

3: STATE OF THE REGION

2014 POPULATION

710,253

2000 POPULATION

618,489

14.7%

OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S POPULATION

INTRODUCTION

A crucial step in transportation planning is to understand the forces that will drive regional change over the coming years. The *Horizon 2040* State of the Region assessment highlights demographic and economic trends related to the future growth and transportation of communities in the Upstate. The existing conditions highlighted in this chapter informed the creation of the regional transportation strategy throughout the planning process. The State of the Region Report can be found in Appendix B (<http://www.gpats.org/plans/horizon2040>).

People

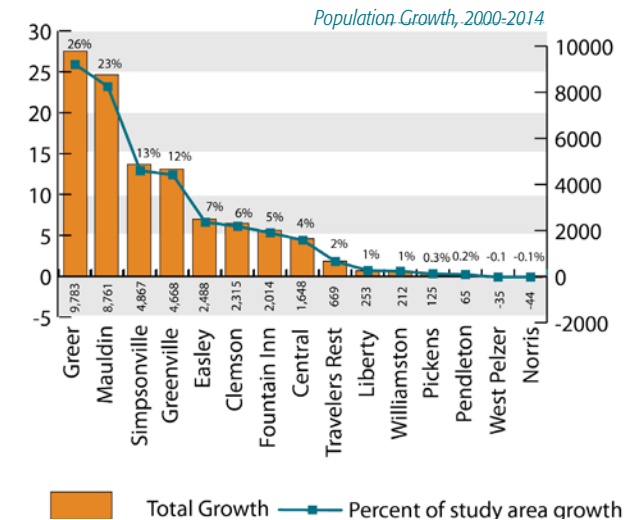
Community members use the transportation system every day to connect to education, jobs, cultural resources, recreational activities, and more. Making sure population trends are reflected in the transportation plan allows the system to adjust to anticipated changes and accommodate future demand and changing lifestyles.

