

## 2017 JMGBL Awards Application

Submission Date	2017-06-23 15:27:09
This application is for:	J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award
Project Title	VisionKershaw 2030
County/Countries	Kershaw County
Staff Contact	Michael Conley
Job Title	Director of Planning and Zoning
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<p>Please provide a summary of your entry (no more than 100 words) to be used in a handout for the awards competition and included in press releases/publications. You may either type the summary in the text box or upload it as an attachment below.</p>	<p>Kershaw County took a proactive approach to address growth concerns. Kershaw County with Santee-Lynches Council of Governments reached out to the residents asking them to give a vision of what they perceive the county should look like in 2030. To take it a step further, County Council and its local partners have since used the final document, visionkershaw 2030, to look at their budgeting processes in a systematic approach. How do we achieve what the residents asked us to achieve to get to the goal of our vision of Kershaw County in 2030 and beyond?</p>
<p>Presentations may include more than one speaker; however, each speaker should be aware that the 10-minute time limit is strictly enforced. Please list the name, title, and e-mail address of each speaker:</p>	<p>Julian Burns, County Chairman, julian.burns@kershaw.sc.gov Vic Carpenter, County Administrator, vic.carpenter@kershaw.sc.gov Michael Conley, Director of Planning and Zoning, michael.conley@kershaw.sc.gov</p>
<p>Will any of the speakers need accommodations (wheelchair accessibility, etc.) during the competition?</p>	No
<p>To submit these attachments online, please upload Microsoft Word or PDF documents below.</p>	<p><a href="#">2017 J Mitchell Graham Award Final doc.pdf</a></p>



# vision**kershaw**

2030

KERSHAW COUNTY SOUTH CAROLINA

J MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD  
2016



## Executive Summary

Located in the Midlands of South Carolina, Kershaw County occupies a total of 727 square miles, primarily rural, wooded countryside. At the 2015 Kershaw County Council annual retreat, County leaders saw a need to set long-range priorities and objectives to achieve the County's ideal future. VisionKershaw 2030 is the result of collaboration and support between Kershaw County Council, County Administration, Kershaw County School District, the City of Camden, the Town of Bethune, the Town of Elgin, special purpose districts, the Chamber of Commerce, numerous civic associations, and private citizens during the summer and fall of 2015. The end product was a set of long-term goals and plans for Kershaw County that the vast majority of citizens will recognize as their own and support wholeheartedly through the next generation.

Though the Vision has a 15 year horizon, it is a living document for the governments in the County and the County's partners. The Vision serves as a foundation for the Kershaw County Council at the annual retreat as they set the year's goals and objectives and create the budget for the coming year. It also informs County stakeholders as they set budgets and make plans for investment and action. The Vision is meant to be dynamic and grow with the County. As the years change, the patterns of growth shift and priorities change. At the heart of the Vision lies a robust community input and engagement process.

### 1. Why was this project undertaken?

In June 2015, Kershaw County had reached a crossroads. With heavy growth pushing into the county from the City of Columbia's metropolitan area and Richland County, Kershaw County recognized the need to respond to these growth challenges and opportunities while protecting what residents already love about the county.

The County's administration and elected leadership decided to spearhead a community-wide visioning effort that would go beyond simply those areas that the County's agencies were funded to support, and involve the broadest possible collection of agencies and individuals to determine what goals and objectives the community would pursue between 2016 and 2030.

This visioning effort created an ideal foundation for the more detailed and technical planning efforts that include transportation, environmental, and neighborhood planning, among many other types of planning activities on both a county and city level.

The Vision combined local governance with heavy community participation and long-range planning. This type of ongoing community engagement and foresight was critical for any community that aimed to impact its future proactively.

**2. What is the significance of this project to your community as a whole? How does it relate in importance to the other problems in your community?**

As the saying goes, “if you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.” The process of creating VisionKershaw 2030 resulted in a common community vision, not just a government vision or school district vision or a chamber of commerce vision. It brought these entities and more together to discuss what is important to them and provided a forum for them to talk, but more importantly, to listen to each other and hear about each other’s problems and challenges. The process created an atmosphere of community fellowship and bonding.

The visioning process ensured that the ongoing growth is recognized and utilized for the betterment of the county. It also ensured that no community segment was left out. This process impacted the entire community and the finished product reflected the needs, cares and concerns of the entire county. With everyone seated at the table, it was evident that being “separate we were weak – but together we’re strong.”

