

Upstate Update

NUMBER 56

JULY
2004

Upstate Forever's Monthly Bulletin on Important Issues and Events in the Upstate

EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • LAND TRUST

90 Per Cent of Upstate Growth Is Taking Place In Unincorporated Areas!

An astonishing 90 per cent of the Upstate's new residents are choosing to live in the region's unincorporated areas—outside cities and towns—where there are usually few, if any land use controls. In just the past three years, 28,000 additional residents have settled in these areas. That translates to about 11,000 new homes where just about anything can be built across the street - from a landfill or junkyard to a race track or hog farm.

| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2003 Population estimates | Population Increase In Unincorporated Areas By County | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | County (Unincorporated Areas) | 2000 Estimate | 2001 Estimate | 2002 Estimate | 2003 Estimate | Percent Increase 2000-2003 | Numerical Increase 2000-2003 | Projected Population 2030 |
| | Anderson County | 123,660 | 125,969 | 127,293 | 128,812 | 4.2 | 5,152 | 188,206 |
| | Greenville County | 275,164 | 279,140 | 282,513 | 285,772 | 3.9 | 10,608 | 406,412 |
| | Greenwood County | 40,068 | 40,568 | 40,935 | 41,258 | 3.0 | 1,190 | 54,086 |
| | Laurens County | 47,417 | 47,886 | 47,972 | 48,147 | 1.5 | 730 | 55,091 |
| | Oconee County | 51,759 | 52,346 | 53,135 | 53,853 | 4.0 | 2,094 | 77,215 |
| | Pickens County | 70,182 | 70,789 | 70,902 | 71,539 | 1.9 | 1,357 | 84,867 |
| | Spartanburg County | 185,042 | 187,508 | 189,643 | 192,026 | 3.8 | 6,984 | 270,584 |
| | TOTAL | 793,292 | 804,206 | 812,393 | 821,407 | 3.5 | 28,115 | 1,136,461 |

Those 11,000 new homes are typically the largest investment their owners will ever make. However, in the unincorporated areas of the Upstate (except in about 60 per cent of Greenville County, 20 per cent of Anderson County, and all of Greenwood County), there is no zoning, and only minimal development regulations apply. This means that practically any type of development can occur anywhere, and there is little or no control over its placement, appearance, or the impacts it will have on the surrounding community. You might buy a beautiful new home on a quiet rural road only to learn later about plans to put a salvage yard or nightclub right next door.

Let's take a little closer look at the statistics. During the past three years, some counties experienced greater increases than others - Greenville County had the highest rate of countywide growth (3.8 per cent) with more than twice as many new residents as any other county. Oconee County ranked second (3.2), Anderson County third (3.1), and Laurens County had the lowest (0.9 per cent). Overall, population in the region increased by 2.9 per cent, or about 33,000 people.

| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2003 Population estimates | Population Increase By County 2000 - 2003 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | County | 2000 Estimate | 2001 Estimate | 2002 Estimate | 2003 Estimate | Percent Increase 2000-2003 | Numerical Increase 2000-2003 | Projected Population 2030 |
| | Greenville County | 381,027 | 386,309 | 390,843 | 395,357 | 3.8 | 14,330 | 557,170 |
| | Oconee County | 66,423 | 67,010 | 67,893 | 68,523 | 3.2 | 2,100 | 91,473 |
| | Anderson County | 166,323 | 168,810 | 170,184 | 171,510 | 3.1 | 5,187 | 226,769 |
| | Spartanburg County | 254,395 | 256,778 | 259,029 | 261,281 | 2.7 | 6,886 | 333,248 |
| | Greenwood County | 66,329 | 66,765 | 67,185 | 67,503 | 1.8 | 1,174 | 79,410 |
| | Pickens County | 111,050 | 111,821 | 112,056 | 112,859 | 1.6 | 1,809 | 130,318 |
| | Laurens County | 69,656 | 70,026 | 70,065 | 70,269 | 0.9 | 613 | 76,216 |
| | TOTAL | 1,115,203 | 1,127,519 | 1,137,255 | 1,147,302 | 2.9 | 32,099 | 1,494,604 |

Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate

Upstate update

NUMBER 56
J U L Y
2 0 0 4

Assuming this three-year growth rate continues until 2030 (and that is probably a conservative estimate), population in the region will be nearly 1.5 million, increasing by approximately 380,000 residents. To put it another way, population in the seven-county region will increase by roughly the same number of people who currently reside in Greenville County, the state's most populous.

