

# **CHARLESTON COUNTY GREENBELTS PLAN**



**Presentation to Charleston County  
Greenbelt Advisory Board  
December 20, 2017**

CHARLESTON COUNTY • ALTA/GREENWAYS

# TODAY'S AGENDA

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- Reaffirm the Greenbelt Vision and Goals
- Review 2006 Action Plan
- Review Greenbelt Program Criteria
- Review other greenspace criteria
- Additional Items for consideration

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# **REAFFIRM GREENBELT PROGRAM VISION & PURPOSE**

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# **2006 GREENBELT VISION**

The Future of Greenspace  
Conservation in Charleston County



# 2006 GREENBELT DEFINITION

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For the purpose of the Charleston County Greenbelts Plan, the term *greenbelts* will be used to describe a variety of land types. Greenbelts may include public or private lands in rural, suburban and urban settings. Access to greenbelts may also be public or private. The various types of greenbelts are listed below. They may include, but are not limited to, their subcategories:

- ***Passive greenspace:*** Trails, greenways, and interpretive parks
- ***Active greenspace:*** Low-impact play fields and parks, including areas for fishing, crabbing, boating, etc.
- ***Lowcountry ecosystems:*** Upland forests, swamps, bogs, brackish and freshwater wetlands, Carolina bays, marsh islands, and cypress, backwater, and saltwater marshes
- ***Productive landscapes:*** Lands used for agriculture, silviculture, and mariculture
- ***Heritage landscapes:*** Irreplaceable cultural and historical landscapes unique to the County
- ***Corridors:*** Scenic roadways, abandoned rail lines, and utility corridors
- ***Natural infrastructure:*** Floodplains, wildlife habitat, recharge zones, and lands critical to clean water
- ***Reclaimed greenspace:*** Brownfields, abandoned sites, and other green infill projects

These greenbelts collectively form a protected living system of landscapes that serve the residents, businesses, visitors, and future generations of Charleston County by preserving and improving the health and quality of life for all.

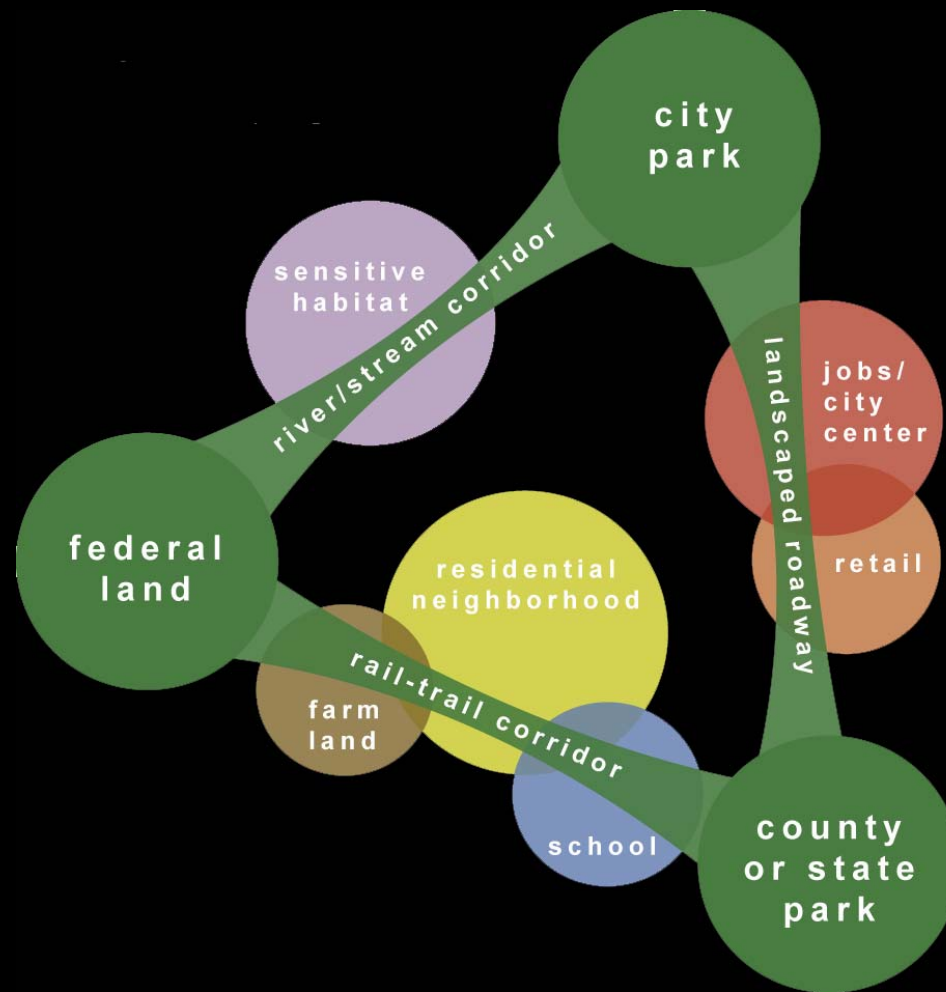
# 2006 GREENBELT VISION

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- *“Cities and Villages Surrounded by Green”*
  - Rural landscape preservation
  - Public access to water, not necessarily by boat ramps
  - Public access to greenspace and parkland
  - Balance development and greenspace
  - Reclaim brownfields
  - Set aside as much greenspace as possible
  - Include passive recreation greenspace
  - Link greenspace with trails, not necessarily along roads
  - Develop bike paths as part of Greenbelts Plan
  - Leverage funds to maximize buying power
  - Plan for both urban and rural areas of the County

