

The City of

Seneca

Comprehensive Plan





SENECA
CITY
HALL

221
E.N. FIRST STREET

221





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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OVERVIEW

A comprehensive plan is a foundational planning document for the City of Seneca to utilize as it grows and develops over the coming years. The plan provides guidance on long-range strategic direction to the elected and appointed officials and administrative staff as they develop programs, policies, and projects in the City limits and surrounding areas. State law in South Carolina requires that the plan be updated every ten years, with an interim review every five years. The required reviews and updates help to ensure that the information contained within the plan remains relevant and the plan's direction aligns with community goals. This plan is unique in that it marks the 150th anniversary of the City and serves as a key document to help guide Seneca over the next 10 years.

The plan is designed for government agencies, residents, private developers, property owners, and private organizations to use while planning the City's future growth, development, and preservation. The plan is considered a "living document" that establishes a set of guidelines and procedures for implementing the long-range vision, goals, and strategies for the community. These strategies and goals are built around an inventory and analysis of the following eleven elements:

1. POPULATION
2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
3. NATURAL RESOURCES
4. CULTURAL RESOURCES
5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES
6. HOUSING
7. LAND USE
8. GROWTH MANAGEMENT
9. TRANSPORTATION
10. RESILIENCY
11. PRIORITY INVESTMENT

LEGAL AUTHORITY

In 1994, the South Carolina Legislature passed the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act, which granted authority to local governments to prepare and maintain comprehensive plans, as set forth in the South Carolina Code of Laws Title 6, Chapter 29. The Act consolidated formerly separate state legislative acts regarding local authority to create comprehensive plans. Although the Comprehensive Plan is not a legally binding "ordinance," it does inform land use and development ordinances and regulations as the Planning Commission and City Council carry out their duties in guiding and facilitating development in the City. The Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act sets the requirements for the 10 year update and 5 year review, but the Plan may be updated as often as necessary. It should be noted that the State of South Carolina requires that all comprehensive plans contain at least ten elements. This Plan includes the ten required elements, as well as one additional element, titled "Growth Management." As the background assessment was being conducted, it became clear that this eleventh element would be necessary to realize the vision for the City of Seneca.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan should be used as a guide for both public and private sector decision making concerning future growth and land development in and around the City of Seneca.

The City Council and Planning Commission should use the Plan to provide consistency in the evaluation of development proposals or policy changes; ensuring that any approved development or policy change works towards achieving the vision of the Plan. The Plan should also be used to guide capital improvements, development regulations, and coordination efforts with other government agencies and partners on issues of mutual interest. In relation to the private sector, the Plan provides guidance to land owners and developers on the City's expectations for future growth.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

This update to the Comprehensive Plan was carried out in two phases. The initial phase focused on conducting a public survey and gathering background information necessary to prepare the Plan's eleven elements. The information was collected through analyzing existing planning documents, meeting with key stakeholders, and collecting data. The second phase focused on preparing the Comprehensive Plan, working with Staff and the public on developing a vision and goals, collecting input on the draft document, and completing the adoption process.

The process began with initial meetings with City staff and the Planning Commission in June of 2022. After the project kick-off meeting, the collection and analysis of data for the Plan's elements began. Initial public engagement occurred during the City's Juneteenth event; where the Plan was publicly announced, initial engagement was conducted, and information on the process was provided. A community survey was conducted online during the month of July. The survey was published on the City's website, the project website, Facebook, email lists, and in the local newspaper. In July and August, a series of workshops were conducted with the Planning Commission to review the findings of the background research and community survey. Five key planning themes were identified as important aspects for the development of the Plan's vision and overall direction. A public drop in was scheduled for the end of August for the community to review the background elements and give feedback on the planning themes and draft vision. The Planning Commission met in mid-September to review the community input and finalize the goals for the plan.

The Comprehensive Plan was drafted during the months of June through September. The Planning Commission held a series of workshops in September and October to provide input on the final plan. Following their review and approval, the finalized plan was presented at Planning Commission meetings in October and November. The Plan then headed to City Council for public hearing and adoption. The Plan was adopted on January 10, 2023.

VISION FRAMEWORK

In general, the Comprehensive Plan Vision was based on the Plan's elements, direction provided by the Planning Commission, and public input. The Planning Commission met several times to review and discuss the background information contained within the Plan's elements and the public input. This review resulted in the development of key issues and planning themes that were molded into a draft vision. The draft vision was reviewed by the public prior to finalizing the vision statement for this Plan. After the public meeting, the key themes and public input were developed into goals and implementation strategies, that would help achieve the vision of the Plan.

PLANNING PROCESS



PLAN SENECA PROJECT WEBSITE

PLAN 150 SENECA Home | Planning Process | Get Involved | Contact Us

Draft Comprehensive Plan

The draft Comprehensive Plan is now available, and was presented to the Planning Commission at their meeting on October 17th. The adoption process will begin during the month of November and is anticipated to continue until January 2023. To share your comments on the draft, follow this [link](#).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

30+

COMMENTS DURING
CITY'S JUNETEENTH
CELEBRATION
JUNE 18, 2022



360+

PARTICIPANTS IN THE
COMMUNITY SURVEY
JULY 1-31, 2022

20+

ATTENDEES AT THE PUBLIC
DROP IN MEETING
AUGUST 29, 2022



COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the “Plan Seneca” process, an online community survey was conducted in July of 2022. The survey included 19 questions aimed at informing the planning process by asking respondents about particular issues / concerns, recommendations for improvements, and their vision for the future of Seneca. The survey was advertised in the City’s water bills, on the websites and Facebook pages, at the City’s Juneteenth festival, and in the local paper. Advertisements were also placed on Facebook to garner additional feedback, and more than 3,000 people were reached by these ads.

Overall, 368 residents participated in the Plan Seneca community survey. The following provides a summary of the responses received. 134 of the survey respondents also provided their email so that they could stay updated on the comprehensive planning process.

Of the 368 individuals who responded to the survey, 69% live in the City of Seneca and 21% said they work in the City. A little over 1/3rd of those who responded have lived in the City for over 20 years and almost 20% have lived in the City less than 5 years. The majority of respondents were between 35-44 years old, but around 20% of respondents were represented in each of the 45-54, 55-64, and 65+ age categories as well.

32% of respondents ranked their quality of life in the City of Seneca as high. 55% said it was average and only 13% ranked their quality of life as low. The top factor that respondents ranked as contributing to quality of life was community character.

QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST



When asked to identify what participants valued the most about Seneca, the number one response was Lake Keowee, with the second choice being housing affordability/ cost of living. The survey also asked respondents about their top three concerns regarding Seneca. The top response was housing. However, over 80 respondents selected the option for other and noted concerns of insufficient activities for young people, homelessness and support services, infrastructure maintenance (mainly road conditions), poor aesthetic appearance, and the need for more restaurants and retail opportunities.

MOST VALUED ASPECTS OF THE CITY

1. LAKE KEOWEE
2. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY/COST OF LIVING
3. WELCOMING COMMUNITY
4. NATURE AND OPEN SPACE
5. SCHOOLS
6. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
7. COMMUNITY CHARACTER/ APPEARANCE
8. PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES
9. DOWNTOWN/LOCAL BUSINESS

The survey also asked residents about their perception of the recent pace of growth in the City. 52% of respondents said that the City was growing at the right pace, 26% said it has been growing too fast, and 21% said that growth was occurring too slowly.

Almost half of the respondents believe that traffic will become an issue if the City continues to grow but 42% of respondents said that they currently have no problems getting around Seneca.

The survey also asked respondents about their preferences for accessing a range of transportation options. 53% of respondents said they would like to have better access to sidewalks and 53% also said that they would like better access to bike lanes / trails. A little less than half of respondents wanted better access to greenways, and 21% noted a desire for better access to public transportation. Open ended responses to this question indicated desires for better sidewalk and road maintenance, ride share options, and regional light rail.

TOP TRANSPORTATION RELATED ISSUES

# OF RESPONSES	TRANSPORTATION ISSUES
96	Need to Improve Road Maintenance
45	Poor Drivers / Lack of Traffic Enforcement
34	Crashes and Access Issues on US-123
30	Traffic in General
30	Light Timing / Location
24	Bus Schedule / Route Options
23	Need More and Better Maintained Sidewalks
15	Need Turn Lanes
15	Dangerous / Poorly Designed Intersections
12	CAT Buses Need Actual Stops / Shelters
12	Need Bike Lanes / Access

The table above summarizes the open-ended responses which were received in regards to transportation-related issues. Those responses which were received by more than ten respondents are shown above. The number one request was to improve road maintenance.

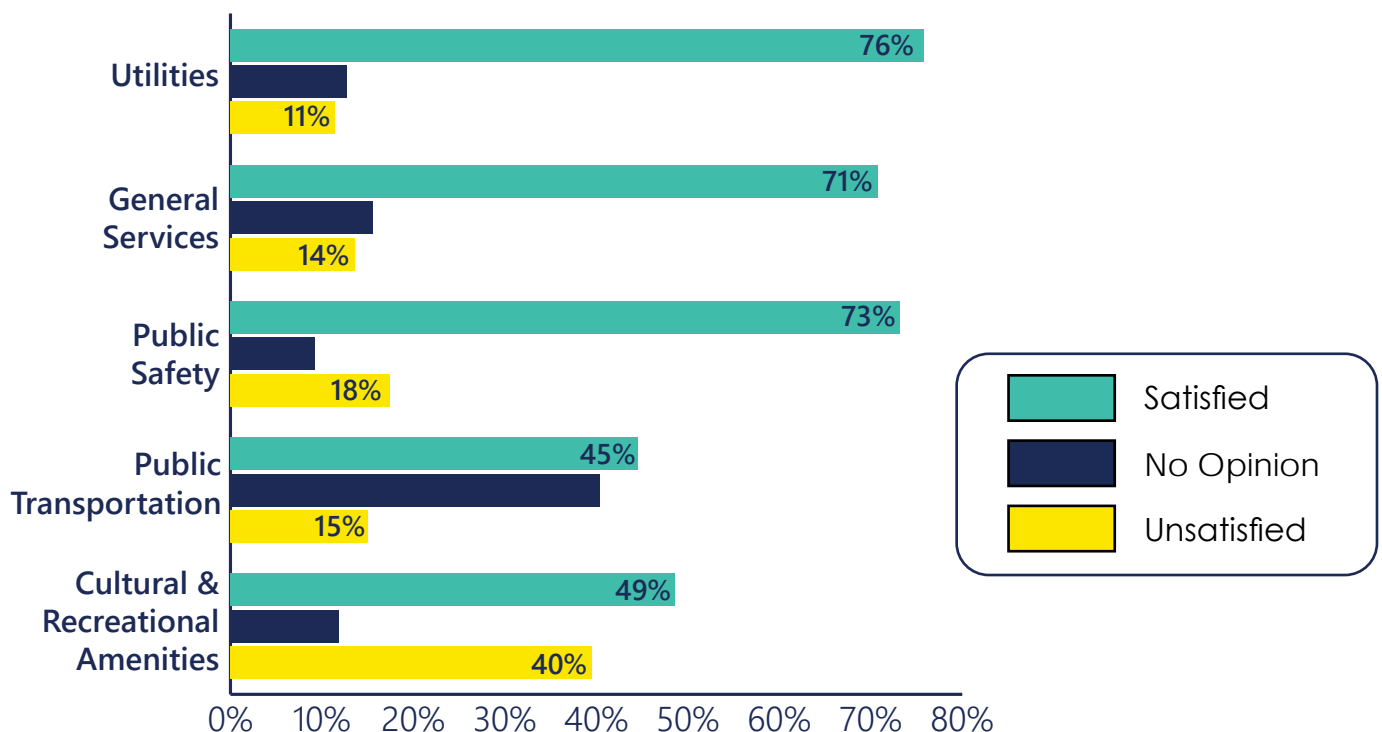
When asked about parks and recreation, there was an almost even split in terms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with recreation, parks, and open spaces in the City. Slightly more respondents were not satisfied. The survey also asked respondents to rank their satisfaction across all City services. The majority of respondents said that they were satisfied with each of the services. However, 40% of respondents noted dissatisfaction with cultural and recreational amenities. Of the 130 respondents who submitted a comment related to municipal services, 36 requested better recreation, 20 requested recycling pick up, 15 requested improved cultural events and activities, 11 requested trails and sidewalks, 9 requested homelessness assistance, and 9 requested more restaurants and retail.

REQUESTED RECREATION FACILITIES

# OF RESPONSES	RECREATION REQUESTS
73	Pool / Splash Pad / Water Park
68	Children's Park / Playground
64	Improved / New Recreation Fields / Courts
45	Trails
38	Dog Park
14	More Green Spaces
13	Skating Park / Rink
10	Update / Enlarge / Improve Shaver

The table above summarizes the recreation requests which were made by ten or more respondents. This was an open-ended question.

SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES



At the end of the survey, participants were asked to describe their vision for the future in an open ended question. The responses were then summarized and grouped into the below categories in order to identify trends. The number one vision for the future of Seneca (by a large majority) was to keep improving downtown.

The survey responses, in conjunction with the results of other public input, background research, and Planning Commission meetings, led to the development of the key planning themes. The themes were reviewed at the public drop-in meeting and were utilized to guide the development of the vision and goals of this Plan. The vision and goals are detailed on the following pages.

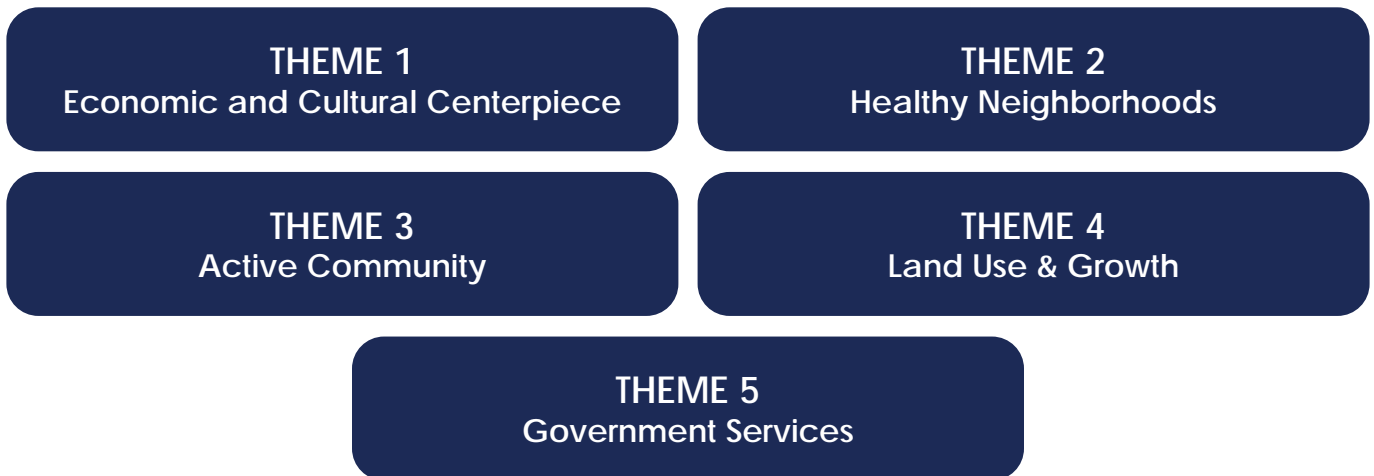
VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF SENECA

# OF RESPONSES	VISION FOR THE FUTURE
88	Keep Improving Downtown
33	More Restaurants / Retail / Entertainment
33	Keep "Small Town" Community
32	Expand Recreational Opportunities
29	More Activities for Children
29	Demolish or Clean Up Old Buildings
24	Control Growth
19	Improve Walkability / Bikability
17	Improve / Widen Roads and Fix Traffic
15	More Green Spaces
12	More Affordable Housing Options
10	Solve Homeless Problem

Survey respondents were able to write their visions for the future of Seneca. The responses were summarized and the visions described by ten or more respondents are shown in the table above. Other frequent requests included putting a stronger emphasis on arts and culture, becoming more inclusive to minorities, improving landscaping and curb appeal, and enhancing law enforcement.

PLANNING THEMES

Following the collection and analysis of background information, the Planning Commission worked to identify and refine a series of planning themes that emerged to form the backbone of the Comprehensive Plan. During a drop-in meeting, the public was given the opportunity to review and comment on the draft elements and the five planning themes that are outlined below.



ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CENTERPIECE

- Development of Downtown
- Cultural Assets and Museums
- The Hub of Business and Entertainment for the Lake Keowee Area
- Seneca as a Destination
- SC-123 Highway Corridor
- Regional Context

HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

- Clean, Safe, and Compatible
- Density and Mix of Uses
- High Quality, Attainable Housing
- Property Maintenance
- Connecting Neighborhoods to Downtown / Recreation Via Sidewalks and Trails

ACTIVE COMMUNITY

- Greenways, Sidewalks, Trails, etc.
- Recreation Facilities
- Transportation Component as Applicable

LAND USE & GROWTH

- Density, Appearance, Sustainability, Utilities, etc.
- Identification of Infill and Growth Areas
- Resiliency and Environmental Concerns
- Potential Annexation Areas

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Includes All City Services
- Priority Investments
- Intergovernmental Coordination with Local, County, and State Organizations/Agencies

VISION

All of the information collected was evaluated by the Planning Commission as they developed a vision statement for this Plan. The Comprehensive Plan vision statement, below, is an overarching statement that captures the desired future for the City of Seneca and the surrounding community. The vision establishes how the community desires to grow and its aspirations for the next 150 years. The goals and strategies of the Plan, which are presented on the following pages, were developed to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Vision.

Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

The City of Seneca will strive to maintain a vibrant community with a strong downtown, surrounded by healthy neighborhoods integrated with abundant recreation opportunities and preserved open spaces.

We will embrace the role our community plays as the cultural and economic centerpiece of the Lake Keowee region, and look forward to a sustainable and attractive future.



GOALS

The goals support implementation of key components of the vision statement, articulating the most important areas of focus. In addition, strategies were developed under each goal to provide a specific course of action for the City to implement this Plan. The goals and strategies work together to address key observations identified in the Plan's elements. The orange symbols below and throughout this section of the Plan identify the elements of the Plan that are associated with each implementation strategy. The elements are identified as follows:

- P POPULATION
- ED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- NR NATURAL RESOURCES
- CR CULTURAL RESOURCES
- CF COMMUNITY FACILITIES
- H HOUSING
- LU LAND USE
- GM GROWTH MANAGEMENT
- T TRANSPORTATION
- R RESILIENCY
- PI PRIORITY INVESTMENT

GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S ROLE AS THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CENTERPIECE

The City of Seneca is the economic and cultural centerpiece of Oconee County. As residential development continues to occur in Oconee County and around Lake Keowee, the City will work to foster its identity as the economic and cultural centerpiece of the region. Through strengthening its Downtown area, enhancing multi-modal connections to Downtown, and continuing to grow its cultural footprint; Seneca will foster more robust cultural and commercial opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Maintain a toolkit of incentives to attract private investment downtown to aid in revitalization and economic development.

Context: This City has already begun investing in redevelopment of downtown properties and redesign of existing streetscapes. Seneca should continue to facilitate downtown's redevelopment through a range of incentives to private developers. These may include a façade grant program, tax incentives for historic preservation, assistance and education around state and federal assistance programs, and marketing the advantages of downtown. The City should also continue its work in acquiring dilapidated buildings and vacant properties for the purposes of redevelopment.

Elements:

- ED
- CR
- LU
- GM
- PI

Strategy 2: Expand the marketing of the City’s cultural assets, museums, and downtown.

Context: Discover South Carolina and Visit Oconee County host web pages that aim to attract visitors to the City of Seneca. However, the City should consider partnering with these organizations to expand their reach and better target potential visitors. The City should consider supporting a “Visit Seneca” campaign to better attract Lake Keowee visitors to downtown Seneca. Further, the City should brand the Seneca Historic District as a cultural arts district to preserve and promote the City’s heritage and expand cultural activities.

Elements:



Strategy 3: Work to improve the appearance of the SC-123 Highway Corridor.

Context: SC-123 runs along the northern edge of the City, just south of Lake Keowee, and is the most significant corridor in the City, in that it contains the highest traffic volumes. A large number of visitors travel this corridor to reach the lake, the City of Clemson, or another destination without ever venturing further south into the City. Improving the appearance of this corridor may entice visitors to visit other areas or draw visitors to other parts of the City, such as downtown Seneca. The City should consider enhancing design regulations along this roadway to improve the appearance of future development and to expand multi-modal transportation options. In following the county’s 2019 corridor study recommendations, particular attention should be directed toward enhancing the character of the corridor and in providing bicycle and pedestrian connections between the cities of Seneca and Clemson.

Elements:



Strategy 4: Implement a wayfinding system in and around Seneca to strengthen the identity of the City.

Context: Wayfinding is a creative and strategic tool that can help visitors locate business districts, government facilities, cultural resources, and other major attractions. As orientation around the City may be confusing to strangers, wayfinding is a wonderful strategy which can help direct traffic and encourage visitors to explore additional attractions within Seneca. The City should develop a strategic wayfinding plan that establishes consistent branding, color schemes, and designs for signs that will be placed in high-trafficked areas. Particular attention should go towards cleaning up sign clutter, ensuring signs are appropriately scaled, and accurately detailing the most pressing attractions.

Elements:



Strategy 5: Expand and attract industrial development within the City limits to take advantage of the City’s workforce and reduce commute times for residents.

Context: Less than 1% of the total area of Seneca is dedicated to industrial uses today. However, almost one-quarter of residents work in manufacturing, and almost 85% of residents commute outside of the City for work. The City has a number of existing sites which could support further industrial development, and the City should pursue efforts to support this type of development. The City should assess current zoning, land development regulations, and utility provisions to ensure that properties zoned for industrial development are supportive of these more intensive uses. The City should also work with the county and other regional entities to ensure that these properties are appropriately marketed.

Elements:      

Strategy 6: Continue to facilitate partnerships between local businesses, industries, high schools, and workforce training centers to assist with business retention and recruitment.

Context: Business retention and recruitment is an important element of any economic development strategy. The City has already begun fostering relationships between local high schools, workforce training centers, and businesses. However, this effort should be continued and strengthened in the future, in an effort to provide employment opportunities within the City for Seneca residents. These efforts may also help to retain younger populations; particularly those cohort between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, which have been historically low in Seneca.

Elements:    

GOAL 2: BUILD AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

The City of Seneca is home to a wide variety of healthy neighborhoods. In order to accommodate a wide range of housing types and affordability levels, the City of Seneca will encourage the provision of various neighborhood designs. The City will ensure that while neighborhoods within it may offer a range of housing types, densities, and amenities; they will all provide opportunities to utilize alternative transportation. Zoning designations will be carefully considered to ensure that design requirements are appropriately matched to surrounding development.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Ensure that the City's residential zoning districts best promote a wide variety of residential densities, housing types, and mixed uses in a manner which is compatible with surrounding development.

Context: As housing costs continue to remain high across the country, Seneca should work to ensure that a wide variety of housing densities and types are available within its jurisdiction. The City should work to ensure that high quality, attainable housing is available with a range of amenities in various locations. Particular attention should be directed toward encouraging the development of small scale, "missing middle" housing typologies to increase density while maintaining Seneca's small town character. Efforts should also aim to increase residential densities in downtown Seneca.

Elements:



Strategy 2: Promote walkable communities by providing and requiring pedestrian connections.

Context: Providing pedestrian connections between and throughout residential neighborhoods and commercial areas has a range of positive impacts. This will reduce the number of car trips (and thus automobile traffic) in the City, increase residents' physical activity levels (which has a range of positive health impacts), and improve the small-town character of the City. In order to facilitate walkable communities, the City should pursue a range of related sub-tasks. This includes pursuing grant funding to provide sidewalks and trails in already developed areas; requiring the provision of sidewalks or trails with all new development; and working to prioritize funding for the construction of sidewalks and trails. Particular effort should be placed on developing sidewalks and trails between urban neighborhoods and downtown Seneca. Efforts should also be made to prioritize pedestrian and greenway connections identified in the City's recent Master Plan to connect residents to recreational facilities. Additionally, the City should pursue Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding to provide sidewalks between residential areas and schools.

Elements:



Strategy 3: Strengthen code enforcement activities where necessary.

Context: A desire to strengthen code enforcement was brought up by residents in the community survey which was conducted at the beginning of this project. Enhancing code enforcement efforts will reduce the number of unsightly buildings, remove visible junk and debris from properties, and facilitate similar improvements, which will strengthen the overall appearance of the City.

Elements:     

Strategy 4: Review the City’s zoning ordinance to ensure it aligns with future land uses and projected growth.

Context: The City’s Comprehensive Plan intends to envision changes which should occur within the City in the next ten-or-so years. One of the primary ways in which this is achieved is through the Future Land Use Map, which is provided in the Land Use Element. In order to ensure future development achieves the vision of the future land use map, the City should review the zoning map and zoning ordinance to ensure that it allows and promotes the types of development outlined in this plan. The City should also consider adopting a form-based code to allow for flexibility within each zoning district while maintaining the desired character of the City.

Elements:      

Strategy 5: Conduct a housing affordability study.

Context: Related to Strategy 1 of this Goal, concerns associated with an increase in homelessness in and around the City were brought up by many residents in the community survey conducted at the beginning of this process. In order to reduce the risk of homelessness, provide homeless-related services, and increase housing affordability, the City must first have a better understanding of the problem and its source. In order to do so, the City should conduct a housing affordability study to determine the source and extent of the problem. Following this study, the City should be better able to direct state and federal resources in a manner which best assists the community.

Elements:      

GOAL 3: FOSTER AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY

The City of Seneca is an active community. We will work to enhance opportunities for all residents to enjoy active lifestyles. Through the provision of sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and recreational amenities, the City of Seneca will work to reduce residents' reliance on the private automobile. We will also work to support events and activities which encourage more active lifestyles.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Continue to prioritize the expansion and improvement of the City's recreation facilities, as identified in the City's 2019 Master Plan.

Context: In 2019, the City developed a Master Plan that focused primarily on improvements to downtown and the City's recreational facilities. As these efforts have continued to be supported by residents, the City should prioritize the recreation improvements which were identified. Foremost, the City should prioritize the development of a new centralized recreation complex that can meet new and projected demand, while also providing opportunities for travel sporting events.

Elements:



Strategy 2: Create recreational opportunities for the adult population.

Context: During the public input stage of this process, a number of residents identified a need for more adult recreation. Specifically, residents who participated in the community survey and attended a public drop-in meeting requested that the City consider developing an adult recreation league for sports such as softball and pickle ball. The City is identified by the state as one of the best places to retire, and about 40% of its residents are between the ages of 50 and 80 years old. In order to better serve this population, Seneca should examine the feasibility of creating adult recreational leagues.

Elements:



Strategy 3: Prioritize the development of additional sidewalks, greenways, and trail networks throughout the City.

Context: As mentioned in Goal 2, there are a wide range of benefits attributed to the development of walkable communities. The City’s 2019 Master Plan considered the provision of additional greenways, and an Oconee County plan similarly identified the need to develop a greenway along SC-123. The recommendations of these plans should be pursued, in an effort to better connect residents to recreational, commercial, and institutional uses. The City should also review its development regulations to ensure that the provision of sidewalks or trails is required for all new development, to ensure that current and future residents will be able to walk and bike throughout the City.

Elements:



Strategy 4: Pursue efforts to establish sports-related tourism in the City of Seneca.

Context: The City of Seneca is well-situated to become a hub for travel sports and recreational tourism. It’s prime location in the region, as well as its proximity to the lake, hotels, and major transportation routes makes it an ideal candidate for travel sporting competitions; a factor which has been noted by elected officials. With recently identified improvements to the Shaver Recreational Complex, the City should hone in on these strengths to foster its role in sports-related tourism. The City should work with other entities to ensure that its sporting facilities are up-to-part with travel sports requirements, and that ample hotel rooms are available in Seneca to support tournaments.

Elements:



GOAL AREA 4: COORDINATE WELL-PLANNED LAND USE AND GROWTH

Development in the City is well-planned and related impacts are adequately considered. As development continues to occur in and around the City, Seneca will prioritize controlling growth in a way that best matches its vision for the future. Through careful consideration of utility provision, annexation, and zoning regulations, the City will ensure that future development occurs in a fiscally responsible manner that both supports the needs of residents and appropriately protects cultural and environmental resources.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Implement an annexation strategy, as discussed in the Growth Management Element, to ensure that the City is appropriately planning for future growth in and around the City.

Context: Since 2010, the City of Seneca has required all development which has tapped onto the City's water system to sign an annexation agreement, which requires the development to annex into the City if and when it becomes contiguous to the City's boundaries. As a major utility provider, this is the primary tool available to the City to require annexation. Although there are many areas contiguous with the City where services were provided without the annexation agreements, there are still a couple dozen properties that are contiguous to the City with signed annexation agreements post 2010. The City should the use the annexation prioritization map provided in the Growth Management Element to prioritize the annexation of those areas which are most beneficial to include in the City limits. As annexation occurs, the City's opportunities for annexation will increase widely. The City should utilize the GIS tracking system to ensure future annexations are prioritized when appropriate. Also, careful attention should be given to analyzing the fiscal impacts of annexation and ensuring that the City is incorporating areas which are best served within the City limits.

Elements:



Strategy 2: Utilize the future land use map when considering any rezoning application, development proposal, or annexation request to ensure that future land uses best meet the City's vision.

Context: The City Council and Planning Commission should consider the Comprehensive Plan when they are reviewing all zoning amendments, development proposals, rezonings, and textual amendments. As the Future Land Use Map lays out the physical vision for the future of the City, it directs the Council and Planning Commission in terms of preferred future development scenarios. If a proposal does not match the Future Land Use Map, it should be carefully considered to determine whether the proposal should be denied or the Future Land Use Map should be changed. As circumstances change over time, the Future Land Use Map may need to be modified to better capture the current vision for the City.

Elements:



Strategy 3: Develop a coordinated plan for future water, sewer, and electric service areas and related infrastructure.

Context: The City of Seneca provides water, sewer, and electric services in and outside of its boundaries. Properties within the City are also served by the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and Duke Power. The City’s water system is connected to those of Walhalla and Westminster; and the City provides wholesale water service to Keowee Key, the Town of Salem, and the Pioneer Rural Water District. Wastewater collection and treatment are operated by the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority, which oversees wastewater quality throughout Oconee County. Before extending utilities, careful consideration should be given to the economic impacts of owning and maintaining such utilities. The City should work cooperatively with Oconee County, all municipalities within Oconee County, the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority, the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, and Duke Power to develop coordinated plans for future utility extensions. The City should ensure that these plans are both fiscally responsible and are in line with the Future Land Use Map and annexation strategy.

Elements:       

Strategy 4: Promote environmentally sensitive development to protect the City’s natural resources.

Context: The City of Seneca has a range of water resources, including Lake Keowee, streams, watersheds, and wetlands. There are also sensitive soils and endangered species in Seneca. In order to best preserve the natural and environmental features in the City, Seneca should work to protect these areas from development. When considering development applications, the City should give particular consideration to environmental concerns, stormwater issues, and natural habitats.

Elements:     

Strategy 5: Improve multi-modal infrastructure throughout the City.

Context: As mentioned previously, residents of the City would greatly benefit from the ability to walk and bike throughout Seneca. To facilitate this, the City should prioritize transportation improvements which improve the ability to walk and bike. A major way the City should improve multi-modal infrastructure is through improvements to E North 1st Street. The City should work with SCDOT to examine opportunities to redesign the segment of E North 1st Street from W North 3rd Street to Holleman Street. As this segment both runs through Downtown Seneca and connects the Downtown area to SC-123, emphasis should be placed on improving pedestrian crossings, enhancing medians, and incorporating additional landscaping.

Elements:        

Strategy 6: Work with Clemson Area Transit to examine the long-range feasibility of Seneca, South Carolina public transportation.

Context: The City of Seneca currently provides public transportation through fixed-route bus service that is operated by the Clemson Area Transit (CAT). CAT is a fare-free service provided in partnership with Clemson University, the City of Clemson, the Town of Central, the Town of Pendleton, the City of Seneca, SCDOT, and the Federal Transit Administration. The City of Seneca utilizes federal grant funding from its designation as a rural community to provide this service. With impending changes to census designations of rural communities, it is possible that this funding will go away. In light of this, Seneca should work with CATS to examine the long-range feasibility of public transportation in the City. If the continuation of this service is feasible, consider improvements to transparency of service, bus stop amenities, and routes.

Elements:



Strategy 7: Assist in the update of the Anderson county and Oconee County Joint Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and provide information and educational resources to residents to ensure that they are best prepared for disasters.

Context: In October of 2000, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 was signed into law by the President of the United States. This Act required local and state governments to develop and adopt Hazard Mitigation Plans in order to remain eligible for federal disaster assistance and grants. Anderson and Oconee Counties first came together to establish a joint Hazards Plan in 2005, and the plan has been updated in 2012 and 2017. It will undergo another update in this year (2022). The Anderson county and Oconee County Joint Hazard Mitigation Plan is a plan which analyzes all potential impacts to the region, which includes the City of Seneca, and helps to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies to prepare and recover from natural disasters. In addition to natural hazards, the City of Seneca is at risk from flooding related to potential dam breaks of Lake Keowee and Lake Issaqueena. The City is also at risk of potential nuclear disasters, related to the Oconee Nuclear Station, which is located just nine miles north of Seneca, on Lake Keowee. It would be in the City's best interest to assist in the Joint Hazards Mitigation Plan, and to disseminate information to residents, in order to reduce potential disaster impacts.

Elements:



Strategy 8: Improve regional coordination on planning and development-related concerns.

Context: Like many places, Seneca is deeply impacted by the municipalities and counties which surround it. Growth occurring in the City is largely occurring in surrounding communities, as they too are in close proximity to Clemson University, have access to lakes, and are in a prime geographic location. As the City continues to grow, and as it continues to attract aging populations, it will need to work with its neighbors to better coordinate resources to help manage growth and aid in the provision of services.

Elements:



Strategy 9: Facilitate public forums before the Planning Commission for the reuse of publicly-owned properties.

Context: Over time, publicly-owned properties may be proposed for reuse. The Planning Commission may facilitate public forums to receive input from the community on public properties proposed for reuse and/or redevelopment.

Elements:



GOAL AREA 5: PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The City of Seneca's government provides efficient and effective services. We will work to ensure that all services are efficiently and effectively administered. The City will strive to stay ahead of residents' needs by continuously improving and growing its services.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Review departmental staff and growth plans on annual basis to maintain adequate levels of service.

Context: As the City continues to grow, it will need to increase and expand municipal services, such as resources allocated to development review, and an increased demand for amenities, such as recreation. In order to ensure that the City can maintain its high quality of service in the future, it should review departmental planning and programming on an annual basis and increase staffing and resources as needed. This endeavor could be paired with an annual evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan, to assess the direction the City is moving and ensure the plan remains a living document.

Elements:



Strategy 2: Prioritize intergovernmental coordination with all local, county, and state organizations or agencies which serve the City of Seneca.

Context: As mentioned in the previous goal, the City of Seneca is deeply intertwined with its regional partners. As the City and its surroundings continue to grow and change over time, Seneca should prioritize working with its neighbors to better coordinate resources and aid in the provision of services. Particular effort should be made toward working with those local, county, and state organizations who already have a great impact on the City; such as Oconee County, Walhalla, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the South Carolina Department of Environmental Protection, all utility providers, and other such entities.

Elements: ED CF H LU GM T R PI

Strategy 3: Utilize the implementation table contained in this Plan to aid in the development of a capital improvement plan.

Context: The Implementation Matrix contained in this plan provides a significant list of capital projects which will help guide decision making for the City in the years to come. To assist with implementation, the City should develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that designates funding and funding years to each project, assuring that they will be implemented over time. The City should also examine regional, state, and federal grant opportunities which can be leveraged to assist in funding capital projects.

Elements: ED CF LU GM T R PI

Strategy 4: Proactively plan for the City's future utility and infrastructure demands.

Context: As mentioned in the previous goal, the City wields a significant amount of control over development through the provision of utilities. It also has the ability, primarily through coordination with the South Carolina Department of Transportation, to guide infrastructure investment. As the City continues to grow and change, utilities and infrastructure within it will need to be improved, upgraded, and enlarged. The City should proactively assess the capacity of these services to ensure that it is appropriately planning for needed improvements and expansions, and does not end up in a situation where it cannot provide needed services. This recommendation will require coordination with a range of other entities, including other utility providers, regional agencies, and the state. In a similar vein, planning for municipal buildings and schools, as well as the reuse of previous municipal buildings and schools, should be taken into consideration.

Elements: ED NR CF H LU GM T R PI



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

As mentioned in the introduction of the Plan, there are ten elements that are required by the state of South Carolina’s Local Elements Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Enabling Act of 1994. This Plan also includes an additional element on Growth Management. These elements provide the background information which was used to build the vision, goals, and strategies of the Plan. Each element covers an inventory of existing conditions and includes key observations related to the specific top area. The eleven elements are:

1. POPULATION
2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
3. NATURAL RESOURCES
4. CULTURAL RESOURCES
5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES
6. HOUSING
7. LAND USE
8. GROWTH MANAGEMENT
9. TRANSPORTATION
10. RESILIENCY
11. PRIORITY INVESTMENT

The data presented within each element was primarily collected from the United States Census, the American Community Survey, local and county elements bodies, as well as several state and national GIS layers. While the primary focus of the Comprehensive Plan is the City of Seneca, some data is shown at the census tract, Oconee County, and state of South Carolina scales. These geographies are important to understanding how the City compares to the surrounding region.

The information contained in the elements is utilized throughout the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The elements can be viewed as an inventory of the current state of the City, a collection of maps, illustrations, charts, tables, and text describing the key features of the City.



ELEMENT

1

POPULATION



INTRODUCTION

The Population Element describes key trends and projections about the City of Seneca and surrounding region's growth and demographics. In addition to population growth, this element also covers information about age, race, income, family status, and education. This element is important to understanding how the people who live and work in Seneca impact the future of the City.

CONTEXT

Seneca is located in southeastern Oconee County, South Carolina. Oconee County is the northwestern-most county in the state of South Carolina, bordering Georgia to the west and North Carolina to the north. Seneca is the largest City in the county in both size (7.55 square miles) and population (8,564 people in 2020). There are six census tracts within the City: 306.1, 307.1, 307.2, 308, and 309.2. The characteristics of each of these census tracts vary but must all be considered when planning for the future of the City. Map 1.1 shows the general location of Seneca within the County. It is bordered by Lake Keowee to the north and is situated on the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains. US Highways 76 and 123 cut across the northern edge of the City.

Founded in 1874, Seneca grew as a railroad town, sitting at the crossroads between the Blue Ridge Railway and the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line Railway; both of which are part of present day Norfolk Southern Railway, which still bisects the City. The name Seneca arose from the Cherokee village Esseneca located on the Seneca River (Seneca Visitor's Center).

The first school in the City was built in 1874. In 1899, The Seneca Institute, Seneca Junior College, was established in the City as a Historically black college and served only African American students until 1939.

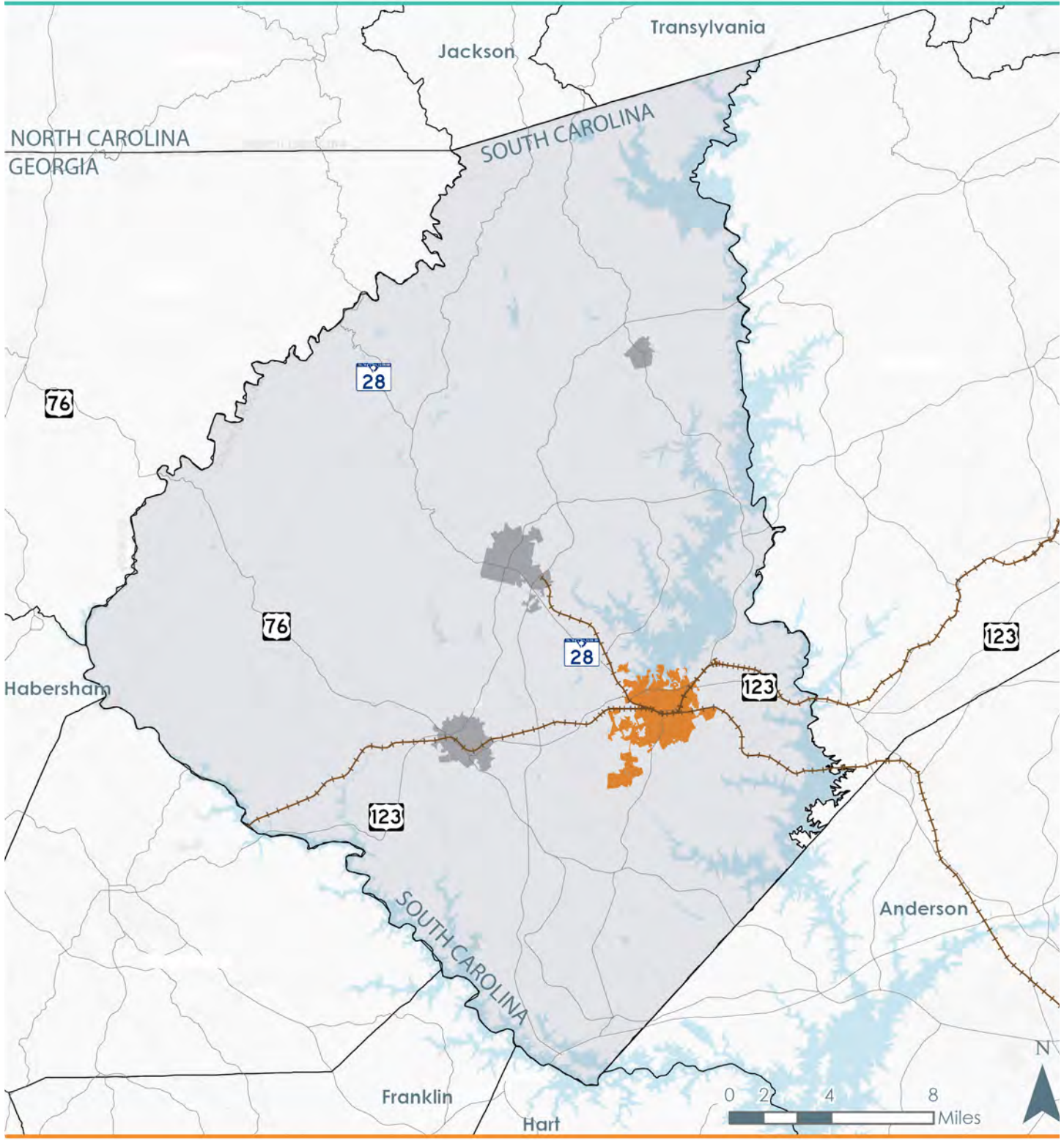
The primary industry that kick-started Seneca was textiles. In 1893, the Courtenay Manufacturing Company established the first mill village in the City, along the Little River in order to provide hydro-power to the mill. In the 1960s and 1970s, major federal dam projects helped support additional hydro-power for public utilities, created lakes for major water sources, and strengthened the county's recreational attractions. Lake Hartwell (1963), Lake Keowee (1971), and Lake Jocassee (1974) were all created through these dam projects. As textile industries moved overseas, Seneca turned towards recreation, tourism, and retirement as economic drivers. The City's location near multiple universities, major transportation routes, and its proximity to nature will continue to guide its future.

GROWTH AND POPULATION TRENDS

Seneca's population grew most drastically in the 1970s, and was followed by a stalling out of growth from 1980 through the 2000s. While population growth has since risen, it has been at a slower rate than the county and state. The rate of growth in the City slowed slightly from 2010 (6.3%) to 2020 (5.7%) aligning with the slightly slower pace of growth in the County. The County's population is projected to increase through 2035. Migration has continued to be the primary source of population change since 1990, with an overflow from the nearby Clemson metro. Table 1.1 shows the population increase for the surrounding census tracts since 2010.

