

# 2020 Comprehensive Plan



# Darlington County

## Comprehensive Plan 2020

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

South Carolina Code sets forth the mission of the Darlington County Planning Commission: to undertake a continuing planning program for the physical, social, and economic growth, development, and redevelopment of the area within its jurisdiction. The plans and programs must be designed to promote public health, safety, morals, convenience, prosperity, or the general welfare, as well as the efficiency and economy of its area of jurisdiction.

The Commission voted unanimously to recommend to Darlington County Council this 2020 Comprehensive Plan. The Commission served as the steering committee for the preparation of the plan. Guidance and technical support were provided by the Development Services Department staff of Darlington County Government. Further support and research were conducted by Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments staff and Alec Hebrner, AICP.

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# Darlington County Comprehensive Plan 2020

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## **INTRODUCTION**

South Carolina Code sets forth the mission of the Darlington County Planning Commission: to undertake a continuing planning program for the physical, social, and economic growth, development, and redevelopment of the area within its jurisdiction. The plans and programs must be designed to promote public health, safety, morals, convenience, prosperity, or the general welfare, as well as the efficiency and economy of its area of jurisdiction.

This planning program must address nine elements: population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, transportation, housing, land use, and “priority investment.” Darlington County Council has assigned economic development planning to the Darlington Economic Development Partnership; meanwhile, the Darlington County Historical Commission is empowered to plan for historical resources. The County also participates in regional planning efforts for transportation and water quality.

The Planning Commission’s role, then, varies by element. It must lead in some areas, coordinate in others. Implementation, furthermore, requires cooperation with special purpose districts, semi-public agencies, and municipalities.

This Comprehensive Plan documents the current state of Darlington County’s continuing planning program. Existing conditions relative to each of the nine elements have been inventoried, goals considered, and implementation strategies evaluated. This exercise is, therefore, an update of the continuing planning program.

While updates to a comprehensive plan are due no less frequently than every ten years, a healthy planning program will account for changing conditions in a community and revisit goals and existing conditions appropriately. Opportunities for assistance and partnership also arise that enhance the planning program and become substantive improvements to the document known as the comprehensive plan. They simply need to be adopted as such by the governing body and assimilated into the work of a planning commission and its staff.

## **LOCATION**

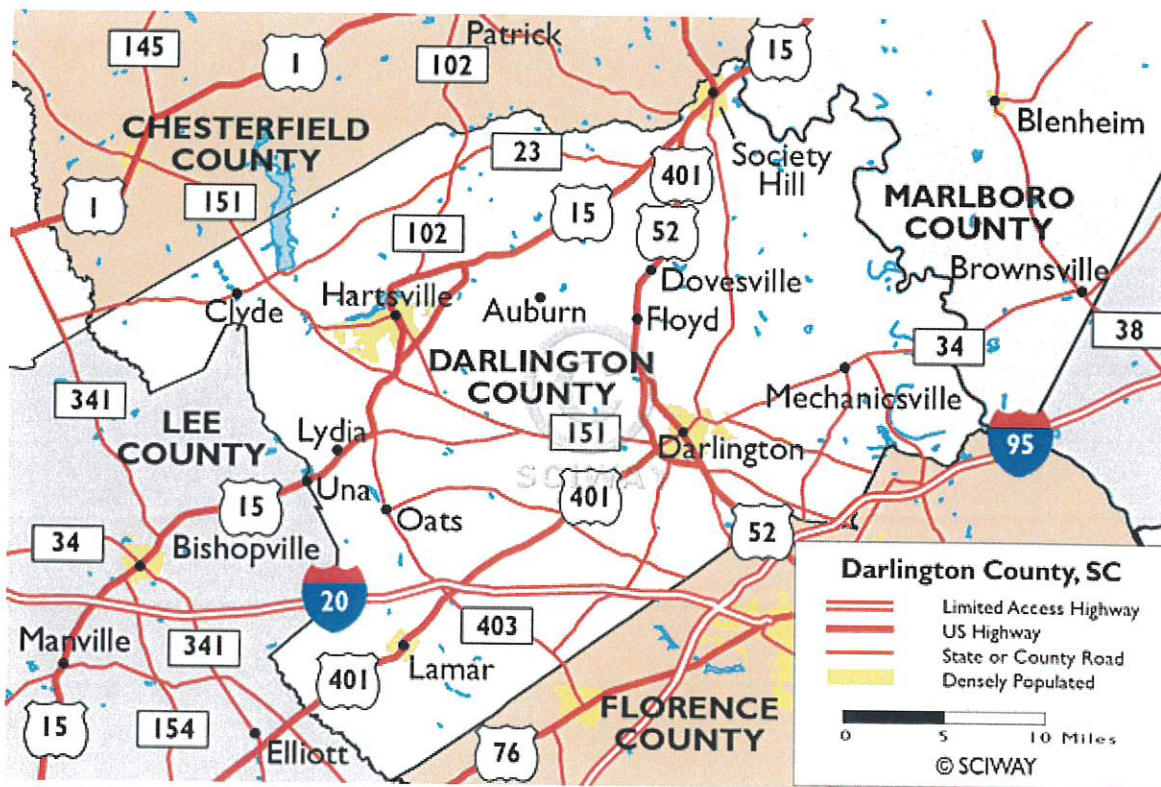
Darlington County is located in the northeastern portion of South Carolina, part of the Pee Dee Region. Darlington County is bounded by Chesterfield County, Florence County, Lee County, and Marlboro County. The location map on the next page depicts this, as well as the four municipalities within Darlington County and several unincorporated crossroads communities.

The city of Darlington, the County seat, is located in the following approximate distances from population centers across South Carolina. These distances are along the most practical routes from main intersections in the cities listed.

Florence	11 miles
Myrtle Beach	79 miles
Columbia	78 miles
Charleston	140 miles



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Source: [www.sciway.net/maps/cnty/darlington.html](http://www.sciway.net/maps/cnty/darlington.html)

## CHAPTER 1

# POPULATION ELEMENT

### DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

#### **INTRODUCTION**

A study of the general socio-economic characteristics of a population provides a basis for identifying future development needs and some of the resources needed to satisfy these needs. Such analyses are also useful in determining future demand for public services and infrastructure, such as roads and utilities.

The analyses contained in the first sections represent only a general overview of the socio-economic characteristics of Darlington County and are not intended to be a complete study of the County's population and economy. They are intended only as background information for this Comprehensive Plan.

Because Darlington County does not exist in a vacuum, it is important to view its population and economic characteristics in comparison to the surrounding area. In most cases, data for Darlington County is presented with the same types of data for the other counties of the Pee Dee. Also, Census reports prior to 2010 included population and housing data gleaned from everyone responding to the Census questionnaire, as well as data derived from a sample of one-in-six households regarding such social and economic topics like income and education. The 2010 Census, however, was an enumeration of only population and housing data; therefore, a study of trends in the data derived from the decennial Census could only be conducted for those categories of information collected in 2010. Sample data are no longer collected every ten years; rather, small samples are taken every year and averaged for multi-year periods. Because larger samples have lesser margins of error, multi-year periods are the most accurate. Thus, when such data is presented, five-year averages will be used.

#### **POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**

Population figures indicate that Darlington County had a population of 67,689 persons in 2010, which was a 0.34-percent decrease from the 67,922 persons residing in the County in 2000. This rate of decrease was lower than the State's 15.3 percent increase for the same period; however, Darlington County was still the 20<sup>th</sup> most populated county in South Carolina.

Hartsville was the largest municipality in Darlington county with a population of 7,765, the second largest was the county seat of Darlington with 6,288, the third largest was Lamar with 987, and fourth was Society Hill with 563.

Figure 1.1 reports population counts and projections prepared by the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. The data are undated, but include estimates at recent as 2016, evidence that the projections were made in the last three years. The numbers show a population peak for the Pee Dee Region around 2010. American Community Survey estimates, available from the US Census Bureau, appear to confirm a decline in Darlington County population since 2011.

Florence County, while bucking this trend, still has population projections that level off to 2030. These findings contrast with numbers for the state of South Carolina. The State expects robust growth, driven particularly by the Upstate and the Charleston area.

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<b>Figure 1.1: POPULATION AND PROJECTIONS BY COUNTY</b>						
County	April 1, 2000 Census	April 1, 2010 Census	July 1, 2015 Projection	July 1, 2020 Projection	July 1, 2025 Projection	July 1, 2030 Projection
<i>Darlington</i>	67,394	68,681	67,534	66,180	64,590	62,520
Chesterfield	42,768	46,734	46,036	45,090	43,950	42,410
Dillon	30,722	32,062	31,235	30,350	29,410	28,170
Florence	125,761	136,885	138,807	140,280	140,920	140,710
Marion	35,466	33,062	31,729	30,380	28,850	27,220
Marlboro	28,818	28,933	27,541	26,100	24,560	22,960
<i>Pee Dee Region</i>	330,929	346,357	342,882	338,380	332,280	323,990
<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>4,012,012</b>	<b>4,625,364</b>	<b>4,894,834</b>	<b>5,175,800</b>	<b>5,457,700</b>	<b>5,730,490</b>

Darlington County, like many other counties in the Pee Dee Region, is a predominantly rural county. Only 28.4% of the total county population lives within the municipal limits. The remaining 71.6% of the population lives outside of the city limits. Figure 1.2 breaks down the population of each of the local jurisdictions within Darlington County.

The County assesses current and future populations by geography to anticipate changing levels of demand for public services and infrastructure. For some systems, resources can be reallocated from one location to another within a service area. For others, with fixed lines (roads, drainage, and utilities), the County must determine only where new lines will be needed, but also where existing lines may see declining use and may risk falling into disrepair.

The County's ability to study demographic subareas is not limited to municipalities. The North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA) reports trends and projections for demographic and socioeconomic data sets for a variety of geographies (e.g., ZIP codes) and to an extent, customizable geographies. NESA can be contacted for assistance at [www.nesasc.org](http://www.nesasc.org).

<b>Figure 1.2: 2010 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY JURISDICTION</b>			
Jurisdiction	2000 Population	2010 Population	2010 % of County
City of Darlington	6,720	6,289	9.16%
City of Hartsville	7,556	7,764	11.30%
Town of Lamar	1,015	989	1.44%
Society Hill	700	583	0.85%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.			

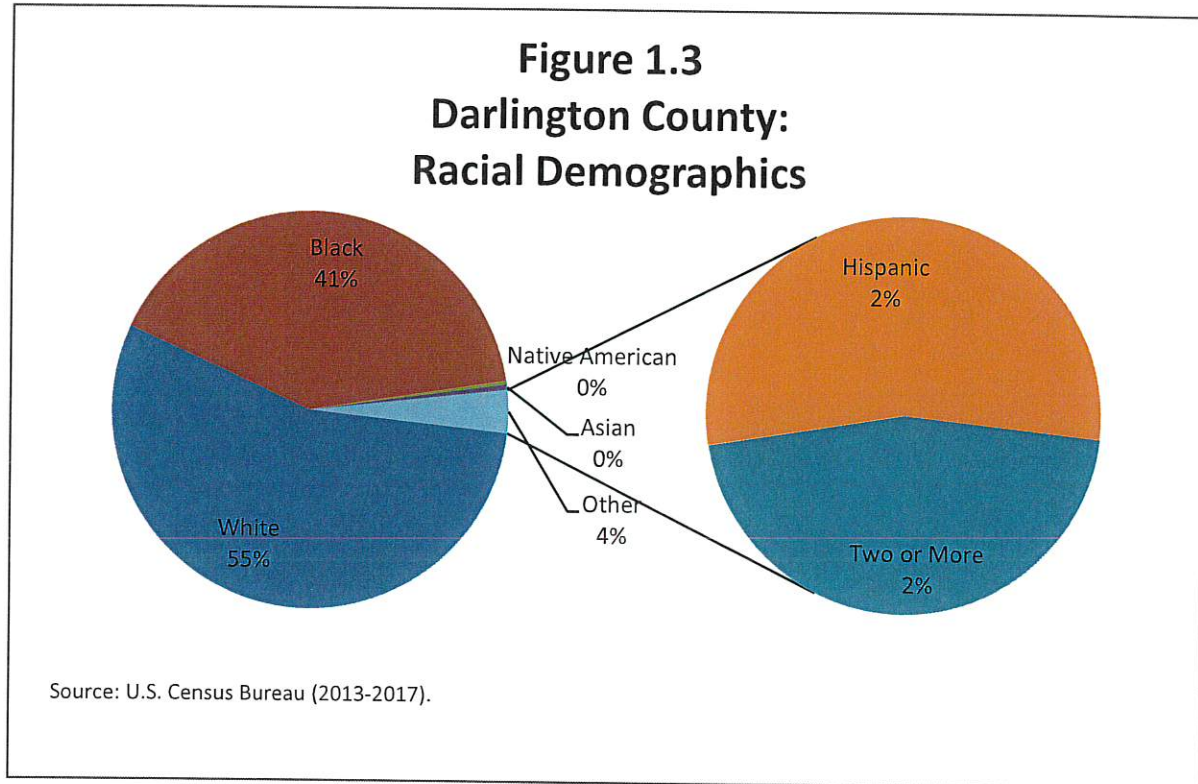
### **POPULATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC DATA**

Prepare for the demands of population growth. Darlington County can accomplish this by evaluating the components of population growth to plan for age-related service needs and monitoring the need for particular housing types. Infrastructure improvements in advance of development would also be a way to prepare for the demands of population growth, as well as to guide development.



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According to the US Census 5-year survey, Darlington County has a total of 31,915 males and 35,657 females. Demographically, Darlington County is 55% Caucasian, 41% African-American, 1% Asian, and 6% other ethnicities. Another two percent represent two or more ethnicities, as indicated in Figure 1.3, below.

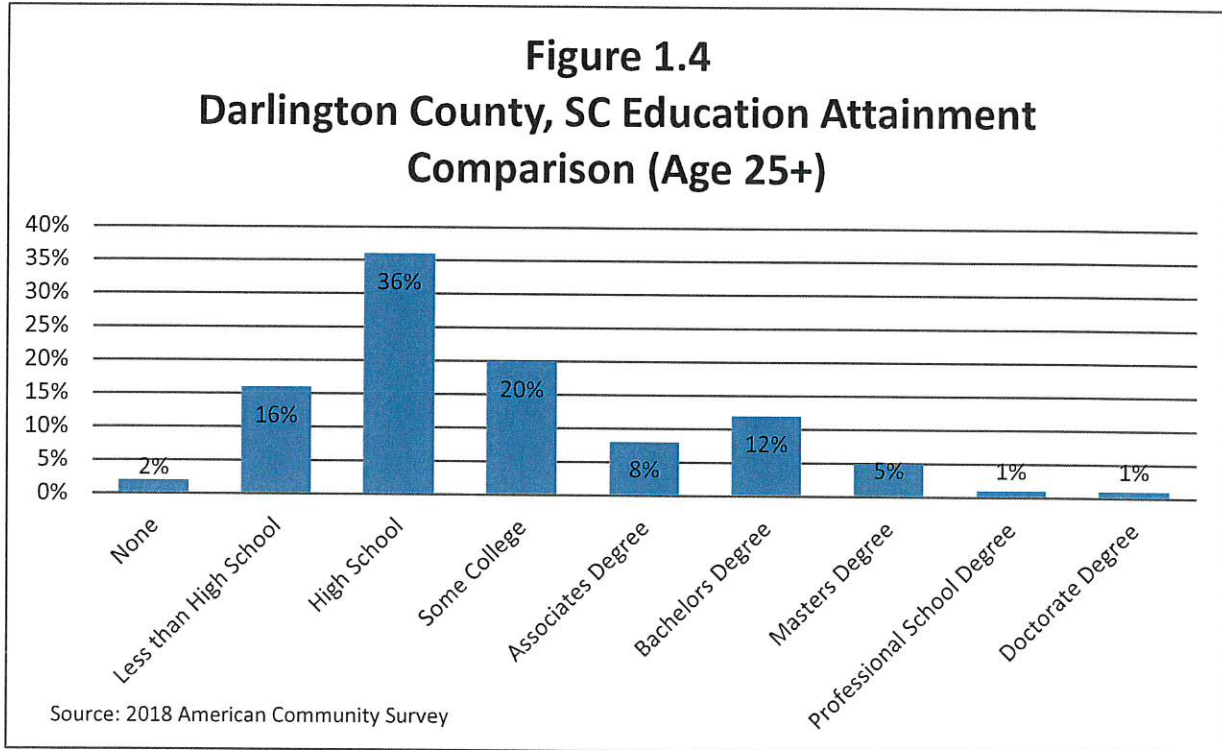


Households include all persons who occupy a housing unit; however, not all households are composed of families. A family consists of a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. A household may contain only one person.

An examination of 2010 Census data reveals that only 68.3 percent of the households in Darlington County include families. The remaining 31.7 percent are non-family households, including householders living alone and not more than eight unrelated persons living together in a housing unit. There was also an average of 2.51 people per household (2012-2016).

According to a 2018 American Community Survey, 36% of all people over the age of 25 in Darlington County have earned a high school diploma, 20% attended some college, 8% earned an Associate's Degree, 12% earned a Bachelor's Degree, and 5% earned a Master's Degree. 16% of all people over the age of 25 in Darlington County have less than a high school diploma. See figure 1.4 below.

Darlington County School District provides public primary and secondary education throughout Darlington County. County voters approved by referendum funding to build three new schools to replace or consolidate existing aging, undersized facilities, one each in Lamar, Hartsville, and Darlington. These are expected to open in the 2020 academic year.



According to the most recent American Community Survey, households in Darlington County had a median income of \$36,217 in 2017, which is about three-quarters of the statewide median household income of \$48,781.

Males in Darlington County earned \$40,019 on median, 1.25 times more than females on median, in 2016. Income inequality of Darlington County (measured using the Gini index) is 0.437, which is lower than the national average. A look at incomes in Darlington County, neighboring counties, and the state appears in Figure 1.5 and Figure 1.6, herein.

Figure 1.7 reports that poverty levels in Darlington County are worse than the state, on average but better than most of the Pee Dee Region. An impoverished population requires higher levels of public services, so local governments and special purpose districts (e.g., school districts) incur greater costs per capita to provide services. In turn, revenue collection to maintain infrastructure becomes more challenging.

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**Figure 1.5:  
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME**

COUNTY	1980 INCOME	% OF STATE	1990 INCOME	% OF STATE	% CHANGE 1980-1990	2000 INCOME	% OF STATE	% CHANGE 1990-2000	2010* INCOME	% OF STATE	% CHANGE 2000-2010
Chesterfield	\$14,410	84.7%	\$25,559	83.0%	77.4%	\$36,200	75.3%	41.6%	\$41,225	76.0%	13.9%
<i>Darlington</i>	\$15,523	91.2%	\$26,754	86.9%	72.4%	\$37,662	78.3%	40.8%	\$46,894	86.5%	24.5%
Dillon	\$12,748	74.9%	\$22,144	71.9%	73.7%	\$32,690	68.0%	47.6%	\$34,693	64.0%	6.1%
Florence	\$15,798	92.8%	\$28,718	93.2%	81.8%	\$41,274	85.8%	43.7%	\$48,896	90.2%	18.5%
Marion	\$13,518	79.4%	\$21,873	71.0%	61.8%	\$32,932	68.5%	50.6%	\$38,043	70.2%	15.5%
Marlboro	\$14,139	83.1%	\$22,231	72.2%	57.2%	\$32,019	66.6%	44.0%	\$32,485	59.9%	1.5%
South Carolina	\$17,016		\$30,797		81.0%	\$48,100		56.2%	\$54,223		12.7%

Sources: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980-2000; ACS 5-Year Estimates (\*), 2006-2010; and, Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments, 2012.

**Figure 1.6:  
PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME**

COUNTY	1980 INCOME	1990 INCOME	% CHANGE 1980-1990	1980 % OF STATE	1990 % OF NATIONAL	2000 INCOME	% CHANGE 1980-2000	2000 % OF STATE	2000 % OF NATIONAL	2010* INCOME	% CHANGE 1990-2000	2010 % OF STATE	2010 % OF NATIONAL
Chesterfield	\$6,191	\$9,455	52.7%	79.5%	65.6%	\$14,233	50.5%	66.1%	56.9%	\$17,162	20.6%	73.2%	62.8%
<i>Darlington</i>	\$6,191	\$10,510	69.8%	88.3%	72.9%	\$16,283	54.9%	75.6%	65.0%	\$20,096	23.4%	85.7%	73.5%
Dillon	\$4,878	\$8,077	65.6%	67.9%	56.0%	\$13,272	64.3%	61.6%	53.0%	\$14,684	10.6%	62.6%	53.7%
Florence	\$6,780	\$11,007	62.3%	92.5%	76.3%	\$17,876	62.4%	83.0%	71.4%	\$21,932	22.7%	93.6%	80.2%
Marion	\$5,679	\$8,185	44.1%	68.8%	56.8%	\$13,878	69.6%	64.4%	55.4%	\$16,653	20.0%	71.0%	60.9%
Marlboro	\$4,842	\$7,948	64.1%	66.8%	55.1%	\$13,385	68.4%	62.2%	53.5%	\$13,817	3.2%	58.9%	50.6%
South Carolina	\$7,298	\$11,897	63.0%		82.5%	\$21,536	81.0%		86.0%	\$23,443	8.8%		85.8%
United States	\$9,503	\$14,420	51.7%	121.2%		\$25,035	73.6%	116.3%		\$27,334	9.2%	116.6%	

Sources: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980-2000; ACS 5-Year Estimates (\*), 2006-2010; and, Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments, 2012.



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**Figure 1.7  
POVERTY LEVELS**

	2000					2010				
	PERSONS BELOW POVERTY		% OF ELDERLY BELOW POVERTY	% OF MINORITIES BELOW POVERTY	% OF FEMALE HEADED FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY	PERSONS BELOW POVERTY		% OF ELDERLY BELOW POVERTY	% OF MINORITIES BELOW POVERTY	% OF FEMALE HEADED FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY
	TOTAL	%				TOTAL	%			
Chesterfield	8,561	20.3%	24.2%	34.7%	37.8%	10,368	22.7%	18.0%	35.0%	48.1%
<i>Darlington</i>	13,426	20.3%	22.1%	32.9%	36.2%	13,438	20.0%	15.1%	29.7%	35.8%
Dillon	7,311	24.2%	26.6%	35.0%	39.2%	9,490	30.5%	23.7%	40.6%	44.9%
Florence	20,063	16.4%	16.5%	28.7%	33.4%	23,609	18.0%	14.0%	28.9%	33.2%
Marion	8,117	23.2%	23.5%	32.4%	40.0%	8,271	25.1%	19.1%	33.8%	41.8%
Marlboro	5,882	21.7%	22.7%	29.4%	36.3%	7,193	27.5%	17.6%	35.8%	44.9%
PEE DEE REGION	63,360	19.2%	19.7%	31.4%	35.7%	72,369	33.7%	16.5%	32.2%	N/A
South Carolina	625,874	15.6%	11.6%	26.4%	35.2%	716,537	16.4%	11.2%	27.4%	34.2%

Sources: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 2000; and, ACS 5-Year Estimates (\*), 2006-2010.

SC Works, in its efforts to support economic development and workforce training, maintains community profiles for each of the state's 46 counties. The Darlington County profile numbers 28 pages, containing many of the data sets listed above plus many others upon which Darlington County government and its partners can rely. The [community profile](http://www.scworks.org) and subsequent, up-to-date versions can be found at [www.scworks.org](http://www.scworks.org).

## CHAPTER 2

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

## DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### **INTRODUCTION**

This element of the Comprehensive Plan examines the economic base of Darlington County, exploring the characteristics of the economy and the workers. In addition to labor-force and employment data, this element presents data and analysis regarding agricultural production, retail sales performance, and capital investment/job creation in the county.

As indicated in the population element, Census reports prior to 2010 included population and housing data gleaned from everyone responding to the Census questionnaire as well as data derived from a sample of one in six households regarding such social and economic topics as income, education, etc. The 2010 Census, however, was an enumeration of only population and housing data; therefore, a study of trends in the data derived from the decennial Census could only be conducted for those categories of information collected in 2010. However, sample data for other categories are available but are no longer collected every ten years. Rather, small samples are taken every year and averaged for multi-year periods in the American Community Survey (ACS). Because larger samples have lesser margins of error, multi-year periods are the most accurate. Thus, data provided from the North Eastern Strategic Alliance, the U.S. Census, Datausa, and the South Carolina Department of Commerce are used here.

### **LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT**

The economy of Darlington County employs 26,048 people. The largest industries by employment in Darlington County are Manufacturing (4,357), Healthcare & Social Assistance (3,786), and Retail Trade (3,538), and the highest paying industries are Utilities (\$61,412), Finance & Insurance (\$33,089), and Professional, Scientific, Tech Services (\$32,120).

Per Datausa, the economy of Darlington County specializes in Utilities; Manufacturing; and wholesale trade, which employ respectively 3.87; 1.61; and 1.25 times more people than what would be expected in a location of this size. The high proportion of workers in these three industries indicate that they constitute the economic base of the county. This means that these industries export goods and services to other communities. As an example, Robinson Nuclear Station produces electrical power and distributes it to surrounding counties via the power grid.

Understanding one's economic base is important to identify how and where investment in public services and infrastructure should occur. It further informs economic development strategies that could benefit from proximity to suppliers or buyers that constitute the economic base, as well as benefit from supporting public investments.

### **COMMUTING PATTERNS**

The average daily commute for Darlington County workers is 22.9 minutes. 73.7% of all employees in Darlington County have a daily commute less than 30 minutes and only 3.14% have a commute in excess of 90 minutes. Figure 2.1 reports that a notable percentage of county residents commute outside of Darlington County to work. This finding is consistent with the presence of the county in the Florence metropolitan statistical area. To support this commuting pattern, Pee Dee Rural Transit Authority provides park-and-ride bus service to employment centers in Florence. Darlington County also

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participates in the Florence Area Transportation Study, the federally designated entity responsible for programming revenue for transportation improvements in the metro area.

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**Figure 2.1:  
Place of Work of Workers 16 Years Old and Over  
2017**

County	Workers 16 Years and Over	Worked in State of Residence						Worked Outside State of Residence	
		Total		Worked In County of Residence		Worked Outside County of Residence		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Chesterfield	18,790	15,746	83.8%	12,514	66.6%	3,232	17.2%	3,044	16.2%
Darlington	26,285	26,048	99.1%	15,298	58.2%	10,751	40.9%	237	0.9%
Dillon	11,122	10,054	90.4%	7,407	66.6%	2,647	23.8%	1,068	9.6%
Florence	58,671	58,026	98.9%	48,697	83.0%	9,329	15.9%	645	1.1%
Marion	11,514	11,238	97.6%	6,241	54.2%	4,986	43.3%	276	2.4%
Marlboro	9,499	7,637	80.4%	5,196	54.7%	2,441	25.7%	1,862	19.6%
<b>Pee Dee Region</b>	<b>135,881</b>	<b>128,749</b>	<b>94.8%</b>	<b>95,353</b>	<b>70.2%</b>	<b>33,385</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>7,132</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
Georgetown	23,609	23,113	97.9%	17,258	73.1%	5,831	24.7%	496	2.1%
Horry	135,714	131,778	97.1%	123,907	91.3%	7,736	5.7%	3,936	2.9%
Williamsburg	11,301	11,244	99.5%	6,238	55.2%	5,006	44.3%	57	0.5%
South Carolina	2,168,006	2,053,102	94.70%	1,530,612	70.60%	524,657	24.20%	114,904	5.30%
Source: U. S. Census Bureau, ACS 5- Year Estimates, 2012-2017.									

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### UNEMPLOYMENT

The County's unemployment annual average rate peaked at 14.4% in January 2010; Unemployment in Darlington County has fallen since and reached its lowest percentage rate in 2017 at 5.70%. Unemployment statistics reporting Darlington County and surrounding counties appear in Figure 2.2.

<b>Figure 2.2: UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE 2013 - 2017</b>										
County	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Chesterfield	1,924	9.20%	1,454	6.90%	1,294	6.00%	1,074	5.00%	940	4.40%
<i>Darlington</i>	1,509	11.80%	1,213	9.60%	1,090	8.60%	854	6.70%	717	5.70%
Dillon	2,808	9.30%	2,374	8.00%	2,215	7.40%	1,855	6.20%	1,583	5.30%
Florence	5,363	8.30%	4,674	7.20%	4,263	6.50%	3,429	5.20%	2,988	4.60%
Marion	1,706	13.10%	1,355	10.50%	1,281	10.00%	1,102	8.70%	930	7.40%
Marlboro	1,448	13.80%	1,057	10.60%	968	10.00%	779	8.40%	607	6.60%
<b>Pee Dee Region</b>	<b>14,758</b>	<b>9.70%</b>	<b>12,127</b>	<b>8.00%</b>	<b>11,111</b>	<b>7.30%</b>	<b>9,093</b>	<b>6.00%</b>	<b>7,765</b>	<b>5.10%</b>
Georgetown	2,472	10.10%	2,124	8.60%	2,118	8.40%	1,689	6.80%	1,395	5.50%
Horry	11,446	8.60%	9,913	7.40%	9,751	7.10%	8,156	5.80%	7,106	5.00%
Williamsburg	1,585	12.50%	1,263	10.00%	1,180	9.20%	959	7.70%	786	6.30%
South Carolina	167,325	7.60%	143,412	6.50%	135,095	6.00%	114,144	5.00%	98,756	4.30%
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics										

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### **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

Agricultural production has been the mainstay of Darlington County and other counties in the Pee Dee Region for nearly a century. However, the complexities of farm product marketing, the price of land, changes in the structure of government support payments, competing uses for prime farmland and other factors have contributed to a decline in agricultural production in the last several decades. Figures 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 provide data on the types of farm organizations and tenure of farm operations.

<b>Figure 2.3: FARM AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION 2012</b>			
<b>County</b>	<b>Farms</b>	<b>Harvested Cropland (Acres)</b>	<b>Farm Sales (\$1,000)</b>
Chesterfield	717	29,608	\$121,209
<i>Darlington</i>	385	108,185	\$129,171
Dillon	228	70,351	\$132,177
Florence	632	86,665	\$54,047
Marion	275	38,420	\$40,649
Marlboro	224	63,489	\$61,838
<b>Pee Dee Region</b>	<b>2,461</b>	<b>396,718</b>	<b>\$539,091</b>
Georgetown	209	9,019	\$12,809
Horry	938	95,367	\$101,293
Williamsburg	679	73,194	\$61,811
South Carolina	25,266	1,634,706	\$3,040,069
<i>Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, 2012.</i>			



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**Figure 2.4**  
**TYPE OF FARM ORGANIZATION**  
**2012**

County	Individual/Family	Partnership	Family Corporation	Other Corporation	Other
Chesterfield	625	47	27	0	18
<i>Darlington</i>	326	23	22	11	3
Dillon	188	24	12	1	3
Florence	577	26	24	3	2
Marion	238	20	13	0	4
Marlboro	174	24	17	1	8
<b>Pee Dee Region</b>	2,128	164	115	16	38
Georgetown	183	13	10	3	0
Horry	831	58	32	4	13
Williamsburg	615	29	20	6	9
South Carolina	22,393	1,482	968	140	283

*Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, 2012.*

**Figure 2.5**  
**Tenure of Farm Operations**  
**2012**

County	Full Owners	Part Owners	Tenants
Chesterfield	554	144	19
<i>Darlington</i>	252	107	26
Dillon	139	74	15
Florence	423	166	43
Marion	173	83	19
Marlboro	171	47	6
<b>Pee Dee Region</b>	1,712	621	128
Georgetown	156	44	9
Horry	650	14	8
Williamsburg	503	151	25
South Carolina	19,169	5,055	1,042

*Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, 2012.*

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### CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND JOB CREATION

From the standpoint of capital investment in new and expanding industries and jobs created by this activity, Darlington, Chesterfield, and Florence Counties lead the region, particularly in the years 2007-2011. Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg Counties also had remarkable totals in capital investment and jobs over the five-year period per South Carolina Department of Commerce. Darlington County had a steep decline in jobs in 2010, as part of the Great Recession, but has had increases since. The North Eastern Strategic Alliance provided the data for the period 2016-2018 presented in figure 2.6.

Before drawing conclusions, it is important to remember that these are announced capital investment and job totals, which may not accurately reflect actual accomplishments. Investments may have changed to meet market conditions, etc.

<b>Figure 2.6: CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND JOB CREATION BY COUNTY 2016-2018</b>						
County	2018		2017		2016	
	Jobs	Investment	Jobs	Investment	Jobs	Investment
Chesterfield	62	\$124,800,000	60	\$3,900,000	136	\$73,400,000
Darlington	0	\$340,000,000	135	\$30,000,000	--	--
Dillon	54	\$11,500,000	800	\$115,000,000	--	--
Florence	126	\$75,470,000	1081	\$695,650,000	600	\$77,300,000
Marion	34	\$20,700,000	--	--	--	--
Marlboro	130	\$13,400,000	--	--	--	--
<b>Pee Dee Region</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>\$585,870,000</b>	<b>2,076</b>	<b>\$844,550,000</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>\$150,700,000</b>
Georgetown	--	--	--	--	252	\$11,200,000
Horry	237	\$35,750,000	45	\$5,800,000	422	\$6,813,000
Williamsburg	12	\$2,000,000	145	\$7,000,000	65	\$20,000,000

Source: North Eastern Strategic Alliance

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Darlington County Council tasks the Darlington County Economic Development Partnership with leadership in economic development. DCEDP is comprised of a staff of two and a board of community and business leaders. The staff works from offices located on the campus of the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology, southeast of the city of Darlington.

