



City of
Seneca, South Carolina

2014-2024 Comprehensive Plan



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INTRODUCTION

Location

The City of Seneca is located in Oconee County within the upstate of South Carolina at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Seneca is also the largest city in Oconee County, also known as the Golden Corner for its position adjacent to both Georgia and North Carolina.



History

The City of Seneca was established in 1873 and enacted its first charter in 1874. The city was platted at a location that was planned as an intersection between the Southern and Blue Ridge Railroads. Seneca became a regional center for commerce because of its position as a transportation hub. Textile mills became a predominant industry, followed by other manufacturing industries. With the development of Oconee Nuclear Station and the creation of Lakes Jocassee and Keowee, the area has become a recreation, tourism and retirement location.



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Reflections

The previous decade has been one of significant flux in local, national and international settings. The emergence of new international economic powers such as China and India have also shifted the economic futures of the local area.

Once popular and profitable textile jobs have been outsourced overseas and little has come in its place in the form of economic and employment opportunity. As such, a middle class of semi-skilled and high school-educated adults who once held stable mill employment has declined. In the early 2000's, job losses were mitigated by the growth in the building industry; that industry however, weakened with the financial crisis and economic downturn of 2008.

Locally, regionally, and nationally, the economy has shifted from a period of booming growth to recession to weak recovery. This shift has resulted from a period of housing and businesses growth flourished by an environment of liberal lending practices to a recessed economy stagnated by a more conservative use of lending capital – due in part to regulations put in place to ameliorate the effects of such economic bubbles.

While recent signs point to a slow recovery, the City of Seneca has had to look at ways to grow in spite of the prevailing economic conditions. City government has explored ways to incubate and incentivize growth and has sought new and unique opportunities to distinguish Seneca from the recent economic challenges.

As Seneca moves forward, this document is intended to help guide the growth of the city, to promote efficiency, and protect those characteristics that will distinguish Seneca and make it attractive to both new and existing businesses and lifelong citizens.

Projections

According to US Census projections for 2050, Seneca sits in the middle of a proposed mega-region; an area of growth and urbanization that will extend west to Tuscaloosa, Alabama and north to the Raleigh-Durham area of North Carolina.

Projections by the US Census Bureau estimate that by 2030, South Carolina will grow by 1.1 million to an estimated 5.1 million people. Of this population projection, 1.6 million will be in the 10 county upstate area alone. Furthermore, in each instance, the percentages of juvenile and senior citizen populations are projected to grow proportionally larger in South Carolina; particularly in the upstate area than those of the United States as a whole.

As we focus into our area, the 2010 Census assigned 74,273 residents to Oconee County, a 1% increase from a population of 73,420 projected in 2003. Additionally, the county is projected to have 91,070 by 2030 which should be in line with and part of the 1.6 million people projected for the 10 county upstate area.

At the city level, growth has yet to be realized; moreover, projections from the 1999 Comprehensive Plan had anticipated higher projections in both the 2000 and 2010 Census respectfully than have actually occurred. These over estimations in population projections could be attributed to several factors to include: an aging populace within the city, reductions in manufacturing jobs, and an abundance of older inner city dwellings potentially viewed as undesirable by home buyers seeking newer housing being built outside of the city limits.

Nevertheless, changes in lifestyles, resource costs in items such as fuel and groceries, and provision of services that benefit city properties are all expected to result in policies that allow for expanded city limits, increased densities within the city, and subsequent population growth.

Projections – the next Decennial Census

From the 2010 Census, population numbers collected, particularly, for the Cities of Clemson and Easley, our neighbors to the east have changed their priorities. Their combined urban growth over the past ten years, along with the progressive development of the upstate region as a whole has resulted in Clemson and Easley being included into the Greenville/Spartanburg metropolitan area.

The reason we concern ourselves with Clemson and Easley's growth etc. is because their growth and designation from rural to urban carries with it new opportunities as well as obligations that has the potential to impact Seneca. These opportunities and obligations include reaching Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) thresholds. MPO's are federally funded regional agencies which determines how transportation, infrastructure, and transit dollars are both received and distributed. Conversely, previously available opportunities for rural transit funding and USDA rural development grants and assistance are eliminated as population growth continues.

This continued growth westerly into Seneca and Oconee County will most certainly impact the city with increased responsibilities for governmental roles that were previously relegated to the state and its agencies to include but not limited to storm-water permitting. From this comprehensive plan, the efforts to address these anticipated concerns will be borne.

Planning

Planning is about envisioning alternatives, agreeing upon direction, setting goals, taking steps towards those goals, and evaluating our progress along the way.

Through public meetings, alternatives have been discussed, direction have been realized, and goals have been set. Seneca's Comprehensive Plan update has been developed to do the following:

Keep the best small-town community features while allowing for the growth that is coming.

Furthermore, the growth that was anticipated in the middle of the previous decade looks different from the growth that may be anticipated now. Whereas expansion outward of uniform development was once the norm, external pressures now affect those growth patterns.

Gas prices which have fluctuated over the years and other transportation costs can make driving more of a necessity than a luxury. At the same time, the Nation is looking at the value of the availability of food and consequently food systems planning. Food, an issue possibly taken for granted in the past has now reached into the forefront of interest as both consumers and policy makers seek and demand locally sourced food, the diminishing of food deserts- which is a lack of markets and healthier food in the interest of creating efficiency in food costs, nutrition, and availability.

Additionally, National trends have emphasized the importance of active downtowns with amenities that promote walking and healthier life choices, increased social interaction and opportunities for people to interact, to connect within the community and enjoy all the things that living in a small town has to offer.

POPULATION

Existing Conditions

The data produced over the last three censuses has been changed drastically by the evolution of computing and other technological tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Since 1900, the city has grown tremendously (See **Figure 1.**) and as of the 2010 Census, the city of Seneca recorded 8,024 people living within its city limits. Of that number, our population was evenly dispersed in age from birth to age 69, naturally declining from age 69 and older.

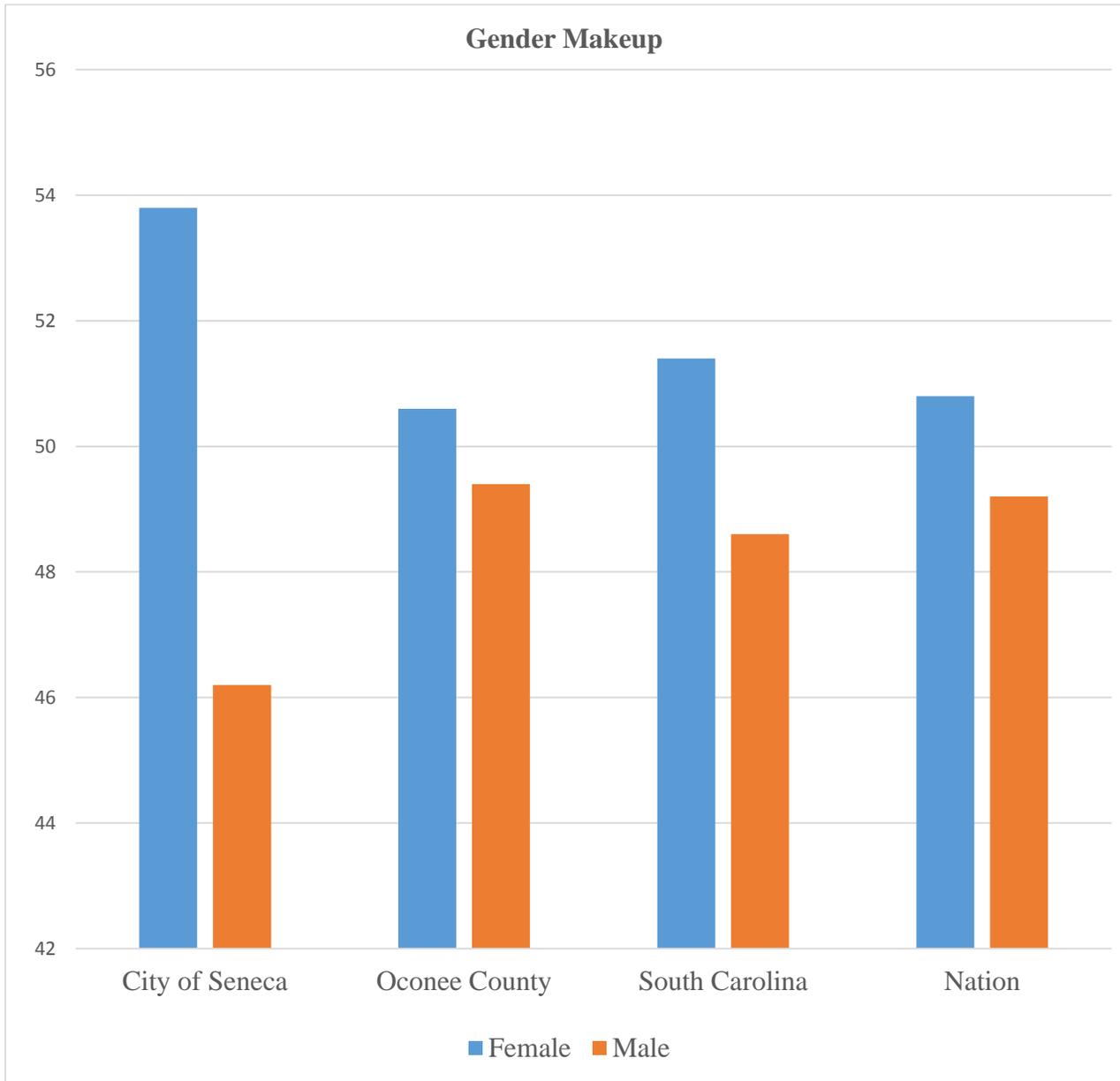
**Figure 1.
Decennial Population**

Census	Population	%± Change
1900	920	—
1910	1,313	42.7%
1920	1,460	11.2%
1930	1,929	32.1%
1940	2,155	11.7%
1950	3,649	69.3%
1960	5,227	43.2%
1970	6,027	15.3%
1980	7,436	23.4%
1990	7,726	3.9%
2000	7,652	(-1.0%)
2010	8,024	5.9%
Est. 2011	8,117	0.2%

US Census

The gender makeup for the city is 53.8% female and 46.2% male, comparable with the county (50.6 and 49.4), state (51.4% and 48.6%), and nation (50.8% and 49.2%) respectfully. (See Figure 2.)

