

Introduction

Why Plan?

The Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan represents the community's collective land use vision for the future. The Plan is the product of an 18-month public process. It is the policy document which guides where the community will develop, how it will develop, and what that development will look like. By definition, it is the deliberative design and development consensus of Sumter's citizens, businesses, and elected decision makers.

Comprehensive Plans are mandated by South Carolina State Law: the Planning Enabling Legislation found in Chapter 29 of the South Carolina Code of Law. By law, Sumter must update its comprehensive plan every 10 years. The current plan was adopted in 2009. The year 2019 marks the time for update.

The purpose of the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan is to direct and guide growth in both the City of Sumter and Sumter County. As such, it is an aspirational expression of our vision through policy. The Plan is not a regulatory document nor is it a book of law. Strict over-interpretation should be avoided in lieu of a broader spirit. The Plan - its policies and maps - are not intended to be parcel specific and should not be applied so acutely.

How to Use the Plan

The Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan is a tool for guiding growth and development in the community for the next 20 years. It is not intended as a rigid and unyielding land use document. The purpose of the Plan is to help Sumter, its citizens and elected officials alike, make informed decisions about development issues, in the best interests of both property owners and the broader community.

Many land use decisions are complex, with diverse and diverging interests thrust into the public spotlight. So, the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan attempts to provide decision makers with clear goals and policies. These are the foundations of how we as a community - City and County - go about managing our future. There will be conflicts, vagaries, and unintended consequences for sure, as happens when property rights are balanced with a community's interest. In the end, the Plan is grounded in fostering a land use pattern that is efficient, compact, diverse, and mixed-use. It sets the stage for a built environment which is greener, more attractive, and increasing in quality design every day.

Changing the Plan

This planning process anticipates a changing environment. The Plan will be reviewed every five years and updated every ten years in an ongoing quest to ensure relevancy. From time to time citizens, developers, or even City and County Council may request changes to the Plan. Although changes should be extraordinary and rare, the City and County will consider changes to the Plan which:

- Are necessary in order to implement a Community Vision
- Implement the goals of this Plan
- Recognize changing conditions in our community

Amendments to the Plan require Planning Commission review consistent with State Law, a public hearing either at the Planning Commission or at Council, and formal adoption by Ordinance.

