



The *Newberry County Comprehensive Plan 2023* provides a blueprint for the future growth and development of the County in the coming decade. The Comprehensive Plan is long-range in scope and represents a comprehensive update of the previous *2013-2022 Newberry County Comprehensive Plan* that was adopted in 2012. This new Plan serves as a general guide for the future social, economic, and physical development of Newberry County. Intentionally area-wide and non-site specific, the Plan is implemented through more specific tools such as the City of Newberry County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations and other ordinances, codes, policies, and programs.

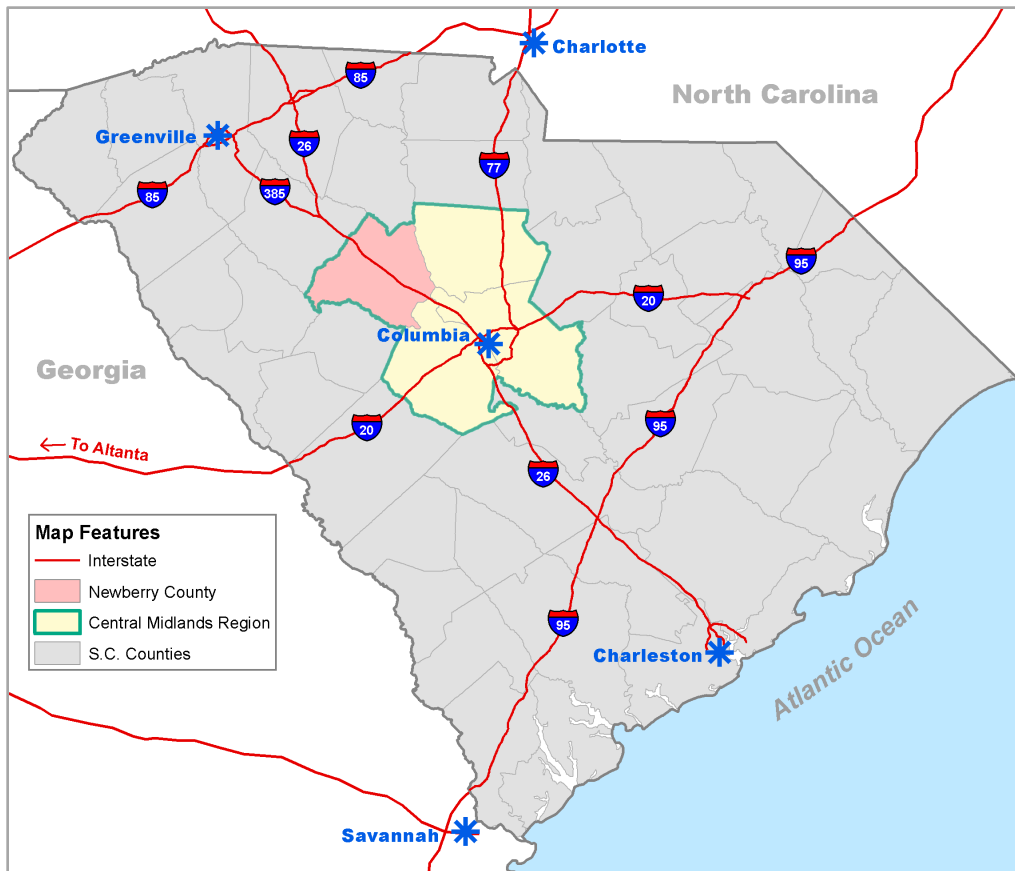
1.1. Location

Newberry County is located in the Midlands region of South Carolina and is bisected east-to-west by the I-26 corridor linking the Columbia and the Greenville-Spartanburg Metro areas (Map 1-1). Proximity to abundant natural resources and major transportation routes established the County as an early center of commerce, government and cultural resources for the surrounding counties.