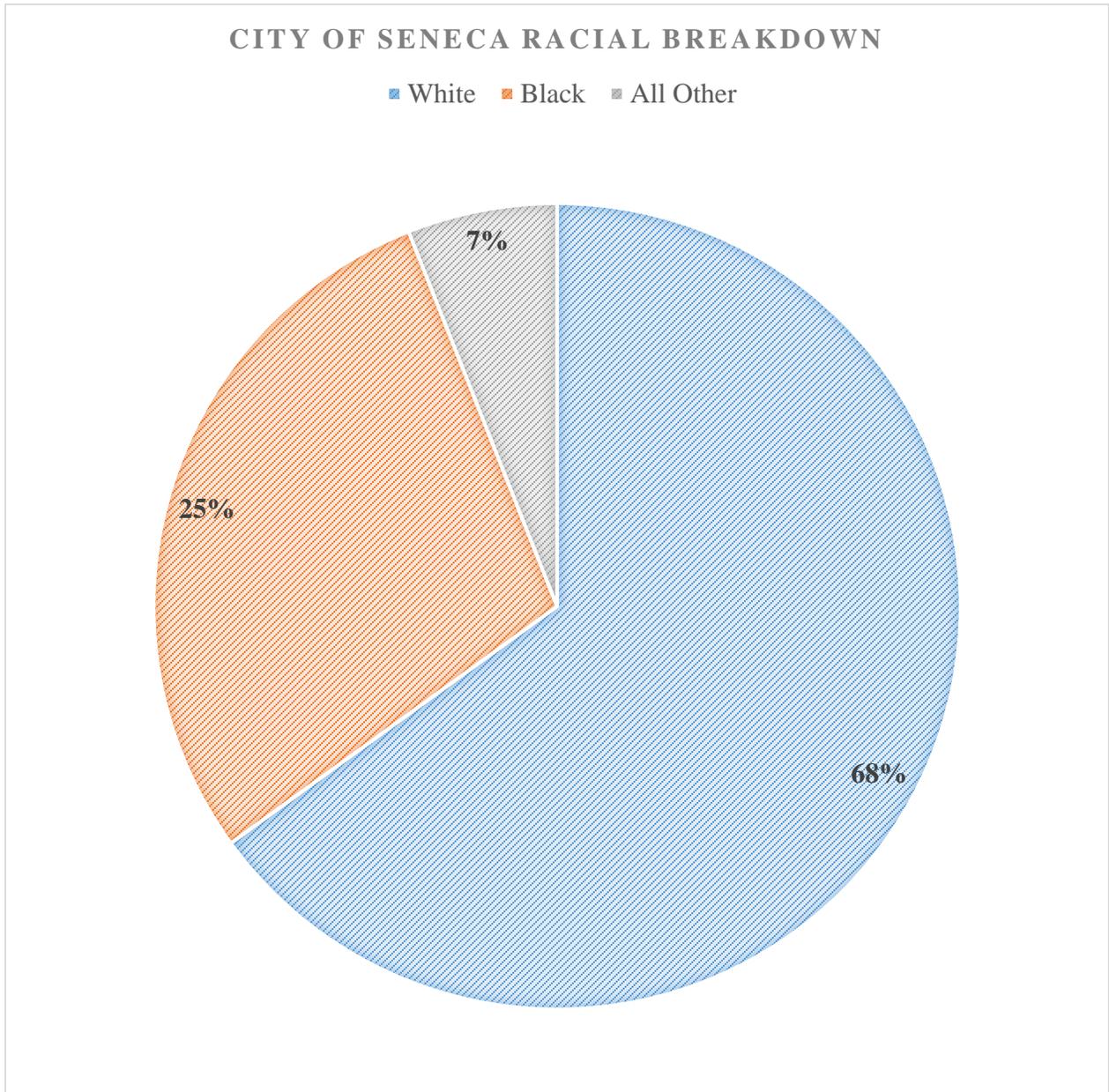
Figure 2.
Gender Makeup



As an educated workforce, 85% of the city’s residents have at least a high school diploma, 24% have at least a bachelor’s degree and 9% have at least a master’s degree.

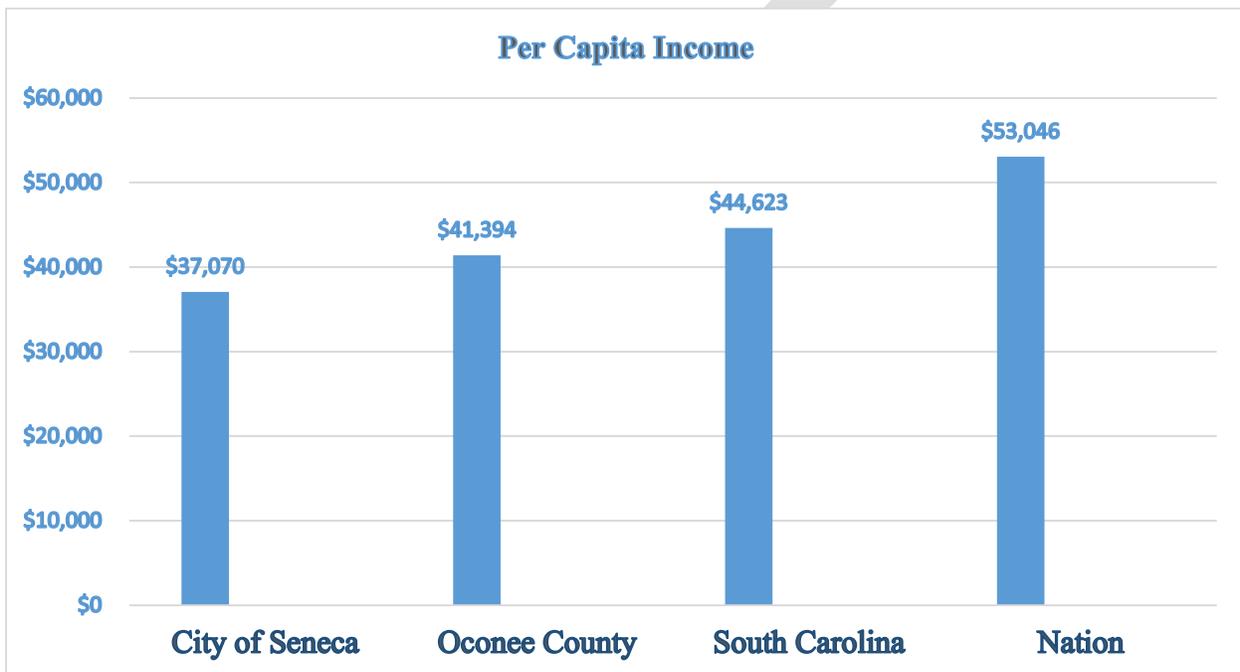
The racial makeup of the city is 68% White, 25% Black or African American; and 7 % covers all other remaining races or combination of races to include Hispanic. This compares with the state's percentages of 66.25, 27.9% and 5.9% respectively. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3.
Breakdown by race



The median income of Seneca is \$37,070. For Oconee County it is \$41,394, for the State it is \$44,623 and it is \$53,046 for the Nation. (See Figure 4.) Major employers within the city and region include: Oconee County School System, Duke Energy, and the City of Seneca. Conversely, the poverty levels increase from national (14.9%) to state (17.6%) to local level (22.7%).

Figure 4.
Per Capita Income



Goals

A goal of the population element of the city’s comprehensive plan is to not seek to plan what the makeup of the population will be, but rather to plan that our community, as it is comprised, has the resources to accommodate its population.

To do this, the goals and objectives of the other elements are set – from daycare to senior housing, from roads to parks and to utilities – these are the plans for our population and listed in the upcoming sections that discuss strategies for success, responsible agencies/entities, anticipated outcomes, and timeline for success.

It is for these plans that the current conditions from the 2010 Census are compiled and studied to determine what the community is and may be, while community meetings and surveys are used to determine the community’s needs and aspirations.