> MAP 1.1: CONTEXT

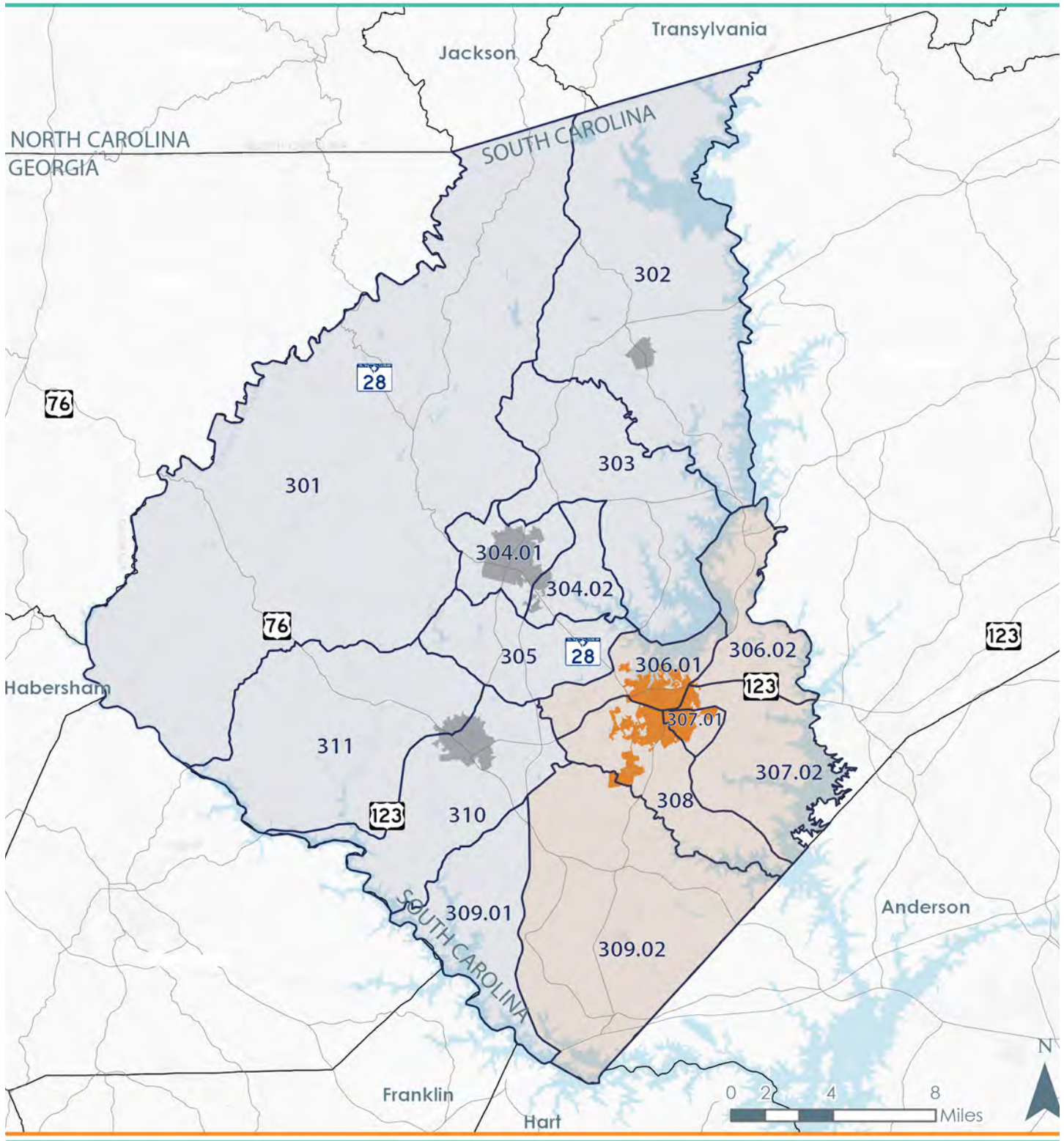
Source: SCDOT and US Census (2022)



- Seneca City Limits
- Oconee Municipalities
- Oconee County
- Counties
- Major Roads
- Railroads
- Lakes

> MAP 1.2: US CENSUS TRACTS

Source: US Census (2020)



- Seneca City Limits
- US Census Tracts (Outside of City)
- US Census Tracts (Part of City)
- Major Roads

> TABLE 1.1: POPULATION CHANGE BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: US Census Bureau, United states Census (2000 - 2020)

CENSUS BLOCK GROUPS	2000 POPULATION	2010 POPULATION	2020 POPULATION	% CHANGE 2000-2010	% CHANGE 2010-2020
301	4046	4,352	4,164	7.6%	-4%
302.01	5,498	5,764	2,500	4.8%	8.24%
302.02			3,739		
303.01	5,005	6,145	2,011	22.8%	16.94%
303.02			5,175		
304.02	7,892	6,989	2,212	11.1%	2.1%
304.03		1,779	2,598		
304.04			4,142		
305	4,101	4,375	4,757	6.7%	8.73%
306.01	7,088	4,443	4,845	25.4%	9.05%
306.02		4,447	4,869		9.49%
307.01	3,798	3,733	3,592	-1.7%	-3.78%
307.02	4,656	6,086	6,761	30.7%	11.09%
308.01	6,395	7,214	3,211	12.8%	5.71%
308.02			4,415		
309.01	8,602	2,454	3,148	16.0%	28.28%
309.03		7,526	4,688		2.42%
309.04			3,020		
310	5,354	5,267	5,143	-1.6%	-2.35%
311	3,780	3,699	3,617	-2.1%	-2.22%
Total	66,215	74,273	78,607	12.2%	5.48%

* Census Tracts in Orange make up portions of Seneca

> TABLE 1.2: POPULATION COMPARISON

Source: US Census Bureau, United states Census (2000 - 2020)

	2000	2010	% CHANGE 2000-2010	2020	% CHANGE 2010-2020
SOUTH CAROLINA	4,024,223	4,635,846	15.2%	5,218,040	12.6%
OCONEE COUNTY	66,434	74,273	12.2%	78,607	5.48%
CITY OF SENECA	7,622	8,102	6.3%	8,564	5.7%

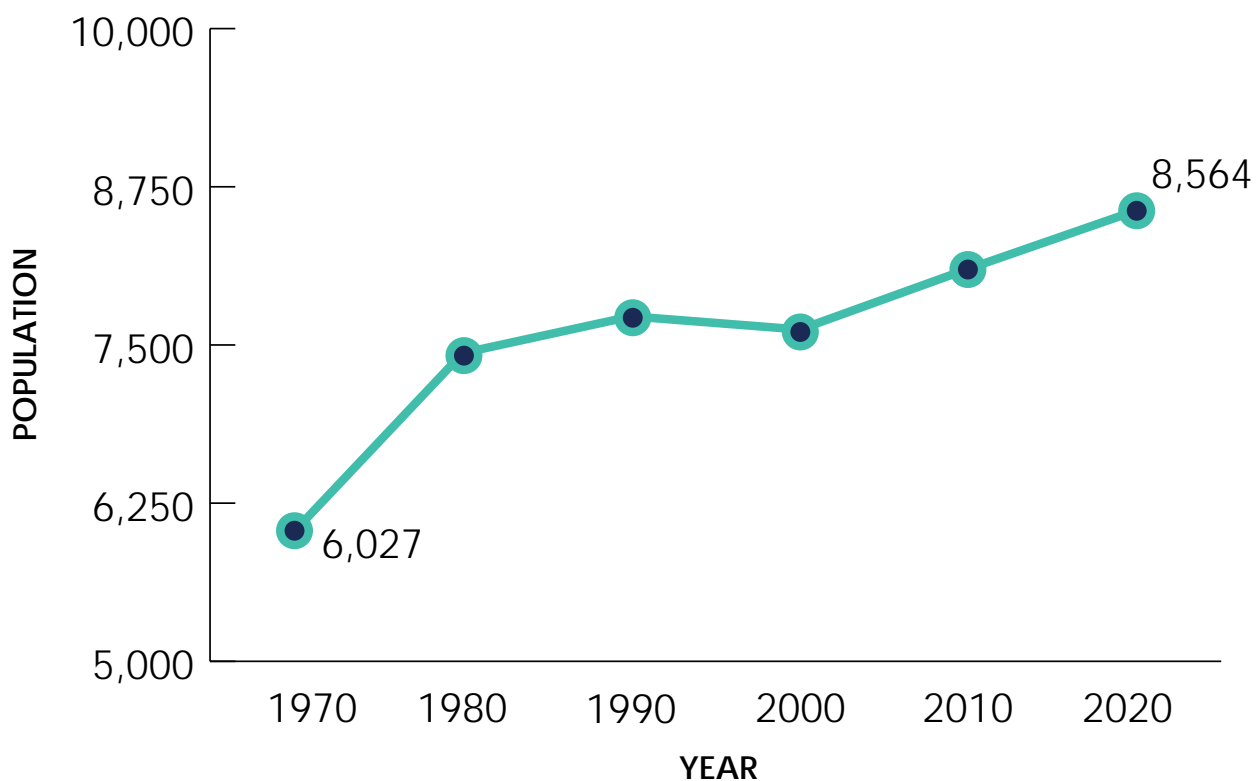
> TABLE 1.3: HISTORIC POPULATION COMPARISON

Source: US Census Bureau, United states Census (1970 - 2020)

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
SOUTH CAROLINA	2,590,516	3,121,820	3,486,703	4,024,223	4,635,846	5,218,040
OCONEE COUNTY	40,728	48,611	57,494	66,434	74,349	80,015
CITY OF SENECA	6,027	7,436	7,726	7,622	8,102	8,564

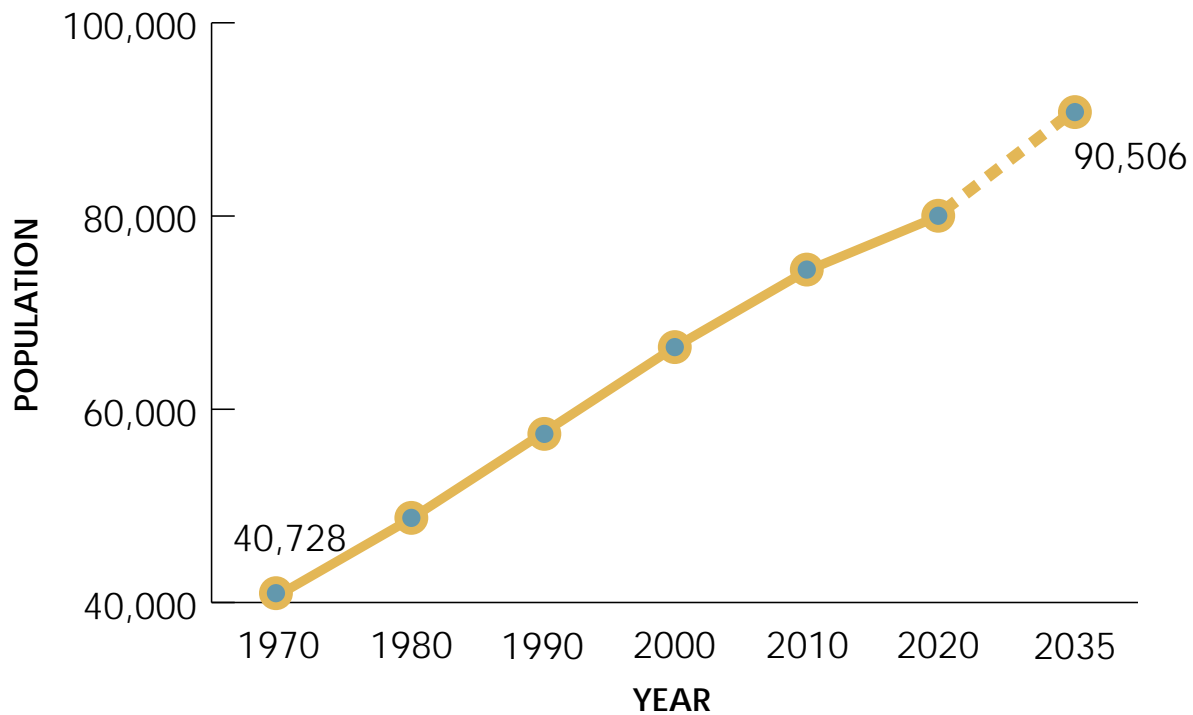
> FIGURE 1.1: CITY HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH

Source: US Census Bureau, United states Census (1970 - 2020)



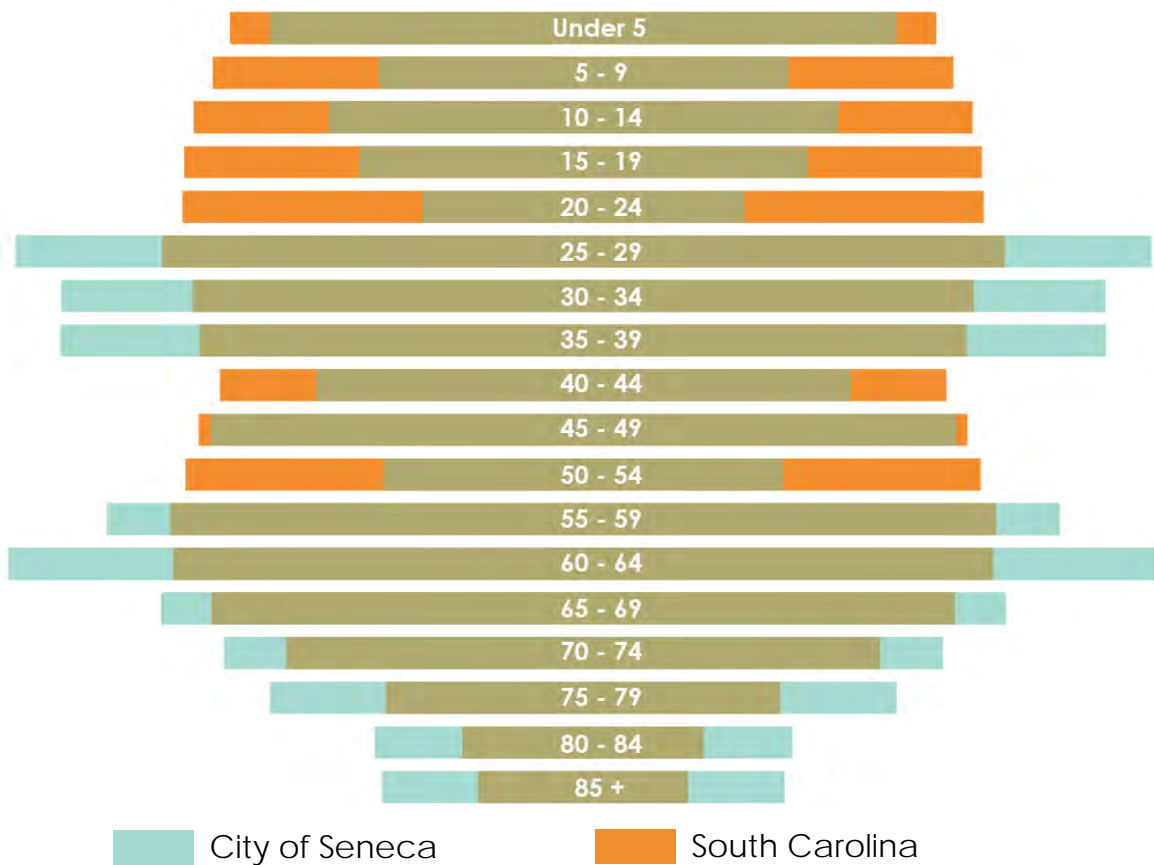
> FIGURE 1.2: COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTION

Source: United States Census (1970 - 2020), SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office



> FIGURE 1.3: AGE PYRAMIDS FOR THE CITY AND STATE

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



> **TABLE 1.4: MEDIAN AGE AND DEPENDENCY**

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)

	SOUTH CAROLINA	OCONEE COUNTY	CITY OF SENECA
Median Age	39.7	46.1	45.7
Age Dependency Ratio	65.2	76.0	62.1
Old Age Dependency Ratio	29.2	40.9	39.6
Child Dependency Ratio	36.0	35.1	22.5

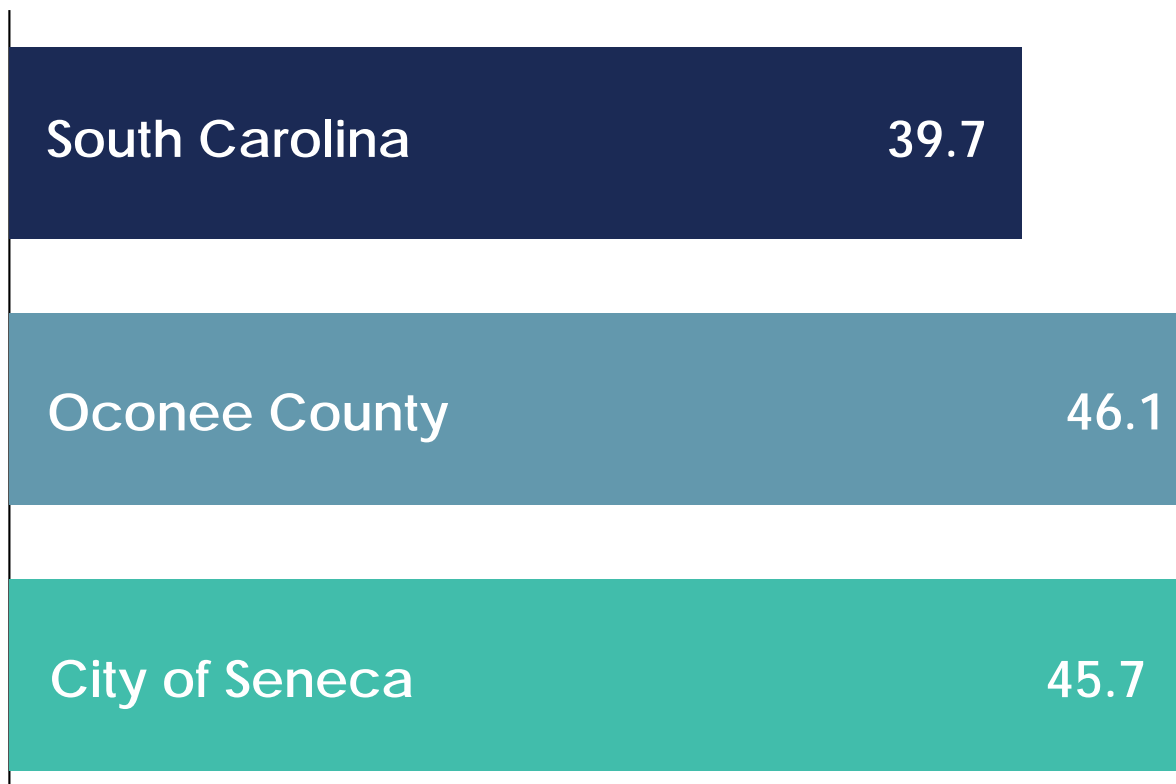
*The Age dependency ratio is the population typically not in the labor force (under 16 and over 65) divided by the population in the labor force (16 - 65). A high number indicates a burden on the productive part of the population to maintain economy.

*The Old Age Dependency Ratio is the population over 65 divided by the population aged 16 - 64. A high number indicates a burden on the productive part of the population to maintain economy, particularly in relation to an aging population.

*The Child Dependency Ratio is the population aged 0 - 15 divided by the population aged 16 - 64. A high number indicates a burden on the productive part of the population to maintain economy, particularly in relation to a young population.

> **FIGURE 1.3: MEDIAN AGE COMPARISON**

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The population in Seneca is generally older, with the largest portions of the population between the ages of 60-64 and 25-29. The smallest age groups are 30-60 and under 25, indicating that there are fewer young families in the City and an increasing population of residents retiring or aging in place. The age breakdown in Seneca is similar to that of nearby Westminster and the County as a whole. The other municipalities in the County (Walhalla and West Union) have a younger population than Seneca. As of 2020, the City's median age (45.7) is slightly below that of the County and the age dependency ratios are also much lower. As the median age continues to increase, the old age dependency will also likely rise, leading to a potential increased burden on the economy. That being said, retirement aged individuals can also benefit the community through generally higher incomes, education levels, and a neutral fiscal impact on service delivery.

According to the AARP, by 2034, older adults are projected to outnumber children across the US¹. Therefore it will be important for Seneca to ensure that it is livable and attractive to aging adults.

Oconee County has a higher percentage of white only residents (88.2%) and a lower percentage of African American residents (7.4%) than South Carolina (27.4%) and the US (12.6%) as a whole. However, Seneca has the highest percentage of African American residents in the County (26.7%), as well as a higher percentage of other races and Hispanic residents than the county as a whole. Although, some of the other municipalities are more diverse than Seneca. Since 2000, both the County and the City have experienced an increase in diversification of the population.

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILY STATUS

About one quarter of all households in Seneca are people who live alone, and 11.5% of the households contain individuals over the age of 65 who live alone. About 17% of households are families with children under the age of 18. The average household size of 2.14 indicates that there are not many households with large groups of individuals living together. In fact, the average family size is just 2.94, indicating small family sizes as well.

¹ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/livable-in-action/info-2019/us-census-and-aging.html>

> FIGURE 1.4: SENECA HOUSEHOLDS

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



> FIGURE 1.5: SENECA HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

A higher portion of the City’s population over the age of 25 has some college, an associates degree, or bachelor’s degree, than both the County and the State. However, the City also has a lower percentage of high school graduates and graduate level degrees than the County and State. These trends align with the types of employment in the City. Almost 40% of residents who live in Seneca and are over the age of 25 have a high school degree or lower level of education, as compared to 29.5% of individuals who do not live but work in the City.² Education and workforce development are further covered in Element 2 of this Plan.

2 <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

> TABLE 1.5: TREND COMPARISONS (NET CHANGE 2010 - 2020, % OF 25+ POPULATION)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2010 - 2020)

	SOUTH CAROLINA	OCONEE COUNTY	CITY OF SENECA
No High School Degree	+ 5.8%	+ 7.7%	+ 12.3%
High School, Some College, or Associate’s Degree	- 2.4%	- 5.1%	- 10.5%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	+ 5.1%	+ 6.0%	+ 5.7%

> TABLE 1.6: EDUCATION COMPARISONS (% OF 25+ POPULATION)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)

	SOUTH CAROLINA	OCONEE COUNTY	CITY OF SENECA
No High School Degree	11.7%	14.3%	16.0%
HS Graduate (includes equivalency)	28.9%	28.7%	23.9%
Some College, No Degree	20.6%	19.7%	23.3%
Associate’s Degree	9.9%	9.9%	10.3%
Bachelor’s Degree	18.2%	16.5%	18.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10.8%	10.9%	7.6%

> FIGURE 1.6: TREND COMPARISONS (NET CHANGE 2010 - 2020, % OF 25+ POPULATION)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2010 - 2020)



1.2% increase in non-degree population



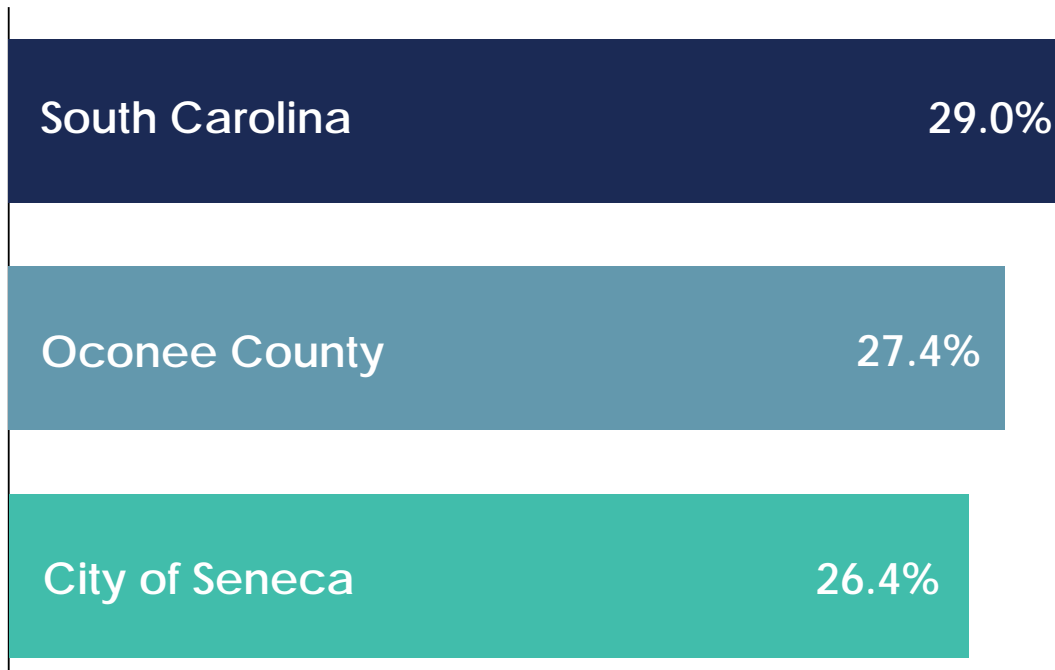
4.9% decrease in H.S. degree & some college population



4.7% increase in college degree population

> FIGURE 1.7: PERCENT OF THE POPULATION WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



LIVABILITY

Each year, the AARP releases a livability score for neighborhoods, cities, counties, and states throughout the country. The score is based on seven categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. Each category is scored on a scale of 0 - 100, with a national average score of 50 for all categories.

The overall livability score for Seneca is 51, which is just slightly above the national average. Oconee County and South Carolina both have an overall score of 48. The categories where Seneca scored the highest are housing (69) and environment (68). Housing is measured through the percentage of homes with zero step entrances, availability of multi-family homes, housing costs, housing cost burden, and availability of subsidized housing; along with policies that promote affordability, availability, and accessibility. Environment captures metrics and policies about air and water quality, hazard mitigation plans, and energy efficiency.

The categories for which Seneca scored the lowest were opportunity (30) and health (35). Opportunity is based on metrics and policies about job availability, government credibility, and graduation rates. Health is measured by metrics and policies about healthy behaviors, such as smoking cessation and exercise. The City can use the livability factors from AARP as guidance for a variety of factors that can support an aging population and the overall quality of life throughout the City.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- With Seneca's expected population growth, it will likely be classified as urban in a future US census designation. This change will impact funding and authority for transportation, public facilities, and the environment.
- As the population continues to get older, the City will need to ensure that the services and economy is not burdened by this age group. Additionally, it should look into a livability study to make sure that the City meets the needs for this population.
- Seneca is more diverse in race, ethnicity, and income than the rest of the County and should ensure that attention is given to the different groups that make up its population when making decisions.
- The City has a generally small household size; indicating higher levels of individuals living alone and less large families.
- The City's median age group and general population age distribution is skewed much older than other localities. It will need to focus on retaining and attracting young families to reverse these trends.
- Seneca's population has a lower high school graduation level and lower percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher. The City should ensure that trade schools and post secondary educational opportunities are available to make sure that the population meets the employment needs.



ELEMENT 2

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Element highlights how the labor force and industries have shaped the growth of the community. This element covers regional comparisons, unemployment, wages and income, employment recruitment and trends, land use, industry sectors, commuting patterns, and work force development.

CONTEXT

As stated in the previous element, the main industry that initially spurred growth in Seneca was the textile industry. Textiles were able to be successful due to Seneca's location at a major railroad intersection and near a river. These assets are still valuable to the economy today. The Norfolk Southern Railway travels through the City, with multiple tracks along the main corridor. This rail system allows for the movement of goods into and out of the region. Additionally, the City is bisected by US-123, which travels from Chattanooga, Tennessee to Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. This route cuts directly through Clemson, home to Clemson University, which is only seven miles from Seneca. Also, the City is only 14 miles off of Interstate 85; a major interstate highway in the southeastern United States, traversing from Alabama to Virginia, and linking it to both Charlotte and Atlanta. These interstate connections are vital to the economic growth and overall health of Seneca.

Oconee County is the main economic development authority for the City. However, the City established the Seneca Facilities Corporation in 2012 to act primarily as a real estate arm to assist the County's economic development division on a local level. Seneca Facilities Corporation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to "promote and encourage the retention of existing businesses and industries and the establishment of new businesses and industries in economically distressed areas of the City." Seneca and Oconee County work jointly to facilitate economic development. Additionally, both the County and the City are part of several planning and economic development regional organizations which work to establish a vibrant and diverse workforce.

LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

COUNTY AND STATE LABOR FORCE

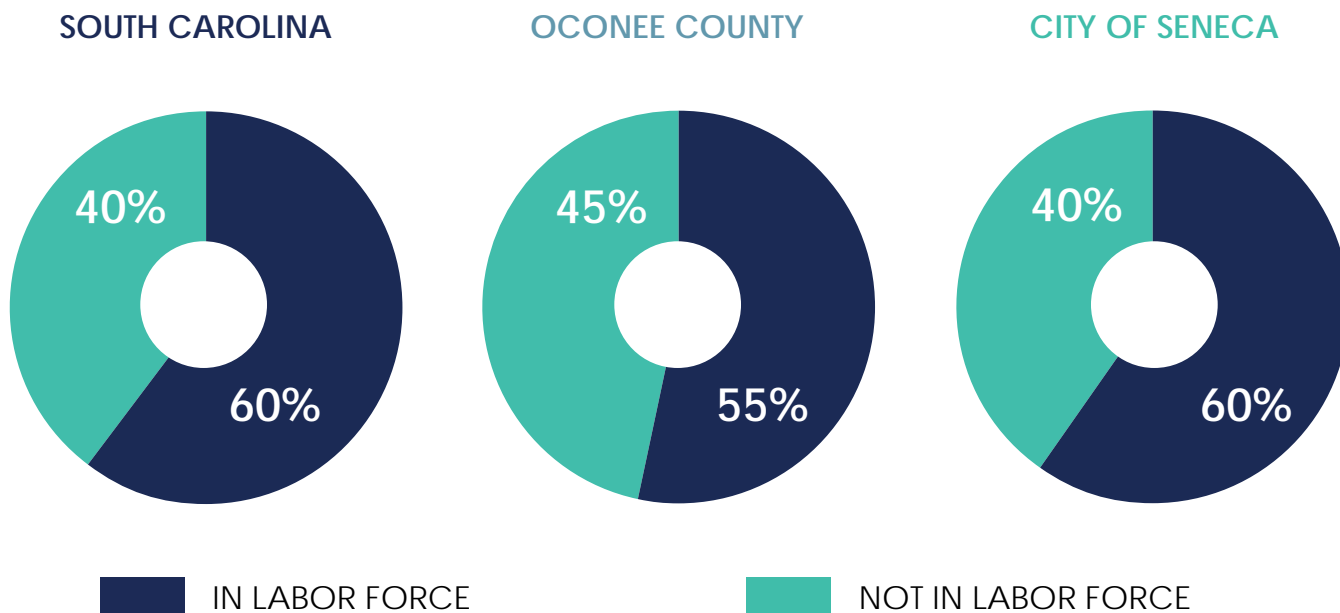
Oconee County had 34,377 individuals in the labor force as of April 2022. The labor force participation rate in the County was lower than both the State and the City of Seneca. The industries in the County with the highest employment in 2018 were manufacturing, retail trade, and healthcare/social assistance. Projections provided by the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce predicted that by 2028 the industries with the highest employment would remain the same. However, the industries with the highest projected growth rate would be management of companies and enterprises, professional/scientific/and technical services, and administrative support/waste management¹.

Table 2.1 shows location quotients for employment and wages in Oconee County in 2020. Location quotients are ratios used to measure how an area's employment and wages compare to the national distribution. If a location quotient is greater than 1.0, it indicates that the industry has a greater share of the target area's employment than the average county in

¹ <https://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/04000073.pdf>

> **FIGURE 2.1: LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION (PERCENT OF POPULATION 16+)**

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



> **TABLE 2.1: ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT & WAGE LOCATION QUOTIENT (OCONEE COUNTY, 2020)**

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Private Employment by NAICS Sector (2020)

NAICS INDUSTRY SECTOR	EMPLOYMENT LOCATION QUOTIENT	WAGE LOCATION QUOTIENT
Construction	0.96	0.80
Manufacturing	2.89	2.93
Wholesale Trade	0.46	0.39
Retail Trade	1.33	1.35
Information	0.58	0.35
Finance and Insurance	0.56	0.37
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	0.61	0.59
Professional and Technical Services	0.36	0.26
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.02	0.01
Administrative and Waste Services	0.59	0.88
Educational Services	0.43	0.31
Health Care and Social Assistance	0.53	0.71
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.39	0.80
Accommodation and Food Services	0.97	0.89
Other Services, Except Public Administration	1.08	1.09

the United States. On a statewide level, the industries with the highest employment location quotient are utilities (1.42), manufacturing (1.39), administrative and waste services (1.25), and accommodation and food services (1.25)². Oconee County has a similar high employment location quotient in manufacturing (at 2.68). Other industries with location quotients above 1.0 in the County include arts, entertainment and recreation (1.39), Retail trade (1.33), and other services/public administration (1.09).

The Appalachian Regional Commission Shift Share Analysis for South Carolina (2005-2018) provides another measure of industries and employment in the County. According to this source, employment in Oconee County grew by 3.51% from 2005 to 2018. Shift share analysis compares industry mix, regional shifts, and total share of employment compared to the United States, the Appalachian region, Oconee County, and its neighboring counties. Industry mix (IM) shows if an industry is growing faster or slower than the overall growth rate in the compared regions. The Regional Shift (RS) measures the actual employment changes in an industry after adjusting for overall industry growth rates, determining if the County has a competitive advantage for that industry. Total Share (TS) combines the RS and IM to measure if the growth of an industry is fast despite not having a competitive advantage or if the County has a strong enough competitive advantage to overcome a slower than average industry growth rate. The higher the number for all of these values, the better.

The industries with the highest total share of employment growth in Oconee County from 2005 to 2018 are educational services, administrative, and ambulatory health care. On a regional level, the industries with the highest IM or industries which grew faster in the County than the surrounding region were food service, ambulatory services and motor vehicle bodies. The slowest growing industries compared to the Appalachian region were computer/electronic services and retail. The industries with the highest RS or where employment grew the most compared to the industry's growth rate were educational services, administrative services, and computer/electronic services. And the industries which had the lowest employment growth after adjusting for overall industry growth were food/service industry and motor vehicle bodies³.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate in Seneca was higher than the County and State through 2017, when it dropped below 6%. However the City has experienced a spike in unemployment since 2019 and its unemployment rate is currently much higher than Oconee County. The County's unemployment rate, on the other hand, has followed closely with state and national rates. The County experienced a spike in 2020, following the coronavirus pandemic. However, unemployment dropped back down in 2021 to 3.6%. The majority of unemployment claims in the County were from white females in the 25 - 40 year age range, with a college degree. However, unemployment in all categories are minimal.

From June 2021-July 2022, ten of the twelve months had more job openings than unemployed individuals, indicating that there is likely a mis-alignment between the type of jobs and location of jobs available as compared to the unemployed workforce⁴. The industries with the highest number of unemployment claims in the County were manufacturing and administrative/support/waste management. These industries were also the highest in the State.

2 https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/table_maker/v4/table_maker.htm#type=6&year=2020&qtr=A&own=5&area=45000&supp=0

3 South Carolina Shift-Share Analysis 2005-2018 (2022)

4 <https://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/04000073.pdf>

INCOME AND WAGES

INCOME

The United States Census labor market profiles for the those who live in Seneca show that 75.7% of individuals who live in the City make over \$1,250 a month, with 37.6% earning more than \$3,333 a month. For individuals who commute into the City for work, slightly less (71.8%) earn over \$1,250 a month and only 29.6% earn over \$3,333 a month.

The per capita income in Seneca for 2016 - 2020 was \$28,515, and the median household income for the same data period was \$42,150. These numbers are below the averages for the County and the State. Seneca is within two of the census tracts with the lowest median incomes in the County. Both the median household and per capita incomes levels for all three jurisdictions rose from 2010 to 2020, which aligns with national trends.

WAGES BY INDUSTRY

Similar to employment location quotients, wage location quotients indicate what industries have higher wages (as a total subset of the economy) in the County as compared to the average county in the United States. These two location quotients, employment and wages, are often linked. Thus, manufacturing, retail trade, and other services/public administration are also the industries with the highest wage location quotients in the County.

The industries with the highest average wages in the County are management of companies and enterprises (\$83,928), finance and insurance (\$70,772), and professional, scientific, and technical services (\$70,304). The industries with the lowest average wages in the County are accommodation and food service (\$19,760), arts/entertainment/recreation (\$20,072), and retail trade (\$32,552). As shown with the location quotients, the City has a higher than average share of employment retail and arts/entertainment.

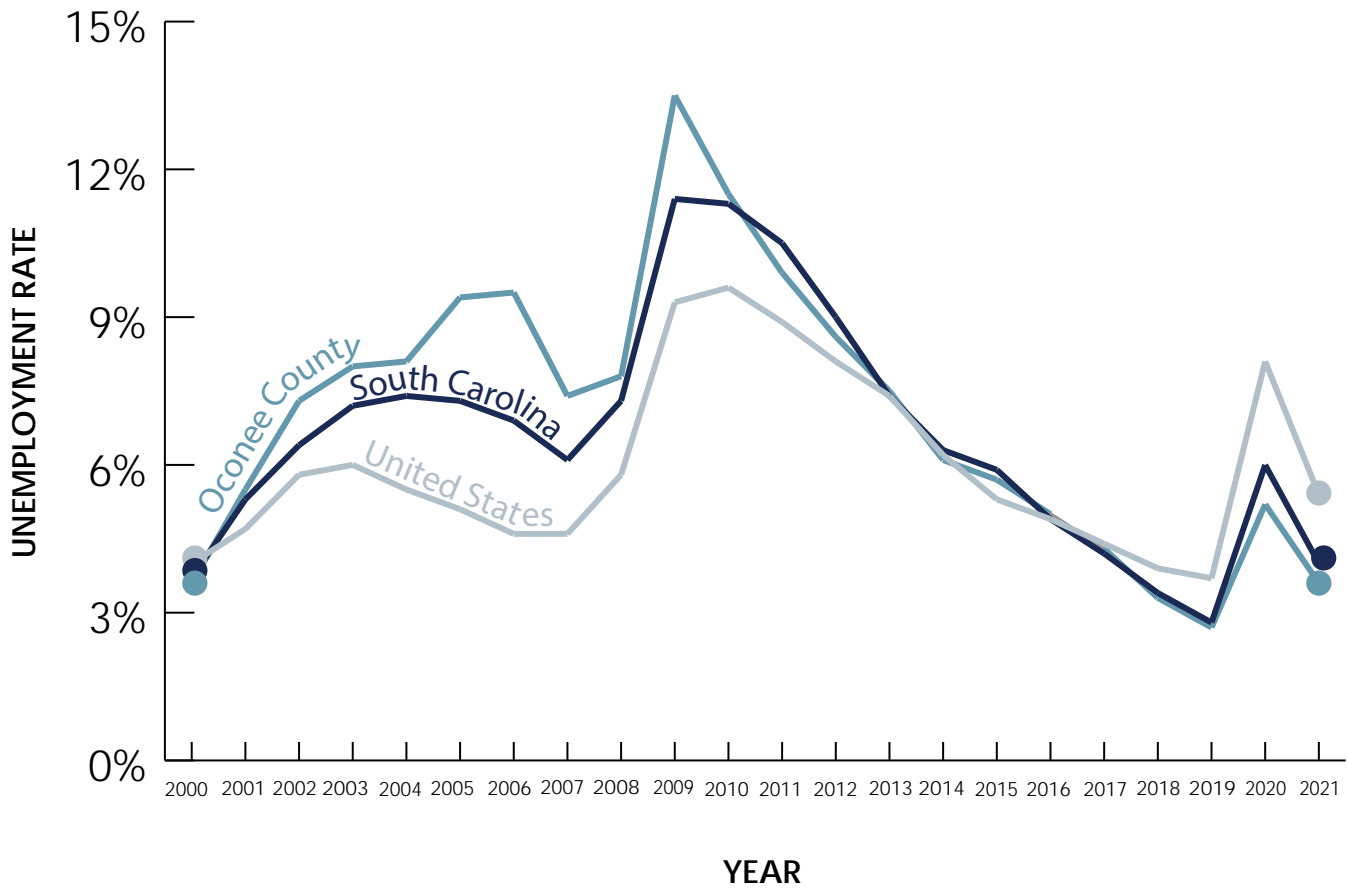
REGIONAL ECONOMY

Each year, the Appalachian Regional Commission compiles a classification system to compare counties in the region in terms of three year average unemployment rates, per capita market income, and poverty rates. The classifications include distressed, at-risk, transitional competitive, or attainment. The classification is used to determine match requirements for grants, as well as research and investment strategies to target the most distressed areas. The Appalachian Regional Commission has designated Oconee County as a transitional county for fiscal year 2023, which means that the County is transitioning between both strong and weak economies. There are three areas within the County which have been classified as distressed: Census tract 308.01 (in Seneca), 311 (between Holly Springs and Westminster), and 304.03 (in Walhalla). Census Tract 308.01, which contains the southern portion of Seneca, was listed as distressed because the median family income is 57.9% of the U.S. average and the poverty rate (24.5%) is 190.6% of the U.S. average⁵.

5 <https://www.arc.gov/classifying-economic-distress-in-appalachian-counties/>

> FIGURE 2.4: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (2000 - 2021)



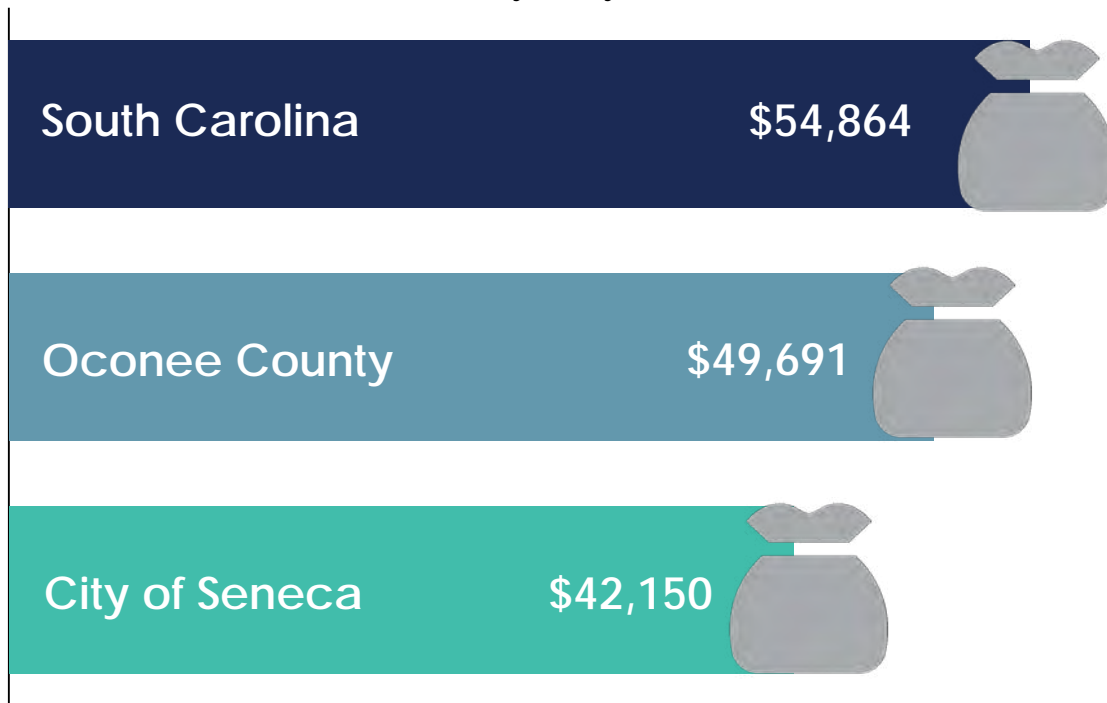
> TABLE 2.2: INCOME COMPARISONS

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2010, 2020)

	SOUTH CAROLINA	OCONEE COUNTY	CITY OF SENECA
Median Household Income, 2010	\$43,939	\$42,266	\$39,239
Median Household Income, 2020	\$54,864	\$49,691	\$42,150
Change in Median Household Income, 2010 - 2020	+ 24.9%	+ 17.6%	+ 7.4%
Median Per Capita Income, 2010	\$23,443	\$24,055	\$21,863
Median Per Capita Income, 2020	\$30,727	\$31,297	\$28,515
Change in Median Per Capita Income, 2010 - 2020	+ 31.1%	+ 30.1%	+ 30.4%

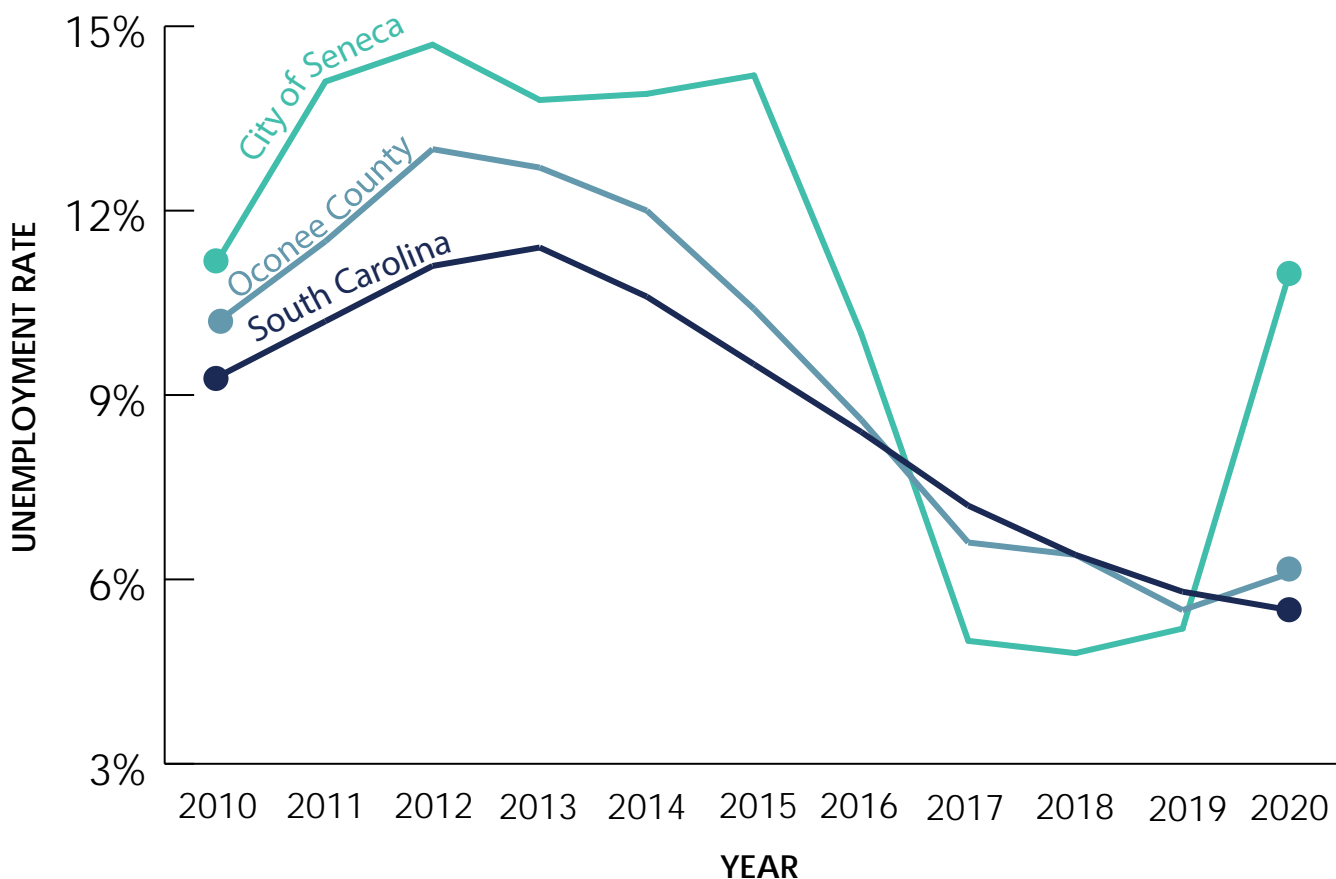
> FIGURE 2.2: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISONS

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



> FIGURE 2.3: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2010 - 2020)



EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRIES, AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

LAND USE

Map 2.2 illustrates areas in Seneca devoted to industrial, office, or commercial land uses. Slightly over 15% of the City's land is set aside for these uses, not including areas zoned for mixed-uses, which also typically contain commercial and office uses. As shown in the map, the areas designated for commercial and industrial uses largely fall along US-123, North 1st Street, and Wells Highway.

INDUSTRIES

When looking at top industries in Seneca, 22.2% of residents work in manufacturing, 13.3% in accommodation and food services, 12.7% in retail trade, and 11% in health care and social assistance. In contrast, of those who commute into the City for work, 16.2% work in accommodation and food services, 15.6% work in health care and social assistance, 15.2% work in retail trade, and 10.8% work in finance and insurance. Only 0.4% of individuals who commute into Seneca work in manufacturing.

Overall, Seneca's industry sectors that employed the highest percentage of the population in 2020 were educational services/health care/social assistance, arts/entertainment/recreation/food service, and manufacturing.

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS AND ECONOMIC RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

In order to assist with the retainment and recruitment of businesses there are several state, regional, and local resources available in the City:

City of Seneca Business Development Support Center (SBDSC)⁶

The SBDSC helps to serve the City's businesses with attraction, retention, and redevelopment by providing leadership training, marketing services, and educational resources. The SBDSC currently has 64 member businesses.

Oconee Economic Alliance

The Oconee Economic Alliance (OEA) is the economic development arm of Oconee County and its municipalities, and works to bring jobs and capital investments to the area. The OEA aims to recruit new industries through marketing, retain existing industry through increasing incomes and diversifying the tax base, and assist municipalities in downtown revitalization⁷. On their website, the OEA lists the target industries for the County as Advanced Manufacturing, Plastic Injection Molding, Automotive, and Metal fabrication. These industries were chosen based on both the opportunities available in the County and the existing workforce skills.

