

Planning Forward 2035

Bennettsville Comprehensive Plan

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

land use
Open Space
COMMUNITY FACILITIES
CHANGING
ECONOMIC
housing
CREATIVITY
NOISE
JOBS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMITMENT
Priority Investment
recreation
Natural Resources
quality of life
CULTURAL RESOURCES
Transportation
Public Participation
planning/zoning
PARTNERSHIPS
Community Facilities
annexation
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
BUSINESS INCENTIVES
COMMUNITY
Population Downtown



CITY OF BENNETTSVILLE

South Carolina

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Executive Summary

Good planning focuses on how to make these choices in an integrated way, with careful consideration of the real costs and a commitment to allocate resources effectively. A good plan is an active, robust, continual conversation among a diverse audience; there is no such thing as a good plan that ends up on a shelf.

City of Bennettsville is on the precipitous of change. Planning is an action word that requires thoughtful decision making, monitoring, and proactive approach to development. Development does not nor will not happen overnight, particularly with the anticipated I-73 Corridor. Change means a reimagined and progressive governance. Commitment is for today not tomorrow.

Planning Forward 2035 is a living document designed to bend and morph to meet present concerns and newly discovered opportunities. More importantly, it is a response to citizen engagement. The ultimate goal is to transition Bennettsville from a place to a destination. Below are relevant points from within various elements.

- Review and update the City’s zoning ordinance. Planning Forward 2035 serves as the City’s blueprint. Zoning is one of the tools used to promote appropriate land uses. The update includes landscaping and buffering standards along with a proactive subdivision ordinance.
- Fully engage residents. Building trust is a conscious inclusionary process. Engaging residents and businesses through social media platforms, e-blasts to make them aware of meetings and events. It is a way to share their thoughts on topics. This creates an environment for dialogue, support, citizen participation, and communal investments.
- Create a healthy economic landscape. This starts with low hanging fruit or easier achievable tasks. One such task is to modify the City’s website. Specifically, placing “Doing Business” link. Hartsville, Aberdeen, and Pinehurst, considered progressive municipalities, have a “Doing Business” link. This helps expanding, burgeoning, and new businesses owners to navigate through the process to open or reaching more customers. Here are where fillable business license forms, incentives, tax credit/rebate programs, and other pertinent information can be found. Another link is a link highlighting Downtown – tours, eateries, cool places to visit and public parking.
- Council with staff create target specific market incentives Downtown and its highway corridors.
- Work collaboratively with Marlboro County’s council to develop a special tax program pursuant to the Bailey Bill. The State tax incentive promotes historic preservation, affordable housing, and economic development. The Bailey Bill would be a welcome incentive for Downtown and its historic properties. Simply, the bill freezes property taxes for contributing properties to historic/overlay districts and individually listed National Register properties. With the City and County approval, property owners can make significant investments. Their

- property tax remains at pre-development levels up to 10 years or more. That is predicated on the agreed upon terms between the City and County.
- What is the City's regional attraction? Transitioning from a place to destination requires a regional event. Hartsville has the Bluegrass Festival, Cheraw the SC Jazz Festival, Lake City the Art Fields, and Florence the Pecan Festival and a myriad of events through its performing arts center. These marquee events draw thousands to these cities and towns. Visitor make their calendars in advance to return next year. Here is where Council, staff, residents, and the business community to discuss and support a marquee event.
- Proactively address housing in a comprehensive fashion through rehabilitation, warranted demolition, and new construction. The Housing Element details rehab and demolition efforts. Housing includes building potential housing clients and sensitivity to affordable and senior housing.
- Actively collaborative to the School District, Economic Development Board, and NETC to help shape the current and future workforce and attracting regional and international companies.
- Promote locate businesses - Bennettsville Means Business Initiative. The initiative fosters a business incubator and business education in partnership with NETC.
- Build coalition with local businesses and nonprofits to further the City's vision.
- Build a relationship with banks under Community Reinvestment Act to engender support a housing counseling program, low interest low pool for business development and upper-story and apartment conversion housing Downtown.
- Aggressively seek grants to address recreation and parks, housing, transportation, economic development, and other needs.
- Public Utility integrate solar as part of its energy portfolio to reduce customers' energy costs.
- Engage in quarterly or biannual committee meetings with each Council member assigned to an element or two with the appropriate staff to ensure steps are taken to meet set goals and priorities.
- Building a robust park and recreation system. Proposed is a greenway along Crooked Creek expanding Lake Wallace's trails to pedestrian and bike paths to Downtown and other parks. The implications are tremendous particularly if the former Marlboro Training School is repurposed as a fitness and aquatic center. The City of Greenville, SC used the Reedy River Fall and Swamp Rabbit Trail to transform its Downtown and City from a place to a destination.

Appendix A highlights the visioning process and respondents' comments.

Location & Introduction

The City of Bennettsville is a cozy, small rural community nestled in the north-western portion of Marlboro County. Bennettsville is both a great place to live and visit, offering a number of cultural, educational, and recreational resources. Featured is a promising downtown and prominent architectural and historic resources. There is no wonder why South Carolina designated it as South Carolina's "first" Great Town. The City is an ardent supporter of the community and high school sports. Its friendly smiles and waving hands greeting familiar and not so familiar faces frame its charm.

Bennettsville serves as the County seat and hub of its offices. McColl and Cheraw, its closest municipal neighbors, are a 16 and 18-minute drive respectively. The City is within 38 miles of Laurinburg, NC, and 45 minutes from Florence, SC. It is another hour and 47 miles from Columbia, SC and Charlotte, NC. South Carolina Highway 9, a major arterial, connects Charleston to Spartanburg and a number of small and rural communities in between. United States Highway 15 is another arterial linking Bennettsville to Hartsville, SC and Laurinburg, NC. Its location not only makes it accessible to larger markets but an attractive place to live and commute. The City's latest Comprehensive Plan was completed 2007. A lot has changed since then. The City of Bennettsville is poised to take the next step in defining and redefining its future without compromising its cozy town character. Consequently, Bennettsville contracted with RS3 Planning Collaborative, LLC to update its Comprehensive Plan.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan, also known as a master or general plan, is a community's compass to charter what it endeavors to be while building on its strengths and assets. The Comprehensive Plan manages expected population and employment growth, new development, land uses, demolitions, repurposed structures, and public-private investments. More importantly, it provides the basis for policies and budget decisions that align with a community's vision. In short, it is a community's response to its future. The document is official in nature, meaning county or municipal Councils adopt it into law. South Carolina, SC Codes § 6-29-510(E), mandates communities with development or zoning standards to develop or update, and adopt comprehensive plans every 10 years. The State mandates communities address nine (9) planning elements - population, land use, community resources, transportation, community facilities, natural resources, housing, economic development, and priority investment. These planning elements are not isolated components rather interwoven threads that connect to and support one another. Because of the interrelatedness, some information is duplicated. In one incidence, there may be a slight reference and in another expressed in detail. During the 10-year period, counties and municipalities are required to review their plans every five (5) years. However, comprehensive plans should be reviewed annually to gauge their progress. Annual, semi-annual, or quarterly reviews ensure the plan does not sit on a shelf or in a box collecting dust. This gauges progress and addresses attention areas and unanticipated issues. Embedded are general to specific goals and policies that express a long-range vision with short and intermediate plans.

Short-term describes incremental steps toward identified goals. These readily accessible projects are low hanging fruit with immediate outcomes. They serve as confidence builders. Council, staff, and the broader community see measurable progress, which in turn builds pride, trust, and confidence. Long-term goals and objectives take a little more time and energy. However, short-term accomplishments chip away at the more ambitious projects. Other long-term goals and objectives are on-going in order to plan a vibrant community. Equally important, its implications can extend 20 years and beyond after the plan is adopted. How? Inattentive and negligent response to the community's plan furthers frustrations and creates an uncomfortable economic and socio-political environment. Conversely, routine review and action energizes a community and forwards a healthy economic and socio-political environment. Additionally, it lays the foundation for specific planning efforts like ordinance amendments and new ordinances, landscape and open space planning, downtown and neighbourhood revitalization planning, and others. These build momentum for future generations. Communities need to remember a comprehensive plan is a living document providing a host of options and capacity to adjust for unanticipated changes. The development of such a document requires a great deal of preparation. The Comprehensive Plan is based on objective data and research into current conditions, issues, and trends.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The process attempts to glean information about a community in synched fashion. Efforts are to identify a vision and unearth strengths/assets, opportunities, constraints, fears, and build on a community's strengths and assets. A series of review and analysis of studies, previous plans, articles, Census, State, county, and local data, agency consultations, and the collective analysis and synthesis of all the available information for public review and consideration. A draft progresses to the Planning Commission, then to the public through the public hearing process for review, input, and comments. The draft is tweaked into a final document for Council and the public to review before adoption. After the adoption, the real work begins. Council, staff, key stakeholders, and the Bennettsville Community begin to dissect the plan into implementable phases. The valued part of the preparation process is community engagement. Engagement teases out information and frames the strengths, weakness/threats, and opportunities. Dialogue and debate promotes creativity and a pluralistic approach. It becomes the backdrop for any planning canvas.

In an effort to engage the public, we kicked off the Comprehensive Plan process with a community visioning and planning workshop. It attempted to engage the three learning approaches – audio, visual, and kinesthetic. The visual incorporates surveys to gauge the demographics and community perception and interest. Surveys give persons who are not as comfortable vocalizing their views aloud a platform to share their thoughts. Kinesthetic [hands-on] approach used a map activity. Groups were provided maps and colored pencils to note strengths in blues, issues/weakness in red, orange, or purple, and opportunities in green. They perused over the maps, while conferring with each other, made notations on the maps and assigned their color preferences. This engaged their audio, visual, and motor responses. Audio included dialogue among them and with us during the discussion session. Tough questions were asked of the community throughout the planning process. Questions like what thing or things would you change? Do you feel you have a vibrant downtown? What are the City's strengths? Questions gauged perceptions and a variety of needs.

Planning Forward 2035 represents the voices, ideas, interests, concerns, and direction of Bennettsville's residents, businesses, leaders, City officials, staff, and invested stakeholders. Several of its goals and objectives are ambitious yet practical. Nonetheless, its success will hinge on community support.

Vision

A community promoting an active Downtown, preserving its historic and cultural resources, and engaging its youth and residents, making Bennettsville an inviting place.

The vision is the cornerstone of any plan, especially the Comprehensive Plan. It embodies a community's hopes, personality, strengths, and future aspirations. It moves the abstract into existence. More importantly, it is a reminder of the plan's guiding principles designed to keep the community focused and steer others back on track.

Below are their vision statements. All of them are valued. However, the following stood out:

- *Innovation, education, quality of life for all, team work chamber, town, and community. A beautiful place to live and grow.*
- *Promoting growth while recognizing history of town through teamwork and network of support for business, art, and recreation.*
- *A progressive, supportive local government that fosters community involvement in ongoing efforts to enhance and improve the community to make it the best place possible to live, work, and recreate.*
- *A plan that will let our town grow, keep it a great place to live, and also give our children (our future) something to do and stay active.*
- *Sustaining growth through a mix of governmental, non-profit, residential and commercial that enhances quality of life.*

Notice the messaging. Keep in mind, these were independent responses. The only prompt was the example vision statement to engage and inspire them to tap into their creative thought. Each states and hints to community, quality of life, economic growth, reinvigorating downtown, and an inviting place. It would be impossible to read and digest their vision if we combined the aforementioned vision statements. With the City's permission, we synthesized the above vision statements around their shared message. *A community promoting an active Downtown, preserving its historic and cultural resources, and engaging its youth and residents, making Bennettsville an inviting place* seems to capture their sentiment. Bennettsville's vision articulates optimism and partnership as it navigates to a brighter future.

Chapter 1

POPULATION ELEMENT

The Population Element reflects a community's statistical and descriptive analysis. This section of the Comprehensive Plan is not meant to be comprehensive but a snapshot. Subsequent elements add to our community canvas. Population trends, age, race, household, education, income, and the future populations are the focus of this element. The Population Element offers an analysis of where we were 10 years ago, a relative glimpse of where we are now, and an idea of where we hope to be. There are some comparisons between the City of Bennettsville, Marlboro County and the State. The data lays the basis for developing planning policies to further development patterns in the City.

Where are the demands for service? What departments and/or agencies can best provide service? Population becomes more than just numbers. It is linked to events, policies, and present attitudes. Population gauges and projects the number and types of jobs, housing, commercial, environmental, and infrastructure demands, and recreational amenities. This will influence how the City of Bennettsville with the County plans to approach education (K4-12 and post-secondary training), healthcare, and supportive services.

This socioeconomic profile relies heavily on data provided by the United States Census Bureau. Some datasets are taken from the American Community Survey (ACS). The American Community Survey is an annual surveying component for the Census Program. Data is extrapolated from population sampling. There are margins of error due to sample reliability. Nonetheless, this is a reliable gauge for an ever changing socioeconomic landscape. ACS categorizes data by 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year survey enumerations. The 5-year dataset is the most readily available for communities. There are distinguishing differences each with tradeoffs. The 1-year estimate uses the smallest sample size. It is less reliable than the 3 and 5-year ACS Estimate. However, it uses the most current date. Sample size is larger for the 3-year and even larger for 5-year Estimate. As you may have guessed, the larger the sample, the more reliable the data. Data is less current with the expanded time. However, the data is usable and offers an adequate statistical gauge. Another source is the South Carolina Statistic Abstract. The South Carolina Statistical Abstract is a publication of the South Carolina Budget and Control Board.

POPULATION TRENDS

Figure 1 expresses population trends from 1960 to 2017. Bennettsville steadily experienced population growth from 1960 to 2000. Its greatest growth rate occurred between 1970 and 1980. This is surprising. Textiles, around 1974, in South Carolina and the South began to close and/or relocate to other countries. The 70s was not only dogged by textile closures but by gas storage and recession. Households and families relocated in search of work. This does not mean families and households did not leave Bennettsville. Any population loss did not stymie or reduce its

population. Alternatively, Marlboro County’s agricultural decline namely tobacco attributed to Bennettsville population growth. Its population grew through families relocating from the County to City for employment and annexation.

For the first time in five decades, the City’s population declined in 2010 dwindling by 3.8 percent. One plausible explanation for the decline is the 2008 Recession triggered by the bursting house bubble. The 2008 Recession nearly brought America to a screeching halt. Unemployment, housing foreclosures, and a less than stagnant housing market forced families and households to reassess priorities. A number of adult children moved back home with their parents, moved in with family, and friends, and/or relocated to find work. Bennettsville’s population shift followed this trend. It is also possible families and household migrated to the County for more affordable housing options, which could explain Marlboro County’s population growth.

Figure 1.1. Population Trends



Unfortunately, the Census’s forecasted a continual population decline through 2017. The enumeration is derived from the Census Bureau’s ACS 5-Year estimates. The estimate, though

valid, forecasts population via a sampling methodology. The Census Bureau relies on survey responses from selected tracts and block groups. The numbers hinge on survey responses and individuals surveyed. The shrinking population projections may be influenced by the assumption the economy is still reeling from the 2008 Recession. Another is the persons sampled, less enthusiastic, may not have participated or did not give it the attention required. Traditionally, people are more invested during the Census’ decennial enumeration due to the fanfare encouraging participation. A third is a combination of both.

Table 1.1 Population Trends

Locality	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	*2017
Bennettsville	6,936	7,468	8,774	9,345	9,425	9,069	8,493
Marlboro County	28,529	27,151	31,624	29,361	28,818	28,933	26,825
Percent of County	24.3	27.5	27.7	31.8	32.7	31.3	31.7

Locality	1960-1970 % Change	1970-1980 % Change	1980-1990 % Change	1990-2000 % Change	2000-2010 % Change	2010-2017 % Change
Bennettsville	7.7	17.5	6.5	0.9	-3.8	-6.4
Marlboro County	-4.8	16.5	-7.2	-1.8	0.4	-7.3

Source: U.S. Census 2000 & 2010 Decennial Data

* 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 1.1 also reflects population proportionality between the City of Bennettsville and Marlboro County. Bennettsville, in 1960, represented nearly a quarter of the County’s population. Note the incremental increase each decade until 2000. The city made up a third of its population. Despite, Bennettsville 356 persons loss, its proportionality to the County was a minuscule decline.

Another proportionality to be discussed is the City’s group quarters population. Group quarters are compartmentalized into two categories – institutionalized and noninstitutionalized facilities. The former is ineligible to participate in the labor force. This populace accounts for persons residing in adult and juvenile correctional facilities, assisted living nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, and inpatient hospice. Noninstitutional persons are an assorted mix. Living arrangements include college/university housing, military quarters, and other group facilities. Other group facilities consist of emergency and transitional shelters, group homes, residential



Figure 1.2. Group Quarters Data

treatment centers, maritime/merchant vessels, and worker living quarters. In 2010, 20 percent of Bennettsville’s population resided in group quarters. Between 2000 and 2010 group quarter increased 26.4%. Nearly 100 percent of those residing in group quarters were institutionalized.

The number of noninstitutionalized persons were so minuscule it was nearly 0 percent. Table 1.2 indicates a larger portion of this population was either housed at Evans Correctional Institution or local/county correctional facilities. Briefly, Evans Correctional Institution was built in 1989 as a State medium-security men’s prison. Its capacity is 1342 inmates. It stands to reason having a men’s prison equates to the disproportionate number of males incarcerated.

Table 1.2. Group Quarters

	2000		2010		2000 Percentage Change
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent	
Institutionalized	1427	99.5%	1804	99.6%	26.4%
Noninstitutionalized	7	0.1%	8	0.1%	14.3%
Group Quarters Population	1434	15.2%	1812	20%	26.4%
Total Population	9425		9069		
Institutionalized					
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<i>Correctional Institutions</i>	1312	4	1645	4	
<i>Nursing Facilities</i>	27	84	67	88	
Noninstitutionalized <i>Other Group Facilities</i>	3	4	3	5	

Source: 2000 & 2010 Decennial Data

Gender

Typically, females outnumber their male counterparts. Males, in 2010, outnumbered females representing 55% of the population. The previous decade females comprised 52% of the City’s population. Between 2000 and 2010 Bennettsville’s female population dwindled by 16%. What happened? A

plausible explanation is this group, in response to the 2008 Recession, left in larger numbers in search of employment and/or better opportunities.

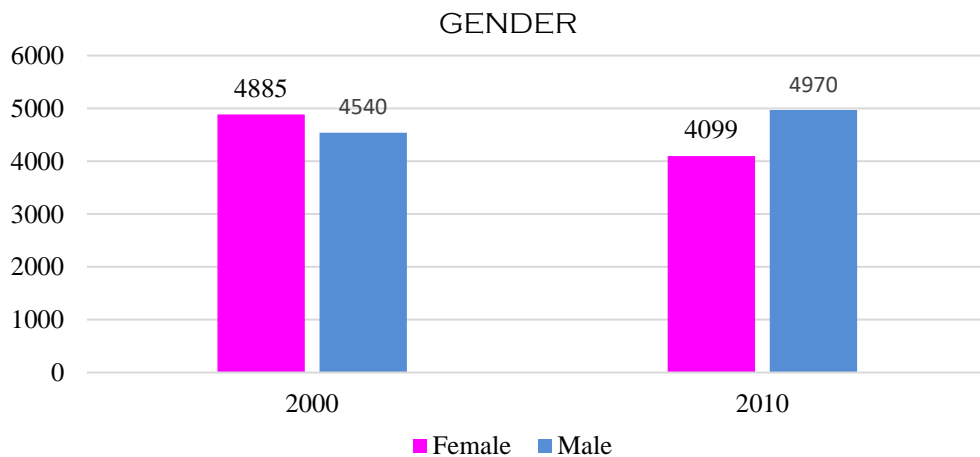


Figure 1.3 Gender

Table 1.7b validates this hypothesis. There was a 26% decline in graduate and professional degreed women. Their advanced degrees made them more marketable. This marked a significant depletion of the intellectual talent from the community.

POPULATION UP CLOSE

Demographers view population in terms of births, death, and migration. These determine population enumerations. Here, we briefly explain the relationship and application regarding the City's population.

Births

Births are intrinsically tied to fertility for women between age 15 and 44. Fifteen through forty-four year olds have traditionally been dubbed childbearing years. That is why demographers are fascinated with this group. According to the Congressional Research Service's 2011 report titled *The Change Demographic Profile of the United States*, birth rates declined among this age group. This reflects a trend in declining of birth rates in the United States. Several decades ago, raising a family was a priority. That is no longer the case. Societal attitudes toward relationships and childbearing have changed. Experts surmise the decline in fertility rates is attributed to the rising cost of rearing children and motherhood delayed for career pursuits. In fact, women over 35 reflected higher birth rates than in the past. Delayed motherhood also means fewer children. Surprisingly, a number of women are not interested in motherhood. Births were highest among single women. Single-parent births, out of wedlock, remain a societal taboo particularly when politicized. Yet, these births stemmed this Nation's declining fertility rates.

Deaths

Deaths, though part of life, are calculated in the natural increase equation. Demographers unfortunately have to forecast a "who is more likely to die" profile. The simplest assumption is the older population. This assumption will need to be reassessed due to the extended longevity of seniors. Advances in medicine and healthier lifestyle choices are extending their life span. An aging population represents a larger policy impact moving forward.

Older means changes in healthcare, Medicare and Medicaid benefits, housing choice, senior services, and the re-entry of seniors in the labor markets. This has caused States and the nation to rethink services and the quality of care. Although seniors are living longer, they still have mobility issues and more in-house accidents. Downsizing becomes more realistic. Housing needs to be safe and affordable without interrupting their quality of life. Nationally, the shrinking births and expanding senior population lend to a larger national debate that continues to be the topic of conversation in Washington – Social Security. Theoretically, fertility rates are in direct proportion to the eligible labor force. What does this mean? As fertility rates shrink, so does the number of eligible persons in the labor force. If this trend continues, there will not be enough younger workers to support the growing seniors and fragile Social Security Program. Lawmakers continue to debate extending the retirement age and/or make the Program flexible to investment

markets. Either the rising cost of living or other personal reasons has forced seniors to re-enter the labor market. Seniors are filling entry level and service sector jobs once taken by younger participants. This surge in an older workforce has reshaped hiring practices and age discrimination legislation. The downside is there are fewer entry level and first-time job

opportunities for younger persons and stymied upward mobility within the corporate structure due to senior delayed retirement. Another reality for this group is vulnerability to poverty. The second assumption is a little more complicated. However, the factors with the most impact paint a bull's-eye on poverty. Health and disease are the prevailing factors. Both common denominator is access to healthcare and healthier food choices. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, accidents, Alzheimer's, diabetes, influenza, and pneumonia, kidney disease, and septicemia are the 10 leading causes of death. Sadly, the majority of this list affects those at and below poverty. Stress associated with day-to-day survival further erodes their quality of health. This group experiences more health issues due to poor diet. They are most likely to have little to no healthcare coverage, and rely on EMS Transport Services and ER visits as a form of healthcare. They are more vulnerable than most to die sooner. The fact McCleod, since 2000, closed its Bennettsville hospital makes the City's marginal income families and household more vulnerable.

Below the population distribution pyramid depicts Bennettsville's 2010 births and deaths in terms of survivorship. It also reflects age and gender. The ideal distribution pyramid resembles a Christmas tree with a large base gradually tapering to a point. This population pyramid resembles a peculiar, erratic shape. Populations among 0-15 years of age are nearly the same for male and females. Afterwards, the number of females compared to the male cohorts declined drastically from 25-49 years of age. This further illustrates the women who most likely left Bennettsville. One glaring observation is females, between ages 20 -24, start to drop off. Another is the declining 60-64 year old cohort group. Notably, males outnumber females with a few of exceptions. Males began to significantly decline after 64 years of age. Females mirroring the national trend out-lived men.

AGE & GENDER POPULATION PYRAMID

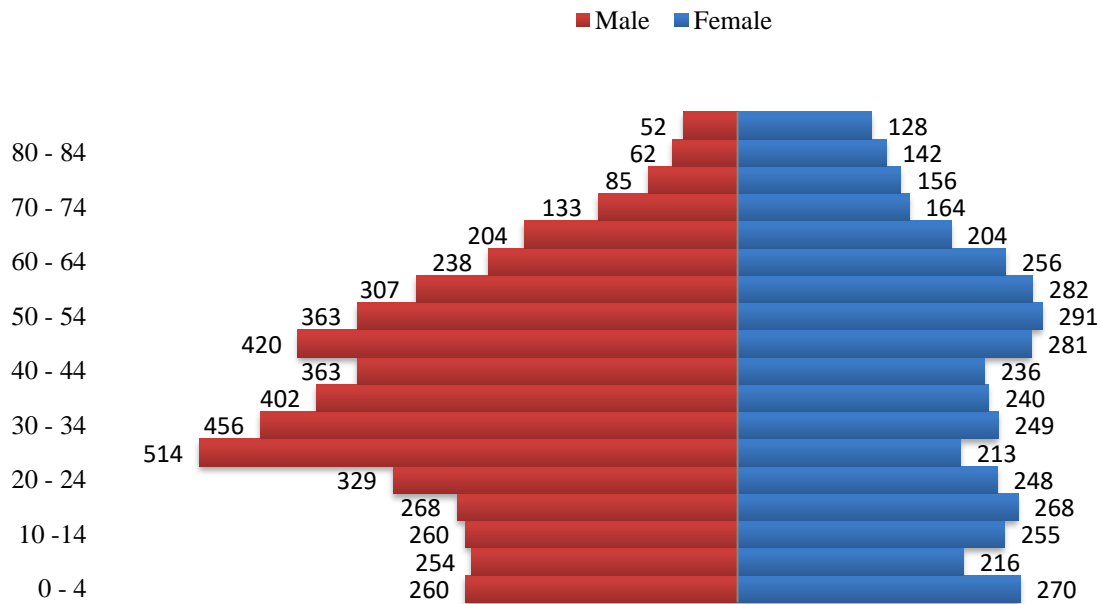


Figure 1.4. Age & Gender Population Pyramid

Bennettsville’s population cohort group table illustrates population proportion by age. It complements Figure 1.4 painting a broader demographic prospective. In 2010, 55-64-year olds grew by the largest percent. Forty-five to 54-year olds’ population grew 12.2 %. The remaining cohort groups declined. The two most significant are under and 15 to 34-year olds. Both are interwoven. The first is a 14% reduction in children being born. Children are the life blood to any society, community, or culture. No or the lack of children catastrophically limits one’s future. Together, 15 to 34-year olds compromise a 35% decline. This impacts the future births, further reducing the number of children. If we factor declines among 35-44 cohort group future births are more problematic. Remember fertility for women is typically between age 15 and 44. Lastly, seniors 65 and older had the second smallest decline reflecting survivorship from the previous cohort group and longevity. Side by side decennial comparison reveal this population make up a significant portion of Bennettsville population. Bennettsville, mirroring the Nation, is getting older. This signals an increasing need and programming for senior services, housing, and more accessible transportation.

Table 1.3. Population by Cohort Group

	2000 (9,425)		2010 (9,069)		2000 – 2010 Change
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent	
Under 5	619	6.6	530	5.8	-14.4
5 to 14	1213	12.9	985	10.9	-18.8
15 to 24	1330	14.1	1113	12.3	-16.3
25 to 34	1462	15.5	1432	15.8	-2.1
35 to 44	1477	15.7	1241	13.7	-16.0
45 to 54	1208	12.8	1355	14.9	12.2
55 to 64	750	8.0	1083	11.9	44.4
65 over	1366	14.5	1330	14.7	-2.6
Median Age	35.5		38.7		

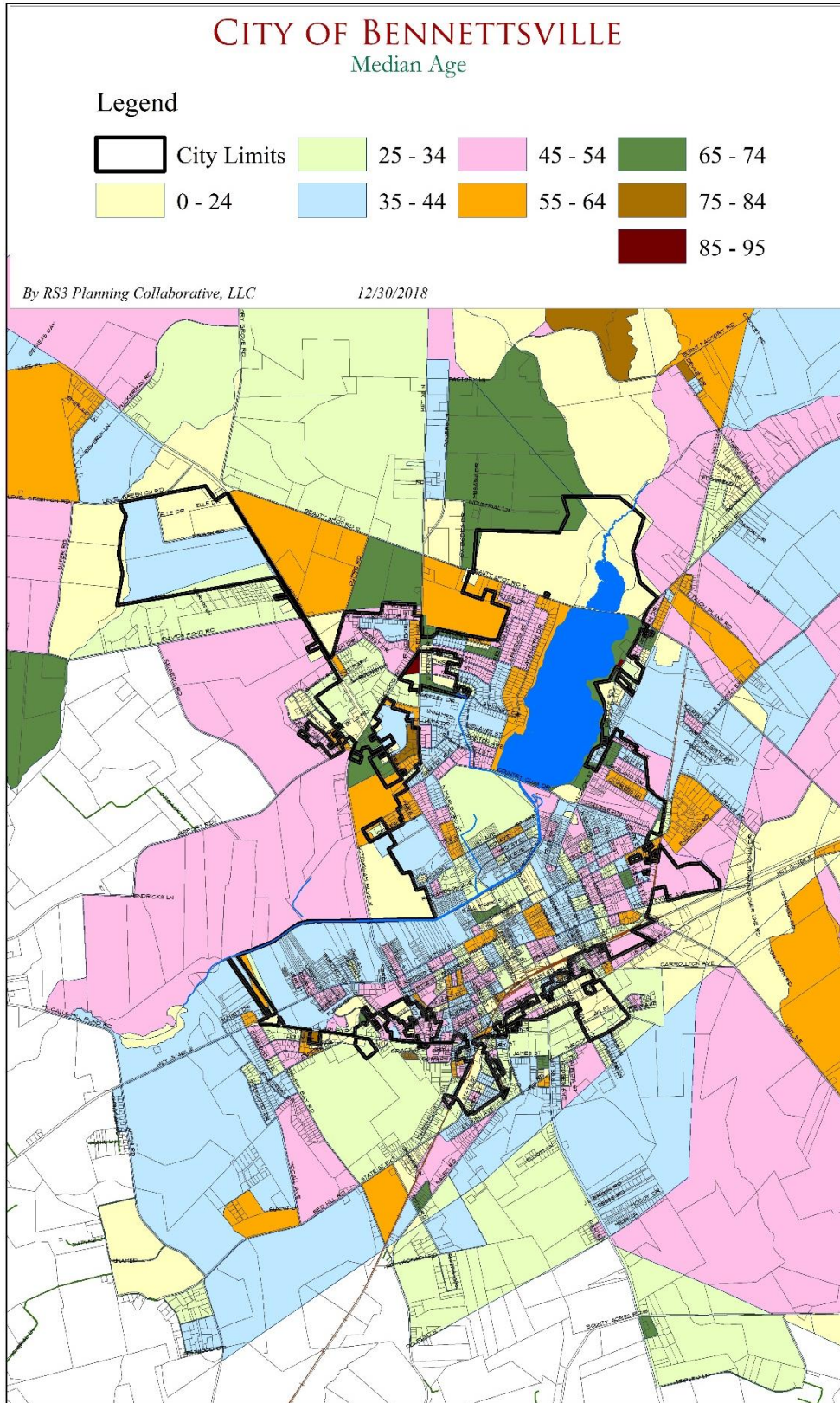
Source: 2000 & 2010 Decennial Data

The City’s median age in 2010 was 38.7, slightly older than the State’s median age (37.9 years of age). Figure 1.5 reflects varying householders’ age by Census block groups.

Depicted are areas of concentration by age groups. There is a significant 33 – 44-year old population. This group tends to be settled and have young children.

Additionally, the Median Age Map is also a visual tool to determine where services and programming is needed. For example, 55 to 64-year olds in concentrated areas are more likely to need owner-occupied housing rehabs and a myriad of senior services. Alternatively, it highlights area of youth concentration. We will circle back to this map later.

Figure 1.5. Median Age Map



The last variable of the population equation is migration - immigration and emigration. Migration reflects the population's pulse. Migration, here, is more than where people move. Employment, lifestyle, cost of living, and housing choice influence migration patterns. Shifts in migration patterns are complex and many. However, it is a reasonable assumption that the biggest reason is employment opportunities. Work suitability and adaptability is the norm in a changing global economy. Higher skilled and educated labor force is needed to meet employment demands. The Nation's shift from manufacturing to a technological, service-oriented, and outsourcing paradigm has dealt an economic blow to this Region, particularly small and rural communities. Consequently, a number of post-secondary graduates do not return to the City, County, and/or Region because it does not offer them the economic opportunities other regions of the State or Nation provide. Table 4 illustrates their interrelationship and hints at an explanation for the raw population numbers.

The base data is taken from the SC Statistical Abstract. Unfortunately, the State does not provide detailed data for cities and towns. The City of Bennettsville's birth, death, and migration analysis make an assumption the City's population mirrors the County. Often time, municipalities grow independently of their counties. Nonetheless, proportionality analysis is used to derive estimated births, deaths, and migration. The analysis takes the proportion of the County's births, deaths, and migration from the previous Census decennial. The proportion as a percentage is multiplied by the previous decennial year. For example, the portion of Marlboro County's births in 2000 was 12.8% of the total population. Multiply the City's 2000 population (9,425) by .128 estimating 1206 births. This extrapolation method is not precise. As we can see the estimated population in parentheses is 393 persons more than the actual 2010 Census enumeration.

Table 1.4. Births, Deaths, & Migration Analysis

Locality	2000	2010	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Total Population Gain/Decline
Bennettsville	9,425	9,462 (9,069)	1206	1056	150	-113	37
Marlboro County	28,818	28,933	3,702	3,235	467	-352	3,966
Locality	2010	2016	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Total Population Gain/Decline
Bennettsville	9,069	8444 **8,692	599	635	-36	-589	-625
Marlboro County	28,933	26,944	1,913	2,024	-111	-1,878	-1,989

Source: *South Carolina Statistical Abstract (2000-2010 & 2010-2016)*

** 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Bold numbers are estimates based on statistical portion of Marlboro County data from SC Statistical Abstract

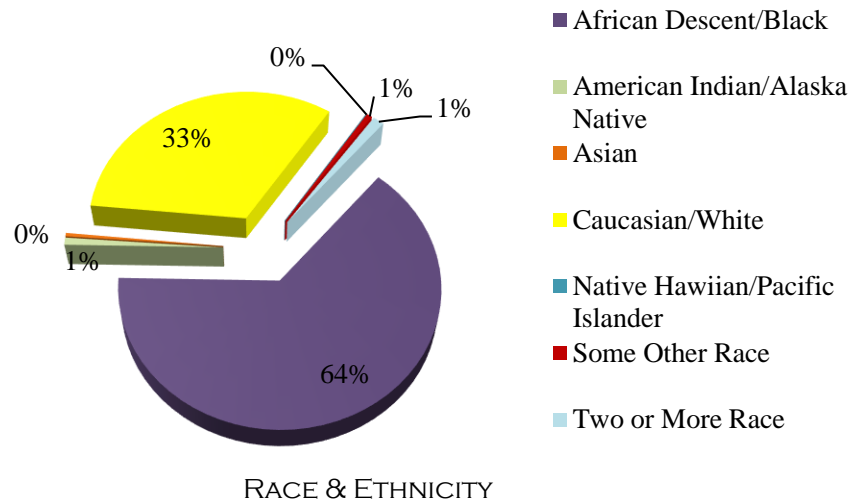
SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

This section peeks at the City's socioeconomic composition. This profile discusses race and ethnicity, household, education, and income characteristics. Poverty appropriately fits with the Economic Element.

Race & Ethnicity

Figure 1.6. Race & Ethnicity

Race, for clarity, is an artificial construct lacking scientific merit. The classifications hinge on socio-political observations and stereotypes. However, it is the favored nomenclature to identify peoples. Nonetheless, the City is gradually becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.



Bennettsville's population, historically, had been expressed through the Black-White dynamic. Other racial groups were marginal. Bennettsville, like America, is slowly becoming a salad bowl. This analogy draws on the added ingredients beyond the typical lettuce and tomatoes. Differences are an asset. Table 5 reflects racial and ethnic change between 2000 and 2010. People of African Descent continue to outnumber all other racial groups. Although the largest group, it experienced 2.2% decline. In fact, all racial groups declined in population. The largest was among Asians. Persons claiming Some Other Race and Two or More Races more than quadrupled in size in 2010. People, in a racially diverse climate, are opting to express and redefine their racial identity. Those options allow persons to account for their heritage contributions. The 2000 Census marked the first statistical account of the Hispanic/Latino Community. Their numbers have drawn the attention of demographers, politicians, and others. Counts have risen and continue to climb. The City of Bennettsville is no exception. The Hispanic/Latino Community grew 150.8% between 2000 and 2010. Hispanic/Latino, for clarity, is not a race rather an ethnicity. It has erroneously been associated as a race. The much-politicized Immigration Debate, highlighting specific imagery, adds to this notion. Hispanic and Latino are geo-political references. Hispanics are Spanish-speaking people of Mexico. Latino is a term for Spanish-speaking persons from the Caribbean Islands, Central, and South America. They represent an amalgam culture and in many cases people. Bennettsville potentially will continue to be culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse in the future.