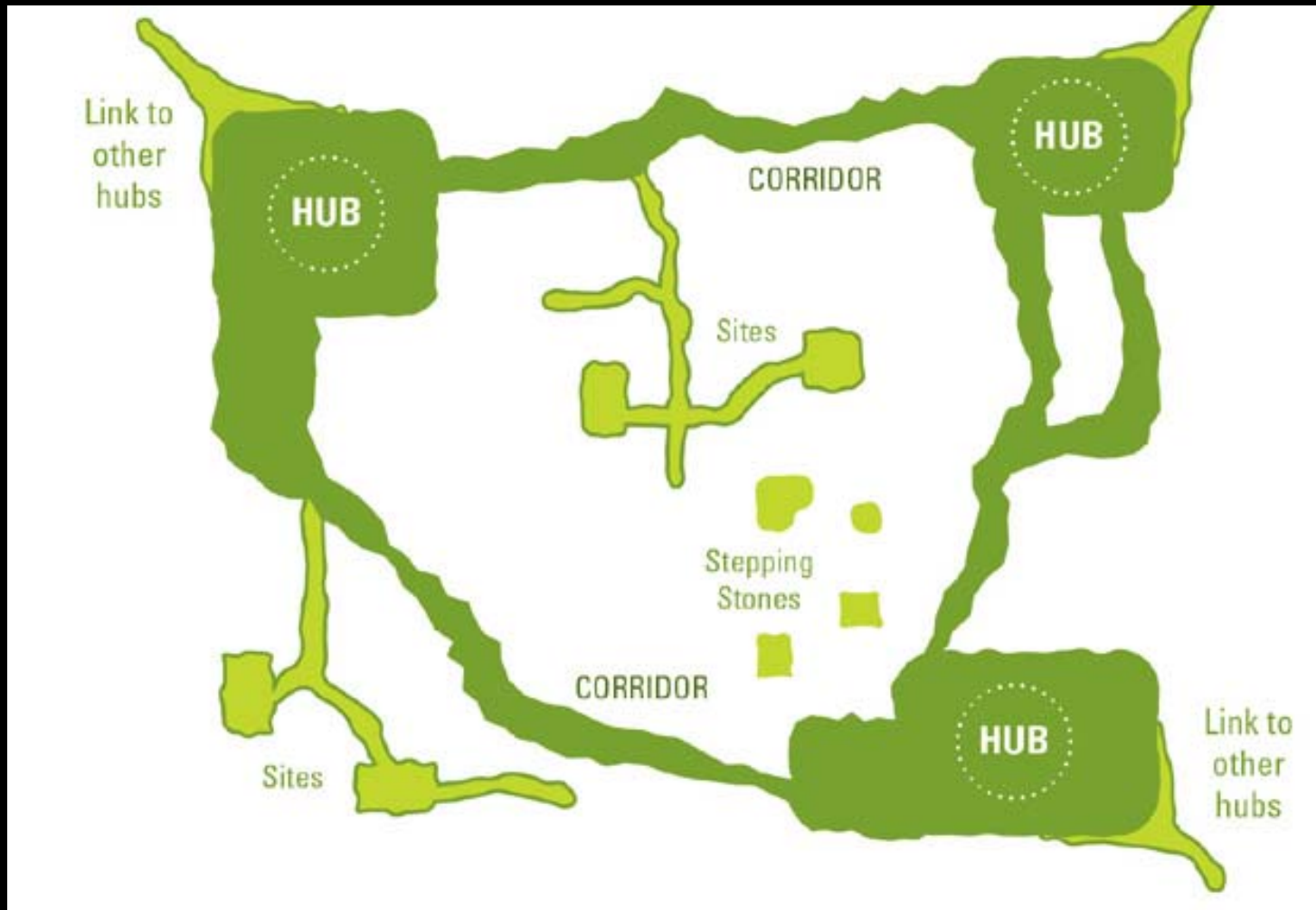
# HUB + SPOKES CONCEPT

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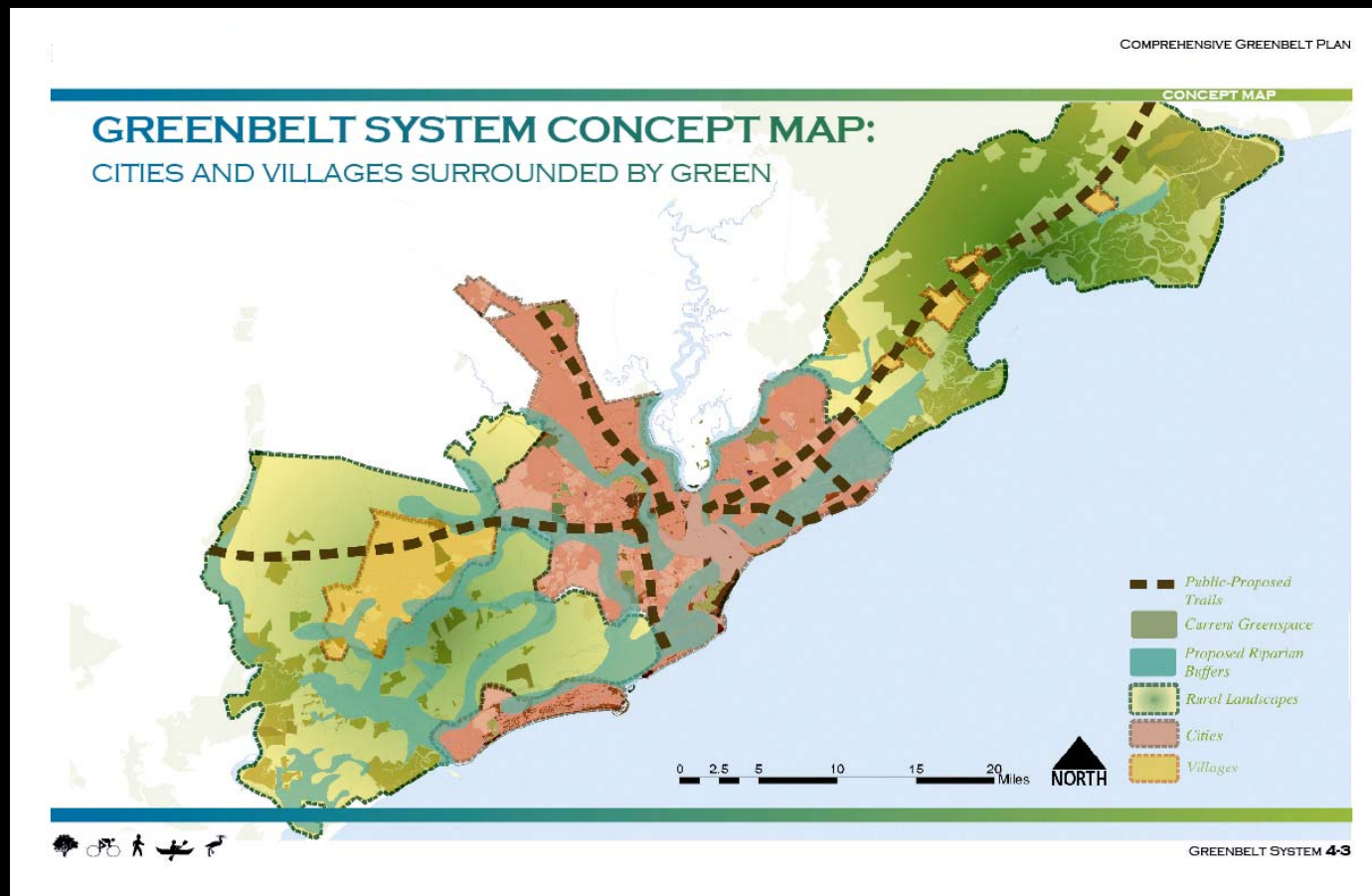
# HUB + SPOKES CONCEPT

