

TRAILS MASTER PLAN

FOR THE

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

OF LAURENS COUNTY



LAURENS COUNTY
TRAILS
ASSOCIATION

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Presbyterian College
Clinton, South Carolina
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The Laurens County Trails Association especially wants to acknowledge the contributions of Bill Lane of the National Park Services' Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

Early on, the LCTA understood the need to develop a Trails Master Plan but had no expertise in doing so. Through Bill's invaluable leadership, guidance, expertise, and vision, the LCTA and its partners developed this Plan, which sets the vision and strategy for many future land- and water-based trail projects.

Bill provided leadership and worked with us to develop the project plan, to structure and organize public input meetings, and to draft the survey that probed the public's interest and preferences about trails in Laurens County. He also engaged NPS resources to develop the maps included in this Plan.

Equally as important as those specific accomplishments, Bill's readiness to help, his creativity, his encouragement, and his friendly cooperation has made working with him a delight for everyone!

Beyond this Plan, we eagerly anticipate Bill's continuing leadership to evaluate feasible routes for the Swamp Rabbit trail extension, to develop trail design guidelines, and to develop a funding strategy.

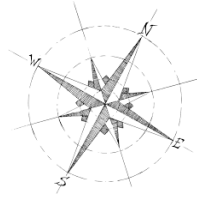
The LCTA's Board of Directors is unanimous in its enthusiastic appreciation of Bill's support and contributions. We would have struggled without him and the end result would not likely have produced the quality and thoroughness that is this Plan.

Bill has over 30 years of experience in land planning, landscape architecture and civil engineering. Prior to working for the National Park Service, he worked with local land planning/civil engineering firms in Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia. Concentrating on preserving and re-establishing native flora habitats, he worked on planned unit developments (PUD) which incorporated open space protection with multi-use/residential zoning.

Bill is a registered Landscape Architect with an undergraduate degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Georgia (1986) and a Master's of Landscape Design from the University of Tennessee (1993). His master's concentration focused on developing local zoning regulations which would promote the creation of public "greenways" as a means of alternative transportation and flood control.

Since becoming employed with the National Park Service in 1993, Bill has worked on a variety of Greenway/Blueway Trail projects throughout the southeast United States. From local two-mile trail projects to multi-state corridor protection plans, his focus has been on assisting recreation enthusiasts in developing creative partnerships, building public support and developing funding strategies. Projects with the National Park Service include: Tennessee Statewide Greenways Initiative, East Coast Greenway (a proposed trail which will link the entire eastern seaboard of the United States from Maine to Key West, Florida), Great Smoky Mountains Regional Greenway, Waccamaw River National Water Trail designation and most recently, a regional water trail plan for the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

Don Walker, Executive Director



SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The Laurens County Trails Association encourages cooperation among all the county's citizens, communities, and businesses. The following organizations signed resolutions of support and commitment at the outset of this effort to establish a countywide network of trails for the benefit of all of the citizens of Laurens County and its visitors:

Clinton City Council
Greenville County Department of Recreation
Greenville Health System
Laurens City Council
Laurens County Chamber of Commerce
Laurens County Commission of Public Works
Laurens County Community Foundation
Laurens County Council
Laurens County Cycling Club
Laurens County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
Laurens County Development Corporation
Laurens School District 55 (Laurens)
Laurens School District 56 (Clinton)
National Park Service
Old 96 District Tourism Commission
Piedmont Technical College
Presbyterian College
South Carolina House of Representatives
Upstate Forever
YMCA of Clinton
The Family YMCA of Greater Laurens

The Laurens County Trails Association Board of Directors:

Jamie Adair

*Greenville Health System-LCMH
Marketing & Community Relations*

Laura Blind

*Retired – Former Director
Joe R. Adair Outdoor Education Center*

Dan Boozer

Laurens County Cycling Club

Bob Bryant

*Professor
Presbyterian College*

Brie Holmes

*Wellness Director
The Family YMCA of Greater Laurens*

Andy Howard

*Laurens County Director
of Parks & Recreation*

Susan Johnson

Avid Cyclist and Outdoors Enthusiast

Janice Long

*Cross Fit Training Center
Owner/Operator*

Jane Nelson

*Retired – Former High School
Head of English Department*

Jim Nelson

*Retired – Former Area Manager
of New Technologies, SW Bell*

Mike Pitts

*South Carolina District 14
State Representative*

Jason Pridgen

*City of Laurens
Director of Parks & Recreation*

Mary-Wallace Riley

*City of Clinton
Special Projects Coordinator*

Bob Simpson

*Clinton Newberry Natural Gas Authority
Assistant General Manager*

Jeff Thomason

Owner of Earl Thomason Jewelers

Don Walker

Retired – LCTA Executive Director

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program Specialist:

Bill Lane

National Park Service, Landscape Architect

The Laurens County Trails Association thanks the many citizen volunteers who have assisted with this master plan's development.

The author is grateful to the board for its guidance, input and constant support, especially the editorial assistance of Laura Blind, Bill Lane, Jane Nelson, and our Executive Director Don Walker. Special thanks are due also to Bill Lane for his steadfast support and wise counsel, both of the author and the entire board of directors. Of course, any errors that may exist in this report belong to the author alone. Special thanks belong also to Norm Bryan and Sarah Burns of Presbyterian College for their assistance in managing and tabulating the public surveys.

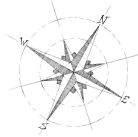


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface: Executive Summary	i
Chapter One: Trails for Laurens County	1
Introduction	1
Purpose	1
Background	1
Vision	4
Chapter Two: Benefits	5
Health	5
Economic	7
Environmental	10
Cultural	12
Transportation	14
Chapter Summary	15
Chapter Three: Existing Conditions	16
Location	16
Natural Resources	19
Population	23
Economy	27
Development Trends	30
Existing Parks and Trails	34
Challenges and Opportunities	44
Chapter Summary	47
Chapter Four: Proposed Trails	49
The Swamp Rabbit Trail to the Palmetto Trail	49
Hiking Trails	51
Bicycle Trails	54
River Trails	60
Horse Trails	61
Community Trails and Networks	62
Chapter Five: Implementation	63
Plan Adoption	63
Prioritization	64
Funding	65

Evaluation of Land and Right-of-Way	
Acquisition Options	67
Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance	68
Chapter Six: Conclusion	72
Appendices:	
Appendix A: Public Meetings, Survey, and Results	75
Appendix B: Conservation of Natural Resources	88
Appendix C: Economic Resources	90
Appendix D: Maps	101

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Laurens County Trails Association offers this *Trails Master Plan for the People and Communities of Laurens County* to support the creation of a comprehensive, countywide network of various types of trails for the many benefits such trails will bring for all the citizens, communities, and visitors of Laurens County.

CHAPTER ONE: TRAILS FOR LAURENS COUNTY

The Laurens County Trails Association is a citizen-based, voluntary, non-profit, charitable 501(c)(3) organization that began to take shape in 2013 and was formally established in 2014 to:

- 1) promote healthy lifestyles by planning and implementing trails for walking, running, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and paddling;
- 2) support conservation of the county's natural resources; and
- 3) stimulate economic development through the use of these trails.

This master plan reviews the benefits such trails can bring to the people and communities of Laurens County, examines the conditions that would affect such efforts, and offers suggestions for possible trail locations and guidance for creating and implementing the plan.

The primary goal is to extend the Greenville Health System's Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County through Laurens County and to connect it to the Palmetto Trail in Sumter National Forest.

The Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County would form a "backbone" trail to which other trails in the county may connect to link communities and places of interest. Such greenway trails will support walking, hiking, jogging, running, cycling, and other outdoor recreational interests for individuals and groups. The plan also calls for the creation of blueway trails along the county's navigable waterways and horse trails in the county's forests.

This plan promotes wise stewardship of the county's natural resources, provides an alternative non-motorized transportation network, and shows compelling evidence for significant economic development and gain if Laurens County can capitalize on its current status as a "green oasis" between the rapidly expanding cities of Columbia and Greenville/Spartanburg and extend the widely popular and successful GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through the county.

CHAPTER TWO: BENEFITS

The benefits from extending the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail and establishing a trails network in Laurens County are many and varied. Trails promote better **health and fitness**. Studies demonstrate that physical activity is an essential component of a healthy life. Trails provide opportunities for people of all ages and physical abilities to engage in activities that improve personal fitness, enhance a sense of well-being, and foster positive social interactions.

Trails are a proven way to enhance **economic development**. The GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail has already generated an economic boon to the communities that are associated with it, and the extension of the Swamp Rabbit through Laurens County will prove similarly advantageous for its citizens and communities. Moreover, the additional mileage of the Swamp Rabbit extension through Laurens County will increase the trail's popularity, and Laurens County would become the entry point for tourists from the densely populated coastal areas of the southeastern

states. Furthermore, the connection of the Swamp Rabbit Trail to the Palmetto Trail makes Laurens County a unique tourist destination and would serve a greater variety of outdoor recreational interests, including backpacking, horseback riding, walking, cycling, and paddling.

Trails are good for the **environment**. Good health and the quality of life are associated with a healthy environment, such as clean air and water, and the environment is worthy of care in its own right. Trails can help preserve and protect the county's valuable natural resources and provide opportunities for people to have healthy personal experiences with nature, now and in the future.

Trails provide a variety of **cultural benefits**. They can highlight important aspects of the county's rich history and contribute to the county's present-day culture. From the county's role among the Cherokee Indians to its early settlement by pioneers and roles in the Revolutionary War, even regarding any of the county's significant historical figures since then, trails can be crucial aids in preserving the county's history, contributing to people's education, and promoting community spirit among the citizens of Laurens County.

Trails offer the advantage of alternative, **non-motorized transportation routes** within the county. Studies have long shown that trails provide their own natural incentives for users by being separated from motorized traffic. Trails can offer safe opportunities for commuting to school, work, local businesses, other communities, and places of interest such as the Palmetto Trail, Sumter National Forest, Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, and the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

CHAPTER THREE: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Recent demographic studies reveal that Laurens County is a **green oasis** between two of the fastest growing metropolitan areas of South Carolina. The county's **location** and abundance of **natural resources**, including 18 endangered plants and animals, are not unaffected by urban sprawl; they are attractive assets for citizens who participate in outdoor activities, which is a majority of South Carolina's residents (54%). Furthermore, a trails network in Laurens County would support four of the top five most popular outdoor activities, which are running and jogging followed by fishing, biking, camping, and hiking or backpacking. Trails would also support the most popular activities of bird watching and wildlife viewing. Moreover, the county's location as the junction for the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail and Palmetto Trail, together with its location as the easternmost entry point for accessing the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail, adds to the county's attractiveness for **outdoor recreation** and **eco-tourism**.

Demographic studies also highlight the inevitable **population growth** of Laurens County, as South Carolina's population grows 28% from 2000 to 2030. Consequently, a trails network can play an important role in the county's strategic planning so that the **quality of life** for the county's inhabitants is enhanced and not diminished. Trails would contribute to the **improved healthiness** of the county's citizens, which presently is ranked generally poor (i.e., 48% physically inactive, 45% adult obesity rate, 74% poor diet, etc.).

The economic analysis of Laurens County in this plan shows how trails would contribute to the county's **economic growth**, particularly in the areas of outdoor recreation and tourism along with their supporting businesses and support systems. Advantageous for Laurens County, also, is the economic potential from developing its **historical and cultural resources**.

Positive development trends reflect the county's rising popularity for business and industry. Indeed, Laurens County and its largest cities, Clinton and Laurens, have all received statewide recognition recently for their economic development. Associated with such developments is the rise of cooperative citizen ventures through such entities as the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce, the Laurens County Development Corporation, the Laurens County Planning Commission, and community councils. A trails system would further enhance and diversify the business profile of Laurens County, resulting in creating more jobs.

Existing parks and trails provide a solid base for developing a trails network in Laurens County, however the lack of an unused railroad bed makes a rails-to-trails conversion impossible. Instead, the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County and development of any other trails will require reliance on public roads and right-of-ways, the utilization of county property, access to utility right-of-ways, private property conservation easements, and cooperative arrangements with appropriate state and federal agencies. Fortunately, there is **broad support** for trails at every level, which is necessary for the success of any trails project but which also means the success of this project will depend on a **significant fund raising program**.

CHAPTER FOUR: PROPOSED TRAILS

The extension of the **GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail** through Laurens County and its **connection to the Palmetto Trail** is the **top priority** of this master plan. It is the longest trail proposed and will serve the largest number of citizens and communities across the county. The trail's already established name recognition and popularity will attract visitors and commerce even as it promotes conservation of the county's valuable natural resources. As the "backbone" trail of the proposed system of trails, it will also promote the development of shorter trails along the way that connect to it. Furthermore, connecting the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail to the Palmetto Trail increases the overall attractiveness of Laurens County for outdoor recreational pursuits. In broad strokes, the proposed route would run from Fountain Inn to or near Owings, Gray Court, the City of Laurens property near Ceram Tec, Laurens YMCA, Laurens' Little River Park, The Ridge, County Park, Laurens County Memorial Hospital, Sterilite Nature Area, Clinton, and the Palmetto Trail. Altogether, the trail would run around 45 miles through the county.

In addition to supporting the creation of **short local trails** in and around communities, the master plan also proposes some **longer trails of 5 miles and more**, such as from Ware Shoals to Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area and on to Lake Rabon Park, the City of Laurens, and GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail. The Clemson property near Cliff Pitts WMA is also conducive for a longer trail, as are the Belfast Wildlife Management Area, the Whitten Center, and the Sumter National Forest. The Clemson property (~500 acres) offers the most promising prospect for lengthy **horse trails**.

The plan also calls for **five designated bike routes** on state and county roads throughout the county. Cycling is one of the most popular and fastest growing outdoor activities, and Laurens County is already recognized as a leading cycling destination, as evidenced through the county's annual Flight of the Dove event. These routes are distributed around the county and run 30, 50, 62, 45, and 24 miles, which together would provide **over 200 miles** of directionally guided routes for cyclists to enjoy the county's natural beauty.

Three Blueway access points are also proposed. Laurens County is rich in fresh water river resources, too, and the plan encourages the creation of public access points along the already existing blueways of the **Enoree, Reedy, and Saluda Rivers** for the benefit of the county's citizens and the conservation of these vital waterways. Consideration is also given to creating blueways or hiking trails along Rabon Creek, Duncan Creek, and the Little River.

Also encouraged is the **acquisition of the Whitten Center property** and its development as a **public park** that could support a full range of outdoor activities: hiking, camping, cycling, horseback riding, fishing, etc. Its location would form an excellent gateway park for developing the county's eco-tourism and provide an outdoor lab for the county's schools.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION

The vision of this trails master plan is the result of input from hundreds of citizens throughout Laurens County who have contributed through public surveys, public meetings, letters of support and endorsement from the county and its city councils as well as from a broad range of organizations, institutions, and businesses in the county. This broad and deep support bodes well for the county's implementation of this project. Together, the people and communities of Laurens County can create a network of trails that will improve the quality of life for everyone. Nevertheless, it will require a concerted team effort.

Since this is a citizen driven initiative, the plan will be shared first with the governing bodies of Laurens County for their consideration, feedback, and initial recommendations. The master plan will then be made available to the public through a variety of means, including public meetings. A revised master plan will then be submitted to the county's governing bodies for their consideration for adoption.

Once approved, the plan will serve as a guide for conserving some of the county's natural resources and creating a network of public trails. The top priority is the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County and linking it to the Palmetto Trail. All other recommendations are secondary and should be pursued only in so far as they do not hinder the county's efforts to connect the Swamp Rabbit and Palmetto Trails.

Funding is of chief importance. The plan and Appendix C present federal, state, corporate, local, and private sources for generating funds necessary for a public project of this scale. Also critically important will be the county's capacity for creative arrangements on both public and private lands as well as the use of utility line right-of-ways and the generous support of many citizens. Trail design, construction, and maintenance will be governed by safety concerns.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

The time is right for the people of Laurens County to work together to establish a network of trails and waterways that will enhance personal fitness, promote active lifestyles for healthier living, improve the quality of life in the county, contribute to the overall sense of community spirit, conserve natural areas, and stimulate economic development. There is considerable benefit for everyone throughout the county in the completion of this plan. Indeed, hundreds of citizens have already begun working together toward this goal for the benefit of all. The Laurens County Trails Association offers this Trails Master Plan for the People and Communities of Laurens County in full support of such aims.

CHAPTER ONE

DEVELOPING TRAILS FOR LAURENS COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

This Master Plan for Greenway and Blueway trails in Laurens County is offered by the Laurens County Trails Association to fellow citizens of Laurens County to establish a coordinated countywide system of trails that will utilize greenways (land routes) and blueways (river routes) along with existing roads for the recreational use and personal benefit of the citizens of Laurens County and the whole State of South Carolina. These routes will also serve visitors from other places. Greenways and Blueways are corridors of undeveloped natural areas—land and water—that are set aside for recreational use and environmental protection.

PURPOSE

The system of trails proposed in this master plan will accommodate anyone who seeks to enjoy the out-of-doors in beautiful Laurens County, whether walking, hiking, jogging, running, cycling, canoeing, kayaking, horseback riding, bird-watching, or participating in similar outdoor activities.

Many of the trails will also serve as a county transportation system and provide non-motorized routes and connections between communities and recreation areas throughout Laurens County, including the Palmetto Trail, the Swamp Rabbit Trail, and the adjacent Sumter National Forest.

All of the trails in this proposal will enhance personal fitness, promote active lifestyles for healthier living, improve the participants' quality of life, contribute to the overall sense of community spirit, conserve natural areas, and stimulate economic development.

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2013, citizens of Laurens County who were involved in developing trails in particular parts of Laurens County came to realize there were other citizen groups in the county working independently to develop trails in other areas. Unknowingly, they had also been competing against one another for state and federal grant money to develop trails in their respective parts of the county.

Now aware of one another, these citizen groups began to collaborate and sought to establish county-wide awareness of their efforts. After offering a series of open invitations in local papers in the county for other interested citizens to join their efforts, they coordinated open public meetings throughout the county during the summer of 2013. The consequence of those countywide meetings was the formation of the Laurens County Trails Association (LCTA).

A team of volunteers was formed to design this fledgling organization. They worked through the fall of 2013 to establish the LCTA's mission. Broadly speaking, the LCTA is a voluntary organization that exists to serve all the citizens of Laurens County and their visitors in creating and sustaining a countywide system of trails on land and water-based trails on rivers that will connect communities throughout Laurens County with trails that are safe, non-motorized, and—where possible—handicapped accessible. More specifically, the LCTA's mission is to:

- 1) promote healthy lifestyles by planning and implementing trails for walking, running, hiking, biking, and paddling;
- 2) promote conservation of the county's natural resources; and
- 3) stimulate economic development through the use of these trails.

The LCTA organizational committee recognized that the LCTA could not and should not oversee all trails work throughout Laurens County. Rather, the LCTA would focus on designing and implementing a single “backbone” trail that would stretch through the county to which others could connect local trails. The LCTA would develop a master plan for this “backbone” trail and show how other trails could be connected to it. Furthermore, the LCTA would establish a collaborative network to support the various local trails development groups so that all trails work will be as successful as possible.

This planning team also decided that membership in the LCTA would be open to the public as an entirely voluntary, non-dues requiring organization. It would also be non-political, and it would work to become a non-profit charitable organization, independent of any other organization and fully committed to the best interests of the county's citizens.

Finally, during the fall of 2013, the organizational committee named a Board of Directors, and the LCTA was turned over to the Board in January of 2014.

In the spring of 2014, the Board of Directors created the LCTA's by-laws, established the LCTA's legal status, developed a publicity plan, defined officers, and developed staffing requirements. Through such efforts, the Board also decided that the “backbone” trail should be an extension of the Greenville Health System's Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County through Laurens County to the Palmetto Trail.

The Board then began soliciting initial support from county governments, businesses, schools, and organizations. By late spring and summer, twenty-one organizations in the county had committed their support to the LCTA's initiative to establish a greenway plan for Laurens County that would include extending the Swamp Rabbit Trail through the county.

The LCTA applied for a federal grant from the National Park Service (NPS) in the summer of 2014 and was one of the few selected to receive one that fall. Through this grant, NPS personnel provide guidance and expertise for the LCTA's development of a master greenway plan for Laurens County, including assistance with identifying the most feasible route for extending the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail.

In the fall of 2014, the LCTA succeeded in its bid to be incorporated as a non-profit charitable 501(c)(3) organization.

Also during the fall of 2014 and through the winter of 2015, the LCTA collaborated with the National Park Service to establish key goals of their partnership for the benefit of the citizens of Laurens County. The NPS committed to assist the LCTA in:

1. the development of the Laurens County Master Greenway Plan, which is a strategic, conceptual plan covering all types of trails and other uses of outdoor spaces;
2. the identification of the most feasible route to extend the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County as well as how the GHS SRT may serve as a “backbone” that enables other local trails to connect and be connected throughout the county;
3. the identification of the initial phase(s) to be implemented;
4. the generation of active community participation in all stages of trail planning, design, and implementation, as well as administrative functions like publicity and fund raising; and
5. the development of a funding strategy to include grants from government and private sources, public contributions, and other sources.

During the spring of 2015, the LCTA initiated its planning phase for countywide public meetings in order to learn from fellow citizens of Laurens County their views about the development of a countywide Master Greenway Plan. Citizen input is essential for achieving the LCTA’s goals to promote improved health and quality of life, conserve the county’s decreasing green spaces and natural resources, and stimulate economic development.

A survey was developed and public hearings were planned, scheduled, and held from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in April and May at the Laurens YMCA (April 28), the Clinton YMCA (April 30), the Gray Court Community Room (May 5), and at Camp Fellowship in Waterloo (May 7). In addition to members of the LCTA, fifty-seven citizens unrelated to the LCTA attended these meetings.

In addition to learning about the LCTA’s mission and work, attendees made valuable contributions in identifying the county’s important natural, cultural, and historic resources. They also provided important information through their completion of the LCTA’s survey, which was made available on-line after the public meetings and announced at the websites of county municipalities and newspapers (See Appendix A).

In all, 246 people submitted an LCTA survey (89 on paper and 157 online). Not everyone who submitted a survey, however, responded to every question. Thus the data in Appendix A reflects the most conservative assessment of public feedback by including non-responses in the cumulative averages. It also includes the general averages of each specific response.

The survey was managed and tabulated independently of the LCTA by the Office of Institutional Research at Presbyterian College. Through the summer and fall of 2015, the LCTA focused on analyzing the data from its public hearings and survey. The input from these countywide public meetings and the data collected from submitted surveys not only inform but are also instrumental in the development of this Laurens County Master Greenway Plan.

In sum, this Master Plan is the natural outcome of many citizens in Laurens County joining together to promote the establishment of a countywide system of trails for the benefit of everyone in Laurens County.

VISION

Presently, the LCTA's primary goal is the extension of the newly opened and widely popular Greenville Health System's Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County through Laurens County to connect with the Palmetto Trail—South Carolina's premier cross-state trail for hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, camping, and other active outdoor recreation.

The extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail from its current southern terminus in Fountain Inn to the Palmetto Trail in Laurens County would create an Upstate loop-trail of several hundred miles through Laurens, Union, Spartanburg, and Greenville Counties for foot travel and mountain biking. It would also link various communities in Laurens County and would provide many shorter trail experiences through sectional use.

Of course, as this master plan will show, other trails could and should be established in Laurens County. Some trails could run to and from particular points of interest as well as to other areas and communities in the county, each ideally connecting to the Swamp Rabbit Trail. Pedestrian / cycling paths may also be developed beside yet separate from selected roads in the county.

This master plan also recognizes the need for creating additional designated bike routes on public roads in the county. Furthermore, it highlights the rich possibilities for establishing water-based trails on the Enoree, Saluda, and Reedy Rivers with designated put-in and take-out points. Similarly, given the prevalence of horseback riding in Laurens County and the surrounding area, with numerous equestrian centers between Greenwood, SC, and Tryon, NC, the LCTA recognized that horse trails could and should be developed to serve the county's citizens and visitors.

In short, the people of Laurens County working together, with time and commitment, can establish a network of trails and waterways that will enhance personal fitness, promote active lifestyles for healthier living, improve the quality of life in the county, contribute to the overall sense of community spirit, conserve natural areas, and stimulate economic development. There is much benefit for everyone in the completion of this plan. Indeed, hundreds of people have contributed and begun working together toward such ends for the benefit of all. This Laurens County Master Greenway Plan is offered in support of such aims.

CHAPTER TWO

BENEFITS

Trails on land and on waterways promote physical activities—such as walking, jogging, running, cycling, skating, paddling, and horseback riding, all of which improve personal fitness and quality of life. Trails also have a positive impact on the economies and the development of communities, even as they play a vital role in preserving nature and historical sites. Furthermore, trails provide rich benefits by encouraging families, friends, colleagues, and communities to interact with each other and with nature as they journey outdoors together—one way or another—across the land or along waterways.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Trails in Laurens County will have a positive impact on some of the county's negative health trends.¹ Data from the latest statewide survey (2012) indicate that the citizens of Laurens County are among the State's most unhealthy in the areas of adult obesity (45.1%), unhealthy diet (74.2%), adult smoking (22.8%), and physical inactivity (48.7%). Low birth rates and inadequate nutrition for children also contribute to the County's poor health statistics and reflect the county's higher-than-average poverty rate (20.6%).² Poor health is costly to individuals and communities. Indeed, as early as 1999, a study at the University of South Carolina found that 2000 deaths a year in South Carolina are caused by the lack of physical activity and costs the state more than \$157 million annually.³ Sadly, these trends of physical inactivity and poor health have continued. Trails, however, play a vital role in improving the health and personal fitness of individuals and raising the healthiness of communities.⁴

Physical activity is proven to be one of the most effective ways to improve personal health and fitness. A landmark study conducted over the course of several decades by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows a direct correlation between daily physical activity and a person's health and quality of life.⁵ Among the major findings of this study are that people who are usually inactive can improve their health and wellbeing significantly by becoming even moderately active on a regular basis and that physical activity need not be strenuous to achieve health benefits. Of course, the study also shows that greater health benefits

¹One of the most current, comprehensive, and helpful summaries of the health benefits of trails is "Health and Wellness Benefits" by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, Washington, D.C., available at <http://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?id=3070>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

²See "County Profile: Laurens County, South Carolina," at http://www.healthdata.org/sites/default/files/files/county_profiles/US/County_Report_Laurens_County_South_Carolina.pdf. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

³"Good Health: It's Your Move—Physical Activity in South Carolina," May 14, 1999, at <http://www.prevention.sph.sc.edu>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

⁴See especially, "Parks and Health," in "Parks and Trails Health Impact Assessment Toolkit," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/parks_trails/. Accessed on June 1, 2015. According to the CDC, "People who are exposed to the greenest environments also have the lowest levels of health inequality among low-income households."

⁵See "A Report of the Surgeon General: Physical Activity and Health At a Glance," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996, at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/pdf/sgraag.pdf>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

can be achieved by increasing the amount of physical activity by duration, frequency, and/or intensity.

A review of the literature on the health benefit of trails shows that trails provide tangible benefits for improved personal health and fitness. Regular physical activity on trails improves personal health and raises the health level of communities by:

- reducing the risk of dying prematurely,
- reducing the risk of dying from heart disease,
- reducing the risk of developing diabetes,
- reducing the risk of developing high blood pressure,
- helping to reduce blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure,
- reducing the risk of developing colon cancer,
- reducing feelings of depression and anxiety,
- helping to control weight,
- helping to build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints,
- helping older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling,
- and promoting psychological well-being and self-esteem.

This last point deserves further comment. A growing body of research shows that human participation in outdoor activities contributes substantially to good mental health while little contact and feelings of separation from nature are associated with diminished psychological, physical, and cognitive health.⁶ In other words, personal activity in natural settings can relieve feelings of anxiety and stress even as it affects positively one's view of oneself and others. Not surprisingly, green spaces are increasingly common in the treatment of Attention Deficit Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and in the rehabilitation of adjudicated youth and adults.

Personal health is improved by a sense of personal connection with the environment. Trails provide opportunities for individuals to grow in their appreciation of being outdoors. Not only is exposure to nature necessary for appreciating and caring for the environment (see Environmental Benefits below), but being outdoors is essential for acquiring a better sense of self in relation to the world and life's natural processes. In other words, studies show that trails and green spaces naturally promote psychological, emotional, and relational health by helping people learn about themselves and the world in which they live.

Trails can also provide safe places for children and adults to recreate and socialize. A recent 2014 study by the Alliance for Cycling and Walking shows that safe passageways for walking and cycling, along with reasonable proximity to these passageways and destinations, correspond directly with usage and positive social interaction. The number of users and general safety increase when pedestrians and cyclists have routes that are safe from motorized vehicles.⁷

⁶See Richard Louv, "No More 'Nature Deficit Disorder': The No Child Left Inside Movement," *Psychology Today*, January 29, 2009 at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/people-in-nature/200901/no-more-nature-deficit-disorder>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

⁷2014 Bike-Walk-Benchmarking Report, AARP, at <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2014/2014-Bike-Walk-Benchmarking-Report.pdf>. Accessed May 29, 2015. See, also, B. McKenzie, "Modes Less Traveled—Bicycling and Walking to Work in the United States: 2008-2012," American

Trails that are separate from motorized traffic provide safe travel routes to school and work even as they provide safe avenues for recreational excursions by pedestrians, cyclists, paddlers, and horseback riders (see Transportation Benefits below). Separation of non-motorized and motorized traffic reduces dramatically the number and severity of accidents that is common when they use the same space. Furthermore, given their own safe space, pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities are better able to socialize and cooperate in sharing the trail.

In sum, trails provide many health benefits—individually and communally—by providing for people of all ages and abilities a range of opportunities for sustained physical activity in a safe, healthy, attractive, and enjoyable outdoor setting. Trails are associated directly with improvements to personal health and fitness, sense of well-being, and positive socialization.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The economic benefits from trails in Laurens County will be numerous. Many extensive studies nationwide demonstrate the economic benefits from greenways and blueways and their corresponding trails.⁸ Most telling for the economic potential in Laurens County are the three annual impact studies of the nearby GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail covering 2010 to 2013 (the GHS SRT opened officially in 2009). Each year’s report leaves no doubt about the remarkable economic value and growing economic impact of the GHS SRT for Greenville County.

The clear advantage for Laurens County—even with a smaller demographic profile—lies chiefly in the county’s ability to link the multi-use GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail with the more rugged hiking and cycling path called the Palmetto Trail.⁹ Laurens County can join the two trails and make possible an Upstate Loop for hikers and cyclists, which would draw trail users not only from Laurens, Greenville, Spartanburg, Union, and Newberry Counties but from elsewhere in the state and nation. Moreover, given the international profile and prevalence of European businesses in the Upstate, especially Greenville, international users are also likely. In other words, Laurens County is situated perfectly for becoming a hub for South Carolina’s two premiere trails. It would be attractive to a wider range of outdoor enthusiasts than the GHS SRT alone in its capacity to serve both.

