

GREENWOOD COUNTY

Strategic Planning Report

Final Report / September 2, 2026



September 2, 2026

Toby Chappell, County Manager
Greenwood County Administration
600 Monument Street
Greenwood, SC 29646

Subject: Greenwood County Strategic Planning Report

Dear Mr. Chappell:

It has been a pleasure working with the County Council and County staff on the development of Greenwood County's Strategic Plan. Raftelis is pleased to provide this Strategic Planning Report that summarizes the process and documents all elements of the final Strategic Plan. We hope that this document will serve as a useful guide as the County begins moving toward its intended vision by entering the implementation phase of strategic planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with Greenwood County on this engagement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michelle Ferguson".

Michelle Ferguson

Executive Vice President

Greenwood County Strategic Plan

Vision

Greenwood County is a community where small-town values, natural beauty, forward-thinking leadership, and economic opportunity come together to create a safe, prosperous, and welcoming place for families, businesses, and future generations.

Strategic Focus Areas



Financial Sustainability

Greenwood County utilizes public funds responsibly. We carefully manage future growth through fiscally responsible planning and sustainable service delivery.



Community Partnerships

Greenwood County engages with the community to understand their needs. We build strong partnerships and strategic alliances that advance shared goals and effectively address local needs and opportunities.



Safe and Engaged Community

Greenwood County enhances community safety and engagement by providing responsive public safety services, creating a welcoming atmosphere, and fostering meaningful public participation across every generation.



Economic Development

Greenwood County prioritizes planned investment, opportunity, and quality of life. By aligning economic growth initiatives with community values, we create an environment where families and businesses can prosper for generations.



Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing

Greenwood County supports thoughtful infrastructure and transportation planning and strives to create an environment where attainable housing is available for all.



Quality of Life Amenities

Anchored by Lake Greenwood, the County ensures our open space, recreation, and arts offerings are appealing and accessible to all segments of our population.

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Executive Summary

In March 2026, Greenwood County engaged Raftelis to support the County in the development of a strategic plan. This report summarizes each phase of the County's strategic planning process. A strategic planning process involves articulating a clear vision for the community and a mission for the organization, establishing focus areas, identifying priority strategies, and creating implementation plans. Greenwood County's Strategic Plan is intended to represent County Council's vision for the community and those specific strategies that will help accomplish that vision. The process of developing a strategic plan explores three specific questions:

1. *What do we know to be true today?* – Where are we?
2. *What do we hope will be true in the future?* – Where do we want to go?
3. *What must go well in order to make it so?* – How do we get there?

In this way, the County's Strategic Plan is a roadmap to move the community towards its intended vision of being a community where small-town values, natural beauty, forward-thinking leadership, and economic opportunity come together to create a safe, prosperous, and welcoming place for families, businesses, and future generations. Ultimately, a strategic plan is a fundamental management tool that exists to help the organization improve its delivery of services to the community in alignment with the governing body's direction.

To answer the first strategic planning question – *What do we know to be true today?* – Raftelis solicited community input through multiple stakeholder engagements, including a community meeting open to the public, a survey available to all Greenwood County employees, seven in-person focus groups with key community partners and department leaders, and individual interviews with Council members. The summary of this input is captured in the attached **Environmental Scan**.

In May 2026, the County Council worked to answer the second question – *What do we hope will be true in the future?* – by articulating a desired future for the community and identifying strategic focus areas for achieving that vision. The attached **Council Strategic Planning Retreat Summary** includes a synopsis of this engagement.

A strategic plan is best when touched by as many people as possible. Therefore, additional stakeholder input was sought from community members on the draft elements of the strategic plan during a community

open house in July 2026. The results of this engagement effort were then shared with County leadership, available in the attached **Community Open House Input Summary**.

Following, Raftelis facilitated an implementation workshop for the County's leadership team to answer the third question – *What must go well in order to make it so?* During the session, County leadership focused on identifying priority strategies and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the County's progress on each of the strategic focus areas.

The attached **Strategic Plan Implementation Playbook** was included as a deliverable following this workshop. After this workshop, the County made minor modifications to the strategic plan framework; the final strategic plan is detailed in the attached **Strategic Plan**.

Strategic Plan Implementation Playbook

The organization's strategic plan represents the County Council's Vision for the future, setting Strategic Focus Areas that address the needs of the organization and the County, and align with its Mission and Values. This document details the elements of the strategic framework, their relationships, and the process for developing actionable implementation strategies through the creation of an Implementation Plan Template for each focus area.

This document also outlines a conceptual management system that the County should consider to support organizational development, link departmental plans and operations with the strategic framework, promote budget alignment, and report on progress.

Strategic Framework

Strategic plan implementation activities cascade from the strategic framework. Greenwood County's strategic framework describes the Council's *Vision* and aspirations for the organization and the community as set forth in six *Strategic Focus Areas*. This document details the additional elements of the strategic framework, including *Strategies* and *Key Performance Indicators*.

Framework Element	Definition
Vision	Aspirational, intended to reflect what you hope will be true about the County in the future
Organizational Mission	The role and purpose of the County, frequently expressed in statements about "who we are, what we do, and why we do it"
Organizational Values	Values guide behavior, whether stated or unstated, and are observed when the workforce is "at its best"
Strategic Focus Areas	The "big buckets of things that must go well" in order for the County to be successful and achieve the Vision
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	KPIs measure and demonstrate progress in the Strategic Focus Areas at a high level
Strategies	Strategies are the projects, programs, or initiatives that the County needs to undertake in order to make progress in each Strategic Focus Area

Developing a Strategic Plan Management System

The strategic plan represents the County Council’s vision for the future, setting priorities that address the needs of the organization and the community and align with its mission and values. However, without an effective management system, even the most well-crafted plans risk becoming a document that just “sits on the shelf,”—having great intentions but not tangible results. To ensure successful implementation, the County must embed the strategic plan into its day-to-day operations through a robust management system.

Such a system encompasses several key elements: accountability for communicating the plan and results, defined implementation roles and responsibilities, regular planning and check-ins, aligning departmental operations and initiatives, integrating the plan into the budgeting process, and building and sustaining organizational capacity and individual employee performance. Together, these components create a structured approach that ensures the plan remains actionable, measurable, and impactful.

Communication

Accountability for the strategic plan starts with effective communication, which is essential to ensure alignment, buy-in, and sustained engagement from internal and external stakeholders. Sharing the vision, goals, and progress not only builds trust but also fosters a sense of shared purpose. For internal stakeholders, including County staff and leadership, clear communication ensures they understand their roles in achieving strategic outcomes. For the County Council, community partners, and the public, open communication demonstrates accountability, invites collaboration, and maintains the momentum necessary for long-term success.

Now that Strategies and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed and finalized, the full strategic plan framework should be communicated broadly, according to a well-developed communication plan. Such a communication plan should include provisions for adoption by the County Council, internal rollout within the organization, community rollout, and a plan for periodic status updates. Examples of communication strategies for each of these aspects are provided in the following table.

Communication Element	Sample Activities
Council Adoption	• Formal Presentation – Schedule a session with the County Council to review the updated strategic plan framework, including the Strategies and KPIs developed by County staff. • Adoption – County Council should adopt the plan formally to demonstrate the County’s commitment to the stated vision and focus areas. • Regular Council Updates – Establish a cadence for periodic updates, using consistently formatted reports and visual dashboards to track progress and demonstrate accountability.

Communication Element	Sample Activities
Internal Rollout within the Organization	• Leadership Briefing – Hold a dedicated session with leadership teams to present the plan’s key elements, including the Strategic Focus Areas, Strategies, and KPIs, and their departments’ roles to support implementation. • Department Engagement – Customize presentations for different departments, emphasizing their specific contributions to the overall plan and soliciting feedback to refine program alignment. • Accessible Resources – Provide easily digestible materials, including summary documents, infographics, and FAQs through intranet platforms, emails, and printed means.
Engagement with Community Partners	• Collaborative Meetings – Convene key stakeholders, such as nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and advocacy groups, to introduce the strategic plan and explore opportunities for partnership. • Co-Branded Messaging – Work with community partners to align messaging and jointly promote shared goals to the public.
Community Rollout	• Public Launch Event – Organize a community event to unveil the strategic plan, incorporating presentations, storytelling, and interactive tools to make the vision relatable and inspiring. • Diversified Channels – Use press releases, social media, newsletters, and local news outlets to reach a broad audience. • Simplified Messaging – Create accessible, jargon-free materials, including brochures, videos, and infographics to ensure the plan resonates with a diverse community.
Periodic Status Updates	• Quarterly Updates – Share progress through internal and external reports, highlighting successes, challenges, and course corrections. • Transparent Metrics – Use dashboards and scorecards to visualize progress measured by KPIs and strategy milestones. • Celebration of Milestones – Acknowledge and celebrate key achievements with both internal teams and the broader community to maintain momentum and morale.

Roles and Responsibilities

Organizations approach implementation differently, and there are several approaches to roles that can work well. At a minimum, the following roles are helpful for organizations working to implement their strategic plans.

Who	Role and Responsibilities
County Council	County Council sets policies and overall priorities for the organization. The Council should contribute to the development of the strategic plan, support implementation planning and prioritization, and advocate for the resources and capacity required to achieve success.

Who	Role and Responsibilities
Strategic Plan Owner	This is the point person for the strategic plan implementation, often the County Manager. This may or may not be the primary activity this person is tasked with, but the person should have dedicated capacity to manage the process. The Strategic Plan Owner should be responsible for soliciting feedback from the various staff and teams associated with strategic plan implementation, coordinating status updates and progress reports, and identifying opportunities for collaboration across the organization and plan framework.
Strategic Focus Area Leads	Strategic Focus Area Leads should be assigned to their particular Strategic Focus Areas based on the work they do on a day-to-day basis (e.g., the organization's Communications Director is probably a likely candidate to lead a stakeholder engagement-based Strategic Focus Area). Strategic Focus Area Leads should be responsible for coordinating the work of their respective Strategic Focus Area teams, scheduling work sessions, coordinating resources, and reporting progress regularly.
Strategic Focus Area Teams	Strategic Focus Area Teams are made up of subject matter experts in the operational area(s) covered by their respective Strategic Focus Areas. Individuals chosen to participate in Strategic Focus Area Teams should already have some level of accountability within the given Strategic Focus Area and can actively work to make or direct progress. These teams should be responsible for developing the Implementation Plan Templates for their respective Strategic Focus Areas, including identification and development of Strategies and Tactics. They should act as liaisons to their respective departments and divisions, supporting the alignment of operations with the strategic plan.

Consistent Cadence for Meeting and Reporting

Ensuring that a strategic plan remains relevant and does not become an ornamental shelf decoration requires a regular process for checking in on the progress that has been made to date, what obstacles have surfaced, what the next steps might be within a given Strategic Focus Area or Strategy and reprioritizing as necessary.

Implementation Plan Templates

While the strategic framework sets the direction for the County by defining a Vision and Strategic Focus Areas, it does not specify what actions will have to take place in order to achieve success or how success will be measured. Strategic Focus Area Teams should work together to develop an implementation plan that supports progress in their respective Strategic Focus Areas. To start, the team should review the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Strategies, then work to identify specific Tactics required to make progress toward their assigned area. The Implementation Plan Templates are included as a separate Word file attachment.

Meeting Cadence

Most strategic plans are designed to guide their organizations for a three- to five-year time horizon, but, crucially, circumstances often change over that time period. To effectively work the plan throughout the planning time horizon, the following cadence of planning and check-ins is recommended.

Frequency	Who	What
Monthly	Strategic Focus Area Teams	Meet to finalize implementation plan templates, review recent activities and progress, identify next steps, and potential roadblocks
	Strategic Focus Area Leads	Share key updates with the Strategic Plan Owner
Quarterly	Strategic Focus Area Leads	- Prepare quarterly status reports for their respective Strategic Focus Areas - Share status reports with the Leadership Team
	County Council	- Convene a quarterly strategic plan update meeting, with Strategic Focus Area Leads sharing their teams' status reports - Identify and discuss issues, opportunities, and potential reprioritization needs - Share key updates with the public
Annually	Strategic Plan Owner	Develop annual progress updates to celebrate accomplishments and report results

Alignment

The concept of alignment pertains to both the alignment of departmental operations and plans with the strategic framework as well as aligning employee performance expectations.



Aligning Departmental Operations and Plans

Long-term success will depend upon the degree to which the organization aligns its departmental and ongoing work with the County's strategic plan. Alignment will be dependent on the degree to which department and division leaders communicate and champion the plan with their respective teams and the alignment of department-level strategic plans, business plans, and annual work plans with the overarching strategic framework.

