



Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2017-2027

**Joint Comprehensive Plan for Polk County and the Cities of
Cedartown, Rockmart and Aragon**

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Draft November 2016

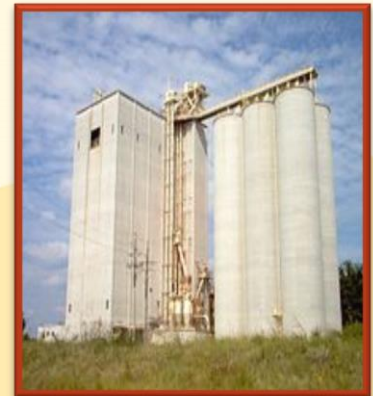


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Aragon Mill: Aragon city website

**Polk County
Joint Comprehensive Plan 2017-2027**

**Joint Comprehensive Plan for Polk County and the Cities of
Cedartown, Rockmart and Aragon 2017**

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
503 West Waugh Street, Dalton, Georgia 30720

DRAFT
November 2016

Adopted:
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City of Cedartown:
City of Rockmart:
City of Aragon:

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Adoption Resolutions

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1. Introduction: Planning for Progress

Why We Plan

Why is planning in local government important? First, it helps the government run more smoothly and seize opportunities as they emerge. Second, in Georgia, it is required to qualify for many state loans and grants. Lastly, following the process laid out by Georgia Department of Community Affairs, it promotes a democratic, participatory local government.

Requirements of the Plan

Polk County is uncrowded, with an expansive rural appeal. However, it still offers industrial and commercial opportunities, a strong agricultural base, recreational amenities, and small-town charm. Just as in a more populous area, community leaders have a strong commitment to the process of planning as the pathway to accomplish the county's goals and meet the complex challenges of the twenty-first century. The state of Georgia requires that county and city governments develop, adopt, maintain, and implement a comprehensive plan to qualify for selected state grants, loans, and permits. By adhering to the state's planning process, these local governments maintain their Qualified Local Government status (QLG). Polk County and the cities of Cedartown, Rockmart, and Aragon have participated in and benefited from the planning process for many years, completing their most recent full plan in 2007, the *Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan, 2007-2027*, or referred to here as the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. An update of the work programs was completed in 2012 for the years 2012-2016. Following the new 2014 state rules, a full update of the plan is now required every ten years to maintain QLG status.

The county and the cities of Cedartown (the county seat), Rockmart, and Aragon have worked together to develop the *Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan, 2017-2027*. Although the dates indicate a 10 year planning timeframe, some elements, such as population growth, were considered as far out as 2050. Polk County has several unincorporated crossroad communities, including Esom Hill, Young's Valley, Antioch, Fish Creek, and Browning, that have been considered in this planning process. Incorporated border cities that have some land within Polk County choose to plan with the counties where the majority of their land is located. These cities are Taylorsville, lying on the Bartow County line, and Braswell, most of which lies in Paulding County. The following elements need to be addressed in the ten-year update.

- Community Vision and Goals- a short summary of what residents view as an ideal community and a list of ways to get there.
- Report of Accomplishment- a table summarizing the status of work activities listed in the last five-year work program. Items that are assessed as underway are automatically moved forward to the next work program, along with activities that were postponed.
- Community Needs and Opportunities- a collection of ideas from the public and government leaders that reflects the current state of the county and what it could improve and enhance.
- Land Use/Future Development Guide- a spatial organization system featuring maps of the area. It describes how people interact with the landscape and how human activity will change the landscape in the future and is useful in planning development.
- Community Work Program- a list of specific tasks to accomplish within the next 5 years.

Several elements that local Georgia governments sometimes deal with are not required in this plan. A capital improvements element is not required because Polk does not charge impact fees. None of the governments involved are in the Georgia Job Tax Credit Tier 1, so an economic development section is not required. None of the county is in a Metropolitan Planning organization, so a transportation section is not required. A housing element is not required because none of the governments are HUD CDBG Entitlement Communities.

This plan has been updated in accordance with the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, O.C.G.A. Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective March 1, 2014. The plan is organized to comply with these new state planning rules.

Past, Present and Future Character of Polk County

Economic Diversity

Polk County is comprised of the beautiful rural, rolling landscape at the southernmost tip of the Ridge and Valley province of the Appalachian Mountains. The Cherokee Indians lived in the area and used the Big Spring as a water source. When the Indians were forced out of Georgia in 1838, one of the removal camps was located at the spring, which is now memorialized as a site on the Trail of Tears. The economy of the white settlers had its roots in farming, forestry, and mining of iron, slate, and limestone. The Civil War had a devastating effect on the county, with the burning of Cedartown by Union troops. After the war, agriculture and mining slowly recovered. The county has hosted a number of industries, particularly cotton mills, such as the Cedartown Cotton and Export Company, Aragon Mills, and Goodyear, which made fabric for its tire plant in Alabama. Current industry includes automobile parts, aerospace products, furniture, and food storage and packaging. Both Cedartown and Rockmart have industrial parks.



Figure 1. Memorial to Cherokee at Big Spring Park, Cedartown

The outdoor recreation and movie industries are becoming important as people seek out wide-open spaces and the old-fashioned appeal of smaller cities. The county welcomes those coming to cycle on the Silver Comet trail from the Atlanta metropolitan area, maintaining trailheads along their section of trail's east/west route out of Paulding County to the Alabama line, where it joins with the Chief Ladiga Trail. Two state wildlife management areas feature hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding and other outdoor activities.

Natural Setting

This part of the Ridge and Valley Province-is made up of low-elevation mountains and hills, with expansive valleys in between. The county's high point is 1680 feet at Shorty Mountain (also called Indian Mountain) on the Georgia/Alabama border. The county is mainly a headwater region of the Upper Coosa River Basin and Etowah River Basin, with many small streams winding across the landscape. The larger streams

include Cedar Creek, Euharlee Creek, and Fish Creek. A small amount of the Tallapoosa River Basin is located in the southeastern part of the county.

Because the county is in a headwater area, there are no large rivers or large reservoirs. Limestone rock of the Knox Formation underlies most of the county so there are many springs and abundant groundwater, the water source for the county and its towns. Cedartown uses the Big Spring, which is located inside its city limits, and is the second-largest spring in the Southeast. The reliance on springs and wells makes groundwater protection particularly important for residents, as well as for the fish and wildlife of the area. How Polk County manages its streams affects what happens downstream and could impact neighboring counties that get their water from streams and rivers in the Coosa Basin, such as Floyd and Bartow Counties.

Much of the landscape outside of the cities is pasture and forest land. The two state Wildlife Management areas, Paulding Forest WMA (4501 acres in Polk County) and J.L. Lester WMA area (477 acres) are managed for wildlife and timber production.

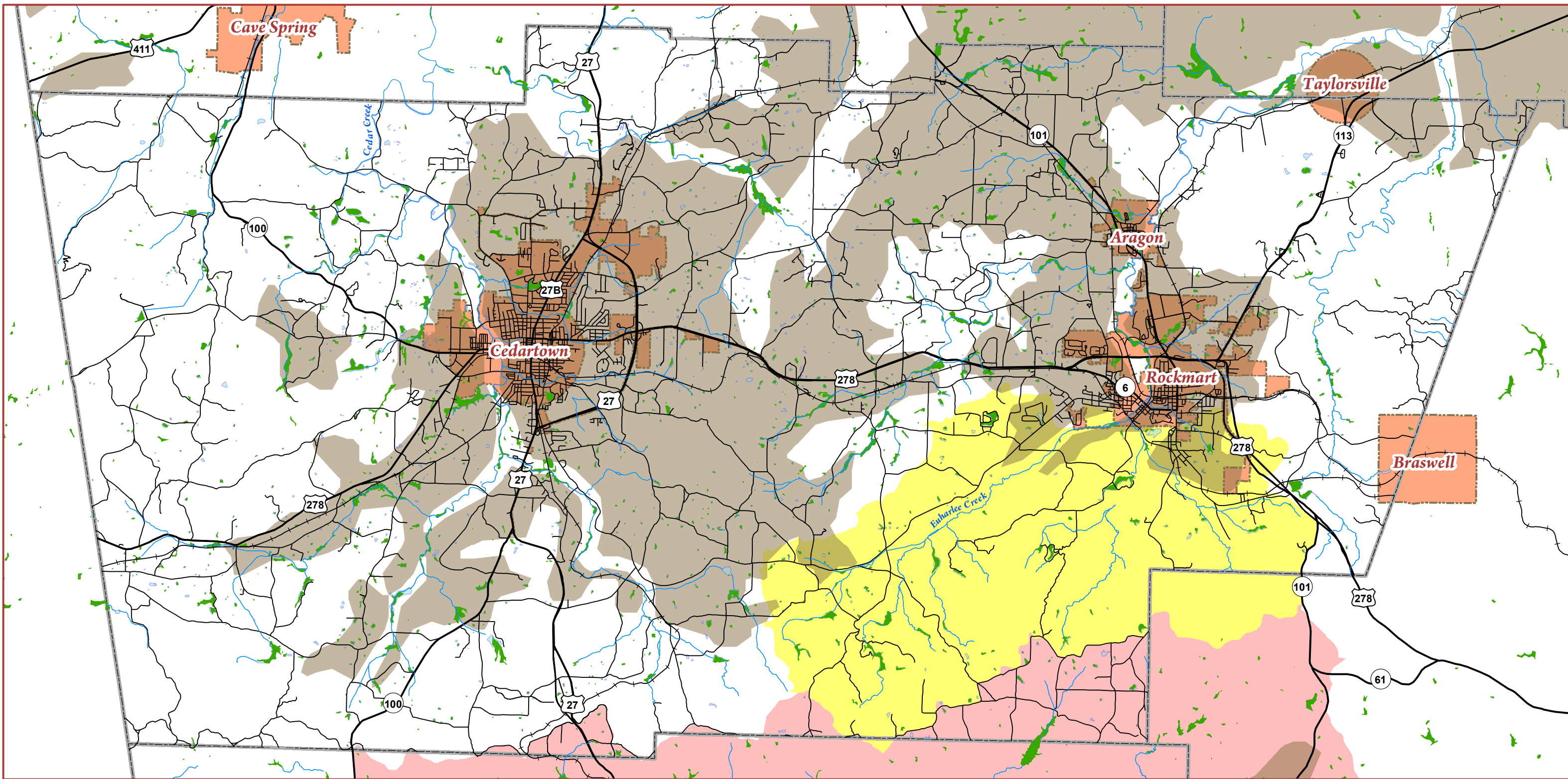
Environmental Planning Criteria

The state of Georgia encourages local governments to incorporate protection for important natural resources in their planning process so that these resources are not damaged as development occurs. The Environmental Planning Criteria cover five areas of concern. In Polk County, only two of these areas needing special protection occur, groundwater recharge areas and wetlands. A primary water supply watershed does occur, but the land is too far from the water intake to require protection. As mentioned above, groundwater is vital to the functioning of the county, so protecting groundwater recharge areas is important. Springs are wetland areas, so protecting them is also vital. Polk County has adopted these measures in its development regulations. See Figure 3, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Polk County Map.



Figure 2. Mill Pond at Aragon.

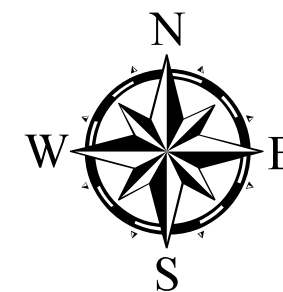
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Environmentally Sensitive Areas - Polk County, GA

1 in = 2 miles

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| | Roads | | County Boundary | | Primary Water Supply Watershed |
| | Highways | | Perennial Streams | | Secondary Emergency Water Supply Watershed |
| | Railroads | | Groundwater Recharge Area | | |
| | City Limits | | NWI Wetlands | | |



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Population, Education, and Economics

Georgia's population has grown rapidly since the 1960's, as people have moved into the state to take advantage of job opportunities (Figure 3). Projections of future population growth from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget show more than 14 million people in the state by 2050. Paulding County, east of Polk County and buffering it from Atlanta, is projected to be the most populous county in the Northwest Georgia Region by 2050, reaching 300,000. Past predictions indicated that Polk might grow rapidly, but rapid growth did not occur during the 2000's. The Polk County population is projected to increase, not decline, but at a much slower rate than Paulding County, with Polk's population slightly below 50,000 by 2050.

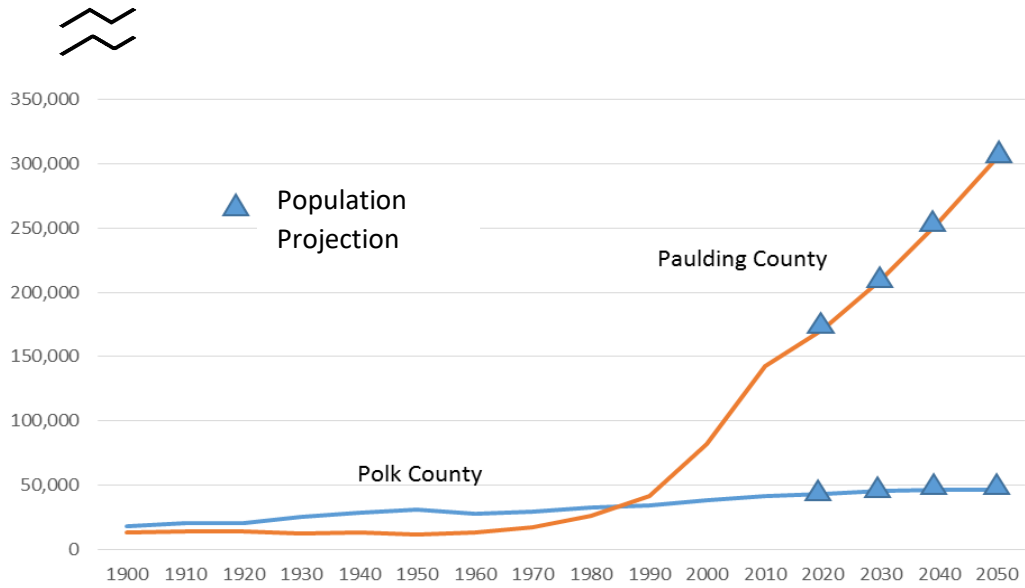
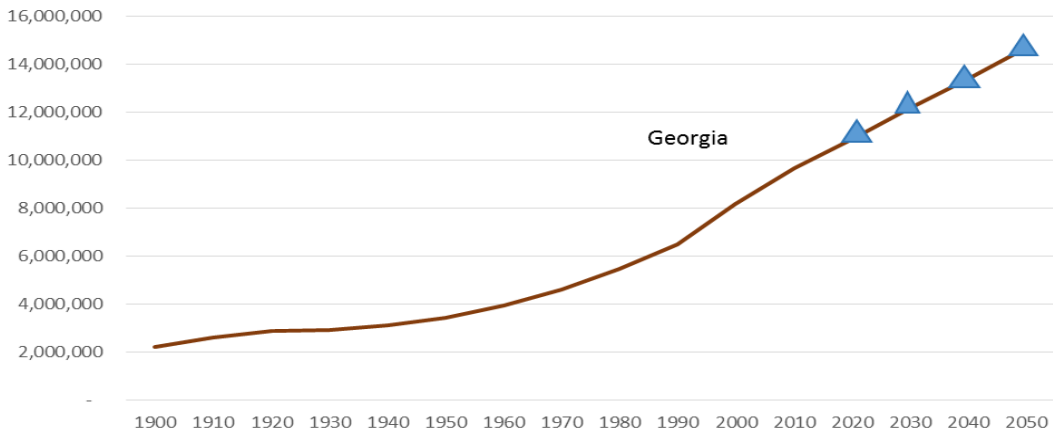


Figure 4. Population trends. Source: US Census for 1900-2010, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget projections for 2020-2050

Education is another issue of great concern in the county and it affects income and employment. As Figure 4 shows, Polk County lags behind the state and the fifteen-county Northwest Georgia Region in college degrees, with only 7.5% attaining a bachelor’s degree compared to 10.4% for the region and 17.8% for the state. There is not a 4-year college in the county, although there is a branch of Georgia Northwestern Technical College located in the industrial park in Rockmart.

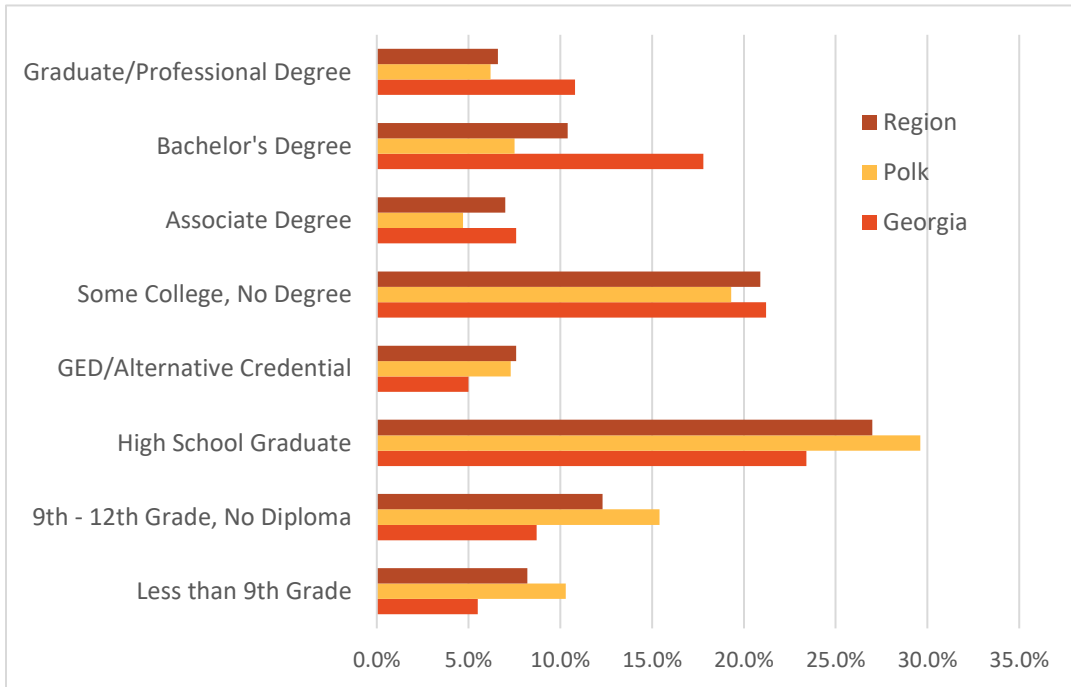


Figure 5. Educational Attainment, 2015 population 25 years and older. Source: US Census 2010, ESRI Forecasts for 2015.

Polk County’s median household income for 2015, \$36,882, is the fifth lowest in the region, but nine of the region’s counties do not rise out of the thirty thousand range (Figure 5). Paulding County, with its proximity to Atlanta, has become a location where many professionals find suburban housing, so it has the highest income in the region. The 2015 poverty threshold for a family of 4 with two children under 18 is \$24,036, according to the US Census Bureau. In Polk County, 20.6% of the population, or 8473 people out of a total population of 41,133, is below the poverty threshold. According to US Census block data maps, 20-49.5% of the people living in and around large areas of Cedartown and Rockmart are in poverty. In terms of rural poverty, the southeastern part of the county has a 20-49.5% poverty rate. An area below Cedartown and west of Route 27 also has 20-49.5% poverty rate. Higher poverty levels, from 50-100%, are found only in Cedartown on the south side of town.

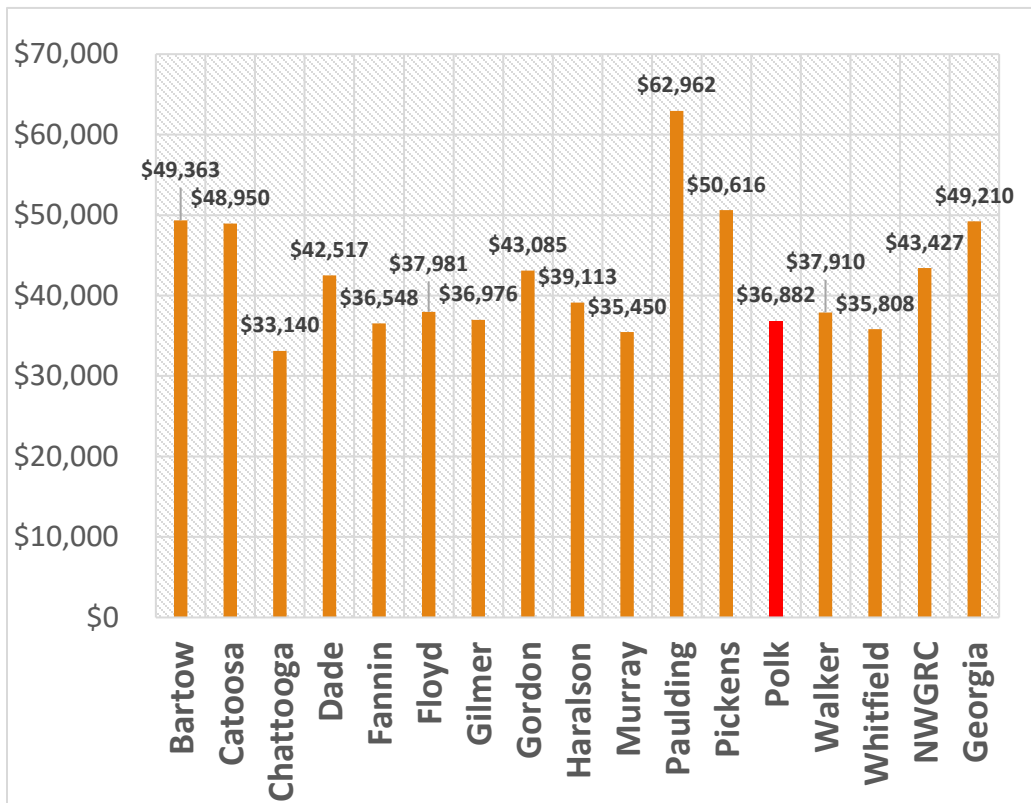


Figure 6. Median Household Income 2015. Source: US Census Bureau, ESRI Community Profile.

The recession of 2007-2009 still has an impact on Polk County. Unemployment for November 2014 to December 2015 for Polk County was at 7%, the third highest level of unemployment for this period in the region (Figure 6). However, eleven other counties were still above 6% at that time. Figure 7 shows that unemployment has dropped since reaching a high in 2010, but is still not back to pre-recession levels, and that Polk County follows the national and state trend.

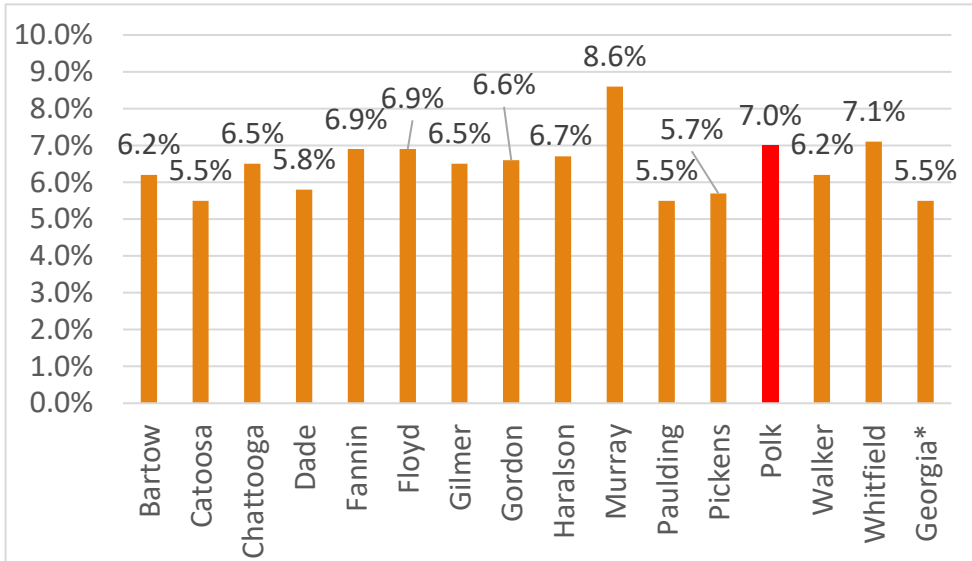


Figure 7. Unemployment Nov 2014-Dec 2015. US Department of Labor; Georgia value is for Dec 2015.