Community Survey Reports, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014, <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/acs-25.pdf>. Accessed May 29, 2015.

⁸ A good entry point to the literature is “Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways,” by the Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, Washington, D.C., available at <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org>. The most extensive collection of resources currently available is through the National Trails and Partnership. See “Resources and Library: Economic Impact,” at <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/economics/index.html>. Accessed May 29, 2015.

⁹For information about the Greenville Health System Swamp Rabbit Trail, a multi-use greenway in Greenville County, see <http://greenvillerec.com/swamprabbit>. For information about the Palmetto Trail, a backpacking and hiking route that spans the State of South Carolina from mountains to the sea, see the Palmetto Conservation website at <http://www.palmettoconservation.org/aboutthetrail.asp>.

The economic data from adjacent Greenville County is telling and fits solidly with reports from other communities that have established trails.¹⁰ The recently published three year study of the impact of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail shows a dramatically positive effect on community businesses along or near the trail, which in the first year of a three year study released in 2014 showed sales and revenue increases of from 30% to 85%. These are significant gains, and they improve.

In the second year, businesses next to the GHS SRT or in close proximity to it (including now five retail bicycle shops) reported increases in sales and revenue ranging from 5% to as high as 100% (avg. = 47%). That year, also, five additional businesses opened or relocated to property along the trail. Those that relocated saw an increase in sales of from 30% to 90%. Annual revenue from trail users for businesses the second year ranged from \$50,000 to \$400,000 (avg. = \$111,250).

In the third year, increases in sales and revenues ranged from 10% to 85%, but some businesses posted especially striking gains. Revenue from trail users at non-bike shops was as high as \$400,000, and two bike shops posted gains from \$300,000 to \$400,000. Much of the retail gains have been in the areas of food, lodging, trail services, and unique retail or related outfitter stores.

The result of the GHS SRT three year study shows that the economic benefit in tourism-based revenues for Greenville County has been \$6.7 million annually. Again, this is tourism income. The study does not address the extended economic impact elsewhere in the county or in the communities associated with users of the GHS SRT who are county residents.

Such positive economic gains for local businesses along the trail, as any visitor to Travelers Rest may observe, speaks not only to the growing popularity of the trail and for the opportunities it provides for outdoor recreation but speaks also to the widespread recognition of the trail's personal lifestyle value and its attractiveness for out-of-county and out-of-state visitors.

Some background for this point is important. Since the GHS SRT opened officially in April 2009 with over 3,000 in attendance, usage has grown dramatically. The number of users in 2011 was 359,000 and in 2012 rose to 403,000 users for a 12.2% gain. In 2013, though, the number of users rose to over 501,000, marking a 24.3% gain. Significant also is that over a quarter of these users are from out-of-town, meaning they come especially to use the trail for recreational purposes. Most users, however, live within 15-20 minutes of the trail. Regarding the point above, the study shows that a growing number of people are moving to properties along or near the trail so that they may use the GHS SRT for recreational purposes as well as for commuting to school, work, or town during the work/school-week.

Demographically, this is especially true for many of today's young professionals, which will be increasingly important both to for the development of Laurens County and for bringing residents here. Perhaps more importantly for Laurens County, though, is the attractiveness of

¹⁰See "Year 1 Findings," "Year 2 Findings," and "Year 3 Findings" of the "Greenville Health System Swamp Rabbit Trail," by Julian A. Reed, at <http://greenvillerec.com/studies-surveys>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

such trails to out-of-town and out-of-state visitors/users that now represent 25% of the GHS SRT users. The extension of the GHS SRT through Laurens County, then, will increase the trail's appeal, number of users, and sales / revenues of businesses even as it affects development.

Property values and real-estate development also benefit from greenways. Many studies show that green spaces increase property values. They show also that consumers are willing to pay a premium to live in walkable communities. For instance, the National Association of Home Builders found that Americans are increasingly interested in living where they have more immediate access to green spaces where they can readily walk, run, or cycle. The association also found that trails consistently rank in the top five most important amenities for purchasing real estate.¹¹

This positive correspondence between green spaces and property values is longstanding. Even as early as 1873 when New York City's Central Park was completed, property values rose and even doubled. The same kind of relation between housing, natural aesthetics, and value continues today.¹² For instance, a 1998 study of the property values along the Mountain Bay Trail in Brown County, Wisconsin, shows that lots adjacent to the trail sold faster and on average for 9% more than similar property not located next to the trail. A 1995 survey of real estate agents in Denver, Colorado, shows that three-quarters of them believe that homes adjacent to trails are easier to sell. Developers of Shepherd's Vineyard housing development in Apex, North Carolina, added \$5000 to the price of 40 homes that were adjacent to the regional greenway there, and those homes were the first to sell.¹³ Closer to Laurens County, a study of the Thread Trail in York County, SC, shows an increase of *at least* 4% to homes close to the trail.¹⁴

Trails can make other development projects more marketable and profitable, too. When Pittsburgh experienced a mass exodus of skilled laborers and professionals with the collapse of the steel market in the 1970s, the city leaders redeveloped the riverfront with trails and greenways that gave rise to adjacent development and redevelopment. In recent years, it has been ranked consistently among the better cities to raise a family.¹⁵ Similar renaissances have occurred in cities like Chattanooga (TN), San Antonio (TX), Baltimore (MD), and Chicago (IL). Of course, we know the advantage of such development right here in the Upstate through the

¹¹Gopal Ahluwalia, Director of Research, National Association of Homebuilders and National Association of Realtors (NAHB NAR), April 2000. This survey of 2000 recent homebuyers indicated that walking/jogging and bike trails are second from the top on the "important to very important" amenity list, behind highway access, which Laurens County has amply. See "Benefits of Trails and Greenways: Ten Reasons to Consider a Trail or Greenway in Your Next Project," by Bob Searns and Jeff Vogel, National Trails Training Partnership, October 2002, at <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits/10reasons.html>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

¹²See the many articles available at the National Trails and Partnership website. See, especially, "Resources and Library: Economic Impact," at <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/economics/index.html>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

¹³"Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways," by the Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, Washington, D.C., available at <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org>. Accessed on May 29, 2009.

¹⁴"Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for York County Communities: Weaving Communities Together," February 2009, p. 9.

¹⁵"Benefits of Trails and Greenways: Ten Reasons to Consider a Trail or Greenway in Your Next Project," by Bob Searns and Jeff Vogel, National Trails Training Partnership, October 2002, at <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits/10reasons.html>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

renaissance of downtown Greenville and the development of Falls Park on the Reedy River over the past two decades.

Another economic dimension pertains to the economic attraction value of Laurens County's existing green spaces, such as Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, Sumter National Forest, the Joe Adair Outdoor Education Center, and our city and county parks, not to mention the nearby attractions of Lake Greenwood and Ninety-Six National Historic Site. In other words, Laurens County has natural resources that can offer visitors an attractive counterbalance to the urban sprawl that is ongoing in adjacent Greenville and Spartanburg Counties as well as nearby Lexington County. A network of trails could link the county's existing green areas, providing a greater range of recreational options and more opportunities for users to spend at area businesses.

As economic studies have shown, properly managed green spaces can significantly improve the attractiveness of a property and area as well as its value and profitability. People value accessible public green spaces for outdoor recreation. With proper attentiveness, then, given Laurens County's natural resources and location between the major metropolitan areas of Greenville, Spartanburg, and Columbia, user-friendly natural areas here could become a major recreational draw for citizens and visitors to and throughout the Upstate.

In sum, trails in Laurens County will generate tourism revenue, attract and advance local businesses, generate jobs, increase property values, potentially raise tax revenue from new businesses, attract young professionals seeking homes adjacent to or near greenways, enhance the County's profile for attracting business, and draw many visitors from urban areas seeking recreation in natural and developed recreational areas not too far from "home" or even as a vacation destination.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Intelligent use of natural spaces is also good for the environment itself. By definition, greenways and blueways are corridors of natural space managed for conservation and recreation purposes. They preserve important natural landscapes, provide links between fragmented habitats, protect plant and animal species, and facilitate positive interactions between humans and the natural world.

Whether trails exist as greenways or blueways, trails are an effective way to serve people and preserve natural spaces, especially with the rise of urban sprawl. Trails conserve important natural landscapes and waterways, and they also create connections between islands of habitat that are important for both plants and animals to survive. Trails can link the county's natural areas and parks. Of course, pathways also provide buffer space from development for the native wildlife and plants there, too, and can contribute to a more extensive countywide conservation plan.¹⁶

¹⁶"Enhancing the Environment with Trails and Greenways," by the Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, Washington, D.C., available at <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org>. Accessed on June 1, 2015. See also the helpful resources cited there.

Trails can be an effective tool for managing the county's greenway development with the whole county's environment and ecological future well-being in mind. For example, recent trends show that natural areas and environmental corridors will become increasingly rare in Laurens County and throughout the state of South Carolina as development continues to consume more forested and agricultural land. To be sure, South Carolina is still largely forested due in part to the timber industries here, but the natural landscape of South Carolina is rapidly changing toward urbanization. Already in the last 40 years, the state's agricultural land has decreased by 60% and forests have fallen by 1.5 million acres.¹⁷ Compounding this trend is the conservatively projected population growth of an astounding 27% in SC between 2000 and 2030, from 4 million to over 5 million people.¹⁸ This growth is largely centered in Greenville, Charleston, and south of Charlotte. In Laurens County alone, though, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population growth is on track to increase by 13% between 2000 and 2020, from 69,567 to 78,590 residents. The growth already is reflected in the rise of per capita income, which according to the South Carolina Department of Commerce (2014), rose from \$20,571 to \$31,627 between 2000 and 2012, an increase of 53.75%.

Simply put, urbanization will increase and natural spaces will decrease. Even with careful planning, the state and county's natural spaces will diminish. Wise planning at the state, county, and city levels, then, will be essential for preserving vital green spaces.

Indeed, Laurens County is already beginning to experience more urban influence from Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, especially.¹⁹ This can be a good thing for the economy but can have a negative effect on the area's natural resources, such as air and water quality, available green space accessible to the public, and the native plant and animal species along with their habitats. Given the current trend, many of the remaining natural tracts of land in Laurens County will be gone in 20 to 30 years unless land owners—public and private—find a way to work together to preserve the beautiful natural resources that characterize Laurens County—the Gateway to the Upstate.

The development of a network of trails, however, gives the citizens of Laurens County an opportunity and incentive to manage better the county's development and use of property in ways that include plans for preserving and integrating green spaces, which of course is good for the environment and for all who will live in Laurens County.

¹⁷See "Conserving South Carolina's Working Forests," in *South Carolina's Forest Resource Assessment and Resource Strategy: Conditions, Trends, Threats, Benefits, and Issues*, South Carolina Forestry Commission, June 2010, at <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/fra-cons.htm>. Accessed on June 1, 2015.

¹⁸"South Carolina 2030 Population Projections," in South Carolina Community Profiles of the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, at http://www.sccommunityprofiles.org/census/sc_proj.php. Accessed on June 1, 2015.

¹⁹This is no surprise; it's where many citizens of Laurens County Shop. Furthermore, *CNN Money* has ranked Greenville as one of the "Top 10 Fastest Growing Cities in the U.S."; *Bloomberg* (2010) named Greenville the 3rd Strongest Job Market in the nation; and *Forbes* recently named Greenville the 13th Best City for Young Professionals. The Charlotte area is ranked 7th in the county for growth and the Charleston area is 3rd! Additionally, the state of South Carolina is ranked within the top 10 fastest-growing states and economies by the U.S. Commerce Department.

Trails conserve natural resources.²⁰ They preserve corridors of natural habitat for many different species of plants and animals. Once these habitats and their natural resources are gone, it is difficult if not impossible to restore them. Trails and their corridors preserve natural areas with minimal human affect upon habitats and their native plants and wildlife.

Green spaces and trails improve air quality. On one hand, they protect plants that produce oxygen and filter out harmful pollutants such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, and carbon monoxide. On the other hand, they also provide an alternative opportunity for traveling safely between neighborhoods or for particular activities in a community without burning fossil fuels.

Trails and greenways also improve water quality. They provide natural buffer zones that protect streams, rivers, and lakes from pollution, whether from trash, from road run-off of oil and gas, or from the dissipation of chemicals in fertilizers and pesticides that leach from yards and farms. Wherever this kind of protection occurs, it improves the county's water quality and the health of everyone who uses it. It also aids aquatic species in the water as well as all other plants and animals that draw from it. Cleaner sources of water (i.e., Lake Rabon, Enoree River, Duncan Creek, etc.) also mean less expense for water treatment. Educating the public about the county's water sources, the importance of good stewardship, and providing them opportunities to enjoy the county's waterways properly would help more citizens conserve and protect these waterways.

Trails and greenways also aid the environment by helping people become better educated about the interconnected natural world in which they live. Conservation of the environment depends on such awareness. Indeed, the health, well-being, and sustainability of future generations depend on it. It is critical that the citizens and communities of Laurens County band together now in an effort to preserve the county's remaining natural areas and plan wisely for the future. It is a naturally beautiful county, why should its citizens need to travel elsewhere to enjoy being out of doors in natural spaces?

In sum, a network of trails can help preserve and protect many of the county's natural resources and provide opportunities for future generations to reap benefits that can come only through personal experience with nature. Trails and greenways are good for the environment.

CULTURAL BENEFITS

Laurens County is rich in cultural heritage, and trails and greenways that help users learn more about the county's history can contribute to the users' deeper sense of appreciation and vision of ways in which the citizens of Laurens County can work together today for a better future together tomorrow.

On one hand, a network of trails and green spaces can promote the appreciation, preservation, utilization, and connection of historic sites in the county. Laurens County is rich in history and has been attracting visitors for years, at least since Cherokee Indians lived and traded

²⁰“Enhancing the Environment with Trails and Greenways,” by the Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, Washington, D.C., available at <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org>. Accessed on June 1, 2015.

here with the earliest European settlers in the early 1700s. The county is rich in Revolutionary War history and is home to the Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, which is part of the “Cradle of Democracy” project that chronicles more than 180 battles fought in South Carolina. Laurens County was also home to tailor Andrew Johnson who became the 17th President of the United States. During the Civil War, Confederate States President Jefferson Davis made his retreat through the county before being caught in Georgia in 1865. The county is also home of the legendary blues guitarists “Pink” Anderson and “Blind Reverend” Gary Davis. The Clinton and Laurens Museums together with any of the county’s historic buildings may also be included. In other words, these and many other historic sites could be joined by trails and would help trail users learn about people and events in the past and how that impacts the present.

On the other hand, a network of trails and green spaces would provide many more cultural advantages for the present and future for all the people who live or will reside in Laurens County or visit it. In the same way that trails connect places, they connect people. Study after study, as cited above, shows that building and using trails strengthens communities by increasing the breadth and depth of cooperative relationships. Good relationships are the foundation of every good community, and one of the guiding goals of the Laurens County Trails Association, as with all the county’s governing bodies is the promotion of community life.

A project of this scope is not only for all the citizens of Laurens County but is also a project that will provide many opportunities for joint labors and mutual benefits. The LCTA’s public meetings and news reports from countywide publications chronicle already the positive community building affect of this project countywide (see Appendix A). The establishment of trails will further this trend. Trails will also contribute to a sense of belonging and county pride, as there is room for all to contribute and for all to enjoy the benefits of their shared work.

In practical ways, trails and greenways in Laurens County will link communities even as they can join neighborhoods within communities by providing safe throughways separate from motorized traffic. Within communities, trails can link schools, parks, churches, YMCAs, and other community facilities. Trails will provide opportunities for interested citizens to contribute on many different levels, from offering their artistic and landscaping talents to coordinating communitywide activities on the trails during their construction and after their completion. Trails between communities can provide the same. Each community could contribute distinctive elements to the greenway design.

All trails would be a free and accessible community asset. They will offer opportunities for many kinds of exercise and recreation in a public green space. They will be available for people of all ages and abilities, and no fees will be charged.²¹ Because everyone may use the trails, there will be increased opportunities for people to meet, get to know one another, and experience a sense of community through the creation and development of more social bonds—person to person.

²¹According to the latest statistics, the poverty level in Laurens County is 20.6% (SC average is 18.1%). See, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/45/45059.html>. Accessed on June 2, 2015. The county’s average for the U.S. Free and Reduced Lunch Program available to public schools is 56.3%. See, <http://high-schools.com/directory/sc/counties/laurens-county/45059/>. Accessed on June 2, 2015.

The trails and green spaces will also contribute to the people and communities of Laurens County by promoting partnerships. For example, walking clubs could form in Laurens, Clinton, Gray Court, and Waterloo and plan joint day walks together. A cycling outfitter in Clinton could form partnerships with cycling shops in Greenville. A high school cross country team could use a portion of the trail for an invitational meet. Nature walks, group exercise programs, bicycle safety seminars, and a host of other cooperative partnerships would develop.

In sum, trails and greenways in Laurens County would do much to improve not only the health and quality of life for individuals but would also improve the quality of life and sense of community spirit throughout the entire county.

TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

As noted above, there are several important advantages for establishing trails for non-motorized traffic. Centrally important is the improved safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Separating non-motorized from motorized traffic is the most significant factor for reducing injuries and even eliminating fatalities of pedestrians and cyclists.

Trails provide incentive for commuting to work and school. A 1991 Harris Poll on commuting found that 46% of respondents said they would cycle to work if they could use safe designated bike trails. A subsequent study by the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2012 shows that such interest persists, but over this period of two decades there were only slight gains nationwide for cyclists (up to 0.6%) and the percentage of walkers decreased (down to 2.8%).²²

This national trend for walking and cycling to work and school is dramatically reversed, however, where communities have built safe routes. Recently established pedestrian and cycling lanes and trails in Boston, MA, have contributed to an increased walking commuter rate of 15%. Similar route improvements in Washington, D.C., have moved their walking commuter rate to 12.1%. Cycling has shown the largest gains, though. With the development of appropriate infrastructure, the bicycle commuting rate in Davis, CA, has risen to 18.6%. In Key West, FL, the rate is now 17.4%, and in Corvallis, OR, the cycling commuter rate 11.2%. Using cycling infrastructure design help especially from European countries (where more people cycle or walk to work than drive), American cities are finding creative ways to create safe non-motorized routes for cyclers and walkers, even as cities move to become more pedestrian and cycling friendly. The continuing growth of commuter traffic on the GHS SRT supports the same findings.

²²The study shows that for cyclists there were modest gains, from 0.4% (1990) to 0.6% (2008-2012) while walking fell from 5.6% (1980) to 3.9% (1990) then 2.9 (2000) and now stands around 2.8% (2008-2012). Distance to work and lack of safe routes are the leading causes given for the stagnant and declining rates. See especially <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/acs-25.pdf>. Accessed June 2, 2015. See also the 2014 study by the Alliance for Biking and Walking at <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2014/2014-Bike-Walk-Benchmarking-Report.pdf>. Accessed on May 29, 2015.

Another documented national trend is that most household travel occurs within a ten-mile radius of one's house.²³ When safe paths are provided, persons who would ordinarily drive to work or school or shop for incidental items often take advantage of trails and leave their cars at home. Moreover, the GHS SRT study found that 55% of the trail's users lived within roughly ten to twelve miles (about 15 minutes) of the trail.

One of the best ways that Laurens County can improve the health of students and many who work in the county is to provide safe ways for them to travel to school and work on pedestrian and cycling pathways. One primary potential source of funding for such development is the 2005 Federal "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient (SAFE) Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" (Public Law 109-59, 1404), which provides grants to communities to establish safe routes for children to walk or cycle to school. Between 70% and 90% of the grant money provided must be used to develop infrastructure for bicycle lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic-calming measures, bike racks, etc.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In sum, then, whether for recreation, school, work, or shopping, trails can provide a vital avenue for public transportation. Trails also provide an opportunity for people to exercise and improve their personal health and fitness. Trails are good for business and economic development. They are good for the environment by promoting the preservation of green spaces. Trails also promote good relations, contribute to an overall sense of community, and raise the quality of life for all users. The benefits of trails are many.

²³See p. 19 of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration 2009 Survey of Transportation Trends, at <http://nhts.ornl.gov/2009/pub/stt.pdf>. Accessed June 2, 2015.

CHAPTER THREE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

An understanding of the existing conditions of Laurens County is vital to any effort to establish a countywide system of trails. To be sure, widespread interest and commitment to develop a network of trails are also critical, together with an awareness of the benefits that such trails bring. Yet, the existing conditions in Laurens County will play a key role in the successful creation of trails for the benefit of its citizens.

In this chapter, we will look specifically at the county's location, natural resources, population, economy, development trends, and existing parks and trails, all of which will affect any development of a trails network. We will also consider relevant challenges and obstacles citizens will face for developing trails in Laurens County. As we will see, the existing conditions are largely favorable for developing a comprehensive trails system that will serve the county's citizens and enhance their quality of life.

LOCATION

If the three most important rules for assessing the value of real estate are “location, location, location,” then Laurens County is favorably positioned for developing a popular trails system that will attract visitors to the county even as it provides a range of personal, communal, and economic benefits for the county's citizens.

Accessibility

To begin with, Laurens County is easily accessible from surrounding counties and states. It is centrally located between three of the state's most populated and rapidly expanding urban areas. The cities of Greenville, Spartanburg, and Columbia are each within an hour's drive.¹ The other three leading metropolitan areas of South Carolina—Florence, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach—are respectively two, two-and-a-half, and three-and-a-half hours away. The interstate corridors of I-26 and I-385 provide ready access to and through the county.

Nationally Recognized Trails

Laurens County is also uniquely positioned to benefit from its location between the southern terminus of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail (GHS SRT) in Greenville County and the portion of the Palmetto Conservation Foundation's Palmetto Trail which runs through the county's eastern side in its 500 mile reach from South Carolina's Atlantic coast to its Blue Ridge Mountains.

Each of these two trails provides related but different recreational services. The GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail is a graded, multi-use, variable surfaced trail that serves predominately

¹The center of Laurens County is approximately 170 miles from the coastal city of Charleston, 150 miles from Florence, 70 miles from the state capital in Columbia, 38 miles from the center of Spartanburg, and about 35 miles from the city center of Greenville.

walkers, hikers, runners, and cyclists. The Palmetto Trail is a rustic trail for hikers, backpackers, mountain bikers, and—in some sections—horseback riding. Each of these trails is nationally recognized and gaining increased attention and popularity, with over half a million people in 2014 alone using the twenty completed miles of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail.²

By extending the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail south from Greenville County, Laurens County would become the first point of entry for all citizens and travelers coming to use the SRT from the east, southeast, and northeast (i.e., Columbia, Charleston, Florence, Savannah, etc.).³ Laurens County would also become the southern terminus of a newly formed loop trail of several hundred miles utilizing the GHS Swamp Rabbit, the Palmetto, and possibly other trails in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Should Laurens County succeed in linking these two distinct and widely popular trails, a wider range of services would be needed in the county to accommodate users of either or both trails, which in turn would spawn new businesses and increased revenue in the county, as evidenced along the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville up to its present northern terminus in Travelers Rest. There, as well, the more natural surroundings around Travelers Rest attract users from the increasingly urbanized Greenville-Spartanburg area, as noted in the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail studies. The attractiveness of natural surroundings is also especially relevant for Laurens County.

Rural and Forested Landscape

The location of Laurens County is further advantageous because its rolling piedmont landscape is largely rural and forested. The county has the additional advantages of the Sumter National Forest running through a portion of it; the Musgrove Mill State Historic Park is located here, too. Not only is the prevalence of green areas aesthetically pleasing, conducive for good health, and naturally attractive for outdoor recreation but studies show that growing urbanization—such as in the nearby counties of Greenville, Spartanburg, Lexington, Richland, and York—will make the green spaces of Laurens and Union Counties increasingly attractive and more valuable for both living space and outdoor recreation.⁴

²The GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail was featured in the 2015 fall edition of the nationally syndicated *rails-to-trails magazine*. See <http://www.railstotrails.org/magazine/>. See also the relevant portions of chapter two in this master plan. For the growing national popularity of the Palmetto Trail, see the Palmetto Conservation Foundation website at: <http://palmettoconservation.org/about/>. See, also, such usage sites as that of the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy at <http://www.trailink.com/trailsearch.aspx?keyword=Palmetto+Trail>; The Palmetto Conservation Foundation at <http://palmettoconservation.org/palmetto-trail/> and <http://www.palmettotrail.org/maps.asp>; and “6 Tips for Through-Hiking the Palmetto Trail” at <https://rootsrated.com/stories/6-tips-for-thru-hiking-the-palmetto-trail>.

³For the economic impact of travel in South Carolina and Laurens County, see *The Economic Impact of Travel on South Carolina Counties 2014: A Study Prepared for the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism* by the U.S. Travel Association Washington, D.C. July 2015

⁴See “Would You Be Happier Living in a Greener Urban Area? A Fixed-Effects Analysis of Panel Data,” in *Psychological Science*, June 2013, 24: 920-928. See also, B. S. Gentry, D. Krause, K. A. Tuddenham, S. Barbo, B. Rothfuss, and C. Rooks, *Improving Human Health by Increasing Access to Natural Areas: Opportunities and Risks, Report of the 2013 Berkley Workshop Held at the Pocantico Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund*, Tarrytown, NY, July 2013, in the Yale Program on Strategies for the Future of Conservation; and, Thomas Elqvist, et al, eds., *Urbanization, Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Services: Challenges and Opportunities – A Global Assessment* (Heidelberg: Springer Dordrecht, 2013).

Urban Sprawl

Studies also show that natural spaces nationwide are decreasing while demand on natural areas is increasing.⁵ Presently, for instance, South Carolina ranks 10th in the nation for its percentage population growth (13% from 2002-2010; 44% from 1982-2010)⁶ and is 11th in the nation for the rate of loss of natural spaces to urban sprawl (354 square miles from 2002-2010; 2,020 square miles from 1982-2010).⁷ Much of the sprawl in South Carolina is occurring without coordinated efforts for zoning, but the conclusion of one study shows that the “toll of urban sprawl on ecosystems, farmland and scenic open spaces cannot be substantially halted unless anti-sprawl efforts include a two-pronged attack using both land-use/consumption tools and population tools.”⁸

Green Oasis

Laurens County is not immune to sprawl and the loss of green space, but its location and the current prevalence of green space is valuable now and will become increasingly valuable and attractive as surrounding counties become more urbanized.

Outdoor Activities

The county’s location and “greenness” is naturally attractive to citizens who participate in outdoor activities, too. Indeed, nearly half of the American population participates in outdoor activities at least once annually, and this percentage has remained constant for the past decade at around 49%.⁹ The rate of participation in outdoor recreation in South Carolina on average is higher than the national average at 54%.¹⁰

The most popular outdoor activity in the state, as nationwide, is running and jogging followed by fishing, biking, camping, and hiking or backpacking. The fastest growing outdoor activity nationwide for the past several years is off-road running and triathlons, which last year grew at a rate of 211%. Other favorite activities at the top of the list include bird watching and

⁵See, especially, the data pertaining to South Carolina and its leading cities in L. Kolankiewicz, R. Beck, and A. Manetas, *Vanishing Open Spaces: Population Growth and Sprawl in America* (Arlington, VA: NumbersUSA Education & Research Foundation, 2014). This comprehensive study was first presented at the Earth Day Texas Eco Expo, April 26-27, 2014, and is available at: <https://www.numbersusa.com/sites/default/files/public/assets/resources/files/vanishing-open-spaces-study.pdf>

⁶Ibid., 159 (H5), 157 (H3).

⁷Ibid., 59.

⁸Kolankiewicz, L. and R. Beck. 2001. *Weighing Sprawl Factors in Large U.S. Cities: A report on the nearly equal roles played by population growth and land use choices in the loss of farmland and natural habitat to urbanization. Analysis of U.S. Bureau of the Census Data on the 100 Largest Urbanized Areas of the United States.* March 19. NumbersUSA: Arlington, VA., 64. Cited in Kolankiewicz, Beck, and Manetas, *Vanishing Open Spaces: Population Growth and Sprawl in America* (Arlington, VA: NumbersUSA Education & Research Foundation, 2014), 161.

⁹*Outdoor Participation Report 2014* (Boulder, CO: The Outdoor Foundation, 2014), 4f. Available at: <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2014.pdf>

¹⁰A summary of such studies is available in “SC Outdoors Facts,” *South Carolina Great Outdoors* at <http://www.scgreatoutdoors.org/portfolio/sc-outdoor-facts>.

animal viewing as well as skateboarding and simply enjoying the outdoors.¹¹ The Laurens County Trails Association's countywide survey (2015) identified the most popular activities locally, in order of priority, as walking/hiking, cycling, and enjoying quiet time followed by running/jogging, nature observation/birding, kayaking/canoeing, visiting historic sites, group outings, horseback riding, mountain-biking, and commuting (see Chapter Five).

A trail network located in Laurens County, then, that utilizes both the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail and the Palmetto Trail would stand to capitalize not only on four of the top five outdoor activities in the state and in the nation—along with other related activities—but would also draw users readily from the state's leading metropolitan cities because of its location alone.

Summary

Laurens County is in a good location for attracting visitors through a developed system of trails throughout the county even as it serves the county's citizens.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Laurens County is rich in natural resources. In addition to the inherent value of the resources themselves, they are also conducive for quality outdoor experiences of many different kinds. Located in the northwest area of South Carolina, in the Piedmont region commonly called the Upstate, Laurens County encompasses nearly 724 square miles, of which about 11 square miles is comprised of water, predominately small ponds and lakes.

Land Mass

Within the state of South Carolina, Laurens County is the 16th largest of 46 counties in land mass.¹² Roughly sixty percent (60%) of the county's land cover is presently forested (286,955 acres or 448.4 square miles), which is down from nearly 74% forest cover in 1975 (341,858 acres or 534 square miles). Of this amount, the Sumter National Forest comprises 4.5% (20,379 acres or 32 square miles) of the county's total area. The remaining forested acreage is owned by the county, municipalities, utility companies, private landowners, industries, and corporations.

Forests

The county's forests are predominately mature mixed forests (67.5%) common throughout the piedmont of the southeastern United States. This ecoregion is characterized by a humid subtropical climate and is also comprised of a diverse mixture of hardwoods, evergreens, and shrubs. Oaks, hickories, tulip poplar, beeches, ash, maples, hawthorne, sassafras, dogwood, and pines are common throughout this region.¹³ There are also large monocultural tracts of managed pine forests throughout the county as well as mature hardwood forest tracts, especially in deep ravines with sheltered slopes and in protected wetlands.

¹¹*Outdoor Participation Report 2014* (Boulder, CO: The Outdoor Foundation, 2014), 26.

