

**DATE:** June 8, 2023

**TO:** Chairman Harry Johnston, Cherokee County Commission  
**ATTN TO:** David Greenberg, Senior Planner, Cherokee County  
**FROM:** Mike Alexander, Director, ARC Center for Livable Communities

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has received the following proposal and is initiating a regional review to seek comments from potentially impacted jurisdictions and agencies. The ARC requests your comments related to the proposal not addressed by the Commission's regional plans and policies.

**Name of Proposal:** 2023 Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan Update

**Description:** A regional review of the draft 2023 Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Submitting Local Government:** Cherokee County

**Date Opened:** June 8, 2023

**Deadline for Comments:** June 29, 2023

**THE FOLLOWING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES ARE RECEIVING NOTICE OF THIS REVIEW:**

ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY  
PICKENS COUNTY  
DAWSON COUNTY  
CITY OF BALL GROUND  
CITY OF MILTON  
CITY OF MOUNTAIN PARK  
CITY OF WALESKA

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE  
GEORGIA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
COBB COUNTY  
FULTON COUNTY  
CITY OF CANTON  
CITY OF HOLLY SPRINGS  
CITY OF ALPHARETTA  
CITY OF KENNESAW

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
BARTOW COUNTY  
FORSYTH COUNTY  
CITY OF NELSON  
CITY OF WOODSTOCK  
CITY OF ROSWELL  
CITY OF ACWORTH

**Review information is attached.**

For questions, please contact Donald Shockey at [dshockey@atlantaregional.org](mailto:dshockey@atlantaregional.org) or 470-378-1531. If ARC staff do not receive comments from you on or before **June 29, 2023**, we will assume that your agency has no comments and will close the review. Please submit comments via email. For more information on the comprehensive plan review process please visit <https://atlantaregional.org/community-development/comprehensive-planning/plan-reviews/>



**Chairman**  
Harry B. Johnston

**County Manager**  
Geoffrey E. Morton, P.E.



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

1130 Bluffs Parkway  
Canton, Georgia 30114  
678-493-6000 | Fax 678-493-6013  
[www.cherokeega.com](http://www.cherokeega.com)

**Commissioners**  
Steve West, District 1  
Richard Weatherby, District 2  
Benny Carter, District 3  
Corey Ragsdale, District 4

May 18, 2023

Atlanta Regional Commission  
229 Peachtree St NE, Suite 100  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

Cherokee County has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Kevin Turner at 678-493-6101 or [JKTurner@cherokeega.com](mailto:JKTurner@cherokeega.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. B. Johnston", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Harry B. Johnston  
Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

Enclosures



**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-R-035**

**Comprehensive Plan Update  
Transmit Resolution**

**Cherokee County**

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorizes local governments throughout the State to prepare Comprehensive Plans to be used in guiding their future growth and development;

WHEREAS, **Cherokee County** has prepared an **Update** to its **Comprehensive Plan** that covers the years 2023 through 2027 that was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning;

WHEREAS, the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning require that certain minimum public participation and other procedural requirements be met as part of updating local Comprehensive Plans; and

WHEREAS, **Cherokee County** desires that its **Update** to the **Comprehensive Plan** be reviewed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that **Cherokee County** certifies that the minimum public participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing this draft update to the Comprehensive Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that **Cherokee County** does hereby authorize the draft **Update** of its **Comprehensive Plan** to be submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

Adopted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023

**Cherokee County**

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_









# OUR CHEROKEE

Planning the *Future* Together  
Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan



# Acknowledgements

## THANK YOU...

### Cherokee County Board of Commissioners

Harry Johnston, Chairman  
Steve West, District 1  
Richard Weatherby, District 2  
Benny Carter, District 3  
Corey Ragsdale, District 4

### County Staff

Geoff Morton, County Manager  
Brantley Day, Community Development Agency Director

### Planning and Zoning Staff

Margaret Stallings, Director of Planning and Zoning  
Kevin Turner, Deputy Director  
David Greenberg, Senior Planner  
Jillian Willis, Planner

### Consultant Team - Pond

Jonathan Corona, Project Manager

And the biggest thank you to the many residents and business owners who generously gave their time to be engaged in the development of this plan!



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## Executive Summary

The Our Cherokee Comprehensive Plan is the County’s guide to enhancing and sustaining Cherokee residents’ quality of life and happiness by establishing a unified action plan for sustainable growth, housing opportunities, economic welfare, land use, and placemaking. This document covers the County’s current social, economic, housing, and transportation profiles while incorporating the projections for the future of Cherokee’s land use, development patterns, and growth. However, it is significant to understand that these are not ideas formulated solely by County employees, but a resident-led plan. The Planning Team began the comprehensive planning process in the middle of 2022 with numerous in-person community meetings and the launch of a County-wide online survey. Cherokee residents were able to voice their opinions and dictate an overall vision with guiding principles and core values that directly influence future growth and development.

With four major components, this document provides a summary of the planning process and contains the land use policies that regulate development. First, the document highlights the past, present, and potential future of the County with existing conditions and statistics. The County is always evolving and understanding this change is significant to formulating efficient policies. Second, there is a brief overview of the community engagement process that touches on community desires and needs. The third component is a compilation of the updated Character Areas that cover future development on County land. Lastly, the final component of this document highlights the comprehensive annual review process, recent accomplishments, and the Community Work Plan that highlights future projects and tasks. This document is the primary tool to shape the future of the County. In essence, it describes our shared responsibility to implement codes, policies, and regulations that directly coincide with the vision and core values. This is the only way to ensure that the work of the many Cherokee residents, business owners, property owners, and stakeholders is utilized to the fullest extent possible, making sure Cherokee County’s future is bright.

**“Together, we believe that the County is and will continue to be *the world’s best place to live and where the metro meets the mountains.*”**  
**- Chairman Harry Johnston**

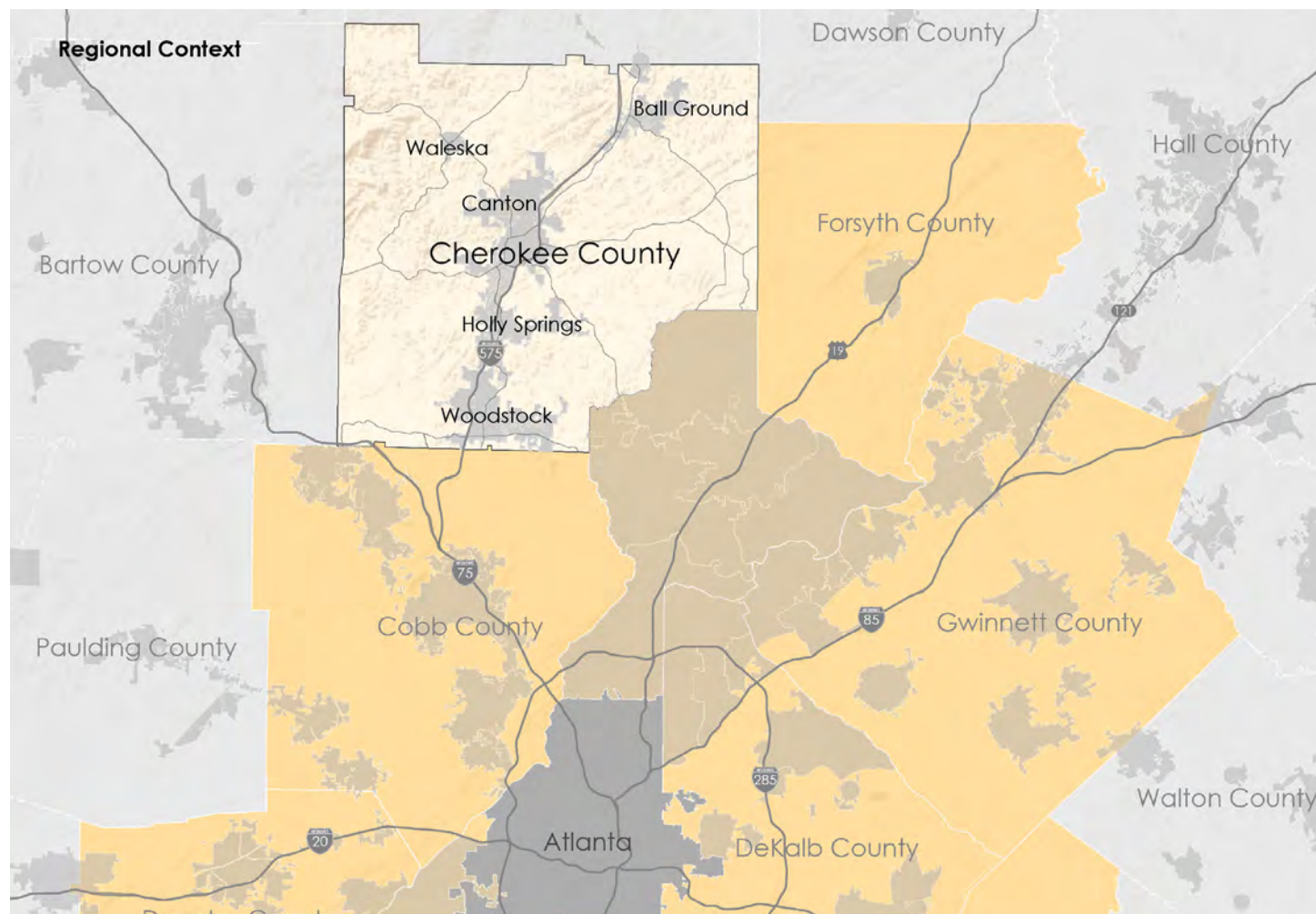




# 1 Cherokee Past & Present

## Introduction

This part of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan will cover the past and present of Cherokee County. It will highlight significant events and milestones across the development of the County. Then it will touch on major trends in the different profiles. For instance, how the demographics of the County has changed across time, how the economy has evolved, changes in housing type, impacts to our transportation infrastructure, and the quantity and quality of basic services and community facilities. The graphs and charts present in the profiles were provided by Pond and are also available in Appendix E with their respected sources.



## Cherokee County Across the Years

Cherokee County consists of 434 square miles at the northern edge of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. Originally inhabited by Paleo-Indians, the County was surveyed in 1832. Throughout the 19th century, its primary industries were tobacco, cotton, and marble. Commerce increased when the Marietta & North Georgia Railroad was completed in 1879, linking Canton to Marietta and Atlanta. In 1882, the railroad was extended to Ball Ground and would reach Murphy, North Carolina by 1887. This opened up the County to new industry and commerce. In 1899, local merchant R.T. Jones established the Canton Cotton Mill. The mill quickly dominated the economic and social life of Canton, making it a major center for denim cloth manufacturing.



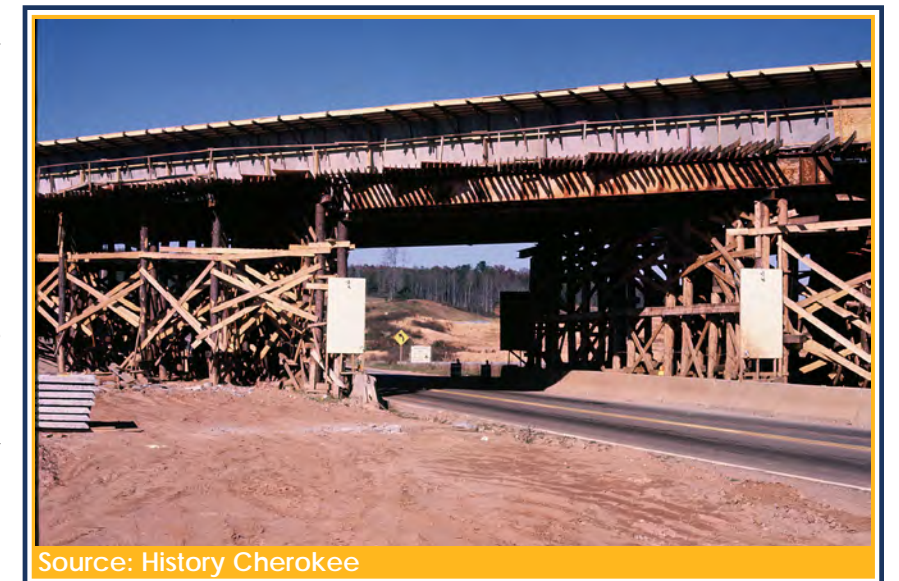
Source: History Cherokee



Source: History Cherokee

By the turn of the 20th century, the County's five cities—Canton, Woodstock, Ball Ground, Holly Springs, and Waleska—emerged as commerce and trade centers that shaped each city's identity. While the County experienced some post-war suburban development, it remained mostly rural throughout the mid-twentieth century when it was known as the "poultry capital of the world."

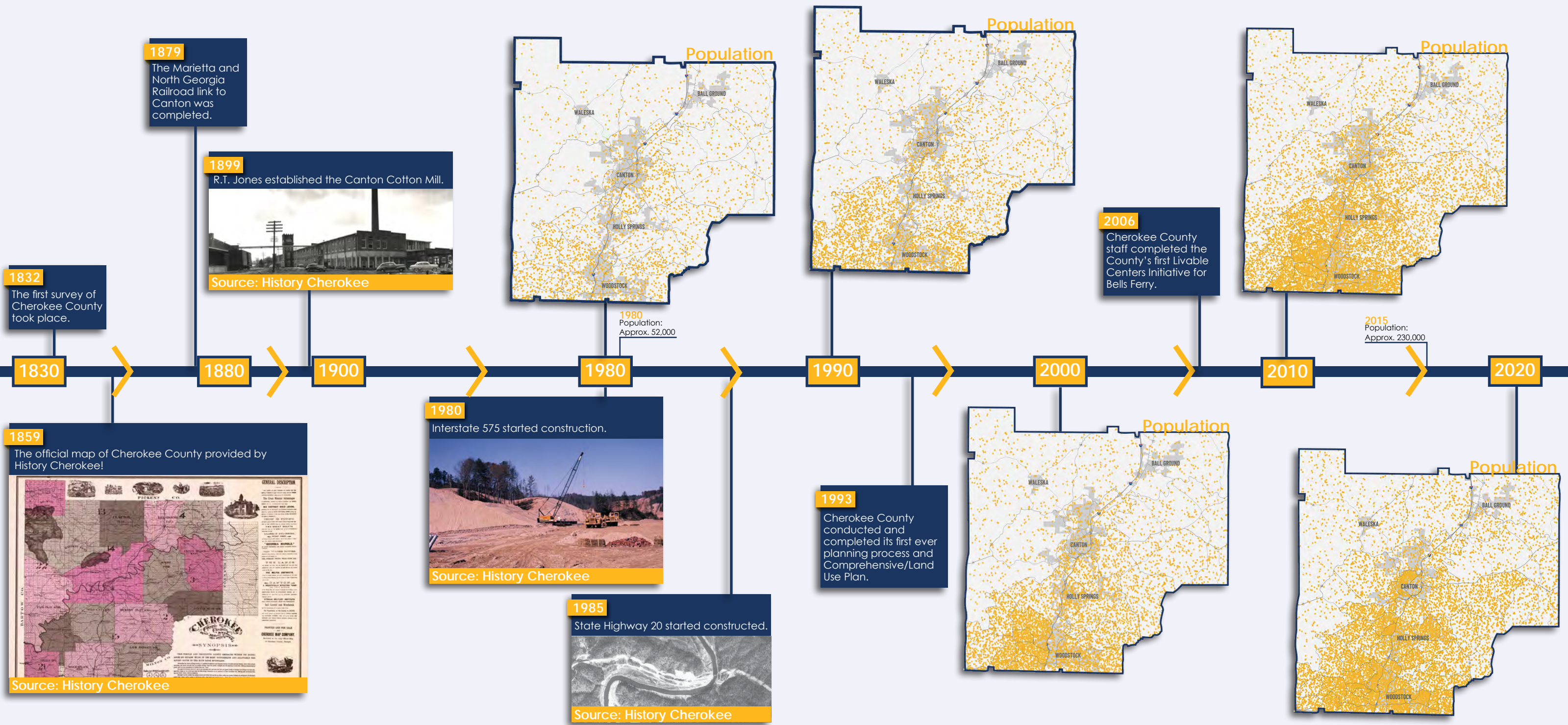
It wasn't until 1980 when I-575 was underway and residents began moving northward from Atlanta's inner suburbs, that the County took on more suburban developments. Highway 20 was underway in 1985, connecting the County with cities and towns east and west. Over the next forty years, the County would see a population boom from about 52,000 in 1980 to nearly 267,000 in 2020. The economic landscape in Cherokee has changed as well, with the top three industries being Professional/Scientific/Technical Services, Retail, and Healthcare. The physical landscape is in the process of changing amidst massive growth; new developments are being built in historically rural areas, and Highway 20 is scheduled to be widened across the next decade.



Source: History Cherokee



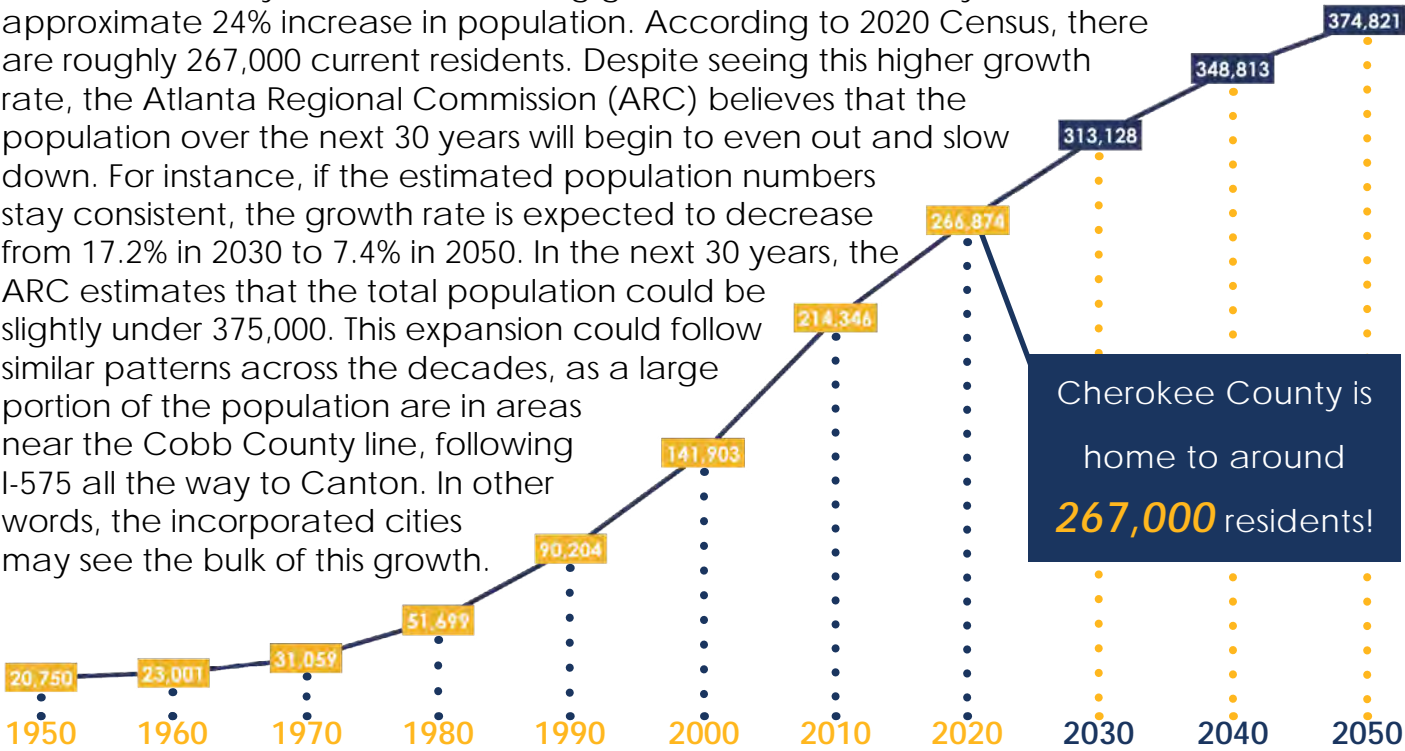
# Cherokee Across the Years Timeline



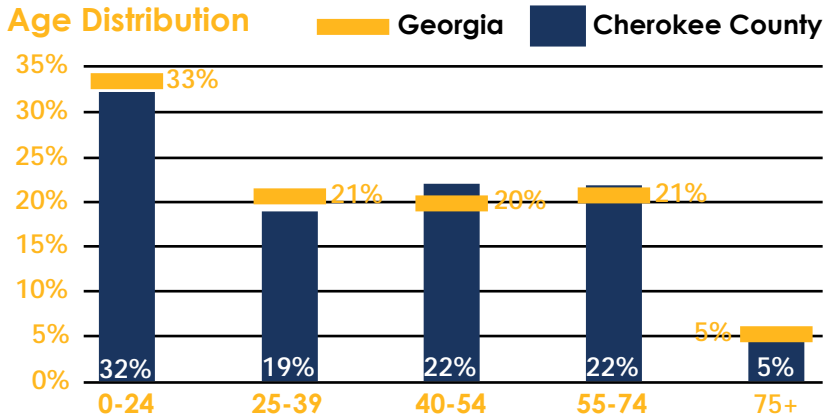


# Demographic Profile

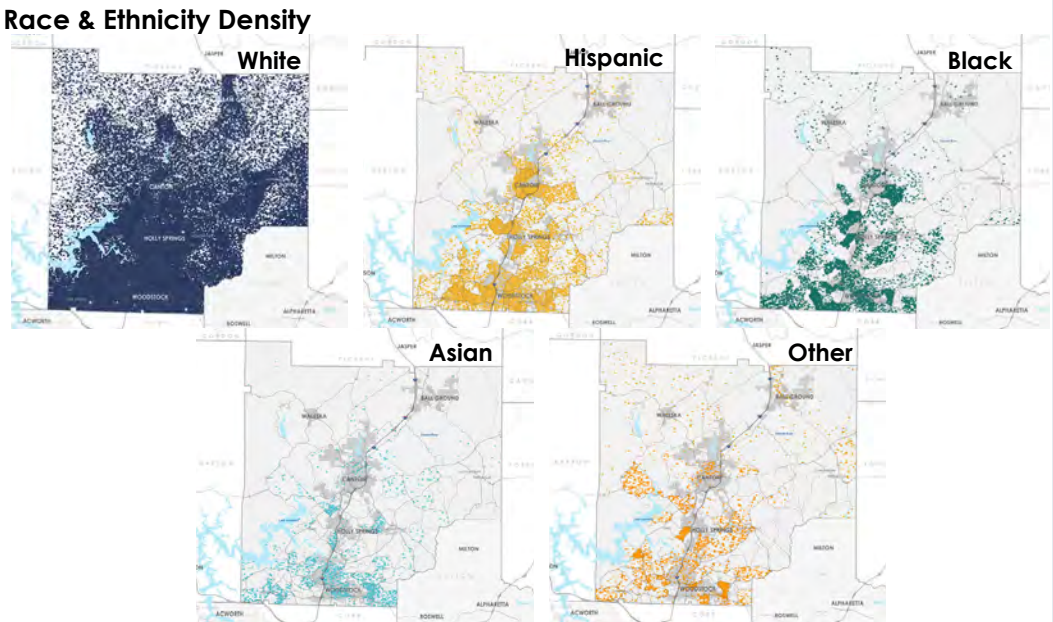
Cherokee County has seen increasing growth over the last 10 years with an approximate 24% increase in population. According to 2020 Census, there are roughly 267,000 current residents. Despite seeing this higher growth rate, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) believes that the population over the next 30 years will begin to even out and slow down. For instance, if the estimated population numbers stay consistent, the growth rate is expected to decrease from 17.2% in 2030 to 7.4% in 2050. In the next 30 years, the ARC estimates that the total population could be slightly under 375,000. This expansion could follow similar patterns across the decades, as a large portion of the population are in areas near the Cobb County line, following I-575 all the way to Canton. In other words, the incorporated cities may see the bulk of this growth.



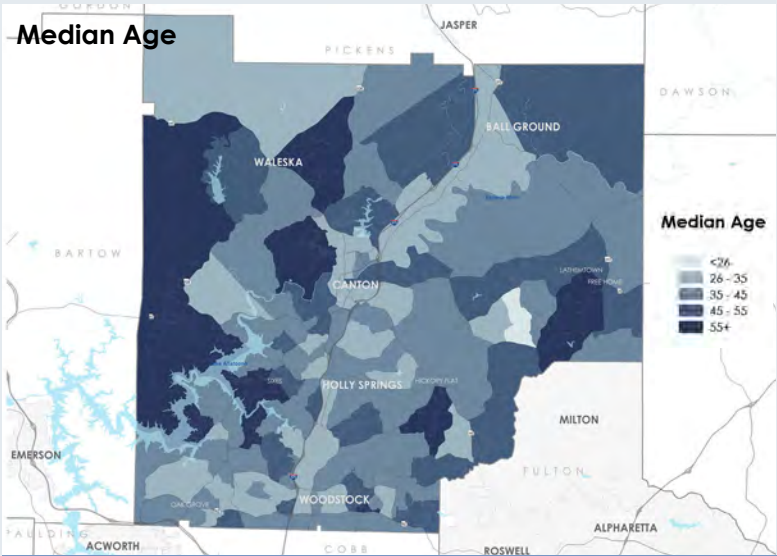
The age of our residents tends to follow the age distribution found in the State of Georgia. The main differences are that Cherokee County has a slightly lower population of people in their 20s and 30s and a slightly higher population of people in their 40s and mid-50s. Cherokee County could see changes in its age distribution as families move and grow their households in the County. But many residents are long-term, generational natives of the County and will continue to age in place.



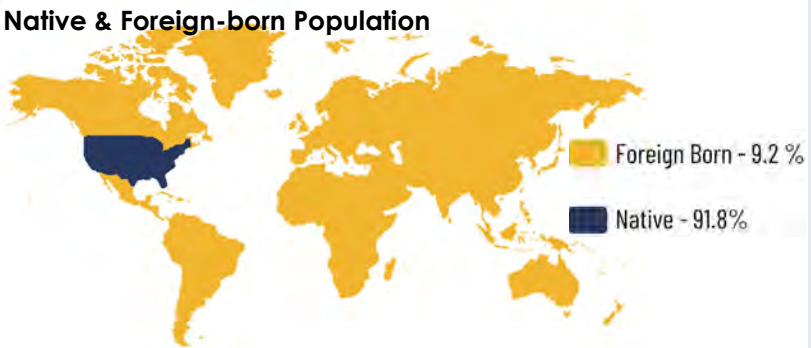
Along with the growth the County has seen, there have been slight increases in diversity. Despite being predominately white, there have been increases in residents who do not identify as non-Hispanic white. The majority of this population seems to reside in incorporated cities along I-575 and near the Cobb County line. Lastly, the County has a high level of educational attainment, with 45% of the population having an Associate's Degree or higher and only 8% having no high school diploma.



In terms of diversity, Cherokee County sees the most of it in incorporated areas and along the Cobb County line.



Across Cherokee, the median age tends to be below the age of 45.



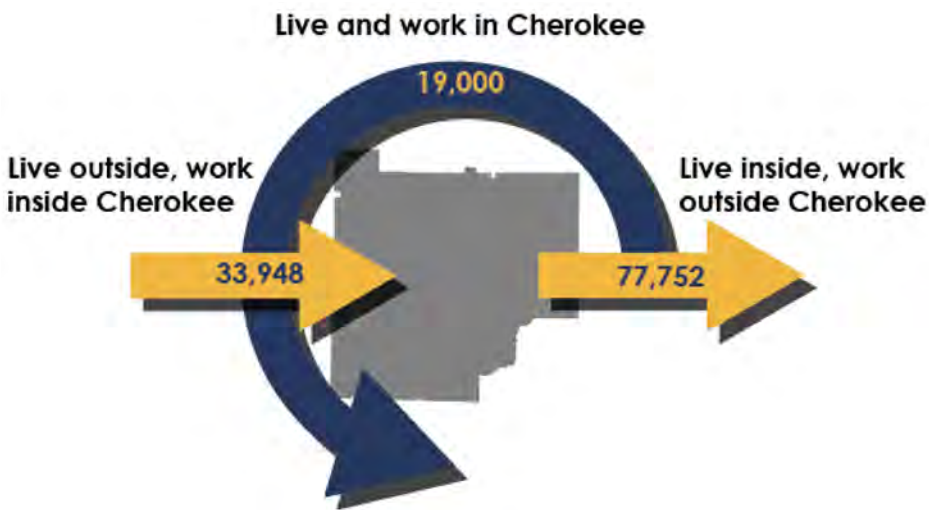
Nearly 90% of Cherokee County's population was born in the US with 46.6% being born right here in Georgia!





Economic Profile

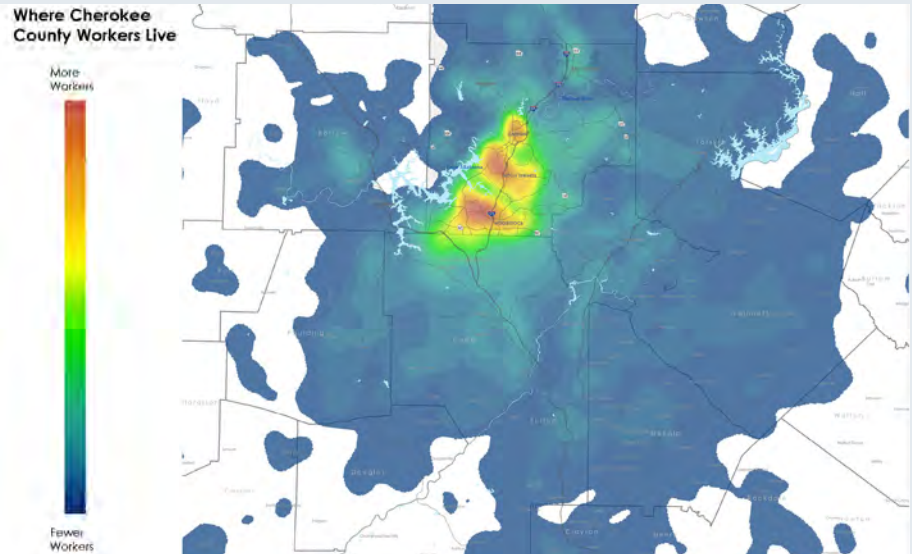
Cherokee County continues to display some of the typical characteristics of a bedroom community as around 78,000 residents live inside the County, but travel outside for work. Most of Cherokee County’s workforce travel to other job centers like Kennesaw, Alpharetta, Buckhead, Midtown, and Downtown Atlanta. Meanwhile, about 34,000 workers live outside the county and commute to Cherokee to work. There are only an estimated 19,000 residents who live and work in Cherokee County. In terms of the internal employment density, there are larger hotspots in the incorporated areas, down I-575 near the airport, and along other major roadways.



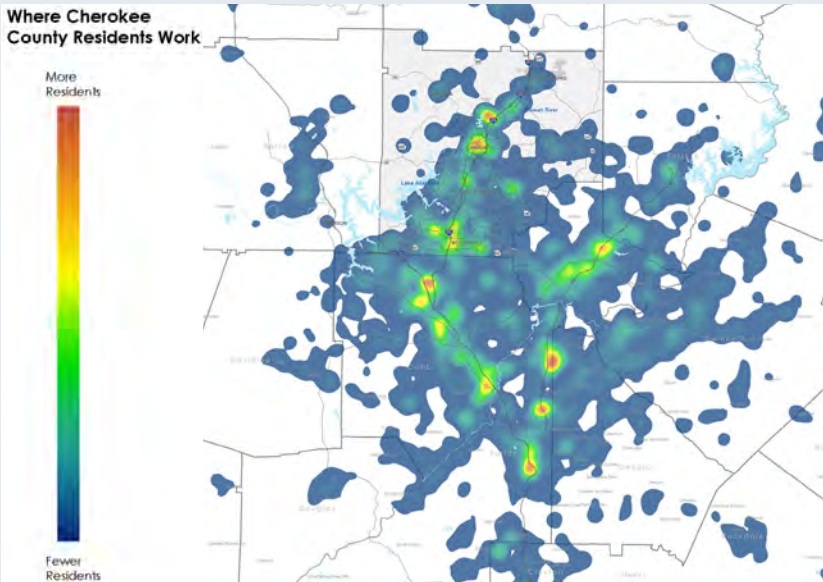
Interestingly, there are a lot of similarities between the Cherokee’s employment by industry and our workforce. In both, the most populated industries are Retail, Manufacturing and TCUW, and Other Services. While the Manufacturing and TCUW workforce is very similar in percentage, Retail, and Other Services changed places in the list for Cherokee’s workforce. One of the biggest differences is in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services with the workforce percentage being almost double the employment in that industry inside the County.

Employment and Workforce

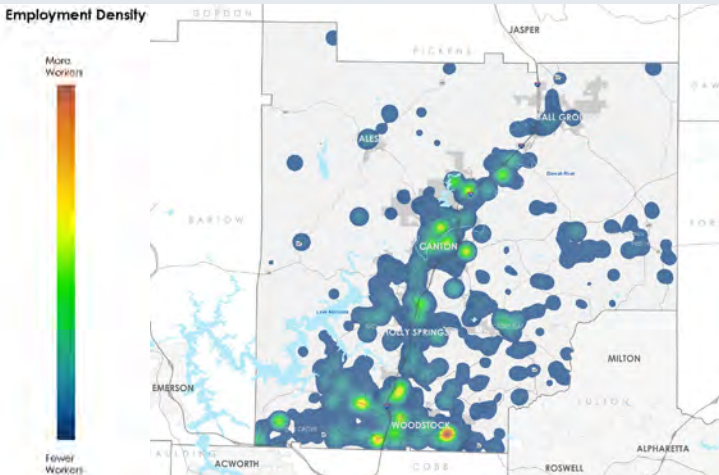
	Employment By Industry	Workforce By Industry
Agriculture, Mining, & Construction	9.8%	8.0%
Health Care & Social Assistance	9.1%	9.7%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	5.6%	10.4%
Accommodation & Food Services	13.3%	9.7%
Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	9.1%	8.0%
Retail	18.9%	13.4%
Other Services	14.3%	21.6%
Manufacturing & TCUW	19.9%	19.2%



The majority of Cherokee County workers live within the County, but some do travel from all over the metro area.



Cherokee residents work all over the metro area with major cities being hotspots.



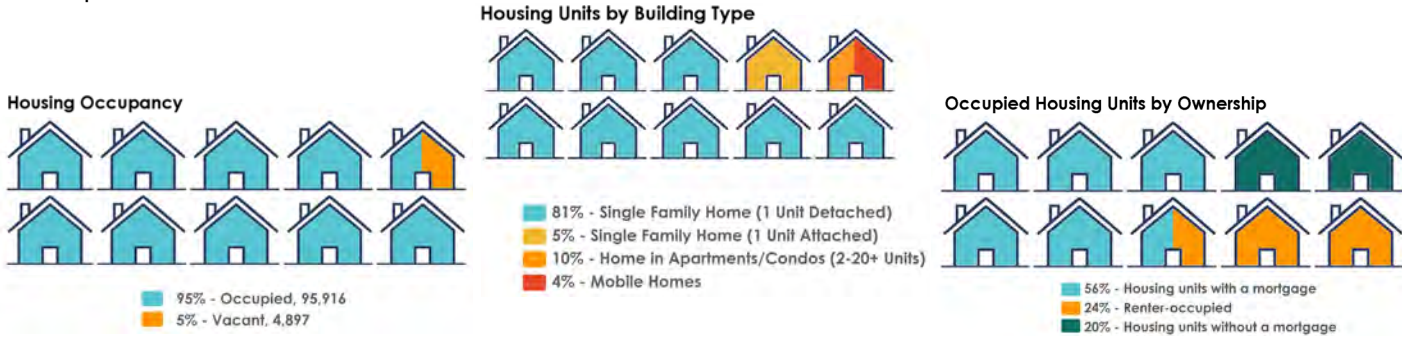
In Cherokee, most jobs can be found in the cities and along major roadways.



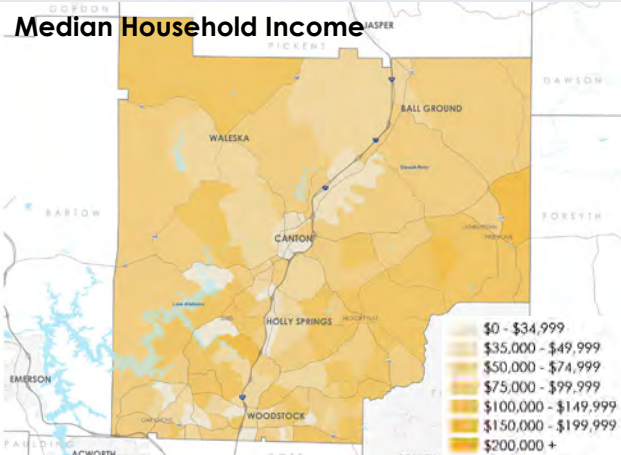
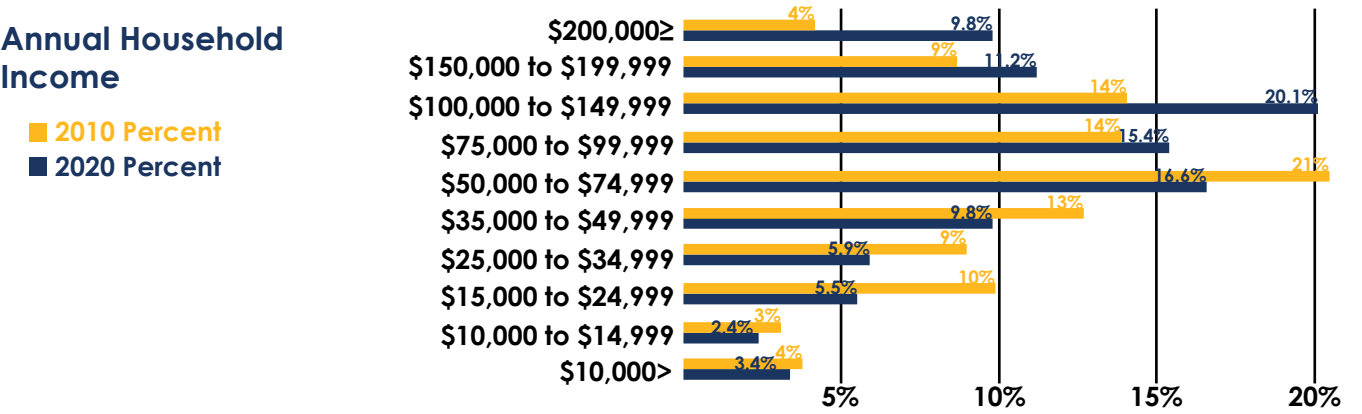


Housing Profile

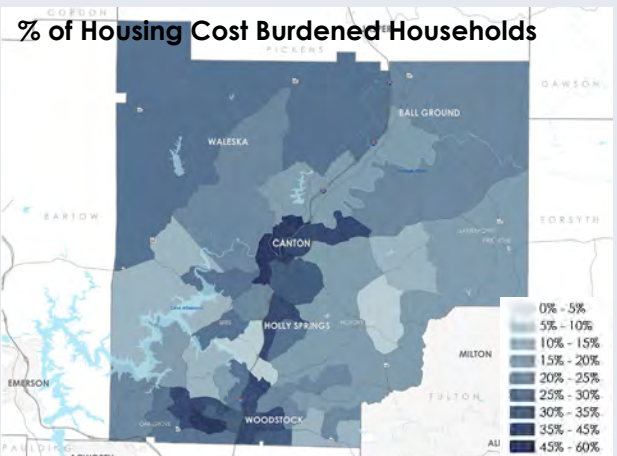
Cherokee County has consistently seen growth in its housing market with the majority of the stock being built after 1980. From 2000 to 2009, the County saw an increase of roughly 30,000 units. From 2010 to now, there has been a noticeable lull in homes built. The number is less than half the growth seen in previous years. In the last four years, approximately 6,800 residential permits were issued in Cherokee County. Amongst these were a variety of single-family subdivisions, townhomes, and apartments. As of the most recent data, the County consists predominately of single-family attached and detached homes at 86%, while apartments and condos only make up 10% of the housing units. Within the occupied housing, 56% are owner-occupied with a mortgage, 20% are owner-occupied without a mortgage, and 24% are renter-occupied.



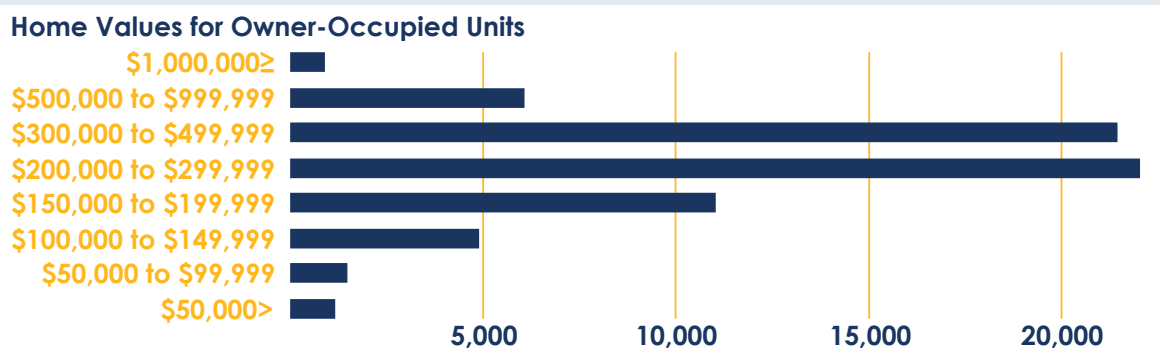
Along with an increase in housing stock, there has been an increase in income. Since 2010, the number of households making \$75,000 or more has increased. Likewise, the number of households making \$74,999 or below has decreased. This change can increase the demand for services and higher-cost housing, but can also be detrimental to those in the lower brackets who may be more housing cost burdened and have limited access to services. According to the data, the more cost-burdened areas are in the approximate locations where the median household income is the lowest. However, in terms of percent of impoverished households, the highest percentage can be found in Canton, south of Waleska, west of Woodstock near Bells Ferry, and south of Lathemtown and Free Home.



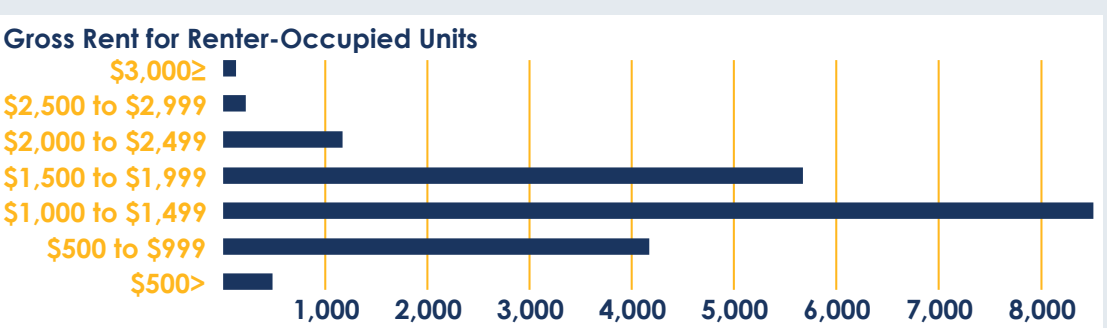
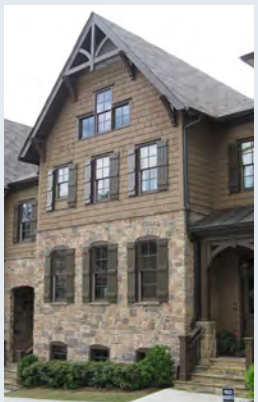
The lower median income is the most present in incorporated areas.



The most cost-burdened residents live within incorporated areas.



In Cherokee, the home value is mostly in between \$200K and \$499K.

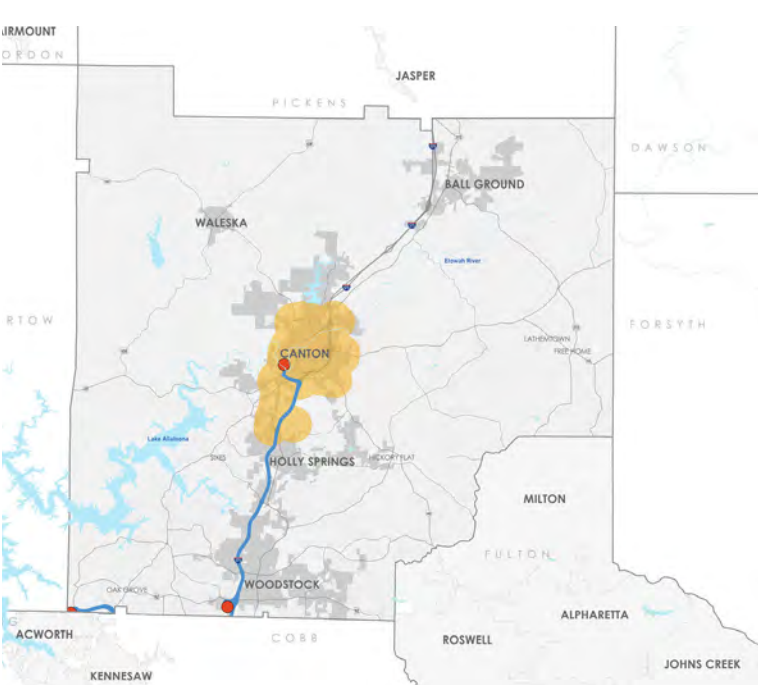


In Cherokee, the gross rent is mostly in between \$1,000 and \$1,999.



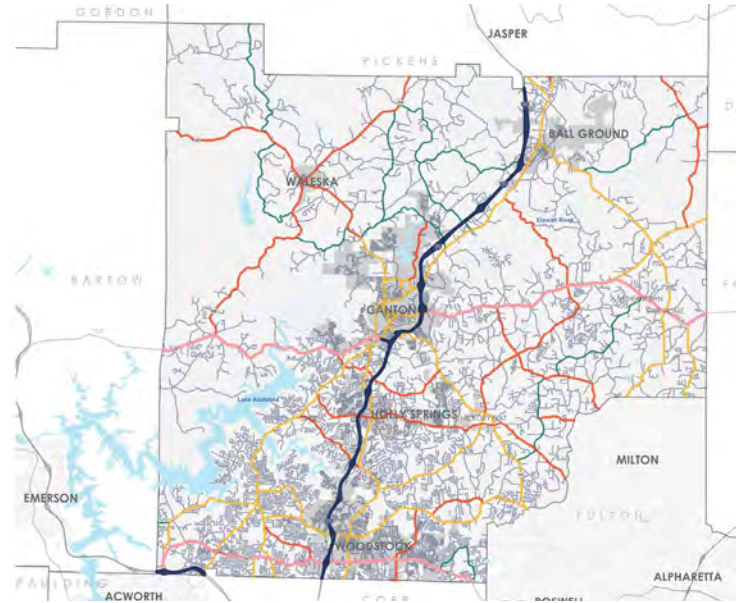
# Transportation Profile

Cherokee County residents predominately travel by personal vehicle with the County's expansive local and major routes and connections. From north to south, I-575 connects the County and cities to Kennesaw, Marietta, Atlanta, and other major employment centers. As for the east-to-west connections, State Route 20 provides passage to Bartow and Forsyth County and State Route 92 provides passage to Cobb and Fulton County. Therefore, residents have swift access to outside services, entertainment, and jobs. In terms of alternative transit opportunities, the County is limited. There are currently options like the Xpress Service offered by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority and the paratransit service offered by Cherokee Area Transportation System in the Canton area. The Xpress Service connects the County to the metro-Atlanta area, whereas the Canton paratransit only operates within a ¾-mile radius. It is primarily of service to those who cannot travel without assistance to access services and grocery stores. Based on the recent Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the County may transition to a microtransit model.



### Regional Transportation

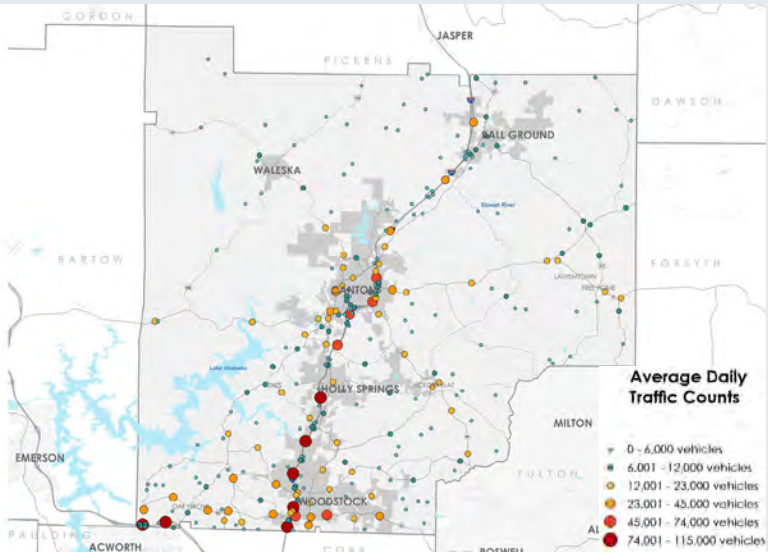
As the County continues to grow, it puts a greater demand on the roadways. On major roads, like I-575, State Route 20, and State Route 92, there are average daily traffic counts between 23,000 to 115,000. Some of the local roads, like Bells Ferry and Hickory Flat Highway, have an average of between 12,000 to 45,000. It is estimated that these numbers could continue to grow, which is why the County has an abundance of planned transportation projects. For example, two projects currently underway are the widening of State Route 20 between Canton and Cumming and the widening of Bells Ferry Road from Kellogg Creek Road to Victoria Road. Outside of these road projects, there are also planned bike and pedestrian projects, like the expansion of the trail system in Woodstock and Southwest Cherokee. These will provide much-needed recreational opportunities and alternative transportation routes to travel by bike or foot.



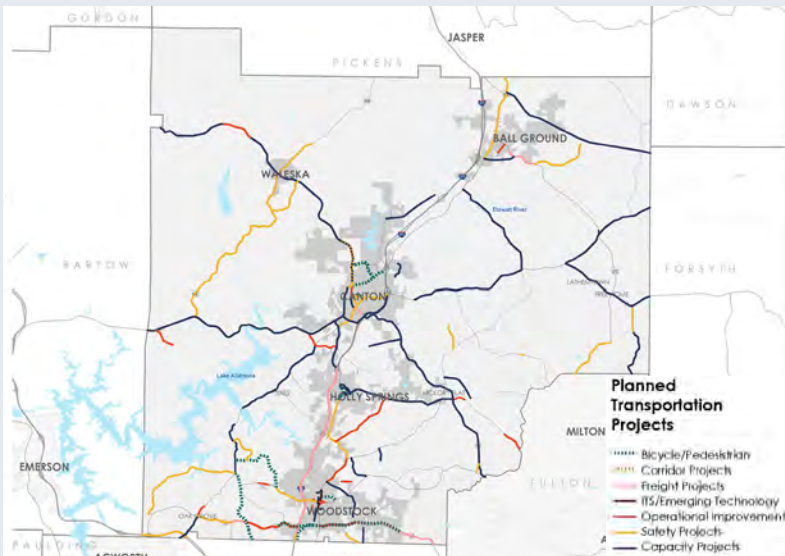
### Functional Class

1 3 4 5 6 7

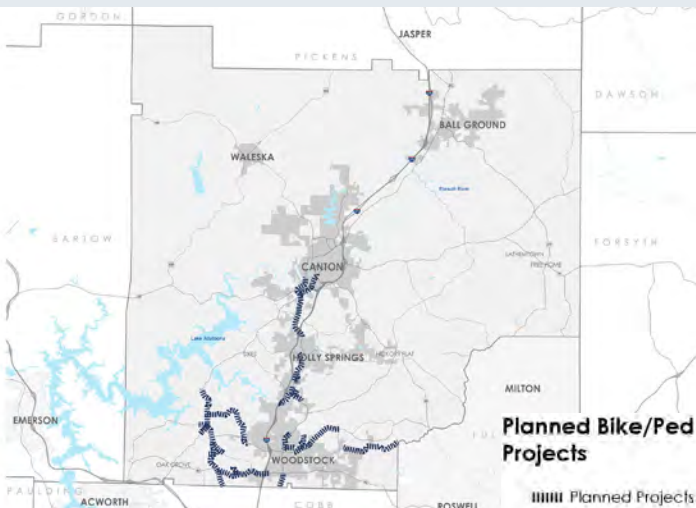
of the trail system in Woodstock and Southwest Cherokee. These will provide much-needed recreational opportunities and alternative transportation routes to travel by bike or foot.



Cherokee has higher daily traffic counts along the Cobb County line and along I-575.



The County has an abundance of planned projects, including multiple capacity ones.



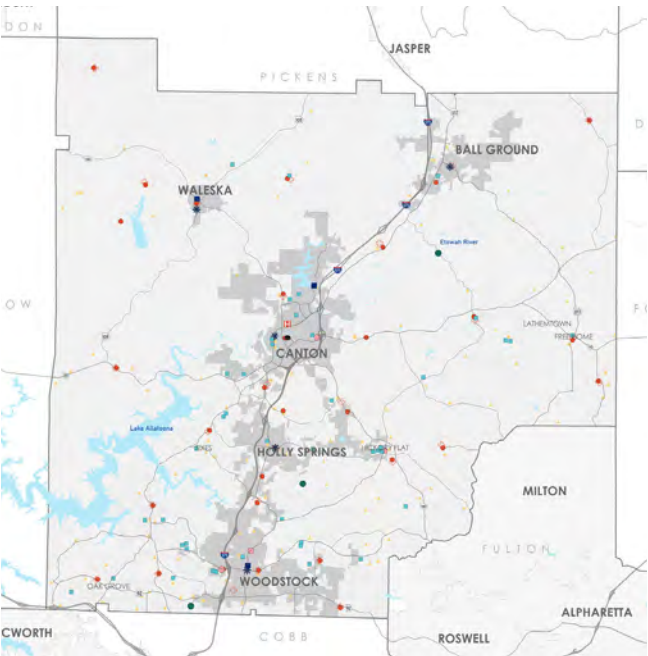
Cherokee plans on expanding the established trail system in multiple areas.



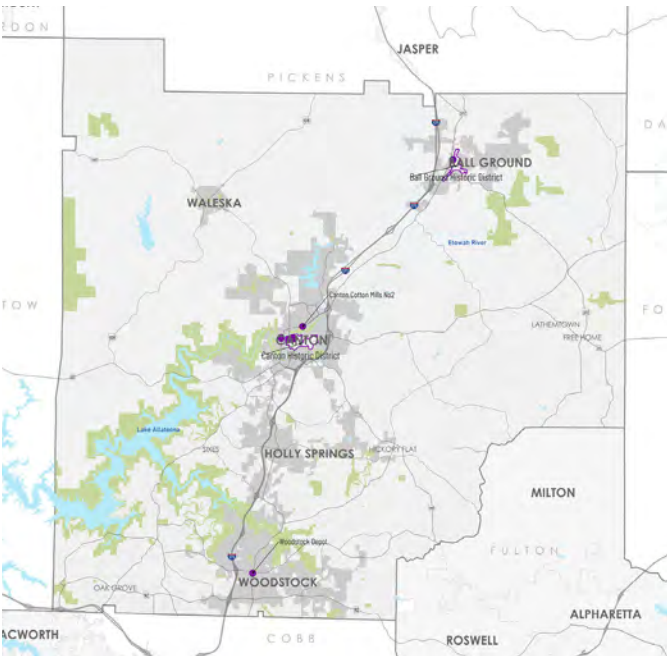


Quality of Life Profile

Cherokee County provides an abundance of community facilities and recreational opportunities that boost the quality of life of residents. These services are often located in or nearby the incorporated cities of Woodstock, Holly Springs, Canton, Ball Ground, and Waleska. Along with community facilities and parks, the County also has two historic districts and multiple nationally registered historic resources. Canton and Ball Ground both have recognized historic districts that are fundamental features of the cities. As for the historic resources, it ranges from the old Woodstock and Holly Springs depot to the Canton Cotton Mills.



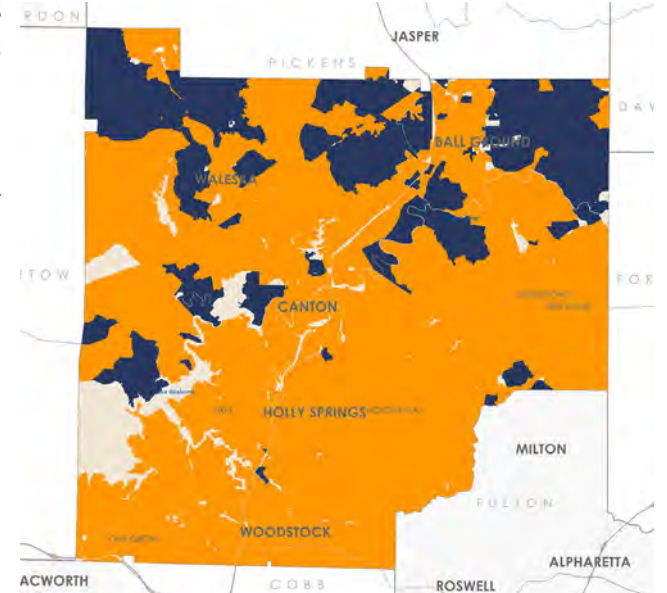
- Community Facilities**
- College
  - Court
  - ✚ EMS
  - ▲ Cell Towers
  - School
  - Library
  - Fire Station
  - ✱ City Hall
  - Hospital
  - Solid Waste Facility



- Parks & Historic Resources**
- National Registry
  - Historical Resource
  - Historic District
  - Park

Another aspect of quality of life is access to broadband/internet services. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs conducted broadband research by obtaining data from the various internet service providers in Georgia. According to their data, most areas within Cherokee County are considered served. This is based on the broadband definition of 25 Mbps down, and 3 Mbps up, available to more than 80% of the locations within a census block. The northern region of Cherokee County has large portions of unserved blocks. This is especially concerning near the cities of Waleska and Ball Ground. With the growing population in Ball Ground and the student population in Waleska, it is important to reduce the unserved areas to improve their quality of life.

- Broadband Availability**
- No Data
  - Served Areas
  - Unserved Areas



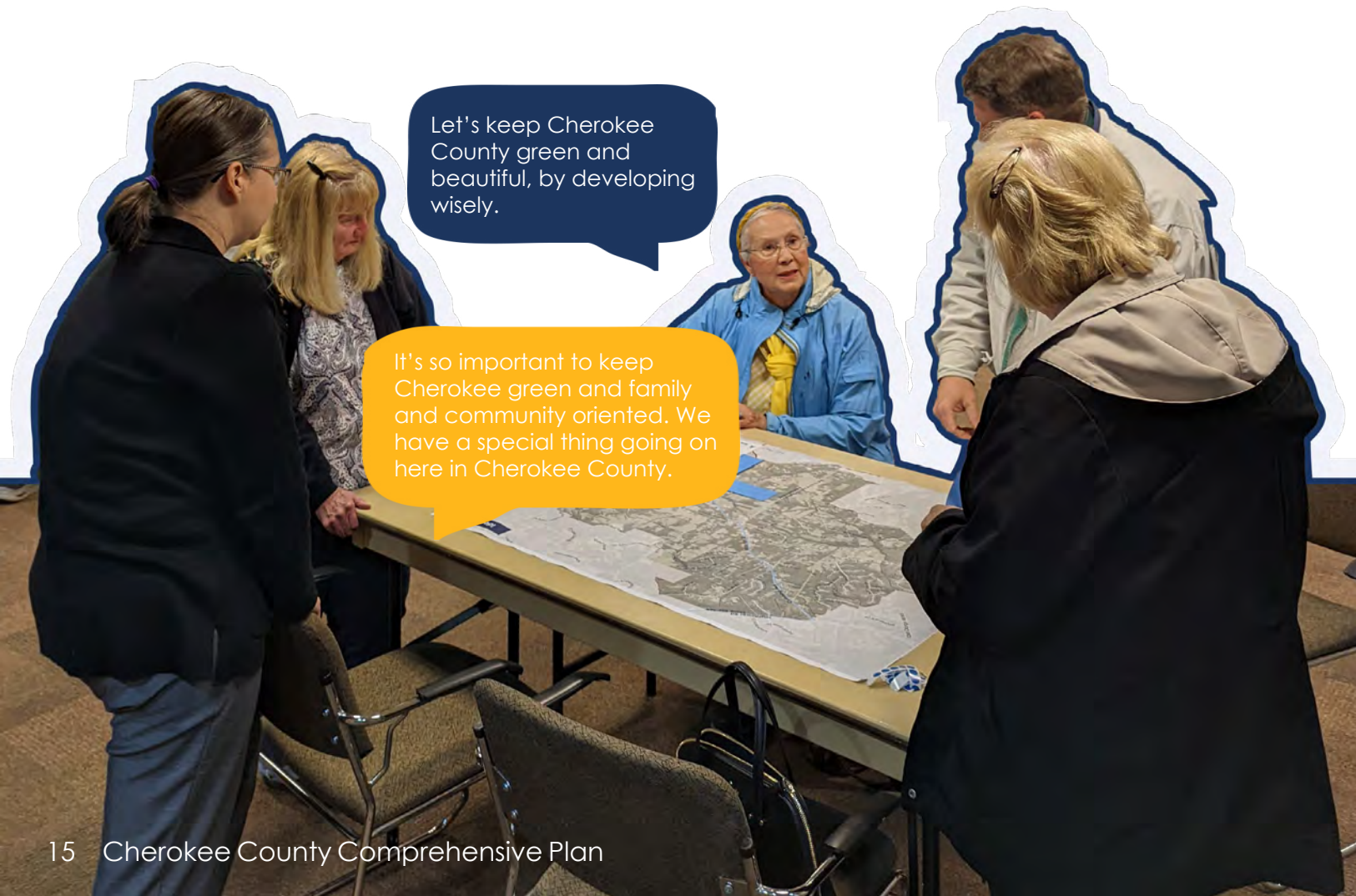




# 2 Community's Vision for Cherokee

## Introduction

Considering the pace at which Cherokee County has grown over the past ten years, many residents are concerned about increased congestion, over-development, and the potential loss of historic and natural resources. Growth is important for Cherokee's future, but maintaining our community character as we evolve is why a Comprehensive Plan is essential. This part of the Plan covers the Planning Team's comprehensive process and the outreach activities utilized to engage the public and stakeholders throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update. Based on the existing conditions, future projections, and the community engagement data collected, we updated the Core Values, Guiding Principles, and Character Areas to better reflect the community's priorities for the County.



## Comprehensive 4 Step Planning Process

### 1 Research and Discovery

September 2022 - January 2023

**Main Initiative:** Research and review the existing conditions of Cherokee County.

As the first part of the planning process, research was foundational to understanding the current state of our community. In this research, there was a focus on 6 areas: demographics, economics, housing, land use, broadband, and transportation.

More information on these areas can be found in Chapter 1 Cherokee In The Present.



### 2 Vision

October 2022 - November 2022

**Main Initiative:** The project team will gather input from stakeholders including residents, property owners, and staff about their vision for Cherokee County.

This part of the process includes gathering community input to build upon the County's current policies and guidelines. The Project Team held multiple meetings and created a website to gather input. More details on this work are on the next few pages.

### 3 Develop

December 2022 - May 2023

**Main Initiative:** The community input will help inform policies and guidelines that are included as the comprehensive plan is drafted.

After the initial public input, the next step was to understand what needed to be added or updated about the previous 2018 Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan. This included looking at Character Areas, policies, guidelines, zoning, other plans, the Community Work Plan, and community needs.

With an initial draft created, it was time to put it online for more community feedback. Along with allowing online access, the Project Team held two more County-wide meetings to allow people to give in-person comments on the entirety of the plan. More specific information on these two meetings is on the pages to follow.

The last part of this phase was to include all the feedback given by residents, property owners, and staff. Then the document was prepared for the Board of Commissioners review and transmittal to the Department of Community Affairs.



### 4 Document

June 2023 - October 2023

**Main Initiative:** Comprehensive plan elements such as maps, policies, and narratives are updated.

Finally, once the document has been finalized internally with map, policy, and/or land use updates, it is sent over to the Department of Community Affairs for review. The review process took roughly days. Once feedback was received, the Project Team incorporated it into the final document.

The very last step was to have the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners approve and adopt the plan in its entirety. This was done on .



# The Important Dates

## October 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4 BOC Kick-Off Meeting!	5 Website Kick-Off!	6	7	8
9	10	11 1st County Wide Meeting!	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 2nd County Wide Meeting!	20	21	22
23	24	25 Ball Ground Meeting!	26	27 Airport/Tech Ridge Meeting!	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

Across our engagement activities, the website, meetings, and surveys, there was a total of **2,273** active residents!

## November 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2	3 Waleska Meeting!	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 Free Home Meeting!	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Website Closes!	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

# Community Engagement

As part of the Vision phase of the comprehensive planning process, community engagement was essential to developing a County-wide vision. To gather necessary input, the Planning Team held six pre-draft meetings and developed a website that ran in tandem. Two of the meetings focused on Cherokee County as a whole, whereas the remaining four focused on some of the Target Areas.



## Our Cherokee Website

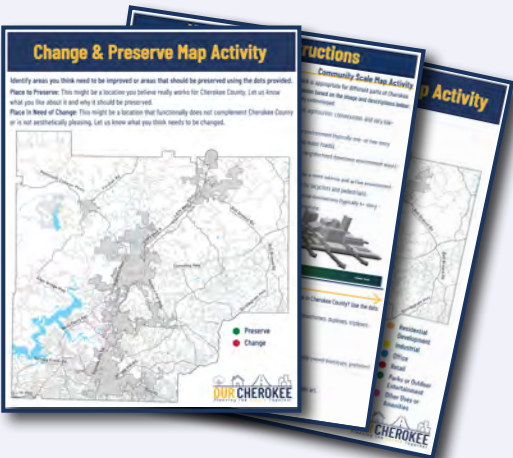
The website, Our Cherokee, acted as a hub for information and community input. There, residents could see meeting dates, past plans, and participate in our online survey and interactive map tool. The map tool allowed participants to pinpoint portions of the County they find significant. Participants could also comment on: places they wanted to change or preserve, what the community scale should look like, any issues and concerns, any opportunities and ideas, and different types of new uses and amenities.

Along with the interactive map, the website had a link to a survey. The survey focused on sustainability, broadband, and future land use. There were generic demographic questions about age, income, and employment.

## County-Wide Meetings

The two County-wide meetings happened on October 11th and October 19th at the Northside Cherokee Conference Center and the Woodstock Recreation Center.

The meetings were set up as open house style and had multiple activities for people to participate in. The activities were replicated the interactive map tool on the Our Cherokee website. This was to allow as many people as possible to participate on the same activity, in-person or online. Paper copies of the survey were present. More pictures of the activities can be found in Appendix 2.





# Four Target Area Meetings

Alongside the two County-wide meetings, there were four locations considered significant to the County. Two of the four places included Free Home and the Airport/Technology Ridge Parkway. The last two were the City of Ball Ground and the City of Waleska.

## Free Home and Airport/Technology Ridge Parkway Meetings

The Free Home meeting took place at the Free Home Fire Station on November 10th and the Airport meeting took place at the Airport Fire Station on October 27th. At these meetings, the Project Team took a similar approach of replicating the website activities. Along with the interactive maps, there was an extra board that had participants address their opinions on the current future development character areas for the particular location.

At these meetings, a few of the consultant's team and County staff and officials were present to answer questions and assist participants with the activities. It was significant for these two meetings to highlight concerns and issues with the related locations. For instance, Free Home specifically identified the highway expansion of State Highway 20 and the Airport area focused on economic growth and development.

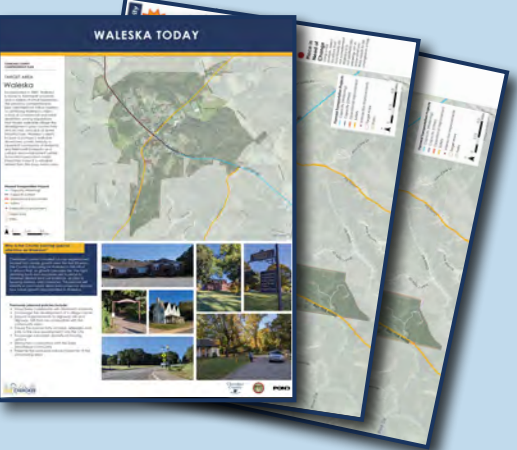
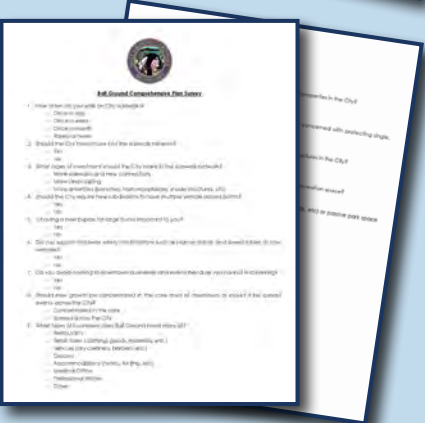


Across Free Home and the Airport's community meetings, there were 30 attendees that participated in the activities and survey!

