

Chapter 2: Introduction

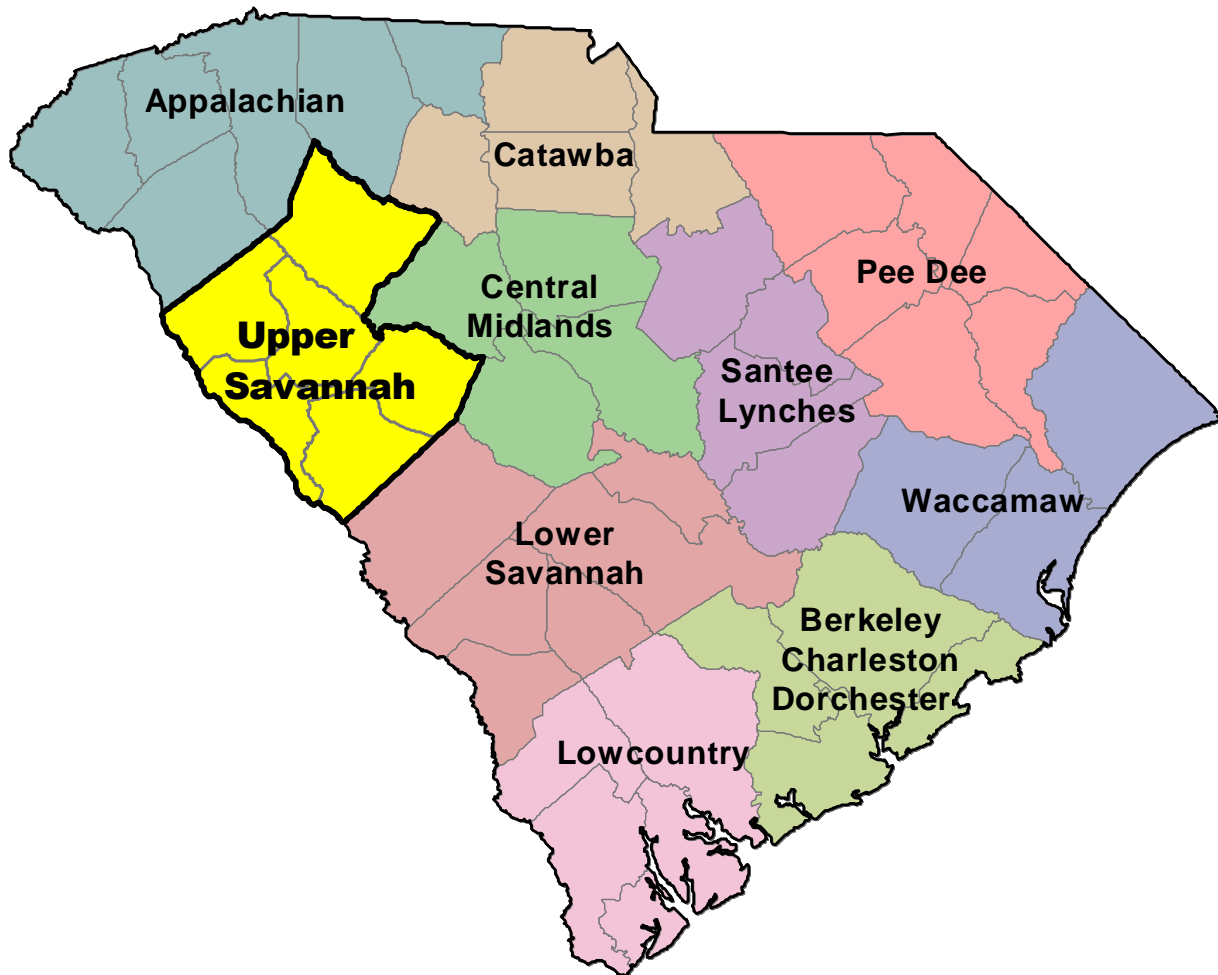
Population	Economic	Cultural Resources	Community Facilities
Natural Resources	Housing	Energy	Land Use

2.1 Location

Greenwood County is located in western South Carolina in the Upper Savannah region of the state. The County is located between four major urban areas - Columbia (81 miles east), Greenville/Spartanburg (54 and 60 miles north, respectively), Anderson (39 miles northwest) and Augusta, Georgia (59 miles south). The County is located within the Piedmont landform region of South Carolina. Furthermore, Greenwood County is nestled southeast of Interstate 85, southwest of Interstate 26, northwest of Interstate 20 and northeast of the Savannah River.