Goals

1. A more educated community
2. A more healthy community
3. A more productive community
4. A more social community

Objectives

Objectives

Education

- 1.1 Promote opportunities for more higher learning
- 1.2 Promote opportunities for learning outside of the school program

Health

- 2.1 Promote elements for more healthy transportation choices
- 2.2 Promote variety of recreational opportunities

Productivity

- 3.1 Promote economic development opportunities that create jobs
- 3.2 Promote opportunities to train for jobs

Sociality

- 4.1 Promote social activities and interaction
- 4.2 Promote social spaces
- 4.3 Promote civic organizations and their efforts to provide social opportunities



Education objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
1.1 Promote opportunities for more higher learning	City of Seneca	A better educated community	2015 and ongoing
1.2 Promote opportunities for learning outside of the school program	City of Seneca	A better educated community	2015 and ongoing



Health objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
2.1 Promote elements for more healthy transportation choices	City of Seneca	A healthier community	2015 and ongoing
2.2 Promote variety of recreational opportunities	City of Seneca	Enhance quality of live within the community	2015 and ongoing



Productivity objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
3.1 Promote economic development opportunities that create jobs	City of Seneca	A more affluent community	2015 and ongoing
3.2 Promote opportunities to train for jobs	City of Seneca	A more affluent community	2015 and ongoing



Sociality objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
4.1 Promote social activities and interaction	City of Seneca	A more caring community	2015 and ongoing
4.2 Promote social spaces	City of Seneca	A more caring community	2015 and ongoing
4.3 Promote civic organizations and their efforts to provide social opportunities	City of Seneca	A more caring community	2015 and ongoing

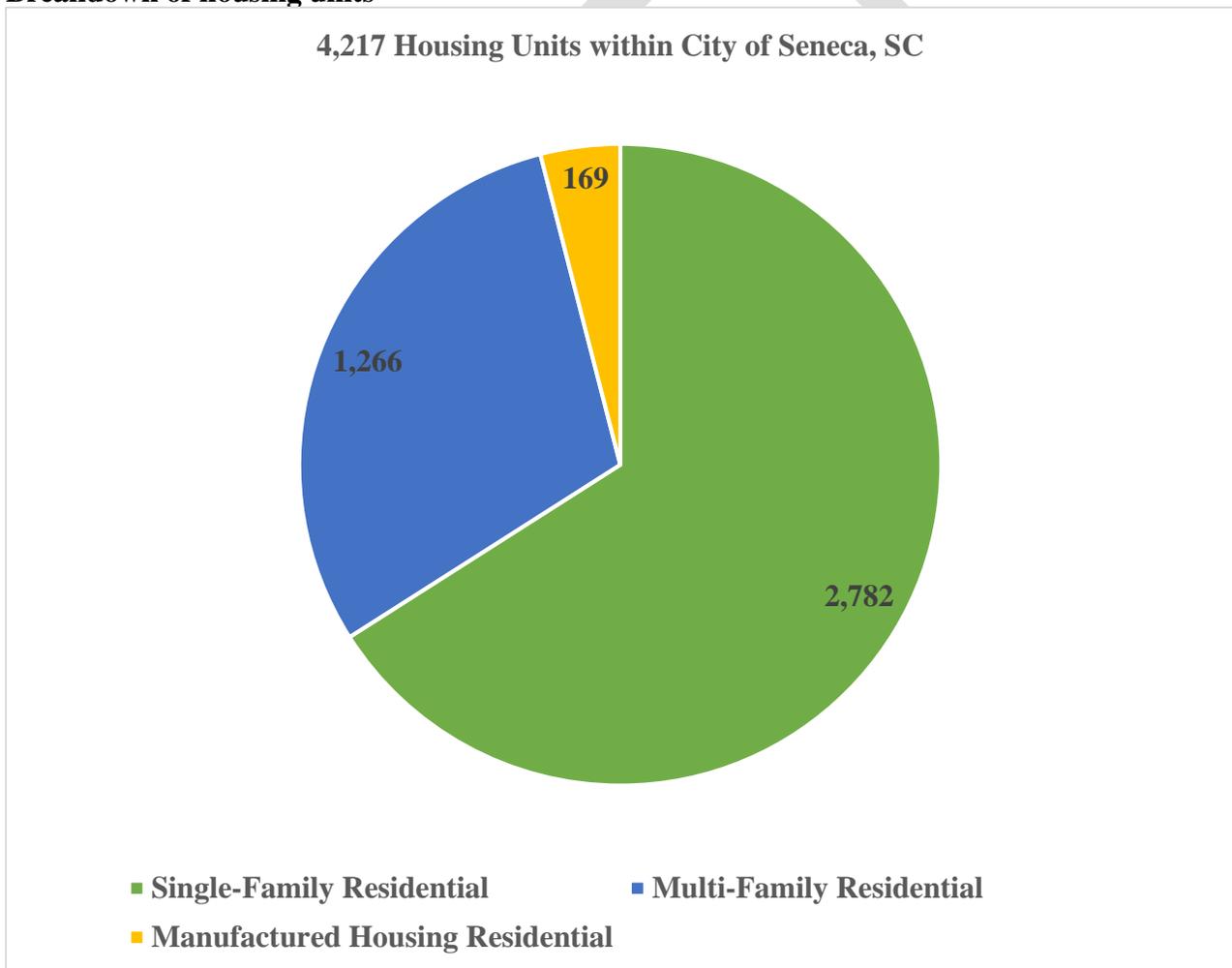
HOUSING

Existing Conditions

The City of Seneca is part of the Seneca Census County Division, which encompasses an area greater than the city limits. Housing Data is available for this CCD that is useful to the city. The CCD contains a population of 25,923. Furthermore, as of the 2010 Census:

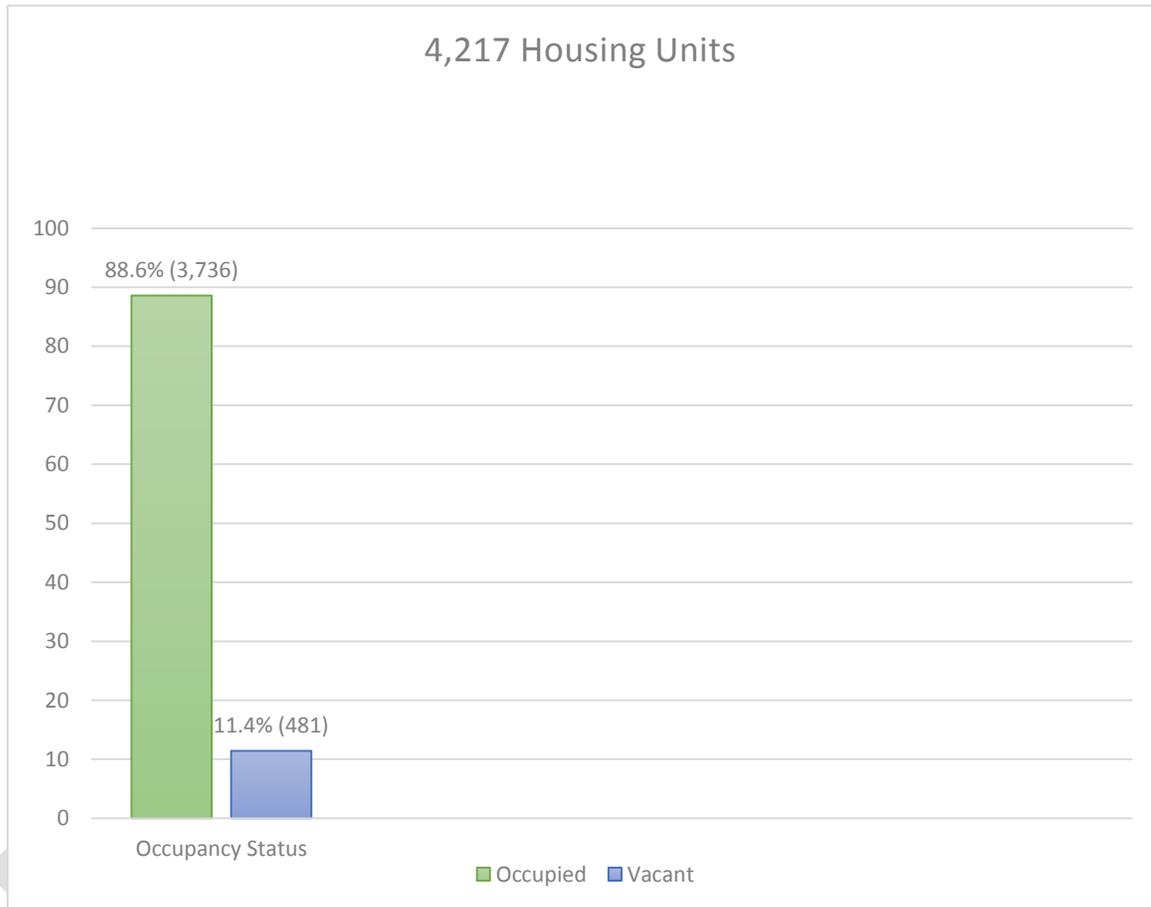
- The City of Seneca had 4,217 housing units as of 2010. (See figure 5.)
- Of those 4,217 housing units, the majority or 2,782 were single-family detached units while 1,266 were multi-family units and 169 were manufactured housing units.

