



# ONEPICKENS COUNTY

A Comprehensive Plan For OUR Future

**ADOPTED MAY 17, 2022**



**POND**





# ONEPICKENS COUNTY

A Comprehensive Plan For OUR Future

**ADOPTED MAY 17, 2022**



## PICKENS COUNTY

222 McDaniel Avenue  
Pickens County, South Carolina  
29671

PREPARED BY



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a result of the community's collaborative efforts to envision the future of Pickens County including contributions from community members, the Advisory Committee, elected officials, County staff, and the planning team:

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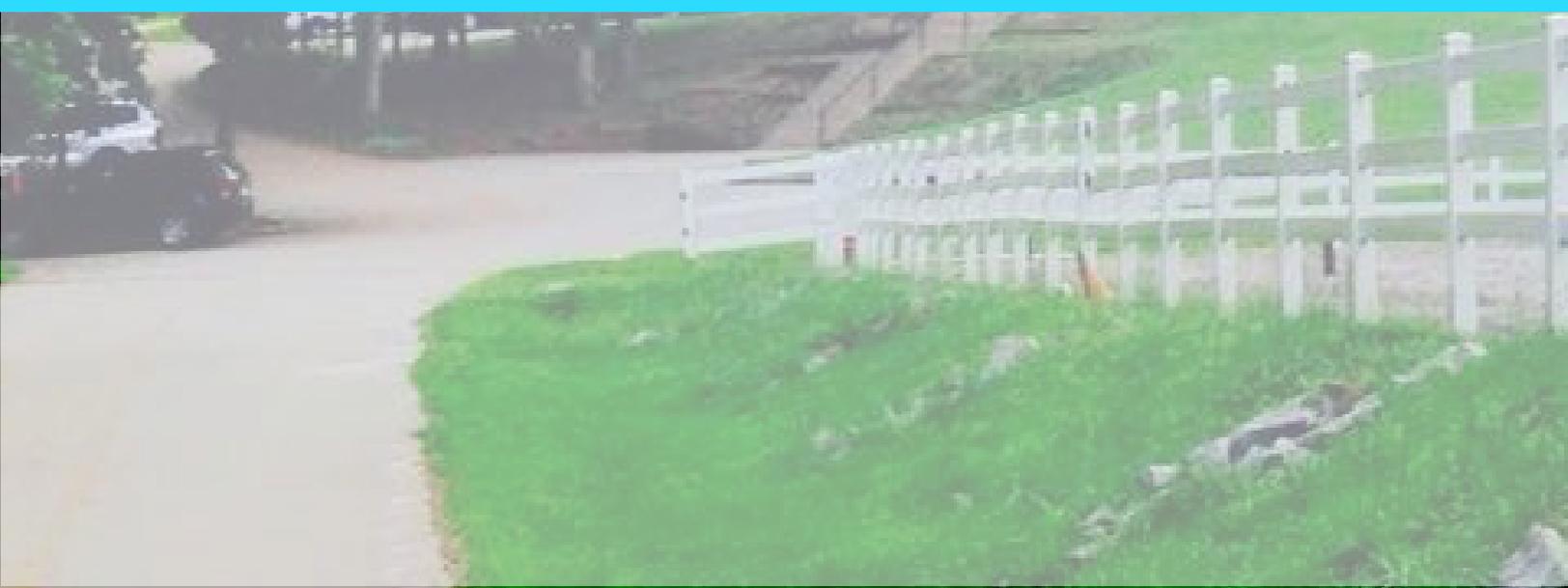
Thanks to all who contributed to this plan document in ways large and small by participating in meetings, surveys, and by providing invaluable feedback to the planning team in every capacity.

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A. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





1

# INTRODUCTION



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Pickens County is nestled between Lakes Keowee and Jocassee to the west, the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the north, and the growing urban area of Greenville to the southeast. The county includes seven municipalities, and is broadly rural, with more suburban and town center areas in the south and central parts of the county, with rural and conservation areas to the north. Pickens County is proud to host several natural amenities, including the aforementioned lakes, Table Rock State Park, and the highest point in South Carolina, Sassafras Mountain.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

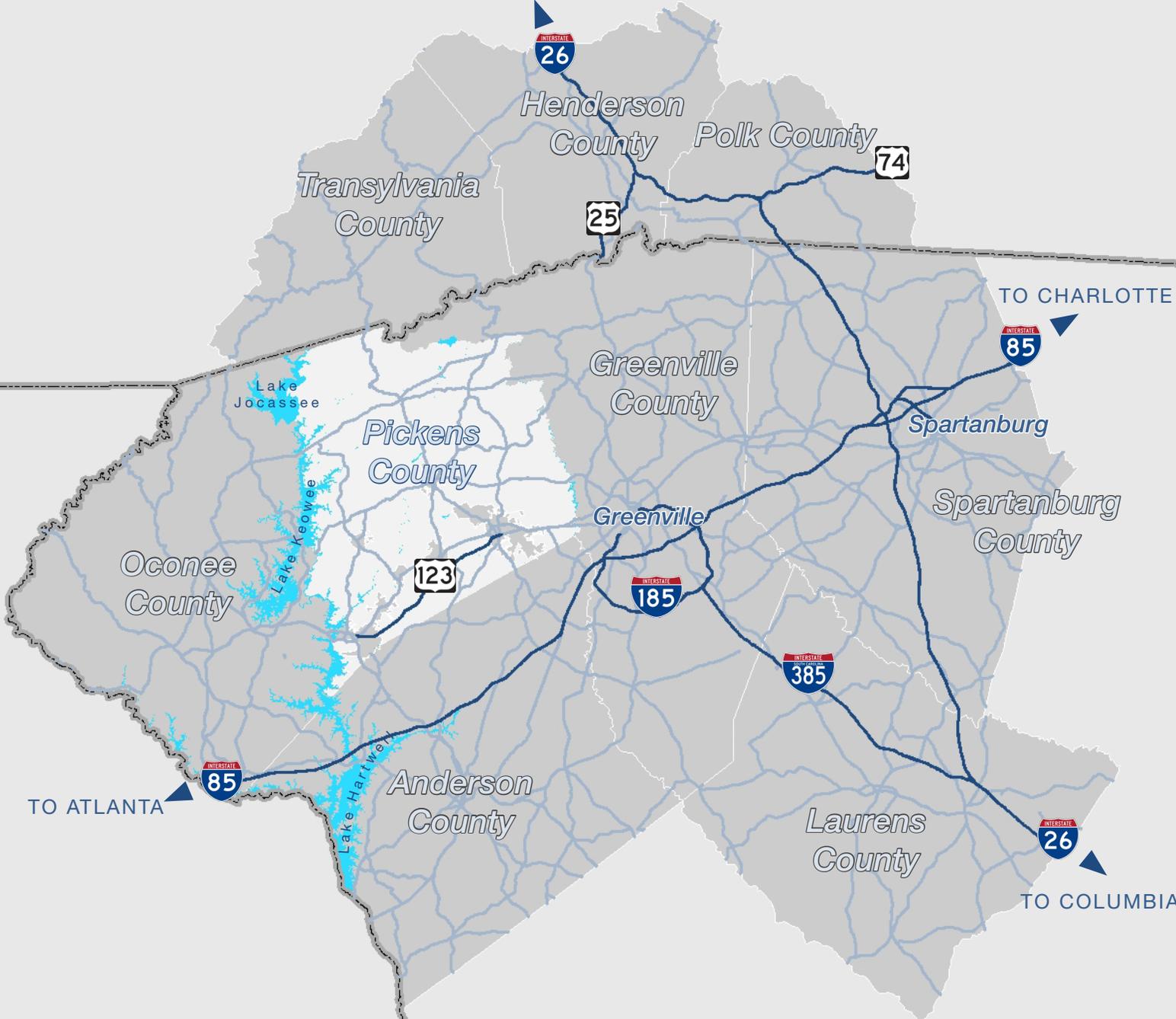
The 1994 South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act authorizes local governments to prepare and maintain comprehensive plans. According to the act and a later amendment in 2007, the following elements must be included in a comprehensive plan:

- Population,
- Housing,
- Land Use,
- Economic Development,
- Transportation,
- Community Facilities,
- Cultural Resources, and
- Priority Investment.

Each element is required to express existing conditions, show needs and goals in the area, and set out implementation strategies with timeframes. These plans are expected to be revisited every five years and more thoroughly updated every ten years. This document serves as a substantial update to the 2016 update of the Pickens County Comprehensive Plan.

NORTH CAROLINA

TO ASHEVILLE



TO CHARLOTTE

TO ATLANTA

TO COLUMBIA

GEORGIA

SOUTH CAROLINA

# PLANNING PROCESS

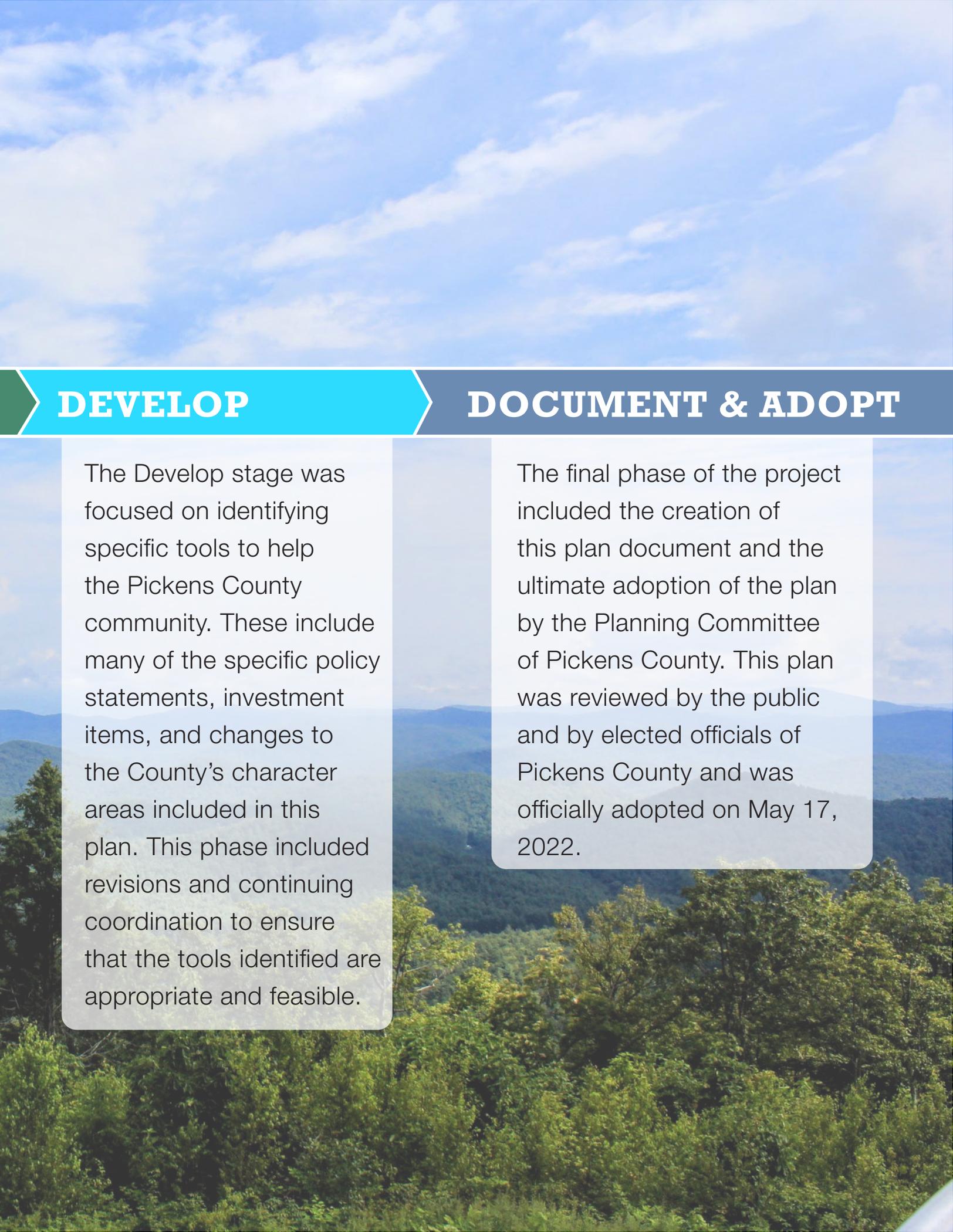
This comprehensive plan has been created based on a combination of factual research and community engagement. This provides the plan a robust understanding of the needs in the community, the goals the community has for the future, and the tools available to help reach towards those goals. In order to identify these aspects, the planning process has been built around a five-step process.

## RESEARCH

Data was collected to better understand the Pickens County community – including the population, economic environment, natural features, and the institutions that call it home. This phase also included research into the County's current policies and goals from the previous comprehensive plan and other planning efforts.

## VISION

Through community engagement including both a dedicated advisory committee and broad public input opportunities, the planning team crafted a vision for the Pickens County community. This vision is documented through the needs, opportunities, and goals in this plan.



## DEVELOP

The Develop stage was focused on identifying specific tools to help the Pickens County community. These include many of the specific policy statements, investment items, and changes to the County's character areas included in this plan. This phase included revisions and continuing coordination to ensure that the tools identified are appropriate and feasible.

## DOCUMENT & ADOPT

The final phase of the project included the creation of this plan document and the ultimate adoption of the plan by the Planning Committee of Pickens County. This plan was reviewed by the public and by elected officials of Pickens County and was officially adopted on May 17, 2022.





# 2

## PLANNING PROCESS



## 2. PLANNING PROCESS

The concerns and goals of the Pickens County community are at the center of this Pickens County Comprehensive Plan. As such, there have been extensive efforts to listen to a wide range of community members. This chapter details the specific efforts made to engage the community and presents the feedback received. This feedback is incorporated in many of the decisions made and informs the planning direction taken in later sections.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

An Advisory Committee was assembled to provide guidance on the Comprehensive Planning process. This Committee was formed to represent a broad selection of interests throughout Pickens County including representatives from the organizations shown on the facing page.

These representatives were invited to an initial meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2020 at the Hampton Memorial Library in Easley. Members of the Pickens County Planning Commission were also invited to the meeting to engage with the planning process. A full list of invitees and attendees is included in the Community Engagement Appendix, **Appendix A**.

Once the group had introduced themselves, the meeting was used initially to present a broad selection of research into current conditions within and around Pickens County. These same datasets and maps are presented in this plan as part of the Plan Elements chapter. This overview helped to establish a more common understanding of the current needs and conditions throughout the county, which created a strong basis for the next activity.

Members of the Committee were asked to participate in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) activity. Each attendee was asked, in turn, to provide one point in one of those categories, and then those with a second point were also invited to add it to the list in turn.



## STRENGTHS

- Existing plans, data, and planning resources
- Quality of life/natural resources
- Post-secondary education system
- Central location (access to Atlanta, Charlotte, etc. and natural resources)
- Historic heart of SC Upstate
- People and service organizations
- Career and Technology Center and relationships with business community
- Great K-12 system
- Affordability (taxes, etc.)
- Friendly Community
- Family Structure



## WEAKNESSES

- Lack of 4-lane access to I-85
- Lack of access to affordable childcare
- Affordable housing
- Inadequate roadways in/out of Pickens (especially to/from Greenville)
- Public transportation (especially with respect to public health)
- Crime (particularly drug related)
- Access to mental health services
- Early childhood opportunities
- Utility costs/controls/power
- Losing industrial/economic sites
- Coordination of services

# SWOT

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Local food sources
- Leverage unique identity
- learn from neighbor's mistakes
- Leverage education (K-12 + Secondary)
- More job opportunities
- More short-term housing
- Fare free electric fleet (CATS) as model

## THREATS

- Protection through regulation of lake
- Lack of strong stormwater regulation/septic
- Losing identity
- Loss of large preserved parcels
- Changing attitudes (Who are we?)
- Crime (particularly drug related)
- Cooperation towards common goals between service providers; need more regional or county level approach
- Resistance to tools to manage growth



### Organizations & Agencies Represented by the Advisory Committee



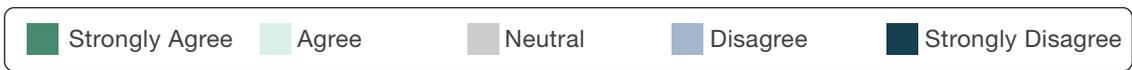
## Advisory Committee Meeting #1 (Cont'd)

At the end of the SWOT activity, the Committee was invited to review the County’s Policy statements from the previous Comprehensive Plan. Policies were made available on boards around the room and attendees used dots placed on the boards to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement. As shown, broad agreement was found on all policy statements, with very few disagreements.

Because of this, most of these policy statements have been maintained in this Comprehensive Plan. Some additions and modifications have been made to improve consistency with County goals and current practices, or based on other feedback received from the Pickens County community.

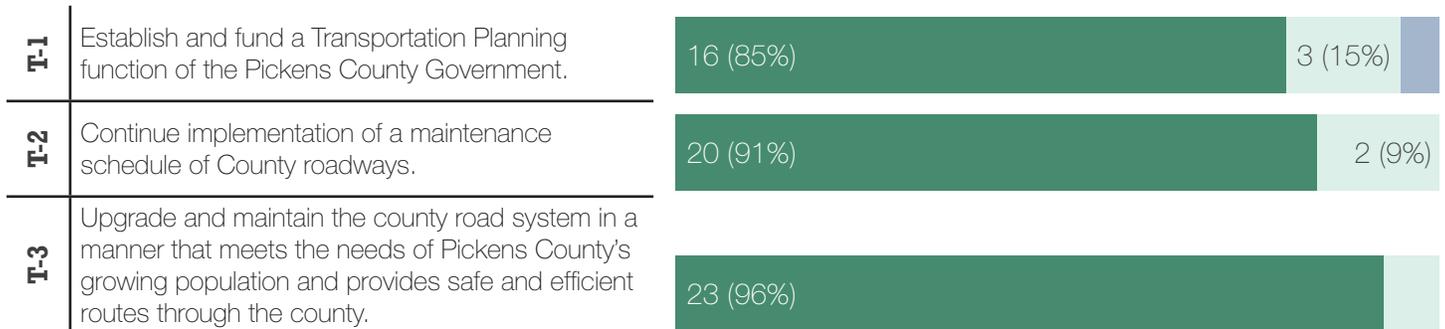
### NR - Natural Resource Policies

<b>NR-1</b>	Maintain water quality and air quality a required by DHEC and EPA.	23 (96%)
<b>NR-2</b>	Cooperate with other agencies that protect critical areas.	21 (84%) 4 (16%)
<b>NR-3</b>	Encourage the preservation of wildlife habitat, scenic views and vistas, and rural agricultural land and the development of local nature-based businesses and tourism.	26 (93%)
<b>NR-4</b>	Support agencies and organizations that actively protect and promote natural resources of Pickens County.	23 (88%)

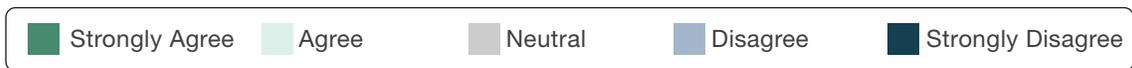
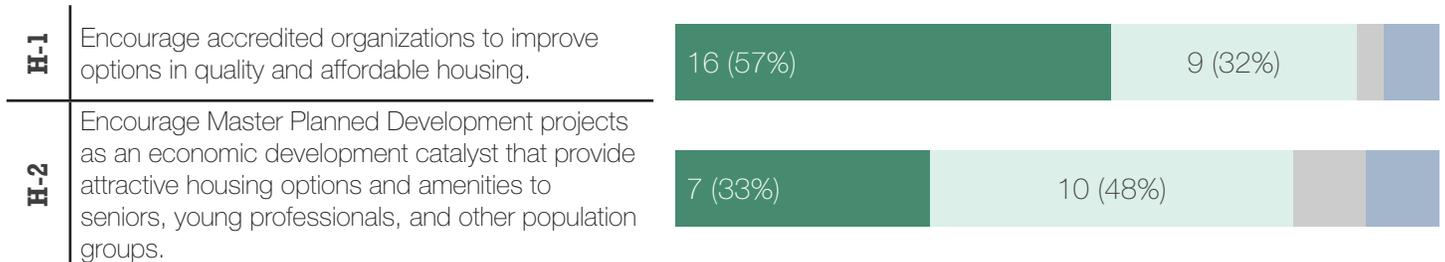




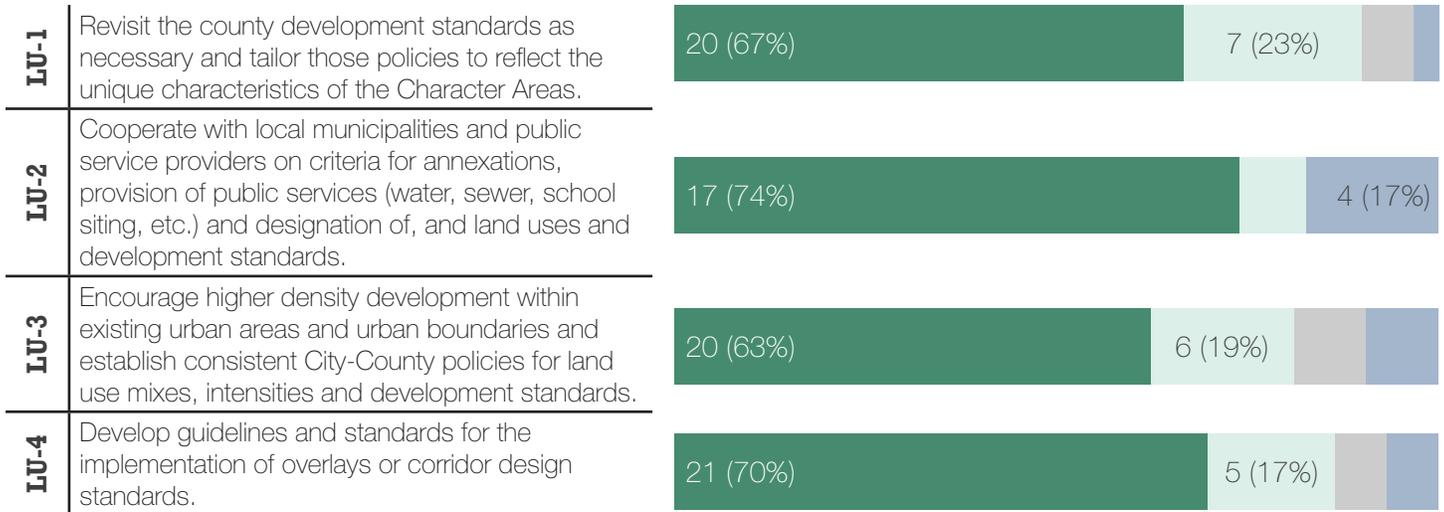
## T - Transportation Policies



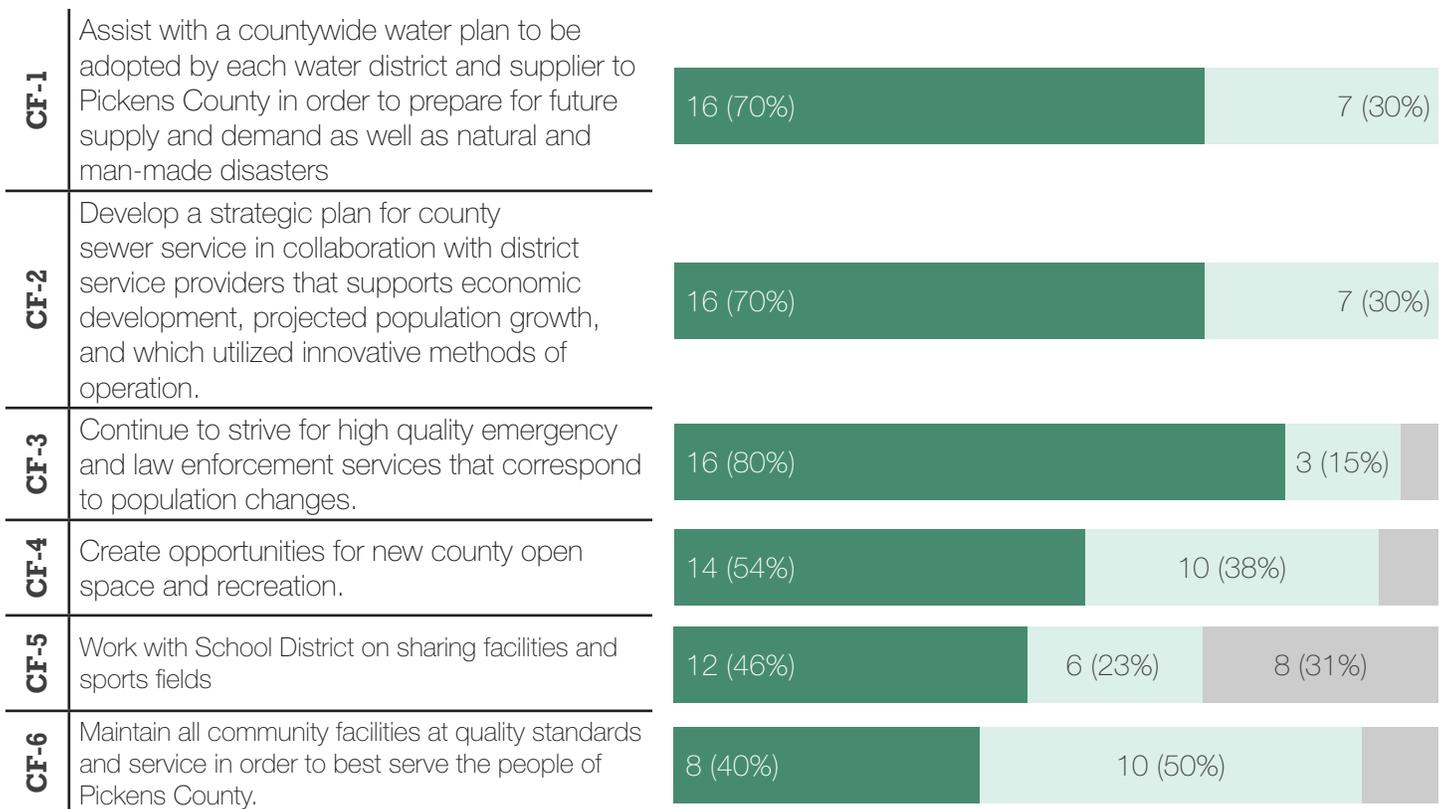
## H - Housing Policies



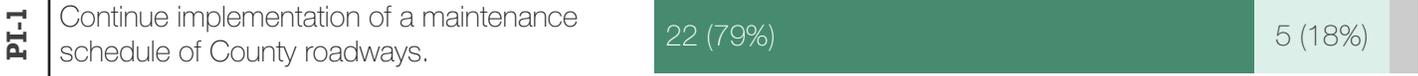
### LU - Land Use Policies



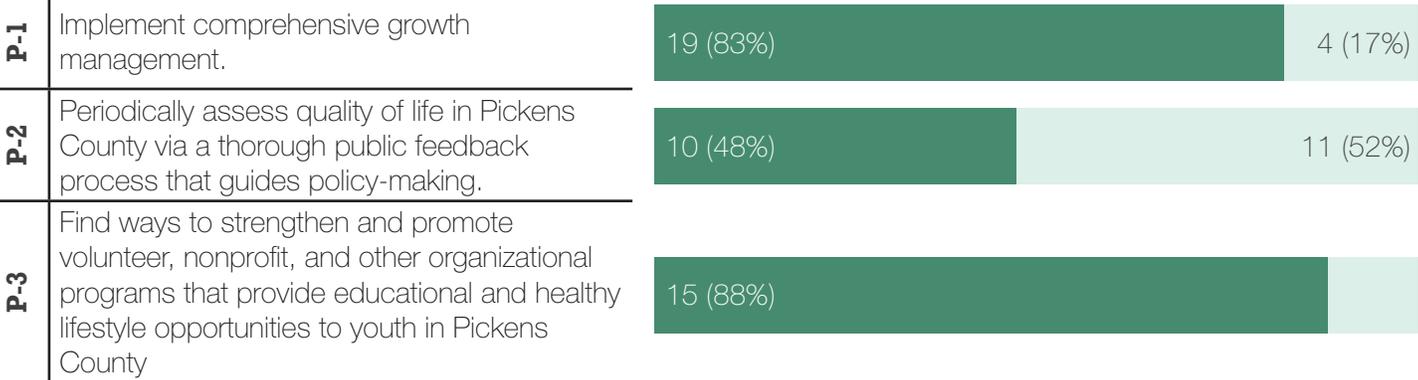
### CF - Community Facilities Policies



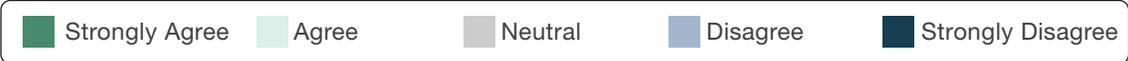
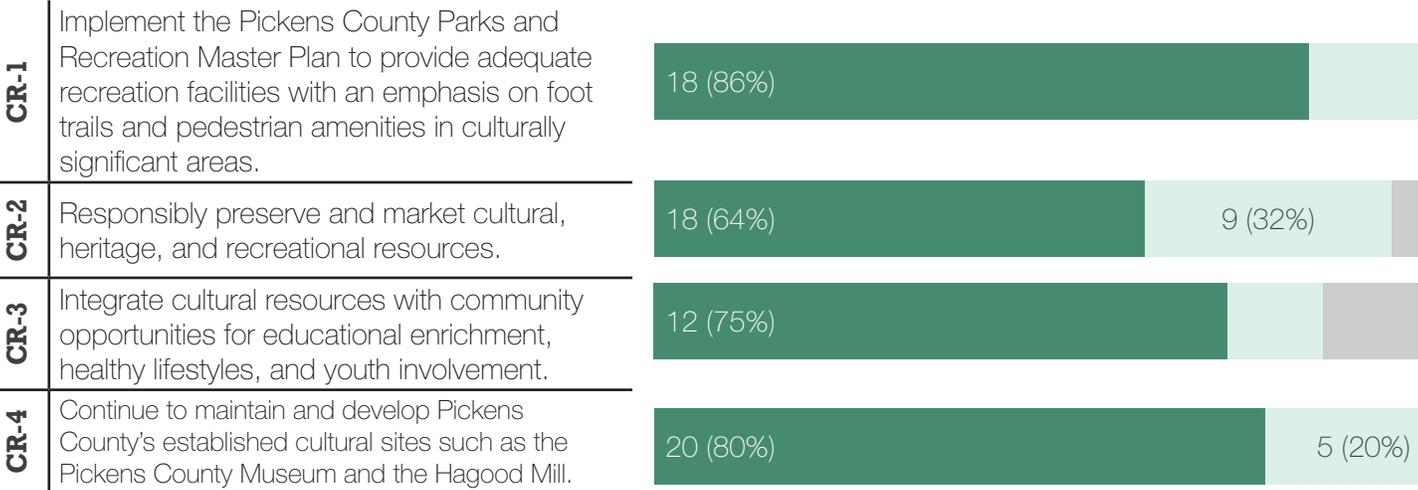
PI - Priority Investments Policies



P - Population Policies



CR - Cultural Resources Policies



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ROUND #1

A round of broad community engagement was planned for later in year 2020. Due to the ongoing public health crisis, activities were conducted primarily online. From this point on, the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated substantial changes to the originally anticipated processes and schedule of the plan, and required a greater emphasis on online interactions. During the month of December, activities were also made available in a room in the County offices in Pickens. Activities were available in the FREE room from 8am to 5pm and was attended by planning staff from 2pm to 4pm on Tuesdays and

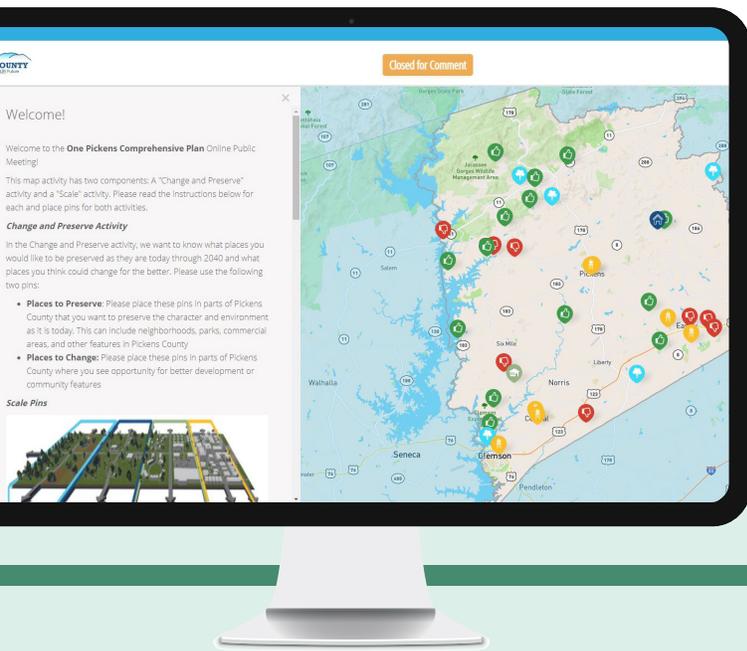
Thursdays through the month of December 2020. The online and FREE room activities were designed to mimic each other and included a map activity and a survey.