To achieve this alignment, each department must actively integrate the County's Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies into its own planning and execution processes. This includes the following actions:

- **Evaluate Existing Operations and Alignment:** Each department should assess how its unique functions and programs support the overarching County Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies. Specific objectives that align with County goals should be identified. As departmental strategic plans, business plans, and work plans are updated, they should reflect alignment with the County's strategic framework.
- **Establish Clear Lines of Accountability:** Departments should have clear lines of communication for sharing the manner and extent to which their programs and operations contribute to Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies. Mechanisms for regular reporting on progress, including periodic check-ins and contributions to County-wide performance reporting, should be created to ensure accountability.
- **Track and Evaluate Progress:** Departments should define specific metrics that reflect their contributions to the County strategic plan and align these metrics with the plan's KPIs where appropriate. Performance data should be used to identify successes and opportunities to adapt operations to improve desired outcomes.
- **Champion the Plan Through Strong Leadership:** Department and division leaders should model commitment to the County's strategic plan by embedding its elements in their leadership practices, decisions, and communications. Leaders should actively engage employees in understanding their role in achieving strategic outcomes, emphasizing how their work contributes to the overall vision for the County.

Aligning Employee Behaviors

Every County employee, regardless of their role, contributes to the organization's success and ability to deliver quality services to residents and customers. Fostering alignment between staff and the overarching County strategic vision and Strategic Focus Areas requires emphasizing shared values, encouraging

behaviors that reflect those values, and integrating goal-setting processes that connect individual work to organizational outcomes.

Values guide behavior, whether stated or unstated, and are observed when the workforce is “at its best.” Employees serve as ambassadors of these values through their daily actions, interactions, and contributions. The County should clearly articulate how the organization’s values influence work practices and celebrate employees who exemplify the organization’s values. Examples of values-aligned behaviors are provided in the following table.

County Value	Value Description	Examples of Value-Aligned Behaviors
Stewardship	We are accountable and responsible caretakers of public resources, investing wisely in our people, infrastructure, and community to build a stronger Greenwood County.	• Maintains County assets and property as if they were their own • Suggests improvements to processes or systems that enhance efficiency or reduce waste • Takes responsibility for the long-term financial health of the County through practical spending and strategic investment recommendations
Cooperation	We work as one unified team, building strong relationships across departments and with our community partners through mutual respect, open communication, and shared purpose.	• Works proactively with others to achieve shared goals • Shares information and resources to benefit the team • Acknowledges and values the contributions of others • Seeks input and builds consensus before making decisions impacting multiple stakeholders
Integrity	We hold ourselves to the highest standards of honesty, professionalism, and ethical conduct in every interaction, earning trust through consistency in our words and actions.	• Consistently meets deadlines and fulfills commitments • Demonstrates honest and ethical decision-making • Communicates transparently and honestly, even in difficult situations • Own mistakes and works to correct them promptly
Customer Service	We are committed to service excellence, treating every resident and colleague with respect and professionalism.	• Actively listens to understand customer needs and concerns • Demonstrates empathy and patience in challenging interactions • Follows up to ensure customer issues are resolved effectively • Treats every customer and colleague with respect and dignity
Innovation	We engage employees at every level to find better ways of serving Greenwood County, embracing new ideas and continuous learning.	• Readily embraces modern technologies, policies, or procedures and seeks to understand their benefits • Remains open to innovative ideas and constructive feedback • Seeks out learning opportunities to acquire new skills • Maintains a positive and proactive attitude when faced with ambiguity or uncertainty

Budget Alignment

The County's budget is one of its most powerful tools for communicating priorities. Whether explicit or implied, the allocation of resources reveals where an organization places its emphasis. Budgets articulate more than financial decisions—they signal what the organization values, the outcomes it seeks to achieve, and the work it deems essential. Misalignment between a strategic plan and budgetary decisions can undermine the credibility of both, creating gaps between stated goals and operational reality. As a result, the County's budget and budgeting process must be deliberate in reinforcing the Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies defined in the strategic plan.

To ensure that the budget serves as an operational tool for achieving strategic outcomes, the County should align its budgeting process with the strategic plan. This integration can be achieved through the following approaches:

- **Budget Request Alignment:** As part of the budgeting process, each department and operating unit should articulate how their budget requests support the County's overarching vision and focus areas. Proposed new programs, services, or initiatives should connect to specific strategic outcomes, with quantifiable results that demonstrate the anticipated impact.
- **Outcome-Focused Resource Allocation:** Budget decisions should prioritize investments that drive progress toward the organization's priorities. This may require reallocating funds from traditional activities that no longer align with the Strategic Focus Areas to Strategies designed to address evolving priorities.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Aligning the budget with the strategic plan requires collaboration across departments to address shared goals. By fostering dialogue between teams, the County can identify overlapping and conflicting priorities, avoid duplication of effort, and pool resources for greater impact.
- **Performance-Based Budgeting:** Incorporating Key Performance Indicators and other performance metrics into the budgeting process supports accountability for strategic alignment. Measures that are included in the budget request document should demonstrate alignment with Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies where appropriate.
- **Multi-Year Planning:** Many strategic outcomes take time to achieve. A multi-year financial plan tied to the strategic plan can help to ensure sustained focus and funding for long-term priorities. Such a plan can also facilitate proactive adjustments based on evolving needs and unexpected events.
- **Transparent Communication of Trade-Offs:** Strategic budgeting requires making difficult decisions. The County should communicate the rationale behind budget decisions, particularly when reallocating

resources or discontinuing programs. Transparency builds trust with stakeholders and reinforces the commitment to strategic outcomes.

Organizational Capacity

Developing and implementing the County's strategic framework and associated management system requires a level of associated organizational capacity and development. County staff and resources are already stretched in many directions, and any new programs or initiatives identified during implementation planning will require an understanding of the organization's capacity to accomplish them, as well as a resourcing plan. Ongoing initiatives that support Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies will likely benefit from process improvement activities, including process and value stream mapping, elimination of waste and non-value-added activities, and streamlining processes to ensure that they have achieved their desired results effectively and efficiently.

Additionally, it is important to note that at a fundamental level, strategy development represents change for an organization—continuing to do what the organization has always done in the same ways is unlikely to result in improved performance or results. A deliberate focus on change management and capacity building allows organizations to address different impacts of change on people and groups; mitigate risk; prepare, equip, and support people as they work through changes; and ultimately increase the opportunity for project success.



GREENWOOD COUNTY

Environmental Scan

Final Report / May 26, 2026



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Introduction

Greenwood County (County) is in the process of developing a Strategic Plan to guide future decisions and create a roadmap to move toward the County's intended Vision. In order for a community to plan effectively for the future, it is important to first have a clear understanding of where that community stands today. This Environmental Scan provides an overview of Greenwood County's current operating environment regarding the County's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the future.

Information included in this report comes from a variety of national resources, Greenwood County, County Council interviews, a survey of County employees, focus groups with internal and external stakeholders, and a community meeting. The full list of data sources is shown below:

- U.S. Census Bureau (Census)
- Census Reporter
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Greenwood County
- Stakeholder Engagement
 - Interviews with County Council Members
 - Community and Department Director Focus Groups
 - Community Meeting
 - County Employee Survey

Community Characteristics

The following section discusses the current state of the Greenwood County community and summarizes the County's experience.

Demographic Trends

On a **national** scale, the population of the United States has grown continuously, increasing by more than 20% between 2000 and 2025, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's estimates.¹ The impact of this growth is felt differently from community to community. Access to economic opportunities, cost of living, quality of schools, and proximity to employment centers all influence how each community's population changes over time. The COVID-19 pandemic further reshaped population distribution, with many workers gaining flexibility to live farther from their workplaces.

Population growth, or the lack of it, directly influences how local governments operate. Rapid growth can bring an influx of new revenue, but it also creates challenges in developing and maintaining adequate

¹ [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

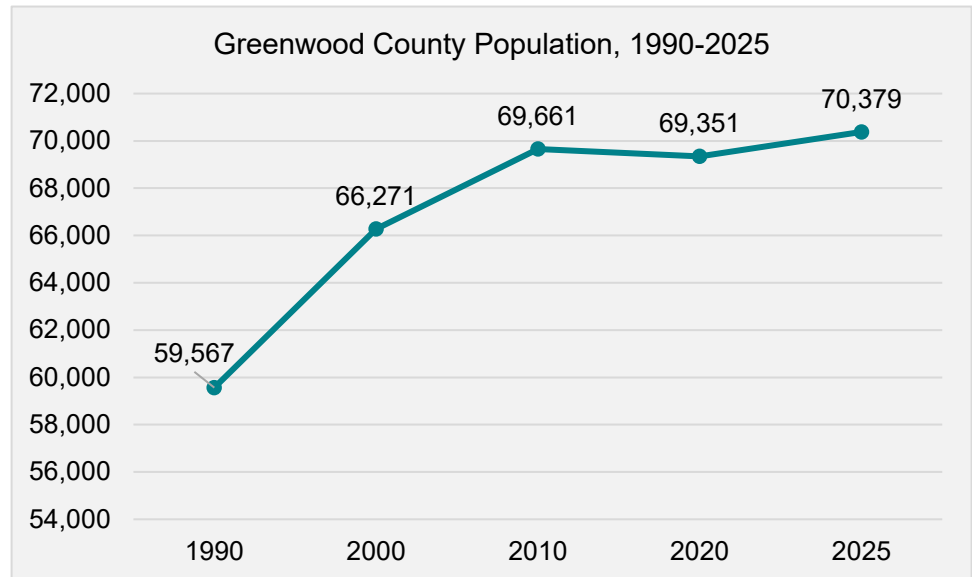
services and infrastructure. South Carolina was named the nation's fastest-growing state last year.² According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the state's population grew by 1.5% from July 2024 to July 2025.

Historically, **Greenwood**

County's population

trajectory has been relatively flat compared to state and national trends. The population increased from 66,271 in 2000 to an estimated 70,379 in 2025, representing 6.2% overall growth and an average annual growth rate of just 0.25% per year. The slight dip in 2020 reflects a broader trend of modest out-migration common in the South during the pandemic

and a natural decrease where deaths outnumbered births.³ However, more recently, Greenwood County experienced more rapid growth within the last year, with the population growing by 1.5% between July 2024 and July 2025 based on the one-year estimate.⁴



In Greenwood County, the median age of 41.4 is only slightly higher than the South Carolina median of 40.7 years and the national median age of 39.2.⁵ Approximately 20.3% of the County's residents are age 65 or older, suggesting that an aging population will shape future priorities for programs and services, particularly regarding healthcare access, housing, transit, and recreation.⁶

Greenwood County's racial and ethnic composition reflects meaningful diversity. According to the 2020 Census, the County's population was 59.4% White, 30.2% Black or African American, 1.0% Asian, and 4.8% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino residents of any race comprised 6.8% of the population.⁷

Understanding and serving the unique needs of a diverse community will be an important consideration as the County plans for the future.

Workforce Trends

Nationally, workplace culture has shifted significantly in recent years. Many employers now offer increased schedule flexibility and expanded opportunities for remote work. The Census reports that the number of employees working remotely full-time increased from 6% of the workforce in 2019 to 14% by 2023.⁸ This

² [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

³ [Municipal Association of South Carolina](#)

⁴ [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

⁵ [Census Reporter](#)

⁶ [Census Reporter](#)

⁷ [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

⁸ [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

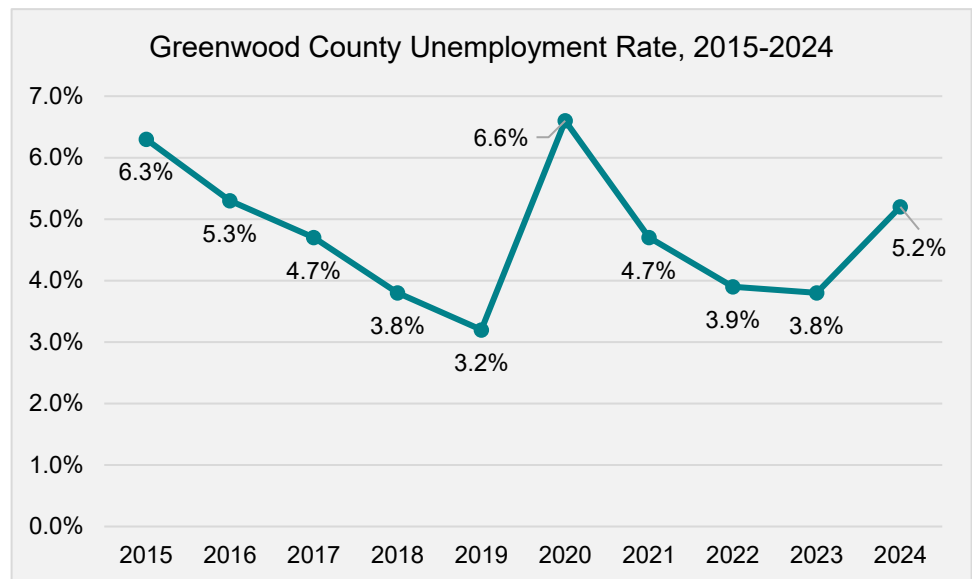
shift has given workers greater geographic freedom, meaning communities must compete on quality of life and economic opportunity to attract and retain talent.