Oconee County Chamber of Commerce

The Oconee County Chamber of Commerce assists local businesses in achieving success through resources, political advocacy, marketing, networking, education and training. While the Chamber covers the entire County, their main focus is Westminster and Walhalla.⁸

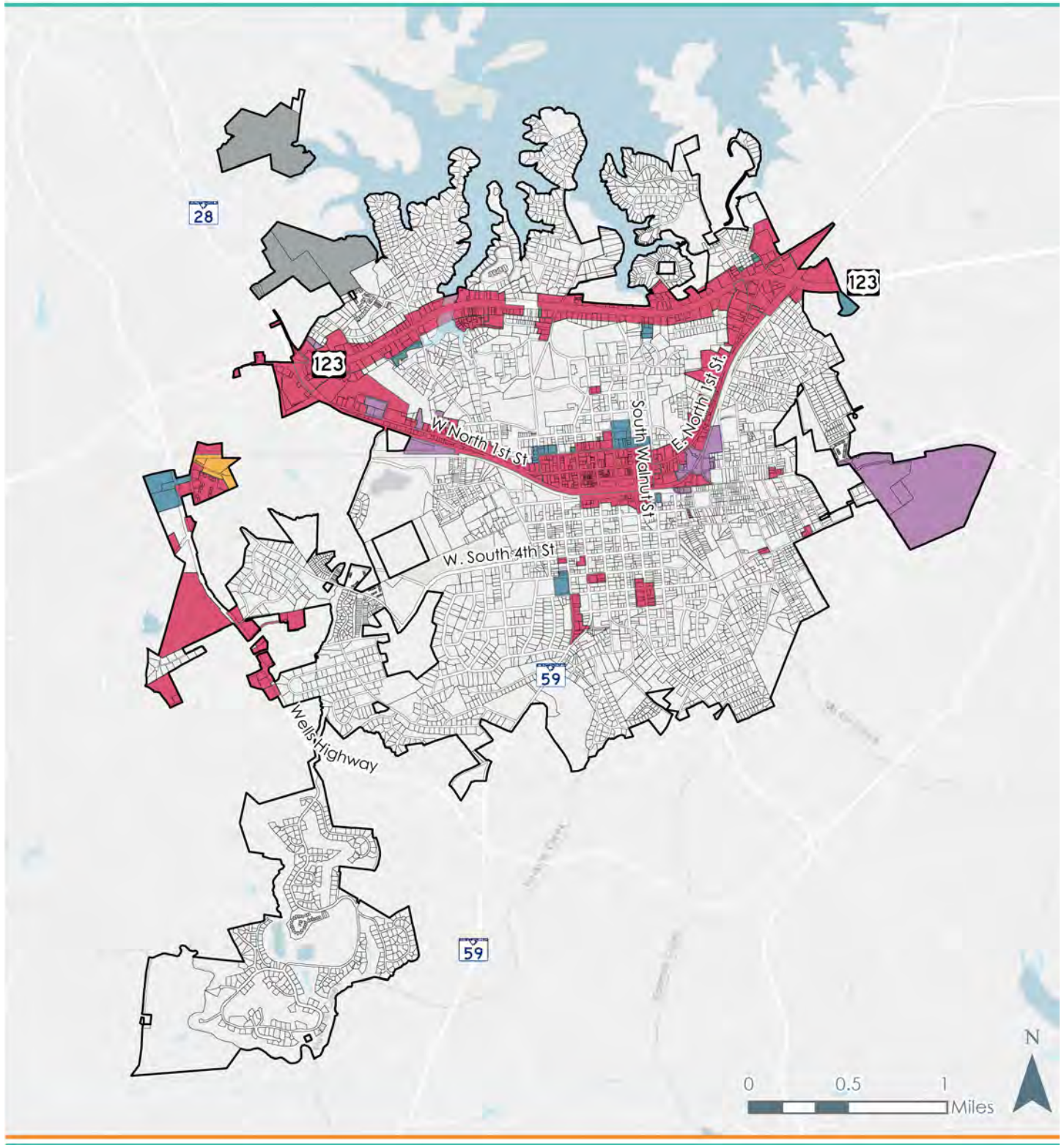
6 <https://sbdsc.org/>

7 <http://oconeealliance.org/who-we-are/#what-we-do>

8 <https://oconeechambersc.com/>

> MAP 2.2: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND USES AND ZONING

Source: City of Seneca(2022)



 Seneca Parcels

 City Limits

ZONING

 Industrial

 Commercial

 Office

 Mixed Use Vacant

 Mixed Use

> TABLE 2.3: KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)

INDUSTRY SECTOR	PERCENT OF WORKERS
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	4.7%
Construction	6.4%
Manufacturing	15.0%
Wholesale Trade	0.7%
Retail Trade	13.6%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	3.8%
Information	0.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	5.9%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administration	4.4%
Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	20.4%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	17.8%
Public Administration	2.3%
Other Services	4.5%

> TABLE 2.4: KEY OCCUPATIONS (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)

OCCUPATION	PERCENT OF WORKERS
Management, Business, Science, Arts	30.4%
Service	18.8%
Sales and Office	27.0%
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	6.5%
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	17.3%

Upstate SC Alliance

The Upstate SC Alliance is a public/private regional economic development organization formed in 2000 to market the northwestern corner of South Carolina. This includes Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, and Union Counties. The alliance works with local economic developers, investors, and the South Carolina Department of Commerce to bring businesses to the Upstate region⁹.

Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG)

The ACOG helps to provide guidance and programs related to transportation, transit, aging services, community development and infrastructure grants, and work force development. The ACOG covers the regions of Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties, as well as 42 municipalities¹⁰.

Appalachian Development Corp (ADC)

The ADC works to further economic development, job creation, and retention by providing technical assistance and financial lending to businesses located in the Upstate South Carolina region. The ADC provides funding in partnership with the US Small Business Administration and the US Department of Agriculture. Financial assistance includes reduced risk, fixed interest rates, reduced equity contributions, and extended amortization¹¹.

Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission serves as an economic development agency, focusing on grants, research, and educational opportunities. The Commission works in partnership with the federal government and 13 state governments covering 423 counties in the Appalachian region.

South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA)

The SCRA was chartered by the State in 1983 as a public, non-profit corporation to grow innovation and economic development in South Carolina. The key industry focus areas for the SCRA are advanced manufacturing and materials, information technology, and life sciences. These sectors align with the strengths of the workforce, existing companies, and institutional research in the State¹².

SC Division of Small and Minority Business Contracting (SMBCC)

The SMBCC connects minority and women-owned businesses to State contracting and procurement opportunities and work with State agencies to implement and monitor minority contracting programs. The SMBCC also works with stakeholders to develop and implement policies addressing issues surrounding the small and disadvantaged business community and procedures to increase participation in state contracting by minority and women-owned businesses¹³.

South Carolina Innovation Hub

The SC innovation hub, or Scribble, is a division of the South Carolina Department of Commerce focused on entrepreneurial programs and innovative curriculum¹⁴.

9 <https://www.upstatescalliance.com/about-us/>

10 <https://www.scacog.org/>

11 <https://adcloans.com/about/>

12 <https://www.scra.org/about-us/>

13 <https://osmba.sc.gov/>

14 <https://scribblesc.com/about/about-sc-innovation/>

SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP)

SCMEP is a non-profit operating under the SC Department of Commerce that works to help South Carolina companies to improve their competitiveness, performance, and profit¹⁵.

Clemson Regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The Clemson Regional Small Business Development Center is the Small Business Development Element closest to Oconee County. The SBDC is a statewide network of business training and counseling centers. The SBDC assists small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow their businesses through education and resources such as bookkeeping, marketing, and technologies¹⁶.

Upstate Carolina Angel Network

The Carolina Angel network, now under VentureSouth, is a venture capitalist investment group that invest in and supports start-up and high growth businesses in the Southeastern United States¹⁷.

WorkLinks Workforce Development

WorkLinks is a State office that provides employer assistance in hiring qualified workers, labor market information, job skills assessment and placement, and employment training programs for youth, seniors, veterans, and other special populations (Oconee County Comprehensive Plan 2020)¹⁸. Oconee County is within the SC Works WorkLinks area and has four centers; one of which is located in Seneca.

INDUSTRIAL PARKS

Oconee County has three County-owned industrial parks that are certified by the South Carolina Department of Commerce¹⁹. Map 2.3 shows the location of the industrial parks in Oconee in relation to the rail line and opportunity zones.

Seneca Rail Park

The Seneca Rail Park is located on the east side of Seneca, 2.4 miles off of US-123. The Park has 111 acres; 83 of which are buildable. The Norfolk Southern Railway runs along the northern edge of the site and provide opportunities for shipping and transport to and from the site. The park is designated as a certified fiber ready industrial park; the first in Upstate South Carolina to receive this designation. There are several incentives that can be provided to businesses interested in the Seneca Rail Park:

- The site is located in a census tract eligible for new market tax credits
- Fee in lieu of tax eligible
- Job tax credits and job development credits
- Worker training assistance programs
- Foreign trade zone and multi county industrial park eligible

The site has power, water, sewer, fiber, and natural gas service already in place. In the marketing proposal it states that within a 30 minute drive there is a population of 149,934 people, and 815,831 people within a 60 minute drive²⁰. Within a 20 mile radius of the Seneca

15 <https://scmep.org/about-us/who-we-are/>

16 <https://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/sbdc/about.html>

17 <https://venturesouth.vc/>

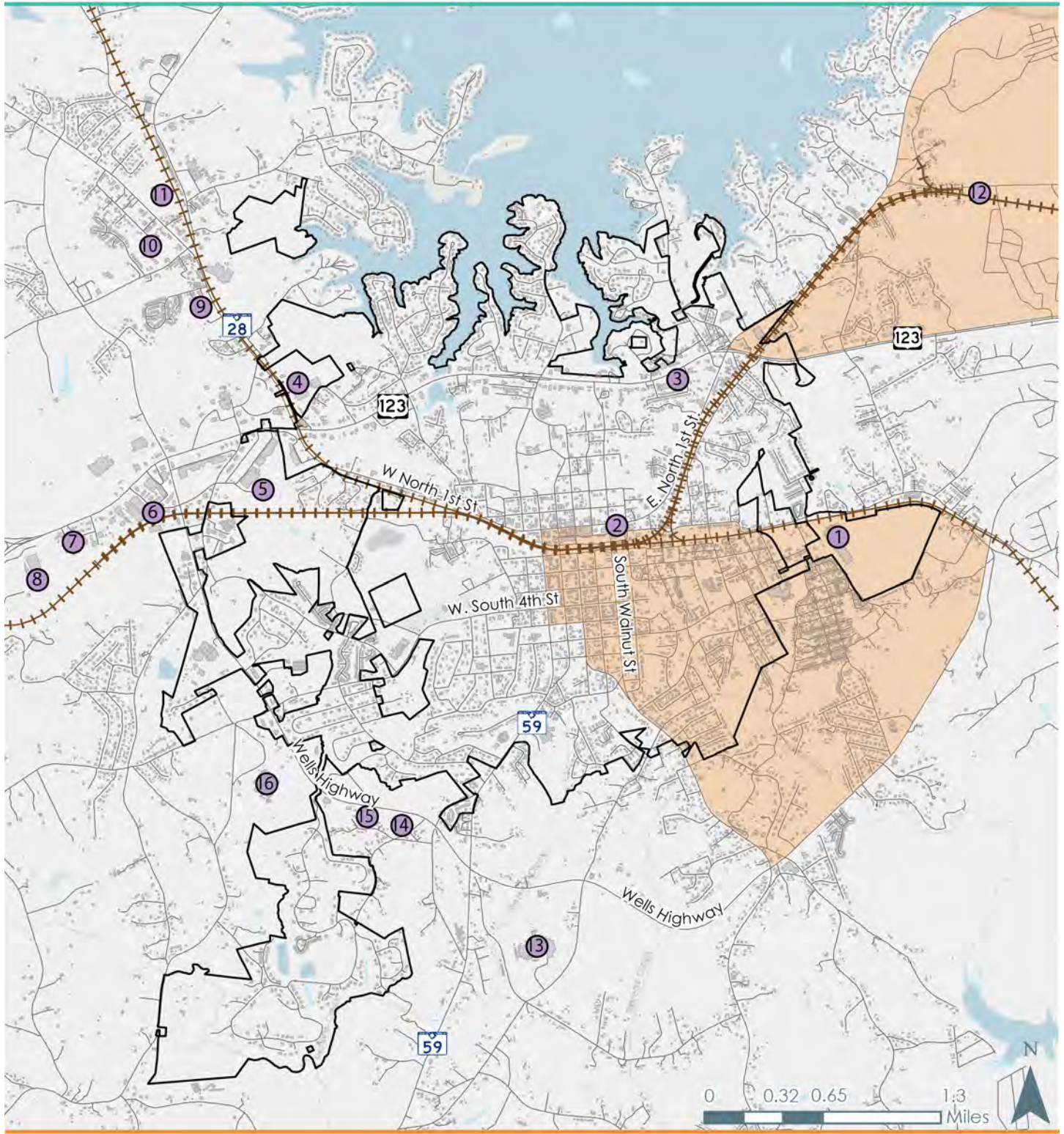
18 <https://worklinkweb.com/en/>

19 <https://investoconeesc.com/site-selectors/available-real-estate/industrial-parks-2/>

20 <https://investoconeesc.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Seneca-Rail-Park-Package-update-8.9.18->

> MAP 2.3: INDUSTRIAL SITES AND OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Source: Oconee County Economic Alliance (2022)



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ① Seneca Rail Park | ⑥ Hi-Tec Plating Inc | ⑪ Parkway Products | ⑯ BorgWarner Torq Transfer |
| ② Keowee Brewing | ⑦ Ideal Steel Inc | ⑫ Lainer Timber | --- Railroads |
| ③ Technology Solutions | ⑧ Sealed Air Corp | ⑬ BASF | ■ Opportunity Zones |
| ④ Perry Ellis International | ⑨ US Building Innovations | ⑭ CRM Global Manufacturing | |
| ⑤ Plastic Products Inc | ⑩ Colony Tool | ⑮ Agitation Resource | |

Rail Park, there are 206,068 individuals in the labor force (a 72.2% labor force participation rate). Within this radius, it is estimated that there are 4,181 manufacturing workers who are currently underemployed and therefore potentially available to work in new facilities at the site. Because the underemployment rate in this area is higher than the State, there are potentially more opportunities to bring in new industry.

Oconee Industry and Technology Park (OITP)

The OITP is a manufacturing park that contains 400 acres (303 buildable) along highway 11. The County's workforce development center and the Tri-County Technical Campus are located within the Oconee Industry and Technology Park, providing opportunities for internships and co-ops to be readily available to companies who choose to locate there.

Golden Corner Commerce Park (GCCP)

The GCCP is a manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution park in the northern portion of Oconee County, along highway 59. The park is 322 acres; 268 of which are buildable.

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Opportunity zones are part of a federal program under which state governors designate low income census tracts as areas to encourage economic development and job creation through federal tax reductions. There are two opportunity zones in Oconee County:

Historic Mill Hill Opportunity Zone

The Historic Mill Hill Opportunity Zone captures the site of the former JP Steven Mill (on 27 acres adjacent to Downtown Seneca). The Seneca Rail Park is located within this opportunity zone.

Lake Keowee Opportunity Zone

The Lake Keowee Opportunity Zone is a 625 acre tract on the Keowee River which is currently under a single owner. The area is zoned "unrestricted" and is open for mixed use development. The area's proximity to Clemson University allows for opportunities to take advantage of the student population, events, and visitors.

TOP EMPLOYERS

The Top employers in Seneca are:

- Duke Energy
- Oconee Memorial Hospital
- Borg Warner
- Schneider Electric
- BASF Corp
- Greenfield Industries
- Perry Ellis International

All of these (except the hospital and Perry Ellis) are also top employers in the County.

TOURISM

Tourism is an important economic development driver in Seneca due to the region's natural amenities and nearby urban areas. There are several hotels within the City limits; the newest including Keowee Key and the Cliffs. Hotels are important for both housing visitors and contributing to the tax base.

In 2018, the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism released a report on the statewide economic impact of travel.²¹ The report showed that for 2018, Oconee County received \$66.21 million in overall expenditures due to travel and tourism; \$4.29 million of these expenditures came from sales tax receipts and \$3.32 million from local tax receipts. Oconee ranked 20th in the State by expenditure levels.

Local Accommodations Tax Grant and Local Hospitality Tax Grant

Seneca utilizes revenues from hospitality and accommodations taxes to provide Local Accommodations Tax Grants and Local Hospitality Tax Grants to tourism-related organizations. Each grant program includes about \$10,000, and can be used for tourism-related buildings, tourism-related facilities, beach and water access, roadways to tourism destinations, advertisement of promotions related to tourism, and water or sewer infrastructure to meet tourism demands.²² Grant applications are available twice per year and recipients are approved by the City Council and the City of Seneca ATAX Advisory Committee.

While the lake is a major tourism attraction, there are also several events which draw visitors into Downtown Seneca. The City hosts an annual half-marathon, Race for the Green Half Marathon and 5k, which runs through Downtown and showcases the City to visitors. In 2022, there were over 130 participants in the half marathon and over 280 participants in the 5k. The marathon is hosted by Go-Green Events which has helped to organize over 500 races since 2010 to encourage running in the Upstate Region.²³ The City also hosts a range of seasonal events Downtown, including Jazz on the Alley, Clemson watch parties, a Christmas parade, and Christmas light events.

COMMUTING

COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERNS

Within Oconee County, there is a fairly balanced spread of commuting patterns. According to the 2019 American Community Survey, 65% of residents worked in the County and 16% of residents worked within the City itself. Almost 2,600 people commuted into the City for work and about 3,400 residents commuted outside of Seneca for work.

South Carolina Power team's 2017 workforce analysis showed data on commuting patterns for residents within the 20 miles of the Seneca Rail park. This data shows that manufacturing workers have similar commuting patterns to other industries in the area, with a slightly higher percentages of workers traveling more than 15 minutes to work. Manufacturing workers travel on average of 26.6 minutes, whereas other industries travel 25.3 minutes. Additionally, workers who earn below average wages tend to have 30.8% shorter commute times (22.2 minutes) as compared to workers with above average salaries (29.1 minutes). Based on polling, 62.1% of workers reported that they would be willing to travel more than 30 minutes for job opportunities.²⁴ The study concluded that the realistic labor shed for the rail park would include workers within a 40 minute commute time.

21 https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/bitstream/handle/10827/31645/PRT_Economic_Impact_of_Travel_2019-08.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

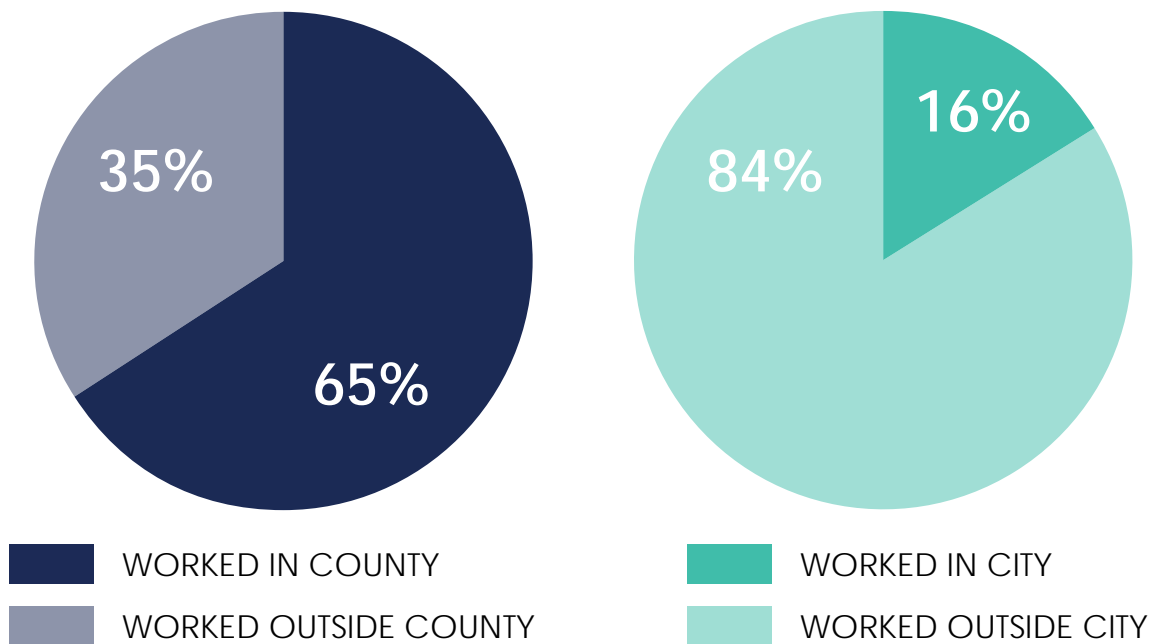
22 <https://Seneca.sc.us/finance-home/local-accommodations-tax-grant#:~:text=The%20City%20of%20Seneca%20accepts,%2C%20programs%2C%20events%20and%20promotions.>

23 <https://runsignup.com/Race/Results/95544/#resultSetId-305329;perpage:5000>

24 https://investoconeesc.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/SC-PowerTeam-Labor-Study-Findings_SRP.pdf

> FIGURE 2.5: PLACE OF WORK (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



CITY COMMUTING PATTERNS

Of the people who are employed in Seneca, 92.8% live outside of the City and only 7.2% reported that they both lived and were employed in the City. Additionally, of those who live in Seneca, 93.5% reported working outside of the City.²⁵ This is likely attributed to a spatial mismatch of industry employment, where the types of jobs residents are employed in are not available in the City and vice-versa.

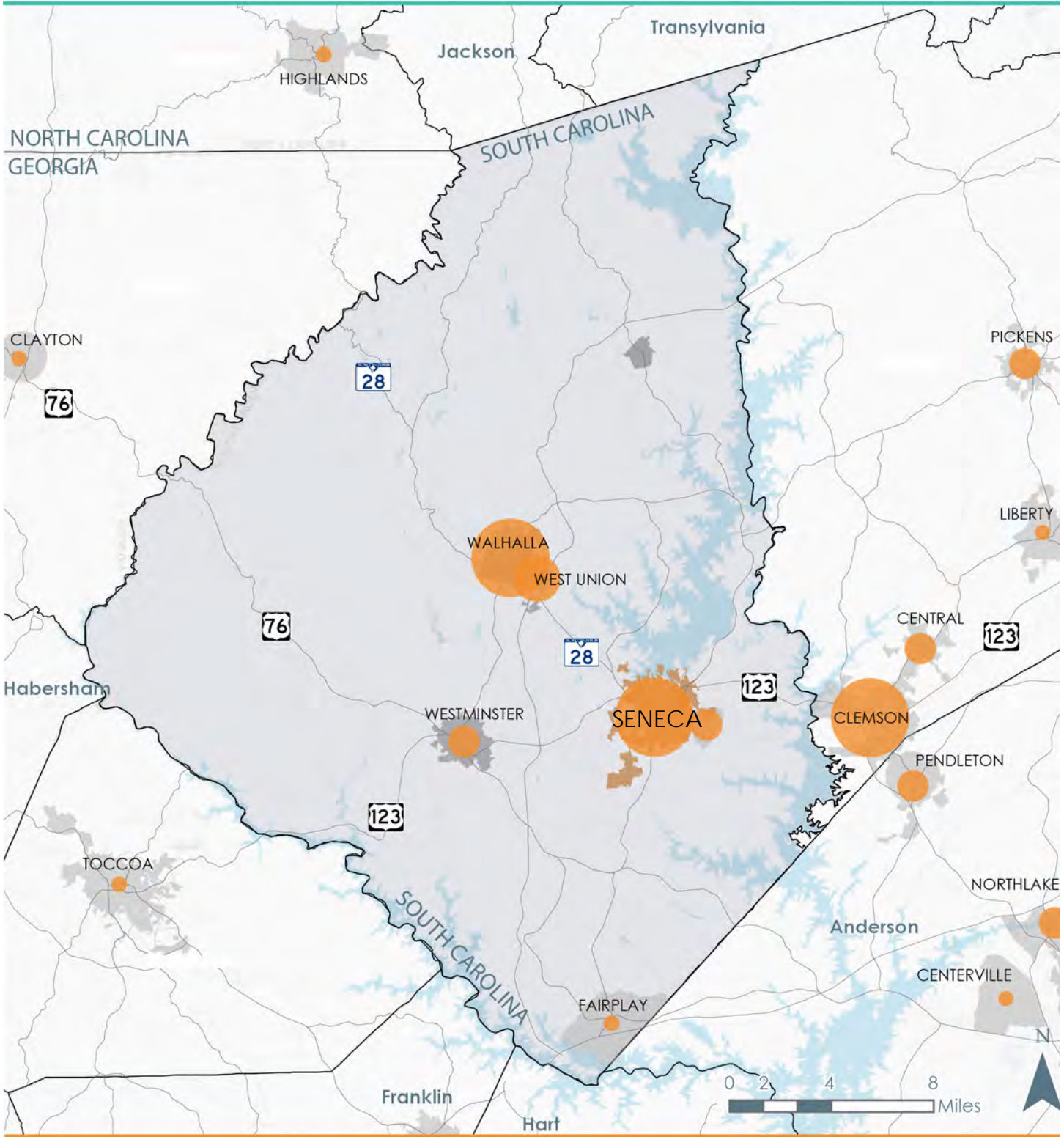
Most commuters reported driving alone or carpooling to work. This large majority may also be attributed to the high levels of regional inflow and outflow for commuting. Additionally, both the City and County have identified the lack of multi-modal transit infrastructure in previous plans, which hinders the attractiveness and ability to use other modes to commute.

- The Top 10 places that people who live in Seneca commute to are:
1. Greenville City, SC
 2. Clemson, SC
 3. Seneca, SC
 4. Walhalla, SC
 5. Anderson City, SC
 6. Columbia City, SC
 7. Easley City, SC
 8. West Union, SC
 9. Wade Hampton, SC
 10. North Charleston, SC

25 <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

> MAP 2.4: WHERE CITY RESIDENTS TRAVEL FOR WORK (REGIONALLY)

Source: US Census OnTheMap (2019)



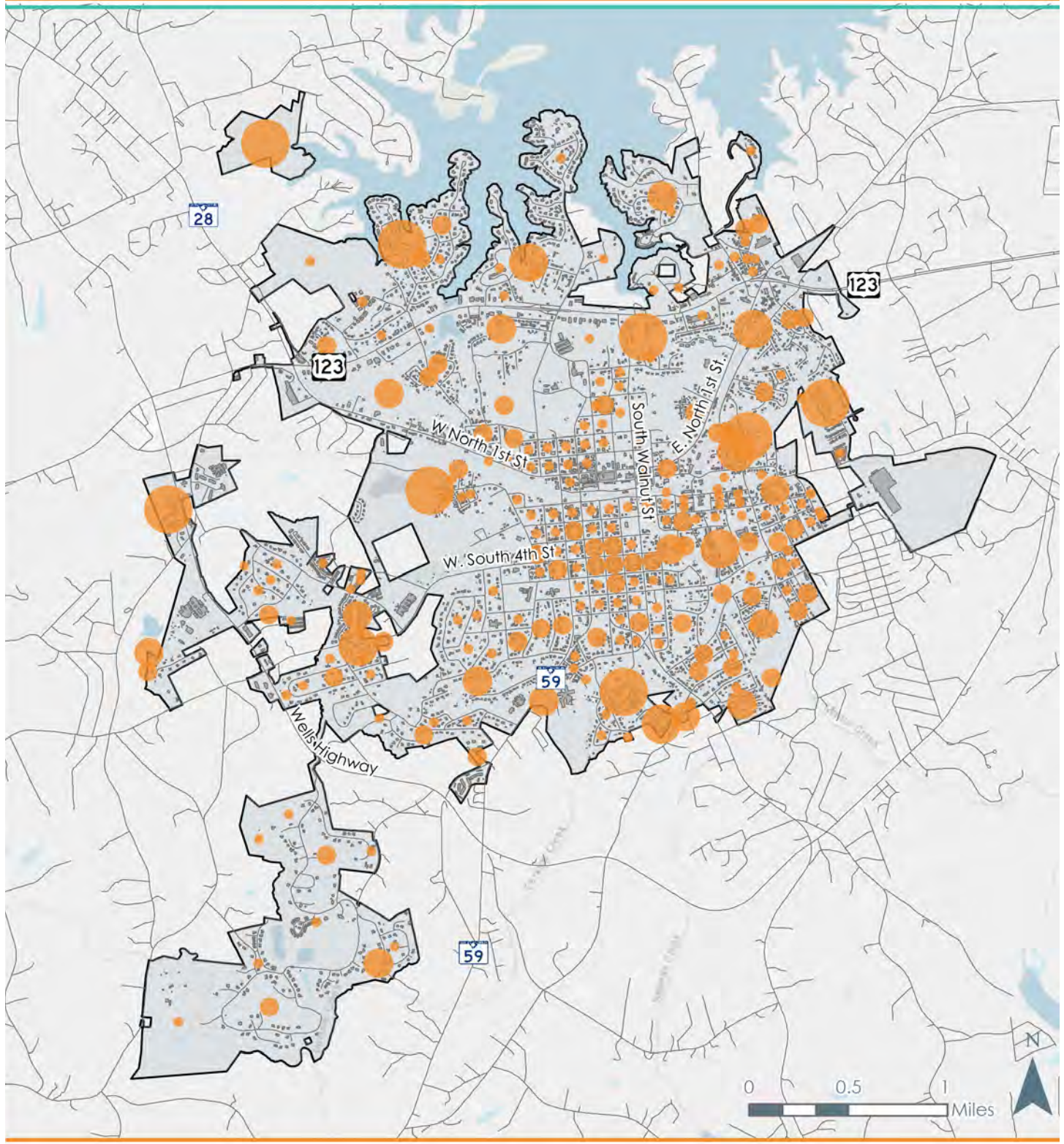
- Seneca City Limits
- Municipalities
- Oconee County

OF JOBS AT EACH DESTINATION

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 303

> MAP 2.5: WHERE RESIDENTS TRAVEL TO WORK (WITHIN THE CITY)

Source: US Census OnTheMap (2019)



Seneca City Limits

Buildings

OF JOBS AT EACH DESTINATION

1 - 10

11 - 25

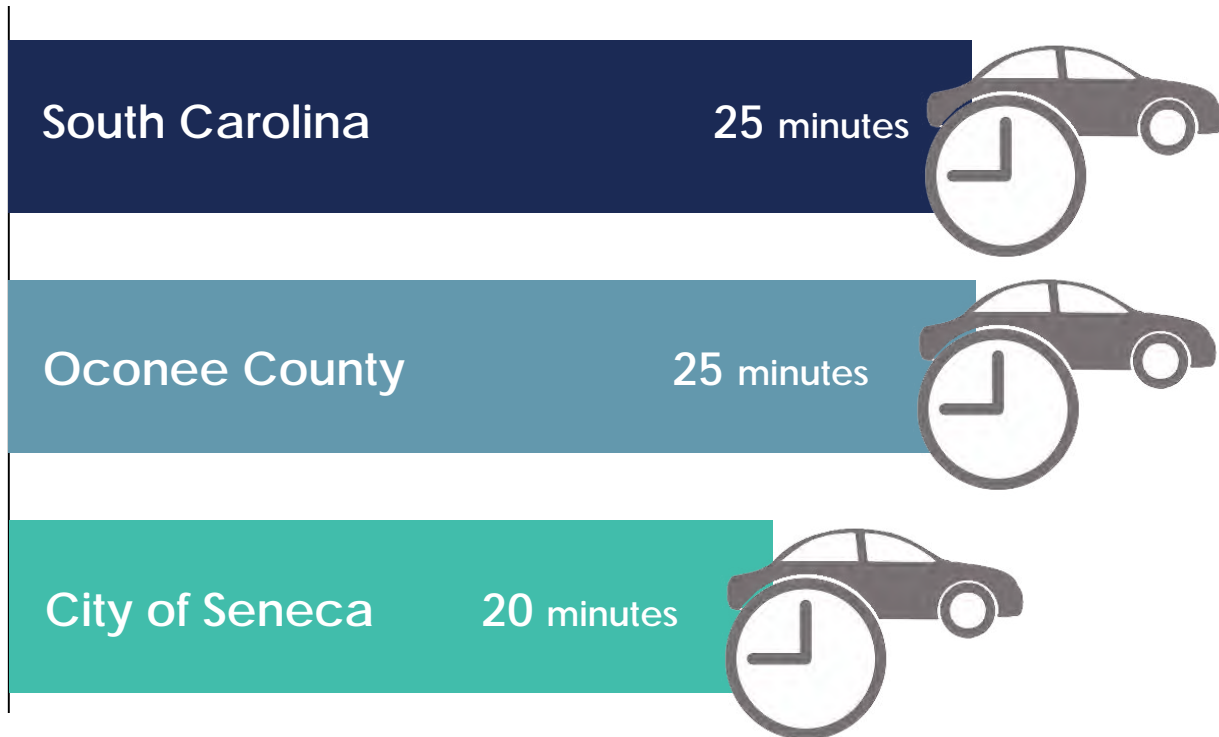
26 - 50

51 - 75

> 75

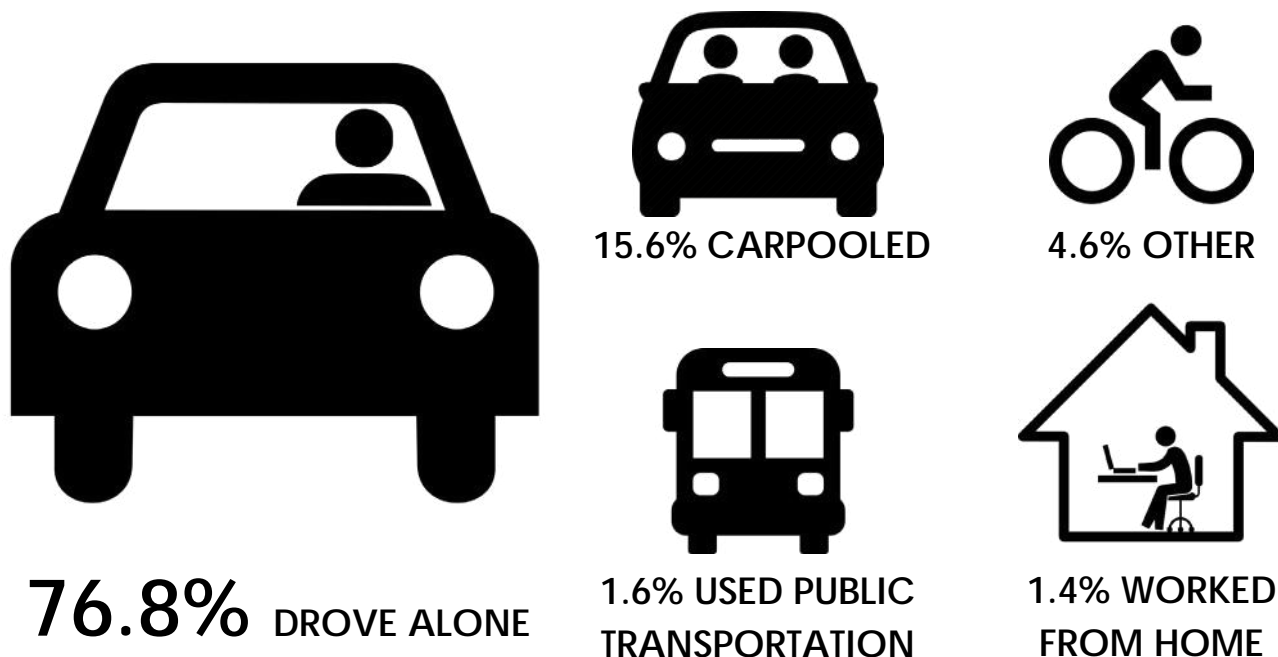
> **FIGURE 2.6: COMMUTE TIMES (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION)**

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



> **FIGURE 2.7: MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION (CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION)**

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

One of the best ways to strengthen economic development is through workforce development, as it both improves the marketability of residents and aids in the attraction of new industries. The City of Seneca hosts, or is in close proximity to, several regional, state, and national resources for workforce development.

Tri-County Entrepreneurial Development Corporation (TCEDC)

The TCEDC assists local entrepreneurs in all of the steps needed between concept and reality through resources and services such as low-rent office space and counseling/mentor-ship services. TCEDC works in partnership with the Oconee Economic Alliance, SCORE, and Tri-County Technical College²⁶.

Clemson University

Clemson University is a large public university located in Upstate South Carolina, only seven miles from Seneca. Clemson University has 21,653 undergraduate students and 5,688 graduate students, with over 80 majors offered. Because of its proximity to Seneca, Clemson serves as a great asset to the City for educational opportunities as well as a nearby educated workforce.²⁷ There are several programs provided by the University which also benefit the State, such as Clemson's Industrial Assessment Center, which provides free energy assessments to small and medium sized industrial facilities throughout the State.²⁸

Tri- county Technical College

Oconee County is in the Tri-County Technical College service area. Tri-County Technical College is a public community college with four campuses: Pendleton, Anderson, Easley, and Seneca (Oconee Campus). The campuses all include a work-based learning program that allows students to work at a business in the area to learn skills, culture, and opportunity.²⁹ Tri -County Technical College has the fifth largest enrollment among the 16 two-year colleges in the South Carolina Technical Education System. The Oconee Campus opened in 2018 in a 37,000 square foot facility which has since offered programs in manufacturing, business administration, and high school dual enrollment credit programs. The campus is also co-located with the Hamilton Career and Technology Center and they have several opportunities for cross education. The current programs at the Oconee Campus are:

- Mechatronics Technology
- Industrial Electronics Technology
- CNC Programming and Operations
- Manufacturing Management and Leadership
- Business Administration (emphasis in operations management)
- University Transfer / University Studies Certificate
- Dual Enrollment / Technical Career Pathways
- Corporate and Community Education

26 <https://www.tcedc.net/about>

27 <https://www.clemson.edu/about/index.html>

28 Oconee Comprehensive Plan 2020

29 <https://www.tctc.edu/admissions/the-tctc-value/career-training/>

Southern Wesleyan University (SWU)

SWU is an accredited nonprofit Christian college in South Carolina, offering both online and on-campus degree programs. The campus is only a 23 minute drive from Seneca.

Hamilton Career Center

Hamilton Career Center is a technology-focused education center for high school students. The center is set up to enable students to explore career interests, gain employable skills, prepare for post secondary education, and gain state and national certifications. The program currently includes classes in architecture; arts, audio-visual technology; marketing; education and training; health services; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, corrections, and security; manufacturing; science, technology, engineering, and math; transportation distribution and logistics; and transition programs.³⁰

School District of Oconee County (SDOC)

Beyond regular classroom requirements, the School District of Oconee County offers elective and diverse classes for middle and high school students which allow them to expand interests and explore career potentials.

Oconee County Adult Education Program

Oconee County Adult Education program is operated by SDOC in Seneca. The program helps residents obtain their high school equivalency diploma (GED), increase adult and family literacy, achieve career ready certification, and improve workplace skills.³¹

Nurturing Oconee's Workforce (NOW)

NOW is a manufacturing-focused workforce development initiative. The initiative began in 2016 under the SDOC and the Oconee Economic Alliance. Participants of the initiative attend monthly employment skills and career awareness workshops, gain industry exposure and networking experiences, and complete internships with Oconee's top manufacturing employers.³²

ReadySC

ReadySC is a statewide training program run by the South Carolina Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education for new and expanding companies in South Carolina, with an estimate value per employee of up to \$9,500. ReadySC operates short term trainings that are customized to meet the specific needs of the employers such as employee recruitment, screening, and training for businesses at little to no cost.³³

Apprenticeship Carolina

Apprenticeship Carolina is a statewide coordination of registered occupational apprenticeships. The program provides individuals with on-the-job training and technical instruction through apprenticeships in over 1,000 occupations and tax credits to participating employers.³⁴ Apprenticeship Carolina also works in partnership with the Hamilton Career and Technology Center.

30 <https://hctc.sdoc.org/>

31 Oconee Comprehensive Plan 2020

32 Oconee Comprehensive Plan 2020

33 Oconee Comprehensive Plan 2020

34 Oconee Comprehensive Plan 2020

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The lakes and proximity to urban areas, such as Clemson, serve as attractors for the City. By understanding these external influences, Seneca can determine if and how it wants to capitalize on different groups, such as Clemson University, to aid in economic development efforts.
- There is a need to attract more private investment Downtown.
- The City's median household and per capita income levels have risen over the past decade, along with the State and County.
- There is a large mis-alignment between those who live and those who work in the City. Further investigation concerning what jobs residents are trained for and how to provide housing for those who work in Seneca should be considered.
- The most common commuting destinations for residents of Seneca are Greenville and Clemson.
- The City has an abundance of regional and state educational and workforce training resources which will help ensure economic success in the future.
- Seneca and Oconee County are targeting different industry sectors for business development and recruitment.
- The City should consider more multi-modal transit options to reduce an over-reliance on private vehicle commuting patterns in order to reduce roadway traffic during peak hours.

ELEMENT

3

**NATURAL
RESOURCES**



INTRODUCTION

The Natural Resources Element provides details on the natural landscape and environmental conditions in order to better understand the opportunities and limitations that these factors play in the future of the City. This element covers soils and geological conditions, climate, agricultural and preserved natural land, parks and recreational facilities, and water resources.

GEOGRAPHIC AND GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

LAND COVER

Based on satellite imagery that was collected from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2019, the land within Seneca is mostly classified as either developed medium density or developed low density, as shown in Map 3.1. Areas along US-123, SC-28, and Ram Cat Alley are classified as developed high density, due to the large amount of impervious cover. There is no land in the City that is classified as cropland. However, there are a few areas along Wells Highway, which are classified as pasture or hay land. The mixture of density in the City is important to retaining the small town feel but it is also important to preserve undeveloped and natural space when planning for growth.

Tree canopy follows the same trends as land cover and impervious surfaces. There are very low levels of tree canopy within the central Downtown area and levels increase as you move into the surrounding area. While there are several large trees on properties in Seneca, there are few to no trees along the streets. Tree canopy is important to urban areas, as they can help to reduce peak temperatures, lower air pollution levels, enhance property values, foster social space, improve neighborhood aesthetics, and serve as important animal habitats.

SOIL

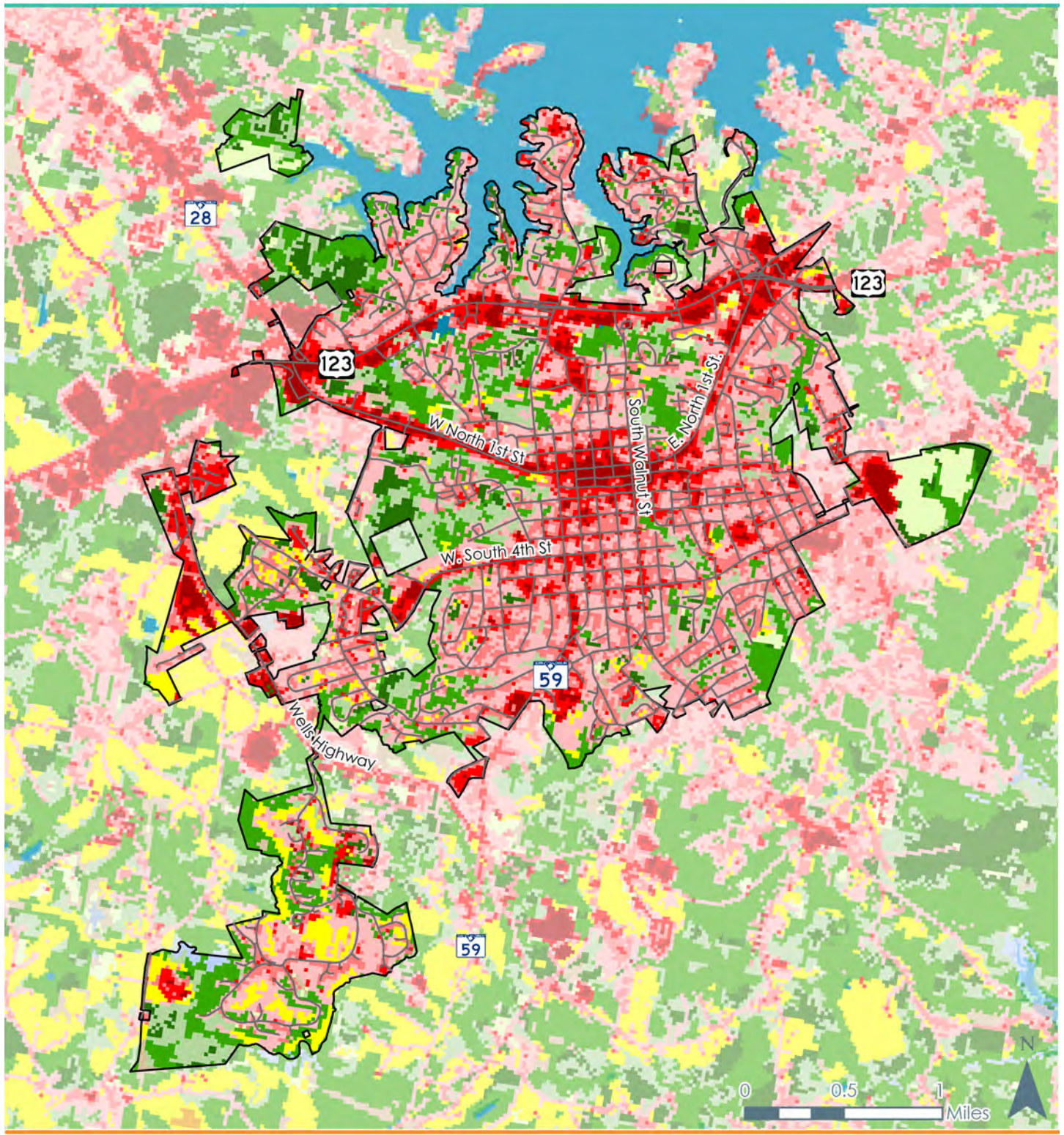
The USDA releases periodic soil surveys on a county level. The surveys define soil types by type, slope, and level of erosion, with the primary purpose of defining which combination of these characteristics serve as prime farmland soil. The State of South Carolina also uses this list to classify soils of statewide importance for land that nearly meet the prime farmland requirements by being able to economically produce high yields of crops when proper farming practices are followed. On the other hand, soils which are good for farming are also the best soils for development, due to their stable and nutrient rich nature. Map 3.3 shows the soil classifications in Seneca from the most recent USDA soil survey of Oconee County. The best soils are located in the central part of the City, as shown in dark green, radiating outwards towards its boundaries. While the majority of these area are already developed, they would also be good candidates for urban agriculture.

TOPOGRAPHY

Map 3.3 shows the topography of Seneca. It is slightly hilly, with a topographic range of 256 feet from the highest to lowest points in the City limits. The highest points in the City are towards the center and to the far eastern and western edges. Several of the roads are also in higher elevations; North 1st Street, Walnut Street, Bruce Hill Boulevard, Ben Hilda Drive, and US-123 north of Downtown are all along peaks. The lowest points in the City are to the north and southwest, where there are rivers and large bodies of water.

