



Oconee by Choice Vision 2008-2028 Plan DRAFT for Citizen Review January 2008

Goal Areas

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A Planned Choice – The Choice of a Planned Oconee

Oconee chooses smart growth and increased economic vitality with a plan that protects what is precious—a way of life, the bountiful resources of nature, and towns and a countryside full of inviting warmth. Oconee plans for a larger vision, one that stays true to the best of Oconee, one that responds to the character and economic desires of the county.

By 2028 Oconee County will:

- P1 Develop a plan through public and private sectors to establish through ordinances, zoning, and managed growth an appropriate balance between individual property rights and a community's choice to achieve an ordered and harmonious sense of itself.
- P2 Manage growth by developing a comprehensive future land use map to promote thoughtful zoning for industrial, agricultural, commercial, community, and residential housing development and to establish setbacks, height restrictions, and zoning so as to promote smart business expansion and protection of natural resources.
- P3 Preserve and protect lakes, mountains, and natural beauty; preserve natural environment with ordered growth, specifically providing buffers around lakes and natural areas.

- P4 Encourage smart growth, conservation measures, green cities planned with pedestrian-friendly spaces, and open green areas and a balanced village-style development with a certain percentage for development and a generous percentage for green space.
- P5 Revitalize downtowns by combining historic preservation with economic rejuvenation, and government operations to develop attractive city centers, complete with programs for the promotion as destinations for shopping, outings, and tourism.
- P6 Plan growth for environmentally sound infrastructure—roads and utilities—by collaborating among cities and the county in creating a master infrastructure plan that is prioritized and phased in; and provide infrastructure to areas where growth is desirable, with the I-85 corridor as a priority.
- P7 Reduce the number of billboards and establish a countywide signage ordinance.
- P8 Discourage malls and franchise stores from locating in the downtown areas.
- P9 Safeguard a healthy water supply by building environmentally sound infrastructure, by providing ample buffers around water sources, by restricting water diversion to outside areas, and by managing sewage and stormwater runoff.
- P10 Manage roadsides for neatness and address property with pronounced litter and clutter.
- P11 Create wildlife sanctuaries and enhance natural areas as a part of managed growth.
- P12 Inform of existing, and create additional, incentives for land owners to preserve and create natural areas.
- P13 Employ impact fees for planned growth.
- P14 Manage sprawl along Highway 123 and retain the small town feel.
- P15 Encourage compact, aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian-friendly communities.

- P16 Provide a modern functional public transportation system countywide—the CAT bus system and perhaps alternatives—to reduce traffic congestion and to provide affordable transport for all citizens, but especially for work force.
- P17 Link transportation upgrades and expansion with plans for industrial growth, tourism, agriculture, and cultural arts/recreation while keeping the environment green, unpolluted, and clean.
- P18 Build a road system and traffic patterns for the future, with four-lane connectors to I-85, an improved highway system around Seneca and Clemson, traffic directed away from Highway 11, and integration with the state’s road plan.
- P19 Plan for alternative transportation by building bike paths and sidewalks.
- P20 Inform citizens on the purposes and effects of zoning and land use planning.

An Educated Choice – The Choice of Education

Oconee is proud of its schools, its students, and the excellence that they achieve. Oconee chooses learning for all, beyond traditional learning, extending and renewing resources beyond the usual concepts of time and place. While continuing to promote personal responsibility in school children, Oconee also proclaims that it is every citizen’s right and responsibility to learn.

By 2028 Oconee County will:

- E1 Make a good education system available for all Oconee residents through the development of educational programs that assess long-term job needs and address new industrial needs in partnership with Oconee County School District, area colleges, and universities so all residents can become productive citizens.
- E2 Promote parent volunteerism in schools and parent engagement in education.
- E3 Cut the drop-out rate by half.
- E4 Create curriculum that utilizes instructional best practices to ensure relevant and engaging educational opportunities.