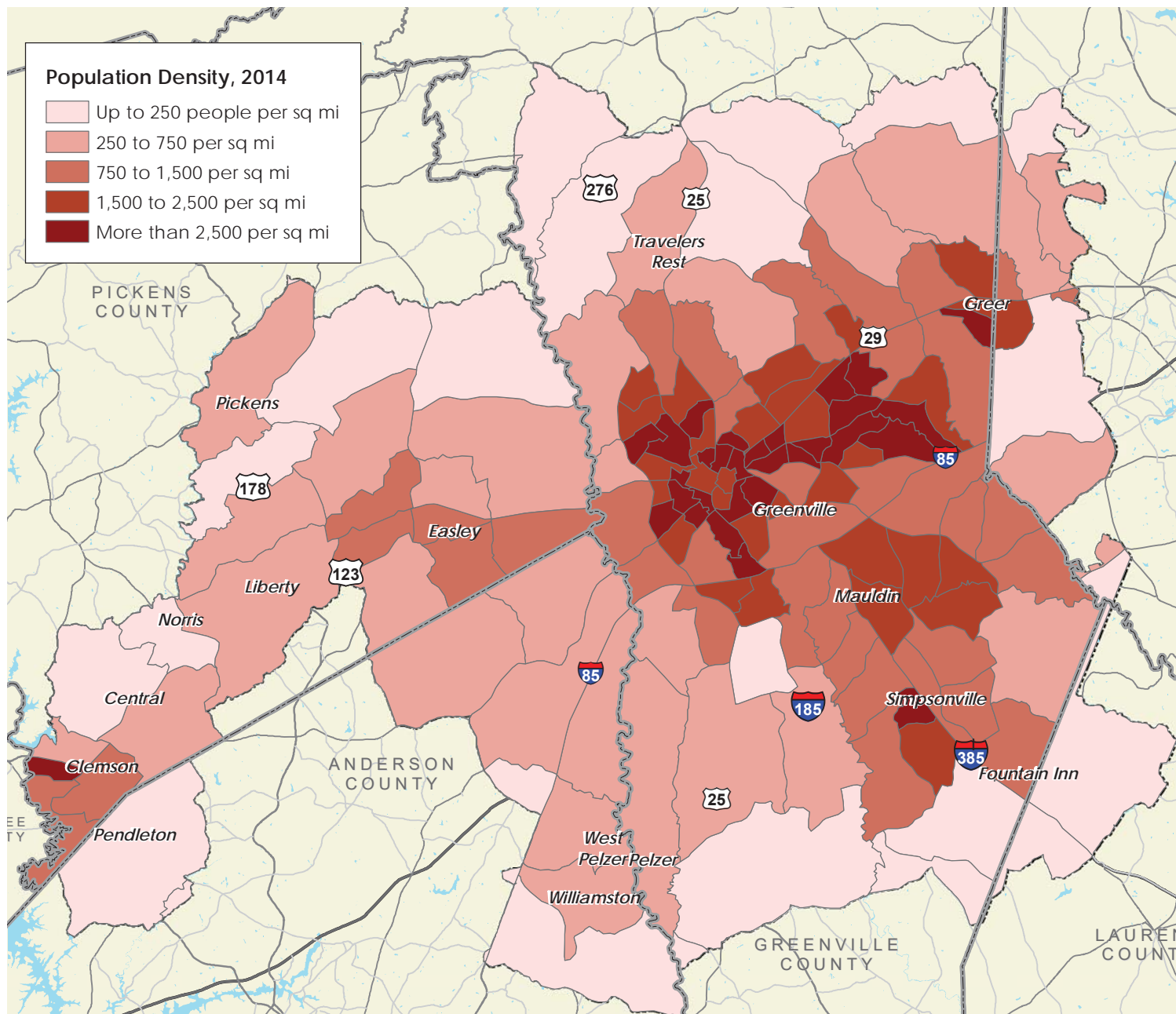
Population Growth

With an increase of nearly 92,000 people, the Upstate grew approximately 15% between 2000 and 2014. While slightly less than the state's growth rate of 20% during that time period, this influx has greatly affected the transportation network. This growth was not evenly distributed across the study area. While the cities of Greer and Mauldin both experienced more than a 50% population increase from 2000 to 2014, West Pelzer and Norris saw their populations decline. Greer added the most people overall, with a total increase of 9,783 (a 58% increase.) In addition, the GPATS area's minority population increased faster than the non-minority population, at 23% growth compared to 13%.

Aging Population

Mirroring state and national trends, the GPATS community is aging. The study area's median age increased from 35.5 in 2000 to 37.8 in 2014, reflecting an increased proportion of the population at retirement age or older. Aging communities always present significant mobility challenges in comparison with younger populations. Nearly 75% of older persons across the nation live in neighborhoods that are designed to be vehicle dependent, which can make it difficult for older residents to "age in place." Maintaining the flexibility and foresight to accommodate a variety of lifestyles and ensuring that viable multimodal options exist for residents will be extremely important moving forward.