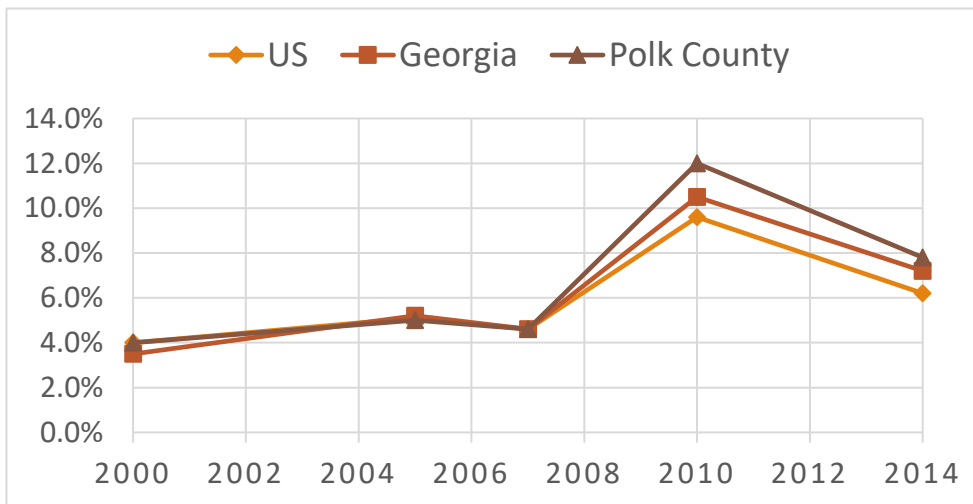


Figure 8. Employment Trends. Georgia Department of Labor; US Department of Labor.

Public Participation-Bringing Everyone to the Table

The state planning rules require public participation because it is a fair and reasonable way to run a local government in a democratic society, and local residents that participate in the planning process have greater ownership in the results. Each government chose stakeholders to serve as steering committee members. These stakeholders included interested residents from various professions, government managers, and other government employees. These stakeholders met at five evening meetings, to which the general public was also invited.



Figure 9. Stakeholders/Steering Committee at Public meeting

The first two meetings dealt with brain-storming over issues important to the community using the SWOT method (listing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). Further meetings allowed time to review the future development maps, and lists of needs, opportunities, and possible work program items generated from the SWOT analysis. Other topics covered at the meetings included population and employment trends, the Regional Water Plan, and the Environmental Planning Criteria as they apply to areas in Polk County. The review of Environmental Planning Criteria included a map showing the location of wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and water supply watersheds. See Appendix A for a list of meetings and other contact with the communities.

An electronic survey specific to the county was developed and put online on the Polk County Government website and the Cedartown website, as well as being posted in the newspaper in print form. Two hundred and fifty people filled out the survey. There were varied levels of participation from the different communities, with the largest number of participants coming from Cedartown (50%) and the least from the smallest community of Aragon (8%). Since participation was open to anyone who cared to log on or send in the newspaper survey, and participants were not randomly selected, the results may not be statistically significant, but the survey does provide insight on how residents view their community. See Appendix B for the complete results of the Community Survey.

2. Community Vision and Goals

Every community wants some basic things like jobs and good housing. The planning process lets communities go beyond the basics to develop a vision of what would be ideal for their unique situation. Each government had a vision statement in the last plan. In the years since the last plan, Polk County crafted a new vision statement that is posted on their website and is the one shown here. The cities looked at their old vision statements and updated them at the fourth stakeholder meeting.

To give the governments a stronger sense of the direction the communities would like to go, the planners added goals to the vision statements. Goals are guiding principles that, if followed, would make the vision

a reality. The goals are general statements related to issues that residents brought up repeatedly during the public input process, such as a desire for better schools, better job opportunities, and a safe, clean living environment. The county and its municipalities have several goals that are the same because they are all part of the same geographical area, all experienced the difficult effects of the recession, are all under a single county-wide school system, and all get their drinking water from groundwater.

Polk County

Polk County Vision Statement

Polk County will be the premier county in Northwest Georgia to live, work, and raise a family, with an open and efficient government which works with its citizens, local businesses and organizations to facilitate thoughtful economic growth and prosperity. In doing so, Polk County will provide solution-oriented services to the community through the application of standards, consistency and planning, with focus on public safety, creation of employment opportunities, and enhancement of quality of life.



Figure 10. Polk County Courthouse, Cedartown.

Polk County Goals:

1. We will encourage the development or expansion of businesses and industries that provide quality employment opportunities close to home while minimizing the impact on our infrastructure and rural environment.
2. We will develop policies that protect agricultural land and the practice of agriculture by local farmers.
3. Our community has made a commitment to alternative transportation and recreation in developing the Silver Comet trail. We will promote its use for tourism and the economic benefits outside visitors provide, as well as for the health and fitness for our residents.
4. We will work to promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, and resource efficient housing in the community so that the members of our workforce can live in the community in which they work.
5. We will carefully to plan the expansion of infrastructure, such as sewer, into areas where it will enhance residential, commercial, and industrial development.
6. We will seek to provide fire and police facilities and staff to adequately protect life and property throughout all areas of the county.
7. We will protect our abundant groundwater, a unique resource providing the water supply for our county.

8. We will support our public school system and other institutions that provide technical job skills in our community, and encourage opportunities for residents to further their education and training.
9. We will work with neighboring counties to address regional issues such as water resources and recreation (Silver Comet Trail).

Cedartown

Cedartown Vision Statement

Cedartown is a diverse, historic community, with small town values, and with an eye toward the future. Our priorities include preserving individual liberties while providing a safe community with a high quality of life. A diversified local economy will support our next generation's quality of life.

Cedartown Goals:

- 1 We will encourage the development and expansion of businesses and industries that provide quality employment and enhance our small town character.
- 2 We will develop policies that maintain the downtown as the focal point of the community.
- 3 Our community has made a commitment to alternative transportation and recreation in developing the Silver Comet trail. We will promote its use for tourism and the economic benefits outside visitors provide, as well as for the health and fitness for our residents.
- 4 We will work to promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, and resource efficient housing in the community so that the members of our workforce can live in the community in which they work.
- 5 We will carefully plan the expansion of infrastructure to enhance residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- 6 We will protect our abundant groundwater, a unique resource providing the water supply for our city.
- 7 We will support our public school system and other institutions that provide technical job skills in our community, and encourage opportunities for residents to further their education and training.



Figure 11. Waterworks at Big Spring Park, Cedartown.

Rockmart

Rockmart Vision Statement

Rockmart is steeped in tradition, pride and a sense of community. Our priorities include being proactive in managing our future growth and development. Our goals are to ensure quality growth, economic development, strong education and traditional values and to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.

Rockmart Goals:

1. We will develop policies that maintain the downtown as the focal point of the community.
2. We will encourage the development and expansion of businesses and industries that provide quality employment and enhance our small town character.
3. Our community has made a commitment to alternative transportation and recreation in developing the Silver Comet trail. We will promote its use for tourism and the economic benefits outside visitors provide, as well as for the health and fitness for our residents.
4. We will work to promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, and resource efficient housing in the community so that the members of our workforce can live in the community in which they work.
5. We will carefully plan the expansion of infrastructure to enhance residential, commercial, and industrial development.
6. We will protect our abundant groundwater, a unique resource providing the water supply for our city.
7. We will support our public school system and other institutions that provide technical job skills in our community, and encourage opportunities for residents to further their education and training.



Figure 12. Rockmart City Hall.

Aragon

Aragon Vision Statement

Aragon is small in size, but its citizens are welcoming and neighborly, with a sense of tradition. Our priorities include providing a high quality of life to our citizens with the benefits of a close-knit community. Our goals include creating new business, and maintaining and increasing our level of service to our citizens.

Aragon Goals:

1. We will encourage the development and expansion of businesses and industries that provide quality employment and enhance our small town character.
2. We will work to promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, and resource-efficient housing in the community so that the members of our workforce can live in the community in which they work.
3. We will carefully plan the expansion of infrastructure to enhance residential, commercial, and industrial development.
4. We will protect our abundant groundwater, a unique resource providing the water supply for our city.
5. We will support our public school system and other institutions that provide technical job skills in our community, and encourage opportunities for residents to further their education and training.



Figure 13. Aragon City Hall.

3. *Progress made: Reports of Accomplishment*

The reports of accomplishment show the results of past planning efforts. The status of each work program item can be found here. Since work programs are updated every five years, the items under consideration here are from the period from 2012 to 2016. The county manager, city managers, and other government officials reviewed the 2012-2016 work programs for their respective governments and noted which activities had been completed. If projects were started but not completed, the “Underway” column was marked and the estimated year of completion was noted. There is no penalty for postponing or dropping a project, since this is a planning document and not a binding legal agreement. However, an explanation is required for postponed or dropped projects. For example, a project may not have been accomplished because voters rejected a ballot measure to fund it. Sometimes an item is dropped because it may have been a new initiative or new mandate several years ago, but over time it has become a routine function of government. Items marked as underway or postponed are carried forward to the work programs in this current plan, *Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan, 2017-2027*.



Figure 14. Rockmart Industrial Park.

Polk County Report of Accomplishments

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016						
Polk County						
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Support implementation of the Appalachian Valley Fiber Network.	2012-2013	X				
Support the Polk County Development Authority with potential industrial sites.	2012-2016		X (2016)			
Polk County Airport safety improvements	2012-2016		X (2016)			
Encourage high skill businesses and selectively recruit environmentally friendly industries.	2012-2016				X	Routine function of government
Prepare an economic development strategic plan with meaningful stakeholder input.	2012-2016	X				
HOUSING						
Promote the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	2012-2013	X				
Removal of blighted structures	2012-2016		X (2016)			Rewritten for work program to include "in unincorporated areas"
TRANSPORTATION						
Implement the Transportation Act of 2010 projects.	2013-2016				X	Was not approved by voters
Culvert replacement program	2012-2016		X (2016)			Rewritten for work program

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

Polk County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Develop Hendricks Road property (adjacent to the Silver Comet Trail) as a passive recreation area.	2012-2016			X		Lack of political interest and funding; rewritten for work program
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Implement 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	2012-2016				X	Routine activity of government and last one was completed.
Construct county public works facility (CIP)	2012-2014		X (2016)			
Construct county police facility (CIP)	2012-2014	X				
County administrative facility improvements	2012-2016			X		Lack of political interest
Expansion of Polk Medical Center and recruitment of doctors	2012-2016	X				
Construct law enforcement firing range	2012-2013	X				
LAND USE						
No items listed						
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Update the Service Delivery Strategy	2016		X (2016)			Rewritten for work program to say "Maintain"
LOST renegotiation	2012	X				
Establish good working relationships with neighboring counties.	2012-2016	X				

Cedartown Report of Accomplishments

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016						
City of Cedartown						
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Support implementation of the Appalachian Valley Fiber Network.	2012-2013	X				
Expand the Cedartown North Industrial Park	2012	X				
Downtown Streetscape expansion	2012-2016	X				
Coordinate with the Cedartown Development Authority	2012-2016	X				
Coordinate with the Cedartown Downtown Development Authority	2012-2016	X				
Promote Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone	2012-2016				X	Lack of interest
HOUSING						
Promote the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	2012-2013			X		Rewrite for work program; part of new GICH program strategy
Philpot Street housing rehabilitation project	2012-2016				X	This is a private initiative
Allow for mixed use zoning in residential areas needing redevelopment.	2012-2016				X	Routine policy of Cedartown government
TRANSPORTATION						
Continue the Cedartown Transit program	2012-2016				X	Routine policy of Cedartown government
Implement the Transportation Investment Act of 2010 projects	2013-2016				X	Was not approved by voters

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

City of Cedartown

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Stabilization of the Big Spring channel	2012-2016		X (2017)			Rewritten for work program to include nature trail
Trail of Tears Park improvements	2012-2016		X (2018)			Rewritten for work program to include nature trail
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
East Gibson Street water line replacement	2012-2013	X				
Cedartown Waterworks rehabilitation	2012-2016		X (2016)			
Floyd Medical Center Hospital sewer line construction	2012-2014	X				
Cedartown Waste Water Treatment Plant rehabilitation	2012-2016		X (2021)			
Cedartown Event Center construction	2012-2016		X (2016)			
Police department renovations	2014-2016		X (2016)			
Recreation facility improvements/expansion	2012-2016	X				
LAND USE						
No items listed						
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Update the Service Delivery Strategy	2016		X (2016)			Rewrite to say "Maintain"
Work with Polk Co. to develop a countywide vision.	2012-2015	X				Ongoing activity, possible rewrite for work program

Rockmart Report of Accomplishments

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016						
City of Rockmart						
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Develop and support an Economic Strategy to include a sound vision for both city and county to include a positive balance of a 60-40% split between industrial, commercial and residential growth and development.	2012-2016	X				
Continue our participation in the Economic Strategic Vision process currently implemented within Polk County and the work being performed by the Fanning Institute out of the UGA.	2012	X				
Implement a city-wide effort to promote tourism and take advantage of area resources such as the Silver Comet Trail, and other historical landmarks within Polk County by increased marketing. Utilization of social media outlets to assist in the marketing of tourism.	2012-2014	X				
Initiate and develop special tax districts to support investment development with the downtown business district and other commercial corridors throughout the city. Implement and develop plans to support and promote Urban Redevelopment Zones, Enterprise Zones and pursue and establish a Better Home Town Program.	2012-2014		X (2017)			Rewritten for 2017 work program and made into 3 items. Better Home Town Program dropped. Opportunity Zones added.
Consider reestablishment of a Downtown Development Authority.	2012-2016		X (2020)			

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

City of Rockmart

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Support implementation of the Appalachian Valley Fiber Network to enhance and improve economic development.	2012-2013	X				
HOUSING						
Continue efforts to provide and encourage both public and private housing developments and programs to assist all citizens regardless of income.	2012-2016	X				
Complete the Jackson Street Public Housing Development and support the construction of the new Early Childhood and Adult Learning and Training Center proposed by NWGHA on Piedmont Avenue.	2012-2014	X				
Implement a Minor Repair Program within the City to assist in controlling blighted and foreclosed properties and to aid in minor repair for the elderly.	2013-2016			X		Under consideration. The City of Rockmart was approved as a GICH community beginning in 2016.
Promote the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	2012-2013	X				
Continue efforts to develop a Public/Private partnership development of a residential rehabilitation facility to aid female War Veterans through medical supervision of resident care.	2012-2016				X	The developer did not pursue this development
TRANSPORTATION						
Implement the Transportation Investment Act of 2010 projects.	2013-2016				X	Not approved by voters
Work closely with GDOT and support the efforts of the Transportation Investment Act and encourage the construction and completion of	2014-2016			X		Postponed due to Act not being approved by voters but still pursuing funding for the

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

City of Rockmart

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
the Marquette Road and Hwy. 101 widening projects as approved by the Regional Round Table.						widening of Marquette Road. Preliminary study on Highway 101 has been done
Improve and promote gateway signage and other traffic/pedestrian signage throughout the city to assist both motorist and pedestrian/bicyclist.	2015-2016	X (gateway signage)	X (2017)			Rewritten for the 2017 work program to separate item into two activities. Gateway improvements moved to Land Use section.
Continue to pressure GDOT to construct designated right turn lane at the intersection of Hwy. 101 and Hwy. 278 in north bound lane. Project is approved by GDOT pending funding.	2012-2013	X				
Sidewalk rehabilitation/replacement with all consideration of ADA compliance.	2012-2016		X (2020)			Ongoing process using DOT LMIG funds (rewritten for 2017 work program)
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Expand and improve infrastructure and rehabilitate existing infrastructure that has been outdated or needs repair to ensure compliance with Federal and State Requirements.	2012-2016	X				Compliance with EPD mandate was completed. However, this item was rewritten for 2017 work program to involve the implementation of 2010 Sewer study and item was moved to Community Facilities and Services section.
Protect current water sources and support and enforce the regulations set forth by EPD and other regulating agencies.	2012-2016	X				
Train personnel and establish policy and guidelines to ensure compliance with Georgia Water Stewardship Act of 2010.	2012-2016	X				
Educate Consumer on the need to conserve and protect the State's water sources.	2012-2016		X (2020)			Ongoing process (rewritten for 2017 work program)

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

City of Rockmart

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Complete renovation on the Concession Stand at Hilburn Field.	2012	X				
Renovate the old library to accommodate relocation of the Senior Center.	2012	X				
Renovate the existing Senior Center to become Rockmart's Silver Comet Trailhead.	2012-2013	X				
Inspect and Paint all Water Storage Facilities that are part of the City's water system.	2012-2016		X (2020)			Rewritten for 2017 work program
Expand and improve infrastructure to attract and support both new and existing industry as well as new commercial development.	2012-2016	X				
Complete Well No. 3 Development and bring on line in Spring of 2012.	2012	X				
Encourage and support the efforts of the City of Cedartown and Polk County to establish a new hospital recommended by Floyd Medical Center on Hwy. 278 between Cedartown and Rockmart. Additionally, maintain and encourage open communication with other healthcare providers to enhance the health, safety, and general welfare of the community.	2013-2016	X				
LAND USE						
No items listed						
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Conduct joint intergovernmental meetings to establish long term vision of service delivery and	2012-2014		X (2020)			Rewritten for 2017 work program

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

City of Rockmart

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
explore the sharing of services and/or the consolidation of services that will promote an enhanced level of service delivery.						
Continue to discuss the importance to achieve like or similar zoning, development regulations and visions especially a distance of 2 to 3 miles from the incorporated limits to the unincorporated limits.	2012-2015		X (2020)			Rewritten for 2017 work program
Update the Service Delivery Strategy.	2016		X (2016)			Rewritten for 2017 work program to say "Maintain"

Aragon Report of Accomplishments

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016						
City of Aragon						
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Continue seeking ways to attract commercial and manufacturing jobs to the city.	2012-2016				X	Routine activity of government
Support implementation of the Appalachian Valley Fiber Network.	2012-2013	X				
HOUSING						
Promote the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	2012-2013			X		City desires more follow-up although Census tracts did not indicate any eligible homes at that time.
Employ a code enforcement officer	2012-2016	X				
Identify properties that require rehabilitation, renovation, or condemnation.	2012-2016		X (2021)			
Utilize zoning and planning for residential growth and economic development.	2012-2016				X	Routine activity of government
TRANSPORTATION						
Implement the Transportation Investment Act of 2010 projects	2013-2016				X	Not approved by voters; Funds not available
Repair sidewalks	2012-2016			X		Lack of funds (CDBG), possible rewrite to make this more specific
Widen and resurface East Second Street and West Aragon Road	2012-2016				X	Lack of funds,
Traffic signals and turn lanes, as appropriate, on SR 101	2012-2016				X	Not a city requirement

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

City of Aragon

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Preservation of Aragon Mill Pond	2012-2016	x				
Aragon Kids' Day activities	2012-2016				X	Not a city-funded activity; Shriner's Club
Annual Aragon Barbecue	2012-2016				X	Not a city-funded activity; Shriner's Club
Promote the "Don't Mess with Aragon" campaign to local citizens.	2012-2016				X	Lack of participation
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Maintain and improve Tom Pittman Field, Jake Belk Field, and Aragon Veterans Park.	2012-2016				X	Routine activity of government. Possible rewrite for more specifics
Renovations to Aragon City Hall	2012-2016	X				
Develop a recycling plan	2012-2016				X	No resource; lack of funding
Implement Adopt-A-Mile Program	2012-2016				X	State no longer implements
Expand and improve water and sewer infrastructure, as needed, to support residential, commercial, and industrial development.	2012-2016				X	Responsibility of County Water Authority
Fire Department service truck	2014-2016				X	Department closed 2014
Fire Department equipment	2014-2016				X	Department closed 2014
Police Department vehicles	2014-2016	X				SPLOST funded
Police Department equipment	2014-2016				X	Ongoing function of government
Public Works dump truck	2014-2016		X (2019)			SPLOST funded
Public Works equipment (chipper; mower; backhoe)	2014-2016		X (2018)			Mower and backhoe have been purchased. Rewrite for work program.
Street/road and stormwater infrastructure repairs	2014-2016				X	Routine maintenance

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2012-2016

City of Aragon

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Removal or rehabilitation of abandoned and sub-standard structures	2014-2016				X	Routine maintenance; possible rewrite of activity
Security system, copier, and office furniture for City Hall	2014-2016	X				
LAND USE						
No items listed						
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Seek consistent Aragon representation on the Polk County Water Authority Board.	2012-2016		X (2021)			
Review mutual aid and automatic aid agreements.	2012-2016				X	Fire Department no longer exists
Update the Service Delivery Strategy	2016		X (2016)			Reword to say "Maintain"

4. Needs and Opportunities

The required SWOT analysis, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, is really a brainstorming exercise. To carry out the exercise, the meeting room was set up with tables for each of the three cities and the county, and stakeholders sat at the table of the government they represented. On the tables were large sheets of paper, one sheet for each of the seven activity categories, (Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, Natural/Cultural Resources, Community Facilities and Services, Land Use, and Intergovernmental Coordination). Each activity category sheet was divided into 4 columns headed by Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. One person at the table was designated the scribe, and the group worked together to generate as many ideas as they could to fill in all the columns. These sheets were collected by the planners at the end of the meeting and the planners developed these ideas into needs and opportunities with possible strategies. The stakeholders had the chance to review these needs and opportunities at the next meeting. The strategies became work program items. In addition, the needs and opportunities from the last plan were shown to the stakeholders so they could comment on whether an issue had been completely solved or had become obsolete. In this way, each government developed its own set of needs and opportunities, although many issues overlapped and planners used similar wording if the issue was the same. For example, in the intergovernmental coordination section, since the governments are supposed to work together, several issues were repeated in each needs and opportunities section.



Figure 15. Rockmart Public Library.

Results of Survey related to Needs and Opportunities

How did the survey results and the issues that the stakeholders raised relate? The survey participants were not randomly selected, so there is probably some overlap in who was a stakeholder and who took the survey, since the planners advertised the survey in the meetings. However, with 250 survey respondents and an average of 22 people at the stakeholder meetings, the survey did capture a wider range of opinions among the general public.

Improving job opportunities was a prominent theme among stakeholders, and in the survey results, 76% of respondents indicated that lack good jobs was something that they did not like about their community (question 4) and in another question, 82% said that more good jobs was a change they would like to see in their community. In the write-in responses to the open-ended Question 15 about what the most important issue facing Polk County was, jobs and economic stagnation were frequently cited. When residents responded in Question 4 about what they did not like, the second biggest issue was lack of local stores and restaurants, and the third biggest issue was too much litter. Litter problems, dilapidated businesses and residences, landfill problems, dumping, and other issues related to the appearance and upkeep of the county were prominent issues mentioned in write-in responses to the question about the

most important issue in the county. There was a strong response to protecting the rural community character in question 4, with 45% of the respondents considering this an important change to be made, and in other parts of the survey respondents wrote that this was important. Other prominent issues were education and illegal drug activity. See Appendix B for the full results of the survey.

Not every issue can be addressed in this planning time-frame. The county and city governments are constrained by finances, staffing, legal requirements, and whether there is enough public interest in an issue to pursue it. For example, extending sewer into the county was brought up by the stakeholders but it is not economically feasible at this time and is not necessary in sparsely populated, agricultural sections of the county. It might even be considered a detriment to preserving agricultural lands. Issues that were brought up by the stakeholders but later deleted from the work programs by managers, for whatever reason, were then removed from the issues and opportunities lists.



Figure 16. Polk County Countryside.

Polk County Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

CODE

- ED1. The low level of educational attainment contributes to a low wage base, which slows our economic development and has led to a 20.6% poverty rate (US Census, ACS 2010-2014 estimates).
Possible solution/strategy: Continue regular quarterly meetings of county and municipalities and Polk County School System to improve communication (see work program under Intergovernmental coordination section).
- ED2. There is limited land for retail development because land is in active agricultural use.
Possible solution/strategy: Rezone for nodal development at key intersections to allow for retail/service opportunities.
- ED3. There are insufficient public funds to stimulate or support retail and tourism economic development.
Possible solution/strategy: Tourism and agritourism in rural areas could create new opportunity (see work program under Natural and Cultural Resources).
- ED4. It is feared that the crime rate will go up, with an increase in illegal activities such as littering and drug use as economic development falters.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Develop projects and educational materials with assistance of Keep Polk Beautiful to raise awareness of litter problems.
 - b. Continue partnership with Drug Task Force (see work program under Natural and Cultural Resources, Community Facilities and Services).
- ED5. There is a need to create development opportunities and programs encouraging infill development, brownfield/greenfield redevelopment.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Support the Development Authority of Polk County with potential industrial sites.
 - b. Continue participation in Blueprint Polk 20/20.

Polk

Housing

CODE

- H1. Single family homes are being used as multifamily dwellings.
Possible solution/strategy: We need to amend zoning and housing codes to protect neighborhoods and avert overcrowding (see work program under Land Use section).
- H2. There is an excess of dilapidated and substandard housing stock, including manufactured homes.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Develop or vigorously enforce nuisance ordinance to improve image and availability of housing stock.
 - b. Code enforcement could be assigned to certified law enforcement.

