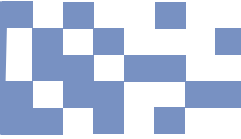


THE **Vision's Voice**  
PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE



presented by The Cliffs Communities  
by Becky Mann

Whether you call it little Atlanta, home to the shops at Gridlock, or simply your worst traffic nightmare, Woodruff Road has become Greenville's most obvious example of what happens in the absence of planning. Thanks to shop after shop, and strip mall after strip mall, all emptying onto a thoroughfare that can't accommodate that many curb cuts, getting around is difficult at best.

"I think that's a perfect example of when we let growth happen, and this is not something you lay at the foot of the city or the county or anybody in particular," says Nancy Whitworth, economic development director for the city of Greenville. "If you don't plan, things just happen and then all of a sudden you think, oh my goodness, how did this happen? Well, there was no plan."

Greenville's growth, Whitworth says, has brought about an awareness that to avoid Woodruff Road situations, growth has to be orderly and sustainable. Economic prosperity has to be balanced with quality of life issues. Planning should be not just about what's going on in your own backyard, but about what's across the fence, across town, and across turf-driven boundaries.

Greenville's Vision 2025 goal for planning and infrastructure reads with that balance in mind: Greenville County is considered the premier location for new industry because of its public services and its reputation for a high quality of life resulting from a commitment to comprehensive planning.

It's a goal that Whitworth says can be achieved. "I do think that we have the wherewithal to begin to plan more comprehensively as a whole county as opposed to in the past, we've tended to look at our own areas, like in the city or in Greer. I think that there's very much interest at the county and the other municipalities for us to all begin to work together a little bit better," she says. "I absolutely do see that as something that is very doable."

Rick Danner, mayor of Greer, agrees. He and others have worked hard to create an inviting downtown, a sense of place, and a sense of community in Greer while working with surrounding areas to move the Upstate forward. "We're always interested in finding ways to work with other governmental entities, and we have had some success in that regard. I certainly understand, I think our council understands, that we have to be a player in this market.



A graphic explanation of the many facets of Vision 2025. For more information, contact Russell Stall with Greenville Forward at 233-8443 or [rstall@researchwrks.com](mailto:rstall@researchwrks.com)

Spartanburg has a lot to offer, Greenville has a lot to offer, but all three of the cities are a little bit different," he says.

Whitworth points to the area's economic development strategy as a positive example of what can happen when people work together. The strategy involved the city, the county and the chamber, along with representatives from Greer and other areas – all involved in a process that involved open communication. The Upstate Alliance, she says, is another example. A group that brings together 10 counties and three cities, the alliance promotes economic development. Bringing the right people together to talk about regional planning, an initiative brought forth by USC Upstate, is another move in the right direction. Discussion began last year, and another session is in the works.

There are obstacles, of course. Looking no farther than one's own boundaries can be a tough habit to break. Open communication across political boundaries will work with time, Whitworth says. "I think we need to get to where it's seamless, so that it's not this rigid, forced sort of way of working together," she says. "I think it's something that's going to have to come more naturally, and it's going to take a little bit of time to get to that point."

Vision 2025 goals, including those for planning and infrastructure, are moving forward with the help of Greenville Forward, an organization intended to make sure that the Vision becomes a reality. For more information, go to [www.greenvilleforward.com](http://www.greenvilleforward.com) or call Russell Stall, executive director of Greenville Forward, at (864) 233-8443. ■



As Vision 2005 paved the way in the 1980s for the incredible quality of life Greenville enjoys today, Vision 2025 spearheads projects that will further elevate our city, culturally and commercially. The Vision's Voice is one of the many ways that The Cliffs is committed to promoting growth in Greenville.

*The*  
**open hearth**  
SINCE 1959

**Celebrating 47 Years!**

*Serving the Finest Steaks, Chops, Chicken, and Seafood in an Intimate Dining Atmosphere*

Monday-Saturday, 5:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.  
864-244-2665 • 2801 Wade Hampton Blvd.

**Celebrating Greenville's new downtown destination**

  
*Hampton Inn & Suites*

**Greenville Riverplace**

171 Riverplace, Greenville, SC 864.271.8700 [hamptoninnandsuitesgreenville.com](http://hamptoninnandsuitesgreenville.com)

photo by Scott Holloway