## Map Activity

Participants were presented with a map and asked to place certain indicators on it to voice their vision for varying areas of the county. There were two sets of indicators: Change and Preserve; and Scale.

## Change & Preserve Activity

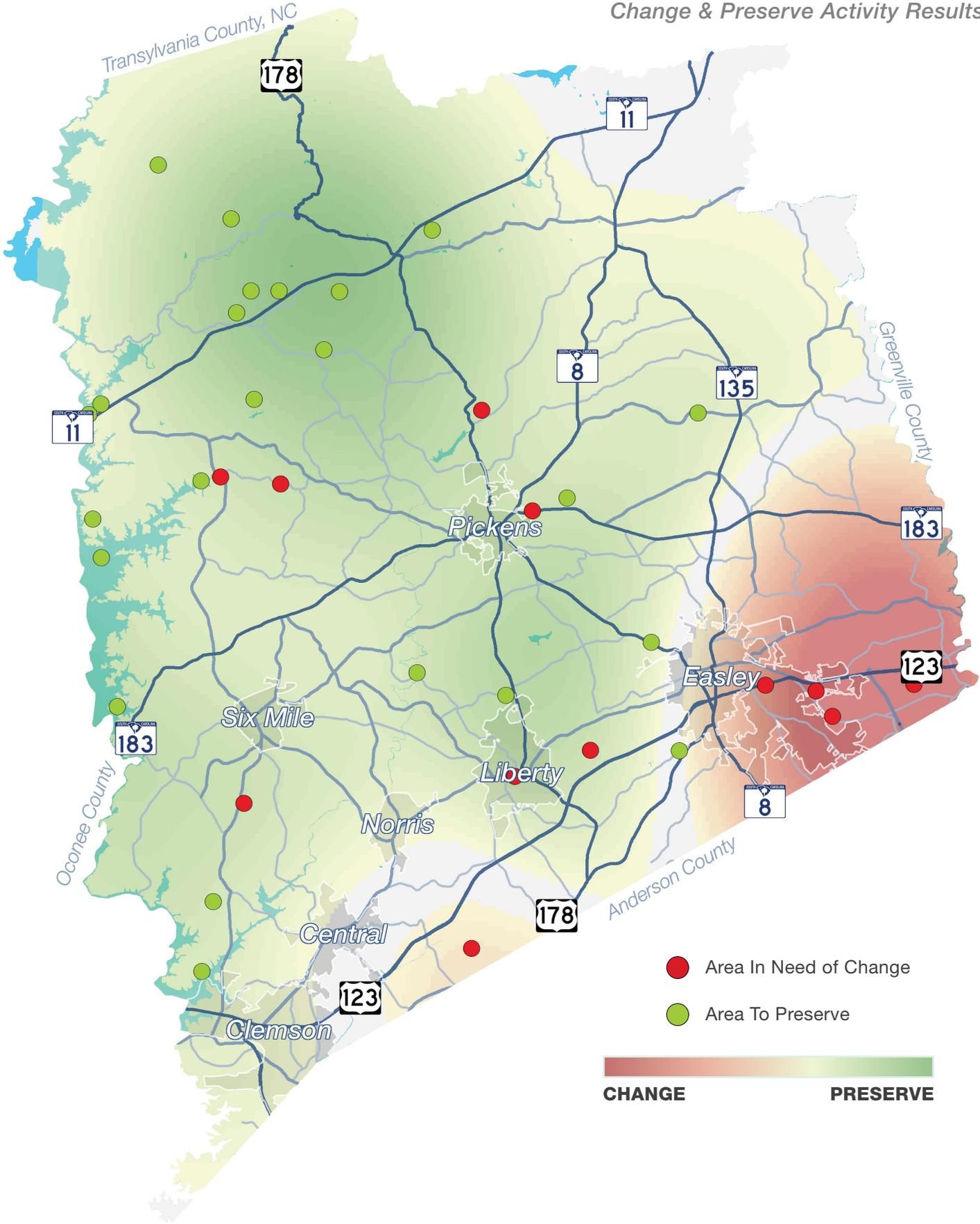
Change and Preserve included two pins. One was used to indicate areas that participants wanted to see preserved in the future. The other was used to indicate where participants saw opportunity for better development or community features. In the online activities, participants could also “like” or “dislike” markers placed by earlier participants. The map below shows the pins placed and a heatmap weighted by the likes added to those pins. Participants suggested a broad range of areas that should be preserved, with the most consistent preservation markers placed in the north and west parts of the County, in the scenic protected areas north of SC 11, and along Lakes Keowee and Jocasee. Occasional areas were indicated for change throughout the county, with the most concentration along the US 123 corridor in and to the east of Easley.



## PROJECT WEBSITE

To supplement the live engagement events, the planning team created a virtual engagement hub using Social Pinpoint to further engage with the community via interactive maps and surveys. This website also hosted videos of meetings for those unable to attend scheduled events.

Change & Preserve Activity Results

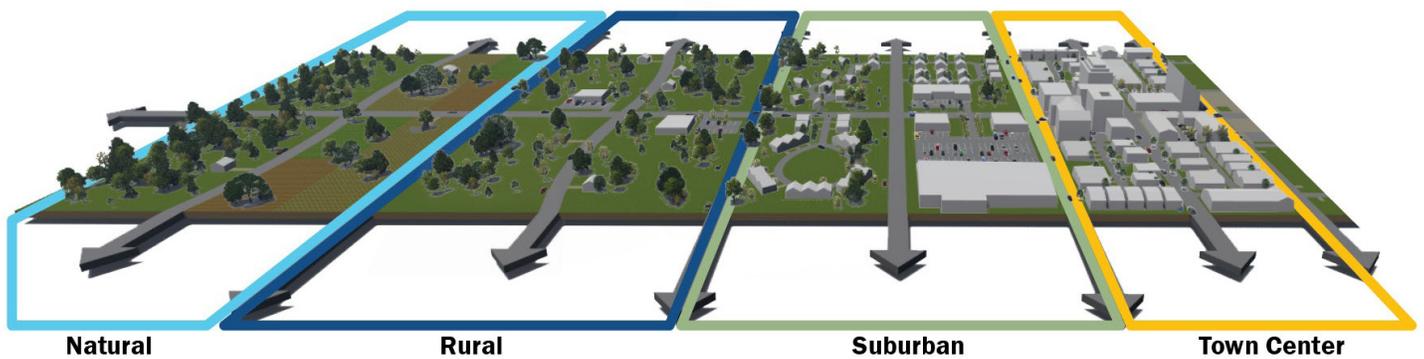


### Scale Activity

In the scale activity, participants could place markers to indicate the level of intensity of development they thought was appropriate for different areas in Pickens County. Intensities included Natural, Rural, Suburban, and Town Center, visualized below.

This map shows the results of this activity. The most intense levels of development were indicated inside

of the existing town centers of Central, Clemson, Easley, and Pickens, which already have more urban character than other areas. The northern parts of the county were highlighted as areas that should remain natural or rural, with some other locations also indicated as natural or rural outside of the existing cities and towns.



**Natural**

Areas that should be left undeveloped, or left to agriculture and very low-density housing and similar uses through the year 2040.

**Rural**

Areas that should be sparsely developed through the year 2040.

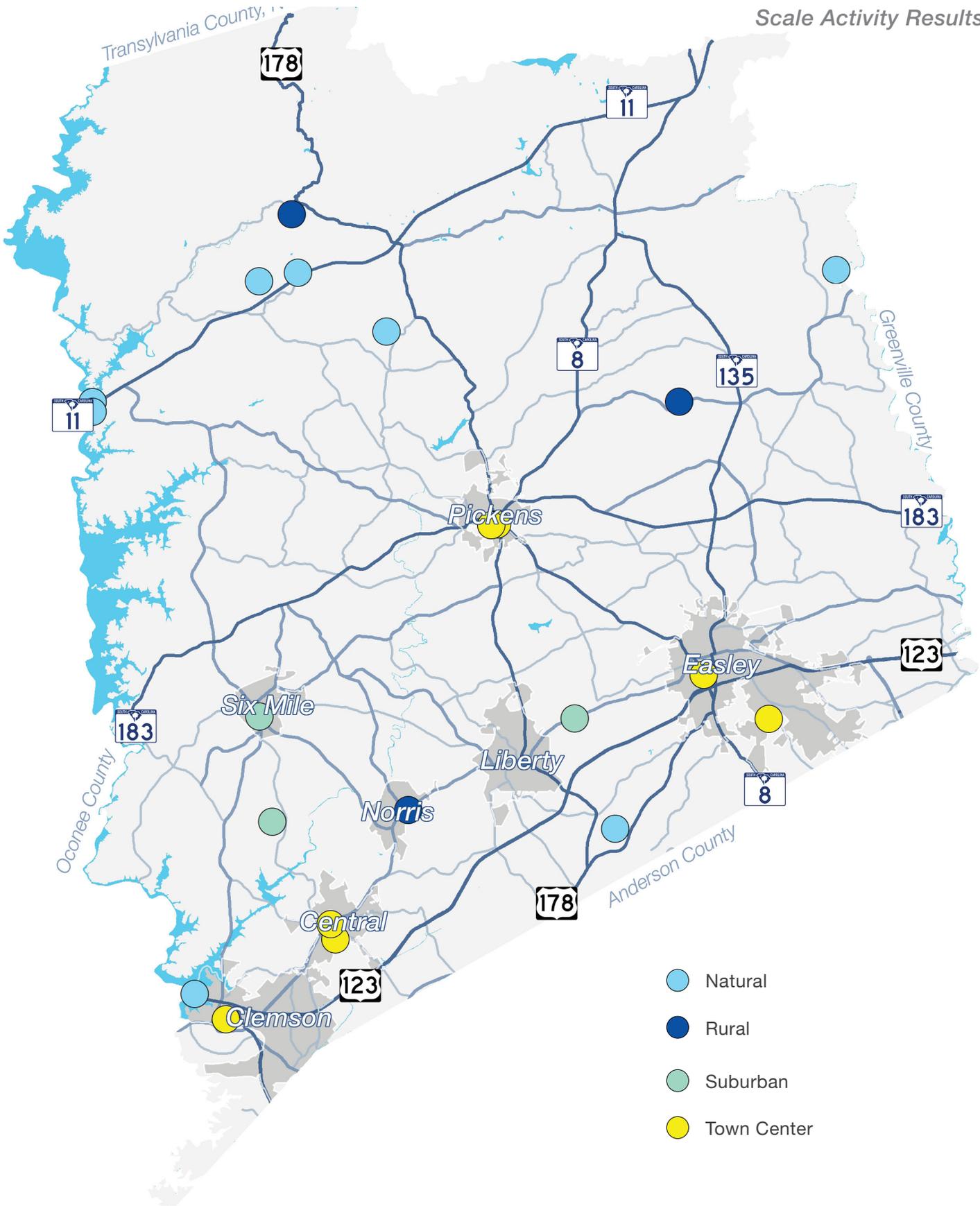
**Suburban**

Parts of Pickens County that should have a suburban environment (typically one- or two-story buildings that are mostly accessible via car) through the year 2040.

**Town Center**

Areas of Pickens County that should have an opportunity to be a more active and mixed use environment, typically including 1-3 story buildings with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians.

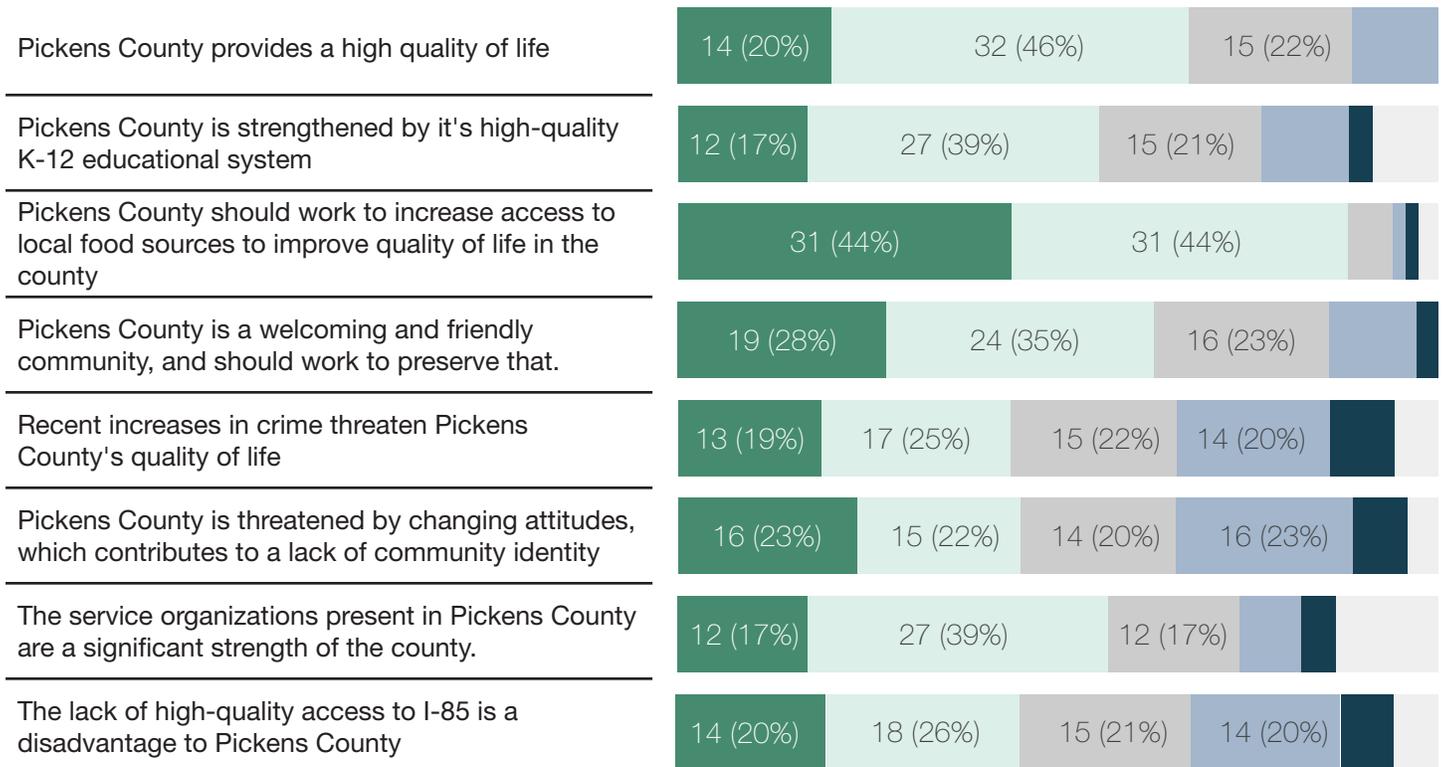
Scale Activity Results



## Survey Activity

Participants in this round of public engagement were also asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of “Big Ideas.” These Big Ideas were created from the results of the SWOT activity performed in the first Advisory Committee Meeting, placed into categories aligning with the plan elements. Participants could choose a range of options from “Strongly Agree” through “No Opinion” to “Strongly Disagree.”

The results of this activity are shown below and on the following page. The vast majority of the ideas provided by the Committee were agreed with by those who participated in this activity. Those that received less than 50% of the responses for “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” were discussed in the second advisory committee meeting.



The fare-free, all-electric transit model used by Clemson Area Transit (CAT) could be used to provide and/or improve transit across all of Pickens County



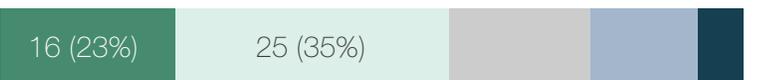
Pickens County suffers due to a lack of strong stormwater and septic system regulations



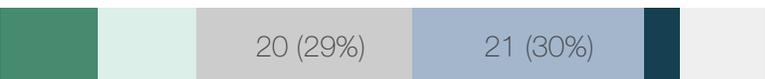
Limited access to public transportation is a weakness of Pickens County



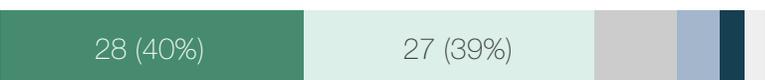
Inadequate roadways into and out of Pickens County have a negative impact on the county.



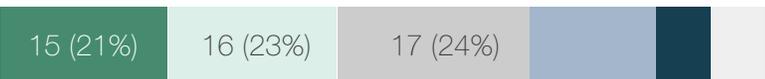
Utility costs in Pickens County are high and the county should work to lower them



Affordability is an important asset in Pickens County and should be maintained and/or improved



Pickens County should work to increase the availability of short-term housing in the county



The post-secondary education system (colleges, trade schools, etc.) in Pickens County is an asset to the county as a whole



The location of Pickens County, and its proximity to other locations, including Greenville, Atlanta, and Charlotte, is an asset



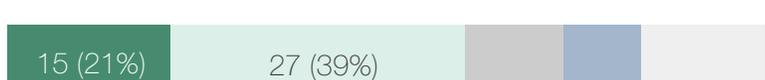
Pickens County can and should work to increase job opportunities by keeping and attracting industrial and other economic development.



The Pickens County Career and Technology Center has positive relationships with the business community that are a valuable asset to the county.



Businesses and residents are resistant to tools to manage growth, which poses a threat to the future of Pickens County





## VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the project team hosted meetings virtually through video conference to connect with the community. The Advisory Committee was able to effectively provide input with live polling applications as well as facilitated discussions.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2

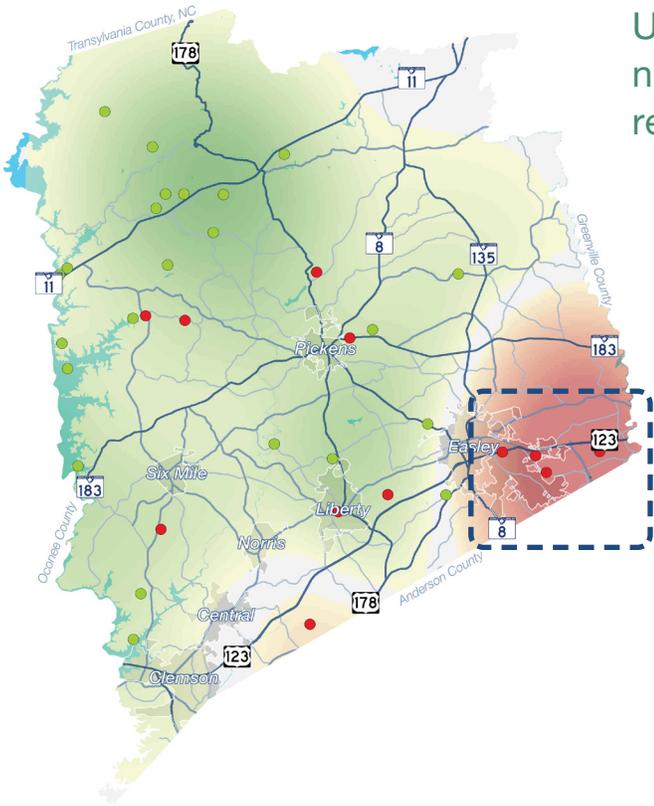
A second advisory committee meeting was held virtually on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at noon via Zoom. In this meeting, the results of the public engagement activities were shown, and conclusions were discussed with the Committee.

Big Ideas which received less than 50% “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” were discussed among the group. Those conversations helped the planning team craft and refine the Big Ideas and policies that are shown in later chapters of this plan.

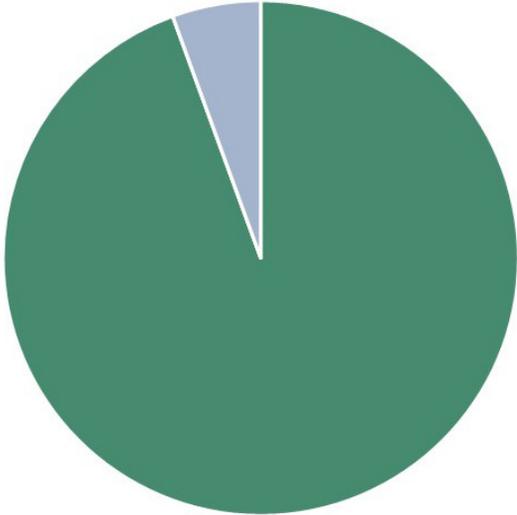
The committee also reviewed the map activity and discussed potential changes to the Future Development Map based on the feedback received during the first round of public engagement. Results of live-polling questions during the meeting are shown on the following pages.

The committee discussed the US 123 corridor east of Easley. Representatives from Easley indicated that upcoming developments and investments were poised to change the area in many of the ways requested by activity participants.

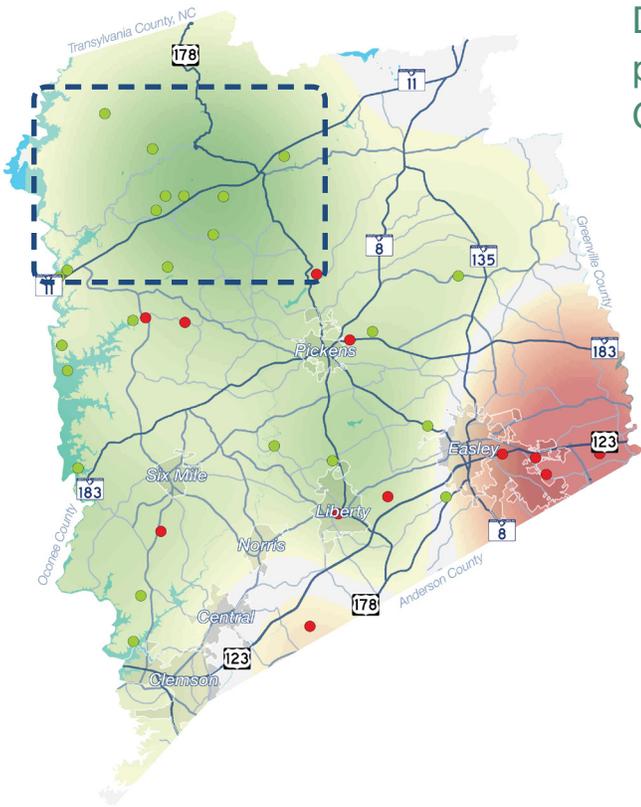
After the poll and some discussion, the committee supported the idea of expanding the Recreation and Open Space character area at the north of the County to encompass the SC 11 corridor, rather than generally existing north of SC 11. SC 11 is a protected scenic byway, so a conservation-minded character area is appropriate for areas along the roadway. These changes, among others, are included in the new Character Area Map, which is discussed in Chapter 5.



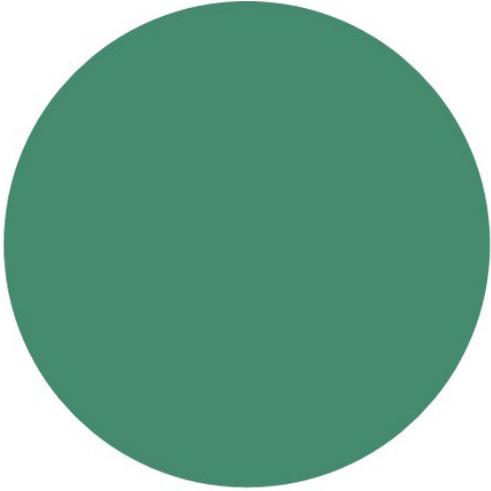
US 123 corridor east of Easley cited as needing aesthetic enhancements and reinvestment?



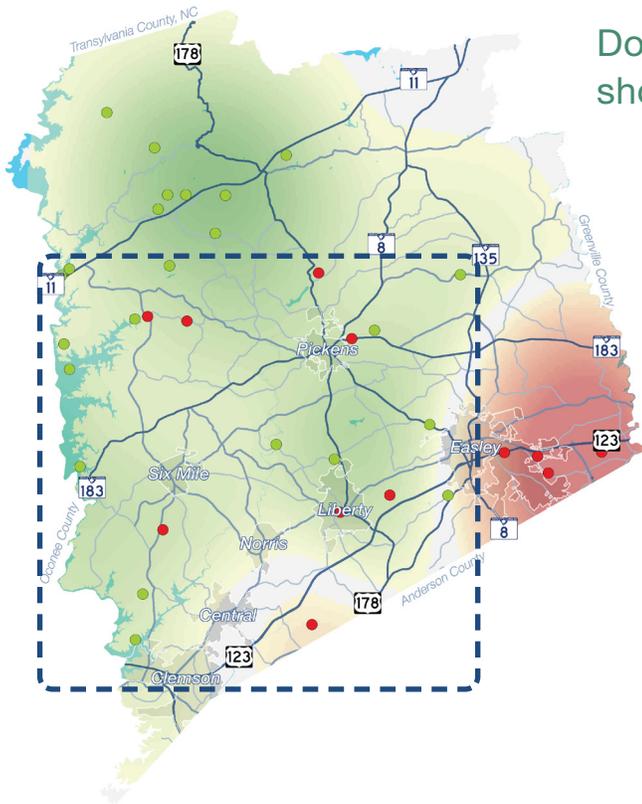
■ Yes, I agree    ■ I'm unsure/I have no opinion    ■ No, I disagree



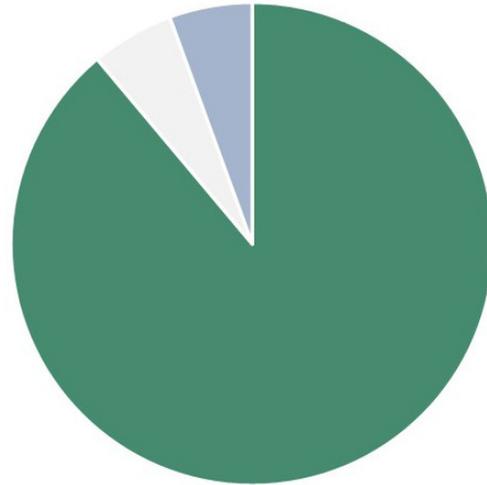
Do you agree that the natural character and preservations of the northern part of the County should be maintained?



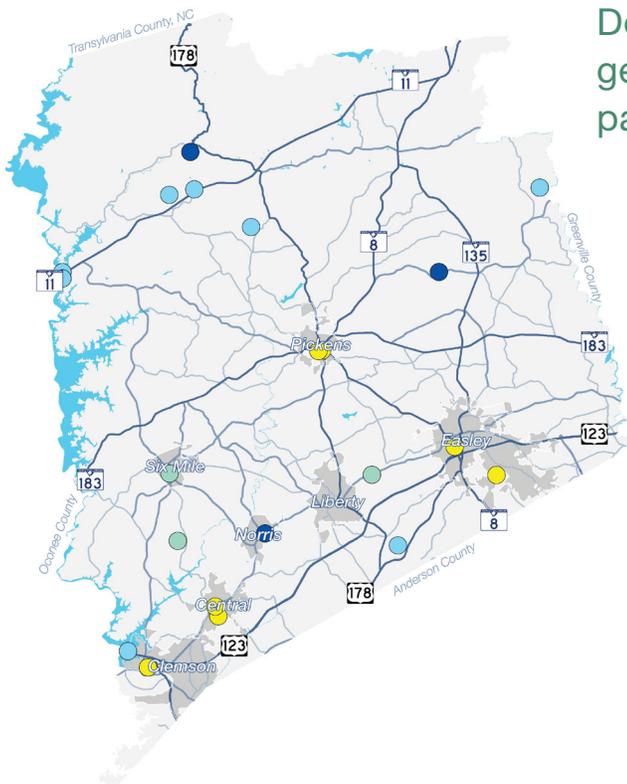
■ Yes, I agree    ■ I am unsure/I have no opinion    ■ No, I disagree



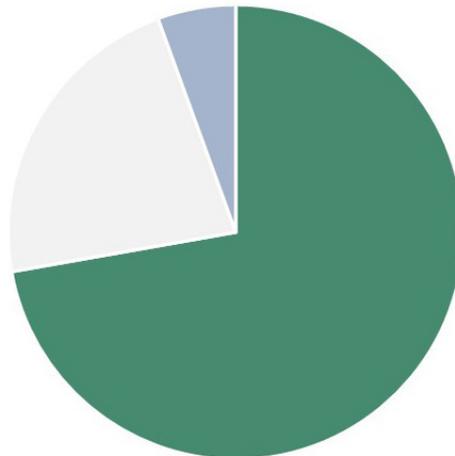
Do you agree that other natural features should be preserved throughout the county?



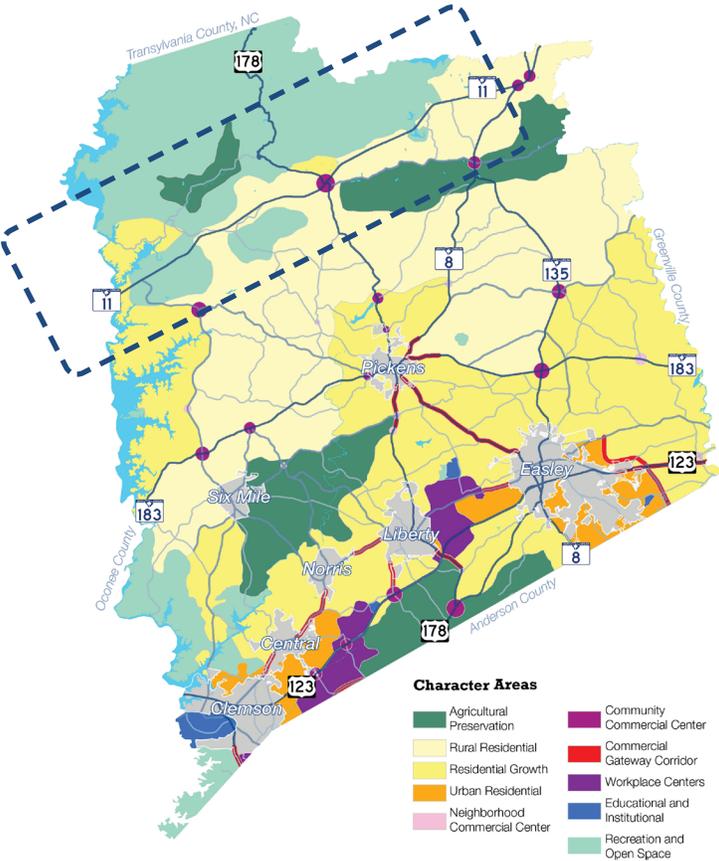
■ Yes, I agree    ■ I am unsure/I have no opinion    ■ No, I disagree



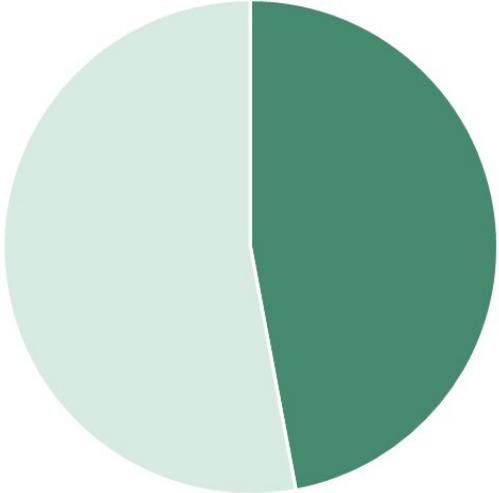
Do you agree that development should generally be more intense in the southern part of the county than in the northern area?



