

Lancaster 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

February 8, 2022 - 6:00pm

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Steering Committee Members Present: Ben Levine, Melin Stroble, Kim Lineberger, Melissa Thornton, Mike Neese, Michelle Evans, Audrey Currey, Britt Blackmon, Jon Hardy, Susan DeVenny, Brian Hernandez

Steering Committee Members Absent: Brad Bucy

County Staff Members: Ashley Davis, Rox Burhans

Benchmark Planning Team: Jason Epley, Vagn Hansen, Bridget Callea, Tanvi Halde

Welcome

The meeting began at 6:00 with introductions from those in attendance.

Baseline Review Part 1

Benchmark team members reviewed Part 1 of the Baseline Review with the Steering Committee. A review of County-wide data and trends included population, housing, education, labor force, income, work locations and commuting, zoning, land use, land subdivision, land cover, managed lands, parks and greenways, wetlands and floodplains, watersheds, topography, prime farmland soils, mining activity, transportation, and historic sites. A brief summary of some the same data was also presented for the Panhandle, Greater Lancaster, and Southern Lancaster Planning Areas. The primary information for Part 1 focused on readily available information from the 2020 United States Census Bureau, the 2019 American Community Survey, and additional sources including Lancaster County, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other state and federal resources.

Lancaster County had a population growth rate of 60% from 2000 – 2020, with the Panhandle region accounting for most of that population growth, adding more than 33,000 people. This represented a growth rate of 476% between 2000 and 2020 for the Panhandle area. The population growth and characteristics of the Panhandle region have greatly influenced the trends for the County as a whole for almost every statistical category. County-wide, land use has remained predominantly agricultural, with concentrations of development in each of the County’s municipalities and the Panhandle area, where infrastructure can support development. Southern Lancaster and the eastern portion of Greater Lancaster has vast amounts of farmland and forest contained in parcels greater than 50 acres in size.

Listening Sessions

The Listening Sessions are planned for February 10 and 11 in the Council Chambers located upstairs in the Lancaster County Administration Building. The meetings will include county department heads/staff, state and regional agencies, municipal representatives, development industry experts, community groups and organizations, economic development experts, agricultural industry representatives, environment and natural resources officials, and parks and recreation professionals. The listening sessions will help provide additional information to incorporate into the Baseline Review phase of the Plan.

Community Survey

The survey will be released in the next couple of weeks. The community survey will coincide with a more focused public launch of the project to include a project website, press release, and other methods to raise the general public awareness of the project. The Steering Committee members will be asked to share the survey and project website with their contacts to help encourage a wide range of input.

Next Steering Committee Meeting Date

The next Steering Committee meeting will be Tuesday, March 29 at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers of the County Administration Building.

Committee Member Comments and Discussion

The Steering Committee discussed a variety of topics at the end of the meeting. Some of the key points and questions were as follows:

- Are there case studies of communities with a comparable situation (i.e. the extreme growth of the Panhandle within a rural county/community)?
- How can the money available through the Federal government be considered in the process (acknowledging there is such a short time frame)?
- We want to make sure we hear the community’s voices during the process
- How can we incorporate the arts and culture into the Plan (activities, public art, theater, night life, conference center in the Panhandle, etc)?

- Make sure we include broadband and internet access.
- How can we coordinate and make plans for water/sewer given constraints with LCWSD? How does the City of Lancaster water and sewer fit in?
- What do we want out of growth? Do we want the growth? What goals do we want to achieve with growth? Is all growth good growth? Where is the best place for growth to go? What do we need to protect/preserve as we grow? Incentivize the growth we want.
- Include municipal officials and representatives in focus groups and listening sessions.
- How do we ensure affordable land for future school sites?
- Transportation issues impact the ability for many residents to get to work and other places they need to go.
- Increased needs for recreation opportunities (programs and facilities).
- Identify resources for Steering Committee to review regarding best planning practices.
- Steering Committee members have access to additional resources including recent residential real estate closing data and the School District's growth projections report – these would be interesting to incorporate into the Baseline Review.
- Specific concerns were raised about water quality, food access, inclusivity, land affordability, infrastructure, and culture.
- How can we accommodate Spanish speaking people during the process?
- Identifying the potential for sports tourism and recreation opportunities for the young population