> MAP 3.1: LAND COVER

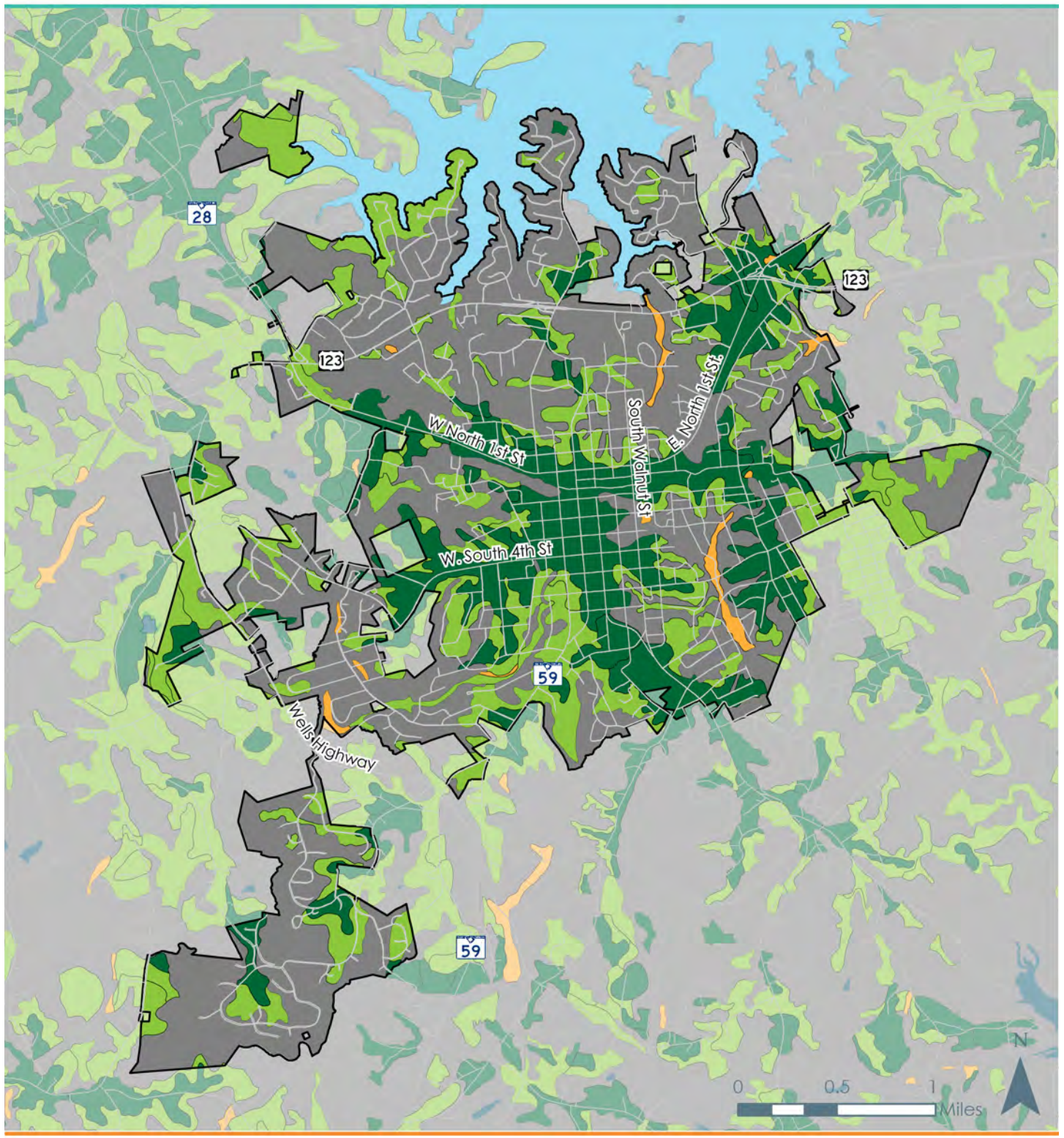
Source: National Landcover Dataset (2019)






 Woody Wetlands	 Mixed Forest	 Developed, Open Space
 Barren Land	 Herbaceous	 Developed, Medium Intensity
 Shrub / Scrub	 Hay / Pasture	 Developed, Low Intensity
 Cultivated Crops	 Evergreen Forest	 Developed, High Intensity
 Open Water	 Herbaceous Wetlands	 Deciduous Forest

> MAP 3.2: SOIL TYPES

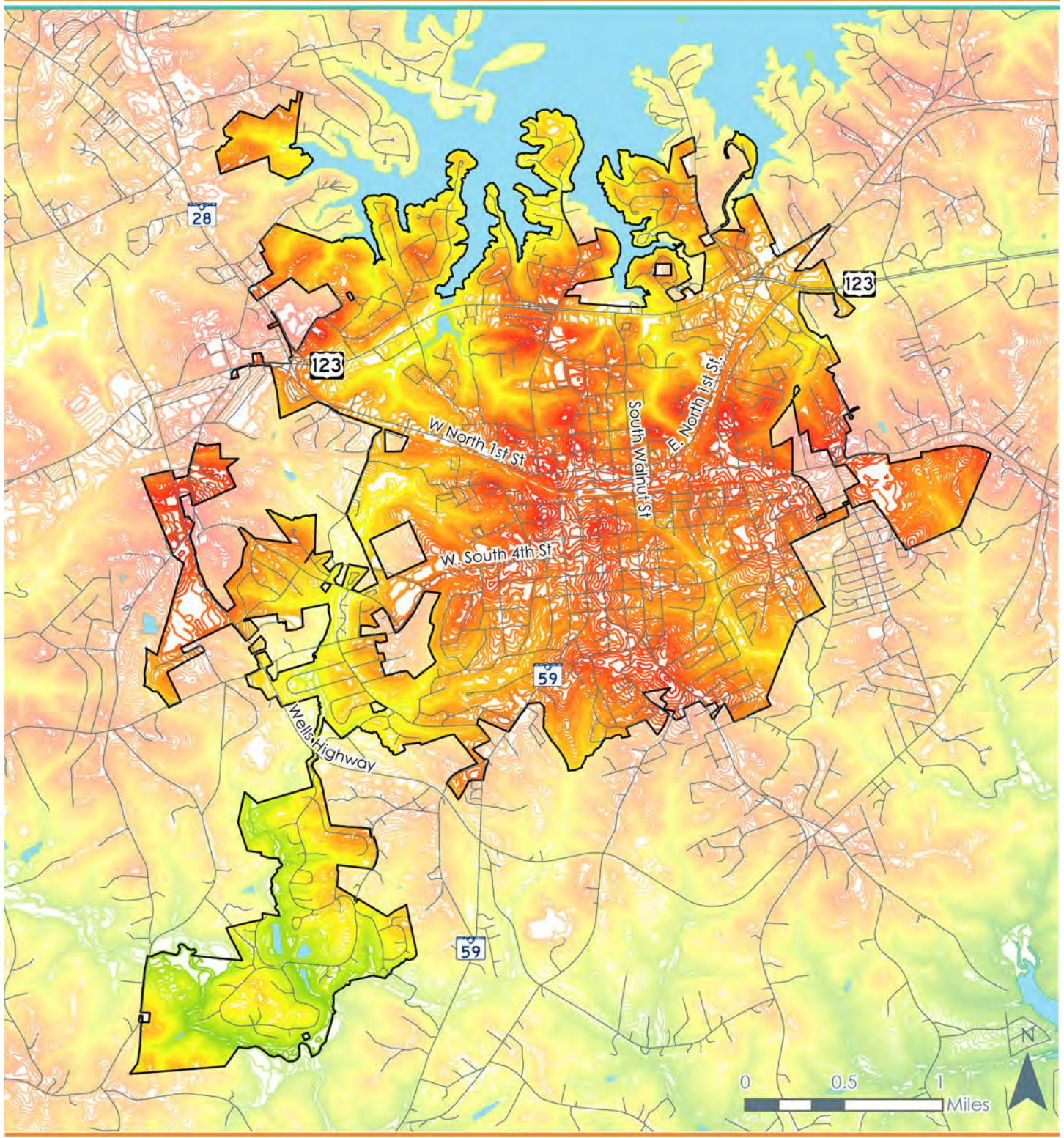
Source: USDA Soil Survey (2021)



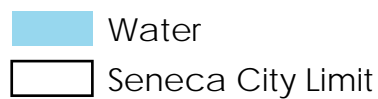
-  Soils of statewide Importance
-  Prime Farmland Soils
-  Prime Farmland Soils if Drained

> MAP 3.3: TOPOGRAPHY

Source: Oconee County Data (2022)



ELEVATION CONTOURS



RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) tracks species throughout the State in order to monitor their needs, habitats, and migration patterns. In Oconee County, SCDNR is currently tracking 216 species. The following species, which are present in the County, are listed as at-risk, threatened, or endangered on the State or Federal level.¹

▼ FIGURE 3.1 RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED ANIMALS IN OCONEE COUNTY

Source: SC Department of Natural Resources

COMMON NAME	FEDERAL STATUS	STATE STATUS
American Bumble Bee	At-Risk	Not Applicable
Bald Eagle	Protected	Threatened
Barn Owl	Migratory Bird Treaty Act	Not Applicable
Black Rail	Threatened	Not Applicable
Carolina Hemlock	At-Risk	Not Applicable
Eastern Box Turtle	Not Applicable	Regulated
Eastern Musk Turtle	Not Applicable	Regulated
Eastern Small-Footed Bat	Not Applicable	Threatened
Edmund's Snaketail	At-Risk	Not Applicable
Great Blue Heron	Migratory Bird Treaty Act	Not Applicable
Indiana Bat	Endangered	Endangered
Little Brown Bat	At-Risk	Not Applicable
Northern Long Eared Bat	Threatened	Not Applicable
Persistent Trillium	Endangered	Not Applicable
Rafinesque's Big Eared Bat	Not Applicable	Endangered
Rusty Patched Bumble Bee	Endangered	Not Applicable
Small Whorled Pogonia	Threatened	Not Applicable
Smooth Purple Coneflower	Endangered	Not Applicable
Sunfacing Coneflower	At-Risk	Not Applicable
Tri-Colored Bat	At-Risk	Not Applicable

PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The temperate climate, lakes, rivers, and blue ridge mountains have given Oconee County the nickname "Golden Corner." The City of Seneca's location on Lake Keowee and in the central-eastern portion of the County is ideal for accessing all of these resources.

¹ <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/af61ba156d054cc7b3e27d09a0c35c0f>

STATE PARKS

There are three state parks located in Oconee County that are protected for natural, cultural, and recreational purposes:

- Devils Fork state Park- 24 miles from Seneca
- Lake Hartwell state Park - 16 miles from Seneca
- Oconee state Park - 19 miles from Seneca

COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Oconee County owns and maintains 11 parks and recreation facilities and eight boat ramps:

- Chau Ram County Park- 13 miles from Seneca
- High Falls County Park - 13 miles from Seneca, on Lake Keowee
- South Cover County Park- 5 miles from Seneca
- Foothills Trail System- 23 miles to trail-head from Seneca, 77 mile trail
- Palmetto Trail- 15 miles to Stumphouse Passage and 25 miles to Eastatoe Passage; South Carolina's longest pedestrian and bicycle trail through 14 counties

CITY PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

There are 10 parks and recreational facilities in the City of Seneca. These recreational facilities are further outlined in element 5.

- Shaver Complex
- Kapp Field
- Blue Ridge Field
- Gignilliat Community Center
- Gignilliat Football Field
- Gignilliat Picnic Area
- Library Park
- Monarch Park
- Norton Thompson Park
- Buchanan Park
- Future Expansion Planned

Trails

There is one listed trail within Seneca. The Bruce Hill Shaver Trail is a 0.7 mile walking path that links the Bruce Hill Community to the Shaver Recreational Complex.

WATER RESOURCES

LAKES

Lake Keowee is located in the northern portion of Seneca. It is a man-made river that resulted from the damming of the Keowee River in the 1970s. Duke Energy currently owns the dam for hydro-power generation and to cool their nuclear generator. The lake is approximately 26 miles long and 3 miles wide, with a shoreline stretching 387 miles. Beyond power generation, the lake is a recreational destination for boating, swimming, fishing, and water sports.

RIVER BASINS AND WATERSHEDS

There are eight major river basins within the State of South Carolina: Savannah, Saluda, Edisto, Salkehatchie, Broad, Catawaba, Santee, and Pee Dee River Basin. Oconee County, along with the western edge of the State, is part of the Savannah River Basin. The Savannah Basin is in parts of both South Carolina and Georgia, covering over 3,171,462 acres.

These river basins are further divided into 8, 10, and 12 digit watersheds to further specify the specific drainage areas. Watersheds show the geographic area into which water, sediments, and dissolved materials drain based on topographic ridges. The largest watershed covering Seneca is the Seneca River Basin, which covers Westminster to the west, Pickens and Liberty to the east, and Lake Hartwell to the south. Within the Seneca watershed, the City is divided into 3 sub-basins: Hartwell Lake-Seneca River, Little River-Lake Keowee, and Conerross Creek.

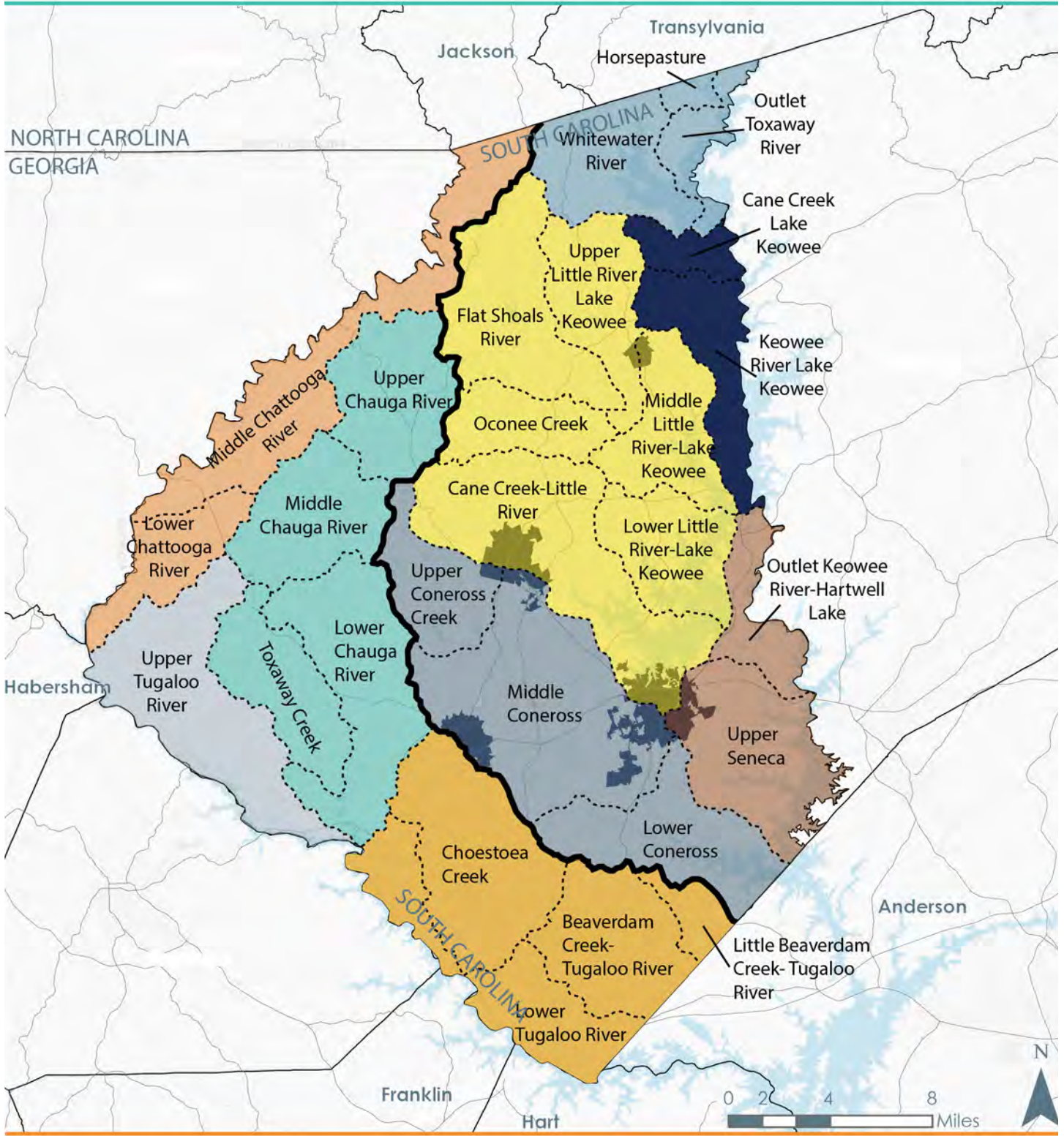
The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) monitors the quality of watersheds through establishing total daily maximum loads (TDML) of net pollutants permitted in a watershed. The Conerross Creek Watershed, covering the western portion of Seneca, is an approved TDML watershed. This means that the State has set a maximum TDML in order for the water body to meet water quality standards for a particular pollutant. TDMLs are triggered when a watershed is identified on a state's Section 303(d) list of impaired waters as set by the Clean Water Act. Conerross Creek was placed on the impaired waters list for South Carolina in 1998 due to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, which often arises from sanitary sewer overflows, leaking sanitary sewers, failing septic systems, and direct discharges. It was vital to reduce the levels of fecal coliform for the area to support recreational uses. In order to improve the water quality, the state initiated a three year project in 2002 that targeted the agricultural community and homeowners to assist with repair and replacement of septic systems. By 2005, through public and private partnership efforts, the Conerross Creek watershed met the State's water quality standards. However, the watershed will continue to be on the TDML list for continued monitoring.

WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

Wetlands are defined as areas where water is near the surface or covers the soil for varying periods throughout a year. Wetlands are very important to a natural ecosystem, as they help to mitigate flooding and filter pollutants from the water. As the City is largely developed, wetlands are most concentrated around rivers. Floodplains describe areas adjacent to bodies of water that are subject to flooding during heavy rain events. FEMA defines the base floodplain as zone AE, which captures areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding.

> MAP 3.4: WATERSHEDS

Source: SCDHEC (2022)



10 DIGIT WATERSHEDS

Chattooga River

Hartwell Lake - Upper Tugaloo

Chauga River

Little River-Lower Tugaloo

Hartwell Lake-Lower Tugaloo

Coneross Creek

Hartwell Lake-Seneca River

Keowee River

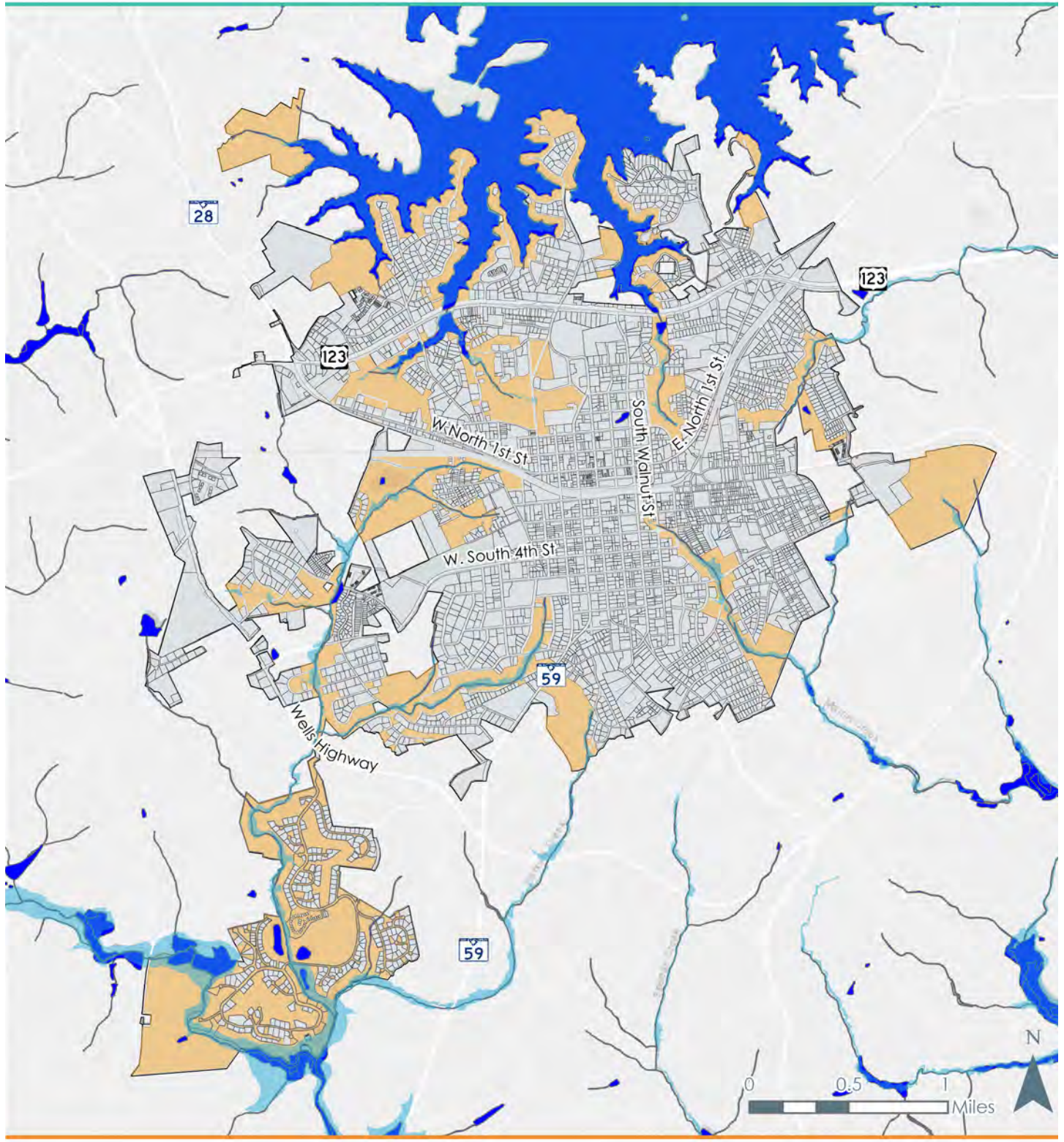
Headwaters Keowee River





8 Digit Watersheds

12 Digit Watersheds

> MAP 3.5: WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

Source: National Flood Hazard Layer and Benchmark Planning (2022)



-  1% Annual Chance of Flooding
-  Parcels that Intersect with the Floodplain
-  Wetlands
-  Seneca City Limit

As illustrated in Map 3.5, there are 565 parcels within the City that intersect with the 1% annual floodplain. Therefore, 10% of all parcels in Seneca are subject to this risk. Oconee County updated their floodplain maps in 2021 to provide more accurate flood risk assessment. However, floodplains are continually changing as development and erosion patterns change.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- There are numerous natural amenities for residents and visitors within the County that should be viewed as assets for Seneca.
- Lake Keowee is a large draw for the City. Seneca should ensure that it can support these visitors, while also becoming a destination on its own.
- The best soils for development and farming are concentrated in the central portion of the City. There are also some prime farmland and development soils to the east and west that should be considered when Seneca seeks to expand its boundaries.
- Seneca is fairly hilly, with the lowest points to the north and south.
- The City should reference the threatened species list when considering development.
- Water is very important through rivers, lakes, and wetlands. It is important to protect these natural resources to ensure they are available for future residents. The primary water source for the City is Lake Keowee.



ELEMENT 4

**CULTURAL
RESOURCES**



INTRODUCTION

The Cultural Resources Element considers historic districts and structures, heritage corridors, cultural sites, arts, and festivals. These places and resources make the City unique and are important to preserve in the future.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Oconee County is located in the northwest corner of South Carolina, between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Chattooga and the Tugaloo Rivers. The name Oconee comes from the Cherokee word which translates to land besides the water. The area was first inhabited by the Cherokee and Creek tribes before European settlers arrived in the late 18th century. Through a series of treaties, the Cherokee were eventually displaced from the area. The Seneca name was also derived from the Cherokee tribe and their former village: Esseneca.

Oconee County was established in 1868 and Walhalla was designated as the County seat. Around that same time, the land which is now Seneca was sold and conveyed to the Atlanta and Richmond Air Line Railway to allow the rail line to intersect with the Blue Ridge Railway. The first passenger train is believed to have run through Seneca in 1873 and the City was officially incorporated on March 14, 1874.

According to the City's visitors page, it operated differently from other rural southern towns, through bidding off land at its initiation. Two of the 16 original lots were sold to African American residents, which was rare in the State at the time. Following the rise of rail and industry, as well as WWII, three major dam projects were conducted in the County. The damming of the Keowee, Tugaloo, and other local rivers gave birth to the lake resort environment that is part of the attraction of Seneca today. Lake Hartwell, Lake Keowee, and Lake Jocassee support the City's public utilities, lake recreation, lakefront residency, and water supply.¹ This Comprehensive Plan will be adopted at the beginning of Seneca's Sesquicentennial, in 2023.

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

HISTORIC DISTRICT

Downtown Seneca has numerous historic buildings and mixed architectural styles which are reflective of popular trends throughout different architectural periods. This led to Downtown's formal designation as a historic district on December 31, 1974. The boundaries of the district were expanded on April 23, 1987 to include additional designated structures. Map 4.1 shows the historic district boundaries, which contain the historic buildings on the National Register.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

There are 20 houses and three churches that are national register properties in Seneca. A few of these even pre-date the founding of the City in 1874. Architectural styles of these buildings include Victorian, Classical Revival, Bungalow, Tudor Revival, and Four Square.²

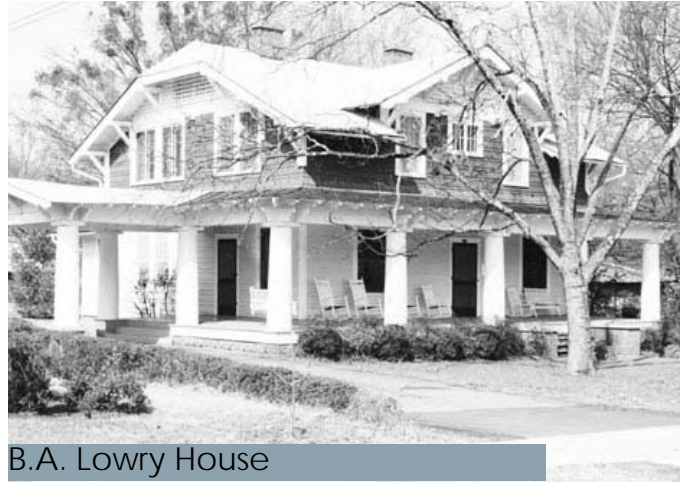
1 <https://Seneca.sc.us/visitor/welcome/about-seneca#:~:text=The%20City%20was%20chartered%20in,of%20the%20nearby%20Seneca%20River.>

2 <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/oconee/S10817737005/index.html>

HISTORIC STRUCTURES



Austin Harper House



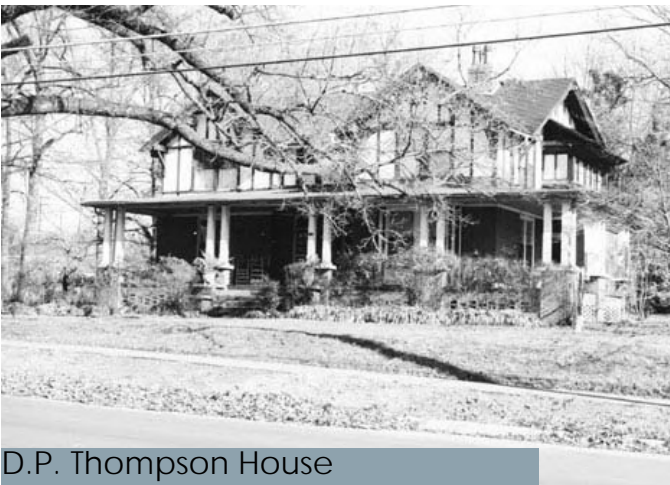
B.A. Lowry House



Burkhalter- Davis House



C.N. Gignilliat House



D.P. Thompson House



H.L. Thompson House



Harper-Burley



Hines House



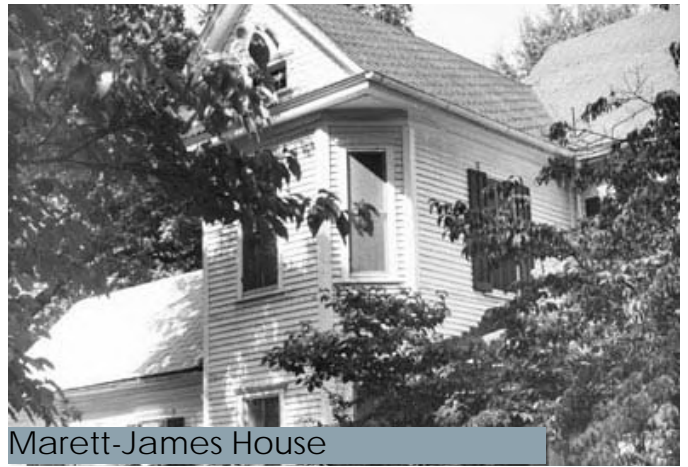
Homer Ballenger House



Livingston-Striblin House



Lunney Museum



Marett-James House



Miss Sue L. Gignilliat House



Mrs. G.W. Gignilliat House



Old Stringer House



R.L. Nimmons Jr House



Roach- Matheson-Bell Log House



Seneca Baptist Church



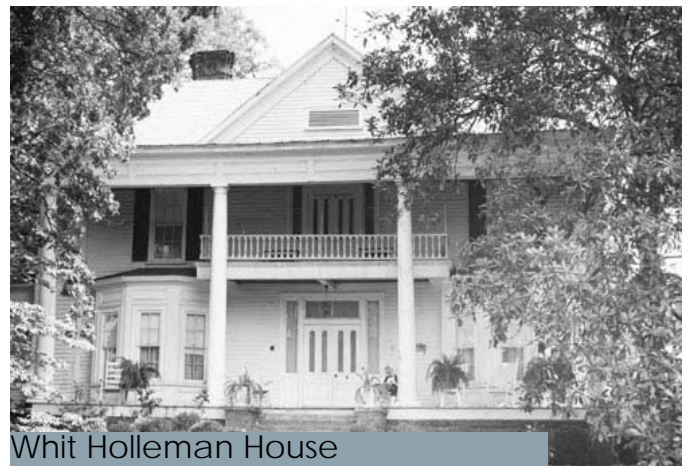
Seneca Presbyterian Church



T.J. Harper House



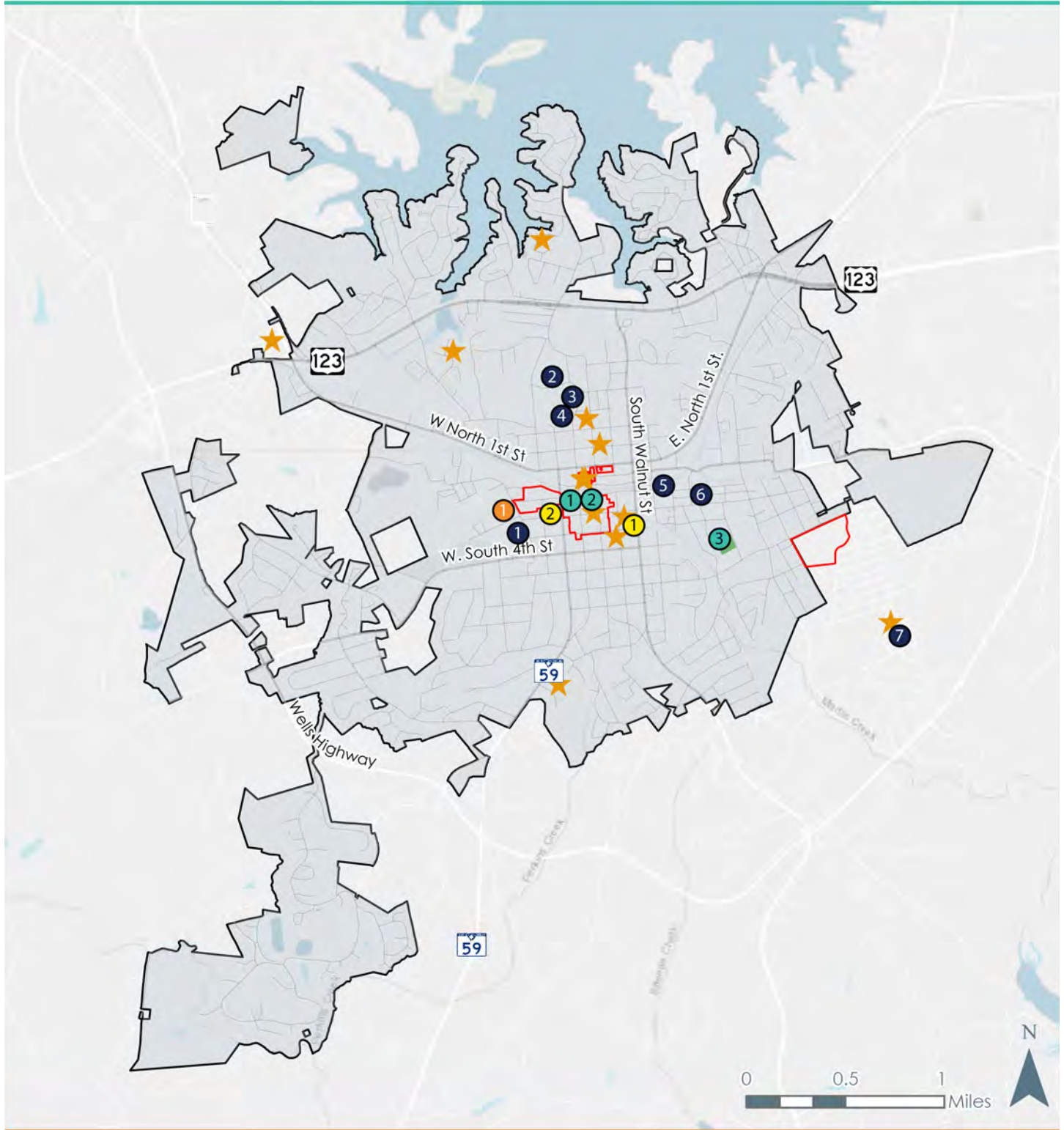
W.P. Nimmons House


















Whit Holleman House

> MAP 4.1: CULTURAL SITES

Source: City of Seneca and Benchmark Planning (2022)



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  National Register Historic District | SC Heritage Corridor Sites | Eligible Historic Sites | |
|  Seneca Library |  Lunney Museum |  Seneca Junior College |  Seneca Depot |
|  Bertha Lee Strickland Museum |  Blue Ridge Arts Center |  Seneca Armory |  Seneca School |
|  Faith Cabin Library (National Register) |  Blue Ridge Field |  Charles McGee Byrd Post |  Utica Mill School |
| | |  Mountain View Cemetary |  Quilt Trail Sites |

DOWNTOWN SENECA

Downtown is the heart of Seneca and serves as the primary business, cultural, and tourism hub. Over the past decade, there has been increased investment by the City into Downtown to ensure vibrancy in the area. In 2019, the City initiated a Seneca Master Plan, which provided recommendations on how to further improve the Downtown and central business district. The following recommendations resulted from the plan:

- Spread the Ram-Cat Alley likeness through the rest of downtown
- Develop an event venue on the green with a stage or amphitheater for events
- Incorporate splash pads, misters, and other water elements to keep downtown cool during the summer
- Create a streetscape and facade program to foster a sense of place in downtown
- Host more events downtown
- Add businesses such as a bowling alley or anchor retail to serve as attractors
- Enhance walkable paths in and around downtown

The following goals were also included in the plan:

- Foster downtown with a park-like character, encouraging activity at all times during all seasons and bringing attention to the role the CBD plays in local water management
- Make downtown more accessible by various modes of transportation to encourage the use of current and planned amenities. Make downtown a walkable destination to encourage visitors to explore the City and its amenities by reorganizing the roadway, slightly modifying traffic patterns, and utilizing traffic calming techniques
- Create a downtown that is a desirable place where businesses and residents want to relocate

Downtown Design Review District

In 2002, the City established a set of design guidelines for their Downtown district. The guidelines are meant to protect and enhance architectural heritage, cultural and economic welfare, and harmonious growth and development.³ The design review district also ensures that the historic buildings and landmarks are preserved as Seneca grows in the future. The guidelines are enforced by the Board of Architectural Review, a five member board created by local ordinance.

Commercial Building Improvement Program (CBIP)

In June 2022, the City approved an ordinance to establish a Commercial Building Improvement Program (CBIP). Seneca's CBIP hopes to encourage downtown improvements in order to help achieve the goal of an active downtown.

3 <https://Seneca.sc.us/documents/planning-and-development/design-review-guidelines.pdf>

CULTURAL RESOURCES

In addition to structures, there are several other ways in which a community can preserve and enrich its culture and heritage. Seneca is part of several regional cultural networks, while also having its own museums, cemeteries, and libraries. Map 4.2 shows the location of cultural sites in the City.

HERITAGE CORRIDORS

The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor is a congressionally designated National Heritage Area under the National Park Service. The Corridor was founded in 1996 and works to preserve and promote natural, historic, and cultural assets throughout 17 counties in South Carolina. There are 10 sites within Oconee County that are a part of the corridor. The following three sites are in the City of Seneca⁴:

- The Lunney Museum - built in 1909, this house now is on the National Register of Historic places and serves as a museum of Victorian furniture and local memorabilia
- Historic Ballenger House- built in 1925, this home is located in Downtown Seneca and now serves as an event space for weddings, art exhibits, and fundraisers
- Blue Ridge Field Heritage Park- formerly the site of a football field at the segregated African American Blue Ridge High School and serves as a memorial to the rich history of the education system for African American students in the area from 1800s-1969, when schools were integrated and the site was left vacant. The site now has a walking track, community gardens, recreational field, and picnic shelter.
- Blue Ridge Arts Center- housed in the former Episcopal Church that was built in 1882

MUSEUMS

There are two museums in the City which help to share the history of the place and people that have made up Seneca. The Seneca City Museums also own and maintain a historical archive. The museums are funded through the City's Hospitality Accommodation Tax, South Carolina's Accommodations Tax, South Carolina's Humanities grants, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Oconee Accommodations Tax.⁵

Lunney Museum

As mentioned previously, the Lunney Museum is the only historic house museum in the County.

Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum

The Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum is the only exhibit museum focused on local African American History in Upstate South Carolina.

Carter Archives

The Carter Archives are home to all of the collections and archival material that belong to the Seneca City Museums. The archives are in the historic Gignilliat School Building.

4 <https://scnhc.org/oconee-county/>

5 <https://senecaCitymuseums.org/>

LIBRARIES

Seneca Public Library

The Library in Seneca is part of the Oconee County Public Library System. The system was founded in 1948 in Walhalla, and the Seneca branch opened in 1953. In 1963, the Seneca branch became the first in the County to have a building dedicated solely to library services. In 1983, the construction of new facilities and the expansion of the Seneca branch was made possible by the assistance of funding by the City.

Oberlin Faith Cabin Library

The Oberlin Faith Cabin Library is one of only two remaining libraries in free-standing cabins in the State of South Carolina.

CEMETERIES

Cemeteries provide a space for cultural, ethnic, and religious rituals and remembrance to take place. The cemeteries in Seneca have been noted on Map 4.2.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Churches and Religious institutions are also a notable part of a community, as they can help foster deep community networks and a sense of place beyond their religious affiliation. The churches and religious institutions in Seneca have been identified on Map 4.2.

ARTS

QUILT TRAIL

The Quilt Trail was started in 2001, in Adams County Ohio, as a way for communities to share heritage and stories through making quilts and displaying them throughout a community. In 2019, Oconee County became the first South Carolina county to adopt the quilt trail concept and began to expand participation to historic buildings, parks, and businesses. The quilt trail has since spread to Anderson and Pickens Counties, and is now called the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail. This shared art form helps to connect different parts of the region while preserving unique community heritage. There are over 11 quilt trail locations in Seneca; most of which are noted on Map 4.1. A few of the quilts are displayed at the end of this Element.⁶

ARTS, HISTORY, AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

The Arts, History, and Culture Department of the City works to enhance tourism, education, and quality of life through planning, public art, history, and cultural experiences.⁷ The Department helps to promote and operate the Seneca City Museums, Carter Archives, Visual and Performing Art events, and historic sites.

BLUE RIDGE ARTS CENTER

The Blue Ridge Arts Center is an arts and cultural center run by the Blue Ridge Arts Council, a non-profit volunteer organization. The mission of the Arts Center is to “Bring Art to the People and People to the Arts” by allowing local artists to display their work, hosting gallery shows,

6 <http://www.uhqt.org/interactive-map/>

7 <https://www.artshistoryculture.org/>

teaching art classes, and holding meetings and events for the community. The Arts Center also has its own art library for members to access art reference books and instructional videos. As noted above, the Art Center is located in Seneca’s oldest church, and is part of the national register.⁸ The Blue Ridge Arts Council also helps to put on various outreach efforts, including public mural projects, park benches, and the “Scavenger Hunt” which involves stencil cut cats painted by local artists hidden throughout Downtown.

RAM CAT ALLEY

Ram Cat Alley is the western portion of the Main Street in Downtown Seneca. The name is said to have originated from the multitude of cats that hung out in the area when there were meat and fish markets in the early 1900s. In the mid 1900s, the Mayor of Seneca rehabilitated many of the original buildings and repaved the road to revitalize the alley. The alley is now a pedestrian district of shops, restaurants, and public space for both residents and tourists. The alley is also part of the national register of historic places, as the 18 buildings within it reflect development from 1887-1930.⁹

ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL TOURISM

Downtown Seneca is home to a number of events and festivals, and in 2021, attendance at the weekly music nights was around 750 people. The following festivals have become annual events in Downtown Seneca:

- Black History Month
- Race for the Green
- Jazz on the Alley
- Cruzin on Main Street
- Memorial Day Celebration
- Juneteenth
- July 4th Celebration
- Youth Carnival
- Brew N’ Que
- Jeep Fest
- Halloween on the Green
- Magical Musical Holiday Light Show
- Seneca Christmas Parade
- Jazzy Christmas
- Gingerbread land
- Fishing Competition
- 150th anniversary celebrations

8 <http://www.blueridgeartscenter.com/about-brac/>

9 <https://www.scpictureproject.org/oconee-county/ram-cat-alley.html>

QUILT TRAIL QUILTS IN SENECA



KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The City has an important and unique history which is important to maintain and celebrate through both the built and cultural environments.
- Seneca's historic district and structures include a variety of architectural styles.
- In recent years, there has been an increased effort to improve the appearance and vibrancy of Downtown. Ram Cat Alley is representative of the type of environment that residents would like to expand in Downtown.
- The City has several sites which are part of regional cultural corridors.
- Seneca's libraries, museums, and art centers foster cultural heritage and should be viewed as important assets to maintain moving forward.

ELEMENT

5

**COMMUNITY
FACILITIES**



INTRODUCTION

The Community Facilities Element outlines the public facilities and services that are provided in the City. These facilities and services include public utilities, solid waste collection and disposal, recycling, fire protection, emergency medical services, government facilities, and education facilities.

CITY GOVERNMENT AND DEPARTMENTS

Seneca is a Mayor-Council type of government, in which the Mayor is elected separately from the City Council. This type of government structure is the second most common form of government and is typical for older cities of various sizes. Seneca also has a City Administrator who oversees day-to-day operations of municipal departments.

The City operates with the following departments:

- Arts, History and Culture
- Buildings and Projects
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Planning and Development
- Building Codes
- Recreation
- Seneca Light and Water
- Animal Control
- Municipal Court
- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Sanitation Department
- Streets Department
- Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority

CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT FACILITIES




The following buildings and facilities are owned by the City or County and are located in Seneca. Some of the facilities are described later in this Element. Map 5.1 shows the location of these facilities.

- Oconee Medical Clinic
- Rosa Parks Clinic
- Our Daily Bread
- Our Daily Rest
- United Way
- Golden Corner Food Bank
- Airport Buildings
- Animal Control Facility
- Coroner's Office and Morgue
- High Falls Park Building
- Roads and Bridges Department Facility
- Seneca Health Department
- Seneca Library
- Shiloh Road Emergency Substation
- Solid Waste Complex
- South Cove Park Building
- Vehicle Maintenance Facility
- Workforce Center Building

> MAP 5.1: CITY AND COUNTY OWNED FACILITIES

Source: Oconee County Parcel Search (2022)



-  Seneca City Limit
-  City Owned
-  County Owned

UTILITIES

Seneca operates its own water and electric utilities under “Seneca Light and Water.” Because of this, the City is able to ensure the provision of these services to all parcels within its municipal limits, as well as regulate costs to maintain levels of affordability. Map 5.2 shows the utility districts in and around Seneca.

ELECTRICITY

Seneca Light and Water (SL&W) provides the majority of the electric service within the City limits. In the surrounding area, electric service is also provided by Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and Duke Energy. Map 5.2 shows the territory assignments for electric service.

The electric distribution unit for the City was first established in the early 1900s as a single unit distributing to Downtown. In the 1920s, the facility was expanded and SL&W began to purchase wholesale power. By using both its own power grid and buying power from the market, the City is able to ensure that demand is met and rates remain affordable. The current electric distribution unit includes two 12.5 kV substations and 172 miles of primary distribution lines.¹ SL&W has emergency power generator systems in place for all critical infrastructure in case of outages or interruptions in service.

WATER

Seneca Light and Water’s primary water source is Lake Keowee. The lake itself is owned by Duke Power Company. However, the City and Duke signed a water contract in 1969, which allows Seneca to draw raw water for municipal purposes. The City’s system is also interconnected with Walhalla and Westminster for supplementary water supply. Water Treatment is provided primarily through the Seneca Water Treatment Plant, which is located on the southern end of Lake Keowee, off North Hampton Road. The plant has a capacity of 20 million gallons per day, with an average daily demand of 6.5 million gallons per day and a peak demand of 11 million gallons per day. After treating the water, it is stored in three ground storage wells and eight elevated tanks with a capacity of 6.4 million gallons. The most recent construction and expansion to the facility began in 2014.

