

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



# **FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

# County Council

---

Dan Ruff  
District 1

Shirley M. Greene  
District 2

Peggy Swearingen  
District 3

Timothy Roseborough  
District 4

Douglas Pauley, Chair  
District 5

Cornelius Robinson  
District 6

Clarence Gilbert, Vice Chair  
District 7

# Planning Commission

---

Randy Kelley, Chair

William Gray, Vice-Chair

Chris Knight

Jennifer Barnes

Billy Peak

Donna Miller

Roger Gaddy

# RESOLUTION OF THE FAIRFIELD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, the Fairfield County Planning Commission has revised the Comprehensive Plan, which contains all elements required by the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 as amended in 2007; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission, pursuant to SC Code Sections 6-29-520(B), desires to recommend to the Fairfield County Council the adoption by ordinance of the plan;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Fairfield County Planning Commission that the revised comprehensive plan, including the text, maps, tables, and figures are recommended to the Fairfield County Council for adoption by ordinance, after public hearing, in accordance with SC Code Section 6-29-530.

Adopted by the affirmative votes of at least a majority of the entire membership of the Planning Commission this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

---

Chair, Planning Commission





# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
PLAN REQUIREMENTS	1
PLAN ORGANIZATION	1
ADOPTION PROCESS	2
MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE	3
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	3
VISION AND VALUE STATEMENT	5
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS	5
<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>6</b>
INTRODUCTION	7
POPULATION CHANGE	8
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	10
EDUCATION AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS	15
PUBLIC HEALTH	19
KEY FINDINGS	21
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	22
<b>HOUSING</b>	<b>23</b>
INTRODUCTION	24
RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TRENDS	24
AGE AND CONDITION	28
OCCUPANCY AND TENURE	29
AFFORDABILITY	31
ESSENTIAL WORKER HOUSING	35
HISTORIC PRESERVATION	35
HOUSING OUTLOOK	37
SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS	39
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	39

---

**NATURAL RESOURCES** **41**

INTRODUCTION	42
PHYSICAL SETTING	42
CLIMATE	43
SOILS	44
LAND COVER	45
FORESTRY RESOURCES	48
WATER RESOURCES	48
RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES	53
WETLANDS	56
SOLAR ENERGY	57
SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS	58
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	58

---

**CULTURAL RESOURCES** **60**

INTRODUCTION	61
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	61
HISTORIC SITES	62
MUSEUMS	63
SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS	64
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	66

---

**RESILIENCE** **67**

INTRODUCTION	68
NATURAL HAZARD RISK AND VULNERABILITY	72
NATURAL HAZARD EVENTS AND LOSS IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY	72
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	84
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	84

---

**TRANSPORTATION** **85**

INTRODUCTION	86
THE HIGHWAY NETWORK	86
PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES	90
PIEDMONT GATEWAY SCENIC BYWAY	92
BUS TRANSIT	93
RAIL TRANSIT	94
AIR TRANSIT	94
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	94

---

<b>ECONOMY</b>	<b>96</b>
----------------	-----------

---

INTRODUCTION	97
EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS	97
INDUSTRIAL SITES	101
COMMUTING PATTERNS	102
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS	102
SCOUT MOTORS	104
OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM	104
SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS	105
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	106

<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>	<b>108</b>
-----------------------------	------------

---

INTRODUCTION	109
PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS	110
PUBLIC SANITARY SEWER SYSTEMS	113
SOLID WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL	115
ELECTRIC POWER	115
NATURAL GAS	116
LAW ENFORCEMENT	116
FIRE PROTECTION	118
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	120
MEDICAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES	120
PARKS AND RECREATION	121
EDUCATION FACILITIES	123
COMMUNICATION	125
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	129

<b>LAND USE</b>	<b>131</b>
-----------------	------------

---

INTRODUCTION	132
EXISTING LAND COVER	132
EXISTING LAND USE	134
PRIME DEVELOPMENT AREAS	138
LAND USE TRENDS	142
CURRENT ZONING DISTRICTS AND RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES	143
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN	147
LAND USE COMPATIBILITY	154
LAND USE STANDARDS	156
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	157

## **PRIORITY INVESTMENT**

**159**

INTRODUCTION	160
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION	160
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	163
REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES	163
FUNDING SOURCES	163
PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS	168
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING GAP	169
COORDINATION AND NOTIFICATION	169
LOCAL PLANNING COORDINATION	170
GOALS AND STRATEGIES	171

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

**172**



DRAFT

1

# Introduction

# Introduction

The comprehensive plan serves as a general policy guide for use in planning for future growth and development. The plan relates existing conditions to a corresponding list of goals and strategies that reflect a vision for future growth and development. The plan provides a framework for making informed decisions about land development, economic growth, infrastructure improvements, housing, transportation, and natural and cultural resources.

## Plan Requirements

The comprehensive plan satisfies the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (the Planning Act), which establishes the comprehensive plan as an essential part of the local government planning process. The law tasks the local planning commission with developing the comprehensive plan. Once adopted, the plan will become the blueprint for future growth and development as well as for the preparation and adoption of tools for implementing the plan (e.g., the zoning ordinance and land development regulations). The framework for organizing the comprehensive plan as outlined in the Planning Act requires an examination of ten (10) planning elements, which are summarized in Table 1.1.

## Plan Organization

The comprehensive plan is organized so an individual chapter is devoted to one of the ten required elements. In accordance with the Planning Act, the elements include: a discussion of existing conditions; an analysis of trends and their potential impacts; and associated goals and implementation strategies. Each element also includes relevant maps, tables, and figures.

Table 1.1: Comprehensive Plan Requirements

ELEMENT	TYPICAL CONTENTS
Population	Growth and development, household characteristics, education, income, race, sex, age, health
Housing	Location, type, age, condition, affordability, occupancy, ownership
Natural Resources	Land and water resources, critical habitat, conservation and mitigation priorities, development constraints
Cultural Resources	Historic buildings, unique commercial, residential, and scenic areas, arts and culture
Economic Development	Workforce characteristics, employment, economic base, travel characteristics
Transportation	Network connectivity, traffic patterns, transit access, bike and pedestrian facilities
Community Facilities	Water and sewer, solid waste, public safety, education, parks and recreation
Land Use	Existing and future, neighborhood and town center, zoning and land development
Priority Investment	Funding, capital improvement needs, intergovernmental coordination, priority areas
Resiliency	Flooding and natural hazard vulnerability; public health, safety, and welfare; resilient planning and development; coordination

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

## Adoption Process

Once the comprehensive plan is complete, it must be adopted by the local government through the following process:

- A resolution by the local planning commission recommending the plan for adoption by the local governing body. The action must be recorded in the planning commission's official minutes, and the recommended plan must be forwarded to the local governing body.
- A public hearing must be held at least 30 days after publishing a notice or advertisement in a general circulation newspaper in the community.
- An ordinance is then adopted by the governing body, which cannot be approved until the planning commission has officially recommended the plan as described above.

## Monitoring and Maintenance

The Planning Act requires the planning commission to review the comprehensive plan or specific elements of it, as needed, but not less than once every five years to determine if amendments are necessary to account for any significant developments or changing needs in the community. The comprehensive plan, including all elements, must be fully updated and adopted by the process described above, at least every ten years.

## Community Engagement



Citizen engagement in local planning efforts is vital for identifying community needs and priorities. To solicit input on the Fairfield County comprehensive plan, Fairfield County conducted an online community survey in the spring of 2022. More than 300 survey responses were received from residents representing each county council district and a wide range of income groups. The typical respondent was 45 years or older, owned their own home, lived in a 2-person household, and has been a County resident for more than 20 years. The twenty-six-question survey covered topics ranging from growth and development preferences to public facilities and services.

When asked about public services and facilities, the majority of survey respondents indicated public safety, parks/recreation, and development services were performing adequately; while road and sidewalk maintenance, code enforcement, and housing opportunities needed improvement. Road maintenance was identified as a high-priority need or concern for the county. Other high-priority needs included small business development support, housing opportunities, commercial development, blight, and increased police and fire service capacity. Recreation facilities were viewed as a low-priority need because of recent investments in recreation facilities.

In regards to development preferences, respondents would like to encourage more restaurants, medical facilities, and commercial developments; and discourage mining, extractive, and other potentially polluting industries. When asked about the single most important issue facing Fairfield County, the top three responses were governance and political issues, budgeting, controlling spending, and lack of growth/under-development. When asked about support for levying additional fees or taxes for specific services, more than 50% of respondents expressed support for additional fees for road maintenance, hiring police officers, business attraction, water/sewer, fire response, and beautification of streets and signage. Respondents identified public transportation and new parks as services they were not interested in supporting with new fees or taxes. Table 1.2 summarizes the results from the public survey.



Table 1.2: Community Survey Results Summary

Adequate Public Services and Facilities	High Priority Needs	Development Types to Encourage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Safety</li> <li>Parks and Recreation</li> <li>Development Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road/Sidewalk Maintenance</li> <li>Small Business Development</li> <li>Housing Opportunities</li> <li>Business and Commercial Development</li> <li>Increased Code Enforcement</li> <li>Public Safety Improvements</li> <li>Blight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit Down Restaurants</li> <li>Medical Facilities</li> <li>Industrial/Commercial Facilities</li> <li>Quality, Affordable Housing</li> </ul>
Inadequate Public Services and Facilities	Low Priority Needs	Development Types to Discourage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code Enforcement</li> <li>Road and Sidewalk Maintenance</li> <li>Housing Opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Transportation</li> <li>Solid Waste Services</li> <li>More Park and Recreation Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mining &amp; Extractive Industries</li> <li>Hazardous &amp; Polluting Industries</li> </ul>

Source: Fairfield County Comprehensive Plan Community Survey, 2022.

In addition to the survey, Fairfield County also received public input on community needs and priorities through public and stakeholder engagement meetings. Fairfield County holds annual public meetings to collect input on priority community needs for developing grant applications through the SC Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. A needs assessment meeting was jointly held with the Town of Winnsboro on March 22, 2022 at the Winnsboro Woman's Club. The meeting was well attended by local residents and a number of comments were received highlighting community priorities related to:

- Substandard housing and code enforcement
- Demolition of dilapidated buildings
- Home repair/rehabilitation
- Trees and beautification
- Water and sewer improvements
- Road maintenance and paving
- Recreational facilities
- Better community outreach and citizen participation
- Implementation of existing plans
- Better communication/coordination between local governments

Additional stakeholder engagement meetings were held throughout the summer and fall of 2022 with representatives from the Town of Winnsboro, the Town of Ridgeway, the Town of

Jenkinsville, and the Lake Wateree area. Input on priorities received from these meetings included:

- Annexation, zoning, and code enforcement coordination
- Demolition, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of abandoned properties
- Water quality, riparian setbacks, and zoning ordinance consistency around Lake Wateree and Lake Monticello
- Quality, affordable Housing
- Natural resource protection, open space, and conservation areas

Recurring themes and priorities highlighted in the survey and public/stakeholder meetings were used to develop the vision, goals, and strategies outlined in the plan.

## Vision and Value Statement

The comprehensive plan establishes a vision for the future, which is based on a strong economy, healthy and resilient communities, environmental conservation, and quality public services. The planning process strives to create an equitable, healthy, sustainable, and attractive place for present and future generations. The planning process also recognizes Fairfield County as an assemblage of local neighborhoods with a unique natural and cultural heritage, and as a competitive player on the regional stage, with considerable potential for economic development and a high quality of life for all its citizens.

## Comprehensive Plan Goals

In order to realize this vision, the comprehensive plan will adhere to the following goals:

- **Goal # 1: Population.** Grow and sustain a healthy, diverse, and prosperous population of all ages through job creation, residential recruitment, aging services, quality of life improvements, and equitable access to programs and services
- **Goal # 2: Housing.** Provide a range of quality housing opportunities for residents of all ages and incomes.
- **Goal # 3: Natural Resources.** Protect, preserve, and promote Fairfield County's natural resources.
- **Goal # 4: Cultural Resources.** Protect, preserve, and promote Fairfield County's cultural heritage.
- **Goal # 5: Resilience.** Strengthen Fairfield County's ability to respond to and recover from natural hazards, economic downturns, and other community vulnerabilities.

- **Goal # 6: Economy.** Support a diverse and resilient economy, that includes a thriving industrial sector, support for small locally owned businesses, and leveraging of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities.
- **Goal # 7: Transportation.** Provide a safe, efficient, and accessible multi-modal transportation system.
- **Goal # 8: Community Facilities.** Provide the highest quality of public services and facilities in a transparent, coordinated, and cost-effective manner.
- **Goal # 9: Land Use.** Provide a framework for the orderly, efficient, and equitable development of land that accommodates future growth while protecting natural resources, enhancing the quality of life, and preserving the rural character of the community.
- **Goal # 10: Priority Investment.** Facilitate a higher level of public investment through internal coordination and intergovernmental cooperation.

DRAFT

DRAFT

2

# Population



# Introduction

The population element of the Comprehensive Plan describes how the County's population and demographic characteristics have changed over the past several decades. The information presented is based on a combination of decennial US Census data and interim demographic estimates obtained from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. Information will be provided on a variety of community characteristics including:

- Population Change
- Age, Race, and Gender Distributions
- Income Characteristics
- Poverty Levels
- Educational Attainment

Fairfield County is located in the upper Piedmont region of north central South Carolina and comprises an area of 710 square miles, including 686 square miles of land and 24 square miles of surface water. Surrounding counties include Chester County to the north, Union County to the northwest, Newberry County to the west, Richland County to the south, Kershaw County to the east and Lancaster County to the northeast. The Broad River forms the west boundary of the County and Lake Wateree forms the east boundary.

The Town of Winnsboro is the county seat and largest municipality and service center. The Town was incorporated in 1832 and named after Revolutionary officer, Colonel Richard Winn. The County uses a Council-Administrator form of government (with 7 single-member officials on County Council elected to 4-year terms) and is a member of the Central Midlands Regional Council of Governments along with Richland, Lexington, and Newberry Counties.

Geographically, the County is well situated between Columbia (20 miles) and Charlotte (40 miles) and is well connected to these major urban centers via I-77 which passes directly through the eastern side of the county. Over the years, the County has benefitted from its close proximity and connectivity to both urban centers. This accessibility to unique natural and cultural assets within and outside the County should be accounted for when planning for its future growth.

# Population Change

Fairfield County had a modest but continuous population decline the past 20 years. According to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) five year estimates, it ranked #38 of 46 in total population, and is one the least populated counties in the State with an estimated 22,406 residents (Table 2.1). This number is almost 1,000 people less than the 2010 official Census population count of 23,956.

Table 2.1 - Population estimates for Fairfield County

	2020 ACS	2015 ACS	2010 ACS
<b>Estimate</b>	22,406	23,108	24,040

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

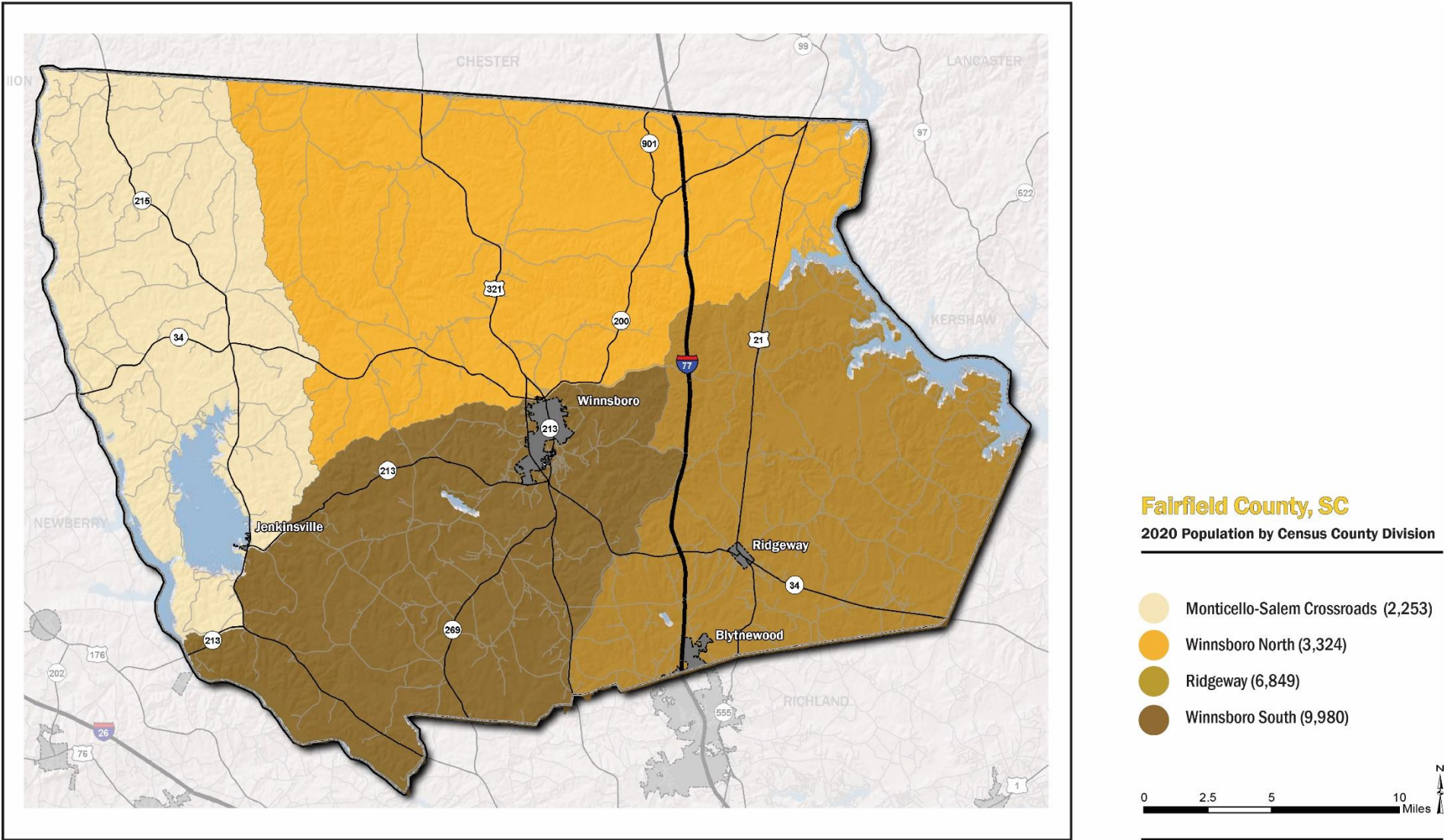
While a current estimate and historical perspective provide a foundation for moving forward, it is also essential to know where within the county the population resides. What are the existing development patterns and population densities? Census County Divisions (CCD's), which are districts defined by the US Census Bureau to analyze population at the sub-county level, help in making this determination. Fairfield County is divided into four such divisions: Monticello-Salem Crossroads, Ridgeway, Winnsboro North and Winnsboro South. Map 2.1 shows the Fairfield County CCD's, while Table 2.2 provides the 2020 and 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) population estimates.

Table 2.2 - Fairfield County 2020 Population Change by County Subdivision.

Census County Subdivision	2020 ACS	2010 ACS	Percent Change 2010 to 2020
Winnsboro North	3,324	4,512	-26.3%
Winnsboro South	9,980	11,923	-16.3%
Ridgeway	6,849	5,419	+26.4%
Monticello – Salem Crossroads	2,253	2,186	+3.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,406</b>	<b>24,040</b>	<b>-6.8%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Map 2.1: Census County Subdivisions



The least populated is the Monticello-Salem CCD, located in the western part of the County. According to the 2020 ACS, this district has 2,253 residents and a density of approximately 16 persons per square mile. The most notable landmarks in this district are the VC Sumner Nuclear Power Plant, Lake Monticello, and the Town of Jenkinsville.

The Ridgeway CCD, located on the opposite side of the county, has nearly twice the density and more than twice the population of Monticello-Salem CCD with 6,849 residents. It is the primary beneficiary of development with Lake Wateree and the extension of growth from Richland County, north along the I-77 corridor.

The two Winnsboro CCDs share the county seat and contain the bulk of the population, centered principally in and to the south of Winnsboro in the middle of Fairfield County. Winnsboro North has a population density of about 19 persons per square mile, and a 2020 population estimate of 3,324. Winnsboro South has a much higher density of about 72 persons per square mile and a 2020 population estimate of 9,980. The Town of Winnsboro itself has a current population estimate of 3,208, while Ridgeway (the next largest Town) has a population of 294, and Jenkinsville (the smallest and newest municipality) has a population of 36.

A look back at changes within the four CCD's shows a big jump in population in the Ridgeway CCD, most likely due to the presence of I-77 and easy accessibility to Richland County. On the other side of the county, in the Monticello-Salem CCD, also had a slight increase in population. The Winnsboro North CCD has been a slow growth area, and actually lost about 25 percent of its 2010 estimated population. Within the same time period the Winnsboro South CCD experienced a modest decline of 16 percent.

This population distribution pattern displayed in the four CCDs establishes a backdrop for planning – indicating rural issues are the primary concern in the north central and western parts of the county, while emerging urban and development issues are the primary concerns in the south central and eastern parts of the County.

## Demographic Characteristics

In addition to population distributions, it is also essential from a planning perspective to understand demographic characteristics of the population. The principal components are gender, age, and race and ethnicity. These are important characteristics of the population to understand in order to plan for and support diversity, inclusion, and equitable development in all areas of the County.

### Gender and Age

In regards to gender, the female population is larger than its male counterpart. In 2020, the female population in South Carolina was estimated at 51.5 percent of the total. The County of Fairfield by comparison has a slightly higher ratio of females, with women outnumbering men



by close to 1,000. The County's female population increased gradually from 51.7 percent in 1980 to 52.1 percent of the total in 2010, and 52.5 percent in 2020 (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 - Fairfield County Population Trends by Gender

	2020 Estimate (% Total)	2015 Estimate (% Total)
Male	10,657 (47.5%)	11, 060 (47.8%)
Female	11,749 (52.5%)	12, 048 (52.2%)

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates*

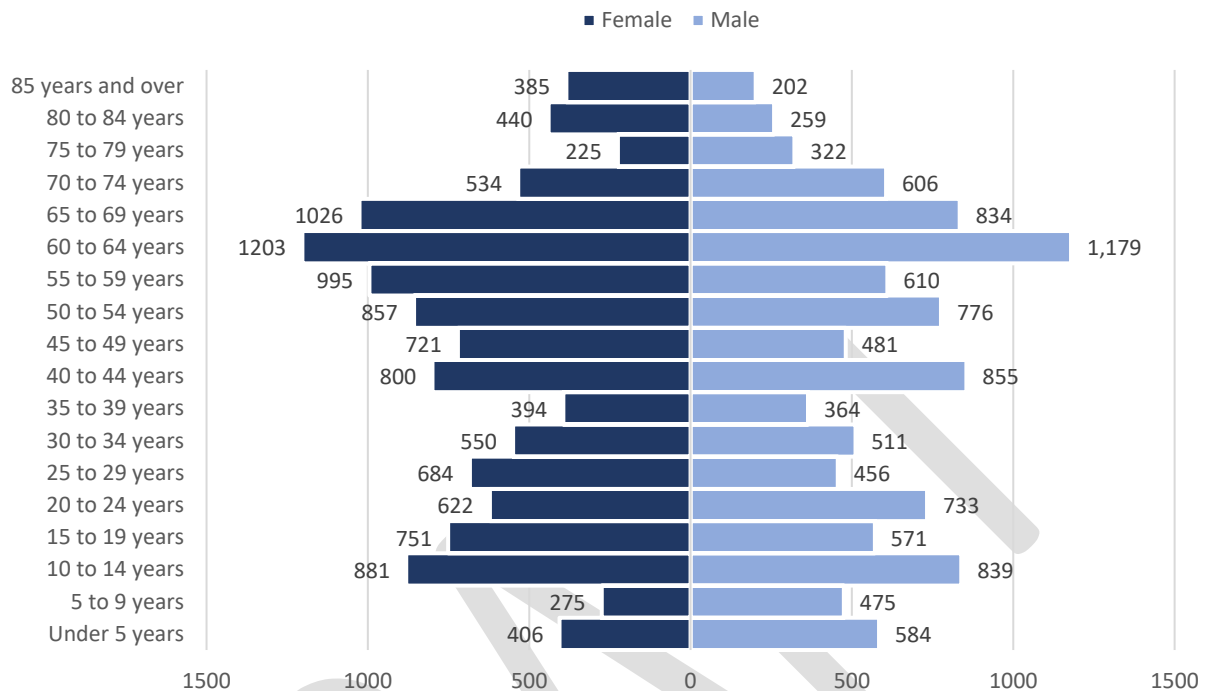
Nationally, the sexes are about evenly distributed in the pre-teen and teenage years, but with age the ratio generally favors the female side. While the process is gradual, females at age 65 and over are in a definite majority position. This pattern is also prevalent in Fairfield County where in 2020, females 65 and over comprised 22.2 percent of the aging population. Figure 2.1 presents the population pyramid for Fairfield County, summarizing the population component of age is distributed between male and female genders.

This trend has few physical planning implications, except for housing. More people, particularly elderly, of any one sex generally produce more one-person households, favoring smaller units and/or aggregate housing and care facilities. There are obvious social and financial ramifications however with gender imbalance, particularly for females.

The most noteworthy trends taking place in the age of County residents are: (1) a declining number of young people under the age of 18; (2) an increasing number of elderly 65 and older, and; (3) substantial growth in the median age of the population. These population shifts among the three major age groups is of considerable concern because of the obvious planning ramifications. The reasons are both social and economic.

From 6,128 persons (nearly 26 percent of the total population) in 2000, the under 18 age group dropped to 4,284 (or 19 percent of the total) by 2020 – a 30 percent decline. While not as significant, the working age cohort between 19 and 64 years had a reduction of 6 percent. This contrasts with a 56 percent increase in the population 65 and older in that same twenty-year time period. The median age of the population has similarly increased by 27 percent, from about 37 years old to 47 years old. (Table 2.4).

Figure 2.1 - Fairfield County Population Pyramid



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Table 2.4 - Fairfield County population age trends by cohort.

Age Cohort	2020 (% Total)	2015 (% Total)	2010 (% Total)	2000 (% Total)
Under 18	4,284 (19.1%)	4,865 (21.0%)	5,431 (22.7%)	6,128 (26.1%)
18-64	13,289 (59.3%)	14,348 (62.0%)	14,960 (62.4%)	14,232 (60.7%)
65+	4,833 (21.6%)	3,895 (17.0%)	3,565 (14.9%)	3,094 (13.2%)
Median Age	47.1	44.1	42.3	36.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

## Aging in Place

Aging in place is a trend that is here to stay. Contrary to the notion that most elderly retired people migrate to places like Florida and the coast, 77 percent of adults Americans 50 and older prefer to stay in their homes and never move, according to the 2021 Home and Community Preference Survey by the AARP. The sentiment expressed in this survey was not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and is also consistent with 63 percent of younger adults, making it an overall societal concern. As the elderly segment of the population increases the County will need to be prepared to address the different needs of this growing community.

Heads of household aged 65 and older are expected to grow nationwide in the next 20 years by 41 percent. This is reflected in Fairfield County, as the population 65 and older who own their home increased from an estimated 27.0 percent in 2010 to 38.6 percent in 2020.

While home ownership amongst the elderly population has increased, so has the rate of this population that rents their home. According to 2020 Census ACS five year estimates, around 23.2 percent of the population 65 and older rent, compared to 13.0 percent in 2015.

Two of the principal concerns of an aging population are (1) the physical or built environment in which they live, and (2) housing. Fairfield County should consider addressing the following concerns in regards to its built environment and an aging population:

- **Transportation:** Make getting to places easier. Focus on alternatives to the automobile: i.e. sidewalks, bikeways, and public transportation. Additionally, the County should require installation of easy to read directional signs, ramps, and hand rails in all public buildings.
- **Social Environment:** Increase the variety, accessibility and attractiveness of places where people meet, whether by accident or appointment, including passive recreation opportunities such as those available at the County's parks. Increasing ease of access to broadband internet will also facilitate socializing for the segment of the aging population with limited mobility options.

In regards to housing issues, 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.

In Fairfield County, most residential areas are devoted exclusively to single-family detached housing on fairly large lots. Housing alternatives are needed to address the changing needs and preferences of an aging population. Such alternatives should include the following:

- Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs)
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's)
- Congregate Housing
- Smaller Housing Units
- Assisted Housing
- Shared Housing
- Retirement Housing Projects, Subdivisions

According to the AARP 2021 Home and Community Preference Survey, as many as 49 percent of adults would consider leaving their current homes for one that would allow them to age independently. Around 69 percent of adults would consider sharing their home with a relative, or even a friend (54 percent) as they grow older. Of note are shared housing options or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's), which allow adults to cohabit with relatives or friends as they age in place while maintaining a higher degree of independence. According to 2020 Census ACS 5 year estimates, in the Fairfield County population 60 and older:

- Thirty-one percent have a disability
- Thirty-four percent live alone
- Seventy percent of the population is at or above 150 percent of federal poverty level
- One in five persons in poverty over 65 are women vs one out of every six man

These conditions generally are mirrored in housing conditions and living standards, but also show up in health conditions, as persons in poverty or subsisting on low incomes are more likely to have poor health because of inadequate doctor care due to cost.

## Race and Ethnicity

There has been a modest change in the racial composition of the County over the last 30 years, but all racial groups have increased numerically (Table 2.5). Based on the 2020 Census ACS estimates, African Americans make up the largest share of the population (53.5 percent) with Whites making the up the second largest racial category (40.5 percent).

Table 2.5 - Race and Ethnicity

Race	2020 Census (% Total)	2020 ACS (% Total)	2010 Census (% Total)	2000 Census (% Total)
White	8,503 (40.5%)	8,540 (38.1%)	9,098 (38.0%)	9,282 (39.4%)
Black or African American	11,201 (53.5%)	12,795 (57.1%)	14,112 (58.9%)	13,859 (58.8%)
American Indian and Alaska Native	64 (0.3%)	94 (0.4%)	47 (0.2%)	36 (0.2%)
Asian	101 (0.5%)	105 (0.5%)	54 (0.2%)	44 (0.2%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	7 (< 0.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Hispanic or Latino	423 (2.0%)	513 (2.3%)	374 (1.6%)	250 <sup>1</sup> (1.1%)
Some other race	55 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	30 (0.1%)	104 (0.4%)
Two or more races	594 (2.8%)	359 (1.6%)	241 (1.0%)	129 (0.5%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

## Education and Income Characteristics

There exists a positive correlation between land use and the quality of housing, income and education. Higher educated people generally command higher incomes and subsequently reside in higher end homes and neighborhoods.

In South Carolina, as elsewhere, higher education generally equates to increased earnings with each level of attainment, as illustrated in Table 2.6. Persons with a high school diploma earn on average more than those who do not finish high school. Going to college will increase average incomes even more over those who do not attend. And each step above some college also will result in higher incomes, on average.

<sup>1</sup> For the 2000 Census the “Hispanic or Latino” category is not mutually exclusive with other categories.

Table 2.6 - Educational Attainment and Median Annual Household Income

Educational Attainment	Median Annual Income (2020)	% Change by Education Level
< High School	\$16,507	-
High School Graduate	\$31,465	+90%
Some College/Assoc. Degree	\$34,197	+8.7%
Bachelor's	\$46,351	+35.5%
Graduate/Professional Degree	\$60,700	+30.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

There is also a strong correlation between education, income and health. The government report, Health, United States, 1998, found that each increase in income and education has a perceptible impact on health. The near poor are, on average, healthier than those living in poverty; middle-income people are healthier than the near poor; and people with high incomes tend to be the healthiest. People with less education and less money are more likely to have jobs that do not offer health insurance, and that means less access to health care. This can result in higher death rates for all major causes of death, including chronic diseases, infectious diseases and injuries.

Based on 2020 Census ACS estimates, approximately 9.9 percent of residents in Fairfield County have less than a high school diploma. This number represents a 50 percent decrease from the 2000 Census, which reported 21.4 percent in this category. The number of people reporting a bachelor's degree or higher experienced a 24.0 percent increase since 2015, from 14.3 percent to 17.8 percent. These estimates follow an overall trend within the County, where educational attainment has been steadily increasing in the past decades (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7 - Educational Attainment Levels (Persons 25 Years and Older)

Educational Attainment	2020 ACS	2015 ACS	2010 ACS	2000 Count
	Number (% Total)	Number (% Total)	Number (% Total)	Number (% Total)
< 9th Grade	637 (3.9%)	1,037 (6.3%)	1,242 (7.6%)	1,767 (11.6%)
9th-12th - No Diploma	1,611 (9.9%)	2,229 (13.6%)	2,271 (13.9%)	3,260 (21.4%)
HS Diploma - Some College	9,700 (59.6%)	9,340 (57.1%)	9,066 (55.5%)	7,798 (51.2%)
Associates Degree	1,426 (8.8%)	1,410 (8.6%)	1,160 (7.1%)	641 (4.2%)
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	2,895 (17.8%)	2,341 (14.3%)	2,598 (15.9%)	1,778 (11.7%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Educational attainment varies by gender. Males represent the largest share of this category at around 30%. Females represent the largest share of those with a Bachelor's degree or higher.

As previously noted, higher education generally produces higher incomes. And while both have improved since 1990, incomes in Fairfield County lag behind averages for the State in terms of median household, family and per capita incomes. Table 2.8 shows the change in median household, family, and per capita incomes from 2010 to 2020. While the increase over the last 20 years is modest, the change still represents an overall positive trend. Table 2.9 shows the distribution of income characteristic through a 10 year time period.

In Fairfield County, the largest segment of poverty for persons 25 years and older are those with less than a high school degree (33.8 percent). Almost 12.8 percent of those with some college or associate's degree have incomes less than the poverty line. Only 2.2 percent of those residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher are considered to be below the poverty line.

Table 2.8 - Median and Per Capita Income for Households and Families in Fairfield County, 1990 – 2020

	2020	2015	2010
Median HH Income	\$43,861	\$36,004	\$36,120
Median Family Income	\$58,279	\$41,456	\$40,849
Per Capita Income	\$25,698	\$20,401	\$18,877

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Table 2.9 - Income Characteristic for Households in Fairfield County

Income and Benefits (In 2020 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	2020 ACS (%)	2010 ACS (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,315</b>	<b>9,121</b>
Less than \$10,000	1,172 (12.6%)	1,596 (17.5%)
\$10,000 to \$14,999	512 (5.5%)	529 (5.8%)
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,231 (13.2%)	1,624 (17.8%)
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,179 (12.7%)	1,203 (13.2%)
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,083 (11.6%)	1,332 (14.6%)
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,394 (15.0%)	1,121 (12.3%)
\$75,000 to \$99,999	832 (8.9%)	830 (9.1%)
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,153 (12.4%)	584 (6.4%)
\$150,000 to \$199,999	537 (5.8%)	219 (2.4%)
\$200,000 or more	222 (2.4%)	91 (1.0%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Of the lower income families, 14.7 percent were determined to have incomes below poverty status. For families with children under 18 the rate jumps to 25.1 percent, which represents a four percentage point decrease from 2015 estimates. The poverty rate for individuals and elderly persons has also decreased over the five year period.

According to 2020 Census ACS 5 year estimates, the largest concentration of poverty within Fairfield County is family households with a female householder with no husband (Table 2.10). While the proportion of this population has decreased to 54.5 percent, it has consistently remained above 50 percent for the past decade. The largest concentration of poverty is within Black or African American families at 20.7 percent. Approximately 643 African American families are living in poverty compared to slightly over 220 white families.



Table 2.10 - Poverty status in the past 12 months by household type in Fairfield County

Household Type	2020 (% Total)	2015 (% Total)	2010 (% Total)
Married Couple Families	316 (34.8%)	285 (25.6%)	241 (26.4%)
Male householder, no spouse	98 (10.8%)	188 (16.9%)	87 (9.5%)
Female householder, no spouse	493 (54.5%)	639 (57.5%)	584 (64.1%)
Total families below poverty level in the past 12 months	907 (100%)	1,112 (100%)	912 (100%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Despite the modest gains in income, the overall data tells us much about living conditions in Fairfield County. While income has improved over time, due in part to increased educational attainment levels, they have not kept pace with the State, and much of the population remains burdened by poverty. Table 2.11 shows how an estimated 33.5 percent of Fairfield County population, or around 7,400 residents, live at or above 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

Table 2.11 - Percentage of people whose income in the past 12 months is below the federal poverty level

All Individuals below:	Number of Individuals	Percent of Total Population
50 percent of poverty level	2,185	9.9%
125 percent of poverty level	5,528	24.9%
150 percent of poverty level	7,404	33.5%
185 percent of poverty level	8,666	39.2%
200 percent of poverty level	9,531	43.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

## Public Health

One measure of the population that is of long-term interest to a community is public health. Health factors play into such topics as housing, economic development, transportation and community facilities. If a population has severe medical needs, this can become taxing on the local medical infrastructure and reduces an individual's ability to spend monies into the local community for general goods and services.

In 2018, a *Community Health Needs Assessment* was performed by the Fairfield Community Coordinating Council (FCCC). This study revealed interesting information about the population. Compared to the state average, Fairfield County residents had a lower than average rate of excessive drinking, preventable hospital stays and graduation rates. Excessive drinking is a risk factor for adverse health outcomes while a high graduation rate correlates to a higher overall health factor. These areas of exception should be highlighted and maintained as other areas of health within the community are focused on.

Fairfield County does have areas of health that need to be a primary focal point moving forward. The *Community Health Needs Assessment* identified 13 areas where the county can approve and are based on Fairfield County's health data in relation to state and national averages. These factors are based on correlations with a healthy community.

Table 2.12 - Areas of Community Health Concern, 2018

Health Indicator	Fairfield County Value	State Value	National Value (Top Performing States)	Value Measure
Adult Smoking	19%	20%	14%	% adults who smoke
Adult Obesity	39%	32%	26%	% based on obesity rate
Access to Exercise	23%	54%	91%	% living within ½ mile of a physical activity
Alcohol Impaired Driving	45%	37%	13%	% of motor vehicle crash deaths with alcohol involved
Some College	47%	62%	72%	% adults with some post-secondary education
Unemployment	7%	5%	3%	% of 16 or > unemployed and seeking work
Children in Poverty	32%	23%	12%	% children < 18 living in poverty
Children in Single Parent Households	60%	39%	20%	% of children where head of household is single parent
Commuting Time	55%	33%	15%	% of commuters driving more than 30 minutes to work each day
Food Environment Index	6.0	6.0	8.6	Ranges from 0-10 based on access to food and food insecurity
Sexually Transmitted Infections	648.5	569.9	145.1	Number of new cases per 100,000 population
Income Inequality	5.9	4.8	3.7	Ratio of household income at the 80 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Violent Crimes	629	521	62	Number of violent crimes reported per 100,000 population

Source: *Community Health Needs Assessment, Fairfield Community Coordinating Council, 2018.*

Many of the factors identified in the above table relate to actions or inactions that put one's health at risk. Others focus on distance patterns within the local communities. However, the indicators point to increased rates of obesity, diabetes and hypertension within the County population under current conditions.

The good news is many of the risk factors for a healthy community can be reduced or minimized with coordinated actions by public and private agencies along with business and industry. Within the last decade, Fairfield County has invested in their Parks and Recreation programs for all age groups which should promote healthy lifestyles for years into the future. Additional post-secondary education and employment opportunities within the County would help to reduce the educational attainment levels, reduce unemployment, decrease commute times and improve the inequalities in income. Community health education and promotion can be incorporated into community information and distributed by employers. As investment continues to occur with public and private funding, the County needs to focus on funding projects where a direct correlation can be made where success can be measured by improvement in the community's long-term health factors.

## Key Findings

- Fairfield County has experienced a 12 percent population decline since the 2010 Census count, with about 3,000 less residents in 2020 than in 2010 (20,948 vs 23,956);
- The Census Population Estimates Program (PEP) calculated an estimated 1 percent decline in population between 2020 and 2021 (20,948 vs 20,690)
- The 2020 Census count racial composition shows that the County continues to diversify since 2000, with slight increases to Asian, Hispanic and other minorities comprising an ever enlarging segment of the population.
- The African-American population experienced a 19 percent decrease since 2000 while the White population had a slight decrease of 8 percent in the same time period
- County racial composition in 2020 is majority African American (53.5 percent), followed by White (40.5 percent), with an ethnic minority population of around 6 percent.
- Median age has increased from 36.9 in 2000 to 47.1 in 2020 Census ACS
- There is an overall increase in the non-workforce population. The elderly population cohort (65+ years) has increased by 56 percent since 2000 (3,094 vs 4,833 in 2020), and now comprises around 22 percent of total County population in 2020.
- The under 18 population has declined 30 percent in the same time period (6,128 vs 4,284 in 2020), and now represents around 19 percent of County population.
- The labor force age cohort (18-64 years) experienced a slight 6 percent decline since 2000 (14,232 vs 13,289 in 2020). This age cohort still comprises the majority of the population in Fairfield County (59 percent)
- According to 2020 Census ACS estimates, the population under 9 years old experienced a 46 percent decrease since 2000

- The sex ratio (males per 100 females) is 90.7. Fairfield County is majority female (52.5 percent), with females outnumbering males by close to 1,100 people.
- There is an overall increase in higher education in Fairfield County. The proportion of the population 25 years and older with a Bachelor's Degree or higher has increased by 62 percent since the 2000 Census Count (1,778 vs 2,895 in 2020 ACS).
- In contrast the proportion of the population without a high school diploma has decreased an estimated 55 percent in the same time period
- Median Household income has increased by 20 percent since the 2010 Census ACS (\$36,120 vs \$43,861 in 2020 ACS).
- Per capita income has increased by 36 percent since the 2010 Census ACS (\$18,877 vs \$25,698 in 2020 ACS)
- According to 2020 Census ACS estimates, Fairfield County median household income is 20 percent lower than the South Carolina median household income (\$43,861 vs \$54,864). Per capita income in Fairfield County is 16 percent lower than South Carolina overall.
- Poverty levels decreased from 2015 to 2020 according to Census ACS estimates (24.4 percent in 2015 vs 18.5 percent in 2020). Poverty rate is higher than in South Carolina overall (14.7 percent)

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal # 1: Population

Grow and sustain a healthy, diverse, and prosperous population of all ages through job creation, residential recruitment, aging services, quality of life improvements, and equitable access to programs and services

### Strategies

- 1.1. Attract/retain workforce age population through job development, residential recruitment initiatives, and marketing Fairfield County as an "alternative residential option" for commuters to the Columbia and Charlotte metropolitan areas
- 1.2. Coordinate with the Fairfield County Council on Aging, the CMCOG Area Agency on Aging, and other aging service providers to improve and expand access to "age sensitive" transportation, housing, meals, and other essential services.
- 1.3. Support public health priorities with a focus on ensuring equitable access to healthy foods and the promotion of active lifestyles and recreation opportunities

DRAFT

3

---

# Housing

# Introduction

The housing element of the comprehensive plan provides an analysis of the County's housing stock in terms of type, distribution, age, condition, occupancy, and its ability to accommodate existing and future population growth. In compliance with the SC Priority Investment act, housing affordability issues are also addressed. This includes an analysis of the town's income to housing cost ratio as well as a policy analysis of regulations that may be prohibitive to the provision of affordable housing.

## Residential Building Trends

Fairfield County has 11,958 housing units according to 2020 U.S. Census ACS five year estimates, a 2.4 percent increase from 2010 estimates. This represents an increase of 277 units over the number reported in 2000, or an annual average increase of about 27 per year for the decade.

Building permit data during the past decade shows that most construction and additions are residential in nature (Table 3.1). Single family construction since 2016 has been concentrated to the South and East of the Town of Winnsboro, particularly near Blythewood and by the Wateree River. No multi-family projects have been built since 2016. Suffice to say, building permit data does not always equate to actual numbers on the ground for a variety of reasons.

