



**JOINT LIBERTY CITY COUNCIL & PLANNING COMMISSION**

**WORK SESSION AGENDA**

**March 5th, 2024, at 6:30 PM**

**Rosewood Center - 419 E Main St. Liberty, SC 29657**

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- **Welcome and Call to Order Mayor Erica Romo Woods**

***Discussion Topics:***

-Joint convening to discuss the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Adjournment**



To sign up to speak at the next council meeting, please email or call our Clerk of Council by 4:30 pm the Friday prior to the meeting. (Regular Sessions are held the second Monday of every month)

**Blocke@libertysc.com - 864-843-3177**





## MEMO

To: Council Members  
From: Jennifer Vissage, City Planner  
Date: February 23, 2024  
Re: Comprehensive Plan Update

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As you know, the Planning Commission has been working hard on the comprehensive plan update. The data research has been completed and the next step is goals and the future land use map. The Planning Commission has been working on these items but now they need your input.

I have attached the draft copy of the plan and the map for you to review prior to the work session. The goals are listed in the last chapter of the plan. If you have questions prior to the meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me.

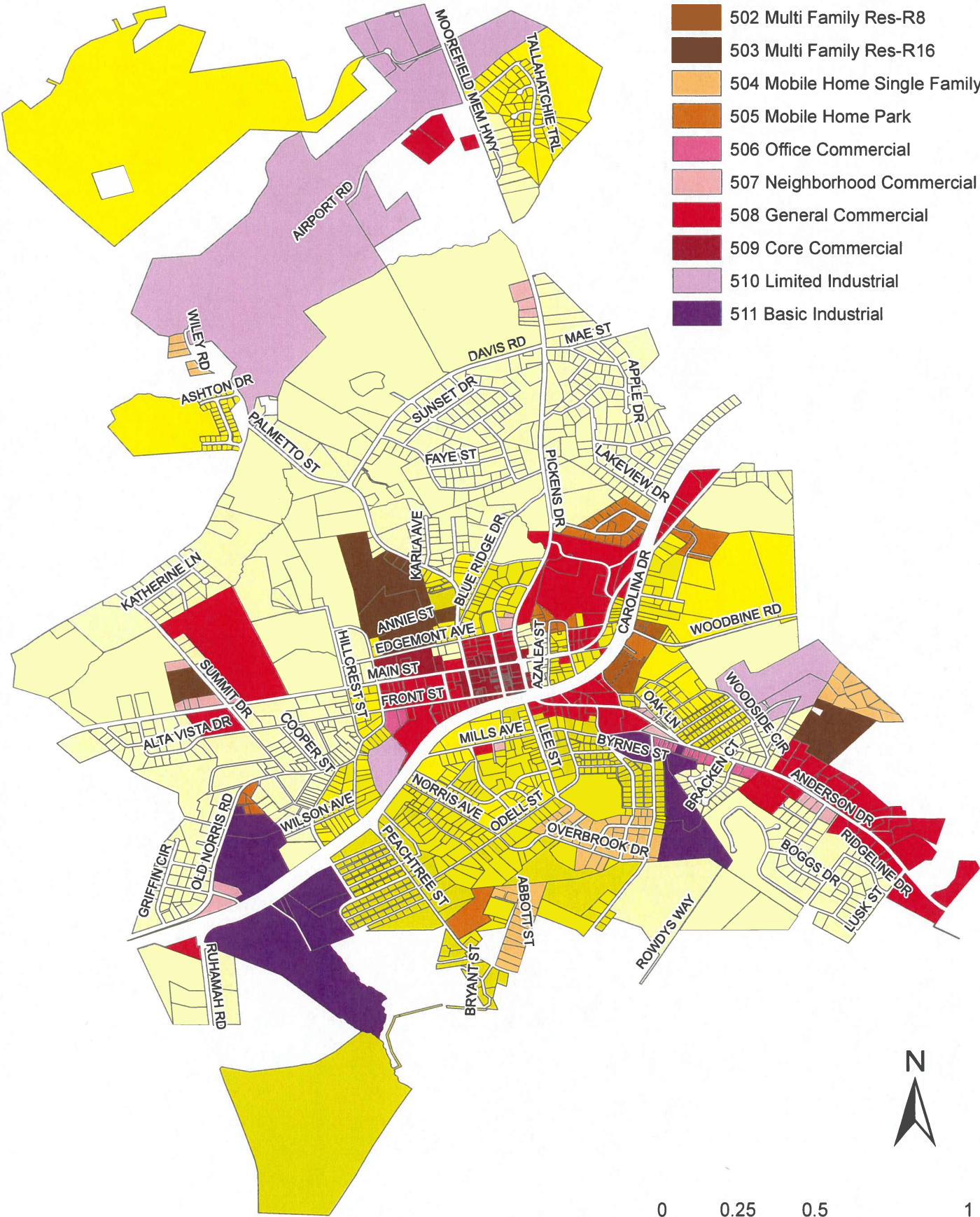
After the work session, we will have another public meeting in hopes of getting more input from the citizens. Once I finalize the date, I will invite all of you to attend as well.

Thank you for your assistance and input with this project.



**Zoning**

- 500 Low Density Residential
- 501 Medium Density Residential
- 501A Duplex Residential
- 502 Multi Family Res-R8
- 503 Multi Family Res-R16
- 504 Mobile Home Single Family
- 505 Mobile Home Park
- 506 Office Commercial
- 507 Neighborhood Commercial
- 508 General Commercial
- 509 Core Commercial
- 510 Limited Industrial
- 511 Basic Industrial



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





CITY OF LIBERTY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
ADOPTED 2024  
DRAFT

*City of Liberty*

*South Carolina*

**CITY COUNCIL**

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ROBBIE SHOENLEBEN, MAYOR PRO-TEM  
LAVANT PADGETT  
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**CITY STAFF**

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BAILEE LOCKE, CITY CLERK

**PRODUCED BY:**

S.C. APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**ACOG PROJECT TEAM**

JENNIFER VISSAGE, SENIOR PLANNER  
JAKE WHITMIRE, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose .....	1
Framework .....	2
<b>HISTORY OF LIBERTY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>POPULATION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Population Trends .....	5
Household and Family Trends .....	7
Race and Ethnicity .....	8
Age .....	8
Education .....	9
<b>ECONOMY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Economic Profile .....	10
Income .....	10
Employment .....	11
<b>Housing .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Existing Conditions .....	14
Value and Affordability .....	15
Type and Occupation .....	16
Age and Condition .....	17
<b>Natural Resources .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Geographic Profile .....	19
Climate .....	19
Topographic Character .....	20
Lakes, Rivers, and Streams .....	21
Flood Areas .....	21
Soils .....	21
Unique Parks and Recreation Areas .....	22
<b>Community and Cultural Facilities .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Community Facilities .....	24
Cultural Facilities .....	28
<b>Transportation .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Context .....	30
Road Network .....	30
<b>Land Use .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Existing Land Use .....	36

Existing Zoning .....	37
Future Land Use .....	39
<b>RESILIENCY .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Purpose .....	44
Primary Hazards .....	44
Tools and Existing Protective Measures .....	45
Conclusion .....	45
<b>Priority Investment .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Quality Development .....	49
Quality Connections.....	50
Healthy Neighborhoods .....	51
Natural and Cultural Resources .....	52

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The Liberty Comprehensive Plan is an officially adopted policy document that establishes the City's goals for the future and provides direction for decisions affecting the use and development of land, preservation of open space, transportation systems, partnerships with other organizations, economic growth, the expansion and maintenance of public facilities and services, and the relationship between land use patterns and fiscal policies.

The document will need to be reviewed in 5 years and rewritten in 10 years in accordance with Section 6-29-510(E) of the South Carolina Code<sup>1</sup>. Future reviews will focus on providing new demographic information to determine whether the trends identified in this Plan are still relevant, or if they have changed.

The Comprehensive Plan is different from the land use code. It does not change existing regulations, nor does it create new regulations. It is an advisory document that recommends and provides guidance changes to the land use code. The Comprehensive Plan is written to provide general policy direction while also providing enough detail to set priorities and guide decision-making.

Five factors make the Comprehensive Plan "comprehensive":

- The plan covers the entire area of the city and the city periphery.
- The plan integrates authentic and diverse community participation spanning the full range of perspectives and interests.
- The time horizon considered in the plan is long-range, extending two decades into the future, well beyond the pressing concerns of today.
- The plan provides general guidance on where growth and various land uses should occur and articulates community expectations about the physical form of development.
- The plan provides a framework for achieving a sustainable future at the local level with strategies that aim to align community, environment, and economy.

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<sup>1</sup> All planning elements must be an expression of the planning commission recommendations to the appropriate governing bodies about the wise and efficient use of public funds, the future growth, development, and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction, and consideration of the fiscal impact on property owners. The planning elements whether done as a package or in separate increments together comprise the comprehensive plan for the jurisdiction at any one point in time. The local planning commission shall review the comprehensive plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan. The comprehensive plan, including all elements of it, must be updated at least every ten years.



# Framework

The framework for reevaluating and reestablishing the Comprehensive Plan to meet the needs of the future is outlined in the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994. The Comprehensive Plan includes ten elements, which comprise the body of this Plan:

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Population                              | 6. Community Facilities |
| 2. Housing                                 | 7. Land Use             |
| 3. Economic Development                    | 8. Transportation       |
| 4. Natural Resources                       | 9. Priority Investment  |
| 5. Community Facilities/Cultural Resources | 10. Resiliency          |

Since this document is intended to serve as a new Comprehensive Plan, the elements will be discussed in detail, to determine what changes have occurred since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2003. New socioeconomic data from the 2020 US Census and other sources will be incorporated into this review regarding the Population, Housing, and Economic Development elements. Parks, facilities, and projects will be reviewed in the Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Transportation, Natural Resources and Land Use Elements. Two new elements, Priority Investment and Resiliency, have been added since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

The Resiliency Element was recently adopted by the South Carolina General Assembly on September 29, 2020. This document will introduce the Resiliency Element and lay a groundwork to be built upon during the 5 Year Comprehensive Plan Update.

## HISTORY OF LIBERTY

Liberty's official recognition as a town came soon after the Charlotte-Atlanta Airline Railway was completed in the early 1870s. Former Confederate General William Easley, a lawyer working for the railroad company, negotiated to have the tracks laid through the southern part of Pickens County. It is along these tracks that the towns of Liberty, Easley, and Central all grew. By 1873, Liberty Station was built north of Liberty Spring after Mrs. Catherine Templeton deeded her land to the railroad company. John T. Boggs set up the new Liberty Post Office that same year, and was named the town's first postmaster.<sup>1</sup> Liberty was formally chartered on March 2, 1876, with the future town center being located on the former lands of Mrs. Templeton.



The town's first mayor W.E. Holcombe, a lawyer and former state senator, was elected in 1876.<sup>1</sup> He, like every succeeding mayor until the early 20th century, conducted most municipal business in his own home. Several schools were already in operation by this time, with most being privately funded, and sponsored either by the community or by the local churches. The Liberty First Baptist Church had existed prior to the city's founding, being located at the old Liberty Spring site. Reports indicate the Church had a congregation as early as the year 1802, when they met at an old log house north of the present-day town. The Liberty Presbyterian Church was built in 1883 at its present site; formerly the church's members had worshiped at Mt. Carmel Church in the country.

Liberty's next change came in 1901, when Mr. Jephtha P. Smith organized and started the first cotton mill, which he named the Liberty Mill. The original mill contained a card room and an operating spinning frame. Eighteen houses and two overseer houses were built as a mill village to house the plant's workers and their families. The second cotton mill was built by Mr. Lang Clayton of Norris in 1905. Built in a part of town often referred to as Rabbit Town, the plant was originally named the Calumet Mill, and later renamed the Maplecroft Mill. By 1920,

both mills had come under the control of Woodside Mills. The first mill became known as Woodside Liberty Plant #1 (commonly called the Big Mill), and the second as Woodside Liberty Plant #2 (commonly called the Little Mill). Woodside Mills operated the plants until 1956, when Dan River Mills of Virginia purchased the company. At their height in the 1970s, the mills employed over one thousand workers and housed over one thousand looms. In the 1970s, the Woodside Liberty Mills were the world's largest producers of Oxford fabric, a popular fabric of the era. Mills were again purchased in the early 1980s by Greenwood Mills, which maintained control of the mills until local textile industry declined in the 1990s due to foreign competition. In 2013 the little mill was demolished. The Big Mill is currently being stripped for demolition.

Outside of the mills, several other major changes also happened during this long time. Electricity came to Liberty in 1910, when Mr. J. Warren Smith, a salesperson, installed two gasoline generators downtown to operate the first streetlights and the lights of several shops. By 1928, demand had increased to the point that Mr. Smith decided to sell his assets to Duke Power, which established a small office downtown. The Liberty Fire Department was first established in 1925, with J. Warren Smith—the same man who brought electricity to Liberty—being named as the first fire chief. The Fire Department moved into its present building in 1974. The first town library originated in 1947 as a small room located in the same building as City Hall. The Sarlin Community Library, the one in current use, was built at its present location in 1966. Liberty's police department was finally organized in the 1920s, when the city employed a chief of police and two police officers. The first telephone service came to Liberty in 1902, when Southern Bell installed a telephone switchboard in the same building as the post office. The first water plant for the town was built in 1918 on Black Snake Road. This plant initially supplied water to around one hundred homes. This plant was phased out by 1956 after a newer waterworks site was built on Eighteen Mile Creek.

# POPULATION



## Population Trends

Population changes affect the physical growth of communities. An increase in population creates the need for new housing units, roads, water and sewer lines, schools, parks, police, and fire service, along with retail and service businesses.