Table 1.5. Race & Ethnicity

Race	2000	2010	Change
Total Population	9,425	9,069	-3.8
African Descent/Black	5,952	5,822	-2.2
American Indian & Alaska Native	80	76	-5.0
Asian	47	36	-23.4
Caucasian/White	3,280	2,966	-9.6
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	2	0
Some Other Race	10	55	450.0
Two or More Races	56	112	100.0
Ethnicity			
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	59	148	150.8

Source: U.S. Census 2000 & 2010 Decennial Data

Households

Household characteristics offer a broad assumption on how people congregate in groups. Income, age, and social preferences influence living arrangements. The implications point to housing needs - new housing size and design and household services - which can be categorized geographically. Households and families are basic units of analysis in demography. They are not the same. A household is composed of one or more people who occupy a housing unit. Not all households contain families. Under the U.S. Census Bureau definition, family consists of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. They also may include other unrelated people. Nonfamily households are generally everyone else – those living alone and who share their residence with unrelated individuals. The Census Bureau has not caught up with the other “family” combinations. The 2020 Census may reflect non-traditional arrangements, especially where children are present. Table 5 expresses household, family, and

non-family size. Household includes family and nonfamily categories. The family dynamic is constantly changing and will change further as societal attitudes change. Nonetheless, family household focuses on married couples with children, married couples without children, and female head of household with no husband present, and male head of household with no wife present. Table 5 also provides a comparative profile between the City, Marlboro County and the State. Excluded are persons residing in quarters and aggregate living facilities.

The City of Bennettsville’s total households declined as its population dwindled. The decline was among family households. There are a couple explanations for the decline in family households, specifically husband-wife couples and male households-no wife present. Couples are favoring live-in relationships in lieu of marriage. This trend is steadily becoming the norm. For male households with no wife present, less men were awarded parental custody or elected not to be their child(ren)’s primary care-giver. Not surprising is the decline in the average household and family sizes. We can only surmise, without investigating, persons moved, joined the armed forces, and/or are among those in quarterly and aggregate living facilities.

Contrarily, Marlboro County and the State households grew with their respective populations. Despite the State’s growth, its average household and family sizes declined. Marlboro County’s did not. The County’s family household composition dipped with declines in male no wife present and female no husband present categories.

Table 1.6. Household Characteristics

	Locality	Total HH	Family HH	Family Households			Non-family HH	Non-family Household		Average HH Size	Average Family Size
				Husband -Wife Family	Male HH, no wife present	Female HH, no husband present		Living Alone	Other		
2010	Bennettsville	3,099	1,923	929	147	847	1176	1083	93	2.34	3.02
	Marlboro County	10,478	7,338	4,464	544	2,330	3,140	2,818	322	2.59	3.14
	South Carolina	1,801,181	1,216,415	849,959	85,354	281,102	584,766	477,894	106,872	2.49	3.01
2000	Bennettsville	3,289	2,166	1,174	157	835	1123	1035	88	2.43	3.06
	Marlboro County	10,383	6,903	3,819	563	2,521	3,480	3,120	360	2.47	3.06
	South Carolina	1,533,854	1,072,822	783,142	62,722	226,958	461,032	383,142	77,890	2.53	3.02

Source: US Census 2000 & 2010 Decennial Data

Education

Education, no matter the society’s adopted system, becomes the basis for shaping its social and economy landscape. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are the basis of America’s educational capital. In a global economy, the better educated the populace the more attractive a community is to international and domestic investments. Simply, educational attainment equals jobs. High school graduation rates are the biggest economic barometer. Marlboro County School District work feverously to reduce dropouts, tardiness, and absences. The more students attend school, the less likely they are to dropout.

Marlboro County School District partnered with Northeastern Technical College to give every student the opportunity to graduate high school with a two-year associate degree or job related technical certificate, such as but not limited to cosmetology, practical nursing, or welding. The Industry Training Center, the repurposed Winn Dixie grocery store, is a partnership that benefits not only Marlboro County students but the County as whole. Accessible training for industrial and manufacturing jobs is the goal. The partnership includes Northeastern Technical College, Marlboro Economic Development Partnership, Marlboro County School District, North Eastern Strategic Alliance, and industry partners. It will operate in a state-of-the-art building located centrally in our county to better serve our students and citizens. The School District has something to be optimistic about.

	Locality	Graduate or Professional Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Associate Degree	Some College, No Degree	High School/GED	9 th – 12 th , No Diploma	Less Than 9 th Grade
*2010	Bennettsville	4.0%	6.4%	4.6%	14.4%	35.4%	24.9%	10.3%
	Marlboro County	2.5%	6.1%	4.0%	15.4%	39.5%	20.9%	11.6%
	South Carolina	10.5%	17.7%	7.6%	21.3%	28.4%	8.3%	6.1%
2000	Bennettsville	4.9%	5.9%	3.8%	11.7%	33.8%	26.9%	13%
	Marlboro County	3.6%	4.7%	4.2%	13.3%	35.0%	24.5%	14.6%
	South Carolina	6.9%	13.5%	6.7%	19.3%	30%	15.4%	8.3%

Table 1.7b. College Education by Sex

	2000		*2010		Percent Change	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Some College	312	403	434	473	39	17
Associates	119	115	115	176	-3	53
Bachelor's Degree	144	220	163	242	13	10
Graduate/Professional Degree	95	207	96	154	1	-26
Total	670	945	808	1045		

Source: U.S. Census 2000 Decennial Data

*ACS 2006-2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The Educational Attainment Table accounts for persons 25 and older. The columns most telling are “Less Than 9th Grade” and “9th – 12th, No Diploma.” Every community wants those numbers as low as possible. In 2000, the Bennettsville and Marlboro County had double digit numbers in both categories. The City’s was 13% and 26.9% respectively. Less Than 9th Grade nearly dropped by three (3) percent in 2010. A little more than ten percent (10.3%) had less than a 9th grade education. Although Bennettsville remains in double digits in persons with a 9th – 12th grade education with no diploma, the number dipped almost by two percent. Both the County and State witnessed a reduction in Less Than 9th Grade and 9th – 12th, No Diploma. Despite Bennettsville strides, it statistically lags behind the State and County in Less Than 9th Grade and 9th-12th, No Diploma.

An important litmus test for any community is its number of high school graduates and GED recipients. The City’s high school diploma and equivalent numbers trailed the County but

exceeded the State. High school/GED graduations rose by nearly two percent (1.6%). This increase is not by accident. Marlboro County School District has made strides to improve graduation rates. Education attainment improved with the exception of graduate and professional degrees. Graduate and professional degrees dropped nine percent over the decade. The City, in terms of college achievements, outpaced the County except for Some College, No Degree.

Income

Economic indicators, here, are median and per capita income. Both are economic barometers to gauge a community's economic profile. However, they are in no way perfect. They provide a snapshot in time.

Keep in mind; median is not an average [mean] rather the middle number of all available present incomes. Median family income is typically higher than median household income because of the composition of households. Family households tend to have more people, and more of those members are in their prime earning years. The drawback to using family income measures is that they disregard persons living in nonfamily households, who tend to be disproportionately younger or older. In some cases, it is appropriate to exclude nonfamily households for housing affordability. Affordability is based on family income rather than household income. Per Capita income is a mean computed for every man, woman, and child by dividing total income by total population. Though it is not perfect, it is a reliable measure. The drawback is it accounts for children, the unemployed, and persons no longer participating in the labor force. As a measure for comparing places is another drawback. One area may have more children per household than another, thereby skewing the per capita income comparison. Nonetheless, it is an indicator of the economic well-being of a community. It shows the efficiency of a community's economy and the support the economy provides for its residents.

Table 1.8 expresses a 30-year glimpse of the City of Bennettsville, Marlboro County, and State's economic profile. The first observation is the household, family, and per capita incomes increased each decennial except for Bennettsville's 2010 family and per capita incomes. Unlike the 1990 and 2000, the 2010 data is an estimate. There is no explanation why the Census Bureau choose to reflect 2010's income dataset as an estimate, which has both plus and minus margins of error. Stated previously are the inherit issues with sampling. Additionally, those randomly may not have fully rebounded from the 2008 Recession. Keep in mind Marlboro County's data includes the City. Lower family income may be the result of higher unemployment, lower paying jobs, and a larger number of persons receiving unemployment insurance, public assistance, social security, disability, and the like. The other is, only in 1990, did City's household, family, and per capita incomes outpace the County.

Table 1.8. Median and Per Capita Incomes

Locality	1990			2000		
	Household	Family	Per Capita	Household	Family	Per Capita
Bennettsville	\$19,120	\$23,361	\$8,641	\$22,389	\$29,272	\$13,917
Marlboro County	\$18,068	\$22,231	\$7,948	\$26,598	\$32,019	\$13,385
South Carolina	\$26,256	\$30,797	\$11,897	\$37,082	\$44,227	\$18,795
2010						
Locality	Household	Family	Per Capita			
**Bennettsville	\$24,386	\$27,776	\$13,749			
**Marlboro County	\$27,688	\$32,485	\$13,817			
*South Carolina	\$42,018	\$51,704	\$22,128			
Source: U.S. Census 1990 & 2000 Decennial Data *2010 ACS 1 Year Estimates **2006 – 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates						

Table 1.9 is more telling. Although, incomes have risen over the years, the rate of growth has decreased. This does not hold true for Bennettsville 2010 family and per capita incomes. The top numbers in the table reflect the numerical difference between enumerations while the bold numbers reflect change as a percentage.

Table 1.9. Income Comparison

Locality	1990-2000 Change			2000-2010 Change		
	Household	Family	Per Capita	Household	Family	Per Capita
Bennettsville	\$3,269 17.1	\$5,911 23.3	\$5,276 61.1	\$1,997 8.9	(\$1,496) (5.1)	(\$168) (1.2)
Marlboro County	\$8,530 47.2	\$9,788 44	\$5,437 68.4	\$1,090 4.1	\$466 1.5	\$432 3.2
South Carolina	\$10,826 41.2	\$13,430 44	\$6,898 58	\$4,936 13.3	\$7,477 16.9	\$3,333 17.7

Let us discuss the City of Bennettsville’s median family income for a moment. Family income is most used to gauge local, State, and Federal policies and services. Many policies decisions look at how families will be affected. Have said that, families between 1990 and 2000 witnessed a \$5,911 increase in income. This was a 23.3% increase. Comparatively, median family income between 2000 and 2010 decreased \$1,496, a 5.1% decrease. Cost of living, not the only factor, may be outpacing incomes. It is worth mentioning household and per capita incomes shrank.

Briefly, cost of living is measured by the consumer price index. Consumer price index (CPI), according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. CPI fluctuates from month to month and place to place. Bureau of Labor Statistics gathers the average prices paid by consumers for hundreds of different items each month. The average is then compared to a reference base period. That base period is an arbitrary date set by the federal government. Currently, the US uses the average of goods and services from 1982 to 1984 and considers that our reference base period with a factor of 100. CPI is also used to calculate inflation, comparing two-time periods. We will use the Bureau of Labor's CPI Inflation Calculator, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm, to illustrate our point.

Let us test this assumption comparing January 1990 and January 2000 to calculate the purchasing power of \$100. The result is \$132.50 meaning \$100 in 1990 was equivalent to \$132.50 in 2000. Comparing 2000 and 2010 for the same month resulted in \$128.37. As we can see purchasing power with inflation between 2000 and 2010 was lower. This is not to dismiss the rising cost of living influence on spending power. Another factor is the 2008 Recession and the high unemployment. Reportedly, the national economy has made strides. Its economic ripples are not fully realized in small and rural communities. Consequently, there remains some uncertainty and skepticism among employers. They may be hesitant to expand or provide pay increases at or above the consumer price index. Only time will tell.

THE FUTURE

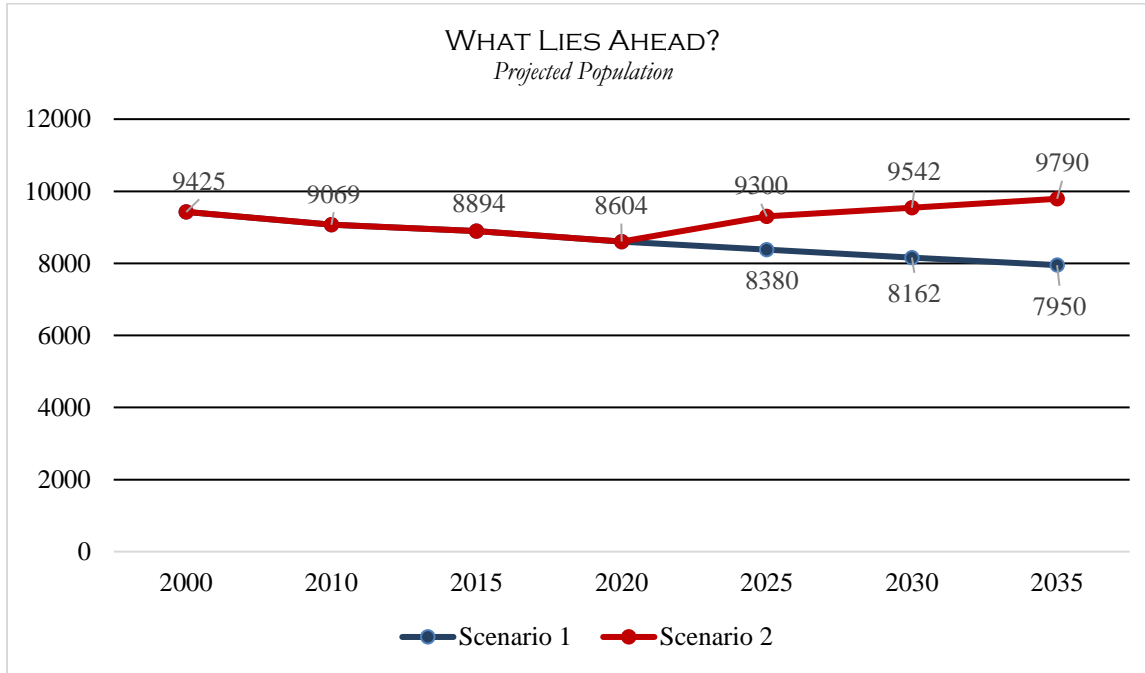
What lies ahead? Population projections short of demographers' annual birth, death, and migration, calculations vary on extrapolation methodology. Often times, projections follow particular patterns, assume growth rates will continue at the same rate, reflect proportionality of a county or region's growth, or reflect annexations and the number of residential building permits. Either way, a projection is an indicator that is unpredictable. Unpredictability is influenced by market and event changes that can be devastating or catapult significant growth. The *What Lies Ahead Graph* articulates population actuals from 2000 and 2010 decennial data, and ACS's 2015 estimate. The forecast uses percent change between 2015 and 2010 as a growth indicator producing two plausible scenarios.

Scenario 1 assumes Bennettsville's population will shrink 2.6% each quinquennial (5-year period). Estimates from the Census Bureau, since 2010, have projected the incremental population loss. In fact, SC Budget and Control projects negative growth through 2030. This trend assumes the City will continue the same approach to governance and policies.

Scenario 2 projects a 2.6 percent increase every 5 years after 2020. The Census Bureau in 2019, this year, will administer its 2020 decennial enumeration. There is not enough time to implement ambitious policies to catapult population growth. RS3 Planning Collaborative, LLC believes the

subsequent years with ambitious policies, governance, partnerships, and a change in attitudes will grow the City's population, economy, and quality of life. The goals and policies below are strategies going forward.

Figure 1.7. Population Projected



Source: U.S. Census 2000 Decennial Data; 2010 – 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates

POPULATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Population Element again is a snapshot of the City of Bennettsville, giving us a glimpse at areas we can improve and further develop. Planning will be crucial in creating a workable framework to guide anticipated and future growth.

Goal 1.1 Increase the City of Bennettsville City of Bennettsville's population.

Policy 1.1 Develop an annexation policy. Any annexation policy must compliment a robust public investment and economic development strategy. Potential property owners are hesitant to annex in a less than vibrant community.

Annexations, currently, have been one at a time inclusion into city limits based on water service. Like most town and cities, annexation agreements with persons seeking utility service are signed with promise to annex into municipal limit if the said property becomes contiguous with the municipality. The City needs to develop an annexation policy that aggressively seeks to incorporate contiguous areas. Past annexations raise speculation on how non-contiguous properties were annexed.

First, the policy needs a mission. What is the driving ambition behind its efforts? Many municipalities use annexations as a revenue generator. Higher end homes and areas become the target. Many do not account or consider the cost of extensive infrastructure or services. Bennettsville annexation policy needs to account for extending infrastructure and services while rebuilding deteriorated and maintaining current infrastructure. The typical demanded infrastructure is sewer. If sewer is the carrot, the City needs to be able to provide those services within a reasonable time. Reasonable is within four years.

The City of Greenville's annexation policy, for example, targets surrounding businesses. Why? Commercial annexations generate far more revenue than residential because they are taxed at six percent, use more water, and require waste disposal services. Commercial annexations become the tentacles in attracting residential properties. Figure 1.8 Annexation Consideration Map depicts property market values in relationship to Census block groups with 51% or more homeownership. Higher market values immediately get one's attention. The Easter egg is the 51% and greater homeownership. Those areas are a triple benefit. One, the City immediately increases its tax base. Secondly, it increases its homeownership ratio. Thirdly, homeowners typically are more invested in their homes and community. The City volunteer pool for civic activities and board participation expands.

Let us revisit the Median Age Map. Highlighted are the median ages of Bennettsville householders and surrounding areas. Note the cream, blue, and light green areas. The ages are between 24 and 44. This group is more likely to start a family or have young families and consist of young professionals.

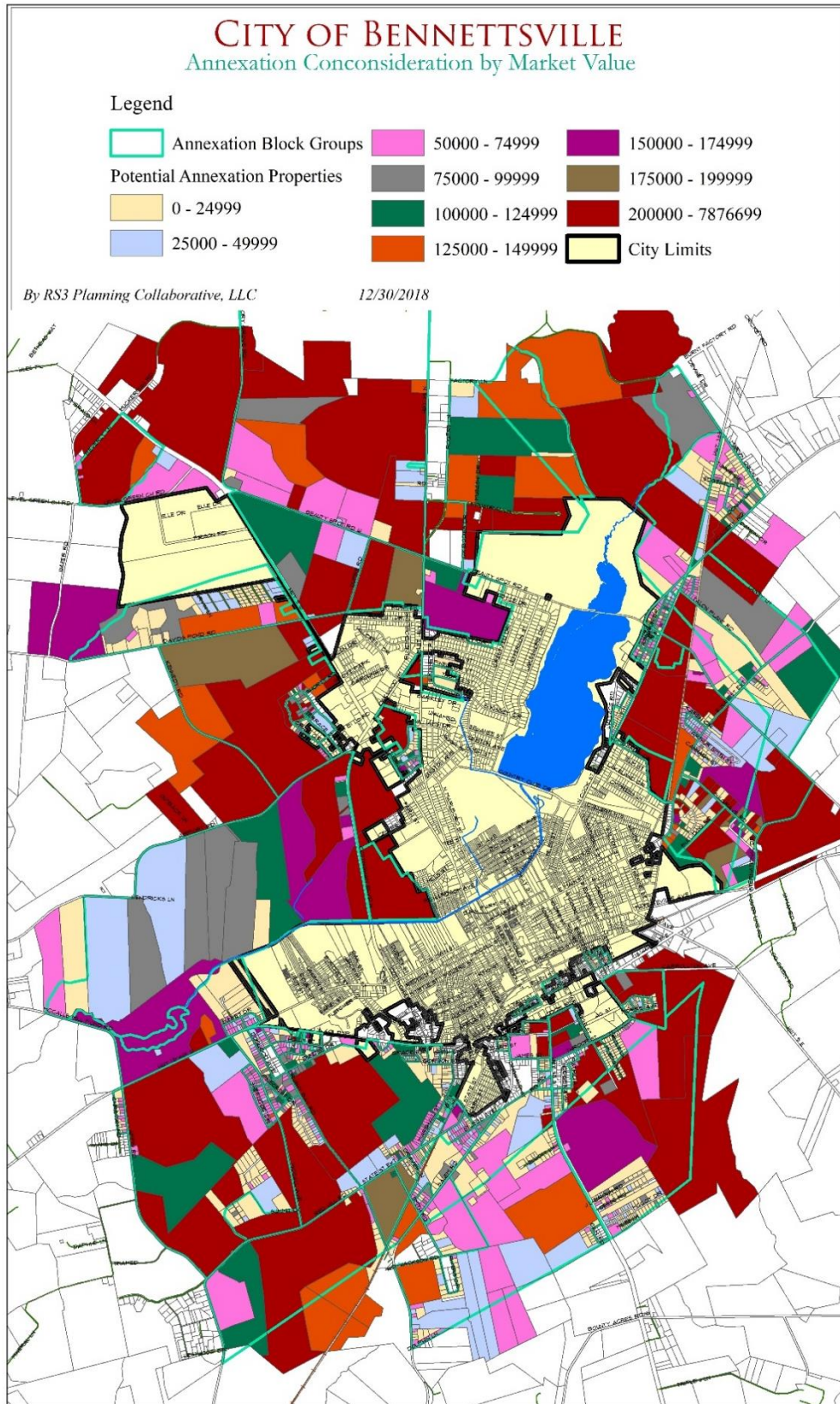
Secondly, an annexation policy needs a sales-pitch. Why annex into the City is the question that needs to be asked. Next, what does the City have to offer? Again, this needs to be a part of a

broader economic development strategy. The City should not shy away from the below or similar incentives. Growth requires giving something short-term to reap long-term benefits.

Below are some examples:

- amortized tax collection (The first year, they would only pay 50% and gradually 100%. It can be in the form of a rebate. The City of Beaufort has an aggressive annexation policy. It provides annexed property owners two payments equal to one and one-half (1½) times that property's projected city real property taxes based upon the real property's then current appraised value, use, and city millage rate at the date of execution of the annexation agreement. Once the annexation is executed with the other after the property is officially annexed. Another option is credits and reimbursements for annexed real property from the date of annexation for a maximum period of three (3) years.);
- demonstrate efficient emergency services (i.e. police and fire). Lower insurance service office (ISO) rating equal lower homeowner and renter insurance premiums.;
- provide sewer or a reasonable timeline for sewer services;
- public improvements; and,
- tax abatements, business licence incentives, façade grants, access to housing rehabilitation grants.

Figure 1.8. Annexation Consideration Map



Policy 1.2. Increase housing starts.

Partner with non-profit, developers, and builders to develop housing with diverse styles and price ranges. The target needs to be on 20 and 30 something year olds looking for affordable housing and community atmosphere. Young families and professionals are attracted to amenities – parks/recreation, shopping, dining, and good schools. The latter is problematic. The School District, it has a less than stellar reputation. It, since 2012, has a State report card rating range from At-Risk to Average. The most recent, 2018 rating, for City resident schools are:

- Bennettsville Intermediate School – Below Average
- Marlboro School of Discovery – Good
- Marlboro County High School – Below Average

Strategy 1.2. Fortify a coalition to address educational deficiencies beginning with a collaborative with head starts and early childhood programming.

Strategy 2.2. Create a platform to connect parents as an active partner.

Policy 1.3. Reclaim a number of vacant lots and housing in need of rehabilitation. We will discuss this detail in the Housing Element.

Policy 1.4. Transition the City of Bennettsville from a place to a destination

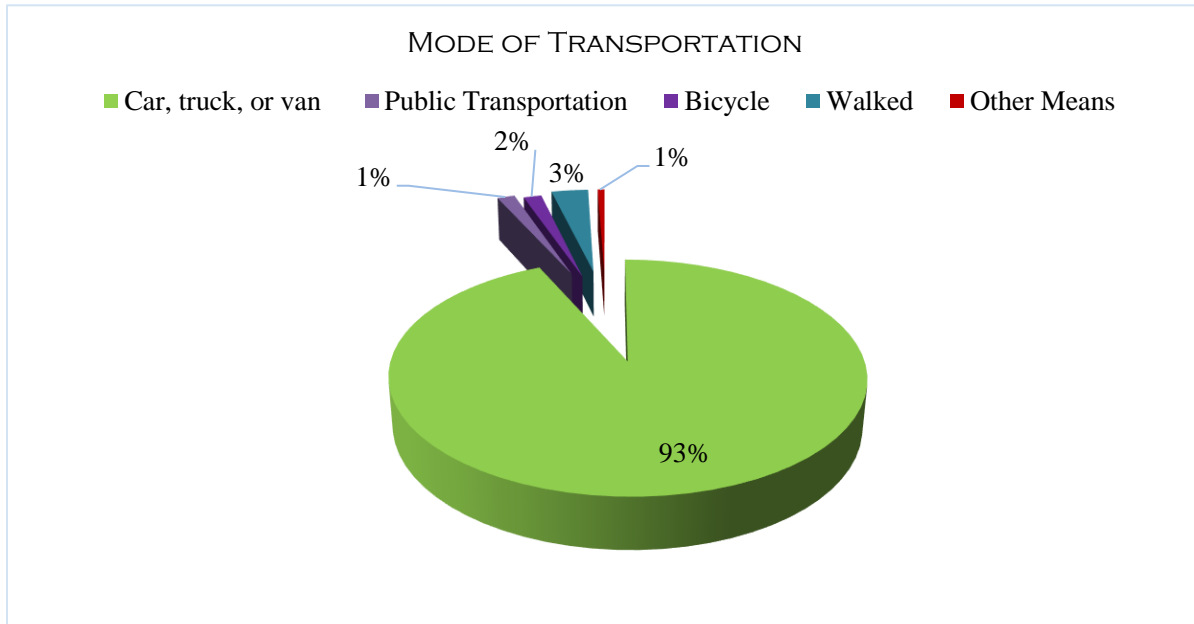
Chapter 2

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The purpose of the Transportation Element is to ensure transportation facilities and plans in Bennettsville are aligned with existing and anticipated transportation needs and objectives, economic, quality of life, and other. It considers transportation networks, including road improvements, new road construction, transits, and pedestrian/bicycle networks. Transportation planning considers efficient and reliable transportation is a struggle for some the residents. The lack of and unreliable transportation can and many times present obstacles to obtaining employment, securing affordable day care, and enjoying the social aspect of a community. A worker absent due to unreliable transportation impacts other employees. Transportation also plays a significant role in the land use ensuring transportation efficiency for existing and planned development.

Commuting patterns are an important transportation indicator. The Census focuses on commutes/trips to work. Commuter characteristics are used to plan road and highway improvements, shape planning services, and understand people's travel patterns and their means of transportation. Its shortcoming is its limited attention to domestic trips for shopping, dining, recreation, or picking up a few grocery items. Ignored are modes of transportation for those trips, which may differ from work generated trips. Trips to other destinations are predicated on design or the lack of neighborhood design. Work may be miles away requiring a vehicle travel. On the other hand, a loaf of bread is minutes away walking. Walking or biking is then the preferred mode of travel. Nonetheless, Figure 2.1 notes Bennettsville's working population relies heavily on cars, trucks, and vans as part of their work commute. Workers, per the Census Bureau, references persons 16 years old and older.

Figure 2.1: Mode of Transportation



Public Transportation and other means were the least used. Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (PDRTA), during the 5-year survey period, was providing scheduled routes to Bennettsville. Transit services ended in 2013. Without route and stop time information, transit usage may have been a response to limited routes and stop times to employers. Transit would have been an inconvenience.

Table 2.1 offers a detailed description of the dataset between 2000 and 2010. There are a few takeaways. One is the jump in persons working from home. We can only speculate this was influenced by the 2008 Recession. Briefly, Bennettsville’s working from home population (3%) nearly mirrors the State (3.8%). Working from home is a growing trend in response to an ever-changing employment landscape. Another is the gigantic leap in biking to work. Carpooling declined by 27.4% in 2010. Lastly, despite the decline in workers between 2000 and 2010, the percent of persons with 1 or more vehicles increased by .3%.

Table 2.1. Modes of Transportation/Vehicle Availability

	2000	Percent	2010	Percent	Percent Change
Total	3000		2499		-16.7
Worked from Home	16	1	65	3	306.3
Worked	2984	99	2434	97	-18.4
Car, Truck, or Van	2764	93	2271	93	-17.8
<i>Drove Alone</i>	2132	77	1812	80	-15.0
<i>Carpooled</i>	623	23	459	20	-27.4
Public Transportation	62	10	36	1	-41.9
<i>Bus or Tolley Bus</i>	54	87	36	100	-33.3
<i>Taxicab</i>	8	13	0	0	-100
Motorcycle	6	0	0	0	-100
Bicycle	0	0	37	2	3700

Walked	96	3	76	3	-20.8
Other Means	56	2	14	1	-75
No Vehicles	818	26	623	21	-24
1 or More Vehicles	2,367	74	2374	79	.3
Total	3185	100	2997	100	

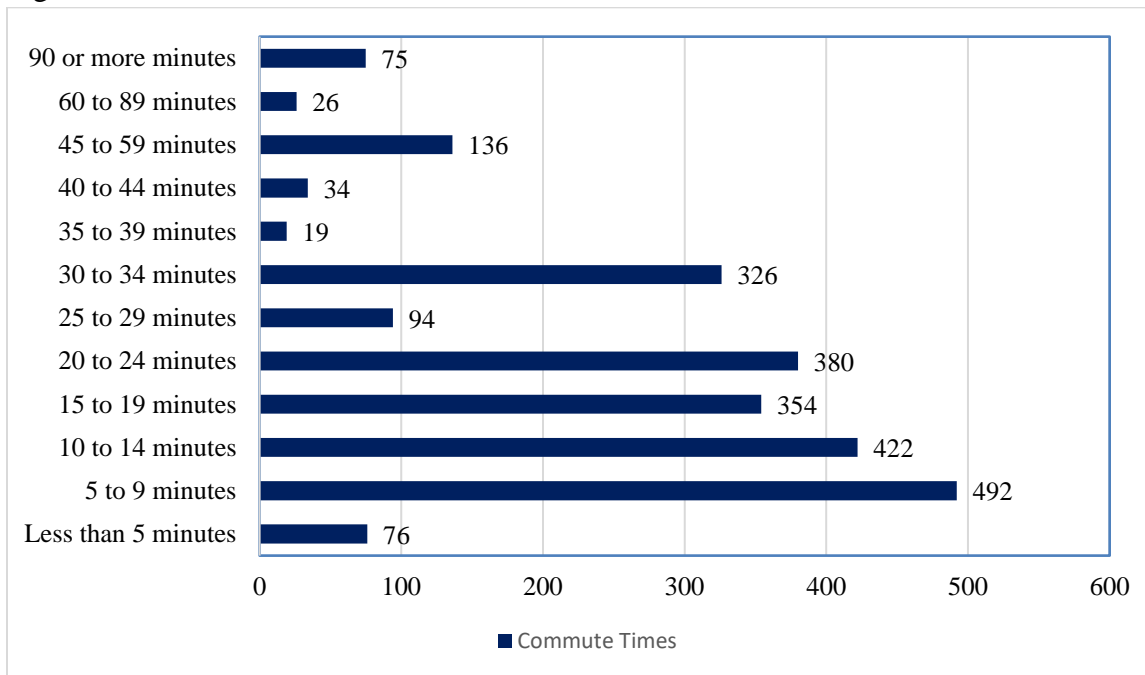
Source: 2000 Census; ACS 2006-2010 5-Year Estimates

Vehicle availability has several implications. In this case, raising vehicular ownership places a demand for road widening projects, paving frequency, increased greenhouse omissions, and the need for multi-modal alternatives. In short, increased vehicles place a higher demand on road systems.

The last transportation indicator is commuting times. Longer commutes mean increased vehicle investment in the form of maintenance, gas costs, and time away from family. High monthly transportation costs divert monies from housing repair, entertainment, and potentially food, or healthier food choices. Equally, if not more important, family or personal time. It is not uncommon for people to spend an hour or more traveling to work. For example, if one with an hour commute leaves work at five o'clock, home arrival time is around 7:00 pm. The reality is high-volume areas, during rush hour between 3 and 6 o'clock, add up to another hour to one's commute. Family time, especially with children, is limited. The hour commute means an early departure resulting in a 9 or 10 o'clock bedtime. Family and personal time are grossly restricted.

Bennettsville's average commute time is 24 minutes. Figure 2.2 reflect 2010's commute times. Overwhelmingly, people's work commutes are less than 30 minutes – less than an hour round-trip. Thirty-seven percent had less than 15-minute commutes. This reflects employment proximity. Greater than 30-minute commutes are linked to employment outside the State and in other counties. Bennettsville's transportation profile is the perfect segue to examine the State's responsiveness to Bennettsville's transportation needs. The inventory and analysis accounts for road, transit, trails, rails, air facility, seaport, and pedestrian/bicycle networks.

Figure 2.2 Commute Times



ROAD NETWORKS

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Commerce, South Carolina State Ports Authority, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and other key stakeholders have updated the South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan (MTP), "Charting a Course to 2040". The 2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan addresses the enhanced federal planning requirements by providing a vision for improving future condition, performance, and accessibility of transportation infrastructure and services that enhance the mobility and economic competitiveness of South Carolina. The MTP is updated every 5 years to reflect the latest information on travel and growth trends, goals and objectives, infrastructure conditions, future deficiencies, and estimated funding. Adopted in December 2014, this year [2019] marks another update.

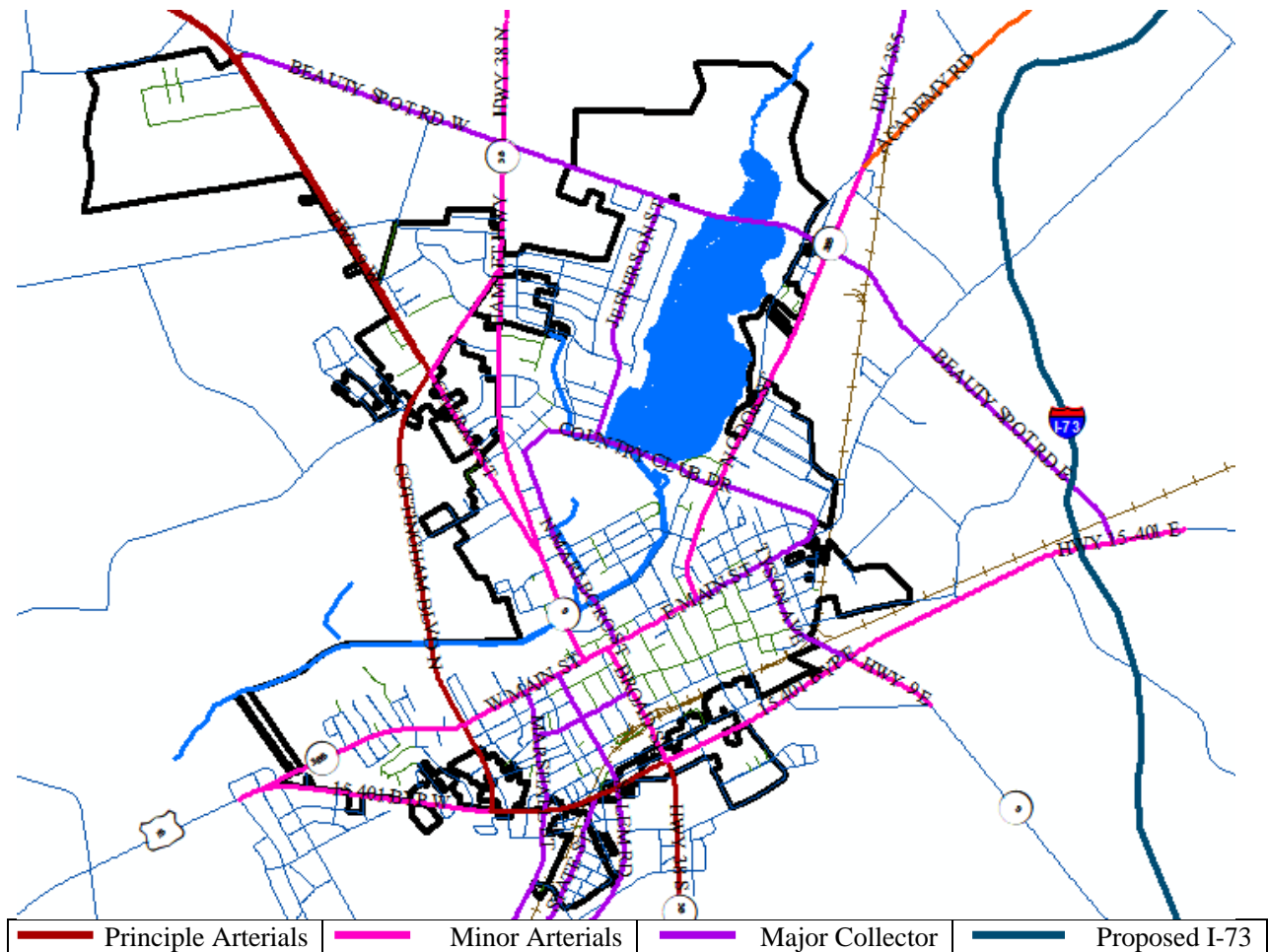
Bennettsville is in a unique position. The majority of the roads are owned and maintained by SCDOT. Another portion is owned and maintained by the City and Marlboro County. A list of both City and County roadways are listed at the end of this Chapter. This arrangement is far from perfect. SCDOT roads create some issues regarding the direct improvements the City can make to the road system; however, it alleviates a larger portion of the financial responsibility of the City. Improvements by SCDOT had been hampered by inadequate funding. The State's General Assembly's passage of the Road Bill provides increased and sustainable revenue. It is too early to tell when and how roads will be updated and/or expanded. Regardless, this element's goal is to provide multi-modal solutions.