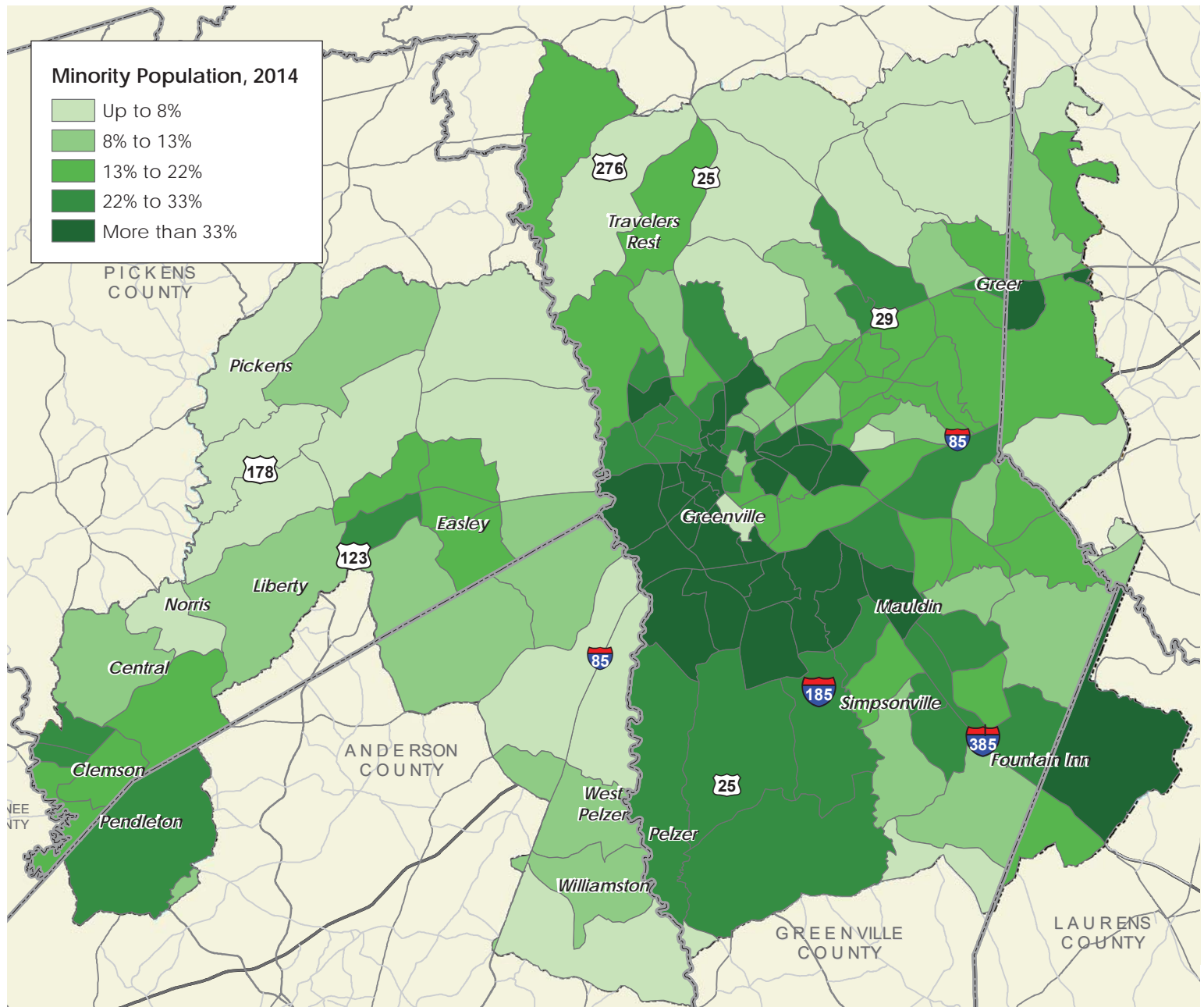


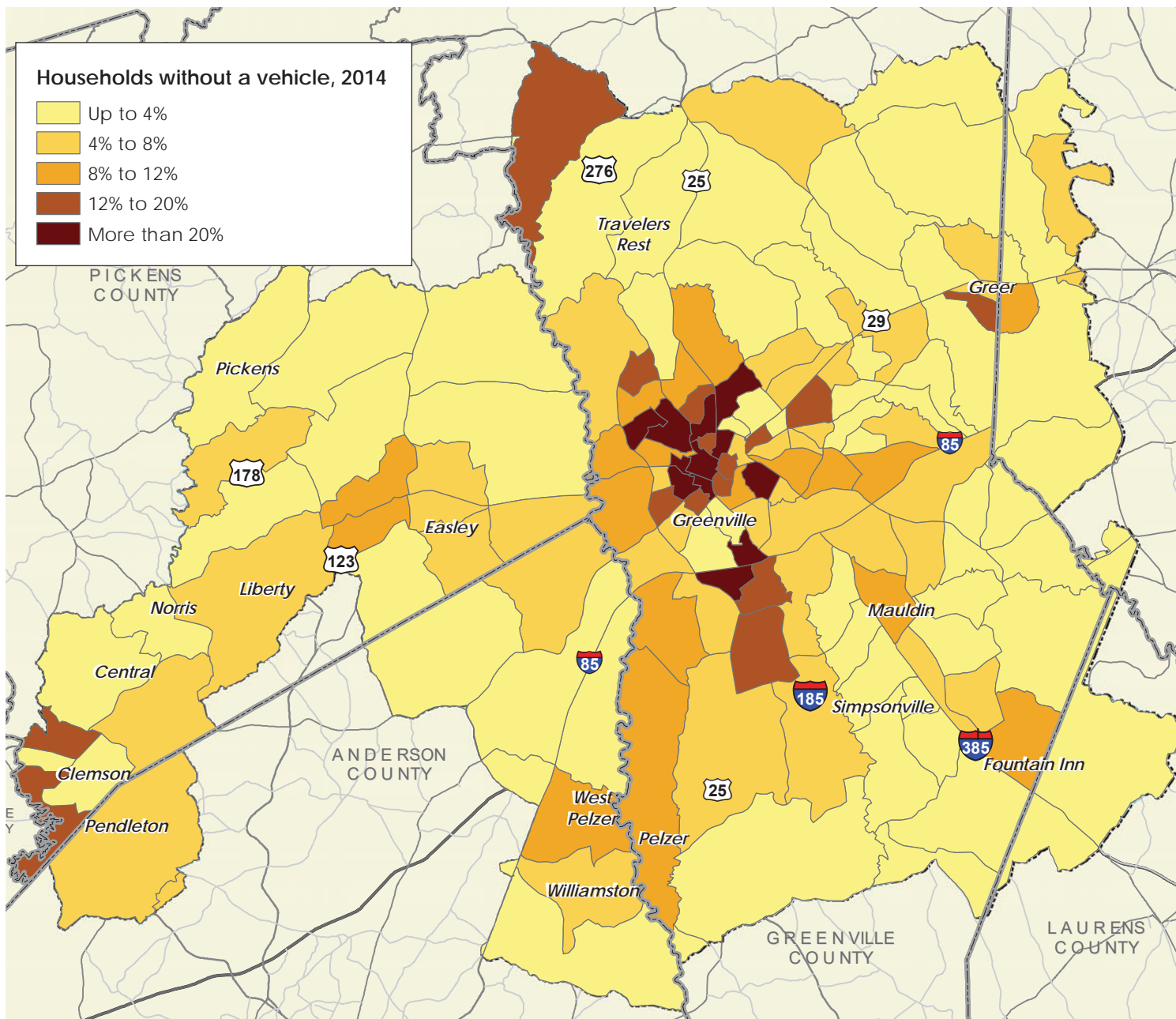
Population Density

Population density varies greatly throughout the study area, with a high of more than 6,200 people per square mile in Greenville near Bob Jones University to just over 17 people per square mile on the northern edge of the GPATS area near Travelers Rest. The densest areas of the region surround downtown Greenville, Greer, and Clemson, where the built environment takes on a more urban development pattern.

Minority Population

The GPATS study area is growing increasingly diverse. In 2014, approximately 23% of the region's population was defined as any race or ethnicity besides "white alone" in the U.S. Census. This represents an increase from 19% in 2000. In addition, GPATS' minority population increased faster than the white population, at 23% growth compared to 13%.





Households without a Vehicle

Approximately 20% of households in the GPATS study area do not have access to vehicles. These households tend to be clustered around Greenville, in the center of the metro area, with other concentrations near Clemson University and the far northern edge of the study area. It is important to know the location of these households to provide adequate services, as these households are more likely to rely on walking, biking, and transit as their primary means of transportation.