**3. How much of the county’s population is benefited by the project? In what specific ways are different groups of citizens within the county better off than before?**

Throughout the eight month public engagement process, citizens of all ages met at over 32 public outreach events or responded to the online survey to voice their priorities and to describe the community in which they’d like to live, work, and raise families.

As a result, VisionKershaw 2030 articulates a common vision of values and goals for the entire county that are captured and grouped into five major elements:

- Economic Growth
- Land Use
- County Service Excellence
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Lifetime of Education, Health, Culture, and Recreation

Each major element contained Goals and Objectives specific to each area of focus and provided the entire community with a roadmap of what needs to be done.

**4. What degree of success did the project attain? What major objectives were achieved?**

VisionKershaw 2030 achieved the initial aim of bringing people from all segments of Kershaw County together to create a roadmap to the future – one that ensures the ongoing growth of our county will be managed according to the desires expressed by its citizens.

Shortly after VisionKershaw 2030 was created, county government and local organizations began placing projects and initiatives into motion consistent with the vision's five major elements:

#### MAJOR ELEMENT – ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Kershaw County collaborated with Central Carolina Technical College and the State of South Carolina to expand the Central Carolina Technical College Kershaw County Campus to include flex office space and training/incubation lab space

#### MAJOR ELEMENT – LAND USE

- Kershaw County worked with KershawHealth, the county's local hospital, to develop greenspace within Wateree Executive Park – a business park located in the Elgin community of Kershaw County. The greenspace will include walking paths and outdoor seating
- Kershaw County worked with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to create a Wildwood Lane Pedestrian Trail Master Plan designed to link neighborhoods within the Lugoff community

#### MAJOR ELEMENT – COUNTY SERVICE EXCELLENCE

- Kershaw County launched a new county website providing more online resources and information including online request and service forms
- Kershaw County currently in the construction planning phase for a new EMS station to provide more efficient emergency service to the western portion of county most heavily impacted by the Columbia metropolitan area growth – this effort was made a priority by County Council and budgeted for the 2016-2017 fiscal year

#### MAJOR ELEMENT – INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

- Improvements to the local airport – this effort was also a priority for The Kershaw County Council and was budgeted for the 2016-2017 as well as 2017-2018 fiscal year
- Black River Road Plan to access The Steeplechase Industrial Park and Central Carolina Technical College Kershaw County Campus

#### MAJOR ELEMENT – LIFETIME OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, CULTURE, AND RECREATION

- Kershaw County voters approved a referendum in 2016 to fund a large number of improvements and construction projects at the county's schools, including, construction of three new elementary schools
- Also included in the referendum was the construction of a new Applied Technology Education Campus co-located with Central Carolina Technical College - Kershaw County Campus

## Project Effort/Difficulty

### 1. What did your county have to do to accomplish its objectives?

The Visioning began at the Kershaw County Council's Annual Retreat in 2015, during which County leaders identified a need to set long-range priorities and objectives needed to achieve the County's ideal future. The Council approached Santee Lynches Council of Governments (Santee-Lynches) to help organize and facilitate the process in order to achieve a high quality and useful result – one which could be a model for others as well as an input to regional planning efforts.

At the heart of the visioning process was a robust community input process, conducted to collect ideas and attitudes from County residents and business owners. The public engagement process was widely advertised through methods including a dedicated website, press releases, direct mailings, flyers, newspaper articles and word of mouth.

The process included over 32 outreach events, including workshop briefings and listening sessions conducted by the Santee-Lynches and County planning staff. These events included presentations and idea-generating exercises and discussions.

The workshop discussions that form this Vision were organized around the S.W.O.T. analysis tool (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). In each workshop, participants voted on their priorities within the S.W.O.T.

In addition to the interviews conducted throughout the County, the community input process included a survey which was distributed at events and other venues throughout the County, as well as made available via a dedicated website. The survey provided the opportunity for residents and business owners to record their views on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing Kershaw County, as well as their relative importance. Over 650 surveys were collected.

The result of the public input is a set of long-term goals and plans for Kershaw County that the vast majority of county citizens recognize as their own and support. The Vision articulates five themes that reflect the wants and desires of our citizens – Economic Growth, Land Use, County Service Excellence, Health, Culture and Recreation. Kershaw County Council understands the county's vision can only happen when resources are budgeted. Since its completion, Kershaw County Council and County Administration use this vision plan as a budgeting tool – creating a priority list reflective of the vision plan for each fiscal year and setting the annual budget accordingly.

### 2. What challenges occurred during the project? Were there any community concerns?

One major obstacle associated with any planning process is the perception that “this will be just another plan that sits on the shelf.” It became very important to convince residents that this

was more than just a long range plan – it was an effort to help us define who we are and who we want to be. It was also a way to help the County grow in a managed and positive manner.