SCDOT maintains a road functional classification throughout the State. That classification system is defined below:

- Primary Arterials accommodate higher speeds and traffic volumes, and longer-length trips. They interconnect and provide continuity for major corridors to accommodate trips entering and leaving urban and rural areas and movements.
- Minor Arterials provide moderate length trips, and interconnect and augment the higher-level arterials.
- Collectors provide connections to minor public facilities, interconnection of minor thoroughfares, access to concentrated land uses, or access to diffuse land use areas. This road classification is categorized into major and minor collectors.
 - *Major Collectors* direct property access and traffic circulation in higher density residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas. It may enter/pass-through residential neighborhoods for significant distances and channel traffic from local streets onto the arterial system.
 - *Minor Collectors* navigate traffic access and traffic circulation in lower density residential and commercial/industrial areas. It may enter/pass-through residential neighborhoods for only a short distance and channel traffic from local streets to/from the arterial system.
- Local Roads afford basic access between individual properties and connecting with higher order roadways. A route meeting this purpose would connect a home, work or entertainment trip by connecting the final destination to the roads serving longer trips.

Figure 2.3 Transportation Network Map highlight aforementioned road functional classification.

Figure 2.3 Transportation Network Map



We would be remiss if we did not discuss the impending Interstate 73 Corridor. Interstate 73 will serve as a connector from I-74 in North Carolina to Myrtle Beach. The proposed alignment of the corridor will be east of Bennettsville. It offers Bennettsville an economic and growth opportunity. Even though the overall connection to the Pee Dee Region will be enhanced, the primary access from and to I-73 will be via US 15/401 and SC 9. Managed properly, I-73 will increase Bennettsville’s visibility to SC visitors and a discovery for South Carolinians not familiar with the City. Equally important is the location and expansion of industry which only enhances Bennettsville’s position in the region.

SCDOT and Marlboro County Transportation Committee (CTC) are committed to several rehabilitation/resurfacing and operational/safety projects. Figure 2.4 Road Projects Map and Table 2.4 illustrate and list the locations and types of projects. As SCDOT evaluates the next five (5) years as part of its MTP update, it may propose new projects. Marlboro’s CTC, as a partner, will have an opportunity to present prioritized projects. What is a CTC? County Transportation Committees are Statewide county governing boards comprised of county residents. Appointed by a county’s legislative delegation, the Committee works with SCDOT to address transportation

needs and plans in addition to prioritizing road improvements. Marlboro's CTC functions in the same capacity.

Figure 2.4 Road Project Map

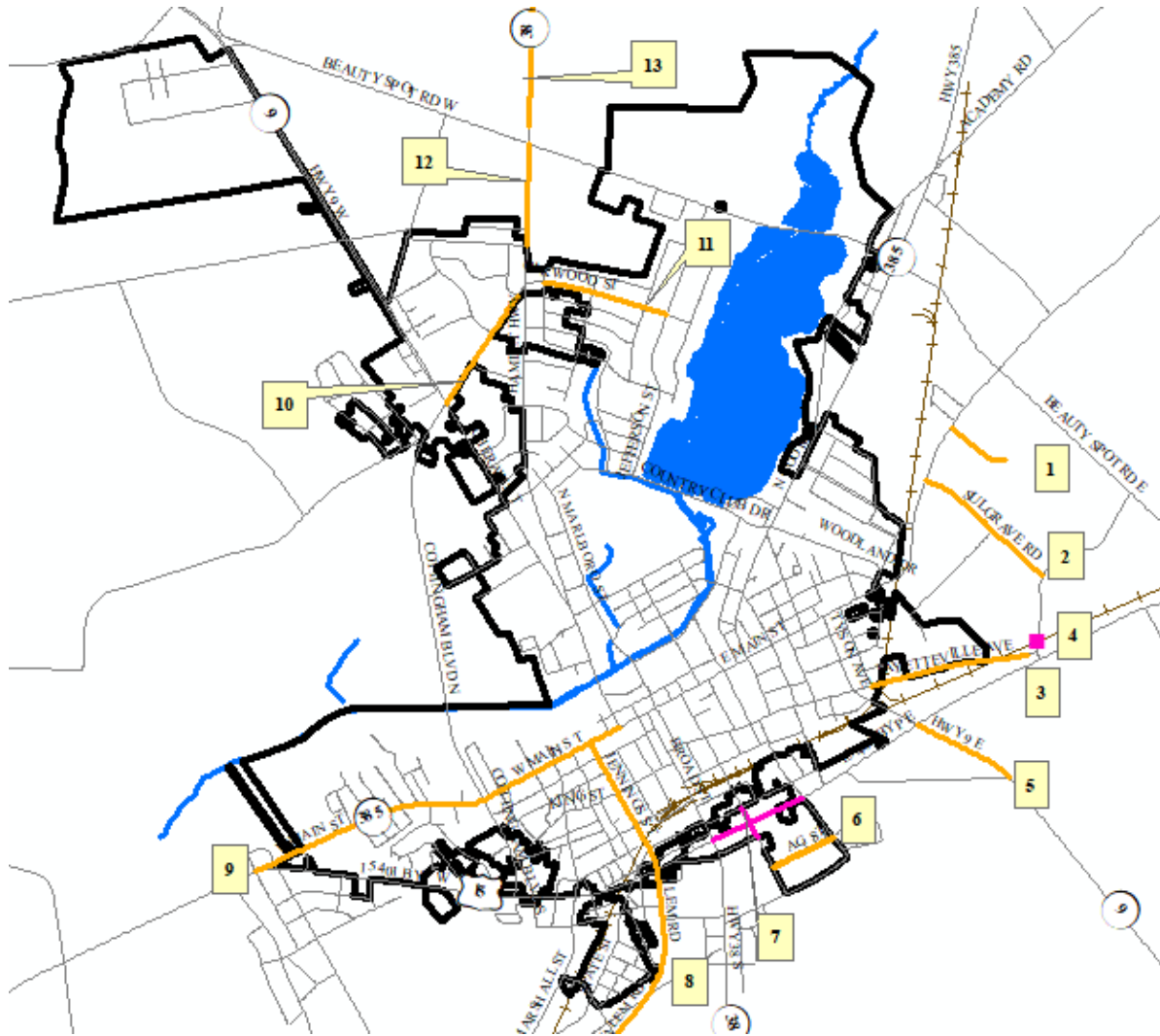


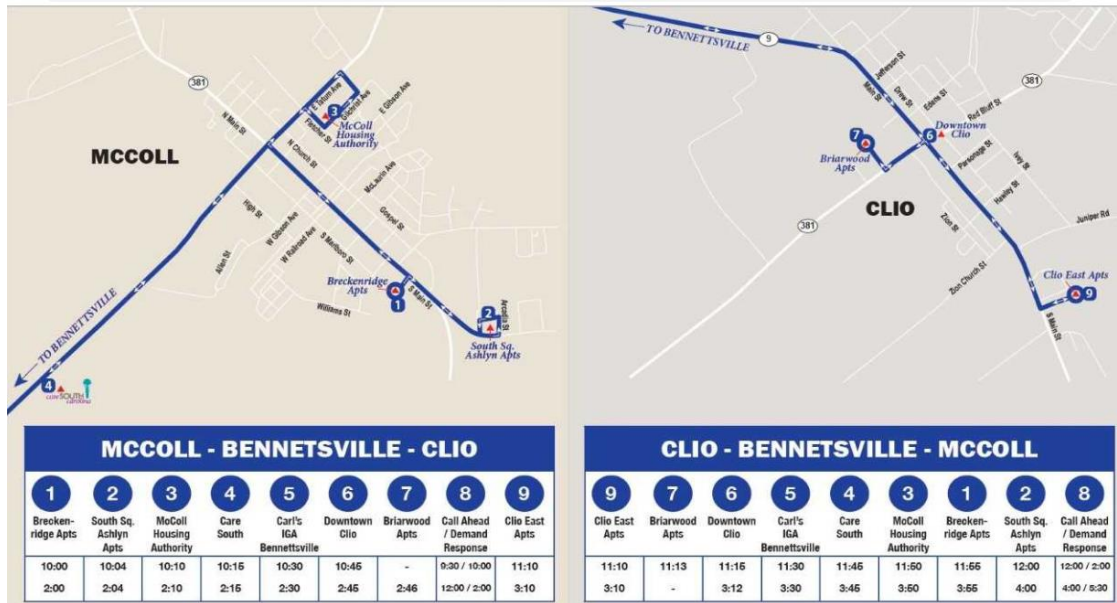
Table 2.2 Road Projects

	Rehab/Resurfacing	Operational/Safety	Operational/Safety (RR Crossing)
1.	Project Name: 2019 Non-FA Secondary Pavement Improvement Program Project Type: Reconstruction Road Name: Arthur Smith Street		
2.	Project Name: 2019 Non-FA Secondary Pavement Improvement Project Project Type: Reconstruction Road Name: Sulgrave Road		
3.	Project Name: Marlboro CTC FY '17-'18 Resurfacing Project Type: Rehab Road Name: Fayetteville Avenue (From Tyson Avenue toward International Drive)		
4.	Project Name: S-728 Participation Agreement Project Type: Safety Improvement Site Location: Pee Dee River RR Crossing		
5.	Project Name: 2019 Non-NHS Primary Preservation Program Project Type: Preservation Road Name: SC 9 (From US15/MLK Hwy to Covington Road)		
6.	Project Name: 2018 Non-Federal Aid Program Project Type: Resurfacing Road Name: AG Street (Between S. Parsonage Street & Throop Street)		
7.	Project Name: Type 2 Signal Upgrade Project District 5 Project Type: Signal Site Location: S. Parsonage Street & US 15 Intersection		
8.	Project Name: Marlboro CTC FY '16 – '17 Resurfacing Project Type: Preservation Road Name: Jennings Street/Salem Road (From W. Main Street to Briston Street)		
9.	Project Name: Resurfacing SC 385 (W. Main Street) from US 15 to SC 9 Project Type: Resurfacing Road Name: W. Main Street (From Cheraw Street to US 15)		
10.	Project Name: Resurfacing SC 38 from SC 79 to SC 9 Project Type: Resurfacing Road Name: Oakwood Street (Between Purch Bowl & SC 9)		
11.	Project Name: Marlboro CTC Project Type: Preservation Road Name: Oakwood Street (Between W. Kinney Circle & Jefferson Street)		
12.	Project Name: Resurfacing SC 38 from SC 79 to SC 9 Project Type: Resurfacing Road Name: SC 38N		
13.	Project Name: Resurfacing – SC38 from SC 79 to SC 9 Project Type: Resurfacing Road Name: SC 38N (From Rogers Lane to Hwy 38N)		
<i>Source: SCDOT Programmed Project Viewer</i>			

TRANSIT

The State, as part of its MTP, addresses regional bus network planning. Bennettsville solely is too small to support a municipal or public transportation service. The County also does not have the capacity to operate a bus service. After five (5) years of disrupted bus service, Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (PDRTA) is bringing back public transportation to the area.

Scheduled bus routes connect McColl, Bennettsville, and Clio. See schedule below. PDRTA also offers demand-response service. Ideally, people call a day before to schedule a trip.



Credit: Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority

Additionally, Greyhound Bus Lines is one of two Class A interstate bus carriers with stations in Florence, SC and Laurinburg, NC. Both are located within an hour from Bennettsville.

Transit operations are a precarious venture. Transit agencies depend on annual appropriations and informal agreements. Not having a reliable funding source continues to be a concern. The hope is service will not be disrupted again.

TRAILS

Currently, there are tree trails within the City. One is the two-mile walking trail that is a part of Lake Wallace. Lake Wallace is divided into three parts. The swimming and boating side has a one-mile skiing channel, grassy terraces, and white sandy beaches for swimming. Across a dike is the larger fishing and sailing portion, which is stocked with fish. The third portion of the lake lies north of Beauty Spot Road and is the reservoir for the City of Bennettsville's water system, as well as a waterfowl refuge with Canadian Geese, ducks, coots, mergansers, and herons. The other two are Northeastern Crescent and Carolina Connector Trails. Sections traverse through Bennettsville following State highway routes. According to SC Trails, both are marketed as bike routes. Ironically, there are no bike lanes within the City. There is an opportunity to expand the Lake Wallace walking trail along the existing canal and street system incorporating pedestrian/bike networks to Downtown and nearby park.

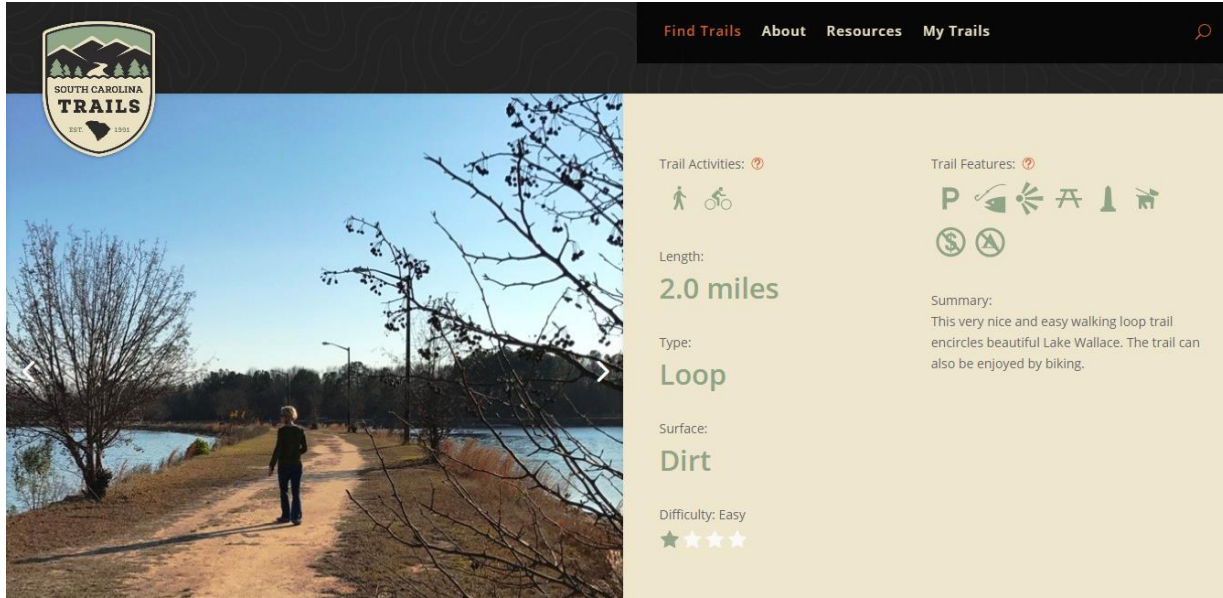


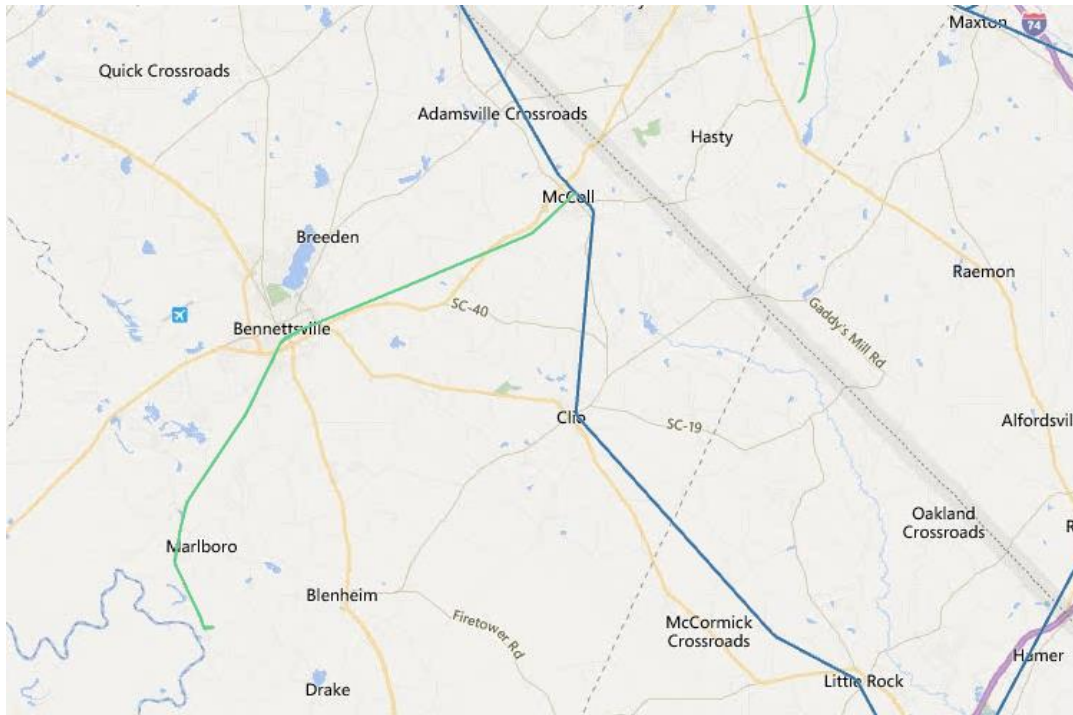
Photo Credit: South Carolina Trails (www.sctrails.net)

RAIL SYSTEM

Rail freight provides efficient transportation of raw materials and goods for industries and businesses and serves as a distribution channel for products exported to other states and countries. Rail tonnage was forecasted to increase from 70.3 million in 2011 to 101.4 million in 2040, a 44.3 percent increase. This forecast reflects Upstate and Dillon Inland Ports, Charleston’s intermodal container transfer facility, and the proposed Interstate 73. Passenger and freight rail traffic in the Greater Pee Dee Region is likely to increase with the corridor’s arrival.

CSX Transportation (CSXT) is South Carolina’s largest railroad with 1,269 route miles. CSXT traverses through Bennettsville to McColl using Pee Dee River’s short rail line. Traffic is interchanged with CSXT at McColl to transfer freight on its service line. The 3.8-mile spur transports paper, chemicals, aggregates, fertilizer, and plastic. Its major customers are Domtar, Mohawk, Flakeboard, Hanson Aggregates, and Southern States Cooperative.

It is worth noting passenger train service - Amtrak – is accessible in Florence, SC. CSXT’s rail lines help connect passengers to the destinations.



Credit. CSX Rail Inventory Map

——— Short Rail Line Partner ——— CSX Service Line

Freight systems are assessing areas of improvement. Freight rail efficiency strategies are to:

- Reduce freight bottlenecks causing significant freight congestion.
- Coordinate with the South Carolina Ports Authority and the Department of Commerce and develop a formal mechanism to purchase abandoned rail right-of-way that has been identified as having future freight transportation applications.

The needs specifically impacting Bennettsville are Pee Dee River Rail’s needed \$9.7 million investment in rehabilitation and capacity service. Table 2.5 Pee Dee River Short Rail Needs itemizes needs. Grants and generated revenues will be tapped to address rail needs.

Table 2.5 Pee Dee River Short Line Needs

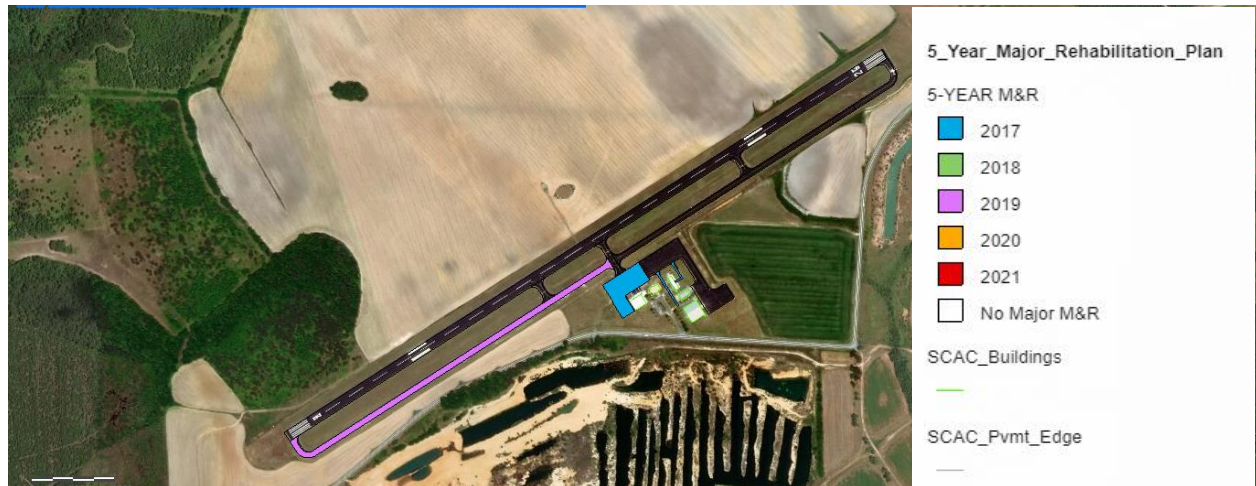
Short Line Improvement Project	Estimated Cost (\$ million)
Rehabilitation	
Relay 7.6 miles of rail between McColl and Bennettsville (2 phases)	\$5.7
Capacity/Service	
Additional yard capacity at Bennettsville	\$2.1
Additional interchange capacity at McColl	\$1.4
Additional industry services trackage	\$.5
Total	\$9.7

Source: Charting a Course to 2040 (State-wide Rail Plan)

AIR FACILITIES

Bennettsville’s nearest airport is Marlboro County Jetport also known as H.E. Avent Field. H.E. Avent Field is three nautical miles (3.4 miles) west of the Bennettsville’s central business district. The County-owned facility operates as a SC III airport covering 175 acres. SC III Airports are generally located in non-urban areas. These airports serve smaller business and personal aircraft. These airports offer fuel and most aviation services.

Figure 2.5 Airport 5-Year Rehabilitation



Credit: South Carolina Aeronautics Commission

H.E. Avent Field welcomes approximately 1,888 visitors each year. Visitors spend money on lodging, food, car rentals, entertainment, and/or retail purchases supporting the hospitality industry. South Carolina Aeronautics Commission’s Economic Impact Study measured airports contribution to South Carolina’s economy. The report estimates the State’s airports have an annual \$657 million impact in state and local tax revenues. H. E. Avent Field, according to the report, supports an estimated \$1.2M in economic benefit. The report findings estimated that, when only direct economic impacts are considered, the airport contributes approximately \$52,120 in annual state and local tax revenues.

Despite the airports economic impact, \$2,859,567 will be needed to maintain and improve the airport over the next five years; this equates to an average annual investment of \$571,913. Figure 2.5 illustrates upgrades and improvements within the last five (5) years. The airport’s annual economic impact far exceeds its annual financial need for maintenance and improvement.

SEAPORTS

Approximately 172 miles separate Bennettsville from Port of Charleston and Port of Georgetown. Both are governed by South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA). Serving as the owner-operator, the SCPA owns the terminals and manages all operations at the facilities. Port of Charleston primarily handles containerized cargo with container activities focused at North

Charleston and Wando Welch Terminals. A third is planned for the Naval Base Terminal. Port of Charleston's Union Pier Terminal is also the only operating South Carolina port with cruise operations. Charleston's harbor is being deepened, in response to the Panama Canal's improvements to accommodate larger vessels. Combined with an already successful inland port, this will exponentially increase cargo traffic.

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE NETWORKS

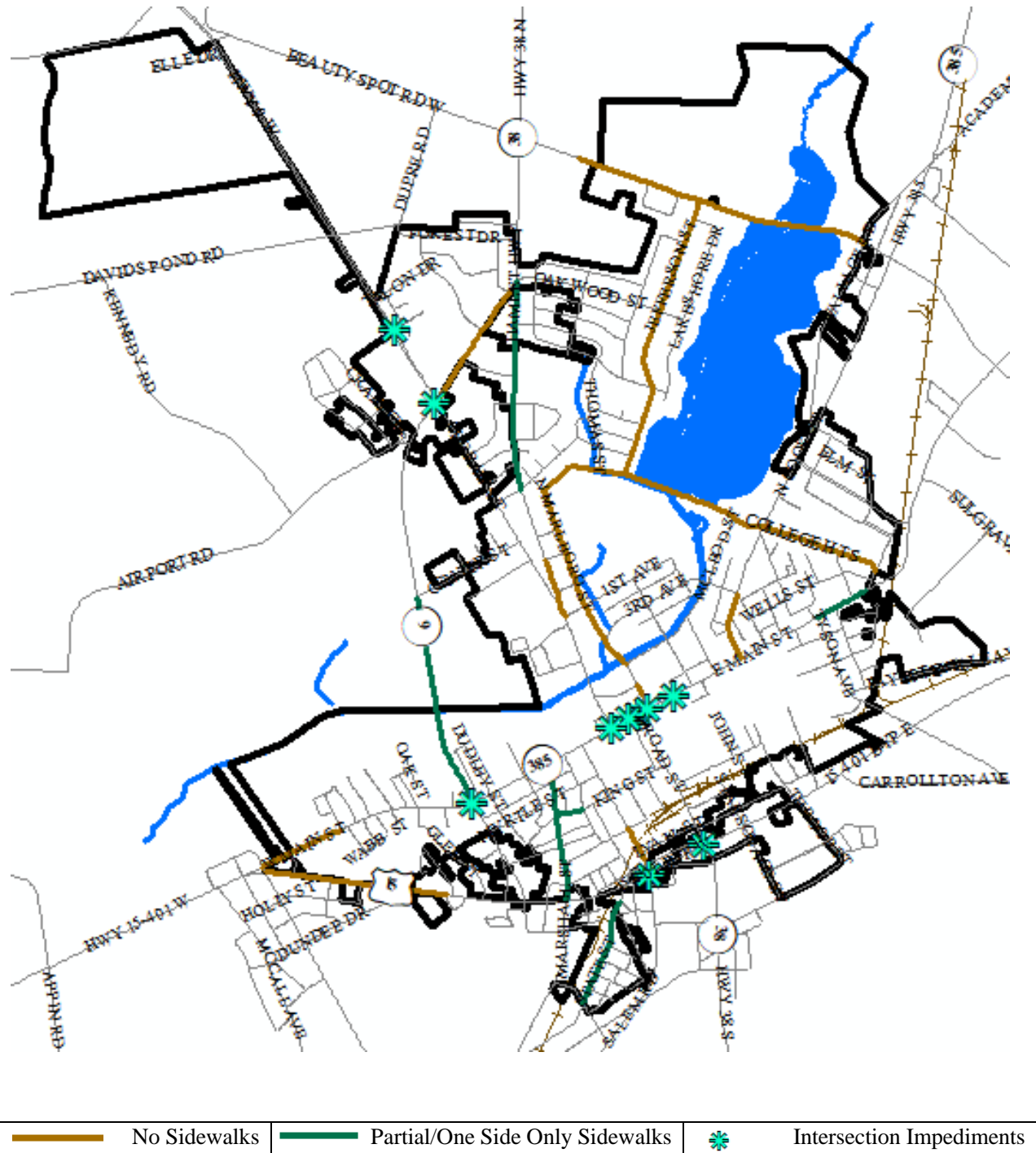
Sidewalks exist in a significant portion of the City. The majority of these sidewalks reflect pre-ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards. They are relatively narrow. In many cases, their design cannot easily accommodate two pedestrians passing one another. It is more of a challenge if the other person has mobility issues.

Traditionally, sidewalks and pedestrian amenities are handled through the local governments. Multiple communities are embracing greenways and/or pedestrian/bike systems. The goal is to promote other modes of transportation reducing the reliance on vehicles. Appropriate design encourages walkability. Wider sidewalks, crosswalks, crosswalk signals, appropriate lighting, and perception of safety encourages pedestrian activity beyond necessity. Necessity is the motivating factor for some. These walk because of no or limited transportation options despite dim lighting and where areas are perceived unsafe. Perception of safety relates to feeling safe. Fears of being struck by a vehicle or an intimidating setting discourages walking.

Figure 2.6 illustrates impediments to walking on Bennettsville's higher volume roadways. Notice these streets were identified earlier in the functional classification map. The absence of sidewalks on arterials and major collectors create pedestrian conflicts with vehicular traffic particularly on under and unlit streets. Highlighted also are streets with interrupted sidewalks and sidewalks only on one side of the street. The former forces one to walk on the street maneuvering from on-coming vehicular traffic. The latter forces pedestrian traffic to one side. When crowded one will have to deviate off to an adjacent property. The other option is to temporarily walk on the street avoiding potential traffic then back on the sidewalk.

The map also pinpoints intersections with safety impediments. Most are Downtown. The impediments are limited to no crosswalk signals especially for the visually impaired, few to no ADA mats, and faded to no crosswalk striping. This presents challenges to children and seniors crossing these intersections. Both are most vulnerable due to mobility and delayed reflexes. Briefly, ADA mats are one of the accessibility standards for the visually impaired. They provide tactile warnings using a distinctive surface pattern detected by cane or underfoot. This alerts the visually impaired of approaching streets and hazardous surface or grade changes. It is worth noting ADA mats are absent throughout the City. Why are these intersections so important? They are within Bennettsville's central business district. Downtown is the heart beat of a city's social and business interaction. Walking in the Downtown should be safe and convenient.

Figure 2.6 Walkability Map



Walking is what connects people to storefronts and encourages spending. Extending the Lake Wallace trail into an interconnected pedestrian/bicycle paths to nearby parks and Downtown will enhance Bennettsville’s quality of life. Furthermore, it will serve as a catalyst for Downtown’s revitalization.

There are no designated bicycle lanes. Again, the lack of design discourages activity. Cyclist, at their own risk, share the road with motorists. Impatience on a motorist's part can lead to some less than civil exchanges. This circles back to the perception of safety.

We are not suggesting massive sidewalk upgrades. Such an undertaking would be a waste of resources and procurement nightmare. We are noting existing conditions. However, there are opportunities to add sidewalks where non-existent and install appropriate crosswalk signals and stripping, and ADA mat.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1: To provide a cohesive and unified approach to transportation planning through intergovernmental coordination.

Policy 1.1 Insure that the appropriate zoning and future land use occur within a specified roadway classification to insure development is consistent with the roadway to promote responsible growth patterns.

Policy 1.2. When feasible, any transportation improvements shall include multi-modal aspects as part of the planning and design of the proposed improvement.

Policy 1.3. Encourage public education and awareness of the importance of multi-modal systems and usage.

Policy 1.4. Provide safe and convenient access between neighborhood, employment centers, schools, service centers, and recreational centers.

Policy 1.5. Work with SCDOT and Marlboro CTC to install pedestrian crosswalk islands on five-lane highways and near schools, and other areas where warranted.

Policy 1.6. Develop language in the zoning ordinance to encourage sidewalk and/or trail requirements within proposed subdivisions.

Policy 1.7. Identify needed road repairs and collaborate on sidewalk installments. Apply for SCDOT's Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding to install sidewalks on high-volume roadways. Funding can be used to install crosswalk signals and stripping, and ADA mats.

Goal 2. Pursue opportunities that link the existing trails and parks to create a fully accessible trail system throughout the City.

Policy 2.1. Complete pedestrian/bicycle plan for the Bennettsville to implement a comprehensive network of pedestrian and bicycle routes and trails.

Policy 2.2. Consider bicycle and pedestrian access when selecting sites for new public facilities such as schools, parks, libraries, and community centers.

Policy 2.3. Pursue SC Park Recreation Tourism Grants:

- *Recreational Trails Program*

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal-aid assistance program designed to help states provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail use.

- *Park and Recreation Development Fund*

The PARD grant program is a state-funded non-competitive reimbursable grant program for eligible local government or special purposes district entities within each county which provide recreational opportunities.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund

LWCF is a federally funded reimbursable grant that is for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreational use purposes.

Policy 2.4. Actively partner with Marlboro CTC on City roadways and establish pedestrian/bike networks.

CITY/COUNTY ROAD NETWORK INVENTORY

CITY OWN/MAINTAINED STREETS		
Alston Street	Bouchier Street (Murchison St to Jennings St.)	Cedar Street (Powers St to King St)
Clyde Street (E. Market St to E. Main St)	S. Cook Street (E. Main St to Fayetteville Ave)	Covington Street (N. Weatherly St to N. Jordan St)
S. Everett Street (E. Main St to Fayetteville Ave)	Fayetteville Avenue (Broad St to Tyson Ave)	Fletcher Street (Stokes St thru Housing Authority)
Huckabee Street (Palmer St to Waste Treatment Plant)	S. Jordan Street (Fayetteville Ave to Henrietta St)	Livingston Avenue (E. Main St to Hamer St)
Lewis Street (1 st Ave to 4 th Ave)	W. Market Street (Cheraw St to N. Parsonage St)	S. Marlboro Street (Portion of S. Marlboro St to Fayetteville St)
Matheson Street (Fayetteville Ave to Crossland St)	Moore Street (E. Main St to Fayetteville Ave)	Munnerlyn Street (Hudson St to Amelia St)
McColl Street (Jennings St to Broad St)	McKellar Street	McNair Street
Newton Lane (S. Cook St to S. Everett St)	S. Parsonage Street (E. Main St to Railroad Track)	Pinehurst Street
Roberson Street (McColl St to King St)	Sligh Street (Williams Dr to Winston Ave)	Spencer Street (McColl St to King St)
Sunnybank Street	Townsend Street (Carlisle Ct to Fayetteville Ave)	Virginia Circle
N. Weatherly Street (E. Main St to Covington St)	Westwood Court	Winston Avenue (Cheraw St to Dead-end)

COUNTY OWN/MAINTAIN ROAD		
*1 st Avenue (Livingston Ave to loop 2 nd Ave @ Livingston Ave)	4 th Avenue Lewis St to Dead-end	Amelia Street (Ayers St to Dead-end)
Ayers Street Ella/Fleet St to US 15/401	Barkley Drive	Barkley Place
Portion of Boundary Street Railroad to State St	Circle Court	Durham Street (McLeod St to Miles St)
Elementary School Road	*Elizabeth Street	Ellen Street (S. Parsonage St to Leonard St down to Atkins St)
Evergreen Court	Gibson Circle	Henrietta Street (S. Jordan St to McKellar St)
King Street (Olive St to Dead-end)	Laura Street	*Lawson Street (Section from Hall & Lawson St)
Liberty Street (W. Market St to W. Main St)	W. Main Street (Shandon/Pinehurst St to Dead- end)	Miles Street (Durham St to Dead-end)
*Moody Street	Norman Street Winston St to Country Club Dr)	Riley Street (Jennings St to Ella/Fleet St)
*Shady Lane (Spencer St to Roberson St)	*Spencer Street (Shady Ln to Broad St)	*Stanton Alley
Umojo Trailer Park Road	*Unnamed (Intersects w/ Barkley Pl)	Waba Street (Burch St to Williams St)
Wallace Circle	*Unpaved	

Chapter 3

CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Cultural Resources articulate a community's history, historical resources, scenic landscapes, and institutions that make it unique. These forms express identity, traditions, and aspirations. This Element serves a mirror asking Bennettsville what its legacy decades from now.

HISTORY

In 1785, Marlboro County was created by an act of the South Carolina Legislature. Its first courthouse was erected near the Pee Dee River. This location proved to be unsuitable. Consequently, the Legislature in 1819 commissioned the construction of a new courthouse in what became Bennettsville. Established at the County seat, Bennettsville is named in honor of then Governor Thomas Bennett, Jr. The Courthouse became the epicenter of community and business life. Residences, hotels, and stores were established around it. According to one account, by 1860, Bennettsville was a village of about thirty residences, three churches, two lodges, about six stores, several offices, one or more blacksmiths, and wood shops. The City boasted of two good schools, a male and female academy, under the management of first-class teachers.

Sections of the City were burned during the Union troops occupation. General William T. Sherman used the Courthouse and Jennings-Brown House as his headquarters. Because the Courthouse was not burned, it is one of the few county seats with preserved records dating to 1785. Following the war, Bennettsville experienced a period of much growth and change. During the 1870's and 1880's, railroads were constructed linking Bennettsville to other areas. During this period, cotton production began to boom in Marlboro County. Bennettsville became a transportation center for the cotton market making it a prosperous City. This new wealth was reflected in its growth.