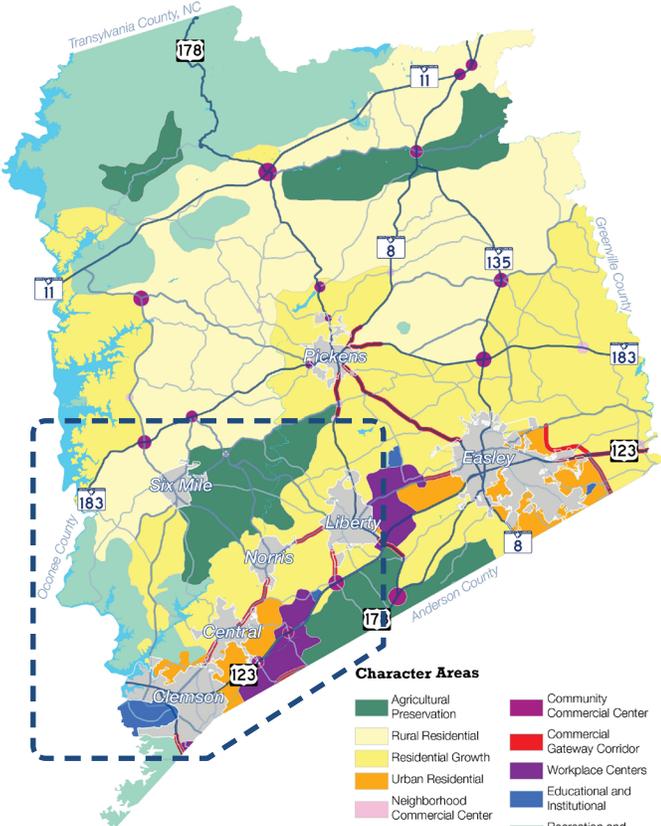
■ Yes, I agree    ■ I am unsure/I have no opinion    ■ No, I disagree



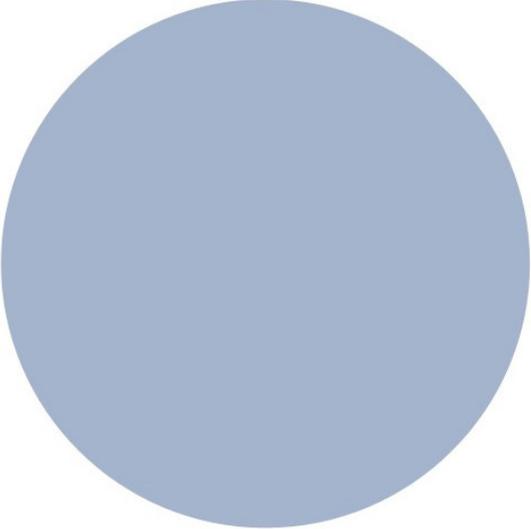
Is SR 11 the appropriate boundary for the Recreation and Open Space area?



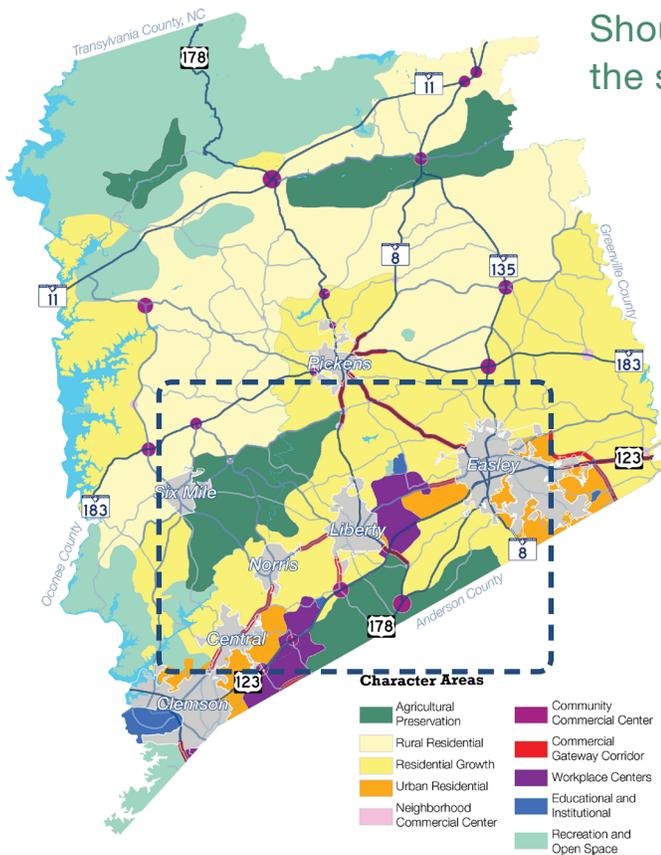
- Yes, it should be extended further south, past SC 11
- No, it should be maintained where it is
- No, it should be reduced



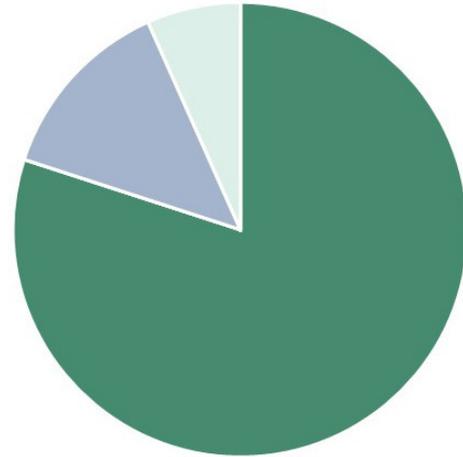
Are there areas that need to be added to or removed from Recreation and Open Space in the southwest part of the county?



- Yes, additional areas need to be added
- No, the area as it is shown is sufficient
- No, this area should be reduced in size



Should the Agricultural Preservation areas in the south be maintained?



- Yes, both should remain as they are
- Yes, and one or both should be expanded
- No, the area south of US 123 should be reduced
- No, the area between Six Mile and Liberty should be reduced
- No, both areas should be reduced
- No, one or both areas should be removed entirely

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3

A third Advisory Committee meeting was held on Monday, November 8, 2021 in the Council Chambers, Pickens County Administration Building from 4pm to 6pm. After the Committee and other attendees arrived, the meeting began with introductions and Pond provided a plan status update. A full copy of the meeting presentation and sign-in sheet are included in Appendix A.

The presentation recapped the planning process, touching on each phase of the process: research, vision, develop, document, and adopt.

Specific pieces of the elements discussed during the meeting included the Economic Development Goals and Objectives and changes to the Character Area Map. Based on public input, Pond developed

draft ideas for the Economic Development Goals and Objectives. These ideas were presented to the Committee and a live survey using Pigeonhole Live was used to receive real-time feedback in addition to open group discussions.

Because the previous plan did not have a goal, objectives, or policies in the Economic Development Element, the planning team had drafted new ones based on input received from the public and from earlier Advisory Committee meetings. During this meeting, these draft statements were presented to the Committee, who was then asked for feedback.

The Committee largely agreed with the Goal, Objectives, and Policy as presented, but provided valuable insight that was used to refine these statements.

The first question asked for confirmation if the Committee agreed with the development goal: “Pickens County will leverage the County’s education system, infrastructure, and strategic location to create and attract a variety of economic opportunities to improve quality of life through increased opportunities for employment and for local goods and services.” The Committee largely agreed with this goal.

The potential Economic Development Objective #1: “Leverage access to Greenville, proximity to I-85, and presence of great educational resources to attract potential employers to Pickens County” was widely accepted but provoked discussion about access to Greenville. It was stated there is too much emphasis on Greenville with the belief that Greenville should come to Pickens. Additionally, the Committee wanted to see an emphasis on not just attracting businesses to Pickens, but on developing and retaining businesses, especially small businesses.

The potential Economic Development Objective #2: “Increase access to the SR 11 corridor and the county’s lakes and mountains to create economic and recreational opportunities related to recreation and tourism in a way that minimizes impact to these natural resources” sparked discussion among the group. The word “access” was not favored by the committee as it suggests physical access. Suggestions for an update included ideas from the Committee to replace access with tourism marketing, awareness, improve, and knowledge. Thoughts shared with the group by attendees were to discourage truck traffic on SR 11 and an alternative route was needed for trucks. Hwy 123 between Clemson and Liberty was given as an example of what SR 11 corridor should strive to be in regard to cleanliness and natural beauty.

The Committee was given an opportunity to suggest any other objective statements that they would like to see in the economic development element. Themes from this question were small business, innovation, and preservation. This input was used to refine the objective statements, and to develop the policy statements that are presented in this plan, beginning on page 70.

The presentation showed three major changes to the character area map for feedback from the Committee. Changes were incorporated on the SC 11 Corridor, residential area immediately south of SR 183, and the workplace center near SR 153 extension.

The Committee considered the addition of an overlapping character area along the SC 11 corridor with the intent to add awareness of the corridor’s special status and conservation needs in future decisions. The group approved the SR 11 corridor change as it was shown.

The second change presented would convert the area south between SR 183 and Six Mile from the “Rural Residential” area to the “Residential Growth” area. This change was suggested by County staff based on the presence of infrastructure and public services. This change was also accepted by the committee after some discussion of associated infrastructure needs and potential impacts on land value.

An area east of Easley near the SR 153 extension was proposed to be changed to “Urban Neighborhoods” and “Workplace Centers” based on plans between the County and City of Easley. The Committee informed the planning team that residential neighborhoods had been approved and as such, the Workplace Center designation was likely inappropriate. Based on this, the area was instead converted to an Urban Neighborhoods area.

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ROUND #2

A second round of public engagement was held in County Council Chambers on December 7, 2021 from 5pm to 7pm. At this meeting, the planning team provided boards with summary information about the plan. These materials are included in Appendix A and draw specific attention to the major changes in this plan from the previous document, which include changes made to the character area map (in the land use element), and new economic development policies and implementations. Copies of the draft plan were also made available to any who wanted to review a physical copy of the document.

Several participants discussed the plan with the planning team, including the following topics:

- Continued protection of private property rights,
- Existing tax allocations for community facilities,
- Potential ordinances on SR 11 for preservation, and
- Previous and future opportunities for community feedback.

Some participants provided written comments which are also included in Appendix A.. Participants provided comments which are also included in Appendix A.

## WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH

*Where Pickens Workers Live*

*Where Pickens Residents Work*

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Economic Development Element Goal**  
Pickens County will leverage the County's education system, infrastructure, and strategic location to create and attract a variety of economic opportunities for local goods and services.

**Economic Development Element Objectives**

- Leverage presence of great educational resources, proximity to I-85, and access to Greenville to attract potential employers to, retain existing businesses throughout, and develop new ventures within Pickens County.
- Continue to protect and market the SR 11 corridor and the county's lakes and mountains to create economic and recreational opportunities related to recreation and tourism in a way that minimizes impact to these natural resources.

**Economic Development Policies and Implementation**

**POLICY:** Pursue a coordinated economic development strategy throughout the county.

**ACTION:** Work with municipalities and Alliance Pickens to develop a coordinated economic development strategy for the county.

**AGENCIES:** Alliance Pickens, Municipal governments, local Chambers of Commerce

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing

**POLICY:** Intentionally work to develop, retain, and promote local small businesses.

**ACTION:** Create a dedicated position within Alliance Pickens to work with existing and potential small businesses.

**AGENCIES:** Alliance Pickens

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing, starting 2022

### TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

The current comprehensive plan does not include the Goals and Objectives section of the Economic Development element, and the text shown here is proposed to be included in the new plan. Please take a moment to read through the goals, objectives, and policies and implementation and share any thoughts you have with the planning team or on a comment form.

# WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

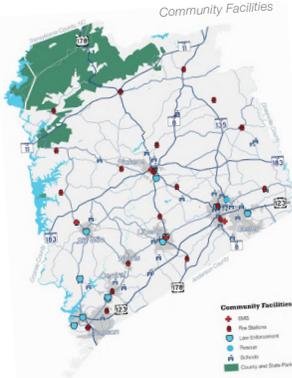


## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### RESEARCH

Community facilities describes the infrastructure, property, and spaces that are operated for the benefit of the public. This element covers the following seven essential public functions:

- Public safety,
- Emergency services,
- Education,
- Parks and recreation,
- Solid waste management, and
- Water supply, treatment, and distribution.



### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### Community Facilities Element Goal

"Our vision is to provide strategically located and high-quality infrastructure providing sewer, water, solid waste, fire, emergency services, and public safety, along with cultural/educational community facilities, to meet the needs of the residents of Pickens County."

#### Community Facilities Element Objectives

- Continue to invest and support the Pickens County Career and Technology Center to maintain positive relationships with the business community
- Maintain partnerships with the post-secondary education system as the colleges provide an asset to the county.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### RESEARCH

By preserving, maintaining, and improving our natural resources, many facets of our community can be enhanced including social, economic, and cultural aspects provides current resource information and presents goals for their use and protection. Additionally, one may determine the best and highest use of the land through an understanding of slope, topography, soils, watersheds, and location of flood plains. Natural resources affect land use and zoning decisions.

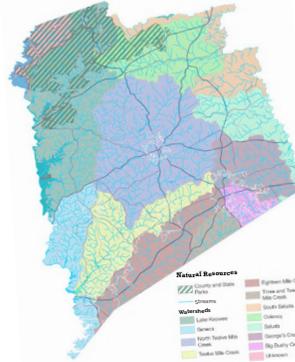
### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### Natural Resources Element Goal

"Our vision is to continue our heritage of stewardship and to ensure the integrity of our natural assets by promoting, protecting, and enhancing the quality of our air, water, and land resources that support the quality of life in Pickens County."

#### Natural Resources Element Objectives

- Cultivate natural resources so that the economic, recreational, and cultural values of the region may be enhanced
- Prepare to meet the water needs for future residents and businesses by developing a conservation plan and investigating new water sources
- Encourage water conservation measures
- Increase awareness of critical lands (watersheds, floodplains, threatened and endangered species locations, important view-sheds, prime and important soils, steep slopes, shorelines, etc.)
- Reduce erosion and improve water quality in our watersheds
- Promote the conservation and preservation of land for agriculture, hunting and fishing, wildlife habitat, and forestry
- Promote parks and open space in private development
- Adopt night sky friendly lighting standards for public buildings



- Preserve natural beauty; protect mountain vistas, lakes and river watersheds, and forest preserves; increase green space areas; protect pristine land all in a manner that respects the rights of property owners
- Develop the recreational potential of the Twelve Mile Creek corridor
- Study the long term impacts of various environmental/ecological issues surrounding Twelve Mile Creek and Lake Hartwell
- Strive to attain National Ambient Air Quality Standards countywide and study the placement of air quality monitoring stations in the county
- Explore opportunities for gray water reuse
- Actively promote "Buy Local" for all of Pickens County's agricultural products



# PLANNING COMMISSION

On Thursday, January 27, 2022 the Pickens County Planning Commission met to consider the draft plan document. As part of their consideration, the Commission was presented with the document, its appendices, and additional public comment received in the time since the second round of public engagement. As part of the discussion, the Commission recommended changes to the draft plan. The Commission requested a new policy be added to enforce the need to enforce existing regulations related to code enforcement to improve and maintain the beauty of the County and to being good stewards of the land. In response to comments provided by the

City of Clemson, an additional museum was added to the listing of cultural resources and another's description was updated to reflect recent changes. In response to staff input, an additional site was added to the list of historic sites in the County. The draft plan was also updated to ensure accuracy in population figures given in the first element of the plan document. Additionally, the Commission chose to update the Agencies section of each policy statement with a recommended lead agency to assist in the implementation of these efforts. These changes have been made and are included in this version of the Plan.





3

POPULATION



# 3. POPULATION

The core of Pickens County is in its residents. As such, any plan for the County must understand the makeup of the county’s residential populace.

Population of the comprehensive plan analyzes the number of residents in the County and demographics in addition to trends and projections. Demographic data also includes household size, education levels, and income characteristics. This information is used to estimate the County’s basic public service needs of future population growth. Please note that many sections of this chapter reference year 2019 population estimates. During the planning process for this comprehensive plan update, year 2020 Census data was in the process of being released, however, not all data was available. Year 2019 estimates were used to ensure that the data presented here were able to be more comprehensively consistent. Under current South Carolina planning law, an update of this plan must take place at least every five years. Year 2020 census data will be available and should be used during the next update to this plan.

Pickens County is a designated part of the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC Metropolitan Statistical Area

(Greenville, Pickens, and Laurens Counties) which had 6% increase in population from 2010- 2019 with a total population of 921,594 in 2019. Pickens County is also part of the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC Combined Statistical Area which is eight upstate counties with a combined population of 1,475,235 in 2019.

As South Carolina’s 15th largest county, Pickens County has an estimated population of roughly 126,884 residents in 2019 with a growth rate of 9.1 percent since 2010. The majority of Pickens County residents, an estimated 74,549 people, lived in unincorporated areas, while approximately 52,335 live in the seven municipalities within the county. Easley has the largest population in the county at a population of 21,364 residents with rapidly growing, Clemson, being the second largest in population (17,501).

This information is used to estimate the County’s

basic public service needs of future population growth. Pickens County is a designated part of the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA - Greenville, Pickens, and Laurens Counties) which had 6% increase in population from 2010- 2019 with a total population of 921,594 in 2019. Pickens County is also part of the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC Combined Statistical Area which is nine upstate counties (Anderson, Cherokee,

Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, and Union Counties) with a combined population of 1,499,762 in 2019.

Countywide, the population per square mile in 2010 was 240.2 persons. The population is spread across the county at a very low density (less than one person per acre), with pockets of higher density (more than two persons per acre) in Clemson and Easley.

## POPULATION CHANGE

Pickens County is one of ten counties that make up the Upstate Region of South Carolina. Six out of ten counties participate in the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) a voluntary structure that provides various resources to local governments and assists with intergovernmental coordination. In terms of population numbers, Pickens County was the fourth fastest growing county in the 10- county Upstate Region from 2010 – 2019. From 2010 – 2019, population growth was 9.10 percent similar to the state population growth rate of 10.7 percent according to the US Census.

The population increased by 7,660 in Pickens County with a population change of 6.3 percent from 2010 to 2019 which is a slightly less change than the state of South Carolina (10.7 percent).

Pickens County population growth has outpaced expectations with estimates showing Pickens has grown approximately 1,140 people per year. The previous Comprehensive Plan projected growth of

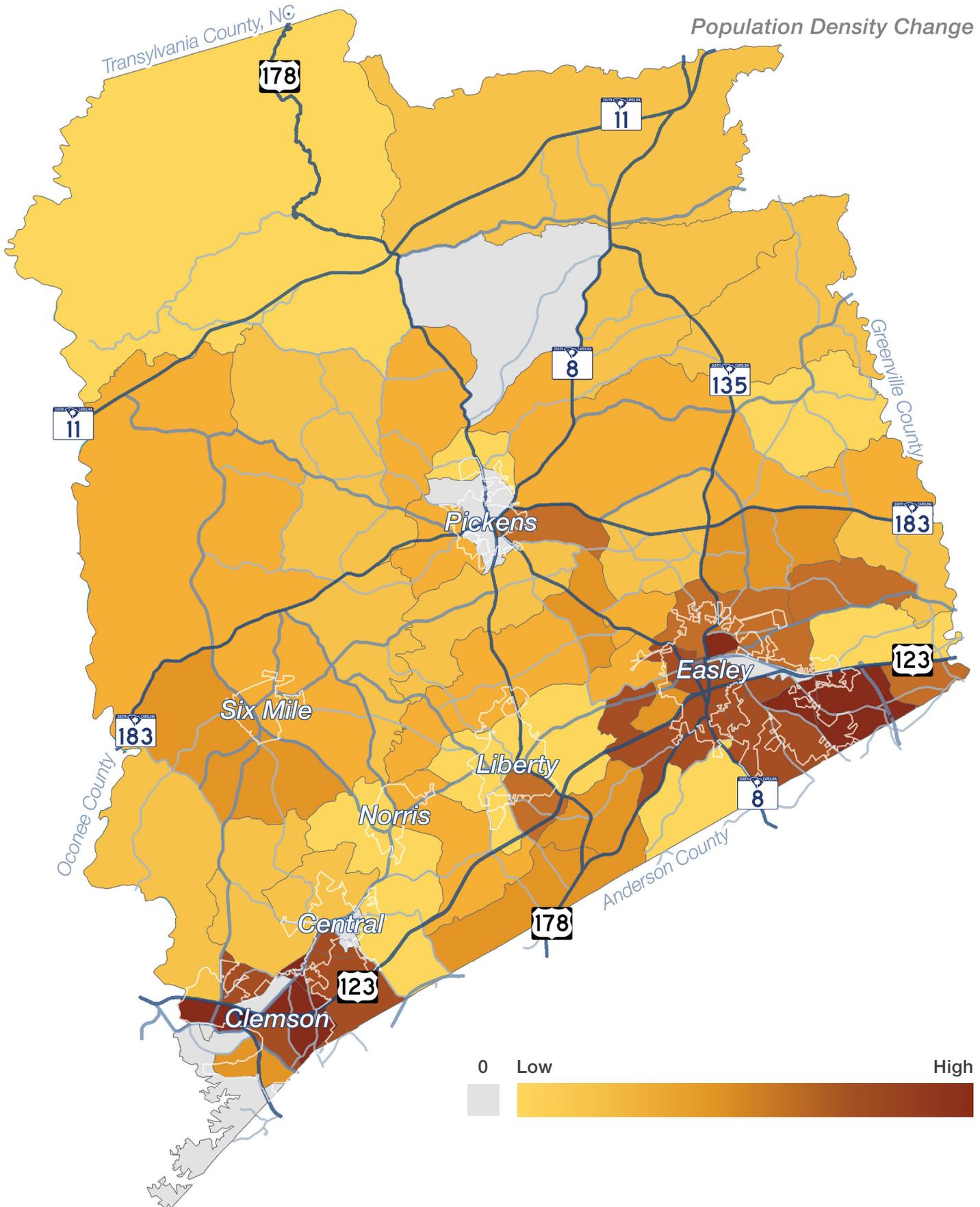
approximately 440 people per year, 2015 – 2020. The city of Clemson, 27th largest city in South Carolina, has a high population change of 31.9 percent since 2010 while Liberty’s population has decreased by -3.6 percent during the same time period as shown in the tables and map below.

Pickens County has approximately 5.0 percent of the total population who identify as Hispanic or Latino compared to the state’s average of 6.3 percent. Dramatic ethnicity growth of over 20 percent is seen in the Asian and Hispanic population.

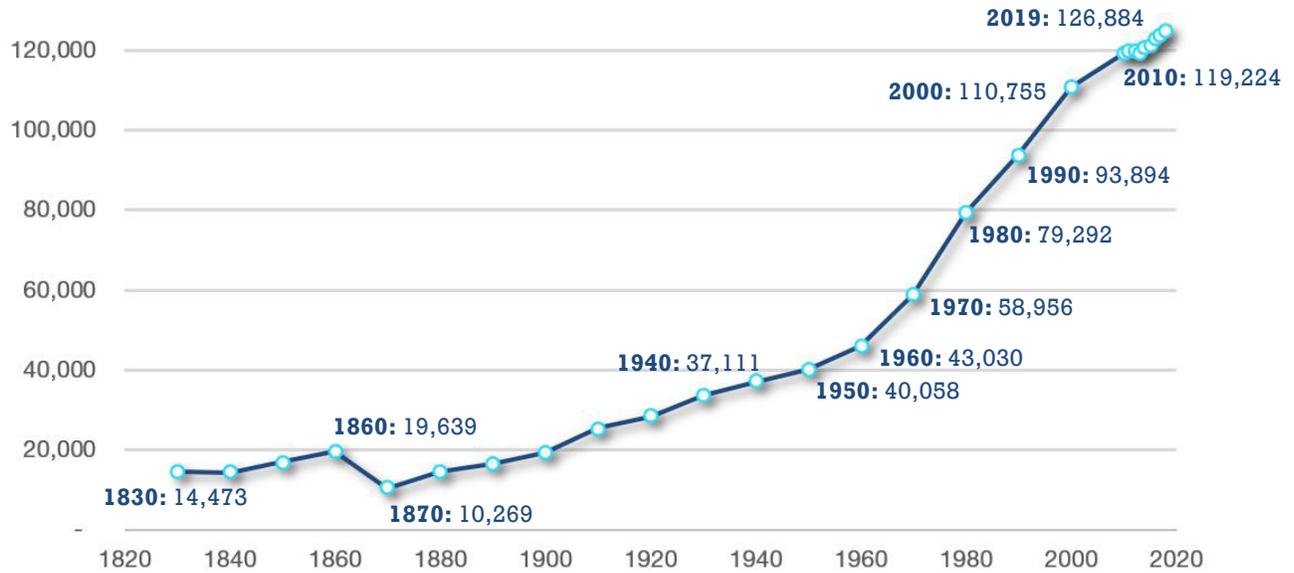
### Change by Race & Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	2010	2019	% Growth
White, non-Hispanic	103,301	106,292	2.9%
Black, non-Hispanic	7,589	8,392	10.6%
Asian, non-Hispanic	1,718	2,424	41.1%
Hispanic	3,496	4,557	30.3%

Population Density Change



Pickens County Historical Population



Population and Population Change by County

County	Population		Population Change	
	2010	2019	Number	Percentage
Abbeville County	25,417	24,527	-890	-3.5%
Anderson County	187,126	202,558	15,432	8.2%
Cherokee County	55,342	57,300	1,958	3.5%
Greenville County	451,225	523,542	72,317	16.0%
Greenwood County	69,661	70,811	1,150	1.7%
Laurens County	66,537	67,493	956	1.4%
Oconee County	74,273	79,546	5,273	7.1%
Pickens County	119,224	126,884	7,660	6.4%
Spartanburg County	284,307	319,785	35,478	12.5%
Union County	28,961	27,316	-1,645	-5.7%
Upstate Region	1,362,073	1,476,814	17,493	8.4%
South Carolina	4,625,364	5,148,714	523,350	11.3%

Population and Population Change by Municipality

Municipality	Population		Population Change	
	2010	2019	Number	Percentage
Easley	20,364	21,364	1,000	4.9%
Clemson	13,964	17,501	3,537	25.3%
Central	5,202	5,385	183	3.5%
Liberty	3,269	3,177	-92	-2.8%
Norris	813	900	87	10.7%
Pickens	3,126	3,160	34	1.1%
Six Mile	675	848	173	25.6%

# POPULATION DENSITY

Pickens County has 497 square miles with a population density in 2019 of 253.3 people per square mile. Pickens County is the fourteenth most populous of South Carolina’s forty-six counties. The population is spread across the county at a very low density (less

than one person per acre), with pockets of higher density (more than two persons per acre) in Clemson and Easley as shown in the Population Density Map on the facing page.

# PROJECTIONS

Over the next fifteen years, Oconee and Pickens Counties are expected to have a consistent increase in population. Pickens County is projected to have a population of 139,525 in 2035 as shown in the table. Growth will be focused around Lake Hartwell and Lake Keowee as second homes and retirement communities continue to be in demand. Counties adjacent to Greenville, South Carolina (including Pickens) have a consistently higher growth rate and population than those further out

Northern Pickens County in the mountains is sparsely populated, with the actual number of people moving to the area low, but in percentage increase it is significant. People desiring a scenic mountain home comprise a significant portion of the people moving there.

Prime working age population is adults between the ages of 25 and 54 which represent the core of the county’s workforce and includes its most economically

productive demographic. Where productive residents choose to live and work influences the nature and fate of local economies with competition for prime age workers growing. Competition for prime age workers increases as the 65 and older population of the county continues to grow.

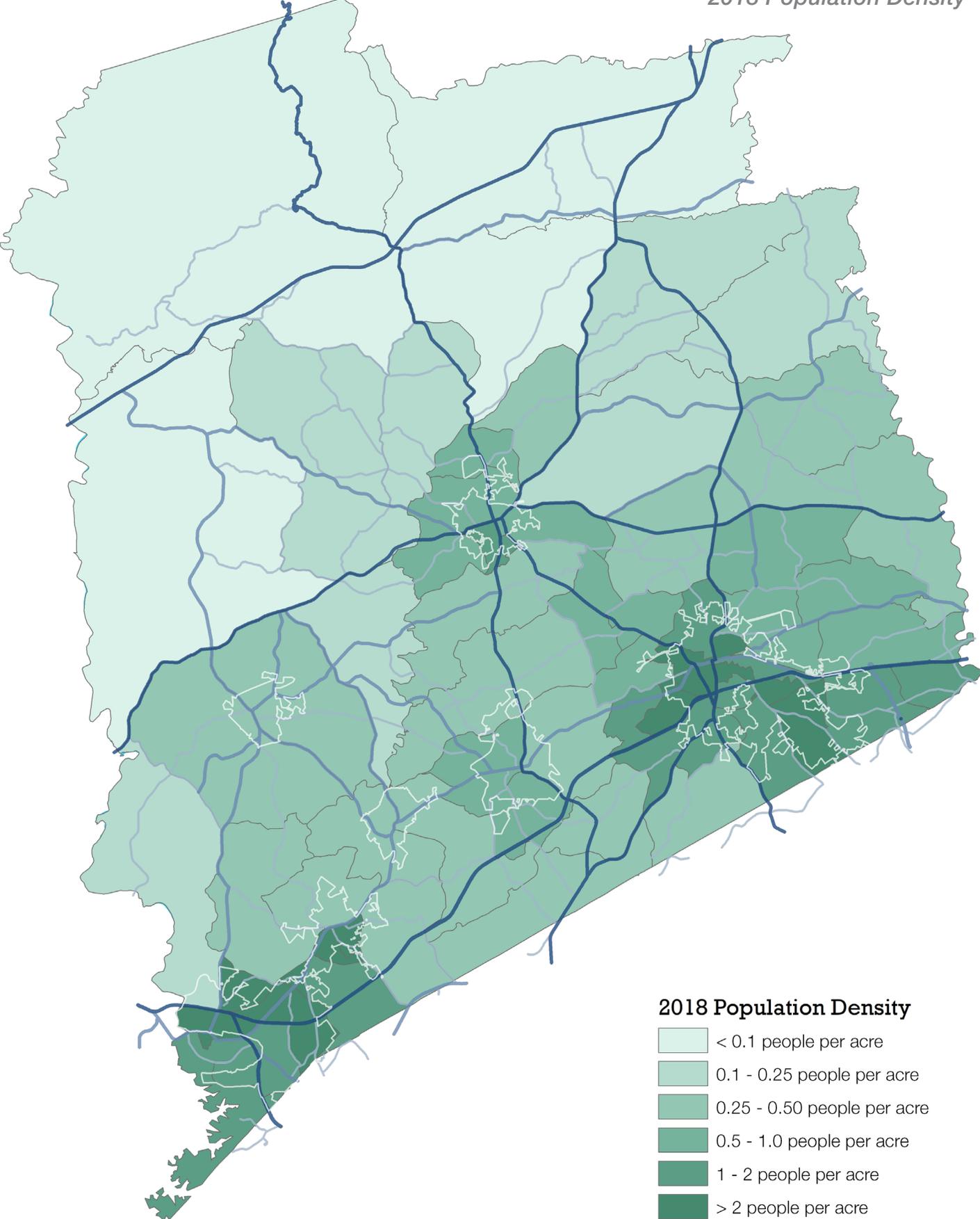
*Population Projections; Average Annual Growth Rate 2010-2035*

	2010	2020	2025	2030	2035	Growth Rate
Pickens County	119,224	129,347	134,734	135,865	139,525	0.7%
Anderson County	187,126	204,353	214,715	224,750	234,420	1.0%
Spartanburg County	284,307	326,205	348,085	373,465	399,415	1.6%
Greenville County	461,225	532,486	573,060	616,105	659,270	1.7%
Oconee County	74,273	80,015	82,490	84,940	86,830	0.75%
ACOG Region	1,362,073	1,534,241	1,622,166	1,493,440	1,577,810	0.6%
South Carolina	4,625,364	5,282,232	5,629,430	5,881,710	6,223,085	1.4%

*Workforce Population Projection 2020-2035*

	2020	2025	2030	2035
Prime Working Age	43,055	43,620	45,050	46,230
Population 65 or older	21,870	24,835	27,360	28,990
Male	21,625	22,170	22,735	22,820
Female	21,430	21,850	22,315	22,820

2018 Population Density



# DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The median age in the County is 36.2 compared to 37.9 for the state of South Carolina. The age composition in 2019 was approximately 80 percent, 95,000, of individuals aged 18 and over. In 2019, approximately 80 percent of the county, or 95,000 residents, were 18 years or older. About 36 percent of the population is prime working age in the County. Pickens County has a higher rate of residents 15-24 than the state as a whole. This is likely due to the presence of Clemson University. Only 16.7 percent of the population is older than 65 years and over. Men and women make up roughly equal portions of the community (49.8 percent men vs. 50.2 percent women).

