Whitfield County Comprehensive Plan

A Joint Comprehensive Plan for
Unincorporated Whitfield County and the Municipalities of
Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell

2018-2022

Prepared By:
Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
503 W. Waugh St. Dalton, Ga. 30721

Prepared For:
Whitfield County

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Whitfield County

Board of Commissioners

Board Members
R. Lynette Laughter, Chairman
Harold Brooker
Barry W. Robbins
Roger Crossen
Greg Jones

September 18, 2018

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
503 W. Waugh St.
Dalton, Ga. 30721

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

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

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

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

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Ethan Calhoun, Senior Planner at (706) 295-6485/ ecalhoun@nwgrc.org.

Sincerely,

R. Lynette Laughter

R. Lynette Laughter
Chairman, Whitfield County Board of Commissioners

Enclosures

PO Box 248 ~ Dalton, Georgia 30722-0248 ~ Phone (706) 275-7500 ~ Fax (706) 275-7501
www.whitfieldcountyga.com

Town of Cohutta

Ron Shinnick
Mayor

12 September 2018

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
503 West Waugh Street
Dalton, GA 30721

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The Town of Cohutta has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

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If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Ethan Calhoun, Senior Planner at (706) 295-6485/ ecalhoun@nwgrc.org.

Sincerely,
Mayor Ron Shinnick

Town of Cohutta
Enclosures

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
JASON PARKER
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MAYOR
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CITY COUNCIL
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ANNALEE HARLAN
TYREE GOODLETT
GARY CREWS

September 13, 2018

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
503 W. Waugh Street
Dalton, Ga. 30720

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Dalton has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

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

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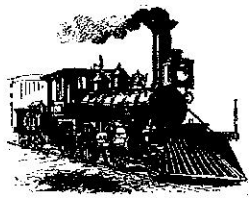
If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Ethan Calhoun, Senior Planner at (706) 295-6485/ ecalhoun@nwgrc.org.

Sincerely,

Denise Wood

Denise Wood
Mayor Pro Tem
City of Dalton

Enclosures



City of Tunnel Hill

201 G. Vaughn Parkway
Tunnel Hill, Georgia 30755
Telephone: 706-673-2355
Fax: 706-673-6434

September 13, 2018

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
503 W. Waugh St.
Dalton, Ga. 30721

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Tunnel Hill has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

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

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If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Ethan Calhoun, Senior Planner at (706) 295-6485/ ecalhoun@nwgrc.org.

Sincerely,

Ken Gowin
Mayor

Enclosures

The City of Varnell
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Mayor Tom Dickson
Council Members
Ashlee Godfrey Mayor Pro Tem)
Bill Caylor Clyde Williams
David Owens Bob Roche

September 13,2018

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
503 W. Waugh St.
Dalton, Ga. 30721

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Varnell has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

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

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

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Ethan Calhoun, Senior Planner at (706) 295-6485/ ecalhoun@nwgrc.org.

Sincerely,

Tom Dickson

Mayor Tom Dickson,
City of Varnell

Enclosures

Whitfield County

Joint Comprehensive Plan 2018-2028

Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for

Whitfield County Including the

Municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell

Prepared for:

Whitfield County

Town of Cohutta

City of Dalton

City of Tunnel Hill

City of Varnell

By:

NWGRC
NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
Regional Planning

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ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS 1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2
INTRODUCTION 4
HOW TO USE THIS PLAN 9
JOINT LAND USE ELEMENT 12
Using the Future Development Map 14
Character Area Descriptions 22
Future Development Maps 67
COHUTTA'S FUTURE LAND USE 71
RURAL BROADBAND 80
HOUSING 82
TRANSPORTATION 91
POLICY STATEMENTS 106
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM 112
Unincorporated Whitfield County 112
Town of Cohutta 125
City of Dalton 140
City of Tunnel Hill 153
City of Varnell 161

ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHITFIELD COUNTY

Lynn Laughter
Board of Commissioners Chairman

Barry Robbins
Board of Commissioners District 1

Harold Brooker
Board of Commissioners District 2

Roger Crossen
Board of Commissioners District 3

Greg Jones
Board of Commissioners District 1

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TOWN OF COHUTTA

Ron Shinnick
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Sheila Rose
Vice Mayor

Sandy Clayborne
Council Woman

Shane Kornberg
Councilman

Greg Fowler
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Pam Shinnick
Town Clerk

CITY OF DALTON

Dennis Mock
Mayor

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Councilmember, Ward One

Annalee Harlan
Councilmember, Ward Two

Tyree Goodlett
Councilmember, Ward Three

Gary Crews
Councilmember, Ward four

Bernadette Chattam
City Clerk

Jason Parker
City Administrator

CITY OF TUNNEL HILL

Ken Gowin
Mayor

Jim Griffin
Councilmember, Post 2

Elizabeth Dennis
Councilmember, Post 2

Hub Griffin
Councilmember, Post 4

Melinda Griffin
City Clerk

Blake Griffin
City Administrator

City of Varnell

Tom Dickson
Mayor

Pam Garrison
City Clerk

Bill Caylor
Councilmember

Ashley Godfrey
Councilmember

David Owens
Councilmember

Bob Roche
Councilmember

Clyde Williams
Councilmember

Mike Brown
City Manager

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Dalton-Whitfield Chamber of Commerce

Mark Buckner
Dalton Utilities

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Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority

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Executive Director, DDDA

Tom Minor
Whitfield, Dalton, Varnell Planning Commission

Edward O'Brian
Chief, Whitfield County Fire Dept.

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Chief, Dalton Fire Dept.

David Elrod
Dalton State Foundation

Patricia Garner

Marcus Morris

Sherry Brock

Daniel Peoples

Catherine Sellers

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Community Agenda for Whitfield County and the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell

Located in the North Georgia Region and part of the Dalton Metropolitan Statistical Area, Whitfield County covers approximately 290 square miles of predominantly rural, yet increasingly suburban landscape in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Considered the "Carpet Capital of the World" due to its well-established carpet industry, Whitfield County includes four municipalities: Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell.

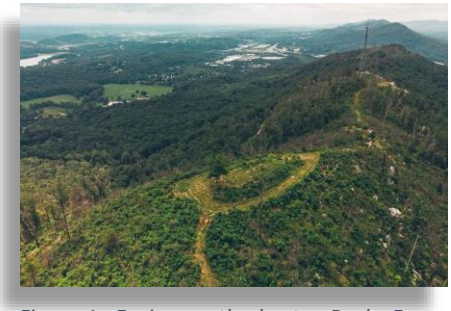


Figure 1: Facing southerly atop Rocky Face Ridge. Haig Mill Reservoir in left foreground

Whitfield County and the cities of Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell have joined together in an effort to meet the challenges ahead, working together with their citizens, elected officials, professional staff, business leaders, property owners and major employers to prepare the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2018-2022.*

WHY WE PLAN

Comprehensive planning is an important management tool for promoting a strong, healthy, community. A Comprehensive Plan provides a vision, clearly stated and shared by all, that describes the future of the community. It protects private property rights and also encourages and supports economic development. The plan can be used to promote orderly and rational development so that Whitfield County and the cities of Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell can remain physically attractive and economically viable while preserving important natural and historic resources.

The comprehensive plan provides the tool to become more certain about where development will occur, what it will be like, when it will happen, and how the costs of development will be met. It provides a tool for the community to achieve the development patterns it desires, such as: traditional neighborhoods, infill development, creating a sense of place, providing transportation alternatives, permitting mixed uses, protecting natural resources and accommodating economic growth.

Planning also helps the County and its municipalities invest their money wisely in infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer, schools, parks and green space, and

Why we plan

- Set a new standard for protecting natural and cultural resources
- Promote desired patterns of Development
- Facilitate economic development
- Accommodate a range of housing and transportation options
- Prioritize capital expenditures
- Enhance quality of life

other facilities to maintain and improve the quality of life for the residents of Whitfield County.

PURPOSE

The *Joint Comprehensive Plan* represents the community's vision, goals, policies, key issues and opportunities that the community intends to address, and an action plan highlighting the necessary tools for implementing the comprehensive plan. In addition, it outlines desired development patterns and supporting land uses with a future development map for unincorporated Whitfield County and the cities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell.

Figure 2: Excited audience at Burr Park's Summer Concert Series in Downtown Dalton

The Joint *Comprehensive Plan* serves the purpose of meeting the intent of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," as originally established in 1989 and most recently revised in March, 2014. Preparation in accordance with these standards is an essential requirement in maintaining status as a Qualified Local Government. State law requires Whitfield County and its municipalities to update their respective comprehensive plans by October 31, 2018. For planning purposes, DCA classifies Whitfield County as an "Advanced" planning level jurisdiction.