Bennettsville since has changed in response to its times. Its constant is its unique architecture and preservation of several historically significant resources. Only a handful of places in South Carolina are defined by its architecture. It is not surprising the State of South Carolina designated Bennettsville as the first G.R.E.A.T. Town. The acronym stands for Governor's Rural Economic Achievement Trophy.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Archaeological sites, and historic objects and buildings are our visual libraries connecting us with our past. They tell a story piquing our imagination and curiosity. We discover personalities, design styles and the designers behind the edifices, and attitudes and challenges associated with each site. Bennettsville's visual libraries [historic resources] are within its Historic District.

Many of the structures – residential and commercial – reflect late 19th and early 20th century architecture.

Figure 3.1 depicts the original National Register Historic District. The District was first listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1978 and later expanded in 1993. It encompasses two individually listed NPHP properties – Jennings-Brown House (1972) and Magnolia (1973). SC ArchSite note eligible structures – Marlboro County Training High School and Easterling-Legrand-Gregg House - for NRHP consideration. Marlboro Training High School

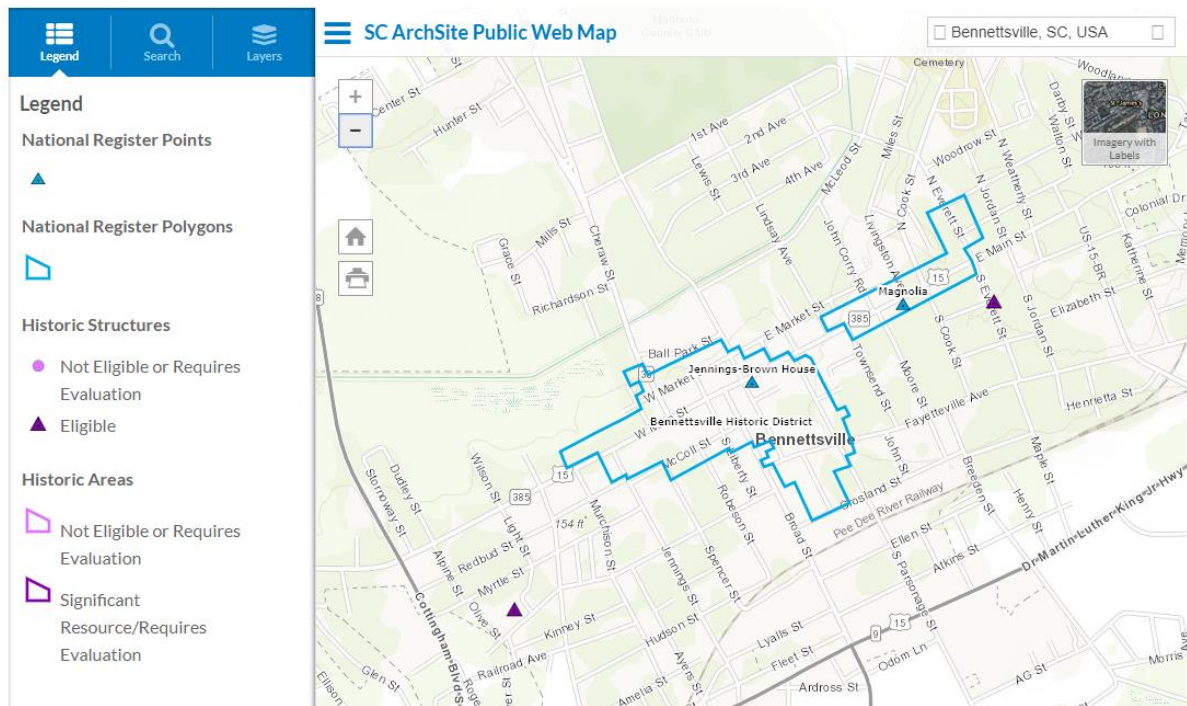


Figure 3.1 SC ArchSite Map (Credit: South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology and South Carolina Department of Archives and History)

built in 1928 was the first high school for African Americans in Marlboro County. A South Carolina Historical Marker commemorates the former school.

Briefly, the National Register of Historic Places is the United States’ recognizes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects for historic significance. Nomination for this Federal designation begins with a historic investigation by a historic preservationist, historian, or other qualified professional. Nominated districts sites and/or structures are reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for significance. If historic significance is confirmed, the nomination(s) is sent to the National Park Service for placement on its National Register of Historic Places.

Figure 3.2 reflect today’s Historic District boundaries and historic overlays. The expansion is a response to Brockington’s 2003 recommendation. Recommended was the inclusion of buildings left out of the original nomination and adjacent residential areas exuding historic streetscapes. The revised District appears to not have been submitted for NRHP consideration. The District encompasses hundreds of residential, commercial, and industrial structures and sites making

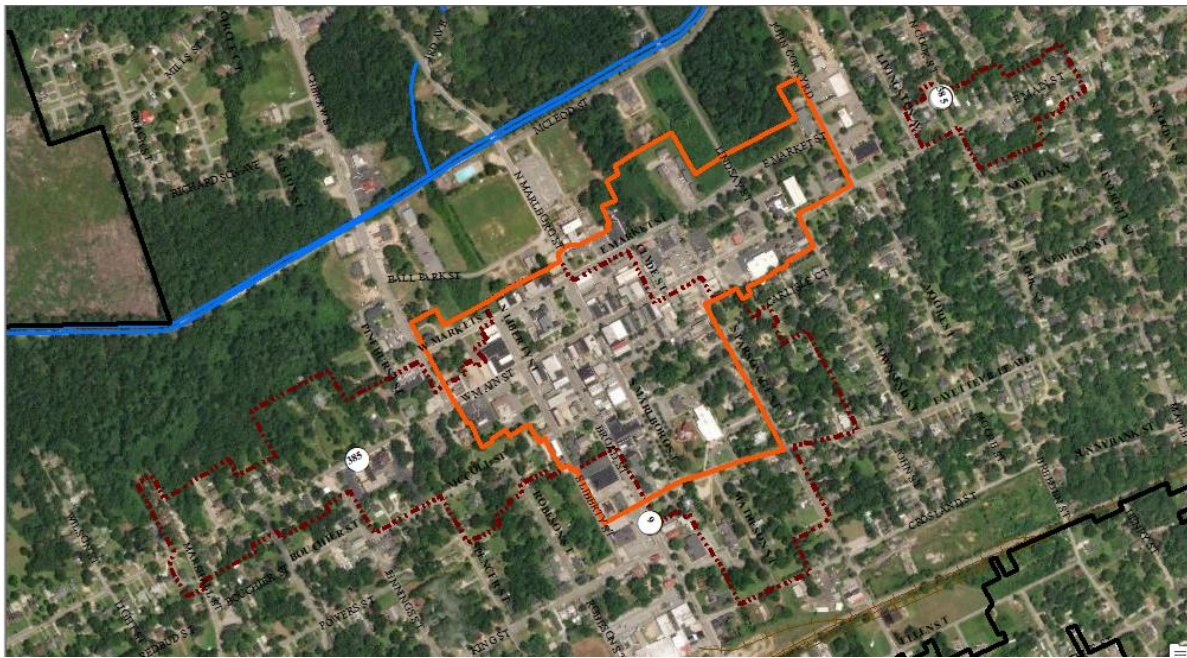


Figure 3.2. Bennettsville Historic District & Overlay Map

— Historic District - · - Historic Overlay — Crooked Creek — City Limits

Bennettsville a tourist destination. The bulk of the District’s historic resources, according to Brockington’s Historic Resources Survey Report, are homes. Their architecture reflects National styles like Greek Revival, Folk Victorian, and others. Others do not fit the National styles. Rather they mimic various National design elements giving them unique architectural styles. Historic tourism is an economic generator especially for communities with significant historic resources like Bennettsville. Charleston, SC comes to mind. Typically, this tourism hitchhikes on events, conferences, and festivals. The City has highlighted 31 sites as part of its Walking Tour Guide. One destination is Marlboro County Historical Museum.

The Marlboro County Historical Museum began in the early 1970's as a small county museum in the WPA Building. Today, it is housed at 123 South Marlboro Street, a 1902 constructed Victorian home. Exhibited are collections dating to colonial times, farm implements, and Native American, military, and medical artifacts. The Museum also features local artists' exhibits. The Museum is open Monday



Credit: Marlboro County Historical Museum

through Friday from 8:30 am to noon and by appointment. Admission is free. However, house tours are a nominal fee.

Unfortunately, local, State, and National historic treasures are threatened by abandonment, deterioration, and inappropriate additions and alterations. Inappropriate additions and alterations are not exclusive to residences. Bennettsville's central business district has witnessed inappropriate alterations to its historic facades. Feature changes can drastically alter historic architecture unique to a period. There is increasing pressure to remove buildings to make way for newer buildings or alter the façade to appear modern. Each change chips away the District's unique characteristics. If gone too far, it will render the Historic and Overlay District non-extant. Having historic resources are one thing, preservation is a commitment.

EMBRACING THE ARTS

Bennettsville has cultivated an arts presence. The arts showcase and compliments Bennettsville's history and architectural resources. Its ardent proponents are Marlboro Area Arts Council, the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, and Marlboro Civic Center.

Marlboro Area Arts Council

To encourage and stimulate the practice and appreciation of the Arts among the citizens of Marlboro County. - Marlboro Area Arts Council Mission

Established in February 1970, the Marlboro Area Arts Council coordinates and facilitates art events in Marlboro County. Housed in the historic Walker-Weatherly House at 303 East Market Street helps to keep Marlboro thriving as a cultural center.

The Council:

- Sponsors the Jubilee Arts and Crafts Festival.
- Provides incentive grants for County teachers to incorporate the arts into basis curriculum.
- Offers a Children's Performing Arts Camp.
- Presents events such as an Evening Concert Series, School Time Series for children, Writers Reading Series, Annual Banquet and Auction Fundraiser, Artists' Retail Shop, and a variety of Art and Craft classes throughout the year.

Bennettsville Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center

Bennettsville's Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center are housed jointly in the historic D.D. McColl House (ca. 1830) at 304 West Main Street.

The Chamber of Commerce, in addition to its community promotional and economic development mission, services as a conduit for the arts and cultural resources, providing brochures and information to newcomers, tourists, perspective businesses and other interested parties.

The Visitor Center is the official information center for visitors and prospective new residents. The center is stocked with brochures, pamphlets, maps, event schedules and related material designed to inform visitors of the community's facilities, resources, programs, and projects of interest. It also has a staff to answer questions and assist and accommodate visitors on their stay in Bennettsville.

Marlboro Civic Center

The Marlboro Civic Center was built in 1917. It was at the time one of the finest opera houses in the Carolinas known previously as The Garden Theatre and The Playhouse. It was once Marlboro County's thriving cultural and entertainment center. The theatre was a major stop for vaudeville and musical shows on the New York to Miami circuit.

Following its heyday, it was used as a silent movie theatre, then a motion picture theatre. For a while after that, it lay dormant until substantially renovated and reopened in 1995. It is one of the oldest theatres in South Carolina and listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. As such, it is a source of community pride.

The Center is a state-of-the-art venue featuring:

- 320 seat Frances Carroll McColl auditorium.
- 40' x 45' stage suitable for theatrical/dance/music productions
- Orchestra pit for 15 musicians
- Kinny Memorial Lobby and reception area
- Activity wing with fully-equipped classrooms and dressing rooms

- Completely handicap accessible
- Theatrical lights and sound
- 9-foot Steinway concert grand piano
- Resonant acoustics

FAITH INSTITUTIONS

Peppered throughout the City of Bennettsville are churches, places of worship. Institutions are more than brick and mortar. They purport and preserve culture distinct to the people who worship in them. Although the tenants of a belief are universal, they mirror cultural nuances. It seeps out in illustrations used in sermons and resonant with each note. They remain our genealogical repository, chronicling births, baptisms, marriages, deaths, and other information. Ancestry's genealogy database hinges on these institutions' data. Places of worship serve as our communication hub, centers for social interaction, music and arts, therapy, uplift, and brokers for change.

CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1. Promote Historic Preservation. Historic preservation has a three-pronged approach – construction/rehabilitation, tourism, and education.

New Construction/Rehabilitation/Occupancy Incentives Policy

Policy 1.1. Apply for USDA Rural Development and Housing Trust funds for owner-occupied rehabilitation. It is easier to address deterioration housing stock before it gets to a condition where demolition becomes the only viable choice.

Policy 1.2. Utilize Bailey Bill to incentivize Downtown revitalization.

Policy 1.3. Utilize prorated building permit fees to encourage historic restoration projects.

Policy 1.4. Become an active member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Policy 1.5. Develop grant applications to the National Trust and South Carolina Department of Archives & History (SCDAH) to contract with an architect to develop a pattern book guiding appropriate additions and alterations.

Policy 1.6. Apply for SCDAH funds for commercial exterior historic restoration projects.

Policy 1.7. Enforcement – Code violations must be taken seriously. That means fining inappropriate and unauthorized construction projects and demanding Architectural Review before projects begin.

Tourism

Policy 2.1. Develop Cell/Mobile Tour. Visitors can stop at sites using their phones to access pre-recorded tour guide for pertinent information.

Policy 2.2. Incorporate a map as part of the Walking Tour Guide brochure with restaurants and shopping venues to help visitors better navigate to sites.

Education

Most people do not understand or have limited information about the Historic and Overlay Districts and the importance of historic preservation.

Policy 3.1. Mail postcards to property owners and/or have an online historic preservation forum to explain and share the importance of historic preservation.

Policy 3.2. Alert property owners of available State and Federal tax credits for exterior repairs.

Policy 3.3. Work with African Americans to chronicle their experiences and history.

Policy 3.4. Work with South Carolina Historic Marker Program to commemorate noteworthy African and Native American sites.

Policy 3.5. Expand Walking Tour Guide to include other African and Native American sites.

Policy 3.6. Nominate the Marlboro County Training High School and Easterling-Legrand-Gregg House for NRHP recognition.

Policy 3.7. Create an Historic Preservation Month or Week in concert with Downtown merchants offering specials and/or discounts. Provide rides, food, games, or combination to attractive residents and educate them on the importance of historic preservation.

Policy 3.7b. Alternatively, incorporate historic preservation as part of a major event or festival.

Policy 3.8. With either of the above options, [Policies 3.7 & 3.7b] have a historic theme poster contest for K-12 students with prizes for winners. Marlboro Area Arts Council, local banks, and corporate sponsors would be great partners.

Chapter 4

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

The Community Facilities Element provides guidance to make appropriate community infrastructure decisions. It also inventories community assets as resources that shape and impact day-to-day lives. Many of these resources are owned and managed by the City of Bennettsville. More important, this Element helps us to see the value in these resources.

COURTHOUSE

It would be irresponsible not to mention one of Bennettsville’s important, captivating structures.

The Marlboro County Courthouse, though a County owned and managed facility, dominates Bennettsville’s urban and social landscape. Located at 105 Main Street, it has a long, rich history. The Courthouse serves as the epicenter of Downtown, the focal point of Bennettsville’s commercial, governmental, and



Credit: South Carolina Picture Project

social confluence. Its architecture and scale complement the City’s historic buildings and district.

CITY HALL

City Hall is located at 501 East Main Street. The building houses the City Administrators, Planning, Codes, Finance/Purchasing, Municipal Court, and Human Resources Offices.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Water Collection/Distribution and Waste Water Treatment, Electric and Gas Services are under the Public Utilities Department at 501 East Main Street.

Water Facilities

Water is managed from the City’s water facility at 625 Wallace Road. The water system is expansive servicing more than 4,383 customers. Water is collected from ground and surface water sources. Lake Wallace is the City’s surface water source. Ground water is drawn from five

(5) well. Average production capacity is 2.74 MGD [million gallons per day]. Table 4.1 depicts the amount of water from both sources.

Table 4.1. Water Yield by Sources	
SOURCE	YIELD
Lake Wallace	4 MGD
Well One (Coxe Road)	4,256 GPM
Well Two (Odom Road)	5,906 GPM
Well Three (Sandy Grove)	3,756 GPM
Well Four (Old Beauty Spot)	2,356 GPM
Well Five (Gibson)	2,356 GPM

Source: *Bennettsville Utilities Department*

MGD – Million Gallons per Day

GPM – Gallons per Minute

The water system has one (1) million gallons of portable water at any given time. Portable water is water safe for drinking and cooking. This water supply is stored in above ground tanks for emergency use. Its three elevated towers, one million gallons of storage capacity, ensure there is significant water pressure.

Wastewater Facilities

Bennettsville Wastewater Treatment Plant is located at 225 Huckabee Street. The plant processing capacity is 3.9 million gallons a day (MGD). Currently, it is operating below capacity. Effluent from the plant is discharged into Crooked Creek.

Electrical & Natural Gas

The City of Bennettsville is one of the few municipalities in South Carolina in the business of providing electrical power and gas services. Operations are managed at 203 John Corry Road location.

Electricity is provided to 4,380 customers. Five hundred and six are commercial and industrial businesses. Service is extended to 100 customers outside the City’s limits. Residential rates are \$6.50 while commercial/industrial rates are between \$9.10 and \$18.10. What does this mean to Bennettsville’s customers? Electricity Local, a comprehensive resource of electricity rates and usage information for local areas across the United States, highlights the value of service. Listed are residential, commercial, and industrial rates in comparison to South Carolina and National averages:

- The average residential electricity rate in Bennettsville is 11.4¢/kWh [kilowatt hour], 3.14% less than the South Carolina average rate of 11.77¢/kWh and 4.04% less than the national average rate of 11.88¢/kWh. Residential rates in the U.S. range from 8.37¢/kWh to 37.34¢/kWh.
- Bennettsville average commercial electricity rate is 7.66¢/kWh, 20.46% less than the South Carolina average rate of 9.63¢/kWh and 24.08% less than the national average rate of 10.09¢/kWh. Commercial rates in the U.S. range from 6.86¢/kWh to 34.88¢/kWh.

- Industrial electricity rate is 6.02¢/kWh equal South Carolina’s average rate. However, its average rate is 9.75% less than the national average rate of 6.67¢/kWh. Industrial rates in the U.S. range from 4.13¢/kWh to 30.82¢/kWh.

Natural gas is available to 2,051 residential, 255 commercial, and six (6) industrial customers. Two hundred and seventy-two customers are outside the City’s limits. Rates are the same, in or out of the City. There is no cost to access the system in the City, other than the tap fee. However, cost associated with extending the system outside the City must be borne by the customer, unless projected revenue over a 5-year period will be enough to off-set the cost of installation.

The City purchases nearly 345,213 mcf [thousand cubic feet] of gas a year through a marketing organization from the “open access market”. System expansion and gas supply to meet future demand appears adequate. The City also owns a propane-air system that is used to supplement the gas load during demand periods.

Public Works

The Public Works Department, division of Public Utilities, is responsible for solid waste collection, recycling, street sweeping, storm water drainage, litter collection, maintenance of street signs, city-owned vehicle and equipment maintenance, demolition of abandoned structures, clearing overgrown lots and mowing and maintaining public green areas. Located at 205 West Market Street, the facility serves 3,157 residences and 299 commercial properties. Curb side collection of residential waste and yard debris is once a week. Commercial solid waste is collected as needed, up to three times a week. All solid waste is delivered to a City owned and operated transfer station located outside the City. The City then transfers the solid waste to the Lee County Landfill.

Recycling within the City is accomplished with the use of two unmanned drop-off sites strategically located to encourage recycling. These sites are emptied daily, the contents stored, and subsequently transferred to various markets for the respective products. Materials accepted include aluminium cans, steel cans, plastics, newspapers, magazines and used oil.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Protection

The Bennettsville Fire Department (BFD) formed in 1911 celebrates 108 years of service. BFD provides fire protection, rescue, fire inspection and investigation, hazmat, and fire prevention services. Its fire coverage area is approximately 9 square miles. Coverage includes the City of Bennettsville and the surrounding unincorporated areas via mutual aid extending five (5) road miles from its two fire stations – 201 John Corry Avenue and 718 Oakwood Street. In addition to our residents, as part of its critical infrastructure, both stations protect two elementary and primary schools, one middle school (Bennettsville Middle School) and high school (Marlboro High School), technical college (Northeastern Technical College), urgent care (Marlboro Family

Practice & Urgent Care), several industrial manufacturing companies, the City of Bennettsville's water and sewer treatment operations, recreational facilities and parks, daycare centers, senior facilities, churches, a historic district with contributing properties and sites listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, and a significant number of commercial businesses in addition to US 15/401, SC 9, SC 385, and SC 38, and CSX railway.

The fire station houses 17 pieces of apparatus - 5 engines, 2 service trucks, 2 command vehicles, 2 pickup trucks, 1 run around vehicle, 2 jon boats, 1 rescue boat, and 2 brush trucks. Thirty combined paid and volunteer firefighters are on staff. Twelve are full-time firefighters. The Department relies heavily on its 18 on-call volunteer personnel to assist with on-scene fire and rescue operations. Twenty-eight firefighters (93%) are firefighter II certified. Firefighter II Certification means those firefighters are more knowledgeable in firefighting techniques. They can create fire intervention plans, conduct vehicle extraction, coordinate multiple emergency response teams and combat wildfires. BFD has one fire/arson investigator and certified State Fire Marshal. The Department prides itself on fire safety and preparedness, which means training. Trainings are conducted each month to re-enforce and update firefighting techniques. Staff is equally encouraged to attend external fire trainings and webinars. One member of our staff is a certified fire instructor. The Department prides itself on its ISO (Insurance Service Office) Class 3 rating. The ISO rating outside the five (5) road mile area is 5. Achieving a 3 ISO rating was one of the Departments identified goals in 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The Insurance Service Office (ISO) inspects, grades, and ranks fire departments and defence areas or districts from 1 to 10, on a basis of protection offered. One represents the best possible protection, with 10 signalling the absence of any protection. The lower the classification equates to lower insurance premiums for homeowners and businesses.

Equally important to fire response is fire prevention. Bennettsville's Fire Prevention Program aims to reduce the number of fires and provides appropriate responsiveness to a fire. On a continual basis the Department engages the most vulnerable residents – children and seniors. Its biggest fire prevention campaigns are the Fire Prevention Parade and Summer Camp.

Law Enforcement

The Bennettsville Police Department protects and serves the City's residents and business community. The Police Headquarters is located at 243 East Main Street with substations on King and Broad Streets. Substations add visibility and access to the public. Community-oriented policing with problem solving shapes its approach to crime prevention and law enforcement. Services included victims' advocacy, SORT (Special Operations Response Team), investigations, animal control, and traffic safety. It is the dedicated 32 full-time employees who play an integral role in policing. Twenty-eight of those employees are certified and commissioned police officers. There are 25 vehicles patrolling the City's streets. A police vehicle can be seen at

any given time. Police presence is an indirect prevention strategy that also provides a level of psychological safety.

Effective policing relies on crime prevention and relationship building. Crime prevention is realized through its Bike Unit, S-77, and K-9 Programs. Below briefly describes each:

- Bike Units – Four officers, members of the Bike Unit, patrol residential areas during the Spring, Summer, Fall months.
- S-77 is a service offered to vacationers. Officers make routine checks at residences.
- K-9 Unit specializes in detecting and tracking. Detection is the preventive element to thwart explosive attacks.

School Resource Officers (SROs), Crime Stoppers Boxes, Crossroads, Officer Read Program, and Explorer builds relationship. All are great programs but only two stand out – Crossroads and Crime Stoppers Boxes. Crossroad targets students with disciplinary issues with the aim of promoting discipline, responsibility, and self-esteem. Crime Stoppers Boxes are an innovative approach to increase crime prevention and solving. Boxes are conveniently located to give students the anonymity to share.

Let us circle back to the number of police officers. The FBI, through its data collection, reflects various statistic profiles. One is the number of police officers per 1,000 people. The latest data reflect 2017 numbers. The average number of officers represented from a National, Regional, and Sub-regional perspective. Table 4.2 Reflects all three measuring police staff adequacy. The table uses the 2010 Census Decennial and 2017 ACS population estimate to help express the data. Calculation results are reflecting actual officers are derived by multiplying averages by Bennettsville’s population. The average is represented in equation as a 1000th integer not a percent. For example, national x population (.0038 x 9069 (2010 Census) = 34. Bennettsville average per 1000 is calculated as follows: (28 (officers)/9069) x 1,000 = 3.08 or 3.1. Using the former equation equates to 28.

	National	South Region	South Atlantic (subregion)	Bennettsville	
Avg. Number of Police Officers per 1,000	3.8	5.2	6.2	(2010 Pop) 3.08 (3.1)	(2017 Est) 3.48 (3.5)
*Bennettsville Required Officers per 1,000	2010/2017 34/30	2010/2017 47/42	2010/2017 56/50		
Bennettsville’s Surplus/Deficit	-4/-2	-19/-14	-28/22		

Sources: Bennettsville Police Department, Census 2000 Decennial & ACS Estimate, FBI 2017 Crime in the United States Table 71

*Number of Officer per 2010 & 2017 Population Counts

The City needs to focus its attention on the National average in lieu of the others. A comparison to National average is more obtainable. Using either population counts, the data suggests a need

for more officers. Any substantial increase in population due to annexation and/or immigration will create a need for additional personnel and equipment to combat criminal activity.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Quality of life is measured by personal preferences. Recreational facilities are one of those measures. Residents and visitors are drawn to amenities like quality and accessible park and recreational facilities. Quality, safety, and accessibility are preferences that impact use.

Council recognizes the impact recreation has on a community. Their aim is to provide a more robust and inclusive park system. In fact, the City is in the process of developing a City Park Master Plan. There is an ambition multi-phased plan to repurpose the Marlboro Training School. The plan includes: a large and small dog park; an ADA-compliant sensory playground for physically disabled and wheelchair bound children and individuals; a splash pad; camping grounds; outdoor amphitheatre; and indoor recreation center with basketball courts, classrooms and meeting rooms. Hopefully, the City will work to place the structure on the National Register for Historic Places celebrating its cultural heritage. The City recreation portfolio is listed in Table 4.3

Park Name	Major Facilities Site	Acreage
Smith Park	(2) paddle tennis courts, basketball court, baseball/softball field, playground, grill, and restrooms	9.25
Bennettsville Community Center	Offices, event hall, classrooms, kitchen, aerobics studio, and conference room.	1.65
Marlboro Street Tennis Park	6 lighted tennis courts, shelter and grill.	1
Marlboro Street Baseball Park	Single baseball field, dugouts, bleacher and restrooms	3.3
Woodland Park	Playground, shelter, grills, picnic tables, and restrooms	2.75
Woodland Gardens	Passive landscaped	4.5
Kidsland Park	Playground, shelter, grill, picnic tables, restroom	9.7
McLeod Street Park	(2) Basketball courts, concession stand, restrooms, fenced in concrete area (site of 4 former tennis courts).	2
Hodges Park	Playground, shelter, grill, restrooms and half basketball court	3.5
Bennettsville Visitor Center	5,000 sq. ft historic two-story property, offices, public restrooms, outdoor greenspace.	1.45
Total		39.1

Source: City of Bennettsville Recreation Department

	All Agencies	Less than 20,000
Median	10.1	10.8
Lower Quartile	5.1	4.9
Upper Quartile	17.4	18.0

Source: National Park and Recreational Agency

Cumulatively, the Recreation Department owns and manages 39.1 acres of recreational spaces. Is this enough recreational space for a city of Bennettsville’s size? There is not a definitive answer. The National Park and Recreational Agency (NPRA), in concert with park and recreational agencies nationwide, develops a performance review and metric report. The NPRA’s 2018 Performance Reviews and Metric Report serves as a benchmark and tool to further parks, recreational facilities, and programming. It does not set national standards because no two park and recreational agencies are the same. Data is presented as medians in addition to lower quartile and upper quartile. Circling back to does Bennettsville have enough recreation space question. According to the NPRA Report, the median park acreage per 1,000 persons is 10.1 acres. This number includes large cities which is not an equitable comparison. Neither is the median (10.8 acres) for jurisdictions under 20,000 people. Twenty thousand population to some is a medium sized city. Nonetheless, this is the smallest population category. Using the lower quartile (4.9 acres), Bennettsville conceivably should have 44.4 acres of park space – a deficiency of 5.3 acres. Closing this gap is very achievable within the next 10 years particularly with the impending Marlboro Training School Recreational Complex and other opportunities.

In addition to its recreational facilities, Bennettsville Recreation Department offers the following programs to youth and adults. Table 4.4 outlines the Recreation’s programs.

Yoga Gentle Flow (Adults)	Yoga Vinyasa Flow (Adults)	T’ai Chi Chih (Adults/Seniors)
Aerobics Morning (Adults)	Aerobics Evening (Adults)	Kettlebells (Adults)
Kids Kickboxing (Youth)	Soul Line Dancing (Adults)	Liturgical Dance (Youth)
Paint & Sip Art Class (Adults)	Kids Arts Class (Youth)	Dominoes (Senior)

Source: City of Bennettsville Recreation Department

In addition to park and recreational management and programming, the Recreation Department is involved in multiple events. These events are sponsored by or in partnership with the Recreation Department. Table 4.6 highlights events by month and partners. Where partners are not identified, the events were facilitated by the Department.

Month	Event
January	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade (Partnership w/ Marlboro County NAACP)
April	City of Bennettsville Easter Egg Hunt
May	The Kelly Miller Circus
June – September	From Anywhere Concert Series (approximately 2 per month)
July	Fourth of July Firework Show & Concert (Partnership w/ the Lake Paul Wallace Authority)
August	Beach Blast (Partnership w/ the Lake Paul Wallace Authority)
October	Trunk or Treat or Outdoor Movie (Partnership Marian Wright Edelman Library)
November	Downtown Scarecrow Contest
November	Scarecrow Fest (Partnership Marian Wright Edelman Library)
November	Veteran’s Day Parade (Partnership with Marlboro County Veterans Affairs Office)
December	City of Bennettsville Christmas Parade

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Marian Wright Edelman Public Library

Marian Wright Edelman Public Library, located at 203 Fayetteville Avenue, is named in honor of Marian Wright Edelman. Ms. Edelman, a Bennettsville native, is the founder of the Children's Defense Fund and children's advocate shares. The library shares space with Northeastern Technical College – Bennettsville Campus. Housed in in the children's area is a permanent display case with storyboards telling the story of Mrs. Edelman. Marian Wright Edelman Public Library is part of Marlboro County's library system. The library offers various outreach activities and programs, including adult book groups, story time, summer readings for all ages, early childhood and adult literacy programs, and bookmobile. Patrons have access to databases, high-speed Internet, word processing, computers, genealogy materials, microfilm reader/printer, newspapers, magazines, e-books, audio books, movies and music for children and adults, large print books, and games.

Northeastern Technical College -Bennettsville Campus

Northeastern Technical College (NETC) is public technical college with its Main Campus located in Cheraw, South Carolina. Founded in 1967 out of civic interest and involvement from Cheraw's leadership. NETC has an enrollment of more than 1,000 students with regional campuses outside Cheraw in Bennettsville, Dillon, and Pageland. Offered are 21 associate degrees, 23 certificates, and four diplomas ranging from nursing to electronics technology to criminal justice.

The Bennettsville Campus is located downtown in the heart of the City's cultural center. Its Downtown proximity places students within walking distance of dining, shopping, the Marlboro County Historical Museum, and the Marion Wright Edelman Public Library. Between 250 and 400 students are enrolled each year, plus students from Marlboro County High School participating in the dual associate's programs. The Campus maintains four to six full-time staff and three to four faculty members. The Bennettsville campus combines traditional, instructor-led courses, and faculty broadcasting from the Cheraw from two campus sites - 131 South Marlboro Street and 1120 Oakwood Street. The Marion Wright Edelman Public Library also houses two state-of-the-art NETC classrooms and computer lab. Housed also on campus is SC Works and a day care with 2 full-time and 6 part-time teachers.

ManuFirstSC is offered on this campus. This ManuFirstSC is a 3-week (62 hour) program that prepares individuals for jobs in industry and manufacturing with 100% scholarship funding for eligible applicants. The program focuses on manufacturing awareness and safety, and upon program completion students will be awarded a Snap-on tool certification, and the 10-hour OSHA General Industry Safety and Health Certification. Employers like Arauco, AO Smith, Schaeffler, Talley Metals, Screwomatics, MarCo, Crown Cork and Seal, Conbraco, Perdue Farms, and Highland are committed to interview and hire program graduates.

Marlboro County School District

Marlboro County School District operates eight schools and an adult education program. Four of the facilities, including the adult education program, are in the Bennettsville area. They are listed below. The School District has experienced its share of challenges and successes. However, it remains dedicated to graduating students prepared for the next step. Through the innovative and effective applications of technology, personal, and digital learning in our schools, graduation rates have increased from 64% to over 80% within the last few years. The Industry Training Center will be a welcomed vehicle for student success. Developed in partnership with Northeastern Technical College, the Marlboro Economic Development Partnership, the Marlboro County School District, the North Eastern Strategic Alliance, and industry partners, the center will partner with area industries to train workers for industrial and manufacturing jobs.

School	Grades	Address
Bennettsville Primary	PreK - 2 nd	301 Jefferson Street
Bennettsville Intermediate	3 rd - 5 th	701 Cheraw Street
Marlboro County High	9 th - 12 th	951 Fayetteville Avenue Extension
Marlboro County Adult & Community Education	NA	215 Broad Street

Source: Marlboro County School District

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Marlboro Family Practice and Urgent Care, at 957 Cheraw Street, owned and operated by Scotland Health Care System. The practice has been serving the Marlboro County Community since 2000 and is dedicated to providing quality, personalized care. In addition to providing scheduled appointments, urgent care services are offered on a walk-in basis.

Hours

- Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Lunch from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.)
- Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (urgent care services only)
- After hour calls are handled by our doctor on call.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals and policies are central to the City of Bennettsville's departments.

Utilities

Goal 1. To reduce energy use and costs

Policy 1.1. Incorporate solar and geothermal technologies into its energy portfolio, particularly solar usage into public buildings' design and on-site. Design needs to sensitive to architectural features or blend into public spaces.

Policy 1.2. Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the benefits of energy conservation.

Goal 2. To provide adequate utility services to maintain the current level of service and anticipate the future needs.

Policy 2.1. Upgrade facilities and information as part of a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan.

Policy 2.2. Ensure adequate supplies of high-quality potable water for distribution to current and future users.

Goal 3. To conserve and protect water resources.

Policy 3.1. Develop wellhead ordinance creating protective zones around a wellhead. The ordinance restricts and regulates identified land uses that have the potential to discharge pollutants into ground water.

Policy 3.2. Develop reclaimed water program. Reclaim water as an alternative to potable water use for irrigation of lawns, golf course, parks, school, industrial/commercial landscapes, industrial manufacturing processes, and fire sprinkler systems. Reclaimed water reduces discharge into Crooked Creek. Reclaimed water can be an income producing stream marketed to landscapers, and commercial/industrial business. Lastly, a reclaimed water program reduces potable water demands. Cities like Brentwood, CA, Wilson, NC, San Francisco, CA, and Greeley, CO have active reclaimed water programs.

Policy 3.3. Promote ground water recharge and aquifer sustainability.

Policy 3.4. Encourage water conservation techniques through public education, information and incentives to reduce water usage.

Goal 4. To continue to provide adequate sewer capacity to meet the demands of existing and future users in an efficient and economical manner.

Policy 4.1. Require property owners with failed septic systems to upgrade to DHEC standards or connect to municipal services.

Policy 4.2. Continue to prevent and reduce infiltration and inflow by systematically monitoring and inspecting sewer lines and manholes and making necessary repairs in a timely manner.

Solid Waste

Goal 5. To reduce the amount of solid waste sent to the landfill.

Policy 5.1. Continue to recycle glass, plastic, paper, metals, and cardboard reducing dumping costs to the City.

Policy 5.2. Implement an aggressive recycling public relations and education campaign. Integrate campaign into fairs and special event activities.

Policy 5.3. Mandate new multi-family, commercial, industrial, and institutional developments to include on-site recycling facilities for employees and residents as part of the trash collection system.

Policy 5.4. Recycle and encourage the reuse of building materials when possible.

Public Safety

Goal 6. To provide Public Safety services to meet the needs of today and prepare for tomorrow insuring response times are efficient and reliable.

Policy 6.1. Replace dated equipment (i.e. Aerial Truck, brush truck, and two engines with one engine).

Policy 6.2. Obtain appropriate equipment for natural disaster events.

Policy 6.3. Incorporate new technologies.

Policy 6.4. Encourage and promote staff trainings.

Policy 6.5. Increase staffing to meet population demands.

Goal 7. To reduce the crime rate and fear of crime.

Policy 7.1. Maintain the highly visible law enforcement presence in high crime areas.

Recreation

Goal 8. Develop a robust park and recreational system.

Policy 8.1. Develop recreational complex at the former Marlboro County Training School and add greenways as part of the park system. Incorporate a fitness center in the former Marlboro County School. This provides a less expensive alternative to gyms.

