



PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

LG Task Force Chair: Alan Hamada
 Chair: Brad Wyche
 Facilitator: Paul Ellis

VISION

In 2025, Greenville County is a place where parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources are in abundance, are protected, provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities, receive adequate financial support, and enhance the quality of life for all residents of the county.

By 2025, at least 15 per cent (76,500 acres) of the total land area in Greenville County is devoted to parks, greenways, and open spaces for use and enjoyment by the general public. These parks, greenways and open spaces are distributed throughout the county and provide a wide variety of opportunities, ranging from natural, undisturbed areas to active recreation facilities. In addition, by 2025, at least 10% (51,000 acres) of the county's total land area will be preserved voluntarily through conservation easements and other methods.

	Public Parks, Greenways and Open Spaces	Open Spaces Protected by Conservation Easements (Public & Private)
Current	17,000	24,000
Needed	59,500	27,000
Total by 2025	76,500	51,000

By 2015, the standards set forth in the Greenville County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and in the master plans for the municipalities in the county are achieved.

- 80% of the county's population is within a safe 10-minute bicycle ride of a public park.
- The Reedy, Saluda, Tyger and Enoree River Greenway Systems of parks, multi-use trails and public open spaces have been completed.
- There is an ample supply of urban green space, such as "pocket" parks.
- Greenways for walking and bicycling have been built along many major highway, railroad and utility corridors.
- Abandoned commercial and industrial properties are frequently re-used for parks and public spaces, and there is an ongoing identification and re-use of abandoned rock quarries and other suitable land for regional retention ponds for storm water and recreational use.
- All public education campuses are public parks, and many also serve as community centers, public libraries, police substations, dining sites for senior citizens, and sites for public forums and meetings, and when appropriate, parking facilities are shared.
- More national and state scenic highways are designated in Greenville County and are protected and maintained to perpetuate their scenic value and attraction to tourists.

By 2025 the County, municipalities and the private sector provide sufficient funding for the maintenance, improvement, and redevelopment of existing parks, greenways and open spaces and for the acquisition and development of lands for such uses in the future.

- Many funding sources are available, such as bonds (general and revenue), impact fees, user fees, accommodations taxes, real estate transfer fees, and referendum-approved sales taxes.
- South Carolina taxpayers are able to designate contributions for parks on their state income tax returns.
- There is strong corporate support of parks through donations, volunteer hours, and special fundraising promotions.
- There is an ongoing effort to encourage private gifts of property for parks and conservation.

Vision Summary

Keep the Green in Greenville

- 15% of land area in parks and open spaces; currently below national standards
- 10% of land in conservation easements
- Reedy River greenway includes world class gardens, sculpture, bike paths and linkages to adjacent villages
- Tree line all parking lots
- One agency responsible for parks (city/county/municipalities)

Greenways as linkages

- Reedy River Park
- 16 mile greenway from Lake Conestee to Furman to Travelers Rest
- Enoree
- Saluda
- Feeder Streams in Simpsonville and Mauldin
- Stream buffers, bike paths, gardens

Walkways and bikeways as transportation and linkages



Both incentives and regulations are used to create parks, greenways, and open spaces in Greenville County.

- Important open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources throughout the county are protected and conserved by a variety of methods, such as Purchase of Development Rights programs and Transfer of Development Rights programs.
- Incentives encourage developers to create parks, greenways and open spaces and to preserve environmentally significant lands and resources.

One agency has overall responsibility for public parks, greenways and open spaces throughout Greenville County. There is strong public support for parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources in Greenville County, and local officials and the public recognize the positive impact these places have on economic development, public wellness, increased property values, tourism, and quality of life.

- The news media, community leaders, politicians, developers, civic groups, utilities and the general public are knowledgeable and informed about the value and importance of public parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources in Greenville County.

Vision 2025

Parks and Open Space Committee

Vision Statement

In 2025, Greenville County is a place where parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources are in abundance, are protected, provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities, receive adequate financial support, and enhance the quality of life for all residents of the county.

Goals

1. By 2025, at least 15 per cent (76,500 acres) of the total land area in Greenville County will be devoted to parks, greenways, and open spaces for use and enjoyment by the general public. These parks, greenways, and open spaces shall be distributed throughout the county and shall provide a wide variety of opportunities, ranging from natural, undisturbed areas to active recreation facilities. In addition, by 2025, at least 10 per cent (51,000 acres) of the county's total land area will be preserved voluntarily through conservation easements and other methods.

	<u>Public Parks, Greenways and Open Spaces</u>	<u>Open Spaces Protected by Conservation Easements (Public & Private)</u>
Current	17,000	24,000
Needed	59,500	27,000
Total by 2025	76,500	51,000

2. By 2015, the standards set forth in the Greenville County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and in the master plans for the municipalities in the county will be achieved.