DCEDP maintains a strategic plan each year. It includes an inventory of existing conditions, foremost of which is an inventory of prospective sites for industry and distribution. The document further contains goal statements and implementation strategies to retain and attract employers. "Darlington County Economic Development Partnership: An Annual Review" appears in Appendix A of this Comprehensive Plan. It is hereby adopted as part and parcel to this plan, as it has been duly adopted by the DCEDP Board.

## CHAPTER 3

# NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

## DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

This element of the Plan consists of an inventory and assessment of the natural physical characteristics that affect land use and development in Darlington County. Principal among these natural resources are climate, topography, soils, floodplains, and water resources. Some natural resources may have local *and regional* scopes of location and impact. For example, air quality and wildlife habitats are not confined to individual county boundaries.

### TOPOGRAPHY

Darlington County is a nearly level to gently sloping plain with slight rolling topography in the north and flatter swamplands in the south. The county lies in the middle of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. This physiographic province consists chiefly of unconsolidated rock material approximately 1,200 feet thick.

Topographic constraints appear to pose little deterrent to development; however, since the County is relatively flat, with only slight-to-moderate slope, hard rains often create flooding conditions, standing water, silting of creeks and streams, and other health and safety hazards. As a result, careful consideration and study of quantity and quality of water in stormwater runoff should precede development.

### SOILS

Soils are a very important consideration when planning for the orderly growth and development of an area. Soil conditions can present a major constraint to development. Building on unsuitable soils usually means increased construction costs and a less desirable finished product.

There are eleven general soil associations in Darlington County. Each of these soil associations has been mapped for location and evaluated by the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture with respect to type and degree of limitation on urban development. NRCS updated the Darlington County soils survey in 2006, making it one of the most current among South Carolina counties. The survey consists of a map, including a version with which users can [interact](#), and a [manuscript](#) describing characteristics of each soil association, including development constraints. NRCS's website resides at [www.nrcs.usda.org](http://www.nrcs.usda.org).

### FLOODPLAINS

The county has low-lying areas abutting the rivers and creeks, as well as other depressions like Carolina Bays, that are subject to periodic flooding. As a result, they are ill-suited to most types of real estate development. These areas are poorly drained, frequently wet, or subject to rising water over extended periods.

The National Flood Insurance Program uses a standard of the 100-year floodplain as the guideline for development standards. The NFIP guarantees subsidized flood hazard insurance in those communities that will uphold certain standards relative to a flood that has a 1% chance of occurring within a given year. First among them is a building requirement to that horizontal members like HVAC ducts and

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electrical conduits remain above the base flood elevation of the 100-year flood. Darlington County enforces these standards through standard development permitting processes.

Darlington County Council adopted modernized flood hazard areas for its jurisdiction in 2013. These maps provide base flood elevation and other information that architects and structural and civil engineers should use to design and develop sites in impacted areas. Citizens and real estate agents are advised to ascertain flood hazard information for sites they own or may have interest in before making real estate transfer or development decisions. Maps are available at Darlington County offices and [over the internet](http://www.darcosc.com) via Darlington County's website, [www.darcosc.com](http://www.darcosc.com).

### **WATER RESOURCES**

Darlington County is located in two river sub-basins of the Pee Dee River Basin – the Pee Dee and Lynches River Sub-basins. The Pee Dee River Sub-basin, which covers the majority of the Pee Dee region of South Carolina, extends from the North Carolina border southeast to Winyah Bay. The sub-basin is approximately 2,350 square miles in area and encompasses most of Darlington County.

The Pee Dee River has a large and well-sustained streamflow year-round. It originates in North Carolina and receives most of its flow from drainage include Black Creek, Catfish Creek, Jefferies Creek, and Thompson Creek. Black Creek, the largest of the tributaries, flows through the more urbanized portion of the sub-basin (Hartsville, Darlington, and Florence). Its streamflow is affected by two impoundments, Lake Robinson and Prestwood Lake.

The Lynches River Sub-basin is a long, narrow basin cutting through the Pee Dee region. It is approximately 1,370 square miles in area and encompasses a small portion of Darlington County. The Lynches River is the dominant hydrologic feature of this sub-basin. Two of its moderately-sized tributary streams are Sparrow Swamp and Lake Swamp, which flow through the western side of the County.

The presence of the Great Pee Dee and Lynches Rivers is both, an asset and hindrance to development. As large physical features, rivers deter urbanization across them. They form natural edges to development on both the eastern and western boundaries of the County, even where bridge access is provided. The floodplains of the rivers and their tributaries are further constraints to development in many internal portions of the County, even in urban areas. They, too, define edges to urbanization.

The rivers comprise the foundation for “green infrastructure” in Darlington County. They are the receiving water bodies for drainage from all land throughout the county. They further support industrial activity and electrical power generation and, in those roles, contribute to economic development.

The rivers, and more broadly, the riparian corridors that contain them, further indirectly contribute to economic development. They add bountiful natural beauty and recreational opportunities to residents. These “quality of life” considerations aid the County’s recruitment of talent, and employers increasingly weigh the quality of a place in their site-selection processes. Some communities even incorporate recreational use of green infrastructure into a diversified economic development strategy, one in which purveyors of goods and services attract patrons from well beyond their boundaries.

County Council has reviewed “A Green Infrastructure Plan for Darlington County, SC,” published by the Green Infrastructure Center, Inc., in December 2016. This plan includes an inventory of existing conditions for natural, as well as cultural resources in Darlington County. The plan further identifies goals and implementation strategies to sustain green infrastructure and protect and market recreational use thereof and also to capitalize on natural and cultural resources for tourism and other economic development.

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“A Green Infrastructure Plan for Darlington County, SC” is hereby adopted as part and parcel to this Comprehensive Plan. It appears in Appendix B of this document.



## CHAPTER 4

# **CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT**

## **DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This element of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on historic places, buildings, and structures in Darlington County, as well as other characteristics that distinguish this place and its people. Many of the tangible symbols of Darlington County's heritage continue to be a part of daily life and are kept alive by their constant use. Some structures accommodate adaptive re-uses, while others have continued to be used for their original purposes. Some are private residences with the owners providing upkeep and preservation.

Cultural resources are important because they can enhance opportunities for community interaction and cooperation, and provide beneficial social outlets for the community. These resources can provide opportunities for residents and visitors to be exposed to valuable learning activities, leisure events, and other activities that foster appreciation of the local community. These resources also help to shape the image of the community and can be instrumental in attracting other educational and employment opportunities to the area.

### **HISTORY**

Darlington County was originally inhabited by a few small Native American Tribes, of which, the Cheraws dominated. In all effort to induce colonists to settle this area of South Carolina, the colonial government in 1736 and again in 1737 granted two immense tracts of land extending for miles along both sides of the Pee Dee River for the exclusive use of the Welsh Baptists in Delaware, who were contemplating migration to this colony. The entire length of Darlington County bounding the Pee Dee River lies within the limits of these two old Royal Grants.

In 1785, Darlington County was one of three counties created out of the old Cheraw District. In 1888, Darlington County, one of the larger counties of the state, lost almost one-third of its territory to the formation of the new County of Florence. Again, in 1901, it lost an additional 50 square miles of territory to the formation of the new County of Lee.

Throughout its existence, Darlington County has had a large agricultural economy. Agriculture continues to be a mainstay of Darlington County. Cotton was king until dethroned after World War I by flue-cured tobacco, which was introduced to Darlington planters in the late 1880s. Since World War II, manufacturing has grown in Darlington County, providing an alternative to the decline in pursuit of agricultural careers expected of the next generation.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Like many communities, Darlington County has evolved over time to meet the needs of its residents. Streets have been constructed and improved, and buildings have been built, torn down, or adapted to new uses. The growth of a county is a natural progression...the old must sometimes make way for the new. Those things that are pleasant, attractive, or can inform the residents about their history and their communities can be retained to advance progress.



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Often communities pursue historic preservation to encourage the revitalization of blighted areas through the restoration of historic buildings. When a property owner spends time and money to restore a historic site, it motivates surrounding property owners to make improvements, even if their properties are not historic. Historic places can emerge as distinctive destinations for shopping, dining, and sightseeing.

Most importantly, preserving historic resources preserves the heritage and character of a community and contributes to the citizens' understanding of the history of the community. To those ends, the Darlington County Historical Commission has erected 82 historical markers throughout the county. This work began more than 60 years ago, when the commission's predecessor, the Darlington County Historical Society functioned as a private club.

The value of this effort helped the society evolve into a part of County government, becoming the Historical Commission in 1965. It since gained responsibility as an archive for historical records in Darlington County as well.

These records and the commission's staff occupy a freestanding building at 204 Hewitt Avenue in Darlington, the former jailhouse repurposed – in an act of historic preservation – in 1984. The commission further manages the Jacob Kelley House Museum at 2585 Kelletown Road near Hartsville. To that end, \$65,000 is programmed for renovations of the museum in the County's Capital Improvements Plan.

### **HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

Some tangible symbols of Darlington County's historical heritage remain intact and today serve as physical reminders of the County's history. In 1972, the Historical Preservation Survey and Plan was published by the Pee Dee Regional Planning and Development Council (now Council of Governments), which listed historically significant properties with pertinent data by county. This survey was repeated for the Hartsville area in 1981 and for the Darlington area in 1986. This survey of historic resources was done through the SC Department of Archives and History and the SC State Historic Preservation Office.

The National Register of Historic Places is a list of properties that are significant in the history of the United States and is maintained by the National Park Service. Of the more than 1,400 sites in South Carolina, 44 are located in Darlington County. The National Register sites in Darlington County include the places listed in the table on the following page and are taken from information on the website of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

The Darlington County Historical Commission maintains lists with locations of its 82 historical markers, which is reproduced at the end of this element. The commission is also maintaining a list of places on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as nationally registered historic districts with all contributing properties. This list also appears herein.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES AS INFRASTRUCTURE**

Darlington County has numerous distinctive features, places, characteristics, and events that make it a unique place. First and foremost among these may be the Darlington Raceway. The venue at 1301 Harry Byrd Highway near Darlington is best known for its signature event, the Southern 500. The event attracts NASCAR fans throughout South Carolina and every state in the nation to Darlington County, many of them for a full weekend of races.

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The raceway is an important economic driver for the Pee Dee Region. The Darla Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina estimates the raceway's annual impact to the region at \$50.1 million (\$53 million for the entire state).

Local and state tax revenues are estimated at \$2.8 million annually as a result of the Darlington Raceway. Darlington County assesses an accommodations tax and a hospitality tax on hotels, restaurants, and similar businesses that serve race fans. These revenues can be reinvested in both, grey and green infrastructure and public services that improve these visitors' experience.

County Council has reviewed "A Green Infrastructure Plan for Darlington County, SC," published by the Green Infrastructure Center, Inc., in December 2016. This plan includes an inventory of existing conditions for natural, as well as cultural resources in Darlington County. The plan further identifies goals and implementation strategies to sustain green infrastructure and protect and market recreational use thereof and also to capitalize on natural and cultural resources for tourism and other economic development.

"A Green Infrastructure Plan for Darlington County, SC" is hereby adopted as part and parcel to this Comprehensive Plan. It appears in Appendix B of this document.



# Darlington County Historical Commission & Museum

## DARLINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL MARKERS

#	Marker Name	GPS (N)	GPS (W)	Street Address	City
1	Major Robert Lide	34° 21' 11.62"	79° 44' 28.19"	2829 Cashua Ferry Rd (#34)	Mechanicsville
2	David Rogerson Williams	34° 27' 00.56"	79° 50' 36.06"	3330 Society Hill Rd (#16-133)	Society Hill
3	Long Bluff	34° 30' 47.24"	79° 51' 00.11"	101 N. Main St (#15)	Society Hill
4	Evan Pugh	34° 21' 34.81"	79° 47' 00.61"	799 Mechanicsville Hwy. (off #34)	Mechanicsville
5	Lamuel Benton	34° 21' 09.38"	79° 44' 34.86"	2817 Cashua Ferry Rd. (#34)	Mechanicsville
6	George W. Dargan 1802-1859	34° 18' 32.47"	79° 53' 43.07"	703 Weaver St. (off #52)	Darlington
7	Darlington District Agricultural Society / The Mineral Spring	34° 19' 37.35"	79° 53' 01.35"	350 Mineral Springs Rd. (off #52)	Darlington
8	Jacob Kelley House	34° 20' 59.70"	80° 08' 31.40"	2585 Kelletown Rd. (off #151)	Kelletown
9	St. David's Academy	34° 30' 21.90"	79° 51' 27.77"	499 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
10	Thomas E. Hart House	34° 21' 55.88"	80° 06' 58.70"	1624 W. Carolina Ave. (#151)	Hartsville
11	Samuel Bacot 1745-1795	34° 16' 18.34"	79° 49' 17.04"	700 E. McIver Rd. (off #52)	Darlington
12	Attempted Ambush	34° 16' 13.08"	79° 51' 04.43"	1415 Ebenezer Rd (off #52)	Darlington
13	Welch Neck Church	34° 30' 45.65"	79° 51' 02.24"	112 Church St. (off #15)	Society Hill
14	Augustin Wilson	34° 10' 10.19"	79° 57' 57.50"	6559 Oates Hwy. (#403)	Lake Swamp
15	Macedonia Church	34° 17' 52.32"	79° 52' 02.77"	400 S. Main St. (DT)	Darlington
16	St. James Church	34° 18' 03.50"	79° 52' 28.66"	312 Pearl St. (DT)	Darlington
17	Lower Fork Of Lynches Creek Baptist Church / Gum Branch Church	34° 22' 57.01"	80° 11' 06.97"	1504 Clyde Rd.(#16-53)	Clyde
18	Edmund H. Deas	34° 17' 43.65"	79° 51' 45.28"	209 E Ave. (off #52)	Darlington
19	Wilson Crossroads / Dr. Peter A. Wilson	34° 13' 24.29"	79° 53' 51.43"	2245 Timmons ville Hwy. (#340)	Darlington

Adopted August 10, 2020

20	William Andrew Dowling	34° 16' 03.44"	80° 00' 54.80"	I528 E. Seven Pines Rd. (#16-19)	Oates
21	Zachariah W. Wines	34° 30' 27.30"	79° 51' 03.79"	290 Church St. (off #15)	Society Hill
22	Darlington County / Darlington County Courthouse	34° 18' 11.60"	79° 52' 16.71"	I Public Square (DT)	Darlington
23	John L. Hart / John Hart House	34° 22' 35.93"	80° 04' 25.26"	I08 E. Home Ave. (DT)	Hartsville
24	Wesley Chapel	34° 16' 24.29"	80° 05' 43.53"	306I Wesley Chapel Rd. (off #15)	Lydia
25	Lawrence Faulkner / Simon Brown	34° 30' 42.60"	79° 51' 05.87"	I33 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
26	Society Hill Library Society	34° 30' 32.91"	79° 51' 17.69"	290 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
27	James Lide Coker	34° 22' 39.75"	80° 04' 15.50"	210 E. Home Ave. (DT)	Hartsville
28	David Robert Coker 1870-1938	34° 22' 39.17"	80° 04' 16.06"	213 E. Home Ave. (DT)	Hartsville
29	Carolina Fiber Co. / Sonoco Products Company	34° 22' 44.85"	80° 04' 02.45"	414 E. Home Ave. (DT)	Hartsville
30	Trinity Church	34° 30' 39.74"	79° 51' 09.22"	201 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
31	Eastern Carolina Silver Company	34° 22' 44.99"	80° 04' 01.01"	501 E. Home Ave. (DT)	Hartsville
32	Welch Neck High School / Coker College	34° 22' 41.65"	80° 04' 09.60"	311 E. Home Ave. (DT)	Hartsville
33	Laurie M. Lawson	34° 15' 48.17"	80° 02' 57.31"	999 E. Seven Pines Rd. (#16-19)	Oates
34	First Baptist Church [Hartsville]	34° 22' 35.43"	80° 04' 26.65"	I04 E. Home Ave. (DT)	Hartsville
35	Butler School	34° 21' 32.44"	80° 04' 12.30"	1103 S. 6th St. (DT)	Hartsville
36	Society Hill Presbyterian Church	34° 30' 32.70"	79° 51' 17.91"	290 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
37	Darlington Raceway	34° 17' 50.88"	79° 54' 18.47"	I30I Harry Byrd Hwy. (#151)	Darlington
38	First Baptist Church [Darlington]	34° 18' 00.07"	79° 52' 08.84"	216 S. Main St. (DT)	Darlington
39	Japonica Hall / Maj. J. J. Lucas	34° 30' 20.40"	79° 51' 30.61"	548 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
40	Williamson's Bridge	34° 16' 13.50"	79° 47' 12.02"	I800 S. Charleston Rd. (#16-35)	Darlington
41	Caleb Coker House	34° 30' 32.30"	79° 51' 17.27"	289 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
42	Hartsville Oil Mill	34° 22' 21.27"	80° 04' 20.16"	201 S. 5th St. (DT)	Hartsville
43	Henry "Dad" Brown	34° 17' 21.96"	79° 52' 58.22"	204 Brockington Rd. (off #52)	Darlington
44	Fair Hope Presbyterian Church	34° 06' 40.35"	80° 04' 40.16"	1116 E. Lynches River Rd. (off #76)	Lamar

45	Lawrence Reese	34° 17' 55.30"	79° 52' 16.00"	229 W. Broad St. (DT)	Darlington
46	Damascus Methodist Church	34° 22' 56.40"	80° 03' 02.63"	1037 E. Home Ave. (off #15)	Hartsville
47	Execution Of Adam Cusack	34° 31' 06.88"	79° 50' 38.11"	404 N. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
48	Wilds-Edwards House / Samuel Hough Wilds	34° 17' 56.55"	79° 52' 31.19"	120 Edwards Ave. (DT)	Darlington
49	Darlington Memorial Center	34° 18' 00.20"	79° 52' 34.90"	402 Pearl St. (DT)	Darlington
50	Andrew Hunter	34° 15' 37.19"	79° 47' 50.71"	1199 E. McIver Rd. (off #52)	Darlington
51	"Yankee Hill"	34° 18' 24.35"	79° 52' 25.60"	208 N. Main St. (DT)	Darlington
52	Julius A. Dargan House	34° 17' 59.18"	79° 52' 36.97"	410 Pearl St. (DT)	Darlington
53	Lydia Rural Fire Dept.	34° 17' 20.66"	80° 06' 27.12"	750 W. Lydia Hwy (#15)	Lydia
54	Darlington Memorial Cemetery	34° 18' 04.87"	79° 51' 23.20"	589 D Ave. (off #52)	Darlington
55	John L. Hart House	34° 20' 44.41"	79° 51' 08.76"	1063 Society Hill Rd. (#16-133)	Darlington
56	John Westfield Lide House	34° 21' 17.44"	79° 50' 52.11"	1240 Society Hill Rd. (#16-133)	Darlington
57	Mont Clare Community Center	34° 23' 49.23"	79° 49' 01.44"	1632 Mont Clare Rd (off #16-133)	Mont Clare
58	Society Hill Depot	34° 31' 06.38"	79° 50' 38.97"	400 N. Main St (#15)	Society Hill
59	Grove Hill / Cemetery	34° 18' 16.40"	79° 51' 34.69"	417 S. Watley St. (off #52)	Darlington
60	Darlington County Jail	34° 18' 16.84"	79° 52' 17.31"	204 Hewitt St. (DT)	Darlington
61	Mount Pleasant Baptist Church / Lowther's Hill Cemetery	34° 21' 10.97"	79° 44' 27.93"	2828 Cashua Ferry Rd. (#34)	Mechanicsville
62	Oates	34° 15' 11.57"	80° 04' 39.39"	3500 Oates Hwy (#403)	Oates
63	Henry C. Burn House	34° 30' 41.05"	79° 51' 07.77"	163 S. Main St. (#15)	Society Hill
64	Mt. Zion Baptist Church	34° 23' 45.98"	79° 54' 05.84"	3208 N. Governor Williams Hwy. (#52)	Dovesville
65	Coker's Pedigreed Seed Company / Coker Experimental Farm	34° 21' 27.84"	80° 03' 35.17"	1269 S. 4th St. (#151)	Hartsville
66	John Wesley Methodist Church	34° 09' 50.39"	80° 03' 38.63"	304 E. Main St. (DT)	Lamar
67	New Providence Baptist Church	34° 25' 34.09"	80° 01' 52.88"	1884 Antioch Rd. (#16-115)	Hartsville
68	Flat Creek Baptist Church [Darlington]	34° 21' 41.68"	79° 50' 32.37"	1369 Society Hill Rd. (#16-133)	Darlington
69	Bethlehem Methodist Church	34° 27' 45.63"	79° 59' 38.93"	2700 Byrdtown Rd. (off #15)	Byrdtown

70	Hartsville Graded School / Mt. Pisgah Nursery School	34° 21' 58.78"	80° 04' 19.55"	630 S. 6th St (DT)	Hartsville
71	New Hopewell Baptist Church	34° 25' 47.37"	79° 58' 25.88"	3500 New Hopewell Rd. (off #15)	Hartsville
72	Swift Creek Baptist Church	34°18'46.86 "	79°58'24.67 "	413 N. Center Rd. (off #151)	Hartsville
73	Rosenwald Consolidated School	34°28'36.01 "	79°51'31.94 "	410 Rosenwald St. (off #52)	Society Hill
74	Jerusalem Baptist Church	34°22'15.48 "	80°04'26.90 "	301 S 6th St. (DT)	Hartsville
75	Round O Community			1900 Society Hill Rd	Darlington
76	St. John Methodist Church			220 W 7 Pines St	Lamar
77	Hartsville Passenger Station	34° 22.472	080° 04.235	194 S 4th Street	Hartsville
78	Hartsville Colored Cemetery			417 Marion Avenue	Hartsville
79	Hartsville Cotton Mill			250 Bock of Coker Avenue	Hartsville
80	St. Joseph's Catholic Church			307 Washington Street	Hartsville
81	Mt. Rona Missionary Baptist Church			245 Lumber Road	Society Hill
82	Bethel Church			2413 Bethel Road	Hartsville





## CHAPTER 5

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

## DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

Addressed in this element are many facilities and services essential to the County's growth and development. The community facilities and services discussed here include water, sewer, solid waste collection and disposal, public safety, education, recreation, general government, the library, and health facilities. Some of the facilities and services are directly provided or maintained by Darlington County, while special purpose districts or private utilities provide others.

### WATER & SEWER SERVICE

The presence or absence of community water and sewer service has a profound influence on urban development. Public action to provide water and/or sewer service can affect the direction and timing of growth by encouraging or discouraging development in particular areas. Development occurring in areas without sanitary sewerage must provide for on-site waste disposal to meet state health requirements and protect groundwater.

Presently, there are three different water systems operating in Darlington County. Two of these are municipally owned systems, while the third operator is the Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority (DCWSA). DCWSA recently accepted the systems previously operated by the towns of Society Hill and Lamar, while the cities of Darlington and Hartsville continue to operate their own.

The systems obtain most of their water supply from 16 groundwater wells with various pumping capacities. The Society Hill reaches of the DCWSA system, however, utilize a surface-water source, Cedar Creek, with an intake capacity of 0.54 million gallons per day (MGD). DCWSA annexed this system in January of 1992.

Water storage is achieved through 19 facilities – 4 ground- and 15 elevated storage tanks – ranging in capacity from 0.05 to 1.10 million gallons. Water lines extend throughout much of Darlington County, allowing for the potential to extend service to most locations that may anticipate development.

Compared to water service coverage, access to sanitary sewerage is much more limited in unincorporated portions of Darlington County. The map at the end of this element, "Darlington County Community Facilities," depicts those sewer mains maintained by DCWSA.

A water and sewer system inventory has recently been completed for DCWSA. The US Economic Development Administration grant and funding from the Darlington County Economic Development Partnership made the study possible.

The study focused on sanitary sewerage for several existing and prospective industrial sites and parks, grouped in five locations: Hartsville/SC-151, Darlington Jetport, Highway 52 near I-95, Highway 340 near I-20, and Lamar, also near I-20. The consulting firm that executed the study, engineers of Davis & Brown, found that water pressure was adequate for potability and firefighting to support most uses at these locations. DCWSA owns and operates both, water supply and transmission.

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The authority maintains sewer transmission but does not own and operate wastewater treatment. In its "Analysis of Water Capacities & Sewer Service Capabilities for Industrial Development Sites Served by the Darlington County Water & Sewer Authority," Davis & Brown noted that upgrades in treatment capacity, and new transmission thereto, necessitate partnerships with municipal sewer providers throughout and around Darlington County.

### **Lamar Area**

Four prospective industrial sites, including one with a vacant building, exist along US-401 at or near its junction with I-20. The consultants report that water capacity is available to support reuse of the existing building and some new development on the other three sites; however, full buildout would require upgrades to supply pressure and storage.

The report indicates that the Lamar sewer system requires repairs to handle anything more than a small discharge from the vacant building at US-401 and I-20. Consequently, no service is currently available to the other three prospective industrial sites despite the presence of a sewer main along US-401. This DCWSA main discharges into the sewer system owned and operated by the Town of Lamar.

Inflow and infiltration into the sewer system compromises its available treatment capacity. That primarily means that stormwater is finding its way into the system through aged pipes and unpermitted discharges, overwhelming the plant during heavy rainfall events.

This is a common problem in small towns across South Carolina. Stagnant investment in property and stagnant or declining populations leave towns short of the revenue needed to keep up with maintenance and modernization.

The report includes a cost estimate of \$660,900 to repair the system. Alternatives to connect the four sites to wastewater treatment plants in Timmonsville or Florence range in cost from one to two million dollars.

### **SC-340**

Water and sewer services are in place for the I-20 Industrial Place. Sewage discharges to the Timmonsville Wastewater Treatment Plant, a small facility operated by the City of Florence that could be overwhelmed by a particularly large impact. A new line to route effluent to Florence's main WWTP would cost about half-a-million dollars.

### **Hartsville/SC-151**

Sewer analysis for Hartsville industrial park identifies two options: (1) connect to the municipal system, which would necessitate annexation into the city of Hartsville, and (2) install a ten-mile-long force main along SC-151 to connect to an existing line near Darlington Middle School. The latter option, discharge to Florence's wastewater treatment plant, would cost an estimated \$720,000. The study further considers making a sewer main on SC-151 available for commercial connections, which would more than double its cost to \$1.74 million.

The study indicates that water supply may be inadequate for a large industrial user and that pressure is inadequate to fight fires at Hartsville sites. The Darlington Fire District reports that it would expect to fight a fire there with tanker trucks, so these sites may yet work for the right employer without water system upgrades.

# Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

## Darlington Area

One of two subjects of study on the eastern side of the county is Tech Foundation Park. Darlington County Economic Development Partnership, Florence County Economic Development Partnership, and the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology operate there now with ample water and sewer capacity. Utilities are in place to attract employers.

The Darlington Jetport location has neither water nor sewer capacity to support industry without upgrades. The consultant offers a strategy to implement these utilities with cost estimates approaching three-and-a-half million dollars.

## SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Disposal methods and facilities for solid and yard wastes, used oils and similar products, and household or business chemicals in a community are a necessity. If an easily accessible place is not provided, residents will simply dump or burn wastes inappropriately. Each participating jurisdiction provides some type of solid waste disposal.

Figure 5.1 CONVENIENCE CENTER SITES Darlington County	
Site Name	Location
Antioch	2425 Antioch Rd, Hartsville
Centerville	319 Centerville Rd, Hartsville
Dovesville	250 Dovesville Hwy, Dovesville
East Lydia	315 East Lydia Hwy, Hartsville
Pine Ridge	2229 West Old Camden Rd, Hartsville
West Mciver	424 West Mciver Rd, Darlington
Bay Road	1332 Bay Rd, Hartsville
Lamar	601 Bay Branch Rd, Lamar
Old Ruby	1218 Old Ruby Rd, Hartsville
Smith Ave	715 Phillips Street, Darlington
Landfill	2301 Great Cypress Rd
East McIver	1318 E. McIver Rd, Darlington
Society Hill	212 East Depot Street, Society Hill
Syracuse	3204 Lamar Hwy, Darlington

Source: <https://www.scdhec.gov/environment/recycling-waste-reduction/where-recycle-locally/darlington-county-recycling-locations>

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

Solid waste management consists of three activities: collection, disposal, and recycling. In Darlington County, public collection of solid waste and recycling is handled by Darlington County Environmental Services through a system of staffed convenience centers and a landfill. The system is designed to offer a range of services to the citizens of the county that will meet disposal needs in a manner that is convenient to the user and is in full compliance with state and federal requirements.

Municipalities in the county can either contract with a private company for curbside garbage collection services or provide these services to residences and businesses in the municipality. The cities of Darlington and Hartsville provides garbage collection services within municipal limits.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Darlington County Sheriff's Office provides uniform patrol of the county on a daily basis. There are currently 74 sworn officers. The office is located at 1621 Harry Byrd Hwy, Darlington, SC 29532.

The Detention Division is composed of 50+ employees, which includes administration, command staff, and officers. In 1999, the detention center moved into a new facility, which houses 224 inmates, with an additional holding area capacity of 64. The facility houses both male and female inmates. This state-of-the-art facility has been a model in structure and operations throughout the state. It is a direct supervision facility, a totally self-sufficient operation consisting of housing, food service, and laundry facilities that maintain a high level of service on a daily basis. Ninety-five to ninety-eight percent of the housed inmates are pre-trial or persons waiting to go to court to have their cases heard by a judge. The other two to five percent are persons serving a sentence of no more than 90 days or are waiting to be transferred to another facility. Additionally, this is a contracted holding facility for the United States Marshall Service for Federal inmates awaiting trial in the United States Federal Court System.

The W. Glenn Campbell Detention Center is responsible for planning, organizing, and implementing the operations and programs of the detention division. Additionally, the director ensures that all policies, regulations, and procedures are enforced and implemented. The Detention Center Director prepares and monitors the division budget, prepares reports and analysis as required. This position is directly accountable to the Sheriff or his designee for the implementation of all operations of the division.

Darlington County Emergency Medical Service was established in 1975. EMS now serves the population of the county, including its municipalities, from four bases at the following addresses. Hartsville Base has two 24-hour ambulance crews while the remainder has one crew each.

- Headquarters: 1625 Harry Byrd Highway, Darlington SC 29532
- Hartsville Base: 411 South Fourth Street, Hartsville, SC 29550
- East Darlington Base: 3231 Cashua Street, Darlington, SC 29532
- Lamar Base: 1644 Cartersville Highway, Lamar, SC 29069

Darlington County Council formed the Darlington County Fire District 32 years ago. It has nearly doubled its number of stations from ten to nineteen during that time. Two of those stations are scheduled for replacement in the County's Capital Improvements Plan. They stand within the town limits of Lamar and Society Hill. All 19 appear on the map at the end of this element, "Darlington County Community Facilities."

As of this writing, Darlington County Council has given first reading to an ordinance that would provide funding to upgrade the Fire District's fleet to pumper trucks capable of delivering water at a rate of 2,000 gallons per minute. This level of service would meet the standard of protection necessary to fight fires at prospective industrial sites, according to Davis & Brown's study of water and sewer service capabilities, summarized above.



# Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Darlington County has one school district. A board of trustees and superintendent operates under the general supervision of the South Carolina Department of Education. Darlington County School District operates five major high schools – Darlington HS; Hartsville HS; Lamar HS; and the magnet Mayo High School for Math, Science, and Technology. The South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics in Hartsville, one of two Governor's schools in the state, is overseen by a board appointed largely by the governor. There are 23 public schools in total, including all high, junior high, middle, and elementary schools.

The number of schools will change in 2020 when three new facilities open. The new schools will replace existing, aging schools with modern new facilities. The map at the end of this element, "Darlington County Community Facilities" depicts the locations at which they are under construction. Two of the three are outside of municipalities, in places that will reduce families' options to walk or bike to school and increase bussing needs relative to existing facilities.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

South Carolina's system of two-year technical colleges serves Darlington County via Florence-Darlington Tech, located on US-52 very near the boundary between Florence and Darlington counties. Private Coker University in Hartsville is the lone four-year college in Darlington County.

## **RECREATION**

There are numerous recreational opportunities available to the citizens of Darlington County, provided by the County, its municipalities, the State, school districts, or private parties. The Darlington County Recreation Department is divided into three service areas for administration, management, and control purposes – the Darlington area, the Hartsville area, and the rural area, which is primarily the remainder of the county. Each area has its own director and staff.

