



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MARCH 11, 2024**

Present: Clarence Gilbert, Cornelius Robinson, Dan Ruff, Shirley Greene, Tim Roseborough, Doug Pauley, Peggy Swearingen, (Council Members); Clay Killian (Interim County Administrator); Synithia Williams (Deputy County Administrator); Tommy Morgan (County Attorney) ; Dr. Kimberly Roberts (Clerk to Council)

Absent: None.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date and location of this meeting: The Independent Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield, The Country Chronicle and one hundred forty two other individuals.

Due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the meeting is being live-streamed through the County's YouTube page in order to keep citizens informed.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pauley called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Pauley called for the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilman Ruff to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

4. INVOCATION

Pastor Jimmy Burroughs led the invocation.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting 2/26/24. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

6. PUBLIC PRESENTATION

A. Comprehensive Plan - Gregory Sprouse (Central Midlands Council of Governments - COG)

Mr. Sprouse was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation (**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED**). He said the COG was one of 10 regional planning agencies across the state. They served Richland, Lexington, Fairfield, and Newberry counties. His program area was community development and local planning

efforts. In regards to what a comprehensive plan was and was not, he used the example of building a house. To do so, one had to do a lot of planning and assessing before groundbreaking. The comprehensive plan was that initial planning phase that set the stage for the tools that actually created the construction drawings that the house would be built from. It was not a regulatory document but an overall vision of the goals and the trajectory of growth in coming years. The comprehensive plan came first and set the stage and then they worked towards using the implementation tools. Mrs. Swearingen asked if he had a timeline. He said the implementation chapter outlined all of the high level goals. They had a time frame that they organized into short, medium, long term and ongoing. The short term needed to be done within the next couple of years, medium within 2-5 years and long term was over the next 10 years. Mr. Robinson asked about a previous project with the city regarding dilapidated houses and wanted to know if they could recoup those funds prior to COVID. Mr. Sprouse said they were working on it and the plan included that. Mrs. Greene said people talked to her about the health status of their population and that it did not look good. They needed to make sure they had additional facilities to help care for their population. They did not have a hospital and probably needed more nursing facilities. She appreciated him including that in the plan.

B. FY 2023 Audit – Mauldin & Jenkins

Mr. Grant Davis, partner with Mauldin & Jenkins, referenced the copies Council had in front of them and said he would refer to some of the pages as he went along. He said they issued what they called their Auditor's Discussion Analysis. Its purpose was to give them required information as a part of conducting the audit like: they were independent of the county, they did not have any disagreements with management, and they did not encounter any significant difficulties. It also had other relatively useful information. Pertaining to the financial statement, they issued an unmodified (clean) opinion. Probably the most helpful was the Management's Discussion & Analysis because it gave a comparison of 2022 to 2023 and a narrative discussion as to the causes. As he went along in the audit, he said the general fund reported assets of about \$18 million versus liabilities of just under \$2 million, which gave a fund balance of about \$16 million. It was a decrease of about \$1.9 million from 2022-2023. He thought it was important to note when talking about fund balance, if taken as a proportion of the expenditures for fiscal year 2023, the amount was about \$34.5 million. If that number was divided by 12 and taken as a percentage of the general fund balance it gave them about five months of fund balance on hand as of June 2023. He said if they did not take in another dollar after June 30th, they could operate for five months at spending 2023 levels, which was a pretty healthy place to be. He said the income statement of the general fund said they had about \$34