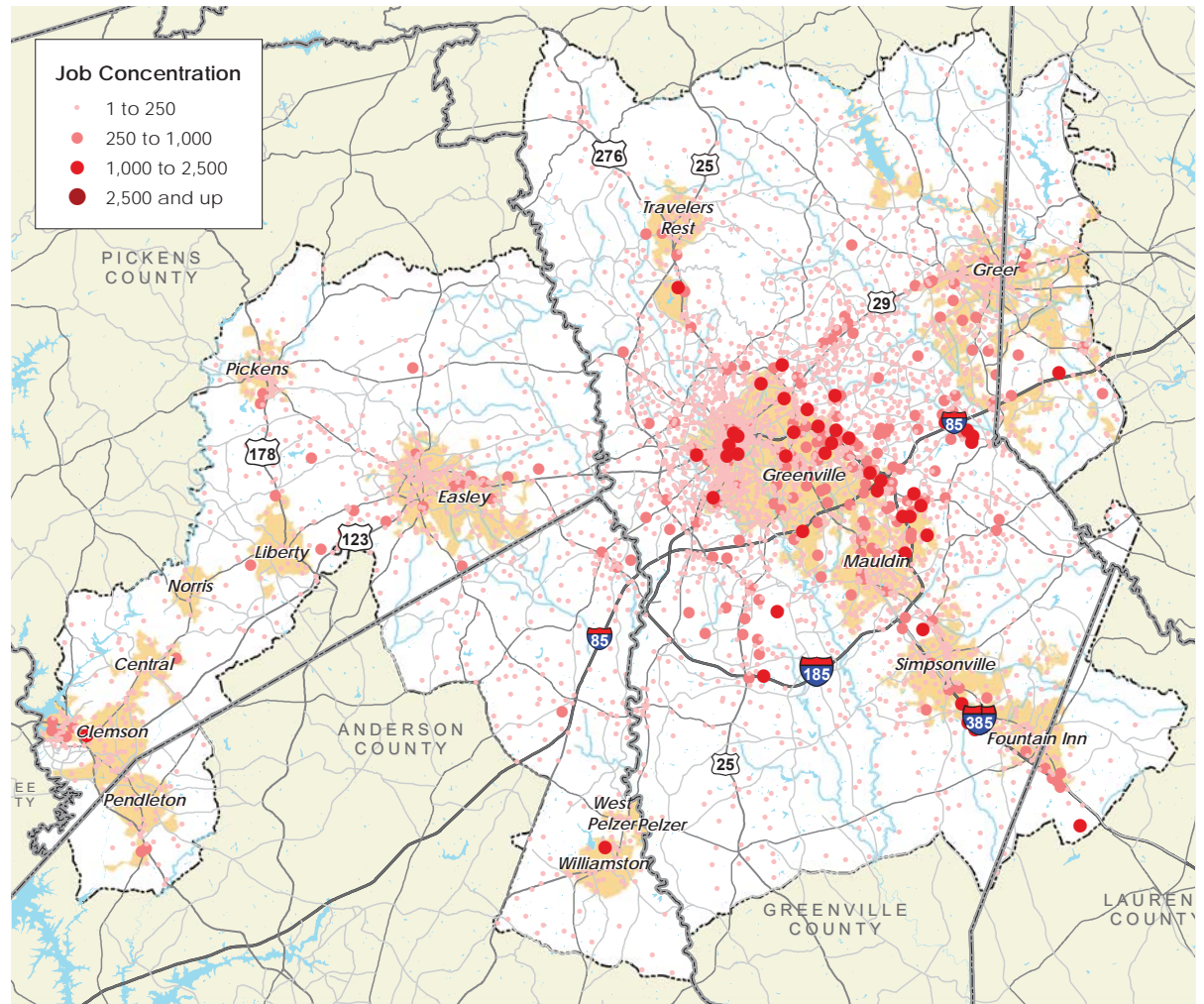
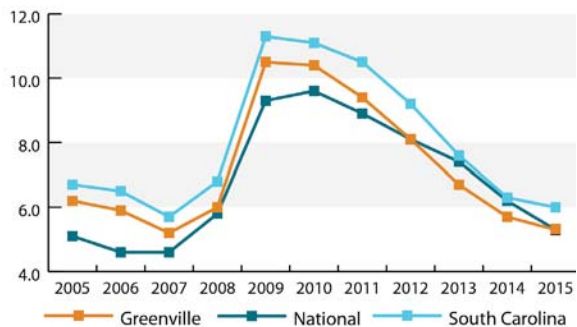
Prosperity