- E5 Further develop college preparedness and honors programs, such as Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate, and foreign language instruction.
- E6 Use education facilities wisely and economically to extend the education options of youth and to achieve lifelong educational needs, such as after-school tutoring, English as a second language, literacy education, parenting skills, and computer training.
- E7 Expand trade school education in areas such as welding, construction, and computer technology, and expand career and technical education options for middle and high school students.
- E8 Maintain and improve comparative student achievement through test scores and academic performance.
- E9 Strengthen pre-K programs, early education access, contracts for services, parenting education, and childcare training.
- E10 Create an environmental education center.

A Working Choice – The Choice of Rewarding Employment

Oconee chooses honest productive labor as a foundation of economic vitality. The emphasis is on quality of life in economic decisions, balancing the preservation of a wonderful place to live with the growth of high quality jobs. Oconee continues to define itself by making choices that pleasantly fill the senses with Oconee’s best and bring labor enough to fill one’s hands.

By 2028 Oconee County will:

- W1 Cultivate more high paying, low environmental impact jobs in areas such as manufacturing, biomedical, high tech, clean industry, tourism, and health care.
- W2 Invest more now to attract jobs of the future; provide incentives for businesses to relocate.
- W3 Encourage availability of high-speed Internet and wireless connections.
- W4 Build job growth on tourism and retirement destination trends.
- W5 Make the I-85 corridor more desirable to industry and commerce.

- W6 Market the lakes, waterfalls, mountains, along with fishing and outdoor recreation for tourism, emphasizing old town, arts and crafts, local artists, history, Oconee Heritage Center, and eco-tourism.
- W7 Provide opportunities for young people to stay by encouraging industry recruitment, tourism, and manufacturing jobs, especially in automotive, high tech, healthcare, heritage tourism, and eco-tourism.
- W8 Redevelop existing industrial buildings and vacated structures.
- W9 Provide incentives for downtown business revival, renovation, and relocation.
- W10 Encourage or create a single countywide chamber of commerce.
- W11 Establish a convention and visitors bureau.
- W12 Encourage the development of a convention center and encourage development of accommodation facilities and restaurants.
- W13 Promote local agriculture, market its economic value and impact, and expand farmers' market opportunities.
- W14 Expand Oconee County Commerce Center on Highway 11.
- W15 Promote the development of a small business health insurance pool.
- W16 Establish agricultural processing facilities.

A Destination Choice – The Choice for a Destination

People choose Oconee as a place where they can visit or live. Oconee embraces lifelong residents and warmly welcomes newcomers and tourists. All partake in Oconee's bountiful nature, experiencing the rejuvenating power of its lakes and mountains, and its vistas. Oconee is a beautiful stage for art, culture, history, recreation, and entertainment.

By 2028 Oconee County will:

- D1 Enhance venues that host art, culture, and entertainment events.
- D2 Continue partnering with a variety of arts/cultural/recreational organizations to provide mutually beneficial activities and events.

- D3 Involve young professionals, families, art organizations, governmental bodies, and media in formulating and promoting cultural events.
- D4 Create a performing arts/visual arts/cultural center as a magnet for community activity and as an attraction for tourism.
- D5 Learn how successful communities manage artistic, cultural, and entertainment activities and model programs accordingly.
- D6 Expand recreational sites and activities, including YMCA, swimming pools, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, and outdoor sports facilities.
- D7 Enhance recreational activities for people of all ages, including camping, walking, hiking, fishing, riding, biking, boating, kayaking, and canoeing.
- D8 Improve after-school art and recreation activities.
- D9 Create a community arts forum, bulletin board, and calendar of events to advertise offerings.
- D10 Give a voice to young people in the research and design of recreation, entertainment, and art facilities and programs.
- D11 Provide handicap accessibility when renovating or building parks and play areas.
- D12 Provide more access to lakes.
- D13 Build an outdoor stage venue for entertainment and art, and encourage as a hub for retail stores, restaurants, and coffee shops.
- D14 Create a consolidated website to promote group and organizational efforts.
- D15 Preserve and protect existing state land, and acquire more through conservation programs.