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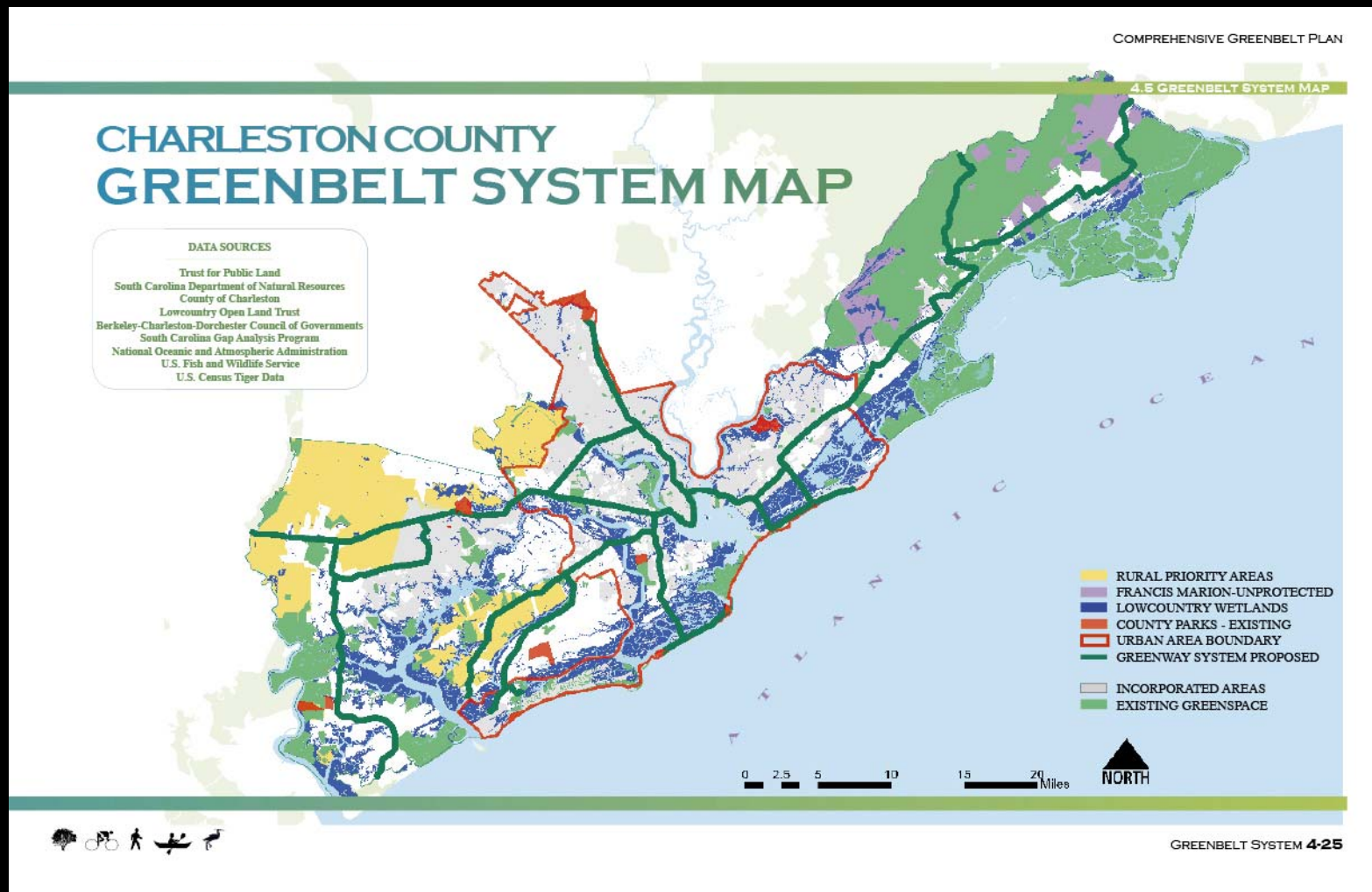
# 2006 GREENBELTS VISION

