

*One Future.
One Greer.*

2010 Comprehensive Plan



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Purpose and Requirements of the Comprehensive Plan	2
Process	4
Participants	8
Section 1: Population	9
Regional Context	9
Population Trends	10
Population Demographics	13
Race	13
Age	13
Households	15
Education	16
Income	17
Forecast	18
Goals	20
Section 2: Economic Development	21
Historical Context	21
Workforce Trends	22
Economic Development Strategies since 1999	24
An Educated Population and Workforce	25
Development of a Local Public Transportation Network	26
Promotion and Development of the Downtown Area	27
Compete in the Global Economy	28
Meet Infrastructure Needs	31
Community Involvement and Information Sharing	31
Goals	32
Section 3: Housing	35
Housing Characteristics	35
Growth	36
Starts	37



**2010 Comprehensive Plan
Table of Contents**

Types	37
Age and Condition	38
Occupancy and Tenure	39
Costs and Value	40
Housing Affordability	41
Housing Strategies	42
Neighborhood Revitalization and Affordable Housing	42
Community Design and Neo-traditional Planning	43
Historically Significant Neighborhoods	45
Home Ownership Responsibilities	46
Goals	47
Section 4: Community Facilities	49
Introduction	49
Primary Education	50
Secondary Education	54
Library System	54
Government Services	55
Fire Protection and Emergency Medical	56
Law Enforcement	59
Municipal Court	60
Parks and Recreation	61
Public Services	65
Human Services	66
Health Services	67
Assisted Living/Skill Nursing Facilities	67
Utilities	68
Sewage and Wastewater Treatment	69
Water Supply Treatment and Distribution	70
Natural Gas	70
Electricity	71
Future Utility Plans/Projects	71
Goals	72

Section 5: Cultural Resources	73
Historical Context	73
Unique Residential Areas	75
Unique Commercial Areas	75
Urban Design	76
Cultural Tourism	77
Religious Sites and Institutions	78
Archaeological Sites	79
Conclusion	80
Goals	80
Section 6: Natural Resources	83
Climate	83
Air Quality	85
Slope Characteristics	86
Soils	88
Hydrology, Water Quantity and Quality	88
Flood Plain and Flood Way Areas	91
Animal and Plant Habitats	92
Environmentally Concerned Sites	93
Conservation Measures	94
Conclusion	94
Goals	93
Section 7: Transportation	97
Introduction	97
Past Planning Studies	98
Highway and Transportation Plans	101
Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS)	103
Greenways, Bicycle Paths, and Sidewalks	105
Rail Transportation	108
Public Transportation	109
Air Transportation	111
Goals	114



City of Greer, SC

2010 Comprehensive Plan

Table of Contents

Section 8: Land Use	115
Introduction	115
Methodology	116
Existing Land Use Inventory	116
Future Land Use Needs	117
Future Land Use Issues and Allocation	118
Visioning Exercise	119
Land Use Goals	120
Future Land Use Map	120
Communities	121
Centers	122
Corridors	123
Conclusion	124
Section 9: Priority Investment	125
Introduction	125
Cooperative Planning Strategies	127
Identification of Funding Sources	127
Conclusion	128

2010 Comprehensive Plan

City of Greer, SC

Introduction

In the year 2010 the City of Greer, an all American city, is recognized and included in the top 200 places to live in the United States. The reason for this recognition is the commitment made by the community to provide both an outstanding quality of life and business environment. This commitment to excellence began with the recognition of the importance of education. Through the efforts and support of all facets of the community, Greer has become a model for success in lifelong learning.

The Greer community offers its 25,000 residents a wide variety of housing, both in price and type. Whether it is in one of the central city's older neighborhoods, its suburban subdivisions (both stick built and manufactured housing), senior citizen complexes, or mixed use villages, citizens are offered a variety of housing and living opportunities.

Overcoming its large geographic area, the city, through its greenway system and its emphasis on the Center City, has successfully created a community-wide sense of belonging. The greenway system, still under construction, will link various residential neighborhoods with each other and with various recreational and cultural amenities across the community. Greer's Center City, the hub of the greenway system, has become a community gathering place where residents can come and dine, shop, be entertained, or just enjoy its small town charm.