Seneca distributes water through over 500 miles of water lines which expand beyond the municipal limits and into unincorporated parts of the County. Map 5.2 shows the water service area, which includes most of the eastern portion of Oconee County. The City also provides wholesale water service to Keowee Key, the Town of Salem, and Pioneer Rural Water District, as well as backup service to the Cities of Walhalla and Westminster. The City owns all of the pipes, storage tanks, pumping stations, and water treatment facilities that it operates and the majority of the lines are in City or State right-of-way.²

The 2021 Water quality assessment for the City’s water treatment plant lists the regulated contaminants that were detected in the water: turbidity, fluoride, nitrate, chlorine, trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids, organic carbon, lead, copper, and gross alpha. None of these contaminants were at a harmful level.³

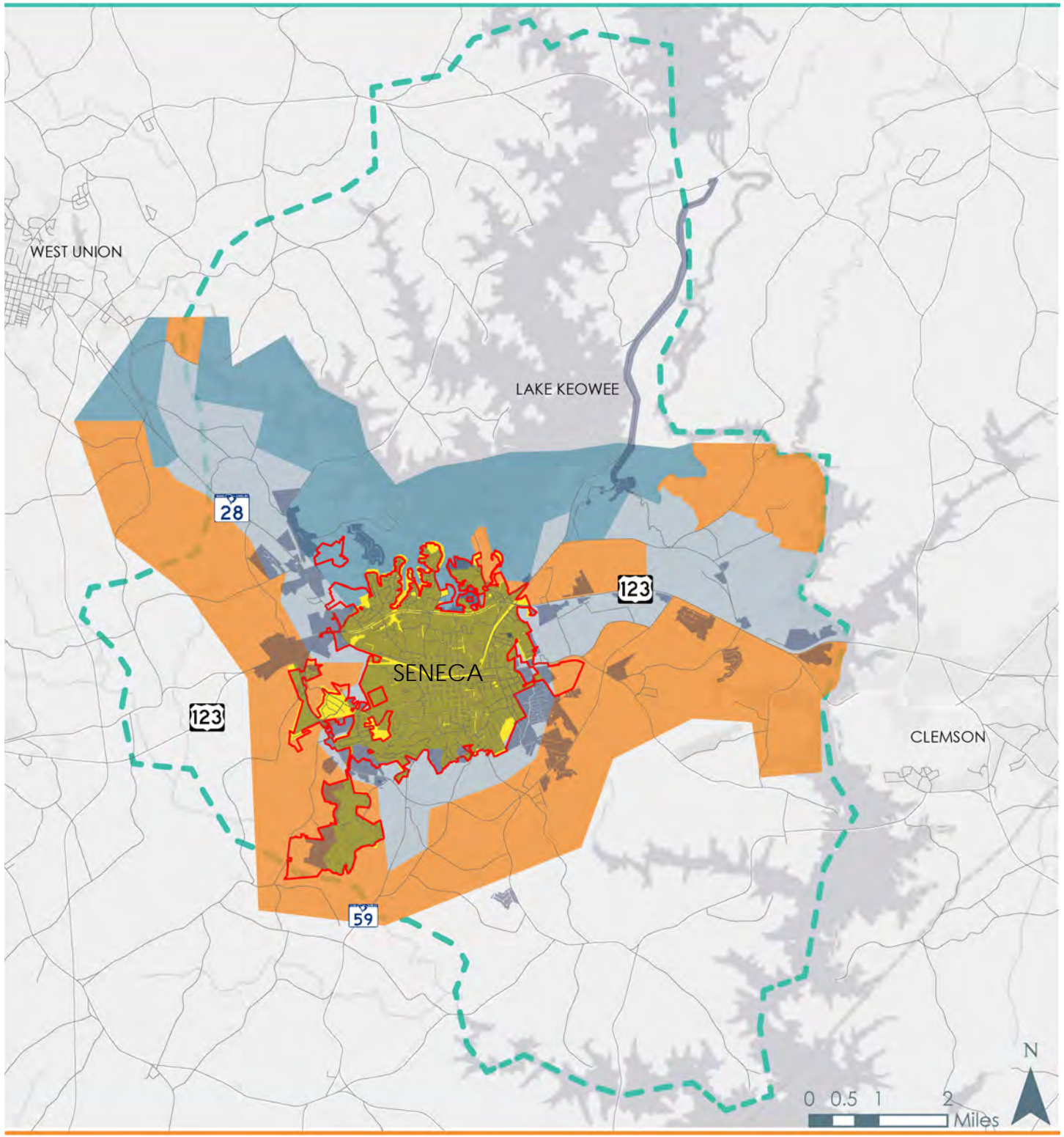
1 <http://dev.senecalightandwater.com/Utilities/Electricity>

2 <http://dev.senecalightandwater.com/Utilities/Water>

3 <https://Seneca.sc.us/documents/light-and-water/water-quality-reports/2021-water-quality-consumer-confidence-report.pdf>

> MAP 5.2: UTILITY SERVICE AREA

Source: City of Seneca (2022)



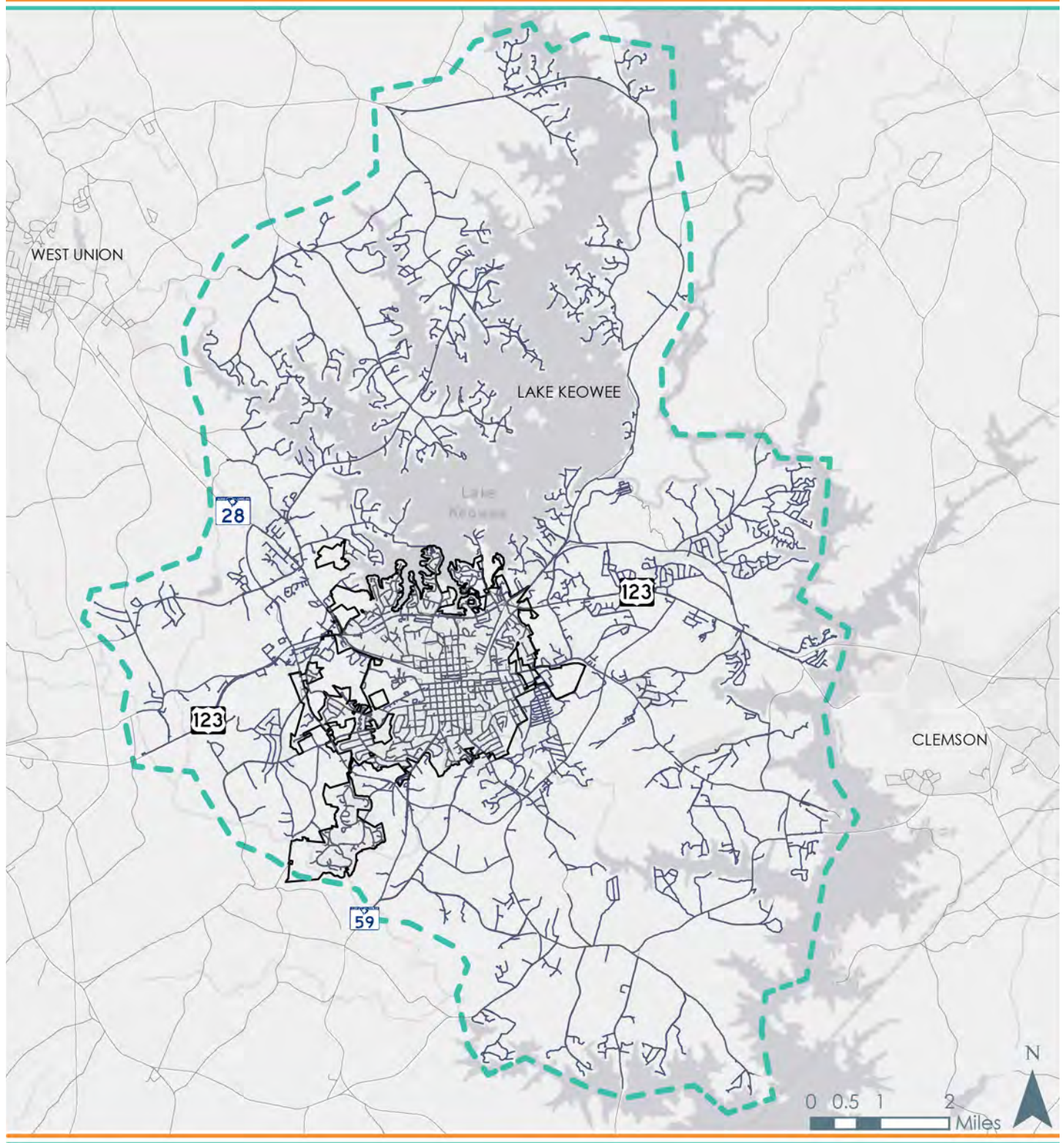
ELECTRICITY SERVICE TERRITORIES

- Unassigned
- Blue Ridge
- Duke
- SL&W

- Seneca Roads
- Seneca City Limit
- Sewer Service Area
- Water Service Area

> MAP 5.3: WATER SERVICE AREA

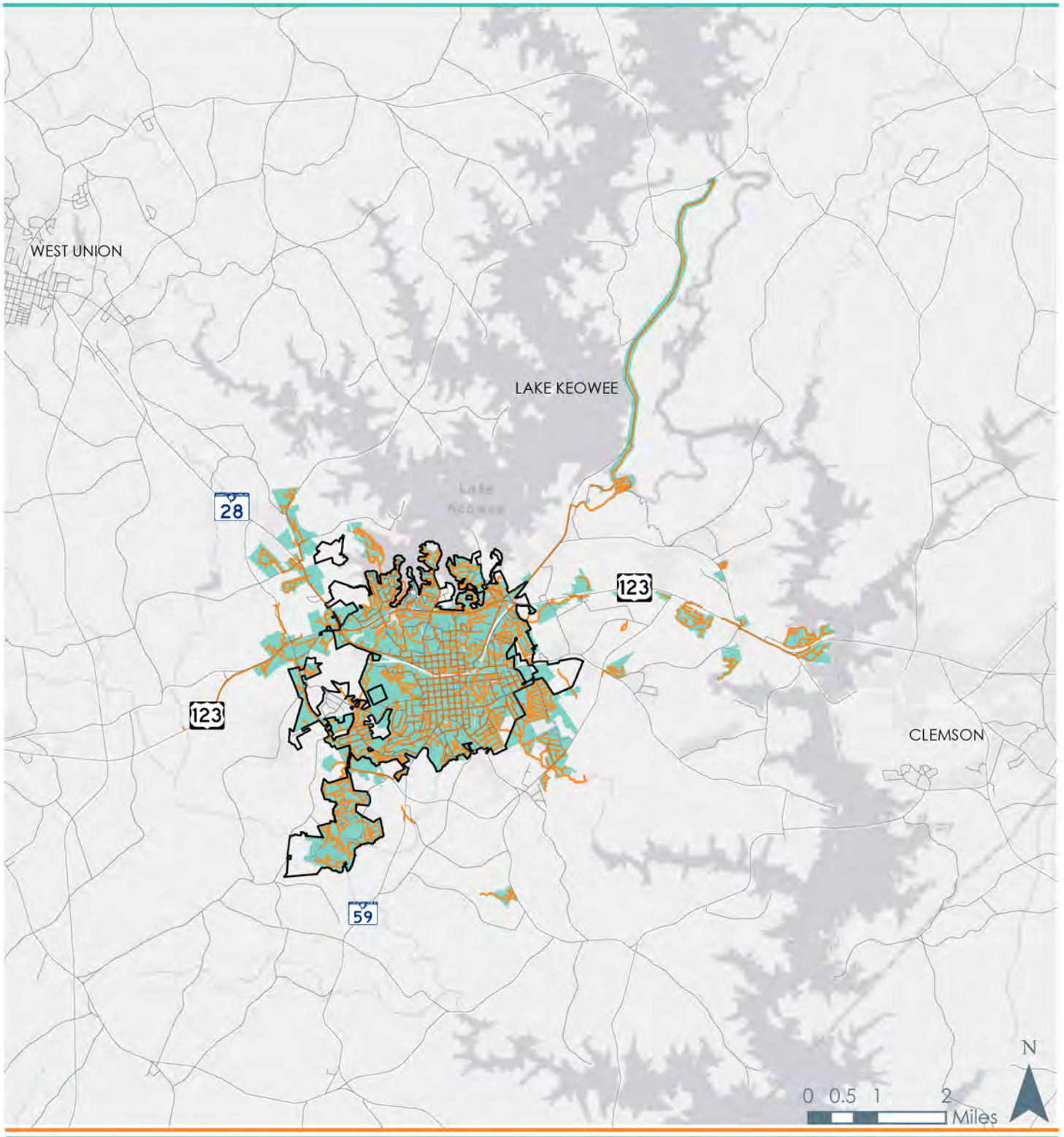
Source: City of Seneca (2022)



- Seneca Roads
- ▭ Seneca City Limit
- - - Water Service Area
- Water Lines

> MAP 5.4: SEWER SERVICE AREA

Source: City of Seneca (2022)



- Seneca Roads
- ▭ Seneca City Limit
- ▭ Sewer Service Area
- Sewer Lines

In 2010, a water service agreement was put into place which requires all new development that taps into the City's water service to annex into Seneca if (and when) it is contiguous, regardless of land use. However, this agreement only applies to properties that newly tap into the service, not existing users. Thus, properties adjacent to the City which tapped into its water system prior to 2010 are not bound by this agreement. Many of these properties limit future water customers outside of the municipal limits from becoming annexed, as they make it difficult to be contiguous to Seneca's boundary.

WASTE WATER COLLECTION

Sewer and waste water is operated by the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA). This County-wide authority was established in the late 1960s in order to improve water quality and replace old infrastructure in municipalities. The Oconee County Sewer Commission, which later became the OJRSA, was signed into law through Act 950 in 1971 and became its own entity in 2007. OJRSA oversees acquisition, construction, maintenance, and operation of sewage waste for the County. The agency consists of a board of nine commissioners who are appointed by Seneca, Walhalla, and Westminster. Because Seneca is the largest City in the County, they are given four representatives on the board.

The County's wastewater treatment plant, Coneross Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility, was first built to process 5 million gallons per day. This capacity was upgraded in 1996 to 7.8 million gallons per day to accommodate industrial and commercial growth. In addition to the treatment plant, OJRSA owns, operates, and maintains 65 miles of gravity sewer, 15 pump stations, 24 miles of force mains, and three permanent flow monitoring stations.⁴

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Oconee County Solid Waste Complex is located in Seneca. The complex houses the main office, a material recovery facility for recyclables, and a transfer station for loading shipments of municipal solid waste for landfill disposal.

Within Seneca, there is a Class 2 Construction and Demolition Landfill. The Oconee County Solid Waste Ordinance and SC DHEC regulations specify that Class 2 landfills are solely for the disposal of construction and demolition materials and other acceptable materials per SC regulation 61-107.19 Appendix 1. Dumping at this landfill is only permitted for individuals and businesses with the appropriate license and are subject to pay tipping fees; this landfill is not for household trash.⁵

Residential garbage in the City is collected weekly along five different routes. Seneca owns the containers that are provided to residents, and additional containers can be requested at a reduced cost. Commercial garbage collection, which includes housing complexes over four units, must work with the City's sanitation department to determine the type of container needed.

4 <https://www.ojrsa.org/>

5 <https://oconeesc.com/documents/solid-waste/landfill-brochure.pdf>

The Solid Waste Department also operates 10 recycling centers in the County; three of which are within or in close proximity to Seneca:

- Strawberry Farm; 301 N Strawberry Farm Rd, Seneca
- Metromont; 250 Ustorit Dr, Seneca
- Richland; 230 Richland Rd, Westminster

The City stopped providing curbside pick-up of recyclables in 2013 in order to reduce costs. Residents are encouraged to donate items for reuse to the following locations:

- Boys Camp Thrift Store
- Habitat for Humanity
- Girls Camp Thrift Store
- Salvation Army

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

FIRE DEPARTMENT

There are 13 volunteer fire departments, three municipal fire departments, and one special tax district fire department in Oconee County. Seneca is served by the City's municipal fire department and Oconee County Fire.

The Seneca Fire Department consist of both paid and volunteer firefighters. In addition to fire and emergency response, the Fire Department offers several community programs to improve the safety of residents. These programs include smoke detector programs, child safety seat programs, home safety inspections, business safety inspections, a teenage fire explorer program, and first aid provision at public events. In addition to providing service to the City, the Seneca Fire Department has an agreement with the County to provide fire service within a 5 mile radius of Seneca. The Oconee County Fire Department operates Station Number 7 in the City.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Oconee County Emergency Services manages fire protection, medical first response, hazardous materials mitigation, technical rescue, SCUBA dive rescue, emergency management, and public safety education across the County. The Emergency Services is a fully volunteer service with 170 members in the rescue squad and 450 in the fire service.

Other volunteer organizations in the County that assist with Emergency Medical Services include the following:

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Special Needs Task Force
- Community Agricultural Response Team (CART)

The Tri-City Rescue Squad provides emergency management services in Seneca. Together with the Seneca Fire Department, they provide emergency medical services within its service areas. Ambulance transportation is provided by the Oconee Medical Center.

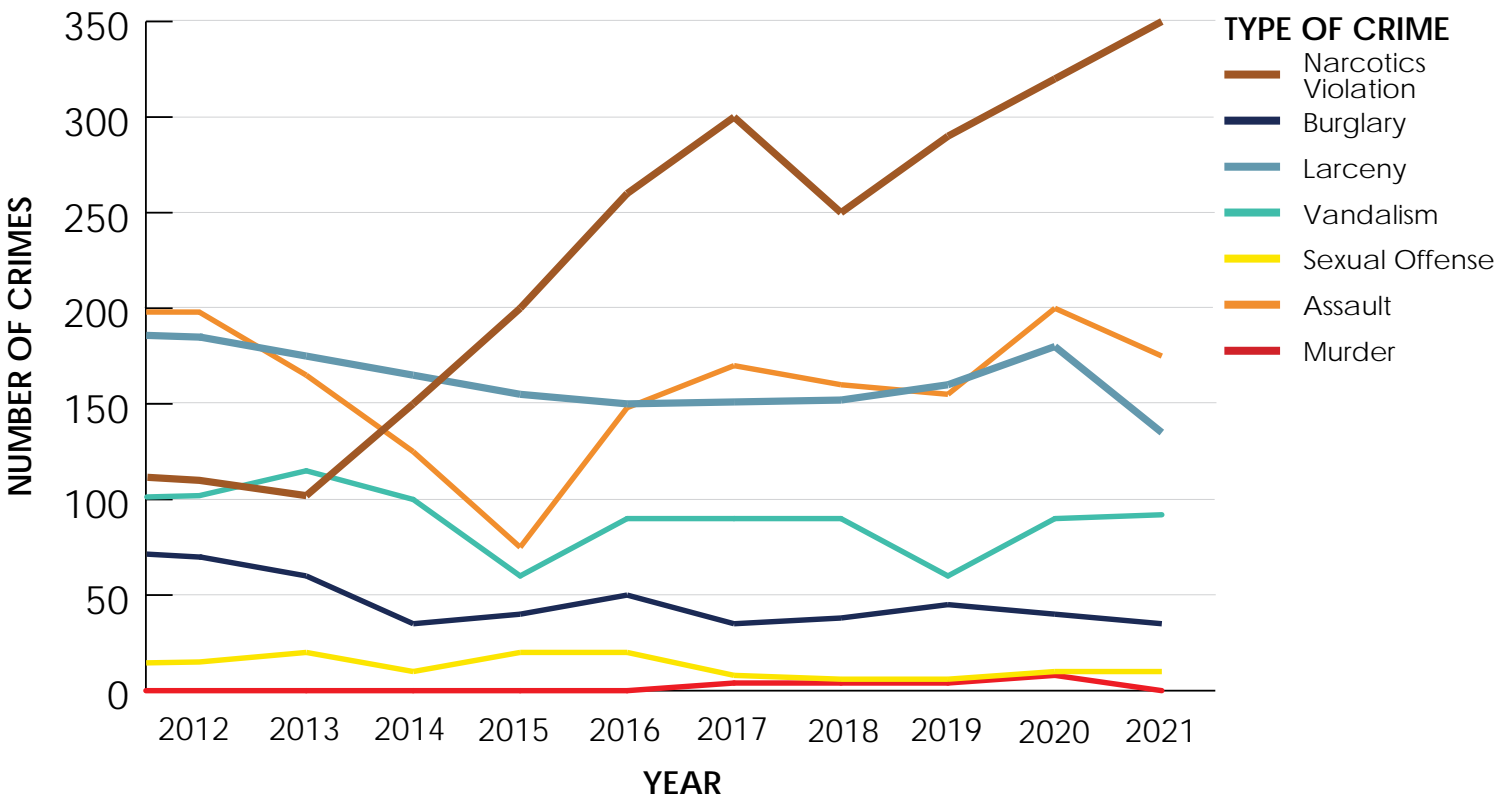
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Seneca operates its own police department in the municipal limits. Areas outside of the City are covered by the Oconee County Sheriff’s Department. The City department has four locations: a main office; a narcotics investigations office; a training building for SWAT, warrants, victim services; and a downtown/community police services building.

The Seneca Police Department tracks crime at a fairly detailed level. Over the past ten years, the majority of crime rates have remained fairly stable in Seneca. The crime that has experienced the greatest increase over this period was narcotics violations, which jumped from a little over 100 in 2012 to almost 350 in 2021. Narcotics violations include possession, distribution, and trafficking.

> **FIGURE 5.1: TEN YEAR CRIME DATA**

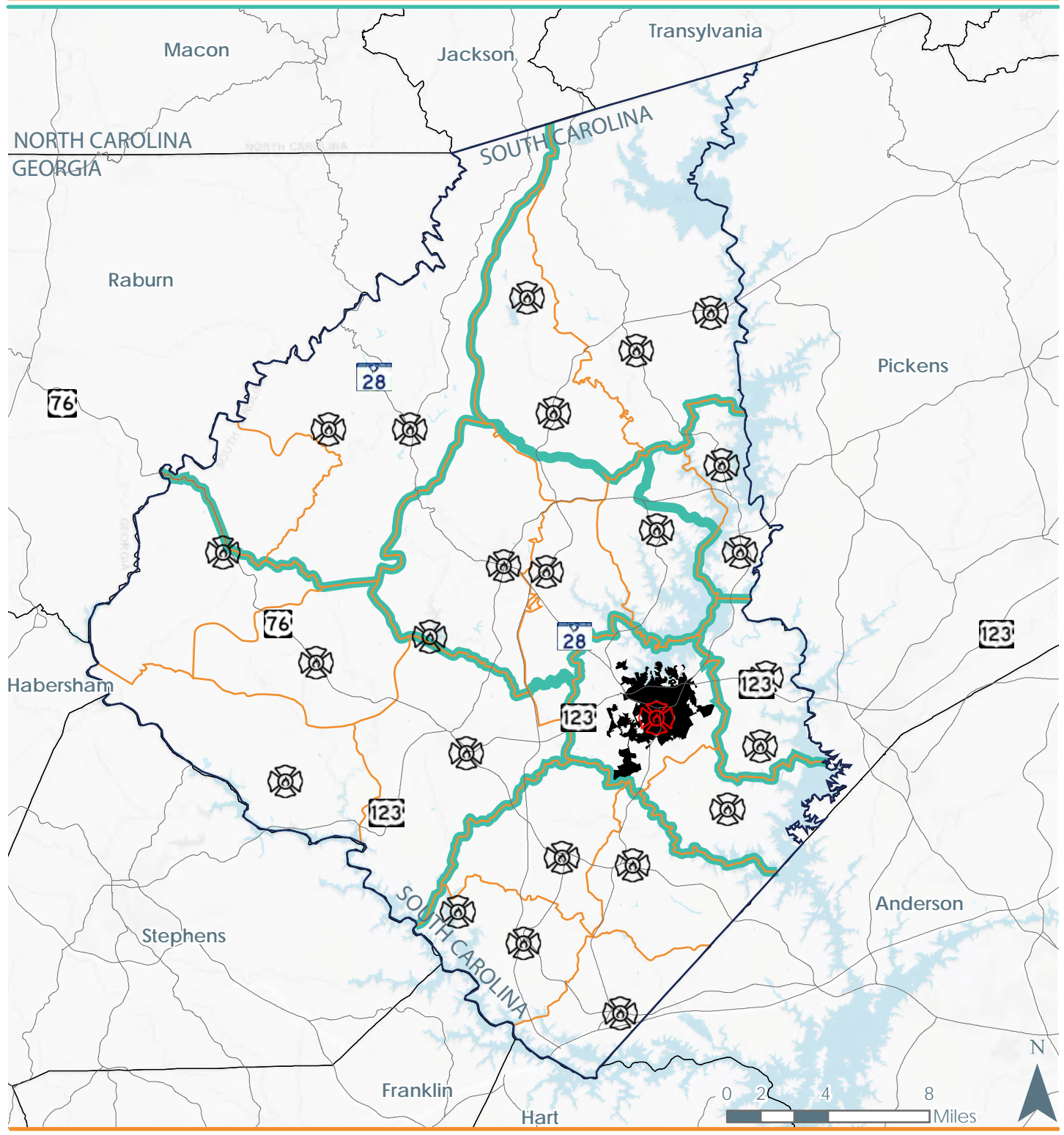
Source: City of Seneca Police Department



Other crime data tracked by the police department includes property crimes and crimes against people. When comparing types of property crimes, the most prevalent type is larceny; followed by vandalism and burglary. For crimes against people, the most prevalent type is assault. However, there have also been several cases of sexual offenses in Seneca each year. Data for murder crimes has only shown cases from 2017-2020. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show the ten year data for various types of crime in the City.

> MAP 5.5: FIRE AND RESCUE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

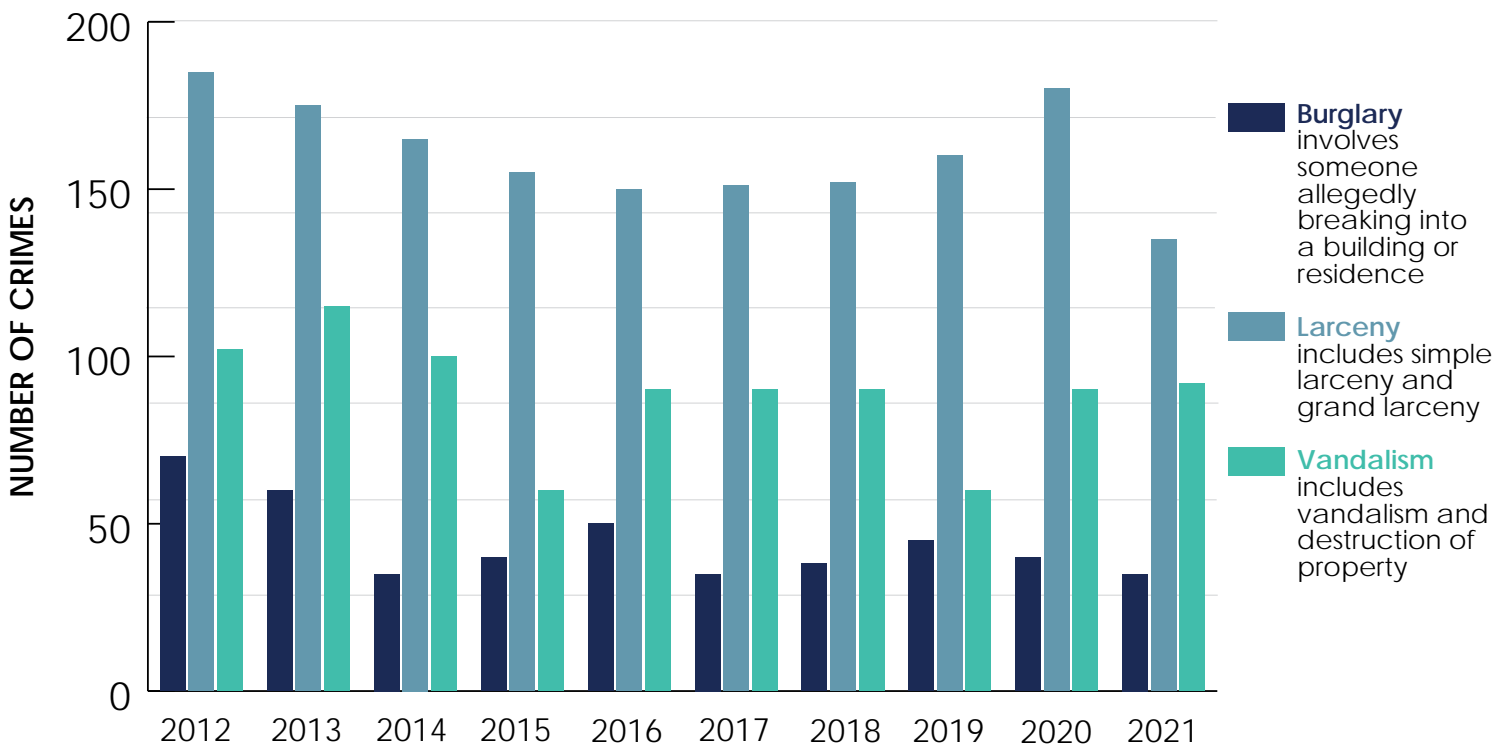
Source: Oconee County (2022)



- Major Roads
- Oconee County
- City of Seneca
- Rescue District Boundaries
- Fire District Boundaries
- + Fire Station

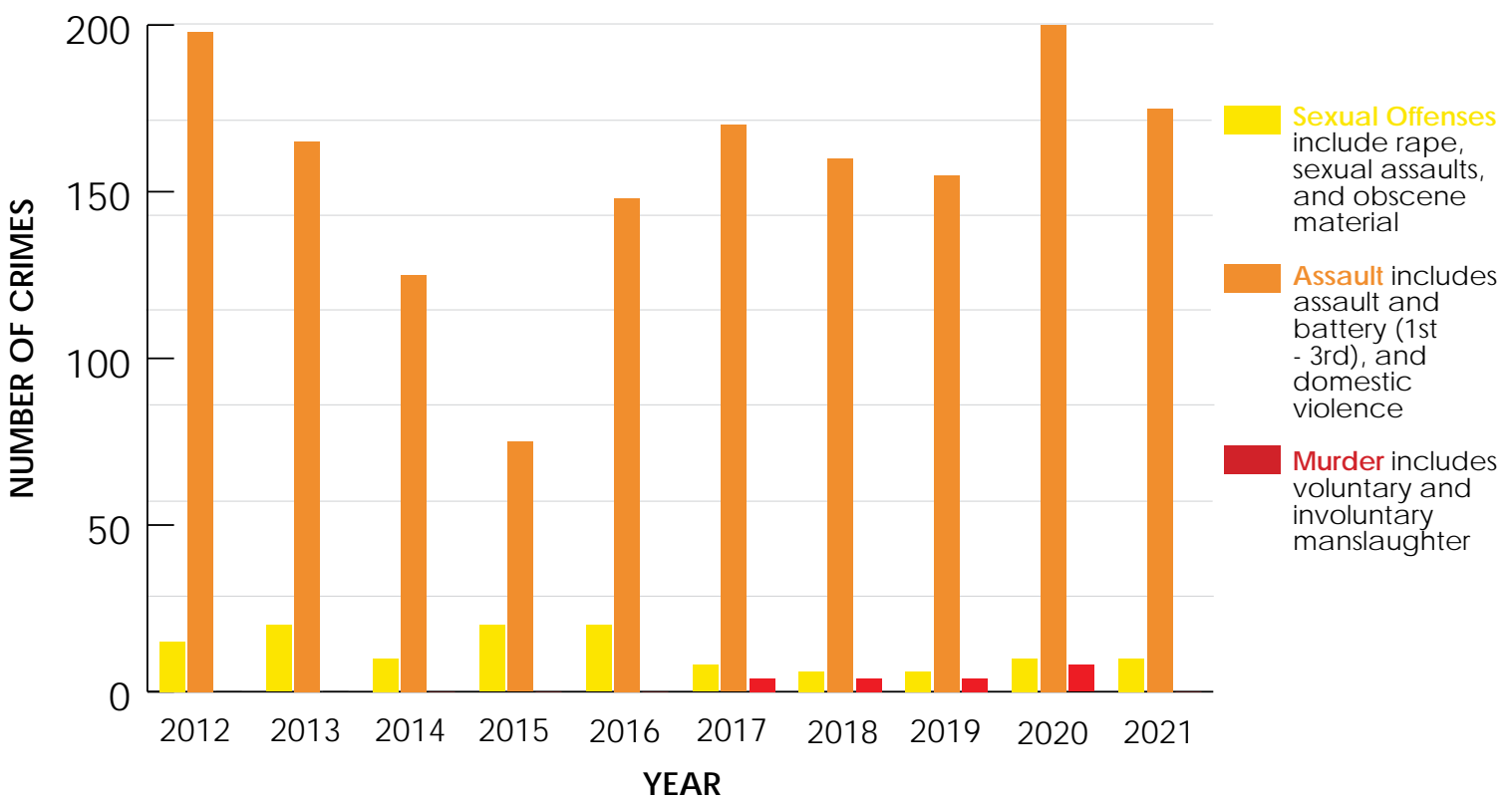
> **FIGURE 5.2: PROPERTY CRIMES**

Source: City of Seneca Police Department



> **FIGURE 5.3: CRIMES AGAINST PEOPLE**

Source: City of Seneca Police Department



HEALTH CARE

Health Care is an essential element of maintaining a community's quality of life. There is a broad scale of health care services that need to be fulfilled to provide adequate care for everyone in the community. There are two main care centers within Seneca:

Rosa Clark Free Medical Clinic

The Rosa Clark Health Center has been serving Oconee County since 1982. The Center became federally qualified in 2017, which has allowed it to receive funds from the Health Resources and Service Administration to provide primary care to under-served areas. The clinic is run by a volunteer board of directors. The clinic provides care to residents on a sliding fee scale based on the number of people in a household and income compared to the federal poverty level. The Clinic provides dental services, medical and behavioral health, primary care services, and pharmacy services. There are two facilities (one dental, one medical) under the Rosa Clark clinic and both are located in Seneca.⁶

Prisma Oconee Memorial Hospital

The Oconee Memorial Hospital has been serving residents in the County since 1939. The current facility has 169 beds and provides in-patient, out-patient, and community services. In 2021, Memorial Hospital was given the Pulmonary Care Excellence Award. The Hospital was also recognized as one of America's top 100 hospitals for Pulmonary Care in 2022.⁷ The City hopes to annex the hospital in the next couple of years.

SCHOOLS

OCONEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Oconee County School District contains 10 elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools. Five of these schools are within the City:

- Blue Ridge Elementary
- Northside Elementary
- Ravenel Elementary
- Seneca Middle School
- Seneca High School

All three of the elementary schools in Seneca provide education to students in pre-K through 5th grade. In 2021, Blue Ridge Elementary had a student enrollment of 589, Northside Elementary School had an enrollment of 619 students (with 50 teachers), and Ravenel Elementary School had 556 students and 42 teachers. When looking at school rankings, all three of the elementary schools had high rankings, in the 90th percentile, for all subgroups of metrics. All three of these schools have significantly decreased their chronic absenteeism rate from the previous year. However, the corona-virus pandemic likely contributed to these statistics. Comparing participation rates across the elementary schools for 2021, Blue Ridge had the lowest percentage of prime instructional time based on presence of students and teachers, at 95.1%. Blue Ridge serves 100% of its students with 1:1 learning, as compared to 97% at Northside and 84% at Ravenel. Northside Elementary had the highest percentage of students enrolling in kindergarten and demonstrating readiness to learn, at 34.1% (Ravenel 25.6% and Blue Ridge 3%). Northside Elementary also scored the highest among the three

6 <https://rosaclarkclinic.org/>

7 <https://www.healthgrades.com/hospital-directory/south-carolina-sc/prisma-health-oconee-memorial-hospital-hgst1f7ae6a6420009>

elementary schools in Mathematics (49%) and scored 49% in percent of students to meet or exceed in English Language Arts. Ravenel scored the highest among the elementary schools in percentage of students to meet or exceed in English Language Arts (49.2%). Ravenel has the highest percentage of students in the gifted and talented program, at 16.1%. However, this was a decrease of 3.7% from the previous year.

Seneca Middle School served 850 students in the 2021 school year, with almost 41% minority students. 2% of students received ESOL services, 59% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch, 23% were identified as gifted and talented, and 5% of students were served in a special education setting. In the 2021 school year, Seneca Middle School students scored in line with the district and state for performance in English, Math, and Science. The Oconee County School District is currently working on building a new home for Seneca Middle School along Wells Highway, near Seneca High School and several elementary schools. The goal is to have the school opened for the 2024 school year.

In the 2021-2022 school year, Seneca High School had 953 students and 58 teachers. Within the district, Seneca High is the most diverse school, with 37% minority students. However, the school is also one of the more impoverished in the district, with 45% of the student population qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The high school offers 24 advanced placement courses to assist the students in college readiness. Additionally, students are able to take dual enrollment classes through Tri-County Technical College. In 2021, Seneca High School students scored higher than the district and state averages for the ACT and SAT in all categories. For the class of 2021, 42% of students went on to a 4 year college, 27% attended a 2-year college, 13% went straight into the workforce, and 3% entered the military.⁸

OCONEE ACADEMY

Oconee Academy is also a part of the Oconee County School District. However, the Academy is set up to provide an alternative for middle and high school students who have been identified as having frequent discipline problems and academic deficiencies. Administrators at the other Seneca schools, as well as the Director of Student Services, determine enrollment at the Oconee Academy. Classes at the Academy include “life skills” and follow a behavior management system. Typically, students only attend the academy for one semester during which both transportation and lunches are provided.

OCONEE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Oconee Christian Academy is a kindergarten through 12th grade private school in Seneca. In 2021, there were 126 students enrolled, 45 of which were in high school. The graduating classes are typically small (6 in 2021). Similarly to Seneca High, Oconee Christian Academy offers student college prep, honors classes, AP classes, and Dual enrollment options to further college readiness. 50% of the current students at Oconee Academy receive financial aid to attend the school.⁹

8 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u0ho5433_oqJgQrpXEfaHBhz9KAtXxus/view

9 <http://www.oconeechristian.org/School-Profile-v-13.html>

SENIOR SERVICES

There are several private and public facilities offering services, care, and housing to seniors in the City. Senior Housing is covered further in the Housing element.

Golden Corner Respite Care

Golden Corner Respite Care provides care and activity programs for seniors suffering from dementia in order to provide their caregivers a break. The Center in Seneca serves both Oconee and Pickens Counties.

Senior Solutions

Senior Solutions serves seniors throughout Upstate South Carolina with transportation, information, adult day care, home care, home delivered meals, congregate dining services, and senior centers. The Oconee Senior Center is located in Downtown Seneca. The Oconee center offers adult day care, exercise classes, fitness equipment, and social events.¹⁰

Palmetto Active Daycare for Seniors

Palmetto Active Daycare serves seniors who can no longer stay home alone by providing supervision, therapeutic exercise, socialization, and nursing care during weekdays (Monday through Friday). The center serves Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC)

The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is the designated provider of AAA and the ADRC for Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties. The ACOG provides information, referrals, assistance, and programs to older adults and their caregivers. Operating as an ADRC allows the ACOG to subcontract local service providers for transportation, adult day care, meal delivery, counseling, nutrition, and other services.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Seneca's Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of sports and events at municipal facilities. As mentioned in the Natural Resources Element, the City operates and maintains seven baseball and softball fields, one football field, two indoor basketball courts, two outdoor basketball courts, two outdoor playgrounds, two batting cages, an 18-hole Disc Golf Championship Course, a 1.1 mile paved walking track, and a 3.2 mile trail/cross country track. The main locations for recreation activities are the Shaver Recreation Complex, Gignilliat Ball Fields, Kapp Fields, and the Gignilliat Community Center.

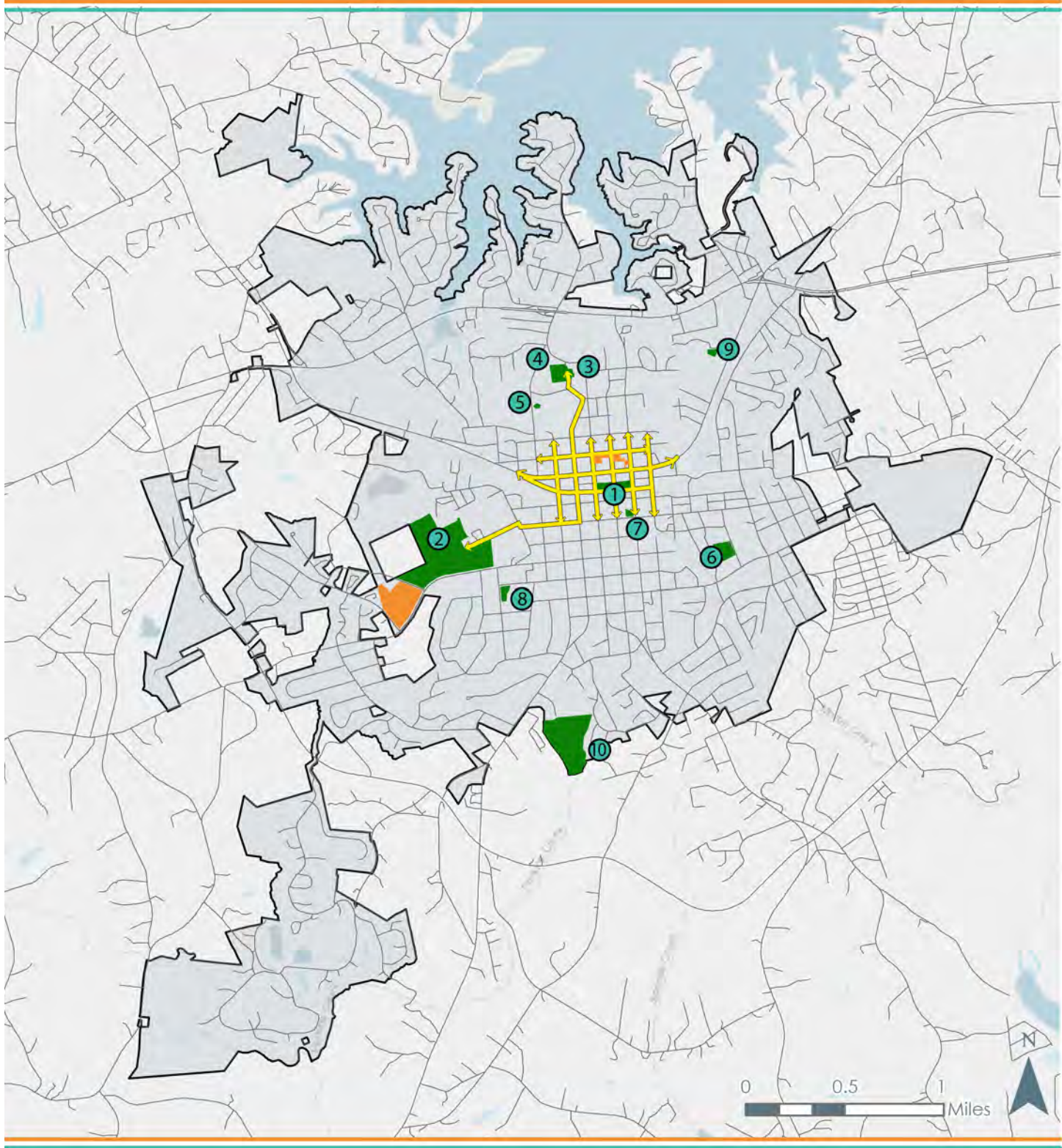
The City offers the following sports programs throughout the year:

- Tackle football
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Cheer-leading
- Softball
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Soccer
- T-Ball
- Flag Football

¹⁰ <https://www.upstateseniors.org/>

> MAP 5.6: EXISTING AND PROPOSED RECREATION FACILITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Source: City of Seneca Master Plan (2019)



Proposed Facilities

Existing Recreation Facilities

Proposed Circulation Improvements

- ① Norton Thompson Park
- ② Shaver Complex
- ③ G. Community Center
- ④ G. Football Field
- ⑤ G. Picnic Area
- ⑥ Blue Ridge Field
- ⑦ Library Park
- ⑧ Kapp Field
- ⑨ Monarch Park
- ⑩ Future Expansion

In order to encourage participation in these programs, fees are reduced for Seneca residents. Another parks and recreation program is State Park Passes. Park Passes allow individuals or families to visit any of the 47 South Carolina State Parks (three of which are in Oconee County). Park passes can be checked out at the Oconee Public Library locations to allow residents to visit for free.¹¹

In 2019, Seneca funded a Master Plan focused primarily on parks and recreation, as well as on Downtown. The goal of the plan was to help focus the City's effort to expand and rehabilitate its facilities and guide decision making in these areas. The plan acknowledged that the City's park and recreation facilities are not in good condition or are nearing the end of their life cycle, and therefore investment in this area is necessary. Additionally, the plan noted that the current number of fields and facilities cannot accommodate the surrounding population or sporting events which could help attract visitors. The following recommendations and goals from the Master Plan relate to parks and recreation facilities:

- Provide a new centralized recreation complex with a new indoor recreation center and outdoor fields able to meet current and projected demands. This complex should be able to host travel sporting events at different competition levels and will provide a championship caliber court/field.
- Optimize land use to provide space for daily public use and serve as an outdoor event space for travel tournaments and other occasions. Small pavilions surrounding open green space could serve the public as a general recreation area and a recreation complex itself could be the primary hub for the new trail system.
- Provide a centralized and efficiently organized recreation complex to allow the parks and recreation department's limited staff to maintain the park efficiently without a significant increase in operational cost.
- Additional land will need to be procured to accommodate expansion. The existing shaver complex is ideally located adjacent to vacant land with no substantial structures or current development making it easier to establish playing fields. Additionally, the adjacent middle school is scheduled to be replaced. The existing lot is ideal for additional rectangular fields and the existing track can be incorporated into the new trail network.

Map 5.6 shows the areas of investment designated in the 2019 Master Plan.

11 <https://oconeelibrary.org/passes-for-sc-state-parks-now-available/>

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Many of the services and community resources provided within the City are under the County's jurisdiction. This can make it difficult to make administrative or policy decisions.
- Seneca Light and Water is one of the City's strengths and is attractive to developers and new businesses. Seneca should continue to provide robust service and requested expansion.
- Seneca's utility provision boundaries are much larger than the municipal limits.
- The City should work with the County on annexation policies in order to ensure annexation is contiguous with the municipal limits but does not extend beyond what the City can manage.
- The County provides the solid waste collection for Seneca. The City no longer provides recycling pick up for residents but there has been an expressed interest in bringing this service back.
- The County's Fire Department and EMS service serves Seneca. The City has its own police department.
- Crime rates over the past 10 years have remained fairly stable; however, there has been a large uptick in narcotics violations over the past 2 years.
- Schools in Seneca are in good condition or have planned improvements. The City should continue to support these schools to ensure that the needs of the population are met and the students are prepared for secondary education or the workforce.
- The City and County have several facilities dedicated to serving the aging population on varying levels of need.
- As public properties are proposed for reuse, an opportunity exists to facilitate public forums before the Planning Commission to receive community input.
- Many of the existing recreation facilities are no longer in good condition. The City's 2019 Master Plan and Downtown Plan included several recommendations for expanding and improving these facilities. The City has also been working to acquire more land to provide parks and recreation to its residents.

ELEMENT 6

HOUSING



INTRODUCTION

The Housing Element is an important part of the Comprehensive Plan, as it provides an analysis of growth trends and needs. The Housing Element describes the existing and projected housing stock, home costs and value, tenure, types of housing available, affordability, and senior housing information.

HOUSING STOCK AND GROWTH

There are many factors that contribute to where housing is developed: water and sewer availability, transportation routes, natural resources, employment centers, past development trends, and related amenities. Since 2000, the City's housing stock has continued to grow, by a total rate of 13% in 20 years, as compared to a population growth over the same period of 10.9%. Although Seneca is small, its proximity to a larger area - Clemson - influences this development. Based on 2018 trends, it was projected that there would be 4,256 housing units in 2023 and 4,441 housing units in 2030. This would mean an overall growth rate of 7.7% over the 12 year period from 2018 to 2030. In 2020, there were 4,230 housing units in the City. This means that the City's housing stock is growing more quickly than projected, which is further evidenced by the more recent growth rate of 13%.

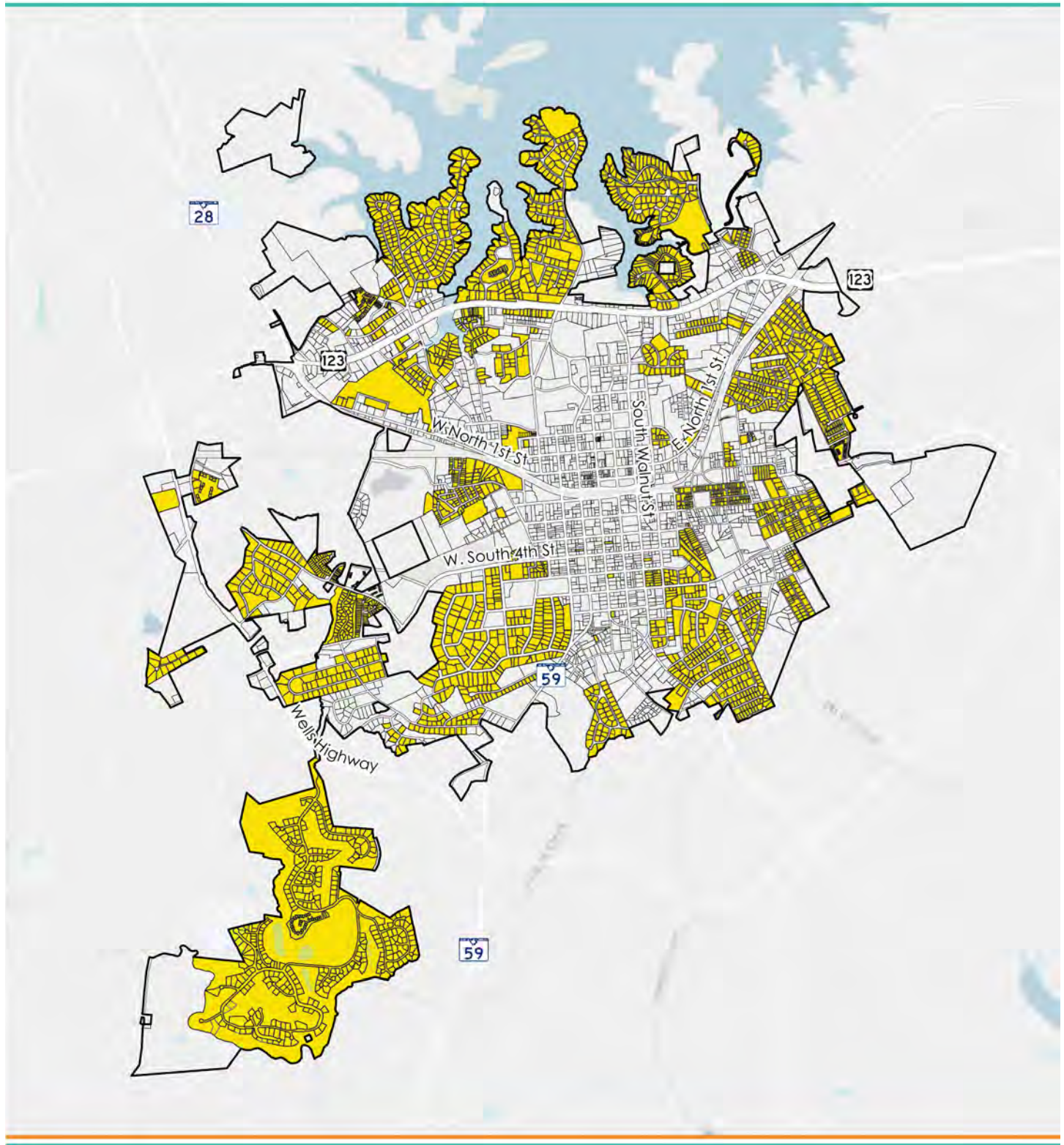
The trends for past growth across the County vary by municipality. Most of the new growth has occurred in multi-family developments and subdivisions which have located near Seneca, along the corridor between Seneca and Clemson, near Walhalla, and around the two lakes: Lake Keowee and Lake Hartwell.