What kinds of impacts will that growth have? To start, those 380,000 people will need roughly 152,000 residences developed on approximately 76,000 acres of land. Their retail needs alone will equal around 7.6 million square feet of space - not including parking. They will include at least 40,000 students who will need classroom space, buses, and playing fields. And they will bring with them nearly 275,000 automobiles that will be driven approximately 3.4 billion miles every year on our roads and highways. The communities that are going to feel the brunt of these impacts need to get involved in planning for their future now.

One way to plan for this growth is by adopting zoning and land use regulations. While the mere mention of the word "zoning" raises the blood pressure of many rural landowners, the likelihood of high-impact, incompatible land uses near their homes and businesses should be enough to generate some serious dialogue about the future of their communities.

Possibly this generation's most misunderstood word, "zoning" comes in many forms and applications. Its intent is simply to help guide growth in a logical pattern in order to minimize the disruptions caused by land uses that are unsuitable for residential and commercial areas and to minimize the impacts of traffic that accompanies growth. In the long run, this helps protect both property values and our communities. Zoning is usually accompanied by development standards for setbacks, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, parking and the like.

Both zoning regulations and development standards can be very general or very specific in nature - and there have certainly been abuses and exaggerated applications since they were first utilized in 1926. Land use and zoning regulations should be flexible enough to ensure that development patterns are compatible with a community's standards without stifling the natural evolutionary process of growth. Blending these two objectives is not easy, which is why community involvement is key to establishing successful land use plans and the zoning ordinances that make those plans a reality. In a region where significant growth is expected, the people who reside there should be involved in the process of planning for that growth. That is the only way the unique character of their own communities can be preserved - they are the ones who know its history and culture, and they should have a major voice in how it will change in the future.

There is no question that the Upstate region will continue to grow. Many communities that are unaccustomed to change are going to begin feeling its impacts in the very near future. Others will continue to evolve until there is virtually no more land left to develop. Without land use planning and regulations, the Upstate's unincorporated, unzoned areas are like the proverbial sitting duck - totally unprepared for what's to come, and very likely to be unhappy with the results.

By 2030, the Upstate will have approximately 380,000 more residents than we do today. If recent growth trends continue, 90 per cent of them will live in unincorporated areas. We should be doing everything we can to protect the quality of life of all of our residents - new and old - and to ensure their investment in both their home and their region is one they'll never regret.

Hybrid Technology Works For Public Transit Too!

The Upstate's rapid growth has spawned several transportation problems that threaten both our environment and our regional economy. The Environmental Protection Agency has listed Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg counties as "non-attainment" with the national Clean Air Act ozone standard (see Upstate Updates Numbers 48, 50 and 53), a status that can have an impact on economic growth and ultimately threatens our share of federal transportation funds. The leading sources of nitrogen oxide, an essential element in the formation of ozone, are cars, trucks, buses and other vehicles. Simultaneously, increased commuter traffic, overburdened feeder routes, and rapidly spiking fuel prices have raised our stress levels and drained our pocketbooks as we maneuver through Upstate traffic.

This problem is not unique to our region - traffic congestion and long commutes are consistently named a major concern in cities and towns throughout the nation. Dissatisfied with the status quo, the City of Seattle, Washington has implemented a new transit system that promises a clean and efficient alternative.