million in revenues versus about \$34.5 million in expenditures, which again was a decrease of about \$1.9 million. The majority of the decrease was due to transferring monies between other funds of the county. He referred to their report on internal controls and compliance with laws, regulations, grant agreements, etc. It was not designed to offer an opinion but to provide negative assurance – meaning if they noted any instances of non-compliance or internal control deficiencies they were required to communicate them to the County. There were no instances of non-compliance. The third and final report was on the County's compliance and internal controls with spending associated with federal money. If more than \$750,000 of federal monies were spent in a fiscal year, it triggered a compliance audit with federal guidelines. They were required to audit two of the County's major federal programs – the Airport Improvement Program and the ARPA Program. They issued an unmodified or clean opinion with the spending of those programs. Pertaining to the internal control deficiency, the title was the same as was issued last year but was very different than last year's situation with about \$95 million in activities not being recorded. This year the County over recorded a bit specifically in the Fairfield Facilities Corporation (FFC) fund – he felt out of an overabundance of caution. The FFC issued bonds in 2013 that were refunded by 2021 bonds. The proceeds of the 2021 bonds were going to be used to make the debt service payments on the old bonds. Once that money was deposited in an escrow account with a trustee, it no longer belonged to the County - that cash was set aside to make debt service payments on those old bonds until they were callable or until they matured. The County recorded the proceeds of those of those cash accounts that year and they had to take them off because it was no longer debt of the county. He thought there was a significant improvement in timeliness – they beat the extension timeframe given by the state and they beat the report date from last year – June 28th. They tried to reword the verbiage in the control deficiency to reflect the improvements. Mr. Ruff asked if they would be on time for the next audit and he said last year's audit was a big effort for the county to record all of the adjustments (nearly \$100 million) and prepare the required financial closeout in order to begin the next audit. They started their audit field work at the beginning of November and he did not see anything wrong with that timeframe going forward but would be willing to start sooner if the county was ready. Mrs. Greene asked for clarification about the bonds and wanted to know if that was the money given by Dominion. He said the Facilities Corporation issued bonds in series 2021. A portion of the monies used to refund those bonds was settlement money – a county contribution to get to the total. The principal amount of the 2013 bonds that were outstanding were greater than what was issued with the 2021 bond so the county had to put in extra money to affect the refunding. Often times the old

refunded bonds had a call date and they could not be paid off until that call date. Sometimes the call date was their final maturity date or sooner. It protected the bond investors to ensure they received the money they anticipated on interest. The refunded 2013 A and B bonds had a call date that had not been met yet. When the refunding transaction took place, the county was required to deposit the proceeds needed to pay the principal in interest until the call date. Because the county did not show a liability anymore for the 13 A and B bonds, it did not get the benefit of recording the cash set aside to pay it. The bond trustee, Regions Bank, made all of the principal interest payments – the county did not have to do anything or pay any additional monies. Mr. Ruff asked about the tax area of his firm and if they would be working towards an appeal on behalf of the county in hopes of recovering about \$400,000. Mr. Killian said he would talk about that under his report. Mr. Davis said they had an in-house tax counsel with a very high success rate and they felt pretty comfortable about being able to recoup at least \$400,000.

- 7. 1st PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION:** All public comments made during this session must pertain to items on the agenda for which no Public Hearing is scheduled. Each speaker is allocated three (3) minutes for comment. The total time allocated for the public comment portion of the meeting is thirty (30) minutes. Those wishing to make public comment must sign to do so prior to the Council Chair calling the meeting to order. The Clerk to Council will make a public comment sign-up sheet available at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the meeting.
- Don Goldbach
 - Ann Corrao
 - Randy Bright

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

9. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND ORDERS

A. First Reading (By Title Only) Ordinance No. 833: An Ordinance of Adopting the Comprehensive Plan for Fairfield County, South Carolina 2024-2034 and Other Matters Related Thereto. Motion made by Councilman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Ruff to approve. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

10. BOARD AND COMMISSION MINUTES (For information only)

None.

11. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

None

12. OLD BUSINESS

A. Short Term Rental Update

Mrs. Williams said the members of the committee approved some recommendations to draft a short term rental ordinance in early January. They since lost the Community Development Director and were accepting applications and conducting interviews. Their recommendation was to wait until the position was filled in order to have someone to lead the implementation of the ordinance. They would continue to work on the draft and would bring it to full Council once the position was filled. Mr. Killian said they conducted one interview and had a couple more and were fairly certain they would fill the position quickly.

13. NEW BUSINESS

None.

14. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Sheriff's Office – New Car Purchase – ACTION ITEM

Mr. Killian said the Sheriff's Office had a vehicle totaled and they received an insurance settlement of just under \$47,000 for replacement. It was right at the amount to replace the vehicle but to outfit the vehicle would cost an additional \$8,200. Their recommendation was to award the purchase of the vehicle and he would work with the Sheriff's Office for the additional funds. They had a contingency fund to assist if needed. Motion made by Councilman Gilbert, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

B. Mauldin & Jenkins Proposal Regarding IRS Appeals – ACTION ITEM

Mr. Killian said Mr. Davis mentioned earlier that they had a tax division that did nothing but tax related work. They had become quite proficient with appeals particularly with the Affordable Care Act. Council had a proposal in front of them, not to exceed \$40,000, to engage them to appeal on the County's behalf. They could not make any guarantees but were hopeful to recoup at least \$400,000. He said in addition, they received an extension to file the ACA reports to early May – they were originally due at the end of the month. They were cleaning up personnel records, which probably created some confusion from the beginning and they were getting new access to the IRS because they had a new finance director. They should be able to get the reports done for the current year on time. Motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilwoman Greene to approve. ***The motion carried 7-0.***