Figure 3: Chief O'Brien showcasing some equipment purchased with previous SPLOST dollars at a recent event held at Edward's Park

This plan updates the *Whitfield County Comprehensive Plan 2008-2017* adopted in 2008 by the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners and the mayors and city councils of Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell. The 2008 plan did not include the town of Cohutta, but Cohutta later adopted their own independent comprehensive plan in 2016. Like the 2008 plan, this 2018 update will serve as the official comprehensive plan for unincorporated Whitfield County and the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell. The 2018 plan does include the town of Cohutta.

SCOPE

The *Joint Comprehensive Plan* provides a fine-tuned list of needs and opportunities, future development maps with character areas, narratives on housing and transportation. The plan also contains an implementation program listing strategic capital projects aimed at addressing the community's, previously mentioned, needs and opportunities. For the future development maps, the Land Use narrative presents strategies for implementation of each character area depicted. The Housing narrative highlights the findings from the *Believe Greater Dalton*

Figure 4: Historic Prater's Mill

Housing Strategy (2018). A Transportation narrative is included which summarizes the Transportation Implementation Program prepared by the Dalton-Whitfield Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The implementation program includes the Community Work Program (CWP) and policy statements intended to guide the County and its municipalities.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVMEMT

Creating a functional Comprehensive Plan begins with defining a common vision for the future development of the Community. A Community Vision is the overall image of what the community wants to be and how it wants to look at some point in the future. It is the starting point for creating a plan and actions to implement the plan. A successful visioning process requires meaningful participation from a wide range of community stakeholders. Whitfield County residents, property owners, business owners and other stakeholders contributed to the production of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Due to the participation involved in developing the plan, the *Comprehensive Plan* should generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of Whitfield County and thereby encourage citizens to remain engaged in the development process and ensure that the county and each municipality implement the plan.

Figure 5: Cohutta stakeholder's meeting in spring 2018

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The initial public hearing was held at the Whitfield County Commissioner's Chambers in the City of Dalton on November 13, 2017 as part of the Commissioner's regular business meeting.

The final public hearing was also held at the Whitfield County Commissioner's Chambers in the City of Dalton on September 10, 2018 as part of the Commissioner's regular business meeting.

The public hearing was well-attended and ads were published in the Daily Citizen newspaper to inform Whitfield County citizens about the comprehensive plan and how to be involved in the process.

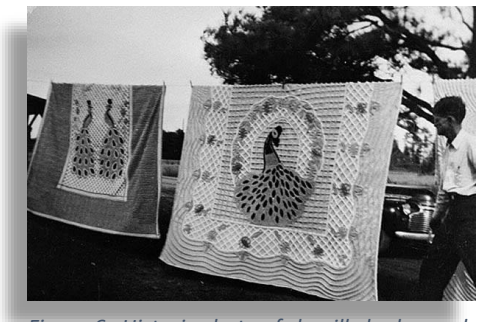


Figure 6: Historic photo of chenille bedspreads displayed along Hwy. 41 (aka Peacock Alley)

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Prior to the official process of the *Comprehensive Plan* update a heavy interest in strategic planning had emerged throughout the community. This sudden interest seemed to arise in the wake of the recent recession that profoundly injured Whitfield's once legendary local economy. Since the initial impacts of the recession a noticeable recovery within this community altered the mindset of many Whitfieldians from that of survival to that of optimism and forward thinking. With an evident desire in the community for continued improvement the Dalton-Whitfield Chamber of Commerce began work to launch a county-wide initiative dubbed *Believe Greater Dalton*. One of the initial, and rather influential, discoveries found that 62% of those earning more than $40,000 a year at a job in Whitfield County choose to live somewhere else. That initial data point paired with the results of a community survey, in which 2,220 responses were submitted, led the steering committee of *Believe Greater Dalton* to develop a strategic action plan. This plan is aimed at tactically improving the community with six key goals that, if achieved, will create an environment which attracts, retains and produces talented and educated citizens as well as a more sustainable and resilient community.

Figure 8: Standing room only during the October 2017 Believe Greater Dalton Roll Out event at Dalton's City Hall

Figure 7: Downtown Dalton RSVP Town Hall in spring of 2018

Since the initiation of *Believe Greater Dalton* In partnership with the Downtown Dalton Development Authority (DDDA), the community was awarded a Renaissance Strategic Vision and Planning Process grant (RSVP). This process will deliver a downtown master plan and the steps to get there facilitated by a skilled team from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at UGA as the end result. The initial public input phase which consisted of an online survey with over 800 responses, 20+ focus groups, and a town hall community forum, where over 150 people showed up to give their input on our downtown, is complete and the findings have been presented to the steering committee. Phases two and three will provide design concepts and economic tools for implementation, with the final plan expected by late fall.

Figure 9: BGD is heavily invested in on-going community outreach including regular video shorts

Over 150 people turned out in late January to participate in focus groups that would shape and direct the work of the committee on Community Pride. Marketing and storytelling of the positive Dalton past, present, and future story and community beautification were the two overarching themes and have become the focus of these efforts. In partnership with Keep Dalton-Whitfield Beautiful, a series of grass roots community clean-up events are underway and already yielding great results. BGD has amplified its social media presence through videos and our new "People of Dalton" campaign. Working together with multiple community entities, this committee within *BGD* is pursuing a marketing and communications professional to become a resource for the community at large to ensure this strategy continues to make forward strides.

Figure 11: Volunteers during planned clean-up days at Burr and Brookwood parks

Figure 10: BGD housing committee meeting, summer 2018

The BGD strategic plan called for a comprehensive study of the current market to be sure we act on the best possible information. The Housing committee interviewed consultants, selected the group they felt was best suited for the work, and the study is underway. Confirming the importance of the work of the Housing Strategy, over 2000 people took the Housing Market Survey. The results of the comprehensive study are included within the housing element and this committee is ready to get to work on creating the solutions.

Whitfield County has also continued to participate with the THRIVE 2055 Initiative since it began in 2014. THRIVE 2055 is a citizen-led, public-private endeavor to engage people from across the 16-county, tristate Chattanooga region of Southeast Tennessee, Northwest Georgia and Northeast Alabama to make the most of our economic opportunities while preserving what we love about our home communities. The objective of the three-year process is to identify regional values and goals along with a consensus on strategies related to regional economic development, our region's natural treasures, regional transportation, and education and training that can be implemented for the long-term prosperity of the region. This initiative has completed its initial phases by observing the community's aspirations, and developing priorities for the region. The THRIVE 2055 Initiative is now in its third "Action" phase. Highlights from the initiative can be found throughout the *Comprehensive Plan*.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

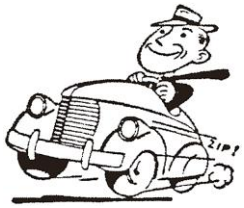
HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Joint Narratives

The purpose of this plan is to implement a vision for growth and development by guiding and implementing land use and development policy in unincorporated Whitfield County and the cities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell. Each jurisdiction addresses each of the elements (described below) in joint sections that focus on each element as it relates to the entire county. This slightly different format from the previous 2008 narrative was chosen in order to reduce unnecessary redundancy to create a more unified and streamlined narrative since the introduction of DCA's 2014 minimum standards.

- **The Land Use Element** of this plan is a joint section including an alphabetical list of character areas for the four jurisdictions utilizing an FDM. The Town of Cohutta's land use element utilizes a Future Land Use Map format while all other jurisdictions utilize a Future Development Map format. Actionable projects committed to land use are found within each individual jurisdiction's Community Work Program (CWP)

- **The Transportation Element** utilizes information found within the Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization (GDMPO) combined with input from each jurisdiction to identify issues with transportation throughout the county. Actionable projects committed to transportation improvement are found within each individual jurisdiction's Community Work Program (CWP)



- **The Housing Element** identifies issues and opportunities sourced from the *Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy* completed in August 2018. Actionable projects committed to housing are found within each individual jurisdiction's Community Work Program (CWP)

- **Policies** are adopted to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local officials. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the comprehensive plan, including achieving the Vision for Future Development and appropriately addressing the Community Issues and Opportunities. Policy statements are identified for each planning element. Due to the interjurisdictional similarity of the policies adopted in the previous Comprehensive Plan this plan will incorporate them into a single joint section in order to reduce unnecessary repetition.