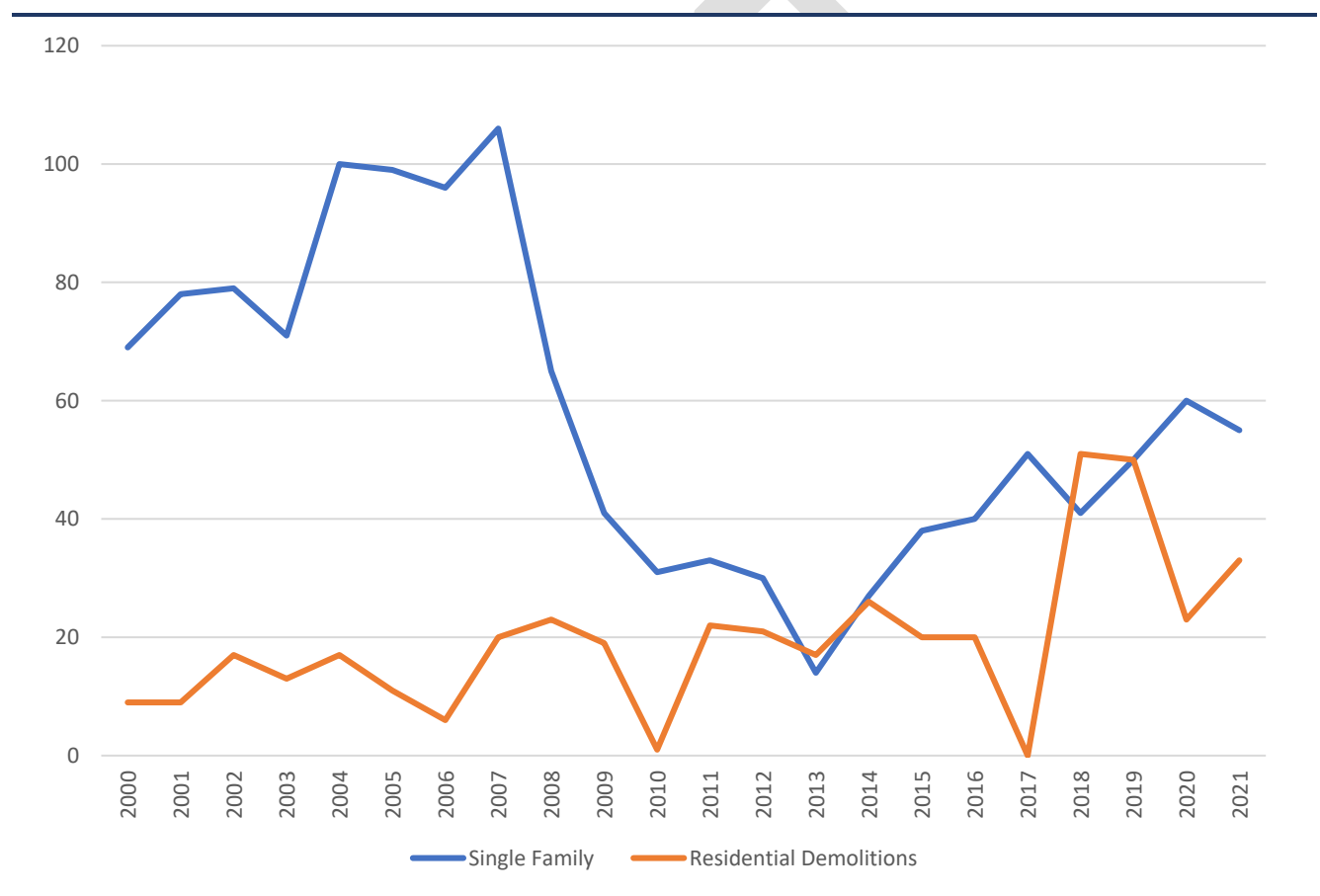
Table 3.1 - Fairfield County Building Permit Trends by Type

Permit Type	2021	2020	Year 2019	2018	2017
<b>Total Permits (Estimated Value)</b>	<b>227 (\$34,687,370)</b>	<b>221 (\$31,371,842)</b>	<b>244 (\$35,999,710)</b>	<b>216 (\$21,776,015)</b>	<b>201 (\$20,523,842)</b>
Single Family Units (Estimated Value)	55 (\$17,121,232)	60 (\$13,804,857)	50 (\$11,546,846)	41 (\$9,755,333)	51 (\$12,015,727)
Multi-Family Units (Estimated Value)	0 (\$0)	0 (\$0)	0 (\$0)	0 (\$0)	0 (\$0)
Additions/Repairs (Estimated Value)	104 (\$15,264,841)	103 (\$15,126,416)	109 (\$15,050,749)	82 (\$3,666,220)	67 (\$4,056,743)
Non-Residential (Estimated Value)	35 (\$1,770,297)	58 (\$2,440,569)	85 (\$9,402,115)	93 (\$8,354,462)	83 (\$4,451,372)

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

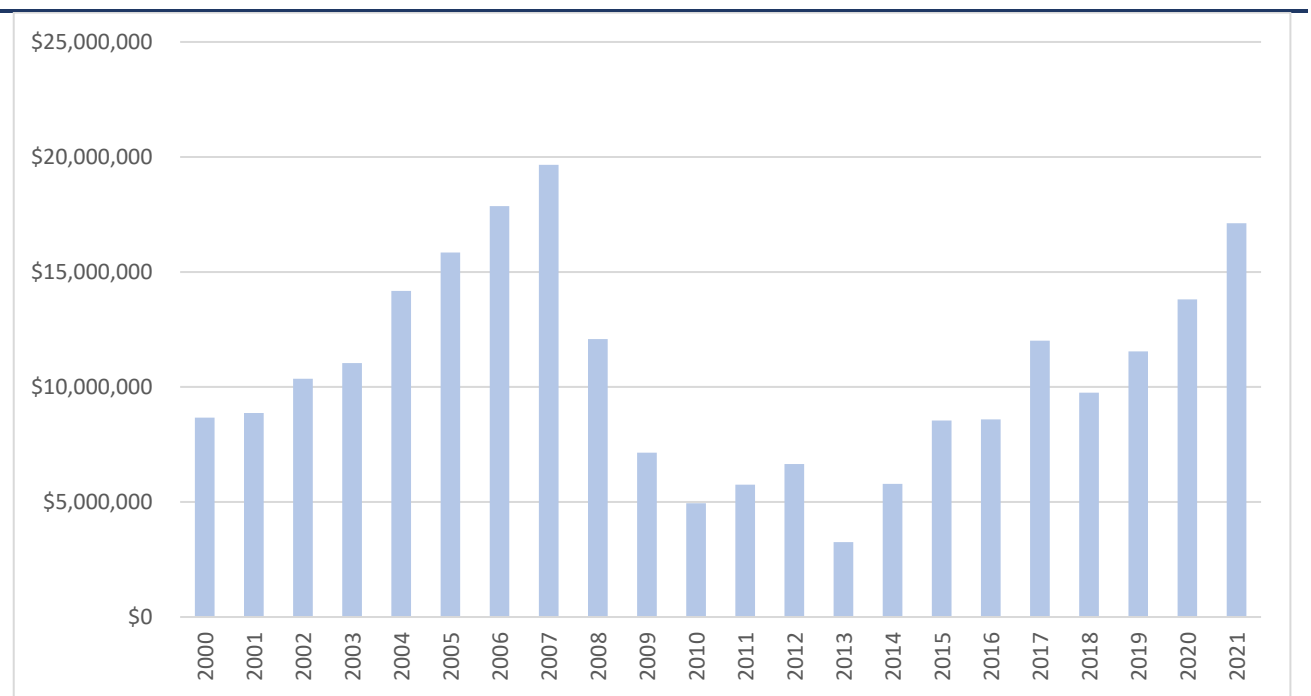
Single-family detached homes account for a majority of the housing in Fairfield County, but not to the extent they once did. In 1970, single-family site-built housing accounted for 92 percent of all housing in Fairfield County. By 1990, single-family housing had declined to 69 percent, and in 2000 it further declined to 63 percent of all housing. Census ACS estimates from 2010 to 2020 show that this trend has plateaued, increasing from 65 percent to 67 percent in that time period. Building permits issued from 2000 through 2021 show a decline in single-family housing, and their rate of construction per year has not yet recovered from the 2008 recession (Figure 3.1 and 3.2).

Figure 3.1 – Number of Building Permits Issued 2000 - 2021



Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

Figure 3.2 – Number of Building Permits Issued 2000 - 2021



Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

In contrast to single family housing historical trends, there has been an increase in manufactured housing. According to 2020 Census ACS five year estimates, mobile homes account for approximately 23 percent of all housing units within Fairfield County (Table 3.2). This is higher than statewide trends, with mobile homes comprising around 15 percent of all housing in South Carolina. The growth of alternative housing in the form of manufactured and multi-family dwellings is driven by economics and changing lifestyles. Both types of housing address the issue of economics. Manufactured housing cost about 70 percent of comparable site-built housing. And multi-family, while also less expensive, better addresses the needs of a more mobile populace and workforce.



Map 3.1: Residential Building Permits 2010-2021

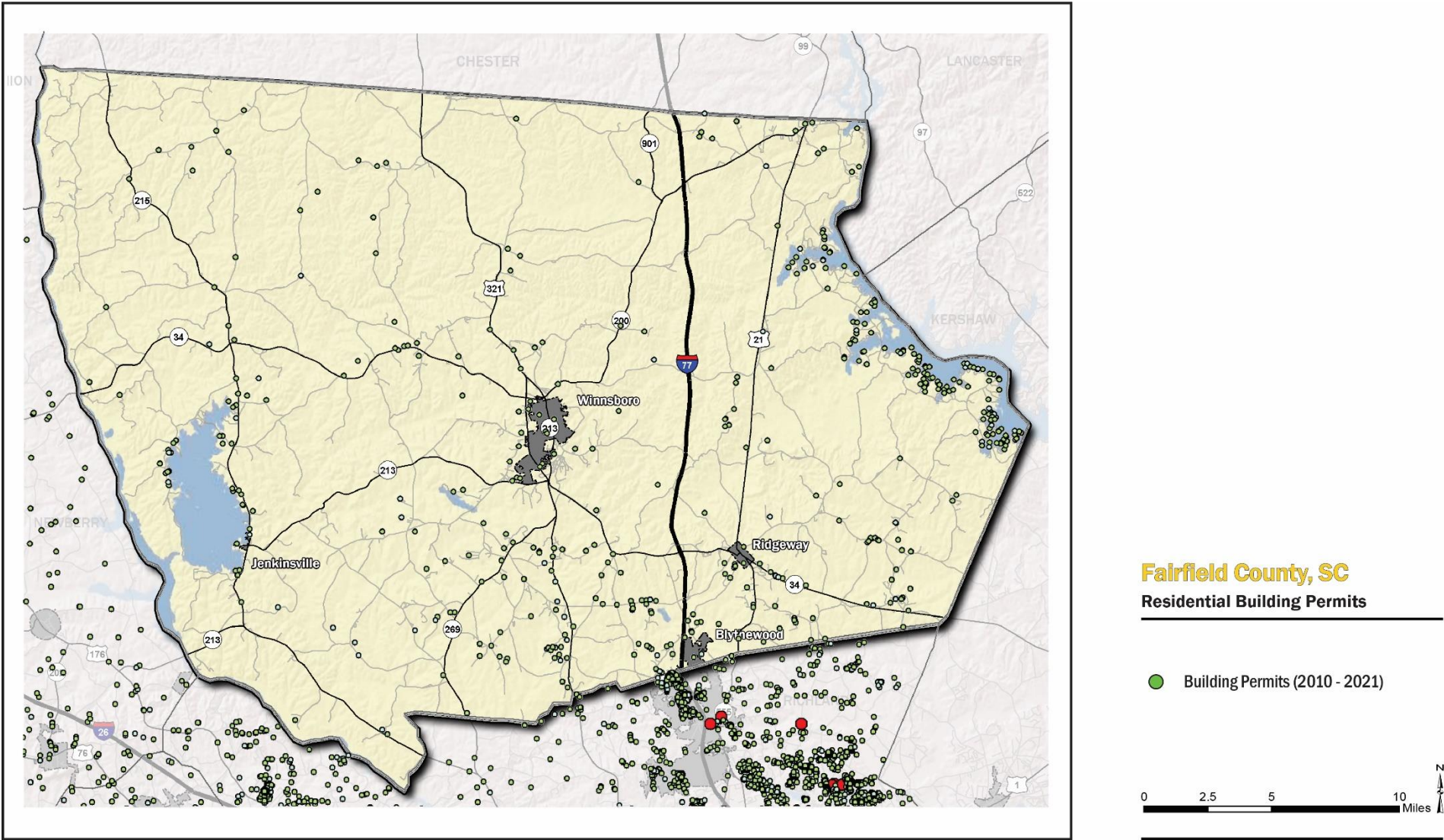


Table 3.2 - Housing Units by Type 2010-2020

Year	Single Family Homes, Detached (% Total)	Single Family Homes, Attached (% Total)	Mobile Homes (% Total)	Multi-Unit Homes (% Total)
2010	7,576 (65.8%)	68 (0.6%)	2,909 (25.2%)	968 (8.4%)
2011	7,691 (66.2%)	92 (0.8%)	2,722 (23.4%)	1,116 (9.6%)
2012	7,868 (67.6%)	71 (0.6%)	2,702 (23.2%)	999 (8.6%)
2013	7,766 (66.8%)	67 (0.6%)	2,862 (24.6%)	928 (8.0%)
2014	7,855 (67.4%)	58 (0.5%)	2,756 (23.6%)	991 (8.5%)
2015	8,176 (70.1%)	59 (0.5%)	2,558 (21.9%)	868 (7.4%)
2016	8,181 (70.2%)	48 (0.4%)	2,665 (22.9%)	768 (6.6%)
2017	8,150 (69.0%)	85 (0.7%)	2,787 (23.6%)	790 (6.7%)
2018	8,297 (70.0%)	29 (0.2%)	2,835 (23.9%)	690 (5.8%)
2019	7,989 (67.2%)	33 (0.3%)	2,980 (25.1%)	888 (7.5%)
2020	8,113 (67.8%)	33 (0.3%)	2,832 (23.7%)	980 (8.2%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

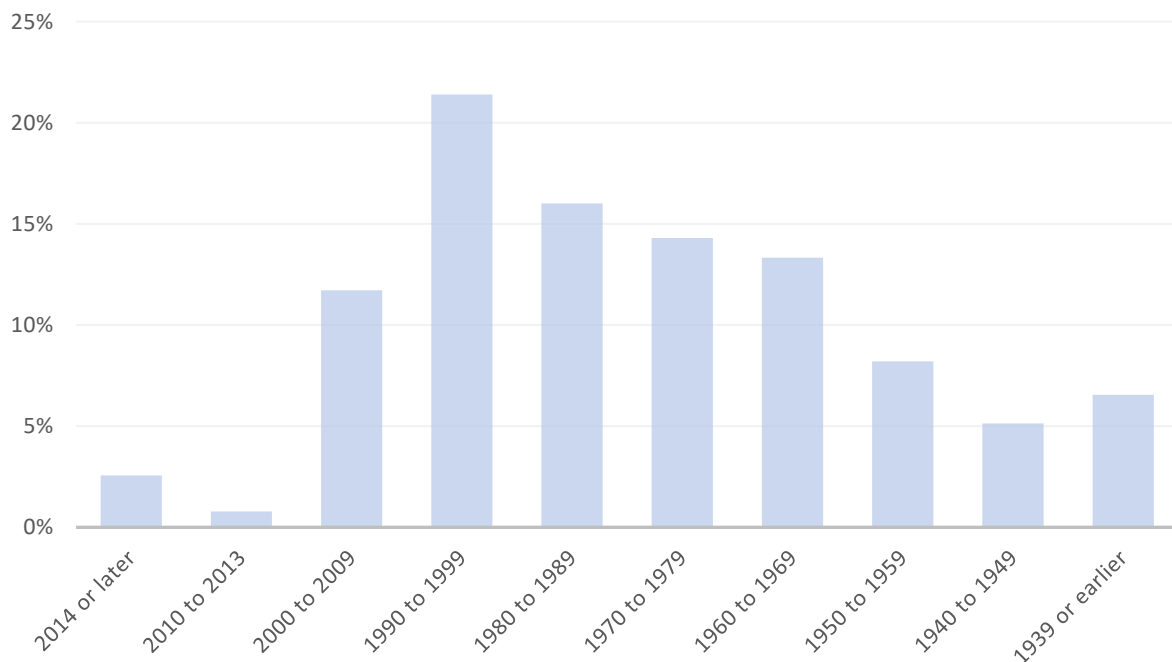
## Age and Condition

A substandard house is one with structural deficiencies and/or one without complete plumbing and/or kitchen facilities. Something as basic as plumbing and complete kitchen facilities are viewed in this day and time as standard components in all homes. The extent to which these conditions exist in Fairfield County is relatively small and declining. The 2020 Census ACS estimated that there were 112 homes without complete plumbing facilities and 148 houses without complete kitchen facilities. The U.S Census does not evaluate or statistically record the extent of substandard structures.

In the absence of individual housing inspections, it is not possible to assess with any degree of accuracy structural conditions of the County's housing stock. However, there are some indices, in addition to the absence of complete plumbing and kitchen facilities, housing values, and exterior visual inspection and assessment, which may be used to evaluate and quantify housing conditions in the county.

One of the key indicators used for determining housing conditions was "age of housing". Older homes are more likely to pose fire hazards, have dangerous code violations, have lead paint, or be structurally deficient in some way. According to 2020 Census ACS five year estimates, 11 percent or 1,397 of the County's housing stock, were built prior to 1950 (Figure 3.3). While this is not a condemnation of all older homes, it is an indicator of possible substandard conditions based on age. Where such housing exists, the potential for becoming substandard and the cost of maintenance generally are greater.

Figure 3.3 – Age of Housing Units by Decade



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Substandard, vacant, and dilapidated housing units are a significant and growing challenge for Fairfield County. Many older neighborhoods in and around Winnsboro have a large number of these units that need to be either rehabilitated or demolished. Residents often complain to County and Town officials about these properties and the need for better code enforcement. Blighted residential areas create a public health and safety hazard for existing residents and make it difficult to attract and retain residents.

## Occupancy and Tenure

Nationally, over the last several decades the number of households has increased at a higher rate than the population. The reason for this has been a sustained reduction in the size of households. In 2010, the U.S. Census reported the lowest ever average number of persons per owner-occupied households in South Carolina at 2.54. Renter-occupied housing was slightly lower, averaging 2.43 persons per household. These trends may be changing across the nation. Future households, as well as families, are projected to further increase in size nationally,

according to a 2018 report of Census trends by Pew Research Center. This report concluded that by 2020, average household size would reach an average of 2.6 persons per household, a conclusion matched by 2020 Census ACS estimates.

But the opposite may be the case for Fairfield County. From 1980 to 2000, the average size of households in Fairfield declined 16 percent, continuing a downward trend over the last several decades and producing the smallest ever number of persons per household at 2.63 in 2000. Household size further declined between 2000 and 2010 to 2.59 persons per household, essentially mirroring the state-wide average.

From 2010 to 2020 the trends shifted. According to 2020 Census ACS five year estimates, household size across South Carolina has plateaued to an average of 2.55 per owner-occupied housing unit, while renter-occupied housing has an average of 2.46 persons per housing unit. In the same time period, average household size in Fairfield County for owner-occupied housing reduced to 2.37 persons per unit.

Table 3.3 - Persons Per Household in Owner and Renter Occupied Housing within Fairfield County

Year		2010	2015	2020
Persons Per Household	Owner-Occupied Housing	2.59	2.61	2.37
	Renter-Occupied Housing	2.58	2.29	2.38

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Shrinking household size would normally equate to a preference for smaller housing units. This seems not to be the case in Fairfield County however, where 71 percent of all homes have three or more bedrooms. With the development of more alternative housing such as manufactured homes and multi-family dwellings, this will likely change over time. In summary, the Plan must account for projected size and composition of households to more accurately predict future housing needs in the community.

The majority of housing in Fairfield County is owner-occupied, but declining as a percent of all housing according to 2020 Census. This is due to the state of the economy and fallout-out from the housing market recession of 2008-2010. Occupancy trends since the turn of the century seem to be driving the housing market to more affordable alternatives found in multi-family and manufactured homes, and less binding alternatives, found in rental housing. Until the situation is corrected and reversed, home-ownership may further decline.

Home mortgage issues aside, home ownership remains high in Fairfield County, at nearly three-quarters (75 percent) of all occupied housing units. The proportion of the housing stock in the rental market has remained steady since 2010 and according to 2020 estimates stands at 25 percent. The vacancy rate, already high in 2000, increased by 41 percent in 2010 to a new high of 19 percent of all housing.

Households include all persons who occupy a housing unit, but not all households are composed of families. A family by definition consists 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 can also contain only one person.

In 2020, there were 6,166 family households comprising 66 percent of all households in Fairfield County, according to Census ACS five year estimates. The remaining 34 percent were non-family households, of which 31 percent are one-person households, and 12 percent are comprised of householders 65 years and older. As noted in the Population Element, the population 65 and older is increasingly owning more of the share of housing units in the County.

## Affordability



The goal of the National Affordable Housing Act is that "every American family be able to afford a decent home in a suitable environment". But what constitutes affordability? According to 2020 Census ACS five year estimates, housing values or the cost of owner-occupied housing in Fairfield County is modest by comparison with values across the State (Table 3.4). Forty-six percent of owner-occupied housing in Fairfield is valued at less than \$100,000 compared with only 26 percent statewide.

About 25 percent of the County's owner-occupied dwellings were valued above \$200,000, compared with nearly twice the rate statewide (41 percent). The median value of housing in the County is 63 percent of that of the State median. Median rental housing rates in Fairfield County, like owner-occupied housing values, are generally lower than those statewide by about 20 percent. Census estimates for 2020 show the median monthly rental rate to be \$718 in Fairfield County compared with a statewide median of \$918. But are these considered affordable rates?

Affordability is perhaps the most important factor driving the housing market. The market must be in tune with the marketplace if it is to meet the demand for housing in Fairfield. This means matching housing costs with household incomes of existing and perspective householders.



Table 3.4 - Housing Costs and Value Estimates for Owner Occupied Units in 2020

	Fairfield County Units (% of Total)	South Carolina Units (% of Total)
<b>Owner-occupied units</b>	<b>7,014 (100%)</b>	<b>1,375,391 (100%)</b>
Less than \$50,000	1,318 (18.8%)	147,583 (10.7%)
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,935 (27.6%)	211,250 (15.4%)
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,335 (19.0%)	220,685 (16.0%)
\$150,000 to \$199,999	703 (10.0%)	227,679 (16.6%)
\$200,000 to \$299,999	628 (9.0%)	264,249 (19.2%)
\$300,000 to \$499,999	837 (11.9%)	197,846 (14.4%)
\$500,000 to \$999,999	197 (2.8%)	83,763 (6.1%)
\$1,000,000 or more	61 (0.9%)	22,336 (1.6%)
<b>Median House Value</b>	<b>\$106,900</b>	<b>\$170,100</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

As a general rule, affordability is calculated by lending institutions on the basis of the "two and a half" rule. That is, affordability is based generally on housing costs not exceeding two and a half times gross household income, or using the following HUD formula *"a homeowner pays no more than 30 percent of monthly household income for mortgage payments, insurance, taxes and utilities (housing costs) and a renter pays no more than 30 percent of monthly household income for rent and utilities (rental costs). A household is considered cost-burdened when it spends more than 30 percent of monthly household income on either housing costs or rental costs. When costs exceed 50 percent, a household is considered severely cost-burdened."*

There are exceptions, with some householders paying more by choice. But the vast majority of households paying more than 30 percent generally meet the definition of cost-burdened. *The National Low Income Housing Coalition surveys the rental market and asks two basic questions:*

- Could someone in your community who gets a full-time job at minimum wage today reasonably expect to find a modest rental unit he or she could afford?
- What would a family in your community have to earn to be reasonably assured of quickly finding an affordable rental unit (one costing no more than 30 percent of annual income)?

Table 3.5 presents 2020 Census ACS five year estimates cost burden calculations for owner-occupied housing in Fairfield County. Based on the HUD definition, approximately 25 percent of

owner occupied housing with a mortgage is not affordable while 14 percent of owner occupied housing without a mortgage are not affordable. Combined, over 18 percent of owner occupied housing units is considered unaffordable.

Table 3.5 – Cost Burdened Estimates for Owner-occupied Housing Units (2020)

SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (SMOCAPI)	Count (% of Total)	
	No Mortgage	Mortgage
Less than 20.0 percent	3,023 (76.1%)	1,590 (55.0%)
20.0 to 29.9 percent	393 (9.9%)	572 (19.8%)
30.0 percent or more	558 (14.0%)	728 (25.2%)
Total	3,974 (100%)	2,890 (100%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

Cost burden is significantly higher for renter-occupied housing, according to 2020 Census ACS five year estimates. Around 56 percent of renter-occupied households within Fairfield County are not affordable (Table 3.6). According to a 2021 Need Assessment by the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority (SC Housing), there is a “housing wage” gap of \$5.17 for the average renter in Fairfield County, suggesting that the average wage in Fairfield County might not be sufficient to cover the housing needs of renters.

Table 3.6 - Cost Burdened Estimates for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (2020)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates

GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (GRAPI)	Count (% of Total)
Less than 15.0 percent	279 (16.2%)
20.0 to 29.9 percent	213 (12.4%)
30.0 percent or more	976 (56.7%)
Total	1,722 (100%)

Slow population growth has limited the availability of a range of housing types. The existing housing stock needs significant improvement or rehabilitation. To provide housing, requires a demand for housing which currently is limited as employees who work in the County leave for

more urbanized communities. Low to moderate income housing needs may best be summarized by assessing the status of subsidized housing programs and projects in the county.

Two agencies are primarily responsible for assisting low to moderate income households in Fairfield County: the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority (SC Housing) and the Rural Development Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

According to a 2021 Need Assessment by SC Housing, there are 23 subsidized rental housing units per 100 low-income renters, and 148 evictions per 1,000 renter households. As of June 2022 there is a three to five year waiting list for housing assistance through SC Housing. SC Housing subsidizes the following affordable rental housing projects within Fairfield County:

- Fairfield Senior Village – 32 bedroom units  
156 US Highway Bypass 321 N, Winnsboro, South Carolina 29180
- Winnsboro Arms – 120 bedroom units  
61 Winnsboro Arms Drive, Winnsboro, South Carolina 29180
- Winnfield West Apartments – 66 bedroom units  
338 US Highway 321 Bypass North, Winnsboro, South Carolina 29180
- Deerwood Apartments – 72 bedroom units  
300 Winnsboro Ln, Winnsboro, South Carolina 29180

The Rural Development Division of the USDA subsidizes the following multi-family housing projects within Fairfield County:

- Dogwood Apartments – 36 bedroom units  
250 W. Church Street, Ridgeway, South Carolina 29130
- Castlewood I & II Apartments – 96 bedroom units  
200 Castlewood Dr, Winnsboro, South Carolina 29180
- Evans Knoll Apartments – 36 bedroom units  
701 W Moultrie St, Winnsboro, South Carolina 29180
- Laurelwood I & II Apartments – 64 bedroom units  
16A Laurelwood Ct, Winnsboro, South Carolina 29180

Additionally, most existing housing and buildings in the county were constructed without regard to “green building design” – incorporating efficiency and conservation of energy and water in the design, construction and operation. As such, they too, may be considered substandard by today’s standards. Green building design is intended to reduce environmental impact through energy-efficient materials, solar systems, and water conservation technique, including storm water management techniques. With emphasis on green building design, the County is challenged to encourage and/or assist in retrofitting its housing stock and ensuring green building design in new homes and subdivisions, as well as commercial and institutional buildings.



## Essential Worker Housing

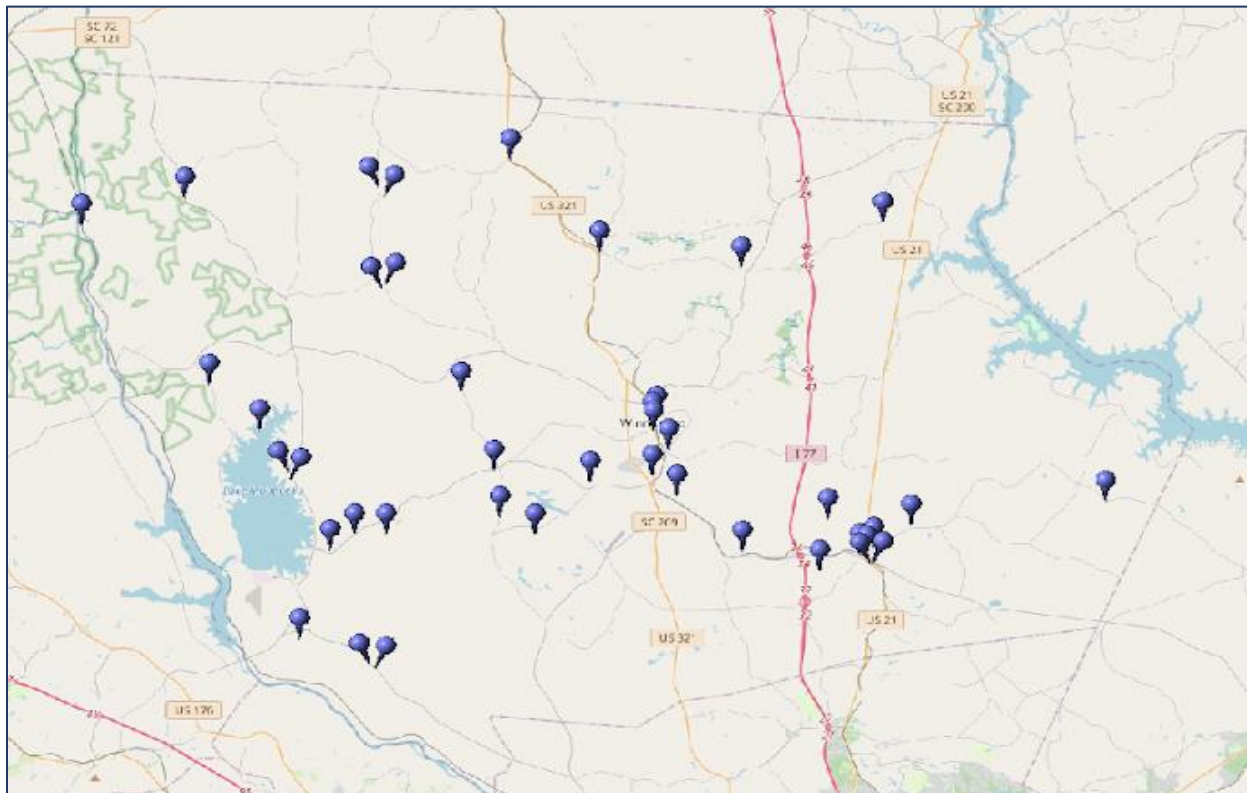
Ensuring quality, affordable housing for essential workers in education, public safety, and healthcare is a significant challenge for rural areas like Fairfield County. Without a strong, affordable housing market, it is very difficult to attract and retain this essential segment of the workforce. As a means for addressing this challenge for education workers, Fairfield County and the Fairfield County School District have been working collaboratively to develop a new residential housing complex that will provide submarket rate rental units for teachers. The housing complex is being built on school district owned property. The district will retain ownership of the land but will rent the units to qualifying employees. This innovative project could provide a good model for creating additional affordable housing units targeting essential workers in the county.

## Historic Preservation

As we look to the future, we need to appreciate our past. There are a number of properties, structures, and public works projects that are historically significant. These sites should be protected from adverse development in order that future generations can observe and enjoy these unique sites.

Fairfield County is home to 43 properties and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To be considered for the National Register, the site must show significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Properties in Fairfield County that are listed on the National Register include such interesting features as an Indian burial mound, churches and schools, commercial buildings, a campground and a railroad. At least 18 of these properties are residential in nature and dispersed widely across the county.

Map 3.1– Properties on the National Register of Historic Places



Source: National Park Service, Open Street Map, 2022.

Table 3.7 – Fairfield County Historical Resource Areas

National Register Areas	Location	Community
Camp Welfare	Camp Welfare Rd	Mitford
Davis Plantation	US Highway 215	Monticello
Liberty Universalist Church and Feasterville Academy	SC Highway 215 N	Blair
Mayfair	State Rd S-20-358	Jenkinsville
Ridgeway Historic District	Downtown Ridgeway	Ridgeway
Rockton and Rion Railroad Historic District	Southwest Winnsboro	Winnsboro
White Oak Historic District	Patrick Rd	White Oak
Winnsboro Historic District	Downtown Winnsboro	Winnsboro
Historic Areas Eligible for Consideration	Location	Community
Ivy Hall	Buckhead Rd	Blair
Lebanon Presbyterian Church Cemetery	US Highway 21 S	Ridgeway
Mount Zion Institute	Walnut St	Winnsboro
Rocky Creek/Cedar Creek Development	Catawba Rd	Mitford
Rocky Mount Battlefield	Catawba Rd	Mitford

Source: SC Department of Archives and History, SC ArchSite, 2022.

There are a number of state and federal programs available to protect historic properties. Preservation planning is an opportunity to catalog historical properties and document their importance to the local community. Local initiatives through historical societies and local governments can preserve historical areas through the local permitting process by establishing a board of architectural review and creation of historical zoning districts or historic overlay zones.

Protection and promotion of these unique resources also provide a tourism draw and efforts to capture tourism dollars for historic properties should not be underestimated. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past.” The Preserve America Communities Program provides designation to towns, cities and counties that celebrate their heritage by using historic assets for economic development and community revitalization to educate the public. Twenty-four South Carolina communities have received this designation including nearby communities of Blythewood and Camden. Tourism in South Carolina is a \$24 billion industry with \$17 billion from domestic visitor spending per 2019 data from SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. With Fairfield County’s location between the Charlotte and Columbia markets and close proximity to other historical resources in the state like the Ninety Six National Historic Site, the Newberry Opera House and the Historic Camden Revolutionary War Site, investment into this niche market would provide long-term benefits to the county.

## Housing Outlook

Over the next 20 years, housing will be a top priority for Fairfield County as well as the Central Midlands region. There are a number of components that affect the county’s future housing needs.

Under current conditions, the county’s population is projected to decrease by eleven percent over the next ten years. Even with previous population decreases, the number of residential building permits have increased with 384 new residential structures constructed from 2011 to 2020. Additionally, the county’s average value for new residential construction has been over \$200,000 since 2012 with the most recent data showing an average value of around \$230,000. There were also 283 residential demolitions from 2011 to 2020 which was a 108 percent increase from the previous ten years. Yet, more than 63 percent of the housing stock is more than 30 years old.

Fairfield County is one of four counties within the Central Midlands region which make up the Columbia metropolitan area. Property values in Fairfield County are some of the most affordable within the region which provides opportunity to attract investors from other portions of the Columbia area and outside the region.

Table 3.8 – Residential Value by County in the Region

County	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units (2016-2020)
Richland	\$167,500
Lexington	\$163,200
Newberry	\$118,500
Fairfield	\$106,900

Source: US Census Bureau, 2022.

In a July 2022 search on the Columbia Multiple Listing Service, the average price for a residential property in Winnsboro was \$119,000; comparatively, 16 miles to the south in Blythewood, the average price was \$441,000.

These comparatively low values also make existing housing stock attractive to investors for improvements, additions and modifications. Reinvestment into established properties provides opportunities for revitalization of existing streets, blocks and neighborhoods and can have a dramatic effect on a community. Targeting reinvestment into existing communities, called infill development, also requires minimal capital expenditures as the infrastructure is already in place.

Areas within Fairfield County have recently grown in popularity with homebuyers. The southern portion of the County is attractive to individuals that commute to Columbia and surrounding areas for work. With northern Fairfield County only 28 miles to Rock Hill, this area is highly attractive to individuals looking for an alternative from the Charlotte area. Lake Monticello and Lake Wateree are underutilized resources for second homes and retirement properties. In 2019, *WorkandMoney.com* ranked South Carolina as the fourth most affordable state for retirees; Georgia and North Carolina were ranked 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, respectively. As demand in particular areas of Fairfield County grows, the pressure to extend services to these areas will increase. But there are ways to plan in advance to meet the future need while maintaining the rural character of the area, yet not becoming a suburban extension of Greater Columbia.

Fairfield County has an opportunity to utilize these trends and begin marketing itself as an alternative residential option for the Midlands of South Carolina. Combining the county's rural character and wealth of natural resources, with lower than average housing prices and close proximity to two major metropolitan areas, makes Fairfield County a great prospect for housing growth. In order to move this concept forward, the local governments and public agencies within the community will need to promote the area outside of the market, extend sewer to high growth areas and ensure that services like fire, law enforcement and emergency medical services are increased to meet the need. The expected result of the added growth would be an increase in population, an increase in property values, newer housing stock, an increase in the local tax base and increased enrollment in the public education system.

# Summary of Observations

- Fairfield County has an estimated 11,958 total housing units, according to 2020 Census ACS 5-year estimates.
- Average Household Size for owner-occupied housing stock in Fairfield County is 2.37 which is slightly lower than South Carolina averages (2.55).
- Housing is predominantly characterized by large, single-family detached housing units. Detached single-family housing comprises 67.8 percent of all housing units.
- In 2020, mobile homes constituted an estimated 23.7 percent of housing units in Fairfield County. This is significantly higher than South Carolina (15.8 percent) and national (6 percent) rates.
- Of the estimated 11,958 housing stock, 22.1 percent is vacant.
- 75.3 percent of occupied housing units are owner occupied which is higher than the South Carolina (70.1 percent) and national (64.4 percent) estimates.
- Over 50 percent of housing units were built before the year 1990.
- Median home value is \$106,900 which is 37 percent lower than the South Carolina median.
- Median monthly rent in Fairfield County is \$718, 27.8 percent lower than the state median (\$918).
- Around 55 percent of renters are cost-burdened in Fairfield County, meaning that renters dedicate at least 30 percent of household income to paying rent.
- Owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage have an estimated 25 percent cost-burdened population.
- At around 14 percent, owner-occupied housing units without a mortgage are cost-burdened at a lower rate than mortgaged housing units.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal # 2: Housing

Provide a range of quality housing opportunities for residents of all ages and income.

### Strategies

- 2.1. Adopt the countywide housing study once complete and incorporate by reference into the Comprehensive Plan
- 2.2. Work with the Town of Winnsboro to strengthen the County and Town building code enforcement programs to reduce the number of vacant and dilapidated properties in the County
- 2.3. Explore opportunities for implementing a minor home repair/rehabilitation program to assist low-income homeowners with essential exterior repairs such as roofs, porches, siding, etc.

- 2.4. Work with community partners to implement the priority recommendations outlined in the housing study as appropriate and feasible
- 2.5. Support the development of more “senior friendly” housing opportunities in the County
- 2.6. Work with public, private, and non-profit partners to increase access to quality affordable housing opportunities in key areas of the county

DRAFT

DRAFT

4

---

# Natural Resources

# Introduction

The natural resources element of the comprehensive plan is intended to provide an inventory of significant physical and biological features of the landscape including consideration of:

- Physical Setting
- Climate
- Water Resources
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Natural Hazards

The purpose is to provide a base from which to guide policy decisions that are related to the use and management of these natural resources, especially as they pertain to the need for protection, restoration, and/or impact the intensity and types of permissible land uses.

## Physical Setting

The concept of the ecoregion will be utilized to generally describe the environmental properties of Fairfield County. Ecoregions are areas of relative similarity in the type, quality and quantity of environmental and ecological resources. These regions may be greatly generalized (encompassing multiple states) or hierarchically sub-divided and differentiated based on the spatial distribution of soil, geology and ecology. The current system utilized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has four levels of ecoregions. These levels go from Level I (highest and more generalized) to Level IV (lowest and more differentiated).

According to the USDA, the majority of the County is located in the Southern Outer Piedmont Level IV Ecoregion. The Southern Outer Piedmont Ecoregion, itself part of the Piedmont Level III Ecoregion, is noted for its lower elevations, lower amount of precipitation and irregular plains. Elevation in this region varies from 180ft to around 1500 feet above sea level, with a local relief profile of 100 feet to 300 feet. Ecologically disturbed areas of this ecoregion are dominated by pine tree species, while mixed oak forest tend to populate less altered locations.

South and Southeast portions of the County are located in the Carolina Slate Belt Level IV Ecoregion, also part of the Piedmont Level III Ecoregion. The Carolina Slate Belt is known for irregular plains interspersed with hills and linear ridges. Elevation varies from 165 feet to almost 1200 feet above sea level, with a local relief of 100 feet to 300 feet. Natural vegetation consists of mixed oak and hickory forests, with longleaf and shortleaf pine varieties.



A small portion in the Southeast of the County is located in the Sandhills Level IV Ecoregion. The Sandhills Ecoregion, itself part of the Southeastern Plains Level III Ecoregion, is noted for its rolling hills composed of Cretaceous-age marine sands and clays, covered in places with Tertiary-age sands. Elevation varies from 100 feet to 720 feet above sea level, with a local relief profile of 100 feet to 300 feet. Figure 4.3 illustrates the major eco-regions of the County.

Topographic conditions or slope characteristics can have a profound influence on development, both in terms of land use and development costs. Fortunately, the great majority of Fairfield County is not encumbered by extreme topographic conditions. There are virtually no poorly drained “table top” flat lands, and few areas so extensively sloped as to preclude development because of development cost.

## Climate



Climate is the long-term weather trends in a given area. Weather may change daily, but climate is usually measured in 30-year cycles based on prevailing temperature and precipitation patterns. Therefore, while weather over a given year may go through extremes events, the information in this section presents average weather trends over long periods of time.

Climatic conditions are largely responsible for the physical, chemical and biological relationships of the soils, and their present state. This has also contributed to population and industrial movement from less hospitable temperatures in the northeast (Frost-belt region) to the more hospitable Sunbelt region, where the climate is more conducive to outdoor recreational and economic pursuits.

Fairfield County, like the rest of South Carolina, has a temperate climate. This is typified by ample rainfall in all seasons, short and usually mild winters, and long, warm summers. There are daily weather variations between specific locations, but the annual average in all parts of the county is similar.

Annual precipitation in Fairfield County ranges from a low of 32 inches to a high of 69 inches. This rainfall is mostly associated with frontal weather and summer rainfall, with tropical air masses. Precipitation is evenly distributed throughout the year, which is sufficient for the cultivation of most crops. Winter rains are lighter and steadier than summer storms which are often violent cloud-bursts of short duration.

Mean annual temperature for the County varies seasonally. During spring months, it ranges between a low of 33°F to a high of 56°F. Summer months mean temperatures range between a low of 67°F and a high of 89°F. This becomes important in determining the growing season, as this weather allows between 200 and 240 frost free days.

# Soils

The various soils found throughout the county are derived from the underlying geologic formations. There are nine formations in Fairfield County. Slates, argillites and metavolcanic rock are found principally in the southern part of the County. The slates and argillites weather rapidly, but the rock weathers at a much slower rate. Coastal Plain sediment, consisting of sands and clays deposited during changes in sea level, is found in the southeastern part of the county.

Soil properties, such as drainage and physical and chemical composition, affect the kinds of activities supported in an area. It can have an impact on agriculture, urban development and the severity of flooding events. Soils and soil conditions have a significant effect on land use, often limiting its development. Such is the case with soils in many areas of Fairfield County. In fact, about 21 percent of all soils in the county pose severe constraints to urban development. The principal constraints fall into two categories: (1) foundations for dwellings, and; (2) use for septic tanks. Foundation limitations are the result of very low load bearing capacity, erodibility and steep slopes in some areas. Constraints in the use of septic tanks for on-site sewage disposal have to do with slow percolation rates, slopes, high water table, flooding, and hard rock at shallow depths.

While it is not impossible to develop these soils, they are costlier to develop and often contribute to lingering problems. As a result, they are studiously avoided for the most part, at least for high intensity development. Unfortunately, lands with the fewest constraints for urban development also have the fewest constraints for agricultural and forestry use. Since development generally follows the path of least resistance, other factors being equal, there is the potential for conflict wherever productive agricultural and forest lands stand in the path of urbanizing development.

Four of 11 different types (series) of soils found in Fairfield County pose severe constraints to development. Table 16 lists these soils, establishing their extent in the county, and identifies the type of constraint each poses.

Inherent constraints to urban development have kept most of these soils in a rural or undeveloped state, but with the expansion of public sewer service into these areas, one of the major obstacles will be no more, thus opening them to the prospects of more intensified development.

Table 4.1 - Soils with development constraints within Fairfield County.

Soil Classification	Percent Land Area	Type of Constraint		
		Building Foundation	Use of Septic Tanks	Both
Chewacla-Toccoa	1%	YES	YES	YES
Vaocluse-Blanton	<1%	NO	NO	NO
Wilkes-Cataula-Winnsboro	12%	NO	NO	NO
Wilkes-Winnsboro-Mecklenburg	23%	YES	NO	NO
Wilkes-Hiwassee-Madison	2%	YES	NO	NO
Appling-Rion-Wateree	3%	YES	YES	YES
Cecil-Pacolet-Appling	19%	NO	NO	NO
Madison-Cecil-Hiwassee	10%	NO	NO	NO
Pacolet-Cataula-Madison	5%	YES	YES	YES
Wateree-Rion-Helena	10%	YES	YES	YES
Georgeville-Herndon	15%	NO	NO	NO

Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service

Most of the county's soils suitable for development are also suitable for farming and classified by the Department of Agriculture as prime farmlands. They are located south of Winnsboro, in the area of greatest growth potential. As a result, greater use of soils information is recommended as a prerequisite to development, including:

- Considering soil survey information as one of the criteria for making land use plans and decisions.
- Consulting a soil survey before commencing any earth-moving or construction activities.
- Requiring the use of soil surveys in any large scale land development or management projects.

## Land Cover

Land cover refers to the natural physiographic and ecological features present in a landscape. It is typically defined as the unaltered biophysical cover on the earth's surface. On the other hand, land use refers to the utilization and possible alteration of land cover for various socioeconomic purposes. Land cover may guide the kinds of land use in an area, but socio-economic and political factors tend to determine what kind of land use takes place.

Fairfield County is the most forested county in the state. According to the 2019 National Land Cover Database (NLCD) classification system, 71.5 percent of the County is covered in a type of forest (in particular evergreen forests). Following this, in terms of area, are shrub & scrub (8.4

percent) and grasslands (4.4 percent). Only around 5 percent of the County is considered urban space. Table 4.2 summarizes land use land cover calculations.