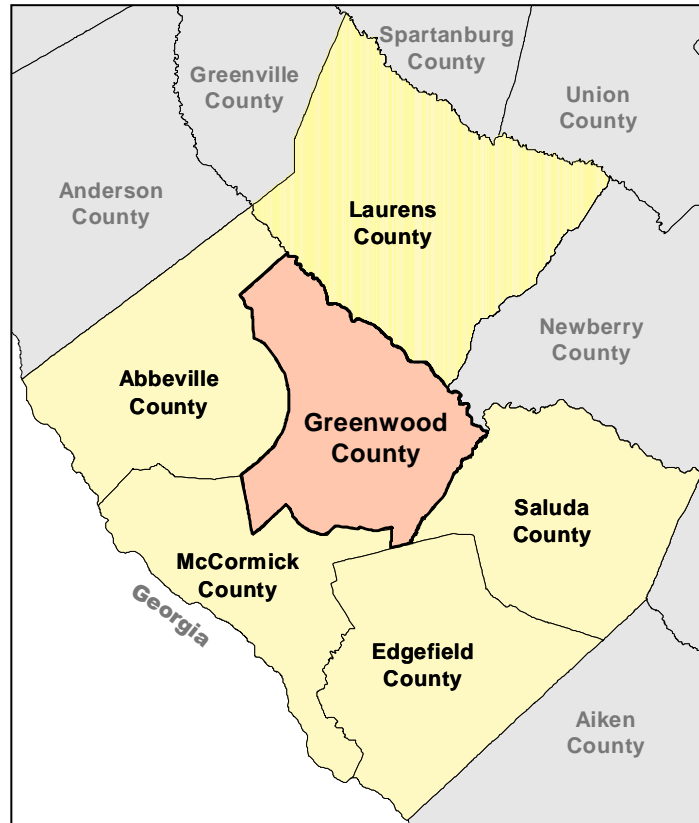
The County is bounded by six adjoining South Carolina counties: Abbeville, McCormick, Edgefield, Saluda, Newberry, and Laurens. Of these counties, the City of Greenwood is the largest municipality within the region. The most predominant land feature is the Saluda River and Lake Greenwood which forms the northeastern boundary of the county.

Figure 2-1. Upper Savannah Region Location Map



Source: Greenwood City/County Planning Department, 2006.