Figure 5
Breakdown of housing units



- Of those 4,217 units, 88.6% (3,736) were occupied and 11.4% were recorded as vacant. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6.
Occupied/vacant percentages



Furthermore- US Census figures show:

- Of the 3,736 occupied units, just 56.7% were owner occupied, while 43.3% were renter occupied.
- Of owner occupied units, the vast majority were valued at under \$100,000.
- Although the majority of housing units are valued below \$100,000; the median home value was \$119,900 largely due to lake front housing units that drive up the value.
- Of rental units, the median rental costs were \$633.

Goals

1. Affordable housing
2. Mix of commercial and residential housing in same zoning classification
3. Mix of housing options (integration)
4. Removal of dilapidated housing

Objectives

Affordable Housing

- 1.1 Perform study on affordability and the number of housing units that are priced affordably using 2010 Census Data
- 1.2 Report to Planning Commission on study findings
- 1.3 address any study findings through code amendments.

Mixed Uses

- 2.1 Present form-based code to Planning Commission for review (form-based code guides the design of structures based on their use, but is less restrictive in the separation of uses).
- 2.2 Develop proposal for multi-use zoning districts to present to Planning Commission.

Mix of Housing Options

- 3.1 Develop proposal for housing development that meets performance criteria allowing mixes of housing sizes and types without requiring distinct zones.

Removal of Dilapidated housing

- 4.1 Continue efforts to use International property Maintenance Code to prevent housing from becoming dilapidated.
- 4.2 Find funding source for those properties that do become dilapidated to be removed when the owners are unable to repair or demolish.



Affordable housing objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/ Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
1.1 Perform study on affordability and the number of housing units that are priced affordably using 2010 Census Data	City of Seneca	Better housing choices	2015 and ongoing
1.2 Report to Planning Commission on study findings	City of Seneca	Better housing choices	2015 and ongoing
1.3 Address any study findings through code amendments.	City of Seneca	Better housing choices	2015 and ongoing



Mixed uses objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
2.1 Present form-based code to Planning Commission for review (form-based code guides the design of structures based on their use, but is less restrictive in the separation of uses).	City of Seneca	More effective land use controls	2015 and ongoing
2.2 Develop proposal for multi-use zoning districts to present to Planning Commission.	City of Seneca	More effective land use controls	2015 and ongoing



Mix of housing options objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
3.1 Develop proposal for housing development that meets performance criteria allowing mixes of housing sizes and types without requiring distinct zones.	City of Seneca	Better housing choices and more effective land use controls	2015 and ongoing



Removal of dilapidated housing objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
4.1 Continue efforts to use International property Maintenance Code to prevent housing from becoming dilapidated.	City of Seneca	More effective land use controls and safer housing choices	2015 and ongoing
4.2 Find funding source for those properties that do become dilapidated to be removed when the owners are unable to repair or demolish.	City of Seneca	More effective land use controls and safer housing choices	2015 and ongoing

NATURAL RESOURCES

Existing Conditions

The City of Seneca is approximately 4925.7 acres (7.7 square miles) in area and located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, adjacent to Lake Keowee. The area climate has four distinct seasons with mild spring and fall temperatures, short winters and warm southern summers.

SLOPE CHARACTERISTICS: Seneca's location in the foothills is exemplified by slope characteristics in nearly all areas. There are approximately 400 acres of gullied lands with steep slopes in the city, some of which are cost-prohibitive to development.

AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND: There is little area in the city devoted to agriculture. There are a few minor forested areas including lands owned by the city for recreation.

PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITAT: There are no known discrete animal or plant habitats in the city; rather, the city is included in the habitats of the South Carolina piedmont.

PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS: The city maintains two major recreation areas in the city as well as smaller facilities. As these are well developed, they are discussed in Community Facilities. While the city lacks natural recreation areas, there are numerous areas within the surrounding county and region.

SCENIC VIEWS AND SITES: There are a number of locations in and around the city that provide scenic views, however, many of these are on thoroughfares or private property.



WETLANDS: Wetlands exist in the area, especially where water has been impounded.

SOIL TYPES: Clay loam is the most common soil type. It supports forest, cultivation and urban development.

WATER RESOURCES: Water resources include watersheds, surface water and ground water.

Watersheds: The city sits in the Seneca Watershed, part of the Savannah River Basin. Impoundment of Lakes Keowee and Hartwell have created two sub-watersheds, generally recognized as being divided by the rail line which runs along the ridge of the town, with waters to the north flowing to Keowee and to the south flowing to Hartwell

Surface Water: There are several small creeks in the Seneca area. Perkins Creek and Martins Creek both trace their headwaters to near the center of town, while two other unnamed creeks feed into Lake Keowee.

Ground Water: Groundwater fluctuates between 40 and 60 feet below the surface, on average. While groundwater is rarely used as a source of water in the city, contamination of ground water is a concern and several properties have been subject to monitoring and remediation in the city.

Flood Plains: The city floodplains were updated in a 2008 study that used digital mapping and data to produce highly accurate floodplain information. There is approximately 163.3 acres of land within the floodplain, about 3% of the total land area in the city.

Air Quality: The City of Seneca is affected by the air quality of other areas to include the metro Atlanta region; which has created concerns of being in Federal EPA non-attainment status. Non-attainment can impact and/or hinder permitting for certain economic development projects. Mitigation efforts, mainly through provisions of mass transit and zero emission buses has made strides in increasing our areas air quality.

These are the highlights of our natural resource conditions. For more detail, please refer to the appendices.

Goals

1. Conserve our natural resources, using our resources for their best purposes when and where possible.
2. Build on tourism
3. Lead in conservation, recycling, and natural resource education

Objectives

Conservation

- 1.1 Water Quality -Promote opportunities for use of Best Management Practices
- 1.2 Stormwater - Promote opportunities for learning outside of the school program
- 1.3 Soil and Slopes – encourage development where appropriate, use slope-challenged lands for other purposes when appropriate.
- 1.4 Air Quality - seek out ways to improve air quality within our area.

Build on tourism

- 2.1 Promote tourism activities that maintain the quality of the resources they utilize
- 2.2 Promote variety of recreational opportunities

Lead in Conservation, recycling and resource education

- 3.1 Promote recycling.
- 3.2 Promote educational opportunities in our parks and recreational areas.
- 3.3 Review city policies toward natural resources and promote conservation in public works activity.
- 3.3 Review city ordinances with regard to landscaping and promote conservation in private development activity.



Conservation objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
1.1 Water Quality –Promote opportunities for use of Best Management Practices	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
1.2 Storm-water – Promote opportunities for learning outside of the school program	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
1.3 Soil and Slopes – encourage development where appropriate, use slope-challenged lands for other purposes when appropriate.	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
1.4 Air Quality- seek out ways to improve air quality within our area.	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing



Lead in conservation, recycling and resource education objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
3.1 Promote recycling.	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
3.2 Promote educational opportunities in our parks and recreational areas.	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing

3.3 Review city policies toward natural resources and promote conservation in public works activity.	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
3.4 Review city ordinances with regard to landscaping and promote conservation in private development activity.	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing

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CULTURAL RESOURCES

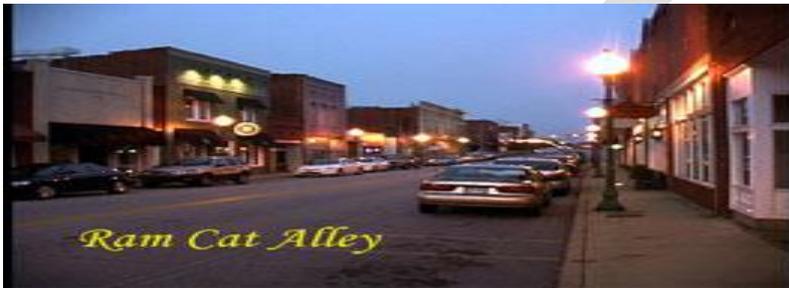
Existing Conditions

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

In 1999, Seneca's Comprehensive Plan listed an inventory of cultural resources. That can be found in the appendices. Since that time, the city has put into place its design review district, two areas in the downtown designed to enhance the city's two historic districts and the surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

The city has two main commercial Districts – Highway 123 (formerly designated but still known as the Bypass) and North First Street/Ram Cat Alley/Downtown.



RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

There are several distinct neighborhoods in Seneca; the oldest neighborhoods are more often a mix of residential, with some commercial uses interspersed, near the downtown. Subdivisions from the 1940's on are more uniformly residential with public institutions (schools, public parks and religious buildings) mixed in. Later 20th century subdivisions became even more uniform in use.

NATURAL /SCENIC RESOURCES

While there are some scenic view-sheds of the mountains to the city's north and west, these areas have not been designated as protected since they are on private property. These were discussed under Natural Resources.

OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES

Organizations include the Greater Oconee County Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Seneca Merchants Association, the Ram Cat Alley Merchants Association, and a number of other cultural clubs and fraternal organizations listed in the appendices.

Events include Holiday Festivals such as Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Halloween and Christmas, as well as Black History Month events.

Activities include the summer farmer’s market downtown, seasonal music events downtown, and events of other organizations.

Designations include the National Register Historic Districts, the South Carolina Heritage Corridor, it’s designations for Art and African American culture; the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail and Oconee Heritage Quilt Trail.

Goals

1. Promote “small town” feel
2. Promote Seneca’s heritage
3. Find new ways to promote Seneca and collaborate with other groups to promote Seneca.