## Ball Ground and Waleska Meetings

The Ball Ground meeting took place on October 25th at the Ball Ground City Hall and the Waleska meeting took place on November 3rd at the Waleska Fire Station. Like the Free Home and Airport meetings, the activities were similar to what was on the website. However, Ball Ground and Waleska had their own concerns and issues to focus on. Besides the County-wide survey available at the meetings, Ball Ground had their own survey created by their Planning and Zoning Director.

At these meetings, County and City staff and officials were present. As well, three of the consultant's team were there to help answer questions and guide people through the activities. In Ball Ground, some of the major topics of conversation were traffic and controlled development of commercial and residential property. In Waleska, conversations were centered around commercial growth, connectivity, and housing opportunities.



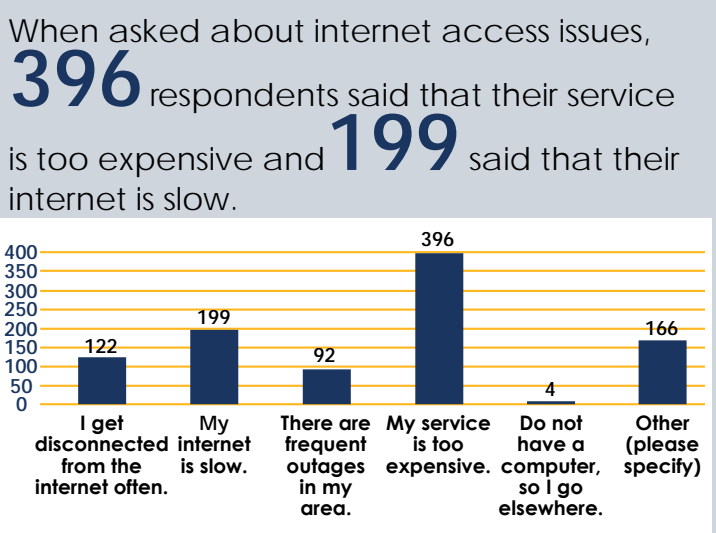
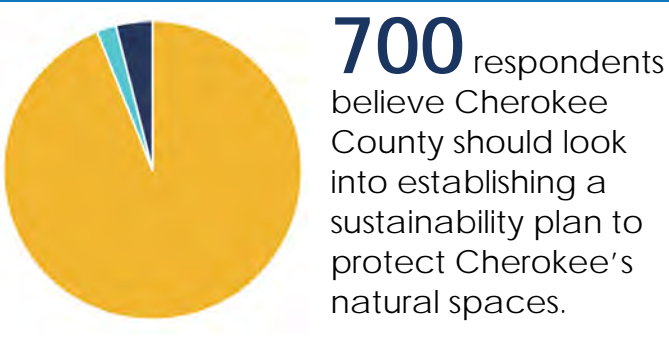
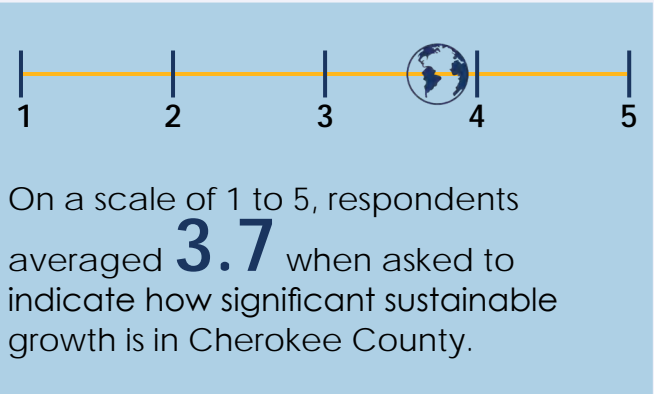
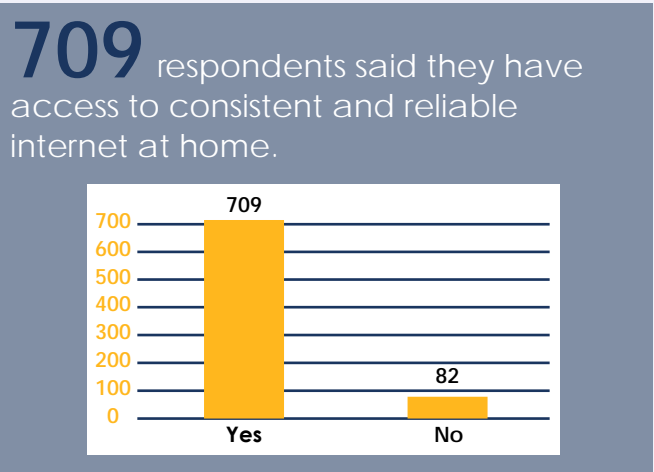
Across Ball Ground and Waleska's community meetings, there were 40 attendees that participated in the activities and surveys!



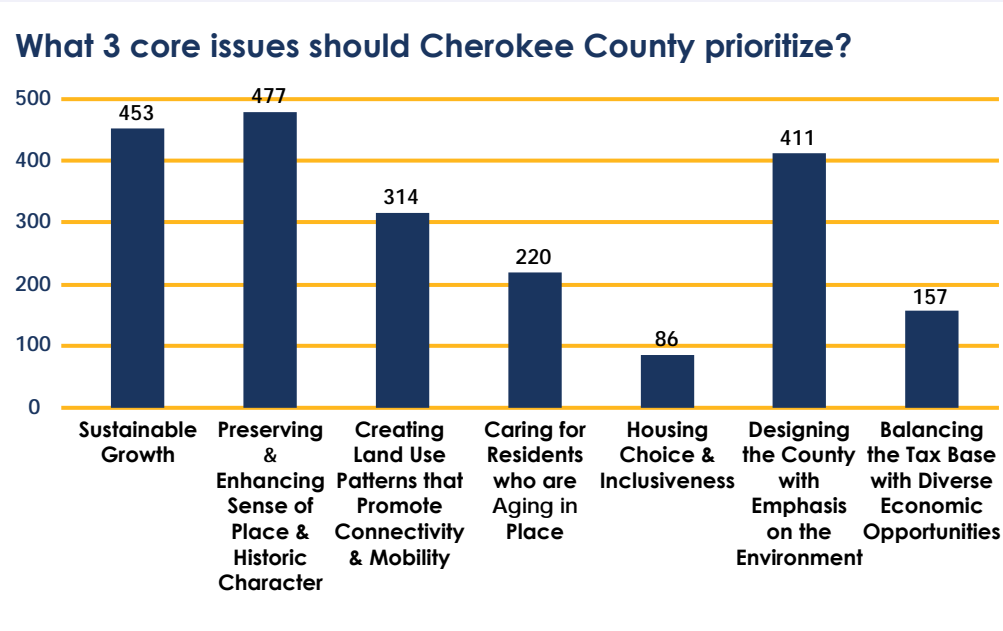


# Survey Significant Takeaways

**51%** of respondents are confident that the current Future Development Map accurately reflects where they live, whereas **29%** were not sure.

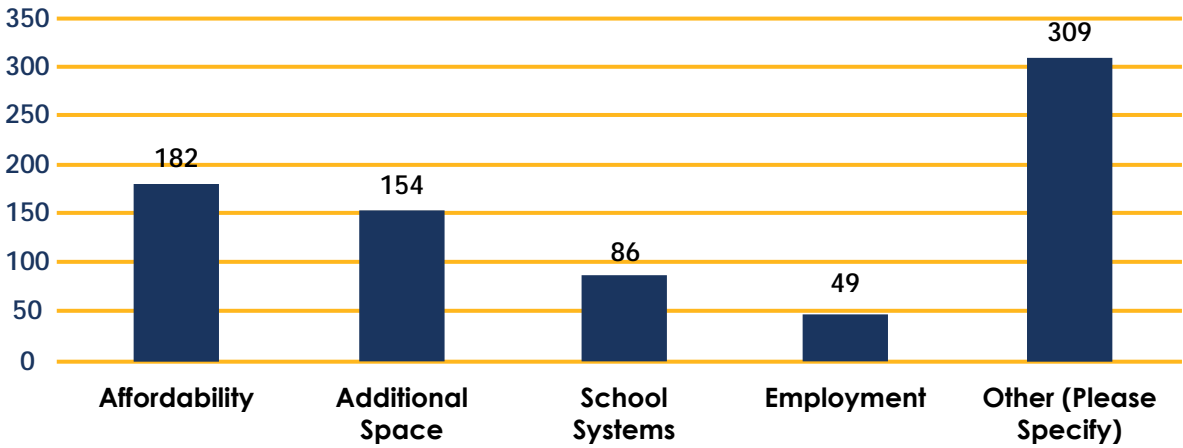


In the other issues category, roughly **110** respondents stated that they do not have many issues. However, multiple respondents made note that there is a limited number of options for providers.



Respondents believe that **Sustainable Growth**, **Preserving and Enhancing Sense of Place and Historic Character**, and **Designing the County with an Emphasis on the Environment** should be prioritized. There is a strong desire to protect and preserve the rural characteristics of the County.

If you moved to the County recently, for what reason(s)? Please choose all that apply.



Some of the other not listed reasons were...

- The **beauty** of Lake Arrowhead and the surrounding rural areas.
- Good place for **equestrian activities** and space, especially suitable for trail riding.
- More closely aligned **values** to raise a family.
- Rural lifestyle** close to most amenities Metro Atlanta offers.
- Small town atmosphere. A **community** feel.
- The exquisite beauty and **serenity** of the county.
- Great place to live with **recreation**, **arts** and **natural beauty**, sense of community very level of civic pride.
- Natural spaces, charm, **simpler life style**.

As well, approximately a third of those who specified the other reason stated that they have been long-term residents of the County. The number of years here ranged from 10 to 55+.

**639** respondents said new development should be encouraged to incorporate sustainable building practices, such as regional stormwater detention, waste reduction, green building materials, and energy conservation measures.

When asked what is the most pressing issue facing their neighborhood... **326** people said congestion while **242** people said encroaching development.



# The Important Dates

## April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Survey Kick-Off!	11 Draft Review Meeting	12	13	14	15
16	17 PC Work Session!	18 BOC Work Session!	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

At the Draft Review Community Meeting there were 20 attendees that participated in the activities and surveys!

30  
Website Closes!

## May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2 PC Meeting!	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 BOC Meeting!	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

# Community Engagement

As part of the Develop and Document Phase of the comprehensive planning process, it is pertinent to understand how the community feels about proposed changes and additions to the Future Development Map and Character Areas. The Planning Team held one County-wide meeting, inviting residents to come voice their opinion, and set up an in-person and online survey gauging opinions on major changes to the Plan.



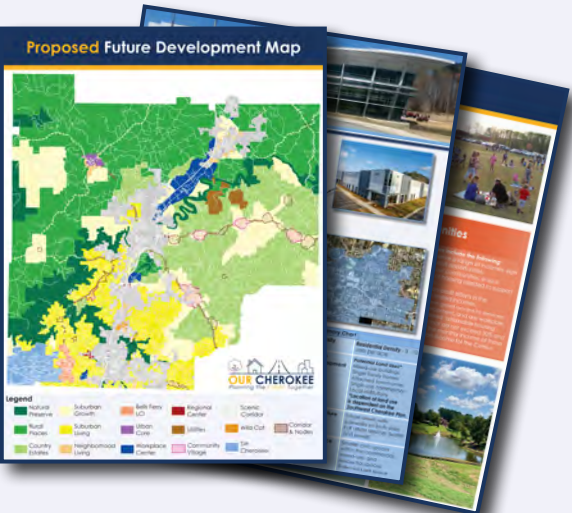
## Survey on Changes

The Planning Team created a five question survey to gauge how the community felt about proposed changes to the Future Development Map and the Character Areas. The questions focused on the major changes to the map, like the addition of Character Areas and the combination of a few. The last question was left open-ended so people could choose to respond to the map or anything else they have concerns about.

## County-Wide Draft Meeting

The Planning Team held a County-wide meeting on April 11th at the Northside Cherokee Conference Center.

The meetings was set up as an open house style with large boards. The boards highlighted the major changes the Team was proposing and there were two large-scale Future Development Maps so that residents could clearly see the difference. Along with completing the survey, the community was able to ask the Team questions and have more detailed discussions on the Map.





# After the Meetings

After the numerous community engagement meetings held by the Planning Team, time was spent consolidating and analyzing the data and responses received. Survey participants were asked to prioritize the Core Values established in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The results showed that an overwhelming amount of people want to see sustainable development and growth at the forefront with maintaining the “small-town” feel of the County. As well, the Planning Team noticed that in some of the write-in responses, people seemed overwhelmingly concerned with housing opportunities and the County’s housing market in general. Therefore, with these observations in mind, the Planning Team sought to condense the eight original Core Values into three succinct “umbrella” areas. They encompass the previous plan’s concerns, while providing tools related to the concerns resident’s wish to prioritize. Along with the three Core Values, the Planning Team also established a Community Vision and some Guiding Principles from the engagement data.

*“Cherokee has something special. We provide a natural and small town feeling with the rural areas. We need to preserve those spaces as it is what draws people here. So, the County needs to find a way to provide services to its citizens while maintaining the natural spaces.”*  
- Our Cherokee Community Survey Comment

## Community Vision

Shopping and services are neighborhood based. Employment opportunities allow people to make their living within their community. The Vision seeks a healthy community that nurtures a community member’s health and spiritual wellbeing. In addition to wise land use choices, services and institutions such as places of worship, hospitals, senior homes, and childcare centers are abundant. The mind is challenged and souls are nurtured with schools, theaters, museums and galleries; places to kick back and rest or engage in recreation. Above all the Community Vision is about the desires and values of the people who live there.



### 3 Core Values

#### Sense of Place

### Guiding Principles

- Growth should be guided to preserve and enhance the unique character of our communities.
- The county includes natural areas, critical water resources, and animal habitats that should be preserved while respecting the rights of private property owners.



#### Housing Opportunities

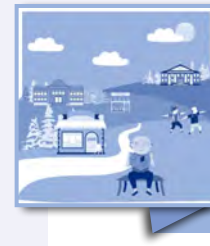
- An array of housing choices is important to address the diverse needs of the population within our communities.



#### Sustainable Growth

- The continued economic development of our area depends on a variety of new commercial and industrial development in appropriate locations.
- New development should not cause undue burden on public services, infrastructure and community facilities.





## Sense of Place

A community's history, its social connections, the natural and built environment, and means of transportation all contribute to a Sense of Place. This is an important Core Value because communities do not simply house residents and businesses; they convey their own unique energy that contributes to neighborhood comfort and pride. For some County residents, this could be a farm that has been in the family for generations. For others, it is a neighborhood full of families who gather in someone's driveway to socialize. While Sense of Place may sound intangible, there are a few planning components that directly affect it. Encouraging compatible land uses in the character areas creates a healthy Sense of Place by providing accessible amenities vital to everyday life. Appropriate roadway design impacts the Sense of Place by increasing recreational activity and promoting a sense of security and freedom among residents and businesses. Another major component of Sense of Place is the historic character, which tells the story of a community's past.

### Relationship to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Core Values:

- ☒ Promoting Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure
- ☒ Preserve and Enhance Sense of Place and Historic Character
- ☒ Aging in Place
- ☐ Housing Choice and Spirit of Inclusiveness
- ☐ Designing with the Environment
- ☒ Balanced Tax Base and Diverse Economic Opportunities

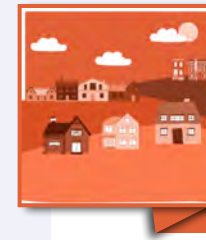
### Implementation Strategies:

- Design and incorporate appropriate new street and sidewalk design concepts into the development regulations for each character area. All street designs should include provisions for alternative modes of transportation.
- Investigate preservation incentives and preservation tools such as easements, transfer of development rights, and overlay zoning.
- Incorporate design guidelines into area plans that ensure appropriate new construction and adaptive use.
- Offer information and assistance to property owners who may be interested in having their potentially eligible property listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and to the development community regarding redevelopment.

Policies that positively impact land use, roadway design, and historic character may include the following:

- Focus new growth into appropriate character areas, thereby lifting development pressure from farming and rural communities and strengthening the more developed areas of the County.
- Protect and preserve unique historical resources within the County and its cities, specifically buildings, structures, neighborhoods, or areas of historical, architectural, or cultural significance.





# Housing Opportunities

This Core Value pertains to residents' ability to find a living space regardless of occupation or age group. The housing market supply and affordability have been a national issue for some time, and Cherokee County has not been immune. While the County's affordability fares slightly better than other parts of Metro Atlanta, housing costs have increased since our last plan update. The County has also seen a decline in the number of starters or 'first-time' homes. Household sizes have decreased in the past several years as well. We must allow for a variety of housing types so our residents may find a home that matches their price point and lifestyle. On the other end, it is important to take care of our long-time residents who may need a smaller living space for this phase of life. As many residents age in place, we need to account for this increase over the next two decades.

## Relationship to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Core Values:

- ☒ *Promoting Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure*
- ☐ *Preserve and Enhance Sense of Place and Historic Character*
- ☒ *Aging in Place*
- ☒ *Housing Choice and Spirit of Inclusiveness*
- ☐ *Designing with the Environment*
- ☐ *Balanced Tax Base and Diverse Economic Opportunities*

## Implementation Strategies:

- Develop a housing task force with County and City stakeholders to explore innovative housing opportunity strategies.
- Research the feasibility of a land bank for the County.
- Review development regulations to remove constraints to the development of second units (i.e., accessory or granny flats) in appropriate areas in order to provide additional affordable housing opportunities in areas where infrastructure already exists
- Continue to target the use of available CDBG funds for the Single Family Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation program.
- Consider revising ordinances to encourage appropriate senior housing in existing and future development nodes, where goods and services are easily accessible.

## Policies that can improve housing opportunities include the following:

- Encourage a variety of housing stock to serve a range of incomes, age groups, and lifestyles to provide choices and opportunities.
- As employment opportunities diversify in our communities, ensure adequate amounts, types, and densities of housing needed to support desired commercial and industrial growth.
- Support innovative public, private, and non-profit efforts in the development of housing for residents with limited incomes.
- Encourage senior housing in areas that have good access to services, medical facilities, and nonresidential development, and are walkable.
- Seek to have 5% of all housing units considered 'attainable housing', which would include mortgage payments that do not exceed 30% and rent payments that do not exceed 35% of the monthly income of those whose incomes fall within 60-120% of median income for the Census Tract.





## Sustainable Growth

The term 'sustainable growth' may sound like a buzzword, at its root, it refers to how efficiently we use our resources and infrastructure to ensure residents and businesses thrive as growth continues. We have changed a lot as a County. Our natural resources, location near the mountains, and proximity to Atlanta have made us an attractive choice for residents and businesses in the past 30 years. To accommodate this influx, we must be proactive in where and how we develop. How do we balance job and population growth with preserving the natural resources for which the County has long been known? How can we manage traffic for those traveling throughout the County? Where should we prioritize density? These are all questions we must address in order to grow sustainably.

### Relationship to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Core Values:

- ☒ Promoting Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure
- ☒ Preserve and Enhance Sense of Place and Historic Character
- ☐ Aging in Place
- ☐ Housing Choice and Spirit of Inclusiveness
- ☒ Designing with the Environment
- ☒ Balanced Tax Base and Diverse Economic Opportunities

### Implementation Strategies:

- Continue to analyze our zoning ordinance and development regulations to ensure consistency with the county's vision.
- Annually review the Future Development Map, rezonings, and other data based on population and growth trends to make potential adjustments.
- Continue to identify, fund, and implement LCI projects.
- Continue the focused marketing campaign targeting industries identified in Opportunity Cherokee.
- Maintain an adequate supply of quality-prepared business and manufacturing sites.
- Enhance Cherokee County Airport as an economic development asset by adopting an overlay district that meets FAA requirements and protects the Airport from incompatible land uses.

### Below are some goals to help achieve that:

- Increase pedestrian safety by developing specific roadway types and pedestrian-related facilities by character area.
- Concentrate density in downtown and commercial nodes, allowing for less intense development further from commercial areas.
- Protect natural resources and greenspace in the midst of ongoing development.
- Connect developments with existing transportation networks and adjacent properties.
- Design public facilities and infrastructure that support increasing development.
- Create regional job centers with a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses that minimize car trips and promote a Live-Work-Play lifestyle.
- Continue to ensure that the training and educational needs of employers are being met through partnerships between industry and educators.



## Our Vision

healthy community

wise land use

desires and values of residents



## Our Core Values



Sense of Place



Housing Opportunities



Sustainable Growth

## Our Guiding Principles

housing diversity

job growth

historic preservation



### 4 Target Areas

**Free Home**  
East Cherokee County along Cumming Hwy

**Airport/Technology Ridge Parkway**  
North Cherokee County along I-575

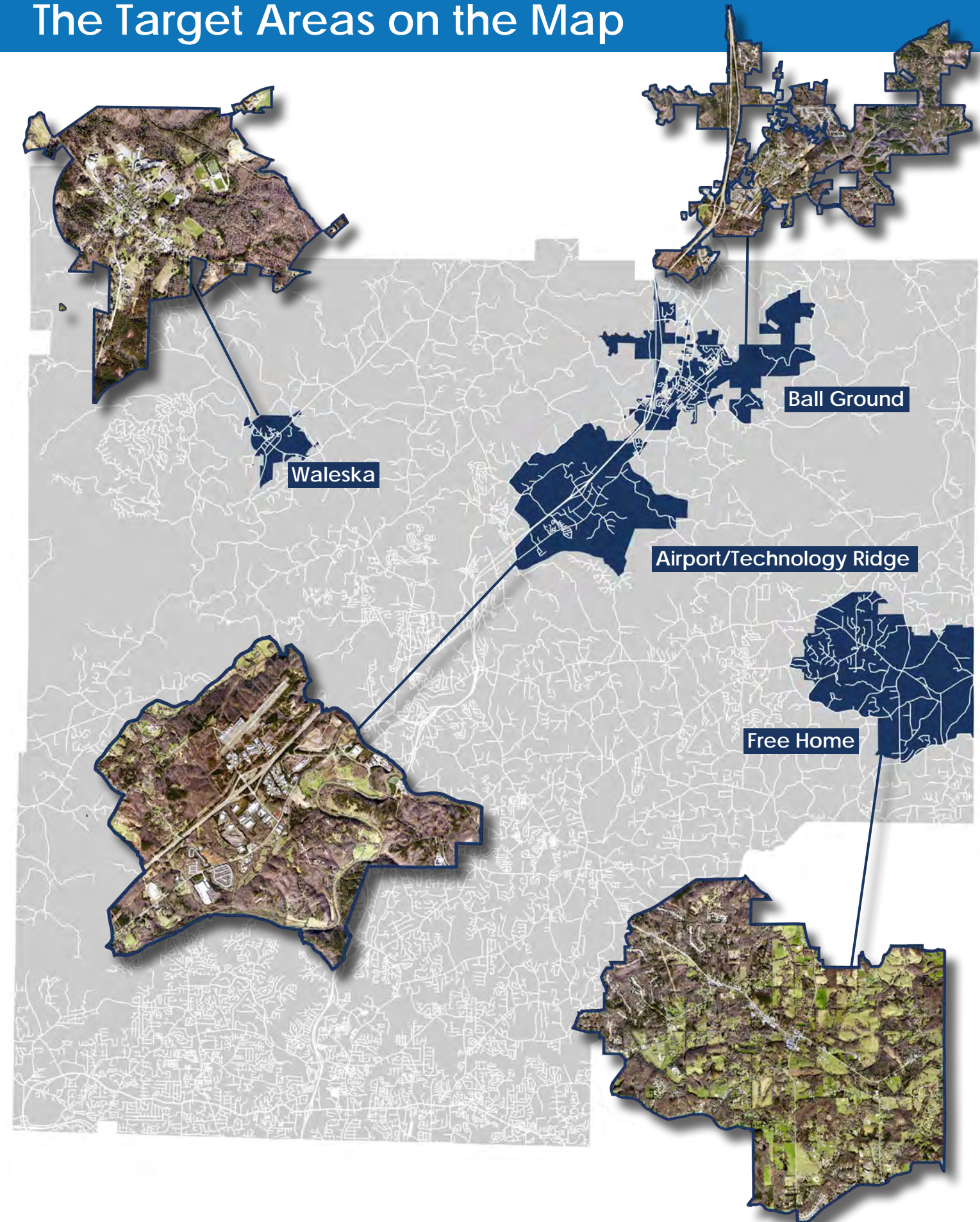
**Ball Ground**  
Northeast Cherokee County just off I-575

**Waleska**  
Northwest Cherokee County along State Route 140

## Target Areas

As our vision, guiding principles, and core issues were developed through community engagement, they also provided the Planning Team with an opportunity to hone in on a few particular areas in the County. In other words, there are some places in the County that needed extra attention relating to the Core Values mentioned previously. These areas were done in tandem with the Comprehensive Plan. Free Home and the Airport/Technology Ridge Parkway were fundamental areas in determining economic and sustainable growth, whereas Ball Ground and Waleska conducted their own Comprehensive Plans. The locations of these Target Areas are stated above and can be seen on the map off to the right.

## The Target Areas on the Map







## Free Home

### Why is the County placing special attention on Free Home?

The widening of Cumming Hwy over the next decade will change the corridor dramatically. This process aims to establish land use compatibility, access to housing options, and consensus around character preservation. The Free Home target area is a vital part of Cherokee County's economy and maintaining its viability will be important moving into the future.

*"Free Home is wonderful and the rural characteristics is the reason for that. We would like to see more light commercial coming to the area but with minimal disturbance to the rural character."*



### Description

The Free Home target area is a rural area stretching along Cumming Hwy / Hwy 20 from the Forsyth County boundary line. Much of the land is currently used for agricultural purposes, with a significant residential component and commercial properties dotted along the corridor. Each historic community consists of a mix of historic commercial buildings with newer, small-scale, suburban shopping centers surrounded by low-density suburban subdivisions.

Current challenges include traffic congestion, lack of community facilities, potential impacts from the Highway 20 widening project, and the potential for uncontrolled development. Therefore, it is crucial to protect the community's character, advocate for adaptive reuse, improve transportation access to employment centers, and be proactive about planning.

### Key Implementation Strategies

- Encourage a nodal development pattern along the corridor
- Target appropriate businesses within the nodes
- Invest in a system of parks and green spaces along the corridor
- Enhance the stronger sense of place and identity in each of the communities along the corridor
- Maintain an open dialogue with the community on planning issues related to the road widening



## Airport Area/Tech Ridge Parkway

### Why is the County placing special attention on Airport / Tech Ridge Area?

As a major activity hub for the County, ongoing planning efforts ensure land use compatibility, access to housing options, and establishing a sense of place. The Airport Area and Tech Ridge are a vital part of Cherokee County's economy and maintaining its viability will be important moving into the future.

*"The airport area provides an abundance of jobs and is a good economic asset for Cherokee County. We should keep up with the work happening in this area."*



### Description

The Airport Area is consistently experiencing industrial growth as agricultural land is being transformed into an employment and industrial center. The Airport Area/Tech Ridge Target Area has served as a location for industrial growth and could provide jobs and housing that encourage residents to live and work in the County. In addition to the airport as an asset, the expansive room for growth, significant public investment, and access to the Etowah River provide the foundation for a major employment hub.

### Key Implementation Strategies

- Encourage more office and industrial use/services within the Workplace Center Character Area
- Preserve prime industrial land with good transportation access for industrial uses
- Create a stronger sense of place and identity
- Support the development of recreation options and pedestrian amenities
- Support job training and matching programs
- Encourage greater housing options nearby





## Ball Ground

### Why is the County placing special attention on Ball Ground?

Over the years, the City of Ball Ground has experienced both population and economic growth that warrants continued study to ensure that this growth occurs sustainably. An intergovernmental agreement between the City and County leverages the jurisdictional relationship between the two entities to conduct planning processes in tandem with one another which will ultimately ensure compatible transitions in land use, continued excellence in the delivery of civic services, and overall partnership and cooperation.

*"I love Cherokee County and Ball Ground. I chose to move here because it has that small-town feel but is still convenient to get what I need."*

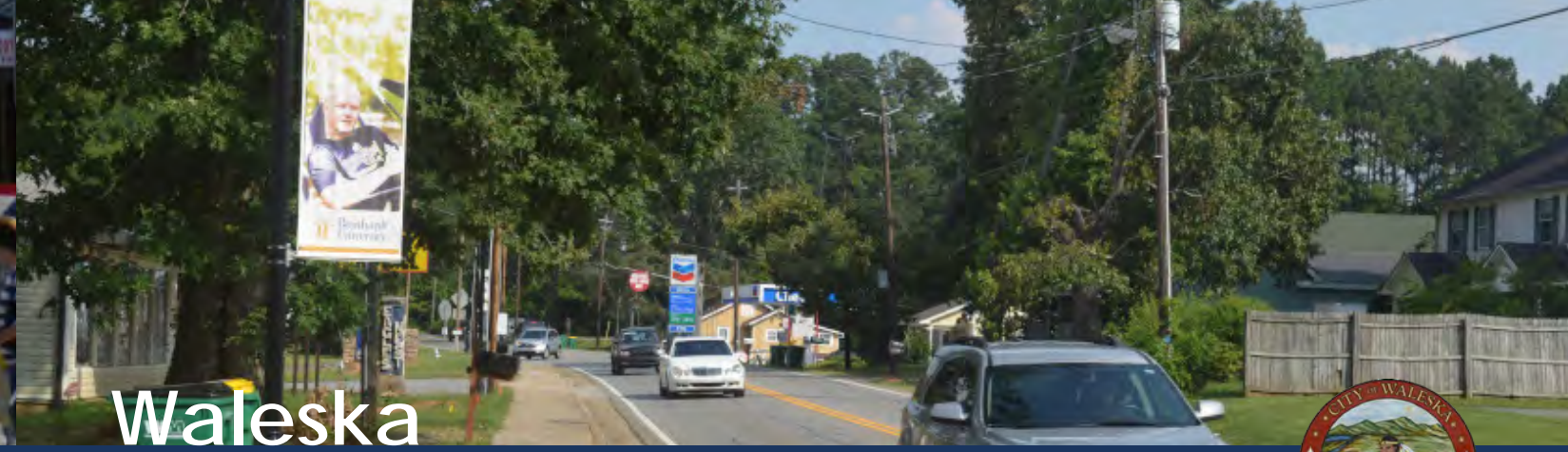


### Description

Founded in 1883, Ball Ground was once the largest city in Cherokee County. Today, the city is home to numerous businesses and industries. The charm of the historic town and its surrounding area has led to an increasing interest in tourism in the area. The last decade has also seen significant growth in new residential neighborhoods within the city. With direct access to I-575 and sewer capacity, the time is right for the City to plan for anticipated growth pressure.

### Key Implementation Strategies

- Pursue the development of a grocery store and other missing commercial uses such as full service restaurants and a dry cleaner.
- Expand the variety of housing options to ensure Ball Ground's essential workers have the opportunity to live in the City.
- Continue to connect residences, businesses and civic uses by pedestrian facilities and extensions of the street grid.
- Support the reuse of older, existing buildings and fill vacancies downtown.
- Invest in furtherance of our strong system of parks and green spaces by meeting new needs of the community.
- Protect our existing industrial zoning to Continue building the area's industrial base.
- Develop a cohesive tourism strategy based on Ball Ground's unique character and nearby destinations.
- Prioritize the development of the 372 truck route and Control development along it.
- Preserve historic buildings and neighborhoods and ensure that new development is compatible.



## Waleska

### Why is the County placing special attention on Waleska?

Cherokee County's smallest city has experienced modest but steady growth over the last 20 years. The County is focusing on Waleska in this effort to ensure that, as growth pressures rise, the right planning tools and processes are in place to preserve desired land use balance, access to housing options, and character. This process will identify a community vision and consensus around how future growth may manifest in Waleska.

*"Preserve Waleska and its small town. Many of us have moved here to get away from the traffic and development in south Cherokee. Please maintain Waleska's small town feel."*



### Description

Incorporated in 1889, Waleska is home to Reinhardt University and a variety of small businesses. The previous Comprehensive Plan identified the following barriers to achieving Waleska's vision: a lack of commercial and retail amenities; zoning regulations that hinder walkable village-like development; poor connectivity and access; and a lack of sewer infrastructure. Waleska's assets include a compact walkable downtown, scenic beauty, a close-knit community of residents, and Reinhardt University as a cultural and employment center. Its location away from major interstates makes it a valuable retreat from the busy metro area.

### Key Implementation Strategies

- Open dialogue with Reinhardt University and look for opportunities to collaborate on projects to improve the city.
- Encourage the development of a village center.
- Support improvements to SR 140 and SR 108 that are compatible with the community vision.
- Ensure the connectivity of roads, sidewalks and trails to link new development into the city.
- Encourage a broader diversity of housing options.
- Strengthen connections with Lake Arrowhead.
- Preserve the rural and natural character of the surrounding area.





# 3 Future Development

## What are Character Areas?

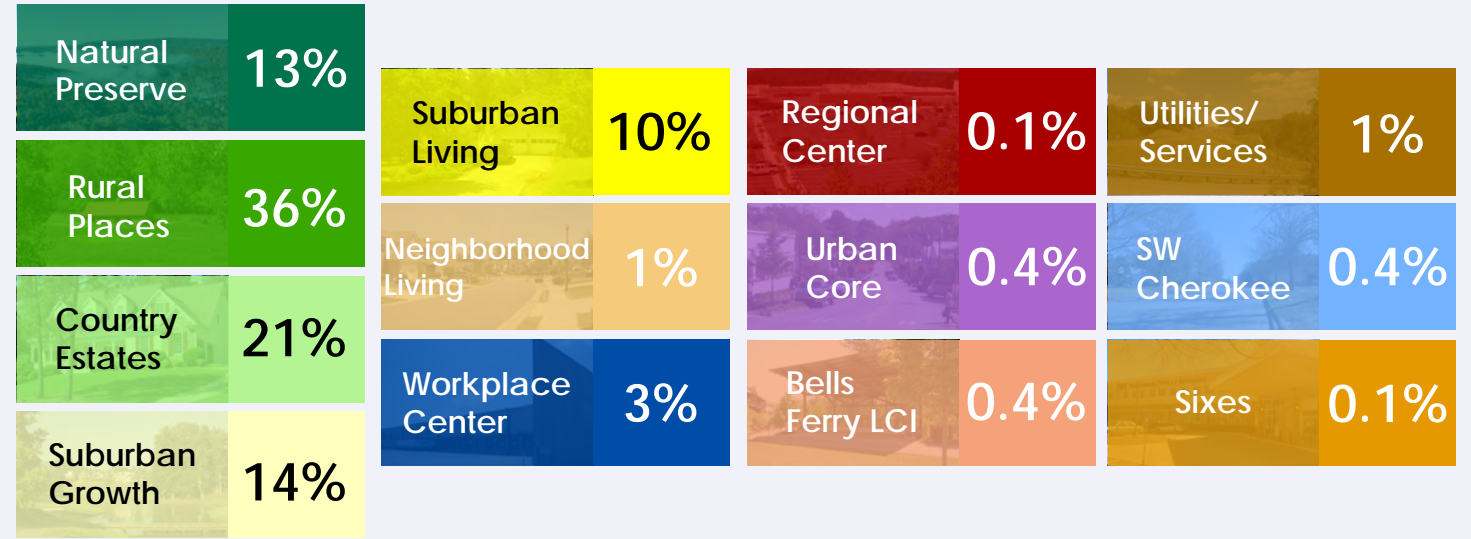
The 2008 Comprehensive Plan introduced Character Areas to Cherokee County. These areas are used to identify places and areas that show a common form of development and land use pattern, lifestyle and sense of place intensity of use, design elements, or other factors that collectively define the character of a place or areas, whether existing or intended in the future. The use of Character Areas provides a much more comprehensive picture of the communities' vision for a place or areas instead of individual land use categories.

The Character Area designations indicate primary and secondary types of land uses and the infrastructure necessary for that type of development. As the community continues to grow over the next 20-plus years, the Character Area descriptions will serve as a guide in the determination of future development approvals.

## Character Area Highlights:

- Encourage a “holistic” approach to long-range planning by integrating the community's vision and desires with actual land use patterns;
- Directly link the Comprehensive Plan to regulations and implementation strategies, such as impact fees and development codes;
- Provide solutions “outside the box” by integrating new and exciting concepts in land use planning and community design; and
- Allow the maximum amount of flexibility in land use planning.

## Cherokee County's Current Character Areas



## Character Areas

### Why Use Character Areas?

- Provides a strong link between the community's vision, guiding principles, goals, and the Future Development Map;
- Provides additional protection, enhancement, and clarification for zoning and land development; and
- Provides additional guidance to developers regarding the qualitative issues the County and Cities will consider during the rezoning process.

### Benefits of Character Areas

- Provides for strong land use compatibility and transitional standards;
- Looks at an overall area for both internal and external connectedness, with an emphasis on the mixing and integration of appropriate and complementary uses;
- Identifies intensity levels, compatibility considerations, and infrastructure considerations;
- Spells out the overall “feel” of an area in quantitative terms, thereby giving decision makers additional guidance during the rezoning and development review process; and
- Coordinates economic development, natural resource, and capital facility policies within land use planning.

### How it Works

- Character Area guidelines establish a general direction by providing a base level of development quality and compatibility with surrounding areas;
- Character Areas provide an area-wide view of how a specific use on a specific property will interact with a larger area;
- Character Areas allow additional qualitative controls while small area and corridor studies are completed; and
- A use must still fit the intent of the Character Area and any associated criteria. A potential type of non-residential development may be “allowed,” but it may still not be appropriate.

## Future Development Map

Visualizes the Character Areas throughout the county to establish where appropriate growth can occur.

## Zoning Decision

Helps establish where certain land development or a zoning district suits a place or area.

## The Future Development Map

The Future Development Map was developed through the analysis of current and future conditions and land use patterns on the Existing Land Use Plan Map, the Current Zoning Maps, approved developments, an economic market study, topographic characteristics, natural resource sensitivity, the availability of infrastructure, infrastructure programming and needs demonstrated by residential and employment forecasts. These analyses provided an essential base of information for Character Area development.

- Applies the overall vision, guiding principles, and policies to land use patterns of the Comprehensive Plan to the unincorporated areas of the County, the City of Waleska, and the City of Ball Ground;
- Was developed in conjunction with infrastructure planning and availability, land use compatibility, and existing zoning;
- Acknowledges projected growth and provides capacity for this growth in appropriate areas of the county and cities;
- Acknowledges and accommodates corridors currently or proposed to go through residential/commercial transition;
- Identifies specific corridors and areas that are appropriate for redevelopment activities and further study; and
- Provides a strong emphasis on integrated design, beneficial mixing of uses, and connectivity.



Zoning Decision Process with Character Areas



Character Areas

- 1 Identify on the Future Development Map
- 2 Review descriptions
- 3 Review Core Issues



Proposal

- 4 Evaluate if consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- 5 Evaluate the immediate area



Present Findings

- 6 Submit application for rezoning or development decision

Interpretation

This plan is developed based on the idea that the Future Development Map and the text are to be used as an integrated whole, with the map being a graphic representation of the text. Interpretation of the Future Development Map is a process, which rests on the guiding principles, goals, and policies expressed in the text. The Character Area designations on the map, both in terms of overall definition and intensity of land use types, require that policies and intent statements regulating the development and the location of each land use type, be evaluated and applied in the process of plan implementation.

Plan implementation is carried out through the application of regulations such as the Zoning Ordinance and through projects and programs outlined in the Short-Term Work Program. The Board of Commissioners and City Councils administer the Map within their respective jurisdictions, with input from their Planning Commissions and planning staff.

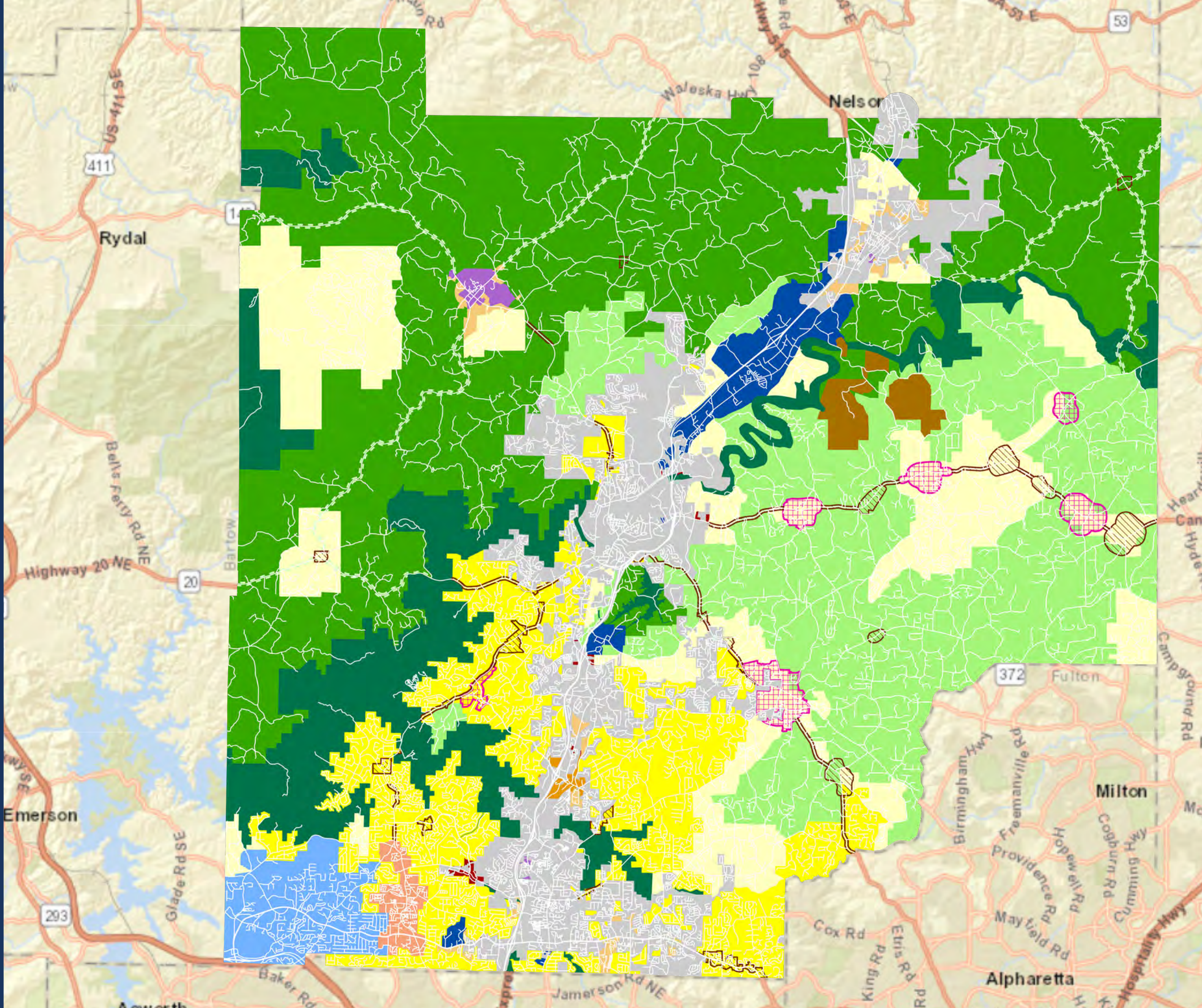
The initial contact for plan interpretation begins with the staff. It is at this point that the proposal is evaluated for its conformity and compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and other functional plans. In the event a use or development proposal is inconsistent with the Future Development Map or Comprehensive Plan policies, that fact is addressed as one of the Standards for Zoning Review already adopted by each jurisdiction in their Zoning Ordinance.



Future Development Map

Legend

- Natural Preserve
- Rural Places
- Country Estates
- Suburban Growth
- Suburban Living
- Neighborhood Living
- Workplace Center
- Regional Center
- Urban Core
- Utilities/Services
- Bells Ferry LCI
- SW Cherokee
- Sixes
- Community Village
- Scenic Corridor
- Corridor & Nodes







# Natural Preserve

## Description

The Natural Preserve character area covers undevelopable land around the County that is brimming with prominent ecological features like lakes, streams, view sheds, wetlands, and other significant natural features. Parcels within this Character Area offer an abundance of natural resources for residents to consume for recreational purposes that are protected by easement or acquisition. As well, the land poses as habitat protection, stormwater management, and filtration of surface and groundwater.

## Intent

Natural Preserve areas are intended as places that will remain undeveloped for centuries for the preservation of environmental functions and passive recreation uses. Within the Character Area, minimal disturbance is significant, as well as providing connected trail systems and outdoor gathering spots. Access to them should be central and easy for residents, but surrounding the immediate area, it should be complimentary low-intensity residential and commercial development.

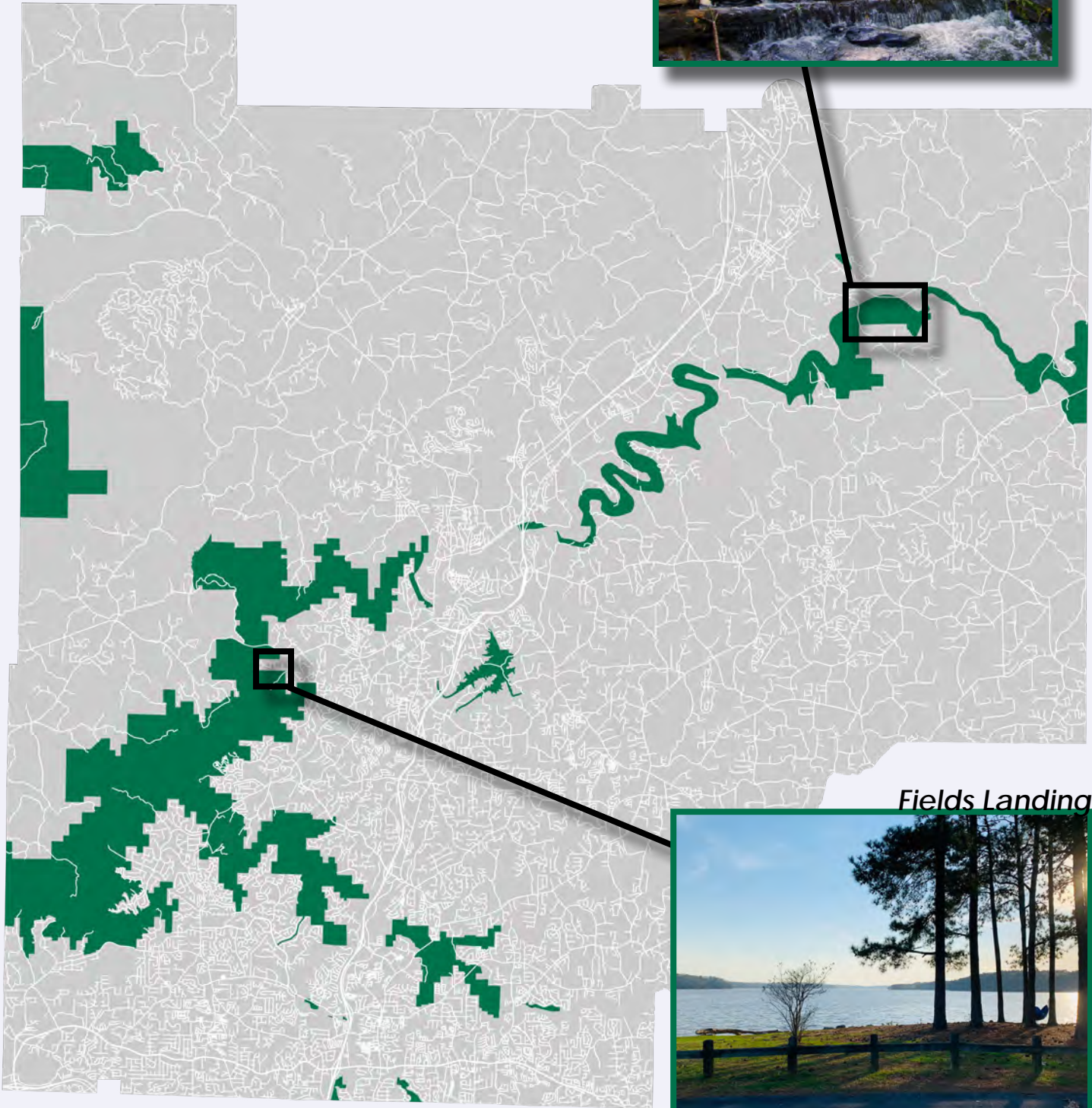
## Strategies

- Focus on allowing minimal, low-intensity disturbance (i.e., roadways, sidewalks, pavilions, etc.) in these areas to protect natural resources and habitats from destruction.
- Continue to provide recreational usage in natural areas for residents to gather and engage in outdoor activities without taking away from the natural beauty that draws people in.
- Identify land that fits the description provided here to preserve significant natural habitats, features, and resources from depletion.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	<i>Residential Density</i> - 0.5 units per acre maximum
Future Development	<i>Primary Land Uses</i> Timber management & conservation uses Passive recreation (i.e. hiking, equestrian usage, kayaking, etc.)  <i>Secondary Land Uses</i> Homesteads
Infrastructure	Greenways Trail systems Benches Private roads/drives for cars/pedestrians Generally no sewer
Greenspace	Open space, lakes, streams, and other predominant environmental features

Where in the County can this be found?

The dark green color below represents all the Natural Preserve space in the County. In these areas, you will find parks, streams, waterfalls, and forests. Some examples are Brick Mills Falls, Etowah Creek, and Lake Allatoona.







# Rural Places

## Description

Land in Rural Places is typically cultivated as pasture, farmland, or woodlands under forestry management, or sparsely settled homes on individual tracts, which is mostly located in the northern part of Cherokee County and surrounding Natural Preserves. This area represents a balance between the natural environment and human uses with low-density residential, farms, forests, outdoor recreation, and other open space activities.

## Intent

Rural Places is envisioned as an agricultural-residential community, which benefits from its scenic rural landscape while accommodating limited, low-density residential growth. Large-scale urban/suburban development is not compatible with this Character Area due to conflicts such as agricultural uses or other forms of activities resulting from raising livestock and crop production. Focused efforts should be made to encourage and support agricultural businesses, promote flexible site design to fit the land, and allow open space and/or the natural landscape to dominate these areas.

## Strategies

- Preserve undeveloped land so that the natural landscape dominates the majority of the Character Area while identifying appropriate spots for low-density residential homes.
- Manage development along roadways to provide appropriate, compatible, and complimentary transitions from new construction to existing development.
- Provide adequate access to services at a level appropriate to the development pattern that prioritizes maintaining the rural, small-town feel of the Character Area.
- Zoning districts could include AG.

## Summary Chart

<b>Intensity</b>	<i>Residential Density</i> - 0.5 units per acre maximum
<b>Future Development</b>	<i>Primary Land Uses</i> Active farming, timbering & conservation uses Homesteads on individual lots Large lot estate-style single-family residential development  <i>Secondary Land Uses</i> Outdoor recreation Semi-public & institutional uses
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Easement & private driveway access. Roads have grassy swales & narrow lanes. Public water may be available.
<b>Greenspace</b>	Significant greenspace often on private property Typically surrounding Natural Preserves

## Where in the County can this be found?

The green color below represents all the Rural Places in the County. In these areas, you will find private, low-density housing, large properties, and land used for agriculture and livestock purposes.







# Country Estates

## Description

The Country Estates character area is noted for its low-intensity housing, horse farms, and agricultural production. This area promotes farming and livestock production along with large lot housing that preserves the surrounding rural aspects. Country Estates residential lots are typically around two acres or more, with more prevalent housing development than in Rural Places. As well, Country Estates differentiates itself with “estate farms,” horse farms, equestrian-related development, and its low-intensity residential community feeling.

## Intent

The intent of Country Estates is to retain the low-intensity nature of the area by supporting the existing production-oriented agricultural activities such as animal production and crop cultivation. Also, encourage the further development of large lot estates and “gentlemen’s farms” that blend into the overall fabric of the area. It should resemble a slow transition from rural areas to suburban with more prevalent homes on larger parcels. However, maintaining the same usage of agriculture, livestock, and equestrian-based activities is essential to the communities.

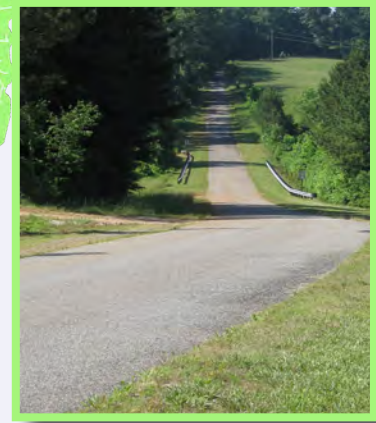
## Strategies

- Maintain an appropriate lot size minimum of 80,000 square feet, around two acres or more, to preserve the small-town, rural feel of the area while providing the necessary space for agriculture and equestrian activities.
- Ensure that future development does not disturb rural areas or obstruct scenic views or vistas while still providing the necessary services that maintain a high quality of life.
- Zoning districts could include AG and R-80.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	<b>Residential Density</b> - 0.5 units per acre maximum
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Active farming, timbering & conservation uses Homesteads on individual lots Large lot estate-style single-family residential development  <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Passive recreation Semi-public & institutional uses
Infrastructure	Most roads have grassy swales & narrow lanes Some subdivisions have curb & gutter Public water available but no sewer
Greenspace	Greenspace on private property Conservation areas in residential neighborhoods

## Where in the County can this be found?

The light green color below represents all the Country Estates space in the County. These areas are noted by large estate homes and equestrian related activity in the eastern part of the County.







# Suburban Growth

## Description

Suburban Growth areas have limited existing development but occur where growth pressure is the greatest due to adjacency with current or proposed community infrastructure (such as sewer and water, and transportation). This is an area in transition from rural types of development to suburban ones, often characterized by pockets of development interspersed among a rural landscape. More specifically, these areas mostly consist of single-family detached homes situated on lots ranging in size with shallower setbacks than in Rural Places and agriculturally-dominated land.

## Intent

Suburban Growth is intended to preserve the primarily residential nature of these areas while promoting new, low-density residential communities that foster a sense of community and provide mobility, recreation, and open space. To obtain this it is significant to channel growth pressures to areas that are suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment to create more sustainable communities. Hence, there is a need to ensure new development is compatible and located where existing infrastructure (i.e. roads, schools, water/sewer, etc.) is available.

## Strategies

- Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, libraries, health facilities, and other services at suitable locations near residential communities.
- Provide suitable, efficient connections and infrastructure to nearby services and land uses for ease of access and quality of life.
- Encourage innovative development that integrates greenspace within its design such as conservation subdivisions, and master-planned and traditional low-density communities in appropriate locations.
- Zoning districts could include AG, R-80, and R-40.

## Summary Chart

<b>Intensity</b>	<b>Residential Density</b> - 0.5 - 1.0 units per acre
<b>Future Development</b>	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Single-family detached housing Conservation subdivisions  <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Semi-public & institutional uses
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Roads have a combination of swales & curb/gutter Public water is available Sewer may be available or planned for the future
<b>Greenspace</b>	Open space & conservation areas in neighborhoods Public parks & greenspaces

## Where in the County can this be found?

The light yellow color below represents all the Suburban Growth area in the County. It is predominately located between larger residential and highly-populated service areas and rural residences as a transitional phase. In these areas you will find slowly developing homes and services.







# Suburban Living

## Description

Suburban Living areas are distinguished by the established suburban neighborhoods of single-family detached houses, the complimentary shopping areas, and institutions, such as churches, schools, libraries, and regional parks. Homes tend to be on modest-sized lots within large-scale residential developments. Ideally, residents in Suburban Living have space, but should also be able to walk to parks, schools, and community centers near their neighborhood.

## Intent

The Suburban Living Character Area is envisioned to support existing suburban neighborhoods with compatible residential and commercial development. Suitable development in this area should be similar to the existing pattern of development in terms of size, scale, and lot density. This Character Area should help to foster a sense of community by providing connections (vehicular and pedestrian) to commercial development, civic land uses, recreation, and open space. Finally, higher-intensity new development should be limited to areas where there is available capacity within the existing infrastructure (i.e., roads, schools, water/sewer, etc.) as to not overwhelm the current conditions.

## Strategies

- Ensure that new infill development complements existing uses and does not overpower or add constraints to the infrastructure.
- Incorporate public and semi-public uses into neighborhoods by considering the size, scale, and impact to ensure compatibility.
- Utilize traffic calming techniques, sidewalks, and street connections to improve connectivity and walkability within the Character Area.
- Zoning districts could include R-40, R-30, R-20, R-15, and RD-3.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	<b>Residential Density</b> - 1.0 - 3.0 units per acre
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Single-family detached housing Conservation Subdivisions Master-Planned Communities  <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Semi-public & institutional uses Regional outdoor recreational uses or parks
Infrastructure	All new roads have curb & gutter Sidewalks within subdivisions extending to community facilities Sewer is available in most areas
Greenspace	Open space & conservation areas in neighborhoods

## Where in the County can this be found?

The yellow color below represents all the Suburban Living space in the County. In these areas you will find more developed versions of our Suburban Growth. Therefore, they are located outside of City limits and along higher density residential.







# Neighborhood Living

**Description**  
 Neighborhood Living areas are mostly residential in nature but may include small commercial areas. The residential units include townhouses and duplexes, along with single-family homes intended for empty nesters, seniors, singles, small families, and workers employed in the County. The Neighborhood Living Character Area is denser than suburban areas because it is generally located in and around cities in Cherokee County where there are full urban services, infrastructure, and compatible commercial development.

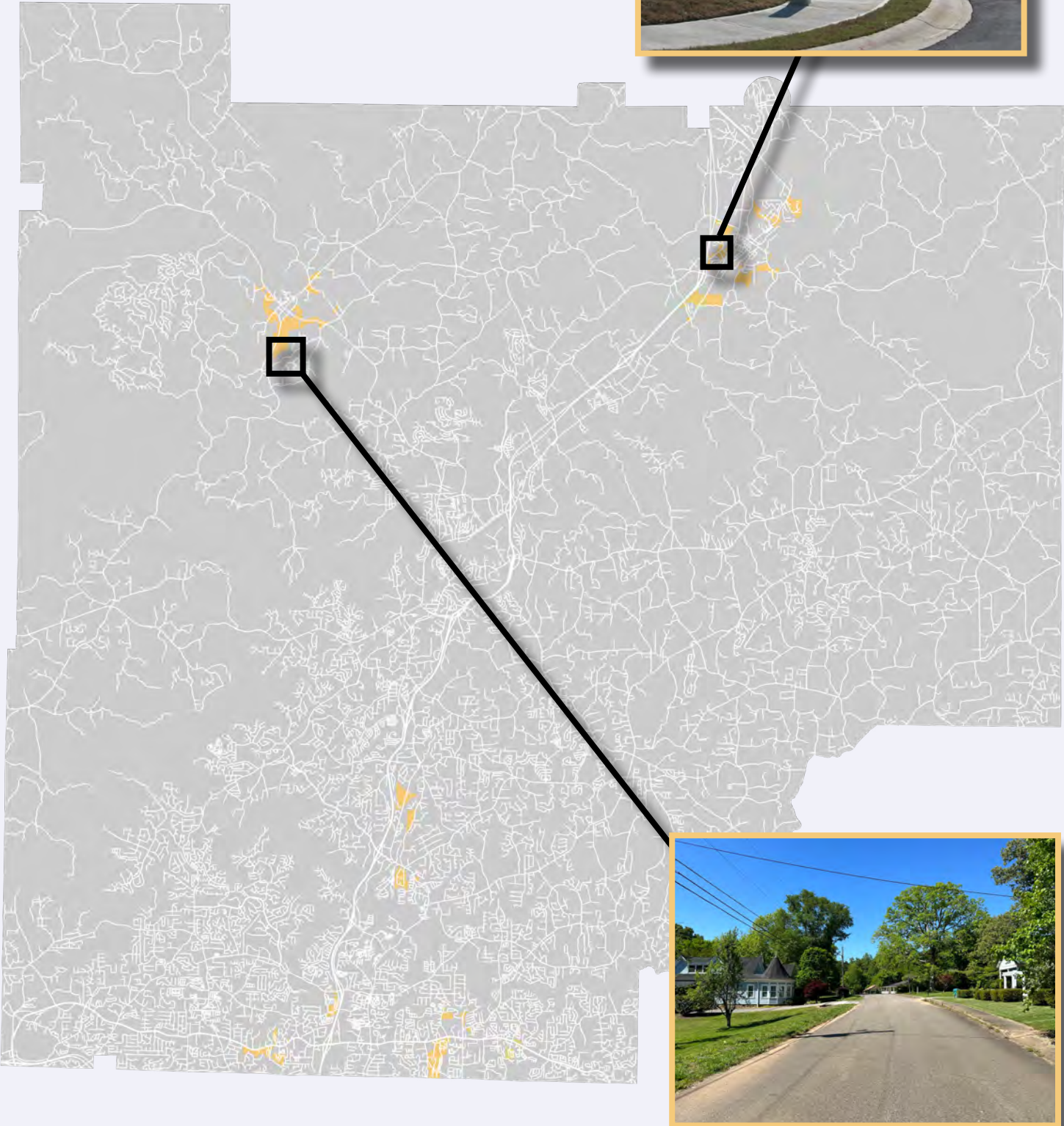
**Intent**  
 The intent of this Character Area is to create new moderate-density neighborhoods to accommodate a range of housing types that suit a variety of lifestyles, price points, and stages of life while being respectful of existing neighborhoods. Community facilities and commercial uses are common in these areas to provide close and convenient services with pedestrian and trail connections to encourage the use of walking and bicycling.

- Strategies**
- Integrate commercial establishments such as corner markets and mixed-use buildings as part of new developments to encourage walkability and ease of access to services.
  - Locate parks, squares, and other greenspaces close to all new homes so every resident lives in close proximity to recreational activities.
  - Locate parking to the sides or rear of residential and non-residential buildings, and screen all parking from the public pedestrian view.
  - Zoning districts could include RD-3, RZL, RA, RTH, and TND.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	<b>Residential Density</b> - 3.0 - 8.0 units per acre
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Small lot single-family homes Attached single-family duplexes and townhouses  <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Public & institutional uses Mixed-use buildings
Infrastructure	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water & sewer)
Greenspace	Smaller civic spaces (i.e. pocket parks, playgrounds, etc.) within the residential areas

**Where in the County can this be found?**

The light orange color below represents all the Neighborhood Living space in the County. In these areas you will find mostly homes and predominately surrounds Cherokee's smaller cities like Waleska and Ball Ground.







# Workplace Center

## Description

Workplace Centers represent major employment areas, including professional and corporate offices, regional offices, and light industrial districts. They are located along major transportation corridors and have a high level of access to the region. Retail developments are secondary uses on the periphery that complement these employment centers. Greenspaces and civic spaces that connect workplaces together are integral as well.

## Intent

Workplace Center is envisioned to be villages, industrial parks, and compact activity centers. An integrated mix of uses and building types, along with external and internal connectivity will create a synergy between retail, office, industry, and surrounding residential development.

## Strategies

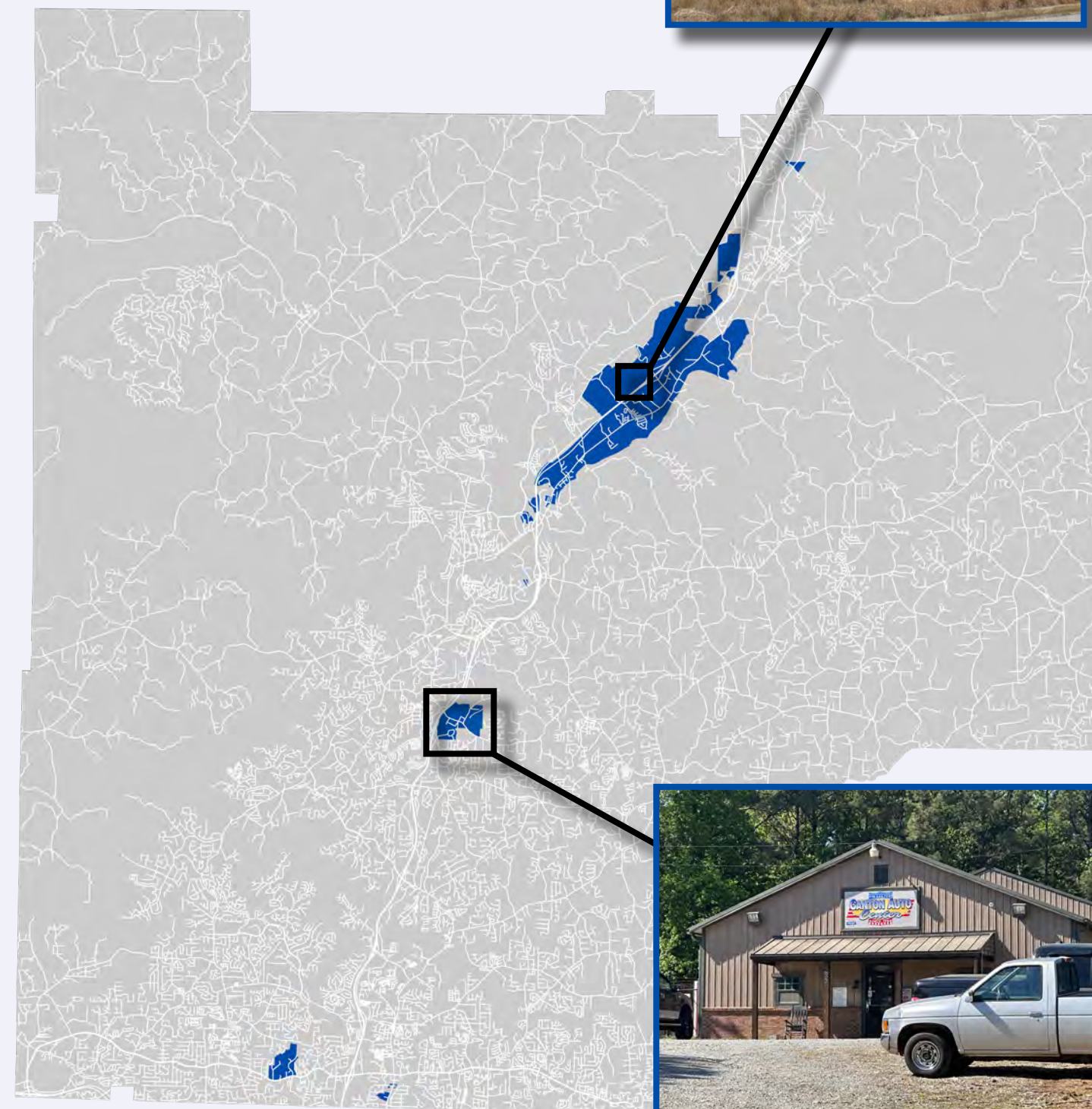
- Develop master plans for various Workplace Center developments, including provisions for trails, greenways, and other civic spaces.
- Encourage the “clustering” of office and retail uses that are integrated with parking, landscaping, and pedestrian areas.
- Install buffers between incompatible uses in the Character Area.
- Preserve prime land with quality transportation access for industrial and office uses.
- Zoning districts could include OI, CP, NC, GC, LI, and HI.

## Summary Chart

<b>Intensity</b>	<b>Residential Density -</b> N/A
<b>Future Development</b>	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Office buildings & complexes Light industrial / manufacturing & warehousing  <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Retail & services commercial development
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Suburban streets with a sidewalk on one side Full urban services (water and sewer)
<b>Greenspace</b>	Trails connecting to passive recreation areas and surrounding residential areas Private on-site amenities for employees

## Where in the County can this be found?

The blue color below represents all the Workplace Center space in the County. In these areas, you will find offices and industrial centers. These are predominately located along major roadways, like I-575.







# Regional Center

## Description

The Regional Center Character Area encompasses energetic hubs of retail, restaurants, offices, and high-density residential development laid out in a main street-like fashion. This area includes public spaces and amenities catering to residents. Regional Centers promote walkable environments for pedestrians to work, shop, eat, and live. They are most commonly found just outside City boundaries along major transportation corridors.

## Intent

The overall Regional Center environment is intended to be oriented toward the pedestrian experience and focused on connectivity to allow drivers many ways to get around the area. Sidewalks, paths, green spaces, and open spaces are as important as buildings. This high intensity of mixed uses should be organized to provide a pleasant "Main Street" type feel and planned to allow for ease of movement, internal and external. Large and moderate-scale commercial/office development is the primary focus for land use, while residential should be limited.

