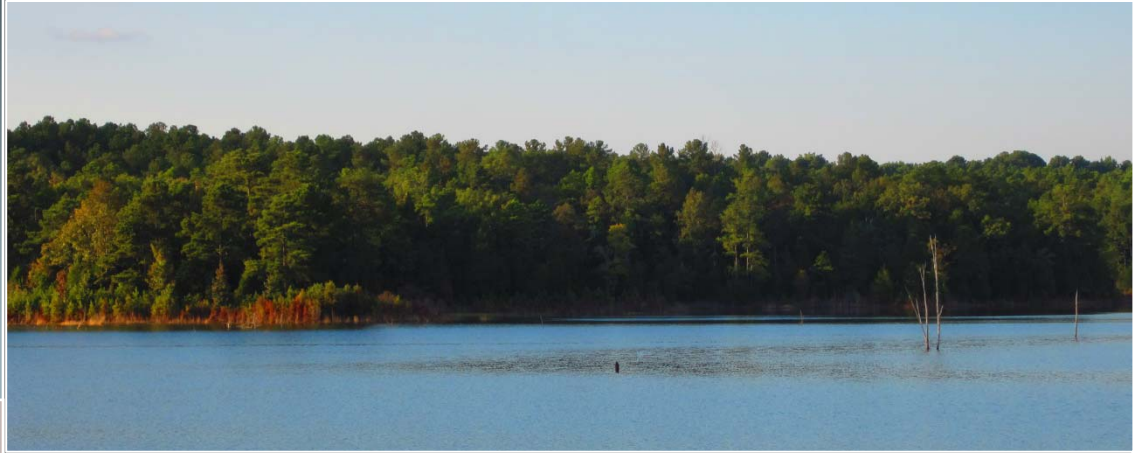


2014



# Gateway Community Livability Assessment & Recommendations Report

## Calhoun Falls, South Carolina

This report prepared by  
The Conservation Fund in  
collaboration with the  
Federal Highway  
Administration.



THE  
CONSERVATION FUND

U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

## Federal Lands Livability Initiative

REPORT PREPARED BY:



The Conservation Fund (TCF) is a national non-profit environmental organization that has protected over 7 million acres of land and water in all 50 states. Working with community, government, and business partners, TCF strives to balance economic and environmental goals.

TCF's **Conservation Leadership Network** is a team of experts that brings diverse professionals together to forge conservation solutions. The Conservation Leadership Network assists communities plan for the future, connect regions, develop leaders, and balance nature and commerce.

IN COLLABORATION WITH BY:



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides stewardship over the construction, maintenance and preservation of the Nation's highways, bridges and tunnels. FHWA also conducts research and provides technical assistance to state and local agencies in an effort to improve safety, mobility, and livability and encourage innovation.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2009, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development created the Partnership for Sustainable Communities “to help improve access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide” (<http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov>). Through the goals of this partnership, the federal government has committed significant resources and attention to implementing livability in state and local governments.

This Federal Lands Livability Initiative, a research project led by the Federal Highway Administration’s Federal Lands Highway Program, is an extension of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and provides an opportunity to direct attention to livability beyond urban areas and focus on America’s gateway communities—communities that exist in close proximity to public land. Gateway communities are often affected by decisions made by managers of the surrounding public lands. The decisions of leaders of gateway communities similarly may affect the management of resources on adjacent public lands. Gateway communities also often support public lands by offering unique recreational and cultural heritage experiences and providing for food, lodging, and other essential services for visitors. Transportation access between gateway communities and their neighboring public lands is integral to health and viability of each. Hence, special emphasis is made on transportation for the Federal Lands Livability Initiative.

Livability in gateway communities relies heavily on the coordinated decision-making and partnership between community leaders and public land managers. This Livability Assessment and Recommendations report is the result of an evaluation of natural, cultural, physical (infrastructure), commercial, and economic health of the gateway community and surrounding landscape, and their relationship to the six principles of livability:

1. Provide more transportation choices for residents, workers, and visitors.
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing and lodging choices that meet the needs of residents, workers, and visitors.
3. Enhance economic competitiveness by valuing the public lands and natural, cultural, recreational, and environmental assets associated with the gateway community.
4. Support existing gateway communities and sustain their unique character.
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investments within the community and between the gateway community and public lands.
6. Value communities, neighborhoods and landscapes, and the area’s natural, cultural heritage, and recreational assets that foster social, economic, and public health.

A Livability Assessment Team, comprised of representatives of The Conservation Fund and the Federal Highway Administration gathered information from background materials, community leaders, stakeholders, and site visits to provide this assessment as a tool to help Calhoun Falls, South Carolina, and its public land partners support and enhance livability in their area.

## South Carolina



### CALHOUN FALLS, SOUTH CAROLINA— GATEWAY TO THE RICHARD B. RUSSELL LAKE DAM AND LAKE PROJECT

The gateway community of Calhoun Falls, South Carolina, and its partner, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Richard B. Russell Dam and Lake Project (Russell Lake), were selected from the pool of applicants due to their demonstrated commitment to partnership and readiness to implement livability measures to strengthen connections to surrounding natural resources.

Calhoun Falls is located in rural Abbeville County, roughly an hour's drive from Greenville, South Carolina, and two hours from Atlanta, Georgia. The town is located at the junction of two major state highways, SC Highway 72 and SC Highway 81. Highway 72 has been re-routed around downtown Calhoun Falls as a four-lane bypass.

Textiles historically have been important to Abbeville County and the surrounding region. In recent decades, however the textile industry has declined steadily. Community leaders and civic groups in Calhoun Falls have recently begun to reach out to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a partner for community economic development, seeking to capitalize on the proximity to Russell Lake. This 26,650-acre lake is one of the most popular fishing spots in South Carolina and attracts more than one million visitors a year.

Calhoun Falls is the only town along Russell Lake that has direct lakeshore access within the town limits. Local leaders recognize this as an asset that sets Calhoun Falls apart from other communities that lie along other lakes in the region making up what is known as the "Freshwater Coast". To advance and support economic resiliency, community leaders are pursuing joint investments with managers of nearby public lands. The town has put significant effort into developing and implementing a 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan that can serve as a road map for a sustainable outdoor-recreation-focused market, creating jobs and attracting new and diverse businesses. As part of this plan, the town of Calhoun Falls has worked with USACE to take over management duties for a 123-acre lakeside site located less than a mile from downtown. This site, known as Blue Hole, is a major component of developing outdoor recreation opportunities on Russell Lake and in and around Calhoun Falls. Additionally, Calhoun Falls has secured a technical assistance award through USDA that will be administered by the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (SCNHC). Abbeville County is one of seventeen counties that make up the SCNHC. This award will provide the town with an

asset inventory, recommendations, hospitality training, and assistance with marketing and branding to better capitalize on their position within the SCNHC. This exciting opportunity aligns well with the Livability Assessment and the momentum that it has already generated by the many projects implemented to date.

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

Over the course of the four-day assessment in Calhoun Falls, review of area plans and materials, and other interviews and research, the Livability Assessment Team made the following observations regarding key opportunities and challenges associated with livability:

- Russell Lake is an untapped amenity for Calhoun Falls. The beauty of its untouched natural landscape is an asset that should be a defining characteristic of Calhoun Falls. The lake attracts more than one million annual visitors, and Calhoun Falls is poised to take advantage of its proximity to the lake as a driver for economic development.
- Calhoun Falls' downtown along Cox Avenue has "good bones." It is compact and walkable, and has the potential as a great destination. Residential neighborhoods, town hall, and public services are near the downtown, and recent upgrades to sidewalks and street crossings along Cox Avenue increase its potential as an area for the community and visitors to congregate.
- As in many rural American towns, Calhoun Falls is experiencing a decline in traditional industries, such as textile mills and manufacturing. This is increasing the local unemployment rate and increases the need for the town to find economic diversity. The town's 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan includes a focus on capitalizing on the area's natural resources by building a sustainable tourism market in Calhoun Falls. This visionary plan hopes to take advantage of what Calhoun Falls has to offer to attract visitors and new residents in search of a high-amenity lifestyle and good quality of life.
- The reduced job opportunities in Calhoun Falls have left many people of working age with little choice but to leave the area. As a result, Calhoun Falls has an aging population and an increasing demand for social and medical services.

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, the Livability Team offers the following priority recommendations. These recommendations and others are expanded upon further in the body of this report.

- **Gain support and investment for the implementation of Calhoun Falls' 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan.** Several town leaders initiated and completed a thorough market study and economic development plan for Calhoun Falls. This leadership and direction are essential for implementing the activities that are needed to enhance livability in the town. Continued awareness and buy-in among



community members, surrounding towns, counties, and state and federal governmental agencies will be vital to its success.

- **Take a regional approach.** Regional approaches and partnerships are critical to Calhoun Falls' success. As advised in an African proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Working together and following an "all boats rise" approach will enable the region to leverage internal resources and attract outside support.
- **Better connect the lake amenities to the neighborhoods of Calhoun Falls.** Russell Lake is a gem that should be embraced by the town of Calhoun Falls and its residents. The town should continue to facilitate and improve physical and non-physical connections to Russell Lake. The many strategies include improving infrastructure, such as pedestrian and bicycle paths; increasing community events, boat tours, and other related activities; and improving marketing and branding, interpretation, lake-inspired art and music, and other value-added products.
- **Focus on downtown Calhoun Falls.** For the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan to be fully successful, the town of Calhoun Falls must demonstrate to residents and visitors that Calhoun Falls is the true gateway to Russell Lake. The town should lead residents and local businesses through a downtown revitalization process to reach goals of becoming a desirable destination with a healthy and thriving downtown businesses and amenities.
- **Develop a multilayered approach to funding sources.** Calhoun Falls should continue to work creatively to develop an inventory of potential public, private, and corporate funding sources to build a "layer cake" of investments in Calhoun Falls. Having projects that demonstrate clear vision, lasting impacts, and leveraged partnerships will be attractive propositions for many potential funders.
- **Cultivate civic and entrepreneurial leadership.** Calhoun Falls' leaders have lit many sparks from few resources. Some great initiatives are underway, and the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan provides a great vision of and guide toward the future. Given that Calhoun Falls is a small town, it is critical to involve all community members and cultivate civic leaders. Calhoun Falls should look for opportunities to build leadership skills among civic volunteers and small business entrepreneurs, and to encourage leaders to step forward as community ambassadors.
- **Become active stewards of the community's character and natural resources.** Just as the preservation of community character and downtown infrastructure is important to developing and sustaining a sense of place, the conservation of the natural landscape is important to preserving this defining element of Calhoun Falls. It is important that the town and community recognize the economic value of its natural landscape as the foundation for sustainable tourism and economic development. It is

the community's character and the natural resources within and just beyond Calhoun Falls that will make it a desired destination that will attract visitors as well as create a more livable community that will attract and retain residents and businesses.



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# INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT LIVABILITY—PRINCIPLES FOR GATEWAY COMMUNITIES

Former U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood defines livability as tying the quality and location of transportation facilities to broader opportunities such as access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safe streets.

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development created the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This partnership developed six Principles of Livability. While substantial work is being done to support, promote, and implement livability nationally, the Federal Lands Livability Initiative focuses on what *livability* means and how it is measured in gateway communities.

For the purposes of this report as part of the Federal Lands Livability Initiative, livability in gateway communities is defined as using existing natural and physical assets and ongoing investments to sustain and enhance community health and well-being (including economic resiliency, ecological functionality, and social health) for residents and visitors. One of the common characteristics of gateway communities is that they provide essential services, such as food and lodging, to visitors of our nation's public lands. Gateway communities attract both visitors and residents who are seeking unique recreational and cultural heritage experiences. Gateway communities face distinctive challenges and must work in a symbiotic relationship with public land partners to overcome these challenges. As such, we propose using an adapted version of the six Principles of Livability, as follows (adapted text is italicized):

1. Provide more transportation choices *for residents, workers, and visitors.*
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing *and lodging choices that meet the needs of residents, workers, and visitors.*
3. Enhance economic competitiveness *by valuing the public lands and natural, cultural, recreational, and environmental assets associated with the gateway community.*
4. Support existing *gateway communities and sustain their unique character.*
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investments *within the community and between the gateway community and public lands.*
6. Value communities, neighborhoods, *and landscapes and the area's natural, cultural heritage, and recreational assets that foster social, economic, and public health.*

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

In September of 2012, The Conservation Fund (TCF) in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration and a steering committee comprised of representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Land Management, commenced a two-year Federal Lands Livability Initiative. Central to this initiative was strengthening livability capacity in selected gateway communities and their neighboring public lands, with particular emphasis on improving transportation access and options in ways that would support livability.

Selected communities receive technical assistance in the form of a livability assessment and a subsequent action-planning workshop. This two-step process is designed to help communities identify potential projects to improve livability and plan for project implementation. The livability assessment can be used as a baseline for enhancing or improving existing conditions, while communities and public land partners use the workshop to spur implementation of on-the-ground livability improvement projects.

The livability assessment involves reviewing and evaluating the characteristics of a gateway community and its nearby public lands and then summarizing observations and recommendations in a written report. The assessment team (consisting of TCF and FHWA representatives) evaluates the natural, cultural, physical infrastructure, commercial, and economic health of the community and surrounding landscape, with a focus on how these factors relate to the six principles of livability.

The assessment process consists of a site visit; interviews with key stakeholders; and review of reports, brochures, plans, websites, news articles, and other relevant materials. The assessment looks at attractions; visitor services; physical infrastructure; organizational capacity and partnerships; the condition and preservation of resources; economic development; public support for sustainable tourism and livability; and education, outreach, and marketing.

This report is the result of these efforts. In addition to summarizing findings, the report provides specific recommendations for planning and implementing livability improvements, with an emphasis on the challenges and opportunities that are unique to gateway communities and their nearby public lands.

### Criteria for Selection of Communities

The Federal Lands Livability Initiative announced a nationwide request for applications to federal public land managers with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Land Management. To evaluate applicants and determine appropriate candidates for the initiative, the Livability Initiative Steering Committee evaluated four main criteria:

1. The selected community must be a gateway community, that is, a community directly adjacent to or near public lands managed by a federal agency that actively provides services to public land visitors. Ideally, the community will identify itself as a “gateway

community," willingly associates itself with the public land, and views the public land as a destination and asset for tourists and residents alike.

2. Leaders from the selected community and public land must demonstrate evidence of an existing collaborative partnership.
3. The selected communities and associated public lands will represent (as a group) a mix of community types with diverse geographies, community size, and socioeconomic characteristics.
4. Leaders from the selected gateway community and associated public lands will demonstrate a level of readiness to engage in this initiative, including participation in the assessment and subsequent community action planning workshop.

On the basis of these criteria, the community of Calhoun Falls, South Carolina, and its nearby public lands were selected to be part of the Federal Lands Livability Initiative.

### Calhoun Falls Assessment Process

The assessment visit to Calhoun Falls, South Carolina was conducted from September 30 to October 3, 2013. The local assessment design team developed the itinerary, which involved visiting the downtown and neighborhoods of Calhoun Falls, surrounding public lands, major transportation routes, and other destinations of importance to livability in and around the town. The team also talked with community and public land stakeholders to gather information about the unique character of this gateway community, livability challenges and opportunities, access to public lands and other public services, and other related issues. The planning team provided current studies, plans, and other materials to familiarize the assessment team with the area's resources and trends in livability. (See the appendix for a copy of the itinerary.)

The Livability Assessment Team worked with the local planning team to customize the initiative to meet the community's specific needs and objectives. To this end, the Livability Assessment Team discussed with local planning team members their goals for participating in the Livability Initiative. The four goals identified by the Calhoun Falls planning team are shown below:

#### CALHOUN FALLS GATEWAY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT GOALS

- Create a regional destination by broadening support for Calhoun Falls as a gateway community and enhancing livability within the county and region.
- Realize the economic and community opportunities of being a gateway community and demonstrate the value of natural resources to livability and the economy.
- Create new revenue streams.
- Couple Livability Initiative actions with the ongoing implementation of the town's 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan.



# ASSESSMENT AREA BACKGROUND

The assessment area for this report is the town of Calhoun Falls, South Carolina, the gateway community to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Richard B. Russell Lake and Dam Project (Russell Lake), which borders the western side of the town's limits. The town is approximately 3.5 square miles and was founded at the junction of the Savannah Valley Railroad and the Georgia, Carolina, and Northern Railroad. With the growth of the textile industry in the early 1900s, the town began to grow, and Calhoun Falls came to resemble typical textile-mill villages of the time, with mill-built housing, schools, and a company store.

Calhoun Falls is located in rural Abbeville County, almost an hour's drive from Greenville, South Carolina, and two hours from Atlanta, Georgia. The town is located at the junction of two major state highways, SC Highway 72 and SC Highway 81. Highway 72 has been re-routed around downtown Calhoun Falls as a four-lane bypass.

The textile industry has been in decline in recent decades, and community leaders and civic groups have reached out to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a partner in community economic development and to capitalize on the proximity to the 26,650-acre Russell Lake. Russell Lake is one of the most popular fishing spots in the state and hosts more than one million visitors a year. Calhoun Falls is the only Freshwater Coast community in South Carolina with direct lake access within its town limits.



## CALHOUN FALLS DEMOGRAPHICS

**Population (2010):** 2,004

**Population Growth (2000-2010):** -14.1%

**Racial Composition (2010):**

53% Black/African American

44% White alone

1.9% Two or more races

1.2% Hispanic/Latino

0.5% Native American

0.0% Asian

**Median Age (2010):** 40.8 years

**Median Household Income (2010):**

\$29,261

**Residents Living in Poverty (2010):**

20.8% of all residents; 38.4% of children

**Unemployment (2013):** 11.8%

**Educational Attainment (2011):** High

School Diploma: 41.9%, Bachelor's Degree:

2.4%, Graduate or Professional Degree:

2.6%

**Top Four Industries (2011):**

1. Manufacturing

2. Retail Trade

3. Utilities

4. Construction

**Commuting:** 84.6% drive alone,

13.9% carpool, 1.4% walk;

Mean travel time to work: 24 minutes

**Housing (2011):** 977 total housing units;

825 occupied, 152 vacant (13 for seasonal

uses); 65.2% owner occupied, 34.8%

renter occupied

(U.S. Census)





## RICHARD B. RUSSELL LAKE AND DAM PROJECT (RUSSELL LAKE)

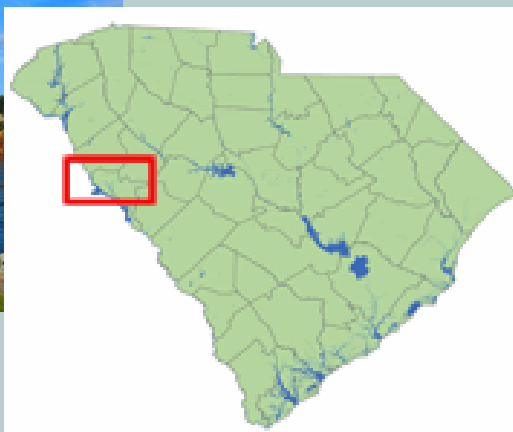
**Land Manager:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District.

**Acreage:** 26,650 acres of water, 26,500 acres of land, and 540 miles of shoreline. The lake is located on the upper Savannah River; 30 miles downstream from Hartwell Dam and 37 miles upstream from J. Strom Thurmond Dam. The chain of three lakes is 120 miles long.

**Amenities:** Visitor centers are located at the powerhouse and the Natural Resource Management Center, off US Highway 72. The project has 21 state-operated recreation areas (8 in Georgia and 13 in South Carolina); 1 locally operated recreation area (Blue Hole Recreation Area in Calhoun Falls); and 1 marina lease. The project also includes about 600 prehistoric and historic sites, ranging in age from the end of the last Ice Age to the early 20th century. Some of these are now under water, but many of them can be visited. Due to federal laws that prohibit private exclusive use of public lands surrounding the lake, the area remains strikingly beautiful and picturesque. Many visitors express their appreciation with the Corps of Engineers for maintaining the aesthetic qualities of the lake and shoreline to offer a unique experience for outdoor enthusiasts. With its undeveloped shorelines, Russell Lake provides an outdoor experience that goes beyond just fishing; visitors enjoy the beautiful scenery and viewing of the abundant wildlife.

**Access:** Visitor access to the dam, visitor centers, fishing piers, boat launches, and other state and local recreation areas is available at turnoff points from highways along the South Carolina and Georgia lakeshores. SC Highway 81 and SC Highway 72 provide major access to the lake around the Calhoun Falls area.

Richard B. Russell Lake and Dam has **more than 1.1 million visitors per year**. Visitors can enjoy a wide variety of recreational activities, including water sports, hunting, hiking, picnicking, camping, and fishing.







### CALHOUN FALLS STATE PARK

**Land Manager:** South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism.

**Acreage:** 318 acres; direct access to Russell Lake.

**Amenities:** Calhoun Falls State Park’s campground is considered one of the best in the South Carolina state park system. There are 86 standard campsites, 14 walk-in tent sites, 1 rental community building, 36 rental boat slips in the marina, tennis and basketball courts, and a 1.75-mile loop trail.

**Access:** Visitor access to Calhoun Falls State Park is located directly off of SC Highway 81, less than two miles from the downtown of Calhoun Falls. Lake users are able to access the State Park via a boat ramp. **More than 300,000 people use the park each year.**





### BLUE HOLE RECREATION AREA

**Land Manager:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District; managed by town of Calhoun Falls.

**Acreage:** 123 acres; direct access to Russell Lake.

**Amenities:** Pavilions, picnic sites, a fishing pier, a boat ramp and floating dock, restrooms, and parking. The town council has approved design and construction funding for the addition of a stage. The Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition coordinates events held at Blue Hole and has purchased kayaks with the intent of renting them at Blue Hole during the summer season.

**Access:** Visitor access to the Blue Hole Recreation Area is off of SC Highway 81, less than one mile from the downtown of Calhoun Falls. Abbeville County is scheduled to repair the Blue Hole road to maintain access to the Blue Hole boat ramp.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Assessment Design Team:

Joseph Cade, *Town of Calhoun Falls*  
Chris Cowan, *Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce*  
Fay Crocker, *Abbeville Federal Credit Union*  
Carey Elliott, *Town of Calhoun Falls*  
Lee Garrett, *Town of Calhoun Falls*  
Paul Gilbert, *Town of Calhoun Falls*  
Delores Graham, *Park Sterling Bank*  
Tuck Hanna, *Town of Calhoun Falls*  
Lynne and Robert Hester  
Glenn Kowalski, *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Russell Lake Project*  
David Rice  
Horace Thomas  
Earl Wright, *Town of Calhoun Falls*

Assessment Participants:

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Bruce Cooley, *Abbeville County*  
David Drake, *Calhoun Falls State Park*  
Delores Graham, *Park Sterling Bank*  
Kendall Gunter, *Greater Abbeville Chamber of Commerce*  
Reverend T. Keith Hicks, *Calhoun Falls Church of God*  
Sam Hill, *CSX Railroad (retired)*  
Donna Howell, *Calhoun Falls Garden Club*  
Dr. Simon Hudson, *University of South Carolina*  
Sam Leaman, *Upper Savannah Council of Governments*  
Fred Lewis, *Tour Historic Abbeville* Lee Logan, *Town of Due West*  
Deirdre McCullough, *Calhoun Falls Charter School*  
Mary Beth McCubbin, *Clemson University*  
Yolanda Morris, *Federal Highway Administration, South Carolina Federal Aid Office*  
Stephen Pettigrew, *Pettigrew Hardware*  
Lauren Ponder, *South Carolina National Heritage Corridor*  
Kathy Rice, *Calhoun Falls Garden Club & Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition*  
Bradley Robinson, *Calhoun Falls State Park*  
Mindy Rogers, *Calhoun Falls Town Council*

Dorothy Sherard, *Calhoun Falls Resident*  
Mike Sullivan, *South Carolina Department of Transportation*  
Buster Taylor, *Abbeville County School Board & Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition*  
Jimmy Tinch, *South Carolina Department of Corrections (retired)*  
Kim Westbury, *South Carolina Department of Commerce*  
Jeff Wilson, *WCTEL*

Lodging Provided By:

The Belmont Inn, *Abbeville, South Carolina*

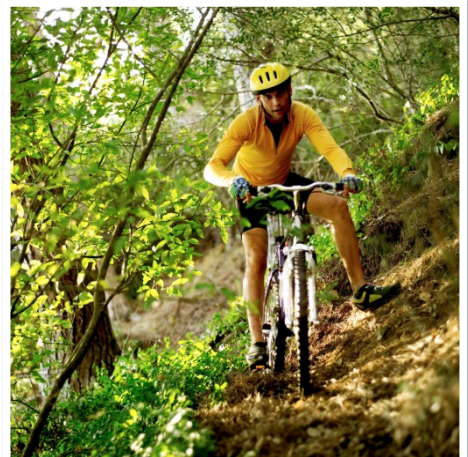
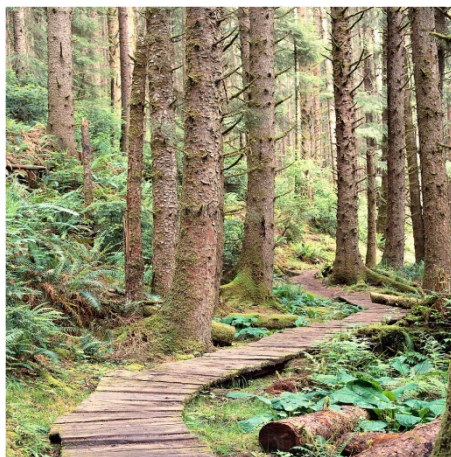
Meals Hosted By:

The Belmont Inn, *Abbeville, South Carolina*  
The Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce  
Clifford's Marina, *Elberton, Georgia*  
Marlene's Kountry Kitchen, *Calhoun Falls, South Carolina*  
Napoleon's, *Calhoun Falls, South Carolina*  
Village Grill, *Abbeville, South Carolina*





LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE 1:  
PROVIDE MORE  
TRANSPORTATION CHOICES  
FOR RESIDENTS, WORKERS, &  
VISITORS





# PROVIDE MORE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES FOR RESIDENTS, WORKERS, & VISITORS

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## TRANSPORTATION ACCESS & CHOICE: KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Vehicle transportation routes into Calhoun Falls, Russell Lake, and surrounding areas are in good condition.
- There is no public transportation serving Calhoun Falls.
- Good walkability exists in the town's compact downtown area along Cox Avenue and adjoining neighborhoods. Outside the downtown, few streets have sidewalks or bicycle lanes for everyday travel or recreation.
- Good parking is available at lake access points. The team observed a need for better wayfinding signage to direct people to these access points.
- A major opportunity exists to connect the downtown with surrounding natural amenities, schools, and community services with multiple transportation modes.
- The intersection of SC Highway 72 and SC Highway 81 is a major decision point for travelers entering Calhoun Falls and its downtown area along Cox Avenue.
- CSX freight rail travels through Calhoun Falls. This route is also under consideration as part of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor.

Transportation infrastructure is a fundamental part of any community because it provides people with access to jobs, education, goods and services, and recreational activities of all kinds. In gateway communities, transportation contributes to livability through investments that enhance access and connections to services for residents and visitors, while providing connections that highlight the character of the community as an entrance to our nation's natural treasures. Transportation investments can mean safer highways and intersections, context-sensitive roadway design, and multi-purpose trails, as well as downtown enhancements that encourage walking and biking that provide health benefits, social interaction, and access to local businesses, services, and recreational attractions.

FHWA's Livability Initiative promotes strategies to encourage transportation choices and connections into rural and gateway area transportation networks at the local and regional level. To read more about FHWA and Livability visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/>.

FHWA has identified the following strategies for rural livability:

- Add sidewalks, curb extensions, crosswalks, parking, and landscaping to make small towns more walkable and economically viable.
- Build and connect bicycling and trail networks.
- Link ridesharing, rural on-demand transit vans, and commuter buses to regional employment centers and services.
- Improve connections between neighborhoods and Main Streets, schools and parks, and housing and services.
- Coordinate town and county plans and infrastructure investments with a regional vision for growth and resource protection.
- Incorporate community design and land use planning, mobility and accessibility, public health, environmental protection, and economic development.<sup>1</sup>

As a gateway community with direct access to Russell Lake, the town of Calhoun Falls must work with federal and state land managers to ensure safe connections and access through a mix of transportation modes that connect the town with the surrounding area. The major highway infrastructure of SC Highway 72 and SC Highway 81 is in good condition, which generally makes vehicle travel to and around Calhoun Falls easy and safe. However, the Assessment Team observed several areas where transportation investments could enhance livability for residents and visitors. The Assessment Team recommends several site-specific improvement projects to facilitate access between Calhoun Falls and surrounding public lands and to strengthen wayfinding, support additional recreational users, and meet the service needs of residents and visitors.

This section includes a set of priority recommendations to enhance transportation access and choices followed by a set of recommendations on transportation elements related to access, connections, and rural public and school transportation.

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

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### IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DOWNTOWN AND BLUE HOLE RECREATION AREA

The Blue Hole Recreation Area is less than a mile from the Calhoun Falls downtown area. Blue Hole provides direct lake access, walking trails, day use, and event space. Since Blue Hole has come under town management, many maintenance improvements have made it a destination for day use by residents; and the community has held several successful events at its newly renovated pavilions. Creating safe and convenient multimodal access from the downtown area and residential areas to Blue Hole would be an ideal transportation connection project because it would support multimodal transportation choices and increase access to recreational opportunities and community events. Making these connections would also support economic

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Livability Initiative, "Transportation and Rural Livability," [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/fact\\_sheet/transandrurallivability.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/fact_sheet/transandrurallivability.cfm).

development as they help to establish Calhoun Falls as a recreational destination. Increased opportunities for residents to enjoy recreational opportunities, retail options, and services provided by area businesses would translate to an economical gain for the area as a whole.