- H3. Variable water pressure leads to poor ISO ratings in some areas of county.
Possible solution/strategy: Replace water supply pipes and add water tank or pumps for optimal water pressure (see work program under Community Facilities and Services).
- H4. Homeowners threatened by high property crime.
Possible solution/strategy:
a. Expand Neighborhood Watch.
b. Increase law enforcement manpower.
- H5. Lack of affordable housing threatens quality of life for younger people.
Possible solution/strategy: Encourage quality, affordable single family dwellings.

Polk**Transportation****CODE**

- T1. There is inadequate drainage and erosion on some roads.
Possible solution/strategy: Inventory road conditions, prioritize list and schedule maintenance.
- T2. County-wide public transport system, which was funded by a two-year grant, has been cut back to service in Cedartown only.
Possible solution/strategy: Upgrade public transportation availability.
- T3. Trails are proven transportation alternatives with other benefits including recreation, health, and social interaction.
Possible solution/strategy: Support the trail extension from the Silver Comet Trail to Cave Springs.
- T4. The Polk County Airport, Cornelius Moore Field, needs to be better managed.
Possible solution/strategy:
a. Empower an Airport Authority for direct oversight of airport management.
b. Continue Polk County Airport safety improvements.

Polk**Natural/Cultural Resources****CODE**

- NC1. There is no on-going and active education about resource conservation and protection for the public, local elected officials, developers, economic developers, etc.
Possible solution/strategy: Work to improve education through community organizations like Keep Polk Beautiful.
- NC2. There is no art community in the county; county residents must participate in Rockmart's art community or Cedartown's art community.

Possible solution/strategy: Improve services related to the arts in the county and improve coordination with activities in the two towns. We need to enhance and support the art programs of Cedartown and Rockmart for the benefit of tourism and the public good.

- NC3. Litter and debris from the landfill is an eyesore when viewed from the Silver Comet Trail.
Possible solution/strategy:
- Develop plans to screen views of the landfill using tree plantings, fencing, or walls.
 - Improve landfill procedures regarding trash processing and daily cover.
- NC4. Since the landfill instituted tipping fees a few years ago, illegal dumping in the county has become a problem.
Possible solution/strategy: Increase rural patrols, enforce current littering laws and ensure that violators are prosecuted, publish names of violators in paper when prosecuted.
- NC5. Littering may become a problem as economic development falters.
Possible solution/strategy:
- Increase law enforcement presence in areas prone to these problems and enforce litter laws.
 - Ensure that violators are prosecuted. Publish the names of convicted violators and their fines in the newspaper.
 - Work with Keep Polk Beautiful to develop projects and educational opportunities to change local attitudes toward littering.
- NC6. The potential has not been met for the county's natural and cultural resources to yield economic benefits and enhance quality of life for residents.
Possible solution/strategy: Identify, protect and enhance natural and cultural resources for their own sake and for their economic benefits, promoting these resources for outdoor concerts (outdoor amphitheaters), agritourism and the film industry.

Polk

Community Facilities and Services

CODE

- CFS1. County needs updated public works facility.
Possible solution/strategy: Construct public works facility.
- CFS2. County administrative facilities are outdated and inadequate.
Possible solution/strategy: carry out county administrative facility improvements.
- CFS3. Our community does not place infrastructure to direct growth and development toward identified areas and away from sensitive areas.
Possible solution/strategy: Update zoning map and ordinances to preserve the county's land resources (see work program under Land Use).
- CFS4. Low water pressure in area between Rockmart and Antioch is preventing installation of fire hydrants. Water distribution system is inadequate in some parts of the county, preventing

water hydrants.

Possible solution/strategy: Upgrade water system so pipes are sufficient for fire hydrants.

CFS5. Countywide litter problem.

Possible solution/strategy: Increase litter pick-up by maintenance staff, increase patrols, prosecute those that are littering and educate county residents regarding proper trash disposal (see work program under Natural and Cultural Resources).

CFS6. Majority of fire department staff is volunteer.

Possible solution/strategy: Consider creating paid fire department staff gradually as funds become available.

CFS7. County should remain vigilant of the landfill capacity so future waste disposal needs are met and the environment protected. Possible solution/strategy: Educate residents regarding landfill capacity, contract details, and efforts to protect environment (see work program under Natural and Cultural Resources).

CFS8. Recycling options are limited and do not include plastic or glass, and sending these materials to the landfill will further reduce its capacity.

Possible solution/strategy: Expand recycling program to include more types of materials.

CFS9. The county police department is understaffed.

Possible solution/strategy: Consider increasing staffing as funds become available.

CFS10. Aging county courthouses need renovation to better carry out the business of government.

Possible solution/strategy: Determine space needs, plan renovations, identify funding source, such as a new SPLOST, and implement.

CFS11. Need to place infrastructure to guide well-planned new development.

Polk

Land Use

CODE

LU1. Regulations governing signs are uncoordinated and some signs along Route 278 were grandfathered in before zoning rules.

Possible solution/strategy: Unify sign ordinance and consistently regulate sign design and installation.

LU2. Farmland needs to be protected from uncontrolled development.

Possible solution/strategy:

- a. Make sure zoning map reflects the location of prime farmland.
- b. Use zoning to plan and direct development away from prime farmland.
- c. Make sure future development map reflects location of prime farmland.
- d. Use future development map to direct development away from prime farmland.

- e. Preserve the integrity of agricultural properties by making the requirements for buffers fall on the less intense land use when adjacent to agricultural land uses (this prevents undue restrictions on farming).
 - f. Encourage use of conservation easements on farmland to preserve land for future farmers.
- LU3. There is concern over potential unplanned growth along Route 278 especially around the new hospital.
Possible solution/strategy: Designate this area around the new hospital as a new character area called “medical district” on future development map.
- LU4. We can expect medical professionals to locate near the hospital.
Possible solution/strategy: We need a medical park to develop around the hospital on public water /sewer.
- LU5. There is a need for consistent zoning throughout county.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Consider a consolidated zoning ordinance or amendments to achieve compatibility between county and cities.
 - b. Reorganize and update the county zoning ordinance-

Polk**Intergovernmental Coordination****CODE**

- IC1. There is a need to coordinate services throughout county and cities to ensure an efficient and well-run government that serves all the residents.
Possible solution/strategy: Maintain the Service Delivery Strategy in conjunction with municipalities.
- IC2. There is no process in place to ensure consistency with the land use regulations of contiguous governments and our community does not have any border agreements to address detailed questions of land use, access, property value and annexation procedures.
Possible solution/strategy: develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, etc.).
- IC3. Local politics and outside influences can prevent governments from working together. There is a need for better coordination between county and cities.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Continue regular quarterly meetings of county and municipalities.
 - b. Establish a local advisory board of residents that meets with the government to discuss local issues and grants, and develop solutions.

Cedartown Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

CODE

- ED1. The low level of educational attainment contributes to a low wage base, which slows our economic development and has led to a 20.6% poverty rate (US Census, ACS 2010-2014 estimates). The current workforce is not adequately prepared to support vigorous economic development.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Communicate educational needs to Polk County College and Career Academy and NW Georgia Technical College, Polk Campus.
 - b. Encourage stay-in-school programs, provide opportunities to pursue higher education.
- ED2. There is limited land for economic development.
Possible solution/strategy: We need to annex land and extend services to expand growth opportunities. Develop recently purchased two hundred and forty acres addition to industrial park.
- ED3. Infrastructure of city does not adequately support economic development.
Possible solution: We need to bolster water and sewerage infrastructure where it is lacking (see work program in Community Facilities and Services section).
- ED4. The ability of government to keep up with services is threatened.
Possible solution/strategy:
We need to use grants and loans to help provide adequate services.
A SPLOST for infrastructure improvements is beneficial to cover this need (see work program in Intergovernmental Coordination section).
- ED5. Current incentives to attract businesses are not adequate.
Possible solution/strategy: Updated incentive packages may be necessary to compete for economic development projects.
- ED6. There is a lack of downtown retail.
Possible solution/strategy:
We need to promote downtown opportunities for retail, service and offices.
- a. Promote the Downtown Cedartown Association inventory of available spaces at www.downtowncedartown.com under available properties tab with buildings and apartments for rent or sale listed.
 - b. Promote the DCA Downtown Cedartown Association Façade Grant Program.
- ED7. Almost half of the workforce leaves the county to reach their job, plus our wages are lower.
Possible solution/strategy: New development is needed to create employment and a higher wage scale.
- a. Implement 2013 Cedartown Strategic Vision and plan.

- b. Apply for State Department of Community Affairs funds for tourism and marketing.
- c. Continue participation in Blueprint Polk 20/20.

ED8. Road access corridors to the county are limited to state and county routes, slowing economic development.

Possible solution/strategy: Upgrade existing state routes to carry more traffic (see work program under Transportation).

Cedartown

Housing

CODE

- H1. We need consistent enforcement of existing minimum lot sizes by the County. Consistent enforcement would prevent developers from playing the entities against one another.
Possible solution/strategy: Compare and unify lot sizes for all governments.
- H2. Housing options for middle and upper income buyers is lacking.
Possible solution/strategy: Plan and solicit annexation of land for residential growth.
- H3. There is an excess of dilapidated and substandard housing stock.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Develop or enforce nuisance ordinance to improve image and availability of housing stock.
 - b. Removal of substandard housing is beneficial to property values and the public good: Review ways to strengthen legal options to deal with dilapidated and substandard housing stock.
- H4. There is a surplus of rental properties and a lack of homes for purchase.
Possible solution/strategy: We need to evaluate the potential to revitalize or redevelop surplus rental properties. Downtown loft apartments offer an opportunity to live and work downtown.
- H5. Economic instability makes the housing situation difficult for low income families.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Complete new subsidized housing unit.
 - b. Complete Cedartown Housing Authority renovations.
 - c. We need to continue implementation of the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing program (GICH).
 - d. Continue city website improvements to promote Cedartown's GICH involvement and affordable housing programs.

Cedartown

Transportation

CODE

- T1. We need to decide what roads are for traffic flow and what roads are intended for development. There may be a serious disconnect between citizens' ideas and developers'

ideas.

Possible solution/strategy: Prepare a detailed analysis of traffic congestion and signalization on primary corridors.

- T2. The bypass serves the industrial park but also funnels potential consumers away from downtown.

Possible solution/strategy: Develop attractive signage to welcome into the downtown.

- T3. There is insufficient funding for transportation projects.

Possible solution/strategy: A SPLOST can serve funding needs as an alternative to property taxes (see work program in Intergovernmental Coordination section).

Cedartown

Natural/Cultural Resources

CODE

- NCR1. We need to protect and secure all water and natural resource areas for our future.
- NCR2. Encourage green space preservation, to allow sufficient ratio between construction areas and to provide appropriate buffer areas to support green space activity. Possible solution/strategy: Make use of greenspace requirements in new federal housing requirements and redesigned flood zones
- NCR3. Big Springs renovation efforts should continue. Incorporate a multi-cultural committee to examine issues of growth within our diverse community.
Possible solution/strategy: Stabilization of the Big Spring channel and enhancements to Big Spring Park, including nature trail.
- NRC4. Trail of Tears Park, a historic and culturally important site, needs improvement.
Possible solution/strategy: Complete Trail of Tears Park Improvements and continuation of nature trail.

Cedartown

Community Facilities and Services

CODE

- CFS1. Renovations/improvements carried over from previous plan:
- a. Cedartown Waterworks rehabilitation
 - b. Cedartown Waste Water Treatment Plant rehabilitation
 - c. Police department renovations
- CFS2. Upgrade sewer to support economic development.
Areas for upgrades:
- a. Goodyear Mill Village
 - b. South Industrial Park
- CFS3. The Civic Auditorium, a building from the 1970's, is under-used, understaffed, and expensive to

operate, needs renovation, and does not meet the current needs in the downtown.

Possible solution/strategy: Develop a facilities assessment plan to analyze options regarding the facility itself and potential venues for the future.

- CFS4. Downtown needs facilities for training, conferences, receptions, and for coordination of tourism opportunities.

Possible solution/strategy: Build Event Center adjacent to Silver Comet trail in 2016.

- CFS5. The water supply, the Big Spring, needs better interconnectivity

Possible solution/strategy: We need to loop and interconnect water supply lines to improve public health and the efficiency of the system

- CFS6. Recreation facilities and programs are good but could be better.

Possible solution/strategy: We need to expand or improve facilities at several park sites, such as soccer complex at Goodyear Park.

Cedartown

Land Use

CODE

- LU1. There are transition issues between zones.

Possible solution/strategy: We need to review the zoning ordinance to improve buffering requirements between incompatible uses and dissimilar zone districts.

Cedartown

Intergovernmental Coordination

CODE

- IC1. There is no process in place to ensure consistency with the land use regulations of contiguous governments and our community does not have any border agreements to address detailed questions of land use, access, property value and annexation procedures.

Possible solution/strategy: develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, etc.

- IC2. Communication coordination needs improvement and local politics can prevent governments from working together.

Possible solution/strategy:

- a. Continue regular quarterly meetings of county and municipalities and Polk County School System to improve communication.
- b. Work with GICH Advisory Board to discuss housing and economic development issues and develop solutions.

- IC3. Additional service agreements between governments could be considered.

Possible solution/strategy: Update Service Delivery Strategy.

- IC4. Blueprint Polk 20/20 will continue to have City of Cedartown as a participant (see work program Economic Development Section).

Rockmart Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

CODE

- ED1. Special tax districts are useful tools in economic development to boost business in downtown and other commercial corridors.
Possible solution/strategy: Initiate and develop special tax districts to support investment development with the downtown business district and other commercial corridors.
- ED2. Urban Redevelopment Areas and Opportunity Zones are useful tools in economic development.
Possible solution/strategy: Implement and develop plans to support and promote Urban Redevelopment Area and Opportunity Zones.
- ED3. Enterprise Zones are useful tools in economic development.
Possible solution/strategy: Implement and develop plans to support and promote Enterprise Zones.
- ED4. The role of a Downtown Development Authority is helpful in promoted well-managed economic development.
Possible solution/strategy: Consider reestablishment of a Downtown Development Authority.
- ED5. Additional funding sources are useful in economic development and infrastructure needs.
Solution/strategy: Continue to research available new funding sources, including SPLOST, LOST, and Special Service Districts, and user fees as options to property taxes increase (See work program in Intergovernmental Coordination Section).
- ED6. The low level of educational attainment contributes to a low wage base, which slows our economic development and has led to a 20.6% poverty rate (US Census, ACS 2010-2014 estimates). The current workforce is not adequately prepared to support vigorous economic development.
Possible solution/strategy:
- c. Communicate educational needs to Polk County College and Career Academy and NW Georgia Technical College, Polk Campus.
 - d. Encourage stay-in-school programs, provide opportunities to pursue higher education.
 - e. Support online listing of locally available college scholarships to encourage the pursuit of higher education.
- ED7. Industrial properties are in short supply.
Possible solution/strategy: Expand the Rockmart Industrial Park.
- ED8. A sense of apathy among residents hinders economic development.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. A standing citizen advisory committee could help vet local projects.

- b. Increase participation and membership in the chamber of commerce and/or Rockmart Business Alliance.

ED9. We need to promote revitalization of some parts of our community.

Possible solutions/strategy:

- a. The entrances to the city need gateway improvements, such as new or improved signage and landscaping to give a sense of arrival and sense of place. The entrance on Old 278 is especially unattractive.
- b. Promote revitalization so our downtown can look and function better through a façade reimbursement program.
- c. Develop an inventory of vacant buildings for marketing purposes.
- d. Promote opportunities presented by the Silver Comet Trail through the city.

ED10. We need to promote downtown opportunities for retail, service and offices.

Possible solutions/strategy:

- c. Promote the Downtown Cedartown Association inventory of available spaces at www.downtowncedartown.com under available properties tab with buildings and apartments for rent or sale listed.
- d. Promote the DCA Downtown Cedartown Association Façade Grant Program.

ED11. New development is needed to create employment and a higher wage scale.

Possible solutions/strategy: Continue participation in Blueprint Polk 20/20.

Rockmart

Housing

CODE

H1. There is an excess of dilapidated and substandard housing stock.

Possible solution/strategy:

- a. Complete a thorough housing assessment for condition and repair needs.
- b. Work with GICH Program (currently participating), Habitat for Humanity, Brush with Kindness, and Minor Repair Program to repair and replace substandard houses.

H2. There is a high percentage of rental property and options for middle and upper income buyers are limited.

Possible solution/strategy: Evaluate whether regulations are limiting growth for middle and upper income buyers.

H3. There is no longer a homeless shelter in the county.

Possible solution/strategy: Churches and nonprofits can make a homeless shelter part of their mission. Explore ways that government could support this effort.

H4. There is a lack of adequate senior housing.

Possible solution/strategy: Incentivize and support the development of assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

- H5. There is a lack of affordable, good quality single-family housing. Funding is needed to help solve housing problems.
Possible solution/strategy: Use resources of NW Georgia Housing Authority, CDBG and CHIP funding.

Rockmart

Transportation

CODE

- T1. Two roads within city limits need widening and improved traffic flow.
Possible solution/strategy: Support transportation study for widening:
a. Marquette Rd
b. Prospect Rd
- T2. Traffic congestion and street connectivity needs improvement.
Possible solution/strategy: Develop traffic studies to mitigate increasing traffic congestion. Improve street connectivity within and between developments on Highway 278 and Highway 113.
- T3. Traffic signage needs upgrading throughout city.
Possible solution/strategy: Improve traffic/pedestrian signage throughout the city to assist both motorists and pedestrian/bicyclists.
- T4. Sidewalks are aging and need repairs.
Possible solution/strategy: Complete sidewalk rehabilitation/replacement for ADA compliance throughout city.
- T5. Bicycle lanes on streets are lacking.
Possible solution/strategy:
a. Develop a Biking and Pedestrian Plan for city.
b. Develop bicycle lanes in concert with scheduled maintenance on local streets with sufficient width.

Rockmart

Natural/Cultural Resources

CODE

- NC1. There is a need for citizens and the government to be better stewards of water and other natural and cultural resources.
Possible solution/strategy:
a. Develop a water conservation education program for customers of the city water department.
b. Develop local stormwater runoff management ordinance.
- NC2. There is a problem with litter and vandalism.
Possible solution/strategy: Work with Keep Polk Beautiful to develop projects and educational

opportunities to change local attitudes toward littering.

Rockmart

Community Facilities and Services

CODE

- CFS1. Sewer system need expansion and upgrades.
Possible solution/strategy: Implement 2010 Sewer Study by expanding and improving sewer lines throughout the city that have been outdated or are in need of repair to ensure compliance with Federal and State Requirements.
- CFS2. Water storage facilities need maintenance upgrades.
Possible solution/strategy: Inspect, paint, and landscape all Water Storage Facilities that are part of the City's water system.
- CFS3. Outdoor amphitheater would be an asset to recreational facilities.
Possible solution/strategy:
a. Develop plan for outdoor amphitheater for public events.
b. Secure funding to build amphitheater.
- CFS4. Gateway signage needs updates and landscaping.
Possible solution/strategy: Update gateway signage and landscaping as needed to enhance public appeal.
- CFS5. Parks need improvements.
Possible solution/strategy:
a. Nathan Dean Playground (\$125,000 General Fund)
b. Dog park at Nathan Dean Park (\$15,000 private)
c. Silver Comet Trailhead with trail connector at Seaborn Jones Park
- CFS6. Recreation program could serve more people.
Possible solution/strategy: Develop and expand and recreation program.

Rockmart

Land Use

CODE

- LU1. The entrances to the city are unattractive, especially the entrance on Old 278.
Possible solution/strategy: Develop a gateway corridor that might include special overlay district in the zoning regulations with requirements for facades, signage, and landscaping.
- LU2. Buffer compatibility between city and county zoning ordinances needs to be developed.
Possible solution/strategy: Develop agreements between city and county to establish buffers between incompatible uses at the city limits. The Rockmart commercial zone at the city limits is a particular concern.
- LU3. There is a lack of an urban growth ring for Rockmart.
Possible solution/strategy: Plan the future growth boundary for the city for zoning purposes.

- LU4. The sign ordinance needs to be updated.
Possible solution/strategy: Update the sign ordinance.

Rockmart

Intergovernmental Coordination

CODE

- IC1. Although the city and county's visions vary drastically, positive relationships between the city and county prevent excessive conflict over jurisdictional control. We need to maintain mutual aid agreements between all governments dealing with public safety, emergency response, and efficiency.
Possible solution/strategy: Maintain the Service Delivery Strategy in conjunction with county and other municipalities.
- IC2. There is a lack of communication between the school system and the rest of government. We need representatives of each government to meet regularly for consideration of issues and solutions beneficial to all.
Possible solution/strategy: Continue quarterly meetings with the Polk County School System and all local governments to improve communication.
- IC3. There is a need for consistent zoning throughout county. There is no process in place to ensure consistency with the land use regulations of contiguous governments and our community does not have any border agreements to address detailed questions of land use, access, property values and annexation procedures
Possible solution/strategy: develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, etc.).
- IC4. Communication coordination needs improvement and local politics can prevent governments from working together.
Possible solution/strategy: Work with GICH Advisory Board to discuss housing and economic development issues and develop solutions.
- IC5. Counties and cities can work together to use land banks as a useful tool in dealing with tax delinquent, substandard, deteriorating, and foreclosed properties.
Possible solution/strategy: Establish joint land banking authority according to new state guidelines.
- IC6. Blueprint Polk 20/20 will continue to have City of Rockmart as a participant (see work program Economic Development Section).

Aragon Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

CODE

- ED1. The low level of educational attainment contributes to a low wage base, which slows our economic development and has led to a 20.6% poverty rate (US Census, ACS 2010-2014 estimates). The current workforce is not adequately prepared to support vigorous economic development.
Possible solution/strategy:
- f. Communicate educational needs to Polk County College and Career Academy and NW Georgia Technical College, Polk Campus.
 - g. Encourage stay-in-school programs, provide opportunities to pursue higher education.
- ED2. Lack of business opportunities and marketable assets make commercial growth difficult.
Possible solution: We need to redevelop the 70 acre Old Aragon Mill site by removing the remains of the building. Water and sewer are already available there. NSP funds could be used if new project is housing.
- ED3. Our declining and aging population reduces our community investment and involvement.
Possible solution: An assisted living facility is needed for our population.
- ED4. Clear economic development criteria and short and long-term planning is missing from our community.
Possible solution: We need to create a short and long term “to do” list for economic development.
- ED5. There are limited resources for development.
Possible solution: Market the 25 acres of available land next to the new Dollar General as a commercial or mixed use site adjacent to a state highway.
- ED6. Aragon is not a destination.
Possible solution: Develop and publish a list of existing and potential reasons to go to Aragon in terms of recreation, history, culture, business, and industry.
- ED7. Sewer only extends to parts of Aragon now, limiting commercial development.
Possible solution/strategy: Extend existing sewer lines to all of Aragon as a possible CDBG project (see work program under Community Facilities and Services).

Aragon

Housing

CODE

- H1. There is a high percentage of rental property.
Possible solution/strategy: We need new single family homes that encourage home ownership.

- H2. There is a refuse problem around homes.
Possible solution/strategy: Working with new code enforcement officer, enforce existing littering laws and nuisance ordinance and increase law enforcement presence in areas prone to these problems.
- H3. There is an excess of dilapidated and substandard housing stock.
Possible solution/strategy:
- c. Develop or enforce nuisance ordinance to improve image and availability of housing stock.
 - d. Removal of substandard housing is beneficial to property values and the public good.
- H4. Sewer lines do not cover all of city, limiting housing development.
Possible solution/strategy: Extend sewer into all of Aragon (see work program under Community Facilities and Services).
- H5. There is a lack of residential land to develop.
Possible solution/strategy: Annex land for residential development commensurate with the extension of sewerage
- H6. Outside ownership by bank interests and decreasing values without new development threaten the housing situation.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Use Neighborhood Stability Program funds to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed properties in qualifying areas.
 - b. Develop existing residential lots that belong to the city.

Aragon**Transportation****CODE**

- T1. We have sidewalks that need to be repaired.
Repair sidewalks:
- a. Aragon Road
 - b. Elm Street
 - c. Oak Street
 - d. Walnut Street
- T2. Traffic has increased on Highway 101 and there is a need to improve road access to and from the city in terms of traffic flow and pedestrian access.
Possible solution: Highway 101 that serves the city could be upgraded to a 4-lane highway, with consideration to including a traffic signal and pedestrian crossing. Aragon will continue to coordinate with Polk County and GDOT District 6 on facilitating long-term Project #0000406 to widened State Route 101 to a 4-lane highway with consideration to include traffic signal and pedestrian crossing.

- T3. The public transportation system, which was funded by a two-year grant, has been cut back to service in Cedartown only.
Possible solution: Re-establish county-wide public transportation.
- T4. There is a lack of adequate road maintenance funds to keep up residential streets.
Possible solution: Develop a priority list for road repairs and use it to obtain funds from the 2014 SPLOST and Local Maintenance and Improvements Grants (LMIG).