Figure 2-2. Greenwood County Location Map



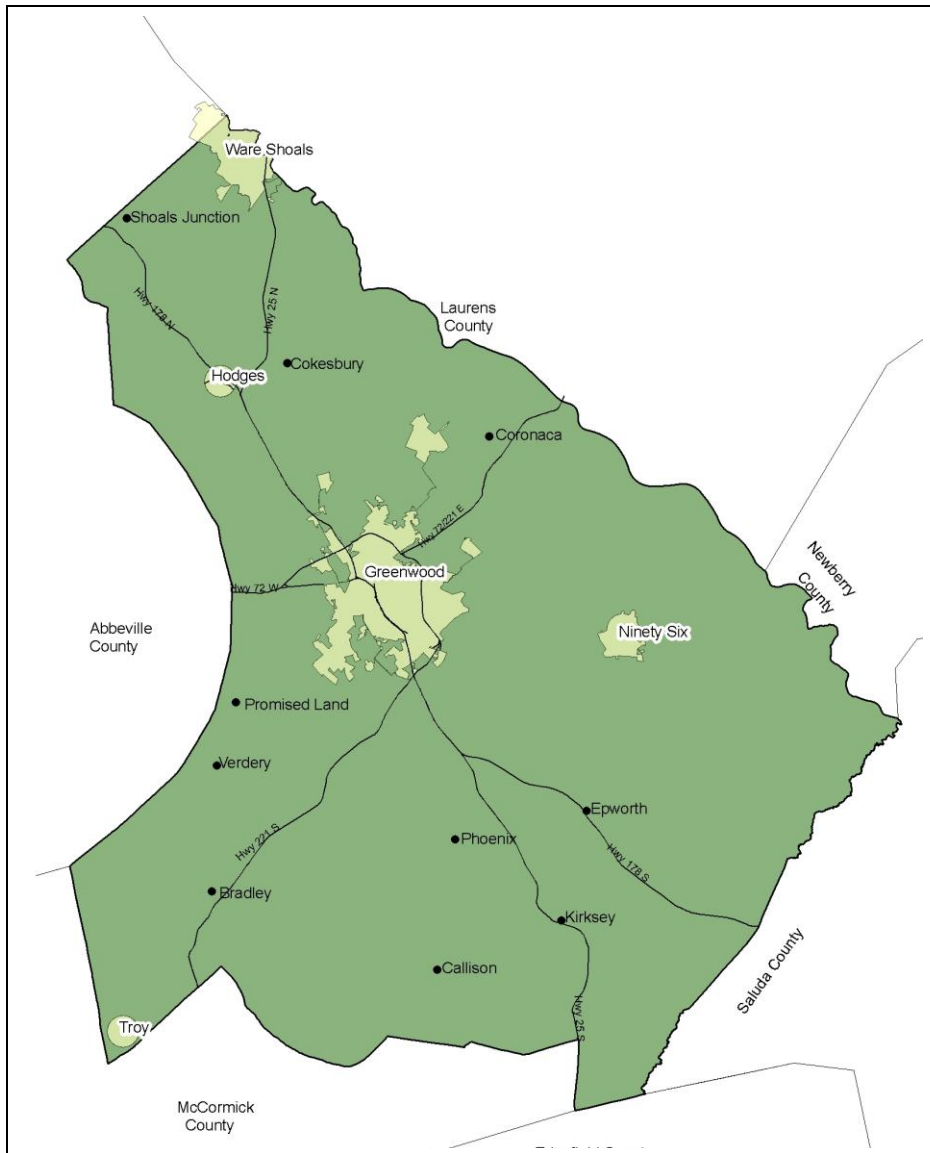
Source: Greenwood City/County Planning Department, 2006.

There are four municipalities located in Greenwood County: the City of Greenwood, the Town of Hodges, the Town of Ninety Six, the Town of Troy and the Town of Ware Shoals. The City of Greenwood lies in the west-central portion of the County and is the seat of county government. The northwestern section of the county is home to the community of Ware Shoals. The Town of Ware Shoals straddles Greenwood, Laurens, and Abbeville Counties along the Saluda River. The Town of Hodges is located between Ware Shoals and Greenwood along U.S. Highway 25. In the most southwestern corner of the County lies the Town of Troy. This Town is located between the communities of Greenwood and McCormick. The Town of Ninety Six is located just east of Greenwood along S.C. Highway 34. This community is home to Old Star Fort and the Ninety Six National Historic Site. Ninety Six is the oldest community within Greenwood County.

There are also smaller communities within Greenwood County that are not classified as municipalities.

- Shoals Junction* - U.S. Highway 178 and the Abbeville County Line
- Coronaca* - the intersection of S.C. Highway 702 and U.S. Highway 221
- Epworth* - the intersection of U.S. Highway 178 and S.C. Highway 248
- Kirksey* - the intersection of U.S. Highway 25 and Martin Town Road
- Callison* - the intersection of S.C. Highway 67 and Phoenix Road
- Phoenix* - the intersection of Phoenix Road and Damascus Church Road
- Bradley* - the intersection of U.S. Highway 221 and S.C. Highway 10
- Cokesbury* - the intersection of S.C. Highway 254, S.C. Highway 702, and U.S. Highway 25
- Verdery* - along S.C. Highway 10 at Cedar Springs Road
- Promised Land* - along S.C. Highway 10 near the Abbeville County Line

Figure 2-3. Greenwood County Community Map



Source: Greenwood City/County Planning Department, 2006.