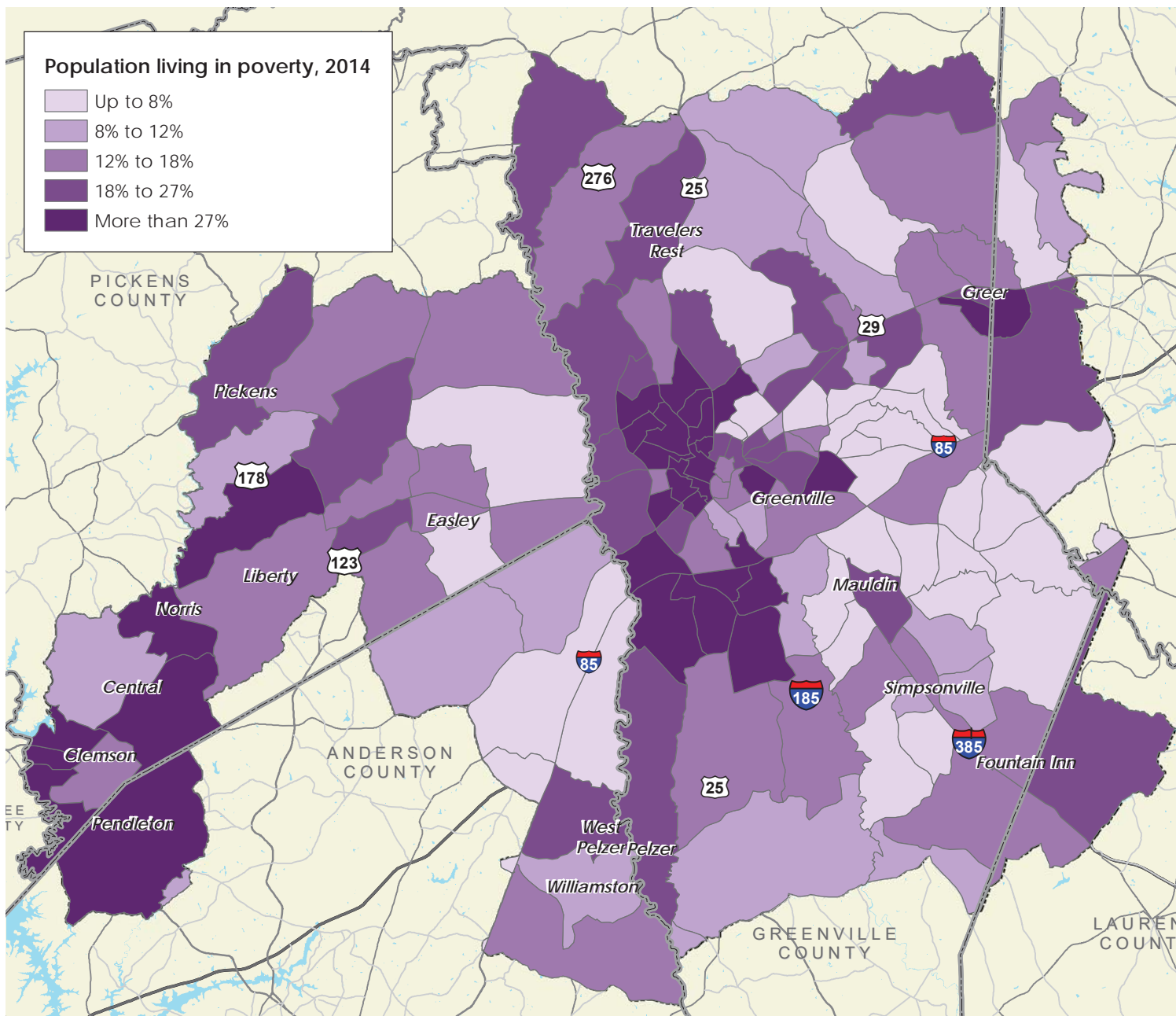
Transportation is foundational to community development as it provides access to employment, thereby acting as a stepping stone for economic growth. Taking a closer look at employment hubs within the region can uncover opportunities for multimodal connections.

Employment

Though the GPATS study area represents only 14.7% of the state's population, it hosts 16.7% of the state's jobs—a proportion that has increased during the last decade. Employment (and unemployment) in the area has followed national trends throughout the past decade, decreasing during the recession and steadily increasing since 2010. Though jobs are located throughout the study area, the heaviest employment concentration is located near Greenville, surrounding the I-385 corridor. Total employment has also risen during the past decade, from 290,000 in 2005 to more than 316,000 in 2015.