Aragon

Natural/Cultural Resources

CODE

- NCR1. We need to make sure to try to preserve and protect our limited resources. Our open spaces, air, and water quality need to be protected.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Develop a Greenspace inventory of existing and potential greenspace for city ownership or protection by agreement with landowner.
 - b. Implement Georgia Department of Natural Resources' minimum protection standards for groundwater recharge areas and wetlands through changes to zoning or additions to development regulations as development regulations are updated.
- NCR2. The city has a reputation for not having a strong community.
Possible solution/strategy: Empower strong church community and Aragon Historical Society to create events and spaces where community strengths can be nurtured, expanded and displayed.

Aragon

Community Facilities and Services

CODE

- CFS1. City needs renovations to facilities and needs to purchase equipment:
- a. Renovate Community Center
 - b. Renovate old City Barn
 - c. Renovate ball park, concession stand, and playground equipment
 - d. Purchase Public Works dump truck
 - e. Purchase Public Works equipment (chipper)
- CFS2. Stormwater must be managed, sewer needs repairs, and sewer facilities only reach part of community.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Treat stormwater separately from municipal sewage at sewage treatment plant.
 - b. Fix leaking sewer lines throughout city.
 - c. Extend sewer lines to serve all of Aragon.
- CFS3. City needs overall planning for recreational facilities.
Possible solution/strategy:

- a. Prepare Recreation Conceptual Plan as guide for developing parks and recreation projects.
 - b. Prepare Master Plan for development and implementation of identified recreation projects.
- CFS4. Acreage is needed to expand outdoor parks for passive recreation and parking for festivals.
Possible solution: Annex property. Discuss with churches the potential to use church parking lots during festivals (not in work program).
- CFS5. There is a lack of state and federal funding for community facilities.
Possible solution: Explore grant opportunities.
- CFS6. Brand new large Stage @ Aragon needs to be promoted.
Possible solution: Develop a plan to market the Stage @ Aragon for musical performances and other events. It is one of two stages in county that can accommodate a large band. See recreation director's role below.
- CFS7. More events could increase visibility for city and strengthen community pride and spirit.
Possible solution: Hire a recreation director to develop a plan for festival events throughout the year. Recreation director could be shared with Rockmart.
- CFS8. New property needs to be developed as a park.
Possible solution/strategy: Develop property as park location for outdoor stage, passive recreation and parking for festivals.

Aragon**Land Use****CODE**

- LU1. There is a lack of available land for any future planning.
Possible solution: We need to market the city to encourage annexation (see work program under Housing).

Aragon**Intergovernmental Coordination****CODE**

- IC1. Additional service agreements between governments could be considered.
Possible solution/strategy: Update Service Delivery Strategy.
- IC2. Communication coordination needs improvement and local politics can prevent governments from working together.
Possible solution/strategy:
 - a. Continue regular quarterly meetings of county and municipalities and Polk County School System to improve communication.
 - b. Seek consistent Aragon representation on the Polk County Water Authority Board.
- IC3. There is no process in place to ensure consistency with the land use regulations of contiguous governments and our community does not have any border agreements

to address detailed questions of land use, access, property value and annexation procedures.

Possible solution/strategy: develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, etc.).

- IC4. Blueprint Polk 20/20 will continue to have City of Aragon as a participant.
- IC5. State and Federal funding sources are difficult for small cities to obtain.
Possible solution: Inform local leaders of opportunities through workshops, webinars, and regional meetings. Work closely with NWGRC to identify opportunities for grants and loans.
- IC6. Local elected officials need to be involved in the planning process.
Possible solution/strategy:
- a. Elected officials need to expand their roles in city government.
 - b. Subcommittees of the council allow specialization and expanded knowledge.
 - c. Recommend quarterly town hall meetings.
- IC7. Tax revenues are insufficient to coordinate governments.
Possible solution/strategy: Explore new funding sources, including SPLOST, and LOST, special service district, user fees, etc.

5. Future Development Guide: Mapping the Future

This section of the *Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan, 2017-2027* covering Land Use is required because each government in Polk County has zoning laws. The county and cities chose to use character areas and future development maps in the last full plan cycle, which resulted in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. This character area policy was brought forward in this plan with some changes and updates.

Character area planning combines form and function to define distinct areas in a community and move the community toward its vision. The goal is to identify overall patterns of development, not just individual land uses on a lot-by-lot basis. A character area has unique characteristics, holds potential to develop into a unique area when given planning and guidance, or must be cared for in special ways because of its particular development issues. Character area planning gives consideration to geographical features, like floodplains and existing greenspace, when planning future development.

The Transect Model was used to revise the Polk County character areas. In this model, character areas run the gamut from the least developed, most natural area, to the most developed areas, which are urban areas. Future development maps graphically guide managers in planning commercial, industrial, residential, and recreational development with the geography and existing land uses in mind.

Development Categories

The Development Categories describe generalized development patterns ranging from completely natural areas to urban areas. Each category incorporates different types and scales of natural and built features. Development Categories are shown in the diagram below and summarized in the table that follows. This is how the Polk County character areas are now arranged.

Summary of Development Categories

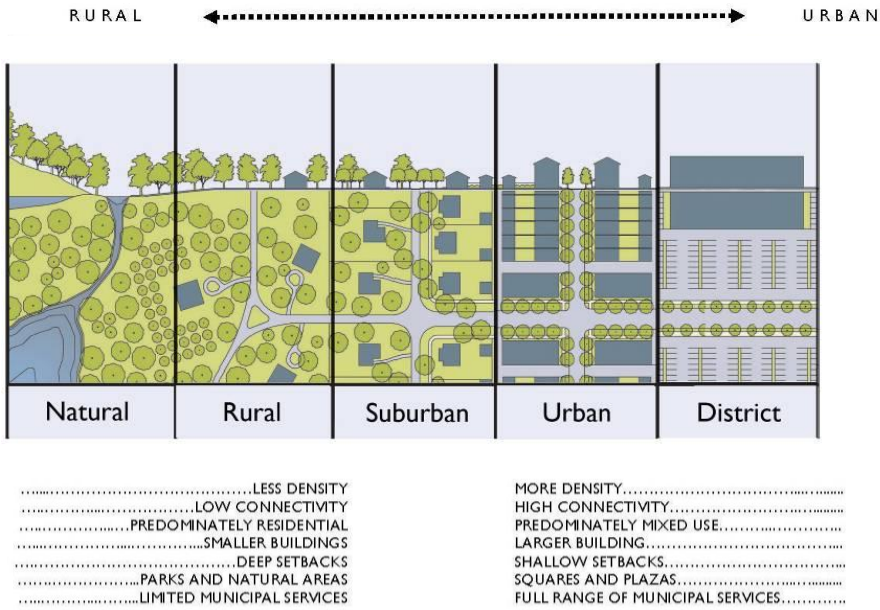


Image courtesy of Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company

<i>Development Category</i>	<i>Summary</i>
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas in a natural state or that should be preserved because of their environmental sensitivity and function. Land includes floodplains, prime agricultural land, groundwater recharge areas and steep slopes.
Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important land to preserve and enhance community's rural lifestyle, agricultural land and natural areas. Areas defined by agricultural uses and low density residential and rural commercial uses.
Suburban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas that represent a transition from natural/rural areas to urban areas. Important to enhance access to urban amenities such as jobs, retail services and public services.
Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important areas to enhance and create quality, walkable communities with residential and non-residential uses in close proximity to one another. High degree of connectivity, density and intensity of development. Characterized by compact, walkable development typical of town centers.
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characterized by compact, walkable development typical of central business districts Districts represent areas that do not fit within the specific categories listed above. Examples often include industrial parks, office parks, colleges and universities and other large-scale single-focused areas.

Character Area Policy

City and county zoning incorporates a zoning map and a written ordinance dividing the land into zoning

districts which may include different types of residential, commercial, and industrial districts. The zoning regulations found in the ordinance determine what land uses and activities are permitted in each district, and also regulate how features like buildings, and signs may be placed on a lot. The zoning regulations also provide procedures for changing the zoning classification of a property and other planning applications.

The zoning map and zoning regulations provide owners of properties in the zoning jurisdictions of Polk County and its cities with certain rights to development, while the comprehensive plan's future development maps help guide the future development of property. The future development maps and character area policy should be used as a guide for future rezoning decisions undertaken by each jurisdiction.

The character area policy is found in the following descriptions of each character area and the accompanying future development maps for the county and each city. The character areas fit with the Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals shown above, and the work program that follows this section. The following elements are included in each character area to help officials and zoning board members as they manage land use and carry out the vision put forth in the plan.

- Description includes what the area looks like and what it is used for, and the development category it would fall into, on a continuum from the most natural areas to the most developed.
- Implementation measures include ways to maintain, improve, or restore the area to its desired character.
- Land use: appropriate ways this area could be used without degrading its character or creating conflict among the people that live on the land and use it.
- Photographs of examples of the character area, providing a visual reference point for that area.

The character areas were updated to simplify them and make them more consistent throughout the county. This allowed planners to reduce the number of areas to sixteen character areas, three of which describe linear corridors. The rate of development in the county has not been rapid over the last ten years, probably because of the economic downturn, so there was not a need to add many new categories. The only completely new character area was the Medical Center District, comprising the new Polk Medical Center and land surrounding it on Highway 278 between Cedartown and Rockmart. The old character area "Linear Greenspace, Parks Recreation" has been split into "Greenspace/Conservation" and "Greenspace/recreational" to distinguish between how intensely the landscape has been altered. Greenspace/Conservation describes areas like the state Wildlife Management Areas and floodplains that will remain relatively undeveloped or be restored to a natural state to control flood damage. Greenspace/Recreation describes developed outdoor spaces such as parks and ball fields with amenities like paved roads, restrooms, concession stands, and pavilions.

On the maps, areas of future suburban growth were extended compared to the 2007 maps. Areas of rural residential growth were extended around the crossroads communities of Esom Hill, Young's Valley, Antioch, Fish Creek, and Browning. These areas were local commercial and social centers in the pre-automobile, agricultural era. Esom Hill has a colorful history because its remote location on the Alabama/Georgia border made it an ideal center for the boot-legging trade during Prohibition. These

crossroads communities still serve as areas where residences, churches, and convenience stores, and other small businesses are clustered. The floodplains were added to the maps in the Greenspace/Conservation category. The floodplains shown are based on FEMA maps of the 100-year floodplain (Zones A and AE). The maps reflect recent additions to the industrial areas around Cedartown. Commercial and office areas have been extended to anticipate development near cities. In Aragon, the houses built by Aragon Mill at the turn of last century are now designated “Mill Village” in keeping with their uniform age and construction and history. Rockmart has added proposed locations of gateway signage on major corridors into the city and a Utility Service Boundary to show how far out the city’s water and sewer service will be extended if requests are made to extend it to future developments.

The scenic corridors, commercial corridors, and the Silver Comet Trail corridors have not been changed but each trailhead of the Silver Comet Trail is labeled with a green circle as Greenspace/Recreation on the Polk County map. The proposed path of the bike trail extension to Cave Springs has been added in the northwest quarter of the county.

Character Area Descriptions

Future Development Map Character Areas

Character Area: Greenspace/conservation

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Undeveloped natural lands and environmentally sensitive area not suitable for development, such as scenic views, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas and other environmentally sensitive areas. These areas are in the natural development category.

Implementation Measures:

Maintain natural, rural character by:

- Not allowing any new development
- Promoting use of conservation easements
- Widen roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary.
- Carefully design the roadway alteration to minimize visual impact
- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations, and as ownership allows, hunting and fishing access.

Land uses:

passive recreation, parks, conservation areas, easements, and set-asides to protect the natural character of the site and its role in enhancing water and air quality, and providing breeding and migration space for wildlife, and in some cases, public hunting and fishing access.



Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area



Stream with riparian vegetation

Future Development Map Character Areas

Character Area: Greenspace/ recreational

Found in: Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Description: natural areas developed for recreation, with amenities such as ball fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, camping areas, public outdoor pools, bike trailheads, skateboard parks, and outdoor amphitheatres. Could be located in rural, suburban, or urban areas.

Implementation Measures:

- Develop connectivity between recreation areas and other destinations such as schools, neighborhoods, and city centers using sidewalks and bike and foot trails.
- Gauge parking availability and traffic congestion during events
- Signage for pedestrian and bike safety
- Public investment: park maintenance, police patrols
- Maintain open space

Land uses:

Passive and active recreation, flood management.



Seaborn Jones Park in Rockmart



Baseball Fields

Future Development Map Character Areas

Character Area: Agricultural/Forest

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County

Description:

Lands in open or cultivated state or sparsely settled, woods, farms, pine plantations. These areas could be in the natural or rural development category

Implementation Measures:

- More detailed sub-area planning
- New or revised local development regulations: restrict commercial and residential development to protect farmland and open space. Require cluster or conservation subdivision design, architecture that maintains rural character
- Promote use of conservation easements
- Widen roadways only when necessary
- Carefully design the roadway alteration to minimize visual impact
- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism, recreation
- Establish development nodes
- Infrastructure improvements: use utility siting to control growth

Land uses:

agriculture, forestry, limited subdivisions, commercial, and industrial development



Pastureland, Polk County



Forest, Hardwoods and Pine

Future Development Map Character Areas**Character Area:** Rural Residential**Found in:** Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon**Description:**

Rural, undeveloped land likely to face development pressures for lower density (one unit per two+ acres) residential development. Typically will have low pedestrian orientation and access, very large lots, open space, pastoral views, high degree of building separation.

Implementation Measures:

- Preserve rural features and limit residential development
- New or revised local development regulations: Require preservation of open space, trees, limit commercial and residential development
- Public Investments: Public parks and greenspace/ trails to connect Residential and small stores
- Infrastructure Improvements: Improve water and sewer, extend where practicable
- Maintain rural atmosphere with new residential development by:
 - Permitting rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporate significant amounts of open space.
 - Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain regional rural character, without “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
 - Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.
 - Can be designed for greater pedestrian orientation and access, more character with attractive clustering of buildings

Land uses:

Residential, Limited Commercial, Agricultural

*Rural Residential**Rural Residential*

Future Development Map Character Areas

Character Area: Crossroad Community

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County

Description:

Historic Communities, Unincorporated, at Intersection of Main Thoroughfares. They are in the rural development category.

Implementation Measures:

- Use Traditional Neighborhood Development principles, encourage commercial development in nodes
- Public Investments: Beautification projects, signage
- Similar development strategies and policies as for Rural Residential

Land uses:

Agricultural, Agribusiness, Rural Residential, Commercial



Fish Creek Community

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. *Character Area:* Suburban Residential

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Area where typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred. Are within proximity to a public water network. Low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, high open space, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential. Post- WWII. These areas are in the suburban development category.

Implementation Measures:

- Use traditional Neighborhood Development principles
- New or revised local development regulations: Streetscape requirements
- Incentives: For infill, rehabilitation
- Public Investments: Beautification projects
- Infrastructure Improvements: Public technology, transit
- Retrofit to meet traditional neighborhood development principles.
- Creating walkable neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, commercial activity centers at suitable locations
- Use traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, interconnections
- Accessory housing units, or new well-designed, small-scale infill multifamily residences to increase density and income diversity



Suburban Residential



Suburban Residential

Land uses:

Residential, Light Commercial

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. Character Area: Mixed Residential

Found in: Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Area includes single family and multifamily housing, mostly post World War II, some areas with sidewalks and some without, may have low to moderate degree of building separation, and may include some light commercial development. These areas are in the urban development category.

Implementation Measures:

- Retrofit to meet traditional neighborhood development principles, apply streetscape requirements, regulate number of people per unit, apply uniform building code
- Incentives: for infill, rehabilitation, open space
- Public Investments, Beautification projects, pocket parks
- Infrastructure Improvements: Public technology, transit, connect to parks and trails
- Create walkable neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, commercial activity centers at suitable locations
- Use traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, interconnections

Land uses:

Residential, Light Commercial



Mixed Residential Aragon



Mixed Residential Cedartown

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. *Character Area:* Traditional Neighborhood

Found in: Cedartown, Rockmart

Description:

Residential area in older part of the community typically developed before World War II. Characteristics include high pedestrian orientation, sidewalks, treat trees, on-street parking, small, regular lots, limited open space, building close to or at the front property line, predominance of alleys; low degree of building separation; neighborhood-scale businesses scattered throughout the area. These areas are in the urban development category.

Implementation Measures:

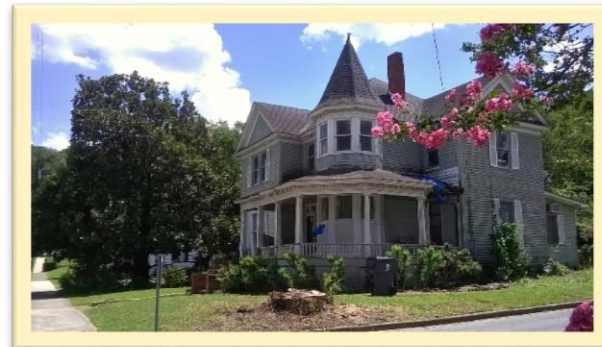
- Preserve traditional and historic features while adapting for current use
- New or revised local development regulations: preservation, rehabilitation, infill guidelines and emphasis
- Incentives: tax incentives or variances
- Public Investments: sidewalks, beautification projects, pocket parks
- Infrastructure Improvements: improve existing water and sewer, provide high speed internet, transit
- Reinforce stability by encouraging homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties.
- Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing.
- Include well-designed new neighborhood activity center at appropriate locations, which would provide a focal point
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections for residents

Land uses:

residential, light commercial



Traditional Neighborhood Rockmart



Traditional Neighborhood Cedartown

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. Character Area: Mill Village

Found in: Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Group of houses constructed around a factory or ‘mill’ in the early 1900’s for factory workers. The houses were built by the mill company, so their design, construction materials, and age was remarkably similar or even identical in the original state. Remodeling over many years may hide original features. The mill is no longer open and the houses have passed into individual ownership. Development includes sidewalks, uniform lot sizes, and small lots. In addition to the homes, the area may include other features, and landmarks of historic interest. Civic and cultural uses of the area may have historic roots stretching back to the days when the mill was running. These areas are in the urban development category.

Implementation Measures:

- Heritage-based planning, including protecting historic properties from demolition. Encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic places designation, tied to eligibility for tax incentive programs.
- New or revised local development regulations: streetscape requirements
- Incentives: variances granted for infill, preservation/ free Wi-Fi access
- Public Investments: beautification projects, create/ Empower Historic Preservation Commission
- Infrastructure Improvements: public technology, transit
- Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/ restored (see Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation).
- New development should fit historic scale and architectural design
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided
- Linkages to regional greenspace/ trail system

Land uses:

Residential



Mill Village Aragon



Mill Village Rockmart

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. Character Area: Downtown Historic District

Found in: Cedartown, Rockmart

Description:

Commercial area in city center with mainly attached buildings on a grid with no setbacks except for sidewalks. Many of the buildings date from the late 1800's to the early 1900's. Businesses include general retail, service commercial, and professional office. Both the downtowns of Cedartown and Rockmart are on the National Register of Historic Places. This is a district with unique characteristics and compact, walkable design.

Implementation Measures:

- Heritage-based planning, including protecting historic properties from demolition. Encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives. Buildings on the National Registry of Historic Places are tied to eligibility for tax incentive programs.
- New or revised local development regulations: streetscape requirements
- Incentives: variances granted for infill, preservation/ free Wi-Fi access
- Public Investments: beautification projects, create/ Empower Historic Preservation Commission
- Infrastructure Improvements: public technology, transit
- Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/ restored (see Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation).
- New development should fit historic scale and architectural design
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided

Linkages to regional greenspace/ trail system

Land uses:

Commercial, Residential



Downtown Historic District Cedartown



Downtown Historic District Rockmart

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. Character Area: Commercial and Office

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Includes strip malls, big-box retail, auto-related businesses, restaurants, convenience stores, and offices. Characterized by high degree of access by vehicular traffic, on-site parking, low degree of open space, and moderate floor-area ratio. These areas could be in the suburban or urban development category.

Implementation Measures:

- Restrict area to be developed commercially
- New or revised local development regulations: building design requirements – landscaping etc.
- Uniform building code county-wide
- Incentives: Developer variances for preserving trees, using pervious asphalt
- Public Investments: law enforcement to patrol areas of open space, trails that connect commercial with residential

- Infrastructure Improvements: maintain stormwater drains
- Retro-fit unattractive or vacant buildings by:
 - a. Creating a shopping “square” around a smaller internal parking lot.
 - b. Upgrading appearance of existing older commercial buildings
 - c. Reconfiguring parking lot and circulation routes for automobiles.
 - d. Providing pedestrian and bicycling amenities
 - e. Adding landscaping, trees in parking lots for shade, runoff control.
 - f. Pervious paving, buffers, mixed use

Land uses:

Commercial, Office



Commercial and Office Cedartown



Commercial and Office Aragon

Future Development Map Character Areas

Character Area: Industrial

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Land used in higher intensity manufacturing, assembly, processing activities. May include manufacturing activities whose noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics are not contained on-site. These areas could be in the rural, suburban, or urban development category.

Implementation Measures:

- Use industrial and small industry parks; have mix of small and large industry
- New or revised local development regulations: Require percentage of open space on site
- Uniform building code county-wide
- Incentives: Tax breaks for incubators and small business for reuse and site cleanup
- Public Investments: Install high-speed internet, provide alternative access roads
- Infrastructure Improvements: Maintain and upgrade roads, install traffic lights, improve sewer/water
- Encourage greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

Land uses:

Industrial



Industrial Rockmart



Industrial Rockmart

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. *Character Area:* Medical Center District

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown

Description:

Area where the hospital and related facilities are located, including doctors' offices, rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and pharmacies. Restaurants for the convenience of employees and clients are also included. This is a district with unique characteristics and potential for walkability.

Implementation Measures:

- New or revised local development regulations: building design requirements – landscaping, open space between buildings to buffer negative visual and noise impacts from hospital.
- Uniform building code county-wide
- Incentives: developer variances for preserving trees, using pervious asphalt
- Infrastructure Improvements: Maintain stormwater drains
- Encourage extensive pedestrian circulation system that makes walking convenient
- Landscaped islands in parking lots
- Moderate vehicular connectivity with curvilinear and linear streets and generous to moderate distance between intersections.

Land uses:

hospital and related facilities and businesses, senior housing, special needs housing, guest lodging for families of hospital patients



Polk Medical Center, Cedartown

Future Development Map Character Areas-Linear Elements

1. *Character Area:* Silver Comet Trail

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart

Description:

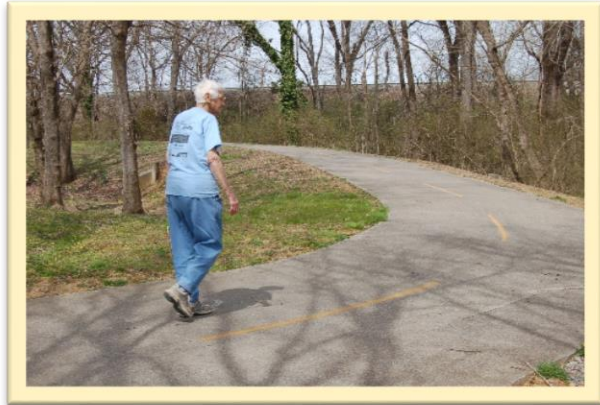
Paved bicycle and pedestrian path crossing the county from east to west with public access at several trailheads across the county and in Rockmart and Cedartown. This trail is found in rural, suburban, and urban development categories.

Implementation Measures:

- Study ways to linking Silver Comet Trail into community bike/pedestrian networks;
- Pursue plans to extend paved bike route off of Silver Comet Trail to Cave Springs
- Set aside land for pedestrian and bicycle connections between schools, churches, recreation areas, city centers, residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Land uses:

Recreation



Walking on Silver Comet Trail



Silver Comet Trail, Rockmart

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. Character Area: Scenic Corridor

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of the major thoroughfares of the county that has significant natural, historic, or cultural features, and scenic or pastoral views. This corridor is found in the rural development category.

