



MONTHLY PLANNING REPORT

January 2025



GREENVILLE COUNTY
PLANNING

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MESSAGE FROM THE PLANNING DIRECTOR

January 2025

Workplan Priorities: Planning Report Update

As the Planning Director, I'm excited to announce that we've refreshed our monthly planning report to better serve not only the Planning Commission but also the community at large. This updated report is designed as both an informative tool and an educational resource, providing a deeper understanding of the planning process and the ongoing development shaping our area.



Rashida Jeffers-Campbell,
Greenville County Planning Director

The biggest change is the inclusion of maps highlighting current development approvals. This will cover rezonings, subdivisions, and in the near future, residential and commercial construction activity. These visual tools will allow you to see firsthand where growth and changes are happening in our community.

In addition to these maps, we'll continue to share insights on relevant planning topics and introduce professional articles for those who wish to dive deeper into specific aspects of urban planning. We believe this new format will not only keep you informed but also foster greater community engagement and transparency in how we plan for the future.

We hope this revamped report sparks curiosity and encourages everyone to stay involved in the planning process as we work together to shape the future of our community.

Planning Best Practices

APA Article of the Month

The following highlights are drawn from the American Planning Association (APA) Zoning Practice publication Issue Number Six titled “*The Sensibility of Unified Development Codes*”, which analyzes trends and spotlights innovation in local land use and development regulation.

“Zoning developed in this country in response to concerns about incompatible uses (e.g., industrial uses) moving into residential or commercial areas, and regulations focused on those issues. In contrast, subdivision regulations evolved as a system to provide accurate descriptions of small parcels of land and eventually grew to include requirements for the improvement of public streets and roads. Increasingly, jurisdictions are consolidating land development regulations into more comprehensive (and comprehensible) documents that present controls in a more seamless, systematic manner.”

The documents are called unified development codes and offers benefits and efficiency:

BENEFITS

1. Combines all regulations into one document and ensures they align with the comprehensive plan.
2. Builds on the strength of planned development regulations by combining zoning and design reviews into one process allowing the community to get a clearer picture of what is being proposed.
3. Removes arbitrary distinctions between subdivisions and other developments ensuring all developments follow the same standards, eliminating confusion.
4. One document makes rules clearer and more predictable for developers, citizens, and officials.
5. Removes duplication, contradictions, and confusion caused by development regulations spread across multiple ordinances or written inconsistently. For example, differing definitions of terms in zoning and subdivision regulations can lead to conflicts.

EFFICIENCY

6. Ensures consistent standards for public notices, hearing requirements, decision-making criteria, and other common aspects of the development review process.
7. Organizes procedures in a way that tracks the typical development process from rezoning (land use and intensity) through site and project specific issues such as platting, site planning, the presence of conditional uses, and variances.

Stuart Meck. (June 2006). *The Sensibility of Unified Development Codes*. Zoning Practice American Planning Association Issue 6.
<https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9027800/>

Ordinance Updates



UDO

Unified Development Ordinance (UDO): Misconceptions & Facts

The adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) on December 3, 2024, marked a significant milestone in Greenville County's planning efforts. It fulfilled one of four key actions identified in the Plan Greenville County comprehensive plan adopted in 2020 to implement community-driven recommendations for growth management. The UDO advanced key strategies of the comprehensive plan by implementing policies to promote sustainable growth, preserve natural resources, and improve community connectivity. These policies include encouraging conservation development, requiring stream buffers, and supporting workforce housing through zoning incentives. The UDO prioritized mixed-use, mixed-residential, and mixed-income neighborhoods while allowing diverse housing types such as accessory dwelling units and compact homes. It enhanced mobility with requirements for sidewalks, connectivity between key areas, and integration of public transportation and strategic development in areas with existing infrastructure. The UDO adoption process involved four years of public and stakeholder engagement, including 17 public meetings, 2 public hearings, website updates soliciting feedback, and the review of over 700 public comments. Despite these efforts, several misconceptions emerged.