As shown in Map 6.1, 2,948 parcels in the municipal limits are considered to be a part of a subdivision. That accounts for 57% of all parcels in Seneca. Overall, 84% of all parcels are devoted to residential uses. Map 6.2 illustrates the types of residential uses permitted across the City. The majority of residential properties are zoned for single family. However, just slightly over 10% of parcels are zoned for multi-family uses, not including zoning districts for mixed use development, which also typically include multi-family units. Within Seneca, 30.7% of housing units are multi-family. Multi-family housing is typically cheaper to construct and therefore reduced costs are passed down to homeowners and renters. While the percentage of multi-family housing seems low, it is high compared to the County total of 10%. Seneca has allowed for mixed use and multi-family housing through its Planned Development zoning district. However, this is still fairly new and has not been widely adopted. In addition, the City allows for increased housing density through accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, and infill housing in and around Downtown Seneca.

The City has three areas zoned for mobile home housing. One area is off of Hunter Street, in the Southeastern corner of the City; one parcel is off of state Rd 37-37; and several units are off of Elm Street. In total, there are approximately 130 homes currently classified as this housing type in Seneca. The City does not allow for RVs, tents, or other temporary housing.

> MAP 6.1: SUBDIVISIONS

Source: Oconee County Data (2022)

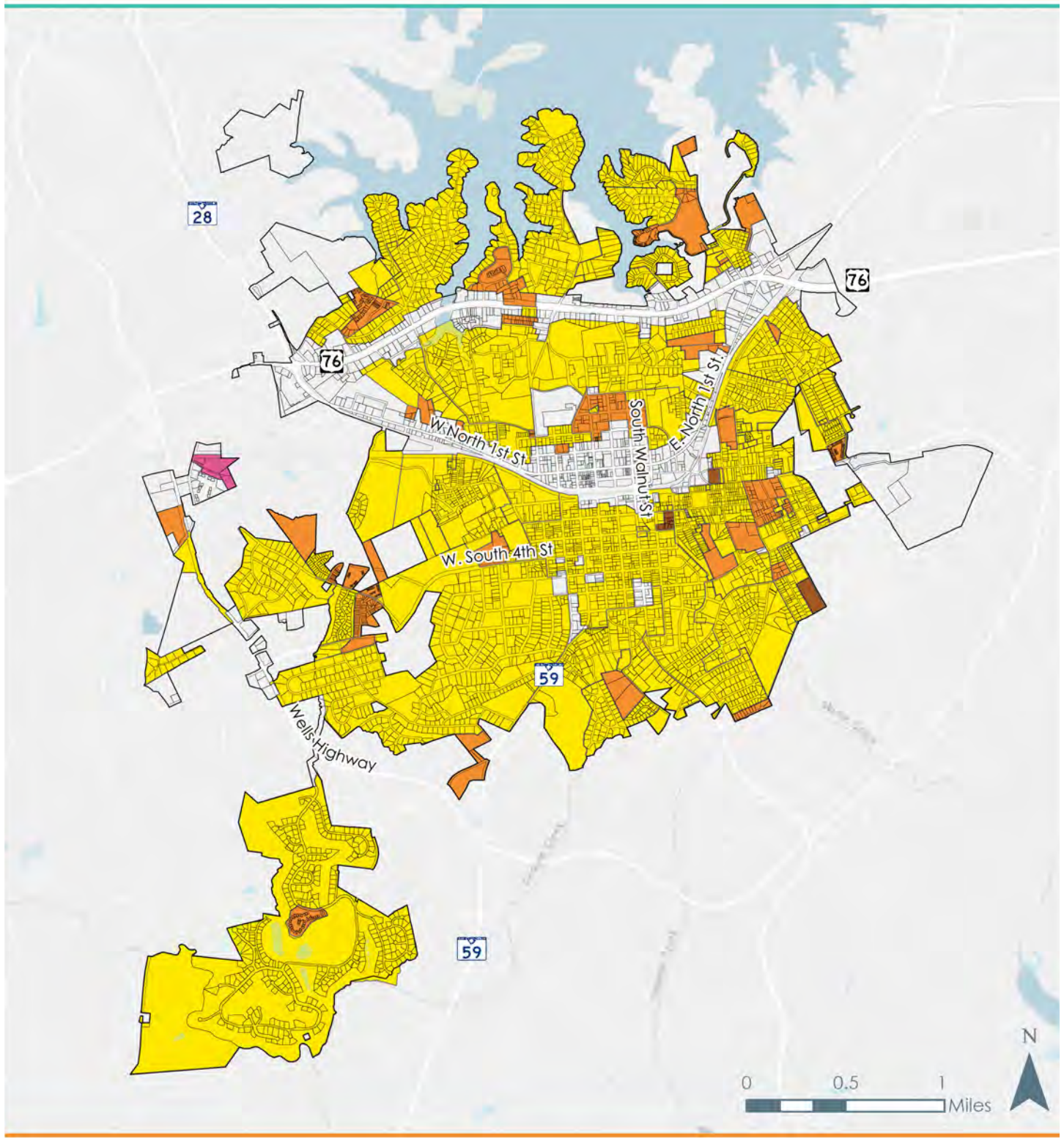


Parcels Classified as a Subdivision





City Limits



> MAP 6.2: PARCELS WITH RESIDENTIAL ZONING

Source: City of Seneca (2022)



ZONING

-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Single Family Residential
-  Mobile Home
-  Mixed Use

-  Seneca Parcels
-  City Limits

> TABLE 6.1: CITY HOUSING STOCK

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)

	NUMBER OF HOMES	PERCENT OF HOMES
1-Unit, Detached	2,698	62.5%
1-Unit, Attached	166	3.8%
2 - 19 Units	1,110	25.7%
20 or More Units	216	5.0%
Mobile Home	130	3.0%

As shown in the table above, the most common type of housing is one-unit, detached homes, which make up 62.5% of the housing stock. This is only slightly below the County's 67.6%.

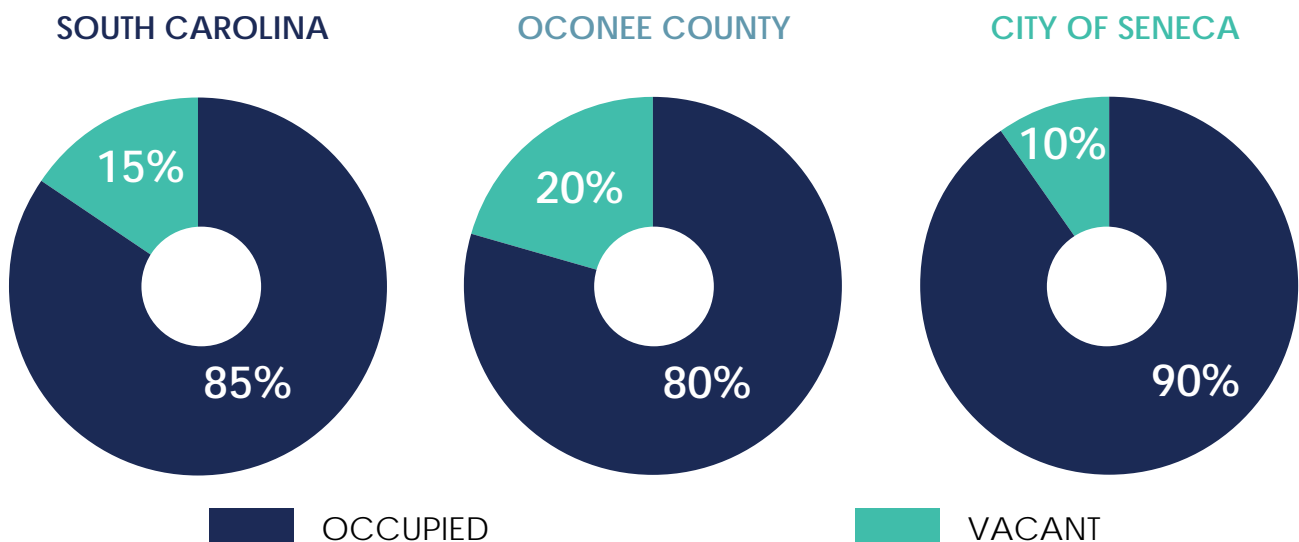
HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TENURE

The vacancy rate in Seneca is 9.6%, which is lower than the County's and State's rates. The vacancy rate in the City has dropped by almost half since 2010, whereas the State and County vacancy rates remained fairly static. It is likely that the vacancy rate will continue to drop over the next couple of years, as there is increasing demand in the area.

Almost half (43%) of all of the housing in Seneca is occupied by renters rather than owners. This is much higher than the State and County rates. The lower owner occupancy could be attributed to the higher percentage of multi-family units, second homes at Lake Keowee, and several nearby colleges.

> FIGURE 6.1: HOUSING OCCUPANCY

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



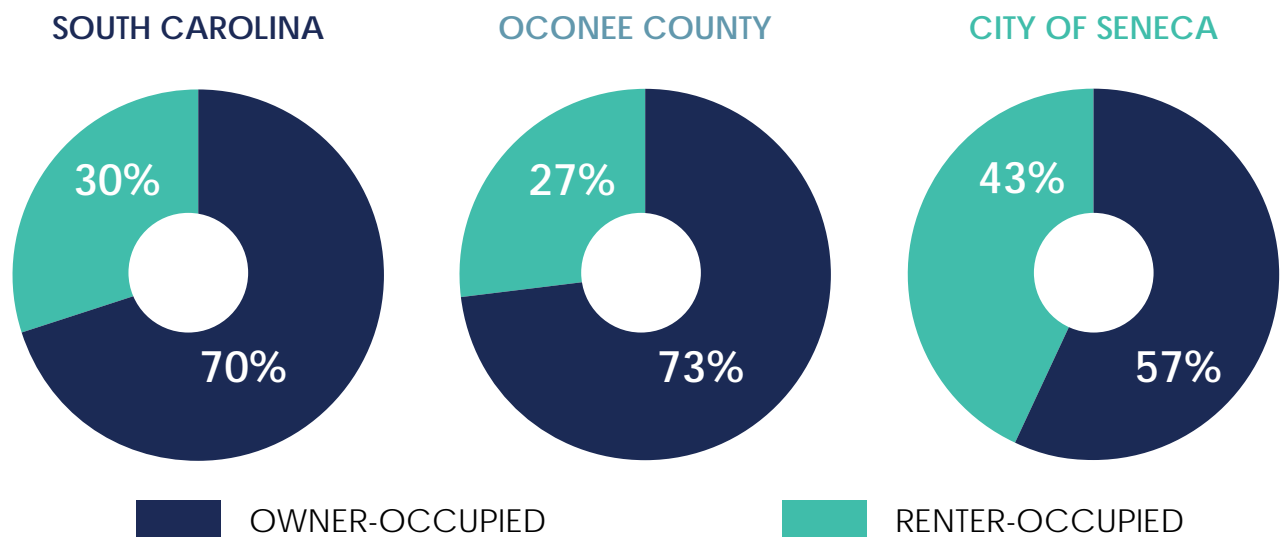
> TABLE 6.2: HOUSING OCCUPANCY TRENDS

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2010, 2020)

	SOUTH CAROLINA		OCONEE COUNTY		CITY OF SENECA	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Occupied	83.4%	84.6%	79.3%	79.6%	81.5%	90.4%
Vacant	16.6%	15.4%	20.7%	20.4%	18.5%	9.6%

> FIGURE 6.2: HOUSING TENURE

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



HOME COST AND VALUE

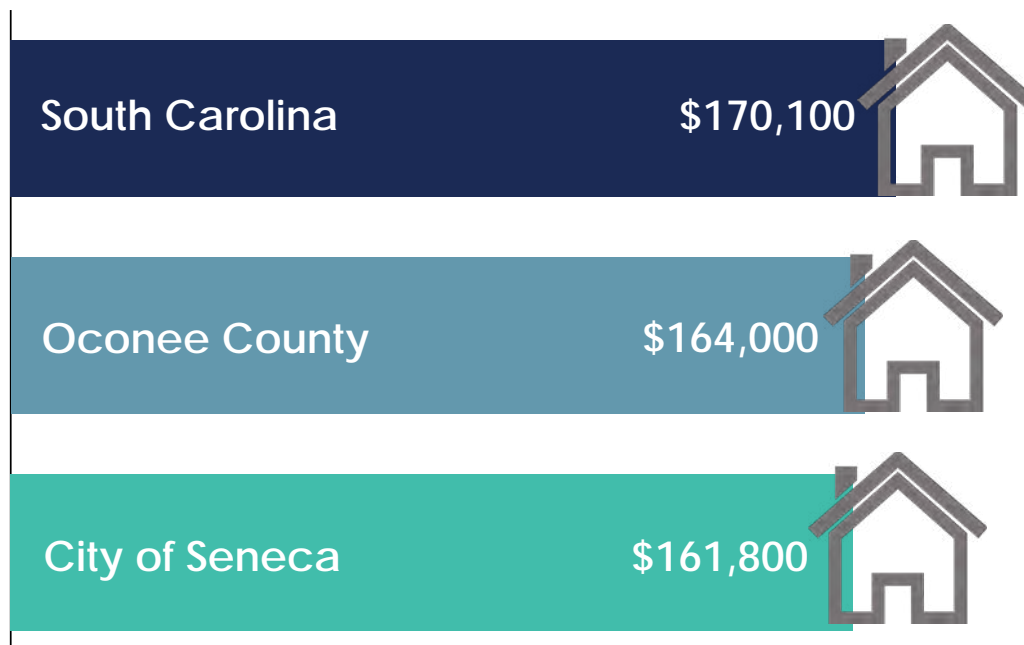
According to the 2020 US census data, the median home value for Seneca was \$161,800, which was slightly below the average for the State and County. Census Tract 307.01, in southern Seneca, had the second lowest median home value in Oconee County in 2020, at \$96,500. The Census tract with the highest median home value was 306.02.

RENTER COST

The Median gross rent between 2016 and 2020 for Seneca was \$541. This was one of the lowest median monthly rents in the County (which averaged \$698 during this same time period) and the State (whose average was \$811). The lower rents may be a contributing factor to the higher percentage of renters in the City.

> FIGURE 6.3: MEDIAN HOME VALUE (OWNER-OCCUPIED UNITS)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



AGE OF HOUSING

The majority of housing built in the City was built prior to 1980, with the largest number of housing units built in the 70s. The census tract with the oldest average housing stock age was tract 307.01, which captures the southern portion of Seneca. This tract also has the highest percentage of minority residents and one of the lowest median incomes among census tracts in the County. The census tracts with the most new housing stock were concentrated around Lake Keowee and Lake Hartwell.

SHORT-TERM RENTAL HOUSING

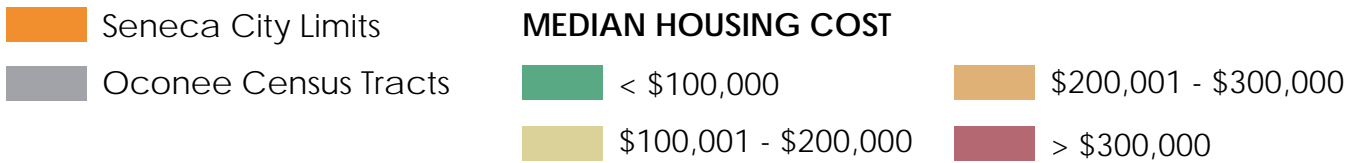
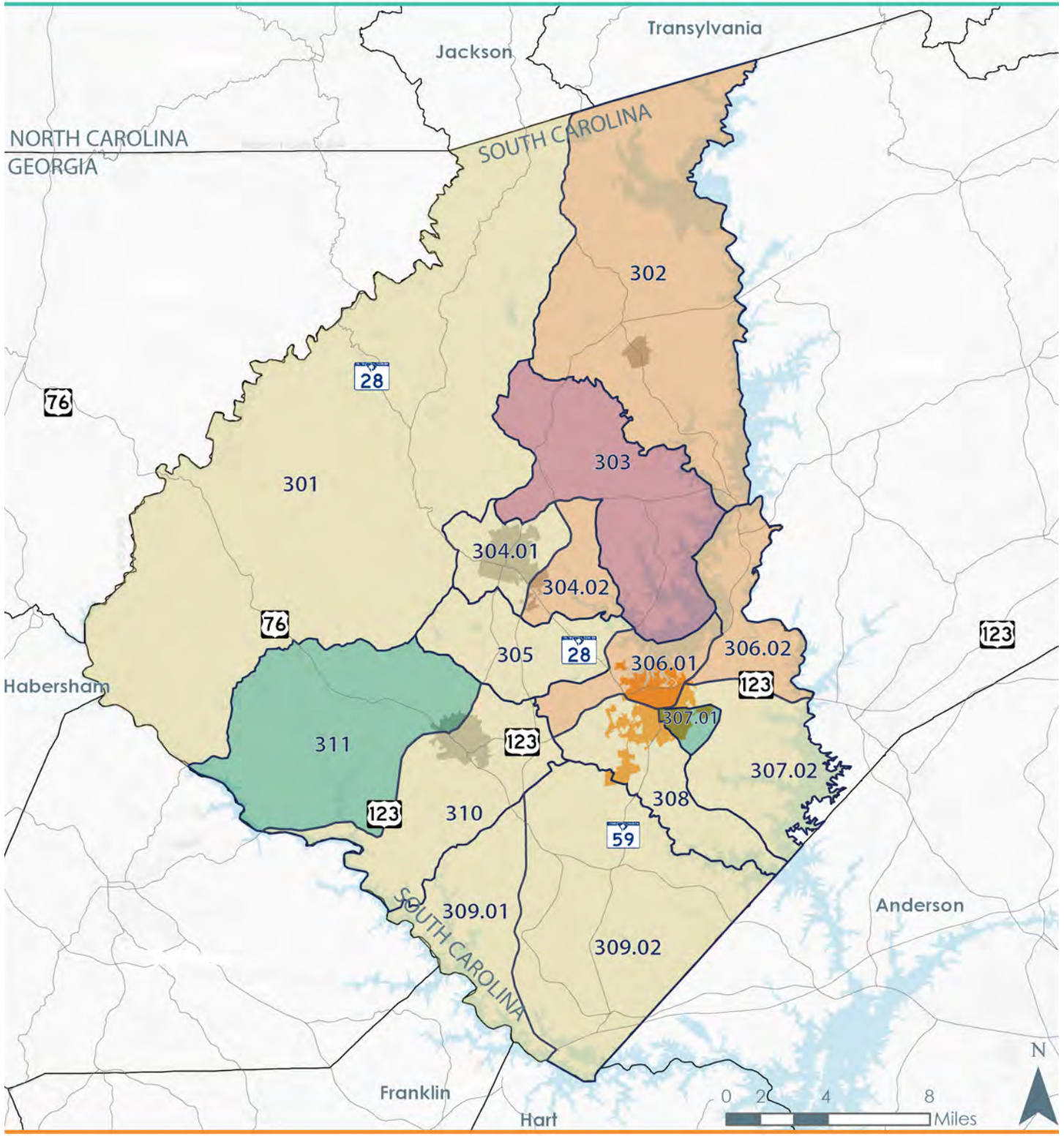
According to AirBnB, there are 27 properties within Seneca's boundaries currently listed for short term rentals. AirDNA provides a market analysis of short term rentals in the Seneca market, which stretches to the west to Clemson, South to Fairplay and Townville, east to Richland and the Westminster region, and north to the Salem region. Within the Seneca market, there are 269 active short term rental properties, with a high concentration around Lake Keowee and along Lake Hartwell. The average daily rate for a place was \$403, occupancy was around 65%, and average revenue across months was \$5,411.¹

Within the municipal limits, the majority of short term rentals are in Downtown Seneca. The City is encouraging units in Downtown to offer short term rentals in order to support tourism in the area. That being said, Seneca has a short-term rental ordinance in place to prevent investors from mass buying properties for this type of use. This ordinance has helped to keep rental costs lower. Because of the City's proximity to Clemson University, as well as the smaller higher education institutions in the area, student housing is important to support these populations. The lower housing costs and availability of rental properties has been sufficient to support the student population thus far and therefore there is no designated student housing within the municipal limits. For example, Oconee County helped to approve 500 - 600 student housing units outside of Seneca, along the railroad.

¹ <https://www.airdna.co/vacation-rental-data/app/us/south-carolina/Seneca/overview>

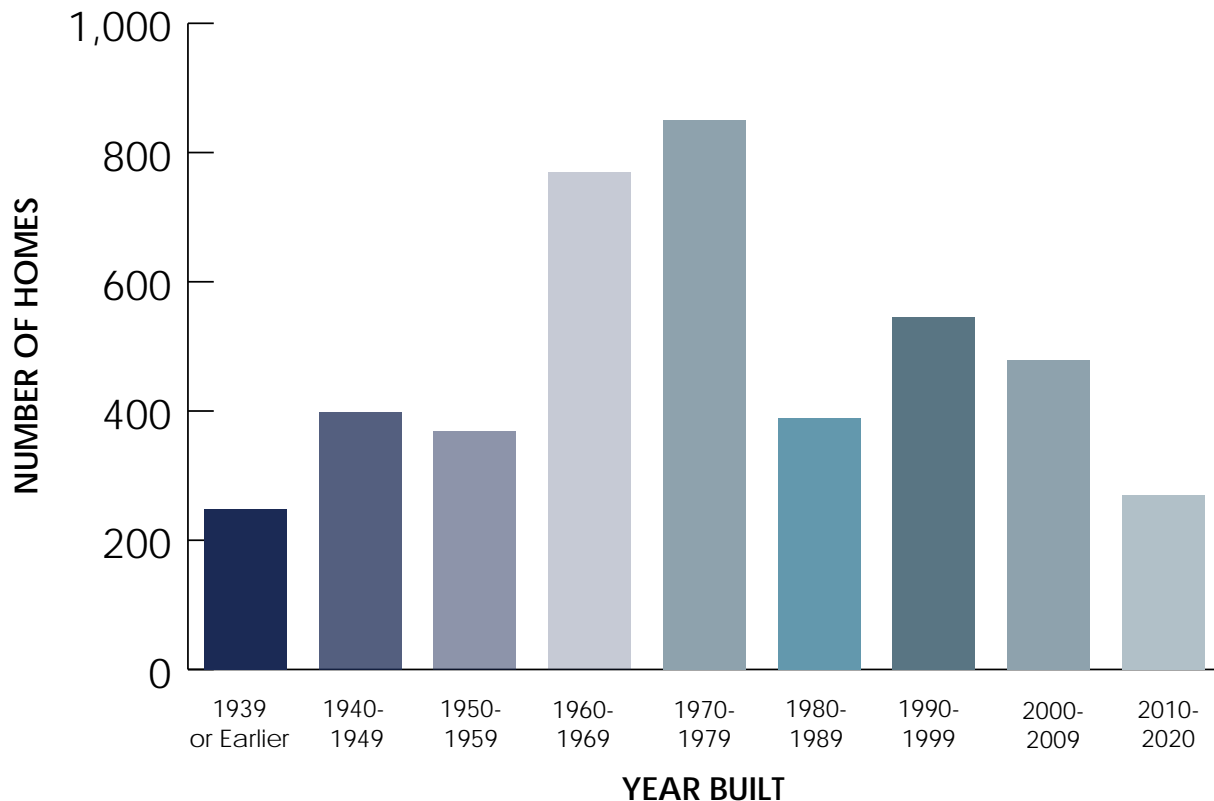
> MAP 6.3: MEDIAN HOUSING COST BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: US Census (2020)



> FIGURE 6.4: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2020)



AFFORDABILITY

In 2021, Oconee County had 2,064 cost burdened rental houses and 23.7% of renters were severely cost burdened.² Spending more than 30% of one's income on housing impacts an individual's ability to pay for basic services such as health care and food. Oconee County is one of only six counties in the State of South Carolina where the average hourly renter wage is higher than the wage necessary for a two bedroom house.

PUBLIC HOUSING ASSISTANCE

The South Carolina Public Housing Authority No.1 was founded in August 1941 to serve the populations in towns of less than 5,000 people in the 16 northwestern counties of South Carolina. The Housing Authority is further subdivided into seven main sections. Section one has its main office in Seneca and serves Seneca, Westminster, and Walhalla.

The table on the following page shows data from HUD on public housing assistance in Seneca and Oconee County for 2021. Seneca is home to a majority share of the public and assisted housing in Oconee County.

2 <https://www.schomeless.org/media/1183/sc-needs-assessment-report.pdf>

> TABLE 6.3: FEDERAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2010, 2020)

	HUD HOUSING		PUBLIC HOUSING		SECTION 8	
	SENECA	OCONEE	SENECA	OCONEE	SENECA	OCONEE
Units	433	679	132	224	214	340
% Occupied	94%	94%	98%	96%	90%	95%
People/Unit	1.9	2	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.3
Total People	771	1,260	217	414	411	777
Avg Family Expense	\$257	\$230	\$263	\$246	\$224	\$200
Avg HUD Expense	\$645	\$532	\$638	\$508	\$736	\$583
Months on Wait List	5	4	5	4	No Data	No Data

STATE HOUSING PROGRAMS

SC Housing Homebuyer Program:

The SC Housing Homebuyer Program assists individuals with purchasing a home by providing low interest rate loans and down payment assistance.³

South Carolina Housing Trust Fund:

The SC HTF partners with governments and non-profits to encourage development of affordable housing.⁴

Low Income Housing Tax Credit:

The Low income Housing Tax Credit program offers incentives for development of multi-family rental housing.

Habitat for Humanity

The County donated 15 homes to the City through Habitat for Humanity. All of these have been fully built.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The CDBG program provides annual grants to states, cities, and counties in order to assist with the development of affordable housing and economic development opportunities. The grants are distributed based on different ranking criteria but allow for some flexibility in how the community uses the funds to meet individual needs and priorities. The City does not currently apply for these grants but could utilize them in the future to assist with implementation strategies from this plan.⁵

3 <https://www.schousing.com/home/HomebuyerProgram>

4 <https://www.schousing.com/home/SCHousingTrustFund>

5 https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg#:~:text=The%20Community%20Development%20Block%20Grant,%2D%20and%20moderate%2Dincome%20persons.

HOMELESSNESS AND SHELTER SERVICES

Homelessness is an increasing problem across the country, as housing costs and the cost of living continue to rise. Within the State of South Carolina, housing and homelessness services are provided by the four Continuums of Care (CoC). Oconee County is part of the Upstate Continuum of Care, which includes over 80 providers across the 13 county region. During the corona-virus pandemic, the CoCs became the lead agencies in the State to help deliver state, federal, and local services.

According to the 2021 state of Homelessness Report,⁶ 10,969 individuals across the State of South Carolina received homelessness services in the 2019 - 2020 year. The majority of the individuals (64%) identified as male and 56% identified as Black or African American. The average age of adults needing services was 41, and the average age of children was 8 years old. However, 86% of those receiving services were single adults. The majority of the statistics on homelessness in South Carolina remained stable from 2018 to 2020, but the percentage of individuals who were veterans and victims of domestic violence rose by 9% in this time period.

United Housing Connections/ Upstate Homeless Coalition

United Housing Connections is a non-profit organization in South Carolina that helps to provide housing and care options to those at risk or experiencing homelessness. United Housing Connections is the lead agency for the Upstate CoC.

Our Daily Rest

Our Daily Rest is a shelter in Seneca that serves all individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

Our Daily Bread

Our Daily Bread is a non-profit soup kitchen in Seneca that provides daily meals to those in need.

Safe Harbor

Safe Harbor is a shelter in Seneca that provides safe shelter, counseling, and advocacy for victims of domestic violence and for their children.

AGING IN PLACE

As mentioned in the Population Element, the number of older adults and retirees is increasing in both the County and the City. It is important to maintain services for older adults in order to enable them to stay in the City as they get older. There are currently 12 senior housing, independent living, and assisted living facilities in Seneca:

- Seneca Health and Rehab Center
- Seneca Residential Care Center
- The Residences at Park Place
- Belevedere Commons of Seneca
- The Oaks at Seneca
- Keowee Place
- Spring Valley Elderly Housing
- Greenfield Apartments
- Seneca Garden Apartments
- Mountain Trace
- Sloan Street Housing
- Stribling Place

⁶ https://www.unitedhousingconnections.org/_files/ugd/69c878_e8ddc2c85b4e4585b559204033a51e35.pdf

The average cost of independent living in Seneca is \$2,837 a month, which is higher than the national average of \$2,650, and much higher than nearby areas, such as Clemson, whose average is \$1,950 a month.⁷

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The City has a high housing occupancy rate and low housing cost as compared to the State and County.
- The City has a low owner-occupied housing rate and a high renter-occupied rate as compared to the County and State. The City's low average monthly rent supports the higher percentage of renters.
- 57% of the parcels in the municipal limits are considered to be part of a subdivision. The majority of these subdivisions are newer developments; especially the ones bordering Lake Keowee.
- Although there is multi-family housing in Seneca, the primary housing type is single-unit, detached homes.
- There are only three areas in the City zoned for mobile home units. As indicated in the Zoning Ordinance, Seneca wants to encourage all mobile homes to be located within designated mobile home parks.
- There are multiple resources available to the City on the county, state, and federal level to assist with housing affordability.
- Most residents would prefer to maintain the small town, low density character of the City.
- While Seneca has several services and resources to assist the aging population, the cost of independent living facilities is much higher in the City than the national average.

7 <https://www.caring.com/senior-living/independent-living/south-carolina/Seneca>

ELEMENT

7

LAND USE



INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Element analyzes existing land use, parcel size, and zoning to provide recommendations for future development and growth. The Future Land Use Map is then used to show the vision for this growth through recommended future land uses throughout the City and adjacent areas.

EXISTING LAND USE AND PARCEL SIZE

Seneca contains approximately 4,497 acres of land within its limits. The City's existing land uses, as described by the County's GIS parcel data, are shown in Map 7.1. Almost 70% of the land is currently used for residential purposes, with commercial being the next most abundant land use. There is 10.3% of land dedicated to public, office, and institutional uses and less than 1% is dedicated to industrial uses. The general uses of land has not changed significantly in the last 10 years; though there has been an increase in multi-family housing and City-owned property.

Map 7.2 shows the parcel size distribution throughout Seneca. The largest parcel in the City is the Cross Creek golf course, at approximately 316 acres; and the smallest is the courtyard behind Buchanan Park, at 0.01 acres. The mean acreage for a parcel in Seneca is 1.17 acres, which aligns with the largely residential and commercial nature of the City, as opposed to the agricultural typology of the surrounding County. When comparing existing land use and parcel size, there are several larger parcels that are still vacant or undeveloped. Other large parcels include large subdivisions and industrial spaces.

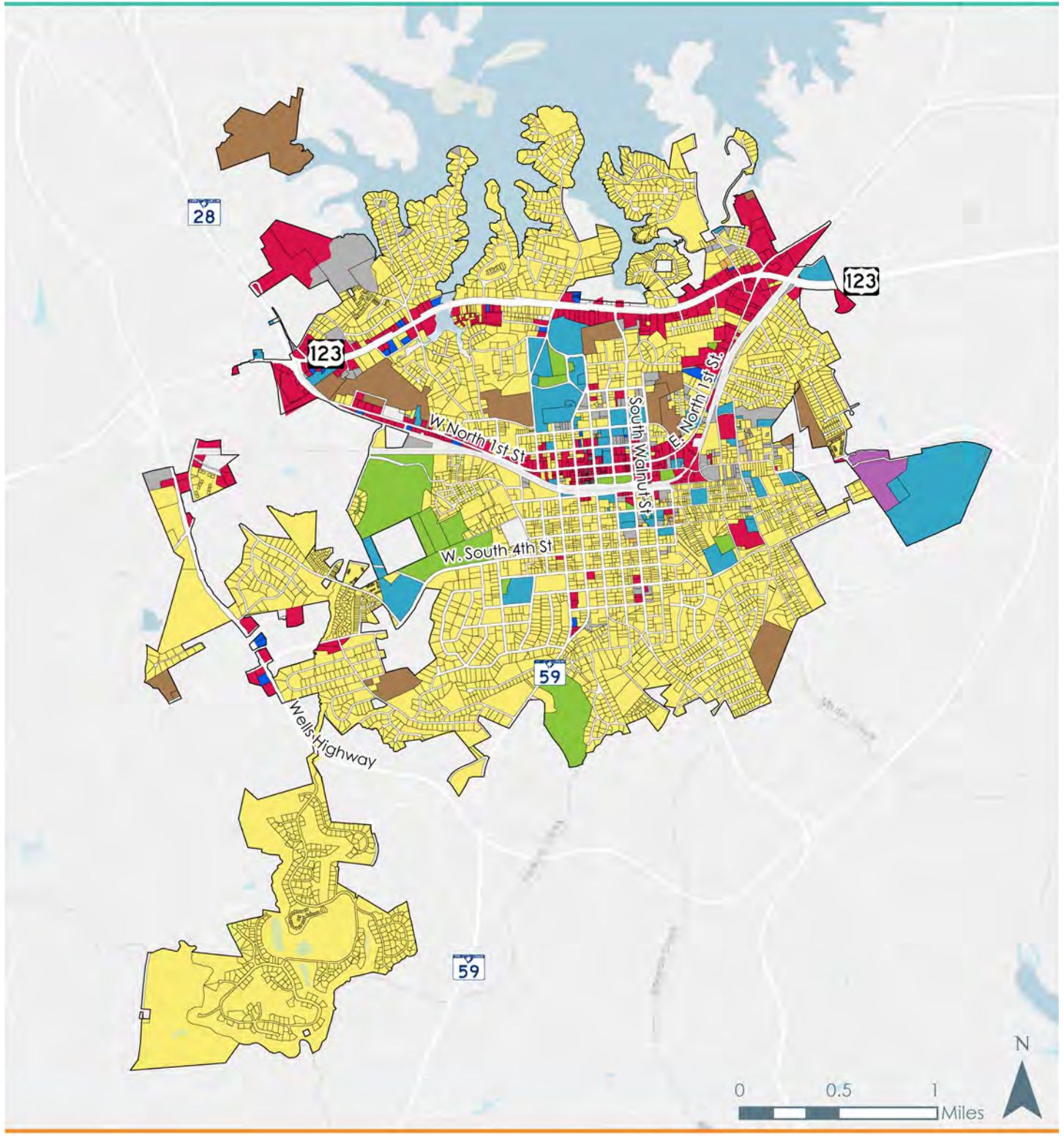
Over the last decade, the majority of growth has been in the Downtown area, primarily through infill and redevelopment. Additional growth has occurred along the lake, with larger scale, residential subdivision developments. The City annexed six of these developments in 2010; four of which have been fully built out in the past decade. Multi-family growth has occurred along Wells Highway, near the middle school.

EXISTING ZONING

Seneca adopted its zoning ordinance in 1999. As the City has grown and developed over the years, a series of minor amendments have been made. However, there has not been a full update in recent years. One of the major changes that have been made is adopting Planned Development zoning districts in order to help allow for flexibility with mixed-use zoning. There are eight parcels, mostly in the northwestern corner of the City, which are currently zoned PDU or PD-MU. Map 7.3 shows the zoning in Seneca. More specific than the land use categories previously discussed, there are 22 zoning districts which each permit specific uses and require certain dimensional or design standards.

> MAP 7.1 EXISTING LAND USE

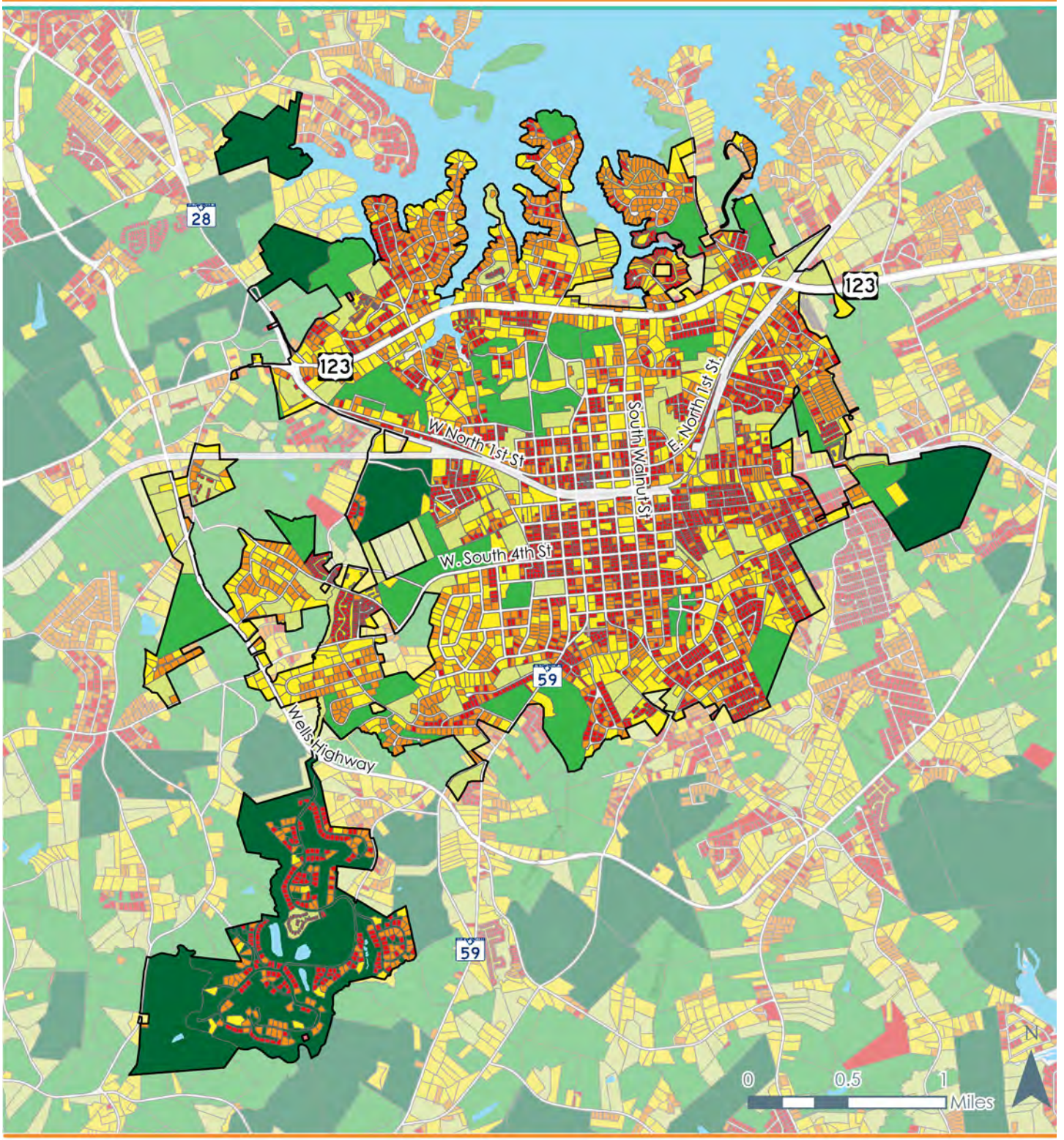
Source: Oconee County Parcel Search (2022)



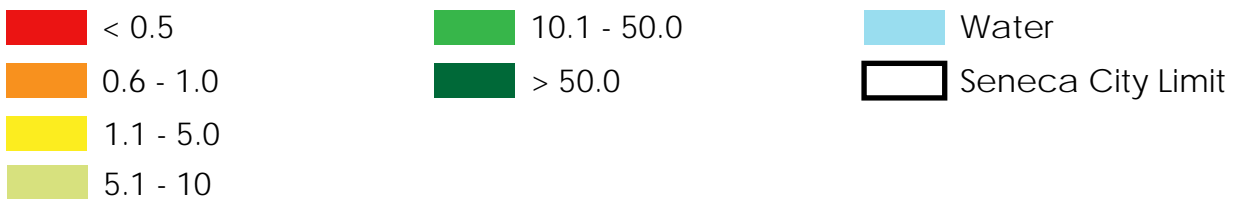
- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Seneca Parcels | Mobile Home Residential | Industrial |
| City Limits | Farm Market | Other / Vacant |
| LAND USE | | |
| Park | Civic / Institutional | Office |
| Residential | Commercial | |

> MAP 7.2: PARCEL SIZE

Source: City of Seneca (2022)

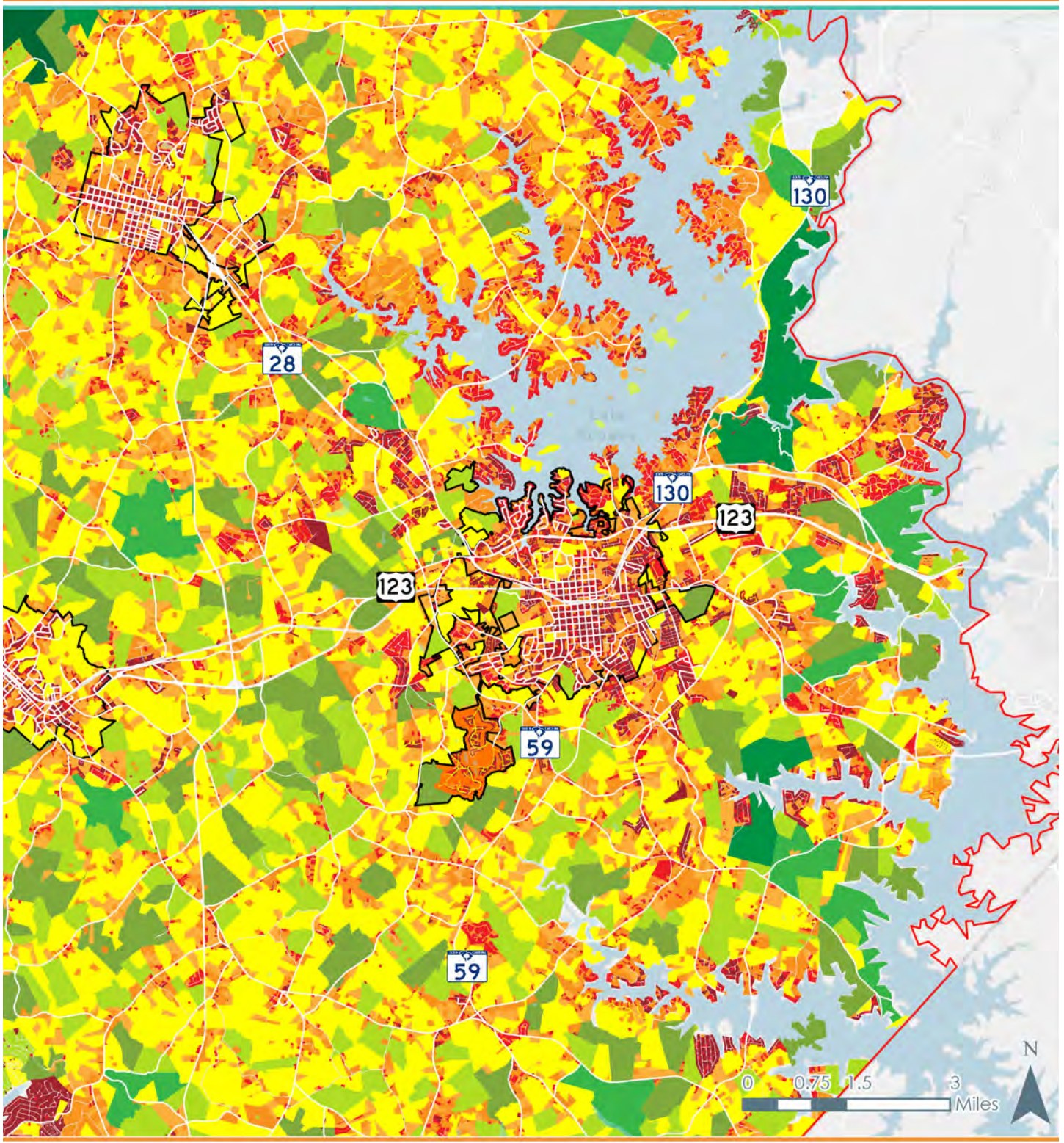


PARCEL SIZE (ACRES)

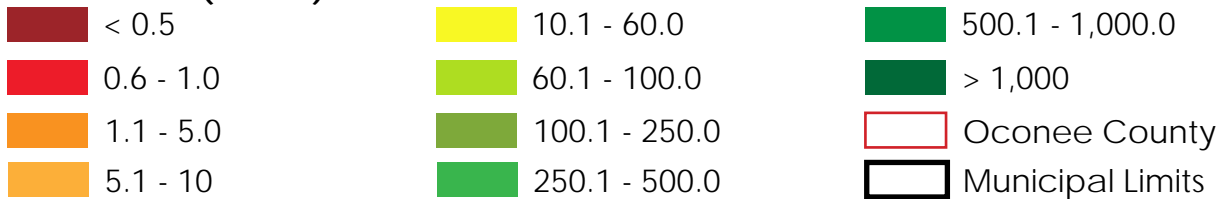


> MAP 7.3: PARCEL SIZE AT A REGIONAL SCALE

Source: Oconee County Data (2022)



PARCEL SIZE (ACRES)



R-20 (Single Family Residential)

The R-20 District is designed to encourage low-density, single family homes on lots of 20,000 square feet or greater. This zone does not allow for any commercial or industrial uses. Permitted uses within this district do not include mobile homes, but some public owned buildings, parks, parking lots, and miniature golf courses are allowed.

R-15 (Single Family Residential)

The R-15 District is also intended for low-density, single family residential purposes. Lots within this district must be at least 15,000 square feet in area. Uses allowed in this district must align with the residential character of the district and are the same as the R-20 district.

R-10 (Single Family Residential)

The R-10 District is designed for low to medium density residential purposes. Single family dwellings within this district must be on lots at least 10,000 square feet in area. Uses permitted in this district beyond single family residences are the same as R-15 and R-20.

R-6 (Single Family Residential)

The R-6 District is intended for medium density single family residential purposes. Lots within this district are required to be at least 6,000 square feet in area. Although this is the highest density single family residential zoning category, there are no additional permitted uses.

RG (General Residential)

The RG District is intended for medium density residential uses. The district requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet and dwelling units must contain at least 1,200 square feet of heated floor space.

RM-8 (Multi-Family Residential)

The RM-8 District was developed to allow for high density residential purposes. The character of this district is solely residential and discourages the encroachment of industrial and commercial uses. The RM-8 district allows for multi-family dwelling units, in addition to the permitted uses allowed in the Single Family Residential districts. The minimum lot size for the RM-8 district is 1 acre.

RM-16 (Multi-Family Residential)

The RM-16 District is similar to the RM-8 district but allows for a minimum lot size of 2 acres.

MHP (Mobile Home Park Residential)

The MHP District allows for high density residential lots designed to meet the needs of mobile homes. This district is also intended to consolidate mobile homes into mobile home parks. Mobile home parks need to be at least 2 acres in size, provide adequate drainage, and meet clearance requirements. Mobile Home parks can have a maximum of 8 mobile home units per acre and each unit must be no less than 4,000 square feet in area and 40 feet wide. There also must also be at least 10,000 square feet of common open space or amenity area for each mobile home park, with an additional 100 square feet of open space for each mobile home unit over 20.

RO (Residential Office)

The RO District is designed to serve as a transitional zone between residential uses and offices or limited commercial activities. Permitted uses within this district include professional offices, medical offices, off-street parking lots, single family dwelling units, and other conditional uses.

OC (Office Commercial)

The OC District is intended to reserve land for businesses, offices, institutional, public, semi-public, and limited group residential purposes. The uses within this district are designed to foster an uncongested and quiet office environment and to discourage retail or industrial uses. Other permitted uses in this district include medical clinics, banks, daycares, cultural and community centers, utility facilities, proprietary schools, nursing homes, veterinary offices, funeral homes, government buildings, and Oconee County School District buildings.

NC (Neighborhood Commercial)

The NC District is designed to reserve land for local or neighborhood oriented businesses. These businesses include shopping or services that directly serve nearby residential areas such as beauticians, repair services, restaurants, bakeries, and all other uses permitted in the OC district. The design of the NC district is not intended to be commercial strip businesses.

HC (Highway Commercial)

The HC District is intended for automobile-oriented commercial development along existing or proposed major roadways. This district serves uses that benefit from being in close proximity to each other and to heavy roadway access. Types of uses allowed in the HC district include retail stores (with enclosed external storage), service businesses, professional offices, restaurants, groceries, medical offices, banks, daycare, laundry, radio studios, car washes, vehicle dealerships, hotels, and other related uses.