Objectives

Small town feel

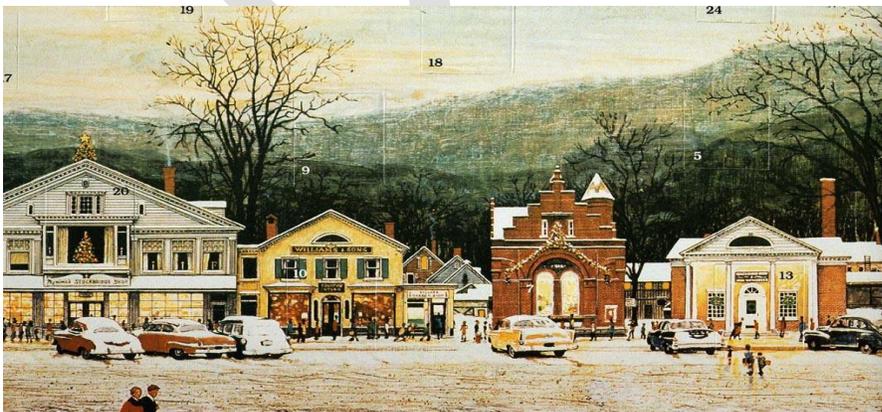
- 1.1 Promote those elements that encourage a small town feel throughout town
- 1.2 Reduced setbacks
- 1.3 Increased buffering of disparate elements
- 1.4 Architectural design in keeping with small town feel
- 1.5 Incentives to encourage small town development

Heritage

- 2.1 Restore historic areas.
- 2.2 Allow growth that is compatible with historic areas.
- 2.3 Conserve historic places while giving them new purpose.

Promotion/Collaboration

- 3.1 Work with all interested stakeholders



Small town feel objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
1.1 Promote those elements that encourage a small town feel throughout town	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
1.2 Reduced setbacks	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
1.3 Increased buffering of disparate elements	City of Seneca	A compatible community	2015 and ongoing
1.4 Architectural design in keeping with small town feel	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing
1.5 Incentives to encourage small town development	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment	2015 and ongoing



Heritage objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/ Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
2.1 Restore historic areas.	City of Seneca	Better embrace historic significance of city	2015 and ongoing
2.2 Allow growth that is compatible with historic areas.	City of Seneca	Better embrace historic significance of city	2015 and ongoing
2.3 Conserve historic places while giving them new purpose.	City of Seneca	Better embrace historic significance of city	2015 and ongoing



Promotion/Collaboration objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
3.1 Work with all interested stakeholders	City of Seneca	A better community	2015 and ongoing

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Existing Conditions

The city provides its citizens with utilities and services. Below are the elements that are provided and a brief description of each.

FIRE PROTECTION: The City of Seneca maintains a fire department with full time, part time and volunteer firefighters. The city currently has one station on West South Fourth Street. The city and county have an agreement in place to provide fire to the unincorporated areas around the city within a five mile radius. The fire department also assists other departments in the area through mutual aid and first responder agreements.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES: The Seneca fire Department also provides EMS services in the service area. Ambulance transportation is provided by the Oconee Medical Center, the area's hospital.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT FACILITIES: The City of Seneca provides for general government.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: Educational Facilities for public schools are the responsibility of the School District of Oconee County. Within the city there are the following schools – Northside Elementary, Blue Ridge Elementary, Seneca Middle, Seneca High and Code Adult Learning Center.

LIBRARIES: Oconee County is responsible for the libraries throughout the county including the Seneca branch.

CULTURAL FACILITIES: For a list, refer to the Cultural Resources appendices.

OTHER GOVERNMENT FACILITIES:

County: Magistrate Court

State: National Guard Armory

PRIVATE FACILITIES: Duke Energy Substation and transmission corridor; Comcast Cable offices; Fort Hill Natural Gas offices, Southern Bell/AT&T offices

Goals

Community Facilities

1. Seneca is an active downtown where one can live and work
2. Seneca is an active community
3. Seneca offers improved government services

Objectives

Downtown

- 1.1 Work to revitalize downtown buildings
- 1.2 Provide more stringent code enforcement

Community

- 2.1 Ensure that utilities are maintained so as to provide continuity of service, public safety, and quality of life.
- 2.2 Seek to extend utilities to existing areas that were developed without them wherever desired and feasible.
- 2.3 Reserve land for green spaces and neighborhood parks
- 2.4 Promote variety of recreational opportunities

Improvement of services

- 3.1 Promote training in all city departments
- 3.2 Look to other communities for best practices
- 3.3 Encourage innovation in service provision.



Downtown objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
1.1 Work to revitalize downtown buildings	City of Seneca	Preserve historic buildings	2015 and ongoing
1.2 Provide more stringent code enforcement	City of Seneca	More effective land use controls, cleaner city and safer housing choices	2015 and ongoing



Community objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
2.1 Ensure that utilities are maintained so as to provide continuity of service, public safety, and quality of life.	Seneca Light & Water	Lower utility bills and more reliable utility service	2015 and ongoing
2.2 Seek to extend utilities to existing areas that were developed without them wherever desired and feasible.	Seneca Light & Water	Greater infrastructure stability and appropriate development patterns	2015 and ongoing
2.3 Reserve land for green spaces and neighborhood parks	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment and opportunities for passive recreation	2015 and ongoing
2.4 Promote variety of recreational opportunities	City of Seneca	A cleaner environment and opportunities for passive recreation	2015 and ongoing



Improvement of services objectives

Strategies for Success	Agencies/ Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
3.1 Promote training in all city departments	City of Seneca	Better trained staff	2015 and ongoing
3.2 Look to other communities for best practices	City of Seneca	Better trained staff and higher efficiency in providing public services	2015 and ongoing
3.3 Encourage innovation in service provision.	City of Seneca	Better trained staff and higher efficiency in providing public services	2015 and ongoing

TRANSPORTATION

Existing Conditions

INTERSTATE Four miles of Interstate 85 run through Oconee County; Seneca is approximately 14 miles from the town center to the nearest I-85 exit. The Federal Highway Administration and State Department of Transportation (SCDOT) are responsible for the Interstate.

STATE ROADS There are approximately 64 miles of state roads in the City of Seneca (not including medians). The SCDOT is responsible for these roads.

COUNTY ROADS There are approximately 1.5 miles of county roads in the City of Seneca. These roads are the responsibility of the county Roads department and their maintenance is paid for with county taxes.

CITY ROADS There are approximately 18 miles of city roads. The city is responsible for the maintenance of these roads. The city repairs these roads using local taxes for small projects and applies for state C-funds (generated through fuel taxes) for larger projects.

PRIVATE ROADS There are approximately 17 miles of private roads in the city. The cost of the maintenance of these roads are usually borne by the adjacent property owners or by a Property Owners Association.

RAIL Norfolk Southern RR controls the rail lines through the City of Seneca. There are approximately 5 miles of rail corridor going through the city, with multiple sets of track in the main corridor.

Existing Conditions

The 2010 Census reported on vehicle ownership of households. At that time, 42.5% of households reported having one vehicle available; 13.4% reported having no vehicle.

Goals

1. Increase transportation choices
 - a. Choices – modes
 - b. Bicycle ways
 - c. Pedestrian avenues
 - d. Expanded transit
2. Develop transportation to support other comp plan goals *
 - a. Energy, Housing, Land Use, Natural Resources, Community Facilities, etc.
 - b. Create land use mixes that reduce need for vehicular transportation

Objectives

Increase transportation choices

- 1.1 Work to connect modes of transportation so that citizens have access to quality of life.
- 1.2 Promote additional bikeways in SCDOT and city projects
- 1.3 Develop plans for promoting walkable areas with sidewalks added to SCDOT and city projects.

Develop transportation to support other comprehensive plan goals

- 2.1 Work with county to increase access to transit.
- 2.2 Consider other comprehensive plan elements when making transportation decisions.
- 2.3 Consider mixed land uses and higher densities as a means to reduce the demand for transportation.



Increase Transportation Choices

Strategies for Success	Agencies/ Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
1.1 Work to connect modes of transportation so that citizens have access to quality of life	City of Seneca-	Better transportation and mobility options	2015 and ongoing
1.2 Promote additional bikeways in SCDOT and city projects	City of Seneca	Better transportation and mobility options and a healthier community	2015 and ongoing
1.3 Develop plans for promoting walkable areas with sidewalks added to SCDOT and city projects	City of Seneca	Better transportation and mobility options and a healthier community	2015 and ongoing



Develop transportation to support other comprehensive plan goals

Strategies for Success	Agencies/ Entities responsible	Anticipated outcomes	Time frame for completion
2.1 Work with county to increase access to transit.	City of Seneca- City Council and Oconee County Council	Better transportation and mobility options	2015 and ongoing
2.2 Consider other comprehensive plan elements when making transportation decisions.	City of Seneca	Better transportation and mobility options	2015 and ongoing
2.3 Consider mixed land uses and higher densities as a means to reduce the demand for transportation.	City of Seneca	Better transportation and mobility options	2015 and ongoing

ENERGY

Existing Conditions

The City of Seneca is one of a handful of cities in South Carolina that is its own electrical utility provider. This means that the city maintains its power grid and buys the majority of its power from the open market. The city staff regularly reviews the purchase contracts to find affordable power rates from capable providers. The city also generates a small amount of power for the purposes of saving on purchased power rates through a process known as peak trimming, and for emergency power to critical infrastructure during power interruptions.