On January 14, 2025, the UDO was reconsidered by County Council and sent to the Council's Committee of the Whole for further review and potential amendments. This decision reflects the Council's responsiveness to community input and ensures that the UDO continues to align with the county's evolving needs and priorities. Below, we address the most common concerns:

Key Misconceptions and Facts:

1. Allows Multifamily Developments in Single-Family Districts

- **Fact:** Multifamily developments are not permitted in single-family districts. Townhomes, classified by the SC Residential Code as single-family attached dwellings, have been allowed in these districts for 20 years.

2. Grants Excessive Powers to County Staff

- **Fact:** Staff approval authority under UDO Article 16.1.8 remains consistent with existing ordinances.

3. Increases Density

- **Fact:** Permitted densities UDO Table 11.9.2-1 remain unchanged from Zoning Ordinance Table 7.1

4. Promotion of Townhome Developments

- **Fact:** Townhomes have been allowed in single-family districts for 20 years. A 2020 zoning amendment removed caps on townhome percentages in open space developments. The UDO continues this policy but increases open space requirements from 15% to 30%.

5. Insufficient Protection for Rural Areas

- **Fact:** The UDO carries forward an LDR amendment enforcing a minimum 1.5-acre lot size for unzoned residential lots on septic systems to manage growth and focus development in urbanized areas. Since the amendment in January 2024, no major septic-based subdivisions have been proposed or approved in unzoned areas.

6. Minimal Open Space Protection in Unzoned Areas

- **Fact:** Open space requirements increase to 30%, replacing the prior practice of averaging lot sizes, which typically resulted in only 15%.

7. Does not Support the Character of Rural Areas

- **Fact:** The UDO offers zoning classifications, such as Agricultural Preservation (AG), Rural Residential (R-R1), Rural Residential (R-R3), Rural Village (RU-V), and Rural Corridor (RU-C) which residents can pursue to protect and support areas deemed as rural in character.

8. Developers can clear cut all but 10% of Trees

- **Fact:** The UDO requires preserving at least 10% of required tree density units, with incentives for retaining large trees - an improvement to the former ordinance which doesn't require any preservation.

9. RV Parks Can Use Community Septic Systems

- **Fact:** The UDO prohibits community septic systems, defining RV parks as single-owner commercial developments.

10. No Public Review of Major Subdivisions

- **Fact:** UDO Article 16.1.7 requires pre-application community meetings for early public notice and input before formal applications can be submitted to the County.

11. No Planning Commission Role in Major Subdivisions

- **Fact:** The Planning Commission remains the decision-making body for major subdivisions/preliminary plans (UDO Table 16.1.3-1).

12. No Infill Standards

- **Fact:** The UDO includes provisions for mill village overlay districts to encourage infill in older areas.

13. No Consideration of Affordable Housing Near Employment Centers/Public Transit

- **Fact:** Incentives are not intended to be restrictive but create housing options for households as provided by the private market which is not dictated by the availability of public transit or proximity to employment centers. UDO Article 11.3.3 is intended to focus growth in existing urbanized areas.

14. Mill Village Overlay Map

- **Fact:** The UDO includes the framework for mill village overlays, with overlay district maps to be developed in the near future.

15. Not Clear Who Approves Apartments & RV Parks

- **Fact:** All development activity in the County is subject to the County's stormwater management ordinance and Building Code. However, the UDO speaks to required administrative approvals and Board/Commission approvals (for certain types of developments that must precede the initiation of a land disturbance and building permit in accordance with the stormwater management ordinance and building code respectively to include all subdivisions and a few non-subdivision developments, namely, RV Parks, Manufactured Home Parks, Campgrounds in Article 5 and Group Development without new lots in Article 11 – these not-subdivisions or single owner commercial developments are reviewed and approved primarily by the Technical Advisory Committee prior to initiating a land disturbance permit and building permit.

***For more information, please visit the <https://www.greenvillecounty.org/Planning/UDO.aspx>.
For questions, contacts us at planning@greenvillecounty.org.***

Project Highlights

Long Range Planning



LONG RANGE PLANING

GREENVILLE COUNTY OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Purpose of the Plan

The Open Space Plan will be crucial to Greenville County's growth, providing a roadmap for preservation and managed development to ensure a resilient and sustainable future.