At more than 647 square miles in total size and 630 square miles of land area, Newberry County ranks 25th among the State's 46 counties in total area. Approximately 90 square miles of the northern area of the County are located within the Sumter National Forest – one of only two national forests in South Carolina. Water comprises 16.5 of the total square miles and forms portions of the County's eastern and southern borders.



Map 1-1. Newberry County Location



There are seven municipalities in Newberry County, including the City of Newberry and the towns of Little Mountain, Peak, Pomaria, Prosperity, Silverstreet, and Whitmire. Nearly one-third of the County's population resides within the City of Newberry.

Amid increasing residential growth near Lake Murray and Lake Greenwood, economic growth near the interstate, and growth spurred by the recent revitalization of downtown Newberry, Newberry County is faced with a myriad of possibilities and challenges in planning for the future. Growing diversity in educational, cultural, recreational, entertainment, and employment opportunities continues to shape a vibrant community for County residents. The County is increasingly attracting the attention of potential residents and residential developers as retirees, couples, and families seek relief from traffic and other issues associated with living in a metropolitan area, but within easy driving distance of the more urbanized areas nearby. With a temperate climate, a more rural and suburban southern lifestyle, and abundant cultural and recreational amenities, Newberry County provides a very attractive alternative.

1.2. Authority

The Newberry County Comprehensive Plan 2033 was developed under the authority of, and in compliance with, the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (Title 6, Chapter 29 of the South Carolina Code of Laws) and subsequent amendments. The planning process was anchored by a lengthy process in which staff,



public and private stakeholders, participating municipalities, the Joint Planning Commission, and County Council created a new plan to guide the County's development into the next decade.

1.3. Plan Requirements and Benefits

Per the provisions of the *1994 Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act* and subsequent revisions, comprehensive plans must be re-evaluated by each jurisdiction's planning commission at least every five years and must be updated at least every ten years. Ten-year comprehensive plan updates must be prepared and recommended by the planning commission and adopted by the governing body. Each element of the Plan must address three components in the planning process:

- An inventory of existing conditions including research and a descriptive summary of existing conditions in the County that are relevant to each planning element.
- A statement of needs and goals derived from the existing conditions research and providing general guidance for policy implementation.
- Development of implementation strategies with timeframes for each element, including objectives and coordinated action strategies to address the identified needs and goals. The strategies are linked to key entities and partnerships identified as essential in implementation responsibility and oversight.

The Comprehensive Plan is an essential guide for future development, providing multiple benefits by defining common goals, prioritizing community needs, and promoting efficient use of limited resources. Not only does the Plan identify the issues and opportunities facing the County over the next decade, it creates an image of what our community is and what we want it to be that serves as a written policy reference for decision-makers.

1.4. Scope of Plan and Elements

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to assess existing conditions, examine the community's strengths and weaknesses, and analyze trends in Newberry County. This information is then used to define the consensus goals, objectives, and policies that County leaders will use to guide public and private development in Newberry County in the coming years. In short, the planning process seeks to answer the fundamental questions of:

- Where are we headed?
- What do we need to improve and what can we build upon?
- What do we want to become and how do we get there?

The County's Comprehensive Plan includes the basic elements as required by the *1994 Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act* and subsequent revisions, as well as an additional Implementation Summary. Each of the required elements includes an inventory of existing conditions and a statement of needs and goals that identify future activities and improvements to attain these community goals. Implementation strategies for each element address specific objectives, action steps, key participants, and timeframes for completion of plan objectives. This



prescribed process is designed to support not only the preparation of the Plan, but also the continuous monitoring, reassessment, and update of the core planning elements considered critical, necessary and desirable to guide local development. Each of the ten required elements, as well as the Implementation Summary, is profiled below.