Liberty experienced major growth from 1880 through the 1920 Census count. The city grew from 149 residents to 1750 residents, a growth rate of 87% over this period. The growth remained steady through the 1930s and 1980s with an increase of over 1,000 new residents. The city then experienced a long decline during the 1990 through 2000 Census counts with a 6.8 decrease in population between the 1990 and early 2000s. This coincided with the decline of the textile industry in the upstate of South Carolina and a downturn in the regional economy because of loss of jobs.

The City of Liberty has seen a steady increase in population between the 2010 and 2020 census counts with a population increase of over 8%. New construction and development will bring even more new residents to the city in the next 10 to 20 years.



Liberty Population vs Pickens County Population		
2020	3366	3.0%
2010	3269	8.6%
2000	3009	-6.8%
1990	3228	1.9%
1980	3167	10.7%
1970	2869	7.6%
1960	2657	16.0%
1950	2291	2.3%
1940	2240	5.3%
1930	2128	24.8%
1920	1750	61.2%
1910	1058	187.5%
1900	368	74.4%
1890	211	41.6%
1880	149	

Source: US Census

The Upstate Region of South Carolina continues to see significant population growth, with the region's population growing by more than 172,000, or 12.6% between 2010 and 2020. Pickens County also experienced growth during the 10-year period, with an estimated 2020 population of almost 120,000, a 7.6% increase from 2010.

Liberty Population vs Pickens County Municipalities 2010-2020			
	2010	2020	Change
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>3269</b>	<b>3465</b>	<b>5.6%</b>
City of Pickens	3126	3300	5.2%
Six Mile	675	747	9.6%
Easley	19993	22154	9.75%
Norris	813	847	4%
Central	5159	5239	1.5%
Clemson	13905	16081	13%
Pickens County	119224	130793	8.84%
Upstate South Carolina	1,362,073	1,544,206	11.7%
South Carolina	4,625,364	5,321,206	13%

While not growing at the rate of the region, Liberty's population is growing again, which could be a mark of stabilization in the community. A major factor contributing to the 1980-2000 population decline was attrition and out-migration to Pickens County, the nearby urban fringe areas. The development taking place in Greenville and Pickens Counties has reached the Liberty market.

Comparing the City of Liberty with similar-sized municipalities in the Upstate illustrates the differences between Liberty and the surrounding region. The City of Liberty is one of the smaller cities in population but is the fourth highest (5.6%) in an increase since 2010 only behind Clemson (13%), Easley (9.75%) and Six Mile (9.6%).

## Household and Family Trends

Any change in population size or demographics creates a change in both the number of households and the demand for housing. Growth in the number of households and/or families has been consistently linked to growth in population. A “family” (or family household) contains relatives living together, whereas a “household” (or non-family household) is one where the householder either lives alone or with non-relatives.

When the population or households increase, the demand for additional housing units increases. This is especially true when population growth is accompanied by a decrease in household size and/or family size (i.e., fewer people per home plus additional people leads to the need for more homes). There were 1277 occupied housing units within the City of Liberty in 2020 compared to 1,458 occupied housing units in 2023. The number of occupied housing units is projected to increase to 1486 in 2023.

Since 1850, the trend in the number of people per household had been declining in the United States. This decline was tied to at least two demographic trends: women having fewer children and fewer extended family living situations. However, in 2018 the United States observed its first increase in household size since 1850, which could have implications on the housing market. This same trend is also present in the state and local household size data. Per the latest projections from ESRI Business Analyst, the number of people per household in 2020 averaged 2.54 in Pickens County and 2.50 in South Carolina compared with 2.53 and 2.49 respectively in 2010. For the City of Liberty, households were more populous with 2.90 people per household in 2020 and 3.08 in 2023.

In terms of families, Liberty was estimated to see an increase in family households in 2020. In Pickens County and the State of South Carolina, the number of family households increased in 2020. In Liberty, these family households make up 71% of all households. In contrast, family households make up 68% of all households in Pickens County and 66% in South Carolina. This trend is not surprising. Across the country, young singles tend to gravitate toward urban areas while families transition to suburban and rural areas for better schools and safer neighborhoods.

Another demographic factor to consider is the percentage of married couples within Liberty households. Married couples comprised 45% of all households in Liberty in 2020, compared to 50% in Pickens County and 48% in South Carolina.

It remains to be seen whether the recent trend of increasing household sizes will continue. Household sizes have been trending downward for over a century, but the trend is now decreasing at a slower rate or plateauing. Population and household size correlate to housing market shifts, which in turn has direct effects on consumer spending. Monitoring these trends will be critical in shaping policy for Liberty and should be discussed in the next Comprehensive Plan.

## Race and Ethnicity

In 2020, the population of the City of Liberty was white (84.3%), with the Black population coming in second (6.4%). The city is less diverse than Pickens County (71.5% White), and the State of South Carolina (63.4% White). The city is slightly more diverse than it was in 2010 when the population was 89.8% White and 6.1% Black. The largest change in this period was with the group identifying as two or more races. This group grew from 2% of the population in 2010 to 5.6% of the population in 2020.

Population by Race				
Race	2010		2020	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
White Alone	435	89.8%	568	84.3%
Black Alone	47	6.1%	30	6.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	0	.1%	1	.9%
Asian Alone	11	.5%	16	.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	5	1.6%	10	2.3%
Two or More Races	4	2.0%	50	5.6%
Total	502	100.0%	675	100.0%

Another noticeable trend is the increase of the Hispanic population as they continue to settle in the Upstate Region. The region's population is 7% Hispanic, a 1.2% increase from 2010. The Hispanic population in Liberty grew at a faster clip with 3.6% in 2010 and now make up 5.2% of residents in Liberty.

## Age

Understanding the age composition of a city is vitally important because it has a bearing on land use issues. The number of people in different age groups impacts the types of, and demands for, both public and private sector services. For example, if the number of senior citizens is increasing and the number of young children is decreasing, then it would be counterproductive to fund new schools at the expense of senior facilities.

The median age in Liberty has steadily increased, going from 38.6 in 2010 to 43.8 in 2020, reflecting a shift in age distribution toward older residents. A similar upward shift in median age occurred within South Carolina and Pickens County. The median age in the state rose from 32.0 in 1990 to 39.5 in 2020. Pickens County's median age increased from 34.9 in 1990 to 36.9 in 2020.

According to the 2020 estimates, the largest percentage of Liberty's population (49%) includes people ages 25 to 64 years old. Individuals in this age bracket are the main working age population. This cohort grew slightly from 2010 by around 4.5%.

Despite current trends, it is important to understand the population makeup of a community to get an idea as to the services required to support them. The age cohort 0-14 accounts for 18% of Liberty's population. This age

bracket includes school age children, plus children too young to attend school. These individuals require services such as day care, adequate educational facilities, appropriate student/teacher ratios, bus service to and from school, free lunch programs for those from economically challenged families, safe routes to school via a network of well-maintained and continuous sidewalks and crosswalks, parks and playgrounds, age-appropriate entertainment and retail (children’s museum, clothing stores, etc.), and pediatric doctors and specialists.

Another large cohort in Liberty are those aged sixty-five and over, who also account for approximately 18% of Liberty’s population. Retired individuals and elderly individuals have unique needs than the general population and require different services. Many retirees choose to stay in their own homes and “age in place,” although senior retirement developments for active lifestyles are becoming more common. Elderly individuals may need added “assistance” for activities of daily living (ADLs) and may choose to live in assisted living facilities. Many such facilities provide a “continuum of care,” whereby a resident can transition easily from independent living within the facility to an assisted living situation to receiving nursing home care within the same facility. These alternative living situations may require changes to the zoning and land development ordinances.

In addition, seniors who remain in their homes often need meal assistance via Meals on Wheels or other nutritional programs, which may require extra funding from the city. Transportation assistance is often needed, requiring transit service, paratransit, or just sidewalks leading to meaningful destinations that are a short walking distance away. Transportation items will need to be included in transportation plans and funded by a Capital Improvement Program or other funding source. Because healthcare needs increase as people age, medical facilities within the city of Liberty may need to expand and/or hire additional healthcare personnel.

## Education

In 2020, more than 42% of Liberty residents over the age of twenty-five have obtained a high school education or equivalent. At least 90% of Liberty’s residents over the age of twenty-five had either a high school or post-secondary degree, including 24% with a bachelor’s degree or higher. In Pickens County as a whole, 42% of the population over the age of twenty-five had obtained a high school education or equivalent, with 88.7% having at least a high school education or higher with 20% having at least a bachelor’s degree. Both Liberty and Pickens County outpace the State of South Carolina in high school level educational attainment, with only 29% of the State’s residents obtaining a high school education or equivalent. However, the state has more residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher (29.6%) compared to the city and the county.

Through the last several decades, the U.S. population has become more educated. Census data show that the number of people who have obtained a high school education is increasing, along with the amount of people seeking further education.

# ECONOMY



## Economic Profile

Economic growth is needed to help create job opportunities, provide a variety of goods and services, and be the foundation for a tax base that can sustain a community through business cycles. Economic development has become so important that communities can no longer afford to leave it to chance. The community's desire to attract industry and diversify the tax base is only achieved through a continuous effort to improve the conditions needed to support economic development. Many issues affect the ability of a city to attract new businesses, ranging from workforce availability, quality of life, taxation, and development costs. Planning efforts that focus on identifying these challenges and strategies to overcome them will be an important part of improving the long-term stability of the local economy.

## Income

The City of Liberty is a middle-income community with approximately 26% of its households earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000 in 2023. Another 32% earn between \$75,000 and \$150,000. However, 28% of households earn less than \$25,000. These households often struggle to find and keep jobs in a changing labor market, keep up with their bills, pay for essentials like health care and housing, and to raise children with a chance of future success. The added pressures placed on these households in down economic times often lead to increased demand for services in a community as well. Both local government and non-profit organizations receive many requests for assistance for everything from shelter to food and clothing and paying bills.

Household Income, 2023	
Less than \$15,000	8.9%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	10%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	13.4%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	12.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	13.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	18.7%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	2.8%
\$200,000 or More	3.0%
Average Income	\$75,106

Source: 2023 ESRI Estimates

The 2023 average household income for Liberty was \$75,106. The city is comparable to both Pickens County (\$76,921) and South Carolina (\$74,567) in average household income levels.

## Employment

Since the industrialization of the South, manufacturing has driven the local economy, previously in the form of textiles. Neither textiles nor manufacturing in general dominate the local economy as they once did. However, manufacturing remains important to the economic well-being of the city (14%) and county (14%).

Employment by Industry	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, Mining	0.1%
Construction	10.8%
Manufacturing	14.0%
Wholesale Trade	2.7%
Retail Trade	11.6%
Transportation and Warehousing, Utilities	7.8%
Information	0%
Finance and Insurance, Real Estate	3.2%
Services	47.1%
Public administration	2.7%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The highest categories of employment in Liberty are “Services.” This category represented 47.1% of workers. This compares to 51% of workers in Pickens County. Statewide, the percentage of people employed in this category was 47.3%. Manufacturing, retail trade and construction are the other top employers for jobs living in the City of Liberty. This is the same pattern in Pickens County as well as the State of South Carolina.

Services account for 47% of employment in Liberty. The Services category covers several sub-categories of employment, including Personal Care and Service Occupations (barbers, hairstylists, fitness trainers, manicurists/pedicurists), Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations (housekeeping, pest control, janitorial), Food Prep and Service Occupations (servers, cooks, dishwashers), Protective Service Occupations (correctional officers,

police officers, firefighters, security guards), and Healthcare Support Occupations (Medical and dental assistants, massage therapists, medical transcriptionists, home health aides).

It is projected that the services industry will continue to provide the greatest number of new jobs in Liberty in the future. A substantial portion of the jobs in the Services field tend to pay less. Average household and family incomes in Liberty are low compared to statewide averages. Families are sometimes challenged to meet their basic needs—including housing and transportation—leaving little extra spending money, which reduces the City’s sales tax revenues. Attracting higher paying jobs that can increase average family incomes is critically important.

The City of Liberty has one major employer within the city limits – Cornell Dublier. The company is located near the airport and employs over two hundred (two hundred). There are eleven (11) other major employers within a five (5) mile radius that hire total of over two thousand employees.

The

Employer	Number of Employees	Distant from City Limits
<b>Cornell Dublier Marketing Inc</b>	220	0
American Waffle	90	1
Champion Aerospace	180	2.2
<b>Abbott</b>	330	2.4
JR Automation	120	2.4
United Tool	75	2.4
<b>Taylor Made</b>	245	2.5
Ipsum	30	2.5
<b>Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Company</b>	720	2.6
Keymark	71	3
Sealevel Systems	69	3
Imperial Die Casting Company	160	4.8

businesses in bold are in the City Limits. The companies in red are listed in the top five manufacturing employers in Pickens County.

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# Housing



## Existing Conditions

Between the 2010 and 2020 Census years, the City of Liberty experienced a low growth rate in terms of total housing units. In this time Liberty increased by a total of thirty-six housing units, resulting in in just a 2.9% housing growth rate. However, this growth percentage outpaces other similarly sized towns within the area, such as Pickens, Westminster, and Williamston, all of which experienced a negative change in total number of housing units. Liberty significantly lagged when compared to the overall growth rate of both Pickens County and the State of South Carolina, which each gained over three times as many housing units by percentage at 10.03% and 9.7% respectively.

Additionally, the City of Liberty currently has 9.84% of its housing stock listed as vacant. This number is the third lowest of the areas surveyed in the following table, trailing Easley, and Williamston who each have 6.37 and 9.21% of homes identified as vacant, respectively. These numbers indicate that Liberty is on trend with most of the region, county, and state in available or dilapidated housing stock.