*SC Highway 81 approaching Highway 72 from Blue Hole to downtown.*

## Recommendations

- The town, with the state park and USACE, should initiate conversations with the regional SCDOT transportation planners and Upper Savannah Council of Governments (USCOG) to discuss project feasibility, opportunities, and potential funding sources. The Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) funds, as well as Transportation Alternatives competitive funds may be applicable for this project. (See Resources and Case Studies section for more information and funding sources.)
- A major issue for pedestrians, bicyclists, and others (golf carts, equestrians, etc.) seeking to access Blue Hole is crossing SC Highway 72, a four-lane highway, and negotiating a narrow bridge over railroad tracks. The town should work with SCDOT and the state park to capture traffic counts and user data for people entering Blue Hole and the state park, as well as cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists entering and exiting the intersection of SC Highway 72 and SC Highway 81. Collecting this data will help to demonstrate the need for access improvement. The town also should invite the railroad company, CSX, to discuss railroad crossing strategies.
- Calhoun Falls State Park is located just across the street from the elementary and high schools, and Blue Hole is just a short mile down the road. This presents a great opportunity to provide educational and recreational opportunities, but safe and convenient access routes are needed. The town should discuss with local schools, Abbeville County, and SCDOT about educating children, parents, and community members on pedestrian safety and creating safe crossings and right-of-way access to nearby public lands and the Calhoun Falls' downtown area and neighborhoods.
- As Blue Hole is within a short distance of the Calhoun Falls State Park, stronger trail linkages should be made to connect the two. The town applied to South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT) for a \$100,000 grant that would



*Narrow bridge over railroad tracks on SC Highway 81 between Blue Hole and downtown.*

have been used to construct the first phase of a walking/biking/golf cart trail connecting Blue Hole and the Calhoun Falls State Park. Unfortunately, SCPRT is unable to provide funding, but it supports the plan overall. The town should continue to pursue this multimodal expansion project and to look for opportunities to add multimodal linkages to downtown Calhoun Falls and other area amenities. (See Resources and Case Studies section for additional trail resources.)

### RESOURCE: Rails-To-Trails Conservancy

Rails-To-Trails Conservancy (RTC) provides a wealth of ideas and resources for trail projects. While RTC does not directly finance trail projects, it is a great resource for information about how to acquire land, construct trails, and manage trails over time. The RTC website includes federal and state funding sources, as well as private foundations, local government tools, and nontraditional funding sources such as voluntary contributions and fundraising music festivals. See [http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding\\_financing.html](http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding_financing.html).

### IMPROVE WAYFINDING SIGNAGE TO AND AROUND CALHOUN FALLS

Wayfinding, interpretive, and directional signage is important for gateway and destination communities. Signs are needed to provide quick, clear, and helpful information as travelers come to enjoy a new experience. A consistent wayfinding plan provides an on-the-ground connection for visitors, as well as a critical support piece for marketing and branding efforts that may include driving and walking tours, daily visitor itineraries, and/or organized outings. The town of Calhoun Falls has made significant progress by investing in attractive town gateway signs and Blue Hole signage, and has used a Palmetto grant to improve street signs throughout the town. In addition, as part of a recent partnership, the South Carolina Heritage Corridor will be providing a wayfinding and interpretive signage assessment.





## Recommendations

- Calhoun Falls has already taken the first steps in improving signage in the community. As the town moves forward, this is good opportunity to create a signage plan with a visual brand that signals a destination and makes the connection between the town and Russell Lake. A wayfinding signage plan can include directional signage to outdoor recreation access points, cultural and heritage points of interest, and designated informational areas, such as kiosks. Wayfinding signs should be at multiple scales to provide direction for drivers and other interpretive information for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to and from Calhoun Falls downtown areas to nearby attractions.

### WAYFINDING: Yadkin Valley, North Carolina

Four counties in northwest North Carolina banded together to create the Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor Partnership. Under this partnership, each county placed “Welcome to Yadkin Valley” and wayfinding signs across the area to lead visitors to cultural, recreational, agribusiness, and heritage sites of interest. The signs are among efforts to market the upper Yadkin Valley as a destination. Funding came predominantly from a National Scenic Byway grant with a 20 percent match from the local governments within the four counties. See <http://www.goyadkinvalley.com/content/news-item-three#.UyBqdz9dVNO>.



- The Calhoun Falls State Park currently has only a few directional signs on SC Highway 81 and no prominent directional signage from the town or SC Highway 71. The town should work with the state park and SCDOT to improve directional wayfinding signage from all directions while coordinating any signage improvement efforts within the town of Calhoun Falls.
- Calhoun Falls is set in a rural landscape, but it is not that far from some of the most populated cities of the Southeast. The town, in partnership with USACE and the state park, should work with SCDOT to investigate opportunities for informational signage directing travelers on I-85 and in populated areas along US Highway 72 and US Highway



81 (e.g. in Athens, Georgia ) to the recreational resources of Russell Lake, Calhoun Falls State Park, and the Freshwater Coast.

- During the assessment, USACE representatives noted that there has not been maintenance or improvement to USACE Russell Lake access signage in quite some time. This is an opportunity for USACE, the town, and SCDOT to address USACE signage in a coordinated effort with signage improvements in Calhoun Falls, which could include changes in sign locations, design, and information about town services.

## WAYFINDING: U.S. Forest Service & Unicoi County, Tennessee

As the U.S. Forest Service prepared to replace its brown directional signs in Unicoi County, local leaders had a request for the Cherokee National Forest. The county asked that the Forest Service use the signs to route people from Interstate 26 through the downtown areas rather than via back roads. By doing so, this increased business in downtown areas and provided the visitors to the recreational lands with services such as food and shops. With minimal public investment, the county and its communities gained an economic win, and the U.S. Forest Service benefitted from the community goodwill.

## RESOURCE: The USACE Handshake Program

The Handshake Program offers USACE's installations a source of seed money for partnership projects. The intent of this program is to initiate new or enhance existing recreation and natural resource management opportunities by encouraging USACE projects to undertake partnering initiatives. This funding opportunity encourages local organizations to partner with the USACE to construct, operate, and/or maintain local partnering projects. Examples of funded projects include trail construction that includes interpretation, the expansion of camping facilities, improvements to provide accessible fishing in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and public art and murals. See

<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm> for a description of the program or

<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/handshake/stories.cfm> for success stories.



*Gateway sign at the entrance to Calhoun Falls.*



*View of downtown Calhoun Falls from SC Highway 72.*

- The Calhoun Falls gateway signs convey a sense of community pride to visitors upon arrival to the town limits. Once visitors reach the downtown area, however, there are few signs that show they have arrived. The intersection of SC Highway 81 and SC Highway 72 is a prime opportunity for destination signage that alerts visitors that they have reached Calhoun Falls and to suggest that the town's charm makes it worth a stop.



*Silos at the intersection of SC Highway 72 and 81 that sit just before the downtown area of Calhoun Falls.*

During the assessment visit, the Assessment Team noted that infrastructure is in place to make such a statement. The existing silos at the intersection provide a place for welcoming signage that entices people to the downtown (such as "Welcome to Calhoun Falls—Gateway to Russell Lake and the Freshwater Coast!"). Such signs would announce to travelers that they have reached a destination and would express pride in the community.



*Examples of welcoming silo signs in Jonathan, Minnesota, and Hygiene, Colorado.*

## ACCESS TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO CALHOUN FALLS AND SURROUNDING PUBLIC LAND AGENCIES

To date, Calhoun Falls, Abbeville County, and the USCOG have not accessed federal or state transportation funding for transportation improvement projects in Calhoun Falls. SCDOT and FHWA have funding programs for rural areas to improve transportation access and multimodal use, but it is important to understand the available resources and to tap the right resource or program for the desired project.

During the assessment, town staff was introduced to Yolanda Morris, the Federal Highway Administration's South Carolina Federal Aid Office representative, and Mike Sullivan, the regional planner for the South Carolina Department of Transportation Intermodal Planning Division. Ms. Morris and Mr. Sullivan joined town staff to tour the main transportation infrastructure in Calhoun Falls and road access to USACE public lands, the state park, and the Blue Hole Recreation area.

SCDOT's Intermodal Planning Division is the main point of contact for Calhoun Falls and Abbeville County for transportation planning and offers potential state funding for transportation improvements. FHWA's South Carolina Federal Aid Office is the main point of contact to access information and to develop potential projects that meet criteria to access federal funding. SCDOT and FHWA are the major partners (in addition to the USCOG) to address wayfinding signage, highway improvements, and access issues. Therefore, the town and county, with assistance of the USCOG, should actively pursue a relationship with SCDOT and state representatives at FHWA as a priority for transportation planning and projects.

Additionally, Lewis Grimm currently leads the transportation planning team for FHWA's Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD). EFLHD provides engineering and planning services and directs funding for a coordinated system of public roads on federal land. USACE managers of Russell Lake, in coordination with the town of Calhoun Falls and Abbeville County, should discuss with EFLHD the area's priority projects to improve multimodal access to the surrounding federal lands.

### Recommendations

- Transportation is and should be part of any economic development strategies in Calhoun Falls. The Assessment Team recommends that the town look for opportunities to integrate priority transportation enhancements in its 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan to (1) support community economic development and quality of life; and (2) demonstrate to potential funders and partners that transportation is a strategic investment that the town has identified as a priority.
- It is important that all potential projects demonstrate a demand for investment. To this end, the town needs to gather traffic counts (especially at major intersections, attractions, and destinations); multimodal user counts (vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians,

etc.); visitor survey data (number of visitors, where are they coming from, etc.), recreational user counts (boaters, hunters, fishers, etc.); and other pertinent quantitative data. If projects would improve safety, accident data is also needed. The Abbeville County Transportation Commission (CTC) should be able to provide or assist in gathering traffic counts in Calhoun Falls.

- As the town continues to discuss potential transportation improvements to enhance livability, the Livability Assessment Team recommends that it engage Abbeville County, USCOG, and state transportation planners and federal land transportation managers to discuss planning processes and roles, and to identify short- and long-term priorities. Priorities should focus on the big picture—those projects that improve access for the greatest number, are environmentally sustainable, and positively impact economic growth. The Livability Assessment Team recommends including as priorities transportation projects, especially those projects that improve connections between the town and surrounding public lands and Russell Lake, provide better multimodal access to surrounding public lands, and improve directional and wayfinding signage.
- In South Carolina, federal transportation funding is allocated to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Council of Governments (COGs). These funds, called Guidesshare, are based on study area population. MPOs, COGs, and SCDOT jointly make project selection for the Guidesshares based on projects included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). COGs are guided by their Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) for recommended projects. Currently, USCOG’s LRTP supports and encourages bicycle and pedestrian facilities where practical and feasible. The LRTP recommends that “Paved shoulders should be considered for all rural facility upgrades. Sidewalks should always be considered for connecting people to school, work, or shopping in small communities”. The town should review the LRTP to find opportunities to align current and future transportation goals related to livability in Calhoun Falls and discuss with the USCOG integrating projects into future updates of the LRTP. See <http://www.uppersavannah.com/transportation-documents/Long-Range%20Transportation%20Plan.pdf>.
- SCDOT has designated in the South Carolina Strategic Corridor System Plan part of SC Highway 72—the Olde 96 Corridor (which includes the segment in Calhoun Falls)—as a “state significant corridor.” The classification of highway corridors is part of SCDOT’s strategic planning to spend up to 20 percent of their programmatic funding on the U.S. Highway System. Calhoun Falls should discuss with SCDOT potential ways to leverage this designation and discuss potential enhancements that would meet requirements for project spending under this strategic plan. See <http://www.scdot.org/inside/pdfs/planning/strategiccorridorplan.pdf>.
- The town should work with the Abbeville County Transportation Commission and USCOG to align planned goals and objectives and leverage money to meet federal program

match criteria. It is important to look for opportunities to integrate projects into county, regional, and state transportation plans and initiatives, such as those mentioned above.

## RAISING LOCAL MATCH:

### The Wilbur Wright Trail in Henry County, Indiana

In 2004, Henry County was awarded Transportation Enhancement funding (now available as Transportation Alternatives Program) from FHWA for the construction of a two-mile, asphalt-surface pedestrian and bicycle trail that connected the county's YMCA and a trailhead at Wilbur Wright Fish and Wildlife Area. In total, the trail would cost \$1,403,700. To raise the local 20-percent match, the nonprofit Healthy Communities of Henry County developed a fundraising campaign that engaged local residents as sponsors. For a donation of \$450-2,500, individuals or businesses could have benches, bike racks, interpretive signs, kiosks, or mile markers installed in their name. Local leaders also utilized funds from the Henry County food and beverage tax, the Henry County Community Foundation, United Way of Indiana, New Castle Redevelopment Commission, Henry County Hospital Foundation, and others. The part of the trail that has been constructed to date serves as equal parts tourist attraction and recreational outlet. The county is moving forward with an additional construction of 1.1 miles and is already raising funds through the community.

- Once data is collected, transportation goals and objectives determined, and community priorities discussed, Calhoun Falls should present potential projects with SCDOT, USCOG, and the CTC and discuss feasibility. These agencies can help the town navigate funding programs and criteria for assistance. For many transportation enhancement programs a 20 percent match is needed. The matching funds can be provided by state, local, or private entities. Although funds from other federal agencies cannot be used to pay for the local portion of a federal-aid project, some flexibility exists in three instances:
  1. Transportation alternatives projects: Funds from other federal agencies may count toward the non-federal share of transportation enhancement projects.
  2. Funds from federal land management agencies: As part of Department of Defense federal land management, funds from the USACE may be used as a nonfederal match on all Title 23 (highway) projects, as well as public transportation projects under Chapter 53 of Title 49 (transportation and transit).



3. Funds from the Federal Lands Highway Program: These funds may be used as a nonfederal match on all Title 23 projects, as well as public transportation projects under Chapter 53 of Title 49 that provide such access.

Additionally, HUD Community Development Block Grants can be used to match federal-aid highway funds.

A major key to success is creativity. Beyond capital improvement grant programs and commerce and tourism grants, local governments can also contribute funding from bonds and sales tax referendums. Donations can be sought from area chambers of commerce, hospitals, banks, parent-teacher associations, and/or community foundations. For multimodal transportation projects, fundraising campaigns might also sell bricks, benches, or bike racks engraved with the donor's name. Some states allow the value of volunteer time, labor, or services donated toward a project to be credited toward the project match. (South Carolina allows this to be done only with considerable consultation with SCDOT.)

## SPECIFIC TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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### TRANSPORTATION ACCESS & CONNECTION FOR MULTIPLE MODES

Safe multimodal transportation access is essential for moving people to their destinations on foot and by bicycle, personal vehicle, and public transportation. Providing alternatives that do not rely on personal vehicles increases mobility, and enables people without cars to get to their desired destinations. Pedestrian and bicycle access also improves public health through physical activity and can generate support for the local economy by creating safe, convenient access to area businesses.



*Sidewalk improvements in downtown Calhoun Falls.*

The town of Calhoun Falls has made enhancements to Cox Avenue by improving sidewalks and street crossings, making the downtown more attractive and safer for pedestrians. As the recreational gateway to Russell Lake, Calhoun Falls also has the opportunity to incorporate multimodal transportation into its overall identity and to extend access beyond its downtown. Creating a seamless, multimodal connection between the downtown residential neighborhoods and surrounding public lands will provide safe and convenient access to the downtown and nearby recreational destinations. This will help to attract tourists to Calhoun Falls downtown, help local

businesses and the economy, and expand recreational opportunities for residents.

## Recommendations

- As a compact community, Calhoun Falls is already very walkable, and improvements to condition, access, and safety will further encourage walking. The town should strategically address these improvements through a bicycle and pedestrian mobility plan. The Assessment Team recommends that the town work with public land managers, neighboring towns, county, USCOG, SCDOT, and bike users/groups to develop a plan that facilitates convenient and safe walking and bicycling infrastructure to connect Calhoun Falls downtown and neighborhoods, public lands, and nearby areas. SCDOT's Bicycle & Pedestrian Program (<http://www.scdot.org/getting/bikePed.aspx#bikePed>) is a good resource to help the town align with state objectives to provide better and safer accommodations for people who choose to walk or cycle.

### **RESOURCE: Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Measures**

The Federal Highway Administration provides a number of resources for ensuring safer transportation for all users and specific measures for improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety, including pedestrian islands, beacons, and road diets. See

[http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/)

## **BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLANNING: Lower Savannah Council of Governments**

The Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG) Bicycle and Pedestrian Regional Plan uses a holistic approach to address infrastructure, policies, and programs that affect bicycling and walking activity rather than conventional methods that consider infrastructure alone. The program's strategic plan includes a review of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and recommendations for infrastructural and non-infrastructural improvements.

The main source of funding was the SCDOT's surface transportation program, Guideshare, which programmed \$350,000 for the entire project. The projects are expected to deliver economic benefits to community residents and businesses in the form of cheaper means of transportation and the encouragement of tourism, health, and livability benefits. See <http://www.lscog.org/common/content.asp?PAGE=396>.

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL: Fountain Inn Elementary School, Greenville County, South Carolina

Fountain Inn Elementary School in Greenville County, SC received a SCDOT Safe Routes to School grant to improve the infrastructure surrounding the school so that more children can walk or bike to school. The grant helped to fund a multi-use path and sidewalks in the area near the school, which has increased the number of children walking and biking to school. The initiative is part of the Greenville County's vision for a safe, walkable, bicycle-friendly, and clean-air community. For more information on South Carolina's Safe Routes to School program, contact the current South Carolina SRTS Coordinator, Rodney Oldham at (803) 737-4073 or [OldhamR@scdot.org](mailto:OldhamR@scdot.org).

- Calhoun Falls should explore opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to and from its schools. For instance, the Safe Routes to School program (SRTS) enables and encourages America's children, including those with disabilities, to walk, bike, or use other modes of active transportation to and from school. While SRTS is only for K-8 schools, given the proximity of the John C. Calhoun Elementary School to the high school, SRTS practices could contribute to safer walking and biking conditions for older students as well.
- The width of SC Highway 72 encourages cars to travel at high speeds and discourages pedestrian traffic between Calhoun Falls and its Northside neighborhoods. Pedestrian striping is evident at Anderson and Fairfield streets, as well as at the intersection between SC Highway 72 and SC Highway 81. Safer connections with on-demand pedestrian signals, signs, flashing lights and pedestrian islands at the road's centerline could make walking safer and more appealing. This intersection—the community's "100 percent corner"—is also prime territory for signs that direct visitors to the Cox Avenue downtown, Russell Lake, and Calhoun Falls State Park and the Blue Hole Recreation Area. The intersection should set the tone of the community and be welcoming to those on foot or bike.



*Pedestrian crossing at the intersection of SC Highway 81 and SC Highway 72.*

## BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLANNING: Village of Altamont, New York

Altamont, a rural community northwest of Albany, developed a bicycle and pedestrian master plan that includes priority enhancements to three state roads that run through the community, along with connections to regional trails and local destinations. See [http://www.altaprojects.net/altamont/Altamont\\_Final\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.altaprojects.net/altamont/Altamont_Final_Plan.pdf).

- To expand outdoor recreational opportunities in Calhoun Falls and to provide residents and visitors with access to natural spaces, the town should explore shared use paths or greenways that connect the downtown, community parks, public lands, schools, community centers, and neighborhoods. The town should work with the garden club, Boy and Girl Scouts, and other community and school groups to plan, design, raise funding, and implement projects such as sign installation, information kiosks, beautification and landscaping, and bike racks and benches.
- Calhoun Falls has a community center, medical clinic, grocery, and other amenities in its downtown area. These amenities are within close proximity to one another, which allows for access by foot or bicycle; however, infrastructure may not be in place that ensures mobility for all. The town should investigate the needs of seniors, families, and disabled populations to understand barriers to access and areas for improvement. A potential approach is *Complete Streets*. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from bus stops.

### RESOURCE: Active Transportation in Small Communities

A 2012 report documents the importance of biking and walking for rural communities. Bicycling accounts for 12 percent of all trips taken in the United States. In rural communities, that number ranges between 6.9 and 9.6 percent, depending on the size and geography of the community. Nationwide, commuting by bicycle has risen 40 percent in the past decade. Active transportation facilities cost a tiny fraction of roadways and, given the pent-up demand for safe and convenient bicycling and walking networks, investments in active transportation offer taxpayers a far greater return. Biking and walking projects also create more jobs per dollar than large highway projects, and the money stays closer to home in small, local businesses.

(Rails to Trails Conservancy, *Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers: Walking and Bicycling in Small Towns and Rural America*, 2012)

## TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS: Complete Streets

Creating Complete Streets requires transportation agencies to change their approach to community roads. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Every transportation project is designed to make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists—ultimately making the town a better place to live. For more information, visit the National Complete Streets Coalition at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>

### **CASE STUDY: Complete Streets in Basalt, Colorado**

Basalt, Colorado, a town of 2,500 located about 25 miles from Aspen, adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2005. It has created a 34-page Complete Streets design manual that outlines overall street design requirements and aims to provide a comprehensive toolkit for the creation of safe, pleasant, efficient, interesting, and active mobility corridors. The design manual classifies street types, functions and design criteria for historic, bicycle, pedestrian, lighting, and infrastructure facilities. See <http://www.basalt.net/planningPdf/StreetsFinal.pdf>.

### **CASE STUDY: Allendale County, South Carolina's Pursuit of a Complete Streets Policy**

Allendale County, South Carolina, which is comprised of the towns of Allendale, Fairfax, Sycamore, and Ulmer, has a population of just over 10,000 people. As evidenced by demographic and health status data, Allendale is a struggling community. A community health assessment conducted in June 2008 concluded that the areas of most concern for the town of Allendale include the lack of available health-care providers, low employment rates, limited availability of healthy foods, neighborhood safety, reliance on health myths, limited insurance coverage, and lack of transportation. Allendale realizes it must also work to increase local awareness and educate citizens about the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating. Many citizens lack transportation and view walking as a necessity—as a negative not a positive. Advocates are working to change this mindset by reinforcing the many health benefits of walking. They have hosted a variety of walking events to encourage use of the local walking trail. This is gradually making a positive impact, as more people are walking to downtown destinations. See <http://www.scdhec.gov/administration/library/CR-010231.pdf>.



## CAPITALIZE ON BICYCLING AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

Bicycling not only is an environmentally friendly transportation alternative to driving, it is also a popular, healthy recreational activity that enhances quality of life and connections to the



*Bikes for Kicks in Greenwood, South Carolina.*

environment. Evidence from the Alliance for Biking and Walking shows that bicycling and walking projects create 11 to 14 jobs per \$1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per \$1 million spent on highway projects.<sup>2</sup> In 2012, the bicycle industry supported an estimated 1.4 million jobs; generated over \$25 billion in federal, state, and local taxes; and contributed \$81 billion to the U.S. economy.<sup>3</sup> These economic benefits extend to other industries as well. Bicycling is characterized as a “gateway activity”: 80 percent of bikers participate in one or more other outdoor activities<sup>4</sup> such as kayaking and hiking—many of the activities that Calhoun Falls and Russell Lake have to offer.

Calhoun Falls has an array of potential bicycling infrastructure and facilities, such as wide shoulders on SC Highway 72, that can be improved to encourage further recreational use. Investments in bicycle facilities could attract cyclists—from long-distance road tourists, to mountain bikers, to family excursionists—and could potentially generate revenue and taxes for the town, create jobs, and increase income in other recreational and service-related industries.

### Recommendations

- It was noted during the assessment that organized bicycling events happen annually in Calhoun Falls with no interaction by the town. The town should capitalize on the potential for increased bicycle use by finding opportunities to implement or enhance bicycling conditions by adding bike lanes, dedicated bike routes, bike racks at destinations, maps, and signage, as well as by making connections to these biking events. When races or bicycle events come through town, consider arranging for a special Calhoun Falls welcome. Provide camp sites to riders or offer special food items, music, or celebrations. Such events provide an opportunity to engage prospective visitors and provide them with a positive impression of the town, luring visitors to come again and to stay longer.

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<sup>2</sup> Alliance for Biking and Walking, *Bicycling and Walking the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report*. [http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012\\_benchmarking\\_report/](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012_benchmarking_report/).

<sup>3</sup> Outdoor Industry Foundation, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy*, 2012. [http://outdoorindustry.org/pdf/OIA\\_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf](http://outdoorindustry.org/pdf/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> The Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report*, 2012. [http://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA\\_OutdoorRecreationParticipationReport2012.pdf?170](http://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA_OutdoorRecreationParticipationReport2012.pdf?170).

- Calhoun Falls and Abbeville County should consider holding their own bicycling or other sporting event. In September, nearby Greenwood County is holding its second county-wide biking event, Bikes for Kicks, to raise money for scholarships. In October, Meggett holds a Cystic Fibrosis Cycle for Life event. And Travelers' Rest hosts the Gran Fondo Hincapie to celebrate George Hincapie's past Tour de France training in the upstate region. See <http://www.landerbearcats.com/sports/msoc/2012-13/releases/201302087623cw>.

## BICYCLE USE CASE STUDY: The Virginia Creeper Trail—Abingdon to Damascus

The Virginia Creeper Trail stretches 34 miles from Abingdon to Damascus, Virginia. The trail, which follows along the Whitetop Laurel River and up to its highest point near the North Carolina state line at Whitetop Station, Virginia. The trail is open to hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. In response to demand for visitor services generated by the trail, nearby towns offer bike rentals, shuttle services, food, lodging, and specialty shops. The towns also market fly fishing, hiking, horseback riding, and other recreational activities on the trail. In 2004, USDA estimated that the Virginia Creeper Trail generated \$1.59 million in annual revenue and supported 27 new full-time jobs.

See Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, *From Trail Towns to TrOD: Trails and Economic Development*, August 2007.



## RURAL PUBLIC & SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Local bus, paratransit, and medical and service-oriented transport play an increasingly vital role for the people of rural communities. In recent decades, rural demographics have transitioned towards an increase in older populations and lower-income citizens—the populations that benefit directly from viable public transportation options. Federal and state funding programs for rural transit currently favors those projects that improve economic efficiency and reduce inequalities, and as a result make communities more livable. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) supports the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and is committed to improving livability in rural communities through the support of local transportation agencies and public transit investments. To learn more, visit <http://www.fta.dot.gov/about/13747.html>.

### Recommendations

- During the assessment, local leaders explained that an informal network exists to help residents who cannot drive or are without a vehicle. However, more information would help to provide a better understanding of the need for public transportation in the Calhoun Falls area. In addition, Calhoun Falls Charter School does not provide busing for students. The Assessment Team recommends that the town, in partnership with the schools, survey residents to learn more about the needs for increased rural public transportation and/or student transportation. Collecting this data is an important first step to address transportation gaps and other issues.
- In South Carolina, like many other states, charter schools are charged with covering their own transportation costs. Because Calhoun Falls Charter School does not provide transportation, the school and the town should collaborate on providing bus service and better pedestrian and bike options for charter school students. Other communities in similar situations have found creative approaches. Many charter schools have conducted fundraising activities to fund buses or other transportation options. Consider the following examples:
  - The Laupahoehoe Community Public Charter School in Hawaii held a silent auction in partnership with a local music festival to raise money toward the purchase of a \$175,000 hybrid bus.
  - Many charter schools have targeted fundraising activities to bridge the funding gap created by unfunded capital needs such as transportation. For instance, the Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy in North Carolina Charter Schools depends upon private donations of time and money to meet their financial and other program needs. Historically, the Scholars Academy has depended on parents and other friends of the school to fund approximately 25 percent of its budget and has benefitted from countless hours of volunteer time donated by parents.

- In Plumas County, California, the public high school and the Plumas K-12 Charter Schools partnered to share school buses. Students who ride the school bus—whether from the charter or public school—pay a fee for a bus pass.
- A Montessori charter school in Haverhill, Massachusetts, worked with the public school district to share busing. The schools adjusted the routes so students at both the charter school and the traditional public schools ride the same buses to the traditional schools, which are used as transfer hubs from which the charter school students then continue on to their own school. The charter school adjusted its school day to accommodate the plan. The busing ended up costing the district an additional \$30,000—only 30 percent of the projected cost. For more information, see the National Charter School Resource Center at <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/>.

## USDA SUPPORT FO RURAL CHARTER SCHOOLS: KIPP Delta Public Schools in Helena, Arkansas

The USDA's Rural Development Community Facilities support program can be a resource for rural charter schools in communities with fewer than 20,000 people. In 2004, two years after opening, the KIPP Delta Public Schools in Helena, Arkansas, received a \$1,169,510 direct, 40-year federal loan through the USDA program, to construct its first facility. According to Stephen Lagasse, USDA's rural community program specialist, "Not only did it help them construct their first facility, it also revitalized the downtown. It kind of gets them going in a positive direction." The school also received a \$50,000 grant from the agency for gym equipment and bleachers.

Nationally, the agency's Rural Development community facilities direct loans, guaranteed loans, and grant programs have provided more than \$209 million to assist 70 charter schools since 2006, according to USDA.

### USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Loans, Guarantees, and Grants for Charter Schools

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools	Loans, Guarantees, and Grants
2006	11	\$40,160,380
2007	12	\$16,695,300
2008	20	\$56,986,682
2009	12	\$29,515,941
2010	15	\$65,932,929
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>\$209,291,232</b>

*Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture*

- Town leaders should also consider the public transportation needs for visitors, using buses for sustainable tourism and recreation purposes and seeking creative ways to provide services to both residents and visitors.

## RURAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: Skamania County, Washington—Drawing Tourism with Bus Line

Skamania County, Washington, is home to about 11,000 people, who live in small towns and on heavily forested land. The county offers a weekday, fixed-route bus service that connects several small towns, carries local employees to resorts and recreational areas, and provides access to adjacent Clark County and the city of Vancouver, Washington. From Vancouver, riders can change buses and travel to other destinations, including Portland, Oregon, just a few miles away across the Columbia River.

While Skamania County was historically a logging area, it is now a recreation destination. The county offers great fishing, camping, and hiking in several scenic spots, including the Columbia River Gorge and the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Recognizing that drawing tourists from nearby urban areas helps the local economy, Skamania recently expanded its rural bus service to include weekends on a seasonal basis. The expanded bus service promotes tourism, helps reduce traffic on rural roads, and frees up limited parking space around trailheads. The new service is funded by private organizations, as well as through county, state, and federal transportation programs.

See more case studies and community tools at <http://www.publictransportation.org>.





LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE 2:  
PROMOTE EQUITABLE,  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING &  
LODGING CHOICES THAT MEET  
THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS,  
WORKERS, & VISITORS



# PROMOTE EQUITABLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING & LODGING CHOICES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS, WORKERS, AND VISITORS

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## HOUSING & LODGING: KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The neighborhoods of Calhoun Falls are compact, walkable, and situated around the downtown; however, some are disconnected by the four lanes of SC Highway 72.
- There is no perceived indication that housing is unaffordable in Calhoun Falls by town leadership, however a rising unemployment rate and an aging population are trends that often lead to housing insecurity and affordability issues. Current data for Abbeville County shows a need for more affordable renter housing throughout the county as a whole.
- The majority of housing stock is single family homes with a median age of 31 years.
- There are three affordable-housing apartment complexes in Calhoun Falls.
- Calhoun Falls State Park provides 86 standard campsites and 14 walk-in tent sites that are available year round.
- There are no full-service lodging options in Calhoun Falls (motels, hotels, or bed and breakfasts).
- The Calhoun Falls 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan includes providing a range of lodging options as a goal.

Communities that offer a wide variety of housing types, such as single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes, and apartments in varying price ranges, are best positioned to attract and retain residents at all life phases. By reducing transportation costs, situating housing near schools, jobs, shopping, and services improves livability. Some communities are integrating housing into existing commercial areas and/or creating new mixed-use developments by putting apartments over first-floor retail stores and offices. This not only makes housing more affordable and convenient for residents, it also provides a local consumer base for businesses.

Any new development and renovation projects in gateway communities should reflect the unique character of the community. Housing design that complements the character reinforces a sense of place among residents while contributing to the overall positive experience of

visitors. Hotels, inns, bed and breakfasts, and other lodging choices have a responsibility to complement the character of the destination that attracts these visitors.

Renovation projects are an often-overlooked means for improving housing affordability, particularly in communities with older buildings. Aging housing usually translates to low energy efficiency and high utility costs. Thus, investments in energy-efficient retrofits and upgrades to improve older housing units can improve affordability.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) supports the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The mission of HUD's Office of Economic Resilience is to create diverse, prosperous, resilient economies by enhancing the quality of place; advancing effective job creation strategies; reducing housing, transportation, and energy consumption costs; promoting clean energy solutions; and creating economic opportunities for all. For more information, visit

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/economic\\_resilience](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/economic_resilience).

Gateway communities can often face several challenges to provide equitable options for housing. As popular destinations that provide access to attractive natural resources, gateway communities frequently experience the introduction of second-home-owner markets that drive home prices upward, impacting year-round residents looking for affordable housing with access to downtown, jobs, schools, shops, outdoor recreation, and other amenities. Conversely, gateway communities set in rural areas may be dominated by agricultural and open lands with little or no connection to community-provided services, such as water, sewer, and utilities.

As a rural gateway community, Calhoun Falls should explore opportunities to expand housing and lodging choices. Since the town currently has no lodging amenities, attracting lodging businesses should be (and seems to be) a priority. Calhoun Falls also should seek to improve housing options for existing residents and to attract new residents. The following are general observations and recommendations recorded during the Livability Assessment for steps toward expanding housing and lodging choices in Calhoun Falls.

## **ATTRACT LODGING INVESTORS**

During the assessment visit, the Assessment Team observed the lack of lodging opportunities in Calhoun Falls (other than camping in Calhoun Falls State Park). As Russell Lake attracts more than one million visitors each year and the state park has more than 300,000 visitors annually, having additional lodging options would help the town tap into an existing visitor base and improve the experience for visitors looking for options beyond camping.

## **Recommendations**

The town has put a lot of work into the market analysis and assessment of existing conditions in Calhoun Falls. The Assessment Team concurs with prioritizing a retail market assessment for

Calhoun Falls which would include conditions and criteria for attracting lodging as a specific business sector. Potential next steps are to:

- Conduct an inventory of existing unique and/or historic buildings that could potentially be developed as one-of-a-kind overnight destinations. Underutilized historic buildings or farms might be able to be repurposed for lodging. The town or chamber of commerce leaders should collect relevant information on potential properties to market to prospective developers.
- Glamping, defined as going camping with glamor, has emerged as a new trend and might provide Calhoun Falls with opportunities to attract tourists. The town of Calhoun Falls should contact glamping sites in the Southeast to research their business models. One approach might be to work with a university's tourism program, such as Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, to tap a graduate student or intern to do site visits and report on findings.



*A treehouse at the Carolina Heritage Outfitters Outpost in Canadys, South Carolina, makes for a unique vacation stay.*

#### RESOURCE: Glampinghub.com

The website, [www.glampinghub.com](http://www.glampinghub.com), provides access to glamping locations across the world. A search for tree houses, tents, yurts or other glamping sites in South Carolina only comes up with two other places—a tree house in Canadys along the Edisto River and a tree cabin near Savannah. See <http://glampinghub.com/rentalsearch/?q=South+Carolina%2C+United+State&checkin=&checkout=&quests=1>.



*A luxury yurt provides great views of Bear Creek Lake in Western North Carolina.*

- Host a community workshop and/or panel discussion on alternative lodging trends and opportunities. The programs could be sponsored by the USCOG, town of Calhoun Falls, Abbeville County, and/or the local chamber of commerce (or SCPRT as a regional Freshwater Coast initiative or involve the SCNHA). The goal of the workshop would be to provide insight on what developers look for and how to organize to attract local or out-of-town lodging investors for alternative lodging options, including luxury camping, boutique hotels, and lodges as well as rustic accommodations such as treehouses, cabins, and yurts. This event should also build public awareness and buy-in for the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan and efforts to diversify the economy with sustainable tourism. Additionally, the town and/or its partners should convene an industry roundtable or workshop event with private developers of desired lodging types



and state, county, and local economic and planning staff to discuss potential partnerships and address barriers to development proposals.

- Create a “development toolbox” that packages local and state incentives, financial and technical assistance, and community attributes for developing new lodging in Calhoun Falls. Include contact information for learning more about these programs. Focus on a variety of lodging types—including farm stays, glamping, and other alternative lodging opportunities—and address issues, such as the permitting process and other regulatory issues, that business owners may perceive as potential hurdles. Information on the estimated lodging demand, Calhoun Falls amenities, and future economic development plans should be included in written materials. The town and/or chamber of commerce should research sustainable, ecotourism-related lodging developers and use these packages as marketing collateral for Calhoun Falls.

#### **RESOURCE: Abbeville County Data on Affordable Housing**

A March 2014 national study by the Urban Institute documents the housing gap for extremely low-income (ELI) renter households. The study indicates that Abbeville County has only 57 affordable and available rental units for every 100 such households. In total, the county has 555 ELI renter households and provides 317 affordable and available rental units with 195 of those units receiving HUD assistance. More information is available at <http://www.urban.org/housingaffordability/>.



*A Calhoun Falls affordable housing complex.*

### **ADDRESSING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CALHOUN FALLS**

There are currently three affordable housing complexes in Calhoun Falls that meet the demand for families in need of housing assistance. Calhoun Falls appears to have sufficient affordable housing available, primarily because many would-be residents have been forced to relocate due to the loss of jobs in the textile industry and the downturn of the economy. As a whole, however, Abbeville County struggles to provide affordable housing for residents, particularly those who seek housing that is closer to jobs, services, and schools.

Assuming that unemployment continues to rise and the population continues to age, it is important that the town of Calhoun Falls focus on affordable housing and housing assistance to



ensure that housing is of good quality and affordable. In addition, the town should ready the housing market to help attract new potential employers to relocate to Calhoun Falls.

## Recommendations

- It is important that town staff is versed on the local, state, and federal resources available to assist community members obtain affordable housing. It is recommended that the town establish a relationship with HUD representatives and county housing staff to understand the criteria/process for accessing federal housing assistance programs. (See case studies and resources for list of programs.)
- The town should discuss current housing trends with USCOG, state, and county housing officials to gather information on local affordable housing assistance and to seek guidance for future planning.
- The town should collect contact information, resources, and other materials related to local affordable housing programs and provide them to local schools, churches, civic centers, medical clinics, and other relevant organizations so that these resources are readily available for residents in need. The town should also post information to a website when one is available.
- Calhoun Falls should incorporate affordable housing into future town planning. The town should plan for neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, including affordable units and mixed-use development, such as housing above stores in the downtown, live-work units, and future developments with a mix of commercial and dwelling types.

## ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS:

### Spokane Tribe of Indians

The Spokane Tribe of Indians in rural Eastern Washington received a HUD Community Challenge grant in 2010 to develop their first-ever community master plan. This opportunity to assess community needs led to greater, more informed participation in the regional economy through USDA Rural Development's Stronger Economies Together initiative. The tribe has also been able to raise awareness about a new pilot public transit project to connect community members with off-reservation job opportunities. In addition, having identified severe infrastructure needs through the HUD grant, it was able to receive Smart Growth Implementation Assistance from EPA to address failing water systems. For more information, visit <http://www.spokanetribe.com/hcc>.

## ENSURE NEW CONSTRUCTION REFLECTS CHARACTER OF CALHOUN FALLS

As the town pursues investors to support lodging options that fit the character of the community, similar attention should focus on prospective housing development. While there is no indication of a housing shortage or need for new construction in Calhoun Falls, the town should take this opportunity to plan for future development that meets the character of Calhoun Falls and its community.

As an example, the Sanctuary, a failed housing development between the Blue Hole Recreation Area and the Calhoun Falls State Park, is prime real estate near Russell Lake that offers a unique opportunity to define how new housing in Calhoun Falls can reflect the character of the community and to set a precedent for future development.



*As development-ready housing development, the Sanctuary offers a prime opportunity to reflect the character and identity of Calhoun Falls.*

### Recommendations

- The town should investigate examples of new construction for housing and lodging that meets the character of Calhoun Falls. Leaders should focus design standards on an clear understanding of building materials and their lifecycles, as well as trends in development planning and site designs. Housing and lodging construction could relate to natural-resource-conscious, eco-friendly, and/or compact conservation developments, as well as neo-traditional town-planning development (also called new urbanism) that is in line with the pattern and character of the Calhoun Falls downtown area. Many communities have adopted design guidelines to shape future development. (See Principle 4.)
- The town should develop a survey of community residents to qualitatively identify housing needs, gaps, and perceived character of the town. A better understanding of perceptions and desires would help ensure that the look and feel of new housing and lodging is complementary to the town's vision.
- The town should consider renovating and repurposing the existing mill housing, land, and remaining factory buildings for residential and/or commercial use. Given the shift in textiles over the last decade or more, there are examples abound of communities that have effectively repurposed their existing mill infrastructure.

## MILL TOWN REVITALIZATION: Taunton, Massachusetts & Rock Hill, South Carolina

Given the broad transformation of global textile production, many communities, particularly in the Southeast and New England, have experienced the closing of their textile factories and a resulting decline in sense of place. Many of these mill towns have reinvented themselves by using the factories, housing, and other existing infrastructure for new uses.

### Taunton, Massachusetts

Taunton, Massachusetts brought new life to one of its largest mill buildings as "Robertson on the River," offering 64 affordable housing units, 18,000 square feet of commercial space, and recreational and green space along the Taunton River.

### Rock Hill, South Carolina

Rock Hill, South Carolina formed an Economic Development Corporation to spearhead revitalization plans. In 2003, project partners developed the Textile Corridor Master Plan that included a feasibility study and physical assessment for the redevelopment of Old Town Rock Hill and four associated mill sites. A subsequent effort by the Rock Hill Council of Neighborhoods prepared the Neighborhood Master Plan to restore infrastructure, provide amenities, and spur investment. The Highland Park Mill was converted into 116 senior housing units; another mill site was sold to private developers for commercial development.

Source: SRA International for U.S. EPA. *Revitalizing America's Mills: A Report on Brownfields Mill Projects*, November 2006.,

[http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/policy/Mill\\_Report\\_110306.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/policy/Mill_Report_110306.pdf).



*Roberson on the River in Taunton, Massachusetts, is a mixed-use, historic mill redevelopment along the scenic Taunton River.*



*This sketch depicts the vision for the economic development strategy for the Rock Hill, South Carolina, Textile Corridor and adaptive reuse of old mill buildings.*

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LAND USE: Chattahoochee Hill Country, Georgia

The Chattahoochee Hill Country, just southwest of Atlanta, is the largest tract of undeveloped land in a highly prized real estate environment. This area of gently rolling hills, pastoral vistas, and historic properties is faced with immediate threats to its long-term preservation. Funded by grants from the Nature Conservancy of Georgia, Atlanta Regional Commission, and matching funds from Fulton County, the Chattahoochee Hill Country Land Use Plan was developed and incorporated into the county's amended Comprehensive Land Use Plan and its overlay district ordinance. The plan encourages development that preserves open space, mixes land uses, offers mixed housing types, and captures the rural and historic character of the community. The land-use plan includes sustainability indicators for many sustainable growth elements, including the preservation of green space and agriculture. The plan was used to successfully implement a "solution to sprawl."

Serenbe was developed in accordance with this plan. This nationally-recognized award-winning 1000-acre greenfield development consists of four mixed-use hamlets (lower-density, village-like zones) that include a variety of housing options. Serenbe has greater density at the center and 70 percent preserved green space that includes a 25-acre organic farm, ponds, woodlands, trails, and bridle paths. Each Hamlet features distinct offerings for residents and visitors, such as health and wellness, the arts, commerce, and agriculture. Connectivity among the hamlets fosters an environment with a strong sense of place and community as well as a diverse, easily-accessible set of services.

For more information the plan and process, see [http://c133251.r51.cf0.rackcdn.com/CaseStudy\\_ChattahoocheeHillsCountry\\_New\\_NL\\_C.pdf](http://c133251.r51.cf0.rackcdn.com/CaseStudy_ChattahoocheeHillsCountry_New_NL_C.pdf).

*New neighborhood development reflects the historic southern charm of the Chattahoochee Hill Country.*





## NEW URBANISM:

### Habersham in Beaufort, South Carolina

New Urbanism is defined as a community design movement that promotes walkable neighborhoods containing a range of housing and job types. New Urbanism seeks to provide all the needs of conventional development in an integrated fashion, through complete communities that include housing, work places, shops, entertainment, schools, parks, and civic facilities, all within easy walking distance of each other.

One example of New Urbanism is Habersham, a 650-unit development built on the grounds of a 283-acre antebellum plantation in Beaufort, South Carolina. Developer Robert Turner devoted 73 acres to the preservation of natural areas, commons, and parks. The town center, which is within walking distance of the residential neighborhoods, includes a new fire station, post office, restaurants, and shops, as well as townhouses, 48 live-work units, and office space. Habersham also includes a primary school, pool house, and community dock. The residences range in size from cottages to manor homes and reflect a variety of traditional historical styles; careful design ensures the homes complement each other and provide an overall cohesiveness. For more information, see "Low Country Splendor," *New Urban Living*, September/October 2004, or <http://www.habershamsc.com/newurbanism.html>.

### HOUSING & LODGING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

As a historic mill town, many of the buildings in central Calhoun Falls date back to 1908, when the Calhoun Mills Company began construction of the first cotton mill. Currently, the median age of homes is 31 years old. Little new construction has been completed in recent years, and there is no indication of a shortage in housing stock.

Given the age of the housing and business infrastructure, many structures are not energy efficient. As infrastructure ages, the costs incurred to home and business owners to heat, cool, light, and provide water and sewage can impact affordability. Energy efficiency and sustainable design challenges local officials, planners, developers, and architects to examine the connections between their buildings, the environment, and communities. By promoting energy efficiency, the town of Calhoun Falls can help reduce non-renewable energy consumption, thereby saving money for owners and renters and, in the process, minimize the impacts on natural resources. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities has compiled resources, funding opportunities, and technical assistance programs for local governments and others to promote energy efficiency at <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/toolsKeyResources.html>.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Bowling Green, Kentucky

The Housing Authority of Bowling Green, Kentucky, was granted over \$1.25 million from HUD to replace more than 2,000 old, inefficient windows in its public housing units with new energy-efficient windows and implement a green jobs and environmental education program. The HUD funding to retrofit public housing units not only preserved affordable housing, but also created a larger local market for weatherization service, taking better advantage of Department of Labor programs that train residents for these jobs. These programs also work in tandem with the Department of Energy's weatherization assistance to low-income families, providing even more jobs for these trained workers.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Mill Revitalization in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) developed the Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit to help communities integrate, customize, and apply smart growth and smart energy tools and policies to suit local circumstances. Given the loss of textile mills across New England, the Commonwealth devoted one section of the toolkit specifically to Mill Revitalization Districts, including modules, case studies, links, model bylaws, and slide shows. See [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/mod-mill-redev.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-mill-redev.html).

## RESOURCES: Housing, Lodging, and Energy Efficiency

### The Partnership for Sustainable Communities

(<http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/toolsKeyResources.html>)

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities has compiled resources, funding opportunities, and technical assistance programs for local governments and others to promote energy efficiency.

### EnergyStar

([http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/small-biz?c=small\\_business.sb\\_index](http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/small-biz?c=small_business.sb_index))

Hotels and other lodging facilities benefit from energy efficiency. EnergyStar provides resources for small businesses, specifically for the hospitality industry.

### Small Business Administration

(<http://www.sba.gov/content/energy-efficiency-lodging>)

The Small Business Administration provides additional ideas and links to resources for lodging and energy efficiency.

### DSIRE: the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency

(<http://www.dsireusa.org/incentives/index.cfm?re=0&ee=0&spv=0&st=0&srp=1&state=SC>)

The DSIRE database provides state-based listings of resources, policies, incentives, and programs for energy efficiency.



LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE 3:  
ENHANCE ECONOMIC  
COMPETITIVENESS BY  
VALUING THE PUBLIC LANDS  
& NATURAL, CULTURAL,  
RECREATIONAL, &  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
GATEWAY COMMUNITY





# ENHANCE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS BY VALUING THE PUBLIC LANDS & NATURAL, CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL, & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GATEWAY COMMUNITY

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## **ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS: KEY OBSERVATIONS**

- The town completed a comprehensive Strategic Economic Development Plan in 2013. Major components of the plan include actions to expand and develop multiple sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities and to drive local economic growth.
- While the Sustainable Economic Development Plan is focused on opportunities within Calhoun Falls, the Assessment Design Team and stakeholders stressed the importance of engaging other communities and Abbeville County to complement one another's assets and to strengthen the local economy by strengthening the economy of the region as whole.
- Calhoun Falls is experiencing a decline in population, particularly among young people and people of working age. There is also declining per-capita income and increased unemployment. The unemployment rate was 14.3 percent in 2012.
- Plant closures and lower property taxes have resulted in lower revenues for the town of Calhoun Falls.
- More than 11 million residents live within a two-hour drive of Calhoun Falls, which lies within the emerging megaregion that stretches from Charlotte, North Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia.
- Following the proposed closure of the public high school in Calhoun Falls, residents worked together to establish the Calhoun Falls Charter School, which opened in the fall of 2008 school year.
- Since its establishment in 2008, Calhoun Falls Charter School has consistently maintained an "A" federal accountability rating.
- Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition formed to coordinate, sponsor, and promote facilities, events, and activities on and around Russell Lake.
- Cox Avenue is the traditional downtown for Calhoun Falls. Once a thriving center, only a few businesses continue to operate in the downtown.
- Although Calhoun Falls's textile mills have closed, textiles continue to be part of the local heritage, and residents' expertise in textiles should be viewed as assets that could contribute to—and strengthen—other economic initiatives.



Economic competitiveness is a main tenet of livability. Investments in livability often create strong local economies. This symbiotic relationship is even stronger in rural and gateway communities where the recruitment of traditional businesses is not always the best or most appropriate economic development strategy. In today's business environment, locating near major transportation routes is less important than in the past, and new businesses are increasingly choosing to locate in communities that offer a high quality of life. An increasing number of businesses consider scenic areas and recreational opportunities as major draws for attracting and maintaining employees.

Communities that combine investments in accessible transportation, housing choices, good schools, and community gathering places will be more attractive to residents and thus to businesses. Potential new businesses that may be attracted to a gateway community range from natural-resource-focused entrepreneurs who want to sustainably capitalize on the abundant nearby natural resources as part of the sustainable tourism industry to technologically-based or creative companies that can locate anywhere the Internet is available.

Calhoun Falls is in a position to prioritize investments in community livability and capitalize on its surrounding natural amenities, proximity to transportation connections, and other Abbeville County towns for regional sustainable economic growth, and to communicate these investments to attract new businesses, residents, and community partners.

As a gateway community to Russell Lake, USACE is a major partner in spurring economic competitiveness and resiliency in the Calhoun Falls area. By providing jobs and job training (internships, service learning opportunities, etc.) as well as serving as stewards of the natural landscape, USACE's presence and protection of the precious natural amenities creates a valuable link between natural resources and economic development. USACE should be included in economic development discussions in and around Calhoun Falls and can contribute to defining the year-round thriving economy that the Calhoun Falls community has the potential to create.

This section includes a set of priority recommendations to enhance economic competitiveness related to promoting sustainable tourism, cultivating commercial services and entrepreneurs, fostering new businesses, and making regional connections to expand markets.

# PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

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## BUILD COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AWARENESS AND BUY-IN FOR STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Calhoun Falls 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan is an ambitious initiative to change how Calhoun Falls is perceived by visitors as well as residents. A contingent of citizens is aware and supportive of the plan for the future health of the community, surrounding towns, and the county. Community awareness, education, and buy-in are continuing priorities for implementation of this plan. To date, Calhoun Falls has undertaken successful outreach to key state and regional departments (natural resources, commerce, council of governments, etc.); this should continue with follow-up and personal outreach. Efforts to build awareness building should also extend to community stakeholders, neighboring communities, and county and regional partners.

### In South Carolina, outdoor recreation generates:

- \$18 billion in consumer spending
- 201,000 direct jobs
- \$4.7 billion in wages and salaries
- \$1 billion in state and local tax revenue

(Outdoor Industry Association, 2013)

## Recommendations

- The town of Calhoun Falls has been diligent in sharing the Strategic Economic Development Plan and has received support from Abbeville County; the Upstate Alliance; the S.C. Department of Commerce; the S.C. Department of Natural Resources; the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism; and USACE. The town should continue to provide plan updates, share successes (big and small), and continue communicating with all of these entities. Additionally, the town should reach out to private corporations, such as West Carolina Tel and other area businesses; foundations; colleges and universities; and other potential local, state, and federal agencies to discuss the plan, opportunities for engagement, and expected benefits or returns on investment that may be of interest to potential funders.
- Outdoor recreation is big business! Outdoor recreation is the third-largest economic driver in the United States (behind financial services and insurance, and outpatient health care). More than six million Americans depend on outdoor recreation for their livelihoods.<sup>5</sup> It is important that the town, surrounding public lands, groups such as the LRRTC, and businesses work collaboratively to educate the community on the business case of outdoor recreation. Education can be done through workshops, speaking engagements, community events and celebrations, newspaper articles, and other media.

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<sup>5</sup> Outdoor Industry Association, *The Outdoor Recreation Economy: South Carolina*, 2012.

[http://outdoorindustry.org/images/ore\\_reports/SC-southcarolina-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf](http://outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/SC-southcarolina-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf).

The combined impact of the South Carolina agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, and tourism sectors accounts for:

- one-third of the state's economy
- over \$54 billion
- and 463,000 jobs or one out of three jobs in the state.

(South Carolina Rural Research Coalition, 2013, <http://ruralrc.org/>)

Community residents need to understand how sustainable tourism can be an economic driver for the town of Calhoun Falls.

- Outdoor recreation can benefit and expand industry. Outdoor recreation can open up new markets within the community and spawn businesses related to equipment and outfitting. Recreation also provides outlets for businesses to bring prospective partners or key talent to demonstrate the excellent quality of life that the area offers for residents. Community leaders should communicate these benefits to residents and help them understand the potential for future growth.

## PURSUE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FIRST, THEN MARKET THE PRODUCT

The Assessment Team emphasizes the importance of first improving the product and then marketing it ("product first, then promotion"). The South Carolina Heritage Corridor partnership will provide an opportunity for the town to inventory and assess opportunities to develop tourism products that can include outdoor recreational activities and destinations, historic sites, and experiential tours. That will be the first step in product development. Once product development is in place, Calhoun Falls can implement marketing and outreach strategies to effectively communicate, educate, and promote the town.

The benefit of product development across many sustainable tourism assets is that it can provide visitors with multiple experiences, allowing individuals and groups to pursue multiple interests and shape an agenda featuring a wealth of things to do—paddling on Russell Lake one day, ziplining the next, learning about the textile heritage on a third, and so forth. In addition, each day can be capped off with dinner at a downtown restaurant, food cart, or around a campfire. Guiding principles for developing sustainable tourism and cultural heritage products and destinations follow.

### Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is an ever-changing industry and spans many experiences. Today's emphasis on sustainable tourism provides opportunities for communities to expand their tourism base by focusing on quality experiences they can offer in unique and authentic places while protecting the qualities that have historically attracted visitors and that contribute to a high quality of life for residents. Sustainable tourism encompasses many categories, including cultural heritage, nature based, community based, outdoor recreation, agritourism, and "voluntourism" or vacation-based philanthropy. In contrast to mass-market tourism, such as cruise ships and theme parks, sustainable tourism stresses quality over quantity; favors unique experiences based on a location's resources (such as distinctive destinations, unspoiled landscapes, and/or historic sites); and relies on locally owned businesses.

Preserving access to the outdoor recreation protects and supports local businesses and the economy. In addition, outdoor recreation also provides health benefits. According to the Outdoor Foundation's 2013 Outdoor Participation Report<sup>6</sup>, the most popular outdoor activities in the United States today are running, fishing, biking, camping, and hiking. The fastest-growing outdoor activities by participation are nontraditional (off-road) triathlons, adventure races, telemarking, freestyle skiing, and traditional triathlons. New markets are emerging for stand-up paddling, windsurfing, kayaking, and rafting. Calhoun Falls and the surrounding public lands offer access to many of these activities, plus many others, positioning the town as a year-round playground for outdoor recreation.

### Sustainable Ecotourism Principles

Ecotourism development expert Ed McMahon, the founder of Scenic America and past vice president of the Conservation Fund, emphasizes the importance of authentic experiences. Sustainable tourism is a strong component of gateway communities. In *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*, authors Jim Howe, Ed McMahon, and Luther Propst<sup>7</sup> provide a chapter for each of step that successful gateway communities take to achieve this end:

- Develop a widely shared vision
- Create an inventory of local resources
- Build on local assets
- Use education, voluntary initiatives and incentives as well as regulations
- Meet the needs of both landowners and communities
- Partner with public land managers
- Recognize the role of nongovernmental organizations
- Provide opportunities for leaders to step forward
- Pay attention to aesthetics.

The Rural Ecotourism Assessment Project by Gail Y.B. Lash and Alison Austin<sup>8</sup> lists three components of community-based tourism:

- Understand and meet the needs of the community
- Realistically deliver a long-term quality tourism product
- Make specific efforts to connect these products to international and local markets.

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<sup>6</sup> Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Participation Report*, 2013.  
<http://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/ParticipationStudy2013.pdf?193>.

<sup>7</sup> Jim Howe, Edward T. McMahon, and Luther Propst. *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities*. Island Press, 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Gail Y. B. Lash and Alison D. Austin. *Rural Ecotourism Assessment Program (REAP): A Guide to Community Assessment of Ecotourism as a Tool for Sustainable Development*. EplerWood International, 2003, p.8. [http://www.masteringthealchemyofpeace.com/downloads/files/REAP\\_Report.pdf](http://www.masteringthealchemyofpeace.com/downloads/files/REAP_Report.pdf).

Sustainable tourism is particularly attractive for communities interested in maintaining or enhancing their community's character and sense of place. In addition to economic development and job creation, sustainable tourism increases the area's attractiveness to outside industries and people seeking to relocate to locales rich in natural amenities, which increases civic pride. In the end, residents have more shops, activities, and entertainment offerings than the local market alone might support.

## BUILDING THE CASE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION: Pennsylvania Wilds

A 12-county area in north-central Pennsylvania has found that outdoor recreation can be part of bringing back the area's manufacturing and supporting the long-time businesses. Following an almost decade-long deliberate initiative to build off the existing assets of the region, the Pennsylvania Wilds is now known for its outdoor recreation. A spin-off of those efforts has also attracted residents to return to the area and start up new businesses, including wilderness outfitting and tours, letterpress printing, and a new local snowboard manufacturer using the PA Wilds brand. In addition, other local businesses bring visitors and prospective employees to visit the area's attractions like paddling on the Clarion River or viewing the wildlife at the Elk Country Visitor Center, which opened in 2010. See <http://www.pawildsresources.org/>.

### Cultural Heritage Tourism

The recent economic recession has had a significant impact on the travel industry. However, studies suggest that cultural heritage travel has continued to be strong even at the height of the recession. The *Cultural and Heritage Traveler* (2013 edition)<sup>9</sup> found that 76 percent of U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling. This translates to 129.6 million adults each year. According to the study, 87 percent of cultural heritage travelers say they want travel experiences that have a combination of a wide variety of activities, such as culture, shopping, nature, exercise, and dining. Additionally, 72 percent seek travel experiences where the destination, its buildings, and its surroundings have retained their character. And 66 percent want travel to be educational; these tourists make an effort to explore and learn about local arts, culture, environment, and history. Cultural heritage travelers spend more per trip than other leisure travelers (an average of \$1,319 per trip compared to \$1,198), making this a highly desirable segment of the tourism industry.

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<sup>9</sup> Mandala Research. *The Cultural and Heritage Traveler*, 2013. <http://mandalaresearch.com/>.



## Five Principles of Successful and Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism

Through its work with communities across the country, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Heritage Tourism Program has developed five principles to help guide successful and sustainable cultural heritage tourism development:

***Collaborate.*** By its very nature, cultural heritage tourism requires effective partnerships. Much more can be accomplished by working together than by working alone.

***Find the fit between the community and tourism.*** Cultural heritage tourism should make a community a better place to live as well as a better place to visit. Respect carrying capacity so everyone benefits.

***Make sites and programs come alive.*** Look for ways to make visitor experiences exciting, engaging, and interactive.

***Focus on quality and authenticity.*** Today's cultural heritage traveler is sophisticated and expects a high level of quality and an authentic experience.

***Preserve and protect resources.*** Many of your community's cultural, historic, and natural resources are irreplaceable. Take good care of them; if they are lost you can never get them back.