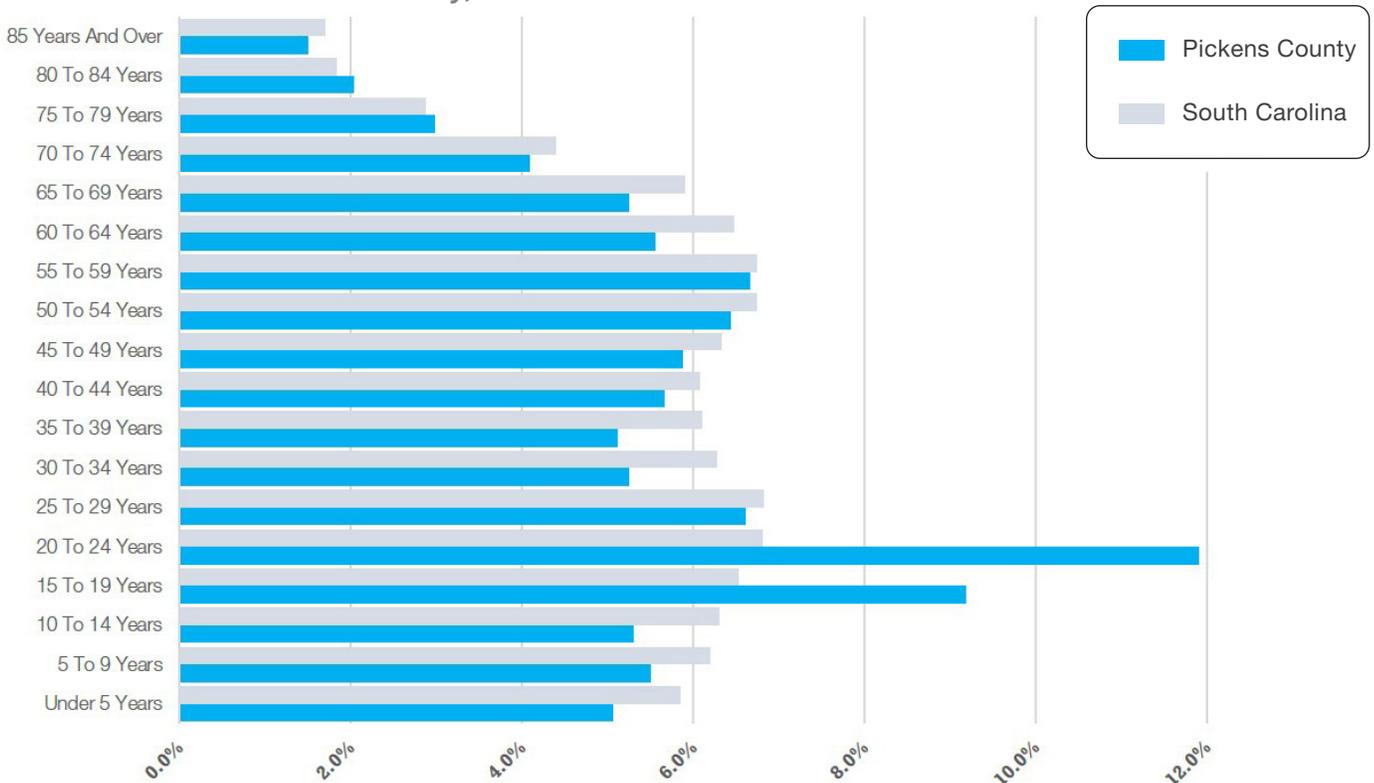
An estimated 88.6 percent of Pickens County’s 2019 population consider themselves to be “white alone,” which is a larger percentage than in the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley MSA, 76.2 percent, or in South Carolina, 68.6 percent. Another 7.2 percent of the population is Black or African-American, lower than the percentage across the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley

MSA (16.7 percent), or across South Carolina (27.0 percent).

Only 3.9 percent of Picken’s population is Hispanic or Latino, which is lower than the share of the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley MSA population (7.1 percent) and slightly lower than the share of the state population (6.0 percent). The categories “Hispanic” and “Latino” are considered ethnicities rather than races, and these designations are considered separately from racial ones.

A small percent of the population is American Indian, 0.3 percent, many of whom are members of the organization known as the Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois and United Tribes of South Carolina, Inc. previously known as Cherokee Indian Tribe of South Carolina. The organization is incorporated in the State of South Carolina and serves as the corporation for the governance of the Cherokees of South Carolina’s Tribal Council, with an elected Tribal Chief/CEO and a Tribal Council made up of Elders and Clan Mothers.

*Age Distribution in Pickens County, 2018*



# SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

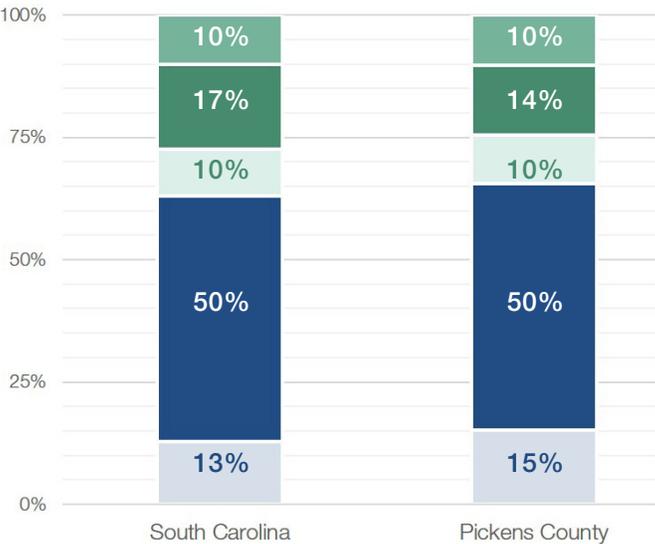
A household is defined by the US Census Bureau as all related or unrelated individuals who reside at an address at the time of survey. There are 47,934 households with an average household size of 2.45 persons with 73.5 percent of households having two or more persons. 38.7 percent of household include one or more persons at 65+ years.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

For individuals 25 years and older in Pickens County, 85% are a high school graduate or higher and 26% have completed a post-secondary degree. These percentages of education attainment are comparable to South Carolina state averages. Pickens County's median household.

Pickens County has a school dropout rate of 3.3 percent which is higher than school districts in Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Oconee, and Cherokee Counties. More than half of these students dropped out by the 10th grade. Communities with less wealth and resources hold more risk for students dropping out.

*Educational Attainment, 25 years and older*



*Tillman Hall at Clemson University*

# INCOME

Median household income in Pickens County in 2019 was \$49,573, slightly lower than the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley MSA median household income of \$52,533, and lower than the state average of \$53,199. A higher percentage of households in Pickens County earn between \$50,000 and \$99,999 per year than in the Greenville-Mauldin-Easley MSA. The majority of Pickens County households, 53%, make less than \$49,999 annually and 28.6% make between \$50,000 and \$99,999 per year.

The poverty rate for all people in Pickens County is 15.3 percent compared to the MSA. 48.2 percent of Pickens County households make less than \$49,999 annually or roughly the median income for the county. The highest majority of households, 19.8 percent, earned \$50,000 to \$74,999 annually. 5.9 percent of households in Pickens County make more than \$150,000 annually.

In 2019, \$26,061 was the per capita income, the measure of money earned per person, including those living in group quarters, in Pickens County, which is \$5,576 lower than the state median capita income.

The poverty rate for all people in Pickens County is 15.3 percent which is slightly higher than South Carolina, 13.8 percent. An estimated 9 percent (4,325) of total households received food stamps/ SNAP benefits in 2019 with 2,527 of households having children. Roughly 46.2 percent of households receiving food stamps are below poverty level.

According to estimates for 2019, 15.4 percent (18,562) of Pickens County’s population with a determined poverty status were earning incomes below the poverty line. The region and the state have slightly lower instances of families in poverty, with 12.3 and 13.8 percent. As shown in the Median

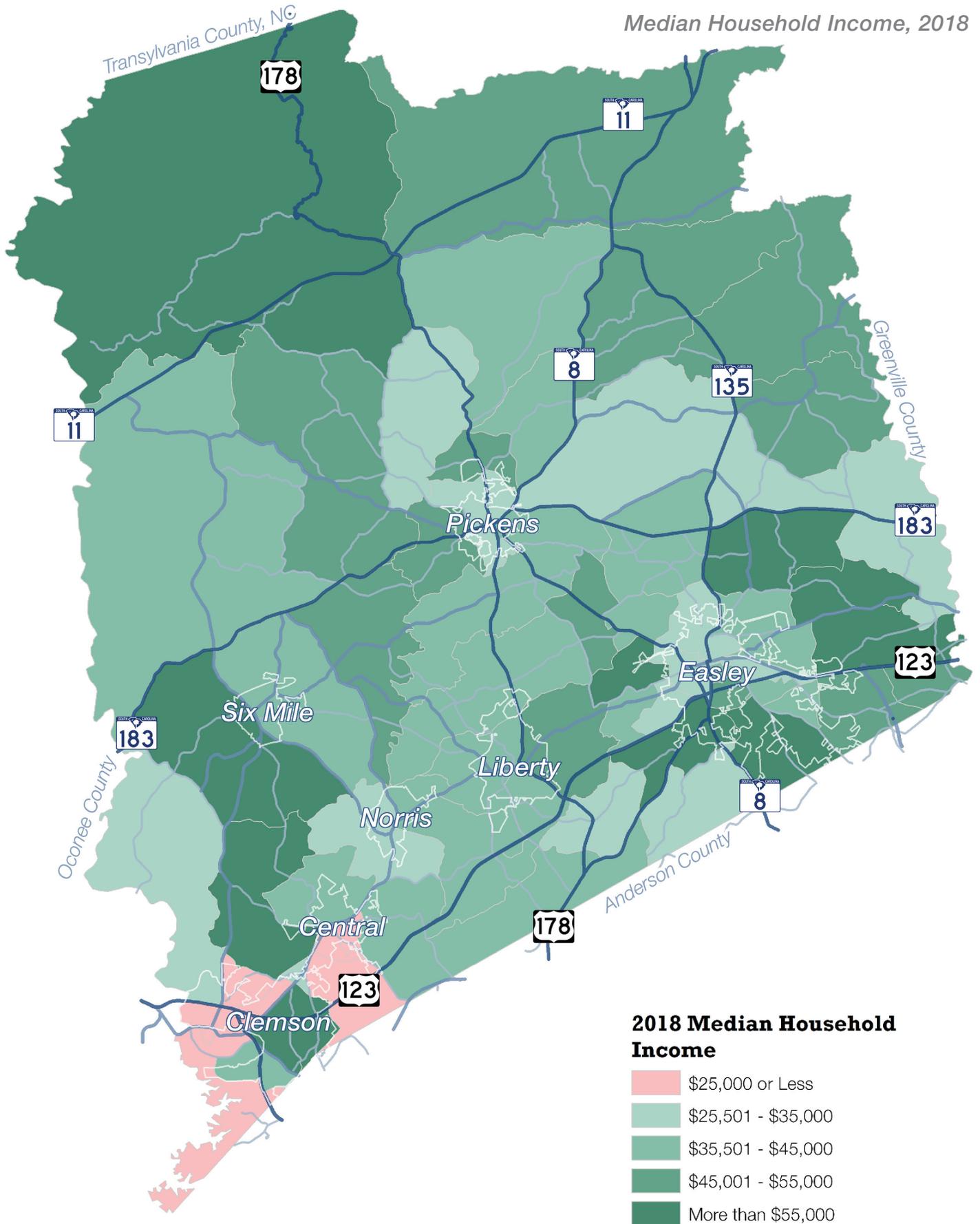
Household Income map, Clemson has a dramatically higher than average percent of persons living in poverty, 38.7 percent, and 49.3 percent of those persons are between 18 to 59 years old. This dramatic difference could be better understood by whether the resident is in school or not. 83.2 percent of enrolled undergraduates and 31.9 percent of graduate students are living below the poverty line; however, students bring employers, revenue, and higher living wages post-graduation and are typically seen as a positive to the community.

According to estimates for 2019, 15.3 percent of Pickens’s family households were earning incomes below the poverty line. The Greenville MSA and the state have slightly lower instances of families in poverty, with 12.3 and 13.8 percent.

## Income Distribution

Income Level	Number of Households	Percentage of Households
All	47375	100.0%
Less than \$5,000	1926	4.1%
\$5,000-\$9,999	1696	3.6%
\$10,000-\$14,999	3054	6.4%
\$15,000-\$19,999	3271	6.9%
\$20,000-\$24,999	2719	5.7%
\$25,000-\$34,999	5374	11.3%
\$35,000-\$49,999	7158	15.1%
\$50,000-\$74,999	8387	17.7%
\$75,000-\$99,999	5173	10.9%
\$100,000-\$149,999	5457	11.5%
Greater than \$150,000	3160	6.7%

Median Household Income, 2018



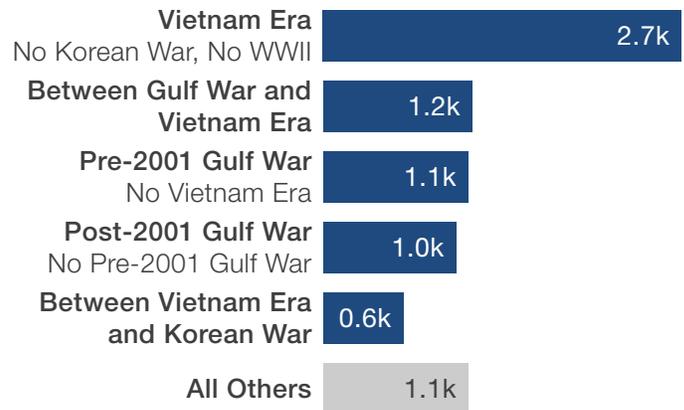
# VETERANS

Pickens County is steep in a strong military tradition with more Medal of Honor recipients than any other county per capita in the United States and an estimated 7,700 veteran residents. Young men and women have answered our Nation’s call to service with selfless heroism sacrifice to ensure the freedoms that we all enjoy. With this in mind, Pickens County is dedicated to promoting a veteran-friendly environment throughout the County. In order to create this environment, the County seeks to:

1. **Assist** Veterans and their families in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled.
2. **Integrate** the efforts of all entities in the State that provide a service to Veterans or their families.
3. **Advocate** for Veterans, our military installations, and service members and their families serving in South Carolina.
4. **Inform & Educate** the public, County and local leaders, and Veterans on matters pertinent to Veterans.

These efforts should work to cultivate a Pickens County Veteran population that is mentally, emotionally, and physically sound; satisfied by the dignified manner in which they are treated by those who provide services; respected by their fellow citizens; and proud of their continuing contributions to their community and the Nation. This community will be able to successfully incorporate into the local community with local residents to build upon community cohesion and growth by using the talents, skills, and experiences that they gained while in service.

## Veterans by Selected Period of Military Service



These goals are currently manifested through the following three lead organizations:

The **Pickens County Veterans Council (PCVC)** whose mission is evaluate, develop, coordinate and promote new and existing programs and services for Veterans and their families within Pickens County. PCVC efforts are underway with key partners (American Legion, SWU Warrior CARE Center, Fleet Reserve, Marine Corps Leagues, Military Officers Association of America).

The mission of **Veterans Haven of Honor (VHOH)** is to provide homeless veterans in Pickens County with safe, temporary shelter while getting them up on their feet & back into society. The intent is to give the homeless veteran a hand up, not a handout. This work is ongoing. A 501c3 organization has been established, and a site and building have been donated in Liberty. Fundraising is expected to commence once cost estimate is approved.

The **Veterans Park** seeks to create a space for veterans and their families to relax, recover, and reflect on where they are, where they are going, and how they can help others in the community. This park is in the initial planning stages.

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Population Element Goal

“Our vision to encourage population growth in areas which have the necessary supporting infrastructure and community facilities; preserving both a rural lifestyle and personal property rights.”

## Population Element Objectives

- Manage growth that poses a threat to the future of businesses and residents by using the appropriate tools.
- Create work to increase job opportunities by keeping and attracting industrial and other economic development.
- Continue to support and integrate the veteran community in Pickens County.

## Population Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Implement comprehensive growth management

**ACTIONS:** Coordinate long-range plans and strategies for the Pickens County Public Service Commission, Pickens County Water Authority, Alliance Pickens, and other county departments to meet expected demands efficiently.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Planning Commission. Supporting Agencies: County Council, County departments.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going

**POLICY/ACTION:** Periodically assess quality of life in Pickens County via thorough public feedback process that guides policymaking.

**AGENCIES:** Administration

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going.

**POLICY/ACTION:** Find ways to strengthen and promote volunteer, nonprofit, and other organizational programs that provide educational and healthy lifestyle opportunities to youth in Pickens County.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: County Council. Supporting Agencies: Administration.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going.

**POLICY/ACTION:** Support and assist veteran organizations in the county in their engagements with veterans

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: County VA Affairs. Supporting Agencies: County Council, Veteran Organizations.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On going

**POLICY/ACTION:** Assess and decide on a design, location and creation of a veteran’s memorial park.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. Supporting Agencies: County Council, County Administration, Veteran Organizations.



ALBERTSON'S  
EST. 1975

THE PINT STATION

BLEB VOODOO GRILL



LAUGHTON & CO

4

HOUSING



# 4. HOUSING

The Housing element guides the community in housing development, preservation, and new construction for future development. The quality, availability, and affordability of housing within an area are good indicators for understand the community’s marketability. Business and personal relocations also consider housing inventory and affordability as well as socio-economic shifts in the housing market.

## HOUSING INVENTORY

### Housing Units and Occupancy

As of 2019, there were 55,598 housing units in Pickens County. Of these, approximately 67.1 percent were owner-occupied. This is comparable to the rate in all of South Carolina, 69.4 percent.

As the population grows in Pickens County so does the need for new housing. The Housing element guides the community in housing development, preservation, and new construction for future development. Strong housing elements call attention to local affordable housing needs, and they use policy and land-use tools to establish a work plan to address those needs. The quality, availability,

and affordability of housing within an area are good indicators for understand the community’s marketability. Business and personal relocations also consider housing inventory and affordability as well as socio-economic shifts in the housing market.

The average owner-occupied household is made of 2.54 people versus the renter-occupied average of 2.29. The rental vacancy rate from 2015 – 2019 is 5.4 which is lower than the 2010 -2014 estimates of 9.6. Only 3.3 percent of total housing units were built 2014 of later which is a significant decline from the 1970 – 2010 estimates of 14.9 – 20.4 percent.

## Housing Types

Housing units can be categorized into one of the following types: single-family, mobile home, or multi-family, which includes single-family attached and detached homes, duplexes, institutional, and other multi-unit structures. There are 22 mobile homes parks in Pickens County with 17.4 percent of housing types being a mobile home in Pickens County. The unincorporated communities in the county consist of mostly single-family housing and a significant number of mobile homes. Easley and Clemson have a more diverse housing stock of condos, townhomes, and multifamily.

The median price for owner-occupied units is \$147,700 as of 2019 which is a 1.2 percent increase from 2010 – 2014 estimates.

Pickens County has a wide range of housing values from around \$50,000 to over \$2,000,000. There are an estimated 33,282 owner-occupied and 14,921 housing units in Pickens County. Only 5.9 percent of owner-occupied units are valued at \$500,000 or more. Almost half, 46.6 percent, of owner-occupied housing units do not have a mortgage. 76 percent of monthly mortgages are less than \$1,500. The majority, at 61.2 percent, have a gross rent of \$500 – \$900 monthly.

A household is considered “housing cost burdened” if they spend at least 30% of their total household income on housing. The definition includes rent or mortgage, utility bills, real estate taxes, property insurance, etcetera. An estimated 3.0 percent earning the household median income are considered housing cost burdened.

The average owner occupied household size is 2.52 versus a comparable size of 2.40 for renter occupied. The homeowner vacancy rate is a low 2.4 percent with rental vacancies at 10.2 percent.

### *Housing Types*

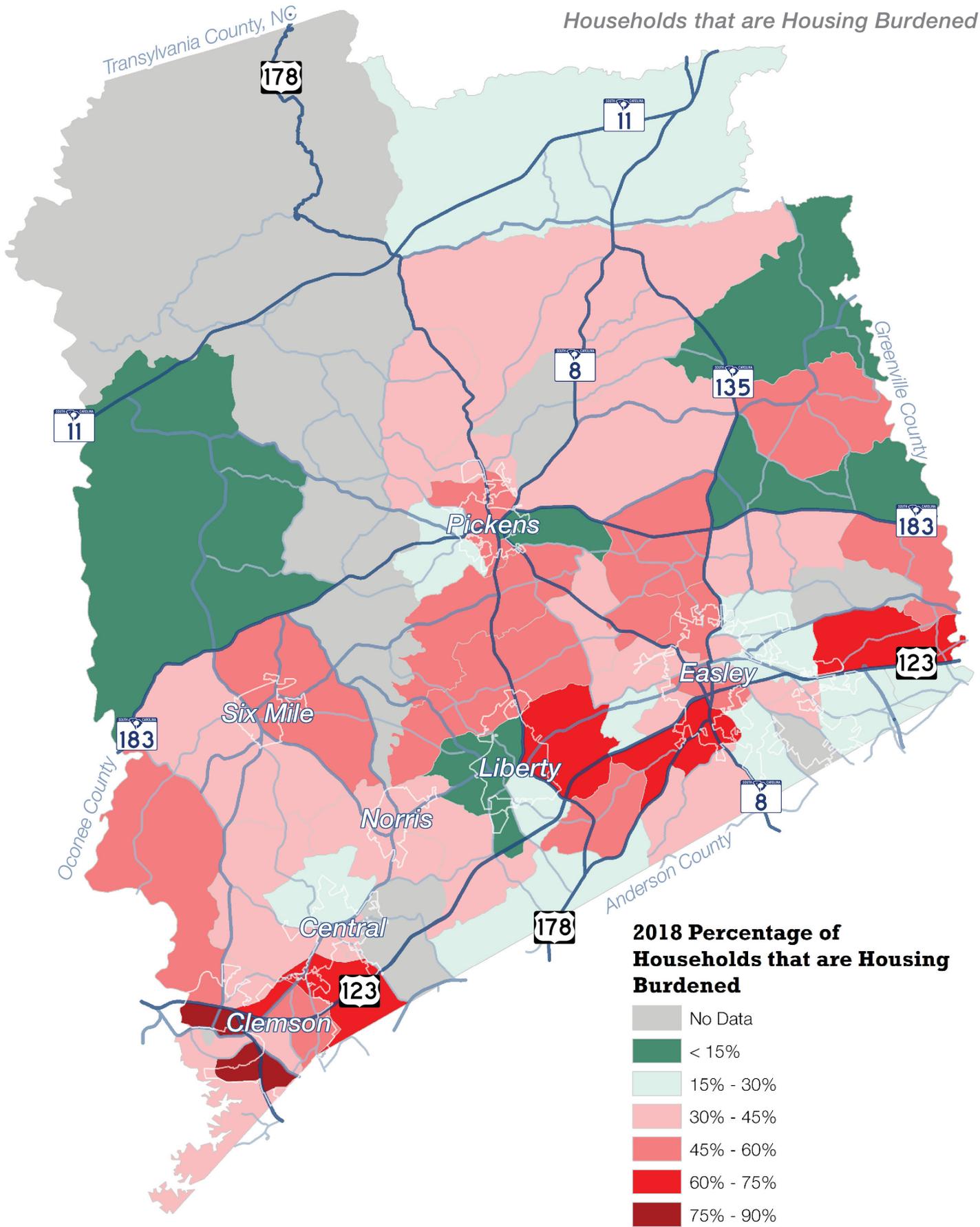
	Pickens County	South Carolina
Single-Family Detached Homes	30,806 (65.0%)	1,241,115 (65.5%)
Single-Family Attached Homes	533 (1.1%)	59,258 (3.1%)
Duplexes	1,174 (2.5%)	37,811 (2.0%)
Tri- and Quad-plexes	1,087 (2.3%)	51,244 (2.7%)
5 to 9 Units per Building	1,619 (3.4%)	78,042 (4.1%)
10 or More Units per Building	3,903 (8.2%)	124,283 (6.6%)
Mobile Home or Other Type of Housing	8,253 (17.4%)	302,958 (16.0%)

## Location and Quality

Housing is located in all parts of Pickens County, from individual properties and large tracts of land to subdivisions of all sizes and gated golf communities. The availability of water and sewer service is related to location. Much of the northern half of the county depends on well water and septic systems. The remainder of the county may have access to a water district provider, but not always public sewer service.

For all housing units in Pickens County in 2013, 60.6 percent were built before 1980 and 39.4 percent were built from 1990 – 2010. There were 43,767 occupied units in Pickens County in 2013, of which 1.2 percent had incomplete plumbing facilities, 1.7 percent lacked complete kitchen facilities, and 1.7 percent had no telephone (US Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey).

Households that are Housing Burdened



# HOUSING AND CARE FOR SENIORS

The ACOG serves as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the six-county Appalachian Region of Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg counties. Providing information and assistance to older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers, the AAA also operates the Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, the Regional Family Caregivers Program, and the I-CARE program.

A nursing home is a residence that provides a room, meals, help with daily living, and recreational activities. Generally, nursing home residents have health problems which keep them from living on their own and may require daily medical attention. There are seven Medicare or Medicaid Certified Nursing Homes in Pickens County with approximately 493 beds (SC Office on Aging Bed Locator). Fifteen assisted living facilities are located in Pickens County.

Nursing Homes	Location	Beds
Capstone Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center	Easley	60
Clemson Downs	Clemson	52
Emeritus at Countryside Health Care Center	Easley	60
Majesty Health and Rehab of Easley	Easley	103
Manna Health and Rehab of Pickens	Pickens	130
Pruitt Health of Pickens	Six Mile	44
Fleetwood Rehabilitation and Health Center	Easley	

Assisted Living Facilities	Location	Beds
Clemson Downs	Clemson	32
Easley Retirement Center	Easley	28
Emeritus at Countryside Park	Easley	66
Maggie Manor	Easley	10
Magnolias of Easley	Easley	56
MasterCare Retirement Home	Liberty	14
Foothills Presbyterian Community	Easley	50
Six Mile Retirement Center	Six Mile	41
Brookdale Central	Central	52
West End Retirement Center	Easley	34
The Willows of Easley	Easley	50
Dominion Senior Living at Patrick Square	Clemson	66
Clemson Heritage Senior Living	Clemson	84
Easley Place	Easley	
Easley Living Center	Easley	
The Retreat at Easley	Easley	

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Housing Element Goal

“Our vision is to promote the development of a broad range of housing to meet the diverse needs of our residents.”

## Housing Element Objectives

- Housing affordability should be maintained and/or improved

## Housing Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Encourage accredited organizations to improve options in quality and affordable housing, and projects as economic development catalysts that provide attractive housing options and amenities to seniors, young professionals and other population groups

**ACTIONS:** Create an economic and regulatory environment that is conducive to housing investment, housing quality and housing affordability

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: Planning Commission and Department of Community Development. Supporting Agencies: Pickens County Assessor, SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority, local housing authorities and similar organizations.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2023-2028



ANTIQUES







# 5

## LAND USE



# 5. LAND USE

All required planning elements influence, in some way, the land use element. The findings, projections, and conclusions from each element will, as they should, influence the amount of land needed in the future for various uses. The Land Use element should be used with the Future Development map as the primary tools when making land development decisions. Ideally, new land uses should be consistent with those uses encouraged and supported by the Comprehensive Plan.

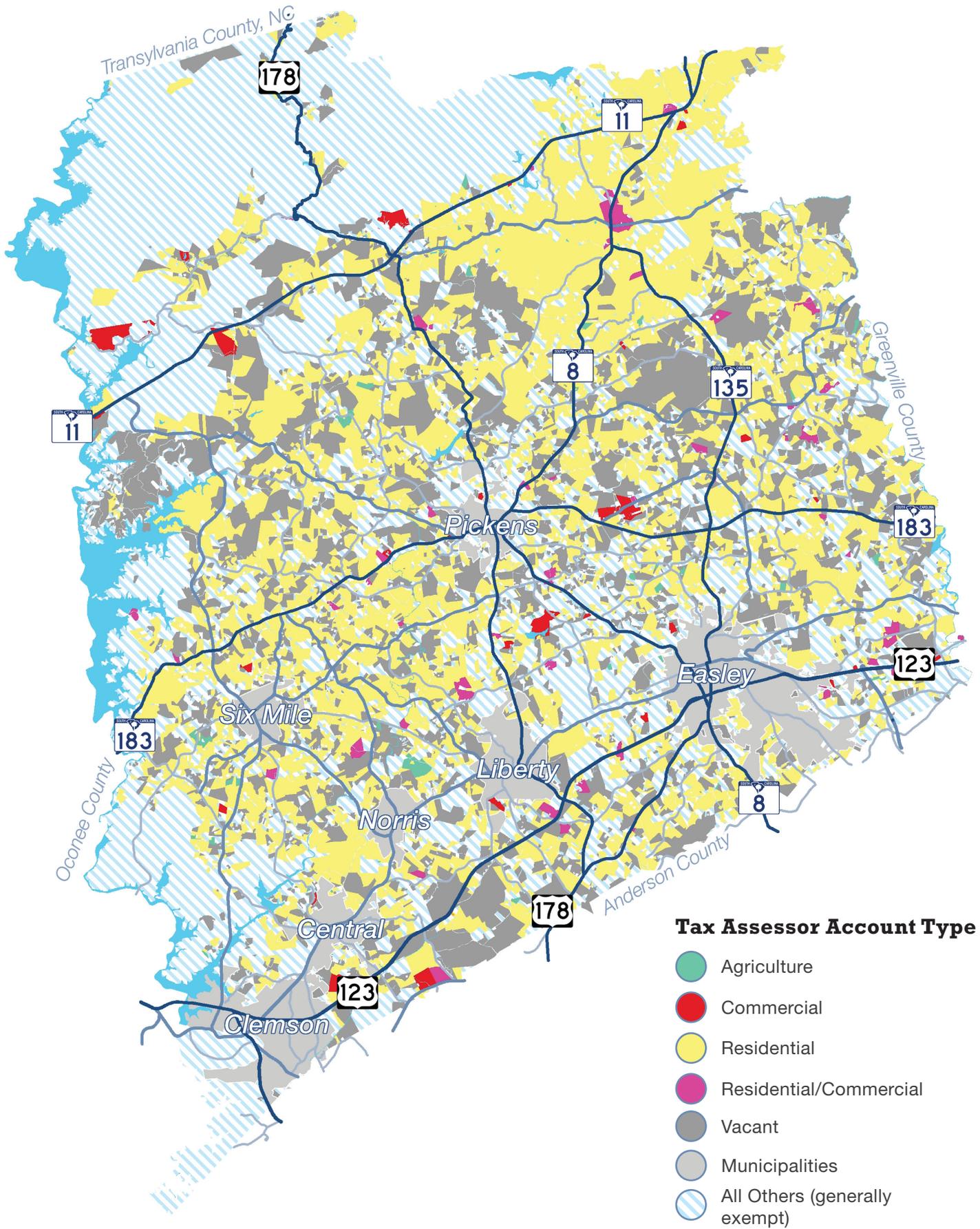
## EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land uses found in Pickens County reflect its rural and suburban character. To assess existing land uses, information from the County Tax Assessor was referenced and is shown in the map on the facing page. A large portion of the community is exempt from County tax assessment, largely by virtue of being public land (Table Rock State Park in the north of the County, the Clemson Experimental Forest in the southwest, etc.) or because that are within an incorporated municipality. Of those areas that are registered with the tax assessor, the majority are dedicated to residential development, and a substantial portion are vacant lands. Commercial, Agricultural, and joint Residential/Commercial properties take up an incredibly small portion of the county’s land area. While detailed data is not readily available, much of the county’s commercial land is concentrated in the cores of the seven municipalities that call Pickens County home.

*Land Use Distribution*

Use	Total Acreage	Total Parcels	% of Total Acreage
Agriculture	865	43	<1%
Commercial	1976	37	1%
Residential (including Mobile Home)	99,781	3,880	31%
Residential/Commercial	2,163	55	1%
Vacant	63,897	3,041	20%
Municipalities	22,085	7	7%
All Others (generally exempt)	127,682	N/A	40%

Pickens County Land Uses by Tax Assessor Account Type



# CHARACTER AREA MAP

A character area map works to articulate the vision the community has for development and how different parts of the county should look, feel, and operate in the future. The map is intended to be illustrative of the types of uses and building and development forms that should be encouraged and how different geographic areas should differ and interact with each other.

The character area map was based on the character area map in the previous comprehensive plan, and was updated based on the input provided by the stakeholder committee and through broader community engagement.

## Character Area Descriptions

### Recreation and Open Space

This category corresponds with parks and areas designated for conservation. It includes such places as forested tracts owned by Clemson University, the State of South Carolina, and Pickens County. Flood plains and stream buffers will typically be included in this category since they are generally not developable, or are developable under very limited and strict circumstances.

### Agricultural Preservation

The Agricultural Preservation character area provides large areas that encourage farming operations. Predominant uses include intensive agricultural production, forestry, and conservation. This character area allows for agriculture-related commercial uses and cottage industries. Very low density (1 unit per 10 acres) residential uses within the character area are the norm, with primarily scattered single-family homes, or compatible large lot, open space, and equestrian-oriented subdivisions.