The new Municipal Complex and the Amphitheater/Cultural Arts Center are just two of the reasons the downtown area has become a socially and economically vibrant attraction. New families have been attracted to Greer because of excellent employment opportunities in all types of businesses, whether it is in one of the state-of-the-art industrial or office parks. These families want to be a part of a city which provides excellent municipal services and a wide variety of shopping opportunities. The pleasant appearance of the city and the sense of pride and caring displayed by its citizens for one another reflect Greer's unique heritage and moral values.

Greer's development pattern reflects its commitment to planned and managed growth. Growth has been encouraged in those parts of the community with adequate road, utility, and school capacity. Mixed use villages have successfully provided their residents with the essential living requirements - housing, employment, recreation, education, and commerce on a smaller livable scale which is more pedestrian friendly and significantly reduces automobile traffic.

Another successful means of reducing traffic has been the utilization of a local commuter transit system within the community which also serves nearby Greenville and Spartanburg. This system will also be supplemented in the future with a regional light rail transit system connecting Atlanta and Charlotte.

This introduction to the City of Greer's 1999 Comprehensive Plan presented a vision for the future of this community. Ten years later, it is rewarding to see much of that vision has come to pass — tempered by the realization there is much left to do. Not so much in tasks left incomplete or in promises left unfulfilled, but in the fact that, while many great things have happened in 10 years, each success creates the need, and desire, to address new or evolving challenges. The vision put forth in 1999 is typical in that it describes the type of community in

which most people want to live, work, play, and visit. That same vision is alive and well — demonstrated by the continued desire for people in this community to share their thoughts and ideas while developing this new plan.

By engaging the community in conversation about what they believe has been done right and where they see need for improvement as the city moves forward, it quickly became apparent the overriding desire was to make this community better than any other. While required by state law, this plan is rooted not solely on legal requirements but in a guiding principle, embraced and advocated by this community for smart and responsible planning to manage the tremendous growth and rapid development the city and surrounding area continue to experience.

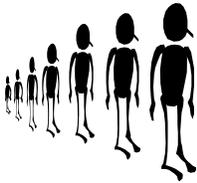
Purpose and Requirements of the Comprehensive Plan



South Carolina’s Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 requires local governments that regulate land use to do so under a written comprehensive plan. The plan must be reviewed and updated every five years with a new plan written every 10 years to address growth and development that has an impact on existing and future planning needs. The City of Greer adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1999 and reviewed it in 2004. This new plan will address the city’s growth and development planning needs through 2020.

The comprehensive plan is developed through the combined efforts of residents, business leaders, and public officials to reflect all aspects of the community. It serves as a guide for decision makers in managing the city’s future growth and development. Local governments use such planning tools as the zoning ordinance, land use and zoning maps, subdivision regulations, etc. to support the goals of the comprehensive plan. It evaluates core planning elements based on a review and inventory of existing conditions, allows adherence to a vision established through community input, and provides the framework for developing implementation strategies necessary to attain the vision.

The key elements of the plan are:



Population. This element includes information related to historic trends and projections; the number, size and characteristics of households; educational levels and trends; income characteristics and trends; race; sex; age and other information relevant to a clear understanding of how the population affects the existing situation and potential of the area.



Economic Development. This element includes historic trends and projections on the numbers and characteristics of the labor force, where the people who live in the community work, where people who work in the community reside, available employment characteristics and trends, an economic base analysis, and any other matters affecting the local economy. Tourism, manufacturing and revitalization efforts may be appropriate factors to consider.



Housing. This element includes an analysis of existing housing by location, type, age, condition, owner and renter occupancy, affordability, and projections of housing needs to accommodate existing and future population as identified in the population and economic elements. It should include a review of housing regulatory requirements that add to the cost of developing affordable housing but are not necessary to protect the public health, safety or welfare. Possible incentives such as density bonuses, design flexibility, and streamlined permitting processes should be reviewed to encourage development of affordable housing.



Community Facilities. This element includes activities essential to the growth, development or redevelopment of the community. Special purpose district boards and other governmental and quasi-governmental entities such as the library board, historic preservation society, and public utilities board should be involved in plan development. It should include plans to address water treatment and distribution, wastewater management, solid waste management, public safety services, government facilities, educational facilities, etc.