An inclusive public engagement process was essential for this Vision. All segments of the County – including the less populated areas and minority groups – were reached and encouraged to provide input. It was vital that everyone had the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions. The Vision had to truly represent the will of the people to be successful.

A special effort was made to include the Junior Leadership group of Kershaw County. These students represent the group that will benefit the most from the Vision. They will inherit the community, and it is critical that the county be passed down in the finest condition with the brightest promise.

A great deal was asked of our community members as this Vision was formed. The process revealed a lack of trust of the government. It was discovered that there was a lack of community communication. The process also identified areas where more communication would be beneficial and exposed the need for ongoing discussion and collaboration.

**3. What were the nature and extent of the county government’s efforts to alleviate the problem(s)? How difficult was it to accomplish the project’s goals and/or objectives?**

The County government provided staff support throughout the entire Visioning process. The process itself was funded by the County Council and involved bringing outside resources into the community to provide unbiased facilitation.

A Core Team was created comprised of representatives from all areas of the community. This group evaluated input and provided guidance to County staff and Santee-Lynches staff throughout the process. The Core Team set the tone for the Vision.

**4. Was financing the project an obstacle? Were there any unusual factors inherent in financing the project?**

Kershaw County Council provided all funding for the Visioning process. No unusual factors were inherent in financing the project.

**5. Did any agencies, citizens groups, or other organizations assist your county with this project? Did their participation pose any particular challenges or offer any unique contributions or benefits?**

This project could not have been successful without the full participation of county agencies, citizen groups, municipalities, the school district, special purpose districts, the Chamber of Commerce, and residents.

The initial kick off session convened where a high level of enthusiasm set the tone for the process. That session was followed by a robust community outreach effort. As expected, all stakeholders presented challenges and concerns. Many times these concerns were in conflict with others being presented. Discussions and debates took place at every meeting. Points of view were shared. Some perceptions were challenged. Uniqueness was recognized.

The process worked. The resulting document is a testament to the hard work and perseverance of the residents of Kershaw County. A major result is increased collaboration among groups within the county. They came together to chart the future of their home.

## **6. Are there any unresolved problems or other goals left to tackle?**

This process and resulting Vision Kershaw 2030 does not solve the problems of Kershaw County. Vision Kershaw 2030 is a living document that will change as our community changes and grows.

2030 is a benchmark date. It was selected as a mid-range goal that allows for clear measurement of successes. It also merges two ten-year comprehensive planning periods for the county.

The plan is reviewed annually by the Core Team and presented to County Council at its annual planning retreat. The Vision does not sit on a shelf. It changes and evolves to help guide the future of Kershaw County.

## **Project Originality/Innovation**

### **1. Justify the uniqueness of this project. What makes it different from other projects designed to achieve the same objective?**

Vision Kershaw 2030 is more than just a long range plan. It is unique in that it engaged the entire community. It is a document By the People, For the People. Long range plans are usually developed in relative isolation by government employees. This plan was facilitated by government employees but created by the residents of Kershaw County.

This Vision involved over 32 outreach events, including workshops, briefings and listening sessions, visits with local organizations, and participation in community events. An on-line community attitudes and needs survey was developed and released in multiple languages, bringing in 650 responses. The engagement process was widely advertised through press releases, direct mailings, flyers, newspaper articles and word of mouth. A dedicated website was also created.

It was continually stressed that this was the vision of the people – not the government. It was not the status quo of “create a budget and develop a long range plan.” That process was



flipped. It was determined to start with the people and their vision, then the government will find the ways to make that vision a reality.

Reviewed and adjusted annually to ascertain what has happened, what hasn't, and what needs to be changed, VisionKershaw 2030 is unique because it is a living document used extensively by Kershaw County Council and other partners as a budgeting and goal setting tool each year. These priorities are then tasked to county administration and county departments to execute these annual goals.

**2. Do you know of any other similar programs in South Carolina? If so, how is your program different?**

There are other visions in South Carolina. However, to our knowledge, none of them focused on the entire County as VisionKershaw 2030 did or made the effort to include as many disparate communities as our did. VisionKershaw 2030 is a completely different approach to the other visions in the State because we have tied our plan and funding mechanisms to accomplish the overall vision for Kershaw County.