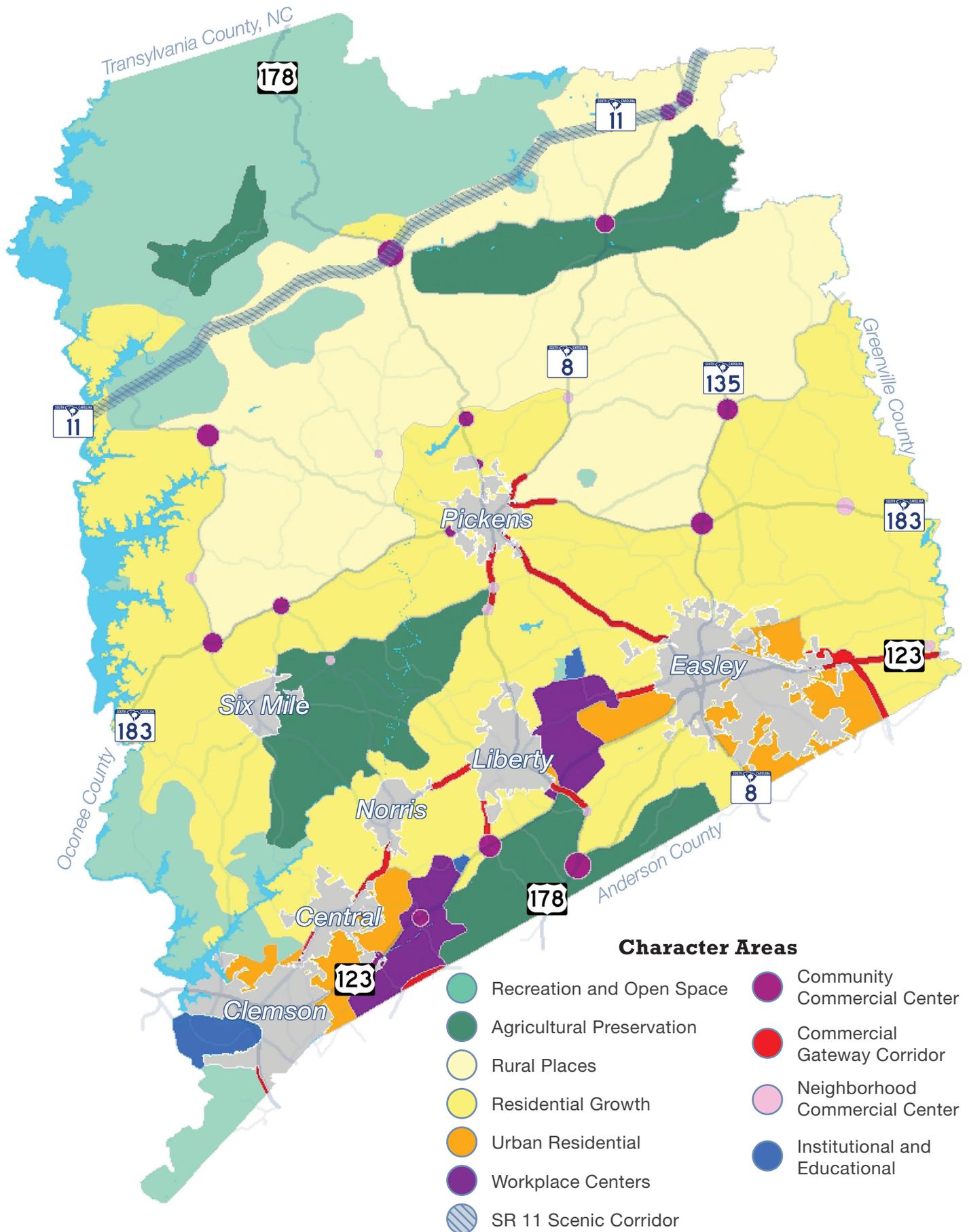
The character area map is shown on the facing page and descriptions of each area are shown in the sections below. These descriptions are intended to give an idea of the vision for the future for each area, and to provide guidance to decision makers as they consider development and public investment throughout the county. These descriptions are not intended to directly limit or restrict potential land uses or development forms, but rather to guide such uses and approvals according to the overall character of the area..

### Rural Places

This area intends to maintain an agrarian character in outlying areas which include active, mostly small-scale, farming operations and large homes sites. It stands on its own as a reflection of existing character, but is also considered a “transitional” area generally in between farmland preserves and residential developments. Residential uses are low density, reflecting reliance on on-site sewage disposal systems and often well water, and generally poor soil conditions for septic tank drain fields. Public sanitary sewer will not exist in this character area. While some locations in this character area may be served by public water, generally this area will continue to rely on individual wells for water supply.

### Residential Growth

These are areas located outside identified centers that are experiencing a high volume of growth. They are designated primarily for single-family homes within conventional subdivisions. Public water is available. Public sanitary sewer may be available. Densities are medium (.5 acre lot sizes) to low (1 acre lot sizes) where public water is available. If public sewage is available, duplexes and townhomes may exist. Small-scale agricultural uses may also exist.



### Urban Residential

These areas are the closest to cities and places experiencing urbanization and growth pressures. Public water and sewage exists, and these areas are served with urban services and facilities such as parks, community centers, libraries, and schools. The predominant use is conventional subdivisions of single-family homes. A mix of land use types, including townhomes and multifamily residences, mixed-use developments and community commercial centers typically will exist.

### Neighborhood Commercial Center

These areas are envisioned to be compact assortments of convenience-oriented retail stores and services at major rural crossroads that address demands of adjacent residents in less urbanized parts of the county. It might contain small-scaled commercial uses, such as a bank, grocery store, dry cleaners, and gas station, arranged in a village-like setting. It might also include a neighborhood park or elementary school. When developed in new places, they should include sidewalks and linkages to adjacent residential areas.

### Community Commercial Center

These predominately commercial areas usually surround two major transportation corridors. They are envisioned as places with compatible mixtures of higher intensity nonresidential development, such as larger scaled shopping centers and professional offices. They serve a market area of several neighborhoods. A variety of housing options may also be provided if designed in the context of a master planned development. These areas shall be designed and developed so that they are safe, attractive, and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike.

### Commercial Gateway Corridor

This character area was conceived to correspond with major road corridors into the county and its cities. It is intended to accommodate large-scale commercial uses serving the traveling public via automobile, including but not limited to “big box” retail stores, car dealerships, car washes, and large corporate offices; all such uses require careful site planning to ensure development interconnectivity and site development conformance with applicable parking, lighting, landscaping and signage standards. Commercial corridors are typically less pedestrian oriented than neighborhood and community centers.

## Workplace Centers

The intent of this character area is to provide a variety of tracts for industry and employment uses that are limited to office and business parks, distribution/service, light industrial, high technology and researching, wholesale companies, similar businesses, and mixed uses that encourage a live/work environment.. Developments adhering to planned development principals are encouraged, with a high quality overall architectural appearance.

## Institutional and Educational

This category corresponds with sites and facilities in public, or private, ownership for such uses as schools, churches, cemeteries, and public offices. Because of the nature of designating property for future public uses, this character area will typically reflect existing use of the area.

## SC 11 Scenic Corridor

The SC 11 corridor in Pickens County is part of the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway and connects a number of tourism opportunities, natural amenities, and historic sites. This area was added to acknowledge that developments on the corridor should be shielded from view of the highway and that developments focused on the natural beauty of the area should be encouraged.

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Land Use Element Goal

“Our vision is to mitigate the impact of development by encouraging the conservation of the agricultural character and natural resources of Pickens County; while protecting the rights of landowners.”

## Land Use Element Objectives

- Continue using proximity to Greenville, Atlanta, and Charlotte as an asset to the county.
- Increase access to local food sources to improve quality of life in the county by promoting small farming.

## Land Use Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Revisit the county development standards as necessary and tailor those policies to reflect the unique characteristics of the Character Areas.

**ACTION:** Revise the Unified Development Standards Ordinance as necessary

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Department of Community Development. Supporting Agencies: Planning Commission, County Council.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2022

**POLICY:** Cooperate with local municipalities and public service providers on criteria for annexations, provisions of public services (water, sewer, school siting) and designation of land uses and development standards.

**ACTION:** Establish formal communication protocols that promote discussion of development proposals with out cities and surrounding counties to ensure consistency with the strategies proposed in the Comprehensive Plan

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Department of Community Development. Supporting Agencies: Planning Commission, County Council

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2022, Ongoing

**POLICY:** Encourage higher density development within existing urban areas and urban boundaries and establish consistent City-County policies for land use mixes, intensities, and development standards.

**ACTION:** Coordinate infrastructure construction to more closely reflect the land use patterns of the municipalities

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Planning Commission. Supporting Agencies: County and Municipalities Departments of Community Development.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2022, Ongoing

**POLICY:** Develop guidelines and standards for the implementation of overlays or corridor design standards.

**ACTION:** Establish a set of standards for all overlays in Pickens County.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: Planning Commission, Department of Community Development.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2022



**POLICY:** Continue to serve as good stewards of the lands of Pickens County to preserve its quality and beauty.

**ACTION:** Continue and improve enforcement of existing code, especially related to property cleanliness, safety, and beautification.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: County Council. Supporting Agencies: Department of Community Development

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2022





# 6

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## 6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

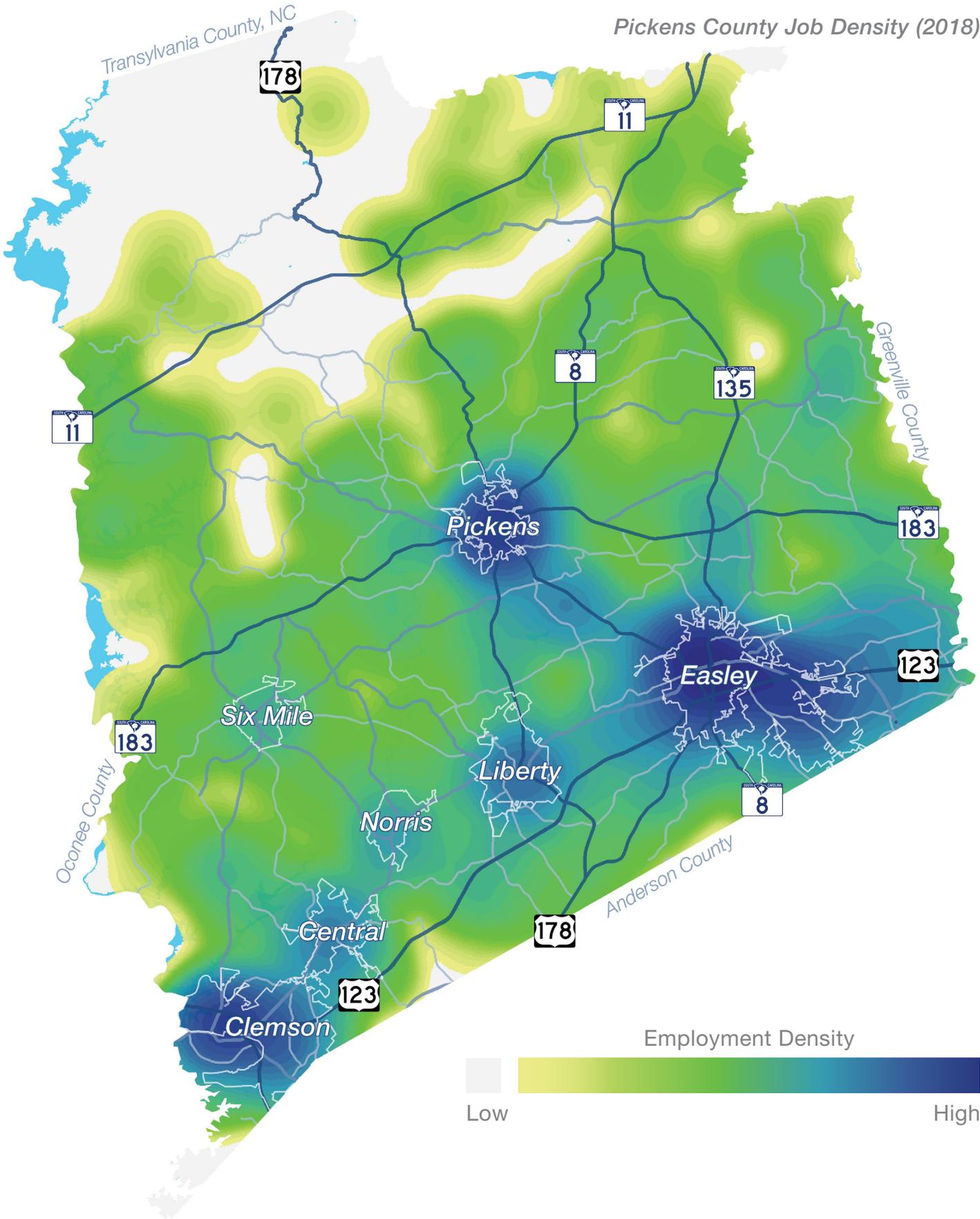


### EMPLOYMENT DENSITY

Pickens County has transformed itself from a textile capital to a county with a diverse portfolio of companies providing advanced manufacturing operations, metalworking, chemical and textile manufacturing, plastics and composites manufacturing, specialty devices, and software development.

Employment in the county is distributed roughly in the same manner as population with concentration of the jobs in Clemson, Easley, and Pickens at a density greater than one job per acre. 65 percent of the Upstate's population lives within 30-miles (45-minute drive) of the 310-acre Pickens County Commerce Park located outside of Liberty and Easley on US 123. This Class A Industrial park is home to employers: Abbott, era-contract USA, IPSUM Technologies, JR Automation Technologies, KeyMark, Inc., Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Company, Safoplast USA, TaylorMade, and United Tool and Mold.

Pickens County Job Density (2018)



# EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Pickens County is home to an estimated 36,391 total industry jobs and 2,359 establishments as of 2019. The total labor force is 58,131, where the employment rate is 96.8 percent (56,520) and the unemployment rate is 3.2 percent (1860). The 2019 average annual wage was \$42,379 in Pickens County compared to \$46,870 in the ACOG region.

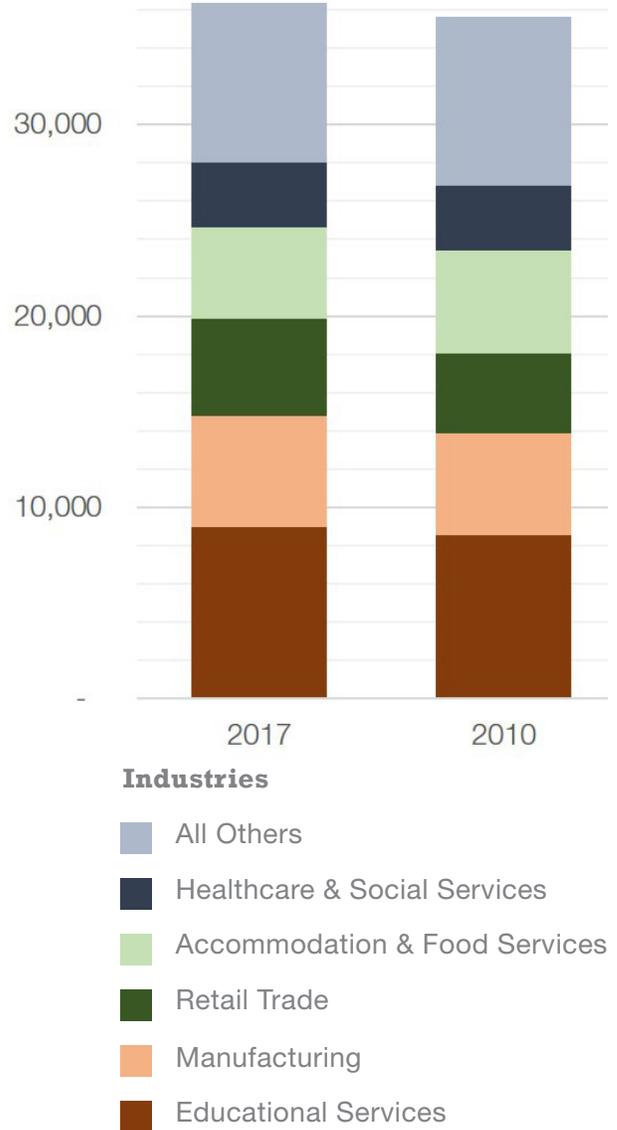
The jobs located in Pickens County are broadly distributed among a number of employment sectors with the largest sectors represented being educational services (24.7 percent), manufacturing (15.9 percent) and retail trade (14.0 percent). Manufacturing is the primary growth industry in Easley, Liberty, and Pickens which combined have approximately 130 manufacturing plants. Clemson University is a major employer with over 3,500 faculty and staff.

The top employment changes by industry in Pickens County were increases in retail trade (+900), manufacturing (+500), and educational services (+400). Decreases in employment were seen in administrative and support; waste and remediation service (-600) and accommodation and food service (-600).

## Top Changes by Industry, 2010-2017

Retail Trade	+900
Manufacturing	+500
Educational Services	+400
Administrative and Support; Waste and Remediation Services	-600
Accommodation and Food Services	-600

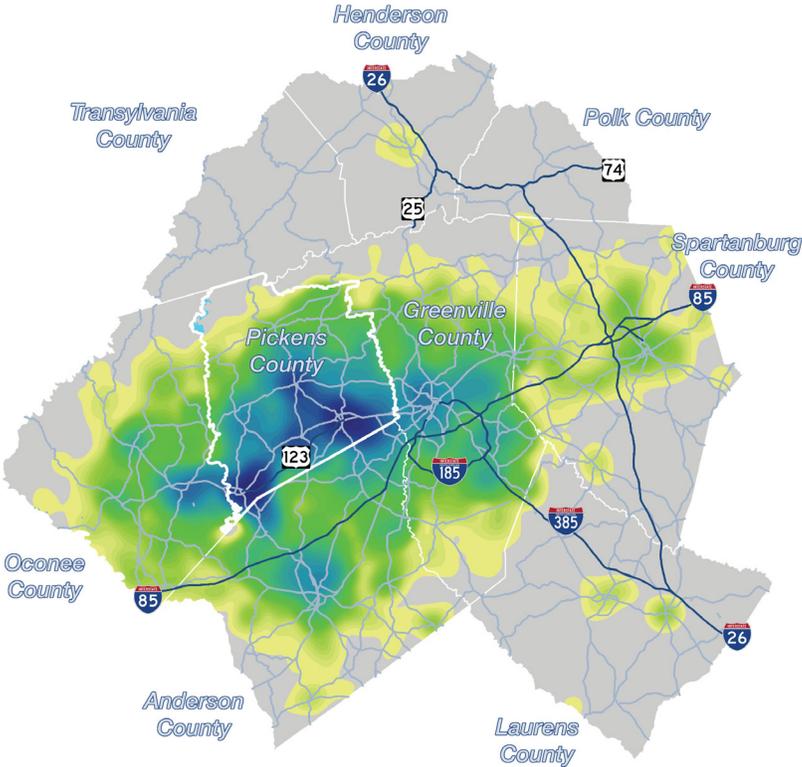
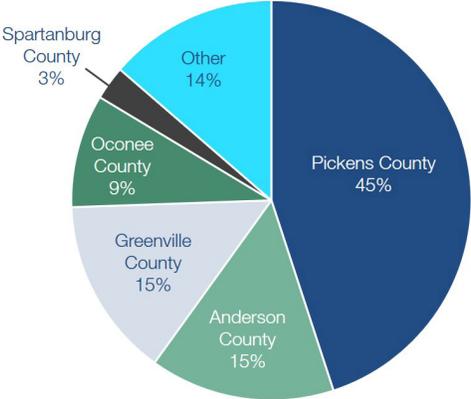
Employment by Industry



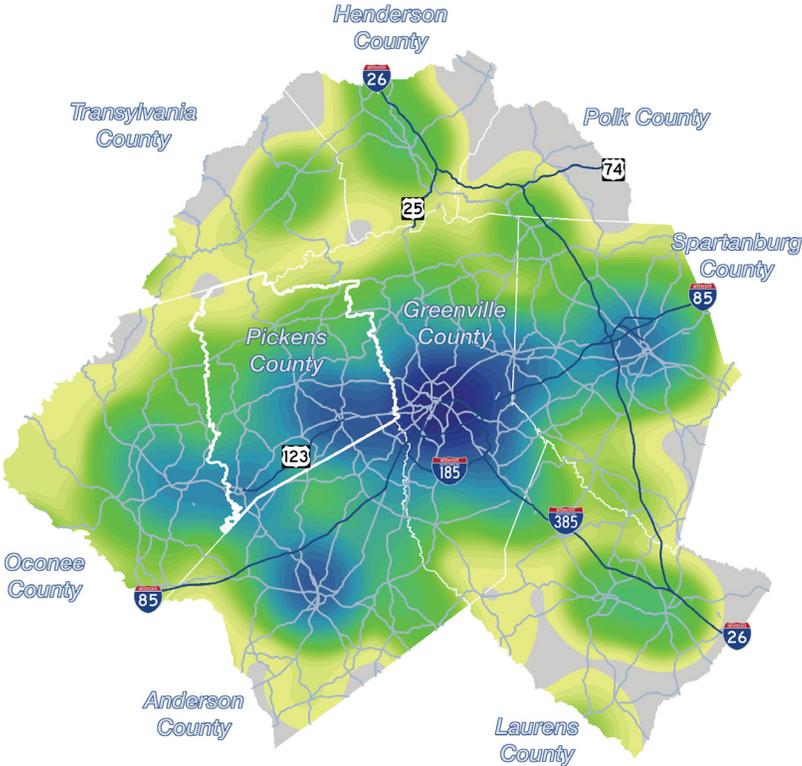
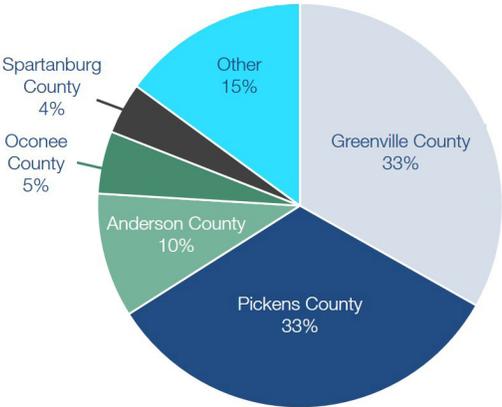
# COMMUTING DYNAMICS

Given Pickens County's relatively small base of employers, most of its working residents commute to jobs outside the County for work. While 32 percent of Pickens residents work in the county, 56 percent of Pickens workers live outside the county. A third of the residents, 17,292, commute to Greenville County and 5,410 residents commute to Anderson County.

Where Pickens Workers Live



Where Pickens Residents Work



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Economic Development Element Goal

Pickens County will leverage the County’s education system, infrastructure, and strategic location to create and attract a variety of economic opportunities to improve quality of life through increased opportunities for employment and for local goods and services.

## Economic Development Element Objectives

- Leverage presence of great educational resources, proximity to I-85, and access to Greenville to attract potential employers to, retain existing businesses throughout, and develop new ventures within Pickens County.
- Continue to protect and market the SR 11 corridor and the county’s lakes and mountains to create economic and recreational opportunities related to recreation and tourism in a way that minimizes impact to these natural resources.

## Economic Development Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Pursue a coordinated economic development strategy throughout the county.

**ACTION:** Work with municipalities and Alliance Pickens to develop a coordinated economic development strategy for the county.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Alliance Pickens. Supporting Agencies: Municipal governments, local Chambers of Commerce

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing

**POLICY:** Intentionally work to develop, retain, and promote local small businesses.

**ACTION:** Create a dedicated position within Alliance Pickens to work with existing and potential small businesses.

**AGENCIES:** Alliance Pickens

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing, starting 2022

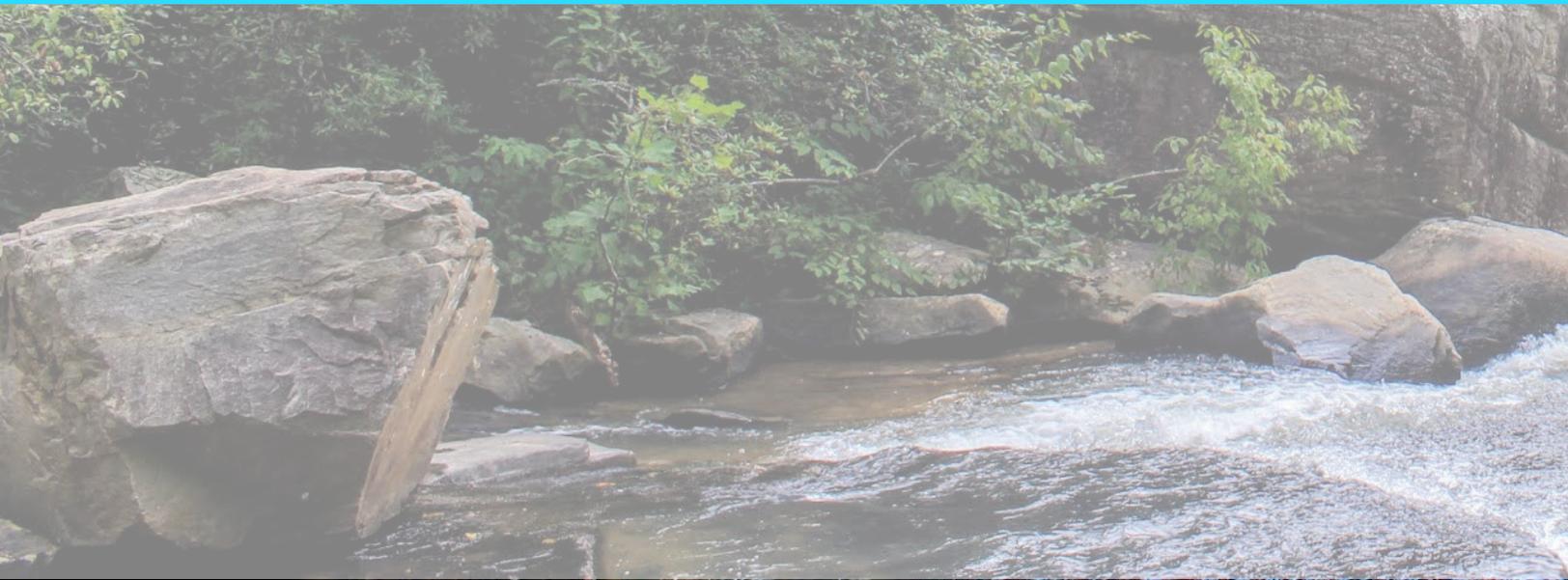
**POLICY:** Work to identify and incentivize key locations for ongoing future commercial and industrial employment.

**ACTION:** Coordinate to identify available land and appropriate tools to encourage commercial and industrial employment in strategic locations around the county.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Alliance Pickens. Supporting Agencies: Pickens County Community Development, Pickens County Council.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing







# 7

## TRANSPORTATION



# 7. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation considers transportation facilities, including major road improvements, new road construction, transit projects, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and other elements of a transportation network.

As Pickens County’s low density residential development style is likely to continue over the coming decades, there will be additional needs for new roadways and additional capacity on the existing network. Roads and bridges that connect subdivisions to state and/or city streets will be maintained by the Pickens County Roads and Bridge Department with SCDOT maintaining state roads and municipalities maintaining city streets. The roads and Bridges Department is also responsible for addressing culvert pipes that need replacing, patching potholes, and cleaning out ditches, whether due to age or general maintenance along county roads.

Clemson Area Transit (CAT) is a fare-free transit service in Pickens County provided by Clemson University, City of Clemson, Town of Central, Town of Pendleton, City of Seneca, Anderson County, SCDOT, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The CAT operates over ten 40-foot Proterra electric buses, seven 40-foot NOVA low-floor buses, and two 62-foot articulated NOVA buses, “Caterpillars” – the first and only two articulated buses operating in South Carolina.

The County has 651 miles (1400 lane miles) of county roads, 234 miles of state primary highway system, 477 miles of state secondary highway system, and 75 county bridges. There is one airport within the County.

# CURRENT TRANSPORTATION PLANS

ACOG works with SCDOT and the Anderson, Greenville-Pickens, and Spartanburg MPOs to develop efficient, multi-modal transportation system to increase the mobility of people and goods within Appalachian Region. ACOG works with SCDOT for long-range planning of rural transportation improvements including highway infrastructure, public transit, planning studies, and other needs. ACOG also works with jurisdictions to prioritize local needs and make recommendations. Members of Pickens County Council sit on their Board of Directors and county staff, along with members of County Council, and other citizens actively participate in their transportation planning process. The Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS) is the MPO for the Greenville Urbanized Area.

GPATS works with road projects, safety projects, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and public transit while responsible for regional transportation planning and overseeing transportation investments. The long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) are documents that guide GPATS's operations.

Adopted in June 2016 and updated in January 2021, the GPATS Horizon 2040 (Long Range Transportation Plan) has roadway recommendations including 123 corridor improvements and 137 intersection improvements throughout the six-county region. Design guidelines were recommended for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connections. The LRTP establishes existing and future transportation needs of the region and allocated projected revenue to transportation programs.

The 2021 – 2027 Transportation Improvement Program was adopted May 2020 and updated January 2021. The Appalachian Region TIP is a

short-range program, developed every two years, that schedules projects to be funded in the next five years and indicated project priorities. Projects move from the LRTP to TIP based upon the prioritization in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and are then scheduled for implementation over five year periods. Project planning must be completed and included in the TIP, regardless of project schedule, to be eligible for funding.

The UPWP is the element of the planning process that identifies the planning activities that must be listed in the UPWP to be eligible for funding. The Unified Planning Work Program is updated annually by the County.

## TRAVEL DEMAND MODELING

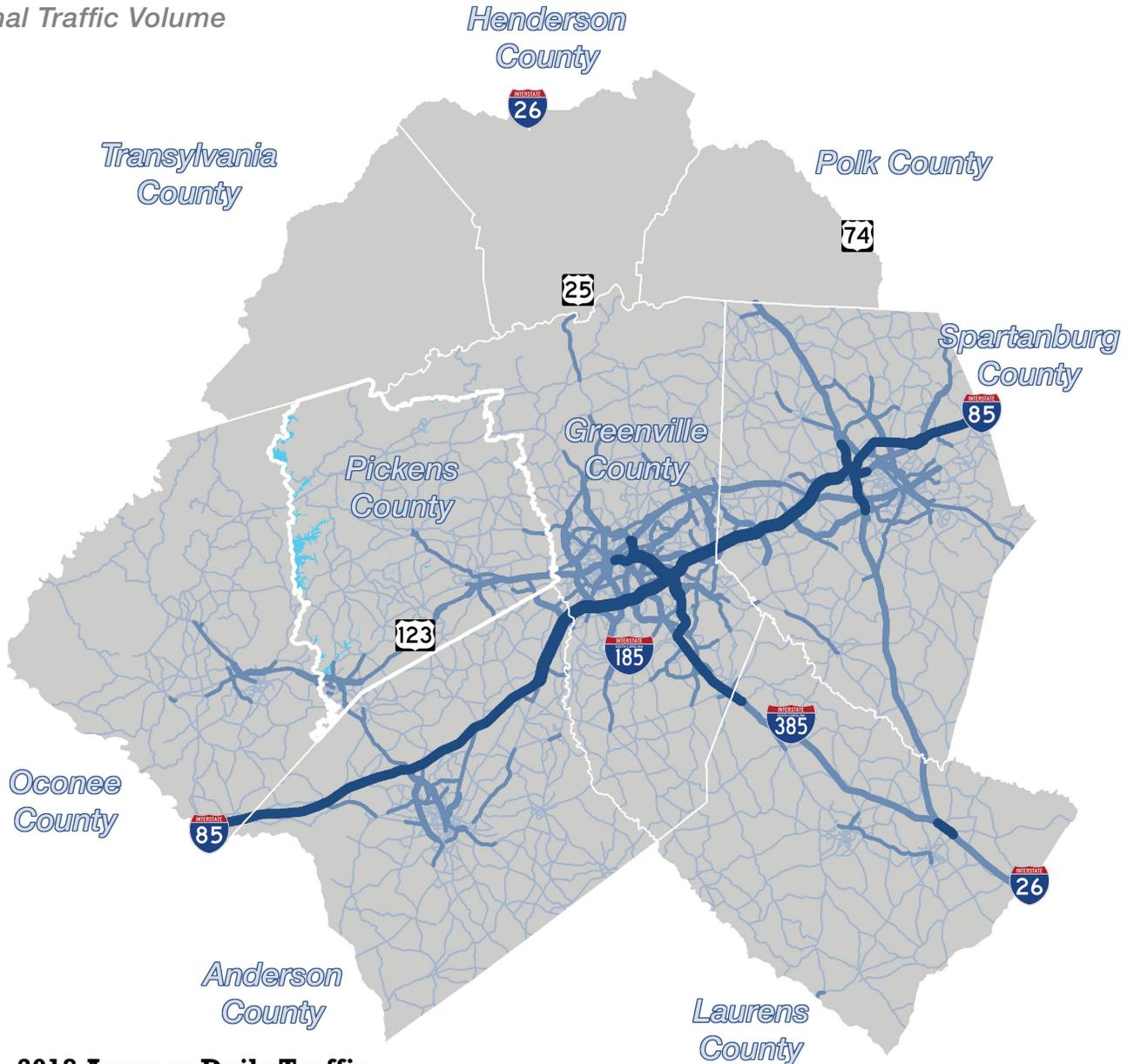
Travel demand modeling uses current travel behavior to estimate travel behavior and travel demand for a specific future time frame based on a number of assumptions. The results of the model provide information such as forecasted travel volumes on roadways; truck forecasts; and college/university travel. Traditionally this model has a four-step process used for analysis that answers the following questions:

- **Trip generation** - how many trips will people make?
- **Trip distribution** - where will people be traveling to and from?
- **Mode choice** - how will people travel?
- **Trip assignment** - what routes will people take?