Unemployment Rates, 2005–2015





Poverty

In 2014, 16.6% of the study area's population lived below the poverty line. This represents a 50% increase from 2000, when only 11% of the population was living in poverty. Poverty has increased especially in the areas surrounding Greenville and in the far west in the areas around Norris, Central, and Pendleton.

Persons in Household	2014 Poverty Guideline
1	\$11,670
2	\$15,730
3	\$19,790
4	\$23,850
5	\$27,910
6	\$31,970
7	\$36,030
8	\$40,090
> 8	add \$4,060 for each additional person

Source: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services

Economic Drivers

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the area’s top industry sectors are manufacturing, administration and support, health care and social assistance, and retail. Together, these four industries account for 49.6% of the employment in the study area. Of these industries, administration and health care have increased their share of local employment since 2004, while manufacturing and retail have each decreased.

Top 5 Industries	2004 Employees	2014 Employees
Manufacturing	51,036 (18.2%)	44,768 (14.1%)
Administration and Support	25,286 (9.0%)	37,908 (12.0%)
Health Care and Social Assistance	25,959 (9.2%)	37,629 (11.9%)
Retail Trade	35,120 (12.5%)	36,658 (11.6%)
Educational Services	24,877 (8.9%)	28,949 (9.1%)

Major Employers	Location	Employees (2016)
Greenville Health System	Greenville	14,931 (4.5% of total employment)
State of South Carolina	Upstate Combined	11,836 (3.6%)
Greenville County Schools	Greenville	9,550 (2.9%)
BMW Manufacturing Corp.	Greer	8,000 (2.4%)
Michelin North America	Greenville	7,120 (2.2%)
Bi-LO, LLC	Greenville	4,600 (1.4%)
BonSecours St. Francis Health System	Greenville	3,985 (1.2%)
Clemson University	Clemson	3,814 (1.2%)
Duke Energy	Greenville	3,300 (1.0%)
GE Power and Water	Greenville	3,200 (0.9%)
Total		70,336 (21.3% of total employment)

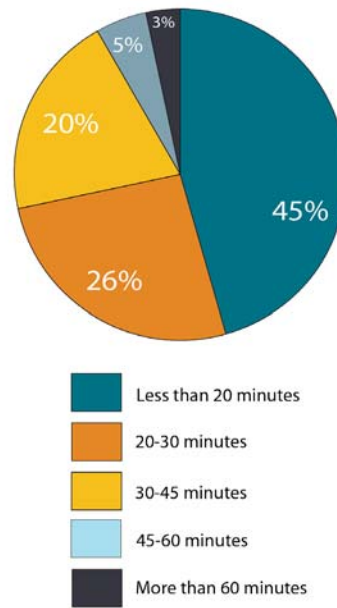
Source: Upstate SC Alliance, 2016

Commuting Patterns

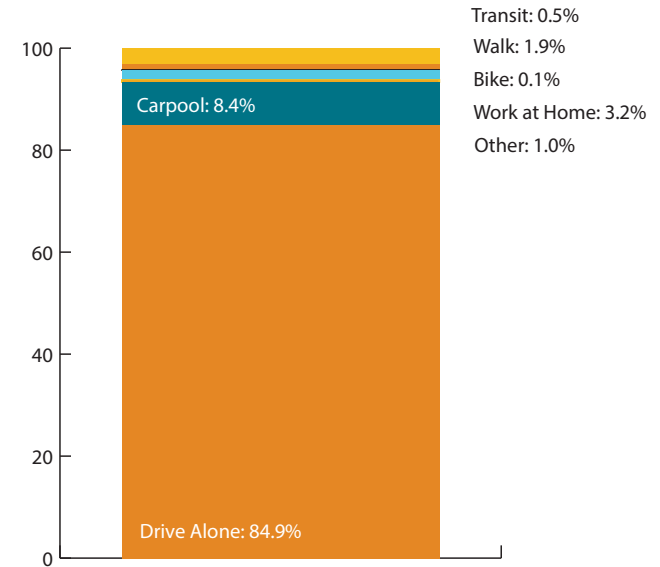
Of the 316,799 jobs available within the study area in 2014, 62% of them were filled by residents who also lived within the study area (196,000). Approximately 120,000 commuters travel from outside the area to work in the region—38% of the daily workforce. These numbers suggest the Upstate is a regional employment center, drawing workers from nearby areas with job opportunities. Future transportation improvements should take into account the commuters who travel daily along the region's main commuting corridors.