Plan Vision

To create and maintain an interconnected network of natural areas, working landscapes, and parks, balancing responsible growth with the preservation of natural beauty and a vibrant quality of life for future generations.

The November Public Open House

An open house was held in November at County Square, with over 50 people in attendance. Participants engaged in interactive exhibits to learn more about the plan and provide feedback. An online survey provided an additional opportunity for the public and stakeholders to express preferences regarding the scope and direction of the plan.

Prioritizing Open Space in Greenville County

An important aspect of the Plan is prioritizing areas of the county that are most important to protect. These include habitat cores, floodplains and wetlands, and other ecological resources; working lands (farms); and lands that hold recreational and cultural value. Data-driven research and analysis will identify areas within proximity to trails, cultural landscapes, schools, and public water access (creeks and rivers).

NEXT STEPS

Following the prioritization analysis Greenville County residents, stakeholders, and steering committee members will be asked for additional input to help guide the plan forward. *A second online survey and virtual open house will be announced soon. (date TBD)*



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

On October 21, 2024, the Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study held its final Policy Committee Meeting of 2024. Of note, the Committee passed updated Federal Performance Measures in the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program as presented by Anna Stewart, updated the Transportation Alternatives Program Document, and passed an Amendment for projects in the Transportation Improvement Program.

The high point of the meeting was the passage of the GPATS Congestion Management Process, after a presentation by Kimley-Horn and Associates. The CMP identified the corridors of highest congestion within GPATS and identified the strategies that could be used to correct them. The CMP will be used as a starting point for next year's Long-Range Transportation Plan Update.

Finally, the Policy Committee said farewell to two long-standing members: Greenville County Councilman Butch Kirven, and Pickens County Councilman Henry Wilson. Mr. Kirven was in attendance and spoke about his time on GPATS and of his years as its Chairman.

NEXT STEPS

The next GPATS meetings will be the Study Team Meeting on **January 27th**, and the Policy Committee on **February 24th**.



This map displays preliminary subdivisions approved in 2024 (January-November).