Implementation Measures:

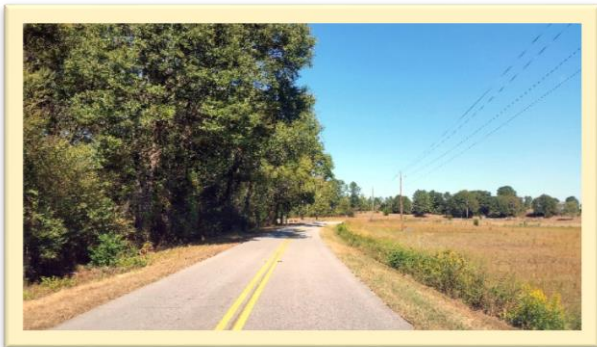
- Consider conducting historical assessments
- New or revised local development regulations: tree conservation
- Public Investments: beautification projects
- Infrastructure Improvements: planning pedestrian and bike trails beyond traffic barriers Establish guidelines on development to protect the characteristics deemed to have scenic value.
- Guidelines for new development that enhances the scenic value of the corridor and addresses landscaping, architectural design.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to clustered developments.
- Provide pedestrian linkages to residential or commercial districts.
- Limited widening of roadway

Land uses:

Agricultural and Rural Residential, greenspace preservation, infill development within close proximity to cities, tourist businesses



Cave Spring Road



Fish Cr Road at Collard Valley Road

Future Development Map Character Areas

1. *Character Area:* Major Highway Corridor

Found in: Unincorporated Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Description:

Developed or undeveloped land on both sides of designated high-volume arterial roads and highways. This corridor is found in the rural, suburban, and urban development categories.

Implementation Measures:

- Use traffic studies to help in transportation planning
- New or revised local development regulations: restrict billboards, restrict exits off main roads & use existing access roads.
- Public Investments: beautification projects,
- Infrastructure Improvements: plan pedestrian and bike trails beyond traffic barriers
- Maintain a natural vegetation buffer (at least 50 feet in width).
- All new development should be set-back behind this buffer, with alternate access roads, shared driveways or inter-parcel roads
- Encourage landscaped, raised medians.
- Provide pedestrian facilities behind drainage ditches or curb.
- Provide paved shoulders for bike lanes or emergency lanes.
- Coordinate land uses, bike/pedestrian facilities w/ transit stops.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signs.
- Unacceptable uses: new billboards.

Land uses:

Industrial, Commercial, Subdivisions

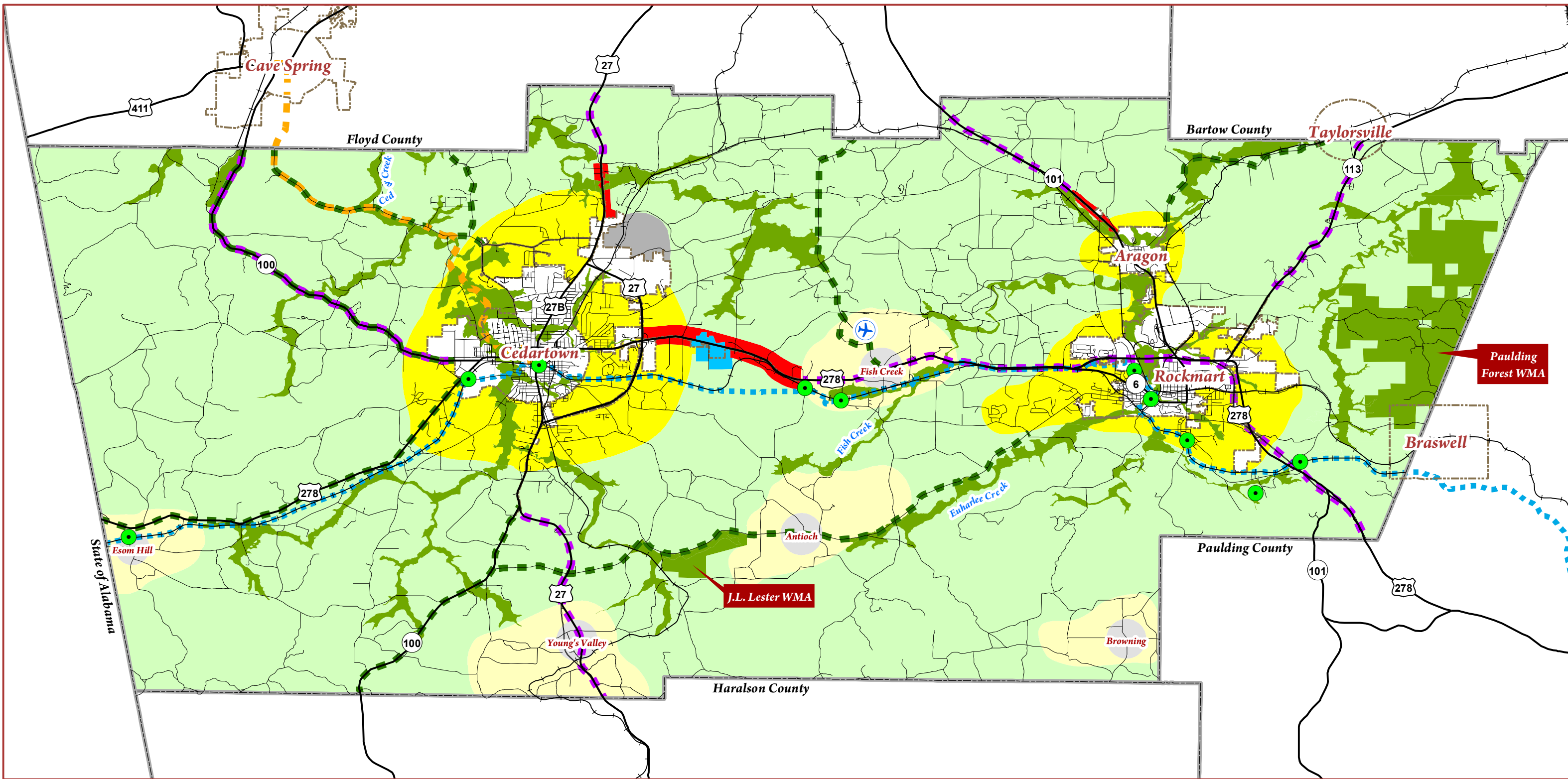


Highway 278 Rockmart

Future Development Maps

The future development maps are found on the following pages for Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart and Aragon.

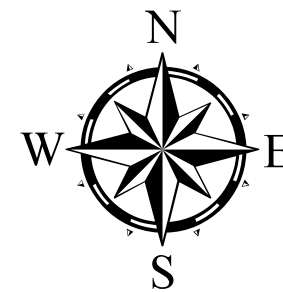
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Future Development Map - Polk County, GA

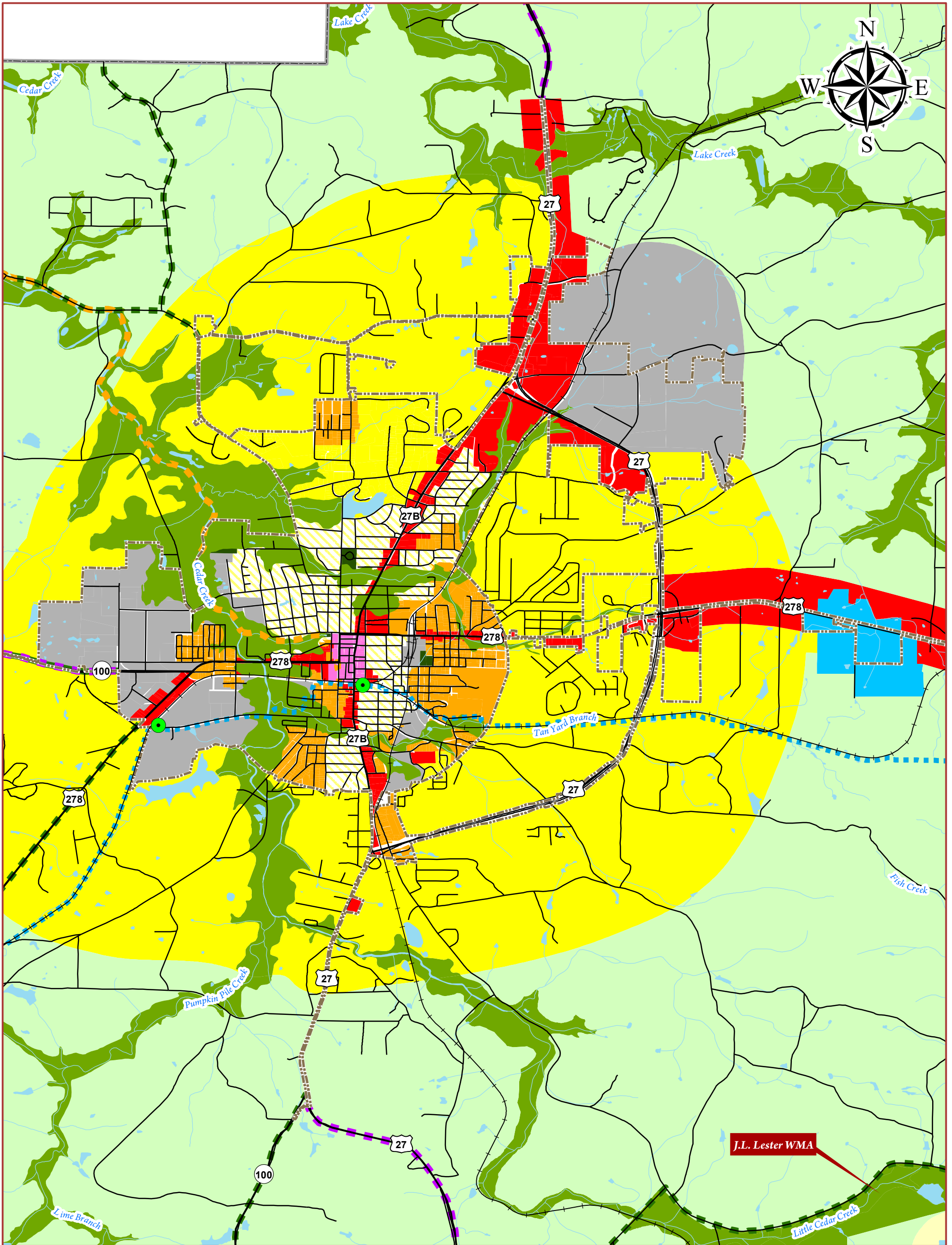
1 in = 2 miles

- | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| City Limits | Commercial & Office | Industrial | Suburban Residential | Major Highway Corridor |
| Character Areas | Crossroad Community | Medical Center | Greenspace/Recreation | Scenic Corridor |
| Agricultural/Forest | Greenspace/Conservation | Rural Residential | Silver Comet Trail | Cave Spring Bike Trail Extension |

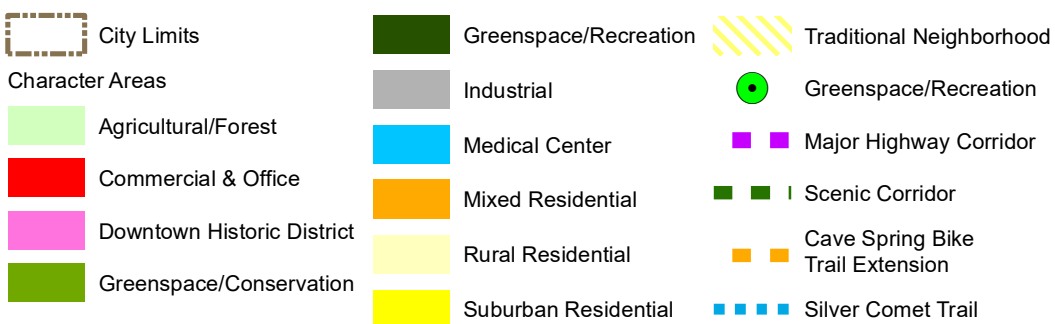


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July 2016



Future Development Map - Cedartown, GA



1 in = 3,750 feet



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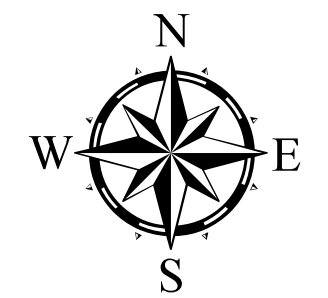
August 2016

Future Development Map Rockmart, GA

 City Limits

Character Areas

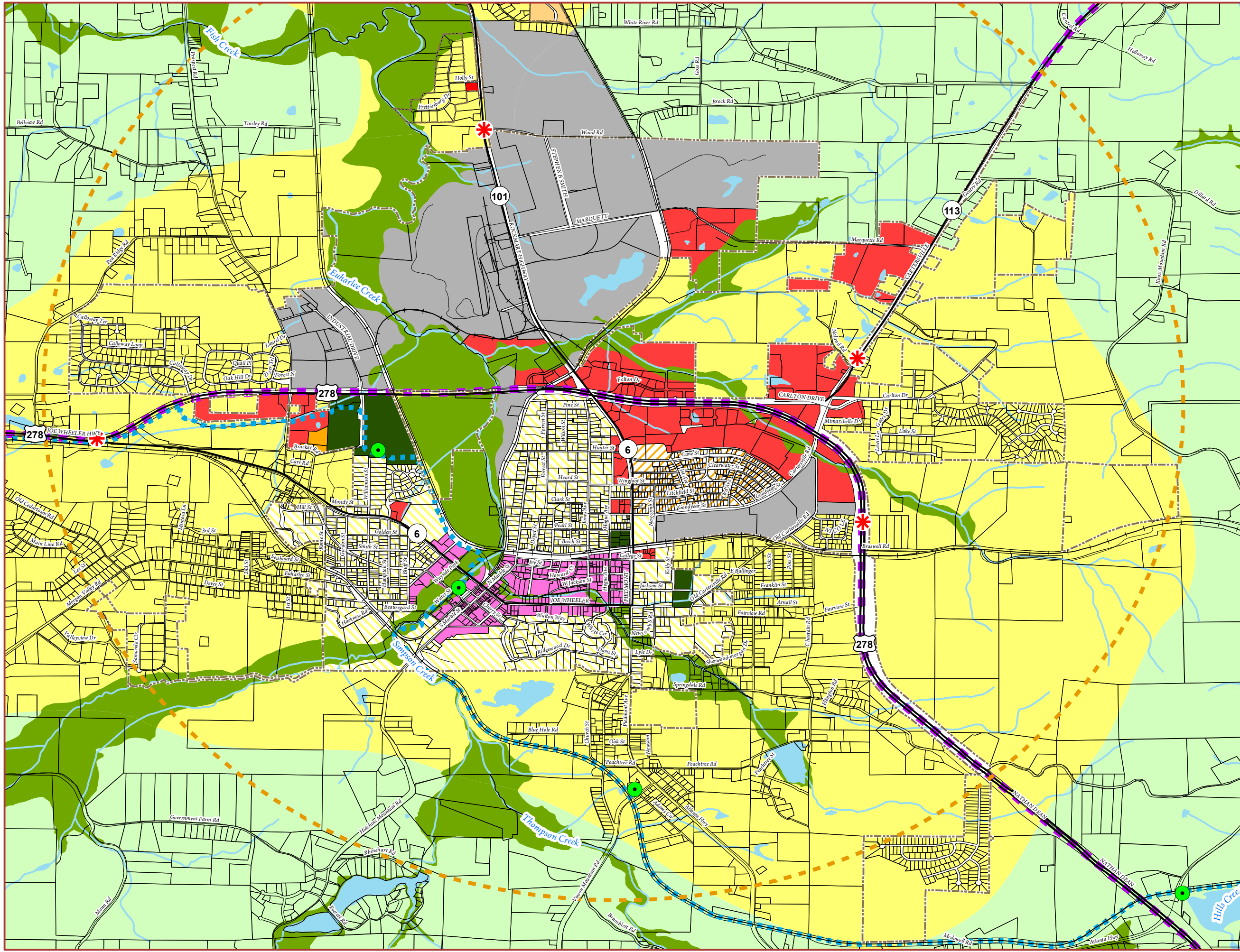
-  Agricultural/Forest
-  Commercial & Office
-  Downtown Historic District
-  Greenspace/Conservation
-  Greenspace/Recreation
-  Industrial
-  Mill Village
-  Mixed Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Traditional Neighborhood
-  Major Highway Corridor
-  Silver Comet Trail
-  Gateway Signage
-  Greenspace/Recreation
-  Utility Service Boundary

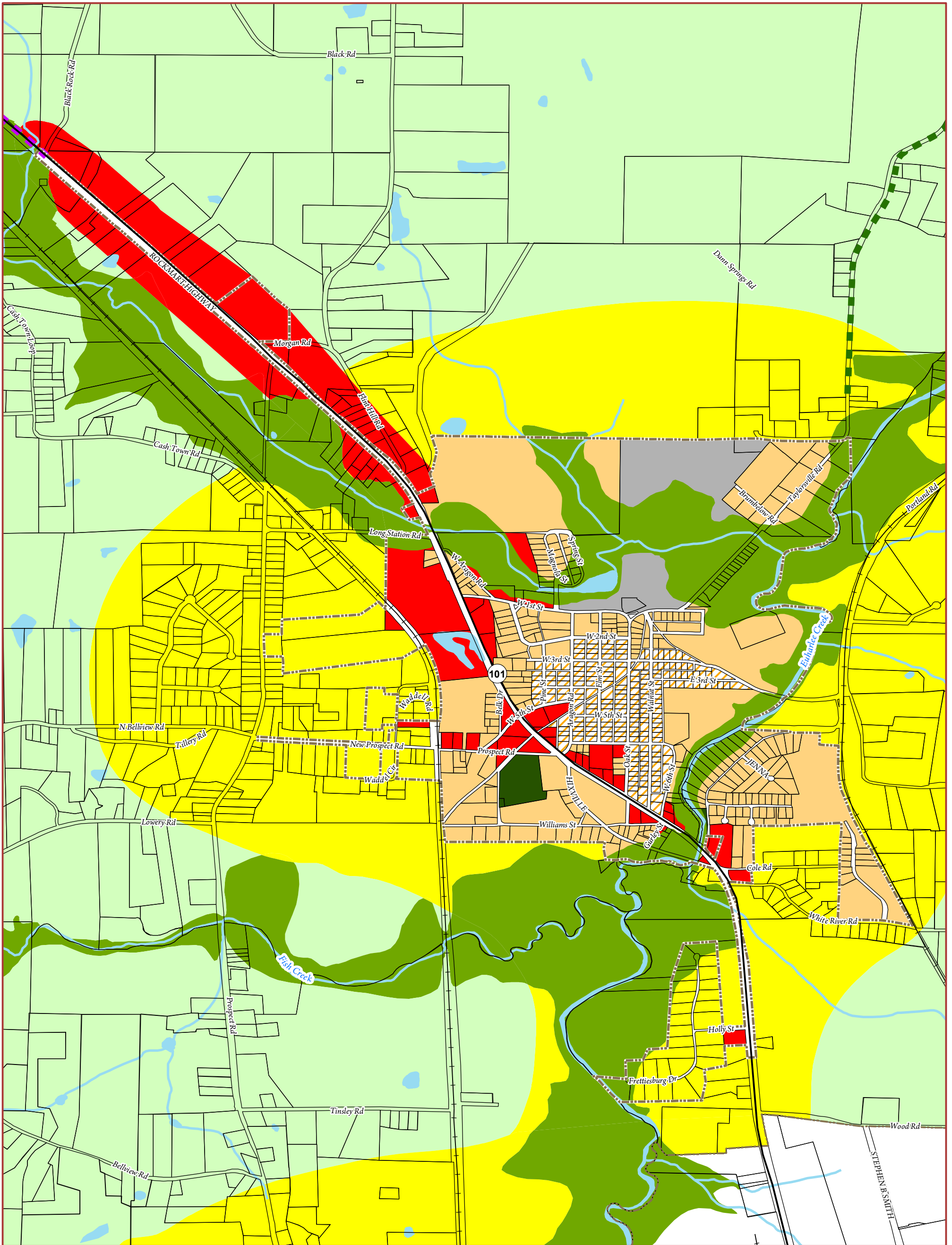


1 in = 2,250 feet

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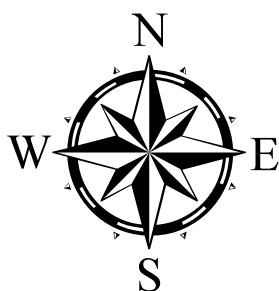
© August 2016





Future Development Map - Aragon, GA

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| City Limits | Greenspace/Recreational |
| Character Areas | Mill Village |
| Agricultural/Forest | Residential |
| Commercial & Office | Major Highway Corridor |
| Greenspace/Conservation | Scenic Corridor |
| Suburban Residential | |



1 in = 1,250 feet



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August 2016

6. Future Progress: Community Work Programs

The Community Work Programs represent a list of specific jobs that the governments are willing to consider accomplishing. Developing the work program from needs and opportunities lists helps to lead the residents and managers from general ideas about problems to specific actions to solve them. It is not a contract or binding document, since many items that go on the list depend on funding that has not yet been obtained. Using the possible strategies from the Needs and Opportunities, planners created work program tables. The stakeholders and the managers then reviewed these work programs. The managers had the final say in the process, because they are appointed by the elected officials to run the government. In the case of Aragon, which does not have a city manager, the mayor and other elected officials had the final say. The managers deleted some of the items based on funding, staffing, overall public interest level (a project might be supported by a single person or small group and has not achieved enough momentum to go forward yet) or legal issues. Sometimes an item is eliminated because it is a routine activity of government, but sometimes an activity that is routine is left in to demonstrate to the public that the government is making a good faith effort in that sphere. If a work program item was deleted by the managers, the planners deleted it from the needs and opportunities section as well.



Figure 21. Cedartown Industrial Park.

In the tables below, items in green were carried forward from the last work program covering the years 2012-2016. The code in the first column can be used to trace that item back to the needs and opportunities lists, which have been numbered for each municipality. There follows a short description of the project, then an estimated time table, a cost estimate, a funding source, and the responsible party, which is the entity charged with carrying out the work. Once again it should be noted that this is a list to guide the efforts of the government, not a binding contract.

