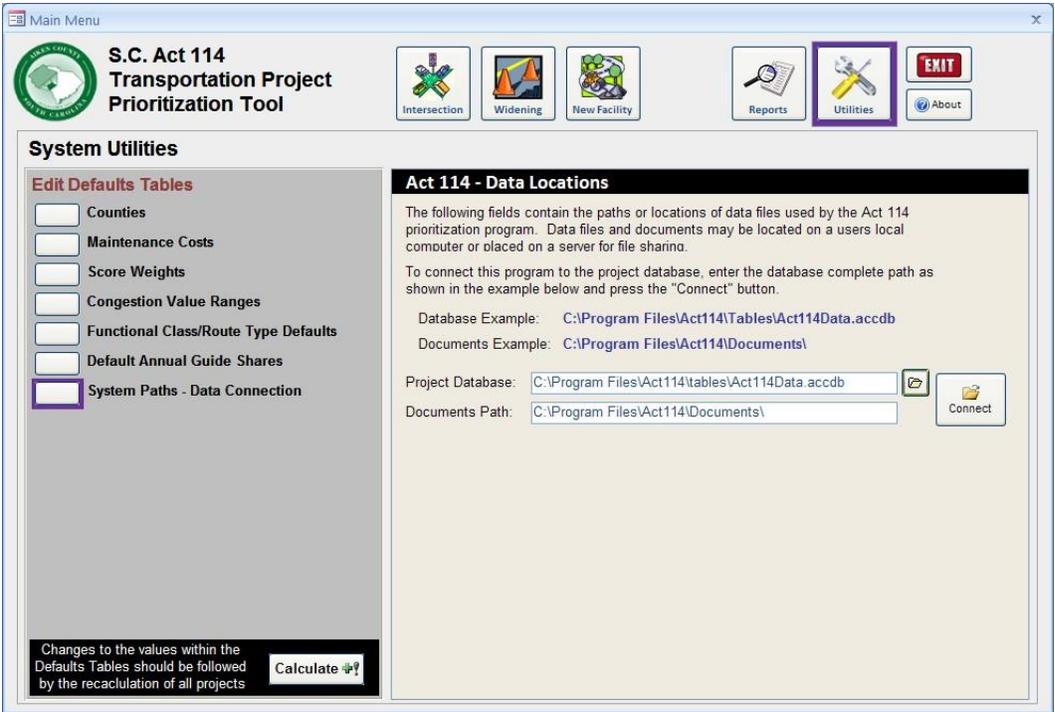
adjustments to the defaults, the user should press the Recalculation button to apply the new values to all projects.

Default Annual Guide Shares – Users have the option to adjust the guide share amounts on this screen. After making any adjustments, the user should run the calculation to see any impacts. Please note that executing the



calculation with revised guide share amounts will make permanent changes to the project scoring and can only be reset by readjusting the guide share amounts to the original amount and rerunning the calculation.

System Paths – This feature allows users to specify the storage locations of files associated with the system. To have multiple users share a single database, the program file must be located on individual personal computers and the



project database “Act114Data.accdb” file should be located on a shared server. Press the folder button to help locate the server data and then press the connect button to initiate the link. Pressing the Connect button will completely reset the database links for the program.

In addition, the

Documents path should

also be set for locating all attached documents in the system. This should also be located on a shared server where possible.

Data Entry

Intersection Project Data Entry – The following provides the criteria included with prioritizing intersection projects and its data source.

Traffic Volume and Congestion:

Metric	Source
Base Year Average Annual Daily Traffic	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Horizon Year Average Annual Daily Traffic	Aiken County Travel Demand Model

Public Safety

Metric	Source
--------	--------

Begin Study Date	SCDOT
End Study Date	SCDOT
Fatal Crashes	SCDOT
Injury Crashes	SCDOT
Property Damage Crashes	SCDOT
Total Crashes	SCDOT

Traffic Status

Metric	Source
All questions	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

Truck Traffic

Metric	Source
Base Year Average Annual Daily Traffic	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Truck Percentage	SCDOT or Actual Classification Count
Truck Traffic	Automatically filled in by Tool

Economic Development

Metric	Source
Department of Commerce Score	SCDOT
All Local Questions	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

Environmental Impact

Metric	Source
The 22 Environmental Features	SCDOT provides maps to determine impacts

Livability

Metric	Source
All Local Questions	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

Widening Project Data Entry – The following provides the criteria included with prioritizing widening projects and its data source.

Traffic Volume and Congestion:

Metric	Source
Base Year Average Annual Daily Traffic	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Base Year Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Horizon Year Average Annual Daily Traffic	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Horizon Year Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio	Aiken County Travel Demand Model

Public Safety

Metric	Source
Begin Study Date	SCDOT
End Study Date	SCDOT
Fatal Crashes	SCDOT
Injury Crashes	SCDOT
Property Damage Crashes	SCDOT
Total Crashes	SCDOT

Financial

Metric	Source
Route Type	SCDOT
Project Cost Estimate	SCDOT
Maintenance Cost per Lane Mile	SCDOT
Resurfacing Costs over 20 Years	SCDOT
Maintenance Costs over 20 Years	SCDOT
Is supplemental funding available and can the project be phased?	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

Economic Development

Metric	Source
Department of Commerce Score	SCDOT
All Local Questions	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

Truck Traffic

Metric	Source
Base Year Average Annual Daily Traffic	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Truck Percentage	SCDOT or Actual Classification Count
Truck Traffic	Automatically filled in by Tool

Pavement Quality Index

Metric	Source
Pavement Quality Index Score	SCDOT

Environmental Impact

Metric	Source
The 22 Environmental Features	SCDOT provides maps to determine impacts

Livability

Metric	Source
All Local Questions	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

New Facility Project Data Entry – The following provides the criteria included with prioritizing new facility projects and its data source.

Traffic Volume and Congestion:

Metric	Source
Existing Roadway 1 V/C Ratio Before	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Existing Roadway 1 V/C Ratio After	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Existing Roadway 2 V/C Ratio Before	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Existing Roadway 2 V/C Ratio After	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Existing Roadway 3 V/C Ratio Before	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Existing Roadway 3 V/C Ratio After	Aiken County Travel Demand Model
Average V/C Ratio Reduction	Automatically filled in by Tool

Financial

Metric	Source
Project Cost Estimate	SCDOT
Maintenance Cost per Lane Mile	SCDOT
Resurfacing Costs over 20 Years	SCDOT
Maintenance Costs over 20 Years	SCDOT
Is supplemental funding available and can the project be phased?	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

Economic Development

Metric	Source
Department of Commerce Score	SCDOT
All Local Questions	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

Environmental Impact

Metric	Source
The 22 Environmental Features	SCDOT provides maps to determine impacts

Livability

Metric	Source
All Local Questions	Aiken County Transportation Coordinating Subcommittee