For more information, visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/economics-of-revitalization/heritage-tourism/#.Us7IF8RDseg>.

### RESOURCE: Sustainable Tourism New Initiative: National Travel and Tourism Strategy

In 2012 President Obama unveiled the National Travel and Tourism Strategy (NTTS) which seeks to attract 100 million new tourists to the United States by 2021. These visitors are expected to spend \$250 billion, thus generating three million jobs in rural and urban places across America.

The NTTS calls for more public/private partnerships within the tourism community. In service to that, the federal tourism team showcased public lands at the U.S. Travel Association's IPW, America's premier international travel trade show where a majority of international bookings to the United States are decided. The goal was to raise awareness of the depth and breadth of authentic experiences available in public lands and work more collaboratively across federal agencies. One key outcome of this collaboration was the joint promotion, with 30 gateway communities, of U.S. World Heritage sites.

The National Park Service (NPS) Office of Sustainable Tourism's strategic plan incorporates the NTTS goals as well as emphasizes increased engagement with gateway communities. By facilitating information exchange between the NPS and tourism communities and leveraging resources, the OST seeks to expand the communications capacity of parks and partners. See <http://www.nps.gov/tourism/nationalstrategictourismplan.html>.



## CULTIVATE COMMERCIAL SERVICES AND PROMOTE EXISTING AMENITIES TO AREA VISITORS

During the site visit, the Assessment Team visited local businesses that offer services that are essential for residents and visitors. Pettigrew's Hardware carries many items not only that assist residents with home projects, but also that can help visiting campers solve problems with campers or RVs. Napoleon's, tucked into the downtown, is the only sit-in eatery in the town and could be easily overlooked without directions. It is important to keep in mind that these businesses and others—from grocer to auto repair to service industries—not only are essential for residents, but also support the needs of travelers.

### Recommendations

- As public land managers, USACE and the state park are vested in visitor satisfaction. The town, with the state park and USACE, should gather data on visitors' activities, commercial and service needs, and the locations most often visited in town and surrounding areas. The goal of this data-gathering process is to identify any unmet needs or desires that would make the stay more enjoyable for visitors. The State Park Service has an online visitor survey (<http://www.southcarolinaparks.com/calhounfalls/visitorsurvey.aspx>) that Calhoun Falls State Park could use as the basis of such a data-gathering effort.
- Calhoun Falls and the state park should share information gathered through surveys of visitors with surrounding businesses to provide them with concrete information about the wants and needs that have been identified. The town, chamber of commerce, USACE, and state park should identify ways to support local businesses in meeting visitors' needs. Suggestions may include providing bicycle rentals and repair, boat

## ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT: Marion County, South Carolina

Marion County, South Carolina, is currently developing an "agriporium"—a place where entrepreneurs can take what is grown in the ground and create value-added products, such as biscuit mixes, jams, jellies, and even cosmetics. The proposed facility will give entrepreneurs a place where they can create, package, and distribute a product. Within the facility, there will be four commercial kitchens (wet, dry, vegetable prep, and mixed-use)—one for each of the food categories that can be created. In addition, the facility will be used for educational training and will include a shop to sell the products. See [http://m.scnw.com/news/local/article\\_b1d61528-212f-11e3-9b3a-0019bb30f31a.html?mode=jqm](http://m.scnw.com/news/local/article_b1d61528-212f-11e3-9b3a-0019bb30f31a.html?mode=jqm).

service and repair, fishing and hunting supplies, propane gas provisions, and other outdoor recreation and/or water sport outfitting.

- The town, chamber of commerce, USACE, and state park should coordinate to develop marketing materials that advertise existing commercial services in Calhoun Falls to visitors at campsites, USACE boat launches, visitor centers, and throughout the downtown and with area businesses. These materials should be posted on websites and provided as hard copies at the Blue Hole Recreation Area and the state park, updated regularly, and tailored seasonally to include community events. The town and its partners should work with the South Carolina State Parks website to better use its pages to provide information about the town of Calhoun Falls that currently is very limited. See <http://www.southcarolinaparks.com/calhounfalls/calhounfalls-area-info.aspx>.



*Specialty food and agribusiness support at the S.C. Department of Agriculture and their "Certified SC Product" Program.*

## INCUBATE ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS

The town of Calhoun Falls should consider fostering and branding artisan and value-added products. Calhoun Falls has not only a beautiful landscape, but also a rich history spanning from its Native American heritage to the growth of textile mills in the Industrial Revolution. A focus on the town's heritage can create new business opportunities and represent the uniqueness of Calhoun Falls.

### Recommendations

- The town of Calhoun Falls is currently working with the South Carolina Heritage Corridor on a resource inventory and assessment, hospitality training, small business training, and wayfinding and interpretive signage assessment. As part of this project, the town should identify ways to include artisan and value-added product development and brand identity to the business education program.
- The town should identify local crafts and talents for cultural heritage tourism and town history. Though local residents make products as hobbies, some may enjoy the support of an outlet to share—and sell—their work. Outlets may include local restaurants, shops, USACE and state park visitor centers, or the town hall, library, or other public spaces. The town also could support cottage industry by providing or coordinating free workspace at community centers or schools, hosting events that allow for local artisans and crafters to display and sell their work, or holding workshops on how to create and market their products.

- The town, chamber of commerce, state park, and USACE should work collaboratively to identify creative opportunities to showcase local music, dance, and other arts-related activities. Music could be showcased at events, but more informal “jam sessions” could be set on porches, small parks, or restaurants. Youth jam sessions or concerts should be encouraged to engage the youngest residents of Calhoun Falls.

## ENGAGING THE ARTS: Floyd Country Store, Floyd, Virginia

In Floyd, Virginia, a weekly jamboree is held every Friday night at the Floyd Country Store. These events are worthy tributes to old-time and bluegrass music and to mountain dance. The Friday evening jam sessions begin with an hour of gospel music performed by a group of local old-timers. Then, various bands take turns playing onstage. On summer nights, musicians often jam in the parking lot and the audience flows over into the street. Snacks, soft drinks, and ice cream are available at the store; local eateries also benefit from the customers lured out for a night of fun.



- The town of Calhoun Falls has an impressive project plan for the redevelopment of the downtown commercial core. In a short-term effort to revitalize the downtown, the town and the chamber of commerce can work with downtown building owners to explore opportunities to use vacant store fronts as art displays or artisan cooperatives. Artisans may wish to develop works along a theme such as the creation of Russell Lake, the farms and rural landscapes, or the textile history.



## OUR TOWN GRANT SUCCESS: City of New Haven, Connecticut

### National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant

NEA awards grants from \$25,000 to \$200,000 to organizations for the implementation of creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. For more information about Our Town and other grants from the NEA, see <http://arts.gov/grants>.

### City of New Haven, Connecticut, Project Storefronts

In 2010, the city of New Haven, Connecticut, launched an innovative pilot program called Project Storefronts. In cooperation with business counselors and property owners, the program enables individual artists, not-for-profits, or teams of creative workers to set up 90-day businesses in vacant storefronts in New Haven's Ninth Square Historic District.

In 2011, the city was awarded a \$100,000 Our Town grant from the National Endowment of the Arts to help expand the award-winning program to provide artists and arts organizations with financial and business counseling to help launch or expand a creative business in the retail-deprived Ninth Square. Meanwhile, artist programming and events raise the profile of the creative businesses, attract new visitors to the Ninth Square Historic District, increase foot traffic in the neighborhood, attract new residents, and help to grow the local economy.



### FOSTER NEW & DIVERSE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

As Calhoun Falls moves forward with plans to develop a sustainable tourism market, it will need support to attract and nurture new and diverse businesses. New businesses should be targeted not only to a wide range of visitors, but new residents as well. These initiatives are focused on a sentiment expressed by Charles Lane and Bernie Mayzck in a 2001 op-ed in the *Post and*

*Courier*: “What if, instead, we envisioned building wealth from within? There are exciting trends taking place all around our country and in rural South Carolina that focus on ways to generate and circulate wealth inside local economies.”

## Recommendations

- During the assessment, a representative from the West Carolina Telephone Company (WCTEL) spoke at the banquet sponsored by the Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce of how WCTEL supports local access to the Internet and some of the other important work it does in the community. Broadband commonly refers to high-speed Internet access that is always on and is faster than traditional dial-up access. Broadband enables residents of all ages access to education, culture, and entertainment; facilitates public safety communication; and allows services for people with disabilities. Broadband can promote economic development and revitalization through electronic commerce. Because reliable broadband service is a major asset for attracting new business and industry, Calhoun Falls should work with WCTEL to build awareness of this asset and explore other ways that WCTEL can (and does) support economic development and community revitalization.
- Entrepreneurial spirit is an important component of thriving rural communities. Local businesses such as Pettigrew’s Hardware and Napoleon’s provide examples of local Calhoun Falls businesses that have a vested interest in seeing the community thrive. The town of Calhoun Falls, in partnership with Abbeville County, USCOG, and area chambers of commerce should look for opportunities to provide technical assistance and financing support to cultivate additional small businesses. The South Carolina Heritage Corridor Small Business training offers a great opportunity for the town and local businesses to work together to find areas where support is needed. (See Case Studies & Resources for a list of potential resources to connect to existing and potential small business owners.)
- The town and its partners should discuss gaps and barriers related to job training and identify opportunities to access expanded learning opportunities. (See Case Studies and Resources for potential resources to access for workforce development.)
- Another major element for attracting new businesses is ensuring that the local workforce is able to meet the needs of potential new businesses, especially businesses

### **RESOURCE: Broadband**

#### **Opportunities for Rural America**

A joint initiative of the Federal Communications Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development is providing funding and technical assistance opportunities for rural areas to access a range of technology platforms to provide broadband service.

([http://wireless.fcc.gov/outreach/index.htm?job=broadband\\_home](http://wireless.fcc.gov/outreach/index.htm?job=broadband_home))

that are focused on new technologies. The town of Calhoun Falls, in partnership with Abbeville County and USCOG, should consider hosting a workforce development workshop or job fair that puts Calhoun Falls' residents in touch with available workforce development and training programs, as well as existing business and employment opportunities.

## DIVERSIFYING ECONOMIES: Miner County, South Dakota

Miner County, South Dakota, created a clear vision that has helped direct the community's approach to development. Instead of spending limited resources trying to attract a major corporation to locate a plant or a store in Miner County or to attract new residents, citizens concentrated on building upon their town's existing assets and focused on creating more and better jobs for the people still there.

Miner County began by creating a Rural Resource Center at the local high school. Funding was obtained from the Annenburg Rural Challenge, which focuses on connecting schools and their communities. Students conducted a community cash-flow study that found that half of the county's residents shopped outside Miner County and that if all residents spent just 10 percent more of their disposable income within the county, it would add more than \$7 million to the local economy. In the year after the survey, Miner County's taxable sales increased by more than 40 percent.

The success of the study prompted Randy Parry, a former business and economics teacher and executive director of Miner County Community Revitalization, to form a committee to bring residents together to renew the county's economy. Using grant money and volunteer labor, participants pulled tree stumps from the downtown of one town and restored houses in another. They also conducted seminars for farmers on emerging markets for deer, elk, and organic beef and converted a vacant slaughterhouse into a processing location for local organic beef. The center and the town of Howard bought wind turbines from a local machine shop, which has since become Energy Maintenance Services of Gary, South Dakota, lowering local electricity rates.

- In 2013, the Greater Abbeville Federal Credit Union applied for and received Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) certification and recently received a \$99,995 grant from the CDFI Fund of the U.S. Department of Treasury. This is a huge opportunity for a small county like Abbeville. A CDFI is a specialized financial institution created for the purpose of promoting community development by providing credit, capital, or development services to small businesses or home mortgage assistance to

## HOW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS WORK: Natural Capital Investment Fund

The Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF; <http://www.conservationfund.org/our-conservation-strategy/major-programs/natural-capital-investment-fund>) uses the positive power of business and markets to generate economic, social and environmental returns with low-interest capital loans. Founded in 2001, NCIF provides debt and equity-like financing to small business located in West Virginia, North Carolina, and the Appalachian regions of Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, South Carolina, and Georgia. Its goal is to provide small and emerging natural resource-based businesses with the financing they need so they can advance sustainable economic development and have a positive impact on human health and the natural environment in their community.

NCIF's business clients are predominantly located in economically distressed rural communities. NCIF provides capital that helps young and innovative business grow until they can access traditional sources of financing. Particular attention is paid to supporting value-added and sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and energy efficiency, heritage- and recreation-based tourism, sustainable forestry and forest products, natural medicines and green products, and recycling. One example is Misty Mountain Threadworks, which received a \$100,000 grant that continues to help expand employment opportunities for skilled workers who have suffered from the shrinking manufacturing economy in North Carolina. Misty Mountain Threadworks makes climbing harnesses and uses sustainable environmental business practices. NCIF's support for the company enables it to continue its sustainable production methods as it expands. The company expects to create eight new positions in the two years post-NCIF investment. See [www.mistymountain.com](http://www.mistymountain.com).

individuals, including, but not limited to, capital access programs, micro-lending, franchise financing, and guaranty performance bonds. The CDFI is intended to focus the majority of its services to help low-income individuals, minorities, women, and rural areas. Calhoun Falls, in partnership with Abbeville County, and other economic development partners, chambers, and businesses should discuss opportunities with the Greater Abbeville Federal Credit Union to expand CDFI capabilities to extend to the strategic economic development of Calhoun Falls, with potential focus on providing capital access micro-lending programs to help recreation-focused businesses, local value-added products, and/or other businesses that will support the priorities identified in the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan.

- Visitors to Calhoun Falls and Russell Lake are prospective business owners and residents. Thus, the town should promote to all visitors the assets of the community and the opportunities of relocating. The town should also be prepared to facilitate their



move. In its recent *Outdoor Recreation Economy* report, the Outdoor Industry Association acknowledged this impact and noted that rural communities are increasingly recognizing that “outdoor recreation and open spaces are key ingredients of healthy communities, contribute to a high quality of life and, most importantly, attract and sustain businesses and families.”<sup>10</sup> The town of Calhoun Falls should develop a new business guide to welcome and facilitate relocation. (See the information on Traverse City, Michigan, see below.)

## REGIONAL CONNECTIONS: Traverse City, Michigan

Traverse City, Michigan discovered the power of tourists. Not only did visitors spend money and boost the local economy, but a study revealed that most leads for new businesses and relocation of talent were the result of people who visited the region and decided that that they wanted to live there. The city launched an outreach and marketing campaign to capitalize on that trend and make it easier for visitors to fulfill the dream of living in Traverse City. For more information, see <http://tcchamber.org/economic-development/relocating-your-business/>.



- Calhoun Falls should strive to grow local jobs, starting with building local skill sets. The Sustainable Economic Development Plan maps out local job opportunities and how they might be achieved. More targeted approaches include the March 2014 Tourism Hospitality and Small Business Training or similar events that help grow existing businesses, cultivate new businesses, and strengthen informed customer service. Over time, the town may want to hold more targeted business development, akin to the Cashing in on Geocaching forum held in Emporium, Pennsylvania.

<sup>10</sup> Outdoor Industry Association. *The Outdoor Recreation Economy*, 2012, p 13.  
[http://outdoorindustry.org/pdf/OIA\\_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf](http://outdoorindustry.org/pdf/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf).

# TOURISM HOSPITALITY & SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING

Friday, March 28, 2014

(Tourism) 10am-1:30pm & (Small Business) 12:30pm-4pm

Lunch is 12:30pm - 1:30pm and FREE for everyone.

Walk away with the tools you need to grow your business by being a part of your community's destination brand. The goal is to provide the highest quality southern hospitality to the visitor leading to memorable experiences and return business!

**Speaker:**  
**Dr. Simon Hudson**  
Director, Center of Economic  
Excellence in Tourism and  
Economic Development  
University of South Carolina



TOWN OF CALHOUN FALLS  
401 NORTH WASHINGTON ST.  
CALHOUN FALLS, SC 29628  
RSVP TO TUCKHANNA@WCTEL.NET  
OR CALL (864)-391-1149



## Pennsylvania Wilds "Cashing-In on Geocaching" Conference



**Friday**  
**November 5, 2010**  
Emporium Country Club  
Route 120  
Emporium, PA  
Registration begins  
at 9:30 am  
**Cost \$ 20.00**  
(checks payable to  
Lumber Heritage Region)  
Includes continental  
breakfast & lunch  
  
*RSVP on or before*  
*October 27th to*  
*Val Shelley at*  
*(814) 486-0213*  
*vshelley@lumberheritage.org*  
  
*Seating limited*  
*to first 100 paid RSVP's*

The Pennsylvania Wilds "Cashing-In on Geocaching" Conference is for tourism business owners, trail groups, community leaders and individuals interested in learning more about this high tech scavenger hunt. Explore the connection between tourism, technology and nature.

**Conference begins at 10:00 am and will include the following topics:**

- Impact geocaching is having in our region
- Demonstration of geocaching
- Panel discussion about the economic benefits of geocaching
- Information about geocaching on public lands
- Rules governing the activity
- Real life insights from groups and businesses that have started their own trails
- GeoWoodstock 2011—Warren, PA

**Geocaching:**  
"The use of billion dollar satellite technology to find  
junk in the woods"



## RESOURCE: Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers Report—Bicycling and Walking Good for Business

A USDA Economic Research Service study indicates that rural counties that attract “creative class” businesses enjoy job-growth rates that are higher than metropolitan counties. Two qualities sought by creative-class workers are active street scenes and outdoor recreation opportunities. Bicycling and walking infrastructure and facilities contribute to these outcomes. In the words of Norman Whitaker, executive director of South Carolina’s Central Midlands Council of Governments, “The creative class is attracted to bike/ped[estrian travel] as modes of transportation and recreation.”

Investments in bicycling and walking facilities can lead to more income and jobs from increased tourism and resident choices. But bike/ped choices go beyond tourism. Places like Billings, Montana have realized that some visitors become residents and business owners. At a 2011 U.S. Congressional briefing, Billings Chamber of Commerce CEO John Brewer opined, “In Billings—and I think throughout the country—there has been a paradigm shift. Trails are no longer viewed as community amenities; they’re viewed as essential infrastructure for business recruitment. Talented people move to Billings in large part because of our trail system that creates the quality of life they are expecting. A healthy trail system is vital to a healthy community.” Brewer points out that *Fortune* magazine recently named Billings as “the number one small city in attracting business.” Brewer concluded, “Federally funded investment in our non-motorized transportation sparks private investment in trails and trail projects, which lures companies, increases residential quality of life, and retains a qualified workforce. Trails are vital to the business and the economy and jobs in Billings.” See *Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy*, 2012,

<http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/ourWork/reports/BeyondUrbanCentersReport.pdf>.

- Calhoun Falls should seek to connect business and industry opportunities to tourism, thereby creating a stronger sustainable tourism “cluster.” In the upstate area, Perception Kayaks pioneered plastic kayaks in the late 1970s and boosted the sport of kayaking nationwide; the kayaks are still made in South Carolina. In the Pennsylvania Wilds, residents and visitors take to the slopes on locally manufactured Homewood snowboards. Calhoun Falls could develop a sustainable tourism cluster from its textile connections,



Confluence Watersports' kayak production factory in Greenville, SC



enabling it to produce high-performance outdoor recreational textiles akin to Misty Mountain Threads or other outfitting brands. In fact, companies like Misty Mountain Threads share the pride of their place of manufacture as their backyard playgrounds.

This economic cluster approach would enable Calhoun Falls to capture greater local economic impact and create a more diversified economy by providing products through more economic sectors. As a result, the local economy could capture not just impacts from visitors to the natural assets of Russell Lake and the state park, but also by providing lodging, meals, and products that are manufactured locally sold at the retail and wholesale levels. Services would also be an integral part of the economy, in the form of leading tours, renting equipment, and outfitting tourists.

- Calhoun Falls should draw on its textile past for economic opportunity. While the community is rightly focused on the future, the town should analyze the capacity for economic opportunities based on its textile heritage and the potential for new textile design and manufacturing, perhaps at a smaller or more specialized scale. The town may also be able to capitalize on the machinery expertise of its residents and/or build opportunities for handicrafts or arts. Some examples from other communities include:
  - **Textile heritage:** Many communities have used their textile infrastructure to tell the story of fiber production, manufacturing, and heritage, and have successfully cultivated economic success by demonstrating this heritage. One example is the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association, a three-county region in the fertile hills of eastern Tennessee, just “over the hills” from the historic east Carolina settlements. Its past included the fur and hide trade, textile mills, and copper and gold mining. Now this heritage is part of the region’s future as it markets cultural heritage tourism to attracting visitors to the Englewood Textile Museum and the From Furs to Factories trail. See <http://www.tennesseeoverhill.com/>.
  - **Manufacturing of specialized textiles for outfitting:** Many outfitting products—paddling jackets, life vests, sleeping bags, tents, chairs—require skilled textile production. Outdoor recreation gear production is a good textile manufacturing mini-sector that can grow in the right places. Becky Anderson, founder of HandMade in America, recently shared that western North Carolina is making a big push for outdoor recreation manufacturing opportunities, including textiles. An outdoor manufacturers’ think tank session was convened in Asheville a few years ago and revealed that most recreational manufacturers are located in the American West and are unfamiliar with the effects of humidity on fabric. These recreational manufacturers may benefit from having places in the East to test and produce their textiles.
  - **Reinvention of textile sector by cultivating local expertise:** Opportunity Threads, a new textile company in Burke County, North Carolina, may serve as example. This cooperative focused on organic fibers, upcycled materials, and

sustainable production methods has drawn on the textile heritage of the region, as well as the idle textile infrastructure and experienced machine operators. The company's production partners range from small entrepreneurs to growing mid-size firms to large fashion apparel and accessory companies that want to move production back to the United States. Opportunity Threads has formed a partnership with Catawba Valley Community College's Manufacturing Solutions Center and Catawba County's economic development organization, Burke Development, Inc. to create the Carolina Textile District. See <http://wealthworks.org/sites/default/files/storypdfs/CarolinaTC10-19-13.pdf>.

- **Handicrafts and arts:** New Mexico offers Fiber Arts Trails to engage visitors and support rural fiber arts enterprises and communities statewide. The trails are the result of collaboration between New Mexico Arts and a grassroots network of fiber artists. Three trail loops bring visitors to the source points of production (from "sheep to shawl"), thereby encouraging entrepreneurship, generating income, creating an informed consumer base, and cultivating a sustainable place-based economy. Inspired by the New Mexico, Wyoming started its own Wyoming Fiber Trails to raise fiber-producing plants and animals; encourage fiber production and products; herald local artisans; and offer tourists "a different way to see Wyoming," guiding them to galleries, exhibits and shops. See <http://www.nmfiberarts.org/> and <http://wyomingfibertrails.org/about/>.
- **Adaptive reuse of mill buildings:** As mentioned in the section on Housing and Lodging Choices, mill buildings provide opportunities for creative new uses, honoring the textile past but looking to future needs for housing, lodging, commercial, institutional, or civic uses. Examples abound of creative reuse of mills. In Edenton, North Carolina, when the Unifi Cotton Mill closed in 1995, local citizens worked together to turn the mill property into a community asset. The mill's owner donated the property to Preservation North Carolina, which added protective covenants and sold the homes and lots to renovation-minded buyers. The mill itself was converted into condos. Thus was created the charming Edenton Cotton Mill Village, a 49-acre waterfront village complete with small and mid-sized homes, walkable streets, and close proximity to downtown. See <http://www.presnc.org/Property/Edenton-Cotton-Mill-Village>.
- **Textile educational/entrepreneurship facility:** Lewis County, Kentucky, is developing a small textile manufacturing facility to retrain residents who have skills in creating textile products. A local funder, AppaPhil, is incubating this program in a repurposed downtown building. Beginning in mid-2017, the leaders expect this will transition to a co-operative. Similarly, in Star, North Carolina, the group, Central Park NC ([www.centralparknc.org](http://www.centralparknc.org)), has transformed a 187,000 square foot former textile mill into the STARworks Center for Creative Enterprises and new home to Central Park NC. The original building was built in the late



1800s as the Carolina Collegiate and Agriculture Institute. From the early 1940s until 2001, the building was used to manufacture hosiery. But the company moved their manufacturing to Mexico and the local community lost over 1,000 jobs when the 12-acre, 11-building facility was shut down. Today, as an enterprise center, their mission is focused on growing and developing creative businesses and individuals for placement in local downtowns. See <http://starworksnc.org/about-us.html>.

## **CULTIVATE NICHE OUTDOOR RECREATION MARKETS AND MESSAGES**

Given the abundant outdoor recreation opportunities in the area near Calhoun Falls, it is recommended that the town, in partnership with the state park, USACE, and Abbeville County work to develop niche tourism markets and messages that would be popular in Calhoun Falls.

### **Recommendations**

- The partnership with the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor will provide the town with a resource inventory and assessment. The goal is to inventory all the outdoor recreation resources and service providers, as well as assess market readiness for expanded sustainable tourism. In the short-term, the town should begin to research and initiate communications with local, regional, and state outdoor recreation groups, such as local hunt clubs, fishing tournament groups, college and university outdoor experience programs and athletics, birding clubs, and biking and hiking groups. Research should include a survey of how and when groups use amenities in Calhoun Falls; the access, service, outfitting, or other commercial needs; and interest in new or emerging forms of outdoor recreation, such as stand-up paddling or geocaching.
- The town, state park, LRRTC, and USACE should look for opportunities to expand community events such as fishing tournaments at Blue Hole, Millwood, or Beer Garden fishing piers and boat launches; bike races, running events, triathlons, or adventure race/obstacle courses; and "land and lake" wildlife viewing or birding tours. Such events can have economic, community-building, and health benefits. For example, Shepherdstown, West Virginia launched the Freedom's Run to improve public health by encouraging physical activity and to connect the community to the public lands that define the region. With races ranging in distance from a marathon to a half marathon, 10K, 5K, and kids' fun run, a variety of outdoor enthusiasts participate while experiencing the wonder of Harpers' Ferry, the Antietam Battlefield, the C&O Canal, and the Appalachian Trail. See <http://www.freedomrun.org/>.
- The town, public land managers, and the LRRTC should collaborate to develop niche marketing materials such as "Top Ten" Lists of where to see birds and/or other wildlife; find guide books; and access maps for biking, hiking, or running. Materials should be

distributed to local, regional, state outdoor recreation organizations, and local businesses, as well as posted on relevant Internet sites.

- The town and public land managers should look for opportunities to invite niche outdoor recreation user groups, such as hiking clubs, birders, and cyclists, to "give back" to the communities and natural resources through cleanups, trail-building days, and other volunteer events. The community can engage outdoor recreation organizations to participate and sponsor such events.

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT: Allegheny River Cleanup

Allegheny Outfitters, a family-run canoe and kayak livery and outdoor gear store located along the National Wild & Scenic Allegheny River in Warren County, is a long-time participant of the International Coastal Cleanup. In 2009, owner Piper Van Ord founded a five-day river cleanup to remove garbage from 31 miles of the river and to highlight the Allegheny as an important recreational, ecological, and economic resource in the Pennsylvania Wilds region. The cleanup has attracted hundreds of volunteers and sponsors, who over the last four years have pulled from the river more than 34,000 pounds of metal, 1,500 tires, and hundreds of pounds of trash. Allegheny Outfitters provides free boats to encourage participation. To learn more, visit [www.alleghenyoutfitters.com](http://www.alleghenyoutfitters.com); <http://www.keppabeautiful.org/Portals/0/PDFs/beautiful/beautifulspring2013.pdf>.

## FOSTER REGIONAL CONNECTIONS AND MARKETING

Regional connections forged through vision, marketing, and branding should be the backbone of sustainable tourism development. Broader regional connections lead to stronger business attraction and growth as people recognize the benefits of a regional rather than a single destination.

### Recommendations

- Calhoun Falls, in partnership with the State Park and USACE, should collaborate with the surrounding communities of Due West, Lowndesville, and Abbeville to develop a coordinated regional partnership and identity. A regional approach to sustainable tourism can showcase the best of each town and provide complementary opportunities for recreation and cultural heritage tourism activities that extend visitor stays. In the short-term, regional itineraries, walking and driving tours, and visitor maps should be developed to begin connecting and promoting the region as a single destination.

Over time, Calhoun Falls should strengthen relationships with regional groups such as Upstate Forever's Sustainable Communities Program (<http://upstateforever.org/sustainable-communities>), and SCPRT's Discover South Carolina tourism website ([www.discoversouthcarolina.com](http://www.discoversouthcarolina.com)).

## REGIONAL CONNECTIONS: Southwest Virginia

By capitalizing on the region's unique qualities, Southwest Virginia utilizes its cultural and natural assets to build a comprehensive, long-term, sustainable economy through organizations like Heartwood: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway, the Crooked Road music trail, 'Round The Mountain artisan trail, and related cultural heritage organizations and venues that promote entrepreneurial and employment opportunities.

The Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission, established in 2008 by the Virginia General Assembly, took the lead in developing a creative economy in Southwest Virginia. In 2011, the Commission became the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, a self-sustaining community-development nonprofit. With the support of the Friends of Southwest Virginia, businesses and individuals help mobilize artists, craftspeople, localities, nonprofit organizations, and entrepreneurs.

A multifaceted plan identifies the cultural and natural assets of the region; coordinates initiatives, organizations, and venues that are engaged in cultural and natural heritage to ensure efficient operations for all. The effort also develops a comprehensive strategy and capital improvements plan to maximize the impact of state investments in the restructuring effort. Key initiatives include:

- Branding and marketing Southwest Virginia as a distinct culture and destination
- Developing and sustaining Heartwood: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway
- Developing and maintaining the Southwest Virginia website while integrating with those of the Crooked Road and 'Round The Mountain as the overall storyboard and trip planner for the region, its communities, and its assets
- Planning and implementing downtown revitalization throughout the region to instill a high quality of life within the communities and to promote them for a broad spectrum of economic development opportunities.

Such success leads the way for a stable economic base for Southwest Virginia. Partners include the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation, and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Resources. Funding partners include the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission and the Appalachian Regional Commission. See [www.myswva.org](http://www.myswva.org).