## Strategies

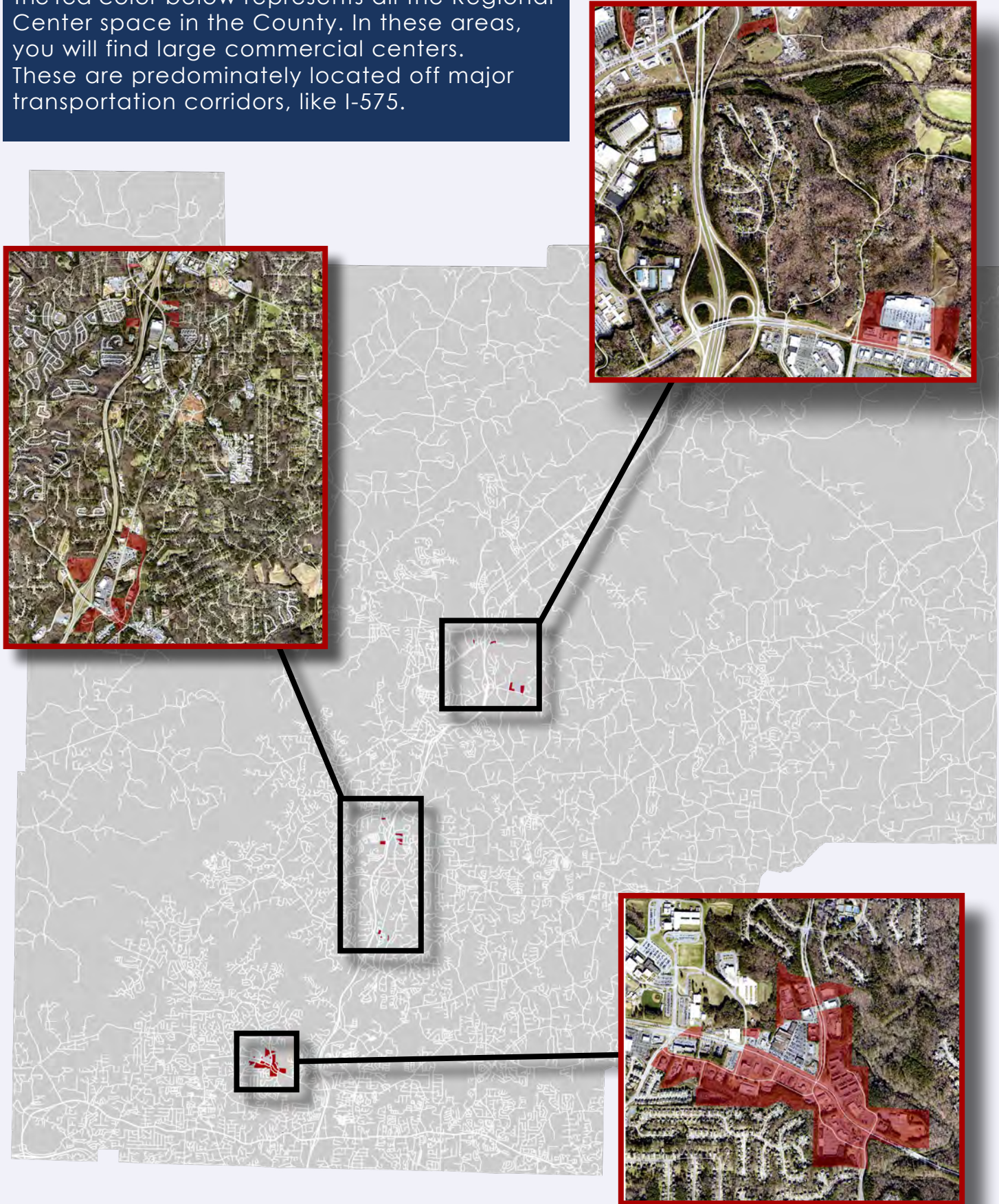
- Develop streets in a grid-like pattern with small blocks to allow pedestrian connectivity throughout the center.
- Ensure buildings are oriented toward the street and are in close proximity to each other; all parcels should be interconnected along streets, squares, plazas, etc. to assist in providing adequate connectivity.
- Design buildings that are compatible with the existing development in terms of color, material, and pattern.
- More intensive uses, commercial uses, and taller structures should be located in the center of the Regional Center, while residential development remains limited.
- Zoning districts could include OI, CP, NC, GC, and LI.

## Summary Chart

Intensity	<i>Residential Density</i> - 6.0 - 16.0 units per acre
Future Development	<i>Primary Land Uses</i> Large-scale retail buildings Regional & professional buildings Entertainment, restaurant & cultural uses Mixed-use buildings  <i>Secondary Land Uses</i> Dense residential neighborhoods
Infrastructure	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water & sewer)
Greenspace	Trails connecting to passive recreation areas & surrounding residential areas Pocket parks and greens

## Where in the County can this be found?

The red color below represents all the Regional Center space in the County. In these areas, you will find large commercial centers. These are predominately located off major transportation corridors, like I-575.







# Urban Core

## Description

The Urban Core Character Area covers the few unincorporated pockets of Urban core areas within Woodstock. As well, it provides an outline of the potential growth of commercial and institutional uses possible in the smaller cities of Ball Ground and Waleska. Overall, Urban Core is characterized by higher-density development and a wide range of commercial and institutional uses. Civic spaces and public buildings amidst retail storefronts and dense housing help create a compact core that promotes an urban feel and vibrancy.

## Intent

The purpose of the Urban Core Character Area is to support the urban downtown areas of Canton, Holly Springs, Woodstock, Waleska, and Ball Ground with future development that is compatible and comparable to the existing infrastructure of each individual City. In other words, each city's Urban Core is based on its surrounding characteristics, density, and service capability.

## Strategies

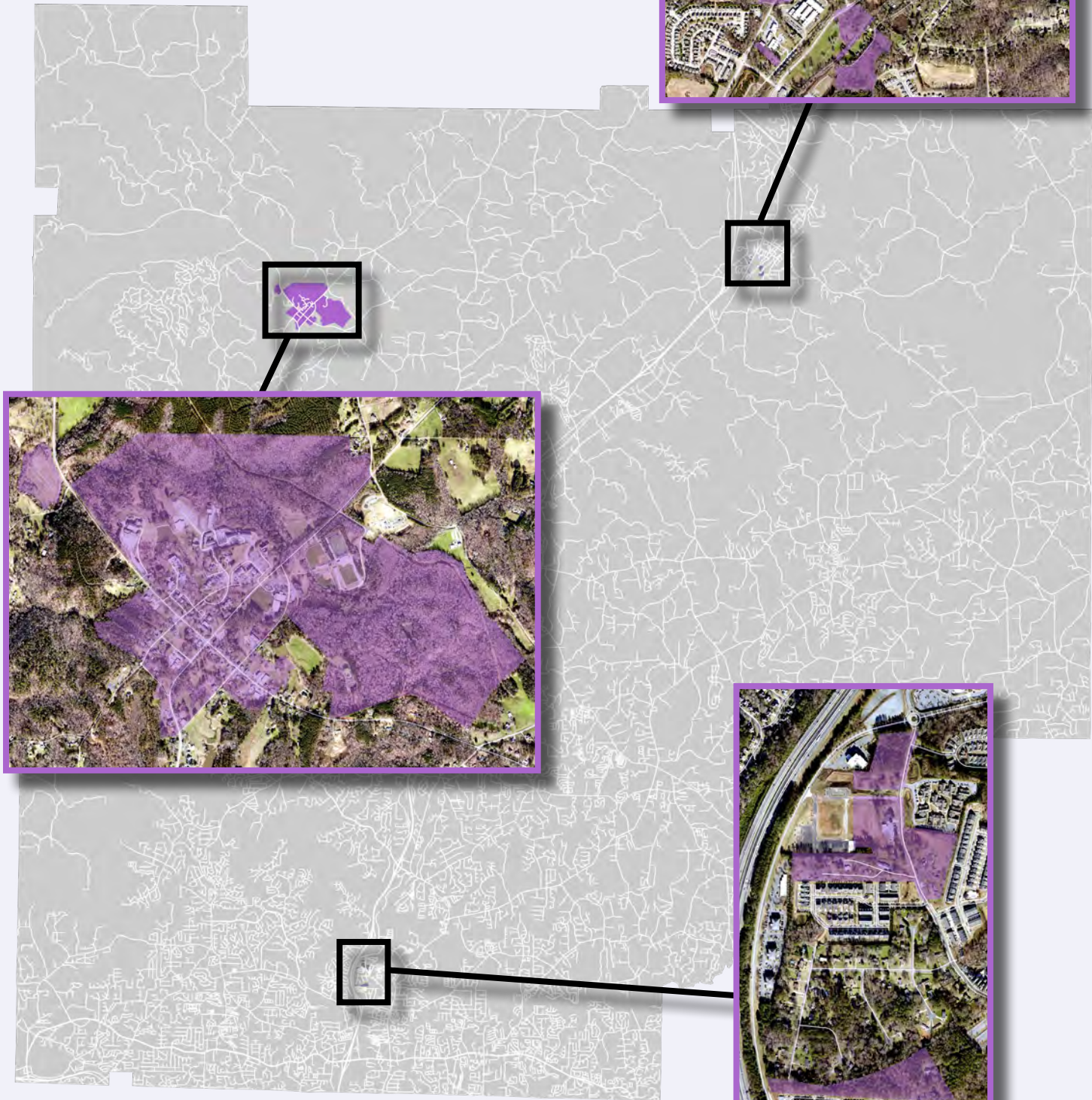
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of older buildings into newer uses to promote sustainable development and reduce construction waste.
- Ensure that new developments connect to existing infrastructure to promote walkability and maintain the urban feel of the area.
- Locate parking on the side and rear of buildings to strengthen the 'main street' feel and improve walkability.
- Market the historic core of the cities to attract additional businesses and ultimately grow the downtown area economically and socially.
- Zoning districts could include a mixed use of RA, RTH, RM-10, RM-16, OI, NC, and GC.

## Summary Chart

Intensity	<i>Residential Density</i> - 3.0 - 16.0 units per acre
Future Development	<i>Primary Land Uses</i> Multi-Family Flats Attached single-family duplexes & townhouses Mixed-use buildings  <i>Secondary Land Uses</i> Public & institutional uses Single-Use Commercial
Infrastructure	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water and sewer)
Greenspace	Smaller civic spaces (i.e. pocket parks, playgrounds, etc.) within the residential areas

## Where in the County can this be found?

The purple color below represents all the Urban Core space in the County. In these areas, you will find traditional downtown elements like shops, sidewalks, restaurants, and what is considered the heart of Waleska and Ball Ground.







# Utilities/Services

## Description

Utilities/Services are characterized by uses that should be buffered from rural and residential areas, in keeping with the county’s environmental goals. The Utilities/Services character area represents a cluster of uses near the Airport that provide services to Cherokee County and the larger region. These areas include solid waste facilities, power plants, and treatment plants.

## Intent

The Utility/Services is intended to take advantage of the I-575 corridor north of Canton and the Etowah River corridor. These utility sites are usually located on large tracts of land and may have intense usage. The surrounding rural character has also been an advantage that provided significant buffers to prevent incompatible land uses.

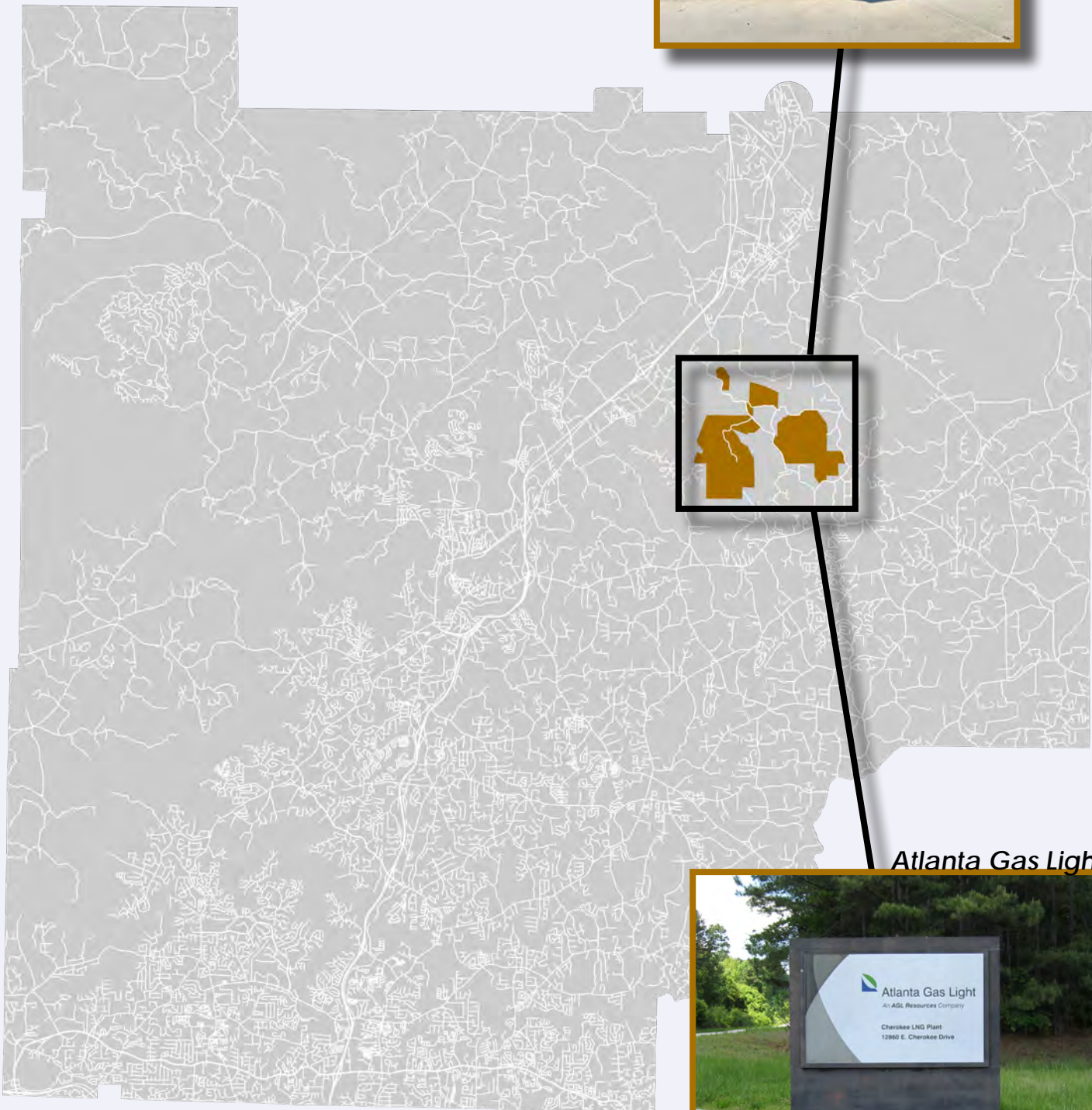
## Strategies

- Maintain significant buffers between industrial/utility plants and surrounding uses, to ensure they don’t intrude on adjacent properties.
- Continue exploring additional sites that may be appropriate for the Utilities/Services character area to keep up with demand and pattern of development.
- Zoning districts could include LI and HI.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	Residential Density - N/A
Future Development	Primary Land Uses Landfill Water and Sewer Treatment Facilities Natural Gas Facility
Infrastructure	Access to major arterial roads, state highways, and/or interstates
Greenspace	Generally consists of undeveloped areas or buffers surrounding the site

## Where in the County can this be found?

The brown color below represents all the Utilities and Services space in the County. These areas are mostly found around similar uses like treatment plants, power plants, and waste facilities. Ideally, it is in areas with minimal interaction with residents.



Pine Bluff Solid Waste



Atlanta Gas Light







# Bells Ferry LCI

## Description

The Bells Ferry LCI area serves as a gateway into Cherokee County from neighboring Cobb County and connects the southwest part of the County with the Woodstock area. Initially developed in the 1960s and 1970s this area is home to outdated commercial parcels and underutilized properties that are ripe for redevelopment. Various housing types can be found in the Bells Ferry LCI area including single-family detached, townhouses, and multi-family developments as well as commercial nodes.

## Intent

The ultimate vision for the Bells Ferry community is to provide diverse choices in housing, entertainment, shopping, job opportunities, and greenspace for area residents and serve as a destination for the region. The Bells Ferry LCI area should be focused on integrating land uses by emphasizing patterns of more compact development to give residents transportation alternatives, such as sidewalks and trails, and support a connected community. The final element of this vision is a significant park space to accommodate both active and passive recreation and serve as a public gathering place.

## Strategies

- Promote alternative transportation, especially in the form of bike and pedestrian paths to reduce vehicle trips and connect neighborhoods.
- Encourage appropriate densities that can support retail, entertainment, and commercial activities that provide vibrancy to the area.
- Provide an array of housing opportunities for residents of different ages and incomes.
- Zoning districts could include RA, RTH, RM-10, RM-16, TND, OI, NC, and GC.

## Summary Chart

<b>Intensity</b>	<b>Residential Density</b> - 4.0 - 12.0 units per acre
<b>Future Development</b>	<b>Potential Land Uses*</b> Small lot single-family homes Attached single-family duplexes & townhouses Mixed-use buildings Public & institutional uses Senior Housing Single-Use Commercial <b>*Location of the land uses follows the Bells Ferry LCI Plan.</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water & sewer)
<b>Greenspace</b>	Smaller civic spaces (i.e. pocket parks, playgrounds, etc.) within the residential areas

## Where in the County can this be found?

The pink color below represents the Bells Ferry LCI. To the right is a zoomed in aerial image of what is included in the Character Area. It is found at the southern County line where Bells Ferry connects Cherokee with Cobb County.







### Description

SW Cherokee serves as Cherokee County’s only direct connection to I-75 and is an essential part of Highway 92. Over the last decade, the area has experienced significant residential, commercial, and industrial growth. With a community-led plan, SW Cherokee will grow in a balanced way ensuring the area remains desirable for companies seeking to develop more economic opportunities as well as residents looking for amenities and great regional access.

### Intent

The vision for SW Cherokee revolves around diversifying land use, establishing connections to opportunities, providing quality infrastructure and opportunities, creating access to greenspace and recreation, and establishing a friendly and safe community. There is a plan to concentrate commercial, retail, office, and mixed-use development along Highway 92 while decreasing its prevalence farther away from the roadway. Also, there will be the inclusion of civic and greenspace uses to create connections to retail and commercial opportunities. Overall, the vision is to establish this area as a place to work, live, and play without harming the natural environment of the area.

### Strategies

- Encourage/recruit mixed-use development in the area between Highway 92 and Old Highway 92.
- Promote the use of sidewalks and trails as an alternative to traditional transportation.
- Zoning districts could include R-40, R-30, R-20, R-15, RD-3, RTH, RM-10, OI, CP, NC, GC, LI, and HI.

### Summary Chart

Intensity	<i>Residential Density</i> - Up to 10 units per acre
Future Development	<i>Potential Land Uses*</i> Mixed-use buildings Single family homes Attached townhomes Single-use commercial Industrial Local institutions <i>*Location of the land uses follows the Southwest Cherokee Plan.</i>
Infrastructure	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water and sewer)
Greenspace	Smaller civic spaces within the commercial, mixed-use, and residential spaces Potential park space

### Where in the County can this be found?

The light blue color below represents Southwest Cherokee. In the bottom right, that is a aerial image of SW Cherokee's boundary. This area is a crucial portion of the County, with its only connection to I-75.







# Wild Cat

## Description

Wild Cat represents major employment areas, including professional and corporate offices, regional offices, and medical complexes. Mixed-use and multifamily are secondary uses that are integrated into or complementary to employment centers. Greenspaces and civic spaces that connect workplaces together are integral as well.

## Intent

Development within Wild Cat should be focused on large corporate centers, campuses, and office complexes. Residential uses should only be located where integrated into a mixed-use development. It is critical to ensure residential uses do not become a primary land use, therefore substantially reducing the non-residential character of the area and causing land use conflicts.

## Strategies

- Develop master plans for various Wild Cat developments, including provisions for trails, greenways, and other civic spaces.
- Encourage large-scale development, including combining lots, and avoid small parcel development.
- Coordinate with the Cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock to study transportation issues and solutions, as well as harmonize land use and Character Areas.
- Zoning districts could include OI, CP, and GC.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	<i>Residential Density</i> - 16 units per acre
Future Development	<i>Primary Land Uses</i> Office buildings & complexes  <i>Secondary Land Uses</i> Mixed-use buildings
Infrastructure	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water and sewer)
Greenspace	Smaller civic spaces within the commercial, mixed-use, and residential spaces Potential park space

## Where in the County can this be found?

The gold color below represents Wild Cat, a joint study area with the Cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock. This area is found at a prominent connection between I-575 and the Sixes region.







# Community Village

**Description**  
Community Villages are nodes on top of existing Character Areas. These nodes are typically located at the convergence of major transportation corridors and allow for large buildings and intensive uses. Businesses within these nodes offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a larger market area. Large plazas provide a pedestrian friendly environment for residents, many of whom may walk or easily drive from their home to the village center, thanks to street/sidewalk connectivity.

**Intent**  
Community Villages are envisioned as places where a compatible mixture of higher-intensity uses are located, including a variety of housing options, small offices, retail shops, services, and well-placed parks/plazas that create a small, interconnected community. At the center of the node, there is a core area containing the more intensive, primary land uses. Moving outward from the core, the land uses are a mixture of less intense retail, office and some residential. At the edge of the Community Village, the land uses are generally residential but with streets leading back to the core area.

- Strategies**
- No individual store or building larger than 80,000 square foot, with a maximum height of 3 stories
  - Design centers to be pedestrian-oriented and break up large parking areas with landscaping and open spaces.
  - Zoning districts could include CP, NC, GC, and LI.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	<b>Residential Density</b> - 200% of Character Area
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Grocery stores, drugstores, restaurants & shops Personal services—dry cleaners, auto repair shops Professional services—doctors, lawyer offices  <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Local institutions—churches, schools Residential housing/senior housing
Infrastructure	Located along major arterial roads or highways Sidewalks connect into surrounding neighborhoods Public water is available Sewer may be available depending on location
Greenspace	Major civic spaces--park or green, ball fields and courts for active recreation

**Where in the County can this be found?**

The dark pink color below represents all the Community Village space in the County. These areas are found at the convergence of major roads and intersections that need moderate-level commercial development.







# Scenic Corridor

## Description

Scenic Corridors parallel major transportation routes, and consist of rural lands that have significant natural, historic or cultural features, and scenic or pastoral views. A variety of scenic elements such as a canopy of trees extending over a roadway, a rural landscape or a mountain viewshed help to establish the character of the corridor. A location along the corridor may possess a single element, however along the length of the roadway, several such elements collectively establish the scenic character of the corridor. Because Scenic Corridors may convey several iconic natural features, this character area emphasizes sensitive development, with commercial amenities clustered into small areas and retaining the natural features of the character area within the development site.

## Intent

It is the intent of the Scenic Corridor to be conceptual and not be a physical limitation upon any one property within a set distance from a roadway. This corridor recognizes the scenic quality of the roadway. To preserve the scenic quality of a corridor, plans for development within the corridor should be sensitive to and integrate its most distinguishing elements. Commercial development should be encouraged to be clustered within designated Nodes rather than strip development occurring along an entire route.

## Strategies

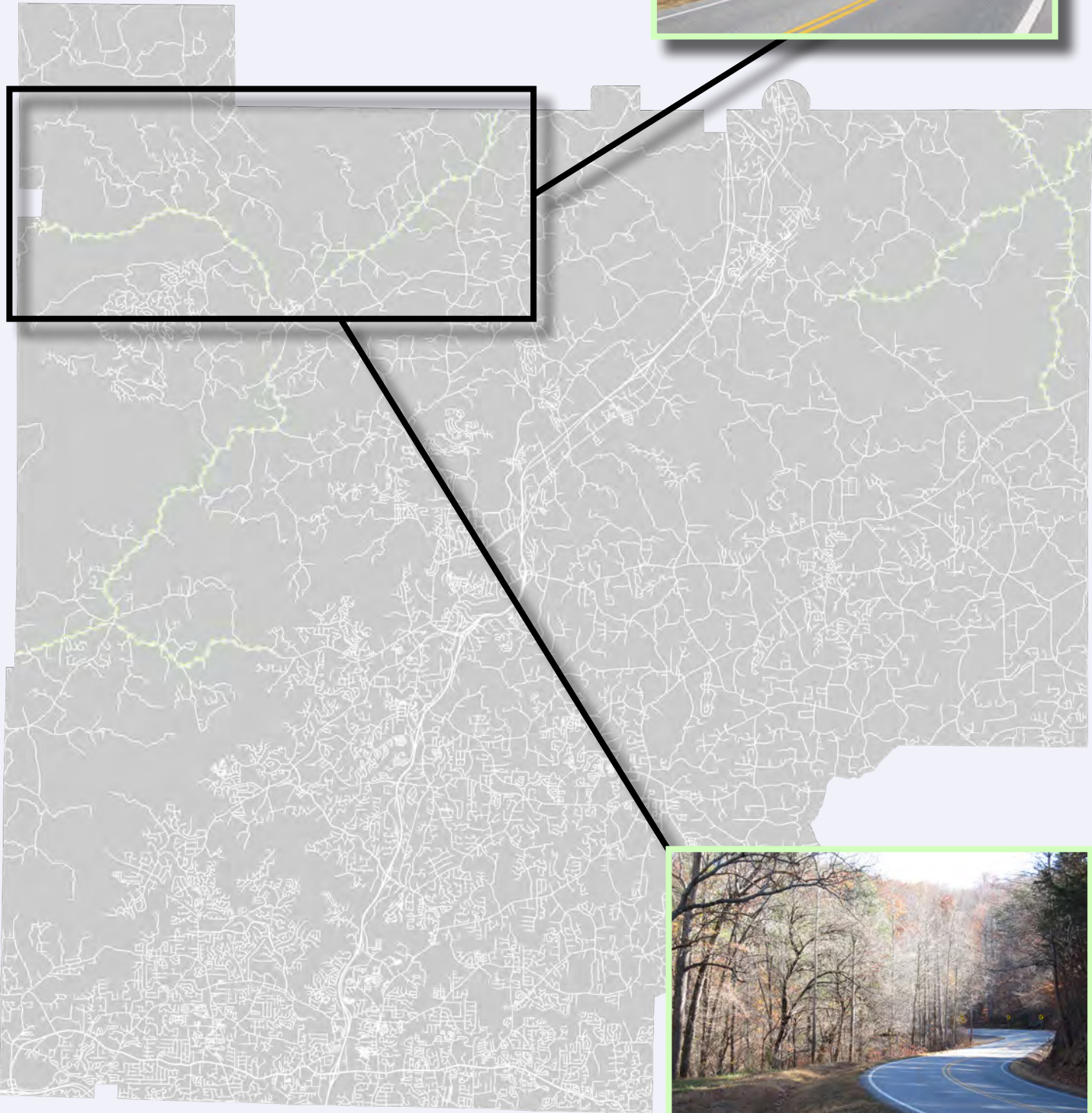
- Organize commercial development within designated Nodes in order to preserve the scenic views and prevent strip development in the corridor.
- Ensure any development plans incorporate existing nature elements, such as retaining a tree canopy that may exist along the road.
- Zoning districts could include AG.

## Summary Chart

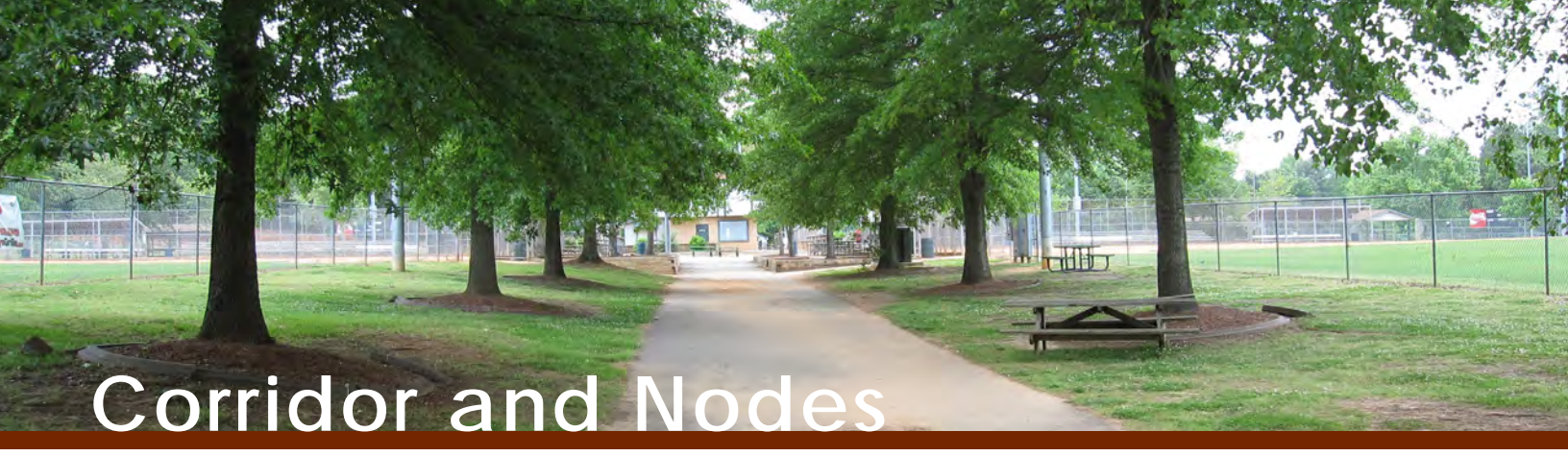
Intensity	<b>Residential Density</b> - 0.5 unit per acre max
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Active farming, timbering, and conservation uses Homesteads on individual lots  <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Outdoor recreation Semi-public and institutional uses
Infrastructure	Local along rural roads Very low street connectivity Public water should be available Sewer is not always available on private property
Greenspace	Greenways and greenspace on private property

## Where in the County can this be found?

The green roads below represent the Scenic Corridors in the County. In these areas you will find vast natural and historic features along these routes. For instance, Beasley Gap on Highway 140 is part of a Scenic Corridor.







# Corridor and Nodes

**Description**  
Corridors and Nodes are typically located at the convergence of transportation corridors or along major roadways originally developed with very low-intensity agricultural and residential uses that have been impacted by nearby development and adjacent road improvements. Businesses within these nodes offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a larger market area. Corridors, such as SR20 and SR 140 can increase the intensity of residential development up to 150% of the existing Character Area.

**Intent**  
Corridors and Nodes are envisioned as places where a compatible mixture of higher to lower intensity uses are located, including a variety of housing options, small offices, retail shops, services, and well-placed parks/plazas that create a small, interconnected community. At the center of the node, there is a core area containing the more intensive, primary land uses. Moving outward from the core, the land uses are a mixture of less intense retail, office, and some residential. Commercial uses should be the primary land use, with residential and institutional being secondary.

Size and scale in Corridors and Nodes are very important. Corridors and Nodes are not intended to be uniform, but a step up in intensity relative to the underlying character area. Nodes in Rural Places should remain small-scale and compatible with existing areas, while nodes in suburban areas may develop larger or multi-tenant neighborhood commercial. Nodes located at smaller intersections or corridors in high-intensity character areas should have a more moderate scale of development. Corridors and nodes in Rural Places or Country Estates should be most restricted in scale.

- Strategies**
- Scale shall vary in intensity: At smaller nodes, no individual store or building larger than 18,000 square feet, with a maximum height of 2 stories; other nodes shall have a limitation of 50,000 square feet, with 3 stories.
  - Larger buildings and more intensive uses should be located in the center of the node surrounded by smaller, residential-compatible buildings. Commercial uses should be near the road.
  - New development should be pedestrian-oriented with front doors that open directly onto a sidewalk or civic space and connections between commercial and residential areas.

Summary Chart	
Intensity	<i>Residential Density</i> - 150% of Character Area
Future Development	<p><i>Primary Land Uses</i> Grocery stores, drugstores, restaurants &amp; shops Personal services Professional services—doctors, lawyer offices</p> <p><i>Secondary Land Uses</i> Local institutions—churches, schools Residential housing/senior housing</p>
Infrastructure	Located along major arterial roads or highways Sidewalks connect into surrounding neighborhoods Public water is available Sewer may be available depending on location
Greenspace	Major civic spaces-- park or green, ball fields and courts for active recreation

**Where in the County can this be found?**

The brown color below represents all the Corridor and Nodes space in the County. These areas are found along roadways and intersections that require further investment on top of the underlying Character Area.





Character Area Summary Table

Character Area	Description of Character and Primary Land Uses	Community Facilities & Infrastructure	Suggested Residential Density
Natural Preserve	Undeveloped natural lands with significant natural features that currently have some form of protection from development.	Very low level of services and community facilities.	0.5 dua max
Rural Places	Outlying rural areas with active farming and scattered single-family housing on large lots. Preservation of sensitive natural resources is important.	Low level of services and community facilities. Potentially with public water but sewer is not planned.	0.5 dua max
Country Estates	Area of low intensity land use with a mixture of single-family housing on large lots and farms.	Local-serving roads, potentially with public water, typically lacks sewer.	0.5 dua max
Suburban Growth	Areas located outside identified centers that are experiencing a high volume of residential growth, primarily single-family houses.	Public water available, public sewerage available or planned; local public facilities.	0.5 - 1.0 dua
Suburban Living	Established residential neighborhoods with potential infill and redevelopment opportunities.	Public water available, public sewerage available or planned; local public facilities.	1 - 3 dua
Neighborhood Living	Urbanized and growth oriented areas, adjacent to identified activity centers with higher densities. Various types of residential dwellings, and mixed-use developments.	Full urban services; regional public facilities.	3 - 8 dua
Workplace Center	Major employment centers utilizing a mixture of manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, commercial and office. Retail and high intensity residential are accessory uses.	Full urban services	
Regional Center	Regionally oriented large scale commercial, office, retail, entertainment and recreational development, often with a residential component.	Full urban services	3 - 16 dua

Character Area	Description of Character and Primary Land Uses	Community Facilities & Infrastructure	Suggested Residential Density
Urban Core	Traditional downtown areas with a broad range of uses, primarily in Ball Ground and Waleska.	Full urban services; regional public facilities.	3 - 16 dua
Utilities/ Services	Major facilities for utilities or services to Cherokee County.		
Bells Ferry LCI	Area targeted for new development and redevelopment integrating residential, commercial and greenspace per the LCI Plan.	Full urban services; regional public facilities.	4 - 12 dua
SW Cherokee	The concentration of commercial, retail, office, and mixed-use development with civic/greenspace connections along Highway 92 corridor. Intensity decreases away from the corridor.	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water and sewer)	Up to 10 dua
Wild Cat	Employment area consisting of large corporate centers, campuses, and office complexes. Residential only allowed in mixed-use developments.	Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides Full urban services (water and sewer)	16 dua
Community Village	Medium-scaled commercial designated to serve several neighborhoods. 80,000sf maximum.	Public water is available & sewer may be available. Good transportation access.	200% of Character Area
Scenic Corridor	Scenic corridors have low intensity development parallel to a viewshed.	Very low level of services and community facilities	0.5 dua max
Corridor & Nodes	Development along roadways is increasingly impacted by growth. They feature a range of uses at varying scales, depending on the underlying character area.	Sidewalks connections Public water is available Sewer may be available depending on location	150% of Character Area



# Zoning Connections Matrix

The matrix below demonstrates the exact connections between the Character Areas from the Future Development Map and the County’s Zoning Districts further described in the Zoning Ordinance, Article 7 District Uses and Regulations. Each Character Area is coupled with possible Zoning Districts, primary, secondary, and mixed land use priorities. This is essential to applicants, stakeholders, and the County Board and Committees in determining future development and land uses across the County.

		Character Areas															
		Natural Preserve	Rural Places	Country Estates	Suburban Growth	Suburban Living	Neighborhood Living	Workplace Center	Regional Center	Urban Core	Utilities/ Services	Bells Ferry LCI	SW Cherokee	Wild Cat	Community Village	Scenic Corridor	Corridor & Nodes
Suggested Residential Density		0.5 dua max			0.5 - 1.0 dua	1 - 3 dua	3 - 8 dua		3 - 16 dua	3 - 16 dua		4 - 12 dua	Up to 10 dua	16 dua	200% of Character Area	0.5 dua max	150% of Character Area
Related Zoning Districts	AG	P	P	P												P	
	R-80			P	P										S		S
	R-60				P										S		S
	R-40				P	P							M*		S		S
	R-30					P							M*		S		S
	R-20					P							M*		S		S
	R-15					P							M*		S		S
	RD-3					P	P		S				M*		S		S
	RZL						P		S			M*					
	RA						P		S	M		M*					
	RTH						P		S	M		M*	M*				
	RM-10								S	M		M*	M*				
	RM-16								S	M		M*					
	TND						P					M*					
	OI						S	P	P	M		M*	M*	M			P
	CP							P	P				M*	M	P		
	NC						S	P	P	M		M*	M*		P		P
	GC							P	P	M		M*	M*	M	P		
	LI							P	P		P		M*				
	HI							P			P		M*				
LEGEND		P	Primary Land Use			S	Secondary Land Use			M	Mix of Land Uses		M*	Mix of Land Uses (Refer to individual plans in Appendix)			





# 4 Implementing Our Vision

## Implementation Process

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan is not the end but the beginning of the implementation process to translate the community vision into reality. The three-step process outlined here is the best way to ensure effective community planning for Cherokee County.

1

**Develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan.**  
The Character Area standards are intended to establish a general direction and a base level of development quality and compatibility with surrounding areas. After completion, detailed plans, such as the Downtown Master Plans, a Solid Waste Management Plan, Livable Centers Initiatives (LCI) Plans, Parks and Recreation Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, small area studies, and design regulations may be adopted as implementing measures of the Comprehensive Plan.

2

**Use the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate proposals for rezoning and other approvals.**  
Each community should use the policies and Character Area standards outlined within the Comprehensive Plan while reviewing specific proposals for rezoning and development.

- All new development should relate and coordinate with policy;
- Review general design considerations for consistency with Character Area descriptions;
- Character Areas are not regulations so it allows flexibility during project review.

3

**Establish regulatory measures necessary to protect and enhance the character of our communities.**  
Development Regulations should reflect the Character Area guidelines and create a one-to-one relationship between this Plan and the Codes. Typically, a natural outcome of a character area-based Comprehensive Plan is a set of design regulations that speak to specific development characteristics such as site planning, massing, scale, and density. This can be achieved in several ways: require detailed concept plans during the zoning and development review process to conform to the character area guidelines, a rewrite of the Codes to reflect a more performance-based approach, the use of zoning overlay districts that supplement the current zoning provisions and safeguard the designated area from undesirable development patterns.  
  
The Cherokee County Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations need to be transformed so they can be modernized and calibrated to reflect the community's vision while creating a user-friendly format. Regulations that are not clear and easy to understand are likely to be poorly enforced or even worse, ignored altogether. These regulations are valuable and necessary tools for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and for the creation of quality developments within the County.

## Plan Review and Update

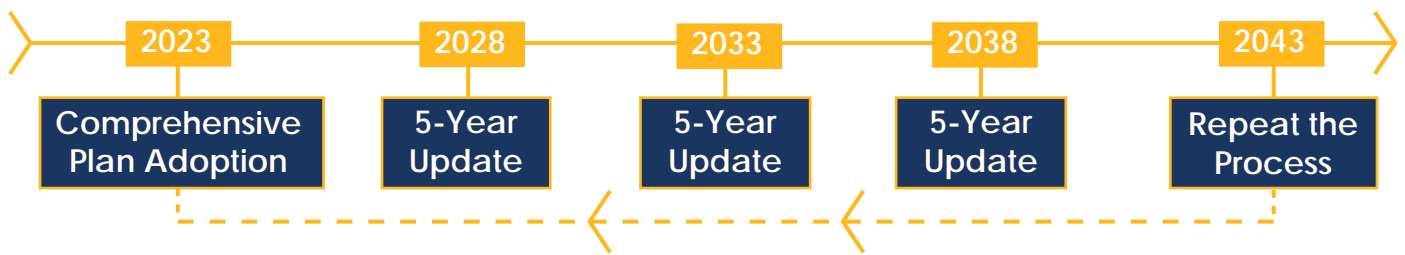
To be a useful tool in guiding growth and development in the future and in ultimately realizing each community's vision for the future, the Comprehensive Plan must be kept current. Over time, changes will occur in the community that may not have been anticipated and over which the community may have no control—changing lifestyles, national or regional economic shifts, the impact of telecommuting or internet access on working and shopping patterns, etc. Annually monitoring these shifts against progress in plan implementation may lead to the need for amendments to the plan. At a minimum, a substantial update will have to be undertaken every five years as per state requirements.

**Annual Plan Review**  
The annual review is to be accomplished in coordination with the annual budgeting and CIE/CWP update process. At a minimum, the annual review should include:

- Pace of growth, in terms of housing units built and land absorbed by nonresidential development.
- Land development approvals over the past year as a scorecard of the Comprehensive Plan's Vision.
- Zoning approvals over the past year in relation to the Future Development Map.
- Future Development Plan Map changes.
- Planned Community Work Plan (CWP) activities compared to actual accomplishments.
- The CWP will be updated annually, reflecting the results of the Annual Plan Review. The CWP will be extended one year into the future to maintain a full five years of future activity, and any changes appropriate to the other years will be included.

**Minor Plan Amendments**  
As a result of the annual plan review, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan may be appropriate. If the needed changes are strictly local and not considered to have an effect on another local government, the changes may be adopted as a minor amendment to the Plan at any time during the year by action of the Board of Commissioners or City Council. At the end of each year, along with the annual update to the CWP, a summary of all minor amendments is to be sent to the ARC with a statement that the individual and cumulative effects of the minor amendments do not significantly alter the basic tenets of the approved Plan.

**Major Plan Amendments**  
If, as a result of the annual plan review process, conditions or policies on which the Plan is based have changed significantly so as to alter the basic tenets of the Plan, the County or City will initiate a major Plan amendment. The public will be involved in the preparation of the Plan amendment to the extent warranted by the degree of change that has occurred. Following State procedural guidelines, a public hearing will be held to inform the public of the community's intent to amend the Plan and to seek public participation. The amendment will be submitted to surrounding communities for review in accordance with our agreement under HB 489, and to the ARC for review under the State's requirements, prior to adoption.





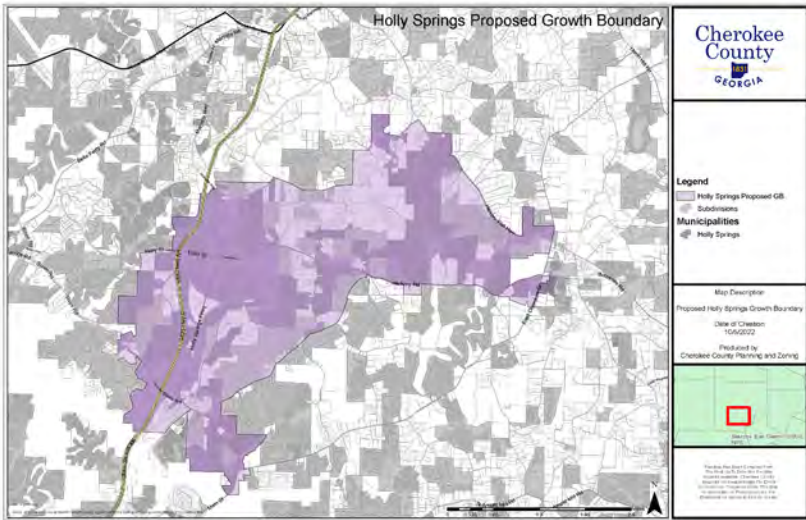
# Recent Accomplishments

Since the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, Cherokee County departments, partners, and employees have accomplished many significant projects. These projects have been in the works for years with multiple stakeholders and jurisdictions working to provide the best service to Cherokee County residents. Below highlights just a few of the projects that we have accomplished. As well, there is a chart that lists every accomplishment from the previous STWP.

## City and County Growth Boundary Agreements (GBA)

Woodstock, Ball Ground, and Holly Springs

The County's Planning and Zoning department have been actively seeking GBAs with the cities in the County. These agreements are negotiated "boundary lines" of which the jurisdictions agree to allow a City to expand with no objection. The County has successfully created GBAs with Woodstock, Ball Ground, and Holly Springs.



## Silver Status with Green Communities Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

Since 2010, the County's Planning and Zoning department have been submitting for recertification with the ARC's Green Communities program. From 2010 to 2018, the County has maintained the Bronze level of the program. However, in 2022, they recertified and was able to meet Silver level, a significant upgrade and improvement for sustainability.



## First Propane Powered Public Transit Cherokee Area Transportation System

In 2022, CATS unveiled three propane-powered buses for its Fixed Route Service. These buses will operate on a regularly scheduled route for a small fee. Along with the buses, the County was able to secure a Federal Transit Authority fuel subsidy, which saves taxpayers money.



## L.B. Ahrens Recreation Center 7345 Cumming Hwy, Canton, GA 30115

The L.B. Ahrens Recreation Center, otherwise known as "The Buzz," is located at Cherokee Veterans Park and is now open for use. Within the 32,623 square-foot building, the center features a rock-climbing wall, basketball courts, a cardio-fitness area, classrooms, and a large banquet hall.

## Technology Ridge Parkway The Bluffs to Cherokee County Regional Airport

In collaboration with Canton and the State Road and Tollway Authority, Cherokee County broke ground on the Technology Ridge Parkway. This project is a new corridor that improves access and is a prime location for corporate relocation.



## Fire Station #15 5225 Yellow Creek Rd, Ball Ground, GA 30107

Cherokee Fire and Emergency Services added a new fire station in the Mica community. In February 2022, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners awarded a \$5.3 million construction contract to Cooper & Company. The new station includes three apparatus bays, six bunks, and a 2,500 square-foot community room.



## Hickory Flat Gym 4835 Hickory Rd, Canton, GA 30115

In 2021, the County approved a construction agreement to restore the Hickory Flat Gym. Part of the restoration included ADA improvements, a new HVAC, and general improvements. Since they preserved the historic character, History Cherokee awarded the County with a Preservation Award.



Recent Accomplishments Chart

The next few pages contain a complete list of recent accomplishments across the last five years. The items on this list were pulled from the Short-Term Work Program (STWP), now known as Community Work Program (CWP), in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update. The STWP/CWP process is part of the Capital Improvement Element (CIE) required of jurisdictions collecting impact fees. The items listed here were the tasks and actions different departments, organizations, and partners sought to accomplish throughout the 2019-2023 Fiscal Year. Some of these tasks will carry over to the new CWP, which is in the next section.

Each project is organized by different categories: Natural and Historic Resources, Economic Development, Housing, Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Public Safety, Library Services, Water and Sewage, School System, and Land Use and GIS. This organizational system is determined by the CIE. Then, the projects are deemed either Complete, Ongoing, Pending, or Dropped. As well, each projects will include an associated date with the status.

- Legend
- ✓ Completed
  - ▶ In Progress
  - ▶▶ Ongoing
  - ⏸ On Hold
  - Dropped

Natural and Historic Resources



Project Description	Status	Comments
Implement Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	▶▶	Continuous process.
Develop Historic Property Resource Kit that includes Tax Credit Basics.	⏸	
Develop and update Historic Resources Map.	⏸	
Continue to update the Cemetery Location Map as needed.	▶▶	Continuous process.
Develop water supply watershed overlay district.	⏸	

Economic Development



Project Description	Status	Comments
Develop and promote business and manufacturing sites within Cherokee County.	▶▶	Continuous process.
Continue the focused marketing campaign targeting industries identified in Opportunity Cherokee.	▶▶	Continuous process.
Enhance the entrepreneurship and small business support programs with a comprehensive range of financial assistance, training, networking, professional advice, and educational opportunities.	▶▶	Continuous process.
Continue the Business Expansion & Retention Program and advocacy for existing industry.	▶▶	Continuous process.
Focus resources on supporting and expanding the Cherokee Workforce Collaborative.	▶▶	Continuous process.
Develop marketing studies for County target areas.	▶▶	Continuous process.

Housing



Project Description	Status	Comments
Continue to evaluate/update dilapidated housing.	▶▶	
Use CDBG funds for the Cherokee County Home Repair Program targeted for low-income seniors and veterans.	▶▶	
Encourage the construction of affordable housing for a range of residents.	▶▶	More work to come.
Develop housing regulations for seniors and disabled persons.	⏸	
Identify areas with adequate infrastructure and suitable for workforce housing opportunities.	▶▶	More work to come.
Facilitate County-wide meetings to encourage cooperation on affordable housing financing from federal and state sources.	⏸	More work to come.
Organize affordable housing education forums for the public.	⏸	

Community Facilities



Project Description	Status	Comments
Periodically review Service Delivery strategies, level of services, and develop a plan to provide services to accommodate new growth.	▶▶	
Continue to identify, fund, and implement Bells Ferry LCI projects.	⏸	
Expand Cherokee County Adult Detention Center.	⏸	

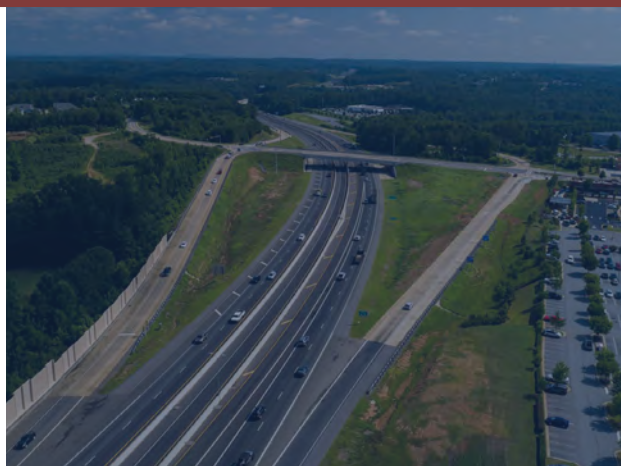


## Parks and Recreation



Project Description	Status	Comments
Multigenerational Center at Veterans Park.	✓	Opened February 2023.
Evaluate sites for multigenerational park facility in SW Cherokee.	✓	Evaluation completed in 2021.
Implement Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	▶▶	Active through 2028.
Connect existing trails and develop linear parks/greenways to connect high priority areas.	▶▶	
Develop additional multipurpose fields for a wider variety of activities.	▶▶	
Develop Thacker property (Alison Lane) for passive recreation.	⏸	Construction remains TBD.

## Transportation



Project Description	Status	Comments
Roadway improvements.	▶▶	
Develop character area-specific roadway standards.	■	
Continue support of Ride-Share Program.	■	
Install Park/Ride lots.	■	
Develop linkages between trails, sidewalks, and amenities/services.	■	
Study alternate route for trucks going through downtown Ball Ground.	▶▶	Project is currently in process.
Develop access management and interparcel access guidelines/regulations.	■	

## Public Safety



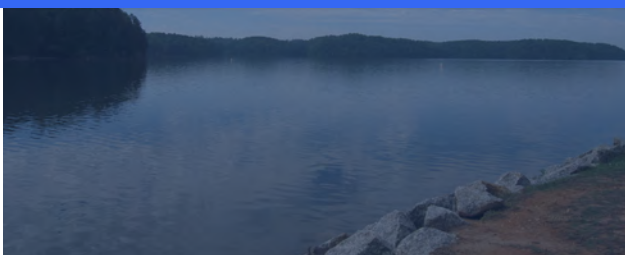
Project Description	Status	Comments
Fire Station 5 renovation.	⏸	Moved to next fiscal cycle.
Fire Station 13 replacement station.	▶	
Fire Station 15 relocation and replacement station.	▶	
Future new fire station.	▶▶	
Purchase property for future fire facilities.	▶▶	
Airport crash truck.	⏸	
Ladder truck	⏸	
Fire apparatus replacement program.	■	
EMS Squad Replacement Program.	⏸	Moved to next fiscal cycle.
Small Fleet Replacement Program.	⏸	Moved to next fiscal cycle.
Consolidate fire service with one Agency.	■	




## Library Services

	Project Description	Status	Comments
	Library collection materials.	⏸	


## Water and Sewage

	Project Description	Status	Comments
	Expand sewer service area.	⏸	Moved to next fiscal cycle.
	Consolidate water/sewer operations into one Agency.	⏸	Moved to next fiscal cycle.
	Link County GIS data with CCWS GIS data for easy use.	⏸	Moved to next fiscal cycle.

## School System

	Project Description	Status	Comments
	Construct new schools.	▶▶	
	Construct additions to existing schools.	▶▶	
	Develop and promote alternative transportation to schools through education and sidewalk construction projects.	⏸	

## Land Use and GIS

	Project Description	Status	Comments
	Create small area plans for areas experiencing significant growth pressures or infrastructure issues.	▶▶	Continuous process.
	Revise Highway 92 Overlay District standards and regulations.	⏸	
	Continue to update annually the 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan and STWP.	▶▶	Continuous process.
	Conduct annual review of the Future Development Map, rezonings, and capital projects for plan and map adjustments.	▶▶	Continuous process.
	Create map showing transportation improvements with off-street trails.	⏸	
	Undertake a Comprehensive Plan update five years after adoption of this plan.	✓	
	Update zoning ordinance to add Regional Airport Area District (RAAD).	⏸	
	Develop a joint plan with Holly Springs for the Hickory Flat area.	⏸	Was on hold for Growth Boundary.
	Develop master plan for SW Cherokee to integrate housing, community services, industrial development, and much needed greenspace/trails.	✓	Completed in 2019.

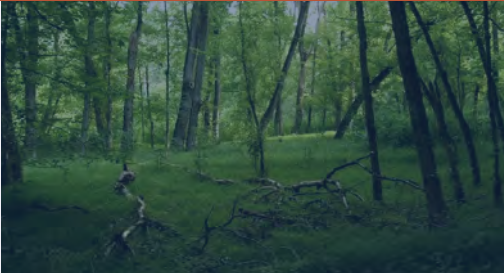


# Community Work Plan (CWP)

The CWP is the County’s short list of proposed, ongoing, and desired projects to complete across the 2023-27 Fiscal Year. It stems off the Capital Improvement Element required of jurisdictions that collect impact fees.

Each project is organized by different categories: Natural and Historic Resources, Economic Development, Housing, Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Public Safety, Library Services, Water and Sewage, School System, and Planning and Zoning, previously labeled as Land Use and GIS. Included with the project description is the timeframe, estimated total cost, funding sources, and responsible party.

## Natural and Historic Resources



Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Implement Parks and Recreation Master Plan.		Staff Time	County	BOC, Planning & Zoning, GIS, Parks & Rec
Continue to update the Cemetery Location Map as needed.		Staff Time	County	GIS, Planning & Zoning, Historical Society

## Economic Development



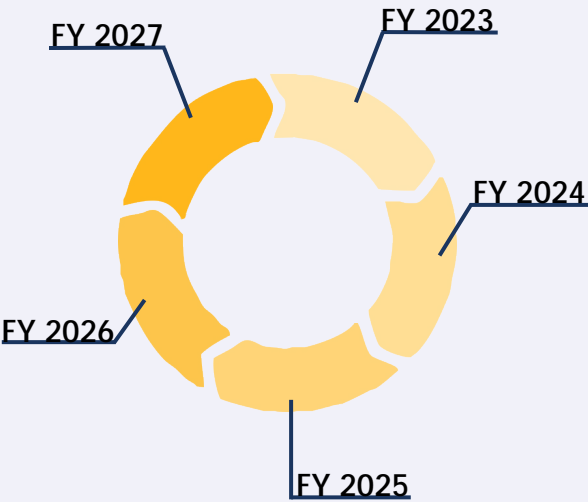
Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Develop and promote business and manufacturing sites within Cherokee County.		Staff Time	Development Authority	Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce
Continue the focused marketing campaign targeting industries identified in Opportunity Cherokee.		Staff Time	Development Authority	Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce
Enhance the entrepreneurship and small business support programs with a comprehensive range of financial assistance, training, networking, professional advice, and educational opportunities.		Staff Time	Development Authority	Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce
Continue the Business Expansion & Retention Program and advocacy for existing industry.		Staff Time	Development Authority	Development Authority
Focus resources on supporting and expanding the Cherokee Workforce Collaborative.		Staff Time	School District, Chamber, Develop. Authority	School District, Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority
Develop marketing studies for County target areas.		\$25,000 each	County	Development Authority, Planning & Zoning

## Housing



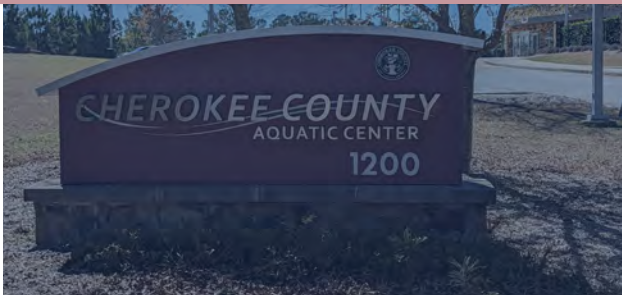
Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Use CDBG funds for the Cherokee County Home Repair Program targeted for low-income seniors and veterans.		\$800,000	County, CDBG	Community Services
Encourage the construction of housing for a range of residents.		TBD	State & Federal Programs, Private	Private Developers
Identify areas with adequate infrastructure and suitable for workforce housing opportunities.		Staff Time	County	GIS, Planning & Zoning, Engineering
Facilitate County-wide meetings to encourage cooperation on workforce housing financing from federal and state sources.		Staff Time	County	Community Development agency
Convene a Housing Taskforce to investigate options related to expanded housing opportunities in the County.		Staff Time	County	Community Development agency
Work with other Cities to form a Land Bank.		Staff Time	County	Community Development agency

### Legend





## Community Facilities



Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Periodically review Service Delivery Strategies, level of services, and develop a plan to provide services to accommodate new growth.		Staff Time	County	BOC, Public Safety, Engineering
Continue to identify, fund, and implement Bells Ferry LCI projects.		\$17,000,000	GDOT, ARC, County, Private	BOC, Planning & Zoning, Engineering, Private Developers




## Parks and Recreation



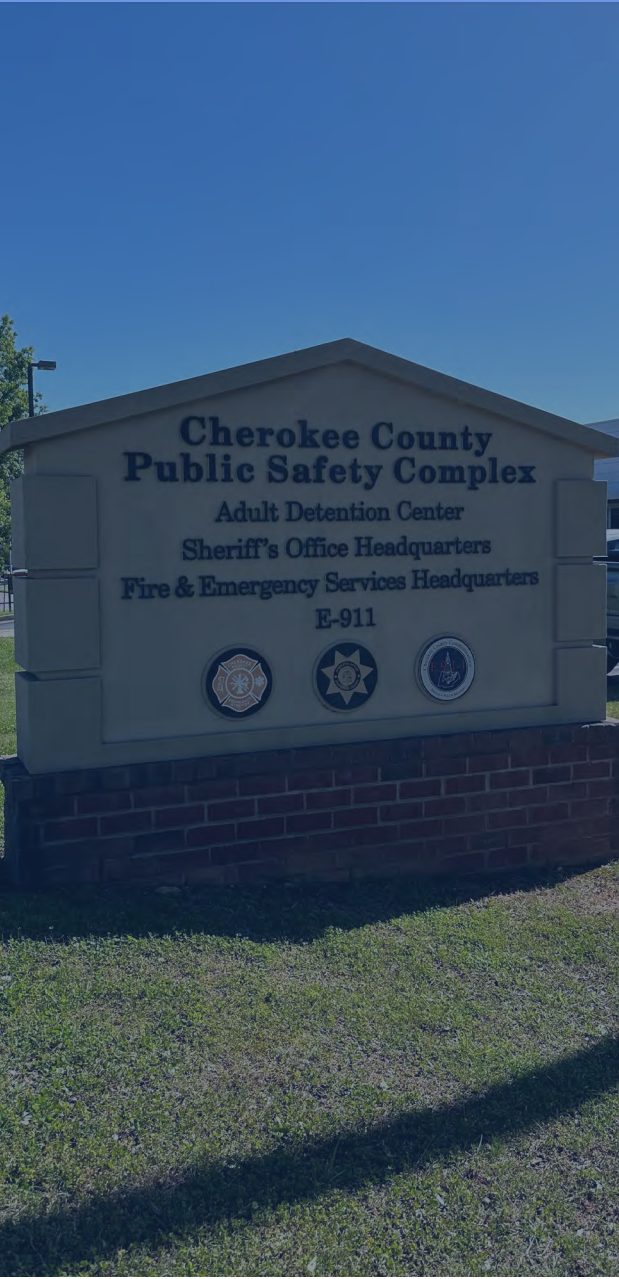









Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Multigenerational Center at Veterans Park.		\$12,400,000	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Evaluate sites for multigenerational park facility in SW Cherokee.		Staff Time	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
East Park (Cherokee Veterans) Fields/Amenities.		\$5,975,000	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Master Trails Plan to connect existing trails and develop linear parks/ greenways to connect high priority areas.		TBD	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Develop additional multipurpose fields.		TBD	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Develop boat launches along the Etowah and Little Rivers.		TBD	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Develop a multigenerational recreation center in SW Cherokee.		\$17,500,000	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Develop a passive park at Yellow Creek Road property.		\$2,500,000	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Develop a passive park at Long Swamp Creek Recreation Area (Hwy 372).		\$1,600,000	SPLOST, DNR Grant	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Develop a Master Plan for a future park in Hickory Flat Community.		\$45,000	SPLOST	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Develop a passive park at EW and Edith Cochran Park in Free Home community.		TBD	SPLOST, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Convert multipurpose fields to artificial turf fields at Badger Creek and Sequoyah Parks.		\$5,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC
Acquire additional land for parks.		TBD	County, Impact Fees	Recreation & Parks, BOC



Transportation

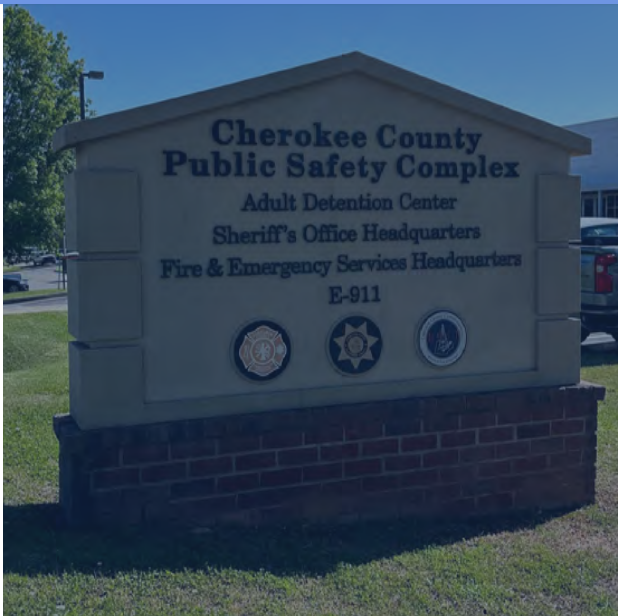
	Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
	Roadway improvements		\$140,000,000	GDOT, SPLOST	BOC, Roadway/SPLOST
	Implement the 2022 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).		TBD	GDOT, SPLOST, Impact Fees	Community Development Agency

Public Safety

	Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
	Fire Station 5 Replacement		\$7,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 7 Replacement and Land Purchase		\$8,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 8 Renovation		\$500,000	SPLOST, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 13 Replacement Station		\$6,000,000	SPLOST, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 15 Relocation and Replacement Station		\$6,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 16 Replacement and Land Purchase		\$8,000,000	SPLOST, City of Canton, Impact Fees, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 18 Renovation		\$1,400,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 19 Roof Replacement		\$150,000	SPLOST, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 29 Replacement and Land Purchase		\$7,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Station 32 Phase 2 Replacement		\$4,000,000	SPLOST, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
	Fire Headquarters and Land Purchase		\$4,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees	BOC, Fire Department



## Public Safety - Continued



Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Fire Safety Village and Land Purchase		\$10,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department
EMS Only Station		\$2,000,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees, EMS Fund	BOC, Fire Department
Fire Apparatus Replacement Program		\$10,910,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees	BOC, Fire Department
EMS Squad Replacement Program		\$4,800,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees	BOC, Fire Department
Small Fleet Replacement Program		\$250,000	SPLOST, Fire District	BOC, Fire Department

## Library Services



Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Library Collection Materials		\$835,512	SPLOST, Impact Fees, General Fund	BOC, Library System
Hickory Flat Library expansion		\$8,200,000	SPLOST, Impact Fees, State Funds	BOC, Library System
Rose Creek Library relocation and expansion		TBD	SPLOST, Impact Fees, State Funds	BOC, Library System





## Water and Sewage



Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
Expand sewer service area.		\$60,000,000	CCWSA	County Water & Sewer Authority
Consolidate water/sewer operations with one agency.		Staff Time	CCWSA	County Water & Sewer Authority
Link County and CCWSA GIS data for easy use.		Staff Time	CCWSA	County Water & Sewer Authority, GIS, Planning & Zoning



## School System

	Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
	Construct new schools		\$41,000,000	Tax, Bonds	Board of Education
	Construct additions to existing schools		\$235,000,000	Tax, Bonds	Board of Education
	Develop and promote alternative transportation to schools through education and sidewalk construction projects.		TBD	Safe Routes to School	CCSD, Roadway/SPLOST

## Planning and Zoning

	Project Description	FY	Est. \$\$	Funding	Responsible Party
	Create small area plans for areas experiencing significant growth pressures or infrastructure issues.		\$300,000	County	Planning & Zoning
	Continue to update annually the 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan and CWP.		Staff Time	County	Planning & Zoning, Engineering, Public Safety, Parks and Rec
	Conduct mid-point review of Future Development Map, rezonings, and capital projects for plan and map adjustments.		Staff Time	County	Planning & Zoning
	Develop joint plan with City of Holly Springs for Hickory Flat area.		Staff Time	County	Planning & Zoning, City of Holly Springs
	Undertake a Comprehensive Plan update five years after the adoption of this Plan.		Staff Time	County	Planning & Zoning
	Develop a joint area (land use and transportation) plan with Cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock for Wild Cat (Sixes Interchange of 575) area.		TBD	County	BOC, Planning & Zoning, City of Holly Springs, City of Woodstock
	Review Zoning Code and Development Regulations and write a Unified Development Code.		\$500,000	County	BOC, Planning & Zoning, Engineering
	Update the Bells Ferry LCI Plan.		\$300,000	County	BOC, Planning & Zoning
	Develop a zoning overlay for Highway 20 (Cumming Hwy).		Staff Time	County	Planning & Zoning
	Develop a sustainability plan.		Staff Time	County	Planning & Zoning
	Take steps to become a Broadband Ready Community (Georgia Department of Community Affairs designation).		Staff Time	County	Planning & Zoning





Incorporating Related Plans.....	A
Community Engagement Materials.....	B
Pond Engagement Summary.....	C
Pond Existing Conditions.....	D
Pond Development Study.....	E
SW Cherokee Plan.....	F
Bells Ferry LCI Plan.....	G

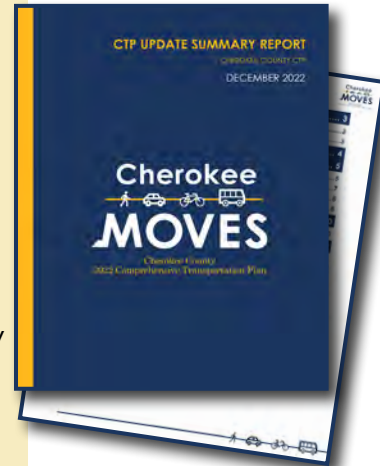


## Appendix A: Incorporating Related Plans

To maximize the impact of the Comprehensive Plan, it is important that we are in sync with other major initiatives/plans in Cherokee County. These related plans, covering areas such as transportation, parks and green space, and economic development, play a crucial role in the shaping of our county. Each plan branches off the goals of the Comprehensive Plan to provide specific strategies/action items to reach those goals.

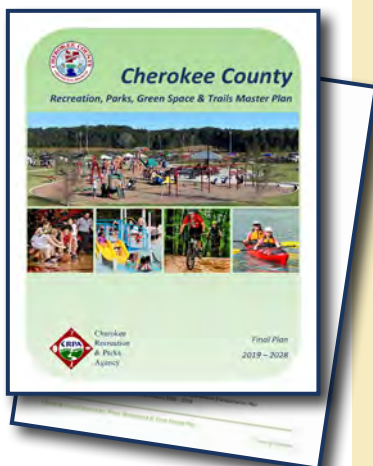
### Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The 2022 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) addresses multi-modal transportation issues through 2050. The final prioritized goals were developed with input from citizens, business owners, and elected officials, then evaluated for effectiveness. The five goals include Improve Connectivity and Mobility, Maintain Community Health, Safety, and Environment, Align Transportation and Land Use Planning, Infrastructure Preservation, and Increase Modal Options. The CTP includes projects related to state routes, bridges, local roads, sidewalks, trails, and technology/ITS support. Likewise, there are changes that may not directly impact the physical infrastructure but will help guide future development in the County. Working with the County Engineer, the Planning Team has incorporated some of these projects into the Comprehensive Plan to follow the tier recommendations set out in the CTP.