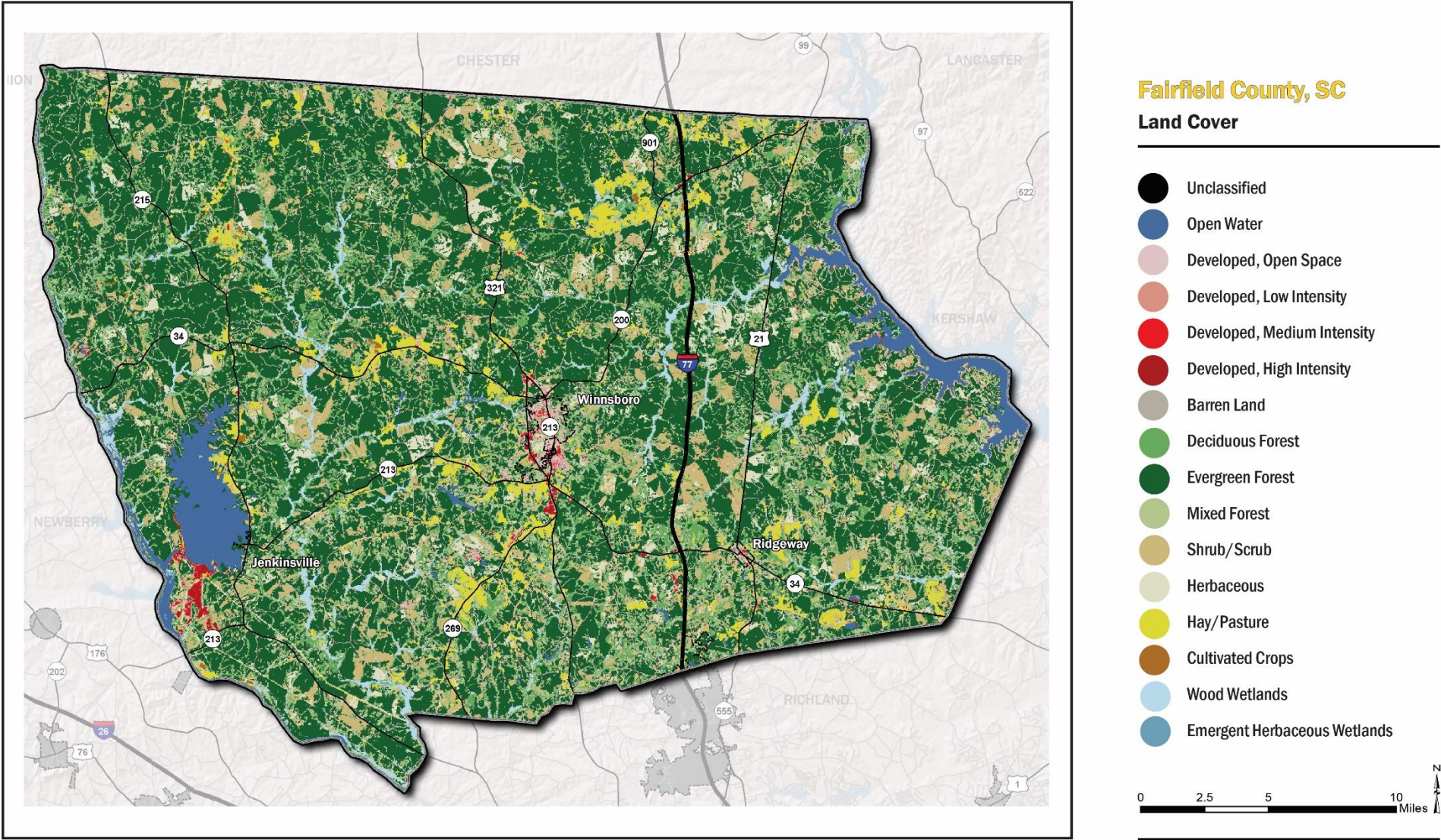
Table 4.2 - Land Cover by Type

Land Use and Land Cover Type	Land Use and Land Cover Area (Acres/Percentage)
Open Water	6,685.5 (3.6%)
Urban; Open Space	6,366.6 (3.4%)
Urban; Low Intensity	2,144 .9(1.2%)
Urban; Med. Intensity	716.9 (0.4%)
Urban; High Intensity	323.9 (0.2%)
Barren Land	223.6 (0.1%)
Deciduous Forest	13,887.8 (7.6%)
Evergreen Forest	92,469.2 (50.3%)
Mixed Forest	25,058.0 (13.6%)
Shrub/Scrub	15,373.0 (8.4%)
Grassland/Herbaceous	8,122.0 (4.4%)
Pasture/Hay	7,708.9 (4.2%)
Cultivated Crops	165.7 (0.1%)
Woody Wetlands	4,261.9 (2.3%)
Emergent Herbaceous Wetland	181.3 (0.1%)

Source: US Geological Survey, 2019 National Landcover Database (NLCD)



Map 4.1: Land Cover



## Forestry Resources

Forestry in South Carolina continues to be a leader among industries in jobs and payroll. The forestry industry contributes about \$21.1 billion to the state economy each year. Timber is the state's #1 agricultural commodity at \$870 million annually. Eighty-eight percent of South Carolina's forests are privately owned. In 2006, forest industries owned 1.4 million acres, down 29% since 2001 and continuing to decrease. Public agencies control 12% of South Carolina's forests. Fairfield County has 438,425 acres, of which approximately 86 percent or 381,156 acres are in woodlands, not including urban forest contained in the county's two municipalities.

The value of the county's forest and forest products cannot be overstated. In the county's urban environs, canopy trees serve to protect and enhance property values, control erosion, moderate climate extremes, provide screens and buffers, promote traffic safety and contribute to community ambience and beautification. In urban and urbanizing areas, regulating and monitoring the care and cutting of trees on public rights-of-way as well as private property are recommended as means of protecting and enhancing the environment. In rural areas of the county, forests are essential to clean air, water, wildlife, many natural cycles, and outdoor recreation, among other things. And forest products contribute substantially to the local economy.

Two primary forces of change work directly to influence the extent and condition of forest lands. They are: (1) change in forest land ownership and (2) change in land use. Change in ownership often brings with it a change in the reasons for owning the land. Having knowledge about forest landowner intent is essential to assessing the impact the landowner might have on the management and availability of the forests. Traditional timber harvesting or other forest product-based uses may be replaced by desires to develop and manage habitat for wildlife or provide new recreational opportunity. Change in ownership also can lead to a change in land use, and it is in this area that the county may exercise a degree of control and management through comprehensive planning, zoning and development regulations.

## Water Resources

Fairfield County is located in the Piedmont physiographic province of the state, where the primary source of water is from reservoirs, lakes and major river systems. As a result, this province depends on abundant rainfall to continually recharge these surface water bodies. Additionally, the county has access to good quality ground water from the underlying fractures of bedrock and overlying soil and saprolite. Both resources are used to meet the county's water demands.

There are many notable bodies of water in the County. Wateree Lake, a 19 square mile<sup>2</sup> reservoir forms much of the eastern boundary of the county. The reservoir is utilized by the

Wateree hydropower station, producing 56 megawatts of electricity for the region. Cedar Creek Reservoir, immediately preceding the Wateree Lake hydropower station, is an 800-acre lake that is also utilized as a hydropower station. It provides up to 45 megawatts of electricity to the region. The Parr Shoals (4.59 mi<sup>2</sup>) and Monticello (10.4 mi<sup>2</sup>) Reservoirs near the Broad river are utilized by the Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Generating Station to cool the reactor of the power plant. Another 797 ponds, six reservoirs and 23 wetlands are distributed throughout the county, most of them with an area of less than three acres. A reservoir located west of Winnsboro in the Jackson Mill Creek Watershed is the primary water source for the Town of Winnsboro and its larger service area extending all the way to Blythewood. The amount of water drawn from this lake is over 700 (millions) gallons.

Ground water also continues to be a primary source of water for local consumption. While providing only about 10 percent of the water supply, the availability of ground water in most areas of the county has perpetuated and sustained a rural lifestyle in areas outside the reach of the Winnsboro service area. The value of the county's rivers and lakes and reservoirs, mandates carefully planning and regulation of development impacting these resources.

Watersheds, or drainage basins, are areas where surface water drains to a single point in a lower elevation. Topography delineates the boundaries of watersheds, acting like a funnel and guiding water towards streams. Fairfield County lies between the Broad and Catawba watersheds. The Broad River delineates the west county boundary while the Wateree River delineates much of the east boundary. Other streams of note that intersect the county are the Little River, Catawba River, Rocky Creek and Big Wateree Creek.

The quality of these water bodies is an important issue, as these serve as recreation locations and important ecosystems for flora and fauna. The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), maintains a list of impaired water bodies that fall within the guidelines of the 303(d) section of the Clean Water Act. The 303(d) list tracks water bodies that need further investigation to determine what efforts and best management practices are required to bring them to EPA water quality standards. As of 2018, DHEC identified 22 locations that fall within the 303(d) impaired water bodies list (Table 4.3).



Table 4.3 – SC DHEC 303(d) Impaired Waterbody List

Station	Location	Impairment
B-143	Beaver Creek at SR 95	Macroinvertebrate
RS-04527	McClure's Creek at SC-215 – 6.7 mi SE of Carlisle	Macroinvertebrate
B-327	Monticello Lake – Lower Impoundment between large islands	pH
RL-04370	Monticello Lake – 1.7 mi NW of Monticello	pH
RL-04374	Monticello Lake – 3.5 mi N of Jenkinsville	pH
RL-13089	Monticello Reservoir – 0.8 mi SW of Lake Monticello East Landing	pH
RL-15009	Monticello Reservoir – 1.04 mi SSE of Lake Monticello West Landing	pH
RL-12049	Parr Reservoir – 0.7 mi NNW of B-346 & 0.9 mi SE of mouth of Hellers Creek	Total Phosphorus
RS-16324	Unnamed tributary to Rocky Creek at Cooper Holmes Road	E. coli
B-077	Winnsboro Br. below Plant Outfall	Copper
B-102	Jackson Creek at S-20-54, 5 mi W of Winnsboro	Macroinvertebrate
B-236	Broad River at SO. RR Trestle – 0.5 mi DS of SC 213	Copper
RL-05416	Cedar Creek Reservoir Debutary Creek Branch – 0.4 mi E of Debutary Creek and S-20-268	Total Phosphorus
RL-09094	Cedar Creek Reservoir – 0.15 mi SW of the Debutary Boat Landing	Total Phosphorus
CW-040	Little Wateree Creek at S-20-42, 5 mi E of Winnsboro	Zinc
RS-16296	Unnamed Tributary to Horse Creek – gravel rd. S-20-21, Old Camden Rd, Old 21, Horse Creek Rd	E. coli
RL-11040	Wateree Lake 1 mi below confluence with Crooked Creek & 1.3 mi above the Big Water	pH, Total Nitrogen, Total Phosphorus
CW-208	Lake Wateree at S-20-101, 11 mi ENE of Winnsboro	pH
RL-08035	Dutchman's Creek Arm of Lake Wateree – 0.4 mi E of S-20-101 bridge	pH, Total Phosphorus
RL-12056	Lake Wateree, Dutchman's Creek Cove near mouth of cut behind Lake Wateree State Park Island	Chlorophyll A, pH
CW-207	Lake Wateree at end of S-20-291	pH, Polychlorinated Biphenyls
RL-16039	Fox Creek Cove of Lake Wateree – 300 yds NE of June Creek Boat Ramp	pH

Source: South Carolina Department of Environmental Control (SCDHEC)

When considering how to improve quality in an impaired body of water, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) analysis can be performed to determine the level of impairment and better target pollution control efforts. A TMDL is a calculation of the pollutant amount a water body can carry before it is considered unfit for use by EPA water quality standards. A TMDL can be developed for each pollutant of interest in a water body (e.g. dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform, turbidity, etc.). Pollutants may come from multiple sources, be it a point source with a clear cause or a non-point source, which is the accumulation of ambient pollutants in the area. Table 19 shows the TMDL stations in Fairfield County, along with their corresponding SCDHEC report.

Non-point sources in particular are a significant issue, as mitigating their effects may involve widespread behavioral or technological changes. Some significant culprits of non-point source contamination are agricultural practices (e.g. pesticide and fertilizer use) and urban land use



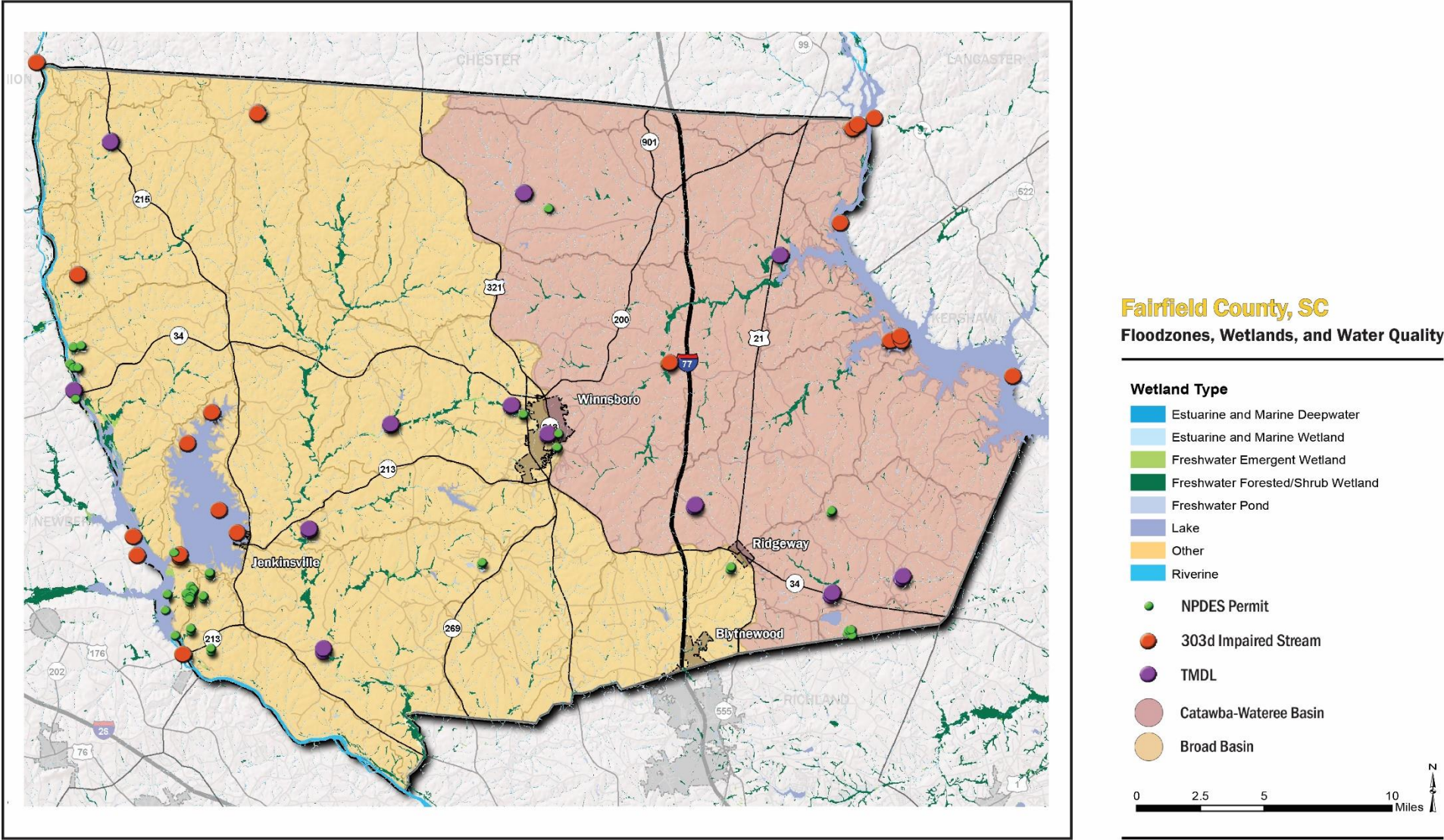
(e.g. stormwater runoff carrying pollutants to streams on impervious surfaces). These contaminants may travel long distances and affect water bodies downstream, or eventually contaminate groundwater sources.

Several locations in Fairfield County were selected for fecal coliform TMDL analysis while one station was selected for a turbidity TMDL analysis. Turbidity is a measure of how opaque a body of water is due to suspended material (e.g. sand) in the water column. It is presented by the amount of Total Suspended Solids (TSS) in kilograms per day. Fecal coliform are a bacteria group that generally originate in the gastrointestinal systems of warm blooded animals. While fecal coliform may not be harmful in itself, high quantities could reflect the presence of water-borne pathogens. Fecal coliform amounts are presented as Colony Forming Units (cfu) per 100 milliliters (ml), which are derived to daily amounts.

Flood plains are relatively narrow in Fairfield County. They parallel most of the county's rivers and tributaries, receiving flood waters or overflow during periods of heavy rain. Principal among these areas are lands paralleling: Broad River, Wateree River, Big Wateree Creek, Little Wateree Creek, Beaver Dam Fork, Rocky Creek, and Little River. It is critical to environmental sustainability that these areas remain undeveloped in order to function naturally to drain the county of flood water and minimize property damage and destruction. To date, developers have for the most part avoided flood plain areas in Fairfield County, but the potential for encroachment and subsequent property damage and disaster have led to the promulgation of federal and local legislation regulating their use and development. Due to the inherent danger from flooding, the continued protection of these areas is strongly recommended. Such a recommendation is reinforced in light of the utility of these areas in replenishing the supply of groundwater and helping protect water quality, and their contribution as wildlife habitats and linear open space.

To this end, the county should continue to expand its review of proposed development in flood plains to ensure that buildings are located on flood-free sites and that other structures do not encroach on the flood plain so as to increase potential flooding on nearby properties. The county should also continue to develop and implement its floodplain management program to include incentives and conservation agreements to preserve or limit the use of such areas to natural greenways, agricultural or outdoor recreation.

Map 4.2: Floodzones, Wetlands, and Water Quality



## Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

Table 4.4 summarizes the rare, threatened, and endangered species that have ranges or habitat in Fairfield County, according to a 2022 report by the SCDNR Heritage Trust Program (SCNHP). There are 49 tracked species found within Fairfield County; however, the exact locations of these species are not labeled in the SCNHP report due to the sensitive nature of this information. Each species is given a global rank by Natureserve (G-rank) and a state rank (S-rank) which indicates its relative state of imperilment across its range; these ranks are often different if a species is widespread/may be more common in other parts of North America but are considered rare or in decline in South Carolina. The rankings are as follows:

- Critically imperiled: typically having 5 or fewer occurrences or 1,000 or fewer individuals
- Imperiled: typically having 6 to 20 occurrences, or 1,001 to 3,000 individuals
- Vulnerable/rare: typically having 21 to 100 occurrences, or 3,001 to 10,000 individuals
- Apparently secure: uncommon but not rare, but with some cause for long-term concern; typically having 101 or more occurrences, or 10,001 or more individuals
- Secure: common, widespread, abundant, and lacking major threats or long-term concerns

The 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is a comprehensive plan by the SCDNR that addresses species deemed by the State to have the greatest conservation need. SWAP priorities do not indicate if a particular species is endangered or threatened under a federal or state designation. Instead, priorities reflect a proactive approach in maintaining healthy populations of species that are threatened by factors such: as rarity, habitat loss, illegal harvest, lack of management funding, and lack of information pertaining to the actual range of a particular species. If not addressed preemptively, many of the listed species may be candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Table 4.4 - Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species in Fairfield County

Species Name	Taxa Type	G-Rank / S-Rank	Protection Status	SWAP Priority
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> ; <b>Bald Eagle</b>	Bird	G5 / S3B,S3N	Federally Endangered, State Threatened	High
<i>Waterbird Colony</i> ; <b>Waterbird Colony</b>	Bird	GNR / S3S4	N/A	Not Applicable

Species Name	Taxa Type	G-Rank / S-Rank	Protection Status	SWAP Priority
<i>Cambarus hobbsorum</i> ; <b>Rocky River Crayfish</b>	Crayfish	G3G4 / S3S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Cambarus spicatus</i> ; <b>Broad River Spiny Crayfish</b>	Crayfish	G3 / S2	At-Risk Species	High
<i>Alosa aestivalis</i> ; <b>Blueback Herring</b>	Diadromous Fish	G3G4 / S5	N/A	Highest
<i>Alosa mediocris</i> ; <b>Hickory Shad</b>	Diadromous Fish	G4 / S4	N/A	Highest
<i>Alosa sapidissima</i> ; <b>American Shad</b>	Diadromous Fish	G5 / S4S5	N/A	Highest
<i>Anguilla rostrata</i> ; <b>American Eel</b>	Diadromous Fish	G4 / S3S4	N/A	Highest
<i>Ameiurus catus</i> ; <b>White Catfish</b>	Freshwater Fish	G5 / SU	N/A	Moderate
<i>Ameiurus platycephalus</i> ; <b>Flat Bullhead</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Carpionodes cyprinus</i> ; <b>Quillback</b>	Freshwater Fish	G5 / S4	N/A	High
<i>Clinostomus funduloides</i> ; <b>Rosyside Dace</b>	Freshwater Fish	G5 / S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Cyprinella chloristia</i> ; <b>Greenfin Shiner</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Cyprinella labrosa</i> ; <b>Thicklip Chub</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S3	N/A	Moderate
<i>Cyprinella pyrrhomelas</i> ; <b>Fieryblack Shiner</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S3S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Cyprinella zanema</i> ; <b>Santee Chub</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S3	N/A	High
<i>Elliptio fisheriana</i> ; <b>Northern Lance</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / SNR	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Etheostoma collis</i> ; <b>Carolina Darter</b>	Freshwater Fish	G3 / S3	N/A	High
<i>Etheostoma thalassinum</i> ; <b>Seagreen Darter</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S3S4	N/A	High
<i>Hybopsis hypsinotus</i> ; <b>Highback Chub</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Morone saxatilis</i> ; <b>Striped Bass</b>	Freshwater Fish	G5 / S4S5	N/A	Moderate
<i>Moxostoma collapsum</i> ; <b>Notchlip Redhorse</b>	Freshwater Fish	G5 / S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Moxostoma robustum</i> ; <b>Robust Redhorse</b>	Freshwater Fish	G1 / S1	ARS	Highest
<i>Notropis altipinnis</i> ; <b>Highfin Shiner</b>	Freshwater Fish	G5 / S3S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Notropis chalybaeus</i> ; <b>Ironcolor Shiner</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S3S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Notropis procne</i> ; <b>Swallowtail Shiner</b>	Freshwater Fish	G5 / S3S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Percina crassa</i> ; <b>Piedmont Darter</b>	Freshwater Fish	G4 / S3S4	N/A	High



Species Name	Taxa Type	G-Rank / S-Rank	Protection Status	SWAP Priority
<i>Ameiurus brunneus</i> ; <b>Snail Bullhead</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G4 / S3S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Elimia catenaria</i> ; <b>Gravel Elimia</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G4 / SNR	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Elliptio angustata</i> ; <b>Carolina Lance</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G4 / S3	N/A	Moderate
<i>Elliptio complanata</i> ; <b>Eastern Elliptio</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G5 / S5	N/A	Moderate
<i>Elliptio icterina</i> ; <b>Variable Spike</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G5 / S4	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Elliptio roanokensis</i> ; <b>Roanoke Slabshell</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G3 / S2	N/A	High
<i>Lampsilis cariosa</i> ; <b>Yellow Lampmussel</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G3G4 / S2	N/A	Highest
<i>Pyganodon cataracta</i> ; <b>Eastern Floater</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G5 / SNR	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Somatogyrus virginicus</i> ; <b>Panhandle Pebblesnail</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G2G3 / SNR	N/A	High
<i>Unio merus carolinianus</i> ; <b>Eastern Pondhorn</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G4 / S3	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Utterbackia imbecillis</i> ; <b>Paper Pondshell</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G5 / SNR	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Villosa delumbis</i> ; <b>Eastern Creekshell</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G4 / S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Villosa vaughaniana</i> ; <b>Carolina Creekshell</b>	Freshwater Mussel	G2G3 / S1	N/A	Highest
<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i> ; <b>Big Brown Bat</b>	Mammal	G5 / S5?	N/A	Highest
<i>Lasiurus borealis</i> ; <b>Eastern Red Bat</b>	Mammal	G3G4 / S4S5	N/A	Highest
<i>Sciurus niger</i> ; <b>Eastern Fox Squirrel</b>	Mammal	G5 / S3S4	N/A	Moderate
<i>Carex oligocarpa</i> ; <b>Eastern Few-fruited Sedge</b>	Plant	G4G5 / S2	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Carex tonsa</i> ; <b>Shaved Sedge</b>	Plant	G5 / S2	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Dicentra canadensis</i> ; <b>Squirrel Corn</b>	Plant	G5 / S1	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Dirca palustris</i> ; <b>Leatherwood, Leatherbark, Wicopee, Rope-bark</b>	Plant	G4 / S2	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Frasera caroliniensis</i> ; <b>American Columbo</b>	Plant	G5 / S2	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Helianthus schweinitzii</i> ; <b>Schweinitz's Sunflower</b>	Plant	G3 / S3	FE	Highest
<i>Hymenocallis coronaria</i> ; <b>Shoals Spiderlily, Cahaba Lily</b>	Plant	G3? / S2	N/A	High
<i>Isoetes piedmontana</i> ; <b>Piedmont Quillwort</b>	Plant	G4 / S2	N/A	High
<i>Juncus secundus</i> ; <b>Secund Rush, Lop-sided Rush</b>	Plant	G5? / S1	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Mononeuria uniflora</i> ; <b>Godfrey's Stitchwort</b>	Plant	G4 / S3	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Ophioglossum pycnostichum</i> ; <b>Southern Adder's-tongue</b>	Plant	G5 / S2	N/A	Not Applicable

Species Name	Taxa Type	G-Rank / S-Rank	Protection Status	SWAP Priority
<i>Osmorhiza claytonii</i> ; <b>Bland Sweet Cicely, Hairy Sweet Cicely</b>	Plant	G5 / S2	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Philadelphus hirsutus</i> ; <b>Hairy Mock-orange, Cumberland Mock-orange</b>	Plant	G5 / S2	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Primula meadia</i> ; <b>Eastern Shooting Star</b>	Plant	G5 / S2	N/A	Moderate
<i>Rhododendron eastmanii</i> ; <b>May White Azalea, Eastman's Azalea</b>	Plant	G3 / S2	N/A	High
<i>Scutellaria parvula</i> ; <b>Dwarf Skullcap</b>	Plant	G4 / S2S3	N/A	Not Applicable
<i>Sedum pusillum</i> ; <b>Puck's Orpine</b>	Plant	G3 / S2	N/A	High
<i>Symphyotrichum georgianum</i> ; <b>Georgia Aster</b>	Plant	G3 / S3S4	N/A	Highest

Source: SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR).

## Wetlands

The United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) maintains an inventory of sensitive environmental resources. The USFWS identified 6.1 acres of freshwater forest/shrub wetlands, and 29.9 acres of freshwater ponds that are considered environmentally sensitive resources

The term wetlands is defined as 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. Wetlands in Fairfield County, like flood lands, are found generally paralleling and extending for short distances along the County's creeks and rivers. Wetlands are considered by the state and federal governments to be important to the public welfare and interest. As such, they are protected by state and federal laws. Prerequisite to the development of such lands is a "jurisdictional determination" by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

The Corps has developed a wetlands map for general reference, but for specific sites, a wetlands determination by the Corps should be secured. Based on the determination, a permit from the Corps may or may not be required to develop the property. Wetlands requiring a permit from the Corps are characterized as follows:

- 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;
- Wetlands set aside for study of the aquatic environment or as sanctuaries or refuges;

- Wetlands the destruction or alteration of which would affect detrimentally natural drainage characteristics, sedimentation patterns, salinity distribution, flushing characteristics, current patterns, or other environmental characteristics.
- Wetlands which are significant in shielding other areas from erosion or storm damage.
- Wetlands which serve as valuable storage areas for storm and flood waters;
- Wetlands which are ground water discharge areas that maintain minimum base flows important to aquatic resources and those which are prime natural recharge areas;
- Wetlands which serve significant water purification functions; and
- 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 it to say, wetland restrictions by the federal government make development of wetlands tenuous at best. Where, in the past, development has been constrained principally by the simple presence of wetlands. It is further constrained by the need to plan around or mitigate the use and circumstances of development proposed for such areas. Clearly, the presence of wetlands should alert the County and the developer to the need for a "wetlands determination" before proceeding. 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. As a factor responsible for influencing development, wetlands, perceived as a natural resource, pose a greater deterrent to development than ever before.

## Solar Energy

Solar energy represents an untapped resource for Fairfield County because of its rural nature. Many rural counties across the southeast are taking advantage of the increasing demand for solar energy. Currently, Fairfield County has 24 solar installations with a total capacity of approximately 192.72 kW. By contrast in the Midlands region, Lexington County has 1,260 installations with a total capacity of approximately 54,274.46 kW.

Throughout South Carolina, small capacity solar installations seem to be more common than large solar farms. The largest solar farms in South Carolina are located in the southwest portion of the state, particularly Hampton and Jasper counties. It is therefore essential to consider energy production and use as an integral part of building design for new construction and renovations. Multiple financing options and tax incentives exist in South Carolina at the consumer level to support the installation of solar electric systems.

## Summary of Observations

- The climatic conditions contributed to the early development of the county and remain an asset to development in contrast to climatic conditions in the frostbelt.
- The location of wetlands---paralleling rivers and creeks ---has had little influence on development.
- That 21 percent of the county's soils pose physical constraints to development, warranting special consideration regarding their use and development.
- That the county is blessed with plentiful supplies of both surface and ground water, the protection and responsible use of which are critical to future growth and development, and community sustainability especially in the context of drought mitigation and management.
- Fairfield County's large forest area (71.5 percent of total land area) is both an a natural and economic asset.
- Space dedicated to urban development accounts for five percent of land in Fairfield County.
- That multi-use role Lakes Monticello and Wateree add significantly to the economic and recreational draw of the County.
- Solar energy continues to be an essentially untapped natural clean energy resource.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal # 3: Natural Resources

Protect, preserve, and promote Fairfield County's natural and cultural heritage.

### Strategies

- 3.1. Strengthen natural resource protection measures in land use regulations, county ordinances, and the development review process to include market based incentives for promoting cluster/conservation subdivisions, use of conservation easements, the promotion of solar resources, enhancing riparian buffer protections, and the implementation of low impact development measures.
- 3.2. Improve development standards for waterfront/lakefront properties that better protect key natural resources and mitigate damage from flooding and other natural hazards.
- 3.3. Evaluate and strengthen enforcement of existing floodplain regulations and riparian buffer zones.
- 3.4. Develop a countywide trail/greenway plan to include exploring opportunities for expanding access and connections to the Palmetto Trail.
- 3.5. Work to strengthen countywide stormwater regulations and support increased funding for stormwater infrastructure.



- 3.6. Use the statewide green infrastructure plan and other available resources to identify and preserve priority conservation areas.
- 3.7. Partner with SCDHEC to identify areas with malfunctioning or aged septic tanks and explore extension of public sewer to these areas and/or identify grant funding for replacement.
- 3.8. Work with local partners, SCDHEC, and local volunteers to improve water quality in impaired streams and watersheds through enhanced monitoring, citizen science programs, watershed-based planning and promotion of low impact development techniques.

DRAFT

DRAFT

5

# Cultural Resources

# Introduction

The Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan inventories existing sites of historic and cultural significance for the purpose of providing policy guidance in ensuring the short and long term protection and preservation of these resources. The inventory typically considers sites and/or districts on the National Register of Historic Places as well as those that have not yet been nominated or determined to be eligible.

## Historical Background



Situated between the Broad River on the west and the Wateree River (now Lake Wateree) on the east, the area was a hunting ground for several Native American tribes (arrowheads and pieces of pottery can still be found on the banks of these bodies of water). It was subsequently settled by the English and Scotch-Irish, beginning in 1740. Hunting and fishing enjoyed by early Indian inhabitants are still enjoyed by residents and visitors today, due to the county's abundant wildlife, particularly deer.

Early English settlements were made around rivers and creeks. Eventually these settlements led to a cotton plantation culture which gave way to "share cropping" following the Civil War. Share cropping, in turn, led to soil depletion and massive soil erosion of most of the county. The arrival of the boll weevil around the year 1920 finished off the cotton industry. In addition to cotton farming and other agricultural pursuits, granite deposits led to the early development of quarrying in the County. Winnsboro blue granite, "The Silk of the Trade," is used worldwide in buildings and monuments.

"Winnsborough" was chartered in the same year as Fairfield District, and made the Seat of Justice. The name of the District seat was changed to "Winnsboro" and incorporated as a town in 1832. The first settler to come to the area was Thomas Nightingale. Other settlers came in the middle of the 18th century. These were primarily Scotch-Irish, a proud, religious people with a strong belief in education, but also included Germans, English and Huguenots.

"Winnsborough" was settled on land owned by the Winn family. It was occupied during the Revolutionary War by British soldiers under Lord Cornwallis. The British camped in the town from October, 1780 to January, 1781.

Mount Zion Institute, in Winnsboro, was the first school to be established in the South Carolina Upcountry. Begun in 1777, it operated uninterrupted, except for the relocation of classes during War between the States, until 1991. it was the forerunner of other upstate schools until public schools were mandated by law in 1878. A granite marker on the campus is a reminder of the British encampment.

The second largest town in the County, Ridgeway, was originally know as "New Town". The name was changed when the owners of Charlotte and South Carolina Railway decided not to build the railroad on the Camden route but to use the "ridge way".

## Historic Sites

Fairfield County has over 100 historical buildings, churches and homes. Also scattered throughout the county are numerous monuments and memories that speak of the unique traditions and culture of the area and the Upcountry.

Foremost among its historical buildings and places are the old market house and Town Clock in Winnsboro. The market house is modeled after Independence Hall in Philadelphia. State legislation authorizing construction specified that it "shall not be of greater width than 30 feet" to allow 30 feet of wagon travel on either side. A clock was added in 1837, and the building has since been known as the Town Clock. Residents boast the clock is the longest continuously running clock in the United States.

The County Courthouse, across from the Town Clock, was constructed in 1823. Designed by South Carolina architect Robert Mills, the courthouse houses records dating as far back as the middle 1700s. Additionally, Fairfield County has numerous churches, some dating back over 200 years. Perhaps the most famous church, built in 1788, is the Old Brick Church, where the Synod of the Carolina for the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church was organized in 1803. A note penciled on the wall of the Old Brick Church is testimony to a Union soldier's regret at the church's floor boards being taken up to build a crossing over the nearby river for General Sherman's troops.

The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) maintain a repository of all locations protected by the National Historic Preservation Act. They also provide a list of locations potentially eligible for said protection. The information in this section combines data from these institutions and the Central Midlands Historic Preservation Survey, which maintains an inventory of historical properties in the Central Midlands region. Due to its centuries long history, the area in Fairfield County contains multiple historical structures and locations. Not all of these sites are officially part of the National Historical Register, but they are long standing structures in the area. Historical sites include but not limited to:

- Winnsboro Market House: authorized by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1785 and remade around 1822 with what is now known as the Town Clock.
- Winnsboro Town Clock: built in 1837. Said to be the longest continuously running clock in the United States.

- County Courthouse: built in 1823. Designed by architect Robert Mills, it contains records dating back to the mid 1700's.
- Century House: located in the town of Ridgeway and built in 1853.
- Cornwallis House: located in Winnsboro and built around 1797. Tradition states this is the house that Lord Charles Cornwallis resided in during his occupation of Winnsboro from October 1780 to February 1781.
- Mount Zion Institute: built in 1777 in Winnsboro.
- Fairfield County Museum: built early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Winnsboro.
- McCreight House: located in Winnsboro and built sometime in the late 1700's by Colonel William McCreight.
- Ketchin Building: built in 1830 in Winnsboro.
- Old Brick Church: built in 1788 near the Town of Jenkinsville. Also known as the Ebenezer Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.
- Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church: built in the early 1850's in the Town of Ridgeway.
- Concord Presbyterian Church: built in 1818.
- Rockton and Rion Railroad Historic District: composed of forty five properties along a twelve mile stretch used to transport blue granite from 1883 to 1945 near Winnsboro.

Additionally, the region has five historic districts:

- Liberty Universalist Church & Feasterville Academy Historic District
- Ridgeway Historic District
- Rockton and Rion Railroad Historic District
- White Oak Historic District
- Winnsboro Historic District

## Museums

The Fairfield County Museum represents a cultural institution that is an asset to the community. The museum was established in 1976. The mission of the museum was and still is to (1) stimulate interest in the role of Fairfield County in the development of South Carolina and the nation. (2) preserve the history of the county through the collection of significant artifacts and interpretation of the personal stories of its citizens, (3) identify and document historic properties and sites within the county, and (4) educate citizens and visitors about the heritage of Fairfield.

The building in which the museum is housed was built in 1848 as a boarding school (Winnsboro Female School) for young girls. The school closed just as the rumblings of war preceded South Carolina's secession from the Union in January of 1861, when it was converted into a soldier's aid facility. Thereafter, it was converted to house many decades of habitation and commercial operations. It emerged again as an educational establishment in 1976 when it was restored and converted to the Fairfield County Museum.

This three-story 1830 townhouse is listed on the National Historic Registry as a late example of Federal style architecture. The 18 inch walls are made of locally fired bricks laid in Flemish bond and the large square building is three stories high. The ornate wood and plaster work of the interior were beautifully restored in the 1970s through the efforts of local reservationists. The museum features artifacts and furnishings relating to Fairfield County's history and prehistory.

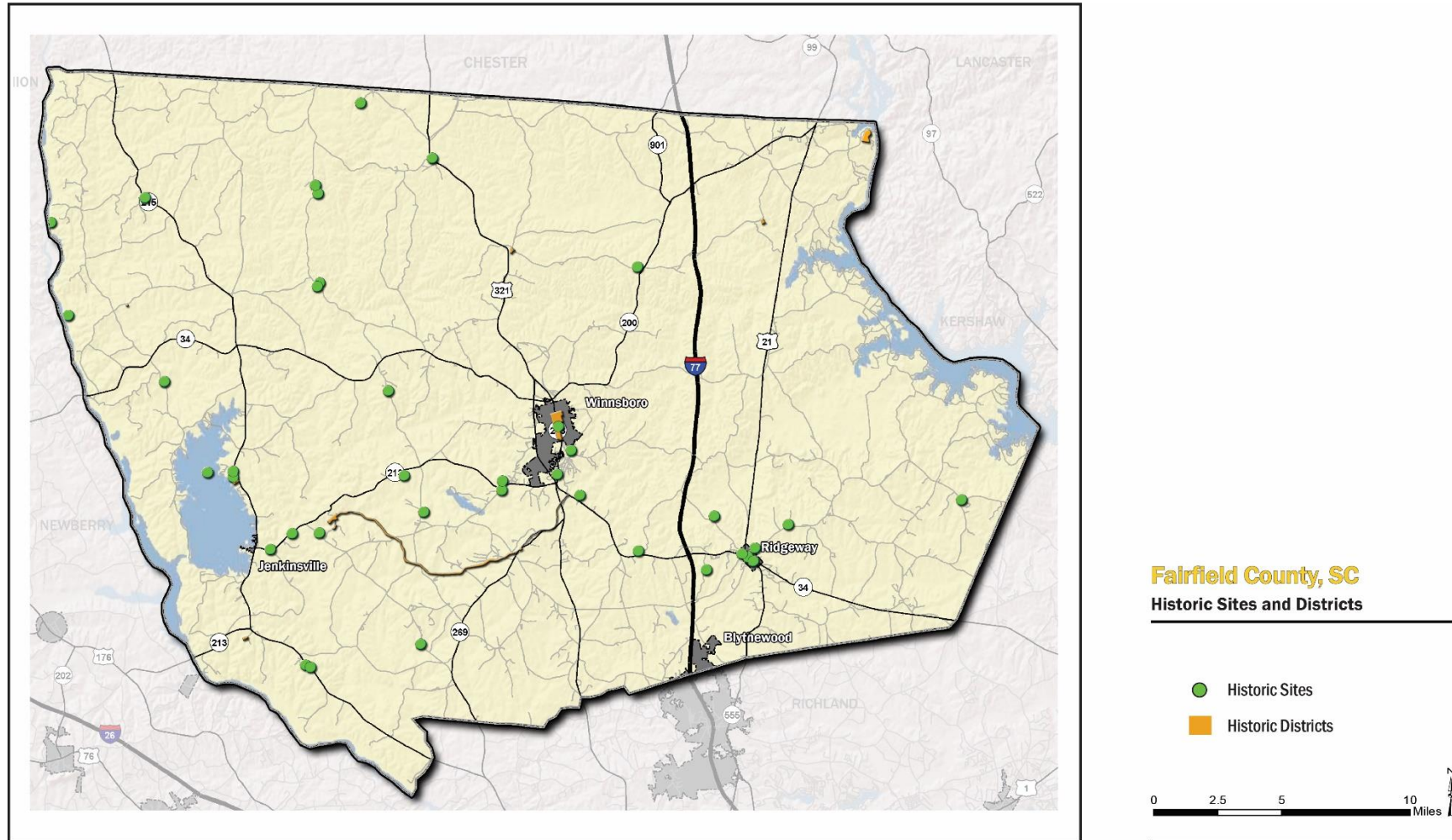
The South Carolina Railroad Museum, Inc., another important historical resource and institution was established in 1973. It operates on 5 miles of the 11.5 mile line of the former Rockton and Rion Railroad. The eastern terminal of the line is at the junction with the Norfolk Southern Railroad at the Rockton Station. The line runs generally westward through the Rion community to Anderson Quarry, home of the world famous blue granite. The Museum exhibits many pieces of rolling stock, including various types of freight and passenger cars as well as a steam locomotive. It also has on display cabooses, freight cars, and diesel engines from CSX, Norfolk Southern, the Lancaster and Chester, and other railroads. Plans call for the construction of a locomotive shop and equipment maintenance area as well as display tracks. Ultimately the Museum plans to have educational train excursions over the entire 11.5 mile route, exhibitions of freight and passenger train operations, static displays of railroad related artifacts, and a library of railroad related publications. The South Carolina Railroad Museum's mission is the preservation and interpretation of railroading in South Carolina.

## Summary of Observations

Fairfield County is well endowed with historical resources due to its rich history, and equally endowed with cultural resources due to its location within the larger Columbia Metropolitan Area. We may also conclude that without proper stewardship, marketing and continuous exploration and preservation efforts, many of the county's cultural resources will be compromised over time, under developed or under- utilized, remain dormant, or lost altogether.

The cultural history of the county has the potential to draw visitors who are interested in seeing beautifully preserved historic buildings, remaining ruins or learning about important historical events. Some will come to discover their genealogy, which has become a function of the Fairfield History Museum. Fairfield County's exceptional history and wonderful places are what gives it a singular "sense of place." This is the essence of "heritage tourism" and it can be a significant economic driver for the county. Fairfield County has many of the heritage tourism attributes necessary to create an economic benefit in the form of tourism income and jobs. Heritage tourism and related industries create economic development, which improves the quality of life.

Map 5.1: National Register Historic Sites



# Goals and Strategies

## Goal # 4: Cultural Resources

Protect, preserve, and promote Fairfield County's natural and cultural heritage.

### Strategies

- 4.1. Promote diversity and inclusion in local history and heritage preservation with a focus on documenting, interpreting, and promoting African American historical sites.
- 4.2. Conduct a countywide historic site survey to update and expand the list of sites eligible for inclusion in the national register of historic places, to increase the inventory of state historic markers, and to expand historical education and outreach opportunities.
- 4.3. Market Fairfield County as a regional tourism destination by highlighting the County's unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources and implementing the priority recommendations from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Plan.
- 4.4. Plan/host regularly scheduled regional/local events and activities in coordination with the Fairfield Chamber, municipalities, Fairfield Historical Museum, community groups, and local venues such as Carolina Adventure World.



DRAFT

6

# Resilience

# Introduction

The Disaster Relief and Resilience Act of 2020 amended Section 6-29-510 (D) of the SC Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act to require the development of a separate resiliency element for the Comprehensive Plan. Per the requirements of the act, the element should consider the impacts of flooding, high water, and natural hazards on individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, economic development, public infrastructure and facilities, and public health, safety and welfare. The element should also promote resilient planning, design and development; be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies; and be coordinated with the other elements and the comprehensive plan goals and strategies.

Resiliency can be defined as the ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from any type of major disruption. A disruption can be caused by the loss of a major employer, by a downturn in a specific industry or cluster, by a larger economic recession, or by a man-made or natural disaster. In order for a region to increase its resiliency, it must be able to adequately evaluate socioeconomic risk and vulnerabilities, assess potential impacts, and build the institutional capacity to mitigate, respond to, and recover from an event. As a means to increase the ability to withstand, absorb, and recover from such major economic disruptions, communities must work together to promote regional economic diversification, workforce resiliency, protection of critical economic and infrastructure assets, and regional coordination for pre and post disaster planning.

Promoting resiliency as a goal is to increase flexibility, develop redundancy, and facilitate the pursuit of alternatives when normal function is significantly disrupted. This concept may extend to any critical community or economic asset within Fairfield County. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated just how socially and economically vulnerable we are, as it has impacted almost every sector of the local and regional economy, and has exacerbated many pre-existing socioeconomic disparities, such as job availability, food access, and housing insecurity.

This element primarily contains information about local food systems and natural hazard risk and vulnerability. The natural hazard risk and vulnerability section summarizes information from the 2021 update of the Central Midlands Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). A FEMA approved and locally adopted HMP is a requirement to solicit federal grant funds under the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program. Mitigation strategies listed in this HMP are eligible for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant, and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant. Fairfield County was a participant in the 2021 Central Midlands HMP and adopted it as of September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Additional information on the planning process and analysis methodology utilized in this element may be found in the 2021 update of the Central Midlands Hazard Mitigation Plan.