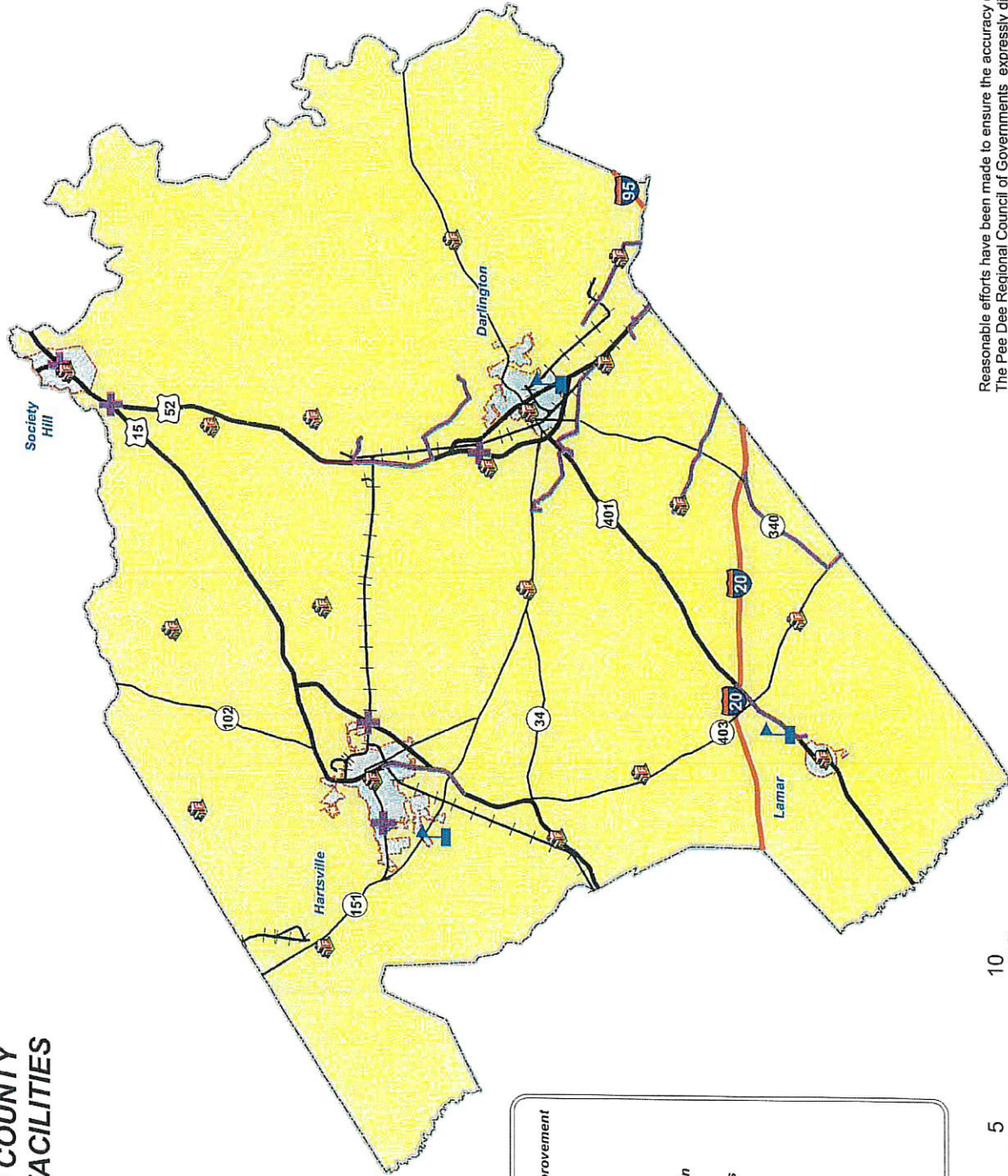
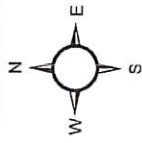
Darlington County and the Cities of Darlington and Hartsville all provide parks and recreation sites with improvements. The school district has provided land for the development of many facilities. School facilities and buildings are used extensively throughout Darlington County through a joint-use agreement.

## **OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The Darlington County Administration Building stands at 1 Public Square, Darlington, SC 29532. Many of the administrative offices are housed there, including – Administration, Purchasing, Planning, Probate Judge, Stormwater, Tax Assessor, Tax Collector, Treasurer, and Veterans Affairs, Building Codes, Solicitor, and Auditor.

The Darlington County Library System provides a wide variety of free programs and services through its four locations Darlington, Hartsville, Lamar, and Society Hill, and its Digital Branch at [www.darlingtonlib.org](http://www.darlingtonlib.org). The library welcomes at least 300,000 visitors each year who use its meeting rooms, wireless internet access, public computers, educational/training programs, electronic databases, 3D printers, wireless hotspots, and a collection of hundreds of thousands of books, DVDs, newspapers, and magazines in print, video, audio, and electronic formats. The library's facilities are available for use by government agencies, businesses, non-government organizations, and the public for their program and service needs.

# DARLINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Intersection Improvement



New School



Fire Station



Sewer Forcemain



Corporate Limits



Interstates



US Highways



SC Highways



Railroads



Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of these maps.  
The Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments expressly disclaims responsibility  
for damages or liability that may arise from the use of these maps. August 2019



## CHAPTER 6

# TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

## DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

The transportation system plays an essential role in the economic and community development of Darlington County. A robust surface transportation system facilitates efficient movement of people and goods. It influences how and where development will occur and whether patterns of future development will enhance economic opportunities, protect natural resources, and advance quality of life in a community.

This element contemplates the means by which people, goods, and services traverse the county and identifies future needs. Transportation systems addressed in this element include railroads, airports, roads (streets and highways), and off-road facilities (e.g., hiker/biker trails). The element elaborates on access to these types of transportation in Darlington County: freight movement, people movement, and air service.

### RAIL SYSTEM

The Pee Dee Region is served by both, passenger and freight rail service. An excellent series of carriers and tracks provide freight-rail service to the region. CSX Railroad operates the mainline, which runs north and south through Florence, connecting the region to the Port of Charleston, one of the nation's busiest.

The Port of Charleston also recently established an "inland port" in Dillon County, to the east of Darlington County along I-95. The inland port serves as a terminal at which to transfer freight containers between trains and trucks. It also serves as a staging area for trucks, reducing empty miles and thus, congestion on I-95.

The South Carolina Central Railroad operates in Darlington County, running from Florence through Darlington to Hartsville and terminating in Bishopville. The railroad's interchange with CSX occurs in Florence. It provides transportation for agricultural products, chemicals, construction materials, fertilizers, minerals, plastics, pulp and paper, steel, and scrap metal used or produced in the region, including two of Darlington County's most significant manufacturers -- Sonoco and Nucor.

Amtrak's "Palmetto Train" offers daily passenger rail service to New York City; Washington, DC; Charleston; Savannah; and Miami. It operates on the CSX main line and provides dining and free wifi.

### AIR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

There are two municipal-owned airports located in Darlington: Darlington County Airport and the Hartsville Regional Airport. The Darlington County Airport is a county-owned, public-use airport located nine nautical miles north of the central business district of Darlington. Hartsville Regional Airport is a city-owned public-use airport located three nautical miles northwest of the central business district of Hartsville. These facilities serve private and corporate users, such as Sonoco's world headquarters in Hartsville.

The Florence Regional Airport serves the Pee Dee Region from a facility located on the eastern edge of the city of Florence. American Airlines offers multiple flights daily to and from Charlotte. Residents also use Charlotte, Columbia, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach airports for air travel.



# Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

## **ROAD SYSTEM**

Darlington County benefits from a robust road network of limited-access highways, multi-modal streets, and high-capacity thoroughfares. Residents and freight carriers alike enjoy efficient access via Interstate Highways 20 and 95 to destinations throughout the southeastern United States and beyond. These facilities, coupled with railroad access, make Darlington County attractive to manufacturers of durable and non-durable goods alike.

Long segments of US and South Carolina Highways 15, 52, 401, and 151 have been widened to five lanes (four travel lanes and a two-way-left-turn lane) to facilitate freight movement to the Interstate Highways. These thoroughfares also efficiently connect the county's four municipalities.

Hartsville, Darlington, and Lamar have highly connective local street networks in which primary streets are typically equipped with pedestrian facilities and occasionally, on-street parking to provide for mobility and access by foot to destinations ranging from retail shops to educational institutions.

## **OFF-ROAD FACILITIES**

Off-road transportation facilities are rare in Darlington County. Like many institutions of higher learning, Coker College employs off-road facilities designed for walking to ensure that young adults enjoy safe, convenient access across campus. "The Vista" is perhaps the highest-profile example of this type of transportation facility in the county.

Abandoned railroads present opportunities to expand the transportation network for alternative modes, as well as to provide opportunities for recreation.

## **FREIGHT MOVEMENT**

The strength of Darlington County's transportation network is its ability to move freight. Major investments in the Pee Dee Region that supplement freight movement include the Dillon Inland Port, as well as surface and capacity improvements to I-95 and US-401. Traffic counts along five-lane thoroughfares like US-401 and SC-151 indicate they are operating at a high "level of service," meaning low volume relative to capacity.

Community development along these corridors constitutes a threat to the high level of service provided by these corridors. High-speed truck traffic does not mix well with a lunch rush or elementary school traffic, whether that traffic includes walkers, cyclists, or car riders. The process of community institutions and local services migrating outward from municipalities is gradual but indeed present in Darlington County despite a lack of population growth.

## **PEOPLE MOVEMENT**

Darlington County's road network also provides efficient mobility and access to residents operating private cars. Real estate developers and end-users – residents, merchants, and customers – prepare for and manage parking demand without government regulation. Darlington County Development Standards are mute on the subject.

Because most unincorporated Darlington County is quite rural in nature, the majority of trips are made by private car. Due to age, ability, or expense, a significant proportion of trips cannot be made by car and are thus completed by other modes.

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

Accurate counts of trips made by mode are unavailable in Darlington County, as elsewhere. The second most common trip type is likely by bus. Many of Darlington County School District's 10,000 students ride school busses every day. Pee Dee Rural Transit Authority operates three recurring routes and an on-demand route in the Darlington County.

All transit trips begin and end on foot. To utilize transit safely, riders must be able to walk alongside *and across* the street in dedicated spaces in all but the quietest of streets.

On those brief segments where sidewalks do exist (e.g., SC-151 near the Raceway), they lie immediately adjacent to relatively high-speed travel lanes. Dedicated crossings are almost non-existent. Facilities designed like this are almost useless to children and the elderly, precisely those populations less likely to have access to private cars. Transit, therefore, performs poorly on such corridors. Active transportation needs can be met through proper redesign of corridors attracting light commercial and institutional development.

### **TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS**

As previously noted, significant improvements in transportation have occurred throughout the Pee Dee Region in recent years. Darlington County has participated in some of these transportation improvement decisions through its roles in the Florence Area Transportation Study and the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments. These two entities are responsible for programming federal revenue for transportation improvements and operations (like transit) in the region. Each is tasked with maintaining a list of projects and an accounting of costs and project timing. A condensed list appears herein, identifying transportation investments in Darlington County.

The Darlington County Transportation Committee (CTC) also invests in the county's transportation system. In broad terms, a county transportation committee takes responsibility for maintenance, while regional agencies provide for upgrades in smaller counties. To date, Darlington's CTC has focused on paving dirt roads; however, it has leeway to invest more broadly, should it so desire. The state's department of transportation, meanwhile, has pushed regional agencies to invest more in maintenance although that is not their original mission.

SC Department of Transportation also repaves roads, typically primary routes, generally leaving secondary routes to the CTC. [SCDOT's website](#) reports significantly more resurfacing activity than the Pee Dee COG and FLATS transportation improvements programs. Resurfacing presents an opportunity to coordinate and plan simple changes to enhance safety through restriping and other thermoplastic paint applications.

Local intervention in an otherwise systematic process is necessary to achieve improvements. Consideration should be given to locations where urban sections with disconnected active transportation routes and rural crossroads at destinations like churches. Revised lane widths, bicycle markings, crosswalks, and new or improved illumination are all potential low-cost safety upgrades that may fit within local budgets with adequate notice from SCDOT.

A full set of road maintenance and improvement projects led by the state can be viewed on a map or in a list at [www.scdot.org](http://www.scdot.org).

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Type	Improvement Location	\$\$\$	Program	Status
Bridge Replacement	US-401 over Jefferies Creek, Lake Swamp, and High Hill Creek	\$5.893M	Bridges	Under Construction
Bridge Replacement	US-52 Business over Swift Creek	\$3.675M	Bridges	Underway
Bridge Replacement	S-49 (Ebenezer Rd) over High Hill Creek	\$1.715M	Bridges	Underway
Intersection Improvements	US-15 (S Main St)/US 52 (Cheraw Hwy)/ US 401 (N Main St)/S-133 (Church St) (In Society Hill)	\$3.05M	Rural System	Under Construction
Intersection Improvements	SC-151 Bus. @ S-102 & S-10 & S-1040 / Construct Roundabout at the intersection of SC 151 Bus. (W Carolina Ave), S-102 (Fourteenth St), S-10 (W Home Ave) & S-1040 (Trailwood Dr) in Darlington County. Located within the City of Hartsville	\$1.775M	Safety	Complete
Intersection Improvements	US-52/401 (N Gov Williams Hwy) & US 15 (Hartsville Hwy) (South of Society Hill)	\$1.35M	Rural System	Programmed
Intersection Improvements	US-52 (N. Governor Williams Hwy) at S-528 (Wire Rd) / 2 mi northwest of City of Darlington	\$1.095M	Safety	Underway
Intersection Improvements	US-15 (S. Marquis Hwy) @ S-135 (Railroad Ave) 1.5 mi east of Hartsville	\$0.325M	Safety	Complete
Pavement	I-20 (Near MM 121 to near MM 135) (EB/WB)	\$25M	Interstate	Complete
Pavement	US-15 from Hartsville to Society Hill (10.5 mi)	\$4.9M	Rural System	Programmed

Notes: "Programmed" means revenue is obligated but the project has not started; "Underway" means the project has started but is not yet under construction.

## CHAPTER 7

# HOUSING ELEMENT

### DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

#### INTRODUCTION

In addition to its primary function, housing represents lifestyle and influences land use and environmental conditions. It is important therefore to review and evaluate housing conditions, trends, occupancy, value, affordability, etc. as a part of the comprehensive plan.

As explained in the population element, Census reports prior to 2010 included population and housing data gleaned from everyone responding to the Census questionnaire as well as data derived from a sample of one in six households regarding such social and economic topics as income, education, housing value, etc. The 2010 Census, however, was an enumeration of only population and housing data; therefore, a study of trends in the data derived from the decennial Census could only be conducted for those categories of information collected in 2010. Sample data are no longer collected every ten years. Rather, small samples are taken every year and averaged for multi-year periods during the American Community Survey (ACS). Because larger samples have lesser margins of error, multi-year periods are the most accurate. Thus, when such data is presented, five-year averages will be used.

#### HOUSING SUPPLY

According to the US Census data, there were a total of 30,810 housing units in Darlington County. Owner-occupancy was 68.3%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units was \$84,700. The median monthly owner cost with a mortgage was \$930. Of the total housing units in Darlington County, owner-occupied detached units represent 50.1%, renter-occupied detached units represent 12.8%, owner-occupied manufactured housing units represent 17.6%, and renter-occupied manufactured housing units represent 10.4%.

#### HOUSING VALUE AND COSTS

The cost of housing in a community influences when and where people relocate. While it is attractive to have low-cost housing available, it is equally important to have a variety of housing types from which to choose. The “filtering” effect – the process of residents buying or moving into more expensive housing when their financial situations allow and thus freeing less expensive housing for persons with lower incomes – only works when an adequate supply of homes is available. Conversely, older residents are often looking to downsize by moving into housing that is smaller, requires less maintenance, and is generally less expensive than their previous home. Quality housing that meets these diverse economic and social needs is essential to a balanced and sustainable housing mix within a community.

The median property value in Darlington County, SC is \$84,700, which is 41% of the national average of \$205,000. Between 2015 and 2016, the median property value decreased from \$86,800 to \$84,700.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Increasing housing costs, coupled with relatively low wages, make home-buying difficult for lower-income families, young couples, and single persons. A standard definition of affordable housing is as follows:

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

*Sale Units:* Housing for which total housing costs (PITI & fees) constitute no more than 28 percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than 80 percent of the County's median household income, by household size; and,

*Rental Units:* Housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than 80 percent of the County's median household income, by household size.

Affordable housing is a very important issue for residents in Darlington County. The cost of housing must be in proportion to household incomes if a community is to meet future housing needs. Lending institutions base affordability generally on housing costs not exceeding 2.5 times the gross household income. This translates into about 30 percent of household income for gross housing expenses. A household is considered cost-burdened if its occupants are paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs.

Cities and towns across South Carolina, including Darlington County municipalities, restrict the location and use of mobile and manufactured housing, often pushing this type of housing to less restrictive, unincorporated areas. Manufactured houses meet a need for lower-cost housing in rural areas that attached housing cannot due to lack of wet utilities. They may serve as starter homes for households saving to build a house on the same site. Residents of heirs' property also rely on manufactured housing because they cannot collateralize their land for mortgages.

### **PUBLIC, AFFORDABLE, AND ASSISTED HOUSING PROGRAMS**

Obtaining affordable, clean, and safe housing is one of the highest priorities for families. The provision of affordable housing options is the primary goal of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which administers many programs that are focused on achieving that goal. A number of agencies and organizations promote or offer housing options and improvements to residents in Darlington County, some affiliated with HUD.

The State Housing Finance and Development Authority (SCHFDA) offers homeownership and rental programs to qualified candidates. Homeownership programs include first-time homebuyer loans, down payment assistance, and a single parent loan program. SCHFDA also administers the Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), a federal program established under the Cranston-Gonzales National Affordable Housing Act of 1990. The HOME program is designed to promote partnerships among the federal government, state and local governments, nonprofit and for-profit sectors who build, own, manage, finance and support low-income housing initiatives.

SCHFDA manages several statewide rental assistance programs, including the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, usually administered by local housing authorities. Other rental assistance programs include the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and the Multi-family Tax-Exempt Bond Financing Program. HUD-assisted rental housing in Darlington County include complexes serving families, the elderly, and/or the disabled.

In 1992, South Carolina enacted the South Carolina Housing Trust Fund. This legislation commits revenues from an increase in the documentary stamp tax on real estate sales to the development of affordable housing. The fund collects approximately two million dollars annually. Allowed uses include housing for families, the elderly, the special needs population and transient housing. To be eligible, a development must have at least 20 percent of its units occupied by households earning at or below 50 percent of the area median income or 40 percent of its units occupied by households earning at or below 60 percent of the area median income.

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development program has a variety of offerings of loans and grants for rural development and housing. Rural residents can seek assistance through the USDA Rural Development Office. Some of the services provided include direct and guaranteed loans for income-qualified candidates, rental assistance, rural rental housing programs, farm labor housing programs, and home repair loans and grants.

Since the organization's initial work in 1985, it has completed hundreds of housing rehabilitation projects in the Pee Dee region. Telamon also assists low-income youth in developing valuable skills and trades. The organization has supervised training crews working with many of its rehabilitation projects.

The Fair Housing Act was passed by Congress in 1967 and amended in 1988. The Act and its amendments protect individuals from housing discrimination because of their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status. Under the law, these are defined as protected classes.

The Fair Housing Act is enforced by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission enforces state laws against discrimination and also protects individuals against retaliation and acts of harm to those who have asserted their fair housing rights.

The Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments has partnered with the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments Fair Housing Program as the local agency that provides intake of complaints. This agency provides outreach education and promotes substantially equivalent local ordinances. A toll-free hotline in English and Spanish and a website with printable fair housing materials for consumers, real estate agents, and property managers are available to those interested.

The South Carolina Centers for Equal Justice is a statewide law firm that provides legal services to eligible South Carolinians. There are 13 offices across the state. The center provides legal representation, counsel, education, and outreach in a variety of areas. Those areas pertaining to housing and income include the following: housing (evictions, foreclosures, and home and real-estate ownership); consumer (loan and installment purchases, bankruptcy, claim and delivery, credit actions); public benefits (Social Security, SSI, food stamps, TANF, Medicare, Medicaid, veteran's benefits, driver's license reinstatement); employment (wage claims, working conditions, unemployment compensation); and, migrant farmworkers (individual rights, public benefits, employment).

Due to unique circumstances, certain populations of Darlington County require special services in order to meet their housing needs. Although Darlington County Government does not provide any type of special housing, this need is being addressed by state agencies, non-profit organizations, and faith-based groups. In the county, there are special needs housing and services for persons with disabilities, the elderly, children (shelters and foster home care), and persons coping with addiction/rehabilitation or with health-related conditions, as well as temporary and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence.

As the population of Darlington County ages and baby boomers look to alternative housing options, the availability of appropriate housing for older residents becomes increasingly important. There are several types of housing for the elderly, representing a range of assistance and care options. Nursing homes are facilities that provide nursing or convalescent care for two or more persons unrelated to the licensee. A nursing home provides long-term care of chronic conditions or short-term convalescent or rehabilitative care of remedial ailments for which medical and nursing care are necessary. Although some residents are admitted for shorter convalescent or rehabilitative stays following hospitalization, most nursing facility residents are older adults who require long-term care.



## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

Community residential care facilities, also referred to as “assisted living facilities,” offer room and board for two or more persons unrelated to the licensee. These facilities are designed to accommodate the changing needs and preferences of residents; maximize the dignity, autonomy, privacy, independence, and safety of residents; and encourage family and community involvement. Such a facility may also offer a beneficial or protected environment specifically for individuals who have mental illness or disabilities.

Nursing homes and community residential care facilities licensed to operate in Darlington County follow.

- Bethea Baptist Health Care Center and Assisted Living at 157 Home Ave., Darlington, SC 29532
- Medford Nursing Center at 105 Medford Dr., Darlington, SC 29532
- Morrell Nursing Center at 900 N. Marquis Hwy., Hartsville, SC 29550
- Oakhaven Nursing Center at 123 Oak St., Darlington, SC 29532
- Carriage House Senior Living of Hartsville at 1131 E. Home Ave., Hartsville, SC 29550
- Easy Living at 506 E. Jackson St., Lamar, SC 29069
- Morningside of Hartsville at 1901 W. Carolina Ave., Hartsville, SC 29550
- Retreat at Carolina Bay at 1340 Carolina Bay Blvd., Hartsville, SC 29550

### **BARRIERS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Communities that strive to ensure a diverse mix of housing face barriers when trying to provide affordable housing. The first barrier to affordable housing is the availability and price of land. This limit on supply, coupled with the widening gap between income and housing costs strains access to housing.

Another impediment is financing, both for would-be homeowners and builders. Neighborhoods of single-family detached houses and apartment blocks totaling more than 200 units per development, intended for rent, are the two residential development models currently able to attract lending for construction and home purchases. Federal funding for affordable rental housing and home-ownership programs, moreover, has been steadily declining.

## CHAPTER 8

# LAND USE ELEMENT

## DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section examines existing development patterns in the County, factors that influence these patterns, and challenges related to these patterns. An understanding of these patterns and problems is essential to forecasting development patterns for the future and avoiding further problems. Development trends identified here will be part of the basis for forecasting a future development plan. Challenges identified here should inform a planning strategy for the County.

The identification of land use patterns and development challenges will aid the planning process so that the future growth and development of Darlington County can occur according to local goals and objectives. Municipalities are outside the jurisdiction of Darlington County Planning Commission, but their land-use patterns are important considerations in this Comprehensive Plan.

### **EXISTING LAND USES**

A current land-use map for this plan is created with a parcel database provided by Darlington County Geographic Information Services. The County maintains this database for several purposes, first and foremost is property assessment for taxation. The typical county assessor sends appraisers into the field to observe and collect property types. Updates are available to the Assessor through building permits issued by the County and its municipalities. Actions on real property recorded at the County's register of deeds also present opportunities to refine this database.

The Assessor uses property classifications somewhat differently than a community planner. This necessitates some categorical analyses and assumptions in the preparation of a current land use map, which appears herein. The database is rendered with these adjustments, as discussed in the following sections devoted to each land use.

The purpose of a current land-use map is the establishment of a baseline scenario from which to anticipate future land use. An understanding of future land use helps the County and its special purpose districts identify new or increased demands for service by location.

Agricultural land use: Like most, if not all South Carolina counties, the largest use of acreage in Darlington County is agriculture. The County's database aggregates land in crop production and pasture, as well as those parcels occupied by farm structures, together with timberland for purposes of taxation. Timberland includes both, planted pine and natural forest, which is often wetland. Due to this last consideration, unimproved parcels of greater than five acres are typically classified "Agriculture" and are rendered as such on the current land-use map.

Residential land use: Most of the 66,802 residents of Darlington County live on land classified "Residential." These parcels include those occupied by houses of all types – site-built, modular, and manufactured. Many vacant parcels smaller than five acres, which appear to have been created for future residential use, are also rendered "Residential" in the current land-use map despite the perhaps temporary absence of use.

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

Mixed-Use: The mixture is typically residential use collocated with a commercial use. Most of the acreage rendered as such are parcels six acres or greater in size where a residence occupies land otherwise used for agriculture, including timber. Many other examples are possible, however. Some residents in rural areas live and work on the same property not only as farmers, but also as woodworkers, car mechanics, and other occupations that require ample indoor space and equipment.

Apartments: Attached and sometimes stacked dwelling units are typically located in municipalities, where they benefit from urban services and wet utilities.

MHP: A mobile home park or a manufactured housing park is a parcel of land with infrastructure, on which demarcated stalls occupied by impermanent residences, whether owned by the renter or the operator. Many mobile home parks allow recreational vehicles as well, as mobile homes decline in number across the country. This arrangement is not in conformance with the South Carolina Code of Regulations and is at best a bypass of the building code; however, these codes are difficult to enforce in this context. A clear market exists for this reuse of mobile home parks. State and local codes probably need to adjust accordingly.

Rest Home: Also known as institutional living, including nursing homes, this commercial use of land functions like multi-family living with on-site medical services that vary in intensity by the type of facility.

Commercial: Most parcels used to host buying and selling of goods and services to other businesses or to consumers are classified as “commercial” property. Many of these commercial properties create or prepare goods or materials for sale; however, a fraction of these are classified as “industrial.” Like “residential,” the “commercial” classification includes vacant parcels under five acres in size. Such parcels appear alongside arterial roads and appear to the Assessor to have been created to host a commercial use. Such parcels may also host temporary commercial uses, such as Christmas tree stands, and permanent outdoor uses like bulk storage (“lay down”) and construction equipment parking.

Industrial: Mentioned above, this classification is created specifically for this plan. Those parcels appearing on the current land-use map as industrial are those commercial properties assessed by the South Carolina Department of Revenue, not the County. This assumption does not perfectly align with those properties used for manufacturing. The identification of such on the current land-use map is important for important reasons. State law helps insulate manufacturers from nuisance lawsuits. These suits are brought against manufacturers due to the externalities of noise, light, vibration, and dust pollution that commonly arise from the production of goods and materials. For the protection of both, residents and manufacturers, the County should not encourage residential and industrial uses from locating near one another.

Institutional and non-profit: A large proportion of parcels in any county are not subject to property taxation. These range from the County’s own facilities to offices owned and operated by non-profit entities. Within the range are social meeting halls, schools, and churches. All these uses function fairly similarly in terms of externalities, which are generally low. Traffic generation varies greatly, especially with respect to peak-hour volume. A municipality would typically seek to break this category down further to better understand neighborhood impacts and assign zoning, but at the scale of a county and the limitation of the data, this aggregation should meet Darlington County’s needs.

Darlington County owns land in planned industrial parks. Parcels therein without industrial buildings are classified “institutional” due to the limitations of the database.

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Cemetery: A cemetery can be institutional (e.g., a church graveyard) or a commercial use. It functions much like open space and occupies a notable amount of acreage in Darlington County.

Recreational: Like cemeteries, recreational uses can be commercial or institutional. They include programmed open space like a golf course or unprogrammed open space – a passive park owned and operated by a town. The Darlington Raceway is thus also classified as “recreation.”

Utility: Land classified “utility” is used by community facilities for functions like electrical power and transportation. In Darlington County, this includes Lake Robinson and the Robinson Nuclear Plant.

Retention: Typically stormwater storage, “retention” is a utility that impacts its surroundings more like open space, except when it fails due to severe weather or structural malfunction.

### **EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS**

Much of Darlington County is rural in character. The majority of commercial, institutional, and residential parcels are clustered in and around the municipalities of the County: the City of Darlington, the City of Hartsville, the Town of Lamar, and the Town of Society Hill. Without significant population gains, the pattern of development exhibits little suburbanization common to fast-growing areas along the coast and upstate.

Commercial, institutional, and industrial uses are also strung along four-lane routes that generally link Hartsville and Society Hill to Florence via Darlington. Traffic-generating landmarks anchoring these routes in outlying areas include the nuclear plant, Nucor, and the raceway.

Other landmarks occur in the centers of cities. Coker College and Sonoco, the only Fortune 500 company headquartered in South Carolina, stand near the center of Hartsville. The seat of county government stands in the Darlington town square. Each of these anchors has had a foothold in their current locations for decades.

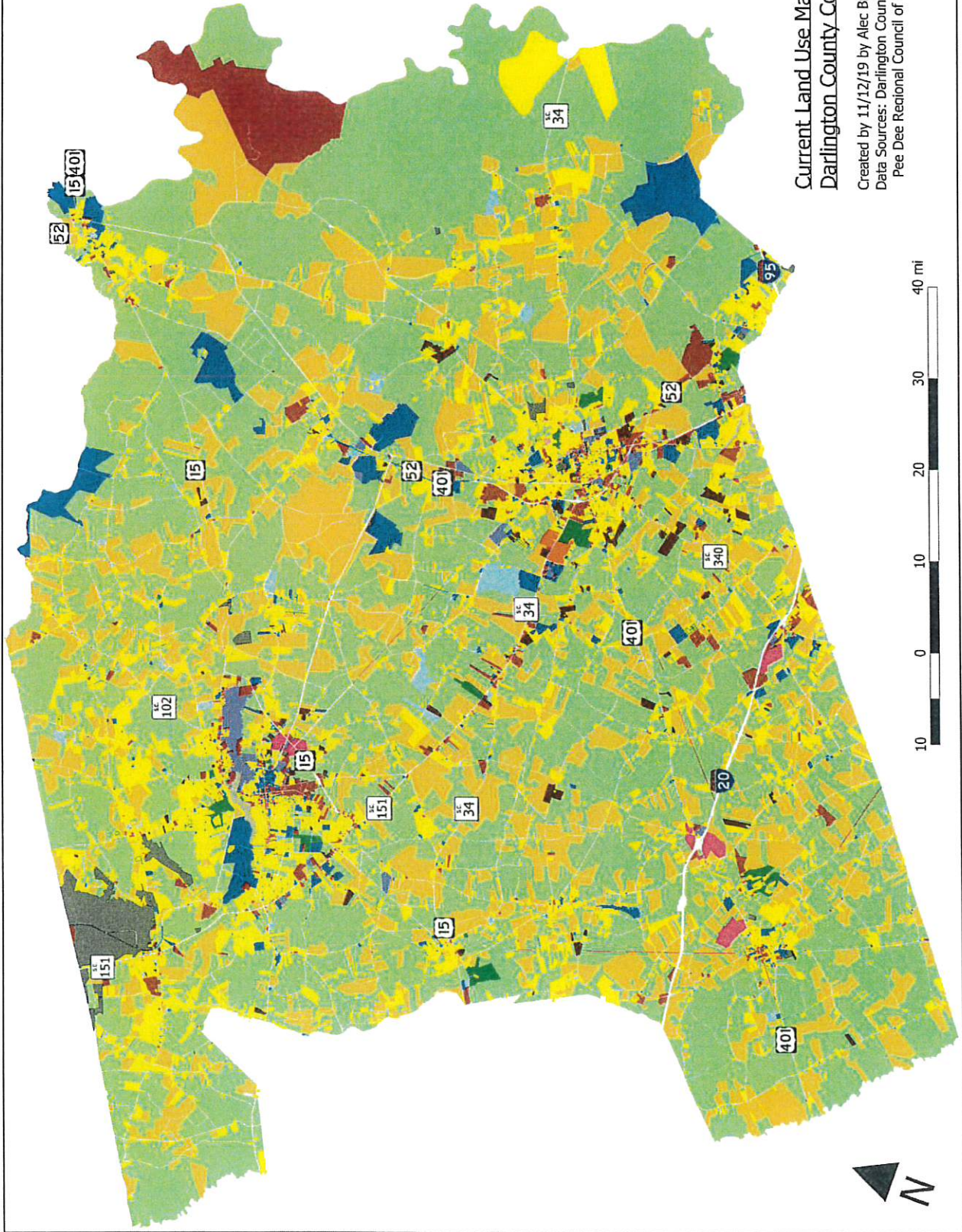
This dichotomy indicates two different approaches to infrastructure planning and development. Before the Great Depression, municipalities drove development patterns by laying out communities in blocks, comprising a street grid. In county seats of South Carolina, an open space lined by streets – a town square – served as the focal point of community development and the starting point of the street grid.

During the great depression, government stopped actively subdividing land for community development. Meanwhile, the federal government set the stage for the 30-year home mortgage, and in so doing, effectively required separation of land uses and linear development patterns. Once the national economy recovered, land subdivision became private enterprise. Street grids became obsolete, and government refocused on widening existing streets and farm-to-market roads. As before, the installation of potable water and sanitary sewerage followed road improvements.

The State of South Carolina enabled municipalities and counties to enact subdivision standards in the 1960s. Darlington County Planning Commission thus oversees administration of standards ensuring orderly subdivision and development of land. Subdivision and development standards typically include access and sanitation, as well as, depending on the intensity of development, drainage and stormwater management.