Americans are also changing jobs more frequently than in previous years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the median tenure for American workers was 3.9 years as of January 2024, down from 4.1 years in 2022. This trend is more pronounced among younger workers, with those aged 25 to 34 reporting median tenure of only 2.7 years in 2024, compared to 9.6 years for workers aged 55 to 64.⁹ In addition, the "silver tsunami" describes the unprecedented wave of Baby Boomer retirements that is draining critical institutional knowledge from organizations faster than it can be replaced.¹⁰ More frequent job changes and losing talent across generations affect an organization's ability to build and maintain institutional knowledge, reinforcing the importance of strong training programs, professional development opportunities, well-documented policies and procedures, and succession planning.

In **Greenwood County**, the unemployment rate has generally fluctuated annually as shown in the chart below, with the most recent rate of 5.2% for 2024—above the South Carolina statewide rate of approximately 4.1% and the national rate of approximately 4.0% in the same year.¹¹ The increase in 2024 is partially attributable to the closure of the Ascend Performance Materials plant, which resulted in approximately 200 permanent job losses.¹² While these rates have improved significantly from the COVID-19 pandemic peak monthly unemployment rate of 11.3% in 2020,¹³ the County continues to experience higher unemployment than the state and nation as a whole.

Despite these challenges, Greenwood County has a strong foundation for workforce development, with most employment opportunities centered in manufacturing or healthcare.¹⁴ The County is

home to two higher education institutions, Lander University and Piedmont Technical College, that provide a direct pipeline of skilled graduates to local employers. An average of 1,500 students graduate annually from these two institutions.¹⁵ The Greenwood Promise is a noteworthy initiative that provides eligible Greenwood County high school graduates the opportunity to attend Piedmont Technical College,



⁹ [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

¹⁰ [The Society for Human Resource Management](#)

¹¹ [South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce](#)

¹² [Index Journal](#)

¹³ [South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce](#)

¹⁴ [South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce](#)

¹⁵ [Greenwood Together](#)

tuition-free and covers the final two years of high-demand majors at Lander University, as well as providing support for other programs¹⁶.

As the County plans for the future, continuing to invest in workforce development programs, attract competitive employers, and support career pathways for residents of all ages will be essential for sustaining economic growth.

Economic Trends

Nationally, the median household income has fluctuated over the past two decades. In the wake of the Great Recession, household incomes declined significantly before following a gradual upward trajectory. The COVID-19 pandemic led to widespread job losses and income reductions for many households, particularly among low-wage workers, resulting in a brief dip in median household income. Government stimulus packages and relief measures provided a temporary boost to income levels, and the national median household income is estimated to have reached \$83,730 in 2024 according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁷

In **Greenwood County**, the median household income in 2024 was estimated at \$52,830, reflecting a 4.3% increase from the prior year according to the American Community Survey data (ACS). While this growth is encouraging, the County's median household income remains well below both the South Carolina median of \$72,350 and the national median of \$80,734. Approximately 16.3% of the County's population falls below the federal poverty line, compared to 13.3% statewide and 10.6% nationally in 2024.¹⁸

Housing costs in Greenwood County have remained well below regional and national benchmarks. The median property value of owner-occupied housing in the County averaged \$180,500 from 2020-2024, roughly 70% of the state median of \$259,000. While the cost of living is lower in Greenwood County compared to nearby urban hubs, locals stressed the importance of ensuring the community remains affordable for people to live and work in the County. Nonetheless, the County's economic base is diverse, with strength in manufacturing, healthcare, education, and logistics. Major employers include Self Regional Healthcare, Greenwood County School Districts, Eaton Corporation, Capsugel Manufacturing, Lander University, and Piedmont Technical College, among others.¹⁹

Recent economic development activity has been strong. In recent years, Greenwood County allocated hundreds of millions of dollars towards capital investment and created hundreds of new jobs. In 2022, North Greenwood Industrial Park attracted ready-to-eat sandwich supplier, E.A. Sween Company, which invested \$38 million and created 300 new jobs alone.²⁰

¹⁶ [Greenwood Promise](#)

¹⁷ [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

¹⁸ [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

¹⁹ [South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce](#)

²⁰ [State of South Carolina](#)

As the County looks ahead, sustaining this momentum in economic development, creating higher-paying jobs, continuing to invest in workforce training, and addressing the income gap between Greenwood County and state/national levels will be key priorities for the County Council and the broader community.

Stakeholder Input

Understanding how Greenwood County is perceived by key stakeholders provides important context for the strategic planning process. Receiving input and feedback is essential to ensuring that the strategic framework is aligned with the organization's day-to-day reality and how internal and external stakeholders perceive the County. Input was solicited through individual interviews with Council members, focus groups with key community stakeholders, a community meeting, a focus group with County department heads, and an employee survey. The purpose of these engagements was to gather feedback on the County's strengths, critical issues, and future opportunities.

The following table provides a high-level overview of the key themes regarding the Greenwood County community discussed by each stakeholder group to show where there is overlap, while the sections below discuss these themes in greater detail.

	County Council	Community Stakeholders	County Department Directors	Employees
Strengths	Financial Discipline	Partnerships	Partnerships	Natural Assets
	Sense of Community	Workforce	Location	Sense of Community
	Growth Potential	Community Support	Quality of Life	Dedicated Employees
Issues and Challenges	Misinformation	Recruitment & Retention	Recruitment & Retention	Public Safety
	Managing Growth	Public Safety	Compensation	Recruitment & Retention
	Public Perception	Public Perception	Infrastructure Gaps	Infrastructure Gaps
Future Opportunities	Responsible Growth	Responsible Growth	Responsible Growth	Economic Development
	Housing Affordability	Community Investment	Staffing	Community Engagement
	Economic Development	Public Safety	Fiscal Strategy	Responsible Growth

County Council Input

Strengths

When considering the strengths of the County, Council members highlighted Greenwood County's **financial discipline** as one of its most notable assets. Council members expressed confidence in the County's ability to manage its resources and maintain fiscal responsibility. Beyond financial stewardship, Council members recognized the strong **sense of community** that defines Greenwood County. Residents are seen as engaged and connected with genuine pride in the area. Council members also pointed to Greenwood County's **potential for growth** as a strength, noting the County's position to attract new residents and industry while building on its existing assets and community character.

Issues and Challenges

Council members identified **misinformation** as a significant challenge facing the County. The spread of inaccurate or incomplete information, particularly through social media, creates obstacles for County leadership in communicating decisions and building public trust. While they were generally optimistic about expanding, Council members also discussed the challenges associated with **managing the growth**, noting the difficulty of balancing development pressures with the preservation of community character and the need for supporting infrastructure, e.g., facilities, utilities, etc. **Public perception** emerged as a related concern, with Council members sharing how the negative press coverage of crime, for example, can sometimes overshadow the County's accomplishments and progress.

The Future of Greenwood County

When asked about opportunities for the County to take advantage of in the future, Council members placed an emphasis on **responsible growth**, ensuring they are pursuing development in a measured, strategic way that preserves quality of life while expanding the tax base and economic opportunities. **Housing affordability** was identified as a priority, with Council members recognizing the need to ensure that residents across income levels can find attainable housing options in the community, both to rent or buy. Council members also highlighted **economic development** as a key opportunity, expressing a desire to attract diverse industries and employers that provide quality jobs for Greenwood County residents. Ensuring the County has the right resources and infrastructure is critical to attracting and retaining a strong workforce and keeping families in Greenwood County.

Community Stakeholder Input

In May 2026, Raftelis conducted community focus groups with representatives from five key stakeholder groups across the County, including School, Nonprofit and Healthcare, Public Safety, Business, and Local Government agencies. In addition, community members were invited to a strategic planning input session held on May 4, 2026. Feedback provided during focus groups and the community meeting is included in the following section. The comprehensive list of feedback the community provided during the community meeting is included as Appendix A.

Strengths

Community stakeholders value the **partnerships** that exist within and around Greenwood County. Collaborative relationships between the County, local organizations, educational institutions, and

nonprofits were cited as a meaningful asset that strengthens the community's ability to address shared challenges. For example, stakeholders shared that public safety agencies across the County often support each other to provide back up. Additionally, the County and City of Greenwood operate under a joint Planning Department to administer planning and zoning needs across the whole community. In the realm of education, Greenwood Promise supports high school graduates to attend college tuition-free.

Stakeholders also recognized the strength of the County staff, noting the **dedication and capability of County employees** who serve the community. Stakeholders shared that County staff put the community first and always do what is necessary to get the job done. **Community support** emerged as another key theme, with stakeholders expressing appreciation for the sense of togetherness and mutual investment among Greenwood County residents. Stakeholders expressed their personal identity with Greenwood County and share a mutual desire to see the community be the best it can be.

During the community meeting, attendees noted Lake Greenwood as a significant community asset and beautiful complement to the County's scenic landscape and recreational amenities. Community members expressed a strong sense of community cultivated by friendly neighbors, family ties, active ministry, and service opportunities.

Issues and Challenges

Community stakeholders identified **recruitment and retention** as the most pressing challenge facing the County. The difficulty of attracting and keeping qualified employees across industries, particularly in a competitive labor market, is seen as a barrier to maintaining the level of service the community expects. The lack of robust transportation options was also suggested as an impact on staffing and making services accessible to the broader population.

Public safety was raised as a concern, with stakeholders expressing the need for continued investment in law enforcement and emergency services to meet evolving community needs. Specifically, stakeholders noted the critical need to address crime and increasing instances of violence particularly in the younger demographic. Strategizing solutions to better support vulnerable populations, including individuals facing homelessness and in recovery, was also identified as a significant challenge. These issues influence **public perception**, which also surfaced in this context, with stakeholders noting that negative or outdated narratives about the County can hinder economic development, community pride, and residents' sense of safety.

During the community meeting, attendees also expressed concern about public safety, preserving natural resources, and managing development. Community members shared frustration over the County's rapid growth, specifically increased traffic and lack of transparency around zoning decisions. Attendees stressed the importance of proactive planning and intentional, strategic development that wouldn't negatively impact the community's small-town atmosphere. Attendees noted that unmanaged growth and overdevelopment were primary factors that would influence a decision to leave Greenwood County.

The Future of Greenwood County

Looking ahead, community stakeholders placed an emphasis on **responsible growth**, echoing the sentiments of the County Council and employees. Stakeholders want the County to grow in a way that is deliberate and strategic, ensuring that infrastructure, such as facilities, utilities, roadways, etc., and services

keep pace with new development. In terms of services, **prioritizing public safety** to ensure these essential services have adequate resources and staff to support growth emerged as a common future hope across stakeholder groups.

Community investment was also identified as a priority, with stakeholders calling for **continued reinvestment in public facilities, parks, and community gathering spaces** that strengthen quality of life. Investing in current assets could drastically expand the revenue base and attract new tourism avenues. Stakeholders identified Greenwood County's geographic proximity to major urban hubs as an asset that could be expanded, noting an increase in tourism during the Masters in Augusta. The County also hosts major events, such as the South Carolina Festival of Flowers and the South Carolina Festival of Discovery, that draw attention on a national scale. Stakeholders hoped that the County would leverage these assets to increase revenue to reinvest in the community and maintain the County's debt-free status. In the same context, access to affordable housing for the workforce was a common theme amongst stakeholder groups.

Community meeting attendees shared the same attitude, adding that implementing and enforcing development standards would ensure future growth is thoughtful and well-planned. The community hoped the Greenwood County of the future continued to prioritize family, green space, public accountability, and job creation to create a sustainable community where residents have access to urban amenities while preserving the small-town character.

County Department Directors Input

Strengths

Department directors highlighted the County's strong partnerships as a key organizational strength. **Collaborative relationships** with municipalities, regional organizations, and state agencies enable the County to extend its reach and deliver services more effectively. In alignment with other stakeholder input, directors also pointed out the County's location as an asset, noting Greenwood County's **geographic position** as an advantage for attracting residents and businesses. **Quality of life** was cited as another strength, with directors recognizing the community's natural amenities, recreational opportunities, and overall livability as factors that distinguish Greenwood County.

Department directors shared that the County's distance from the interstate is both a positive and negative; they are able to preserve a relatively quiet, small-town atmosphere and have plenty of open land to attract developers; however, they are potentially missing out on the perks that major interstate traffic brings. Ultimately, directors expressed that the community's assets and **potential for growth** put the County in a favorable position to make strategic decisions about the future.