Table x.1 Housing Units 2010 - 2022

Area	2010	2022	Change
Anderson	12,938	12,695	-1.88%
Central	2,230	2,376	6.55%
Easley	9,072	10,413	14.78%
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>1,508</b>	<b>1,544</b>	<b>2.39%</b>
Pickens	1,481	1,474	-0.47%
Seneca	4,076	4,417	8.37%
Westminster	1,227	1,134	-7.58%
Williamston	1,878	1,846	-1.70%
Pickens County	51,244	56,385	10.03%
South Carolina	2,137,683	2,344,963	9.70%

Table x.2 Vacancy Rates 2010 - 2022

Area	2010 Vacancy Rate	2022 Vacancy Rate	% Difference
Anderson	14.36%	11.13%	-22.49%
Central	11.57%	14.18%	22.59%
Easley	8.63%	6.37%	-26.23%
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>8.82%</b>	<b>9.84%</b>	<b>11.62%</b>
Pickens	15.87%	11.33%	-28.60%
Seneca	13.86%	11.86%	-14.42%
Westminster	15.65%	15.52%	-0.82%
Williamston	14.38%	9.21%	-35.95%
Pickens County	11.74%	10.68%	-9.04%
South Carolina	15.74%	12.62%	-19.80%

### Value and Affordability

In 2022 the median home price for the City of Liberty was \$150,800, making it the lowest value of the areas surveyed with the next closest being Westminster at \$152,500. While the lowest identified in the region, this number represents a 213% increase in the median home value for the city since the year 2000. This means that while the relative home prices within Liberty are low, the city and its new and future residents are not immune to the same housing cost increases that have been seen in the upstate, state, and nationally.

Similarly, the median monthly rental cost for the City of Liberty is \$809. Like median home value, this figure is low when compared to other areas around the county, region, and state but since the year 2000 has increased by 206% from \$392. Because of this, 57.1% of renters within Liberty are considered rent burdened, meaning that they have 30% or greater of their monthly income being spent on housing costs. This does not include transportation, food, and in many cases utility costs.

These numbers represent a growing issue not only for the City of Liberty, but South Carolina and the nation. As housing prices continue to increase and monthly rental costs follow, the financial strain that housing can put on entire households limits the economic vitality of those individuals and families and in turn has crucial impacts on services related businesses within the City.

Table x.3 Median Home and Rent

Area	Median Value	Rent Median	Rent Burden
Anderson	\$ 177,300	\$ 884	53.0%
Central	\$ 207,000	\$ 919	37.6%
Easley	\$ 229,200	\$ 852	62.6%
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>\$ 150,800</b>	<b>\$ 809</b>	<b>57.1%</b>
Pickens	\$ 191,100	\$ 890	60.6%
Seneca	\$ 201,300	\$ 757	51.0%
Westminster	\$ 152,500	\$ 579	40.8%
Williamston	\$ 154,100	\$ 840	29.0%
Pickens County	\$ 299,100	\$ 873	49.3%
South Carolina	\$ 254,600	\$ 1,084	52.2%

## Type and Occupation

85.9% of Liberty’s homes are single family structures. This is the highest identified percentage of single-family homes in the areas surveyed by 10%. Just 3.9% of available dwelling units are in structures that contain five or more units, 2.9% are duplexes, triplexes, or quadplexes, and 7.3% are mobile homes. This means that there is limited flexibility in housing types for residents. While this strengthens Liberty’s small town, rural character, it can also contribute to an increase in housing costs and make affordable housing harder to come by for current and future residents in need.

Of these available housing types, 72.6% are owner occupied, while the remaining 27.4% are occupied by renters. This owner occupation rate is the highest identified locally and sits slightly above the state owner occupation rate of 72%. This number reflects the low home ownership costs identified by the median housing cost in the previous section. However, there is still over one quarter of the City’s population that rents their housing, and as such has the potential to benefit from affordable rental housing which can be made available by diversifying the housing types within the city.

Table x.4 Units per Structure

Area	1	2 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 19	20+	MH	Other
Anderson	63.1%	12.5%	9.6%	4.1%	7.0%	1.4%	0.1%
Central	32.3%	8.6%	9.7%	36.8%	9.4%	3.1%	0.0%
Easley	76.1%	4.8%	8.3%	2.0%	3.7%	5.0%	0.1%
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>85.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Pickens	67.8%	7.9%	3.0%	4.8%	2.2%	14.4%	0.0%
Seneca	69.1%	12.1%	5.3%	3.9%	6.3%	3.3%	0.0%
Westminster	73.6%	9.9%	1.7%	2.1%	2.8%	9.9%	0.0%
Williamston	75.1%	3.6%	15.8%	0.0%	0.6%	4.9%	0.0%
Pickens County	64.5%	5.2%	3.7%	5.1%	3.2%	18.1%	0.3%
South Carolina	67.5%	4.5%	4.2%	3.3%	5.3%	15.0%	0.2%

Table x.5 Occupation Type

Area	Owner Occupied	Owner Occupied %	Renter Occupied	Renter Occupied %
Anderson	6009	50.0%	5999	50.0%
Central	379	20.1%	1507	79.9%
Easley	7070	69.0%	3182	31.0%
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>72.6%</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>27.4%</b>
Pickens	766	65.2%	408	34.8%
Seneca	2212	55.9%	1742	44.1%
Westminster	675	66.7%	337	33.3%
Williamston	1033	62.3%	624	37.7%
Pickens County	34,448.98	68.4%	15,915.02	31.6%
South Carolina	1,475,216.64	72.0%	573,695.36	28.0%

## Age and Condition

Seventy percent of the City of Liberty’s housing stock was built before the year 1980. This means that a large majority of the homes within the city are near or over 50 years old. 28.4% of homes were built between 1980 and 2009 and just 2.1% are under 14 years of age, having been built since 2010. This means that Liberty has both the highest percentage of homes built prior to 1980 and lowest percentage of homes built since 2010, making it the oldest housing stock in the surveyed area and state.

While Liberty may have the oldest housing stock identified, it is also in good condition. No structures have been identified through the Census to be lacking complete kitchen or plumbing facilities, and just 1.8% of households do not have access to a vehicle, the lowest number in each respective category of all areas surveyed in this plan.

Table x.6 Year Structure Built

Area	Since 2010	1980-2009	1979 or before
Anderson	5.4%	35.9%	58.8%
Central	6.8%	64.0%	29.2%
Easley	9.3%	47.3%	43.3%
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>69.4%</b>
Pickens	5.4%	25.2%	69.2%
Seneca	10.6%	34.7%	54.6%
Westminster	4.0%	34.6%	61.4%
Williamston	2.3%	37.4%	60.1%
Pickens County	11.1%	52.7%	36.2%
South Carolina	14.1%	51.3%	34.5%

Table x.7 Housing Condition

Area	Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	Kitchen %	Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	Plumbing %	No Vehicle Available	Vehicle %
Anderson	44	0.40%	0	0.0%	1495	12.50%
Central	41	2.20%	41	2.20%	186	9.90%
Easley	142	1.40%	46	0.40%	1003	9.80%
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1.80%</b>
Pickens	0	0%	0	0%	173	14.70%
Seneca	118	3%	36	0.90%	250	6.50%
Westminster	6	0.60%	0	0%	57	5.60%
Williamston	24	1.40%	0	0%	42	2.50%
Pickens County	485	1.00%	210	0.40%	3414	6.80%
South Carolina	12866	0.60%	6647	0.30%	115682	5.70%

# Natural Resources

The Natural Resources element looks at the natural systems of the community including climate, topography, soils, water bodies, and other natural features. This information is important to help protect a community’s quality of life by promoting proper development, maintaining aesthetic characteristics, preserving open space and significant natural resources.

## Geographic Profile

The City of Liberty, South Carolina is in Pickens County in the northwestern portion of South Carolina. Highways US 123, US 178, and SC 93 create local links from the city to surrounding areas such as Clemson, Central, Pickens, Anderson, Easley, and Greenville. Just to the east of the city is SC 153 and SC 8, which, along with US 178, connect the City with Interstate 85, one of the fastest growing interstate corridors in the country. Liberty is located near the midpoint between the cities of Charlotte, North Carolina and Atlanta, Georgia (110 miles and 120 miles respectively), and is equidistant from the state capital of Columbia.

## Climate

The climate of Liberty is mild, with an average temperature of 60.1 degrees Fahrenheit. This is slightly lower than other portions of the state such as the Columbia and Charleston regions, which each have an average annual temperature of 63.1 and 64.8 degrees, respectively. Precipitation is consistent throughout the year with an average of 4.3 inches of rain per month. The Columbia region averages four inches of rain per month while the Charleston region averages 4.2 inches per month. The growing season is from late March to early November and averages 225 days.

Figure x.1 – Average Monthly Temperature (in Degrees)  
Source: NOAA

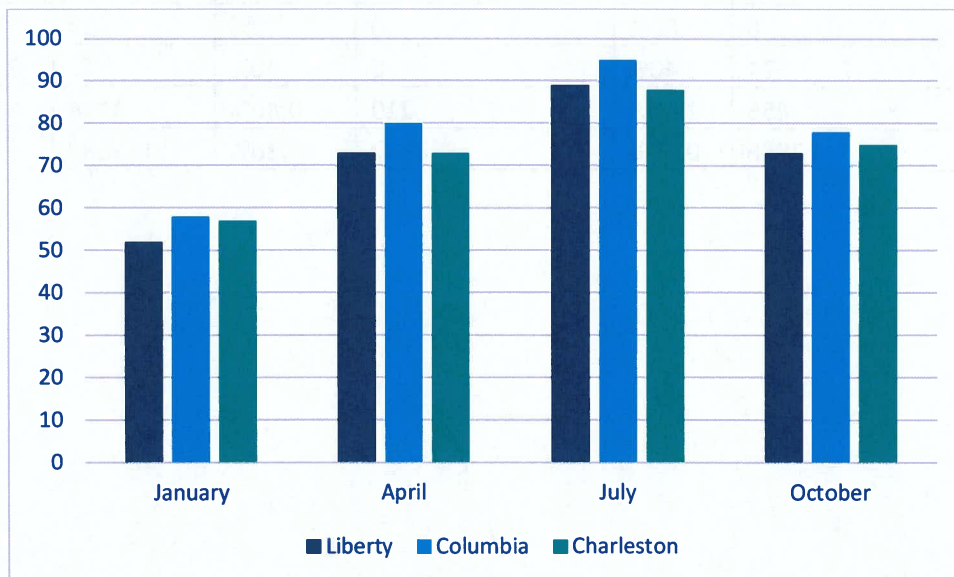
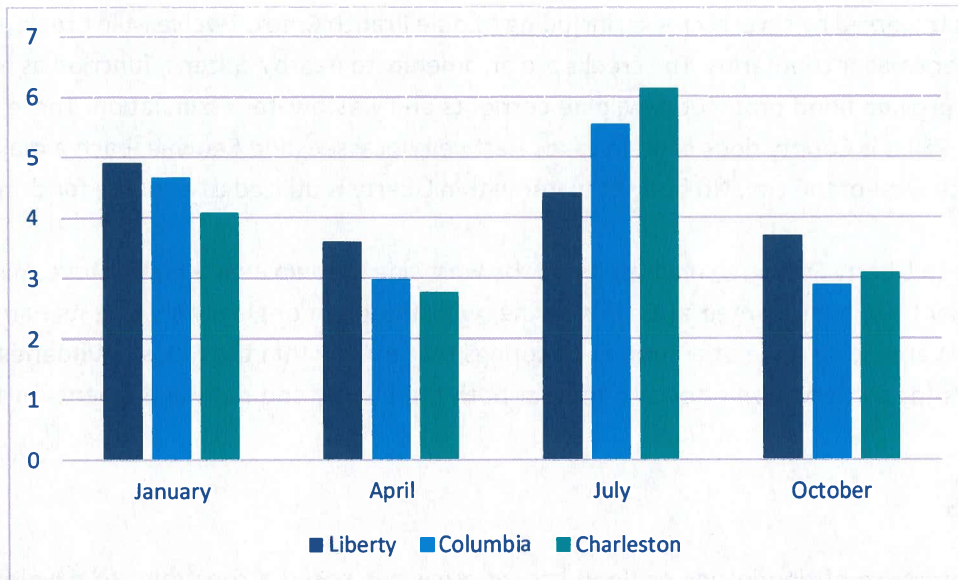


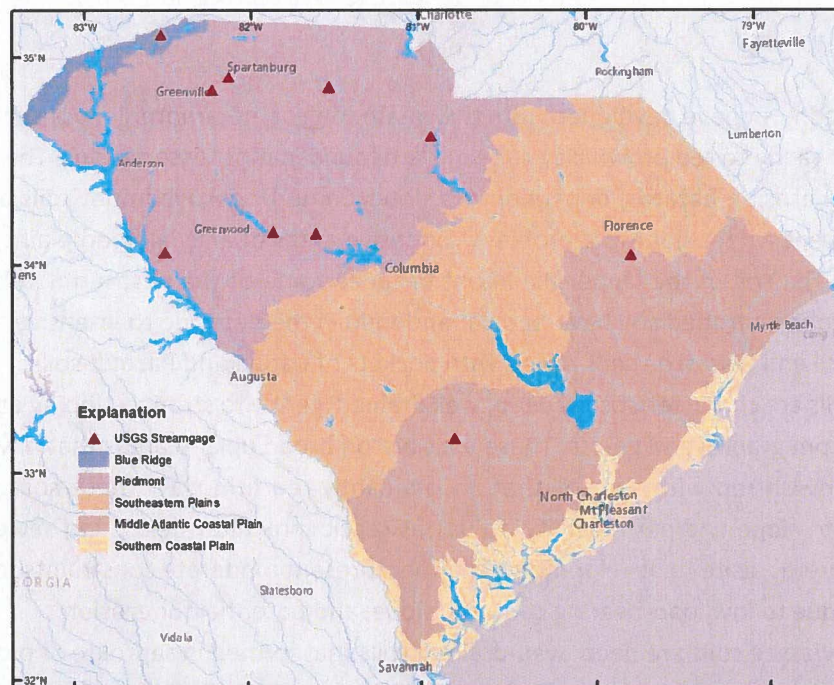
Figure x.2 – Average Monthly Rainfall (in Inches)  
 Source: NOAA



## Topographic Character

Liberty is in the Piedmont region of the state, which is characterized by rolling to hilly topography. Elevations range from nine hundred feet at the edge of the foothills/mountain area to six hundred feet along the Savannah and Broad Rivers at the southern end of the region. The terrain becomes progressively less hilly from north to south across the region.