Legend

- CURRENT LAND USE
- UTILITY
  - RETENTION
  - INDUSTRIAL
  - COMMERCIAL
  - REST HOME
  - MOBILE HOME PARK
  - APARTMENTS
  - RESIDENTIAL
  - AG/RES
  - AGRICULTURAL
  - RECREATIONAL
  - INSTITUTIONAL



Current Land Use Map  
Darlington County Comprehensive Plan

Created by 11/12/19 by Alec Brebner, AICP  
Data Sources: Darlington County Government,  
Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments



## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

### LAND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Traditional development patterns are exclusive to municipalities in Darlington County. Residential, institutional, and commercial uses occur in close proximity to one another. Site utilization is high. (I.e., buildings cover a relatively large portion of a parcel.) Occupiable structures are more likely to be taller than one storey.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Land is used more efficiently.	Incompatible adjacent uses are more likely.
Multiple modes of transportation are highly functional.	Population demands urban services ranging from codes enforcement to trash collection.
Interconnectedness improves efficiency of public service provision, from water supply to trash collection.	Poor drainage and potential for shallow flooding exist where the grid ignores topography.
Potable water and sanitary sewerage protect public health.	Typically developed before water-quality and flood-prevention standards.
Residents are closer to schools and employment options.	Supply of developable land with local street frontage and utilities is limited.

Linear development patterns are common to the four-lane routes that connect municipalities and destinations in Darlington County. Occupiable structures are typically one storey. Institutional, commercial, and industrial development may occur side by side. Residences along these routes indicate a rural development pattern that is giving way to commercialization. Residential development typically a part of linear development patterns occurs in single-use, single-entrance neighborhoods; however, Darlington County has experienced relatively few of these despite its presence in the growing Florence metropolitan statistical area. South Fourth and South Fifth Street approaching Hartsville each exhibit this pattern of development.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Relies on existing road network or compels private-sector construction of parking and network expansion.	Privately developed street networks are typically inefficient, necessitating costly road improvements.
Highly accessible to car and truck traffic.	Difficult or even unsafe to access by other modes of transportation.
Typically more likely to avoid sensitive environments (wetlands, floodplains) than a street grid.	Development standards for parking and stormwater management increase costs to landowners and reduce land-use efficiency.
Lower site utilization reduces cause for nuisance complaints across lot lines, ranging from water run-off to noise.	Primary routes are relied upon for access and mobility, compromising efficacy of each.
In sum, requires less governance (up to a point).	Sewer mains are subject to competing demands of transmission and service.
	Access to roads and sewer is more costly as providers aim to conserve throughput.

Rural settlement patterns occur in pockets throughout the county, typically on or near arable land. Housing and trades that serve customers offsite are very loosely organized around rural roads and private lanes. Organization of parcels is focused largely on distribution to family members rather than orientation around infrastructure. On-site disposal systems typically provide sanitation.



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Strengths	Weaknesses
Relies on existing road network.	Residents may struggle to maintain private lanes and seek government maintenance of them.
Does not typically require wet utilities.	Rural lands can become overtaxed by on-site disposal, threatening groundwater quality.
Requires lowest level of governance.	Access and proximity to emergency services are often poor.
Typically most cost-effective for residents and merchants.	Roads are narrow, have higher vehicle speeds, and lack illumination.
	Remote locations reduce access to education and employment.

Special use districts occur across Darlington County. Such a district is an area anchored one particular use of land or by a notable landmark that dramatically influences land use. A special use district is therefore not a whole community, lacking one or more uses present in a town, commonly residences.

The best-known landmark in Darlington County is the Darlington Raceway. It is surrounded by uses that support race weekend, like campgrounds and restaurants. The raceway stands alongside SC Highway 151 between the City of Darlington and a collection of institutional uses established by the County and the School District. The special use district anchored by the raceway tends to blend into a linear development pattern of commerce providing goods and services to residents utilizing or working at those nearby public institutions.

A similar special use district occurs along US Highway 52 near its junction with Interstate Highway 95. Lodging, eateries, and fueling stations for interstate travelers stand between I-95 and Florence-Darlington Technical College.

The Darlington County Economic Development Partnership also stands in this area, on campus with the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology. The Partnership hopes to attract makers and manufacturers to this special use district, which benefits from potable water and sanitary sewerage, in addition to proximity to I-95.

Two additional areas are budding special use districts for industry. An industrial building stands on one of several sites that DCEDP identified for prospective employers around the interchange of Interstate Highway 20 and US Highway 401, between Lamar and Darlington.

The City of Hartsville, meanwhile, identifies parcels fronting both US-15 and a short-line railroad for makers and manufacturers, some of which already feature metal buildings for industry and distribution.

### **FUTURE LAND USE**

In contrast to current land use, future land use means the function of a parcel that is planned or otherwise anticipated in the coming years. Industrial parks represent the clearest example of future land-use planning in Darlington County. Stakeholders have come together to identify locations near transportation infrastructure, provide wet utilities to those locations, and market them to prospective industrial users.

The example of the industrial park also demonstrates tools communities have at their disposal to influence future land use, as well as the complex challenge of realizing such intention. Unless the public sector itself has specific plans for portions of its jurisdiction, the implementation of future land-use planning relies on economic forces.

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These forces start with economic expansion. Growth in the economic base of a community or metropolitan area catalyzes the conversion of land into higher and better uses, ranging from manufacturing by economic base industries to housing for their employees.

Future land use is also microeconomic. Commercial uses study a variety of factors when seeking sites, from existing and future housing and the likely disposable income of its occupants right down to which side of the street cars can more easily access the site.

For instance, a generic supermarket typically looks for a ten-mile diameter area with 10,000 residents. Within the defined area, the site selector seeks a location overlooking afternoon rush-hour traffic on a road with more than 10,000 average daily traffic. Two-way road access must be feasible, as well as access to potable water and sanitary sewerage. The site must also be in an area served by fire equipment capable of protecting a structure covering fifty thousand square feet of area. Finally, the parcel of land must be sufficiently high and dry.

The South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office projects that Darlington County's population will drop from its 2010 Census count of 68,681 to 62,520 by 2030. The US Census Bureau's 2018 estimate (66,802) indicates the state government office's projection is on track. Macroeconomic forces to convert substantial acreage to residential and supporting commercial uses are therefore absent.

A study commissioned by Darlington Water and Sewer Authority proposes a sewer main to connect Hartsville to Darlington Raceway. The language of the study contemplates that introducing sewerage to ten miles of rural highway frontage would attract community development and ratepayers. Such a strategy is unlikely to bear positive benefits for Darlington County.

Due to a lack of economic expansion, new users to this corridor would most likely have relocated from elsewhere in the county. This redistribution would encourage vacancy and underutilization of existing developed areas. For instance, new sewer service could incentivize a mobile-home-park operator to abandon an existing, economically obsolete property and develop a new park along SC-151. Darlington County Fire District equipment could be stretched thin to ensure protection across such a distance, and scattershot commercial access would increase roadway conflict points to which the emergency medical service might need to respond. This route is also a strategic freight corridor in South Carolina's statewide transportation plans. The sporadic commercial development in the corridor would hamper freight mobility, especially if conditions jeopardize free-flowing traffic conditions. Extending sewer from Hartsville to Darlington could thus detract from, not contribute to economic development in the county.

The County might also consider the attractiveness of intended industrial areas for mobile home park development. Currently, the County has no power to compel DCWSA to deny service to landowners who seek service based on proposed use. Those communities that wish to reserve specific parcels within their jurisdiction for certain uses of land have three options: fee-simple purchase, implementation of easements or deed restrictions through purchase and resale, or land-use regulations. These measures would serve to protect public investment in sewerage upgrades, should the County wish to partner with DCWSA for this purpose.

The examples of SC-151 and intended industrial areas highlight the value of comprehensive planning – planning that contemplates all types of public infrastructure and services necessary to provide for an evolving community, with all its facets of development.

### **FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

This plan includes two land-use maps, one representing current conditions, presented earlier in this

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chapter and one representing conditions planned 10-20 years into the future. The two maps are very similar for two important reasons.

First, the current land-use map does not identify vacant parcels. The parcel data set available from the Darlington County Geographic Information System does not indicate whether a structure occupies a parcel. The County Assessor's Office is the most frequent user of the data set. For real estate assessment, a parcel is considered "residential" if that appears to be the logical use of land after subdivision into lots smaller than five acres. That means that a two-acre parcel rendered "residential" on the current land-use map might have a house or a manufactured housing unit on it, it might be a developed vacant lot available for new construction, it might be a site recently vacated by a manufactured housing unit, or it might remain unimproved. An unimproved lot has road frontage, but no drainage, and remains wooded. Similarly, a vacant improved or unimproved parcel smaller than five acres on an arterial in an urban area would be classified "commercial" on the current land-use map. Such a parcel is indistinguishable from the site of a restaurant on the map.

The second reason the current and future land-use maps are so similar is that Darlington County cannot expect extensive land development in coming years due to stagnant, if not shrinking population forecasts. The vacant parcels already rendered as "commercial" and "residential" likely provide ample acreage to accommodate changes related to population and employer shifts in location within the county. Development of larger tracks for residential use might occur on the periphery of Hartsville. In this case, the municipality will oversee most large development proposals because annexation would be a compelled for sanitary sewerage. Current extents of municipalities appear on the future land-use map.

The highlights of the future land-use map are the lands and corridors identified for economic development. These areas are also discussed in Chapter 2 (Economic Development) and Chapter 10 (Goals and Investment Strategies).

# Legend

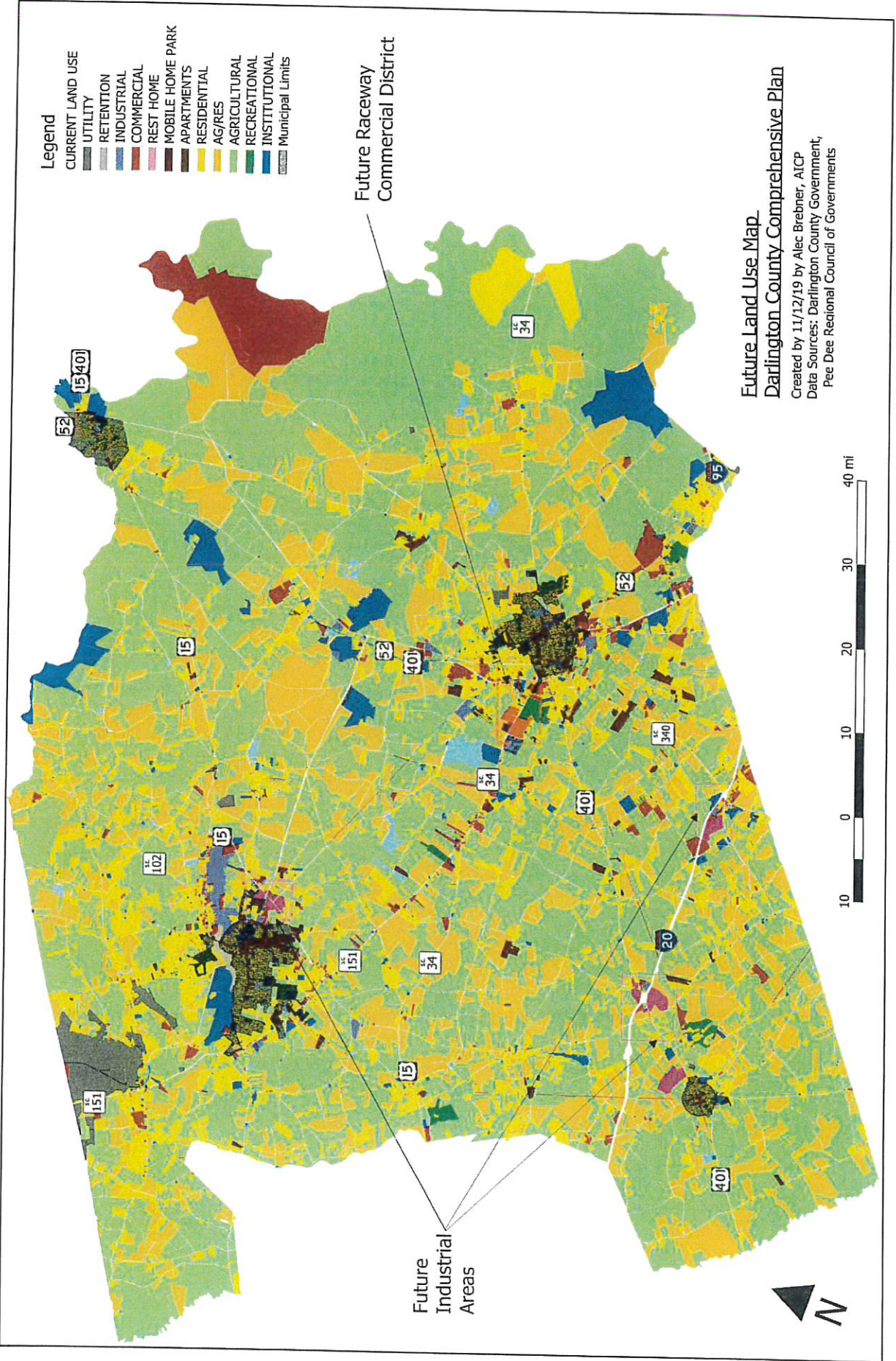
- CURRENT LAND USE
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- REST HOME
- MOBILE HOME PARK
- APARTMENTS
- RESIDENTIAL
- AG/RES
- AGRICULTURAL
- RECREATIONAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- Municipal Limits

Future Raceway  
Commercial District

Future  
Industrial  
Areas

## Future Land Use Map Darlington County Comprehensive Plan

Created by 11/12/19 by Alec Brebner, AICP  
Data Sources: Darlington County Government,  
Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments



## CHAPTER 9

# PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENT

## DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

The 2007 South Carolina Priority Investment Act requires that local Comprehensive Plans include a Priority Investment Element. This element addresses the coordination of major capital improvements, as well as intergovernmental coordination, and supports implementation of related strategies recommended in other elements of this plan. The element must discuss potential methods of funding for the projects, considering all likely federal, state, and local sources. The Priority Investment Act encourages local jurisdictions to examine their future need for capital improvements to public facilities and the likelihood of financing those improvements before a ten-year horizon. The aspirational purpose of the Act is further to encourage local and state governments and special purpose districts to contemplate which areas within their jurisdictions are best suited for investment and how public investments could complement one another and attract private investment in the community.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

The Priority Investment Act amended Title 6, Chapter 29 of South Carolina Code, better known as the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act. The law enables a Planning Commission, once created by the governing body, to develop plans and programs for the development and redevelopment of its jurisdiction. To that end, Darlington County Planning Commission can prepare and recommend to County Council these items: (1) zoning and land use standards, (2) subdivision and land development standards, (3) landscaping and tree protection standards, (4) a capital improvements program, and (5) an official map committing locations to capital improvements.

The Priority Investment Element is the predecessor to the capital improvements program. This element contemplates those revenue streams that could fund capital improvements, as well as suggested capital improvements of greatest need and benefit to the county in the next ten years.

Capital improvements the Planning Commission should contemplate include the use and conversion of real property for transportation and community facilities, with particular regard for improvements that facilitate private use and development of land and the economy. Vehicles and expensive equipment that fall under capital, rather than operating line items, in the County budget are typically beyond the scope of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP), then, is a schedule of improvements to be undertaken within the next four to five years. Each scheduled improvement is assigned an estimated cost with one or more identified revenue streams to cover the cost. Ultimately, County Council must take action to obligate funds for each CIP line item as it arises in the schedule. Darlington County Council has adopted a CIP; a pared-down version appears herein.

A CIP is standard operating procedure for transportation improvements. Federal regulations require metropolitan and rural planning organizations to maintain transportation improvement programs (TIPs). An aggregated TIP for Darlington County, pulling from those TIPs of the Florence Area Transportation Study, Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments, and SC Department of Transportation, appears in Chapter 6, the Transportation Element of this plan.



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## **FUNDING MECHANISMS**

Local governments in South Carolina have several means by which to raise revenue and fund capital improvements. Many of these revenue streams, especially those arising from the federal government, have stagnated in recent years. Those communities that can assemble a funding package from multiple, diverse revenue streams best position themselves to win funding in highly competitive environments.

Most local governments confront needs for improvements that cost more than can be budgeted from the General Fund without borrowing. Tools available to facilitate borrowing, as well as revenue streams, are listed below. The list is not intended to be exhaustive; rather, it aims to help the Planning Commission develop a “fiscally constrained” recommendations. Plainly, this plan should contemplate a realistic funding strategy for capital improvements it puts forward.

- General obligation bond: Bonds may be issued for a specific construction project, for which the local government pledges to pay interest and principal to retire the debt.
- Revenue bond: These types of bonds are issued against projected revenue collected through service charges or user fees realized through completion of the capital improvement.
- 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.
- State and federal grants: Grant funding is available for a variety of capital improvements, provided the local government puts up a funding match, typically ranging from 10%-50%. Grant procedures typically include a competitive application process (e.g., community development block grants {CDBG}).
- Tax increment financing (TIF): A local government can identify an area in need of a capital improvement, create a special tax district around it, and set aside any incremental increase in property tax revenue to fund the improvement.
- User fees: A “user fee” is a one-time fee (e.g., park admission fee) or an annual fee (e.g., trash collection fee on a property tax bill) can offset operating costs or pay down debt on capital improvements, often with some limitations.
- Impact fees: An impact fee is a user fee that is assessed based on projected use of a system. State law limits usage of impact fees to capital improvements that increase system capacity, capacity necessary only due to the fee payer’s impact on the system (e.g., increased wastewater treatment capacity).
- Hospitality Tax: A local government can assess a sales tax on dining and beverage service to help fund special projects and general operations. These dollars can be used on capital improvements that complement hospitality businesses.
- Accommodations Tax: A local government can assess a sales tax on lodging. A-Tax is restricted by state statute to use for tourism-related projects. The State collects the revenue and remits a portion back to the county. An Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee appointed by County Council awards funds to applicable tourism organizations to support festivals and other activities that encourage tourism activity. An applicant could apply to employ funds toward capital improvements consistent with the purpose of the A-Tax.
- Transportation Alternatives Program: A portion of federal gas tax is dedicated to funding for active transportation improvements such as hiker/biker trails and sidewalks and crosswalks to support transit stops. The southeastern portion of the county is eligible for improvements through the metropolitan planning organization (Florence Area Transportation Study), while the remainder must seek funding through SCDOT.
- C-Funds: A portion of State gas tax funds are allocated to counties for transportation improvements.
- South Carolina Infrastructure Bank: The state legislature established the bank to fund major



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capital improvements via grants or loans that an entire metro area would not have capacity to implement. The bank's stated priority is statewide economic impact.

- **Transportation Sales Tax:** A county may assess a sales tax dedicated to transportation improvements. The county may also designate an "authority," or board of appointees to obligate revenues. This is not necessary, however. A planning commission could perform most of the same functions, with the notable exception of obligating revenue.
- **TIGER grants:** A local government may apply directly to the US Department of Transportation for funding of special projects. The program was created with the intent that applications must demonstrate multi-modalism and strong relationships to housing and job creation. More recently, however, the program has funded projects focused on freight movement.
- **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. A Municipal Improvement District is a similar tool that can fund various capital improvements in cities and towns, where implemented.
- **Residential Improvement District:** Similar to a special tax district, a large landowner could create a tax district for his property to fund education facility development arising from housing development in the district.

### **REVENUE STREAMS**

<b>DARLINGTON COUNTY 2020 BUDGET BY FUND</b>			
<b>Fund</b>	<b>Oversight</b>	<b>2020 Budget (in millions)</b>	
General	County Council	\$23.6	
Emergency Telephone	County Council	\$0.6	
Emergency Services	County Council	\$4.6	
Fire District	County Council	\$2.4	
Airport	Airport Commission	\$0.3	
Library	Library Board of Trustees	\$1.5	
Roads and Bridges	Transportation Committee (CTC)	\$1.7	
Environmental Services	County Council	\$2.8	
Hospitality Tax	County Council	\$0.2	
Accommodations Tax	A-Tax Advisory Committee	\$0.01	
<i>Total</i>	-	\$37.9	

Fund budgets are based on conservative estimates of projected revenue expected in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Budgets for expenses are then prepared for County Council review and approval.

Relative to previous years, these numbers show natural variance without growth, which is consistent with the lack of population increase over the same time frame. The County cannot, therefore, expect natural revenue growth from an increased tax base to pay for anticipated capital expenses.

This does not mean the County cannot increase its tax base. Proactive steps to strengthen its economy are underway, as discussed in the Economic Development Element.

Within its 2020 budget, \$0.4 million will pay down general obligation bond debt. These bonds were issued for Darlington County Fire District capital expenses in 2015. County Council approved a millage increase at that time.

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For sake of comparison, the County's general fund is similar in number to the largest public capital expense that impacted it within the past three years. Resurfacing Interstate Highway 95 in and near its jurisdiction cost \$25 million.

This example shows that Darlington County Government has not the capacity to absorb unplanned capital expenses. It must instead plan and program funds carefully and select improvements for funding strategically.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

To aforementioned ends, Darlington County maintains a Capital Improvements Program for expenditures subject to review and approval of County Council. The CIP is a planning tool aimed to anticipate and satisfy long-term needs for land acquisition, construction or rehabilitation, and purchase of equipment typically exceeding \$25,000 in value.

The document contemplates six years of revenue and investment in capital items and prioritizes according to a scoring system. The scoring system accounts for need and demand, both real and regulatory; outside funding (matching dollars); advancement of strategic goals; and coordination with other capital improvements. These last two items both involve Comprehensive Plan consistency, as stated in the scoring system itself.

Darlington County's CIP includes \$11.5 million across six fiscal years. About \$850,000 is devoted to construction, none to land acquisition. A portion of the balance would procure vehicles, equipment, furniture, technology, etc. to properly equip newly constructed facilities. Those real property improvements in the CIP are two replacement firehouses (#11 and #14), a quarantine building for animal control, Jacob Kelley House Museum renovation, and recreation improvements at Lake Darpo and Lamar Ballfield.

The latter three of those six projects are eligible for funding through the Hospitality Tax program and perhaps also the Accommodations Tax program. The former three will rely at least in part on regular recurring revenues collected by the County Treasurer.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Perhaps contrary to popular opinion, local government leaders are in frequent communication with one another. Mutual aid agreements and disaster response across city limits and county boundaries are common. Regional plans for transportation and water quality exist to improve coordination and deter competition between infrastructure providers that would harm consumers. Darlington County participates in regional planning and coordination at Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments and Florence Area Transportation Study. Those in the same discipline often coordinate across organizations.

Through vehicles like mutual aid and shared use, operators of public services and infrastructure systems routinely communicate and coordinate with common purpose. Expansion of service, however, is more difficult to coordinate than operations. Improvement of real property for a new base of operations or even extension of a service line impacts other systems of infrastructure and public services in multiple ways.

First, newly developed real property often requires new or improved utility service and potentially upgraded emergency response as well. New construction necessitating new service lines can forestall other, planned service extensions to areas of need. The location of new construction may cause the utility provider to incur unusually high costs for extensions, and the design of the new facility may also complicate service provision and increase operating costs to either or both parties.

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Too frequently, new construction occurs on land that is cheap or even free (donated), while operating expenses and utilities' capital costs are discounted. A further soft cost is incurred when an employer relocates away from services like shops and dining. Community development suffers from this economic inefficiency. The loser in such a scenario is the taxpayer.

Second, transportation and utility providers compete for limited space. As land costs increase, pressure on linear utilities to collocate increases. Providers may nevertheless resist collocation due to increased complexity of installation and access for maintenance. Collocation of utilities reduces land acquisition costs, keeps more real property on tax roles, and better protects landowners' rights and use of property.

The South Carolina Legislature passed a law in 2019 to prevent transportation agencies from forcing utility lines out of public rights-of-way at utilities' expense. This step may encourage collocation in rights-of-way, which was common decades ago.

Third, the spatial and architectural design of facilities open to the public, as well as transportation facilities, impacts operating costs and community development. Facilities that are accessible by multiple modes of transportation may experience higher usage and customer (taxpayer) satisfaction. Accessible design also helps the facility become an anchor to community development by reducing car trips.

Transportation facility design involves balancing mobility (throughput) and access (to private property). A street in a townhouse development, complete with sidewalks and on-street parking, prioritizes access to residential entrances every 20 feet. Interstate highway restricts access altogether, providing mobility between metropolitan areas. Most roads fall within a range between these two facility types. In some corridors, preservation of mobility (e.g., for freight movement) may be preferred, which should thus dissuade introduction of utilities that would attract new land development seeking access. Elsewhere, community development goals should lead to planning transportation improvements for slower, safer speeds with more crossing opportunities, which may decrease costs to real estate development for access.

Fourth, coordination between public service and infrastructure providers during physical improvements can decrease costs simply through communication and cooperation. Planning and scheduling of moving parts (literally) save time and money, keeping public improvements under budget and ahead of advertised delivery dates.

A condensed list of programmed transportation improvements appears in Chapter 6: Transportation Element of this Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 5: Community Facilities Element summarizes potential water and sewer upgrades. (A list of programmed improvements is unavailable to this planning process.) Chapter 5 also discusses \$60 million in improvements to public education facilities now under construction. The school district reports no additional capacity improvements are planned at this time.

### **PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS**

A "priority investment area" is a location in which the community invests public resources to attract or enhance economic or community development. The South Carolina Legislature debated this concept in 2007; ultimately, local governments are not required to identify them in their comprehensive plans.

SC Department of Commerce, however, very effectively encourages them, even if not by name. Successful sites for employers in our state are those where providers of community facilities have coordinated to install and upgrade their services to support industry. The timing and location of service upgrades are guided by a goal of economic development in a location reasonably well suited to accommodate it.

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

South Carolina communities have been relatively less successful in supporting retail and housing development in similar fashion. Enabling these uses, together with those offices and institutions that serve them, to aggregate and grow is community development. In the same fashion that car dealers aggregate along an “auto-mile” to improve profitability, light commercial, institutional, and residential uses can come together to add value to one another.

## CHAPTER 10

# GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

## DARLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

Darlington County Planning Commission conducted a goal-setting workshop on September 17, 2019. Via staff, the Commission invited organizations with an interest in the long-term growth and development of Darlington County, including municipalities, public service providers, and citizens' organizations.

The group developed the following goals. Technical support staff developed implementation strategies for each goal. Planning Commission reviewed these strategies at its subsequent meeting.

### GOAL #1

*Darlington County will reverse recent population losses and retain and grow its populace.*

- Through its economic development partnership, the County will continue to recruit employers to provide jobs offering living wages to its citizens, both existing and prospective.
- The County will coordinate with Pee Dee Regional Transit Authority to increase its citizens' access to education and jobs.
- To that end, the County will support educational institutions in its jurisdiction, including Darlington County School District, Florence-Darlington Tech, Coker University, and the SC Governor's School.
- The County will continue investment in recreational opportunities to retain and attract residents.
- The County will take steps to increase housing choices for existing and new residents.

Darlington County's population has slowly ebbed in recent years, as documented in the Population Element, for several reasons. The county has several strengths with which to reverse this decline. The Darlington County Economic Development Partnership (DCEDP) has helped attract hundreds of thousands of dollars in investment by employers in each of the past two years. As recently as 2012, no such recruitment efforts existed, per Executive Director Frank Willis.

### **Getting Sites "Shovel Ready"**

The Economic Development Partnership is marketing several sites throughout Darlington County to prospective employers. Only one site has a building suitable for industrial use, that located on US-401 at I-95. Three vacant properties lie around this interchange, all with water and sewer utility access. A recent study, funding for which DCEDP contributed, identified the sewer access as moot. The wastewater treatment plant accepting the sewage is too constrained by inflow and infiltration throughout the system to accept large new users.

The purpose of the study was not only to identify these constraints but also to identify remedies. A couple of cost-effective strategies appear in the final document, but even those seem beyond the capacity of the operator, the small Town of Lamar, to undertake.

For this reason, the County should explore facilitating cooperation between Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority and the Town to consider consolidation. DCWSA has experience accepting an existing system under its umbrella, that of the Town of Society Hill. Precedents for consolidation in the name of

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

economic development exist across the state. The goal of consideration must be fair and equitable distribution of debt and brightened prospects for private investment to offset repair and upgrade expenses.

Dorchester County accepted the water and sewer systems of the Town of St. George. Its larger customer base and deeper pockets enabled it to invest in wastewater treatment plant upgrades necessary to fuel economic expansion. Its resources also better positioned it to seek monies from federal and state sources.

### **Implementation of Transit Enhancement**

Among Darlington County's top challenges in recruitment, per Mr. Willis, is workforce access to employment. Specifically, more robust transit service would not only improve residents' access to employment but also aid in recruitment and retention of employers.

Darlington County is too sparsely populated, even in the vicinity of its largest towns, to support a self-sufficient transit system. Pee Dee Rural Transit Authority nevertheless operates a commuter route between the city of Darlington and Florence, the center of the metropolitan statistical area of which Darlington is a part. PDRTA also operates a circulator in Hartsville, as well as several more truly rural routes, serving rural residents in need of transportation to work and services.

To support PDRTA in its mission, the County should seek partnership with its municipalities to pursue an audit of and prepare a plan for its network of routes going forward. Route planning and alignments are as much art as science. Factors out of the transit authority's control, big and small, greatly affect ridership. A system performance audit will achieve two objectives: (1) find a balance between route convenience and route efficiency, and (2) identify solvable temporal problems that suppress ridership.

Riders will always challenge transit agencies to provide service more convenient to them, i.e., put riders as close to the doors of their destinations as possible. Each additional turn and stop, meanwhile, reduces the convenience of the trip to other riders, making it less a less desirable transportation option.

A system audit will identify opportunities to streamline routes and, critically, to evaluate settings in which stops occur for future effectiveness. Transit stops must occur in locations that are not only safe but feel safe to riders. This safety refers both to potential for crime and accessibility on foot. Routinely neglected in transit provision is the importance of safe walking routes to and from transit stops, especially across arterials roads. A road that cannot be safely crossed on foot will often perform poorly for transit, not to mention pedestrian and motorist safety.

The time at which route changes are implemented will be a challenging transition for PDRTA and its customers. An employee dedicated to matching riders with their routes, ensuring improved mobility of Darlington County citizenship, would ease the transition. Known as a "mobility manager," this role is recommended for implementation by PDRTA in [\*Charting a Course to 2040: South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan\*](#). This document has a supplement dedicated to the Pee Dee Region that identifies a mobility manager position as an opportunity for improved coordination between PDRTA and local governments and citizens thereof. The foremost goal of the mobility manager would be to improve on the region's unmet demand for transit service. The plan cited a goal of 20 percent, whereby one in every five potential transit riders would successfully use the service, an increase from 17 percent in 2013.

Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments and Florence Area Transportation Study, housed at Florence County government, are primary conduits of transit funding. A coalition of local governments in Dorchester County, partnered with PDTRA, should expect success in identifying and programming revenue for this recommended audit.



## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

A well-conducted system audit will recommend solutions to temporal conditions that deter transit use at roadside locations otherwise well positioned to serve riders. Among these solutions will be sidewalks and sidewalks with appropriate signage, illumination, and shelters. Potential funding sources for these improvements include Transportation Alternatives funding available through FLATS and SCDOT, gas tax revenue programmed by the Darlington County Transportation Committee, and Accommodations and Hospitality Tax revenues.

The sponsoring entity will need to demonstrate connections to tourism to employ A-tax and H-tax revenue. For instance, improvements connecting Darlington Raceway to Darlington town square and lodging options down Highway 52.

### **Transit Enhancement Implementation Timeline**

- 1-2 years: Develop partnership, seek and identify revenue.
- 2-3 years: Conduct fiscal audit.
- 2-4 years: Conduct system performance audit.
- 3-6 years: Implement priority physical improvements at recommended stop locations.
- 6+ years: Continue implementation of transportation network improvements that support transit.

### **Implementation of Support for Local Education**

Darlington County School District, Florence-Darlington Technical College, and other educational institutions play a critical role in population retention. They prepare students for the jobs and opportunities Darlington County recruits. Darlington County Government can support its educational institutions through high-quality public safety services and safe, efficient transportation networks to and from educational facilities.

Darlington County School District is opening three new facilities, each of which will alter transportation patterns in various ways. The ability of school bussing to successfully respond affects the number of cars arriving at each campus. Cars and busses traveling to two of these schools are likely to increase, as their locations deter walking and biking to school.

Ideally, transportation patterns and improvements to support changes are implemented in concert with site selection and site planning. SCDOT will typically require upgrades to accommodate motor vehicles. School districts and local governments must typically address access and safety for children who walk and bike. Funds are available to implement solutions through SCDOT's Safe Routes to School program.

Economic opportunity is not the only factor in retaining students after they graduate from school. Education can foster pride in the community in which learning occurs. Schools' curriculum and community engagement teach students about their communities and what they have to offer. The County can actively engage schools in this vein by promoting access to historic places other cultural resources on field trips as well as general admission waivers during slow visitation times.

The perception of the quality of educational systems in Darlington County is perhaps as important as the quality itself to attracting new residents. Online resources like GreatSchools.org score most county schools poorly relative to some Florence County schools. Darlington County's magnet high school; Mayo School for Math, Science, and Technology; enjoys a very high score. An elementary magnet school is also in development stages.

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

Community leaders in education, economic development, and government could work together to boost communication and understanding of the high-quality educational offerings available in Darlington County. This could include engaging the Pee Dee Realtor Association (PDRA) since a real-estate agent is an important point of contact for prospective new residents in the region, especially those moving from other states. PDRA has a stake in the prosperity of the entire region and would likely value information to share with clients.

This same group of community leaders might also engage in discussion about how and why Mayo High is such a high performing school and how other district schools can participate in that success.