Independent Narratives

These portions of the plan are jurisdictionally specific and therefore require more individualized organization than the joint narratives. Unincorporated Whitfield County as well as the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell each have independent narratives for the following plan elements:

Report of Accomplishments The first step of plan implementation is to conduct a report of accomplishments specific to Whitfield County, Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell. The report of accomplishments 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 2013-2017. The local government officials reviewed the 2013-2017 work programs for their respective governments and noted which projects 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 or function of government. Items marked as underway or postponed are carried forward to the work programs in this current plan, *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan, 2018-2022*. However, projects noted as "Ongoing," annual tasks, or policy statements will not be carried forward to the current 2018-2022 work program**.**

Community Vision/Goals The purpose of the Community Goals element is to lay out a road map for the community's future, developed through a very public process of involving community leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of the community. The community goals are the most important part of the plan, for they identify the community's direction for the future, and are intended to generate local pride and enthusiasm for the future of the community, thereby leading citizens and leadership to act to ensure that the plan is implemented.

The community vision paints a picture of what Whitfield County desires to become and provides complete descriptions of the development patterns envisioned. Each jurisdiction has an independent vision statement.

Needs and Opportunities The methodology for generating the list of needs and opportunities was accomplished via SWOT analyses, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, is a brainstorming exercise designed for stakeholders to reflect on their community's needs and opportunities. The exercise was carried out by addressing the entire group of stakeholders rather than separating the group by jurisdiction. Stakeholders had been shown a presentation illustrating the current population and economic trends in order to provide each stakeholder with the basis for an informed discussion during the initial stakeholder's meeting. The SWOT analyses were carried out once at the joint meeting and independently at each jurisdictional stakeholder meeting. This discussion was broken down into seven categories, (Economic Development, Housing, Community Facilities and Services, Transportation, Natural/Cultural Resources, Land Use, and Intergovernmental Coordination). One planner facilitated the discussion while the other wrote down the groups responses on a poster board. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to address each category with the SWOT perspective. These sheets were collected by the planners after the second stakeholder meeting and the responses were developed into a list of needs and opportunities. The list of needs and opportunities was then brought to each jurisdiction's staff and/or elected officials in order to determine which items could be addressed specific to each community. Some of the more overreaching viewpoints discussed during the stakeholder meetings were better addressed via policy statements and other area specific approaches within the character descriptions rather than the more action provoking items.

Community Work Program The community work programs represent a list of specific tasks that the governments are willing to attempt accomplishing. Developing the work program from needs and opportunities lists helps to lead the residents and managers from general ideas about issues to creating specific tasks to solve them. It is not a contract or binding document, since many items that go on the list are dependent on funding that has not yet been awarded or obtained. Using the possible strategies from the Needs and Opportunities, planners created work program tables. The stakeholders, managers, and other government officials reviewed these work programs. The managers and/or elected officials had final say in the content of the work programs, because they are the officials who run the government. In the tables below incomplete projects can be found from the previous 2013-2017 work program as well as new projects for the 2018-2022 period. However, as stated previously, any items in the previous work program that would be considered a policy statement or an annual practice such as routine maintenance will not be carried forward in the current 2018-2022 work program as these items are not quantifiable projects with a clear beginning and end. In the first (left) column one will note the number which references the specific need or opportunity cited previously in the plan. The second column contains a brief description of the item or project to be carried out, followed by a timeline, an estimated cost, a funding source, and the party responsible for the project's completion.

JOINT LAND USE ELEMENT

A comprehensive guide for future development and redevelopment within Whitfield County and its four municipalities

Geography

Whitfield County includes the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell. It also consists of numerous smaller communities that are not incorporated cities but are recognized places in the County. These are addressed by geographic area:

Unincorporated Whitfield County

Northside

The northern portion of the County (north of Dalton city limits/ Dawnville Road area and east of I-75) includes agricultural and lowdensity residential uses east of SR 71/Cleveland Highway, suburban neighborhoods and commercial nodes along SR 71, and the ridges of Rocky Face and Cohutta. Northside Whitfield County includes the following communities: Beaverdale, Cedar Valley, Cohutta Ridge, Hopewell, Norton, Plainview, Pleasant Grove, Prater's Mill, Norton, Rocky Face Ridge, Toonerville and Waring.

Southside

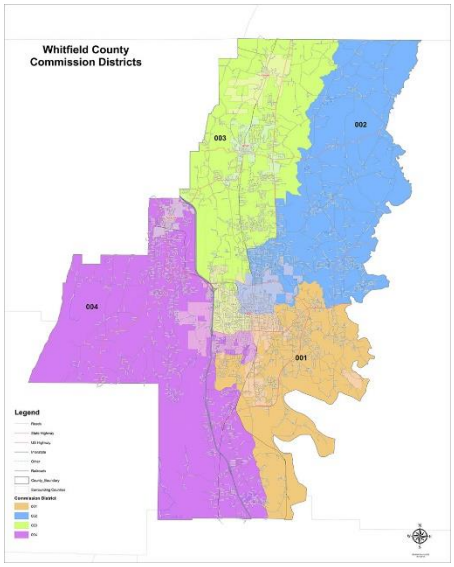
The south side of Whitfield County is located south of the City of Dalton. The area includes portions of the Chattahoochee National Forest located west of I-75, interchange areas at Carbondale and Connector 3 as well as historic rural communities located throughout the area. Southside Whitfield County includes the following communities: Carbondale, Five Springs, Nance Springs, Phelps, River Bend and Tilton.

Westside

The west side of the County is comprised of the areas west of I-75, including residential areas south of Tunnel Hill, the steep slopes of the Dug Gap Ridge, the Chattahoochee National Forest and the western most portion of the county, and the following communities: Dug Gap Ridge, Gordon Springs, Mill Creek, Mt. Vernon and Trickum.

Eastside

The eastern portion of Whitfield County includes areas east of the City of Dalton, including a segment of the Dalton Bypass, commercial development along SR 76, higher density residential areas just east of Dalton, and the Dalton Municipal Airport. Eastside Whitfield County includes the following communities: Dawnville, Cedar Ridge and Keith's Mill.

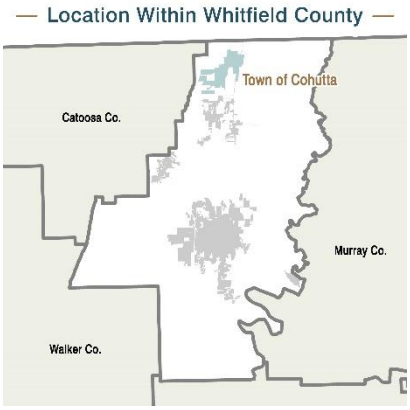


12: Whitfield's geographical quadrants can best be illustrated by the Board of Commissioner's districts seen above

Municipalities

Cohutta

The town of Cohutta has existed since the 1800's but, it was not incorporated until 1969. Located in north Whitfield County, Cohutta totals approximately 3,000 acres with a population of less than 700. The town is only served by one arterial corridor SR 71 which has been a limiting factor in regards to high intensity development.



Dalton

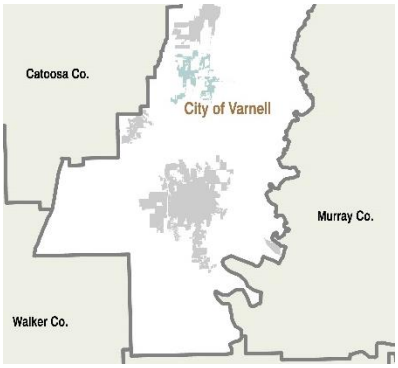
The City of Dalton was incorporated in 1847 and is the county seat of Whitfield County. The City encompasses 19.84 square miles and has an estimated population of 33,401 according to the U.S. Census (July 2007). Dalton is served by SR 71, SR 52, U.S. 41, U.S. 76 and Interstate 75, providing access that has contributed to the City becoming a significant regional economic center.

Tunnel Hill

The City of Tunnel Hill is located west of the northernmost I-75 interchange in Whitfield County. U.S. Census figures for July 2007 estimate a population of 1,249 for the city. Tunnel Hill has a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses inside the city limits, as well as a unique historic resource: the 1850 Western and Atlantic railroad tunnel that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is open to the public, alongside the Tunnel Hill Heritage Center.