### Capital Improvement Element and Plan

Cherokee County uses Impact Fees to help fund the construction of important facilities for libraries, Parks & Recreation, Sheriff patrol, Fire and Emergency Services, and roads. The Capital Improvement Element is a detailed study of the existing facilities, needed facilities, and the costs to maintain the current levels of service in these different areas. This document was last updated and adopted in October 2022 for Fiscal Year 2021. The CIE is updated every year with estimated project costs and timelines for design/construction. Information from this plan has been used to supplement the information in the Community Work Program about major capital projects. These projects typically pertain to Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Fire and Emergency Services, as well as enforcement agencies, senior services, and internal government initiatives.



### Recreation, Parks, Green Space & Trails Master Plan

The Recreation, Parks, Green Space, & Trails Master Plan 2019-2028 prioritizes action items that help improve the location connectivity in the County while developing and improving existing parks. This includes developing a system of linear parks and greenways that connect residents to amenities and services throughout the County, as well as constructing new facilities at existing parks that allow for a wider variety of activities. The plan also seeks to take advantage of the County's natural resources by advocating for canoe/kayak launch points along the Etowah and Little Rivers. Finally, the plan includes a 'gap analysis' which analyzes areas of Cherokee County that lack parks and green space. In this capacity, the plan calls for additional parks to be developed north of Highway 20 and in southeastern Cherokee.

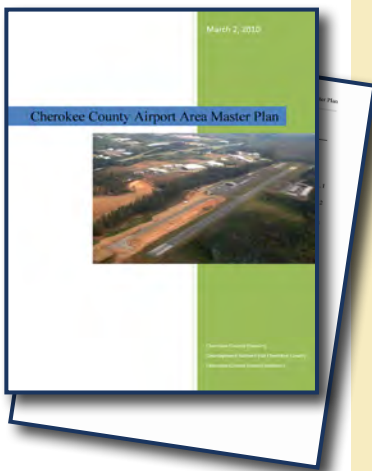


## Cherokee By Choice 2.0 - Five Year Strategic Plan

The Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) drafted the county's five-year economic development strategic plan, Cherokee By Choice 2.0. This plan, which included interviews, surveys, and group discussions with 3,500 participants, highlighted the county's assets that make it an ideal employment center, along with strategies for creating jobs attracting people to live and work in Cherokee. COED identified six target sectors for the county to focus on expanding: Advanced Manufacturing, Commercial Developers, Headquarters, Entrepreneurs/Startups, Film & Digital Entertainment, and Technology. Essentially, Cherokee By Choice 2.0 expands on the Comprehensive Plan to provide a more specific overview of the existing industries and strategies that will grow jobs in the target market, and ultimately keep Cherokee County residents from having to commute outside the County. The plan also emphasizes the importance of attractive & connected places, educated & talented workers, innovative & enterprising businesses, and a vibrant & inviting image. These elements, along with promoting a sense of place for workers, will help the county's workplace and regional centers to thrive as planned.

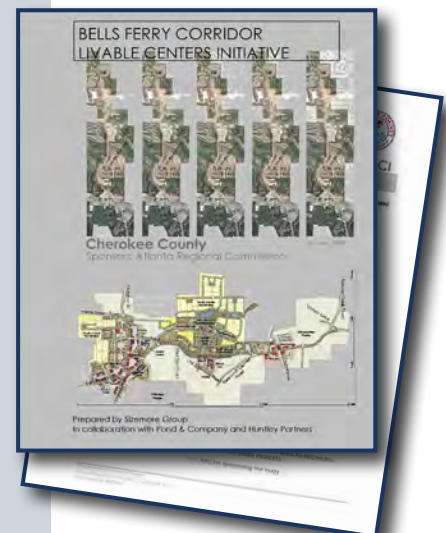
### Airport Area Master Plan

The Airport Area Master Plan was developed in collaboration with the Cherokee Office of Economic Development and a large group of stakeholders representing long-time residents, property owners, business owners, utility providers, and local government. The goal was to take advantage of a major county asset—the Cherokee County Regional Airport, which opened in 1968. The plan outlined strategies to help make the airport a major economic engine for the region. The primary goals of the plan include the creation of a Regional Airport Area District, the adoption of development standards, the development of links between the Airport Area and nearby business centers, and the attraction of employers to the area. From this report, a Concept Plan was developed and included designated areas for business parks, a workplace zone, and low-intensity housing as part of the Master Plan.



### Bells Ferry LCI Plan

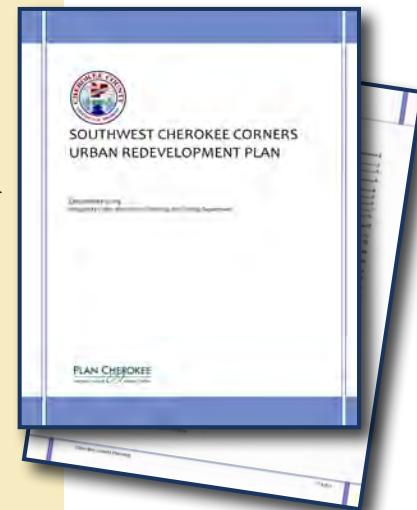
In 2005, Cherokee County received a Livable Centers Initiatives (LCI) grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission to study land use and transportation in the Bells Ferry Corridor. Having long served as a major shopping center and service hub, this plan allows the community to envision the potential redevelopment of this 3-mile stretch of Bells Ferry Road starting near the Cobb County line. Bells Ferry is such an integral part of the County that it was designated as its own Character Area, for which the LCI report provides recommendations. A major priority of this plan is to develop "greyfield" commercial areas and to create a gateway to Cherokee County that provides shopping, basic needs, and housing. The plan developed guidelines within the following categories: Community Character, Transportation, Land Use, and Economic Development. These key items will be addressed through the Character Area implementation strategies.





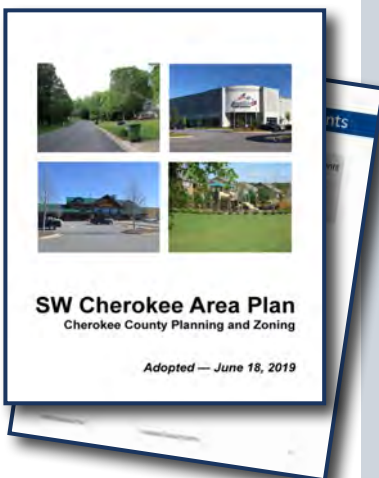
## SW Cherokee Redevelopment Plan

The Southwest Cherokee Opportunity Zone lies at the very corner of southwestern Cherokee County. Through this plan, drafted in 2009, the area roughly bounded by Cobb County, Bartow County, and the intersection of Highway 92 and Woodstock Road became a state-designated Opportunity Zone. This state tax program provides tax relief to employers or property owners who establish businesses within those boundaries to spur job growth. The plan highlights issues that this area faces such as the underutilization of developable land, deteriorating commercial buildings, the overall lack of tax revenue generation, and the high demand for services to address disinvestment and blight. As you will see in this Comprehensive Plan Update, Southwest Cherokee has great potential as a Workplace Center that supports new and existing industries with a variety of nearby housing options for potential employees.



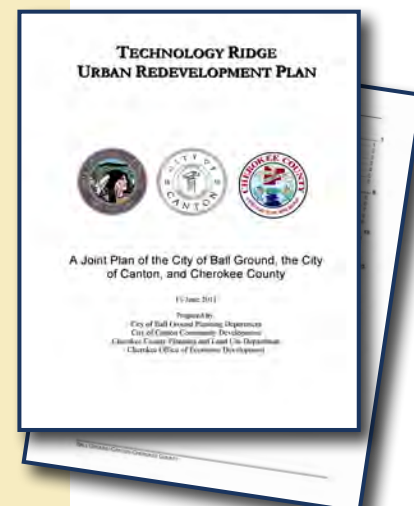
## SW Cherokee Area Plan

In 2019, Cherokee County adopted the SW Cherokee Area Plan as part of an implementation strategy laid out in the County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The plan sought out to grow SW Cherokee into a better place to call home and do business. The values developed for the plan were Diversity of Land Uses, Connections to Opportunity, Quality Infrastructure and Services, Access to Greenspace & Recreation, and Friendly & Safe Community. To get closer to this vision, the County has established the boundary within this plan as its own Character Area. This allows the future land use of the area to be dictated by the SW Cherokee Area Plan for mixed-use, commercial, workplace, and green space uses.



## Technology Ridge Redevelopment Plan

This plan provides the background, goals, and strategies for redevelopment of what would become Cherokee County's second Opportunity Zone, Technology Ridge, which sits along I-575 and reaches from Canton to the southern portion of Ball Ground. In recent years, this area has experienced underdevelopment and an increase in blighted properties. It has also faced a lack of retail market appeal, difficult access, and economic stagnation. To remedy this, the plan aligned itself with the principles of the County and City of Canton's Comprehensive Plan. A primary goal of the plan includes designating Technology Ridge as an Opportunity Zone (since accomplished) that would make potential employers eligible for tax benefits for setting up shop in the area. Other strategies include supporting the development of a variety of commercial uses to encourage activity and employment and encouraging businesses to utilize existing structures that are compatible with the surrounding Character Areas. Like previous small-area plans, the Technology Ridge Plan provides a localized guide that builds on the Comprehensive Plan's overall goals, especially with regard to increasing employment in the area.

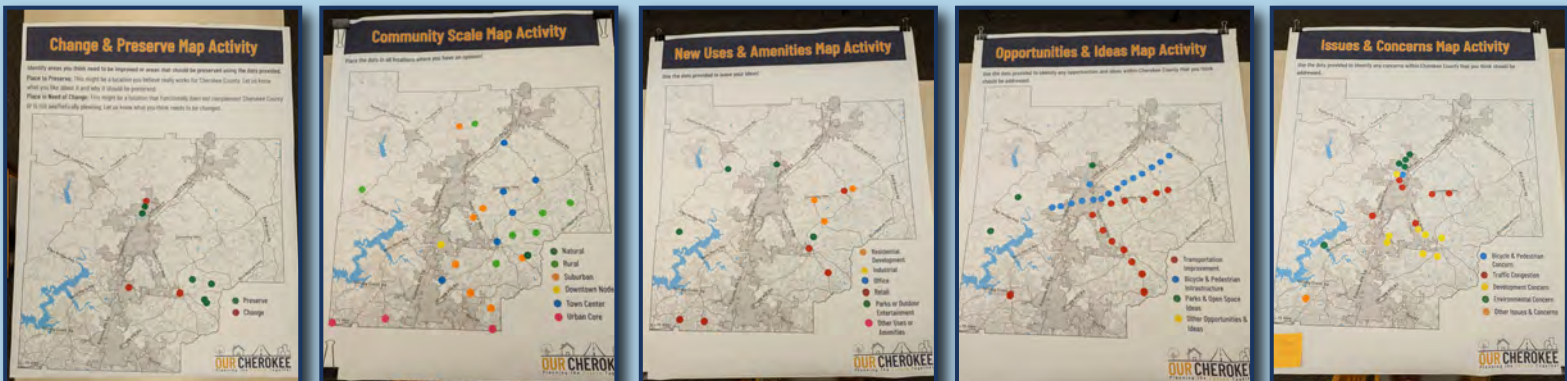
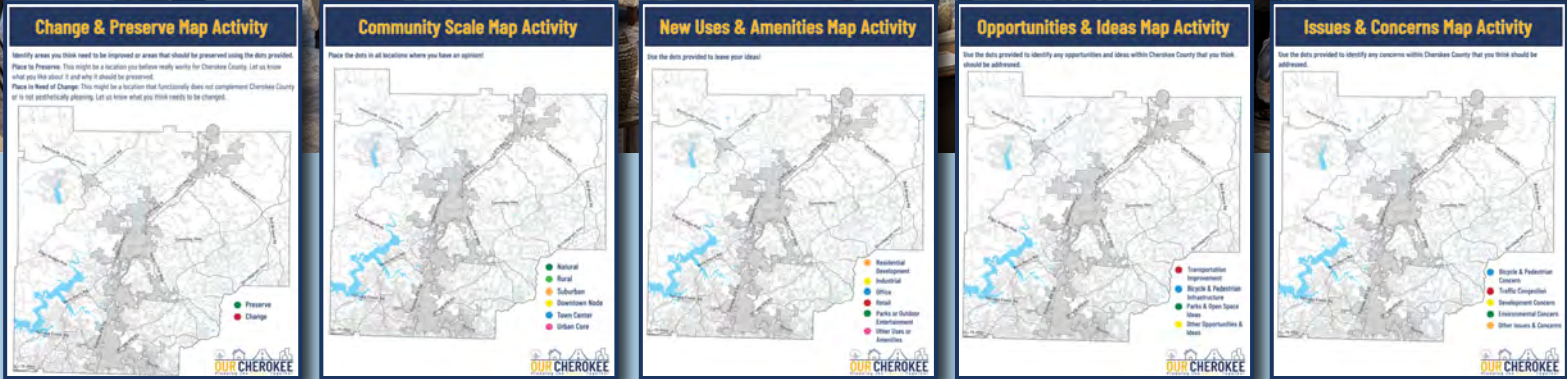




# Appendix B: Community Engagement Materials

## Community Meeting #1

October 11, 2022 - Northside Cherokee Conference Center



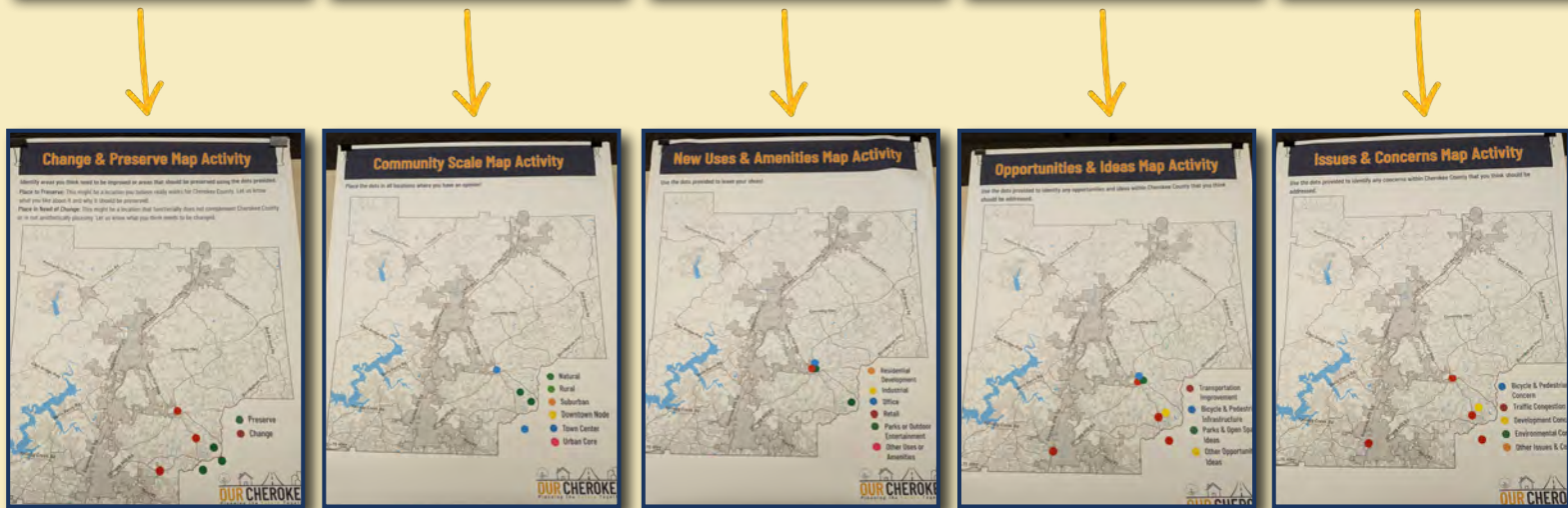
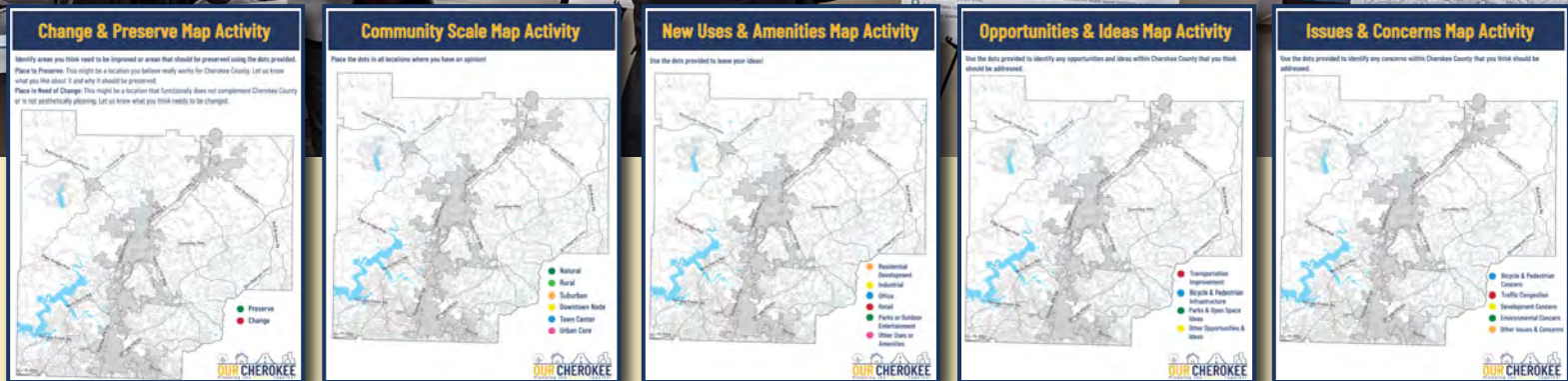
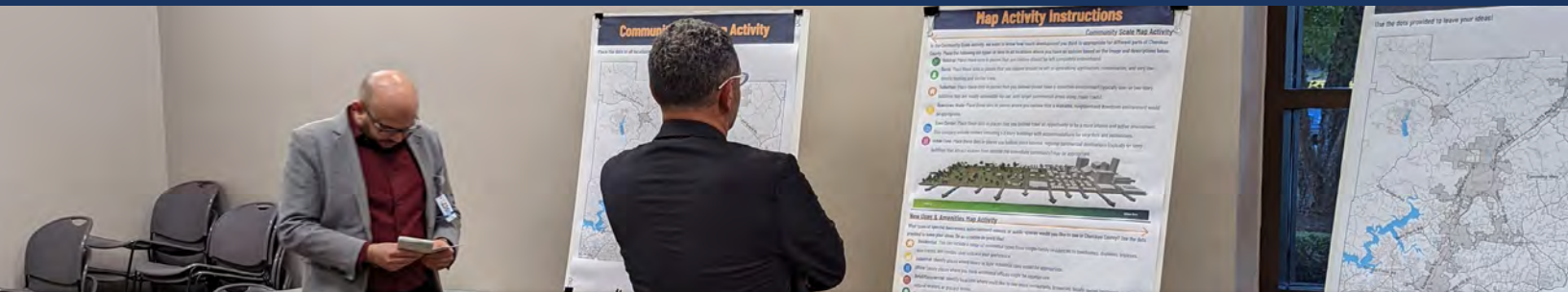
Cherokee County Community Meeting #1 Sign-In Sheet	
Name	Email Address
Brian + Kristen Coston	brian@cherokee.org
John Johnston	john@cherokee.org

Cherokee County Community Meeting #1 Sign-In Sheet	
Name	Email Address
John Johnston	john@cherokee.org
Jack Stelly	jack@cherokee.org
Susan Johnston	susan@cherokee.org
Keith Johnston	keith@cherokee.org
Brad McLaughlin	brad@cherokee.org
Brentley Day	brentley@cherokee.org
Joe R. H.	joe@cherokee.org

Cherokee County Community Meeting #1 Sign-In Sheet	
Name	Email Address
John Johnston	john@cherokee.org
Kristi Ledford	kristi@cherokee.org
Lisa Trosler	lisa@cherokee.org

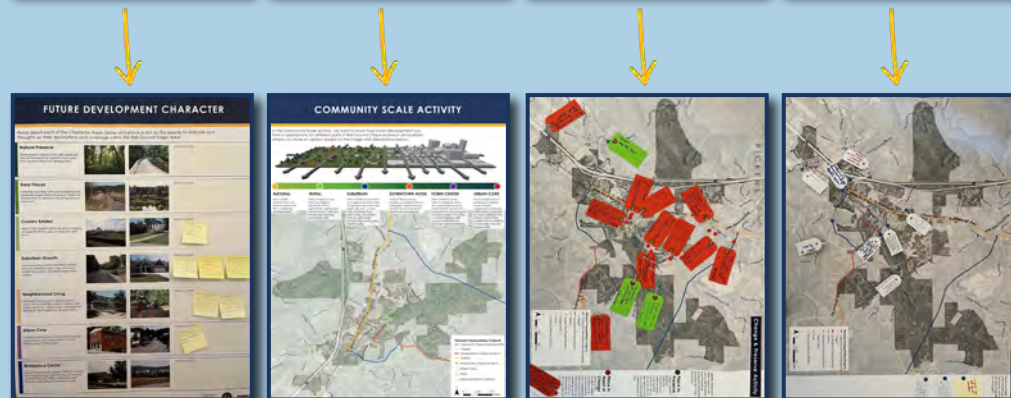
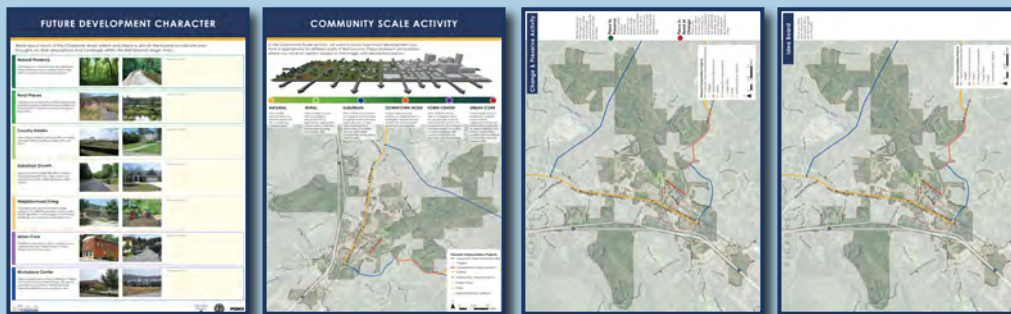
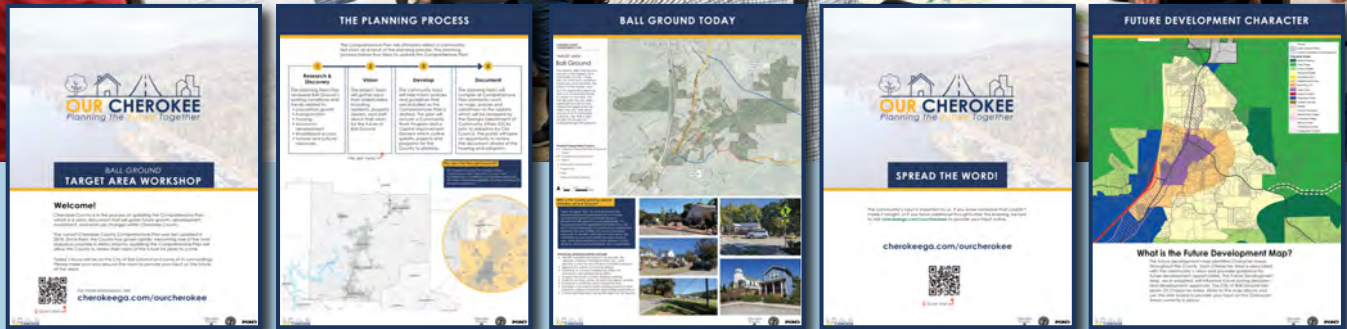


## October 19, 2022 - WREC Recreation Center

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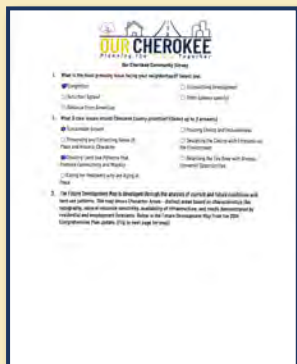
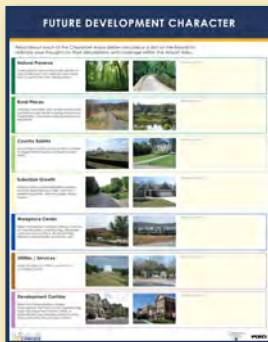
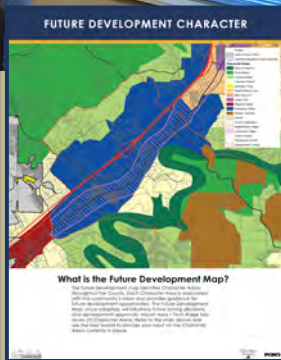
## October 25, 2022 - Ball Ground City Hall

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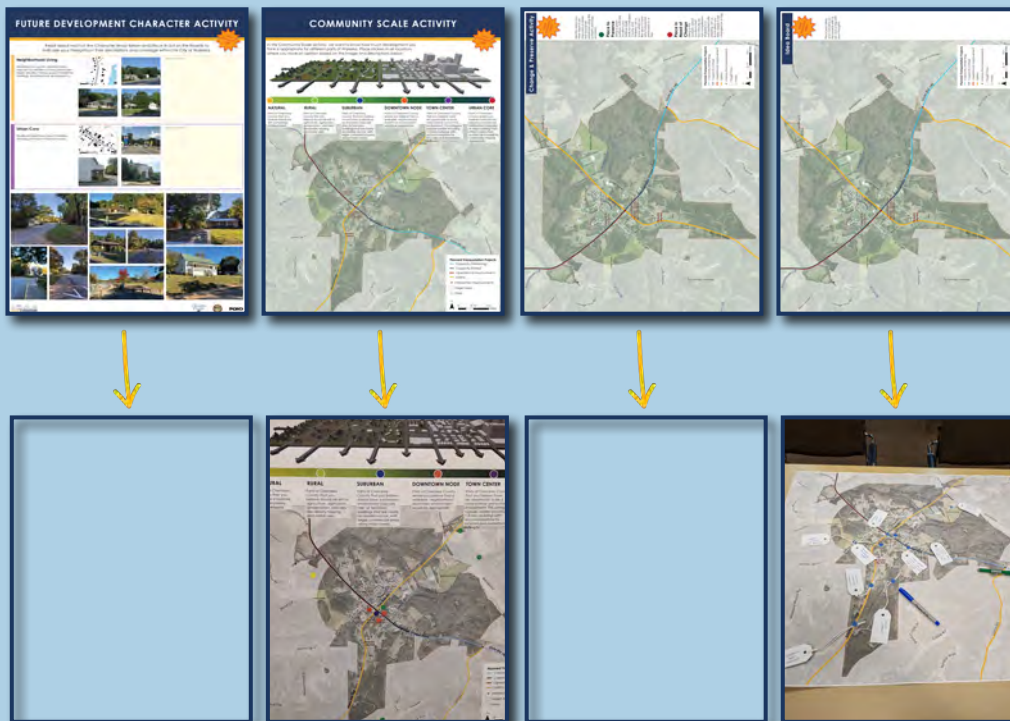
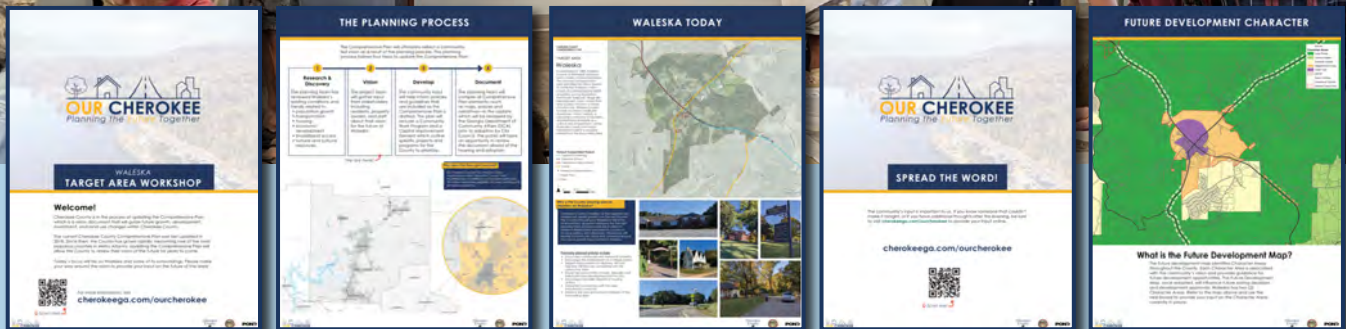
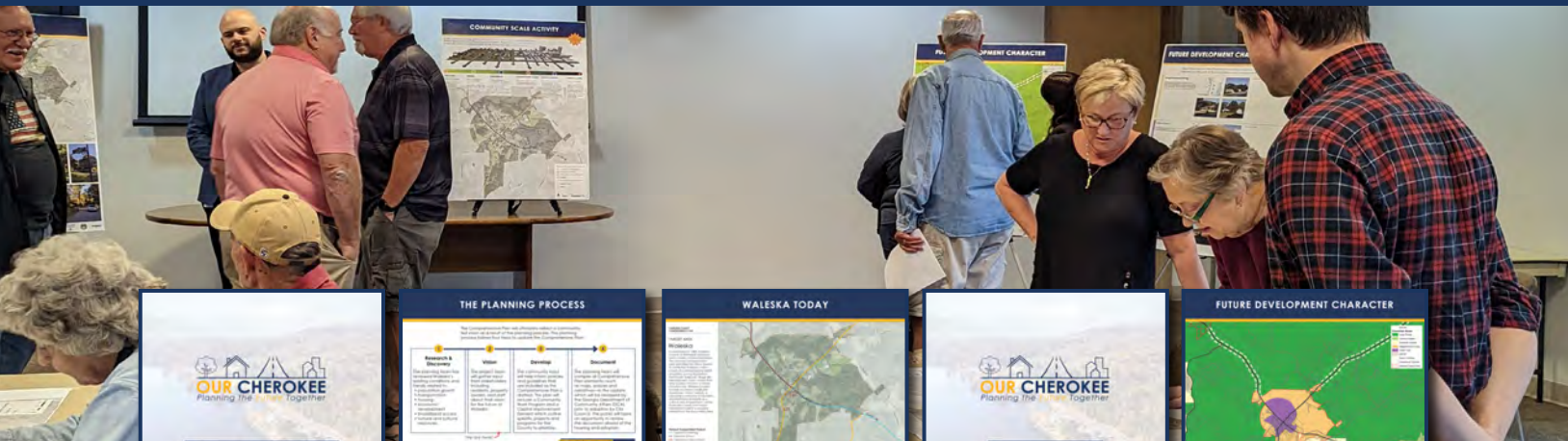
# Airport Area Community Meeting

## October 27, 2022 - Airport Fire Station

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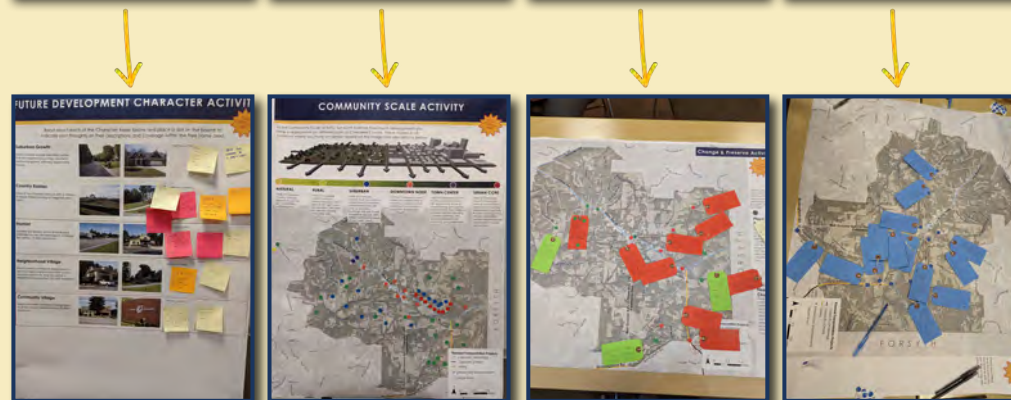
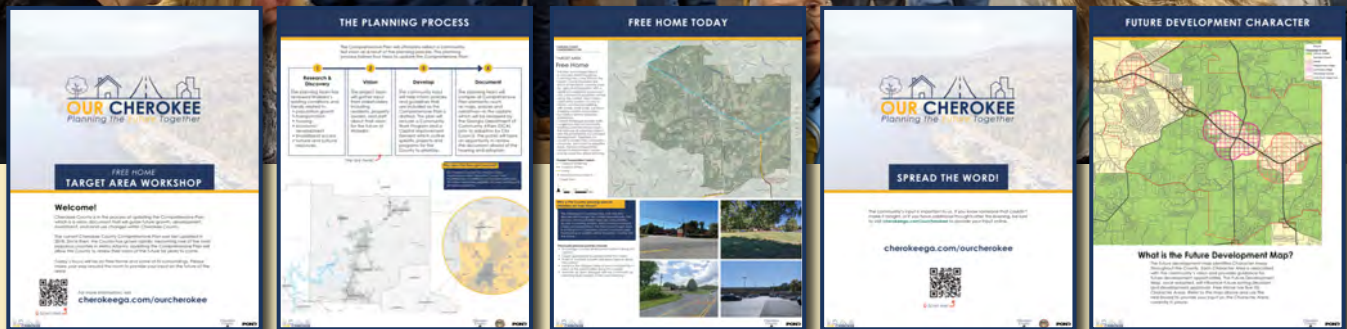
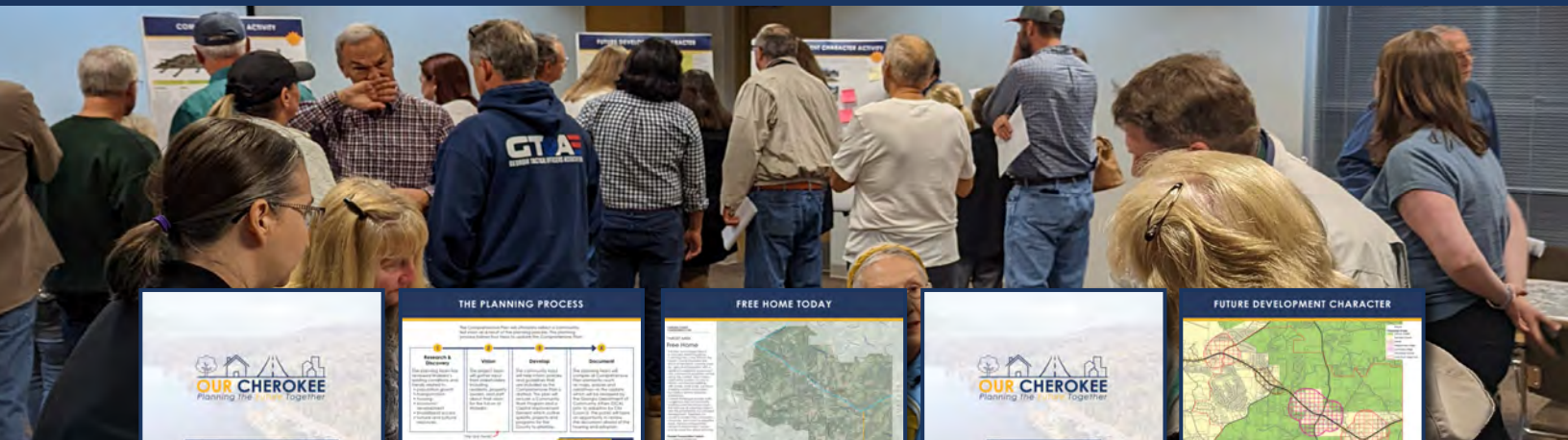


## November 3, 2022 - Waleska Fire Station

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## November 10, 2022 - Free Home Fire Station



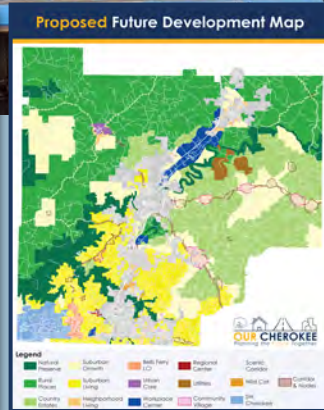
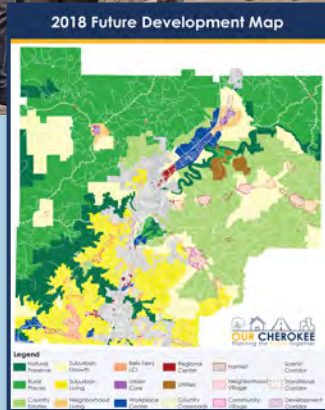
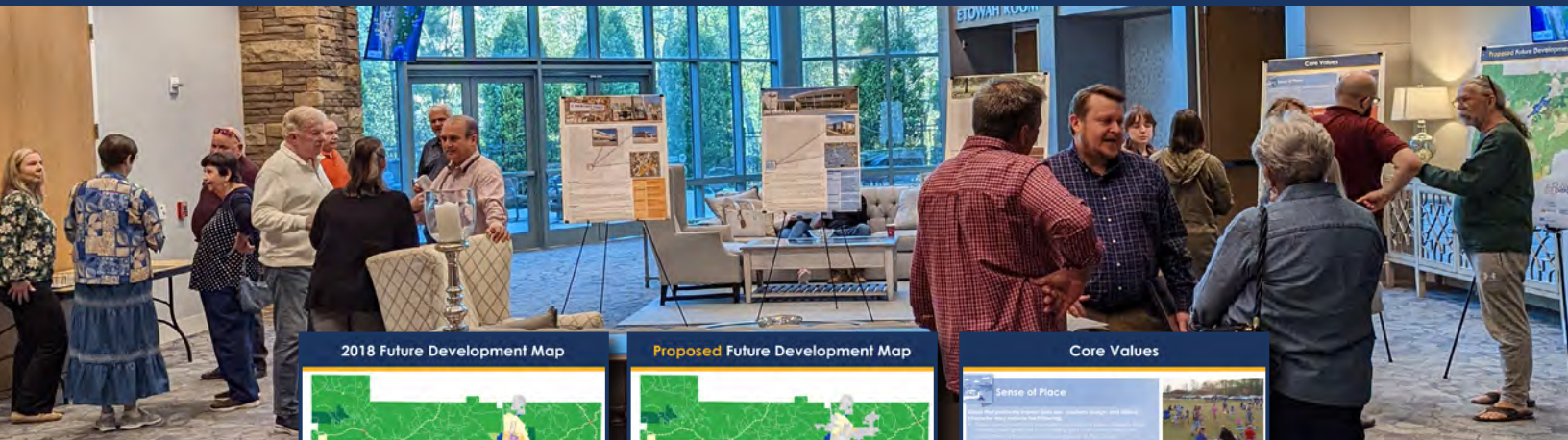
OUR CHEROKEE		Free Home Workshop Sign-In Sheet		Cherokee County	
Name		Email Address		Date	
1	Vanessa Dacbar	2	Maia Doss	3	
4	John Doolittle	5	Gen Hitt	6	
7	April DeLoe	8	20 Weeks	9	
10	Brandon Edge	11		12	
13	Joanna Jennings	14		15	
16	James Johnson	17		18	
19	David Kellum	20	Patty Krum	21	
22	Anna Kerkens	23		24	
25	James & Marlene Robinson	26		27	
28	Don Gordon	29		30	
31	Wesley Clarys	32		33	
34	Tim Jenkins	35		36	
37	Don & Patricia Johnson	38		39	
40	Reginald Cox	41		42	
43	Yusef B. Dax	44		45	
46	Ambera Dwyer	47		48	
49	Debi Lamm	50		51	
52	Phil Gaskins	53		54	

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# Draft Review Community Meeting

## April 11, 2023 - Northside Cherokee Conference Center



### Core Values

#### Sense of Place

Our Cherokee County is a place where people want to live, work, and play. We value the unique character and history of our community and strive to preserve it for future generations.

#### Housing Opportunities

We value a diverse range of housing options that meet the needs of all residents, from affordable rental units to single-family homes. We encourage development that promotes healthy communities and economic vitality.

#### Sustainable Growth

We value responsible land use and development that protects our natural resources and promotes long-term economic growth. We encourage development that is resilient to climate change and promotes environmental stewardship.

### SW Cherokee

**Description**

The SW Cherokee area is located in the southwest corner of Cherokee County. It is a mix of rural and suburban land use. The proposed development plan for this area includes a mix of residential and commercial uses, with a focus on creating a vibrant community center.

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

### Wild Cat

**Description**

The Wild Cat area is located in the central part of Cherokee County. It is a mix of rural and suburban land use. The proposed development plan for this area includes a mix of residential and commercial uses, with a focus on creating a vibrant community center.

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

### Corridor and Nodes

**Description**

The Corridor and Nodes strategy is a key component of the Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan. It identifies key transportation corridors and development nodes that will shape the future growth of the county. The strategy aims to create a more efficient and sustainable transportation system while promoting economic development and community vitality.

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

**Intensity**

Medium Density Residential

### Plan Review Workshop Sign-in Sheet

April 11, 2023 - Northside Cherokee Conference Center

Name	Email Address
John Smith	john.smith@email.com
Jane Doe	jane.doe@email.com
Bob Johnson	bob.johnson@email.com
Alice Brown	alice.brown@email.com
Charlie White	charlie.white@email.com
Diana Green	diana.green@email.com
Frank Black	frank.black@email.com
Grace Hall	grace.hall@email.com
Henry King	henry.king@email.com
Ivy Lee	ivy.lee@email.com
Jack Miller	jack.miller@email.com
Karen Wilson	karen.wilson@email.com
Leo Taylor	leo.taylor@email.com
Mia Adams	mia.adams@email.com
Noah Baker	noah.baker@email.com
Olivia Carter	olivia.carter@email.com
Peter Evans	peter.evans@email.com
Quinn Foster	quinn.foster@email.com
Rachel Gibson	rachel.gibson@email.com
Samuel Harris	samuel.harris@email.com
Tina Young	tina.young@email.com
Uma Reed	uma.reed@email.com
Victor Cook	victor.cook@email.com
Wendy Bell	wendy.bell@email.com
Xavier Scott	xavier.scott@email.com
Yara Ward	yara.ward@email.com
Zoe Torres	zoe.torres@email.com





# Appendix C: Pond Engagement Summary



## OUR CHEROKEE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

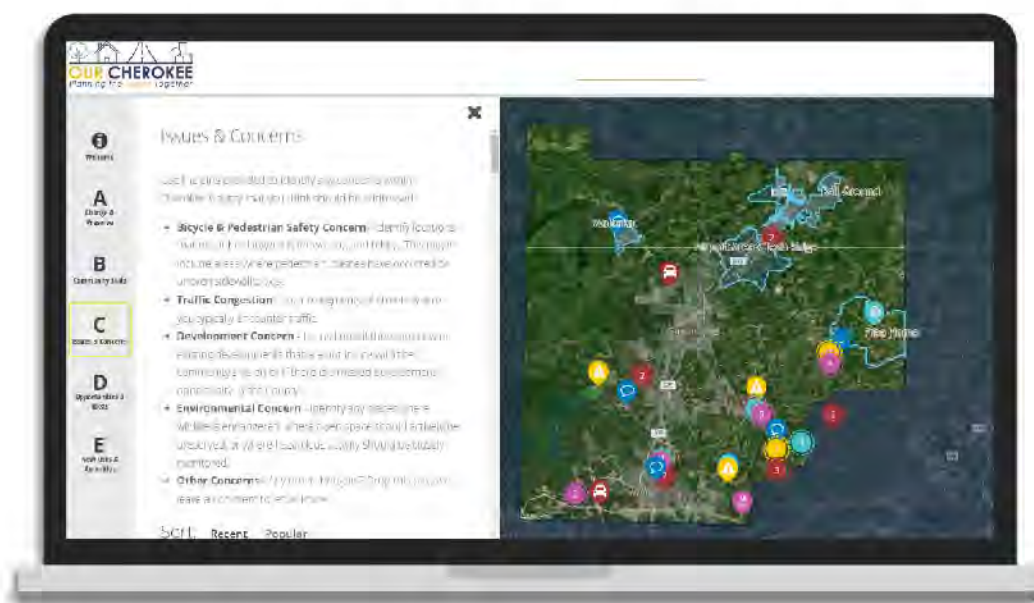
Public input is imperative to the Cherokee Comprehensive Plan update process. To kick off the engagement process, four in-person workshops were held, as the target areas are given special attention in the Comprehensive Plan, and it was important to solicit direct input from the residents and property owners in those areas. In addition to the in-person workshops, an online survey and interactive mapping tool were created and distributed to the public to complete. The online survey garnered 787 responses.

**In-person Workshops** - Workshops were held in the four target areas including Ball Ground, Waleska, Airport/Tech Ridge, and Freehome. Each workshop had several boards that outlined the planning process,, why the target area was chosen, and activities for participants to share their input on community scale and Character Areas.

**Online County-wide Survey** - The online survey was developed to ask participants more broad questions about their experiences in Cherokee County. The questions included their thoughts on broadband in the County, sustainability, and character areas.

**Online Ball Ground Survey** – The City of Ball Ground created a survey with questions specific to the City.

**Online Interactive Mapping Tool** – Social PinPoint, an online mapping tool, was used to allow participants to ‘drop pins’ in the locations they want to see changed or preserved. They could also identify areas of specific community scales, issues & concerns, opportunities & ideas, and new uses & amenities. This document summarizes key takeaways, see a comprehensive list of community comments in **Attachment A: Online Engagement Comment Inventory**.





## WORKSHOP TAKEAWAYS

*Ball Ground Workshop* – The Ball Ground workshop was held on October 25, 2022 at City Hall with 24 people in attendance. Key takeaways in this target area include:

- Growth along Dawsonville Highway may be appropriate and supported once the road is widened.
- Continue to add community spaces and events to downtown Ball Ground.
- Preserve neighborhoods and try to mitigate congestion along Ball Ground Highway.
- Improve the rail crossing at Jordan Road.
- Preserve of wetlands & Long Swamp Creek



*Airport/Tech Ridge Workshop* - The Airport/Tech Ridge workshop was held on October 27, 2022 at Fire Station #21 with 2 people in attendance. Key takeaways in this target area include:

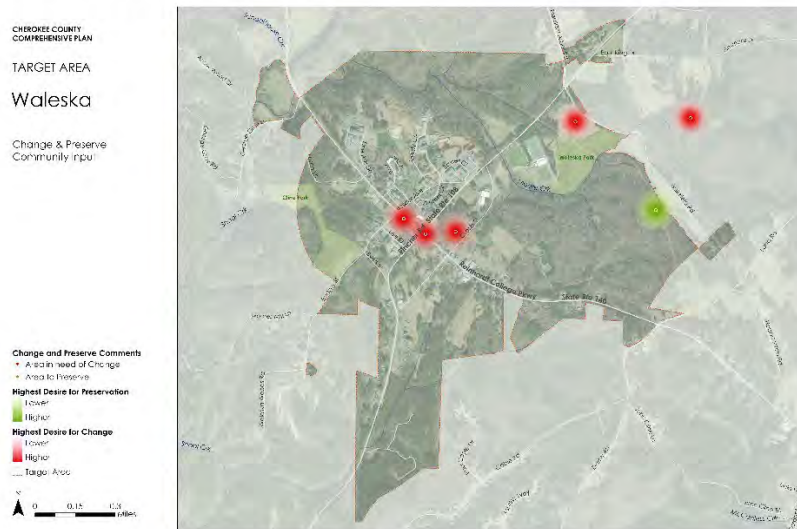
- Concerns about congestion if development increases – particularly in the eastern part of Cherokee.
- The County should consider river access in this target area.





*Waleska Workshop* – 12 people attended the Waleska Workshop held at Fire Station #12 on November 3, 2022. Key takeaways in this target area include:

- Improvements needed at Fincher Road and Reinhardt College Parkway.
- Splashpad needs a consistent schedule.



*Free Home Workshop* – The Free Home workshop was held on November 10, 2022 at Fire Station #4. Key Takeaways in this target area include:

- Protected bike lanes, multi-use trails, and sidewalks should be prioritized in Free Home, particularly on Holbrook Campground Road and around the intersection of Cumming Highway and Ball Ground Road.
- Any future development should be of a high quality and well thought out.
- All responses to Community Scale were Rural, and comments illuded to zoning remaining the same and preserving low density sites.
- New commercial development should be concentrated along Highway 20.







*Ball Ground Workshop*



*Airport/Tech Ridge Workshop*



*Free Home Workshop*

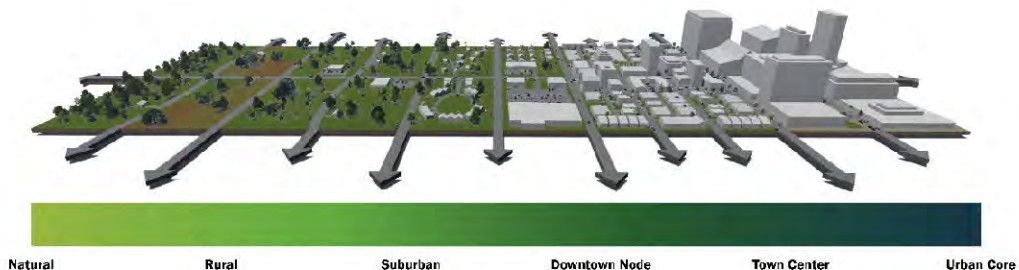


*Waleska Workshop*

## ADDITIONAL INPUT

Because the Comprehensive Plan addresses all unincorporated parts of Cherokee County, not just the target areas, participants could leave comments on the entire map of county. This input is summarized below.

- Community Scale** - The majority of the community scale feedback indicated that participants want to see much of the county remain rural. Pockets of higher density development (Downtown and Town Center) may be appropriate along major corridors and in Hickory Flat. No comments were left in support of the "urban core" community scale. Participants referred to the community scale transect below, and the following maps represent general interest in each scale across the County.



Natural Rural Suburban Downtown Node Town Center Urban Core

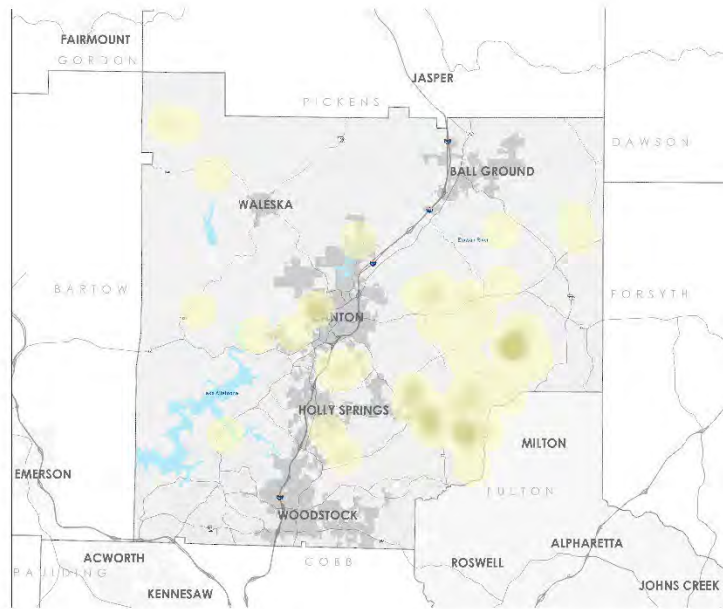


Community  
Scale Input

"Natural" Scale Comments

Less Support  
More Support

0 2 4 Miles



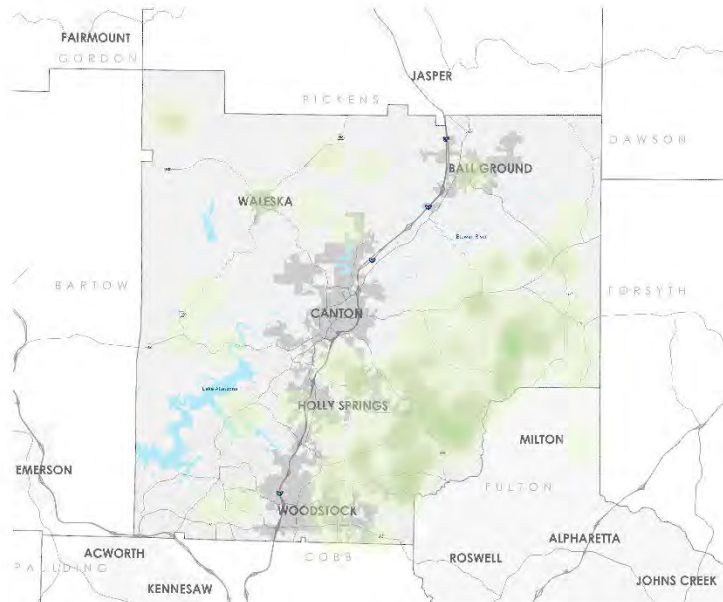
**Natural Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe should be left completely undeveloped.

Community  
Scale Input

"Rural" Scale Comments

Less Support  
More Support

0 2 4 Miles



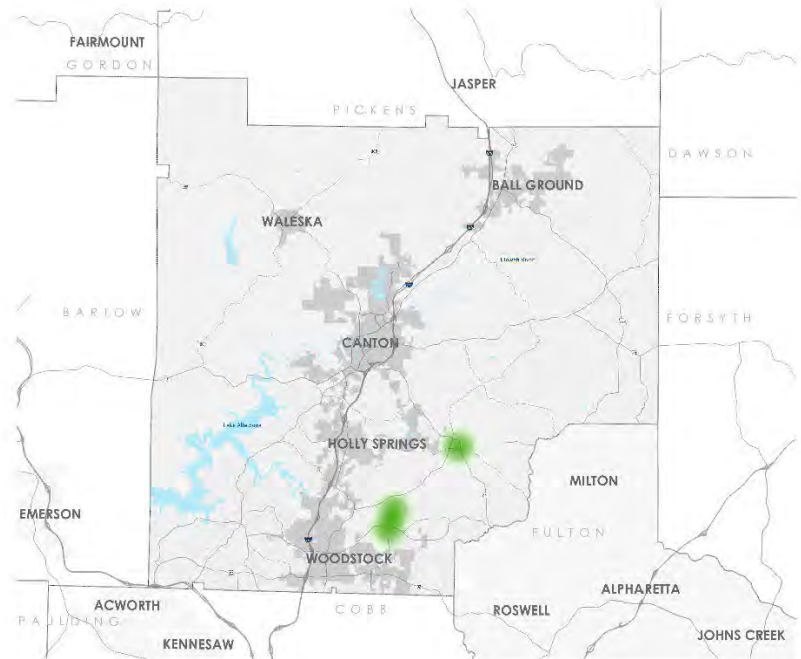
**Rural Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe should be left to agriculture, agritourism, conservation, and very low-density housing and similar uses.



## Community Scale Input

"Suburban" Scale Comments  
Less Support  
More Support

0 2 4 Miles

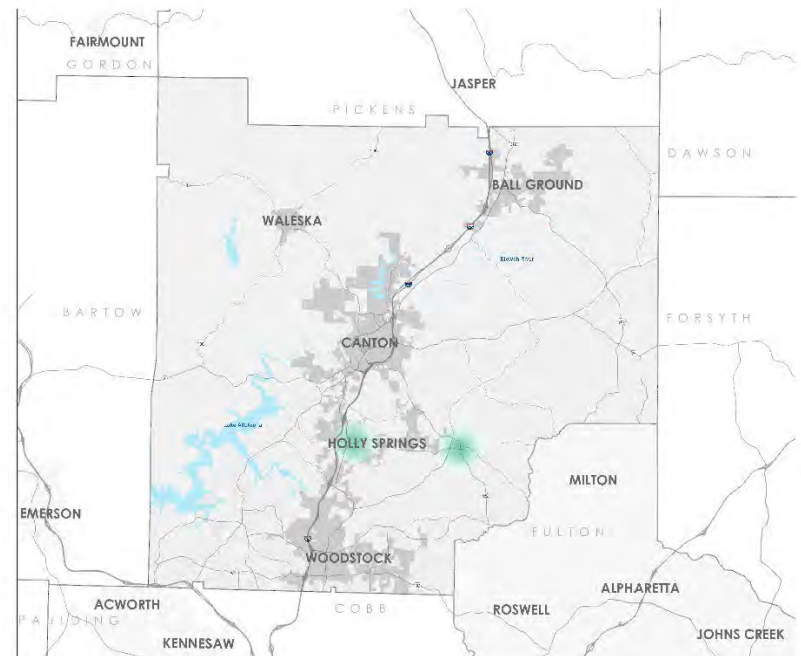


**Suburban Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe should have a suburban environment (typically one- or two-story buildings that are mostly accessible via car, with larger commercial areas along major roads).

## Community Scale Input

"Downtown Node" Scale Comments  
Less Support  
More Support

0 2 4 Miles



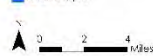
**Downtown Node Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe that a walkable, neighborhood downtown environment would be appropriate.



## Community Scale Input

"Town Center" Scale Comments

Least Support  
More Support



**Town Center Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County where respondents believe have an opportunity to be a more intense and active environment. This category include centers including 1-3 story buildings with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians.

- **Change & Preserve** - Responses to the Change/Preserve activity were varied. Many participants said they would like to see additional sidewalks within the county, especially when there is an opportunity to connect schools to residential areas. Most of the 'preserve' pins were on residential and rural areas, where people want to see no new development or low-density compatible development. Refer to the heat map below:

## Change & Preserve Community Input

Change and Preserve Comments

• Area in need of Change  
• Area to Preserve

Highest Desire for Preservation

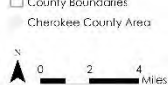
Lower  
Higher

Highest Desire for Change

Lower  
Higher

Chiles

County Boundaries  
Cherokee County Area





- 
- The left photograph shows a map with several blue tags attached to it. One tag reads: "New Rd from and off Clure Dr to Holbrook Camp Grounds. Served on 022 New England from Holbrook." Another tag reads: "Holbrook Camp Grounds." A pen is visible in the foreground.
- The right photograph shows a map with red and green tags. One red tag reads: "Holbrook Camp Grounds. Served on 022 New England from Holbrook." Another red tag reads: "Holbrook Camp Grounds. Served on 022 New England from Holbrook." A green tag reads: "Holbrook Camp Grounds. Served on 022 New England from Holbrook." A scale bar is visible in the bottom right corner.

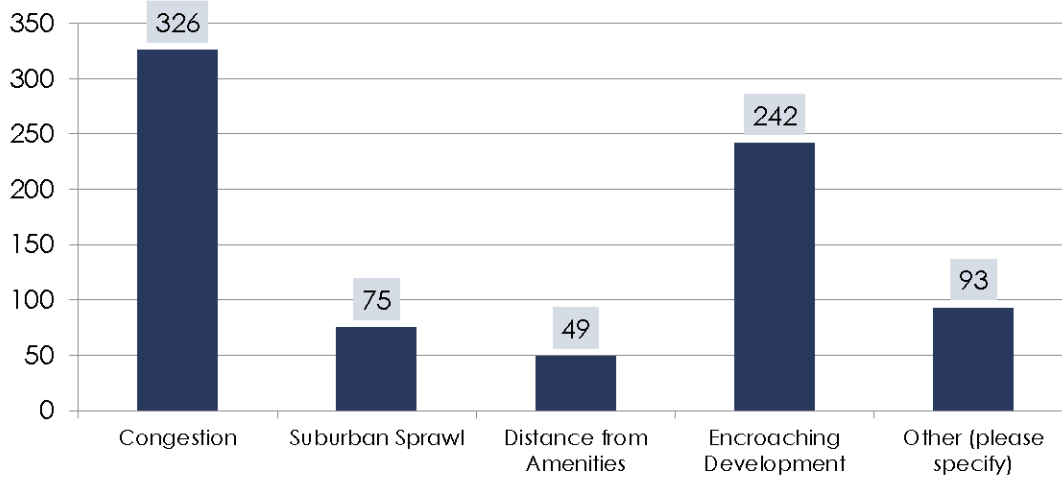


## ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

The county-wide online survey was shared on social media and through word of mouth ultimately reaching over 750 people.

### 1. What is the most pressing issue facing your neighborhood?

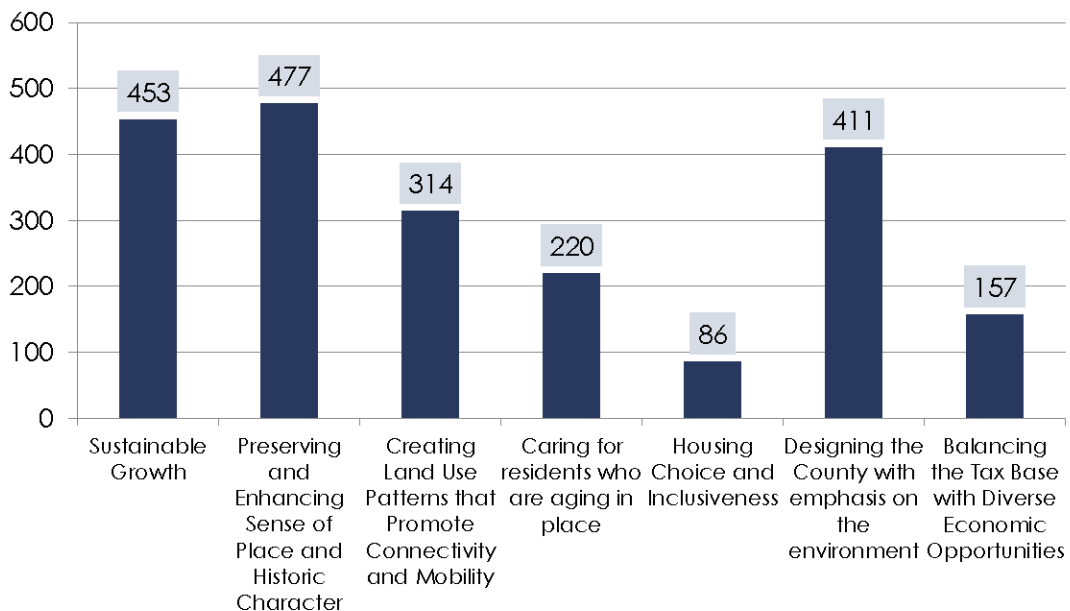
782 responses



See **Attachment B** for a comprehensive list of community comments.

### 2. What 3 core issues should Cherokee County prioritize? (Select up to three answers)

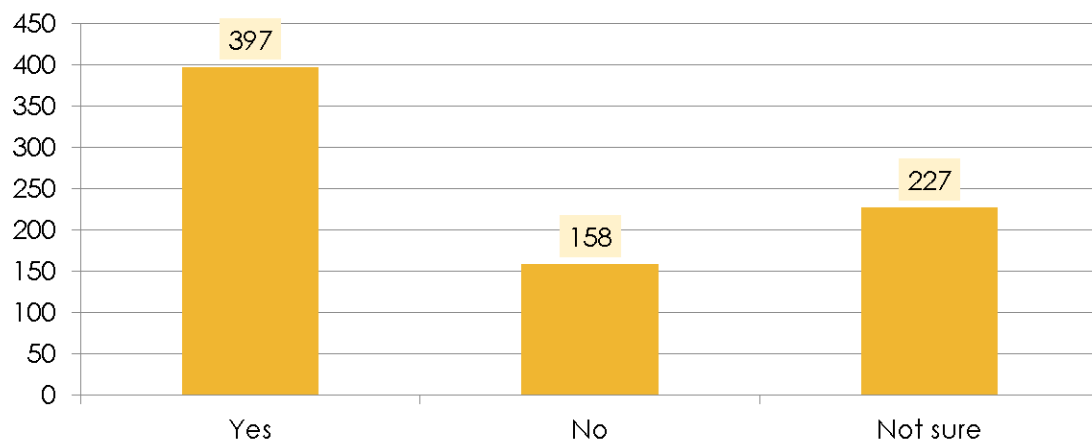
782 responses





3. The Future Development Map is developed through the analysis of current and future conditions and land use patterns. The map shows Character Areas - distinct areas based on characteristics like topography, natural resource sensitivity, availability of infrastructure, and needs demonstrated by residential and employment forecasts. Below is the Future Development Map from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan update. Based on the Future Development Map (2018) do you think your character area accurately reflects where you live?

779 responses



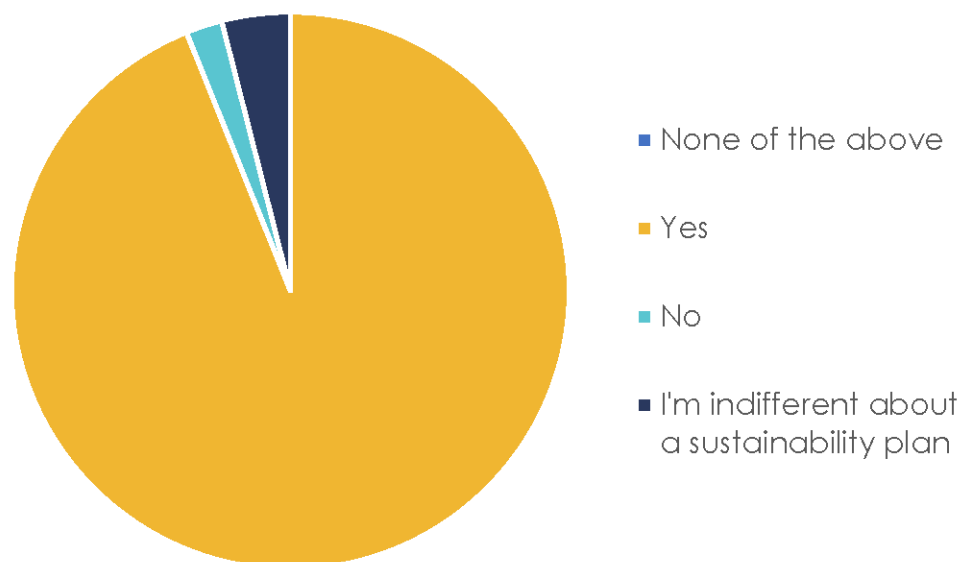
4. On the scale below, please indicate how important sustainable growth is in Cherokee County.

786 responses

Average response: **3.7**

5. Should the county look into establishing a sustainability plan to protect Cherokee County's natural spaces?

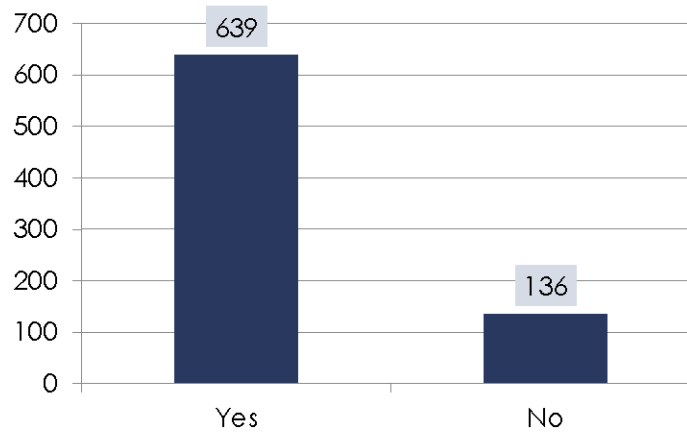
784 responses





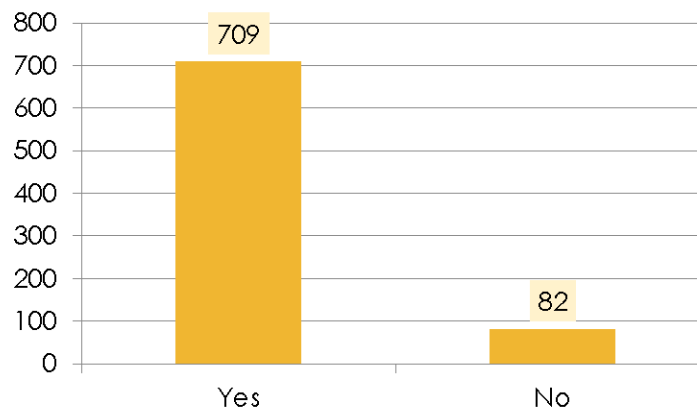
6. As Cherokee County grows, should new development be encouraged to incorporate sustainable building practices? (ie. regional stormwater detention, waste reduction, 'green' building materials, energy conservation measures, etc.)

