

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

AGENDA

6:00 pm, **Monday, February 4th**, 2019

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation by County Council Chaplain
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Election of Officers
5. Approval of Minutes –01/07/2019
6. Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes per person)
7. Corridor Plan
Public Comment (3 minutes per person)
Discussion/Vote
8. Comprehensive Plan
Public Comment (3 minutes per person)
Discussion/Vote
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Adjourn

Anyone wishing to submit written comments to the Planning Commission can send their comments to the Planning Department by mail or by emailing them to the email address below. Please Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the agenda via email please contact our office, or email us at achapman@oconeesc.com.

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

MINUTES

6:00 pm, **Monday, January 7th**, 2019

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

Members Present:

Alex Vassey
Andrew Gramling
Brad Kisker
Frankie Pearson
Mike Johnson
Stacy Lyles

Staff Present:

David Root - county attorney
Adam Chapman - staff liaison

Media Present:

None

1. **Call to Order**- Mr. Root called the meeting to order at 4PM
2. **Invocation by County Chaplin**
3. **Pledge of Allegiance**
4. **Election of Officers** - Mr. Root recommended to not hold the election as not all Commission members are present and one or more of the members may change at the next meeting of council. Mr. Root noted that the Commission could vote, if they so choose to. Mr. Pearson made a motion to table the election of officers until next meeting, Mr. Gramling seconded, vote was unanimous in favor
5. **Approval of Minutes from 12/17/2019** - Mr. Pearson made the motion to approve, Mr. Johnson seconded, unanimous in favor.

Planning Commission's 2019 Calendar

Public Comment: None

Discussion: Mr. Chapman noted the calendar for 2019 and the first meeting of 2020. Mr. Kisker made the motion to accept the calendar, Mr. Gramling seconded the motion to accept the 2019 calendar, the vote was unanimous in favor.

7. **Staff Update** - Mr. Chapman noted the upcoming workshop with Council was the following Thursday and the agenda was to focus on the Comprehensive Plan.
10. Old Business -None
11. New Business - None
12. Adjourn - 4:12PM

Corridor Plan

- Dates
- Steering Committee
- Other information

Comprehensive Plan

- Advertising
- Statistically relevant surveys
- District meetings
- Executive summary
- Other information
- Population Element Goals

H. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The goals, objectives and strategies for implementation (GOIS) table summarizes the actions that will be undertaken in the coming decade to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Population element. Element goals are broad-based ideals that are intended to guide the future of the community, while an objective is a more specific elaboration of a goal that also provides direction. Together the goals and objectives outline the framework for the element and provide the basis for the more detailed and specific plan strategies. Each supporting implementation strategy includes a listing of the agencies that are accountable for the implementation of the strategy, as well as a time frame for completion.

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion
Goal 2.1. Improve the quality of life for existing and future residents of Oconee County.		
Objective 2.1.1. Increase understanding of the County's population composition and characteristics.		
<u>Strategy 2.1.1.1.</u> Monitor demographic patterns in the County and its municipalities to understand and respond to growth and the changing needs of residents, especially special populations.	Oconee County Service Providers	
<u>Strategy 2.1.1.2.</u> Coordinate and collaborate with regional agencies and neighboring jurisdictions to share demographic data and update population projection data and methodologies.	Oconee County ACOG Neighboring Jurisdictions	
Objective 2.1.2. Encourage young adults and families to remain in Oconee County.		
<u>Strategy 2.1.2.1.</u> Continue to create economic opportunities for residents and potential residents through recruitment and retention of industries and businesses.	Oconee County Oconee Economic Alliance Upstate SC Alliance Chamber of Commerce	On-going
<u>Strategy 2.1.2.2.</u> Continue to develop and promote policies and programs that improve economic opportunity for residents and potential residents.	Oconee County Municipalities	On-going
<u>Strategy 2.1.2.3.</u> Seek opportunities to provide or encourage entertainment and recreation options that are attractive to young adults and families.	Oconee County Municipalities	

<p><u>Strategy 2.1.2.4.</u> Work with the Oconee County School District, private schools, and Tri-County Technical College to continue to improve educational quality and access to advanced training opportunities.</p>	<p>Oconee County School District of Oconee County (School District) Private Schools Tri-County Technical College</p>	
<p>Objective 2.1.3. Assess and seek to address the needs of the County's special populations.</p>		
<p><u>Strategy 2.1.3.1.</u> Seek partnerships to assess the unmet needs of special populations and develop strategies and leverage resources to address these needs.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities State and Local Agencies Non-profits Interfaith Ministries</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.1.3.2.</u> Encourage participation by appropriate local service agencies and organizations in the Upstate Consortium Continuum of Care through the annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count and explore efforts to prevent and eliminate homelessness and provide needed services for the County's homeless population.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities Oconee County United Way Local Service Agencies and Organizations Faith-based Organizations</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.1.3.3.</u> Reduce language barriers in the provision of health care, public safety, and other public services to all Oconee County residents.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities Health Providers Other Public Service Providers</p>	
<p><u>Strategy 2.1.3.4.</u> Assess measures to accommodate the needs of the County's aging population in areas such as signage, lighting, and transportation options.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities CAT Bus Service</p>	

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion
<p>Goal 2.2. Promote a livable community in which County residents are healthy, supported, and productive.</p>		
<p>Objective 2.2.1. Ensure access to adequate health care and preventative services.</p>		

<p><u>Strategy 2.2.1.1.</u> Encourage the provision of a continuum of supportive services, home repair programs, and infrastructure that enable elderly residents to <i>age in place</i> to the extent possible.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities Council on Aging Faith-based Organizations Oconee County DSS Oconee County DSNB</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.2.1.2.</u> Promote access to adequate health care facilities and services for all segments of the population to reduce the incidence and high costs associated with chronic health conditions.</p>	<p>Oconee Memorial Hospital County Health Department Oconee County DSNB Rosa Clark Free Medical Clinic</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.2.1.3.</u> Encourage County health care providers in establishing the medical services and expertise needed by local residents, especially geriatric care for the elderly and accessible care for veterans.</p>	<p>Oconee Memorial Hospital County Health Department Oconee County DSNB Senior Solutions</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.2.1.4.</u> Provide a range of fitness and recreational opportunities that encourage health and well-being and that also safely accommodate residents with disabilities, older adults, youth, families, and other special needs populations.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities School District</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Objective 2.2.3. Promote higher levels of educational attainment and job readiness among County residents.</p>		
<p><u>Strategy 2.2.3.1.</u> Create a safe and healthy environment for education and socialization for students at all levels.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities School District Tri-County Technical College</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.2.3.2.</u> Support and promote workforce development programs that address the skilled labor needs of current and potential employers in the County in high tech, high demand pathways.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities Worklink WIA School District Tri-County Technical College Oconee Adult Education Local Employers</p>	<p>On-going</p>

<p><u>Strategy 2.2.3.3.</u> Support local efforts to raise literacy levels of County residents through afterschool programs, family and early literacy efforts, and church-based programs.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities School District Oconee County Adult Education/Literacy Program Faith-based Providers Library</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Goal 2.3. Foster a high level of efficiency, coordination, and cooperation among County and municipal services.</p>		
<p>Objective 2.3.1. Coordinate planning efforts among the County, municipalities, and neighboring jurisdictions.</p>		
<p><u>Strategy 2.3.1.1.</u> Review and/or update the County's Population Element at least once every five years.</p>	<p>Oconee County</p>	<p>2023</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.3.1.2.</u> Coordinate service delivery planning among the County, municipalities, and neighboring jurisdictions to eliminate duplication of effort and address long-term needs of residents.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities Utilities Neighboring Jurisdictions ACOG</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.3.1.3.</u> Foster on-going coordination and communication among Oconee County, municipalities, and neighboring jurisdictions on a wide range of issues including land use planning and regulation, facilities planning, transportation, and the extension and upgrade of utilities.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities ACOG Neighboring Jurisdictions Utility Providers</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 2.3.1.4.</u> Review current land use planning, building codes, zoning and development regulations, and other County ordinances for potential impact on population growth and special populations.</p>	<p>Oconee County Municipalities</p>	<p style="background-color: yellow;"></p>

Chapter 2. Population Element

Population growth directly impacts the physical growth of a community. Increases in population are accompanied by increased demand for housing, education, health care, human services, water and sewer, recreation, and other key community services. In turn, the characteristics of the population can shape the scope and delivery of these essential community services and infrastructure.

The Population Element serves as the foundation for the other elements of the Oconee County Comprehensive Plan, providing a detailed assessment of Census data combined with other key social indicators. The Element provides an overview and analysis of key demographic aspects of the County including: historic growth trends and population projections for the County and its municipalities; the income and family status characteristics of Oconee County households; the educational levels of County residents; the race, gender, and age characteristics of the County's population; and related factors that impact future growth. The Population Element provides the context for understanding the existing and future needs of the County and its municipalities with respect to housing, employment and job growth, education and community services, infrastructure, and future land development.

A. OCONEE COUNTY AND MUNICIPALITIES

Five municipalities are located within the County. The City of Seneca is the County's largest municipality, both in land area at 7.55 square miles and in population, with 8,228 residents in 2016 (Table 2-1). The City of Walhalla is the County seat and is the second largest municipality in the County at 3.96 square miles and 4,263 residents, followed closely by the City of Westminster at 3.41 square miles and 2,482 residents. The Towns of Salem and West Union are both less than one square mile in size, with populations of 305 and 149 residents, respectively. Map 2-1 illustrates the location and size of the County's municipalities.

