



# South Carolina Municipal Annexation and Zoning



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## Abstract

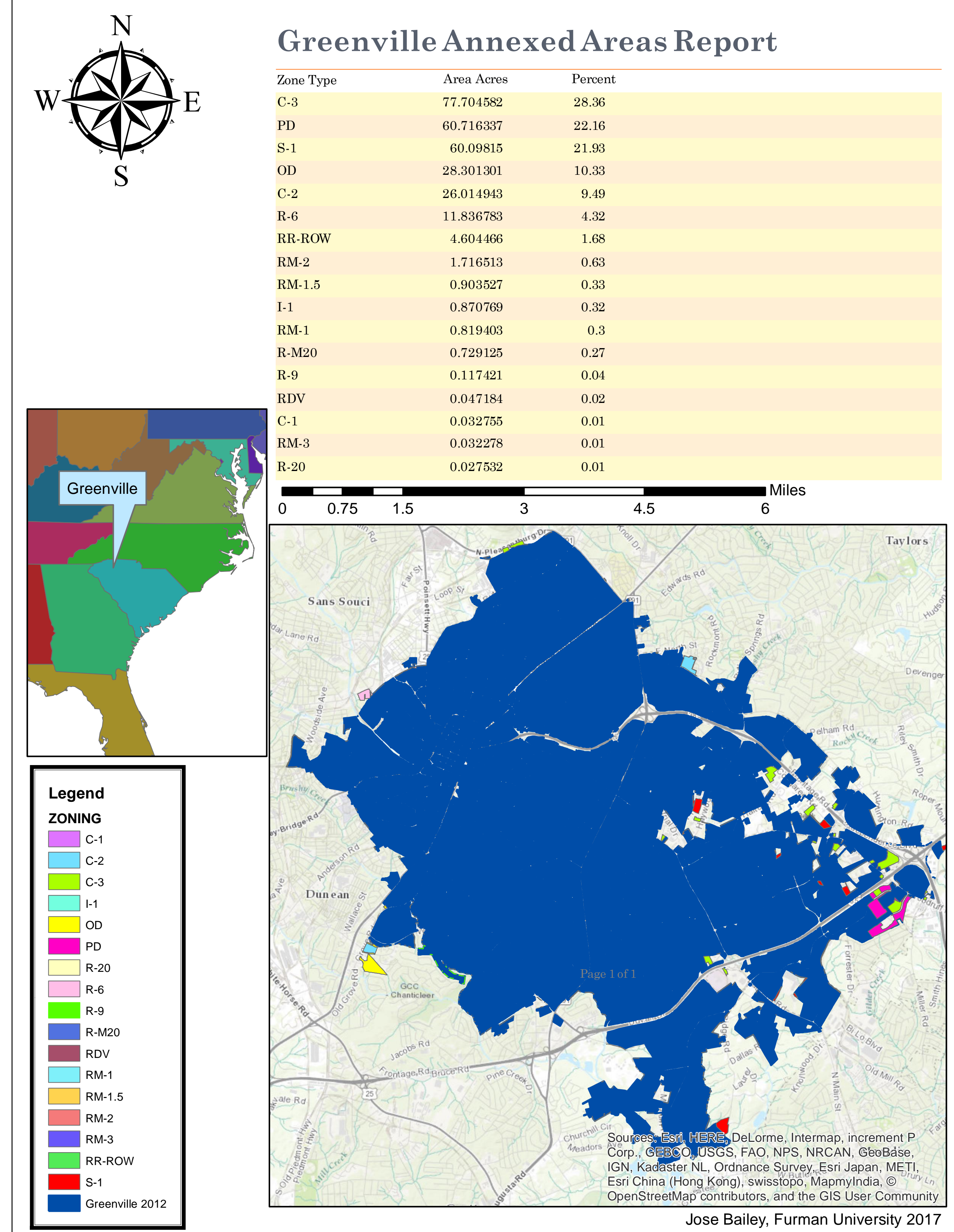
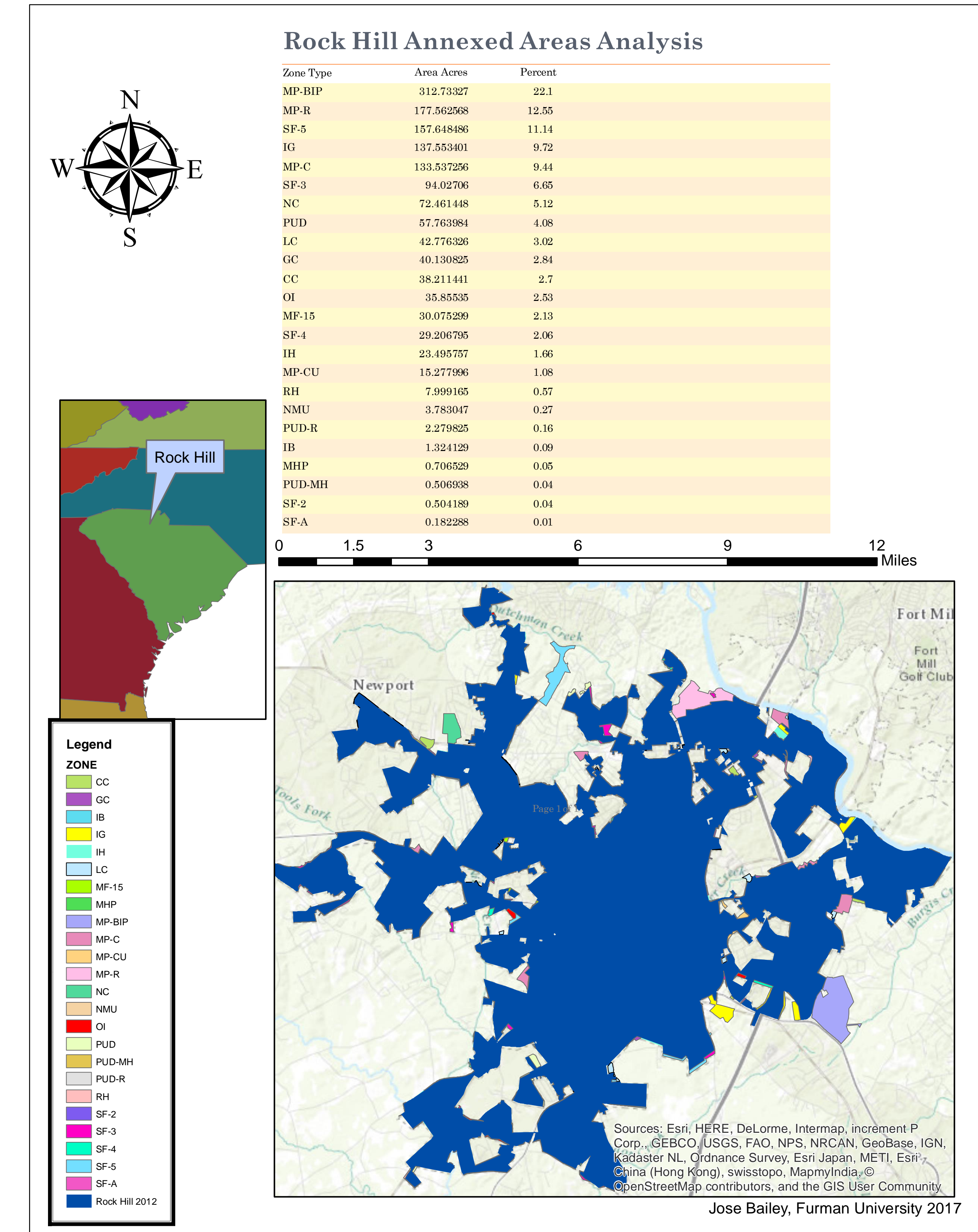
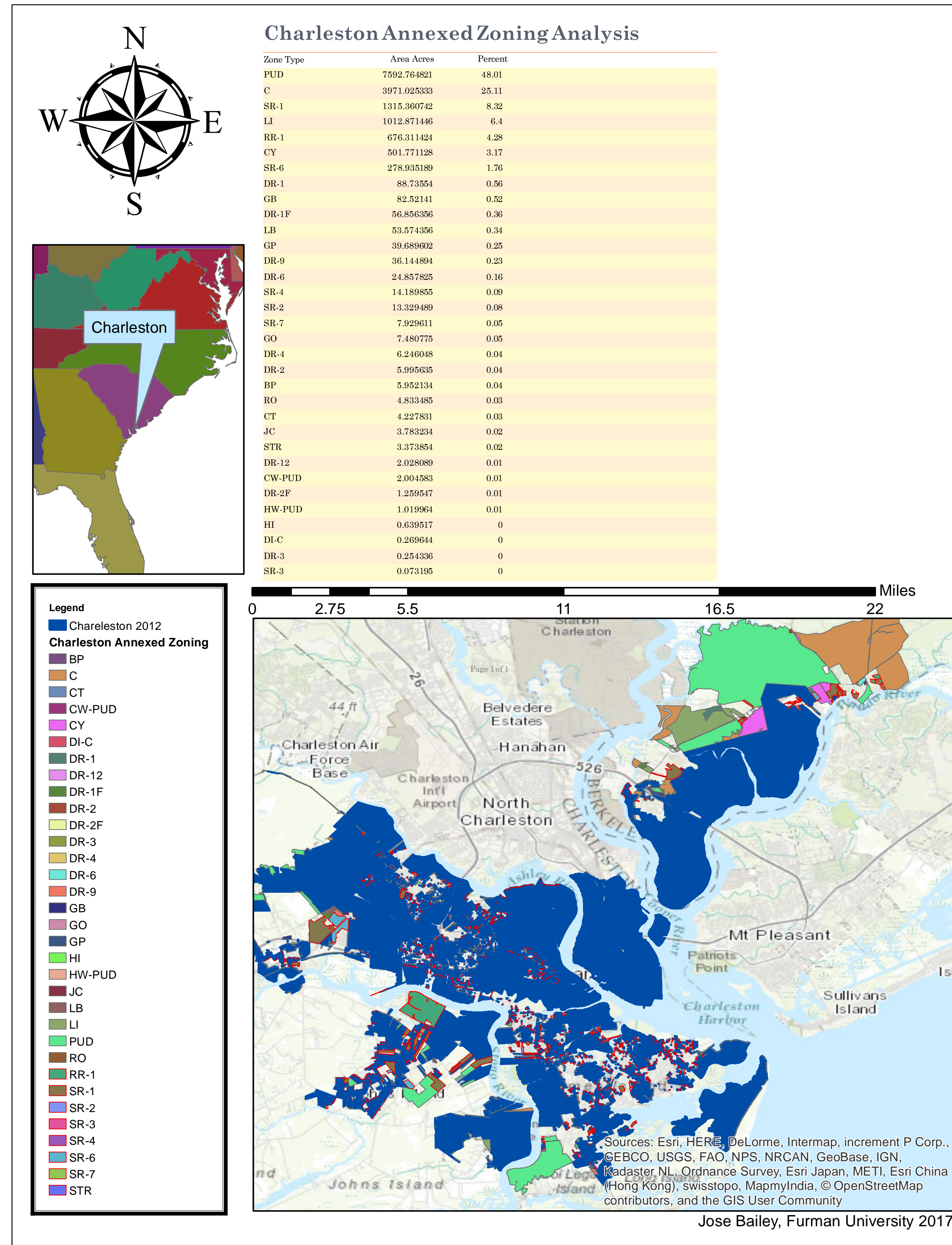
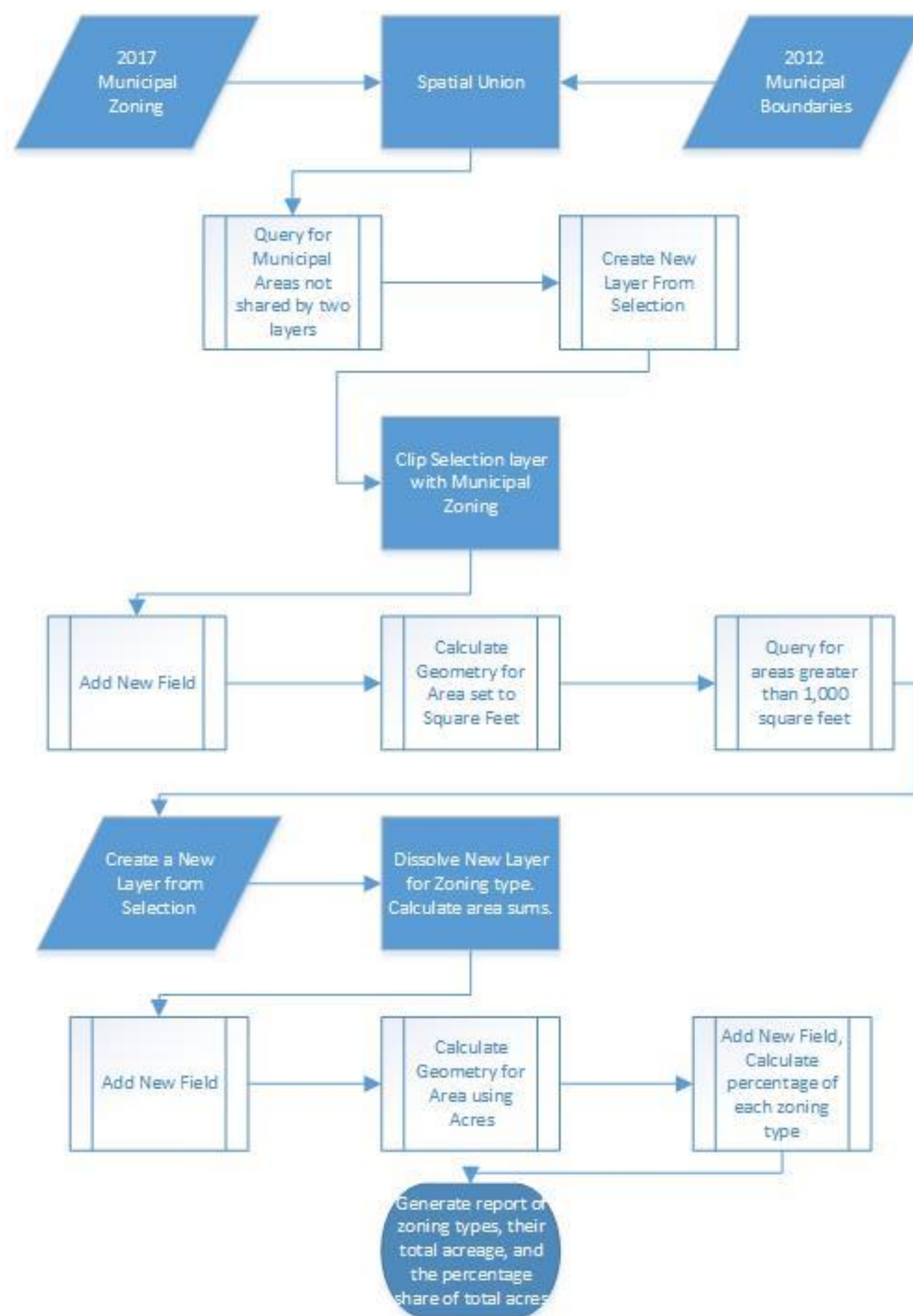
This study aimed at investigating annexation and zoning practices among municipalities in South Carolina. For this assessment, the researcher chose the cities of Greenville, Rock Hill, and Charleston to learn about the lands that these cities annexed from the years 2012 to 2017 and how they are using these lands. The results show that Charleston has been the most aggressive with annexation by incorporating over 600,000 acres of land which were largely devoted to conservation. Rock Hill annexed over 50,000 acres that were heavily devoted toward urban development, and Greenville brought in a little over 11,000 acres for commercial use.