The majority of Pickens County roads, from 2018 average daily traffic counts, have 10,000 or fewer vehicles per day (vpd) which would be considered low volume. US 123 is the busiest road in Pickens County with a traffic volume of more than 10,000

vpd and with more than 20,000 vpd in Clemson and Easley. Connecting Pickens to Easley, SC 8 has high volume for the county with approximately 14,000 vpd near Arial, an unincorporated town center.

*Regional Traffic Volume*



**2018 Average Daily Traffic (South Carolina)**

- 10,000 Vehicles per Day (vpd) or
- 10,000 - 20,000
- 20,000 - 40,000
- 40,000 - 80,000
- 80,000 vpd or

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Transportation Element Goal

“Our vision is to improve and maintain transportation networks for the purpose of traffic safety, efficiency, and pedestrian accommodation; and to plan a self-sustaining local and regional public transportation system.”

## Transportation Element Objectives

- Improve and increase roadways into and out of Pickens County
- Improve access to public transportation
- Expand Clemson Area Transit (CAT) to provide new service areas to improve transit across the county

## Transportation Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Establish and fund a Transportation Planning function of the Pickens County Government.

**ACTIONS:** Develop a Long-Range Transportation Plan specifically and continually fund Long Range Transportation Planning.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: County Council, County Administration. Supporting Agencies: Department of Community Development, Planning Commission.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2023-2025

**POLICY:** Continue implementation of a maintenance schedule for County roadways.

**ACTIONS:** Yearly updates of the County Road Maintenance and Paving Schedule.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: County Engineer. Supporting Agencies: County Council, County Administration.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing/Continuous

**POLICY:** Upgrade and maintain the county road system in a manner that meets the needs of Pickens County’s growing population and provides safe and efficient routes through the county.

**ACTION:** Develop a road improvement schedule.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: County Engineer. Supporting Agencies: County Council, County Administration, Planning Commission.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing/Continuous





8

COMMUNITY  
FACILITIES

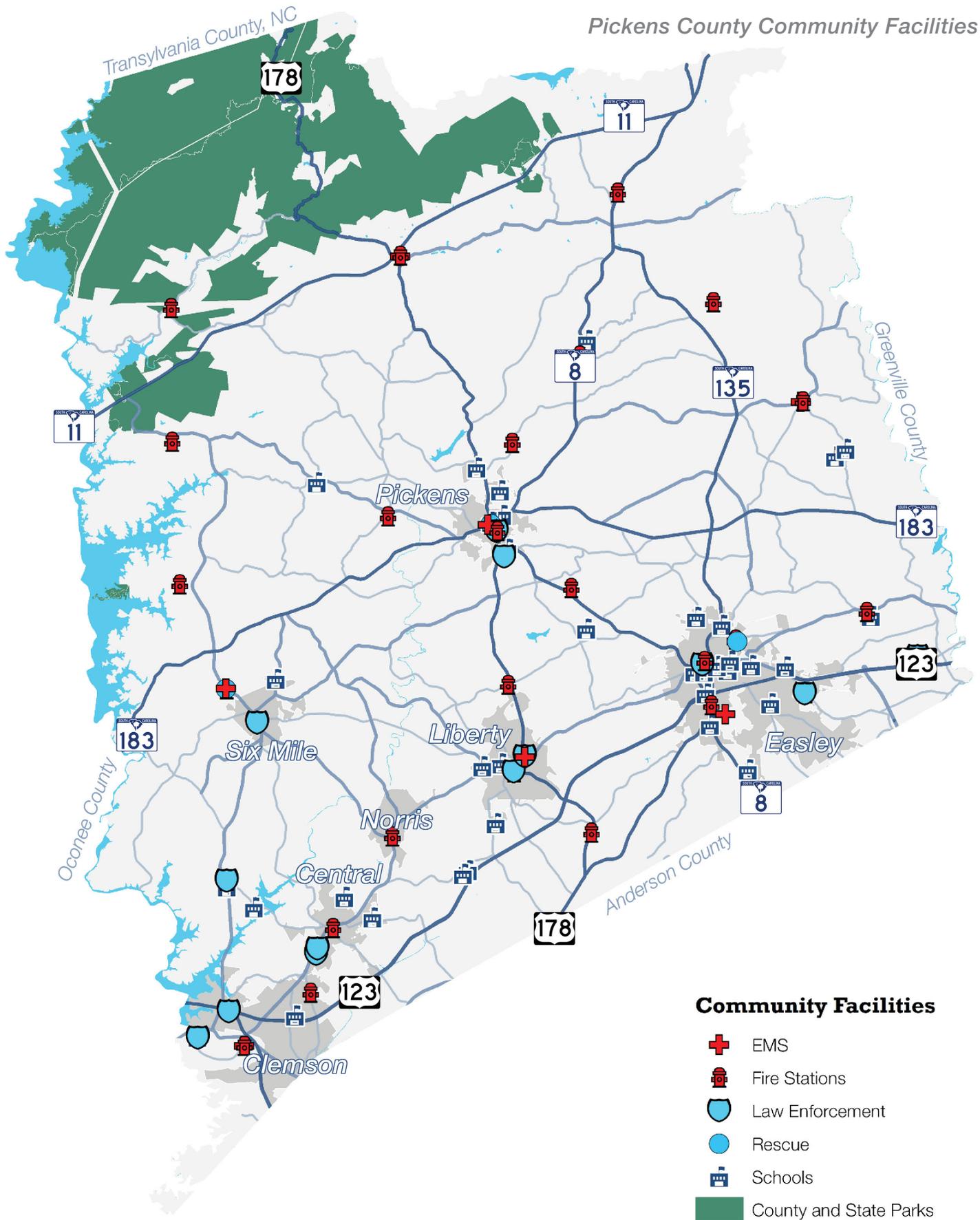
# 8. COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Community facilities describes the infrastructure, property, and spaces that are operated for the benefit of the public. This element covers the following seven essential public functions:

- Public safety,
- Emergency services,
- Education,
- Parks and recreation,
- Solid waste management, and
- Water supply, treatment, and distribution.

Pickens County Community Facilities



**Community Facilities**

-  EMS
-  Fire Stations
-  Law Enforcement
-  Rescue
-  Schools
-  County and State Parks

# PUBLIC SAFETY

## Policing

There are five municipal police departments and one university campus police department within the County: Easley, Liberty, Pickens, Central, Clemson City, and Clemson University.

The Pickens County Sheriff’s Office facility not only serves citizens of Pickens County, it also houses the Pickens County Detention Center, Traffic Court, Office of Magistrate, and the Pickens County Public Service Answering Point for E-911 emergency dispatch. Programs are available for community watch alerts, citizen volunteers, and Explorer youth. The Sheriff’s office divisions include:

- Administration Support,
- Detective,
- Uniform patrol,
- Detention / Judicial Services, and
- The following Specialized Units:
  - Aviation
  - Canine
  - Lake patrol
  - Forensics
  - Narcotics
  - SWAT

Uniform Control Division is the backbone of Pickens County Sheriff’s Office. Administration support, detective, and detention / judicial services all serve the Uniform Patrol. 41 Uniform Patrol Deputies are full-time reporting to the one Captain. They patrol six zones covering almost 500 square acres. Each zone is determined by population density and geographical layout.

## Fire Protection

There are 15 fire departments that serve the 13 fire districts in the county with a combination of full-time and trained volunteer staff. The 13 fire districts have approximately 152 volunteers and 64 paid firefighters. The Pickens County Fire Chief’s Association was formed in 1985 to organize regular meetings and coordination between all the departments.

Fire Department	Districts Served
Central	Central City
Central Rural	Central City
Clemson University	Clemson City Clemson University
Dacusville	Dacusville Rural
Easley	Easley City Easley Rural
Crosswell	Crosswell Rural
Holly Springs	Holly Springs Rural Rocky Bottom Rural
Liberty	Liberty City
Liberty Rural	Liberty Rural
Norris	Norris
Pickens	Pickens City
Pickens Rural	Pickens Rural
Pumpkintown	Pumpkintown Rural
Six Mile Rural	Six Mile City Six Mile Rural
Shady Grove	Shady Grove Rural
The Springs	Cliffs at Keowee Springs
Vineyards	Cliffs at the Vineyards

## Health & Emergency Services

### *Emergency Medical Services*

Pickens County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responds to the pre-hospital medical needs of citizens and visitors of the County for emergency and non-emergency situations. Pickens County operates eight EMS stations in Easley, Liberty, Pickens, Central, Dacusville, Six Mile, and Holly Springs with approximately 90 full- and part-time employees. Each station has one Advanced Life Support emergency ambulance with a minimum staff of at least one paramedic and one certified technician.

EMS Stations	8
Full-time Employees	58
Part-time Employees	36
Advanced Life Support Calls	7,362
Basic Life Support Calls	6,615

### *Hospitals*

Two hospitals are located in Pickens County: Prisma Health Baptist Easley Hospital (formerly Baptist Easley Medical Center) and AnMed Health Cannon. Prisma Health Baptist Easley Hospital is a 109-bed facility serving the Easley community with surgery, obstetrics, orthopedics, emergency medicine, radiology, and imaging and diagnostics services with an adjacent 40,000 square-foot outpatient services facility houses Fleetwood Convenient Care. The AnMed Health Cannon, previously known as Cannon Memorial, located in Pickens with a four-bed critical care unit and emergency medical 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. AnMed Health Cannon participates in the South Carolina Hospital Association’s PricePoint program an online resource to provide meaningful information about healthcare cost.

### *Emergency Management*

The County’s Emergency Management coordinates and integrates all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve “the capability” to mitigate against, prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism or other manmade disasters.

Divisions of emergency management:

- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC),
- Hazardous Materials Response (HAZMAT),
- Volunteer Rescue Squads,
- Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) Communications (Amateur Radio Operators), and
- Water Response Team.

Rescue Stations	8
Volunteer Rescue	66
Rescue Calls	~2,000 yearly
HazMat Team Members	28
Water Resource Team	48
CERT Team Members	19

The LEPC is composed of members from government, local industry, fire, HAZMAT, Law enforcement, and volunteers. The committee maintains all reporting of hazardous chemicals used by industry or other operations within the County under the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) Title III Federal program.

# EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

## Public School District

The School District of Pickens County is the 12th largest school district in South Carolina and a county-wide school system serving the community with a total of 23 schools. Accredited through AdvancED (formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools), SDPC is recognized throughout the nation as a “Quality School System.” All public schools and teachers are fully accredited by the South Carolina Department of Education. The district is composed of five attendance areas: Dacusville, Daniel, Easley, Liberty, and Pickens serving approximately 16,409 students. Of the 23 schools in the district, there are 14 elementary schools, five middle schools, four high schools, and three special programs.

Elementary Schools	
Ambler	Liberty Primary School (Chastain Road Elementary)
Central Academy of the Arts	Hagood
Clemson	McKissick Academy of Science & Technology
Croswell	Pickens
Dacusville	West End
East End	Six Mile
Forest Acres	

Middle Schools	
Dacusville	Liberty
R.C Edwards	R.H. Gettys
Pickens	

High Schools	
Daniel	Easley
Pickens	Pickens County Career & Technology Center
Liberty	

Special Programs	
Daniel	Easley
Pickens	Pickens County Career & Technology Center
Liberty	

## College and Universities

### Clemson University

Clemson University is a public land-grant research university and was founded in 1889 in Clemson, South Carolina. The campus is situated on 1,400 acres in Upstate South Carolina, bordered by Lake Hartwell and the Experimental Forest.

There are approximately 21,650 undergraduate students and 5,690 graduate students. The University is the second-largest university in student population in South Carolina. Clemson offers 80 majors, 90 minors, and 130 graduate program degrees with a 16:1 student -to-teacher ratio. The first-year retention rate is 93.6%. In 2019, Clemson was awarded \$106.3 million in external research funding.

There are five colleges within Clemson University:

- agriculture, forestry, and life sciences,
- architecture, arts, and humanities,
- business and behavioral science,
- engineering and science, and
- health, education, and human development.

The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges and Schools and is able to award bachelors, masters, education specialist, and doctoral degrees.

Clemson boast several special event facilities for the community, including football and basketball facilities in addition the Brooks Center, a fine arts production facility.

### Southern Wesleyan

An institution of The Wesleyan Church, Southern Wesleyan University (SWU) is a private, nonprofit Christian university committed to a liberal arts and professional education. The University was founded in 1906 in Central, South Carolina with a main campus residing on 350 acres.

Approximately 1,345 total students enrolled made up by 768 on-campus undergraduate students, 317 online undergraduate students, and 260 online graduate students. There are 35 percent of students commuting for the on-campus programs. The University employs 54 full-time faculty. With over 50 areas of study, five graduate degree programs, and one doctoral degree are offered with a 14:1 student to faculty ratio. In 2016, SWU was accepted as a full member in the NCAA Division II. The first doctoral program, online Doctor of Education (Ed. D) in Curriculum and Assessment, was approved by the SACSCOC in 2018.



### Tri-County Technical School

Tri-County Technical College is a two-year community and technical college serving Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties founded in 1962. Approximately 9,000 students are enrolled in more than 70 major fields of study at four full-service campuses (Pendleton, Anderson, Easley, and Oconee County), Industrial Technology Center, or online. The main campus is located in Pendleton in Anderson County, South Carolina.

The Easley Campus of Tri-County Technical College opened in 2011 providing higher education programs and services to the residents of Pickens County and surrounding areas. Academic degree programs offered:

- General Studies and University Transfer
- Associate of Arts
- Associate of Science Degree
- Practical Nursing
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Business / Marketing
- Computer Technology.

The Easley Campus is home to the Pickens County QuickJobs Center, a partnership between Pickens County, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (SC DEW) and the College’s Corporate and Community Education Division (CCE). The QuickJobs Center provides short-term training in employee/workforce development and essential job skills.

### Libraries

The library system in Pickens County began in 1935, has one headquarters, three branches and approximately 96,700 registered users. The mission of the Pickens County Library System is to provide all county residents with access to information through development of appropriate collections and services that meet the informational, educational, cultural, and entertainment needs of the residents. Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Library is the main library in the County and located in Easley. This headquarters provides a large meeting space for groups. Branch locations are Central-Clemson Library in Central, Hampton Memorial Library in Easley, Sarlin Library in Liberty, and Village Library in Pickens.

Each branch provides many services to the community such as:

- Children’s Services
- History & Genealogy resources (Easley),
- United States Passport Services,
- House calls for Pickens County residents,
- Seed Library,
- Internet and Computers,
- Meeting and Study Space,
- Library of things to borrow, and
- Outreach.

Headquarters	1
Branches	3
Number of Registered Users	96,732
Library Holdings	240,497
Annual Public Service Hours	12,064

Pickens County Library System (PCLS) offer multiple programs to the community. PCLS was awarded the Bee Cause Project Grant. Each library branch has observation hives, provided by grant funding, to inspire creativity, teach collaboration, and cultivate critical thinking and STEAM skills in observers. Teen Book Box subscription is for ages 12 to 18 with monthly reading catered toward specific interests, candies/snacks, and bookish items. The Teen Book Box is supported in part by a South Carolina State Library grant.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

Nestled in the foothills of the mountains, Pickens County is the only county in South Carolina that claims ownership of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Pickens County offers 31 parks with a variety of amenities such as walking trails, playgrounds, restrooms, shelters, ball fields, and dog parks.

### State Parks and Public Land

Protected **Jocassee Gorge Wilderness Area** is South Carolina's premier mountain property containing about 43,500 acres. It is located in northern Pickens County and eastern Oconee County. The heavily wooded property surrounds Lake Jocassee and contains many streams, hardwoods, and rare, unusual plants and animals. Purchased by SCDNR in 1998 for its unique biology, special recreational opportunities, and because it is a large, rugged and remote property. The Jocassee Gorges management plans main objective is to maintain the natural character of the area with a secondary objective to provide public recreation compatible with the area's natural character. Recreational activities include hunting, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding. Jocassee Gorge also provides opportunities for scientific study and education.

**Table Rock State Park** is nearly 3,000 acres of natural beauty north of Highway 11 in Pickens. The state park gets its name from the iconic open rockface that overlooks the mountains and dense forest of the Blue Ridge Escarpment region. The park's cabins and facilities were built in 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps and are on the National Register

of Historic Places. The park is designated a South Carolina Heritage Trust Site. The many hiking trails serve as an access point for the 76-mile Foothills Trail that hikers use to travel between several connected South Carolina State Parks. Several Table Rock State Park hiking trails go past mountain streams and waterfalls to the tops of Pinnacle and Table Rock mountains. Amenities:

- 2 park lakes: 36-acre Pinnacle Lake and 67-acre Lake Ooleney
- Historic lodge for events
- 94 campsites for tent or RV camping
- Old-fashioned swimming hole with high dive
- 4 picnic shelters
- Monthly bluegrass jam

Keowee-Toxaway State Natural Area located in Sunset, South Carolina is almost 1,000-acre park with stunning views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and access to Lake Keowee. The park also provides access to outstanding rock outcrops located off the

5.5 miles of trails for hiking and walking. Wildflowers are abundant with two rare species: Alleghany spurge and ginseng. The Park features five picnic shelters, 14 tent sites for tent camping, ten RV campsites, and a three bedroom cabin on the shore of Lake Keowee with private dock.

**Poe Creek State Forest** is a 2,498-acre tract in Oconee and Pickens Counties near Lake Jocassee. Hunting, trout fishing, and hiking are the recreation available with connection to 10-acre Long Shoals Roadside Park overlooking Little Eastatoee Creek.

The US Army Corps of Engineers developed **Lake Hartwell** and manages a lakeside campground off Highway 76 in Pickens County. Twin Lakes Campground offers 102 tent and RV campsites. It is surrounded by part of the Clemson Experimental Forest.

## Clemson University

Clemson University also maintains land that is accessible to the public. The **Clemson Experimental Forest** consists of 17,500 acres in Pickens and Oconee Counties. Kresgree Hall for retreats and conferences.

## South Carolina Botanical Gardens

From a camellia collection in the 1950s, the South Carolina Botanical Garden (SCBG) has grown into a 295-acre garden, natural and manicured landscapes for enjoyment and education to all people. The SCBG strives to serve as an interdisciplinary resource focusing on teaching, research, and outreach that advances awareness and understanding of plants, animals, minerals, and culture. In 1992, the State designated the botanical garden located on Clemson University campus. The Garden is accessible by paths and trails, many of which are hard surfaced. History buffs will enjoy the Hanover House (ca. 1716) and the Hunt Family Cabin (ca. 1826). Art connoisseurs will want to experience the Garden's collection of site-specific, nature-based sculptures and the art galleries

in the Fran Hanson Visitor's Center. Other points of interest include the many demonstration gardens, such as the Camellia Garden, Wildlife Habitat Garden, Xeriscape Garden, Hosta Garden, 70-acre Schoenike Arboretum, Heritage Gardens and nature trails.

## County Parks

The **Pickens County Parks Proposal** was presented in May 2021. This proposal recommended master planned and other projects for each of the County's parks in line with other ongoing efforts.

**Mile Creek County Park** is a fisherman's paradise on Lake Keowee with over seven miles of shoreline, 150-foot dock and boat ramp. Amenities at the park are 10 lakefront cabin rentals, three paved boat ramps, two courtesy docks, five dock slips, 60 campsites with water and electric hookups, kayak rentals, three comfort stations, recreational facilities, and plenty of picnic areas.

**Catechee Point and Equoni Point Parks** sit along the Twelve Mile River, and honor the Cherokee heritage of Pickens County and the surrounding area. Each of these parks offer kayak launches and picnic shelters. Plans are in place to improve safety and signage at each park.

The **Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Byway**, commonly referred to as Highway 11, is the front porch of the outdoor experience in Pickens County. Regardless of age, gender or activity, our stretch of Highway 11 is the cornerstone of the Pickens County experience and provides year-round recreation opportunities.

In following the recommendations set forth in the Pickens County Branding & Marketing Study, Pickens County has created anchor parks along the scenic byway, giving Pickens County ownership of Highway 11. Creating these parks on either end of Highway 11 allows the county to own the mountains and adventure experience.

**Grant Meadow Overlook:** Thanks to years of work, Pickens County recently completed construction of a scenic overlook for Table Rock. This overlook offers a safe location for people to park and enjoy one of the best views of Table Rock, the state’s most photographed natural feature, right here in Pickens County.

**Long Shoals Recreation Area:** This recreation site was formerly under the management of the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Effective September 13, 2021, Pickens County entered into a lease agreement to manage the newly renamed Long Shoals Recreation Area, a 10 acre tract of land along the Little Eastatoe Creek. Long Shoals is currently home to a small sliding rock, picnic area and nature trail. PRT plans to undergo a number of safety and signage improvements at the site.

## Municipal Parks and Playfields

The seven municipalities in Pickens County have a greater concentration of neighborhood and community parks and playfields, most of which have been assessed in the Pickens County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The City of Easley has begun implementing a long-term bicycle and pedestrian master plan, which will meet the needs of its urban population and potentially invite development of a greater network for bicyclists through the county.

Duke Energy, which developed Lake Jocassee and Lake Keowee, helps to maintain several recreation and access points along these lakes. There are three public boat access areas to Lake Keowee in Pickens County: Mile Creek Park (leased to Pickens County), Warpath Access Area, and Crow Creek Access Area. A public boat access area was created at Lake Saluda in 2009, through a partnership between the Saluda Lake Homeowners Association and Easley Combined Utility. The boat ramp provides the only public access to the lake from Pickens County and is located next to the ECU water treatment facility.

The **Doodle Trail** is a 7.5-mile rails-to-trails

partnership between the City of Easley and the City of Pickens that opened Memorial Day Weekend 2015. The multi-use trail is open from dawn to dusk for biking, walking, running, and rollerblading. Until 2013, the Doodle railway hauled a variety of commodities to and from Pickens and Easley including food products, textiles, and automobile parts.

**Doodle Park** opened in June 2019 at the trailhead of the Doodle Trail in downtown Pickens. The Park sits on the former headquarters of the Pickens Railroad Company before its purchase by City of Pickens. Doodle Park includes restroom facilities, a railroad depot museum, the AnMed Health Cannon Marketplace Pavilion, benches, bike racks, and a train-themed playground.

**Town Creek Bike Park (TCBP)** is a premier off-road bicycling facility within the city limits of Pickens. The nearly 100-acre park located just one mile from historic downtown Pickens. Completion of the park marks TCBP as one of the first bike parks in the state that offers unique riding features designed to enhance the riders experience through education, challenge and environmental awareness. Features of the Town Creek Bike Park:

- 8’ wide paved trail called the “Appalachian Lumber Greenway” that follows most of the existing trail along the historic Appalachian Lumber Company railroad route and provides a multi-use and ADA accessible path between the Pickens Recreation Center and the Playground of Promise
- 4,000’ FlowCoaster
- Berm turn wall rides
- Dirt Jumps
- Earthen Rollers
- Wooden Rollers

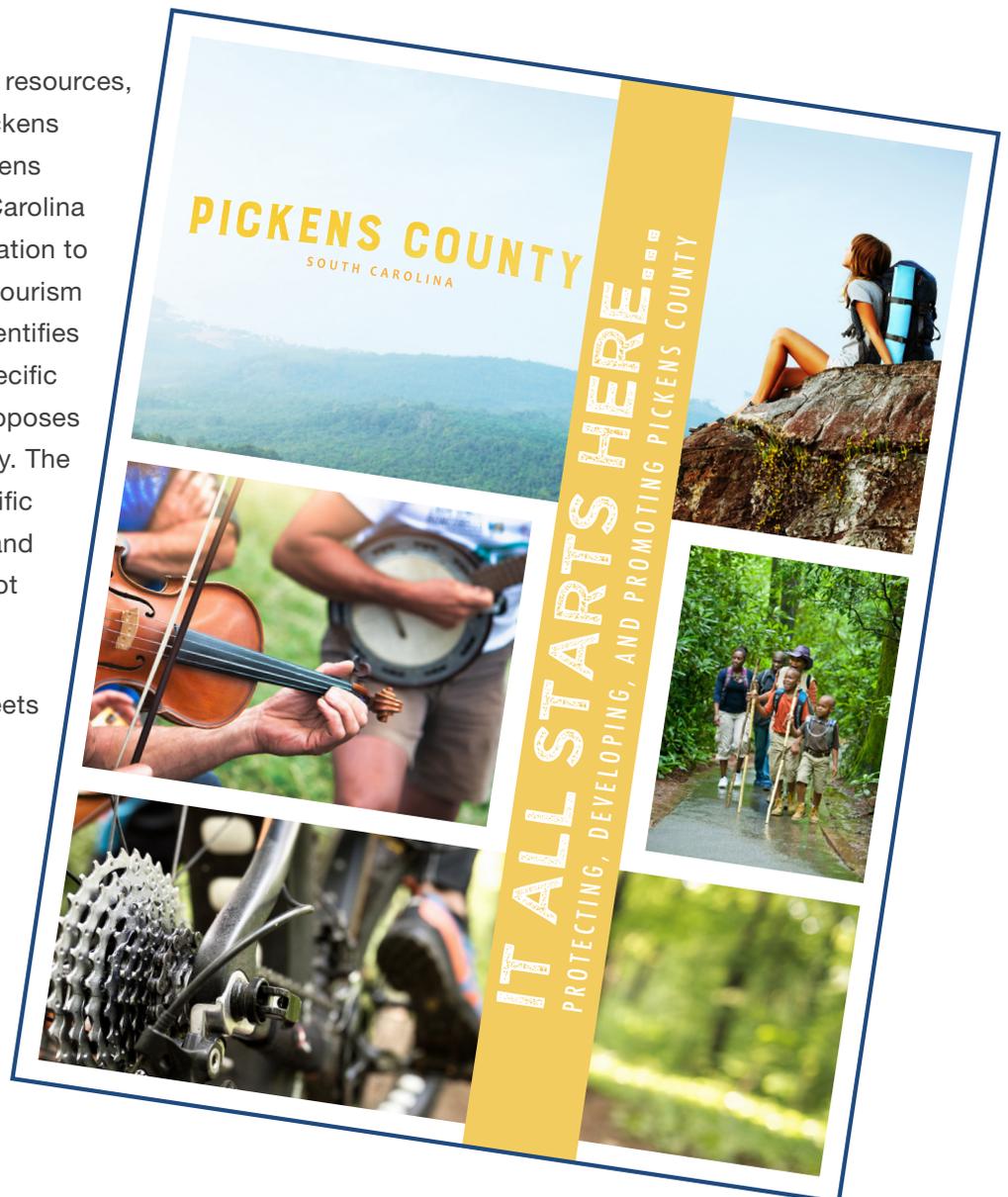
- Apex Over-Under Bridges
- Raised Half Log Trails
- Wooden Banked Turns
- Pump Track and Earthen Bowl
- Single Track

Jaycee Park is a 23-acre recreational area in Pickens. The Park has 2 lighted tennis courts, the Playground of Promise, a picnic pavilion which is also lighted with fans, 2 picnic shelters, 2 lighted youth baseball fields, concession and bathrooms, 1 lighted senior baseball field, 1 lighted football field with grandstands and press box, and 2 paved parking lots. Jaycee Park adjoins Town Creek Trail and the 42 acres that encompass the Pickens Recreation Center and its fields.

## County Branding and Marketing Plan (2020)

To better communicate the natural resources, history, and heritage present in Pickens County to the broader public, Pickens County partnered with the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor organization to create a branding, marketing and tourism development strategy. The plan identifies a County-wide brand, provides specific tourism recommendations, and proposes a marketing strategy for the County. The plan also makes a number of specific recommendations for the County and the Cities within it, including but not limited to:

- Conducting a series of streets audits in Downtown areas to identify top priorities for each area to protect, develop, and promote vibrant downtown areas.
- Adopting a County signage ordinance to reduce clutter and keep signage up-to-date.



# INTRODUCING THE BRAND

## WORDMARK

# PICKENS COUNTY

SOUTH CAROLINA

## BADGE



Main Pickens County



Parks, Recreation & Tourism



Heritage/Culture

## STAMP



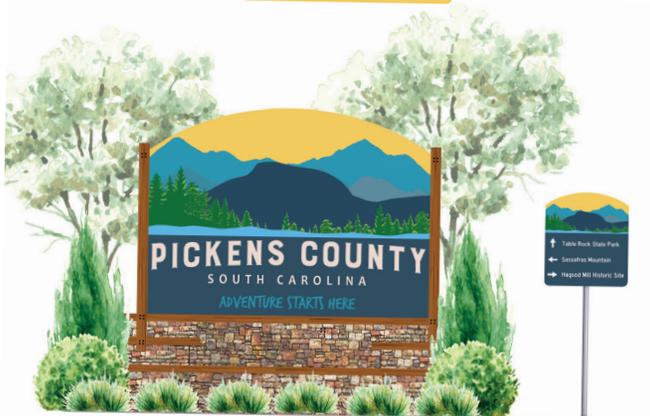
**PRODUCE AND IMPLEMENT A SIGNAGE PLAN:** Signs can either enhance or detract from a community. Currently, signage throughout the entire county is outdated and provides very little direction and/or interpretation for visitors. A more detailed county-wide signage ordinance that is created in cooperation with the cities will provide a cohesive look and feel to the county, while also protecting the view sheds and scenic vistas so important to Pickens. A sample signage ordinance was recommended in the "Protect Pickens" section of the plan.

In addition to the sign ordinance which protects the aesthetics of the county, it is recommended that Pickens install gateway signage at key entry points and wayfinding signage to all key tourism locations. From gateway entry points to directional signage and interpretative panels, signs are one of the principal methods to welcome, advise, direct, and educate travelers in your community. Signage is important not only for conveying information, but also for representing your community. More practically, a well-organized sign system helps create a more pleasurable traveling experience. Designing and implementing a comprehensive signage system is an extensive and complex project. Its complexity, however, is matched by its importance to the success of becoming a viable tourism community.

The following sign designs for gateway, wayfinding and interpretive signage are general in nature and are provided to showcase the possibilities for a comprehensive approach to signage utilizing the new brand. It is recommended that the county create a master signage plan that would provide detailed schematic design renderings as well as a SCDOT approved plan for the appropriate placement of wayfinding signage. For an example of a comprehensive signage plan click the tabs below.

[OCONEE COUNTY WAYFINDING PLAN](#)

[TOWN OF EDGEFIELD SIGNAGE PLAN](#)



- Adopting a billboard control ordinance to reduce visual clutter and improve quality of life.
- Conducting a condition assessment of natural and cultural amenities to identify places where investment can make attractions more accessible and more attractive, and can better protect the attraction for the future.
- Creating and implementing a signage plan for recreational areas to improve wayfinding and increase consistency across the county.

## Solid Waste Management

The Solid Waste Facilities are to be utilized by county residents, private and commercial haulers for solid waste collection, disposal, and management. Pickens County Solid Waste Division accepts and disposes of solid waste generated by the County including solid waste, construction and demolition materials, land clearing debris, and recyclables.

In February 2021, Pickens County moved to a new Construction and Demolition transfer facility at 204 Old Liberty Road, Liberty, South Carolina.

### Solid Waste Treatment

Treatment of solid waste involves three different processes in Pickens County:

**Compaction:** Municipal solid waste is compacted at recycling stations prior to being delivered to the county transfer station. Once it is screened at the transfer station, it is again run through a compactor as it is loaded onto transport trailers.

**Baling:** Recycled materials—including plastic, steel cans, cardboard, and newsprint—are delivered to and baled at the county material recovery facility. All scrap

metal and white goods are delivered to the recovery facility metal pad. A private contractor bales the metal prior to being transported to market.

### Disposal of Solid Waste

The Pickens County Solid Waste Facility is owned and operated by Pickens County covering 178 acres, including a buffer zone. This facility consists of a transfer station, construction and demolition landfill, a wind curtain incinerator, and a material recovery facility. An unlined landfill operated at this location until October 1998. The facility is located between the cities of Easley, Pickens, and Liberty.