Varnell

The City of Varnell was established in 1835 and has an estimated population of 1,584 based on 2007 U.S. Census figures. Located in northern Whitfield County, south of Cohutta and west of SR 71, Varnell is predominantly residential with commercial uses oriented around the traditional town center and toward SR 71. The City's commercial heritage includes the historic Prater's Mill, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



LAND USE ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

This land use analysis relied heavily on GIS to identify and map current conditions, with a base map of the county's watersheds and ground water recharge areas sourced from the 2012 Northwest Georgia Regional Resource Plan map prefacing the future development maps later in this section. GIS maps illustrating the existing public wastewater service areas were also a useful tool for this process and may also be found prefacing the future development maps. Development of land and provision of services via infrastructure are heavily influenced by the contour of the land which varies greatly throughout Whitfield County's mountainous terrain. Wastewater and drinking water systems optimize downslope flow; land development is less expensive on flat land, a rare commodity in Whitfield County; and central travel corridors often follow ridge lines. Arguably, the most significant challenge for Whitfield County's future, not unlike state and global challenges, is the management of its water. Access to drinking water will not be a limiting factor on the county's growth since public drinking water is available along every public road county-wide but, obligations to manage wastewater and stormwater can quickly become crippling government costs, passed along to businesses, residents, and tourists therefore making the county an expensive place to live and conduct business. The land use conversation revealed the need for continuing to direct future growth in areas already supplied with water and wastewater services, while encouraging future development to be impact conscious in its footprint and connections. In prioritizing new development on vacant lots already served by water and sewer and prioritizing redevelopment in both established residential and commercial centers, both county government and future residents benefit from cost savings while natural resource impacts are minimized. Unmanaged development patterns can also worsen traffic and erode natural amenities highly valued among residents. As a result, the following character areas reflect strategies which leverage existing infrastructure and established neighborhoods while accommodating growth in more natural or rural expanses through moderation and character specific approaches. Whitfield County, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell utilize a future development map while the Town of Cohutta chose a future land use map. Therefore Cohutta's future land use element will be separate from the other jurisdictions joint narrative.

Using the Future Development Map

A key component of the comprehensive planning process is the creation of a Future Development Map that reflects the vision for growth and development for the next 20 years. This vision is expressed in unique "character areas." Character area planning focuses on the way an area looks and how it functions. Tailored development strategies are applied to each area, with the goal of enhancing the existing character/function or promoting a desired character for the future. Character areas define areas that presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved, have potential to evolve into unique areas or require special

attention because of unique development issues. The following pages present an alphabetized list of character area narratives as well as each jurisdiction's Future Development Map for Whitfield County, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell respectively. Each character area description includes the following information:

- Development Pattern
- Primary Land Uses
- Implementation Strategies
- Quality Community Objectives

The **development pattern** describes the nature of preferred development in a character area. The description is expressed in terms of characteristics that may include:

- Appropriate building or site design
- Infrastructure required to support development
- Intensity of development
- Type and extent of connectivity between uses, including sidewalk/trail accommodations and street design
- Environmental, scenic, historic or cultural features
- Open space
- Proper land development practices
- Relationship between land uses or character areas
- Traffic mitigation measures
- Availability of, and access to, public spaces or park
- Landscape or buffer treatments
- Alternative approaches to conventional development

The **primary land use** section lists permissible land uses within each character area. This section identifies a recommended land use for each parcel in a character area.

Finally, the **implementation strategies** section identifies the measures the County can take to ensure that the development pattern described by each character area can be implemented. Typical strategies include capital projects, adoption or amendment of regulations, preparation of supplemental plans or studies, implementation of existing studies, and collaboration between entities to achieve a common goal. In addition to the three levels of description above, the **Quality Community Objectives (QCO)** analysis for each Character Area can be found on the following pages. This identifies the QCOs that will be pursued in the character area. These objectives were adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to measure how communities preserve their unique resources while accommodating future development.

Quality Community Objectives

In addition to the three levels of description above, the Quality Community Objectives (QCO) analysis for each Character Area can be found below. This identifies the QCOs that will be pursued in the character area. The QCOs were adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to measure how communities preserve their unique resources while accommodating future development.

Regional Identity – Regions should promote and preserve an "identity," defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.	**Infill Development** – Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.
Growth Preparedness – Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.	**Environmental Protection** – Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
Appropriate Businesses – The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.	**Heritage Preservation** – The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
Educational Opportunities – Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.	**Regional Cooperation** – Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.
Employment Options – A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.	**Transportation Alternatives** – Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.
Open Space Preservation – New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.	**Housing Opportunities** – Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

Sense of Place – Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.	**Traditional Neighborhood** – Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.
Regional Solutions – Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.	

UNINCORPORATED WHITFIELD COUNTY

Quality Community Objective	Character Areas																
	Preserve	Ridge Conservation	Rural Agricultural Reserve	Rural Residential	Rural Neighborhood Revitalization	Rural Crossroads	Suburban Neighborhood	Emerging Suburban	Rural Corridor	Commercial Corridor	Transition Corridor	Bypass Corridor	Community Activity Center	Regional Activity Center	Interchange	Industrial	Airport
Traditional Neighborhoods								✓									
Infill Development							✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Sense of Place	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Transportation Alternatives						✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Identity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓		✓	
Heritage Preservation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓											
Open Space Preservation	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓									
Environmental Protection	✓	✓						✓								✓	
Growth Preparedness	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appropriate Businesses						✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employment Options						✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing Choices				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Educational Opportunities												✓		✓	✓	✓	
Regional Cooperation	✓	✓													✓	✓	✓

CITY OF DALTON

Quality Community Objective	Character Areas															
	Preserve	Ridge Conservation	Town Neighborhood	Town Neighborhood Revitalization	Suburban Neighborhood	Emerging Suburban	Downtown	Commercial Corridor	Transition Corridor	Bypass Corridor	Community Activity Center	Regional Activity Center	Industrial	Medical District	Dalton State College	Airport
Traditional Neighborhoods			✓	✓		✓	✓									
Infill Development			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Sense of Place	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Transportation Alternatives			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Identity	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Heritage Preservation	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓								✓	
Open Space Preservation	✓	✓				✓								✓	✓	
Environmental Protection	✓	✓				✓							✓			
Growth Preparedness	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appropriate Businesses							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employment Options							✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing Choices			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	
Educational Opportunities										✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Regional Cooperation	✓	✓											✓	✓	✓	✓

CITY OF TUNNEL HILL

Quality Community Objective	Character Areas								
	Preserve	Ridge Conservation	Town Neighborhood	Suburban Neighborhood	Emerging Suburban	Transition Corridor	Commercial Corridor	Interchange	Community Activity Center
Traditional Neighborhoods			✓		✓				
Infill Development			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Sense of Place	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transportation Alternatives			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Identity	✓	✓	✓						✓
Heritage Preservation	✓	✓	✓						
Open Space Preservation	✓	✓			✓				
Environmental Protection	✓	✓			✓				
Growth Preparedness	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appropriate Businesses						✓	✓	✓	✓
Employment Options							✓	✓	✓
Housing Choices			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Educational Opportunities									
Regional Cooperation	✓	✓						✓	

CITY OF VARNELL

Quality Community Objective	Character Areas						
	Preserve	Ridge Conservation	Town Neighborhood	Suburban Neighborhood	Emerging Suburban	Transition Corridor	Community Activity Center
Traditional Neighborhoods			✓		✓		
Infill Development			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sense of Place	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Transportation Alternatives			✓		✓	✓	✓
Regional Identity	✓	✓	✓				✓
Heritage Preservation	✓	✓	✓				
Open Space Preservation	✓	✓			✓		
Environmental Protection	✓	✓			✓		
Growth Preparedness	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Appropriate Businesses						✓	✓
Employment Options							✓
Housing Choices			✓	✓	✓		✓
Educational Opportunities							✓
Regional Cooperation	✓	✓					

Character Area Descriptions

The Future Development Map for unincorporated Whitfield County identifies the following twenty-two character areas:

- Airport
- Bypass Corridor
- Commercial Corridor
- Community Activity Center
- Dalton State Corridor
- Downtown
- Emerging Suburban
- Industrial
- Interchange
- Medical District
- Preserve
- Regional Activity Center
- Ridge Conservation
- Rural Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Corridor
- Rural Crossroads
- Rural Neighborhood Revitalization
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Transition Corridor

** The majority of parcels are located inside the Dalton city limits.*

A detailed description of the character areas listed above can be found listed alphabetically on the following pages.

AIRPORT

The Airport character area is composed of those lands in the approach zones around the Dalton Municipal Airport. With the exception of the airport, the character area is currently largely undeveloped and rural with some scattered single-family residential development nearby.