775 responses



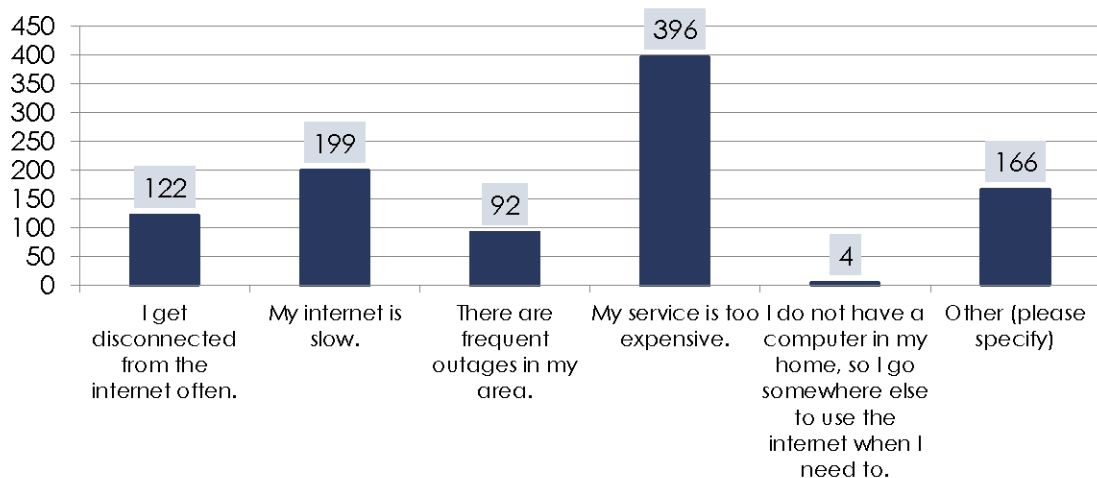
7. Do you have access to consistent and reliable internet at home?

781 responses



8. What issues do you encounter most often with internet access?

736 responses

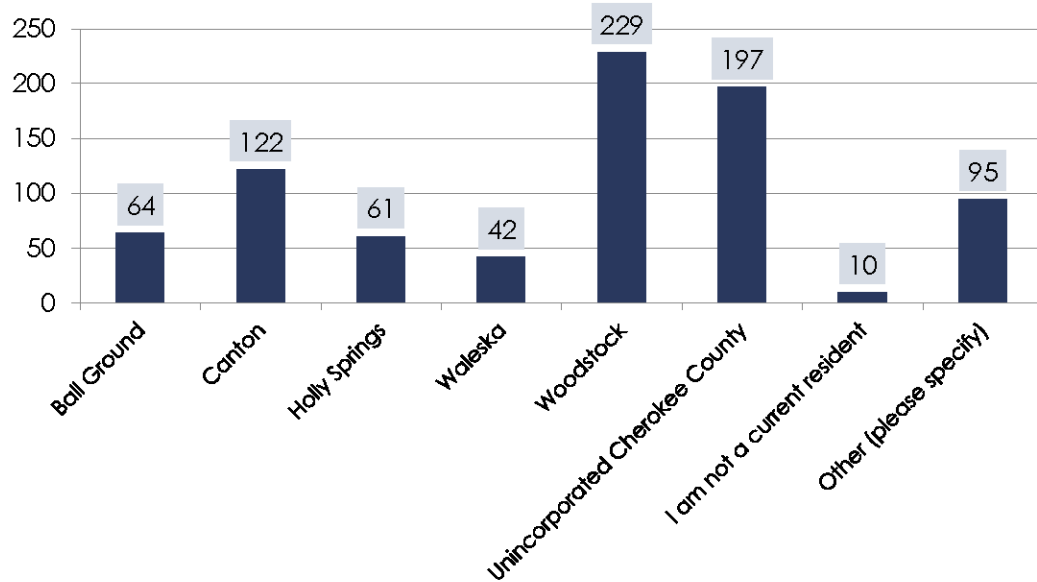


See **Attachment B** for a comprehensive list of community comments.



**9. Where in Cherokee County do you live?**

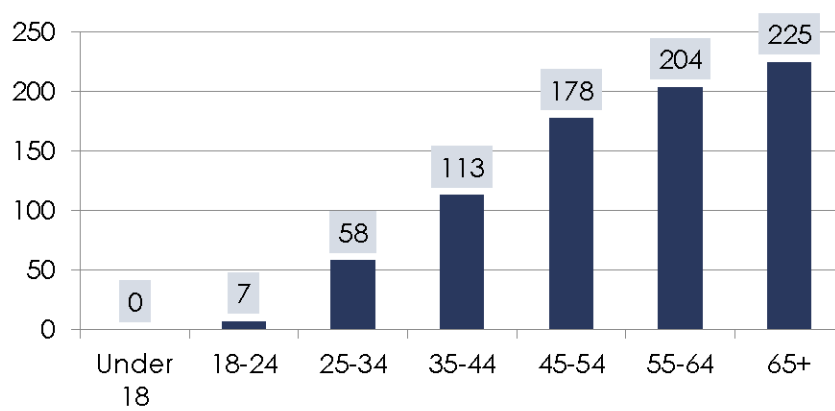
787 responses



See **Attachment B** for a comprehensive list of community comments.

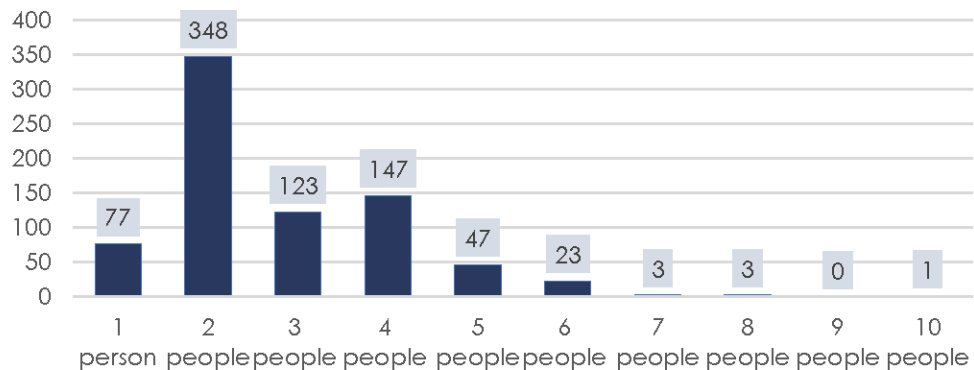
**10. What is your age?**

785 responses



**11. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?**

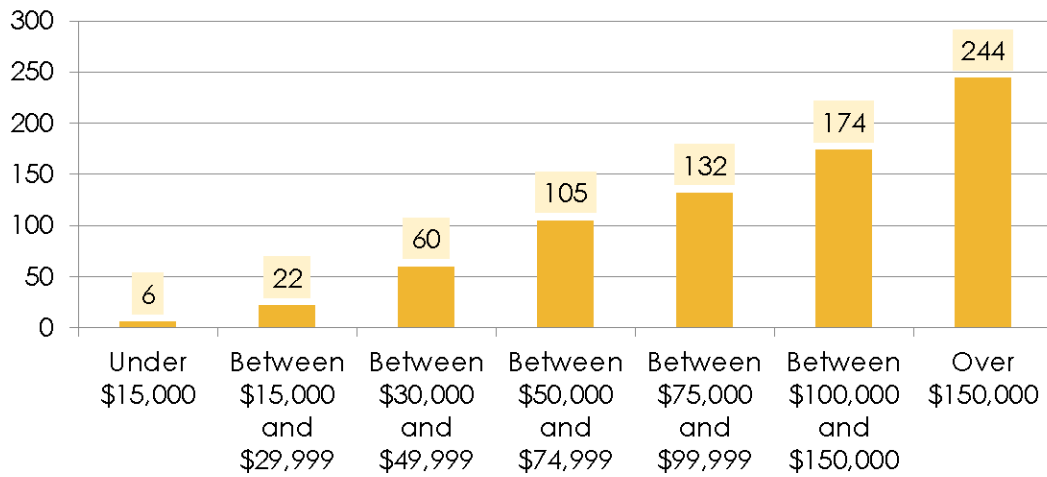
773 responses





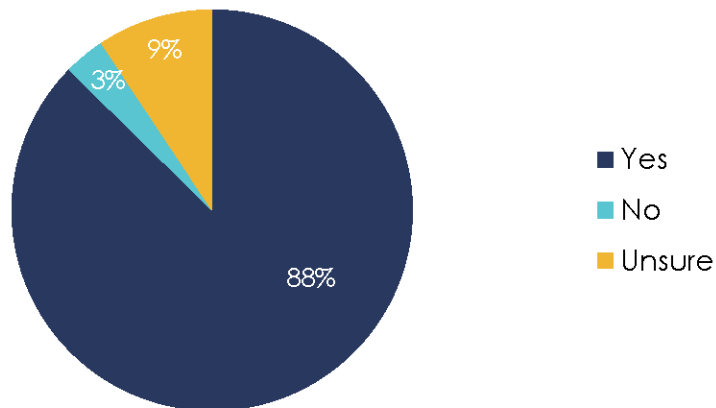
**12. Which range accurately describes your income?**

769 responses



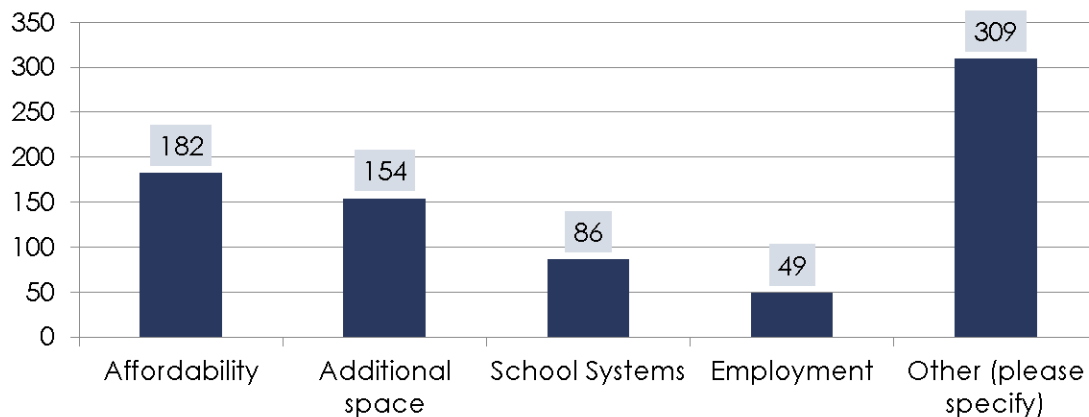
**13. Do you plan to make Cherokee County your home for the foreseeable future?**

783 responses



**14. If you moved to the county recently, for what reason(s)? Please choose all that apply.**

581 responses

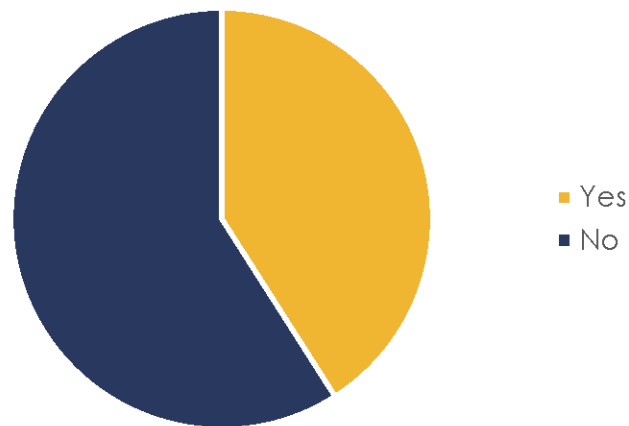


See **Attachment B** for a comprehensive list of community comments.



**15. If currently employed, do you work within Cherokee County?**

775 responses



**16. Is there any other information - ideas, issues, concerns - you would like to share with the project team?**

Survey respondents made mention of several concerns, some that rose to the top as common responses included:

- Traffic Congestion and needed transportation investment throughout the County
- A desire for Cherokee County's rural nature to be preserved
- A need to thoughtfully manage Cherokee County's population growth and development patterns
- A desire for additional recreation opportunities

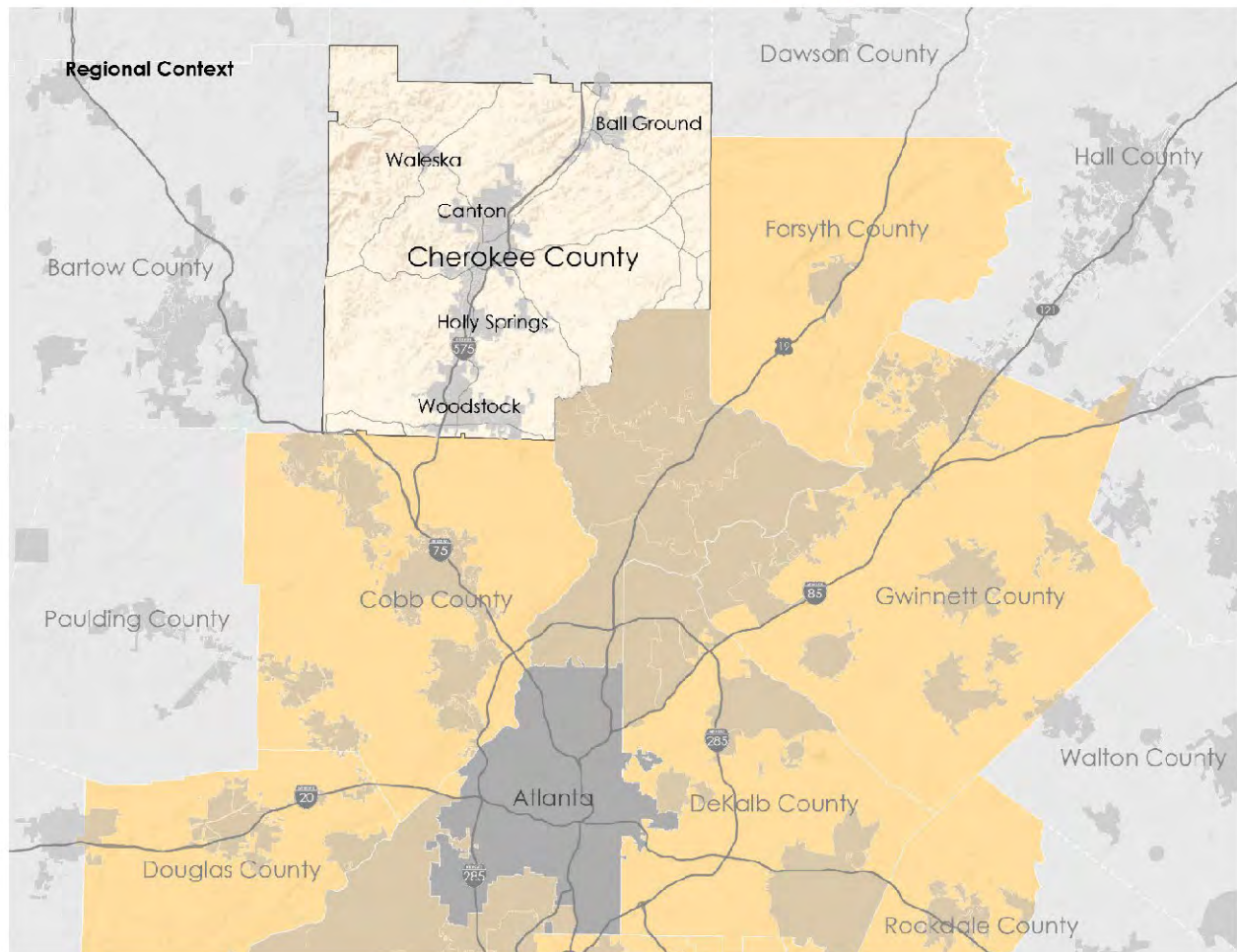
See **Attachment B** for a comprehensive list of community comments.



## Appendix D: Pond Existing Conditions



### CHEROKEE COUNTY TODAY

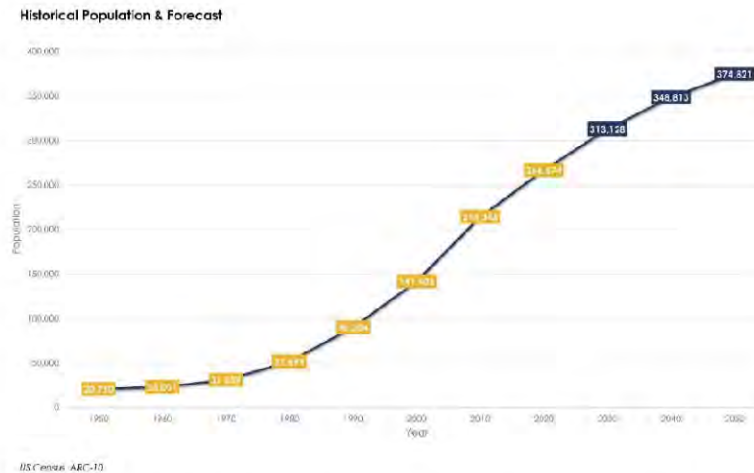




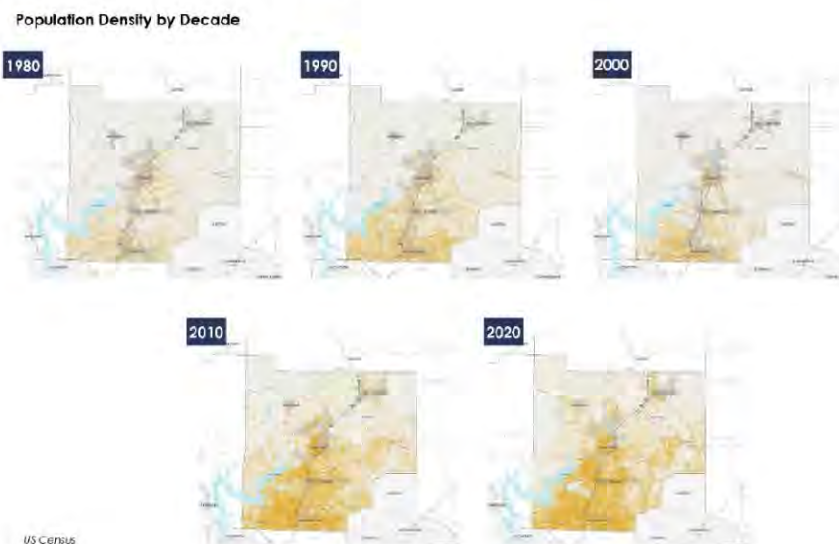
## Population Trends

### Historical Population Growth & Population Projections

Between 2010 and 2020, Cherokee County saw a 24% increase in population with nearly 267,000 residents counted in the 2020 Census. The population is projected to continue to rise through 2050, when the Atlanta Regional Commission estimates the County will have over 374,000 residents. The graph below suggests that the rate of growth will slow slightly, but the overall number of those moving into and growing their families in the County will continue to rise. As the County's growth continues, it is important to consider how this growth will impact infrastructure, and how the County can plan for the needs of these future residents.



Population by Decade is a great way to determine where in the County people have been moving and may provide insight into where future residents will find their homes. Since 1980, Cherokee has seen tremendous growth in the central and southern parts of the County. People may want the benefits of Cherokee County while remaining close to job centers in Metro-Atlanta. In the northern portion of Cherokee, the population growth has concentrated around incorporated areas like Ball Ground and Waleska. More recently, the population has expanded in east Cherokee, close to Forsyth County.

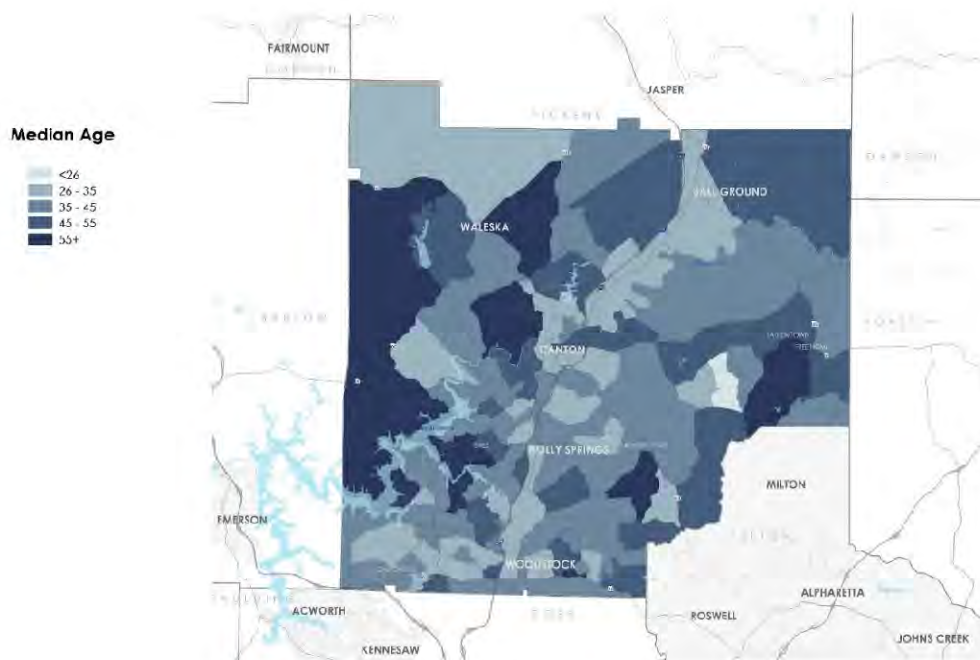
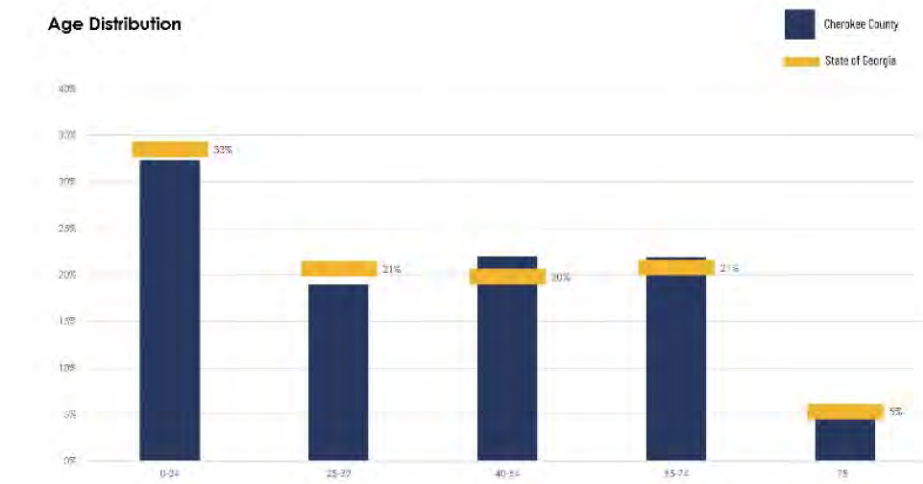




## Who lives in Cherokee County?

### Age Distribution

The age distribution chart below compares the percentage of the population in each age group between Cherokee County and the State of Georgia. Cherokee County is almost on par with the State of Georgia, although it skews slightly older. Cherokee County has a lower percentage of residents in their 20's and 30's than the State of Georgia and a higher percentage of residents older than 40. As the population of the County continues to grow and the pandemic shifts the needs and wants of Metro-Atlanta residents, Cherokee County may 'get younger,' but it's important to consider how this older generation will be cared for within the County.



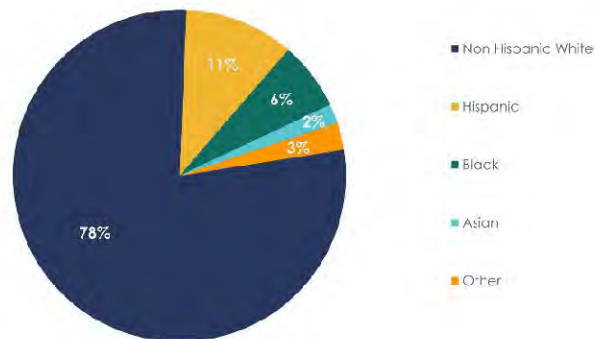
American Community Survey 2010-2020 5-Year Estimate



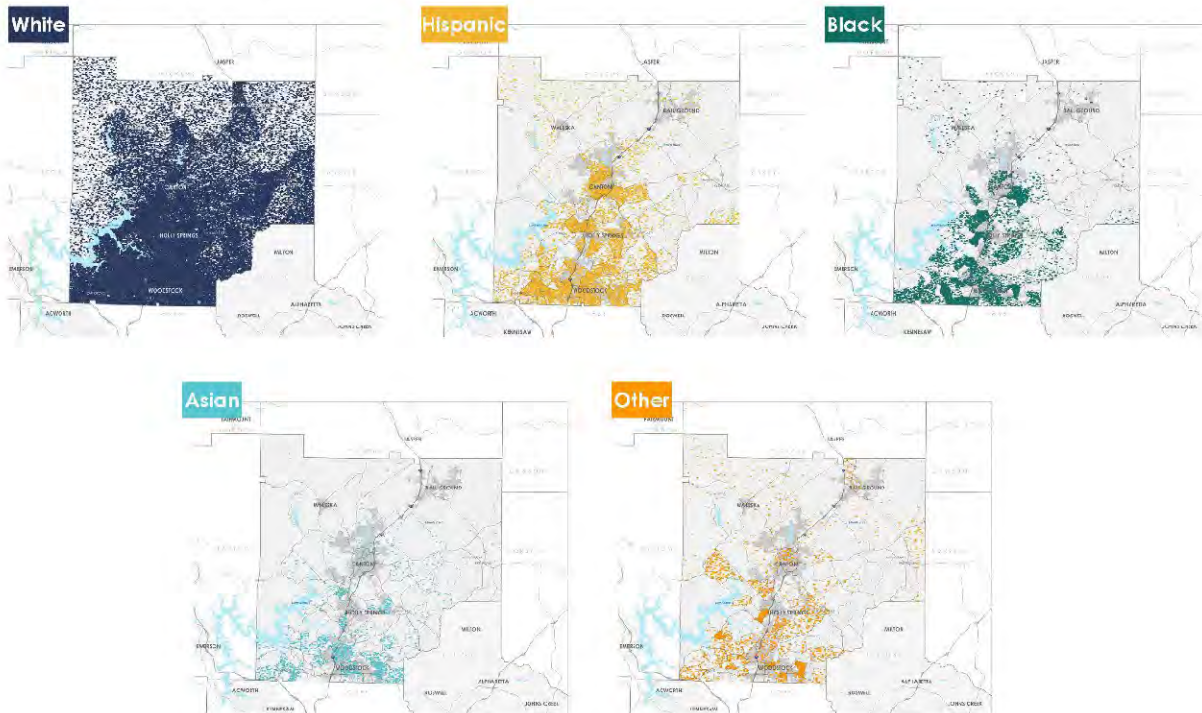
### Race & Ethnicity

Cherokee County's population is over 75% Non-Hispanic White, with the next two biggest population groups identifying as Hispanic and Black. The maps below outline that those who identify as Non-Hispanic White are scattered all around Cherokee County, while those who identify as other races includes Hispanic, Black, Asian and Other are concentrated in the southern and central portions of the County. In 2015, the Non-Hispanic White population was over 80%, so this 2020 data illustrates that the County is becoming more diverse.

**Race & Ethnicity Distribution**



**Race & Ethnicity Density**



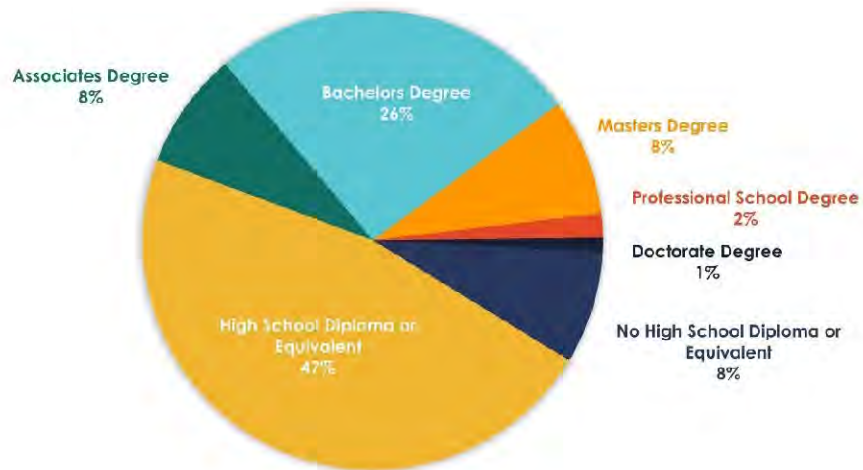


## Economic Development Snapshot

### Educational Attainment

Cherokee County is highly educated with 45% of the population having an Associates Degree or higher. 47% of the population has a high school diploma or equivalent and just 8% has no high school diploma.

**Educational Attainment**



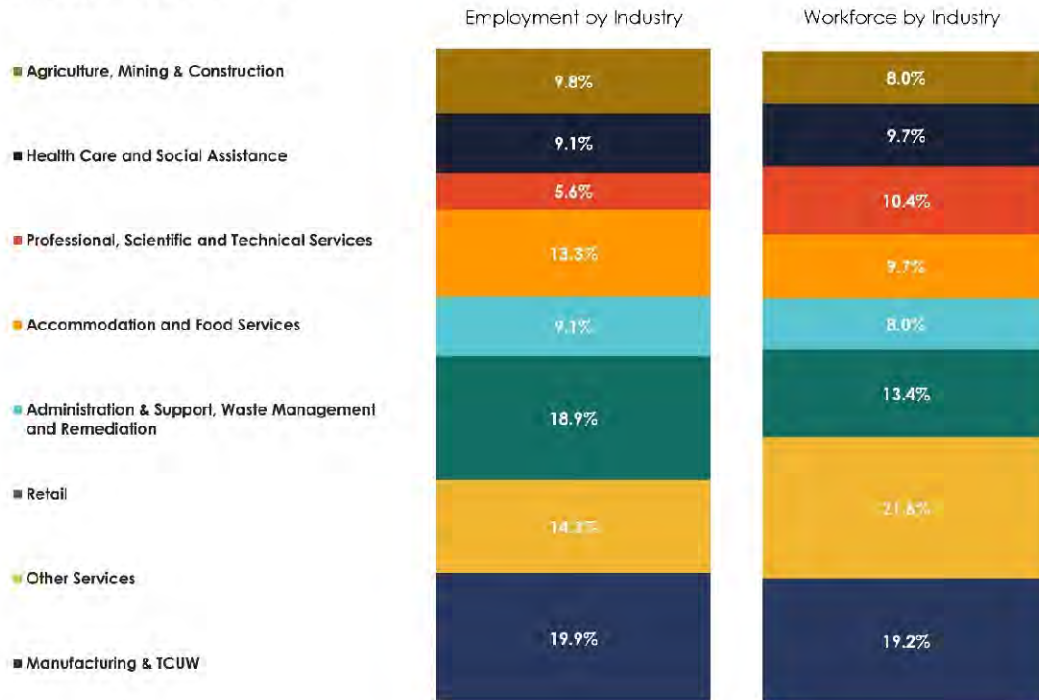
American Community Survey 2016 2020 5 Year Estimate



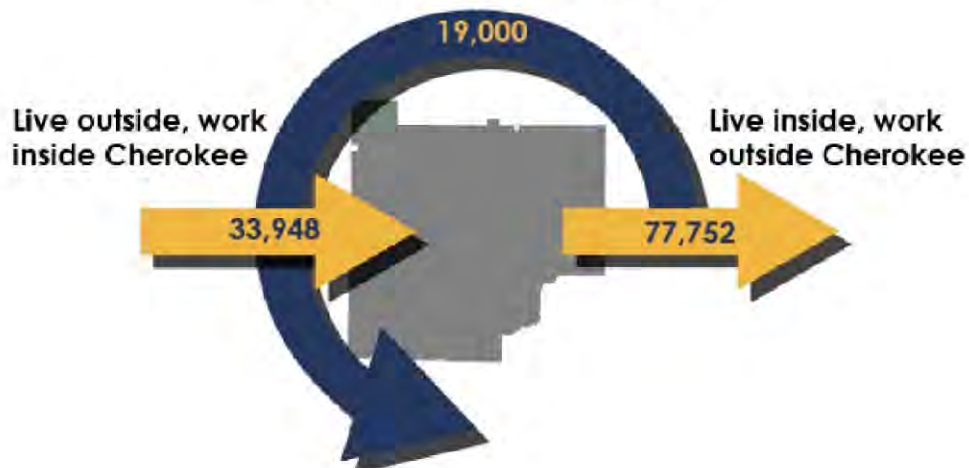
## Employment & Workforce by Industry

The jobs that Cherokee County employs and the workforce of Cherokee County residents are vastly similar. The largest industries that locate in Cherokee County include Manufacturing, Administrative Support, Waste Management, and Remediation which together make up 18.9% of Cherokee County's employment. While Cherokee County's workforce has a similar makeup of jobs housed in the County, around 77,000 residents leave Cherokee County to work every day.

### Employment and Workforce

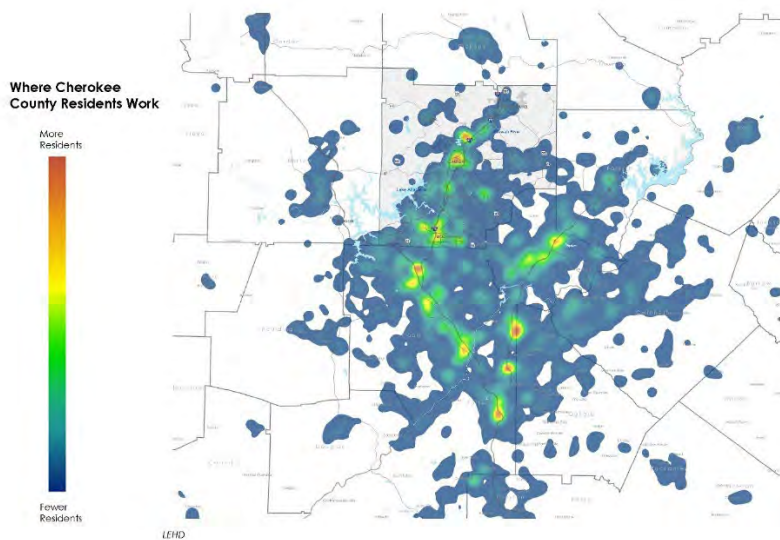
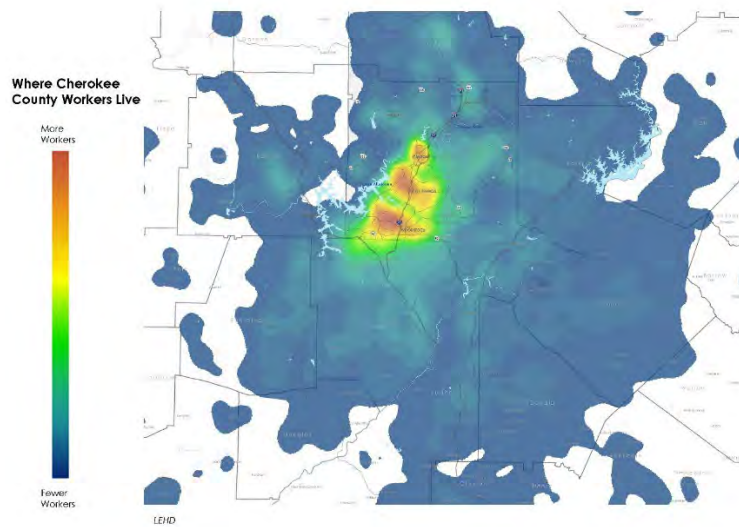


### Live and work in Cherokee





Much of Cherokee County's employees live in Cherokee County, however, some commute from all around the Metro Atlanta area. Most Cherokee residents who work commute to other metropolitan job centers including Kennesaw, Cumberland, Perimeter, Alpharetta, Buckhead, Midtown, and Downtown.



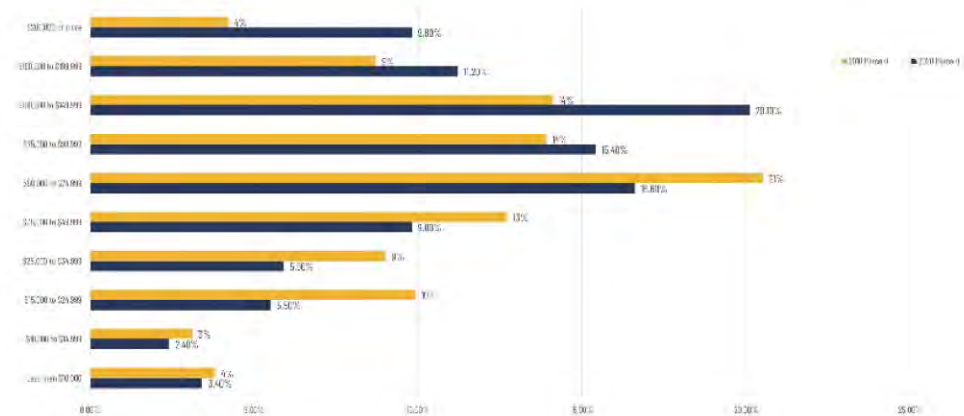


## Housing & Households Snapshot

### Income

The graph below shows the change in annual income of Cherokee County's population from 2010 to 2020, illustrating that the County has become wealthier. The three highest income brackets, between \$75,000 and \$200,000 or more each saw an increase in the number of people attaining that income, while several of the lower brackets saw a decrease. This change in household income can create more demand for services and high-cost housing and can also present a threat to those with a lower income who may have difficulty finding affordable homes, and services close to their home.

Annual Household Income



American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate

As growth has primarily been focused in south and central Cherokee County, the median household income has increased in these areas.

Median Household Income



American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate



### Housing Occupancy

The County has an extremely high occupancy rate at 95%. This shows that the County has met the housing demand for its growing population appropriately and that when a home is available for rent or purchase, Cherokee is demand enough for the home to likely be occupied quickly. Of the 95% Occupied housing, 56% are units where the occupants have a mortgage, while 20% do not have a mortgage. Another 24% live in rental housing.

**Housing Occupancy**



*American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate*

**Occupied Housing Units by Ownership**



*American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate*

Cherokee County's housing stock is primarily detached single-family homes, with some townhomes (attached) and apartments to meet the demand for rental housing. A small part of the County's housing stock is mobile homes.

**Housing Units by Building Type**



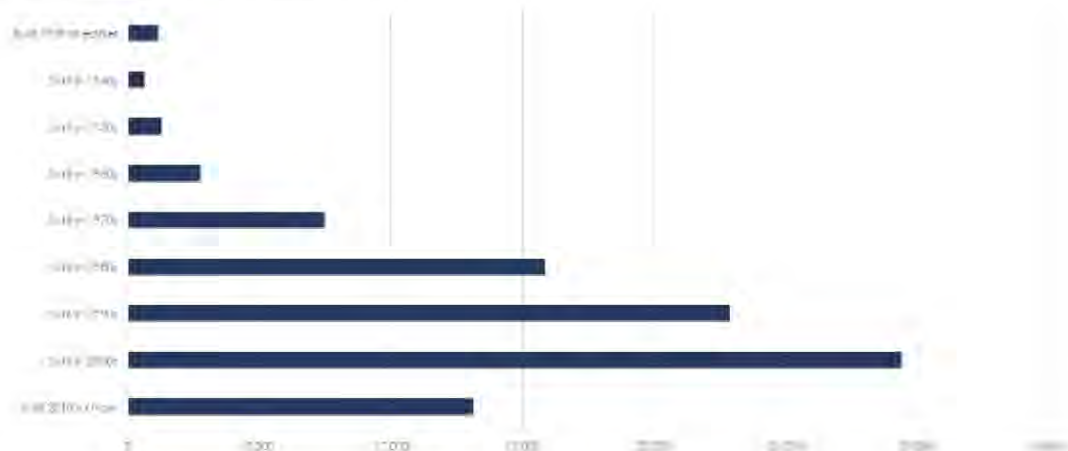
*American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate*



### Age of Housing Units

Much of Cherokee's housing stock was built after 1980. Between 2000 and 2010, almost 30,000 units were constructed, and between 1970 and 2010, there was a steady increase in the number of homes built. After 2010 less homes were constructed, which could be due to the feasibility of construction after the 2008 recession.

**Age of Housing Units by Timeframe**



American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate

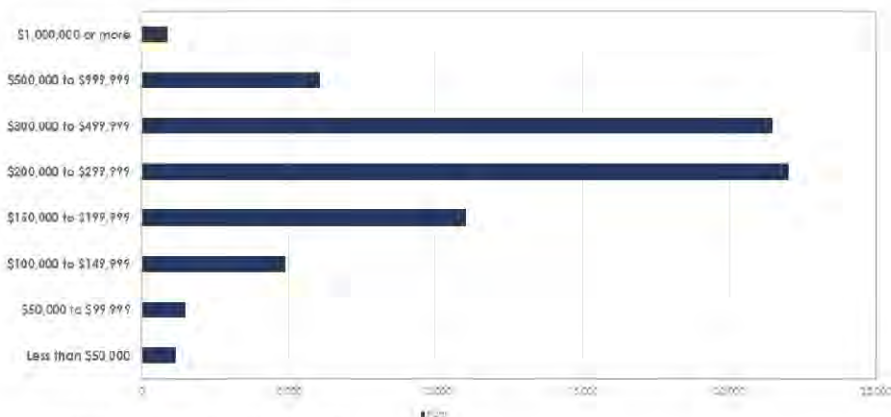
### Building Permits

From 2018 to 2022, there were over 6,800 building permits issued for new residential construction in Cherokee County. During 2020, Cherokee accepted over 600 permits, signaling consistent demand for housing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Home Values & Gross Rent

The chart below illustrates how many households are within each home value bracket. In 2015, the median home value was \$223,200 and in 2020, it jumped to \$271,300 – a 21% increase. This increase is in line with the increase in household income in the County.

**Home Values for Owner-Occupied Units**

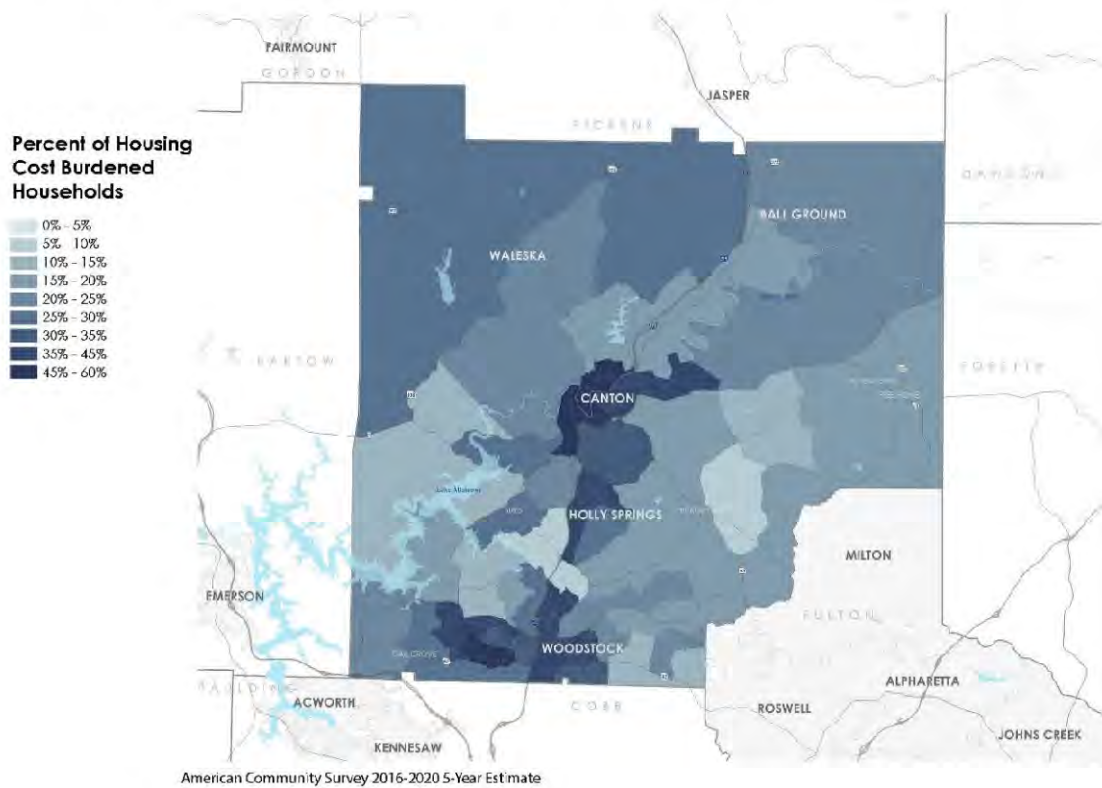


American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate



### Cost-Burdened Households

Cost-burdened households are those that spend over 30% of their income on their housing, including rent and mortgages. Homes values in Cherokee County have been increasing rapidly since 2010, and much of the County has 20% or more of the population that is cost burdened by housing. This may also illustrate that rental rates are growing at a rate that is difficult for residents to keep up with. The higher rates of housing cost-burdened households are in central and south Cherokee where much of the population growth has occurred.

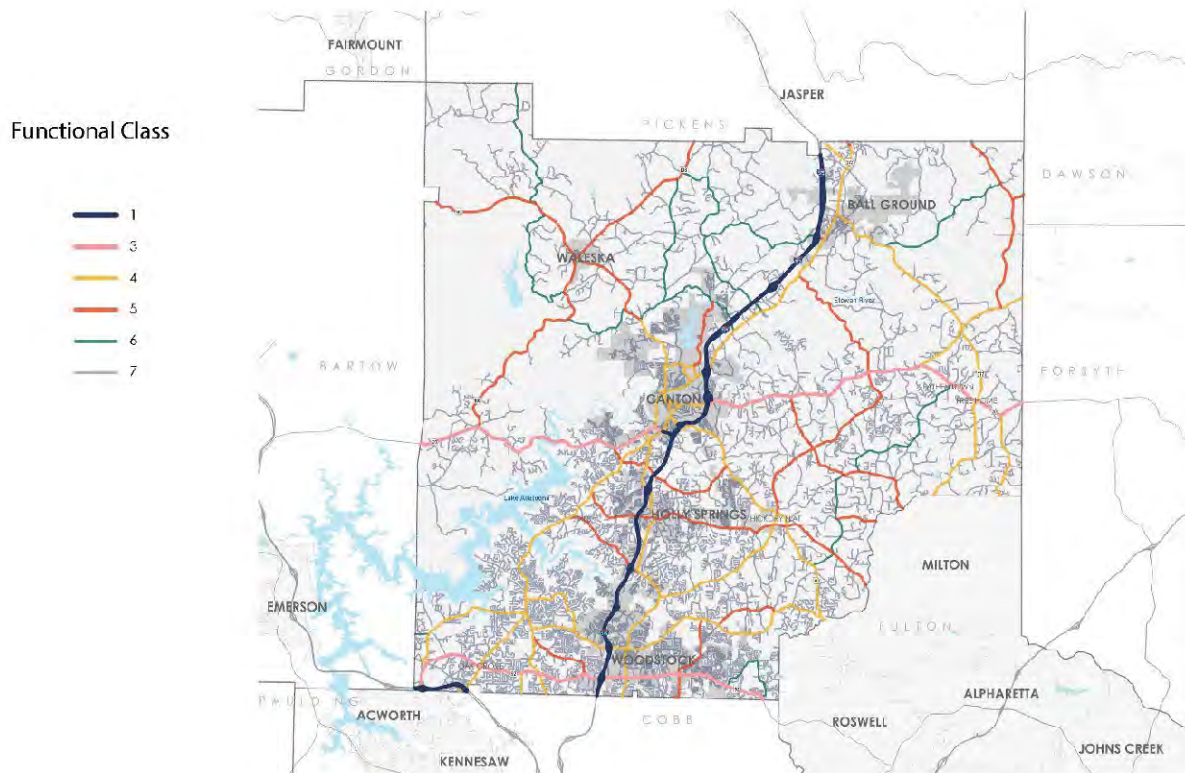




## Transportation Snapshot

### Roadways

The bulk of Cherokee County residents rely on personal vehicles and local roads to make their trips. I-575 bisects the County and serves as the major route connecting Ball Ground, Waleska, Canton, Holly Springs, and Woodstock to Downtown Atlanta and other major employment centers in the region, including Kennesaw and the Cumberland CID. Major east-west connections include SR-20 through Canton and SR-92 through Woodstock. Generally the remainder of the street network is a mix of suburban-style arterials and local streets.

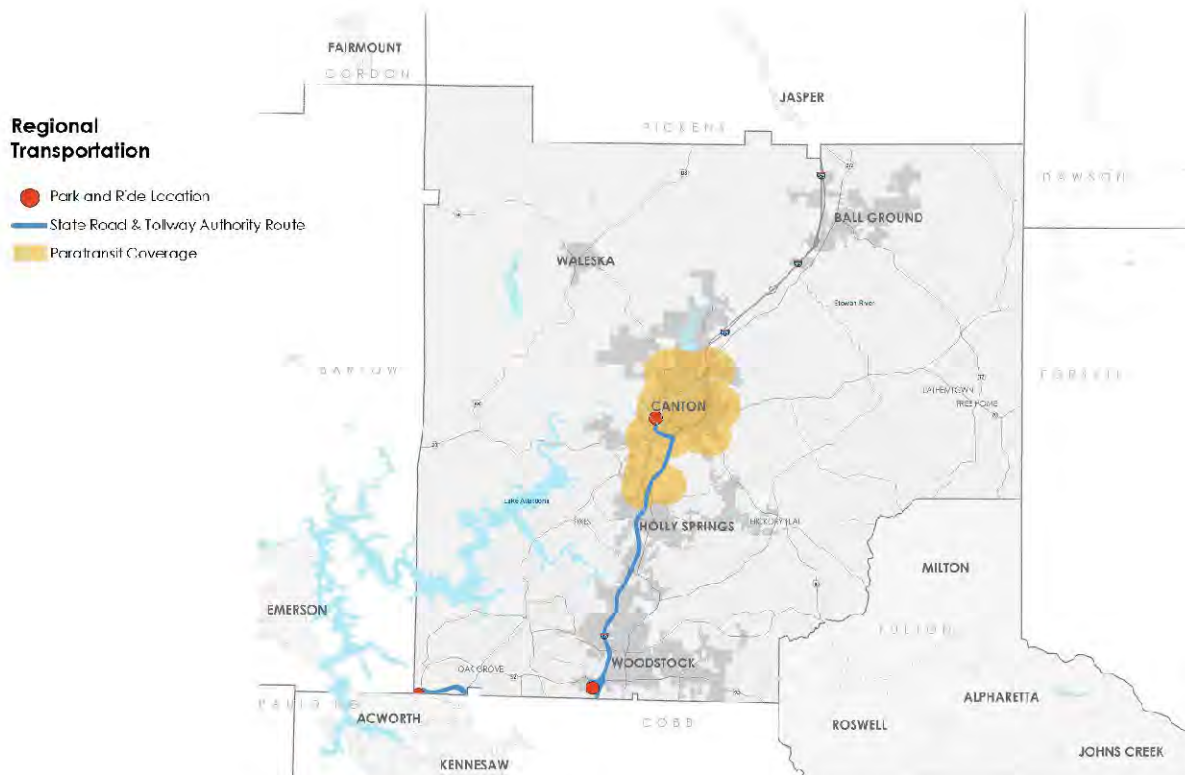


American Community Survey 2015-2020 5-Year Estimate



## Transit

Transit service is currently limited within the County with the exception of Xpress Service by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) route 491 which is accessible at Molly Lane and SR 92. This makes mass commuting in the Atlanta Metro possible, connecting major job centers such as Downtown Atlanta, Midtown, Buckhead, and Perimeter Center. The Canton area is also serviced by paratransit which operates within a 3/4-mile radius of Canton. This complementary service offers transportation assistance to people who cannot navigate without assistance and those with disabilities, providing access to resources such as medical offices and grocery stores in the area.



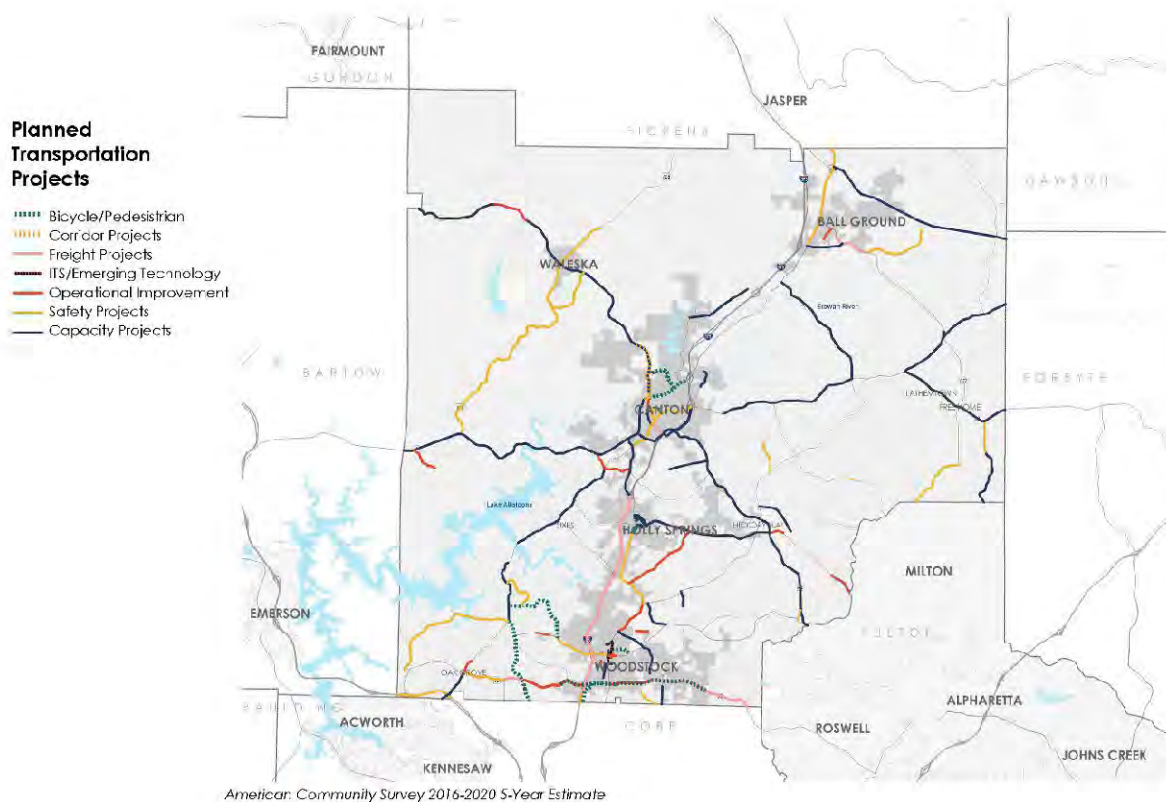
American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate



### Planned Transportation Projects

As Cherokee County continues to grow, demand for roadway capacity projects has increased. Several planned capacity projects throughout the County, including the SR 20 widening between Canton and Cumming and along SR 140 in Waleska may change the County's outlook on future development for those corridors, accommodating opportunities for commercial and residential growth.

Planned Trail connections west of Woodstock in are planned to form new linkages in addition to the ones currently established in Southwestern Cherokee County, which will create opportunities for recreational use in conjunction with local park improvements. While continued bicycle and pedestrian efforts are important for local mobility, they also provide Cherokee residents with a means for basic health and wellness.

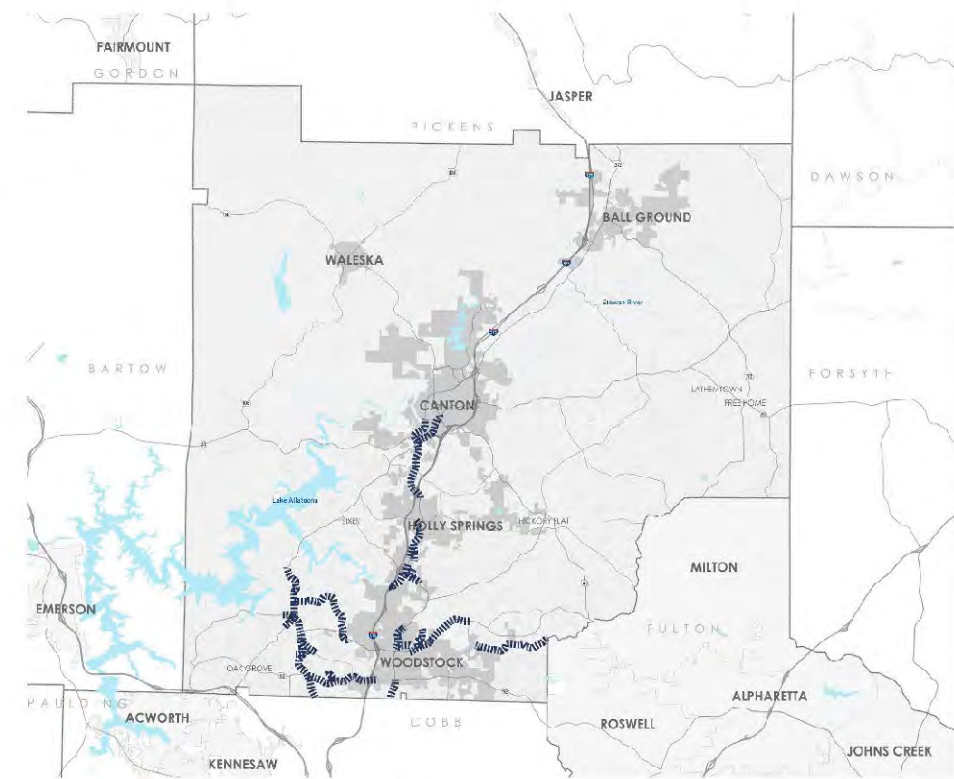




## Planned Bicycle Facilities

### Planned Bike/Ped Projects

Planned Projects

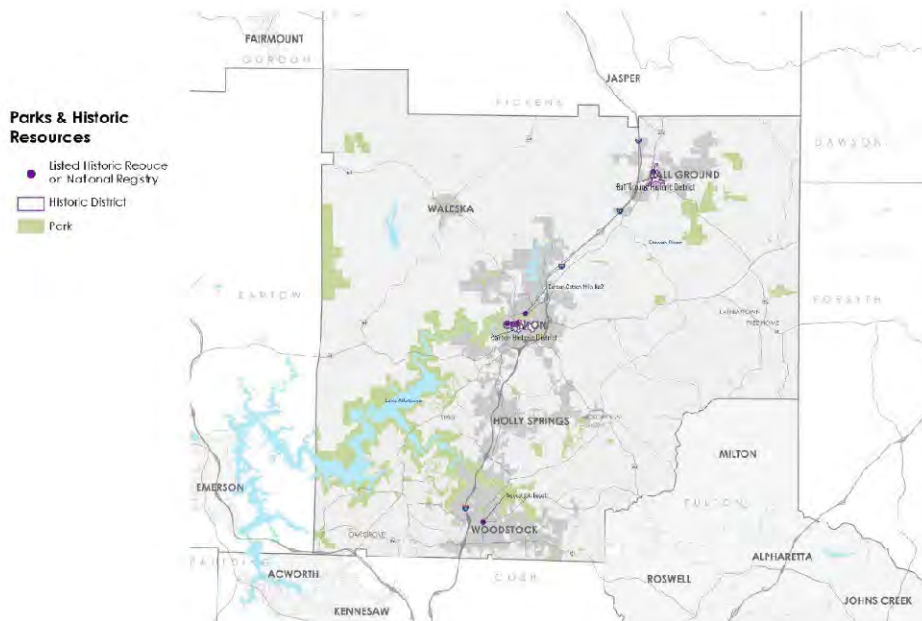
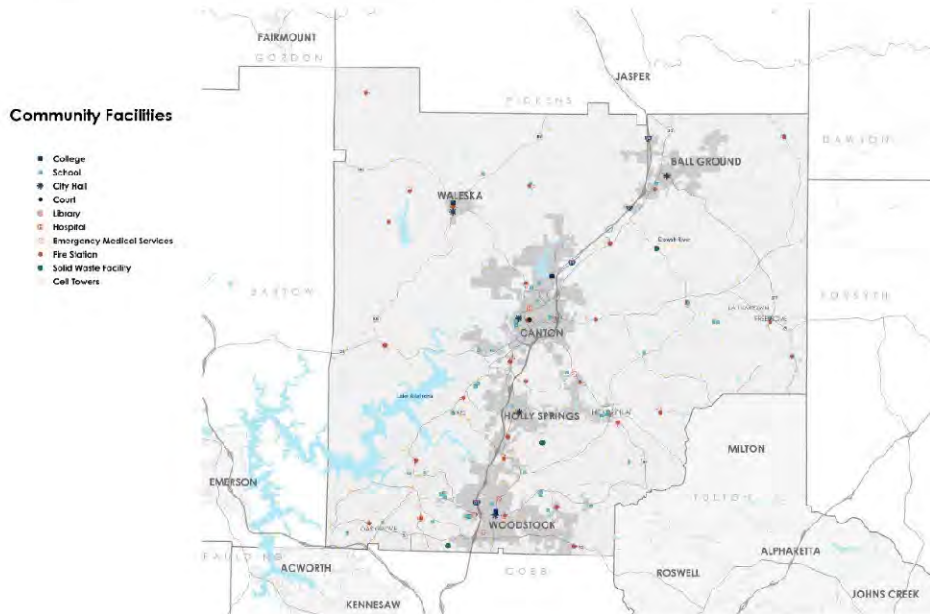


American Community Survey 2015-2020 5-Year Estimate



## Quality of Life Snapshot

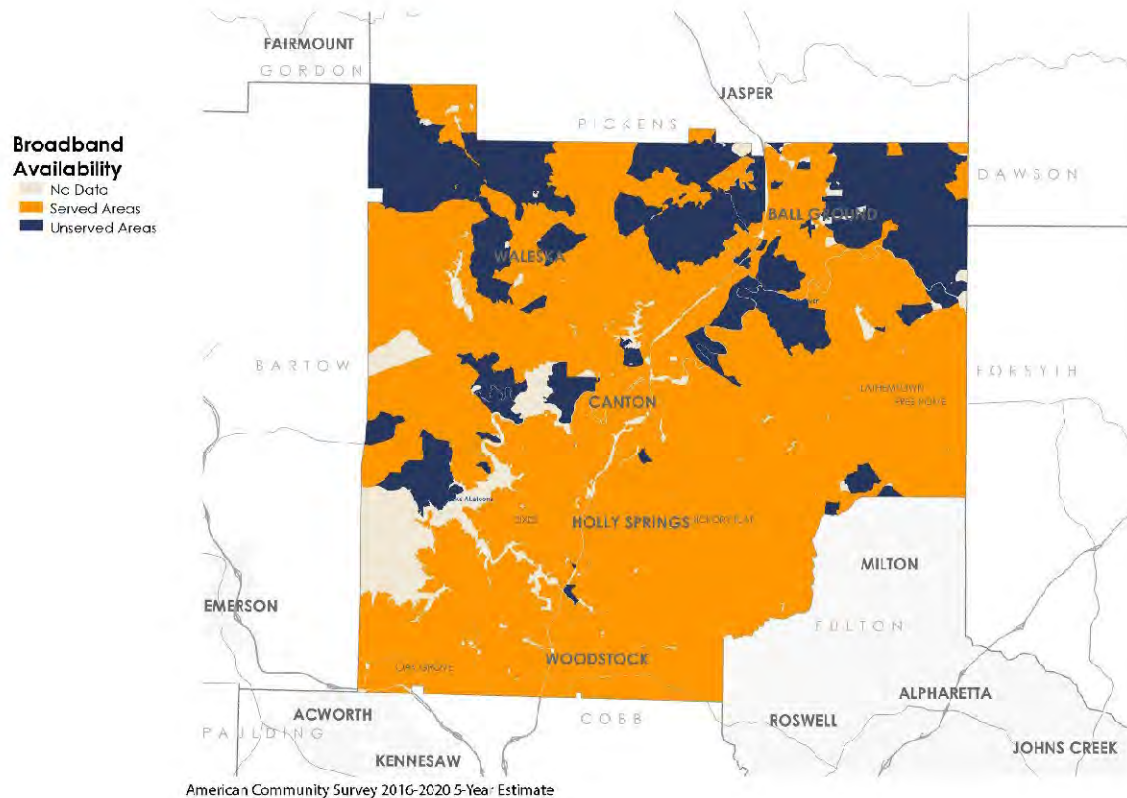
Cherokee County enjoys many local amenities which contribute to a high quality of life for community members. These include outstanding public schools, parks, and healthcare facilities. Partnerships with local communities afford Cherokee County with quality emergency services and community facilities. Most facilities and services are located in close proximity to population centers within Cherokee County. As the County continues to grow, the need for additional or altered facilities may need to be evaluated.





## Broadband Access

The map below illustrates where broadband is available in Cherokee County. The majority of the County does have broadband access, but there are a few key areas, like Waleska and Ball Ground that have seen a high rate of population growth, but still do not have broadband access. As more people move into and near these incorporated areas, its important for work, school, and recreation that they have reliable internet.





# Appendix E: Pond Development Study



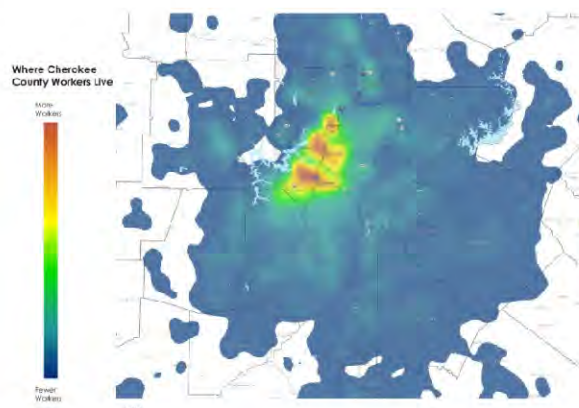
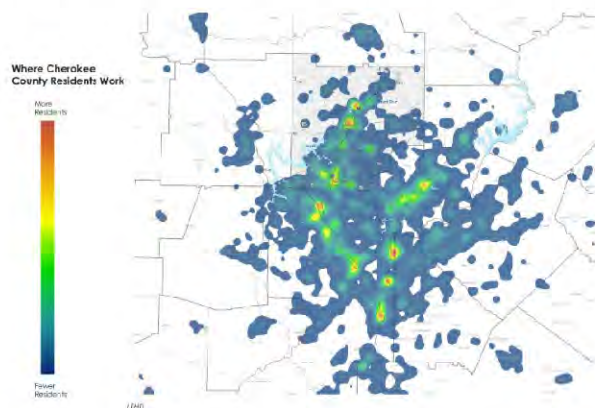
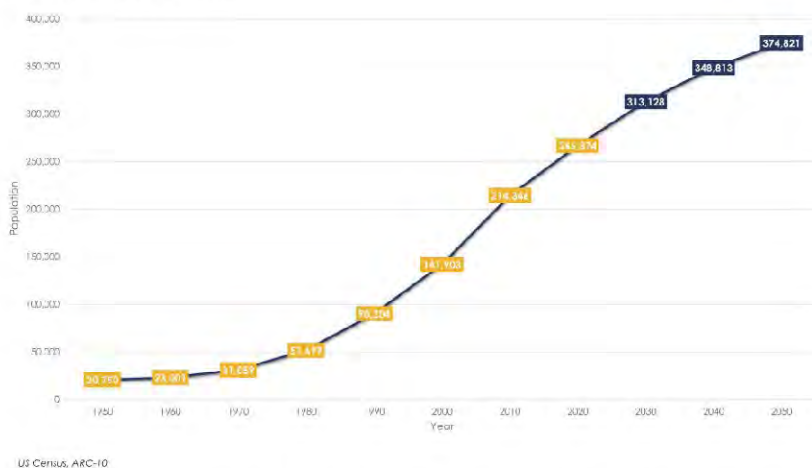
## DEVELOPMENT STUDY

### Introduction

Cherokee County's natural beauty, family-friendly communities, and strategic location in the region continue to make the County an attractive place for new residents and employers. The population of Cherokee County in 2020 was nearly 267,000, representing a 24% percent increase in growth since 2010. Much of the growth has occurred in the central and southern half of the County in Woodstock, Holly Springs,

Canton, and in unincorporated Cherokee County near the Cobb County and Fulton County borders, where residents are able to enjoy Cherokee's offerings while maintaining proximity to job centers within the County and elsewhere in Metro-Atlanta.