¹²<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/south-carolina/land-area#chart>

¹³http://www.clemson.edu/public/naturalist/2014_umnp/pdf/dnr_piedmont_ecoregion.pdf

Wetlands

Wetlands are among the county's most ecologically valuable property and are typically located along rivers, streams, creeks, and lakes. They hold water, purify water, allow aquatic related plants to grow, create habitat for many types of insects and animals, and often provide flood buffers for surrounding properties. Because of their ecological benefit and fragile nature, extreme care must be exercised to preserve them. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service maintain current inventories of wetlands throughout the state of South Carolina.¹⁴ Laurens County lies within both the Broad River Drainage Basin and the Saluda River Drainage Basin.¹⁵

Flood Plains

There are several active flood plains in Laurens County that generally follow the larger rivers and creeks, such as the Enoree River, the Saluda River, the Little River, and Rabon Creek. While ecologically rich and often suitable for various outdoor recreation uses, flood plains are potentially dangerous and any development in such areas requires caution.

It is also significant that Laurens County currently has no zoning policy in place that would prevent developing in flood plains and protect citizens from unwitting purchases of developments within flood plains. Establishing zoning regulations regarding developments in flood plains would protect citizens from potential loss and harm as well as create buffers that would promote conservation.

Ponds and Lakes

Laurens County also has many small ponds and lakes dispersed throughout the county, mostly on private property, but it is also situated along two rivers and forms a sizeable portion of the eastern boundary of Lake Greenwood.

Rivers

The Enoree and Saluda Rivers are key sources of fresh water for Laurens County and form county boundaries. The Enoree River separates Laurens County from Spartanburg and Union Counties on the north and northeast. The Saluda River and Lake Greenwood separate the county from Abbeville and Greenwood Counties on the west and southwest. Greenville County borders on the northwest, and Newberry County borders on the southeast.

These rivers play a key role in the Santee River Basin of South Carolina.¹⁶ The Enoree is a tributary of the Broad River which feeds into the Congaree and Santee Rivers and reaches the Atlantic Ocean at Charleston. The Saluda River is also a tributary of the Congaree River, reaching Columbia past Lake Murray and eventually the Atlantic by way of the Santee River.

¹⁴See U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maps and data at: <http://geoplatform.usace.army.mil/home/>. Current data on wetlands is also available through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Department at: <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>.

¹⁵See "An Overview of the Eight Major River Basins of South Carolina," South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Columbia, SC, 2013, at http://www.dnr.sc.gov/water/waterplan/pdf/Major_Basins_of_South_Carolina.pdf.

¹⁶"Santee River Basin Study," USGS at: <http://sc.water.usgs.gov/nawqa/>

The Saluda River is navigable for canoes and kayaks from Greenville County through Laurens County, and the Enoree River is typically navigable through the County in wet seasons and year-round from Musgrove Mill State Park. The Reedy River is likewise navigable through Laurens County, and the Laurens County Parks and Recreation Department is working to open a blue trail from the county’s border with Greenville County to Lake Greenwood in 2016. This means river enthusiasts may paddle from Laurens County to the Atlantic or anywhere in between as the rivers run through South Carolina. In order to do so, however, more public points of access for put-ins, take-outs, and parking will need to be created. Existing blueway trails, present developments, and proposals for blue trails are presented below and in the following chapter.

Agricultural Land and Soil Characteristics

As for the land, Laurens County is covered largely with forests and farmland, and its gently rolling hills shelter many streams, ponds, and lakes. Laurens County also contains some of the Upstate’s most agriculturally important farmland, as designated by the US Department of Agriculture. This special designation is based upon the quality of the soil, past production of crops, and suitability for livestock and poultry.

According to the Laurens County Comprehensive Plan (2013; LCCP), however, much of the county’s slope characteristics, soil types, and erosion conditions unavoidably limit development for housing and industry in about 62% of the county; moderate restrictions apply to another 13% of the county’s surface area. This means that significant structural development in the county may occur in only 25% of the county.¹⁷ According to this study, it is sufficient acreage to meet the county’s projected population increases, which are addressed below, but it also highlights the opportunity for Laurens County and its residents to preserve and promote its inherent natural resources.

Land Cover

The distribution of land cover across Laurens County may be summarized as follows:¹⁸

<u>Ground Cover</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Square Miles</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Mixed Forest	193,653	302.6	41.8
Scrub/Shrub	81,508	127.4	17.6
Agriculture/Grassland	58,166	90.9	12.6
Evergreen Forest	48,898	76.4	10.6
Deciduous Forest	44,404	69.4	9.6
Urban built-up land	25,389	39.7	5.5

¹⁷For a complete analysis of the county’s soil types and their significance along with descriptions of the county’s flora and fauna, see *Soil Survey of Laurens and Union Counties South Carolina, United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service, in Cooperation with the South Carolina Agriculture Experiment Station and the South Carolina Land Resources Conservation Commission* (Washington, DC: USDA, 1975); and the *South Carolina Forestry Commission FY 2013-2014 Annual Report* (Columbia: SC Forestry Commission, 2014).

¹⁸“Laurens County Comprehensive Plan 2011,” p. 51. The chart above is adapted to include square miles and percentages.

Barren disturbed land	4,021	6.3	0.9
Saturated Bottomland	1,779	2.8	0.4
<i>Total Land Surface</i>	<i>456,044</i>	<i>712.6</i>	<i>99.0</i>
<i>Total Water Surface</i>	<i>7,225</i>	<i>11.3</i>	<i>1.0</i>
County Total	463,269	723.9	100.0

Wildlife

Each land type provides habitat for various kinds of wildlife. Common fauna include quail, mourning dove, meadowlark, turkey, white-tailed deer, black bear, bobcat, gray fox, raccoon, cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, fox squirrel, eastern chipmunk, white-footed mouse, pine vole, short-tailed shrew and cotton mouse. Songbirds include the red-eyed vireo, cardinal, tufted titmouse, wood thrush, summer tanager, blue-gray gnatcatcher, hooded warbler, and Carolina wren. Also common are the box turtle, common garter snake, and timber rattlesnake.¹⁹

Endangered Plants and Animals

Laurens County provides habitat to a growing number of endangered plants and animals, too, and a countywide greenway plan could help preserve them. The 2014 inventory of “Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Communities to Occur in Laurens County, South Carolina” (June 11, 2014), which was conducted by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, emphasizes the importance of countywide conservation efforts and lists for Laurens County the following endangered species:²⁰

Meadow Vole	One-flower Stitchwort
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	One-flowered Broomrape
Barn Owl	American Ginseng
Carolina Lance-Atlantic Spike complex	May White
Large Yellow Lady's-slipper	Georgia Aster
Eastern Leatherwood	Southern Nodding Trillium
Columbo	Three-parted Violet
Kidneyleaf Mud-plantain	Oak - hickory forest
Yellow Honeysuckle	Pine - oak forest

Natural Resources Management Goals

Recognizing the important value of the common and endangered natural resources that are spread throughout Laurens County, the Laurens County Planning Commission established the following seven goals for managing its natural resources, all of which relate to any development of trails in Laurens County. These goals are the: (1) protection of farmlands; (2) advancement of water quality protection; (3) safeguarding of natural resources; (4) promotion of best management practices (BMP); (5) coordination of landfill site planning; (6) encouragement

¹⁹See, “Southeastern United States” in “Ecological Subregions of the United States,” Chapter 20, at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/pubs/ecoregions/ch20.html#231A>.

²⁰ <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/species/pdf/Laurens2014.pdf>.

of recycling to reduce the need for new landfill space; and (7) development of a litter control program.²¹ In other words, county leaders are already well aware of the county's valuable natural resources and have been actively working to protect them while also striving to promote high quality development.

Summary

Laurens County is rich in natural resources, and the establishment of a network of trails along greenways and blueways throughout the county would help conserve the county's natural resources and preserve its environmental treasures. This would be beneficial not only to the county and state but to the nation and world, too. A trails network utilizing greenways and blueways would also help promote among the county's citizens and visitors an appreciation of the county's unique ecology and would enhance environmentally sensitive stewardship and development throughout the county.

POPULATION

The present population of Laurens County and projections for its growth are also advantageous for developing a trails system. Presently, the county's population is distributed largely through two small cities and eight smaller communities, with the rest of the population spread across expansive rural areas. Trails can serve citizens throughout the county by providing opportunities for localized recreation as well as non-motorized transportation routes between towns and communities. The projected population growth in the county, however, will make it increasingly difficult to establish a countywide network of trails, greenways, and blueways in the future. Now is an opportune time to create a trails system in Laurens County.

Statewide Population

Population trends in the county reflect trends statewide. South Carolina is the 12th fastest growing state in the nation, and its population growth has remained steady over the past four decades. In 1982, the state population was 3,207,614. By 2010, nearly 30 years later, the population had grown 44% to 4,625,364.²²

Not surprisingly, the state's population increase corresponds to nearly a 20% decrease of forested land and a steady rise in urbanization. Indeed, most of the population growth has been in the state's expanding urban areas, so much so that now 66.3% of the state's population is classified as urban, whereas it was predominately rural in 1982.

Projections for population growth over the next decade—as with economic growth—point to ongoing double-digit increases in South Carolina. Over the past decade, the national average for statewide population growth has been about 7.2%, but South Carolina's population

²¹*Laurens County Comprehensive Plan 2011*, 55-56.

²²*Vanishing Open Spaces*, 157. For the most comprehensive up-to-date summary of population data for Laurens County over the past decade, see "Community Profile: Laurens County," by the S. C. Department of Employment & Workforce, Business Intelligence Department, Columbia, SC, January 28, 2015, available at <http://www.SCWorkforceInfo.com>.

growth this past decade is 10%. Strikingly, this growth occurred during one of the worst national economic downturns since the 1930s. Upcoming growth projections for the state from 2000 to 2030 are running at 28%, which would be an increase of over 1.2 million citizens.

Along with such population increases statewide, the median age is also increasing. In 1990, the median age in South Carolina was 32 years old. In 2010, the median age in the state was 38 years old.²³ These statewide population trends affect Laurens County.

Countywide Population

Closer to home, the population of Laurens County reflects a similarly positive increase in population, although the county's population dipped downward this past decade and is only now recovering. In 2000, for instance, the population was 69,567 but by 2013 the population had dropped 4.8% to 66,229. But by the beginning of 2015, the population showed signs of growth by 228 to a total population of 66,457. Recent data and trends point to continued growth, with an upward surge of 12.9% by 2018 to 78,590 citizens. Five years later, in 2023, the growth rate is projected to be 18.8% for a population of 82,670; this translates to a total increase of over 16,000 in Laurens County over the next eight years, or about 2000 per year.²⁴

These projected gains of population in Laurens County are on track with state trends, and they are associated with the Upstate's growing popularity for both residence and work. Other characteristics of the county's population are also important for appreciating the relevance of a trails system in Laurens County. For example, the median age in the county in 2013 was about 41 years old, or just three years older than the state average. Similarly, the distribution of ages is relatively even, modulating mildly between 11% and 15% for each age group by decade of life up to the age of 70. Only 11% of the population is 70 and above. There are slightly more females (52%) in the county than males (48%), and 98% of the population is black (26%) or white (72%); the remaining 2% of the population is comprised of American Indian (0.35%), Asian (0.40%), Pacific Islander (0.15%), and two or more races (1.1%). The Hispanic and Latino population of Laurens County is 4.4% and growing. This category is treated separately here because it cuts across the other categories since people in this category may be of any race.

Predicted population growth in the county over the next twenty years highlights the need for strategic planning so that the quality of life for the county's inhabitants is enhanced and not diminished. Such growth also underscores the need for additional services, including recreational ones, which a trails network could provide.

Education

Of course, there are other aspects of the county's population that are also significant for developing a trails network, such as the educational practices and achievement of the county's

²³*Vanishing Open Spaces*, 157-159.

²⁴"Labor Profile, Laurens County," in *South Carolina State of Business* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Commerce, August 2014). All data in this report draws from the 2014 and 2010 data available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

citizenry. According to a 2015 study, the educational background of the citizenry of Laurens County, 25 years of age and older, runs as follows:²⁵

No High School	7.61%
Some High School	14.14%
High School Graduate	36.02%
Some College	20.20%
Associates Degree	7.50%
Bachelors Degree	10.04%
Graduate Degree	4.50%

Another way to view the educational development of citizens in Laurens County is as follows:

High School Graduates	78%
Some College Education	42%
College / Professional Degree	22%

In part, this indicates that there is room for the county’s educational profile to improve. Positively, the level of education is climbing. Yet, the significance of these numbers for the population now is that a trails network could be a vital educational tool for enhancing the instructive and recreational opportunities of the county’s schools and colleges, as well as providing for youth and civic groups of every kind.

Trails along greenways and blueways could provide a variety of “outdoor labs” in which students and teachers could participate in experiential outdoor education or use the outdoors as a classroom in other ways. Trails will also create opportunities for volunteer service, work projects, educational exercises, and learning about working together for the common good and the benefit of the world, all close to home. Even for adult groups, some education about the value of the environment and maintaining trails in the county will be helpful.

The advantages of outdoor education for student achievement and retention are well-documented.²⁶ Furthermore, outdoor education involves far more than learning about the environment. It also promotes values of respect, social responsibility, self-actualization, justice, and the importance of freedom for all living beings and the earth.²⁷ Of course, there are other

²⁵“See Community Profile: Laurens County South Carolina,” South Carolina Department of Employment and Work Force, November 11, 2015. Available at: <http://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/04000059.pdf>

²⁶See, for instance, Julian Ryan, “Nature Is a Powerful Teacher: The Educational Value of Going Outside,” in *The Atlantic*, October 31, 2013. Available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/nature-is-a-powerful-teacher-the-educational-value-of-going-outside/281027/>. See, also, Cheryl B. Torsney, “The Value of an Outdoor Education Experience,” in *peerReview*, A Journal of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Winter 2008, vol. 10, no. 1, available at <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/value-outdoor-education-experience>.

²⁷Rita Yerkes and Kathy Haras, “Outdoor Education and Environmental Responsibility,” in ERIC Digest (Charleston, WV: Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Appalachia Educational Library, 1997).

educational uses, too. For instance, trails can be used by Scouts and church youth groups as well as for athletic conditioning, training, and competition.

Employment

Another relevant aspect of population is employment. Data from 2014 indicate that 45% of the county's population belongs to the labor force (30,129), meaning they are able to be employed. Of this portion, 94.4% (28,440) are employed and 5.6% (1,689) are unemployed.²⁸

When it comes to where they work, about two-thirds commute out of the county (17,559) and a third remain in the county (8,301).²⁹ Over 8000 people commute into Laurens County to work each day.

The top five destinations for residents commuting out of the county, representing 68% of the county's labor force, are Greenville County (37.6% of all resident commuters), Spartanburg County (10.1%), Greenwood County (9.2%), Richland County (7.4%), and Anderson County (3.9%).

The top five places of origin for people commuting into Laurens County to work, representing 62% of commuters who enter the county for employment, are Greenville County (26.8% of those from other counties), Greenwood County (11.5%), Spartanburg County (11.4%), Anderson County (6.9%), and Newberry County (5.8%).

Health

The general health of the county's population is also relevant for considering a countywide system of trails. Trails contribute to the healthiness of populations, and the healthiness of the population of Laurens County is generally poor, as shown above in chapter two. For example, as of 2012, Laurens County's adult obesity rate stood at 45.1%. Similarly, some 74.2% of the county's citizens maintained unhealthy diets, meaning their daily diet fails to provide adequate amounts of nutrients for good health. Moreover, many of the foods consumed are known to cause medical problems. Along with poor diets, nearly a quarter of the inhabitants of Laurens County smoke (22.8%) and almost one half (48.7%) are physically inactive, which leads to poor health and many physical ailments.³⁰ Trails contribute to improved healthiness, hence the strong support for trails by the Greenville Health System and other health agencies.

²⁸Ibid. The data in this report is drawn from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2014.

²⁹Ibid. This data is drawn from the 2010 Commuting Patterns Report of the U.S. Census Bureau, which is why its numbers do not fit neatly with the preceding 2014 data. Still, the pattern is consistent with data in the *Community Profile: Laurens County* (Columbia: S. C. Department of Employment & Workforce, 2015).

³⁰ See "County Profile: Laurens County, South Carolina," at http://www.healthdata.org/sites/default/files/files/county_profiles/US/County_Report_Laurens_County_South_Carolina.pdf. Accessed on May 29, 2015. See also, "Health and Wellness Benefits" by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse, Washington, D.C., available at <http://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?id=3070>; and "Good Health: It's Your Move—Physical Activity in South Carolina," May 14, 1999, at <http://www.prevention.sph.sc.edu>.

Summary

The county's population and its characteristics considered here—distribution, projected growth, education, employment, commuting, health—highlight the critical need for strategic planning, both locally and countywide, for the inevitable increase in population, which will come with a corresponding increase of demand on the county's natural resources and the inevitable decline of its green spaces. A trails network would be a viable and constructive way to provide increased recreational facilities throughout the county which promote good health and a higher quality of living for a growing population, even as it helps conserve valuable greenways and blueways throughout the county. A trails network would facilitate vigorous, wholesome, inexpensive, accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for all the county's citizens.

ECONOMY

The Laurens County Chamber of Commerce (LCCC), the Laurens County Development Corporation (LCDC), and the Laurens County Planning Commission (LCPC), along with the county's associated town and city councils, work together to promote the county's economy and plan for the county's economic well-being. They also monitor the county's present economic environment, and their combined *Laurens County Comprehensive Plan 2011* (LCCP) offers the following summary of the county's current overall economic environment:

“The County Profile indicates that while our per capita income is roughly equivalent to others in the region, our percentage of people without a high school diploma is high. Yet, according to the Education Profile, our expenditures per pupil are well below average. The Miscellaneous Statistics chart indicates low-cost housing and a fairly low crime rate. Agricultural Statistics indicate that Laurens County is a strong agricultural county. Our retail sales per capita are low, which means either we don't buy things, or we don't shop Laurens County. Employment by Industry data indicates growth opportunity (need) in construction, transportation, financial services, wholesale and retail sales; our dependence on government and manufacturing may be cause for concern. Capital investment is about average in the region.”³¹

This summary provides a comprehensive snapshot of Laurens County's economic situation. While an unemployment rate of 5.6% may be on par statewide, any unemployment of an able workforce is a loss for both individuals and the communities to which they belong—in this case Laurens County.³²

³¹“Economic Development,” *Laurens County Comprehensive Plan 2011*, p. 1.

³²The unemployment rate since 1990 has ranged from a low of 3% in 1998 to a high of 11.9% in 2009, according to “A Profile of Socioeconomic Measures: Laurens County, South Carolina,” by the Economic Profile System-Human Dimensions Toolkit (EPS-HDT), January 20, 2014, p. 16.

Employment

In addition to creating jobs suitable for an available work force, it is also important for the county to have a diversified profile of employment types to maintain a more stable economic environment for the county. Fortunately, the 2010 employment rate in Laurens County is just over 94%, and the economy is supported by a variety of businesses and industries.

The LCCP shows citizens engaged in the following types of work:³³

	Number	Percentage
Laurens County	28,819	100.0%
Manufacturing	7,189	24.9%
Educational/Health/Social Services	5,442	18.9%
Retail Trade	3,483	12.1%
Construction	2,172	7.5%
Professional/Scientific/Management	1,932	6.7%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Hotel/Food	1,794	6.2%
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	1,691	5.9%
Other Services	1,572	5.5%
Financial/Insurance/Real Estate	1,229	4.3%
Public Administration	900	3.1%
Wholesale Trade	624	2.2%
Information	435	1.5%
Ag/Forestry/Fishing/Mining	356	1.2%

Presently, manufacturing, education, health services, and retail trade are the leading areas of employment, but the economy is slowly becoming more diversified as manufacturing jobs are decreasing and service related jobs are increasing.

Developing a countywide network of trails would add additional diversity to the county's businesses and industries by creating opportunities for additional jobs, especially in retail trades, recreation, hotel, food, and other service related jobs.

Income

Another aspect of the Laurens County economy is reflected in the yearly per capita income levels. Positively, the per capita income in Laurens County has increased steadily from 1990 to 2010. Still, the county persistently falls below state averages. The following data is illustrative:³⁴

³³Ibid., p. 2. For the most comprehensive analysis of employment by industry, covering the years 1970 to 2000, see p. 6.

³⁴LCCP, p. 5.

Per Capita Income Trends 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010
Laurens County	\$10,739	\$15,761	\$18,650	18.33%
South Carolina	\$11,897	\$18,795	\$23,196	23.42%

A related 2014 study of the socioeconomic characteristics of Laurens County reveals still more positive change by examining the county's personal income levels between 1970 and 2012. During this period, labor income grew from \$699.3 million to \$1.1585 billion (in real terms), which is a 66% increase. Non-labor income—which is income gained from dividends, interest, rent, etc.—grew from \$163.3 million to \$936.0 million (in real terms), a 473% increase.³⁵

The average earnings per job are yet another helpful way to assess the county's economic situation. When both full-time and part-time jobs are counted with equal weight and the total earnings in the county are divided by the total employment, the average earnings per job from 1970 to 2011 grew from \$31,878 to \$36,570 (in real terms), a 15% increase.³⁶

Per capita income averages, personal income levels, and average earnings per job are reflective of the average level of wealth and available spending money in the county. Such data are also a useful measure for retail companies seeking areas for new business ventures. Higher per capita incomes are generally attractive for retail trades.

A trails network in Laurens County would attract retail jobs along with additional businesses providing recreational and supportive services for trail users. For instance, shuttle services for cyclists and hikers could be expected along with specialty shops to serve their needs. Restaurants, bed and breakfast accommodations, camping facilities, river outfitters, and other shops of various kinds could also be anticipated.³⁷

Tourism

Another potential economic growth area for Laurens County is capitalization from tourism activity, most of which passes through Laurens County along its interstates. The ebb and flow of tourism traffic through the county is heaviest throughout the summer but is persistently steady on weekends year-round, largely from travelers heading to and from the state's beaches from areas north and west from Laurens County.

According to the South Carolina Department of Tourism and Recreation Development, tourism activity has evolved into a major economic asset for the state. South Carolina hosts approximately 29.5 million domestic visitors each year for a total of 107.3 million visitor days.

³⁵“A Profile of Socioeconomic Measures: Laurens County, South Carolina,” by the Economic Profile System-Human Dimensions Toolkit (EPS-HDT), January 20, 2014, p. 5.

³⁶Ibid., p. 14.

³⁷Along with chapter two, see, T. Maxwell, “Study Confirms GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail is a Boon to Businesses,” *Greenville Online*, December 3, 2014, at: <http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/12/03/official-swamp-rabbit-trail-greenville-travelers-rest-good-businesses-according-recreation-district-study/19837599/>.

Furthermore, South Carolina hosts nearly 1 million international visitors annually.³⁸ Of these international visitors to the state, 93% are from Canada and 7% are from elsewhere, primarily Europe. In fact, the concentration of European companies—especially German—in the Upstate is among the highest in the southeast. This is significant because Europeans and Canadians are well-accustomed to publicly accessible walkways, trails, and bikeways as well as public transportation. Certainly, too, a growing number of Americans are finding such services attractive for choosing residences, employment, and recreation activities.

To be sure, the economic impact of tourism in South Carolina is significant and growing, with travel and tourism expenditures and investments providing \$11.1 billion in economic activity in 2012 – a growth of 4.6% from 2011. Outdoor recreation plays an integral yet largely untapped role in South Carolina’s burgeoning tourism industry. Annually, more than 11 million visitors to South Carolina participate in some form of outdoor recreation during their trip. Coupled with heritage and cultural tourism, outdoor recreation offers significant economic development opportunities for all regions of the State, especially its rural, inland communities such as those of Laurens County.³⁹

Summary

Economically, Laurens County will continue to grow and has much potential for further economic development. It is only a matter of time before the county’s interstate access, proximity to major metropolitan areas, attractiveness of its natural resources, available work force, and growing economy become more widely recognized for the beneficial features they are. It remains to be seen, however, whether development will occur in positive or negative ways for the citizens and environment of Laurens County. With able leadership throughout the county, though, economic development can occur in ways that will raise the quality of life for all the county’s citizens. A trails network is an effective way to make the county a more attractive place to live, work, shop, and play.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Laurens County has experienced steady growth over the last forty years, but its development trends have not been immune to the nation’s economic downturn during the first decade of this century or to the loss of population during that same period. Despite this up and down pattern since 1970, however, present development in the county is positive, raising the county’s economic profile; in fact some development trends are already contributing to the development of green spaces and greenways.

Positive Employment Gains

Among the more positive developmental successes in Laurens County today are the number of companies locating and expanding in the county, particularly in the northern part, in and around Gray Court. In August 2015, for instance, ZF Transmissions announced a \$22.5

³⁸See <https://www.scprt.com/files/Tourism%20and%20Recreation%20Development/2013%20SCORP%20draft.pdf>

³⁹Ibid.

million expansion of their plant in Gray Court which will add 545 new jobs over the next five years.⁴⁰ Similarly, the same summer, Mogul South Carolina Nonwovens Corporation launched a \$17.6 million project in Gray Court that will employ 38 people initially.⁴¹ At its October 2015 meeting, the Laurens County Council recognized the ZF Group for its contributions to the people of Laurens County, noting that its Owings plant now employs 2,500 people. At the same meeting, Asten Johnson, a fabrics plant near Clinton, was given a fee-in-lieu-of-taxes and incentive agreement for its \$32 million plant and operations expansion. So, also, two other companies yet to be named are preparing to locate their businesses in Laurens County in the near future with initial investments of \$10 million and \$18 million respectively. These are just some of the recent developmental successes in Laurens County, which highlight recent positive gains.

Another encouraging indicator of the county's current circumstances is the current level of proprietor jobs. Between 1970 and 2011, the number of self-employed proprietorships—both individual and partnerships—rose from 2,158 to 5,278, which is a 145% increase. During the same period of time, wage and salary employment (people who work for someone else) grew only from 19,021 to 19,242 or by 1%, although there had been as many as 22,445 employed in wage and salary jobs in 2000.⁴²

Development trends are also evident by examining the industry sector of Laurens County. As seen in the "Economy" section above, the county's employment opportunities fall in the categories of service, non-service, and government related jobs. A study of the data between 1970 and 2000 shows that jobs in services related industries (i.e., transportation, utilities, wholesale, retail, finance, services, etc.) grew from 6,002 to 12,675, a 111% increase. Government jobs grew from 3,239 to 4,751, a 47% increase. During this same period of time, however, jobs in the non-services related industries (i.e., farm, agricultural, forestry, fishing, mining, construction, manufacturing, etc.) shrank from 11,938 to 9,203, a -23% decrease.

A more nuanced picture emerges, however, when employment by industry is examined over this past decade alone. From 2001 to 2011, jobs in services related industries grew from 9,205 to 10,247, an 11% increase. During the same period, however, jobs in non-services related industries declined from 7,749 to 6,604, a -15% decrease. Jobs in government shrank from 4,691 to 4,070, a -13% decrease.

An additional aspect of development trends is the creation of new jobs. The three industry sectors that showed the highest percentage of job increases in Laurens County between 1970 and 2000 were retail trade (3,399 new jobs), services (2,595 new jobs), and government (1,512 new jobs). Still, the three industry sectors with the largest total number of jobs were manufacturing (6,674 jobs), services (5,679 jobs), and retail trade (5,275 jobs).⁴³

⁴⁰See Carla Field, "Upstate Company's \$22.5 Million Expansion to Add 545 Jobs," WYFF, Spartanburg, SC, August 12, 2015, at: <http://www.wyff4.com/news/companys-225-million-expansion-to-add-545-jobs/34671890>

⁴¹See "Mogul establishing first North American operations in the Upstate," S.C. Department of Commerce, August 26, 2015, at: <http://sccommerce.com/news/press-releases/mogul-establishing-first-north-american-operations-upstate>

⁴²"A Profile of Socioeconomic Measures: Laurens County, South Carolina," by the Economic Profile System-Human Dimensions Toolkit (EPS-HDT), January 20, 2014.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 7-8.

More recently over the past decade, from 2001 to 2011, the three industry sectors that added the most new jobs were other services (518 new jobs; excluding public administration), administration, waste services (353 new jobs), and arts, entertainment, recreation (250 new jobs).⁴⁴ The three industry sectors that added the most new personal income (in real terms) were administration, waste services (\$17.2 million), information (\$11.0 million), and wholesale trade (\$5.5 million).⁴⁵

Economic developments such as these have contributed to the county's rising popularity for business and industry.⁴⁶ Indeed, a number of companies in the county have made substantial further investments in Laurens County even as new companies have been looking to locate here. So, too, the City of Clinton was named one of the top ten cities on the rise in South Carolina in 2014,⁴⁷ the City of Laurens was recognized for its Jump Start program,⁴⁸ and the County of Laurens was featured in July 2015 issue of *Business in Focus Magazine*.⁴⁹

Cooperative Efforts

Another favorable development is the rise of cooperative citizen ventures for development in the county. The Laurens County Chamber of Commerce (LCCC), the Laurens County Development Corporation (LCDC), the Laurens County Planning Commission (LCPC), and the county's town and city councils are increasingly supportive of one another, which enhances the county's leverage for locating and fostering the development of businesses and industries that are appropriate for Laurens County. These entities are the best sources for information about development trends in Laurens County today. There are also records of industries by employment size available through the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce.

Diverse and Varying Sized Employers

The size of an establishment, like the number of jobs they make available, also reflects development trends. Of the establishments in Laurens County, 19.7% employ up to 19 people, 25.4% employ between 20-99 people, and 54.9% employ between 100 and 500 employees, with a few even more.⁵⁰

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 13.

⁴⁶See Laurens County Development Corporation News at <http://laurenscounty.org/ed/media/news/>.

⁴⁷See Kamran Rosen, "Cities on the Rise in South Carolina," *NerdWallet*, August 8, 2014, accessible at: <http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/cities/economics/cities-rise-south-carolina/>

⁴⁸See "Main Street Laurens announces Jump Start program for new businesses," in LCDC News, accessible at: <http://laurenscounty.org/ed/2014/06/12/main-street-laurens-announces-jump-start-program-for-new-businesses/>, courtesy of *Go Laurens*.

⁴⁹See Grace McDermott, "Opportunity Awaits," *Business in Focus Magazine*, July 2015, accessible at: http://www.laurenscounty.org/ed/pdf/bifna_july15.pdf

⁵⁰"Community Profile: Laurens County," by the S. C. Department of Employment & Workforce, Business Intelligence Department, Columbia, SC, January 28, 2015, pp. 13-14. See <http://www.SCWorkforceInfo.com>.

The twenty largest employers in Laurens County, listed alphabetically, are:

Anderson Hardwood Floors, Inc.
Asten Johnson, Inc.
D & W Fine Pack, LLC
Effex Management Solutions, LLC
Faurecia Interior Systems, Inc.
Greenville Health System
Laurens County
Laurens County Disabilities & Special Services
Laurens County School District #55
Laurens County School District #56
Marathon Staffing, Inc.
National Health Corporation
Presbyterian College
Rich Products Corporation
SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
Shaw Constructors
Sterilite Corporation
Teknor Apex Company
Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
ZF Group

The presence of these and many other businesses in Laurens County show that the county is an attractive place for businesses and industries to locate and build. This, in turn, raises the economic well-being and profile of the county's citizens, which in turn helps attract further development.