- Expand opportunities related to key travel trends that benefit from a regional approach to build popularity, such as:
  - Staycations: As a rural destination close to populated areas, it is possible that residents in the region have not spent much time in Calhoun Falls. Matt Wixon, author of *The Great American Staycation*<sup>11</sup>, defines a staycation as “a vacation in which the vacationer stays at home or near home while creating the environment of a traditional vacation.” The trend of “staycations” and “one-tank destinations” may provide an opportunity to capitalize on a regional market available to Calhoun Falls. Campaigns often use themes such as “Be a Tourist in Your Own Town” and offer special events, tours, or activities for residents in the community, region, or state.

## STAYCATION CAMPAIGN:

### Lansing, Michigan’s Be a Tourist in Your Own Town

One of the longest running “staycation” programs in the United States, Lansing’s “Be a Tourist in Your Own Town” takes place on a single summer day, attracting 12,000–15,000 people annually. A one-dollar passport grants free admission to more than 60 local attractions and businesses. People can also take advantage of discounted bus routes to most of the attractions. <http://www.lansing.org/events/batyot/> and [www.livability.com/best-places-blog/tourist-in-your-own-town-programs-create-city-ambassadors-build-community-pride/](http://www.livability.com/best-places-blog/tourist-in-your-own-town-programs-create-city-ambassadors-build-community-pride/).

- Volunteer Vacations: More travelers are giving back to destinations they visit by donating time, money, talent, and their repeat business to protect and positively impact the culture and environment. Websites such as [www.voluntourism.org](http://www.voluntourism.org) help travelers find vacation and volunteer opportunities. The diverse ecology and abundant natural resources around Russell Lake provide ample opportunities to build volunteer vacation programs with public land managers, conservation organizations, and outdoor recreation groups to address some of their resource management needs, such as stream and lake cleanups, trail maintenance and construction, or invasive species removal. Partnerships with the USACE and the state park may help identify potential projects that would be well-suited for volunteerism.

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<sup>11</sup> Matt Wixon. *The Great American Staycation: How to Make a Vacation at Home Fun for the Whole Family (and Your Wallet)*. Adams Media, 2009.

## VOLUNTEER VACATION: Northern Forest Canoe Trail

The mission of the nonprofit Northern Forest Canoe River Trail (NFCT), created in 2000, is to connect people to the natural environment, human heritage, and contemporary communities along the 740-mile inland paddling trail, which traces historic travel routes across New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire, and Maine. To meet the mission of stewardship and offer an opportunity to visitors who want to combine a little work with their vacation, NFCT created Waterway Work Trips. NFCT selects sites along the route that are in need of work and designs three-day trips that include trail maintenance along with paddling gear. Interns prep the site and are on hand to supervise participants' work. For more information, see [www.northernforestcanoetrail.org](http://www.northernforestcanoetrail.org).

- **Baby Boomer Travel:** Calhoun Falls is located near as Savannah Lakes and other retirement communities that may be looking for recreational and heritage experiences designed for an older population. With 78 million baby boomers (defined as people born between 1946 and 1964) entering retirement in the coming years, this population segment is increasingly important to the travel industry. Studies show that today's retirees seek to travel and explore new destinations, actively taking at least two trips each year. As it expands its sustainable tourism strategies, Calhoun Falls should consider this demographic by providing enhanced accessibility to downtown shops, restaurants, and amenities and forging partnerships with historical and cultural heritage destinations in nearby Abbeville.

### **DEVELOP BRAND AND MARKETING STRATEGIES AND CREATE INTERNET PRESENCE FOR TOWN**

Branding and marketing are key strategies for successfully attracting new and diverse residents, businesses, and visitors. The partnership with the South Carolina Heritage Corridor will provide marketing and public relations guidance such as for developing key messages to advertise projects and to assist in marketing messages and developing content for a new website.

#### **Recommendations**

- The town, in partnership with residents, local businesses, the state park, and USACE, should develop and implement a local brand identity and a brand and marketing plan. A brand identity offers the best way to outwardly express the vision, character, and values of a community. A logo, advertising, websites, color palettes, and signage are just a few components of a brand. All elements should be consistent, memorable, and representative of the community and its region.





LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE 4:  
SUPPORT EXISTING  
GATEWAY COMMUNITIES  
AND SUSTAIN THEIR UNIQUE  
CHARACTER



# SUPPORT EXISTING GATEWAY COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAIN THEIR UNIQUE CHARACTER

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## EXISTING COMMUNITY & CHARACTER: KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Calhoun Falls has made improvements to streetscapes and pedestrian crossings in the downtown area to improve community character.
- The town has received a grant to replace all street signs.
- The downtown core is very walkable and has good building stock, but it needs façade renewal and potentially structural and internal improvements.
- Communication regarding the town's relationship with and proximity to Russell Lake and/or the lake's contributions to the community is lacking.
- There is little or no recognition of the area's textile heritage.

Reinvestment is an important component of livability. In gateway communities, reinvestment should be targeted to encourage more efficient use of existing infrastructure, protection of farmland and open space, and neighborhood revitalization. Such investment expands transportation choices, preserves what makes the community unique, and ultimately improves quality of life for residents.

As the gateway to Russell Lake and as a historic mill town, Calhoun Falls combines surrounding natural beauty with the charm of a traditional downtown. The town has taken steps to enhance its downtown through streetscape improvements and new street signs. Continued investment in the existing community is important, particularly as it encourages variety in housing, transportation, employment, and recreation to meet livability goals. Priority recommendations for the protection and revitalization of the community and preservation of natural resource assets follow.



## INVEST IN DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

During the site visit, the Assessment Team and stakeholders identified and discussed several opportunities for community reinvestment and revitalization.

### Recommendations

- The town should inventory its public buildings and landmarks to identify priority capital improvement projects that will enhance the community's overall appearance, as well as improve the function and use of the buildings and neighborhoods. A community's investments in public buildings and public space reflect the community's values. At one time, the courthouse, library, and local government offices were the most beautiful buildings in American downtowns; deteriorating or decaying public buildings erode community pride. Public buildings set the standard for the town's sense of place and civic pride. Public investments also make good business sense by sending the message that this place cares about itself and its future. Businesses do not want to invest in a community that is in decline; public investment shows that their private investment will be protected. In addition, public buildings generate foot traffic that helps support nearby businesses. Calhoun Falls has made investments in improving the local police station and town hall parking lot to improve appearance and function. The town can further encourage downtown revitalization by purchasing and renovating vacant or underutilized properties and/or by providing incentives for others to do the same. The

town should also keep public buildings downtown or relocate them to the Cox Avenue corridor or nearby streets.

- During the assessment, participants pointed out underutilized downtown historic buildings, including the old bank building. The town should investigate the feasibility of reusing these structures for businesses or community resources such as libraries, school programs, meeting space, a visitor's center, a museum, etc. By fostering creative reuse the town can demonstrate public investment in the downtown and reconnect residents with community resources and local businesses.



Old bank building in Calhoun Falls.

- As noted in the Transportation Chapter of this report, the Assessment Team noted that the existing silos at intersection of SC Highway 72 and SC Highway 81 provide an opportunity to welcome visitors to Calhoun Falls and promote it as the gateway to Russell Lake. Investment in such welcome signs would signal to residents and visitors that the community cares about its appearance, has a unique character and sense of



Silo mural at the Oregon Nature Trail Nature Park in Wamego, Kansas

place, and has community pride. The town should work with silo owner Dorothy Sherard, SCDOT, and USACE to develop potential project ideas for the beautification and signage use of those silos as a landmark and destination sign for Calhoun Falls. (See also USACE information Handshake Program under Principle 1.)

- Small-town charm often comes from creative elements that incorporate the story of the town's past into today's streetscape. The town of Calhoun Falls, in partnership with the state park and USACE, should work with area historical societies to incorporate historic elements, such as old bricks, factory signs, or other mill architectural features, into new structures, public art, pathways, and/or signs.



## TELLING THE STORY: Connellsville, Pennsylvania

Fayette County, Pennsylvania, formed a trust to develop history and art resources. As a result of this support, local artist Jody Best designed and fabricated this work of public art entitled "*From Coke to Spokes*", which reflects Connellsville's industrial steel heritage and its future, with a strong economic connection to heritage tourism and the Great Allegheny Passage.

- During the assessment visit, town leaders met with a representative of the Clemson University Design Studio, a.LINE.ments, which has designed and planned Little Mountain, the Greenwood Mill Site, and other revitalization programs. Clemson's program may provide a unique partnership opportunity for Calhoun Falls to invest in the downtown, engage college students, and garner regional attention for the community efforts. (To participate in the program, the town will need to raise \$15,000–\$20,000.)



- Calhoun Falls’ transition away from its textile roots is quite recent and may still be painful, but it is important for Calhoun Falls to honor its heritage as a textile mill town. Preserving the mill buildings and/or components, restoring mill housing, creating a mill trail with interpretive signs, recording the experiences of mill workers, and launching an event to celebrate the town’s heritage are all important ways to honor and celebrate the unique heritage of Calhoun Falls.

**RESOURCE: South Carolina Jobs-Economic Development Authority**

The South Carolina Jobs-Economic Development Authority (JEDA) has launched a new program to help local governments and school districts. JEDA’s Financial Advisory Services (FAS) offers evaluation of funding alternatives, advice on how best to combine those alternatives with existing obligations, and multiyear capital improvement and financing plans (CIPs) that include broad market monitoring and specialized assistance. Investment and structured product advisory services consistent with state guidelines are another area of expertise. The website features an example of how the FAS could support downtown revitalization by serving as an advisor to craft a finance plan tailored to the politics and financial capacity of the locality. See <http://scjeda.com/jeda-financial-advisory-services/>.

**ENGAGE BUSINESS OWNERS IN THE REVITALIZATION OF THE DOWNTOWN**

As noted in the Calhoun Falls 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan and by business owners during the assessment, there is a real need for education about and enforcement of building codes, permitting, and safety standards. Currently, several downtown buildings are in disrepair, or used as storage by absentee owners, while safety and appearance concerns are widely ignored.

**Recommendations**

- The town, chamber, and other community partners should consider using a range of tools to address downtown revitalization including education, incentives, and voluntary initiatives as well as regulations. This approach include both “carrots” and “sticks.”
- The town should investigate the feasibility of updating the building ordinances and/or codes to employ stronger enforcement language and consequences.
- The town should investigate the feasibility of hiring a part-time building inspector/enforcement officer or employing a circuit rider that can serve in this capacity for several nearby communities.
- The town has made beautification investments to the downtown with improved pedestrian crossings and landscaping; an equal investment should be reflected in its

downtown buildings. The town and chamber of commerce should incentivize beautification and restoration projects among business owners in the downtown. Incentives could include providing design assistance grants; facilitating fundraisers; organizing “blitz” events or volunteer-led community improvement projects to add public art, provide landscaping, or clean up walls; participating in design studio activities; or sponsoring design competitions.

**RESOURCE: Design Guidelines: Setting Design Expectations with Voluntary Programs**

Communities can develop voluntary or mandatory design guidelines for business owners and developers to achieve complementary styles for new buildings. *Better Models for Commercial Development*, provides examples of communities that have engaged prospective businesses to locate in their towns and voluntarily design their buildings to respect and enhance the existing streetscape and downtown fabric. Other design guides for rural areas and small towns include the Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide and Carroll County (Md.) Design Expectations Manual. All are available online for free.

**Better Models for Commercial Development:** <http://www.conservationfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Better-Models-For-Commercial-Development-The-Conservation-Fund.pdf>.

**Carroll County Design Expectations Manual:**  
<http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/compplan/design/intro.pdf>.

**Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guidebook:** <http://www.pawildsresources.org/designguide>.

## FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:

### Evanston, Illinois

The city of Evanston, Illinois, has established a number of incentive programs to assist local existing businesses and welcome new businesses to the city. These include the façade improvement program that invites business owners to improve the appearance of the street-facing exteriors on their commercial buildings. The Façade Improvement Program offers to fund up to 50 percent of a total qualifying project’s cost to successful applicants. The first 35 linear feet of public right-of-way facing frontage (or less) is eligible for up to \$10,000 on a 50/50 cost-sharing basis. Each linear foot of frontage beyond 35 feet is eligible for an additional \$100 per foot. Improvements include awnings, canopies, doors, windows, fascia, historic restoration, lighting, metal work, tile, trim, painting, and decorative elements. The city provides design guidelines. See <http://www.evanstonedge.com/programs/>.

## BEAUTIFICATION WITH A PURPOSE: Silverton, Oregon

Citizens in Silverton, Oregon, painted artistic and interpretive murals on blank walls, tempting visitors to nearby attractions, restaurants, and stores and visually telling the town's stories about its lumber heritage, the native son who became an astronaut, and a lost dog who traveled thousands of miles back to his family in Silverton. The town murals have become a tourist attraction and are cared for by the local Mural Society. See <http://www.silvertonor.com/murals/>.



*Examples of murals painted in Silverton, Oregon.*

- The town should increase contact with absentee building owners to share the investments being made in the downtown, reinforce awareness of building codes and enforcement, and provide information on opportunities to beautify the downtown. The town also should share information about the progress in the downtown and invite building owners to join in making Calhoun Falls a beautiful and thriving place.
- In the long term, Calhoun Falls may want to pursue participation in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program. Communities use the Main Street approach to revitalize and strengthen their traditional commercial districts. Some have officially designated Main Street programs, but other communities simply incorporate Main Street principles into existing economic development, historic preservation, city management, or urban- and community-planning programs. There are four main tenets adopted by the Main Street approach: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides resources and examples to help communities use this approach to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort. To learn more, see <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street> or contact Main Street South Carolina

Manager Beppie LeGrand at 803-933-1231 or [blegrand@masc.sc](mailto:blegrand@masc.sc). See ([www.masc.sc/programs/knowledge/pages/main-street-sc.aspx](http://www.masc.sc/programs/knowledge/pages/main-street-sc.aspx)).

## THE MAIN STREET APPROACH: Fruitvale Neighborhood, Oakland, California

In 1997, the Unity Council was selected as one of five groups across the country to pilot a new approach to community economic development as part of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's Neighborhood Main Street Initiative. The Initiative is a partnership between LISC and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which created the Main Street model as a tool to preserve the historic downtowns of small cities. The Main Street approach represents a way of working for urban community-based organizations. Rather than being providers of direct services to the community, the Main Street host organization becomes a conduit of information and a facilitator for the development of a shared strategy. The Fruitvale Main Street Program is a broad collaboration between the Unity Council and a number of public and private institutions that have a stake in the success of the neighborhood, including local businesses, banks, the city, the police and parks districts, and, of course, concerned neighborhood residents.

The results of the program have been very impressive; over a hundred new jobs have been created and millions of public and private dollars have been invested in the community. But these large-scale results are achieved through the coordination of hundreds of very small actions. The Main Street approach emphasizes the long-term impact of small things. For example, the Fruitvale Main Street program coordinates a matching grant program for storefront improvements. The program's staff identifies merchants and property owners in need of assistance and helps them find architects and contractors. With funds provided by the city, the program is able to provide very small grants to match the building owner's investment. Some of these façade projects are entirely new storefronts but others are more modest, such as new signs or awnings. Already the program has touched most of the buildings in the commercial district and the net result of all these small investments is immediately noticeable. For more information, see

[http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE/b.5136891/k.7B97/Case\\_Studies.htm](http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE/b.5136891/k.7B97/Case_Studies.htm).

## ENGAGE COMMUNITY IN REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN

The leaders of Calhoun Falls have done an outstanding job of capitalizing on available resources and engaging in partnerships with surrounding public land managers. It is recommended that the town and its public land partners collaborate to lead the community through the revitalization process by building awareness of benefits, cultivating buy-in and new leaders, and developing ongoing opportunities.

### Recommendations

- Look for overlapping opportunities in which investments will benefit visitors and residents. Visitors may be looking for unique experiences, but there are amenities that both visitors and residents can appreciate, such opportunities to shop for everyday groceries and basics, family restaurants, and family activities.
- Raise public awareness of and pride in the town's character. Events such as street cleanups, building painting or murals, art walks, street festivals, farmers' markets, and community gatherings and workshops give local residents and businesses a stake in the downtown and what happens to it. These programs and events also create a lively atmosphere that often instantly enhances pride in the community.
- Strengthen resident awareness of area attractions, including cultural, heritage, and historical amenities. Some communities have special "tourist in your downtown" or hometown days in which they invite residents to visit local attractions. Not only do these events support local businesses, but they also may expose residents to new amenities and activities in the area, strengthen pride among community residents, and make residents better community advocates.
- Consider developing "blitz" events that engage residents and spur visible fast change to the downtown streetscape. An art blitz, for instance, could solicit local professional, amateur, and/or school-age artists to create public art on downtown walls and/or buildings in a one-day or weekend festival setting. Art sites could be selected through applications or identified by the community as priority cleanup sites. Musicians could provide entertainment along Cox Avenue. The youngest residents can participate by creating chalk drawings on sidewalks or by painting on a roll of paper rolled down the closed-off street. (The city of Curitiba, Brazil, for instance, holds a weekly children's art program



*Community Arts Blitz Build for Habitat for Humanity*

#### **RESOURCE: Palmetto Pride**

Palmetto Pride funding can be used for a cleanup blitz and community makeover. It is also available for schools to implement environmental initiatives. Calhoun Falls has successfully used Palmetto Pride funding for public art, tree planting, and beautification. See <http://palmettopride.org/grants-center/>.



by unfurling a large paper roll down the pedestrian zone and providing paint and brushes for whomever would like to participate). Similarly, a garden blitz could gather local gardeners and landscapers to build and plant downtown container gardens. These are low-cost events that would rely on sponsorships, sweat equity, and contributions by residents who take pride in their community.

## **CONSIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRATEGIC CONSERVATION**

The preservation of community character and downtown infrastructure is important to developing and sustaining a sense of place, as is conservation of the natural landscape. The beauty of the surrounding area is a defining element of Calhoun Falls. It is important that the town and its residents recognize the value of the landscape not only as an amenity for those who live in Calhoun Falls, but also as an important component of Calhoun Falls as a successful sustainable tourism destination and economic resiliency.

The protection and conservation of open space and green infrastructure has a number of benefits, particularly for small towns like Calhoun Falls. Green infrastructure can be defined as a strategically planned and managed network of natural lands, working landscapes, and other open spaces. Green infrastructure conserves ecosystem functions and provides benefits to people, regardless of land ownership. For communities, the protection of green infrastructure results in less flood damage to property, as floodplains are managed by the network design. The planning and protection of green infrastructure also means support for working lands and tourism by creating certainty that preserved spaces are not threatened by development and available for recreation; increased home values due to the enhanced natural surrounding that make communities more attractive to buyers; and enhanced quality of life by maintaining scenic views, fresh air and water, and places to enjoy outdoor recreation and physical activity.

The rural nature of the region and the mix of public and private land ownership make it imperative for Calhoun Falls and Abbeville County to work together to plan for the conservation of open spaces and the protection of fragile environmental linkages. One of the most important ways to do this is by directing development toward the most appropriate areas, that is, areas that are not as essential to the ecosystem. Careful planning that takes into account the natural needs of the ecosystem will help ensure that a sustainable tourism industry will thrive because this planning ensures the ongoing health and viability of natural areas for recreation. Calhoun Falls, in partnership with Abbeville County and USCOG, should consider the development of a green infrastructure network plan to create a visual representation of the current open space connections—including those that cross county lines—and areas at risk of possible fragmentation. A green infrastructure network is a strategic approach for future land use and can be used to illustrate potential goals, objectives, and actions for conservation and development to better support quality of life.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AT A SITE SCALE: Block-Scale Green Infrastructure Design for the Historic Northwest Quadrant of Beaufort, South Carolina

The pristine beauty of the Beaufort River and marsh are essential to the city of Beaufort South Carolina's economy and livelihood. In order to ensure that future generations are able to appreciate and experience Beaufort's natural beauty, city staff and elected leaders consider the principles of preservation, growth, and sustainability in each development and infrastructure decision. This commitment to preserving natural resources for future generations has led the city to embrace the concept of green infrastructure for stormwater management. The public works and planning departments implement appropriate, low-cost green infrastructure practices to filter and clean stormwater. To do so, the city created the Block by Block Green Infrastructure (3BGI) program. The Northwest Quadrant, a residential community, was targeted as a priority to integrate a site-scale green infrastructure planning approach that seeks to preserve the historic feel of the community, enhance local amenities, and provide sustainable stormwater management. To do so, they have created a strategic plan that includes goals and objectives that encourage the use of rain barrels among residents and businesses; support community gardens; and prioritize the identification of future community pocket parks.

Learn more at

[http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/upload/Beaufort\\_Conceptual\\_Design\\_Report.pdf](http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/upload/Beaufort_Conceptual_Design_Report.pdf).

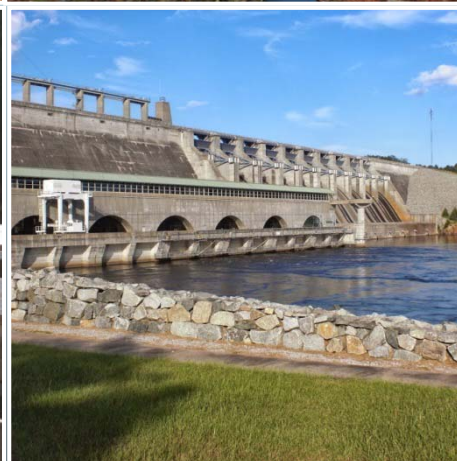
## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AT A LANDSCAPE SCALE: COWASEE Basin Collaborative Conservation Plan

The Congaree Land Trust (CLT) focuses on protecting the natural and scenic lands through voluntary conservation easements in the Congaree, Wateree, and Santee Rivers and associated watersheds (COWASEE Basin). Located in the heart of South Carolina, this mostly rural area has high biological, cultural, and historic values, but it faces growing development pressures. The CLT's strategic conservation plan is an informal approach that changes as properties change and as new information becomes available. The Land Trust moves quickly to work with landowners to protect key tracts of land in the basin. It holds landowner meetings and education events in the watershed. The CLT measures success of its strategic conservation plan by the number of acres protected. An equally important metric is a well-educated public, including politicians and policymakers. CLT has a large organizational focus on education and outreach so that conservation values and need for undeveloped property within the COWASEE Basin will have strong environmental and economic benefits for the area's communities. See

<http://www.landtrustalliance.org/conservation/strategic-conservation/Southeast%20US%20Conservation%20Planning.pdf>.



LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE 5:  
COORDINATE POLICIES &  
LEVERAGE INVESTMENTS  
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY &  
BETWEEN THE GATEWAY  
COMMUNITY & PUBLIC  
LANDS



# COORDINATE POLICIES & LEVERAGE INVESTMENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY & BETWEEN THE GATEWAY COMMUNITY & PUBLIC LANDS

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## POLICIES & INVESTMENTS: KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The town forged a lease agreement with USACE for the Blue Hole Recreation Area and subsequent renovation and implementation of expanded recreation facilities with Department of Commerce grant funding.
- The town and Calhoun Falls State Park worked with Mountain View State Park in Anderson County to obtain underutilized recreation amenities (shelters, picnic tables, restroom fixtures, playground equipment, etc.).
- The citizen-formed Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition came together to coordinate, sponsor, and promote facilities, events, and activities on and around Russell Lake. They had great success in 2013 with several community events held at Blue Hole.
- The town council has done significant work to foster cooperative working relationships with the chamber of commerce, the Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition, local businesses, regional interests, and others to develop and implement an economic vision for Calhoun Falls.
- The town recently obtained ownership of the Anderson Branch Railway right-of-way that parallels SC Highway 81.
- The town has been diligent in sharing the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan and as a result has received support from Abbeville County, the Upstate Alliance, the S.C. Department of Commerce, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, and USACE.
- The town has a formal agreement to receive technical assistance from the South Carolina Heritage Corridor, which creates several new exciting opportunities.



Communities that demonstrate vision, a sense of purpose, and strong diverse partnerships are more likely to receive funding from outside sources. In a competitive market, corporations, foundations, and government agencies all invest in the ideas and initiatives that they believe have the best potential for strong returns. Through demonstrated partnerships with its nearby federal land managers, participation in the Federal Lands Livability Initiative, and ongoing planning for economic development and enhanced quality of life, the town of Calhoun Falls has demonstrated its commitment to livability. These efforts have established a strong track record to share with potential funders and to leverage new partnerships and resources.

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities provides key information on funding and technical assistance opportunities available from the four partner federal agencies. Each agency offers different ways of approaching infrastructure planning and construction, economic development, pollution cleanup, and other issues that are part of achieving sustainable communities. Coordinating funding and leveraging various programs can help communities advance their overall visions and goals. The Partnership's *Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities* provides examples of how rural communities across the country have put federal funding and technical assistance into action and offers a menu of options that communities may consider when planning and implementing projects. The guide is available at [http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/federal\\_resources\\_rural.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/federal_resources_rural.pdf).

The town of Calhoun Falls and its partners have done a great job in leveraging limited resources. Calhoun Falls should build on its vision and priorities in ways that continue to capitalize on the existing investments and forge diverse partnerships that achieve community goals.

## **STRENGTHENING SUPPORT BY LEVERAGING RECENT SUCCESSES AND EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS**

Calhoun Falls should be very proud of the work they have done to build momentum towards bettering their community. These successes should not go unnoticed and should be the basis of leveraging new investments with partners.

### **Recommendations**

- The Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Commission (LRRTC) should continue to grow and expand its partnership with the USACE and the State Park Service. This outstanding civic group has led improvements at the Blue Hole Recreation Area and acted as a liaison for recreation and natural resources for the town of Calhoun Falls. Acting as a "Friends of Russell Lake Group", the LRRTC has an opportunity to cultivate new relationships and communicate potential engagement opportunities with the town of Calhoun Falls. The National Park Service has a long history of supporting "Friends of" groups and has developed resources that are transferrable to the LRRTC in an effort to

sustain their capabilities as a volunteer support group. See [http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/friends\\_groups.htm](http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/friends_groups.htm).

- It is recommended that Calhoun Falls approach the Corps Foundation (see below) to solicit board assistance on identifying fundraising and funding ideas to support the implementation of its 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan.

#### **RESOURCE: The Corps Foundation**

The Corps Foundation is committed to facilitating local involvement and encouraging grassroots participation in the stewardship of rivers and waterways managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Foundation also provides consulting and grant support for community groups to increase the flow of philanthropic dollars to their projects. See <http://www.corpsfoundation.org/>.

- The Upper Savannah Council of Governments (USCOG) is the portal to state and federal resources for Calhoun Falls. Priority areas of service include community and economic development, government services and support, workforce development, aging population assistance, and special projects and partnerships. The USCOG should be considered as a major partner in addressing the economic development priorities in Calhoun Falls and may be a critical resource in building relationships with state and federal partners.
- Consider crowdfunding as a means for raising funds for specific elements of the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan. Essentially, crowdfunding finances a project by expanding the definition of “community” and funding sources. Online crowdfunding campaigns typically raise small-scale amounts to complete an artistic project, such as an music album or film. Efforts to collect at least \$100,000 represent a small percent of crowdfund raises. However, examples range in scope: Chickasha, Oklahoma, used Citizeninvestor to raise \$870,000 to renovate the Kids Place Playground at their Centennial Park. In Atlanta, the Chosewood Park Community Development Corporation is currently using IndieGoGo to raise \$2,800 for neighborhood edible landscaping. Kickstarter and IndieGoGo are a couple of the best known platforms, however, entrepreneurs have developed Kickstarter-like websites devoted specifically to funding civic projects, including neighbor.ly (<http://neighbor.ly>), ioby (<http://ioby.org>), and Citizeninvestor (<http://citizinvestor.com/>). Crowdfunding platforms range too from those that solicit outright donations to some that give donors swag such as key chains or tote bags, to those that offer limited or full equity investments. Calhoun Falls and its community partners should consider the potential of crowdfunding to support a priority project, such as a cabin or treehouse lodging.

- Calhoun Falls also should pursue old-fashioned community fundraising for well-defined projects. In 1997, Nashua, New Hampshire, raised \$28,000 to create a mural of the long-gone Yankee Flyer Diner by having residents pay to be painted into the mural. More recently, Hudson, Ohio, raised money for a centennial walkway and garden on its village green by selling bricks to community members. Engraved bricks were installed with the purchaser’s chosen message or with an image of the town’s iconic clock tower.



*Nashua, NH mural of the Yankee Flyer Diner*

- Calhoun Falls should inventory potential public, private, and corporate funding sources in the region to build a multilayered “quilt” of potential partners. Calhoun Falls is fortunate to have several industries within the immediate area and many large corporations headquartered within the greater region. Opportunities may lie with corporations looking to invest in surrounding towns as part of their corporate mission or responsibility. Local, regional, and state foundations and philanthropic entities may also have funding priorities that align with the needs of the town and its surrounding region. The town should inventory businesses, nonprofits, community foundations, and philanthropic organizations in the region. The town should make sure to explain to these prospective partners the partnership with the USACE and the state park as part of an overall strategy to leverage these existing leverages.

## **MAKE THE CASE FOR REGIONAL SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT**

Regional approaches and partnerships are critical to success for any community, but are particularly helpful for small and/or rural communities like Calhoun Falls. Working together and following an “all boats rise” approach will enable the region to leverage resources and attract support.

### **Recommendations**

- During the assessment, community leaders emphasized the goal of aligning priorities at the county, region, and state levels. Since the assessment visit, stakeholders have reported progress in coordinating the economic development strategies countywide. Calhoun Falls should continue working with Abbeville County and surrounding towns to develop a regional strategy for economic development. An agreed-upon regional vision will be more compelling for investment from state and federal governments, as well as private partners and funding sources.