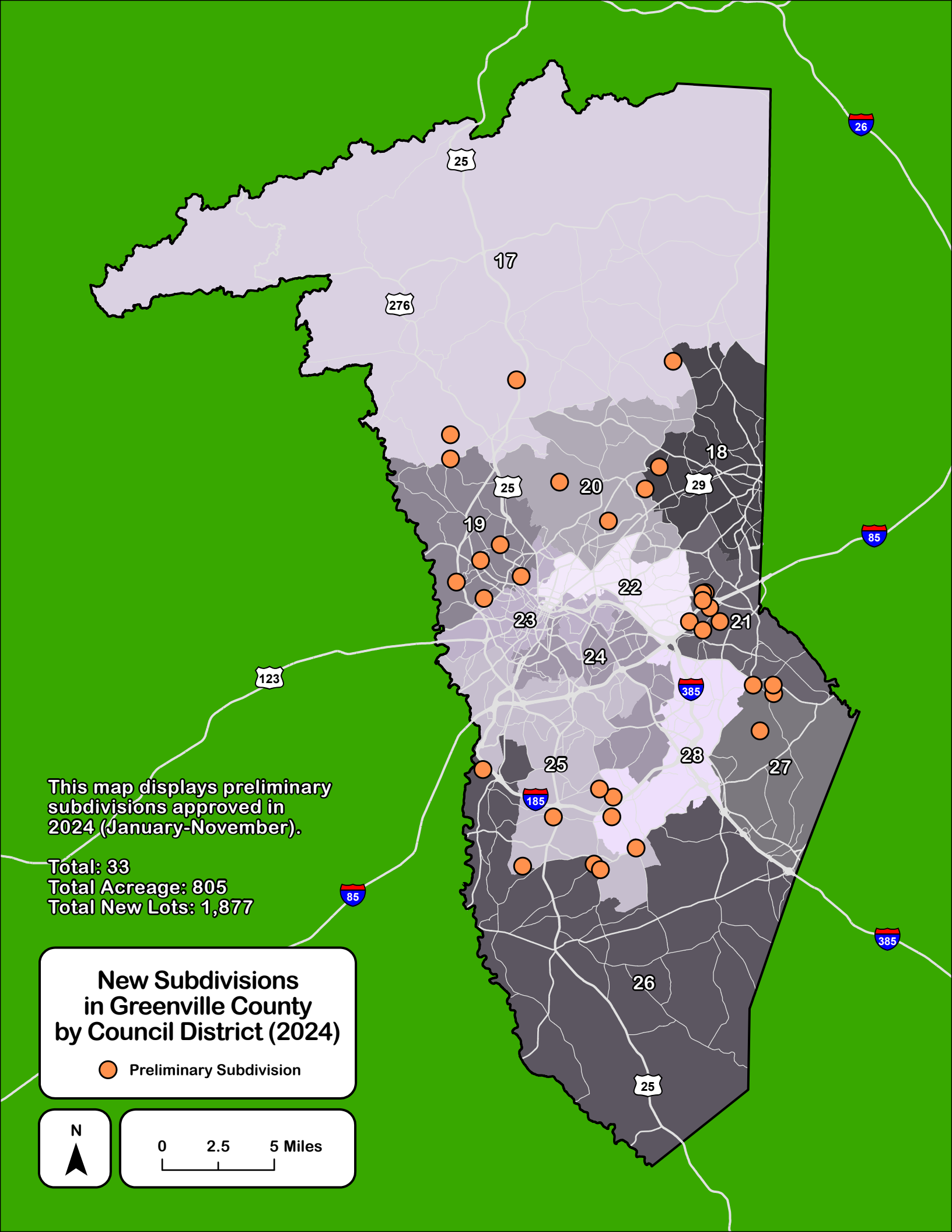
Total: 33
Total Acreage: 805
Total New Lots: 1,877

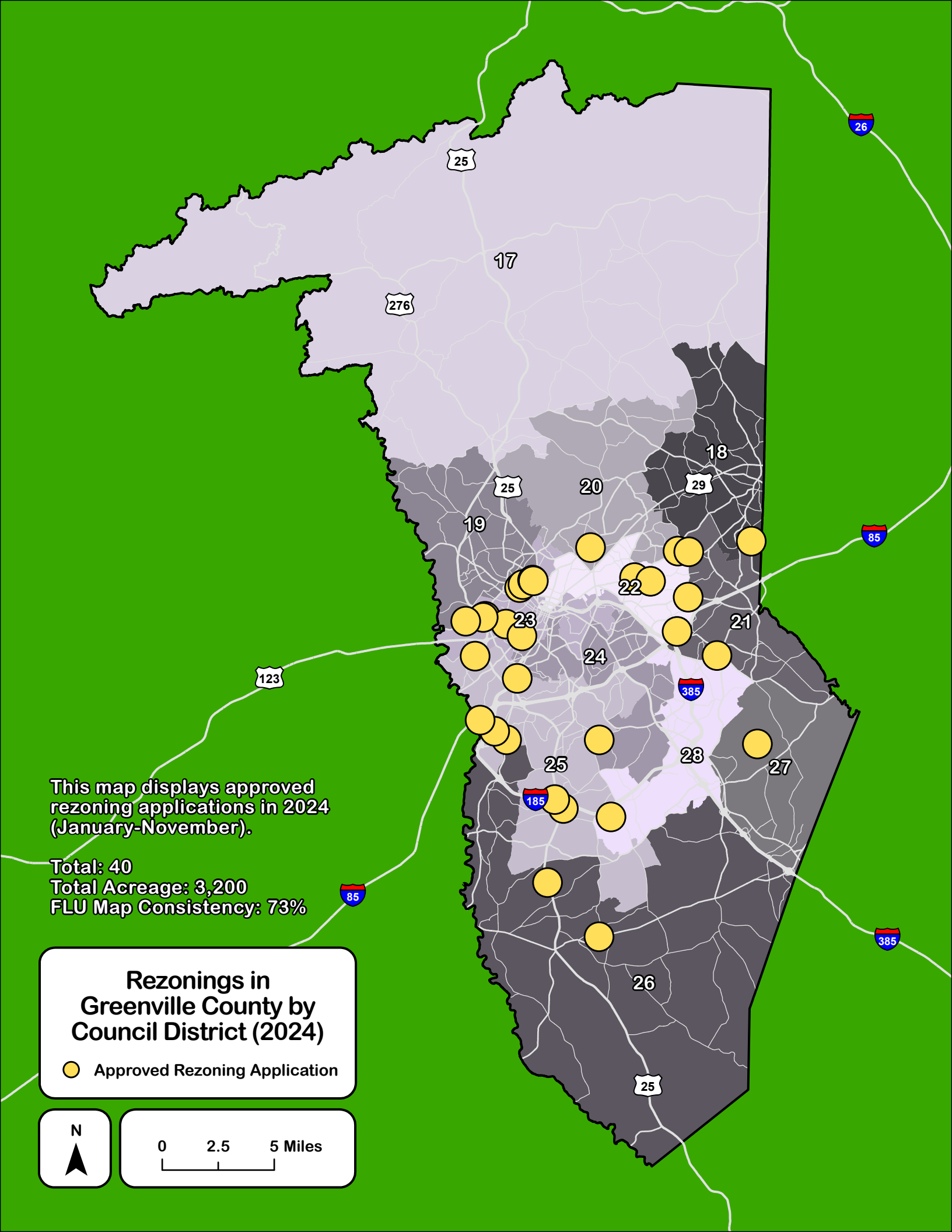
New Subdivisions in Greenville County by Council District (2024)