Commitments for Greenways, Blueways, and Trails

In addition to their roles in raising the economic and developmental profile in the county, some companies are also contributing already to the development of greenways, green spaces, and trails. Greenville Health System, for example, which played a leading role in the development of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County, is playing an active role in the SRT's expansion through Laurens County. Similarly, the YMCAs in Laurens and Clinton not only sponsor a wide range of recreational activities for all ages but are deeply involved in supporting non-motorized fitness routes and trails in the county. In another case, Sterilite Corporation contributed land and a pond to the City of Clinton for the creation of a natural area near its plant just west of town which the city plans to develop along the headwaters of the Bush River. Of course, there are opportunities for other cooperative ventures, such as the possible utilization of utility lines. Certainly, all companies in the county will benefit if their employees have accessible green spaces, greenways, and blueways. Local companies can play a vital role in the county's development of a comprehensive network of trails throughout Laurens County.

Summary

In short, the present development trends are important to the livelihoods of many citizens of Laurens County, but such growth also highlights the critical importance of the county's careful planning and preservation of green spaces. The quality of life for everyone who lives and works in Laurens County—a county long recognized for its outdoor recreational opportunities—depends upon it. The development of a trails network would contribute to the county's preservation of its natural resources and enhance good environmental health along with personal health. A trails system would also further enhance and diversify the business profile of Laurens County, especially by creating more jobs in the service sector.

EXISTING PARKS AND TRAILS

The citizens of Laurens County enjoy a number of parks and trails provided by the county and its municipalities as well as by the State of South Carolina and the U.S. Forest Service. There are also some private hunting preserves and camps. Most of the public parks support a wide range of recreational activities on mostly cleared green spaces, but a few parks and facilities focus on the county's natural resources or support outdoor activities conducive for woodland spaces.

As this master plan makes clear—even without offering a complete listing of parks and trails, Laurens County is already utilizing its natural resources for the benefit of its citizens and visitors. Yet, the development of a network of trails in Laurens County would undoubtedly enhance the county's outdoor recreation facilities and many parks could be connected by these non-motorized routes.

Connecting parks and green spaces with trails would provide additional recreational and fitness opportunities even as it would promote the preservation of natural resources for future generations.

County of Laurens

The County of Laurens provides recreational opportunities at several county parks and is steadily enhancing its outdoor recreation opportunities. Since its creation in 1999, the Laurens County Parks and Recreation Department oversees the four recreational facilities.

The **Charlie Lollis Memorial Park at Tumblin Shoals** on the **Reedy River Blueway** was opened in the fall of 2016 and constitutes the northern access point in Laurens County on the Reedy River Blueway section through Laurens County. The Reedy River, which flows through downtown Greenville, is generally safe for paddling and other secondary recreation activities (e.g., wading, fishing). However, bacteria levels can become unsafe, typically following rain events. Together with another access point downstream at Boyds Mill Pond, paddlers may journey through Laurens County from near the Greenville County line to Lake Greenwood.

Boyd's Mill Pond and the Karl H. Dixon Memorial Park is a small 184 acre lake located in Laurens County near Ware Shoals. Larger boats are not allowed on this lake, but smaller boats such as canoes, kayaks, and small fishing boats with motors less than 15 horsepower are suitable here. The lake is full of bass, catfish, and bream. The public park on Boyd's Mill Pond was created in 2012 and includes a pier and a boat ramp. It is the only point of public access to the lake through which the Reedy River Blueway runs.⁵¹

Lake Rabon is located in Laurens County about five miles south of Hickory Tavern, just off of South Carolina Highway 252 near the City of Laurens. This 546 acre reservoir provides water service to the city and is owned by the Laurens Water & Sewer Commission. There are many private homes along its shoreline, but the city does maintain a park with public access.⁵²

Laurens County Park is located off of South Carolina Highway 72 on Calvin Bridges Road between Laurens and Clinton. It provides a variety of recreational fields for athletic events, open green spaces, and some undeveloped forest property.

City of Clinton

The City of Clinton provides seven parks for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors. The parks, scattered throughout the neighborhoods and tree lined streets of the city, provide space for outdoor recreation, organized sporting events, and public gatherings. In addition to seven parks, public greenspace is also located on the grounds of the M.S. Bailey Municipal Center and near the Clinton Museum in the Historic Griffin House on North Broad Street.⁵³ The city maintains the following facilities:

Josh and Ella Savage Park, located on Willard Road, features a playground, basketball courts, and a picnic area.

Pine Haven Park, located on Willard Road, has a playground and picnic area.

Pine Street Park, located at the intersection Pine Street and Cedar Street, is home to the Boy Scout and Girl Scout Huts and features a ball field, picnic area, and a playground.

Calvert Avenue Park, located at the intersection of Calvert Avenue and South Adair Street, features a playground.

Clinton Mill City Park, located at the intersection of Jefferson and Sloan Streets, features a playground and picnic area.

⁵¹For information about Boyd's Mill Pond and the Karl H. Dixon Memorial Park, see: <http://www.southcarolinialakes.info/boydmillpond.htm>

⁵²For information about Lake Rabon, see: <http://www.southcarolinialakes.info/lakerabon.htm>

⁵³ See, "City of Clinton Greenway, Green Space, & Park Development Plan," The City of Clinton, South Carolina, 2009, accessible at <http://www.cityofclintonsc.com/vertical/sites/%7B55F7B4D2-DDA3-4E24-B36B-2DCD490E9E5E%7D/uploads/%7BB6118F5B-4521-4B45-9540-5A4D8E79102A%7D.PDF>

Oak Street Park, located at the intersection of Oak Street and West Centennial Street, is home to basketball courts, playgrounds, an exercise trail, and a picnic area.

Lydia Mill Children’s Park, located at the intersection of Peachtree and Pine Streets in the historic Lydia Mill Community, features a ball field and a playground and will also provide a walking trail once completed.

Presbyterian College also makes available to the public its 31-acre complex of intramural fields, around which weaves a mile-long, multi-purpose, walking-running-cycling trail. The campus itself also offers many walking paths from one end to the other, roughly a mile each way.

City of Laurens

The City of Laurens maintains and operates six municipal parks with various amenities. These parks are as follows:

Little River Park, located at 317 East Main Street, Laurens, is the office location for the City of Laurens Parks and Recreations Department. Along with lots of green space—including 3 miles of trail, the park houses a large playground, a putt-putt course, and a pavilion.

River Street Park, located in the Historic Jersey Community, is home to the city’s only outdoor basketball court. Beside the court is a family playground, paved parking, restrooms and a pavilion.

Laurens City Park, located on Brownlee Ave, is the hub for all of the Recreation Department’s athletic activities. Home of Laurens Little League, it has two youth baseball fields and one multipurpose field. There are also several football fields and six tennis courts.

The Ridge at Laurens is presently under construction across Exchange Road from Laurens City Park. It will be a new multi-use community and recreation center. Trails will be constructed in this park.

Taylor Park, located on South Harper Street Extension, features a playground suitable for children of all ages.

Laurens Amphitheater, located at 420 Gordon Street, provides a setting for concerts, weddings, church gatherings, and more, with comfortable seating for about 3,000.

Ceramtec Park, located in Laurens just off of Highway 14, is a 40 acre tract of beautiful land that is currently under construction. It will be the most developed park in Laurens County once completed.

Laurens Conservation District

Joe R. Adair Outdoor Education Center is located at 110 Scout Creek Court in Laurens in a wooded area off of Parkview Drive behind Collyar Park. The Adair Center is one of four science centers in South Carolina focusing on outdoor education as well as core curriculum studies. Its 8+ acre tract was donated to the Laurens Conservation District by Mr. Joe R. Adair for the purpose of outdoor education. After its initial construction, oversight was given to the Joe R. Adair Foundation Board. It is operated under a 100 year lease by Laurens School Districts 55 and 56 and is open to visitors year-round. The main center includes office space, classroom space, and a wet lab. Additional facilities include an amphitheater, nature trails, picnic area, garden, and a Native American area. The Adair Center also includes a fully restored 1800s log cabin originally built in Gray Court, SC. Over 4500 students utilize the Adair Center each year. Community groups and visitors also use the facilities and average an additional 1600 visitors per year.⁵⁴

City of Fountain Inn

The City of Fountain Inn has seven public parks encompassing more than 50 acres with over 4 miles of walking trails. The city also has an indoor activities center. The current southern end of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail is located in Fountain Inn.⁵⁵

Country Chase Fitness Park, located at 136 Catterick Way, is the newest park addition in Fountain Inn and is presently the southern terminus of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail. Dedicated in the spring of 2015, this fitness park provides a fitness trail with fixed equipment for a variety exercises, a picnic shelter, and a parking area.

Country Gardens Greenway Park, located at 605 Country Gardens Drive, is presently a half-mile stretch of green space along Wilson Creek that contains a small playground at the start of the greenway along with swings and benches along the route. The city plans to connect this park to the GHS Fountain Inn GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail.

Fairview Street Park, located at 410 Fairview Street along the GHS Fountain Inn GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail, contains a full-length basketball court and connects the back of the Fountain Inn Elementary School to the Woodside Park.

Santified Hill Park, located at 437 Putnam Drive adjacent to Golden View Baptist Church, has a large multi-purpose field, outdoor basketball courts, and a swing set.

Georgia Street Park, located at 104 Georgia Street just off of North Main Street, has a playground, basketball court, gazebo, and a distinctive tricycle or scooter track around the periphery of the park that is used to teach children how to ride bikes or

⁵⁴This description was provided by Connie Daniels, Associate Commissioner of the Laurens County Soil & Water Conservation District, Laurens, SC.

⁵⁵For more information and location maps, see the city's website at: <http://www.fountaininn.org/parks>

glide on scooters. The track has child-appropriate road signs, parking areas, and imagination stations.

PD Terry City Park, located off of Highway 418 at 116 Cannon Avenue, is named after longtime Parks and Recreation Director PD Terry. This park provides playing fields for the community's youth football and baseball programs. There is also a shaded playground and three lighted public tennis courts.

Woodside Park, located at 700 Woodside Avenue, is the city's largest park. It contains three clay infields for softball and baseball, a large multi-purpose field used for many special events—some of which are state- and regional-wide, a large 100-person picnic shelter, and a walking trail. Additional facilities are being planned and developed.

Fountain Inn Activities Center, located at 610 Fairview Street in front of Fountain Inn Elementary School, is the home office of the city's Department of Parks and Recreation. It houses a regulation-sized basketball / volleyball court, fitness room, senior adult lounge, and a commercial grade kitchen. Fountain Inn provides a daily, year-round senior adult activities program here along with other community recreation events. The **Fountain Inn Disc Golf Course** is located on the grounds of the activities center.

City of Gray Court

The City of Gray Court provides access to two parks, which could become parts of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County.

Town Park is located on Main Street downtown. It is comprised of a small green area with a small fountain and benches.

Community Park is a large park development currently underway on South Carolina Highway 101 South. This new facility is scheduled to open in 2016.

Additional Green Space

Citizens of Laurens County also have access to several other sites for water and woodland oriented recreational activities.

Lake Greenwood is an 11,400 acre lake located on the Saluda and Reedy Rivers and owned by Greenwood County, although its 212 miles of shoreline also run along the borders of Laurens and Newberry Counties. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the shoreline is privately owned and developed, but there are still ample opportunities for public access and water sport activities. The reservoir is widely known for its excellent bass and crappie fishing.⁵⁶

⁵⁶For information about Lake Greenwood, see: http://www.southcarolinialakes.net/Lake_Greenwood.html. See also the Lake Greenwood Master Plan released in 2015 at: <http://www.greenwoodsc.gov/countywebsite/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=4741>

The Fellowship Camp and Conference Center is located in Waterloo along eastern shore of Lake Greenwood. It is owned and operated by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is located on 140 acres with nearly a mile of shoreline. In addition to a conference center, dining hall, and picnic pavilion, there is a dock with swimming area and put-in areas for small boats. Access is by permission and reservation.⁵⁷

Laurens county also has an advantage for water sports in that its eastern and western boundaries are navigable rivers—the Enoree, Saluda, and Reedy.

The Enoree River runs along the northeastern border of Laurens County and eventually converges with the Broad River. In addition to fishing and small boat use, The popular **Enoree River Blueway** begins in Greenville County with the first access in Laurens County being the landing on Horseshoe Falls Road on Musgrove Mill State Park property. It winds its way 61 miles east to the Broad River. The first 15 or so miles run along the Laurens-Union County line. The Enoree is generally narrow and shallow, and its banks range from steep hardwood bluffs and flood plain forests to small marshy areas.⁵⁸ Upstate Forever is currently developing a waterproof blueway map of the Enoree River which will extend from Taylors in Greenville County to the Enoree River's confluence with the Broad River.

The Saluda River runs along the southwestern border of Laurens County and provides other opportunities for water-based activities, such as fishing, canoeing, and kayaking. The river is navigable, and various parts of it are already being developed as the **Saluda River Blueway**, a 127-mile blue trail that will connect six counties—including Laurens—and several municipalities. For example, the Anderson County Department of Recreation is currently developing a section of the **Saluda River Blueway**, stretching 48-miles in Anderson County. This section will eventually connect with Laurens County river accesses.⁵⁹ Another completed stretch of blueway is the 34-mile **Lake Greenwood Blueway**, which is sponsored by Greenwood County in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism along with the Federal Highway Administration. Lake Greenwood runs along the boundary between Greenwood and Laurens County, and presently there are two ways to access the Lake Greenwood Blueway from the Laurens County side. One boat ramp access point is at the Laurens Shrine Club (1107 Shrine Club Road, Waterloo) and the other at the River Fork Road Boat Ramp and Fishing Pier (Waterloo). Laurens County has a role to play in the completion of this 127-mile blue trail, and new and improved access points and boat ramps together with signage will be helpful. Upstate Forever has developed two waterproof blueway maps of the Saluda River Blueway, stretching from its headwaters in northern Greenville County all the way to its confluence with Lake Greenwood.⁶⁰

⁵⁷For the Fellowship Camp and Conference Center, see: <http://www.campfellowship.org/about-us/>

⁵⁸For the Enoree River Blueway, see: <http://www.sctrails.net/trails/alltrails/watertrails/enoreervr.html>

⁵⁹See "South Carolina News," Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service, 2015, accessible at: http://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/upload/South-Carolina_2015.pdf

⁶⁰See: <http://www.upstateforever.org/blueway-mapping/>

As mentioned above, the Laurens County Department of Parks and Recreation is developing sections of the **Reedy River Blueway** and has already created public river access points on the Reedy River at the **Charlie Lollis Memorial Park at Tumblin Shoals** and the **Boyds Mill Pond and Karl H. Dixon Memorial Park**. Upstate Forever is currently developing a waterproof blueway map of the Reedy River which will extend from downtown Greenville, SC, to the Reedy River's confluence with Lake Greenwood.⁶¹

Citizens and visitors also have ready access from Laurens County to two other major blueways that are readily accessible in nearby counties.

North of Laurens County, the **Spartanburg County Blueways Project** is underway to establish a series of blue trails along navigable waterways in Spartanburg County (i.e., the Tyger River, the Pacolet River, etc.). Once completed, and even now as they are being developed, paddlers from around the country will be attracted to the new opportunities to experience such blue trails in the Upstate's beautiful terrain.

To the southeast of Laurens County, the River Alliance's **Three Rivers Greenway** has already become one of the nation's premier municipal greenway and blueway projects. The River Alliance was created in 1994 by the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce along with the Cities of Columbia, Cayce, and West Columbia as well as Richland and Lexington Counties to develop 90 miles of river walks and water access points along the Broad, Saluda, and Congaree Rivers for public recreation. Here, as with the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville, the developmental and economic benefits are substantial.

Still, there are other natural areas in Laurens County that warrant attention for a master greenway plan to develop a network of trails and recreational opportunities, such as the following:

The **Musgrove Mill State Historic Park** is located in Laurens County north of Clinton along SC Highway 52 on the Enoree River at Horseshoe Falls. In addition to an interpretive center, picnic facilities, and recreation areas, there are 2 ½ miles of trail. The park hosts many special events year-round and is operated by the South Carolina Department of Parks and Recreation.⁶²

The **Sumter National Forest** consists of three ranger districts (Enoree, Long Cane, and Andrew Pickens) that comprise nearly 371,000 acres in three separate parcels of land. The portion of the forest in Laurens County belongs to the Enoree Ranger District, which consists of more than 170,000 acres that includes property in Newberry, Union, Chester, and Fairfield counties, as well. The Enoree District has gained national recognition for outstanding work in natural resource management on

⁶¹ Upstate Forever is also redesigning the GoPaddleSC website, expected to launch in 2017. This site will feature blueways from across South Carolina, including an interactive map that will allow users to find blueways near them based on skill level, paddling safety information, and much more. This website is a collaboration between Upstate Forever, The Palmetto Conservation Foundation, and SC Department of Natural Resources. See, <https://upstateforever.org/upstate-update-176/>

⁶²See, <http://www.southcarolinaparks.com/musgrovemill/introduction.aspx>

the Indian Creek Wildlife Habitat Restoration Initiative. The Enoree District and its diverse resources provide a full range of active outdoor recreation activities. These include hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, canoeing, horseback riding, photography, etc.⁶³

The **Enoree OHV Trail** in Sumter National Forest for motorcycles and ATVs is one of the most popular off-road vehicle trails in South Carolina. It consists of 23 miles of interconnecting loops in Laurens County within the Sumter National Forest and is one of the most popular OHV trails in the state. Daily user fees apply.⁶⁴

Enoree Passage on the Palmetto Trail enters Laurens County from the south along Brick House Road, just north of the Brickhouse Recreation Area in Newberry County. The trail continues north from the Brickhouse Crossroads almost 9 miles to Ridge Road and then continues another 4 miles or so to the Union County line, meaning some 13.5 miles of the Palmetto Trail runs through Laurens County.⁶⁵

Furthermore, Laurens County is also home to wildlife and hunting preserves as well as shooting ranges, such as the:

Belfast Wildlife Management Area, which is located on S.C. Highway 56 near Kinards and is comprised of 4,664 acres in Newberry and Laurens counties. It is a mix of hardwood forest, pine forest and wetlands that provide habitat for a variety of game and non-game species such as white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, bobwhite quail, Kentucky warbler and American woodcock. It is maintained by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources and is open to the public for hunting, hiking, and other recreational opportunities. Designated ranges for rifle, pistol, and archery are also available.⁶⁶

Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area is a 509 acre preserve managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources located from Armstrong Road off South Carolina Highway 252 across from Boyds Mill Pond. With nearly 2 miles of frontage along the Reedy River, this WMA offers permits for fishing and hunting.

Clinton House Plantation is a 2000 acre preserve located on S.C. Highway 56 just north of Clinton and offers bird and duck hunting, deer and turkey hunts, corporate meetings and conference facilities.

Harris Springs Sportsman's Preserve is located between Cross Hill and Waterloo and offers a range of hunting activities (especially turkey, deer, and quail), skeet shooting, meeting facilities, and lodging.

⁶³For the Enoree Ranger District, see: http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/scnfs/home/?cid=fsbdev3_037413

⁶⁴For the Enoree OHV Trail, see: http://www.sctrails.net/trails/alltrails/mc_atv/enoree%20ohv.html

⁶⁵For more information about the Enoree Passage of the Palmetto Trail, including topographical maps, see: <http://www.palmettotrail.org/enoreepassage.asp>

⁶⁶See Belfast Wildlife Management Area: http://www.dnr.sc.gov/news/yr2010/nov18/nov18_belfast.html

Philson Crossroads Shooting Range, located on State Highway S-30-26, is a U.S. Forest Service maintained range with ADA compliant access and ranges from 25 to 100 yards. There are six shooting tables under a shelter. The range is free and is open year-round from sunrise to sunset.⁶⁷

Horseback Riding Trails

Horseback riding is a popular activity in Laurens County and throughout the state, and its popularity is growing. There are existent horse trails in the county, primarily in the Sumter National Forest, but there are also trails on private property. Farther away, the Pisgah National Forest, DuPont State Forest, the Chattooga Wilderness Trail are also popular for horseback riding.

Given the rise in the sport's popularity and ongoing development of equestrian centers and activities in the Upstate in recent years, Laurens County could benefit from establishing long-distance horse trails and providing additional support services for equestrians.

Some of the growth in this area is evident by the following developments:

Lander University Equestrian Center, located in Greenwood,⁶⁸ offers academic, therapeutic, and recreational opportunities for students and the general public. It is comprised of 37 acres and features 26 stalls, a 45,000 square foot covered arena, a 26,600 square foot outdoor arena, and enclosed round pen, a hot walker, classroom and meeting spaces, and 19 separate pastures.

Riverbend Equestrian Park, located on 74 acres in Greenville at 175 Riverbend Road near Furman University and Travelers Rest and operated by Greenville County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, provides a range of services for horseback riders, mountain bikers, and walkers.⁶⁹

Tryon International Equestrian Center, located in Tryon, NC, about an hour's drive north of Laurens County on I-26, is quickly becoming one of the nation's premier equestrian centers. Launched in 2014 and still being developed, this 1400 acre center will be opening its luxury resort hotel in 2017. Already, it has five horse rings, 500 permanent stalls, a 6000-seat outdoor stadium with lights, and 500 additional stables. The center is also having already a strongly favorable impact on the economy and job market of Tryon, Polk County, and the surrounding area.⁷⁰ The center is expected to draw an average of 90,000 visitors annually.

⁶⁷<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/scnfs/recarea/?recid=47273>

⁶⁸See Lander Equestrian Center at: <http://www.lander.edu/student-affairs/Equestrian-Center.aspx>

⁶⁹See Riverbend Equestrian Park at: <http://greenvillerec.com/parks/riverbend>

⁷⁰See: <http://www.citizen-times.com/story/local/2014/06/25/m-equestrian-center-unveiled-polk-county/11351925/>

Closer to home, the popularity of horseback riding is supported by the Laurens County Saddle Club⁷¹ and the South Carolina Horsemen's Council, both of which provide ready support for riders of every ability who are looking to experience this outdoor recreational activity, most often in riding trails.

There are also a number of local equestrian businesses that have emerged in Laurens County in recent years, such as:

- Black Horse Run (Fountain Inn),⁷²
- Kross Performance Horses (Fountain Inn),⁷³
- Palmetto Equestrian Therapeutic Riding Program (Clinton),⁷⁴
- Trinity Equestrian Center (Laurens),⁷⁵ and
- TW Quarter Circle Ranch Ministries (Fountain Inn).⁷⁶

This is not an exhaustive list, but it attests to the growth of the equestrian industry for recreation and therapy in Laurens County and the surrounding area.

In short, given the growing popularity and prevalence of horseback riding in and around Laurens County, any county greenway plans should include careful consideration for developing horseback riding trails that will serve better the county's citizens and visitors.

Cycling Trails

Laurens County is also home to several popular cycling routes, and the county could utilize its natural advantages to attract more cycling activity. The county's gentle rolling hills and predominately rural setting help make cycling an enjoyable activity for people of all ages and abilities.

The majority of bike routes in the county are along county and state roads. Thus further development of these and any forthcoming routes should include extra pavement along road shoulders for cycling paths. Care must also be given to the placement of rumble strips and utilization of caution signs for motorists. There are a few routes currently where cyclists are safe from motorized traffic, namely on the off-road cycling trails in the Sumter National Forest or along the Palmetto Trail. Of course, cyclists can and do use most all roads in the county, but more can be done to make roads and bike routes safer for cyclists of all ages.

In May 2015, the Laurens County Council approved a designated **Laurens County Bike Route**—yet to be named—that courses its way through the northern half of the county as it makes a circular route from Fountain Inn to Clinton and back by way of the communities of Gray Court and Laurens. Additional spur routes go to Musgrove Mill State Park, the Enoree

⁷¹More about the Laurens County Saddle Club is available at: <http://www.laurenscountysaddleclub.net/what-lcsc-is-all-about.html>

⁷²More information about Black Horse Run may be found at: <http://www.blackhorserunsc.net/>

⁷³See: <http://www.ckperformancehorses.com/about-us.html>

⁷⁴See: <http://petprogram.org/>

⁷⁵See: <http://www.trinityequestriantherapeuticcenter.com/#!contact-us/cyha>

⁷⁶See: <http://twqc.org/>

River at Barrel Stave Road, and south of Clinton and Joanna on State Highway 56 to Newberry County.

Another major bike route that is popular among cyclists, not yet a designated protected route, is that used by the **Flight of the Dove** in an annual cycling event whose proceeds benefit Hospice of Laurens County. Over 400 riders participated in the 2015 event, with riders coming from as far away as central Florida and Kentucky. The main event is the metric century ride (62 miles), but sponsors also provide routes for 50, 30, and 15 miles. Routes begin in Clinton at Presbyterian College's Bailey Stadium, proceed along county and state roads for their respective distances, with the century riders going beyond the Belfast Wildlife Management Area to Blueford's Store, and then return to the stadium.⁷⁷

Of course, the **GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County** will be fully accessible to cyclists, whatever route it may take. Without doubt, any additional routes made possible by the development of trails in Laurens County, especially non-motorized ones, would serve more people and make the county more attractive to its citizens and visitors.

Summary

*Clearly, in light of all of this, when it comes to existing natural spaces, parks, and trails, Laurens County already has much to celebrate. Still, there are more resources and opportunities upon which the county may capitalize further, given foresight and continued good planning. Laurens County provides a wide range of various opportunities for outdoor recreation through its parks, lakes, rivers, natural areas, hiking trails, cycling routes, off-road vehicle trails, hunting and fishing areas, and more. **Locally and in nearby counties, there are many readily accessible, viable, recreational facilities that are already in place for many different types of outdoor recreation. Nevertheless, these existent recreational resources can be better harnessed by the county to advance appreciably the county's health and prosperity. The extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through communities in Laurens County would contribute significantly to such aims.***

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the existing conditions of location, natural resources, population characteristics, economic gains, and development trends are chiefly favorable for establishing a system of trails in Laurens County, there are also challenges that the people of Laurens County will face in accomplishing this end. Along with these challenges, however, come ample opportunities to meet them.

⁷⁷For more about the Flight of the Dove annual cycling event in Laurens County, see its website at: <http://www.bikel Laurens County.com/flight-of-the-dove.html>

Railroad Lines

One principle challenge for creating a trails network in Laurens County is the absence of unused railroad lines in the county that can be converted into trails. Many of the trails surveyed for this study were “rails to trails” conversions, which provide ready routes and are generally less expensive to establish as trails. For example, the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County is a conversion trail. So also in the Upstate are the Mary Black Trail in Spartanburg County,⁷⁸ the Blue Ridge Railroad Trail in Oconee County,⁷⁹ the Doodle Trail in Pickens County,⁸⁰ the Greenway Trail in North Augusta,⁸¹ the Cathedral Aisle Trail in Aiken,⁸² and the Heritage Trail in Greenwood.⁸³ This lack of convertible railroad beds for trails in Laurens County means that the county will need to utilize other means to secure routes for trails. This challenge is neither unusual nor insurmountable, however, as the River Alliance’s Three Rivers Greenway trails system in Columbia demonstrates.⁸⁴

Utility Lines

Many communities around the country have faced a similar challenge and have overcome it through a variety of approaches. Most popular are cooperative efforts between municipalities and utility companies to use various types of utility lines, including water, sewer, natural gas, telecommunications, electric and fiber optics. Shared utility and trail corridors are not only common but have the potential to defray costs associated with developing trails. Usage of utility lines with the support of utility companies and property owners is a proven and often successful way to establish trails and accommodate walkers, hikers, cyclists, and other outdoor enthusiasts along non-motorized trails.⁸⁵ Laurens County should explore opportunities to use utility lines for trails.

Conservation Easements

Another opportunity to meet the challenge is through conservation easements. A conservation easement is a voluntary recorded legal agreement between a landowner and an eligible charitable conservation organization or government conservation agency that protects the land permanently (in perpetuity for all future landowners) while keeping the land in private ownership and usage. The landowner may still utilize the land for uses stipulated in the agreement (i.e., the landowner may farm, harvest timber, build, hunt, mortgage or sell the property, enforce his or her own trespassing rules, etc.), but the agreement blocks any future development of the land that would degrade the property’s natural resources.⁸⁶ In other words,

⁷⁸For the Mary Black Trail, see: <http://www.sctrails.net/trails/ALLTRAILS/Railtrails/MaryBlackRail.html>

⁷⁹For the Rail Trail, see: <http://www.sctrails.net/trails/ALLTRAILS/Railtrails/BlueRidgeHist.html>

⁸⁰For the Doodle Trail, which opened in May 2015, see: <http://www.pcmca.net/thedoodletrail.php>

⁸¹For the Greenway Trail, see: <http://www.sctrails.net/trails/ALLTRAILS/NRT/NAGustaGrnwy.html>

⁸²For the Cathedral Trail, see: <http://www.sctrails.net/trails/ALLTRAILS/Railtrails/CathedralAisle.html>

⁸³For the Heritage Trail, see: <http://www.sctrails.net/trails/ALLTRAILS/Railtrails/Heritage.html>

⁸⁴For the River Alliance, see: <http://riveralliance.org/>

⁸⁵For an overview of utilizing utility lines, see: <http://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/planning/utilities/>

⁸⁶For a complete description of conservation easements, see The Nature Conservancy at: <http://www.nature.org/about-us/private-lands-conservation/conservation-easements/all-about-conservation-easements.xml>

the landowner, not the qualified organization, places restrictions on how the property is used but shares with the designated conservation organization the aim of protecting the natural resources and conservation value of the land permanently. In this way, a conservation easement is unlike traditional “easements” in that it protects a landowner’s intent to preserve the natural integrity of the property while safeguarding the owner’s rights.

The characteristics of a conservation easement make it a unique tool for meeting both public needs and landowner objectives while conserving natural spaces. It protects the land, is often used to guard flood plains, and it may provide significant tax benefits to land owners. Greenways and blueways are naturally compatible with conservation easements, and landowners who commit their property to conservation easements are often supportive of public trail projects.

Public Lands

Of course, routes for trails may be made available in other ways, too. Property owned by Laurens County, its municipalities and communities, as well as by the state and federal governments may be utilized. For instance, trails have been developed through community parks, and trail routes have been added alongside roads as separate paths and even to roads as clearly marked bike and pedestrian lanes. Even though they are not as desirable as greenway paths, some sections of trails in Laurens County will undoubtedly require coordination with city, county, and state Departments of Transportation to improve and create walkways and bikeways along existing roads. Extreme caution must be used in this case, however, to protect pedestrians and cyclists from motorized traffic. Utilization of TE grants with the SCDOT is also crucial for establishing such routes.