Table 2-1. Size and Density of Oconee County and Municipalities, 2016

Jurisdiction	Total Land Area (square miles)*	2016 ACS	Persons per Square Mile
Oconee County	626.33	75,375	120.3
Salem	0.83	149	179.5
Seneca	7.55	8,228	1,089.8
Walhalla (County seat)	3.96	4,263	1,076.5
Westminster	3.41	2,482	727.9
West Union	0.77	305	396.1

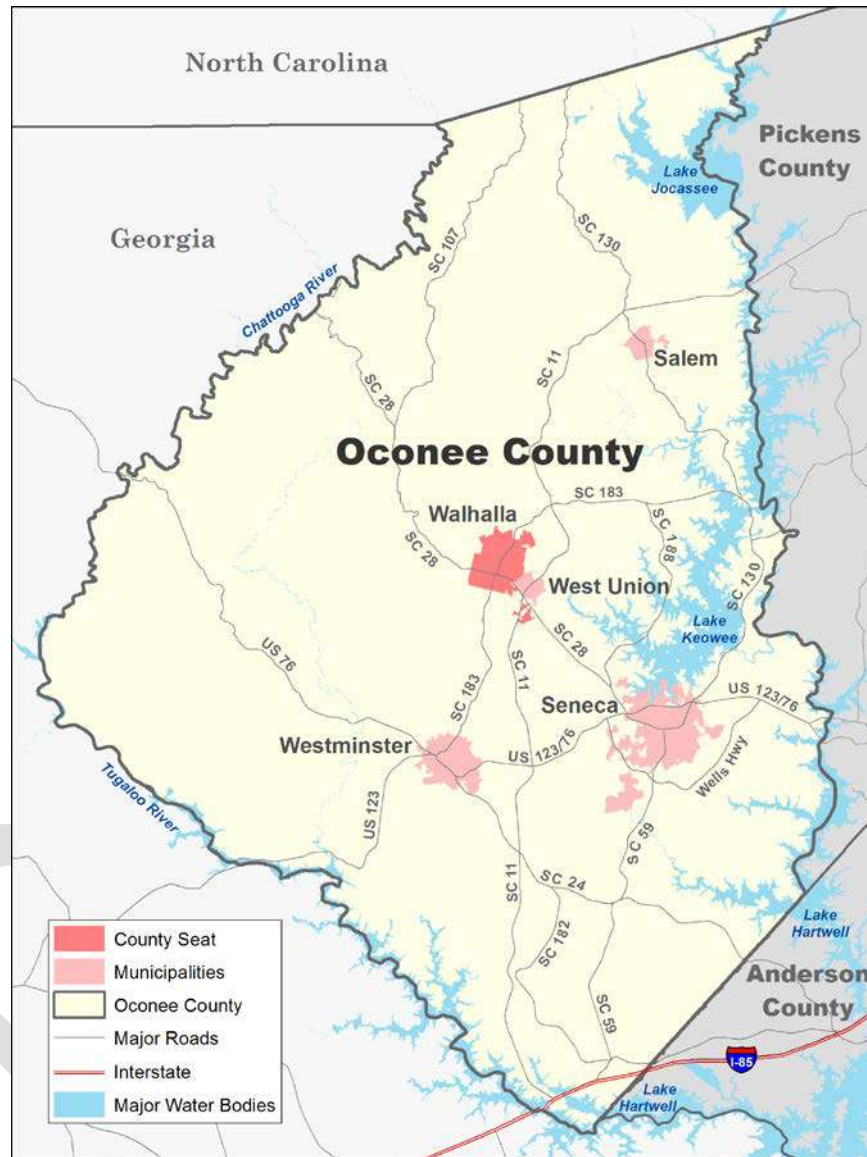
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS); 2010 Census

Oconee County is part of the six-county Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) region that also includes Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens, and Spartanburg counties. ACOG is a voluntary organization of local governments governed by a 44-member Board of Directors that includes local elected officials, citizen, and minority members. Authorized in 1971 as one of



the ten councils of government in South Carolina, the ACOG provides a number of services and assistance to local governments in the region including public administration, planning, information systems and technology, grants, workforce development, and services for the elderly population.

Map 2-1. Oconee County and Municipalities



C. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The U.S. Census Bureau is required by Federal law to conduct a census every ten years to determine the number of people in the United States. The count, commonly known as the decennial Census, is conducted every decade on April 1 in years ending in zero. The *American Community Survey* (ACS) is a yearly survey conducted nationwide by the U.S. Census Bureau that collects a wide range of demographic, social, economic, and housing data. The data is



compiled into three-year and five-year estimates, with the five year compilation considered to be the most accurate depiction of the data. While the main function of the decennial Census is to provide population counts for Congressional apportionment, the primary purpose of the ACS is to measure the changing social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population.

Oconee County ranks as South Carolina’s 18th largest county in population with an estimated 2016 population of 75,375 residents (2012-2016 ACS). Table 2-2 provides comparative data on population growth in the County, the Appalachian Council of Governments Region, and the State by decade since 1970. Oconee County population gains have narrowed with each passing decade, with growth rates ranging from a high of 19.4% from 1970 to 1980 to only 12.2% from 2000 to 2010. However, the County’s growth rate in the most recent decade ranked 16th highest among the State’s 46 counties. The countywide growth rate during the 40-year period from 1970 to 2010 was higher than that of both the Region and the State at 82.4%. Figure 2-1 illustrates population trends for the County, Region, and State from 1970 to 2010.

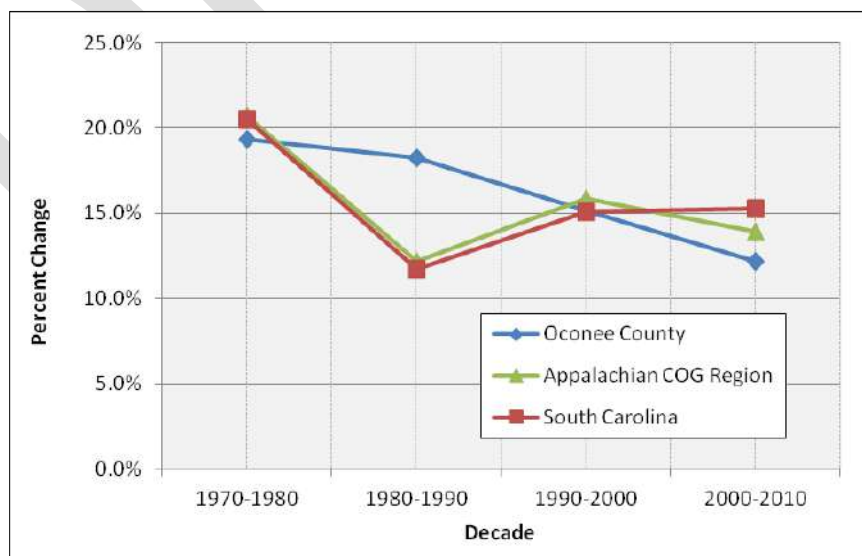
Table 2-2. Population Change by Decade, 1970 to 2010

Year	Oconee County		Appalachian COG Region		South Carolina	
	Total	% Change*	Total	% Change*	Total	% Change*
1970	40,728	--	656,219	--	2,590,516	--
1980	48,611	19.4%	791,895	20.7%	3,121,820	20.5%
1990	57,494	18.3%	888,057	12.1%	3,486,703	11.7%
2000	66,215	15.2%	1,028,656	15.8%	4,012,012	15.1%
2010	74,273	12.2%	1,171,497	13.9%	4,625,364	15.3%
Change 1970-2010	33,545	82.4%	515,278	78.5%	2,034,848	78.5%

* Percentage change from previous time period

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1970 through 2010;
S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, S.C. Statistical Abstract, 2018

Figure 2-1. Population Change by Decade, 1970 to 2010



Oconee County grew by 1,102 residents from 2010 to 2016, with a growth rate of 1.5% over the same period (Table 2-3). The County seat of Walhalla had the largest population gain from 2000 to 2010 among Oconee County municipalities, with an increase of 462 people and a growth rate of 12.2%. Similarly, the City of Seneca added 450 people during the same period for a growth rate of 5.9%. The Town of Salem experienced moderate growth of only nine people (7.1%). However, Census data indicates population declines in the City of Westminster of 325 people (or 11.8%) and the Town of West Union of six people (or 2%) during the decade. 2012-2016 ACS data reveals moderate population changes since 2010 in all of the County's municipalities, ranging from an increase of 126 people in Seneca and 64 in Westminster to only 24 residents in Salem and West Union. Walhalla experienced no increase over the previous six-years.

Table 2-3. Population Change in Oconee County and Municipalities, 2010 to 2016

Jurisdiction	2000 Census	2010 Census	# Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010	2016 ACS	# Change 2010-2016	% Change 2010-2016
Oconee County	66,215	74,273	8,058	12.2%	75,375	1,102	1.5%
Salem	126	135	9	7.1%	149	14	10.4%
Seneca	7,652	8,102	450	5.9%	8,228	126	1.6%
Walhalla	3,801	4,263	462	12.2%	4,263	0	0.0%
Westminster	2,743	2,418	-325	-11.8%	2,482	64	2.6%
West Union	297	291	-6	-2.0%	305	14	4.8%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census and 2012-2016 ACS

As illustrated in Table 2-4, migration has been the primary source of population change in Oconee County since 1990. Net migration increased slightly from 2000 to 2010 over the previous decade, but migration in recent years slowed to an annual average of 426. However, net migration increased to 743 from 2015 to 2016 – a trend that if continued may result in a higher net migration for the decade (Table 2-4).

Total population change is also impacted significantly by the rate of natural increase provided through births and deaths. While births exceeded deaths in Oconee County in the two decades since 1990, that trend reversed since 2010 with deaths outpacing births (Table 2-4). This trend is projected to continue through the end of the decade.

Table 2-4. Components of Population Change in Oconee County

Estimate Timeframes	Total Population Change	Natural Increase			Net Migration	
		Total	Births	Deaths	Total	Average Per Year
1990 to 2000	8,721	1,913	7,629	5,716	6,808	680.8
2000 to 2010	8,058	1,077	8,114	7,037	6,981	698.1
2010 to 2016	2,080	-412	4,916	5,328	2,557	426.2
Annual Est. 2015-2016	611*	-122	782	904	743	---

* Includes a residual that cannot be attributed to any specific demographic component

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS; S.C. Statistical Abstract, 2018

Patterns of population change are illustrated by an analysis of growth by Census tract. Three tracts were added to the County for the 2010 Census, with 2000 Census tracts 304 (304.01 and 304.02), 306 (306.01 and 306.02), and 309 (309.01 and 309.02) each split into two tracts (Map 2-2). Several Oconee County tracts encompass sizable, primarily rural areas, whereas tracts in the Seneca and Walhalla areas are comparatively smaller and more densely populated.

The largest increase in population between 2000 and 2010 occurred in Census tract 306 (2010 tracts 306.01 and 306.02), with a gain of 1,802 persons at a rate of 25.4% (Map 2-4 and Table 2-5). This tract includes the northern area of Seneca and a portion of Lake Keowee. However, the highest rate of increase was 30.7% (1,430 persons) in tract 307.02, located to the southeast of Seneca and bordered by Lake Hartwell and Anderson and Pickens Counties. The population of tract 303, located to the east of Walhalla and including a large portion of Lake Keowee, increased by 22.8% (1,140 persons). Tract 309 (2010 tracts 209.01 and 209.02), encompassing the southernmost area of the County and bordering Lake Hartwell, grew by 1,378 persons (16%).