### **Implementation of Recreational Improvements**

Recreational opportunities for residents and their families support a quality of life, health, and fitness that many seek, especially those with economic mobility. The County's green infrastructure plan outlines strategies, particularly for passive recreation, i.e., those relying on natural resources like rivers and forests.

Darlington County's capital improvements program includes two improvements at active recreation facilities. County Council should commit funds as scheduled in the CIP to implement these improvements: a concession stand at Lamar Ballfield and a shelter at Lake Darpo. Each project should get underway in the 2020 fiscal year and reach completion by 2021.

### **Implementation of Housing Choices**

The variety and affordability of various housing choices are increasingly strained across much of the nation. One reason is that financing of new construction is available to a smaller set of housing types since the Great Recession. Apartment complexes of 250 or more units and new neighborhoods (residential "subdivisions") with a similarly large number of homes comprise most new construction. These two types of projects are the safest models in the eyes of lenders.

Local governments and other infrastructure providers contribute to these lending models in two ways. First, standards of access to highways and wet utility systems are increasingly expensive. To justify the expense, the developer and builder must sell or rent a large number of units across which to diffuse the cost of capital investment. For the benefit of the entire system, SCDOT must set a high bar for access, including turn lanes and signalization, on highways. Similarly, DCWSA must require a lift station on a regional force main to maintain transmission capacity.

Local governments also risk limiting housing choice through fees and regulations of land use and development. Local governments that administer land-use restrictions often apply single-family to disproportionately large areas of their jurisdictions. A single family – two parents with children – represents less than a quarter of all households while single-family houses continue to constitute a majority of all homes. Even duplexes are prohibited in most single-family zoning districts despite the fact that the building code perceives them similarly. A troubling nationwide trend is the prevalence of single-family residential zoning in attendance zones of the highest performing elementary schools. This practice restricts economical housing choices – and the households who seek them – thus restricting access to high-quality education.

Most counties and many towns in South Carolina accept responsibility for maintenance of streets in new neighborhoods of single-family housing but not new neighborhoods of attaching housing. This is typically due to vehicle parking configuration. As a result, maintenance costs are born by residents whose tax dollars help maintain the residential streets their counterparts in detached homes use.

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

This disparity in regulation further handcuffs a local planning commission's ability to address the most commonly lodged complaint against attached housing – traffic generation. A well-connected public street grid relieves congestion while a parking lot accommodating 400 cars (for 250 homes) with a single entrance introduces a choke point.

Additional regulations of various types can add cost and possibly dissuade investment in housing development. Examples include street width, right-of-way and easement widths, and building setbacks.

Development review fees and timelines also add to the eventual price of a home. Fees represent a simple but difficult choice for local governments. Either users of development review processes should be responsible for its cost, or the product of development is so desirable that taxpayers should bear at least a portion of administrative costs.

Typically, local governments can reduce costs of development review to applicants by expediting review schedules. State enabling legislation positions local planning commissions to ensure transparency and predictability in development review. Streamlining development review reduces the time over which applicants must carry short-term financing and its debt service payments. An important part of this strategy is to ensure coordination with state and federal agencies involved in development review, including SC Department of Transportation's encroachment permitting office and Resident Maintenance Engineer, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control's Environmental Affairs division for stormwater and sanitation permitting, and the US Army Corps of Engineers Directorate of Civil Works for wetlands determinations.

Darlington County's approach to increasing housing choices must be a two-pronged approach. It will first look internally to review its fee structure and development standards for opportunities to modernize, streamline, increase flexibility, and strengthen as necessary to ensure high-quality, healthful, safe additions to its built environment.

Efforts to address artificial limitations to attached housing can only be achieved through coordination with municipalities. They preside over locations suitable for attached housing and administer zoning regulations that influence it.

A "Housing Needs Assessment" could be a valuable next step for the county and its four municipalities. Charleston County, in partnership with the South Carolina Community Loan Fund, studied existing and future needs and began to identify limitations to housing supply.

### **Housing Choice Implementation Timeline**

- 6-24 months: Revise County land development standards ordinance.
- 18-30 months: Revise County building and land development permit fees and amounts.
- 24-48 months: Coordinate with municipalities to execute housing needs assessment.

### **GOAL #2**

*Darlington County will expand its economy and increase its self-sufficiency by expanding services available to tourists, businesses, and community groups.*

Darlington County lacks lodging options near the raceway, thus conceding the economic impact of raceway events to Florence County. The county lacks meeting space for business conventions and larger community group functions, leaving these important stakeholders to rely upon venues in Florence County

## Darlington County Comprehensive Plan ~ 2020 Update

as well. An opportunity to solve both problems with a public-private partnership is possible.

Darlington County Government should investigate potential for a hotel with convention space and visitors' center near the raceway. The first step is a feasibility study to determine lodging demand in around the city of Darlington and corollary leakage to Florence County. The study should investigate "comps" – similar ventures – to estimate usage of and revenue from both, lodging and convention space, and to report suites of financing for each. A pro forma should evaluate costs to develop such a facility for comparison to projected revenue. Funding for this study might be sourced through grants like the Hometown Economic Development Grant program at the Municipal Association of South Carolina. (The City of Darlington, a logical partner in this effort, would need to be the applicant for this program.)

The pro forma will likely show a gap – that revenue is unlikely to cover costs, at least in the nearer term. The study must also then investigate opportunities for local government to intervene to reduce costs. The County should, therefore, seek land at a reduced cost and market it for a public-private partnership for development of a hotel with convention space. The lead private partner will be a real estate developer with experience in similar projects, likely procured through a Request for Proposals.

The County might also approach Darlington Raceway to participate in the partnership or at least sponsor the prospective project. A theme might assist marketing efforts of a completed project and serve as the focal point of the visitors' center.

The County's role in the public-private partnership, after securing the site, could include responsibility for a portion of site development. Hospitality tax revenue and perhaps Accommodations Tax revenue could be leveraged for funding. The County could also apply for a loan through the SC Jobs-Economic Development Authority, which has supported a similar project in Myrtle Beach.

The County could retain control of a portion of the parking lot to support convention use of the facility and events at the raceway. If the venture is successful enough, public parking fees could recoup money for debt service on the project.

### **Hotel/Convention/Visitors' Center Implementation Timeline**

- 1-2 years: Build support and assemble local partnership.
- 1 ½ - 2 ½ years: Prepare RFP and procure consultant for feasibility study.
- 2-3 years: Conduct feasibility study.
- 3-4 years: Identify and procure site.
- 4-6 years: Develop and build project.

# 2020

## Comprehensive Plan



### APPENDIX AA

#### DARLINGTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP: AN ANNUAL REVIEW



*Darlington County*  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP  
**AN ANNUAL REVIEW**

Strengthening the economy of Darlington County by attracting and developing new and existing businesses.





## «Our Mission»

Strengthening the economy of Darlington County by attracting and developing new and existing businesses.

### WE STRIVE

### TO ACCOMPLISH

our mission by actively engaging in industrial development, marketing, and public relations.

The most visible work the Partnership conducts is the recruitment of industry to increase investment and create jobs within the county.

Darlington County is a member of the North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA), a regional economic development organization that serves a nine-county region in the northeast corner of South Carolina and works closely with the alliance to significantly enhance the quality of life for residents of the region by creating additional jobs and capital investment within the existing industry base and by recruiting new companies.

### OUR TEAM



**Frank Willis**  
Executive Director  
✉ fwillis@dcdep.com



**Monica Perry**  
Administrative Assistant  
✉ mperry@dcdep.com

Contact us at

☎ 843.413.3210



*Darlington County*  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

### SERVICES

#### Existing Industry Expansion and Assistance

Darlington County works with local, state and federal governmental agencies, utility providers and workforce training resources to facilitate the expansion of existing industries that are committed to creating jobs in the county.

#### Infrastructure Support

Darlington County works with the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad, water and sewer authorities, telecommunications companies, and energy companies to identify locations that have the infrastructure companies need to grow.

#### Workforce Training

Through resources offered by the South Carolina Technical College System at Florence-Darlington Technical College, S.C. Works and ReadySC, Darlington County has the resources to provide companies with a world-class workforce that will ensure productivity and profitability.

#### Incentives

Darlington County works with the South Carolina Department of Commerce to develop competitive incentives packages, making locating in Darlington County one of the easiest and best business decisions you have ever made.

## «Our Leadership»

### COUNTY COUNCIL

**Robert L. Kilgo**  
District #1 - Darlington

**Dannie Douglas, Jr.**  
District #2 - Society Hill

**Joyce W. Thomas**  
District #3 - Darlington

**Bobby Hudson**  
District #4 - Lamar

**Marvin Le Flowers**  
District #5 - Swift Creek Area

**Albert Davis, III**  
District #6 - Hartsville

**J. Lewis Brown**  
District #7 - Hartsville/Kelleytown

**David Coker**  
District #8 - Hartsville

**Marion Charles Stewart, III**  
County Administrator

### PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**Roger Buckley**  
Board Chairman  
Sonoco Products Company

**Greg Alexander**  
Board 2nd Vice Chair  
Moore, Beauston & Woodham LLP

**Stuart Ames**  
Duke Energy

**Leo Bonaparte**  
Retired Banker

**J. Lewis Brown**  
County Council - District #7

**Don Clark**  
Commercial & Industrial Contractors

**Danny Hogge, Jr.**  
Hogge Precision Parts

**Doyle Hopper**  
Nucor

**Jim Ivey**  
Dedicated Community Bank

**Ryan Nettles**  
PolyQuest

**Jeff Singletary**  
Pee Dee Electric

### STATE DELEGATION

**Rep. Terry Alexander**  
District 59

**Rep. Jackie E. Hayes**  
District 55

**Rep. Patricia Moore Henegan**  
District 54

**Sen. Kevin L. Johnson**  
District 36

**Sen. Hugh K. Letherman, Sr.**  
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
District 31

**Rep. Phillip D. Lowe**  
District 60

**Rep. James H. Lucas**  
District 65

**Sen. Gerald Malloy**  
District 29



**WE HAD ONE ANNOUNCEMENT IN 2018**

**\$340 MILLION**  
in capital investment



Southern Current, a leading developer in the residential, commercial and utility-scale solar markets, is expanding its solar farm portfolio with new facilities in Darlington County. The company is investing in a total of 17 individual projects within Darlington County, bringing a collective capital investment of **\$340 million**.

Southern Current is an owner and developer of utility-scale solar energy facilities across the southeastern United States. With an in-house team of development professionals, the company manages projects from site selection and origination through construction and operation.

## «Economic Impact»

THE COUNTY RECEIVES  
**\$1 MILLION**  
EVERY YEAR, FOR  
**30 YEARS**

“Southern Current is proud to make Darlington County home to many of our projects. We’re excited to roll out these major clean energy infrastructure investments over the next three to five years, which will produce substantial tax revenues to the county for decades to come. This wouldn’t be possible without the strong support of the county, partnerships with the economic development team and all of our vendors and consultants that help to make this possible.”

—Southern Current Chief  
Development Officer

*Paul Fleury*





# OVER THE YEARS:

**A LOOK AT  
10 YEARS OF  
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

YEAR	MONTH	COMPANY	JOBS	INVESTMENT
2008	November	Nucor Steel	NA	\$45,000,000
2009	April	Peregrine Energy Corporation	30	\$135,000,000
2009	October	New South Lumber Company	NA	\$7,000,000
2010	April	PolyQuest	30	\$8,000,000
2011	August	PolyQuest	20	\$8,000,000
2011	December	Sonoco	10	\$100,000,000
2011	May	SC National Guard Maintenance Facility	60	\$19,000,000
2011	September	JBE, Inc.	30	NA
2012	February	Nucor Corporation	25	\$120,000,000
2012	January	Remelt Sources	NA	NA
2012	May	Seneca Steel Erectors, Inc.	15	NA
2013	December	Canfor Southern Pine	50	\$8,000,000
2013	March	RBC Bearings	NA	NA
2014	July	Rogers Brothers Farm	30	\$6,000,000
2014	March	Birdsong Corporation	55	\$47,300,000
2015	April	Sonoco	40	\$11,800,000
2015	October	Cypress Creek Renewables	50	\$10,000,000
2017	August	Fiber Industries LLC	135	\$30,000,000
2018	July	Southern Current	0	\$340,000,000

**TOTALS: 580 \$895,100,000**

dcedp.com | 4



## «Driving Potential Investment»

The DECDP rely heavily on partnerships with the South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC) and the North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA) to provide us with creditable leads. Once the leads are in hand we work to assist clients with information requests, guided tours of properties and put forth aggressive incentive packages to lure them to our county.



## PUTTING DARLINGTON COUNTY'S

### BEST FOOT FORWARD

As of April 2019, Darlington County has 27 active leads in our project pipeline. These leads represent \$750.2 million in potential capital investment and the creation of 2,223 new jobs. This includes both new companies looking to locate in the area and industry already in the county considering expansion of existing operations. NESA produced 78 percent of our active leads, with the DECDP and SCDOC each producing 11 percent.

We also received two visits, one being an active project and another a visit from a national site selector seeking additional information about opportunities for development in the county.

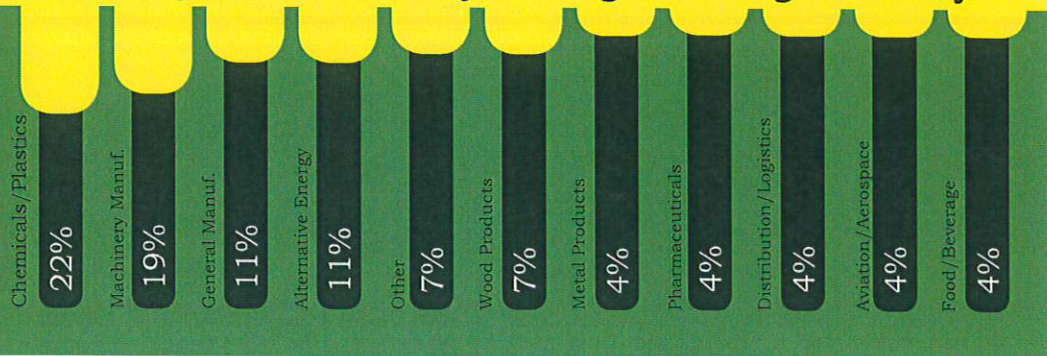
Currently, our most active industry clusters are chemicals/plastics, machinery manufacturing, general manufacturing and alternative energy.

27 active leads  
WITH THE POTENTIAL OF  
\$750.2 million  
in capital investment  
AND  
new jobs 2,223

### Industry Clusters Actively Looking At Darlington County

#### OUR TARGET INDUSTRIES

1. Plastics
2. Metals
3. Food Processing
4. Warehousing
5. Distribution







## MISSIONS

*In 2018, NESAs, on our behalf, performed 15 mission trips to 10 locations including: Montreal, Canada; Washington, DC; Charleston, SC; Detroit, MI; Paris, France; Greenville, SC; Dallas/Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; Toronto, Canada; and Atlanta, GA. Mission trips are comprised of pre-planned meetings with companies whom are actively or considering relocating/expanding their operations. Meetings with consultants and site selectors are also scheduled on these missions.*

## TRADE SHOWS

*NESA, on our behalf, attended three trade shows in 2018. These shows included: the International Production & Processing Expo (IPP), the National Plastics Expo and Select USA. These shows each have a connection back to our target industries. Meetings are pre-planned with select companies in attendance and other un-planned meetings take place as the events progress.*

## CONSULTANT LUNCHEONS

*NESA, on our behalf, hosted five luncheon events with consultants from national site selection firms and real estate brokers in Charlotte, Atlanta, Raleigh, and Charleston in 2018. Attendees receive a regional overview that showcases the many assets of the region and our county. These luncheons were attended by 73 national consultants, site selectors and brokers representing 41 different companies.*

## CONSULTANT EVENTS

*As another way of meeting national site selectors and consultants, NESAs, on our behalf, attends Business Facilities Magazine's annual LiveXChange conference. This speed dating type setting gives us another chance to get in front of decision makers and have Darlington County known across the country.*

## Site Selection Showcase

**We were extremely pleased to be included in NESAs' newest business development venture in 2019, the Site Selection Showcase. It gives us an opportunity to show a national site selector around Darlington County and promote its many assets. Additionally, we are able to get one-on-one access, ask questions, and gather ideas for the future.**





## «Spreading our Message»

The DCEDP markets Darlington County in a variety of ways. We also take full advantage of the partnerships we have in place with the SCDOC and NESA by using their various messaging platforms to spread our message.

### WORKING **TOGETHER**

### TO ATTRACT BUSINESS

In 2018, DCEDP worked in conjunction with Expansion Solutions Magazine to complete a year long marketing campaign. The campaign included a series of editorial articles, traditional print advertisements, and inclusion in the magazine's e-newsletter. Uniquely, Expansion Solutions Magazine attends conferences around the United States on the behalf of its advertisers. At these various conferences, magazine representatives gather information on companies who are looking to relocate or expand. If they receive a credible lead for our area they provide us with a contact that we can follow up with.

**OUR WORKFORCE IS THE BEST AT MAKING THE PIECES THAT MAKE THE WHOLE**

- Available sites with interstate frontage
- 30 Minutes from Inland Port Dillon
- Unmatched access to I-95 & I-20
- State-of-the-art training facilities
- Available workforce of more than 1.1 million

**ACCESS. OPPORTUNITY. ROOM TO GROW.**

Call us today  
843.413.3210  
or visit us online  
[www.dcedp.com](http://www.dcedp.com)

**Darlington County**  
Economic Development Corporation

### DISTRIBUTION

**EXPANSION**  
Where Progressive Companies Meet Growing Communities **SOLUTIONS**

**8,000+**  
Consultants

**6,000+**  
Manufacturing &  
C-Level Executives

**3,000+**  
Corporate Real  
Estate Brokers

**3,000+**  
Other Industry  
Consultants

**170,000**  
Digital Viewership



## PUSHING OUR MESSAGE

## THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

We leverage our relationships with the SCDOC and NESAs to the fullest. In addition to our own website, we market all of our available properties on both of our partners websites.

We also utilize the resources NESAs offers by taking advantage of the many marketing capabilities they provide. Over the past year, we have used NESAs marketing team to assist us with capturing and creating drone videos for the Hartsville Industrial Park, the I-20 Industrial Park, Darlington Tech Foundation Park and the Perfection Building.

Additionally, NESAs helps to market our various properties through their property e-blasts, social media campaigns, and their video newsletter, the NESAs Minute. We have highlighted several properties including the Hartsville Industrial Park, the I-20 Industrial Park and the Darlington Tech Foundation Park through these platforms.

Darlington County works with our regional partners, NESAs, to gain exposure in multiple economic development magazines and websites. They help to expose us to a broad audience in each of the following publications.

Business Facilities

European Business

FDI Alliance International

Site Selection Magazine

Southern Business & Development

Trade & Industry

Put Success in Your Corner

**NESAs**  
SOUTH CAROLINA BUSINESS CORNER

Strategically located in the northeast corner of South Carolina, the NESAs Region puts your business in the ideal position to succeed. With competitively priced land and building options, an unparalleled infrastructure, untapped proximity to both inland and deep water ports and state-of-the-art workforce, your business possibilities are limitless.

Explore the resources that await in the heart of the Southeast and let NESAs be your guide.

Some of the companies that proudly call the NESAs Region home:

Logistics, Q, J, CCM, S, D

## VIEWERSHIP



NESAs promotes our properties to an audience of more than **1,000**

site selectors, consultants and other interested parties.

Social media posts by NESAs, promoting the region and Darlington County made nearly

**26,000**

impressions and videos were viewed for nearly

**1,400** minutes

(January 2019 - April 2019)





## «Promoting Existing Industry»

The majority of announcements come from those companies you already have located within your county. Knowing this, it is one of our goals to make sure our existing industries are prospering and getting all the assistance they need to continue to grow their presence here in Darlington County.

### CREATING **RELATIONSHIPS**

### **FOR MUTUAL GROWTH**

Over the past few years, we have met with or assisted numerous existing industries within the county. Some firms needed assistance with expansion plans and securing additional incentives for investments made in the county. Others needed assistance in revising a past incentive package as their businesses changed and they were unable to meet their original agreements.

We have connected a number of companies with workforce development and existing worker retraining programs and grants. Other resources we have connected local firms with include the Apprenticeship Carolina program and the SC Manufacturer's Extension Partnership (SC MEP).

We also have worked closely with the Darlington County Planning Department to assist with the development of solar farms and to resolve jurisdictional questions for a new industry.



## MANUFACTURER'S ALLIANCE

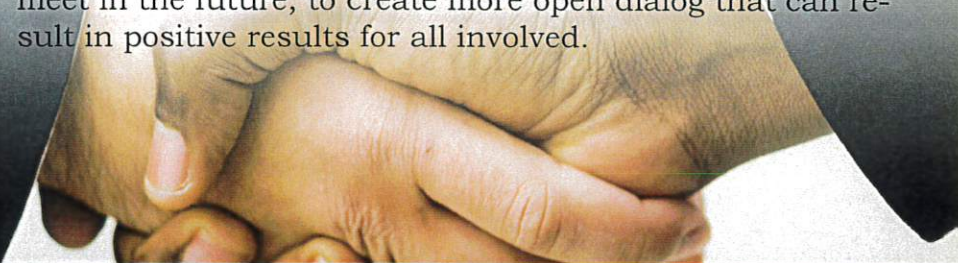
Noticing a need to create a dialog between the Darlington County School District and the county's many industries, we established an alliance which would allow them to have better access to each other.

In October 2018, we were able to hold the group's first official meeting. The meeting brought together representatives from several industries, utility providers, governmental offices, the school district and local colleges.

Industry representatives expressed their main concern was the lack of a single contact person for them to take issues to concerning workforce and other related needs. The school district took immediate action following the meeting, creating a new position and shortly thereafter hiring someone to fill the position.

The Business Engagement Coordinator position is focused on creating work-based opportunities for students with local businesses. This position is also tasked with creating and strengthening relationships with local employers in order to empower Darlington County School District students opportunities through real-world job experiences including internships and apprenticeships.

We were pleased to see, as a direct result of this meeting, a bridge being made between two of the key players in our county's future. We hope, as this alliance continues to meet in the future, to create more open dialog that can result in positive results for all involved.



## Manufacturer's Workshop

*Darlington County Economic Development hosted a workshop in 2018 with the goal of publicizing the numerous resources available for manufacturing success.*

*Approximately 50 people were in attendance. Each speaker took the opportunity to share information about their programs and how they can provide assistance to attendees to help them accomplish their overall goals.*

*Featured speakers included Adrienne Temple of SC Manufactures Extension Partnership, Norris Thigpen of the SC Department of Commerce's International Strategy and Trade Division, Teri Luther of Apprenticeship Carolina and Daniel Beaty of SCDOC's Existing Industry Division.*

*Overall, the workshop was well received and we have plans to coordinate future workshops to include topics on investing in opportunity zones and taking advantage of Inland Port Dillon.*



# «Establishing A Product Inventory»

## BUILDING NOW

## FOR THE FUTURE

When the DCEDP was dissolved in 2012, the county had no industrial parks or marketable sites. Since then, the county has developed three industrial parks -- including two certified parks -- and has three other potential green field sites. The Perfection building is currently the only industrial building being marketed. The three industrial parks have all due diligence completed and are shovel ready.

Although we have an existing inventory of sites and buildings, we continue to work tirelessly to identify parcels of land that will be suitable for industrial development in the future. We know it can take several years to extend infrastructure needed for an industrial park, so when one of the current industrial parks is sold, the next property needs to be ready to start the due diligence process.

We have been working with the Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority to help them update their site inventory and assisted them with finding grants to help pay for the update. The next phase of the infrastructure project will begin later this year and will include finding grants to help with extending sewer lines along the Highway 151 corridor between Darlington and Hartsville, which will greatly increase our available land for development.

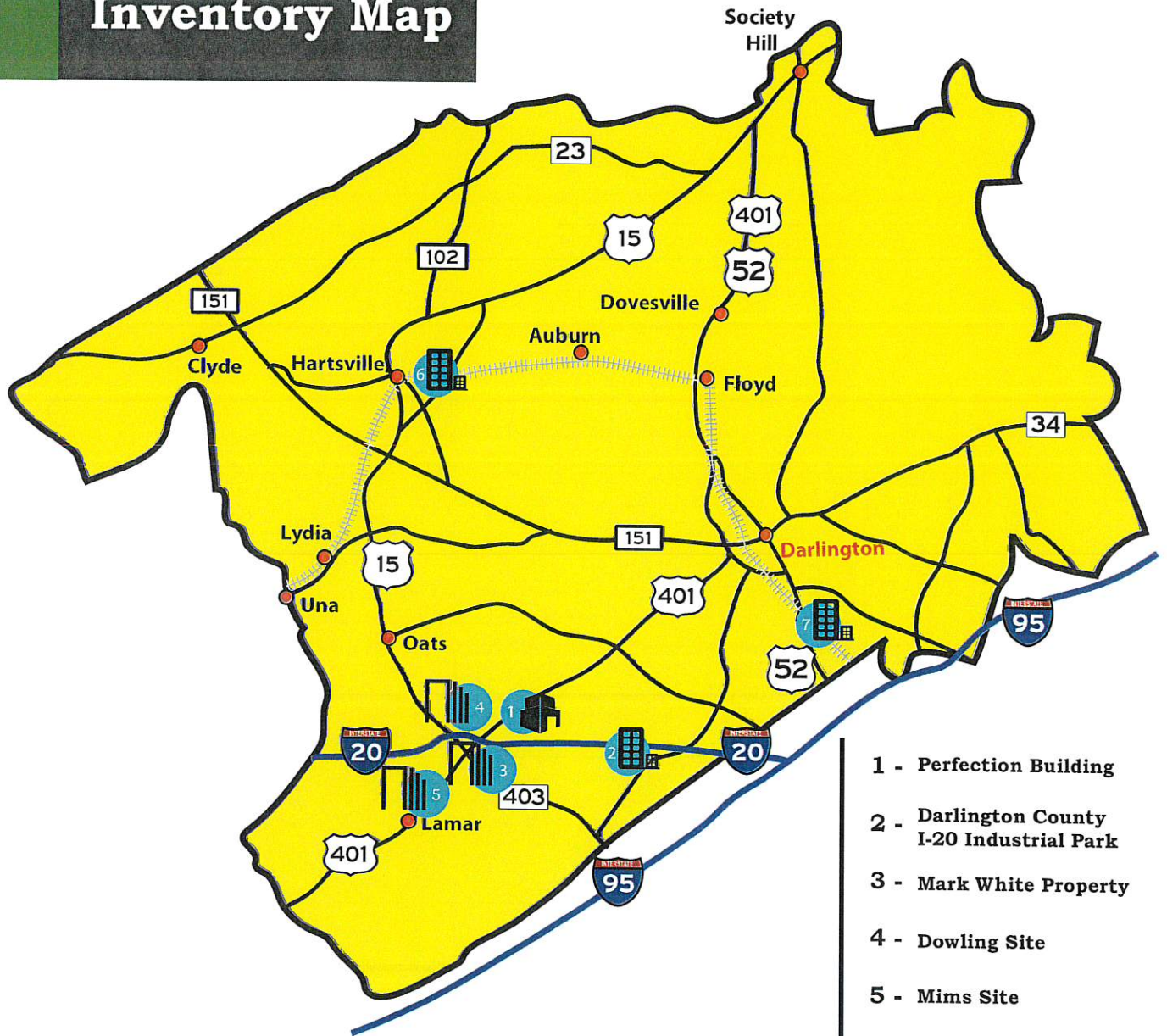
## A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

## HARTSVILLE INDUSTRIAL PARK





# Existing Site Inventory Map



- 1 - Perfection Building
- 2 - Darlington County I-20 Industrial Park
- 3 - Mark White Property
- 4 - Dowling Site
- 5 - Mims Site
- 6 - Hartsville Industrial Park
- 7 - Florence-Darlington Tech College Foundation Park



Industrial Park



Industrial Site



Industrial Building



## «Achieving Benchmarks»



In an effort to measure our economic development progress, we monitor several key indicators that help us understand how the local economy is performing. Such indicators include: unemployment levels, per capita income, average wage rates, job creation, capital investment, and changes in the tax base.

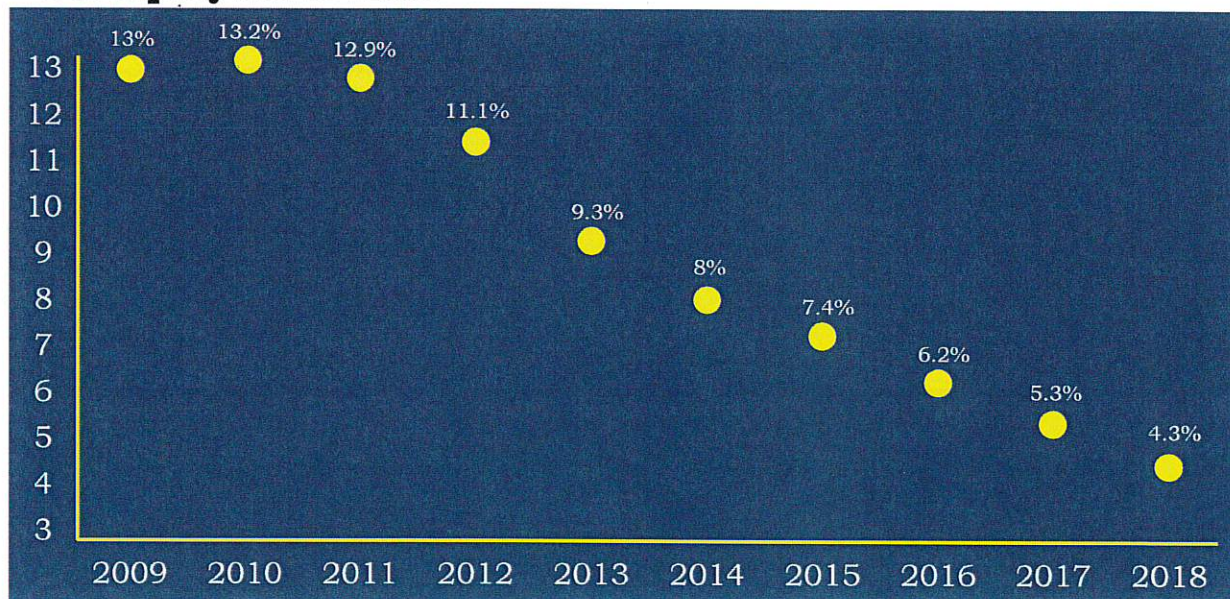
### MEASURING OUR

### ECONOMY'S SUCCESS

Overall, we believe that the county is performing well. We are excited to report the county's unemployment rate dropped another percentage point in 2018 to 4.3 percent. That's a total decrease of 8.9 percentage points since the recession.

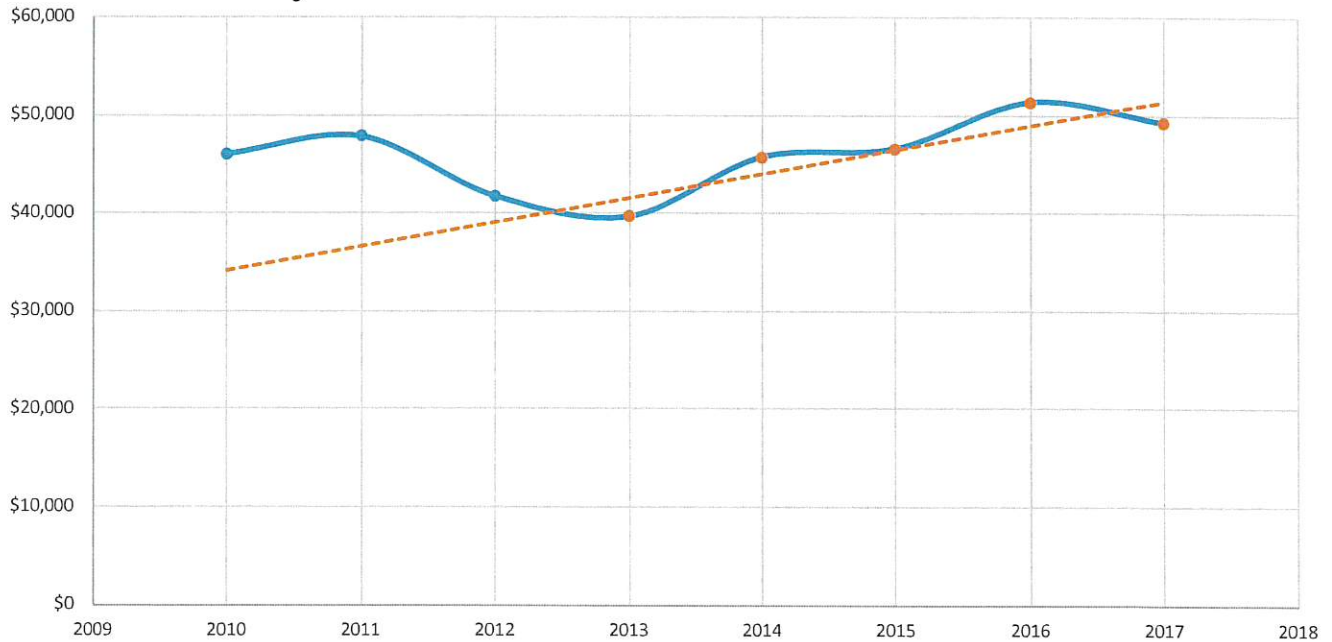
Consequently, per capita income increased at an average annual rate of 2.3% between 2010 and 2017. Likewise, average annual wages per worker increased at an average annual rate of 2.0% between 2009 and 2018.