Historical Population & Forecast





## Purpose

The development study helps to game out what different development scenarios may look like as it related to future character and land use scenarios. Using GIS spatial analysis, the project team developed high level scenarios indicating population and employment projections to efficiently drive further conversation and discussion on what is appropriate within Cherokee County for future intensity of development patterns.

The outcomes of the development study will inform potential policy changes and updates to the Future Development Map which will guide zoning decisions made by the County Board of Commissioners. As the County continues to grow, this may also act as a guide for devising potential scenarios as conditions continually change.

## Methodology

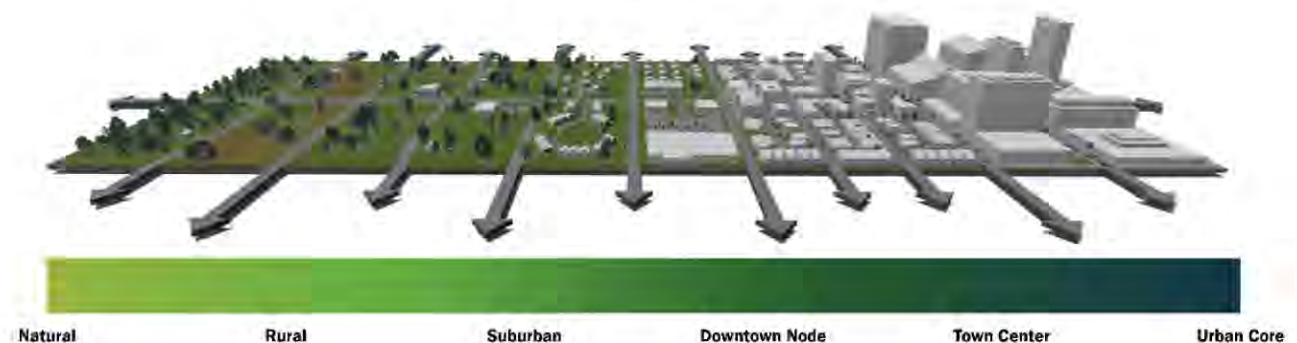
The development study was conducted by the consultant team to form an understanding of where future development opportunities might be focused and prioritized based on community input and technical analysis. By engaging community members, the consultant team was able to identify areas in need of change and areas that should be preserved as well as preference as it relates to the scale of development that takes place throughout the County. Stakeholder consultation with community members and other entities such as the Cherokee County Economic Development departments helped informed the consultant team on current trends and the County's development priorities.

The consultant team also conducted a technical analysis to determine priority focus areas based on development and land use trends, proximity to major routes and future transportation improvements, proximity to existing community amenities, and access to utilities.

## Community Scale

The Community Scale activity was designed to understand what types of development and intensity the community believes is appropriate across various area. Using a scale from Natural landscapes to developed Urban Core, participants online and at in-person workshops were able to voice their vision for the future of different parts of Cherokee County.

The majority of the community scale feedback indicated that participants want to see much of the county remain rural. Pockets of higher density development (Downtown and Town Center) may be appropriate along major corridors and in Hickory Flat. No comments were left in support of the "urban core" community scale. Participants referred to the community scale transect below, and the following maps represent general interest in each scale across the County.

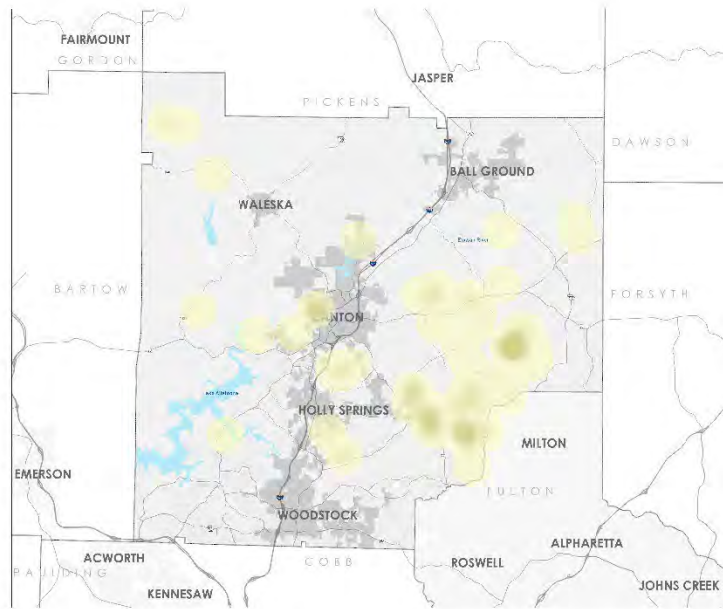
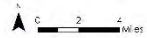




Community  
Scale Input

"Natural" Scale Comments

Less Support  
More Support

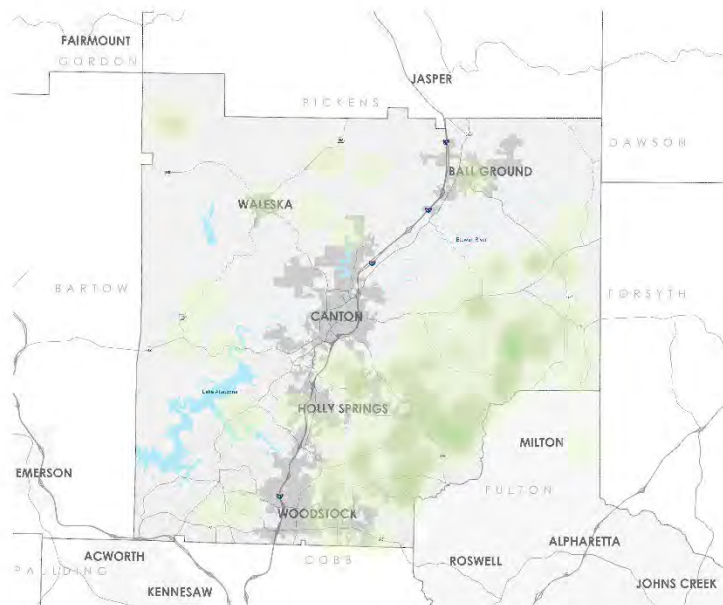


**Natural Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe should be left completely undeveloped.

Community  
Scale Input

"Rural" Scale Comments

Less Support  
More Support



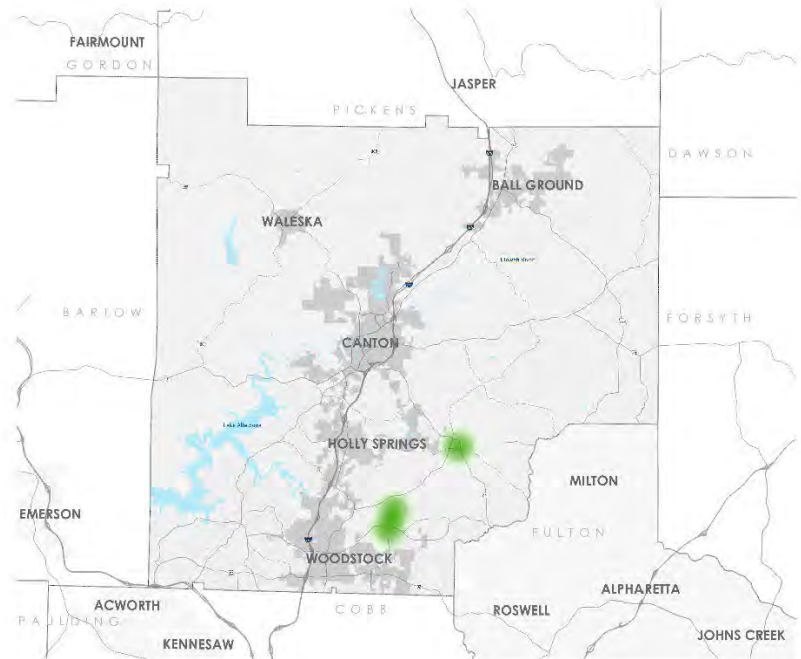
**Rural Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe should be left to agriculture, agritourism, conservation, and very low-density housing and similar uses.



## Community Scale Input

"Suburban" Scale Comments  
Less Support  
More Support

0 2 4 Miles

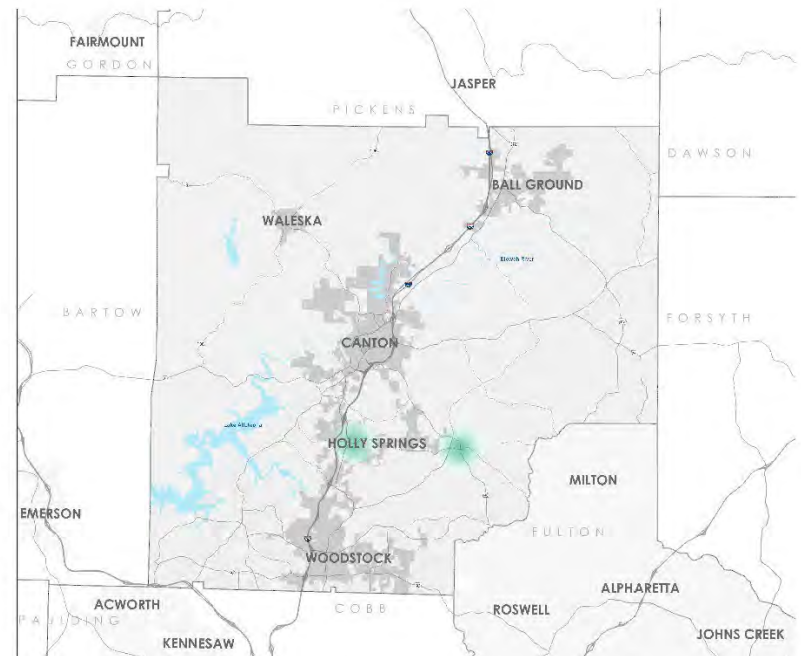


**Suburban Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe should have a suburban environment (typically one- or two-story buildings that are mostly accessible via car, with larger commercial areas along major roads).

## Community Scale Input

"Downtown Node" Scale Comments  
Less Support  
More Support

0 2 4 Miles



**Downtown Node Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County respondents believe that a walkable, neighborhood downtown environment would be appropriate.

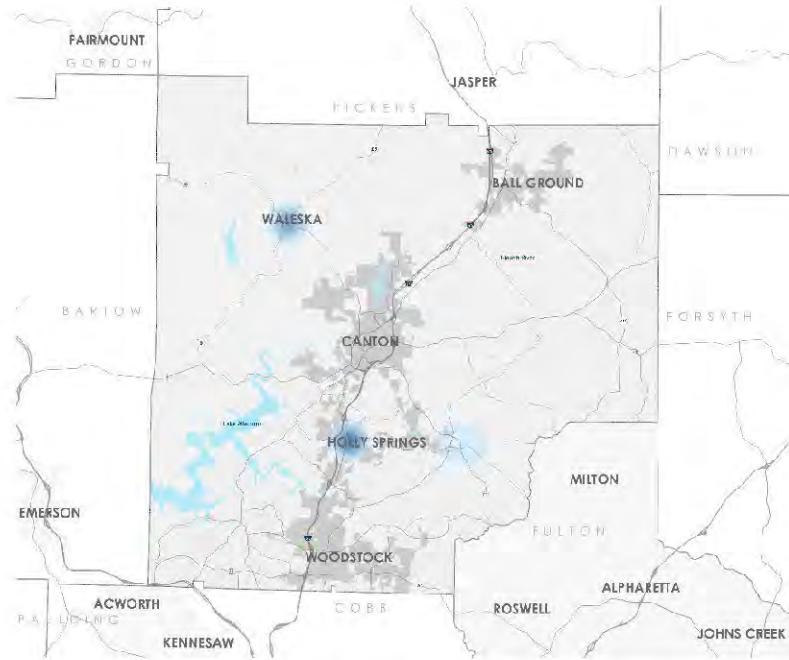


## Community Scale Input

"Town Center" Scale Comments

Less Support  
More Support

0 2 4 Miles



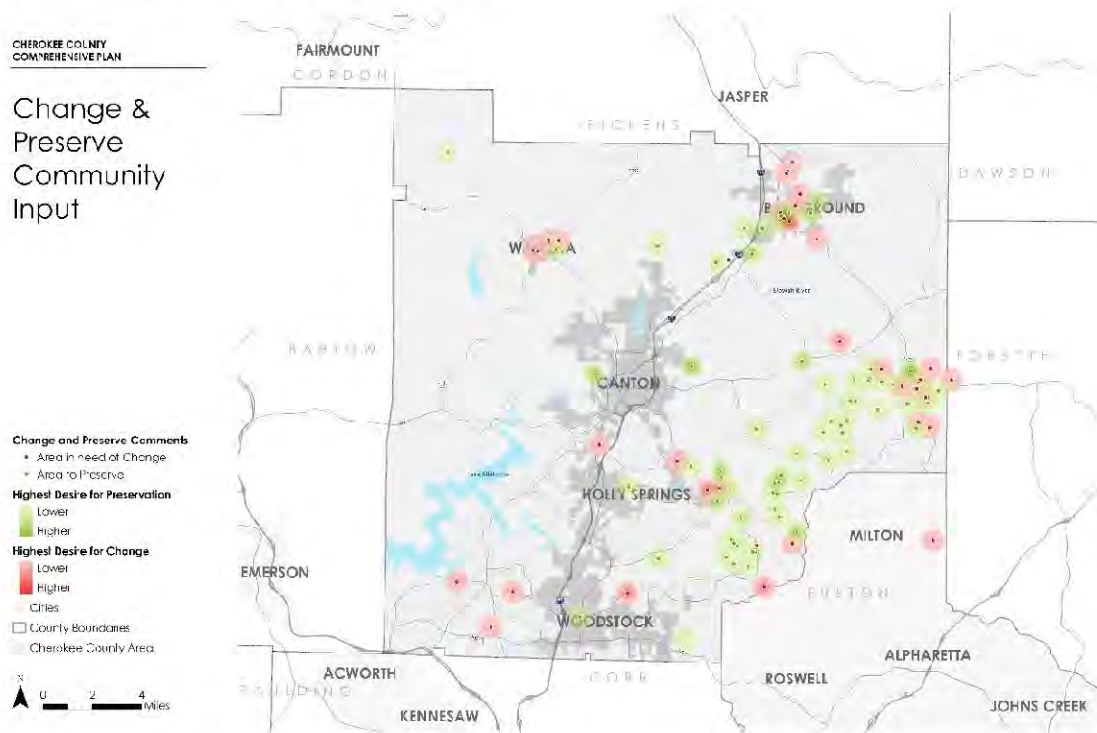
**Town Center Scale Preference** – Parts of Cherokee County where respondents believe have an opportunity to be a more intense and active environment. This category include centers including 1-3 story buildings with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians.



## Change & Preserve

Online and in-person community participants were asked to indicate which parts of the community they would like to either preserve as they exist today (with a green pin) or parts of the community where they see an opportunity for change (with a red pin). Pins were placed on maps of the County and analyzed to identify areas in need of attention.

Responses to the Change/Preserve activity were varied. Many participants said they would like to see additional sidewalks within the county, especially when there is an opportunity to connect schools to residential areas. Most of the 'preserve' pins were on residential and rural areas, where people want to see no new development or low-density compatible development. Refer to the heat map below:





## Technical Analysis

### Overview

In addition to the Community's input, several development and land use factors were considered as a part of this development study:

- The Ball Ground and Airport target areas benefit from **nearby interstate access**, which serves as a draw for new development when considering convenient commutes and the movement of goods and services regionally and nationally.
- There are several **roadway capacity projects planned** for the target area which would potentially draw development interest as the County addresses congestion issues and accommodates future growth opportunities.
- **Large parcels** throughout the County where zoning allows for subdivision welcomes additional mass. With rising property values, property-owners may leverage this right, continuing northward as land in the southern portion of the County becomes scarce.
- Previously established **development nodes lend themselves to potential growth patterns** where land is available. Overlay policy in Hamlets, County Crossroads, Neighborhood Villages, Community Villages, and Development Corridors seek various levels of concentrated growth to accommodate community-oriented uses in a prescriptive manner.
- **Access to utilities**, such as sanitary sewer, indicate future potential for development. Sewer capacity should be further evaluated to ensure it can support future levels of anticipated development.

The following maps indicate patterns related to areas impacted by volume of building permits and transportation project activity throughout the County. These conditions were reconciled to develop an overall assessment of the likelihood for redevelopment in various areas.



### Scenario Profiles

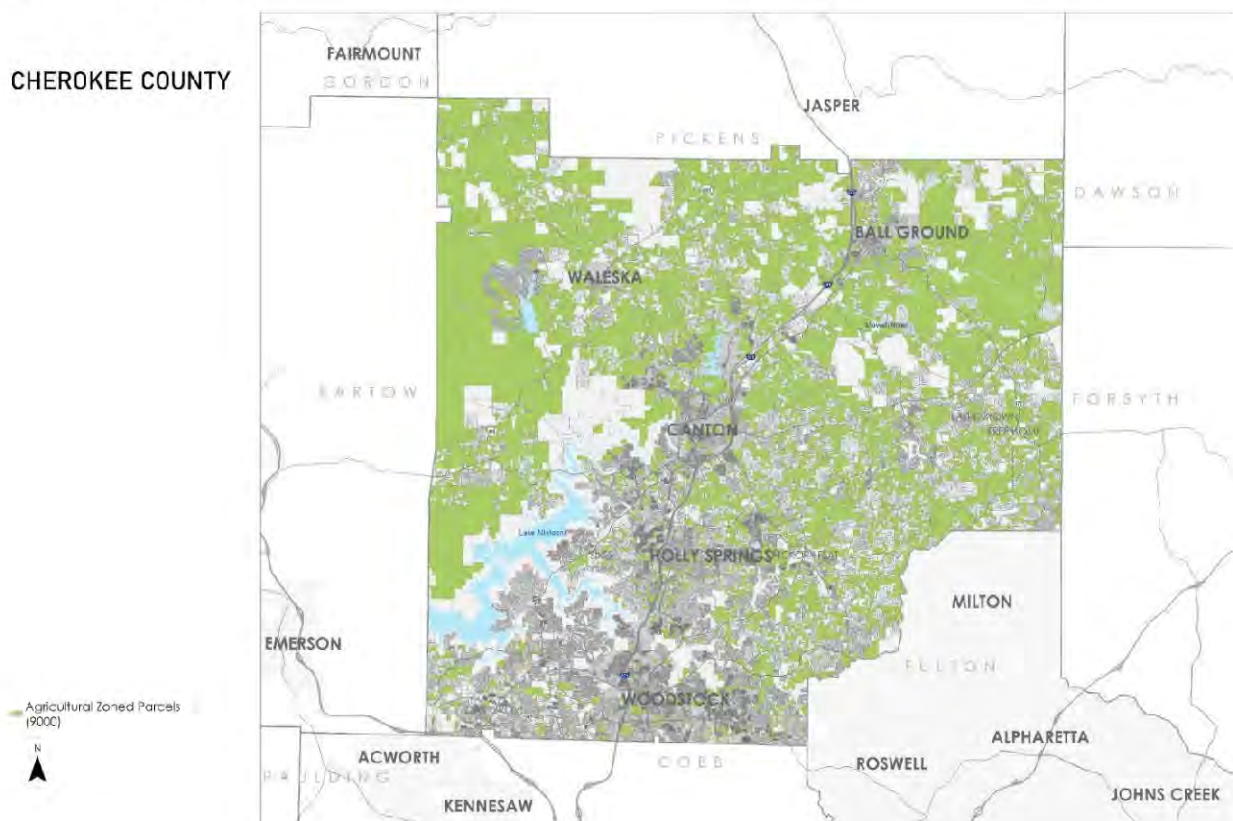
By pairing both input from the community and data-driven technical analysis the consultant team developed build-out scenarios for four potential outcomes, each of which may be influenced by land use policy implemented as a result of this Comprehensive Plan. The project team analyzed the following scenarios:

- A. Status Quo Growth
- B. Aggressive Growth
- C. Focused Growth Alternative
- D. Urban Growth Boundary

Each of the explored scenarios are compared to conditions as of 2020, when the County's population was 266,620 and had 94,867 households county-wide. Each scenario is described in greater detail below.

#### **Scenario A:** *Status Quo Growth*

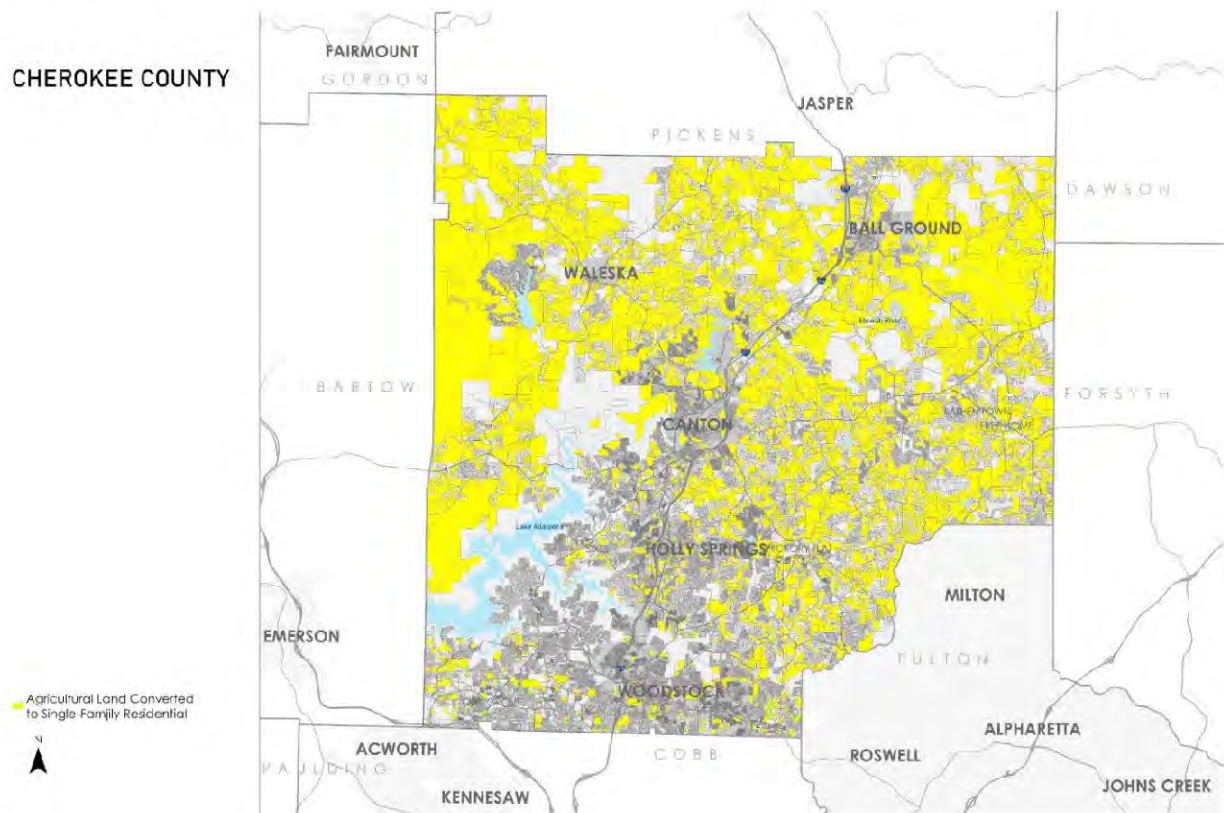
Status Quo Growth was analyzed to envision population impacts if Cherokee County were to grow at a "business-as-usual" rate. As a baseline measure, this study considers the 30-year growth projections per Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) conclusions at an average annual growth rate of 1.3% since 1990. Status Quo growth is projected to have minimal impact on existing Agricultural lots, with limited subdividing and growth trending in areas that it has historically occurred: within and near City limits and in the south toward Cobb and Fulton Counties. The map below shows Agriculture parcels throughout the County, which would by and large remain preserved.





### **Scenario B: Aggressive Single-Family Growth**

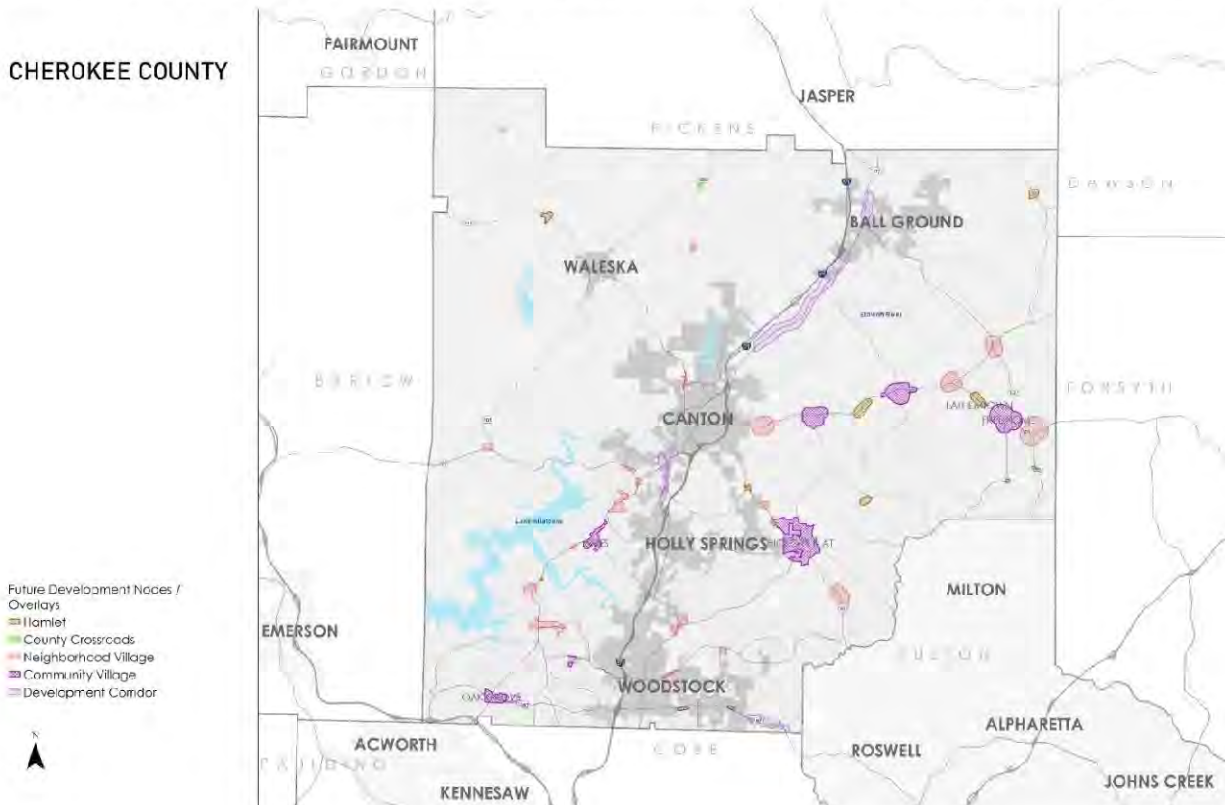
Similar to Scenario A, the Aggressive Single-Family Growth scenario also considers ARC's 30-year growth projections while also taking into account the allowable densification of Agricultural parcels. Today, property owners may subdivide agricultural parcels to 2 acres per lot, if the subdivided parcels meeting current development standards, including right-of-way access and lot width and depth, ensuring the lots are developable. Although fairly aggressive, and likely unrealistic, the project team assumed total build-out of all Agricultural land in Cherokee County to be subdivided at a conservative 5 acre lot minimum which yielded a total population of 613,226. At an average annual growth rate of 4.3%, this scenario generates the highest growth projection of all four scenarios. The map below displays all Agricultural land as single-family residences.





### **Scenario C: Focused Growth Alternative**

The Focused Growth Alternative was developed using existing focus areas that were established in the previous iteration of the Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan's Future Development Map was designed to provide strong land use compatibility and transitional standards and to guide the look and feel in various locations around the County. Character Areas within the map also include Development Nodes and Corridors including Country Crossroads, Hamlet, Neighborhood Village, Community Village, Scenic Corridor, Transitional Corridor, and Development Corridor. While Country Crossroads and Hamlet Nodes do not currently encourage residential development, the focused land subdivision and more commercial and residential activity along the corridors and nodes, depicted in the map below.





30-year projections for this scenario yielded a population of about 391,131 people at an average annual growth rate of 1.5%, just .2% above the Status Quo scenario.



Country Estates and Rural Places within these development nodes are fairly limited. Less than 2% of Country Estates and less than 1% of Rural Places in the County are also in a Development Node or Corridor. Meaning there is a lower ratio of land that is available to subdivide within the nodes, yielding far lower population projections than in Scenario B.

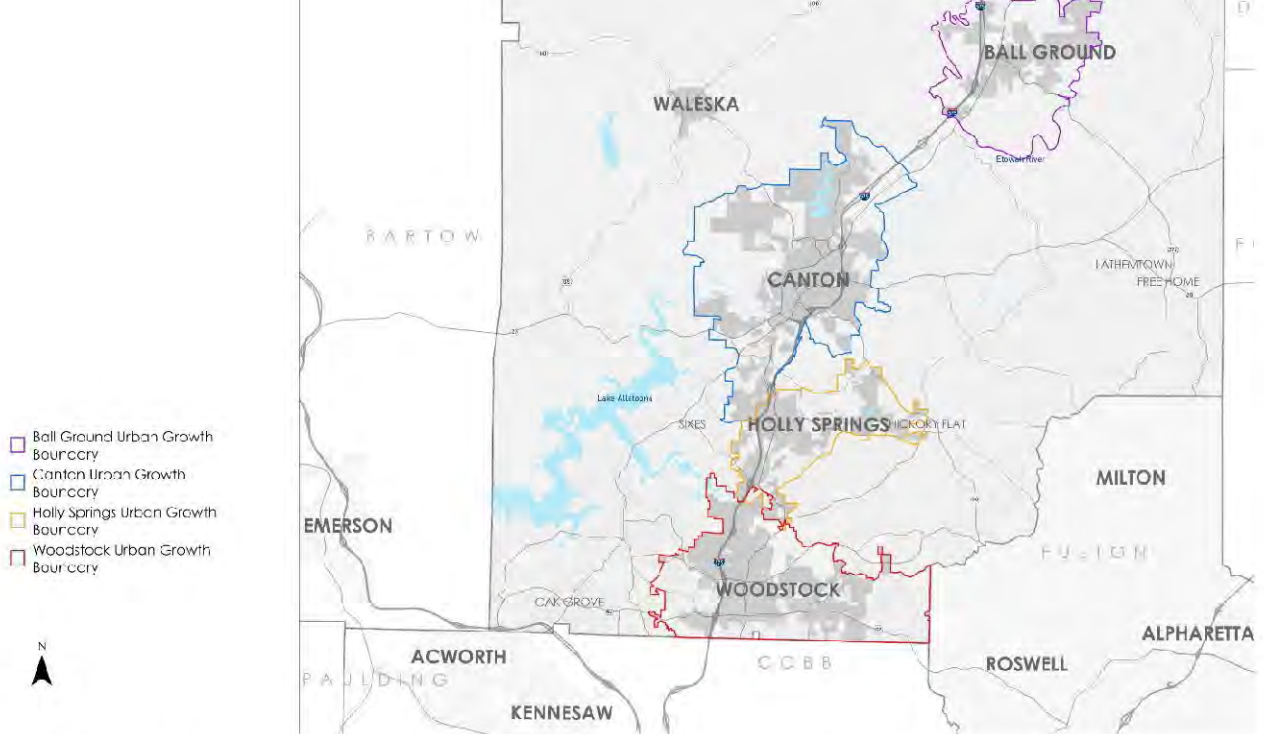
By focusing growth at development nodes and corridors and limiting growth outside of them, the County is able to manage controlled population growth, while still encouraging development in appropriately selected areas. Limiting growth outside of these nodes would require consideration of regulatory changes to restrict aggressive growth from occurring outside of the identified focus areas. As the County updates the Future Development Map, this projected growth may vary as nodes are eliminated or boundaries are adjusted.



### **Scenario D: Urban Growth Boundary**

The County's Urban Growth Boundaries are mutually recognized agreements between the Cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Woodstock and the County that geographically limit areas which may be annexed or developed. The Urban Growth Boundary scenario tested development potential only occurring within the boundaries, in the map below, through a mix of single-family subdivisions and limited multi-family and mixed-use development.

#### **CHEROKEE COUNTY**



30-year population projections for this scenario yielded a population of 418,432 at an average annual growth rate of 1.9%. The moderately higher growth rate than that of Scenario A can be justified by concentrating growth in existing activity centers, limiting development and preserving the existing character of most of unincorporated Cherokee County.



## Development Scenario Summary

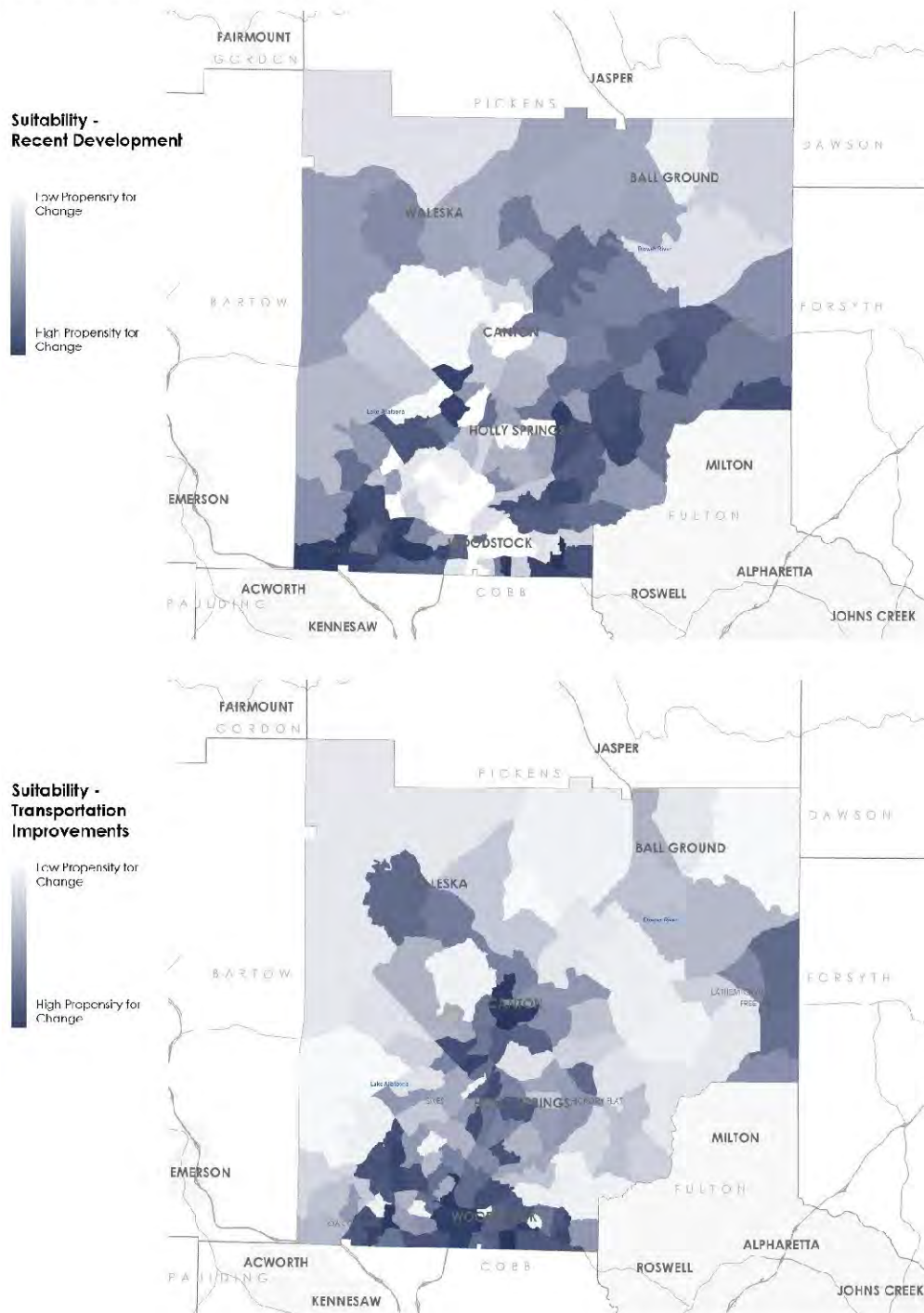
Each previously described scenario is summarized and compared below. Scenarios C and D, Focused Growth Alternative and Urban Growth Boundary, yield the most conservative growth projections, not far beyond Scenario A's status quo projections.

	A	B	C	D
Scenario	Status Quo	Aggressive Single-Family Growth	Focused Growth Alternative	Urban Growth Boundary
	<i>Given projected population growth</i>	<i>Densification by subdivision of AG properties</i>	<i>Growth focused at existing development nodes</i>	<i>Growth focused within existing Urban Growth Boundaries</i>
<b>Zoning Detail</b>	No change	No change	Small-scale mixed-use, townhomes, and cluster SFR allowed by right.	No change
<b>Population</b> 266,620 as of 2020 (Source: US Census)	374,821	613,226	391,131	418,432
<b>Number of Households</b> 94,867 as of 2020	137,297 dwelling units	249,945 dwelling units	145,194 dwelling units	156,628
<b>% Growth</b>	40.45%	130.7%	46.7%	56.9%
<b>Average Annual Growth Rate</b>	1.3%	4.3%	1.5%	1.9%



## Development Node Scoring

The project team developed a scoring mechanism to score each of the Development Nodes established in the previous Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2017. The scores were developed as a result of analyzing recent trends in building data as well as planned transportation projects that may attract new development.





The scale below indicates development suitability from low propensity for change to high propensity (5) for change. *The table below represents the scores of each development node. The County should use the scores to prioritize development nodes for the updated Comprehensive Plan.*

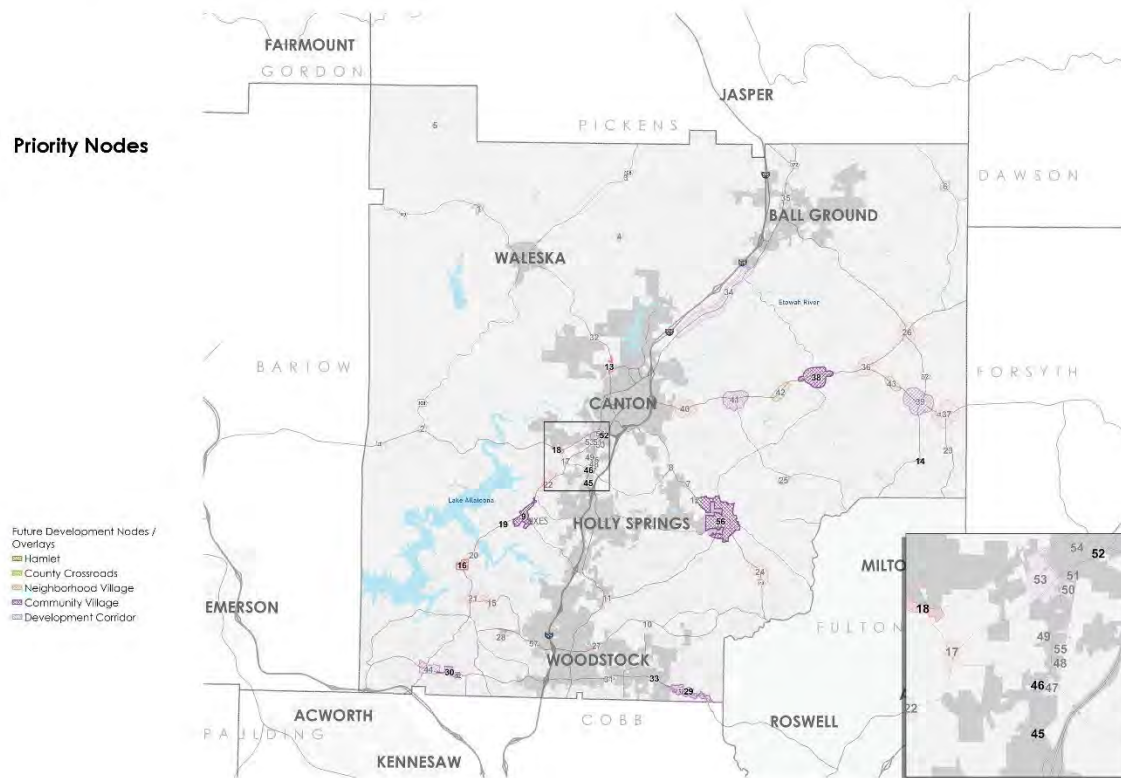
Node ID	Node Type	Score
29	Development Corridor	5
33	Community Village	5
45	Development Corridor	4
46	Development Corridor	4
52	Development Corridor	4
9	Community Village	3
13	Neighborhood Village	3
14	Hamlet	3
16	Neighborhood Village	3
18	Neighborhood Village	3
19	Neighborhood Village	3
30	Development Corridor	3
38	Community Village	3
56	Community Village	3
2	Neighborhood Village	2
3	County Crossroads	2
4	Neighborhood Village	2
8	Hamlet	2
11	Neighborhood Village	2
12	Hamlet	2
15	Neighborhood Village	2
17	Neighborhood Village	2
21	Neighborhood Village	2
23	Hamlet	2
26	Neighborhood Village	2
27	Neighborhood Village	2
34	Development Corridor	2
43	Hamlet	2
44	Community Village	2
55	Development Corridor	2
1	Hamlet	1

Node ID	Node Type	Score
5	County Crossroads	1
6	Hamlet	1
7	Neighborhood Village	1
10	Neighborhood Village	1
20	Hamlet	1
22	Neighborhood Village	1
24	Neighborhood Village	1
25	Hamlet	1
28	Community Village	1
31	Community Village	1
32	Neighborhood Village	1
35	Development Corridor	1
36	Neighborhood Village	1
37	Neighborhood Village	1
39	Community Village	1
40	Neighborhood Village	1
41	Community Village	1
42	Hamlet	1
47	Development Corridor	1
48	Development Corridor	1
49	Development Corridor	1
50	Development Corridor	1
51	Development Corridor	1
53	Development Corridor	1
54	Development Corridor	1
57	Community Village	1



Based on this analysis, the County may prioritize further policy and regulatory action to encourage development within Development Corridors 29, 45, 46, 52, and 30; Community Villages 33, 9, 38, and 56; Neighborhood Villages 13, 16, 18, and 19; and Hamlet 4 as indicated on the map below. Nodes receiving scores 2 and below have a much lower propensity for change.

#### Priority Nodes







# SW Cherokee Area Plan

## Cherokee County Planning and Zoning

*Adopted — June 18, 2019*



# Acknowledgements

## *Board of Commissioners*

Harry Johnson, Chairman  
Steve West, District 1  
Ray Gunnin, District 2  
Benny Carter, District 3  
Corey Ragsdale, District 4

## *Stakeholder Committee*

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Heath Tippens, Cherokee Office of Economic Development  
Danny Meece, Inalfa Roof Systems  
Tim Fernandez, YANMAR America Corporation  
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Kristi Schermerhorn, Centennial Lakes Resident  
Alan Thompson, Thompson Family

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## *Market Study Consultant-Bleakly Advisory Group*

Geoff Koski, President  
Gary Mongeon, Senior Vice President

*Thank you to the many residents  
and business owners who  
generously gave their time  
to be engaged in the  
development of this plan!*



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- How has SW Cherokee Changed?
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- Demographic Profile
- Community Engagement
- Case Studies

## The Plan

- Vision Statement
- Core Issues
- Community Elements

## Vision Into Action

- Process
- 5-year Implementation Plan

## Appendix

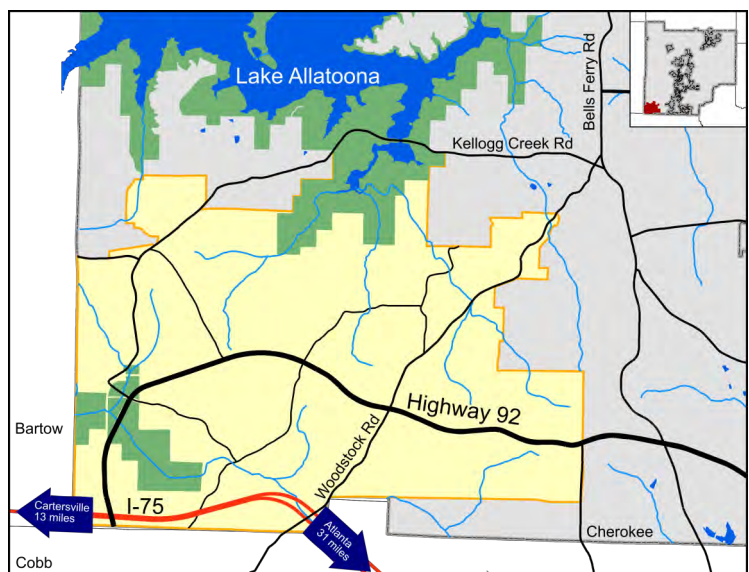
- Market Study



# Executive Summary

## SW Cherokee has Changed

In less than twenty years, SW Cherokee County has gone from a quiet residential community to a growing suburban and employment center. Subdivisions like Centennial Lakes, Ridgemill and Cameron Creek, along with industries like Inalfa Roof Systems, adidas, and YANMAR and retailers like Cabela's make up this former agricultural area. SW Cherokee's population, home values and traffic have all increased with this development. In short, people and businesses want to be here among the existing community. And like the rest of the County, SW Cherokee is evolving and needs strategies to help keep it an attractive place to live and work. In our 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update, one of the key tasks was to take a further look at the SW Cherokee area, and this plan represents the fulfillment of that task.



## Why is an Area Plan Important?

When drafting the comprehensive plan, we told everyone to think of it as “a roadmap to the community’s future, with the community in the driver seat.” Naturally, each portion of the County may face different issues to varying degrees, so an area plan is necessary to focus on one specific part of that map—in this case, SW Cherokee. While the comprehensive plan focuses on a community’s long range goals and ‘big picture’ outlook, an area plan:

- Focuses on a specific geography that shares common issues and characteristics
- Engages the local residents and business leaders to develop the plan
- Explores how the comp plan’s vision can be carried out on a much more detailed level with a clear set of implementation tasks
- Considers local elements for the community’s vision such as zoning, design guidelines, mixed-use centers, greenspace, and place-making ideas



## Relationship to the Comp Plan

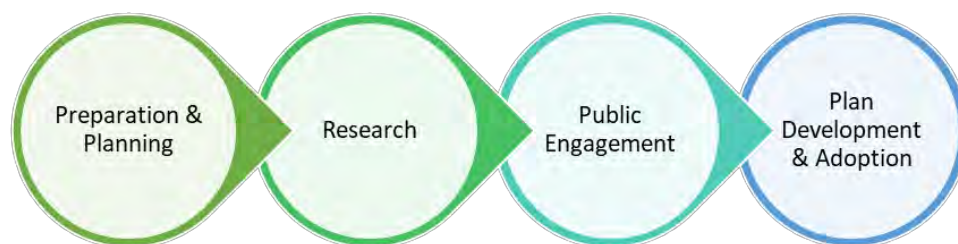
The SW Cherokee Area Plan serves as a spring board for the implementation tasks laid out in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update, which identified SW Cherokee as one of six target areas that warranted further analysis. The SW Cherokee Target Area Workshop, which took place in August 2017, produced an implementation plan that included developing a master plan and market study for the area. This implementation task came from residents' feedback emphasizing the need for more retail, hospitality, and mixed-use along Highway 92; preserving prime land for industrial uses; constructing pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and developing parks and amenities for the area. This Area Plan delves deeper into SW Cherokee's current issues to determine the relevancy of these needs and other issues that have risen in the community. The vision, implementation, and work plan are based on the needs initially identified in the Comp Plan and from resident feedback since then.

## The Plan in a Nutshell

The planning process for SW Cherokee began in October/November 2018, just as the Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted. Planning and Zoning began drafting the project plan for SW Cherokee with the purpose of developing a deeper understanding of SW Cherokee's current trends, issues and opportunities in order to work with residents, property owners and business leaders to develop a shared vision for the area. The four primary objectives this planning process are:

- To build a consensus about a shared vision for the future of SW Cherokee
- To clearly understand and describe the potential for increasing mixed-use development along Highway 92, particularly retail, service, and hospitality businesses
- To integrate trails and greenspace into SW Cherokee's vision
- To develop a list of action items for implanting this vision for the area

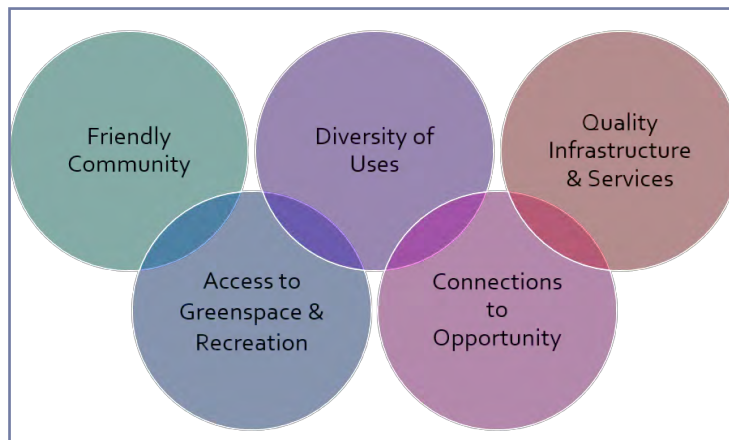
The planning process consisted of four phases: Preparation and Planning; Research; Public Engagement; and Feedback, Edits, and Approval. The Preparation and Planning phase involved



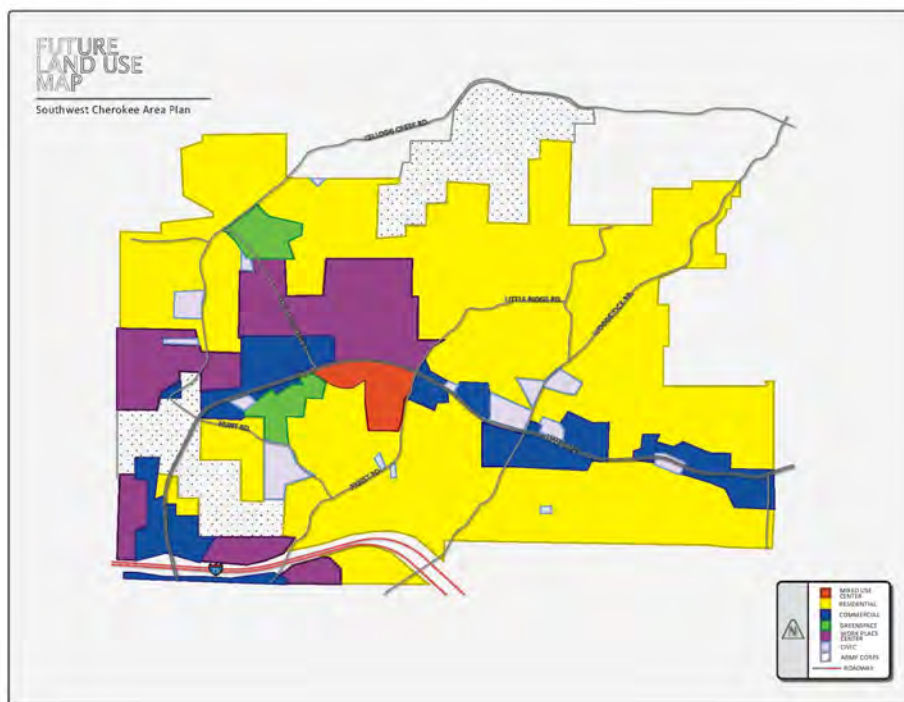
finalizing budget approval, securing meeting venues, and developing the stakeholders committee. During the Research Phase, staff obtained demographic, employment, and historical data (this involved contracting out to Bleakly Advisory Group for the Market Study), researched and developed case studies, developed and analyzed GIS maps. The Public Engagement phase involved two groups of meetings. First, a Stakeholder Committee formed with representatives from residents and businesses that met ahead of the public meeting and served as a sounding board for elements of the plan. Second, staff hosted three public meetings in March and April 2019 that involved interactive activities to engage participants to generate a vision for the future of the community. The market study consultant, Bleakly Group held some additional focus groups and interviews to narrow in on the challenges for SW Cherokee. The final phase saw the completion of the plan document, which was reviewed and refined based on feedback from the community, stakeholders and County officials.



This area plan is divided into three main parts—Community Context, The Plan, and Vision into Action. The Community Context explores SW Cherokee’s key demographics, summarizes the Market Study, and outlines the public engagement process critical to realizing the plan. Building on that section is The Plan, which describes SW Cherokee’s core values and priorities, illustrates the key elements of the map, and presents the final land use plan map. The Core Values, shown in the diagram, comprise basic principles that will help SW Cherokee become a more close-knit, connected and economically viable community. Each core value section describes that value’s relevance to SW Cherokee’s outlook, along with strategies to make that value a reality. Its also important to be realistic, so we also acknowledged potential challenges the County may face carrying out these strategies. The future land use plan developed by the public is an extension of these core values. The Community Elements section describes the map development process in detail.



Finally, the Vision Into Action section spells out how this plan will affect future land use decisions and steps that Cherokee County and its partners can take to implement this vision. The plan concludes with the 5-Year Implementation Plan which outlines initiatives that will fulfill SW Cherokee’s mission. Some of the initiatives are immediate while others will be addressed gradually, but the implementation plan will help the community measure progress toward implementing their vision for SW Cherokee.





# Community Context

## RECENT HISTORY

### **1900-1970**

At the turn of the twentieth century, SW Cherokee was a rural, farming community with significant forested areas. Homes were generally built by local homebuilders for individual families and not in organized subdivisions. The Army Corps of Engineers began building Lake Allatoona starting in 1946, and completed construction in 1949. The area began to change as a result of the lake and the growth of Metro Atlanta with the introduction of residential subdivisions and family owned-operated mobile home parks. In 1949, the Etowah Hills neighborhood became the first platted subdivision in SW Cherokee near the Corps Property. In 1966, Oak Hill Estates, the second subdivision was platted near Wade Green Road.

### **1970-2000**

The 1970s saw an dramatic increase in suburban development. Notably, Interstate 75 was completed up to Highway 92 in 1974. The construction of the Interstate opened SW Cherokee for additional subdivisions in the 1970s and 1980s since it was now much easier to commute by car to Metro Atlanta job centers. The homes in this wave of subdivisions were on septic. The extension of sewer from Towne Lake brought another wave of residential developments in the 1990s, including developments along Woodstock Road and Victory Drive. The Centennial Lakes Golf Course opened in 1989 (though it closed 15 years later). Another important initiative in this period was the Highway 92 Village Ordinance. Adopted in 1997, this overlay district allows for certain uses while prohibiting others, and establishes site and architectural design guidelines for the Highway 92 corridor.





## **2000-Present**

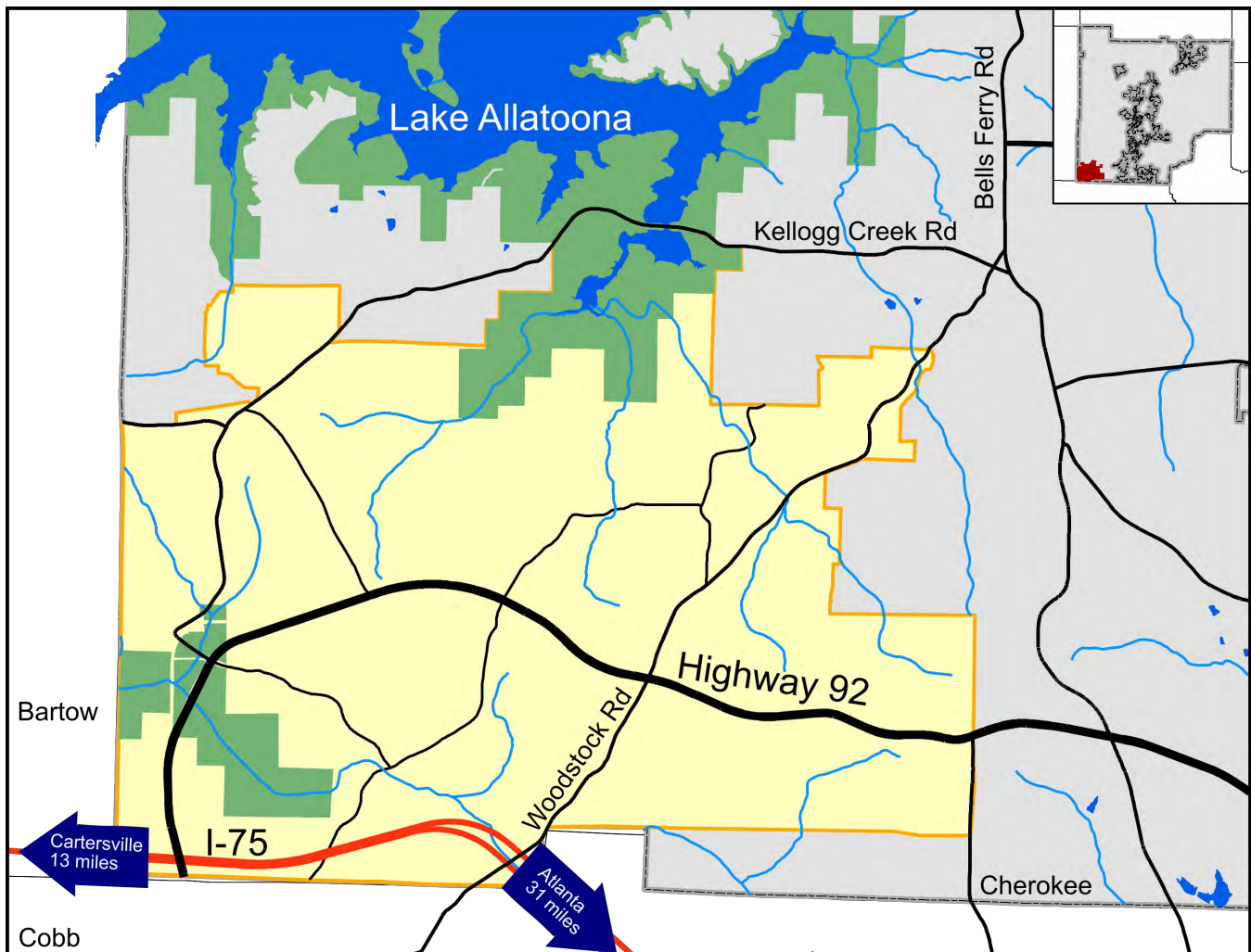
Many changes have come to the SW Cherokee area in this period including major rezonings, transportation improvements and the designation of an opportunity zone. The Centennial Lakes Golf Course and adjacent properties were rezoned for residential development in a series of cases between 2003 and 2005. These properties were subsequently developed into the Centennial Lakes neighborhood. Majestic Realty rezoned property along I-75 for commercial and industrial development that is now home to Cabela's and an industrial park in 2005 as well. Between 2006-2009, Georgia DOT worked to widen Highway 92 through SW Cherokee from 2 to 4 lanes with a divided median. In the process, they also rerouted the road in 3 sections to straighten the path of the road and improve safety. 2009 saw the first rezoning of property for the Cherokee 75 Corporate Park development, specifically the existing mulch plant where the adidas SPEEDFACTORY facility stands today. At the same time, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs approved the designation of the SW Cherokee Opportunity Zone, which allows new and expanding businesses to qualify for significant state tax credits for new jobs created within the zone. As a result of these major changes in the community, the past decade has seen the development of numerous new residential subdivisions and new commercial/industrial projects.

New Residential Subdivisions	New Commercial & Industrial Projects
Village at Oak Grove	Cherokee Commerce Center
Sable Trace	Cabela's
Cameron Creek	CVS at Woodstock Road
Ridge Mill Townhomes	Inalfa Roof Systems
Creekwood Place	MSK
Autumn Ridge	YANMAR EVO//Center
Woodland Trace	thyssenkrupp — Acclaim Lighting
Sable Trace Ridge	Jaipur Living Global HQ
Centennial Lakes	adidas SPEEDFACTORY
Waterford Oak	Cabot — Atlanta Bonded Warehouse
Grace	Woodstock Furniture Outlet HQ & Distribution Center
Centennial Ridge	



## LOCATION OVERVIEW

Working with elected officials and community leaders, the boundary of the SW Cherokee Area was drawn to include roughly 6,000 acres of property. The boundary to the west stretches from the I-75 and Highway 92 interchange area to Kellogg Creek Road to the north to Wade Green Road to the east and the county line to the south. This area is well connected to the Atlanta Region and the I-75 corridor. In the last 40 years, residential development in SW Cherokee has increased the population of the area. Only recently, has the area seen significant industrial growth near the I-75 interchange and in the Cherokee 75 Corporate Park. There is also a large amount of land owned by a variety of federal and local government entities. The statistics below give more detail about these government



**6,035 acres total**

5,355 ac  
parcels

680  
ROW

- 676.9 acres — Army Corps of Engineers
- 103.9 acres — Cherokee County Government
- 61.8 acres — Cherokee County School District
- Roughly 13% is owned by the Federal Government



# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE — People & Households

## Population Basics

<b>12,554</b>	2019 Population Estimate
<b>5%</b>	Percentage of County Population
<b>50.4%</b>	Population Change since 2000
<b>9.43</b>	Square Miles
<b>1,331</b>	Population Density (people per sq. mile)
<b>38.4</b>	Median age
<b>36%</b>	College-educated percentage
<b>13%</b>	African American
<b>12%</b>	Hispanic

## Household Profile

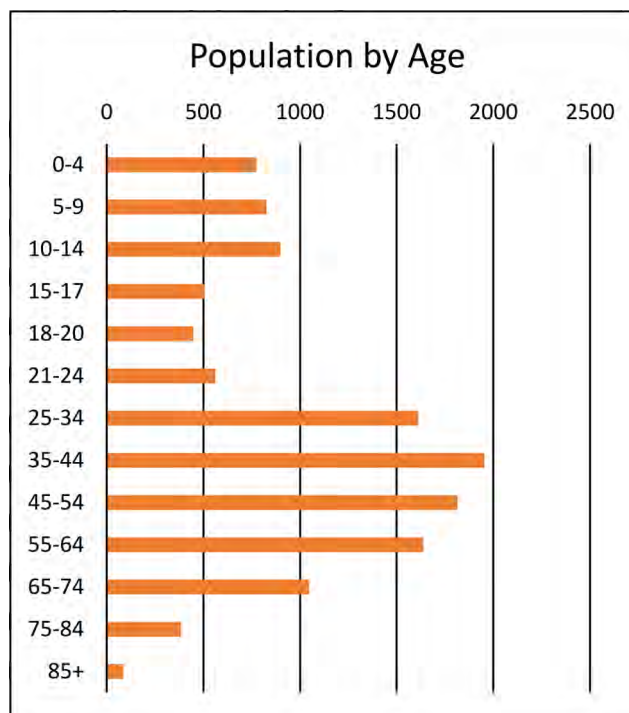
<b>4,428</b>	2019 Households Estimate
<b>2.82</b>	Average household size
<b>30.2%</b>	Households contain 4 or more people
<b>471</b>	Households per square mile
<b>41%</b>	Households with children under age of 18 living at home
<b>37.5%</b>	Married couple family households
<b>84.5%</b>	Homeowner households
<b>13.2</b>	Average length of residence among homeowners in years
<b>16%</b>	Renter households
<b>5</b>	Average length of residence among renters in years

lands.

## Analysis

The population of SW Cherokee has grown from 8,344 in 2000 to 12,557 est. in 2019, which is an increase of more than 50% in less than 20 years. This area of Cherokee County is slightly younger, more educated and more diverse than the rest of the County.

SW Cherokee households are predominately married couples with children living at home that are homeowners. The graph below shows these primary groups in the distribution of population by age. This is a very stable area with a longer than average length of residence for both homeowners and renters. With an average commute time of 37 minutes, this area is currently a quintessential “bedroom community” where people live but have significant commutes to their jobs.





# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE — Housing

## Housing Stock

<b>4,726</b>	Total Housing Units
<b>88%</b>	Single-Family Detached
<b>5%</b>	Townhomes
<b>5%</b>	Mobile Homes
<b>2%</b>	Small Multi-Family
<b>\$194,677</b>	Median Home Value
<b>1994</b>	Median Age of Housing (Year Built)

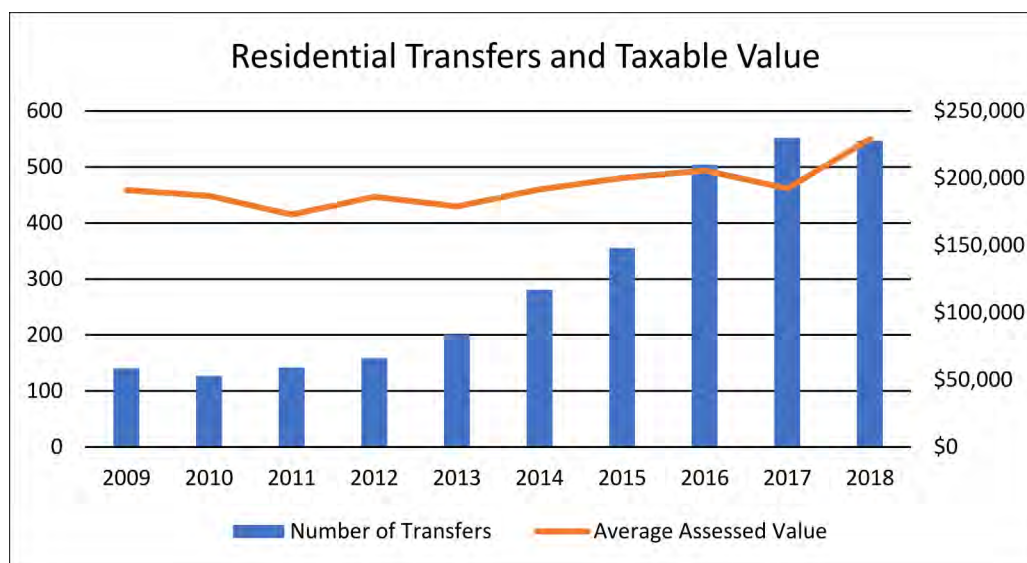
## SW Cherokee Home Market

<b>\$191,091</b>	2009 Average Assessed Value
<b>141</b>	2009 Total Real Estate Transfers
<b>\$229,088</b>	2018 Average Assessed Value
<b>547</b>	2018 Total Real Estate Transfers
<b>25-30%</b>	Percentage of new home sales
<b>9</b>	New Residential Developments (in process)
<b>755</b>	Units — including
	265 Single-family Homes
	148 Townhomes
	342 Apartments

## Analysis

Nearly 90 % of the housing in the SW Cherokee area is single-family detached with a smattering of townhomes and mobile homes but almost no existing multi-family units. Compared with the whole County, roughly 10% of the County housing stock is made up of multi-family units (apartments).

Since 2013, the average assessed value of homes in the SW Cherokee area have trended upwards. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in the number of residential real estate transfers, particularly in 2016 –2018. It is important to note that 25-30% of these are new homes sales.





# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE — Income & Employment

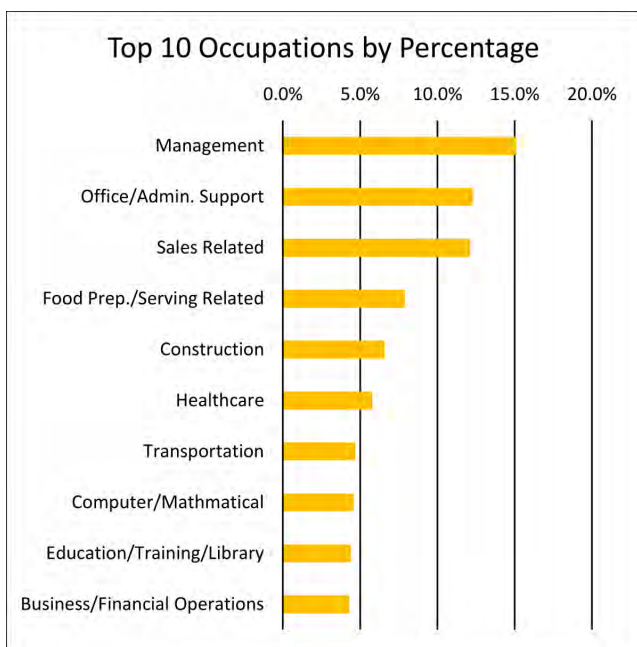
## Analysis

Households in SW Cherokee are solidly middle income with over half earning between \$50,000 and \$125,000 per year. This area also has a relatively low poverty rate with less than 6% of households with incomes below the poverty level. With these strong household income numbers, it is not surprising that there is significant household retail demand around \$53,200 each per year. Considering retail sales within the study area, over half of this demand is being met outside of SW Cherokee with \$27,900 going to the surrounding areas of Bartow, Cherokee and Cobb counties.