Polk County Community Work Program

POLK COUNTY COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ED	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED 2	Rezone for nodal development at key intersections to allow for retail/service opportunities	X					\$1,000	General fund	Polk County
ED 5	Support the Development Authority of Polk County with potential industrial sites.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1 million	SPLOST	Polk County
ED5	Continue participation in Blueprint Polk 20/20	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk Co, Cedartown, Chamber of Commerce
H	HOUSING								
H1,H5	Encourage quality, affordable single-family housing options.	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000	General fund	Polk County
H2	Improve ordinance to address removal of blighted structures in unincorporated areas.	X	X				\$1,000	General fund	Polk County
H2	Remove blighted structures in unincorporated areas.	X	X	X	X	X	\$10,000	General fund	Polk County
H4	Expand Neighborhood Watch and increase law enforcement manpower	X	X	X			\$40,000	General fund	Polk County
T	TRANSPORTATION								
T1	Repair and replace drainage culverts and bridges throughout unincorporated areas	X	X	X	X	X	\$2 million	SPLOST	Polk County
T1	Inventory road conditions for resurfacing shoulder and erosion problems	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000	General fund	Polk County

POLK COUNTY									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
T2	Explore options to provide public transit service in unincorporated Polk County		X	X			\$40,000	GDOT, grant funds	Polk County
T3, ED3	Build the trail extension from the Silver Comet Trail to Cave Springs: Cedartown to Polk County Line, Phases 3:\$1.9 million and Phase 4: \$3.5 million.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5.4 million	GDOT; grant funds	GDOT; Polk Co, Cedartown
T4	Continue Polk County Airport safety improvements	X	X	X	X	X	\$1 million	General fund, SPLOST, state, federal	Polk County
NC	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NC1,NC4 NC5 NC6	To help control littering, increase rural patrols, enforce current littering laws, publish names of violators in paper when prosecuted	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000/yr	General fund	Polk County
NC1, NC3,NC5 ED4, CFS5	Support Keep Polk Beautiful to develop projects and educational opportunities to reduce littering	X	X	X	X	X	\$14,000/yr	General fund	Polk County
NC2,NC6 ED3	Contribute to the arts and art activities with support of festivals and public art displays.	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000	General fund	Polk County
NC3, CFS7	Explore options to screen views of the landfill from the Silver Comet Trail and other public views.		X				\$2,500	General fund	Polk County
NC3,NC6 CFS7	Work toward improved landfill procedures regarding trash processing.	X					\$1,500	General fund	Polk County
NC6, ED3	Explore options for developing Hendrix Road property (adjacent to the Silver Comet Trail) with public/private partnership for recreation		X	X	X		\$5,000	SPLOST; private funding	Polk County; private/public partnership

POLK COUNTY									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CF	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CFS1	Construct county public works facility (CIP)	X					\$2.7 million	General fund	Polk County
CFS2	County administrative facility improvements	X					\$1 million	SPLOST	Polk County
H3, CFS4, CFS11	Encourage Polk County Water, Sewage, and Solid Waste Authority to upgrade water system so pipes are sufficient for fire hydrants between Rockmart and Antioch and other areas of the county.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk County; Polk Co Water, Sewerage, and Solid Waste Authority
CFS6	Explore options for developing paid fire department	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk County
CFS8	Continue to support and publicize recycling program based on demand.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000/yr	General fund	Polk County; Keep Polk Beautiful
CFS9, ED4,H4	Continue partnership with Drug Task Force	X	X	X	X	X	\$100,000/yr	General fund	Polk County
CFS10	Develop plans to renovate county courthouses	X					\$50,000	Grants; general funds	Polk County, NWGRC
ED3, NC6	Maintain Silver Comet Trail in unincorporated Polk County	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000	General fund	Polk County
LU	LAND USE								
LU1	Prepare and adopt a free-standing content-neutral sign ordinance.	X					\$1,500	General fund	Polk County
LU2, LU5,	Review and update zoning map to preserve the county's land resources	X					\$1,000	General fund	Polk County

POLK COUNTY									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CFS3									
LU2	Review and update zoning ordinance preserve the county's land resources	X					\$1,000	General fund	Polk County
LU2	Preserve the integrity of agricultural properties by making the requirements for buffers fall on the more intense land use when adjacent to agricultural land.			X			\$1,000	General fund	Polk County
LU2	Encourage use of conservation easements on farmland to preserve land for future farmers.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	General fund	Polk County
LU3	Designate the area around the hospital as a "medical district" on the future development map	X					\$1,000	General fund	Polk County,
LU4	Support efforts to develop a medical park around the hospital (see Future Development Map)		X				\$1,000	General fund	Polk County
H1,LU5	Review and update zoning ordinance to achieve compatibility between county and cities					X	\$5,000	General fund	Polk County
IC	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
IC1	Maintain the Service Delivery Strategy in conjunction with municipalities	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC2	Continue to develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, etc.).	X					\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC3, ED1	Continue regular quarterly meetings of county and municipalities and Polk County School System to improve communication	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

**POLK COUNTY
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021**

CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
IC3	Develop a local advisory board of residents to meet with the government to discuss local issues and grants and develop solutions.		X	X			\$1,000/yr	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Cedartown Community Work Program

CITY OF CEDARTOWN									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ED	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED1	Improve communication with Polk County College and Career Academy and Georgia Northwestern Technical College to ensure educational needs for technical jobs are being met, and to ensure a skilled workforce.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Cedartown
ED1	Participate with and provide support for One Door Polk Network with partner agencies to promote education incentives and social services programs.	X	X	X	X	X	\$25,000	General fund	City of Cedartown
ED2	Develop newly purchased 240-acre addition to industrial park	X	X	X	X	X	\$750,000	State, local, SPLOST	City of Cedartown
ED5	Promote and enhance incentive packages used to attract commercial businesses	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000	DCA Funds	DCA
ED6	Promote downtown business opportunities through: a. Promoting Downtown Cedartown Association (DCA) website with available properties listed b. Promote DCA's Façade Grant Program	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	Downtown Cedartown Association	Downtown Cedartown Association; City of Cedartown
ED7	Implement 2013 Cedartown Strategic Vision and plan	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000	General Fund	City of Cedartown
ED7	Apply for State Department of Community Affairs funds for tourism and marketing	X					\$1,000	State and Local	City of Cedartown
ED7, IC4	Continue participation in Blueprint Polk 20/20	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown,

CITY OF CEDARTOWN									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
									Rockmart, Aragon
H	HOUSING								
H1	Compare and unify lot sizes for all governments			X			\$1,000	General fund	City of Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon, Polk County
H2	Plan and solicit annexation of land for residential growth	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500/year	General fund	City of Cedartown
H3	Review ways to strengthen legal options to deal with dilapidated and substandard housing stock.						\$1,000	General fund	City of Cedartown
H3, H4	Implement GICH work program to reduce blight, and to improve residential growth and multifamily housing options	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000	General fund	City of Cedartown
H3, H5	As part of GICH efforts, review and analyze methods to implement Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)	X					\$1,000	Federal NSP funds	City of Cedartown, NWGRC
H3, H5	Continue to enforce nuisance ordinance to deal with dilapidated and substandard housing stock	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000/yr	General fund	City of Cedartown
H5	Continue city website improvements to promote Cedartown's GICH involvement and affordable housing programs	X					\$1,000	General fund	City of Cedartown
T	TRANSPORTATION								
T1, ED8	Prepare a detailed analysis of traffic congestion and signalization on primary corridors		X				\$10,000	GDOT	GDOT, City of Cedartown

CITY OF CEDARTOWN									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
T2	Develop attractive gateway signage on bypass to welcome visitors into downtown	X	X	X	X	X	\$125,000	SPLOST	City of Cedartown
NC	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NC1, NC3	Stabilization of the Big Spring channel and enhancements to Big Spring Park, including nature trail	X					\$200,000	Local, state,	City of Cedartown
NC2, NC4	Trail of Tears Park improvements and continuation of nature trail	X	X				\$100,000	Local, state, federal	City of Cedartown
NC2	Increase greenspace by using designated flood zones for trails and open space	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000	General fund	Local, state, federal
CF	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CFS1	Police department renovations	X	X	X	X	X	\$200,000	SPLOST	City of Cedartown
CFS1, ED3	Cedartown Waterworks rehabilitation	X					\$222,000	SPLOST	City of Cedartown
CFS1, ED3	Cedartown Waste Water Treatment Plant rehabilitation	X	X	X	X	X	\$500,000	Local, state, federal	City of Cedartown
CFS2, ED3	Upgrade sewer to support economic development a. Goodyear Mill Village b. South Industrial Park	X	X	X			\$1.5 million	SPLOST, State and Federal	City of Cedartown
CFS3	Develop a facilities assessment plan to analyze options regarding the Civic Auditorium and potential entertainment venues for the future	X					\$5,000	General fund	City of Cedartown
CFS4	Cedartown Event Center construction	X					\$1.6 million	SPLOST/ Public/private	City of Cedartown

CITY OF CEDARTOWN									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CFS5	Develop and implement loop and interconnection plan for water supply lines to improve public health and efficiency of system	X	X	X	X	X	\$40,000	Water and sewer fund	City of Cedartown
CFS6	Develop soccer complex at Goodyear Park		X	X			\$2 million	SPLOST/Grants/private	City of Cedartown
LU	LAND USE								
LU1	Review zoning ordinance to improve buffering requirements between incompatible uses and dissimilar zone districts			X			\$1,000	General fund	City of Cedartown
IC	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
IC1	Continue to develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, etc.).	X	X				\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC2	Work with GICH Advisory Board to discuss housing and economic development issues and develop solutions	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000/yr	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC2, ED1	Continue regular quarterly meetings of county, municipalities, and Polk County School System to improve communication.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC3	Maintain the Service Delivery Strategy in conjunction with county and other municipalities	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

**CITY OF CEDARTOWN
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021**

CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ED4, T3	Continue to research available new funding sources, including SPLOST, LOST, and Special Service Districts, and user fees	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	Various sources	Cedartown

Rockmart Community Work Program

CITY OF ROCKMART									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
EC	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED1	Initiate and develop special tax districts to support investment development with the downtown business district and other commercial corridors.	X					\$4,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED2	Implement and develop plans to support and promote Urban Redevelopment Area and Opportunity Zones		X				\$4,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED3	Implement and develop plans to support and promote Enterprise Zones		X				\$4,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED4	Consider reestablishment of a Downtown Development Authority.		X				\$3,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED6	Improve communication with Polk County College and Career Academy and Georgia Northwestern Technical College to insure educational needs for technical jobs are being met, and to insure a skilled workforce.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED6	Encourage stay-in-school programs to promote graduation.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED6	Support online listing of locally available college scholarships to encourage the pursuit of higher education	X					\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED7	Acquire more land to expand the Rockmart Industrial Park			X			\$1 million \$7 million	General fund	City of Rockmart

CITY OF ROCKMART									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ED8	Develop a standing advisory committee to help vet local development projects and funding sources	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED8	Encourage participation and membership in the Chamber of Commerce and Rockmart Business Alliance	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED9	Promote opportunities presented by the Silver Comet Trail through the city	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500/yr	General fund, tourism	City of Rockmart
ED10	Promote revitalization of downtown by developing an inventory of vacant buildings for marketing purposes	X					\$2,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED10	Initiate a façade reimbursement program				X		\$30,000/yr	General fund	City of Rockmart
ED11. IC6	Continue Participation on Blueprint Polk 20/20	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
H	HOUSING								
H1	Complete a housing assessment for condition and repair needs	X					\$1,800	General fund	City of Rockmart
H1	Implement a Minor Repair Program within the City to assist in controlling blighted and foreclosed properties and to aid in minor repair for the elderly.	X	X	X	X	X	\$15,000/yr	Local, state, federal	City of Rockmart, Dept. of Community Development, NWGHA

CITY OF ROCKMART									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
H1	Implement GICH program to address affordable housing needs by acquiring property to tear down and build housing	X	X	X	X	X	\$300,000	GICH, CDBG	City of Rockmart
H1	Work with Habitat for Humanity and Brush with Kindness programs to repair substandard housing	X	X				\$1,500	General fund	City of Rockmart, Habitat for Humanity
H2	Evaluate whether regulations are limiting growth for middle and upper income buyers		X				\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
H3	Organize task force in partnership with local churches and nonprofits to deal with need for homeless shelter	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
H4	Incentivize and support the development of assisted living facilities and nursing homes		X	X			\$10 million	Private funds, general fund	City of Rockmart, private developer
H5	Explore sources of funding from NW Georgia Housing Authority, CDBG and CHIP funding	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500/yr	NWGHA, CDBG, CHIP	City of Rockmart
T	TRANSPORTATION								
T1	Support transportation efforts for widening a. Marquette Road b. Highway 101					X	\$8 million	GDOT	City of Rockmart, GDOT, Polk County
T2	Develop traffic studies to mitigate increasing traffic congestion and improve connectivity within and between developments on Highway 278 and Highway 113			X			\$15,000	GDOT	City of Rockmart, GDOT

CITY OF ROCKMART									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
T3	Improve traffic/pedestrian signage throughout the city to assist both motorists and pedestrian/bicyclists.		X				\$5,000	SPLOST, Tourism Funds, Grants	GDOT, Polk County Chamber-DAPC and City of Rockmart
T4	Sidewalk rehabilitation/replacement for ADA compliance throughout city				x		\$250,000	General fund, SPLOST	City of Rockmart
T5	Develop a Bike and Pedestrian Plan for City		X	X	X		\$8,000	General fund, LMIG, and other available sources	City of Rockmart
T5	Continue development of bicycle lanes in concert with scheduled maintenance on local streets with sufficient width	X	X	X	X	X	\$20,000	General fund, LMIG, and other available sources	City of Rockmart
NC	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NC1	Develop a water conservation education program with website and conservation flyers for customers of the city water department.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	Water Sewer Fund	City of Rockmart
NC1	Develop local stormwater runoff management ordinance			X	X	X	\$20,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
NC2	Work with Keep Polk Beautiful to develop projects and educational opportunities to change local attitudes toward littering	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	General fund	City of Rockmart, Keep Polk Beautiful
CF	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CFS1	Implement 2010 Sewer Study by expanding and improving sewer lines throughout the city that have	X	X	X	X	X	\$750,000	Water Sewer Fund, GEFA, ARC	City of Rockmart

CITY OF ROCKMART									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
	been outdated or are in need of repair to ensure compliance with Federal and State Requirements.								
CFS2	Inspect, paint, and landscape all Water Storage Facilities that are part of the City's water system.		X	X	X	X	\$100,000	Water Sewer Fund	City of Rockmart
CFS3	Develop plan for outdoor amphitheater for public events	X					\$15,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
CFS3	Secure funding to build amphitheater	X	X	X	X	X	\$962,500	ARC and grants	City of Rockmart
CFS4	Update gateway signage and landscaping as needed to enhance public appeal.	X	X	X	X	X	\$45,000	Local, state, grants	City of Rockmart
CFS5	Improvements to parks: a. Nathan Dean Playground (\$125,000 General Fund) b. dog park at Nathan Dean Park (\$15,000 private)			X			\$200,000	General fund Private funding	City of Rockmart
CFS5	Secure funds for new Silver Comet trailhead with paved connector to trail at Seaborn Jones Park	X					\$75,000	Recreational Trails Program Grant	NWGRC, Rockmart
CFS6	Develop and expand and recreation program	X	X	X	X	X	\$100,000	General fund, grants	Polk County, Rockmart
LU	LAND USE								
LU1	Develop gateway improvements to city entrance on Old 278 by creating a special overlay district in the zoning regulations with requirements for facades, signage and landscaping		X	X	X		\$60,000	General fund	City of Rockmart

CITY OF ROCKMART									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
LU2	Develop agreements between city and county to establish buffers between incompatible uses at the city limits, especially the Rockmart commercial zone at the city limits.	X	X	X	X		\$2,000	General fund	City of Rockmart, Polk County
LU3	Plan the future 3-mile growth boundary for the city for zoning purposes	X					\$1,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
LU4	Update sign ordinance			X			\$5,000	General fund	City of Rockmart
IC	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
IC1	Maintain the Service Delivery Strategy in conjunction with county and other municipalities	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC2	Continue regular quarterly meetings of county and municipalities and Polk County School System to improve communication	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC3	Continue to develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, development regulations, etc.).		X	X	X		\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
ED5	Continue to research available new funding sources, including SPLOST, LOST, and Special Service Districts, and user fees as options to property taxes increase.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	Various sources	City of Rockmart

CITY Of ROCKMART

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021

CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
IC4	Work with GICH Advisory Board to discuss housing and economic development issues and develop solutions	X	X	X			\$2,000/year	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon
IC5	Establish joint land banking authority according to new state guidelines	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart, Aragon

Aragon Community Work Program

CITY OF ARAGON									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ED	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED1	Improve communication with Polk County College and Career Academy and Georgia Northwestern Technical College to insure educational needs for technical jobs are being met, and to insure a skilled workforce.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	General fund	City of Aragon
ED2	Redevelop Old Aragon Mill site. Explore use of NSP funds if new project is housing.			X			\$1,000,000	General fund, NSP, private property owners	City of Aragon, private property owners
ED4	Develop short and long-term action list for economic development	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500	General fund	City of Aragon
ED5	Market 25-acre site on State Route 101 as a commercial or mixed use site adjacent to a state highway	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Aragon
ED6	Develop a portfolio with photos and text on city website of the recreational, historical, cultural, business, and industrial amenities that the city has to offer	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500	General fund	City of Aragon
H	HOUSING								
H1, H3	Promote the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed properties in qualifying areas and to remove abandoned structures	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500/yr	General fund, NSP federal funds	City of Aragon, NWGRC

CITY OF ARAGON									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
H1,H3, H6	Identify properties that require rehabilitation, renovation, or condemnation.	X	X				\$5,000	General fund	City of Aragon
H1, H5, LU1	Support new single family home development by annexing land for residential development				X	X	\$2,000	General fund	City of Aragon
H1, H6	Develop existing buildable residential lots that belong to the city	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000	General fund	City of Aragon
H2	Working with the new code enforcement officer, prioritize removing refuse around homes by enforcing littering laws and nuisance ordinance and increasing law enforcement presence in residential areas prone to litter and refuse.	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000/year	fees	City of Aragon
H3, H6	Redevelop older areas for multifamily use	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000	General fund	City of Aragon
ED3	Support the development of assisted living facilities	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Aragon
T	TRANSPORTATION								
T1	Repair sidewalks a. Aragon Road b. Elm Street c. Oak Street d. Walnut Street	X	X				\$100,000	Local, state, federal	City of Aragon
T2	Aragon will continue to coordinate with Polk County and GDOT District 6 on facilitating long-term Project #0000406 to widened State Route 101 to a 4-lane highway with traffic signal and pedestrian crossing.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General Fund, GDOT	City of Aragon, Polk County, GDOT

CITY OF ARAGON									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
T3	Re-establish county-wide public transportation	X	X	X	X	X	\$40,000	GDOT	City of Aragon, Polk County
T4	Develop a priority list for road repairs and use it to obtain funds from the 2014 SPLOST and Local Maintenance and Improvements Grants (LMIG)		X					General Fund, SPLOST, LMIG	City of Aragon
NCR	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NCR1	Develop a Greenspace inventory of existing and potential greenspace for city ownership or protection by agreement with landowner.		X				\$1,500	General fund	City of Aragon
NCR1	Implement Georgia Department of Natural Resources' minimum protection standards for groundwater recharge areas and wetlands through changes to zoning or additions to development regulations as development regulations are updated.	X					\$1,000	General fund	City of Aragon
NCR2	Partner with churches, nonprofit organizations and Aragon Historical Society to create events and spaces where community strengths can be nurtured, expanded and displayed.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General fund	City of Aragon
CF	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CFS1	Public Works dump truck		X	X			\$60,000	SPLOST	City of Aragon
CFS1	Public Works equipment (chipper)		X				\$30,000	SPLOST	City of Aragon

CITY OF ARAGON									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CFS1	Renovate Community Center		X				\$50,000	General fund	City of Aragon
CFS1	Renovate old City Barn		X				\$25,000	General fund	City of Aragon
CFS1	Renovate ball park, concession stand, restrooms, and playground equipment	X	X	X	X	X	\$70,000	GF, SPLOST, grant funds	City of Aragon
CFS2	Treat stormwater separately from municipal sewage at sewage treatment plant	X					\$1 million	General fund	City of Aragon; Polk Water, Sewerage, and solid Waste Authority
CFS2	Fix leaking sewer lines throughout city		X	X	X		\$1 million	General fund	City of Aragon; Polk Water, Sewerage, and solid Waste Authority
CFS2, ED7, H4	Extend existing sewer lines to all of Aragon (possible CDBG project)					X	\$1 million	CDBG	City of Aragon; Polk Water, Sewerage, and solid Waste Authority

CITY OF ARAGON									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CFS3, CFS4, CFS5	Prepare Recreation Conceptual Plan as guide for developing parks and recreation projects	X					\$5,000	staff time (NWGRC); local dues/ARC;	City of Aragon NWGRC
CFS3, CFS4	Prepare Master Plan for development and implementation of identified recreation projects		X	X	X		\$20,000	SPLOST	City of Aragon
CFS6	Develop a plan to market the Stage@Aragon for musical performances and other events.	X					\$1,500	General fund	City of Aragon
CFS7	Hire a recreation director jointly with Rockmart to develop a plan for festival events throughout year			X			\$25,000	General fund	City of Aragon, Rockmart
CFS8	Develop property as park location for outdoor stage, passive recreation and parking for festivals.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000	General fund	City of Aragon
LU	LAND USE								
	No items listed								
IC	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
IC1	Maintain the Service Delivery Strategy in conjunction with county and other municipalities	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	General fund	City of Aragon, Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart
IC2	Seek consistent Aragon representation on the Polk County Water Authority Board.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000/yr	General fund	City of Aragon

CITY OF ARAGON									
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2017-2021									
CODE:	Activity Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
IC2	Continue regular quarterly meetings of county and municipalities and Polk County School System to improve communication	x	x	x	x	x	\$1,000	General fund	City of Aragon, Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart
IC3	Continue to develop guidelines to help with land use questions on the borders between the county and municipalities (buffers, landscaping, signage, setbacks, etc.).	x	x	x	x	x	\$1,000	General fund	City of Aragon, Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart
IC4	Continue participation in Blueprint Polk 20/20	x	x	x	x	x	\$1,000/yr	General fund	Aragon, Polk County, Cedartown, Rockmart
IC5	Inform local leaders of state and federal funding opportunities through workshops, webinars, and regional meetings and through communication with NWGRC	x	x	x	x	x	\$1,000	General fund	City of Aragon, NWGRC
IC6	Expand the roles of elected officials in city government by developing subcommittees of the council to allow specialization and expanded knowledge, hold quarterly town hall meetings	x	x	x	x	x	\$1,000/yr	General fund	City of Aragon
IC7	Continue to research available new funding sources, including SPLOST, LOST, and Special Service Districts, and user fees as options to property taxes increase.	x	x	x	x	x	\$1,000/yr	Various sources	City of Aragon

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DOCUMENTATION

November 12, 2015. Barnett Chitwood and Gretchen Lugthart visited with county and city managers in Polk County, Cedartown, and Rockmart and with the mayor, city clerk, and future city clerk in Aragon.

November 18, 2015. Notice of the First Public Hearing for the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update appeared in the Polk County Standard Journal as a display advertisement.

December 3, 2016. First Public Hearing for the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update held in Cedartown, Georgia.

January 11-15, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart sent Word documents to the county and 3 municipalities to put on their websites.

January 20, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart sent announcement of the first stakeholder meeting to the Polk County Standard Journal to go in the Community Calendar.

February 2, 2016. Reminder of the first stakeholder meeting was sent to stakeholders via email.

February 4, 2016. First Stakeholder Meeting for the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update held at the Emergency Management Administration Building, Cedartown, Georgia.

February 17, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart sent announcement of the second stakeholder meeting to the Polk County Standard Journal to go in the Community Calendar.

March 1, 2016. Reminder of the second stakeholder meeting was sent to stakeholders via email.

March 3, 2016. Second Stakeholder Meeting for the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update held at Cedartown City Council Room, Cedartown, Georgia.

March 8, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart and Tonya Brown traveled to Polk County to take photos for character areas and other elements of the plan.

March 24, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart sent announcement of the third stakeholder meeting to the Polk County Standard Journal to go in the Community Calendar.

April 2016. Online Community Vision survey available through an online link. Survey link was published in the newspaper, and on newspaper website, the Polk County, Cedartown, and Aragon websites.

April 5, 2016. Reminder of the third stakeholder meeting was sent to stakeholders via email.



Figure 22. Stakeholders/Steering Committee at final Public Meeting, Cedartown City Council Room.

April 7, 2016. Third Stakeholder Meeting for the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update held at Cedartown City Council Room, Cedartown, Georgia.

April 22, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart sent announcement of the fourth stakeholder meeting to the Polk County Standard Journal to go in the Community Calendar.

May 3, 2016. Reminder of the fourth stakeholder meeting was sent to stakeholders via email.

May 4, 2016. Fourth Stakeholder Meeting for the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update held at Cedartown City Council Room, Cedartown, Georgia.

May 11, 18, and 25, 2016. Paper copy of the Community Vision Survey was published in the Polk County Standard Journal, a weekly newspaper.

May 26, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart sent announcement of fifth stakeholder meeting to Polk County Standard Journal to go in the Community Calendar. She also sent this announcement to the website managers of county and municipalities to post on their websites.

June 6, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart sent reminder announcement of fifth stakeholder meeting to stakeholders and county managers.

June 9, 2016. Fifth Stakeholder Meeting for the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update held at Cedartown City Council Room, Cedartown, Georgia.

August 2, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart and Julianne Meadows met with city of Aragon officials and stakeholders to review the work program and proposed future development maps. They met with Matt Denton, Polk County Manager in the afternoon to discuss the county's work program and future development maps

August 10, 2016. Gretchen Lugthart and Julianne Meadows met with city of Cedartown officials Bill Fann, Aimee Madden, and one other individual to review the work program and proposed future development maps.

August 16, 2016 Gretchen Lugthart and Julianne Meadows met with city of Rockmart manager Jeff Ellis to review the work program and proposed future development maps.