Figure x.3 – South Carolina Physiographic Regions  
 Source: USGS



## Lakes, Rivers, Streams, and Springs

The City of Liberty is traversed by several creeks, including Middle Branch Creek, Twelve Mile Creek, and Eighteen-Mile Creek, and other smaller tributaries. The creeks are an amenity to nearby citizens, function as a reservoir for stormwater runoff, provide flood protection, wildlife corridors and wastewater assimilation. There are no major lakes in Liberty, but Pickens County does contain Lakes Hartwell, Jocassee, and Keowee, each a major recreation and tourism resource west of the city. No body of water within Liberty is utilized as a source for drinking water.

Liberty is also home to Liberty Spring, a small spring on the west side of town near Summit Drive. Historic records indicate the City may have been named after this spring, with the town originally sharing its name in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This historic area is just one of a number of springs that exist within the City's boundaries, of which all are good candidates for conservation efforts to protect both the history and natural elements of these natural water sources.

## Flood Areas

Traditionally, the presence of floodplains or flood hazard areas has posed a constraint to development. More recently federal flood plain legislation has added legal constraints and regulations to proposed development in flood hazard areas. Where flood hazard areas (marked by 100-year flood boundaries) have been identified on Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the City of Liberty, special regulations relating to the development of such areas apply. These regulations are designed to reduce and eliminate the hazards of flooding, as required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program. The City of Liberty should make sure to adopt such regulations as part of its zoning ordinance. Flood prone areas are undeveloped, posing few hazards to life and property in the event of flooding. And with flood hazard regulations in place, there is little chance that the situation will worsen.

## Soils

The soils of the Upper Piedmont have developed from the weathering of metamorphic rock such as granite, schist, gneiss, and diorite. Deep sandy to red brown clay sub-soils are found in most associations. The soil is well drained with moderate to severe erosion hazards, dependent on slope. Some Upper Piedmont soils are suitable for on-site sewage disposal, except where slope is a problem. Extensive areas of alluvial flood plains are found in most stream drainage basins. The soil of the Upper Piedmont includes some of the best farmlands in Upstate South Carolina. Vast areas of poor or eroded soil have been abandoned in the past due to intensive agriculture. Liberty is built principally on Cecil and Hiwassee soils mixed with pockets of Catula and Pacolet soils.

**Cecil Series** - The Cecil soils are characteristically deep, well drained, gently to strongly sloping soils that are formed in material weathered from granite and gneiss. These soils are on broad upland areas that have long side slopes. The surface layer is yellowish red with sub-soil that is dominantly red firm clay. These soils pose moderate to severe constraints, due to slope and permeability, to use as septic tank filter fields, and sewer lagoons, making public sewer systems a prerequisite to development. They also present moderate constraints to low buildings and industrial development due to low load-bearing capacity, slope, and potential for erosion.

**Hiwassee Series** - The Hiwassee soils are deep, well-drained soils that formed in saprolite or old alluvium. This soil is in the broad upland areas on long side slopes. The slope ranges from 2 to 25 percent. The surface layer is dusky-



red sandy loam with a sub-soil of dark-red friable sandy clay loam. These soils occupy most of the inner city, posing only moderate constraints to septic tank filter fields and other forms of development.

**Catula Series** - The Catula soils are found in a pocket at the upper end of Middle Branch, just south of SC 93, and in a few other areas to the south. These are well drained, shallow to moderately deep soils, which developed in material weathered from granite and gneiss. The surface layer is yellowish-red sandy loam with a sub-soil of firm red clay loam. They present moderate constraints for septic tank filter fields due to slow permeability and slope.

**Pacolet Series** - The Pacolet soils are found on the northeast and southwest edges of the city. These are moderately-deep to deep, well-drained soils formed in material weathered from granite and gneiss. The surface layer consists of brown fine sandy loam with a sub-soil of yellowish-red sandy clay loam. They pose only moderate constraints for use as septic tank filter fields, but present severe problems for use as sewage lagoons, because of slope.

In sum, the four-soil series upon which Liberty is located have many of the same characteristics, i.e., red clay surface, slope, and slow permeability. Overall, they pose only slight to moderate constraints to urban development, except for use as septic tank filter fields and sewage lagoons. As a result, community sewerage treatment and collection systems are a prerequisite to intensified development, such as exists and is taking place in and around the City of Liberty.

## Unique Parks and Recreation Areas

Pickens County has extensive natural beauty with a continuous chain of large lakes and scenic mountains and valleys. The county is bordered on the west by Lakes Jocassee, Keowee and Hartwell and by the Blue Ridge escarpment to the north. The county is also home to several state parks and wildlife management areas including the land recently purchased from Duke Energy.

### **Lake Jocassee**

Lake Jocassee is a 7,500-acre reservoir of cold, emerald water enclosed by the steep walls of the Blue Ridge escarpment and was formed from the Toxaway and Horse-Pasture Rivers. Duke Power Company completed its 385-foot-high dam in 1973 to provide water for hydroelectric power. Accessible to the public from Devils Fork State Park, Lake Jocassee provides visitors with various outdoor recreation activities such as swimming, water skiing, sailing, scuba diving and fishing. Laurel Fork and Thompson River waterfalls are also accessible via Lake Jocassee.

### **Lake Keowee**

Carrying the name of the old Cherokee Indian capital, Keowee means "place of the mulberries." This pristine lake was the first of the Duke Power Company improvements developed as part of the Keowee-Toxaway complex. Included in the complex are the Oconee Nuclear Station and the Keowee and Jocassee hydroelectric stations. The lake has three hundred miles of shoreline and sports white, smallmouth and largemouth bass, black crappie, bluegill, and threadfin shad.

### **Lake Hartwell**

Lake Hartwell borders Georgia and South Carolina on the Savannah, Tugaloo, and Seneca Rivers. Created by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers between 1955 and 1963, the lake comprises 56,000 acres of water and shoreline of 962 miles. The Corp maintains over twenty recreation areas, many with launch ramps, comfort stations, picnic areas and shelters, swimming beaches and playgrounds.

### **Duke Power Company Land**

In 1980 Duke Power donated a 373-acre tract of land to the South Carolina Heritage Trust Preserve to protect the outstanding natural area. The area, which lies in Pickens and Oconee counties, is home to a forest of old-growth hemlocks, several rare plants, and a self-sustaining trout population. Within this area lies a campground from which hikers may explore the area.

### **The Franklin L. Gravely Wildlife Management Area (Horse-Pasture Game Management Area)**

This area commonly known as the Horse-Pasture is an enclosed mountain valley between the Toxaway and Eastatoe Rivers. It is located on the site where the Cherokee Indians pastured their horses. The area has superb mountain scenery and is one of the few places in the world where the Oconee Bells (*Shortia*) flowers are found.

### **Keowee-Toxaway State Park**

Located in the northern part of the County along scenic Highway 11, Keowee-Toxaway Park is one of the state parks located in Pickens County. The park is equipped with overnight camping facilities and various hiking trails. The Corps of Engineers also provides recreational facilities and maintains lake access areas. The history of the Upper Cherokee Indians is recreated in the park museum.

### **Table Rock State Park**

Table Rock Mountain is a 1,000-foot granite monolith attraction, which takes its name from Indian legend. Native Americans believed that the gods dined on the massive rock while sitting on the "Stool", a smaller mountain nearby. The park has a lake for swimming and boating as well as camping facilities, hiking trails, and a restaurant overlooking the lake.

### **The Foothills Trail**

Duke Power Company maintains a 77-mile hiking trail that crosses some of the most rugged and beautiful terrain in the Carolinas and parts of Pickens County. Photography buffs can aim their lenses at wildflowers, white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, and black bears. The Trail starts off at Table Rock State Park then journeys to Sassafras Mountain, the tallest point in South Carolina, which has vistas of Pisgah Mountain to the Shinning Rock Wilderness. From there hikers venture to Chimneytop Gap then via boat on Lake Jocassee to Laurel Valley which has virgin hemlocks, some five feet in diameter. The Pickens County portion of the trail ends at Laurel Creek Falls and has ridge-top views of Lake Jocassee

### **South Carolina State Botanical Gardens**

Established in 1958 as a camellia collection on a small piece of land, the Garden has grown to 270 acres of lush natural vegetation and miles of trails. Special collections include a Pioneer Garden with authentic log cabins, a gristmill, outbuildings housing historical farm implements, and herbs, flowers, vegetables, and native plant gardens. The Braille Trail, which winds through the Pioneer Garden and adjacent Wildflower, Fern, and Bog Gardens, features special sections for the visually impaired. Other popular areas include the duck pond, a tranquil Garden of Meditation, a Flower and Turf Display and the Roland Schoenike Arboretum, a display of woody plants of economic and historical value. The Garden also contains a two-acre Vegetable Garden display, the Xeriscape Garden, and a Wildflower Meadow. The Garden serves as a living laboratory for students and visitors. Lectures, seminars, festivals, and special tours are offered throughout the year.

### **Cherokee Foothills Scenic Hwy (SC11)**

Once known as "Keowee Path" or "Cherokee Path," this 130-mile road was the route used by the Cherokees and the English and the French fur traders. It now provides a scenic alternative to driving I-85 through SC. Extending

from I-85 near the NC border to I-85 at the Georgia line, this route allows the traveler to experience magnificent views and to visit many attractions along the way.

### **Sassafras Mountain**

At 3,554 feet, this is the highest point in SC. From the summit four states can be viewed: Tennessee, NC, SC, and Georgia.

# Community and Cultural Facilities

## Community Facilities

### *Library*

The Liberty Woman’s Club was the driving force in opening a library in 1947. The library was in a small corner of a room upstairs over Liberty City Hall. As the library collection grew and circulation increased, the room became inadequate. In 1958, the library was moved to another second story room, located over Fedder’s Fashion Shop on Commerce Street in Liberty. In December 1964, the Sarlin Family donated property on Palmetto Street for the site of a new library building and \$5,000 in cash to go toward the construction of a building. The Liberty Woman’s Club and the Friends of the Library began campaigning to raise an additional \$5,000 that was needed to begin construction of the new library building. On April 17, 1966, the dedication of the new library building was held. The building was named the Sarlin Library in honor of the Sarlin Family’s generous donation that helped make the library possible.

As the library’s circulation grew, the need for expansion soon became apparent. The community again came together with the donations to expand the facility. In 1977, a new addition that doubled the size of the library was completed. Dedication of the new building was held on June 12, 1977, on the library’s thirteenth anniversary.

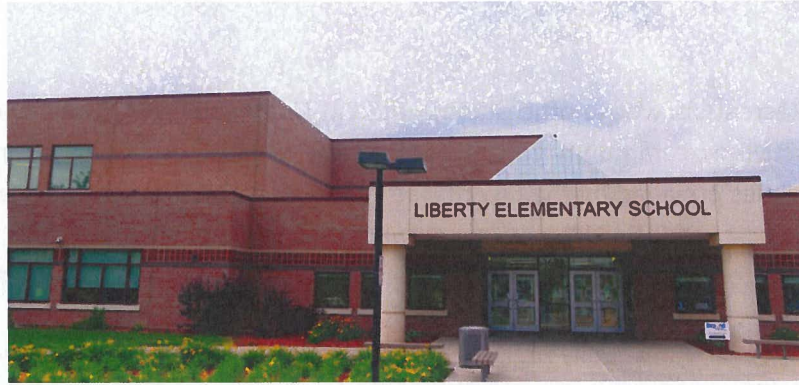
As population growth continued and circulation increased, the need for more space and modern technology became evident. In December 1996, a new 6,400 square foot building replaced the existing structure. The Sarlin Library is located at 15 South Palmetto Street in Liberty and is currently open six days a week.



## Education

Liberty School Facts				
School	Grades	No. of Students	No. of Teachers	Ratio of Students: Teachers
Liberty Primary School	K4-2	684	43	1:17
Liberty Elementary	3-5	443	34	1:13
Liberty Middle School	6-8	468	33	1:14
Liberty High School	9-12	685	42	1:16





### *Career and Technology Center*

As one of the oldest career centers in South Carolina, the PCCTC offers college and career opportunities in twenty-three different pathways. Career and Technical Education offers students the opportunity to gain the academic, technical, and employability skills necessary for true career readiness.



### *Post Secondary Education*

There are many post-secondary schools located in the upstate and Pickens County. Clemson University is in Pickens County and Anderson University is nearby in Anderson County. Southern Wesleyan University is near Central. Tri County Technical serves Pickens, Anderson, and Oconee Counties.