The majority of working adults in SW Cherokee are in white collar occupations. Nearly 6% of the employed are working from home. This is similar to the rest of Cherokee County where there are a lot of home-based businesses. Commutes from the area average about 37 minutes, which is typical of bedroom communities. Most are commuting to adjacent counties for jobs.

## Household Income

<b>\$78,975</b>	Median household income
<b>\$91,520</b>	Average household income
<b>54.1%</b>	Households earning between \$50,000 and \$125,000 per year
<b>&lt; 6%</b>	Households below poverty level
<b>\$53,200</b>	Retail demand per household
<b>\$25,300</b>	SW Cherokee sales per household
<b>\$27,900</b>	Surplus retail demand per household



## Employment & Commuting

<b>63%</b>	Working in white collar occupations
<b>5%</b>	Local unemployment
<b>5.8%</b>	Working from home
<b>37</b>	Average commuting time (minutes)
<b>78.8%</b>	Drive to work alone
<b>12.6%</b>	Travel to work in a carpool
Most traveling to job centers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along I-75 in Cobb</li> <li>• Woodstock/Towne Lake</li> <li>• GA 400 Corridor</li> </ul>	



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public input played a significant role in the development of the SW Cherokee Area Plan. To start, the County formed a stakeholder committee which included representatives from SW Cherokee's neighborhood and business communities. This committee met four times over a seven week span, during which they discussed the progress and findings of the public meetings, strategies to better integrate neighborhood and business interests, and serve as liaisons between the County and community. In addition, the County held 3 public meetings during March and April 2019, which consisted of a 1)public kickoff, 2)community visioning meeting, and a 3)charrette.

## Public Kickoff Meeting

The SW Cherokee Area Plan held its first meeting on March 20 and was well-attended. First, staff presented a slideshow outlining the history of SW Cherokee, a recap of the Target Area Workshop held in August 2017, and an overview of current demographics and trends. This meetings primary goal was to learn how community members currently view SW Cherokee and how they hope it will change in the future. After the presentation, participants were divided into three groups each led by a county staff member, where they were tasked with SW Cherokee's assets, challenges, and needs—an alternative to the traditional SWOT analysis. The next activity was a Word Association where participants brainstormed key words that represented the County's present status and potential future. Both activities helped reveal concerns and priorities from the community, and assisted the County with drafting potential core values, visions, and guidelines. The word cloud on the right shows residents' hopes and priorities for SW Cherokee's future, based on the meeting feedback.

<i>Public Meetings</i>	<i>Stakeholder Meetings</i>
<i>Public Kickoff</i> <i>Wednesday, March 20, 2019</i> <i>6:30pm—8:30pm</i>	<i>Wednesday, March 6, 2019</i> <i>8:00am-10:00am</i>
<i>Community Visioning</i> <i>Thursday, April 11, 2019</i> <i>6:30pm—8:30pm</i>	<i>Thursday, March 28, 2019</i> <i>8:00am-10:00am</i>
<i>Planning Charrette</i> <i>Wednesday, April 24, 2019</i> <i>6:30pm—8:30pm</i>	<i>Wednesday, April 17, 2019</i> <i>8:00am—10:00pm</i>
	<i>Wednesday, May 1, 2019</i> <i>8:00am-10:00am</i>



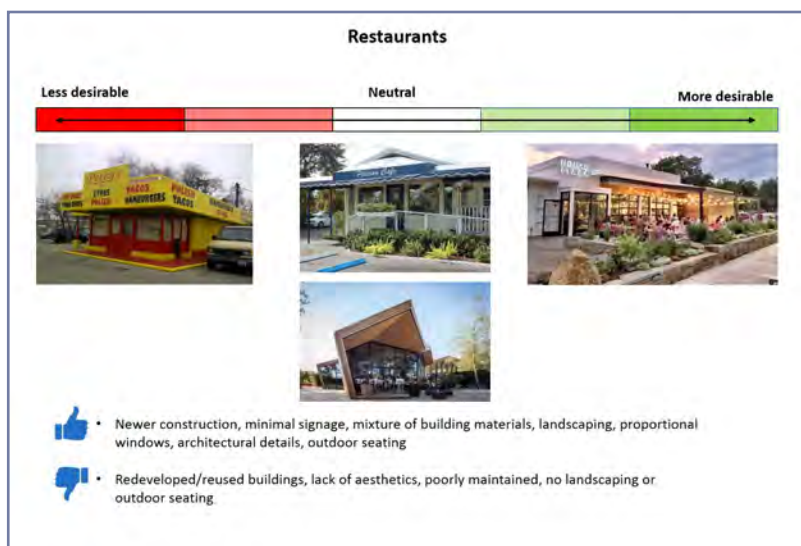
### Future of SW Cherokee Word Association Results



## Community Visioning Meeting

The goal of the Community Visioning meeting was to determine various architectural styles and physical layouts that the community preferred. During the meeting, the County surveyed the residents' development preferences for restaurants, commercial (small, medium, large), mixed-use, attached residential, workplace center, bike & pedestrian paths, streetscapes, parking facilities, signage, and recreation. They were shown a 200-image Community Preference Survey of buildings,

streetscapes, trails, parks, bike lanes and parking lots, and tasked with ranking each image on a scale of 1 through 5 (with 5 being most desirable). The survey revealed that bike & pedestrian paths and recreational uses were two of the community's highest priorities. It also indicated that residents value architectural details, landscaping, "drive to" mixed-use centers, streetscapes lined with varying building styles, and plenty of sidewalk buffering to protect pedestrians from vehicles.



## Planning Charrette

The third and final public meeting consisted of a planning charrette. In short, a charrette is an intense work-effort to find solutions to critical problems or issues. In the planning field, this consists of interactive group activities where participants label a map or diagram according to their future vision of the community. The participants were divided into three groups where they brainstormed and recorded their ideal locations for amenities and other developments on a vellum basemap. They also had overlay maps showing current government lands and developable areas to guide them. The groups were assigned a series of 5 specific design challenges to address in their final product. Attendees used different color markers to denote different types of development on the map. A sample map from one of the groups is shown to the right. This process will be discussed in more depth in the Community Elements section.





# Case Studies

## Overview

In order to better understand how SW Cherokee can successfully manage growth and promote compatible uses that do not conflict with residents' quality of life, County staff explored the initiatives of other Metro Atlanta communities that have faced the same issue. We chose six different municipalities based on a few key criteria—they are located in predominately suburban environment, with a major state or county road, and contained an industrial presence with established residential neighborhoods. The six municipalities are: McFarland Parkway (Forsyth County), Douglas County, Town Center (Cobb County), City of Peachtree Corners, City of Suwanee, and the Fulton Industrial District. Each case study did not necessarily bear resemblance to SW Cherokee's current state, as some of the municipalities are considerably more built out. But the range of areas observed enabled staff to learn how denser communities manage growth, so SW Cherokee may be armed with similar strategies for the future.

To begin the case study research, the Planning and Zoning department scheduled visits with the six municipalities travelled on site to each one. They asked about the successes and challenges they have encountered when managing growth and reflected on their lessons learned. County staff also explored each area themselves, taking notes on development patterns, landscaping and screening, and the quality of light industrial and manufacturing sites. The following case studies represent the outcome of this research.

### Atlanta Region Case Studies

McFarland Parkway (Forsyth County)  
Sweetwater Creek-Thornton Road  
(Douglas County)  
Town Center CID (Cobb County)  
City of Peachtree Corners  
City of Suwanee  
Fulton Industrial CID  
(Fulton County)



A festival at the City of Suwanee's Town Center



## McFarland Parkway (Forsyth County)

McFarland Parkway is an established industrial corridor located in the southern part of Forsyth County. It contains major industries along McFarland, Shiloh Road, and McFarland 400 Boulevard. Both new and established residential neighborhoods sit near the corridor. On February 21, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Vanessa Bernstein-Goldman and Heather Ryan of the Forsyth County Planning and Community Development staff to discuss their experience balancing residential and industrial development.

Many of Forsyth County's successes, including McFarland Parkway, are due to their overlay districts that set higher design standards along McFarland and Shiloh Road, discouraging certain uses. Their standards for landscaping and buffering made for picturesque business parks. Tree screening, berms, and other plantings helped soften the industrialized appearance of the corridor. These natural barriers made residential areas feel untouched by the commercial/industrial areas. The Halcyon development, slated to open this spring, will provide a much-needed mixed-use center to the county.

Forsyth staff discussed challenges as well, including the natural market forces that make it difficult to attract retail. While Halcyon may help, the task remains an uphill battle. Another challenge is the simple ability to track public opinion on development encroachment. Forsyth County staff could not recall any specific complaints they have received, but acknowledged they did not actively track it either due to the challenges of that task.

Overall, Forsyth staff did not seem to have specific initiatives to address this issue. Many of the industries predated the recent residential development so it has been more accepted, or developers were conscious of resident preferences. Cherokee staff also learned that the number of rooftops affects the ability to attract retail, thus explaining why SW Cherokee struggles in this area.



### McFarland Overlay Standards

Landscaping

Board Fences

Architectural Building Materials

Parking Areas

Service, refuse collection & dumpsters

Off-street Loading Areas

Screening of Open Storage Yards

Outdoor display of vehicles, equipment, and merchandise

Canopies





## Sweetwater Creek—Thornton Road (Douglas County)

Over time, Douglas County has become a popular destination for light industrial development, which is present, along with commercial establishments, along Highway 92, US-78, and Thornton Road. Similar to SW Cherokee, Douglas County is a popular market for the industrial sector, where they are surrounded by long-established neighborhoods. The county has also prioritized attracting incubators and tech companies. In addition to numerous industrial establishments, Douglas County is now home to Google and Switch and is preparing for the development of two new 145,000 square foot data centers near Sweetwater Creek. This area is slated to be a major employment area, and the Sweetwater Creek Master Plan—updated in 2016—is its guide. Cherokee Planning and Zoning met with Planning Director Ron Roberts on February 25, 2019 to discuss their successful management of land uses.

Douglas County's strategies for maintaining a healthy separation between industry and residential include a truck parking ordinance that requires trucks to park within 400 feet of the adjacent use. The site must also be at least 200 feet from a residential zone and be screened with natural elements such as trees, shrubs, or berms. These features help isolate industry and truck traffic from the public, making transportation easier and neighborhoods more livable, while still enjoying access to work center hub.

The interaction between freight and passenger traffic has been a concern for residents, so the county also has designated truck routes which help improve the flow of traffic and decrease the potential burden in residential areas (noise, pollution, quality of life, etc.) The Douglas County Comprehensive Transportation Plan designates primary truck routes for Interstate 20, US-78, and Highways 92, 6, and 5, while secondary truck routes consist of Highways 166 and 61, and Capps Ferry Road, Post Road, Lee Road, and Douglas Boulevard. Like many jurisdictions, Douglas County finds it difficult to attract retail. A Kroger grocery store was originally supposed to be built, but impervious surface requirements have kept grocery stores from being developed, highlighting their difficulties in attracting retail amenities.

Through the current development going on in Douglas County, and their initiatives laid out in the Sweetwater Master Plan, staff realized the importance of area/master planning to map out truck routes, bike plans, and development. SW Cherokee would also do well to avoid attracting industries that create significantly more truck traffic.





## Town Center CID

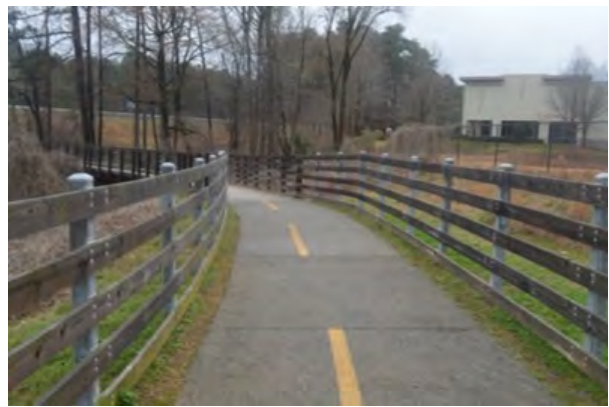
The Town Center Community Improvement District (CID) is located in Cobb County and occupies an area roughly spanning from the 75/575 interchange, the Cobb County Airport, Town Center Mall, and Kennesaw State University. The CID was formed in 1997 and is a major activity center for Marietta, Kennesaw, and even southern Cherokee County. Commercial areas are present around the interstates and along Barrett, Chastain Meadows, and Cobb Parkways. These areas are flanked by established neighborhoods on Bells Ferry Road and Big Shanty Road, and are collectively referred to as the Bells Ferry Homeowners Association. The CID completed their master plan update in 2017, which builds on growth that the area experienced upon recovering from the 2008 recession. On February 12, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Alisha Smith of Town Center CID to discuss their experience healthily maintaining an array of land uses.

One of the most successful projects in tying together land uses is the development of the 7-mile Noonday Creek Trail. Taking advantage of the area's natural resources, the trail was developed in 2011 as a means to connect the existing greenspace. While it was initially received with skepticism from residents, today it is valued by residents and businesses alike. The trail head starts near Bells Ferry Road, which is buffered and screened from the houses, and traverses the area behind the new Chastain Meadows business park, and along several multi-family developments.

Community engagement is a major initiative for the CID. Staff keeps public informed from the very beginning of a project. They also post public meeting notes on their website to keep residents and business in the loop.

They send public meeting invites to Homeowners Associations to ensure they are maximizing their scope of public involvement. The CID typically includes a couple of neighborhood representatives on their stakeholder committees as well. These initiatives empower residents because it keeps them informed about commercial and residential developments which helps to quell potentially negative perceptions.

In talking with Town Center staff and observing the physical environment, Cherokee staff learned the value of public input in gaining trust—especially for trail projects. Also reinforced was the importance of tracking a community's truck traffic. In the CIDs case, there was not need for a truck ordinance due to the small amount of trucks present and their limited radius. Nonetheless, there is value in the practice.





## City of Peachtree Corners

Peachtree Corners is a recently incorporated city in Gwinnett County with a population of approximately 43,000. It is located northeast of Doraville and Norcross, and south of Johns Creek. A dense suburban community that includes a mix of residential, commercial, and light/heavy industrial, Peachtree Corners was first incorporated in 2011, but has long been a magnet for families and businesses. Peachtree Corners remains a densely built-out suburban area with Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Peachtree Parkway serving as the city's main thoroughfares. Industry is prevalent in the southwest corner, and at various parts along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Peachtree Parkway is comprised of commercial establishments, business parks, and serves as an access point to many of the city's single-family subdivisions. On February 5, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Jeff Conkle and Diana Wheeler of the Community Development department.

Soon after incorporation, Peachtree Corners developed a roadmap to guide future development in their 2033 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan divided the city into several character areas—Regional Mixed-Use, Corridor Mixed-Use, Preferred Office, Mixed Housing Types, and Chattahoochee River Area. A major success for the city was the formation of a public-private partnership with Fuqua Development for a mixed-use center. The city purchased land that would later be zoned to Central Business District (and was originally planned as an apartment complex), sent out an RFP, and was able to secure a partnership with Fuqua. Peachtree Corners sold off the potentially profitable parts of the property to Fuqua, while paying for parking decks with SPLOST funding. The Town Center development features 51,000 square feet of restaurant space, 18,570 square feet of commercial, and 70 residential units. It also includes an amphitheater and greenspace to improve the community feel. The public-private partnership is a vehicle that brought a development partner who helped to attract retail and provided the community with a much-needed sense of place.

Other important strategies are simple changes to zoning ordinances. In Peachtree Corners, industrial areas lie fairly close to some residential neighborhoods, but there is not much opposition thanks to certain uses banned from designated parts of the city. A 2012 zoning ordinance banned certain uses on M-1 zoned property in the city's CBD. Prohibited uses include automobile repair shops, self-storage facilities, truck rental centers, and cold storage plants. Architectural/design standards have also naturally weeded out many incompatible uses. These strategies have helped Peachtree Corners maintain a healthy separation of uses, even as they continue growing from the already developed area they once were—which is a lesson Southwest Cherokee can learn from.





## City of Suwanee

The city of Suwanee is located in Gwinnett County, approximately 35 miles northeast of Atlanta. Formerly a rural community, the area has grown into a thriving suburban city over the past three decades. Suwanee is bordered by Fulton County to the north, Sugar Hill to the east, Duluth to the west and I-85 to the south. On February 5, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Kylie Adams and Alyssa Durden of Suwanee's Planning and Inspections department.

Due to Suwanee's developed status, the city seeks to preserve the industrial corridors because they help keep the tax base stabilized and are major employment hubs. Suwanee is experiencing a demand increase for multi-family development, making it critical to accommodate growth while maintaining community character. In the 1990s, Suwanee, like Southwest Cherokee currently, was primarily suburban with incompatible uses significantly buffered from each other—buffers that remain today. Up through the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and after, smarter growth became a priority for the city.

In 2005, the Suwanee Downtown Development Authority (DDA) formed a public-private partnership with Terwilliger Pappas to create a mixed-use building on 3.5 acres owned by the DDA. The project produced Suwanee's new city hall, which was paid for by the partnership and many commercial developments to serve the growing population. While Suwanee maintains a suburban style development, Town Center provides a sense of place with access to amenities, compact housing and green space. Meanwhile, it respects the surrounding character areas. Buffering has proved successful in Suwanee. Suwanee also counts political support as a success. With several city council members possessing a planning and/or sustainability, Suwanee enjoys political support for planning legislation and initiatives. They had no issue attracting retail, since there are so many commercial nodes near the city's boundaries—a valuable insight Cherokee County has come to learn.

While Suwanee's current challenges primarily involve addressing blight on the southern side of the city, their successes thanks to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, buffering practices and political support were valuable takeaways from the meeting





## Fulton Industrial CID

The Fulton Industrial District lies on the southwestern edge of Fulton County and sits along the Chattahoochee River. Since the late 1950s it has been a hub for industry, and is one of the densest industrial developments in the metro area. Fulton Industrial Boulevard is the district's main thoroughfare. Most of the district is part of the Boulevard Community Improvement District (CID). On February 1, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with the Gil Prado, director of the Boulevard CID, to discuss the district's successes and challenges.

A major success has been the creation of the Boulevard CID in 2009, which allowed a more localized jurisdiction to implement changes tailored specifically to the industrial area. This includes an environmental justice ordinance, alternative truck routes, and landscaping requirements around businesses. Aesthetics are a major part of the district's success as well, including public art installations, gateway signage, and wayfinding signage.

Challenges include improving the district's reputation, especially among residents in newly incorporated South Fulton, as well as attracting additional retail. Boulevard CID claims that there are not enough residential rooftops to attract a grocery store or other major retailer. While the crime rate has improved, Fulton Industrial's reputation persists as an over-industrial gritty area.

Through this meeting, Cherokee County staff learned that alternative truck routes are a potentially effective way of limiting industrial encroachment and that community engagement can foster peace between residents and businesses, and help quell perceptions of the area's safety and value. Finally, we learned that area planning, such as this document, should steer us away from industrial development if necessary.







# The Plan

## SW Cherokee Vision

This vision describes the desired future for the SW Cherokee area based on the community values, assets and needs identified through this plan. As the community evolves, there will be new opportunities and challenges. This vision statement will help us to stay focused on where we are going and guide the decisions of local leaders toward that future.

SW Cherokee has transitioned from an agricultural to a “bedroom” community while maintaining a relatively spacious feel. Newer subdivisions have brought even more people to live in SW Cherokee. In recent years, it has also attracted light industry and other businesses along Highway 92. Having a clear community vision is crucial in order to ensure an excellent quality of life in SW Cherokee, while expanding business opportunities and protecting the unique, natural environment of the area.

The vision for SW Cherokee is a connected community with diverse housing, employment and amenities—allowing people to “live, work and play” here. A variety of housing types and amenities will serve existing residents and the increasing newcomers. Varying land uses throughout the area will help to create a developed spine along Highway 92 with adjacent housing that decreases in intensity as you move away from the roadway. Everyone may enjoy a mixed-use center with a public plaza and restaurants, but the area will also retain some of the existing spacious character. As the area continues to grow, more people will have the option to live and work in SW Cherokee plus have access to natural resources such as the Corps Property, Kellogg Creek, and numerous parks and trails. All these factors contribute to the future of SW Cherokee as a welcoming community.

### *Vision Statement*

***GROW** SW Cherokee into an even better place to call home and do business by capitalizing on the great schools, transportation network, and outdoor recreation opportunities that make the area unique.*

***FOCUS** on SW Cherokee Core Values:*

- *Diversity of Land Uses*
- *Connections to Opportunity*
- *Quality Infrastructure and Services*
- *Access to Greenspace & Recreation*
- *Friendly & Safe Community*



## Diversity of Land Uses

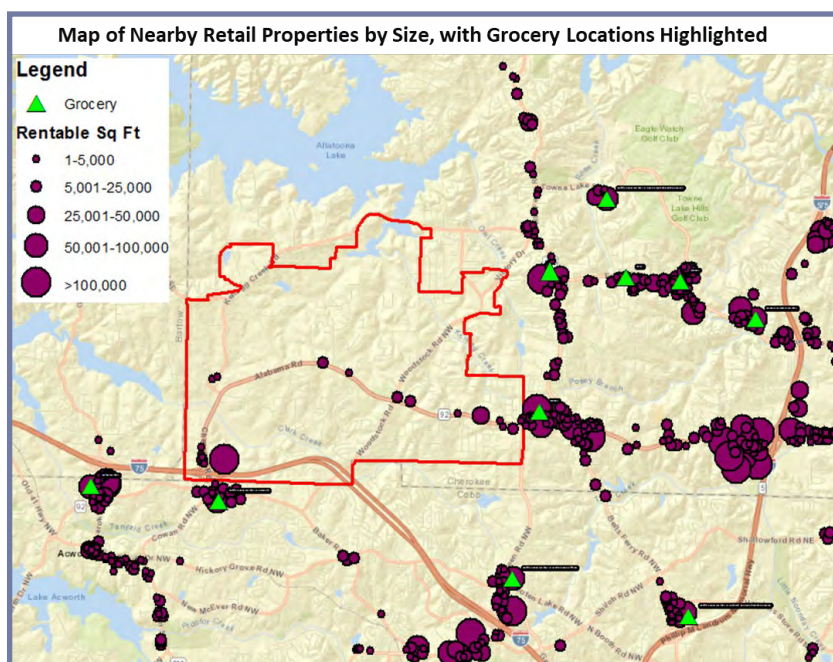
Implementing smart land use policies will help SW Cherokee achieve its vision. Cherokee remains overwhelmingly comprised of single-family detached homes. There are a few townhouses and almost no multifamily developments. This makes it difficult to have enough rooftops in the area to support other forms of retail and amenities that existing residents want. Having an array of land uses helps to meet the future needs of this area while accommodating the projected growth in an efficient manner. Ideally, the more intensive uses would be organized along Highway 92 with greenspace and the intensity would diminish the farther you moved away from 92.

### Attracting Retail and Amenities

SW Cherokee faces a few issues when it comes to attracting retail and amenities to the area, especially regarding grocery stores. Based on current business models, grocers expect typical households to be willing to drive up to three miles to a grocery store. Our market study confirms that nearly every household in SW Cherokee is already within three miles of at least one grocery store. The amount of retail development just outside the study area is also preventing additional amenities from moving in.

Commercial nodes around Bells Ferry Road, the Acworth city limits, Cowan Road, Shiloh Road, and Towne Lake Parkway have kept

amenities and their developers at bay. Also complicating matters is the lower population density in SW Cherokee compared to the more developed adjacent areas. Another issue is land availability for retail. Property along Highway 92 is being developed for either industrial or residential. The Highway 92 Overlay allows townhomes at 6 units per acre by right and this has fueled a townhome boom. If this trend is left to continue all of the suitable sites for retail will be already developed by the time there are enough households (i.e. rooftops) to interest retailers.



### Creating a Live/Work/Play Environment

A theme consistent throughout our public meetings was a desire for a live/work/play community. Current zoning makes this difficult to accomplish. The Highway 92 Village Overlay has not provided as much guidance as expected for creating this type of environment. Besides providing a sense of place and community center, a mixed-use center could also be a catalyst for attracting additional amenities. Like the Town Center development in the city of Peachtree Corners, now home to thirteen restaurants, shops and other businesses with twelve more scheduled to open in the coming months. While it would require a large parcel, a mixed-use development could help attract amenities, greenspace and higher-density housing.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Revise the Highway 92 Village Ordinance to prevent development of prime sites for residential.
- Consider strategies to reserve key sites by working with the Cherokee Office of Economic Development.
- Actively recruit desired development for mixed-use and a live/work/play atmosphere.



## Connections to Opportunity

SW Cherokee's economic base has been growing since the early 2000s, attracting light industry, warehouses, and modern manufacturing companies. SW Cherokee has added more than 1.3 million square feet of new industrial and commercial development since 2010—an average of 165,000 square feet per year. At the same time, all of these new companies have many new jobs in the area. These new jobs are well paid with the average skilled wage in Cherokee 75 Corporate Park is \$72,000 per year, while the average unskilled wage is \$36,000 per year.



### Making Connections

Helping people make Connections to Opportunity is a huge part of the “live work play” mission of this area but there are challenges to making this happen. Since 2000, the community has attracted newer residents who typically have education and skills suited to white-collar jobs. As a result, there is somewhat of a mismatch in the skills of these local residents and the majority of new jobs created by the manufacturing and warehouse development.

It is probably unrealistic to expect that all of these new jobs would be filled by people living in the SW Cherokee Study Area. There is such good transportation access to this area that the jobs are likely to be filled by residents of all three counties, Bartow, Cherokee and Cobb. Going forward, it is important to make SW Cherokee residents aware of these job opportunities and dispel some of the myths about pay and working conditions at these businesses.

### Supporting Our Success

The 2015 Opportunity Cherokee Plan from the Cherokee County Office of Economic Development (COED) described five target markets that COED would focus on to bring jobs to Cherokee County. These target markets are: Advanced Manufacturing, Commercial Developers, Corporate Operations, Film & Media, and Information Technology. COED has been very successful at attracting Advanced Manufacturers, Commercial Developers and Corporate Operations to Cherokee County, with the majority coming to SW Cherokee. All of this development and job creation helps the whole county by diversifying our economy. A multitude of benefits come from this type of development including a more sustainable tax base, quality jobs available to county residents and reduced demand for government services compared to residential development. The County should continue to support this type of development in places that make sense for the community.

### Local/community-friendly Businesses

One of the challenges experienced by both Cherokee County and other jurisdictions around metro Atlanta is the perception and presence of light industrial and manufacturing companies. It is not uncommon for residents to have a negative view of these land uses. However, as we learned from the Fulton Industrial District and Town Center CID, an important part of community-friendliness means reaching out to residents and having open dialogue to improve communication and promote working together to resolve community issues.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Hold/reserve smaller parcels for office/flex or mixed-use development—especially for small businesses to grow
- Promote the overall benefits of industry's presence in the neighborhood, especially in regards to salary, experience, etc



## Quality Infrastructure and Services

As SW Cherokee adds more amenities and new residents move here, the infrastructure must be updated. New demands need to be met regarding connectivity, transportation and school planning. The primary infrastructure issues facing SW Cherokee are a lack of sidewalks and bike facilities, lack of road connectivity, and potential for overcrowded schools. These areas must be addressed to fulfill SW Cherokee's vision as a livable community.



### Pedestrian/Sidewalks

Currently, very few sidewalks exist in SW Cherokee except along Highway 92 and sporadically along secondary roads. Some of the newer residential developments have them internally but they may or may not connect to other parts of the area. Many residents want to feel safer while walking around SW Cherokee but they are discouraged by the current state of affairs. Sidewalks not only provide this safety but also help emphasize connectivity and improve the aesthetic quality of the neighborhood.

### Bicycle Facilities

In general, the narrow 4 to 5 foot wide sidewalks found around SW Cherokee are not safe for use by bicycle riders. They are too narrow to be safe when a pedestrian and cyclist meet or pass. There is a significant need in this area for facilities that can accommodate bicycles. In the community preference survey, the attendees preferred separated bike paths or trails over on-street facilities like bike lanes. This will be a challenge since the trails may require the County to acquire additional right-of-way or easements, which can add cost to such projects.

### New/Improved Roads

Thanks to the increasing traffic and age of the infrastructure, road improvements should be prioritized to ensure the safety of residents and people traveling through the area. This will be especially important as development and the general population increases. New roads that extend from neighborhoods onto Highway 92 or secondary roads could be valuable in improving connectivity.

### School Quality

Oak Grove and Clark Creek Elementary Schools are great schools, but they are either overcrowded or nearing capacity. Oak Grove is currently at 65 percent capacity while Clark Creek is at 103 percent and now requires trailers to accommodate additional students. It is important for SW Cherokee to communicate with the Cherokee County School District (CCSD) to understand population projections that could affect the number of incoming students, plans for school expansions, or potential new schools to maintain the quality reputation of SW Cherokee's schools.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Develop an alternative transportation plan for SW Cherokee that maps out potential sidewalk and bicycle routes that connect neighborhoods and amenities
- Ensure the SW Cherokee Plan is incorporated into the next Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update so major transportation improvements can be planned for this area.
- Continue to identify and implement project-related transportation improvements through the rezoning and land disturbance process.
- Coordinate with CCSD to monitor SW Cherokee student demographics and enrollment projections



## *Access to Greenspace and Recreation*

Natural resources and greenspaces are some of Cherokee County's most valuable assets, so it is important to promote policies that allow for their development and preservation in SW Cherokee. There are currently no County developed parks, trails or recreational areas in the study area. Only limited parts of the Army Corps property in SW Cherokee is accessible to the public. Much of it is either leased to private groups or designated for wildlife management with no public access. There is tremendous opportunity to take advantage of the area's natural resources and open space if we focus on the development of a variety of parks and trails for SW Cherokee.



But it's not simply about blindly developing open spaces. An integral part of greenspace, trails, and park development is understanding the demographics of SW Cherokee—particularly age. SW Cherokee has many seniors and an increasing number of families with children, so providing activities that fit this age range is crucial to satisfying the entire community.

### Need for Parks, Greenspace and Facilities

Creating a vibrant connected community means giving residents access to parks and recreational areas to enjoy and maintain health. This area has already been identified in the new Cherokee County Recreation, Parks, Greenspace and Trails Master Plan as underserved and in need of active and passive park areas. The Plan specifically suggested some athletic fields and an indoor recreation center. The exact location has not been determined but the County owns several pieces of property that may be suitable. This issue came up at several of the public meetings. There was a sense that there needed to be more study done in order to determine the best types of facilities and amenities. Some meeting attendees were concerned that too much resources would be invested in ball fields to serve a few while a wider range of recreation options was needed due to the changing demographics of the area.

Based on community input from the public meeting charrette, ideal park locations could be the Thompson property along Kellogg Creek Road and/or the Dunn property along Highway 92. It is important to keep in mind that the County will have to consider a range of issues before settling on a park site. This area needs more study in order to evaluate different sites and consider the costs and benefits of each to the SW Cherokee area and the County as a whole.

### Access

A critical part of greenspace development is ensuring public access to parks, trails and recreational fields. This especially holds true for the Army Corps property in northern SW Cherokee. The property borders several existing neighborhoods and would benefit residents who may want to easily access Lake Allatoona. It may be a challenge to gain access to certain parts of the Army Corps property but the results will be worth the effort, especially to build a trail network.

### Trails Development

There are currently no trails in SW Cherokee. Trails would allow people to enjoy SW Cherokee's natural resources while connecting neighborhoods, amenities and parks together. The charrette groups proposed trails that followed Kellogg Creek out to the Army Corps property and along Woodstock Road. Trails could connect Highway 92 with neighborhoods, retail, work centers, and schools. The Cherokee County Development Authority is also planning to develop trails connecting to



Cherokee 75. This will provide residents and workers with the ability to walk to work or a mixed-use center. It will also improve neighborhood cohesiveness, because people would be able to talk to parks/amenities, rather than drive there.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Assist Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Agency to evaluate park sites and find funding for the SW Cherokee park.
- Develop a detailed trail plan for SW Cherokee to refine potential trails identified by the community.
- Build relationship with Army Corps of Engineers and be involved in the update to the Lake Allatoona Master Plan.

## *Friendly Community*

SW Cherokee is a close-knit community with established residents and newcomers, an increasing number of white-collar jobs and valuable natural resources. These elements contribute to the welcoming community atmosphere, neighborhood pride and a desire for SW Cherokee to become the best it can be. Maintaining a welcoming community requires several initiatives—

- Creating a 'sense of place' that displays the community name and landmarks through signage
- Developing a mixed-use center that provides a central hub for the community and businesses
- Implementing code enforcement standards that prevent blight and encourage aesthetics in development



### Sense of Place/Signage/Local Org

Creating a sense of place means to build and maintain an inclusive community that residents/businesses are proud to be a part of. As seen in some of the case studies, gateway and wayfinding signage is an excellent way to create a sense of place because they literally label the community and highlight its main attractions, industries and amenities. The Fulton Industrial District uses public art, gateway signage and landscaping to signify the community boundary. The Town Center area contains many signs pointing pedestrians and drivers to important business centers and commercial areas like Town Center Mall. The improvements in both of these areas are driven by Community Improvement Districts (CID). The Woodstock Greenprints Alliance offers another local example of an organization that formed to push the implementation of a plan with great success, especially working in partnership with the city government. SW Cherokee needs an organization to champion these changes as long as it is driven by locals.

### Mixed-Use Center

Many thriving communities have a central location that serves as a hub for businesses and activities. Whether they are redeveloped or built from scratch, a mixed-use center provides space for businesses, public plazas and activities/performances—and even residents. Many suburban mixed-use centers are the result of public-private partnerships, where the jurisdiction forms an alliance with a private developer. The City of Suwanee's Town Center is one example, and consists of a 63-acre development that houses government offices, specialty shops and a 1,000 seat amphitheater. By



serving as a space for businesses, leisure activity and community events, a mixed-use center would make SW Cherokee feel more vibrant and community-oriented.

#### Blight/Code Enforcement

Despite improvements thanks to the SW Cherokee Opportunity Zone, blight is still present in the community as residents can attest. In addition to promoting signage and mixed-use centers, addressing blighted properties that are an eyesore to neighborhoods will also help to improve SW Cherokee's sense of place and demonstrate the care and pride of the residents and business owners.

#### **Policies/Strategies**

- Establish design guidelines and development standards (possibly as part of the revised Highway 92 Village Ordinance) that hold developers accountable for satisfactory building aesthetics
- Assist local residents and business leaders to form a group or committee that includes representatives from neighborhoods and businesses in the area who help direct resources to SW Cherokee
- Explore the feasibility/possibility of forming a public-private partnership for the creation of a mixed-use center
- Establish an ordinance/policy for wayfinding and gateway signage that marks the boundaries and important locations of SW Cherokee
- Work with the County Marshal on code enforcement in SW Cherokee, especially on blighted properties to improve housing conditions and community aesthetics
- Promote business-community activities that allow companies to teach residents about their mission, role in the community, and potential job opportunities.



## Community Elements

## Map Development

## Overview

This section of the Southwest Cherokee Plan contains the final products of a robust community engagement process. Five detailed, individual land use maps as well as one combination of them are the end results of a group process that gathered public input through a graphical exercise known as a community charrette.

## What is a Community Charrette?

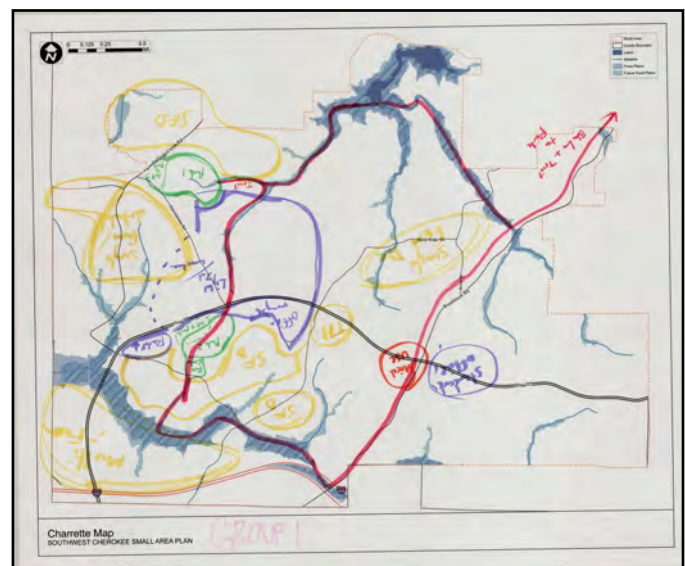
A community charrette, or workshop, is a quick and intensive design exercise organized by a facilitator but defined by the expressions and ideas of the community. Participants debate and affirm proposals that address pressing local issues using physical materials to rapidly, and oftentimes roughly, communicate intentions through graphical means. Typical outcomes of this process are hand drawn maps and diagrams which are then used by organizers to develop a refined community vision.

## Background of Our Community Charrette

On April 24, 2019, a community charrette was held during the last public meeting of the small area planning process. Open to the general public and attended by members of both the Stakeholder Committee and Board of Commissioners, three groups were formed with staff facilitators at each tasked with generating ideas towards an overall vision for Southwest Cherokee. Through this process, planners sought to gain a consensus on suitable areas for specific land uses as well as the establishment and expansion of transportation networks, including those for pedestrians and cyclists.

## The Charrette Process

To begin, staff prepared large base maps for each charrette group featuring useful information such as roadways, environmental constraints, infrastructure and other community assets to be used as references. Other maps with zoning, existing land use and future land use were also made available. A single sheet of clear paper was provided to each group to overlay these reference maps, capturing the community vision of each group through drawn responses to a sequence of exercises. Facilitators explained the charrette process and helped groups navigate through each step, marking the overlaid clear paper map with representational colors for each task.



Charrette map showing a group's five exercise responses

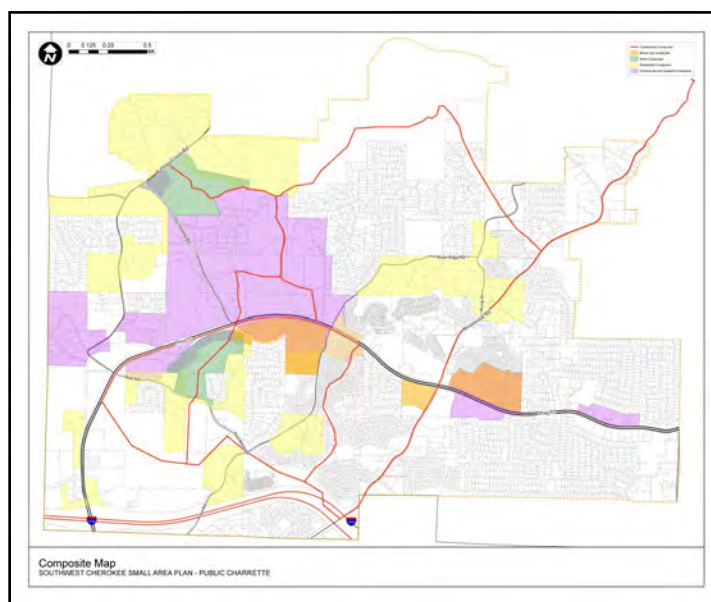


The five main exercises of our charrette process were:

1. Identifying a site for a community park with an indoor recreation center, indicated on each group map with the color green. The location should be approximately 40-to-50 acres, serve a 1-to-3 mile radius, include a mix of active and passive activities for all ages. Groups were asked to think about how location fits with features on the base maps.
2. Selecting a location for a mixed-use center on 15-to-30 acres and considering transportation and access, relationships to existing businesses and residences and how the location fits with features on the base map. Orange was the identifying color for a mixed use center.
3. Locating areas for business expansion and work place centers was done with purple. Groups described the type of development desired, considered transportation and access, relationships to existing businesses and residences and how the location/s fit with features on the base maps.
4. Identifying areas for new residential development with yellow markings while considering transportation, access, relationships to other land uses and how the locations fit with features of the base maps. The type of residential development desired was described at each location.
5. Choosing routes for new trails and roadways. Groups established desired pedestrian networks with red lines and were asked to show any sought after roadway connections.

### Outcomes and Finalization of Maps

Following the five exercises of the community charrette, each group appointed a spokesperson to present their single map to all meeting attendees. A question and comment period was held before staff gathered the maps for review and processing. These were then scanned and digitized, geographically aligned and combined to a single map, using majority rule where any group's land uses may have been in conflict. Gaps on the composite map that were not identified by the groups for any particular land use were then filled in with appropriate uses by staff. These decisions

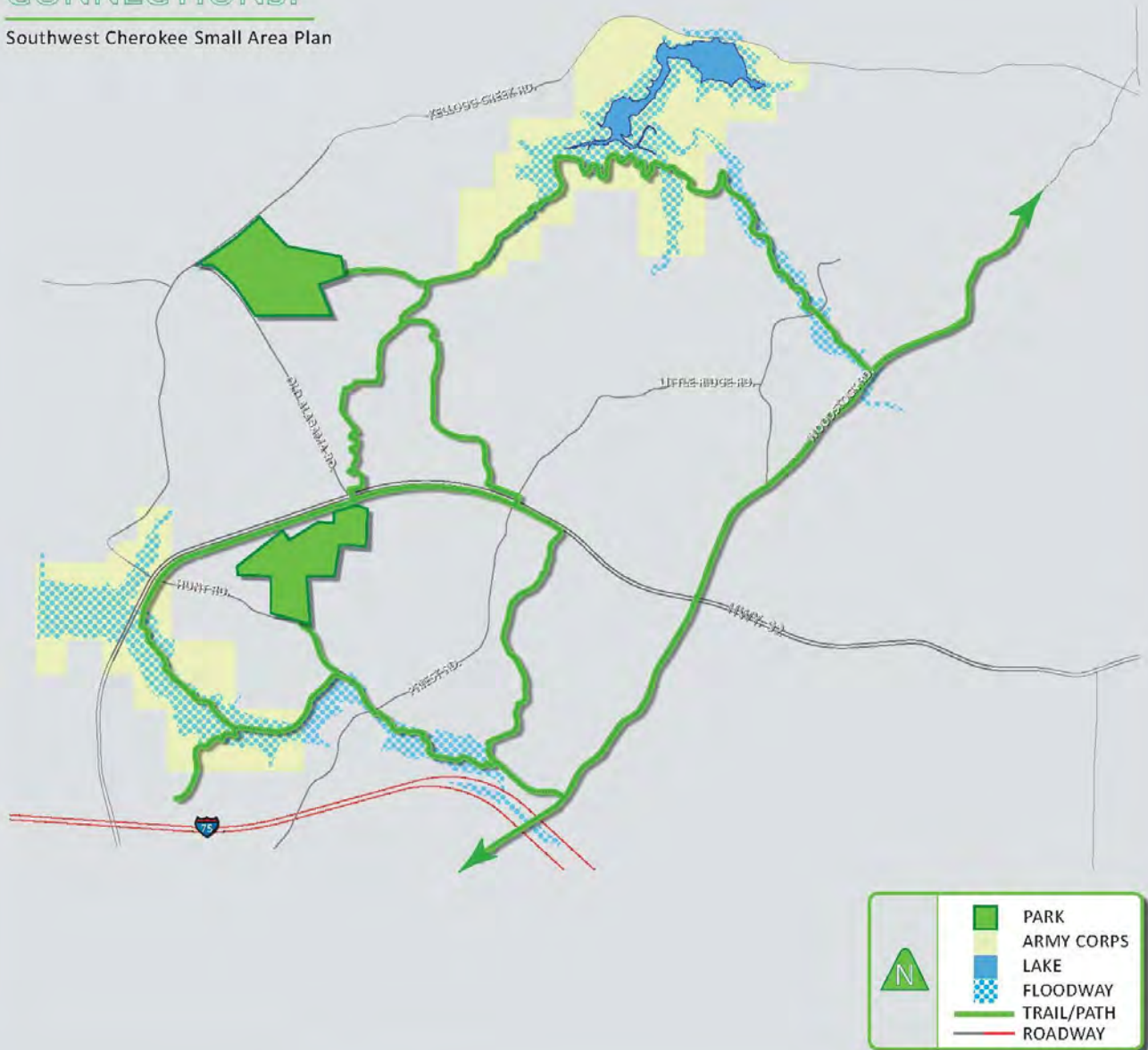


were made based upon knowledge of incoming projects, practicality of uses and development expectations of certain areas, consultation with elected leadership and so on. Charrette results and draft maps were then shared with the stakeholder committee and further refined before public presentation to the Board of Commissioners at the May 21, 2019 Work Session. Maps reflecting all final comments are found on the following pages. High ranking images from the Community Preference Survey corresponding to each land use are also included with these maps.



# GREENSPACE. RECREATION. CONNECTIONS.

## Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan



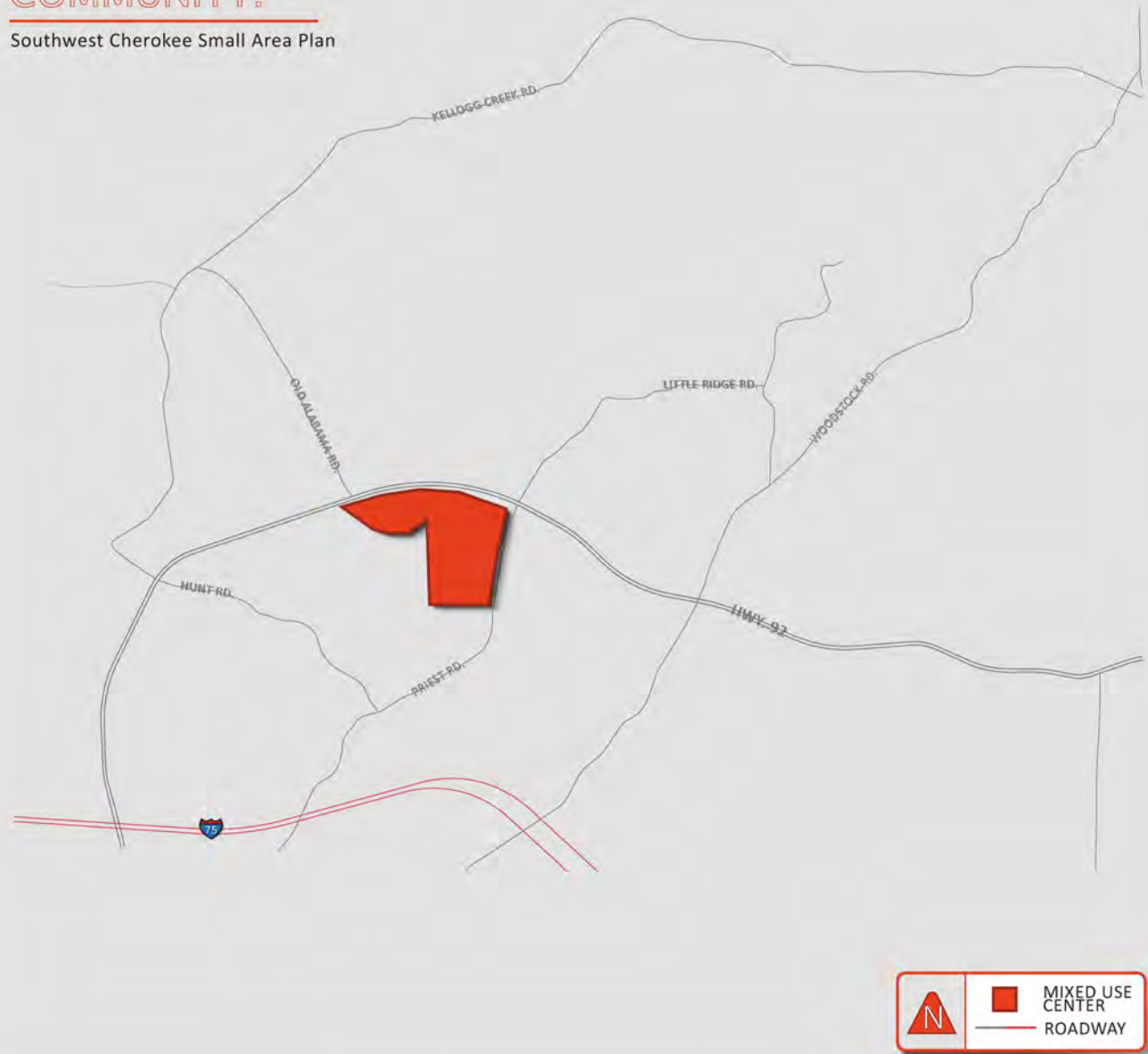
With limited accessible greenspace in SW Cherokee and an expressed demand, there are numerous opportunities available. Corps of Engineers land encircling Lake Allatoona along with undevelopable floodplain make suitable corridors for trails to link homes, jobs, schools, recreation and future mixed use centers. Some County-owned land may also be suitable for outdoor and indoor recreation facilities.





# MIXED USE. LIVE-WORK-PLAY. COMMUNITY.

## Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan



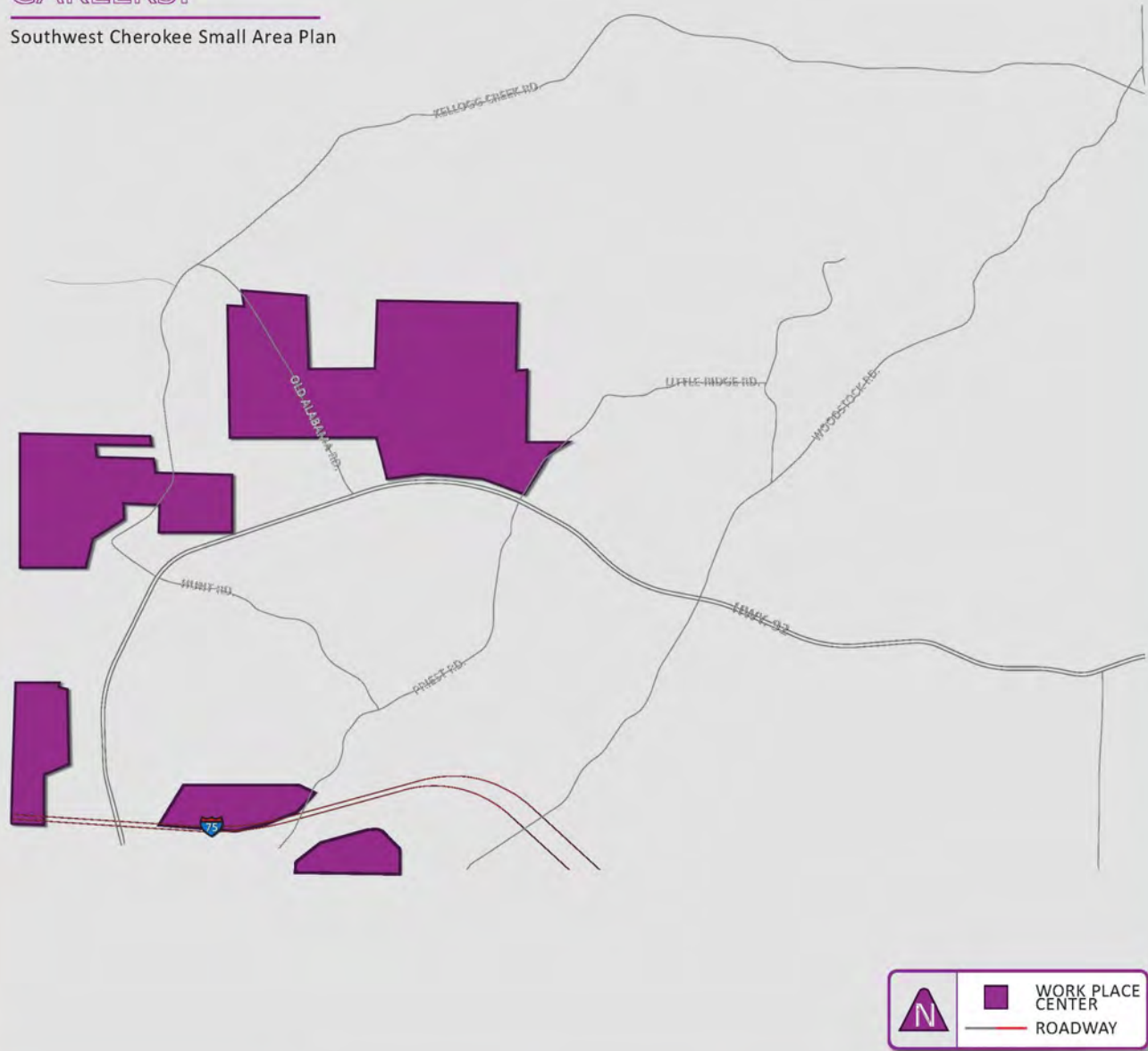
SW Cherokee lacks a distinct community core and affords few opportunities for public events, shopping and leisure. This could be realized with a mixed use center with a mixture of retail, office, restaurant, residential and civic uses likely featuring a public gathering space. A new, mixed use development may rise between 2-4 stories, include well landscaped and walkable streets with buildings of a variety of architectural styles.





# WORK PLACE CENTERS. PRODUCTION. CAREERS.

## Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan



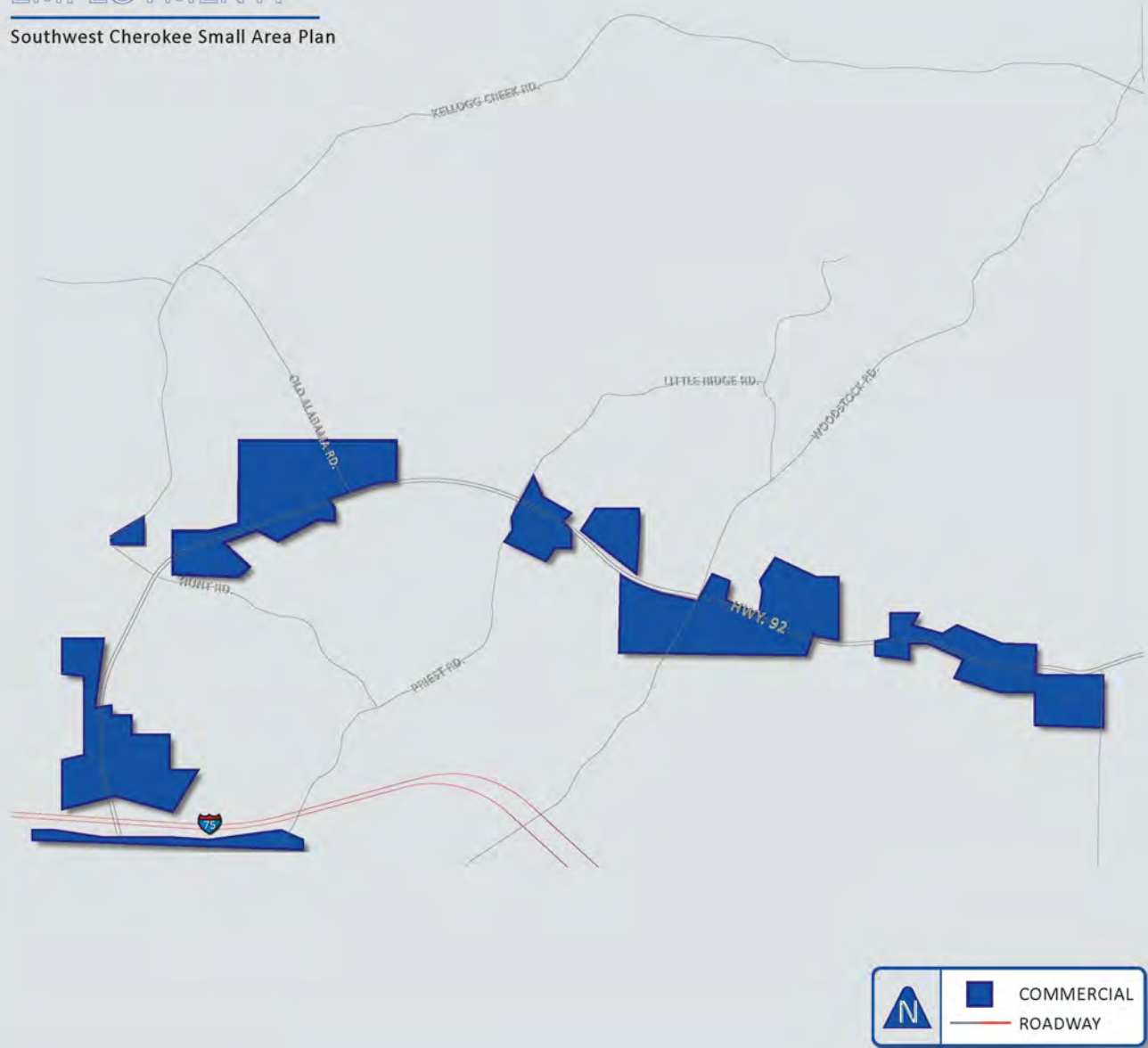
Work Place Centers offer diverse, quality jobs located in general offices, flex buildings and light industrial facilities. These easily access major thoroughfares but do not overrun residential neighborhoods with the intensity of use decreasing with proximity to residences. These areas are characterized by substantial perimeter buffering, quality landscapes and architecture as well as compatible lighting and truck traffic.





# COMMERCIAL ENTERTAINMENT. EMPLOYMENT.

## Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan



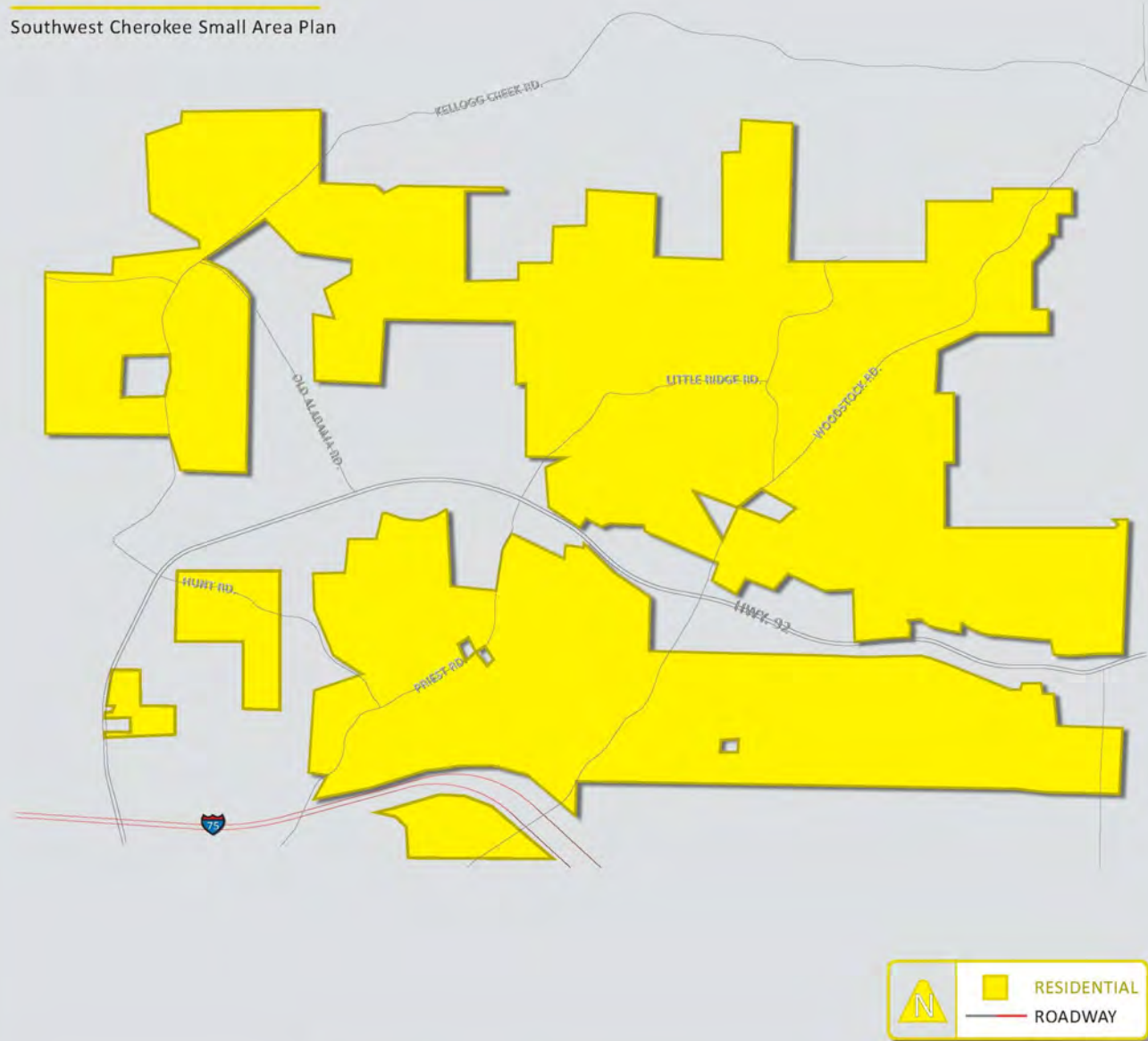
SW Cherokee has limited commercial resources with many residents and workers traveling outside the area for basic goods and services, even jobs. New centers of various sizes, comprised of restaurants, grocers, retail, services and office/flex space may locate in selected areas along Highway 92. Physical characteristics include walkability, superior landscaping and various architectural forms and materials.





# RESIDENTIAL. NEIGHBORHOODS HOMES.

## Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan



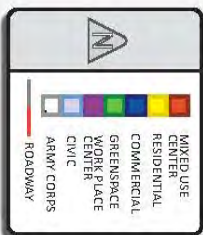
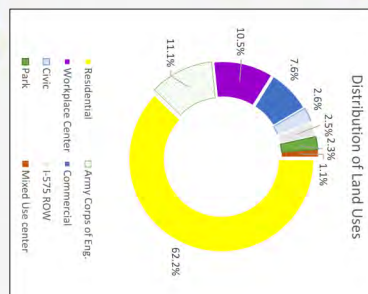
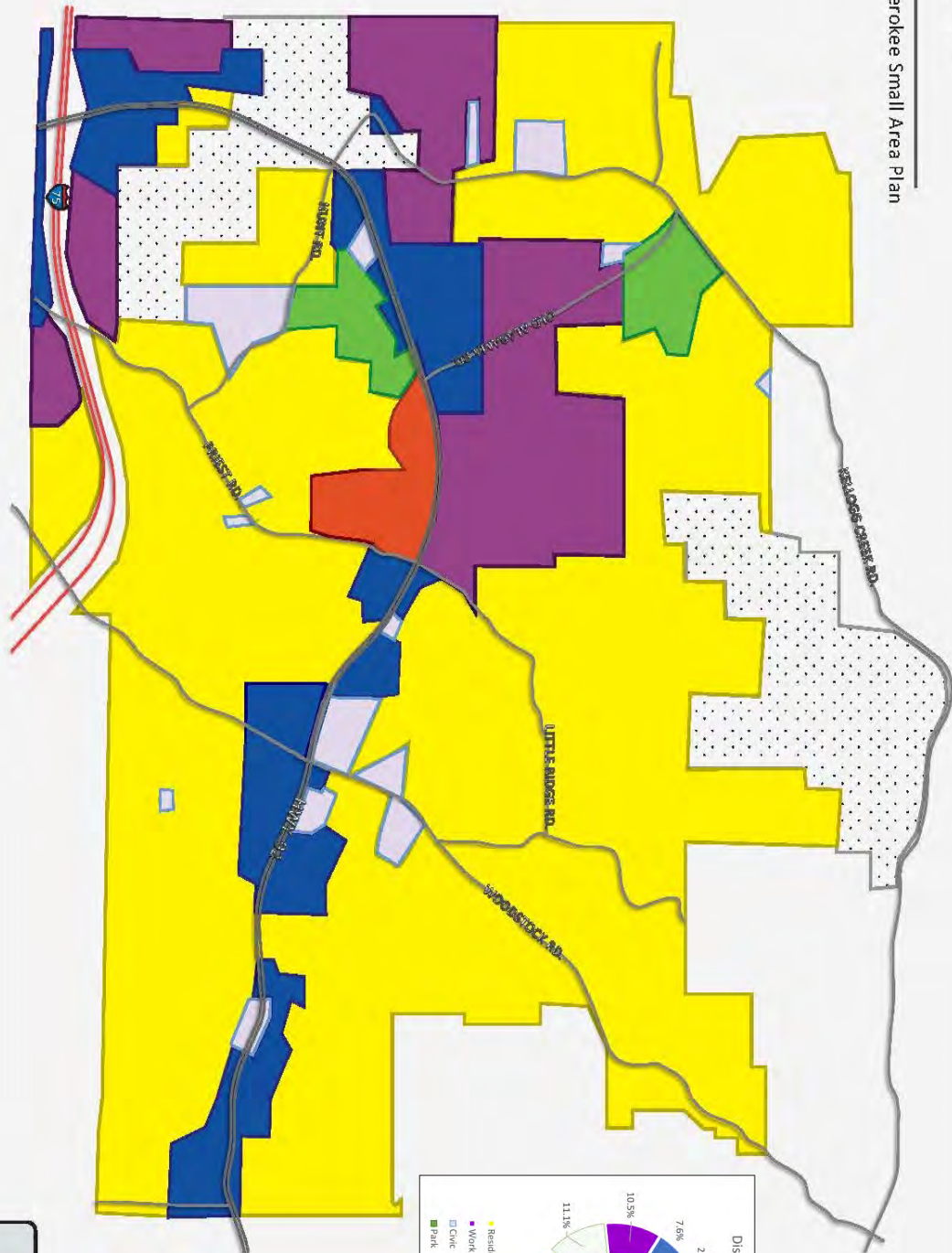
SW Cherokee has is an accessible, largely residential area marked by open space with recent development increasing the housing stock for single family homes and townhomes. No significant multi-family units existing. Growth will be spread throughout the area with larger, denser development concentrated on major roadways and within mixed use centers. Architecture should be tradition in nature with landscaped, walkable streets.





# FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan





# Vision into Action

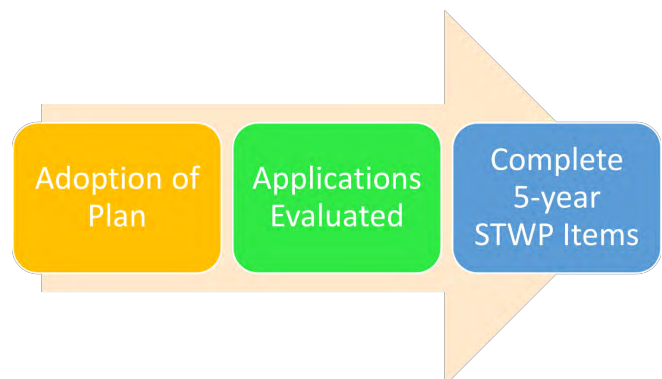
## Vision into Action

The vision section outlined SW Cherokee's core values and strategies to achieve them along with challenges we may encounter. This plan's final step is to put that vision into action. In short, this is a three-step process with many detailed steps in between.

First, the plan will be adopted as an amendment to the Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan, meaning it will become the primary guide for the development of residential SW Cherokee. Upon adoption, this plan will be used to evaluate rezoning applications and development proposals for the area. Finally, the plan will help guide the implementation of items listed in the 5-year Short Term Work Plan (SWTP). For example, this list includes changes to county regulations (Zoning Ordinance and possibly Development Regulations), initiatives to improve the esthetics of the area and efforts to market the area for the desired types of development.

Upon adoption, this plan will serve as the guide for development and rezoning proposals in SW Cherokee. This new criteria will trickle down to many different planning decisions made by the developer and county staff. For example, a developer may propose a building plan that will reflect updated density and design requirements. The structure may contain more windows and a variety of building materials to meet the new standards, whereas this criteria would not have been required prior to the area plan's adoption.

Carrying out SW Cherokee's vision will require continued community engagement in land use planning, refining plans for greenspace, mixed-use, and other developments, and various analyses and steps depending on the particular action item listed in the plan. It will also require real estate analysis and planning to track supply and demand for retail and mixed-use development. These initiatives will occur over the next five years, during which many development projects will be proposed. Demographic and economic shifts may happen as well, so it is critical that the SWTP progress is monitored along with that of the area plan in general.





## Short Term Work Plan (2019-2023)

This section of the plan describes specific projects that came from the Core Issues section that are important to fully implementing the SW Cherokee Plan. The SWTP takes these items a step further by providing a timeframe, estimated cost, and responsible party for when each initiative. The STWP should be updated annually to will reflect the progress achieved toward the vision.