- Integrate Calhoun Falls' priorities into countywide planning initiatives and budgets. The county's economic development focus should be updated to embrace the changes taking place in the national and local economies. A new economic development strategy should recognize outdoor recreation and sustainable tourism as important and viable parts of the county's economic well-being, an understanding of the real and potential impact of the decline in manufacturing, and an understanding of how to encourage the creative economy. Due West is working on an open space plan and historic preservation ordinance, Abbeville on workforce development and training, and Calhoun Falls has finalized its sustainable economic development plan. By coordinating these efforts, these communities can leverage limited resources for a greater return on investment.
- Calhoun Falls should also look beyond the county to the surrounding region. There may be valuable opportunities to partner with and learn from the Freshwater Coast or the communities along the Savannah River Scenic Byway. Such regional partnerships in no way negate Calhoun Falls-specific actions, but shared events and improved communication about resources can expand opportunities for visitors and residents. As an example, Calhoun Falls would continue to provide music at Blue Hole Recreation Area, but the concerts would also be used to let visitors know about performances in McCormick County. The town would revitalize Cox Avenue while sharing information about shopping or eating possibilities in Abbeville. Ongoing training and communication with business owners, residents, and hospitality staff can ensure a common knowledge of the area's assets and attractions. Given the varying character of towns across Abbeville County, highlighting the many complementary activities and attractions can increase visitor satisfaction levels and have a greater overall economic impact for communities countywide.
- Leverage partnership with the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (SCNHC). The Rural Resource Coalition SC estimates that investments in the 17 counties along the SCNHC could increase earnings by \$76 million and add more than 3,500 jobs. Calhoun Falls should continue to work collaboratively with the SCNHC to find grant opportunities and resources that will make Calhoun Falls and Abbeville County a model for success along the corridor.
- Work creatively with the S.C. Department of Commerce to identify regional economic development strategies and partnership opportunities. The Department of Commerce is an excellent resource for guidance on funding and information about building economic resiliency for rural areas. Due to the slow recovery of the nation's economy in recent years, however, more metropolitan areas have commanded much of the attention of this agency. Calhoun Falls and Abbeville County should make it a priority to push for regional approaches to economic development. A coordinated regional approach would provide a means for the S.C. Department of Commerce to spur economic revitalization and diversified markets across a large area, not just one community.

- Connect with area colleges (such as Clemson, Erskine, and University of South Carolina) and their programs on tourism, natural resource management, landscape architecture, and planning. As evidenced by the interest from Clemson’s a.LINE.ment program, these programs are seeking student projects, internships, and hands-on experiences. Colleges and universities often provide technical assistance and/or consulting services that help to leverage investments, provide new ideas and resources, and expand programming. The connections could also entice students, faculty, and staff to visit or relocate to the area.

## DEVELOP AND PROMOTE PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOWN AND PUBLIC LANDS

The town of Calhoun Falls has harnessed its future to the opportunities provided by nearby public lands and waters as recreational assets. Evidence of this commitment is in the dedicated town maintenance staff serving as steward of Calhoun Falls State Park. It is important that the town, chamber of commerce, LRRTC, and public land managers continue this spirit to promote connections to the natural landscape.

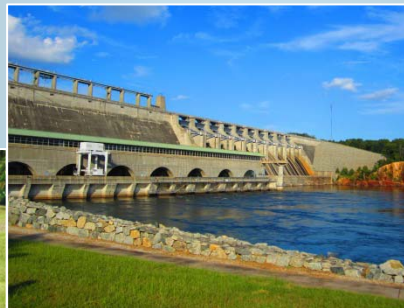
### Recommendations

- The LRRTC has done remarkable things in a short amount of time, playing an instrumental role in making connections between Calhoun Falls and surrounding public lands. The town and public land managers should continue to support the LRRTC by helping it expand its programming and leveraging investments for future projects at the Blue Hole Recreation Area.
- Calhoun Falls has made progress in highlighting that it is the “Gateway to Lake Russell” with new entrance and road signs at the intersection of Calhoun Shores Parkway and Russell Lake Boulevard. In partnership with USACE, the state park, the chamber of commerce, LRRTC, and others responsible for marketing and communications, the town should work collaboratively to weave the gateway connection through its communications and marketing materials, as well as in physical messages. Opportunities may include public art, such as murals or sculptures; informational signs at attractions; local value-added products; events; and local shops and businesses. The awareness of Calhoun Falls as a gateway and steward to public lands is a message that should be used to commemorate its history, celebrate its future, and cultivate civic pride.





LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE 6:  
VALUE COMMUNITIES,  
NEIGHBORHOODS, &  
LANDSCAPES & THE AREA'S  
NATURAL, CULTURAL  
HERITAGE, & RECREATIONAL  
ASSETS THAT FOSTER SOCIAL,  
ECONOMIC, & PUBLIC  
HEALTH



# VALUE COMMUNITIES, NEIGHBORHOODS & LANDSCAPES, & THE AREA'S NATURAL, CULTURAL HERITAGE, & RECREATIONAL ASSETS THAT FOSTER SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, & PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Valuing Community Assets: Key Observations

- Community members have clearly demonstrated that the town values the future and its children by forming a charter school when the future of the high school was in question.
- The LRRTC, Calhoun Falls Garden Club, and other local organizations offer great opportunities for community members to get involved in supporting and enhancing the assets of Calhoun Falls and show that there is a dedicated base of volunteers and engaged citizens ready to lend a hand.
- USACE has played a role in preserving the natural heritage of the area. USACE's Russell Lake is protected through a 300-foot wide "green collar" that does not allow development and dam controls limit variation of water levels, unlike lakes to the north and south.
- Calhoun Falls residents participate in a wide range of recreational activities at Lake Russell and are involved in the annual Kid's Fishing Derby, water safety, lake cleanups, and musical events.
- The 2013 Sustainable Economic Development Plan is a strong indication of the town's vision and commitment to recreational assets for strengthening community livability and economic opportunity.

The distinctive and historic features of rural communities and small towns are often among their most important assets. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities concludes that "communities that conserve and build upon ... historic downtowns and main streets, important natural features and long-standing cultural and religious institutions will be better positioned to enhance quality of life for their residents."<sup>12</sup> Multimodal transportation improvements, downtown economic development, and partnerships with surrounding public land managers will

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<sup>12</sup> Partnership for Sustainable Communities, *Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities*, 2011, pg. 7. [http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/Supporting\\_Sustainable\\_Rural\\_Communities\\_FINAL.PDF](http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/Supporting_Sustainable_Rural_Communities_FINAL.PDF).

create physical connections between downtown areas and recreational activities for people of all ages and ability—making it easier for people to get where they need to go and get exercise while doing it! Studies show that getting people outside and connecting them with nature has physical, mental, and emotional health benefits. Stronger connections to the land also help to strengthen community pride and quality of life. By fostering connections to the land, history, and culture and building a strong sense of community, the natural vistas, charming downtown, and local history and culture of Calhoun Falls will become mainstays of civic pride and stewardship for generations to come.

This section provides priority recommendations for engaging youth, cultivating volunteers and civic leaders, recording history, supporting an aging population, and sustaining a healthy lifestyle.

### **CULTIVATE STEWARDSHIP AND PRIDE IN YOUNGER GENERATIONS**

A survey conducted by the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (a division of the National 4-H Council) showed that involving young people in decision making helps them build problem-solving skills and social competencies such as communication. Involving young people also provides a sense of identity and autonomy and an overall sense of purpose.

While youth learn valuable life skills, adults begin to view young people as valid contributors to the community. Adults also profit from a better understanding of the needs and concerns of young people. Youths often bring a fresh perspective that can help a community find new solutions to old problems. Advocates of youth/adult partnerships assert that programs often are more sustainable and effective when they actively engage young people. Young people can help bring clarity and focus to an organization’s mission and forge stronger connections between the organization and local youth, which can benefit the organization over the long term. For more information, visit the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, <http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/>.



*Volunteers from the local Future Farmers of America and Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition pitch in at Russell Lake during Public Lands Day.*

The health of the natural environment that surround Calhoun Falls and the protection of natural assets rely on the stewardship of the community. Many Calhoun Falls residents expressed a deep and abiding love of Lake Russell and the natural beauty that surrounds the lake and the town, and leaders expressed an understanding of the importance of stewardship. This commitment to stewardship needs to be instilled deeply across the community and especially among youths. Children visit Russell Lake, the Calhoun Falls



State Park, and Blue Hole Recreation Area with their families and on school field trips. The Calhoun Falls Charter School also offers an agriculture class that highlights forestry, soil, and agricultural machinery. The local Future Farmers of America chapter also volunteers for an annual Lake Russell cleanup. Beyond that, it is unclear what kind of interaction or experience Calhoun Falls' young people have with their environs.

The assessment team supports the priority strategies in the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan for education, training, and economic development. With fun opportunities in the outdoors, building momentum for change in the downtown, and nearby resources such as colleges, universities, public land managers, and historical amenities, Calhoun Falls is poised to revitalize its community with economic diversification and include the younger generation to contribute to these efforts.

### Recommendations

- The assessment team supports the project outlined in the Strategic Economic Development Plan to work with Erskine College, Piedmont Tech, and Calhoun Falls Charter School to develop coursework and curricula around environmental sciences, recreation, park administration, and hospitality. The assessment team also recommends including place-based learning programs for all school-aged children.

Place-based learning is an effective strategy for involving and engaging schools, students, and community partners as active citizens of their community and stewards of public land resources. Place-based learning integrates civic engagement and service learning to create an experience for students of all ages to explore and experience the unique context of the community in a broader framework. These programs tend to be project-based, relevant to both community and interdisciplinary education, and allow

### PLACE-BASED EDUCATION CASE STUDY: Amherst, Massachusetts—A City of Stories

In Amherst Massachusetts, 80 students conducted oral history interviews with local immigrants, including classmates, teachers, neighbors and family members. Then they transformed their stories into artists' books with illustrated narratives and poems about the immigrants' homeland, their journey to the United States, and their transition to American life. Students built architectural book structures (pop-out house books and accordion-road books) that joined together to create city blocks, and filled the pages with pictures and words to create a city of stories.

A City of Stories is a unique book arts project that encourages middle school students to use personal connection and creative storytelling to explore the diversity of their local community. The project integrated language arts, social studies, visual arts and community service. This project explores intersections between text and image on the page, between oral and written traditions of storytelling, between classroom and community, and between people of different cultural backgrounds.

students to discover their own voices in the community. They rely on partnerships among public land managers, schools, and community members to continually make investments in future generations. For more resources visit the Center for Place-Based Learning and Community Engagement at [www.promiseofplace.org](http://www.promiseofplace.org) and for review of the planning manual, [www.promiseofplace.org/curriculum\\_and\\_planning/planning\\_tools](http://www.promiseofplace.org/curriculum_and_planning/planning_tools).

- There are many opportunities for young people in Calhoun Falls and Abbeville County to explore, learn, and gain valuable work-related skills. It is recommended that the town work with the schools, chamber of commerce, local businesses and industry, and surrounding public land managers to develop a list of existing internship opportunities and engage partners to prepare a list of potential projects that could be part of a future internship program. Potential examples:
  - Shadowing and project assistance with USACE to explore work in hydrology, alternative energy, water safety, and resource management at Russell Lake. Currently, Hartwell Dam and Lake in the Savannah District of the USACE runs a student employment program. There may be potential expansion or mirroring done at Russell Lake. For more information, see <http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/Careers/StudentEmploymentProgram.aspx>.
  - The South Carolina State Park Service provides traditional and special project internships at their parks. The town should explore with the state Park Service and Calhoun Falls State Park managers the possibility of traditional or project-specific internships that may be available at Calhoun Falls State Park. Interns may be used to assist with interpretation, communications, resource management, or other specific fields of interest. For more information, see <http://www.scpst.com/state-park-service/employmentstateparks/parkinternships.aspx>.
  - The town, in partnership with surrounding public land managers, should explore opportunities for setting up AmeriCorps positions through the VISTA program, National Civilian Community Corps, or Conservation Corps, and/or work with the Student Conservation Association to assist with potential resource management or recreational development, such as trail building and maintenance, cabin and facility construction, etc.

### **RESOURCES: Building a High Quality AmeriCorps Program**

The AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide is designed to assist non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, state agencies, and local governments in creating and developing programs that engage with AmeriCorps to get things done. For more information, see [http://www.in.gov/ofbci/files/Program\\_Start-Up\\_Guide\(1\).pdf](http://www.in.gov/ofbci/files/Program_Start-Up_Guide(1).pdf).



- The town, in coordination with the local school district, should look into the feasibility of establishing a new youth outreach coordinator position to work as a liaison between schools and potential workforce development programs. The new hire could work with area businesses and industry to develop special projects and positions for youth, such as mentoring programs that would expose young people to local work opportunities and give them hands-on work experience.
- The town should work with schools, businesses, and community organizations to develop youth recognition awards and scholarships to recognize the hard work of school-aged residents that make contributions to the community.
- The town and the public land managers should work with schools and local youth organizations to develop opportunities to expose children to recreational and natural resource-based activities, such as kayak expeditions, camping events, birding and wildlife viewing, etc. In addition to providing fun and healthy activities for young people in Calhoun Falls, these activities will instill connections to the land and strengthen future stewardship of the environment.

## **CULTIVATE VOLUNTEERS AND CIVIC LEADERS**

From few resources, Calhoun Falls' leaders have lit many sparks. Some great initiatives are already underway, and the 2013 Strategic Economic Development Plan suggests that many more are to come. Many of community leaders with which the Livability Assessment Team spoke discussed the need to share the leadership, cultivate new leaders, and build new champions. Given that Calhoun Falls is a small town, it is critical to embrace partnerships and coordinate efforts and programs with other communities, individuals, and organizations. There is also a need to help community members within Calhoun Falls to recognize their role as stewards of the community and to encourage them to step forward. Cultivating new leaders often involves cultivating leadership skills that one may not recognize they possess.

### Recommendations

- Community leaders should convene a forum to brief community members on the town's economic development initiatives and invite wider participation. (Underlying each meeting should be the questions: What sectors or the community are missing? Who else should be part of this discussion?)

- The town, chamber of commerce, the schools, and other organizations should hold leadership discussion circles in the schools, as well as at town hall, chamber events, and community meetings. Students at various levels should be encouraged to share what they would like to see Calhoun Falls look like in the future. Young people can participate through poster sessions, as well as discussions. These events should be engaging and earnest but also fun. One idea is to use leadership videos that set a fun tone for a community discussion on leadership. (See information about the Drew Dudley video below.)

### **RESOURCE: A Fun Way to Talk about Everyday Leadership**

A community is not led only by the mayor and town staff, but also in the many people who put their shoulder to the wheel. It is important to recognize the contributions—big and small—of the many people who make their community a better place to live and work. Drew Dudley talks about this as “everyday leadership.” In his funny video, Drew shares what he calls a “lollipop moment” and speaks about how we all need to do a better job at acknowledging leadership in everyday life.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/drew\\_dudley\\_everyday\\_leadership](http://www.ted.com/talks/drew_dudley_everyday_leadership)

- Community leaders should seek to mentor others to build leadership skills across the community. To this end, Brevard, North Carolina, created a Retiree Resource Network, a group of retired residents with private-sector experience who mentor local entrepreneurs, support new and existing businesses and offer free consulting services. This initiative facilitates leadership, economic development, and promotes interaction between long-time residents and newcomers, enhancing quality of life for both.
- The town of Calhoun Falls should work with local schools to educate students about local government and involve them in the community decision-making process. The town should discuss opportunities to develop youth or student seats on school, local government, and other advisory boards and councils; involve youth in the election process; and invite youth to work with local leaders to address specific community issues or needs.

### **RESOURCE: Tourism Cares for America: A Resource for the Community and Young People**

Tourism Cares for America is a volunteer program designed to help preserve, conserve, and protect tourism-related sites that need care and rejuvenation while simultaneously building the skills and experience of the workforce within the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries. Tourism Cares awards academic and professional development scholarships; coordinates a mentoring program that enables scholarship recipients to learn more about the industry and build their professional networks; and acts as a liaison between employers and students for internship opportunities. For more information, see

[www.tourismcares.org](http://www.tourismcares.org).

- The town should work with local businesses and community organizations to develop opportunities for youth engagement in downtown revitalization efforts. Young people could work in coordination with the LRTTC, Calhoun Falls Garden Club, chamber of commerce, and others to participate in beautification projects, trail maintenance and construction, fundraising, and service learning.
- The town and school should consider holding an “Opportunity Day” to feature internship openings, highlight careers of local leaders, and offer field trips or site visits to nearby natural and cultural heritage sites.

## ENGAGING FUTURE ENTREPRENEURS CASE STUDY: Pennsylvania Wilds

In a recent study by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, young people in rural areas said they would stay in the state if starting a business was an opportunity open to them. In the 12-county Pennsylvania Wilds area, Ta Brant Enos, the small business ombudsman, responded by developing a video to communicate to high school students that they can create a business in the area. The video highlights small business owners sharing their success stories and lessons learned, providing inspiration for the younger generation. Participating entrepreneurs include three young snowboarding aficionados who started a snowboarding company, a former U.S. Navy air traffic controller who returned home to start a recreational outfitting business, two young artists who create beautiful letterpress prints for clients worldwide, and friends who used their love of bicycling and the outdoors to open their own cycling shop. Enos offers a one-hour entrepreneurial outreach program to area high school students. See <http://www.pawildsresources.org/youngentrepreneurs>.

- The town should cultivate, nurture, and invest in its leaders. Greenville and Pickens County, South Carolina, are among the many towns, cities, and counties that sponsor leadership programs. The goal of leadership programs, which are frequently facilitated by the chamber of commerce and supported by local businesses, is to develop local leaders and foster leadership skills and abilities among youth. Goals from the Leadership Pickens County program include “to teach youth about the community in which they live; encourage students to become more involved and remain or return to Pickens County following their education; and familiarize the students with leadership roles available to them and to assist in assuming leadership roles.”

## RESOURCE: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents

This 1997 workbook provides a good overview of how to identify the skills and knowledge of local residents and from there to connect them to wide-ranging community opportunities and initiatives. See

<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/CapacityInventories%281%29.pdf>.

- Calhoun Falls could partner with surrounding towns and Abbeville County to create a countywide program and generate the energy to identify and support area leaders. If that notion is overwhelming, the Heartland Center for Leadership Development proposes some easier strategies: start with events that build “civic literacy” by having open houses and formal visits to key businesses, institutions, and agencies across the county; present information on conditions, trends, and activities across the county; exchange visits with other communities; and hold field days or community showcases. For more information, see <http://www.leadershippickens.com/index.php>.
- Calhoun Falls should consider conducting a community capacity inventory that identifies the knowledge and skills that already exist within the community. This involves finding out what individual capacities residents possess and applying these skills as a "tool" to address problems, promote growth, and enhance the quality of local life.
- The town and its partners should recognize and celebrate volunteers through acknowledgement on the Web and/or at an annual ceremony. Volunteers should be given a certificate, pin, or badge as a visible reminder of their contributions.

## RESOURCE: The Orton Family Foundation and Community Matters

The Orton Family Foundation supports Community Matters, an organization that prepares communities to re-create themselves. Their Web site has a wealth of resources—Webinars, partnership programs, blogs, conference calls—on a range of issues including leadership development. See <http://www.communitymatters.org/>

## RECORD HISTORY

Calhoun Falls has a unique history replete with farming traditions, the rise and fall of the textile industry, and the creation of Russell Lake. The lake has increased recreational opportunities and provided habitat for wildlife, but it also has led to the demise of Hutchinson Farm and other historic sites and structures. These are interesting, special stories because they are local stories; no other place has the exact same story to share. Calhoun Falls needs to capture these stories for history’s sake, to better connect youth to their past, and as a means of interpreting the area’s culture and heritage.

## Recommendations

- Hold symposia in Calhoun Falls and/or Blue Hole that focuses on the local history and cultural heritage of Calhoun Falls. Topics can include farming history, textile manufacturing and industrialization, and the creation of Russell Lake.
- Showcase local art that depicts the history of Calhoun Falls and the surrounding region in local businesses or dedicated exhibit areas. Include also interesting written information that tells the stories of the past.
- Invite older residents or a folklorist who is knowledgeable about the area to share their stories with the community.
- Have students research the local history and heritage and/or record recollections of older residents. Exhibit this work prominently in local government buildings and other key locations throughout Calhoun Falls.
- Look for opportunities to engage university students in researching and writing about local history and heritage through research projects that can be used as the basis for tours and interpretation of cultural resources.

## **ACCESS & CONNECTION TO NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER RECREATION**

Enhancement to transportation access and mobility should extend beyond traditional transportation projects to bicyclists and pedestrians and beyond. Kayaking, canoeing, and stand-up paddleboarding are some of the fastest growing activities on water.<sup>13</sup> With the purchase of seven rental kayaks for use at the Blue Hole Recreation Area, the Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition is capitalizing on these trends. Russell Lake has an abundance of shoreline to explore, which provides an opportunity for the town, in partnership with USACE and the state park, to pursue the development of trails along the waterways.

### **Fastest Growing Outdoor Recreation Activities in the U.S.**

- Telemarking (downhill): +46%
- Snowshoeing: +41%
- Skiing (freestyle): +34%
- Kayaking (recreational): +32%
- Triathlon (traditional/road): +28%
- Kayaking (whitewater): +25%
- Hunting (bow): +24%
- Running/jogging: +23%
- Triathlon (non-traditional/offroad): +18%
- Adventure Racing: +16%
- Skiing (cross country): +12%

(Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Participation Report*, 2013)

<sup>13</sup> Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Participation Report*, 2013.  
<http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2013.pdf>.



## Recommendations

- The LRRTC should investigate the feasibility of creating a blueway, or water, trail. Blueways offer opportunities to enjoy scenic and historical sites along a riverway by kayak, canoe, or other water craft. Water trails typically provide maps or brochures that identify points of interest, river access locations, and day-use sites and camping areas. The Chesapeake Bay Gateway Network provides a Water Trail Toolkit to assist in the planning, development, and management of water trails. For more information, see <http://www.baygateways.net/watertrailtools.cfm>. The National Water Trails System, an interagency collaborative effort by the National Park Service's River and Trails Conservation Assistance program and the National Trails System, provides a multitude of studies, surveys, and technical assistance for the development of water trails. For more information, see <http://www.nps.gov/watertrails/>.

### WATER TRAIL CASE STUDY: Roanoke River Paddle and Camping Trail

Martin County is a rural county in North Carolina faced with high unemployment and significant poverty. The nonprofit Roanoke River Partners (RRP) identified the river as an untapped economic driver for their community. RRP coordinated with the North Carolina State Park system and with new and established businesses to highlight, steward, and sustain the unique environment of the Roanoke River, its communities, and its culture. RRP volunteers coordinated the creation of paddle trails with camping platforms in the Roanoke River backwaters. The water trail was established in 1999; by 2001 there were an estimated 2,220 paddle trips a year in the Roanoke Region. The economic benefits are derived from the additional tourism; the average person spends \$42 to \$158 during a paddling trip. For more information, see <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/helpfultools/wtimpacts.pdf> and <http://www.roanokeriverpartners.org>.



© Roanoke River Partners

- Capitalize on existing college and high school recreation programs on Russell Lake. As recreational opportunities develop on Russell Lake, the town of Calhoun Falls, together with USACE, should consider additional infrastructure for college and high school water sport training programs to capitalize on being a host site of the 1996 Olympics for water sports. The town could start by informally talking with the teams currently coming to Russell Lake for training, asking what infrastructure is needed, why they train on Russell Lake, and what students are looking for in their free time. Understanding the needs could lead to more intensive actions, such as sponsoring events or projects aligned with the needs of these visitors.

## **CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIP WITH SENIOR CITIZENS**

The town of Calhoun Falls should actively involve in community revitalization efforts the community residents at Savannah Lakes Retirement Community and other seniors. The population of seniors and retirees is an asset to the community. They often have time and interest to serve as volunteers, community leaders, conveners, and resources.

### Recommendations

- Stakeholders should learn from retirees their interests and desires and should consider how to support desired activities.
- The town should take inventory of programs that are already offered in the community and look for ways to better communicate these offerings to seniors and retirees. Breakfast clubs, book clubs, art and craft classes, exercise classes, charity events, volunteer activities, and networking may all be of interest to senior citizens.
- The town and community stakeholders should discuss and develop ways seniors and retired community members could interact in and engage with local businesses. These might include volunteer opportunities, cooking demonstrations focused on local food traditions at a local restaurant, cross-generational dinners; gardening projects, and beautification projects. The town should also encourage natural-resource based activities targeted to seniors. These could include bird watching, boating, walking or hiking, or picnicking at the Calhoun Falls State Park or Russell Lake.
- The town should discuss opportunities with the Savannah Lakes Community for sharing of resources such as town/county lending of vehicles to transport seniors to community events at Blue Hole; opportunities to use space at Savannah Lake for community, fundraising, or charity events; and co-sponsorship of senior fishing tournaments, birding walks, interpreted hikes, or other events at the lake.

## ENCOURAGE HEALTHIER LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Active transportation can help residents, both young and old, adopt a healthier lifestyle. Studies underscore the importance of integrating exercise into everyday activities, such as traveling to and from school, running errands, visiting friends, or going to work. In the early 1970s, half of all American students walked or biked to school; now only 15 percent do. In South Carolina, the obesity rate is the seventh highest in the United States; 31.6 percent of adults are categorized as obese and 66.2 percent as either overweight or obese. South Carolina also has the second-highest obesity rate for 10- to 17-year olds; 21.5 percent of South Carolinians in this age group are obese.<sup>14</sup> It is imperative that communities find ways to counter this public health threat by facilitating opportunities for walking, biking, hiking, running, and other physical activities. Calhoun Falls should make an interconnected network for healthy, active lifestyles a priority. (In addition to the recommendations included here, see Principle 1 for other ideas about how to encourage active transportation and healthier living.)

### Recommendations

- Calhoun Falls should start community trail walks or walking meetings. Invite any and all community members to join in; the public lands can be a great place to meet. Some doctors are writing park or trail prescriptions to get people moving and into nature, and as recent research has demonstrated, people are more likely to stick to an exercise regimen when followed in a natural setting. Other communities have found that designing programs for specific targeted audiences can help encourage participation. For instance, walking tours can be designed for senior citizens, mothers with toddlers, teens, etc.

### **RESOURCE: Safe Routes to School**

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program enables and encourages America's children, including those with disabilities, to bike and walk to and from school. Since 2005, Congress has provided funding for each state to have a SRTS Program. SCDOT's Safe Routes to School Program helps schools and communities with the planning, development, and implementation of active transportation projects and activities that improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools while also promoting a healthy lifestyle for children and their parents.

Selected schools are required to design a comprehensive Safe Routes to School Plan specific to that school. This plan must incorporate the Five E's of Safe Routes to School: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation. SRTS Workshops aid in the design of a comprehensive SRTS Plan. Only K-8 schools are eligible to apply.

<sup>14</sup> Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *The State of Obesity in South Carolina*, 2013. <http://www.fasinfat.org/states/sc/>.

## WALKING TO SCHOOL CASE STUDY: Southeast Nebraska

Nine towns in Southeastern Nebraska collaborated on the “No Child Left on Their Behind” project, which encouraged families to walk to school together. The goal was to excite kids about walking and biking. Students received awards for walking at a celebration headlined by cheerleaders and the Lil’ Red mascot of the University of Nebraska Cornhuskers. Project coordinator Diane Epp noted the changes, “This program has impacted not only the students and parents, but the entire community.” She reported an increase in older citizens walking to the coffee shop. See *Active Transportation Beyond Urban Centers*, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 2012.

## HEALTHY LIVING CASE STUDY: Sheboygan County, Wisconsin’s ReBike Program

Since its start in 2011, Sheboygan County’s ReBike program has provided over 700 bicycles to area residents in need. The initiative is made possible by Paradigm Coffee & Music, as well as several dedicated volunteers that hold ReBike sessions every Wednesday evening at the coffee house’s basement. Sheboygan County residents in need of a bicycle can attend a ReBike session, where they are paired with a volunteer to spend a few hours working on a bicycle that has been donated. Once necessary adjustments are made, the recipient can take the bicycle home at no charge. For more information, see <http://www.nomosheboygancounty.com/programs/rebike>.





## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES:

- LIVABILITY
- TRANSPORTATION
- HOUSING & LODGING
- ECONOMIC  
COMPETITIVENESS
- EXISTING COMMUNITY &  
CHARACTER
- LEVERAGING RESOURCES
- VALUING COMMUNITY  
ASSETS



# GENERAL LIVABILITY RESOURCES

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## FUNDING RESOURCES

### **Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities**

([http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/federal\\_resources\\_rural.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/federal_resources_rural.pdf))

This guide to HUD, DOT, EPA, and USDA programs highlights federal resources for rural communities that can be used to promote economic competitiveness, protect healthy environments, and enhance quality of life.

### **National Funding Opportunities**

([www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/national\\_funding.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/national_funding.htm))

The EPA has developed a guide of national funding and state-specific resources to assist local and state governments, communities, and nongovernmental organization who are pursuing the varied aspects of smart growth and livability.

## REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

### **Vibrant Rural Communities Case Studies Series**

([www.nado.org/vibrant-rural-communities-case-study-series](http://www.nado.org/vibrant-rural-communities-case-study-series))

The National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation developed a case study series that highlights how rural regions and small towns across the country are growing local economies and creating stronger communities. The series demonstrates how small towns can leverage a wide range of tools and approaches to build on their assets, protect resources, and make investments that benefit residents and local businesses.

### **Livability Literature Review: A Synthesis of Current Practice**

([www.narc.org/wp-content/uploads/Livability-Report-FINAL.pdf](http://www.narc.org/wp-content/uploads/Livability-Report-FINAL.pdf))

This report prepared by the National Association of Regional Councils examines livability consensus concepts throughout communities and expands on reoccurring themes. The review will assist practitioners and policymakers understand how states and localities define, plan, and implement livability.

## **Building Livable Communities: Sustaining Prosperity, Improving Quality of Life, Building a Sense of Community**

(<http://www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/report2knew.pdf>)

This 2000 report describes the challenges of dealing with sprawl and celebrates a “wave of local innovation” as Americans work together to improve quality of life in their communities.

## ORGANIZATIONS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

### **Partners for Livable Communities**

([www.livable.org](http://www.livable.org))

Partners for Livable Communities is a national nonprofit organization working to restore and renew the communities where we work and live. The organization helps solve community problems by providing information, leadership, and guidance that help communities help themselves.



# TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES

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## ACCESS

### **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)**

(<http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/>)

The Federal Lands Access Program provides funds for work on public highways, roads, bridges, trails, and transit systems that are located on, are adjacent to, or provide access to federal lands. These facilities must be owned or maintained by a state, county, town, township, tribe, municipal, or local government. This program, newly created under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) law, emphasizes projects that provide access to high-use recreation sites or federal economic generators.

The Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFLHD) works with the states under its jurisdiction to develop each state's Programming Decisions Committee (PDC). The PDC is responsible for prioritizing the slate of projects for each state's Access Program. The PDC establishes project selection criteria and administers calls for projects.

### **Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_alternatives/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/);  
[http://www.scdot.org/getting/community\\_BikePedFacilitySafety.aspx](http://www.scdot.org/getting/community_BikePedFacilitySafety.aspx))

The Transportation Alternatives Program combines three previously separate sources of transportation funding through the federal transportation legislation: Transportation Enhancements, the Recreational Trails Program, and Safe Routes to School. TAP is administered by the FHWA, but implemented by the states. While TAP staff selects programs annually, the calls for proposals vary by region. The majority of TAP funding has been focused on high-population areas, with a competitive selection process for the remaining rural areas. TAP typically requires a 20 percent local match. Local agencies should contact SCDOT and FHWA program staff for more information about project criteria and focused priorities.

### **Current Contacts:**

#### **Pedestrian & Bicycle Engineer**

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#### **Local Program Administrator (State TAP Manager)**

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**Transportation Enhancement Coordinator (State TAP Manager)**

Cathy Rice

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**FHWA TAP Contacts**

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[Patrick.Tyndall@dot.gov](mailto:Patrick.Tyndall@dot.gov)

**Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants**

(<http://www.dot.gov/tiger>)

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program provides U.S. Department of Transportation investments in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. TIGER grants are highly competitive with tremendous applicant interest. Grants are targeted to innovative capital projects and planning projects that are multimodal, multijurisdictional, or otherwise challenging to fund through existing programs. The TIGER program employs a rigorous selection process to choose projects with exceptional benefits to make communities more livable and sustainable.

**CASE STUDY: Using TIGER Funding to Revitalize Small Town Main Streets in Colorado**

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs received a TIGER II Planning Grant and a HUD Community Challenge Grant to help three small communities—Fowler, Monte Vista, and Rifle—pursue a unique joint planning initiative to revitalize their downtowns. The work will include creating construction-ready design drawings for the renovation of historic buildings and planning for development that will increase walkability, transportation choice, and energy efficiency.

### **FHWA Recreational Trails Program (RTP)**

([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/overview/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/overview/))

The Recreational Trails Program is an assistance program of the FHWA. The RTP provides funds to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail uses. RTP funds are available to state, federal, and local government agencies or qualified private organizations. The minimum grant amount is \$10,000 with a maximum of \$100,000. Motorized projects are eligible for the maximum amount of motorized funding available. See, <http://www.scprr.com/our-partners/grants/trails.aspx> for more information.

The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism is currently funding grant applications for FY 2013/2014 RTP grant funding. Continue to check their website for updates for the FY 2015/2016 RTP grant funding cycle.

### **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA)**

([www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca))

The National Park Service's RTCA provides technical assistance to help citizens and community leaders plan and advance locally led conservation projects. Eligible applicants do not need to be located near or be associated with a national park.

### **National Trails Fund**

(<http://www.americanhiking.org/National-Trails-Fund/>)

American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund offers hiking trail improvement grants to active member organizations of its Hiking Alliance. Once a year, Alliance Members have the opportunity to apply for a grant (between \$500 and \$5,000) to improve hiking access or hiker safety on a particular trail.

### **South Carolina Safe Routes to School**

(<http://www.scdot.org/getting/safeRoutes.aspx> & <http://www.scsaferoutes.org/>)

SCDOT's Safe Routes to School Program assists schools and communities in the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools while promoting a healthy lifestyle for children and their parents.

### **Upper Savannah Council of Governments Transportation Planning (USCOG)**

The Upper Savannah Council of Governments is committed to developing an efficient, multimodal transportation system that will increase the mobility of people and goods within the Upper Savannah region. A successful partnership with the South Carolina Department of



Transportation (SCDOT) has enabled USCOG to take a more active role in regional transportation issues. USCOG assists the SCDOT in the long-range planning of regional transportation improvements, including highway infrastructure, public transit, planning studies, and other needs as appropriate. USCOG also works with jurisdictions in the region to prioritize local needs and make recommendations to the SCDOT for funding of highway and transit projects.

***Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP)*** The Rural Planning Work Program describes the transportation planning activities undertaken by the USCOG office and is produced annually. RPWP tasks are designed to address issues identified by the USCOG Board which serves as the Policy Advisory Committee.

***Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)*** The Long Range Transportation Plan is a comprehensive transportation planning document for the six-county Upper Savannah region. The LRTP defines the overarching goals for transportation in the region, establishes existing and future transportation needs, and allocates projected revenue to transportation programs and projects that address those needs.

***Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*** The Upper Savannah region TIP outlines the planning objectives, priority status, and funding sources for all projects scheduled for construction over a five-year period. The TIP is submitted to SCDOT for approval and inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP contains an accounting of federal highway funds approved by the SCDOT Commission for roadway improvements and certain public transit allocations. The STIP is organized according to SCDOT District Offices. The Upper Savannah region is covered by the SCDOT District 2.

### **South Carolina Scenic Byways & Highways Program**

([www.scdot.org/getting/scenic\\_byways](http://www.scdot.org/getting/scenic_byways))

SCDOT partners with several organizations in areas related to the scenic byways and highways program. South Carolina has 21 scenic byways, comprising more than 450 miles in South Carolina. The Savannah River Scenic Byway, one of four national scenic byways in South Carolina, follows SC Highway 81 through Abbeville County.

### **National Scenic Byway Foundation**

([www.nsbfoundation.com](http://www.nsbfoundation.com))

The National Scenic Byway Foundation aids in the successful completion of projects that might not otherwise be accomplished by the Federal Highway Administration and/or other byway organizations. It can assist in branding, management, preservation, and enhancement of byways through cooperation between government, communities, and other stakeholders.

### **Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook**

(<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/guides/complete-streets-local-policy-workbook/>)

This introductory guide serves as a starting point for transportation experts and interested local leaders to begin mapping out their own Complete Streets policies.

### **Eat Smart, Move More South Carolina**

(<http://eatsmartmovemoresc.org/>)

Eat Smart, Move More South Carolina is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to positively impacting the health of all South Carolinians by promoting healthy eating and active living where they live, learn, work, pray, and play. Eat Smart, Move More does this by partnering with community leaders and focusing on policy, systems, and environmental changes that influence people to make healthy choices.

### ***Complete Streets Toolbook***

(<http://eatsmartmovemoresc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Complete-Streets-Toolbook-SC-FINAL.pdf>)

Eat Smart, Move More developed South Carolina’s guide to creating Complete Streets at the local level. The guidebook promotes the numerous benefits Complete Streets can provide to South Carolina communities: from healthier individuals, to cleaner air quality, to economic redevelopment. By identifying the various elements that make streets truly “complete” and describing the needed amenities to accommodate users of South Carolina’s roadways, the toolbook serves as a valuable resource for engineers, planners, elected officials, and residents who desire safe and efficient facilities for bicycling and walking within their communities.

### ***Complete Streets Advocacy Manual***

(<http://eatsmartmovemoresc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Complete-Streets-Advocacy-Manual-SC.pdf>)

This handbook was created to convince local leaders—mayors, city council members, and county council members—of the benefits of Complete Streets for communities. It is written for both citizen and the nonprofit advocates who desire streets to accommodate all users, including cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, the elderly, the disabled, and drivers.

### **A Case Study of Two South Carolina Communities Pursuing Complete Streets Policies**

(<http://www.scdhec.gov/administration/library/CR-010231.pdf>)

This report provides considerations for implementing a community guide on recommended practices and implementation of complete street policies and examples from two South Carolina community case studies.

## **Benefits of Complete Streets: Complete Streets Work in Rural Communities**

(<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/factsheets/cs-rural.pdf>)

Smart Growth America and the National Complete Streets Coalition developed a fact sheet of the benefits of implementing the complete streets approach in rural areas and small towns.

## WAYFINDING

### **Wayshowing for Byways: A Reference Manual**

([www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/topics/visitor-experience/wayshowing](http://www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/topics/visitor-experience/wayshowing))

*Wayshowing for Byways* is a reference manual provided by the America's Byways Resource Center that offers suggestions about how to show travelers how to experience a route and for improving the navigational element of the visitor experience. A culmination of more than two years of research, development, and testing, this manual addresses the concerns of a different audience in each chapter.

### **A Comprehensive Management, Branding and Marketing Strategy for South Carolina's National Scenic Byways**

(<http://viewer.epaperflip.com/Viewer.aspx?docid=ffb65c31-b564-44b1-bea7-a281010ee1ee#?page=6>)

With input and engagement from byway committees, stakeholders, and the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor, this plan provides a comprehensive strategy for the overall marketing, branding, development and management of byways.

### **Agritourism and Tourism Oriented Directional Signage Program (TAOS)**

(<http://agriculture.sc.gov/agritourismandTODS>)

The South Carolina General Assembly has approved legislation creating the Agritourism and Tourist Oriented Directional Signage Program, commonly referred to as the TODS program.

TODS is a program that allows tourism and agritourism-oriented facilities to have directional signs placed in the highway right-of-way. The program is a cooperative effort between the S.C. Department of Transportation, the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, and the S.C. Department of Agriculture. Designed to promote agritourism and tourist-oriented facilities in rural areas, the program provides directional signs from the closest designated SC or US route.

## **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/13747\\_11003.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/13747_11003.html))

FTA provides financial assistance to states, municipalities, transit agencies, and other public bodies for the provision and delivery of public transportation services, capital investments in transit systems and facilities, as well for maintenance and repair of public transit systems. FTA supports the Livable Communities Initiative and is committed to improving livability in rural communities through the support of transportation agencies to make public transit investments. Their programs offer unique opportunities for rural communities.

## **Bus Livability Discretionary Grants**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13094\\_3557.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13094_3557.html))

The Bus Livability Discretionary Grants program provides unallocated Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities money to projects that fulfill the six livability principles of the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The goal of the program is to invest in projects that increase transportation options, provide access to jobs and affordable housing, encourage economic development, and improve accessibility to transportation for the public. The program funds capital expenses for a wide range of projects, such as intermodal facilities, sustainably oriented buses, bicycle infrastructure, and more.

## **Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093\\_3556.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3556.html))

This program provides formula funding to states for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funds are apportioned based on each state's share of population for these groups of people.

## **Rural Areas Formula Program**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093\\_3555.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3555.html))

This program provides funding to States for the purpose of supporting public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000.

## **Job Access and Reverse Commute Program**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093\\_3550.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3550.html))

The program is to address transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment.

### **New Freedom Program**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093\\_3549.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3549.html))

This program provides additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and society.

### **Rural Transit Assistance Program**

([www.webbuilder.nationalrtap.org](http://www.webbuilder.nationalrtap.org))

This program provides training, technical assistance, research, and related support services in rural areas.

### **Intercity Bus Program**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation\\_law/12349\\_6519.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_6519.html))

The Intercity Bus Program under FTA's nonurbanized area formula grant program supports the connection between nonurbanized areas and the larger regional or national system of intercity bus service. The program provides critical transit access to residents in nonurbanized areas to employment, health, educational, and other important "human" services and opportunities.

### **Major Capital Investments (New Starts/Small Starts)**

([http://www.fta.dot.gov/12304\\_3559.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/12304_3559.html))

These discretionary programs are the federal government's primary financial resources for supporting the planning, development, and construction of major transit capital projects.

## MULTIPLE MODES

### **FHWA Bicycle & Pedestrian Program**

([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian))

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Program, part of the Federal Highway Administration's Office of Human Environment, promotes bicycle and pedestrian transportation use, safety, and accessibility. Definitions for priority bicycle facilities include:

**Bicycle facilities:** Defined as shared roadways, signed shared roadways, bike lanes, and shared-use paths. Providing adequate bike facilities that are clearly marked can mean easier, safer, and more frequent trips made by bicyclists.

**Bike shops and rental outfitters:** Which offer important amenities for traveling cyclists and residents. Bicycle retailers provide the goods and services associated with bicycling, act as information resources about bicycling for visitors and new riders, and can often attract and cultivate biking enthusiasts in communities.



Bike parking and bicycle racks: Which are often simple and inexpensive ways to make an area more accessible for bicyclists. Having these amenities allows bikers to explore downtowns, shop, eat, and feel safe knowing that there is a secure place to leave a bike.

Bike hostels: These can take many shapes and forms, from the formal to the informal, all providing the necessary amenities for long-distance travelers or the bicyclist on a budget.

### **National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPD)**

(<http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>)

The National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPD) is collaboration between Alta Planning + Design and the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Pedestrian and Bicycle Council to provide information on forecasting and counting, how counts influence bike/pedestrian programs, and adjustment factors to help extrapolate counts to annual figures.

### **SCDOT's Bicycle & Pedestrian Program**

(<http://www.scdot.org/getting/bikeped.aspx>)

SCDOT is committed to meeting the ongoing challenge of providing better and safer accommodations for people who choose to walk or cycle. This effort is coordinated by the agency's Pedestrian and Bicycle Program.

### **People For Bikes**

(<http://www.peopleforbikes.org/>)

Formerly the Bikes Belong Coalition, People for Bikes provides funding for important and influential projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling in communities across the United States. These projects include bike paths and rail trails, as well as mountain bike trails, bike parks, BMX facilities, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center**

([http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/planning/funding\\_government.cfm](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/planning/funding_government.cfm))

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center serves as a website with and resources for planning and design, training, government funding, and other programs related to pedestrian and bicycle projects. See their case study compendium for examples of pedestrian and bicycle project implementation at

[http://katana.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/pbic\\_case\\_study\\_compendium.pdf](http://katana.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/pbic_case_study_compendium.pdf).

### **Case Studies of Water Trail Impacts on Rural Communities**

(<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/helpfultools/wtimpacts.pdf>)

This 2002 report provides information about the economic and social impacts of water trails in three rural communities.

### **The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**

(<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/index.html> & <http://www.scprt.com/our-partners/grants/lwcf.aspx>)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund program provides matching grants to state and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities (as well as funding for shared federal land acquisition and conservation strategies).

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loans**

([http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF\\_Direct\\_Loans.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF_Direct_Loans.html))

Rural communities can receive loan funds to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety, and public services. This can include costs to acquire land needed for a facility, pay necessary professional fees, and purchase equipment required for the operation of the facility.

## **OTHERS**

### **Metropolitan and Rural Transportation Planning: Case Studies and Checklists for Regional Collaboration**

(<http://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/rpompo.pdf>)

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation and Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), with funding support from FHWA, developed this guide to facilitate improved collaboration, communication, and partnerships among the nation's metropolitan planning organizations, rural transportation planning organizations, state departments of transportation and other entities.



# HOUSING & LODGING RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES

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US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

## **Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants**

([http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/sustainable\\_housing\\_communities/sustainable\\_communities\\_regional\\_planning\\_grants](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities/sustainable_communities_regional_planning_grants))

This program provides grants to help improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions, and increase state, regional, and local capacity to incorporate livability, sustainability, and social equity values into land use plans and zoning.

## **Community Challenge Grants**

([http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/sustainable\\_housing\\_communities/ HUD-DOT Community Challenge Grants](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities/HUD-DOT_Community_Challenge_Grants))

This program provides grants to enable communities in fostering reform and reducing barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital, and sustainable communities. Such efforts may include amending or replacing local master plans, zoning codes, and building codes. This program also supports the development of affordable housing through the development and adoption of inclusionary zoning ordinances and other activities such as acquisition of land for affordable housing projects.

## **Capacity Building for Sustainable Communities**

([http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/sustainable\\_housing\\_communities/capacity-building](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities/capacity-building))

This program, jointly funded by HUD and EPA, will identify intermediaries to provide additional assistance to the recipients of the two grant programs above.

## **Housing Choice and Project-Based Voucher Programs**

(<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/about/index.cfm>)

Housing Choice and Project-Based Voucher Programs provide rental subsidy funding to local public housing agencies for units that are chosen by the tenant in the private market (housing choice vouchers) or for use in specific developments or units (project-based vouchers). Housing choice vouchers allow tenants more flexibility in deciding the location of their residence, often enabling residents to live closer to work, family, amenities, or services.

### **HOME Investment Partnership**

(<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home>)

The HOME Program provides formula funding directly to larger cities and counties, to consortia of local governments, and to state governments. The HOME program is designed to create affordable housing for low-income households and can take the form of direct assistance or loan guarantees. Funds can be used for most kinds of housing development, including acquisition and rehabilitation in the creation of low-income housing. Additionally, HOME program funds can be used for homebuyer assistance and for tenant-based rental assistance.

### **Green Refinance Program Plus**

([http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/2011/HUDNO.11-106](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2011/HUDNO.11-106))

Green Refinance Plus is an enhancement of the Fannie Mae/FHA Risk-Share program, which provides funding for the refinance, preservation, and energy-efficient retrofits of older affordable multifamily housing properties, including those that are currently in Fannie Mae's or FHA's portfolio. This program allows for lower debt service coverage and higher loan-to-value ratios, to generate extra loan proceeds for property rehab and energy-efficient retrofits.

### **Mortgage Insurance for Rental Housing**

(<http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/progdsc/renturbanhsg220.cfm>)

Several FHA mortgage insurance programs can be used to facilitate the new construction and substantial rehabilitation of multifamily rental projects. Some FHA programs can be used to refinance and acquire existing multifamily projects not requiring substantial rehabilitation.

## US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

### **USDA's Housing and Community Assistance Programs**

([http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/LP\\_Subject\\_HousingAndCommunityAssistance.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/LP_Subject_HousingAndCommunityAssistance.html))

USDA provides loans and grants to rural communities and individuals for housing and community facilities including buying, repairing, energy efficiency, and rural rental housing.

## SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSING RESOURCES

### **South Carolina State Housing Finance & Development Authority**

(<http://www.sha.state.sc.us/>)

The State Housing Finance & Development Authority provides information on grants, technical assistance, and financing strategies related to housing. Affordable housing facts can be accessed at [http://www.schousing.com/Public\\_Information/Affordable\\_Housing\\_Facts](http://www.schousing.com/Public_Information/Affordable_Housing_Facts).

### **South Carolina Community Loan Fund**

([http://www.sccommunityloanfund.org/loan-programs/view/affordable\\_housing1](http://www.sccommunityloanfund.org/loan-programs/view/affordable_housing1))

Abbeville County lacks a community development corporation but the South Carolina Community Loan Fund serves some of these functions statewide. The loan fund finances projects that: (1) provide affordable housing; (2) create access to food and essential services; (3) increase the quality and availability of neighborhood facilities; (4) create employment opportunities; (5) attract additional investment; and (6) strengthen the social and economic fabric of the community.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### **Urban Land Institute Ten Principles for Developing Affordable Housing**

([http://www.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/TP\\_AffordableHousing.ashx\\_.pdf](http://www.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/TP_AffordableHousing.ashx_.pdf))

This publication summarizes the knowledge and experience of experts in the affordable housing industry and ways to encourage the development of more affordable housing choices as part of localities' efforts to achieve balanced, healthy, and sustainable communities.

### **Affordable Housing Design Advisor**

([www.designadvisor.org](http://www.designadvisor.org))

The Affordable Housing Design Advisor brings together experience and ideas from successful affordable housing projects all over the country and the people who developed, designed and built them. To accompany the Affordable Housing Design Advisor, a design-focused workbook was developed as a tool to help communities meet affordable housing design goals. For more information, see <http://huduser.org/Publications/PDF/finalall.pdf>.

### **National Association of Realtors' (NAR) Smart Growth Action Grants**

(<http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/smartgrowth/smart-growth-action-grants.html>)



NAR's Smart Growth Action Grants support a wide range of land-use related activities with the primary goal of supporting more sustainable development through involvement of realtors.

**Enterprise Affordable Housing Design Grant**

(<http://www.enterprisecommunity.com/solutions-and-innovation/design-leadership/design-grant#sthash.cHT9nR2j.dpuf>)

Enterprise's Pre-Development Design Grant program provides funding for design exploration during the early stages of affordable housing development. Carrying the project from inception to the beginning of schematic design, these grants enable development teams to define project goals, identify challenges, and explore multiple design solutions.

**NeighborWorks America**

([www.nw.org](http://www.nw.org))

NeighborWorks America is one of the country's leaders in affordable housing and community development. It works to create opportunities for lower-income people to live in affordable homes in safe, sustainable neighborhoods that are healthy places for families to grow.

## CASE STUDY: Examples of New Urbanist Development in South Carolina

The Village at Port Royal is a 50-acre New Urban development within the Town of Port Royal, located in coastal Beaufort County, South Carolina. Port Royal officials desired to reverse the decades-long economic decline and capture some of the growth enjoyed by the rest of Beaufort County. To this end, they adopted a New Urbanist master plan that facilitated sustainable redevelopment of the 440-year old town.

During the 1980s, Port Royal's population remained stagnant, as the community was bypassed by development and growth that occurred elsewhere in Beaufort County, including nearby Hilton Head Island. Port Royal began to capture some of the growth in South Carolina's fastest-growing county in the 1990s through redevelopment and annexation.

The 1994 South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act proved the catalyst for town officials to inject new life and development into Port Royal through a new master plan. With wide public participation, the town embraced New Urbanism as their future and approved a master plan in 1996. A Traditional Town Overlay District Code was adopted as part of the master plan in 1997 to ensure New Urban conventions would be carried out at the individual building sites. Both documents were adopted as part of the Port Royal Comprehensive Plan in 1999. The town used the comprehensive plan as a blueprint for future development. The town also proactively sought annexation of unincorporated adjacent parcels to boost its tax base and extend the New Urban design philosophy across a larger area to complement the New Urban redevelopment of the town's core.

Featured in architecture and "builder magazines, the Village at Port Royal was selected in 1996 by the Congress for the New Urbanism as one of the Top Ten Traditional Neighborhood Designs in the United States. The Village was developed on the same urban framework that has characterized Port Royal since the eighteenth century. The streets cross each other at right angles, creating short blocks with sidewalks. Outside the Village, however, there were entire blocks that lack houses or commercial buildings; historic renovation and new construction contrasted with older, dilapidated structures and aging mobile homes that reflect the hard economic times endured by Port Royal over the past 50 years.

Port Royal refused to fade away from neglect and disinvestment. A planning impetus from the state and the insights of a creative developer and visionary town manager combined to give the town new life. The state's call for local comprehensive plans, the opportunity to capitalize on the booming growth in Beaufort County, and the tenacity of its citizens produced a new master plan and comprehensive plan that mapped Port Royal's road to recovery. New construction has been steady, and the town's built environment continues to grow through small developments, building rehabilitations, and new public buildings along Paris Avenue, the main downtown thoroughfare. New civic buildings include Port Royal's town hall, senior citizens' center, police station, fire station, post office, and elementary school.

For more information, see [http://newurbanismwatershed.unc.edu/PDF/port\\_royal.pdf](http://newurbanismwatershed.unc.edu/PDF/port_royal.pdf).

# ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES

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## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

### **USDA's Promoting Tourism in Rural America**

(<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/tourism.html>)

This revision of *Promoting Tourism in Rural America* covers the major issues in rural tourism including agritourism, cultural/heritage tourism, ecotourism, planning, marketing, economic impact and more.

### **National Trust for Historic Preservation Survival Toolkit**

(<http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/economics-of-revitalization/heritage-tourism/survival-toolkit/#.UwPtMsRDseg>)

The recent downturn in the economy has had a major impact on many sectors of the cultural and heritage tourism industry. The news over the past few years includes a number of losses—heritage sites and museums closing, state programs eliminated, tourism agency budgets slashed, and so forth. Despite the challenges, many communities have survived and thrived. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has collected success stories in this “Survival Toolkit” that provides a wide range of suggestions for continuing and expanding heritage tourism even during downturns in the economy.

### **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**

(<http://arts.gov>)

The National Endowment for the Arts provides several grants to expand and enhance the role of the arts and cultural tourism products throughout the country. Potential funding opportunities for Calhoun Falls include:

***Challenge America Fast-Track Review Grants:*** The NEA provides up to \$10,000 in matching grants for projects in underserved communities for cultural districts, public art, and cultural tourism promotion. For more information, see <http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/challenge-america-fast-track>.

***Art Works:*** This program supports nonprofit arts activities in disciplines such as folk and traditional arts, museums, and presenters (including festivals). For more information, see <http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works>.

***Our Town:*** This program supports creative place-making projects that contribute to the livability of communities and places the arts at the core.

***Citizens' Institute on Rural Design:*** The CIRD provides site and downtown design/planning workshops for small communities administered by the Project for Public Spaces. For more information, see [www.rural-design.org](http://www.rural-design.org). See their resource *Seven Secrets of Successful Communities* at <http://rural-design.org/blog/seven-secrets-successful-communities>

### **Preservation Directory Grants and Funding Sources**

(<http://www.preservationdirectory.com/PreservationGeneralResources/GrantsFundingSources.aspx>)

The Preservation Directory provides information about grants and fundraising for historic and cultural resource preservation.

### **South Carolina Arts Commission Grants and Resources**

(<http://www.southcarolinaarts.com/grants/index.shtml>)

The South Carolina Arts Commission provides several grants for organizations, artists, and resources for other arts-related funding opportunities.

Additionally, the Arts Commission's Cultural Tourism program provides two online marketing resources that package the state's valuable arts products specifically for visitors to explore the state's arts and culture. The Arts Commission's Vacationers and Visitors web page (<http://www.southcarolinaarts.com/tourism/index.shtml>) provides visitors with a taste of the state's rich arts and cultural landscape. The web page also provides a marketing platform for the arts and arts organizations statewide. The value of Vacationers and Visitors is enhanced through a partnership with the SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, and through eArts, an online newsletter and resource of arts and cultural attractions in South Carolina. eArts includes brief feature articles, perspectives from a "roving reporter," links to hotel accommodations and other deals, and an entry point to South Carolina Arts Commission activities. eArts is distributed monthly to 10,000 consumers who have expressed significant interest in arts-related information. Calhoun Falls should look for opportunities that meet their guidelines to be included in these marketing outlets. For more information, see <http://www.southcarolinaarts.com/tourism/eartsguidelines.shtml>.

### **Clemson University Sources of Funding for Tourism Research**

(<http://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/tourism/fundinglinks.html>)

Clemson University provides a clearinghouse of funding opportunities for tourism research, project grants, and other agencies and foundations that support tourism projects.

### **ArtPlace America**

([www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org))

A collaboration of 13 national and regional foundations and 6 of the nation's largest banks, ArtPlace America advances creative placemaking across the country, the practice of making arts and cultural projects central in place-based strategies to transform communities.

## Outdoor Industry Association Outdoor Recreation Reports

Calhoun Falls can track the trends and growth in various outdoor recreation activities—including South Carolina-specific highlights—by accessing the annual studies from the Outdoor Industry Association including the Outdoor Recreation Economy Report and the Outdoor Participation Report. <http://www.outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/recreation/resources.php>

### STUDY: An Ethnographic Investigation of a Community's Use of Sport and Cultural Events

A recent study indicates the potential of event tourism for rural communities, acknowledging that event and festival production can be a highly effective means for publicizing a rural community's appealing features and attracting tourists who might otherwise never visit. The benefits of festivals extend well beyond generating tourism dollars and include strengthened social capital of rural communities and enriched quality of small-town life. Further, the study highlights how the social outcomes of sport events may be leveraged when the arts are used to complement sports and when commercial elements support social leverage. Such sports and arts performances can be blended to support both economic and social objectives. The report advises that communities considering event-based tourism carefully plan the economic and social objectives and ensure that they are in line with community capacity.

See Vassilios Ziakas, *An Event Portfolio in Rural Development: An Ethnographic Investigation of a Community's Use of Sport and Cultural Events*, (2007), [http://www.academia.edu/1833723/An\\_Event\\_Portfolio\\_in\\_Rural\\_Development\\_An\\_Ethnographic\\_Investigation\\_of\\_a\\_Communitys\\_Use\\_of\\_Sport\\_and\\_Cultural\\_Events](http://www.academia.edu/1833723/An_Event_Portfolio_in_Rural_Development_An_Ethnographic_Investigation_of_a_Communitys_Use_of_Sport_and_Cultural_Events).

## REGIONAL CONNECTION

### CASE STUDY: Regional Visioning & Implementation: Bear Lake Valley Blueprint

The Bear Lake Valley Blueprint in rural Utah and Idaho used scenario planning and cost/benefit analyses to clarify priorities and guide local decision making. The area's regional economy is based mainly on agriculture and tourism. The region focused on a vision for future growth in towns and villages to preserve working lands and open space. The regional plan calls for more compact and infill development, more walkable mixed-use neighborhoods, reduced water demand, and lower road construction costs. Overall, their scenario estimated \$83 million in lower local infrastructure costs. Regional leaders recognized that integrating regional infrastructure can better align resources and promote the region's competitive advantages. (NADO Research Foundation, "Regional Approaches to Sustainable Development." September 2011. [www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/NADO-Sustainable-Devt-2011.pdf](http://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/NADO-Sustainable-Devt-2011.pdf))



## **CASE STUDY: Clarion-Little Toby Creek Trail, Pennsylvania**

This picturesque 18-mile trail meanders along the Wild and Scenic Clarion River and Little Toby Creek through Elk and Jefferson counties between the charming small towns of Ridgway and Brockway. Starting in 1992, it took nine years, \$1.8 million and thousands of volunteer hours to complete the trail. The trail is open year round for nonmotorized use (bicycling and walking), and in the winter becomes an excellent cross-country skiing trail.

According to local historian and former regional planner Bob Imhof the community pushed for the trail's development in order to provide a place for residents to ride bicycles, taking advantage of the existing moderate grade rail beds from the area's historic lumber heritage. Shortly after the trail's opening, residents in Ridgway were surprised by the arrival of bike tourists, who were seeking a new riding experience. An existing outfitter quickly added bicycles to its canoe livery and now the trail benefits both residents and visitors. According to the 2007 Clarion River Greenway Plan, local tourism sources report that visitors to the Clarion River corridor generate \$144 million in revenue annually, with hubs such as Ridgway critical to the local region. Much of the revenue is generated from outside of the corridor, and results in a net gain for the area.