Issues and Challenges

Recruitment and retention emerged as the dominant challenge faced by department directors, consistent with concerns raised by other community stakeholder groups. Directors described the difficulty of competing with the private sector and neighboring jurisdictions for skilled employees, and the **organizational strain** caused by vacancies and turnover. **Compensation** was identified as a primary catalyst, with directors noting that pay scales do not always align with the demands of County positions or the cost of living, making it harder to recruit and retain qualified staff.

Infrastructure gaps also surfaced as a concern, with directors pointing to **aging facilities, technology needs, and deferred maintenance** as issues that affect the County's ability to deliver services efficiently. Maintaining the County's debt-free status is admirable; however, directors questioned if this accomplishment was a potential detriment to preventative maintenance measures, updating aging facilities, and operational optimization.

The Future of Greenwood County

Department directors see responsible growth as the primary opportunity for the County to capitalize on in the future, aligning with other stakeholder groups on this theme. Directors stressed the importance of ensuring that **organizational capacity keeps pace with community growth**, including adequate staffing and updated infrastructure. Staffing was identified as a major priority, with directors advocating for **strategic workforce planning, competitive compensation, and professional development** to build a resilient County workforce. Having enough staff to support growth and service demands is critical to future success. Fiscal strategy was also highlighted as an opportunity to build on in the future, with directors calling for **long-term financial planning** that positions the County to fund critical needs, minimize impact on taxpayers, and invest in its future without overextending resources.

Employee Input

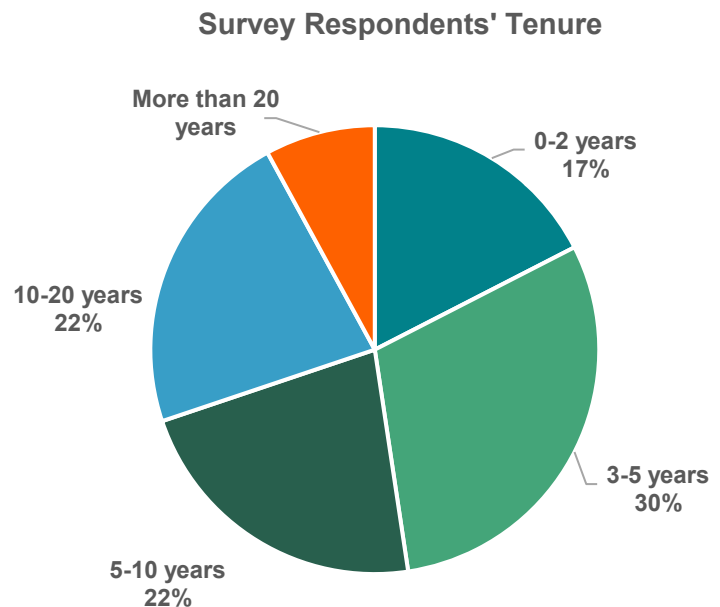
County employees had the opportunity to provide input during the strategic planning process by responding to a survey. The survey was administered through a web-based tool, Zoho™ Survey, and was available from April 29 to May 15, 2026.

A total of **114 responses** were received, with most respondents having worked for the County for at least three years. Only 17% of respondents have worked for the County for less than two years, as reflected in the figure to the right.

The survey was divided into five sections:

- Input on the development of an organizational mission statement
- Input on potential organizational values
- Input on the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Input on the community's strengths and issues²¹
- Any other comments relevant to the strategic planning process

The following sections summarize the results of the survey. The comments were analyzed and assigned to categories based on topic areas or themes. Themes



²¹ Summarized in previous section.

were chosen to accurately represent the respondents' statements and to identify commonalities across responses where they exist. A copy of the survey questions is included as Appendix B.

Organizational Mission

An organization's mission statement identifies the overall goal of its operations and clearly defines the organization's purpose. It answers three questions:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?

To help describe the employees of the County, the work that they do, and what benefits the community experiences as a result of their work, survey respondents answered the three open-ended questions mentioned above.

Who Are We?

Respondents were first asked the question, "Who are we? How would you describe the employees of the Greenwood County?" A total of 81 employees provided input.

Employees most commonly described themselves and their colleagues as **dedicated public servants** who take pride in making the County better. Respondents emphasized their commitment to providing **quality services** and their care and compassion for the community. Other common descriptors included hardworking, community-focused, kind, and team-oriented, reflecting a workforce that values collaboration and service.

Representative responses from these themes include:

- *Capable*
- *We are a great, energized group of people who are concerned with the betterment of Greenwood County and providing leadership for our resources.*
- *Dedicated public servants committed to integrity, teamwork, and serving our community.*

As Greenwood County employees, we are:

- Service-Oriented / Community-Focused (38%)
- Dedicated and Committed (24%)
- Hardworking (22%)
- Kind, Caring, and Friendly (19%)

What Do We Do?

After describing the employees of the County, survey respondents provided input on what the employees of Greenwood County do and how their work serves the community. A total of 77 employees provided input.

The most common response was that County employees provide **essential services** that support the daily lives of residents, from public safety and infrastructure maintenance to administrative functions that keep government running smoothly. Respondents also discussed how their roles contribute to maintaining and enhancing the **quality of life** in the community, ensuring that Greenwood County remains a desirable place to live and work.

Representative responses from these themes include:

- *Greenwood County provides essential services to our community and works to improve the quality of life for all of our residents.*
- *Provide resources for the community*
- *Provide public safety and attempt to grow the local economy.*

As Greenwood County employees, we:

- Serve the Community (47%)
- Offer Public Safety and Protection (25%)
- Contribute to a Better Quality of Life (16%)
- Develop and Maintain Infrastructure (14%)

Why Do We Do It?

Respondents were next asked why they do the work that they do, and what drives them and their colleagues to deliver for the community. A total of 80 employees provided input.

The most common response was a genuine desire to serve the public and make a positive impact on the community. Employees expressed pride in their work and a **sense of responsibility** to the residents who depend on County services. Many respondents noted a personal connection to the community, with several indicating that they live in Greenwood County and are motivated by the **desire to improve the place they call home**.

Representative responses from these themes include:

- *I try to deliver the best I can because I care about the entire community as a whole.*
- *To make a positive difference and strengthen the community we serve.*
- *To make sure that Greenwood continues to develop and grow while keeping its close relationships with the community and neighbors.*

As Greenwood County employees, we:

- Have a personal connection to the community (29%)
- Desire to serve and help others (23%)
- Make a positive impact (14%)
- Take pride in our work (14%)

Organizational Values

The County's values embody its core principles and guide the way that the organization operates and serves the community. To help identify the values to incorporate into the County's strategic plan, survey respondents were asked to select the values that their colleagues show when they are at their best and what values guide their decision-making. They were shown groups of similar values and asked to choose the groups that should be most important for the County to embody. They were then asked a series of multiple-choice questions to define which value words in each grouping are most impactful. Finally, they were given the opportunity to list any other values missing from the list provided that are important to the County.

Value Groupings

Survey respondents were shown groups of similar values and asked to select five groups of words from a list of 18. From that list, they were then asked a series of multiple-choice questions to define which value in each grouping is most impactful. Finally, they were given the opportunity to list any other values missing from the list provided that are important to the County. A total of 79 employees provided responses.

The following table shows the value groups from most- to least-selected, along with the percentage of respondents who selected that value. The most-selected group, chosen by 59% of respondents, was "Responsibility (includes Accountability/Stewardship)." The second most-selected group, chosen by 56%,

was “Teamwork (includes Collaboration/Cooperation/Unity).” Respondents were able to select multiple groups; therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Value Groupings	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Responsibility (includes: Accountability / Stewardship)	59%	47
Teamwork (includes: Collaboration / Cooperation / Unity)	56%	44
Compassion (includes: Caring / Empathy)	52%	41
Integrity (includes: Honesty / Trustworthiness)	44%	35
Customer Service (includes: Accessibility / Helpfulness / Responsiveness)	43%	34
Respect	29%	23
Excellence (includes: Competence / Professionalism)	28%	22
Commitment (includes: Dedication / Ownership)	24%	19
Safety	23%	18
Quality (includes: Effectiveness)	20%	16
Fairness (includes: Consistency)	19%	15
Efficiency	16%	13
Preparedness (includes: Forward- thinking / Proactivity)	14%	11
Resilience (includes: Adaptability / Flexibility)	14%	11
Innovation (includes: Continuous Improvement / Creativity)	13%	10
Belonging (includes: Welcoming)	11%	9
Engagement (includes: Openness / Transparency)	5%	4
Sustainability	5%	4

Refinement of Values

The next set of questions was dedicated to the refinement of values. Respondents were asked to select which of the words from the groupings in the previous question best describes how County employees should behave. They were only asked about the groupings that they had previously selected as most important.

The following table shows the most-selected word from each of the groupings. Value groups are shown in the same order as in the table above.

Value Groupings	Most-Selected Value
Responsibility (includes: Accountability / Stewardship)	Stewardship
Teamwork (includes: Collaboration / Cooperation / Unity)	Cooperation
Compassion (includes: Caring / Empathy)	Caring
Integrity (includes: Honesty / Trustworthiness)	Integrity
Customer Service (includes: Accessibility / Helpfulness / Responsiveness)	Customer Service
Respect	Respect
Excellence (includes: Competence / Professionalism)	Competence
Commitment (includes: Dedication / Ownership)	Commitment
Safety	Safety
Quality (includes: Effectiveness)	Effectiveness
Fairness (includes: Consistency)	Fairness
Efficiency	Efficiency
Preparedness (includes: Forward- thinking / Proactivity)	Preparedness and Proactivity
Resilience (includes: Adaptability / Flexibility)	Resilience
Innovation (includes: Continuous Improvement / Creativity)	Continuous Improvement
Belonging (includes: Welcoming)	Welcoming
Engagement (includes: Openness / Transparency)	Transparency
Sustainability	Sustainability

Based on these responses, the top five values selected are:

- Stewardship
- Cooperation
- Caring
- Integrity
- Customer Service

SWOT Analysis

Survey respondents were asked open-ended questions about the Greenwood County organization's greatest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These questions help to develop a sense of how staff currently perceive the organization today, and how it can build on its strengths and capitalize on its opportunities moving forward. The following table provides a high-level overview of the key themes to show where there is overlap, while the sections below discuss these themes in greater detail.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Dedicated Employees			
Departmental Leadership	Accountability	Employee Investment	Staff Burnout
Sense of Responsibility	Communication Silos	Funding Sources	Rising Cost
	Recruitment and Retention	Community Engagement	Staff Turnover

Strengths of the County Organization

Survey respondents were asked about the greatest strengths of the County **organization**. A total of 55 employees provided input.

Respondents felt the **dedicated workforce** was the County organization's greatest strength. Employees consistently described themselves as hardworking, loyal, and motivated by a desire to improve the quality of life for residents. This dedication is reinforced by an **organizational structure** that respondents view as adaptable, with strong departmental leadership and effective supervisory relationships. Underlying both is a deep **sense of responsibility**: employees conduct themselves with integrity and take pride in their willingness to go above and beyond for the community.

Representative responses from these themes include:

- *Visionary leadership*
- *Dedicated core workforce*
- *Commitment to community*
- *The County responds quickly to local needs, an example would be public assistance during Storm Helene, most employees were expected to show up for work to help and we did*

Weaknesses of the County Organization

Similarly, survey respondents were asked about the greatest weaknesses of the Greenwood County **organization**. A total of 54 employees provided input.

While the County benefits from strong individual contributors and departmental leadership, respondents identified several organizational gaps that impact effectiveness. Employees noted a **disconnect with top-level leadership** that has influenced trust and morale. There is a desire for more accountability across departments and **transparency** with resource allocation. Closely related, many respondents cited poor

communication between departments and with the public. Employees shared that they have limited involvement with decision-making and feel **departmental silos** prevent cross-departmental collaboration.

Many respondents also cited uncompetitive pay and limited career growth opportunities as barriers to recruiting and retaining qualified employees, as a limited applicant pool, competition from surrounding jurisdictions, and the departure of experienced staff continue to strain organizational capacity. Most notably, employees identified **public safety** as facing the most significant staffing challenges, with respondents highlighting the need for additional law enforcement personnel, improved response times, and expanded resources to serve a growing population.

Representative responses from these themes include:

- *Lack of team-building*
- *Retention of good employees*
- *Lack of public trust*
- *Allocation of County funding*

Opportunities Within the County Organization

Next, respondents provided input on what they see as the top opportunities on which the County should focus its efforts. A total of 50 employees provided input.

Respondents identified three major areas of opportunity to strengthen the organization. **Investing in employees** through competitive compensation, professional development, career advancement pathways, and innovative benefits would position the County as an employer of choice and directly address the retention and recruitment challenges identified as weaknesses. Pursuing **diversified funding sources**, including grants, tourism revenue tied to Lake Greenwood and recreational assets, economic development initiatives, and strategic partnerships, could expand the County's resource base without placing additional burden on taxpayers. Strengthening **community engagement** through public education about County functions, expanded citizen input on decisions, and more effective use of digital platforms would help tell the County's story and build public trust.