### *Safety – Police/Fire*

The City of Liberty maintains one Police Department that employs fourteen sworn Police Officers. The Fire Department is operated by Pickens County.

## Recreation

City of Liberty Parks and Recreation, whose offices are located at Liberty city gym, The city of Liberty Parks and Recreation offers leisure activities, community engagements activities and sport activities for adults and children of all ages. We use the facilities provided by the City of Liberty which includes two indoor basketball courts, one outdoor basketball court, one outdoor pickleball/tennis court, two outdoor regular tennis courts, one softball field, two baseball fields, one tee-ball field and one football field. We also have additional space for general play.

There are many opportunities for individually organized recreation spaces and parks that are located within the City of Liberty: Freedom Park, Little league park, Rosewood center, Stadium with walking track, City Gym, Mills Avenue Gym, Woodside field, Iselin field, Morris field, Kings field and Sarlin Park. These areas are gathering places for various festivals and community events as well as locations for community residents and visitors to enjoy.

## Meals on Wheels (Pickens County)

Meals on Wheels operates twenty-seven home-delivered meal routes and serves all communities in Pickens County including a route in the City of Liberty. Eligibility for home-delivered meals is not based on age or income. Our clients are homebound and physically or mentally challenged to the point where meal preparation is impossible. Many of the clients live alone and the visit from our Meals on Wheels volunteer is the only interaction they receive daily. Volunteers monitor the welfare of clients on their routes and serve as a link to other community-based services, such as transportation, home health services, financial services and even home repair and handicap accessible modifications.

Meals on Wheels also provides a Young at Heart program in Liberty. The Young at Heart Program at the McKissick Center provides the perfect place for active seniors to dine for lunch and participate in a variety of planned activities.

All diners are encouraged to share in the cost of their meal service. Daily, weekly, or monthly contributions toward the cost of meal service allow us to continue providing meals to all who need them. Services will not be denied to anyone who is unable to help with the cost of the meal; however, it is important that everyone gives at a level they can afford.

The Young at Heart Activity Center at the McKissick Center provides its members with a variety of activities and programs including social circles, structured fitness and exercise classes, day trips and outings to local points of interest, educational programming, fun and games, music and dance, arts, and crafts.

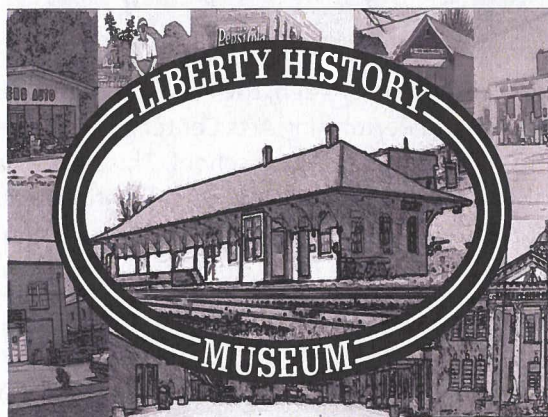
## Adult Day Care Services

There are two adult day care services that aid within the City of Liberty. Elite Home Care provides DHEC certified in-home care for senior citizens, people with disabilities, veterans, and post operation rehabilitation All services are consistently ranked among the top providers for In-Home Care, Day Center Care and Transportation and received the Best of the Upstate award 5 years in a row.

At Liberty Active Day, day services are provided for seniors and adults with development and intellectual disabilities. The approach is that every member can benefit from an engaged, socially stimulating, and care focused experience.

## Cultural Facilities

### *Liberty Museum*



Sometime in the early October of 2019 I, Chris Hansen, posted on Facebook the idea of Liberty, SC having its own history museum. And the response was positive and encouraging by many people. This launched the idea of the Liberty History Museum Project. A Facebook Page was created and immediately people began to Like and Follow the page. The first historical project that was created was the story of the former train depot and how Catherine Templeton used her land to help establish the town of Liberty.

Researching the town's history was in full force with the discovery of Mrs. Julia Woodson's collection at the Faith Clayton Genealogical Research Room at Southern Wesleyan University. Then the Covid-19 Pandemic hit. This shut down my research efforts and raised awareness for the establishment of a history museum. Over the months and years since late 2019 the collections slowly grew, but not as I expected because of the pandemic. This really hurt the efforts.

In 2021, the mayor and city council wanted this to happen and made every effort to do so. They saw this as a spotlight to help the city bring new growth and a positive aspect to Liberty, SC. Plus the pandemic was over too. And in the summer of 2023 the idea that started a dream became a reality. The city agreed to house the Liberty History Museum in the Rosewood Center. A Grand Opening date was set for October 14th, almost four years to the day when the project started.

Today the collections and related historical items have grown tremendously along with the support of the community it represents. The Liberty History Museum has a very bright future and will continue to be a staple for the city and community for years and decades to come. Our commitment to help preserve, discover, and tell the history of Liberty, SC is our propose.

The museum is open on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and soon plans to open other days during the week.

## *Pickens County Center for Performing Arts*



From bluegrass and gospel music, and all genres in between, the Pickens County Performing Arts Center is a world-class entertainment venue. The Pickens County Performing Arts Center carries some local history because it is part of a lovely new complex renovated from what was the high school. This venue, with over 600 seats, is made to handle a variety of forms of the performing arts in style. New stage lighting including spotlights and a state-of-the-art sound system makes each seat the “best seat in the house”. The newly refinished wooden stage, box office, concession area, dressing rooms and green room have received complements from performers and visitors alike.

## *McKissick Center*

Nestled in the heart of downtown Liberty, SC, the McKissick Center is conveniently located to Easley, Clemson, Anderson, and Greenville. Our modern, spacious, and highly flexible facility can accommodate any occasion. Offering several rooms, an outdoor patio area, and a commercial kitchen, The McKissick Center is the perfect choice for weddings, family gatherings, corporate parties, extraordinary events, and so much more. It now serves as the home of Pickens County Meals on Wheels and provides a community focal point that exclusively focuses on the three leading threats of aging: hunger, isolation, and loss of independence.

The overarching vision is to use the venue to provide direct programs and services to our senior neighbors across Pickens County as well as operate a social enterprise that will support our mission all year long. Book your event here to ensure hundreds of seniors can live the nourished lives they deserve.





# Transportation

## Context

Transportation and accessibility are crucial to the success of a city and the good of its citizens. The routes that we take and ways in which we move upon them dictate everything from the type of goods we receive, our economic status and mobility, and even our social lives and the ability to connect between people. As much of the rest of the upstate, South Carolina, and the southern region of the United States beyond, Liberty is currently a car dependent City for a vast majority of its residents. The city sits seventeen miles north of interstate I-85, the closest interstate route that connects it to Georgia and North Carolina. It is located at this intersection of two major US highways, US-123 and US-178 and is bisected by South Carolina Route 93. These roads create the major network that connects Liberty to the cities and towns around it.

As the City continues to develop, special consideration must be given to the provision of alternative methods of transportation within the City Limits. Currently, there exists a sidewalk network, however it is far from comprehensive and leaves many areas of Liberty cut off from potential pedestrian traffic. Additionally, there are no designated bike lanes within the city. This means that anyone looking to travel within the City limits must do so on foot, which can create long travel times and dangerous conditions depending on the destination, or by car which creates an increased burden on the existing road network as both local and regional traffic move through the City. Finally, recreational opportunities can be combined with these mobility efforts in the form of trails. These trails can create natural, non-paved paths that connect the residents of Liberty with the businesses providing their goods and services at the same time as providing a health benefit, both mentally and physically, to those who get out to enjoy the trails recreationally.

The rural character of the City of Liberty does add a layer of complication to these efforts. However, with effective planning and coordination with local and state agencies the opportunities to increase the intermodal accessibility of Liberty can be identified.

## Road Network

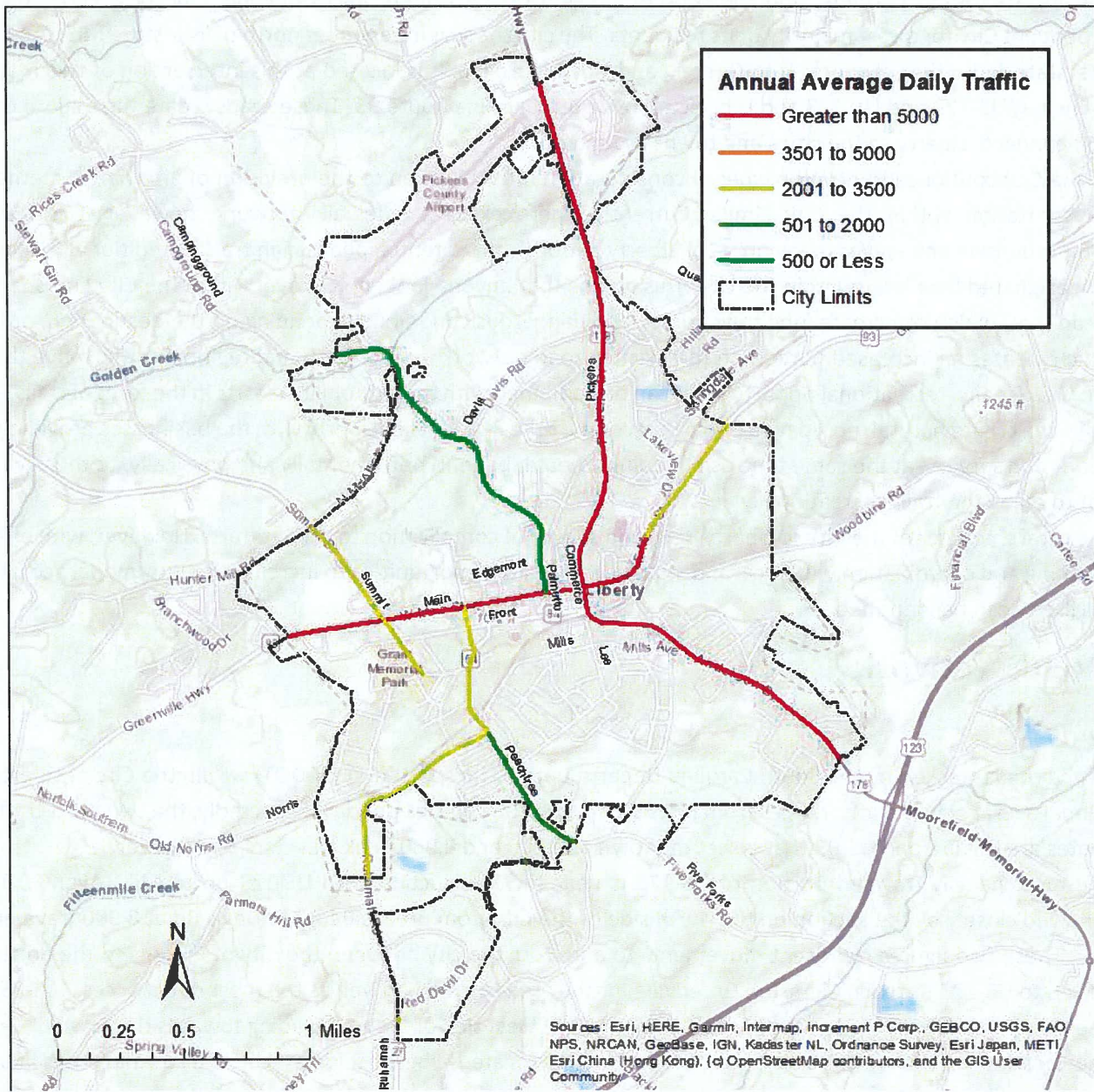
### *AADT*

Of the roads tracked by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) within the City of Liberty, the annual average daily traffic ranges from just 375 up to 9,200 vehicles per day. Expectedly, the two most trafficked routes are US-178 and US-93 that bisect the town at 9,200 and 8,000 peak travelers, respectively.

The most heavily traveled portion of US-178 is near the intersection with US-123 up to Mills Avenue. This is followed closely by the section on the north side of the City from Breazeale Rd to Davis Rd at 8,900 travelers per day. These two figures represent movements to and from the city between the City of Pickens to the north, and access to US-123 to reach Clemson, Greenville, or the areas beyond as well as the most direct access to I-85.

The most heavily trafficked portions of US-93 are on the west side of the city heading towards the Town of Central. The location of the new Liberty High School and renovated Liberty middle school also affect this number. Combined with traffic patterns, these movements represent more local trips generated by parents taking their children to school.

The intersection of these two routes represents the most poignant location for safety and traffic alleviation considerations. Being near the city center and separating a majority of the city from the largest local grocery store, Ingles, this intersection is crucial not only to vehicular movements in and through Liberty, but also for those using alternative methods of transportation that may be seeking to cross in this area. Ensuring the safety of both drivers and pedestrians while maintaining travel time reliability should be of utmost importance to Liberty as it moves forward, continues to grow, and seeks to expand the availability of alternative modes of transportation throughout the city.



## Commuting Patterns

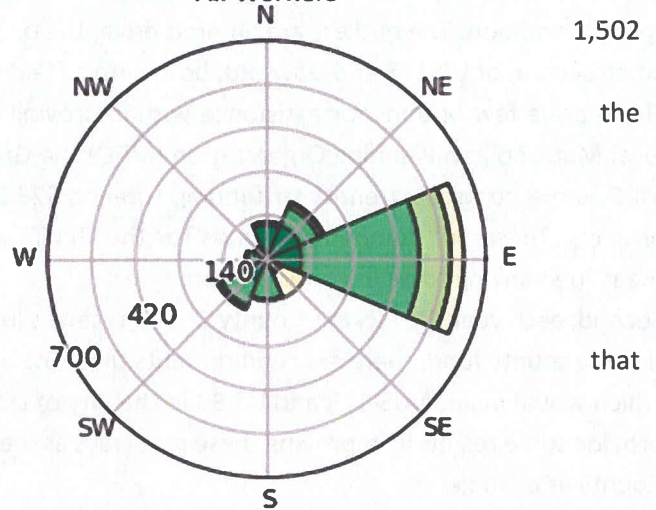
Conclusions seen in the AADT data above are also reflected in the commuting patterns for the City of Liberty from the US Census Bureau seen below. Of the recorded employed individuals living in the City of Liberty, just fifty-two, or 3.5%, both live and work within city limits. This means 96.5% of Liberty's employed population is traveling elsewhere for employment opportunities.