Policy 8.2. Pursue SCPRT and recreational program and facilities grants.

Policy 8.3. Routinely monitor and maintenance existing facilities.

Policy 8.4. Partner with Lake Paul Wallace Authority and Marlboro County Recreation Department to develop interconnecting pedestrian/bicycle paths connecting Lake Wallace, parks, and sections of Northern Crescent and Carolina Connector trails.

Policy 8.5. Work with SCDOT to establish bike lanes along City portion of Northern Crescent and Carolina Connector trails.

Policy 8.6. Collaborate with Marlboro County Recreation Department to reduce redundant services and programming through cooperative agreements.

General Government

Goal 9. Develop and implement a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program to insure all City assets are well maintained and provide adequate environments to all employees and citizens.

Policy 9.1. Perform routine maintenance of City assets to insure their long-term stability.

Policy 9.2. Promote sustainability in the design and maintenance of City assets.

Policy 9.3. Routinely review spending and debt service in relationship to the City's Capital Improvements Program.

Chapter 5

NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

The Natural Element reflects creation’s gifts and constraints to mankind. This allows us to appreciate and respect the natural landscape. Therefore, our goal is not to adversely affect the natural environment as we expand our development footprint. Highlighted is climate, air quality, topography, soils, water resources, flood hazard areas, and wetlands.

CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY

The City of Bennettsville has mild winters and long warm summers. Rainfall is plentiful year-round, with the greatest periods of precipitation in summer. Total annual precipitation is about 50 inches. In winter the average temperature is 42 degrees and the average daily minimum temperature is 30 degrees. In summer, the average is 78 degrees, and the average daily maximum is 89 degrees.

Air Quality

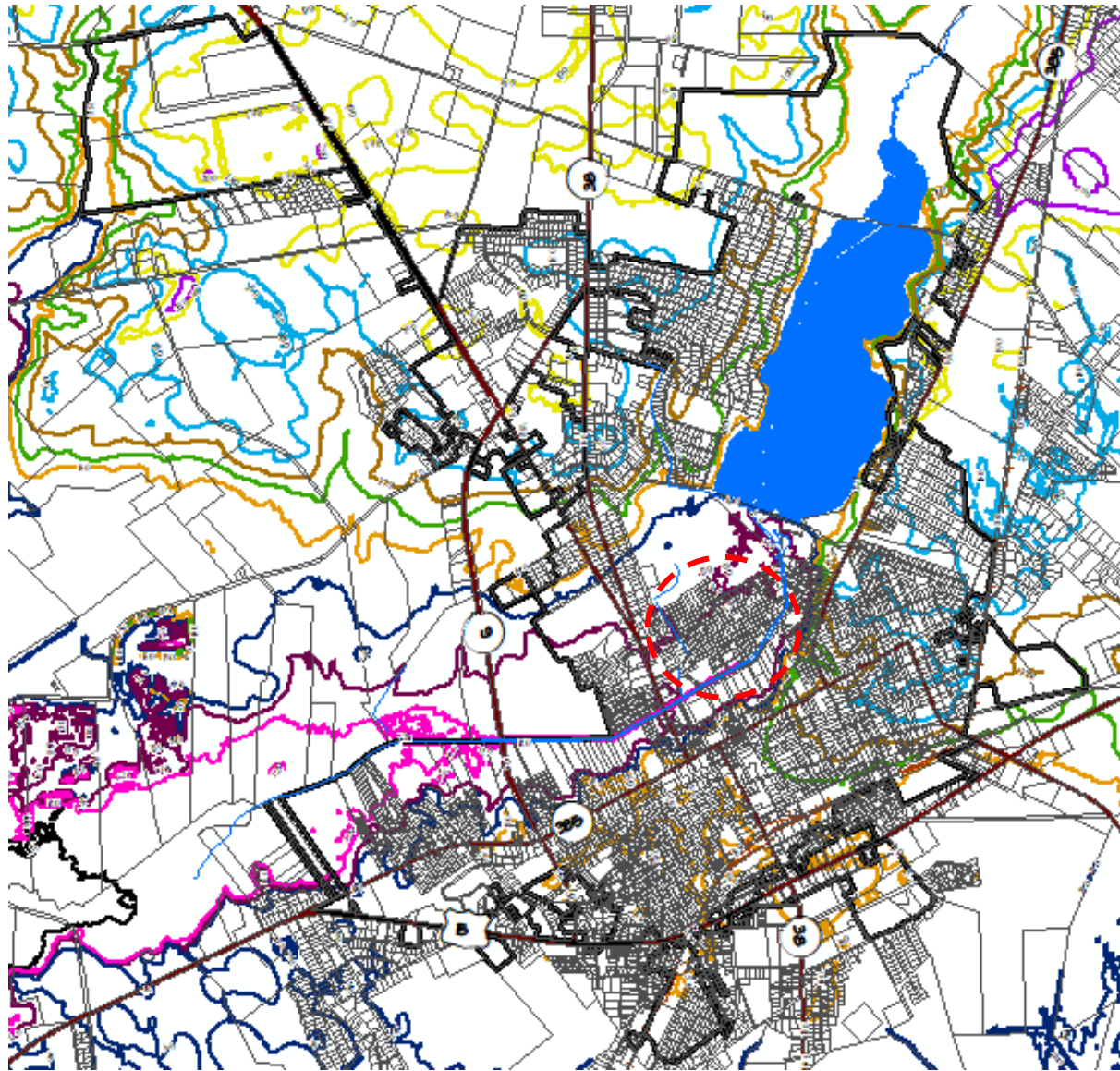
The Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) establishes the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for several contaminants – particle pollution, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and ground level ozone. Standards are imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Air quality is measured by part per million (ppm) of particle matter. Consequently, air quality is rated according ppm thresholds from Good to Hazardous. Between Good and Hazardous is Moderate, Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, Unhealthy, and Very Unhealthy. Good means air quality, 0 to 50 ppm, is considered satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk. Hazardous, 301 and 500 ppm, is a health warning of emergency conditions. Presently, Bennettsville, according to AirNow, is rated Good with 33 ppm. AirNow is EPA’s interactive Air Quality Index database and forecast platform. Bennettsville’s air quality places it in Attainment Status. Attainment references areas with concentrations of pollutants below NAAQS. Non-Attainment is the opposite. What does this mean? Air quality here is not restricted and poses no imminent health threat. Expanding and new industries are not restricted. In other words, Non-Attainment status might limit growth of existing industries and prohibit new industries because an already fragile air quality.












TOPOGRAPHY

Elevations are determined by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Its interactive map viewer (TNM) provides elevation data. Elevations results may vary by user due to location preferences. For example, Bennettsville’s elevation is 141.62 feet above sea level at Lake Wallace and increases to 147.35 at the City’s southern boundary. From North Cook Road to Cheraw Highway, elevations are 185 feet above sea level. Figure 5.1 illustrates Bennettsville topography. For readability purposes, contours are in 10 feet intervals. Precise elevations are based on two (2) feet intervals. Nonetheless, the City overall is hilly. Elevations are steepest

around and near Lake Wallace. The topography map also reflects the direction of runoff. Runoff sheets flows are concentrated in one area – Shady Lane Neighborhood. This areas flood damage is exacerbated by its location in a floodway and over taxed creek. In fact, the attendees at the kick-off meeting identified this area during our input session.

Figure 5.1. Topography Map



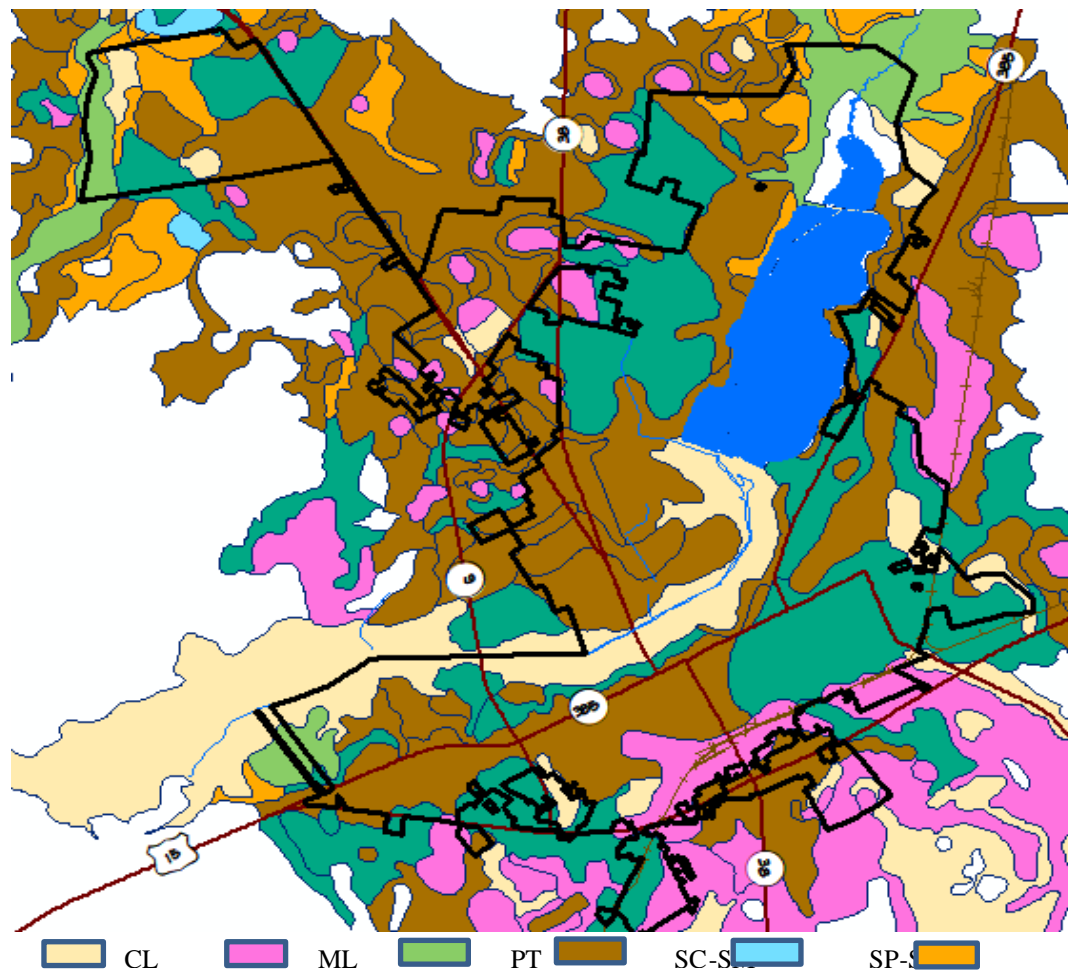
Topography Contours				
 120	 130	 140	 150	 160
 170	 180	 190	 200	 210
 Confluence of runoff in neighborhood				

SOILS

The largest soil types by acreage are Pamlico, Norfolk, Faceville, and Kinston. With the exception of Pamlico, these soil types excellent for residential and commercial footings. Pamlico is prevalent along the floodway and very limited in terms of construction capacity. A comprehensive list of Bennettsville’s soil types is in Table 5.1. Figure 5.2 depicts Bennettsville soil types by Unified Solid Classification System (USCS). The Unified Soil Classification System is a soil classification system used in engineering and geology to describe the texture and grain size of a soil. The classification system can be applied to most unconsolidated materials, and is represented by a two-letter symbol. Each letter is described below (with the exception of Pt). The following helps to decode the assigned classification associated with specific soils.

Letter	Definition	Letter	Definition
G	Gravel	P	Poor graded (uniform particles)
S	Sand	W	Well-graded (diversified particle sizes)
M	Silt	H	High plasticity
C	Clay	L	Low plasticity
O	Organic		

Figure 5.2. Unified Solid Classification System Map



Circling back to soil suitability for construction. The following maps illustrates the locations for appropriate development. Challenging soils increase the building cost to make the project achievable. The maps reflect soils impact on dwellings without basements and small commercial buildings.

Dwellings without Basements

Dwellings are single-family houses of three stories or less. For dwellings without basements, the foundation is assumed to consist of spread footings of reinforced concrete built on undisturbed soil at a depth of 2 feet or at the depth of maximum frost penetration, whichever is deeper.

The ratings for dwellings are based on the soil properties that affect the capacity of the soil to support a load without movement and on the properties that affect excavation and construction costs. The properties that affect the

load-supporting capacity include depth to a water table, ponding, flooding, subsidence, linear extensibility (shrink-swell potential), and compressibility. Compressibility is inferred from the Unified Classification of the soil. The properties that affect the ease and amount of excavation include depth to a water table, ponding, flooding, slope, depth to bedrock or a cemented pan, hardness of bedrock or a cemented pan, and the amount and size of rock fragments.

Rating class terms indicate the extent to which the soils are limited by all of the soil features that affect the specified use. "Not limited" indicates that the soil has features that are very favorable for the specified use. Good performance and very low maintenance can be expected. "Somewhat limited" indicates that the soil has features that are moderately favorable for the specified use.

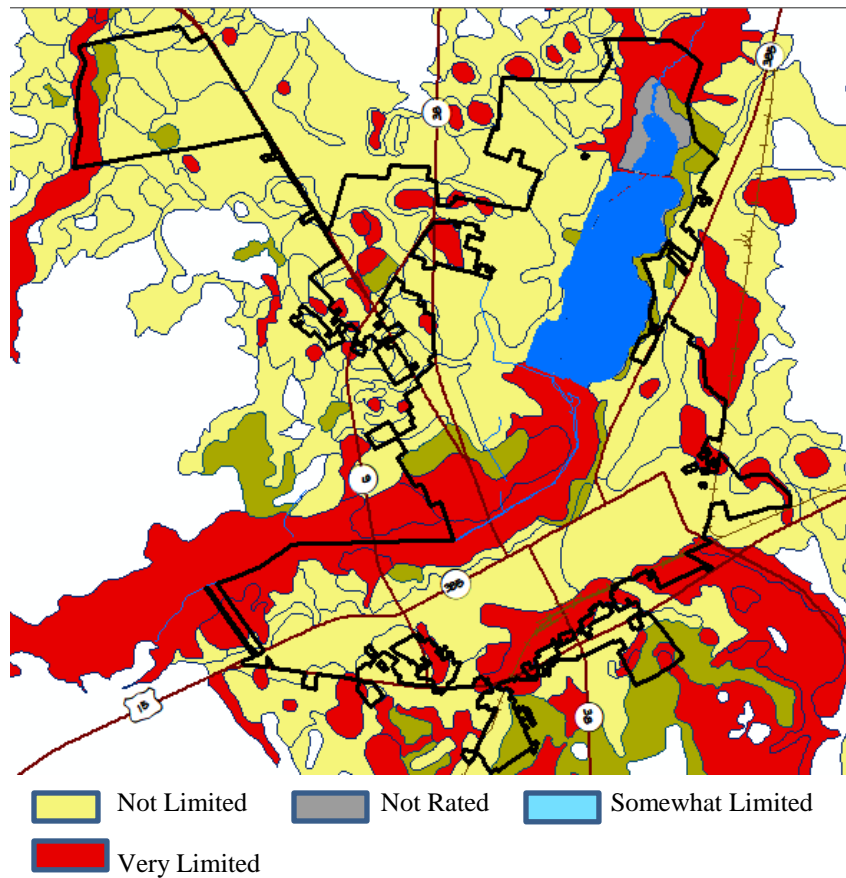


Figure 5.3. Dwelling Suitability

The limitations can be overcome or minimized by special planning, design, or installation. Fair performance and moderate maintenance can be expected. "Very limited" indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for the specified use. The limitations generally cannot be overcome without major soil reclamation, special design, or expensive installation procedures. Poor performance and high maintenance can be expected.

Small Commercial Buildings

Small commercial buildings are structures that are less than three stories high and do not have basements. The foundation is assumed to consist of spread footings of reinforced concrete built on undisturbed soil at a depth of 2 feet or at the depth of maximum frost penetration, whichever is deeper. The ratings are based on the soil properties that affect the capacity of the soil to support a load without movement and on the properties that affect excavation and construction costs. The properties that affect the load-supporting capacity include depth to a water table, ponding, flooding,

subsidence, linear extensibility (shrink-swell potential), and compressibility (which is inferred from the Unified classification of the soil). The properties that affect the ease and amount of excavation include flooding, depth to a water table, ponding, slope, depth to bedrock or a

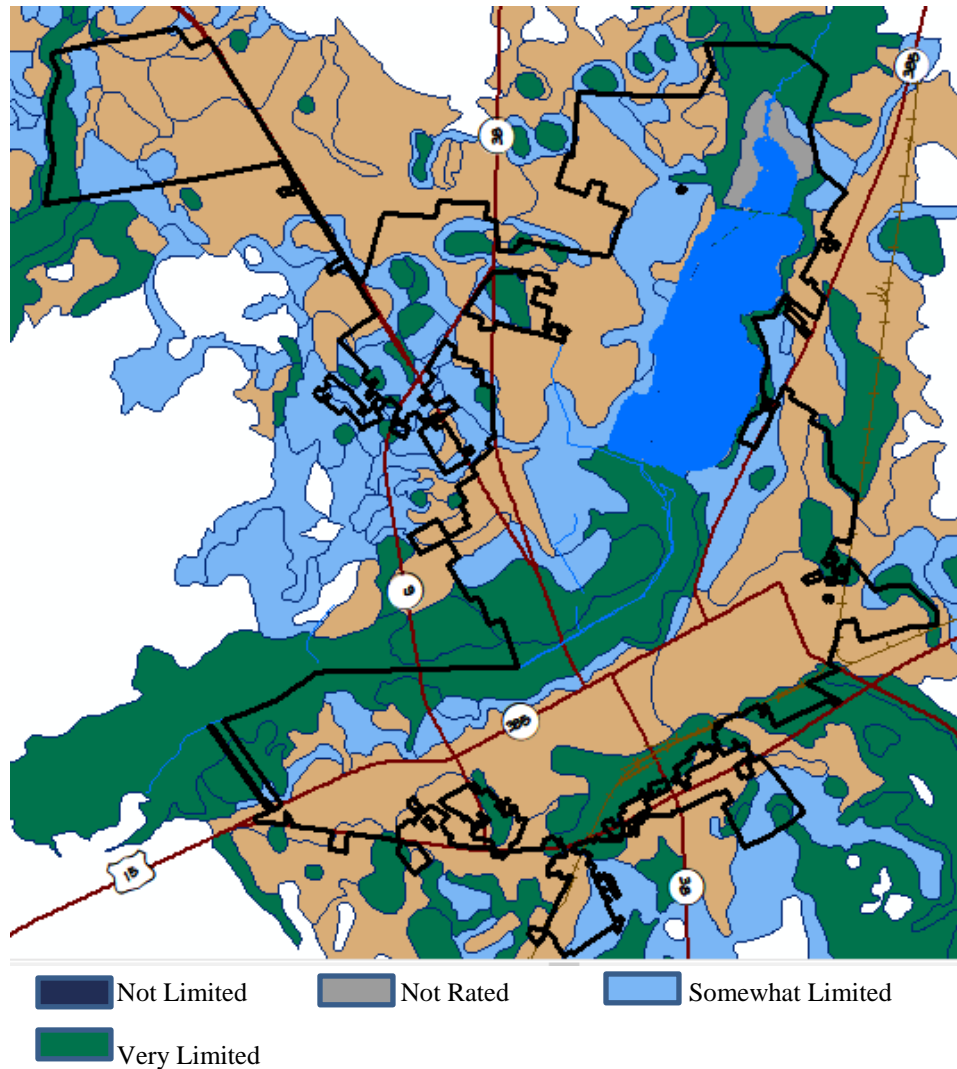


Figure 5.4. Commercial Suitability

subsidence, linear extensibility (shrink-swell potential), and compressibility (which is inferred from the Unified classification of the soil). The properties that affect the ease and amount of excavation include flooding, depth to a water table, ponding, slope, depth to bedrock or a

cemented pan, hardness of bedrock or a cemented pan, and the amount and size of rock fragments.

Rating class terms indicate the extent to which the soils are limited by all of the soil features that affect the specified use. "Not limited" indicates that the soil has features that are very favorable for the specified use. Good performance and very low maintenance can be expected. "Somewhat limited" indicates that the soil has features that are moderately favorable for the specified use. The limitations can be overcome or minimized by special planning, design, or installation. Fair performance and moderate maintenance can be expected. "Very limited" indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for the specified use. The limitations generally cannot be overcome without major soil reclamation, special design, or expensive installation procedures. Poor performance and high maintenance can be expected.

Lastly, hydrologic soil groups are based on estimates of runoff potential. Soils are assigned to one of four groups according to the rate of water infiltration when the soils are not protected by vegetation, are thoroughly wet, and receive precipitation from long-duration storms. The Hydrologic Soil Map illustrates soils' runoff potential.

The soils in the United States are assigned to four groups (A, B, C, and D) and three dual classes (A/D, B/D, and C/D). The groups are defined as follows:

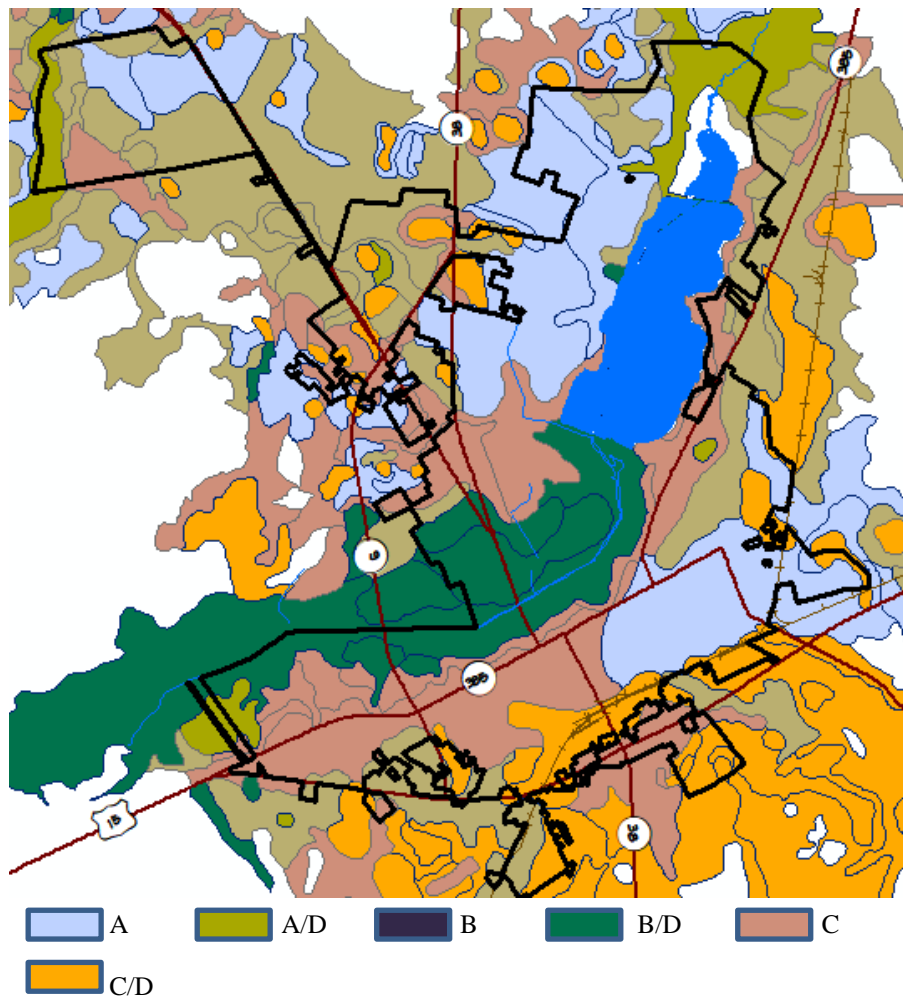
- Group A. Soils in this group have low runoff potential when thoroughly wet. Water is transmitted freely through the soil. Group A soils typically have less than 10 percent clay and more than 90 percent sand or gravel and have gravel or sand textures. Some soils having loamy sand, sandy loam, loam or silt loam textures may be placed in this group if they are well aggregated, of low bulk density, or contain greater than 35 percent rock fragments.
- Group B. Soils in this group have moderately low runoff potential when thoroughly wet. Water transmission through the soil is unimpeded. Group B soils typically have between 10 percent and 20 percent clay and 50 percent to 90 percent sand and have loamy sand or sandy loam textures. Some soils having loam, silt loam, silt, or sandy clay loam textures may be placed in this group if they are well aggregated, of low bulk density, or contain greater than 35 percent rock fragments.
- Group C. Soils in this group have moderately high runoff potential when thoroughly wet. Water transmission through the soil is somewhat restricted. Group C soils typically have between 20 percent and 40 percent clay and less than 50 percent sand and have loam, silt loam, sandy clay loam, clay loam, and silty clay loam textures. Some soils having clay, silty clay, or sandy clay textures may be placed in this group if they are well aggregated, of low bulk density, or contain greater than 35 percent rock fragments.

- Group D. Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of clays that have a high shrink-swell potential, soils that have a high water table, soils that have a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, and soils that are shallow over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very slow rate of water transmission.

If a soil is assigned to a dual hydrologic group (A/D, B/D, or C/D), the first letter is for drained areas and the second is for undrained areas. Only the soils that in their natural condition are in group D are assigned to dual classes.

The majority of soils in the City are of hydrologic soils group type “C” soils, indicating a moderately high runoff potential. Soil compaction and the addition of non-native soils to the soil profile that typically occurs with urban development can usually be expected to decrease the infiltration capacity of (i.e., increase the runoff from).

Figure 5.5. Hydrologic Soil Map



LAKE WALLACE & CROOKED CREEK

Lake Wallace is perhaps the City's most popular and visible public resource, providing both recreational and aesthetic amenities. It is also a source of the City's water supply. It empties into Crooked Creek, which meanders through the southern part of the City. Crooked Creek is synonymous with wetlands and floodway.

WETLANDS

The principal criteria for determining wetlands are hydrology, soils, and vegetation. Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs. Specific State and Federal agencies, most notably the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the SC Natural Resources Commission, and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control have specific interest in preserving these natural areas, including the issuance of development permits when conditions warrant. Typically, the Corps of Engineers take the lead role in wetlands protection, reviewing proposed projects and making wetland determinations. When wetland conditions are found, the Corps evaluates the public benefit of the project relative to the potential damage to the wetland resources. While not all development in wetland areas requires a permit, an assessment of conditions is required.

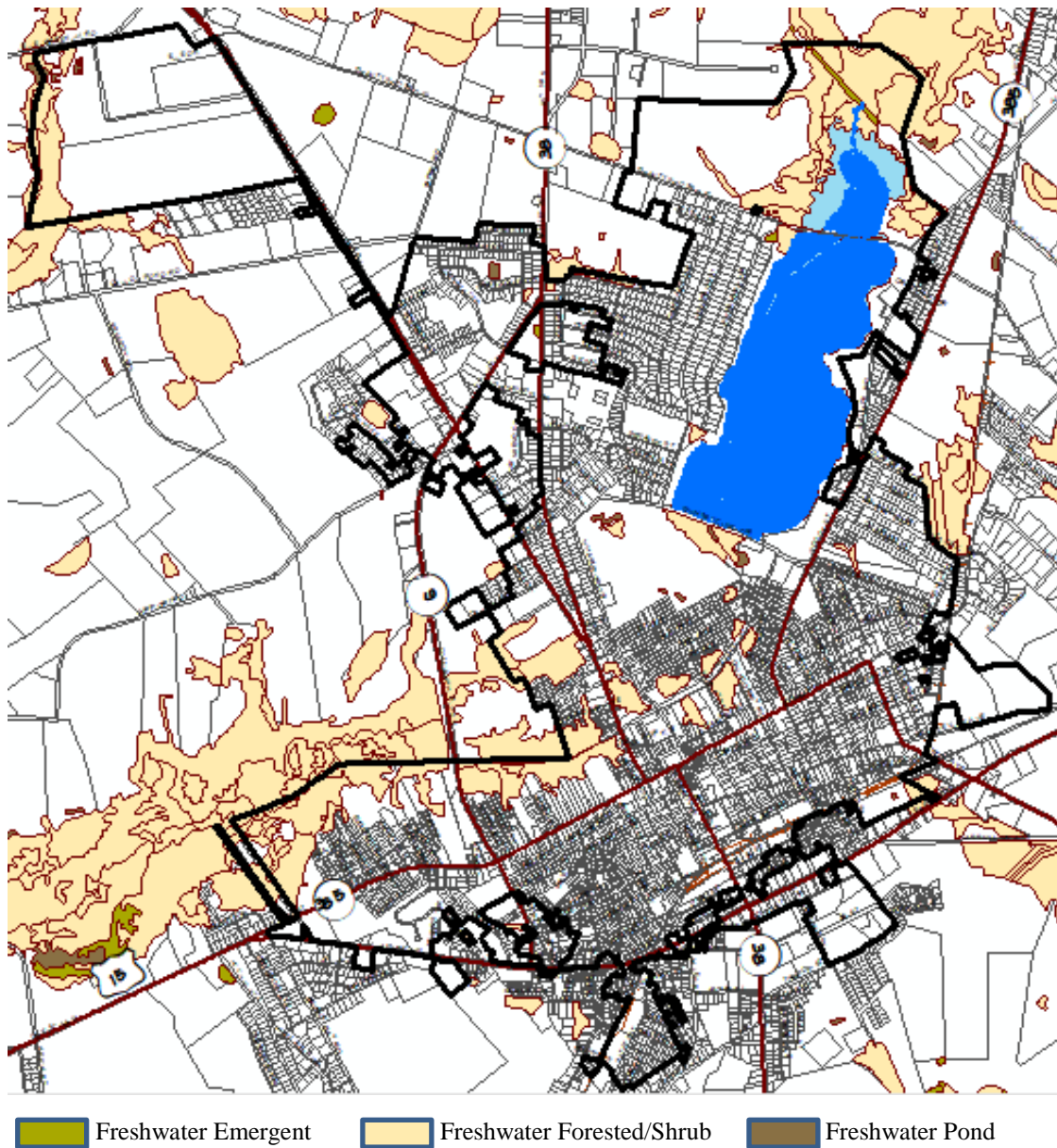
Unfortunately, the US Fish and Wildlife Service report entitled *Wetlands Losses in the United States, 1780s to 1980s* estimates that wetlands in South Carolina decreased by 27% during the last century, resulting in a loss of more than 1.75 million acres of wetlands. Because wetlands provide numerous benefits for humans, it is important to encourage their protection. In addition to providing habitat for plants and wildlife, estuarine wetlands provide critical habitat for a majority of the commercial fish and shellfish consumed in the United States.

According to information provided by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), 96% of the commercial catch and more than 50% of the recreational catch in the Southeast consists of fish and shellfish that depend on estuary/coastal wetland systems. Coastal wetlands also act as a buffer to protect shore areas from waves and storms and help to reduce and even prevent erosion. Ninety percent of the State's wetlands are freshwater wetlands. Freshwater wetlands can store stormwater to reduce flooding, as well as purify water by holding and breaking down pollutants and by trapping silt or soil so that it settles in the wetlands instead of clogging up nearby streams. Some wetlands store water in the rainy season and release the water later into nearby aquifers or underground streams. This cycle recharges the groundwater that supplies many South Carolinians with drinking water. Scientists have linked atmospheric maintenance as an additional beneficial wetland function. Wetlands store carbon within their plant communities and soil (plants use carbon dioxide to photosynthesize) instead of releasing it to the atmosphere. Thus, wetlands even play a role in moderating global climate conditions.

Loss of wetlands, especially through filling, increase runoff with a subsequent loss of the wetland functions for flood control, groundwater recharge, and water quality improvement.

Bennettsville's wetlands are located around Lake Wallace, along Crooked Creek, and the southern upper portion of City. The Wetland Map identifies wetlands and where development has encroached in those sensitive areas. Freshwater forested/shrub wetland predominates the City's natural landscape.

Figure 5.6. Wetlands Map



FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

Floodplains and floodways, here, covers a significant area. The land feature begins north of Lake Wallace meandering through Lake Wallace along Crooked Creek and upper southern portion of the City into the unincorporated areas. Intense rains are problematic for property owners and residents living within these sensitive areas. Noted earlier the soils along this area is prone to flood and/or water retention. It does not help that topographically the City's runoff converges in the Crooked Creek neighborhood. Flooding has been and is catastrophic for this section of the City.

The devastation from flooding overshadows floodplains' importance. Floodplains perform vital natural functions such as temporary storage of floodwaters. They moderate peak flood flows, enhance water quality, and recharge groundwater. Erosion control in addition to cultivating diverse natural wildlife populations, and aesthetic quality are among its functionality. These functions are best served if floodplains are kept in their natural state. Wherever possible, the natural characteristics of floodplains and their associated wetlands and water bodies should be preserved and enhanced. Decisions to alter floodplains, especially floodways and stream channels, should be the result of careful studies and planning.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies and evaluates flood areas. It recommends communities to participate in National Flood Insurance Program. In order to participate, communities must have an adopted flood ordinance that complies with FEMA's standards. The Federal Flood Insurance Program uses a standard of the 100-year floodplain, or 1% flood to locate restricted areas for development. Flooding not only presents problems in reconstruction costs but health hazards by possible contamination of water supplies and resources.

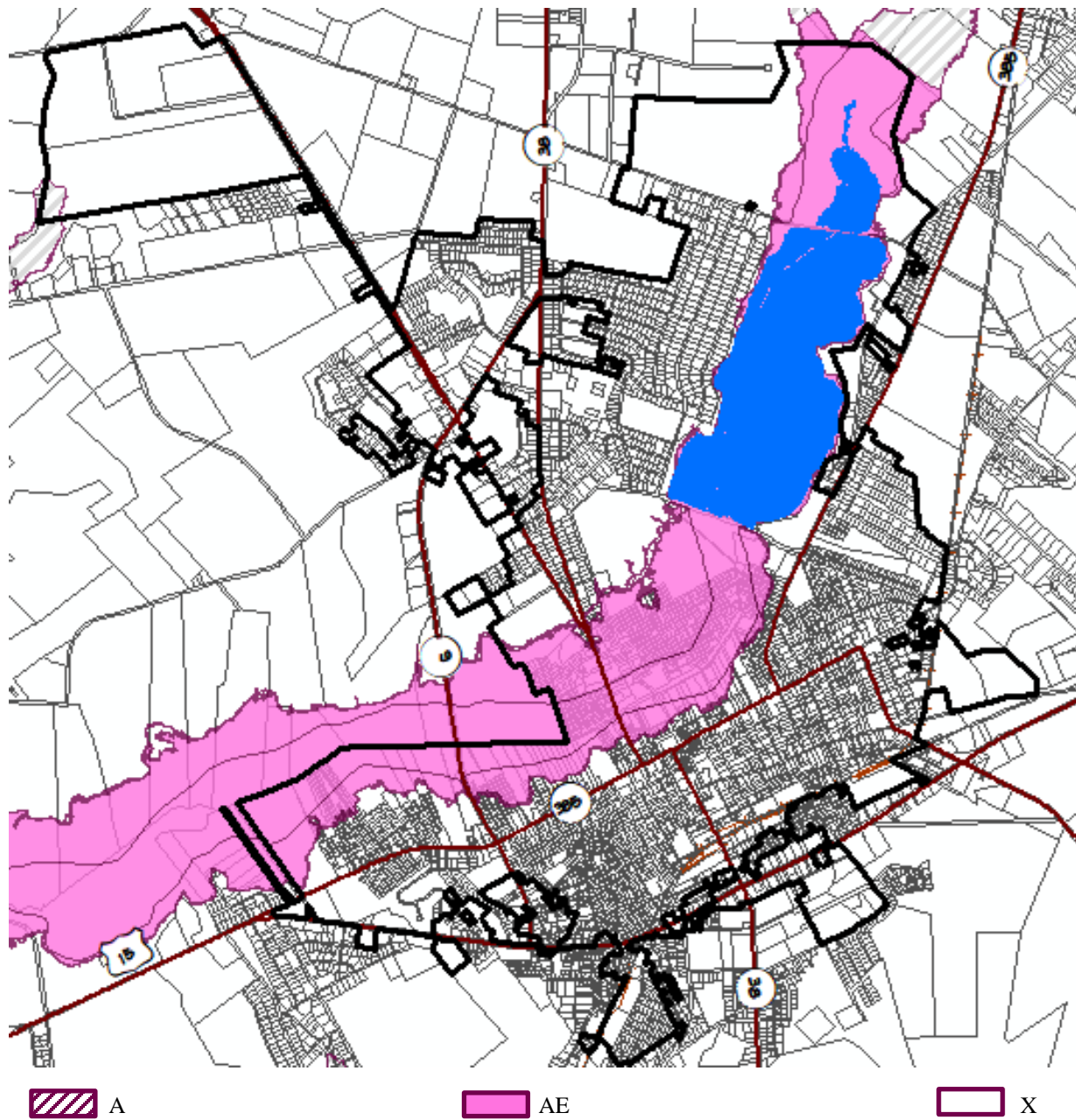
Development in a floodplain, especially a floodway, should be discouraged. However, developments can be situated in a floodplain. Standards require structures to be elevated above base flood elevation (BFE). Nursing homes, childcare facilities, or schools should never be considered. These vulnerable populations are more apt to be injured and/or suffer a fatality to due to flooding. Evacuation of these populations are more challenging.