The city Building department requires new construction to be built to the requirements of the International Energy Code, as required by the state. New buildings are required to install and list the insulation required by the building code.

TRANSPORTATION The City of Seneca seeks to become the first all-electric bus system in the country. To that end, the city has received a grant from the Federal Transit Administration to develop such a system

Objectives

Conservation

Lead in education

Goals

1. Seneca is a leader in conversation
 - a. Energy production and use
 - b. Recycling
 - c. Education
 - d. Informing citizens
 - e. Incentives
 - f. Alternatives (such as mixed development)



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Existing Conditions

Oconee County serves as the economic development authority. It does so through its Economic Development office, as well as through the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The city does not have separate offices for these functions, but cooperates with the county in joint efforts to facilitate economic development in the city.

To that end, the city has formed the Seneca Facilities Corporation (SFC), a real estate arm that can more easily handle real estate transactions. The SFC and the county have teamed up to buy the former Amoco/Phillips plant on the edge of the city and turn both the building and additional land holdings into an industrial park with rail access – one of few in the upstate. The city, SFC and county have worked to restore the property to a level in which it can be rented and has worked to secure tenants.

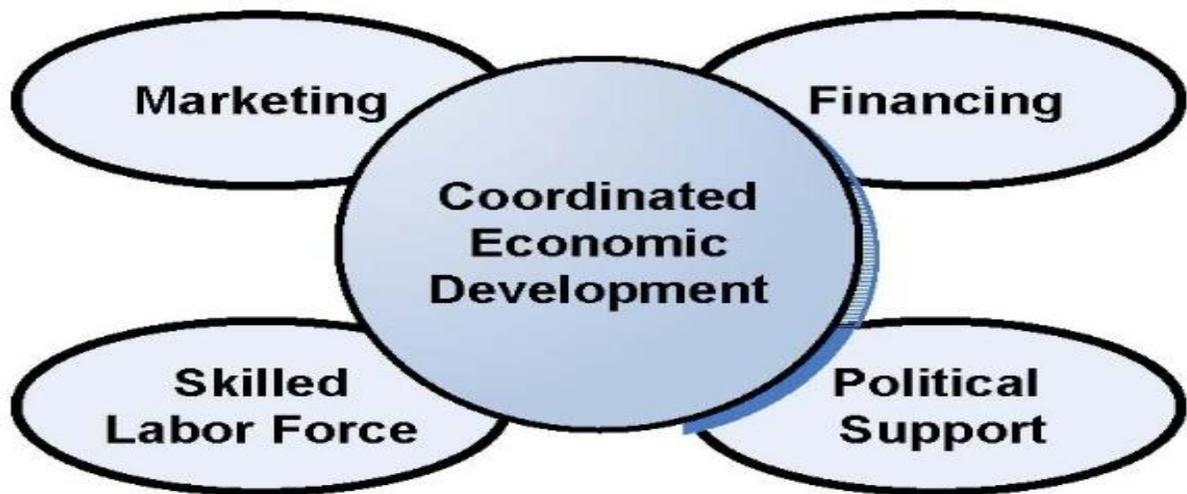
The Oconee County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) also seeks to help existing businesses in the area to thrive through advocating and networking opportunities.

Goal

1. Bring economic opportunity to Seneca in the form of high-paying jobs for our citizens.

Objective

1. Continue to partner with the Oconee County Economic Development offices in their like efforts to bring such opportunity and employment to the county.
2. Work with the Oconee Chamber of Commerce to help businesses thrive.



LAND USE

Existing Conditions

The City of Seneca Zoning Ordinance is based on Euclidean zoning, named after the city of Euclid, Ohio, where such land uses were first tested in the US Supreme Court and found to be a Constitutional use of a local government's power to protect the health, safety and welfare of local population. Euclidean zoning is based upon segregating land uses into distinct zones, so that homogenous areas form and unrelated land uses do not intrude.

The zoning map reflects areas of high and low density residential, commercial and industrial areas, as well as areas of protected park and open space. The city has implemented zoning in this way for the past 40 years and has an estimated 65% residential and 35% commercial/industrial land use mix.

The city also has numerous public and quasi-public land uses that are allowed under the residential and commercial zoning districts. The city also has some planned development zones which allow for more design flexibility.

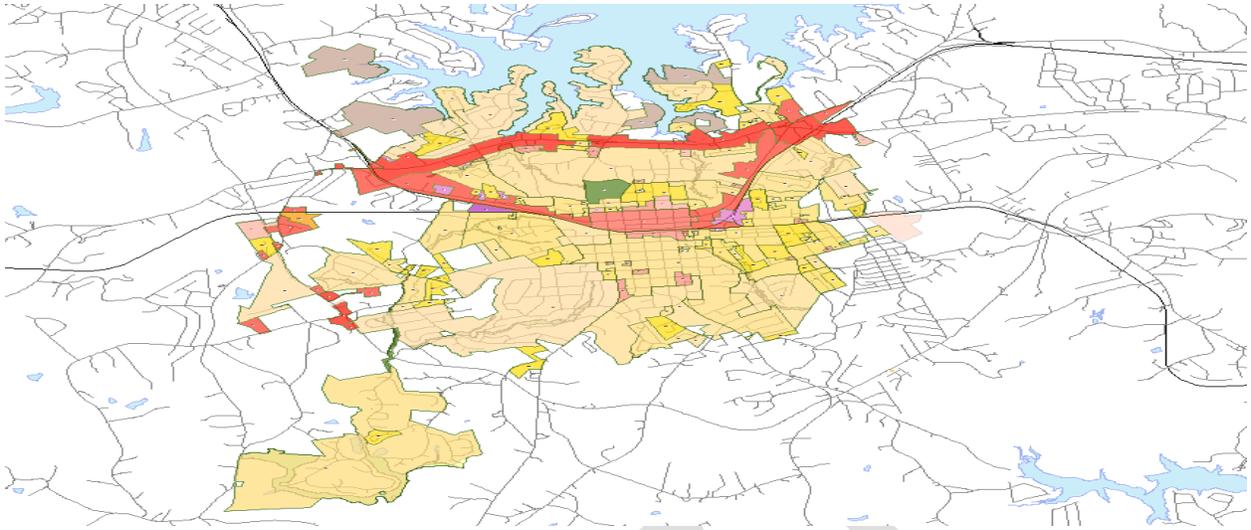
The City of Seneca

Goals

1. Attractive Downtown
 - a. Economic incentives
 - i. Maintained buildings
 - ii. Stronger regulations
2. Controlled growth
 - a. Serve and invest (infrastructure) within the city – not outside current city boundaries
3. Attractive city-wide
 - a. Vacant lots
 - b. Sign regulations
 - c. Uniform enforcement
4. Encourage service organizations downtown
5. Downtown a destination for/of/with activity

Objectives

Future Land Use Categories/Character Areas



Future Land Use Categories

The following Table presents the land use categories, “Character Areas,” as shown on the Future Land Use Plan map, and indicates those zoning districts that are most commonly compatible with the use designation.

Character Area	Description of Character and Predominate Land Uses	Community Facilities	Zoning Districts
SL- Suburban Living	<p>Outlying areas with single-family housing on larger lots (20,000 sq. ft. +).</p> <p>Commercial Activity should be discouraged due to its non-existence or limited infrastructure within the area.</p>	<p>Public water available, public sewerage available or planned; local public facilities</p>	<p>R-20 & CP</p>

UR- Urban Residential	Urbanized and growth oriented areas. Various types of residential dwellings to include multi-family. Mixed-use developments may be appropriate with adequate infrastructure.	Public water & sewer; regional public facilities.	R-10, RG, R-6, RM-8 & RM-16, Clustered Development /Conservation Subdivision
TC- Transitional Corridor	This corridor is designed to allow for transition from higher density residential uses to compatible non-residential uses along major roadways or where major transportation improvements are planned. Size, parking, and appearance standards should apply to this character area.	Public water & sewer may be available. Linier transitional areas along major transportation corridors.	R-6, RO, & OC, Clustered Development /Conservation Subdivision
NVC- Neighborhood Village Center	Located at key crossroad intersections. Small-scaled neighborhood commercial with access and size restrictions.	Public water & sewer may be available. Good transportation Access.	RO, OC, & NC

Character Area	Description of Character and Predominate Land Uses	Community Facilities	Zoning Districts
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CVC- Community Village Center	Higher intensity of commercial activity intended to serve more than one neighborhood, uses such as retail, office and services.	Public water & sewer are available. Arterial access. Regional public facilities	GC, CC, & RM-8
WC- Workplace Corridor	Intensive commercial retail sales and services along major highway corridors that are considered major employment generators with an emphasis on landscaping and aesthetics.	Public water & sewer available. Arterial access. Possible Rail Access. Regional public facilities	HC, GC, RM-8 & RM-16
CT- Commerce Technology	Industrial/Office Park development and employment generators.	Public water & sewer. Major transportation Access. Regional public facilities	HC & LI
II- Intensive Industrial	Large scaled and high intensity users that have potential negative impacts on residential uses.	Public water and sewer. Major transportation access. Possible Rail Access. Regional public facilities	LI & BI

CHARACTER AREA GUIDELINES

Suburban Living

As the City of Seneca continues to experience growth in both residential and commercial development, areas meant for traditional subdivision and scattered lot development are necessary. The intent of this character area is to channel growth pressures to areas that are suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment, and to areas that have a more “suburban” feel. This character area could also include older established neighborhoods.