# Local Food Systems

Access to safe and nutritious food is considered a basic individual right by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (Food and Agricultural Organization 2011). According to the USDA, food insecurity is defined as the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life. Limited access to supermarkets, supercenters, grocery stores, or other sources of healthy and affordable food may make it harder for some people to eat a healthy diet in the United States. Formerly referred to as “food deserts” by the USDA, areas of low income and limited access to healthy food retailers can impact the individual economic resiliency of residents in Fairfield County. Therefore, increasing the proximity and availability of healthy food in low income areas is a way to improve economic resiliency.

The solution to this issue is not as simple as building more grocery stores. An area’s food system is a complex, interconnected network that is impacted by individual choices, community trends, and state and national policy. A food system that is inadequate or unsustainable leads to consequences such as: an inability to consistently provide adequate nutritious food (also called food insecurity), and poor long-term health outcomes on issues caused by a lack of nutrition (for example obesity, diabetes and heart disease).

The USDA tracks food insecurity through several indicators that determine relatively low income and low access to grocery stores and other healthy food sources. The USDA considers an area to be low income when residents earn less than 80 percent of the State-wide median family income. An urban area is considered low access when at least 500 people or 33 percent of the population is one mile away or more from a healthy food source. A rural area is designated as low access by the USDA if there is no grocery store or other healthy food source within 10 miles or more.

Additional indicators of food insecurity include the availability of transportation and levels of vehicle ownership. All these data are aggregated to the Census tract level. Fairfield County has both urban and rural areas, which each have different challenges in developing sustainable food systems. The only Census tract designated as urban in this dataset is the one where the Town of Winnsboro is located.

Historically, Fairfield County is an area with a high minority population that has a lower median income level than the rest of South Carolina (see the Population element). According to the 2019 USDA Food Research Atlas, 15.8 percent of the 23,956 residents of Fairfield County lived in a Census tract without a grocery store within one mile in an urban tract, or 10 miles in a rural tract. Out of 9,416 housing units at this time, an estimated four percent had no vehicle access, further increasing the difficulty in accessing healthy food sources.

Supplemental information corroborates these food insecurity trends in Fairfield County. According to 2020 Census ACS five-year estimates, almost 14 percent of the 9,315 households in Fairfield County are receiving SNAP Benefits. Of those estimated 1,282 households receiving

SNAP benefits, 53 percent have one or more people that is 60 years and over. A 2020 study by Feeding America found that 10.9 percent of the Fairfield County population (2,440 people) at this time were considered food insecure under the USDA definition. The same report denotes that 29 percent of this food insecure population is eligible for SNAP benefits.

A nationwide 2021 study by Feeding America analyzed the impacts of COVID-19 on food insecurity. The report concluded that people already impacted by food insecurity before the COVID-19 pandemic now face even greater hardship. Residents would not suffer these impacts equitably; every one in five African-Americans were estimated to suffer food insecurity versus only every one in nine for the white population.

While food insecurity tends to impact rural counties more than urban ones, the report also suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened food insecurity regardless of location. In 2019, one out of every nine people were considered food insecure in urban counties versus one out of every eight in rural counties nationwide. For 2021, Feeding America estimates that this has worsened in urban counties, and now one in every eight individuals are considered food insecure, regardless of living in an urban or rural location.

Prime agricultural land is a critical component of addressing food insecurity. Promoting local agriculture and decreasing the travel distance of fresh food significantly contributes to a resilient food system economy. Conversion of prime agricultural land to other land use types that do not permit agriculture reduces the overall capacity of a local food system to provide healthy food to its residents. Low density residential land use may threaten agriculture by dividing prime agricultural land into large-lot housing that may appear rural but typically excludes food production. Residential subdivisions may pose a similar threat by expanding into prime agricultural land.

According to a 2022 report by the American Farmland Trust (AFT), *Farms Under Threat 2040*, agricultural land developed to LDR is five times more likely to be converted to UHD land by 2040. Using a dataset from 2001-2016, the AFT analyzed conversion rates of agricultural land into the following broad land use types:

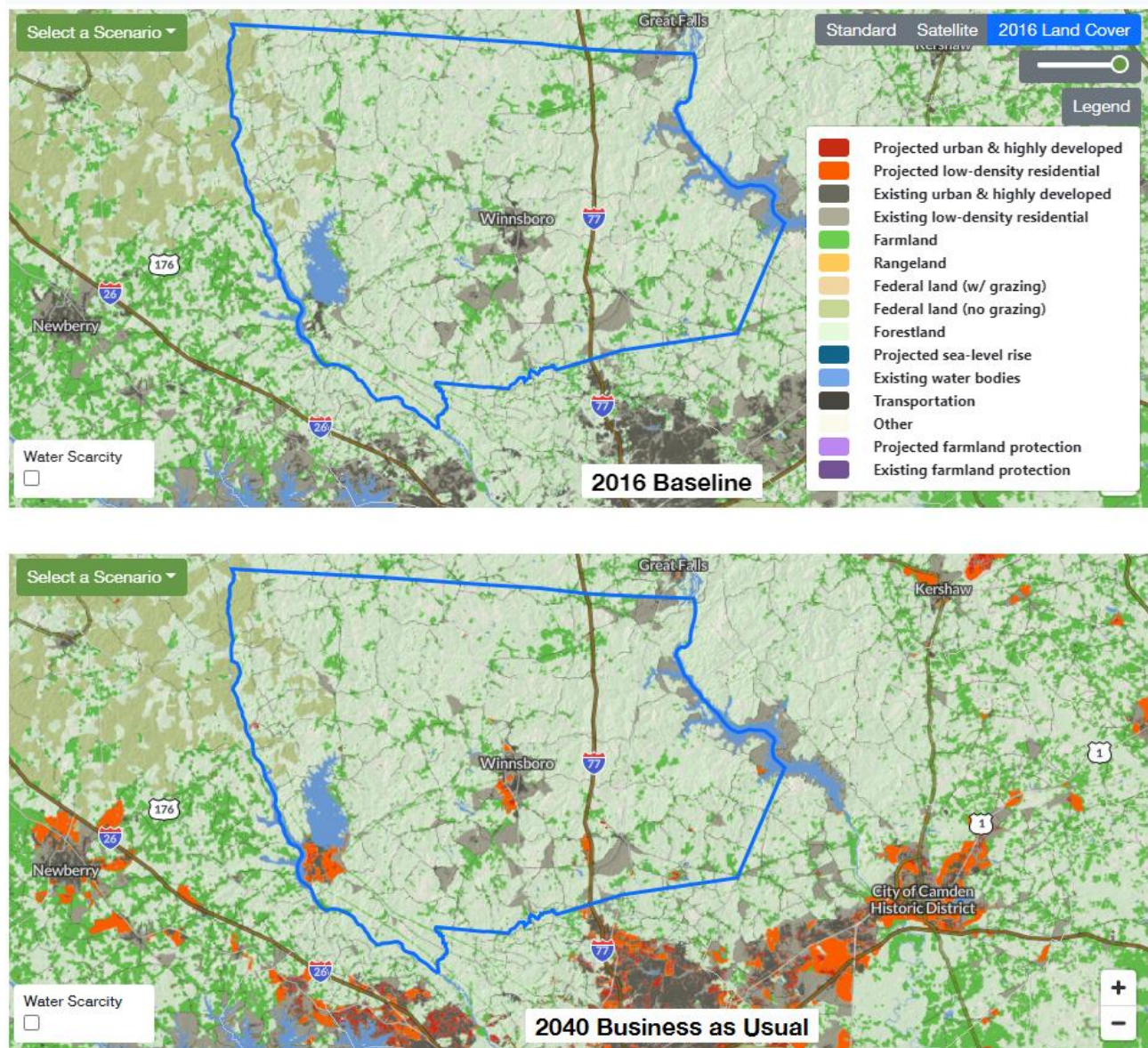
- Urban and highly developed (UHD) land use includes commercial, industrial, and moderate-to-high density residential areas.
- Low-density residential (LDR) land use includes scattered subdivisions and large-lot housing, which fragment the agricultural land base and limit production.

The 2022 AFT report analyzed farmland conversion rates under three different scenarios:

- “Business as Usual”, where recent development patterns are extrapolated to 2040.
- “Runaway Sprawl”, where inefficient low density development displaces more farmland.
- “Better Built Cities”, where compact development and reduced urban sprawl saves irreplaceable farmland from conversion.

The analysis by AFT indicates that Fairfield County would lose between 900 and 1,500 acres of agricultural land by 2040. The “Better Built Cities” model leads to the least amount of farmland loss, while even the “Business as Usual” model leads to the most amount of farmland loss by 2040. Most of this farmland conversion would occur west of I-77, particularly west of the Town of Winnsboro, and south of Lake Monticello.

Map 6.1: Farmland Conversion by 2040



*Farmland Conversion by 2040 in Fairfield County (Source: American Farmland Trust)*



# Natural Hazard Risk and Vulnerability

## Social Vulnerability and Assets at Risk

Natural hazards, such as flooding, tornadoes and winter weather, threaten all the population of Fairfield County. This threat is not just a result of these hazards impacting an area, but is also impacted by social vulnerability, which refers to the ability of a community to anticipate, cope with, and recover from the impact of natural hazard events. Understanding where populations reside who have a lower ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disaster events can help decision makers distribute scarce resources and is a critical element in addressing community resilience.

Social vulnerability can be calculated with a composite index based on wealth, sex, age, employment, poverty, race, ethnicity, and transportation access. The University of Central Florida has developed a Vulnerability Analysis Mapping Platform which provides national data based on characteristics of the population. Fairfield County generally has a medium social vulnerability rating, increasing to medium-high on the western portions of the County, up to high vulnerability in the more densely populated Town of Winnsboro.

In addition to the population of Fairfield County, infrastructure and property are also at risk of natural hazards. This includes residential and commercial building stock, dozens of critical facilities essential to emergency management, and important infrastructure utilized throughout the County. Table 29 shows the assessed value of replacing the building stock throughout Fairfield County, totaling \$2.2 billion when utilizing 2019 estimates. The majority of assets are dedicated to the residential housing stock in the County, amounting to around \$1.8 billion.

Community lifelines, also referenced as critical infrastructure in previous HMP's, are defined by FEMA as the most fundamental services in a community that, when stabilized, enable all other aspects of society to function. This includes emergency management resources such as shelters and law enforcement, and necessary infrastructure for transportation such as gas stations and roadways. Table 30 shows FEMA community lifelines by type.

## Natural Hazard Events and Loss in Fairfield County

The most frequent natural hazard events in Fairfield County are cold and thunderstorms (incl. lightning, hail, and wind). While thunderstorm, lightning, wind and hail damage is non-catastrophic, their cumulative impact and high frequency is still significant (around \$12.75 million, 38 people injured/killed, 26% frequency). When overlaying the risk from all hazards, western and central Fairfield County exhibit the highest levels of risk. Based on climate projections, the frequency and possible damage from thunderstorms and other meteorological and hydrological hazards is very likely to increase. It is anticipated that the number of cold days, and perhaps winter storms, will decrease. Table 31 shows a summary of the historical record

for all natural hazard events and losses in Fairfield County analyzed for the 2021 Central Midlands HMP.

All of the population of Fairfield County is at risk of natural hazards impacts. Table 6.1 summarizes the information utilized to create the overall risk profile for Fairfield County, including a community input survey to determine public natural hazard mitigation priorities. The effectiveness and acceptance of hazard mitigation strategies depends on a community's risk awareness and risk perception. This survey gauged hazard awareness, preparedness and impacts of residents in the Central Midlands region (see Appendix in the 2021 Central Midlands HMP for more information). The perceived risk highlights the overlaps and/or discrepancies between the objective risk (as developed in the hazard and vulnerability assessments) and subjective risk (as expressed by Fairfield County residents).

Map 6.2 presents the overall risk assessment, accounting for all hazards in a historical record of 1960 to 2018, social vulnerability to these hazards, and an analysis of hazard impacts throughout Fairfield County. When overlaying these data, Fairfield County exhibits largely medium-low to medium risk levels. However, western and central portions of Fairfield County show substantial areas of medium-high risk levels with pockets of high-risk areas in and around the Town of Winnsboro.

DRAFT

Table 6.1: Overall risk assessment for Fairfield County

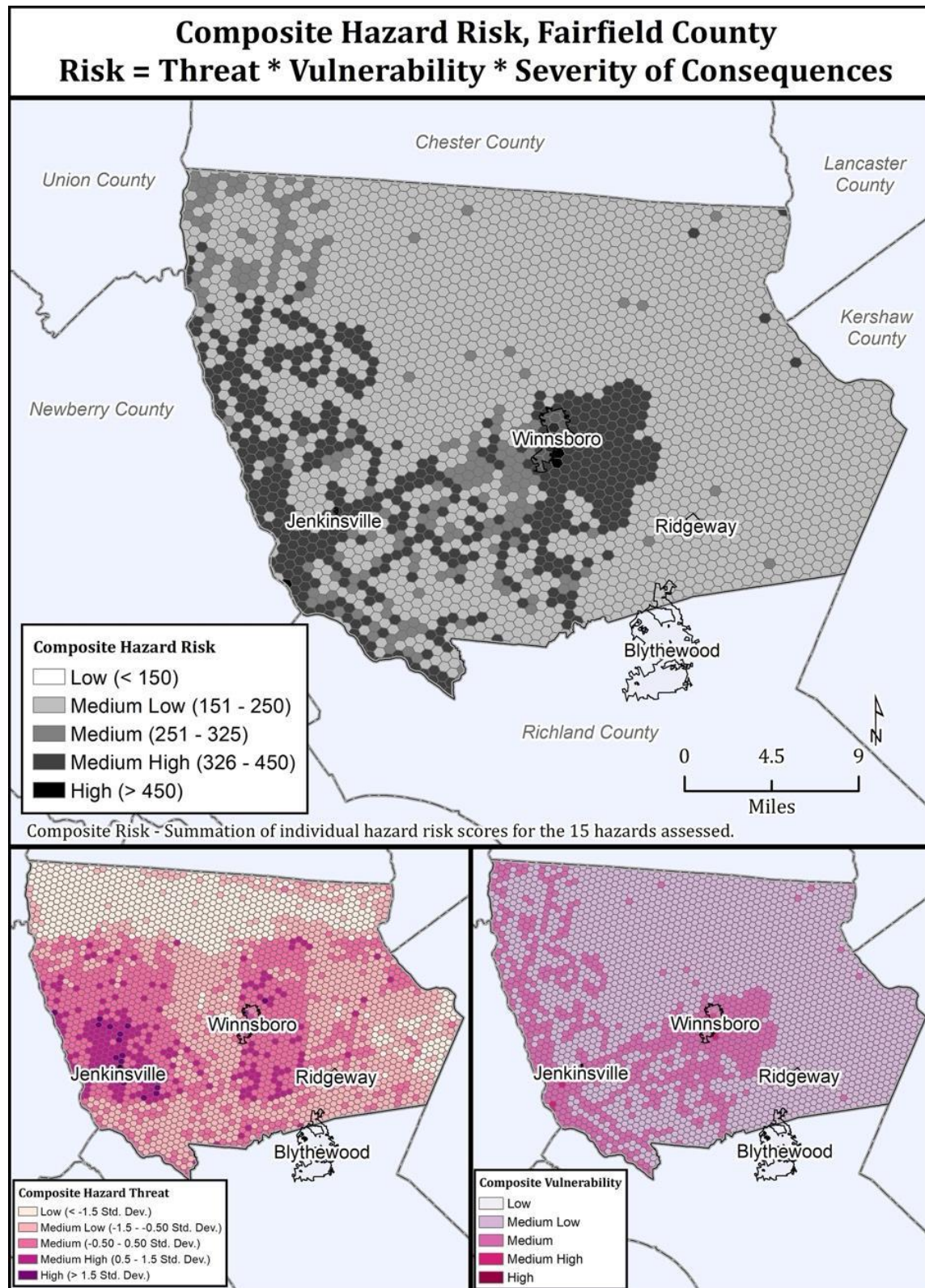
Perceived Risk	Hazard	Geographic Extent of Hazard Threat (THR)	Vulnerability (VUL)	Severity of Consequence (CON)	Severity of Consequence (CON) subcomponents				Overall Risk
					Future Climate Impacts		Historical Impacts	Priority Hazards <sup>[1]</sup>	
Less Important	<i>Winter Weather</i>	Widespread	High	Moderate	Unlikely to worsen	↔	Major	High	High
More Important	<i>Extreme Heat</i>	Isolated	Low	Severe	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Major	High	High
More Important	<i>Droughts</i>	Widespread	High	Severe	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Major	High	High
Somewhat Important	<i>Tornadoes</i>	Widespread	High	Severe	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Extensive	High	High
Somewhat Important	<i>Tropical Cyclones</i>	Scattered	Medium	Severe	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Minor	Medium	Medium
More Important	<i>Wind</i>	Isolated	Low	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Extensive	Medium	Low
Somewhat Important	<i>Extreme Cold</i>	Widespread	High	Moderate	Unlikely to worsen	↔	Extensive	Medium	High
Least Important	<i>Earthquakes</i>	Scattered	Medium	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Minor	Medium	Low
Least Important	<i>Flash Floods</i>	Isolated	Low	Moderate	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Minor	Low	Medium
Somewhat Important	<i>Lightning</i>	Widespread	Medium	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Major	Low	Medium



Perceived Risk	Hazard	Geographic Extent of Hazard Threat (THR)	Vulnerability (VUL)	Severity of Consequence (CON)	Severity of Consequence (CON) subcomponents				Overall Risk
					Future Climate Impacts		Historical Impacts	Priority Hazards <sup>[1]</sup>	
Less Important	<i>Hail</i>	Isolated	Low	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Extensive	Low	Low
Somewhat Important	<i>Thunderstorms</i>	Widespread	Medium	Moderate	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Major	Low	Medium
Somewhat Important	<i>Fog</i>	Widespread	High	Minor	Unlikely to worsen	↔	Minor	Low	Low
Less Important	<i>Wildfires</i>	Isolated	Low	Moderate	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Minor	Low	Medium
Least Important	<i>Riverine Floods</i>	Isolated	Medium	Moderate	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Minor	Low	Low

Source: CMCOG 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan

Map 6.2: Composite Hazard Risk



Based on historical event record, social vulnerability analysis, and the distribution of assets, Fairfield County is most at risk from the following types of natural hazards:

- Extreme Heat
- Drought
- Tornadoes
- Tropical Storm/Hurricanes
- Wind

Extreme heat can impact all of Fairfield County (see Map 6.3). The county averages 18 to 24 days classified as “very hot,” or above 95°F. The highest risk is in the southern and western portions of the county, including the towns of Winnsboro, Ridgeway, and Jenkinsville. Temperatures above 100°F can be experienced in the months of May, June, July, August, September, and October. Extreme heat carries a high risk due to the possibility of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The risk of extreme heat is expected to increase in the county with climate change, as the summer maximum temperature has increased from 72.8°F over 1971-2000 to 73.4°F over 1981-2010.

Every person and property in Fairfield County is at risk from hurricane and tropical storm impacts (see Map 6.4). This can include extremely strong winds, heavy rainfall, severe storms, and tornadoes resulting in extensive property damage and power outages. Western portions of the county have a slightly higher historical risk of tropical system impacts. Fairfield County experiences a tropical system about once every year.

Tornadoes pose a threat to all of Fairfield County, but the western and northeastern portions of the county have historically experienced more tornado warnings (see Map 6.5). The county experiences low magnitude tornadoes twice a year on average, and occasionally sees intense tornadoes affecting densely populated areas. Tornadoes can be spawned from severe storms as well as outbreaks stemming from tropical systems. Tornadoes can result in extensive property damage and loss of life.

The county frequently experiences high wind events with gusts exceeding 58 mph. On average, severe wind events occur every 2 months. There is a slightly higher propensity for severe weather, including wind damage, in the central and southern parts of the county. High winds can cause property damage and power outages due to flying debris.

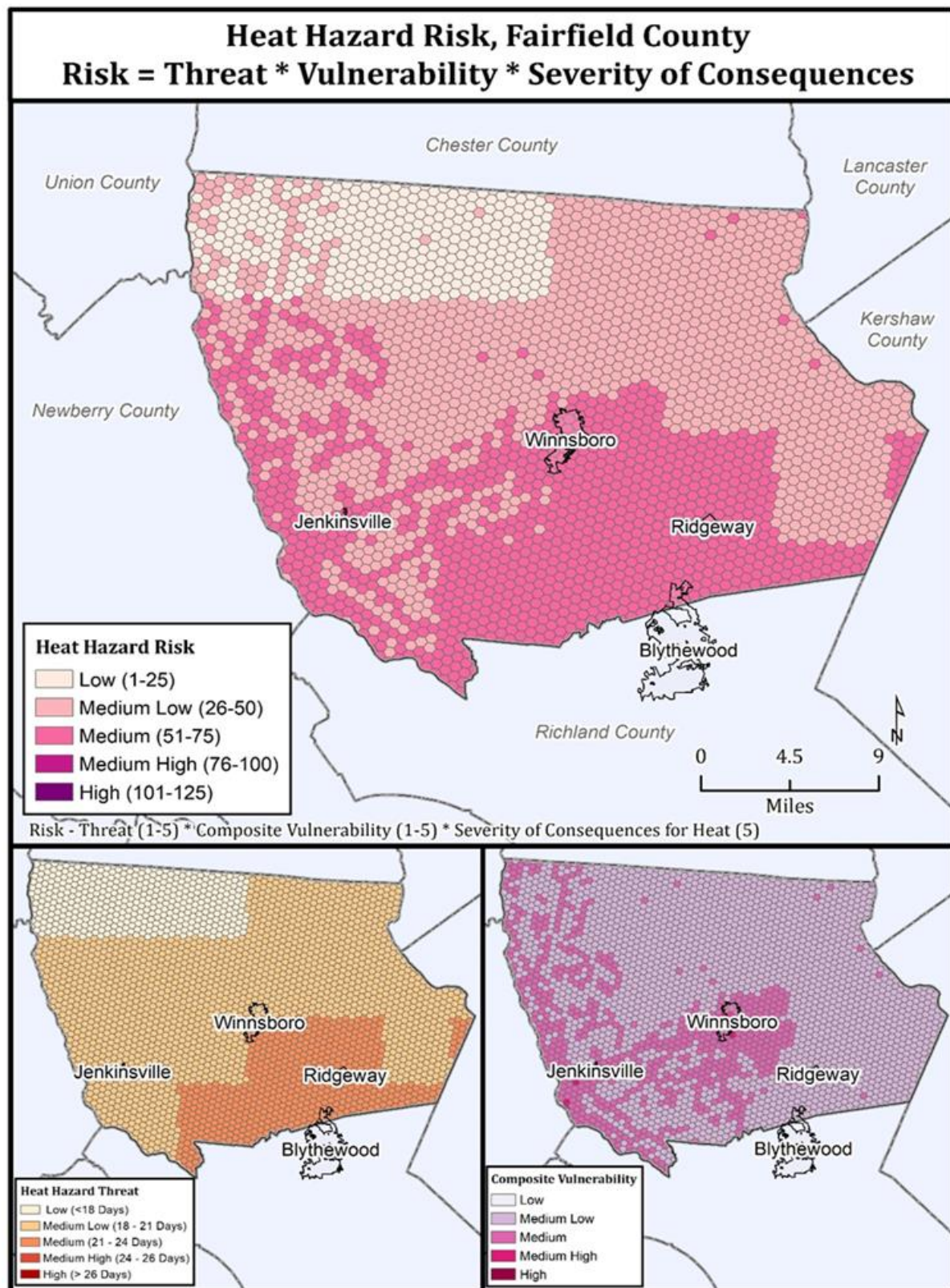
Drought also impacts the entire county (see Map 6.6). Overall, Fairfield County averages 15 to 22 weeks in drought per year, with the highest risk and frequency of drought concentrated in the western portions of the county. Multi-year droughts have also occurred in Fairfield County, such as from 1998 to 2002. Droughts negatively impact agricultural production, especially corn,

cotton, and soybean, as irrigation systems are not common in South Carolina. Tourism, freshwater fisheries, industry, and water and sewer utilities can also be significantly impacted by extended periods of drought. Due to climate change, the number of drought days and the duration of drought events is expected to increase.

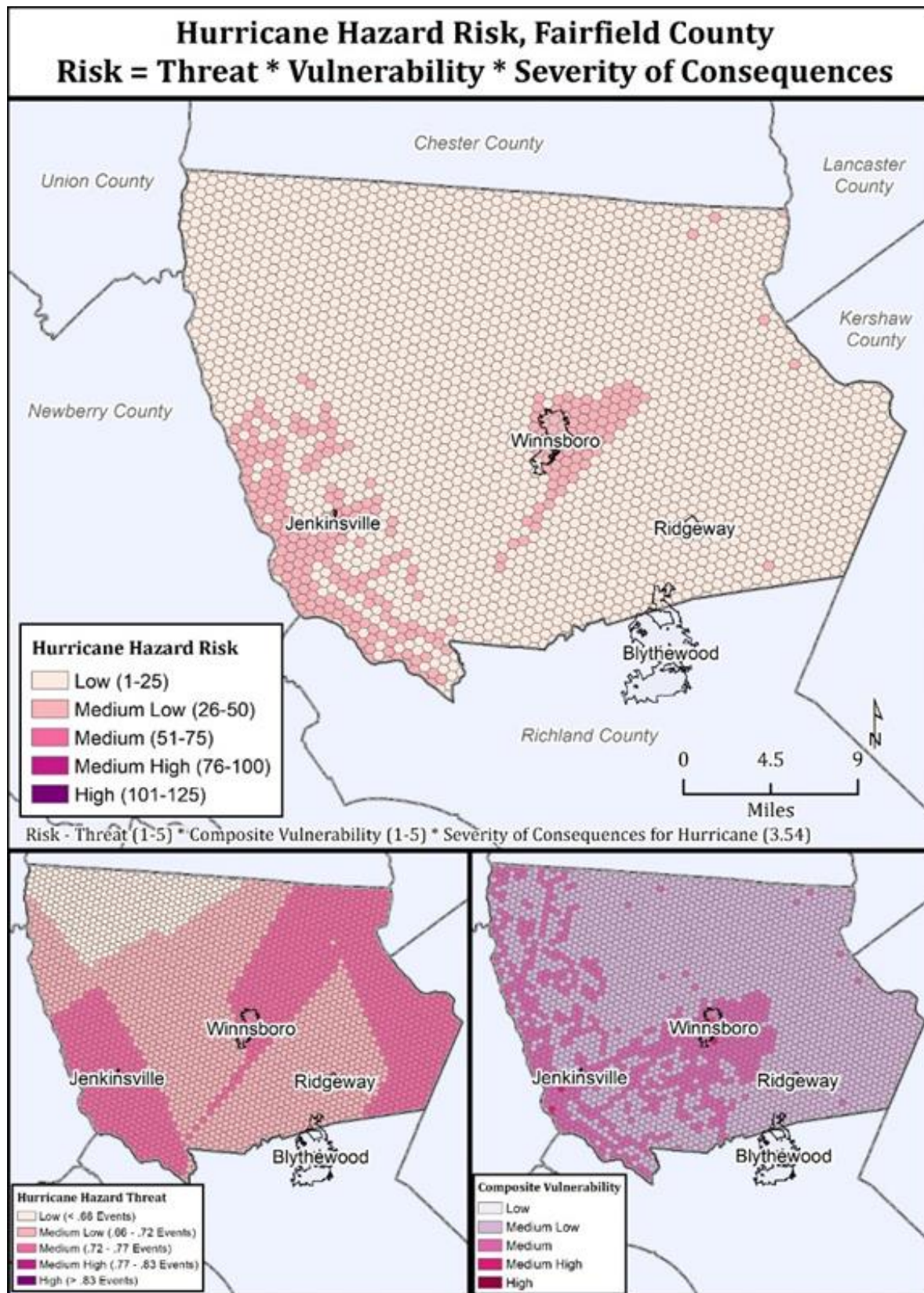
DRAFT



Map 6.3: Heat Hazard Risk

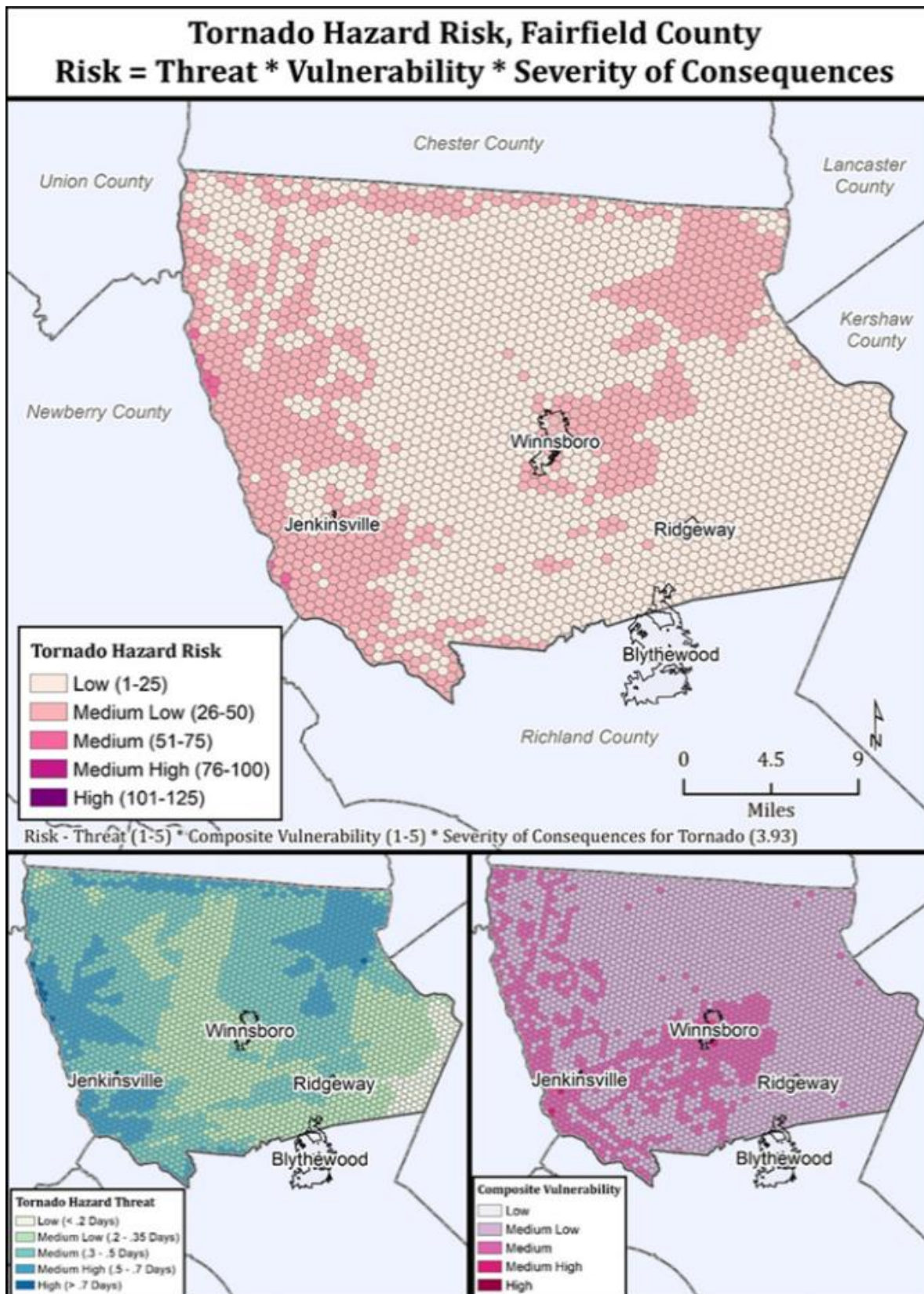


Map 6.4: Hurricane Hazard Risk





Map 6.5: Tornado Hazard Risk





Map 6.6: Drought Hazard Risk

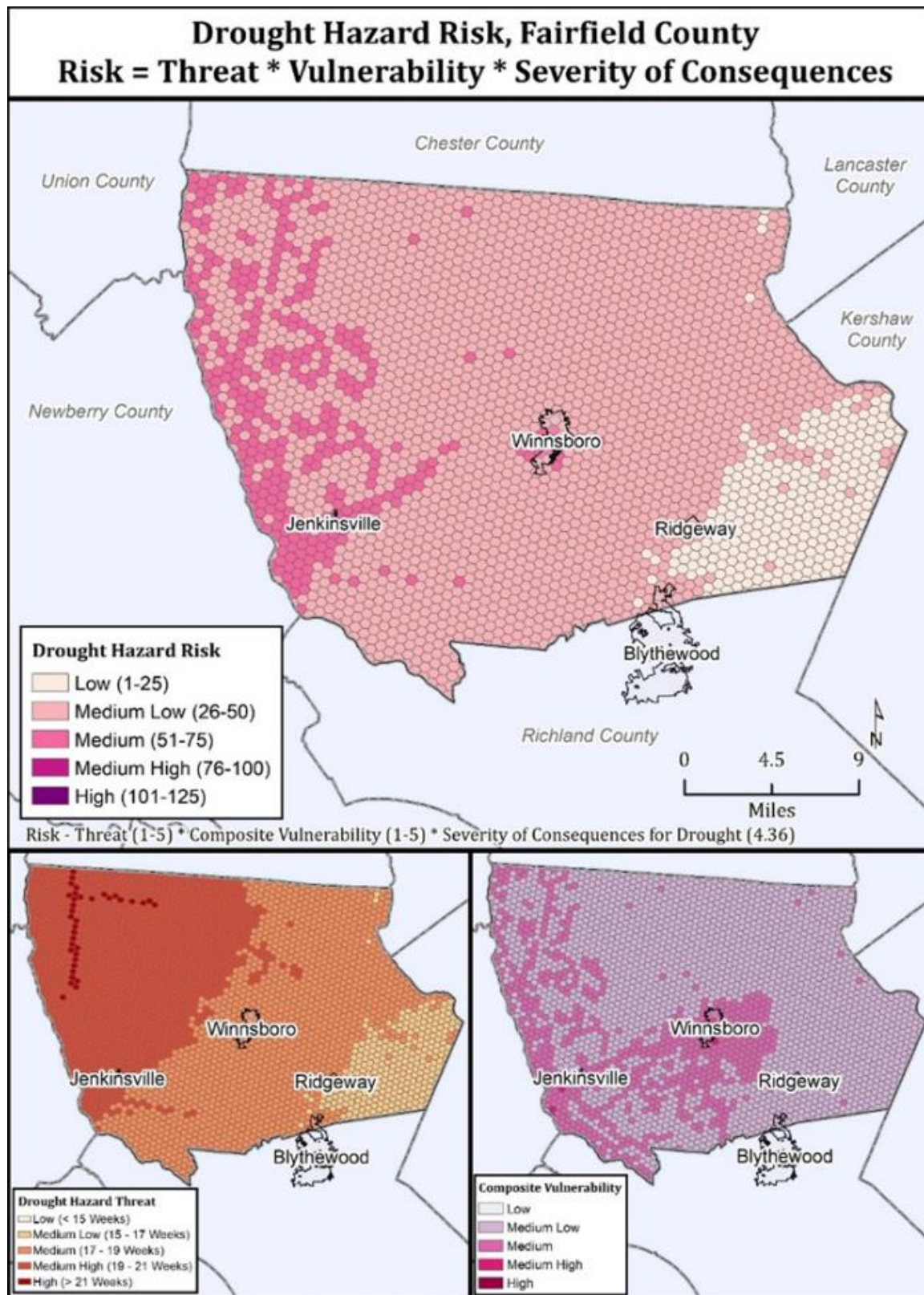


Table 6.2: Partner Organizations and Agencies

Local Governments	State/Regional/Special Purpose Districts	Other Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairfield County Emergency Management</li> <li>• Richland County Emergency Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Midlands Council of Governments</li> <li>• SC Office of Resilience</li> <li>• SC Disaster Recovery Office</li> <li>• SC Emergency Management Division</li> <li>• SC DNR Flood Mitigation Program</li> <li>• SC DNR State Climatology Office</li> <li>• SC Department of Public Safety</li> <li>• SC Department of Transportation</li> <li>• Fairfield County School District 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Organizations</li> <li>• United Way of the Midlands</li> </ul>

## Summary of Key Findings

- Fairfield County generally has a medium social vulnerability rating, increasing to high vulnerability within the Town of Winnsboro.
- Fairfield County generally has a medium to low composite hazard threat
- Fairfield County has a higher risk to drought, extreme heat, wind, tropical storms, and tornadoes
- Flooding in Fairfield County is localized to areas of poor drainage.
- Significant weather related hazard events are expected to increase in frequency and intensity as a result of climate change
- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact local and regional economic resiliency.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal # 5: Resilience

Strengthen Fairfield County's ability to respond to and recover from natural hazards, economic downturns, and other community vulnerabilities.

### Strategies

- 5.1. Continue working with Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) to update, adopt, and maintain the Fairfield County portion of the 2021 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan to include reviewing and updating the priority mitigation strategies and identifying funding opportunities for implementation.
- 5.2. Coordinate resilience efforts with neighboring jurisdictions and partner agencies/organizations to include developing a contact database of stakeholders and system for outreach and coordination.
- 5.3. Work with economic and workforce development partners to strengthen the County's ability to respond to and recover from economic downturns such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the termination of the VC Summer Nuclear project expansion.

DRAFT

7

# Transportation

# Introduction

The transportation element of the comprehensive plan inventories and analyzes issues impacting the local transportation network. The SC Priority Investment Act, which amended the comprehensive planning act to require a separate transportation element, stipulates that this analysis be multi-modal in nature and therefore include a comprehensive needs assessment of road improvement projects, new alignments, transit service, and bike and pedestrian facilities. This element also must be developed in accordance with the land use element to ensure compatibility and coordination between transportation priorities and existing and future land use policies.

## The Highway Network



The primary mode of transportation in Fairfield County, like all other counties in South Carolina, is the automobile. Public transportation is provided by the Fairfield County Transit System, providing flexible route service and subscription service for human service agencies and community organizations. Taxi services, and ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft are also available across the county.

Transportation by automobile is sustained principally by the county and State road system. Responsibility for road and highway maintenance is shared by the County and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). The development and opening of new streets and roads are regulated by the County. As additional development occurs and the use of land intensifies, continuous monitoring will be required to remain alert to the need for improvements. But much of the need may be anticipated through the local land use planning process, which is an integral part of any street planning exercise.

Streets and roads are categorized by SCDOT and the Federal Department of Transportation into a hierarchy of “functional classification”. This system allows for evaluation and analysis of specific street segments within the overall functioning of the street network. Functional classification systems organize roadways based on accessibility and mobility. There is an inverse relationship between accessibility and mobility in transportation planning. At the top of the spectrum, Arterials provide the highest level of mobility due to their high travel speeds. However, these high travel speeds necessitate a restricted system of access points. At the other end of the spectrum, local streets provide the highest level of access to land, with numerous curb cuts and driveways. However, local streets must necessarily limit speed and mobility as a result of increased access.

The capacity of State and County roads to serve existing and projected development is critical to the planning process. In evaluating that capacity, the SCDOT categorizes all roadways on the basis of Level of Service (LOS). This defines streets and roads in terms of their service

characteristics, ranging in levels from A to F. An “A” level of service roadway has free flow conditions with relatively low volumes and little or no delays. The other end of the spectrum is an “F” LOS with stop and go operation and average signal delays greater than one minute.

All streets and roads in Fairfield County are designed to provide not less than a “C” level of service. Where traffic volumes exceed this designed service level, improvements are generally scheduled by the State. Typically, streets with an LOS of D, E or F are given top priority for improvements.

Table 7.1 presents traffic count volumes from 2010 through 2021. Due to lower traffic volumes in the year 2020 on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, trends are presented in two ways: once from 2010-2019 to analyze pre-pandemic trends, and again from 2010-2021 to estimate post-pandemic impacts. Both the 2021 calculations and the traffic volume forecasts up to 2050 include the 2020 traffic count data.

Among the County’s major streets, roads and highways listed on Table 7.1, only two sections, excluding I-77, meet the description of “four-lane undivided major arterial”: SC 34, from I-77 toward Winnsboro for a few miles, and U.S. 321 By-Pass. Traffic volumes on these sections and other major routes listed do not exceed the Class “C” average daily traffic volume limits established by SCDOT.

While traffic volumes are relatively low and road capacity adequate at this time, planning must account for increasing through traffic in major transportation corridors. Truck traffic on SC 34 and U.S. 321 also is a concern. Segments of I-77 through the county, while operating at an LOS of C as of 2021, are projected to operate at a LOS E by the year 2050. Congestion is also anticipated around Lake Monticello, with projected new development.

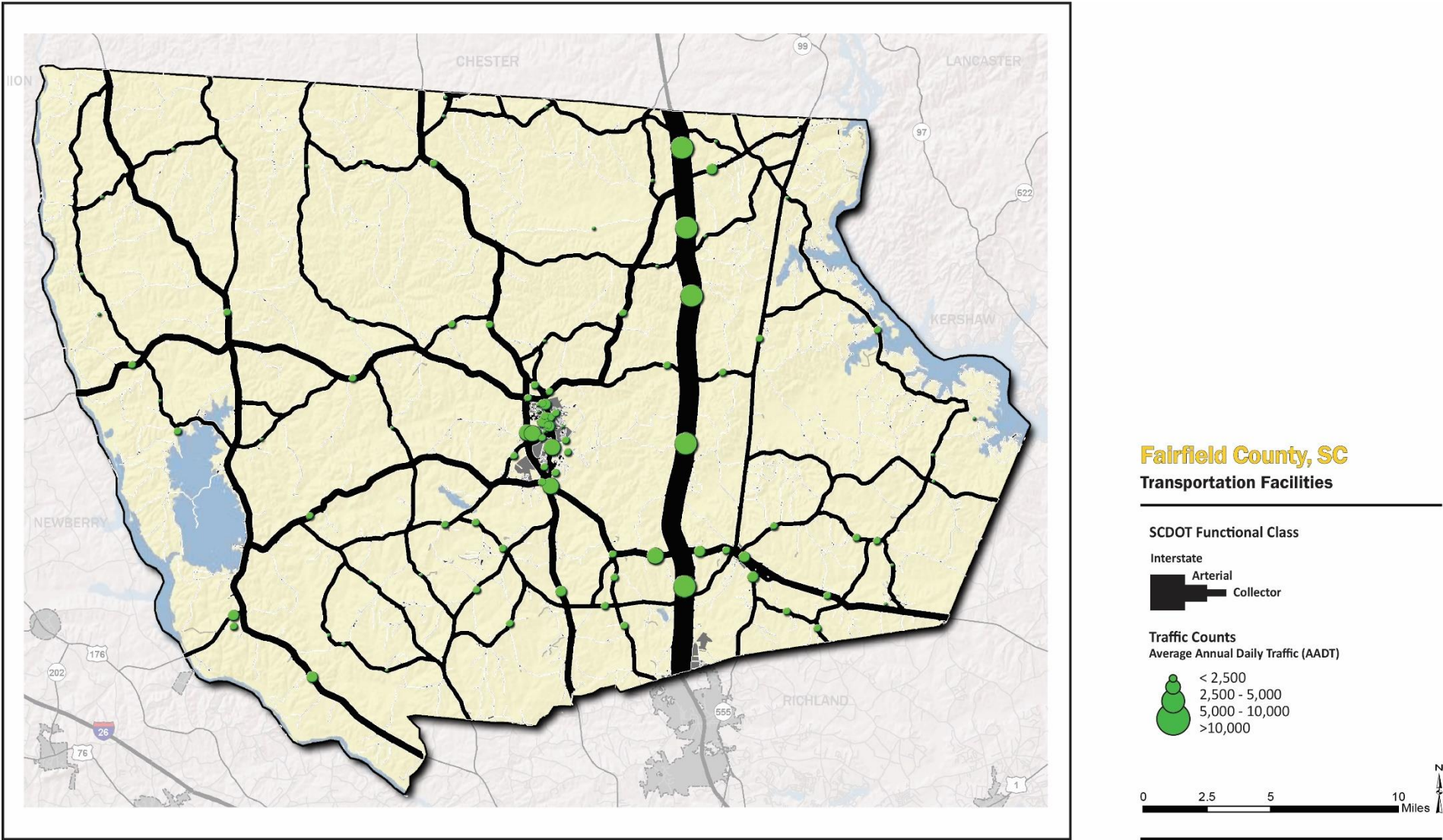
Table 7.1: Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts for selected Fairfield County road segments (2021)

Highway	Traffic Count by Year				Change in Traffic Volume		Roadway Capacity			Forecast (LOS) 2050
	2010	2015	2019	2021	Change 2010-2019	Change 2010-2021	Capacity	V/C 2021	LOS 2021	
SC 34 [Stations 125, 127, 128, 129]										
between US 321 to S-34	6,400	6,600	7,100	6,200	10.9%	-3.1%	10,800	0.57	B	8,706 (C)
S-34 to I-77	7,500	7,200	7,900	7,100	5.3%	-5.3%	10,800	0.66	B	11,183 (D)
I-77 to US 21	4,600	4,500	4,600	4,400	0.0%	-4.3%	10,800	0.41	A	4,026 (A)
Ridgeway US 21 & Kershaw Co. Line	2,100	2,500	2,500	2,200	19.0%	4.8%	10,800	0.20	A	2,649 (A)
US 321 [Stations 107, 111, 109]										
South of Winnsboro	3,100	3,200	3,600	3,000	16.1%	-3.2%	10,800	0.28	A	2,238 (A)
North of Winnsboro	2,500	2,100	2,100	2,100	-16.0%	-16.0%	10,800	0.19	A	1,411 (A)
Winnsboro Bypass	6,700	6,900	6,600	6,100	-1.5%	-9.0%	24,800	0.25	A	7,301 (A)
US 21 [Stations 103, 101]										
Ridgeway to Chester Co. Line	950	900	1,000	900	5.3%	-5.3%	8,600	0.10	A	920 (A)
Ridgeway to Richland Co. Line	2,900	3,000	3,300	3,200	13.8%	10.3%	8,600	0.37	A	3,371 (A)
SC 215 [Stations 147, 145]										
Monticello Reservoir to Chester Co.	1,250	1,200	950	1050	-24.0%	-16.0%	10,800	0.10	A	1,148 (A)
Monticello Reservoir to Richland County	1,650	3,100	4,400	4,300	166.7%	160.6%	10,800	0.40	A	5,960 (B)
I-77 [Stations 2225, 2230, 2227, 2229, 2231]										
Richland County to Peach Rd (S-30)	41,100	44,700	46,300	50,600	12.7%	23.1%	58,600	0.86	C	77,126 (E)
Peach Rd (S-30) to SC 34	39,700	42,500	41,600	48,500	4.8%	22.2%	58,600	0.83	C	72,513 (E)
SC 34 to Old River Rd (S-41)	37,200	39,600	41,500	45,900	11.6%	23.4%	58,600	0.78	C	69,135 (E)
Old River Rd (S-41) to Camp Welfare	36,900	39,400	44,200	45,600	19.8%	23.6%	58,600	0.78	C	67,829 (E)
Camp Welfare (S-20) to SC 200	36,900	39,500	41,600	45,500	12.7%	23.3%	58,600	0.78	C	67,964 (E)

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments; SCDOT



Map 7.1: Functional Classification and Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)



There are other transportation issues facing the county. The Central Midlands Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2020-2027, with local input, identified priorities in Fairfield County related to road resurfacing, and interstate and bridge rehabilitation. Road maintenance is the responsibility of the Public Works Department in Fairfield County but, due to insufficient funding, road maintenance has been identified in the Rural Transportation Improvement Program as an issue. Table 7.2 summarizes the projects included in the program for Fairfield County.