Maintenance Hangar at Dalton Municipal Airport

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Limit building heights to avoid conflict with airport operations
- Discourage encroachment of unsuitable land uses, including residential land uses, public gathering places (i.e., churches and schools), and any other use that may affect visibility or safe electronic instrument approaches and departures from the airport
- Discourage land uses that may present a potential conflict with future aviation operations
- Discourage encroachment of unsuitable land uses by enforcing regulations
- Promote traditional rural land uses in the surrounding areas

Runway at Dalton Municipal Airport; Facing Northwest

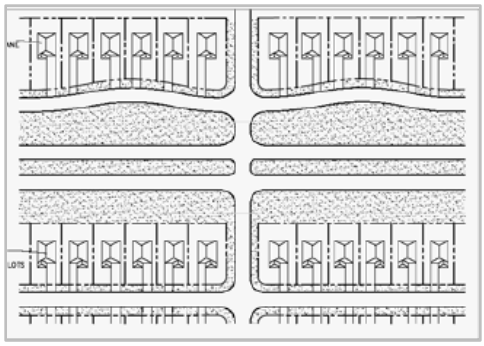
Implementation Strategies

- *Enforce existing height restrictions*
- *Review rezoning requests to insure compatibility with this character area.*
- *Determine and administer appropriate buffers for noise and safety to accommodate the long-range needs of the airport*
- *Evaluate need for other requirements for new development to address land use compatibility and the mitigation of any impacts that may adversely affect existing or future aviation operations or aviation-related land uses at the airport*

Aerial Image of Dalton Municipal Airport

BYPASS CORRIDOR

The Bypass Corridor character area is land located along the Dalton Bypass. In addition to its transportation function, the Bypass is generating new development activity. This is true of the northern portion, where industrial uses are prevalent and where residential areas north of Dalton continue to expand. Development plans include a 1.2 million square feet mixed use development at Underwood Road (part of the Regional Activity Center character area), to include retail, residential (apartments and senior housing) and flex office space. The project in turn has the potential to spawn additional growth along the Bypass.



Access Management is necessary along the Dalton Bypass to allow for development and mitigate traffic congestion

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Establish a connected street network for new development that links to existing streets
- Include a relatively high-density mix of commercial and retail centers, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area
- Include a diverse mix of higher-density housing types (town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums) that can serve a broad range of incomes, including workforce and senior housing
- Encourage mixed use development with screened parking, landscaping, internal sidewalk and street connectivity, and quality building materials and site design
- Provide strong, walkable connections between different uses
- Connect to nearby networks of greenspace/multi-use trails/bike paths where available
- Depict clear physical boundaries and transitions between the edge of the character area and surrounding residential areas
- Incorporate landscaping of commercial sites/parking lots
- Require shared driveways and inter-parcel access
- Prohibit billboards and limit business sign height/size to minimize “visual clutter”
- Reflect coordinated transportation/land use planning
- Encourage shared parking among uses

Dalton Bypass area east of Dalton's city limits

- Discourage strip development
- Maintain traffic flow with access management measures and nodal development

Primary Land Uses

- Commercial (retail and office)
- Industrial Warehousing
- Mixed use
- Higher density residential uses

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare and incorporate into development review a "development impact matrix" to determine potential impacts of specific industries on the environment and infrastructure*
- *Prepare and adopt design/development standards for industrial sites*
- *Recruit businesses that are suitable for the Bypass Corridor character area*
- *Implement a Bypass Corridor Overlay District to regulate building placement, design and size, sign placement, materials, landscaping, access management, interparcel access and other elements that contribute to the look and function of the corridor*
- *Prepare and adopt necessary amendments to require interparcel access, limit curb cuts, and require sidewalks with new development*
- *Encourage creation of Tax Allocation Districts (TAD), Community Improvement Districts (CID) or Business Improvement Districts (BID) as a means for financing (including leveraging local funds to receive federal funds) planning and plan implementation improvement projects*

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

The Commercial Corridor character area includes developed land on both sides of a high-volume street or highway that is primarily made up of automobile-oriented strip commercial and office development. It is characterized by single-use, generally one-story buildings that are separated from the street and sidewalk (though they often do not have sidewalks) by parking lots with few shade trees. Commercial Corridors generally have a high degree of traffic congestion; numerous curb cuts, especially in more densely developed areas such as Dalton, minimize the transportation functionality of a corridor. Over time, the Commercial Corridors should redevelop as pedestrian-friendly mixed use corridors.

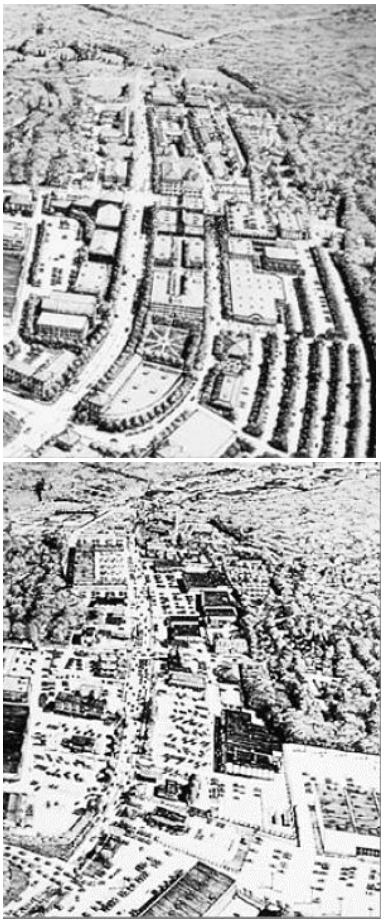
Commercial Corridor areas should over-time redevelop as mixed use, pedestrian-friendly communities

The Commercial Corridor character area in Tunnel Hill represents the City's main commercial strip along both sides of U.S. 41/Chattanooga Road from the railroad overpass to near Campbell Road.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Preserve or increase traffic flow by consolidating driveways and encouraging interparcel access
- Cluster commercial and mixed use development at major nodes along the corridor (see also Commercial Corridor character area description)
- Provide sidewalks and a more pedestrian-friendly environment by incorporating landscaped buffers between the roadway and sidewalks and placing buildings closer to the street
- Limit signs and billboards
- Increase landscaping along the corridor, including in and along parking lots to provide shade, reduce impervious surfaces, shield parking areas, and improve the appearance of individual sites and the entire corridor
- Encourage redevelopment that permits minimal building setbacks, mixed use development, screened parking, and requires quality materials and design related to the building, the site, and signage
- Coordinate land use planning with bike, pedestrian and transit opportunities
- Better integrate stormwater treatment in site planning and design with additional site design standards



Redevelopment of Commercial Corridors should strive to create the connected, mixed-use corridor (shown on the bottom) and avoid recreating the existing condition (shown on top)

- Reflect coordinated transportation/land use planning
- Encourage shared parking among uses

Development Pattern for Tunnel Hill

- Limit driveway spacing along the highway frontage. Align driveways wherever possible and require shared driveways and inter-parcel access
- Incorporate quality
- Develop and/or redevelop with a series of interconnected, pedestrian-scale mixed uses that serve the surrounding residential areas
- Residential development should reinforce the corridor's commercial center by locating higher density housing options adjacent to or along the corridor, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments and condominiums, which also provides a transition between the character area and surrounding areas

Commercial Development along SR 71/Cleveland Highway in Varnel

- Include direct connections to the greenspace and trail networks and enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks to streets that intersect with the corridor and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring residential areas and other destinations, such as the school, post office, the Heritage Center/Tunnel Hill, parks, etc.
- Concentrate commercial development within the Commercial Corridor and avoid as much as possible stretching the corridor outside of the existing boundaries into established residential neighborhoods

Primary Land Uses

- Commercial and retail uses
- Professional offices
- Mixed use development (including residential uses above ground-floor retail or office space)
- Civic/Institutional
- Passive and active parks

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare and adopt Streetscape Master Plans for Commercial Corridor character areas to guide future enhancements*
- *Prepare and adopt a Mixed Use Development Overlay District to facilitate "greyfield redevelopment" and implement Commercial Corridor character area master plans*
- *Prepare and adopt a "Big Box" ordinance to specify design parameters, maximum square footage requirements, a plan for reuse, etc.*
- *Implement Commercial Corridor overlay district to regulate building placement, design and size, sign placement, materials, landscaping, access management, interparcel access and other elements that contribute to the look and function of the corridor*
- *Adopt mixed use ordinance in Tunnel Hill*

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER

The Community Activity Center character area typically represents locations at important intersections along major thoroughfares adjacent to Suburban Neighborhood and Emerging Suburban areas. Community Activity Centers serve the daily convenience needs of the surrounding community, generally those neighborhoods within a five-to-10-minute drive. These community focal points include a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses easily accessible by pedestrians.