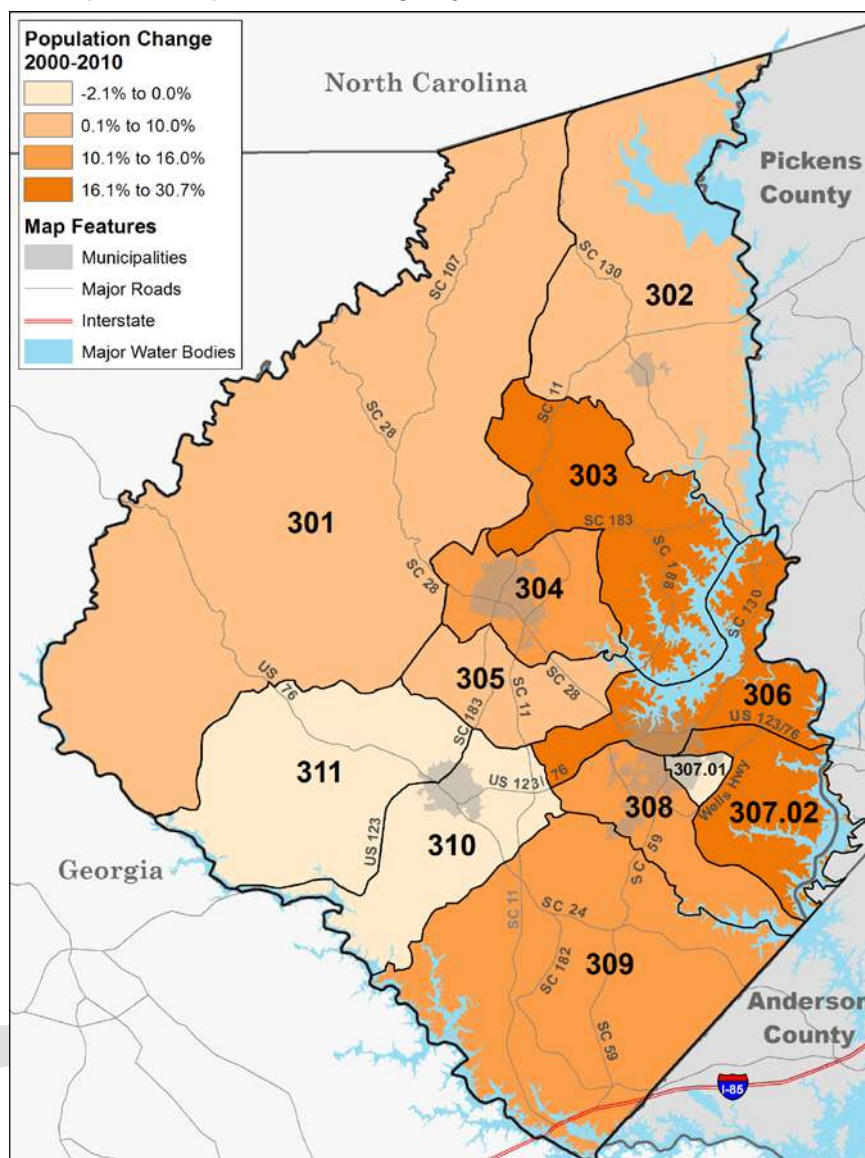
Three tracts experienced small population losses between 2000 and 2010, including rural tracts 310 and 311 at 87 (1.6%) and 81 (2.1%) persons, respectively, and tract 307.01 that includes the southeastern area of Seneca at a loss of 65 persons (1.7%).

Table 2-5. Population Change by Census Tract, 2000, 2010 and 2016

2000 Census Tracts	2000 Census Population	2010 Census Tracts	2010 Census Population	2016 ACS Population	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2016
301	4,046	301	4,352	4,473	7.6%	2.8%
302	5,498	302	5,764	5,529	4.8%	-4.1%
303	5,005	303	6,145	6,825	22.8%	11.1%
304	7,892	304.01	6,989	6,985	11.1%	-0.1%
		304.02	1,779	1,873		5.3%
305	4,101	305	4,375	4,412	6.7%	0.8%
306	7,088	306.01	4,443	4,899	25.4%	10.3%
		306.02	4,447	4,640		4.3%
307.01	3,798	307.01	3,733	3,900	-1.7%	4.5%
307.02	4,656	307.02	6,086	6,520	30.7%	7.1%
308	6,395	308	7,214	6,744	12.8%	-6.5%
309	8,602	309.01	2,454	2,540	16.0%	3.5%
		309.02	7,526	7,372		-2.0%
310	5,354	310	5,267	4,821	-1.6%	-8.5%
311	3,780	311	3,699	3,842	-2.1%	3.9%
Total	66,215	---	74,273	75,375	12.2%	1.5%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010; 2012-2016 ACS

Map 2-2. Population Change by Census Tract 2000 to 2010*



*Based on 2000 Census Tract Boundaries
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010

D. DEMOGRAPHIC OUTLOOK

Oconee County posted an 18.3% growth rate between 1990 and 2000. The County’s rate of population growth slowed to 15.2% from 2000 to 2010. The rate of increase continued to slow from 2010 to 2016 with a six-year growth rate of only 1.5% (1,102 residents).

The potential for future population growth may be fueled by continued single-family residential development in areas along the U.S. Highway 76/123 corridor between Seneca and Pickens County, in the areas surrounding the County’s larger municipalities, in the areas near Interstate 85 that offer an easy commute to the Greenville Metro area, and in remaining undeveloped



infill areas bordering Lake Keowee. Potential multi-family development may also occur in the areas between Seneca and Pickens County. However, many other factors can influence future population changes including interest rates, local tax rates, the economy, the housing market, fuel prices, and an aging population.

South Carolina is projected to gain 400,000 new residents between 2010 and 2020 (*UNC Carolina Population Center, 2015*). The percentage of the aging population with the financial resources to relocate will increase as more of the “baby boomer” generation enters retirement. *Kiplinger* ranked South Carolina twelfth highest among the “Best States to Retire” in 2018, noting the State’s mild weather, below-average living costs, tax exemptions on social security and other retirement income, and low property taxes as influential factors. Given the frequency and severity of natural disasters such as hurricanes affecting popular retirement destinations along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts – coupled with rising property taxes, housing costs, and sharp increases in coastal insurance premiums – many retirees are seeking less expensive, less vulnerable communities further inland that offer many of the same amenities.

The ten-county Upstate Region is widely considered an attractive retiree destination within the State. Oconee County offers convenient regional access through the interstate and intrastate road systems; close proximity to Clemson university; abundant natural resources that include Lakes Jocassee, Hartwell, and Keowee; and a myriad of outdoor recreation opportunities including whitewater rafting, fishing, paddling, horseback riding, camping, and hiking. For many of the same reasons, families and individuals looking for a more rural residential setting, opportunities for an active lifestyle, or alternatives to more densely developed areas find Oconee County to be an attractive option. *SmartAsset*, a financial technology company that provides personal finance advice and decision tools, ranked the City of Seneca among the top 10 places to retire in South Carolina and the 15th best place to retire in the Nation in 2015. The list is based on tax friendliness, medical care, and social life.

The Environics Analytics Company, a leading global data and analytics company, provides annual estimates and five-year projections of population and other demographic data. The Company’s *Claritas Pop-Facts* data uses proprietary methodologies, combined with Census and American Community Survey data, to estimate current population and provide five-year projections for a range of geographies including counties and municipalities. The current edition provides 2018 estimates and 2023 projections for current-year geographies including counties and municipalities. County population projections through 2030 can be made using annual growth trends based on these five-year growth projections.

Claritas Pop-Facts estimates indicate that the population of Oconee County will reach 80,260 by 2023, with a projected increase of 10% to 84,739 residents by 2030 (Table 2-6). Growth is also projected in four of the County’s five municipalities over the 12-year period. The cities of Seneca and Walhalla are projected to grow by 8.2% (691 persons) and 6.5% (286 persons), respectively. Although the Town of West Union is projected to grow by only 26 persons, the rate of growth is similar to Seneca at 8%. Modest growth of less than one percent is anticipated

for the City of Westminster and no change is expected for the population of the Town of Salem in the coming decade

Table 2-6. Population Estimates and Projections

Jurisdiction	2010 ¹ Census	2018 ² EA Estimate	2023 ² EA Projection	2030 Projection	Projected Change 2018 - 2030	
					#	%
Oconee County	74,273	77,061	80,260	84,739	7,678	10.0%
Salem	135	121	121	121	0	0.0%
Seneca	8,102	8,418	8,706	9,109	691	8.2%
Walhalla	4,263	4,423	4,542	4,709	286	6.5%
Westminster	2,418	2,472	2,478	2,486	14	0.6%
West Union	291	329	340	355	26	8.0%

Sources: ¹U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census; ²Environics Analytics (EA) Claritas Pop-Facts, 2018

The future growth rate is also dependent on many factors including household and family size, availability of new housing, in and out-migration, economic activity, and the availability of a range of appropriate housing options. For municipalities, future annexations may also play a role in population growth.

E. URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION

Urban areas are defined by the Census as “densely settled territory” that can “consist of: 1) a cluster of one or more block groups or Census block groups or Census blocks each of which has a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile at the time; and 2) surrounding block groups and Census blocks each of which has a population density of at least 500 people per square mile at the time; and 3) less densely settled blocks that form enclaves or indentations, or are used to connect discontinuous areas with qualifying densities.”

Rural areas are defined as all territory located outside of urban areas. In 2010, the County ranked 20th statewide in the percentage of rural population, with 64.9% of its residents living in rural areas (2010 Census). However, the County is becoming urbanized at a faster pace than urbanization statewide. The County’s urban population grew by 31.6% from 1990 to 2000 and by 35.6% from 2000 to 2010 (Table 2-7). By comparison, the State’s urban population increased by 27.4% in the 1990s and 26.4% from 2000 to 2010.