#### Unemployment Rate



*\*Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Retrieved from JobsEQ)*

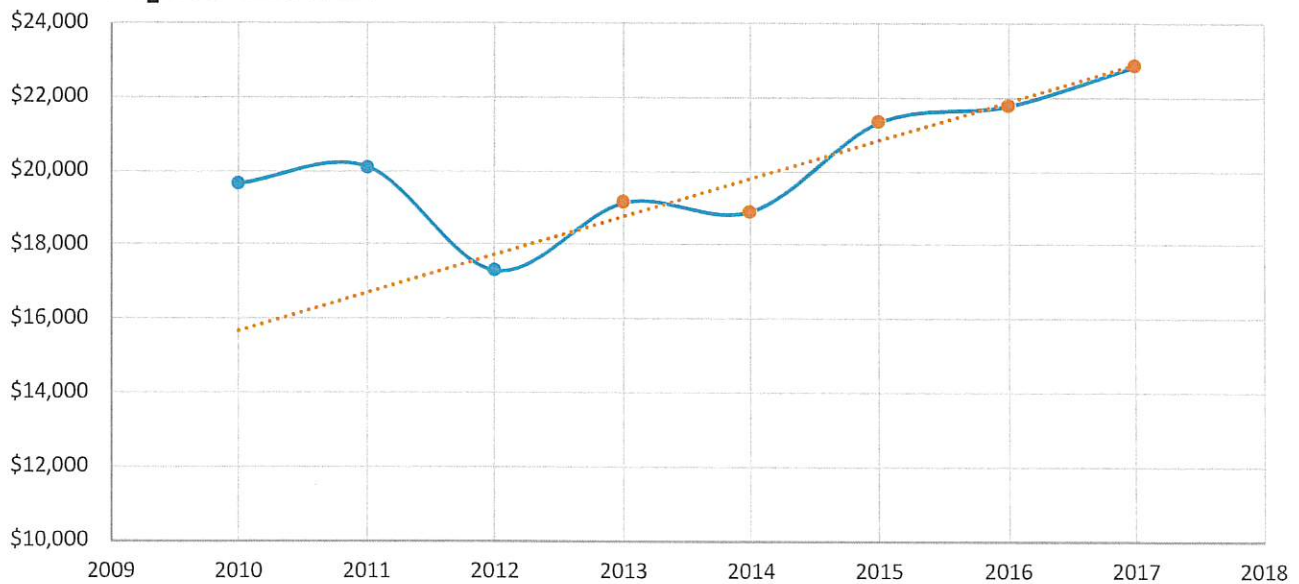
## Median Family Income



\*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

\*\*Trend line based on 2013-2017 data.

## Per Capita Income



\*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

\*\*Trend line based on 2013-2017 data.





*Darlington County*  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

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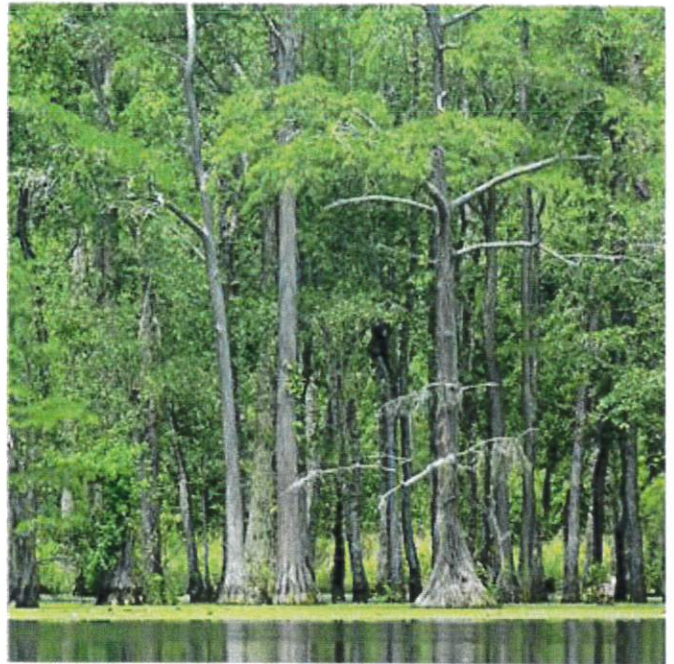
# 2020 Comprehensive Plan



## APPENDIX BB

### A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN FOR DARLINGTON COUNTY, SC





# A Green Infrastructure Plan for Darlington County, SC

Prepared by the Green Infrastructure Center Inc.

December 2016



Funded by the South Carolina Forestry Commission under a grant from the USDA Forest Service Southern Region. Darlington County provided analysis, mapping work, policy review, and coordinated community input. Prepared for Darlington County SC by the Green Infrastructure Center Inc.. December 2016.



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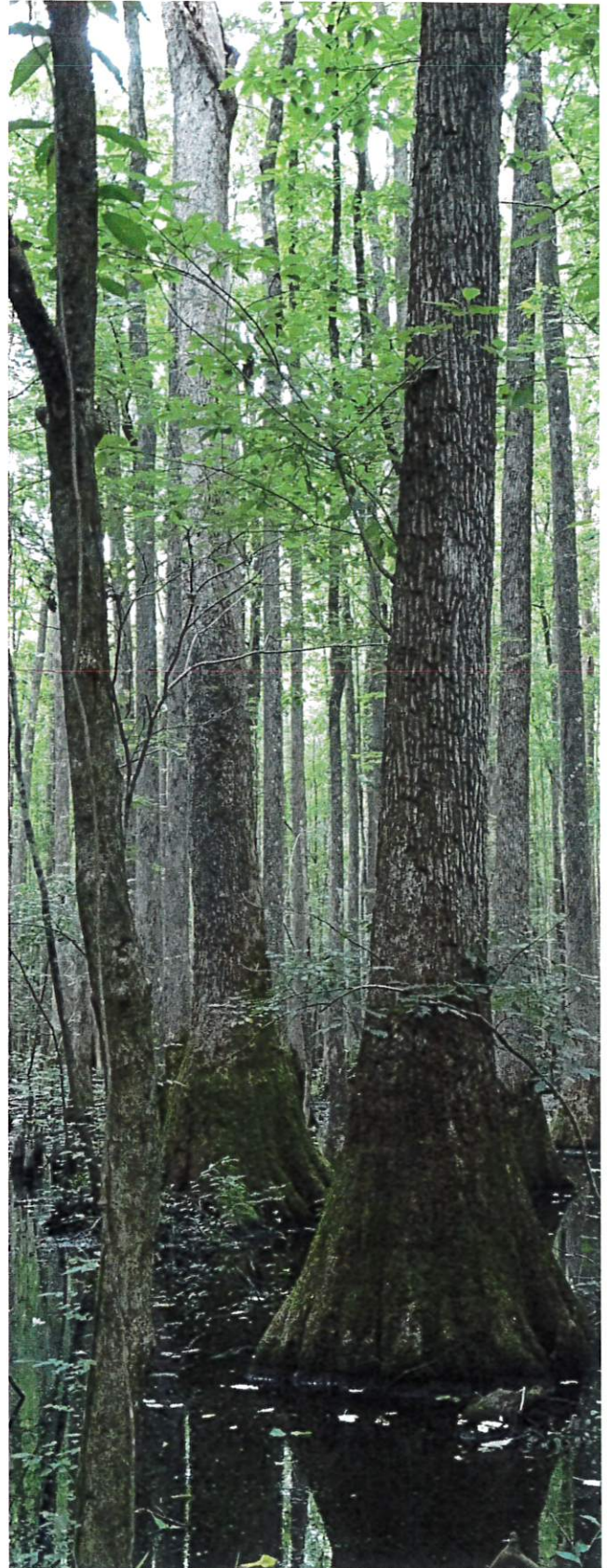
## Introduction

This study provides maps and analysis of Darlington County's rich natural resources. It provides guidance on what areas may be protected to meet needs such as hunting and fishing, sustaining the rural economy, protecting wildlife and clean water, or supporting tourism events, such as the Ag and Arts Tour. This study was launched in fall 2015 with a grant from the SC Forestry Commission. The county's natural resources are their 'green infrastructure' because they are natural features (green) and they provide support (infrastructure) for the county's growth, health, economy and lifestyles. This report provides the study results as well as key strategies to protect, connect or restore the county's highest value natural assets.

To ensure that the county's top natural assets are protected today and for the future, the county used the best possible data for analysis. This entailed applying the state's green infrastructure landscape model. The results were analyzed by the county's review committee made up of key staff and community representatives. The state's model was developed by Green Infrastructure Center with support from the SC Forestry Commission and was then further refined using local criteria to select those areas with the greatest local significance and importance. These landscapes include areas that support forestry, agriculture, recreation, wildlife habitat and clean water. They also provide scenic beauty and beautiful places to live for county residents.

The maps in this report show which aspects of the county are the most unique and of the highest quality. A high quality landscape supports many species, recharges groundwater, filter the air and provides oxygen and natural beauty. It also indicates which areas may be best to not overly develop, and on the flip side, which areas that have less fragile or more abundant resources and are better suited for development. The maps in this report were created using satellite imagery to show land cover and lands uses, as well as other data about water quality, rare species, or the best soils for growing crops.

This report is organized by key resources beginning with large intact landscapes or 'habitat cores' showing key areas for wildlife and water quality, followed by working lands (agriculture and forestry), outdoor recreation and finally heritage and culture which are supported by a natural landscape. The end of the report provides key strategies to protect or expand these resources.





## Why Do We Need to Map and Study Green Infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure refers to all the natural assets that help support Darlington County. It includes our trees and forests, waterways, wetlands, soils and natural areas, such as parks and trails. Although governments manage grey infrastructure – roads, bridges, power lines or pipelines – communities may not realize that we also need to manage ‘green infrastructure’ too. Trees need to be planted, agriculture and forestry need to be protected, and water needs to be kept clean and plentiful.

Just as governments plan for sidewalks or streetlights, they also need to plan to support our trees, trails, creeks, lakes, springs, forests and other open spaces. To do a good job of taking care of these assets, their extent, condition and necessary actions to restore or protect them should be determined.

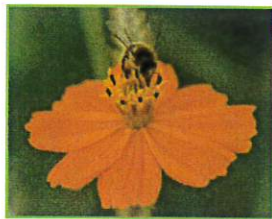
This study created a map of the county’s natural landscapes and also mapped the connections across the area to determine how well connected are they are. A green infrastructure study shows how to link multiple objectives together and what to prioritize. The maps highlight significant cultural sites that depend on the landscape for their interpretation or protection, such as plantations or historic districts. Following are just some of the reasons the county undertook this study:

### Economy:

- ✓ Areas with more green spaces are able to better attract top companies and well-paying jobs.
- ✓ Darlington County can save funds in the long run by making better, smarter investments in water, trees, trails, agriculture and parks.
- ✓ Areas near to green spaces have higher property values and sell faster.

### Food Supply:

- ✓ Pollinators, which we all rely on for food and natural beauty, also need habitat to allow them to do their work! They sustain our flowers, crops and many other plants.



### History:

- ✓ Mapping our landscapes also ensures the settings for our historic and cultural resources such as plantations,

archaeological sites, or favorite views are recognized and considered as we grow and develop.

### Safety:

- ✓ Hazards, such as flooding, can be abated or avoided with better planning, thereby saving lives and lessening risks and costs.
- ✓ Greener communities are safer communities; less crime occurs in green areas than areas without green spaces.



### Health:

- ✓ The greener the community, the better the air quality and the healthier the people.
- ✓ A connected landscape is healthier, more diverse and more resilient.



### Wildlife and Environment:

- ✓ When landscapes are connected, wildlife and birds can move across the landscape, ensuring their ability to obtain food, find shelter, and maintain a diverse gene pool for healthy populations. People also need a connected landscape to allow for recreation, adventure and alternate transportation. Darlington County can look for ways to maintain existing connections and make new ones too!

## Mapping Green Infrastructure

This report describes the Green Infrastructure assets of Darlington County. The study entailed mapping and cataloguing the county's highest value natural assets and development of strategies to conserve or restore them. Natural assets include forests, trees, water, soils, trails, parks, agricultural soils, open space habitat, and connecting landscapes. These natural features are 'assets' because they help keep the county cleaner, cooler and more attractive, provide recreation, absorb and filter stormwater and support native species of birds, bees and butterflies, as well as vibrant businesses, tourism, and residential districts. We consider all these natural assets as *green infrastructure* because they are also part of the 'infrastructure' that supports a vibrant, healthy county.

### How This Plan Was Created

In Fall 2015 Darlington County convened a committee to study the county's green infrastructure assets. The project was funded by the South Carolina Forestry Commission under a federal grant from the USDA Forest Service. In April 2016, the county used their technical support funding to hire the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) to help them create the maps and associated strategies. To learn more about GIC visit [www.gicinc.org](http://www.gicinc.org).

Members who served on the committee include:

- Lee Andrews, Darlington County PRT
- Travis Bishop, Darlington County Planning Commission
- James Brunson, SC Forestry Commission
- Lisa Chalian-Rock, City of Darlington
- Seth Cook, Pee Dee Land Trust
- Terri Cribb, Darlington County Development Services
- Caroline Dunlap, Darlington County Development Services
- Joyce Franklin, Volunteer
- Al Gray, Darlington County Institute of Technology
- Renee Howle, Darlington County Landfill
- Ken McRae, Volunteer
- Paula Newton, Darlington County Development Services
- Sara Nyikos, Clemson Pee Dee REC Center
- Doug Reimold, Volunteer
- Julie Ritz, Darlington County Development Services
- Bill Segars, Volunteer (Segars Construction)
- Ben Williamson, Volunteer

Additional public input was sought at three community forums to introduce the project and a public open house held in November 2016 to share the final results. The committee reviewed these ideas and used them to inform prioritization and development of the recommended strategies. The Planning Commission and the County Council then reviewed the ideas, modified them as needed and adopted them.



*Figure 1 An open house was held in November of 2016 to present maps and data to members of the public and to gather additional public comments.*

The committee followed the six-step process for creating green infrastructure plans:

**Step 1. Set Goals:** What does Darlington value?

Determine which natural assets and functions are most important.

**Step 2. Review Data:** What do we know or need to know, to map the values identified in Step 1?

**Step 3. Make Asset Maps:** Map the county's highest-valued natural assets that contribute to a healthy ecology and also support cultural and economic values –Based on the goals established in Step 1 and data from Step 2.

**Step 4. Assess Risks:** What assets are most at risk and what could be lost if no action is taken?

**Step 5. Determine Opportunities:** Determine Opportunities for protection or restoration. Based on those assets and risks you have identified; determine which ones could or should be restored or improved? And which need the attention soonest?

**Step 6. Implement Opportunities:** Include the natural asset maps in both daily and long-range planning such as park planning, comprehensive planning and zoning,



transportation planning, tourism development and economic planning

This report is divided into four main categories; Trees and Habitats, Water, Working Lands, Recreation and Culture. Each of these four topic areas affects the condition and vitality of the county. A healthful environment supports the health of residents and visitors alike and affects the county's economic and social vitality too. These topics are all interrelated; for example, Darlington County would not attract visitors to its Arts and Ag tour unless the scenery were beautiful and enjoyable. Following a description of each focal area are strategies developed by the committee to better protect, enhance or restore that resource.

### Forest and Wetland Habitats

A remarkable feature of the Coastal Plain is its rare Carolina Bays. Darlington County is rich in Carolina Bays. There are about 500 Carolina Bays in Darlington County that have at least 50 percent forest cover remaining. These were mapped by finding soils of the Rains or Coxville series, and analyzing these areas based on orientation and compactness.

They are shallow depressions, often oblong and sometimes crescent-shaped. They contain unique soils that are often saturated. Based upon radiocarbon dating of the pollen cored from them, they are thought to date back to the last glacial age. However, since the oldest radiocarbon date from a Carolina Bay shows only when the water table rose high enough for a permanent standing water to support biologic life, they may actually be much older. Carolina Bays tend to support rich biodiversity and many are still intact within Darlington County (Figure 9). Drainage of the area for past uses, such as agriculture, or for on-going development, has removed some of the once-abundant Carolina Bays.

Darlington's landscape supports rare species, such as the Pickerell Frog and endangered species such as the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (see Appendix A). People also enjoy and depend on the landscape. Healthy intact landscapes support many recreational uses such as hunting, fishing, nature walks, birding, horseback riding and other nature-based recreation.

Forests that make up Darlington's high value habitats also play a key role in the water cycle, helping to evapotranspire water into the atmosphere while slowing surface runoff and providing better infiltration of rain into underground aquifers. This slowing and storage of runoff water also reduces flooding, since water is released much more slowly

from forested landscapes to surface waters than from open fields or impervious areas, such as parking lots.

A forest is not only its trees, but also includes the structures and assemblages of forest soils, accumulated leaf litter – also known as the 'duff' layer – soil microbes, fungus and the myriad habitat niches provided by overstory and understory trees, shrubs and plants (e.g. herbaceous plants and vines). This duff layer also absorbs and holds water and provides key habitats.

Forest cover is the most effective land cover type for reducing runoff pollutants. Tree canopy breaks the energy of rain drops, while the duff layer of the forest floor acts like a sponge, soaking up water, reducing the velocity of overland runoff and breaking down pollutants. In addition, forests absorb air pollutants such as volatile organic compounds, sequester carbon (which helps to abate climate change impacts) and produce oxygen.

Forests also provide habitat for wildlife. Larger forests can support a greater diversity of habitat types and thus more wildlife diversity. In general, the larger an intact forested area, the more likely it is to support a greater diversity of species. In order to support a diversity of wildlife, plant and insect species, a good rule-of-thumb for the size of a forest in the eastern U.S. is a minimum interior size of 100 acres made up of native tree species (e.g. not a pine plantation, but a natural forest with a diversity of tree species).

### Habitat Cores and Corridors

The most significant habitats are known as habitat cores. Habitat cores must be at least 100 acres and should not be fragmented by wide roads or power lines. Satellite imagery and lands can be used to show where these areas with intact habitats are located. Each habitat core consists of two parts: a central area of undisturbed wildlife habitat, which is surrounded by an edge area that absorbs impacts from outside the core (such as erosion, wind, human intrusion and invasive species). This edge habitat serves as a buffer; protecting the inner core habitat from encroachment.

There are 176 habitat cores in Darlington County, totaling about 86,400 acres. Most of these are relatively small and disconnected, due to the fragmented nature of the county's agricultural landscape. The most connected cores occur most commonly along streams and floodplains, especially the Great Pee Dee River, the Lynches River, Black Creek, and Sparrow Swamp. These riparian corridors are also notable due to the fact that they weave in and out of the towns of Hartsville and Darlington, creating a link between



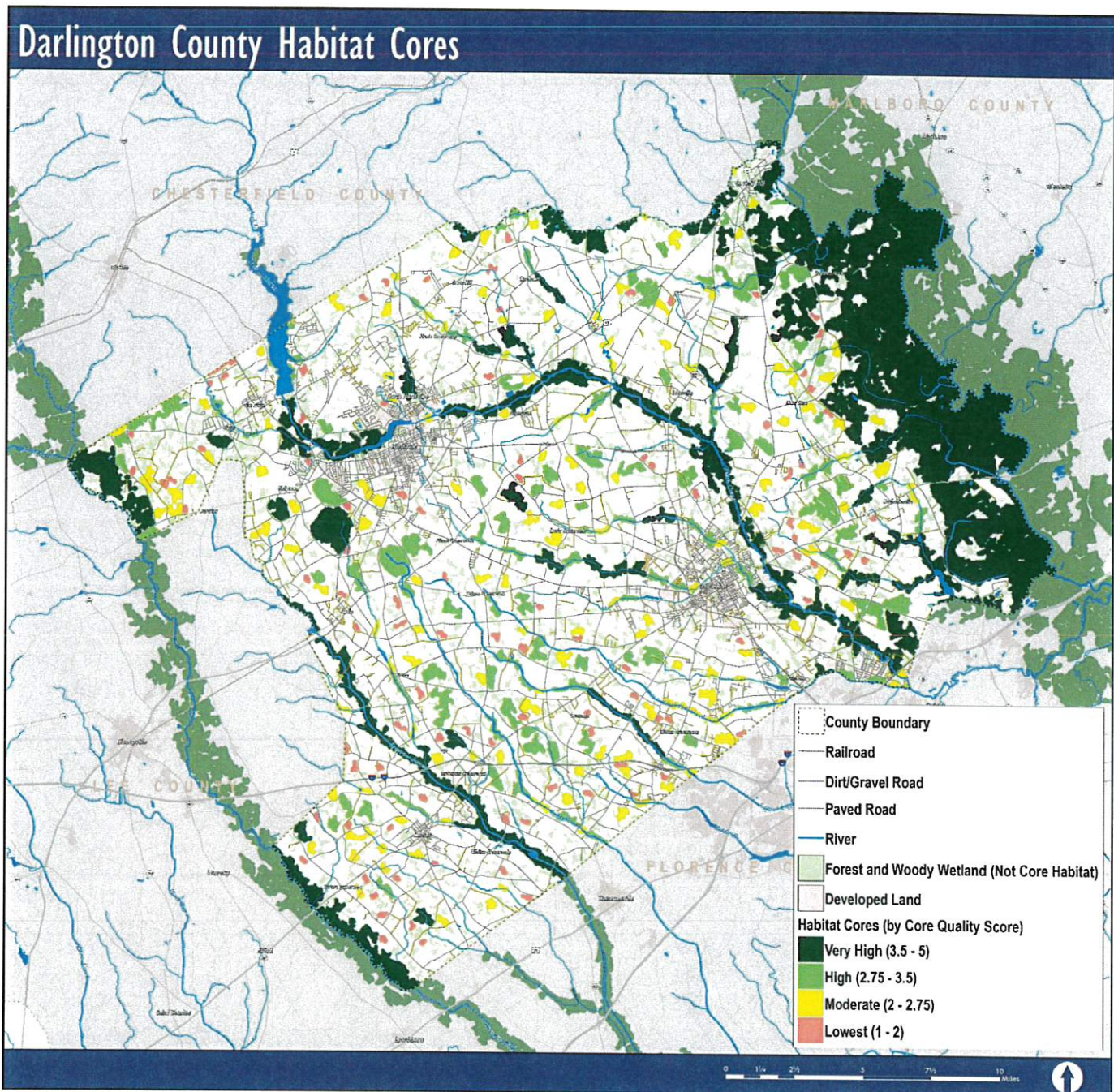


Figure 2 Map showing habitat cores in Darlington County, ranked by their composite Core Quality Index (part of the South Carolina Habitat Cores Model)

the county and cities and providing habitat in the most urban areas in the county.

Habitat cores are ranked based on several factors to estimate their quality and intactness. Each core is ranked according to ten attributes: area (acres); thickness (how many feet across at its widest); topographic diversity (standard deviation of elevation); species richness (mean predicted number of species); percent wetland cover; soil diversity (number of SSURGO associations); compactness ratio (optimal shape); stream density (linear feet per acre);

and abundance of rare, threatened, and endangered species (number of total observations), and the diversity of rare, threatened, and endangered species (number of unique species observed). The scores of each attribute are averaged to create a single composite score (estimate of ecological integrity). The ecological integrity of each core is estimated as one of four values, shown in Figure 2: 'Lowest', 'Moderate', 'High', or 'Very High'

In Figure 3, the rankings are further modified by several other factors after the initial ranking. This provides an



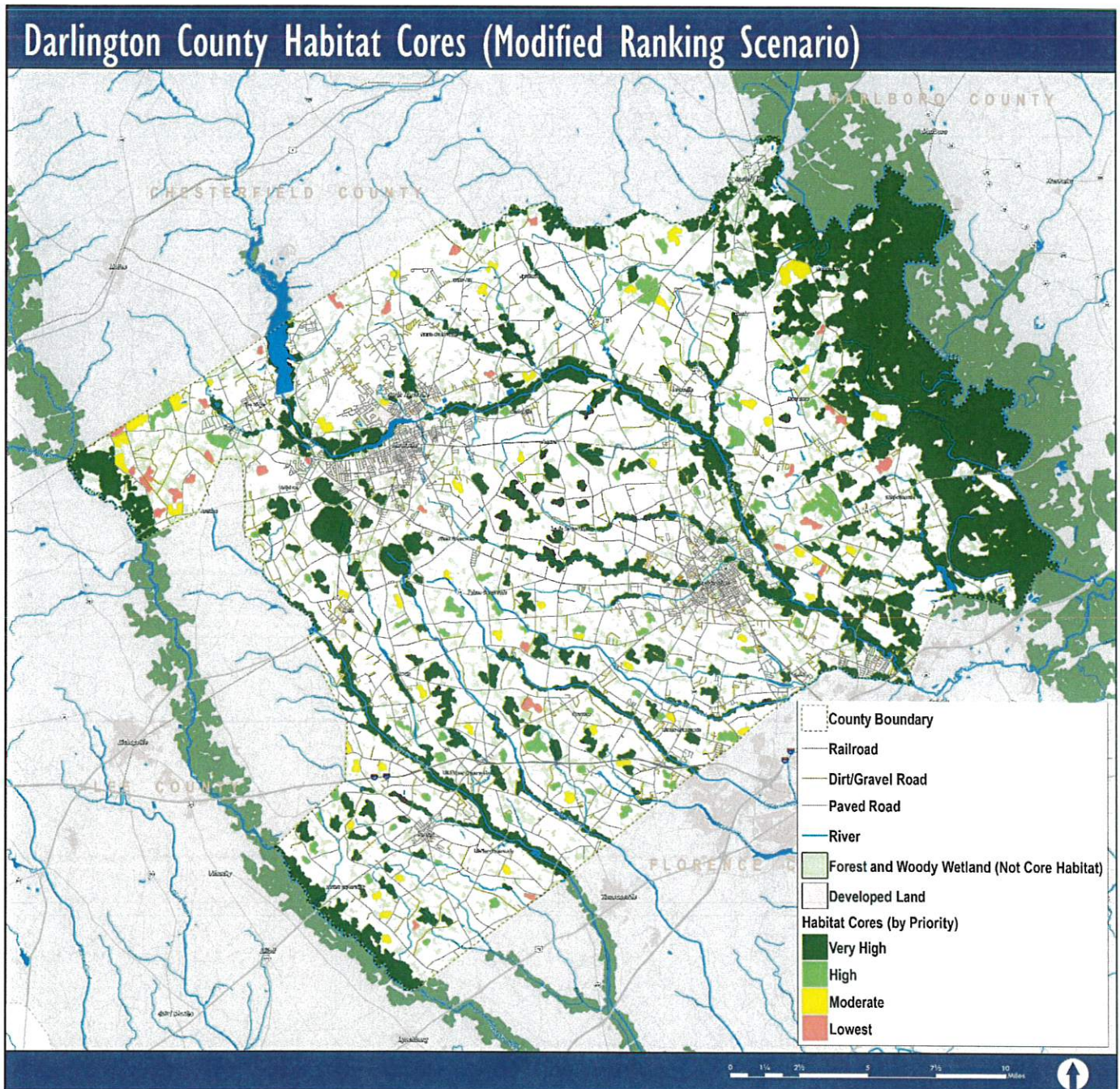


Figure 3 Map of habitat cores in Darlington County, showing a modified ranking scenario that includes additional factors important to the county. Adapting the state model is one way of developing priorities at a local level.

additional ranking scenario that incorporates other values that were not captured when the cores were assessed for ecological integrity alone. Cores are increased by one rank level (e.g. from 'High' to 'Very High') for each of the following factors:

- the core is within 300 feet of a named waterbody,
- is within 300 feet of a park or conservation easement,
- intersects a Carolina bay,
- intersects a historic building or district,
- is near a major populated place, and
- more than 50 percent of the core's area is classified as wetland.

A core's rank is lowered by one level if more than 50 percent of its area is evergreen forest (forest plantations).



# Habitat Cores and Their Protection Status

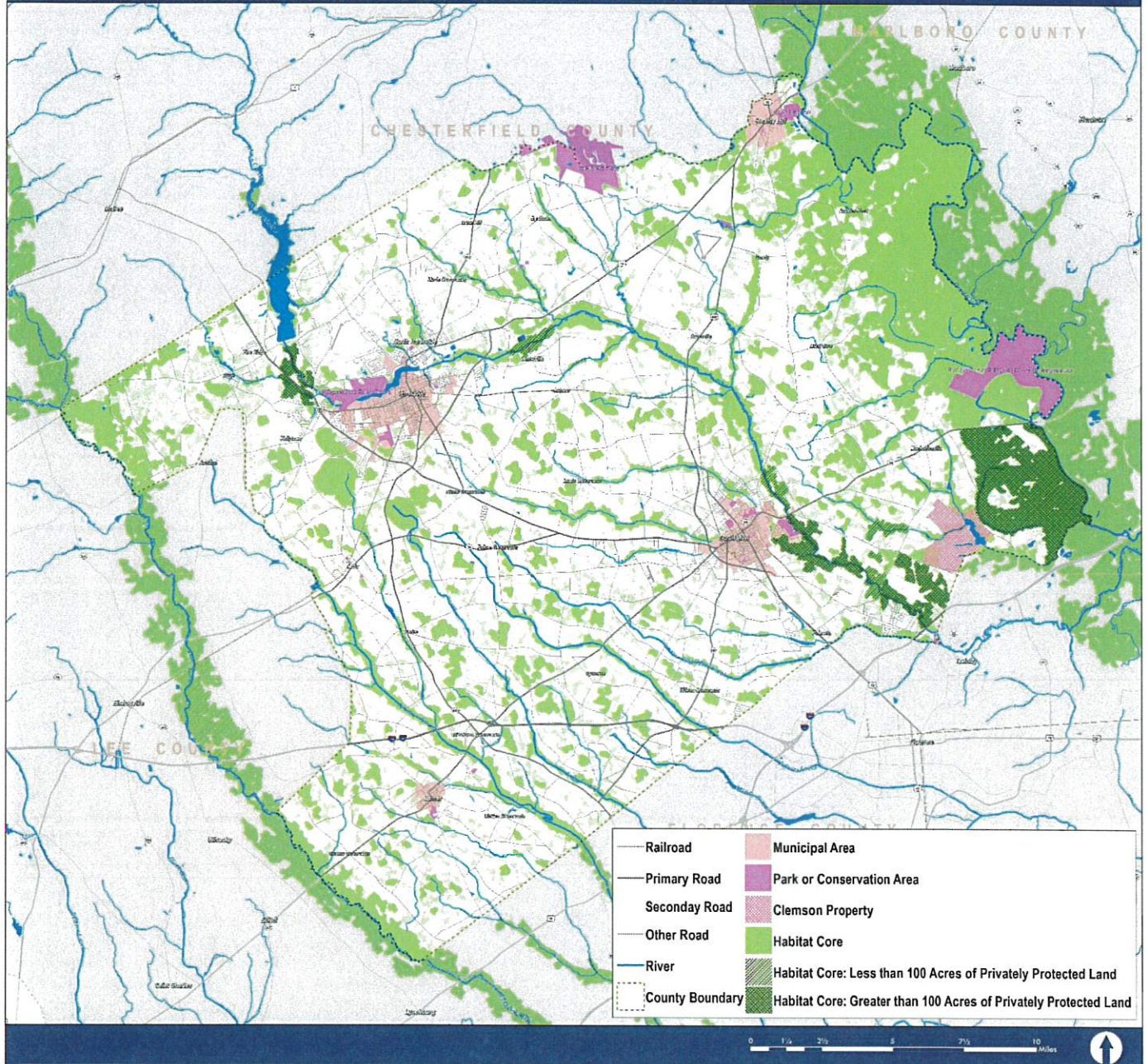


Figure 4 This map shows where forest, wetlands, and other habitat are less at risk. There are many ways to protect habitats, taking the form of parks, natural areas, wildlife management areas, private conservation easements, or other land managed whole or in part for ecological benefits.

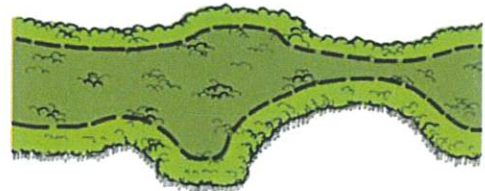
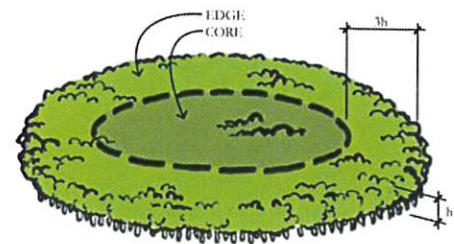
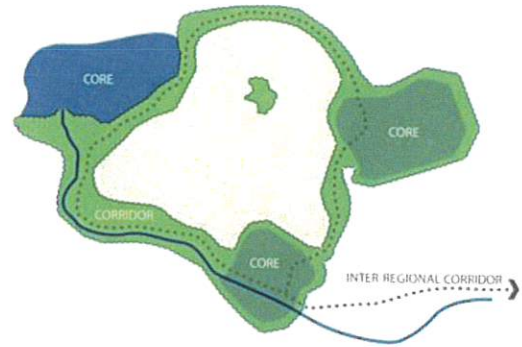


## Key Definitions:

**Core:** A core is an area or patch of relatively intact habitat that is sufficiently large to support more than one individual of a species. Consider that the greater the number of interior species present and the greater the diversity of habitats, the more important it is to conserve the core intact.