● Preliminary Subdivision



0 2.5 5 Miles





This map displays approved rezoning applications in 2024 (January-November).

Total: 40
Total Acreage: 3,200
FLU Map Consistency: 73%

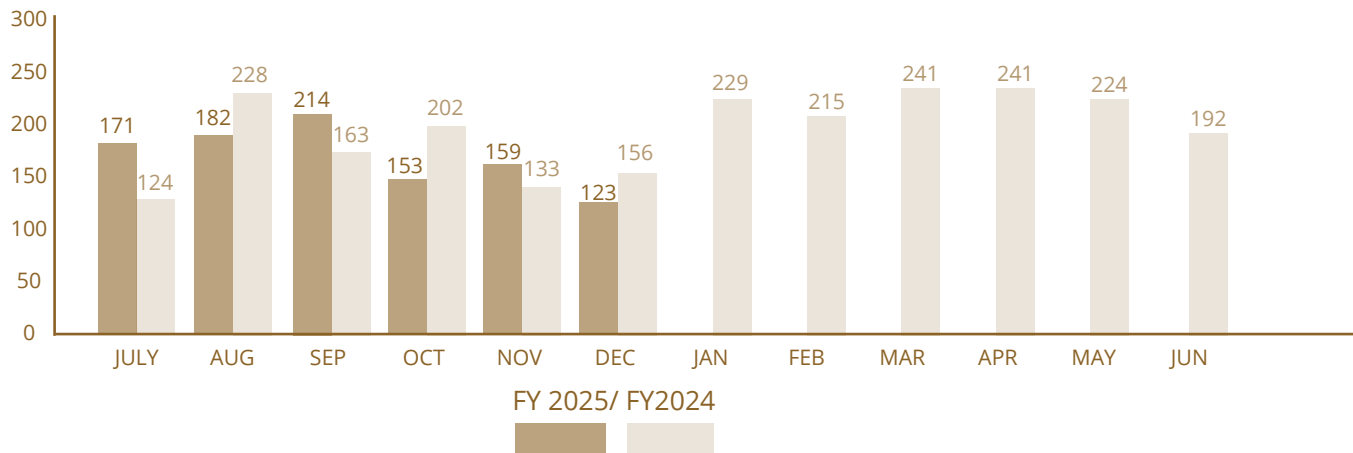
Rezoning in Greenville County by Council District (2024)