Table 7.2: Projects listed in the 2020-2027 Central Midlands Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Project Name	Project Type
Syrup Mill Road (S-115) <b>Resurfacing</b>	Guideshare
I-77, Mile Marker 34 to 48 <b>Interstate Rehab</b>	Interstate
Little River (SC-34) BR-57 <b>Bridge Rehab</b>	Bridge
Wateree Creek (SC-200) BR-65 <b>Design Build Package E</b>	Bridge
Bellfield Rd (SC-43) over Sawneys Creek <b>Bridge Replacement</b>	Bridge
Bonnie Rd (S-258) over Thorntree Creek <b>Bridge Replacement</b>	Bridge

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Biking and walking, as complements to the local vehicular transit system, provide numerous personal and social benefits, both in terms of a necessary means of travel, and for recreational opportunities. Increased walking and biking also reduces vehicle miles traveled for personal automobiles, reducing traffic congestion and the need for widening roads. Other benefits include healthy exercise, savings in transportation costs, and reduced pollution.

The emphasis on transportation is gradually shifting from sole reliance on the automobile to a more balanced combination of travel modes, including greater use in the future of mass transit (discussed later in this Plan), bicycles, and pedestrian walkways. Yet, according to Census ACS estimates from 2010 to 2020, automobile transportation still accounts for more than 90% of

travel within Fairfield County. For some residents, biking or walking is a primary means of transportation, whether out of desire or necessity. And for others, having facilities present for walking, biking, or both adds a quality of life factor that may determine where a person chooses to live and work. The presence of a network of accessible and well-maintained sidewalks and biking facilities has shown to help communities attract new residents.

Safety for pedestrians and cyclists represents a key challenge, especially along the County's major roads and highways. The South Carolina Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan (PBSAP), published by SCDOT in May 2022, presents an analysis of pedestrian and cyclist crash rates by county from 2015 to 2019. In this report, rates represent a ratio of number of incidents per 1,000 residents in a given county. A high frequency of incidents in an area with a comparatively low population would lead to a higher fatality rate for the given county.

At 61 per 1,000 residents, Fairfield County had the highest rate of pedestrian crashes with fatal or serious injuries during this time period. The next highest rate was Charleston, with 57 pedestrian crashes per 1,000 residents during the same time period. When looking at just the incidents that resulted in a pedestrian fatality, Fairfield County still has the highest rate at 35 pedestrian fatalities per 1,000 residents. No bicycle crashes of any kind were reported within Fairfield County during the same time period.

Incidents in rural counties across South Carolina were typically of pedestrians being hit while walking on roadways (at least 80 percent). The majority of these incidents occurred on roadways with no lighting (66 percent), in the evenings under dry conditions (85 percent), and primarily in local or collector type roads (at least 40 percent) which generally have a lower traffic volume capacity and speed limits. These results suggest that incidents in rural areas are likelier to result in fatalities despite the lower population density.

If facilities in the form of sidewalks, trails or bike lanes are not provided, then pedestrians and cyclists are forced to try and share roads with automobile traffic, which increases the risks of accidents. It is particularly important to ensure that safe routes to schools and parks are provided with sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes. Renewed interest in pedestrian and bicycle transit stresses the need for transportation alternatives as a means to improve, expand and enhance such facilities.

Transportation Alternatives (TAs) are innovative, community-based projects that provide opportunities to expand transportation choices beyond traditional street and highway programs. Such projects enhance one's travel experience by walking, bicycling, taking transit, or simply riding in a car. Funds are available from SCDOT through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for retrofitting local streets and roads to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians, and to protect scenic vistas and the environment. Use of these funds could assist the County in expanding and improving sidewalks and bikeways.

Additionally, the County should adopt the following criteria for adding bike and pedestrian facilities to the system over time:

- **Identify quantifiable need as determined by:** obvious dirt footpaths, existing sidewalk not compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act, or evidence of pedestrian fatalities or injuries.
- **Near Schools.** Not every school-aged child rides a bus to school. For kids that live near their school and walk to school, they must have a safe place to travel. Areas within ¼ mile of schools should be the highest priority for sidewalk improvements – ¼ mile is generally estimated as a 5-minute walk, a distance that people will usually choose to walk.
- **Bus Stops.** For those who do not own cars or choose to use public transportation, sidewalks leading to bus stops are necessary for safe pedestrian travel.
- **Near Parks.** People are likely to walk to parks if they are located within a short walking distance (5-minute walk from a park).
- **Commercial Corridors.** Those who do not own cars will walk to commercial areas for their service needs, as well as some who enjoy walking from their home to retail or restaurants, if sidewalks are available. Areas with a lot of foot traffic and inadequate pedestrian walkways should be a high priority for sidewalks.

## Piedmont Gateway Scenic Byway

The natural beauty and cultural history of Fairfield County will be featured for the traveling public to enjoy. The Piedmont Gateway Scenic Byway is one of 22 scenic byways identified by the SC Department of Transportation. Scenic byways connect local destinations along unique routes that highlight significant recreational, commercial and historic areas which foster recreational tourism, economic development, and cultural preservation.

The Piedmont Gateway Scenic Byway will traverse 26 miles of roads and highways within Fairfield County. The route will begin in Downtown Ridgeway and follow US Highway 21 north, continue on Camp Welfare Road west toward Interstate I-77, and continue westward along Mobley Highway to the White Oak community. Planning for the route and the related objectives and proposals are contained within the Piedmont Gateway Corridor Management Plan. The primary goals of this planning effort are to:

- Promote the byway to attract visitors and position the area as a scenic destination and great place to live and work;
- Preserve the scenic, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and archeological resource areas of the byway for future generations;
- Interpret the rich history of the area and use the byway to help tell the story; and,
- Identify ways to enhance and potentially extend the plan to local byways in Fairfield and Chester counties.

Direct affects of this planning effort to the local transportation system include additional vehicular traffic volumes as well as bicycle traffic increasing along these roadways. Roadway intersection enhancements and ingress and egress improvements into related land uses may be necessary to provide more efficient traffic movements. Additional directional and promotional signage will be utilized to highlight the route and the landmarks that make the Piedmont Gateway unique. This scenic byway initiative is an opportunity to promote the county and provide a further economic development tool for future development.

## Bus Transit

Mass transit is provided in Fairfield County by the Fairfield County Transit System (FCTS). It is a county operated system eligible for and receiving federal grant funds, administered by the SC Department of Transportation, from Section 5311 of the Rural Transportation Program and the State Mass Transit Funds (SMTF) program. These programs provide the bulk of the operating cost of the system.

The FCTS is Fairfield County's predominant source of public conveyance. The transit system is a department of Fairfield County Government operating under the authority of the County Administrator. The FCTS operates a general public flexible route (route deviation) transportation service and subscription transportation services for human service agencies and community organizations. The route deviation service is available to all individuals. Some of the subscription transportation services are provided exclusively for the agency's clients while others are shared with the general public.

Transportation services are offered in varying frequencies, Monday through Friday from early morning through late afternoon. Fares vary from route to route. Routes are designated to allow for deviations along the way to accommodate specific pick-up or drop-off requests within a two-mile radius. The deviation services are available to all passengers for an extra charge in addition to the normal route fare. Services are generally provided within Fairfield County and between Fairfield County, Richland, Kershaw, Newberry, and Chester counties. In partnership with The COMET, the FCTS now provides transportation to The COMET's Killian Road Superstop on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

While mass transit service is critical to those persons utilizing the system, ridership has been in decline over the past two years because of the economic downturn and loss of jobs. This has meant a loss of fee revenue compounded by dwindling state and federal assistance. The System's vehicle fleet is scheduled for replacement based on "use for life", and currently no vehicles are scheduled for replacement by SCDOT. In addition to public transit service, multiple organizations provide on-demand transportation to specific elements of the population.

More intensive use of mass transit is conditioned on careful coordination of bus services and land use policies designed to reduce vehicular traffic. Public transit is most feasible in areas of



dense development that create enough ridership demand. Strategic land use planning can create a pattern of high density residential, commercial and mixed-use nodes along major transportation corridors that will better support transit service. As currently configured, the route deviation alignment and subscription transit service are designed to make the system as user friendly as possible for its riders.

## Rail Transit

Rail service in the Metropolitan Area includes both passenger and freight. Amtrak has a station in downtown Columbia, (30 -40 minutes from Fairfield County) with daily stops between New York and Florida. CSX Corporation and Norfolk Southern own and operate an extensive rail network through and within the Metropolitan Region, with approximately 308 route miles of railroad lines in the four counties. The lines are predominately single track, with no extended sections of double track. This limits rail line capacity, since trains must wait on sidings to pass each other. The capacity of single track depends on a number of factors including the number of sidings, the mix of trains using a segment, the track grade, curvature, speed limits in effect, and the method of dispatch control.

## Air Transit

Fairfield County is easily accessible to two major airports. The Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE), located about 30-40 miles from the County via I-77, and the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport (CLT) located in Charlotte, North Carolina about 70 miles from the county via I-77. Air passenger and cargo service are provided at both airports by scheduled airlines, jet freight carriers, and various charter flights. Direct overseas flights are available from Charlotte.

Fairfield County also owns and operates a public airport - Fairfield County Airport (FDW) - located about three miles southwest of Winnsboro. The airport covers an area of 159 [acres](#) which contains one [asphalt](#) paved [runway](#) measuring 5,243 x 100 feet and 30 T-Hangers. For the 12-month period ending May 8, 2019, the airport had an average of 20 aircraft operations per day: 92 percent [general aviation](#), 4 percent [air taxi](#), and 4 percent military. There are 37 aircraft based at the airport: only five percent are multi-engine airplanes, with the rest being single-engine. The Airport also dispenses jet and 100/LL fuel, provides rental airplanes, flight instruction, pilot's shop, stocks supplies and provides maintenance service.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal # 6: Transportation

Provide a safe, efficient, and accessible multi-modal transportation system.

## Strategies

- 6.1. Work with the Town of Winnsboro to develop a Streetscape Project/Master Plan for Downtown Winnsboro.
- 6.2. Evaluate/prioritize bike and pedestrian improvements within developed areas and coordinate those projects with countywide trail and greenway planning initiatives.
- 6.3. Work with the SCDOT and other partners to implement priority recommendations outlined in the Piedmont Gateway State Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan.
- 6.4. Explore opportunities for implementing landscaped gateways and signage at gateways and interchanges along I-77.
- 6.5. Work with SCDOT and other partners to evaluate opportunities for creating a new I-77 interchange to improve access to the Mega-site and downtown Winnsboro.
- 6.6. Continue working with the Fairfield Transit and the COMET to identify opportunities for expanding transit service within the County.
- 6.7. Work with SCDOT and CMCOG to identify strategies for reducing the high rate of rural pedestrian injuries/fatalities.
- 6.8. Work with partners to implement transportation-related recommendations identified in the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Plan.
- 6.9. Support long term initiatives to establish intercity passenger rail service between Columbia and Charlotte.
- 6.10. Coordinate with partners to implement priority road and intersection improvement projects identified in the CMCOG Rural Transportation Plan



DRAFT

8

---

# Economy

# Introduction

The economic development element of the comprehensive plan presents existing labor force characteristics and provides an analysis of the County's economic base by inventorying employment trends by place of work and industry type. The local economy is not confined to what happens within the County boundaries. It is also influenced by geographic characteristics and neighboring jurisdictions. This is especially the case for Fairfield County which is strategically situated along the I-77 corridor between Charlotte and Columbia. The community is in a position to shape and help stimulate its economy through planning, zoning, creating a healthy and attractive living environment, and facilitating local economic development initiatives.

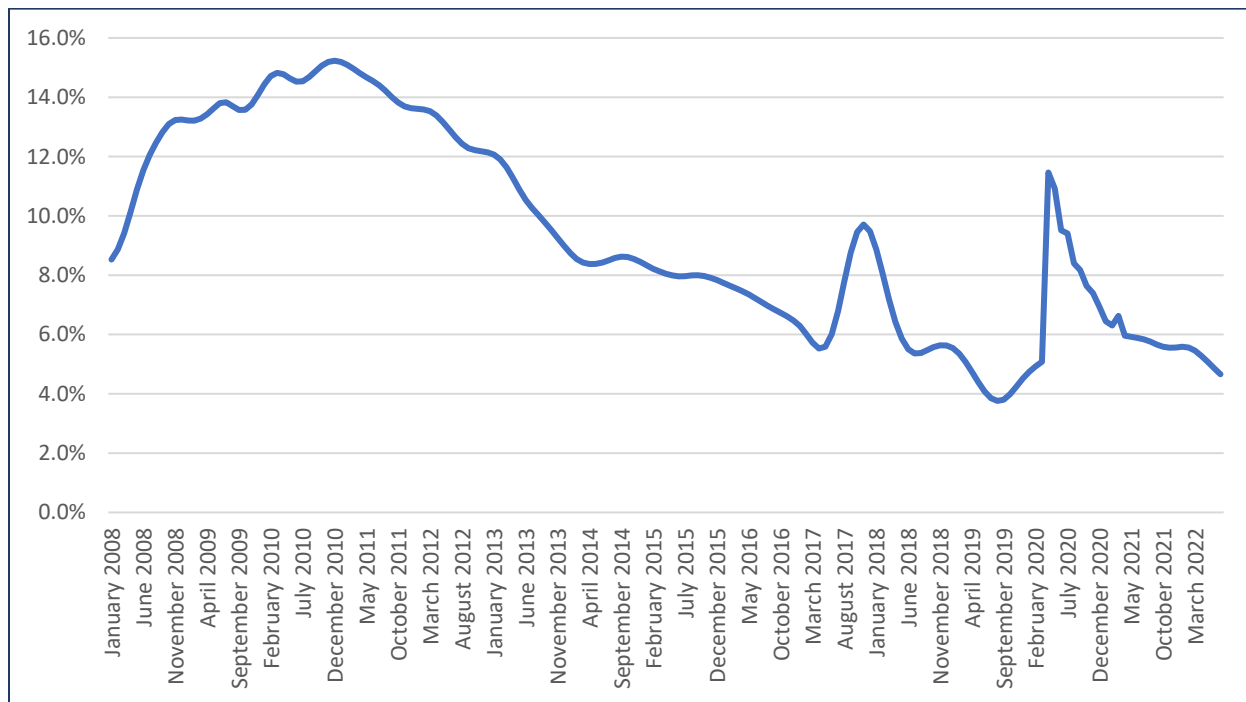
## Employment Characteristics

Fairfield County's civilian labor force aged 16 and over (not seasonally adjusted), has fluctuated between 9,000 and 10,000 over the last 10 years: from 10,671 in 2010 to an estimated 10,228 in 2020. The unemployment rate over this period for this segment of the labor force, however, has only slightly increased, from 4.8 percent in 2010 to 5.0 percent in 2020.

When you look at the overall employment numbers, the impact of the great recession of 2008 in Fairfield County is abundantly clear. The height of unemployment was during 2014 when the county experienced an unemployment rate of 8.1 percent. While the unemployment rate has almost declined by half since this time, the overall workforce and number of jobs available is not yet back to pre-recession levels suggesting a slower than average economic recovery. It is likely that many people in the County have left to pursue economic opportunities in surrounding areas such as the Columbia and Charlotte labor markets. Figure 8.1 illustrates the unemployment trends in the County since the early 2010s.

Table 8.1 shows employment trends for these occupation types from 2000 to 2020, according to Census ACS five year estimates. Occupation, according to the US Census Bureau, refers to the type of work that an individual classifies themselves as. The types of occupations in Fairfield County have slowly shifted from a production focused economy to one more focused on providing services. In 2000, construction and production occupations amounted to 40 percent of all employment in Fairfield County. These same occupations have declined in employment over this time period, and now amount to around 27 percent of all county employment. While service focused occupations amount to about 50 percent of all Fairfield County employment in 2000, this proportion has now increased to an estimated 72.8 percent in 2020.

Figure 8.1 – Unemployment Rates in Fairfield County 2008 - 2022



Source: Chmura Analytics, Jobs EQ

Table 8.1 – Employment by Occupation

Occupation	2020 ACS	2015 ACS	2010 Census	2000 Census
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	9,775	8,693	9,763	10,826
Unemployed	513	1,272	908	752
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	3,062 (31.3%)	2,094 (24.1%)	2,784 (28.5%)	1,991 (18.4%)
Service occupations	1,740 (17.8%)	1,906 (21.9%)	1,847 (18.9%)	1,648 (15.2%)
Sales and office occupations	2,317 (23.7%)	1,799 (20.7%)	2,081 (21.3%)	2,036 (18.8%)
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	850 (8.7%)	867 (10.0%)	1,047 (10.7%)	1,395 (12.9%)
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,806 (18.5%)	2,027 (23.3%)	2,004 (20.5%)	3,004 (27.7%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

Table 8.2 – Employment by Occupation

Industry	Employed 2020 ACS	Employed 2015 ACS	Employed 2010 ACS
<b>Civilian employed population 16 years and over</b>	<b>9,775</b>	<b>8,693</b>	<b>9,763</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	45	238	85
Construction	608	379	769
Manufacturing	1,612	1,681	1,711
Wholesale trade	186	100	256
Retail trade	978	794	811
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	725	825	726
Information	118	73	148
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	510	425	595
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,301	604	867
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1,824	1,771	1,836
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	494	690	635
Other services, except public administration	465	383	363
Public administration	909	730	961

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

Occupations of significant employment includes Management, Business, Science, and Arts; Sales and Office Occupations; and Service Occupations. Around 30 percent of the employed civilian labor force population 16 years and over work in management, business, science, and arts occupations. Other significant industries include sales and office occupations at 23.7 percent of the civilian labor force; production, transportation, and material moving occupations account for 18.5 percent of the employed civilian labor force.

Table 8.2 shows employment trends by type of industry according to 2020 Census ACS five year estimates. Industry, according to the US Census Bureau, refers to the type of work that an employer classifies their business as. Summarizing employment this way illustrates how all types of industry in Fairfield County were negatively impacted due to 2014 unemployment trends. This further illustrates how manufacturing and production industries have not recovered to their pre-recession levels. Meanwhile, service oriented industries are experiencing employment levels higher than they have ever been in the past decade.

Table 8.3 illustrates the largest employers in the County. VC Summer Nuclear Station is the largest employer with just under 1,000 employees. Fairfield County School District is the second largest employer with 650 employees. The other large employers overwhelming represent the County's manufacturing sector which has long been an important part of the local economy.

Fairfield County has long been successful in attracting and retaining industrial development because of its ideal location near the geographic center of the state, with five major interstates within an 85-mile radius. It is uniquely positioned halfway between New York and Miami, within 24-hour ground access to more than 70 percent of the U.S. market. Additionally, one of the nation's most effective and productive deepwater ports, the Port of Charleston, is easily accessible 138 miles away. Norfolk Southern Railway provides Class I rail service to the county by two routes: Charlotte to Columbia and Spartanburg to Columbia with direct connection to the Port of Charleston and the intermodal Inland Port in Greer. Connectivity to major North/South and East/West interstates and rail hubs allows for easy market access, making Fairfield County the premier location for business.

Table 8.4 – Major Employers in Fairfield County

Employer	Number of Employees
V.C. Summer Nuclear Station	700
Fairfield County School District	629
Healthcare US Co. Ltd. – MLILY	600
Breakthru Beverage South Carolina	400
Element Electronics	350
Fairfield County Government	307
Mekra Lang North America	290
Isola Laminate Systems	160
BOMAG Americas	111
Infinity Foods	100
Qualex Manufacturing LLC	100
Fujicopian USA (Palmetto Imaging Technology)	40
Sea Pro Boats – Fairfield	33
Pharmacy-Lite Packaging	18
Southeastern Dock & Door	16

Source: Info USA; ESRI Community Analyst

# Industrial Sites

Most of the existing industries and recruitment efforts are concentrated south of Winnsboro, on U.S. 321 and in the County's three industrial parks and other sites targeted for industrial development. These include:

- [Fairfield Commerce Center](#)- 158 Blue Granite Pkwy, Ridgeway, SC, 29130
- [Hwy 34 Ridgeway Rail Site](#) - Hwy. 34, Ridgeway, SC, 29130
- [500 Tillessen Blvd](#) - 500 Tillessen Blvd, Ridgeway, SC, 29130
- [Buchanan Site](#) - 1968 SC-34, Winnsboro, SC, 29180
- [Phillips Granite](#) - 1057 Columbia Road, Winnsboro, SC, 29180
- [Walter B. Brown I & II Park](#) - Commerce Blvd at Cook Road, Ridgeway, SC, 29130
- [Charm, portion](#) - 200 East Church Street, Ridgeway, SC, 29130
- [I-77 Mega Site](#) - I-77 & SC Hwy 34, Ridgeway, SC

The Fairfield Commerce Center ("FCC") is a 684-acre, Class A Business and Industrial Park located just off I-77 in central South Carolina. The park is owned and is being developed by Fairfield County. All due diligence required for development has been performed, Phase I infrastructure has been designed and water and road infrastructure is installed. The park has been fully master planned and has achieved the highest level of site certification offered in South Carolina, making it one of the largest Class A parks in the state to achieve certification under the new, more rigid standards adopted in 2010 by the South Carolina Department of Commerce. The County is also in the process of developing a joint county park with Richland County along the I-77 corridor. Once developed, this park will provide more opportunities for business recruitment and expansion efforts and will provide a number of quality employment opportunities for area residents.

## I-77 Mega Site

Fairfield County has been proactive in fostering the county's economic development opportunities. The County has identified 1,500 acres as the I-77 International Megasite. At completion, this site will provide up to 9.2 million square feet of manufacturing space. Located between Columbia and Charlotte along Interstate I-77, this development is within easy access to Interstates I-20, I-26, I-85, and I-95 and within an 11-hour drive of 45 percent of the US population. Additional transportation alternatives are provided. A railspur is proposed for the site which will add capacity to ship good through Norfolk Southern's expansive railway network.

Two rail-accessible inland ports and the Port of Charleston are all within a two-and-a-half-hour drive. The site is also served by the Columbia Metropolitan Airport and the Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

Currently, the site planning work and grading have been completed and infrastructure improvements are being made which include water and sewer accessibility. A new, dedicated interchange will provide direct access to Interstate I-77 and provide a gateway into the Town of Winnsboro. The I-77 International Megaproject's potential for Winnsboro, Fairfield County, and the central SC region is tremendous.

## Commuting Patterns

The overall job market is complex within the County. Of the County's 9,595 residents with jobs in 2019, 79.2 percent leave every day for employment in adjoining counties while only 20.8 percent actually work and reside within Fairfield County. The average commuting time for Fairfield County residents is around 30 minutes. The longest commutes are for residents in the Winnsboro North CCD, but easy interstate access in the county makes this a difference of only one to two minutes.

## Economic Development Organizations

### Fairfield County Economic Development

Fairfield County has a full-service economic development department that offers a range of services, including support for existing industries, assistance with site and building selection for new and expanding businesses, and providing demographic and labor statistics, wage and benefits surveys, and relocation support. Target industries for the County include automotive and heavy equipment, advanced manufacturing, distribution and logistics, and light manufacturing and assembly. Fairfield County Economic Development recently completed a strategic plan that lists the following goals for the organization: quality sites and buildings to attract and retain businesses; retain and support the expansion of existing businesses; develop a strong talent pipeline; raise awareness of Fairfield County as a choice business location; an innovative economic development organization. Key priority projects include development of a site plan for the mega site, implement site infrastructure improvements, issuing an RFP for Signage design, complete the housing study and zoning ordinance update, create partnerships for health care and economic development, explore the exist 32 plan, and conduct a training center feasibility study.



## I-77 Alliance

In 2014, the I-77 Alliance was formed to position and market Chester, Fairfield, Richland, and York Counties as an excellent business location to attract investment, high quality jobs, entrepreneurs, and professional talent. As a first step, the alliance retained Creative Economic Development Consulting, Inc. to prepare the I-77 Strategic Plan to leverage the regional planning process for the local economic development programs. While this plan provides a comprehensive economic development strategy at the regional scale, recommendations related to Fairfield County are limited. Their focus is primarily along the I-77 corridor. However, several strategies identified in this report are relevant for Fairfield County especially, when used in conjunction with a sound community planning strategy. The I-77 Strategic Plan is organized along the following seven overarching objectives:

- Marketing and Lead Generation
- Internal Marketing and Education
- Quantify the Workforce
- Leverage Partner Organizations
- Regional Infrastructure
- Regional Product Development
- Leveraging the Region for Local Problem Solving

Key findings presented in the I-77 Alliance Strategic Plan related to Fairfield County include:

- Infrastructure (water and sewer) delivery is identified as a weakness in Fairfield County.
- Lack of quality buildings (Class A) in Fairfield County.
- Noncompetitive electric rates in Richland and Fairfield Counties
- Fairfield County had the least number of available sites in the market and less than 2 buildings available ready for occupancy.
- The labor force dipped in Fairfield County, while the other three counties saw a growth, albeit marginal.
- The maximum growth in wages was observed in Fairfield County, followed by Richland County with an average weekly wage of \$984 in Fairfield County.
- Fairfield County had the lowest SAT scores of the four counties included in the plan.

## Central SC Alliance

The Central SC Alliance is a non-profit economic development organization focused on an eight county region in Central South Carolina. The organization's primary mission is to recruit capital investment and create jobs in the region. This is achieved through assisting businesses in job creation and attracting capital investment. The work of the Central SC Alliance is geared towards advancing and improving the region's economy by collaborating with a network of industries, talent, and communities. The Alliance actively invites investment and partnership, emphasizing the importance of collective efforts in growing, succeeding, and thriving together. This collaborative approach involves working with allies throughout the Central SC Region and

the state to support their mission of fostering prosperity for both the people and the places they serve.

## Scout Motors

In Spring 2023, Scout Motors Inc. announced a \$2 million investment on a 1,600-acre site in northern Richland County. This manufacturing facility is estimated to employ at least 4,000 employees and produce 200,000 vehicles annually. American automaker Scout Motors operates as a separate division of the Volkswagen Group. The business was founded in 2022 to provide electric automobiles with off-road capabilities. The Blythewood plant, with an operational launch date of late 2026, will be the first factory the company constructs.

The location of the Scout facility at Interstate I-77 and Blythewood Road is 2.5 miles south of the Fairfield County line. The close proximity provides an opportunity for an economic benefit to Fairfield County through residential developments and related commercial businesses and manufacturing suppliers. The growth from jobs will increase housing opportunities within Richland and Fairfield Counties which will support added commercial and service businesses and further job growth in these areas. Additional industrial, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution facilities who supply related components of the Scout manufacturing process may find a need for close proximity to this facility and establish a presence in both counties.

BMW in Greer, after a 30-year presence in South Carolina, has been an economic driver within the Upstate economy. Comparatively, this facility employs nearly 9,000 employees and produces over 400,000 vehicles a year. In 2017, the annual estimated impact of the BMW facility to the regional economy was \$16.6 billion. Similarly, the Scout Motors facility will have a tremendous impact and provide opportunities for thousands of residents. Fairfield County should work with partners to harness the spillover potential for related investments.

## Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

In 2022, Fairfield County was selected as a partner community through the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) Program. The RERC provides assistance to counties, cities and towns for outdoor recreation and downtown revitalization programs by identifying options to enhance the local economy. The Program seeks to promote community revitalization, protect air and water quality, support and diversify the local economy, foster job creation and encourage new opportunities for individuals to interact within the natural world. This program is unique in that it focuses both on the urban core of communities as well as the natural environment within rural areas. The end result is a Community Action Plan (CAP) which highlights the local resources while establishing specific actions to enhance the local economy.

A local steering committee was established with individuals representing nine organizations which worked with a Planning Assistance Team of consultants from various federal, state and regional agencies. Public workshops were held to obtain community input and identify key information for inclusion within the plan. Additionally, the Planning Assistance Team and the Local Steering Committee set goals to strengthen the economy of Fairfield County and invigorate the towns of Winnsboro, Ridgeway and Jenkinsville.

The CAP identified five goals with multiple action items assigned to each goal statement. These goals and action items ranged from recreational programs to broadband access and entry-level housing needs. Lastly, the CAP outlined a community vision in which residents and visitors can utilize the varied outdoor recreation facilities through the promotion of active lifestyles, downtown revitalization, and increased access to the Broad River.

## Summary of Observations

- Top 5 industries for civilian employed population 16+ years old according to the Census 2020 ACS: Educational services, and health care and social assistance (1,824); Manufacturing (1,612); Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (1,301); Retail trade (978); Public administration (909).
- Top 5 occupations for civilian employed population 16+ years old according to the Census 2020 ACS: Management, business, science, and arts occupations (3,062); Sales and office occupations (2,317); Production, transportation, and material moving occupations (1,806); Service occupations (1,740); Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (850).
- According to 2020 Census ACS data, civilian labor force unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing to 5.0 percent from a high of 14.8 percent in 2014. This is slightly lower than the South Carolina unemployment rate at that time (5.0 percent).
- Fairfield County (government and school district) is the largest employer, with around 900 employees. VC Summer is second largest employer at around 700 employees.
- The county's economic development is driven by a diverse range of industries, including heavy equipment production, electronic components, nuclear energy, and the manufacture of the only televisions made in the United States.
- Fairfield County's economic landscape is further strengthened by its strategic location, with 92% of its available industrial sites and buildings being within three miles of interstate access, facilitating efficient logistics and transportation.
- The I-77 mega-site and the Scout Motors development both have the potential to offer transformative economic development opportunities for Fairfield County.
- Key infrastructure improvements, such as the proposed WWTP, are essential for leveraging these economic development opportunities.

# Goals and Strategies

## Goal # 7: Economy

Support a diverse and resilient economy, that includes a thriving industrial sector, support for small locally owned businesses, and leveraging of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities.

### Strategies

- 7.1. Strengthen the County Economic Development organization through increased marketing, cultivating public-private partnerships, and increasing participation in regional economic development alliances.
- 7.2. Strengthen small business development initiatives with a focus on support for Women and Minority Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) (e.g., establishing a County office of business opportunities, setting procurement goals, etc.).
- 7.3. Study economic development efforts and site development in other counties to establish best practices for Fairfield County (e.g., CSX Central South Megasite in Kershaw County).
- 7.4. Proactively pursue a major employer as an anchor for one of the industrial parks and build a “theme industrial park” around that anchor.
- 7.5. Have Economic Development Director give progress reports at least quarterly to County Council at public meetings.
- 7.6. Attract and retain business by investing in industrial sites, funding product development, implementing a proactive Business Recruitment and Retention program, and supporting new retail, commercial, and mixed-use developments.
- 7.7. Support town center redevelopment initiatives in the municipalities.
- 7.8. Develop a strong talent pipeline by conducting a feasibility study for a training/career center at the Fairfield Commerce center, promoting the teachers village, and working with partners to develop skills and career pathway programs.
- 7.9. Explore the feasibility of hiring a small business coordinator and hospitality and tourism director.
- 7.10. Identify opportunities for promoting the adaptive reuse of vacant commercial space and brownfield sites for small business development needs.
- 7.11. Market Fairfield County as a regional tourism destination by highlighting the County’s unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources and implementing the priority recommendations from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Plan.
- 7.12. Continue to track/market available industrial space and develop tracking and marketing system for smaller commercial space and lots in key commercial areas.
- 7.13. Promote Fairfield County as a choice business location through marketing and promotion, and investing in amenities and placemaking assets.

- 7.14. Promote farmers market, local agriculture, and other food related businesses.
- 7.15. Continue to invest in existing industrial sites and ensure adequate infrastructure and resources at these sites for attracting and retaining industry to include the new I-77 Megasite.

DRAFT

DRAFT

9

---

# Community Facilities

# Introduction

The Community Facilities element serves as an overview of the public services provided by governments, agencies and organizations for the use by the public. This includes most levels of government services as well as infrastructure, utility and life safety needs by the general public.

Community facilities are defined as facilities that are necessary to support development and redevelopment, are publicly owned and/or serve the public health, safety and welfare.

Infrastructure systems include water supply, treatment, and distribution; sewage system and wastewater treatment; solid waste collection and disposal, fire protection, emergency medical services, and general government facilities; education facilities; and libraries and other cultural facilities. The element may also include, energy, telecommunications, stormwater management, open space and recreation, public health care, public safety, justice, public administration and public improvements.

This element is divided into twelve categories:

- Public Water Systems
- Public Sanitary Sewer Systems
- Solid Waste Collection and Disposal (County Service)
- Electric Power
- Natural Gas
- Law Enforcement (County Service)
- Fire Protection (County Service)
- Emergency Medical Services (County Service)
- Medical Facilities and Services
- Recreation (County Service)
- Education Facilities (County Service)
- Communication

Fairfield County government has direct control over half of the above-mentioned items related to community facilities and therefore it is imperative to continue to maintain positive interaction with those agencies and organizations that are responsible for these services. Inter-agency cooperation and coordination is essential to the orderly extension and development of future facilities and the county as a whole



# Public Water Systems

There are six public water systems providing service to Fairfield County – the Town of Winnsboro, the Town of Ridgeway, Jenkinsville Water Company, Midcounty Water District #1, Midcounty Water District #2, and the Mitford Water District. The agencies are special-purpose districts formed by the state legislature and governed by a board or commission. The Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority provides water to about 150 Fairfield County customers around Lake Wateree close to the Kershaw County line, limited to the River Road area. In total, these operators provide public water to the great majority of households, businesses and industry in the county.

## Town of Winnsboro

The Town of Winnsboro is the largest supplier of water in the county and the only operator drawing from a surface water supply. All other system operators rely on groundwater supplies as their primary source of water. Midcounty uses a groundwater source as well as purchases water at a wholesale rate from the Town of Winnsboro.

The Town of Winnsboro serves the resident population, surrounding development areas and extends water to prime development areas such as the Walter Brown Industrial Park, Interstate 77 and further towards the Town of Blythewood. The Town is using around 2.1 million gallons per day (MGD) on average with a total system capacity of 4.0 MGD. Town officials are working with SCDHEC to increase the total capacity of the system to draw up to 10.0 MGD maximum capacity for future growth. There is supply to meet the future needs of the community within the next twenty years and beyond.

## Mid County Water Company

The two Midcounty Water districts serve a large area west of Winnsboro, extending eastward to the Jenkinsville service area. Capacity of the two Midcounty districts exceed the average usage. As a result, the districts are well positioned to capitalize on and accommodate future growth opportunities. The Town of Ridgeway has six wells with capacity to produce 900,000 gallons per day. It is currently using less than 25,000 gallons per day and operating at two percent of total capacity. This excess capacity gives the community and its larger service area ample water infrastructure to accommodate new and expanding development.

## Jenkinsville Water Company

The Jenkinsville Water Company also has ample water capacity to accommodate and capitalize on future growth opportunities. It is currently operating at 49 percent total capacity, with a reserve of over 250,000 GPD.

Table 9.1: Fairfield County Water System Inventory, 2022

Operators	Water Source		Average Use (MGD)	Total Capacity (MGD)	Maximum Capacity (MGD)	Population Served
	Surface	Wells				
Town of Winnsboro	5	0	1.429	4.000	4.000	7,888
Town of Ridgeway	0	6	0.011	0.900	0.000	950
Jenkinsville Water Co	0	16	0.125	0.254	0.000	2,550
Midcounty Water Dist 1	0	5	0.055	0.268	0.001	1,487
Midcounty Water Dist 2	0	0	0.231	0.970	0.000	3,500
Mitford Water District	0	1	0.155	0.400	0.000	1,878
Miscellaneous Systems <sup>1</sup>	0	30	0.000	0.000	0.000	na
Lugoff-Elgin Water	1	0	na	na	na	na

<sup>1</sup>Miscellaneous systems include two mobile home parks, camp sites, Dominion Energy Parr Steam Plant, Health Care Center and other isolated uses and locations.

Source: SCDHEC, *Water Supply Inventory Source Report*, 2021; EPA Envirofacts *Environmental Source Book*, 2022.

## Mitford Rural Water District

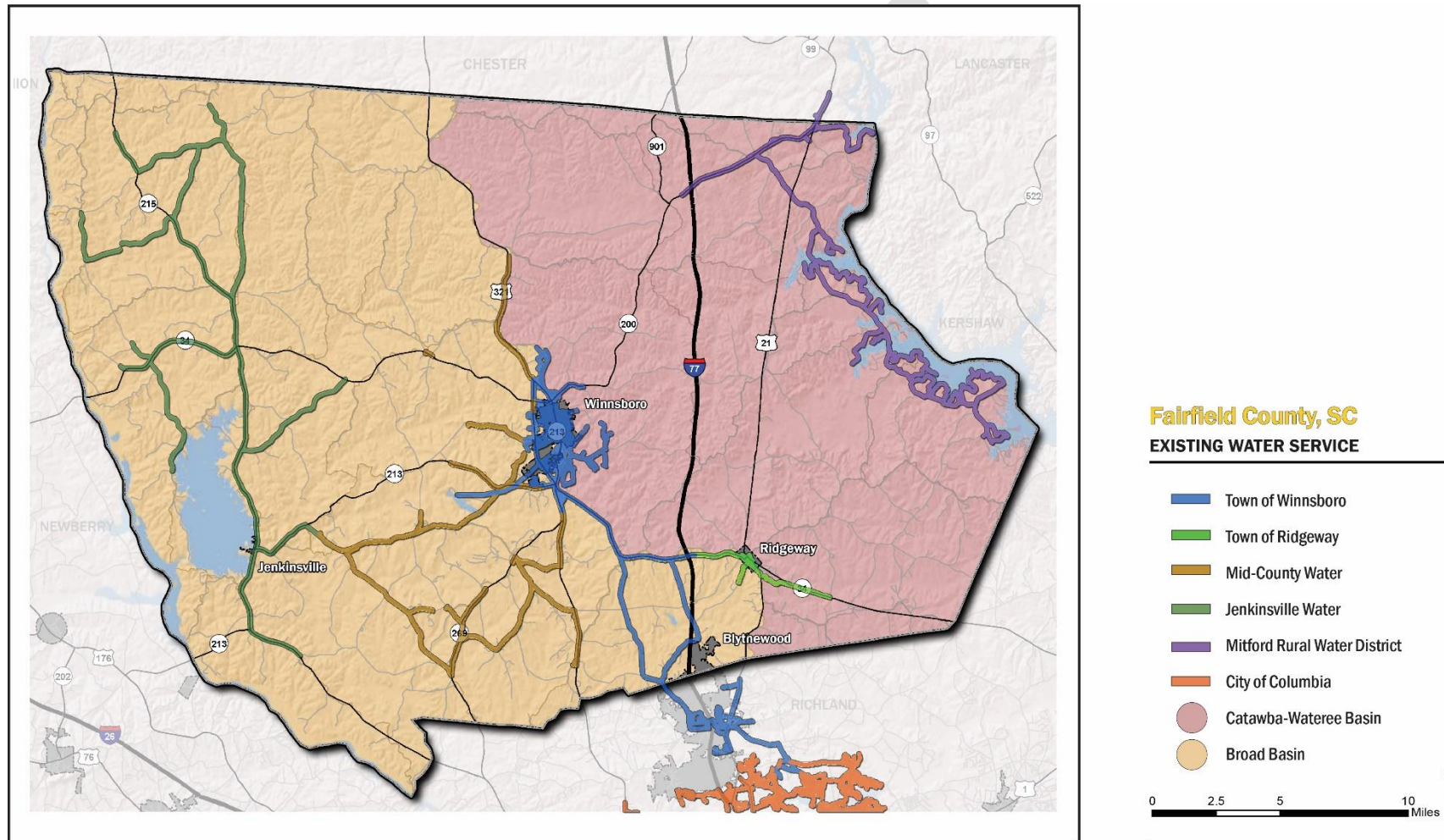
The Mitford Rural Water District serves the Mitford community and the upper northeast corner of the county, extending along SC Highway 200 to Interstate I-77. This district also has ample reserves to accommodate future growth and development opportunities, with operation at only 39 percent total capacity.

## Miscellaneous Systems

There are also 30 miscellaneous private wells in the county serving a variety of uses, including mobile home park communities, boat ramps, rest stops, camps, healthcare center and other relatively isolated uses. Due to the high dependency of groundwater sources for public water, the need to protect, preserve and conserve these resources is paramount for the future viability of the county.

Public water infrastructure is located in most of the prime development areas of the County. The primary focus moving forward should be to monitor existing capacities of the systems and identifying potential expansion opportunities as growth occurs

Map 9.1: Existing Water Service



# Public Sanitary Sewer Systems

Sanitary sewer service and systems are a necessary need for local communities and have a direct correspondence to the density of population living within an area. Sewer service in Fairfield County is limited to three areas: the Town of Winnsboro, the Town of Ridgeway, and a portion in the northeastern portion of the County along SC Highway 200 from Interstate I-77 to Mitford and into Chester County.

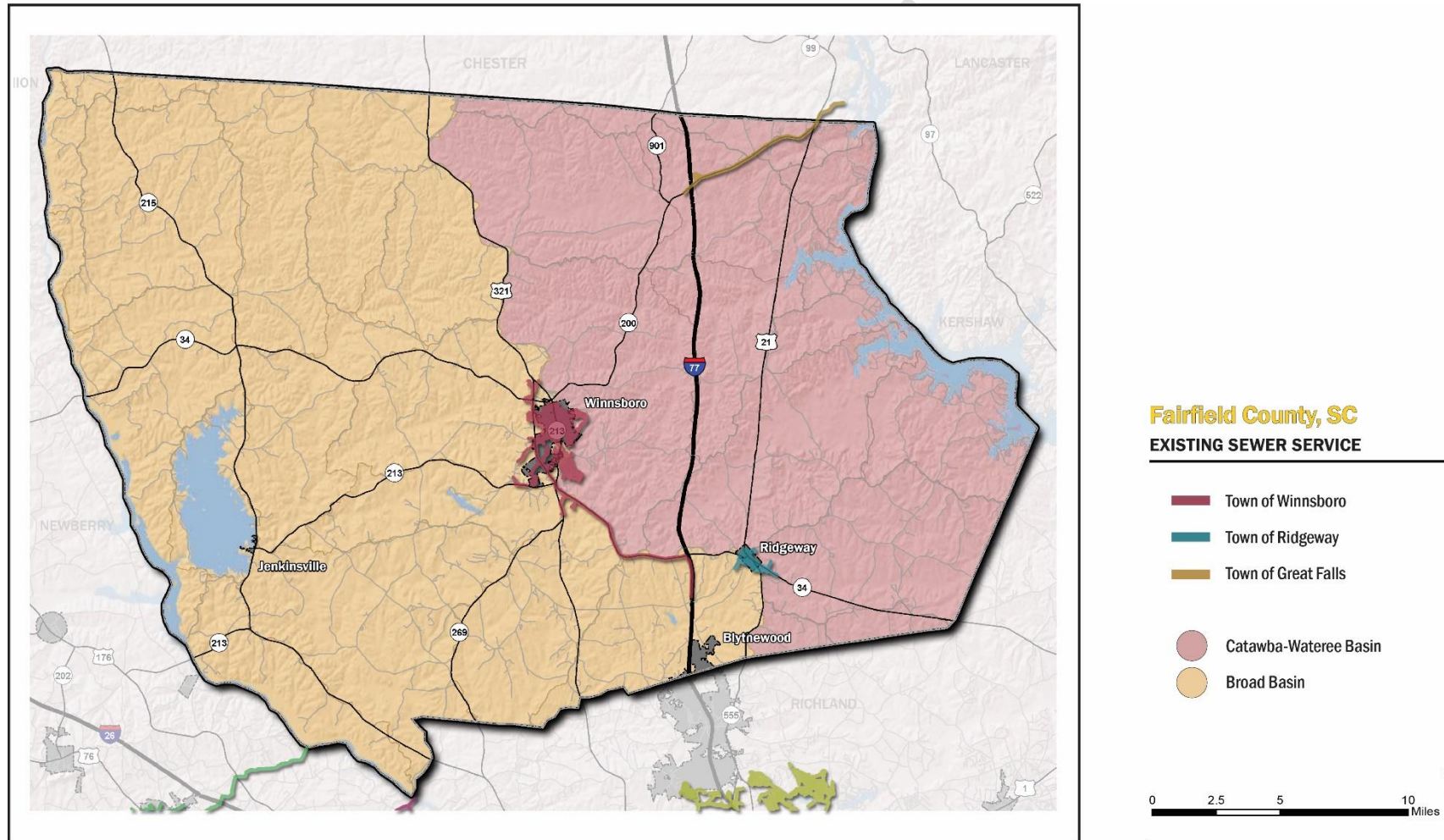
The Town of Winnsboro has extended service to industrial developments within close proximity to its municipal boundary, primarily southward along US Highway 321. The Town of Winnsboro is served by the Winnsboro Jackson Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant, which serves over 3,000 customers. Over the last several years, the Town of Winnsboro and Fairfield County have been working with the SC Department of Commerce and the economic development community to build a new mega site industrial park along I-77 near the Town of Ridgeway. There currently is not enough water and sewer capacity in the County to meet the needs of this facility. Project partners have been working to identify a solution to this issue, which will entail the development of a new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to serve the site and surrounding areas. The new WWTP will be owned and operated by the Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer System, a new joint utility agency set up to assist with expanding water and sewer infrastructure in the County. Once built, this facility will provide service to the mega site as well as adding much needed domestic treatment capacity for the surrounding residential areas.