2.2 Historical Background

Originally inhabited by Native Americans, this portion of South Carolina was not settled by Europeans until the mid-eighteenth century. The town of Ninety Six was the first township in the county as it was established as a frontier trading post around 1730. In November 1775 Ninety Six was the site of one of the first battles of the American Revolution in South Carolina. In May 1781 American forces besieged the British-held Star Fort at Ninety Six for over a month but were forced to withdraw when British reinforcements approached.

Greenwood County takes its name from the City of Greenwood, the county seat. The City of Greenwood, formed in 1857, developed around a plantation owned by John McGehee which he named "Green Wood". Greenwood County was formed in 1897 from portions of Abbeville and Edgefield counties.

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2.3 What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is the principal policy document for guiding future conservation and development of the County and its communities. It represents an outline of community values, ideals and aspirations to govern a shared environment. Its purpose is to bring a deliberate, overall direction to the day-to-day decisions of the governing bodies, its commissions and staff. The Plan:

- ❑ Organizes the desires of the public in regard to the physical, social, economic, and environmental character of Greenwood County;
- ❑ Defines a realistic vision of what the County and its communities intends to be twenty years from now; and
- ❑ Charts the course of conservation and development that will determine the future character of our communities and the nature of their environment.

The Comprehensive Plan is composed of text, maps, and figures. The essence of the Plan is contained in the goals, policies and programs in the text and in the Future Land Use Map. Some goals, policies, and programs address site-specific locations, and their results are shown on the Future Land Use Map. Other goals, policies and programs are more general in nature, and are described in the text of the plan.

2.3.1 Legal Requirements

The Comprehensive Plan is a legal document adopted by Greenwood County, the City of Greenwood, the Town of Ninety Six, the Town of Troy, and the Town of Ware Shoals. It is the apex of land use regulations, meaning that all other land rules and regulations must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Regulations that are not consistent with the Plan must be amended to insure consistency.

State law requires local governments to prepare comprehensive plans if land use restrictions are adopted. The state has mandated that a comprehensive plan must contain the following seven elements: population, natural resources, economic, housing, cultural resources, community facilities and land use. Each of these elements stand alone in content, but must be evaluated comprehensively with the other elements for maximum benefit.

Comprehensive plans have long term horizons. This Plan addresses the needs of the communities to the Year 2020.

2.3.2 The Comprehensive Planning Process

In 1996, the Greenwood City/County Planning Commission recommended that a consolidated comprehensive plan be undertaken to identify the needs and direction of the Greenwood County communities within the next twenty years. This Plan was to provide public decision-makers and private developers with clear and more effective policy guidance. In early 1997, groups and individuals were identified to serve on committees to formulate each element of the Comprehensive Plan. In May of 1997, a survey was conducted by the Planning Department staff to identify the needs and issues of importance to the general public. Members of the county, city and town councils, Planning Commission, municipal and county staff members, the general public, and community organizations met from July of 1997 to January of 1999 to develop the document. The culmination of the project resulted in the adoption of the Plan by Greenwood County, the City of Greenwood, the Town of Ninety Six, the Town of Troy, and the Town of Ware Shoals in March of 1999.

The result of this effort is a Comprehensive Plan built upon a consolidated framework by the citizens of the municipalities and the county. The Plan is a guide, through text and maps, to opportunities and conditions for new development based on an optimal balance among the social, environmental and economic needs of and costs to the community. The Comprehensive Plan is an officially adopted statement of policies that will guide decision-makers toward attainment of the long term goals that determine the physical development of our community. The Plan also serves as a collective community archive of issues raised and directions chosen during the last years of the 20th Century.

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2.3.3 What the Plan Covers

This Plan supercedes and replaces any and all prior versions of land use plans or comprehensive plans, housing studies, environmental assessments and the like. The Plan covers the political boundaries of Greenwood County, the municipal jurisdictions including the Town of Ware Shoals town limits within Abbeville and Laurens Counties. This Plan also includes the entire watercourse of Lake Greenwood to the 440' contour line within Laurens and Newberry Counties.