**Transfer Station:** This station is permitted to receive 250 tons of municipal solid waste per day. It is owned and operated by Pickens County. In 2012, Pickens County accepted and transferred to the Greenville County facility approximately 42,606 tons of MSW.

**Construction and Demolition Landfill:** This landfill is permitted to receive 20,000 tons of construction and demolition material per year. Its life expectancy is 3.5 more years of service. In 2009, approximately 15,000 tons of material was disposed of in the limited capacity county C&D landfill. **Air Curtain Incinerator:** This incinerator is permitted to receive 105 tons per day. During times of emergency, this limit can be lifted by DHEC. In 2013, approximately 7,200 tons of material passed through the incinerator.

**Material Recovery Facility:** This facility receives an average of 34.47 tons per day. This weight fluctuates relative to citizen participation.

Solid Waste	Tons	Percent
Household	42,045	57%
C&D Landfill	19,211	26%
Incinerator	5,931	8%
Recycled	6,349	9%

### Recycling

There are nine recycling stations in Pickens County with each station accepting a wide variety of recyclable materials including a aluminum, aerosol, and steel cans, antifreeze, batteries, paper products, clothing, oils and oil filters, glass, paint, seven types of plastic, tires, and C&D material. Free mulch is available Wednesday – Friday at the main County landfill.

Recycling Station	Location
Easley	Liberty
BES PAC	Easley
Willow Springs	Six Mile
North Old Pendleton	Liberty
Chastain Road	Central
Dacusville	Easley
Table Rock	Pickens
Midway	Pickens
Pickens County Landfill	Liberty

### Wastewater Management

Each wastewater system in South Carolina is regulated by the DHEC Bureau of Water and its comprehensive water pollution control program to control transportation, treatment, and the disposal or use of wastewater and sludge. Additionally, the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is designated as the Water Quality Management Agency for the region and reviews sewer projects for conformance to the Regional Water Quality Management Plan.

Treatment Plant	Capacity (gallons/day)
18-Mile Creek Upper Regional WWTP	1,000,000
18-Mile Creek Middle Reginal WWTP	1,000,000
Liberty Roper WWTP	500,000
Central North	150,000
Pickens County Stockade	60,0000

The Pickens County Public Service Commission provides wastewater treatment facilities for collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal of domestic and industrial wastewater in parts of Pickens County. The commission is an advisory board to the County Council and is composed of seven members, six appointed by council from each district and one at large member. The commission is empowered by the county to plan, design, acquire, construct, operate, maintain, improve, and extend wastewater facilities throughout the county. The Public Service Commission operates eight wastewater treatment plants and oversees the county Industrial Pretreatment Program and Biosolids Land Application Program.

### Service District and Agencies

The Pickens County Public Service Commission currently provides sewer availability and wastewater treatment and collection in the areas of the county within the 12-Mile Creek, 18-Mile Creek, and Saluda River basins. The agency also provides service to the municipalities of Central and Liberty.

Easley Combined Utilities operates three wastewater treatment plants and serves about 9600 customers in and around the City of Easley. The Pickens Twelve Mile River WWTP provides sewer service to 1,300 wastewater taps in and around the City of Pickens. The Twelve Mile Rive WWTP was designed and built with enough treatment capacity to accommodate most or any business or industry joining the community. Additionally, the cities of Clemson and Pendleton (in Anderson County) jointly maintain one waste treatment facility that can treat up to 2.0 MGD of sewage and is in the process of being upgraded. Sewer service is currently available to about 40% of county residents. The remainder of the county utilizes private community or individual septic systems on site.

## Septic Tanks

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control requires site approvals and permits for all septic systems. Permits to construct are good for five years. Septic tank systems are most common in rural areas and a necessity for property not served by a public or community sewer system. The factors that are taken into account when issuing a permit include population density, separation between leach fields and groundwater, distance from surface water, loading rate, soil types, and the operation and maintenance of the system. Common issues experienced with typical septic systems are inadequate lot size for supporting the septic field, and the lack of proper system maintenance.

## Water Supply, Treatment, and Distribution

### Pickens County Water Authority

The Pickens County Water and Sewer Authority was created as a Special Purpose District with a mission to acquire supplies of fresh water, capable of being used for industrial and domestic purposes, and to distribute such water in an orderly manner for industrial and domestic use within its service area.

### Water Districts

There are fourteen separate water districts for each supply and distribution agencies in Pickens County:

- Town of Central
- City of Clemson
- Easley Combined Utilities
- City of Liberty
- Town of Norris
- City of Pickens
- Town of Six Mile
- Bethlehem-Roanoke

- Dacusville-Cedar Rock
- Easley-Central 1 & 2
- Highway 88
- Powdersville
- Six Mile & Twelve Mile
- Southside Rural Community

## Water Sources and Quality

The County's water suppliers draw water from Lake Keowee, Lake Hartwell, Twelve Mile Creek, Eighteen Mile Creek, the City Reservoir, and Lake Saluda. 18-Mile Creek is a restrictive source due to the low dry weather flows. South Carolina's Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) monitors the water quality of these raw water sources. The service providers monitor water sources to ensure compliance with regulations and requirements. Twelve Mile Creek has a history of high levels of PCBs and requires close monitoring for compliance.

## Lines and Service Areas

57% of the County has water line service with the remaining areas, mostly northern area, servicing themselves from pumps on their property. The water lines range in size from twelve to one inch in diameter, with 56% of the system with lines less than four inches. The total length of water lines in the county is 470 miles.

## Treatment Facilities and Capacity

There are five treatment facilities in the County:

- Lake Keowee Filtration Plant,
- City of Pickens Plant,
- Saluda Lake Filtration Plant,
- Easley Central Water District Filtration Plant, and
- City of Liberty Filtration Plant.

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Community Facilities Element Goal

“Our vision is to provide strategically located and high-quality infrastructure providing sewer, water, solid waste, fire, emergency services, and public safety, along with cultural/educational community facilities, to meet the needs of the residents of Pickens County.”

## Community Facilities Element Objectives

- Continue to invest and support the Pickens County Career and Technology Center to maintain positive relationships with the business community
- Maintain partnerships with the post-secondary education system as the colleges provide an asset to the county.

## Community Facilities Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Provide leadership in the development of a countywide water plan to be adopted by each water district and supplier to Pickens County in order to prepare for future supply and demand as well as natural and manmade disasters.

**ACTIONS:** Organize and empower agencies via a collaborative process, strengthen partnership, and commit county resources to implementation of the plan.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Pickens County Water Authority. Supporting Agencies: County Council, the fourteen water districts of Pickens County, Greenville Water System, Anderson Regional Joint Water System, Duke Energy (Lake Keowee), US Army Corps of Engineers (Lake Hartwell), SCDHEC, ACOG, and additional local water resource agencies.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2025-2030

**POLICY:** Develop a strategic plan for county sewer service in collaboration with district service providers that supports economic development, projected population growth, and which utilizes innovative methods of operation.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Public Service Commission. Supporting Agencies: County Council, district sewer providers, Alliance Pickens, Department of Community Development, DHEC, and ACOG.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2025-2030

**POLICY:** Continue to strive for high quality emergency and law enforcement services that correspond to population changes.

**ACTIONS:** Provide adequate facilities, equipment, training, and resources to police, fire, EMS, and emergency management departments.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: County Council. Supporting Agencies: Administration, County departments.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going

**POLICY:** Create opportunities for new county open space and recreation.

**ACTIONS:** Assess recommendations in the Pickens County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, coordinate with municipality plans, research development opportunities and funding assistance, and oversee project completion.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Department of Parks and Recreation. Supporting Agencies: County Council, Tourism Board, Cultural Commission, Alliance Pickens, and other County departments.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Ongoing

**POLICY:** Work with School District on sharing facilities and sports fields.

**ACTIONS:** Establish an intergovernmental agreement between Pickens County and the School District providing for the shared use of recreational facilities and fields.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: School District, County Council. Supporting Agencies: Administration, County Parks and Recreation

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2023-2027

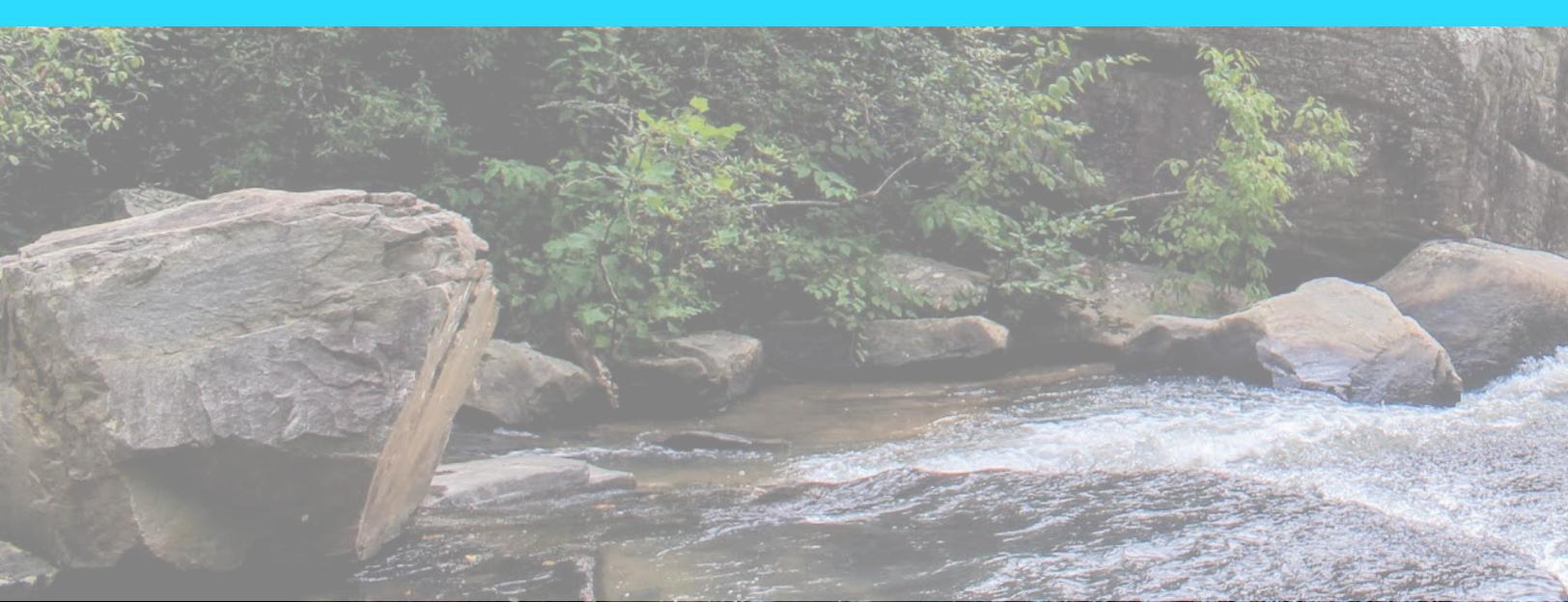
**POLICY:** Maintain all community facilities at quality standards and service in order to best serve the people of Pickens County.

**ACTIONS:** Research methods and funding to help reduce energy and water use in facilities, provide healthier indoor work environments, and reduce emissions from county vehicles. Implement a system for reducing paper consumption in all departments.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: Administration, Building Maintenance

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going







# 9

## NATURAL RESOURCES



## 9. NATURAL RESOURCES

By preserving, maintaining, and improving our natural resources, many facets of our community can be enhanced including social, economic, and cultural aspects provides current resource information and presents goals for their use and protection. Additionally, one may determine the best and highest use of the land through an understanding of slope, topography, soils, watersheds, and location of flood plains. Natural resources affect land use and zoning decisions.

### CLIMATE

Pickens County lies within the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which are part of the Appalachian Mountain range in Upcountry. The Appalachian region in the northwest portion of the state experiences cooler temperatures, owing in part to upward lifting of air masses and subsequent cooling effect provided by the increase in altitude. Altitude change also causes the additional phenomenon of down-slope heating as air masses from the mountains settle and compress over the eastern Blue Ridge and Piedmont region During the winter months, the highlands of the Blue Ridge escarpment deflect northerly cold air to the southwest, often lessening the impact of major cold fronts and winter storms. The Blue Ridge physiographic province, where it is humid continental. Pickens County has no wet or dry season as the precipitation patterns are the opposite of other areas of the state. The Upstate areas usually have more than 24 days of rain annually with only one to three days with measurable snowfall. The county has four distinct seasons.

Pickens County  
receives an  
average of

**54.3"**  
of rain each year

# GEOLOGY AND TERRAIN

Pickens County is situated within the Piedmont and Blue Ridge physiographic regions. These regions exhibit variations in topography, geology, hydrology, and vegetation that directly affect the quantity, quality, and availability of water resources in the county. The Blue Ridge physiographic province is located in the northwest portion of Oconee and Pickens Counties. It is distinguished from other areas of South Carolina by elevations between 1,000 and 3,300 feet. Dissected mountains, rugged hills, and thick forests characterize the land surface. Water quality of streams and groundwater are excellent in the Blue Ridge due to the constant replenishment from abundant local rainfall.

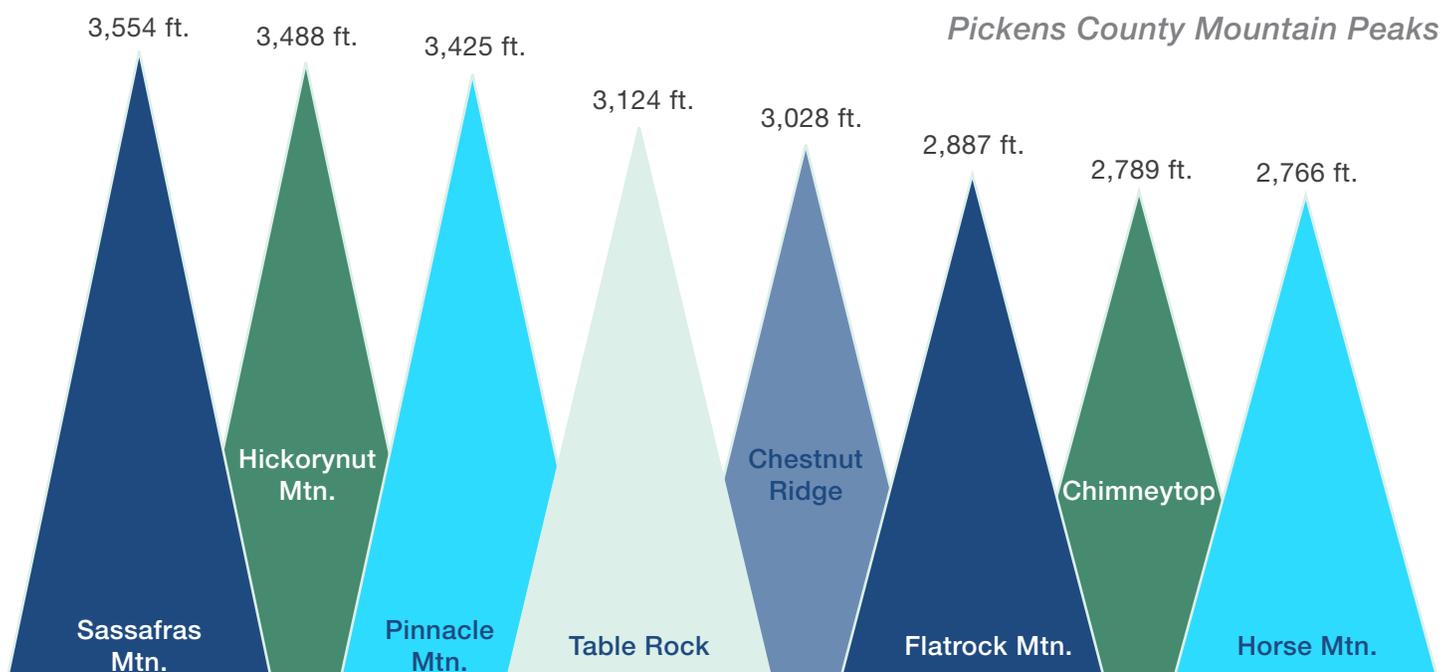
The Piedmont region, similar to the Blue Ridge, has lower topographic relief with elevations ranging from 450 to 1,000 feet above sea level. Pickens County is dependent on regional rainfall to recharge lakes, reservoirs, and major rivers as these surface bodies of water are a primary source of water for public supply, industry, agriculture, and power production in the Piedmont region. Groundwater is of good quality except in small areas of contamination.

SC Geological Survey labels three rock belts within Pickens County: Chauga belt, Walhalla thrust sheet, and Sixmile thrust sheet. The primary geological feature is the Six Mile thrust sheet (SCDNR, 2017) and made up of number of rock types (mica, schist, red-weathering biotite schist, gneiss) that are commonly deeply weathered.

Glassy Mountain features a rare geologic formation known as a “monadnock”. A monadnock is formed from exposure of a harder rock as a result of a softer one once surrounding it. These isolated hills of bedrock are commonly quartzite. This landform is unusual in South Carolina and harbors several rare plant species.

## Mountaintops

Pickens County is home to 75 named summits, ridges, ranges, trails, and other mountain features in the Blue Ridge Mountains, part of the Appalachian Mountains. Sassafras Mountain (3,554 feet) is the tallest peak in the county and in South Carolina, though it straddles the North Carolina border. Featured mountains are shown in the graphic below.



# HYDROLOGY

Hydrology encompasses the occurrence, distribution, movement, and properties of waters of the earth and their relationship with the environment within each phase of the hydrologic cycle. Hydrological components of a watershed are evapotranspiration, surface runoff, groundwater recharge, and streamflow.

## Watersheds

A watershed refers to a geographic area which the surrounding waters, sediments, and dissolved material drains to a stream, lake, or river whose boundaries extend along surrounding topographic ridges. Healthy watersheds help in protecting water quality and also provide benefits to the people and wildlife living in them. The Saluda River Basin originates in the Blue Ridge province and central portion of the Piedmont region and located in most of Greenville and Pickens Counties. The Savannah River Basin is shared with Georgia and the most regulated in the South Carolina due to the dams for reservoir storage and power production. Lake Keowee and Lake Hartwell are located in the Savannah River Basin on the South Carolina side.

Pickens County is divided into four watershed districts: Georges Creek, Oolenoy, Brushy Creek, and Three and Twenty. Brushy Creek and Three and Twenty are located in Pickens and Anderson County. Three and Twenty Watershed drains to Lake Hartwell, which serves as a drinking water supply for Anderson Regional Joint Water System (ARJWS), serving over 200,000 residents in Anderson and Pickens County.

Located in the Piedmont Ecoregion of South Carolina, three subdivided watersheds encompass approximately 69,169 acres in Pickens County. Eighteen Mile creek (38,104 acres) originates in Easley and travels southwest along US 123. It flows through the towns of Liberty, Norris, Central, and Pendleton and ending in Lake Hartwell. Golden Creek (10,242 acres) also originates in Easley and flows

southwest along the eastern edge of Eighteen Mile creek and converges into Lower Twelve Mile creek (20, 818 acres) in Norris. Lower Twelve Mile creek eventually flows into Lake Hartwell through Easley, Liberty, Central, Six Mile, Norris, and Clemson.

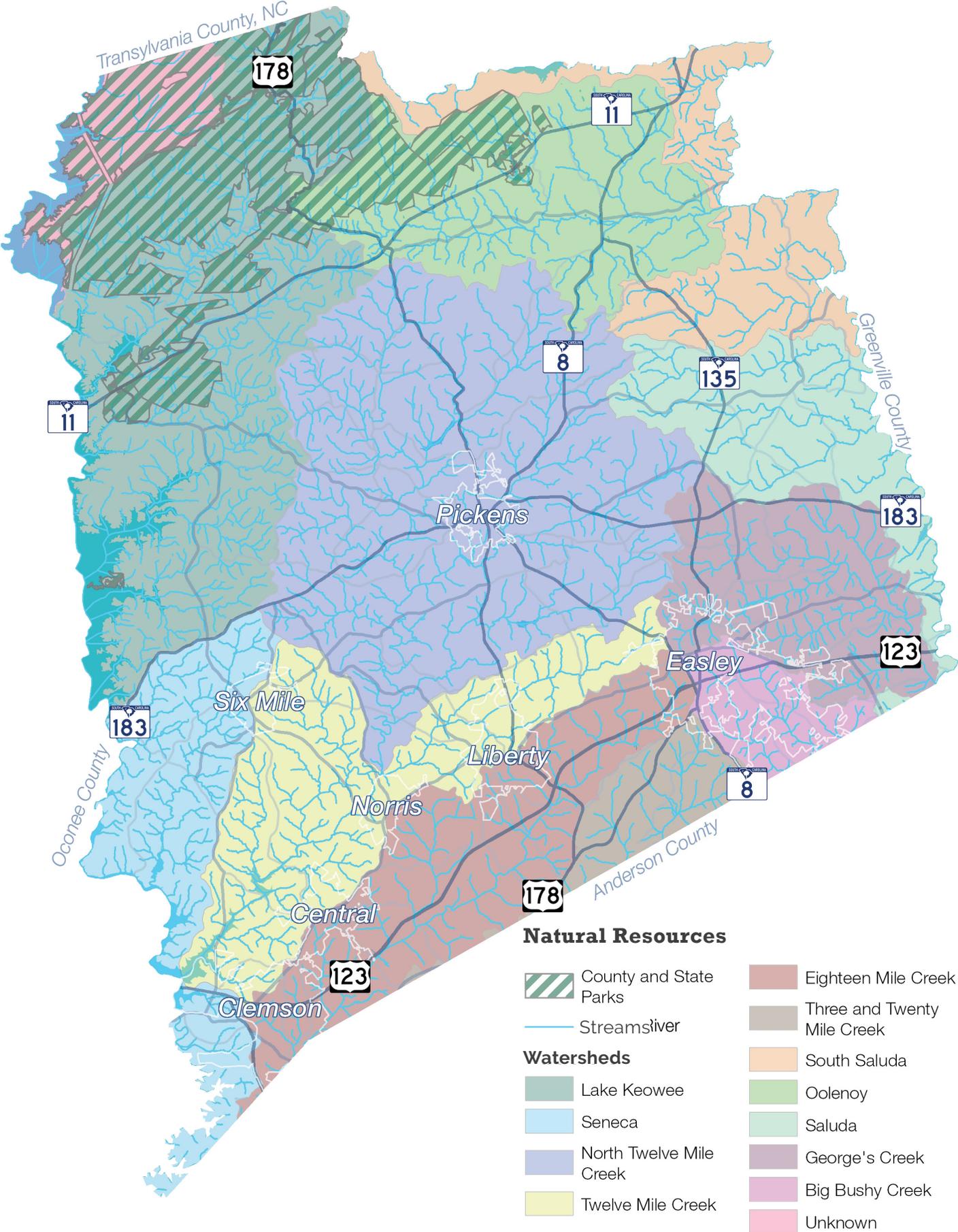
## Lakes, Rivers, Streams

Pickens County is bordered by waterways to the east and west. Lake Jocassee, Lake Keowee, and Lake Hartwell form the western boundary. These man-made lakes provide power for industry, domestic water supply, and recreation. The eastern border is the Saluda River which separates Pickens and Greenville Counties.

**Lake Jocassee** is 7,500 acres and 300-foot-deep reservoir in northwest South Carolina. It was created in partnership with Duke Power and the state in 1973. It is known for its beautiful mountain views, undeveloped shoreline, and clean, clear water. The shore length is 75 miles bordered by green forest. Lake Jocassee is only accessible from inside Devils Fork State Park. Visitors enjoy various recreational activities such as swimming, boating, sailing, scuba diving and fishing.

**Lake Keowee** is a man-made 18,372-acre reservoir developed to serve the needs of Duke Energy and public recreational purposes. The pure, clean lake water is used to cool Duke Energy's three nuclear reactors located at the Oconee Nuclear Generating Station. The two large dams, Keowee Dam and Little River Dam, generate hydroelectric power. With 300 miles of measured shoreline, Lake Keowee provides recreational destination for fishing, boating, swimming, sailing, kayaking, and other water sports.

**Lake Hartwell** is one of the southeast's largest and most popular recreation lakes. It is a man-made reservoir created by the construction of the Hartwell Dam which was completed in 1962. The lake is almost 56,000 acres with a shoreline of 962 miles.



# SOILS

Soils are important to the stability of our slopes and topography, the quality of our drinking water, the success of local farming, and the beauty of our landscape. The Soil Survey of Pickens County (1972) was compiled by the US Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service, now the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and provides local data on soil types, slopes, streams, plants, ag-operations, and other items impacted by soils. Aside from this paper document, the NRCS maintains and updates the Web Soil Survey, a huge online database of soil information for the entire country.

Good soil conditions for development, are determined largely on two criteria: bearing capacity and drainage. The bearing capacity refers to a soil's resistance to penetration from a weighted object such as a building foundation. Typically, gravel and sandy soil mixtures have a greater bearing capacity than clay soils, and clay, in turn, has a greater bearing capacity than loamy or organic soils. However, all soils have a higher bearing capacity when the soil is further compacted. Bearing capacity is also affected by how compact the soil is. Drainage is described in three terms: infiltration capacity (rate at which water penetrates the soil surface); permeability (rate of water movement through a soil); and percolation (rate in which water is absorbed in the soil) Good drainage means that water moves rapidly through the soil and the soil does not remain saturated for extended periods of time.

Pickens County is made up of six general soil associations. Each soil association is named according to its most dominant soil type. Within the association, many of the properties will vary depending on the slope, depth of bedrock, drainage,

and underlying parent material. Each principal soil association is listed below along with their inherent characteristics.

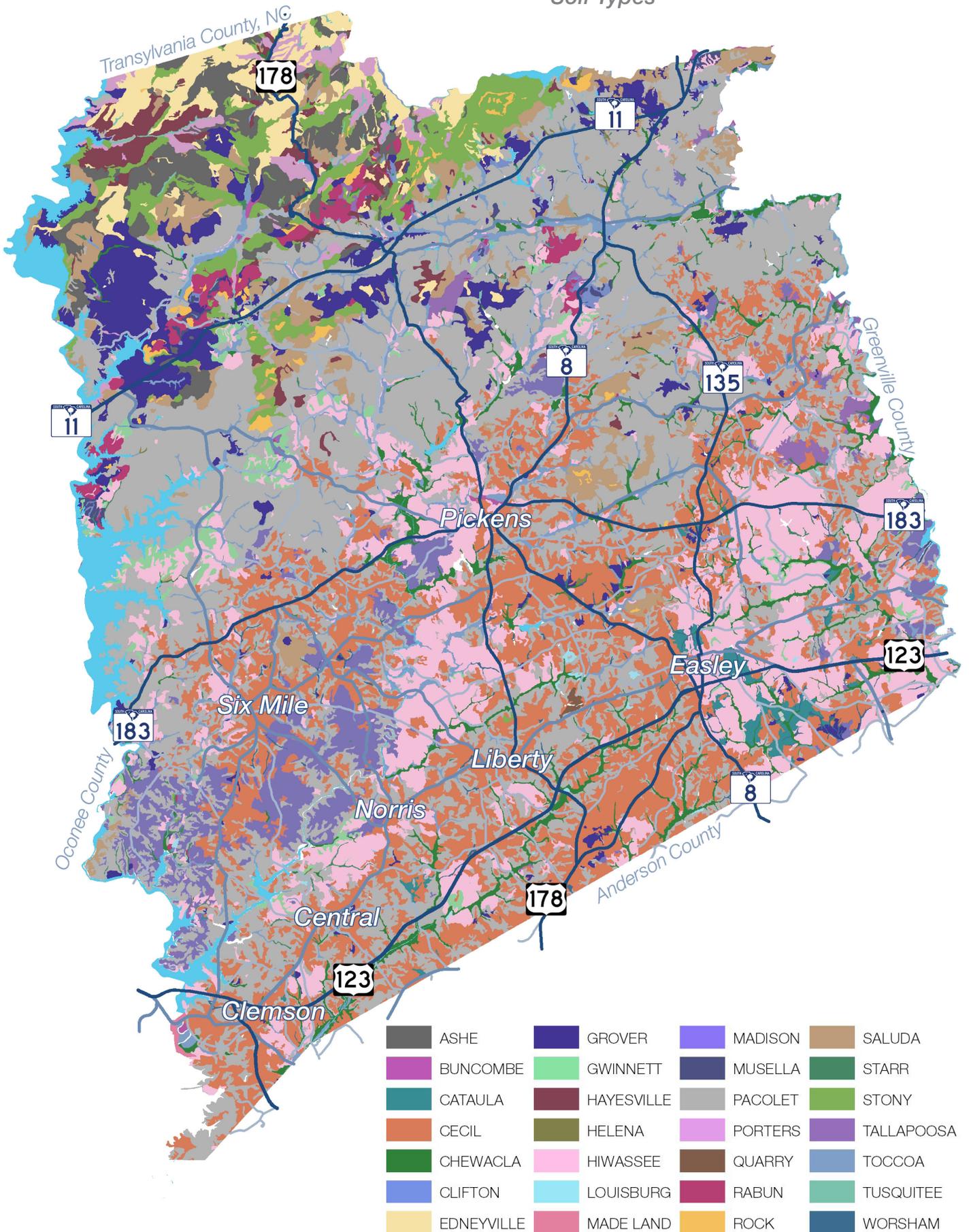
## Edneyville-Porters-Hayesville Association (Ed-Po-Ha)

Found in the northwestern 4 percent of the county, this association is well drained and has strongly sloping to very steep soils that have loamy subsoil and are moderately deep to deep weathered rock. These soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited for cultivation or extensive development and restrict their use to largely rangeland, woodland or wildlife habitat.

## Ashe-Saluda-Stony Land Association (As-Sa-St)

Found in the northern regions of the county, this association extends in a generally east to west direction and occupies about ten percent of the county. Ashe-Saluda-Stony is the name given to moderately deep or shallow soils (or even weathered rock) that have a loamy subsoil and are found on steep slopes and are excessively well drained to well drained. This association is a valuable source of water supply for municipal areas. This association maintains the same severe limitations to development as the previous association, because rock close to the surface adds to the difficulty in building structures on this association. Typically, this association is best suited to wildlife habitat and recreational uses.

Soil Types



### Pacolet-Grover-Hiwassee Association (Pa-Gr-Hw)

Found on a wide strip of land directly adjacent to the mountain areas, this association, in the north-central part of the county occupies about 45 percent of the county land. It is a well drained association on steep slopes with a dominant clay subsoil and moderately deep to deep weathered rock. Cleared areas on this association produce a severe danger of erosion; therefore only limited cropland is found within it. This association is also best suited for woodlands and wildlife habitat areas.

### Cecil-Hiwassee-Madison Association (Ce-Hw-Ma)

Located in the south-central part of the county, this association occupies the more gently sloping areas of the county and covers 20 percent of county land. Found on uplands, these soils are well drained sloping soils which have a largely dominant clay subsoil and are moderately deep to deep rock. This association is well suited for agricultural uses. Additionally, there are only moderate restrictions on building sites, recreational areas, and foundation materials for roads. Septic fields can be installed with moderate to severe limitations.

### Cecil-Madison-Pacolet Association (Ce-Ma-Pa)

This association is found in 15 percent of the county occupying the southwest and southeast corners of the county. Its location is typically on hilly terrain adjacent to major drainage ways. This association has the same properties as the Cecil-Hiwassee-Madison Association but lies on steeper slopes. Moderate limitations exist for low-density construction but higher density construction and industrial sites have more severe limitations. In addition, severe limitations for septic tank construction exist.

### Toccoa-Chewacla Association (To-Co)

Located largely in the flood plain areas, this association occupies six percent of the county. It ranges in type from well drained to somewhat poorly drained, has nearly level soils that are dominantly loamy throughout and are subject to flooding. This association is not recommended for intensive construction because of flooding and inability for the water to percolate through the soil. Poor drainage can create conditions of saturated soil. Recreational uses are most recommended for areas in which these soils are located.

# WILDLIFE

Pickens County is home to a diverse and unique variety of plants and animals. Much of northern Pickens County, being located in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, is ideal habitat for many plants and animals not typically found in other parts of the state. Yet in the rest of the county, one can find a mix of plants and animals typical of what you may find throughout the piedmont region of South Carolina. Pickens County is located in Game Zone 1 that include Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens Counties which oversee hunting regulations and seasons and additional species hunting regulations such as deer, migratory birds including waterfowl, trapping and commercial fur harvest, and turkey. Located in Pickens County, there are three additional wildlife management areas with additional regulations: Caesars Head / Jones Gap, Glassy Mountain Archery / Chestnut Ridge, and Stunphouse.