Table 2-7. Urban and Rural Population in the County and State, 1990, 2000, and 2010

	1990		2000		2010		% change 1990-2000	% change 2000-2010
	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Oconee County	57,494	100.0%	66,215	100.0%	74,273	100.0%	15.2%	12.2%
Urban	14,601	25.4%	19,215	29.0%	26,054	35.1%	31.6%	35.6%
Rural	42,893	74.6%	47,000	71.0%	48,219	64.9%	9.6%	2.6%
South Carolina	3,486,703	100.0%	4,012,012	100.0%	4,625,364	100.0%	15.1%	15.3%
Urban	1,905,378	54.6%	2,427,124	60.5%	3,067,809	66.3%	27.4%	26.4%
Rural	1,581,325	45.4%	1,584,888	39.5%	1,557,555	33.7%	0.2%	-1.7%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010; 2000-2001 S.C. Statistical Abstract

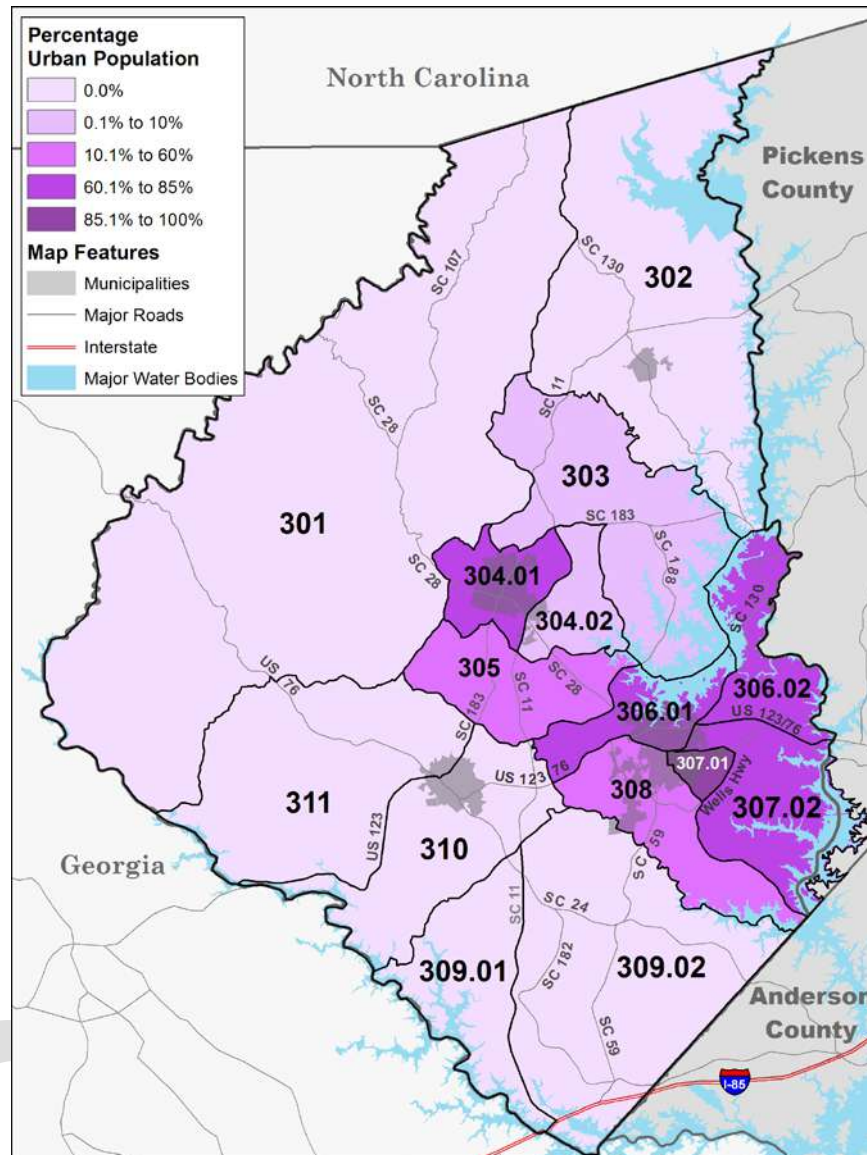
Oconee County's urbanized areas include the cities of Seneca and Walhalla and the surrounding unincorporated areas, including areas along the south shore of Lake Keowee and its southern border with Pickens County. The County's five predominantly urban tracts include the greater Seneca and Walhalla areas, ranging from 100% urban in tract 307.01 that includes a southeastern portion of Seneca to 64.1% in tract 304.01 that includes most of Walhalla. The County's six rural Census tracts are in the northern, western, and southernmost portions of the County. Table 2-8 and Map 2-3 detail urban and rural population data by Census tract.

Table 2-8. Urban and Rural Population by Oconee County Census Tracts, 2010

Census Tract	Total Population	Urban		Rural	
		#	%	#	%
301	4,352	0	0.0%	4,352	100.0%
302	5,764	0	0.0%	5,764	100.0%
303	6,145	250	4.1%	5,895	95.9%
304.01	6,989	4,477	64.1%	2,512	35.9%
304.02	1,779	177	9.9%	1,602	90.1%
305	4,375	1,375	31.4%	3,000	68.6%
306.01	4,443	3,516	79.1%	927	20.9%
306.02	4,447	3,663	82.4%	784	17.6%
307.01	3,733	3,733	100.0%	0	0.0%
307.02	6,086	4,608	75.7%	1,478	24.3%
308	7,214	4,255	59.0%	2,959	41.0%
309.01	2,454	0	0.0%	2,454	100.0%
309.02	7,526	0	0.0%	7,526	100.0%
310	5,267	0	0.0%	5,267	100.0%
311	3,699	0	0.0%	3,699	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Map 2-3. Urban Population by Census Tract, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

E. DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Insight on population composition is essential to the local planning process. Data relating to age, race, gender, educational attainment, income, and household characteristics is requisite for determining the need for, and location of, new services or facilities such as parks, schools, emergency service centers, transit routes, health care facilities, and senior centers.

1. Age and Gender

The State and County populations are continuing to age as baby boomers near and enter their retirement years. The large number of post-World War II births, combined with an overall



increased life expectancy, has contributed to an aging population nationwide. The median age of Oconee County residents increased by 5.4 years from 2000 to 2016, outpacing the statewide age increase of only 3.4 years (Table 2-9). Oconee also posted the highest median age of any Appalachian COG Region county in the 2000 and 2010 Census. The County median jumped by 3.9 years from 2000 to 2010, rising to a high of 44.9 years by 2016.

Table 2-9. Median Age in Years by Decade for the Appalachian COG Region and State 2000, 2010 and 2016

Jurisdiction	2000	2010	2016
Anderson County	37.3	39.7	40.5
Cherokee County	35.3	38.3	39.1
Greenville County	35.5	37.2	37.9
Oconee County	39.5	43.4	44.9
Pickens County	32.7	34.9	35.8
Spartanburg County	36.1	38.0	38.2
South Carolina	35.4	37.9	38.8

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census; 2012-2016 ACS

As detailed in Table 2-10, more than one-fifth (21.5%) of County residents are aged 65 or older – higher than the 15.8% of individuals in this age group statewide. The percentage of younger baby boomers aged 45-to-64 years old residing in the County at 28.3% is also slightly higher than that of South Carolina at 26.6%. This group represents the largest age segment of the County population. Residents aged 25-to-44 comprise the second highest percentage for the County at 21.7%. The percentages of Oconee residents in younger age groups are slightly below the statewide percentages for groups 18 years and younger.

Table 2-10. Population by Age Group for the County and State, 2016

Age Group	Oconee County		South Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	75,375	100.0%	4,834,605	100.0%
Under 5 years	4,016	5.3%	291,499	6.0%
5-17 years	11,340	15.0%	794,280	16.4%
18-24 years	6,054	8.0%	479,402	9.9%
25 - 44 years	16,378	21.7%	1,223,300	25.3%
45 - 64 years	21,346	28.3%	1,284,444	26.6%
65 - 84 years	14,803	19.6%	680,832	14.1%
85+ years	1,438	1.9%	80,848	1.7%
Under 18 years	15,356	20.4%	1,085,779	22.5%
18+ years	60,019	79.6%	3,748,826	77.5%
65+ years	16,241	21.5%	761,680	15.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS



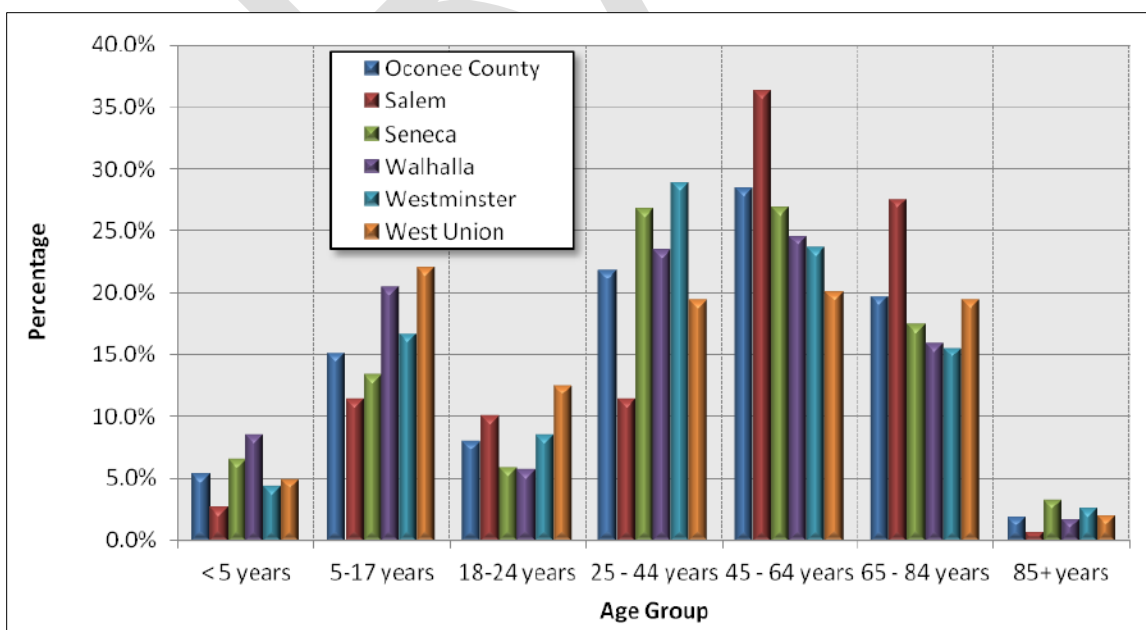
The age distribution of Seneca and Westminster residents are similar to that of the County. In contrast, the age of Walhalla and West Union residents is younger, while that of Salem residents is older (Table 2-11). Nearly 29% of Walhalla residents and 27% of West Union residents are children under the age of 18 years. Well over a quarter (28.2%) of Salem residents are aged 65 or older. Figure 2-2 compares the age distribution of County and municipal residents.