As seen in the radar chart below, a vast majority of these workers are travelling east to northeast. The distances recorded in these movements paint an expected picture most of these employment opportunities for citizens of Liberty are in Greenville and the surrounding areas. This reflects the traffic counts seen on US-178 as travelers access the more freely moving US-123 to reach their destination.

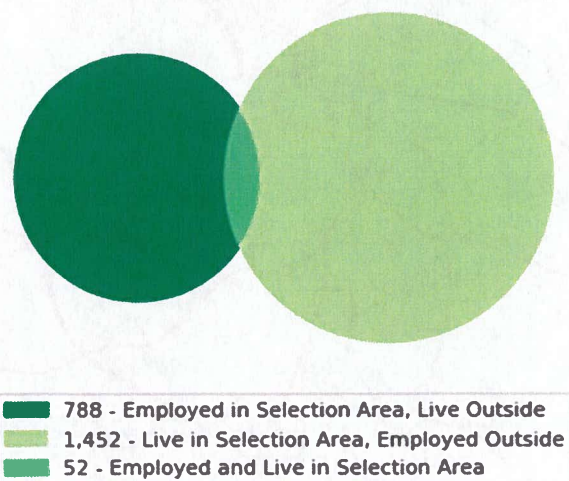
Other employment centers for the citizens of Liberty indicated are Clemson and Easley to the southwest and northeast, respectively. Interestingly, there is also a reported number of individuals that are using US-178 to access I-85 and travel over fifty miles for their employment opportunities.

These patterns help draw two conclusions. First, more gainful employment opportunities can be sought out within the city to provide for those that live there to allow them to work in the same place they live. Second, Liberty currently serves as home to many workers in the Greenville area, and special consideration should be given to their needs and how to make Liberty an even greater opportunity for those that wish to live outside of the City of Greenville.

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2021  
All Workers



Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2021

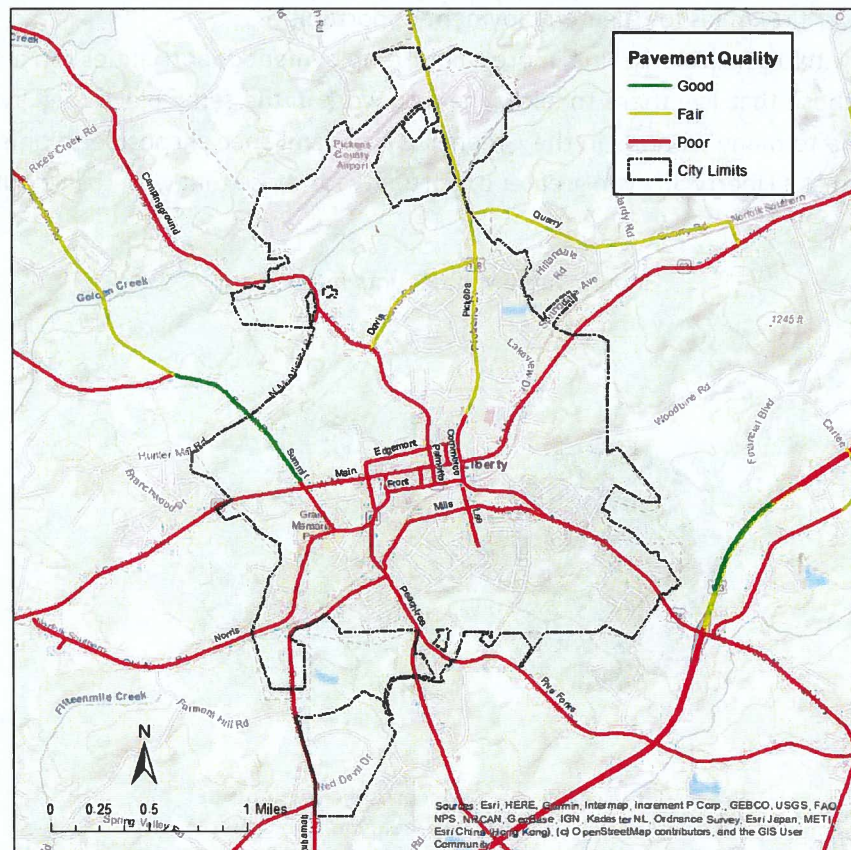


## Pavement Quality

SCDOT also keeps a record of pavement conditions for state-maintained roads throughout South Carolina. For the City of Liberty, all but three (3) roads or sections of roadway maintained by the state are currently listed as in “poor” condition. The outliers are Summit drive, the only “good” rated pavement quality road in the city, and the north section of US-178 and Davis Rd, both with a “fair” rating. This data can be seen reflected in the map below. There are a few options for assistance with improving the quality of these roadways. First, is working with the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) the Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS). This MPO is the controlling entity of funding totaling \$23.2 million in annual allocation for roadway improvement projects. These are competitive funds for the GPATS area and projects must rank of the GPATS performance measures ranking to be in consideration.

Second, each year the Pickens County C-fund receives just over \$2.8 million in funds for roadway projects. Though this is a county fund, there are requirements that 25% of the funding must be spent on the state highway system, which would include US-178 and US-93 in the City of Liberty. Collaboration with the local C-fund committee may provide some results in improving these roadways as they provide benefits to both Liberty and residents of Pickens County as a whole.

Finally, local coordination with the SCDOT district offices and advocacy from local representatives at the state level may open opportunities for repaving in SCDOT’s already established repaving program. This program is already the main entity by which the projects are conducted, but local advocacy and awareness of the need can lead to expedited results.



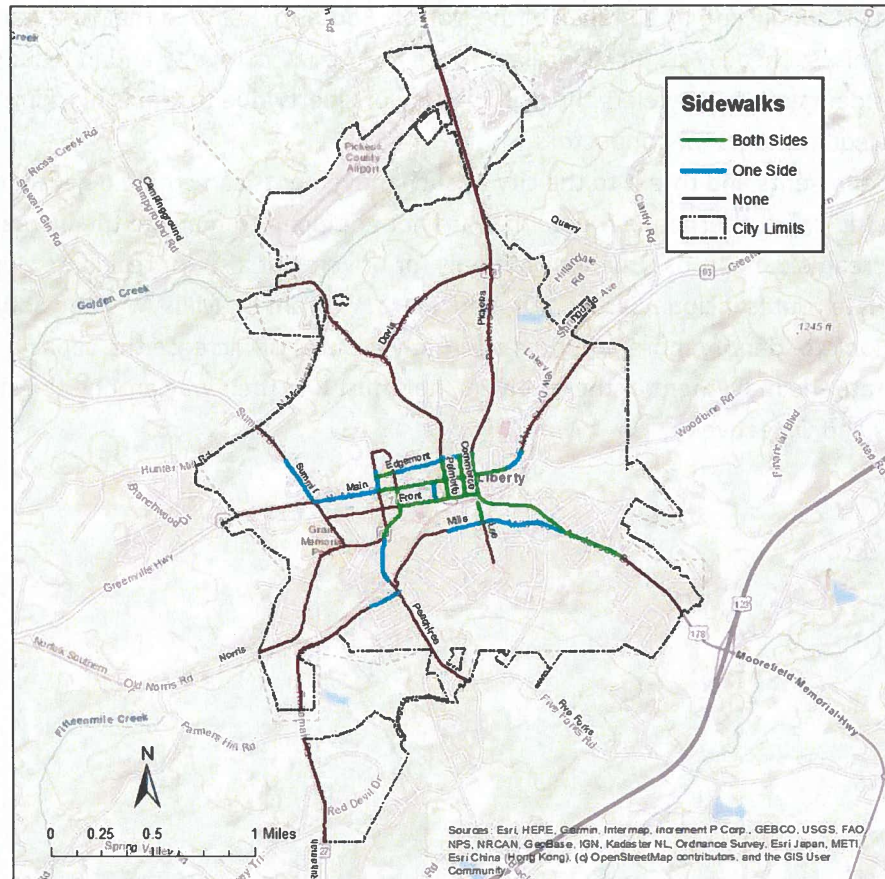
## Pedestrian Network

Liberty has a comprehensive sidewalk network for pedestrian movements given its size. Of the major roadways in the middle portion of town, all but a section of Peachtree St north of W Main St has at least some sidewalk pathing. This provides a great base for improvements as the city continues to grow. Priority should first be given to closing gaps in the existing sidewalk network. Locations of opportunity include Hillcrest Dr between Peachtree and Edgemont streets, Front Street between Peachtree Street and Summit Drive, Summit Drive to Old Norris Rd/Grant Memorial Park, and Old Norris Rd from Summit Drive to Peachtree Street. This would complete the network within the main area of the city and provide usable movement patterns for existing and future pedestrians.

Second, the city should look at adding sidewalk access to areas that currently have none. These areas can include but are not limited to Peachtree Street from the railroad bridge to the City Limits, Mills Ave from Peachtree Street to the existing sidewalk near Meadowbrook Drive, and extending the existing sidewalk on Main Street on both ends of the City to provide access to the Ingle grocery store and areas surrounding Grant Memorial Park.

Finally, as access continues to expand, the city should look at complementing the existing and developing sidewalk network by adding sidewalks on both sides of the road for those areas that currently only contain them on one side of the street. This is the final piece of the puzzle that will lead to a well-developed, robust sidewalk system that can encourage more people to walk and engage with businesses and services in the city without the need of a car.

City leadership should look at Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grants provided by SCDOT for funding opportunities to assist in the completion of this network. This program provides funding for projects that provide alternative means of transportation of more than \$500,000. This program has been renewed by SCDOT and, along with new complete streets efforts by the department, represents a fantastic opportunity for the city and its residents.



## **Railroads**

Liberty is subdivided by a branch of the Norfolk Southern Railroad that runs parallel to US-93 and intersection US-178. This is a heavily trafficked freight route for the rail company and in recent years has generated some issues to residents of and travelers through the City of Liberty due to trains blocking the intersection because of union time requirements for conductors.

This represents a threat to the city as such movements can create delays for travelers and send large volumes of traffic down alternative routes that are not equipped to manage the increase in vehicles moving along them. This creates dangerous situations not only for drivers but also for residents along these alternative routes. These alternate routes include Carolina Dr, Park Plaza, W Front St, Mills Ave, and Southern St. Moving forward, the City may look to identify more potential alternative routes or increase the capacity and safety of the existing ones to facilitate the movement of these drivers that must find their way around the stopped train.

### **Goals and Objectives**

# Land Use

## Existing Land Use

The City of Liberty covers approximately 2,787.5 acres of land. This is an increase of approximately 15.8% of total land area covered since 2013 (2,408 acres). This increase in coverage speaks to Liberty’s growing community character and how development patterns have necessitated the expansion of the city. Of this land area, approximately 1,964.4 or 70.5% is developed. The following table shows the existing acreage for each category of land use.

Land Use	Parcels	Percent of total parcels	Acreage	Percent of total Acreage
SF Residential	1009	55.17	1,060.86	38.06
Mobile Home	81	4.45	45.19	1.62
MF Residential	226	12.38	158.47	5.68
Institutional	45	2.48	454.09	16.29
Commercial	121	6.64	98.25	3.52
Industrial	19	1.07	141.23	5.07
Vacant/Undeveloped	326	17.81	829.45	29.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2787.54</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Residential*

Residential land uses account for 45.36% of all land use in the city of Liberty. Of this, 83.89% are single families, 3.57% are mobile homes, and 12.53% are multifamily land uses.

As expected, the predominant residential type in the city is single family homes. Single family properties compromise 1,060.86 acres, or 38.06% of the total land use in the city. This reflects Liberty’s rural character that has developed the community into its existing form. The city has made efforts to rehabilitate existing houses and demolish dilapidated homes throughout the town to maintain this character through a revolving loan program and coordination with external and internal organizations and institutions.

The largest growing subset of residential land use in the City of Liberty is multifamily housing. At the last update of this plan, multifamily housing made up just 1.2% of the City’s total land area. However, that figure has grown by 500% to bring it to the existing 158.47 acres, or 5.68% of land area. This trend reflects the growing condition of Liberty and the external needs and pressures being out on the city and its new and existing residents to develop more affordable housing options as costs increase and potential new homeowner’s plan.

Mobile homes are allocated throughout the city, however there are strongholds of these residential types in both the east and south portions of the city. This land use type makes up 1.62% of the City’s land area for a total of 45.19 acres.

### *Commercial*

Commercial land uses account for 98.25 acres, or 3.52% of the total land area of the City of Liberty. Though this represents a lesser percentage of land area than previously reported, the number of parcels has increased

indicating commercial growth in the City of Liberty. Most of the parcels are in the downtown area or along US-178 near the interchange with US-123.

As Liberty continues to grow, the increase in the number of commercial uses in the city will be a good indicator for its economic growth and vitality moving forward.

### ***Institutional***

Institutional land uses include fire and police stations, government offices, schools, churches, cemeteries, parks, and playgrounds, and any other publicly held lands such as the airport on the north side of the city. These land use types make up 16.29% of Liberty's land area, total 454.09 acres. A large majority of this area is the airport, which totals 230 acres or 8.25% of the City's land area by itself.

