INTRODUCTION

More than 70,000 residents call the city, towns and rural areas of Greenwood County home. The County also serves as the regional commercial and employment center for surrounding communities of the Upper Savannah Region. During its 120-year history, Greenwood County has evolved from a rural, outlying trading post to a bustling railroad town and a modern high-tech center of international commerce. The ambitious, yet achievable goals outlined throughout the Comprehensive Plan reflect the potential of a dynamic community with a bright and prosperous future.

CONTENTS

2.1. GEOGRAPHY 2
2.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 3
2.3. WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN? 5
2.3.1. Legal Requirements 5
2.3.2. Plan Scope 5
2.3.3. Plan Organization 6
2.3.4. The Comprehensive Plan Maps 6
2.3.5. Administering the Plan 6
2.3.6. Amending the Plan 6

2.1. GEOGRAPHY

Greenwood County is located in the Upper Savannah region of western South Carolina, bounded by the six counties of Abbeville, Edgefield, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda. Greenwood benefits from proximity to multiple transportation corridors including Interstates 85, 26, and 20, and to the Savannah River. The County is located between four urban areas – Columbia (81 miles east), Greenville/Spartanburg (54 miles north), Anderson (39 miles northwest) and Augusta, Georgia (59 miles south). Located in the Piedmont landform region of the state, the County's topography is typified by rolling hills, clay soils, and deciduous forest ecosystems. The most predominant features are the Saluda River and Lake Greenwood, which together form the northeastern boundary of the County. These physiographic features have shaped the economic and political development of Greenwood County.

Greenwood County is home to five municipalities – the City of Greenwood and the Towns of Hodges, Ninety Six, Troy, and Ware Shoals. The City of Greenwood lies in the central-west portion of the County and is the seat of county government. The City is the largest municipality in the County in terms of geographic size and population, as well as the most populous city in the Upper Savannah region.

The Town of Ware Shoals is located in the northwestern portion of the County along the shoals of the Saluda River. Portions of the Town extend into the three counties of Abbeville, Greenwood and Laurens. The largest portion of the incorporated area, including Main Street and the Town Hall, is within Greenwood County.

Originally a frontier town served by two rail lines, the Town of Hodges was once the banking center of Greenwood County. Hodges is located south of Ware Shoals and north of the City of Greenwood along U.S. Highways 25 and 178.

The Town of Troy lies in the southwestern corner of the County along S.C. Highway 10 between the City of Greenwood and the Abbeville community of McCormick. Troy is surrounded by the Sumter National Forest.

The Town of Ninety Six is located in the eastern part of Greenwood County, east of the City of Greenwood on S.C. Highway 34. Home to Old Star Fort and the Ninety Six National Historic Site, the community is the oldest settlement in Greenwood County.

There are also a number of smaller, unincorporated communities within Greenwood County that maintain distinct identities, including:

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

2.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Originally inhabited by Native Americans, western South Carolina was not settled by Europeans until the mid-eighteenth century. Trade with Native Americans flourished during the colonial period along a trail near the 96th milepost east of Keowee, the capital of the Cherokee Nation. By 1730, a frontier trading post was established along the trail near the 96th milepost east of the Keowee. The small settlement became the first township in the County and the first court district in the State outside of Charleston. In November 1775, Ninety Six became the site of the first battle of the American Revolution in the South. Later, in May 1781, American Continental forces besieged the British-held Star Fort at Ninety Six for 28 days before being forced to withdraw as British reinforcements approached. The siege at Ninety Six was the longest in the American Revolutionary War.

Greenwood County takes its name from the City of Greenwood, the county seat. Formed in 1857, the City of Greenwood developed around the “Green Wood” plantation owned by John McGehee. Local commerce was fueled by a nearby railroad stop of the newly expanded Greenville and Columbia Railroad in 1852. Historical structures from this active period include the Vance-Maxwell House (c. 1850) that was home to Dr. John C. Maxwell. The civil war surgeon and state senator was active in the formation of Greenwood County and helped establish the now Connie Maxwell Children’s Home in 1891.

In 1895, the State Constitution was readopted and the County system was maintained. As a result, ten new counties were formed, including Greenwood. The new county was carved from portions of Abbeville and Edgefield Counties out of the original Ninety Six District. Greenwood became the county seat and added governmental services to its economic repertoire.