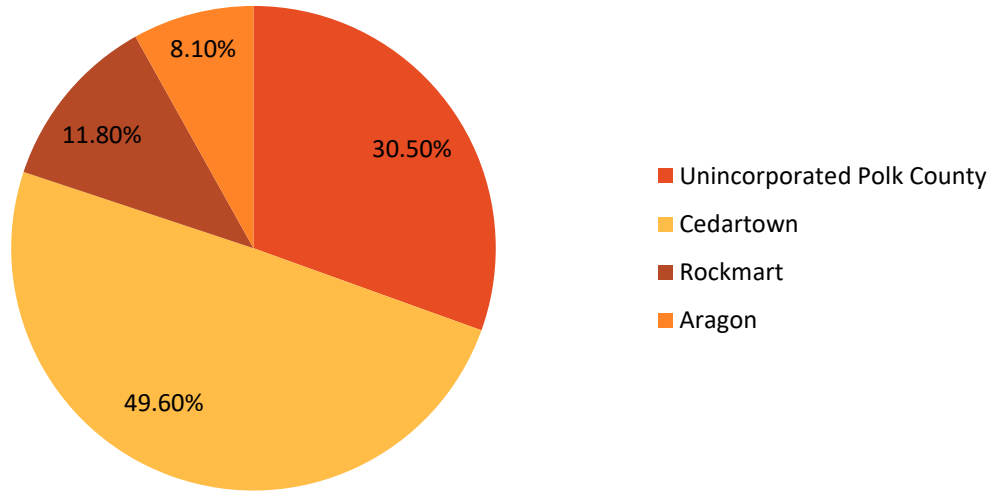
APPENDIX B. RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Report for Polk County 2016 Community Vision Survey

Survey by surveygizmo

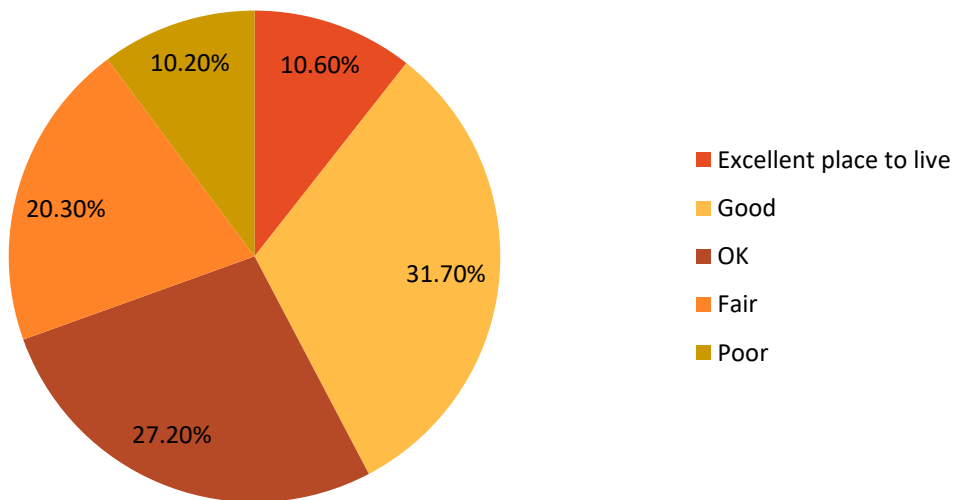
Response Counts	
Completion Rate:	76.8%
Complete:	192
Partial:	58
Disqualified:	0
Total:	250

1. In which community do you live?



Value	Percent	Count
Unincorporated Polk County	30.5%	75
Cedartown	49.6%	122
Rockmart	11.8%	29
Aragon	8.1%	20
Total		246

2. How does your community rate overall? (Check one)



Value	Percent	Count
Excellent place to live	10.6%	26
Good	31.7%	78
OK	27.2%	67
Fair	20.3%	50
Poor	10.2%	25
Total		246

3. What do you like about your community? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Count
Friendly and helpful nearby neighbors	59.6%	134
Convenient local shopping	23.1%	52
Hunting, fishing, and outdoor activities	23.1%	52
Good EMS, fire and police protection	33.8%	76
Access to hospital facilities	26.7%	60
Well-located schools and libraries	32.4%	73
Accessible public buildings and parks	28.9%	65
Variety of housing choices	12.0%	27
Many neighborhood churches	39.1%	88
Homes far apart allowing greater privacy	34.2%	77
Scenic views and natural wildlife assets	46.2%	104
Other – specify	8.9%	20

Other – specify

Comet trail (3)

Feel safe (2)

Railroad History / Comet Trail

Affordable.

Agriculture in area

Can have "mini" farm

Dogs and cats run all over and no one wants to make owners obey leash laws!

No traffic congestion.

Our community in the last 15-20 years has gone down. Drugs etc. are terrible and no one does anything to stop it.

Rural setting
Rural Community/Agriculture

Small town living

The people

No traffic

None

Total responses: 20

4. What don't you like about our community? (check all that apply)

	Percent	Count
Not enough good jobs	75.4%	172
Too much traffic	3.5%	8
Loss of scenic views and natural areas	15.8%	36
Rising cost of living	21.1%	48
Not enough local stores and restaurants	62.7%	143
Isolated housing choices	7.5%	17
Homes crowded too close together	6.6%	15
Incompatible nearby development	16.7%	38
Inadequate public services	27.6%	63
Hospital too far away	10.1%	23
Not enough theaters and libraries	19.3%	44
Local schools not good enough	39.5%	90
No public transportation	28.1%	64
Not enough tourists	21.1%	48
Too much litter	50.4%	115
Management of landfill	31.1%	71
Inadequate housing choices	11.8%	27
Other	23.2%	53

Mowers and ATV's not allowed on roadways. Rockmart main roads in poor condition.(2)

Politics, always the same one's voting in the polls. Too much tennis, football, soccer, cheerleading.(2)

A VERY LOUD POWER PLANT!!! In the Lime Branch areas

Animal control

Apathy from residents

CRIME, POOR DOWNTOWN LOOK, RUN DOWN AND TOO MANY FALLING APART. OWNERS WONT FOLLOW PROPER ORDINANCIES TO UPKEEP THEM IN THE PROPER ORDER. POOR BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE COMMISSION. COMMISSION WONT ENFORCE BUILDING ORDINANCES

City is one big junkyard

City of Cedartown has let Big Center Creek grow into eyesore, other cities cherish their flowing creeks, Look at Big Cedar used to be clean.

County doesn't enforce codes and regulations. Dogs run loose and animal control does nothing to owners.

Crime rate

Disconnect and government ignoring the Southside of Cedartown

Farming Interest more important than local residents. Property Taxes too high

Fashion, too much sport's groupies, no transportation for cancer patients from Polk to Rome facilities.

Has not bounced back from the economic crisis

Hospital - No BCBS ins. Housing - need affordable condos. Had better shopping choices 40 years ago.

Hospital does not take Blue Cross

Inadequate police and fire services in Vinson Mountain area.

Incompetent govt workers

Junky - very poor zoning and code enforcement

Lack of building code enforcement

Lack of concern and enforcement of ordinances and areas which are vacant, empty, or just trashy looking.

Local government and development groups do not seem to be doing anything

Neighbors hoards that need to be cleaned up by property owners or tore down.

Neighbors with dogs that bark at shadows and falling leaves. Dogs running loose in Dogwood Subdivision.

Not enough good working fire hydrants

Not enough opportunities for community participation in the theater program. Very exclusive

Not kid and family friendly.

Nothing here to do

Overgrowth of banks of roads and ditches. Inadequate drainage system and soil erosion of property. No sidewalks, no street lights.

Blight - inequality in hiring practice. Overgrowth and signs that block vision when trying to merge to the main highway. Roads in need of repaving. Erosion of property caused by road and drainage system. Homes that are in desperate need of repair.

Pollution - Neighbors burning garbage almost daily. Cannot enjoy outdoor activities at home because of poor air quality. Local police/fire dept will not respond to complaints.

Pollution - Neighbors burning garbage almost daily. Cannot enjoy outdoor activities at home because of poor air quality. Local police/fire dept will not respond to complaints. Property tax dept attempting to increase taxes by over valuing some property while decreasing or undervaluing neighboring properties. High taxes without any services (poor police protection, only a volunteer fire dept.) Poor property maintenance by owners - garbage in yards, garbage on roads. No internet service other than slow DSL.

Poor code enforcement. County is junky

Roads are in bad shape, need more recreational facilities

Cedartown seems to want to attract people that are not assets to the community "bums". There are also too many buildings that are rentals that are not maintained properly.

The City is competing with local businesses - The City sewer is running out in the streets during hard rains.

The City is taking sludge from the landfill and putting it into the City sewage system.

The litter problem is terrible. People should be fined when seen littering. An active effort needs to be made.

Too many illegal immigrants taking jobs from legal citizens

Too many empty store buildings and dilapidated houses. Owners need to do repairs so they can be rented.

Too many illegal immigrants and drug abusers

Too many vacant businesses. Too many dilapidated houses, former meth labs.

Too much speeding, unsafe driving

Very few activities for families other than going to Wal-Mart or the grocery store together.

Crumbling infrastructure

Lack of to serve and protect every citizen especially those in need of protection against sex trafficking and being made to do ANYTHING AGAINST YOUR VERY OWN WILL.

Need more welcoming entries to county/cities

No YMCA

That we have allowed people to trash up yards with cars and junk. One of the most beautiful middle class neighborhoods have been taken over with trash and cars parked all over the yards. I'm speaking of the Cave Spring Road from there to the Goodyear village, it use to be so peaceful and very well kept houses, now it's nothing more than one big landfill.

Too many abandoned homes, drugs, break-ins, I could go on and on.

Too many run down property

Too much drug use and stealing

Unenforced coding violations on houses and vacant lots/properties

Total: 53 responses

5. What changes would you like to see made? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Count
Protect our rural community character	44.6%	100
Allow mixed-use developments	20.1%	45
More good jobs	81.7%	183
More housing choices	14.3%	32
Protect more scenic open spaces	31.3%	70
Preserve more farms and woodlands	39.7%	89
More local shopping and entertainment	60.7%	136
Pave more roads and add new highways	25.9%	58
Extend sewer to unincorporated Polk County	21.0%	47
Provide safe sidewalks and more bicycle trails	34.4%	77
More public parks, ball fields, and playgrounds	31.7%	71
Public transportation system	25.9%	58
Reduce services to slow tax increases	7.6%	17
Commercial development only at rural crossroads	8.9%	20

Fewer signs and billboards	21.0%	47
Require new business and industries to add landscaping	28.6%	64
More recycling opportunities	37.9%	85
Senior housing opportunities	21.4%	48
Other – specify	21.9%	49

Other – specify

Enforce zoning and code. (2)

More activities for kids, talent, acting, swimming for entertainment.(2)

Repave more roads. (2)

1 - reduce and combine city and county police enforcement. I don't think we need a sheriff's department plus county and city police. Maybe consolidate sheriff's department and county police. Also there needs to be something done about our landfill' !!!! Why are other counties bringing their trash into our community. Doesn't make sense to me !!!

Add bike lanes to Main Street.

Allow other business to come in & let Polk grow

Better fire and police protection for unincorporated Polk County, better fire protection water from the local water authority

Better housing options for low income families, not just seniors. More recycling options and a community project focused on environmental conservation. You guys are doing a great job! We appreciate the opportunity to give our input and we appreciate all your hard work!

Better litter cleanup/adopt a road

Clean up or demolish abandoned properties (le, old Del Taco building)

Do something with Old Goodyear not a city dump and old Arrow and Zartiz Property.

Expand cable and Internet in rural areas

Fine people that don't remove yard sale signs and signs asking for you to vote.

Force owners of rental properties to properly maintain them

Improve code enforcement for unkempt properties

Improve schools

In my opinion infrastructure is crucial for the future. I would like to see developers be put on the hook for infrastructure upgrades. For example, sewer upgrades, intersection improvements, turn lane additions, etc.

Incentives to encourage industrial development

Litter management- clean up our community

Major roads entering Cedartown specifically 278 and south 27 appearance improved.

Make homeowners maintain their property.

More efficient govt services

More money for county fire department

More money spent on the Southside of Cedartown

More opportunities for youth and youth education.

More public awareness on issues.

New highways not needed, existing roads in terrible condition

No more low income housing

Not that many businesses in Cedartown. Commissioners don't want any.

Pick up stray and loose dogs. Breaking the law. Georgia has a leash law.

Replace school board & superintendent.

Start demolishing dilapidated housing stock, provide incentives for drawing in new residents, help establish new nonprofits for Polk/NWGA Area for cultural and educational opportunities

Stiffer penalties for derelict properties

Stop outside people/firms from dumping in our landfill. Improve Airport. Improve water supply for firefighting. Better upkeep of paved roads

Stop the regional landfill!!!

Strict zoning and land use planning needed badly

TEAR DOWN THE MANY, MANY, MANY RUN DOWN HOMES, ENFORCE ALL DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES TO MAINTAIN THEIR 1 PROPERTIES IN THE MANNER THEY SHOULD, HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE.

Theater season schedule, movies, and ethnic group activities

Van for cancer patients that need help with treatments, food, gas, clothing, and happiness.

YMCA

better restaurants

change the laws where if you live in a home you have to keep it maintained and well groomed, not allowing 6 cars in yards and fix and clean up these neighborhoods,

do not extend infrastructure improvements- that will increase sprawl into the rural areas

more code enforcement to clean up the city

more industry to bring in more good jobs - from middle management to hourly workers.

Total responses: 49

6. What changes would you oppose? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Count
More private land use restrictions	41.1%	74
More conventional subdivisions	27.2%	49
More commercial and industrial growth	13.3%	24
Encouraging more housing choices	5.6%	10
Protecting more scenic open spaces	7.8%	14
Preserving more farms and woodlands	8.9%	16
More local shopping and entertainment	7.8%	14
Paving more roads and adding new highways	14.4%	26
More public sidewalks and bicycle trails	13.9%	25
More public parks, ball fields, and playgrounds	11.1%	20
Public transportation system	25.0%	45
Reducing services to slow tax increases	38.9%	70
Commercial development only at rural crossroads	18.9%	34
Fewer signs and billboards	7.8%	14
Requiring new businesses and industry to add landscaping	11.7%	21

7. Is your community now providing adequate services to the citizens?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	34.6%	73
No	41.7%	88

Don't Know	20.9%	44
If no, identify the services	24.2%	51

If no, identify the services

Helping senior citizens, there is no help for them unless they can put down 90% of the cost. Why is that? (United Fund) (2)

No transportation at all for cancer patients. Summerville and Rome has transit but Cedartown does not! (2)

Adequate means suitable or sufficient for a requirement. Also question #4 (include).
Adequate police protection

Adequate sewer system.

Better code enforcement: litter, noise, lawns, speeding.

Enforce codes concerning overgrown lawns, derelict properties; crack down on tractor trailers running traffic lights on 278

Family entertainment, parks are not equipped to provide fun for children.

Fire Department paid

Fire and police

Fire, Police, road maintenance

Hospital needs to take all insurances.

Improve fire protection to improve ISO

Inadequate county fire, too many dangerous neighborhoods for small towns

It would be nice to have a "safe" passive recreation option

More services for seniors, More Playground areas throughout City, more recreation and parks

Need better Fire Protection. Would like to see the abolishment of the County Police

Need more public transportation. Need more industry to bring more jobs.

Need more recreation in outlying areas, need more restaurants and entertainment

No real public transportation opportunities, downtown area only extends between East Ave. and Welcome Center, new ball fields are great, but no soccer fields yet. Commercial real estate in downtown

area seems to have big issues which aren't being addressed in a timely manner, with roofs falling in on some empty storefronts and bricks falling or threatening to fall on others.

Not enough law enforcement to handle the crime in the community. The lack of pay in our county for law enforcement hinders our law enforcement from retaining veteran officers which translates to the type of service we receive.

Not enough recreation facilities. Code enforcement is almost non-existent.

Not picking up the trash anymore and not making families to clean their yards.

Not providing adequate education

POOR FIRE PROTECTION, NEED PAID FIRE PROTECTION, THE TAX PROPOSED WAS WAY TO HIGH ON THE FEW THAT WOULD HAVE TO PAY IT. ALL THE COUNTY SHOULD BE TAXED MORE FAIR. POLK COUNTIES TAX'S ARE TOO HIGH FOR THE SERVICES PROVIDED. TRASH EVERYWHERE ON THE ROADS ALL THE TIME. CONSTANTLY TRASH EVERYWHERE. POOR ROADS EVERYWHERE IN THE CITY AND REALLY THE COUNTY, AKA JOHNSON LAKE ROAD ALL THE WAY TO THE END, ESPECIALLY NEAR TOWN. THE SOUTH SIDE.

Police and fire services in Vinson Mountain area.

Police and fire. Water is turned off for hours sometimes.

Police protection is a joke, city and county.

Recreation

Road in need of repair, sewage draining, litter control.

Sewer and natural gas are not provided

Sewer system

Sewer, transportation, not enough small businesses

The county does a poor job letting people know of services. Their website really needs some work to be easier to navigate and to be up to date.

The county police is not needed.

The public safety services are severely understaffed and underpaid. It is sad that this community expects the public safety personnel to operate under the conditions they currently operate.

There isn't enough community involvement or opportunity for community involvement.

There needs to be a way for seniors and people that can't get out affordable transportation.

There needs to be more of a feeling of community especially in the lower income areas, SAFE and fun entertainment for children and families, and more employees at the police departments and animal control.

Too many calls to get traffic off dead end road, too many calls to have drug paraphernalia picked up, too many animals running around, too many drunks and drug addicts.

We need a community center with a pool for our community it would serve everyone.

Youth programs

all of them

code enforcement

drug problems

fire

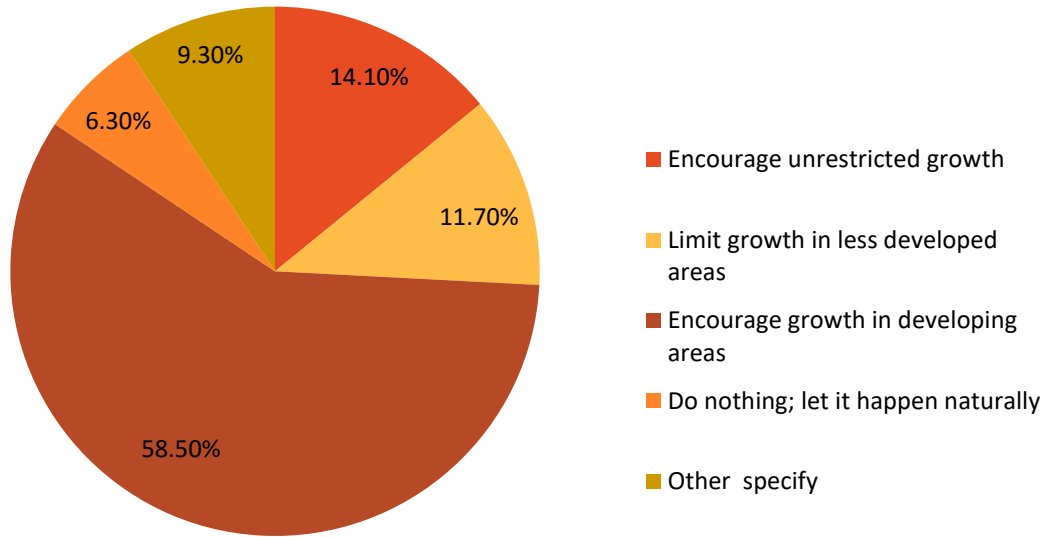
impossible to have current laws enforced

modeling talent, cancer patients to and from the doctor, more activities for teens, help the homeless.

need to protect stream buffers and improve water quality

Total responses: 51

8. How should our local governments manage growth (check one)



Value	Percent	Count
Encourage unrestricted growth	14.1%	29
Limit growth in less developed areas	11.7%	24
Encourage growth in developing areas	58.5%	120
Do nothing; let it happen naturally	6.3%	13
Other – specify	9.3%	19
	Total	205

Other – specify

No answer marked?! (2)

Think about it. (2)

As the community grows let the county grow

DOWNTOWN DECO

Encourage growth, but with a plan for impact on traffic patterns, road use, light/noise pollution; and force companies to clean up abandoned buildings/lots.

Get rid of known drug areas and dealers. Shut down stores breaking gambling laws.

Growth in Rockmart is much greater. Cedartown needs more restaurants and places to shop.

Growth is coming whether people like it or not. It is up to local governments to determine a vision of how growth should be. Then with a vision in place you can manage the growth in a controlled manner rather than a sporadic way. Growth can be a good thing if managed properly.

Have a plan that balances and manages the growth

Hotels, workshops, swimming pools, teens, private development classes for all ages.

Improve education

Not sure. Allow it to grow but monitor and be aware of what's going on.

Quit building spec buildings, I live in Polk County because I like the rural setting and farm life. If I wanted growth, I'd move to Cobb County or somewhere else in metro Atlanta.

THE COUNTY HAS NO REAL PLAN THAT WORKS FOR FAIR PAYING JOBS THAT WILL EVER ATTRACT PEOPLE TO MOVE IN OR STAY IN THE COUNTY FOR WORK. CEDARTOWN IS AND CONTINUES TO DRY UP EVERYWHERE

Work with schools to better educate students.

have a plan for growth and only allow commercial activity in non-residential area

Special land use permits

Total - 19

9. Rank the importance of the following: (Use 1 for the most important and 8 for least important)

Overall Rank	Item	Rank Distribution	Score	Total Respondents
1	Improve economic opportunities		1,025	170
2	Improve educational opportunities		983	172
3	Protect natural resources and environment		780	175
4	Maintain rural quality of community life		770	178
5	Prove efficient community infrastructure		766	169
6	Preserve farmland and forests		689	172
7	Manage development type and location		687	175
8	Control rising cost of community services		672	173

10. What type of growth management actions would you support? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Count
Land use regulations/zoning	40.5%	75
Higher density in planned city areas	21.1%	39
Lower density in planned rural areas	23.2%	43
Transferring development rights	8.6%	16
Growth limitation boundaries	18.4%	34
Limiting total annual development	5.4%	10
Incentives to encourage smart growth	69.7%	129
Impact fees to offset cost of growth	17.8%	33
Limiting development in floodplains	37.8%	70
Requiring stream buffers	30.8%	57
Limiting mountain slope development	24.3%	45
Agriculture and forest conservation	48.6%	90
Acquisition of land for public uses	22.2%	41
Land acquisition using eminent domain	6.5%	12
Land acquisition using density incentives	4.3%	8
None	4.3%	8

11. What do you think will happen to our community character without adequate growth controls? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Count
It will stay the same	25.1%	49
The quality of life will go down	66.2%	129
Natural resources will be threatened	57.4%	112
Air quality will get worse	41.5%	81
Won't have enough water to meet needs	30.8%	60
We'll end up covered with subdivisions	33.8%	66
Don't know	5.6%	11

12. Is housing for all income groups available in the county and the cities?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	60.8%	115
No	34.9%	66
Comments – Write in	16.4%	31

? Depending on your income. (2)

Don't know. (2)

Better jobs reduces the need for public housing, but half the battle is fighting fraud. We've all seen the Cadillac Escalade with disability plates... and no one gets out who is disabled.

Big joke

CC&R's must be abolished by amendment or they will control local government.

County - No, City - Yes

Good on North end Cedartown, slum lords on West and South ends.

If you have fixed income you are forced to live in slummy area.

Limit government assisted housing

MOST OF THE HOUSING IN THIS COUNTY IS SUBSTANDARD FOR AFFORDABLE RENTS, POOR QUALITY, OLD FALLING DOWN OR NEEDS TORN DOWN

More apartments for seniors needed without income restrictions.

Most affordable neighborhoods are high crime areas. I'd like to see housing areas for middle class without having to worry about sketchy neighbors or drugs.

Most housing in Polk County is for lower income families.

Need more decent rental houses by private owners.

Need more middle or upper middle class/single family

Not adequate, too many neighborhoods with slum-type housing

Not decent housing, too many out of town property owners letting rental houses become run down and lower area property values

Not sure

Public housing is not available in all locations

Quality housing has decreased for the middle/upper middle class; inadequate housing for the elderly. We need more facilities such as Ramsey Run

Some community housing is too high for some to live.

Some houses are not fit to live in.

There are not enough and too expensive.

Too much low end housing.

Too much low end rental housing

Too much low income government funded housing. We are getting other communities problem people.

Yes, but some of it is sub-standard

but need more for lower income families in better locations

most government housing is in bad neighbor hoods.

Total responses: 31

13. The county and cities should consider the following financing mechanisms for water, sewer, recreation, roads, education, and other needed improvements: (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Count
All alternatives financing mechanisms	31.5%	56
Impact fees	23.0%	41
Special improvement or tax districts	21.3%	38
Special Purpose Sales Tax (SPLOST, TSPLOST, or LOST)	65.2%	116
Grants	75.8%	135
Low interest loans	41.0%	73
No additional funds needed	6.2%	11
Comments – Write in	6.2%	11

All drug money and drug offenders for labor.

Fine that who litter and dump trash - install some video cameras that record license plates.

If we are going to be taxed, it needs to be in a way that ALL residents pay the tax, not just home owners!!

Need much and much more for teen recreation besides sports.

Please get our kids books instead of iPads... this is unacceptable.

Put a higher sales tax on and let everyone pay taxes

Recreation, development personal, image awareness, for all ages.

Spend within means and don't let politics keep the county from pursuing federal grants.

WE NEED ANYTHING THAT ATTRACTS BUSINESS FOR GOOD, FAIR PAYING JOBS TO KEEP THE CEDARTOWN RESIDENTS FROM LEAVING THIS TOWN OR COUNTY. THEY ARE LEAVING EVERY YEAR

We need the most for the money.

fix all county roads no matter what the neighbors think and keep all county roads maintained.

Total responses: 11

14. I would be willing to volunteer and be active in programs to protect our environment and natural resources if the County would organize them in my community.

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	76.0%	130
No	21.6%	37
Comments – Write In	7.0%	12

Comments – Write in

After retirement

Aging population makes this problematic

Already involved in some programs

Dead, starving and homeless and unemployed people don't care about natural resources... we need jobs. That said, our Big Spring must be protected, as our water is our life.

I would drive cancer patients to and from appointments if we had transit.

MAYBE, IT DEPENDS

Not able to do many physical activities health issues.

Too old.

We are retired and unable to do this.

We do already.