A Safe and Healthy Choice – A Choice of Security, Health, and Contentment

Oconee chooses to be a safe, healthy, and clean county. Oconee takes care of those who need care, and it provides resources for its citizen to care for themselves. Important are ample housing, the ability to move freely around the county through well-ordered transport and a well-kept road system, and the opportunities to pursue a healthy lifestyle.

By 2028 Oconee County will:

- S1 Prepare for the growing needs of senior adult healthcare, including the needs for in-home services, assisted and independent living facilities, and staged care.
- S2 Establish communication as a core value of government, among all branches and among citizens countywide.
- S3 Enforce litter laws uniformly throughout the county.
- S4 Provide consistent high quality fire and police protection, hospital and emergency responder service across the county.
- S5 Insist on quality, safe, and affordable healthcare for all.
- S6 Increase housing that is targeted to Oconee median family incomes.
- S7 Improve training for public safety officers, including training in technology, diversity, and disaster response.
- S8 Ensure an efficient, centralized communication system for law enforcement and first responder personnel.
- S9 Increase detention space and expand programs for repeat offenders.
- S10 Provide support to the most needy in the community, including victims of domestic violence, the ill, the frail, the indigent, distressed individuals and families, and recovering substance abusers.
- S11 Encourage social services agencies and groups to form partnerships and create a one-stop center, with public transportation access, to improve the scope and effort of services to meet the needs of the whole person.
- S12 Address homelessness by building a shelter, providing counseling, and improving case management services.

- S13 Build a computer network for social service agencies, and align with the national model for strengthening families through early intervention and care.
- S14 Coordinate food pantry efforts, especially those of the churches, by helping to establish a database for the needy; include clothing and utilities assistance in reporting.
- S15 Provide more health outreach and medical satellite facilities throughout the county.
- S16 Promote physical activity across the community.
- S17 Support and expand programs that meet the needs of the handicapped; e.g. Tribble Center Gift and its Thrift Store.
- S18 Buffer industrial and commercial locales so that they do not diminish the health and safety of residential areas.
- S19 Encourage citizens to participate in, or to lead, housing and growth management discussions.
- S20 Look for opportunities to combine city and county services for value, effectiveness, and breadth of service.
- S21 Promote mixed income housing rather than class- and income-based housing areas.
- S22 Provide a women's shelter while providing counseling and access to case management services.
- S23 Reduce or discourage influences that lead to crime, including poverty, drug use, unemployment, apathy, and hopelessness; increase or promote influences that lead to productive lives, including health, employment, education, feelings of self-worth, and connectedness.
- S24 Promote citizen confidence in and engagement in local government and civic affairs.
- S25 Embrace diversity and acceptance of all citizens as part of the Oconee tradition and way of life.
- S26 Encourage churches to continue to respond to community needs and crises.

A Natural Choice – The Choice That’s Natural

Nature abounds here. Oconee has chosen the richness of nature in the past, and it chooses nature for the future. Oconee is joined to nature and cannot be separated from it; thus nature is guarded jealously and protected passionately, safeguarding the lakes, mountains, streams, waterfalls, and forests for the present and for the future. In its towns and along its byways, Oconee treasures the pulse of nature, which is unhurried, unbothered, and unblemished. Oconee chooses nature’s beauty and a small town feel as centerpieces of its life.

By 2028 Oconee County will:

- N1 Protect that which attracts newcomers and visitors and which keeps lifelong residents: the beautiful natural environment.
- N2 Preserve Lake Keowee, Lake Jocassee, and Lake Hartwell.
- N3 Retain and protect the small town and rural feel of the county.
- N4 Create wildlife sanctuaries, and enhance incentives for land owners not to develop environmentally sensitive and environmentally valuable land.
- N5 Preserve farms and promote farming values.
- N6 Protect natural green spaces and historical sites, e.g., Chatooga, Chauga, state and county parks, USFS forest lands, WMA lands, the fish hatchery, Spy Rock Road areas, Stumphouse Tunnel, Civilian Conservation Corps camps, and textile heritage sites; develop new green spaces and historical sites where needed.
- N7 Preserve a healthy community with clean air and water.
- N8 Fund an agriculture conservation bank and promote conservation easements.