*“Cities and Villages Surround by Green”*





# 2006 GREENBELT SYSTEM MAP

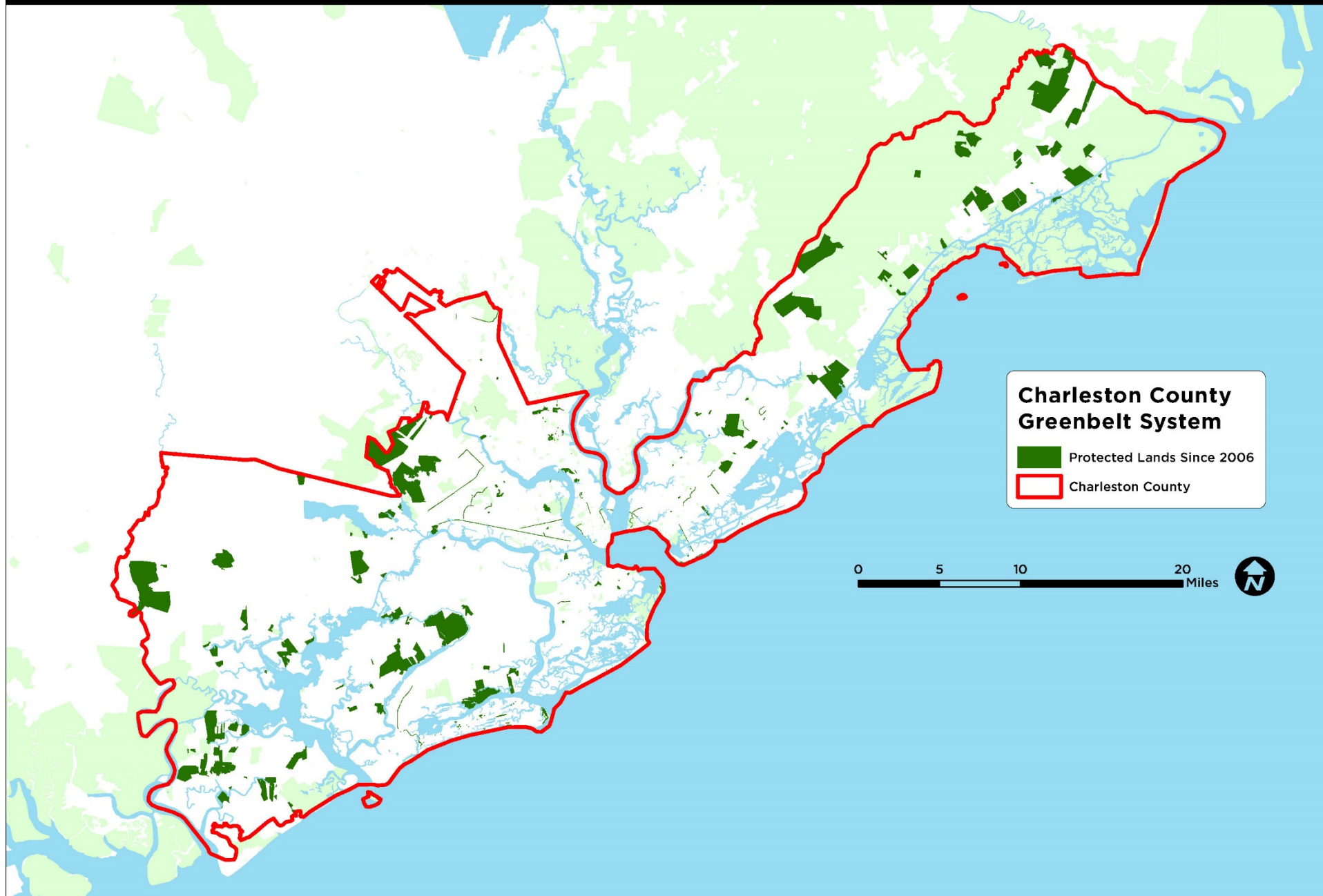


# PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

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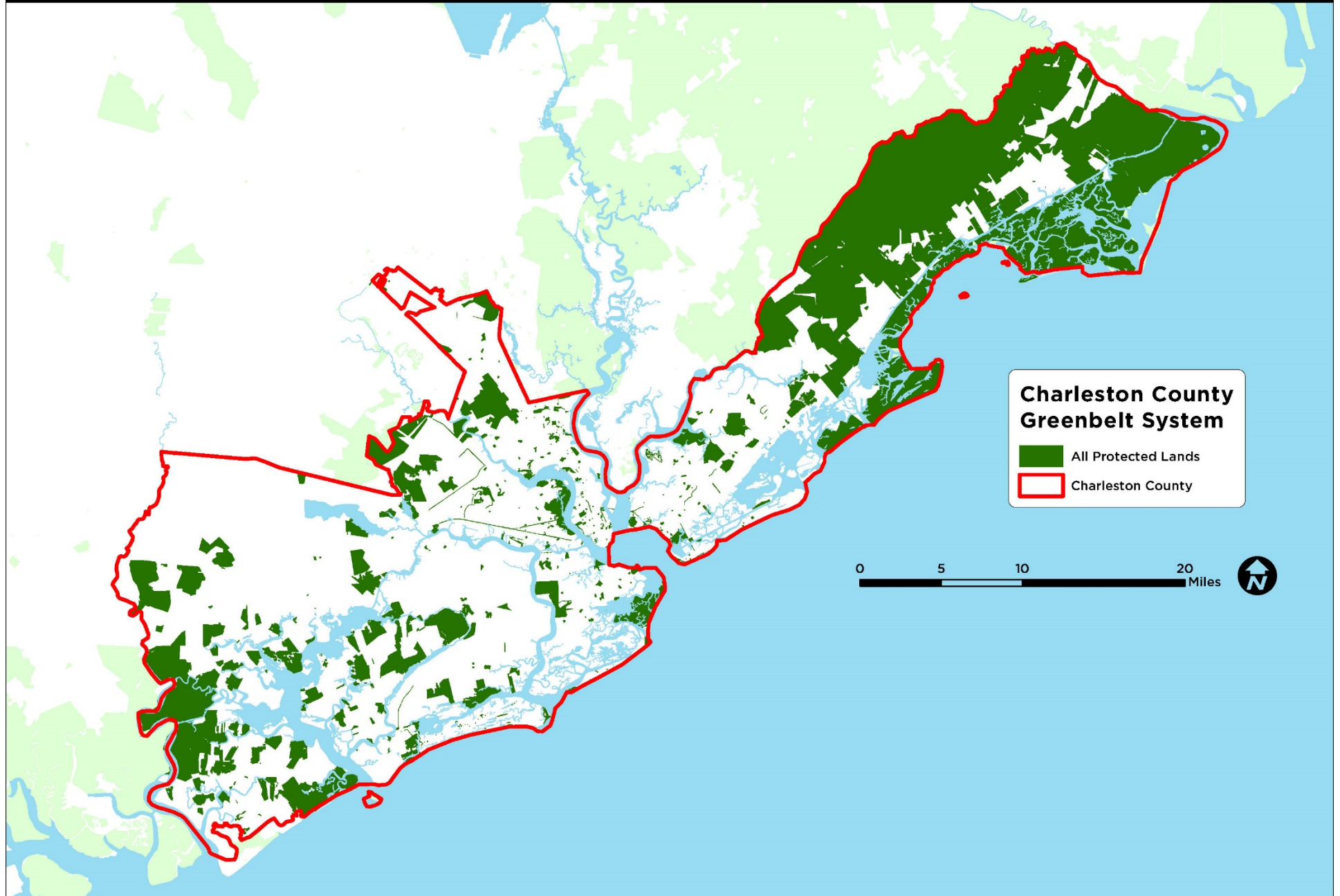
“The purpose of this Greenbelt Plan is to conserve and protect both of these landscape types, which in the future can be devoted to 1) preservation of natural resources, 2) preservation of historic and cultural property, 3) protection of scenic landscapes, 4) outdoor access and recreation, 5) protection of public health, safety and welfare.” (Page 4-1)

## *Lands protected since 2006*





*Total lands protected 2017 – approximately 198,000 acres*



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# **QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION REGARDING THE GREENBELT VISION & PURPOSE**



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# **REVIEW 2006 GREENBELT ACTION PLAN**

# COMPREHENSIVE GREENBELT PLAN

CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
2005-2030 **ADOPTED JUNE 6, 2006**



*Prepared for*  
CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

*Prepared by*  
GREENWAYS INCORPORATED  
WHITE & SMITH, LLC



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# COMPONENTS OF THE GREENBELT SYSTEM

Charleston County's treasured  
resources

# GREENBELT SYSTEM COMPONENTS

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- **Charleston County Greenbelt System would be comprised of six principal landscape types:**
  - Rural Greenbelt Lands
  - Francis Marion Forest
  - Lowcountry Wetlands
  - PRC Regional Parks
  - Urban Greenbelt Lands
  - Greenway Corridors

The plan  
breaks down  
the 30%  
(40,000  
acre) goal  
into 6  
component  
landscapes

RURAL GREENBELT LANDS



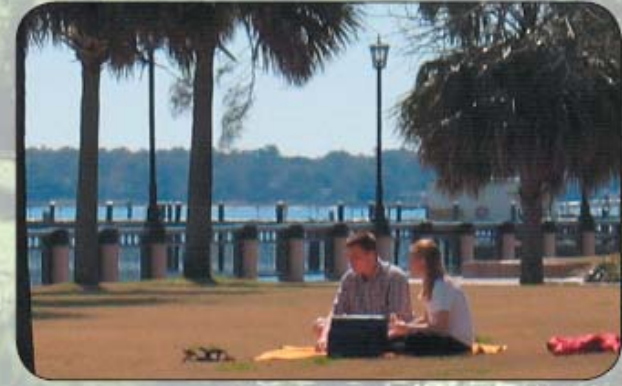
PRC PARKS



FRANCIS MARION NATIONAL FOREST



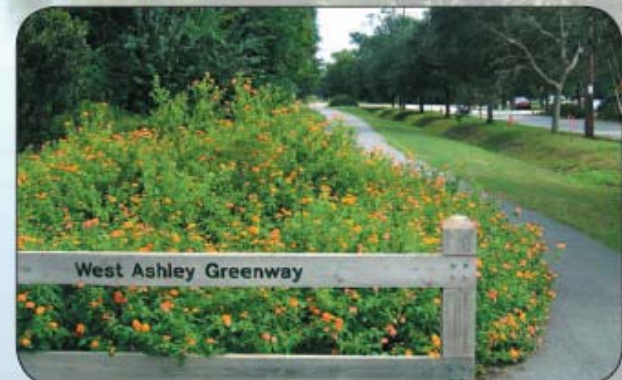
URBAN GREENBELT LANDS



LOWCOUNTRY WETLANDS



GREENWAYS





# GREENBELT SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Charleston County Greenbelt System Components		
<u>Component Description</u>	<u>Target Acres</u>	<u>Percent of Goal</u>
<b>Rural Greenbelt Lands</b> - Represents a minimum "target" recommendation by Greenways Incorporated, desired acreage would be conserved through various acquisition methods using Conservation Toolbox and Sales Tax proceeds, specifically targeting lands noted in the Comprehensive Plan as high priority natural resource areas.	16,240	41%
<b>Francis Marion Forest</b> - Based on multi-agency MOU that identifies this as the amount of private land holdings in the forest.	10,275	26%
<b>Lowcountry Wetlands</b> - Represents an "infill" and "as needed" recommendation by Greenways Incorporated for both rural and urban landscapes where additional wetland protection is needed.	5,610	14%
<b>PRC Regional Parks</b> - Based on PRC Open Space Analysis.	4,675	11%
<b>Urban Greenbelt Lands</b> - Represents a minimum "target" recommendation by Greenways Incorporated, takes into account wish lists provided by North Charleston, Mt. Pleasant, Charleston and beach communities. Also based on PRC Open Space Analysis for urban areas.	2,000	5%
<b>Greenway Corridors</b> - Based on a 200 mile system of greenways throughout the County. Greenways would be 50-foot wide corridors.	1,200	3%
<b>Total Targeted Greenspace (25 year projection)</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

# GREENBELT PROGRAM COMPONENTS

	Total Acreage	% of 2006 Target
Total Protected Since 2006		
Rural Greenbelt Lands	11,397	70%
Francis Marion Forest	11,438	111%
Lowcountry Wetlands	7,900	141%
PRC Regional Parks	5,933	127%
Urban Greenbelt Lands	666	33%
Greenway Corridors	155	13%
Total	37,628	94%

# CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

- Implementation Resources
- Sales Tax Allocation Formula
- Implementation Budget
- Organizational Framework
- Grants Programs
- Next Steps



# CONSERVATION TOOLBOX

DRAFT GREEN SPACE TOOLBOX

## CHARLESTON COUNTY GREENBELTS PLAN

### GREEN SPACE TOOLBOX

This toolbox has been created to provide Charleston County and its member communities with a quick reference of land conservation strategies. Many of the tools defined can be used in combination, or separately to conserve greenspace throughout the County. This toolbox is divided into several distinct sections: regulatory, acquisition, land donation and management strategies. For each strategy, advantages and disadvantages of each is listed to help define the most appropriate strategy for a given opportunity.

