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Spartanburg wins award for its land-use planning

City first in Upstate to adopt Urban Code

From staff reports

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Upstate Forever will honor the city of Spartanburg with the Sustainable Communities Champion Award for its significant work in land-use planning and sustainability, a press release states.

The non-profit group will honor the city at its annual ForeverGreen Awards luncheon on Thursday.

The city is the first in the Upstate to adopt an Urban Code — or a transect model-based code — to regulate how new buildings are constructed in the downtown area. The code is based on building forms, rather than function, and organizes downtown and its surrounding areas into zones and incorporates urban design principles, including public gathering places, mixed uses and housing options, the release states.

The focus is on the “pedestrian experience” by encouraging active street fronts with parking in the rear or side of buildings and requires exterior building materials to be compatible with other buildings.

“A thriving downtown is central to our city’s vision and council’s adoption of the downtown master plan and urban code was certainly a significant step in the central business district’s continuing development,” Mayor Junie White stated in the release. “This award is an example of the kind of positive attention our city is receiving as a result of years of efforts to make our downtown a place where people increasingly choose to live, do business, dine, and shop, as well as a central gathering place for our residents to

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form and maintain connections that strengthen the entire city.”

In addition to downtown planning, the city also launched Spartanburg B-Cycle, the first bike-sharing program of its kind in the Southeast. The city has revamped its recycling program and as a result of the changes, participation has tripled in the last three years, the release states.

“The city of Spartanburg’s award from Upstate Forever is a great testament to the type of vision we have for the city and its community members,” said Angela Viney, director of the Spartanburg office of Upstate Forever. “This award sets a benchmark for the great work Spartanburg has done in the past and what we plan to accomplish in the future.”

The luncheon will honor other organizations and individuals that have made significant contributions in air and water quality, public service and volunteer service.

Other awards include: Tommy Wyche Land Conservation Champion Award, Bettina George; Clean Water Champion Award, Dan Rankin, Dave Demarest, Lynne Newton; Clear Skies Champion Award, city of Greenville; Public Servant of the Year, John Frampton; Volunteer of the Year, Jim Gossett.

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