GC (General Commercial)

The GC District is designed for business, financial, professional, and services uses. Permitted uses in this district are similar to that of Highway Commercial but with a less auto-oriented location.

CC (Core Commercial)

The CC District is intended to encourage centrally located trade, commercial, and community service areas. The CC district covers the central downtown core of Seneca and serves to maintain the diversity of businesses within the area. Permitted uses are similar to the Highway Commercial District but the CC district has a much smaller lot area (6,000 square feet), which ensures that the desired character is achieved.

CP (Conservation Preservation)

The CP district is intended to preserve and control development within certain land or water areas. Examples of these areas include wildlife refuges, areas of natural beauty, outdoor recreational areas, and environmentally sensitive areas. Uses and activities in this district must not destroy or impair the natural species or topography of the area. Permitted uses include private docks, public utility lines, publicly owned parks / open space, swimming beach, boat marina, forestry area, retention ponds, agricultural / horticultural farming, and shoreline protection areas.

BI (Basic Industrial)

The BI District is intended for basic or primary industrial purposes which involve extensive manufacturing and processing or assembly operations. Large undeveloped tracts of land can fall under this zoning type if they have the potential to support future industrial uses.

LI (Limited Industrial)

The LI District provides areas for limited industrial uses. Industrial uses permitted under this designation cannot be objectionable in terms of noise, odor, or fumes to surrounding properties. Example of industrial uses that could fall under this category include research laboratories, transportation terminals, public facilities, agricultural / horticultural farms, radio towers, vocational schools, and office buildings. Additionally uses that would benefit industrial workers, such as restaurants, are permitted in this zone.

PD-R (Planned Development Residential)

The PD-R District was established to allow large-scale residential developments that obtain the advantages of creative site design, improved appearance, compatible adjacent uses, optimum service of community facilities, open space amenities, and improved functioning of vehicular access and circulation. The minimum lot size for this district is 3 acres. The district is based on the premise that larger lot sizes will allow for more functional design through buffers, separation of uses, access patterns, and relationships with adjacent zoning districts. Permitted uses within the PD-R district include single family, dual family, single family attached, and cluster dwelling units, as well as some accessory buildings and recreation facilities. This district requires that 5% of the total area be dedicated to common open space or amenity areas. Any development classified under this district must be approved by the Planning Commission and City Council.

PD-C (Planned Development Commercial)

The PD-C District is similar to the PD-R, but is designed to encourage the unified development of large commercial sites, rather than residential. The PD-C also has a minimum lot area of 3 acres. Any of the uses permitted in HC, GC, OC, NC, or CC districts are allowed in the PD-C district; however, Planning Commission and City Council approval is necessary for any development in this district.

PD-MU (Planned Development Mixed Use)

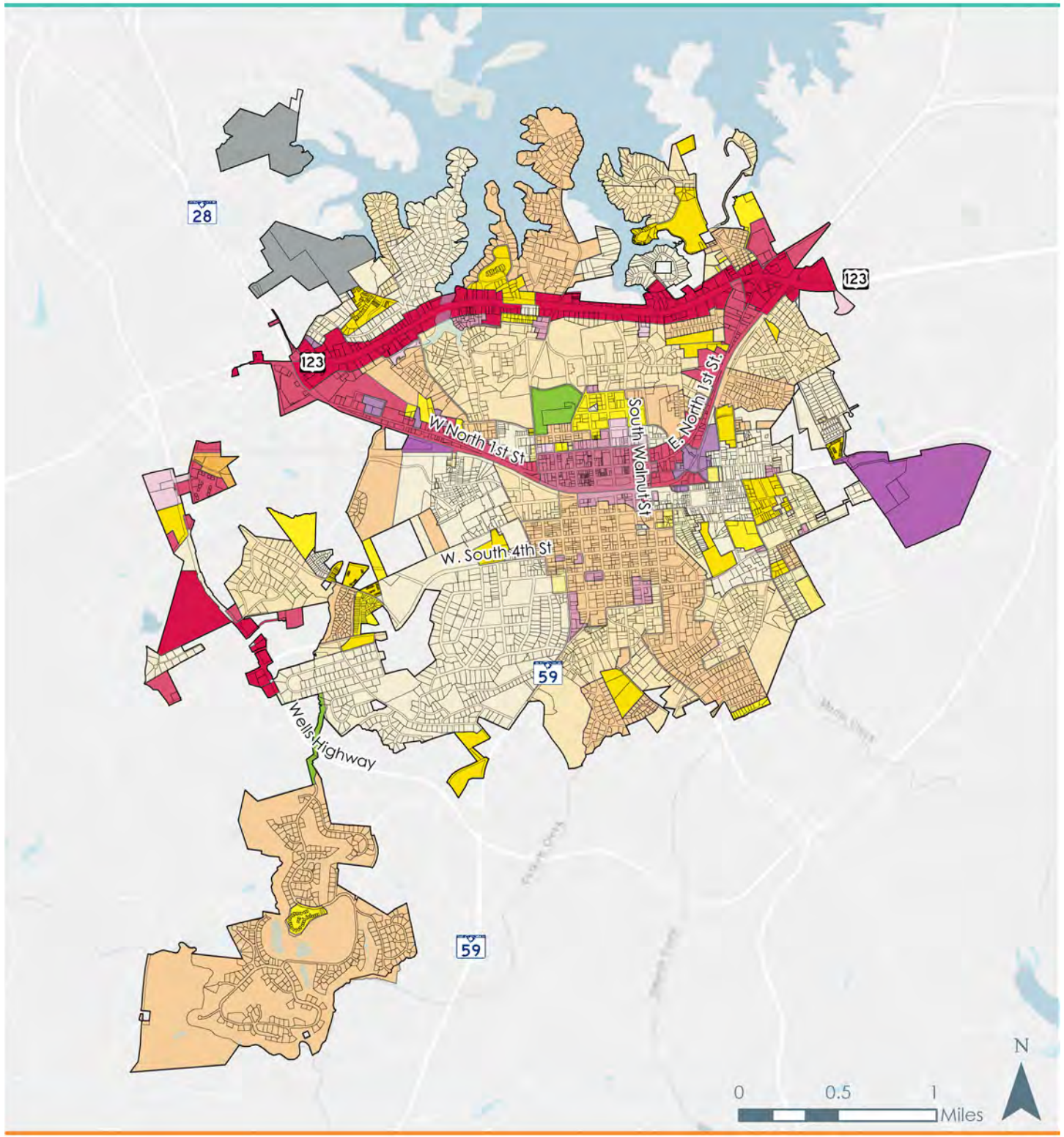
The PD-MU District is designed to provide creativity in large-scale mixed use development through flexibility in design, advantages of improved appearance, compatibility with adjacent uses, optimum service of community facilities, open space, and amenities, and functional circulation. As with the PD-R and PD-C districts, the PD-MU district has few defining regulations but does require Planning Commission and City Council approval of design. Permitted uses with the PD-MU district include any uses permitted in R (except RG), RM, HC, GC, OC, NC, or CC districts. The PD-MU district also has the minimum lot size of 3 acres.

PD-U (Planned Development Undeveloped)


The PD-U District is a designation intended to preserve large parcels for future development as a Planned Unit Development. Planning Commission and City Council can grant approval of a PD-U district if the parcel owner shows intent for future development but without a detailed site and development plan at the time the request is made. The same minimum lot size of 3 acres is required for this classification. There are no uses permitted under the PD-U District until the plans have been approved and the district is reclassified as a specific type of PD District (PD-R, PD-C, PD-MU).

> MAP 7.4 ZONING

Source: City of Seneca(2022)



ZONING

 R-20	 RM-8	 PD-U	 CC
 R-15	 RM-16	 OC	 CP
 R-10	 MHP	 NC	 BI
 R-6	 RO	 HC	 LI
 RG	 PD-MU	 GC	 Seneca Parcels

> TABLE 7.1: ZONING DISTRICTS

Source: City of Seneca GIS (2022)

ZONING DISTRICT	ZONING DISTRICT NAME/DESCRIPTION	PARCEL COUNT	ACRES
R-20	Residential - Single Family	826	818.1
R-15	Residential - Single Family	833	817.5
R-10	Residential - Single Family	1296	1163.4
R-6	Residential - Single Family	636	338.3
RG	Residence General)	183	79.2
RM-8	Residential - Multi-Family	196	119.1
RM-16	Residential - Multi-Family	342	210.6
MHP	Mobile Home Park Residential	15	13.0
RO	Residence Office	18	7.5
PD-R	Planned Development Residential	0	0
PD-C	Planned Development Commercial	0	0
PD-MU	Planned Development Mixed Use	5	11.1
PD-U	Planned Development Undeveloped	3	159.0
OC	Office Commercial	31	37.3
NC	Neighborhood Commercial	91	42.2
HC	Highway Commercial	200	221.0
GC	General Commercial	199	197.2
CC	Core Commercial	181	45.4
CP	Conservation Preservation	5	33.6
BI	Basic Industrial	9	149.0
LI	Limited Industrial	25	27.2
Other	Other	15	7.3
	Total	5,109	4,496.8

FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Maps 7.5 and 7.6 show the desired character of different areas in Seneca. The Future Land Uses do not directly align with the current City zoning designations but are a more general representation of the types of development the City would like to see. When considering new developments and rezoning cases, the Planning Commission and City Council should consult the Future Land Use Map to ensure that developments are compatible with the desired vision. The descriptions of each land use type are listed below.

Suburban Neighborhood: All areas in and around the City which are primarily used for single family residential purposes, or are intended to support residential development in the future. The density of the residential development in these areas varies based on the ability to receive urban services.



Urban Neighborhood: This area primarily includes well-established traditional neighborhoods in and around the City that are on a grid street network. These areas are generally a higher density than most suburban neighborhoods. Urban neighborhoods exhibit opportunities for infill residential development and other improvements that support their connection to Downtown Seneca.



Rural: Areas outside of the City which are generally agricultural or rural in nature, with limited development. These areas are projected to remain rural for the foreseeable future.



Commercial Corridor: Existing and future commercial development that is primarily suburban in nature, and located along major roadways. These commercial enterprises are typically larger scale and include different types of commerce than the commercial uses in Downtown Seneca.



Commercial Node: Commercial Nodes are commercial areas that are focused around major intersections in suburban and rural transition areas. The concentration of these basic goods and services help meet the needs of lower density areas outside of the City.



Civic: The Civic areas include parks, recreation facilities, schools, and other public spaces throughout the City for the use and enjoyment of the general public.



Industrial: All areas which are currently used for industrial purposes, or which are intended to support industrial development in the future. The City should consider land use compatibility measures to ensure incompatible land uses are appropriately buffered based on the intensity of uses.



Downtown Commercial: The area which can be described as “Downtown Seneca.” This area is intended to continue to revitalize and expand, supporting a broad range of activities, entertainment, commerce, and residences.



Cultural Arts District: A cultural extension of Downtown; this area is home to a wide range of historic and civic uses. This area compliments Downtown and its connection to the Downtown should be improved over time.



> MAP 7.5: FUTURE LAND USE FOR THE CITY

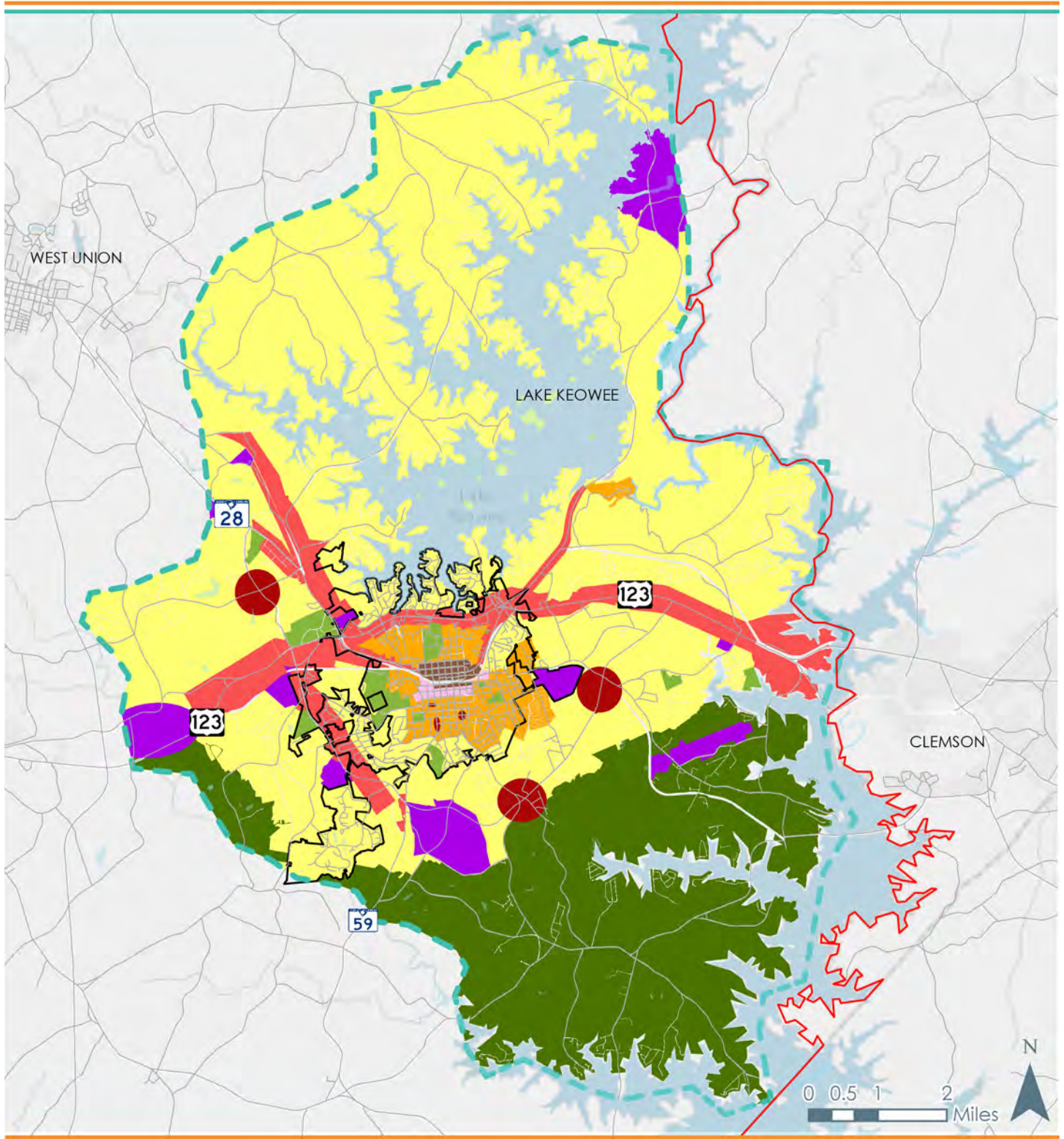


- Seneca City Limits
- Oconee County Boundary
- Water Service Area

- Future Land Use
- Suburban Neighborhood
 - Urban Neighborhood
 - Rural
 - Commercial Corridor

- Commercial Node
- Civic
- Industrial
- Downtown
- Cultural Arts District

> MAP 7.6: FUTURE LAND USE REGIONAL



- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Seneca City Limits | Future Land Use | Commercial Node |
| Oconee County Boundary | Suburban Neighborhood | Civic |
| Water Service Area | Urban Neighborhood | Industrial |
| | Rural | Downtown |
| | Commercial Corridor | Cultural Arts District |

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The City's primary land use is residential, which aligns with the adopted Zoning Map.
- While Seneca has a number of parcels dedicated to multi-family housing, the number of districts which permit this use are limited.
- Commercial land uses and zoning districts are located primarily along US-123, North 1st Street, and Downtown.
- The Future Land Use Map is primarily intended to protect existing character areas while promoting infill development and redevelopment in specifically targeted areas. It also aims to direct future growth in an efficient and effective manner.

ELEMENT 8

**GROWTH
MANAGEMENT**



INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Element is intended to provide insight on the City's growth and annexation opportunities. This Element is closely linked to the Land Use Element but focuses more on directing growth, rather than existing conditions. The Planning Commission and City Council should refer to this Element when considering annexation and development to ensure that they are prioritizing the areas that will help achieve the guiding vision.

GROWTH AND ANNEXATION AREAS

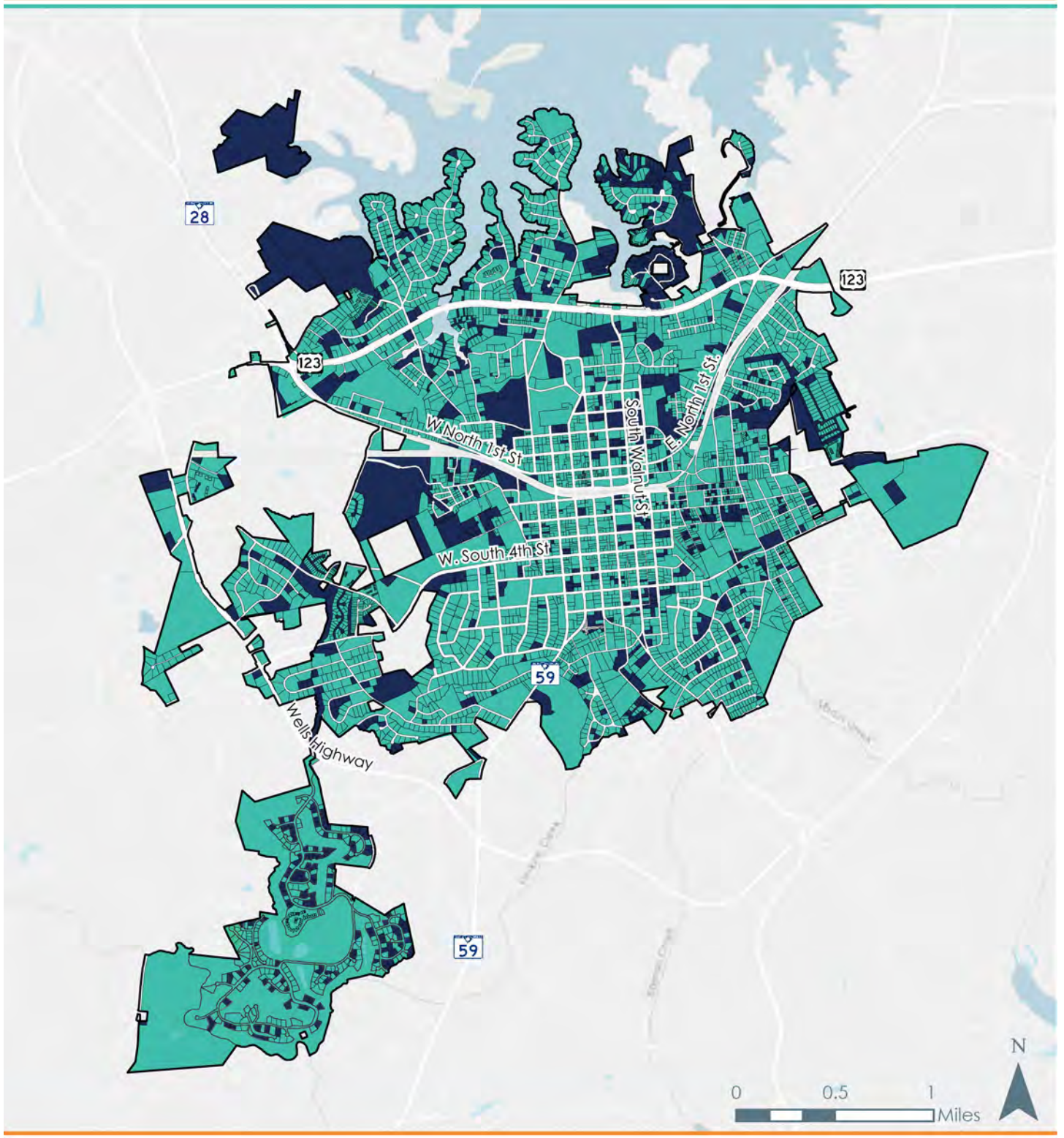
As mentioned previously, the City of Seneca should expect continued population growth over the next 10 years. While the City itself is anticipated to continue growing, areas around it are likely to experience similar growth trends. Looking at Map 8.1, there are 1,004 parcels within the municipal limits that do not currently contain a structure. These areas could support some of the new residents, particularly through small-scale single family and multi-family housing.

In regards to growth outside of Seneca, Map 8.2 shows the parcels with which the City has annexation agreements. These annexation agreements are part of the water service agreements, as described in the Community Facilities Element. There are 2,466 parcels with annexation agreements, dating from 2000 to 2022. The total acreage of these parcels is 9,177 acres, which is almost double the current acreage of the municipal limits. The City has been limited in its ability to officially annex these parcels, as State law requires annexations to be contiguous to municipal limits. Contiguity is defined by Section 5-3-305 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, and includes properties which are adjacent to a municipality and share a contiguous border, or which are connected by road, waterway, easement, railroad track, marshland, or utility line to a continuous border (rephrased from Statute). One of the main deterrents to Seneca's ability to annex is a proliferation of properties that connected to the City's water system prior to the establishment of water service related annexation agreements. These unincorporated properties prohibit many properties with annexation agreements from being contiguous.

Map 8.3 highlights the parcels with annexation agreements that are contiguous to the current municipal boundaries. There are 155 parcels which meet this criteria, and an additional 59 which would qualify if the initial 155 were annexed. For a number of reasons, Seneca should prioritize annexing these parcels which already qualify for annexation. Further annexation should be strategically conducted along major corridors and in areas which are likely to experience growth along with the provision of municipal services. Theoretically, the City has the capability of annexing to the full extent of its water service area. Of course, this is extremely unlikely and there are a range of considerations to examine when considering annexation potential. Primarily, Seneca needs to evaluate the fiscal impacts of annexation - the benefits of tax revenue do not always outweigh the cost of providing services such as utilities, waste pick up, public safety, and other municipal costs.

> MAP 8.1: PARCELS WITH STRUCTURES

Source: City of Seneca (2022)

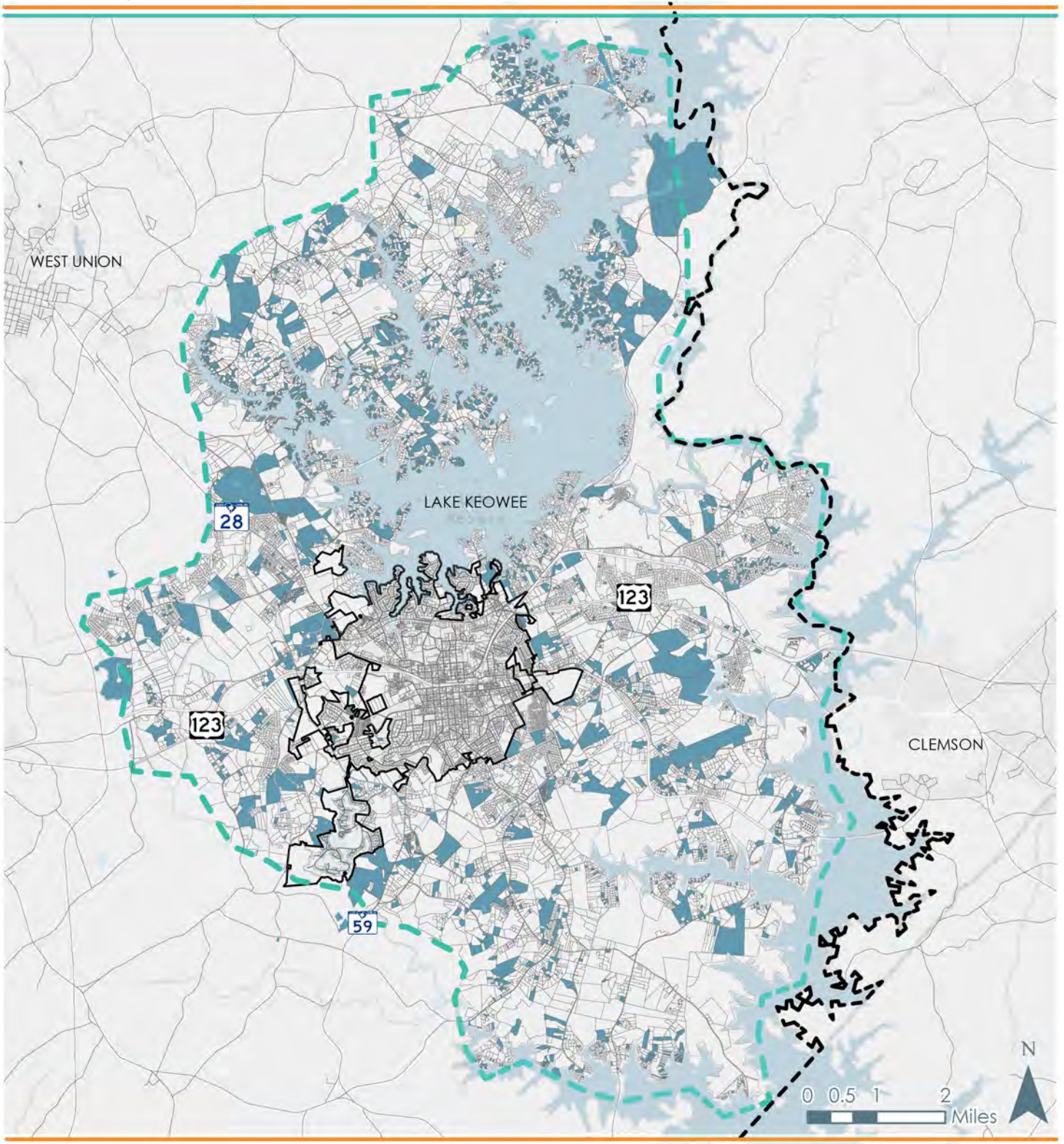


Seneca City Limits
Parcels

Parcels without a structure
Parcels with a structure

> MAP 8.2: ANNEXATION AGREEMENTS

Source: City of Seneca (2022)

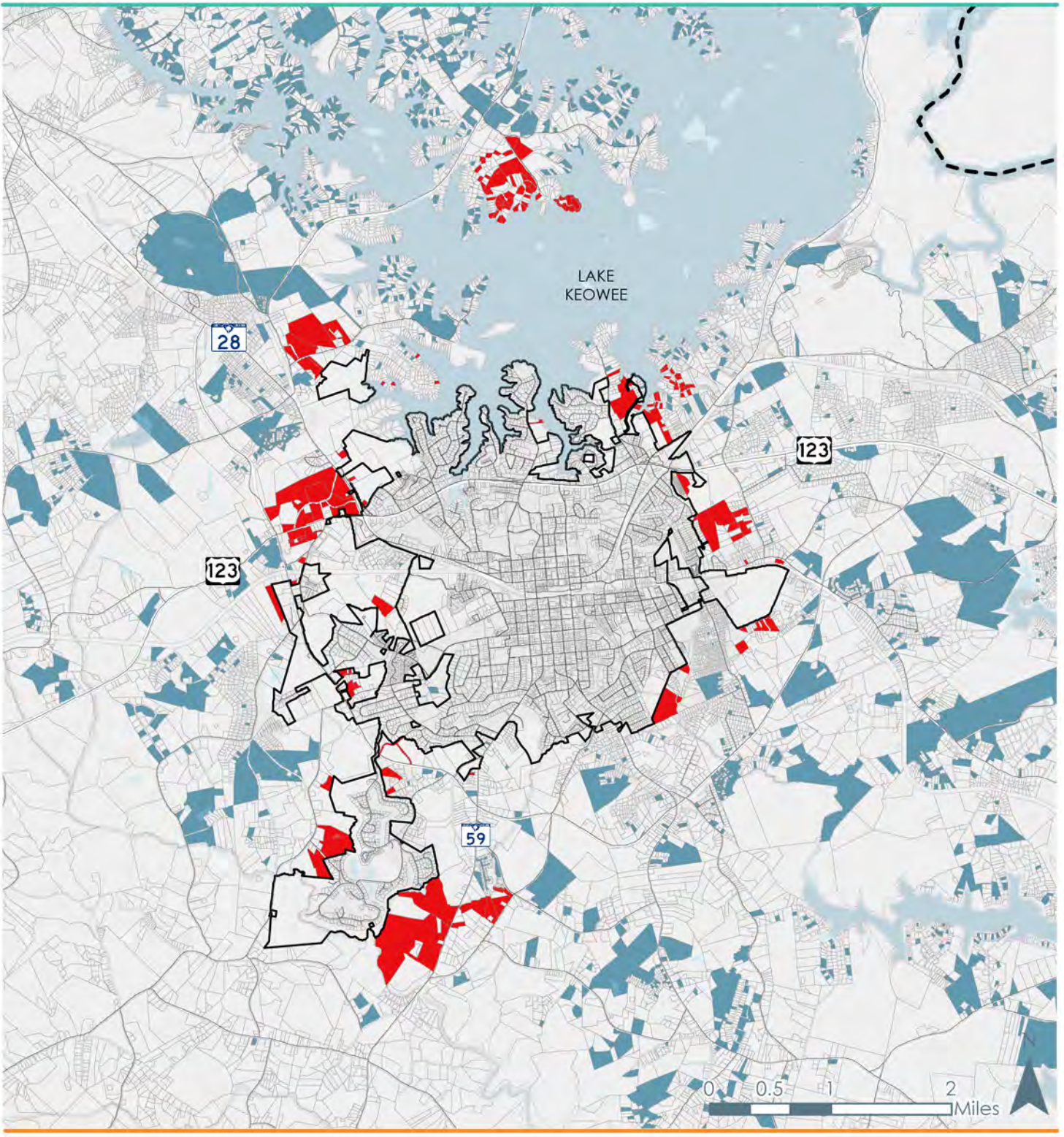


- Seneca City Limits
- Water Service Area
- Parcels

Parcels with Annexation Agreements

> MAP 8.3: ANNEXATION POTENTIAL

Source: City of Seneca and Benchmark Planning (2022)



- Seneca City Limits
- Oconee County Limits

- Parcels with Annexation Agreements
- Contiguous Parcels w/ annexation agreements

Industrial development should always be a target for annexation, as the tax revenues generally outweigh the cost of service provision in these areas. When looking at annexation opportunities or expansion of industrial activity around the City, there are several large parcels on the northern, southern, and western edges of the municipal limits with annexation agreements in place. The largest of these parcels are slightly further from the municipal limits, but are located along major corridors which could be annexed into Seneca in the future.

Additional commercial and residential growth is expected on the eastern edge of the City, towards Clemson University. Oconee County has also identified this area as a location for future growth in their comprehensive plan: future growth potential along US-123 between Seneca and Pickens Counties, as well as areas surrounding the cities, and infill around Lake Keowee.¹ Additional areas likely to be annexed in the near term include the former West Point Steven's Mill, on the eastern edge of Seneca, which has seen redevelopment interest over the years and is contiguous to the municipal boundaries.

A full analysis of annexation feasibility was conducted, and the recommendations from this study resulted in Map 8.4, which shows an annexation prioritization map. Phase 1 captures the parcels with annexation agreements that are already contiguous to the City boundary. Phase 2 involves annexing key parcels (based primarily on commercial and industrial uses identified in the Future Land Use Map) which could best aid utility provision to parcels with annexation agreements. Phase 3 outlines the full annexation potential, if Seneca were to annex in every parcel that is within the water service area boundaries. When properties within Phase 3 become contiguous to the municipal limits and are subject to annexation agreements, they should be carefully examined for the fiscal impacts of annexation.

It is extremely unlikely that Seneca will annex all of the properties with annexation agreements within the next 10 years. However, this provides a framework for directing annexation efforts. As annexation progresses, the City will need to continue tracking these agreements on GIS to ensure that all parcels are contiguous and are annexed in the appropriate order. Additionally, before undertaking any annexations, the City needs to analyze the water and sewer system capacities, as well as the fiscal impacts of annexation, to ensure that annexation is the appropriate strategy.

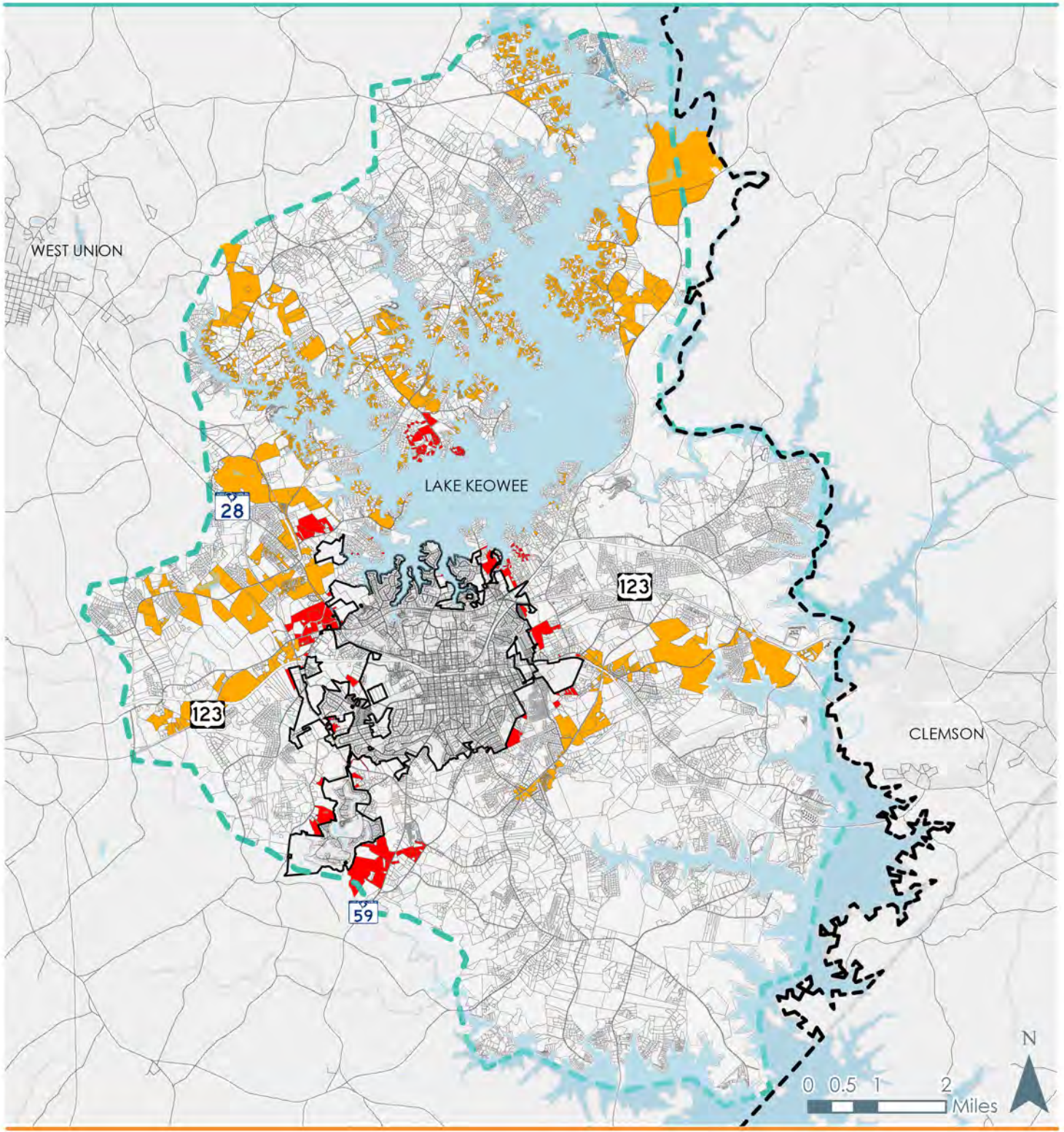
KEY OBSERVATIONS

- There are many large and vacant parcels which can provide opportunities for increased density and infill development to accommodate anticipated new development.
- Seneca has numerous annexation agreements in place due to water service agreements for new development. However, the large majority of these parcels are not contiguous with the municipal limits and therefore cannot currently be annexed.
- If all of these annexation agreements were to occur, the City's land area would triple.
- The City should consider increased service needs and population impacts that will come with annexation.
- There are several large parcels outside of the municipal limits that could provide opportunities for planned developments or industrial growth.

¹ Oconee Comprehensive Plan

> MAP 8.4: ANNEXATION PRIORITIES

Source: City of Seneca and Benchmark Planning (2022)



- Seneca City Limits
- Oconee County Limits
- Parcels

- Phase 1 Annexations
- Phase 2 Annexations
- Phase 3 Annexations



ELEMENT

9

TRANSPORTATION



INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Element serves as a baseline review of the City's current transportation network, planned road improvements, transit programs, and bicycle and pedestrian connections. Additional review of the County's infrastructure and alternative modes of transportation help to examine the City's connections to the surrounding region. This element helps to visualize existing conditions and determine needs to guide future development.

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

The primary mode of transportation within Seneca is private vehicles. In the City's previous Comprehensive Plan, lack of multi-modal transportation options was listed as a weakness. While the bus system has grown, the City still lacks a robust bicycle and pedestrian network to allow for alternate modes of travel.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) describes the state's road network through functional classifications:

- **Interstates and freeways** are designed for mobility and long distance travel
- **Arterials** serve major rural and metro areas with high mobility for moderate distances
- **Collectors** connect local traffic with arterials
- **Local roads** hold the lowest traffic volume and shortest distance traveled

There are no interstates within Seneca. However, US-123, a major arterial, bisects the northern end of the City, connecting it to Clemson and Westminster. The functional classifications of all roads in and around Seneca are shown on Map 9.1.

TRAFFIC COUNTS

SCDOT collects data on traffic counts at various stations throughout the State. These counts are then tabulated to estimate the average daily traffic (ADT) on specific roadways. Map 9.2 shows the ADT on main roadways within Seneca in 2021. The roads with the highest traffic counts are US-123, with almost 30,000 trips; North 1st Street, with 10,000 trips; Wells Highway, with 11,000 trips; and SC 59, in the center of the City, with 7,000 trips daily.

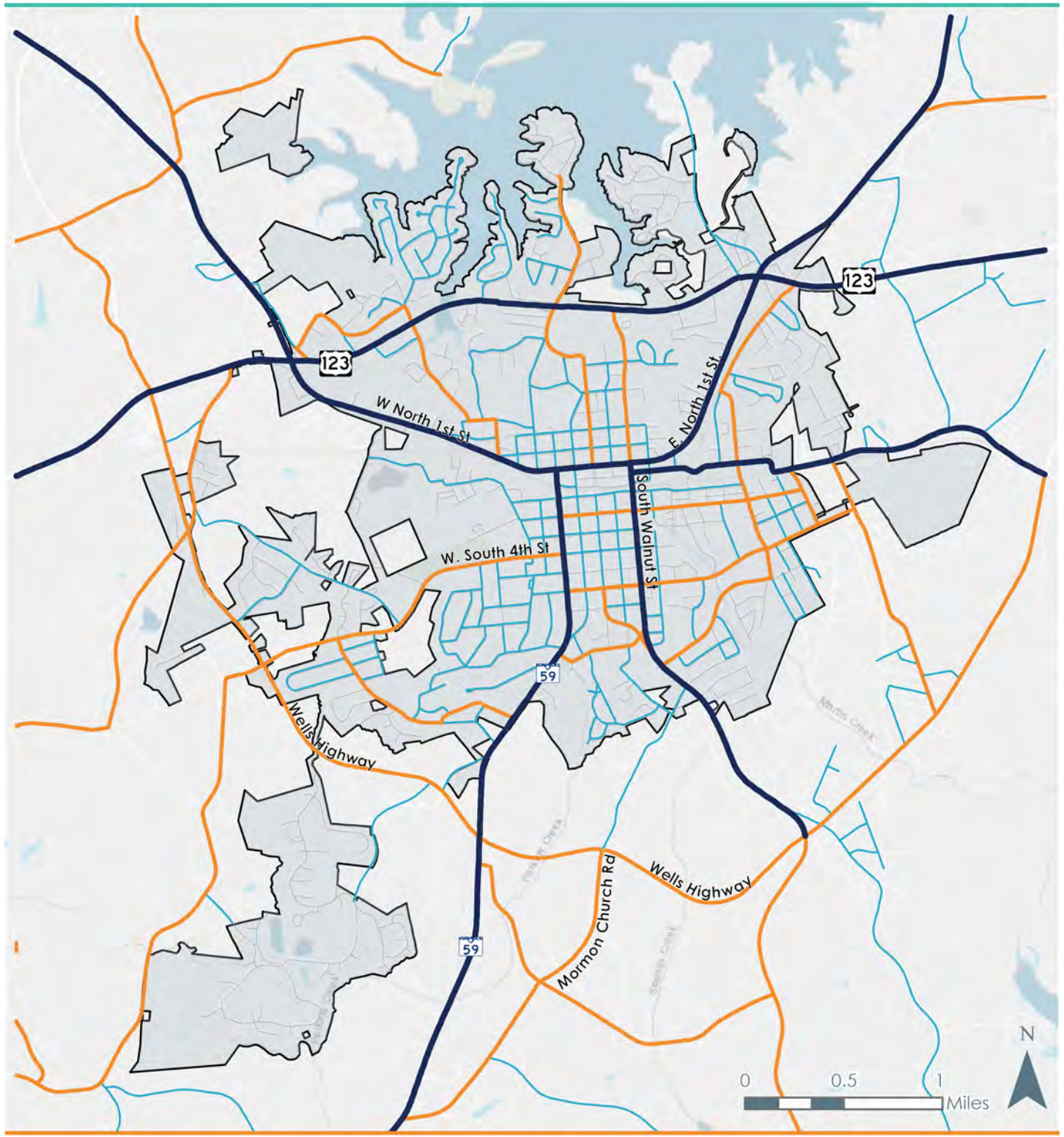
REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

The closest interstate to Seneca is I-85, whose nearest exit is 14 miles from the center of the City. I-85 is an important roadway because it connects Seneca, its residents, and businesses to major metropolitan areas in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia.

MAP 9.1: FUNCTIONAL ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Source: SCDOT(2022)



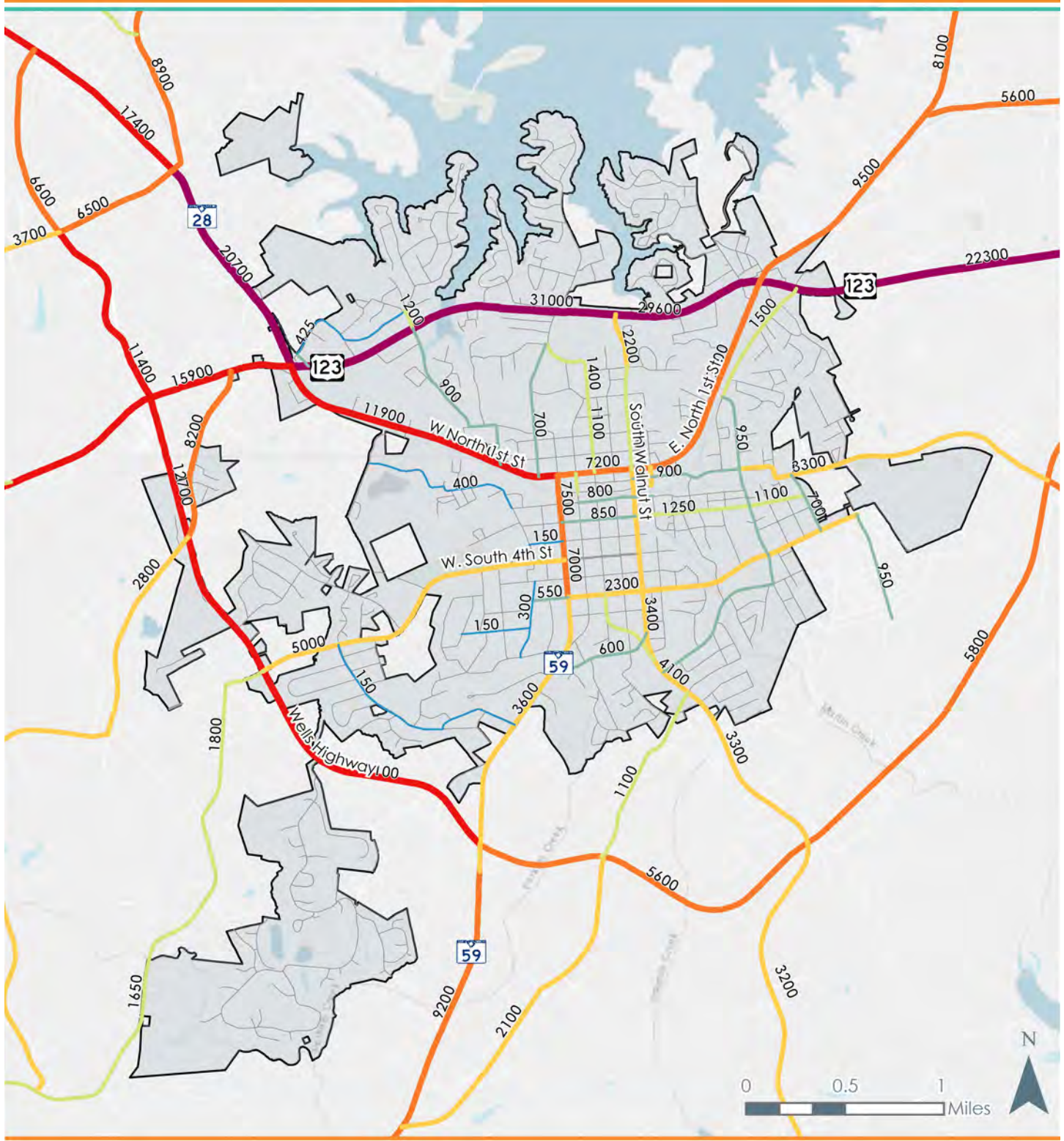
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Collector
- Arterial

Seneca City Limit

> MAP 9.2 AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (2021)

Source: SCDOT(2022)



AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (TRIPS)



Seneca City Limits

AIRPORTS

There are two local airports that are in close proximity to Seneca: Eagle Ridge Airport and Oconee County Regional Airport. Eagle Ridge Airport is located three miles southeast from Seneca and is a private airport. Oconee County Regional Airport is 0.6 miles outside the municipal limits and serves as the “aviation gateway to Upstate South Carolina’s scenic Golden Corner.”¹ The Oconee Regional Airport is owned by the County but also is largely served by the population of Clemson University, especially during football season.

For large scale commercial (national and international) travel, the closest airports are Greenville-Spartanburg International airport (56.7 miles), Charlotte Douglas International Airport (134 miles), and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport (123 miles).

RAIL

As stated in earlier elements, Seneca developed as a railroad town. The Norfolk Southern Railroad still runs through the City today. Norfolk Southern Railway is the second largest rail carrier in South Carolina, accounting for 30% of the state’s rail system. The Seneca Rail Industrial Park was located near the railroad so that new industries could take advantage of the rail for transportation needs. The rail is mostly used for freight, but also runs one to two Amtrack passengers services each day. Amtrack does not currently stop in Seneca but there is potential in the future to allow for the high speed rail service to connect the City to Atlanta and Charlotte.

TRUCKING

Interstate 85 is an important freight corridor because it connects major cities across the southeast. Because the City is offset from this interstate, there is only minor truck traffic; mostly on local roadways. That being said, the proximity to I-85 provides opportunities to industries that locate within Seneca.

PLANNED AND PROPOSED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The South Carolina Department of Transportation creates a statewide Transportation Infrastructure Plan (STIP) each year to plan out a six year horizon of projects within the State. The most recent STIP was for 2021-2027. Only projects that have already been designated for state, federal, or local funds and are planned to begin work during the plan horizon can be included in the STIP. There were only four projects in the 2021 STIP that are within or in close proximity to Seneca:

- Resurfacing of Sitton Mill Road (P041540)
- Re-timing of the 8 Signal System on US-123 from North 1st Street to Hitec Road(P039037)
- Type II Traffic Signal Rebuild at US-59 and Wells Highway (P040993)
- Install Center Line Rumble Strips on S-59 below Wells Highway (P041398)
- Pavement Reconstruction on Return Church Road (P041005)

¹ <https://oconeecountyairport.com/about-us/>

Transportation planning in Oconee County is led by the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG), which assists SCDOT with transportation planning outside of designated metropolitan regions. The ACOG produces a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the region and lists specific projects each year into a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Only projects that are listed in the TIP can be put into the SCDOT's STIP. Similar to comprehensive plans, long range transportation plans have a 20 year planning horizon. The latest LRTP for the ACOG was published in 2016 and plans for the region through 2040. In addition to the projects listed in the STIP, the LRTP identified a potential streetscaping project on SC-130, from N Cherry Street to US-123, decreasing roadway widths to make room for sidewalks, landscaping, and pedestrian improvements. This project is yet to be funded.