What to do going forward? There are hundreds of properties within the City's floodway. The fallout over the years has been tremendous. Razing all these structures is an overly ambitious and unrealistic project. This would rapidly depopulate the City. The City should consider green infrastructure along Crooked Creek twenty to forty feet on each side of the creek. Strategic planted trees and shrubs with a storage conveyance system to collect rainwater and slowly empty it into Crooked Creek. This would also serve as an extension of the Recreation Department's future use of the former Marlboro Training School and provide pedestrian and bike connections. A three to four foot retaining wall integrated with a landscaped berm would serve as a spillway

barrier. Another important project element is dredging Crooked Creek on a routine schedule to delay and minimize it topping over onto adjacent properties.

The below map identifies and distinguishes the floodway from the floodplain in addition to low risk areas. The map mirrors FEMA FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map). Areas highlighted by X are areas outside flood hazard area with a 0.2 percent-annual-chance flood. Alternatively, A and AE are high risk areas. Communities that participate in the NFIP, flood insurance is required. A represents areas with a 1% annual chance of flood and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Zone AE are the most severe and have a 1% probability of flooding every year. Properties in Zone AE are high risk for flooding.

Figure 5.7. Flood Hazard Map



NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT GOALS & POLICIES

Goal 1. Protect natural resources.

Policy 1.1. Make the protection of Bennettsville's natural resources a priority in shaping the future development of the City. New development proposals should be reviewed for their potential impacts on natural resources.

Policy 1.2. Evaluate the filling and development projects in wetlands and flood hazard areas. Army Corp of Engineers must be consulted when projects are proposed in a wetland area.

Policy 1.3. Develop and/or incorporate a natural resources outreach/education program in other outreach efforts.

Goal 2. Minimize the impact of stormwater runoff onto properties.

Policy 2.1. Develop a comprehensive stormwater study and implementation strategy.

Policy 2.2. As part of the City's Planning review for commercial/industrial and subdivisions, ensure projects have a NPDES Permit for projects one or more acres of land disturbance. This includes projects with an acre or more of impervious surface. Commercial/industrial projects less than one acre should obtain a Less Than One Area DHEC permit. All permits should be a part of the development packet and submitted prior to construction.

Policy 2.3. Incorporate low impact design as part of the zoning ordinance with permit incentives.

Policy 2.4. Incorporate landscaping and buffers into zoning ordinance.

Policy 2.5. Develop green infrastructure project from Lake Wallace along Crooked Creek. Green infrastructure practices like rain gardens, tree plantings, water detention basins, stream restorations, and pervious pavement mimic natural processes to slow and capture rainwater. In addition, green infrastructure provides additional environmental, economic and social benefits that would not be provided with

Soil Types	Soil Unit Map Name	Soil Classification	Acreage
BnB	Blanton sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	SP-SM	25
BnC	Blanton sand, 6 to 10 percent slopes	SP-SM	30
BoB	Bonneau sand, 0 to 4 percent slopes	SM	172
CoD	Cowarts loamy sand, 10 to 15 percent slopes	SM	80
Cx	Coxville loam	ML	787
EmB	Emporia loamy sand, 2 to 6 percent slopes	SC-SM	319
EmB2	Emporia sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, eroded	SM	7
EuA	Eunola loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	SM	90
FaA	Faceville loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	SM	1,453
FaB	Faceville loamy sand, 2 to 6 percent slopes	SM	112
FaB2	Faceville sandy clay loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, eroded	SM	28
GoA	Goldsboro loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, Southern Coastal Plain	SC-SM	399
HnA	Hornsville loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	SM	35
HnB	Hornsville loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	SM	36
HnB2	Hornsville sandy clay loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, eroded	SC-SM	7
Kn	Kinston loam, frequently flooded	CL	1,011
LuB	Lucy sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	SP-SM	45
NaB	Nankin loamy fine sand, 2 to 6 percent slopes	SM	10
NbB2	Nankin sandy clay loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, eroded	SM	30
NcA	Norfolk loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	SM	1,790
NcB	Norfolk loamy sand, 2 to 6 percent slopes	SM	237
NoA	Norfolk loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	SC-SM	1,081
NoB	Norfolk loamy sand, 2 to 6 percent slopes	SM	382
Og	Ogeechee sandy loam	SM	139
Pa	Pamlico muck, frequently flooded	PT	2,605
Pe	Paxville fine sandy loam	SC-SM	29
PrA	Persanti loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	ML	540
Ra	Rains sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	SM	29
Sm	Smithboro silt loam	CL	666
TpB	Troup sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes, Southern Coastal Plain	SP-SC	25
UgB	Uchee sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	SP-SM	59
Ur	Udorthents	CL	84
WaB	Wagram sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes	SP-SM	12

Chapter 6

HOUSING ELEMENT

One of the most basic necessity after water and food is housing. Housing is quintessential to one's quality of life. Bennettsville has a unique mix of housing types, sizes, and ages. Most notable among these are the City's historic and beautiful Victorian, Greek Revival, and variety of architectural resources making it a special place. The Housing Element is a response to demographic changes and conversations about housing preservation/rehabilitation, creative partnerships, new construction, and affordable housing.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

When we hear the word housing, the first immediate image is the traditional box or rectangle form with massing. Massing is an architectural term that references structural elements extending from the primary box or rectangle's form giving a house its architectural composition. Simply, we recognize them as porches and additions off the primary form. Housing is broader than that. Housing, in reality, means something different to each person. The Census enumeration give respondents prescribed housing options. One-unit detached translates into single-family homes. One-unit attached is synonymous with condominiums and townhouses. We are familiar with apartments and mobile homes. Boats, RVs, vans, and cars are modes of transportation. It is difficult to imagine these as residences. Without personal experience or knowledge, the thought

escapes us. Nonetheless, thousands call these home. Not surprising, the bulk of Bennettsville's housing choice is 1-unit detached single-family homes. In fact, 76% of the prescribe housing choices were

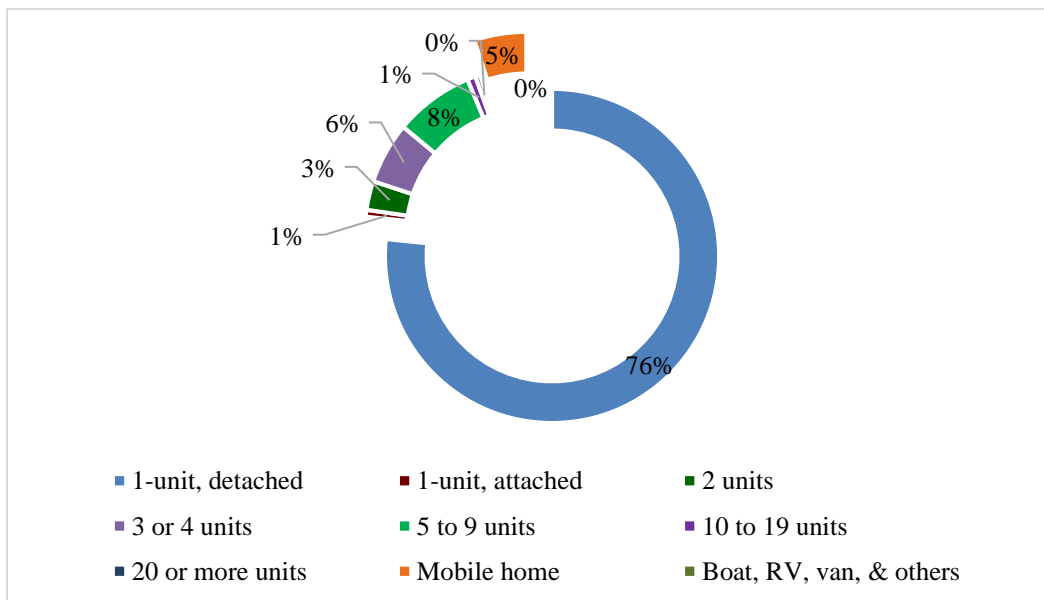


Figure 6.1. 2017 Housing Choices

single-family homes. Single-family housing gradually climbed over the 17-year enumeration while others either declined each enumeration or increased in 2010 to fall in 2017. Small

apartments, 5 to 9 units, were second. It is worth noting that no one after 2000 reported to have resided in a car, RV, van, or boat. Table 6.1 reflects Bennettsville’s housing inventory from 2000 – 2017. Available housing units between 2000 and 2010 increased by 2.3 percent. Year built explains the 2.3% increase. Between 2000 and later, Bennettsville gained 157 units. It is safe to assume these housing gains were before the Recession or progress. Remember housing consist of the aforementioned categories. Without building permits, we cannot be specific in the types, particularly since mobile homes darter Bennettsville housing landscape. However, the additional units should reflect 3870 units in lieu of 3799. What happened? One plausible explanation is 71 units were either razed and/or deemed uninhabitable. In 2017, 49 units were no longer part of the City’s housing inventory. It appears a significant number of structures were razed and/or inhabitable despite 61 additional units. The Housing Stock Summary also reflects occupied housing units which declined each enumeration year. Fourteen and 21 percent of the available housing choices, between 2000 and 2017, were vacant. The largest, 802 vacant units, was in 2010. It is not a coincidence that the vacancy rate rose after 2007’s Recession. Foreclosures, doubling up, and relocations due to job loss attributed to the 52% increase. Nonetheless, Bennettsville declining occupancies may correlate to its deteriorating housing stock. Potential

Housing Characteristics	2000	Percent	2010	Percent	2017	Percent
Total Housing Units	3713		3799		3750	
Occupied Housing Units	3185		2997		2956	
1-unit detached	2579	69.5%	2646	69.6%	2873	76.6%
1-unit attached	64	1.7%	33	0.9%	25	0.7%
2 units	207	5.6%	202	5.3%	105	2.8%
3 or 4 units	361	9.7%	392	10.3%	223	5.9%
5 to 9 units	180	4.8%	185	4.9%	288	7.7%
10 to 19 units	40	1.1%	56	1.5%	30	0.8%
20 to more units	24	0.6%	39	1.0%	17	0.5%
Mobile home	250	6.7%	246	6.5%	189	5.0%
Boat, RV, van, & others	8	0.2%	0	0%	0	0%
Tenure						
Owner-Occupied Units	1832	58%	1393	46%	1555	53%
Renter-Occupied Units	1353	42%	1604	54%	1401	47%
Vacant Units	528	14%	802	21%	794	21%
Median Mortgage (SMOC)						
Median (SMOC) w/o Mortgage	\$650		\$1078		\$859	
Median Rent	\$213		\$342		\$288	
No Paid Rent	\$334		\$515		\$588	
Median Housing Value	\$96		\$262		\$89	
Median Housing Value	\$57,000		\$82,600		\$73,200	
	2000-2010	2010-2017				
Median Mortgage (SMOC)	65.8%	-20.3%				
Median (SMOC) w/o Mortgage	60.6%	-15.8%				
Median Rent	54.2%	14.2%				
Paid No Rent	172.9%	-66.0%				
Median Housing Value	44.9%	-11.4%				

Sources: 2000 Decennial; ACS 2006 – 2010 5-Year Estimates; ACS 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

homeowners and renters no longer considered some units viable due to moderate to gross deterioration. Another is the lingering slow recovery after the Recession. Fragile consumer confidence and employment uncertainty caused persons to pass on homeownership and/or continue to double up with family and friends. Doubling up refers to persons or families living with family and friends.

Homeownership versus rentership is one the most prevalent housing topics followed by housing values. Homeownership reflects a community’s health. It gauges investment. A home is an investment more than likely attached to a 30-year commitment – a mortgage. Mobile home, however, are view differently unlike stick built or modular homes. The knock on them is their tendency to depreciate over time. Mobile home advocacy groups are countering this notion as myth. For clarity, modular homes are not another nomenclature for mobile home. The term has and is being used interchangeably to denote mobile homes. The distinguishing difference is building standards. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) establishes and regulates the building codes for mobile homes. Additionally, mobile homes are registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles similar to a car. Modular homes are constructed according to its state’s building or International Building Codes and registered with its state’s designated regulatory codes agency.

Homeownership also singles stability. Homeowners tend to have a commitment to their neighborhoods and community. This is believed to be higher than renters who tend to be more transient. Bennettsville with the exception of 2010 had a slightly higher homeownership portfolio. Fifty-four percent of the City’s housing favored renter-occupied housing in 2010. Again, this is linked to the Recession. Ten years after the Recession, 2017 data show an about face homeowner to renter portfolio. Homeownership rebounded to 52%. Alternatively, NeighborhoodScout’s March 2019 data reports a 53% to

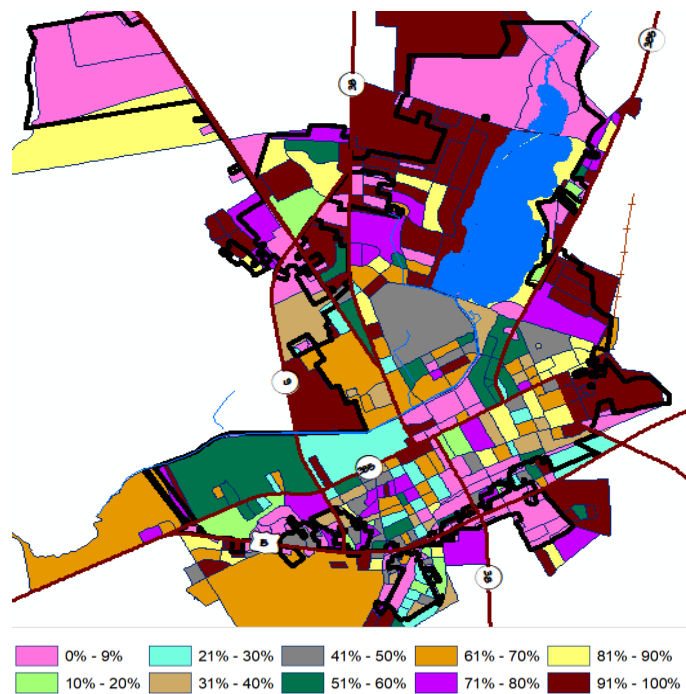


Figure 6.1. Homeownership Map

47% renter-oriented portfolio. NeighborhoodScout is a community research platform. The research group purports to have a comprehensive database. Users have access to a community’s real estate, demographic, crime, and public school profiles. Figure 6.1 illustrates homeownership by the 2010 Census’ blocks. A census block is the smallest geographic unit used by the United States Census Bureau for tabulation of 100-percent data. Each block represents the percentage of homeownership. Concentrations of homeowners are near the golf course. Low homeownership is concentrated in older and lower income areas.

The housing market can be quite unpredictable. However, housing values is another community health measurement. Property owners expect property values will climb over the years. Values, here, are reflected as median. Between 2000 and 2010 housing values rose 44.9%. Despite the economic recession, housing values climb \$24,900. Surprisingly, in 2017, housing values fell by 11.4%. It is difficult to speculate on this phenomenon. NeighborhoodScout purports Bennettsville’s median housing value is \$87,862, which is a 20% increase.

Median mortgage and rent are housing descriptors. Potential residents use these descriptors along with other data to guide their relocation decision. Table 6.2 compares 2017 rents and mortgages with Bennettsville’s regional competitors – Laurinburg, Cheraw, Rockingham, and Hartsville. Bennettsville, in terms of median mortgage, is competitively modest. In fact, it is the lowest. Rents are in the same ball park with the others. It is second from the bottom above the Town of Cheraw. In comparison, Bennettsville’s housing is modestly priced. The distinguishing difference between Hartsville, Rockingham, and Laurinburg are amenities and public investment.

City/Town	Median Mortgage	Median Rent
City of Bennettsville	859	588
City of Hartsville	1056	624
City of Laurinburg	1082	637
City of Rockingham	1026	595
Town of Cheraw	955	525

Source: ACS 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

One observance is no paid rent. No rent paid are units/housing provided for free by friends or relatives, or in exchange for services such as resident manager, caretaker, minister, or tenant farmer. Another is renters reporting no income. These numbers may reflect persons residing in Section 8-based public housing. HUD’s housing policy hinges on 30% of a household’s income. There are adjustments based on household size. Nonetheless, thirty percent is the affordability litmus test. In other words, housing theoretically should not exceed 30% of a household’s income, including utilities. We will elaborate on this later. No rent, here, indicates households’

income was so low their rent was zero dollars. Numerically, these households are minimal. One conclusion is clear. The 2007 Recession created a housing crisis resulting in a 172.9% increase in no rent housing. After 2010, the number of no rent tenants dropped 66%, numerically lower than 2000's numbers.

SUBSTANDARD & AGING HOUSING

One readily available measure of housing quality is plumbing availability and a complete kitchen. Substandard is marked by the lack of one or more plumbing facilities. Plumbing facilities defined as hot and cold piped or running water, a flush toilet, and a bathtub or shower inside the structure for the exclusive use of the occupants of the unit. A unit has a complete kitchen when it has a sink with piped water, range or cook top and oven, and refrigerator. In 2000, 62 occupied households noted either incomplete plumbing and kitchen facilities. Of those, 54.8% (34 units) did not have complete kitchen facilities. The number of incomplete facilities dropped by 56% in 2010. Incomplete kitchen was the only deficiency. No deficiencies were reported in 2017, which gestures the households addressed the deficiencies themselves or received assistance. Substandard housing often is the result of gradual decline from deferred to no maintenance. An aged housing stock is vulnerable to substandard appearance and safety violations. Concentrated in one area can be intimidating and an anchor on housing values.

	2000	Percent	2010	Percent	2017	Percent
Occupied Housing	3185	2%	2997	0.9%	2956	0%
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	28	45.2%	0%	0%	0	0%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	34	54.8%	27%	100.0%	0	0%
Total	62		27		0	

Seventy-nine percent of Bennettsville's housing stock is 49 years old or older. A number of them are or will be eligible for National Register of Historic Places consideration. Table 6.4 highlights the year structures were built. Not all aged housing stock is or on the verge of being substandard. We want to draw your attention to the fact that these units may need housing rehabilitation assistance. It is worth the investment to address cosmetic and codes violation before structures become unsalvageable. Vacant lots where once houses stood reduces tax revenues and potential public-private investments.

Year Structure Built	2000	%	Year Structure Built	2010	%	Year Structure Built	2017	%
Built 1999 to March 2000	27	.07%	Built 2005 or later	42	1.1%	Built 2014 or later	0	0%
Built 1995 to 1998	135	3.6%	Built 2000 to 2004	115	3%	Built 2010 to 2013	61	1.6%
Built 1990 to 1994	197	5.3%	Built 1990 to 1999	234	6.2%	Built 2000 to 2009	302	8.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	562	15.1%	Built 1980 to 1989	612	16.1%	Built 1990 to 1999	328	8.7%
Built 1970 to 1979	827	22.3%	Built 1970 to 1979	973	25.6%	Built 1980 to 1989	419	11.2%
Built 1960 to 1969	578	15.6%	Built 1960 to 1969	457	12%	Built 1970 to 1979	1011	27%
Built 1940 to 1959	983	26.5%	Built 1950 to 1959	562	14.8%	Built 1960 to 1969	510	13.6%
Built 1939 or earlier	404	10.9%	Built 1940 to 1949	220	5.8%	Built 1950 to 1959	391	10.4%
			Built 1939 or earlier	584	15.4%	Built 1940 to 1949	244	6.5%
			Built 2005 or later	42	1.1%	Built 1939 or earlier	484	12.9%

Sources: 2000 Decennial; ACS 2006 – 2010 5-Year Estimates; ACS 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

AFFORDABILITY

Housing has outpaced incomes. Affordability is a reoccurring topic and concern, especially for seniors, low to moderate income households, and millennials. Millennials are at the center of the conversation because of their income potential and being the future leaders of tomorrow. This group is opting to live with their parents and rent in lieu of buying a house. Their skepticism is about the housing market is compounded by student loan debt and high housing costs.

Affordability is what drove the tiny house phenomenon, now recognized by the International Building Codes. Communities across the country have incorporated tiny housing ordinances. There is some reservation on the topic. One is if and when housing becomes less precarious will there be a demand for these structures? If the demand is not there, what will the impact on these structures on a community's housing landscape. What, if any, are their impact on neighboring property values? Nonetheless, affordable housing is a real concern for Americans. What is affordable housing? How is it measured? This topic has been one that policy-makers have grabbed over the years. Affordable is an abstract construct predicated on housing preference, income, and spending – maintenance and utilities. Planners because of increasing sprawl have linked long commutes with raising the cost of housing. Specifically, the cost of gas and maintenance due to wear and tear diverts income for housing upkeep.

Circling back to affordability discussed earlier, the typical standard is 30 percent of household income. However, the South Carolina defines affordable as: *... units for sale, housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance, and condominium or association fees, if any, constitute no more than twenty-eight percent (28%) of the annual household income for a household earning no more than eighty percent of the area median income, by household size, for the metropolitan statistical area as published from time to time by the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) and, in the case of dwelling units for rent, housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than thirty percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than eighty percent of the area median income, by household size for the metropolitan statistical area as published from time to time by HUD.* This rather lengthy definition that boils down to 28% of household income for mortgage holders and 30% for renters.

Let us turn our attention to Table 6.3. Articulated is income percentages allocated for housing. SMOC refers to selected monthly owner costs. It is calculated from the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees. Our analysis uses the Federal 30% monthly housing allocation as our affordability gauge. Thirty percent or less is ideal. However, others are paying more than 30% of their monthly income for housing excluding utilities. Households paying more than 30 percent are considered cost burdened. Extremely cost burdened housing refers to housing that exhausts 50 percent or more of a household's monthly income. For easier illustration, we combined the 30 to 34, and 35 percent or more categories. The numbers and associated percentages are not

absolute because 30% (our baseline) is included. Consequently, the results are approximates. Several areas are quite noticeable. More mortgage holders and renters, in 2010, paid more than 30 percent of their income toward housing. This is surprising. A plausible explanation is at least one householder from the groups experienced job loss and/or was reduced from full-time to part-time work. This forced those households to expend more of their income to maintain housing.

Table 6.3 Affordability						
Percent of Monthly Housing Cost w/ Mortgage (SMOC)						
	2000	Percent	2010	Percent	2017	Percent
Less than 20 percent	955	59%	250	30%	375	49%
20 to 24 percent	171	11%	89	11%	136	18%
25 to 29 percent	88	5%	104	13%	4	1%
30 to 34 percent	100	6%	78	9%	27	4%
35 percent or more	296	18%	305	37%	224	29%
Not computed	9	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Percent of Monthly Housing Cost w/o Mortgage (SMOC)						
Less than 20 percent			423	77%	564	71%
20 to 24 percent			40	7%	17	2%
25 to 29 percent			13	2%	51	6%
30 to 34 percent			28	5%	0	0%
35 percent or more			42	8%	157	20%
Not computed			12	0%	0	0%
Percent of Monthly Rent						
Less than 20 percent	428	36%	293	23%	295	23%
20 to 24 percent	150	13%	166	13%	129	10%
25 to 29 percent	120	10%	128	10%	150	11%
30 to 34 percent	81	7%	40	3%	101	8%
35 percent or more	402	34%	624	50%	633	48%
Not computed	0	0%	0	0%	93	0%
Percent of Monthly Housing Cost (SMOC) 2000-2010						
	2000-2010	2010-2017				
Percent of Monthly Housing Cost (SMOC)						
Less than 20 percent	-73.8%	50%				
20 to 24 percent	-48.0%	52.8%				
25 to 29 percent	18.2%	-96.2%				
30 to 34 percent	-22.0%	-65.4%				
35 percent or more	3.0%	-26.6%				
Percent of Monthly Housing Cost (SMOC) 2010-2017						
Less than 20 percent		33.3%				
20 to 24 percent		-57.5%				
25 to 29 percent		292.3%				
30 to 34 percent		-100.0%				
35 percent or more		273.8%				
Percent of Monthly Rent						
Less than 20 percent	-31.5%	0.7%				
20 to 24 percent	10.7%	-22.3%				
25 to 29 percent	6.7%	17.2%				
30 to 34 percent	-50.6%	152.5%				
35 percent or more	55.2%	1.4%				

Sources: 2000 Decennial; ACS 2006 – 2010 5-Year Estimates; ACS 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates

Cost burdened was lowest among householders with no mortgage. Unfortunately, no 2000 data was available this group. Without it, there is no way to determine how this group was impacted by the 2007 Recession. Baffling is the increased cost burden percentage for renters and householders with no mortgage in 2017. Continued employment instability more than likely influenced renters. The only explanation for the increased cost burden among non-mortgage holders is the cost of insurance and utilities rose during this period. Mortgage holders cost burdened, in 2017, fell almost to pre-Recession numbers. Renters,

unfortunately, are more likely to be cost burdened. Upon closer examination, they are more apt to be severely cost burdened. In fact, the National Low Income Housing Coalition report across South Carolina there is a shortage of rental homes affordable and available to extremely low-income households (ELI). Their incomes are at or below the poverty guideline or 30% of their area median income (AMI). Many of these households are severely cost burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing. Severely cost burdened poor households are more likely than other renters to sacrifice other necessities like healthy food and healthcare to pay the rent. They tend to experience unstable housing situations like evictions.

Real people like a clothing clerk at Walmart or journeyman on a construction site face housing unaffordability. South Carolina Department of Employment & Workforce's first quarter wages for Marlboro County reports a clothing clerk earns \$6.60/hour or \$1,056 a month. A journeyman earns 8.33/hour equating to \$1,332.80 a month.

According to HUD, in Marlboro County, this year's the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$688. Affordability at 30% of one's monthly income means a household must earn \$2,293 monthly or \$27,518.40 annually. A 40-hour work week, 52 weeks translates into \$13.23/hour. Using the clothing clerk and journeyman, the clothing clerk would have to allocate nearly 65% of your monthly income to afford a two-bedroom apartment. Approximately, 52% of the journeyman's monthly wages are needed to afford the same two-bedroom unit. Both would be severely cost burdened. Each would need to work additional hours, obtain a second job, or find a roommate to avoid being cost burdened. Cost burdened householders, especially the severely cost burdened, are more likely to experience homelessness.

HOUSING VULNERABILITY

Millions have been homeless one time or another. Embarrassed, no one wants to admit being homeless. Those who bounce between family and friends do not consider themselves homeless. What is homelessness? Homelessness, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has a layered definition. Simply, it is a family or individual lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence. They may be sleeping on the streets, with friends and/or family, in motels, cars, abandoned buildings, or shelters.

Some ambivalence to homelessness is the result of misinformation. There is the notion people choose to be homeless. This is furthest from the truth. No one endeavors to be homeless. The truth is the majority of Americans are one pay check, crisis, investment, or life choice away from being homeless. Persons experiencing homelessness suffer from some crisis that disrupts their ability to remain housed. A crisis could be fleeing from domestic violence or an unsafe environment, a medical emergency, job loss, or foreclosure. Others' housing instability is the result of unexpected mental health challenges, or drug and/or alcohol abuse. There are cases where newly released inmates with no place to go end up homeless. The crux of homelessness is

people cannot find housing they can afford. The scarcity of affordable housing engenders more episodes of homelessness. It sounds straightforward, but it is not. Homelessness is symptomatic of a larger socio-economic, political reality.

There is no easy way to enumerate homelessness. Episodes of homelessness fluctuate with the seasons. Continuums [Continuums of Care] use Overnight Shelter Surveys to enumerate homelessness. This approach is referenced as point-in-time (PIT) counts, which only provides a snapshot of homelessness. PIT is an estimate based on emergency shelter and transitional unit stays, persons turned away from shelter/transitional housing due to filled capacity, and those living on the streets. Homeless counts are every year during the last 10 days of January. These are believed to be the coldest days of the year. The assumption is that homeless persons are more likely to seek shelter. Those turned away from shelters are counted as unsheltered. The unsheltered are also those found on the streets, which is quite challenging. Volunteers canvas the streets, alleys, underpasses, parks, makeshift camps, abandoned buildings, and elsewhere to count those unsheltered. Criticism of PIT count is the variations in count methodology and incidental duplication. For example, a person visiting several shelters seeking housing is counted each time. Another is an individual on the street may have been counted by a different volunteer canvassing the same area. Continuums use the data to determine needs and evaluate programs and services to combat homelessness.

South Carolina's 2018 homeless population was 3,933. Of the 3,933 persons experiencing homelessness, 21.6 % (851 persons) were families and children, and 78.1% (3,070 persons) were adults or adult-only families. Twelve individuals were single children. Homelessness in Bennettsville is not as pronounced.

The homeless in Bennettsville maybe the visible invisible. This is an oxymoron but true. The point-in-time count model is not applicable for the City. Its methodology hinges on a shelter system. The shelter system, here, is camouflaged and non-existent. The vaguely known shelters cater to domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Secrecy is tantamount for safety. On the other hand, there are no publicized women, men, or teen emergency shelters or transitional housing units in Bennettsville. It is the latter that suggest homelessness does not exist. Homelessness does not stick out like the popular images seen on television, and in the newspapers and magazines. Homelessness is camouflaged to evade scrutiny, harassment, or arrests. Their constant movement and avoidance to lounge in a way not to startle our senses make them invisible. Somehow, they fade into the night to emerge again in similar places.

HUD's Point-in-Time Annualization, however, provides a homeless estimate. The estimate relies on persons living in poverty from the previous year's estimates. The U.S. Census estimates 2,185 people in Bennettsville lived in poverty in 2016. HUD estimates 6.3 percent of those living in poverty experiences an episode of homelessness. The Annualization estimate is calculated by multiplying 2,185 persons by 6.3 percent (.063) equalling 138 point-in-time homeless persons

count. HUD furthers the annualized estimate ranges from 3 to 6 times higher than the point-in-time count. Therefore, the annualized homeless estimate is converted to a PIT by dividing the estimate by either 3 or 6. The 138 persons is divided by three and six to derive the PIT count, 46 and 23 respectively. These numbers presumably reflect those doubled up with family and friends. However, an undetermined segment experienced one or more episode of homelessness either on the streets, in a motel, or some temporary shelter.

BARRIERS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Exclusionary Zoning. (Exclusionary zoning adds to the cost of housing through specific aesthetic and architectural standards. For example, requiring apartments to be built with masonry materials has been viewed as exclusionary.)
- High cost of land.
- Exorbitant developer’s fees.
- NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard). (Public protest of affordable housing has dissuaded Councils and developers from developing affordable housing projects.)
- Limited living wage employment. (Living wage employment are jobs that meet to-date housing costs. Sadly, service jobs (i.e. clothing clerks, cashiers, and waitresses) do not come close.)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

Communities	Address	Program	Units/Beds
Housing Authority of Bennettsville	253 Fletcher Street	Project-based Assistance	216
Glenfield Apartments Phase II	606 Center Street	LIHTC & Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Programs	40
Eastwood Apartments	106 Gibson Circle	Project-based Assistance	62
Cedar Creek Apartments	1003 Cheraw Street	Section 202 Project-based Assistance (Senior Specific)	30
Westwood Park	201 Fletcher St	Project-based Assistance	154
Bennettsville Lofts	309 Woodland Dr	Accepts Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers	22
Marlboro Place Phase II	813 Cheraw St	Project-based Assistance	24
Oakwood Manor	902 Oakwood Street	Accepts Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers	24

Below are several affordable housing options.

HOUSING SPECIFIC

Housing specific looks at housing through a broader lens. Although housing is a universal necessity, housing tastes, necessities, and conveniences are specific. This is particularly true for seniors, and person with disabilities, mental challenges, and persons living with HIV/AIDS. Housing, for them, takes on a different dimension. Their quality of life hinges on a different set

of conveniences. Supportive services, in many respects, are an inseparable tandem where one is crucial to the other. The City of Bennettsville recognizes and embraces housing inclusion. In other words, there is room to integrate population specific housing into the larger housing context. This attempts to broaden personal perspective and share the myriad of community resources and responses to these groups. Because seniors make-up a significant portion of Country and Bennettsville's population, we will focus on seniors. This in no way discounts or diminishes other housing specific groups and their supportive service needs.

More than 26% of Bennettsville population are seniors. Seniors, using AARP's model, are 50 years or older. Fourteen percent, in 2010, were 65 and older. Many of them are Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers are persons born between 1945 and 1964. Aging Boomers, coupled with the trend toward smaller families, ensure that the 50+ population will continue to outnumber teens, a shift from historical trends. This is evidenced by the Age & Gender Population Pyramid.

Aging in place is a concept where seniors are opting to stay in their homes and neighborhoods in lieu of moving into a senior living or retirement communities. This life decision is the impetus for AARP Public Policy Institute's Creating Opportunities for Liveable Communities Report. The Report looks at liveability. This policy paper offers a wholistic glimpse and approach to aging. Although housing plays a substantial role in the aging process, it is a spoke in the larger liveability wheel. Liveability for seniors include walkability, access to services, an active community environment, and safety among a host of factors. How do others perceive it? People perceive liveability differently. General findings among 50-year olds and older revealed most of the 50 plus population want to age in their homes and communities. The importance of proximity to community elements varies greatly. Household income influences thoughts about the importance of local government spending. Most non-drivers say they live in community that are already pedestrian-friendly. Increasing police presences and improving schools are key government services for most of the older adult population.

There were modest racial and ethnic differences. Personal safety is more of a concern for family caregivers, for people with disabilities, non-drivers, and people with lower incomes. Most non-drivers say they live in communities that are pedestrian friendly. Specialize transportation and local government decision making processes are important issues for people with disabilities and for family caregivers. For renter, funding for affordable housing programs is the most important local government investment.

What community amenities do older adults want close to home? According to the associated survey, seniors favoured the following preferences:

- Bus within 1 mile or less (50%)
- Grocery Store (47%)
- Parks (42%)
- Pharmacy/Drug Store (42%)

- Hospital (29%)
- Church/Religious (29%)
- Train/Subway (23%)
- Big Box Store (18%)
- Entertainment (16%)
- Mall (Shopping) (13%)

When asked “what do older adults want in their communities”, they prioritized the following preferences:

1. Increased police presence;
2. Improved schools;
3. Make streets more pedestrian-friendly;
4. Provide transportation for older adults and people with disabilities; and,
5. Build or upgrade parks.

What does this mean for Bennettsville’s 50 plus population? This policy paper offers hints to the common views and concepts about liveability. A target survey of Bennettsville’s seniors would reveal slightly difference responses and needs. However, the result would not be too far off from the AARP’s Report. As Bennettsville ages, number of seniors are going to opt to remain in their homes. Largely, seniors who have roots in a community do not want to leave. Familiarity with family, friends, church, neighborhood, and general surroundings give them comfort. Relocating, although it has benefits, the comfort of home cannot be replaced. Another is there is not readily available housing stock with different price points and amenities that caters to seniors. The only available senior housing options are:

- BTU Rest Home: Assisted Living (80 beds); 113 Ellison Street
- Cedar Creek: Section 202 (30 units); 1003 Cheraw Street
- Housing Authority of Bennettsville: Section 8-based (216 units; housing is senior specific); 253 Fletcher Street

Moving forward, supportive services are going to be needed. Supportive services include but not limited to housekeeping, assistance bathing and toileting, house upkeep, lawn maintenance, paying bill, trips to the doctor and dentist, grocery store, and assistance with medications.

HOUSING ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1. To insure the longevity of the existing housing stock as well as maintaining the charm and history that is the City of Bennettsville. Protect the assets that currently exist and provide opportunities for current and new homeowners.

Policies 1.1. Improve housing conditions through code enforcement.

Goal 2. Encourage a broader range of housing types.

Goal 3. Encourage new housing in the Downtown area which will serve to meet a growing desire among millennials intrigued by housing in and near downtown. This creates a built-in population of consumers supporting downtown businesses.

Policy 3.1. Work with banks using CRA (Community Reinvestment Act) to encourage investment. They can create a loan pool with low interest rates to encourage second-story housing.

Goal 4. Encourage new infill single family residential development and subdivision development opportunities.

Policies 4.1. Gross dilapidation and absenteeism offer donation options to property owners. This is great tax incentive and carrot for them to donate their properties to the City to be repurposed for rental and for-sale rehabs and/or new construction opportunities. The City needs to strategically select properties as part of its revitalization strategy. Sell the idea with a simple guide to illustrate with a tax advantages for property owners. Collaborate with a CPA to develop the guide with a disclosure to consult tax preparer, attorney or CPA. People are reluctant to try something if that are not familiar with it. The guide potentially removes this barrier.

Goal 5. Selectively allow the re-purposing of larger older homes to apartments and condominiums.

Goal 6. Create incentives for first time home buyers and young families.

