

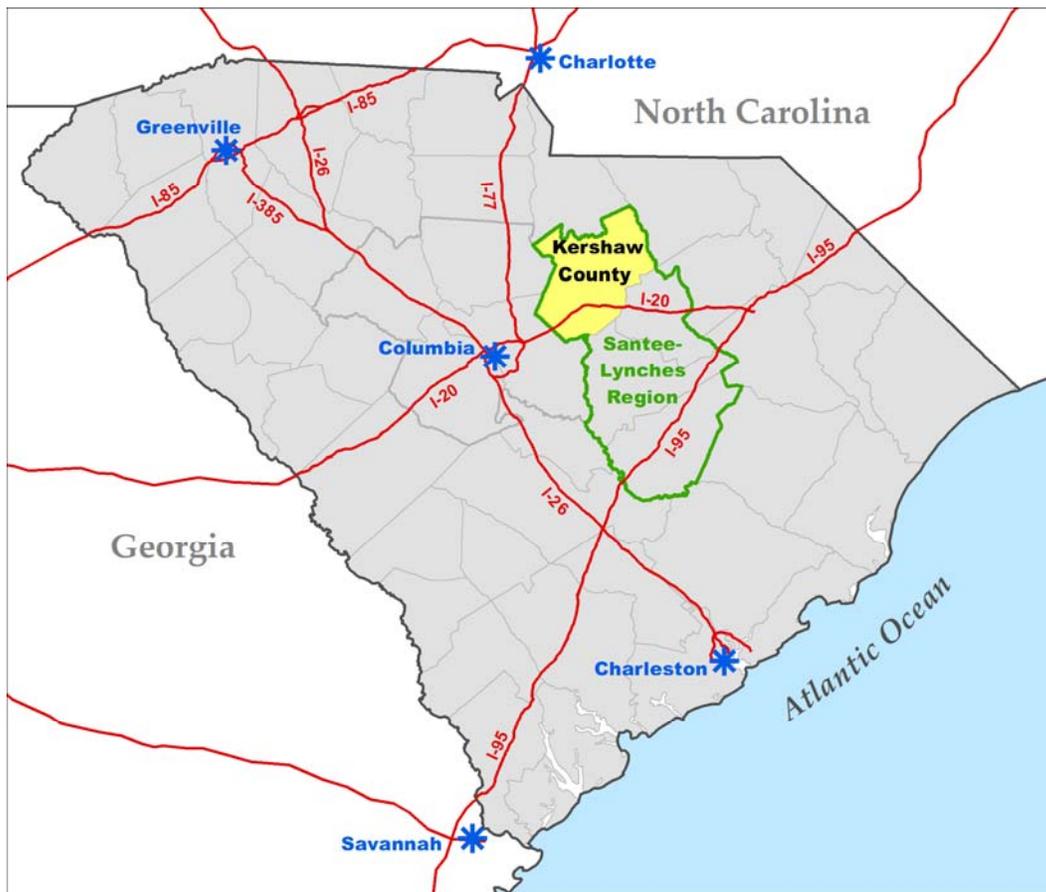
# Chapter 1. Introduction

The *2017-2027 Kershaw County Comprehensive Plan* provides a blueprint for the future growth and development of the County. Building on the successful community consensus process of *VisionKershaw 2030*, the Plan represents a long-range and comprehensive rewrite and update of the previous *2006-2016 Kershaw County Comprehensive Plan*. The new plan serves as a general guide for the future social, economic, and physical development of Kershaw County. Intentionally area-wide and non-site specific, the Plan is implemented through more specific tools such as the *Kershaw County Unified Code of Zoning and Land Development Regulations* and other ordinances, codes, and programs.