Private Property

Communities building trails have also negotiated pedestrian right-of-ways with private landowners. Businesses and industries have provided easements and right-of-ways, as well. Municipalities have even raised funds to purchase property. Given that trail construction costs without pre-existent clearing, grading, and suitable foundation can cost upwards to \$250K-\$500K per mile in challenging terrain, property purchases are generally last resorts or limited to key sections where ownership is essential. Fortunately, as we will see in a forthcoming chapter, there are many state, federal, and private sources for funding trail construction and property acquisition.

Without continuous railroad beds and lacking established greenways and blueways throughout the county, planners for a Laurens County system of trails will face the challenge of networking with various land-holders to create an interconnected trails network. The people of Laurens County, however, as we will see in chapter five, are broadly supportive of working together for such a system of trails. In short, even though Laurens County will be unable to convert abandoned railroad lines to trails, there are other options to pursue that are proven effective in creating trail networks, and there is support from the citizens and governments of Laurens County to do so.

Longer Trails

A related matter relevant here is the importance of foresight in creating a system of trails that makes possible extensive non-motorized travel. This is a challenge but also an opportunity. Longer trails and systems are more popular than shorter ones. Short, independent, unconnected trails are beneficial in many ways, to be sure, but the national popularity of the “rails-to-trails” movement demonstrates that higher numbers of users are drawn to longer trails. For example, except for the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail, all of the Upstate conversion trails averaged together come to 4 miles each, the longest of which is 7.5 miles and the shortest 0.9 miles. One of the most attractive features of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail to users, however, is its longer length. In contrast to other conversion trails in the Upstate, the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail has 20 miles of completed trail and plans are underway to extend it another 20 miles from Cleveland Park to ICAR, Mauldin,⁸⁷ Simpsonville, and Fountain Inn.⁸⁸ Successful efforts in Laurens County would bring the trail 50-some miles further to join the Palmetto Trail. Lengthy, non-motorized routes are especially attractive to users, as is evidenced not only by the success of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail but also by such trails in the southeast as the Virginia Creeper Trail⁸⁹ and the New River Trail State Park.⁹⁰

Cost

Another principle challenge for creating a countywide system of trails in Laurens County is the cost. As shown above, the per capita measure of income in Laurens County is low and consistently below the state average. In fact, Laurens County is 23rd among 46 counties in South Carolina in per capita income, even though four of the top five per capita counties are within 50 miles of Laurens County.⁹¹ While extending the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail 50-some miles through Laurens County would draw users from Greenville, Spartanburg, Lexington, and Richland Counties, which would have a positive economic impact in Laurens County, a trails system here will succeed only with financial assistance from local, state, and federal government programs and agencies as well as from foundations, industries, businesses, and private donors. This matter will be addressed extensively in a forthcoming chapter, but the point here is that there are programs and agencies to support the development of trails, and nearly all trail systems have drawn financial assistance from a variety of funding sources.

⁸⁷For SRT plans to reach beyond ICAR to Mauldin, see Scott Keeler, “Mauldin considers plan to extend GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail to Golden Strip,” *Greenville Online*, April 29, 2015, at: <http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/golden-strip/2015/04/28/mauldin-considers-plan-extend-swamp-rabbit-trail-golden-strip/26520093/>

⁸⁸For SRT plans to extend through Simpsonville to Fountain Inn, see Eric Connor, “GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail extension, signature park plan approved,” *Greenville Online*, June 9, 2015, at: <http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2015/06/08/swamp-rabbit-trail-extension-signature-park-plan-approved/28710913/>

⁸⁹For the Virginia Creeper Trail, see: <http://www.vacrepertrail.com/>. The Va Creeper Trail stretches 34 miles from Abingdon, Virginia down thru the lovely town of Damascus, VA (known as the Heart of the Virginia Creeper) along the Whitetop Laurel River and up to its highest point at Whitetop Station near the NC State Line at Whitetop, Virginia. The Virginia Creeper Trail is open year round to hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

⁹⁰For the New River Trail State Park, see: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/new-river-trail.shtml#general_information. See also: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/documents/data/trail-guide-newrivertrail.pdf>

⁹¹See *County Profiles 2014* (Columbia: South Carolina Association of Counties, 2014), p. 55, at: <http://www.sccounties.org/Data/Sites/1/media/publications/countyprofiles2014.pdf>

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In sum, Laurens County is well-situated in the Upstate of South Carolina to benefit from the creation of a countywide network of trails. It is situated between several of the state's largest, most urbanized, and wealthiest metropolitan areas—Greenville, Spartanburg, and Columbia; yet, it possesses its own wealth of natural resources that are increasingly attractive in an increasingly urbanized state. Laurens County is also located strategically between the southern terminus of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Fountain Inn and the Palmetto Trail's route east of Clinton. The county's topography is well-suited for a comprehensive, integrated system of trails, on land as well as along its two rivers. The county possesses a number of parks and tracts of land that can be integrated into a more comprehensive countywide network of trails. And while the county does not have unused railroad lines to convert into trails, there are other ways to establish a trails system. There is also potential for utilizing state park and national forest land, too. Furthermore, the population, economic standing, and development trends of the county are rising, and a trails network is an effective way to serve a population's health and recreation needs even as it attracts tourism, diversifies the county's businesses, and contributes to raising the county's economic profile. Of course, such growth trends also add to the urgency of developing a countywide system of trails. Indeed, this study highlights the clear need for a countywide comprehensive greenway and blueway plan. For now, though, if Laurens County is to be successful in establishing a trails network, it will be through broad, committed, community support throughout the county. The next chapter will offer in broad strokes what is possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPOSED TRAILS

In the preceding chapters, we noted the growing interest in trails throughout Laurens County that gave rise to this master plan. We also considered the clear benefits that such a network of trails would bring to Laurens County and its citizens—personally, communally, economically, educationally, developmentally, and environmentally. We then surveyed existing conditions in Laurens County and found them largely favorable for such a countywide trails project.

Now, in this chapter, we will offer a broad yet succinct vision for initiating a system of trails in Laurens County to better serve its citizens and communities. The maps in Appendix D provide a visual presentation of the following narrative of proposed Greenway and Blueway trail projects for Laurens County.

GHS SWAMP RABBIT TRAIL

The extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County and its connection to the Palmetto Trail is of primary importance in this master plan for several reasons. To begin with, it is the longest trail proposed in this plan and will serve the largest number of citizens and communities across the county. It will also attract visitors and commerce to Laurens County, even as it encourages conservation. Certainly, its name recognition and the trail's success in Greenville County will also prove beneficial. It is significant, also, in that it will serve as a “backbone” trail from which other trails in the county could connect over time. As shown in the previous chapters, the completion of this leading trail project will likely have immediately positive consequences for the people of Laurens County—personally, communally, economically, and developmentally. Connecting the Swamp Rabbit and the Palmetto Trails increases the range of the outdoor recreational opportunities and increases the attractiveness of Laurens County for more outdoor recreational pursuits.

Connecting Communities

It is impossible to state precisely at this point what route the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail will take through Laurens County. Generally speaking, it would run about 40-50 miles long. The trail's exact route will depend on various factors such as community support, funding, and property acquisition; however, given the purposes of the proposed Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County to link communities by means of a non-motorized route, to connect to the Palmetto Trail, and to showcase as much as possible the county's natural beauty, there are some preliminary ideas for a general route that make sense. The public survey conducted in June 2015 shows strong public support.

Potential Route

As evident in the chart below and the map in Appendix D, the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County would aim to connect communities through the county as much as possible in a route that would link it to the Palmetto Trail. Generally, then, this portion of the GHS SRT would begin in Fountain Inn, in the northeastern part of the county, which is where the southern terminus of the Swamp Rabbit Trail is located, and connect to Owings (~6 mi.), Gray Court (~2.5 mi.), CeramTec (~7 mi.), Laurens YMCA (~2 mi.), Laurens’ Little River Park (~2 mi.), The Ridge (~1.5 mi.), County Park (~3 mi.), Laurens County Memorial Hospital (~2 mi.), west side of Clinton (~3.5 mi.), to the Sterilite Nature Area (~1.5 mi.) and then through Clinton (~0.5 mi.) toward I-26 and on to the Palmetto Trail (~13 miles). Altogether, the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County would run about 44.5 miles. The following chart summarizes these potential segments.

**GHS SWAMP RABBIT TRAIL IN LAURENS COUNTY
POTENTIAL TRAIL SEGMENTS**

Segment	Description	Length¹
1- Fountain Inn	Fountain Inn to Owings	6
2- Gray Court	Owings through Gray Court	2.5
3- Barksdale	Gray Court to near CeramTec	7
4- Laurens-west	CeramTec to near YMCA	2
5- Laurens-central	Near YMCA to Little River Park	2
6- Laurens-east	Little River Park to The Ridge	1.5
7- County-west	The Ridge to County Park	3
8- County-central	County Park to Hospital	2
9- County-east	Hospital to west side of Clinton	3.5
10- Clinton-west	West Clinton to Sterilite Nature Area	1.5
11- Clinton-Sterilite	Sterilite Nature Area	0.5
12- Clinton-east	Clinton to I-26	13
13- Palmetto	I-26 to Palmetto Trail	

44.5

Notes

1. Lengths in miles are very rough estimates.

“Backbone” Trail

Conceptually, again, the GHS SRT would form a “backbone” trail through the county which other trails would join, making possible an ever-growing number and variation of trail experiences throughout the county. It would link communities in Laurens County with a non-motorized transportation route for both foot and bicycle traffic. The trail would be surfaced (over time and as funding allows) to support walking, running, hiking, and cycling. It would also promote the conservation of the county’s natural resources and even showcase portions of it. Along with providing opportunities for exercise and improved personal fitness, it would also contribute to the county’s economic development, as observed in the previous chapters, particularly in ways that preserve the natural beauty of the county that many residents prize.

Summary

As noted earlier, the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County should be the primary focus of the communities of Laurens County in their effort to create a trails network. A project of this magnitude, though, will require broad support and steady commitment from the citizens, communities, businesses, and industries of Laurens County. Accomplishing such a goal will not be without challenges for routing and cost. Nevertheless, Laurens County has the human resources, ingenuity, and leadership capable of securing an appropriate route, and it has the capacity to secure the necessary financial and logistical support necessary to extend the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County to the Palmetto Trail.

HIKING TRAILS

The Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County should be a multi-purpose trail suitable also for extended hiking. The Palmetto Trail, which is a rustic trail that runs through the eastern corner of the county in the Sumter National Forest, is already suitable for long-distance hiking and backpacking as it traverses more than 400 miles from the state’s coast to its Appalachian Mountains. The Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County, though, would add an alternative walking experience of 45-50 miles on a graded walking surface to or from the Palmetto Trail. The smoother surface would be more appropriate for many people who prefer or need a less rustic walking path. Still, many people prefer and would use more often natural hiking trails. The surface of the trails proposed here may be finished or rustic. Both types of trails or walking paths are needed.

Short Trails

As shown in the previous chapter, there are several short trails already in Laurens County. These are primarily finished walking and fitness trails in the county’s larger communities of Clinton, Fountain Inn, and Laurens. There are also short rustic trails (i.e., 2 miles or less) in Cross Hill, the Joe Adair Outdoor Center, the Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Lake Rabon Park, the Belfast WMA, and Musgrove Mill State Historic Site.

The county needs more trails such as these. It also needs ways to promote the trails and educate the public for their use and care. Toward such ends, the LCTA supported the City of Clinton Council in their consideration, approval, and upcoming creation of the **Sterilite Nature Area** (50 acres) on SC Highway 56 just south of the city limits, which will include the development of a trail about a mile long that runs parallel to the headwaters of the Bush River. This natural trail will also move through mature forest and pass beside a two acre pond, making it an attractive route for walkers. This short trail is projected to become a segment and early installment of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County. Again, more such developments are needed throughout the county, and efforts should be made to coordinate these developments.

The LCTA proposes that communities and municipalities throughout the county keep working together to create ample opportunities for its citizens to enjoy short hiking experiences.

Long Trails

Longer and more rustic hiking opportunities are also needed, however. They are available in the Sumter National Forest on the northeast side of the county, but there is very little public land elsewhere in the county for trails longer than a couple miles. The creation of long trails, then, will depend on the creativity and cooperation of public and private landholders as well as the county's utilization of existing roadways, right-of-ways, utility lines, conservation easements, and so on. Fortunately, along with the potential route of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail, there is another area of the county that is especially well-suited for establishing a trail of about five to fifteen miles, if the county can gather such cooperative and innovative efforts to support longer trails.

The LCTA proposes that the county build a rustic hiking trail of about five miles from Ware Shoals to Cliff Pitts Wildlife Area, largely following the route of South Carolina 252. Secondly, this same trail could then possibly be extended ten more miles all the way to the City of Laurens and connect to the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail.

Ware Shoals to Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area

Present developments of blueway trails along the Reedy and Saluda Rivers between Princeton and Waterloo, together with the striking shortage of public land in the southwest portion of Laurens County, raise the attractiveness of a potential trail between the Reedy and Saluda Rivers in the vicinity of SC Highway 252 north from Ware Shoals to and through the Cliff Pitts WMA.

A rustic trail in this area would stretch about 5 miles and would make possible a 10-mile round-trip hike through some beautiful forests and countryside (see map in Appendix D). It would also serve the citizens of Laurens County in this area where public land is in such short supply. If it were a rustic trail, it would be less expensive to develop and maintain. This section is presently the most viable opportunity for a foot trail.

Cliff Pitts WMA to the Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens

Although this related segment of trail is not on the map in Appendix D, there is potential for a stretch of trail to continue along the right-of-way of SC Highway 252 from the Cliff Pitts WMA to Lake Rabon Park to the City of Laurens and at some point connect to the Swamp Rabbit Trail. If such a “European style” independent pedestrian way could be added to either side of SC 252, it would become more feasible and safer to travel by foot or bicycle between the City of Laurens, Lake Rabon, and the Saluda River at Ware Shoals.

Utility Lines

Other trail opportunities could exist over municipality sewage lines and gas company pipelines as well as along electrical lines. Companies and municipalities ought to explore together such cooperative efforts wherever appropriate.

Wildlife Management Areas

The Belfast Wildlife Management Area (4,664 acres) and the Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area (509 acres) already contain some hiking trails, but more hiking trails should be developed to facilitate greater access and opportunity for citizens to enjoy and benefit from these natural preserves. These areas are managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, which means also that they belong to the public and are supported by state tax revenues. Moreover, because these public lands are created and managed for the people of South Carolina, the people and communities of the state, especially here in Laurens County, should seek ways to encourage, support, and facilitate additional trails on these public lands.

Whitten Center Property

The state owned Whitten Center property in Clinton is presently for sale and is under consideration by the City of Clinton, the County of Laurens, and the State of South Carolina for possibly becoming a park. The LCTA believes that every effort ought to be exerted to secure this property for such a purpose. This 375 acre property is situated between Clinton and I-26, is largely forested, and could become a well-used nature park for a range of outdoor recreational and educational pursuits, including hiking. This property would also easily accommodate mountain biking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, and many family and group outdoor uses.

Summary

Even though the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County is the top priority of the Laurens County Trails Association and would provide approximately 40-50 miles of trail for hiking, other trails for hiking are also needed in the county. Wherever possible, then, communities should continue to develop hiking/walking trails that keep pedestrians separated from motorized traffic. Trails within towns and communities—especially to schools and parks—as well as trails between communities should be pursued at every opportunity. Presently, though, the area between Ware Shoals

and Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area is an especially appropriate area to add a trail, and it would serve a recreationally underserved area of the county where public land is sparse. It would also help promote care of the county's natural resources. The Whitten Center property is also a fitting location to develop trails, if the property may be secured for public use.

The LCTA thus proposes the creation of a hiking trail between Ware Shoals and Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area.

Furthermore, the LCTA strongly encourages the acquisition of the Whitten Center Property for the outdoor recreational use of the county's citizens.

BICYCLE TRAILS

Laurens County and the Upstate are already well-known and popular among cyclists. For example, as noted previously, the Laurens County Flight of the Dove cycling event attracts hundreds of cyclists annually. The terrain and prevalence of scenic rural roads are largely preferred over more crowded urban roads in nearby counties, such as Greenville, Spartanburg, and Lexington.

Without a doubt, the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County would significantly enhance the county's natural attributes and appeal. Again, establishing it is a priority of the LCTA. Still, there is greater need for bicycle trails in Laurens County than can be met by the Swamp Rabbit Trail alone. In 2015, for instance, recognizing this need, the Laurens County Council, with the support of the LCTA, established the county's first designated bike route in the northern half of the county, connecting the communities of Fountain Inn, Owings, Laurens, and Clinton. This bike trail is presently unnamed, but it is described in the previous chapter.

The Laurens County Trails Association has identified and recommends five other potential routes for bicycle trails. Three of the proposed routes below are used presently for the Flight of the Dove cycling event and run through the southern portion of Laurens County and a portion of northern Newberry County. Civic leaders in both counties would thus have an opportunity for a cooperative venture for their mutual benefit. Short of that, Laurens County would still have attractive bike routes that would serve that area of the county. Each route begins and ends at Bailey Memorial Stadium at Presbyterian College. Two other proposed routes run entirely in the central area of Laurens County. All of the routes can be integrated at some point into the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail.

Together, these five proposed routes are as follows:

**PROPOSAL 1
FLIGHT OF THE DOVE 2015
30 MILES**

GO	TURN	ROUTE	DISTANCE
0.0	L	Bailey Memorial Stadium on Springdale Drive	0.0
0.5	R	US Hwy 76	0.5
3.2	R	Taylor Street	3.7
1.0	R	Milton Road (SC 66)	4.7
0.8	L	Hopewell Church Road	5.5
1.9	L	Bush River Road	7.4
3.0	R	SC 560	10.4
3.4	Straight	SC 560	13.8
0.8	Rest Stop	@ Belfast Rifle Range	14.6
0.0	R	SC 560	14.6
3.4	R	White Plains Road	18.0
0.7	R	Mountville Road	18.7
1.1	L (sharp)	Jefferson Davis Road	19.8
0.2	Rest Stop	@ Piedmont Presbyterian Church	20.0
0.0	R	Jefferson Davis Road	20.0
1.4	L	Old Milton Road	21.4
6.1	R	SC 72	27.5
1.4	R	Springdale Drive	28.9
1.3	L	Finish into Bailey Memorial Stadium	30.2

**PROPOSAL 2
FLIGHT OF THE DOVE 2015
50 MILES**

GO	TURN	ROUTE	DISTANCE
0.0	L	Bailey Memorial Stadium on Springdale Drive	0.0
0.5	R	US Hwy 76	0.5
3.2	R	Taylor Street	3.7
1.0	R	Milton Road (SC 66)	4.7
0.8	L	Hopewell Church Road	5.5
1.9	L	Bush River Road	7.4
3.0	Straight	Bush River Road	10.4
2.5	Rest Stop	@ Bush River Baptist Church	13.9
0.0	R	Bush River Road	13.9
8.8	R (sharp)	Brown Chapel Road	22.7
1.6	R	Belfast Road	24.3
2.9	Rest Stop	@ Smyrna Presbyterian Church	27.2
0.0	L	Belfast Road	27.2
8.8	R	SC 56	36.0
1.3	L	SC 560	37.3
0.8	Rest Stop	@ Belfast Rifle Range	38.1
0.0	R	SC 560	38.1
2.3	R	Mountville Road	40.4
0.6	R	Jefferson Davis Road	41.0
0.2	Rest Stop	@ Piedmont Presbyterian Church	41.2
0.0	R	Jefferson Davis Road1	41.2
1.4	L	Old Milton Road	42.6
6.1	R	SC 72	48.7
1.4	R	Springdale Drive	50.1
1.3	L	Finish into Bailey Memorial Stadium	51.4

*See description above; 25.9 miles runs through Newberry County

**PROPOSAL 3
FLIGHT OF THE DOVE 2015
METRIC CENTURY**

GO	TURN	ROUTE	DISTANCE
0.0	L	Bailey Memorial Stadium on Springdale Drive	0.0
0.5	R	US Hwy 76	0.5
3.2	R	Taylor Street	3.7
1.0	R	Milton Road (SC 66)	4.7
0.8	L	Hopewell Church Road	5.5
1.9	L	Bush River Road	7.4
3.0	Straight	Bush River Road	10.4
2.5	Rest Stop	@ Bush River Baptist Church	13.9
0.0	R	Bush River Road	13.9
8.8	R (sharp)	Brown Chapel Road	22.7
1.6	R	Belfast Road	24.3
2.9	Rest Stop	@ Smyrna Presbyterian Church	27.2
0.0	L	Belfast Road	27.2
8.8	R	SC 56	36.0
1.3	L	SC 560	37.3
0.8	Rest Stop	@ Belfast Rifle Range	38.1
0.0	R	SC 560	38.1
7.5	R	SC 39	45.6
4.0	R	Mountville Road	50.4
1.2	L (sharp)	Jefferson Davis Road	51.6
0.2	Rest Stop	@ Piedmont Presbyterian Church	51.8
0.0	R	Jefferson Davis Road	51.8
1.4	L	Old Milton Road	53.2
6.1	R	SC 72	59.3
1.4	R	Springdale Drive	60.7
1.3	L	Finish into Bailey Memorial Stadium	62.0

*See description above; 25.9 miles runs through Newberry County

PROPOSAL 4
CITY OF LAURENS PUBLIC SQUARE NORTH

GO	TURN	ROUTE	DISTANCE
0.0	Start	Laurens Public Square	0.0
0.1	L	U. S. Highway 221 North (North Harper Street)	0.1
2.1	R	Fleming Mill Road (SR-30-31)	2.3
3.1	L	SC Hwy 308	5.3
1.4	L	U. S. Highway 221 @ Ora	6.7
0.8	R	League Road	7.5
1.0	R	Metric Road	8.5
4.1	L	Old Laurens Road (just beyond SC Hwy 14)	12.6
0.9	R	Trinity Church Road (SC S-30-72)	13.5
4.5	R	SC Hwy 252	18.0
1.7	L	Fort Lindley Road (SC S-30-398)	19.7
3.3	L	Ekomp Beach Road	23.0
3.7	R	Prospect Road (SC S-30-574)	26.7
1.4	R	U. S. Highway 221	28.1
0.2	L	Lisbon Road (SC S-30-49)	28.3
0.9	L	Burnt Mill Creek Road (SC S-30-309)	29.2
3.6	L	Harper Street Extension	32.8
0.7	R	Brown Road	33.5
1.5	R	A. B. Jacks Road / E. Jerry Road	35.0
1.6	L	Barnes Road (SC S-30-44) / Templeton (S-30-35)	36.6
2.0	L	Medical Ridge Road	38.6
0.5	L	Torrington Road	39.1
2.7	L	Fleming Street Extension	41.8
1.7	R	Fleming Street (SC Highway 76 Bypass)	43.5
0.2	L	Garlington Road	43.7
0.4	R	East Main Street	44.1
1.0	R	City of Laurens Public Square	45.1

**PROPOSAL 5
CITY OF LAURENS PUBLIC SQUARE SOUTH**

GO	TURN	ROUTE	DISTANCE
0.0	Start	Laurens Public Square	0.0
0.1	R	U. S. Highway 221 South (South Harper Street)	0.1
5.1	L	Lisbon Road (SC S-30-49)	5.2
5.3	R	Beaverdam Church Road (SC S-30-86)	10.4
2.7	R	Hwy 39	13.1
2.7	R	Smithville Road	15.8
1.4	L	Lisbon Road (SC S-30-49)	17.2
1.6	R	Easy Road	18.8
2.3	L	Hwy 127	21.1
0.7	R	U. S. Highway 221	21.8
2.3	L	Main Street: Arrive Laurens Public Square	24.1

Summary

Laurens County is already a popular location for cyclists. The creation of all five of these proposed bicycle routes in Laurens County, with possible cooperative efforts of Newberry County, would provide over 200 miles of directionally guided routes for cyclists to enjoy more fully the county's (or counties') beautiful hills and countryside. Together with the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail, cyclists could enjoy some 250 miles of bike trails in Laurens County.

Over time, appropriate directional signage could be added as an aid to cyclists, but there is no cost to the county to establish these routes. Of course, support from the citizens and communities of Laurens County for these and any other bike routes could produce trail enhancements to make these routes safer and more attractive, such as the addition of 8-12" of pavement outside of the road boundary stripes on these routes. Nevertheless, the simple designation of additional bike routes in Laurens County will improve personal fitness opportunities for the county's citizens, increase the county's visibility to tourists, and enhance the county's attractiveness to cyclists everywhere by adding additional routes to use in conjunction with the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County.

The LCTA proposes that the bike routes identified above become officially endorsed county bike routes.

BLUEWAYS

The Enoree, Reedy, and Saluda Rivers pass through Laurens County and offer rich opportunities for a range of suitable aquatic activities, such as canoeing, kayaking, tubing, bird watching, fishing, and just enjoying the outdoors.

As we observed in the previous chapters, Laurens County is also well positioned to capitalize on the growing popularity of river sports in our area and the developments underway for blueway trails in Spartanburg, Greenville, Anderson, and Greenwood Counties. Indeed, the Laurens County Department of Recreation and Tourism has already been playing a vital role in these efforts and has led the way in developing the Laurens County section of the Reedy River Blueway, now open in 2016.

Still, in order for Laurens County to capitalize on the recreational use of the Enoree, Reedy, and Saluda Rivers, appropriate access points will need to be created with educational signage to facilitate their safe and appropriate use.

The Laurens County Trails Association proposes the development of blueways together with the following public river access points to promote the use and conservation of the Enoree, Reedy, and Saluda Rivers in Laurens County:

Enoree River Blueway Access Points are recommended at South Carolina State Highway 49 (Union Highway), South Carolina State Highway 56 (near Musgrove Mill State Historic Site), and at Barrel Stave Road (SC S-44-22 on the eastern edge of Sumter National Forest).

Reedy River Blueway Access Points are proposed for U. S. Highway 76 at Tumbling Shoals (west of Hickory Tavern), above and below Boyds Mill Dam (near SC Hwy 252), and at Ekom Beach Road (SC S-30-36). The stretch of river was significant during the Revolutionary War and may be designated a blue trail called the **Patriot's River Run**. Metal historical story boards along the route would convey the story.

Saluda River Blueway Access Points are recommended at Pitts Park in Ware Shoals and above and below the dam near Waterloo.

According to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, portions of **Rabon Creek, Duncan Creek, and Little River** may also support recreational activities and should be considered in the future for possible use.

Summary

The Laurens County Trails Association proposes the creation of public access points to the Enoree, Reedy, and Saluda Rivers for the benefit of the citizens of Laurens County and the conservation of these critically important waterways.

The LCTA also recommends that future consideration of blueways be given to Rabon Creek, Duncan Creek, and Little River.

HORSE TRAILS

There are no existing public horse trails in Laurens County outside of the Sumter National Forest. Given the popularity and growth of equestrianism in Laurens County, however, it would be advantageous to Laurens County to establish public horse trails wherever they may be created.

Belfast and Pitts WMAs

Two potential areas in the county where horse trails may be established are the Belfast Wildlife Management Area (4,664 acres) and the Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area (509 acres). Each area is managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Each area also has forest roads that can be readily adapted for horse trails. Trails in these areas would be more accessible to more horseback riders in the county than the Sumter National Forest on the easternmost edge of the county. Such horse trails in these WMAs would also make the county more attractive for riders in the surrounding area. Of course, in order to use wildlife management areas, all horseback riders must be able to verify that their horses have negative results for the Coggins Test.

Horse trails in these WMAs would be attractive and welcomed additions to the 28-mile Buncombe Horse Trail in the Sumter National Forest. Leaders and communities in Laurens County ought to seek ways to support the SC DNR to establish horse trails in the Belfast and Cliff Pitts WMAs.

Whitten Center Property

As noted above, the Whitten Center property in Clinton is presently under consideration by the City of Clinton, the County of Laurens, and the State of South Carolina for possibly becoming a park, and every effort ought to be exerted to secure this former state facility for such a purpose. This 375 acre property is largely forested and already has trails and forest roads that are readily transferable to horse trails. It would provide an excellent location for equestrian recreation.

Summary

The Laurens County Trails Association proposes the creation of designated horse trails in the Belfast Wildlife Management Area and the Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area in a cooperative effort with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

It also strongly urges the county's elected officials to secure the Whitten Center property for use as a park.

COMMUNITY TRAILS AND NETWORKS

The LCTA also encourages and supports all communities in the county in their efforts to create trails for walkers, runners, hikers, cyclists, skateboarders, paddlers, horseback riders, etc. The LCTA also seeks to foster cooperative efforts that will facilitate connecting trails into networks.

Still, there is a need to add new trails in the county. Adding innovative trails in communities to schools and parks would be an especially effective way to promote better health and fitness practices among the county's youth. Studies show that even fifteen minutes of sustained walking (about a mile) on a regular basis produces notable health benefits, and short trails that are easily accessible to people in communities are used most often.

Again, as noted earlier, there are federal funds and other sources of support to help communities build trails to schools and parks on which students may walk and ride bikes apart from motorized traffic. Such trails may also support family and small group recreational activities as well as help preserve the county's natural resources and heritage. Communities should look closely for opportunities to add such trails to their schools and parks. Short trails are encouraged wherever they may be established.

For example, one innovative trail possibility could draw from county's rich Revolutionary War history and be celebrated as a torchlight tour that celebrates some of the local heroes and heroines of the Revolutionary War. A **Patriot's Path** route could be established from Langston Baptist Church (formed 1737) to Musgrove Mill State Historic Site and proceed on to Duncan Creek Presbyterian Church and cemetery where many Revolutionary War veterans and their families are buried. Other trails celebrating different aspects of the county's history could also be established.

Guidelines for the design and accessibility of all various kinds of trails noted in this chapter are readily available from the National Park Service, the U. S. Forest Service, and other federal, state, and private agencies.¹

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have offered proposals for viable trails to serve the citizens, communities, and visitors of Laurens County. There are rich opportunities throughout Laurens County to establish a system of recreational public trails for walking, running, hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, horseback riding, bird watching, and just enjoying the outdoors. In the following chapter, we will offer support for the implementation of trails in Laurens County.

¹See the National Park Service's *Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance* available at <http://www.nps.gov/noco/learn/management/ncttrailconstructionmanual1.htm>. See, also, the guidelines provided by the U. S. Forest Service at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/trailplans/>. The U. S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration also provides guidelines and helps at: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLEMENTATION

This Master Plan's vision of a comprehensive trails system along greenways and blueways for the people and communities of Laurens County and their visitors requires a clear plan of implementation in order to achieve its goal. In this chapter, then, we will offer a process by which the people and communities of Laurens County may work together to create a network of trails along greenways and blueways to improve the quality of life for everyone in the county, now and for generations to come.

PLAN REVIEW

The Laurens County Trails Association is a grassroots citizens' organization. Consequently, it proposes the following process for citizen review, input, adoption, and implementation of this Master Plan.