UPTOWN GREENWOOD CIRCA 1953

Railroad expansion after the Civil War brought three rail lines to the town of Greenwood, along with a significant increase of both passengers and commerce. The introduction of textile production to the County in 1890 opened the economic prospects for the community and region. William Durst established the first cotton mill in Greenwood County and was soon followed by industrialist James C. Self who launched Greenwood Mills. This shift from an agricultural base to manufacturing production played a significant role in the subsequent development of Greenwood County.

Greenwood also emerged as an educational center in the early twentieth century. Samuel Lander moved Williamston Female College to Greenwood in 1903. The college was renamed for Lander and evolved into the Lander University of today, a public liberal arts institution offering advanced educational opportunity to more than three thousand students.

Benjamin Mays, a humanitarian and Civil Rights leader and activist, was born in the Epworth community of Greenwood County in 1894. Dr. Mays served as president of Morehouse College in Atlanta for 27 years and was a trusted advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King and Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter. His childhood home has been preserved as the Mays House Museum in Greenwood.

Buzzard Roost Dam was constructed between 1938 and 1941 using funding from the Public Works Administration during the Great Depression. Construction of the hydroelectric facility resulted in the creation of Lake Greenwood. The Lake has become an integral natural resource and economic asset as a popular fishing and boating destination for residents and visitors to the County.

In 1944, a tornado destroyed the County's main hospital in Greenwood. In response to the devastation, local businessman James Self provided funding for construction of Self Memorial Hospital in 1951, one of the most advanced hospitals in the country. Now a leading healthcare provider in South Carolina, Self Regional Healthcare is a major employer and significant contributor to the health and well-being of the residents of Greenwood County and the region. The Hospital and the Self Family Foundation have also provided a catalyst for the emergence of Greenwood as a leading bioscience research and commerce center. Greenwood is now home to the Greenwood Genetic Center, the SC Biotechnology Incubator, the JC Self Research Institute of Human Genetics, the Clemson University Center for Human Genetics, and the SC Center for Treatment of Genetic Disorders.

A major revitalization effort was launched in the 1980s to transform the City of Greenwood's central business district. In addition to the removal of the rail lines that had long bisected the heart of the City, revitalization efforts included the addition of arcade structures and the placement of planted medians, street trees and additional landscaping to foster an attractive and welcoming environment. The completion of an Uptown Master Plan in 2004 ushered in significant streetscaping improvements and public and private capital investment in Uptown Greenwood that continues today.

Greenwood County celebrates the historical contributions of each of its communities and welcomes the opportunities that the future holds. This rich history is characterized by a strong and optimistic spirit that permeates the active civic and business life of the Greenwood community – a tradition that is reflected in the Greenwood City/County Comprehensive Plan 2035.

2.3. WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is the principal policy document for guiding future growth conversations and development decisions of the County and its communities. The Plan represents an outline of community values, ideals and aspirations to govern a mutual environment. Its purpose is to bring a deliberate and consistent general direction to the day-to-day decisions of the governing bodies, its commissions and staff. To accomplish this, the Plan:

- Organizes the desires of the public in regard to the physical, social, economic and environmental character of Greenwood County;
- Defines a realistic vision of the County and its communities twenty years in the future; and
- Charts the course of conservation and development that will determine the future character of Greenwood County communities and the safeguarding of the County's environment.

The Comprehensive Plan is a compilation of interrelated narrative, maps and figures. The essence of the Plan is contained in the goals, policies and programs in the implementation plan and illustrated in the Future Land Use Map. While some goals and strategies that address site-specific locations are shown geographically, others are more general in nature and are described in the text of the plan.

2.3.1. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan is a legal document that is formally adopted by Greenwood County, the City of Greenwood, and the Towns of Ninety Six, Troy, and Ware Shoals. As the foundation for local land use planning, all land use regulations and ordinances must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Regulations that are not consistent with the Plan must be amended to ensure consistency.

State law requires local governments to prepare comprehensive plans if zoning and land use regulations are adopted. The State also mandates that comprehensive plans must contain nine basic elements – population, natural resources, economic, housing, cultural resources, community facilities, transportation, land use, and priority investment. Although each element stands alone in content, each must be developed in context with the other elements to ensure consistency and maximize benefits to the community. Per State law, comprehensive plans must also have long-term horizons. This Plan addresses the needs of Greenwood County through 2036.

2.3.2. PLAN SCOPE

The Comprehensive Plan is an officially adopted statement of policies that will guide decision-makers toward attainment of the long term goals that will shape the future physical development of our community. Built upon a consolidated framework and a vision contributed by the citizens of the municipalities and Greenwood County, the Plan is a guide for opportunities and conditions for new development based on an optimal balance of the community's social, environmental and economic needs. The Plan also serves as a collective community archive of issues raised and directions chosen during the first quarter of the 21st Century.