- Approved Rezoning Application



BUILDING PERMITS

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY



New Single-Family Detached Housing Starts (Calendar Year)

2018 total: 2,275	2021 total: 2,332	2024 total: 2,344
2019 total: 1,951	2022 total: 1,661	
2020 total: 2,129	2023 total: 2,141	

COMMERCIAL PROJECTS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

NOVEMBER 2024:

- New construction projects: 27
- Total project value: \$31,949,804.00

2024 Calendar Year Totals:

- Total commercial projects: 450
- Total project value: \$552,726,974.00

NOVEMBER 2023:

- New construction projects: 42
- Total project value: \$193,125,391.00

2023 Calendar Year Totals:

- Total commercial projects: 391
- Total project value: \$553,362,435.55

DECEMBER 2024:

- New construction projects: 32
- Total project value: \$107,819,322.00

2024 Calendar Year Totals:

- Total commercial projects: 482
- Total project value: \$630,546,296.00

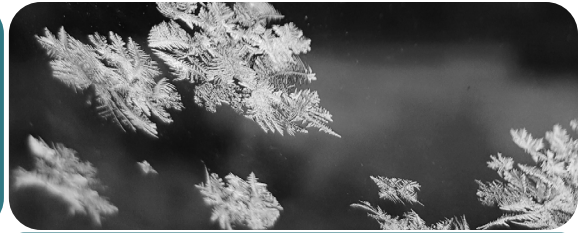
DECEMBER 2023:

- New construction projects: 38
- Total project value: \$497,779,224.