More recently, Brockway was selected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as one of two communities in Pennsylvania to participate in a pilot healthy community program aimed at combating obesity. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has assisted by working to better integrate the trail into the community, and by helping to develop a walk-to-school program.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **CASE STUDY: Maryville, Tennessee Greenway Trail Attracts Major Corporations**

The neighboring cities of Maryville and Alcoa, Tennessee, are proud of their eight-mile greenway trail as a transportation system that provides residents with a healthy alternative for travel to work, school, recreation areas, shops, and restaurants. The trail has helped instill a strong sense of community pride; it also attracts an increasing number of visitors, new residents, and employers. One example is the relocation of Ruby Tuesday's Restaurant Support Center to a site adjacent to the trail. The company's Chairman and CEO Samuel E. Beall, III, stated "I was very impressed with the beauty of the park, which helps provide a sense of community to this area, as well as the many benefits it provides to our more than 300 employees." Blount Memorial Hospital, Alcoa, Inc., and other businesses have contributed more than \$300,000 of funds and easements to enhance the trail's core funding of more than \$1 million in federal Transportation Enhancements. In addition to the economic benefits, the schools use the trail system as part of their physical education programs and as a natural classroom for units on nature and ecology. More information is available from Tom Wietnauer, city of Maryville, at [tweitnau@ci.maryville.tn.us](mailto:tweitnau@ci.maryville.tn.us), or Chris Hamby, city of Alcoa, at [chamby@ci.alcoa.tn.us](mailto:chamby@ci.alcoa.tn.us).

## **USDA Rural Development**

([www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov))

USDA Rural Development supports rural regional economic prosperity by providing job training and business development opportunities for rural residents, including cooperative business development, community economic development and strategic community planning, and faith-based and self-help initiatives. If not done so already, Calhoun Falls should initiate a relationship with its USDA Rural Development Service Center to discuss opportunities for partnership in the future. Contact USDA Rural Development Specialist, Abbeville County, Larry Durham, 864-224-2126 x121, [larry.durham@sc.usda.gov](mailto:larry.durham@sc.usda.gov).

## **USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG)**

([http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_RBOG.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_RBOG.html))

The primary objective of the RBOG program is to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Other USDA grants are also available. More information is on the USDA website at [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD\\_Grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_Grants.html)

## **American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA)**

(<http://www.amiba.net/>)

AMIBA is a charitable organization that helps communities start and sustain an Independent Business Alliance.

## **Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

([www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov))

U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) plays a critical role in fostering regional economic development efforts in communities across the nation.

**Economic Development Assistance Program:** <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=248297>

**Planning and Local Technical Assistance Program:** <http://www.grants.gov/view-opportunity.html?oppId=189193>

## **Small Business Administration (SBA) and SBA's Small Business Development Centers**

The U.S. Small Business Administration can help potential and existing small business owners start and grow their businesses and provides loans, grants, training, and other small-business resources. The South Carolina branch can be reached at [www.sba.gov/sc](http://www.sba.gov/sc). The SBA's Small Business Development Centers further build, sustain, and grow small businesses as well as promote small business development and enhance local economies by creating businesses and fulfilling the SBA mission of creating jobs.

## **Made in Rural America Initiative**

In February 2014, President Obama directed his administration, working through the White House Rural Council, to lead a new “Made in Rural America” export and investment initiative. This initiative is charged with bringing together federal resources to help rural businesses and leaders take advantage of new investment opportunities and access new customers and markets abroad. For more information, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/02/07/fact-sheet-opportunity-all-establishing-new-made-rural-america-export-an>.

## **The Governor’s Office of Small and Minority Business Assistance**

(<http://www.govoepp.state.sc.us/osmba/index.html>)

The Governor’s Office of Small and Minority Business provides resources to small and minority-owned businesses in South Carolina.

## **South Carolina Department of Commerce**

(<http://www.sccommerce.com>)

The S.C. Department of Commerce works with counties and rural communities to assist local leaders in leadership development, downtown revitalization, technical assistance, and strategic planning.

## **Upper Savannah Council of Governments (USCOG) Revolving Loan Fund**

(<http://www.upper.savannah.com/economic.asp#small>)

The USCOG provides a source of capital to assist in financing start-up and expanding businesses.

## **Upstate Alliance Educational Foundation**

([http://wireless.fcc.gov/outreach/index.htm?job=broadband\\_home](http://wireless.fcc.gov/outreach/index.htm?job=broadband_home))

The Upstate Alliance provides funding and technical assistance to regional development organizations to accelerate economic growth and employment opportunities.

## **SC Works Upper Savannah Center**

(<http://www.us1stops.com>)

SC Works Upper Savannah Center provides job fairs, workshops, education and training opportunities, and community resources. This resource center also manages the fund in its investment area as it relates to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). WIA programs help businesses meet their need for skilled workers and provide individuals with access to training that helps them prepare for work. The SC Works Center is also the local representative for the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW). Calhoun Falls should initiate a partnership with their local DEW representative to better understand how to work together to meet community needs.

### **Clemson Regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

([www.clemson.edu/sbdc](http://www.clemson.edu/sbdc))

Clemson's SBDC offers guidance and assistance to small business owners and entrepreneurs in Abbeville County.

### **readySC at Piedmont Community College**

(<http://www.readysc.org/> )

As part of the SC Technical College System, the Center for Accelerated Technology and its readySC program at Piedmont Community College work together to prepare South Carolina's workforce to meet the needs of companies.

### **Certified Work Ready Communities (CWRC) Program**

([www.scworkready.org](http://www.scworkready.org))

The Certified Work Ready Communities program is a voluntary initiative guided by key community leaders (local elected officials, economic development, business leaders, chambers, educators, and workforce development). A Certified Work Ready Community means the county has job candidates with high-demand skills proven by the National Career Readiness Certificate. It also shows that local employers care about hiring the best and brightest. This program aligns with the WorkKeys program that is available at the Abbeville Adult Education Learning Center.

### **Abbeville County Adult Education Learning Center**

(<http://www.acsd.k12.sc.us/adulted/09-10%20web%20plan/index2.htm>)

### **Greater Abbeville Federal Credit Union (GAFCU) & Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)**

(<http://www.gafcu.net>)

Greater Abbeville Federal Credit Union has obtained a Low Income Designation as well as CDFI Certification with a grant of \$99,995 to hire a new business development professional. The credit union was recognized as a Community Business Impact of the year for service to the community including special assistance to employees of a large plant that announced major layoffs. Other assistance included a loan deferral program and special loan refinancing to assist members while they searched for jobs. New products and services were introduced to help those who have been taken advantage of by predatory lenders.

### **ShadeFund**

(<http://www.shadefund.org/>)

ShadeFund invests in entrepreneurs across the United States who generate economic, social, and environmental returns. Its goal is to help people build enterprises that make a difference with every board foot, kilowatt hour, paddle stroke, or bushel they produce. ShadeFund links

small investors to entrepreneurs pursuing projects that build local economies and support small businesses that conserve land and water resources.





# EXISTING COMMUNITY & CHARACTER RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES

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## **Managing Maryland's Growth: Models and Guidelines for Infill Development**

([http://planning.maryland.gov/pdf/ourproducts/publications/modelsguidelines/infillfinal\\_1.pdf](http://planning.maryland.gov/pdf/ourproducts/publications/modelsguidelines/infillfinal_1.pdf))

This publication is intended to help local governments, architects, builders and developers achieve infill by offering remedies that overcome barriers; illustrating rural, suburban, and urban strategies; and identifying alternative approaches.

## **Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) of Washington: Infill Development**

(<http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/planning/infilldev.aspx#infill>)

The MRSC has created an online database of guidebooks, reports, strategies, incentives, and tools to encourage infill development in communities.

## **Housing Assistance Council Affordable Green Building in Rural Communities**

(<http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/greenbuildingreport.pdf>)

This exploratory report provides many examples of affordable green building in the rural context and more details of the challenges rural organizations may face incorporating green techniques in affordable housing projects.

## **Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guidelines**

(<http://www.pawildsresources.org/designguide>)

The Pennsylvania Wilds is known for its strong sense of place. The region's rural and historic character is part of what makes the area attractive to visitors and residents, and along with the commitment of local leaders to serve as stewards of that character. The PA Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship is a voluntary planning document that highlights how communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds can protect or enhance their rural character as they grow. This is a resource for developers, planners, architects, business or property owners, revitalization partners, and community leaders.

## **Carroll County, Maryland Design Expectations**

(<http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/compplan/design/>)

Carroll County, Maryland, is rich in history and rural in nature. The county welcomes new business as part of supporting its thriving community. In doing so, county staff asks the business community to treat their special place with respect by submitting plans that will architecturally and aesthetically complement their community. The county provides design expectations to developers in the earliest stages of planning and engineering processes to

minimize the amount of time it takes to move through the site plan and approval process. The guide provides requests, but not requirements, for creative design.

### **Better Models for Commercial Development**

(<http://www.conservationfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Better-Models-For-Commerical-Development-The-Conservation-Fund.pdf>)

*Better Models for Commercial Development* shows how communities can improve the design and siting of new commercial development. This booklet was written for elected officials, planning commissioners, developers and interested citizens around the country. It shows how new commercial development can be made more attractive, more efficient and more profitable.

### **National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities (NCEF)**

(<http://www.ncef.org/rl/preservation.cfm>)

NCEF provides a host of resources on reusing educational facilities, such as school, commercial, or community facilities.

### **Municipal Association of South Carolina's Main Street South Carolina**

(<https://www.masc.sc/programs/knowledge/Pages/Main-Street-SC.aspx>)

Main Street South Carolina empowers residents with the knowledge, skills, tools, and organizational structure necessary to revitalize downtowns, neighborhood commercial districts, and cities/towns into vibrant centers of commerce and community.

### **Open Space Residential Development: Four Case Studies**

(<http://www.greenneighborhoods.org/casebook.pdf>)

This casebook provides examples of attractive and profitable residential subdivision developments in several Massachusetts' communities that also achieve the preservation of resources.

### **Conservation Subdivision Handbook**

(<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/forestry/pdf/ag/ag742.pdf>)

North Carolina University developed this handbook to guide North Carolina communities in the use of conservation design in land use planning and housing development.

### CASE STUDY: Artists in Storefronts

An ongoing project in the Whittier neighborhood of Minneapolis, Artists in Storefronts aims to work with neighborhood organizations, artists, and local businesses in an effort to promote creativity, revitalize local economies, and provide everyone with equal, open access to art. See [www.artistsinstorefronts.com](http://www.artistsinstorefronts.com).

### CASE STUDY: Ridgway, Pennsylvania, Historic Façade Grant Program

Ridgway, Pennsylvania (population 4,000), is well known for its award-winning Historic Façade Grant Program, which began as a partnership between the Borough of Ridgway and the Ridgway Heritage Council in 1998. The program was initially funded by a grant from the Stackpole-Hall Foundation of Elk County and the Borough of Ridgway. Current funding is provided through a state grant and is administered through the Borough of Ridgway with help from the Ridgway Main Street Program. All improvements must follow the U.S. Secretary of Interior standards of design practices for preservation; if needed the Ridgway Heritage Council Design Committee provides free consulting on project design. A business is eligible for up to \$5,000 in grant funding. Eligible applicants can be the building or business owner. The applicant must match or exceed the grant amount. Ridgway, Pennsylvania, also has a Streetscape Program that, with federal transportation funding, added entrance signs, lighting, and benches to the downtown. See <http://www.ridgwayheritagecouncil.com/faccedilade-program.html>.



# LEVERAGING RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES

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## **Aligning Strategies to Maximize Impact: Case Studies on Transportation and Economic Development**

(<http://www.nwccog.org/index.php/resources/grant-opportunities/>)

This National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation report highlights case studies where transportation planning efforts are linked with economic development strategies in a regional context.

## **Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities**

([http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/Supporting\\_Sustainable\\_Rural\\_Communities\\_FIN.AL.PDF](http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/Supporting_Sustainable_Rural_Communities_FIN.AL.PDF))

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities published this guide in 2011 to share examples and outcomes from its (then) three-year old initiative. The document explains how the Partnership supports rural communities and provides case studies organized by principle.

## **South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA)**

(<http://www.ria.sc.gov/>)

The South Carolina General Assembly created the Rural Infrastructure Authority to help build the capacity of rural communities to compete for jobs and investment as well as to provide environmental facilities that protect public health and meet quality standards. To these ends, the RIA offers competitive grants and other financial assistance to support qualified rural infrastructure projects in areas that are most in need. (Abbeville is an eligible county.) For more information, see [http://scommerce.com/sites/default/files/all/rural\\_summit\\_-\\_ria.pdf](http://scommerce.com/sites/default/files/all/rural_summit_-_ria.pdf).

## **South Carolina Coordinating Council for Economic Development (SC CCED)**

(<http://scommerce.com/sc-advantage/growth-incentives/discretionary-incentives>)

As Tier III local governments, Abbeville County and the Town of Calhoun Falls are eligible for Rural Infrastructure Funds (RIF) under New Business Development Grant Awards. RIF can be used for economic development project assistance, as well as assistance to prepare the state's most rural areas to support economic development. Initially, RIF funds were used primarily for "product development," but in 2005 the SC CCED adopted a formal investment strategy that broadened the use of RIF funds to other activities necessary to improve economic competitiveness. Accomplishments for RIF are described both in terms of grants used for business development assistance, which are tied to jobs and investment, and for more general community development, encompassing product development activities such as industrial parks and sites, community revitalization, and workforce development.

## Rural Resource Coalition SC (RRCSC)

(<http://ruralrc.org/>)

The Rural Resource Coalition SC is an alliance of affordable housing, agriculture, community development, conservation, forestry, property, and tourism leaders. The group works on behalf of South Carolina's residents to strengthen the state's rural communities and optimize stewardship of natural resources.

### Leasing to Utilities: Rails to Trails

A growing source of trail development funds is the leasing of subsurface rights for fiber-optic cables and other utilities. Compatible "joint uses" of a rail-trail corridor include sewer, water and natural gas. Occasionally, above-ground utilities such as telephone and overhead electric lines can successfully share a corridor with a rail-trail. Utility companies also have bought abandoned corridors and then donated the land to the state department of natural resources for trail use. Abandoned corridors can provide key links for utility use, so working cooperatively with local utilities can help pay for a trail. Contact the Rails to Trails Conservancy for more information at

[http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding\\_financing.html](http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding_financing.html). A fact sheet specifically on utilities and rail-trails can be accessed at

[http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource\\_docs/RTC\\_FactSheet\\_RTs%20and%20Utilities.pdf](http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource_docs/RTC_FactSheet_RTs%20and%20Utilities.pdf).





# VALUING COMMUNITIES, NEIGHBORHOODS & LANDSCAPES & THE AREA'S ASSETS RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES

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## VALUING COMMUNITIES

### **Outdoor Nation and Merrell Pack Project Grants**

(<http://outdoornation.org/grants>)

Five \$2,500 grants are awarded each year to the most innovative, impactful, and sustainable projects focusing on increasing outdoor recreation while also creating significant relationships with the environment.

### **Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation**

(<http://mrbf.org/what-we-do#sthash.89zp4m8V.dpuf>)

The Babcock Foundation's priority is to support nonprofits in the Southeastern United States that have track records for helping low-wealth people build assets and transform economic conditions in their communities. Lavastian Glenn is the Babcock program officer responsible for strategic grant making, relationship and network development in South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama and supports grantee organizations engaged in asset development, community economic development, and public policy/systems reform. Contact [lglenn@mrbf.org](mailto:lglenn@mrbf.org).

### **Discover Our Shared Heritage**

(<http://www.nps.gov/NR/travel/>)

The National Park Service's Discover Our Shared Heritage travel itinerary program was developed through the Heritage Education Services Program to showcase thematic tours at historic sites across the country. Itineraries offer self-guided tours focusing on significant American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Itineraries are developed as a partnership between the local organizers and the National Park Service.

### **Georgia-Pacific Foundation**

(<http://www.gp.com/Company/Community/Foundation>)

Calhoun Falls should meet with the Georgia-Pacific Foundation and share its 2013 Sustainable Economic Development Plan. The Foundation requires that programs requesting funding or assistance make a measurable difference in the community's quality of life and make a significant impact in one of the four key areas—education, entrepreneurship, the environment, and community Enrichment—that the Georgia-Pacific Foundation believes best reflects its core

philosophy of creating tangible, sustainable value in the communities where its employees live and work.

### **USDA's Arts and Humanities in Rural America**

(<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/artspub.html#cb>)

This online guide brings together full-text resources for local officials and organizations seeking information on planning arts and humanities programs in their communities.

### **CASE STUDY: Blue Ridge Mountain Arts Association**

The Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association began over 30 years ago with the mission of providing art for personal growth and to serve as an economic engine for the community. They act as a nonprofit arts council serving the mountain communities of North Georgia, East Tennessee, and Western North Carolina. Over the years, the center has grown to serve an audience of 30,000 annually with programming that includes art and music classes for youth and adults and exhibit galleries to showcase and sell local artists' work. The center hosts several popular festivals, including Arts in the Park and the Plein Air Festival (both juried arts events) and the Wildlife and Nature Art Festival and Expo which showcases wildlife and nature artists and also offers outdoor activities including hiking, fishing, camping, and boating. See

<http://www.blueridgearts.net>.

### **CASE STUDY: HandMade in America—Western North Carolina**

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, HandMade in America, based in Western North Carolina, has become a national model for cultural and heritage trail development. HandMade in America was created to showcase artists and craftspeople in a 23-county region and to generate economic impact for this economically depressed area.

HandMade developed a system to guide visitors directly to the artists' studios, but to do so they needed criteria to determine which artists would be included on the trail. To be part of the HandMade in America initiative, shops and galleries must feature American-made crafts with an emphasis on those from Western North Carolina, and restaurants must feature indigenous foods as part of their standard menu. Participants are trained in how to welcome and accommodate visitors and how to think as entrepreneurs to create new partnerships and promotions. See [www.handmadeinamerica.org](http://www.handmadeinamerica.org).

### **CASE STUDY: Pennsylvania Wilds Photo Contest**

The PA Wilds Photo Contest is an annual contest for anyone and everyone who captures the beauty of the Pennsylvania Wilds region. During the 2013 contest, the contest received over 2,700 entries. Twelve photos were chosen and awarded for capturing the heart and soul of the region and put on display as part of a traveling photo exhibit. See

<http://www.pawildsphotocontest.com/>.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

### **The Center for Place-Based Learning and Community Engagement**

([www.promiseofplace.org](http://www.promiseofplace.org))

The Center for Place-Based Learning and Community Engagement provides information about place-based education. See their manual at

[www.promiseofplace.org/curriculum\\_and\\_planning/planning\\_tools](http://www.promiseofplace.org/curriculum_and_planning/planning_tools).

### **The 4-H Youth Development Program**

([www.4-h.org/youth-development-programs/citizenship-youth-engagement/community-action/rural-youth/](http://www.4-h.org/youth-development-programs/citizenship-youth-engagement/community-action/rural-youth/))

Engaging Youth, Serving Community began with a grassroots effort to recognize the 4-H Centennial in 2002. The National Conversation on Positive Youth Development in the 21st Century brought together youth and adults in local communities, at the state level, and finally in Washington, D.C., to discuss how to develop a positive future for America's youth.

The following national goals were established:

- empower rural communities to involve youth as partners in decision-making and governance
- improve the quality of afterschool programs in rural communities by increasing the competencies of providers and integrating 4-H curricula
- provide professional staff and volunteer development to increase the capacity of regions, states, and local communities to accomplish the first two goals.

The program aims to impart youth with the life skills and experience they need to emerge as effective leaders and contributing members of society.

### **CASE STUDY: Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's Kids in Parks Program**

Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and receiving the Champions of Change Award from the White House, the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's Kids in Parks Program is getting kids unplugged and outside for their health—and the health of parks. The program is being expanded throughout the nation with TRACK Trails adventures being added to the program's website as a way to earn prizes designed to make their next outdoor adventure more meaningful and fun. See [www.kidsinparks.com](http://www.kidsinparks.com).

## **CASE STUDY: The Of the Student, By the Student Service Learning Project.**

The Of the Student, By the Student, For the Student Program is a nationally recognized, award-winning service learning program that offers students a full immersion in American history and heritage. Eighth grade students find themselves onsite at the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, bringing the stories of those who came before them to life in videos that they write, produce, shoot, and edit under the guidance of JTHG professionals. The resulting mini-movies, or Vodcasts, offer a permanent record of the students' personal experiences and interpretations.

The pilot program was created and customized by the JTHG Partnership for Harpers Ferry Middle School students in conjunction with Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. See <http://www.hallowedground.org/Education/Of-the-Student-By-the-Student-For-the-Student-Service-Learning-Project>.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **Healthy South Carolina Initiative (HSCI)**

([www.healthysci.org](http://www.healthysci.org))

The HSCI provides funds to support community implementation efforts that work to eliminate health disparities and achieve health equity to improve the health of all South Carolinians. Through funds awarded by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention as part of the National Community Transformation Grant Program, the HSCI seeks to create healthier communities and eliminate health disparities through interventions that reduce death and disability due to tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and heart disease and stroke. The community awards will directly support work at the local level within South Carolina. Groups of community partners will work together on environmental and policy strategies to increase healthy opportunities in their communities.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Community Health**

(<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/index.htm>)

The CDC's Division of Community Health supports community health initiatives that focus on tobacco-free living, active living, and healthy eating. Four programs provide funding which supports sidewalks, trails, bicycle parking, farmers markets, community gardens, community health elements in comprehensive plans, and a variety of other activities. In addition, the REACH program is specifically focused on eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in community health.

## **US Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**

(<http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/index.html>)

The Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) coordinates activities related to rural health care within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Part of HRSA, ORHP has department-wide responsibility for analyzing the possible effects of policy on residents of rural communities.

***Rural Health Care Services Outreach Grant Program:*** The purpose of the outreach program is to promote rural health care services outreach by expanding health care delivery to include new or enhanced services in rural areas. See

<http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/about/community/careservicesoutreach.html>.

***Rural Health Information Technology Network Development:*** The purpose of the RHITND Program is to enhance health care delivery in rural America by supporting rural health networks in the adoption and meaningful use of electronic health records/electronic medical records. See <http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/about/community/rhitnd.html>.

***Rural Health Network Development Program:*** The primary objective of this program is to assist health oriented networks in developing and maintaining sustainable networks with self-generating revenue streams. These grants support rural providers who work in formal networks to integrate administrative, clinical, technological, and financial functions. See

<http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/about/community/networkprogram.html>.

***Rural Health Network Development Planning Grant:*** The Network Planning program provides one-year grants to support the planning and development of a formal health-care network to improve health care delivery in rural areas. This program provides one-year grants up to \$85,000 and allows applicants to develop a business or strategic plan, conduct a needs assessment, conduct health information technology readiness, and ultimately form a network.

See <http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/about/community/rhnetworkplanning.html>.

### **CASE STUDY: Minnesota's Rural Pharmacist Loan Forgiveness Program**

The Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (ORHPC), which is part of the Minnesota Department of Health, administers a rural pharmacist loan forgiveness program with funding from the state of Minnesota. The purpose is to recruit and retain health-care professionals in needed areas and facilities throughout the state. The program provides funds for repayment of qualified educational loans for pharmacists. Minnesota also offers loan forgiveness to physicians, nurses, and dentists. Since 2001, 326 health care providers and faculty have chosen rural or high-need practice locations to take advantage of the loan forgiveness program.



## AGING POPULATION

See **Rural Transit Assistance Program** as listed in Principle 1 Resource list:

<http://www.nationalrtap.org/State.aspx>

### **AARP**

(<http://www.aarp.org>)

AARP's Public Policy Institute provides a number of publications on livable communities. These include resources on funding, such as *Weaving It Together: A Tapestry of Transportation Funding for Older Adults*, which offers seven case studies, many of which feature rural transit systems. Available at [www.aarp.org/research/ppi/liv-com2/policy/transportation/articles/weaving-it-together-transportation-funding-for-older-adults-AARP-ppi-liv-com/](http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/liv-com2/policy/transportation/articles/weaving-it-together-transportation-funding-for-older-adults-AARP-ppi-liv-com/).

### **National Center for Mobility Management**

(<http://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/>)

This organization works with communities to help them coordinate human service/public transportation services for more efficient service delivery.

### **National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST)**

(<http://ncst.madwolf.com/>)

The National Center on Senior Transportation strives to increase transportation options for older adults to support their ability to live independently in their homes and communities throughout the United States.

### **Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc.**

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation is one of the largest foundations in the nation that focuses on preserving neighborhoods and housing and on revitalizing communities. Applicants must be a 501(c)(3). Visit the web site for more information

[http://about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/global-impact/charitable-foundation-funding.html#fbid=fe\\_qksSw90I](http://about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/global-impact/charitable-foundation-funding.html#fbid=fe_qksSw90I).

### **Duke Energy Foundation**

([www.duke-energy.com](http://www.duke-energy.com))

At the core of The Duke Energy Foundation is its commitment to the community, with a focus in four areas: the environment, economic development, education, and community vitality.

(Community vitality includes human services, arts, culture, community safety, and community leadership development). Abbeville County is within the service sector for the Duke Energy Foundation. Applicants must be a 501(c)(3). For more information, see <http://www.duke-energy.com/community/foundation/giving-guidelines.asp>.

**Walmart Foundation**

<http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/state-giving>

The Walmart State Giving program provides grants to nonprofits that serve underserved populations and align with the Walmart Foundation’s giving focus areas. Focused Giving includes programs focused on Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating and Career Opportunity only. Examples include efforts that aim to enroll people in SNAP, healthy eating/cooking skills training, nutrition education, and career skills or job training efforts that lead to placement. Community Engagement Giving is broader and includes programs focused on the unmet needs of underserved populations that may fall outside of the focus areas listed above. Examples include education, health care access and other human services programs. Applicants must be a 501(c)(3).



DATE	Monday September 30, 2013		
Time	Activity	Location	Participants
3:00 P.M.	Arrival	GSP	Pick up by Mayor Garrett & Tuck Hanna
3:15 P.M.			
3:30 P.M.	Travel to Calhoun Falls		
3:45 P.M.			
4:00 P.M.			
4:15 P.M.			
4:30 P.M.			
4:45 P.M.			
5:00 P.M.	Driving Tour	Latimer Pier	
5:15 P.M.		Millwood/Beer Gardens Ramps	
5:30 P.M.		Hwy 72 state line bridge	
5:45 P.M.		USACE headquarters	
6:00 P.M.		Russell Dam and overlook	
6:15 P.M.	Travel to Abbeville		
6:30 P.M.	Check in		
6:45 P.M.			
7:00 P.M.			
7:15 P.M.			
7:30 P.M.	Dinner	Mexican	
8:00 P.M.	Retire for evening	Belmont Inn	

DATE	Tuesday October 01, 2013			
Time				
7:00 A.M.				
7:15 A.M.				
7:30 A.M.	Breakfast	Abbeville	Mayor Garrett	
7:45 A.M.	Belmont Inn			
8:00 A.M.				
8:15 A.M.				
8:30 A.M.				
8:45 A.M.	Travel to Calhoun Falls	Town Hall	Mayor Garrett	
9:00 A.M.				
9:15 A.M.	Driving Tour	Calhoun Falls State Park	Mayor Garrett Paul Gilbert	
9:30 A.M.		Blue Hole Recreation Area	Tuck Hanna Carey Elliott	
9:45 A.M.			Lauren Ponder -all day	
10:00 A.M.			USDOT	
10:15 A.M.			SCDOT	
10:30 A.M.	Boat Tour	Blue Hole boat ramp	Conservation Fund Team	
10:45 A.M.		Blue Hole Cove	Hal Johnson Upstate Alliance	
11:00 A.M.		Clifford's Marina	Ed West SC Dept Commerce	
11:15 A.M.		Arrow Point Golf Course	Lauren Ponder -	
11:30 A.M.		Russell State Park	SC National Heritage Corridor	
11:45 A.M.			SCNHC hospitality rep	
Noon				
12:15 P.M.				
12:30 P.M.	Lunch	Napoleon's		
12:45 P.M.				
1:00 P.M.				
1:15 P.M.				
1:30 P.M.	Meeting/Interview	State Park Community Bldg	Brad Wyche Upstate Forever	
1:45 P.M.			Hal Johnson Upstate Alliance	
2:00 P.M.			Ed West SC Dept Commerce	
2:15 P.M.			SC National Heritage Corridor	
2:30 P.M.			SCNHC hospitality rep	
2:45 P.M.				
3:00 P.M.				
3:15 P.M.				
3:30 P.M.	Travel to Abbeville			
3:45 P.M.				
4:00 P.M.	Tour of Abbeville	Burk Stark Mansion	Greater Abbeville Chamber	
4:15 P.M.		City Square	Jeff Wilson WCTEL	
4:30 P.M.				X
4:45 P.M.				
5:00 P.M.				
5:15 P.M.				
5:30 P.M.	Refresh at Inn			
5:45 P.M.				
6:00 P.M.				X
6:15 P.M.				
6:30 P.M.	Travel to Calhoun Falls			
6:45 P.M.				
7:00 P.M.	Chamber Banquet			
7:15 P.M.				
7:30 P.M.				
7:45 P.M.				
8:00 P.M.				
8:15 P.M.				
8:30 P.M.				
8:45 P.M.	Travel to Abbeville			
9:00 P.M.				
9:15 P.M.	Retire for Evening	Belmont Inn		

9:30 P.M.				
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<b>DATE</b>				
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<b>2:45 P.M.</b>				
<b>3:00 P.M.</b>				

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Wednesday October 02, 2013</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Participants</b>
7:00 A.M			
7:15 A.M			
7:30 A.M	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Abbeville</b>	<b>Mayor Garrett</b>
7:45 A.M		<b>Belmont Inn</b>	
8:00 A.M			
8:15 A.M			
8:30 A.M			
8:45 A.M	<b>Travel to Calhoun Falls</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>	<b>Mayor Garrett</b>
9:00 A.M			
9:15 A.M	<b>Interview</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>	Delores Graham Park Sterling
9:30 A.M			
9:45 A.M			Stephen Pettigrew Pett Hardware
10:00 A.M			
10:15 A.M			Dorothy/Rufus Sherard landowners
10:30 A.M			
10:45 A.M			Diedre McCullough Principal CFCS
11:00 A.M			
11:15 A.M			Bert Broadwell Chairman School Bd
11:30 A.M			
11:45 A.M			Terry Flower shop



12:30 P.M.				
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