Development should blend in with surrounding areas and are encouraged to protect existing trees, as shown by this pharmacy in the Grant Park Neighborhood of Atlanta

Varnell's Community Activity Center area straddles the city boundary at the intersection of SR 71/Cleveland Highway and SR 2/Prater's Mill Road and includes the Varnell Commons shopping center, which includes a grocery store, other retail outparcels. The area also includes undeveloped property.

Strip commercial development currently defines the Community Activity Center area in Tunnel hill

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Develop with a series of interconnected, pedestrian-scale mixed uses that serve the surrounding residential areas
- Residential development should reinforce the center through locating higher density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments and condominiums, which also provide a transition between the character area and surrounding areas
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with sidewalks between different uses
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear
- Include direct connections to the greenspace and trail networks
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring residential areas and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.
- Concentrate commercial development at major roadway intersections (nodal development) to serve surrounding residential areas
- Discourage strip development

Bry-Man's Plaza, an existing Community Activity Center at the intersection of Walnut Avenue and Thornton Avenue

- Limit driveway spacing along the highway frontage, align driveways wherever possible and require shared driveways
- Provide inter-parcel access
- Incorporate landscaping of commercial sites/parking lots
- Incorporate quality signs that are scaled and placed appropriately
- Encourage shared parking among uses

- ***Primary Land Uses***
    - Commercial (retail and office)
    - Multi-family residential
    - Mixed-use (including upper story residential)
    - Civic/institutional
    - Passive and active parks

Varnell's Existing development located in the Community Activity Center is defined by the suburban-style Varnell shopping center shown above

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare and adopt a "Big Box" ordinance to specify design parameters, maximum square footage requirements, a plan for reuse, etc.*
- *Implement an overlay district or amend land development regulations to direct building placement, design and size, sign placement, materials, landscaping, access and other elements that contribute to the look and function of the corridor*
- *Prepare and adopt necessary amendments to require interparcel access, limit curb cuts, and require sidewalks with new development*
- *Encourage creation of Tax Allocation Districts (TAD), Community Improvement Districts (CID) or Business Improvement Districts (BID) as a means for financing (including leveraging local funds to receive federal funds) planning and plan implementation improvement projects*
- *Adopt a Mixed Use Development Overlay District*
- Review sign ordinance for inconsistencies with the desired development pattern and amend accordingly
- *Follow Best Management Practices (BMP) for any land disturbance activities*

Mixed-Use buildings provide opportunities for retail, office, and residential in the same building, as shown in this example from Seaside, Florida

DALTON STATE CORRIDOR

The Dalton State Corridor character area includes the college as well as College Drive. The area is noted most for the college campus, but includes ancillary college uses that are found on-site in a campus-type development or within walking distance or a short drive from the college. Examples include park and recreation facilities, dormitory or multi-family residential uses and supporting commercial. Supporting uses are intended to provide easily accessible services for college employees, students and visitors.

Dalton State College Campus anchors this corridor

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Provide for the location of institutions of higher learning allowing for the full list of ancillary uses
- Highlight the area in order to focus efforts to provide appropriate transition from adjacent uses as well as provide for opportunities for housing and services nearby
- Promote a pedestrian-scale "college community" where college uses and support services (college, apartments, restaurants, etc.) are connected by a network of sidewalks
- Reduce on-site vehicular use and off-site vehicular trips by providing a mix of compatible services for students, employees and visitors
- Depict clear physical boundaries and transitions between the edge of the character area and the surrounding residential areas
- Prohibit encroachment (including parking and light trespass) into the adjacent residential areas
- Retain open space and incorporate landscaping into site design and parking areas.
- Encourage shared parking among uses

Multi-Family housing options provide high-density housing opportunities near the college campus

Primary Land Uses

- College/university/
- Hospitality/hotels/lodging
- Restaurants
- Retail support (drugstore, services)
- Residential development catering to college staff

Hospitality uses such as hotels and restaurants define the southern portion of this character area.

- Mixed use (upper floor office/residential and ground retail)

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare an existing conditions analysis of the area sidewalks to identify substandard facilities and to prioritize repair/replacement projects*
- *Prepare a streetscape master plan designed to provide increased opportunities for walking and biking*
- *Encourage the development of additional housing opportunities for students, faculty and staff of the college*

College Drive is lined on both sides by well-maintained sidewalks that connect the college campus to nearby commercial and office uses

DOWNTOWN

The Downtown character area includes Dalton's central business district and is made up of a mixture of uses such as commercial, government, religious, residential and industrial. Goals of the character area include encouraging a mix of uses to create vitality, reinforcing the area's role as a central business district and local activity center, and respecting and promoting the established development pattern of the downtown core. This character area includes the Downtown Dalton Historic District, which is regulated by a design review process and is eligible for building rehabilitation assistance under the Façade Grant Program.

Downtown Dalton is supported by an active Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority and was the focus of the City's 1999 Streetscape Master Plan, 2001 Dalton Quality Growth Resource Team Report (Georgia Department of Community Affairs), and has been a foundational focus throughout the current *Believe Greater Dalton Initiative* with the goal of creating a regional destination downtown with a live, work, play atmosphere.

Pedestrian friendly streetscapes should be expanded throughout the downtown and downtown fringe areas

Downtown Dalton provides for a mix of uses including: retail shops, offices, professional services, and most recently residential

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Reinforce traditional pedestrian-scaled development patterns, including building placement, lighting, site features, sidewalk use and amenities, traffic patterns, etc.
- Retain and enhance existing building stock with appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation
- Represent a mix of uses that attract residents to the downtown and create vitality
- Serve, and connect to, surrounding neighborhoods
- Protect and encourage historic residential character along Thornton and Glenwood avenues
- Reinforce Downtown as the community focal point of Dalton
- Encourage mixed use development in buildings with underutilized upper floors and with infill opportunities (e.g. residential above ground floor retail)

All new construction should contribute to the existing historic commercial character

- Accommodate redevelopment and infill opportunities that respect the traditional development patterns and architectural styles
- Accommodate higher-density residential housing opportunities
- Encourage a creative, visual environment that encourages exploration and attracts patrons such as attractive, changing window displays, public art, and outdoor dining
- Maintain and enhance the area's historic character
- Clearly define road edges / streetscape with zero lot line setback for new building construction
- Promote commercial, civic and leisure functions of downtown and discourage industrial uses

Dalton's downtown supports multi-story commercial and mixed-use buildings like the historic Hotel Dalton building as pictured above

Primary Land Uses

- Retail
- Office
- Mixed-use (including upper story residential)
- Multi-Family residential
- Government facilities/services
- Parks

Improved sidewalks (as pictured above) and new mixed-use buildings are needed in to create a vibrant downtown

Implementation Strategies

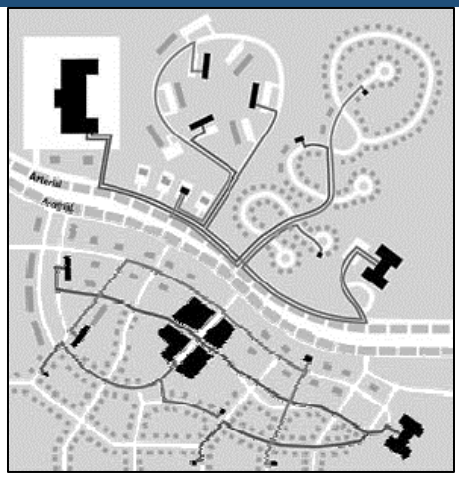
- ➢ Update the historic district design guidelines for downtown Dalton area
- ➢ Extend streetscape improvements to reach entire Downtown character area
- ➢ Update the zoning ordinance in accordance with desired uses, including mixed-use development
- ➢ Continue efforts of Dalton DDA to market downtown, recruit a mix of businesses, and encourage redevelopment where appropriate
- ➢ Consider and implement feasible projects listed within the Carl Vinson *Downtown Dalton Master Plan 2018*
- ➢ Connect Downtown Dalton to Mt. Rachael and Haig Mill Park via the greenway previously noted within the Dalton Green Hat Plan
- ➢ Consider a bike and pedestrian plan to connect Dalton State College to the Green Hat Greenway thus connecting the college campus to downtown

Amenities like Burr Park and the Summer Concert Series will continue to create a sense of place in the community and anchor Downtown Dalton as a destination for visitors

EMERGING SUBURBAN

The Emerging Suburban character area covers areas primarily in the unincorporated county east of Dalton, west of I-75 around and south of Tunnel Hill, and along SR 71/Cleveland Highway that have experienced some residential growth and are positioned to accommodate more due to general land use trends in the area or to proximity to existing neighborhoods.