Objectives:

- 80% of the county's population is within a safe 10-minute bicycle ride of a public park.
- The Reedy, Saluda, Tyger and Enoree River Greenway Systems of parks, multi-use trails and public open spaces have been completed.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

February 6, 2003

The Parks and Open Space Committee held its first meeting at the Cleveland Park Center on February 6, 2003 from noon until 2 p.m. Brad Wyche, the Chair of the Committee, presented an overview of the current status of parks and open space in Greenville County, after which the committee decided to discuss four major topics in the following breakout groups: Creating More Parks and Open Space; Education; Cooperation/Consolidation; and Sharing Facilities.

SUMMARY FOR BREAKOUT GROUP ON CREATING MORE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

I. Things we'd like to see in 2025

- A. A public park within a 10 minute walk of every citizen in the county
- B. A "greenway system" to include walkways, trails, and bike paths to connect existing parks and other key public properties using existing easements and rights-of-way and abandoned railway property.
- C. Bike paths and trails built adjacent to or coexistent to existing transportation corridors to create multi-use/shared space for recreational activities.
- D. A Reedy River park that would provide trails and bike paths from Travelers Rest to Lake Greenwood.
- E. Regulatory requirements for residential, commercial, and industrial developers to preserve existing visible green space and buffers within each project.
- F. Regulatory requirements for residential, commercial, and industrial developers to create visible green space and buffers within each project.
- G. Re-use of abandoned commercial and industrial buildings, parking lots and properties, including textile mills, to create space for parks and recreational activities.
- H. Identification and acquisition of agricultural lands suitable for parks and recreation.

II. Land use planning and regulatory changes we identified as urgent

- A. Aggressive land use planning to protect and conserve existing green space and other natural resources
- B. Zoning ordinances and incentives to promote residential cluster developments
- C. Regulatory requirements and incentives for developers to create park space and plan greenway connectivity to existing or planned greenways and parks.
- D. Public education to increase support for land use planning and zoning.
- E. Elected officials supportive of land use planning and zoning to preserve green space and protect natural resources.

III. Revenue to support the creation and preservation of parks and recreation

- A. Revenue generation through impact fees

- B. Revenue generation through real estate transfer fees.
- C. Revive the “penny for parks” sales tax referendum and campaign to insure passage
- D. Establish a non-profit foundation to accept public, private, and corporate gifts to build parks
- E. Create state tax incentives for the donation of property to park systems
- F. Create a mechanism within the state tax system for individuals to designate a \$1 gift to parks and recreation.
- G. Seek corporate support for parks and recreation
- H. Create partnerships to bring state and federal funding to the county.
- I. Conduct a campaign to solicit private gifts of property as part of the estate planning process.
- J. Generate funding for parks and recreation through the recycling program.

IV. Miscellaneous

- A. Create a statewide program to eradicate invasive species from parks and public lands (kudzu, English Ivy, and bamboo were mentioned specifically)
- B. Identify abandoned rock quarries suitable for capturing and storing large quantities of storm water for replenishing the rivers and streams and for other recreational uses such as fishing.

SUMMARY FOR BREAKOUT GROUP ON EDUCATION

General Ideas

- Vision - Achieve a broadly educated political leadership, community leaders and public
 - Educated political leaders, community leaders and citizenry will approve of abundant parks and open spaces and will make it happen
- Educate everyone about the benefits of Parks & Open Spaces
 - Relate parks to economy, public wellness
 - Green space yields higher property values
 - Green space provides a better quality of life
- Surrounding communities – connect with green space
 - Emphasis should be placed now on connectivity
 - We need to address
 - I-385 into Greenville
 - Reedy River Greenway – TR to Greenwood
 - Easley and Pickens County to Greenville
- Link with redevelopment projects
- Require open space or dollars for open space as part of new development
- Recognize achievements
- Tie to coolness committee

WHO do we educate

- Media – The media provides the main link to the public
- Citizens
- Community leaders – Can influence political leaders
- Business leaders – Can influence political leaders

- Public utilities
 - e.g., Use of Duke Power and Western Carolina Regional Sewer Authority utility corridors
- Developers
- Surrounding communities
- Business recruiters
- Civic groups
- Churches
- Kids/Schools
- Politicians
 - County Council is pivotal in making this a reality
 - Educate the candidates before they become elected officials
- Hospital associations/physicians

WHAT do we do

Provide information on the benefits of abundant Parks & Open Spaces

- Economic Benefits
 - Relate green space to economic development
 - Increased property values
 - Tax benefits
- Increased quality of life
- Wellness benefits
- Open space promotes a Sense of Community - good for diversity and humanity
- Legacy
- Space for citizen interaction/diversity
- “Coolness”
- Make the Reedy River Park a destination - a mini-Buchart Gardens

HOW do we accomplish this education

- Fact sheets
- Media – print and broadcast
- Compare/contrast other places-good and bad
 - Bellingham, WA a good example of where green space is a high priority
- Show where we are and where we should go
- Recognize achievements
- “Coolness”
- Community meetings
- Events at current or proposed Venues
- Convert Greenville’s Main Street into the equivalent of Victoria, BC with hanging baskets – modest cost, maximum effect
- Cost/Benefit analyses
 - For every dollar spent, Green space provides many dollars in return

SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT GROUP ON COOPERATION/CONSOLIDATION

Vision: County, Municipal and Educational entities cooperate fully in sharing their programs and resources to provide the greatest possible recreation and open space opportunities to residents and visitors in all areas of Greenville County.