#### REGULATORY MECHANISMS

There are inherent disadvantages to preserving greenspace through regulatory mechanisms. First, regulations normally apply when the land development process begins. The adverse impacts of land clearing, road building and other development activities (including fragmenting of habitat) often result in resource loss, essentially making greenspace 'protection through regulation' an after the fact exercise. Another disadvantage is that regulations are subject to change. Just as a governing body can adopt stricter regulations, a future governing body could relax or not enforce those rules. The following is a listing of regulatory strategies that have been used throughout the United States to conserve greenspace.

#### DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGY

**Development Impact Fee:** Impact fees are also known as exactions. In its simplest form, the developer is charged an easy to calculate fee. A formula may be created to decide the cost that development will impose on the community. The formula can account for the area of land affected, the number of units built, the expected market value of those units, the distance from the fire and police stations, costs of building roads, and the expected population growth resulting from the construction. The exaction can come in forms other than money. The developer can be required to provide streets, sewers, street lights, parks, or other infrastructure or amenities. The developer might also be required not to develop some portion of the land. In some cases, builders of expensive homes have been required to build some proportional number of low cost homes. The town or county can develop a comprehensive system or formula or exactions can be formulated on a case by case basis from more general criteria.

**Transfer of Development Rights:** In some cases, a local government may want to steer development toward areas where it is more appropriate and easier to serve. Generally, the intent is to steer development away from rural areas, agricultural preservation zones, and environmentally sensitive areas and guide it towards existing cities and towns. Transferable Development Rights (TDR) programs are one way to do that. In a voluntary TDR program, the county would designate certain parts of its territory as "sending zones" and other areas as "receiving zones." Landowners in the sending zones can sell their rights to develop houses or commercial uses to other landowners in the receiving zones, or to a third party who will eventually buy land in the receiving zone. Or, landowners in the receiving zone can buy additional development rights from someone in the selling zone.

**Right To Farm:** Since the 1970s, all fifty states have enacted "Right to Farm" laws to help protect existing agricultural operations from suits brought by people who move nearby, then claim the neighboring farm is a nuisance. Common complaints revolve around odor, noise, dust, flies, application of agricultural chemicals and slow moving machinery. Most statutes have exemptions that do not protect farms and ranches that 1) begin operation after other neighboring land uses already exist; and/or 2) are out of compliance with local, state or federal regulations. Most statutes have not been challenged in court.

#### BENEFITS

A "pay-as-you-grow" program that really has been proven to help cities keep pace with rapid land development. A particularly useful tool for Charleston County, due to its fast pace of growth and rate of change.

Potentially an effective growth management tool. Resources can be protected without huge capital expenditures. Large tracts of protected land can be created in "sending" areas. Great example of this tool: Chattahoochee Hill County, Georgia.

Good program for protecting farm land in rapidly growing communities. Encourages farmers to continue their operations and offers legal protection for these land uses.

#### DRAWBACKS

Can be difficult to implement, as it must meet Supreme Court rulings on "essential nexus," fair and equitable implementation. Politically challenging because impact fees are generally not favored by the development community.

Complicated program to establish and administer. High administrative overhead; requires professional staff assigned to program. Landowner resistance to downzoning in "sending" or higher densities in "receiving" areas. An unproven technique. Requires state enabling legislation.

Depends on farmers to continue their operations, so it is not a method for long term protection of this greenspace resource.

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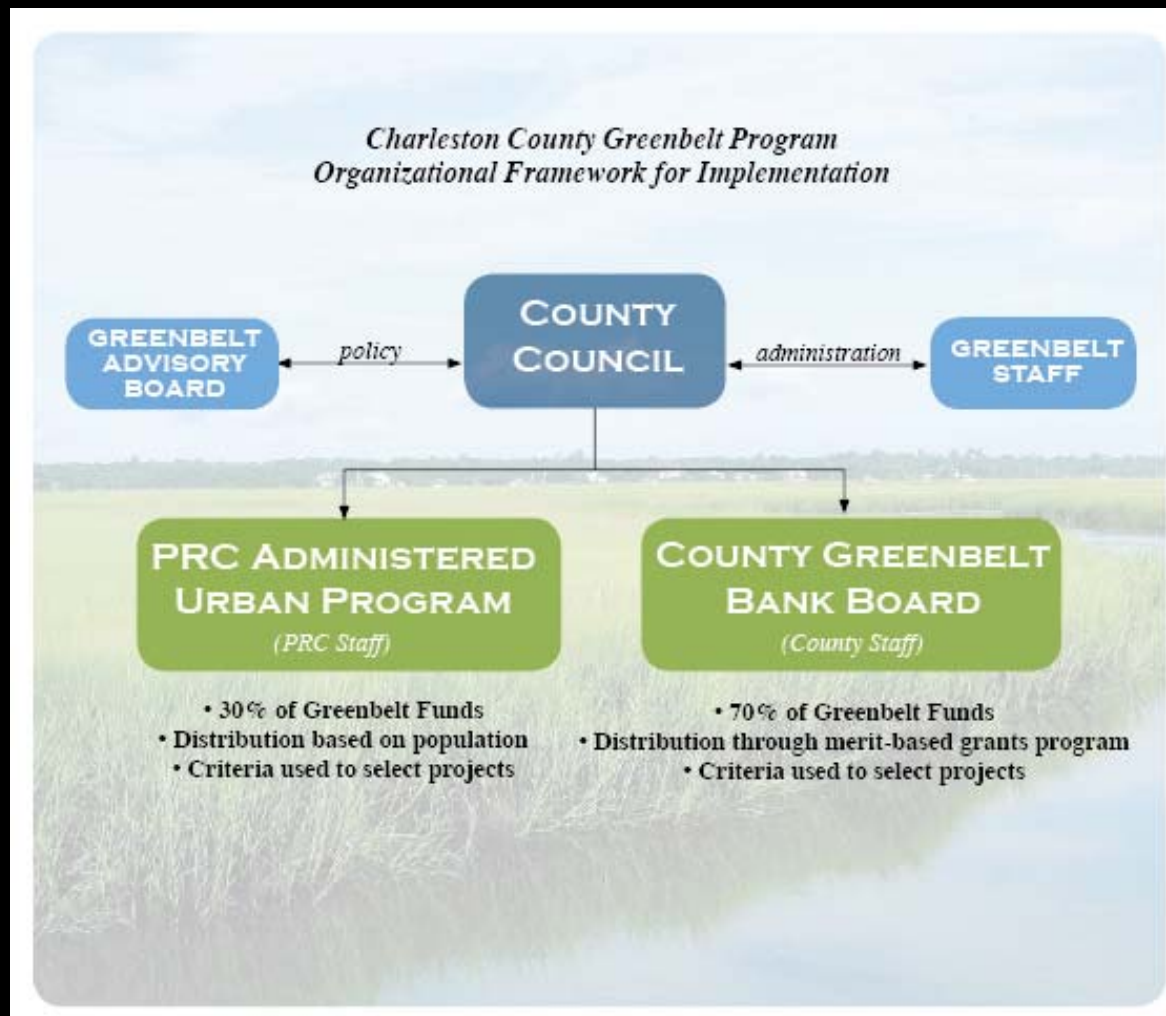
# **QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION REGARDING THE GREENBELT ACTION PLAN**