C. Courthouse Update

Mr. Killian said they were in the next phase of the Courthouse renovations. As a result, several offices would have to be relocated. The Probate Court office would move to 20 Bratton Street, the Auditor, Treasurer, and Tax Collector would move to 117 South Congress Street (old Planning & Zoning office) and the Tax Assessor would move to the old Behavioral Health building at 200 Calhoun Street. The Courthouse would be closed on Good Friday and the following week. He asked for patience during the transition and said information regarding the moves had been sent out.

Mrs. Swearingen asked if the audit would be posted online and he said yes. She asked if the restricted funds were included in the \$16 million and he said he was not sure but would check with Mr. Davis. She asked if the \$1.4 million paid in penalties to the IRS was included and he said it was charged to fiscal year 2023.

15. CLERK TO COUNCIL'S REPORT

16. COUNTY COUNCIL TIME

Mr. Ruff announced the passing of former Councilwoman Bertha Goins' husband, James. He asked for prayer for the family.

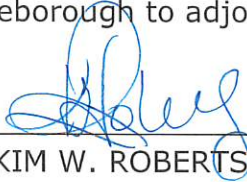
Mrs. Greene thanked those involved in the short term rental discussions. They would work on getting staff before they moved forward on the ordinance. She said she, Mr. Roseborough and Mrs. Williams attended the 2024 Rural Summit, which was a group of small counties that met to discuss progression and programs in their communities. They talked about walking communities, transportation, and main street innovations. Some of the challenges revolved around staffing (police, fire and EMS), which were issues around the nation as well as salaries, competitiveness and economic revitalization. The state talked about energy resilience and trying to get national funding in South Carolina via Nexus and to find usage for gas in the future. The Public Service committee would soon be hearing requests from Dominion Energy for upgrades and Duke Energy for rate increases. Some of the rate increases were 14%, which were high especially for senior citizens and low income citizens. The Summit culminated with Governor McMaster presenting the Order of the Palmetto Award to Maceo Nance, the senior advisor to the Secretary of the South Carolina Department of Commerce. Mr. Nance championed economic development throughout the state for many years. He trained a lot of staff, including Council members, on the processes and procedures necessary in economic development. She thought the conference was beneficial for staff and the county.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (The following statement is provided in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act: Subsequent to Executive Session, Council may take action on matters discussed in Executive Session.)

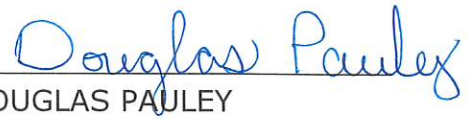
None

18. ADJOURN

At 7:00pm, motion made by Councilman Ruff, seconded by Councilman Roseborough to adjourn. ***The motion carried 7-0.***



KIM W. ROBERTS, Ed. D.
CLERK TO COUNCIL



DOUGLAS PAULEY
CHAIRMAN



Fairfield County Comprehensive Plan

Fairfield County Council
March 11, 2024

Mission Statement

Provide the highest quality of planning, technical assistance and services to local governments and citizens in the Central Midlands Region

Guiding Principles

- Provide a regional forum where any local government can have issues heard and needs addressed
- Advocate on behalf of regional governments, business, and citizens
- Provide planning and technical assistance with the future needs of the region in mind



An Overview of Comprehensive Planning

Community Development	Economic Development	Workforce Development	Aging Services	Transportation	Planning & Local Gov Assistance
<p>CDBG Needs Assessments</p> <p>CDBG Project Development</p> <p>Grant Writing/Grant Administration</p> <p>Community Development Corporation</p> <p>Food Systems/Food Access and Security</p>	<p>EDA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)</p> <p>Stakeholder Coordination</p> <p>Economic Indicators Data Collection and Analysis</p> <p>Small, Women, and Minority Business Enterprise Support</p>	<p>Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA)</p> <p>Job Placement Services</p> <p>Business Services</p>	<p>Aging Services - Older Americans Act</p> <p>Senior Meal Programs</p> <p>Long Term Care Ombudsman Program</p> <p>Information Referral and Assistance</p> <p>Family Caregiver Program</p>	<p>Long Range Transportation Planning</p> <p>Bike and Pedestrian Planning</p> <p>Congestion Management Planning</p> <p>Human Service Coordination</p>	<p>Demographic Research/Data Collection and Analysis</p> <p>Comprehensive Plans/Land Development Regulations</p> <p>Water Resource Planning and Coordination</p> <p>Military - Community Compatible Land Use Coordination</p> <p>Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning</p>