Project Description	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party
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### *Land Use Regulations*

Evaluate and revise current Highway 92 Village Overlay standards	X	X				Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
Revise Future Development Map to reflect desired land uses and zoning in SW Cherokee	X					Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
Develop enhanced buffer standards between industrial and residential development		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning

### *Greenspace, Parks & Trails*

Consolidate and refine trail plans from the CTP and Parks and Rec Master Plan		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
Create a pedestrian and bicycle master plan for SW Cherokee			X	X		Staff Time	Planning & Zoning, Engineering
Support evaluation of sites and design of new Regional Park		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning

### *Transportation*

Conduct a sidewalk survey and gap analysis to addresses on connectivity issues in existing sidewalk network.		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning, Engineering
Study additional transportation improvements		X	X	X		TBD	Engineering
Find funding for identified capital projects			X	X	X	Staff Time	Engineering, Planning & Zoning

### *Marketing & Recruitment*

Develop Marketing Plan for SW Cherokee that includes ideas for wayfinding and gateway signage		X	X			\$30,000	COED, Planning & Zoning
Target and protect key sites for Mixed Use Center	X	X	X	X	X	TBD	COED, Planning & Zoning
Identify smaller sites for offices and flex-space developments to support small to medium size businesses	X	X	X	X	X	Staff Time	COED, Planning & Zoning



# Appendix

**Market Study prepared by Bleakly Group**





**Cherokee County**  
**Planning and Land Use Department**

# **Bells Ferry Corridor**

## **Livable Centers Initiative**

### **Five Year Plan Update**

Prepared for  
Atlanta Regional Commission  
Livable Centers Initiative  
31 August 2016



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## Executive Summary

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In 2005, Cherokee County, in conjunction with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), commissioned the Bells Ferry Corridor Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study to spur redevelopment along the Bells Ferry Corridor (Georgia State Route 92). The LCI program encourages local governments to create plans which link transportation improvements with land use development strategies in order to create mixed-use communities consistent with regional development guidelines. In an effort to revitalize the Bells Ferry Corridor, Cherokee County was awarded one of the first ARC LCI Corridor Study grants. The study focused on developing comprehensive and creative solutions for future land use issues such as development patterns, transportation and circulation options, alternative mobility and transportation modes, jobs, housing options, and implementation strategies. The goals of the Bells Ferry LCI Corridor are to offer opportunities for citizens to live, work, and play in the area, to promote a better quality of life, and to create a sense of place and identity for the community.

The vision of the Bells Ferry Corridor community is to redevelop commercial properties and under-utilized areas into a ‘community of choice’ that offer diverse choices and activities for the entire community. The goal is to create high quality developments that offer ‘quality of life’ to Cherokee County residents. In recent years, the study area has seen new residential projects and redevelopment of mobile home parks into new residential development. Revitalization of the Bells Ferry corridor continues as growth radiates from metropolitan Atlanta.

As part of the LCI program, recipients are required to provide an Evaluation and Appraisal Report and a new Implementation Plan with an updated five year Action Plan. The 2005 Bells Ferry LCI report included an implementation strategy with a specific five year action plan that outlined activities to be completed while implementing the LCI plan. The 2005 action plan was intended to be just the beginning of the implementation process. The Evaluation and Appraisal Report that follows offers a general discussion of the progress of LCI plan implementation to date. The report indicates completed actions and new developments/ infrastructure upgrades, as well as planned actions that have not been accomplished. There is also a discussion of actions that have occurred contrary to the original LCI plan and why those actions happened.

The Implementation Plan, with an updated five year Action Plan, updates the Implementation section of the original LCI plan, as well as the 2010 update, with strategies for the next five years. The implementation section includes both a strategy narrative and an updated five year action plan. The narrative section describes the organizational structure and process that will be used to ensure that Action Plan items are successfully implemented. This section details collaboration opportunities with other organizations and strategies to ensure continued support from local elected officials, citizens, and businesses. The narrative section also discusses the evaluation process that will be used to monitor future plan implementation. This LCI five year plan update is intended to ensure continued plan implementation. The plan update is also an opportunity to make a detailed assessment of plan implementation progress and offers a chance to identify areas where adjustments need to be made in order to reinvigorate the original 2005 plan and build upon the 2010 update.



## Evaluation and Appraisal Report

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The Bells Ferry LCI plan identifies a series of tasks, realistic mechanisms, and responsible parties to ensure that the plan's vision becomes a reality. The plan is built around several basic strategies for achieving successful implementation. These strategies include:

- Focusing on proven market strengths.
- Basing a financing structure on multiple funding sources.
- Identifying and securing a major economic incentive – a source of financing controlled by Cherokee County – which can be used to attract private developers and investors.
- Providing an organizational framework for implementing the LCI plan.

### *Local Development Corporation*

As initially conceived, an inter-departmental process for facilitating and coordinating the initial implementation of the Bells Ferry Corridor Action Plan was to be created. This process was to begin within the first three years of adoption of the Bells Ferry Corridor Action Plan and include the initial establishment and administration of the proposed Tax Allocation District (TAD) as allowed under the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Law. At the time of adoption, it was believed to be essential that all available incentives, including a TAD, be offered throughout the corridor in order to fully realize the development potential of the Bells Ferry area. The TAD was intended to encourage and attract private investment in the Bells Ferry Corridor by offering financial incentives that could help improve the conditions contributing to disinvestments and marginal use of property.

It was envisioned at the time of adoption that the Bells Ferry Corridor would require a significant amount of staff time on the part of Cherokee County; at least until a separate economic development entity could be established. As such, a Cherokee County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) was to be created. The corporation was to be capable of assuming responsibility for both TAD administration and facilitation of public/private development initiatives throughout Cherokee County. The CCEDC was to be accountable to the local governing authority while maintaining the efficiency and flexibility of the private sector.

In addition to the CCEDC and the TAD, the original LCI plan called for Cherokee County to prepare and launch a public/private partnership aimed at facilitating LCI compatible private development projects within the Bells Ferry Corridor. The partnership was to utilize redevelopment powers, bond financing, and/or other economic development incentives available to Cherokee County. Various incentives and tools such as Section 108 Guaranteed Loans, Industrial Revenue Bonds, and Community Development Block Grants were recommended in the original LCI plan.

Investing in public facilities and improvements was also called for in the original LCI plan. Based on a coordinated strategy and timetable, public improvements within the Bells Ferry Corridor were intended to maximize the impact of such improvements on potential private development. Public facilities and improvements such as an aquatic center and park, a branch library, a community center, and multiuse paths and trails were recommended in the original LCI plan to facilitate private development.



*Current Status*

Unfortunately elements in this section of the LCI plan have not been implemented because of the defeat of the Cherokee County TAD ballot initiative. Through the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Law, TADs allow jurisdictions to utilize tax increment financing in various projects. Cherokee County does not have the redevelopment powers necessary to complete many of these initiatives without a TAD. A district like this would allow Cherokee County to issue non-recourse bonds that could be used to provide land, infrastructure, and other essential project requirements within the district.

Because the voters rejected the TAD, Cherokee County has had difficulty creating attractive financial incentives to private developers and investors to develop within the Bells Ferry area. The 2005 LCI study projected that such a TAD could support as much as \$200,000,000 in bond financing for redevelopments in the Bells Ferry area; none of this financing is currently available. Since the TAD was rejected, Cherokee County has not established an Economic Development Corporation to administer TADs in Cherokee County. If a TAD is ever established, such a corporation could facilitate private development and coordinate initiatives, as needed, with other governmental and non-governmental entities. At this time there are no plans to present a new TAD ballot initiative to Cherokee County voters.

*Design Guidelines*

The Bells Ferry Plan envisioned the need to improve regulatory measures to ensure the best possible outcome in terms of future land use, zoning, and design quality. It was expected that as implementation of the LCI plan began, the success of and demand in the corridor, coupled with the adoption of improved regulatory mechanisms, would encourage developers to design and build products of a higher quality.

In addition to regulatory improvements, the LCI plan recognized the need to ensure access to appropriate housing options for those who work in the Bells Ferry community. The quality of life for those who live and work in the Bells Ferry community would suffer from longer commutes, more congestion, and larger lots dedicated solely to parking if a jobs-to-housing balance was not attempted. The LCI plan provided a range of options that could be adopted to create incentives for workforce housing. These incentives included allowing for higher density housing, expanding opportunities for employer-assisted housing, and promoting partnerships between potential developers and experienced nonprofit housing developers who may be able to obtain additional resources to develop workforce housing. Incentives like these would ensure that a community continues to adhere to the principles of smart growth and promotes a positive quality of life.

*Current Status*

Implementation of the Bells Ferry LCI Plan began with the adoption of the plan as an amendment to the 1997 Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan in 2006. This provided an immediate change to land use policy in the Bells Ferry Corridor. The plan was subsequently integrated into the 2008 Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan. These new standards have served as a guide for new development proposals to accommodate mixed use and pedestrian-friendly sustainable environments as articulated in the original LCI plan.



To further implement the Bells Ferry LCI Plan, the Cherokee County Planning and Land Use Department received an LCI Supplemental Grant to develop the Bells Ferry Community Design Guidelines in 2006. The Design Guidelines became the basis for a new Overlay Zoning district called the Bells Ferry Community Design District, which was adopted in 2007. The overlay allows development regardless of existing zoning as long as the project is consistent with the LCI Plan. The new regulations aim to make all new development in the area consistent in terms of land use, height, setbacks, parking, interparcel connectivity, streets, signage, and open space to encourage and support the desired character for the LCI area. These design guidelines ensure that the quality and character of development reflects the community vision as expressed in the LCI study.

Efforts to ensure access to appropriate housing options for those who work in the Bells Ferry community have yielded some positive results. Elements of this initiative were planned and partially executed shortly after adoption, including a 2008 Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review for the Mount Pilot project; however, economic conditions prevented further implementation of the project. However, as the economy has rebounded, several noteworthy projects have been proposed and are in various stages of development: a mixed use commercial/residential project on a 38 acre parcel on Wade Green Road, an 87 lot single-family residential development on Bascomb Carmel Road, and an age targeted mixed use project on a 22 acre site on Bells Ferry Road.

### ***Transportation***

In addition to TAD revenues, the LCI plan encouraged Cherokee County to apply for and secure all available Federal and State transportation funds, as well as ARC LCI Implementation Grant funds. Part of the Bells Ferry LCI Study Plan relied on transportation-related funding to supplement improvements, particularly in combination with the comprehensive network of improvements recommended in the original LCI plan.

### ***Current Status***

Transportation planning and construction initiatives in the Bells Ferry area are in various stages of implementation. Improvements funded through the LCI program include the installation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safety enhancements, and streetscape improvements. Several construction projects have been completed within the Bells Ferry LCI area. Utilizing Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds, the Wade Green Road streetscape enhancement project (GDOT PI # 0008095) was successfully completed. The Wade Green Road project included improved landscaping elements, pedestrian lighting, and decorative paving. Construction of curb and gutter and a sidewalk along the west side of Robin Road between SR 92 and Bells Ferry Road has been completed. The LCI process helped Cherokee County to make several design upgrades to the SR 92 project, such as crosswalks and wider sidewalks, all of which have been completed.

Cherokee County is fortunate to have a voter-supported Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) program to fund many local projects. SPLOST is a six year, one percent sales tax that is levied on the purchase of goods and services within Cherokee County and requires a voter referendum to be renewed. Cherokee County's SPLOST has



been renewed through 2018. Cherokee County uses SPLOST to fund capital improvements for local projects such as the construction, operation, and maintenance of roadways that are not a part of the Federal or State highway system (e.g., local county roads). Current transportation projects funding by SPLOST include intersection improvements along the Bells Ferry Road. Cherokee County also uses SPLOST revenue to provide the local match as required to receive Federal and State transportation funding. The widening of Bells Ferry Road was funded through ARC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) using Federal and State transportation funds along with matching funds from SPLOST.

A number of transportation projects are in various stages of planning and implementation. The projects are focused on intersection and safety improvements as well as pedestrian and streetscape improvements. Several intersection improvements are planned in the corridor: Bells Ferry Road/Kellogg Creek/Victory Drive area, a turn lane and signal modification at SR-92 and Robin Road, and a dual turn lane improvement and signal modification at SR-92 and Bells Ferry Road. In addition, a much-needed maintenance project near Sixes Road and Eagle Drive is planned.

Bicycle-pedestrian improvements are planned for the Bells Ferry Corridor, including landscaping improvements on SR-92, Woodland Drive, Santa Fe Trail, and Hartwood Drive. In addition, bicycle-pedestrian improvements are planned on Bells Ferry Road from the Cobb County line to Kellogg Creek Road. Cherokee County recognizes that in order to provide a true multi-modal environment for residents and visitors, a number of improvements need to be made including sidewalks, bike lanes, grade-separated cycle tracks, shared-lane markings, and "Share the Road" signs.

### ***Community Building***

Just as physical infrastructure improvements were identified as necessary in the Bells Ferry LCI Corridor, the need to create a sense of place in the area was also acknowledged. The need for creating mixed use centers, pedestrian friendly environments, quality and safe sidewalks, and multi-use trails was explicitly stated in the original LCI plan. Furthermore, the plan encourages Cherokee County to work with social, non-profit, and religious organizations to cater to the needs of those with limited or no access to automobiles. The original LCI plan recognized a need to establish a network and coordination process among social services and non-profit agencies to focus on the large number of seniors within the Bells Ferry area, as well as on the significant number of Hispanic and other recent immigrants to the area.

Creating a sense of place in the Bells Ferry Road area was also to be achieved by designing, funding, and implementing an economic development, marketing, and branding initiative. The program had four components:

1. Attract businesses and offices to the area by promoting the area as suitable for residents and/or workers from diverse social and economic backgrounds as well as creating diverse housing product types. With a diverse labor pool, a variety of businesses can be supported. The proximity to the residential area would provide for smart growth opportunities and continue to enhance the quality of life.
2. Encourage commercial development through mixed use centers. Commercial development would also be supported by a mix of housing types in the area.



3. Create partnerships that can support economic development activities. The ability of the community to compete for the services and economic development opportunities it wants in the Bells Ferry area depends on the proactive involvement of residents and partnerships with other agencies.
4. Marketing and branding. Branding is an important component of attracting new development to the area. Collateral materials, marketing initiatives, and campaigns should be created for the area. These materials should describe the economic opportunities as well as the civic, political, and public support for the LCI plan and the development initiatives. Targeted campaigning to sell the vision to key audiences is important in attracting investment to the Bells Ferry area.

### *Current Status*

Several commercial projects have been developed in the last five years which have helped to create a sense of place and spur improvements within the Bells Ferry corridor:

- American Family Care (6440 Bells Ferry Road). This clinic provides urgent care services for patients requiring immediate medical attention. The clinic is able to treat most illnesses and injuries that would normally require treatment in an emergency health facility. By treating illnesses and injuries at this clinic, patients can obtain the care they need without having to travel to a hospital which may not be as close or convenient as this clinic. In addition, interparcel access and shared parking were accomplished as a result of the clinic's proximity to existing developments. Constructed in 2013, the building is 5,022 square feet in size. The clinic represents a \$534,290.58 investment in the Bells Ferry corridor.
- Aspen Falls Auto Spa (6390 Bells Ferry Road). Built in 2011, this carwash and automotive detailing company built a 7,853 square foot building with an investment of \$544,684.08. Although the property was already zoned for commercial use prior to construction, the site and building were designed in accordance with the Bells Ferry Community Design Guidelines.
- C & T Auto Service (2348 Bascomb Carmel Road). This full service auto repair business has operated in Cherokee County since 1976. The company expanded and opened its current store on Bascomb Carmel Road in 2004. In 2015, the company expanded yet again with the addition of a 2,400 square foot building at its Bascomb Carmel Road location. Working with Cherokee County staff, the owner was able to use the Bells Ferry design guidelines and take advantage of the district's site design flexibility in exchange for a new, aesthetically pleasing masonry building.
- Cherokee County Bells Ferry Fire Station (6276 Bells Ferry Road). Cherokee County is in the process of building a new fire station near the intersection of Bells Ferry Road and Old Bascomb Court. The total cost of the project, including land, design fees, furniture, fixtures, equipment, and construction, is \$3,300,000.00. This project represents a significant investment on the part of Cherokee County in the Bells Ferry area.
- Patriots Park (1485 Kellogg Creek Road).  
The park is located west of Bells Ferry Road on a 33 acre tract on Kellogg Creek Road. Patriots Park will feature two natural grass baseball/softball fields, an artificial turf adaptive use baseball/softball field, two fenced off-leash dog areas,



an adaptive use field designed to be accessible for athletes of all abilities, a 0.8 mile paved walking trail, and concession and restroom facilities. 21 acres of the site will be set aside for passive recreation. Adjacent to a natural meadow within the park, Patriots Plaza will be built and feature a monument with granite pavers. The park represents an estimated \$5.9 million investment in the Bells Ferry LCI district.

- **Tranquil Gardens Assisted Living and Memory Care (5734 Bells Ferry Road).** Currently in the middle of the development review process, this is one of the most significant projects to be proposed within the Bells Ferry Community Design District in recent years. The project is on a 22 acre site that was blighted and underutilized. As the site of a former mobile home sales lot, the property contained several dilapidated and abandoned mobile homes, many of which were illegally occupied by trespassers. The property was frequently vandalized and a constant eyesore. Because of the Bells Ferry overlay, the property owner did not have to undertake a costly and time-consuming rezoning. In addition, the owner was allowed to design a project with more density. As designed, the project will feature a mix of uses including retail, age-targeted housing, and an assisted living facility.
- **Wade Green Road, south of SR-92.** This 38 acre tract has experienced renewed interest over the past several years as the economy has improved. The tract is sufficiently large enough to allow a site design with a group of uses. As currently envisioned, the project will feature a mixture of housing types, prominently sited civic or community buildings, and commercial or office/institutional workplaces which will provide a balanced mix of activities and public spaces. The property owner intends to create an attractive, efficient, and worthwhile development.

Several business have undertaken major renovations to upgrade the appearance of their establishment:

- **Cherokee Corners, LLC Shopping Center (5520 Bells Ferry Road).** A commercial development near the intersection of GA-92 and Bells Ferry Road has recently made several signage and exterior façade improvements. The 13 acre tract is anchored by a Food Depot grocery store, Park Avenue Thrift, a regional thrift store selling donated goods, and Woodstock Market, a home furnishings consignment store and outdoor market. Family Dollar, Little Caesars, Cricket Wireless, Rent-A-Center, and a local beauty salon also occupy space in the shopping center.
- **KFC/Taco Bell (6760 GA-92).** The scope of the renovation included exterior and interior alterations of existing free standing restaurant. Exterior façade upgrades consisted of new exterior skin elements and tower panels. The restaurant's interior was improved for new dining decor, seating package, and new restroom finishes. Kitchen and drive-through areas remained in operation during the remodeling so there was little, if any, negative economic impact during the renovation. The upgrades were completed in August of 2014. The construction cost was estimated to be \$105,000.
- **Krystal Restaurant (6261 GA-92).** The scope of the renovation, currently underway and nearing completion, includes repainting the exterior, new awnings,



- new wall murals, and improving the accessibility ramp to the restaurant. Interior upgrades will be made to the dining room and restrooms. The renovation represents an investment of approximately \$105,000. The renovation will contribute to the visual appeal of the intersection of GA-92 and Robin Road.
- McDonald's Restaurant (5600 Bells Ferry Road). The scope of the renovation included new façade materials, new exterior wall signage, installation of additional kitchen equipment, and remodeling the lobby and restrooms. A new pedestrian access was created to link the restaurant with the sidewalk on Bells Ferry Road. When the renovations were completed in 2011, it represented a significant reinvestment and enhanced the visual appeal of the area.

As each of the projects listed above demonstrate, businesses are willing to develop new projects or renovate existing ones in the Bells Ferry corridor. This willingness to upgrade a business or start a new one can be attributed, at least in part, to the Bells Ferry Overlay District. The construction of a new building, or the renovation of an existing one, can often have a domino effect on the surrounding area. As one building is renovated, a nearby building often feels compelled to renovate as well. One of the goals of the Bells Ferry Community Design District is to encourage the creation of high-quality development that offers a superior quality of life to residents and business owners. By establishing a set of guidelines that provide site planning, design, and building regulations for development within the corridor, Cherokee County has been able to attract and encourage projects which contribute to the unique identity of the Bells Ferry corridor.



## Report of Accomplishments

Transportation Initiatives				STATUS				Notes
Project	Description	PE Year	Construction Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant	
SR-92 Widening	Current DOT Project. Roadway capacity.	2005-2006	2008	X				
SR 92 - Current Design Modifications	20-ft Raised Median. Roadway safety.	2005-2006	2005-2010				X	A depressed median was installed in lieu of a raised median.
SR 92 - Current Design Modifications	Landscaping for raised median. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2006		X				A depressed median was installed in lieu of a raised median.
SR 92 - Current Design Modifications	6-ft Sidewalks on Both Sides. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2006		X				
SR 92 - Current Design Modifications	5-ft Landscaped Planting Strip on Both Sides. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2006		X				Stamped concrete was installed along with a depressed median.
SR 92 - Current Design Modifications	Proposed Median Breaks / Intersections. Access Management.	2005-2006					X	No funding available at this time.
SR 92 - Current Design Modifications	Pedestrian Refuge Islands. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2006					X	No funding available at this time.
SR 92 - Current Design Modifications	Alternate Crosswalk Hardscape Materials. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2006					X	No funding available at this time.
Bells Ferry - Current Modifications	Landscape Existing Median. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2010					X	No funding available at this time.
Bells Ferry - Current Modifications	Landscape Existing Planting Strip. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2010					X	No funding available at this time.
Bells Ferry - Current Modifications	Parallel Linear Park with Shared-Use Path. Pedestrian facilities and Access Management.	2005-2010				X		No funding available at this time. Right-of-way acquisition is a significant obstacle.
Additional Current Projects	Gateway Features. Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2010				X		No funding available at this time.
Additional Current Projects	Robin Road: Curb, gutter, and sidewalks to westside only. Roadway Safety and Pedestrian facilities.	2005-2006		X				
Additional Current Projects	Eagle Drive Widening. Roadway capacity.	2006		X				



Transportation Planning Initiatives				STATUS				Notes
Project	Description	Study / Implementation Year		Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant	
SR 92 Design Changes	Coordination of SR 92 Design Changes and Landscape Maintenance Program.	2008	2013	X				
SR 92 Access Management	Implementation of Bells Ferry and SR 92 Access Management Plan (Including an outreach program to business/property owners to involve them in the implementation process through overlay or design guidelines or master plan/s).	2007	Ongoing		X			Plan elements are implemented as projects are submitted.
Wade Green Access Management Study	Wade Green Access Management Study (Includes Robin Road / Tyson Drive / Wade Green Intersection).	Ongoing			X			Access study is conducted as projects are submitted.



<i>Housing Initiatives</i>			STATUS				Notes
Project	Description	Study / Implementation Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant	
Bells Ferry Parkway Enclave	Develop large tract of vacant parcels and large single family lots and redevelop existing mobile park home site into a cohesive residential neighborhood with various housing product types that attracts people from diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds integrated with parks and playgrounds and openspace and bike and pedestrian trails. To create a walkable, pedestrian friendly residential community. The sub area includes Bells Ferry Parkway Enclave.	2016		X			A mixed use commercial/residential project on a 38 acre parcel on Wade Green Road, an 87 lot single-family residential development on Bascomb Carmel Road, and an age targeted mixed use project on a 22 acre site on Bells Ferry Road are in various stages of planning and development.
<i>Other Local Initiatives</i>			STATUS				Notes
Project	Description	Study / Implementation Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant	
Cherokee County Fire Station - Bells Ferry	Construct a new state-of-the-art fire station within the Bells Ferry LCI area.	2010		X			Project has been approved for construction.
Civic Amenities	To create a parkway with parks, fields integrated into the neighborhood fabric that offers residents with both passive and active recreation opportunities. To create multi-use pathways and an amphitheatre.	2016		X			Patriots Park is being built on a 33 acre tract on Kellogg Creek Road, west of Bells Ferry Road. Construction began in November 2015. The project will cost approximately \$5.9 million.
Aquatic Center	To build an aquatic center in the Bells Ferry Parkway Enclave that serves the needs of Cherokee County.					X	Constructed in Cherokee County but outside of the Bells Ferry LCI area.



<i>Economic Development Initiatives</i>			STATUS				Notes
Project	Description	Study / Implementation Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant	
Tax Allocation District	Establish TAD for the LCI Study Area.				X		Voters defeated ballot initiative to give Cherokee County redevelopment powers.
TAD Administration and Urban Design Group	Setup TAD Administration and Urban Design Group comprising of a consultant and Cherokee County inter-department.				X		Voters defeated ballot initiative to give county redevelopment powers.
Marketing and Branding Campaign	Develop Marketing and Branding Campaign.				X		Not developed due to staff time and funding limitations.
Economic Development Corporation	Create Cherokee County Economic Development Corporation.				X		Unable to establish due to TAD rejection by voters.
<i>Planning and Zoning Initiatives</i>			STATUS				Notes
Project	Description	Study / Implementation Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant	
Land Use	Adopt new land use for the LCI study area to accommodate mixed use and pedestrian friendly sustainable environments.	2008	X				Adoption of new land uses was part of the 2008 Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan.
Zoning Regulations	Develop zoning regulations to implement the LCI Plan: use, height, setbacks, parking, interparcel connectivity, and streets.	2006	X				Zoning regulations were adopted as part of the Bells Ferry Community Design District.
Design Guidelines	To develop guidelines (including access management) for the LCI study area to ensure the quality and character of development to reflect the community's vision as articulated in LCI study.	2006	X				Utilized LCI supplemental funds to develop design guidelines.



## Implementation Plan with updated Five Year Action Plan

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One of Cherokee County's long-term planning goals is to promote interconnected development in its activity centers and corridors which feature a mix of uses, pedestrian friendly elements, compact neighborhood layout, and distinctive design features across Cherokee County. Building a sustainable community while balancing growth and development pressure continues to be a goal of the Bells Ferry LCI district. If obstacles can be overcome, redevelopment of the Bells Ferry area has the potential to significantly change the area and the southwestern part of Cherokee County. The goals of the Bells Ferry corridor remain:

- To make the corridor a 'gateway' into Cherokee County.
- To provide diverse choices in retail, housing, entertainment, and recreation that not only serve this community, but is a destination choice for the region.
- To increase job opportunities for residents and improve the jobs-to-housing balance.
- To provide residents with transportation alternatives and modes for traveling within the area.
- To support a diversity of people of all incomes, ages, social, and cultural backgrounds.
- To change the image of the community from an unsafe and declining neighborhood to a thriving and vibrant community.

### *Challenges*

The Bells Ferry LCI plan has encountered significant challenges since its inception and adoption. With the defeat of the TAD by voters, Cherokee County has been unable to utilize tax increment financing options that otherwise would have been available if a TAD had been approved. TAD funding was identified as a vital component of the original LCI plan because it would have allowed Cherokee County to issue non-recourse bonds. These bonds could have been used to provide infrastructure, land, and/or other essential project requirements within the TAD. As a result, attractive incentives to private developers and investors to develop within the LCI district could have been created. In addition, without a TAD Cherokee County has not established an Economic Development Corporation. The corporation was to administer the TAD and facilitate public/private development opportunities in the Bells Ferry LCI district. Without a TAD to administer there has not been a need for this corporation. Lack of a dedicated TAD funding option forced a fundamental, unforeseen shift in planning for the Bells Ferry LCI area.

As initially proposed, an effort focusing on attracting commercial entities to the Bells Ferry area, as well as an effort to create partnerships supporting economic development activities in the area through a marketing and branding initiative was to be carried out. Unfortunately, a nationwide economic downturn stifled the initial implementation of the Bells Ferry LCI plan. A sizable commercial project could set the trend for development in the area, thus dictating the type of marketing and branding



campaign needed. The Bells Ferry area remains in need of an identity to help attract and retain businesses and promote a sense of community.

### *Opportunities*

While some obstacles remain in the way of successful implementation of the Bells Ferry LCI plan, there are a number of opportunities for overcoming these challenges. Cherokee County has a SPLOST program which continues to have a positive impact on the Bells Ferry LCI area. A portion of the SPLOST is used to revive a major component of the LCI plan. Funding from the SPLOST will be used to improve intersections, install pedestrian facilities, and improve streetscape features.

Unfortunately very few funding opportunities, outside of a TAD, are uniquely designed for spurring redevelopment in an area such as the Bells Ferry LCI Corridor. Cherokee County has been and will continue to actively seek other funding sources such as the ARC implementation grant to support eligible transportation improvement projects in the LCI area. In addition, Cherokee County will aggressively pursue opportunities that were not identified in the initial plan. Funding from Cherokee County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program could be directed to projects in the LCI area. The specific project would need to align with Cherokee County's goals for funding affordable housing and infrastructure development activities through the CDBG program. The potential impact could be significant on the seniors and underserved residents of the Bells Ferry area. With the designation of an "Entitlement Community" a CDBG could be used to acquire real property, rehabilitate residential and non-residential structures, construct public facilities, improve public infrastructure, such as water and sewer facilities, streets, neighborhood centers, and the conversion of school buildings for eligible purposes, and provide incentives to businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities.

The Bells Ferry LCI area could qualify for DCA Opportunity Zone status. As redevelopment and revitalization efforts in Bells Ferry's older commercial areas continue, Cherokee County could qualify for the Georgia Job Tax Credit of \$3,500 per job created. Cherokee County is fortunate to already have two highly successful Opportunity Zones in the southwestern portion of the county and near the Cherokee County airport near Ball Ground. If the success of Cherokee County's existing Opportunity Zones were replicated in the Bells Ferry area, the program could yield positive results.

In addition to DCA Opportunity Zone status, the Bells Ferry area may qualify for the DCA State Enterprise Zone program. Although no serious studies have been conducted to determine the Bells Ferry area's potential for participation in this program, the area does suffer from underdevelopment and disinvestment in some areas. Some areas of Bells Ferry corridor have suffered from a lack of building permits, licenses, land disturbance permits, and other indicators of underdevelopment. Were the Bells Ferry area to be recognized as an Enterprise Zone, Cherokee County would be in an even stronger position to encourage private businesses to reinvest and rehabilitate the area.

Cherokee County will continue to pursue collaboration opportunities with other organizations, as it has since the LCI plan was initially adopted. Cherokee County has previously participated in the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Urban Marketplace. The ULI Urban Marketplace is a one-day conference organized to promote investment



opportunities and development strategies in urban neighborhoods. Cherokee County has been represented by staff and elected officials at the ULI Urban Marketplace to promote Bells Ferry.

In addition, the Cherokee County Planning and Land Use Department has a strong working relationship with the Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED). COED promotes economic development in Cherokee County by supporting the expansion of existing industry and by attracting new investment and quality employment opportunities. In addition, COED facilitates project site selection, financing options, industrial engineering services, and many other economic development services. With the help of COED, collaboration opportunities are continuously being pursued with private developers that embrace mixed use development and are interested in working in the Bells Ferry area.

Cherokee County will continue to work with private developers in the Bells Ferry area. As part of formally adopting the Bells Ferry LCI plan, revisions were made to Cherokee County's zoning and development regulations which permit a tremendous amount of freedom, particularly when using Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) zoning. TND zoning encourages developing tracts of land that are sufficiently large to allow a site design for a mixed-use development. In addition, TND zoning maintains compatibility with the surrounding area and creates an attractive, efficient, and stable environment. Unfortunately Cherokee County has had few opportunities to fully utilize the revised regulations due to economic conditions. No further regulatory changes are planned. However, thanks to the momentum generated by the LCI plan, Cherokee County has adopted a set of regulations that will encourage attractive and sustainable development.

The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners (BOC) has been proactive in investing in the future of the area. For example, thanks to SPLOST funding, Cherokee County will be constructing a new Fire Station in the Bells Ferry area. Construction of a new fire station is just the type of community infrastructure improvement identified as vital to the success of the Bells Ferry area. Constructing a much-needed new fire station is a demonstration of the Cherokee County BOC's commitment to the LCI plan and the Bells Ferry area.

The original LCI study recognized the importance of monitoring and evaluating each component of the plan initiatives including design, financing, land use, transportation, and zoning. In the original LCI plan it was recommended that until the CCEDC was set up to supervise LCI implementation, a TAD Administration/Urban Design Group was to take the lead role in monitoring LCI plan implementation. Unfortunately, as a result of the rejection of the TAD by Cherokee County voters and negative economic conditions, such an organization was never established. The need to assess plan implementation remains as development and redevelopment of the Bells Ferry Corridor continues. Monitoring and evaluating on a periodic basis (whether monthly, quarterly, and/or annually) will ensure seamless and successful implementation of the LCI plan. Until the need for a truly independent monitoring organization is demonstrated, the Cherokee County Department of Planning and Land Use will continue to monitor LCI plan implementation.



Although significant challenges remain, the LCI plan can still be successfully implemented if Cherokee County continues to:

1. Build and promote the Bells Ferry area to established market strengths.
2. Base a financing structure on multiple funding sources.
3. Identify and secure a major economic incentive – ideally a source of financing controlled by Cherokee County – that can be used to attract private developers and investors.
4. Provide an organizational framework for implementing the LCI Concept Plan.

Cherokee County is confident that the resurgence of interest experienced in the Bells Ferry area will continue. The success of redevelopment in the Bells Ferry area will not be the result of a single strategy, but rather the result of a number of interconnected elements that must be implemented in tandem. As private development accelerates within the Bells Ferry area in coming years, the LCI plan will allow Cherokee County to take full advantage of private investments to ensure the best possible outcome for residents and businesses in the area. The successful implementation of the Bells Ferry LCI Plan will require not only a commitment of resources on the part of Cherokee County, but a collaborative approach with other entities, such as ARC, Georgia Department of Transportation, corridor property and business owners, and area residents.



## Five Year Action Plan

### FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### Transportation Projects

Project ID	Description	Type of Improvement	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs	ROW Year	ROW Costs	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Match Amount (if applicable)	Local Source
CTP-068	Bells Ferry Road @ Kellogg Creek Road @ Victory Drive Intersection Improvement	Intersection Improvement	2016	\$25,500	N/A	N/A	2018		\$910,000	Cherokee County	Cherokee County SPLOST		
CTP-070	SR-92 @ Robin Road Turn Lane and Signal Modification	Intersection Improvement	2015	\$27,250	N/A	N/A	2017		\$200,000	Cherokee County/GDOT	Cherokee County SPLOST		
CTP-165	Safety Improvements on SR 92 between Wade Green Road NW and Bells Ferry Road	Safety Improvement	2019		N/A	N/A	2024		\$290,000	Cherokee County/GDOT	Federal / State		
CTP-194	SR 92 Landscaping Improvements Woodland Drive (A) / SR 92 (B) Santa Fe Trail/Hartwood Drive (A)/SR 92 (B)	Bicycle - Pedestrian	2014	\$87,000	N/A	N/A	2016	\$410,175	\$497,175	Cherokee County/GDOT	Federal / State / Cherokee County	\$80,000	Cherokee County SPLOST
CTP-209	Bells Ferry LCI Improvements from Cobb County Line to Kellogg Creek Road	Bicycle - Pedestrian	2015		N/A	N/A	2018		\$1,000,000	Cherokee County/GDOT	Federal / State / Cherokee County	\$200,000	Cherokee County SPLOST
CTP-286	SR-92 @ Bells Ferry Road Turn Lane and Signal Modification (Dual left turn lanes from NB Bells Ferry to WB SR 92)	Intersection Improvement	2015	\$27,250	N/A	N/A	2017		\$400,000	Cherokee County	Cherokee County SPLOST		
CTP-299	Bells Ferry Road from Kellogg Creek Road to Sixes Road	Bicycle - Pedestrian	2019		N/A	N/A	2040		\$7,610,000	Cherokee County	Cherokee County SPLOST		
<b>Totals</b>				<b>\$167,000</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$410,175</b>	<b>\$10,907,175</b>				

#### Transportation Planning Initiatives

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
SR 92 intersection improvements and safety modifications.	TBD	2016-2019	Cherokee County	Cherokee County
Bells Ferry Road intersection improvements and safety modifications.	TBD	2016-2019	Cherokee County	Cherokee County
Implementation of Bells Ferry and SR 92 Access Management Plan (including an outreach program to business/property owners to involve them in the implementation process through overlay or design guidelines or master plans).	TBD	Ongoing	Cherokee County private sector	Cherokee County / private sector

#### Economic Development Projects/Initiatives

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Establish TAD for the LCI Study Area.	TBD	TBD	Cherokee County	Cherokee County
Setup TAD Administration and Urban Design Group comprising a consultant and Cherokee County inter-department.	TBD	TBD	Cherokee County	Cherokee County
Create Cherokee County Economic Development Corporation.	TBD	TBD	Cherokee County	Cherokee County
Develop Marketing and Branding Campaign.	TBD	TBD	Cherokee County	Cherokee County

#### Housing Projects/Initiatives

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Develop large tract of vacant parcels and large single family lots; redevelop existing mobile park home site into a cohesive residential/institutional product with various housing product types that attracts people from diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds integrated with parks, playgrounds, open space, and bike and pedestrian trails. The goal is to create a walkable, pedestrian friendly residential community.	TBD	2017-2026	Cherokee County private sector	Cherokee County / private sector

#### Other Local Initiatives

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Create a parkway with parks, fields integrated into the neighborhood fabric that offers residents with both passive and active recreation opportunities. To integrate the pond into the park and create multi-use pathways and an amphitheatre.	TBD	2017-2026	Cherokee County private sector	Cherokee County / private sector
Cherokee County Fire Station #1, Bells Ferry	\$3,300,000	2017	Cherokee County	Cherokee County



## Photographs – Existing Buildings

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### *Cherokee Corners, LLC Shopping Center* 5520 Bells Ferry Road



Woodstock Market – façade improvements.



Food Depot and Park Avenue Thrift – façade improvements.



***Krystal's Restaurant***  
6261 GA-92



Façade and site improvements.



Façade and site improvements.



***McDonald's Restaurant***  
5600 Bells Ferry Road



Façade and site improvements.



Façade and site improvements.



*Photographs – New Developments*

***American Family Care***

6440 Bells Ferry Road



Designed in accordance with Bells Ferry Community Design Guidelines. The sidewalk connects the building directly to Bells Ferry Road.



Designed in accordance with Bells Ferry Community Design Guidelines.





Site features pervious (grass) overflow parking as well as shared parking with adjoining businesses.

***Aspen Falls Auto Spa***  
6390 Bells Ferry Road



Designed in accordance with Bells Ferry Community Design Guidelines.





Designed in accordance with Bells Ferry Community Design Guidelines.

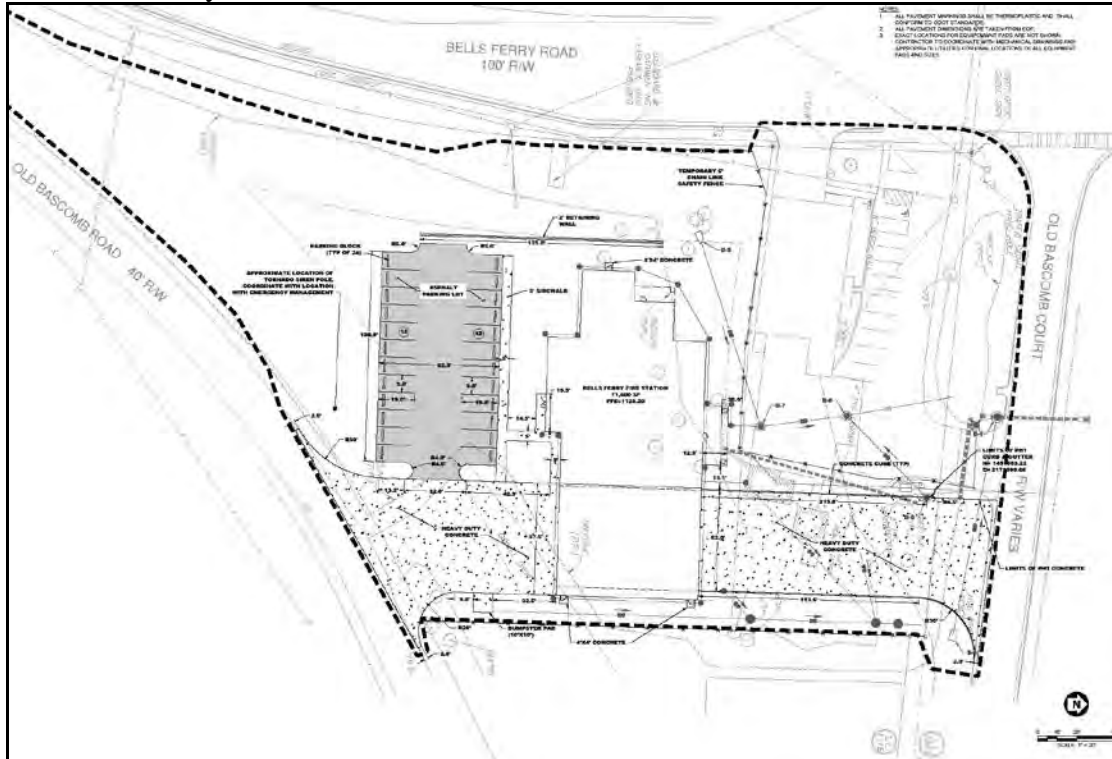
***C & T Auto Service***  
2348 Bascomb Carmel Road



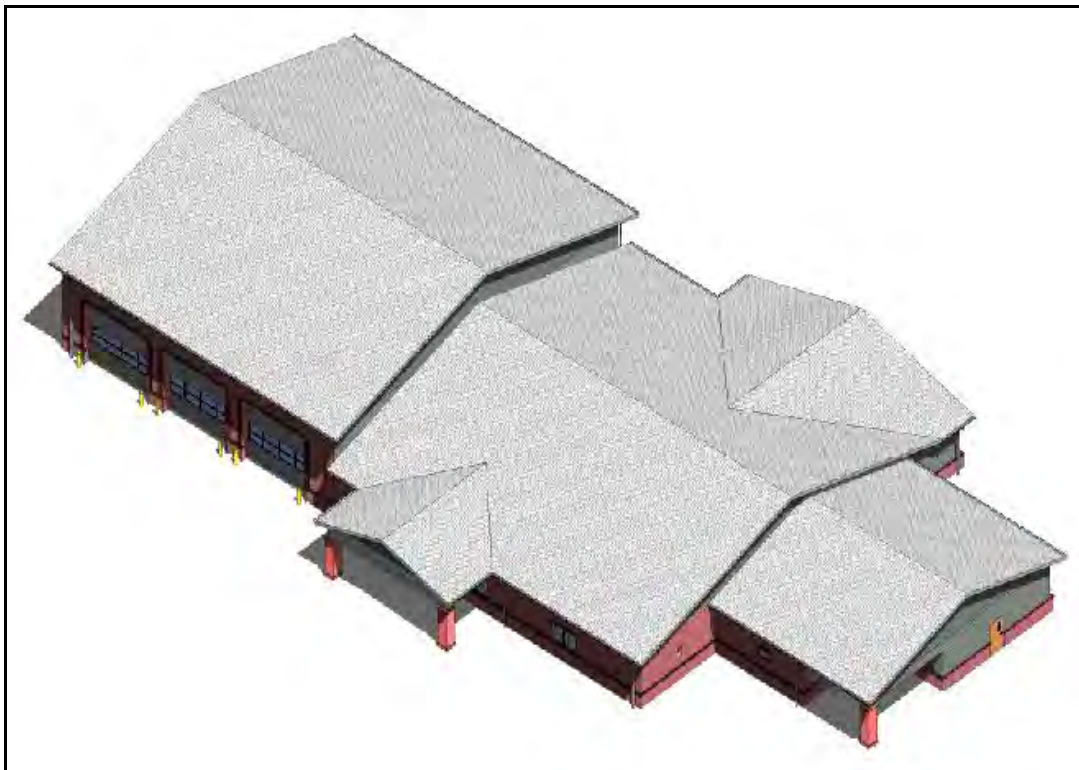
Designed in accordance with Bells Ferry Community Design Guidelines.



**Cherokee County Fire Station - Bells Ferry**  
6276 Bells Ferry Road

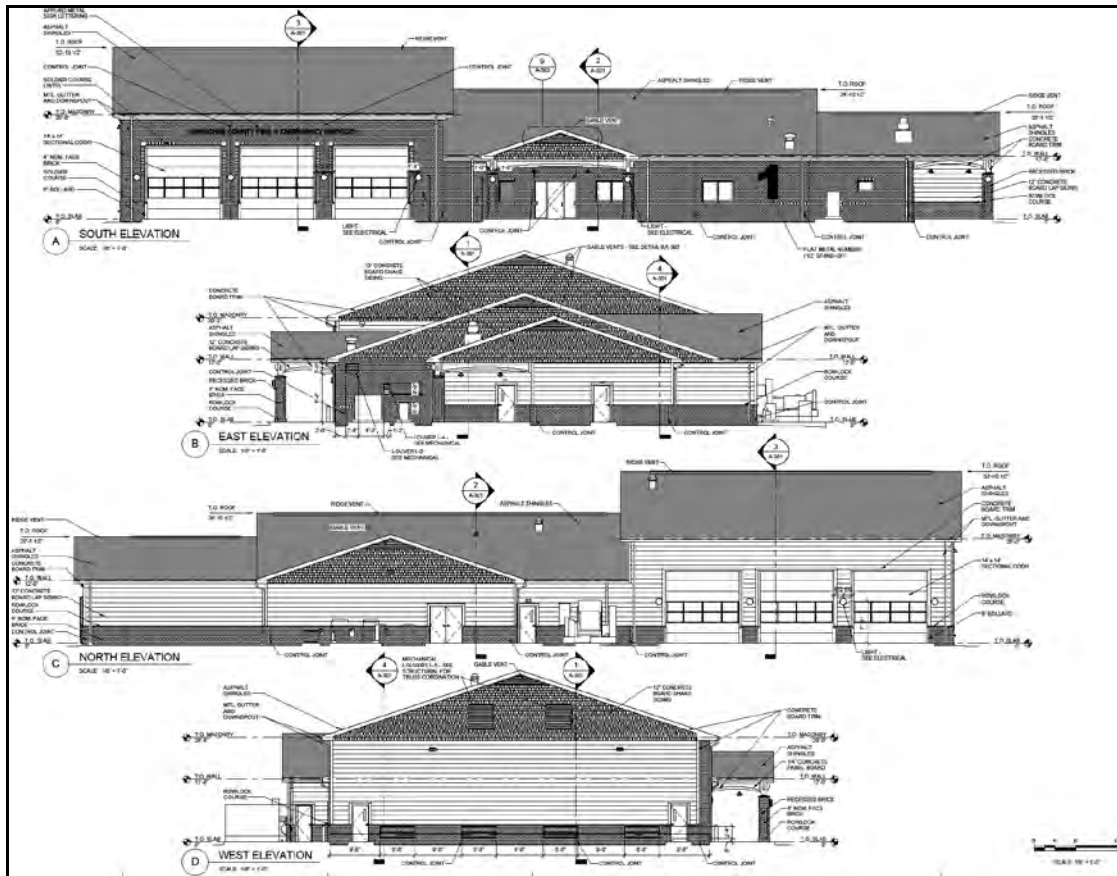


Site plan. (Credit: Wiley|Wilson.)



3-D Rendering. (Credit: Wiley|Wilson.)





Elevations. (Credit: Wiley|Wilson.)



*Patriots Park*

1485 Kellogg Creek Road



Site plan. (Credit: Smith Planning Group.)



Park facility. (Credit: Smith Planning Group and Studio.bna architects.)





Adaptive use baseball field. (Credit: Smith Planning Group.)



Patriots Plaza. (Credit: Smith Planning Group.)





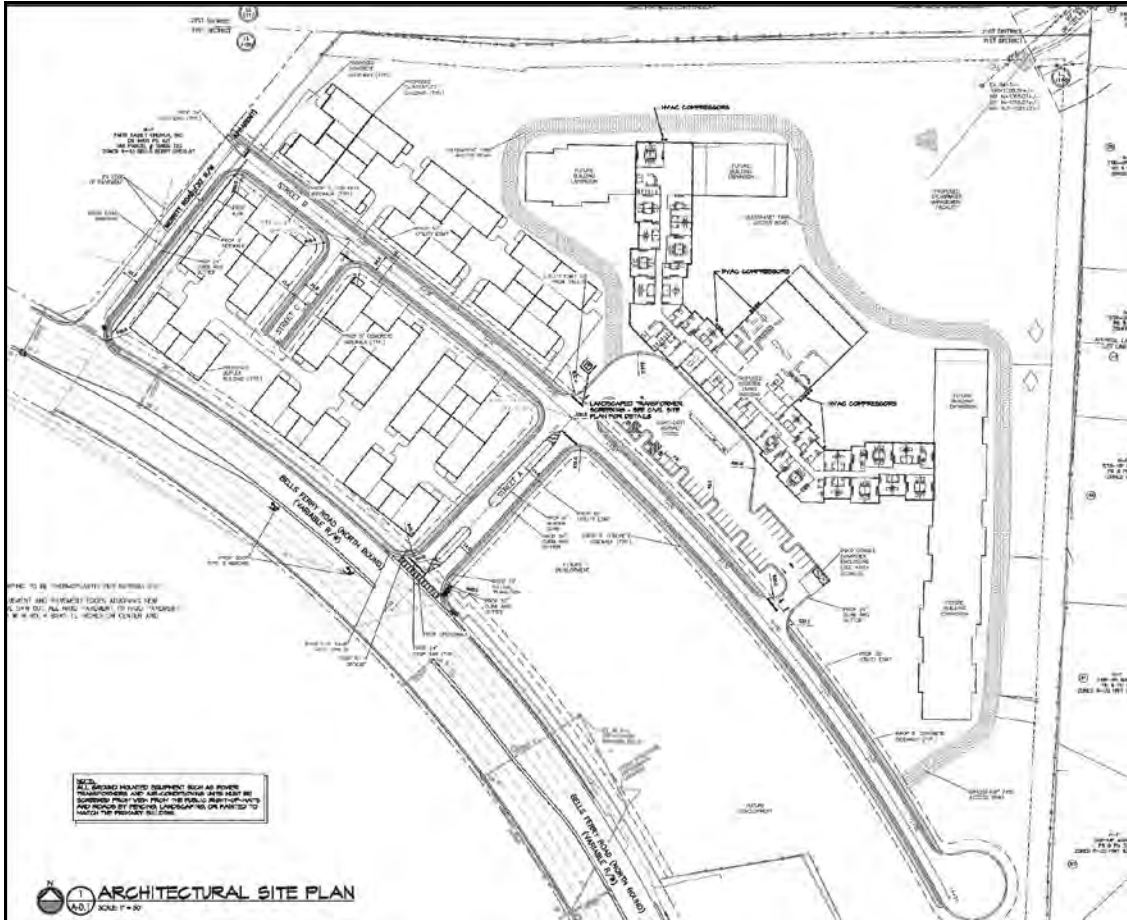
Site work in progress.



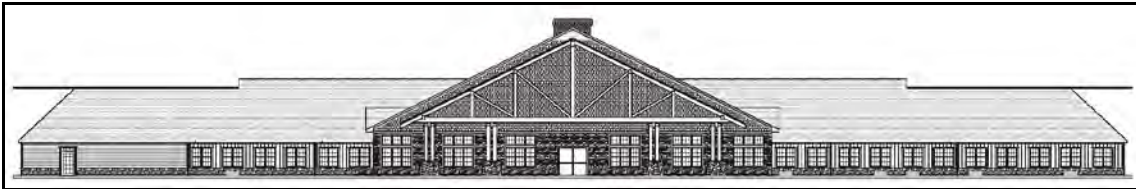
Site work in progress.



***Tranquil Gardens Assisted Living and Memory Care***  
5734 Bells Ferry Road



Site plan. (Credit: Precision Commercial Architects, Inc.)



Elevation. (Credit: Precision Commercial Architects, Inc.)





Site work in progress.



Site work in progress.



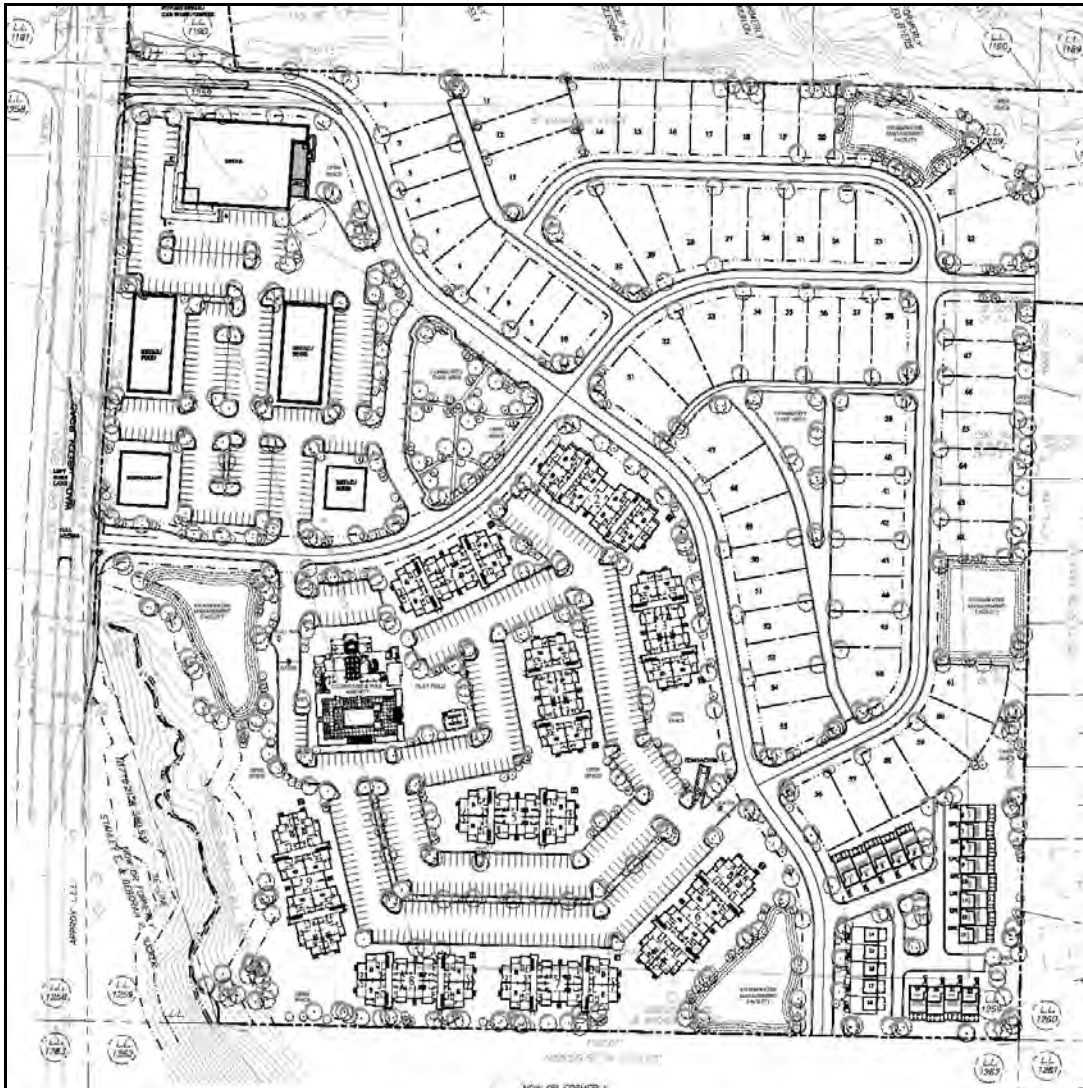


Site work in progress.



***Wade Green Road Tract***

South of SR-92 (Tax Identification Number: 15N06006B)



Conceptual site plan. (Credit: Planners and Engineers Collaborative, Inc.)





Wade Green Road streetscape improvements. The tract is located on the left. A curb cut for the tract can be seen in the lower left corner.



A median break on Wade Green Road at Hopgood Road will improve access to the site. A curb cut for the tract is visible at the bottom.





Facing east into the property from Wade Green Road.



Facing northeast into the property from Wade Green Road.

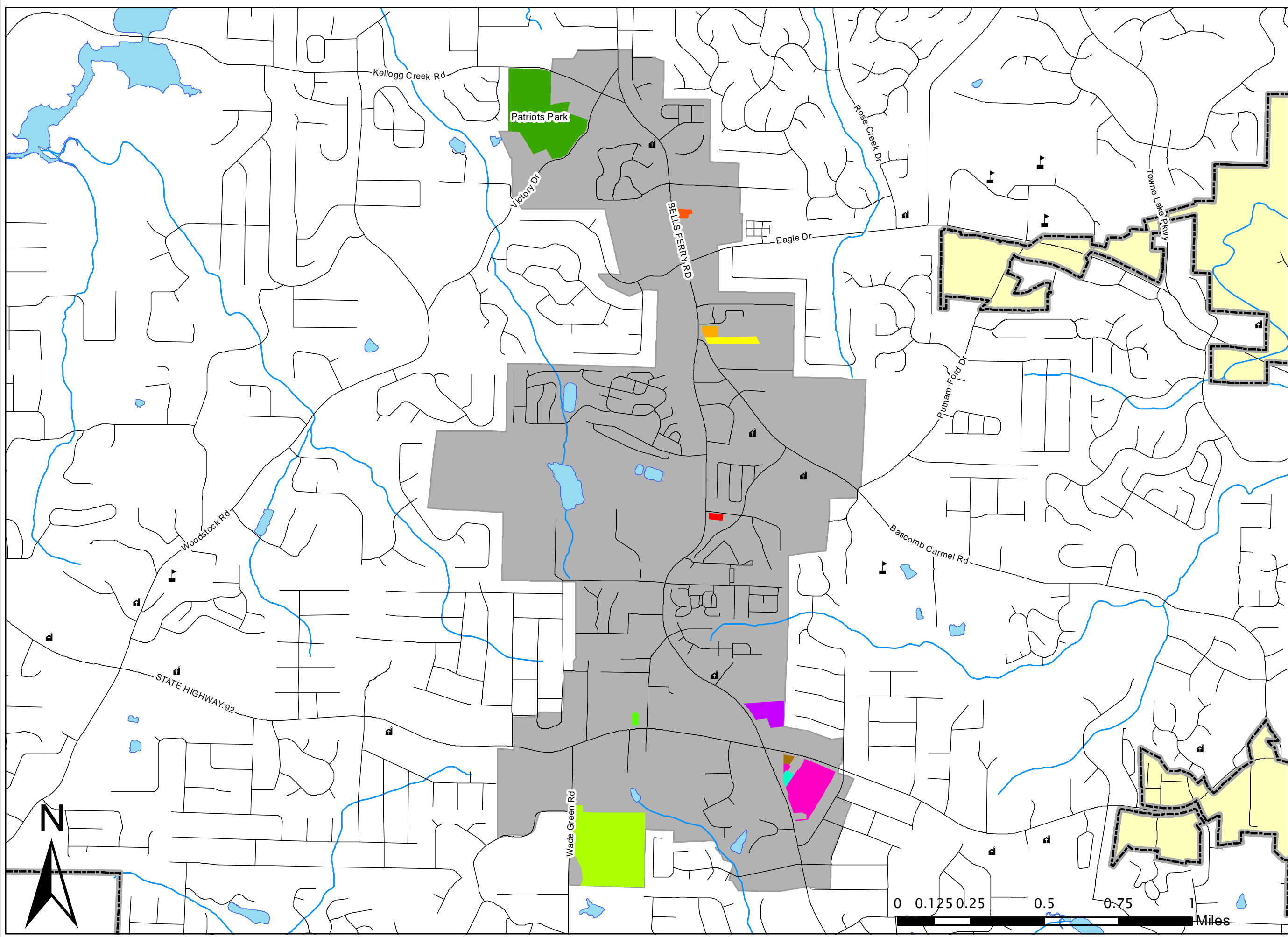


## Maps

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1. Location of new developments map.
2. Land use map.
3. Transportation project map.





## Planning and Land Use

### Legend

- American Family Care
- Aspen Falls Auto Spa
- C & T Auto Service
- Cherokee Corners Shopping Center (Renovation)
- Cherokee County Fire Station - Bells Ferry
- KFC/Taco Bell (Renovation)
- Krystal Restaurant (Renovation)
- McDonald's Restaurant (Renovation)
- Tranquil Gardens Assisted Living and Memory Care
- Wade Green Road Project
- Churches
- Schools
- Park
- Bells Ferry LCI District
- Woodstock

Date of Production:  
31 August 2016

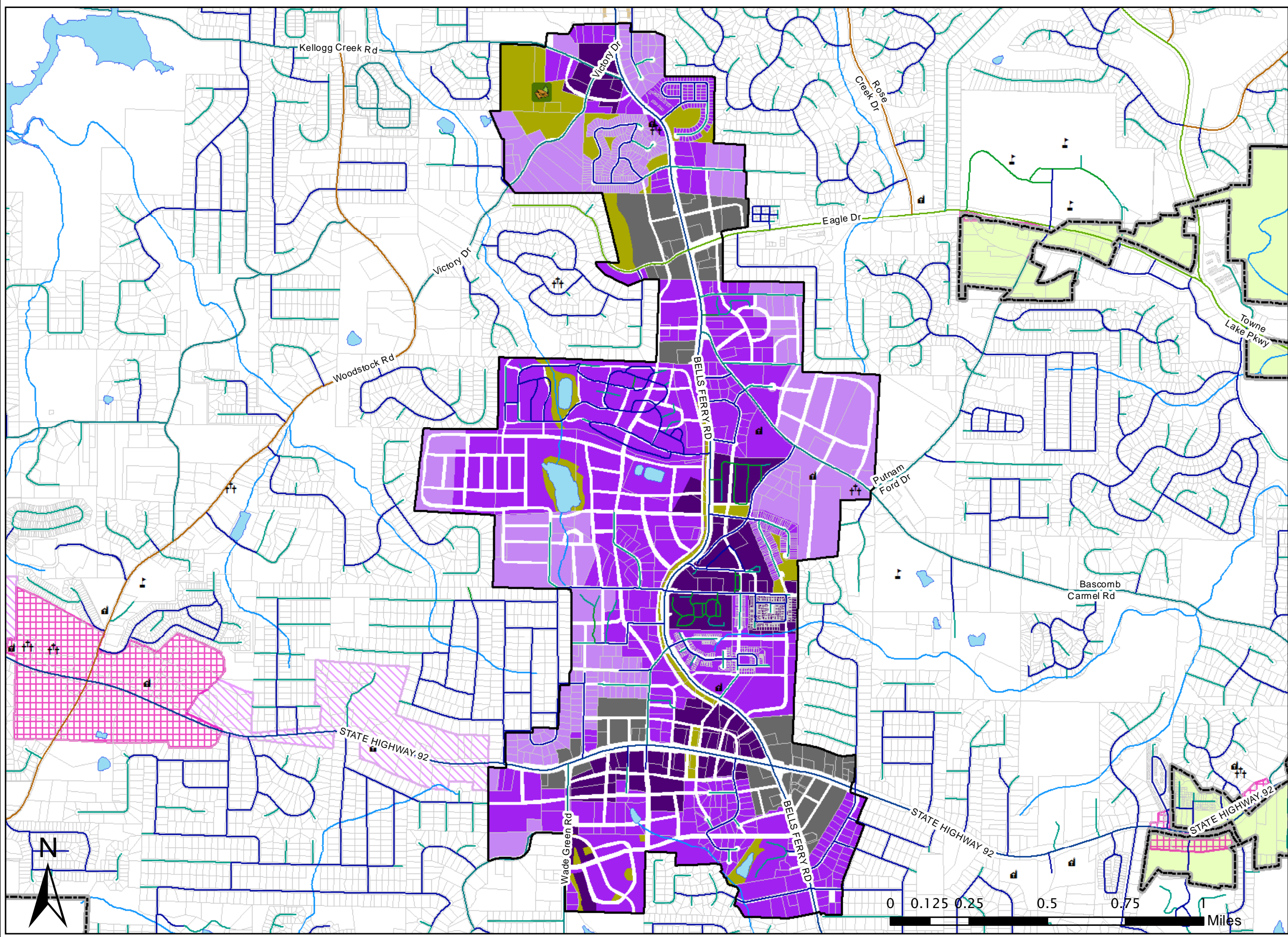
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Canton, Georgia 30114

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Maps\New Developments

## New Developments

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Planning and Land Use

**Legend**

- Park
- Churches
- Bells Ferry LCI District
- Schools
- Neighborhood Zones
  - Civic Space
  - Neighborhood Center
  - Neighborhood Edge
  - Neighborhood General
  - Special District
- Development Nodes
  - County Crossroads
  - Hamlet
  - Neighborhood Village
  - Community Village
- Corridors
  - Scenic Corridor
  - Transitional Corridor
  - Development Corridor
- City
  - Woodstock

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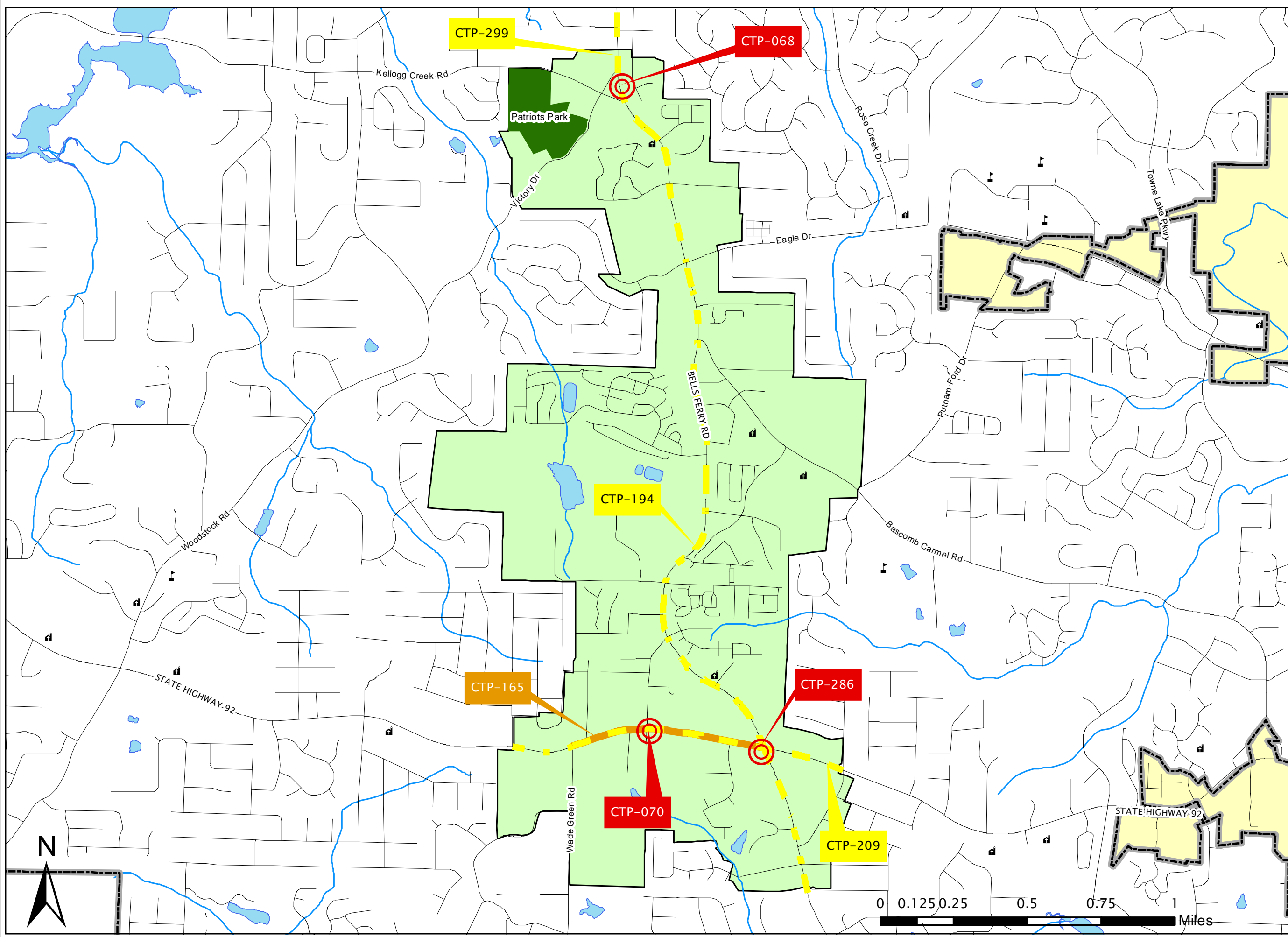
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# Land Use

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Planning and Land Use

- Legend
- Bicycle - Pedestrian Improvement
  - Safety Improvement
  - Park
  - Church
  - School
  - Bells Ferry LCI District
  - Woodstock
  - Intersection Improvement

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Transportation Projects.mxd

## Transportation Projects

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A dark blue silhouette of a mountain range with several peaks, serving as a background for the lower half of the image.

# Cherokee County

1831

GEORGIA

*Where Metro Meets  
the Mountains*