Representative responses from these themes include:

- *Greenwood County can be a leader [by] being proactive in developing plans for future growth that affects utility increases, water quality, etc. for controversial developments*
- *Grant funding*
- *Job training for employees*
- *We have an opportunity to educate our constituency*

Threats to the County Organization

Respondents also provided input on what they see as the top threats to the County organization. A total of 52 employees provided input.

Staff burnout is one of the most pressing threats facing Greenwood County, according to employees. Respondents expressed that current staffing levels are insufficient to meet growing service demands, particularly in public safety and emergency services, leading to fatigue, declining morale, and reduced capacity to maintain service quality. **Rising costs** driven by inflation, increasing housing prices, and expanding service delivery expenses place pressure on both the organization and the residents it serves,

requiring a careful balance between the County's tradition of financial discipline and the need to invest in infrastructure, technology, and personnel. **Staff turnover** ties these pressures together: experienced employees are departing faster than institutional knowledge can be transferred, and the combination of compensation gaps, workload strain, and accelerating retirements creates a compounding risk to operational continuity that will intensify as the County continues to grow. **Infrastructure gaps**, including aging facilities, transportation deficiencies, and utility capacity constraints, were also frequently mentioned as challenges requiring attention. Employees suggested that these challenges were intertwined, so addressing one of these issues may positively impact the other.

Representative responses from these themes include:

- *Burnout - not enough people to do the work*
- *Hiring to fill personnel slots even though the person may not be exactly qualified*
- *Low pay leads to higher turnover*
- *Stress at times*

Additional Comments

In the concluding section of the survey, respondents were given an opportunity to provide additional comments that would be helpful for the strategic planning process. A total of 45 employees provided input. Responses reiterated sentiments expressed throughout the survey, with an emphasis on four major themes. The most common themes, mentioned by at least eight respondents each, are listed below:

Workforce and Resource Allocation

Workforce investment was the most frequently cited theme. Respondents called for competitive compensation that keeps pace with cost of living and peer counties. Beyond pay, responses emphasized adequate staffing levels to distribute workloads, sufficient departmental budgets, and meaningful opportunities for employee input in decisions that affect their work. Several respondents also encouraged collaboration with external partners, including nonprofits and schools, to pool resources and extend the County's capacity.

Leadership and Transparency

Respondents expressed a strong desire for proactive, research-informed decision-making and greater transparency in how the County communicates with both employees and the public, noting that increased information-sharing can strengthen community confidence. Others called for stronger accountability at all levels of leadership and commitment to implementing long-term strategic priorities.

Community Development and Engagement

Respondents recognized that Greenwood County is changing and emphasized the importance of managing that change intentionally. Priorities included proactive planning policies, infrastructure capacity, and environmental protections. Several responses also highlighted the need for youth outreach and programming, local economic development that retains tax dollars in the community, and balancing growth with the County's small-town character.

Technology and Modernization

Respondents identified technology as a key enabler of efficiency and service delivery. Specific needs included a dedicated Human Resources Information System (HRIS) to replace the current financial

system's limited HR capabilities, as well as updated tools across departments. Several responses tied modernization to workforce transition, noting that as experienced employees retire, the County must equip the next generation with the technology and resources they need to work effectively.

APPENDIX A:

Strategic Planning Community Meeting



Strategic Planning Community Meeting

Greenwood County residents were invited to a strategic planning community meeting held on May 4, 2026. The meeting was planned and facilitated by Raftelis. During the meeting, attendees were asked to respond to a series of prompts about Greenwood County's strengths, challenges, services, and future state. The transcription of the attendees' feedback is included below.

Why Greenwood

Why do you choose to live in Greenwood County?

- To live in a small town – safe
- Affordable lake property
- Family first
- Bicycle friendly
- Job opportunity
- Lander University
- Weather
- Slower pace of life
- The people; lower taxes; less traffic congestion; less crime
- Life long resident
- 30 years ago it was the school district
- Lake Greenwood – moved here for the lake; SC has the 2nd largest lake; keep the lake advisory
- Quality for affordability
- Lived here temporarily
- Transferred here temporarily
- The lake; people are very friendly; born here – family
- Relatives/family; small town appeal
- Moved here for the lake

What keeps you here in Greenwood County?

- Lake Greenwood
- Quiet
- Supportive efforts to help others – churches, community organizations
- Hope for a "representative" County government vs. a "ruling" County government
- Family; jobs; small town; rural areas; friendliness
- Country life / small town living
- Everyone knows your name
- Family – cost of living
- Trees – love the trees
- Like the lake
- The Lake!!!!
- Community events; environmentally clean city
- Friendly people; know your neighbors

- Quality of life
- People
- Amazing roads for cyclists; ministry/service opportunities
- Time the lights
- We need a freeway to get out, around and through town

What makes you proudest to live in Greenwood County?

- Our woods!!!
- Quiet!
- Friendly neighbors
- Community spirit
- County appearance!
- Ministry opportunities
- Less traffic pressure
- 96 school district
- Right now it is hard to be proud – crime, irresponsible growth
- Beauty of the environment and health of the ecosystem
- Big volunteer community
- Religious emphasis
- Widest Main Street
- It was amazing how people helped others after the hurricane
- I love too the people here – support those who need less; the nonprofit community
- Exceptional medical care for a community our size – could it be better? Yes!
- Welcoming; sense of community
- Location
- A lot to do here; always something going on
- Knowing people
- I love Greenwood – 54 years here

Challenges and Opportunities

What do you see as the most pressing challenges in Greenwood County?

- Losing our greenspace
- Lack of Greenwood's social identity/division
- Traffic
- Crime
- Pollution; left from DHEC
- Protect the environment; higher crime responses to emergencies; affordable housing
- Potential for over-development and planning; transparency about what has happened in the past with resources; future quality of services; resources
- We don't know who we are, the most pressing challenges in County
- Community needs to do specialized training to meet the needs of incoming industries
- Architectural standards lacking (defined and enforced)

- Recruit only environmentally friendly companies (No pollution!)
- Good jobs to keep kids
- Helene exposed; leader/leadership not ready
- Where is the Planning Department in this planning process?
- Drinking water
- Uncontrolled growth; protecting natural resources; road capacity and road conditions; growth should dictate:
- The lake is central to Greenwood County's economy and health/quality of life; lake water quality – prioritizing water quality is essential; Recreation, business, fishing, jobs all crash if the lake is bad
- Overpopulation, infrastructure has not kept up, power grid ancient, school overcrowding, crime (town), jobs, displacement of wildlife
- Oversight on codes/ordinances; equitable enforcement
- Look the "Good Old Boy system" – Transparency in zoning; commercial negotiations; hold Ascend responsible for cleanup

How should the County address these challenges?

- Support volunteer planning; committee to staffing
- County admin should not dictate dismissal; standards of development
- Staff the planning department with qualified personnel
- Define requirements and enforce them
- Open communications; move to about proposed development; have as well as resources
- Mitigation of development impacts; traffic impact fees
- Surety bonding for development
- County council should engage in discussions not only in what is legal but also the right thing to do
- Recruit only environmentally friendly companies (No pollution!):
- 1) Listen to the people that live, work, play here; let us know what the master plan is so we can make suggestions and revisions
- 2) Halt/slow new construction; testing on land near lake before it is developed/rezoned (Before harm is done!)
- 3) Hire independent agency and credibility against/to monitor lake water; Town council has a credibility problem
- Yes:
- 1) Listen to the people
- 2) Halt/slow new construction; testing on land near the lake that was formerly industrial; before it gets developed/rezoned (Before harm is done!)
- Consider a citizens academy; podcasts
- Update the navigation/giving (link)
- Listen to residents!
- Measured growth
- Impact fees for large developments
- Public safety to keep pace w/ development
- No over-development
- Planning commission needs to be an independent group; not controlled by county council

- Manage development without relying on DHEC
- Create a 10-20 year plan for future and share/get feedback from public
- Value the voices of our community; help prevent overdevelopment that negatively impacts our green space and animal life
- Consider: citizens academy; podcasts; update navigation/giving (link)
- Transparency in zoning; commercial negotiations
- Unified voice regarding pending issues
- Report thru blogs
- Transparency among public officials and concerns from citizens
- Timely responses to citizen issues
- Greater leverage of State and Federal Grants
- Public safety to keep pace w/ development
- Single family and over-55 instead of high density
- Lake management
- Limit building permits until we have a long-term plan for future growth
- Until we have a long-term plan; plan for future; limit building permits

What actions can the County take that would have a big impact on the County's future?

- Consider a citizens academy; podcasts
- Update the navigation/giving (link)
- Listen to residents!
- Measured growth
- Impact fees for large developments
- Public safety to keep pace with development
- No over-development
- Animal: spay/neuter; animal dumping is huge; enforce leash law; enforce barking codes
- Consider green space; please help prevent new construction from clear-cutting large areas of land (before harm is done):
- Listen to the people that live, work, play here
- Halt/slow new construction on land near lake (before harm is done)
- Hire an independent agency to monitor the lake water
- Collaboration; do independent land/water testing on former industrial land, before it gets developed/rezoned
- Provide incentives for economic development; communicate incentives to the public; proper size zoning
- Transparency in zoning and commercial negotiations; hold Ascend responsible for cleanup
- Equitable enforcement; oversight on codes/ordinances
- Create 10-20 year plans for future and share/get feedback from public
- Value the voices of our community; help prevent overdevelopment that negatively impacts our green space and animal life
- Storm water manager for lakes, rivers, creeks, streams and watershed
- We need storm water management
- Overdevelopment for lakes, rivers, creeks, streams and watershed

- Manage development without relying on DHEC
- Traffic; pollution; left from DHEC; crime; protect the environment; higher crime responses; affordable housing
- If you have ever lived somewhere else, what do you miss about that place?
- Did not allow clear cutting when building homes in Mt. Pleasant
- Public golf courses
- Clean lakes; public transportation; freeway
- My friends; the retail stores; restaurant variety; work with city to redevelop mall
- Left/right turn lanes; better streets/traffic flow; better planning; that place had: Rails, Bike trails, Parks, Walkability, Restaurants; more healthcare options; Thriving newspaper to keep informed; I lost the low traffic here but we need better roads; managed without chemicals; water environment; Allen – a good model; arts and culture; variety of restaurants (too much fast food here)
- Sams Club; Home Depot' County World Cafe Transcription

Services

What services does the County do an excellent job at providing?

- Trash collection
- Parks – Grace Park, Civic Center Park, Parks as a whole
- Landfill shredding documents (Siloam Church Road)
- Clean site
- Public safety – law enforcement
- Litter maintenance
- Emergency management information updates
- Community events – in conjunction with City
- Volunteer Fire Departments
- I appreciate having a public information officer; Abby Banks does a wonderful job!
- Impressive staff at tax office
- Like new logo – let it be a road map!
- Zero community clubs in last several years
- Find community clubs – New park I support
- Like pay information online
- Emphasis on lake economy; job development; industry recruitment

Have you ever been disappointed by a service you received from the County?

- Yes – neighbor blocked off a large portion of our common driveway; no one including EMS could help us; we were told it was a civil manner even though EMS could not get to our house because of the blocked area
- Emergency medical services
- Planning Commission processes
- Poor future planning regarding developments
- Not actively attracting employment opportunities
- Humane Society / Animal – spay/neuter
- Lake management

- Not advised when hurricanes or tornadoes will affect us and where we can go for safety
- Hurricane Disaster surfaced many issues: underground power, roads/clearing
- Co-operation roads – lack of maintenance on roads; overhanging trees; lack of planning on FPD buildings; allowing new development; sufficient infrastructure needs to be in place before development/construction; after accidents – whoever is being paid to have the vehicle need to make sure to get all the debris – save our tires!!
- Total lack of planning – total disappointment
- Courthouse – no work on Fridays; no operation hours
- Road conditions due to construction
- Are we better prepared now? Helene response
- Community is disappointed about public meetings
- Lake management; imbalanced enforcement; Humane Society are not there all the time
- Yes, I'm not sure
- Codes and ordinances

What would you like to see the County do more of or differently in the future?