**3. What innovations were required in accomplishing your objectives?**

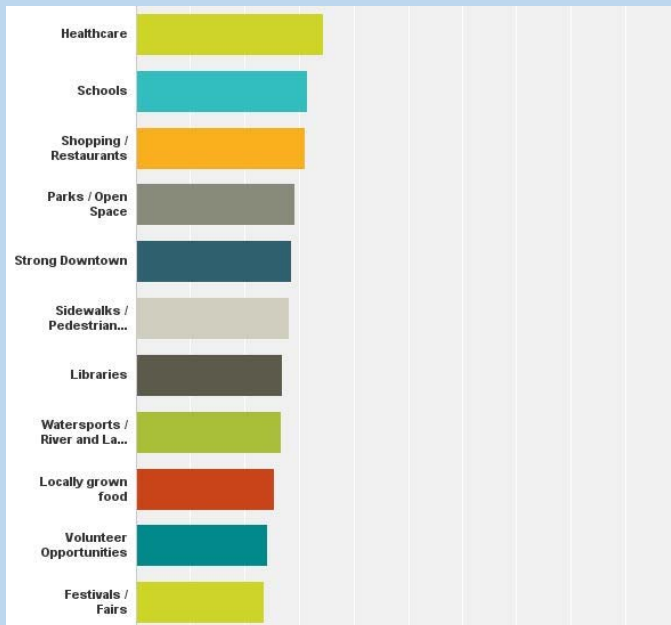
Our creative use of the Visioning process to create goals for government is unique. We were able to create a communications plan and "VisionKershaw 2030" brand that helped foster enthusiasm and built momentum within the community. The data collection was not just a typical survey. It was inclusive, energetic, participative, and fun. New relationships were formed. New alliances between organizations developed. This is more than just a plan – it is a kick start to new collaboration.

**4. Who provided the creativity and imagination in your project?**

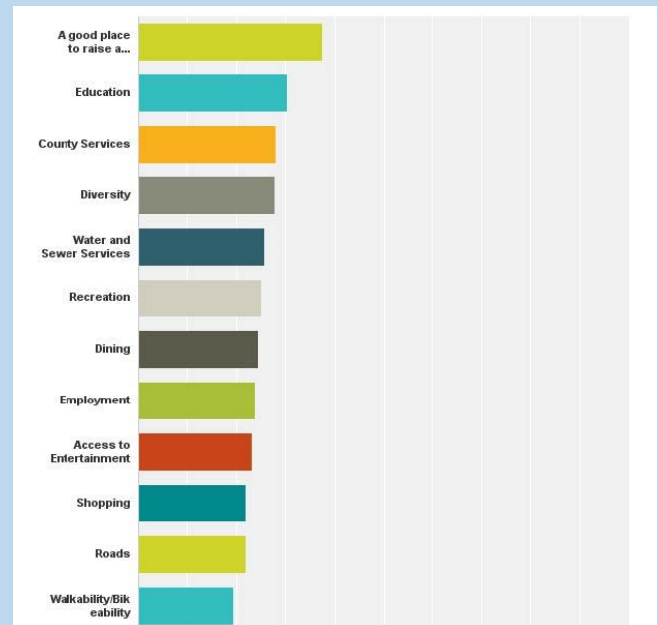
The residents of Kershaw County provided the creativity and imagination of VisionKershaw 2030.

# COMMUNITY INPUT

## Relative Importance of Selected Factors on Community Members' Quality of Life



## Community Members' Perception of Specific Kershaw County Services and Assets



At the heart of this visioning process is a robust community input process, conducted to collect ideas and attitudes from County residents, and business owners. The public engagement process was widely advertised, through methods including a dedicated website, press releases, direct mailings, flyers, newspaper articles and word of mouth.

The process, conducted from July to December 2015, included over 32 outreach events, including workshops briefings, and listening sessions conducted by the Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments and County planning staff. These events included presentations and idea-generating exercises and discussions.

The workshop discussions that inform this Vision were organized around the S.W.O.T. analysis tool (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). In each workshop conducted through the County, residents voted on their priorities within the S.W.O.T. The chart below depicts the ten S.W.O.T elements that received the most preference votes.