General Motors has equipped 235 new 75-passenger Seattle buses with clean hybrid technology, using an innovative hybrid electric system that pairs Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel engines with high-torque Allison electric drive-systems. These sleek, speedy, comfortable coaches deliver up to 60 percent greater fuel economy while reducing emissions by as much as 90 percent, compared to the old fume-belching standard diesel buses that they replaced. The new buses can accelerate up to 50 per cent faster, can run in all-electric mode in congested, sensitive areas, and promise to save 750,000 gallons of fuel and \$3.5 million in operations costs each year. Though these cleaner, "high tech" buses cost about 40 per cent more than the standard diesel coaches, their dramatic cost savings will offset the higher purchase price over time. These savings will become even more significant as fuel costs continue to rise and the price of hybrid buses drops as they are adopted for use by transit systems throughout the country.

With wise implementation, such technology can be the spark to make public transportation a viable, attractive option in the Upstate. The Greenville Transit Authority now serves 750,000 riders annually across busy intersecting "transportation spokes" that conveniently link county residents with some of the most popular (and therefore most high-traffic) work, shopping, health-care and entertainment clusters. The Spartanburg SPARTA system serves nearly 590,000 annual riders, while the Anderson Electric City Transit links to the very popular Clemson Area Transit (CAT) system and has 1-million-plus free-fare annual riders.

It is easy to see the advantages in having cleaner air, lower fuel expenses, and the convenience of a cool, clean, comfortable coach that can whisk us to our favorite local destinations while we kick back, relax, read, compute or even nap. And, with the close proximity of our Upstate "tri-cities" and smaller towns, we could even commute quickly, cheaply and cleanly across our entire region. Is such a transportation culture change possible? It is already happening in Seattle, Portland, Austin and Salt Lake and could be the catalyst for even greater revitalization here.

Such transportation technology is consistent with the Upstate Air Quality Steering Committee's strategy, which identifies increased public transportation, hybrid vehicles, and low sulfur fuels as "Priority A" components in their Early Air Compact (EAC) plan. The EAC is a response to the EPA ozone rating of non-attainment that was assigned to our region in April of this year.

Cleaner air, less stress, more relaxation, and more spending money? Sounds like a classic win/win situation for all of us who commute (and breathe!) in the Upstate.

Thanks to Upstate Forever volunteer Dan Roberts for this article.

Upcoming Events

Upstate Forever Events

Ongoing, Garner's Natural Foods, Greenville, S.C. Recycle your grocery bags and help raise funds for *Upstate Forever*. If you are shopping at Garner's on Antrim Drive, you can help *Upstate Forever* by taking your own shopping bag for your groceries. For every bag you save Garner's, they will give you a bean to drop into your choice of three jars - one jar is for *Upstate Forever*. At the end of the campaign, we will receive 5 cents for every bean.

September 23, 2004, "Dealing With Dirt: The Impact and Control of Erosion in the Upstate," Co- Sponsored by *Upstate Forever* and the Saluda Reedy Watershed Consortium. Palmetto Exposition Center, Greenville, SC. This one day conference will feature top experts and seasoned professionals who will share their perspectives on a variety of issues. Topics will include information about Upstate soils and topography, how to navigate the NPDES regulatory system, strategies for minimizing impact and maximizing return during construction, municipal responsibilities, and the impacts of sediment on stream habitat and water quality. For more information, visit www.upstateforever.org

Other Events

August 27-29, Southern Energy and Environment Expo. Western North Carolina Agricultural Center, Fletcher, N.C. This annual event is designed to showcase renewable energy and sustainable economics in a context of responsible environmental stewardship. <http://www.seeexpo.com/>

November 10-12, Green Planning 2004: Integrating Urban and Community Forestry in Planning. Crowne Plaza Hilton Head Island Resort. This conference is co-sponsored by the SC Urban and Community Forestry Council and the SC Chapter of the American Planning Association. <http://www.scurbanforestry.org/pages/760088/index.htm>



Forever Friends



If *Upstate Forever* is to promote sensible growth and protect special places in this beautiful region, we must engage the interest and support of growing numbers of people who care about clean air and water, open space and community revitalization.