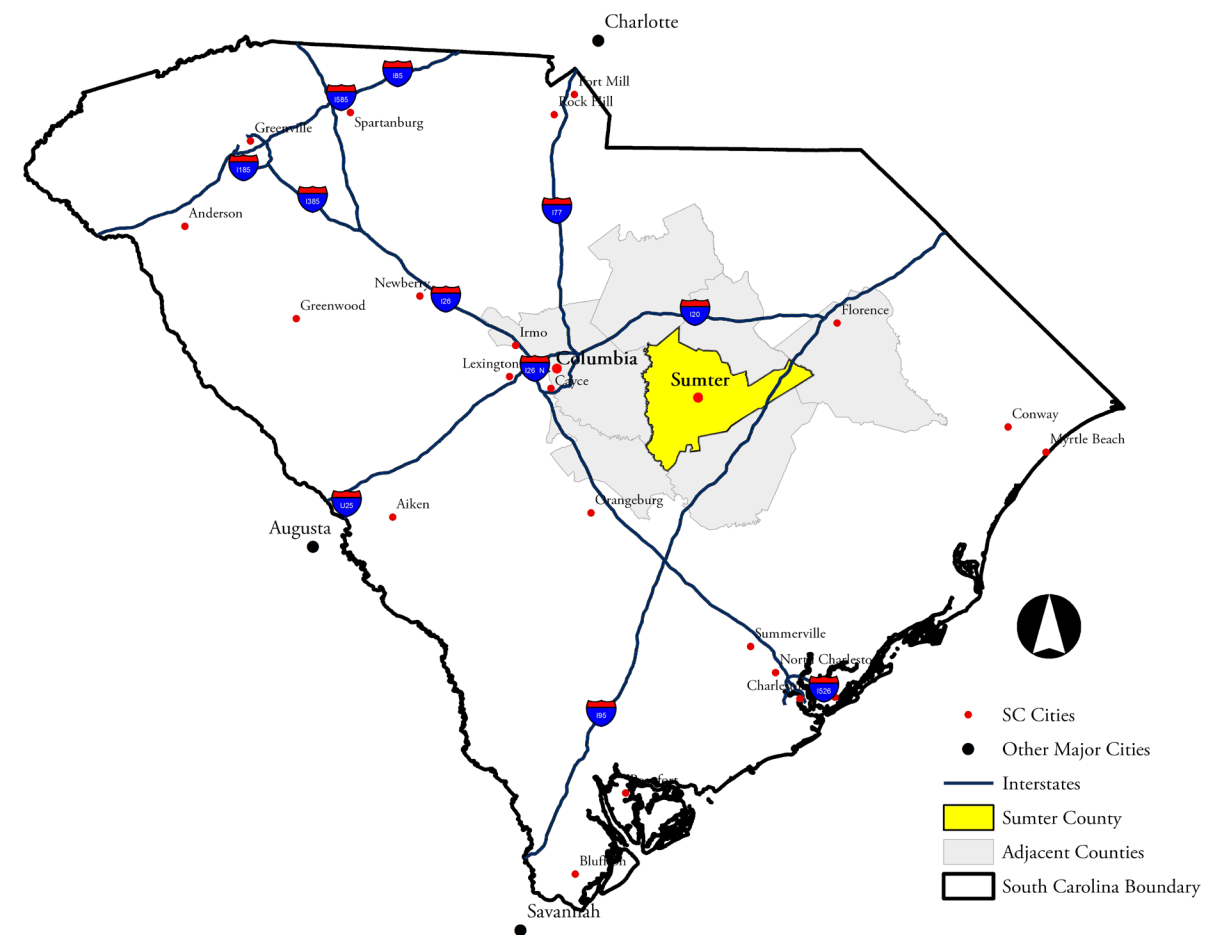
State & Regional Context

Sumter is located in central South Carolina, within the eastern portion of the geographic area commonly referred to as the "Midlands". The City of Columbia is in close proximity to the west and the City of Florence is in close proximity to the east. Sumter is within 2 hours drive time of the Charlotte, Charleston and Augusta metropolitan areas, and within 3 hours drive time of the Greenville and Savannah metropolitan areas.

Sumter is centrally located within the Santee-Lynches Region of the state, which is one of ten defined regional districts used for various planning, workforce development, and service provision purposes. Other counties that make up the Santee-Lynches region include Kershaw, Lee, and Clarendon.