Table 2-11. Population by Age Group for County Municipalities, 2016

Age Group	Salem		Seneca		Walhalla		Westminster		West Union	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	149	100.0%	8,228	100.0%	4,263	100.0%	2,482	100.0%	305	100.0%
< 5 years	4	2.7%	543	6.6%	362	8.5%	107	4.3%	15	4.9%
5-17 years	17	11.4%	1,095	13.3%	869	20.4%	414	16.7%	67	22.0%
18-24 years	15	10.1%	486	5.9%	241	5.7%	210	8.5%	38	12.5%
25 - 44 years	17	11.4%	2,199	26.7%	999	23.4%	715	28.8%	59	19.3%
45 - 64 years	54	36.2%	2,206	26.8%	1,043	24.5%	586	23.6%	61	20.0%
65 - 84 years	41	27.5%	1,429	17.4%	676	15.9%	385	15.5%	59	19.3%
85+ years	1	0.7%	270	3.3%	73	1.7%	65	2.6%	6	2.0%
< 18 years	21	14.1%	1,638	19.9%	1,231	28.9%	521	21.0%	82	26.9%
18+ years	128	85.9%	6,590	80.1%	3,032	71.1%	1,961	79.0%	223	73.1%
65+ years	42	28.2%	1,699	20.6%	749	17.6%	450	18.1%	65	21.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

Figure 2-2. Comparative Age Distribution by Percentage, 2016
Oconee County and Municipalities

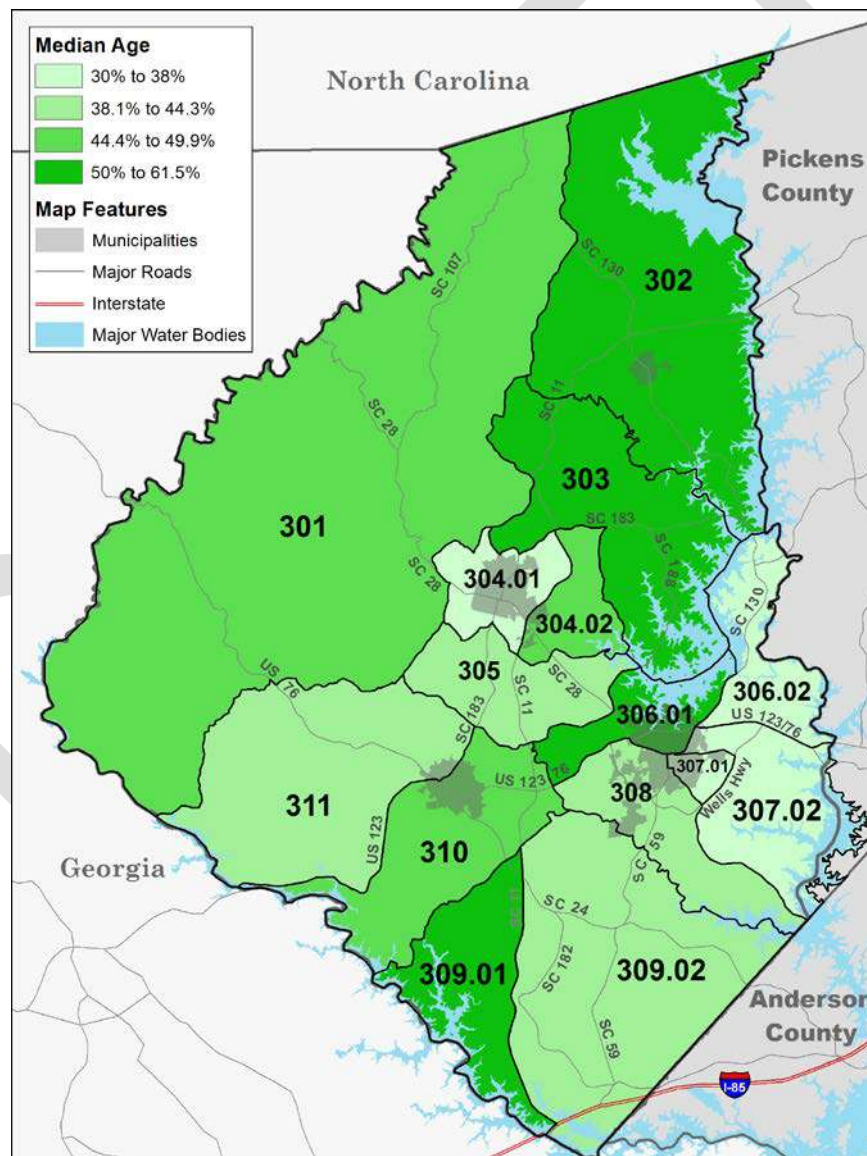


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS



Map 2-4 illustrates age distribution by Census tract for Oconee County. The tract with the youngest population is 307.02 with a median age of only 30 years. This tract is bordered by Lake Hartwell and is near the City of Clemson and Clemson University. Tracts 304.01 (includes Walhalla) and 306.02 (bordered by Lake Keowee and Pickens County near Clemson) also have comparatively lower median ages at 37.1 and 37.7 years, respectively. Two of the County's more rural areas also have the oldest populations. Tract 302 in the northeastern area of the County that includes Lake Jocassee has the highest median age at 61.5 years, followed by a median of 53.5 years in tract 309.01 in southern Oconee County at the Georgia border. Tract 306.01 that includes a portion of the northern area of Seneca and bordered by Lake Keowee, and tract 303 east of Walhalla that includes a portion of Lake Keowee also have older populations with median ages of 50.6 and 50 years, respectively.

Map 2-4. Median Age by Census Tract, 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS



The percentage of female residents in Oconee County mirrors the Nation at 50.8%, but is slightly lower than in the State at 51.4% (Table 2-12). The gender balance decreases dramatically within the 85 and over age group in which nearly two-thirds (63%) are female. Younger mortality rates and war casualties among older men are the leading causes of the disparity between males (46.8%) and females (53.2%) among residents in the age 65 and older category. While males slightly outnumber females in children aged 5 to 17 and young adults aged 18 to 44, females outnumber males by a small percentage in all other groups. Women comprise nearly two-thirds (63%) of residents aged 85 and older.

Table 2-12. Age and Gender, 2016

Age Groups	Total Persons	Male		Female	
		#	%	#	%
Total Population	75,375	37,104	49.2%	38,271	50.8%
Under 5 years	4,016	2,005	49.9%	2,011	50.1%
5 to 17 years	11,340	5,710	50.4%	5,630	49.6%
18 to 44 years	22,432	11,479	51.2%	10,953	48.8%
45 to 64 years	21,346	10,317	48.3%	11,029	51.7%
65 to 84 years	14,803	7,061	47.7%	7,742	52.3%
85+ years	1,438	532	37.0%	906	63.0%
Total under 18 years	15,356	7,715	50.2%	7,641	49.8%
Total 18+ years	60,019	29,389	49.0%	30,630	51.0%
Total 65+ years	16,241	7,593	46.8%	8,648	53.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

The age and gender composition of residents can be a significant factor in local planning. An aging population requires a host of special services such as health care, specialized housing and transportation. Estimates of median age by gender reveal that both males and females in Oconee County are notably older than their counterparts throughout the State and Nation (Table 2-13).

Table 2-13. Median Age by Gender, 2016

Gender	Oconee County	South Carolina	United States
All Persons	44.9 years	38.8 years	37.7 years
Male	43.3 years	37.3 years	36.3 years
Female	46.1 years	40.3 years	39.0 years

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

2. Racial and Ethnic Composition

The racial composition of Oconee County is predominantly White at more than 88%, well above the State at 67.3% and Nation at 73.3% (Table 2-14). The County has a lower percentage of African-American residents at 7.4%, as compared to the percentage statewide at 27.4% and nationwide at 12.6%. The percentage of County residents of other races, including persons of two or more races, is similar to that of the State at 4.4%. The same is true for the percentage of

the County population whose ethnicity is Hispanic at 4.9%, which is slightly lower than the statewide percentage of 5.3%. An individual is considered to be of Latino or Hispanic origin if the person is of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race. Therefore, residents of Hispanic origin are counted within the racial categories of Caucasian, African-American and Other Races as provided in Table 2-14 and are also shown separately as an ethnic subcategory.

Among the County's municipalities, the City of Seneca has the lowest percentage of White residents at 65.4%, as well as the highest percentage of African-American residents at 26.7%. Salem has the highest percentage of Caucasian residents at 97.3%, followed by Westminster at 89.4% and Walhalla at 81.7%. West Union has the highest percentage of residents of other races at 26.2% (80 persons). Walhalla has the largest Hispanic population at 1,138 persons, comprising more than one-fourth of the City's population. However the Hispanic population of West Union comprises the largest percentage among the five municipalities at 28.2%.

Table 2-14. Racial Composition, Oconee County and Municipalities, 2016

Jurisdiction	Total	White		African-American		Other Races ¹		Hispanic ²	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Oconee County	75,375	66,486	88.2%	5,549	7.4%	3,340	4.4%	3,700	4.9%
Salem	149	145	97.3%	0	0.0%	4	2.7%	0	0.0%
Seneca	8,228	5,384	65.4%	2,198	26.7%	646	7.9%	506	6.1%
Walhalla	4,263	3,483	81.7%	373	8.7%	407	9.5%	1,138	26.7%
Westminster	2,482	2,219	89.4%	219	8.8%	44	1.8%	17	0.7%
West Union	305	218	71.5%	7	2.3%	80	26.2%	86	28.2%
South Carolina	4,834,605	3,252,252	67.3%	1,322,368	27.4%	259,985	5.4%	258,361	5.3%
United States	318,558,162	233,657,078	73.3%	40,241,818	12.6%	44,659,266	14.0%	55,199,107	17.3%

¹Other races also includes persons of two or more races

²Hispanic is an ethnic category in the Census, therefore persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

Oconee County has experienced racial and ethnic composition changes in recent years. The County's White population increased by 10.4% in the 2000s. During the same decade, the number of African-American residents increased by only 1.1% (63 persons). There were substantial increases among persons of "other races" and persons of "two or more races" at 110.8% (1,213 persons) and 115.6% (630 persons), respectively. Table 2-15 provides racial composition data for Oconee County for 2000, 2010 and 2016.

In Oconee County, 4.9% of the population (3,700 persons) is Hispanic, more than double the 1,562 persons of Hispanic origin (2.4%) in 2000. From 2000 to 2010, the Hispanic residents in the County increased by 114.4%, or 1,787 residents. The County ranks 18th highest statewide in the percentage of Hispanic population and 17th in the number of Hispanic residents (2012-2016 ACS). By comparison, South Carolina's Hispanic population statewide grew by nearly 148% from 2000 to 2010, while increase nationwide was much less at only 43%. Research by the Sisters of Charity Foundation indicates that there are a number of factors that draw Hispanic immigrants to South Carolina including opportunities for employment, low cost of living, a



relatively safe place to live, desire to reunite with family members already in the area, access to quality education and healthcare for their children, and desire to provide for family members in their country of origin (*Latino Immigrant Families in South Carolina, 2013*).

The County's Hispanic community continues to grow, adding 351 persons since 2010, for a growth rate of 10.5% during the 6-year period. This is slightly higher than Hispanic population growth statewide at 9.6% and nationwide at 9.4%. In addition to being predominantly Mexican (71.4%), ACS data reveals that the County's Hispanic population is evenly divided between females and males, with a median age of 25.3 years. More than one-fourth of the County's Hispanic residents (637 persons) speak little-to-no English and nearly one-half (870 persons) lack a high school education. Over 40% of Hispanics in Oconee County (1,485 persons) live in poverty.