**Edge:** The transitional boundary of a core, where the vegetation assemblage and structure differs markedly from the interior, such as forest edges. The structural diversity of the edge (with different heights and types of vegetation) affects its species diversity, as well as the prevalence or abundance of native or invasive species.

**Corridor:** A more or less linear arrangement of a habitat type or natural cover that provides a connection between cores and differs from adjacent land. Corridors are used by species to move between cores, need to be wide enough to allow wildlife to progress across the landscape within conditions similar to their interior habitat. For this reason, it is recommended that these connections be at least 300 meters wide: a central 100-meter width of interior habitat, with a 100-meter edge on either side to protect safe passage and buffer against human intrusion and invasive species. Streams are natural corridors and the width of the vegetative corridor on either side should reflect the stream order (i.e. larger streams need wider forested buffers).



## Urban Areas

It's important to also recognize the benefits of urban areas. Trees in urban areas make a difference too. One mature tree can uptake between 600 to 3000 gallons of stormwater annually, which helps alleviate flooding. Trees also clean runoff water. Trees also lead to strong economies and vibrant communities. People shop longer and spend 12 percent more in tree-lined shopping districts, so trees in commercial areas help pay for themselves and support county revenues (Wolf 1999). Both residential and commercial property values increase and commercial spaces rent faster when mature trees are present.

When trees are not present, distances are perceived to be longer and destinations farther away, making people less inclined to walk than if streets and walkways are well treed (Wolf 2008). Businesses often depend on pedestrian traffic to get new customers, so the more walkers there are, the more likely an attractive, street front store display will be able to lure new shoppers. Following are issues that are key

to economic revitalization, chief among them is the need to reduce unattractive areas. Unattractive areas disincentive economic development and lead to feelings of insecurity and fear of crime.

Patches of vegetation also add up to provide habitat for pollinators – which we need to protect our food supply! Farmers markets and residents' backyard vegetable gardens would not be possible without bees. Wild bees (not raised commercially) are less susceptible to disease and can travel to more areas so it's important to support their needs. Even in the towns of Hartsville and Darlington, improving the backyard habitats can make a huge difference (see the resources section in Appendix B for ideas). Since everyone likes (and needs) to eat fresh, local food, protecting local pollinator habitat is something everyone can get behind! Smaller habitat patches within urban areas also provide stepping stones for both pollinators and birds to move across the landscape.



## Agricultural Assets

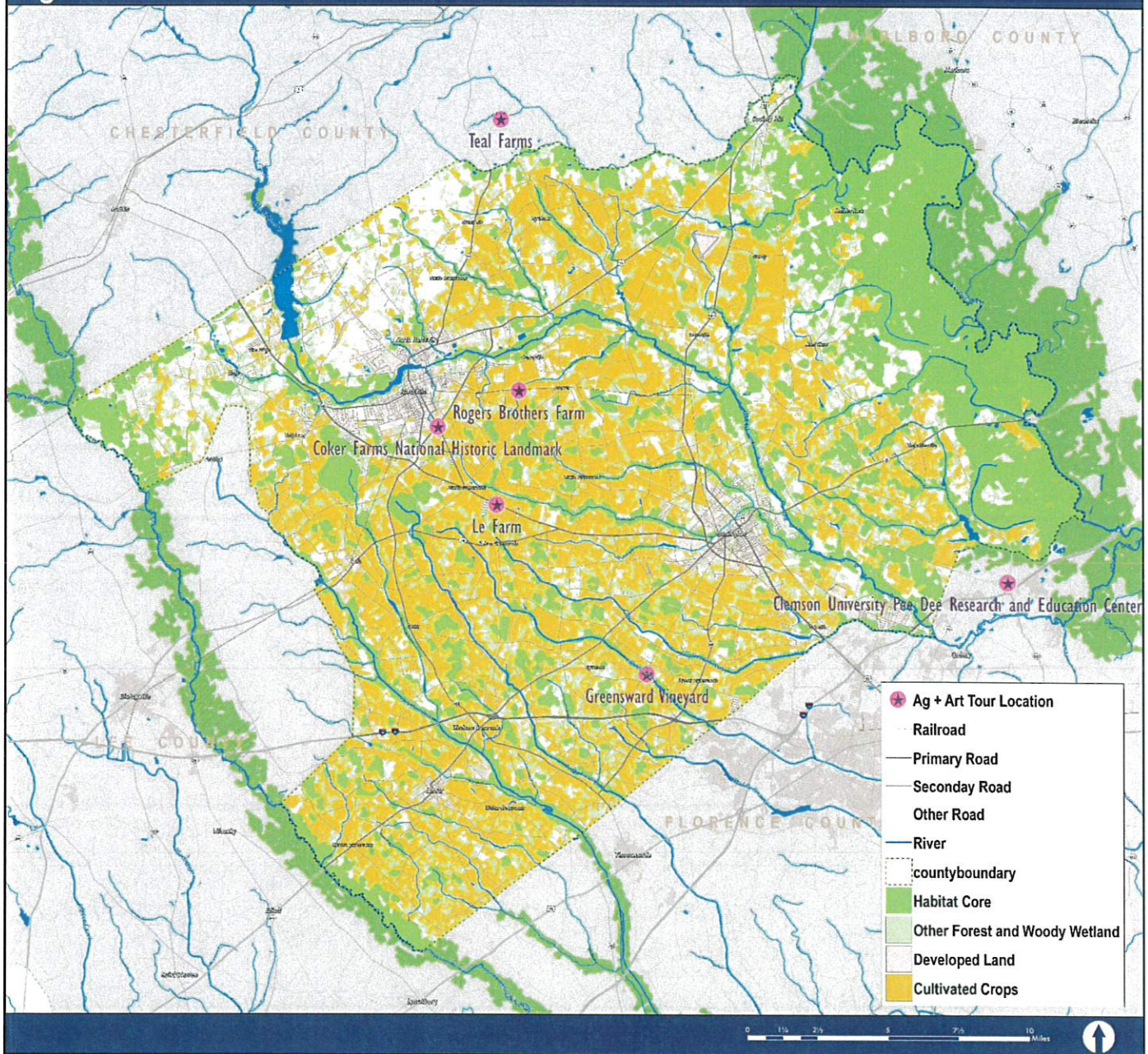


Figure 5 Map showing Darlington County's existing farmland, as well as current Ag + Art Tour locations.

There is one other compelling fiscal reason for planning the conservation of natural assets as part of a green infrastructure strategy: avoiding costly natural disasters. By including the natural landscape as part of infrastructure planning, it is possible to reduce the threat of extensive flooding by identifying and protecting floodplains, allowing for natural drainage and avoiding building in hazard locales. The risks and costs associated with wildfires can also be reduced or eliminated by evaluating

where forests are most sensitive to disturbance and avoiding overdevelopment in those areas.

### Working Lands

Darlington County's rich soils led to very successful farms. Darlington is still renowned for leading America's revolution in scientific agriculture through the Coker Seed Company. David R. Coker worked in his family's mercantile business until a prolonged illness gave him time to formulate a plan for pursuing his passion for agricultural



## Prime Agricultural Soils

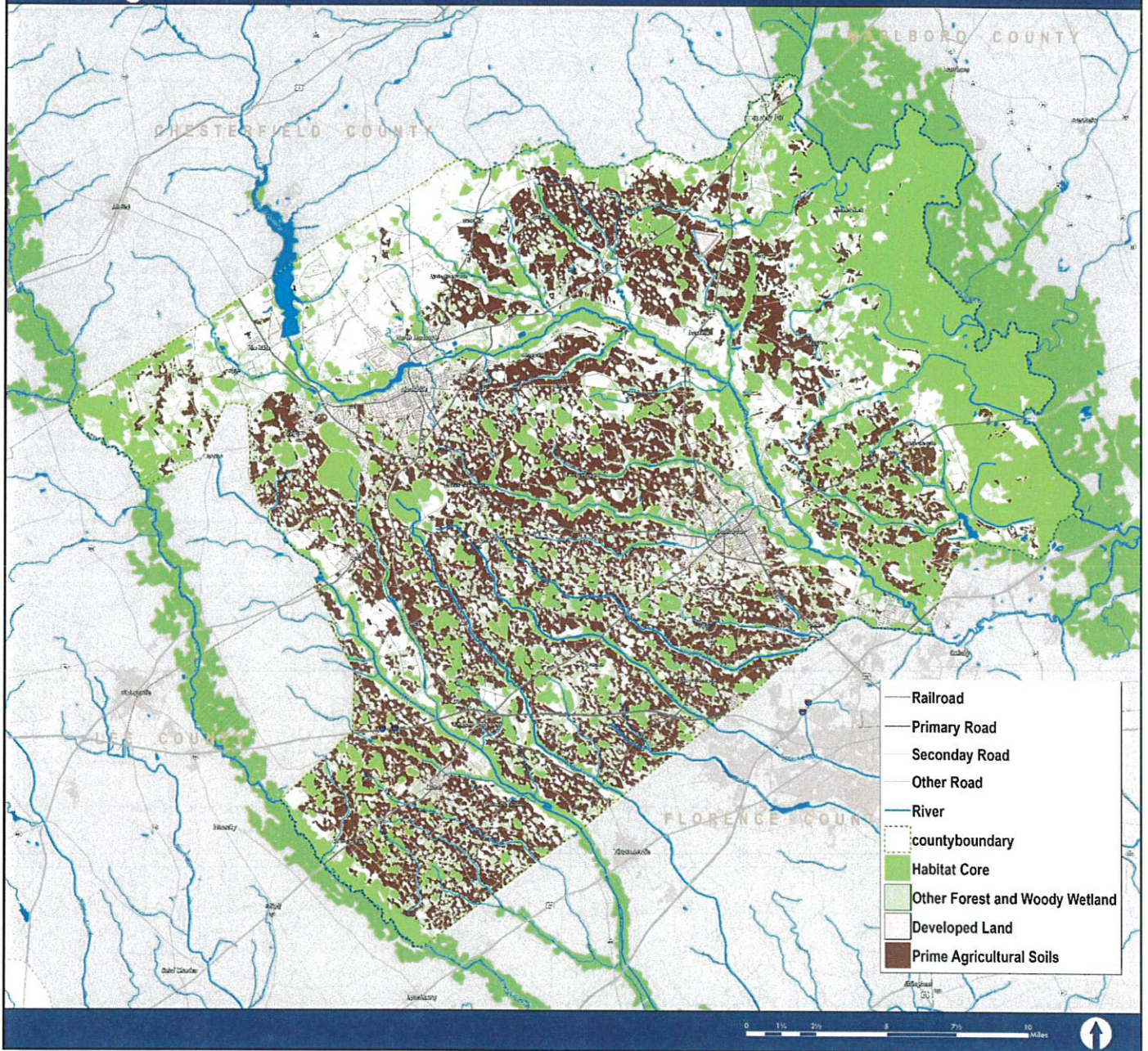


Figure 6 Map showing Prime Agricultural Soils: Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.[SSM, USDA Handbook No. 18, October 1993]

pursuits. He partnered with his father to create Coker's Pedigreed Seed Company—organized in 1914 as the farm division of J. L. Coker & Company. He applied ideas from Gregor Mendel who pioneered scientific plant breeding in the 1860s. The Cokers' scientific, methodical approach allowed them to select for the strongest genetics for plants

such as cotton to be disease resistant while also providing high yields. They also developed hybrid seeds and cures for pests, such as the boll weevil. Coker Farms, located just on the outskirts of Hartsville, is now a national historic landmark. Although the civil war and the great depression dealt blows to its economy, Darlington has always



## Forestry Assets

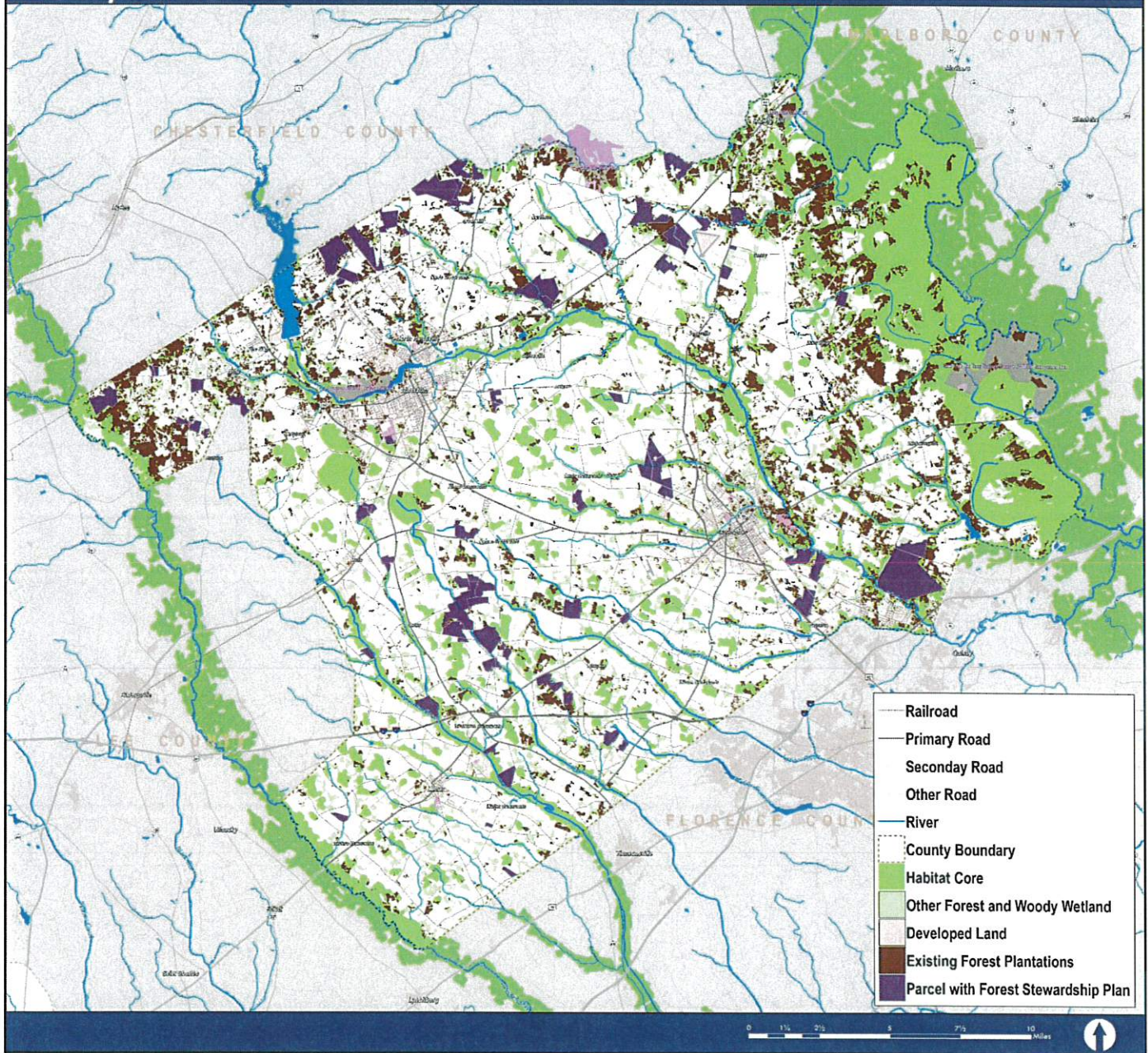


Figure 7 Map showing existing forestry assets (known), including forest plantations as well as properties with forest stewardship plans. To learn more about the South Carolina Forest Stewardship Program, visit <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/mstew.htm>.

bounced back. Today, the county boasts the 8th highest value for agricultural products sold with soybeans and wheat among the top agricultural products in South Carolina (2012 Census of Agriculture).

The county celebrates the connection of arts and agriculture through its annual arts Ag + Art Tour. The South Carolina Ag + Art Tour is a free, self-guided tour of farms and artisans to provide visitors the opportunity to

see first-hand where their food comes from, watch artists in action and purchase their works, dance to the melodies of bluegrass and folksongs, and learn more about rural life. The Tour is the largest free farm tour in the nation with over 20,000 visitors participating since 2012.

The map on page 12 shows parcels that have forests covering at least 20 acres. These parcels are large enough to be managed for on-going forestry.



## Parcels with Greater than 25 Acres of Forest

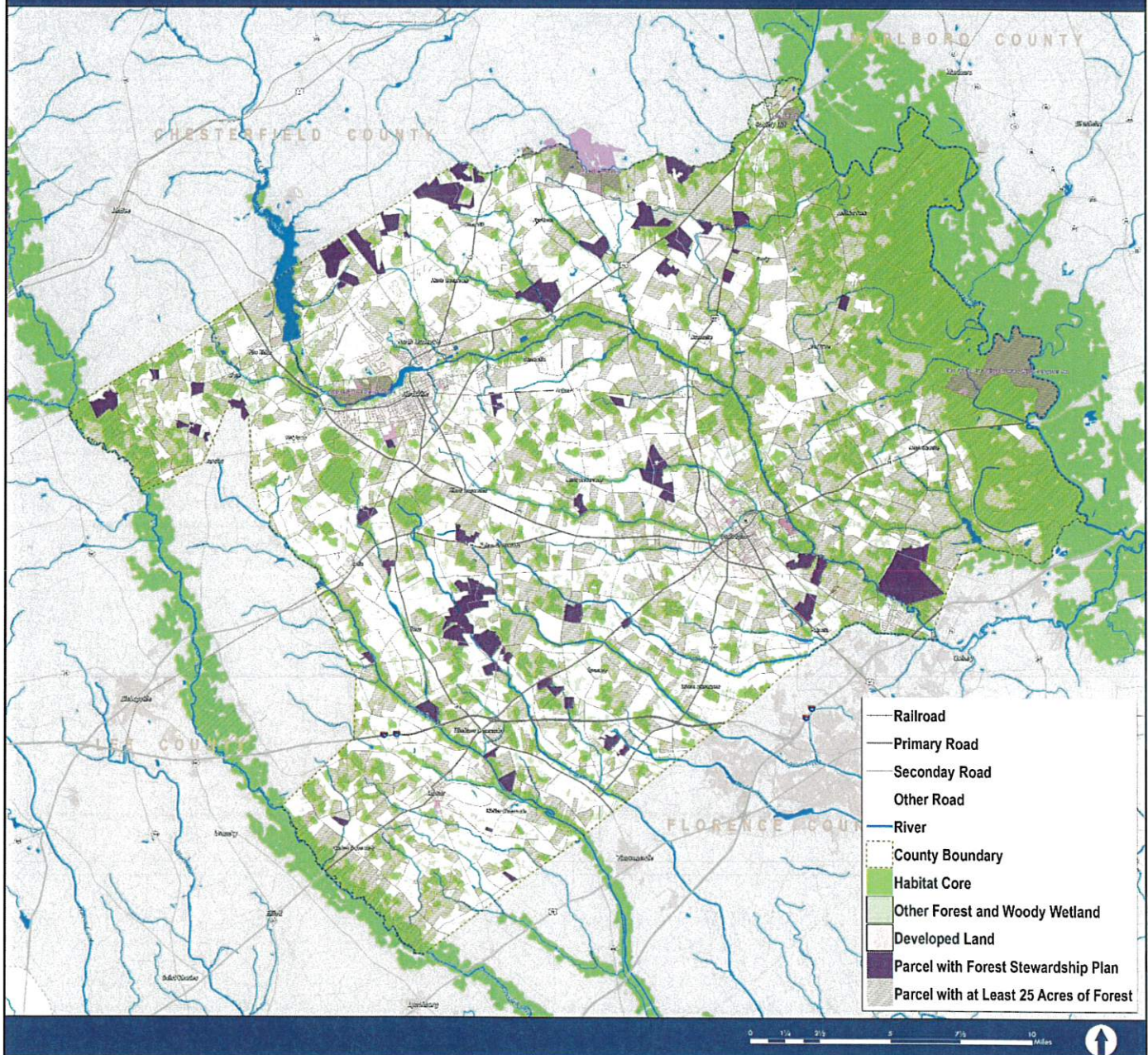


Figure 8 Map highlighting parcels that contain at least 25 acres of forest. 25 acres is a good rule-of-thumb for quickly visualizing which areas may be more viable for forestry.

### Water

Water supports our very existence for drinking, bathing or fishing, irrigating crops or providing recreation and natural beauty. The county's abundant rivers and wetlands are true treasures. However, some waters are impaired and other areas are in need of habitat restoration to protect them. For those who depend on well water, forests recharge aquifers by holding water, filtering it and allowing it to slowly infiltrate down, instead of running off quickly or

causing other problems, such as downstream flooding. The longer a well can remain in service, the lower the cost, since it will not need to be relocated or re-drilled to reach a deeper water table.

Protecting watersheds with forested land cover and buffering streams from runoff also helps to prevent future water quality impairments that are expensive to mitigate. Under the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL) rules, plans for waters found to be



## Wetlands and Carolina Bays

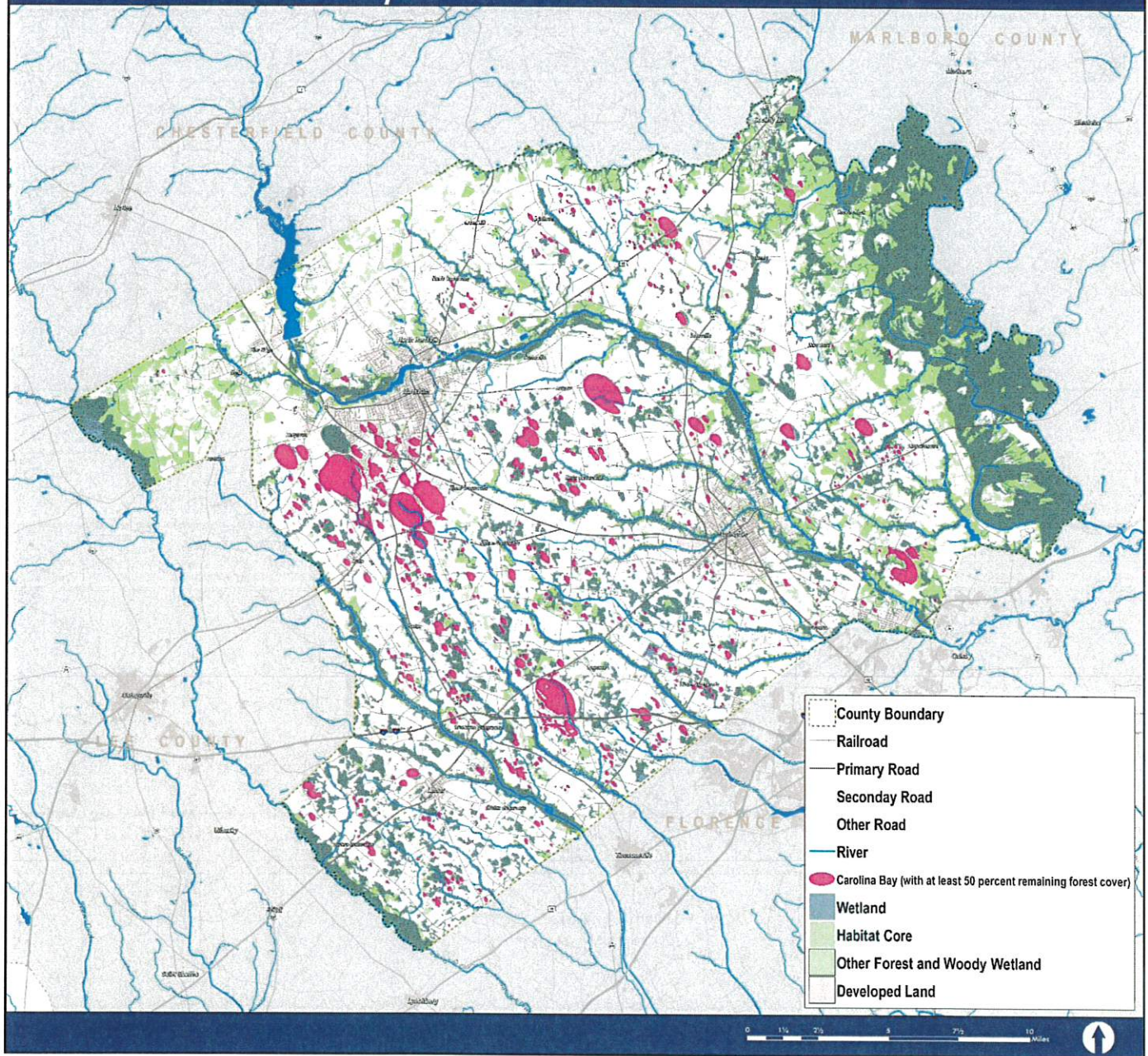


Figure 9 Darlington County is rich in aquatic resources. This map highlights wetlands, as well as Carolina Bays.

impaired, require assessment and clean-up plans. These rules affect every county. Planning with water issues in mind and preventing impairments is far less costly in the long run, than trying to rehabilitate an impaired stream.

At certain levels of urban development and related imperviousness, aquatic life (macroinvertebrates, fish, salamanders and other aquatic-dependent species) begin to decline. The rate of decline is affected by factors such as land cover, lot sizes and land use types, as well as the

locations of imperviousness within the watershed.

Excessive urban runoff results in pollutants such as oil, metals, lawn chemicals, pet waste and other pollutants reaching surface waters. High stormwater flows result in channel and bank scouring, releasing sediments that smother aquatic life and reduce stream depth, and as channel capacity is lost, there is yet more bank scouring and flooding.



# Watersheds of Darlington County

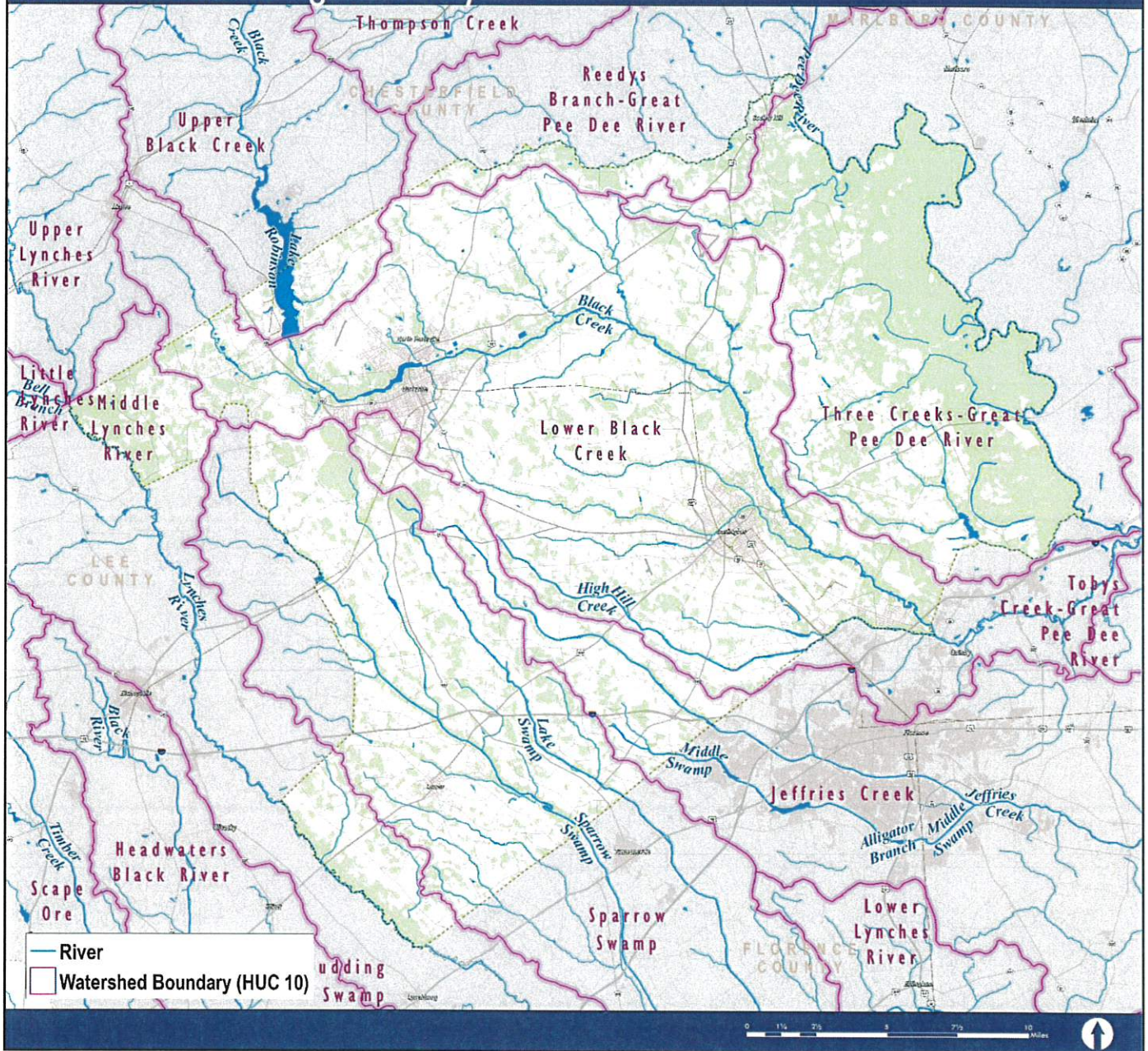


Figure 10 Map showing the major watersheds of Darlington County. The majority of the county falls within four watersheds: Sparrow Swamp, Jeffries Creek, and Three Creeks (Great Pee Dee River).

A key determinant of stream health is how well buffered the stream is with natural vegetation. A woody vegetated buffer of 100 feet wide can remove more than 90 percent of the nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment from overland runoff. If stormwater pipes bypass the buffer underneath and discharge to the stream directly, then much of the buffer benefits for mitigating polluted runoff are lost. Even with these caveats, a general rule of thumb is that

impacts to aquatic life tend to be seen even at impervious levels just above 10 percent (Schueler 2003).

There are about 10,500 acres of land within 150 meters of a major stream that are not forested (150 meters on either side of a stream totals 300 meters, the ideal minimum width for a habitat corridor). These areas present opportunities to reforest stream buffers, which will improve water quality and habitat.



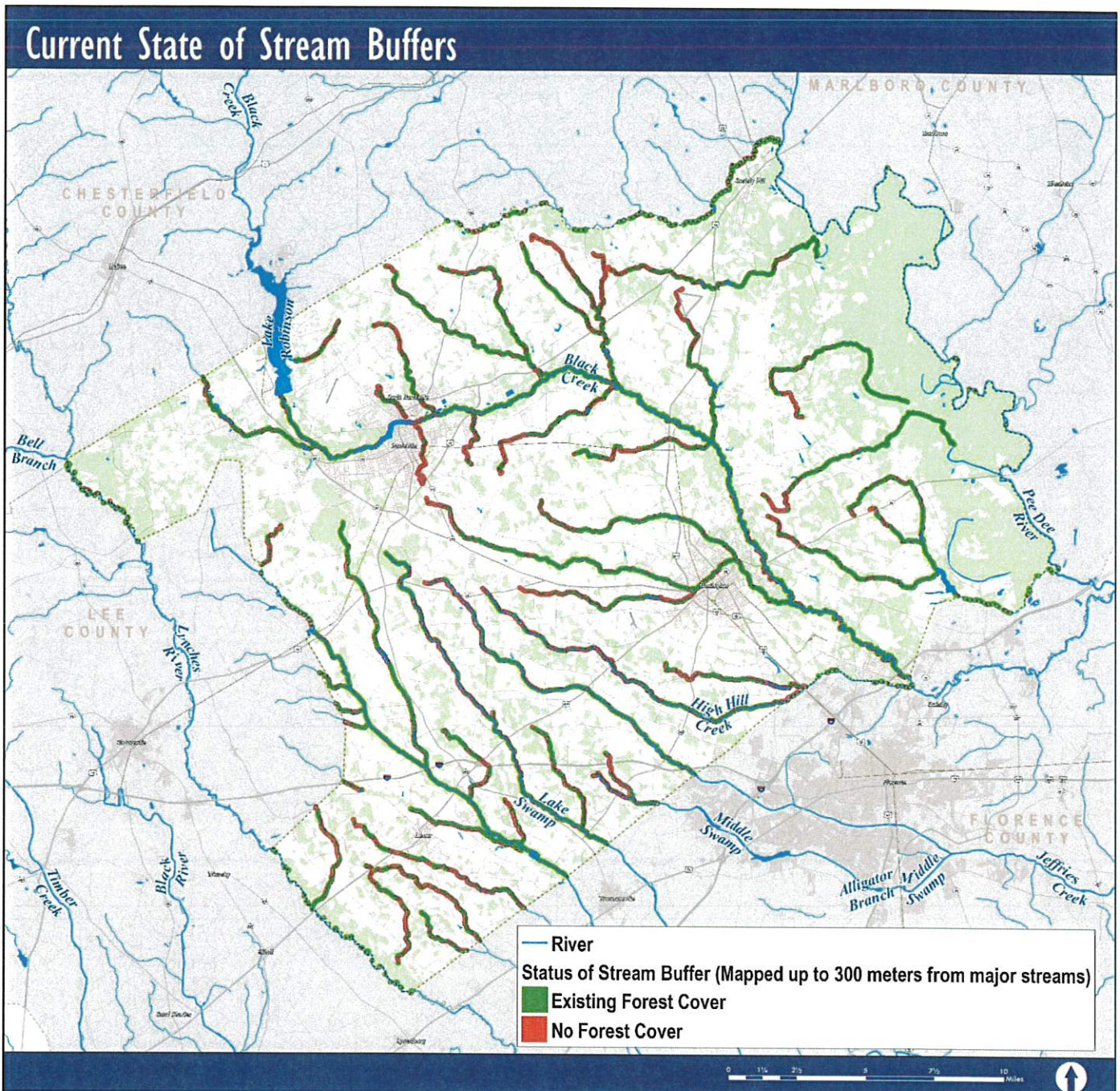


Figure 11 Map showing where vegetated stream buffers do and don't exist. Replanting or enhancing a stream's vegetated buffer is one of the most effective ways of increasing water quality.