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# **REVIEW 2006 GRANTS PROGRAM & THE PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA**

# ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS PROGRAM



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# **RURAL GRANTS PROGRAM CRITERIA & PROCESS**

# GRANTS PROGRAM CRITERIA AND SCORING

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- Tell Us About the Project - **30 Points**
- What Makes the Project Special - **35 Points**
- How Can We Make the Project Work - **35 Points**

**Total Possible Points - 100**

# CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF RURAL & URBAN PROJECTS

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- **Tell Us About the Project - 30 Points**
  - Distinguishing characteristics - 10 pts
  - Location and size - 5 points
  - Address public access and use - 5 points
  - Project management - 5 points
  - Ready for immediate action - 5 points



# CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF RURAL & URBAN PROJECTS

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- **What Makes the Project Special**
  - Environmental features - 10 points
  - Historic and cultural features - 10 points
  - Quality of Life - 5 points
  - Linkage opportunities - 5 points
  - Consistent with adopted plans - 5 points

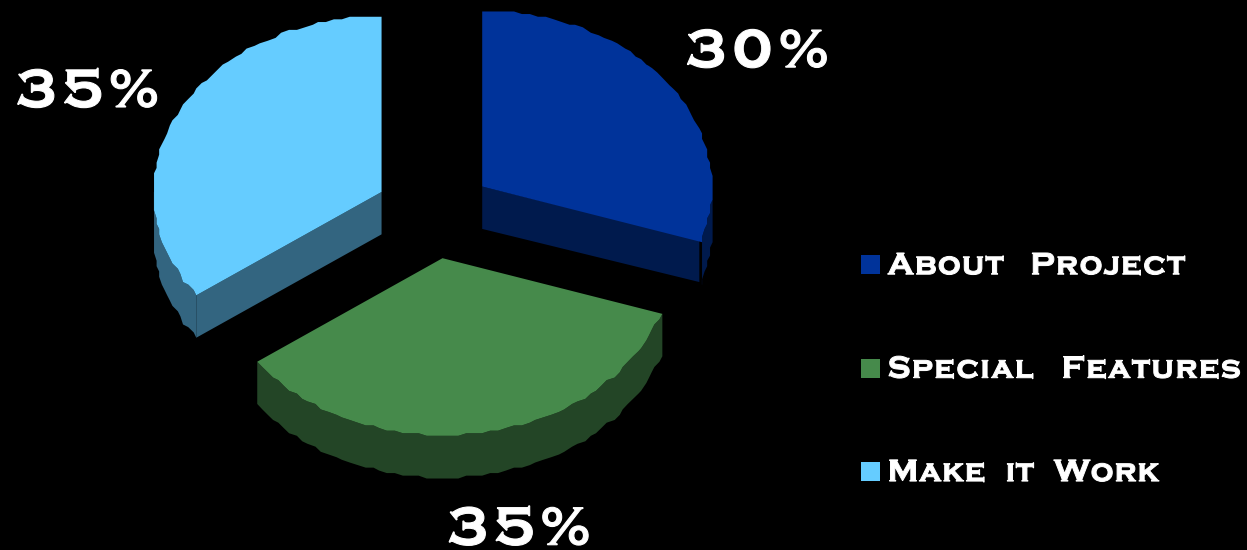
# CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF RURAL & URBAN PROJECTS

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- **How Can We Make the Project Work**
  - Funding and leveraging - 15 points
  - Financial partners - 5 points
  - Level of public support - 5 points
  - Non-financial partners - 5 points
  - Implementation - 5 points

# SCORING SYSTEM

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# RANKING THE PROJECTS

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- **High Priority** - 90 to 100 Points
- **Medium High Priority** - 80 to 90 Points
- **Medium Priority** - 70 to 80 Points
- **Low Priority** - 60 to 70 Points
- **No Interest** - 60 and below

# SCORING THE MORRIS ISLAND PROJECT





# SCORING THE MORRIS ISLAND PROJECT

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- **Tell Us About the Project**
  - Distinguishing Characteristics 10
  - Location and Size 5
  - **Public Access and Use 2**
  - Project Management 5
  - Ready for Action 5

**27 out of 30 possible points**

# SCORING THE MORRIS ISLAND PROJECT

---

- **What Makes the Project Special**
  - Environmental Features 10
  - Historic and Cultural Features 10
  - Quality of Life 5
  - Linkage Opportunities 2
  - Consistent with Adopted Plans 5

**32 out of 35 possible points**

# SCORING THE MORRIS ISLAND PROJECT

---

- **How Can We Make the Project Work**
  - Funding and leveraging **15**
  - Financial partners **5**
  - Public support **5**
  - Non-financial partners **5**
  - **Project implementation** **4**

**34 out of 35 possible points**

# **SCORING THE MORRIS ISLAND PROJECT**

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- **Tell Us About the Project - 27 Points**
- **What Makes the Project Special - 32 Points**
- **How Will the Project Work - 34 Points**
  
- **Total Points - 93 out of 100: A High Priority Project for Conservation and Inclusion in Greenbelts System**

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# **URBAN GRANTS PROGRAM CRITERIA & PROCESS**



# URBAN GRANTS PROGRAM

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- Urban allocation divided among the municipalities according to the 2000 census
- Funds used to acquire land or fund minor improvements
- Applications submitted to a grants committee comprised of CCPRC and County staff
- Projects must comply with intent of program

# URBAN ALLOCATION

Current Urban Allocation			
Municipality	Population (U.S. Census 2000)	Percent of Population	Urban Allocation
Charleston	95,528	34.69%	\$ 9,886,405
Folly Beach	2,116	0.77%	\$ 218,990
Isle of Palms	4,583	1.66%	\$ 474,305
James Island	18,341	6.66%	\$ 1,102,130
Kiawah Island	1,163	0.42%	\$ 120,361
Lincolnton	904	0.33%	\$ 93,557
Mt. Pleasant	47,609	17.29%	\$ 4,927,161
N. Charleston	76,244	27.69%	\$ 7,890,661
Seabrook Island	1,250	0.45%	\$ 129,365
Sullivan's Island	1,911	0.69%	\$ 197,774
Unincorporated	25,734	9.34%	\$ 3,459,290
<b>Total</b>	<b>275,383</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$ 28,500,000</b>

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# **QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION REGARDING THE GREENBELT PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA**

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# **REVIEW PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA FROM OTHER GREENSPACE PROGRAMS**

# Great Outdoors Colorado



CHARLESTON COUNTY • ALTA/GREENWAYS



# GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

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- Project Description and Quality – 40 Points
- Project Need and Urgency – 20 Points
- Project Benefits – 10 Points
- Leveraging of Funds – 10 Points
- Partnership Support – 15 Points
- Ability to Accomplish Goals – 5 Points

Total Possible Points – 100 Points

# GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

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## Project Description and Quality – 40 Points

- Geographic Area and Natural Values
- Current and Proposed Uses
- Adjacent and Nearby Land Ownership and Uses
- Environmental Hazards
- Access
- Development Rights
- Encumbrances
- Mineral Rights
- Water Rights
- Transaction Details

# GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

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- **Project Need and Urgency – 20 Points**
  - Significance to Community
  - Jeopardy
  - Importance to and Consistency with Local Government Policies and Programs

# GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

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- **Project Benefits – 10 Points**
  - Catalyst for Additional Conservation
  - Demonstration Value
  - Is this the beginning of future phases

# GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

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- **Leveraging of Funds – 10 Points**
  - How will you leverage
  - Why is GOCO money needed
  - Describe confirmed sources
  - Provide letters of intent to fund

# GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

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- **Partnership Support – 15 Points**
  - Who are your partners?
  - What are their contributions
  - Letters of support



# GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

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- **Ability to Accomplish Goals – 5 Points**
  - Staff and experience of your agency or organization
  - What transactions are you going to accomplish and timing to accomplish
  - Are there any outstanding GOCO grants, what is the status of these?