Table 2-15. Oconee County Racial Composition, 2000, 2010 and 2016

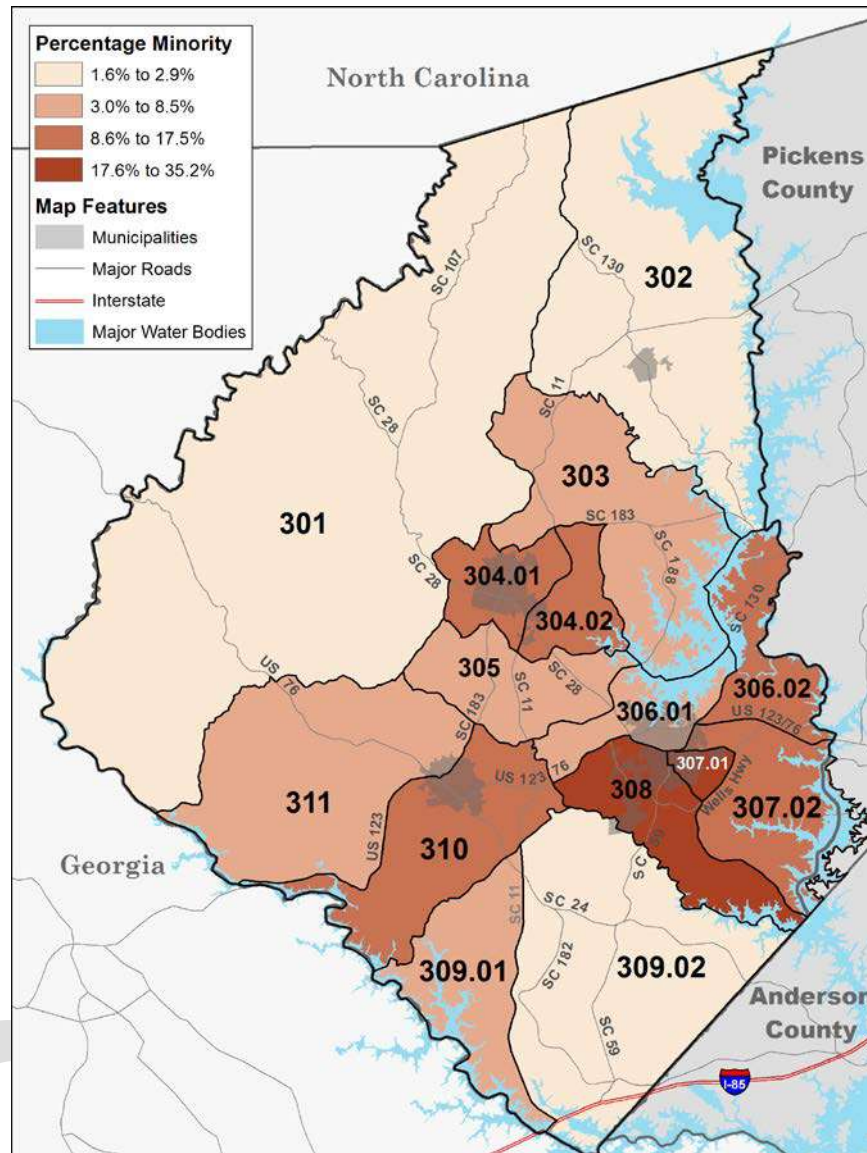
Race/Ethnicity	2000 Census		2010 Census		2016 ACS		Change 2000-2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	66,215	99.2%	74,273	98.4%	75,375	97.9%	8,058	12.2%
White	59,025	89.1%	65,177	87.8%	66,486	88.2%	6,152	10.4%
African-American	5,550	8.4%	5,613	7.6%	5,549	7.4%	63	1.1%
Other Races	1,095	1.7%	2,308	3.1%	1,781	2.4%	1,213	110.8%
Two or more Races	545	0.8%	1,175	1.6%	1,559	2.1%	630	115.6%
Hispanic*	1,562	2.4%	3,349	4.5%	3,700	4.9%	1,787	114.4%

*Hispanic is an ethnic category in the Census, therefore persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census; 2012-2016 ACS

Census tract 307.01 in the southeastern portion of Seneca has the highest percentage of minority (non-White) residents at 35.2%, followed by the adjacent tract 308 with a minority population of 29.7% (Map 2-5). The population of tracts 301 in the western area of the County, 309.02 in the southern area of the County at its border with Anderson County and Georgia, and 302 in the northeastern section of County at the Pickens County border, have the lowest percentages of minority residents at 1.6%, 1.8%, and 2.9%, respectively.

Map 2-5. Minority Population by Census Tract, 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

More than 61% of Oconee residents are life-long South Carolinians, similar to the 60.5% of residents statewide born in the Palmetto State (Table 2-16). Over one-third of County residents (37.6%) were born in a state other than South Carolina, slightly lower than the 38.4% of residents statewide who are not native South Carolinians. Nearly 5% of South Carolina residents were born in another country, while only 3.7% (2,823) of Oconee County residents are foreign born.



Table 2-16. Place of Birth, 2000 and 2016

Place of Birth	Oconee County				South Carolina			
	2000		2016		2000		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	66,215	100.0%	75,375	100.0%	4,012,012	100.0%	4,834,605	100.0%
United States Native	64,619	97.6%	72,552	96.3%	3,896,034	97.1%	4,603,889	95.2%
<i>South Carolina</i>	43,456	67.2%	44,484	61.3%	2,568,954	65.9%	2,784,196	60.5%
<i>Different State</i>	20,863	32.3%	27,308	37.6%	1,293,518	33.2%	1,767,132	38.4%
<i>Outside of US*</i>	300	0.5%	760	1.0%	33,562	0.9%	52,561	1.1%
Foreign Born	1,596	2.4%	2,823	3.7%	115,978	2.9%	230,716	4.8%

*Born outside of the United States, but entitled to U.S. citizenship

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2012-2016 ACS

Lack of English proficiency can pose significant language barriers for residents seeking housing, education, employment, medical care, and financial and legal services. However, fewer than 4,000 (5.5%) of the County's population over the age of five speaks a language other than English at home. This is lower than the statewide percentage of 6.9% (Table 2-17). While most people who speak another language at home also speak English, many are not fluent. More than two-thirds (70.4%) of County residents who speak another language at home speak Spanish, and of those Spanish-speakers, less than half (42.5%) speak English less than "very well."

Table 2-17. Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English, 2016

Language Spoken and Ability to Speak English	Oconee County		South Carolina	
	#	%	#	%
Total Population 5 Years and Over	71,359	100.0%	4,543,106	100.0%
Speaks English Only at Home	67,460	94.5%	4,230,746	93.1%
Speaks Language other than English at Home	3,899	5.5%	312,360	6.9%
Speaks Spanish	2,743	70.4%	200,761	64.3%
<i>Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"</i>	1,167	42.5%	89,325	44.5%
Speaks Other Indo-European Language	655	16.8%	58,669	18.8%
<i>Speak English Less Than "Very Well"</i>	113	17.3%	14,712	100.0%
Other Languages	266	6.8%	41,081	13.2%
<i>Speak English Less Than "Very Well"</i>	163	61.3%	18,453	44.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

3. Household and Family Characteristics

Household and family status are key indicators of social and economic conditions within the community. Households include all related and unrelated persons who occupy a housing unit. There are 30,867 households in Oconee County, with an average household size of 2.42 persons. This is slightly lower than the statewide average household size of 2.55 persons. More than two-thirds (67.8%) of County households consist of a family – defined as two or more persons living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. The

percentage of family households countywide is similar to the percentage statewide at 66.4%. There are 20,932 families in the County, with an average family size of 2.89 – lower than the State average of 3.13 persons per family. Nearly three-fourths (74.4%) of County family households consist of a married couple and 28% of these families include children younger than 18 years. Females with no husband present comprise 17.8% of all family households (3,724 households) and almost half of these include a child under 18 years of age.

More than a quarter (25.8%) of all County households include a child under the age of 18 and over a third (36.2%) include at least one person aged 65 or older (Table 2-18). There are 9,935 non-family households, representing 32.2% of all Oconee County households. Most of the County's non-family households (86.9%) consist of an individual living alone, with 45.3% of these single-person householders aged 65 years or older.

Table 2-18. Household Type and Size, 2016

Households (HH) by Type	Oconee County		South Carolina	
	#	% all HH	#	% all HH
Total households	30,867	100.0%	1,839,041	100.0%
Family households (families) - Total	20,932	67.8%	1,220,791	66.4%
<i>With own children under 18 yrs</i>	6,963	33.3%	485,629	39.8%
Married-couple family	15,572	74.4%	863,581	70.7%
<i>With own children under 18 yrs</i>	4,378	28.1%	304,068	35.2%
Female householder, no husband present	3,724	17.8%	273,143	22.4%
<i>With own children under 18 yrs</i>	1,831	49.2%	144,710	53.0%
Non-family households - Total	9,935	32.2%	618,250	33.6%
Householder living alone	8,634	86.9%	520,544	84.2%
<i>Householder 65 years and over</i>	3,914	45.3%	192,623	37.0%
Households with children under 18 yrs	7,956	25.8%	562,826	30.6%
Households with persons 65+ yrs	11,182	36.2%	532,420	29.0%
Average household size (persons)	2.42		2.55	
Average family size (persons)	2.89		3.13	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

4. Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is a key indicator of current and future earnings potential. As shown in Table 2-19, educational levels measurably improved in Oconee County between 2000 and 2016. The percentage of County residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher rose from 18.2% to 23.5%. Likewise, the percentage of residents with some college, including those with an associate degree, increased from 22.5% to 28.8%. The percentage of County residents who lack a high school education dropped by almost 10% from 2000 to 2016.

Nearly 84% of County residents aged 25 and older have completed high school. This percentage is slightly lower than the 86% of residents statewide who have earned a high school diploma. Slightly over 16% of County residents did not graduate from high school, with only 6.2% of

these adults having less than a 9th grade education. These percentages reflect the statewide trend.

Oconee County is similar to the State in the percentage of residents with postsecondary degrees, with 8.9% of County residents holding an associate degree, 13.9% a baccalaureate degree, and 9.6% a graduate or professional degree. Statewide, 9.1% of South Carolinians have earned an associate degree, 16.9% a baccalaureate degree, and 9.6% a graduate or professional degree.

Table 2-19. Educational Attainment, 2000 and 2016

Educational Attainment	Oconee County				South Carolina			
	2000		2016		2000		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Population 25 Years and Over	45,896	100.0%	53,965	100.0%	2,596,010	100.0%	3,269,424	100.0%
Less Than 9th Grade	5,118	11.2%	3,329	6.2%	215,776	8.3%	153,262	4.7%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	6,877	15.0%	5,468	10.1%	398,503	15.4%	302,825	9.3%
High School Graduate*	15,237	33.2%	16,963	31.4%	778,054	30.0%	963,022	29.5%
Some College, No Degree	7,420	16.2%	10,698	19.8%	500,194	19.3%	686,140	21.0%
Associate Degree	2,913	6.3%	4,817	8.9%	173,428	6.7%	299,118	9.1%
Bachelor's Degree	5,060	11.0%	7,486	13.9%	351,526	13.5%	551,968	16.9%
Graduate/Professional Degree	3,271	7.1%	5,204	9.6%	178,529	6.9%	313,089	9.6%

*Includes equivalency

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2012-2016 ACS

5. Income and Poverty

Household and family incomes in Oconee County are lower than household incomes statewide. Median household income in the County is \$41,818, more than \$5,000 lower than the State median of \$46,898 (Table 2-20). Similarly, the County's median family income at \$52,310 is \$5,848 lower than the median family income for all South Carolinians.