The Plan covers the political boundaries of Greenwood County and its municipalities, including the portion of the Town of Ware Shoals located within Abbeville and Laurens Counties. This Plan also encompasses the entire

watercourse of Lake Greenwood to the 440 foot contour line within Laurens and Newberry Counties. The Plan supersedes all prior versions of land use and comprehensive plans and related planning documents.

2.3.3. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Plan consists of narrative text, maps, and other illustrations arranged in chapters by element. Beginning with Chapter 3, each element identifies topics that describe the existing conditions within Greenwood County and a discussion of issues that are associated with these conditions. Desired future conditions are stated in the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies at the conclusion of each chapter.

2.3.4. THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAPS

The official Future Land Use Map, accompanied by the text, is an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan. The map includes the political boundaries of Greenwood County and the municipal boundaries of the City of Greenwood and the Towns of Hodges, Troy, and Ware Shoals.

The Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan presents a graphic depiction and sets the course for the managed growth of the County over the next twenty years. The Map is required by State law and must clearly designate the intended type of land use for properties covered by the Plan (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial). In addition, the map and text together specify the desired population density at which residential development should occur; that is, the maximum number of dwelling units per acre of land that may be constructed on a parcel, and in turn, the number of people per acre expected to populate residential areas. In like manner, the map and text together convey the desired building intensity at which commercial and industrial development should occur to achieve the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Separate maps throughout the document summarize conditions that may preclude development or trigger particular requirements to make development possible. All maps and figures contained herein are adopted as part of the document. Other pertinent features of the Future Land Use Map include the location of existing and proposed parks, public schools, water bodies, and roadways.

2.3.5. ADMINISTERING THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document once adopted. Amendments may be proposed to change the land use designation of a property or properties. During a rezoning process or an amendment to the future land use map, the proposal should be reviewed within the context of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure compliance. As time goes on, the County, City, or towns may decide that it is necessary to revise portions of the plan text to reflect changing circumstances or community priorities. In addition, all local governments in the County must conduct a comprehensive review of the Plan every five years to determine whether the Plan continues to promote prevailing community values and conditions.

2.3.6. AMENDING THE PLAN

The Greenwood City/County Comprehensive Plan may only be amended by the governing authority of the Greenwood County Council or the Council of a municipal government. A request to amend the Plan may be made by the County, City or Town Councils, Planning Commission, or other group, agency, organization, or citizen. Amendment of the Comprehensive Plan would follow the general procedures outlined below:

1. Prior to filing an official application for a Comprehensive Plan amendment, the prospective applicant or his or her agent should discuss the proposed amendment with the Director of City/County Planning. This gives the applicant an opportunity to learn the details of the amendment process and any concerns the community may have about the proposed change.

2. Should the applicant decide to proceed with a proposed amendment, the next step is to file an official application with the Greenwood City/County Planning Commission and pay the required processing fees. All applications requesting a change in land use designation must be accompanied by a development plan of sufficient detail to ascertain the potential impacts of the area. The Planning Department staff will determine what constitutes "sufficient detail" on a case-by-case basis.

3. Once an application is submitted, it will be placed on an agenda for public hearing before the City/County Planning Commission according to the schedule established by the Planning Commission for Comprehensive Plan amendments. Prior to the Planning Commission hearing, the Department will provide notice to the public of the hearing date and the item to be discussed. An individual amendment typically requires a legal notice in a legally adjudicated general circulation newspaper and a notice mailed to all contiguous property owners of the subject property. Notices for major amendments affecting the entire community, such as this update of the Comprehensive Plan, are handled differently due to the scale of the potential impact.

4. Planning Department staff will prepare a report to the Planning Commission for the public hearing, describing in detail the proposed amendment, any environmental or other impacts that may result, and comments from other affected municipal or county departments or governmental agencies. The staff report, which is sent to the Commission and the applicant, will advise whether the Commission should recommend the amendment to the respective council for approval or denial. The staff report, comments from the applicant, and other public testimony become factors in the Commission's action.

5. The Planning Commission's recommendation is then forwarded to the appropriate governing body for final action. County, city or town councils will review the recommendation and determine whether the request is in the best interest of the community as detailed below.

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

1. The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is deemed to be in the public interest.

2. The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is consistent and compatible with the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan and any implementation programs that may be affected.

3. The potential impacts of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment have been assessed and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare.

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