First, the Laurens County Trails Association will **distribute this Master Plan to the governing bodies of Laurens County** for their consideration and preliminary feedback. This first reading of the Master Plan by community leaders is aimed at identifying and correcting any major issues in the Master Plan that could hinder the plan's adoption by the county's communities and citizens following the public's review and response. Any plan that goes to citizens for their review should be viable, at least in principle.

Second, once the LCTA receives preliminary support from community councils, the LCTA will **make the Master Plan available to the public** through the websites of municipalities, the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce, the Laurens County Trails Association, and any other appropriate websites where the Master Plan may be posted for public access. Furthermore, the LCTA will utilize the county's newspapers and radio stations and distribute flyers to announce the availability of the Master Plan for citizen review and to encourage citizens to read it and provide feedback about it.

Third, the LCTA will then plan, announce, and **host a series of public meetings** to collect personal input from citizens around the county. These meetings will be held in the same locations (Laurens YMCA, Clinton YMCA, Gray Court Community Room, and Waterloo Camp Fellowship) and in the same manner as the LCTA's public meetings during the spring of 2015 when it conducted its public interest survey.

Finally, after the public meetings, the **LCTA will utilize the public's support and input to revise the Master Plan as appropriate and submit the final Master Plan to the governing bodies of Laurens County** with requests for each council's review and endorsement.

PLAN ADOPTION

Once the Master Plan is approved by the people and communities of Laurens County, it will serve the county as a guide for conserving some of the county's natural resources and creating a network of public trails along greenways and blueways for the citizens and visitors of Laurens County.

The approved Master Plan will be a resource for planning boards throughout the county so that appropriate consideration will be given to protect corridors of green space and waterways that can contribute to the county's trails system.

The LCTA recommends, also, that regulations for development in the county include requirements for developers to set aside land for trails wherever a development overlaps property of proposed trail routes. Local governments and boards could also adopt policies that would provide incentives for developers to create greenways and trails in their developments.

As noted earlier in this plan, careful consideration should be given to watersheds and floodplains in the county. For ecological reasons alone, ordinances should strictly limit the construction of structures in these areas.

It is also appropriate for county leaders to examine how zoning laws could help the county protect its natural resources, positively shape development, and enhance the quality of life for all of the county's citizens.

PRIORITIZATION

The LCTA recommends that the county's **top trail priority** be the extension of the **GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail** through Laurens County, from Fountain Inn to the Palmetto Trail by way of Gray Court, Laurens, and Clinton. For the reasons noted in this plan's previous chapters, the creation and continuation of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail will generate the most immediate positive benefits for the people and communities of Laurens County.

The LCTA recommends that the people and communities of Laurens County harness their resources and work together to extend the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through the county and link it to the Palmetto Trail.

The LCTA recommends further that all other proposals in this Master Plan be addressed secondarily or in a way that does not hinder or impede this top priority of extending the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County.

Of course, we are not suggesting that no other trail proposals in this Master Plan should be addressed until after the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail is completed through Laurens County. Rather, we want only to emphasize the importance of the county's focused attention and united effort to achieve this plan's primary goal of bringing the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County. Again, completion of this work affects most positively the county's economic

development and provides the greatest degree of health and recreational services to the largest number of citizens and guests of Laurens County.

Nevertheless, the **other trail proposals** in this plan are also important for the same people and the same reasons. They should be pursued, also, as leadership, opportunities, and resources are available. Several proposals can be achieved with minimal financial investments.

Establishing the **Bike Routes** proposed in this plan, for instance, would require no outlay of funds and only needs to receive approval from the appropriate governing bodies to be created. Once designated as a bike route, the roads on which these routes run would qualify for additional state and federal money when any future roadwork is needed, so that the roads can be widened to accommodate cyclists.

Similarly, the proposed **Patriot's Path** and the **Patriot's Run** can be created with the support of the National Park Service and a modest commitment of leadership from citizens.

Looking ahead, Laurens County should seek **cooperative arrangements with the National Forest Service** for establishing more trails in Sumter National Forest, especially foot trails and horse trails, along with access points.

Likewise, the **South Carolina Department of Natural Resources** and the **County of Laurens** could work together for developing trails in the county's various wildlife management areas and forests managed by the SCDNR, such as the Cliff Pitts WMA and the Belfast WMA.

Finally, the **outdoor educational opportunities** that a system of trails will provide for our public schools and area colleges along with civic groups of all kinds should be promoted.

Summary

While all of the proposals in this plan are reasonable and effective ways to capitalize on the attractiveness of the county's scenic beauty and natural resources, the extension of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County should be the county's highest trail priority because it will have the single most positive impact on the county's economic development, conservation of natural resources, and promotion of healthy life styles.

FUNDING

The development of a countywide system of trails will depend on the county's successful acquisition and utilization of a range of funding sources—federal, state, corporate, local, and private. Trails cost money to create and maintain, and fortunately there are resources committed to their creation and use. In other words, the county is not limited to its own expendable public funds for establishing a trails network.

Private Funding

Private funding, both individual and corporate, from local donors, foundations, and industries should be pursued steadily, since local donors and foundations often know best the county's circumstances, needs, and opportunities. They are often primary stakeholders in the county's future, too. In addition to all this Master Plan's supporting agencies, businesses, and institutions, there are several local foundations that may have interest in supporting any of the trail projects proposed in this plan.

Along with local foundations, the businesses and industries located in Laurens County are also important potential partners for developing a countywide trails network, since their futures are also tied to the county's well-being. For example, the Greenville Health System and Sterilite have already made commitments for preserving natural areas and promoting healthy outdoor recreation in Laurens County. Other companies, businesses, and industries will also support the creation of trails through the county, if provided the opportunity to do so.

Public Funding

State and federal funding resources are also available for trails. A catalog of federal and state funding sources is presented in **Appendix C**. Here, we wish to emphasize only certain aspects of federal and state funding support.

Regarding federal funds, some resources pertain specifically to trails and their creation. Secondly, other sources do not relate foremost to trails but include trail assistance, which means that they may be used to assist in the creation of trails in certain circumstances, usually as part of a larger project. For example, some federal program funds are directed to states, and the states decide what projects to fund, which can include trails. Thirdly, other federal program funds are granted to a federal agency through a competitive process and are then released to specific projects in a state. Finally, in still other instances, Congress may "earmark" funds for individual projects that it deems important, either historically or environmentally.

There are also opportunities for funding from the state and its agencies. The South Carolina Real Estate Transfer Tax, for instance, which is allocated between the Heritage Trust Program and the Conservation Bank Act, provides steady support for conservation projects throughout the State of South Carolina. Other conservation funding is available in South Carolina through the Conservation Incentives Act and the Park and Recreation Development Fund. The South Carolina Heritage Trust Program and the Land Conservation Bank Act are also potential revenue sources for a trails system in Laurens County.

Summary

Private and public sources of funding for trails are available to support the creation of trails in Laurens County. The sources mentioned here and in Appendix C are appropriate places to begin, but they are also suggestive of avenues for pursuing other sources that support the trails. Efforts should be made early to identify additional sources of financial support. Nevertheless, the sources identified here demonstrate the availability of private and public funds to support

the creation of trails throughout the county. Citizens and leaders of Laurens County should seize every opportunity to secure funds from all available sources in order to establish the trails that are proposed in this Master Plan.

EVALUATION OF LAND AND RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION OPTIONS

A trails network in Laurens County can be formed by means of a creative patchwork of various types of land acquisitions, utilizations, and right-of-ways. Even though the county has no unused rail lines that can be readily converted into trails, there are a variety of ways that land may be acquired or made available for trails.

Public Land

Laurens County and its communities own land, and so communities and civic leaders throughout the county should be attentive to ways in which trails on public property could better serve the needs of the county's citizens. Public trails on public lands are a fitting relationship. Local governments and citizens should work together to create trails in suitable areas on public lands for everyone's mutual benefit.

The United States Forest Service and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources also hold and manage public lands in Laurens County. These public agencies may also assist in the creation of public trails. As noted in the previous chapters of this study, there are rich possibilities for the development and enhancement of trails in Sumter National Forest, Cliff Pitts Wildlife Management Area, and Belfast Wildlife Management Area. Thus the county's officials and citizen groups, like the Laurens County Trails Association, should seek opportunities for cooperative ventures in creating more public trails on these properties that are in line with management principles of these areas and supportive of the aims of this Master Plan.

Another option for land acquisition that community and county governments may employ involves adjustments to and even the creation of zoning and development regulations. Certainly, as noted earlier, all of the stream corridors and headwaters in the county should be protected. This is essential for protecting the county's aquatic natural resources and our communities' water supplies. Preventing the intrusion of buildings and other developments in these watershed corridors should hold high importance for civic leaders. Communities ought to safeguard the county's stream corridors by establishing minimum setbacks for development from perennial streams and uphold restrictions on developments in flood plains. Such actions would create greenways for trails.

Private Land

Private land owners in Laurens County may also play a key role in the development of a countywide trails system. In some cases, donations of property or right-of-way easements from private citizens, businesses, and corporations could provide land for trails even as they would generate tax reductions for such donations and easements. Citizens may also utilize Conservation Easements (described on p. 45) to maintain ownership and control of their donated property while also supporting the creation and use of trails. In some instances, given the opportune

circumstances, private land may also be purchased, but limited funds will likely minimize this option.

Utility Lines

Many trails around the county have been established with the right-of-way support from utility companies that have made their various route lines available. Thus trails may run along line routes for water, sewage, electric and fiber optics, telecommunication, and natural gas. Such cooperative arrangements with utility companies in Laurens County may also play a key role in developing trails.

Developer Contributions

As proposed earlier, if a developer's project overlaps an area slated for the development of a trail, local governments can require or offer incentives for developers to set aside the portion of property that is targeted for a potential trail. Studies show that trails are attractive features for developers, so such cooperative efforts can benefit all parties.

Summary

The cooperative and creative efforts of the citizens, communities, and governments of Laurens County can generate sufficient property in appropriate places to support a countywide network of trails.

TRAIL DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE

Trails in Laurens County should be designed for public use in ways appropriate for any trail's particular purpose. Moreover, trails should be built as well as possible to sustain public usage for their designated purposes for years to come as well as to minimize maintenance. Of course, all property requires maintenance, so plans are also needed for maintaining the county's trails once they are established.

As previously noted, there are ample resources available on trail design and construction from the U.S. Forest Service and similar agencies as well as from various community master plans for trails and greenways around the country.¹

The principle guideline for any trail's design, once a segment of property is selected, is that the design be appropriate for the trail's function. Of central importance, also, are issues of safety, access, and maintenance.

¹See, especially: W. Hesselbarth, B. Vachowski, and M. A. Davies, *Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Forest Service and the U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2007); *Manuals and Guides for Trail Design, Construction, Maintenance, and Operations, and for Signs* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2015), available at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm; D. J. Torbic, et. al., *The National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 766: Recommended Bicycle Lane Widths for Various Roadway Characteristics* (Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, 2014);

Basic Greenway Dimensions and Surfaces

The purpose of a trail should be the determining factor for trail design features of surface material, width and height of clearing, grading, drainage, plantings, and maintenance accessibility. Multi-purpose trails that are suitable for walking, running, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, and/or just enjoying the outdoors typically utilize crushed limestone or granite screening. The surface of such trails is often 6-10 feet wide with 10-14 feet of brush clearance and 10-12 feet of vertical clearance. By contrast, rustic trails for pedestrian and/or horse traffic often utilize natural surfaces with appropriate designs to check erosion and are typically 3-5 feet wide with 7-9 feet of clearing and the same minimum overhead clearance for horse traffic or 8-10 feet clearing height for foot traffic. Bike routes or trails along roads are generally 3-6 feet wide paved surfaces, either along each side of the road or separated from motorized traffic entirely as a bike “road.” In this latter case, bike routes are often paved 10 feet wide. Trail size and surface are determined by the trail’s purpose.

Other Design Features

Other important trail design features to keep in mind regarding trail function are grade percentage, sight distances, turning radiuses, road and stream crossings, and terrain features. Regarding topography, for instance, special care will be needed in wet areas or on steep slopes, both of which should typically be avoided as they can raise safety issues and increase maintenance difficulties. Or in the case of turning radiuses, wide, gentle curves with good sight distances are also important for safety, make a trail more interesting, add aesthetic appeal, and are easier to maintain. Or pertaining to stream and road crossings, it is commonly recommended to keep them at a minimum to minimize cost and increase maintenance efficiency and safety. Certainly, motorized road crossings, access points, and any parking areas must receive careful attention given their needs for size, clearance, surface material, and signage.

Blueways

Of course, thus far we’ve summarized only important matters for trails along greenways and existing roads. Blueways along creeks and rivers in this proposal also have design, construction, and maintenance needs. Here, though, the routes are already established. Thus the key development aspects of blueways are the access points for entering and leaving the water and appropriate signage as needed to provide paddlers relevant information and requirements as needed. A special concern here is safety and care of the environment. Because all of the blueways in this proposal are for non-motorized boating along naturally flowing streams that are often shallow, narrow, and filled with strainers, access points for blue trails do not need vehicle access into the waterways, only pedestrian paths. These pathways, however, should be paved from a parking area to the streams in order to reduce erosion and environmental degradation of the streams’ banks and increase boater safety by providing better footing for carrying canoes and kayaks to the water as well as for entering and exiting the blueways.

Trail Use Guidelines

Wherever trails are used, especially for a variety of recreational pursuits, clear guidelines for trail conduct and right-of-way are needed. This is because walkers, hikers, joggers, cyclists, horseback riders, school groups, families, and people with a range of ages and mobility may be on a section of trail at the same time. This broad range of possible activities and abilities on a multi-use trail raises the potential for conflict. Consequently, trail etiquette guidelines will need to be publicized on signs along the trail to promote responsible, courteous, safe behavior. For example, cyclists should yield to pedestrians, but joggers should yield to walkers and hikers. Cyclists and pedestrians should all yield to horseback riders. Thus the county should establish a countywide code of conduct and make it known along the trail and in communications about the county's trails. Such a code of conduct can reduce conflict and increase safety. Certainly, the code of conduct should be enforceable, too, so that it is meaningful and relevant.

Damage Control

Some accidental damage and vandalism can be expected on heavily travelled public pathways. Appropriate trail design may minimize damage but cannot keep it from happening. Damaged and vandalized property can also stimulate further damage. Thus all county trails will need regular inspection for early identification and repair of damages. Trails also affect the environments in which they are located, thus care should be given to avoid sensitive environmental areas. Natural features of the land along with strategically placed vegetation, brush piles, and drainage ditches can encourage users to stay on the trails. Trail signs can also educate users to appropriate use of the trail as well as to environmental, historical, and cultural elements along the route.

Maintenance

To be sure, there's a great deal more regarding trail design and construction, but an overview of issues regarding maintenance is also appropriate here. The primary goal of maintenance is to help ensure the safety of trail users and to preserve the natural resources around the trail. In order to do this, quick responses to repair damages or correct deteriorations will be necessary.

The LCTA recommends, therefore, that the county establish an "Adopt a Trail" program in which local citizens, schools, civic groups of every kind, and businesses maintain a section of trail as a service to all trail users. Wherever funds are needed for particular repairs of the trail or to replace signage, the various funding options identified above and in Appendix C should be pursued.

In order to assist citizens and communities in maintaining their trails, the LCTA also recommends that trail maintenance guidelines be established along with procedures for ensuring that repairs are properly done and are environmentally sound (see Appendix B).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The implementation of a network of trails in Laurens County will require the commitment and support of the county's people and communities. It is a trail for the people and it will only come into existence with widespread contributions of time, energy, leadership, sweat equity, and financial resources from people and groups throughout the county. The better we can all work together toward this common goal, then the better the system of trails and the better our benefits from it. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight in broad strokes some of the more pressing issues that will need to be addressed in order to transform trail plans into actual trails. Together, the people of Laurens County can create a vital recreational resource that will enhance the quality of life for all.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Throughout this Trails Master Plan for greenway and blueway trails in Laurens County, the Laurens County Trails Association along with the many volunteers who have supported and contributed to this project have sought here to demonstrate the need, the feasibility, and the timeliness for the county to establish a coordinated countywide system of trails that will utilize greenways (land routes) and blueways (water routes) along with existing roads to create a trails network for the recreational use and personal benefit of the citizens of Laurens County and the State of South Carolina along with their visitors.

The purpose of this network of trails is to accommodate anyone who seeks to enjoy the outdoors in beautiful Laurens County, whether walking, hiking, jogging, running, cycling, canoeing, kayaking, horseback riding, bird-watching, or participating in similar outdoor activities. In addition to serving many different kinds of individual recreational interests, these trails will also serve many different kinds of groups in the county—families, neighborhoods, communities, schools, Scouts, churches, and clubs.

These trails will also serve as a countywide transportation system that provides non-motorized routes and connections between communities, natural areas, historical sites, and recreational parks throughout Laurens County, including the Palmetto Trail, Sumter National Forest, Musgrove Mill State Historic Park, and the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail.

All of the trails proposed in this study will enhance personal fitness, promote active lifestyles for healthier living, improve the participants' quality of life, contribute to the overall sense of community spirit, conserve natural resources, and stimulate economic development.

Toward such ends, we recommend for the following reasons that the county support as a **top priority** the extension of the **GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County**:

- First, as one of the longest trails proposed, it will serve the largest number of citizens and visitors.
- Second, it will form a “backbone” through the county to which other trails may be connected.
- Third, it will promote the conservation of Laurens County’s natural resources.
- Fourth, it will form a non-motorized transportation route that connects the largest number of communities through Laurens County—Fountain Inn, Gray Court, Laurens, and Clinton.

- Fifth, the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail will also connect these communities in Laurens County with communities in Greenville County, from Fountain Inn to Greenville and on to Travelers Rest.
- Sixth, the national—even international—name recognition of this trail, especially for cyclists, and the growing popular appeal of this trail will be enhanced by the trail’s lengthening through Laurens County.
- Seventh, the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Laurens County and connection with the Palmetto Trail in or near the Sumter National Forest would increase the appeal of Laurens County for outdoor tourism by providing additional recreational opportunities through both a multi-purpose trail (the Swamp Rabbit) and a rustic trail (the Palmetto Trail).
- Eighth, Laurens County will become the southern terminus and entry point of the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail, serving as the first point of access for users from Florida and the coastal areas of Georgia, South Carolina, and southeastern North Carolina.
- Ninth, the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail will have the most favorable economic and developmental impact for the benefit of the people and communities of Laurens County.

As shown in Chapter Two of this Trails Master Plan, every effort by the people and communities of Laurens County to extend the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through the county will produce significant health, economic, environmental, cultural, educational, and transportation benefits for all.

Such is a trademark of timely service: benefits are far ranging. Moreover, the public survey (Appendix A) in this study suggests strongly that there is widespread public support for extending the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County as well as for establishing a system of greenway and blueway trails throughout the county to serve the health needs and wide-ranging outdoor recreational interests of the people who call our county home.

Without a doubt, as we observed in Chapter Three, the existing conditions are favorable for the people, communities, and businesses of Laurens county to work together to create a system of trails for the benefit of all. The county’s location and wealth of natural resources enhance its present attractiveness as a green oasis. The question is not whether or not Laurens County will ever become developed, however, and experience urban sprawl in the manner of several of its neighboring and nearby counties. All demographic studies and projections indicate the eventual creation of heavily populated, urbanized corridors from Charlotte to Greenville and Greenville/Spartanburg to Columbia. The question for the citizens and civic leaders of Laurens County, rather, is how best to prepare for this inevitable change and develop in ways that will ensure that Laurens County is always a beautiful place to live, raise a family, and work.

The Laurens County Trails Association wholly supports economic development for the prosperity and the improved quality of living for everyone, but it recognizes that conservation of natural resources plays a vital role in our well-being, as these natural resources provide services to us—such as clean air and water—that raise our quality of health and life. It also recognizes that trails can play an important role in spawning economic development through the creative use of the county’s current green and blue spaces and natural resources. There are challenges to such a development, but there are ways to meet and overcome those challenges through the widespread support and teamwork of the county’s citizens and leaders.

Certainly, too, as proposed in Chapter Four, along with bringing the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County to the Palmetto Trail, all of the other proposals in Chapter Four are also important and ought to be implemented. There are opportunities to create short **walking trails** within our communities and longer **hiking trails** outside of them and between them. The designation of **bike trails** along some of the county’s roads is easy to do and over time will be improved with state and federal funding. The county’s waterways, especially the Enoree, Reedy, and Saluda Rivers, are already navigable for canoes and kayaks. With public access points, they are ready made **blueways**. **Horse trails** will serve citizens engaged in one of the state’s fastest growing recreational activities. All of the trails may also be used for educational purposes by the county’s schools and colleges, making possible close to home a range of **outdoor educational activities** for many different academic disciplines. Certainly, the county’s acquisition of the **Whitten Center property** with its natural resources and strategic location as a “gateway park” to these opportunities could play a dramatic role in the county’s economic development.

In these and other ways, trails will serve well the people and communities of Laurens County as well as people throughout the Upstate, around our tri-state region, and even around the nation and from other countries. With such a system of trails as proposed in this Master Plan, Laurens County can offer a great many different kinds of outdoor activities while simultaneously providing ready services to support those activities. Thus Chapter Five offers a process by which the people and communities of Laurens County may work together to create a network of trails along greenways and blueways to improve the quality of life for everyone in the county, now and for generations to come.

The time is right for the people of Laurens County to work together to establish a network of trails and blueways that will enhance personal fitness, promote active lifestyles for healthier living, improve the quality of life in the county, contribute to the overall sense of community spirit, conserve natural areas, and stimulate economic development. There is considerable benefit for everyone throughout the county in the completion of this plan. Indeed, hundreds of citizens have already begun working together toward this goal for the benefit of all. The Laurens County Trails Association offers this Trails Master Plan for the People and Communities of Laurens County in full support of such aims.

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC MEETINGS, SURVEY, AND RESULTS

OVERVIEW

The Laurens County Trails Association's countywide public meetings and survey show overwhelming support for extending the GHS Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County through Laurens County and developing a trails system that will connect the communities of Laurens County with safe, non-motorized trails for walking, jogging, bicycling, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and horseback riding.

Public meetings in April and May at the Laurens YMCA, the Clinton YMCA, the Gray Court Town Hall, and Camp Fellowship in Waterloo were well attended, and participants provided valuable information about the county's existing trails, navigable waterways, historic sites, and more as they marked county maps and identified needs and opportunities for developing a trails system.

Participants also completed a survey that was later made available on-line through June. The survey was developed by the Laurens County Trails Association with support from the National Park Service and administered by the Presbyterian College Office of Institutional Research.

Of the 239 respondents, the majority live in and near Clinton, Laurens, Gray Court, Waterloo, Joanna, Fountain Inn, Cross Hill, Maddens, Hickory Tavern, and Mountville. Responses also came from citizens in over 20 other communities in the county. A little more than half were women while slightly less than half were men. Nearly half of all respondents were in the 41-64 years old age group.

The most popular activities identified, in order of priority, were walking/hiking, cycling, and enjoying quiet time followed by running/jogging, nature observation/birding, kayaking/canoeing, visiting historic sites, group outings, horseback riding, mountain-biking, and commuting.

There was also a strong interest in making safe, non-motorized pedestrian and cycling paths to the county's schools and business areas. The most requested trail access points were Clinton, Laurens, Sumter National Forest, Fountain Inn, and Gray Court.

About 17% of the respondents would use trails on weekends only, but some 43% would use trails weekly and another 10% daily.

The most unified response occurred on the question of whether or not the Swamp Rabbit Trail should be extended through Laurens County. Of respondents, some 93% support the continuation of the Swamp Rabbit Trail (SRT) from Greenville County through Laurens County to connect with the Palmetto Trail. This high percentage most likely results from the widely

- B. City of Fountain Inn
- G. Town of Gray Court
- C. Sumter National Forest recreation trails
- H. Work
- D. School
- I. Other City/Town _____
- E. Other Location (Specify) _____

4. Which three of the above destinations would be most important?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

5. How often would you use the trail?

- A. Daily
- B. Weekly
- C. Weekends only
- D. A few times a year
- E. Not at all

6. Would you support extending the Swamp Rabbit Trail through Laurens County and Connecting with the Palmetto Trail?

- Yes
- No

If No, what are your concerns? _____

7. Please check the landscaping/design elements that would enhance your experience on the trail: (Check all that apply)

- Parking at trailheads
- Posted regulations
- Information Kiosks
- Dirt trail surface
- Compacted gravel surface
- Paved trail surface
- Dual surface (dirt and paved)
- ADA Water Access Ramp
- Fencing
- Emergency phones
- Exercise course with stations
- Viewing areas
- Trail signing
- Historical/Interpretive signs
- Mile markers
- Toilets
- Benches
- Water fountains
- Garbage cans
- Pet waste disposal
- Picnic Tables
- Covered picnic shelters
- Artwork (murals, sculptures)
- Native plant landscaping
- Other (specify) _____

8. From the list of design elements above, please indicate the top five that are most important to you:

1. _____

- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Tell us something about yourself:

9. Are you a resident of Laurens County? Yes No

10. Where do you live?

- A. City of Laurens
- B. City of Clinton
- C. City of Fountain Inn
- D. Town of Gray Court
- E. Town of Waterloo
- F. Town of Cross Hill
- G. Town of Joanna
- H. Local Subdivision (name of subdivision, i.e. Crossroads) _____
- I. Local Rural Area (name of area, i.e. Mountville) _____
- J. Other _____

11. How old are you?

- A. 1-10 D. 19-25 G. 65 +
- B. 11-13 E. 26-40
- C. 14-18 F. 41-65

12. Gender: Male Female

13. You are completing this survey representing: Individual Household
 Number in household _____

14. Do you have any ideas, comments, or concerns you would like to make about the trail system?

Thank you for your time in assisting the Laurens County Trails Association Advisory Board.

Would you like to help the Laurens County Trails Association create a countywide trail system?

We need volunteers for all aspects of the project: assembling mailings, planning activities and events, working with kids, collecting information, fundraising, constructing the trail, and much more! This is a countywide project and we welcome everyone's participation!

If you are interested in helping us, please complete the below information, and we will contact you.

Name:

Address:

Phone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____

Please indicate any special interest(s) that you may have or special skill(s) that you can provide. Thanks!

Join us on FaceBook, too!

LCTA Trail Use Survey Results

June, 2015

General Numbers

- 239 people responded to the survey, which was administered both on paper and online.
 - Online = 157
 - Paper = 82

How should a trail system in Laurens County be used?