2.3.4 Organization of the Plan

The Plan is made up of text, maps, and other illustrations. The text is arranged in chapters. Starting with Chapter 3, each chapter identifies topics that describe the existing conditions of areas within Greenwood County and a discussion of issues that are attributed to these conditions. Desired future conditions are stated in the goals, policies, and programs in the remainder of each chapter.

2.3.5 The Comprehensive Plan Maps

Accompanying the text is an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan: the official Future Land Use Map. The map covers the political boundaries of Greenwood County and the municipal boundaries of the city and towns. The Land Use Map is a requirement of state law and must clearly designate the type of land use for each property covered by the Plan (*i.e.* residential, commercial, industrial). In addition, the map and text together must specify the population density at which residential development may occur; that is, the maximum number of dwelling units per acre of land that may be constructed on a piece of property, and in turn, the number of people per acre expected to populate each residential property. In like manner, the map and text together must specify the building intensity at which commercial and industrial development may occur.

Other pertinent features of the Future Land Use Map include the location of existing and proposed parks, public schools, floodplains, and roadways. Thus, the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map is a graphic depiction of, and sets the course for, the managed growth of the County over the next twenty years.

Separate maps throughout the document summarize conditions that may preclude development or trigger particular requirements to make development possible. All of these maps and figures are adopted.

2.3.6 Administering the Plan

Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan does not remain static. Amendments may be made to propose a change in land use designation of a particular property. As time goes on, the County, City or Towns may decide that it is necessary to revise portions of the text to reflect changing circumstances or philosophy. In addition, the local governments should comprehensively review the Plan every five years to determine whether the Plan continues to promote prevailing community values and conditions.

2.3.7 Amending the Plan

Any citizen wishing to amend the Comprehensive Plan would follow the procedure generally outlined below:

1. Prior to filing an official application for a Comprehensive Plan amendment, the prospective applicant of his or her agent should discuss the proposed amendment with the Director of City/County Planning. This gives the applicant a first-hand opportunity to learn the details of the amendment process and any concerns the community may have about the proposed change.
2. Should the applicant decide to proceed with an amendment, the next step is to file an official application with the Greenwood City/County Planning Commission and pay the required processing fees. All applications requesting a change in land use designation must be accompanied by a development plan of sufficient detail to ascertain the potential impacts of the area. The Planning Department staff determines what constitutes "sufficient detail" on a case-by-case basis.
3. Once an application is submitted, it will be placed on an agenda for public hearing before the City/County Planning Commission according to the schedule established by the Planning Commission for Comprehensive Plan amendments. Prior to the Planning Commission hearing, the Department will provide notice to the public of the hearing date and the item to be discussed. An individual amendment typically requires a legal notice in a legally adjudicated general circulation newspaper and a notice

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- mailed to all contiguous property owners of the subject property. Notices for major amendments affecting the entire community, such as this update of the Plan, are handled differently due to the scale.
4. Planning Department Staff will prepare a report to the Planning Commission for the public hearing, describing in detail the proposed amendment, any environmental or other impacts that may result, and comments from other affected municipal or county departments or governmental agencies. The staff report, which is sent to the Commission and the applicant, will advise whether the Commission should recommend the amendment to the respective council for approval or denial. The staff report, comments from the applicant, and other public testimony become factors in the Commission's action.

Any decision on a Comprehensive Plan amendment must be supported by findings of fact. These findings are the rationale for making a decision either to approve or deny a project. While specific findings may be applied on a project-by-project basis, at least the following standards should be made for each Comprehensive Plan amendment:

1. The proposed amendment is deemed to be in the public interest.
2. The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is consistent and compatible with the rest of the Comprehensive Plan and any implementation programs that may be affected.
3. The potential impacts of the proposed amendment have been assessed and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.

To ensure consistency and compatibility with the Plan, amendments initiated by the governing bodies or requested by public agencies are subject to the same basic process and requirements described above. This includes appropriate environmental review, public notice, and public hearings leading to official action by Council resolution.