## A. LOCATION

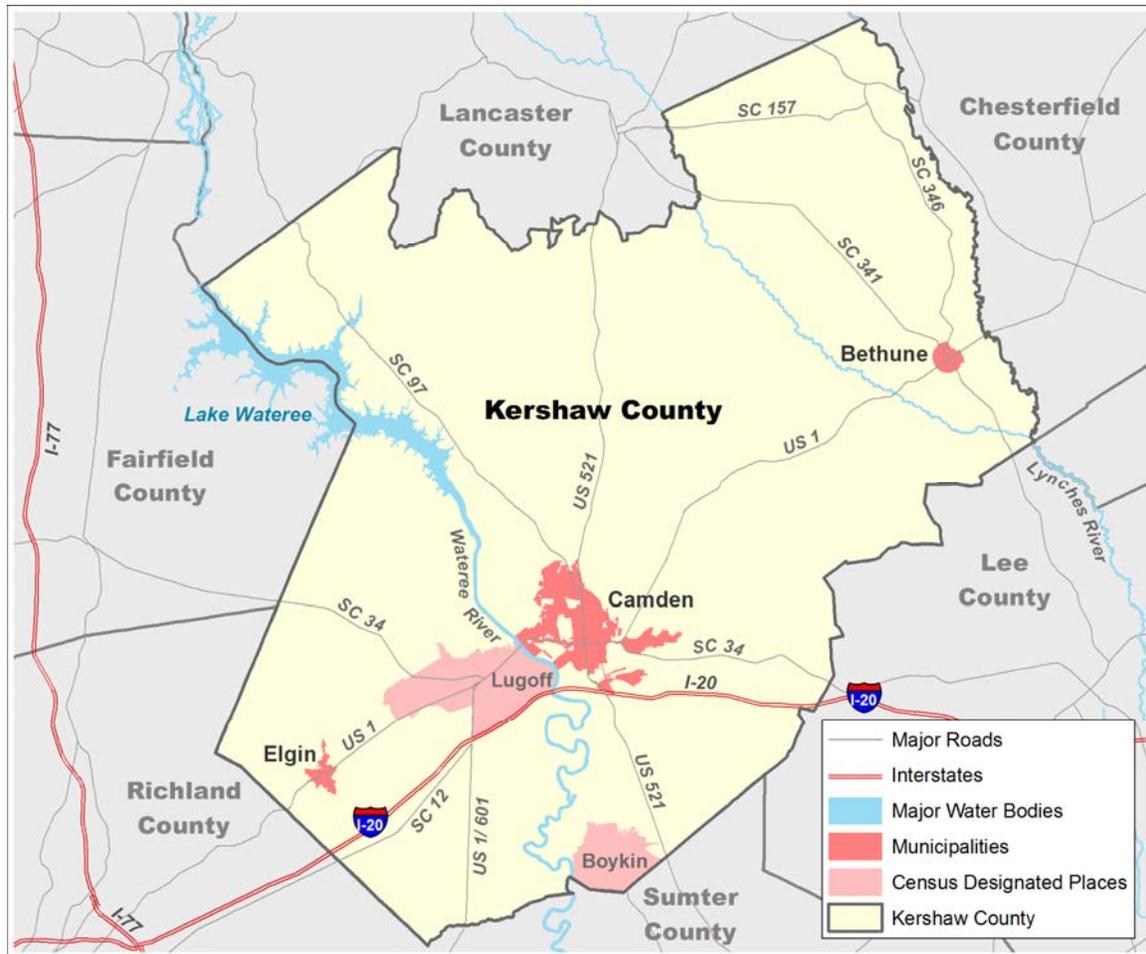
Kershaw County is located in the Santee-Lynches region of South Carolina. Access to the Wateree River and trade routes between the coast and areas further inland established the area as an early center for commerce, government, and cultural resources for the region. The County continues to benefit from its strategic location today, traversed east-to-west by the I-20 corridor that links the Columbia Metro region to Atlanta to the west and Florence and the I-95 corridor to the east (Map 1-1).

**Map 1-1. Kershaw County Location**



Kershaw County ranks 25<sup>th</sup> among the State's 46 counties in total area at more than 740 square miles. Fourteen of the County's total square miles are comprised of water, primarily consisting of Lake Wateree, the Wateree River, and the Lynches River (Map 1-2).

**Map 1-2. Kershaw County and Municipalities**



Three municipalities are located within the County. The City of Camden, located near the center of the County, is the county seat. Established around 1732, Camden is the South Carolina's oldest inland city. Camden is also the largest of the County's municipalities, both in land area (10.7 square miles) and population (6,931 persons). The Town of Bethune is located in northeastern Kershaw County above the Lynches River, while the Town of Elgin is located in the southwestern area of the County north of I-20 near the Richland County border (Map 1-2). All three of the County's municipalities are bisected and linked by U.S. Highway 1. While not incorporated, the large community of Lugoff stretches west from Camden along U.S. Highway 1 toward Elgin. Along with the Boykin community, Lugoff has been designated as a *Census designated place*. Such communities are recognized as settled concentrations of populations that are identifiable by name, although not legally incorporated.