Urban Residential

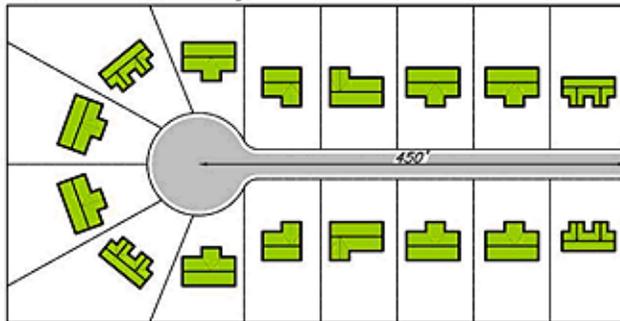
Areas designated as Urban Residential are located primarily within sections that are currently experiencing growth pressures and within areas that public water & sewer and major transportation investment exists or are planned. This character area will serve as a transitional area for higher density single family residential to include conservation developments/cluster subdivisions and multi-family uses. Minimum lot size varies by type of unit and whether public water and sewer serves the lot.

The purpose of the Urban Residential Character area is:

- To accommodate a variety of housing types;
- To encourage clustered developments/conservation subdivisions that increase greenspace and limit impervious surface;
- To allow for the conversion of sites to more intensive residential use when appropriate;
- To ensure compatibility between established single family and newer medium density development;
- To provide and maintain a supply of developable land throughout the urban area for residential and other supportive urban uses, as demand warrants and service capabilities permit;
- To encourage locating residential development where full urban services, public facilities, and routes of public transportation are available; and
- To permit, in certain sections of the city, multi-family housing developments which are consistent with growth policies of the city and which blend into the overall fabric of the city.

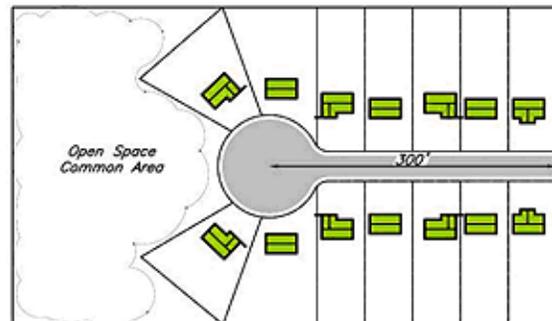
Single Family Detached Cluster Development

Illustration Based on R-3 Zoning.



Conventional Single Family Detached Subdivision

- 5 Acres
- 14 Lots
- 12,000 sf Minimum Lot Size



Cluster Development - Single Family Detached Subdivision

- 5 Acres
- 14 Lots
- 7,000 sf Minimum Lot Size
- Minimum Open space / Common area - 15% of Total Tract

Transitional Corridor

Areas suitable for designation as a Transitional Corridor are those originally developed for single-family homes that have or will become impacted by commercial encroachment.

In order to propose an orderly, safe, and aesthetic transition, properties within designated transitional corridors can be considered for nonresidential use at intensity compatible with surrounding residential areas that maintain the essential residential “look” and feel of the area.

Designation of this corridor is meant to encourage public and private investment that will promote vitality, activity and safety in the area, by controlling aesthetics, site planning and limiting non-residential uses that will not overly impact existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to the site.

PREDOMINATE LAND USES

- Existing residential dwelling units;
- Commercial services within converted residential dwelling units;
- Limited mix of selected retail uses that are considered “low impact”;
- Infill commercial and residential that is compatible in look, density and mass to surrounding development;
- Senior Living Facilities; and
- Small churches and community facilities.



Neighborhood Village Center

Neighborhood Village Centers are places where small-scaled commercial uses, such as a bank, grocery store, drug store, cleaner, and gas station, are arranged in a village-like setting that might include a neighborhood park, pedestrian circulation and public spaces. Thus, a neighborhood village center is envisioned as a compact assortment of convenience-oriented retail stores and services to address the demands of nearby residents in less urbanized parts of the city. From an urban design perspective, sidewalks can be an important circulation features in Neighborhood Centers, but even more important is the scale of the roads that serve these areas. Given its small scale and emphasis on small stores, a Neighborhood Center may be overwhelmed by wide thoroughfares carrying high-speed traffic and instead should rely on more modestly scaled roadways and tree-lined streets. Adaptive re-use of existing structures and buildings is encouraged as a focal point.

PREDOMINATE LAND USE

- Small-scaled grocery stores, bakeries, cafes and small retail shops;
- Personal services, such as laundromats, dry cleaners, barber/beauty shops, and video rental;
- Professional services such as lawyers, accountants, physicians and dentists;
- Small churches; and
- Community services.



Community Village Center

Typically located at the convergence of major transportation corridors, Commercial Village Centers are envisioned, as places where a compatible mixture of higher intensity uses are located, such as larger scaled shopping centers, professional offices and services.

Mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, service and recreational uses integrated and linked together by a comprehensive circulation system are encouraged in these nodes.

Community village centers include shopping and service facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a market area consisting of several neighborhoods.

The community village concept includes a variety of housing options, employment opportunities, businesses, office, retail shops, services, well-placed parks, plazas and open spaces that create a community with mixed use dynamics and where it is possible for people to live, work and play.

Land use components coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive, and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. Natural and historic resources within community village centers should be enhanced and preserved as a means of defining a distinct identity or sense of place. Improved connections to natural assets, both pedestrian and vehicular, particularly from existing and developing higher density residential communities will tie the village together. A Community village center should create a focal point for its surrounding neighborhoods.

PREDOMINATE LAND USES

Store front shops with a pedestrian friendly downtown feel, historical properties redeveloped and repurposed with an attention to retaining its historical and architectural past.

Careful attention should be given when considering placement of uses such as shopping centers containing an anchor grocery or large drug store & higher density residential.



Workplace Center

Considered major employment centers utilizing a mixture of commercial, office and limited residential uses, these character areas are located primarily along major transportation connections. Corridor housing would provide a customer base for offices, café, restaurants, and retail uses located on the corridor, and also enhance the safety of the corridors by maintaining a continuous population base in a location that is typically unpopulated in the evening hours.

From an urban design standpoint, the most critical element in creating a visually appealing workplace center is the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping. Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses. Vast amounts of parking and loading/ unloading areas should be screened from view.

Where possible the parking areas should be distributed to two or more sides of the business to “visually scale down” the size of the parking lot. Inter-parcel access between sites should be used whenever possible. Grouping or “clustering” of shops with commingled parking, landscaping and pedestrian areas is encouraged

PREDOMINATE LAND USES

- “Showplace” operations such as offices and research facilities, sales and show rooms, medical complexes;
- Sit down restaurants, car dealerships, & banking/finance institutions; and
- Comprehensive and cohesive unified projects that integrate commercial.



Commerce Technology

Under normal circumstances, certain types of industrial uses and major employment generators may place heavy demands on public facilities or cause significant impacts on the environment. The industrial uses allowed within the city are not intended to create such problems or demands.

The intent of the Commerce Center is to provide a variety of tracts for industrial and employment uses that are limited to office and business parks, warehouse centers, distribution/service, large scaled commercial, light industrial, high-technology and research, wholesaling companies and similar businesses that have no significant impacts on the environment. In addition, certain commercial uses such as car dealerships, truck terminals and car washes require careful site planning to minimize curb cuts and reduce the perception of parking as the primary use.



Intensive Industrial

This area is established to provide for intensive industrial uses such as landfills, quarries, and other industrial uses that are potential public nuisances, are identified as environmentally hazardous or are potentially dangerous to health, safety or general welfare of the city. These manufacturing and industrial uses impact the surrounding environment differently than other industrial uses due to transportation requirements, waste storage and disposal, and chemical byproducts from production and processing. Such uses require a special consideration in order to be located anywhere within the city.



Transportation/Communications/Utilities

This category designates existing electric substations, telephone facilities, cable TV, transmission towers and satellite downlink operations in the city. There are no known plans for future locations for such facilities, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The category also includes all streets and highways in the city.



Public/Institutional

This designation includes sites and facilities in public ownership for such uses as medical, educational, cultural, governmental, administrative and protective services, and cemeteries. Churches, though institutional in character, are not singled out in this category; rather, they are included within the categories of surrounding properties.



Parks/Recreation/Conservation

The Parks/Recreation/Open Space land use classification is for those areas within the city that has been developed for park or recreation use or is designated open space.



PRIORITY INVESTMENT

Existing Conditions

The city and its utility, Seneca light and Water (SL&W), have been working to make improvements in public infrastructure. These improvements include: investment in peak trimming, the purchase of new electric vehicles, improvements to the water plant, and improvements to the electric grid.

The next ten years will see needs in maintaining water and sewer lines and the need for additional office space as a number of city departments are overgrown or poorly located.

Gas taxes are not providing the needed revenue to repair roads. Furthermore, the state will continue in seeking to divest itself of the majority of road miles within the city since they do not serve the states interests and rather serve the city's interests instead.

The city depends upon a portion of SL & W revenue to function in the form of business license.

The county depends on taxes from Duke Energy nuclear station, projected to be on line for many more years. The state also seeks to spread the taxes from the nuclear stations to the rest of the counties,

The city has held the line on its millage rate and the state has capped millage rate increases.