Upstate residents typically choose to commute by driving alone, doing so at a higher rate than state or national averages. Currently, very few commuters take advantage of alternative commute options, such as walking, biking, or public transit. However, 45% of Upstate workers currently have less than a 20-minute commute to work, indicating a good balance between home and work locations.

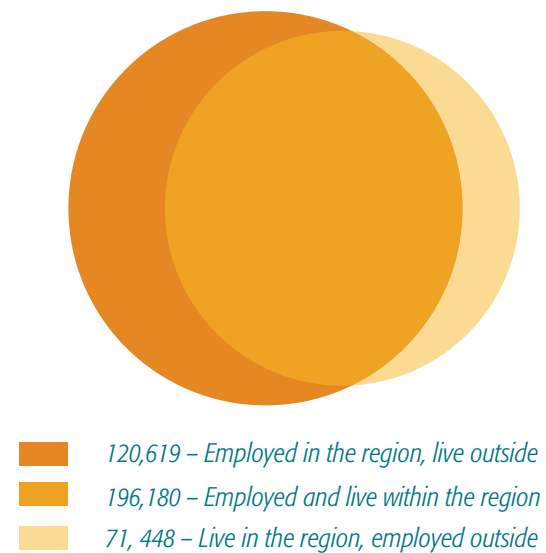
Travel Time to Work



Commute Mode Share

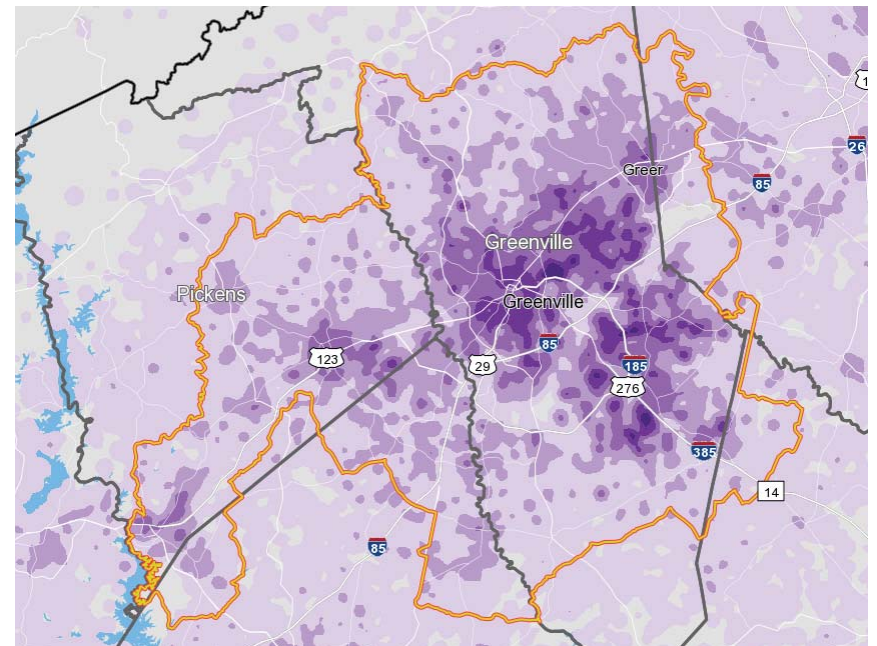


Regional Commuting Inflow and Outflow



Where Upstate Workers Live

Workers employed in the Upstate largely live within the region, with many also traveling from outside the study area's borders. Though residential development is clustered around Greenville, Mauldin, and Easley, many workers live in a dispersed pattern throughout the area. The greatest number of those who work in the area travel southeast from their job to their home, with 14% traveling farther than 50 miles.



Where Upstate Residents Work

Upstate residents who live and work in the region have the largest concentration of employment opportunities in Downtown Greenville and along the I-385 corridor. These two areas host a wide variety of employment sectors, including manufacturing, retail, and health care. Most residents travel southeast or east from their home to reach their workplace.