# Wake County, North Carolina



# WAKE COUNTY , NC OPEN SPACE PROGRAM CRITERIA

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## Qualitative Evaluation

- Location
- Linkage
- Proximity
- Accessibility
- Aesthetic Quality
- Use/Utility
- On Adopted Plan
- Threat of Loss
- Rarity
- Floodplain Protection
- Cultural/Historic Resources
- Manageability



# WAKE COUNTY , NC OPEN SPACE PROGRAM CRITERIA

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## Quantitative Evaluation

- Cost to acquire
- Present Tax Value
- Appraised Value
- Type of acquisition strategy – consult toolbox
- Size of parcel
- Shape of parcel
- Name of parcel
- Property Characteristics
- Liabilities
- Use/Utility

# WAKE COUNTY , NC OPEN SPACE PROGRAM CRITERIA

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- Ranking/Score
  - Location
  - Linkage
  - Proximity
  - Accessibility
  - Aesthetic Quality
  - Use/Utility
  - On Plan
  - Threat
  - Floodplain Protection
- Staff Recommendation
  - Acquisition
  - Management
  - Regulation

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# **QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA FROM OTHER GREENSPACE PROGRAMS**

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# **ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE GAB**



# KEY ISSUES TO DISCUSS

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- An impervious surface limit (Community centers, basketball courts, tennis courts, etc. have been allowed on Greenbelt properties as long as the overall land percentage has remained as greenspace. In the past it has been a judgement of staff. It would be nice to have a limit on the amount of impervious surface allowed on a property. All conservation easements have a limit normally around 2% of the total acreage). May to consider if paved trails/roads/parking areas will be included in the impervious surface limit.

# KEY ISSUES TO DISCUSS

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- Are swimming pools allowed? What if the impervious surface limit is in place?
- Setting deadlines for parks/developments/uses to be complete and in place. We have had several inquiries as to why the properties purchased for public uses are sitting unused and undeveloped.
- Agencies wanting to protect properties in the urban incorporated areas must get approval from the urban municipalities for funds to protect the property. What if the muni says no?

# KEY ISSUES TO DISCUSS

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- Protecting Private Lands with Greenbelt Funds
- Use of Greenbelt Funds to pay for facility improvements
- Use of Leverage in awarding Greenbelt Funds

# PROTECTING PRIVATE LANDS

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- Consultants recommendation:
  - Continue to use a full complement of tools within the Conservation Toolbox
  - Consider modifying terms of Conservation Easement to incorporate a public access provision – for recreational, educational and/or research purposes
  - Produce a study that quantifies the conservation services benefits of protected public and private land

# USE OF GREENBELT FUNDS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

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- Consultant's recommendation:
  - Continue the policy defined in the adopted 2006 Greenbelt Plan:
  - Minor improvements will be limited to: **boardwalks, foot bridges, unpaved trails, unpaved roadways, and unpaved small parking areas**. The cost of these improvements should be included in any proposal submitted for the acquisition of sites. Other improvements may be included in a particular project **but can not be funded with Greenbelt proceeds.**" (Pages 5-6 and 5-8)

# LEVERAGING OF GREENBELT FUNDS

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- Consultant's recommendation:
  - Continue to encourage the use of leverage in awarding Greenbelt Program grant funds
  - Strive for/encourage applicants to achieve a minimum of 2 for 1 leverage as basis for award

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# **QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION REGARDING ADDITIONAL ITEMS PRESENTED**



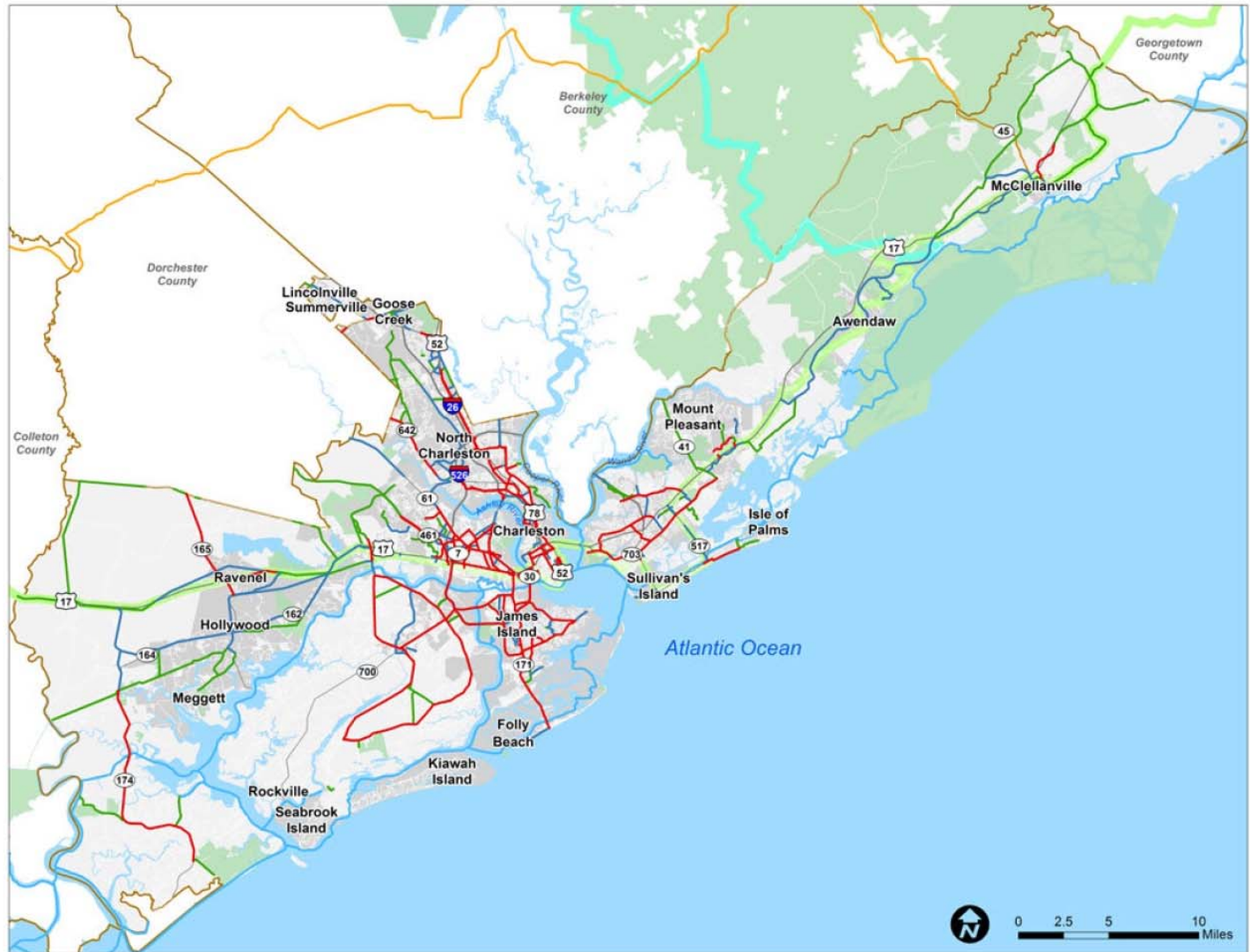
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# OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