Table 2-20. Median Household and Family Income, 2016

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income	Median Family Income
Oconee County	\$41,818	\$52,310
Salem	\$40,833	\$42,143
Seneca	\$35,236	\$51,904
Walhalla	\$30,973	\$28,203
Westminster	\$31,510	\$42,917
West Union	\$28,676	\$29,861
South Carolina	\$46,898	\$58,158

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

Median household income among the County's municipalities ranges from a high of \$40,833 in Salem to a low of \$28,676 in West Union. Seneca has the highest median family income at \$51,904, while Walhalla posted the lowest median family income among the municipalities at \$28,861.

Per capita income for Oconee County residents at \$25,944 is slightly higher than that of South Carolina at \$25,521, but trails the national income of \$29,829 (Table 2-21). Income growth for local residents has exceeded the State, with a 36.8% increase in per capita personal income in Oconee County from 1999 to 2016. This rate is higher than State rate of 35.8%, but behind the national growth rate of 38.2%.

Table 2-21. Per Capita Income, 1999 and 2016

Jurisdiction	1999	2016	% Change 1999-2016
Oconee County	\$ 18,965	\$ 25,944	36.8%
South Carolina	\$ 18,795	\$ 25,521	35.8%
United States	\$ 21,587	\$ 29,829	38.2%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2012-2016 ACS

Table 2-22 details the per capita income for racial and ethnic groups in Oconee County. The County ranked 10th statewide in per capita income in 2016. While the per capita income for the County's African-American residents at \$16,629 is close to the income for African-American residents statewide, it is \$12,923 lower than the per capita income for the County's Caucasian residents. Countywide per capita income for Caucasians at \$25,944 is slightly higher than for Caucasians throughout the State at \$25,521. Per capita income among the County's Hispanic residents at \$12,047 is lower than that of Hispanics statewide at \$15,236.

Table 2-22. Per Capita Income by Race, 2016

Jurisdiction	All Persons	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic
Oconee County	\$ 25,944	\$ 27,361	\$ 16,629	\$ 12,047
Salem	\$ 20,191	\$ 20,748	N/A*	N/A*
Seneca	\$ 23,692	\$ 28,849	\$ 15,180	\$ 12,839
Walhalla	\$ 15,895	\$ 17,026	\$ 12,217	\$ 6,856
Westminster	\$ 18,406	\$ 19,139	\$ 12,272	N/A*
West Union	\$ 15,147	\$ 18,013	\$ 12,457	\$ 9,222
South Carolina	\$ 25,521	\$ 29,767	\$ 16,844	\$ 15,236

*Per Capita Income not available

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

Within Oconee County municipalities, the City of Seneca has the highest per capita income at \$23,692. West Union has the lowest per capita income at \$15,147. Per capita income among all racial and ethnic groups is highest in Seneca. For Caucasians, per capita income was highest in Seneca at \$28,849 and lowest in Walhalla at \$17,026. The highest per capita income for African-

Americans is in Seneca at \$15,180, while African-American per capita income was lower in Walhalla, Westminster, and West Union. The lowest per capita income for Hispanic residents in Walhalla was only \$6,856.

An examination of household income by age reveals that the age group that includes Oconee County's youngest baby-boomers (residents aged 45-to-64) have the County's highest median household income at \$49,191. Incomes are also higher for persons aged 25-to-44 at \$41,790. The lowest median household income is found among the County's youngest residents (aged 25 years and younger) at \$24,333, followed by the County's older residents (aged 65 and older) at \$37,345.

County income levels are lower within all age groups than for residents of South Carolina, with the exception of residents under 25 years of age (Table 2-23). However, the median household income for County residents in this age group is only \$113 higher than the median household income for that age group statewide.

Table 2-23. Median Household Income by Age of Householder, 2016

Age of Householder	Oconee County	South Carolina
All Householders	\$ 41,818	\$ 46,898
15 to 25 years	\$ 24,333	\$ 24,220
25 to 44 years	\$ 41,790	\$ 50,671
45 to 64 years	\$ 49,191	\$ 54,421
65 years and over	\$ 37,345	\$ 37,795

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

As listed in Table 2-24 and illustrated in Map 2-6, Tract 303 (north and east of Walhalla and bordering Lake Keowee), has the highest median household income in the County at \$60,632. Median household income was also higher at \$56,938 in adjacent tract 306.01 (northern area of Seneca and southern Lake Keowee) and tract 302 (northeastern Oconee County) at \$53,939. Tract 307.01 that covers the southeastern portion of Seneca has the lowest median income at \$30,919. Median household income was also lower at \$31,092 in tract 311 (southwestern Oconee County with a portion of Westminster) and in tract 304.01 that includes most of Walhalla at \$31,572.

Per capita income was highest in tract 306.02 (bordered by Lake Keowee and Pickens County near Clemson) at \$42,245, followed by a per capita income of \$41,664 in tract 302 (northern Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee). Rural tract 311 and tract 307.01 that includes a southern portion of Seneca had the lowest per capita incomes at only \$16,440 and \$16,577, respectively.

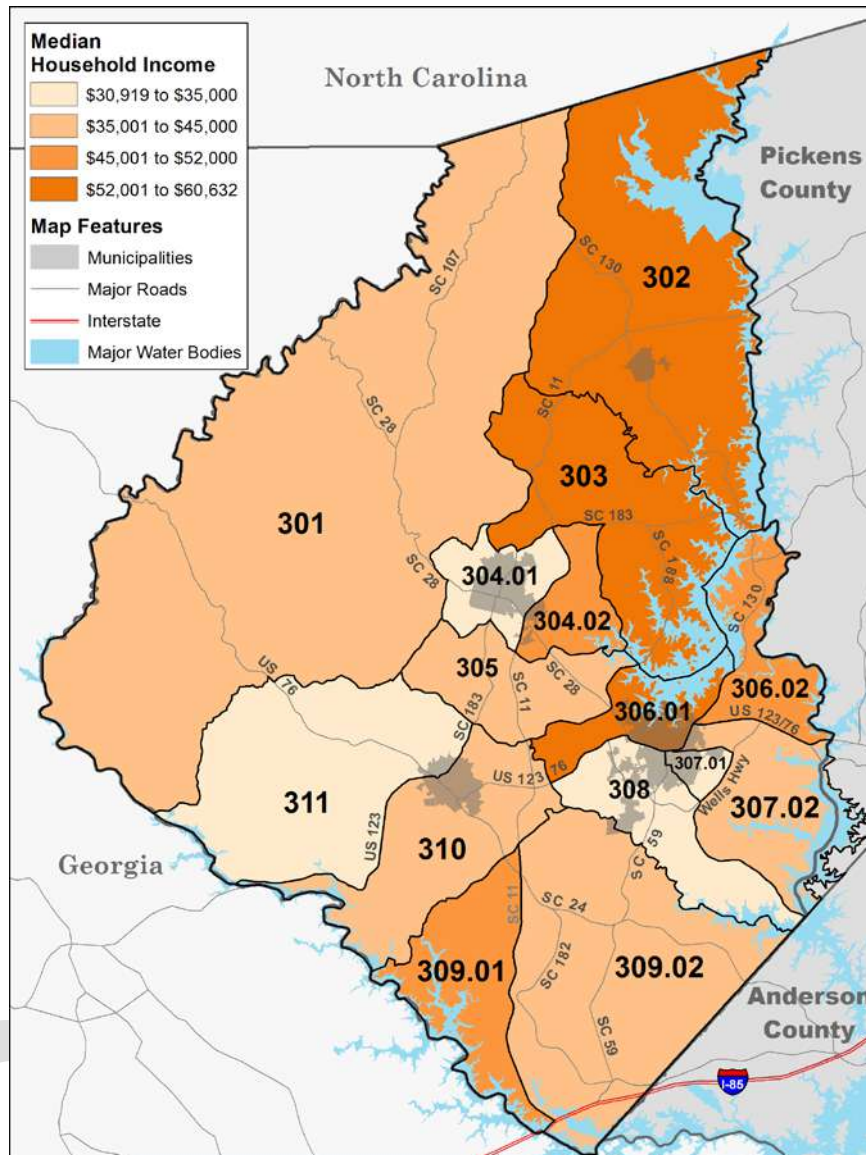
Table 2-24. Oconee County Income by Census Tract, 2016

Census Tract	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
301	\$ 38,182	\$ 20,343
302	\$ 53,939	\$ 41,664
303	\$ 60,632	\$ 32,532
304.01	\$ 31,572	\$ 18,106
304.02	\$ 48,393	\$ 23,809
305	\$ 36,541	\$ 22,863
306.01	\$ 56,938	\$ 33,277
306.02	\$ 51,042	\$ 42,245
307.01	\$ 30,919	\$ 16,577
307.02	\$ 43,364	\$ 21,061
308	\$ 33,765	\$ 23,221
309.01	\$ 51,771	\$ 32,762
309.02	\$ 41,320	\$ 23,673
310	\$ 39,545	\$ 21,094
311	\$ 31,092	\$ 16,440

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2016 ACS



Map 2-6. Median Household Income by Census Tract, 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

Poverty is defined as having insufficient resources to meet basic living expenses, including the costs of food, shelter, clothing, transportation and medical expenses. Among Oconee County households, 16.4% (5,076 households) live in poverty (Table 2-25). More than half (53.3%) of these households in poverty are families. Approximately one-third (38.7%) of families living in poverty are married couples and 19.3% include related children under 18 years old. Over half (52.5%) of the families living in poverty are headed by a female with no husband present, with the majority of these families (1,154 families) including children less than 18 years of age.

Non-family households comprise 46.7% of the County's households in poverty. Females living alone comprise more than 60% of non-family households in the County living in poverty. Nearly



one-fourth (23.5%) of Oconee's non-family households living in poverty include a single female aged 65 or older, while only 6.7% include a single male 65 years of age or older.