## Literature Review

Annexation is the process by which municipalities go about acquiring new lands to bring under their jurisdiction. There are several costs associated with this practice such as the requirement of increased services to the newly incorporated territories. At the same time, the municipality can gain a larger tax base or lands that it can designate for planned uses such as commercial or industrial which can bring jobs and revenues to the city. In South Carolina laws concerning annexation are designed to give private individuals the choice to be annexed individually or as a neighborhood with consent. Many citizens often choose to do this in order to gain access to city services such as water, sewage, waste management, or emergency responders. Municipalities in the state are often much more limited in their abilities to take the initiative on annexation and often the most viable route is conducted through annexing areas that receive services without paying city taxes.

In addition to this, zoning can play an important role in the developing of a city. Zoning is the designation of land for a particular purpose such as residential, commercial, or industrial. Studies have found that zoning can have significant effects on local property values and overall quality of life in a municipality. Cities often face issues with regards on how to zone different parcels and this often leads to a careful balancing act where planners have to satisfy multiple interests. This is because multiple constituents often have conflicting interests on kind of construction they want to happen within a certain area which may affect anything from the price of a home to the profitability of a business.

## Methods



## Conclusion

As we can see from the analyses presented, there is a significant variation in annexation between the cities examined in this study. Charleston by far has had the most aggressive annexation with over 15,816 acres incorporated in only five years. While a large portion of these lands have been set aside for conservation and urban development, other tracts have been allocated toward industrial and residential use signifying an expected increase in population and business activity. Rock Hill has also made moves toward bringing lands under city jurisdiction which have totaled over 1,415 during the same time frame and much of this being designated as business industrial parks and residential. The city of Greenville in comparison has incorporated much smaller amounts of land over this period which have 274 acres with a primary focus on commercial use.

As we can see, the city of Greenville is falling behind significantly when it comes to outward development which may reduce its competitiveness in business and residential attraction in comparison with other cities. Therefore, Greenville has the potential to either develop the lands it currently has within its boundaries or extend outward and develop those. The first might require rezoning some tracts which may have political repercussions for city leaders. The second would involve a significant investment in city services to make them desirable to citizens outside of the boundaries so they may wish to become annexed. This could provide the city with the ability to incorporate larger tracts of land which can be designated to fit the city's growing needs.

## References and Data Sources

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