## Recreation and Culture

### Historic and Cultural Assets

Darlington County has a rich culture stemming from its long history of human habitation. People have made their mark on the landscape for many hundreds of years. Over time, populations have come and gone. Land which was once a town or plantation has reverted to fields and forests. At 567 square miles with 68,681 people (2010 census) Darlington is a largely rural, but growing county.

The county is rich in natural and cultural assets. The County has extensive, high quality agricultural soils as well as rich forests and wetlands that support abundant fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation. The Great Pee Dee River borders the north and eastern edge of the county, while the Lynches River borders the southern side. Black Creek, Jeffries Creek, and Sparrow Swamp are also key watersheds that supported the area's settlement. The area is rich with history from its earliest inhabitants, the Native



## Historical and Cultural Assets

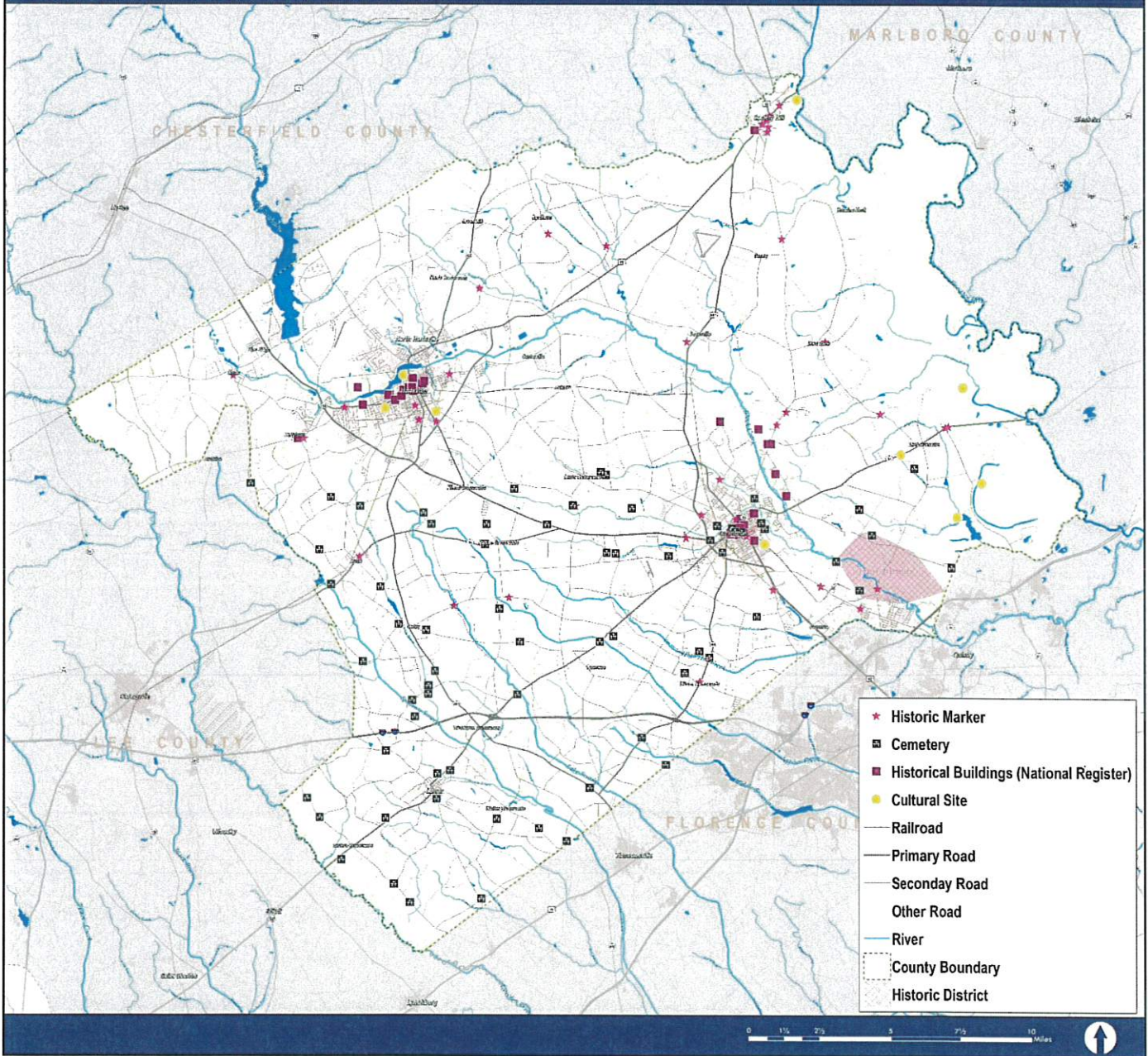


Figure 12 There are a variety of historic and cultural assets in Darlington County, Hartsville, and Darlington. This map shows several categories of known assets. For example, there are 17 buildings on the National Historic Register in Hartsville, 10 in Darlington, 1 in Society Hill, and 8 in the county. However, there are many more historic buildings than are shown on the map, but they are not on the National Register.

Americans to later colonists. Native Americans from Cheraw and some Catawba tribes are thought to have lived in the area, with the earliest tribes residing there since the 11th century or even earlier. Their "Pee Dee" culture is catalogued as belonging to a class referred to as the "South Appalachian Mississippian Culture" tribes (National Park Service).

The first known established colonial settlement was likely Murfee, whose plantation was located somewhere near an area now known as Pocket landing along the Pee Dee River. Colonial land grants in 1736 and again in 1737 extending along both sides of the Pee Dee River, were allotted for Welsh Baptists from Delaware to create a colony there. Welshmen from Pennsylvania and Delaware



soon followed. Eventually English, Scots-Irish, French Huguenot and German Palatine settled there as well.

The first village in the area was located along a bluff on the west side of the Pee Dee River, across from the original settlements and church in Welsh Neck. By 1760, it was a key trading post known as Long Bluff and was later chosen as the Court House for the Cheraws District, created in 1768. It is most famous for its early declaration of grievances against the British Crown in 1774.

The county's rich history and culture are a major draw for a unique type of tourist; the heritage tourist. They enjoy nature and history. Heritage tourists, spend on average, about 2.5 times more than all other tourists. The key is to not only attract them to the county, but to give them multiple activities and options to extend their stays. However, heritage tourists are also more sensitive to their landscapes and less likely to want to travel through unattractive areas. With heritage tourists, impressions count so improving entryways encourages them to visit.





## Access to Recreation Sites

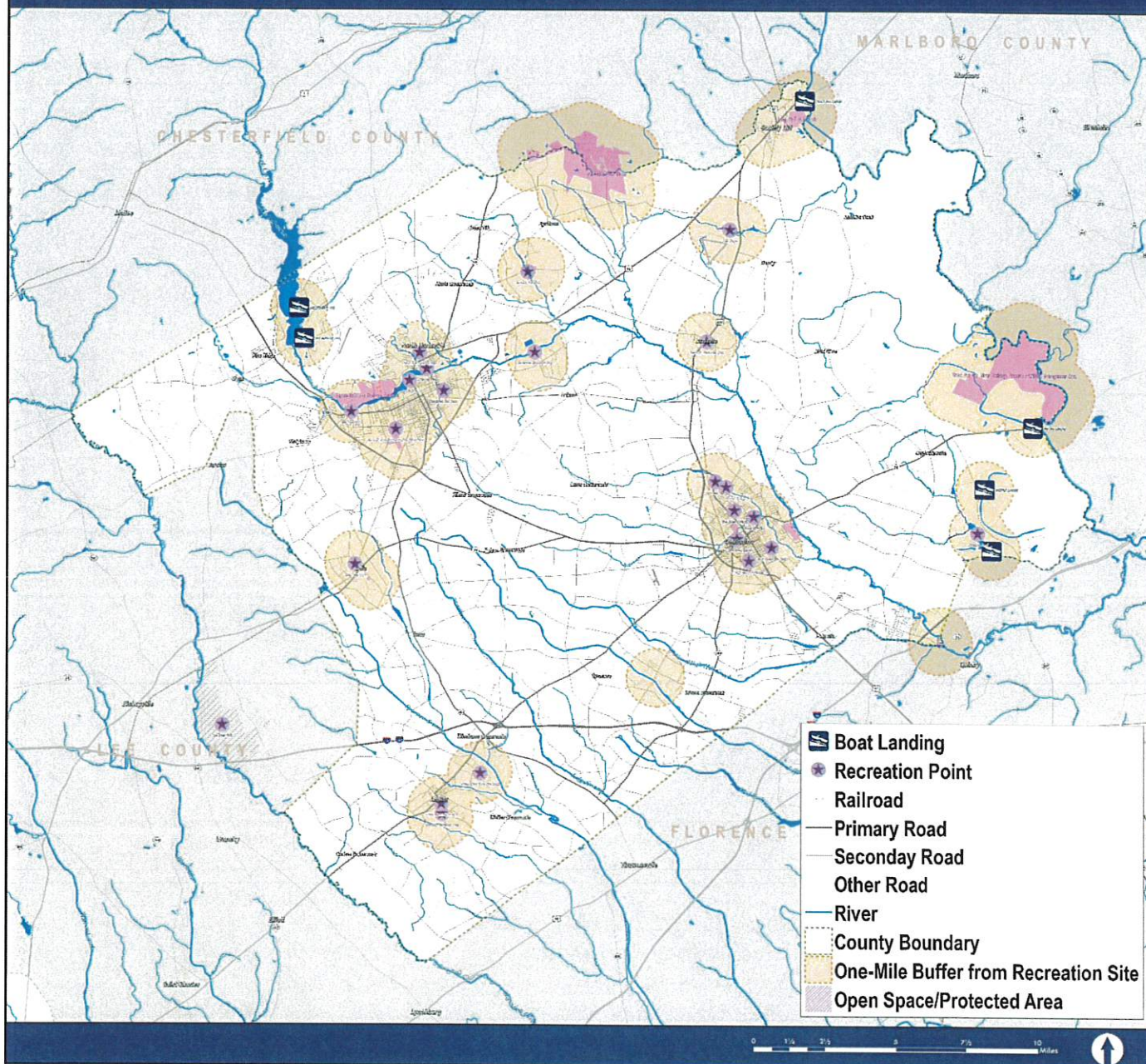


Figure 13 Map showing the location of outdoor/nature based recreation sites. One mile buffers from these features are shown to visualize accessibility to them.

### Recreation Assets

Today, Darlington County supports a wide variety of outdoor recreation, from fishing, boating, and hunting, to simply strolling through the grounds at Kalmia Gardens. The green infrastructure of the county supports the trails, both by buffering them from urban settings as well as providing some of the truly special nature experiences that abound. It is important to ensure that residents have access to trails where they live. As populations age in place, people look for walks they can take within their

neighborhoods, as well as do young families who need access to parks and trails that don't require a car trip to reach them. Not everyone in the county has equal access to parks.



## Implementation

The county now has all of the data created for this project to use for daily and long range planning. For example, the county can use the data to inform planning decisions as well as updates to the comprehensive plan. When meeting with prospective land developers, the county can show where greenspace is desired or key connections that could be kept open across multiple parcels to allow for future trails or simply bird pathways. The county's stormwater management staff can use the maps to prioritize where more infiltration is needed or to form the basis for grant proposals and funding applications. Citizens can use the maps to target tree planting or backyard habitats in their neighborhoods or to suggest where more trees may be needed to shelter a key community walkway or safe route

to school. Land trusts can use the information to identify key parcels to protect in order to connect a green corridor or buffer an adjacent land use.

By protecting natural habitats, reconnecting them and adding more areas over time, the county can create a healthier environment for both nature and people. The goals following this section show how the network of green spaces can be connected, restored or expanded.

The best application for natural asset maps in this plan is daily use. For example:

- ✓ Consult the maps when considering where new businesses could locate or how to create a historic driving tour. Integrate the maps into Darlington

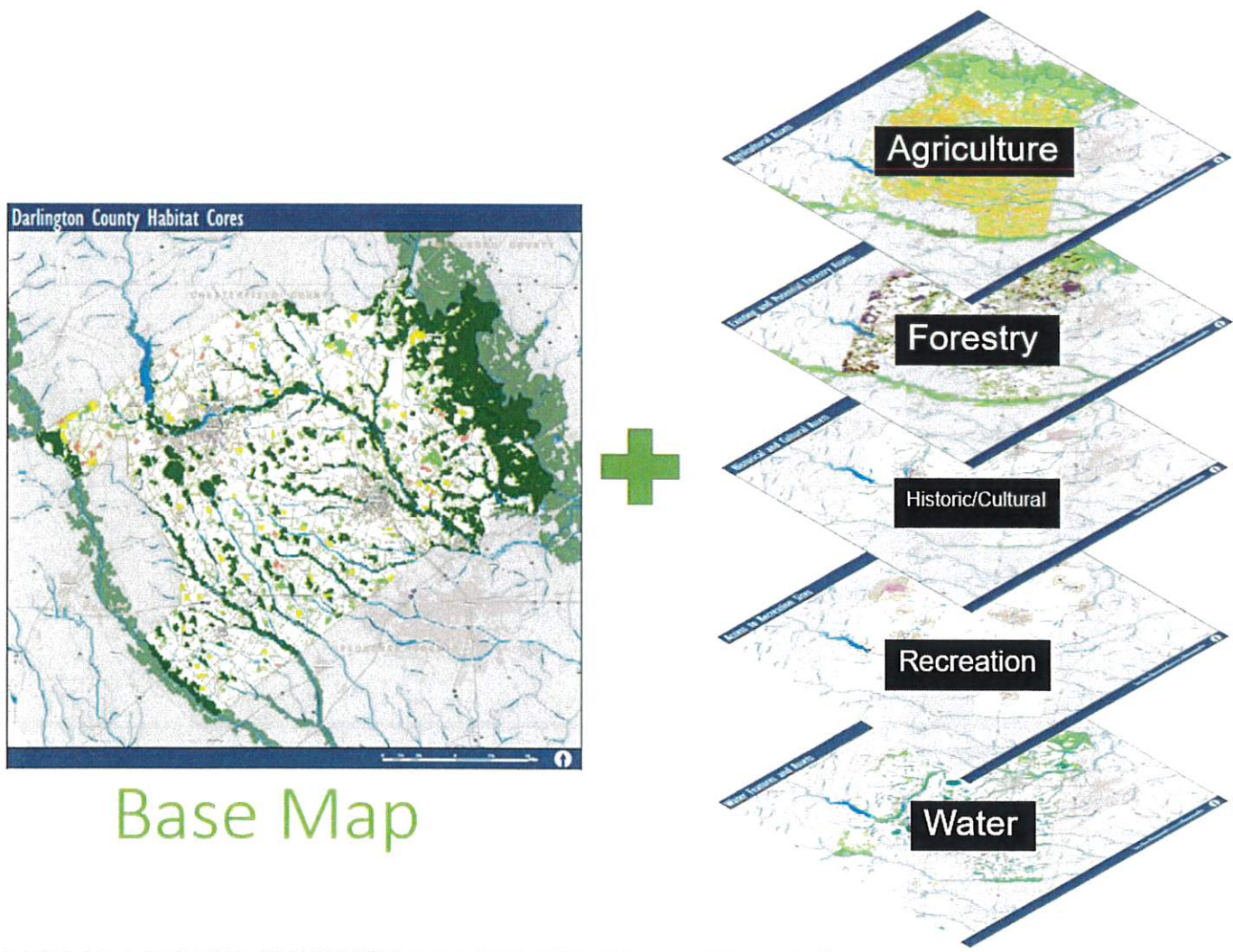


Figure 14 The maps and data produced during this project are now held together in a single geographic information system (GIS) database, making it easier for the county to use this information in day-to-day and long range planning. Information related to the county's best agricultural or recreation assets, for example, can easily be mapped in relation to the county's habitat network.

County decisions about the comprehensive plan or future land use.

- ✓ Engage the historic society and other local cultural groups to use the cultural maps to protect scenic vistas and maintain the historic character of supporting landscape.
- ✓ Work with state and local parks departments to find opportunities to protect the highest-valued landscapes as public parks or reserves.
- ✓ Seek out opportunities to connect and restore the tree canopy and other natural land cover across cities and towns.
- ✓ Work with Clemson extension agents and local and regional foresters to educate owners of significant landscapes about options for improved land stewardship and sources of public and private grants to fund long-term conservation.
- ✓ Engage universities and schools in landscape studies and restoration projects to facilitate hands-on learning about resource protection.
- ✓ Use the maps as benchmarks to evaluate progress in long-term land conservation and stewardship.

## Strategies

Committee members developed the following strategies to realize their vision for protecting, restoring and expanding the green infrastructure of Darlington County. There are four categories of goals followed by objectives and actions to achieve them. Some of the strategies require funding to carry out, while others require a change in practice or policy or cross-department coordination. Over time, more strategies will be added and some may be altered as circumstances change. This plan should be treated as a living document and updated as needed to reflect new ideas, priorities or opportunities. It can be used as the basis for grant proposals or to justify expenditures by the County. It is an ambitious and significant agenda to help create a county which is clean, green, healthful and thriving.

This plan reflects a new way of doing business and builds upon other recent county plans and policies.

Following are the goals and associated strategies to achieve them. Below is a list of goals, the rationale for the goal and objectives followed by more detailed strategies for each. Objectives are listed in the order in which they should be achieved since some are co-dependent. For example, some of the tree planting and care goals require an arborist to be on staff to implement and carry them out over time.

## Goal 1: Conserve the connected forested landscape and healthy soils for watershed health, clean air, scenic beauty, wildlife habitat and to support sustained timber and food production.

### Objective 1A: Educate landowners about the multiple benefits provided by healthy and connected forests.

#### Actions:

- 1). Identify or help form landowner groups and associations for cooperative forest management education and action. Share maps and resources from the project.
- 2). Share maps and resources from the project with all relevant county departments and county partners. Make map(s) and plan(s) available on the Darlington County website after adoption by County Council (make sure to keep PDLT's information confidential).
- 3). Develop a brochure to hand out in the Development Services (Planning) Department office to residents, businesses, developers, and prospective landowners.

### Objective 1B: Restore forests adjacent to surface waters to protect water quality and support wildlife.

#### Actions:

- 1) Develop criteria for healthy stream buffers in the County and educate landowners about their importance.
- 2) Utilize the maps showing lacking stream buffers to identify priority restoration areas.
- 3) Identify nonprofit groups to assist with funding and planting needs.
- 4) Determine the mechanism by which the County will encourage stream buffer protection or restoration (volunteer program, ordinance, etc.)
- 5) Identify landowners and develop a plan to approach/reach them.



**Objective 1C: Educate youth about the important values provided by forests through educational plantings at schools.**

Actions:

- 1) Work with schools to apply for grants for plantings and curricula development.
- 2) Work with existing conservation clubs at schools such as Future Farmers of America (FFA), 4-H, and Florence Darlington Technical College.
- 3) Link this objective to the efforts spear-headed by the Darlington Schools to plant the American Chestnut Tree across Darlington County.

**Objective 1D: Work with partners to target easements to properties that meet strategic goals for connecting and protecting the forest landscape and wildlife habitat.**

Actions:

- 1) Develop criteria to select which parcels to prioritize.
- 2) Identify the parcels.
- 3) Modify the plan to approach landowners outlined in Objective 1B, Actions 4 and 5. for use with this objective.

\* Note: Meets current comp plan “Goal: 6. Provide protection for those endangered species identified within our jurisdiction.”

**Goal 2: Maintain and improve the water quality of county lakes, streams and wetlands to protect aquatic life and recreational uses.**

**Objective 2A: Obtain more consistent water quality data on the health of surface waters.**

Actions:

- 1) Identify and map additional areas where water data are needed.
- 2) Consider implementing a volunteer monitoring program.

**Objective 2B: Review the county stormwater manual and standards to evaluate their effectiveness in treating runoff volume and quality.**

Actions:

- 1) Work with Consultant to integrate into the Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP)

**Objective 2C: Support additional outreach activities about stormwater runoff and abatement**

Actions:

- 1) Link to existing efforts with the Clemson University Extension Service
- 2) Include this as a key component in the SWMP.

*Note: this build on Objectives 2b and 2d from the County's Comprehensive Plan*

**Goal 3: Nature Based Recreation and Health: Promote access to nature to ensure healthful landscapes and healthy communities.**

**Objective 3A: Create a water trail for Black Creek.**

Actions:

- 1) Identify access points and establish easements.
- 2) Create a plan for maintaining non-motorized boat passage.
- 3) Work in concert with the City of Darlington to coordinate efforts on a trail from Smith Ave transfer station in the County to Williamson Park in the City.

**Objective 3B: Create a rail trail from Hartsville to the Pine Ridge Area.**

*\*Note the Hartsville Kalmia Gardens existing trail.*

**Objective 3C: Increase opportunities for water access countywide.**

Actions:

Identify areas where access is lacking and could be added.

**Objective 3D: Promote birding opportunities in the county by identifying sites and access points.**

Actions:

- 1) Identify birding groups in the vicinity and request their input. (e.g. the Sandhills Wildlife Refuge [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Carolina\\_Sandhills/](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Carolina_Sandhills/) . They have a birding Boot Camp in May 2017)
- 2) Map the best birding sites in the County. Publish the map on the web and promote in birding magazines.
- 3) Assess what types of birding infrastructure are most needed (such as birding blinds, parking areas, wayfinding signage).

**Goal 4: Historic and Cultural Resources:  
Promote appreciation and interpretation of the county's cultural, historic and scenic resources and their landscapes settings.**

**Objective 4A: Map significant historic cultural sites in the county.**

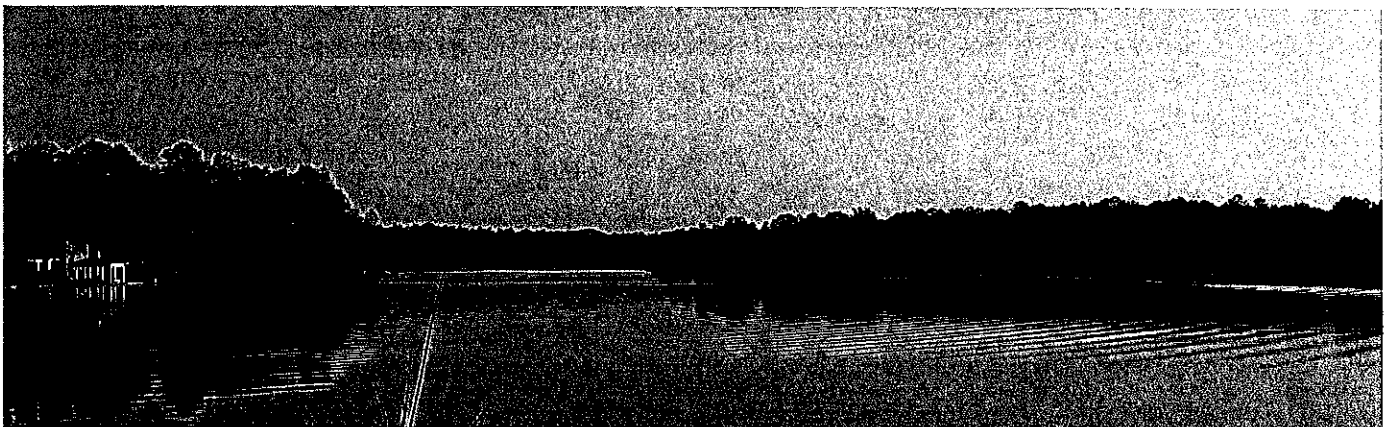
Actions:

- 1) Categorize the known resources by interest type (e.g. civil war, revolutionary war, agricultural history, etc.).
- 2) Determine how to disseminate the information to tourists (e.g. create a driving route, mobile apps, brochures)
- 3) Enlist the support and input from the Historical Commission, museums and Coker Farms center.

**Objective 4B: Map known and potential cemeteries to develop a data list and avoid unintentional disturbance.**

Actions:

- 1) Develop a protocol for notifying county staff/Historical Commission of cemeteries as they are discovered, and adding the location to the County's GIS database.



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Wolf, Kathleen L. City Trees, Nature and Physical Activity, Arborist News, Vol. 17, No. 1, February 2008

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## Appendix A: List of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species in Darlington County

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Communities Known to Occur in Darlington County, South Carolina March 13, 2012					
Scientific Name	Common Name	USESA Designation	State Protection	Global Rank	State Rank
<b>Vertebrate Animals</b>					
<i>Corynorhinus rafinesquii</i>	Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat		SE: Endangered	G3G4	S2?
<i>Kinosternon baurii</i>	Striped Mud Turtle			G5	SNR
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	LE: Endangered	SE: Endangered	G3	S2
<i>Rana palustris</i>	Pickerel Frog			G5	SNR
<b>Vascular Plants</b>					
<i>Amorpha georgiana</i> var. <i>georgiana</i>	Georgia Leadplant			G3T2	S1
<i>Arabis missouriensis</i>	Missouri Rock-cress			G5	S1
<i>Aristolochia tomentosa</i>	Woolly Dutchman's-pipe			G5	S1
<i>Astragalus michauxii</i>	Sandhills Milkvetch			G3	S3
<i>Balduina atropurpurea</i>	Purple Balduina			G2	S1
<i>Calopogon barbatus</i>	Bearded Grass-pink			G4?	S2
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i> ssp. <i>canadensis</i>	Enchanter's Nightshade			G5T5	S3
<i>Cladium mariscoides</i>	Twig Rush			G5	S1
<i>Draba reptans</i>	Carolina Whitlow-grass			G5	S1
<i>Dryopteris carthusiana</i>	Spinulose Shield Fern			G5	S1
<i>Helenium pinnatifidum</i>	Southeastern Sneezeweed			G4	S2
<i>Ilex amelanchier</i>	Sarvis Holly			G4	S3
<i>Kalmia cuneata</i>	White-wicky			G3	S2
<i>Lepuropetalon spathulatum</i>	Southern Lepuropetalon			G4G5	S2
<i>Lygodium palmatum</i>	Climbing Fern			G4	S3
<i>Lysimachia asperulifolia</i>	Rough-leaved Loosestrife	LE: Endangered		G3	S1
<i>Macbridea caroliniana</i>	Carolina Bird-in-a-nest			G2G3	S3
<i>Menispermum canadense</i>	Canada Moonseed			G5	S2S3
<i>Ophioglossum vulgatum</i>	Adder's-tongue			G5	S2
<i>Pleea tenuifolia</i>	Rush False-asphodel			G4	SX
<i>Psilotum nudum</i>	Whisk Fern			G5	S1
<i>Pyxidanthra barbulata</i>	Well's Pyxie Moss			G4	S2
<i>Rhexia aristosa</i>	Awed Meadowbeauty			G3	S3
<i>Ruellia caroliniensis</i> ssp. <i>ciliata</i>	Sandhills Wild Petunia			G5T3T5	S1
<i>Sarracenia rubra</i>	Sweet Pitcher-plant			G4	S3S4
<i>Scirpus subterminalis</i>	Water Bulrush			G4G5	SNR
<i>Scutellaria parvula</i>	Small Skullcap			G4	S2S3

Page 1 of 2

This chart uses the NatureServe conservation status ranking system.

For more information on Global ranks, visit <http://explorer.natureserve.org/granks.htm>

For more information on State ranks, visit <http://dnr.sc.gov/species/staterank.html>

Scientific Name	Common Name	USESA Designation	State Protection	Global Rank	State Rank
<i>Solidago bicolor</i>	White Goldenrod			G5	S2
<i>Solidago verna</i>	Spring-flowering Goldenrod			G3	S2
<i>Tofieldia glabra</i>	White False-asphodel			G4	S1S2
<b>Communities</b>					
Atlantic white cedar swamp				G2	S2
Bald cypress - tupelo gum swamp				G5	S4
Bottomland hardwoods				G5	S4
Hillside herb bog				G1	S1
Mesic mixed hardwood forest				G5	S4
Pine - scrub oak sandhill				G4	S4
Pond pine woodland				G4G5	S3
Streamhead pocosin				G4	S4
Xeric sandhill scrub				G5	S3

## Appendix B: Resources

### Funding resources:

#### **Paddling Grants for Water Trail and Facilities** (apply in March):

Outdoor foundation

419 7th Street NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20004

<http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/>

#### **Grants for Low Impact Development, Habitat Restoration and More**

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/pages/home.aspx>

#### **Urban Waters Small Grants from U.S. EPA** (usually release RFP in the fall)

<https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants>

#### **Backyard and School Butterfly Gardens** (apply by Oct. 15)

The WildOnes

Cash grants of \$500 for plants and seeds, and prefer students and teachers apply.

<http://www.wildones.org/seeds-for-education/sfe/>

#### **Alliance for Community Trees** (tree planting grants)

<http://actrees.org/what-we-do/grants-and-awards/planting-trees/>

#### **Transportation Enhancement Grants** (multi-modal, trails, depends on Congressional allocation)

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/transportation\\_enhancements/guidance/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/transportation_enhancements/guidance/)

#### **Rails to Trails Conservancy:** funding links

<http://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/acquisition/financing-and-funding/>

In addition, visit the **Foundation Center** <<http://foundationcenter.org/>> to learn of private foundation sources such as the Walton Family Foundation: <http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/our-impact/environment>

### Birding resources

#### **Wings Across the Americas**

Program to Recognize Flyway Conservation by the USDA Forest Service

<http://www.fs.fed.us/global/wings/awards.htm>

#### **Forests**

South Carolina Forestry Commission

BMP Forester: Eric West: (843)382-6955

Stewardship Forester: James Brunson: (843)662-5571

Urban Forester: Lois Edwards: (864) 910-0139

Lynches River Unit -Chesterfield Zone

16222 Highway 1

Patrick, SC 29584

843-498-6918



Unit Forester: Kenny Robertson  
Pee Dee Region  
113 Forestry Commission Dr.  
Florence, SC 29501  
843)662-5571

Urban Forestry South  
Research and best practices for tree care and management  
<http://www.urbanforestrysouth.org/>

### **Water trails**

American Rivers Blue Trails Guide: <http://www.bluetrailsguide.org>  
River Network River Voices on Water Trails <https://rivernetwork.org/files/rv/rv2006v16n2.pdf>  
Guidelines for Paddling Trail Development <http://myfwc.com/boating/waterway/paddling-trails/>  
Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network: Water Trail Toolbox <http://www.baygateways.net/watertrailtools.cfm>

## Appendix C: Public Comments on Strategies

### Comments on Strategies

- Under Goal 1, Obj B: Create incentives for landowners to agree to conservation easements (esp. along water)
- Under Goal 4, Obj A: Include Native American cultural sites on map [STAFF COMMENT: This is a good comment, but there are no mapped Native American cultural sites in the county as far as we know. This would require researching if and where they exist in the county]
- Under Goal 4, Obj A: Produce sightseeing pamphlets and disseminate
- Under Goal 4, Obj A: Create a tourism app [STAFF COMMENT: this idea would need to be fleshed out, including the type of app, and funding source. The county should decide if this should be a priority.]
- Under Goal 2, Obj C: Water education within schools and communities [STAFF COMMENT: this is a potential implementation strategy for this objective i.e. specifically targeting schools for education efforts]
- Under Goal 1, Obj B: Spell out how to establish buffers: such as a volunteer program, an ordinance to create creek buffers, etc. [STAFF COMMENT: There are multiple mechanisms for encouraging/requiring stream buffers – what form this should take in Darlington County should be a county decision point.]
- Under Goal 4, Obj B: Consider a brief ordinance requiring the ‘registration’ of ‘home cemeteries’ (i.e. Buried on their own land). A simple affidavit with a map of burial site can be recorded with the Clerk of Court. [STAFF COMMENT: This is a larger topic that should be a county decision point. May be controversial]
- Under Goal 1: Produce zoom in maps of urban areas to be able to see details and connections to larger networks.
- Goal 2, Obj B: Modify objective to focus on practical and cost efficient BMPs
- Under Goal 4, Obj A: Add historic churches to the historic/cultural map.

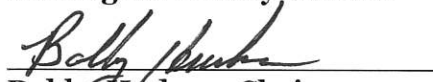
### Other Comments

- There are some expired plans and ag inclusions in stewardship plans
- Map vacant commercial properties
- Maintain landowners rights to access/use
- “Clean up” Maize historic areas look nice

ATTEST:

  
J. JaNet Bishop  
Clerk to Council

Darlington County Council

  
Bobby Hudson, Chairman

### Ordinance No. 20-01

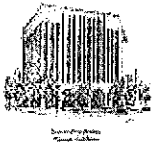
First Reading: January 7, 2020

Second Reading: February 3, 2020

Public Hearing: March 2, 2020

Third Reading: August 10, 2020

# Darlington County Recording Page



Darlington Clerk of Court / ROD

Scott B. Suggs

Darlington County Courthouse

1 Public Square - Room B-4

Darlington, SC 29532

(843) 398-4330

OrdinanceNo : **2020-13**



Doc ID - 003510220114

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At (Recorded Time) : **11:57:03 AM**

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Recording Fee : **\$0.00**

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Type of Transaction: **Ordinance**

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