New development should provide pedestrian and vehicular connectivity, a range in housing types and sizes, and traffic calming measures. For the most part, non-residential uses should be accommodated in the Community Activity Center character area. Neighborhood focal points can be created within Emerging Suburban areas by locating schools or community centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences. Small-scale, walkable mixed use neighborhood centers can create neighborhood focal points and can be accommodated with master-planned, Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND). In addition, conservation subdivisions should be permitted as a suitable alternative to traditional low-density residential subdivisions in order to protect and maximize open space.



The Emerging Suburban character area seeks to encourage the connectivity depicted on the bottom of the diagram and discourage conventional suburban sprawl shown in the top of the diagram

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Protect natural and scenic resources
- Provide connected system of streets within new neighborhoods and to existing neighborhoods where possible, resulting in an expanded/alternate local street network for motorists and emergency vehicles
- Accommodate master-planned, Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) that blends residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services that are linked in a compact pattern, encourages walking, and minimizes the need for auto trips within a subdivision
- Provide safe facilities for pedestrians, schools buses, and bicyclists using the road right-of-way
- Connect to a network of greenways/trails, wherever possible

Emerging Suburban Area in Westside Whitfield County

Undeveloped property in Tunnel Hill designated as Emerging Suburban area

- Provide adequate open space and active and passive recreation opportunities for area residents
- Limit clearing and grading
- Permit use of conservation subdivisions with the goal of maximizing open space
- Include a variety of housing choices
- Provide sidewalks, street trees and decorative, pedestrian scale lighting
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking and street trees
- Encourage the location of schools, community centers or well-designed small-scale commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences
- Protect water quality with appropriate measures for soil and erosion control and groundwater recharge area protection, including Best Management Practices (BMP)

Pedestrian friendly streets with sidewalks, street trees and homes with front porches are encouraged in the Emerging Suburban Area

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family residential (net density of 2 dwellings per acre)
- Parks
- Public/institutional

Undeveloped property adjacent to SR 71/Cleveland Highway in Varnell is part of the Emerging Suburban character area

Implementation Strategies

- ➢ Prepare and adopt a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance
- ➢ Prepare and adopt street connectivity requirements that require a connected system of streets within new subdivisions and connections to existing subdivisions, including requiring multiple stub out streets to allow for future connectivity when adjacent properties develop
- ➢ Expand sewer service to include all Emerging Suburban, Suburban Neighborhood and Traditional Neighborhood character areas currently underserved
- ➢ Adopt a Tree Protection/Replacement Ordinance that limits clearing and grading and therefore maintains the natural tree canopy as much as possible

INDUSTRIAL

The Industrial character area includes land used in low and high intensity manufacturing, wholesale trade, distribution, assembly, processing, and similar uses that may or may not generate excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics. Most notable in Whitfield County is the carpet industry, which traditionally has been the driving economic force in the area and continues to be a large employer. A goal of this character area is to allow opportunities to expand this base while also accommodating new businesses.

New Industrial development / redevelopment should encourage development of attractive large-scale building footprints that can accommodate the needs of modern manufacturing while incorporating landscaping and attractive site design

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Accommodate diverse, higher-intensity industrial uses and supporting commercial uses
- Prohibit residential uses
- Depict clear physical boundaries and transitions between the edge of the character area and surrounding residential or rural areas
- Provide access management measures to maintain traffic flow (e.g. shared driveways and interparcel access for similar uses on adjacent properties)
- Incorporate landscaping of parking lots
- Encourage parking lots to incorporate on-site stormwater detention or retention features, such as pervious pavements
- Provide adequate buffers
- Limit visibility of industrial operations/parking from the public right of way
- Limit extensive mass grading and clearing
- Control signage (height, size, type) to prevent “visual clutter”
- Prevent adverse impacts to natural resources and surrounding population
- Reflect a campus or unified development
- Protect air and water quality
- Address traffic impacts and circulation in site design

Industrial Area in south Whitfield County defined by large single-story industrial and warehouse structures

Example of modern industrial property near I-75

Primary Land Uses

- Industrial
- Commercial

Entrance to the County's Industrial Park near the Carbondale Interchange

Implementation Strategies

- Prepare and adopt design/development standards for industrial sites
- Prepare and incorporate into development review a "development impact matrix" to determine potential impacts of specific industries on the environment and infrastructure
- Coordinate economic development activities for recruiting research and office parks

Roadway Widening due to Future Industrial Development

There are several roadways that may require widening when large industrial developments are constructed or existing industrial development is expanded. Some of these locations are listed below.

- Carbondale Road Widening (2 to 4 lanes) from Redwine Cove Road to I-75 Interchange
- Old Dixie Highway (2 to 4 lanes) from South Dalton Bypass to Cross Plains Boulevard
- SR 3/South Dixie Road (2 to 4 lanes) from South Dalton Bypass to Cross Plains Boulevard
- South Dalton Bypass from I-75 Interchange to SR 3/South Dixie Road – Add one eastbound lane that would become a right-turn lane drop at SR 3/South Dixie Road.
- South Dalton Bypass (4 to 6 lanes) from I-75 Interchange to SR 3/South Dixie Road including widening of interchange ramps from 1 to 2 lanes.

INTERCHANGE

The Interchange character area represents three of the five Whitfield County interchanges locations along I-75: east of Tunnel Hill and south of Dalton (Connector 3 and Carbondale exits are combined into a single Interchange area, as reflected on the Future Development Map). The interchanges are characterized by auto oriented commercial and industrial uses that cater to travelers along I-75 and the nearby industrial workforce. Access to the interstate has allowed industrial uses to flourish in some areas while also providing numerous entry points to the County. As prominent gateways to the County, attention should be paid to permitted signage, the presence of sidewalks and other site or streetscape features that can enhance or detract from the aesthetic and functional qualities of the area.

Interchange includes a mix of warehouse, industrial and retail uses in buildings with large, one-story footprints. The area is designed to accommodate automobile traffic, but provides few options for walking and biking

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Accommodate diverse, higher-intensity industrial uses and supporting commercial uses
- Limit "interchange commercial" uses
- Depict clear physical boundaries and transitions between the edge of the character area and surrounding rural or residential areas
- Reflect a campus or unified development
- Provide access management measures such as interparcel access
- Incorporate landscaping of commercial sites/parking lots
- Discourage strip development
- Provide adequate buffers
- Limit visibility of industrial operations/parking from the public right of way
- Limit grading and clearing
- Control signage (height, size, type) to prevent "visual clutter"
- Reflect coordinated transportation/land use planning
- Protect water quality with appropriate soil erosion control and groundwater recharge protection area measures

Interchange area near I-75 interchange is designed for future industrial and business park development

The Interchange area located in Tunnel Hill near the intersection of SR 201 and I-75 have developed with metal butler buildings with little design character

Primary Land Uses

- Industrial
- Interstate commercial (gas stations, restaurants, convenience stores)

Implementation Strategies

- Prepare and incorporate into development review a "development impact matrix" to determine potential impacts of specific industries on the environment and infrastructure
- Continue to coordinate economic development activities for recruiting research and office parks
- Implement an Interchange Overlay district to regulate building placement, design and size, sign placement, size and materials, landscaping, access and other elements that contribute to the look and function of the interchange area
- Prepare an Access Management Plan, with recommendations that include opportunities for driveway consolidation and interparcel access
- Expand sewer service to include all Interchange areas currently underserved (e.g. west of I-75 including portions of Carbondale and Connector 3 interchange areas)

Interchange Character Area shown above located at the I-75/Carbondale Road Interchange

Industrial uses are included within the Interchange character area, shown above in the southeast quadrant of the I-75/SR201 interchange area

MEDICAL DISTRICT

This character area represents the Hamilton Medical Center and ancillary medical center uses that are found on-site in a campus-type development or within walking distance or a short drive from the medical center. Examples include professional medical and dental offices, nursing home facilities, retail pharmacies and restaurants. Supporting uses are intended to provide easily accessible services for hospitals employees, patients and visitors. In addition, the close proximity of this character area to housing provides an opportunity for employees to live and work in the same general area. While the Medical District plays a vital role in the community, it is important to encourage building / site design features and landscape buffers to mitigate the impacts of the Medical District on adjacent residential properties. Likewise, multimodal connections to adjacent neighborhoods should be provided.