Help us expand the reach and impact of our work by nominating several friends for membership. Please send us complete names and addresses by email to info@upstateforever.org, by writing us at P.O. Box 2308, Greenville, SC 29602, or by calling 864-250-0500. We will extend an ever-so-gentle invitation to join. Your friends will be grateful you cared enough to recommend them for membership. So will the Upstate.

Lots o' Links

Energy and Smart Growth. This newly published paper from the Funder's Network discusses the opportunities to reduce U.S. energy consumption by efficiently locating new development. http://www.fundersnetwork.org/usr_doc/Energy_and_Smart_Growth.pdf

Drivers in NC Research Triangle Wedded to Their Cars. Regardless of increasing gas prices, drivers are stuck in traffic because there are no safe or convenient alternatives. <http://newsobserver.com/news/story/1368429p-7491160c.html>

Five National Parks' Air Dirtier than NYC's. Be sure to see the interactive sidebars, too. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/06/25/tech/main626103.shtml>

Buildings Designed for Better Health. Designing buildings with exercise in mind is helping reshape workers and providing more opportunities for social interaction. <http://www.newsday.com/news/health/wire/sns-ap-fit-healthy-architecture,0,7948786.story?coll=sns-ap-health-headlines>

Bicycle Day Care in Denver. Park your bike, shower, change your clothes - even have your bike repaired - at this new, free, bicycle parking facility. <http://www.bizjournals.com/denver/stories/2004/06/21/story7.html>

American Outdoors Act of 2004. Under this new legislation sponsored by Senators Lamar Alexander and Mary Landrieu, 25 per cent of the revenues collected from oil and gas drilling on offshore federal land would be considered "conservation royalties" and used to fund parks, wildlife conservation, and other outdoor recreation programs in every state in the nation. http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_52409.asp

Wondering What Kind of Tree to Plant and How to Plant It? The South Carolina Urban Forestry Association has developed the Tree Species Selection Guide for SC to help you find just the right tree and to help you plant it right so it will bring you many years of shade and enjoyment. <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/urbsg04.htm>

Benefits of Urban Trees. And speaking of trees...here is some great information about the contribution they make in our communities through water conservation, cooling the air, reducing air pollution, and increasing property values. <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/urbben.htm>

Chicago's "Going Green." Mayor Daly's goal is to make Chicago the greenest city in the world and he has a good start! http://www.jxj.com/magsandj/rew/2004_02/chicago.html

And Now...For Something Completely Different. Greenville was named nation's second sweatiest city on Old Spice's Third Annual Sweatiest Cities List for 2004. Up from 43rd place last year, Greenville's annual sweat measurement was second only to El Paso's in this year's rankings. http://www.oldspice.com/pdfs/OS_Sweatiest_Cities.pdf

Did You Know...

- ... that Americans take 42 per cent fewer trips by foot today than they did 20 years ago?
- ... and that 70 per cent of the trips children make are in the back seat of a car?
- ... that the obesity rate among SC adults rose by 90% from 1990 to 2002?
- ... women who walk 10 blocks or more per day is can reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease by 33 per cent?

Upstate update

NUMBER 56

J U L Y
2 0 0 4

Quotes of the Month

"More asphalt does not solve the problem [of sprawl]. We've got to have some new, creative ways of doing things."

Butch Kirven, County Council Representative
Elect for District 27, *Greenville Journal*, July 2004

Shameless Advertisement

As a not-for-profit organization, *Upstate Forever* depends on the financial support of people like you if it is to fulfill its mission of promoting sensible growth and protecting special places. Your contribution bears witness to your concern for the quality of life in the Upstate and your commitment to the preservation and enhancement of livable communities.

If you are not already a member, please consider joining today. If you are a member, but have not yet renewed, please send in your check today. If you want to honor a special person in your life (on an anniversary, birthday or for no specific occasion at all), or if you want to memorialize a loved one who cared about our special places, please consider making a gift in that person's honor or memory. You can make a gift by mailing us your check at P.O. Box 2308, Greenville, SC, 29602. A downloadable form is available on our website at http://www.upstateforever.org/i_want_to_join.htm. All gifts are tax deductible.