The City and Pickens County also hold many vacant properties that could present the opportunity of parks and other public uses in the future.

### ***Industrial***

The City of Liberty contains several industrial properties within its boundaries. These uses make up 5.07% of the City's land area for a total of 141.23 acres. These uses indicate opportunities for large economic benefits to the citizens of Liberty, but also must be maintained so as not to threaten the character of the city itself.

### ***Undeveloped/Vacant Land***

829.45 acres or 29.76% of the City of Liberty's land is vacant or undeveloped. These parcels represent opportunities for future growth without relying on annexation for the city. These lands may be publicly or privately held, but each one presents a unique opportunity to shape and enhance the character of Liberty in the years to come.

## **Existing Zoning**

The City of Liberty has thirteen designated individuals zoning categories. Seven of these are residential zones, four are commercial zones, and there are two industrial zone types.

### ***Residential***

75.9% of Liberty's developed and undeveloped land area is zone as residential. This is broken down into single family zones with Low Density Residential (40.84%) and Medium Density Residential (19.02%) totaling 59.9% of Liberty's land area and 80% of the City's residential area.

There are also designations for multifamily zones with Duplex Residential (10.69%), Multi Family R8 (.3%), and Multi Family R16 (1.97%). These categories make up 12.69% of Liberty's total land area and account for 17% of residential uses in the city. As noted above, this number has grown significantly since the last update of this plan and is anticipated to make significant impacts to Liberty's development in the years to come.

Finally, the city makes specific designations for mobile home residences with two zones: Mobile Home Single Family (1.85%) and Mobile Home Park (1.23%). Together these zones account for 3.08% of Liberty's total land area and approximately 4% of designated residential land area.

### ***Commercial***

Liberty's commercial zones are broken down into the following four categories: Office Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, General Commercial, and Core Commercial.



Office Commercial is Liberty's newest commercial designation and typically consists of businesses that provide technical services to other businesses and individuals. Because of its recent designation, this zoning type accounts for just .24% of the total land area of the city and 2.69% of commercial uses. Increasing office use type can be seen as a sign of economic growth for a city or area and as such this category can be used as one indicator of Liberty's economic vitality moving forward.

Neighborhood commercial zones consist of businesses that provide services to residents and match the character of the surrounding area. These businesses provide much needed services to local areas and can often be accessed by those that they serve within walking distance or without much required travel. Examples of these businesses include but are not limited to hair salons, daycares, and legal consulting services. Typically, these businesses run out of an owner's residence or a formerly occupied residence. Liberty's Neighborhood Commercial zone accounts for .67% of its total land area and 7.6% of its commercial land area.

The General Commercial category covers all commercial uses that do not fall into any of the other designated categories. These are typically outside the center of the city and its surrounding neighborhoods. Liberty's general commercial uses are clustered on US-178 near the interchange with US-123, along SC-93, Edgemont, Commerce, and Front Streets. General commercial makes up 7.31% of Liberty's total land area, but accounts for a large majority of commercial zones at 82.5% of all commercially zoned areas.

Finally, Liberty's Core Commercial zones are concentrated around the downtown areas. These businesses, as the name implies, create the "core" of local businesses that support and supply the citizens of Liberty. These businesses are typically restaurants, furniture stores, local craft stores, or any other use deemed fit to occupy the downtown area. Core Commercial makes up .64% of Liberty's total land area and just 7.2% of commercial zones in the city.

## ***Industrial***

Liberty has two industrial zoning types, Limited Industrial and Basic Industrial.

Limited Industrial is the lower of the two industrial zones, and as the name suggests limits what type of industrial designated uses can be present on these properties. This is because typically these uses are found closer to residential and commercial areas and must not create a nuisance for other local property owners. Limited Industrial makes up 10.89% of Liberty's total land area, with a majority of this being occupied by the County Airport on the north side of the city.

Basic Industrial allows for certain high industrial use types relative to Limited Industrial. Most of these businesses and parcels are in the south of the City along SC-93 and US-178. Basic industrial accounts for 4.34% of the City's total land area.

Zone	Parcels	Percent of Total Parcels	Acres	Percent of Total Acres
500 – LDR	660	36.07	1138.48	40.84
501 - MDR	487	26.61	530.24	19.02
501A -DR	298	16.28	298.04	10.69
502 – R8	5	.27	8.36	.30
503 – R16	11	.60	54.84	1.97
504 - MHSF	74	4.04	51.64	1.85
505 - MHP	37	2.02	34.31	1.23
506 – OC	14	.77	6.64	.24
507 - NC	21	1.15	18.74	.67
508 – GC	135	7.38	203.84	7.31
509 – CC	65	3.55	17.89	.64
510- LI	10	.55	303.62	10.89
511 - BI	13	.71	120.90	4.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2787.54</b>	<b>100</b>

## Future Land Use

As Liberty continues to develop and grow in the coming years, special attention must be paid to how this development is done and where it is allowed to ensure that the City grows in a sustainable way that minimizes negative impacts to current and new residents and maximizes the potential for those same individuals and the City itself. As the upstate of South Carolina continues to grow, it is inevitable that these impacts will be felt in the city, as they already have and diligence in growth patterns moving forward can help to maintain Liberty’s character while dealing with the impending growth.

### *Single Family Residential*

The largest growth in land use for the city moving forward will be in single family homes. Though multifamily housing is always needed, Liberty’s character and location dictates that its future is majority single-family housing. Moving forward, this use type is expected to occupy 58.83% of Liberty’s land area, making it the majority use for the city. There is enough vacant land within the City Limits to accomplish this goal, but annexation should be in consideration as growth patterns dictate.

### *Multifamily Residential*

As Liberty continues to grow, affordable housing options must be made available to current and future residents. The city has already shown a commitment to developing multifamily housing and should continue to do so in the coming years. As mobile homes become in need of replacement in the future the city should encourage multifamily housing in their place. This would maintain the affordability of the housing while also improving the character of the city. Multifamily housing is expected to make up 8.95% of Liberty’s land area as it continues to develop.

### *Institutional*

Institutional uses and their growth are dictated by the needs of the city and its people. As such, it can be difficult to predict the future and what municipal, religious, and educational needs will be as Liberty continues to grow. The city must engage with the community and ascertain the public needs to provide any institutional uses that

can provide benefit. This will result in a growth in this use type from its current expected 16.29% of land area in Liberty.

### ***Commercial***

As Liberty grows and more residents with ever increasing needs move to the city, commercial uses must grow and adapt to keep up with the changing requirements and to become an attraction for potential new residents. As such, the commercial land area of the city is anticipated to double in the coming years to 7.88% of the land area in the City of Liberty.

### ***Industrial***

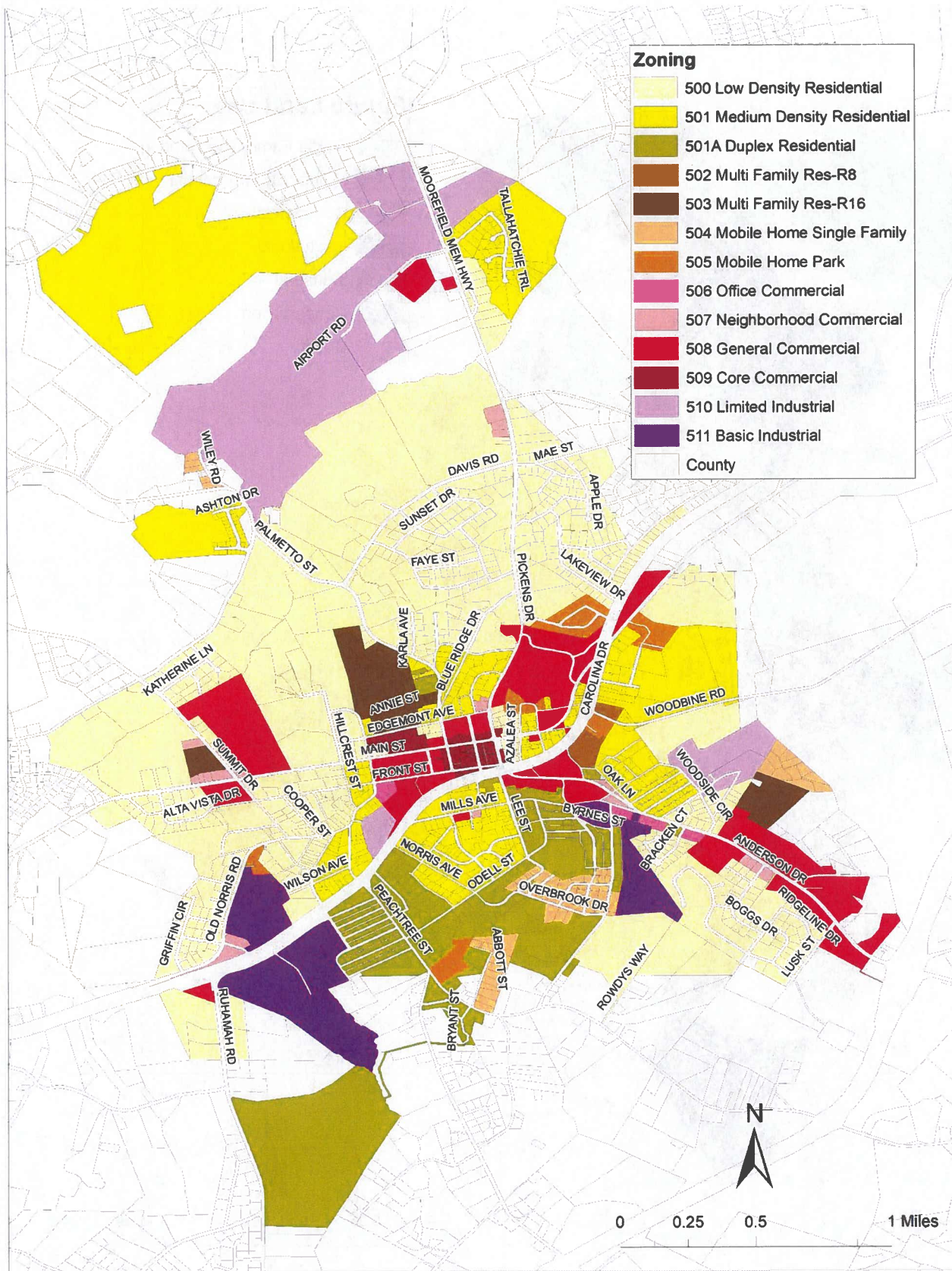
Industrial uses, like institutional, are dictated by the needs and growth of the city. While these can be an attractive economic front, exceptional care must be made to ensure that these do not interfere with the daily lives of the residential and commercial properties around Liberty. In the future, industrial land use types can make up 6.81% of all Liberty’s land area, and making sure that this is done in a sustainable way is a crucial function of the City Council and the Planning Commission.

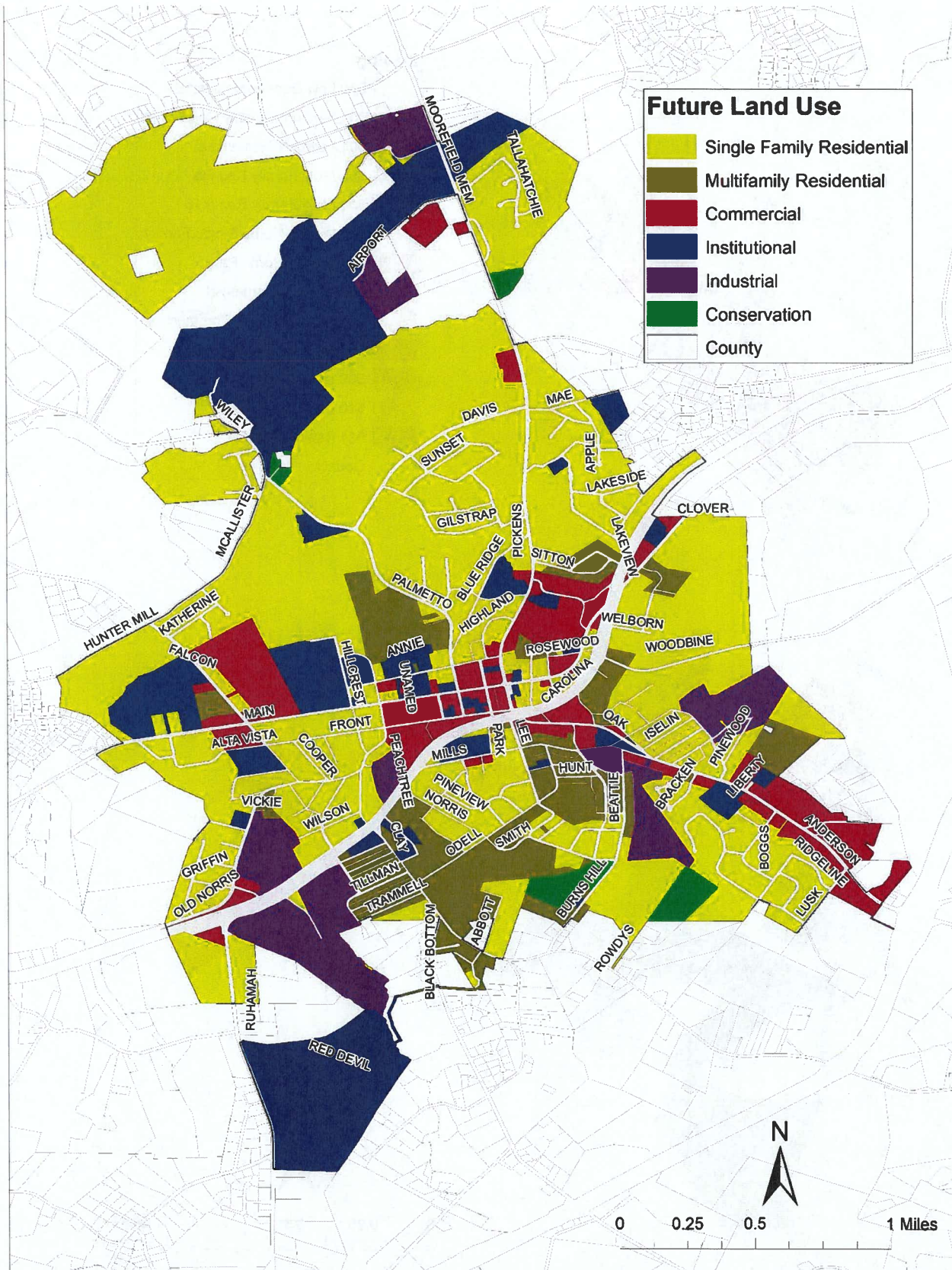
### ***Conservation***

In some areas environmental features may dictate the need to protect certain parcels of land for the good of the land itself and the people that surround it. Environmental features that can create such impacts are floodplains, wetlands, water resources, and extreme topography. In this plan, four properties have been identified for potential future conservation efforts, but the City and its leaders and residents should always be mindful of how these features can both positively and negatively impact the City moving forward.