Kershaw County is faced with a myriad of possibilities and challenges in planning for the future. Quality cultural, educational, recreational, entertainment, and employment opportunities offers a vibrant community for County residents. In addition to serving as a beloved home for long time residents, Kershaw County is attracting the attention of a growing number of new residents, including retirees and families seeking relief from traffic and other issues associated with living in a metropolitan area. Retirees are increasingly drawn to the area in search of a temperate climate, a more rural and suburban southern lifestyle, and abundant cultural and recreational amenities. The County offers these benefits while in close proximity to the amenities and services provided by a growing major metropolitan region.

The County is challenged with preserving these amenities amid increased residential and commercial development in the West Wateree area, growing interest in residential development in the Lake Wateree area, the need for additional local employment opportunities, and a shortage of lower cost housing. The Comprehensive Plan examines the diverse factors that will influence countywide future development and land use, and provides goals and recommendations that will enable Kershaw County to realize its full potential with the goal of continuing to provide an excellent quality of life for its citizens.

## **B. AUTHORITY**

In early 2018, Kershaw County completed a comprehensive plan rewrite in compliance with the requirements of the *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (Title 6, Chapter 29 of the South Carolina Code of Laws)* and subsequent amendments. The 1994 Act consolidated previous enabling acts that authorized local governments in South Carolina to create and maintain comprehensive planning process. The rewrite was preceded and guided by *VisionKershaw 2030*, an extensive countywide initiative completed in 2016. The ambitious visioning project was a year-long process that engaged hundreds of citizens of all ages in describing the community in which they would like to live, work, and raise families. The result was the articulation of a shared vision for the entire County. The new Comprehensive Plan is anchored by a lengthy process that builds on the visioning effort in which staff, public and private stakeholders, participating municipalities, the Planning Commission and County Council created a more detailed plan to guide the County's development into the next decade.

## **C. PLAN REQUIREMENTS AND BENEFITS**

Per the provisions of the *1994 Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act* and subsequent revisions, comprehensive plans must be re-evaluated by each jurisdiction's planning commission at least every five years, and must be updated at least every ten years. The *2017-2027 Kershaw County Comprehensive Plan* is a ten-year comprehensive rewrite of the previous Comprehensive Plan. Ten-year comprehensive plan updates must be prepared and recommended by the planning commission and adopted by the governing body. Each element of the Plan must address three components in the planning process:

- An inventory of existing conditions including research and a descriptive summary of existing conditions in the County that are relevant to each planning element.
- A statement of needs and goals that are derived from the existing conditions research and provide general guidance for policy implementation.
- Development of objectives and implementation strategies linked to specific timeframes for each element, including identification of key entities and partnerships with implementation responsibility and oversight.

The comprehensive plan is an essential guide for future development, providing multiple benefits by defining common goals, prioritizing community needs, and promoting efficient use of limited resources. Not only does the Plan identify the issues and opportunities facing the County over the next decade, it creates an image of what our community is and what we want it to be that serves as a written policy reference for decision-makers.

## D. SCOPE OF PLAN AND ELEMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to assess existing conditions, examine the community's strengths and weaknesses, and analyze trends in Kershaw County. This information is then used to define the consensus goals, objectives, and policies that County leaders will use to guide public and private development in Kershaw County in the coming years. In short, the planning process seeks to answer the fundamental questions of:

- Where are we headed?
- What do we need to improve and what can we build upon?
- What do we want to become and how do we get there?

The County's Comprehensive Plan includes the basic elements as required by the *1994 Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act* and subsequent revisions, as well as an additional Implementation Summary. Each of the required elements includes an inventory of existing conditions and a statement of needs and goals that identify future activities and improvements to attain these community goals. Implementation strategies for each element address specific objectives, action steps, policy directions, key participants, and timeframes for completion of plan objectives. This prescribed process is designed to support not only the preparation of the Plan, but also the continuous monitoring, reassessment, and update of the core planning elements considered critical, necessary and desirable to guide local development. Each of the nine required elements, as well as the Implementation Summary, is profiled below.