2023 Calendar Year Totals:

- Total commercial projects: 751
- Total project value: \$870,497,940.00

Development Trends



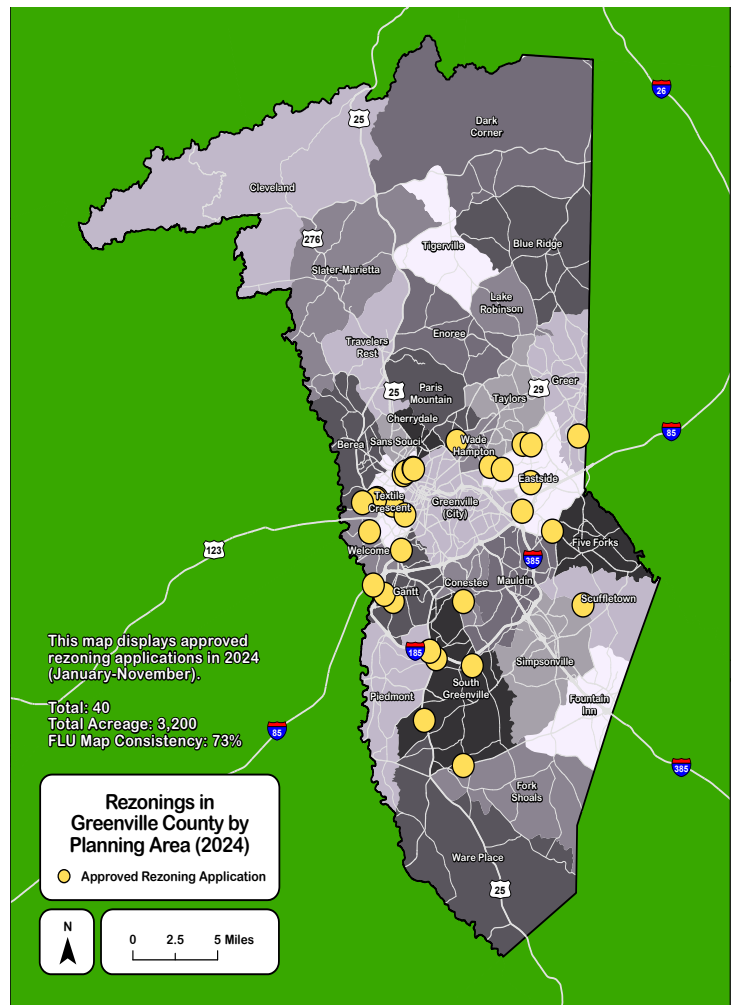
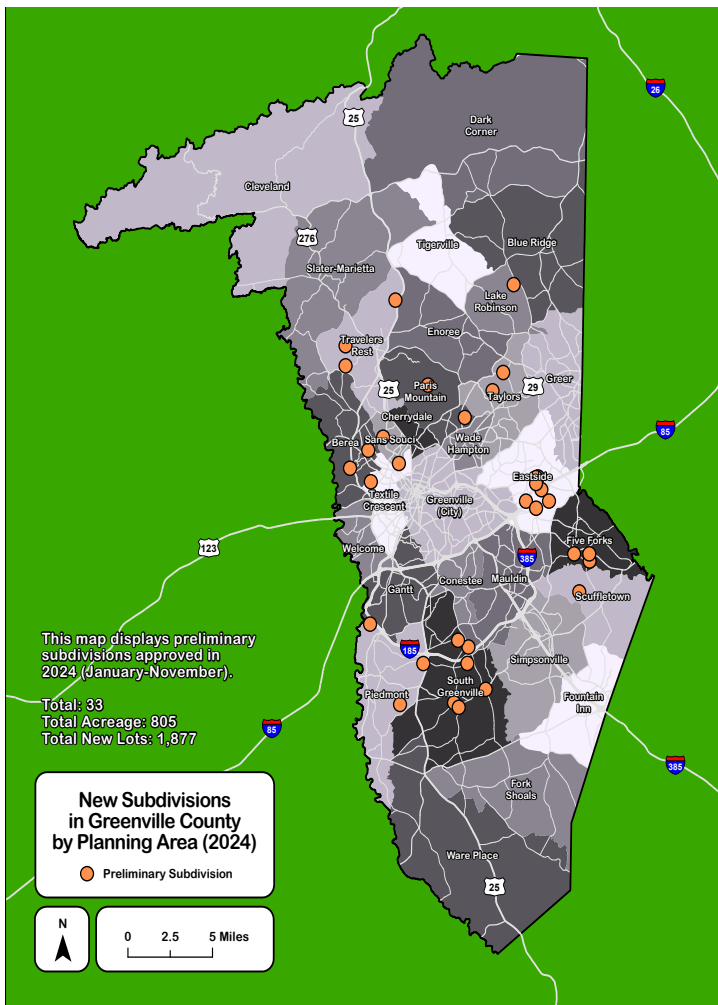
Land Use Changes

Subdivision Trend

33 preliminary subdivisions were approved by Planning Commission in 2024 (between January and November, since the Planning Commission does not meet in the month of December), covering 805 total acres and creating 1,877 new lots across Greenville County.

Zoning Trends

40 zoning applications were approved by County Council in 2024 (between January and November, since a Public Hearing is not held in the month of December), covering 3,200 acres across Greenville County. Of those, 73% aligned with the Future Land Use Map or local area/community plan's recommendations. 40% of approved rezonings included commercial districts (C-1, C-2, C-3, S-1), while 28% included residential districts. 18% were review districts (FRD, PD).



PLANNING CALENDAR

UPCOMING DATES

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
January 21st	County Council	301 University Ridge, Greenville - Council Chambers	6:00 pm
January 22nd	Planning Commission	301 University Ridge, Greenville - Committee Meeting Room	4:30 pm
February 3rd	Planning & Development Committee	301 University Ridge, Greenville - Committee Meeting Room	5:00 pm
February 4th	County Council	301 University Ridge, Greenville - Council Chambers	6:00 pm
February 12th	Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)	301 University Ridge, Greenville - Committee Meeting Room	3:00 pm
February 18th	County Council	301 University Ridge, Greenville - Council Chambers	6:00 pm
February 20th	Historic Preservation Commission	301 University Ridge, Greenville - North Building - Comm Mtg Rm	12:00pm
February 26th	Planning Commission	301 University Ridge, Greenville - Committee Meeting Room	4:30 pm

Greenville County Planning Contact Information

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GREENVILLE, SC 29601