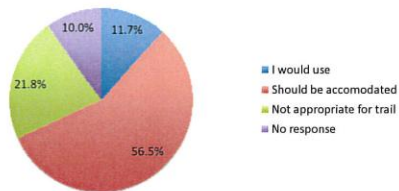
- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Commuting | • Group Outings |
| • Bicycling | • Non-motorized boating |
| • Horseback riding | • Enjoying quiet time |
| • Mountain biking | • Seeing historic sites |
| • Nature Observation/Birding | • Other |
| • Running/Jogging | |
| • Walking/hiking | |

Ranking of responses

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Walking/Hiking | 8. Non-motorized boating |
| 2. Enjoying Quiet Time | 9. Mountain biking |
| 3. Seeing Historic Sites | 10. Horseback riding |
| 4. Bicycling | 11. Commuting |
| 5. Nature observation/Birding | |
| 6. Group Outings | |
| 7. Running/Jogging | |

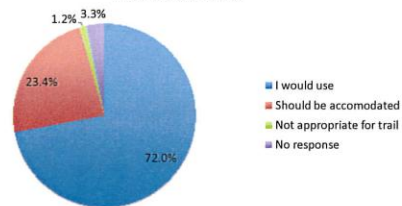
Commuting

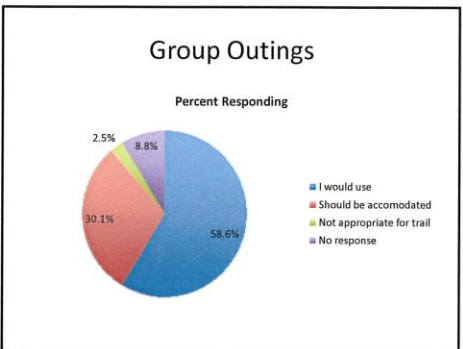
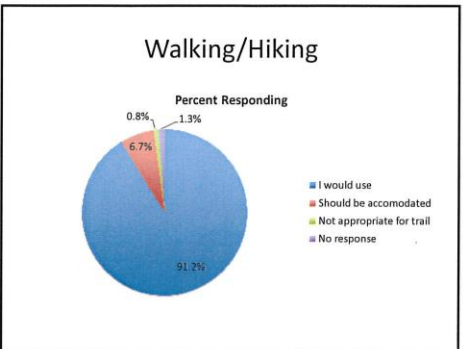
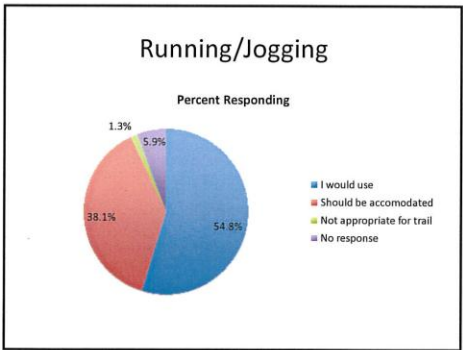
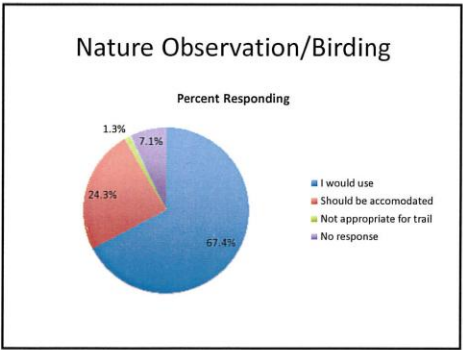
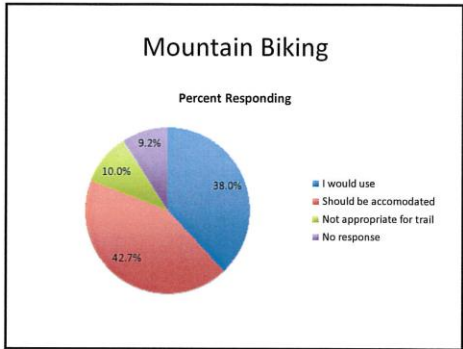
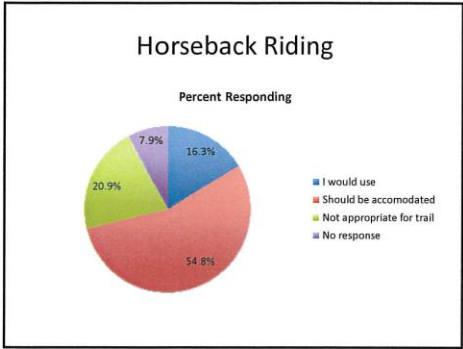
Percent Responding

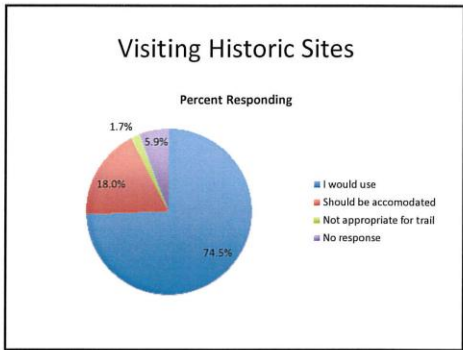
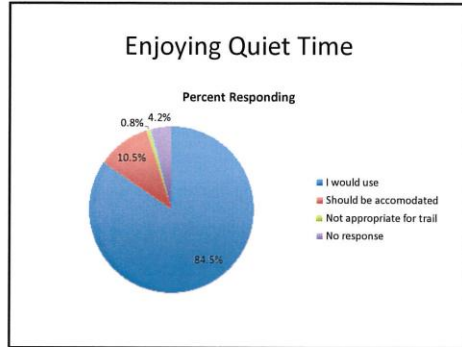
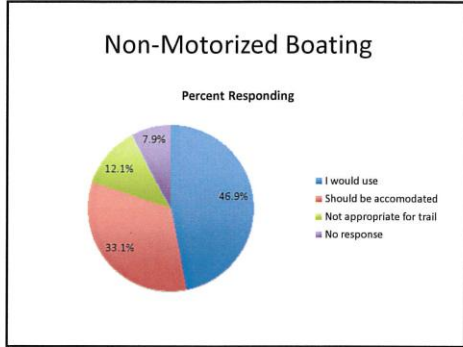


Bicycling

Percent Responding

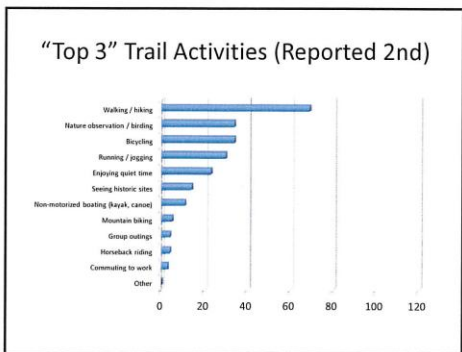
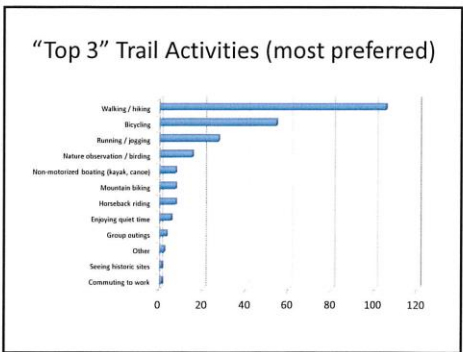


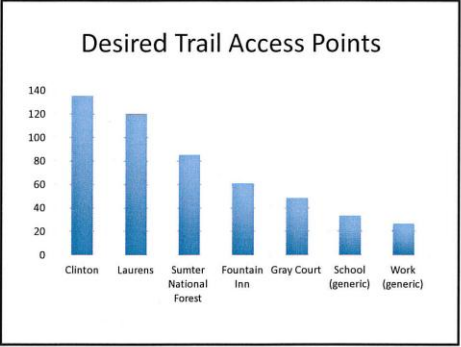
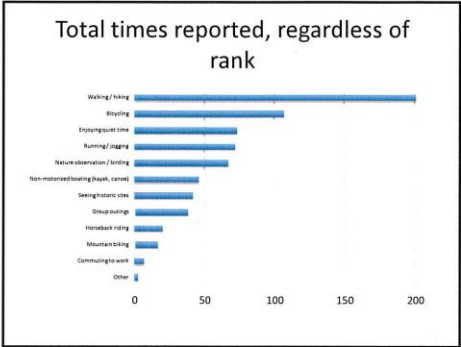
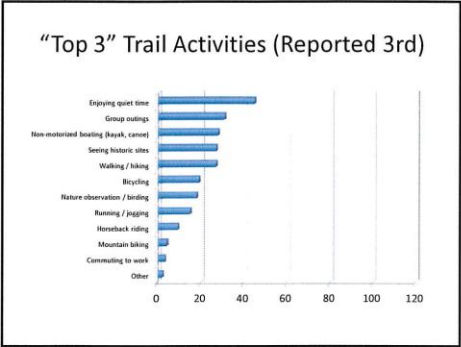




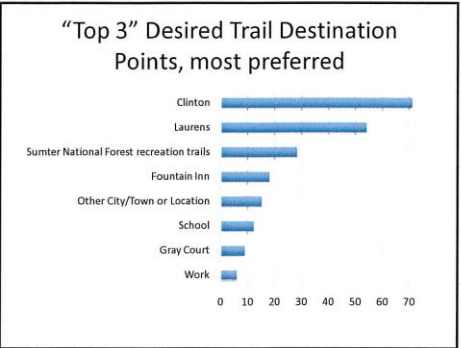
Other, itemized

Activity	Number reporting
Four-wheeler trails/golf carts	4 (1.7%)
Hunting/Fishing	2 (0.8%)
Dog walking	2 (0.8%)
Picnics	1 (0.4%)





- ### "Other" Locations, based on open-ended question
- Greenville (11)
 - PC (6)
 - Greenwood/Lake Greenwood (6)
 - Any/All (5)
 - Musgrove Mill (5)
 - Joanna (4)
 - Newberry (3)
 - Center (2)
 - Hickory Tavern (2)
 - Horseshoe Falls (1)
 - Kinards (1)
 - Lake Rabon (1)
 - Columbia (1)
 - Laurens County Park (1)
 - Enoree River (1)
 - Joe Adair Outdoor



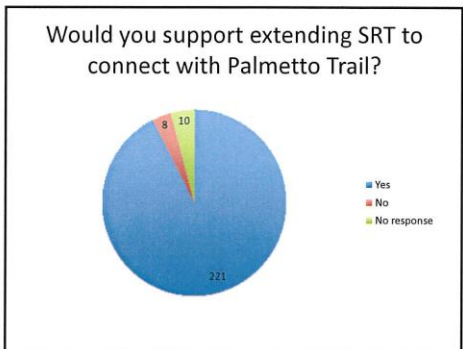
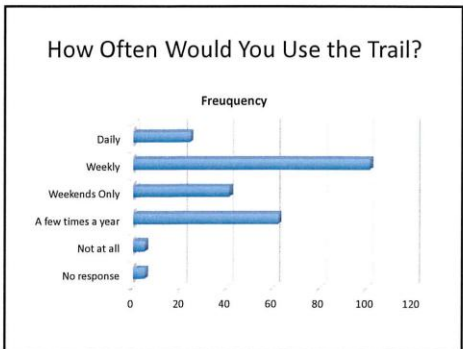
- ### Most preferred, Other (when specified):
- Boyd's Mill (1)
 - Kinards (1)
 - Musgrove Mill (1)
 - Presbyterian College (1)
 - Simpsonville (1)
 - Swamp Rabbit (1)
 - Waterloo (1)



- ### Reported 2nd, Other (when specified):
- Musgrove Mill State Park (2)
 - Greenville (1)
 - Hickory Tavern (1)
 - Joanna (1)
 - Park(1)
 - Newberry (1)
 - Presbyterian College (1)



- ### Reported 3rd, Other (when specified):
- Greenville (6)
 - Presbyterian College (3)
 - Downtown (1)
 - Mauldin (1)
 - Joanna (1)
 - Lake Rabon (1)
 - Simpsonville (1)



If no, why not?

- Expense (4)
- Proximity from Clinton (1)
- Crowds (1)*
- Vandalism (1)*
- Select groups (1)*
- Not enough knowledge of SRT (1)

*same respondent

What features would enhance your experience of a trail system?

Feature	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Parking at trailheads	191	80%
Trail signage	165	69%
Garbage cans	162	68%
Toilets	152	64%
Mile markers	149	62%
Benches	141	59%
Viewing areas	133	56%
Historical / interpretive signs	132	55%
Posted regulations	131	55%
Water fountains	120	50%

What features would enhance your experience of a trail system?

Feature	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Native plant landscaping	115	48%
Picnic tables	110	46%
Information kiosks	108	45%
Dual surface (dirt and paved)	104	44%
Covered picnic shelters	95	40%
Pet waste disposal	88	37%
Paved trail surface	87	36%
Emergency phones	82	34%
ADA water access ramp	66	28%
Dirt trail surface	62	26%

What features would enhance your experience of a trail system?

Feature	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Exercise course with stations	59	25%
Artwork (murals, sculptures)	46	19%
Compacted gravel surface	40	17%
Fencing	27	11%

What features would enhance your experience of a trail system?

- *OTHER FEATURES, specified:*
- Bicycle Repair Tool Station (1)
- Playground (1)
- Posted Trail Maps(1)
- Recycle Bins (1)
- TVs (1)
- Vending Machines (1)
- Waterway transportation upstream (1)

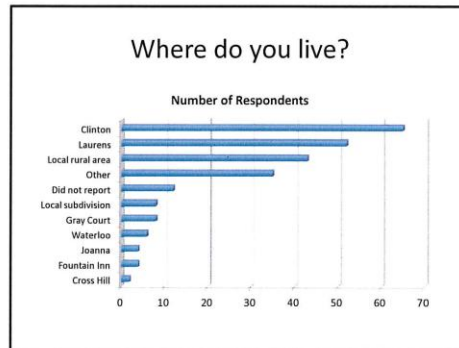
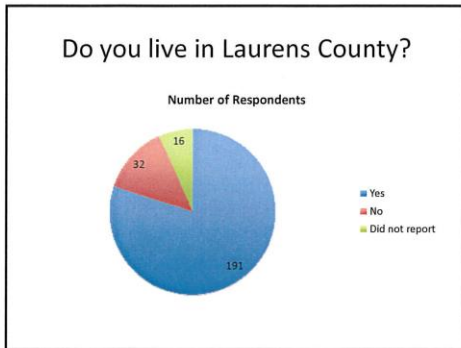
The following two slides summarize the responses to five separate items, asking participants:

Which design elements are your top five that would impact you use of the trail?

Data is organized by individualized response, then ranked by total number of times reported.

Rank	Feature	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	Total
1	Parking at trailheads	87	14	12	12	8	133
2	Toilets	14	25	30	23	12	104
3	Trail signage	13	24	22	23	4	86
4	Garbage cans	0	17	14	7	24	62
5	Mile markers	3	12	20	12	13	60
6	Water fountains	6	14	13	18	8	59
7	Dual surface (dirt and paved)	23	12	11	7	4	57
8	Benches	2	8	10	19	16	55
9	Paved trail surface	20	14	10	5	2	51
10	Viewing areas	5	9	12	8	16	50
11	Posted regulations	10	13	8	4	7	42
12	Historical / interpretive signs	7	7	7	13	7	41
13	Emergency phones	10	10	8	5	5	38

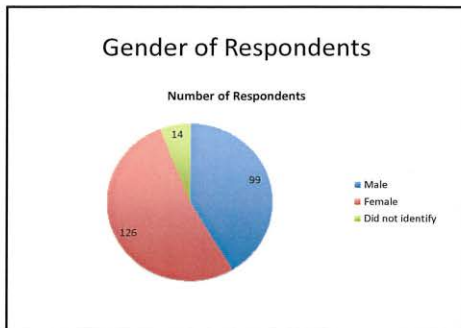
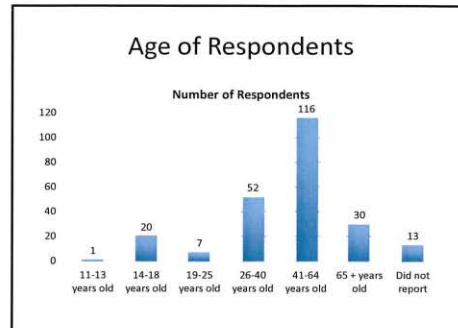
Rank	Feature	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	Total
13	Emergency phones	10	10	8	5	5	38
14	Information kiosks	4	5	2	8	11	31
15	Picnic tables	0	0	8	8	14	30
16	Dirt trail surface	7	8	4	4	4	27
17	Native plant landscaping	2	4	7	5	7	25
18	ADA water access ramp	2	4	2	4	7	19
19	Eastern course with stations	0	9	3	3	3	18
20	Covered picnic shelters	0	1	4	4	8	17
21	Compacted gravel surface	3	4	2	3	3	15
22	Pet waste stations	1	0	2	6	5	14
23	Artwork (murals, sculptures)	1	2	1	2	4	10
24	Other	3	0	0	2	4	9
25	Fencing	0	0	1	1	2	4



- ### Breakdown of "Local Rural Area" (n=8)
- n=8
 - Merrie Oaks (5)
 - Doublebrook (1)
 - Eastwind (1)
 - Laurens County (1)

- ### Breakdown of "Local Subdivision" (n=43)
- Laurens (4)
 - Outside Clinton (4)
 - Maddens (3)
 - Outside Laurens (3)
 - None reported (3)
 - Cross Anchor (2)
 - Hickory Tavern (2)
 - Mountville (2)
 - Waterloo (2)
 - Cain Estates (1)
 - Chestnut Ridge (1)
 - Ghost Creek Road (1)
 - Gray Court (1)
 - Highway 14 (1)
 - Highway 252 (1)
 - Kinards (1)
 - Lake Martin (1)
 - Lanford (1)
 - Laurens County (1)
 - Lisbon (1)
 - Milton (1)
 - Musgrove Mill (1)
 - Near District 55 High school (1)
 - Ora (1)
 - Outside Waterloo (1)
 - Stage Coach Rd (1)
 - Trinity Ridge (1)

- ### Breakdown of "Other" (n=35)
- Simpsonville (7)
 - Greenville (6)
 - Spartanburg (4)
 - Newberry (3)
 - Greenwood (2)
 - None reported (2)
 - Anderson (1)
 - Sumter National Forest (1)
 - Enoree (1)
 - Hickory Tavern (1)
 - Lake Greenwood (1)
 - Lanford (1)
 - Laurens County (1)
 - Ora (1)
 - Outside Clinton (1)
 - Tennessee (1)
 - Ware Shoals (1)



- ### Responding to Survey Representing Individual or Household?
- Responding as an individual
 - n=131
 - Avg household size (when reported) = 2.1
 - Responding as a household
 - n=94
 - Avg household size (when reported) = 3.5
 - Not indicated (indiv. vs. household)
 - n=14
 - Avg household size (when reported) = 2.0
 - Overall average household size (when reported) = 3.1 (n=121)

*These PowerPoint slides were created by Dr. Sarah Burns of Presbyterian College and represent the tabulation of survey data as of June 17, 2015 with 239 respondents. Seven additional surveys were received shortly afterwards by mail. In all, 246 people submitted an LCTA survey (89 on paper and 157 on-line)

APPENDIX B

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Laurens County is presently a green oasis between the increasingly urbanized, paved, and populated counties of Greenville, Spartanburg, Lexington, and Richland Counties, as shown in this Master Plan in Chapter Three: Existing Conditions (see, for example, pages 17-23). The ongoing—even dramatic—loss of forested and rural landscape in South Carolina is a well-documented reality and need not be rehearsed further here.

The purpose of this appendix, instead, is simply to encourage citizens, communities, and government officials in Laurens County to recognize the increasing urban sprawl in the county's surrounding area, consider the evidence that shows the increasing attractiveness and economic advantages of green spaces, and to act together to preserve the county's natural resources along with more publically accessible natural areas throughout the county, before it becomes less possible and even impossible to do so. A countywide system of trails would be a healthy catalyst for conserving natural resources, which in turn also raises the healthiness and quality of life for the residents of Laurens County.

Without a doubt, the natural resources of Laurens County provide many needed services that citizens typically take for granted but ought to appreciate and value more highly.

The air we breathe, for example, is critical to our health, which is why organizations such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the American Lung Association all devote considerable resources to monitoring air quality and promoting cleaner air. Unhealthy air is hazardous and may even endanger lives. Everyone deserves clean air to breathe.

The same can be said of water, plants, soils, and sustainable land. Our natural resources exist in a delicate, interconnected and interdependent balance, all of which are susceptible to harm from environmental changes.

Ecosystems of plants and animals, nutrients and organisms, provide humans critically vital services that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace. **History and current events show that every organism affects its environment, and every environment affects the organisms in it.** This is why it is important for everyone to conserve, preserve, and care for the world we live in. It is the only world we have, our only home in the vast universe.

This is no less true for Laurens County. The health of the citizens of Laurens County depends on the services provided by our county's ecosystems. On one hand, then, a countywide trails network will positively affect the health of many of the county's citizens and visitors. On the other hand, a system of trails can help preserve important natural resources, which then in turn contribute to good health.

The system of trails in this Master Plan is just one aspect of the county's larger need for a new conservation plan and countywide support to achieve it.

For example, Laurens County can and should become more efficient in recycling. Presently, the statewide average for recycling is just under 32%. As of the end of 2013, Laurens County had climbed up to a recycling rate of 23%.¹ By contrast, many European communities are beyond 70% efficient in recycling and some are now pushing beyond 80%. Here in Laurens County, then, there is clearly room to improve. A large percentage of the county's recyclable goods are filling up landfills and recycling profits are literally being thrown away. Another aspect of this issue is that entrepreneurial opportunities exist in Laurens County for services to support more recycling and claim more financial profits from the county's waste.

Another aspect of this larger conservation issue pertains to the particularly problematic contemporary issues in the county (especially Clinton) regarding energy and water. A trails network can play a role in the county's larger efforts to encourage citizens not to waste energy and water. Thus everything from choosing more energy and water efficient appliances to caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows to insulating ceilings and collecting rainwater for yard care would produce meaningful dividends and be better for the environment.

Education must play a key role in fostering a higher value in conservation of our natural resources, and a system of trails can play a leading role in promoting environmental education in our county's schools as well as among the general public. Trails can be used as school laboratories, and signs can inform all trail users about important environmental issues. Of course, historical and cultural information should also play a role in educating users and promoting good stewardship of natural resources.

SUMMARY

People naturally care for the things that are important to them. Trails can play a crucial role in promoting positive values and caring for the earth, especially that small part of it called Laurens County, South Carolina.

¹See "Old Landfill Now Used as County Recycling Center," in Go-Laurens, Wednesday, December 23, 2013, accessible at: <http://golaurens.com/askgolaurens/item/16503-old-laurens-landfill-is-now-recycling-center>.

APPENDIX C

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Recreational Trail Grants Program US Department of Transportation

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/index.htm>

<http://www.scprt.com/our-partners/Grants.aspx>

The Recreation Trails Program is a federal transportation program that provides monies for the maintenance, development, acquisition and construction of new and existing trail facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Funds are distributed to the states according to the formula. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, municipal agencies, state agencies, federal government agencies and other government entities (regional governments, port districts, etc.). Eligible projects include:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Development and rehabilitation of existing trails
- Construction of new recreation trails
- Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property

Grants are distributed annually to require a twenty percent match.

In fiscal year (FY) 2014, the Recreational Trails Grant Program (RTP) contributed to South Carolina \$1,211,220 for trails.

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/funding/apportionments_obligations/re cfunds_2014.cfm

Contact:

Ronda Pratt, State Trails Coordinator
SCPRT - State Trails Program
Recreation, Planning, and Engineering
1205 Pendleton St, Rm 246
Columbia SC 29201-3790
803-734-0130; Fax 803-734-1042 rpratt@scprt.com

**Transportation Enhancements (TE)
US Department of Transportation**

www.enhancements.org
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legregs/directives/notices/n4510776/n4510776_t2.cfm
http://www.scdot.org/getting/community_transportation_alternatives.aspx
http://www.scdot.org/getting/pdfs/TAP_Guidance.pdf

The federal Surface Transportation Program provides states with funding for highway projects. States are allocated funds based on a combination of population, transportation systems, miles of roads, and other factors. Each state must reserve at least 10 percent of its Surface Transportation Program dollars for transportation enhancements activities. These enhancement projects include historic preservation, rails-to-trails programs, easement and land acquisition, transportation museums, water pollution mitigation, wildlife connectivity, and scenic beautification. All projects must be related, in some way, to transportation.

In each state, TE projects are selected through a competitive process. Applications are submitted by local government entities, often in partnership with nonprofit organizations. The federal government provides 80 percent of the funds and the municipalities need to contribute a 20 percent match.

Since 1992, the SCDOT Commission has elected to allocate a portion of available funds for the Transportation Enhancement Program. The program facilitates and provides a greater opportunity for local governments to collaborate with the agency to pursue a broad range of non-traditional transportation related to activities such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, street scraping, scenic and landscaping programs, and historic preservation. The Transportation Enhancement Funds are provided by the Transportation Equality Act for the 21st Century (also known as TEA 21 and formerly known as ISTEA) and allocated by the South Carolina Department of Transportation. For 2014 apportionments, see <http://www.scdot.org/inside/pdfs/stip/stip.pdf>

**Safe Routes to School Program
US Department of Transportation**

<http://www.scdot.org/getting/safeRoutes.aspx>

SAFETEA-LU created a new program called Safe Routes to School. The goal of this program is to encourage children to walk to school by providing accessible and safe trails connecting schools to neighborhoods. 70% of the funds are used for infrastructure, 10% for education and enforcement, and 20% can be used for either category. Matching funds are not required. The award amounts per project proposal over the past five years are most often \$200,000, but some were made for \$400,000. See: http://apps.saferoutesinfo.org/project_list/report.cfm?state=SC

**Transportation and Community and Systems Preservation Program (TCSP)
US Department of Transportation**

Although commonly mentioned in many sources, **this program is no longer in service.** Please note that MAP-21 (Transportation Authorization Bill) did not provide funding for the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program. Therefore, the program has been terminated and no future solicitation will be disseminated.”

Source: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/>

**Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
Department of the Interior (varies by agency)**

<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/>

Created in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the largest source of federal money for park, wildlife, and open space land acquisition. Specifically, the LWCF provides funding to assist in the acquiring, preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources, including but not limited to open space, parks, trails, wildlife lands and other lands and facilities desirable for individual active participation. The program’s funding comes primarily from offshore oil and gas drilling receipts, while federal recreation fees, sales of federal surplus real property, and federal motorboat fuel taxes fund also contribute to the LWCF. Under this program, a portion of the money is intended to go to federal land purchases and a portion to the states as matching grants for land protection projects. The authorized expenditure from this fund nationwide in 2014 was \$43,389,666, of which \$688,849 was allocated to South Carolina projects. See:

<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/LWCF%20FY%2014%20Certificate%20of%20Apportionment.pdf>

**LWCF – Federal
Department of the Interior
Department of Agriculture/US Forest Service**

The federal side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funding for federal agencies (Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management) to add land to existing recreation areas, parks, forests, refuges and other federal units. LWCF funding provides the bulk of the money available for this purpose and is typically provided through the annual federal appropriations process, with Congress making the determination of what federal land units will receive LWCF funding each year.

In South Carolina, there are two national forests, several national wildlife refuges and national park units such as Fort Sumter and Congaree National Park that qualify. Funding levels for federal land acquisitions and recreational developments are determined by Congress or the

relevant federal agency and are related to the property's value. See the 2014 report at:
<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL33531.pdf>

**LWCF – Stateside
National Park Service**

<http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/south-carolina.html>
http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/files/FY16%20State%20Factsheets/South_Carolina16.pdf

The stateside LWCF program provides a 50 percent match to states for planning, developing and acquiring land and water areas for natural resource protection and recreation enhancement.

Funds are distributed to states based on population and need. Once the funds are distributed to the states, it is up to each state to choose the projects, though the National Park Service has final approval. Eligible grant recipients include municipal subdivisions, state agencies and tribal governments, each of whom must provide at least 50 percent matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions and a detailed plan for the proposed project. Grant applications are evaluated based on the technical merits of the project, the public/private partnerships, and how the project addresses the identified needs and priorities of a statewide comprehensive plan. Annual appropriations to the fund have ranged from a high \$369 million in 1979 to four years of zero funding between 1996 and 1999. Over the past fifty years, South Carolina has received \$279.5 million.

**Forest Legacy Program (FLP)
US Forest Service (USFS)**

www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/aboutflp.shtml

The Forest Legacy Program was established in 1990 to provide federal funding to states to assist in securing conservation easements on forestlands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses. Fee transactions are also used under the program, either for the whole transactions or combined with easements to achieve a state's highest conservation goals. A state voluntarily enters the program by submitting an Assessment of Need (AON) to the Secretary of Agriculture for approval. These plans establish the lead state agency, the state's criteria for Forest Legacy projects, and Forest Legacy areas within which proposed Legacy projects must be located. Once the AON is approved, the state lead agency can submit up to three grants each year for projects within the FLAs. The federal government may fund up to 75 percent of project costs, with at least 25 percent coming from private, state or local sources.

In FY 2014, South Carolina received \$2,165,000. See:
http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/fy14_flp_funded_project.pdf

**Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration:
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

For FY 2013 data, see:

<http://www.fws.gov/budget/2013/PDF%20Files%20FY%202013%20Greenbook/23.%20Sport%20Fish%20Restoration.pdf>

For FY 2014 data, see:

<http://www.fws.gov/budget/2014/FWS%202014%20Budget%20Justifications.pdf>

See pages starting at SF-1. State data on SF-9

The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, Commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Act, was passed in 1950, to create a program for the management, conservation, and restoration of fishery resources. The program is funded by revenues collected from an excise tax paid by the manufacturers of fishing equipment. Appropriate State agencies are the only entities eligible to receive those grants and funds are apportioned to each State on a formula based on the percentage of licensed anglers in the state and the percentage of states' land and water area. The program is a cost-reimbursement program in which the state applies for repayment of up to 75 percent of approved project expenses. The state must provide at least 25 percent of the project costs from non-federal sources.

**Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson Act)
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/WR/WRFinalApportionment2014.pdf>

Implemented in 1938, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, more commonly known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, provides funding for the selection, restoration, rehabilitation, and improvement of wildlife habitat as well as wildlife management research. Funds are derived from an excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition, and archery equipment as well as a percent tax on handguns. Funds are apportioned to state agencies on a formula based on the total area of the state and the number of licensed hunters in the state.

The program is a cost-reimbursement program in which the state applies for repayment of up to 75 percent of approved project expenses. The state must provide at least 25 percent of the project costs from non-federal sources. In FY 2014, South Carolina projects received \$10,172,083.

Migratory Bird Conservation Fund
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/refuges/realty/mbcc.html>

Each year, duck stamp (migratory bird and conservation stamps) revenues are deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund along with appropriations from the Wetlands Loan Act of 1961, import duties from arms and ammunitions, receipts from refuge admission fees, receipts from the sale of refuge-land crops and refuge rights-of-way, and Federal Aid funds.

Administered by the USFWS, the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is used to acquire waterfowl breeding, wintering, and migration habitat needed for maintaining optimum migratory bird population levels and to achieve desirable migration and distribution patterns. The habitat areas, acquired in fee, easement, or other interests such as leases or cooperative agreements, become units of the National Wildlife Refuge System or Waterfowl Production Areas. The Service focuses its acquisition efforts to benefit waterfowl species most in need of habitat protection. Over 5 million acres have been protected with funds from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. Savannah NWR in South Carolina has acquired lands with funds provided through this program. In FY 2014, the MBCF was able to conserve 1,350 acres with an investment of \$2,029,000.

For the 2014 report, see: http://www.fws.gov/refuges/realty/pdf/MBCC_2014.pdf
Pages 26-27 provide expenditures/acreage for SC.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)

<http://www.fws.gov/birds/grants/north-american-wetland-conservation-act.php>

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) was passed in 1989 to provide matching grants for the acquisition, restoration, and enhancement of wetland ecosystems for the benefit of waterfowl and other wetland dependent migratory species. Administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, grants are available to nonprofit organizations, state and local agencies, tribes, and private individuals in the US, Canada, and Mexico. Two types of grants are awarded; small grants for up to \$75,000 and standard grants for up to \$1 million. There is a 1:1 non-federal match requirement for each grant although the average match of successful proposals is over 2:1. In FY 2014, two grant requests of \$1,000,000 each were awarded in South Carolina to protect coastal wetlands.

See: http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/Standard/US/2013_Sept.shtm#5666

**State Wildlife Grants
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/SWG/SWG.htm>

Fact Sheet available at: <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/SWG/QR-SWG.pdf>

Created by Congress in 2001, the State Wildlife Grants Program is a matching grant program available to every state in support of cost-effective, on-the-ground conservation efforts aimed at restoring or maintaining populations of native species before listing under the Endangered Species Act is required. In order to maximize the effectiveness of this program, Congress required each state to develop a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy for the conservation of the state's full array of wildlife and the habitats they depend upon. These plans identify species and habitats of greatest conservation need and outline the steps necessary to keep them from becoming endangered. The State Wildlife Grants Program provides matching funds that are to be used to implement the conservation recommendations outlined in these state wildlife action plans. In FY 2014, three projects in South Carolina received a total of \$1,716,874. See pages 5-6 at:

<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/SWG/SWG2014FundedProjects.pdf>

**Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund:
Recovery Land Acquisition Grants
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html>

http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/pdf/FY%2014_project%20descriptions%20FINAL.pdf

Grants offered through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (authorized under section 6 of the Endangered Species Act) fund participation in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed and listed species. Recovery Land Acquisition Grants provide funds to State for the acquisition of habitat, through both fee and easement, for federally listed threatened and endangered species in support of approved recovery plans. These funds must contribute to the implementation of a finalized and approved recovery plan for at least one listed species. South Carolina hosts many threatened and endangered species. Land acquisition projects that support the recovery of these species are eligible for funding under this program. For 2014 awards, see:

http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/reports/species-listed-by-state-report?state=SC&status=listed

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Keystone Initiative Grants & Special Grants Programs

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

<http://www.nfwf.org/programs.cfm>

In 1984, Congress created the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to benefit the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and the habitat on which they depend by attracting diverse investments to conservation and encouraging locally supported stewardship on private and public lands.

Through their Keystone Initiatives Grant Program, NFWF funds projects to conserve and restore bird, fish, and wildlife populations as well as the habitats on which they depend. The Foundation awards matching grants to projects that address priority actions laid out by their strategic plan, work proactively to involve other conservation and community interests, leverage funding, serve multiple objectives, involve strong partnerships, and fit into a larger ecosystem approach to conservation. The most successful applications will display the long-term environmental benefits of a project that yield high quality conservation returns.

Eligible grantees include federal, tribal, state, and local governments, educational institutions, and non-profit conservation organizations. Grants can range from \$50,000 to \$300,000 and typically require a 2:1 nonfederal match.

In addition to the Keystone Initiative matching grants, the Foundation administers a variety of special grant programs with specific conservation objectives, programmatic guidelines, and timelines. (See the Foundation's website for more information on these numerous grant opportunities or call NFWF's Eastern Partnership Office at 202-857-0166.)