Existing Conditions

Schools are paid for with county taxes. The libraries are part of the county system as well.

Fire district funding is expected to be cut by the county.

The Fire department serves an area of approximately 5 miles outside the city. These areas receive fire protection without the burden of city taxes. As the whole of the county now has an ISO rating of 4, property owners outside the city will benefit from reduced insurance costs as well.

Priority investment will be in those areas that maintain the infrastructure, services safety and quality of life for the citizens

Goals

1. Conserve our natural resources
2. Build on tourism
3. Lead in conservation, recycling, and natural resource education

Objectives

Conservation

- 1.1 Water Quality -Promote opportunities for use of Best Management Practices

1.2 Storm-water - Promote opportunities for learning outside of the school program

1.3 Soil –

1.4 Air Quality

Build on tourism

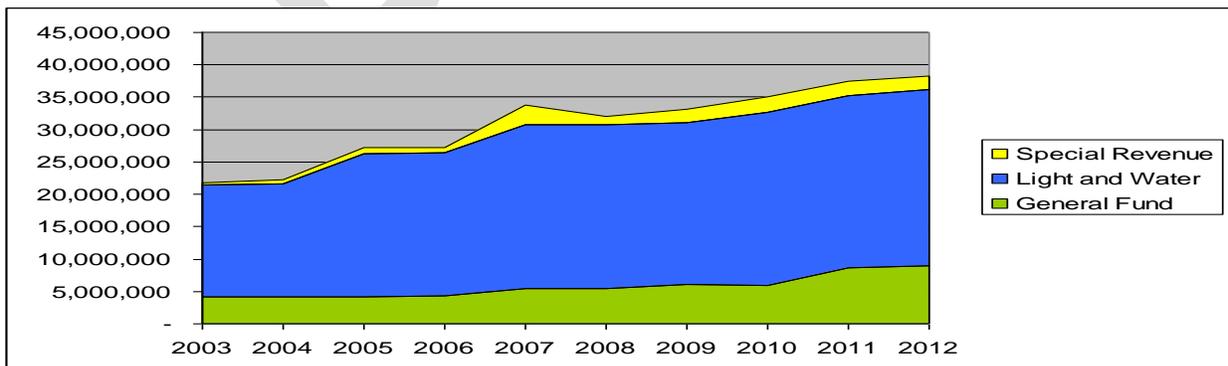
2.1 Promote tourism activities that maintain the quality of the resources they utilize

2.2 Promote variety of recreational opportunities

Lead in education



10 YEAR TREND OF BUDGETS/REVENUES



APPENDIX 1

The Comprehensive Planning Process

In 1994, South Carolina passed the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act. The Act requires local governments wishing to review and update their plans on a regular basis.

The local planning commission shall develop and maintain a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continual re-evaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction.

Surveys and studies on which planning elements are based must include consideration of potential conflicts with adjacent jurisdictions and regional plans or issues.

The basic planning process for all planning elements must include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Inventory of existing conditions;
- (2) A statement of needs and goals; and
- (3) Implementation strategies with time frames.

A local comprehensive plan must include, but not be limited to, the following planning elements: Population, housing, economic development, cultural resources, natural resources, community facilities, transportation, land use and priority investment.

APPENDICES

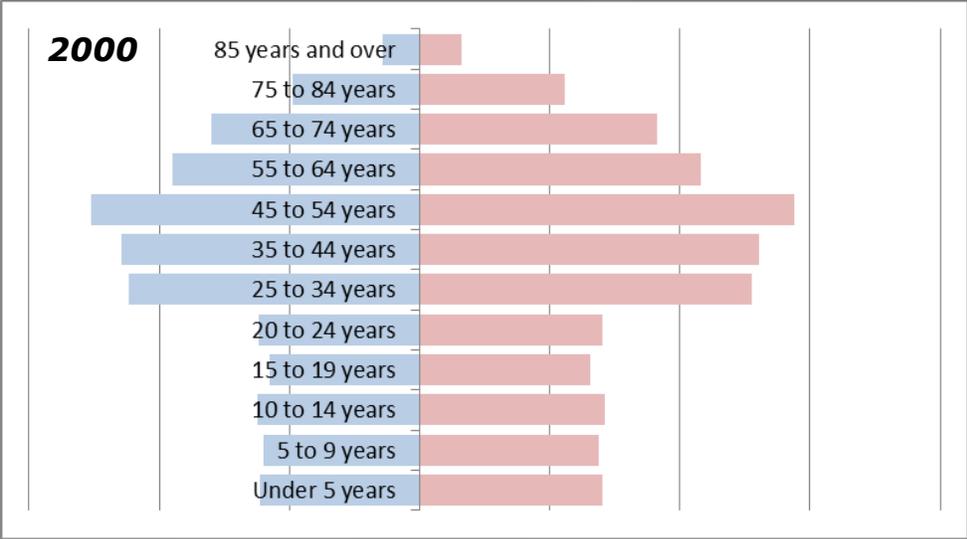
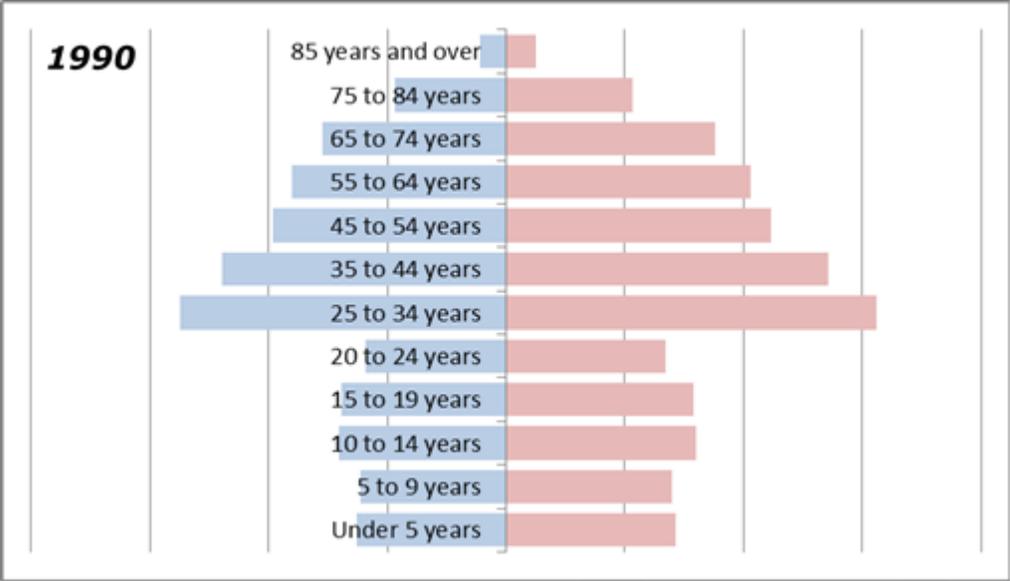
List of community facilities and their uses:

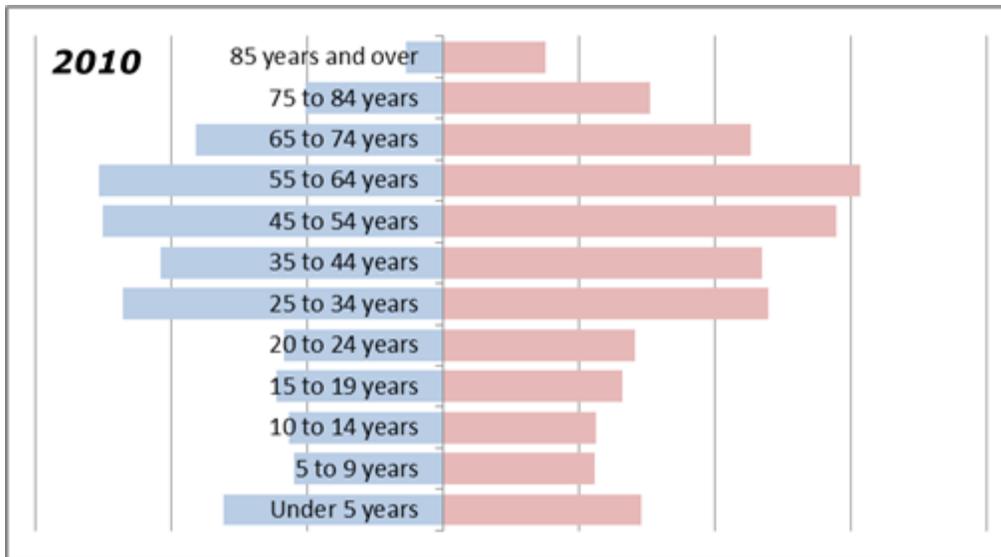
Oconee Medical Center, Rosa Clark Clinic, Our Daily Bread, Our Daily Rest, United Way, Golden Corner Food Bank

Lunney museum, old college library, senior solutions,

Churches

The three histograms demonstrate the changes in city population between 1990 and 2010. Most notable are the aging and increase of segment "A", the loss of school-aged children and the expansion of 0-5 years of age.





Based on this information, it would be safe to assume that the population will continue to “age in place” (the retired and elderly will not relocate to other parts of the country seeking better quality of life), and that there should be a focus on providing services that allow them to do so.

DRAFT