- Zoning needs to be more consistent city/county
- Walkability in city/county
- Recruit/allow more businesses
- Balance rentals/purchases (no affordable home purchase, not rent)
- Larger tracks of land per house in County; 6c = 1 house per 2 acres
- Impact fees for new construction, not improvements; larger developments
- More historic preservation – incentives for renovation of existing structures
- Controlled growth
- No data control
- Increased diversity in restaurant offerings
- Expanded cable/TV/internet services
- Long community comments/input times on developments
- Initiate impact fees for large projects
- Expand airport; business recruitment
- Create input from department heads on budget, etc.
- Youth development programs
- Increase EMS/Fire/First Responder services; ISO
- County Council communications; LP – staffed/controlled
- Improved infrastructure
- Too much boat traffic – unsafe; need more emphasis on safety
- Restrictions on planned development; too many new homes
- More go-around investment; protecting the lake economy depends on it
- Serious emphasis on protecting the lake; investment and economy depends on it
- A plan to deal with homelessness and health/moral
- More litter control
- Crack down on violence
- More/better public impact on issues

- Create rules/ordinances; crack down on neighborhoods
- Enforcing dog dumping; lack of control
- Collaboration between city/county government
- More reviews on development; plan for growth; don't give big tax breaks to industry (and not to industry standards)
- Do more due diligence before approvals on development
- All developments before approval
- More development of opportunities

The Future

What do you hope Greenwood County will be known for in 10 years?

- Taking care of the community
- Peaceful and clean!
- Accountable City/County Council
- Council puts the community ahead of personal interests
- Hopefully not a polluted lake
- Thriving, Responsible – Setting a standard for responsible, intelligent growth; 2010–20
- A nice place to shop but not strip malls
- A community for families
- Youth in community; opportunities to maintain/retain youth
- Respite from "bad cities"
- Thriving Fine Arts; Thriving the Arts
- Peaceful, Healthy Community; nature preservation of wildlife; quality of life
- Adequate infrastructure; commonplace; small town appeal; future development
- Nice quiet town that maintained its small town appeal
- Safe!!!
- Decrease of cancer causes; better school protection; cleaner air?
- Well-being of citizens; better animal welfare; greenspace
- Safe places to walk; create greenspace
- More transparent and collaborative government; no over development; no collaboration with the state
- Higher end restaurants; better jobs; local owned businesses
- Full employment; new clean environmentally developed businesses; well-planned, legally specific and enforced, community architectural standards
- Family; jobs
- We need a freeway to get out of town

What keeps you here in Greenwood County?

- The Lake!!!!; community events; environmentally clean city
- Friendly people; know your neighbors; quality of life
- People
- Amazing roads for cyclists; ministry/service opportunities

- Lake Greenwood!
- Family
- Low traffic
- Quiet; beautiful; litter-free
- People have been friendly
- Over-development; increased traffic
- Increased traffic (Chevy/Volvos/Steel Creek in downtown)

What would make you want to leave?

- Crime/drugs
- Toxic/dirty lake
- Over-development / poor planning
- Data center
- Developers who aren't concerned by our environment, by buildings on sites that may have chemical spills – unless it goes through necessary process – like Breen field
- No building on sites that may have chemical spills unless it goes through necessary process like Breenfield
- Crime/drugs / shootings / dirty water
- Mobile homes/buildings; abandoned buildings; litter; shootings; drug abuse; no more Dollar General; Dollar Tree
- Dirty water; litter crime; long commute
- Pollution!
- Uncontrolled growth!!
- Crime/drugs/shootings/gangs
- Over-corporation; turning into Woodruff – No
- Jobs – we need businesses to keep jobs
- Getting too crowded
- Violence/crime
- Toxic waste
- Good Ole Boy system
- Continued unplanned development (circled/starred)
- Unhealthy lake
- Ongoing lack of accountability and transparency
- Significant increase in traffic congestion
- Lack of county development accountability
- Poor unstructured development
- Voted officials not working for constituents; not transparent

APPENDIX B:

Employee Survey Instrument



Greenwood County, SC

Strategic Planning Employee Survey

Greenwood County has embarked on an exciting process to develop a Strategic Plan, and we want your input! When completed, the Strategic Plan will help the County direct its efforts and resources towards a clearly defined future for the community and the County organization.

The County has partnered with Raftelis, a local government consulting firm, to facilitate this process. This survey has been developed to solicit your input on the organization's mission, and values. These elements will provide a foundational framework for how the County operates, makes decisions, and engages with the community.

Your perspective as an employee is vital to ensuring that our mission and values accurately reflect who we are and what we strive to achieve. All responses are confidential and will be sent directly to Raftelis, who will compile and analyze the results. These insights will be instrumental in shaping statements that truly represent our collective identity and goals.

Please complete the survey by May 15, 2026. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. We greatly appreciate your time and thoughtful input in this important process.

Mission

An organization's mission statement addresses three questions:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?

Please provide your thoughts on the questions below.

1. Who are we - How would you describe the employees of Greenwood County?
2. What do we do - How would you concisely describe what Greenwood County does for the community?
3. Why do we do it - What drives you and your colleagues to deliver for the community?

Values

When you see your colleagues at their best, what types of values are they demonstrating? What values are guiding their decision-making?

Please select up to five value themes from the list below.

- Responsibility (includes: Accountability / Stewardship)
- Compassion (includes: Caring / Empathy)
- Teamwork (includes: Collaboration / Cooperation / Unity)
- Innovation (includes: Continuous Improvement / Creativity)
- Safety
- Integrity (includes: Honesty / Trustworthiness)
- Customer Service (includes: Accessibility / Helpfulness / Responsiveness)
- Efficiency
- Commitment (includes: Dedication / Ownership)
- Preparedness (includes: Forward- thinking / Proactivity)
- Engagement (includes: Openness / Transparency)
- Sustainability
- Resilience (includes: Adaptability / Flexibility)
- Respect
- Excellence (includes: Competence / Professionalism)
- Quality (includes: Effectiveness)
- Belonging (includes: Welcoming)
- Fairness (includes: Consistency)

Based on the value groupings selected, the survey will show additional questions allowing the respondent to choose one of the values from each grouping previously selected.

Additional Questions

1. What do you see as the top three **strengths** of the County **organization**?
2. What do you see as the top three **weaknesses** of the County **organization**?
3. What do you see as the top three **opportunities** of the County **organization**?
4. What do you see as the top three **threats** to the County **organization**?
5. What do you see as the top three **strengths** of the Greenwood County **community**?
6. What do you see as the top three **issues** facing the Greenwood County **community** over the next five years?
7. What else would you like the County to consider in setting the future direction of the County and organization?
8. How long have you worked for Greenwood County?
 - a. 0-2 years
 - b. 3-5 years
 - c. 5-10 years
 - d. 10-20 years
 - e. More than 20 years

GREENWOOD COUNTY

Council Strategic Planning Retreat Summary

Held May 26-27, 2026



Greenwood County, South Carolina, held a Strategic Planning Retreat on May 26-27, 2026. The retreat was planned and facilitated by Raftelis.

All members of the County Council, the County Manager, and several County Department Directors attended the retreat.

Day One

Welcome and Introductions

To kick off the retreat, Chairman Theo Lane welcomed participants, and the facilitator shared the purpose of the retreat—to establish a strong foundation for strategic planning and begin developing the strategic plan framework. After reviewing the agenda and meeting norms, members of the County Council and staff introduced themselves and shared their expectations for the strategic planning process. The summarized responses from participants are captured below:

- Focus framework for immediate term and future
- Set path and goals we want to achieve that community can understand
- Build consensus among Council
- Difficulties of social media impact
- Opportunity to put things down on paper and create a thought out plan
- Build cohesive team of departments
- Grow right! Attract the right industry
- Try to be proactive vs. reactive
- Create focus for staff so they are able to row in same direction and link priorities to budget
- Define what we are working to achieve, as team internally and externally with community
- Specific and clear guidance
- Reflect all ages of community
- Population accuracy

This I Believe...

Council members were asked to come prepared to share “what they believe” about the future of Greenwood County. This exercise is loosely based on the “This I Believe” essay format initiated by Edward R. Murrow on National Public Radio in the 1950s. Participants were encouraged to describe their core values that guide their daily lives and share personal stories. A summary of Council members’ comments is captured below:

- **Chairman Lane:** Greenwood County is a unique place and home to many significant institutions. For example, the Greenwood Genetic Center offers state-of-the-art technology that has helped countless families find answers and provide resources in the genetic field. I’m not from here, but I choose to be here, and I appreciate the County’s history of progressive and visionary leadership. As members of Council, it is our duty to do what is best for the community and make smart, planned decisions.
- **Council Member Templeton:** Greenwood County doesn’t fit the typical mold for industries to come here, but once they get here, they realize how great this place really is. The people make this County special and it’s a great place to raise a family. I was raised here and went to school here. My parents, my kids, and my grandkids are still here. We have had great leaders throughout history and progressive Council that contributed to the Greenwood County of today.
- **Council Member Miller:** Greenwood County is a community-first place that creates a welcoming, family-oriented environment that supports children. We value Friday night football, Sunday service, and keeping our younger population engaged. From our arts district, technical school, four-year university, and global manufacturing operations, there are many different things to attract people.
- **Council Member Bishop:** I grew up here and graduated from Ware Shoals. Greenwood County is a great community, and we have so many great things going on that we need to do a better job of recognizing. We have the opportunity to promote what we are doing and be proud of it. Between our excellent leaders on the Council and opportunities to expand partnerships within the community, the County is in a strategic position to meet community needs. I’m excited for the future, seeing where we go, and being part of how we get there.



- ***Vice Chairman Pruitt:*** I was born and raised in Ninety Six and my mother still lives in the house I grew up in down the road. Inspired by her public service, I worked with the school system when I moved back to serve the community that gave me so much. Greenwood County has a strong sense of community fueled by our residents' passion, willingness to help, and church community. The lake and our healthcare system are strong assets too. This County has accomplished so many good things and residents are very receptive if we take the time to engage them.
- ***Council Member Allison:*** Greenwood County is home because my family is here. It's amazing how much the County has grown and how successful it's been considering the distance from the interstate; specifically, the Genetic Center and regional hospital are examples of our community's investment in healthcare and quality of life. On top of cancer and heart specialists, we also have an 11,000-acre lake as an asset to fuel future growth. Our County staff do a great job of communicating our assets and attracting industries to invest here.
- ***Council Member Griffin:*** I was born and raised in Greenwood County and having my family here is the biggest asset. It is important to remember why we serve on this Council and stay focused on our priorities for Greenwood County.

Reflections

When asked about common themes, Council members noted their shared passion, love, and commitment to their families and their community. They are mindful that Greenwood County is their home and it is their responsibility to set the course for Greenwood County's future through the strategic planning process.

Strategic Planning for Greenwood County

The facilitator presented a high-level overview of the strategic planning process. Strategic plans, at their core, are intended to answer three questions:

- Where are we today?
- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?

The facilitator emphasized that local governments develop and implement multiple types of plans that work in tandem to support the County in achieving its vision. Each plan has its own purpose and time horizon, with strategic plans typically covering a three to five-year period.

The image on the following page demonstrates how different types of plans complement each other. No single plan supersedes another; they should all align.



Project Scope

The facilitator then reviewed Raftelis' scope of work.

Completed:

- Kick-off with the County Manager
- Council interviews
- Employee survey
- Community and staff focus groups
- Community meeting

Currently:

- Two-day strategic planning retreat with the Council

Following the Retreat:

- Seek community feedback on draft strategic plan framework
- Host staff workshop to develop implementation strategies
- Draft and finalize the strategic plan

Strategic Framework Elements

Next, the facilitator provided an overview of the strategic plan elements, shown in the chart below. The Council and staff each “own” different parts of the plan—the Council sets the high-level direction, including the vision and strategic focus areas, while staff uses their expertise to operationalize the plan. The facilitator shared the following analogy: “The Council’s job is to put the destination into the GPS; the staff’s job is to determine the turn-by-turn directions.”

Framework Elements	Definition	Owner
Vision	Aspirational, intended to reflect what you hope will be true about Greenwood County in the future.	Council
Strategic Focus Areas	The “big buckets of things that must go well” for the County to be successful and achieve its Vision.	Council
Priorities/Actions	Projects, programs, or initiatives that the County needs to undertake to make progress in each Strategic Focus Area.	Staff (with Council approval)
Organizational Mission	The role and purpose of the organization are frequently expressed in statements about “who we are, what we do, and why we do it.”	Staff
Organizational Values	Values guide behavior, whether stated or unstated, and are observed when the workforce is “at its best.”	Staff

Environmental Scan

The facilitator then reviewed findings from the Environmental Scan, which was provided to the Council members and attendees. The Environmental Scan provided an overview of the County’s current operating environment. The presentation included the County’s demographics, workforce, and economic trends, as well as a summary of the County’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the future according to various internal and external stakeholders. The information was derived from a combination of national resources, Greenwood County, interviews with members of the Council, a survey of County employees, five focus groups with School, Nonprofit and Healthcare, Public Safety, Business, and Local Government stakeholders, a focus group with County department leaders, and a community meeting. After the presentation, the group reflected upon the findings. Comments from the discussion are captured below:

- Transportation is a significant challenge across age groups and affects residents countywide.
- Workplace culture is a major factor in recruitment and retention.
- Communication is important both internally with our employees about the benefits of County employment and externally with our community about County operations.
- As a community, we all have the same goal and want the same things, even if it appears that some people seem to want different things.