Cultural Resources. This element includes historic buildings and structures, unique commercial or residential areas, unique natural or scenic resources, archeological sites, educational, religious or entertainment areas or institutions, and any other feature or facility relating to the cultural aspects of the community.



Natural Resources. This element includes information on coastal resources, slope characteristics, prime agricultural and forest land, plant and animal habitats, unique park and recreation areas, unique scenic views and sites, wetlands and soil types, flood plain and flood way areas, mineral deposits, air quality, and any other matter related to the natural environment of the area.



Transportation. This element considers transportation facilities including major road improvements, new road construction, transit projects, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and other elements of a transportation network. This element must be developed in coordination with the land use element to ensure transportation efficiency for existing and planned development.



Land Use. This element deals with land development characteristics. It considers existing and future land use by categories including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, forestry, mining, public and quasi-public, recreation, parks, open space and vacant or undeveloped land. The findings, projections and conclusions from the other elements influence the amount of land needed for various uses.



Priority Investment. This element reviews the likely federal, state, and local funds available during the next decade to address needed public infrastructure and facility projects such as water, sewer, roads, schools, etc. It is done in coordination with the counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over the projects.

Process



The process used to develop this new comprehensive plan was much the same as 10 years before. Representatives from the community volunteered to dedicate several hours of their time over a six-month period to conduct a thorough review of each element. Each volunteer provided his or her views on how the community was faring and offered recommendations on goals and objectives for the future. Then, based on the collected feedback, a framework for the new comprehensive plan was developed. The final result would be a comprehensive plan that reflects a broad-based consensus of issues and

concerns that need to be addressed in the future — those that will result in a better quality of life for all.

Work on this new plan began in the fall of 2007 with pre-planning and the city staff creating a general timeline. As a first step, in November 2007, city staff held a Priority Investment in Our Community meeting. This meeting was held to address the requirements of the Priority Investment Act which amended the 1994 Comprehensive Planning Act to require, among other things, the cooperation with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions while making determinations of needed public infrastructure and facilities (such as water, sewer, roads, schools, etc.) and the sources of funding available for them over the next 10 years. Local fire districts, school districts, municipalities, counties, public and private utilities, state agencies such as SCDOT and SCDHEC, and others that provide services to the Greater Greer Community as a whole were invited to begin that dialogue necessary for responsible management of growth and development.



Local fire districts, school districts, municipalities, counties, public and private utilities, state agencies such as SCDOT and SCDHEC, and others that provide services to the Greater Greer Community as a whole were invited to begin that dialogue necessary for responsible management of growth and development.

In January 2008, during the annual Council Planning Retreat, city staff conducted a joint workshop with the city council and planning commission to review the legal requirements and purpose for the comprehensive plan, establish the goals and objectives of the plan development process and attain feedback for the branding of the plan development. In February 2008, the 15-member steering committee was selected and immediately began formulating strategies to solicit participation from the community on the 25-member citizen committee and to finalize the branding of the plan development. By March 2008, the plan development was branded “One Future. One Greer.” and the solicitation strategy for public participation consisted of multiple newspaper articles and editorials, advertising on the city website and cable channel, distributing flyers, and making presentations to community groups and organizations.



In May 2008, a Community Kickoff Meeting was held. During this meeting the branding was publicly unveiled, the process was explained, roles and responsibilities of those involved were defined, a hands on Design Preference Survey workshop was conducted, a “City-At-A-Glance” presentation was made to review current city successes, progress, and issues, and applications were made available for the public to register to participate on the Citizen Committee.

By August 2008, the citizen committee was formed and, in a joint session with the steering committee, received a State of the City Report from staff that provided the historical growth and development progress to date in relation to each of the comprehensive plan elements. During this session, participants were asked to provide a “health checkup” by ranking eight areas of the city on a 1 (unhealthy) to 4 (healthy) scale. The results of this survey are displayed below with a percentage of responses for each area. In most aspects the city did quite well with only Transportation receiving a negative “checkup.”