Areas not served by public sewer service are limited to private septic systems which are permitted through the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). Septic systems provide limited development capacity to a site due to the ability of the soil to allow percolation of waste into the soil strata. The dependence on septic systems, and the maintenance of older systems, within many portions of the County is a long-range concern for future development and the environment. Future sewer expansion needs to be explored for portions of southern Fairfield County between SC Highway 269, SC Highway 34 and US Highway 21.





Map 9.2: Existing Sewer Service



## Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

The Fairfield County Public Works Department provides for solid waste management and recycling programs. The County has ten recycling convenience centers, geographically distributed around the county for easy use by the public. These centers receive both solid waste refuse and recyclable materials, including cardboard, newspaper, aluminum, tin, scrap metal, plastics, used motor oil, lead-acid batteries, tires, paint and appliances. The recycling centers also accept yard waste including brush, leaves, and limbs. Most of the sites are around two acres in size and are operated by the County. Fairfield County does not provide curbside recycling or waste pickup in the unincorporated areas.

Solid waste and recyclable material are collected from the convenience sites and transferred to the Waste Management transfer station on US Highway 321 Bypass for disposal. Fairfield County contracts with Waste Management for the disposal of solid waste which is typically transported 32 miles to the Screaming Eagle Landfill outside of Elgin in both Richland and Kershaw counties. Recyclable materials are collected by private vendors, such as Sunoco, Santree and Biogreen, based on the type of material collected. The recycling market is a shifting market based on demand which provides an inconsistent revenue stream to the county's budget.

The Public Works Department has a rolling stock inventory of three roll-on trucks, two trailer trucks, and a knuckle boom truck for loading tree limbs and outdoor waste. Tree limbs are recycled into mulch. Just as in other departments, a maintenance and replacement schedule should be maintained to ensure long-term functionality of the equipment. Future needs for additional convenience sites may be necessary as growth is predicted for southern Fairfield County

## Electric Power

Electrical capacity and supply are vital for a functional and growing county. Meeting the demands of existing residences, businesses and industry as well as the future needs for proposed future development are of utmost priority. Fairfield County is home to the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station which is located on the shore of the Monticello Reservoir near Jenkinsville and is managed by Dominion Energy. This nuclear station with its single reactor has the capacity to generate 966 megawatts of electricity. Two additional reactors were planned for the site, but plans were abandoned in 2017. Dominion Energy also manages the Parr Hydro facility on the Broad River which produces 15 megawatts. Though no solar farms are located within Fairfield County, Dominion Energy manages seven sites in South Carolina and may consider additional locations within its service area to add additional electrical output. These

solar farms are backed up by a 150 megawatt natural gas turbine generator also located at the VC Summer site.

Dominion Energy provides electrical service to portions of the west and south-central portions of Fairfield County. The County is also served by three additional electrical providers: Fairfield County Electric Cooperative, the Town of Winnsboro and Newberry Electric Cooperative. These companies acquire energy from various sources including purchasing wholesale from Dominion Energy and retailing it to their customers.

With the four utility providers and the local generation capacity within the county, the electrical system capacity should meet the County's long-term development needs over at least the next two decades.

## Natural Gas

Natural gas is an essential need for many industrial uses. The SC Energy Office reported in 2019 that industrial users consumed 29 percent of the natural gas usage in the state. This was only behind electrical power generation at 55 percent with the next highest category being residential users at nine percent.

Natural gas is supplied to the County by Dominion Energy through the Transco-Moore pipeline which crosses into Fairfield County in the northwest corner of the County. The utility wholesales gas to the Town of Winnsboro which retails and distributes it to the Town and outlying customers along Highway US 321 south and west of Winnsboro. The availability of natural gas is a definite plus when recruiting industrial prospects and promoting economic development.

## Law Enforcement

Public safety is a major concern for communities as they grow and develop and attract new business and industry. For the last decade, crime statistics have trended downward for Fairfield County where the number of violent crimes decreased by 25 percent from 2009 to 2019, and the number of property crimes declined by 10 percent.

Violent crimes are described as crimes against persons which include murder, sexual assault, kidnapping, human trafficking, and aggravated assault. Property crimes include burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny, and arson.



Table 9.2 – Crimes Reported in Fairfield County

Offense	Offenses Reported (2009)	Offenses Reported (2019)	Percent Change (2009-2019)	Rate per 10,000 Population (2019)	County Ranking	State Rate per 10,000 Population (2019)
Violent Crime	606	455	-24.9	79.2	10	51.5
Property Crime	818	734	-10.3	251.0	33	297.0

Source: SC SLED, *Crime in South Carolina, 2019*

There are a number of variables affecting crime, including manpower to enforce the law. Looking at manpower alone, The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report shows that the Fairfield County Sheriff's Department in 2019 employed 2.7 officers for every 1,000 people in population. Fairfield County has a slightly higher ratio than the state average of 2.4 for every 1,000 people using 2019 data.

Moreover, manpower alone is not an accurate gauge of the level of quality of law enforcement provided or the emphasis a jurisdiction places on enforcing the law. To better assess criminality and law enforcement's response from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, many variables must be taken into account. Some variables have a significant impact on crime, but are not readily measurable or applicable pervasively among all jurisdictions. Geographic and demographic factors specific to each jurisdiction must be considered and applied if one is going to make an accurate and complete assessment of crime in the county.

Some of the factors that are known to affect the volume and type of crime occurring from place to place, according to FBI *Crime in the United States* report are: population density and degree of urbanization; variations in composition of the population, particularly youth concentration; stability of the population with respect to residents, mobility, commuting patterns, and transient factors; economic conditions, including median income, poverty level and job availability; modes of transportation and highway systems; cultural factors and educational, recreational, and religious characteristics; family conditions with respect to divorce and family cohesiveness; climate; effective strength of law enforcement agencies; administrative and investigative emphases on law enforcement; policies of other components of the criminal justice system; citizens' attitudes toward crime; and crime reporting practices of the citizenry.

The Sheriff's Department has 63 employees of whom 57 are sworn officers. The road deputies are responsible for patrolling the entire county with the exception of the jurisdictional boundaries of the Towns of Winnsboro and Ridgeway. The Sheriff's Department has four patrol zones and maintains a force of five deputies for each 12-hour shift.

The Sheriff's Department is headquartered on the first floor of the County Administration Building and has three patrol substations for each patrol zone. These three substations are shared facilities with Emergency Medical Services and Fire. They are primarily unmanned stations used principally as operation bases for road deputies. Even though the substations appear adequate for current operations, a long-range plan for the functionality of the Sheriff's Department headquarters in its current location is necessary based on the long-term needs of the department.

The Sheriff's Department is also responsible for the Fairfield County Detention Center. This facility is utilized for the temporary housing of inmates. The facility has an operational capacity of 110 individuals.

The Department operates a fleet of 75 vehicles, including a command vehicle, bloodhound truck, SRT Truck, four-wheel vehicles for rough terrain and weather, marked deputy vehicles, unmarked cars, and spare vehicles. There are also two boats for aquatic rescue. The Department is utilizing a five-car replacement schedule per year which allows for high mileage and worn vehicles to be rotated out of service, ensuring the availability of an adequate response fleet.

## Fire Protection

County fire protection is provided by Fairfield County through volunteer community fire departments, with a full-time County Fire Chief. These services are supported through annual tax millage assessment for operations and capital improvements. Individual fire departments also engage in periodic fundraising activities.

Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings are given to fire service areas based on the level of service provided and is a measure of a fire department's ability to serve its community. They are based on a scale from 1 to 10. An area served by full-time fire personnel with updated equipment and a service area served by fire hydrants will have a lower ISO rating than a rural department with volunteer service and no public water.

Table 9.3 – ISO Rating Characteristics

Major Class	Characteristics
Class 10	No recognized fire department or defense
Class 9	Recognized fire department, but no recognized community water service
Classes 4-8	Recognized fire department and community water system
Classes 1-3	More complete and sophisticated systems, based on individual grading of suppression

Source: Insurance Services Office, 2022.

In 2019, the county moved to a consolidated fire district for the entire county. Prior to this, ISO ratings were provided to the eleven individual fire districts and each was rated independently. This meant that property within one fire district paid a higher or lower insurance premium based on the particular services of an individual department. The consolidated rating for Fairfield County was established at 5/10 in 2021. This means that properties within a five mile radius of a fire station would be rated a 5 and those properties outside of a five mile radius would be rated a 10. Rural areas located outside the boundaries of the recognized service area of one of the county's 12 stations, which is typically a five-mile radius from the fire station, are technically without fire protection as far as ISO is concerned. However, response is provided by the county from the nearest fire station. Additionally, the County has entered into mutual aid agreements with all the surrounding counties if assistance is necessary.

The decision to move to a consolidated fire district was a means to save county property owners money on their insurance premiums and provide better services to the citizens. The operating expenses for all fire departments are funded through the county's general fund. The consolidation provides for consistency across the fire service in budgeting, prioritization, funding and operations and streamlines the effectiveness of the fire service.

The class rating ultimately is an evaluation of a department's ability to respond to a fire. The Fire Service has been proactive in evaluating the future needs of the county through a strategic planning process. Individuals volunteering for local fire service is at an all time low across the state and country. Maintaining adequate staffing is a primary concern. The plan also details needs for individual stations and identification of gaps in fire coverage across the county for potential new station locations. The goals of the strategic plan, if met, will continue to provide quality fire services to the county, reduce response times and improve ISO ratings. A new twelfth station will be added to the fire service in 2022: Station 11 - River Road.

Table 9.4 – Fairfield County Fire Service Departments, 2022

Department	Station #	Service Area
Community	1	Winnsboro
Greenbrier	2	Winnsboro
Mitford	3	Great Falls
Blair	4	Blair
Southeastern	5	Ridgeway
Jenkinsville	6	Jenkinsville
Ridgeway	7	Ridgeway
Dutchman Creek	8	Winnsboro
Feasterville	9	Blair
Southeastern Substation	11	Ridgeway
Blackstock	12	Blackstock
Community Substation	13	Winnsboro
Greenbriar Substation	14	Winnsboro
Dutchman Creek Substation	15	Winnsboro
Lebanon	16	Winnsboro

Source: Fairfield County Fire Service, 2022.

## Emergency Medical Services

Fairfield County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) provides 911 emergency medical response throughout Fairfield County. It responds to 6,000 calls annually. The Department operates six stations, strategically located to minimize response times. The main station is located on US Highway 321 Bypass, two stations are located in the Ridgeway-Lake Wateree area, one in Jenkinsville, another in the Blair community, and the sixth between Winnsboro and Great Falls. All but two stations are housed in mobile homes and are in adequate condition. The main station is in need of renovation and replacement as it is located in an older building.

EMS has twelve ambulances and 45 full-time certified personnel. It also has 25 certified “as needed” personnel, and an administrative assistant. Currently, ambulances are on a one-year, two vehicle replacement schedule as funding is provided through the general fund.

## Medical Facilities and Services

The primary hospital in Fairfield County is MUSC Health Fairfield Emergency and Imaging which is located in Winnsboro. This facility provides 24-hour emergency care with six exam rooms, two trauma rooms, onsite laboratory, and imaging services. More extensive medical services are provided 22 miles south from Winnsboro at MUSC Health Columbia Medical Center Northeast.

# Parks and Recreation

Fairfield County provides many opportunities for active and passive recreation throughout the County. Active recreation is defined as organized activities such as baseball fields, basketball courts and soccer fields; passive recreation are activities such as fishing, hiking, and kayaking.

In the 2019 South Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan, hiking, camping, walking and canoeing/kayaking were the four highest outdoor recreation interests from those surveyed. Active recreation categories like soccer, tennis, volleyball, football and baseball received some of the lowest responses.

The Enoree Ranger District, a segment of the Sumter National Forest, provides more than 170,000 acres in Fairfield, Newberry, Union, Chester, and Laurens counties for hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, canoeing, photography and scenic viewing. Additionally, the Broad and Catawba Rivers have been designated State Scenic Rivers for public use. Lake Wateree also offers ample opportunities for boating, fishing and canoeing. Fairfield County is home to the Lake Wateree State Park. This state park provides a boat ramp, 100 paved campsites, a playground, a two-mile walking trail and includes 238 acres along the shoreline.

The Palmetto Trail is a proposal to provide 500 miles of cross-state hiking and cycling paths from the mountains to the sea. The Alston Trailhead off of SC Highway 213 along the Broad River provides direct access for county residents to access this amazing resource. The trailhead with its 1,100 foot long trestle spanning the Broad River is the access point to the Peak to Prosperity Passage which is 10.7 miles in length and accommodates hiking, biking and camping. Future linkages of the Palmetto Trail would cross Fairfield County from the Alston Trailhead and head southeast to link with existing portions of the trail in Richland County.

Fairfield County, through its Parks and Recreation Department, provides eighteen facilities for the use by the public. These parks are located throughout the county in order to provide accessibility to the county's population. In addition to the park facilities, the County provides a robust selection of programs including after-school, dance, gymnastics, health and fitness, senior, summer camp and active sports. These programs provide healthy options for community interaction and engagement.

Maintenance and upkeep of park facilities is an ongoing challenge. Adding or modifying existing park amenities is necessary to meet the trends of the recreational needs of the public. The addition of pickleball courts is an example of how the Parks and Recreation Department identified a new trend and incorporated this sport into their park inventory.

Table 9.5: Park Facilities Maintained by Fairfield County

Park Type	Park Name	Location	Size (Acreage)	Major Facilities Present	Planned Improvements
<b>County Parks</b>	Adger Park	Winnsboro	16	Playground, basketball, shelter, picnic tables	Walking track
	Feasterville Mini Park	Blair	1	Playground, basketball, shelter, picnic tables	
	Willie Lee Robinson Park	Blair	4	Playground, baseball field, picnic shelter, restrooms	
	Shelton Mini Park	Blair	2	Playground, basketball, shelter, picnic tables	
	Chappelltown Mini Park	Winnsboro	1	Playground, basketball, shelter, picnic tables	
	Drawdy Park	Winnsboro	13	Baseball fields, concessions, restrooms, playground, picnic shelter, multi-purpose field, walking track, batting cages	
	Garden Street Park	Winnsboro	4	Baseball field, concessions, restrooms, batting cages	
	Horeb-Glenn Mini Park	Winnsboro	1	Playground, basketball, shelter, picnic tables	
	Lake Monticello Park	Jenkinsville	25	Tennis, ballfield, basketball, picnic facilities, walking trail, restrooms, concessions, playground	
	Boykin Recreation Center	Winnsboro	4	Basketball gym, tennis courts, pickleball courts, program room, dance stage, kitchen, playground	
	Middle Six Mini Park	Winnsboro	1	Playground, basketball, shelter, picnic tables	
	Mitford Mini Park	Great Falls	2	Playground, basketball, shelter, picnic tables	
	Centerville Mini Park	Ridgeway	15	Tennis, basketball, shelter	
	Rufus Belton Park	Ridgeway	6	Baseball, basketball, playground, shelter, concessions, walking track, batting cages	
	Mitford Community Center	Winnsboro	5	Indoor basketball, fitness room, computer room, kitchen	
	Monticello Community Center	Jenkinsville	*	Indoor basketball, fitness room, computer room, kitchen	
	Community Fitness Center	Winnsboro	3	Weight room, exercise studio, locker rooms	
	Fortune Springs Pool	Winnsboro	1	Outdoor pool, restrooms, picnic tables	
	Ridgeway Community Center	Ridgeway	N/A	Basketball gym, kitchen	
	Blackstock Mini Park	Blackstock	N/A	Playground, picnic shelter, basketball, walking track	
	Winnsboro Activity Center	Winnsboro	N/A	Classrooms, program room, kitchen, playground, basketball gym	

\* Monticello Community Center is located at Lake Monticello Park

Source: Fairfield County Recreation Department and Fairfield County Comprehensive Plan 2021.

Table 9.6 - Park Facilities Maintained by Other Government Entities

Park Type	Park Name	Location	Size (Acreage)	Major Facilities Present	Ownership
<b>State and Federal Parks</b>	Lake Wateree	Winnsboro	72	Campground, picnic area, boat ramp	State and Federally Maintained
	Sumter National Forest	Blair	11,500	Walking, hiking, horseback riding	State and Federally Maintained
<b>Municipal Parks</b>	Fortunes Spring Park	Winnsboro	9	Swimming pool, playground, picnic tables	Municipal Maintained
<b>Other</b>	Lake Monticello Public Park	Jenkinsville	23	Skiing, swimming, fishing, softball field, basketball, tennis courts, walking paths, playground, picnic tables	Dominion Energy Maintained

Source: Dominion Energy, SCDNR, Town of Winnsboro, 2022.

Fairfield County owns and/or has access to a total of 104 acres in park space and an additional 11,604 acres in other managed park lands. Based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards, a park system should be composed of a total of 6.24 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per every 1,000 population. Based on this standard and the 2020 census data, Fairfield County should have between 140 to 235 acres of park space. Inclusion of the Lake Wateree State Park pushes county park land totals within the NRPA standards.

Even though NRPA standards have been met, the County should continue to look for opportunities to provide additional parks and recreation amenities into the future. Over the last decade, the County made a commitment to its parks facilities and has utilized monies from the General Fund and the American Rescue Plan funds to add nearly 30 new amenities to the county park system. Future additions include a walking track proposed for the Willie Lee Robinson Park in the Blair community.

## Education Facilities

Fairfield County is served by the public school system of Fairfield County School District. The district operates seven schools: five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The district also provides a career and technology center and the Gordon Odyssey Academy for students within the district.



Table 9.6: Fairfield County Public School Trends

School	Grades	Enrollment (2012-2013)	Enrollment (2021-2022)	Change	2019 Report Card Rating
Fairfield Elementary	PK-6	634	540	-94 (-14.8%)	Average
Fairfield Magnet for Math and Science	K-6	308	201	-107 (-34.7%)	Excellent
Geiger Elementary	PK-6	310	255	-55 (-17.7%)	Good
Kelly Miller Elementary	PK-6	265	222	-43 (-16.2%)	Excellent
McCrorey-Liston School of Technology	PK-6	213	134	-79 (-37.1%)	Average
Fairfield Middle	7-8	439	310	-129 (-29.4%)	Unsatisfactory
Fairfield Central High	9-12	777	684	-93 (-12.0%)	Average
<b>TOTAL</b>		2,946	2,346	-600 (-20.4%)	

Source: South Carolina Department of Education, School Headcount by Grade, 2022.

The combined enrollment of the seven public schools during school year 2021-2022 was 2,346 students. The enrollment has fallen by more than 20 percent within the last nine years and more than 30 percent in the last twelve years. Additionally, four of the seven schools rated average or unsatisfactory in the latest SC Department of Education report card report; the latest data available was 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted multiple school years.

Fairfield County is also home to Richard Winn Academy, a private school that provides pre-kindergarten to grade 12 education with a current enrollment of around 200 students.

With continued decline in enrollment and decline in total population for the County as a whole, functionality of seven individual schools will need to be evaluated. Positively, there is capacity at these schools to accommodate additional population, so the school district and the County need to work together to promote each other and begin to build back the population.

Midlands Technical College serves the Fairfield County area with a satellite campus. As of the 2021-2022 academic year, the Fairfield campus enrolled 253 students. This campus provides over 70 different class subjects in eight core areas: advanced manufacturing, business, education and public service, English and humanities, health care, STEM, social and behavioral

sciences and interdisciplinary studies. Midlands Tech offers associate degree programs and advanced certifications in many fields with immediate employment openings.

Midlands Tech partnered with the Career Development Center at Fairfield Central High School to create the Fairfield Central High School Success Center. The Center integrates high school students with local employers to provide career information, professional networking, and work experience for students. High school students are also able to enroll with Midlands Tech for dual enrollment classes - classes that count towards their high school diploma as well as receiving college credit. During the 2021-2022 academic year, 36 percent of the students at Fairfield Central High School participated in dual enrollment classes. Furthermore, ten percent of the high school graduating class furthers their education at Midlands Technical College after graduation.

The Fairfield campus of Midlands Technical College is an underutilized resource that needs to be developed further over the next decade. Programs like dual enrollment and high school success center are just the beginning for opportunities that could be fostered with local businesses and industry and county economic development.

## Communication

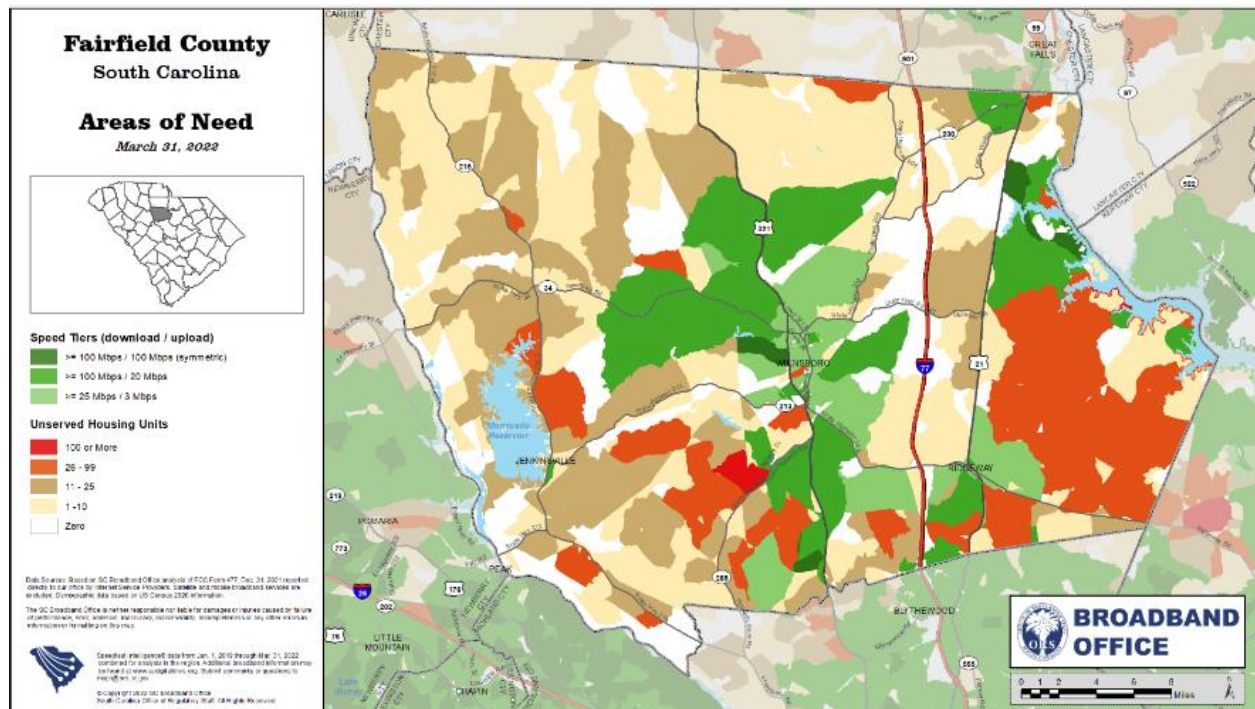
As our dependence on technology grows for more and more daily activities, so too does our reliance on the system to be reliable and available to our citizens. Internet access has become a major factor in economic development and residential growth as the need for digital infrastructure has skyrocketed. Broadband access has become a major issue for communities as educational services, employee operations and retail commerce become more digital.

- Education - Allow K-12, college and post-graduate students to learn remotely in virtual classrooms.
- Employment - Provide employers the ability to allow employees to telecommute or work remotely.
- Healthcare - Allow doctors and patients to connect virtually through Telehealth.
- Local Economic Impact - Allow small local businesses to more easily reach their customers and provide e-commerce options.
- Public Safety and Emergency Response - Allow safety personnel and first responders the ability to communicate as needed in a timely manner.

According to the US Chamber Technology Engagement Center, rural small businesses increased gross sales by 17 percent through digital technology during the previous three years. Closing the gap on digital infrastructure by providing high-speed internet to underserved populations and communities should be a county-wide priority. Developing a broadband assessment plan is the first step to determine the best approach for the provision of reliable and cost-effective broadband connectivity in Fairfield County. Frontier and TruVista currently provide internet via fiber optic cable within the county. However, the service is not available across the entire

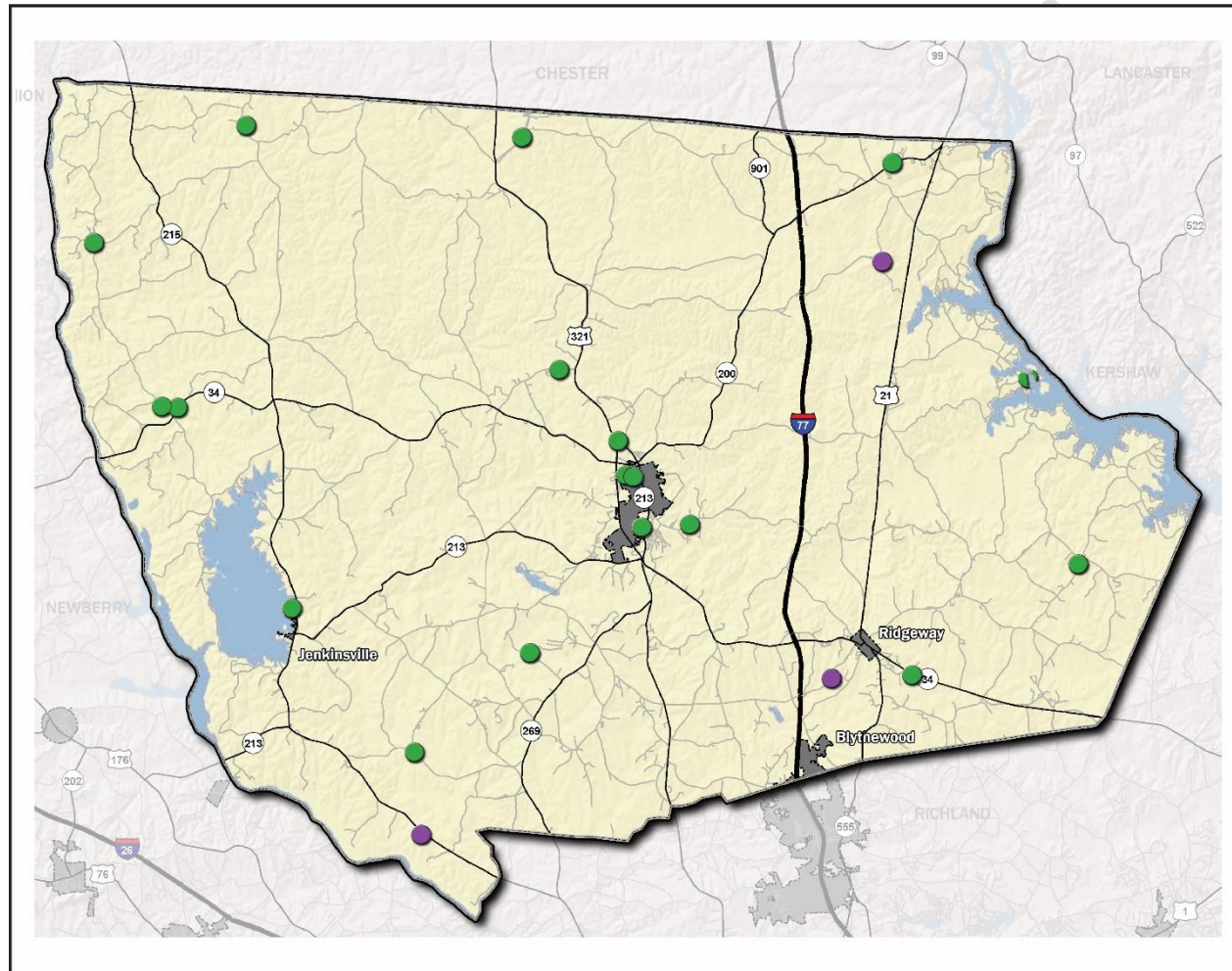
county; only 13 percent of the population has access to fiber internet. Nearly 49 percent of the county population has no access or internet speed below 25 Mbps. Working with agencies such as the State Broadband Office and including these agencies as a collaborative stakeholder in the planning process would be beneficial to identification of funding and cost-sharing opportunities.

Map 9.3: Broadband Coverage



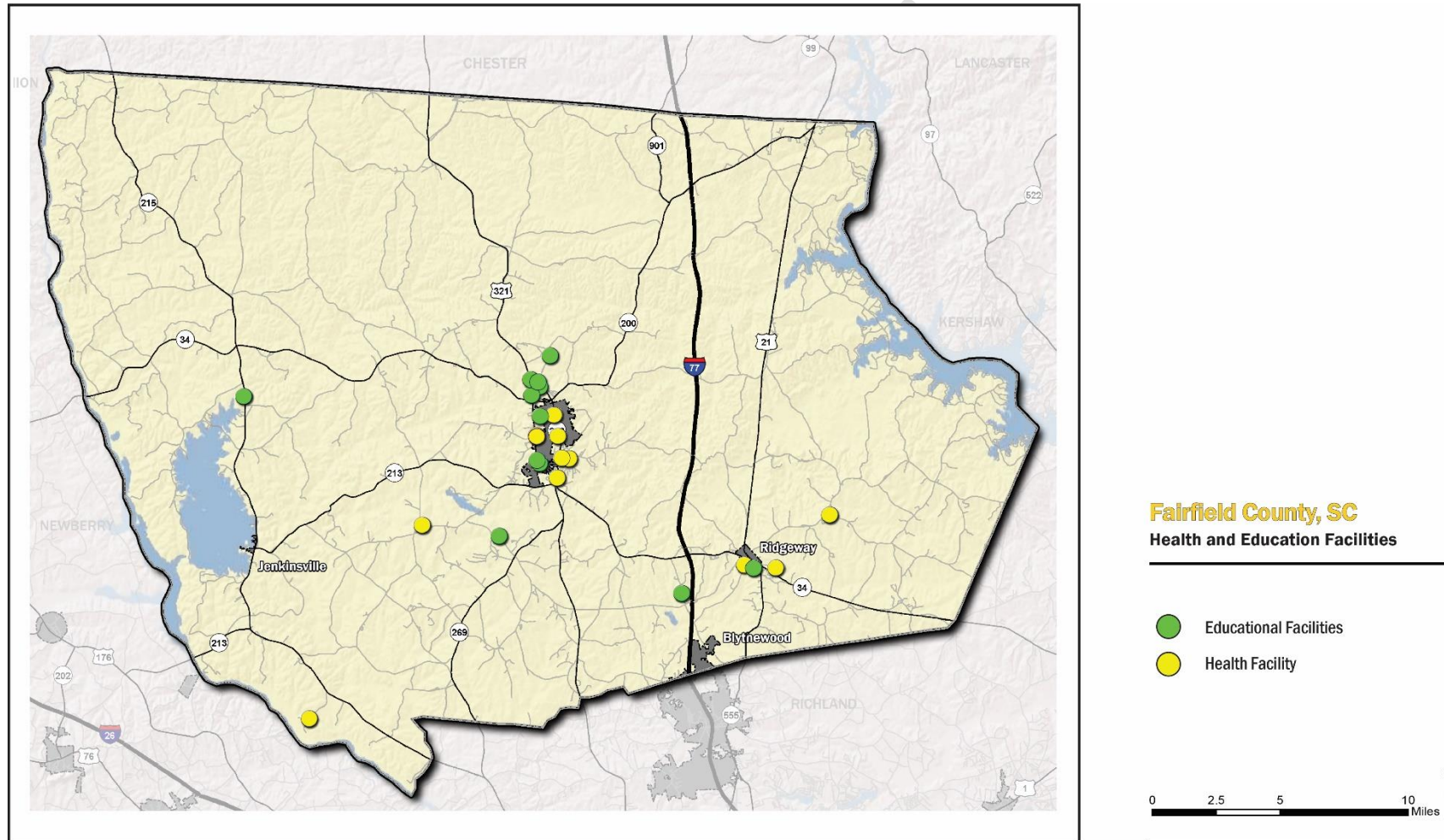
Source: South Carolina Broadband Office

Map 9.4: Park and Recreation Facilities





Map 9.5: Health and Education Facilities



# Goals and Strategies

## Goal # 8: Community Facilities

Provide the highest quality of public services and facilities in a transparent, coordinated, and cost-effective manner.

### Strategies

- 8.1. Evaluate staffing needs and rates of pay for county employees through a comprehensive classification study to retain employees and be competitive in the marketplace.
- 8.2. Address immediate personnel shortages in EMS, Fire, and Law Enforcement, and other essential service areas.
- 8.3. Support water and sewer infrastructure improvements and coordination between utility providers to include continued support for the Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer System and construction of a new WWTP
- 8.4. Identify areas for expansion of the public water system to underserved areas in southern Fairfield County to include the Ridgeway area
- 8.5. Explore opportunities for extend public sewer to underserved areas – primarily to southern Fairfield County between SC Highway 269, SC Highway 34 and US Highway 21
- 8.6. Encourage additional partnerships between local governments, the school district, SC Department of Commerce, and Midlands Technical College to establish workforce development pipelines, skills training, and career pathway programs
- 8.7. Develop a maintenance schedule for parks to ensure the facilities are maintained at a consistent level and the investment in these facilities is extended
- 8.8. Expand outdoor recreational opportunities at existing sites, such as the Palmetto Trail and Lakes Monticello and Wateree, to appeal to a range of user types.
- 8.9. Continue to work with the SC Broadband office to encourage the expansion and accessibility of broadband service in underserved areas of the County
- 8.10. Ensure all county-owned buildings meet or exceed ADA standards
- 8.11. Implement the Strategic Fire Plan and review the plan every five years to ensure community needs are being met.
- 8.12. Develop a community outreach strategy and plan to improve community outreach and education regarding county services, programs, and projects

- 8.13. Develop a wayfinding program for directional signage to major destinations within the county
- 8.14. Explore utilization of public school facilities as shared use recreation opportunities.
- 8.15. Evaluate the solid waste and recyclable materials program annually to ensure the County is receiving market rate for materials and a cost-effective rate for solid waste disposal.
- 8.16. Increase awareness of the many local recreational assets in Fairfield County, through programming, increased access for residents and visitors, improving wayfinding, and marketing initiatives.
- 8.17. Promote and market educational achievements of the Fairfield County School District
- 8.18. Promote inter- and intra-agency cooperation with Fairfield County departments and agencies



DRAFT

10

## Land Use

# Introduction

How land is utilized and developed affects nearly every aspect of a community. From environmental concerns to infrastructure capacity to public safety needs, land use patterns play an important role in the provision of services and ultimately the costs the public will bear into the future. Since land is a finite resource, decisions today affect the future. Local land use planning provides guidance and opportunities for the effective and efficient development of land within Fairfield County.

This element serves as a collaborative nexus for the document where the ideas, trends and objectives are identified geographically. The Land Use element is the centerpiece of the comprehensive planning process as it profiles the existing land use pattern and forecasts future need and supply of land area.

## Existing Land Cover

The US Geologic Survey (USGS) maintains the National Land Cover Database which defines land based on satellite imagery. This tool is useful in identifying areas of growth and land use changes over time. The land cover information is extremely detailed on the types of natural land cover and less detailed as to the type of developed land.

As shown on Map 10.1, developed areas identified as urban are clustered around the Town of Winnsboro, the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station, the Town of Ridgeway and the intersection of Interstate I-77 and SC Highway 200. Urban land accounted for only five percent of the total land area of the county.

The majority of the county is made up of Evergreen Forest which is primarily southern pine forest. Forested Upland, including evergreen, deciduous and mixed forests, amounted to nearly 72 percent of the county's land area and is found throughout the county. Areas not developed or identified as forest lands made up the remaining 23 percent of the land area with shrubs, grassland and pasture lands being the major categories identified. Pastureland and hay producing lands were around four percent of the land area and clustered in the northern, central and southern portions of the county. Croplands were found in less than one percent of the county's area. Very little of the County is identified as wetlands.

Map 10.1: Land Cover

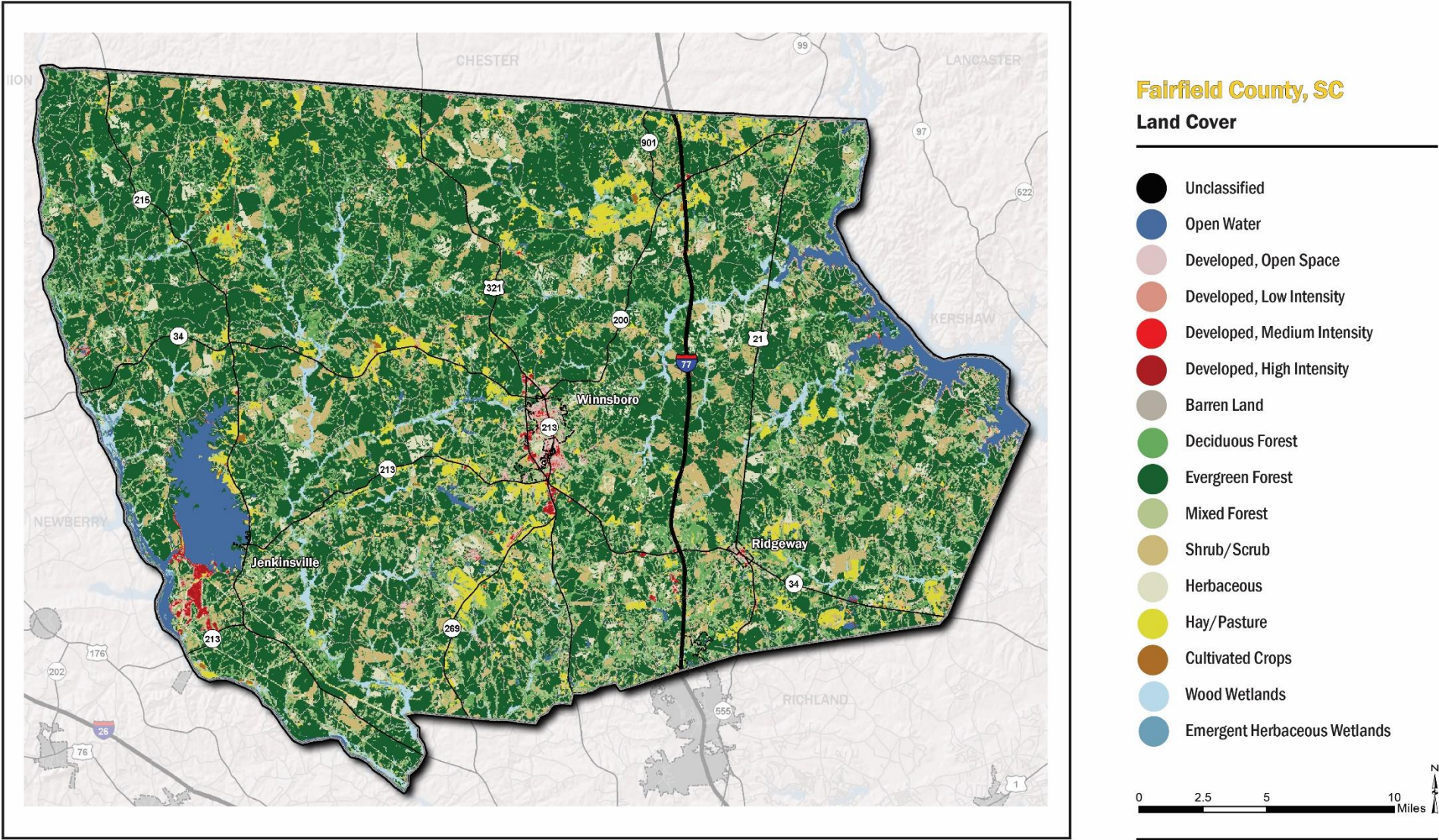


Table 10.1 – Fairfield County Land Cover by Area

Land Cover Categories	Area (Acres)	Percent	Modified Classification	Percent
Open Water	6,685.5	3.6%	Water	3.6%
Urban; Open Space	6,366.6	3.4%	Developed	5.2%
Urban; Low Intensity	2,144.9	1.2%		
Urban; Medium Intensity	716.9	0.4%		
Urban; High Intensity	323.9	0.2%		
Barren Land	223.6	0.1%	Barren	0.1%
Deciduous Forest	13,887.8	7.6%	Forested Upland	71.5%
Evergreen Forest	92,469.2	50.3%		
Mixed Forest	25,058.0	13.6%		
Shrub/Scrub	15,373.0	8.4%	Shrubland	8.4%
Grassland Herbaceous	8,122.0	4.4%	Herbaceous Upland Natural Vegetation	4.4%
Pasture/Hay	7,708.9	4.2%	Herbaceous Planted/Cultivated	4.3%
Cultivated Crops	165.7	0.1%		
Woody Wetlands	4,261.9	2.3%	Wetlands	2.4%
Emergent Herbaceous Wetland	181.03	0.1%		

Source: USGS, GIS Analysis of National Landcover Database, 2019.

## Existing Land Use

The current pattern of development provides planners with an idea of how the community has developed, where to expect future development and the amounts of land dedicated to different types of development. It also shows underutilized areas, prime development areas and sensitive areas to protect. An inventory of existing land usage was developed from Fairfield County Tax Assessor data through GIS (geographic information system) analysis. Lake Wateree, the Monticello Reservoir and transportation rights-of-way were excluded from this land use analysis. Land within the municipal limits of incorporated areas is included for this analysis.

Land uses were classified and mapped based on the following seven categories as depicted in the Existing Land Use Map.

## Residential

Land area used for dwellings of various types. This category includes residential construction of manufactured, mobile and modular housing, multi-family residential, townhouses, duplexes and stick-built construction.

## Commercial

Land area used for businesses, including retail and wholesale operations, professional offices, and service industries. This category includes such things as restaurants, stores, hotels, offices, entertainment complexes, laundromats, malls and garden centers.

## Industrial

Land area used for the manufacturing of goods and production of particular items. This category also includes the warehousing and distribution, assembly and fabrication, and research and development of products. Examples of this land use category include manufacturing plants, industrial parks, distribution centers, warehouses, research and development centers, and rail yards.

## Public/Institutional

Land area used for private, public, religious, or philanthropic activities providing for the social, cultural, educational, health or physical betterment of the community. Examples include churches, cemeteries, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, assisted living facilities, libraries, parks and open space, government facilities and lands, utilities, communications towers, and community non-profits.

## Dominion Energy/Duke Energy

A subtype of public/institutional, the Dominion Energy/Duke Energy category identifies properties owned, managed and utilized for energy generation by these two companies.

## Rural/Undeveloped

Land area not developed for a specific use or assigned a land use classification. This land use type is usually considered vacant land available for a more specific land use typology in the future. Agricultural properties are included within this category whether actively or passively managed.

## Water

Land area covered by water and unable to be developed without connection to adjacent land. This category includes lakes, rivers, streams, reservoirs, and ponds.



Map 10.2 provides a snapshot of the existing land use of Fairfield County in 2021. The majority of land is identified as rural – either undeveloped land or non-agricultural land. Residential land uses are dispersed throughout the county with clusters along roadways south of SC Highway 213 and SC Highway 34. Residential uses are also found around Winnsboro, Ridgeway, Lake Wateree and the Mitford Community.