Comprehensive Planning Requirements

Planning Process and Elements (S.C. Code § 6-29-510)

- Planning Commission – Systematic Preparation and Continual Re-evaluation (5 Year Review – 10 Year Update)
- Consideration of Adjacent Jurisdictions and Regional Plans/Issues
- Planning Process
 - Existing Conditions
 - Statement of Needs and Goals
 - Implementation Strategies with Time Frames
- Ten (10) Required Elements

Adoption Process (S.C. Code § 6-29-530)

- Recommendation by Resolution of the Planning Commission
- Public Hearing With 30 Day Notice
- Adoption by Ordinance

Planning Commission Review of Proposals for Compatibility with Plan (S.C. Code § 6-29-540)

TEN ELEMENTS

Population • Housing
Economy • Natural Resources • Cultural Resources
Community Facilities • Transportation • Land Use
Priority Investment • Resiliency

Comprehensive Planning Requirements

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	Natural hazard vulnerability; public health, safety, and welfare; resilient planning & development; coordination

An Overview of Comprehensive Planning

Plan Organization

Introduction

- Plan Requirements, Organization, Adoption Process
- Vision and Value Statement
- Summary of Goals

Elements

- Chapter for Each Required Element
- Existing Conditions Inventory (Maps, Tables, Narrative)
- Summary of Findings (Most Chapters)
- Goals and Strategies

Implementation Plan

- Goals and Strategies
- Timeframes
- Responsibility
- Supporting Elements

Fairfield County Council – March 11, 2024

Population Change

Fairfield County had a modest but continuous population decline the past 10 years. According to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) five year estimates, it ranked 238 of 45 in total population, and is one of the least populated counties in the State, with an estimated 22,526 residents. The number is similar to other 1,000 people less than the 2010 official Census population count of 23,995.

Table 2.1 - Population estimates for Fairfield County

Estimate	2020 ACS 20,526	2010 ACS 21,188	1990 ACS 24,040
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020) 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. Where are the existing and potential population centers? How are they changing? The following table breaks down the census tracts defined by the US Census Bureau to measure population at the sub-county level. Using this determination, Fairfield County is divided into four sub-divisions: Dominick-Salem Crossroads, Ridgeview, Winstonsalem and Winstonsalem South. Map 2.1 shows the Fairfield County CDDs, 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

County Subdivision	2020 ACS	2010 ACS	Percent Change 2010 to 2020
Winstonsalem	8,124	4,511	-43.9%
Winstonsalem South	8,962	11,973	-24.9%
Ridgeview	4,249	3,429	+21.4%
Dominick - Salem Crossroads	1,200	2,148	-44.1%
Total	22,535	24,061	-6.4%