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Percent of Total Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total Acres</b>
<b>SF Residential</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>65.90</b>	<b>1639.91</b>	<b>58.83</b>
<b>MF Residential</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>18.63</b>	<b>249.39</b>	<b>8.95</b>
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>454.09</b>	<b>16.29</b>
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>12.08</b>	<b>219.54</b>	<b>7.88</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>189.96</b>	<b>6.81</b>
<b>Conservation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>.22</b>	<b>34.65</b>	<b>1.24</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2787.54</b>	<b>100</b>







# RESILIENCY

In 2020, The South Carolina General Assembly passed an amendment to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 to require a Resiliency Element to be included in all Comprehensive Plans in South Carolina.

## Purpose

The primary purpose of the Resiliency Element is to aid in the ability of the City of Liberty to adapt and recover quickly, fairly, and transparently from changing conditions such as recurrent burdens and sudden disasters. Sudden disasters may consist of flooding, high water, and natural hazards.

## Primary Hazards

**Flooding.** According to NOAA, flooding is an overflowing of water onto land that is normally dry. Flooding can be further classified, defined, and forecasted depending on several factors including cause, duration, and extent. Flooding is the most frequent and costly natural hazard in the United States. Flash flooding is a rapid onset event that occurs from short, heavy rainfall, accumulating in areas faster than the ground can absorb it. These big rain events are exacerbated by a combination of several factors, including local drainage issues and the amount of impervious surface.

**Severe Thunderstorms, Tornadoes, and Lightning.** A thunderstorm is a rainstorm event during which thunder is heard, which is audible due to lightning causing the air to heat and expand rapidly. Therefore, all thunderstorms have lightning. According to the National Weather Service, there are approximately 100,000 thunderstorms that occur in the United States per year and about twenty-five million lightning flashes a year, killing about sixty-nine people annually. This number reflects the significant decline in fatalities within the past few decades, but lightning continues to remain a top storm-related killer. A tornado is a violent windstorm characterized by a twisting, funnel-shaped cloud extending to the ground. Tornadoes may also occur as part of a severe thunderstorm event. Tornadoes may form at any time of the year, but in the United States, the peak of events occurs in the spring and early summer months of March through June, especially during the late afternoon and early evening.

**Drought.** Drought is caused by a lack of precipitation over an extended period, often resulting in a water shortage for some activity, sector, or the environment. In contrast to other environmental hazards, droughts develop slowly over a period of weeks, months, or years. According to NOAA, drought is the second most costly weather and climate disaster affecting the United States, preceded only by tropical cyclones. Historically, South Carolina has experienced many statewide droughts. They can occur at any time of the year and last for several months to several years.

**Hail.** Hail can occur year-round and can happen anywhere because it derives from severe thunderstorms. It is a precipitation type, consisting of ice pellets that form when updrafts of thunderstorms carry water droplets up into the freezing level of the atmosphere. Hail can be small and generally pea-sized, but hail can also be larger, capable of damaging property and killing livestock and people.

**Winter Storms.** Winter storms and winter weather kill dozens of Americans each year, from exposure to cold, vehicle accidents, the improper use of heaters, and other winter related incidents. Winter storms are regular occurrences that happen across the country and can take place during spring and fall as well. Many hazards are associated with winter storms and weather including fierce winds, extreme cold, coastal flooding, heavy snow, and ice storms. Other concerns related to winter weather are power, heat, and communication outages. Most deaths associated with winter weather and storms are indirectly related, such as fatalities from traffic accidents due to icy conditions, or hypothermia from prolonged exposure.

**Hazardous Materials.** Hazardous material incidents can include the spilling, leaking, pumping, emitting, discharging, escaping, leaching, or disposing into the environment of a hazardous material, but exclude: (1) any release which results in exposure to poisons solely within the workplace with respect to claims which such persons may assert against the employer; (2) emissions from the engine exhaust of a motor vehicle, rolling stock, aircraft, vessel or pipeline pumping station engine; (3) release of source, byproduct, or special nuclear material from a nuclear incident; and (4) the normal application of fertilizer. Facilities that store or use hazardous materials are scattered throughout the state, but many are in coastal counties, where they are also exposed to hurricane winds and rains. However, hazardous materials are frequently transported along I-85 and I-26 and could create a significant hazard if an accident caused a spill.

## Tools and Existing Protective Measures

**The Pickens County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.** In compliance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) requirements to receive federal disaster funding, Pickens County, local districts and community stakeholders and partners have adopted a Hazard Mitigation Plan that is updated annually, with a full review every five years as required. The purpose of the Hazard Mitigation Plan is to continue guiding hazard mitigation efforts to better protect the people and property in the County from the effects of hazard events.

**DHEC's NPDES Permit Program.** NPDES is a regulatory program created under the Clean Water Act, and it is one of the main driving forces behind most of the mandated state and federal regulations. Under the NPDES Permit Program, stormwater discharges are considered point sources and operators of these sources are required to receive an NPDES permit before they can discharge stormwater runoff. Any construction site of one acre or more is required to obtain a stormwater permit via the NPDES program from DHEC.

**International Building Code Series.** The State of South Carolina requires governing local entities to adopt, by ordinance, the state-approved versions of the International Building Code series. Currently the approved Building Code in South Carolina is the 2018 International Building Code (IBC), and the 2009 Energy Code. The International Building Code series provides best practices to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location and maintenance of all buildings, structures, and certain equipment.

## Conclusion

The goal of this Comprehensive Plan Review is to introduce the topic of resiliency into Liberty's Comprehensive Planning process. As was outlined earlier in this section, there are several hazards that occur frequently in the



Upstate and in Liberty in particular. A limited number of tools and protective measures exist to mitigate these potential hazards. Initial mitigation recommendations are as follows:

1. Determine areas that are of the highest risk, evaluate development intensity regulations for these areas, and prioritize projects in these areas.
2. Strengthen partnerships with surrounding districts to combat issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
3. Educate the public about their role in building resilience and how to recover.
4. Review and consolidate resilience-related efforts detailed in other Elements of this Plan during the next five-year update, which may include, but not be limited to, advanced study and audit of existing facilities and programs.

# Priority Investment

One of the requirements of the State Comprehensive Planning Legislation is that the city consider how it will pay for needed capital investments. This includes an analysis of all funding sources for public infrastructure and facilities, as well as coordination with other adjacent and relevant districts and agencies.

The City of Liberty has been engaged in capital asset and debt administration for its infrastructure for many years and understands the benefits of coordination with partner agencies. The city works closely with SCDOT, Pickens County and the Appalachian Council of Governments, for instance, on planning and securing funding for construction of road projects.

The City Council prepares the City's budget, which includes Capital Expenditures and Debt Administration. To address several of the plan's recommendations, the city should consider putting together a five-year operating plan to help staff and Council members anticipate future capital costs and needs.

# PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Any successful planning process begins from the bottom up. It includes all segments of the community—especially the “average” citizen. Therefore, a survey was designed to allow the public to provide their input on the future of the community. A public meeting was also held to allow additional public input into the process. A working committee was also assembled to discuss the plan and goals for the future. These forums focused specifically on future land development and land use across the City of Liberty. This document is a product of the public input process and is intended to convey the message, the feelings, and the attitude of the city of Liberty citizens toward future development and growth. The results of the survey are in Appendix A of this document.

Residents were asked to rank their priorities by issue area. The following list details their priorities:

- 1) Services/Utilities
- 2) Entertainment/Shopping
- 3) Employment
- 4) Appearance
- 5) Public Safety
- 6) Environment
- 7) Housing
- 8) Historic Preservations
- 9) Recreation
- 10) Transportation/Traffic

# GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The public input conducted for the Comprehensive Plan has identified several goals for the city to pursue. Each of the goals was identified through extensive public involvement, progress involving not only citizens of Liberty, but local business owners, city staff, the Planning Commission and City Council. This section will outline four key themes from those goals and present a set of recommendations for each theme.

## Quality Development



Most communities want to see a basic level of quality standards for their city. Development that does not contribute to the dignity and meaning of a place can have an adverse effect on property values, the community's sense of place and economic development. Quality development will include nice aesthetics, friendly streets, sidewalks, and inviting storefronts.

*Enhance the Quality and Planning of New Development.*

- Maintain Liberty's unique character and small-city atmosphere and encourage a strong physical sense of both neighborhood and community.
- Preserving and enhancing Liberty's most important natural and cultural resources are the foundation for the character of the community.
- Adopt policy and regulations that include conservation, protection, management, and enhancement of the critical and sensitive features of the natural environment in Liberty and the surrounding area, while encouraging responsible economic development and diversity.
- Adopt policy that manages not only the timing and location of development, but also the content and design of development, to maintain and enhance the community and character of Liberty while promoting economic development.

## Plan Proactively to Manage Growth Efficiently.

- Provide adequate, high quality, and well-maintained public services, amenities, and facilities.
- Expand and maintain Liberty's utility infrastructure to adequately serve future growth and development.
- Develop recreational, sports, and cultural facilities to provide and sustain an adequate level of service.
- Maintain and improve the current elevated level of public safety and emergency services.
- Coordinate planning efforts with Pickens County to ensure quality planning, particularly for schools and along the edge of city and development located just outside the city within the county.
- Review and update the zoning and land use development ordinances.
- Encourage the development of restaurants and retail development downtown.
- Encourage the development of activities for youth and seniors.

- Maintain the current balance of owner occupied and rental housing.
- Apply development standards to ensure that mixed use areas are human scaled, pedestrian friendly, and physically integrated through mixed use buildings and buildings that front onto streets rather than large parking lots that separate buildings and their uses.

## Quality Connections



Transportation connectivity and the ease of getting around via streets, trails, and sidewalks has a major impact on the quality of life in any community. Increased connectivity reduces congestion, makes a city more walkable and bikeable, and makes a community more inviting for businesses, residents, and visitors. It is important to recognize the assets the city has, and to try to connect them safely through a variety of transportation modes.

- Develop a plan for maintenance and repair of existing sidewalks.
- Expand existing trail and sidewalk network to connect key community assets and neighborhoods.
- Adopt development regulations that require new developments to provide transportation improvements, including future controlled access collectors, to city standards where necessary, to implement the planned transportation network.
- Identify key intersections for improving pedestrian facilities (crosswalks, signaling) and streetscape applications.

# Healthy Neighborhoods



Neighborhoods are an important part of any city's success. Neighborhoods are where neighbors talk, people walk, and bikes ride. Neighborhoods should feel safe and inviting and provide places of recreation for neighbors and visitors alike. Healthy neighborhoods also provide a variety of housing options depending on lifestyle.

## *Provide a Variety of Housing Options.*

Successful communities attract a variety of residents, from affluent to low-income, and from new graduates to retirees. These communities are more resilient through recessions, down economies, and demographic shifts much better than the less diverse communities. If a surgeon, nurse, teacher, and convenience store worker are all able to find adequate housing opportunities in the same city, then a truly resilient community will exist.

- Promote residential development that protects existing, low-density neighborhoods while allowing greater flexibility in designated areas.
- Review and revise the range of uses and district regulations in the single-family residential districts to ensure that they preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Review and revise Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Regulations to ensure that infill developments are compatible with the existing neighborhood character.
- Provide a wide range of housing options and types, particularly affordable housing for low to moderate income persons as well as for the aging population.
- Encourage neighborhood development through standards that include sidewalks and communal areas throughout each neighborhood of a minimum acreage or number of lots.
- Encourage builders to utilize innovations in residential developments that allow people to interact, such as big front porches, sidewalks, and shared green space for clusters of homes.

## Focus on Neighborhood Stability.

Neighborhood stability programs focus on maintaining safe, clean, and well-kept areas that residents want to invest in for the future. Stable neighborhoods provide a sense of community and pride for the city.

- Promote redevelopment of older, obsolete residential areas through the rehabilitation of older buildings, including mitigating lead-based paint threats, and through the elimination of substandard housing when rehabilitation cannot be justified.
- Actively pursue community development funds for the rehabilitation and improvement of infrastructure in declining neighborhoods.
- Develop and adopt property maintenance standards specifically for mobile homes and other residential structures.
- In existing lower density, single family residential neighborhoods, establish zoning densities compatible with the existing development.