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Official warns of county's sprawl
Wyche says Upstate may become the 'next Atlanta'

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Greenville County develops 16 acres of land per day. If the county continues its rate of development, which is now six times higher than the population growth rate, 1,705,595 acres will be developed by the year 2050.

These figures and the plight of Woodruff Road as it exemplifies the county's planning woes were presented by Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever, in an Eastside Area Council meeting April 12.

The "pave over rate" in the Upstate, Wyche said, is the equivalent of one Haywood Mall per day. If this trend continues, by 2040, Greenville will be the next Atlanta.

The answer is developing a plan and, more importantly, implementing that plan, he said.

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Woodruff Road, the perfect example of a plan not followed, evolved into the tangle that it is today because of a "catastrophe of rezonings" that began in the 1980s, he said. One parcel at a time, it became the poster child for the "classic sprawl pattern" so typical of the county development lately.

Currently, Greenville is the fifth-most sprawling region in the United States, just behind Atlanta, Wyche said.

This sprawl model uses more land than is necessary, costs more to build and much more to service than a traditional neighborhood development (TND), he said. These TNDs conserve natural growth and open spaces, mix residential and commercial properties, and encourage walking over driving.

To encourage new development patterns, especially in Greenville's Eastside and along Woodruff Road, Wyche hopes to start an Enoree River Greenway project beginning at the Pelham Mill Park to save the "badly neglected" Enoree River, he said.

For more information visit www.upstateforever.com or fill out a Greenville Planning Commission survey for the Woodruff Road area at: www.greenvillecounty.org/survey_woodruff_rd_pl/woodruffrdSurvey.asp.

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