“City Health” Survey Results

Elements	Rankings			
	1	2	3	4
Population	0%	4%	52%	44%
Community Facilities/Cultural Resources	0%	16%	52%	32%
Housing	0%	29%	52%	16%
Economy	0%	16%	64%	20%
Natural Resources	0%	33%	56%	8%
Transportation	25%	58%	12%	4%
Land Use	0%	13%	80%	4%
Quality of Life	0%	0%	72%	24%

City of Greer

During the next four months, the committees participated in numerous workshops to review these historical trends in more depth and to identify the issues, challenges, and ideas for moving forward over the next decade. In November 2008, another joint meeting was held to discuss the issues, challenges, and ideas that had been identified to date; to review the goals and objectives of the 1999 plan for accomplishments and tasks left incomplete; to compare and contrast the 1999 goals with the current challenges, issues, ideas, etc. to determine viability, value, interest, necessity, etc. in retaining outstanding goals; and to begin identifying goals and objectives for the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.



In January 2009, both committees joined the city council and the planning commission to participate in a land use exercise that would set the groundwork for the Land Use element. This exercise was a hands-on workshop that allowed the participants to shape a tangible vision of Greer’s future land use needs for generations to come. Poring over existing land use maps, four teams worked to produce their vision of how growth and development should occur over the next 10 years in relation to utilization of commercial, industrial and residential property.



This exercise was intended to reinforce the point of how all other elements of the comprehensive plan contribute to the city's Future Land Use Map. In March 2009, staff participated in the Urban Land Institute's "Upstate Reality Check," an exercise similar to the January workshop but on a regional scale. This exercise was designed to promote collaboration and coordination among regional political, business, environmental, and civic leaders in South Carolina's Upstate region.

Participants were able to gain understanding of the region's shared growth issues and to discover ways to work together to achieve shared goals for housing, economic development, transportation, and green space needs

Over the next nine months, city staff worked to draft the plan. This involved updating the 1999 plan's statistical and demographic data to reflect the current state of the community, working with stakeholders to clarify roles and responsibilities, and developing the new goals and objectives. In December 2009, the steering committee began its review of the final draft. The plan was then brought to the planning commission for consideration (including an opportunity for the community to review the plan) prior to being sent to city council to be adopted.

Throughout the entire process, a primary goal was to ensure community involvement. The result is a comprehensive vision and recommendation for the planning objectives necessary to address future growth and development using responsible management practices. By embedding the community dynamic in the process, pride can be taken in the fact that the shape of the city's future is truly in their hands. Without the time and effort of those involved, this plan could have still been produced. However, it would have lacked the care traditionally taken to ensure that those things which already make Greer a great place to live, work, and play will continue to remain vital to the community over the next 10 years and beyond.



**2010 Comprehensive Plan
Introduction**

Participants

Along with many other members of the community, the following people dedicated their time and efforts to the City of Greer's 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

City Council

Rick Danner
Jay Arrowood
Wayne Griffin
Sandra Anderson
Lee Dumas
Wryley Bettis
Judy Albert

Planning Commission

Don Foster
Judy Jones
Morris Burton
Clay Jones
John Holland
Brian Martin
Larry Clifton

Steering Committee

Rick Danner
Ed Driggers
Jerry Balding
Greg Clark
Larry Clifton
Reno Deaton
Betty Farley
Sam Floyd
Joan Holliday
Randy Kemp
Rudy Painter
Chip Radford
Marvin Robinson
Keith Smith
Scott Turner

Citizen Committee

Ed Armendariz
Eric Barnhart
Larry D.C. Bounds
Paul M. Brown
Jimmie E. Carroll
Matthew Carter
Geraldine Doherty
Thomas G. Faulkner, III
Seth Fogle
J. D. Glenn
Catherine Hallissey
Joada Hiatt
Hank Hulseberg
Tami S. Howell
Martha King LaFoy
Laura MacPherson
Tom McAbee
Caroline T. Robertson
Amanda Somers
Scott Stevens
Jim Stringer
Patrick Sudduth
Dewey Tarwater
Esteban Torres

City Staff

Mike Sell
Glenn Pace
Justin Glenn
Darlene Howard
Steve Owens

Additional Support

Tom Meeks (Greenville Co. Planning Dept.)
Dan McGee (Greenville Co. Planning Dept.)
Norm Wright (Greenville Co. Planning Dept.)
Kevin Robinson (Greenville Co. Planning Dept.)
Mary Walsh (Upstate Forever)