# PEOPLE TO PARKS TRAILS PLAN

## TIER RESULTS COUNTY OVERVIEW

- First Tier Priority
  - Second Tier Priority
  - Third Tier Priority
  - East Coast Greenway
  - Palmetto Trail
  - Statewide Bike Tour Route
  - Saltwater Trails
  - Existing and Proposed Parks
- Roads**
- Interstate
  - US Highway
  - SC Highway
  - Local Streets (white)
  - Charleston County
  - County Boundaries
  - Water Bodies



# PEOPLE TO PARKS PLAN



PAVED SHOULDER



SHARED USE PATH



SEPARATED BIKE LANE



BIKE ROUTE



BIKE LANE



NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTOR

## GREENWAY FACILITY TYPES

This plan was lead by CCPRC with guidance from:

- Charleston County Transportation
- City of Charleston
- City of North Charleston
- Town of Mount Pleasant
- Charleston Moves
- Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester Council of Governments
- SCDOT



The Charleston County People 2 Parks Plan envisions a future for Charleston County where all residents are connected to parks, schools, and other important destinations via an interconnected network of safe, comfortable, and convenient walking and bicycling infrastructure.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



CHARLESTON COUNTY

## PEOPLE 2 PARKS

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

JANUARY 2016

Study developed by:





# PEOPLE TO PARKS PLAN

STEP  
1

## CREATE A COUNTYWIDE GREENWAY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

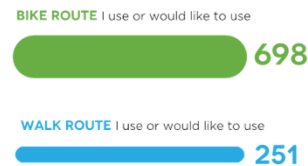
At the center of this study is a proposed greenway network derived from previous planning efforts and refined through input from project stakeholders. This greenway network consists of a comprehensive interconnected system throughout the urban, suburban, and rural areas of Charleston County.

A survey and an online interactive mapping tool reached over 3,100 residents. The online map resulted in:

**TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS DRAWN**



**TOTAL NUMBER OF LINES DRAWN**



STEP  
2

## PRIORITIZE GREENWAY NETWORK PROJECTS BASED ON NEED AND DEMAND

This mapping analysis, which incorporates Charleston County's objective ranking system criteria, provides a prioritization score for all projects to allow for a rational, strategic approach to network development. The prioritized bicycle and pedestrian network recommendations provide the greatest benefit in an equitable manner throughout Charleston County.

STEP  
3

## ESTABLISH A SIGNATURE SPINE ROUTE EXTENDING ACROSS CHARLESTON COUNTY

### SPINE CONCEPT

The spine concept grew out of a need for establishing a primary cross-county route that would seamlessly connect the county's urban and rural areas, link municipalities to one another, and capitalize on existing facilities and community destinations.

The spine is intended to serve as the core cohort of greenway projects. This is reflected as Phase 1 in the network buildout timeline. Subsequent projects will spur off of the spine, making logical connections to the next untouched tier of parks and other destinations.



STEP  
4

## DEVELOP A PHASED TIMELINE FOR BUILDING THE NETWORK PLAN

PHASE 1

### FACILITY TYPE MILEAGE

Bicycle Route	0.0
Neighborhood Connector	1.4
Paved Shoulder/Bike Lane	7.8
Separated Bike Lane	4.4
Shared Use Path	39.5
Sidewalk	0.9
Intersection Improvements	2

**TOTAL MILEAGE: 54.0**

**FISCAL YEARS: 2017 - 2021**

**COST: \$38,128,820**



PHASE 2

### FACILITY TYPE MILEAGE

Bicycle Route	32.8
Neighborhood Connector	27.7
Paved Shoulder/Bike Lane	16.5
Separated Bike Lane	3.9
Shared Use Path	41.3
Sidewalk	0.0
Intersection Improvements	1

**TOTAL MILEAGE: 121.5**

**FISCAL YEARS: 2022 - 2025**

**COST: \$40,008,309**



PHASES 3-5

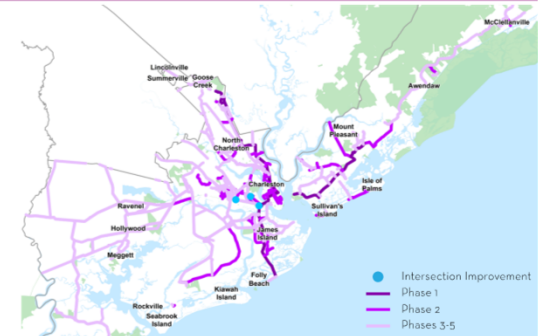
### FACILITY TYPE MILEAGE

Bicycle Route	27.0
Neighborhood Connector	3.2
Paved Shoulder/Bike Lane	109.7
Separated Bike Lane	8.9
Shared Use Path	290.8
Sidewalk	2.4

**TOTAL MILEAGE: 441.8**

**FISCAL YEARS: 2026 - 2042**

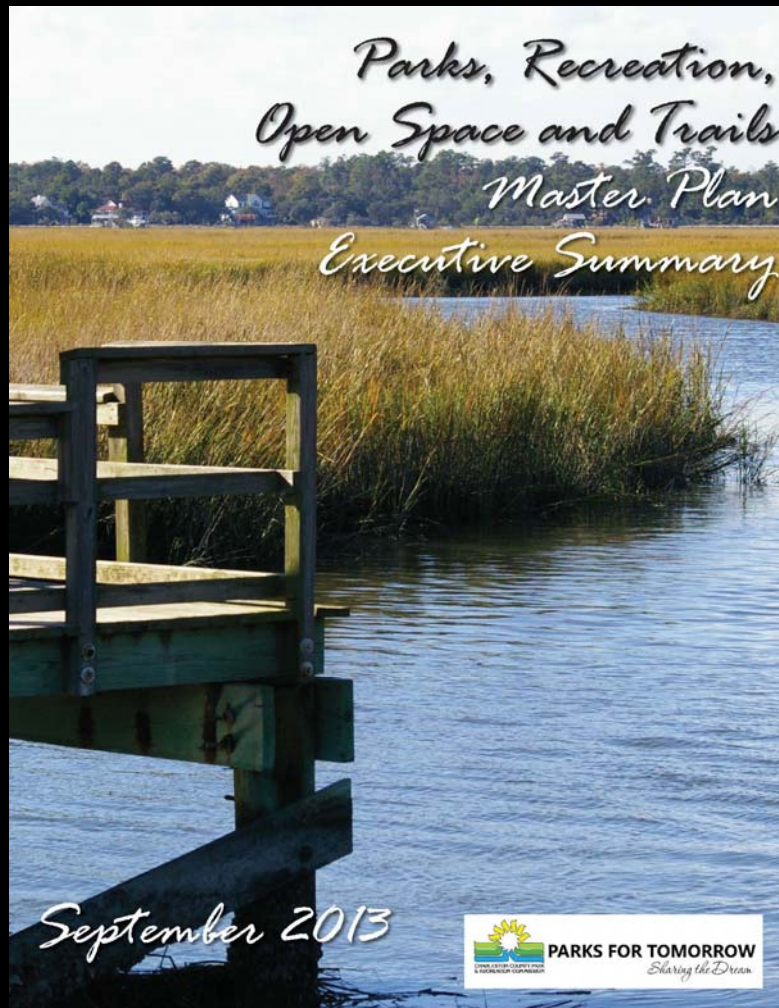
**COST: \$245,982,064**



\* Existing facilities not included on maps

# CCPRC PLAN - 2012

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## **Key Issues:**

- *Level of Service focus*
- *Program to meet needs*
- *Connectivity/trails*
- *Protect natural & cultural resources*
- *Improve access to water*
- *Minimize impact to natural resources as parks are developed*