## *Selected Species by Endangered Status*

Species	Status
<b>Vascular Plants</b>	
Smooth coneflower	US Endangered
Black-spored quillwort	US Endangered
Mountain sweet	US Endangered
Pitcher Plant	US Endangered
<b>Vertebrate Animals</b>	
Eastern cougar	US / SC Endangered
American peregrine Falcon	SC Endangered
Rafinesques's big-eared bat	SC Endangered
Bog turtle	US / SC Endangered
Southern coal skink	SC Threatened
Eastern small-footed myotis	SC Threatened
Bewick's wren	SC Threatened

# NATURAL RESOURCES ECONOMICS

South Carolina's natural resources are essential for economic development and contribute nearly \$30 Billion and 230,000 jobs to the state's economy, according to a 2009 study by the University of South Carolina, Moore School of Business. However, in Pickens County the combined employment in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining have decreased from 1.2 percent of county employment in 1980 to 0.7 percent in 2000 (SC Statistical Abstract, SC Budget and Control Board).

# NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Natural resource management in Pickens County is performed to a large extent by federal, state, and local government agencies and institutions, as well as by a broad group of private organizations. A brief overview of some of these groups is presented in this section in order to give a sense of the vast amount of effort and coordination that is involved with managing and promoting best management practices for natural resources.

## Public, Private, and Partnerships

**US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** sets standards for drinking water under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (1974), water quality under the Clean Water Act (1972), and air quality under the Clean Air Act (1970, 1990).

**US Fish & Wildlife Service** develops and enforces legislation to protect and maintain riverine and other ecosystems for habitat protection.

**US Geological Survey, SC Water Science Center (monitoring) and SC Water Resources Center** (local institute that receives an annual federal matching grant from the USGS), which focuses on reservoir and watershed research and has an advisory board made up of stakeholders.

**US Army Corps of Engineers** coordinates with both South Carolina and Georgia which share the Savannah River Lakes system (including Lake Hartwell).

**SC Energy Office** has received stimulus funds to provide energy audits and assessments for public, nonprofit, and private entities to help them operate with greater energy efficiency.

**DNR** assesses resources and offers management guidelines through five divisions: Land, Water, and Conservation; Law Enforcement; Marine Resources; Outreach and Support Services; and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. Save Our Saluda is an advocacy group for the Saluda Watershed that is pursuing a designation for the Saluda River as a State Scenic River through DNR.

**SC DHEC** is delegated responsibility under the EPA and several federal and state laws such as the South Carolina Pollution Control Act to regulate health and environmental issues. Pickens County is served by the Region 2 Environmental Quality Control (EQC) branch office in Greenville, which offers staff support for air quality, land and waste management, and water quality.

**SC Parks, Recreation, and Tourism** operates and manages all of the state parks and provides assistance to communities for parks, recreation, and tourism development and promotion. PRT offers a Tourism Action Plan and grant opportunities. The 2010 State Trails Program offered \$1,000,000 in grant funding for public recreational trails and facilities.

**Palmetto Conservation Foundation** is a statewide, non-profit organization devoted to the protection of natural areas through land trust assistance or local government programs, preserving Revolutionary War battlefields, and developing greenways and the Palmetto Trail.

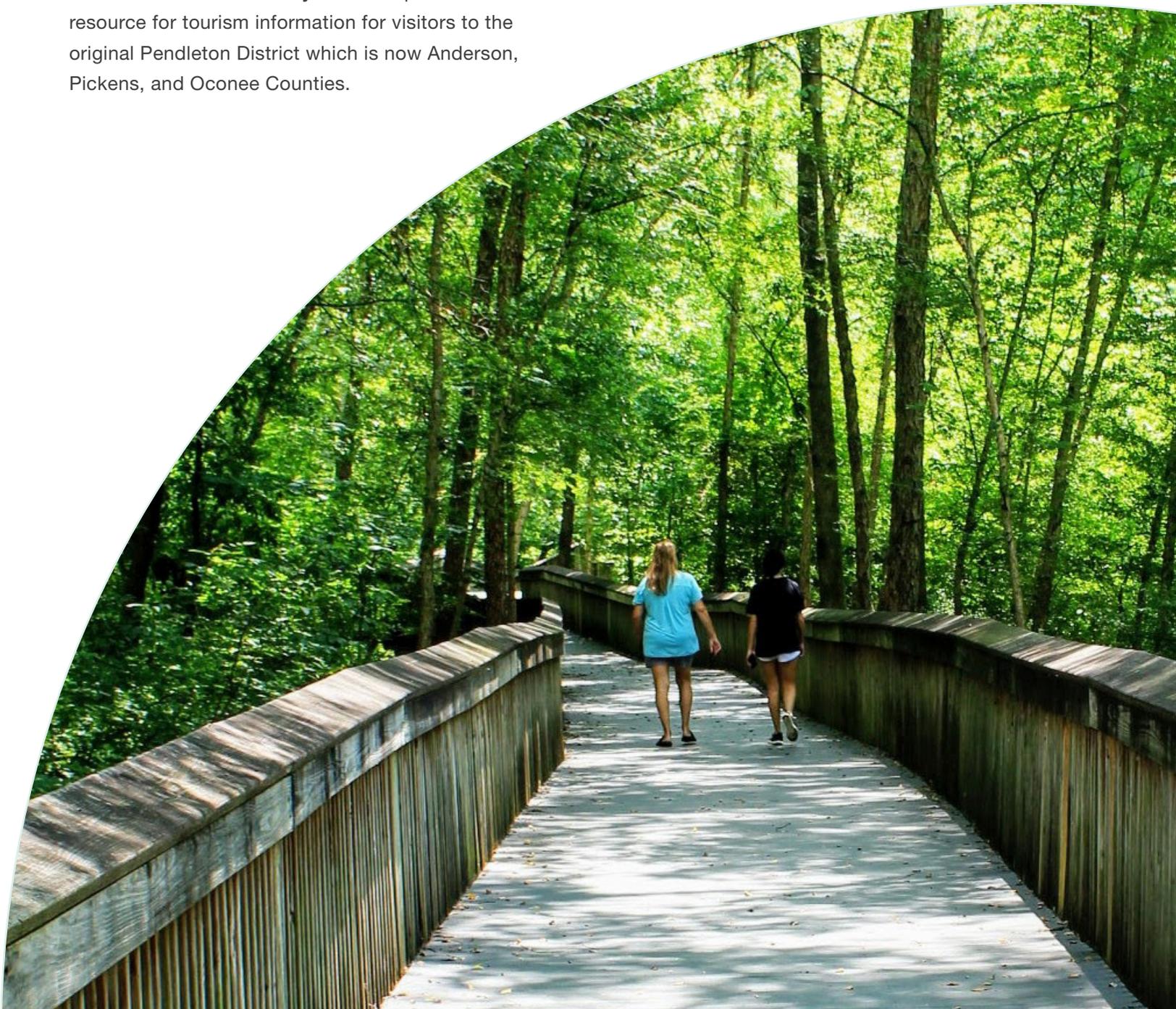
**South Carolina Cooperative Extension, Pickens Countywide Stormwater Consortium** is based at South Carolina's two land-grant institutions, Clemson University and South Carolina State University, in all 46 counties, and at the five research and education centers. The Clemson Extension Office in Pickens County utilizes a network of specialist and researchers to provide expertise in agronomic crops, economic and community development. Food safety and nutrition, 4-H, horticulture, livestock and forages, and natural resources.

**Clemson University** offers support through various colleges, programs, and research initiative. The University host The SC Botanical Garden and Bob Campbell Geology Museum.

**Duke Energy** oversees permitting and shoreline management for Lake Jocassee and Lake Keowee, and works closely with state agencies and local agencies regarding shoreline development, lake access, and water supply.

**Friends of Lake Keowee Society (FOLKS)** improve impaired waterways in Lake Keowee Watershed by reducing nonpoint sources of fecal coliform and metals. FOLKS is a nonprofit public service watershed organization partners with Clemson University, SC Forestry Commission, USDA/NRCS, county governments, Duke Energy, and citizens of Oconee and Pickens Counties.

The **Lake Hartwell Country** is an independent resource for tourism information for visitors to the original Pendleton District which is now Anderson, Pickens, and Oconee Counties.



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Natural Resources Element Goal

“Our vision is to continue our heritage of stewardship and to ensure the integrity of our natural assets by promoting, protecting, and enhancing the quality of our air, water, and land resources that support the quality of life in Pickens County.”

### Natural Resources Element Objectives

- Cultivate natural resources so that the economic, recreational, and cultural values of the region may be enhanced
- Prepare to meet the water needs for future residents and businesses by developing a conservation plan and investigating new water sources
- Encourage water conservation measures
- Increase awareness of critical lands (watersheds, floodplains, threatened and endangered species locations, important view-sheds, prime and important soils, steep slopes, shorelines, etc.)
- Reduce erosion and improve water quality in our watersheds
- Promote the conservation and preservation of land for agriculture, hunting and fishing, wildlife habitat, and forestry
- Promote parks and open space in private development
- Adopt night sky friendly lighting standards for all public and private developments.
- Preserve natural beauty; protect mountain vistas, lakes and river watersheds, and forest preserves; increase green space areas; protect pristine land all in a manner that respects the rights of property owners
- Develop the recreational potential of the Twelve Mile Creek corridor
- Study the long term impacts of various environmental/ecological issues surrounding Twelve Mile Creek and Lake Hartwell
- Strive to attain National Ambient Air Quality Standards countywide and study the placement of air quality monitoring stations in the county
- Explore opportunities for gray water reuse
- Actively promote “Buy Local” for all of Pickens County’s agricultural products

## Natural Resources Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Maintain water quality and air quality as required by DHEC and EPA.

**ACTIONS:** Review state and federal monitoring data for Pickens County. Cooperate with other agencies in the remediation of polluted areas or mitigation for impacts on natural resources.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: Pickens County Soil and Water Conservation District. Supporting Agencies: County Council, Community Development Department, Stormwater Department, DHEC, EPA

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going.

**POLICY:** Cooperate with other agencies that protect critical areas.

**ACTIONS:** Review county development standards that guide residential and commercial development with regard to steep slopes, shorelines, streams and riparian habitat.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: Community Development and Stormwater Departments. Supporting Agencies: County Council, Pickens County Soil and Water Conservation District, DHEC, and other State agencies.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2022, Ongoing





EASLEY DOODLE PARK



Old Cedar Rock Rd

10

CULTURAL  
RESOURCES



# 10. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources focus on the historical sites and structures that have played a role in the development of the county in addition to the places that make the County unique.

## HISTORY OF PICKENS COUNTY

Pickens County was formed after the American Revolution in 1826 from Pendleton. The land that is now Pickens County once belonged to the Cherokee. Relationships with the Cherokee people began around the 1720s by English traders such as James Beamer. When the Cherokee felt threatened by the French and rival Indian tribes, they appealed to Royal Governor James Glen for protection. The County's most significant contribution to colonial America was Fort Prince George that was built along the Keowee River for protection but now resides under Lake Keowee. Fort Prince George became an early focal point of the area and a point from which many of our places derive their name. Mile Creek, Six Mile, Twelve Mile Creek and Ninety Six all reportedly got their names based on their distance from Fort Prince George.

As more of the land was settled following the American Revolution, it brought to the area the county's future namesake. Revolutionary War Brigadier General Andrew Pickens established his home, Hopewell Plantation in the Clemson area in the 1780s. South Carolina's map was ever-changing until

the 1868 Constitutional Convention split the existing Pickens District into Oconee and Pickens Counties. The location of the Pickens Courthouse settlement was then moved from its original site on the banks of the Keowee River to a spot several miles to the east. There, several prominent local men donated 151 acres of land to establish the new town of Pickens. Since 1868, the city of Pickens has remained the county seat.

In the early years of Pickens County's existence, the railway came through and gave rise to many of the settlements that became the towns we have today. Easley was incorporated in 1874, Central in 1875, Liberty in 1876, Calhoun (now Clemson) in 1892, Norris in 1909, and Six Mile in 1910. It wasn't just the railroad that made these communities bustling centers of commerce and trade. In 1895, D.K. Norris opened the first cotton mill, which was called Catechee Mill, in Pickens County. From that point forward, cotton mills and manufacturing have been an important way of life for the people of Pickens County.

# MUSEUMS

- Bob Campbell Geology Museum
- Central Heritage Museum
- Collins Ole Towne
- Clemson Area African American History Museum
- Irma Morris Museum
- Hagood Mill Historic Site & Folklife Center
- Jocassee Gorges Visitor Center
- Pickens County Museum of Arts & History
- Clemson Arts Center
- Fran Hanson Visitor Center at South Carolina Botanical Gardens

The **Bob Campbell Geology Museum** is located in the **South Carolina Botanical Gardens** at Clemson University housing a collection of over 10,000 rocks, mineral, fossils, lapidary objects, and artifacts.

The **Central Heritage Museum** was created in 1995 by Milton and Betty Holcombe through their foundation. In Central, the Jessie and Jennie Morgan house and its contents were purchased for use as a headquarters for the Heritage Society and as the Central Heritage Museum.

**Collins Ole Towne** is a recreated 1930s village in Central that displays a reminiscent of life in a small town in the 1920s and 1930s. The village features a depression-era country store, barbershop, schoolhouse, gristmill, molasses mill, and sawmill.

The **Clemson Area African American History Museum** is managed by the City of Clemson and is the only African American Museum in Pickens County responsible for collecting, interpreting, exhibiting, and preserving the rich and vibrant history of African Americans in the City of Clemson and Upstate South Carolina.

The **Jocassee Gorges Visitor's Center** is a joint effort of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. The exhibits tell the natural and cultural story of the area and are housed in the former Holly Springs Baptist Church.

## Art Centers

The **Birchwood Center for Arts and Folklife** offers regional history, fine and traditional arts, and fostering and preserving area folkways located in the early 1800s Sutherland-Masters House.

The **Pickens County Museum of Arts and History** is housed in the 1902 old Pickens County "goal" with art, antiquities, artifacts and temporary exhibits.

The **Clemson Arts Center** is a City of Clemson department under Parks and Recreation established for the purpose of bringing the arts to all members of the community through educational adult and youth art programs, exhibitions, community art development, and creative placemaking.

## Performance Facilities

There are four major performance facilities in Pickens County: **Clemson University Sporting Events**, **Robert Howell Brooks Center for Performing Arts**, **Foothills Playhouse**, and the **Pickens County Performing Arts Center**. The Foothills Playhouse in Easley is a 214 seat community theater providing live theatre and drama classes.

# HISTORICAL SITES AND STRUCTURES

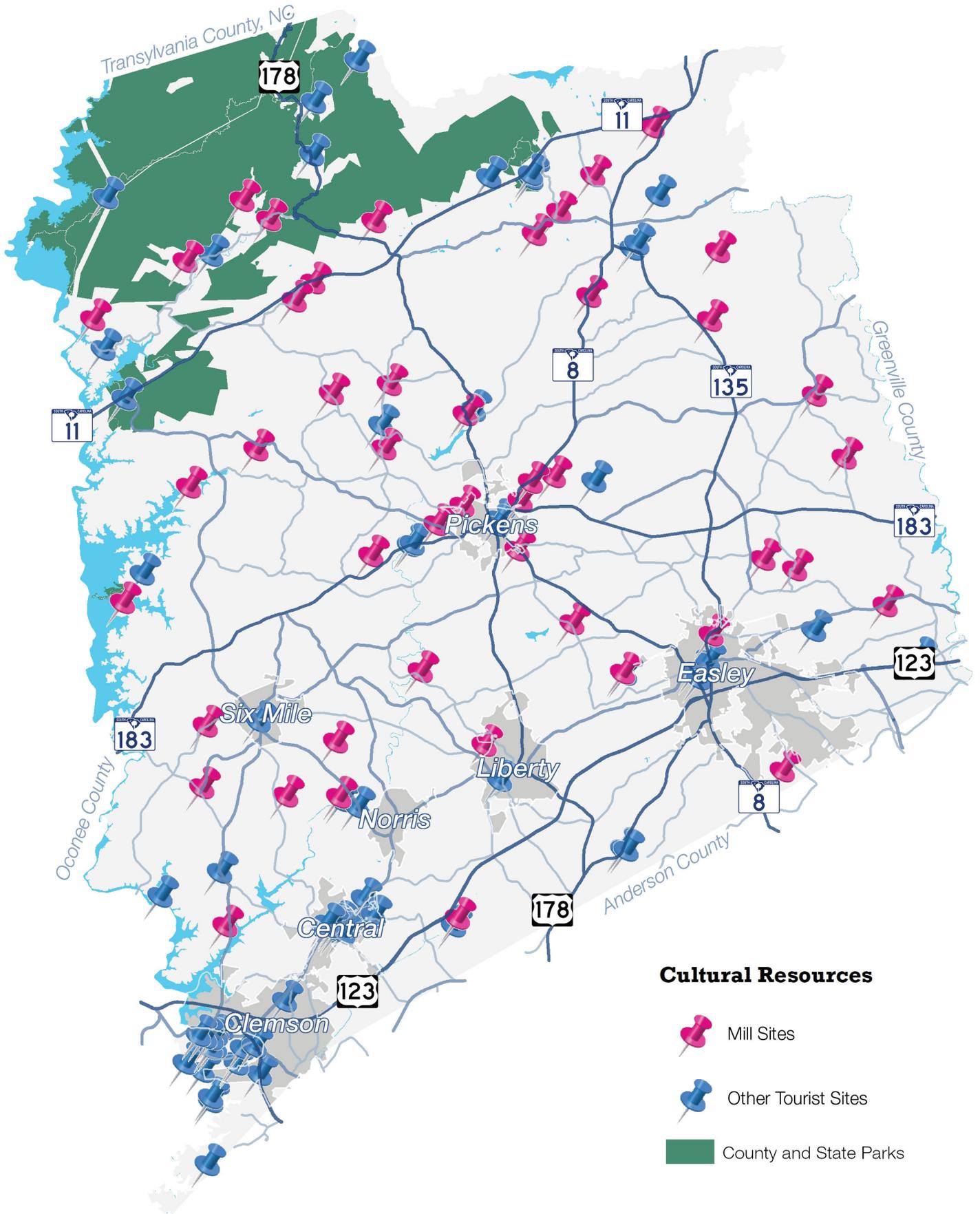
There are many historical structures and sites in Pickens County representing a wide range of cultures and time periods that have been integral in the history of Pickens Count. Fort George was built resulting from a 1753 treaty that allowed the fort to be constructed on Cherokee territory to protect British interests and defend the Cherokee from their enemies. The Pickens County Historical Society is leading efforts to completely rebuild Fort Prince George near its original location.

The Hagood-Maulding House was the South Carolina house the old Confederate veterans called home. The earliest section of the Hagood-Mauldin House was built about 1856 in Old Pickens Court House. The Pickens County Historical Society acquired the house in 1987 and opened as a fine arts museum the following year.

## National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. There are twenty-six historic sites or districts have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Pickens County, SC.

- Civilian Conservation Corps Quarry No. 1 and Truck Trail
- J.C. Striblin Barn
- Civilian Conservation Corps Quarry No. 2
- Liberty Colored High School (Rosewood Center)
- Central High School
- Morgan House
- Clemson College Sheep Barn
- Old Pickens Jail
- Clemson University Historic District I
- Old Stone Church and Cemetery
- Clemson University Historic District II
- Oolenoy Baptist Church Cemetery
- Easley High School Auditorium
- Roper House Complex (Camp Oolenoy)
- Fort Hill
- Central Roller Mills
- Sheriff Mill Complex
- Griffin-Christopher House
- J. Warren Smith House
- Hagood Mill
- Structural Science Building (Lee and Lowry Hall)
- Hagood-Mauldin House (Irma Morris Museum)
- Table Rock CCC Camp Site
- Hanover House
- Table Rock State Park Historic District
- Hester Store
- Williams-Ligon House



## Other Sites of Historical Significance

- Abel Church & Cemetery
- Central City Hall/Old Jail
- Freedom Hill Church & Center
- Alfred Hester House
- Cochran House
- Gaines House
- Bailey Barton House
- Cold Springs Baptist Church & Cemetery
- Glassy Mountain Fire Tower
- James Beamer Homestead
- Craig/Stewart Mill
- Greenville-Pickens Speedway
- W.T. Bowen House
- Dacusville School
- Hagood Log Cabin
- Bowie Home Place
- John Easley Home
- Hester House
- Carmel Presbyterian Church
- Eastatoee Church
- Hinkle/Dr. Valley Home
- Cateechee School
- Ezekiel Pickens House
- Hunt Cabin
- Hunter's Post
- McKinney's Chapel
- Meece Mill
- Nine Times School
- Norris House
- Oolenoy Church
- Oolenoy Community Center
- Dr. Peek's Hospital
- Ponder House
- Powder House
- Red Caboose
- Redmont Post Office
- Mobile Prison
- Mountain View Hotel
- Murphree-Hollingsworth Cabin
- Soapstone Baptist Church
- Tillman Hall
- Twelve Mile School
- West End Hall
- Wolf Creek School

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Cultural Resources Element Goal

“Our vision is to honor, preserve, and promote the unique heritage of Pickens County through cultural and recreational opportunities that serve our diverse residents and visitors.”

## Cultural Resources Element Objectives

- Provide easier, healthier access to cultural resources by improving pedestrian and ADA pathways connecting cultural landmarks, schools, recreation areas, and urban centers
- Implement the county recreation master plan
- Develop and enhance existing access to lakes and rivers to provide walking trails and recreational activities along waterways
- Encourage and endorse non-profits that seek to promote cultural resources
- Promote equestrian events, venues, and trails for healthy recreation and cultural enjoyment
- Promote lakes, mountains, and natural resources for tourism and recreation
- Continue to identify potential historic sites for preservation and increase the awareness, importance, marketability and accessibility of our Cultural Resources to all residents of, and visitors to, Pickens County
- Create a countywide alliance that supports and markets the arts and cultural activities
- Cooperate with our cities to encourage the development of resources for youth in the areas of recreation, sports, art, culture, and entertainment
- Preserve healthy lifestyles, natural resources, readily available recreation, and safe communities with low incidence of crime
- Increase art and cultural opportunities in the communities beyond those provided by educational institutions while continue to seek the cooperation and collaboration of colleges and universities
- Maintain historic sites, such as grist mills, homes, churches, Native American sites, and the Pickens County Museum

## Cultural Resources Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Implement the Pickens County Parks and Recreation Master Plan to provide adequate recreation facilities with an emphasis on foot trails and pedestrian amenities in culturally significant areas.

**ACTIONS:** Assess and prioritize needs, research development options and funding sources, oversee projects.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Department of Parks and Recreation. Supporting Agencies: Cultural Commission, Tourism Board, County Council, and other county departments.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going

**POLICY:** Responsibly preserve and market cultural, heritage, and recreational resources.

**ACTIONS:** Continue to maintain an inventory of cultural resources. Develop an action plan for improving local sites and make them accessible to residents and visitors. Develop tour routes to link a network of sites.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Leads: Cultural Commission and Tourism Board. Supporting Agency: County Council.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going

**POLICY:** Integrate cultural resources with community opportunities for educational enrichment, healthy lifestyles, and youth involvement.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Cultural Commission. Supporting Agencies: County Council, Tourism Board.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going

**POLICY:** Continue to maintain and develop Pickens County's established cultural sites such as the Pickens County Museum and the Hagood Mill.

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: Cultural Commission. Supporting Agency: County Council

**IMPLEMENTATION:** On-going



PUMPKINTOWN  
MOUNTAIN



OPRY

FOOD-GIFTS  
LATTE







**11**

PRIORITY  
INVESTMENT



# 11. PRIORITY INVESTMENT

The South Carolina Priority Investment Act (PIA) amended the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act by requiring a Priority Investment Element be added to all local comprehensive plans in South Carolina. The purpose of the Priority Investment Element is to improve governmental efficiency by requiring a higher level of coordination among local governments and other local or regional public service providers. Improved coordination among these organizations will result in future development that, in theory, is more cost effective and more efficient in the consumption of land and resources.

## 10-YEAR CAPITAL NEEDS

The Planning Commission is charged with identifying a list of those capital projects in Pickens County that are anticipated to be funded with public monies in next 10 years. The list of projects is to be reviewed and considered as part of the Planning Commission’s annual recommended prioritization of projects for County Council. The source of projects to be considered on the list may be, but is not limited to, the listed needs of various County agencies on their 5-year Capital Improvement Plans (CIP), school board building programs, and other public infrastructure and facility requirements identified as critical to the citizens of Pickens County. Projects have not yet been identified by the Planning Commission. Once the Comprehensive Plan has been adopted, the next order of business for the Planning Commission will be to work on a “Ten Year Capital Needs Plan for Pickens County” and incorporate that list in this plan.

# FUNDING OPTIONS

## Bonds

The primary source of revenue for county capital projects are General Obligation Bonds (G.O. Bonds). G.O. Bonds are secured by the County’s projected future property tax revenue stream. It should be noted that the State of South Carolina limits the amount that local governments can borrow through G.O Bonds to 8% of the assessed value of the County’s taxable property. Although the state does allow for the approval of additional bonds by referendum in certain cases, it is not possible to anticipate the outcome of such votes; therefore, only those funds available within the 8% limit can be considered a steady funding source.

In order to project the amount of capital funding that Pickens County may reasonably expect to be able to access through bonds in the coming decade, it is necessary to review past activity and bonding capacity. It should be emphasized that the amounts derived through this process are based on history, and although relevant for the purposes of this examination, may not necessarily indicate future conditions. The table below shows the total taxable assessed values for Pickens County from 2016 to 2020. The utilization of the values recorded over a 5-year period will typically include at least one reassessment of all taxable properties in the County, thereby updating those values and improving the accuracy, and making it possible

to establish reasonably reliable averages to use in projecting future funding levels into the near future.

It is possible to establish a projected annual increase of 5% over the next 10 years, using the average assessed value of \$508,245,236. The following table outlines the projected debt limit for Pickens County through the year 2030.

The legal debt margin for Pickens County is projected to increase in the next decade from

*Projected Debt Limit for Pickens County, 2015-2030*

Year	Assessed Value	Debt Limit	Bond Balance	Debt Margin
2015	\$459,057,129	\$36,724,570	\$4,082,304	\$32,642,266
2016	\$468,229,829	\$37,458,386	\$2,534,276	\$34,924,110
2017	\$478,428,074	\$38,274,246	\$2,276,372	\$35,997,873
2018	\$500,486,199	\$40,038,896	\$27,008,202	\$13,030,694
2019	\$524,103,928	\$41,928,314	\$24,879,351	\$16,048,963
2020	\$569,978,153	\$45,598,252	\$23,265,000	\$22,333,252
2021	\$598,477,061	\$47,878,165	\$22,345,000	\$25,533,165
2022	\$628,400,914	\$50,272,073	\$21,390,000	\$28,882,073
2023	\$659,820,959	\$52,785,677	\$20,395,000	\$32,390,677
2024	\$692,812,007	\$55,424,961	\$19,360,000	\$36,064,961
2025	\$727,452,608	\$58,196,209	\$18,285,000	\$39,911,209
2026	\$763,825,238	\$61,106,019	\$17,165,000	\$43,941,019
2027	\$802,016,500	\$64,161,320	\$16,000,000	\$48,161,320
2028	\$842,117,325	\$67,369,386	\$14,790,000	\$52,579,386
2029	\$884,223,191	\$70,737,855	\$13,530,000	\$57,207,855
2030	\$928,434,351	\$74,274,748	\$12,220,000	\$62,054,748

*Total Taxable Assessed Value by Fiscal Year*

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Average	% (+/-)
\$420,697,356	\$421,939,814	\$442,023,365	\$444,177,843	\$451,884,634	\$508,245,236	5%

\$22,333,252 to \$62,054,748 because of increased assessed property values and the elimination of current bonded indebtedness. Naturally, any additional bonds utilized to fund capital projects in the interim would directly reduce the available amount, as would any significant decrease in assessed property values.

## Other Sources

### Designated Funds

Another option to provide a regular funding source for capital projects is to designate a specific portion of annual revenues as a 'set aside' for capital projects. Naturally, such a plan would only cover a limited portion of the overall capital needs of the County, but it would serve as a steady funding source for the purposes of planning for projects. One possible use for a regular set-aside could be to escrow the monies for specific multi-phased projects to be accomplished over a long period of time, or for those items that require significant upgrades on an ongoing basis. Also, for those projects that primarily serve only a limited region of the County but stimulate additional development, such as the expansion of infrastructure, it may be appropriate to designate a portion of the tax increment stemming from the new development, either to replenish the fund of designated monies, or to accomplish additional phases of the project.

### Special Tax

The tax, which has already been used in several other South Carolina counties, is governed by strict state guidelines that limit the applicability of funds primarily to the development and construction of a project. In brief, a 6-member commission made up of representatives from both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county creates a list of projects to be funded by the tax. The list is presented to County Council, who may either approve or reject the specified projects with no changes. If approved, the list of projects and projected costs are then part of a referendum question that must be voted on by the electorate. A majority vote supporting the tax initiates the levy, which will be in place no more than 7 years, with the tax ending sooner if actual revenues exceed the projected amount. If such an effort succeeds, the tax will be a reliable funding source for some projects; however, as with efforts to exceed the 8% assessable value limit on bond capacity by referendum, the outcome of votes cannot be reliably anticipated. Therefore, prior to the successful implementation of the one-cent capital infrastructure tax, it cannot be considered a steady funding source for future capital needs.

### Grants

The use of grants become an increasingly important revenue component for many communities, with Pickens County being no different. In recent years, grants from state and federal agencies have enabled the County to move ahead with a number of projects that would otherwise have been delayed, or possible even never realized. In spite of their value in providing needed

funding, however, grants are at best of limited value for planning purposes, for the availability of funds needed for a specific project can seldom be reliably anticipated far enough in advance to allow for them to be considered a steady funding source. The competition for a limited pool of money from an ever growing number of potential applicants, combined with and the impact of the whims of economics and political moods, often results in an ever-changing amount of grant funds. Grant money, therefore, while a wonderful supplement to turn to for specific capital projects, should not be considered a major steady source of revenue.

## Impact Fees

A major revenue source for funding capital projects in some South Carolina counties is development impact fees. In spite of the fact that Pickens County has not enacted impact fees to date, they continue to receive public support as an option for funding roads, parks, libraries, and other capital improvements. It should be noted, however, that the South Carolina Development Impact Fee Act imposes a number of stringent requirements on local governments seeking to develop a program. For example, prior to adoption of any impact fee for residential units, the local government must study and publish a report on the potential impacts of the fee on affordable housing within the jurisdiction. Also, the local ordinance creating the fee must specify the improvement that the money is to be used for, with the amount of the fee being based on verified costs or estimates established by detailed engineering studies. Once adopted, impact fees may be applied only for the period stated in the enacting ordinance, with all monies collected from the fee identified in a published annual report, detailing the collection, appropriation, spending of any portion. As a result, impact fees are an alternative for Pickens County to consider as a funding source for future capital improvements, but the creation of a program will likely require significant assistance from an experienced consultant.

## User Fees

Currently, Pickens County collects user fees for utilizing county-owned facilities; specifically use of the facilities at Mile Creek Park and utility user fees collected by the Public Service Commission. Although they can be considered a steady source of funding, user fees and other miscellaneous type of revenue typically generate only a portion of the amount associated with constructing and operating a facility. There are exceptions, however, for facilities such as recreation complexes many times combine these fees with concession monies, entry fees for events, and other miscellaneous revenues to achieve profitability, which can in turn be used to retire debt or upgrade a facility. Other types of facilities, however, simply do not lend themselves to the application of user fees. When appropriate, therefore, the County should consider user fees and other miscellaneous revenue as a funding source for capital projects.

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Priority Investment Element Goal

“Our vision is to foster coordination and cooperation among all of Pickens County’s local governments in prioritizing the investment of public funds in our county.”

## Priority Investment Element Objectives

- Set appropriate 10-year priorities for water, sewer, roads/transportation, community facilities and schools
- Devise a mechanism that will promote cooperation between municipalities
- Build greater cooperation and coordination between Clemson University, Southern Wesleyan University, Tri-County Technical College, Pickens County School District, and the communities in Pickens County
- Build collaboration among government agencies and economic development organizations to provide infrastructure to attract new businesses and industries
- Align development of new water, power, communications, and sewer lines to meet economic development demands and environmental concerns, and whenever practical, encourage and direct development to where infrastructure already exists
- Identify available funding sources and establish priority investment areas
- Encourage coordination of public facilities and services to support the implementation of Character Areas as identified in the Comprehensive Plan

## Policies and Implementation

**POLICY:** Set appropriate 10-year priorities for water, sewer, roads/transportation, community facilities and schools

**ACTIONS:** Establish an initial “Ten Year Capital Needs Plan for Pickens County”

**AGENCIES:** Suggested Lead: County Council. Supporting Agencies: Planning Commission, School District of Pickens County, Other County Departments, all Cities.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** 2023