True Today, True in 10 Years

The County Council and staff were asked to share their responses to two questions:

- What is true about Greenwood County today that you hope will still be true in 10 years?
- What is not true about Greenwood County today that you hope will be true in 10 years?

The following table highlights the high-level themes that emerged from the exercise.

True Today – Still True in 10 Years	Not True Today – Hope It Will Be True in 10 Years
• Collaboration, true community, caring, and strategic growth • Strong economic development • Strong financial position • Popular lake • Beautiful throughout • Low taxes • Leadership remains progressive and rooted in what is best for the community, not just popular • Community engagement and passion • Collaboration • Small town feel • Home town feel • Love for Greenwood and family • Full of people who care for others • Partnership • Sense of community • Small town feel with modern amenities • Strong faith in church and God • Small town value system • Focus on raising good children and offering successful career opportunities • Great place to raise a family • Educational powerhouse	• We better utilize Lake Greenwood • Community collaboration • Transit system county-wide • Growth of transportation system • Full transit ability • Affordable housing • Government help for affordable housing • More housing that more can afford • No youth violence • Lowest crime rate in SC • Growth of Greenwood Promise • Low crime / civility across all boundaries • Strong family units • Strong retail markets and shopping • Gathering celebration Inside • Economic hub

Day Two

Setting the Stage

To kick off Day Two, members of the County Council and staff shared a reflection about the strategic planning process based on conversation from Day One. Participants' comments are summarized below:

- Hearing the community's feedback from the Environmental Scan and reflecting on the major accomplishments of the County over the years reminds Council that they share the same goal with the community.
- It's easy to get caught up in the "noise" and the Council has an opportunity to celebrate the County's wins with the public on a more regular basis.
- The community is invested in Greenwood County as evidenced by voters' overwhelming approval to implement and extend the 1% Capital Project Sales Tax (CPST) to fund critical initiatives.
- The strategic plan will align Council and guide their decisions through divisive topics. Staff agreed that the strategic plan framework promotes credibility among the community and adds a layer of consistency to their approach to achieve Council's vision of success.

Vision

The vision is an aspirational statement intended to reflect what the Council hopes to be true about Greenwood County in the future and should provide a clear picture of success to guide long-term decision-making. Concepts such as family, quality of life, small town feel, and care influenced the Council's vision statement, included below:

Greenwood County is a community where small-town values, natural beauty, forward-thinking leadership, and economic opportunity come together to create a safe, prosperous, and welcoming place for families, businesses, and future generations.

Strategic Focus Areas

Strategic Focus Areas are the "big buckets of things that must go well" in order for the County to be successful and achieve its Vision. With this in mind, members of the County Council and staff worked in groups to develop an initial strategic framework for the strategic plan, including six Strategic Focus Areas listed below:

- Financial Stability
- Community Partnerships
- Quality of Life Amenities
- Safe and Engaged Community
- Economic Development
- Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing

Success Statements

In groups, Council members worked with staff to define what success looks like for each of the six Strategic Focus Areas. The Council reviewed the draft success statements, noting what they considered was most important and identifying missing concepts. The success statements and discussion are summarized in the following table in no particular order. The County will work with Raftelis to finalize the success statements.

Draft Strategic Focus Area	What Success Looks Like	What's Important/Missing
Financial Stability	Greenwood County utilizes public funds responsibly. We carefully manage future growth through fiscally responsible planning and sustainable service delivery.	• South Carolina is the fastest growing state • Balance growth with cost • Level of service must be sustainable
Community Partnerships	Greenwood County engages with the community to understand their needs. We build strong partnerships and strategic alliances that advance shared goals and effectively address local needs and opportunities.	• Council and community partners' relationship is mutually beneficial • Council listens and seeks to understand perceived community needs • Share a common goal
Safe and Engaged Community	Greenwood County enhances community safety and engagement by providing responsive public safety services, creating a welcoming atmosphere, and fostering meaningful public participation across every generation.	• Consider multiple aspects of public safety • Safety includes being welcoming and open to ideas, diversity • Include youth and senior population
Economic Development	Greenwood County prioritizes planned investment, opportunity, and quality of life. By aligning economic growth initiatives with community values, we create an environment where families and businesses can prosper for generations.	• Think about perception of potential industries considering a Greenwood County location

Draft Strategic Focus Area	What Success Looks Like	What's Important/Missing
Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing	Greenwood County supports thoughtful infrastructure and transportation planning and strives to create an environment where attainable housing is available for all.	• Make sure growth aligns with infrastructure • Available housing for people at all stages of life • Impact of County policies
Quality of Life Amenities	Anchored by Lake Greenwood, the County ensures our open space, recreation, and arts offerings are appealing and accessible to all segments of our population.	• Healthcare • Passive recreation • Faith, family, and foundation

Next Steps and Adjourn

As the retreat came to a close, Chairman Lane thanked members of the County Council and staff for their time and participation during the session.

As for the next steps, Raftelis will seek community input on the draft strategic plan framework, host an implementation workshop with staff, and finalize the strategic plan.

GREENWOOD COUNTY

Community Open House Input Summary

Held July 22, 2026



Greenwood County, South Carolina, held a Community Open House on July 22, 2026. The Open House was planned and facilitated by Raftelis.

Introduction

Greenwood County sought community input as part of the development of its new strategic plan. Public engagement is a vital component of creating a plan that supports and advances community priorities. Members of the Greenwood County community have had two separate opportunities to provide their input on the strategic plan through two community meetings. First, early in the strategic planning process, residents were invited to a strategic planning community meeting held on May 4, 2026. During the meeting, attendees were asked to respond to a series of prompts about Greenwood County's strengths, challenges, services, and future state. Raftelis presented the summarized results of this engagement during the Strategic Plan Workshop with County Council on May 26-27, 2026. This Workshop resulted in the creation of a proposed strategic framework, which includes the following elements:

Framework Element	Draft Language
Vision	Greenwood County is a community where small-town values, natural beauty, forward-thinking leadership, and economic opportunity come together to create a safe, prosperous, and welcoming place for families, businesses, and future generations.
Strategic Focus Areas	
Financial Sustainability	Greenwood County utilizes public funds responsibly. We carefully manage future growth through fiscally responsible planning and sustainable service delivery.
Community Partnerships	Greenwood County engages with the community to understand their needs. We build strong partnerships and strategic alliances that advance shared goals and effectively address local needs and opportunities.
Safe and Engaged Community	Greenwood County enhances community safety and engagement by providing responsive public safety services, creating a welcoming atmosphere, and fostering meaningful public participation across every generation.
Economic Development	Greenwood County prioritizes planned investment, opportunity, and quality of life. By aligning economic growth initiatives with community values, we create an environment where families and businesses can prosper for generations.
Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing	Greenwood County supports thoughtful infrastructure and transportation planning and strives to create an environment where attainable housing is available for all.
Quality of Life Amenities	Anchored by Lake Greenwood, the County ensures our open space, recreation, and arts offerings are appealing and accessible to all segments of our population.

Greenwood County community members were asked to provide feedback on the proposed framework above during the Community Open House on July 22, 2026. In total, 30-40 community members attended the event to provide input on the questions below. While the sample is limited and may not represent all opinions of the community at-large, the input provides valuable insight.

Vision

For the Vision, attendees were asked, "Is this Vision what you hope will be true about the County in the future?" Overall, the responses generally supported the Vision's broad aspirations, but they stressed that **forward-thinking leadership** must be proven through **government transparency**, **direct citizen involvement**, and **clear definitions** for core concepts like small-town values. Feedback from attendees suggested that community support for the Vision is impacted by County leadership's ability to balance economic growth with public health, environmental protection, safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and strict limits on high-impact developments like data centers. Comments are listed in the table below, verbatim and in no particular order.

Vision
Agree: How can "Main Street" Grow w/ more business traffic / foot traffic - And capitalize on beautiful Lake / Recreation / State Park ?
PROTECT GREENWOOD COUNTY'S RURAL <u>NATURAL</u> BEAUTY - / PRIORITIZE NON-MOTORIZED MOVEMENT INCLUDING PEDESTRIAN & CYCLISTS' SAFETY & NEEDS
At present, unbridled residential construction expansion threatens to bring in people of moral values contrary to that accepted by local standards.
Yes But - Protecting environment w/ transparency
Small town values definition?
to advertise fwd thinking leaders - <u>Need</u> fwd thinking leaders
Agree, also I don't think data centers fit in that statement. Just saying :)
maybe change to add "citizen first community where"...
NO Data Centers and NO Flock <u>Cameras</u>
? Small town values? Where do we define "forward thinking leadership"? I want to see transparency, communication and citizen involvement
We have many trees and a variety of native nature all around Greenwood. More free public amenities too.
↑ 1. Maple Blaze Trees 2. Fig Trees 3. Rose Bushes 4. Palmetto Trees like Beverly Hills and or Downtown Charleston or Beaufort, South Carolina
GREENWOOD SHOULD BE A COMMUNITY WITH A <u>TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT</u>
I HOPE THAT THE COUNCIL WILL PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH: A BAN ON DATA CENTERS / PROTECTIONS AND CLEANUP OF LAKE GREENWOOD / CAREFUL DEVELOPMENT THAT AVOIDS HEALTH HAZARDS
What are small town Values ? Please be more specific
In order to build community we need to safely connect communities by bike lanes and <u>safe</u> ped crossings and sidewalks
This sounds nice but the reality of what is brought to Greenwood Co. to enhance quality of life, might not. It is essential to get citizen feedback
More diversity in community ldrship
Protect the <u>Environment</u> / Leadership honest, transparent, and listens

Vision

Emphasis on natural beauty / GREENwood

Economic Opportunity without pollution or putting our health at risk

forward thinking needs to include citizen input

Safe means No Data Centers

Strategic Focus Areas

For each Strategic Focus Area, attendees were asked, “What projects or initiatives should the County consider to support [the Strategic Focus Area]?” Comments are listed in the tables below, verbatim and in no particular order. Sticky notes that were grouped by attendees are listed sequentially in the table.

Financial Sustainability

For Financial Sustainability, attendees were asked, “What projects or initiatives should the County consider to support Financial Sustainability?” Overall, responses demonstrated strong public support for **continuing the 1-cent sales tax** and offering **community financial education**, while emphasizing that true fiscal responsibility requires complete **government transparency** in all spending and business deals. Attendees strongly advocated for ending non-disclosure agreements, publicizing cost-benefit analyses for corporate tax incentives, and restricting tax breaks for major industries and high-impact developments like data centers.

Financial Sustainability

More transparency of tax payers money.

Better Roads if people can get around that will get people out to support the community

Financial literacy lectures

Keep the 1 cent sales tax on the ballot

The 1¢ tax!

No tax breaks to New Industry- Make Industry verify employment numbers.

Teach Finances! Classes in schools and for adults

♥ the Penny tax

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency & Communication: More info and broken down for the general public

No FILOT agreements !!! / No NDAs / No property tax reduction

City/County gov't Should only grow w/ population growth. (Contain cost) / Transparency

Develop and Publicize incentives given to business that come to Greenwood / No Data Centers

Openness and transparency in ALL projects & initiatives / No DATA CENTERS

Penny tax is a great thing

① ABSOLUTELY NO DATA CENTERS! / ② TOTAL TRANSPARENCY / ③ ABSOLUTELY NO NDAs!

COMPLETE AND TOTAL BAN ON DATA CENTERS!! keep business deals w/ government TRANSPARENT. NO NDAs or SECRET MEETINGS

↖ THIS !!! ↗

Financial Sustainability

Penny tax is great!

Bring in some "better" jobs other than medical. Attract age group to help support aging community

No or less tax breaks for big corporations. They can afford to pay their share.

I know tax breaks are incentive to business/industry but reign some in

I trust the Treasurer and Public Info person. People need to understand and be educated about what they do

Think about extra local A-tax will be paid by outsiders

Keep incentives to business so we can bring jobs, but publicize CB analysis -> Transparency

Community Partnerships

For Community Partnerships, attendees were asked, "What projects or initiatives should the County consider to support Community Partnerships?" Overall, responses emphasized the need for **proactive communication**, **accessible public information**, and regular **two-way dialogue** through open forums and flexible meeting formats. Attendees advocated for expanding civic education, strengthening regional and City-County alliances, and building strategic partnerships with local organizations and reputable businesses to address community needs.

Community Partnerships

build community by connecting communities - Swamp rabbit style revamp mall to community space

Work actively across lakeland region to pool / share resources

dual public comment like City of Greenville (pc 1 - before mtg biz agenda only; pc 2 - any item after mtg business)

take citizen sentiment yearly - track it; improve it

Hire Abby some help

More exposure of government interests is needed to hold down expenditures

Find forum to allow for questions with appropriate "tone".