Table 2-25. Poverty Status by Household Type, 2016

Family Type	Oconee County		South Carolina	
	#	%	#	%
Total Households	30,867	100.0%	1,839,041	100.0%
Households Living Below Poverty Level	5,076	16.4%	299,882	16.3%
Family Households Living Below Poverty Level	2,705	53.3%	156,452	52.2%
Married Couple Family	1,046	38.7%	48,063	30.7%
<i>With Related Children under 18 yrs</i>	521	19.3%	27,448	17.5%
Female Householder, no Husband Present	1,419	52.5%	92,732	59.3%
<i>With Related Children under 18 yrs</i>	1,154	42.7%	79,043	50.5%
Nonfamily Households Living Below Poverty Level	2,371	46.7%	143,430	47.8%
Female Householder Alone	1,426	60.1%	85,976	59.9%
<i>65 Years and over</i>	557	23.5%	29,933	20.9%
Male Householder Alone	945	39.9%	57,454	40.1%
<i>65 Years and over</i>	160	6.7%	9,950	6.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

Nearly 19% of Oconee County residents live in poverty. This is higher than the State and national rates of 17.2% and 15.1%, respectively (Table 2-26). The highest percentage of County residents living in poverty includes persons between 18 and 44 years of age at 42.1%. Well over one-fourth (29.1%) of Oconee County residents living in poverty are children under the age of 17. Seniors aged 65 and older living in poverty comprise 9.8% of the County population, or 1,351 senior residents.

Table 2-26. Poverty Status by Age, 2016

	Oconee County		South Carolina		United States	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Persons*	74,704	---	4,693,266	---	310,629,645	---
Persons in Poverty	13,806	18.5%	806,422	17.2%	46,932,225	15.1%
Under 5 years	1,372	9.9%	83,749	10.4%	4,614,933	9.8%
5 to 17 years	2,653	19.2%	186,356	23.1%	10,720,850	22.8%
18 to 44 years	5,814	42.1%	302,059	37.5%	18,401,450	39.2%
45 to 64	2,616	18.9%	163,363	20.3%	8,999,565	19.2%
65 to 74 years	700	5.1%	39,087	4.8%	2,210,809	4.7%
75 years and over	651	4.7%	31,808	3.9%	1,984,618	4.2%

*Persons for whom poverty is determined

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

The percentages of the County's White and African-American residents living in poverty are similar at 18% and 18.7%, respectively (Table 2-27). While the percentage of African-American residents living in poverty is lower than the percentages statewide and nationwide, the

percentages of White residents and residents of other races in poverty are higher. Significantly higher poverty rates are found among County residents of other races (27.3%) and of two or more races (26.5%). Most significant is the poverty rate among Hispanic residents in the County at more than 40%.

Table 2-27. Persons with Income below Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, 2016

Race	Oconee County			South Carolina			United States		
	Total	In Poverty		Total	In Poverty		Total	In Poverty	
		#	%		#	%		#	%
Total All Persons ¹	74,704	13,806	18.5%	4,693,266	806,422	17.2%	310,629,645	46,932,225	15.1%
White	65,975	11,903	18.0%	3,172,266	393,568	12.4%	228,440,346	28,424,685	12.4%
African-American	5,418	1,012	18.7%	1,271,610	350,792	27.6%	38,562,630	10,111,248	26.2%
Other Races	1,774	484	27.3%	154,919	36,600	23.6%	34,183,313	6,576,421	19.2%
2 or more Races	1,537	407	26.5%	94,471	25,462	27.0%	9,443,356	1,819,871	19.3%
Hispanic ²	3,688	1,485	40.3%	248,459	72,146	29.0%	54,085,091	12,653,597	23.4%

¹Population for whom poverty is determined

²Hispanic is an ethnic category in the Census, therefore persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS

F. SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Special populations can experience a greater need for community services than the public as a whole. Data reveals that special populations in Oconee County include residents with low incomes, the elderly, and single-parent families. Consideration of these residents and their needs should be addressed through each Plan element.

1. Elderly

The needs of an aging population can increase demand for services such as adult day care, home meal delivery, in-home respite services, home repair and modification, transportation services, long-term care, and focused recreational and fitness programs. Oconee County has the highest percentage of residents 65 years and older among the six Appalachian Region counties at 21.5% (ACS, 2016). The percentage of older female residents in the County is even higher at 22.6%. Nearly 10%, or 1,351 of these Oconee County seniors, live in poverty. The poverty rate for senior females is more than double that of males. More than one-third (35%) of households with one or more people aged 65 and older are comprised of elderly persons living alone. One of every three County seniors (6,203 persons) has a disability and of these, 28.8% (1,788 persons) has cognitive difficulty. Over 2,330 elderly persons in the County have difficulty living independently.

2. Veterans

South Carolina's large veteran population often has special needs in the areas of long-term care, employment assistance, homelessness, and medical care. The 2012-2016 ACS reported that there were 6,508 veterans living in Oconee County. Nearly one fourth (24.2%) of the County's senior residents (aged 65 and older) and 21.3% of males are veterans. Veterans comprise 10.8% of the County population. Area veterans are attracted to the Upstate Region by the factors that appeal to other retirees – temperate weather, recreation, cultural and natural amenities, and lower housing prices.

More than 60% of living veterans in Oconee County (3,933 veterans) are aged 65 years or older (ACS, 2016). Over one-third of all Oconee County veterans (2,197 veterans) are disabled. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that 12.3% of South Carolina's homeless population are veterans, with many more living in poverty and at risk of becoming homeless. These conditions generate a growing need for a full spectrum of home and community-based support programs. The number and percentage of disabled veterans continues to climb as aging veterans of the baby boom era develop disabilities and younger service personnel suffer disabling injuries while serving in recent conflicts.

3. Hispanic Population

According to the 2012-2016 ACS, 17.3% of the population of the United States is Hispanic or Latino as compared to 12.5% in 2000. In South Carolina, the Hispanic population has more than doubled from 2.4% in 2000 to 5.3% of the State's total population. These numbers do not include an estimated 87,000 undocumented immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2018).

In Oconee County, 4.9% of the population (3,700 persons) is Hispanic, more than double the 1,562 persons of Hispanic origin (2.4%) in 2000. The County ranks 18th highest statewide in the percentage of Hispanic population and 17th in the number of Hispanic residents. In addition to being predominantly Mexican (71.4%), ACS data reveals that the County's Hispanic population is evenly divided between females and males, with a median age of 25.3 years. Over 40% of Hispanics in Oconee County (1,485 persons) live in poverty. Nearly one-fifth of the County's Hispanic residents (637 persons) speak little-to-no English and nearly one-fourth (870 persons) lack a high school education. Communication is a major issue of concern for many Hispanic residents, who often find it difficult to find and obtain government services, health care, and other essential services because they do not understand materials that are provided only in English and cannot communicate effectively with providers in person or online if only English is spoken.

The continued growth of the County's Hispanic population will create new service demands on local service providers, particularly the School District and area health care providers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that while Hispanics in the United States have slightly lower rates of heart disease and cancer than Caucasians, they have 24% more poorly controlled high blood pressure, 23% more obesity, are 28% less likely to be

screened for colorectal cancer, and are 50% more likely to die from diabetes or liver disease (CDC, 2015). Hispanics are more likely to lack health insurance than any other racial or ethnic group, with one in four uninsured (National Center for Health Statistics, 2015). Language barriers can compound these factors. The local hospital emergency room is a common point for medical treatment for immigrant residents who often lack a primary care physician (Hispanic Access Foundation, 2016).

4. Homeless Population

The homeless population encompasses a broad range of individuals and families with special needs. National research indicates that more than one third (37%) are in families and nearly two-thirds (63%) are individuals (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). More than 8% of the Nation's homeless population are veterans. Homelessness is a significant risk factor for a broad range of health and social problems. Alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness are common problems among the adult homeless population. Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness, with 15.8% of the Nation's homeless adults identified as survivors of domestic violence (HUD Continuum of Care Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Report, 2017). While families who are doubling up (staying) with friends or relatives because they have no other housing options are not included in the HUD definition of homeless individuals and families, they are often at risk of losing that shelter and becoming homeless. Doubled-up friends or families often impose space and financial burdens on the host family and the guests are often asked to leave after a short time. In smaller and more rural communities with no public shelters, doubling up is often the stop-gap measure before sleeping on the streets.

Oconee County is located within the service and planning area of the Upstate Consortium Continuum of Care (Upstate CoC) that encompasses a 13-county region that spans Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Saluda, Spartanburg and Union Counties. The Upstate Continuum consists of more than 80 partner agencies that provide services to the homeless or near homeless. Oconee County is also a member of the local Tri-County Chapter that includes Anderson and Pickens Counties.

Although methodologies exist to count the homeless who take advantage of services offered by various agencies, it is a challenge to determine the true number of homeless within the County. The most accurate assessment of the homeless population at the county, state and national levels is provided through bi-annual *point-in-time* (PIT) counts. In an effort to standardize homeless counts nationwide, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development mandated that an unduplicated count of homeless persons and families be conducted in each state every two years. Point-in-time counts are one-night counts of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations.

United Housing Connections provides the organization and planning for recent point-in-time counts in the Upstate CoC region. The homeless count includes those in shelters, in transitional

housing, living on the street, or in other locations not meant for human habitation. The most recent point-in-time count was conducted in January 2018. On that date, 54 individuals were counted as homeless in Oconee County (*S.C. Point in Time Count Report, 2018*). Of these individuals, 16 were unsheltered and 38 were housed in shelters or temporary housing. Included in the count were three veterans and nine chronically homeless persons. This is a decrease from the 2017 PIT count for Oconee County that reported a total of 63 homeless individuals, of which 22 were unsheltered and 41 were sheltered.

Oconee County has a number of precariously housed families and individuals who are at risk for homelessness based on cost-burden, overcrowding, and income eligibility for the federal school lunch program. Residents with low and moderate incomes can have difficulty affording adequate and safe housing in Oconee County. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines low and moderate income (LMI) households as those households with incomes below 80% of median family income (MFI). More than 40% of all Oconee County households are considered to be LMI. More than one-fourth (25.7%) of all households in Oconee County (7,840 households) are cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income for housing costs (*U.S. HUD CHAS Data, 2018*). At particular risk for homelessness are households that spend more than half of their income on housing and related expenses. Housing costs exceed more than half (50%) of household income for 2,020 homeowners in Oconee County, or 8.9% of all owner-occupied units. Among renter households, 22.9%, or 1,815 households, pay more than 50% of their monthly income in housing costs. These households are considered at risk for homelessness, sometimes spending so much for housing that other life necessities such as medical care and food must be deferred.

Housing overcrowding results from doubling up with family and friends is often the last resort to ending up on the streets. Housing units are considered to be overcrowded when there are 1.01 or more household members per room, including baths and kitchens. In Oconee County, 627 housing units are overcrowded based on this definition (*2012-2016 ACS*).

Free and reduced lunch data for Oconee County schools also indicates a significant number of low-income households. To be eligible for the school lunch program, families must meet annual criteria based on household size and income. Under the guidelines for the 2018-2019 school year, a family of four making \$46,435 (\$893 per week) or less would be eligible for reduced price meals and the same family making \$32,630 (\$628 per week) or less would be eligible for free meals (*U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2018*). Children who are members of households that are eligible to receive Food Stamps or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) are automatically eligible for free meals. More than half (51.2%) of students countywide, or 5,202 students in grades K-5 through 12, meet federal income eligibility limits for free or reduced lunch (*Oconee County School District, 2018*).