Commercial and industrial uses are clustered near major roads and highways or railway lines. Significant commercial sites are located along US Highway 321 and SC Highway 34 in Winnsboro and along US Highway 21 near Mitford. Industrial and manufacturing uses are found along State Road S-20-233, along the southern portion of the Interstate I-77 Corridor and south of the Town of Winnsboro.

Energy production, which is so important to Fairfield County, accounts for nearly two percent of the county land area. Properties owned and managed by Duke Energy and Dominion Energy are clustered in western Fairfield County around the Monticello Reservoir and the Broad River for hydro and nuclear power generation.

There are a number of public lands in Fairfield County. The majority of public land is federal lands within the Sumter National Forest, but also include the Fairfield County Airport, and Lake Wateree State Park.

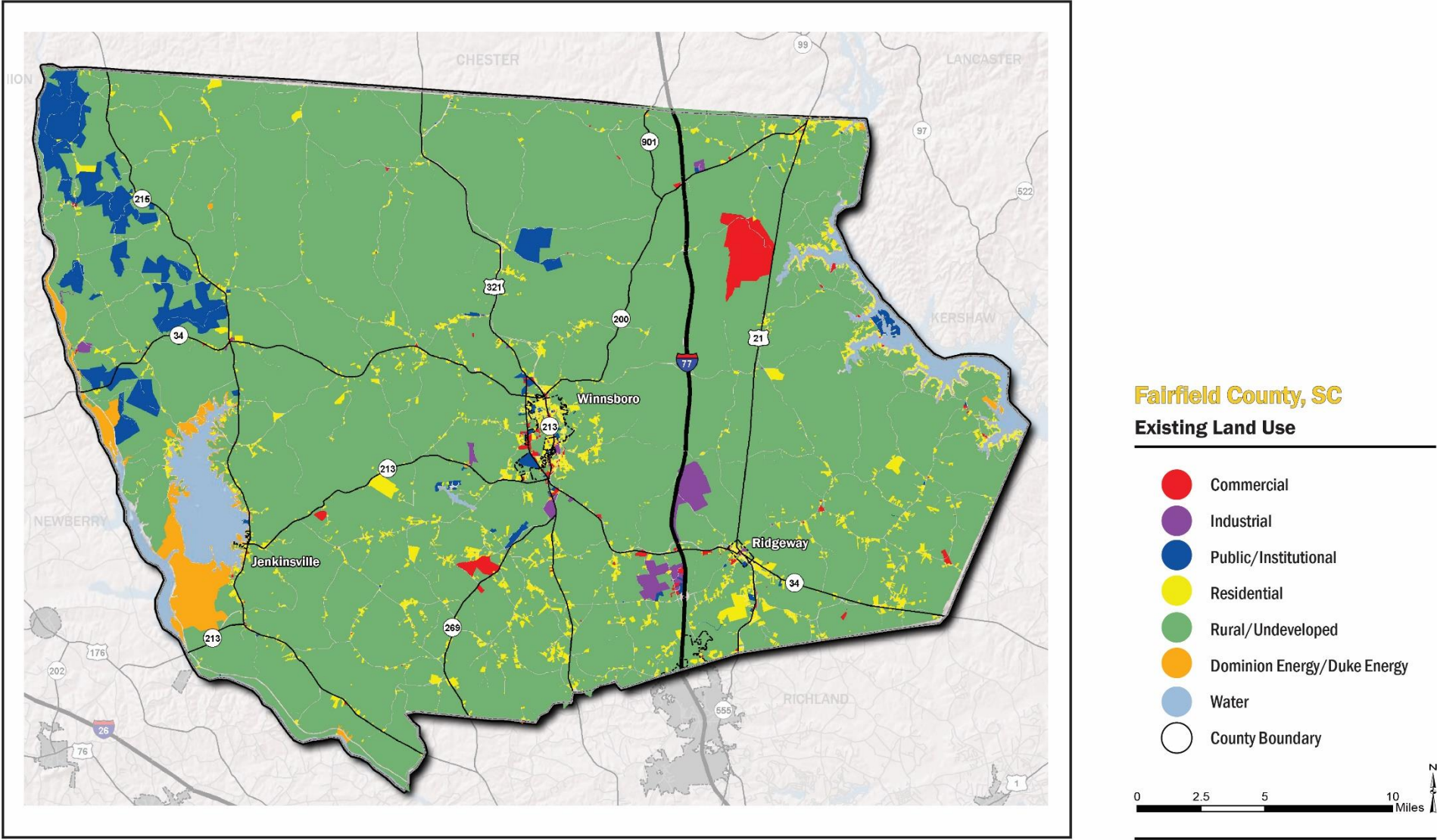
Table 10.2 – Existing Land Usage by Category

Existing Land Use Category	Total Fairfield County	
	Area (Acres)	Percent
Residential	16,127.1	3.8%
Commercial	4,143.6	1.0%
Industrial	2,615.4	0.6%
Public/Institutional	13,362.1	3.1%
Rural/Undeveloped	385,965.5	90.1%
Dominion Energy/Duke Energy	6,375.4	1.5%

Source: Fairfield County Tax Assessor, GIS Analysis, 2022.

Looking at the existing land use, rural and agricultural lands are the predominant land use in the County. More than 90 percent of the land is rural or utilized for agriculture or forestry. Developed land makes up nearly ten percent of the land area with residential comprising four percent. When evaluating the county land use without the municipal land uses included, the amount of land in rural and vacant lands is even more abundant as the amount of residential, commercial and industrial lands decrease.

Map 10.2: Existing Land Use





# Prime Development Areas

The purpose of planning is to encourage development in the optimum location to minimize capital expenditures through unnecessary infrastructure costs. In order to determine areas for future development, it is important to identify prime development areas such as those that are accessible to infrastructure such as proximity to water lines, sewer lines and roadways.

Suitable land is defined as property that is currently undeveloped or identified as floodplains that are not desirable for development and are not owned by a state, local or federal agency. In 2022, there were found to be 373,943 acres of suitable land for future development. This accounts for 82.3 percent of Fairfield County's vacant land. Suitable lands are found throughout the county with most of these lands located east of SC Highway 215.

To further analyze development capacity, areas identified as suitable for future development were evaluated based on geographic development potential. Levels of infrastructure were included to determine a hierarchy of future development potential based on proximity to these services. Water, sewer and road data were included as the three major forms of infrastructure that developments are dependent upon whether the future use is residential, commercial or industrial. Of the 373,943 acres of suitable land for development, 1.3 percent of the prime developable land was found within 2,500 linear feet of two of the three infrastructure variables.

Table 10.3: Development Potential

Development Potential	Definition	Acreage	Percent
High	Lands within 2,500 feet of all three infrastructure types – Tier 1	5,934	1.3%
Moderate	Lands within 2,500 feet of two of three infrastructure types – Tier 2	61,602	13.6%
Moderately Low	Lands within 2,500 feet of one of three infrastructure types – Tier 3	235,558	51.9%
Low	Lands not within 2,500 feet of the three infrastructure types – Tier 4	150,843	33.2%

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments, 2022.

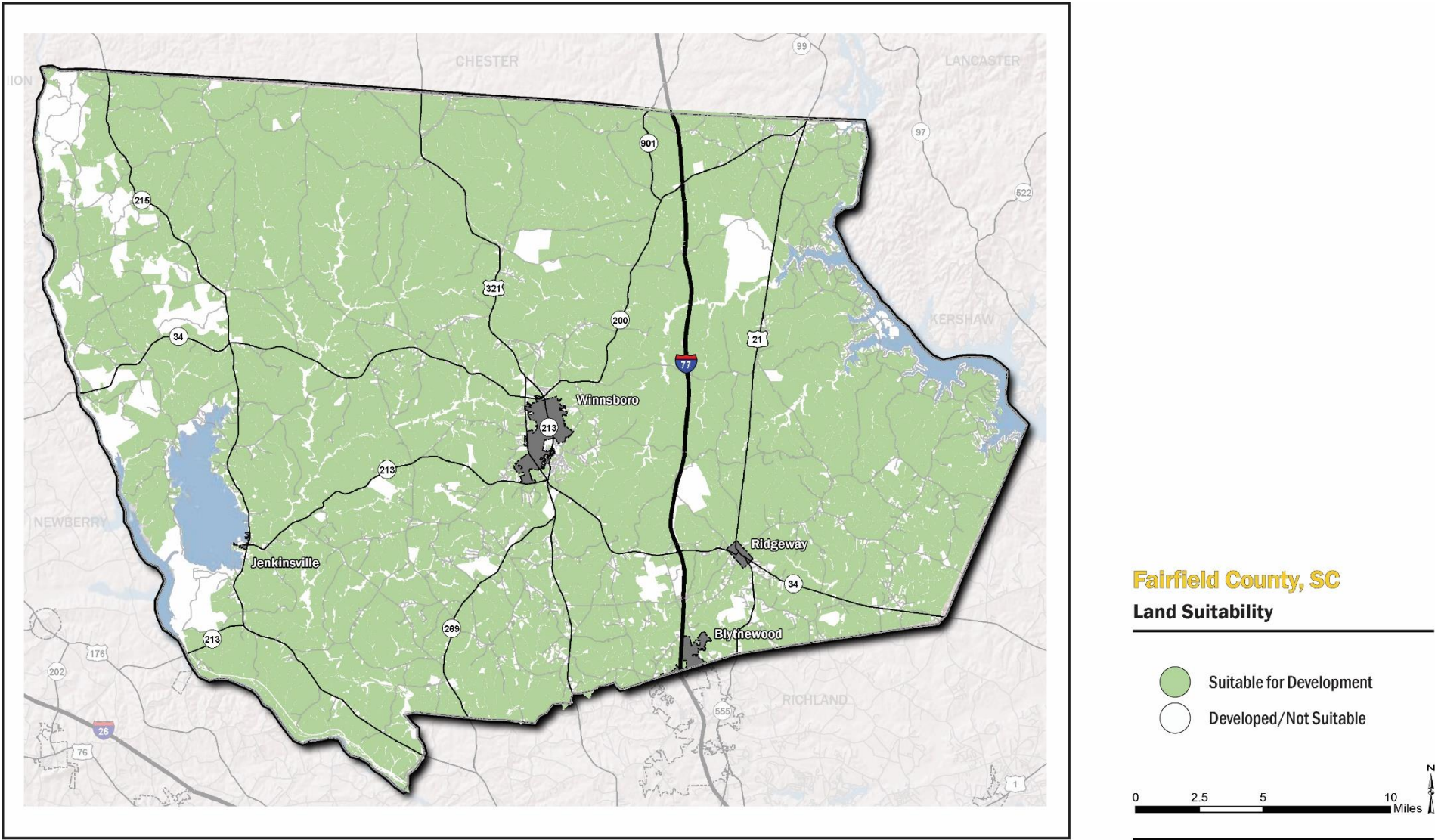
The suitable lands which were found to have a high or moderate development potential are the prime areas for future development and should be targeted for higher densities of development. Specifically, the areas with the highest development potential or prime development areas are located around the Town of Winnsboro and the Town of Ridgeway. These areas should constitute the first tier of future development.

Tier 2 or moderate development potential lands are found predominantly along major highway corridors and at major crossroads. These areas are primarily found along US Highway 321, SC Highway 34, SC Highway 269, and portions of SC Highway 200 and SC Highway 215. This second tier of development potential essentially links the Town of Winnsboro to the Town of Ridgeway with linear growth between these communities.

Areas with a moderately low or low development potential should be limited for development until additional infrastructure is extended to reach these areas. Capital project spending should also be limited within these moderately low and low development potential areas and are found throughout the eastern and northern portions of the County.

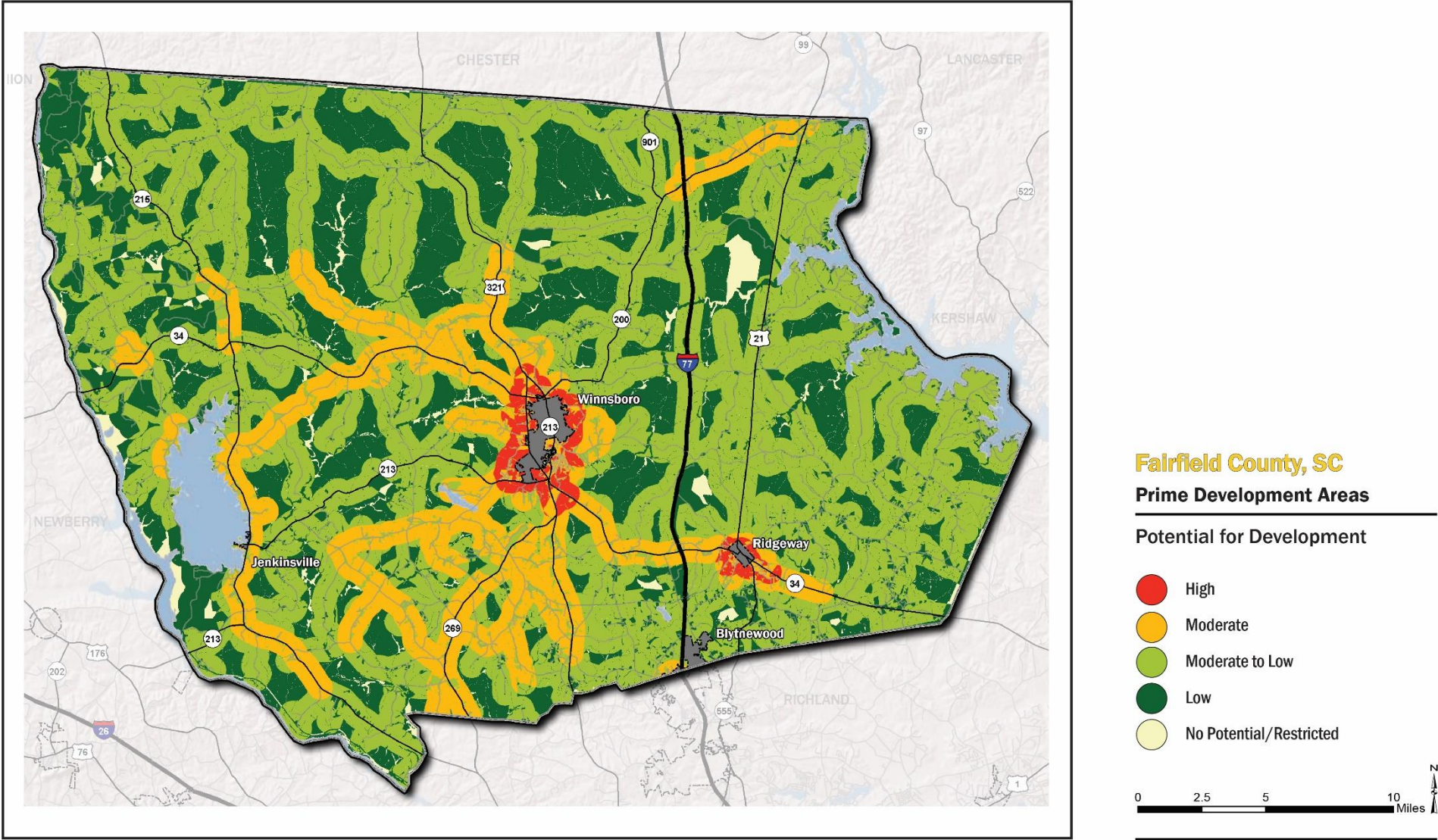
DRAFT

Map 10.3: Land Suitability





Map 10.4: Prime Development Areas



## Land Use Trends

Evaluating the usage of land between the land cover and the existing land use, Fairfield County is largely a rural county made up predominantly of forested land. The county has concentrated development at four nodes – Jenkinsville/south Monticello Reservoir, Winnsboro, west Ridgeway and north Blythewood, and Lake Wateree. These clusters are actually beneficial to the local land use pattern. Urban sprawl is the uncontrolled growth that occurs around urban areas. Even though there is some growth pressure in the south from Richland County, the land use pattern doesn't show patterns of sprawl. However, one would surmise that growth from the Columbia metro area will expand northward. Therefore, Fairfield County needs to be prepared to capture this demand in a way that benefits the county.

With Interstate I-77 running the length of the county, tremendous opportunities avail themselves for additional industrial and commercial uses along this corridor at major interstate exits. As new interstate interchanges are added, land use proposals or corridor studies should be pursued to address these changes and accommodate future needs. Maintenance of and potential future expansions to the V.C. Summer Nuclear Site provide opportunities for more development in southwest Fairfield County.

Continued residential development along Lake Wateree is expected to continue with higher densities dependent upon sewer capacity. Similarly, residential uses would also be expected around the Monticello Reservoir.

Farmland and forested areas should be conserved as much as possible. Unfortunately, areas with optimal soil conditions for agriculture are also good for development. A balance needs to be made between protecting these lands for agricultural use while still accommodating future growth. Finding ways to integrate residential development with agricultural practices through conservation easements and land banking should be explored.

Open spaces and natural areas should be interspersed throughout the County, but they should also be integrated into a network of connectivity and utilized as a transportation alternative or combined into the transportation network. Working with agencies like Palmetto Conservation to complete the Palmetto Trail connection in western Fairfield County is a great example of this.

With Winnsboro being the county seat, the largest municipality and the greatest capacity for water and sewer infrastructure, more growth should be encouraged around this urban center. Ridgeway, being the second largest municipality and its close proximity to the boundary with Richland County, will also be faced with growth opportunities over the next 20 years. The Town of Blythewood may also extend its municipal boundaries northward to capture additional development.

# Current Zoning Districts and Residential Densities

Fairfield County maintains a local land use program through the use of zoning. Individual zoning districts are established throughout the County to provide standards for development – what types of uses are allowed, how large structures can be, how buildings relate to property lines, *etc.* Fairfield County currently maintains nine primary zoning districts, not including special purpose districts. The districts are categorized into residential, business, industrial and rural zones.

Table 10.4 – Zoning District Area Calculations

Zoning District	Title	Acreage	Percentage	District Summary
R-1	Single Family Residential District	6,057.5	1.42	Single Family Dwellings and Supporting Uses
R-2	Inclusive Residential District	2,574.9	0.61	Residential Dwellings of Various Types
R-O	Residential – Office District	0.0	0.00	Mixture of Office, Institutional and Residential Uses
B-1	Limited Business District	284.2	0.07	Commercial and Service Uses for Nearby Residential
B-2	General Business District	10,763.2	2.53	Commercial and Business Uses of Most Types
I-1	Industrial District	23,332.9	5.48	Industrial and Wholesale, Distribution, Warehousing
RC	Rural Community District	2,510.4	0.59	Rural Community Centers of an Agricultural Nature
RD	Rural Resource District	144,518.5	33.96	Rural Conservation for Forest and Agricultural Uses
RD-1	Rural Residential District	235,345.6	55.31	Rural Residential and Expanding Urban Development
APD	Airport Protection District	149.9	0.04	Special Purpose District with Provisions for Protections to Areas around the Fairfield County Airport

Source: Fairfield County GIS Data and Land Management Ordinance, 2022.

Since residential land uses comprise the largest developed land use category in the County, it is important to identify where residential uses have historically been encouraged and at what level of development. Residential land use intensity is typically denoted by density measured in residential units per acre.

Residential development is currently allowed as a permissible use in 95 percent of the county. The highest densities of residential development are allowed east and west of the Town of

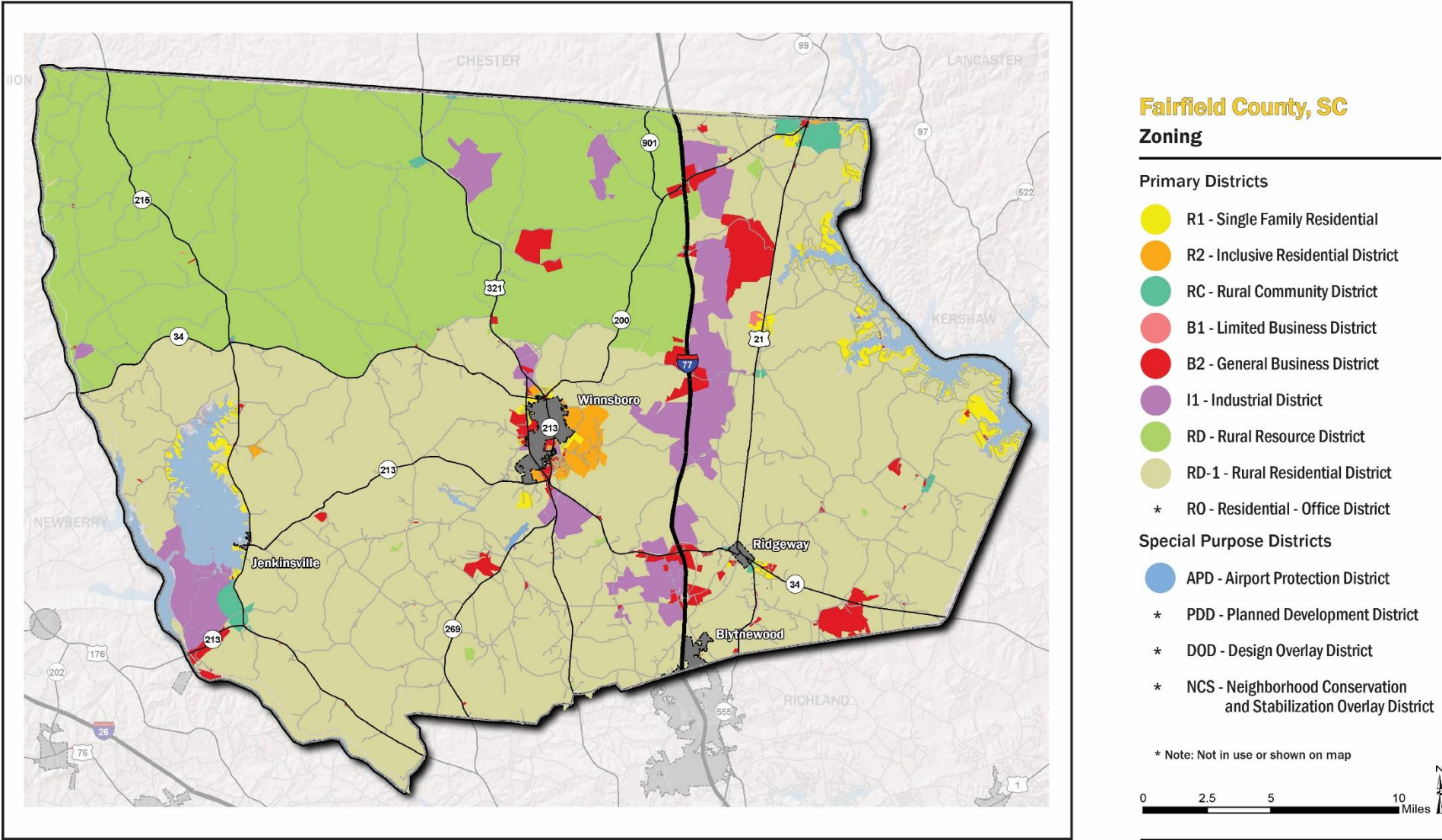
Winnsboro with pockets concentrated along sections of SC Highway 34, US Highway 21, and Interstate I-77. Unfortunately, even though the zoning district allows high densities of residential development, in actuality the chances of this type of development being constructed on many of these areas is small due to the absence of sewer infrastructure. High density residential – typically multi-family residential complexes – should be encouraged near major roads in close proximity to employment centers, commercial centers, schools and higher concentrations of population density. In and around the Town of Winnsboro and between Winnsboro and Ridgeway are the most appropriate locations for zoning districts that encourage this type of land use.

The Fairfield County Land Management Ordinance establishes zoning districts which allow a mixture of uses. For instance, the B-1 zone allows for commercial services and retail uses along with multi-family residential uses up to 4.4 units per acre and the B-2 zone allows for commercial and multi-family residential up to 9.4 units per acre. Some uses can be viewed as incompatible if the uses are within close proximity. Therefore, it is important that the county land use requirements are not encouraging a mixture of potentially detrimental uses within the same zone which could affect residential property values and housing conditions.

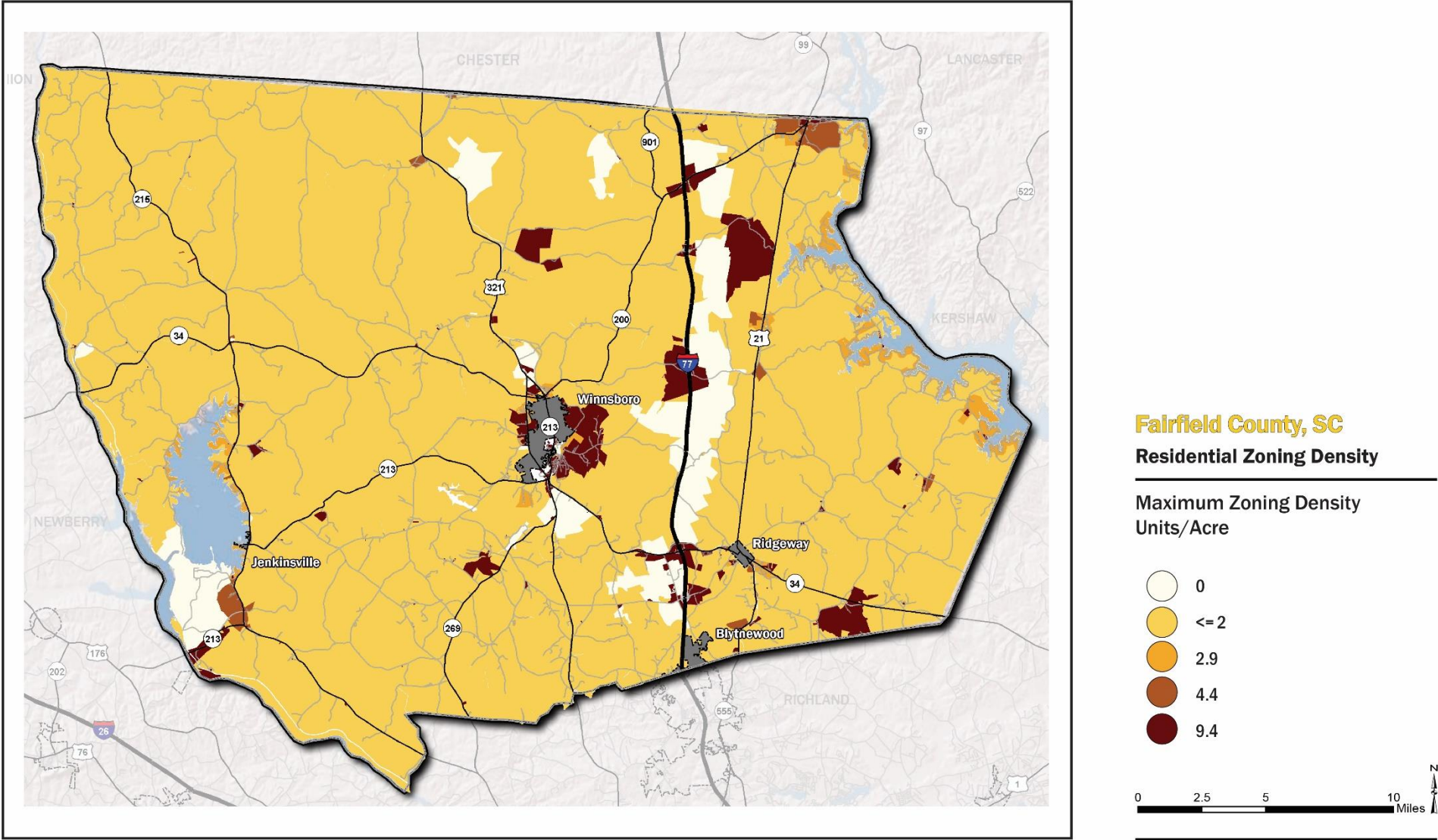
DRAFT



Map 10.5: Existing Zoning



Map 10.6: Existing Residential Zoning Density



# Future Land Use Plan

As we look toward Fairfield County’s future, it is beneficial to look at the county as distinct areas based on unique characteristics and trends. The County can be divided into four planning areas or planning districts. The census county divisions identified by the US Census Bureau are a good starting point as relevant data is available at these levels and future information will be provided for these areas which makes trend analysis convenient for future planning efforts.

Table 10.5 – Planning District Characteristics

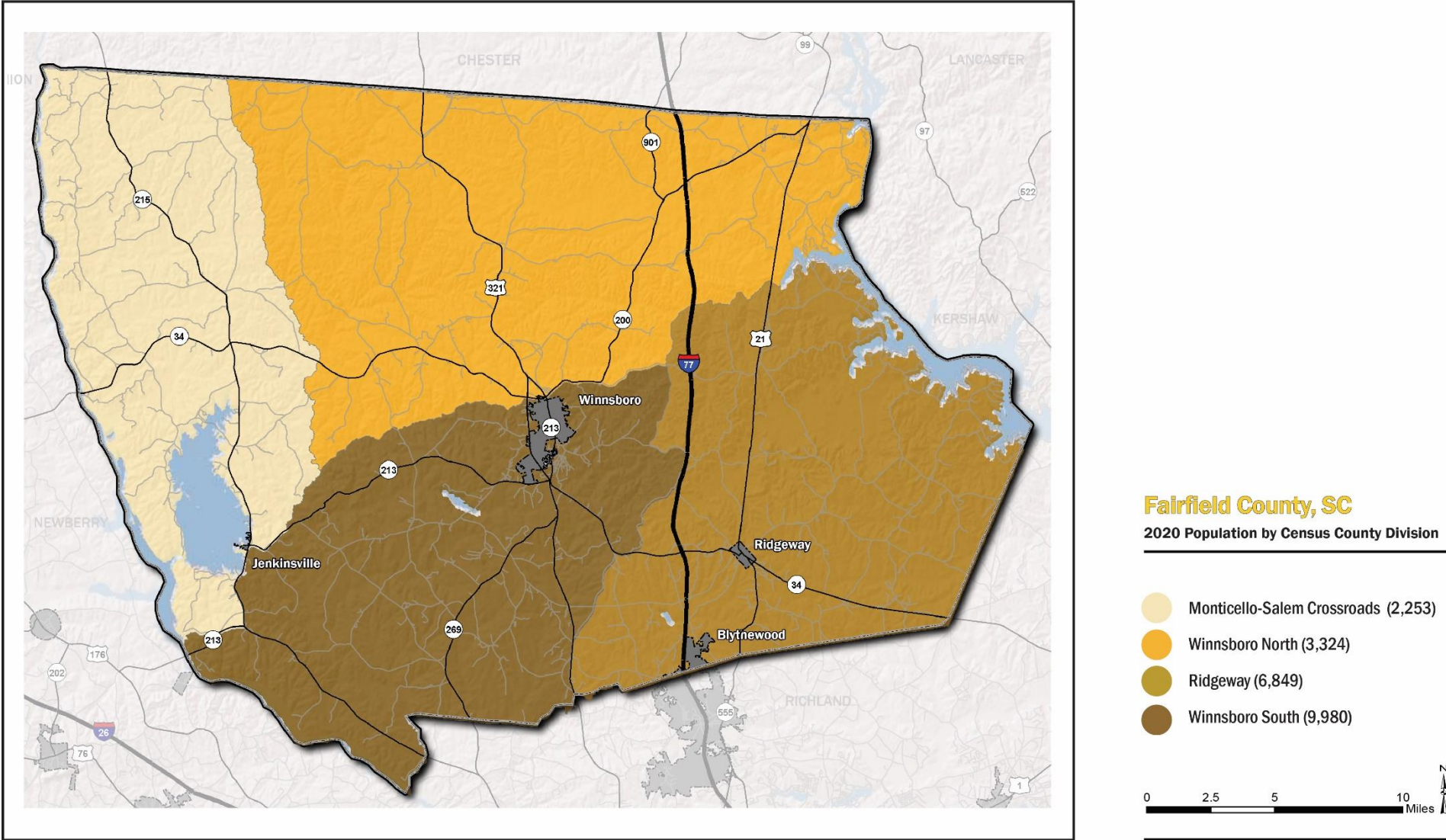
Planning District	Unique District Characteristics
Winnsboro North	Predominantly Rural, I-77 Corridor
Winnsboro South	Growth Opportunities from Richland County, Urban Center
Ridgeway	Growth Opportunities from Richland County, I-77 Corridor, Lake Wateree
Monticello – Salem Crossroads	National Forest, Monticello Reservoir, Energy Generation

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments, 2022.

Planning districts also allow for entities like the Planning Commission to identify trends at a smaller geographic level and ensure that future proposals favor the unique district characteristics of these areas.



Map 10.7: Census County Divisions/Planning Districts



In order to provide a development plan for Fairfield County's future, eleven future land use categories have been established. The categories are based on the proposed future land use pattern that is shown in a Future Land Use Map. The categories are general in nature and provide guidance for implementation through the existing zoning ordinance or future amendments to such ordinance. The categories include:

## Natural Conservation

The natural conservation district, located in western, northern and eastern Fairfield County, is an area that follows the boundary of the Sumter National Forest and expands southward along the Broad River and to the east along Lake Wateree. This district is concerned with maintaining the natural beauty of the district, while encouraging conservation of the natural resources of the area through sustainability practices, recreational activities, agricultural production and low-density residential uses. The Natural Conservation district encourages forestry activities, farming, cultivation, and resource and wildlife management areas. ***Residential densities within this district should not exceed one dwelling unit for every two acres.***

## Rural Interface

This district includes areas of the county which are mostly rural in character and have pockets of small-scale residential, commercial and public uses mostly along public roadways. This district typically has minimal water and sewer infrastructure capacity or may have water and sewer infrastructure expansion in the future. This district is found predominantly to the north, west and southwest of the Town of Winnsboro. ***The residential density for these areas should not exceed one dwelling unit per acre.***

## Rural Township

Found throughout the county, rural townships are crossroad communities. Specifically, this category is outlined for the following unincorporated communities – Blackstock, Blair, Douglass, Jenkinsville, Longtown, Mitford, Rion, Smallwood, Woodward, and White Oak. This land use category encourages the types of development that are typically found within the respective area while encouraging higher population and development densities than the surrounding area. Residential and commercial uses should be encouraged to meet the basic and convenience needs of the surrounding population. ***Residential densities should not exceed two dwelling units per acre.***

## Low Density Residential

This residential category is predominant in the outlying areas of the county where water or sewer infrastructure are lacking. ***This category is typified by large lot development with one dwelling unit per 32,000 square feet of lot area.*** Single family dwellings, including manufactured and modular homes, are included in this designation as well as related uses such as public utilities and parks and recreation.

## Medium Density Residential

This land use category is mostly found between the low- and high-density residential areas as a second-tier housing category. ***The medium density category encompasses single and select multiple family dwellings that are at densities no more than four dwelling units per acre.*** This category would include small lot subdivisions, patio homes, duplexes, townhouses and attached dwelling units. These medium density uses are dependent upon areas with water and sewer capacity or areas to be serviced within the next twenty years.

## High Density Residential

The high-density residential land use category allows for all types of residential uses where water and sewer capacity are available or will be available within the next twenty years. High density residential includes uses multi-family residential such as apartments, condominiums, multiplexes as well as other residential uses found in the lower density residential categories. ***The density of this residential district should not exceed seven dwelling units per acre.***

## Commercial Development

The Commercial Development district is primarily geared towards retail and service operations including stores, administrative and professional offices, restaurants, entertainment facilities and hotels. This category can include all types of commercial development, including small-scale and neighborhood commercial. Most of the areas in this category are dependent on the location and configuration of the highway and road network and are typically clustered along high traffic corridors and at major road intersections. ***Lot coverage of commercial developments should not exceed 65% of the lot area.***

## Industrial Development

In order to fuel a significant portion of the local and regional economy, areas of industrial developed are identified where adequate infrastructure is found or proposed for in the next decade. This land use category should encourage industrial development along with heavy commercial uses that is complementary to industrial and manufacturing processing. Warehousing and distribution centers are also encouraged. Due to the nature of these types of land uses, low density residential should be discouraged within close proximity to these land uses. ***Construction on industrial development sites should not exceed 75% of the lot area.***

## Public Use

Areas identified as Public Use are typified as land utilized for a public purpose, maintained by a public entity or supported by public funds. This includes such uses as schools, hospitals, churches, utility offices, post-secondary institutions, libraries and local government offices of the federal, state and local levels as well as parks, open space and recreational uses. This land use category should be encouraged in close proximity to a variety of areas to meet the needs of the citizens as well as protected from adverse development that could impede or discourage the public's use. ***Lot coverage for public uses should not exceed 50% of the lot area.***



## Urban Expansion

This land use category is identified for areas outside the corporate limits of Winnsboro, Ridgeway and Blythewood to allow for expansion, growth and future annexation of land. The urban expansion district, an area  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the existing town limits, should encourage a mixture of uses to provide housing opportunities, employment centers, public uses and commercial services at some of the highest densities in the county. ***Due to the close proximity to these jurisdictions, cooperation between the county and the towns for land use decision-making should be encouraged and development densities established that are comparable to those found on adjoining municipal properties.***

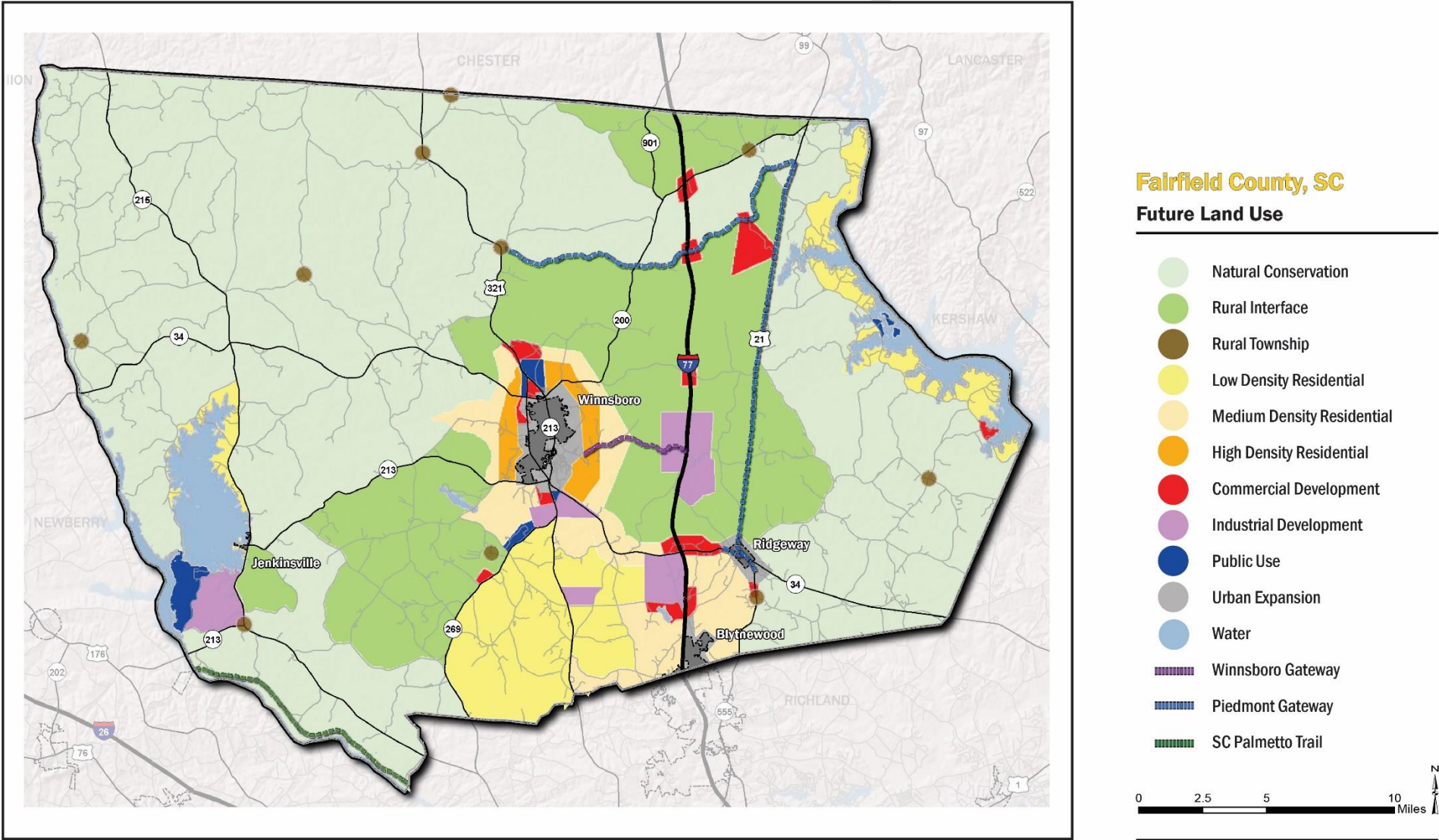
## Corridor Enhancement Areas

Specific corridors identified through the Piedmont Gateway Corridor Management Plan, South Carolina Palmetto Trail or targeted roadway improvements for specialized enhancements and protection from adverse development.

## The Future Land Use Map

The future land use map is a graphic depiction of the goals and objectives identified in this plan as described by the future land use categories. These future land use categories along with the map are meant to be a guide and not intended to be parcel specific. Future land use categories assist the Planning Commission and County Council during the land use decision-making process or zoning application hearings.

Map 10.8: Future Land Use



Residential land uses are clustered around the Monticello Reservoir and Lake Wateree as well as around the Town of Winnsboro and southward toward Richland County. Commercial uses are encouraged in pockets north and south of the Town of Winnsboro and at locations along Interstate I-77. Industrial uses are encouraged south of Winnsboro, along portions of Interstate I-77 and south of the Monticello Reservoir. Public uses are found throughout the county at the county airport, Lake Wateree State Park and property owned by Dominion Energy near the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station.

The rural portions of the county are divided between the Natural Conservation and Rural Interface areas. The rural interface area includes properties within close proximity to municipalities and major roadways and has a higher potential for development within the next 30 years. Areas identified as Natural Conservation are the most rural of the county and have characteristics that limit the future development potential or have a high value for vacant, forested or agricultural areas.

Three corridor areas are identified in the Future Land Use Plan:

- The SC Palmetto Trail Peak to Prosperity Passage is currently located along the western border of the county and ends at the Alston Trailhead. The intent is for the trail to continue along the Broad River toward Columbia to connect with the Capital City Passage. The trailhead also presents opportunities for connections to Lake Monticello and the Town of Winnsboro. Uses in this area should be limited densities of population with opportunities for outdoor recreation and services to meet these needs.
- The Winnsboro Gateway Corridor is a proposed gateway enhancement between the Town of Winnsboro and Interstate I-77 for a direct access point between the two. A corridor plan should be developed during the route's planning process with a focus on a parkway atmosphere encouraging specialized land uses without direct access to the transportation corridor.
- The Piedmont Gateway Corridor is identified within the Piedmont Gateway State Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. An overlay district may be an opportunity to protect this stretch of roadway and encourage uses as outlined in the plan.

Table 10.6 – Future Land Use Categories by Area

Future Land Use Category	Area (Acres)	% of Land Area
Natural Conservation	263,633.4	51.7
Rural Interface	92,954.1	18.2
Rural Township	*	*
Low Density Residential	45,288.6	8.9
Medium Density Residential	20,472.7	4.0
High Density Residential	4,752.6	0.9
Commercial Development	61,449.7	12.1
Industrial Development	9,547.2	1.9
Public Use	4,269.0	0.8
Urban Expansion	7,203.8	1.4

\*Denotes values too small to identify

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments, 2022.

## Land Use Compatibility

The Future Land Use Map serves as the blueprint for the physical development of Fairfield County over the next 20 years. The Map depicts the orientation of future land use categories to each other and natural features to accommodate the expected future growth. Implementation of this land use pattern is dependent upon ensuring that local zoning and land development standards are congruent with the long-range plan. Zoning standards outline the functional interrelations between population density and transportation and infrastructure networks.

Table 10.7 provides a listing of current zoning districts compatible within each of the future land use categories. The County provides nine primary zoning districts along with four special purpose districts. The table below serves as a guide for staff and elected and appointed officials in consideration of future proposed zoning map amendments.

Table 10.7 – Future Land Use Designations and Compatible Zoning Districts for Fairfield County

Future Land Use Category	Compatible Zoning Districts	Recommended Density/Lot Coverage
Natural Conservation	RD	Residential densities within this district should not exceed one dwelling unit for every two acres.
Rural Interface	RD, RD-1	The residential density for these areas should not exceed one dwelling unit per acre.
Rural Township	RC, R-1	Residential densities should not exceed two dwelling units per acre.
Low Density Residential	R-1	This category is typified by large lot development with one dwelling unit per 32,000 square feet of lot area.
Medium Density Residential	R-1, R-2	The medium density category encompasses single and select multiple family dwellings that are at densities no more than four dwelling units per acre.
High Density Residential	R-1, R-2, R-O	The density of this residential district should not exceed seven dwelling units per acre.
Commercial Development	B-1, B-2, R-O	Lot coverage of commercial developments should not exceed 65% of the lot area.
Industrial Development	B-2, I-1, R-O	Construction on industrial development sites should not exceed 75% of the lot area.
Public Use	All Zones	Lot coverage for public uses should not exceed 50% of the lot area.
Urban Expansion	R-2, R-O, B-1, B-2, I-1	Due to the close proximity to these jurisdictions, cooperation between the county and the towns for land use decision-making should be encouraged and development densities established that are comparable to those found on adjoining municipal properties.
Corridor Enhancement Areas	R-1, R-2, R-O, B-1, B-2	N/A

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments, 2022.