Map I-1

State & Regional Map



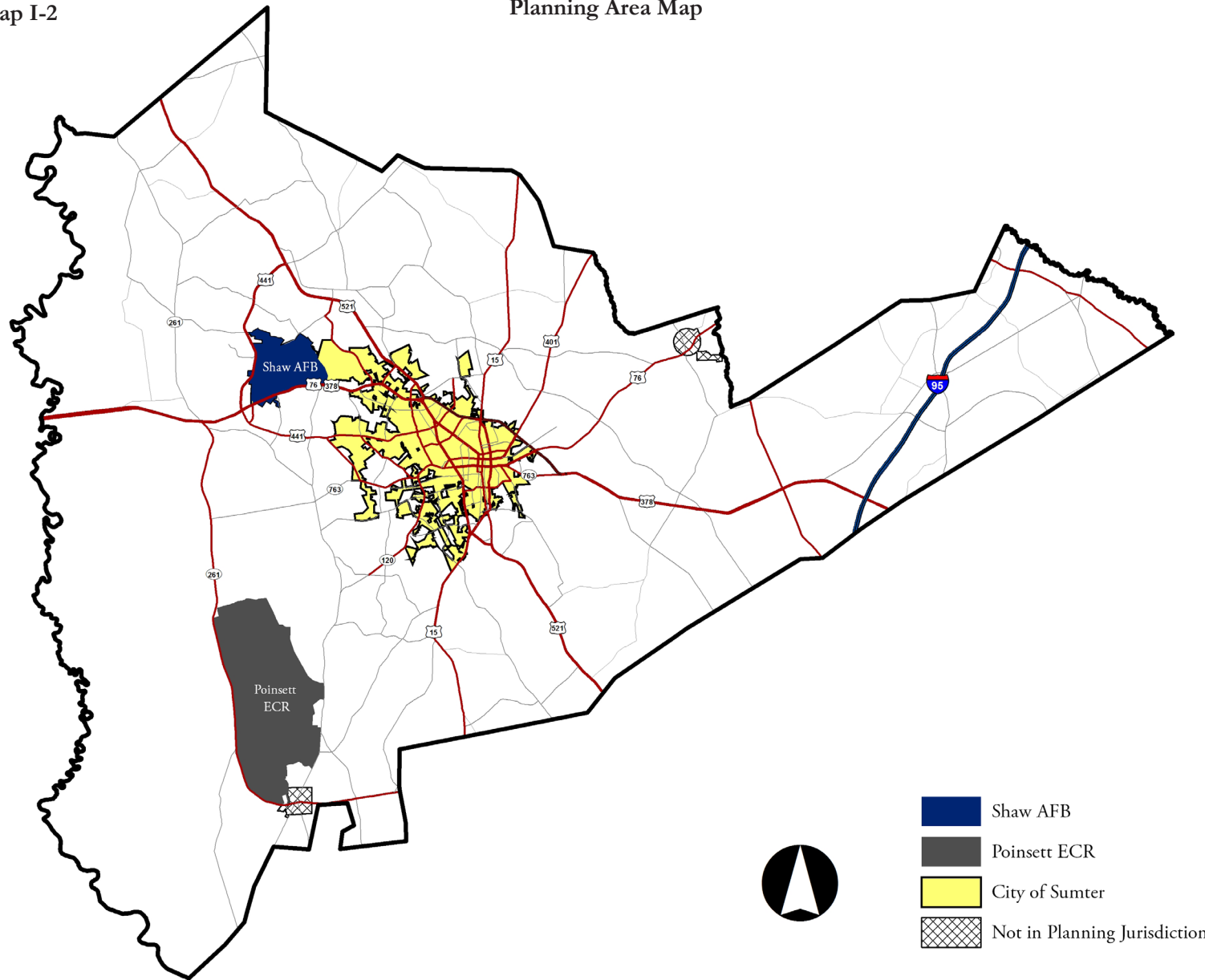
Planning Area

The planning area for the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes all areas of unincorporated Sumter County, and all of the incorporated area of the City of Sumter. The incorporated towns of Pinewood and Mayesville are not included within the Sumter 2040 planning area boundaries, as both of these jurisdictions administer their own land development regulations and comprehensive plans. The study boundaries of the Planning Area contain two United States military facilities - Shaw Air Force Base and Poinsett Electronic Combat Range.

The planning area is bounded by the Wateree River to the west, the Lynches River to the east, Clarendon County to the south, and Lee and Kershaw County's to the north. The primary east to west transportation route is US Hwy 378. Primary north to south transportation routes include US Hwy 521, US Hwy 15, US 401, and Interstate 95.

Map I-2

Planning Area Map



Public Project Review

All public projects - schools, parks, roads, or other public buildings must be reviewed for conformity with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Commission (Section 6-29-540, S.C. Code of Laws). In effect, public projects should make every effort to conform to the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan.



Sumter's broader land use vision requires setting reasonable, actionable, and achievable community goals. The Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan offers eight overarching goals, all of which can be achieved through the policies and implementation items found within this document. The goals are limited in number yet express the full aspirations of the Sumter Community. As such, the City and County support the following specific community Goals:

Overarching Goals

To protect Shaw Air Force Base and Poinsett Range, its facilities and its mission, from unwanted and incompatible development encroachment

To favor a development pattern which capitalizes on infill opportunities and encourages a mixed-use approach, in areas where adequate public infrastructure exists

To transform the built, visual image of Sumter through better site design, quality landscaping, interesting architecture, and sustainable land use priorities

To develop neighborhoods with character, good design, and community amenities

To provide diverse, safe, and affordable housing opportunities for all residents

To focus on Downtown Sumter as the centerpiece for urban living, commerce, entertainment, education, government, and healthcare, in a 24 hour active environment

To prioritize the rejuvenation of existing neighborhoods and commercial corridors

To preserve and enhance the community's green infrastructure, natural, cultural, and historic resources, through sustainable and resilient design solutions

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