## Public Involvement by the Numbers

174 Meeting Attendees

655 Survey respondents

32+ Public Outreach efforts

Stakeholder Outreach, (p.38-41)

## STRENGTHS

- Natural Resources
- Quality of Education
- Lake Wateree
- Sense of Community
- “Small-Town” Feel
- Low Taxes
- Quality Healthcare
- Neighborhood Schools
- “Great place to raise a family”
- History/Historical Sites

## OPPORTUNITIES

- More Recreational Facilities
- Expanded and Equitable Education
- Improve School Facilities
- Downtown Revitalization
- Attract Young Families
- Expansion for Rural Healthcare and EMS Services
- Expansion of Water Infrastructure
- Expansion of Industrial Parks and Jobs
- Establish Full-Time County Fire Department
- Better Utilization of Interstate 20

## WEAKNESSES

- Curb Appeal (blighted areas)
- Lack of Jobs
- Poor Roads
- “Brain Drain”
- Resistance to Effect new ideas
- Lack of Fiscal Base for Resources
- Dilapidated Properties
- Lack of follow-through on plans
- Wateree River Divide
- “Bedroom Community”

## THREATS

- Number of Commuters Leaving County for Work
- Environmental Threats
- Sprawl/Unregulated Development
- Unwillingness to balance history and growth
- Lack of Civic Engagement
- Development in Areas without Services
- Crime Encroachment
- “Status Quo”
- Old Economy Businesses
- Competition from Neighboring Communities



June 22, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to enthusiastically endorse the application from Kershaw County for the J. Mitchell Graham Award for creativity and innovation for the County's *Vision 2030 Plan*.

Kershaw County would be a most deserving recipient of this award. The *Vision 2030* document was an exemplary effort that reflected input and perspective from all critical stakeholder groups in Kershaw County. The inclusiveness of the process used to develop *Vision 2030* helped to ensure that the document was both thoughtful and thorough. Frankly, developing such a forward-thinking plan was long overdue, and I applaud the initiative of our County Council and the County administration to make all this happen.

It is extremely beneficial for me as Superintendent and for our School Board to be able to have *Vision 2030* in place to help inform our decision-making as to strategic goals and budget priorities. As our District progressed through its most recent budget process, *Vision 2030* played an important part in identifying key priorities.

I strongly believe that *Vision 2030* will be the roadmap to success for Kershaw County during the coming years in terms of both economic viability and overall quality of life. I sincerely hope Kershaw County's application will receive serious consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "F.E. Morgan".

Dr. Frank E. Morgan, Superintendent  
Kershaw County School District



June 22, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

The Kershaw County Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Center supports the recognition of Kershaw County for the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award.

In 2015, the county council members discussed their interest in getting feedback from the community about priorities and objectives for the county's future. Therefore, they began a year-long process of outreach activities that included an online survey and community meetings that engaged hundreds of people living in Kershaw County. From their information gathering, the county convened a committee of community leaders from all sorts of backgrounds and geographical locations in the county. That group developed the first draft of the visionkershaw 2030 plan, and continued to meet until they developed a final product. Individual Chamber leaders and business owners were involved in all of the activities mentioned above.

Since final approval of the visionkershaw 2030 plan, the Kershaw County Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Center's twenty-one (21) member Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse this vision. In addition, the Chamber has used the visionkershaw 2030 plan to set our own strategic priorities and activities. Specifically, we are engaged in economic development and education programs in an effort to support the overall vision created by the community. Yearly, we evaluate our efforts in conjunction with other stakeholders to ensure we are on track for successfully meeting the visionkershaw 2030 strategies.

If it had not been for the leadership of Chairman Julian Burns, Kershaw County Councilmen, and Kershaw County staff, the various associations, non-profits, businesses, and governments would not have a cohesive path to follow. It has made all the difference in getting these groups to work together as a team to accomplish these goals!

If you have questions, please contact me at [director@kershawcountyvchamber.org](mailto:director@kershawcountyvchamber.org) or 803-432-2525. Thank you for considering Kershaw County for this award.

Sincerely,

Amy Kinard  
Executive Director



June 22, 2017

Michael Conley  
Director, Planning and Zoning Department  
Kershaw County  
515 Walnut Street, Room 160  
Camden, SC 29020

Dear Michael:

The United Way of Kershaw County is pleased to support the application for receipt of the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for creativity and innovation. Perhaps in some folks mind a long range plan is often neither creative nor innovative. We all hear too many stories of plans developed but not acted on. I can wholehearted assert that this has not and will not happen with this plan, VISION KERSHAW 2030!

The uniqueness of our county and the commitment from our entire county, not simply county government, although that is huge in itself, but the commitment of our towns, civic organizations, non-profits, churches, schools and businesses to embrace and act on this plan is significant.

Recently our United Way of Kershaw County completed a 5 year plan. In developing our vision for the future we utilized the VISION 2030 document extensively and our goals match and complement the plan. Together our county is moving forward. So as you consider Kershaw County for this award you can rest assured that our county will live up to its end of the bargain and follow through with many years of advancing our county and living up to the high ideals of the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald P. Supplee".

Donald P. Supplee  
President

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