Goal 7. Engage in a robust rehabilitation program. This is a proactive approach to addresses deteriorating housing stock before they reach the point of demolition. Most case, those units are support the availability of affordable housing.

Policy 7.1. Apply to SC Finance and Housing Authority's Housing Trust Fund and USDA Rural Development to obtain housing rehabilitation funding. Expand Downtown Development's

bylaws to include housing. This will allow the Downtown Development Association to serve as a conduit to obtain Housing Trust Fund grants and other resources.

Policy 7.2. Offer rehabilitation assistance to income-producing property owners as loan with affordable housing component. A low interest 2% loan may be appetizing. The loan program should provide a stipulation up to 4 years after repayment. It should require rents to remain at pre-loan levels. The property owner can opt out through a fee-in lieu payment. The payment would be the equivalent of pre-loan rents multiplied by 4. The fee-in-lieu payment would serve program income to further additional rehab projects. Built into program would be a fine each year for violating the affordable housing agreement. To verify the violation, renters and property owners must be interviewed each year until the agreement expires. This provision deters forced evictions to raise rents or the immediate sale of the property.

Policy 7.3. Carefully evaluated demolitions to see if housing is salvageable or the cost of rehab does not exceed 50% of the housing value. The 50% rule is a good litmus test and prods codes officials to thoroughly evaluate the structures.

Goal 8. Develop housing partnerships.

Policy 8.1. Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) are great housing partners and developers.

Goal 9. Develop housing counseling program. Housing need to be a proactive commitment. As the marketability of Bennettsville gets underway, there is no need to wait for an influx of people to move to Bennettsville. A robust housing counseling program is needed to transition renters into homeowners by addressing credit issues and educating them on being a valued homeowner. Banks, using CRA, along with grants are a funding mechanism for program development. The City should partner with a CHDO or non-profit to facilitate the program. Participants should pay a nominal fee for participating. The program should be offered to surrounding cities and towns at a higher fee. Afterall, those not living in Bennettsville could be sold on transitioning from a visitor to a resident.

Goal 10. Protect long-time homeowners, particularly seniors to guard against gentrification. Often as the housing starts and interest increase, particularly in neighborhoods near or in Downtown, the housing values push older residents out of their homes. By ordinance, the City to hold its property taxes for an area or identified homes least 10 years. The Bailey Bill is an available tool to encourage affordable housing.

Chapter 7

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

Jobs is often the number one topic when economy is mentioned. The Economic Element looks at the Bennettsville in a broader context. The details are to be flushed out with Council and staff to set priorities for growth. In other words, what kind of City does it want to evolve into in the coming years?

Bennettsville is host to a number of Marlboro County’s largest employers. The unemployment rate in Bennettsville fluctuates with corresponding up and down cycles in the manufacturing and the construction trade sectors, typical of other communities in Marlboro County and the State of South Carolina. Bennettsville’s total Civilian Labor Force fell 1.6% and the City’s Participation Rate remained steady (45.9%) according to 2017 ACS.

Recent employment data suggests that Bennettsville may be experiencing growth (current and future) in five emerging sectors: Financial and Insurance, Health Care, and Administration Support, and Waste Management, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Construction. The majority of the area’s Civilian Labor Force is comprised of individuals who in Bennettsville or Marlboro County. For those individuals who work and live in Bennettsville, the average commuting time is 20 minutes. Approximately less than 1% of all who work and live in Bennettsville work from home.

	2000	2010	2017
Employed	41.4%	36.1%	38.5%
Unemployed	4.4%	15.1%	16.1%
Participation Rate	45.8%	42.5%	42.5%
Population 16 years & older	7,347	7,231	6,861

Industry	2010	2017	Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	72	52	-27.8
Construction	73	93	27.4
Manufacturing	827	654	-20.9
Wholesale trade	103	111	7.8
Retail trade	331	413	24.8
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	84	170	102.4
Information	19	46	142.1
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	81	29	-64.2
Professional, scientific, & mngmt, administrative & waste mngmt services	140	77	-45.0
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	528	591	11.9
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	96	221	130.2
Other services, except public administration	65	66	1.5

Public administration	8	117	1362.5
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	2,505	2,640	5.4
<i>Source: America Community Survey 2013-2017 5-Year Estimate</i>			

EMPLOYMENT

Bennettsville’s workforce industries track closely with the rest of Marlboro County and for that matter the State of South Carolina. A look at employment across all sectors in Bennettsville suggests the possible emergence of some new areas for employment growth. These potential emerging sectors are Finance and Insurance and possibly Health Care. In 2017 Bennettsville’s Civilian employed population over 16 years and over was reported to total 3149.

Marlboro County Economic Development Board reported the following companies as among Bennettsville’s leading employers:

Name/Location	Description	Employees
City of Bennettsville (501 East Main Street)	City Government	125
Marlboro County (105 Main Street)	County Government	206
Evans Corrections (610 Highway 9 West)	State Prison	202
Marlboro County Public School District (122 Broad Street)	Education	654
SOPAKCO Packaging (320 East Broad)	Food Processors	205
Walmart (1250 SC 9)	Retail/Grocery	155
Marlboro Herald-Advocate (100 Fayetteville Avenue)	Newspaper	30
Southern Packaging Corporation (526 Beauty Spot Road)	Corrugated Box	26
Pepsi Cola Bottling Company (127 Cottingham Blvd)	Soft Drink Industry	50
Total		1,653

Source: Marlboro County Economic Development Board

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BASE AND POTENTIAL

A closer look at future employment opportunities across Marlboro County, suggest that total jobs will grow during the period of 2014 and 2024. The three top growth industries will likely be Administrative, Health Care and Construction services. The bottom three new job producers are expected to be Mining, Other Services and Information services. Should the City of Bennettsville’s trends continue, the City will want to encourage a local workforce which is supportive of the top three new job producers. This includes supporting the physical space and locations as well as infrastructure. These employment sectors are expected to beat the average rate of growth for new jobs during this planning period, specifically Transportation, Warehousing and Wholesale Trade. Encouraging adequate workforce training will be key along with ensuring that zoning is in place to support these developing sectors. It is worth noting project data was not available for Transportation, Retail, Wholesale Trade, Utilities, and Manufacturing.

Industry	2014 Estimated Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Percent Change	Annual Percent
Accommodation and Food Services	10,348	11,433	10.49%	1%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,335	5,444	25.58%	2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,965	3,389	14.30%	1.35%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	950	1,027	8.11%	0.78%
Construction	3,158	3,821	20.99%	1.92%
Educational Services	10,264	11,848	15.43%	1.45%
Finance and Insurance	3,931	4,294	9.23%	0.89%
Health Care and Social Assistance	19,070	23,028	20.76%	1.90%
Information	1,016	1,067	5.02%	0.49%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,222	1,324	8.35%	0.80%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	122	126	3.28%	0.32%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,586	3,866	7.81%	0.75%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,084	3,875	25.65%	2.31%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	955	1,049	9.84%	0.94%

Note: Projections are available by Workforce Investment Area (WIA). The data displayed is selected from the appropriate WIA.

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce - Industry Projections

In considering emerging sectors or industries showing the greatest promise for growth, it is helpful to consider average annual wages among these same industries. For example, two of the industries that are projected to lag in comparison to other industries' rates of growth are Information and Manufacturing. Both of which are top wage producers. Other top annual wage producers (on average) are Professional, Scientific, Technology and Utilities.

Industry	Avg Hourly Wage	Avg Weekly Wage	Avg Annual Wage
Construction	\$14.23	\$569	\$29,588
Finance and Insurance	\$18.00	\$720	\$37,440
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$15.23	\$609	\$31,668
Manufacturing	\$32.60	\$1,304	\$67,808
Transportation and Warehousing	\$23.20	\$928	\$48,256
Utilities	\$52.58	\$2,103	\$109,356
Wholesale Trade	\$15.30	\$612	\$31,824

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce - Industry Projections, 2018

A key locational decision for all businesses is the availability of an appropriate labor force. The aging of the population may also change the nature of work arrangements as seniors may want to remain in the labor force, but with alternative or flexible work arrangements. Bennettsville is contending with a “skills gap” in employment markets, in which companies have difficulty finding sufficient candidates to fill openings that call for particular technical skills or abilities. While labor force availability is not something the City can solve on its own, it can work cooperatively with businesses, developers, local schools, and other organizations to formulate strategies to address labor force issues. Marlboro County School District’s partnership with

NETC and industry will ensure businesses have a sufficient pipeline of qualified and appropriate employees. However, the City needs to assert itself into economic development conversation with Marlboro County Economic Development, Northeastern Technical College as an active partner. From a distance, the City have not been actively engaged.

Efforts to enhance labor force availability may involve transit service. Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority is now servicing Marlboro County. The City needs to be at the table with local partners and businesses to negotiate direct transit to participating employees. This makes transportation for workers reliable and readily available.

ISSUES AND NEEDS

Available Vacant Land

Viable vacant land is important for higher intensity and density developments. There are few large tracts to accommodate a research and development facility, light industrial, mixed-use development, and/or multi-tenant business center that can comfortably accommodate high volume traffic without creating conflicts with residential low intensity land uses. Staff and elected officials during our visioning workshop identified property along the bypass as an ideal business/economic development opportunity. We agree. Before attempting to annex the properties, RS3 Planning Collaborative, LLC recommends an evaluation conversation. Staff and elected officials need to:

- assess acreage, access to gas, and sewer, land values, and whether the City can negotiate a donation and purchase deal from the blighted properties;
- consider annexation package and selling points; and,
- quietly discuss redevelopment potential with an investor/investor group to gauge the Connector's viability. This will require some cost to obtain this expertise. The term Connector references the properties along the bypass.

If the Connector is a viable business investment after following the aforementioned steps, the City should move to annex properties and build a prospectus to market Connector for redevelopment. Rezoning and land use considerations may be needed to facilitate impending development.

Aging of Buildings

The City will need to monitor via Codes its non-residential buildings to ensure they are appropriately maintained and useable. Many of the buildings were built in the 1970's and earlier. They may or will become outmoded for new technology. These building will have to be upgraded. Caution is needed before removing contributing structures to the City historic and overlay districts. Far too often, there is a rush to remove outdated buildings to make way for more modern structures.

Accessible Broadband

Technology is paramount to today's business culture. Business is international. Broadband access and connectivity are a must in Bennettsville and Marlboro County if both are going to be a competitive, particularly as I-73 makes its way through the region. Businesses are interested in how accessible desired broadband connectivity is, as well as its speed, cost, and reliability. For many workers, broadband access is critical to working from home remotely. Residents too benefits from broadband access. The City, individually or in partnership, must consider efforts to provide or ensure that others provide sufficient broadband capacity for existing and future businesses in the community.

Beyond the Business Culture

Interwoven into the business culture is housing and amenities. Companies with a regional and/or international presence look for communities that have offerings that will meet their employees' needs and interests. Housing and amenities are big selling points.

As the number of jobs in Bennettsville and Marlboro County increases, housing will become more closely linked to economic development. Lower-income workers may bring increased need for affordable housing, and having appropriate housing located within the City will make employee recruitment more successful. Other new workers may desire types of housing not currently available. The City's housing needs are addressed in more detail in the Housing Element.

The other is active living. Supporting employees' efforts in maintaining an active lifestyle is beneficial to a company in terms of lower health costs and fewer days out of work. Accessibility to trails, sidewalks, fitness facilities, parks, and recreational programming are key to active living. Those are particular interest of relocatees with children. Parents want accessible parks and recreational activities for their children and themselves. The City is planning to enhance its park and recreation profile. The biggest impact for an active living perspective will be repurposing the historic former Marlboro Training School. The building has tremendous potential to have a museum with a fitness and aquatics center, locker rooms, and meeting space. The pictorial museum with limited artifacts adds an aesthetic component and celebrates the school's history. Integrated stylistically would give the recreational center a sense of place and attachment to the broader community. In fact, the facility should retain its former name or be named after one of the school's iconic figures. The site is ideal for various playground equipment and walking track extending to Lake Wallace's trail meandering through the proposed greenway with a walking and bike connections to City and County parks, and Downtown. Wayfinding signs and markers, strategic lighting, cameras, and emergency alert poles, and watering locations for people and their pets adds convenience and safety to the pedestrian/bike system.

TRANSITING FROM A PLACE TO A DESTINATION

Bennettsville transformation from a place to a destination hinges on its Downtown. It Downtown has a great deal of potential and charm. When asked during our visioning workshop, 53% thought Downtown was not great. The last two engagement indicators spoke the loudest. Eighty-two percent expressed a “Need to promote more events.” Events are an engaging way for visitors to discover a community and an avenue to engage residents. More importantly, visitors patronize the local economy. Ninety-six believed retail and entertainment are very much needed. In fact, of those 89% strongly agreed this is a needed boost to the community.

Quality of life on the surface seems to mirror the overwhelming desire for retail shopping and special events. Clearly, the respondents view of Bennettsville emanates from its Downtown to the City’s peripheries. Circling back to the community vibrancy engagement indicator, the perceived lack of or right mix of retail, little to no entertainment venue (i.e. movie theater, bowling alley, skating rink, etc.) and downtown events explain the lackluster view of the community as being vibrant. It is clear Bennettsville’s centerpiece for any economic and commercial growth hinges on a vibrant downtown.

Steps Forward

Public Investment. There is not any street furniture -benches, bike racks-, public art, or hanging planters or planted pots. These make the public space more inviting. People want to be a part of cool places. They feel connected to them. Public investment signals to private investors a commitment the City is all in.

Cool Events. Places like Hartsville, Florence, and Lake City have marquee events attract thousands from various states and counties. Bennettsville is poised for a marquee event. This is an opportunity for residents and leadership to talk through and plan the event. Respondents are also eager to see more events whether musical or family-oriented. From casual local conversations, events are not well advertised and marketed. If true that needs to change.

Opt-in e-blasts and social media platforms sounds the alarm. Locally, a note attached the customers water, electric, or gas bill is an inexpensive way to connect with the community. Event notices in Southern Living and AAA, through SC Park, Recreation, and Tourism, Tag Grant are affective.

Access to Great Advocates. Mark Suster, blogger in What Makes a Great Public Destination? wrote: *To create a great public destination, it's helpful for a community to have access to advocacy organizations that really "get it," and are proactive in working with locals to help them articulate their needs and claim their place.*

Inclusion and feedback are going to be key in driving any event as well as direct and indirect investment.

ECONOMIC GOALS & POLICIES

Goal 1. Work closely with local industry and educators to ensure the workforce is trained to support growth.

Goal 2. Ensure there are adequate and zoned properties for these employment uses, particularly the more intensive manufacturing and warehousing operations.

Goal 3. Allow and accommodate home occupations.

Goal 4. Expand business through annexations.

Goal 5. Reshape business activity in Downtown.

Goal 6. Recruiting new businesses and “top talent” for exiting businesses are two areas where the City of Bennettsville may introduce incentives. There are a wide range of incentives the City (County and State) can provide to businesses who bring new jobs to Bennettsville ranging from grants to loans to tax abatements.

Goal 8. Work with a consultant to develop a feasibility study for Downtown to find economic leakage. Leakage is a term that describe business leaving Bennettsville to other areas. This will help in recruiting business.

Goal 9. Develop incentive ordinances and program.

Goal 10. Initiate broader and diverse events Downtown. Events need to be well marketed not only in Bennettsville but in neighboring areas.

Goal 11. Actively collaborate with Marlboro County Economic Development Board, NETC, and others to market Bennettsville and increase it living wage jobs. Low paying jobs will not change radically change its high poverty rate.

Goal 12. Construct a garage to supplement the limited and depleted on-street parking. The current parking model does not afford readily available parking which neither is accessible or convenient. Potential funding. Consider a ¼ cent penny sales tax to pay for the parking garage. Incorporate garage parking with an apartment, commercial storefronts, or other viable use.

Goal 13. Develop a business incubator program to build local economic development. Partner with NETC to assist burgeoning businesses with developing a business plan, and provide accounting, and marketing courses. Use a vacant storefront. Partner with the Chamber,

Downtown Development Association, and Marlboro Economic Development to market program. Success hinges on business mentors.

Goal 14. Redesign the City's website with a visible link that navigates to how to do business in Bennettsville.

Goal 15. Develop downtown feasibility study for leakages.

Goal 16. Implement the Bailey Bill ordinance in partnership with Marlboro County to incentivize historic preservation, affordable housing, and economic development. The Bill allows county and municipalities to freeze property taxes to allows business and property owners to revitalize their buildings. Consequently, this drives commercial and residential development, especially in downtowns. A revitalized Downtown generates pedestrian traffic and commercial and retail activities.

Goal 17. Apply for New Market Tax Credits.

Goal 18. Take advantage of Opportunity Zone in 2028.

Goal 19. Develop a marketing strategy to sell Bennettsville. Use opt-in on the City's webpage to better connect with residents and businesses. Opt-in allows the City to send e-blasts to alert residents of meetings, events, and community activities.

Goal 20. Craft an economic development policy linking incentives to employment and target specific businesses.

Goal 21. Build local capacity to combat poverty.

Policy 21.1. First-source hiring initiative is to promote local hiring. New York, NY, Hartford, CT, and others have a similar program. First-source hiring refers to a measure taken to maximize the chances that low-income residents where redevelopment is occurring will be able to take advantage of new job opportunities generated. Developers must consider hiring available, local employees before it outsources those job opportunities. This too should be incentivized. Partner with SC Works to access a readily available database of skilled labors.

Policy 21.2. Conduct procurement workshops to assist minority businesses to be competitive in the City's and other governments procurement process.

Goal 22. Develop and promote marquee event along with more special events downtown.

Chapter 8

LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element is intended to guide development, urban form, and land usage in a way that strengthens the city's identity, quality of life, and economic prosperity. This Element attempts to focus on how areas of the City will be managed with a defined character. It lays the foundation for zoning and development patterns.

Field observations identified current land use activity, structures, and character on individual parcels and neighborhoods within the City. Those land uses mirror Vismor & Associates findings. The highway and downtown corridors received the primary assessment; whereas individual neighborhoods were surveyed on a broader scale. Gateway areas were also observed as it pertained to the entrances into the City.

LAND USE TYPES

Bennettsville's existing land usage can be classified into six land use types. The land uses included, single-family, multi-family, commercial, industrial, public/semi-public, and vacant lands. The vacant lands classification includes lands that contain structures yet are currently unoccupied or derelict. This existing land use assessment was used as the base line data for creating future development in terms of allowed uses and site intensity. In most cases, the current land use activity was recognized as appropriate for the site. In other situations, it was noted when a land use activity seemed out-of-character or problematic to the surrounding neighborhood. Vacant – Land that currently lies unused for any purpose. This includes lands that may contain structures but currently unoccupied or derelict.

From the land use survey, the state of existing land uses in the community and concerns regarding the future, the following issues have been raised:

- Land use compatibility
- Future housing composition
- Orderly arrangement (plan) of development
- Building and housing conditions
- The downtown
- Conservation of quality of life, historic, and natural resources

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

The strength and support for planning and zoning is based generally on the concept of land use compatibility. Homeowners and land owners, and the public alike are concerned when new development creates an incompatibility. Not all land use is complementary to or compatible with its surroundings, existing or proposed. And any infringement by uses adversely impacting

prevailing environmental conditions generally is met by resistance from affected property owners.

Land use incompatibility is a universal issue. It is no less an issue in the City of Bennettsville, surfacing every time a new use or project impacts an existing residential area or environmental resource. Depending on the nature of the project, the compatibility issue may range from non-controversial to NIMBY (not in my back yard) proportions.

The City's Zoning Ordinance is designed to protect residential areas from infringement of incompatible development. Still, the potential for land use incompatibility exist every time a property is proposed for rezoning. Thus, constant monitoring is required to check the situation.

Building and Housing Conditions

Housing conditions have improved appreciably over time, but there is still ample evidence of poor and substandard housing in certain parts of the City. The largest concentrations are in the Shady Rest Park community and neighborhoods to the north and south of West Main Street.

The impact of these conditions is two-fold. They provide less than adequate living accommodations, and they project negatively on Bennettsville. Continued participation in low income housing rehab programs and demolition of dilapidated houses and buildings are necessary to address this issue and continue to improve housing and living conditions.

ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT

This is the essence of planning to accommodate future development in an orderly manner. Toward this end, the city should assert itself through the planning process to decide where it wants to go and how it wants to get there. Essential to this challenge is how to accommodate new development so that it will enhance rather than compromise existing environmental conditions. Where is the city going? What does it want to look like 10 or 20 years from now? These and related questions are to be addressed by this Plan and articulated in policy statements. Because the city is essentially built out, most new development will be in the form of redevelopment, infill, and expansion by annexation.

The redevelopment process generally has to do with replacing an existing use with one more economically advantageous or more structurally sound. Often this involves the replacement or redevelopment of a marginal use in a transitional setting, but it can involve the replacement of a structurally sound and economically productive use in a stable setting.

How the city responds to these potential changes will be mirrored in the future. To ensure that the response produces positive results, the following policies are recommended:

- Establish land use and development goals and objectives for the various geographic areas and neighborhoods within the city.
- Develop criteria for evaluating proposed redevelopment activity.
- Monitor all development and rezoning proposals for compatibility with existing land use and development goals.

Conservation of Quality of Life, Historic Resources, Natural Resources, and Residential Areas
The conservation issue is broad in scope. It covers most physical resources responsible for quality of life, including historic and natural resources and quality residential areas.

As development inevitably impacts and changes the physical appearance of the Community, these are the things that need to be monitored and protected to ensure their longevity. Everything that contributes to quality of life should be preserved and enhanced, not just the resources listed herein, but everything that makes Bennettsville an attractive place to live, work and recreate.

THE DOWNTOWN

Vacant stores and an economically weakened downtown can have a devastating effect on land use and Community image, to say nothing of property values and property tax revenues. At issue is how to maintain a strong downtown in the face of growing competition from outside, and the decline of the historical role of the downtown.

Recognizing the importance of the downtown, the city has devoted substantial resources and effort in the form of a full-time on-going association (Bennettsville Downtown Development Association) to revitalize the downtown. The results are readily visible with refurbished buildings, enhanced streetscape and renewed economic vitality.

LAND USE ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICES

Goal 1. Maintain the integrity and quality of life, in existing residential areas and neighborhoods through decision making that promotes traditional neighborhood development, family-orientation and “small town” character. Future land use will be implemented/protected through zoning designations and land development regulations.

Policies 1.1. Ensure that residential areas are located and designed to protect life and property from natural and manmade hazards such as flooding, excessive traffic, subsidence, noxious odors and noise.

Policy 1.2. Encourage a balanced land use mix providing for a variety of housing styles, densities and open space.

Policy 1.3. Enforcement of all applicable laws and regulations and the provision of a variety of housing options, encourage opportunities for all citizens to purchase or rent decent, safe and sanitary housing which they can afford, free from arbitrary discrimination. Existing residential areas shall be protected from the encroachment of incompatible activities; likewise, other land use areas shall be protected from the encroachment of incompatible residential activities.

Policy 1.4. Promote sidewalk connectivity within and external to the neighborhood, especially sidewalks which link residential area to schools.

Policy 1.5. Discourage the development or redevelopment flood hazard areas, especially where dwelling units are not raised and supported above flood elevation.

Goal 2. Design commercial development that is compatible with environmental and economic resources, to enhance access and circulation, results in a positive and attractive built environment and will be in keeping with the needs and character of the community. Office and creative-based employment should be prioritized in the downtown area. Encourage repurpose and revitalization of existing buildings in the downtown core. Ensure new development responds to the established character in the downtown area in terms of architecture, scale, building orientation, and site design.

Policies 2.1. Minimize incompatibility when residential and commercial uses share a common boundary, the installation of buffering, as appropriate, where there is a change of use or increase in intensity. The following will be considered in determining the type and extent of buffering:

- a. Character of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- b. Hours of operation. iii. Location of parking, loading, and storage facilities.
- c. Other characteristics unique to the business.

Policy 2.2. Promote commercial development that serves to maintain or enhance the economic health of the Town, and to increase job opportunities, per capita income and convenience for residents. For example, neighborhood commercial centres should be established close to residential districts to provide close, convenient and complementing services to City residents.

Policy 2.3. Commercial land uses shall be in a manner which ensure the compatibility with the type and scale of surrounding land uses and where existing or programmed public facilities shall not be overburdened. Large regional commercial centres should be located along major transportation corridors and buffered from low density residential neighborhoods. Large commercial centers and automobile sales should be located outside the downtown district.

Policy 2.4. Commercial areas shall be located and designed to enhance safety by providing adequate off-street parking and loading areas and by separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Policy 2.5. Discourage strip commercial development that compounds traffic and land use conflicts.

Goal 3. Promote the development/redevelopment of industrial lands in a manner that reduce the impact on the surrounding properties whereas promoting the industrial land use as an economic driver and useful resources for the community.

Policies 3.1. Industrial land uses shall be restricted to those areas which have adequate transportation services for needed labor supply, materials and product shipment.

Policy 3.2. Support complementary industries and ancillary commercial services should be in proximity to each other to accomplish a linkage between industries and services.

Policy 3.3. Incorporate in zoning ordinance adequate buffering of abutting incompatible land uses from such nuisances such as glare, loading docks, etc. shall be provided on newly developed industrial uses or the enhancement of existing industrial uses.

Goal 4. Ensure the availability of suitable land for utility facilities necessary to support proposed development.

Policies 4.1. Assure adequate land is available for the maintenance of those public utility facilities provided by the Town necessary to support proposed development.

Policy 4.2. Public facilities and utilities shall be located to maximize the efficiency of services provided and to minimize cost and impacts on the natural environment.

Policy 4.3 Require where feasible underground placement of electric, telephone and other utility lines in conjunction with new development or redevelopment.

Goal 5. Ensure the Historic District maintains its vitality, charm and historic nature whereas promoting a diversity of uses to prevent the dilapidation of the district.

Policies 5.1 Continue to promote the history and recreation of the City and Historic District through community outreach and other means.

Policy 5.2. Promote bed & breakfast uses to enhance the lodging stock Downtown.

Policy 5.3. Provide wayfinding signage to direct customer to parking facilities. The City need to strongly consider a 5-minute walk accessible parking garage. There is not enough on and off-street parking Downtown to accommodate potential shoppers or a major festival.

Goal 6. Revisit zoning and subdivision ordinance to align zoning and land uses with the City's vision.

Policy 6.1. Incentivize low impact development, mixed use, infill, and Downtown housing.

Policy 6.2. Develop incentivize ordinance that promote Downtown revitalization and new technologies to increase wireless connections.

Chapter 9

PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENT

The Priority Investment Chapter reflects the need for a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Based on the request for one, none was provided. The assumption is there either not one or it is not available.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM AND PLAN

A CIP is developed through identification of needs over a five-year period. Costs are determined for the project as well as the overall timeline for completion and payment for the project. The projects are ranked in order of overall public need to identify funding priority. With these priorities determined, funding opportunities are outlined. The capital planning process identifies needs, implementation strategies and funding sources over a multi-year schedule so that budgeting and funding cycles are not disrupted due to an overwhelmingly large budget need in a given year. As it develops a capital improvements program, Bennettsville will undertake the updating of its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for its long-range budgeting process each year during the annual budget cycle. This advanced planning allows the Town to efficiently use public monies in a strategic manner. By placing funds on a time frame, cost savings are maximized. The five categories below should be used to determine capital projects:

- Any acquisition of land for a public purpose;
- Any construction of a new facility or an addition to, or extension of, such facility;
- A nonrecurring rehabilitation or major repair of all or a part of a building, its grounds, or a facility, or of equipment, provided that the cost is \$25,000 or more and the improvement will have a useful life of 10 years or more.
- Purchase of major equipment totalling \$25,000 or more;
- Any planning, feasibility, engineering, or design study related to an individual capital improvement project or to a program that is implemented through individual capital improvement projects.

Before Bennettsville develops a major capital improvement, the City will need to estimate the impacts of the continued operations and maintenance of the proposed facility or piece of equipment to the annual budget. Expansion of capital improvements is often associated with increased operations and long-term maintenance costs. This should be compared to the long-term maintenance costs of not replacing, maintaining or renovating an existing capital facility. In addition, some public service facilities need to be staffed on a part-time or full-time basis which has long-term budgetary impacts on the City's general fund. The City needs to engage in forward-looking planning efforts to understand the long-term budgetary impacts of its planned capital improvements prior to engagement of construction of a project or purchase of equipment or land. The projects identified within a CIP will probably indicate that the needs of the City may exceed the ability of anticipated revenues to fund these needs. Developing or identifying

additional sources of revenue would be an option the City could explore to fund the gap between anticipated revenue and the identified requests. The City should be proactive in determining the best funding source for implementation of these projects in advance of their proposed funding dates. While the City should be able to fund a large portion of its growth-related infrastructure requirements from growth related revenue increases, this may not always be the case in the future. As traditional methods of infrastructure finance become less feasible, local governments have turned to methods that place more of the financial burden of growth-related infrastructure on developers and ultimately on the new residents moving to their community. Negotiated development exactions may be used in the development or annexation approval process to assist in funding infrastructure for public services to a new development. The assistance may come in one of several forms. The developer may provide land within the development for the location of a public facility such as a park, fire station or school. Impact fees are another option for alternative funding. Impact fees are like negotiated exactions in that the developer aids in financing public infrastructure required to serve the new development. They differ from negotiated exactions in that they are not voluntary but are instead imposed by the local government in a manner like other fees. The SC Development Impact Fee Act permits the assessment of fees on public facilities including water and wastewater, solid waste and recycling, roads streets, bridges, storm water, public safety facilities, capital equipment over \$100,000, parks, libraries and recreational facilities.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

Once projects are determined, the next step in the process is to determine the best way to fund the purchase or construction of the capital item. There are various ways to fund capital improvement projects in South Carolina:

- Current revenue (pay-as-you-go) – Pay-as-you-go is the financing of improvements from current revenues such as general taxation, fees, service charges, special funds, or special assessments.
- Revenue funds – Revenue funds are monies collected in advance of construction of a project which have been accumulated from surplus or earmarked operational revenues, funds in depreciation reserves or the sale of capital assets.
- General obligation bonds – Bonds may be issued for a specific construction project with the local government pledged to pay interest and principal to retire the debt.
- Revenue bonds – These types of bonds are sold for revenue and financed through service charges or fees incurred from the development of the project.
- Lease-purchase – This option allows for local governments to enter into a lease for a specified period of time until the government has utilized the item, or the government pays for the full value.
- Authorities and special districts – Special districts allow for the raising of revenue based on the use of the future project by a specified geographic area.

- Special assessments – Special assessments may be utilized for properties that have a direct benefit of the service provided by a capital project. Examples of this type of funding would be hospitality and accommodations taxes.
- State and federal grants – Grant funding for many projects is available through state, federal and private grant procedures that typically require a competitive application process.
- Tax increment financing (TIF) – TIF can be used to provide front-end funds in an area where large-scale redevelopment is feasible.
- User fees – User fees may be utilized or increased in order to offset costs that will be incurred through upgrades or new construction of capital facilities.
- Impact fees and exactions – Impact fees and exactions are used to exact additional charges and fees from land development to help pay for capital improvements. These fees are placed into a special fund for system-wide capital facilities and are determined by fiscal impact analysis on the future demand a proposed development will have on the local infrastructure system.

Ultimately, the Bennettsville City Council is responsible for determining the most viable option for funding of a particular item. Much discussion and research are involved in identifying the best funding source of a necessary community project. However, there are some options that are potential sources for additional funding. While it is anticipated that most local government funding sources for capital improvements will continue to be the same as in the past, local governments will need to be innovative and proactive in seeking new funding opportunities, especially those funding sources that bring in revenues from outside the county.

- Hospitality Tax – This is a tax on dining and beverages that helps fund special projects and general operations.
- Accommodations Tax – This is a tax on lodging that is restricted by state statute and may only be used for tourism-related projects. The State’s portion is collected by the State and remitted back to the County. The County distributes funds to applicable tourism organizations on an application approval basis approved by County Council and a Council-appointed Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee to support festivals and other activities that encourage tourism activity.
- Enhancements – Federal funding for transportation enhancements, such as bicycle and pedestrian treatments, guided through the South Carolina Department of Transportation.
- C-Funds – State gas tax funds allocated to counties for transportation improvements.
- South Carolina Infrastructure Bank – The State bank assists in loans and financing for major infrastructure and transportation facilities.
- Penny or Half Cent Sales Tax – An additional sales tax which can be used to fund special projects for infrastructure and capital projects.

- Impact Fee Revenues – Impact fees are assessments that are made traditionally when development occurs. As development begins to increase, funds would be provided to offset any service lag from this new development.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts – TIFs are typically established for areas that are in need of development or redevelopment where additional capital projects are needed or encouraged. This funding mechanism is especially useful in downtown areas or mixed-use districts.
- Special Tax District – This is an option widely used in some counties for sewer improvements for subdivisions and other special areas. An additional annual tax is levied on property for a special purpose where individual property owners are elected to a commission to oversee the spending of these funds.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The City of Bennettsville should seek to coordinate major capital improvements with other nearby governmental jurisdictions where possible. Coordination may include techniques such as joint funding of capital improvements, shared use agreements, or shared maintenance or operations agreements. Coordination should also include consultation with relevant local government jurisdictions during the development of each Comprehensive Plan update and during the development of the annual Capital Improvements Program. Opportunities for shared uses, colocation of facilities, and land swaps between governmental entities should also be explored. Other relevant governmental agencies will be consulted in the planning stages as Bennettsville implements specific capital improvements, and the City will assist other local government agencies in the implementation of their CIPs so long as these are consistent with the City Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY INVESTMENT GOALS & POLICIES

Community investment in services is a necessary government function. As growth and revitalization continues, more services are required to meet the needs of the citizenry. As funding sources decline, priorities must be made to identify and prioritize projects that provide the most benefit. Investment should be directed in areas designated for future investment based on existing infrastructure and future demand. Identify long-range capital project needs in relation to funding. The following goals and policies are recommended to reposition City of Bennettsville as regional destination.

Goal 1. Establish and conduct a needs assessment.

Policy 1.1. The City should establish a process for regularly conducting community appraisals of existing resources and assets and identify gaps, barriers, and future needs. It should use surveys, community meetings, and other methods to seek input from residents, as well as public and private entities to identify desired community services, facilities, and programs.

Goal 2. Conduct a capital improvements plan.

Policy 2.1. Annually determine the needs based on adequate services to the public. To achieve this objective, an annual five-year CIP procedure in the annual budget process should be initiated. The capital needs of all departments and the overall needs of the City should be monitored. The City should identify and develop priorities to complete capital projects and achieve and maintain desired levels of service.

Goal 3. Identify funding sources.

Policy 3.1. Identify funding amounts and sources for capital projects implementation. Toward this end, the City needs to identify and pursue State and Federal grants and other funding for capital improvements. The costs associated with maintenance and operation in all projects, as well as the costs associated with deferred maintenance or postponement of capital project implementation should be considered. Alternative funding sources for project categories should be identified.

Goal 4. Implement capital project plan.

Policy 4.1. The City should maintain a list of capital projects under construction or purchased and track the cost-savings of capital items implemented against no action or deferred maintenance.

Goal 5. Partner with others for cost-saving and efficiency.

Policy 5.1. Strategies to achieve this objective could include developing partnerships on a regional and countywide basis when appropriate; coordinating projects with all adjacent and relevant agencies and jurisdictions; exploring cost-savings opportunities with local governments; considering an interagency review committee in the review and approval process of facility planning; and, exploring joint funding of capital improvements, shared use agreements and shared maintenance or operations agreements

Appendix A

STAKEHOLDER/CITIZEN INPUT ANALYSIS

The City of Bennettsville contracted with RS3 Planning Collaborative, LLC to update its Comprehensive Plan. The public participation process is the linchpin for any successful plan. It ensures community values are articulated and creates healthy dialogue. Dialogue and debate promote creativity and a pluralistic approach. In an effort to engage the public, we kicked-off the Comprehensive Planning process with a community visioning and planning workshop.

The visioning workshop investigated moods, opinions, and information about the City. It also gauged their ideas and suggestions by analyzing perceived strengths, concerns/weaknesses, and opportunities. It attempted to engage the three learning approaches – audio, visual, kinesthetic. There is a tendency for overlap. The visual incorporates surveys to gauge the demographics, and community perception and interests. Surveys give persons who are not as comfortable vocalizing their views a platform to share their thoughts. A number of the indicators were blank – no response. Either the respondents were not sure how to respond or uncomfortable responding. Another explanation was limited time during the public engagement session. Northeastern Technical College was invited to present their impending investment and explain their programmatic platform. Their presentation spilled over our Comprehensive Plan engagement session. Respondents may have been affected by information overload. Kinesthetic [hands-on] approach used a map activity. Groups were provided a map and colored pencils. The instructions were to note strengths in blue, issues/weakness in red, and opportunities in green. They perused over the maps, while conferring with each other, made notations on the maps and assigned their color preferences. This engaged their audio, visual, and motor responses. Audio included dialogue among themselves and during the discussion session.