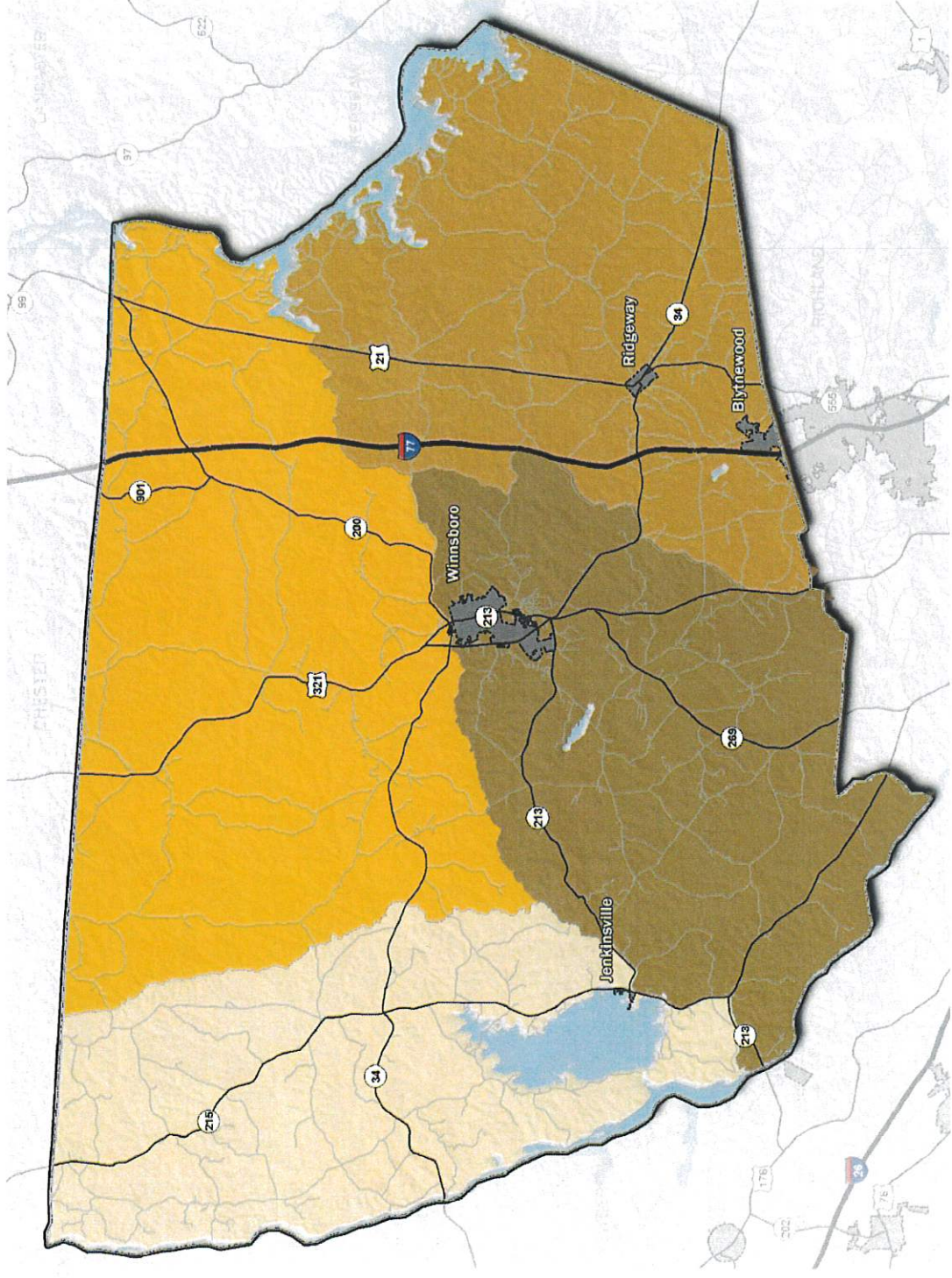
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020) American Community Survey five year estimates

Summary of Observations

- Fairfield County has an estimated 11,568 total housing units, according to 2020 Census ACS 5-year estimates.
- Average household size for owner-occupied housing stock in Fairfield County is 2.27 persons, which is slightly higher than the national average of 2.25.
- Detached single-family housing comprises 67.8 percent of all housing units.
- In 2020, mobile homes constituted an estimated 33.7 percent of housing units in Fairfield County, which is significantly higher than other states (California (12.8 percent) and national (6 percent) rates).
- Of the estimated 11,568 housing stock, 22.1 percent is vacant.
- 79.3 percent of occupied housing units are owner-occupied which is higher than the national average of 65.5 percent.
- Over 50 percent of housing units were built before the year 1950.
- Median home value is \$195,000 which is 57 percent lower than the South Carolina median.
- Homeownership rates in Fairfield County is 57.8, 27.6 percent lower than the state median (85.8).
- 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.
- Around 25 percent of housing units with a mortgage have an estimated 25 percent cost-burdened population.
- At around 34 percent, owner-occupied housing units without a mortgage are cost-burdened at a lower rate than mortgage 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. Assess the countryside housing study zones complete and incorporate by reference into the Comprehensive Plan.
 - 2.2. Work with the Town of Winstonsalem 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 rehab/rehabilitation program to encourage homeowners with external external issues such as roof, porches, siding, etc.