Ways for citizens to communicate and spread information without Facebook!

Inclusive community participation

Put Emphasis on Civics in D50 Curriculum

THIS ↗

Use website like CRM - EVERYTHING we as citizens need should be SEO / ADA optimized and easy / logical to find

Utilize non gov experts in community to help educate / bridge gap

Humanize gov staff / highlight all the good done through proactive communication

Citizens Academy

Create and Hold Volunteer Opportunities Forum for Public Awareness

Increased opportunity for all members of community to know what programs are available for all ages.

Lake Sediment Correction / Dredging / Road Improvement

Provide briefs on issues - more than a title so people can understand

Open Forums for citizens to learn to listen to participate

Increased Focus on reaching all members of community to engage

Make posts / have meeting explaining everything being done / in planning. Be informative!

Community Partnerships

Multi - county Commission or group to work together to BAN data centers throughout our area -

Open Forums!!

MORE COMMUNICATION about MEETINGS and EVENTS. A week or two in advance, through emails, flyers, and Facebook posts. Make sure the community knows! / The County should work with the community to BAN DATA CENTERS.

Provide opportunities for the citizens to dialogue with officials through this process.

Work more closely with United Way and its programs

Community Center / bike lanes / safe crosswalks / Safe sidewalks

Teach Civics to the Community

Celebrate Every Success and Connection / People don't know

THIS ↗

Do they? Engage? Not until people are PISSED! Highlight the Partnerships and Alliances on Social Media

Connect to Steam fest and festival of discovery

Partnership with Decent Companies - Not Data Centers or Flock

Tea! ↗

City and County work together better / Parks and Rec - Trails (Greenspace) / Zoning laws / Community Events not just uptown / Entire county Beautification

Opportunity to gather / meet for Q&A time not Co. Council mtgs

One Spartanburg model / all in; not

Safe and Engaged Community

For Safe and Engaged Community, attendees were asked, “What projects or initiatives should the County consider to support a Safe and Engaged Community?” Overall, responses emphasized expanding public communication through **accessible, non-social-media channels, mobile-friendly websites, and youth-focused civic engagement initiatives**. Attendees strongly advocated for improving **safe mobility** through bike lanes, sidewalks, and transit connections, while calling for **recreational youth amenities**, competitive support for first responders, and growth management that protects public health and community wellness.

Safe and Engaged Community

Tri county EMS w/ Abb & McCormick / reduce turnover / ↑ pay potentially

Paid Public Safety Services

Greater visability of all law enforcement

Bring in business that attracts college graduates to want to move here.

I second that!!

Connect w/ STEAMFest organizers and United Way Healthy People Healthy Carolinas

Better traffic flow to ease frustrated drivers. This would make Greenwood safer

Somehow implement annual drivers tests for seniors to make sure drivers of all ages are safe

Safe and Engaged Community

Proactively help ppl understand conservation easements

Affordable Public transportation / Family friendly businesses / A safe place for teens to go.

Walking Trails thru out City/Cty

More things for kids to do. Go Kart track / More Basketball areas / This may help w/ crime w/ young people

Walking trails in City and County (safe and maintained) / More "passive" green space. (parks)

New website that is mobile enabled. Esp for wizards to report things

YES

Reopen pool downtown

Meaningful public participation? How?

Support and ↑ PR by "Residents for Responsible growth" YES!

Far more community engagement! Explain, coach up. Educate: Get ahead of social media trolls

AFFORDABLE MASS TRANSIT / BETTER PEDESTRIAN & CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE / GREATER GOVERNMENTAL TRANSPARENCY

Bike lanes / Clean - wide sidewalks

Need ways to keep public informed that do NOT rely on Facebook

^ I agree. People CANNOT see Facebook posts without an account. It is NOT reliable!

I suggest newsletters and texting service

Have a Youth advisory council

Support Life-long Learning (used to be a great initiative)

Encourage parent participation in County by putting info on flyers or other info sent home with Dist 50 students

GREENWOOD CAN PROTECT THE COUNTY'S CITIZENS' HEALTH AND MENTAL WELLNESS BY IMPLEMENTING A BAN ON DATA CENTERS / CONSIDERING TRAFFIC FLOW WHILE DEVELOPING / GREATER GOVT. TRANSPARENCY

New website

Citizens Academy

Bike lanes/pedestrian crossings to connects communities subdivisions to main parts of town

Community Swim CENTER

Yes! Community pool - maybe at the Civic Center?

A community center where kids can volunteer to do small things for the community

Bike lanes and good pedestrian crosswalks and sidewalks to connect kids from school and their homes to a community center

Safe and Engaged Community

Turn Mattrans into a "bus" that drives the loop around Greenwood to pick up people and connect them to community spaces

Economic Development

For Economic Development, attendees were asked, "What projects or initiatives should the County consider to support Economic Development?" Overall, responses emphasized prioritizing **small and local business growth**, revitalizing **underutilized commercial spaces**, and expanding **vocational trade training** and **youth rehabilitation** programs. Attendees called for critical **infrastructure upgrades**, including road repairs, traffic management, and expanded trail networks, while insisting that economic development must be transparent, eco-friendly, and strictly aligned with community health and safety by excluding data centers.

Economic Development

Move festival of discovery to a cooler month.

Solid industry that withstands economic fluctuation / Better ROADS

Give young criminal offenders a chance to obtain more education leading to rehab, jobs, better future

fix roads

Walking trails (maintain them) that actually go places. / Beautify entire County. Enforce or enact laws to clean up properties.

Training for "the trades" for 1st time offenders rather than jail time

Healthy Food Restaurants

Incubator / landing pad program

Pipeline STEM & Robotics; give incentive to create next gen of innovative biz HERE

Investing in Business < \$1M investment; incentive program outside state options

Better traffic flow with all the growth.

Do not bring anything to Bradley, SC without citizen input.

Data Centers do NOT align with this Econ. Development point / NO Data Centers

Companies that do not pollute or compromise our quality of life are welcome here

Make it easier for LOCALS to develop things- housing, business, etc.

Educate on ED process, make transparent, demystify to gain support

Priorities: 1) Quality of Life for Everyone 2) Opportunity " 3) Investment

Encourage more college students to come here with more jobs & second spaces to socialize.

Economic Development

A COMPLETE BAN ON DATA CENTERS so we can better use the land for something safer and more profitable. Data Centers don't align w/ economic growth in GWD!!

Workout sessions as a Disciplinary Action for youthful criminals

More "3rd spaces" like a Community Center where you build community people come.

Make it possible to bike and walk across town

PROMOTE EDUCATION & LEARNING OF TECHNIQUE RATHER THAN GO ALL-IN ON TECHNOLOGY: WHICH BECOMES OBSOLETE

EXTEND & EXPAND THE HERITAGE RAIL-TRAIL

DO NOT PUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ABOVE THE PEOPLE OF GREENWOOD'S WELLBEING AND SAFETY!!

Tap into LOCAL experts for better community engagement.

revamping mall to a community hub full of small, local businesses- restaurants, retail, bookstore, study center for students,

Walking tracks, small indoor playground, place where kids can play boardgames, hang out and meet other community members.

Full Scale Hotel

Less government initiatives is better than more government provision

What ARE the Values?

So true, need to be defined like vision is

Work and Rehabilitation Programs for County Jails. More job placement training and programs for kids not going to college

Transparency is paramount. Devise briefs for public consumption, easily accessible w/ disclosure

Swamp rabbit type trail: connect communities and people will want to live here

Forward thinking businesses where jobs are sustainable & eco-friendly.

We need more fun-attractive businesses to come here. Get rid of liquor restrictions so we can have night life

Good Restaurants & Make easy for Locals to Start Businesses

More local and small business

Focus on Education & Training to bring in diverse types of jobs

Clean up 25 / Welcome route to Greenwood

Road Improvement

Require future business to pay employees a competitive, livable wage.

Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing

For Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing, attendees were asked, “What projects or initiatives should the County consider to support Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing?” Overall, responses highlighted the urgent need for expanded **pedestrian and cycling infrastructure** alongside modern **public transit** options, including micro-transit and neighborhood loop shuttles. Attendees emphasized **intentional growth management** that aligns new housing with traffic planning, cost-benefit analyses, and environmental preservation, while calling for **housing strategies** that support homeownership, downpayment assistance, and neighborhood revitalization.

Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing

Sidewalks / bike lanes / Safe ped crossing at lights / community center teens can volunteer at. / Mat trans making a loop around GWD w/ scheduled daily stops so that people can hop on over to uptown or Walmart without a car

Sidewalks/ Multiuse Paths

Micro-transit that ACTUALLY addresses access -> look @ Wilson, NC. Buses have never fixed the problem in rural coms

Less turning lanes! Slow the traffic into neighborhood and parking lots

Sidewalk maintained/ More Sidewalks / More turning lanes into subdivisions / Better traffic flow

Keep Greenwood GREEN

I Think there should be no more Federal low-cost housing in Greenwood. the Old high school now used as such is rife with drug & alcohol addiction

transportation planning - need mass transit, bike lanes, sidewalks

Sidewalks / bike lanes

Respectfully address addiction that creates an unsafe feeling

Safe pedestrian trails & Bike trails / Limit "halfway housing" / Limit rental housing to encourage home ownership

BETTER PEDESTRIAN & CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE / PUBLIC MAPPING OF BEST ROUTES FOR NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL

The same way industrial projects require a cost-benefit analysis - Housing dev. should be required to do same bc of strain on resources v tax revenue !!! yes!

Fund housing downpayment assistance through community works/ encourage other large employers do same

Grants for traffic calming & alternative transportation

MASS TRANSIT!! GWD is VERY car-centric and it's a great struggle to get ANYWHERE without a car

CONSIDER how a new development will increase traffic & make intersections more dangerous

BETTER AWARENESS OF TRAFFIC FLOW

As this County grows, officials need to be intentional about where houses are built, where apt. bldgs. are built. Roads and transportation improvements need to be made along with these.

Connected Infrastructure and Attainable Housing

↗ So tea! Making sure to protect the nature here too!

We need a Freeway. Connect us quicker to Greenville, Spartanburg, Columbia. This will also bring them to us.

Too true!

City County SWIM CENTER

Obtain Grants To Improve Old Neighborhoods

WHAT IS "CONNECTED INFRASTRUCTURE" ?

Improvements for the Elderly & Low income help Everyone

Would love to help "single parent" get new place set up - maybe need furniture - paint, etc.... There are many who "HAVE" who are happy to help & give

Quality of Life Amenities

For Quality of Life Amenities, attendees were asked, "What projects or initiatives should the County consider to support Quality of Life Amenities?" Overall, responses highlighted strong support for **expanding recreational infrastructure** through community pools, multiuse trails, and updated park facilities, as well as **preserving Lake Greenwood and local green spaces**. Attendees emphasized creating vibrant **social venues and events** that appeal to young adults and families, while advocating for continued funding for the arts, lifelong learning, and inclusive outreach to underserved communities.

Quality of Life Amenities

A swim facility

Bike lanes ped x'ing, but make it safer

Community Center where teens and elderly can come together

Community Pool

Mat trans can make scheduled stops daily around the loop of GWD to connect elderly to community spaces

More places for people to meet outside of work, hobbies, & home. "Second places."

More parks... like the civic center. Pickleball courts / Walking tracks etc.

Support more non-alcoholic performing venues / Create a more active parks & recs culture w/ courses, etc.

↑ YES!!

Honestly think GWD excels here: Continue investing in Lake and Recreation Complex / H & A tax to deserving entities

Walking trails / Community Pool / More green space

Life Long Learning / Dredge Lake Sediment

Quality of Life Amenities

PRESERVE the quality of the water in the lake / Remediate Ascend site / No data centers

Save Green Spaces / Walking trails / Nature Areas / Biking Trails and lanes / Promote healthier foods and local farms more

A "Swamp Rabbit" type trail / cross county connector

Yes!!!

CLEAN LAKE GREENWOOD SO WE CAN USE IT!! / Preserve our quality of life by banning data centers

Keep out all industries or companies that pollute: NO DATA CENTERS / KEEP GREENWOOD GREEN

Continued support for the Arts Center and its events

↑ ABSOLUTELY!! A great sign of quality of life is how the arts/culture of the area is doing

Reengage minorities in opportunities for their neighborhoods

SAVE TREES and green spaces!

We need more meeting places / Bars, but more social w/ sports & food. lifting FNS Liquor Restrictions / More lakefront activities for socializing

An Arcade in the mall

Martial Arts School and/or camp

Bring in events that attract mid 20's - 30's Age groups: Runs, etc. / Iron Man

More Entertaining, Safe, and Diverse Nightlife Scene

A Home Depot Would be nice

Outdoor Shooting Range open to legal and wise Gun owners

Programs that engage the "underserved" in art, learning & community involvement

More opportunities for poorer areas