Focus group consultations with City staff, the mayor and few council members, the administrator, and Bennettsville Downtown Development Association were held prior to the Town Hall planning session. The Town hall planning sessions were held in the City's Community Center. Our goal is to:

- Solicit ideas and opinions;
- Build a platform to energize the public; and,
- Build confidence in the planning process by listening intently and incorporating their ideas in the plan.

More importantly, early community inclusion builds public trust and community support in the implementation phase.

The City endeavored to connect with residents, community leaders, elected officials, departmental staff, the Planning Commission, community-based agencies, and non-profits through post cards, flyers, and email notifications. Press releases and public service announcements (PSAs) were released to the Herald Advocate, WPDE News Channel 15, SCNow.com, WBTW News Channel 13, and other media outlets. Unfortunately, the attendance and participation were not what we expected. Those who participated were energetic and eager to discuss the City’s future. Their energy paralleled more attended planning sessions in many respects. Their input lays the foundation for the comprehensive plan and topics that require further investigation.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Initially, each respondent was provided a survey to glean a socio-economic profile. Questions focused on tenure (rent or own), age, race, monthly income, monthly rent, employment status, gender, and presence of children. Subsequent questions related to preferences.

Our socio-economic profile revealed:

- Male participants slightly outnumbered females by six percent. According to the 2010 US Census, our participant composition paralleled the City’s female-male population profile. Males represent 54.8% of the population in relationship to 45.2% females.

1. Indicate your gender:

Male	57%
Female	43%

- Most of the participants were between 65-74 years of age. A little over 25% were between 45-54 year of age, followed by 21% in the 35-44 age range. Statistically, 54 or more percent of the attendees were baby boomers. Baby boomers are persons born between 1945 and 1964. Today, these are individuals between 53-72 years old. The attendees are not a microcosm of the community. The median age was 36.8 in 2010, nearly a half percent (.4%) lower than the national average. The City is relatively young.

2. Indicate your age:

Under 18	0%
18-24	0%
25-34	0%
35-44	21%
45-54	25%
55-64	18%
65-74	29%
75 and older	7%

- Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Asians, and multi-racial persons makeup 3% of the City of Bennettsville’s population. None participated in this planning session. The attendees’

- identified races were African American (25%) and White (71%); this is a radical departure from the actual racial demographics. African Americans makeup 64.2% of the population, while Whites represent the remaining 33.7%. Four percent of the attendees did not provide a response.

3. What race do you consider yourself?

Native American	0%
African-American/Black	25%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0%
White	71%
Two or more races	0%
Other	0%
No Response	4%

- Question 4 gauged household size. Seven percent reported to live alone. Two-person households made up 15% of the respondents. Twenty-one percent live in three-person households. Three-person households were the largest. Cross-referencing household size with question 5, children under 18 years old, the data suggest three and four-person households more than likely to have children under 18 years of age.
4. Please circle the number of persons currently living in your household including yourself.

1	7%
2	15%
3	21%
4	18%
5	0%
6	0%
7	0%
8	0%
9 or more	0%

- Question 5 inquired about the number of children under 18 years old living in the home. Sixty-four percent did not have children under 18 years of age in the home. One child (14%) and two children (18%) under 18 years old were reported present. Cross-referencing the ages of participants with those with children, mothers may have started families later. This mirrors national population growth trends. Women and couples are delaying parenthood in pursuit of careers. The cost of rearing children influences the number of children.

5. Please circle the number of children under 18 living in your home.

0	64%
1	14%
2	18%
3	0%
4	0%
5	0%
6	0%
7	0%
8	0%
9 or more	0%
No Response	4%

- Employment is one barometer for measuring economic health and a socio-economic predictor. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were employed part or full-time. The remaining 39% were either retired or self-employed, full-time. Of these, 32% indicated they were retired. Four percent did not respond. None indicated being unemployed. This is a far cry from the City’s employment status. Bennettsville, according to the US Census’ 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS), has 13.4% unemployment.

6. What of the following describes your current employment status?

Self-employed, full-time	7%
Self-employed, part-time	0%
Employed, full-time	50%
Employed, part-time	7%
Unemployed	0%
Retired	32%
No Response	4%

- Questions 7 and 8 gauged tenure and housing choice. Housing is one of the most fundamental necessities after water and food. Ninety-three percent of the survey respondents owned or have a mortgage, while seven percent reported to rent. The Census tells a different story. Its enumeration shows 52% of Bennettsville’ population were homeowners in 2010. Ninety-three percent indicated to reside in a single-family home. In real terms, attached or detached single-family homes comprised 53.2% of Bennettsville’s housing stock in 2010.

- Homeownership signals stability and long-term investment. Homeowners tend to have a commitment to their neighborhoods, community, and sense of place. This is believed to be higher than renters who tend to be more transient. Of the 46.8% rental housing units, 42% are
- multi-family units, according to Census' 2012-2106 ACS. Apartments with 5 to 9 units were the largest housing type among rentals.

7. Do you own or rent your house?

Own	93%
Rent	7%
Other	0%

8. What type of home do you currently reside?

Mobile home	0%
Single-family	93%
Townhouse/Condominium	3.5%
Duplex	0%
Apartment	3.5%
Senior housing	0%
Assisted Living Facility	0%
Other	0%

- Median mortgage, according to 2016 ACS estimates, was \$858. Housing cost for units without a mortgage was \$314, reflecting owner-occupied units. A little over thirty-six percent (36.7%) indicated their monthly mortgage or rent was under \$500. The most plausible explanation is these participants no longer have a mortgage and/or reside in subsidized housing. On the surface, homeowners with monthly expenses below \$500 quite possibly mirror the monthly housing cost without a mortgage. Closer inspection reveals 25% have monthly expenses below \$500. Twenty-eight percent had mortgages ranging from \$500 to \$849. Eleven percent indicated their monthly mortgage or rent was \$950 or more. On the other hand, we must explore median monthly rents. Median rents, according to 2016 ACS, were \$571. Participants who reported to have rents less than \$500 are well below the median rent. Further analysis in the Housing Element will examine cost burden and affordability.

9. What is your month mortgage or rent?

		Mortgage/Rent by Tenure	
		Renters	Homeowners
Under \$500	36.7%	7%	25%
\$500-\$649	10.7%	0%	11%
\$650-\$749	7.1%	0%	7%
\$750-\$849	10.7%	0%	11%
\$850-949	0%	0%	0%
\$950 and up	10.7%	0%	11%
No Response	25%	0%	28%

- Another economic indicator is income. Monthly incomes ranged from \$1,000 to \$3,500 or more. The income frequency varied along the reported continuum. A majority (42.8%) reported monthly incomes at or above \$3,500 followed by ranges between \$3,000 and \$3,499 (17.9%). The third highest income group reported incomes between \$2,500 and \$2,999. The cross-reference of incomes and employment status suggest once high paying careers now reflective in retirement benefits or current professionals. These respondents in terms of yearly income range from \$30,000 to more than \$42,000 exceeding 2016 household income estimates (\$29,738). The remaining income groups, collectively, equates to 10.8% with incomes ranging from \$12,000 a year (\$1,000 monthly) up to \$35,988 year (\$2,999 monthly).

10. What is your monthly household income, including alimony, child support, social security, and/or other?

Under \$500	0%
\$500-\$649	0%
\$650-\$749	0%
\$750-\$849	0%
\$850-949	0%
\$950-\$999	0%
\$1,000-\$1,449	3.6%
\$1,500-\$1,999	3.6%
\$2,000-\$2,499	3.6%
\$2,500-\$2,999	10.7%
\$3,000-3,499	17.8%
\$3,500 and up	42.8%
No Response	17.8%

- Question 11 gauges community perception. Indicators ranged from strongly agree to disagree. There was a marginal number of no responses. The first indicator asked, “Is Bennettsville a vibrant growth community.” Only 7.1% somewhat agreed Bennettsville is a vibrant City. A little over 17% were neutral. Surprisingly, 71.4% somewhat disagreed and disagreed. This is alarming yet sets the tone for change.

“Offers a good quality of life”, 50% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed. Approximately, 78% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed Bennettsville is a friendly, neighborly place to live. When asked about Downtown, 53% thought downtown was not great. Forty-seven percent of the responses range from neutral (14%) to somewhat agree (29%) to agree (4%). Of course, after 5:00 pm, the Downtown is far less lively. This is not isolated to Bennettsville. Many towns and cities struggle to create a night life in their Downtowns. Communities that have been successful have encouraged more bars, restaurants, sporting events, art and cultural performances, and theaters. These generate a broad cross-section of visitors.

The last two engagement indicators spoke the loudest. Eighty-two percent expressed a “Need to promote more events.” Events are an engaging way for visitors to discover a community and an avenue to engage residents. More importantly, visitors patronize the local economy. Ninety-six believed retail and entertainment are very much needed. In fact, of those 89% strongly agreed this is a needed boost to the community.

Quality of life on the surface seems to mirror the overwhelming desire for retail shopping and special events. Clearly, the respondents view of Bennettsville emanates from its Downtown to the City’s peripheries. Circling back to the community vibrancy engagement indicator, the perceived lack of or right mix of retail, little to no entertainment venue (i.e. movie theater, bowling alley, skating rink, etc.) and downtown events explain the lackluster view of the community as being vibrant. It is clear Bennettsville’s centerpiece for any economic and commercial growth hinges on a vibrant downtown.

11. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the City of Bennettsville.

	Strongly Agree 1	Somewhat Agree 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Disagree 4	Disagree 5	No Response
Is a vibrant growing community	0%	7.1%	17.8%	35.7%	35.7%	3.6%
Offers a good quality of life	7.1%	43%	11%	21%	14%	4%
Is friendly, neighborly place to live	28.6%	50%	14.3%	7.1%	0%	0%
Downtown is great	4%	29%	14%	32%	21%	0%
Need to promote more events	61%	21%	14%	4%	0%	0%
Need retail and entertainment	89%	7%	4%	0%	0%	0%

- Question 12 was open-ended – “If you had a chance to change something about the City of Bennettsville, what would you change?” Change largely centered around jobs, downtown revitalization, and youth activities. The list below reflects the respondents’ views and ambitions.

12. If you had a chance to change something about the City of Bennettsville, what would you change?

Jobs/Better Schools	More government involvement	Need more people.
Morale	Increase tax base.	More growth
More recreational facilities for our youth.	More activities for the kids!	More restaurants
Provide more opportunities for	Add the fine arts – take advantage of	Bring more business, people, events

our youth	the building that exists to further the arts.	Downtown.
More opportunities for entertainment/retail.	Money spent in the Downtown area.	Better school system, economic development (more jobs), better recreation/kids youth programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More jobs ▪ Clean up Town ▪ More things for kids to do 	Increase the amount of recreational activities for youth, family restaurants.	The focus of our elected officials should be for the community as a whole!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer more to children ▪ Move away from status quo ▪ Provide more options in retail/dining/etc. 	Change the vision – take old ways out and import new ways in life changes	Improvement – more downtown retail, restaurants, & entertainment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring back hospital emergency room. ▪ Have better schools & test grades (state level). ▪ Have property owners care for their property & demolish abandoned structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More industries, jobs, & businesses ▪ Better education system (County) ▪ Modernize/Growth & expansion needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in marketing/promotion activities ▪ Encourage downtown renovations (façade, rear entrances, alleys) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ recruit restaurant, retail, entertainment to city
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downtown Bennettsville need new awnings. ▪ Lots of empty housing upkeep should be by the city or owner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More retail stores -coffee shops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ senior center ▪ less taxes ▪ better communication ▪ put tax money to work ▪ More opportunities for young people other than factory work. 	

Socio-economic characteristics influence perceptions and lifestyle choices. The participants overall were a more mature, community-oriented group. Their lens takes on a different perspective than a younger and more transient population. It would have been interesting to observe the responses of millennials, renters, and others. Millennials are a socio-political reference to 18 through 33-year-olds. Thirty-four to 39-year-olds are an equally important cohort group. Both are more susceptible to relocate out the city, county, and state for employment opportunities and lifestyle choices. They tend to prefer urban neighborhoods close to work, entertainment, and shopping. Also, this age group is rethinking homeownership. Given the nation’s slow economic recovery and rising cost of housing, they are not rushing out to be buy homes. Economic recovery is more rapid in urban centers. Recovery efforts are slower in rural counties and small towns. Rentals are the housing of choice. Their input into the planning conversation would have added another perspective to our energetic dialogue. The need for their input remains relevant.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Needs Assessment fleshed out Bennettsville's ambitions, goals, and commitment to its future. It also gauged preference and priority. Needs were evaluated by Housing, Economic Development, and Living Environment categories. These categories have a direct impact on the comprehensive plan's Housing, Economic, and Public Facilities Elements. There is interrelationship between the other elements.

The attendees were asked to rate their need preferences (Strongly Agree to Disagree) and prioritize their needs by allocating a dollar amount. Here, the participants were allocated a theoretical \$100 to decide what to fund and at what levels. Totals could not exceed \$100. This placed them in the decision-makers' shoes. The decision to distinguish which needs are more important is difficult. Decision-makers are tasked daily with making critical decisions that have long-term implications. We decided to articulate priorities in average dollar allocation. Average dollar allocation is total allocated dollar amounts for each need divided by the number of respondents. The allocations reflect the average dollar amount. Subsequently, they were tasked with identifying strategies and partners to address their top needs. Again, this placed them in decision-makers shoes.

VISIONING

The first step was establishing a vision. Vision is the overarching aspiration that moves the abstract to existence. It is a critical component for any plan. The vision statement is more impactful when the community defines its vision. Below are their vision statements. All of them are valued. However, the following stood out:

- *Innovation, education, quality of life for all, team work chamber, town, and community. A beautiful place to live and grow.*
- *Promoting growth while recognizing history of town through teamwork and network of support for business, art, and recreation.*
- *A progressive, supportive local government that fosters community involvement in ongoing efforts to enhance and improve the community to make it the best place possible to live, work, and recreate.*
- *A plan that will let our town grow, keep it a great place to live, and also give our children (our future) something to do and stay active.*
- *Sustaining growth through a mix of governmental, non-profit, residential and commercial that enhances quality of life.*

Notice the messaging. Keep in mind, these were independent responses. The only prompt was the example vision statement to engage and inspire them to tap into their creative thought. Each states and hints to community, quality of life, economic growth, reinvigorating downtown, and inviting place. It would be impossible to read and digest their vision if we combined the aforementioned vision statements. With the City’s permission, we synthesized the above vision statements around their shared message. *A community promoting an active Downtown, preserving its historic and cultural resources, and engaging its youth and residents making Bennettsville an inviting place* seems to capture their sentiment.

Vision

<i>To incorporate an overall lifestyle to coincide with better business and productive community.</i>	<i>Provide a catalyst for growth and provide a positive revenue plan.</i>
<i>Our town needs more jobs, restaurants, and places for kids and teenagers to enjoy various activities.</i>	<i>Provide better service for a more responsible price City beautification Foster better partnerships with other local governments</i>
<i>Our town needs to provide a way for local businesses to grow and succeed- utilities/taxes/etc. We need restaurants/shops/etc. to make Bennettsville a place that young people want to live.</i>	<i>Have a government (employees, elected officials) who can be visionaries together for the betterment of the Town. Encourage leadership to review objectives and be bold.</i>
<i>Promote the community through an active Downtown... business, entertainment, economic development, healthy lifestyle</i>	<i>Bring in more business in Downtown. Fix up the Town.</i>
<i>Develop retail business & restaurants</i>	<i>Small southern charm, busy with retail</i>
<i>To preserve our historic, small town atmosphere while improving opportunities and quality of life for all</i>	<i>Grow culturally and become a dynamic town that residents and visitors want to be a part of especially live</i>

<i>residents.</i>	<i>arts.</i>
<i>Town government that envisions and place to improve the appearance of all sections of the city.</i>	<i>My vision is to see more youth families to encourage more quality of life for our youth.</i>
<i>Retail shopping to many empty stores. Move theater</i>	<i>History and culture</i>
<i>Create an environment to attract more retirees to our community and more opportunities for our young people.</i>	

Housing Needs

In measuring the respondents' housing choice, the respondents felt housing rehabilitation program (77.7%), new construction for homeownership/rental (74%), and housing for seniors (59%) were greatly needed and needed respectfully. Housing rehabilitation program received the highest greatly needed rating at 44.4%. Needed housing solutions are led by new construction (48%) followed by housing for seniors (40%), transitional housing/homeless shelter (37%), housing rehabilitation program and housing counseling program (33.3), and special needs housing choice (22%). Although new construction ranked second, it had the highest none responses tied with special needs housing choice. This is puzzling. Special needs housing is not so puzzling. They may not be familiar with this housing choice. This is evident in it high neutral responses. However, there is no possible explanation for the number of none responses for new construction. Nonetheless, there was some uncertainty. New construction category served a dual purpose. It gauged the housing type and bedroom size preferences. Single-family housing (50%) was the most preferred housing choice followed by apartments (23%), townhomes (13%), and condos (8%). Three-bedroom sizes were preferred. Two, four, one, and more than 4-bedroom sizes in this order reflect bedroom size choice. Demolition, a write-in response, was worth noting. When taken in context with the interactive portion of the visioning session, it is relevant. Several locations on the map were noted eyesores or on the verge of being beyond rehabbing. The fact they are concentrated in several areas make them more significant. Another write-in response was patio homes for seniors reflecting specific units. The respondent, perhaps, wanted to delineate this housing type from the typical apartment style senior housing units.

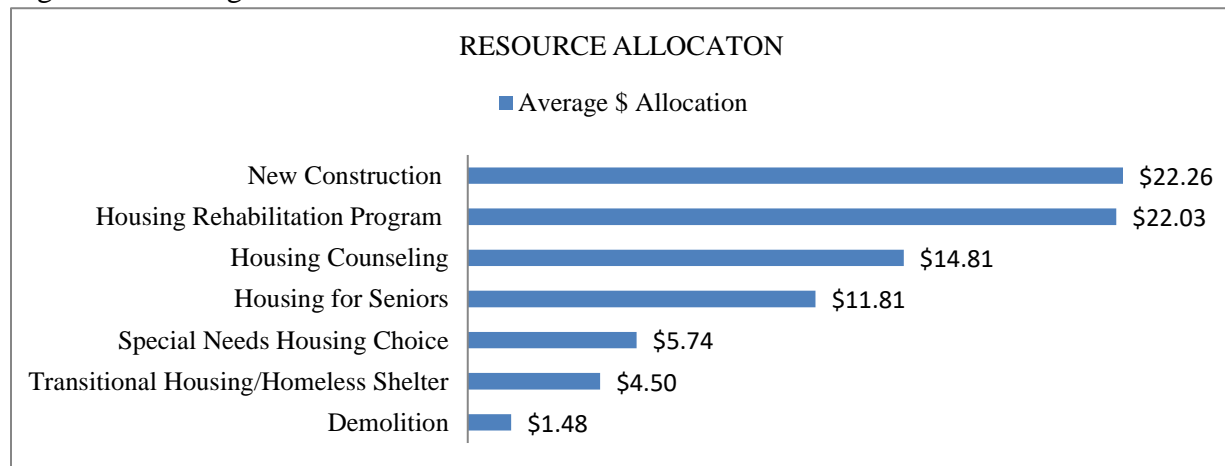
Figure 1 illustrates the average spending per person denoting level of importance. Spending prioritization mirrored the top three housing preferences. Housing, when prioritized, preferences changed. New construction received the highest priority. Respondents allocated \$22.26 for new construction. Twenty-two dollars and three cents were allocated for housing rehabilitation followed by \$14.81 for housing counseling. Housing counseling compliments housing construction. A successfully organized program provides candidates ready to purchase newly constructed units as they become available. This may be the reason housing counseling was one of their top three priorities.

Housing Needs

Town continues to assess and further appropriate housing, please indicate the need for the following types of housing.

	Greatly Needed 1	Needed 2	Neutral 3	Not Needed 4	No Response
1. Housing Rehabilitation Program	44.4%	33.3%	7.4%	3.7%	11.1%
2. New Construction for Homeownership/Rental	26%	48%	7%	4%	15%
Types & Sizes					
<i>Single-family 50% Apartments 23% Duplexes 0% Townhomes 13% Condos 8% No Response 4%</i>					
<i>1bdrm 5% 2bdrm 15% 3bdrm 65% 4bdrm 10% More than 4bdrm 5%</i>					
3. Housing for Seniors	19%	40%	33%	4%	4%
4. Transitional Housing/ Homeless Shelter	1%	37%	26%	7.4%	7.4%
5. Housing Counseling Program	14.8%	33.3%	37%	22%	0%
6. Special Needs Housing Choice (i.e. Mentally Ill, Disabled, HIV/AIDS)	4%	22%	55%	4%	15%
7. Demolition	8%	1%	0%	0%	0%
8. Patio Homes for Seniors	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 1. Housing Prioritization



Economic Development

At a glance, family restaurants were the most desired need in Bennettsville. Retail shopping and movie theater rated second and third. Greatly needed and needed preferences substantiate this observance. Notice write-ins 9 through 15. Craft and men’s stores could easily be incorporated into retail shopping. The respondents felt they were somewhat different. The others ran the gamut from jobs to entertainment related to transportation and everything in between. Nonetheless, prioritization, according to resource allocation, switched family restaurants and retail shopping making retail shopping the top priority. Movie theater remained third.

Respondents on average spent \$20.15 for retail shopping. Second and third priorities by average spending were family restaurants (\$18.50) and movie theater (\$13.18).

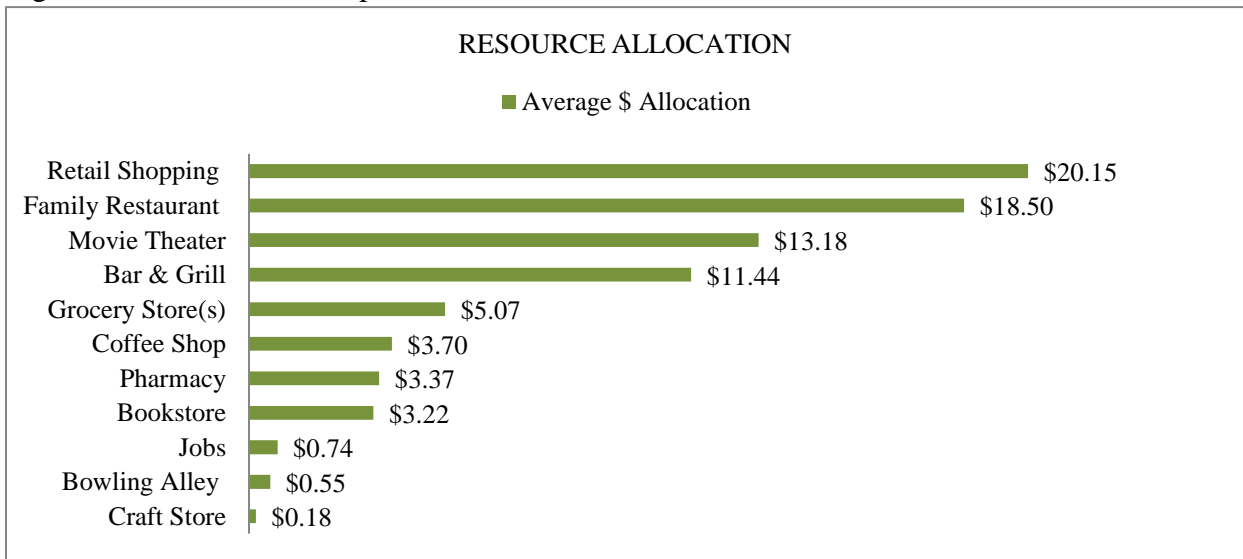
Toolkit focuses on the how. The next session teases out how to cultivate a vibrant business community. We listed several economic development tools inviting additional options. Respondents evaluated their preferences from strongly agree to disagree. Special Event activities gauging strongly agree and somewhat agree categories ranked highest (85%) among categories. It was also the highest ranked strongly agree category. Overwhelmingly, respondents felt Downtown needs more events. Special events as an economic development tool attract visitors and encourage consumer spending. This with retail shopping confirms their perception of vibrancy, which is not shocking. The need for special events were a familiar theme in our community perception probe. Business incentives ranked second (74%). Because Downtown is central to Bennettsville's future, it is worth noting incentives have been instrumental in numerous reimagined Downtowns. Incentives included business license rebate or amortization for new businesses, and discounted license program for long-term businesses, loan program, grants, tax credits, and other programs. Another is business incubators. They are tailored to assist start-ups over 2 to 5-year period. Typically, the municipality or county owns or partners with a nonprofit who owns a storefront. The store front is repurposed to house specific businesses. Programming is included that provides business planning, marketing, tax and accounting education, and business mentoring. Here is where Northeastern Technical College can have a larger technical footprint in Bennettsville. It also allows the businesses to build a clientele to transition into their own storefront or location within the municipality or county. This also allows them to save money to take that next step. Small business training focuses on the programmatic services for emerging and existing businesses. These ensure business success when statistically most businesses fail within two years. Job training program ranked third (59%). The United States economic trade policies has long shifted from a manufacturing to a technological based economy. This shift has impacted small communities particularly those away from urban centers. Successful job training programs are a partnership between local governments, technical colleges, and trade associations. Programming is designed to engage trainees through hands-on training to fill anticipated and/or unfilled labor demands. Briefly, establish and/or improve tourism – a write-in response – is interwoven with special events, business incentives, and retail shopping. Clearly, this respondent sees an underexplored opportunity. Bennettsville has some great assets to make it a regional competitor.

Economic Development Needs

As the Town continues its effort to attract businesses to the community, please indicate the need for the following types of businesses.

	Greatly Needed 1	Needed 2	Neutral 3	Not Needed 4	No Response
1. Movie Theater	37%	33%	22%	4%	4%
2. Family Restaurant	66.6%	29.6%	0%	0%	3.7%
3. Bar & Grill	22.2%	40.7%	22.2%	0%	14.8%
4. Grocery Stores	22.2%	14.8%	29.6%	18.5%	14.8%
5. Coffee Shop	11.1%	18.5%	40.7%	18.5%	11.1%
6. Pharmacy	11%	11%	41%	30%	7%
7. Retail Shopping	63%	30%	0%	0%	7%
8. Bookstore	15%	18.5%	48%	18.5%	0%
9. Bowling Alley	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10. Craft Store	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
11. PARTA	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12. Jobs	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
13. Entertainment	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
14. Men's Store	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
15. Infrastructure	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 2. Economic Development Prioritization



Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following as tools to cultivate a vibrant business community and make the City more attractive to businesses and residents.

	Strongly Agree 1	Somewhat Agree 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Disagree 4	Disagree 5	No Response
Small Business						
Training/Incubator	7.4%	37%	44.4%	11.1%	0%	0%
Job Training Program	4%	55%	26%	11%	4%	0%
Access to Transportation	3.7%	48.1%	18.5%	29.6%	0%	0%
Business Incentives	26%	48%	26%	0%	0%	0%
Downtown Façade Program	15%	26%	33%	26%	0%	0%
Special Events Activities	48%	37%	15%	0%	0%	0%
Establish/Improve Tourism	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Living Environment Needs

Living Environment Needs is the last needs assessment tool but not the least category in this discussion. Again, this is a quality of life barometer. Along the spectrum of need, Community Policing (81%), Cultural Art Centers (78%) and Health Care Services (73%) ranked one, two, and three in terms of preference. Community Policing is interesting. Policing was not nearly as vocalized or illustrated as some others. Perhaps, community policing is an underlying concern couched in the identified abandoned homes and areas needing rehabilitation and new construction. Perception is reality in many cases. The perception of criminal activity is interwoven in lack luster appearances of an area/neighborhood. In fact, that perception spills over in the evaluation of people. Unkept neighborhoods are perceived as intimidating. Cultural Art Center and Health Care Services were familiar and echoed topics. What is surprising is Cultural Art Center nudged out Health Care Services. In fact, Cultural Art Center received the highest greatly needed responses. The now closed art building needs to be updated. It may be a focal point for revitalizing Downtown and attracting visitors. An Art center, restaurants, and retail stores are a dynamic combination for not only Downtown but the entire City. Things, hopefully, will have a ripple effect to the surrounding areas. This may have been the thought process in ranking the Cultural Art Center so high. Health Care Services given most of our respondents' ages is a plausible choice. For these baby boomers and soon to be seniors, health care cost remains a concern despite the impending changes to Affordable Health Care Act and amid ongoing political debate over Medicaid. More importantly, Bennettsville does not have a hospital. McLeod Health closed the hospital. With nearly 9,000 people, residents rely on two urgent care facilities – CareSouth Carolina and Marlboro Family Practice and Urgent Care. Both have limited medical service hours. CareSouth Carolina closes at 5:00 pm and Marlboro Family Practice and Urgent Care closes at 6:00 pm. Serious medical attention or needed service after hours dictate persons to be transported or transport themselves to Scotland Memorial Hospital, which is in Laurinburg, NC. The other option is McLeod Health in Florence, SC. The former is

17 or more miles (30 minute-drive) and the latter is approximately 40 miles (47 minutes-drive). Neither is convenient when it comes to life or death emergencies. Preferences based on funding is a head scratcher. Health Care Services topped the others. Average spending was \$13.33. Community Policing tied for third with Environmental Issues (\$8.33). Infrastructure Improvements were second (\$8.37). Infrastructure surprisingly was not a hot or reoccurring topic during our discussions. Infrastructure as a category included subcategories to further delineate specific concerns/issues. Respondents infrastructure priority focused on sidewalks and resurfacing. They did not specify streets and/or location of no or poorly maintained sidewalks. A number of roads are owned and maintained by the City. Road maintenance and resurfacing is SCDOT's responsibility. The State Assembly recently raised the gas tax to fund much needed road and bridge projects. Transportation Assistance Program funding is available for sidewalks. City-owned infrastructure will have to be prioritized for municipal funding. Environmental Issues like Infrastructure Improvements included subcategories. Overgrown lots, trash, and abandoned cars fueled this selection. These were highlighted during our discussion and illustrated on the visioning map, particularly in association to areas in need of attention.

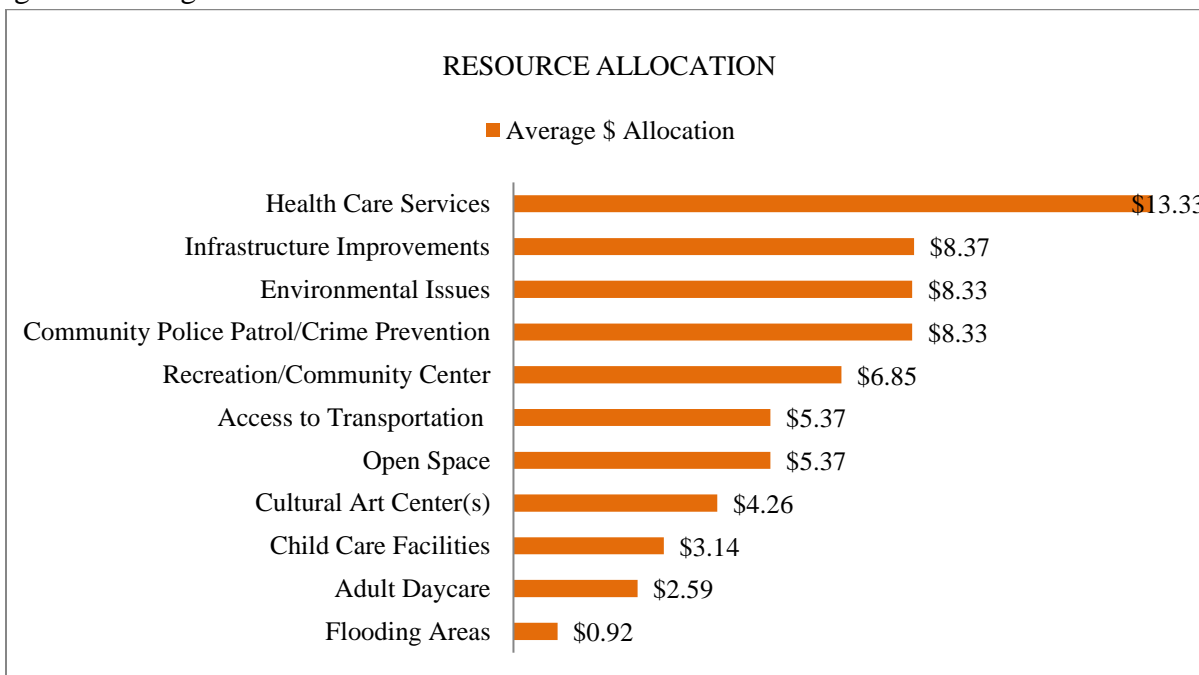
Living Environment Needs

Living environment looks at amenities and quality of life, please indicate the need for the following types of living environment needs.

	Greatly Needed 1	Needed 2	Neutral 3	Not Needed 4	No Response
1. Community Police Patrol/Crime Prevention	33%	48%	19%	0%	0%
2. Infrastructure improvements	41%	26%	19%	0%	7.4%
Type of Services Needed					
<i>Sidewalks/curbing 19.5% Lighting 19.5% Traffic Calming 7.3% Storm Management (Drainage) 7.3%</i>					
<i>Resurfacing/paving 26.8% Water/Sewer issues 19.5%</i>					
3. Recreation/Community Center	33%	30%	26%	7%	4%
4. Environmental Issues	44%	26%	4%	0%	26%
Specific Issues/Concerns					
<i>Abandon Cars 21.21% Overgrown Lots 45.45% Trash 24.24% Dilapidated Houses 3.03%</i>					
<i>Noise –Cars 3.03% Abandoned Houses 3.03%</i>					
5. Child Care Facilities	3.7%	29.6%	62.9%	0%	3.7%
6. Adult Daycare Center(s)	4%	37%	44%	0%	15%
7. Health Care Services	30%	43%	22%	0%	4%
8. Cultural Art Center(s)	67%	11%	15%	0%	11%
9. Open Spaces:	11%	19%	15%	7%	48%
Greenspaces/Open Space Amenities					
<i>Passive Parks (Sitting Areas) 27% Bike Lanes/Trails 23% Walking Trails 27%</i>					
<i>Preservation of Natural Open Spaces 18%</i>					
10. Access to Transportation	26%	30%	11%	7%	26%

11. Other: Skating Rink	3.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
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Figure 3. Living Environment Prioritization



The Needs Assessment responses concluded with soliciting potential strategies and partners to address priorities. This called for them to connect issues with outcomes. Some of the responses rehased preferences. Strategies identified ran the gamut from city government, city-county partnerships, and innovative programming to civic involvement. Below is a list of their responses.

Potential Strategies/Partners

Recreational partnership with Marlboro County Partner with PDRTA Partner with health care/hospital system	Economic Development City & County Administration Health Administrators
Bennettsville Downtown Development Association Churches	Cultural arts- fine arts- utilize existing building Work with schools City Council
Resurfacing/paving Overgrown lots Landscaping plan for City	Good working relationship between the city & county governments Accessibility to venues (public transportation, bike stations)
State agencies, industries, medical facility Restaurants.	Give incentives to small businesses and industries (tax/utilities)
Grants Develop relationship with existing health care providers	Community policing
Growth	City government

MAP ACTIVITY/DISCUSSION

We transitioned from the survey component to the interactive portion of the visioning workshop. This was quite energetic. The participants really got involved and engaged. The group dynamic elaborated on views and context. Strengths, issues/weaknesses, and opportunities were linked to geographical areas. Not only did respondents make critical evaluations but suggested appropriate land uses.

The Visioning Workshop Map illustrates the groups' input. There are areas believed to be both a strength and opportunity or a weakness and opportunity. In some instances, Downtown and Lake Wallace were strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Downtown, for instance, was viewed as an eyesore due to its deteriorating buildings, empty store fronts, and the lack of activity. Its buildings' architecture and historic values and location was a strength. Recognized as a gem that needs to be polished to its full potential is its opportunity. Participants reiterated this. I agree. Similarly, Lake Wallace too is a conundrum. There is no other resource like it within miles. This is its strength. Its unique and underexplored potential affords a great deal of opportunity. One that could help catapult Downtown and surrounding areas. However, its weakness partly lies with its management and unclear vision for the recreational waterbody. Large swatches of fuchsia color highlighted weaknesses/issues. This color pattern reflected neglected neighborhoods particularly the flood area. Continued flooding has wrecked this neighborhood. Damaged structures have been abandoned and/or remain in poor condition. Alternatively, there lies an opportunity along the bypass for redevelopment. The comments from the City's elected officials and staff were unanimous in seeing this area as a gem. Together, we can identify specific uses for development.

REFLECTION

Thanks go out to the Bennettsville Community, staff, residents, and leaders for their participation in this process. The responses were great and helped to fill in some of the blanks and prod further investigation. The vision gives us a platform moving forward. We are inspired to attract a broader community involvement during the community presentation and comment period.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISIONING MAP