Fairfield County, SC

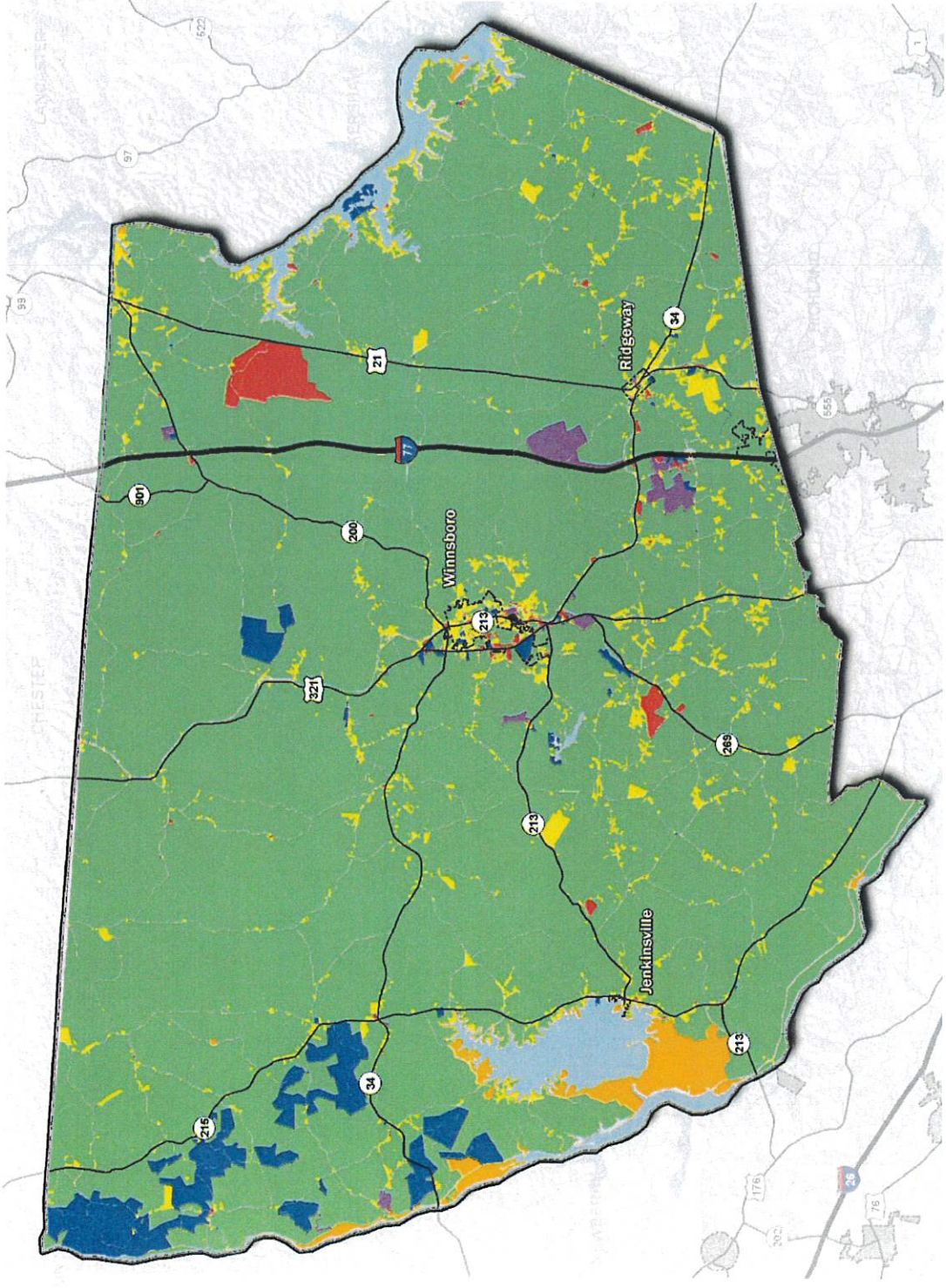
2020 Population by Census County Division

- Monticello-Salem Crossroads (2,253)
- Winnsboro North (3,324)
- Ridgeway (6,849)
- Winnsboro South (9,980)



Fairfield County, SC Existing Land Use

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Rural/Undeveloped
- Dominion Energy/Duke Energy
- Water
- County Boundary



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, CIMCOG, 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 Measites 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

An Overview of Comprehensive Planning

Key Themes/Recommendations

- Support for Existing and Future Population
- Countywide Housing Study
- Economic Development Strategic Plan/Program of Work
- Outdoor Recreation and Tourism
- Small Business Development
- Water and Sewer Improvements
- Zoning and Land Development Ordinance Update
- Town Center Revitalization
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Capital Improvement Planning

Fairfield County Council – March 11, 2024



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Questions **Comments**

Fairfield County Council
March 11, 2024