The county should evaluate the individual zones following the adoption of the comprehensive plan to determine whether they meet the future needs of the community and whether amendments need to be made to the individual standards.

The towns and communities within Fairfield County will continue to grow and as they do, the towns will likely expand their existing municipal boundaries. As the towns annex property into their communities, the County should work collaboratively with the towns on these future annexations. When a property is incorporated, the annexation process should not cause a

major change in the land use of the property whether located in the unincorporated county or inside the town limits. The County Planning Department and county and town administrations can be proactive in identification of prime expansion areas for municipal expansion through land use decisions made within the Urban Expansion future land use category.

## Land Use Standards

Fairfield County is at a unique juncture. The County is blessed with natural resources and beauty and is located in a growing metropolitan area with increasing growth pressures. This is an opportunity to meet these challenges by being proactive in the ways in which the county manages its land use.

After an update or review of the local government comprehensive plan, it is important to reevaluate the current zoning ordinances, zoning map and land development regulations to ensure that the goals and objectives of the plan are included through land use standards and these standards are not unfavorable to the proposed outcomes.

Property development is a challenging industry. Local government is a partner with the local development community in providing guidance for quality land use proposals and building construction. Historically, land uses have been separated due to identified incompatibilities such as noise, density, or pollution. However, there are ways to commingle different land uses together. Mixed Use Development allows for mixtures of uses within a development project such as offices, restaurants, schools, and jobs within close proximity to residential dwelling. These types of developments can include multi-use structures or multiple uses on a project site. The end result is a development that encourages more pedestrian and bicycle access and less reliance on automobiles. Mixed use residential developments provide opportunities to incorporate diverse housing types which provide for residents of differing income levels and age groups.

Trends to develop outward from urban town centers doesn't have to be the norm. Vacant or underutilized properties in and around the towns typically have roads, water, sewer, storm drainage, and other utilities within close proximity. Redevelopment of these sites, referred to as infill development, is an alternative to developing on a vacant piece of property. With much of the infrastructure already in place, the development costs are reduced. Additionally, values of the neighboring properties on a street or block are increased with such redevelopment and spurs more economic development in nearby areas.

Residential development in the Midlands and many other parts of the state follow a similar pattern – take a forested, vacant tract of land and develop the entire site as a residential subdivision covered with impervious surfaces of rooftops, streets and sidewalks. This residential product has a place in a suburban environment. Fairfield County is home to hundreds of square miles of natural, forested property which should be maintained. An alternative residential option is to encourage clustering or compact development. Clustering allows for the density of



the entire site to be clustered on a portion of the property while the remainder of the site is conserved as a natural area either maintained by the homeowners or preserved through a land trust. This development style provides more open space for the residents, reduces development costs for the developer and maintains the county's natural character.

As the County continues to grow, the need for additional or expanded facilities or services will become necessary. Entering into a partnership with the development community through an incentive-based approach is a useful tool. Development incentives come in many forms and range from local government approval of density bonuses to development agreements. For instance, review time for permits may be reduced for projects that are deemed to meet local affordability requirements. A development may be able to increase their allowed density by a certain percentage if they include sidewalks or bicycle paths. A developer may provide land through a development agreement for a fire station or school if their project places a burden on the existing facilities.

It is important for Fairfield County to be a partner with the local development community and foster an atmosphere of cooperation to encourage positive growth for its citizens. Evaluating and amending county land use standards on a periodic basis is a way to encourage the types of positive growth opportunities the county wants to foster.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal # 9: Land Use

Provide a framework for the orderly, efficient, and equitable development of land that accommodates future growth while protecting natural resources, enhancing the quality of life, and preserving the rural character of the community.

### Strategies

- 9.1. Review and update the zoning ordinance and land development regulations to include but not limited to an evaluation of: the number of districts, the number of allowable uses in each district, the purpose/applicability of overlay districts, buffer yard regulations, incompatible district regulations, riparian/floodplain regulations, open space preservation, and lakefront development standards.
- 9.2. Support the Towns of Ridgeway, Jenkinsville, and Winnsboro in efforts to revitalize the downtown as hubs for arts, culture, recreation, and tourism, while providing retail and service amenities for residents and visitors.
- 9.3. Review the comprehensive plan every five years and update it every ten years per SC Code 6-29-510 (E).

- 9.4. Explore the possibility of establishing a joint planning commission between Fairfield County, Winnsboro, and Ridgeway.
- 9.5. Utilize the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map when making local zoning and land use changes and encourage public and private agencies organizations to utilize the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for their own planning efforts.
- 9.6. Coordinate with Winnsboro, Ridgeway, and Jenkinsville on land use planning and development matters to ensure consistency between comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and annexation priorities – schedule regular meetings.

DRAFT

DRAFT

11

---

## Priority Investment

## Introduction

The South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 was amended in 2007 to include the South Carolina Priority Investment Act (PIA). The intent of the PIA is to improve the planning and multi-jurisdictional coordination of public infrastructure decisions. To accomplish these goals, the priority investment element requires local governments to assess the availability of public funds for infrastructure improvements and to prioritize these improvements for expenditure over the next ten years. The act also gives local governments the flexibility of designating specific “priority investment” areas within their jurisdiction; these designations will promote and direct growth in areas where existing or planned infrastructure can support higher intensities of development resulting in cost savings to the general public.

## Intergovernmental Coordination

Fairfield County is home to a number of public entities and agencies. Beyond public facilities owned and maintained by the county, there are a number of properties owned and maintained by the towns, State of South Carolina, the Fairfield County School District, Midlands Technical College and utility providers. Coordination between these entities has occurred in the past and these relationships need to be continually nurtured for the future benefit of the County.

The South Carolina PIA requires that the recommendation of capital improvement projects requiring public expenditure be achieved through “*coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.*” The Act defines adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies as “*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.*” Such coordination in Fairfield County entails written notification by the County Planning Commission or staff to adjacent jurisdictions and relevant agencies of proposed projects and the opportunity to provide comment. Adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies identified as providing public facilities or related services within Fairfield County are listed in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 – Adjacent and Relevant Jurisdictions and Agencies

Jurisdiction/Agency	Capital Improvement/Public Facilities/Services
State of South Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT) – responsible for construction, road maintenance, and improvements for State and Federal roads; statewide transportation planning</li> <li>• SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) – funding for recreation facilities; management of Lake Wateree State Park</li> <li>• SC Department of Commerce – competitive Community Block Grant awards (CDBG) for non-entitlements (Fairfield County and Towns)</li> <li>• SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) – septic tank permitting, water and air quality permitting and management</li> <li>• SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) – wildlife management areas/National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)</li> <li>• SC Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) – statewide mutual aid agreement for catastrophic disaster response and recovery</li> </ul>
Central Midlands Council of Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional transportation planning</li> <li>• Local government assistance</li> <li>• Central Midlands Area Agency on Aging</li> <li>• Midlands Workforce Development Board</li> <li>• Community development – infrastructure improvements and affordable housing programs</li> <li>• Grants writing and administration</li> </ul>
Central SC Alliance and South Carolina I-77 Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of capital investment and job creation in the various regions</li> </ul>
Fairfield Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and retention of jobs and economic growth in Fairfield County</li> <li>• Certified Site program</li> </ul>
Midlands Technical College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairfield County campus of the two-year institution of higher education that is part of the SC Technical College System</li> </ul>
Fairfield County School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre K-12 Public Schools</li> <li>• Adult Education</li> <li>• Career and vocational education</li> </ul>
USDA Forestry Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Sumter National Forest</li> </ul>
<b>Municipalities and Neighboring Cities and Counties</b>	
Town of Winnsboro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County municipality</li> <li>• Provider of law enforcement</li> <li>• Provider of electricity, water and sewer service</li> </ul>
Town of Jenkinsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County municipality</li> </ul>

Town of Ridgeway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County municipality</li> <li>Provider of water and sewer service</li> </ul>
Town of Blythewood (portion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County municipality</li> </ul>
Neighboring Counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chester County</li> <li>Kershaw County</li> <li>Lancaster County</li> <li>Newberry County</li> <li>Richland County</li> <li>Union County</li> </ul>
<b>Private Organizations and Agencies</b>	
MUSC Health Fairfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthcare provider</li> </ul>
Dominion Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversight for Monticello Reservoir, Parr Reservoir, and V.C. Summer Nuclear Station</li> </ul>
Duke Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversight for Lake Wateree</li> </ul>
Water Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jenkinsville Water</li> <li>Lugoff-Elgin Water Authority</li> <li>Mid-County Water</li> <li>Mitford Rural Water District</li> <li>Town of Ridgeway</li> <li>Town of Winnsboro</li> </ul>
Sewer Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town of Winnsboro</li> <li>Town of Ridgeway</li> <li>Town of Great Falls</li> </ul>
Fairfield County Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote economic development and business opportunities</li> </ul>
Fairfield County Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve and archive historic county resources</li> </ul>
Palmetto Conservation Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster appreciation for natural and cultural resources through active recreation on the Palmetto Trail</li> </ul>

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments, 2022.



## Capital Improvements

A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a forecasting and budgeting tool for the identification of future needs and funding sources. The CIP identifies capital items, usually over a particular amount, that involve such things as new building construction, renovation or additions, fleet vehicles and construction equipment purchases, hardware and software purchases, *etc.* An effective CIP identifies the future needs of county departments usually over a five to ten-year timeframe and cost estimates are derived for each line-item amount. The future needs are then prioritized and spread over the five-year budgeting period. This allows for financial planning by the local government and reducing budgetary constraints over a short time period.

Fairfield County developed a five-year capital list for their FY23 budget. The County identifies capital projects in their annual budget allocation. The County has allocated funds for building contingencies, industrial parks and spec buildings, and county roadways through the General Fund. All capital items, not funded with grants, are funded with transfers from the General Fund. Establishing a continual CIP process within the following budget years should be a priority.

## Revenues and Expenditures

The County's FY 2021-2022 Audit reveals the primary source of income for the County is through taxes. This includes real property taxes, vehicle property taxes, payments in lieu of taxes, sales taxes, and an assortment of other taxes. Income from taxes is followed by income from intergovernmental sources or state shared revenues, amounting to seven percent of county revenues. Licenses, permits, fines and fees account for two percent of revenues, with the balance coming from a multitude of sources, including investment income.

The County Audit also shows that the primary expenditure for the County is the operation and maintenance of its public safety system, including police, detention center, fire and judicial, followed by administrative or general governmental expenses. The county's commitment to health and welfare programs accounts for the next highest expenditures, followed by expenditures for public works and utilities.

## Funding Sources

There are a number of funding sources that local governments have at their disposal as allowed by South Carolina State Law for funding large-scale planning initiatives or capital improvements. Fairfield County and the local towns are responsible for determining the optimal funding source for a particular expenditure. Some of these sources require action by municipal or County Council in accordance with the Code of Laws of South Carolina as amended. A summary of

potential funding sources available for projects in the comprehensive plan follows. Individual limitations or conditions for each option have not been reviewed for this document.

## General Fund

The General Fund accounts for all funding resources in the County not otherwise devoted to specific activities. This funding source includes revenues from ad valorem taxes (real estate and personal property), licenses and permits, charges for services, intergovernmental funding, other taxes, and miscellaneous revenue and other funding sources. These funds are generally spent on general government services, public safety, public works and utilities, and health and human services. Expenditures include, but are not limited to, salaries for department employees, supply and fuel costs, and building improvements. Capital and infrastructure improvements are funded in part through the General Fund. The FY 2022-2023 General Fund Budget for the County was \$34.8 million.

## Revenue Fund

Revenue funds are monies collected in advance of the construction of a project that have been accumulated from surplus or earmarked operational revenues, funds in depreciation reserves, or the sale of capital assets.

## General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds (GO Bonds) are backed by the “full faith and credit” of the County, and are usually considered a safe investment for bondholders. The principal and interest on general obligation bonds are normally paid through a property tax levy. GO Bonds are a primary source of revenue for the County.

## Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds are used when the County issues a bond and pledges the revenues received from services provided as payments for the debt service. This revenue is used to pay both principal and interest on the bond. While revenue bonds incur slightly higher interest costs than general obligation bonds, they do not use up the County’s bond capacity.

## Lease-Purchase Agreements

Lease-Purchase Agreements allow a local government to acquire capital assets by making a series of lease payments that are considered installments towards the purchase of the asset. Under a lease-purchase agreement, the local government acquires full ownership of the property covered by the lease by making all of the lease payments over the full term of the lease. The County has used lease-purchase agreements to acquire community facilities related amenities such as playground equipment.

## Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) or Special Tax Districts

Counties and municipalities in South Carolina are authorized to create a local improvement district for capital projects. Provisions for assessing and levying property taxes in different areas and at different rates are set forth in the Code of Laws of South Carolina, Section 4-9-30(5)(a). A local improvement district links together the costs and benefits resulting from new or upgraded capital facilities. Generally, property owners in the new tax district must agree to the new assessment. Capital projects in the special benefit tax district can be bond-financed and paid over time by the benefitting property owners to expedite implementation.

## Special Assessments

Special assessments may be utilized when there is a direct correlation between the service being taxed and the project being funded:

- **Local Hospitality Tax.** A local hospitality tax (H-Tax) is levied on consumers purchasing prepared foods and beverages from vendors located within the jurisdiction enacting the tax. Counties in South Carolina are authorized to levy a hospitality tax of up to two percent if approved by a majority of the governing body. This tax limit is reduced to one percent if it is not also approved by municipal governing bodies within the County (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 6-1-700). H-Tax funds are typically used to fund tourism-related expenditures that result in the promotion of more tourism-related activities. H-Tax revenues are a significant source of funding for the County. In FY 2021-2022 the County received \$164,782 in H-Tax.
- **Local and State Accommodation Tax.** Accommodation taxes (A-Tax) are levied on the rental of rooms, lodging, or sleeping accommodations. The state accommodations tax is a mandatory two percent charge applied to all accommodations statewide. The SC Department of Revenue collects these dollars and distributes them back to cities and counties through a location-based formula. Local governments receiving more than \$50,000 in revenue from the state tax must appoint an advisory committee to make recommendations on how the funds should be spent. Local governments in South Carolina are also authorized to levy an additional local accommodation tax of up to seven percent of the gross proceeds derived by business owners renting rooms, lodging, or sleeping accommodations. An accommodation tax also imposes a sales tax of up to five percent on additional guest services offered at facilities not otherwise taxed under South Carolina law (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 12-36-920). Accommodation tax revenues must be spent on tourism related expenditures. Accommodation tax revenues are an important source of funding for the County. In FY 2021-2022 the County received \$232,883 in A-Tax revenues and had \$146,921 in A-Tax expenditures.

## Grants

Grants represent discretionary, lump-sum funding secured by the County for specific one-time projects. There is no assurance that previous grant monies will be made available again in the future; however, the Comprehensive Plan assumes some growth will continue to be funded with grants. In many cases, receiving grant monies obligates the County to spend additional dollars to meet local match requirements for the grant received.

## Tax-Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax-increment financing, or TIF, can be used to provide front-end funds in an area where large-scale redevelopment is feasible. This funding mechanism is most useful in a defined geographic area like a downtown or mixed-use district.

**User Fees.** User fees may be utilized or increased in order to offset costs that will be incurred through upgrades or new construction of capital facilities.

## Capital Improvements Sales Tax (Penny Sales Tax)

Capital Improvements Sales Tax or the Penny Sales Tax is an additional sales tax on items purchased in the county that can be used to fund special projects for infrastructure and capital improvements projects. A detailed list of projects must be identified with cost estimates provided and prioritized based on funding need. A referendum is required for approval of the tax and is set for a period of time. The sales tax ends when the total amount for capital expenditure has been reached or when the timeframe ceases, whichever comes first.

## Transportation Funding

There are a number of special assessments related to transportation and transportation-related functions at the local level:

- **C-Funds.** C-Funds are allocated to each County within the State by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) for the purpose of transportation improvements. The source of the funds is the State gasoline tax. State law requires that these improvements be tied to the transportation system and that at least 25 percent of the funds be spent on the state highway system. Funds are awarded through a competitive process by a committee designated by the State Legislature, referred to as the County Transportation Committee (CTC). These funds reimburse the County for specified projects approved by the CTC. As a result, C-Funds are restricted for specific uses and cannot be used for all capital projects. More often than not, C-Funds are used for street/road paving and repaving projects.
- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Guideshare.** Guideshare funding is available for each of the South Carolina Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Councils of Government (COG) for system upgrade projects. This dollar amount is calculated by taking

the MPO's or COG's specific proportion of the state population and applying it to the total available funds for system upgrades. The funds are allocated in the Federal Highway Appropriation Bill. Fairfield County is in the CMCOG Rural Transportation Planning Area. Projects identified for funding under this program are outlined in the Transportation Element.

- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).** TAP funding is federal funding available for projects related to activities that improve the transportation experience, including landscaping, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, historic preservation and other visual amenities related to the transportation system. These funds are administered by SCDOT through a competitive grant process.
- **State Infrastructure Bank.** The South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) selects and assists in financing major qualified projects by providing loans and other financial assistance for constructing and improving highway and transportation facilities. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis.

## Development Funding

As development occurs, particularly residential development, demand for services may outpace the facilities or services necessary for additional population. The following are funding sources related to real estate development and population growth:

- **Real Estate Transfer Fees.** A real estate transfer fee is a charge on the transfer, sale, or conveyance of real property. It is applied against the purchase price of the property, and can be restricted to certain types of capital expenditures. The South Carolina Legislature has strictly forbidden the implementation of a real estate transfer fee without expressed authorization from the state legislature (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 6-1-70).
- **Developer In-Kind Contributions.** In some instances, the owner(s) of property seeking entitlements for their land may elect during the development review process to donate right-of-way or construct certain "oversized" capital projects simply for the public good as well as to serve their development. The type and/or magnitude of these contributions vary greatly from location to location and owner to owner.
- **Impact Fees and Exactions.** Impact Fees and exactions are intended to enable new growth to pay for the services it generates a need for. Examples of projects include such things as schools, recreation, and public safety. These fees are established based on the capital and operating impacts of new development and are paid by the developer or ownership interest.
- **Development Agreements.** Development agreements are contractual agreements between local governments and property owners. The contract serves to vest rights to develop a

specific project for an extended period of time while typically providing a direct benefit back to the local community such as property for a new fire station, school or park space.

## Priority Investment Areas

Even though there are many types of funding sources, the amount of funds available for public programs and services are limited. Due to this scarcity, funding decisions must be made to stretch available funds to their greatest extent. Location is one such component of the priority investment equation and is a major cost in the decision-making process.

To encourage sustainable growth, public projects should be guided to areas that have adequate infrastructure to handle the proposed service capacity, or that will be able to upgrade service capacity within one to two years. It is critical that Fairfield County be proactive in identifying the total cost of all proposed public projects. For example, the location of a new high school on a large vacant property ten miles away from the center of the County may seem financially feasible due to lower land costs and availability. However, a location far from existing County facilities and infrastructure can create additional community costs in transporting students and travel costs for personnel. Extension of water and sewer lines to serve a remote site may not be cost-effective in the long term. Extending transportation routes away from a population center requires upgrades to the transportation system and adds transportation costs to the citizens.

Outdated zoning codes that allow for and encourage high density residential housing in outlying areas can generate considerable community costs for public infrastructure and services.

Residential development proposals should be evaluated on the overall costs to the community to include the extension of water and sewer lines; expanded service areas for fire, EMS and law enforcement; increased enrollment in public schools; increased road usage and maintenance costs; and expanded solid waste collection service areas. Services to be utilized by the proposed development must be comparable to the taxes generated from the development in order to offset a net loss. If a loss is incurred to support new development, existing residences and commercial and industrial development must often make up the difference. This relationship is quantified in the following equation:

$$\frac{\text{Net Benefit Received from the Proposed Development}}{\text{Net Cost of Service to the Proposed Development}} = \text{Cost Benefit}$$

Where:

- >1.0 = a net community gain
- 1.0 = break even
- <1.0 = a net community loss

It is important that full benefits and costs are determined beyond direct numerical inputs. Affordable housing may have extensive costs to the community beyond the direct tax benefit from the development. However, consideration of the economic benefit that affordable



housing provides in attracting and maintaining a skilled workforce may outweigh the identified costs.

The Land Use Element identified areas of future development potential based on proximity to existing critical infrastructure including water and sewer service and public roads. Areas with a High or Moderate future development potential represent those with the highest levels of access to existing infrastructure. Future development within these areas must be supported with public investments to provide cost-efficient services. Future public projects should be evaluated and prioritized based on a community cost-benefit analysis and encouraged in priority investment areas.

The County has invested a great deal of time and public monies into industrial site expansions, specifically along SC Highway 34 between Winnsboro and Ridgeway. Even though all of these areas aren't expressly shown on the prime development map, the map is based on the existing infrastructure. As infrastructure is installed in the near term - primarily water and sewer lines - this area will be prime for additional investment. A special prime development designation has been added to the map to denote this as shown in pink in Map 10.4. Focused changes to local zoning and land development regulations should be made to enhance the opportunities for additional development – higher residential densities and mixed uses – within the priority investment areas of Fairfield County. Infrastructure improvements should be targeted and prioritized for these areas as well.

## Capital Improvements Plan Implementation and Funding Gap

As Fairfield County evaluates capital improvement planning, the County will estimate the impact of the continued operations and maintenance of proposed facilities or equipment purchase on the annual budget. Expansion of capital improvements is often associated with increased operations and long-term maintenance costs. However, these factors should be weighed against the long-term maintenance of not replacing, maintaining or renovating an existing facility. Additionally, some public service facilities must be staffed on a part-time or full-time basis, which can result in long-term budgetary impacts on the County's General Fund. The County intends to continue to carefully examine the long-term budgetary impacts of planned capital improvements.

## Coordination and Notification

To ensure success and optimal community benefit, coordination between agencies is a necessity. Fairfield County will continue to coordinate major capital improvements with other nearby governmental jurisdictions where appropriate through mechanisms such as joint

funding of capital improvements, shared use agreements, and shared maintenance or operations agreements. Coordination will also include consultation with relevant local government jurisdictions during the development of each Comprehensive Plan update. Opportunities for shared uses, co-location of facilities, and land swaps between appropriate governmental entities should be explored.

The South Carolina Priority Investment Act requires that comprehensive plan priority investment recommendations on public infrastructure projects be made through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. In practice, South Carolina jurisdictions accomplish this coordination by providing neighboring jurisdictions and agencies access to their draft comprehensive plans and providing them an opportunity to comment. During the public comment period, the draft comprehensive plan was posted on the County's website and comments received. The jurisdictions and agencies listed in Table 11.1 were consulted during the plan formation and provided opportunities to comment. In addition, existing plans from other jurisdictions or agencies that impact the provision of capital facilities and related services for County residents were consulted and have been incorporated by reference in the appropriate elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Local Planning Coordination

South Carolina State Law encourages cities, counties and towns to work together for cooperative planning. Some communities in the state have taken this cooperative nature a step further through consolidating services between local governments. Nearby Greenwood and Newberry Counties have a joint planning commission that serves as the planning commission for the county as well as the city and towns within their jurisdictions. The Planning Commission has representation from each community based on population and handles matters within each jurisdiction. Greenwood County provides planning services for their local governments through a consolidated staff via a shared-use agreement. Each jurisdiction maintains their own ordinances and development standards and the shared staff implement and enforce the local standards of each community.

This type of cooperation should be evaluated for Fairfield County as this model reduces staff costs, provides more efficient service to the general public and fosters a development-friendly, one-stop shop for development review and permitting.

# Goals and Strategies

## Goal # 10: Priority Investment

Facilitate a higher level of public investment through internal coordination and intergovernmental cooperation.

### Strategies

- 10.1. Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to be coordinated with the annual budget cycle
- 10.2. Facilitate an ongoing, council-led, strategic planning process that evaluates and prioritizes comprehensive plan goals and strategies; and includes development of short-term, measurable, and achievable work programs for the high priority goals and strategies
- 10.3. Allocate staffing and financial resources as needed and necessary for successful implementation of the individual work programs identified in strategy 10.2.
- 10.4. Direct public facilities and infrastructure to priority investment areas of the County
- 10.5. Seek additional funding opportunities from federal, state and local granting agencies and private sources for needed public infrastructure and facilities needs to include building partnerships and leveraging existing resources to provide matching funds for grant opportunities
- 10.6. Evaluate opportunities for coordinated planning such as through a Joint Planning Commission or other framework
- 10.7. Consider officially designating key priority investment areas based on key projects and recommendations in the priority investment element and other elements of the plan
- 10.8. Continue to work with agencies, organizations and local governments in Fairfield County and neighboring and regional counties through partnerships, agreements and cooperation

DRAFT

12


---

# Implementation

# Implementation Plan

The implementation plan identifies action strategies that correspond to the vision and goals identified in Chapter 1. These strategies are also designed to reflect the community challenges and opportunities identified in each of the ten elements of the comprehensive plan. Because these goals, objectives, and strategies are not specific to any one element, and in many cases relate to multiple elements at the same time, it makes sense to present them all together with notations reflecting which of the nine elements each strategy relates to. In addition to identifying individual strategies, the implementation plan also satisfies state planning and enabling act requirements by specifying a general time frame and responsible entity for each action.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the goals are designed to be broad based policy statements that reflect the desired vision for future growth and development. Implementation strategies are designed to be realistic and implementable actions that will help to achieve the goals during the life of the plan. The time frames specified for each strategy are broken into the following four categories:

- 
- **Short-term strategies** generally consist of local and regional coordination efforts and planning projects or inventories that do not require considerable staff time or financial resources to implement. Such strategies should be considered for implementation within a 1-2-year time frame.
  - **Medium-term strategies** consist of planning projects or policy changes that have an immediate need but may require a significant amount of staff time, coordination and public participation efforts, and the allocation of financial resources to implement. Such strategies should be considered for implementation within a 2-5-year time frame.
  - **Long-term strategies** consist of major planning projects or changes in policies or administrative operations and may require considerable staff time, the procurement of professional services, and/or the allocation of significant financial resources. Such strategies should be considered for implementation within a 5-10-year time frame.
  - **Ongoing strategies** consist of local and regional coordination efforts, inventories, database maintenance, and planning projects that should be considered for immediate and ongoing implementation.

# Goal # 1: Population

Grow and sustain a healthy, diverse, and prosperous population of all ages through job creation, residential recruitment, aging services, quality of life improvements, and equitable access to programs and services

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
1.1. Attract/retain workforce age population through job development, residential recruitment initiatives, and marketing Fairfield County as an “alternative residential option” for commuters to the Columbia and Charlotte metropolitan areas	Fairfield Chamber of Commerce, Fairfield County Economic Development	Short	Economy, Housing, Land Use, Community Facilities
1.2. Coordinate with the Fairfield County Council on Aging, the CMCOG Area Agency on Aging, and other aging service providers to improve and expand access to “age sensitive” transportation, housing, meals, and other essential services	Fairfield County, Fairfield County Council on Aging, CMCOG	Ongoing	Housing, Transportation, Community Facilities
1.3. Support public health priorities with a focus on ensuring equitable access to healthy foods and the promotion of active lifestyles and recreation opportunities	Fairfield County, Fairfield Forward, CMCOG	Ongoing	Community Facilities, Resilience, Transportation, Land Use

# Goal # 2: Housing

Provide a range of quality housing opportunities for residents of all ages and incomes

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
2.1. Adopt the countywide housing study once complete and incorporate by reference into the Comprehensive Plan	Fairfield County Council, Planning Commission	Short	Population, Economy, Land Use
2.2. Work with the Town of Winnsboro to strengthen the County and Town building code enforcement programs to reduce the number of vacant and dilapidated properties in the County	Fairfield County, Winnsboro	Short	Population, Economy, Land Use
2.3. Explore opportunities for implementing a minor home repair/rehabilitation program to assist low-income homeowners with essential exterior repairs such as roofs, porches, siding, etc.	Fairfield County, Winnsboro, Non-profit Partners	Short	Population, Economy, Land Use
2.4. Work with community partners to implement the priority recommendations outlined in the housing study as appropriate and feasible	Fairfield County, Winnsboro, Ridgeway, Jenkinsville	Medium	Population, Economy, Land Use
2.5. Support the development of more “senior friendly” housing opportunities in the County	Fairfield County, Winnsboro, Non-profit Partners	Medium	Population, Land Use
2.6. Work with public, private, and non-profit partners to increase access to quality affordable housing opportunities in key areas of the county	Fairfield County, Winnsboro, Non-profit Partners	Ongoing	Population, Economy, Land Use



# Goal # 3: Natural Resources

Protect, preserve, and promote Fairfield County's natural resources

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
3.1. Strengthen natural resource protection measures in land use regulations, county ordinances, and the development review process to include market-based incentives for promoting cluster/conservation subdivisions, use of conservation easements, the promotion of solar resources, enhancing riparian buffer protections, and the implementation of low impact development measures	Fairfield County	Short	Housing, Land Use, Priority Investment
3.2. Improve development standards for waterfront/lakefront properties that better protect key natural resources and mitigate damage from flooding and other natural hazards	Fairfield County	Short	Land Use, Resilience
3.3. Evaluate and strengthen enforcement of existing floodplain regulations and riparian buffer zones	Fairfield County	Short	Land Use, Resilience
3.4. Develop a countywide trail/greenway plan to include exploring opportunities for expanding access and connections to the Palmetto Trail	Fairfield County, Municipalities, Community Partners	Short	Land Use, Transportation, Resilience
3.5. Work to strengthen countywide stormwater regulations and support increased funding for stormwater infrastructure	Fairfield County, Winnsboro	Medium	Land Use, Community Facilities, Resilience

## Goal # 3: Natural Resources (Cont.)

Protect, preserve, and promote Fairfield County's natural resources

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
3.6. Use the statewide green infrastructure plan and other available resources to identify and preserve priority conservation areas	Fairfield County, SC Forestry Commission	Medium	Land Use, Resilience
3.7. Partner with SCDHEC to identify areas with malfunctioning or aged septic tanks and explore extension of public sewer to these areas and/or identify grant funding for repair and replacement	Fairfield County, DHEC, CMCOG, Winnsboro, Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer System	Long	Community Facilities
3.8. Work with local partners, SCDHEC, and local volunteers to improve water quality in impaired streams and watersheds through enhanced monitoring, citizen science programs, watershed-based planning and promotion of low impact development techniques	Fairfield County, DHEC, CMCOG, Winnsboro, Non-profit Partners	Ongoing	Land Use, Community Facilities, Resilience

# Goal # 4: Cultural Resources

Protect, preserve, and promote Fairfield County's cultural heritage

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
4.1. Promote diversity and inclusion in local history and heritage preservation with a focus on documenting, interpreting, and promoting African American historical sites	Fairfield County, SC Department of Archives and History, Fairfield Historical Museum, Community Partners	Short	Population, Community Facilities
4.2. Conduct a countywide historic site survey to update and expand the list of sites eligible for inclusion in the national register of historic places, to increase the inventory of state historic markers, and to expand historical education and outreach opportunities	Fairfield County, SC Department of Archives and History, Fairfield Historical Museum, Community Partners	Short	Population, Community Facilities
4.3. Market Fairfield County as a regional tourism destination by highlighting the County's unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources and implementing the priority recommendations from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Plan	Fairfield County, Fairfield Chamber, Fairfield Historical Museum, CMCOG, Community Partners	Short	Natural Resources, Economy, Community Facilities
4.4. Plan/host regularly scheduled regional/local events and activities in coordination with the Fairfield Chamber, municipalities, Fairfield Historical Museum, community groups, and local venues such as Carolina Adventure World	Fairfield County, Fairfield Chamber, Fairfield Historical Museum, Community Partners	Ongoing	Population, Community Facilities

## Goal # 5: Resilience

Strengthen Fairfield County's ability to respond to and recover from natural hazards, economic downturns, and other community vulnerabilities

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
5.1. Continue working with Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) to update, adopt, and maintain the Fairfield County portion of the 2021 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan to include reviewing and updating the priority mitigation strategies and identifying funding opportunities for implementation	Fairfield County, CMCOG, Municipalities, Partner Agencies	Ongoing	Natural Resources, Community Facilities
5.2. Coordinate resilience efforts with neighboring jurisdictions and partner agencies/organizations to include developing a contact database of stakeholders and system for outreach and coordination	Fairfield County, CMCOG, Municipalities, Partner Agencies	Ongoing	Natural Resources, Community Facilities
5.3. Work with economic and workforce development partners to strengthen the County's ability to respond to and recover from economic downturns such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the termination of the VC Summer Nuclear project expansion	Fairfield County, CMCOG, Municipalities, Partner Agencies	Ongoing	Natural Resources, Community Facilities, Economy

# Goal # 6: Transportation

Provide a safe, efficient, and accessible multi-modal transportation system

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
6.1. Work with the Town of Winnsboro to develop a Streetscape Project/Master Plan for Downtown Winnsboro	Fairfield County, Town of Winnsboro, SCDOT	Short	Natural Resources, Community Facilities
6.2. Evaluate/prioritize bike and pedestrian improvements within developed areas and coordinate those projects with countywide trail and greenway planning initiatives	Fairfield County, Municipalities, CMCOG, SCDOT	Medium	Natural Resources, Community Facilities, Land Use
6.3. Work with the SCDOT and other partners to implement priority recommendations outlined in the Piedmont Gateway State Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan	Fairfield County, SCDOT	Medium	Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Land Use
6.4. Explore opportunities for implementing landscaped gateways and signage at gateways and interchanges along I-77	Fairfield County	Medium	Community Facilities, Land Use
6.5. Work with SCDOT and other partners to evaluate opportunities for creating a new I-77 interchange to improve access to the Mega-site and downtown Winnsboro	Fairfield County, SCDOT, SC Department of Commerce, CMCOG	Medium	Economy, Community Facilities, Priority Investment, Resilience
6.6. Continue working with the Fairfield Transit and the COMET to identify opportunities for expanding transit service within the County	Fairfield County, Fairfield Transit, the COMET	Medium	Community Facilities, Land Use

## Goal # 6: Transportation (Cont.)

Provide a safe, efficient, and accessible multi-modal transportation system

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
6.7. Work with SCDOT and CMCOG to identify strategies for reducing the high rate of rural pedestrian injuries/fatalities	Fairfield County, CMCOG, SCDOT	Medium	Population, Community Facilities
6.8. Work with partners to implement transportation-related recommendations identified in the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Plan	Fairfield County, CMCOG, SCDOT, Community Partners	Long	Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Land Use
6.9. Support long term initiatives to establish intercity passenger rail service between Columbia and Charlotte	Fairfield County, Municipalities, CMCOG, SCDOT	Long	Community Facilities
6.10. Coordinate with partners to implement priority road and intersection improvement projects identified in the CMCOG Rural Transportation Plan	Fairfield County, Municipalities, CMCOG, SCDOT	Ongoing	Community Facilities

## Goal # 7: Economy

Support a diverse and resilient economy that includes a thriving industrial sector, support for small locally owned businesses, and leveraging of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
7.1. Strengthen the County Economic Development organization through increased marketing, cultivating public-private partnerships, and increasing participation in regional economic development alliances	Fairfield County Economic Development, I-77 Alliance, Central SC Alliance, Fairfield Chamber	Short	Community Facilities, Priority Investment
7.2. Strengthen small business development initiatives with a focus on support for Women and Minority Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) (e.g., establishing a County office of business opportunities, setting procurement goals, etc.)	Fairfield County Economic Development, CMCOG, Fairfield Chamber	Short	Population, Resilience
7.3. Study economic development efforts and site development in other counties to establish best practices for Fairfield County (e.g., CSX Central South Megasite in Kershaw County)	Fairfield County Economic Development	Short	Community Facilities, Priority Investment, Resilience
7.4. Proactively pursue a major employer as an anchor for one of the industrial parks and build a “theme industrial park” around that anchor.	Fairfield County Economic Development, I-77 Alliance, Central SC Alliance	Short	Community Facilities, Priority Investment, Resilience
7.5. Have Economic Development Director give progress reports at least quarterly to County Council at public meetings	Fairfield County	Short	Community Facilities, Priority Investment



## Goal # 7: Economy (Cont.)

Support a diverse and resilient economy that includes a thriving industrial sector, support for small locally owned businesses, and leveraging of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
7.6. Attract and retain business by investing in industrial sites, funding product development, implementing a proactive Business Recruitment and Retention program, and supporting new retail, commercial, and mixed-use developments	Fairfield County Economic Development	Short/ Ongoing	Community Facilities, Resilience
7.7. Support town center redevelopment initiatives in the municipalities	Fairfield County, Municipalities	Short/Ongoing	Land Use, Community Facilities, Priority Investment
7.8. Develop a strong talent pipeline by conducting a feasibility study for a training/career center at the Fairfield Commerce center, promoting the teachers village, and working with partners to develop skills and career pathway programs	Fairfield County Economic Development, Fairfield County School District, Fairfield Chamber, Community Partners	Medium	Community Facilities, Population, Resilience
7.9. Explore the feasibility of hiring a small business coordinator and hospitality and tourism director	Fairfield County	Medium	Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities
7.10. Identify opportunities for promoting the adaptive reuse of vacant commercial space and brownfield sites for small business development needs	Fairfield County, Municipalities, CMCOG	Medium	Natural Resources, Resilience

## Goal # 7: Economy (Cont.)

Support a diverse and resilient economy that includes a thriving industrial sector, support for small locally owned businesses, and leveraging of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
7.11. Market Fairfield County as a regional tourism destination by highlighting the County's unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources and implementing the priority recommendations from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Plan	Fairfield County, CMCOG, Fairfield Chamber	Medium/	Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Land Use
7.12. Continue to track/market available industrial space and develop tracking and marketing system for smaller commercial space and lots in key commercial areas	Fairfield County, Municipalities	Medium/ Ongoing	Land Use
7.13. Promote Fairfield County as a choice business location through marketing and promotion, and investing in amenities and placemaking assets	Fairfield County Economic Development, I-77 Alliance, Central SC Alliance	Ongoing	Community Facilities, Population
7.14. Promote farmers market, local agriculture, and other food related businesses	Fairfield County, Fairfield Chamber, Town of Winnsboro	Ongoing	Natural Resources, Population, Resilience
7.15. Continue to invest in existing industrial sites and ensure adequate infrastructure and resources at these sites for attracting and retaining industry to include the new I-77 Megasite	Fairfield County	Ongoing	Community Facilities

## Goal # 8: Community Facilities

Provide the highest quality of public services and facilities in a transparent, coordinated, and cost-effective manner.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
8.1. Evaluate staffing needs and rates of pay for county employees through a comprehensive classification study to retain employees and be competitive in the marketplace.	Fairfield County	Short	Priority Investment
8.2. Address immediate personnel shortages in EMS, Fire, and Law Enforcement, and other essential service areas.	Fairfield County	Short	Priority Investment
8.3. Support water and sewer infrastructure improvements and coordination between utility providers to include continued support for the Fairfield Joint Water and Sewer System and construction of a new WWTP	Fairfield County, Fairfield JWSS, Winnsboro, Ridgeway, Jenkinsville Water, Mid-County Water, Mitford Rural Water District	Short	Economy, Population, Natural Resources, Land Use, Resilience
8.4. Identify areas for expansion of the public water system to underserved areas in southern Fairfield County to include the Ridgeway area	Fairfield County, Fairfield JWSS, Winnsboro, Ridgeway, Jenkinsville Water, Mid-County Water, Mitford Rural Water District	Short	Economy, Population, Natural Resources, Land Use, Resilience
8.5. Explore opportunities for extend public sewer to underserved areas – primarily to southern Fairfield County between SC Highway 269, SC Highway 34 and US Highway 21	Fairfield County, Fairfield JWSS, Winnsboro, Ridgeway	Short	Economy, Population, Natural Resources, Land Use, Resilience

## Goal # 8: Community Facilities (Cont.)

Provide the highest quality of public services and facilities in a transparent, coordinated, and cost-effective manner.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
8.6. Encourage additional partnerships between local governments, the school district, SC Department of Commerce, and Midlands Technical College to establish workforce development pipelines, skills training, and career pathway programs	Fairfield County, Fairfield County School District, SC Department of Commerce, Midlands Tech	Short	Population, Economy
8.7. Develop a maintenance schedule for parks to ensure the facilities are maintained at a consistent level and the investment in these facilities is extended	Fairfield County	Medium	Population, Priority Investment
8.8. Expand outdoor recreational opportunities at existing sites, such as the Palmetto Trail and Lakes Monticello and Wateree, to appeal to a range of user types.	Fairfield County, Community Partners	Medium	Natural and Cultural Resources, Economy
8.9. Continue to work with the SC Broadband office to encourage the expansion and accessibility of broadband service in underserved areas of the County	Fairfield County, SC Broadband Office	Medium	Population, Economy
8.10. Ensure all county-owned buildings meet or exceed ADA standards	Fairfield County	Medium	Population
8.11. Implement the Strategic Fire Plan and review the plan every five years to ensure community needs are being met.	Fairfield County	Medium	Priority Investment, Resilience
8.12. Develop a community outreach strategy and plan to improve community outreach and education regarding county services, programs, and projects	Fairfield County	Medium	Population

## Goal # 8: Community Facilities (Cont.)

Provide the highest quality of public services and facilities in a transparent, coordinated, and cost-effective manner.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
8.13. Develop a wayfinding program for directional signage to major destinations within the county	Fairfield County	Long	Economy, Natural and Cultural Resources, Transportation
8.14. Explore utilization of public school facilities as shared use recreation opportunities	Fairfield County, Fairfield County School District, Fairfield Forward	Long	Population
8.15. Evaluate the solid waste and recyclable materials program annually to ensure the County is receiving market rate for materials and a cost-effective rate for solid waste disposal	Fairfield County	Ongoing	Priority Investment
8.16. Increase awareness of the many local recreational assets in Fairfield County, through programming, increased access for residents and visitors, improving wayfinding, and marketing initiatives	Fairfield County, Community Partners	Ongoing	Population, Economy, Natural and Cultural Resources
8.17. Promote and market educational achievements of the Fairfield County School District	Fairfield County, Fairfield County School District, Fairfield Chamber	Ongoing	Population, Economy
8.18. Promote inter- and intra-agency cooperation with Fairfield County departments and agencies	Fairfield County	Ongoing	Priority Investment, Resilience

## Goal # 9: Land Use

Provide a framework for the orderly, efficient, and equitable development of land that accommodates future growth while protecting natural resources, enhancing the quality of life, and preserving the rural character of the community.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
9.1. Review and update the zoning ordinance and land development regulations to include but not limited to an evaluation of: the number of districts, the number of allowable uses in each district, the purpose/applicability of overlay districts, buffer yard regulations, incompatible district regulations, riparian/floodplain regulations, open space preservation, and lakefront development standards	Fairfield County, Planning Commission	Short	All
9.2. Support the Towns of Ridgeway, Jenkinsville, and Winnsboro in efforts to revitalize the downtown as hubs for arts, culture, recreation, and tourism, while providing retail and service amenities for residents and visitors	Fairfield County, Municipalities	Short/Ongoing	All
9.3. Review the comprehensive plan every five years and update it every ten years per SC Code 6-29-510 (E)	Fairfield County, Planning Commission	Medium/Long	All
9.4. Explore the possibility of establishing a joint planning commission between Fairfield County, Winnsboro, and Ridgeway	Fairfield County, Municipalities	Long	All
9.5. Utilize the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map when making local zoning and land use changes and encourage public and private agencies organizations to utilize the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for their own planning efforts	Fairfield County, Planning Commission, Municipalities, Community Partners	Ongoing	All
9.6. Coordinate with Winnsboro, Ridgeway, and Jenkinsville on land use planning and development matters to ensure consistency between comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and annexation priorities – schedule regular meetings	Fairfield County, Planning Commission, Municipalities	Ongoing	All

# Goal # 10: Priority Investment

Facilitate a higher level of public investment through internal coordination and intergovernmental cooperation.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
10.1. Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to be coordinated with the annual budget cycle	Fairfield County	Short	Community Facilities
10.2. Facilitate an ongoing, council-led, strategic planning process that evaluates and prioritizes comprehensive plan goals and strategies; and includes development of short-term, measurable, and achievable work programs for the high priority goals and strategies	Fairfield County Council/ Administration	Short	All
10.3. Allocate staffing and financial resources as needed and necessary for successful implementation of the individual work programs identified in strategy 10.2.	Fairfield County Council/ Administration	Medium	Community Facilities, Priority Investment
10.4. Direct public facilities and infrastructure to priority investment areas of the County	Fairfield County	Short/ Ongoing	Community Facilities, Land Use, Resilience
10.5. Seek additional funding opportunities from federal, state and local granting agencies and private sources for needed public infrastructure and facilities needs to include building partnerships and leveraging existing resources to provide matching funds for grant opportunities	Fairfield County, Municipalities, CMCOG, Community Partners	Medium	Community Facilities, Land Use, Resilience
10.6. Evaluate opportunities for coordinated planning such as through a Joint Planning Commission or other framework	Fairfield County, Municipalities	Medium	Community Facilities, Land Use, Resilience



## Goal # 10: Priority Investment (Cont.)

Facilitate a higher level of public investment through internal coordination and intergovernmental cooperation.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	Supporting Elements
10.7. Consider officially designating key priority investment areas based on key projects and recommendations in the priority investment element and other elements of the plan	Fairfield County	Long	Community Facilities, Land Use
10.8. Continue to work with agencies, organizations and local governments in Fairfield County and neighboring and regional counties through partnerships, agreements and cooperation	Fairfield County, Adjacent Local Governments, Community Partners	Ongoing	Community Facilities, Land Use, Resilience