HWY 123 CORRIDOR PLAN

In 2019, Oconee County approved a Corridor plan for US-123, which cuts through the northern half of the City. The the plan included a gateway to the City of Seneca, operational improvements to maintain traffic levels, a shared bike and pedestrian path along the route, improved signage, access to businesses, and increased multi-modal transportation options.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED TRANSIT

BUS SERVICE

There are three main types of service for public bus transit: fixed routes, on which buses operate on a fixed route and schedule; route deviation, which operates as a fixed route but can deviate from the route within a specified distance on request; and demand response service, which operates only on demand and can transport passengers to their desired destination.

Bus transit service in Seneca is operated by the Clemson Area Transit (CAT) as a fixed route service. CAT is a fare-free service provided in partnership with Clemson University, the City of Clemson, the Town of Central, the Town of Pendleton, the City of Seneca, SCDOT, and the Federal Transit Administration. There are four lines that provide service in Seneca:

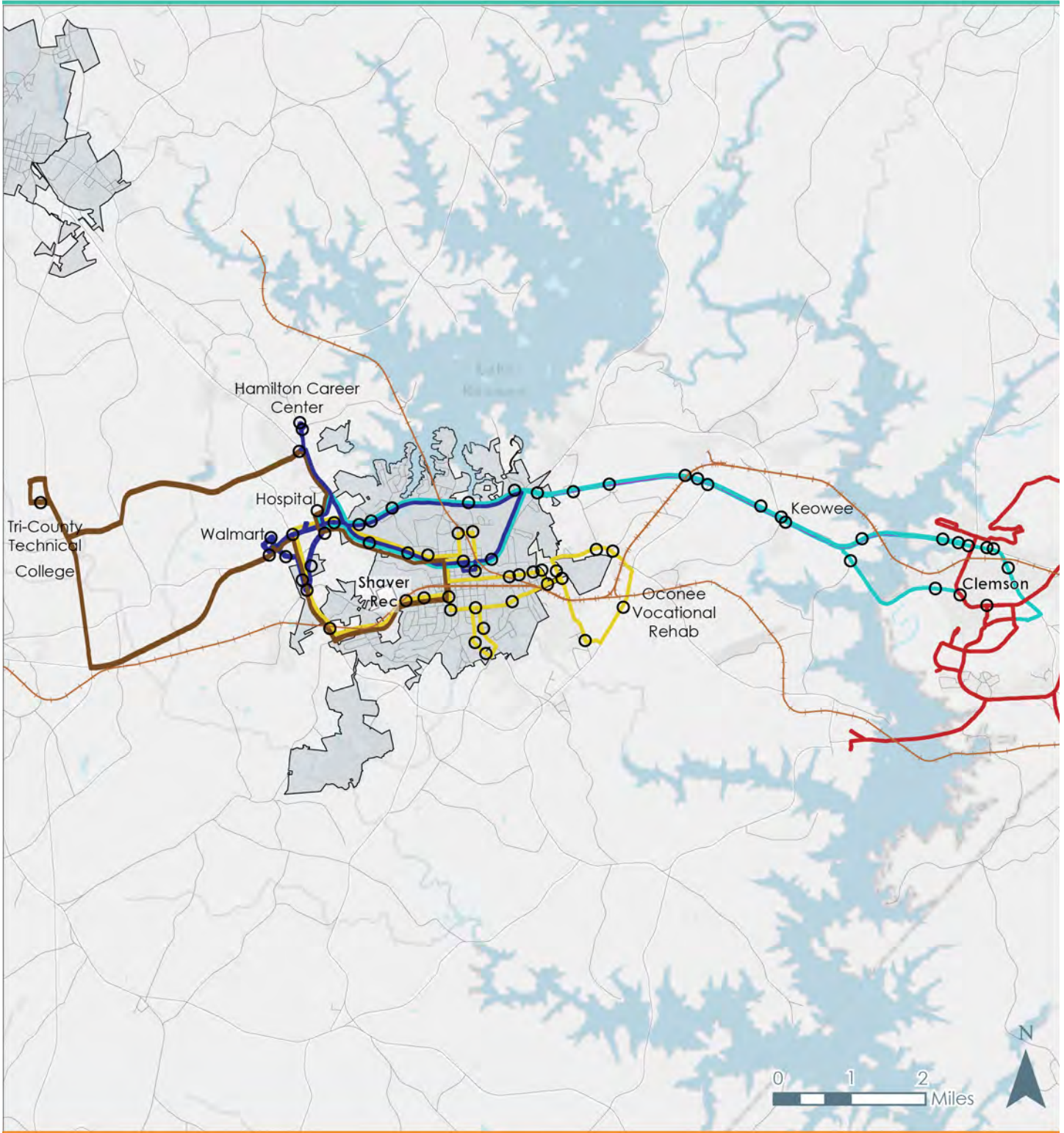
- Seneca / Clemson Express- provides service between Seneca and Clemson University
- Seneca Business Loop- provides service throughout the northern half of the City
- Seneca Residential- provides service in central Seneca
- Seneca Connector- provides service from Shaver Recreation Complex to the Tri-County Technical College

Through alternate routes, riders can also access the City of Clemson, Tri-County community College campuses, Southern Wesleyan University, Town of Central, Town of Pendleton, and Anderson County. All buses within the CATs service can accommodate individuals with disabilities. CAT buses can operate as a route deviation service to provide for curb to curb alternate drop off locations within 3/4 miles of the route for individuals with a disability.

The bus fleet in Seneca is all electric. As the first all-electric bus system in the United states, Seneca received several grants from the Federal Highway Administration to further develop the system.

> MAP 9.3: BUS AND RAIL

Source: SCDOT and Clemson Area Transit (2022)

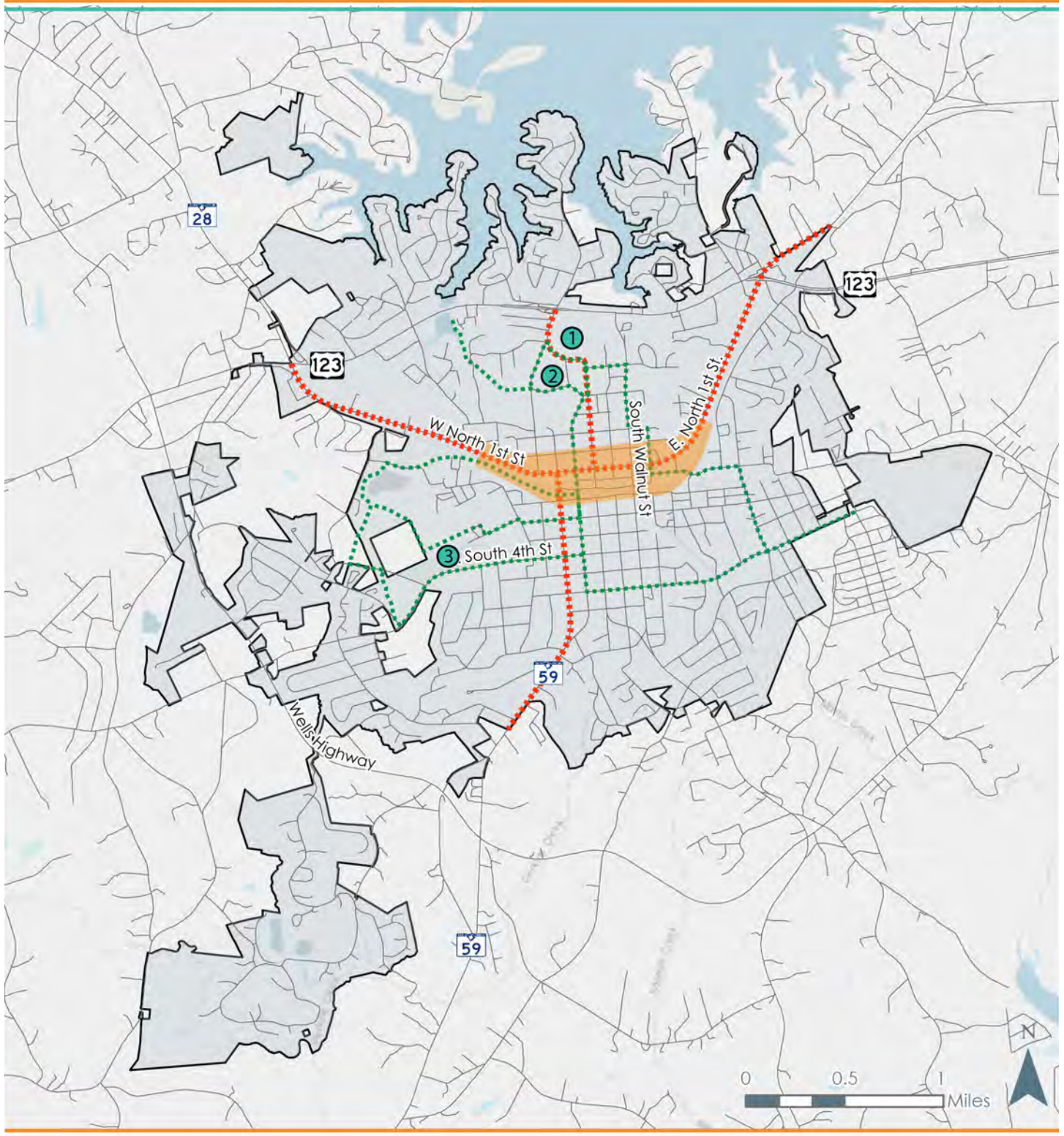


BUS ROUTES

- Seneca Connector
- Seneca - Clemson Express
- Seneca Business Loop
- Seneca Residential Loop
- Other Routes
- Bus Stops
- - Railroad

> MAP 9.4 GREATER SENECA CONNECTIVITY MASTER PLAN (2019)

Source: City of Seneca Master Plan (2019)



- Vehicle and Pedestrian Improvements
- Bike Circulation
- Downtown Master Plan Scope
- Seneca City Limits

- ① Northside Elementary School
- ② Gignilliat Community Center
- ③ Shaver Recreation Complex

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Seneca has a fairly interconnected sidewalk system throughout the Downtown, and spurring out to surrounding neighborhoods. However, walking is still not a primary mode of transportation within the City. By increasing the number of sidewalks to points of interest and improving the perceived safety and condition of existing sidewalks, the City can encourage more walking.

Although bikes have more freedom to travel on roadways than pedestrians, designated bicycle infrastructure is important to improving the safety and desirability of this mode of transportation. There is one bicycle trail within the municipal limits. Oakmont Valley Trail sits in the northeastern most portion of the City, off US-123, connecting Radnorshire Road to Meadowbrook Drive. Seneca's Roads do not have bike lanes or shared lane markings.

The Highway 123 corridor plan includes several recommendations for improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The plan calls for a combination of walking and bicycling bridges across Lake Hartwell, walking and biking tunnels under the rail line, and a shared use path along the entire route.

In the City's 2019 Master Plan there were several recommendations related to improving connectivity in Seneca. The plan recommended creating a trail network to connect the parks and recreation amenities to each other, as well as to the central business district and surrounding residential areas. By increasing connectivity, the City could likely increase usage of the park and accessibility to Downtown. Map 9.4 shows the proposed connectivity improvements from the 2019 Master Plan.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The City's primary mode of transit is personal vehicles.
- There are no interstate highways that run through the municipal limits but US-123 experiences around 30,000 trips a day.
- Nearby I-85 connects Seneca to major metropolitan areas, large airports, and serves as a major freight traffic route.
- The Norfolk Southern Railway has continued to be an important asset to the City since its beginning. The railway is currently an attractor to new industry for the City's Rail Park.
- There are currently only minor projects listed in the state's Roadway Improvement Plan for Seneca.
- Bus service in Seneca is provided by the Clemson Area Transit and is a free service to all residents. There are currently four routes that run through the City.
- There have been desires expressed to increase access to bike lanes and trails to improve connectivity through the City. The 2019 Master Plan included several recommended trails and greenways.



ELEMENT 10

RESILIENCY



INTRODUCTION

In September of 2020, the State of South Carolina amended their Code of Laws to establish the South Carolina Office of Resilience to develop, implement, and maintain a statewide resilience plan and to coordinate statewide resilience and disaster recovery efforts. In conjunction with this, the State also amended Section 6-29-510 of the Code of Laws to require a Resiliency Element as part of all South Carolina comprehensive plans. The Resiliency Element measures social, economic, infrastructural, and environmental factors that contribute to a City's ability to recover in difficult times.¹

SOCIAL RESILIENCY

COMMUNITY NETWORKS AND SOCIAL GROUPS

Research on the ability of communities to recover from disaster has shown that social and community networks play an essential role in a community's resilience. Networks allow for information about preparedness and resources to spread throughout a community as well as aid in the recovery and rebuilding of a community post disaster.

In 2015, the University of South Carolina's Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute created a Baseline Resilience Indicators for Communities (BRIC) Index in order to measure a county's community disaster resilience. The BRIC considers six categories: social, economic, community capital, institutional, infrastructural, and environmental. Each category is scaled from 0 to 1 with 1 being the most resilient. Community Capital focuses specifically on the "social networks and connectivity among individuals and groups."² In 2015, Oconee County had a score of 0.35 for community capital. While this ranking was not the lowest in the State, the County and City should foster community networks, organizations, and institutions to improve the social resiliency of its population.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Social Vulnerability Index³

Every few years, the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) releases data on social vulnerability using census data. The score can be used by local officials to identify how their community may need support before, during, and after a disaster. Map 10.1 shows the census tract level Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) within South Carolina. The index is scored based on the following categories:

- Socio-Economic Status
- Household Composition and Disability
- Minority Status and Language
- Housing Type and Transportation

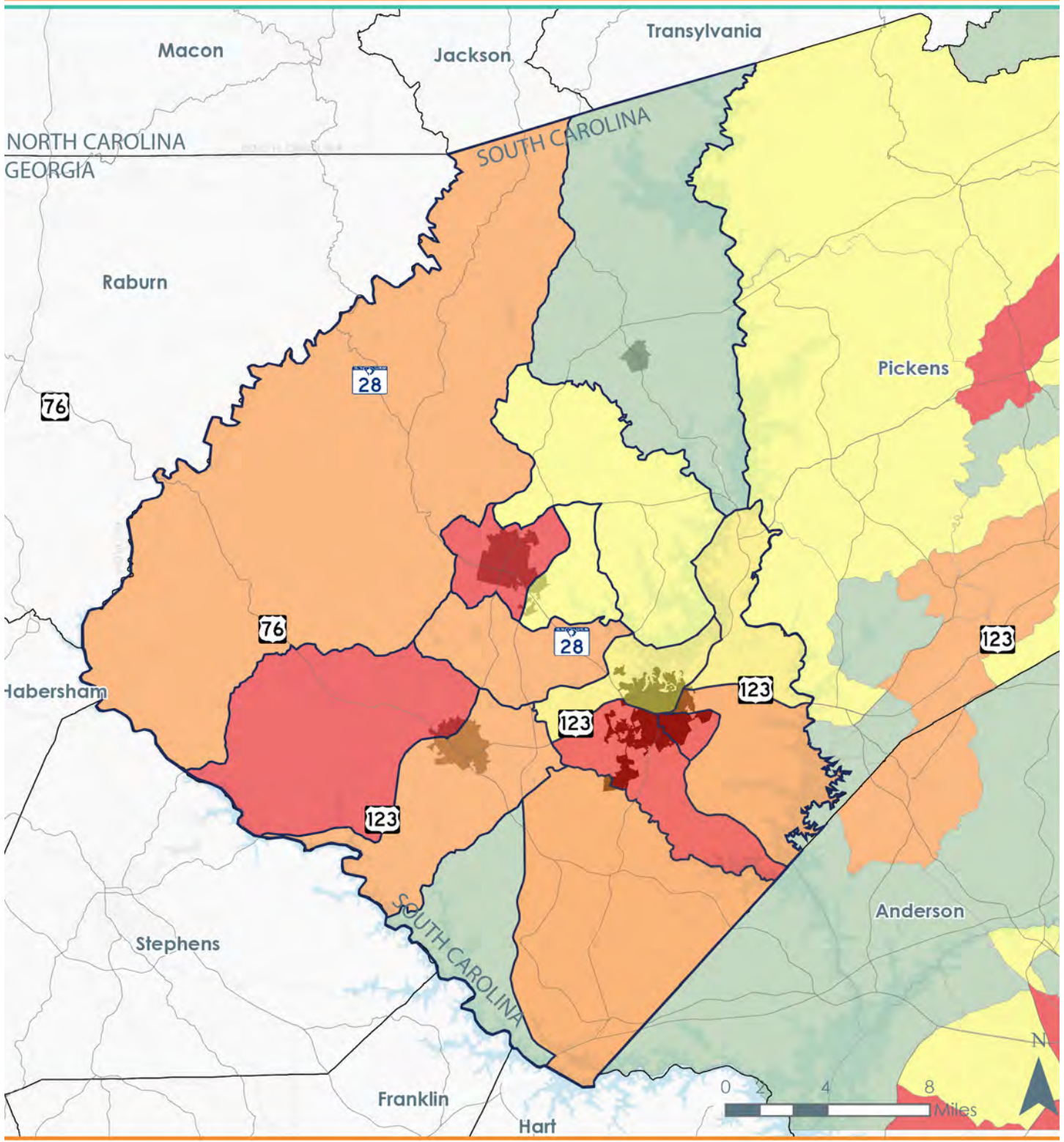
1 https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/centers_and_institutes/hvri/data_and_resources/bric/bric_data/index.php

2 https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/centers_and_institutes/hvri/data_and_resources/bric/index.php

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry/ Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program. CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index 2018 Database South Carolina

> MAP 10.1: SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

Source: CDC Social Vulnerability Index, South Carolina Database (2018)



SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX (0 - 1 SCALE)



For 2018, Oconee County had a SVI score of 0.7293 (0 being the lowest and 1 being the highest possible level of vulnerability). This score indicates a moderate level of vulnerability. The category in which the County scored lowest is household composition and disability, which is based on:

- Number of residents aged 65 and older
- Number of residents 17 or younger
- Number of residents over the age of 5 with a disability
- Number of single-parent households

When considering a community's resilience, it is important to acknowledge the most vulnerable populations and ensure they have the resources necessary to prepare for and recover from disaster.

FOOD SECURITY

Food Security is a measure of both physical and economic access to healthy food that can meet dietary needs of a population. According to data from Feeding America, Oconee County ranks #29 in the State based on levels of food insecurity. The County has a Child food insecurity rate of 15.9% and an overall food insecurity rate of 12.9%. One method to improve food security is through food stamps and other supplemental nutrition assistance programs. Estimates in 2020 for the City of Seneca showed that 17.5% of households received food stamps; 29.1% of those households were home to at least one resident over the age of 60.

ATTACHMENT TO PLACE

Attachment to Place refers to an individual's physical, mental, and emotional connections to where they live. Place attachment can be strengthened through previously mentioned community networks, economic ties, and personal history. Place attachment itself is not easy to measure, but factors such as homeownership, employment rate, and age distributions can act as indicators. It is important to consider these factors when discussing resiliency because they can reveal the likelihood that individuals will remain in an area post-disaster as well as the ability to retain or rebuild these connections post-disaster.

CITIZEN DISASTER TRAINING

There are several resources available to citizens to learn how to best prepare for and protect oneself from a disaster. FEMA has an online resource with instructions on building a disaster supply kit, American Red Cross provides relief and recovery services after a disaster, and DisasterAssistance.gov has information on preparedness, response, and recovery from all types of disaster.

The South Carolina Emergency Management Department⁴ has a Training and Exercise team responsible for training emergency personnel in all levels of government and executing emergency training exercises to further preparedness. The City could further these efforts by holding training sessions for its citizens so they can also be prepared.

4 <https://www.scemd.org/em-professionals/training/>

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

Economic resiliency is a measure of a community’s economic vitality, diversity, and equity and how this can benefit or hinder disaster recovery. Vitality relates to employment and homeownership rates as factors of community stability. Economic diversity is important, as it relates to the dependence of a community on single industries or single markets. Equality through income, gender, and race can ensure that all groups within a community are resilient.

HOMEOWNERSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

As illustrated in the Housing Element, the City has a fairly low percentage of owner-occupied housing units (57%) as compared to the County and State. Owner occupancy rates are important to resiliency as it provides residents with some protections in case of emergency and increases the likelihood for residents to stay following a disaster. Additionally, as referenced in the Economic Development Element, Seneca had a spike in unemployment rates from 2019-2020. Higher unemployment rates can hinder a community’s economic resiliency because individuals are less financially stable to withstand and recover from shocks.

RACIAL AND GENDER INCOME INEQUALITY

Income equality, as mentioned above, is an important factor of a resilient community because it ensures that all residents within a community have the ability to recover from disaster and are not unequally burdened. One way in which income equality is measured is through a Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient measures inequality through statistical distributions of wealth and income. A coefficient of 0 represents perfect equality and 1 represents maximum inequality. Based on 2020 census data, Seneca has a coefficient of 0.46. Oconee County has a slightly higher coefficient of 0.49, and nearby Clemson has an even higher rate of 0.55. The chart below shows the income comparisons by race and gender to illustrate where these inequalities lie on a census tract level. Across all census tracts in Seneca, males make more than females over the age of 15 and in all but tract 307.2, the white population has an income around double that of the black population.

> TABLE 10.1: CENSUS TRACT INCOME BY RACE AND GENDER

Source: US Census (2020)

CENSUS BLOCK GROUPS	WHITE ALONE	BLACK ALONE	HISPANIC	MALE OVER 15	FEMALE OVER 15
306.01	\$76,739	\$32,760	N/A	\$32,439	\$21,274
306.02	\$52,543	\$14,412	N/A	\$39,625	\$16,057
307.01	\$47,820	\$30,292	N/A	\$31,990	\$18,233
307.02	\$41,258	\$48,327	\$40,988	\$22,478	\$21,400
308.01	\$34,403	N/A	\$48,428	\$28,107	\$16,008
308.02	\$61,141	\$21,514	N/A	\$31,979	\$20,246
309.04	\$61,989	N/A	N/A	\$48,801	\$22,319

TOURISM

Although tourism can be an important contributor to economic growth, it is also a variable factor. One way in which the economic resiliency of a community is measured is the dependency on the tourism sector. Tourism is one of the industrial sectors most prone to being impacted by disasters.

INDUSTRY DIVERSIFICATION

One of the best ways for a community to ensure that its economy is resilient to economic or other disasters is to have a diverse industrial base. Industry diversity includes a mix of industry types, industries with regional distribution, and an adaptable workforce. These factors all contribute to a stable and sustainable economic base.

Referring back to the economic element, 66.8% of the City's workforce is within four industry sectors. According to the Economic Diversity in Appalachia Research tool, Oconee County ranks in the 70th percentile for relative industry diversity and in the almost 80th percentile for occupational diversity.⁵ These statistics show that relatively, Seneca has a fairly diverse economic base. Another measure of industry diversification is distribution of products and services. Communities with industries that distribute on a regional or national level are more economically resilient because there is a larger pool of consumers to bolster the local economy. Following a disaster, these industries could help ensure there is still an inflow of economic support while other local industries rebuild.

Lastly, a resilient workforce is one that is able to shift between jobs and industries if necessary. This enables individuals to remain in place if an industry is moved or experiences a downturn. Seneca's wide range of workforce training and post graduate education are important to building a resilient workforce; however, these programs should ensure that they provide a wide range of skills training to adapt to multiple industries.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY

DISASTER RISKS

Each year, FEMA updates their National Risk Index, which identifies communities most at risk to 18 different natural disasters.⁶ Risk index is calculated by combining expected annual loss due to natural hazards with social vulnerability and community resilience. The scores are ranked as a comparison to the United States.⁷ The below chart lists the hazard risk rating for relevant hazards for the County and the census tracts that make up Seneca. Census tract 309.02 was considered to be ranked relatively high compared to census tracts across the State and country, and Census tract 308 ranked relatively high in the category of social vulnerability. The highest environmental risks to Seneca are ice storms, tornadoes, lightning, and strong winds.

5 <http://economicdiversityinappalachia.creonline.org/Profiles/>

6 <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/products-tools/national-risk-index>

7 <https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/map>

> **TABLE 10.1: FEMA NATIONAL RISK INDEX**

Source: FEMA Risk Indicators (2022)

RISK	OCONEE COUNTY	306.01	306.02	307.01	307.02	308	309.02
DROUGHT	16.57	6.2	4.91	3.28	7.12	9.98	19.45
EARTHQUAKE	6.47	19.06	14.15	14.98	13.94	19.22	16.55
HAIL	13.52	14.76	11.54	12.15	14.00	17.49	24.02
HEAT WAVE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HURRICANE	8.75	10.03	8.2	6.66	12.49	16.21	29.17
ICE STORM	31.45	46.84	36.64	39.58	40.48	50.25	42.18
LANDSLIDE	22.49	9.34	15.20	4.15	8.59	9.69	9.15
LIGHTNING	18.47	30.00	24.31	28.26	30.06	36.08	32.27
RIVERINE FLOODING	8.02	10.08	8.06	10.82	9.59	13.31	12.06
STRONG WIND	17.15	33.8	28.42	31.96	35.48	41.51	41.35
TORNADO	24.35	45.12	37.12	41.34	44.67	52.91	47.67
WILDFIRE	4.06	1.51	0	0.75	1.94	3.58	5.81
WINTER WEATHER	22.62	18.85	16.3	18.35	20.47	23.62	22.18
AVERAGE	12.62	19.85	16.91	17.33	18.80	23.21	26.62

Winter Storms

Winter Storms can be defined as an event of snow, ice, and extreme cold temperatures that can impact the safety, security, and mobility of residents and infrastructure. The 2017 Oconee County and Anderson County Hazards Mitigation Plan notes six significant winter storm events that led to disaster declarations in the State of South Carolina since 2000. Oconee County has experienced 28 winter weather events from 1960 to 2016; each of which caused at least \$50,000 in combined property and crop damage. Overall, winter weather events in the County have caused \$12,747,423 in property damage and \$19,724,707 in crop damage (2015 inflation rates). Seneca and the eastern portion of the County are at a higher risk of winter weather events. The best way to provide protection from winter storms is through providing storm shelters, installing early warning systems, and educating the community on preparedness.

Severe Thunderstorms

Severe Thunderstorms include lightning, hail, and rain events which often trigger other natural disasters, such as fires and floods. Oconee County had seven thunder/hail storms and 23 lightning/thunder storms from 1960 to 2016, which caused at least \$50,000 in combined property and crop damage. Total damage from these storms resulted in \$9,267,744 in property damage and \$2,500,446 in crop damage (2015 inflation rates). While there is only a 12.7% chance of more than one hail storm per year occurring in Oconee County, there is a 41.8% chance of a severe lightning storm. Similar to winter storms, the best protection for severe thunderstorms include early warning systems, community shelters, and education for citizens to prepare themselves.

Flooding

Flooding can be defined as the partial or complete inundation of typically dry lands due to overflow of rivers and tidal waters or the rapid accumulation of surface water runoff. The floodplain map for Seneca is in Element 3 of this Plan. Flood risk is typically based on the natural geography of a place, as well as the level of impervious surfaces which can impede natural drainage. Because of the numerous water bodies on the eastern half of the County, Seneca and the surrounding area have a higher flood risk. However, the risk is still fairly low, as the majority of the City is not within the 100 year flood plain. Oconee County experienced 13 flood events from 1960 to 2016; each of which caused at least \$50,000 in combined property and crop damage. Total damage from these events resulted in \$7,886,851 in property damage and \$452,522 in crop damage (2015 inflation rates). In addition to property and crop damage, flood events can also stress vital water and wastewater infrastructure in a place leading to public health risks. The best ways to prevent flooding disasters are through adopting strict floodplain management ordinances to prevent development in the floodplain; reducing the amount of impervious surface in the City through additional vegetation and design ordinances; and ensuring warning systems and evacuation routes are in place.

Drought

Drought can include any event of low precipitation, water shortage, and insufficient water for agriculture. Droughts are typically accompanied by heat waves or hot temperatures which exacerbate the low water supply. Oconee County has experienced eight drought/extreme heat events from 1960 to 2016, which caused at least \$50,000 in combined property and crop damage. Overall, drought events in the County have caused \$9,652,956 in property damage, \$16,626,262 in crop damage (2015 inflation rates). Although the County can experience long durations of drought each year, the probability of these becoming severe events is low. In times of drought, the City must remember that its water use impacts the surrounding region and thus, conservation is important. In addition to being the primary water source for Seneca, Lake Keowee also hosts Duke's Nuclear Station. The station requires water levels to remain high to provide sufficient cooling. While this has yet to be a risk, it is important that the City and County acknowledge this when drought is forecast. Some of the best ways to protect from drought include water conservation ordinances to limit water use during low precipitation periods, and careful monitoring of lake levels. Public awareness and education on water use can also be a useful tool in reducing drought risk.

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are events during which either a sudden slip of a fault line, volcanic activity, or other stressors cause ground shaking and radiated seismic energy. There have been 70 earthquakes in the Upstate Region on record however, only two of these were above a level 2 on the Richter scale since 1986. The probability of an earthquake in Seneca is very low.⁸

Radiation

Natural radiation exposure from the sun or earth is a daily occurrence; however, more harmful radiation can also come from man-made sources such television sets or microwaves. The impacts of radiation are based on cumulative exposure over an individual's lifetime; the longer the exposure, the higher the risk of illness. The Oconee County Nuclear Power Plant is located north of Seneca, on Lake Keowee. The plant is owned and operated by Duke Energy to provide power to the County. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is the agency responsible for monitoring and regulating nuclear plants; however, radiation accidents are still possible. FEMA advises individuals to protect themselves from nuclear power plant emergencies by

8 <https://oconeesc.com/emergency-services-home/emergency-management-home/hazards>

evacuation and closing vents and other outdoor air intakes. Additionally, they recommend that power companies or local governments should provide emergency materials to all residents within 10 miles of the plant, which includes most of Seneca.⁹

Tornadoes

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) defines tornadoes as “a violently rotating column of air, pendant from a cumuliform cloud or underneath a cumuliform cloud and often visible as a funnel cloud.”¹⁰ Tornadoes can be accompanied by rain, wind, hail, and lightning storms, which can add devastation. However, this is not always the case. Additionally, the path of tornadoes is very difficult to estimate, making evacuation difficult. In the State of South Carolina, there have been 47 casualties and 1,057 injuries due to tornadoes from 1950 to 2016. Seneca and northeastern Oconee County experience an average of 0.89-1.75 tornado warnings each year, with a 14.5% chance of a tornado touching down. While the risk appears low, past events indicate that tornadoes have the potential for severe damage. There have been 18 tornado and high wind events from 1960 to 2016, which caused at least \$50,000 in combined property and crop damage. Overall damage from these events have caused \$7,082,597 in property damage and \$5,163,177 in crop damage (2015 inflation rates). In 2020, an L4 tornado ran through the center of the City. The majority of repairs due to damage have already been completed and Seneca had to replace its electric system due to the storm. Personal and community storm shelters provide the best protection against tornadoes, and early warning systems can help ensure necessary evacuations can occur.

Wildfire

According to the Anderson county and Oconee County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, wildfires are the most common hazard in South Carolina. While wildfires can result from other natural hazard events, the most common cause is man-made fires through arson, debris burning, or incendiary equipment use. Despite its common nature, Oconee County has a near zero percent risk of annual wildfire. The County has only experienced two wildfire events from 1960 to 2016, which caused at least \$50,000 in combined property and crop damage. Overall, damage from these events have caused \$103,458 in property damage and \$239,430 in crop damage (2015 inflation rates). As with the majority of these hazards, the best way to prevent a wildfire hazard is through community education on safety and risks.

ANDERSON COUNTY & OCONEE COUNTY NATURAL HAZARDS MITIGATION PLAN

In October of 2000, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 was signed into law by the President of the United States. This Act required local and state governments to develop and adopt Hazard Mitigation Plans in order to remain eligible for federal disaster assistance and grants. Anderson and Oconee Counties first came together to establish a Joint Hazards Plan in 2005, as part of the Western Piedmont Regional Emergency Management Task Force. The plan has since been updated in 2012 and 2017, and will undergo another update in 2022. The 2017 plan focused specifically on natural hazards while recognizing that man-made hazards are still a risk to the Counties.

9 <https://www.ready.gov/nuclear-power-plants>

10 <https://web.archive.org/web/20060929185156/http://www.spc.ncep.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/>

SC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION (SCEMD)

The SCEMD's planning section is responsible for the development, coordination, and maintenance of the State's Emergency Operations Plan, Hurricane Plan, Earthquake Plan, Terrorism Plan, and other hazard plans. The team also works with local and county governments to train personnel on their emergency response.

The South Carolina Emergency Operations Plan (SCEOP) covers all hazards and is designed to be used by the State government and agencies to ensure coordinated and effective response to disasters. The plan notes that most emergency management operations should be executed by local government but that the State is available to assist on request or when the local government capacity is reached. The SCEMD also has a Local Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for local governments and counties to utilize when developing or updating their own plan. The Guide ensures that local recovery plans align with the State and National disaster recovery framework.¹¹

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Oconee County has a moderate level of social vulnerability and several of the census tracts that make up portions Seneca have a high level of social vulnerability.
- Seneca has a fairly high number of households, especially those with individuals over the age of 60, who receive supplemental food assistance. The City should ensure that these support systems remain in place and that other measures are addressed to ensure healthy food is available to all residents.
- While there are several county, state, and federal resources available to Seneca to assist with disaster preparedness, the City should offer training to residents and businesses.
- The City has a low percentage of owner-occupied housing and high levels of racial income inequality which can make it more vulnerable to economic disaster.
- Although tourism is a growing industry in Seneca, the City should continue to ensure that it has a mixed economic base and supports the existing workforce training opportunities.
- The highest environmental risks to Seneca are ice storms, tornadoes, lightning, and strong winds.

¹¹ <https://www.scmd.org/em-professionals/plans/hazard-mitigation-plan/>

ELEMENT

11

**PRIORITY
INVESTMENT**



INTRODUCTION

The Priority Investment Element is designed to help the City prioritize and execute the Plan's goals and strategies through outlining coordination with government entities and enabling strategic utilization of funding sources. The previous elements have helped to position Seneca to direct public and private investment towards achieving the Plan's guiding vision for the future. This Element is required under the South Carolina Priority Investment Act to ensure that local governments examine potential federal, state, and local funds available to use for public investments over the next 10 years. The Plan's strategies are then prioritized based on likely expenditure of these available funds. In order for these projects to be successful, the City must coordinate with surrounding municipalities, counties, utilities, schools, transportation agencies, and other public entities which are impacted by, or have control over, public projects. The City staff is responsible for applying for and monitoring grants, aid, and other financial opportunities.

EXISTING FUNDING SOURCES

In order to undertake public investments, the City must analyze its revenues and planned expenditures. Revenues are defined as consistent inflows of funding available to the City to pay for its operating budget.

REVENUE

For Fiscal year 2023, the following revenue sources are in place to fund City services¹:

- Real Property Tax
- Vehicle, Watercraft, and Other Tax
- Television and Electric Franchises
- Business Licenses
- Permits and Fees
- County Fire Protection
- Shared State Revenues
- Garbage Services
- Natural Gas Authority
- County, State, and Federal Grants
- Sunday Sales Alcohol Revenue
- TNC Local Assessment
- Sports and Recreation Revenues
- Facility and Equipment Rentals
- SC Housing Authority Tax
- Court Fines
- Interest and Investments
- Private Donations

The highest revenue sources are Property Tax (19%), Licenses and Fees (18.67%), and Garbage Service (7.82%). Seneca Light and Water operates under a separate budget.

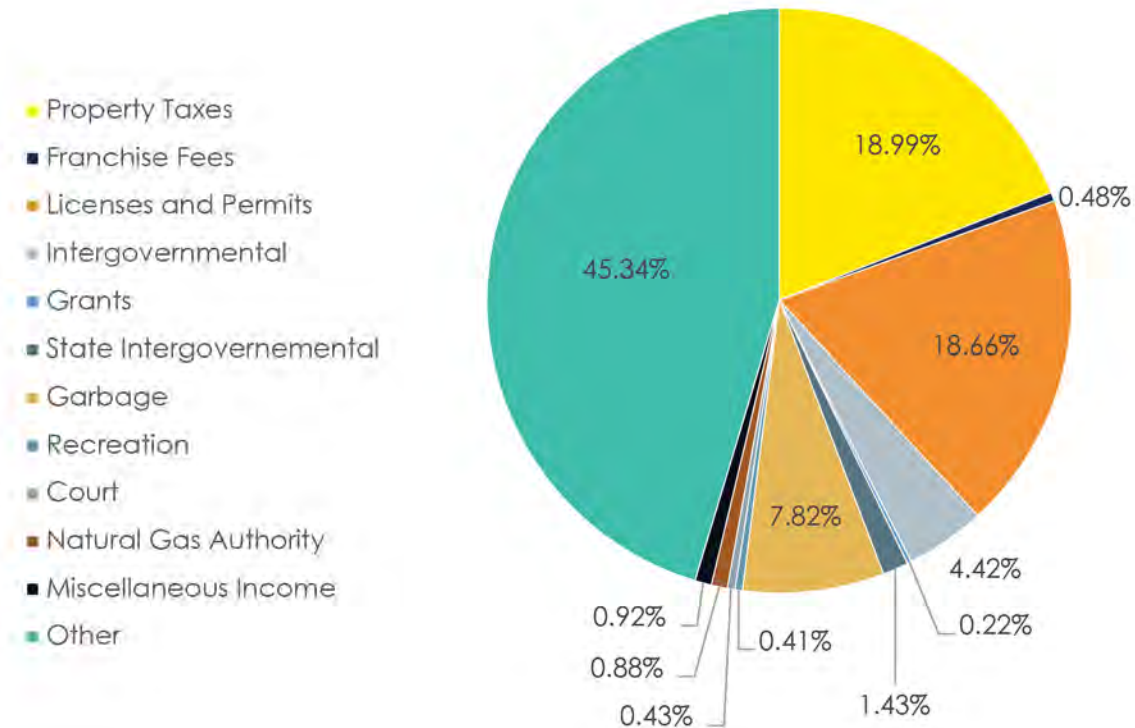
In addition to these revenue sources, the City also reports other annual financing sources such as grants or federal assistance programs that are not consistent revenue. For Fiscal year 2023, it reported several transfers such as transfers from Seneca Light and Water, HAT, SFC, and ATAX. As shown in Figure 1.1, the large majority of funding available to the City each year is from these other financial sources. However, many of these other sources are semi-consistent transfers, which have not been as variable as other grants and financial assistance funds over the past several years.

Seneca makes all budgets and financial reports available to residents on its website: <https://seneca.sc.us/finance-home/financial-transparency>.

¹ <https://Seneca.sc.us/documents/finance/budgets/2023-City-of-seneca-budget.pdf>

> FIGURE 11.1: PROPOSED REVENUE SOURCES FOR 2023

Source: City of Seneca FY2023 Approved Budget



EXPENDITURES

In addition to normal operating expenditures for each City department, the City reports capital expenditures for each year. For FY 2023, capital expenditures consisted of new vehicles for municipal departments, a new garbage truck, improvements to the Shaver Recreation Complex, and improvements to museums. Seneca needs to consider these planned capital expenditures within their priority investment strategy.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to regular revenue streams, the City should consider outside revenue sources to fund larger infrastructure and public investment opportunities. Potential regional, state, and federal funding sources are detailed on the following pages.

REGIONAL FUNDING

ACOG: The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is the regional planning council which covers Oconee County, as well as the counties of Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens, and Spartanburg. ACOG's primary responsibility is to assist local governments with planning, technical, and financial support for local plans, transportation, advocacy, and economic development in order to improve the overall quality of life for residents in the region. ACOG has a variety of grant opportunities and partnerships available to localities. Current and recurring grant opportunities can be found on the ACOG website: <https://www.scacog.org/grants-services>

Appalachian Regional Commission: The Appalachian Regional Commission also has several grant opportunity available to aid local governments in economic development-related infrastructure improvements and technology-related educational projects.

STATE FUNDING

Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Grants: The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism has a state Parks and Recreation Development fund (PARD) that is available to local governments for new parks and trails or improvements to existing facilities.

SCDHEC Grants: The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) has several grants available to cities, counties, and regions within the State that provide solid waste services. These annual grants can help improve solid waste and recycling efforts.

Planning and Preservation Grants: The South Carolina Department of Archives and History helps to administer federal historic preservation and planning funds to local governments within the state. These grants can be used to help fund historic district plans, facade improvement programs, and rehabilitation projects.

SC Rural Infrastructure Authority: The Rural Infrastructure Authority has a Basic Infrastructure Grant Program which can be used to offset local infrastructure projects.

South Carolina Forestry Commission: The forestry commission has several grant opportunities to assist local governments with Geographic Information System (GIS) studies, tree surveys, and environmental protection projects.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): CDBG funds are available through both the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and through the State Department of Commerce. CDBG funds can be used to assist local governments in a variety of projects, such as community infrastructure, job creation, neighborhood revitalization, and public facilities.

FEDERAL FUNDING

USDA Rural Development: The USDA provides several grant opportunities to rural communities throughout the State. Some of the key programs include community facilities grants / loans, water and wastewater disposal loans / grants, and rural business development grants.

Economic Development Administration: The Federal Economic Development Administration offers infrastructure grants for economic development to local governments. Projects eligible through this type of grant include the development of economic development plans in under-served areas, technology-based economic development initiatives, and opportunity zone work.

Federal Transportation Administration (FTA): The FTA provides funding to local governments for public transit system development, including buses, subways, and commuter rail.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

To achieve the goals and strategies set forth in this plan, the City should coordinate with all jurisdictions who have control of, or are impacted by, public investment projects. Coordination should happen on all levels of the municipal government, beginning with City staff. Coordination not only ensures efficient implementation, but decreases duplication of processes and ensures that a shared vision exists across entities.

While Seneca operates and maintains many public facilities, others are owned and maintained by outside entities, such as Oconee County, the Oconee County School District, and SCDOT. These facilities will require an extra level of coordination.

Seneca currently works with the following entities:

Local Governments

- Oconee County
- Pickens County
- City of Walhalla
- City of Westminster
- City of Clemson

Schools and Educational Institutions

- Oconee County School District
- Clemson University
- Tri-County Technical College
- Hamilton Career Center

Utility Providers

- Seneca Light and Water
- Duke Energy
- Blue Ridge Electricity
- Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority

State Agencies

- Department of Transportation
- Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Emergency Management
- Department of Commerce

Regional Agencies

- Appalachian Council of Governments
- Clemson Area Transit
- Norfolk Southern Railroad
- United Housing Connections/ Upstate Homeless Coalition
- Oconee County Fire/EMS/Sheriff

PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS

The City has capital projects which are either currently underway or are being planned, which align with the goals and strategies of this Plan. These projects are listed below.

- Seneca Middle School New Building
- Purchase and Revitalization of Downtown Property

A number of the strategies identified in this Plan involve capital improvements which should be funded by either the City's resources, other entities, or grant funding. The table below lists all strategies of this Plan, as well as the responsible entity, recommended timeline, and anticipated project costs. The costs of implementation strategies are estimated as follows:

- **Time** - Indicates a strategy which will require staff time commitments
- **\$** - \$0 - \$30,000
- **\$\$** - \$30,001 - \$75,000
- **\$\$\$** - \$75,001 - \$300,000
- **\$\$\$\$** - More than \$300,000

PRIORITY INVESTMENT / IMPLEMENTATION TABLE			
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST
<i>Goal 1: Strengthen the City's Role as an Economic and Cultural Centerpiece</i>			
Strategy 1: Maintain a toolkit of incentives to attract private investment downtown to aid in revitalization and economic development.	Planning and Development Department	SHORT	\$\$
Strategy 2: Expand the marketing of cultural assets, museums, and Downtown.	Arts, History and Culture Dep.	SHORT	TIME - \$\$
Strategy 3: Work to improve the appearance of the SC-123 Highway Corridor.	Planning and Development Department	MEDIUM	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$
Strategy 4: Implement a wayfinding system in and around Seneca to strengthen the identity of the City.	Planning and Development Department	MEDIUM	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$
Strategy 5: Expand and attract industrial development within the City limits to take advantage of its workforce and reduce commute times for residents.	Planning and Development Department	MEDIUM	TIME - \$\$\$
Strategy 6: Continue to facilitate partnerships between local businesses, industries, high schools, and workforce training centers to assist with business retention and recruitment.	Planning and Development Department	SHORT	TIME

PRIORITY INVESTMENT / IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST
<i>Goal 2: Build and Maintain Healthy Neighborhoods</i>			
Strategy 1: Ensure residential zoning districts best promote a wide variety of residential densities, housing types, and mixed uses in a manner compatible with surrounding development.	Planning and Development Department	SHORT	TIME
Strategy 2: Promote walkable communities by providing and requiring pedestrian connections.	Planning and Development Department	SHORT	TIME
Strategy 3: Strengthen code enforcement activities where necessary.	Building Codes Department	MEDIUM	TIME - \$\$
Strategy 4: Review the zoning ordinance to ensure it aligns with future land uses and projected growth.	Planning and Development	SHORT	TIME
Strategy 5: Conduct a housing affordability study.	Planning and Development	MEDIUM	TIME - \$\$
<i>Goal 3: Foster an Active Community</i>			
Strategy 1: Continue to prioritize the expansion and improvement of the City's recreation facilities.	Recreation Department	MEDIUM	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$
Strategy 2: Create recreational opportunities for the adult population.	Recreation Department	MEDIUM	\$
Strategy 3: Prioritize the development of additional sidewalks, greenways, and trail networks throughout the City.	Planning and Development	MEDIUM	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$
Strategy 4: Pursue efforts to establish sports-related tourism.	Planning and Development	MEDIUM	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$
<i>Goal 4: Coordinate Well-Planned Land Use and Growth</i>			
Strategy 1: Implement an annexation strategy to ensure appropriately planning for future growth in and around the City.	Planning and Development	MEDIUM	TIME
Strategy 2: Utilize the future land use map when considering any rezoning application, development proposal, or annexation request.	Planning and Development Department	SHORT	TIME
Strategy 3: Develop a coordinated plan for future water, sewer, and electric service areas and related infrastructure.	Seneca Light and Water	MEDIUM	TIME - \$\$
Strategy 4: Promote environmentally sensitive development to protect the City's natural resources.	Planning and Development	SHORT	TIME

PRIORITY INVESTMENT / IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST
<i>Goal 4: Coordinate Well-Planned Land Use and Growth</i>			
Strategy 5: Improve multi-modal infrastructure throughout the City.	Planning and Development	MEDIUM	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$
Strategy 6: Work with Clemson Area Transit to examine the long-range feasibility of public transportation.	Planning and Development	LONG	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$
Strategy 7: Assist in the update of the Anderson County Oconee County Joint Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan; provide informational resources to residents.	Planning and Development	MEDIUM	TIME
Strategy 8: Improve regional coordination on planning and development-related concerns	Planning and Development	SHORT	TIME
<i>Goal 4: Provide High Quality Government Services</i>			
Strategy 1: Review departmental staff and growth plans on annual basis to maintain adequate levels of service.	Finance Department	MEDIUM	TIME
Strategy 2: Prioritize intergovernmental coordination with all local, county, and state organizations or agencies which serve the City.	Planning and Development Department	MEDIUM	TIME
Strategy 3: Utilize this plan to aid in the development of a capital improvement plan.	Finance Department	SHORT	TIME
Strategy 4: Proactively plan for the City's future utility and infrastructure demands.	Seneca Light and Water	MEDIUM	TIME



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