Brownfields Program

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/applicat.htm>

If a property identified for acquisition or redevelopment is or might be a "brownfields" site, many programs and other benefits at the local, state and federal levels encourage its redevelopment. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Program provides direct funding for brownfields assessment, cleanup, revolving loans, and environmental job training. In addition, legislation signed into law in 2001 limits the liability of certain contiguous property owners and prospective purchasers of brownfields properties, and innocent landowner are also afforded liability benefits to encourage revitalization and reuse of brownfields sites. EPA's brownfields program provides several types of grants.

Assessments Grants provide funding for a grant recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct cleanup and redevelopment planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites. \$200,000 grants (or to \$350,000 with a waiver).

Remediation grants are available for remediation of brownfield sites. These grants are limited to \$200,000 per site, with no more than three applications per entity. There is a 20 percent cost-share. NGOs are eligible to apply, but must have site control of the property. One site may qualify for two grants if pollutants include petroleum and non-petroleum contaminants.

Revolving Loan Fund Grants (RLF) provide funding for a grant recipient to capitalize a revolving loan fund to provide sub grants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfields site. \$1 million per eligible entity, with a 20 percent cost share.

Annual grants are usually announced in October of each calendar year.

Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/uprr/>

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program was developed as the urban component to the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1978. UPARR grants are given to eligible cities and counties and are meant to assist disadvantaged areas. The grants fund rehabilitation (capital funding for renovation or redesign of the existing facilities), innovation (funding aimed to support specific activities that either increase recreation programs or improve the efficiency of the local government to operate recreation programs), and planning (funding for development of recovery action program plans) for recreational services in urban areas. A local match of at least 30 percent is required for most grants. This program, however, has not been funded for the past six fiscal years.

Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

<https://www.scdhec.gov/HomeandEnvironment/BusinessesandCommunities-GoGreen/EnvironmentalGrantsandLoans/StateRevolvingFund/Overview/>

<http://www.ria.sc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FY16-CW-Summary-Sheet.pdf>
https://www.scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/Docs/srf_cwpriority.pdf

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency is charged with implementing both the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Act, two landmark pieces of legislation whose respective goals are to clean up America's waterways and to ensure that we have safe water to drink. Conservation is an eligible activity under both laws. Both programs utilize "State Revolving Funds" or SRFs to fund projects that better water quality and enhance our drinking water supplies. Every year, Congress appropriates funds that are apportioned out to the states on a formula basis to fund the SRFs.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

Through the CWSRF program, each state maintains a revolving loan fund to provide a source of low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects. Federal funds must be matched by 20 percent non-federal funds.

The CWSRF program is available to fund a wide variety of water quality projects including all types of nonpoint source, watershed protection or restoration, and estuary management projects, as well as more traditional municipal wastewater treatment projects. Nationwide, 95 percent of these funds go toward infrastructure projects, but watershed protection projects are increasing.

CWSRF programs operate much like environmental infrastructure banks that are capitalized with federal and state contributions. CWSRF monies are loaned to communities and loan repayments are recycled back into the program to fund additional water quality protection projects. The revolving nature of these programs provides for an ongoing funding source that will last far into the future.

States have the flexibility to target resources to their particular environmental needs, including contaminated runoff from urban and agricultural areas, wetlands restoration, groundwater protection, brownfields remediation, estuary management, and wastewater treatment.

Land or easement acquisition is permitted with CWSRF funds as a method to reduce nonpoint source pollution. For example, California has already used \$112 million of its CWSRF funds to acquire over 29,000 acres of land for water quality benefits.

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

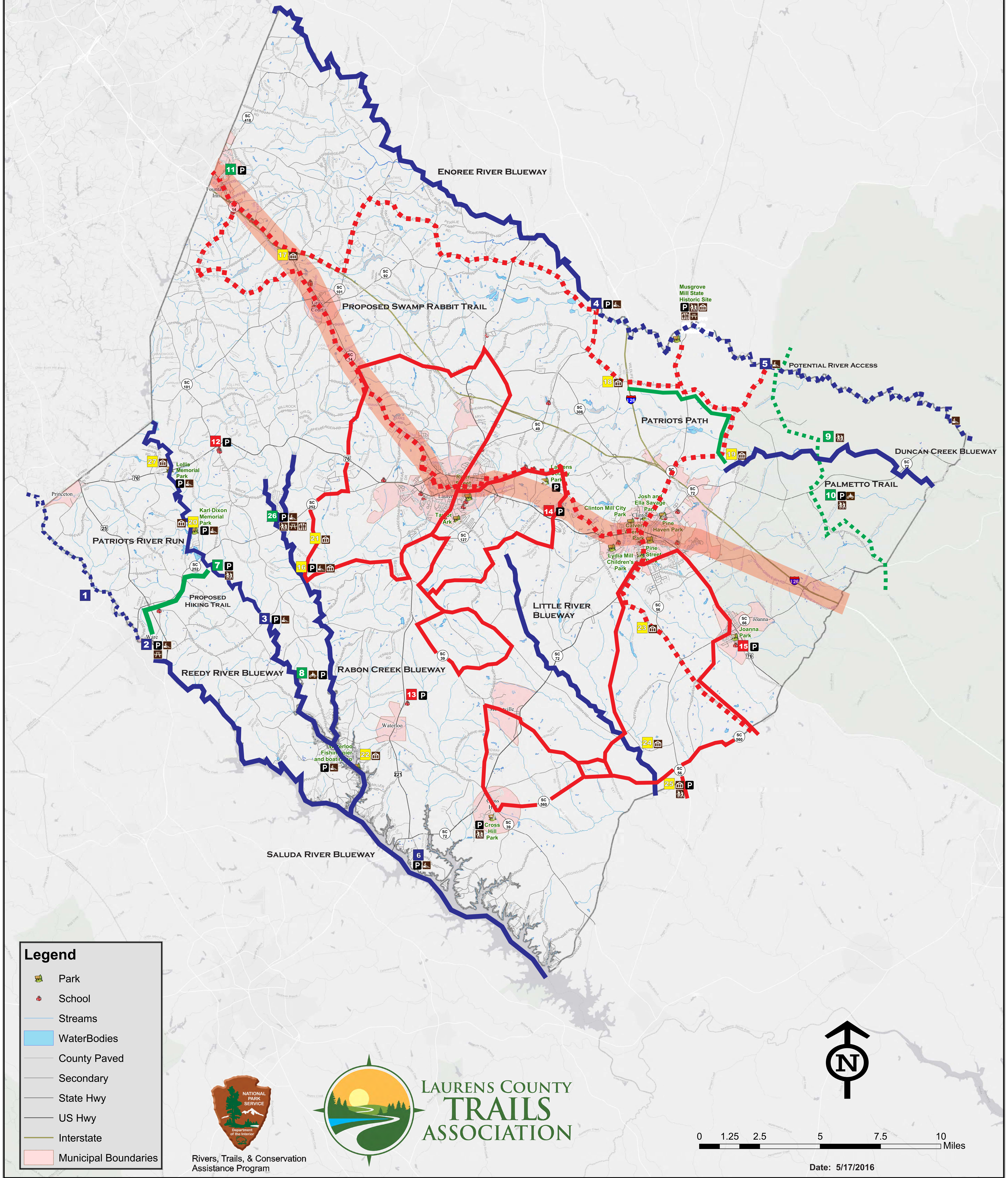
The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program was established by the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments, under which EPA provides grants to States to establish revolving loan funds from which they provide loans and other types of financial assistance to public water systems for eligible infrastructure improvements. Conservation easements and fee acquisitions are permitted with these funds. Given the increasing complications from development and pollution, the EPA has begun a concerted effort to focus more attention on protecting “source water,” which is defined as “untreated water from streams, rivers, lakes, or underground aquifers which is used to supply private wells and public drinking water.” There is growing recognition that protecting the source from contaminants is often more efficient and cost-effective than treating drinking water later.

Loans under the DWSRF are typically low interest and can be repaid over 20 years. There is some flexibility given to the states to allow them to waive the principal repayment, offer negative interest rates or extend the loans to 30 years in specific hardship cases.

Up to 31 percent of these capitalization grants can be set-aside to administer the SRF and state source protection programs and to fund source water protection activities, including land acquisition. UP to 15 percent of the set-aside can be used for land conservation and voluntary, incentive-based protection measures, with no more than 10 percent used for a single type or activity, such as land protection.

Laurens County, South Carolina

GREENWAY / BLUEWAY MASTER PLAN



Legend

- Park
- School
- Streams
- WaterBodies
- County Paved
- Secondary
- State Hwy
- US Hwy
- Interstate
- Municipal Boundaries



LAURENS COUNTY
TRAILS
ASSOCIATION

Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program



Date: 5/17/2016

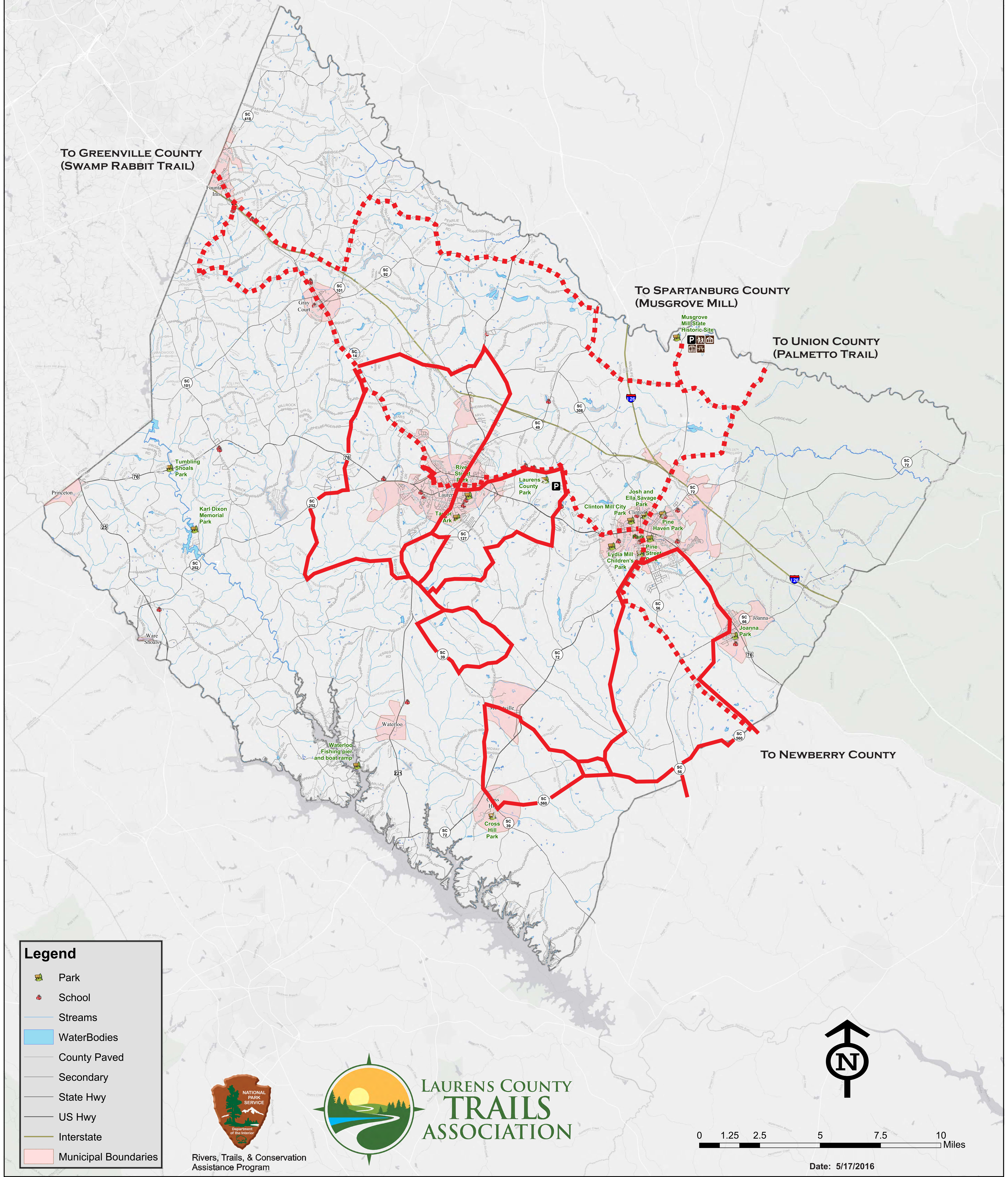
Parking Area	Picnic Area	Existing Hiking Trail	Existing Kayak/Canoe Trail	SALUDA RIVER BLUE TRAIL	SANCTIFIED HILL PARK	FT. LINDLEY
Hiking Trails	Camping Area	Existing Bike Route	Proposed Hiking Trail	PITTS PARK	WICKORY TAVERN ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL	ROSEMONT
Canoe/Kayak Access	Bike Trails	Existing Kayak/Canoe Trail	Proposed Biking Trail	POTENTIAL BOAT LAUNCH (KAYAK/CANOE)	WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	HAMMONDS STORE
Equestrian Trails	Water Trail	Proposed Hiking Trail	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail	POTENTIAL BOAT LAUNCH (KAYAK/CANOE)	GHS COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL	HAYES STATION
Restroom Facilities	OHV Trails	Proposed Biking Trail		ENOREE RIVER WATER TRAIL	JOANNA-WOODSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	BELFAST WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
Frisbee Golf	Historic Site	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail		CAMP FELLOWSHIP	FORT LANDLEY HISTORIC SITE	LAKE RABON PARK
				CLIFTON PITTS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA	OWINGS RAILROAD TOWN	BROWN STATION HISTORIC SITE
				GULCHEE OFF ROAD VEHICLE PARK	LANGSTON BAPTIST CHURCH	
				PALMETTO TRAIL	DUNCAN CREEK PRESB. CHURCH - 1760	
				ENOREE TRAILS (SUNTER NATIONAL FOREST)	BOYO'S MILL	
						PROPOSED SWAMP RABBIT TRAIL

Laurens County Greenway/Blueway Project

Laurens County, South Carolina

Laurens County, South Carolina

ON-ROAD BICYCLING PLAN



Legend

- Park
- School
- Streams
- WaterBodies
- County Paved
- Secondary
- State Hwy
- US Hwy
- Interstate
- Municipal Boundaries



Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program



LAURENS COUNTY
TRAILS
ASSOCIATION

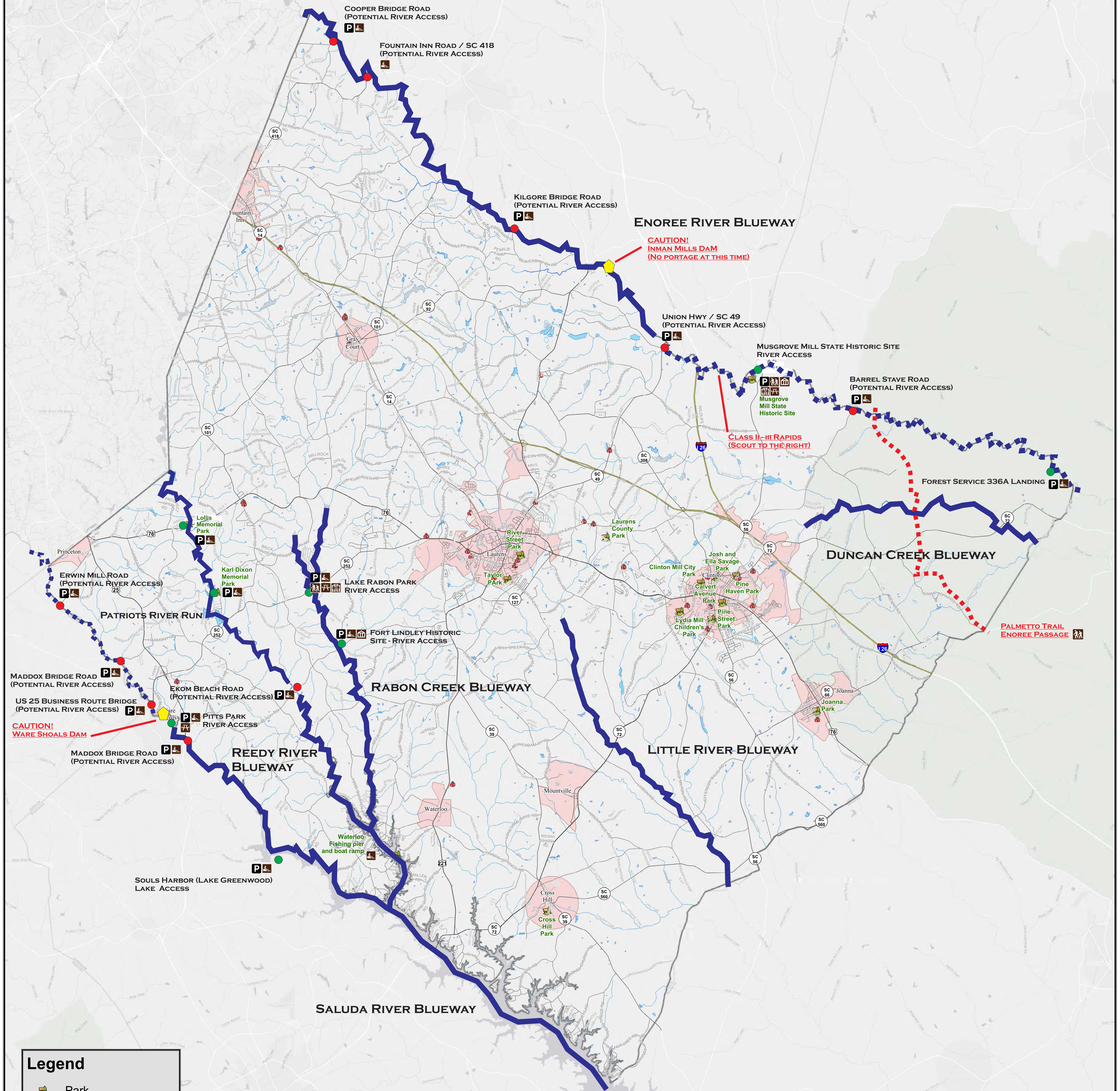


Date: 5/17/2016

Parking Area	Picnic Area	Existing Hiking Trail
Hiking Trails	Camping Area	Existing Bike Route
Canoe/Kayak Access	Bike Trails	Existing Kayak/Canoe Trail
Equestrian Trails	Water Trail	Proposed Hiking Trail
Restroom Facilities	OHV Trails	Proposed Biking Trail
Frisbee Golf	Historic Site	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail

Laurens County, South Carolina

BLUEWAYS PLAN



Legend

- Park
- School
- Streams
- WaterBodies
- County Paved
- Secondary
- State Hwy
- US Hwy
- Interstate
- Municipal Boundaries



LAURENS COUNTY
TRAILS
ASSOCIATION

Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program



Date: 5/17/2016

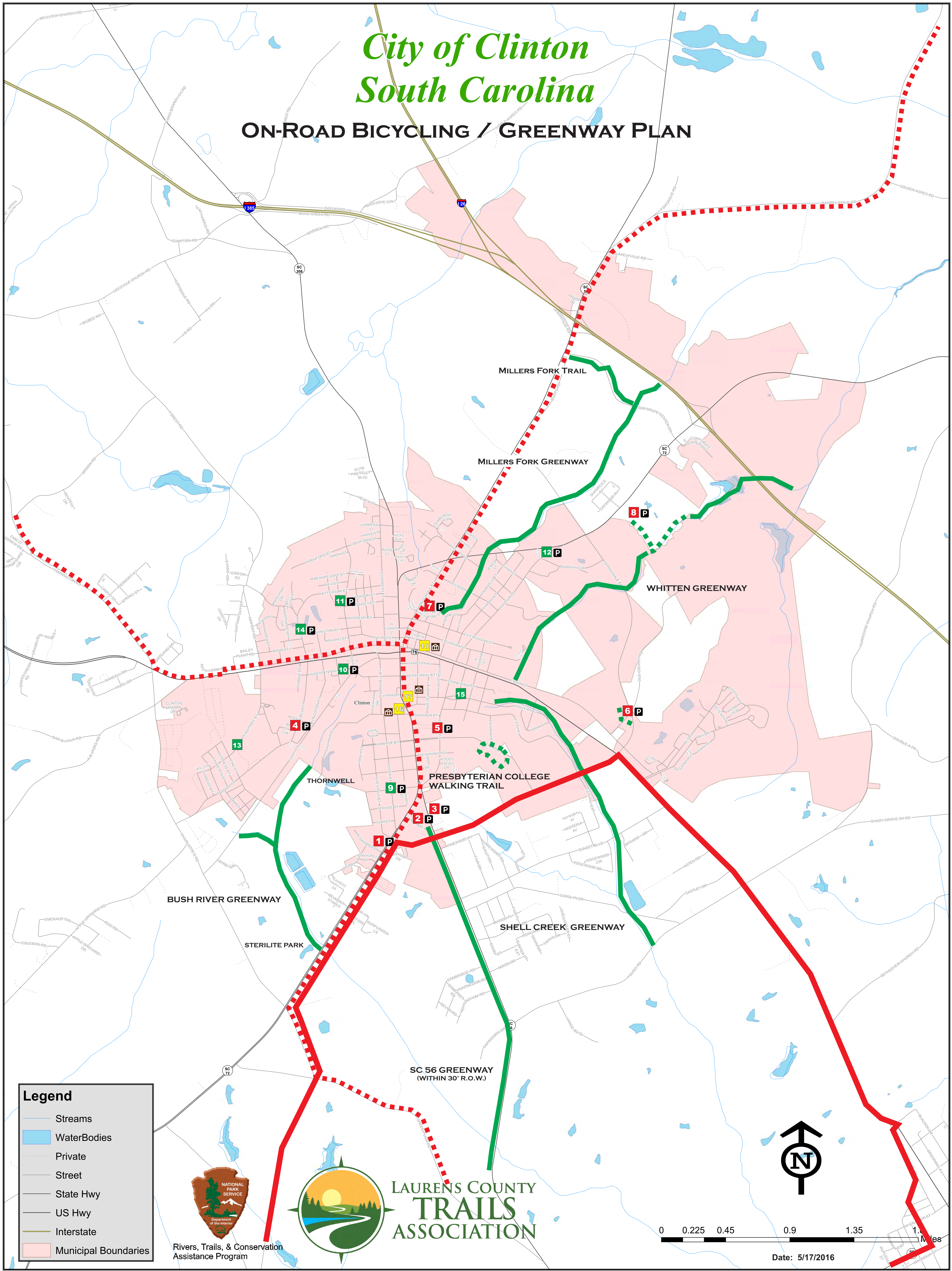
Parking Area	Picnic Area	Existing Hiking Trail
Hiking Trails	Camping Area	Existing River Access Point
Canoe/Kayak Access	Bike Trails	Proposed River Access Point
Equestrian Trails	Water Trail	Dam Site (Use Caution)
Restroom Facilities	OHV Trails	Existing Kayak/Canoe Trail
Frisbee Golf	Historic Site	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail

Laurens County Greenway/Blueway Project - Water Trail Plan

Laurens County, South Carolina

City of Clinton South Carolina

ON-ROAD BICYCLING / GREENWAY PLAN



Legend

- Streams
- WaterBodies
- Private
- Street
- State Hwy
- US Hwy
- Interstate
- Municipal Boundaries



Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program



LAURENS COUNTY
TRAILS
ASSOCIATION



Date: 5/17/2016

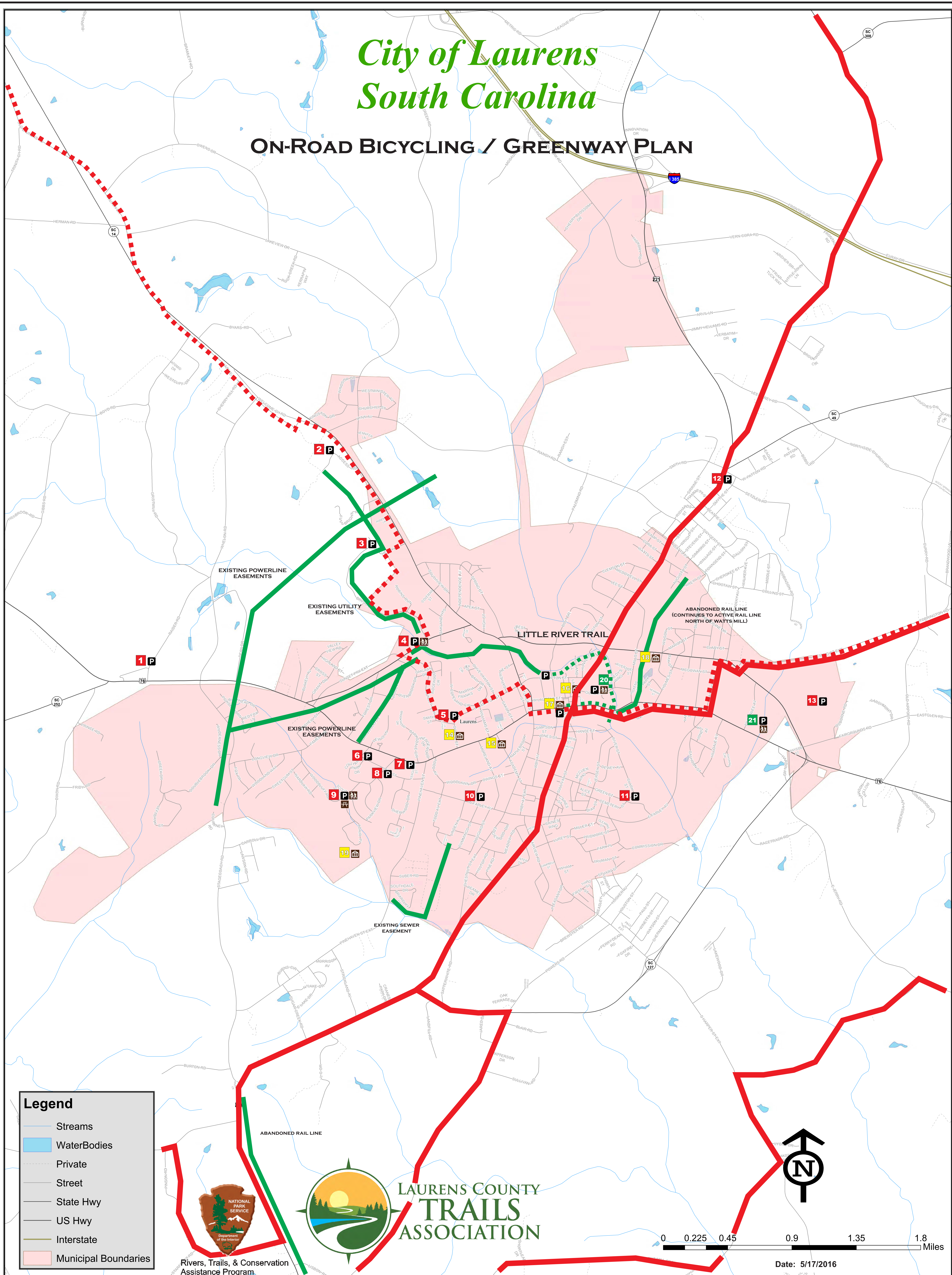
Parking Area	Picnic Area	Existing Hiking Trail	Existing Bike Route	CLINTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	JEFFERSON STREET PARK
Hiking Trails	Camping Area	Existing Kayak/Canoe Trail	Proposed Hiking Trail	CLINTON YMCA	AMERICAN LEGION PARK
Canoe/Kayak Access	Bike Trails	Existing Kayak/Canoe Trail	Proposed Biking Trail	CLINTON PUBLIC LIBRARY	LYDIA MILL PARK (2)
Equestrian Trails	Water Trail	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail	BELL STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL	MARTHA DENDY PARK
Restroom Facilities	OHV Trails			PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE	CALVERT AVE. PARK
Frisbee Golf	Historic Site			EAST SIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	THORNWELL HOUSE
				CLINTON MUSEUM	VANCE HOUSE
				CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL	HISTORIC DOWNTOWN
				PINE STREET PARK	
				OAK STREET PARK	

Laurens County Greenway/Blueway Project

City of Clinton, South Carolina

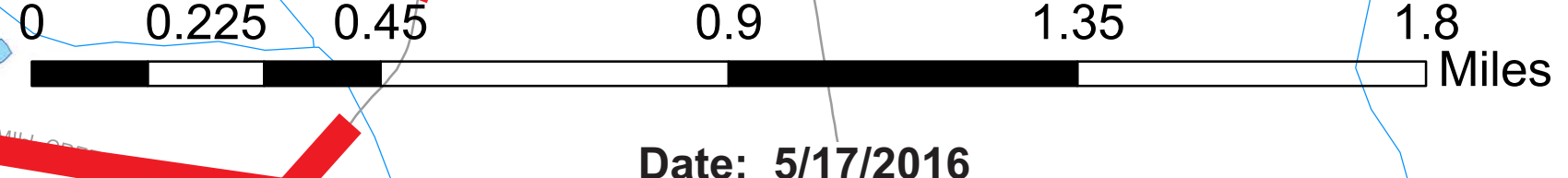
City of Laurens South Carolina

ON-ROAD BICYCLING / GREENWAY PLAN



Legend

- Streams
- WaterBodies
- Private
- Street
- State Hwy
- US Hwy
- Interstate
- Municipal Boundaries



Parking Area	Picnic Area	Existing Hiking Trail	Proposed Biking Trail
Hiking Trails	Camping Area	Existing Biking Route	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail
Canoe/Kayak Access	Bike Trails	Existing Kayak/Canoe Trail	Proposed Hiking Trail
Equestrian Trails	Water Trail	Proposed Hiking Trail	Proposed Biking Trail
Restroom Facilities	OHV Trails	Proposed Biking Trail	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail
Frisbee Golf	Historic Site	Proposed Kayak/Canoe Trail	

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 LAURENS HIGH SCHOOL | 14 SANDERS MIDDLE SCHOOL | 21 CITY PARK |
| 2 FORMER CERAMTEC (NOW CITY OWNED PROPERTY) | 15 FORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | |
| 3 LAURENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 16 FUTURE CIVIC CENTER | |
| 4 LAURENS YMCA | 17 HISTORIC HOME | |
| 5 MARTHA FRANKS RETIREMENT CENTER | 18 DUNKLIN HOUSE | |
| 6 LAURENS MIDDLE SCHOOL | 19 HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MUSEUM | |
| 7 LAURENS COUNTY LIBRARY | 20 HISTORIC MILL SITE | |
| 8 E.B. MORSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 21 HISTORIC CABIN | |
| 9 JOE ADAR CENTER | 22 LITTLE RIVER PARK | |
| 10 AGAPE ASSISTED LIVING CENTER | | |

Laurens County Greenway/Blueway Project

City of Laurens, South Carolina