Consolidation of these organizations may be possible in the future, but attention should be focused on promoting cooperation among the County Recreation District, various city park and recreation departments, and the Greenville County School district.

Objectives:

Create a countywide coordinating committee that would include representatives of the County Recreation District, various city park and recreation departments, and the Greenville County School district. This group may also include representatives of interested private sector groups. The purpose of this group is to:

1. Develop working relationships
2. Share plans
3. Discuss ways to share resources, programs and facilities
4. Improve attitudes and relationships among the various entities
5. Encourage greater public awareness of all park and recreation activities.

SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT GROUP ON SHARING FACILITIES

1. There is a partnership between the Greenville County Recreation Commission and the Greenville County School District, Greenville Tech, North Greenville College, etc.... to allow for the maximum utilization of existing facilities already present within our community as well as new facilities in the future, thus allowing for school fields to be utilized during the summer months for athletic programming and community activities. It was envisioned that this approach would take advantage of the opportunity for consolidated responsibilities for grounds maintenance – i.e., let the School District be responsible for education and the Recreation Commission be responsible for maintaining and programming of the parks, fields and open spaces.

2. These combined school/park campuses would be embraced by our citizens as community centers with full access to the public resulting in a sense of ownership by the surrounding neighborhoods and communities. In a way, replicating Furman University's open campus approach to Greenville where the public is welcome to enjoy the benefits of the campus as a public park throughout the year.

3. There would be the opportunity for cooperation with private entities such as the YMCA, to open up access to the public for further recreational opportunities.

4. There would be broad coordination with transportation related issues to take advantage of utilizing abandoned railways as public connectors between different areas within our community as well as making provisions for the incorporation of bike and walking trails linking various parks and open areas with other amenities including our rivers and other natural resources.

5. Where new developments and subdivisions would provide for neighborhood parks and open spaces as a norm, thus preserving larger natural areas of our rural countryside while providing passive recreational opportunities.

6. Where land beneath power lines could be used as a means to provide community connectors and possible cooperative community gardens and open space.
7. Where the use of regional detention ponds in lieu of small, open, empty ditches would create passive recreational "lake-like" amenities throughout our community while addressing the storm water run-off issues which have to be addressed regardless.
8. The building of public/civic architecture would follow a "Heritage Green" model of creating campus clusters where the interstitial space surrounding and between the buildings would be available for public outdoor space such as that of a university campus.

During the group's discussion, there were strong feelings and a majority consensus that the consolidation of the Greenville County Recreation Commission and the recreation departments of local municipalities such as the city of Greenville, Mauldin etc. not only makes sense but will become a necessity from a fiscal standpoint, as well a coordination standpoint.

- There is an ample supply of urban green space, such as “pocket parks.
 - Greenways for walking and bicycling have been built along many major highway, railroad and utility corridors.
 - Abandoned commercial and industrial properties are frequently re-used for parks and public spaces, and there is an ongoing identification and re-use of abandoned rock quarries and other suitable land for regional retention ponds for stormwater and recreational use.
 - All public education campuses are public parks, and many also serve as community centers, public libraries, police substations, dining sites for senior citizens, and sites for public forums and meetings, and when appropriate, parking facilities are shared.
 - More national and state scenic highways are designated in Greenville County and are protected and maintained to perpetuate their scenic value and attraction to tourists.
3. The county, municipalities and the private sector provide sufficient funding for the maintenance, improvement and redevelopment of existing parks, greenways and open spaces and for the acquisition and development of lands for such uses in the future.

Objectives:

- Many funding sources are available, such as bonds (general and revenue), impact fees, user fees, accommodations taxes, real estate transfer fees, and referendum-approved sales taxes.
 - South Carolina taxpayers are able to designate contributions for parks on their state income tax returns.
 - There is strong corporate support of parks through donations, volunteer hours, and special fundraising promotions.
 - There is an ongoing effort to encourage private gifts of property for parks and conservation.
4. Both incentives and regulations are used to create parks, greenways, and open spaces in Greenville County.

Objectives:

- Protect and conserve important open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources throughout the county by a variety of methods, such as Purchase of Development Rights programs and Transfer of Development Rights programs.
 - Provide incentives to encourage developers to create parks, greenways and open spaces and to preserve environmentally significant lands and resources.
5. One agency will have overall responsibility for public parks, greenways and open spaces throughout Greenville County.
 6. There is strong public support for parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources in Greenville County, and local officials and the public recognize the positive impact these places have on economic development, public wellness, increased property values, tourism, and quality of life.

Objectives:

- There is an ongoing and concerted effort to educate the news media, community leaders, politicians, developers, civic groups, utilities and the general public about the value and importance of public parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources in Greenville County.