- The *Population Element* includes information related to historic population trends and projections; the number, size and characteristics of households; resident educational attainment levels and trends; race, gender, and age characteristics of the population; and other information relevant to a clear understanding of how the population affects the existing and future conditions of the County.
- The *Housing Element* includes an analysis of existing housing in the County by age and condition; owner and renter occupancy; housing location and type; housing costs and affordability; and projections of housing need to accommodate existing and future populations as identified in the Population and Economic Elements.
- The *Economic Element* includes an economic base profile; historic trends and projections on the size and characteristics of the workforce; employment centers and commuting patterns; employment characteristics and trends; economic development targets and incentives; and other conditions impacting the local economy. Related existing economic plans and studies were referenced and incorporated where appropriate.
- The *Natural Resources Element* includes information on water resources; slope and soil characteristics; areas identified as prime agricultural or forest lands; unique plant and animal habitats; unique park and recreation areas; significant wetlands; and other natural resources within the County.
- The *Cultural Resources Element* includes an inventory of historic resources including buildings, structures, and archaeological sites; unique commercial or residential areas; unique scenic resources; educational, religious, or entertainment institutions and venues; and other resources relating to the cultural aspects of Newberry County. Relevant existing historic surveys and cultural planning documents were referenced and incorporated where appropriate.
- The *Community Facilities Element* includes information on a wide range of public facilities and services including existing and proposed water supply, treatment and distribution; existing and proposed sewer systems and disposal facilities; solid waste collection and disposal; police and fire protection; emergency medical facilities; general government facilities and staffing; existing and proposed educational facilities and libraries, and funding sources for these essential facilities and services.
- The *Transportation Element* includes an analysis of transportation systems serving the County. This analysis includes existing roads; planned or proposed major road improvements and new road construction; existing, planned or proposed transit projects; and existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Also incorporated are analyses of related data such as road capacities, traffic counts, commuter statistics, population and employment projections, funding sources, and other factors.



- The *Resiliency Element* considers the impacts of flooding, high water, and other natural and man-made hazards on residents, communities, institutions, businesses, economic development, public infrastructure and facilities, and public health, safety and welfare. It examines the relationship of the Element to the other required comprehensive plan elements, provides an inventory of existing resiliency conditions and risks, discusses at-risk populations and economic implications, provides a listing of existing plans and partnerships, and includes a listing of potential preparedness, mitigation, recovery, and resilience funding sources.
- The *Priority Investment Element* provides direction for implementing recommended strategies from the above elements that require capital improvements. This element examines future capital improvement needs, identifies viable funding sources in the coming decade, and encourages and facilitates coordination and cooperation with identified adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies in the identification, planning, and implementation of capital improvement projects.
- The *Land Use Element* provides information on the existing and future use of land in Newberry County. The content and goals of the other elements define the types and amounts of land needed for various uses to include residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, public and institutional, recreational, and open space. The element provides an existing land use inventory developed using digital mapping. This geographic information system (GIS) mapping of existing land uses incorporated Newberry County Assessor tax parcel data and County staff knowledge of the area. Development of the future land use map built upon the existing land use inventory and was supplemented by County staff assessment of current development trends and potential future development areas.
- The *Implementation Summary* consolidates and prioritizes the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies from all ten elements into a more manageable format that can be readily monitored by County staff and officials. The summary provides timelines for completion of each strategy, along with a listing of the appropriate agency or organization responsible for implementation. A chronological listing of implementation strategies is also provided to inform annual budgeting and resource planning considerations for all action items.

1.5. Review and Adoption

The comprehensive planning process for Newberry County included the active involvement of individuals representing local agencies, organizations, and municipalities, in addition to the participation of numerous County staff, appointed board and commission members, and elected officials. Participants also included local business owners and interested citizens. Working committees were assembled for plan elements to include individuals with subject area expertise and interest and representatives from relevant organizations and businesses. Each committee reviewed the existing conditions for their respective element and provided additional data and input on needs, goals, objectives and implementation strategies. Following review by the element stakeholder committee, the draft document was sent to the Newberry County Joint Planning Commission for additional review, editing and recommendation to the Newberry County Council. Once all Plan elements had been recommended by the Planning Commission, County Council conducted a final review of the entire comprehensive plan draft, including a public hearing and



three readings, with final adoption of the *Newberry County Comprehensive Plan 2033* on March 20, 2024.