- The **Population Element** includes information related to historic population trends and projections; the number, size and characteristics of households; resident educational attainment levels and trends; race, gender, and age characteristics of the population; and other information relevant to a clear understanding of how the population affects the existing and future conditions of the County.

- The **Housing Element** includes an analysis of existing housing in the County by age and condition; owner and renter occupancy; housing location and type; housing costs and affordability; and projections of housing need to accommodate existing and future populations as identified in the Population and Economic Elements.
- The **Economic Element** includes an economic base profile; historic trends and projections on the size and characteristics of the labor force; where County residents work and reside; employment characteristics and trends; economic development targets; and other conditions impacting the local economy. Related existing economic plans and studies were referenced and incorporated where appropriate.
- The **Natural Resources Element** includes information on water resources; slope and soil characteristics; areas identified as prime agricultural or forest lands; unique plant and animal habitats; unique park and recreation areas; significant wetlands; and other natural resources within and adjacent to the County.
- The **Cultural Resources Element** includes an inventory of historic resources including buildings, structures, and archaeological sites; unique commercial or residential areas; unique scenic resources; educational, religious, or entertainment institutions and venues; and other resources relating to the cultural aspects of Kershaw County. Relevant existing historic surveys and cultural planning documents were referenced and incorporated where appropriate.
- The **Community Facilities Element** includes information on a wide range of public facilities and services including existing and proposed water supply, treatment and distribution; existing and proposed sewer systems and disposal facilities; solid waste collection and disposal; fire protection; emergency medical facilities; general government facilities and staffing; existing and proposed educational facilities and libraries, and funding sources for these essential facilities and services.
- The **Transportation Element** is an added requirement for comprehensive plans in South Carolina and includes an analysis of transportation systems serving the County. This analysis includes existing roads; planned or proposed major road improvements and new road construction; existing, planned or proposed transit projects; and existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Also incorporated are analyses of related data such as road capacities, traffic counts, commuter statistics, population and employment projections, funding sources, and other factors.
- The **Priority Investment Element** provides direction for implementing recommended strategies from the above elements that require capital improvements. This element examines future capital improvement needs, identifies viable funding sources in the coming decade, and encourages and facilitates coordination and cooperation with identified adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies in the identification, planning, and implementation of capital improvement projects.

- The **Land Use Element** provides information on the existing use and future use of land in the unincorporated area of Kershaw County. The content and goals of the other elements define the types and amounts of land needed for various uses to include residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, public and institutional, recreational, and open space. The element provides an existing land use inventory developed using digital mapping. This geographic information system (GIS) mapping of existing land uses incorporated Kershaw County Assessor tax parcel data and County staff knowledge of the area. Development of the future land use map built upon the existing land use inventory and was supplemented by County staff assessment of current development trends and potential future development areas. Surrounding land uses were evaluated in determining future land use designations for vacant land parcels.
- The **Implementation Summary** consolidates and prioritizes the goals, objectives and implementation strategies from all nine elements into a more manageable format that can be readily monitored by County staff and officials. The summary provides timelines for completion of each strategy, along with a listing of the appropriate agency or organization responsible for implementation. A chronological listing of implementation strategies is also provided to inform annual budgeting and resource planning considerations for all action items.

## E. REVIEW AND ADOPTION

The comprehensive planning process for Kershaw County included the active involvement of individuals representing local agencies, organizations, and municipalities, in addition to the participation of numerous County staff, appointed board and commission members, and elected officials. Participants also included local business owners and interested citizens. Working committees were assembled for plan elements to include individuals with subject area expertise and interest, and representatives from relevant organizations and businesses. Each committee reviewed the existing conditions for their respective element and provided additional data and input on needs, goals, objectives and implementation strategies. Following review by the element stakeholder committee, the draft document was sent to the Kershaw County Planning Commission for additional review, editing and recommendation to the Kershaw County Council. Once all Plan elements had been recommended by the Planning Commission, County Council conducted a final review of the entire comprehensive plan draft, including a public hearing and three readings, with final adoption of the *2017-2027 Kershaw County Comprehensive Plan* on March 27, 2018.