At some point

Total responses: 12

15. Additional comments: What is the most important issue in Polk County today?

117 Total Responses | [Hide Responses](#)

A government that is aware of what it takes what is needed to develop a healthy community. It needs a government that is all inclusive and recognize the needs of the whole community. Small government should not mean less knowledgeable government.

Be smart about how development occurs. We are ahead of the curve at this point--a place where other more *populated* counties would like to go back to. Let's do it right. Control infrastructure to be able to control growth. Appreciate and provide mechanisms to protect our scenic areas and agricultural businesses (these are not areas just waiting to be developed). Acknowledge that agriculture and forest land are a positive impact on our tax base (they don't require the services other land uses do, so they provide a surplus in taxes...even under CUVA).

City moving industry to the county and leaving old empty industrial buildings in the city as eye sores.

Consolidation of city county services.

County fire department is understaffed and under paid and does not get enough money to operate to its full potential.

County is one big junkyard. We need tightened future land use and zoning. Increase code enforcement. Adopt a strict animal control ordinance.

Crime and drugs.

Crime- drugs, theft, destruction of private property.

Downtown needs a total re-do, much like a small town I lived in, Dunedin, Fla.

Drug problems and the effect on families and children. Need to help increase / improve education for our children so they will be better equipped to gain higher level employment.

Drugs

Drugs and gangs destroying our young people.

Drugs, lack of jobs above minimum wage, lack of family attractions and activities, lack of children and teen attractions and activities.

Dumping of toxic waste in our landfills. County elected officials do not do their job and do not enforce the laws. Far too much favoritism and discrimination. If you are a friend of an elected official you are exempt from the laws, particularly in animal control and the police dept.

Economic growth.....help make our school district stronger.....more housing options for senior citizens.....encourage new industry into our area.....

Economy. There are no jobs to support the population.

Education and drugs are the most important issues in our county. The people are not educated so they make uneducated decisions. We need to make this our top priority. By having opportunities for our youth to excel and believe in themselves, we can cut the crime and drug rate in half. There isn't anything for our youth to do, they get bored and do drugs. If we can educate them and provide opportunities for advancement or for them to help out and have purpose, we will see a drastic improvement.

Education and economic development.

Education, Safety, drug use and crime rate. Make efforts to improve levels of education in Polk County Schools. Would like to see a program instituted whereby funding is provided for mandated drug/alcohol abuse rehab instead of jail time, especially for first-time offenders.

Education, roadway upgrades, new industries, city financial management (water billing issue and other financial management for instance. Embarrassing for our city when billing errors were made 6 years ago???), better roads, punish traffic offenders with jail time instead of petty fines or report to INS when applicable.

Education. We need to support early intervention programs to boost literacy and school readiness and encourage educational attainment throughout the K-12 years and beyond. Adult education programs need to be strengthened.

Equal money, industry, and opportunities available for the Southside of Cedartown. Rid our streets of drugs! More consequences for Meth users to run them out of town!

Fire Department paid

Focusing on providing a high quality education through the College and Career Academy and partnerships with GNTC and local business and industry for internship/"hands-on" application of what is being taught.

GOOD JOBS, JOBS, JOBS, JOBS THAT PAY A LIVING WAGE. CLEAN UP THIS TOWN, CEDARTOWN. ROCKMART IS GROWING AND IMPROVING AND CEDARTOWN IS NOT AT ALL REALLY AND IS DRYING UP EACH AND EVERY YEAR. HALF THE HOUSING IN TOWN PROBABLY NEED TORN DOWN AND DOWNTOWN CEDARTOWN NEEDS A MAJOR STORE FRONT REBUILDING. THIS NEEDS TO BE DONE NOW TO ATTRACT BUSINESS. THEY NEED TO COORDINATE THEIR SHOP HOURS BETTER SO MOST ALL ARE OPEN MUCH TO THE SAME HOURS. THERE'S NO INCENTIVE TO GO DOWNTOWN JUST ABOUT FOR ANYTHING. GET BUSY AND QUIT DAULDING ON POLK COUNTY AND CEDARTOWN GROWTH OPPERTUNITIES. THE COMMISSION IS OLD, SLOW IN JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING AND CAN'T SEEM TO GET ANYTHING GROWTH ORIENTED DONE. MOVE FORWARD WITH SUCCESS NOW!!!!!!!!!!

Get ahead of unwise growth patterns. While we still can, preserve the rural integrity of the community.

Get the drugs out of here. Clean up the cities, make these slum lords resp. for their properties, get youth programs going better education in our schools. We need so many things. I would be writing all day about this.

Good ole boy way will never let changes happen.

Has not bounced back economically; middle class is financing the lower class.

Health care and business should increase.

High taxes, the litter and garbage on the roads.

I think there should be more limitations on the Atlanta Skydiving Club's use of the Polk County Airport. I used to enjoy the small planes that came and went at the airport which is about 2 miles from my house but the constant taking off and landing (every 20 minutes or so) going over my house very close to the treetops is unreal. I would hate to think how bad it is closer to the airport. The other major issue I see in our county is ... Bringing these truckloads of garbage in to our beautiful county. Crazy to think of the damage being done to our environment.

I'm not familiar with the other parts of the county.

Illegal drug use and drug activity

Improving education to attract families to live and work in Polk County.

Improving opportunities for children besides sports, increase the offerings in the arts programs. Improve the education system so the student dropout rate decreases.

Infrastructure, service consolidation

Integrating the Hispanic population

Job development and education improvement

Jobs and adequate fire protection

Jobs other than retail. Our education systems. Litter of our roadways. Crime control. Red light at Cherokee Road and Highway 27 intersection. This road is now used as a major link between Highway 27 and Cave Spring Highway. It's a dangerously busy 2 lane road.

Jobs, Education, Race relationships, fairness in employment.

Jobs, abandoned housing, weed overgrowth, litter, roads need repair.

Knowing where you can go to receive help. There should be more places that you can be sure to get help, besides Tallatoona, if you need it. There should be funds set aside that where we can get the

information to know where to go. Everyone don't have the information. It seems like it's just for certain people.

Lack of access to major highways and poor schools limits ability to attract business. First impressions entering city of Cedartown are unattractive.

Lack of better jobs. The landfill with tons of trash being shipped here. Stop using the jail for profit where local criminals get the revolving door treatment to make room for inmates from other counties.

Lack of code enforcement and very poor zoning laws

Lack of community involvement and wasted resources. Not reaching out to gain benefit of other experience and relying on own experience and knowledge generally limits options.

Lack of good paying jobs across all business sectors for legal citizens.

Lack of industry or economic growth to support needs of community.

Lack of industry to bring in good paying jobs. This impacts everything else.

Lack of job opportunities for college graduates.

Lack of jobs. Education system needs to be more interested in preparing students for life skills related to low to middle income families. We are focused on sports and ipads. Instead of basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Copy and paste is now how we should be writing.

Lack of large industry. Trash from one end of county to the other makes it unattractive. Uncontrolled junkyard at one of main entrances to Cedartown.

Lack of money, both in the government sector and in our households. It is VERY hard to remedy the issue of low income. Low income = low tax base. We have a problem of generational apathy towards the importance of education, a problem of lack of personal responsibility and civic pride. I can drive 30 minutes north of Cedartown and 30 minutes east and find myself in a completely different community. The difference boils down to money, sadly.

Lack of organized recreation for kids, lack of industry in Cedartown/Polk County, roads in need of repair, public housing in need of renovation, need more SPLOST funding instead of tax increases to fund special projects.

Landfill needs to be back in Polk County's ownership.

Leadership needs to think long term

Let's get jobs in here that will bring growth to our area.

Let's take care of ourselves and stop bringing in people that WILL NOT WORK and ONLY SUCK RESOURCES FROM THE COMMUNITY. The substandard rental properties, government housing and section 8 is killing property values and quality of life for the productive people of Polk.

Little growth in industry, jobs and special interests

MESO Americans. Drugs: Legal and illegal and the illogical drug laws.

Making our schools better!

Meth and Crack.

More police, clean up our county, more junk cars, tear old houses down to improve neighborhoods. These house are being used by junkies and homeless leading to health issues with no water for bathroom use. Also causes rats and flies, mosquitoes where water stands not just in city limits but also just outside especially around area of Rockmart Walmart and their areas where water stands for days after rain. A lot of other counties are fining property owners for unclean property, it bring the whole neighborhood property values down.

Needs more recreation and tourism Needs more industry Needs more Restaurants and entertainment.

No good jobs, no industries coming in, nowhere for residents to each and shop. Nothing going on. All these problems have been around for years, people keep talking about it but nothing ever changes here. We need new people making changes to the town. Everywhere else is growing but not Cedartown. All our young people that want a good life leave. Who wants to always live pay day to pay day.

No local jobs. Rising taxes without any improvement in services. Poor police and fire response. Lack of code enforcement. Drugs. No pride in ownership and lack of respect for lands and nature. Stray dogs (no animal control).

Not enough jobs.

Not enough quality shopping and dining to keep spending local.

Nothing for young people to do, drugs, too many subdivisions and littering

Our school system and public safety is in serious need and our community leaders need to address this. This should be priority number one!!

Our schools are being threatened.

Overspending antiquated political and social viewpoints among elected officials.

Planned growth and adequate incentives for business and industrial growth for job creation.

Polk County needs to put a higher sales tax on and let the property owners have a break. It is the only fair tax!

Polk County needs to take notes from surrounding areas. You have to invite various types of businesses into the area and allow the businesses to operate without so many restrictions where the businesses want to come to our county instead of the surrounding areas. Secondly, address the education and public safety issues where family's feel it will be beneficial to raise their family in this community again and stop taking their kids out of our school districts or moving away because of the high crime rates because our officers are working short staffed and can't keep pace.

Polk is way behind other counties like Bartow in regard to zoning, land use, animal control, & code enforcement. Time to stop protecting the local good old boys and clean this county up.

Poverty and poor education. Those two are equal for me

Preserve our green space!

Preserving small town and rural aspect. Promote tourism and preservation of historical and natural sites. I drove to Cobb County to work, enjoyed coming home to escape traffic, crime, noise, etc.

Public Safety Law Enforcement, paid fire department/volunteers in Polk County. Jobs Education We need to keep the bridge and right of ways up to date.

Quality of community

Quit promoting growth! Most people live in Polk, enjoy the rural setting. leave the hustle and bustle in Atlanta. Also, Polk County needs to utilize and keep the landfill to its self, not bringing in everybody else's garbage in. Every county should be responsible for its own garbage. A natural resource such as a landfill should not be used to make a profit.

Responsible economic growth

Roads, Landfill, Police, Speed Limits for control (By-passes)

Rockmart seems to be progressing and going into the Future. Cedartown only wants to grow North and East end of town. Go figure.

Stop the huge numbers of cars being driven by some many employees of City and County back and forth home. Some policemen etc. live out of county including city manager who lives in Alabama. This is costing tax payers a lot of money, this should not be allowed. Polk County is a joke. To find Cedartown just follow the litter trail in every direction.

Sub-par education and lack of opportunities for jobs.

Take back our landfill! The lack of growth has been due to poor planning by the county and city of water and sewer system upgrades and extensions. Stop wasting money on building massive buildings that sit empty.....SMH...

Thank God for Our Sheriff!! Thank you Sheriff Moats for all that you have done & continuing to do.

That we all come together as one and we all help each other achieve their goals and dreams and stop trying to fit in the so called groupies. We all need to work together not against each other. Love, peace, and happiness. Do unto others as they do unto you.

The county is junky and really needs to be cleaned up. Salvage & junk yards should have privacy fencing. Abandoned homes torn down. Rental property owners forced to properly maintain their rental homes and junky apartments.

The county needs to work as one entity instead of individuals. Cities also need to come together for growth for all. Look at the conditions of learning in schools.

The economic/job situation is terrible. We need to bring industry back here. We need to "make" something. I'd love to see meetings for the unemployed and others to brainstorm entrepreneurial ventures. There has to be something we can do. After jobs, it's our schools--they are terrible. The old fogeys on the school board need to go. Dump the iPads. Get books. This economy has driven people into teaching and nursing positions who could care less about anyone's health or education, they just want a paycheck and their weekends off.

The fire and police protection in the county is in bad need or overhaul, Polk county water authority, needs to step up its game on fire protection water, and the county, needs to come up with a better plan for paid firefighters, other than that last plan they had, where they said hey let's increase taxes and hope this plan works.

The improvements of roads. The drive to find more restaurants and shops or businesses for downtown Cedartown. I remember having Belk's, Penney's, local shoe stores, ice cream shops, 10 cent stores, more furniture stores, Sears, Drug store on main street, more men's clothing stores, jewelry stores. Walmart is not enough. Please help us.

The lack of good paying jobs and high drug problem.

The new generation well not have any type of activities or entertainment , They need to grow up in a friendly county where everybody knows u by your name because of the activities spent at the new park or at the bowling alley, communication between different traits is the most important overall.

There are many important issues! We need a means of drawing people and industry in to our community (greater industry and jobs, esthetic improvement -there is NO attractive entrance into Cedartown!! We also need to tear down and add landscape or offering the property for auction which is unoccupied. For example, the shopping center and old Del Taco, Wendy's area. It's ugly and serves very little purpose. Clean it up! We have so many vacant and unkept lots which really make our town ugly. Put the prisoners to work, pulling weeds and planting flowers throughout town.

There isn't any community centers or activities geared towards teens that would keep them off the street. Having something like that might keep them busy and away from drugs.

Time management. Plans are made but takes forever to implement.

To me the most important issue is drug control. It's everywhere and a lot of families are affected by this problem. Not sure what the answer is but there is not enough punishment for this or they would keep doing it

Too many drugs and not enough resources.

Too many drunks and drug dealers and users. Not enough attention on stores using gambling machines and letting people just hang out and make drug deals in plain sight.

Too many illegal immigrants and thugs taking over the towns. Not enough jobs and most of the blue collar jobs we do have are going to the illegal immigrants. Town needs to be cleaned up of not only criminal activity but from litter and run-down buildings and junked up properties.

Two issues, but perhaps more connected than most realize: too many citizens lack needed education and too many families are dealing with drug addiction.

Water quality and a dumb school superintendent

We all need to come together as one to help each other families goals. Too much funding on unnecessary statues when our money could be spent on helping every one. The ratios of color black or white especially at our local children's center, and restaurants, violence, texting, facebook and etc.

We have a lot of people coming to Polk County from other states because of word of mouth about low income housing. This brings in people to our county that have no intentions on working, some have mental disorders which creates more issues for law enforcement and medical staff and many have a dependence on drugs.

We have such beautiful downtown areas we need to encourage and support more local businesses and restaurants.

We need Jobs, Growth, things to do.

We need a vital downtown business area. We need more economic opportunities to allow for business growth, employment, tax income.

We need jobs and a better quality of life opportunities

We need jobs and more extracurricular opportunities for our youth - especially those not involved in sports. We have plenty of housing and lots of closed businesses. I hope we will focus on using the available buildings and land rather than build out - especially since we do not have public transportation.

We need new (or stronger businesses) to create higher paying jobs for young adults to stay in Cedartown/Polk County or to encourage young adults and young families to move to Cedartown.

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APPENDIX C: NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

Community leaders gather for 10-year planning meeting



Kevin Myrick

Polk 10 year Planning Stakeholders Meeting

Community leaders gathered for the first of many sessions on the 10 year plan.



Posted: Thursday, February 11, 2016 11:45 am

By **Kevin Myrick**

Polk County leaders from the cities and county administration and concerned community leaders are working with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGARC) to update the comprehensive plan for the next 10 years. The planning enters its latest stages with the first gathering of stakeholders from the trio of Polk's cities and the county administration, and they got a latest look at growth figures from regional commission officials for the next 50 years.

Gretchen Lugthart, community planner for the NWGARC, told stakeholders during the Feb. 4 meeting that Polk's population trends are expected to remain steady and low through the 2060s, likely only to increase by just 10,000 by the time that census is completed.

By comparison, Lugthart explained growth trends next door are going to be much greater in Paulding County, where by 2060 some 350,000 people are likely going to live within their borders.

In other words, Lugthart said, Polk isn't expected to have the growth of the metro Atlanta area, and local officials can thus plan accordingly for the future.

What mattered now for Polk County is assessing where previous plans ended up, and what needs addressing in the coming decade to make improvements.

Barnett Chitwood, who is heading up planning efforts for Polk through the NWGARC, guided the stakeholders through an exercise to help gauge what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced each entity.

The cities of Cedartown and Rockmart, along with Polk County officials, all pointed toward assets like the Silver Comet Trail, facilities and natural resources as areas of strength and opportunity. Each had different examples of where local governments were falling short - from community involvement to lack of use of some facilities and funding opportunities, to name a few.

Aragon, however, provided a dismal roll call of needed improvements. Lack of commercial growth, a declining population and even involvement in the planning session itself were among the listed items.

In fact, the only representatives at the meeting for the city of Aragon were former Mayor Ken Suffridge and his wife Lou, and Editor Kevin Myrick, who Suffridge had included on the list of stakeholders prior to the end of his term in December 2015.

Chitwood gave several reasons why planning is important, providing a guidebook for changing local governments and to have goals to strive to complete to show progress to local taxpayers.

It also allows local governments to keep their Qualified Legal Government status, required to ensure eligibility for grants, state loans and permits.

Chitwood explained that those items that weren't completed over the past five years from previous planning efforts will be carried forward to the newest round of documentation, along with those areas of concerns brought up by stakeholders over the rest of this year as the process continues.

Documentation and approval of the plan from local governments has to be completed by the end of February 2017.

The next meeting of stakeholders is set for March 3 at Cedartown City Hall in the Commission meeting room at 6 p.m.

Comprehensive Planning continues in Polk with NWGARC [sic]



Kevin Myrick

Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Meeting March 2016

Gretchen Lughart from the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission talks over demographic figures.



Posted: Thursday, March 10, 2016 12:00 pm

By [Kevin Myrick](#)

Income issues, water resources a big focus in latest stakeholder session

Facts and figures are what being used to concoct Polk County's update for the 10 year comprehensive plan. Whether it's population data or deciding what areas need focus in the coming years, the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission has been on hand to provide what leaders need when thinking about their portions of the update.

Among those facts the regional commission is presenting during the update process revolve around incomes in Polk, which based on U.S. Census Data and surveys, the entire county falls well behind its neighbors in Georgia.

In fact, much of the county is considered to be impoverished, including portions of downtown Cedartown with more than 50 percent of the residents bringing in an annual income of \$25,000 or less a year for a whole family to subsist based on Federal standards.

The Regional Commission's Gretchen Lughart, who is helping with the planning process, presented this round of facts and figures during the latest stakeholders meeting on March 3.

She reported that as of 2010, Polk County residents were on average making \$36,882 a year – third from the bottom in the Northwest Georgia region for earning power.

Chattooga residents brought in the least on average at \$33,140, and Whitfield County's average annual income was at \$35,808.

Census figures reported by Lughart also reported that some 34 percent of county residents make \$25,000 or less a year. Maps provided during the presentation show a wide swath of eastern Polk County within this income bracket, along with portions surrounding Cedartown and down toward the southern county line with Haralson County.

"There are large concentrations of poverty statewide, mainly in South Georgia, so it's not an unusual pattern for our area," Lughart explained.

Poverty problems and income levels were also joined by unemployment figures and out-of-county commuting patterns, all pointing to one particular figure: Polk has less jobs available per household than needed.

Lughart pointed out this particular figure – the job-housing balance and job-labor force balance statistics for the county as a whole – and finds that it falls just below a 1:1 ratio as of this year.

In 2006 and 2007 during better economic times, the ratio was as high as 1.2 jobs for every household, but the recession brought the figure down below the 1:1 ratio in 2010, and it as slowly recovered to near that level this year.

Lughart said statisticians set 1.5 jobs for every household in the county as the normal rate.

County commissioner Jason Ward interrupted briefly to ask whether those figures included people who were retired, which Lughart said didn't. Ward pointed out that Polk's retired population also might impact this figure since they weren't counted as households generating income.

Unemployment trends for Polk, Lughart said, have generally followed those of the nation as a whole even if the figures remain higher than the U.S. average.

She said the average rate from Nov. 2014 through Dec. 2015 remained higher than the region and state as a whole – and much higher than the 4 percent rate nationally – but that the recovery here has slightly lagged behind based on statistics even if the declining rates followed the overall trend.

One figure she also pointed out that impacted income levels and job statistics were the number of those already employed who leave Polk County every day to go to work.

More than 39 percent of those employed leave Polk every day to go to work, though 54 percent of people who have jobs in Polk live within the borders.

How do these figures play into the coming plan update?

Figures for income and population data can help the regional planners and local officials determine what areas need addressing in the short and long term, and how much grant money or federal dollars might be available based on the census data and the income that taxpayers generate with local taxes and business.

For instance, housing issues in Rockmart might be better addressed with not just the help of programs like the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, but also federal dollars.

Officials from the county, Rockmart and Cedartown provided planners their thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the coming 10 years that in the last four areas thoughts were needed by planners.

Those included housing options, transportation, land use and intergovernmental coordination.

Aragon officials were again not on-hand for the planning meeting, despite a list provided of individuals who would be interested in the process provided by former Mayor Ken Suffridge.

Suffridge and Polk County Standard Journal Editor Kevin Myrick were again the sole representatives for the City of Aragon.

Planning for future water use

The good news? Polk County's water resources are stable and secure for decades to come.

The bad news? Decisions now about how to handle those water resources could have long term impacts on the future, especially if forecasts by scientists for warming trends in Georgia hold true, and H2O becomes more scarce. Lugthart also presented information on how Polk County will soon have to provide local plans for water resources in the future based on the overall region of North Georgia and the Coosa River watershed for the state.

This particular part of the 10 year joint comprehensive plan will focus on long term handling of water resources and what Polk County can do to ensure not a drop is wasted, and even how interbasin transfers might work out in the future.

An advantage for Polk County, Lugthart said, is that because local springs and creeks provide residents drinking water, there's no great issue of source point pollution to deal with and makes official's job slightly easier.

Where Polk County fits into this planning, she explained, is in mitigating areas of pollution problems like farming activities causing runoff and looking at saving additional water through the use of such items as reservoirs.

Lugthart pointed toward coming U.S. Supreme Court action on the lawsuit between Georgia and the State of Florida over upstream and downstream river resources, and based on decisions made by the justices it could determine much in what local residents will want to do about ensuring there's enough water to go around for all.

"Scientists predict that Georgia is going to get warmer and drier," Lugthart said. "And in view of all that the region's looking to see happen in the future as far as growth is concerned, it's important to seek a water census and plan now."

Though drier conditions are expected over the next decade, Lugthart said, it doesn't mean the forecast will be correct. However, she said it is better to plan for the worst and hope for the best when it comes to future water use.

The regional commission seeks forecasts on water use and availability through the next four decades to allow for adequate planning for future population growth.

"Things are not going to get any easier," she said.

Options for saving water – such as the building of reservoirs – are costly and take years of planning and paperwork hurdles to clear – Lugthart pointed out, but said that Polk officials were required to hear about the water planning process and ideas in the comprehensive plan process.

She also added that Polk might have grants available to it for taking steps to mitigate pollution in local streams and creeks, such as runoff or septic problems. Currently some residents in Northeastern Polk County have funding help available should they decide to upgrade their septic systems as part of a campaign to cleanup up the headwaters of Silver Creek.

She said if Polk pursued such plans for its water resources like Floyd County did with Silver Creek, more residents could have this program provided to them as well.

It could also become part of Georgia's WaterFirst initiative, which provides those EPD 319 grants along with 1 percent interest on Georgia Environmental Finance Authority loans for water project upgrades, and recognition statewide.

Cities and counties who seek the designation have to go above and beyond the practices required by the state in protecting water assets in their communities, Lugthart explained.

However, fellow planner Barnett Chitwood said the program and the coming water plan is worth doing now for future generations.

“Water issues are big because of the cost of water to consumers at the end of the tap,” he said. “Imagine if a water bill was about the same price as a power bill, \$100 a month or so... Folks are supposed to work together on this and everyone involved in the decision making needs to remember that we need to keep water rates low, but also do our best to keep the resources we have for growth and scarcity.”

Chitwood pointed toward Colorado as an example, where water users on the western side of the state have their resources tapped by the eastern side in Denver, then watch the water leave when it heads down the Platte River. Interbasin transfers, as Colorado’s example points out, takes water away from one area where it might be abundant for another’s use where it is scarce and the needs are just as great.

This makes water a highly sought after commodity for places like Atlanta in the coming years, Chitwood and Lugthart both pointed out. However they also reminded officials those transfers come at a cost to local resources, and can impact overall growth over decades.

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APPENDIX D: LEGAL NOTICES

This legal advertisement of the First Public Hearing for the update of the Polk County Joint Comprehensive Plan appeared in the Polk County Standard Journal on Wednesday, November 18, 2015.