Entrance to Hamilton Medical Center, The anchor of the medical District in Dalton

Construction of the newest addition to Hamilton Medical Center, The People's Cancer Institute

A variety of building styles are found within the Medical District including residential-looking buildings like the one pictured above

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Promote a pedestrian-scale "medical community" where medical uses and support services (Medical Center, restaurants, etc.) are connected by a network of sidewalks
- Accommodate housing that benefits from close proximity to health services (senior housing, nursing home, special needs housing, and guest lodging for families of hospital patients)
- Reduce on-site vehicular use and off-site vehicular trips by providing a mix of compatible services for employees and visitors
- Encourage mixed-use opportunities (e.g. medical offices above ground floor retail)
- Depict clear physical boundaries and transitions between the edge of the character area and the surrounding residential areas
- Prohibit encroachment (including parking and light trespass) into the adjacent residential areas
- Retain open space and incorporate landscaping into site design and parking areas
- Encourage shared parking among uses
- Discourage parking in the front yard for homes that have been converted to office uses

Primary Land Uses

- Hospital or clinic
- Professional medical office
- Retail support (drugstore, restaurant)
- Residential (senior housing, assisted living facility, special needs housing, guest lodging for patients' families)
- Mixed use (upper floor office or residential and ground floor retail)

Small monument signs as the one shown above shall be used for businesses in this area

Implementation Strategies

- Prepare an existing conditions analysis of the area sidewalks to identify substandard facilities and to prioritize repair/replacement projects
- Prepare a Medical District Area Master Plan

Pedestrian infrastructure in the Medical District, although improved since 2008, provides limited protection for those who chose to walk. More crosswalks, sidewalks, and shared parking arrangements are needed to make walking safer.

Preserve

The Preserve character area describes primarily public or privately owned land intended to remain as open space for preservation and recreation needs and are not suitable for urban or suburban development. Land can be owned outright or subject to conservation easements. This character area includes major parklands, undeveloped natural lands, and environmentally sensitive areas and significant natural features including steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas, and conservation areas not suitable for development of any kind. The Preserve character area seeks to enhance the significance of these resources and ensure their protection.

Mill Creek in west Whitfield County and its floodplain are part of the Preserve character area

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Preserve natural resources, habitats, views, and rural/agricultural character
- Protect open space in a linear pattern, typically following the flood plain of river and stream corridors and accommodate greenways
- Maintain a high degree of open space
- Prevent degradation to natural resources in areas that have already developed or have the potential to develop due to existing zoning
- Minimize impervious surfaces
- Protect water quality with appropriate stream and reservoir buffers and prohibition of uses that are prone to pollution
- Provide opportunities for passive use recreation and tourism destinations (e.g. canoeing, fishing, hunting, hiking, etc.) and environmental education
- Utilize Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) as a tool to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Pubic parks, such as the county-owned property adjacent to Valley Point middle and elementary schools, are also part of the Preserve character area

Creek and picnic area located in Tunnel hill Park off G. Vaughn Parkway

Primary Land Uses

- Undeveloped areas left in their natural state
- Passive recreation (for environmentally constrained areas)
- Active recreation (for non-environmentally constrained areas)
- Agriculture

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a Countywide Greenways Master Plan that outlines a countywide system of interconnected greenway/trail corridors, addresses greenway trail crossings of all roads, defines specific priorities for property acquisition to develop the system, and addresses recommendations of the Conasauga River Alliance
- Adopt specific cross sections for roads that cross Preserve character areas
- Promote Preserve character areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations
- Encourage use of Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) to protect water quality
- Promote the use of conservation easements and conservation tax credits by landowners
- Adopt "Part V" Environmental Ordinances for river corridor, watershed protection and groundwater recharge areas in accordance with Georgia Department of Natural Resources' minimum environmental planning criteria
- Follow BMPs for erosion and sedimentation control, as defined in the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act
- Develop program for administering TDRs

Wetlands such as the one shown above found adjacent to the Old Dixie Highway corridor south of the Dalton Bypass, are part of the Preserve character area

Tunnel Hill Cemetery is another example of the Preserve character area

Greenspace adjacent to the Varnell City Hall is part of the Preserve character area

Playground equipment at the Varnell Park adjacent to and part of the Preserve character area

REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

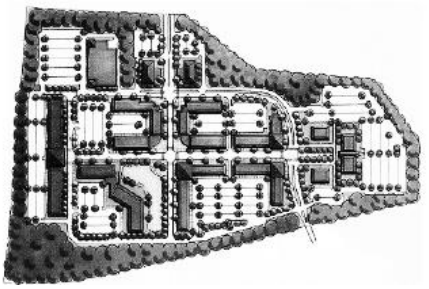
Regional Activity Center character area represents a concentration of regionally-marketed commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, and mixed use development. These areas are characterized by a high degree of access by vehicular traffic, on-site parking, low degree of internal open space; high floor-area-ratio; large tracts of land, campus or unified development. While established Regional Activity Centers are typically single-story suburban shopping centers with minimal office space and housing and limited parking lot landscaping, over time these areas should evolve into mixed use, walkable centers of commerce that attract customers from a regional market and include a variety of housing choices.

Example of appropriate scale and landscaping in the Regional Activity Center shown from the Gerber Village development in Ashville, North Carolina

An example of this character area is West Walnut Avenue, located east of I-75. This area, which includes the Dalton Factory Outlet Stores and other commercial uses that benefit from close proximity to the interstate and serve both local residents as well as interstate traffic, is currently a retail center for the county and is a significant gateway to Dalton and surrounding areas. As an important gateway to the county as well as a heavily traveled area, focus should be paid on enhancing mobility and connectivity for cars and pedestrians, as well as the overall aesthetics of the area (streetscape and building/site design).

Desired development patterns

- Include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area
- Include a diverse mix of higher-density housing types, including multi-family town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums, including affordable and workforce housing
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring residential areas and major destinations, such as neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.



Master plans are an essential part of ensuring that regional mixed-use areas develop as envisioned

- Design should be very pedestrian oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses
- Include direct connections to nearby networks of greenspace or trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreation purposes
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear
- Provide bike lanes or wide curb lanes and conveniently located (preferably sheltered) bicycle parking at retail/office destinations and in multi-family dwellings to encourage bicycling and provide additional safety
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and are not typical "franchise" or "corporate" architecture
- Provide parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater detention or retention features, such as pervious arrangements in addition to the use of landscaped tree islands and medians to break up large expanses of paved parking

Regional Activity Center example of appropriate scale shown from The Avenue of Murfreesboro in Tennessee

Primary Land Uses

- Commercial (retail and office)
- Multi-family residential
- Mixed-use (including upper story residential)
- Civic/institutional
- Passive and active parks

Quality commercial development shown here from the Town Center area of Cobb County, Georgia

Implementation Strategies

- ➢ *Extend sewer infrastructure to Regional Activity Center character area locations currently without service*
- ➢ *Encourage "greyfield redevelopment" of existing underutilized shopping centers with mixed use, walkable development*
- ➢ *Prepare and adopt a Mixed Use Development Ordinance to facilitate greyfield redevelopment and implement Regional Activity Center character area master plans*

RIDGE CONSERVATION

This area includes the Rocky Face Ridge and Dug Gap Ridge that both parallel I-75, as well as all steep slopes (minimum slope of 25%). Hillside development has the potential to harm the area's natural resources and scenic views due to erosion and the loss of trees. The Ridge Conservation character area is intended to maintain the area's ridgelines, which contribute to the County's unique character and its history, while accommodating low-density residential development with minimal impact on the environment.

Ridge Conservation is important in order to protect views and the natural areas

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Protect water quality with appropriate soil erosion and control and groundwater recharge protection area measures
- Preserve historic/cultural resources along ridges
- Incorporate adequate infrastructure for accessibility and for water and fire protection needs
- Protect existing trees
- Protect steep slopes and natural landscape
- Protect scenic views
- Preserve rural character and viewsheds
- Conserve natural features and resources
- Limit impacts of new development on the environment
- Reduce impervious cover
- Utilize natural features for stormwater management
- Encourage low-intensity uses

New residential development atop the ridge in the Ridge Conservation area

Primary Land Uses

- Undeveloped areas left in their natural state
- Passive recreation
- Low-intensity single-family residential
- Forestry/Agricultural

Dug Gap Road winds through the ridge west of Dalton

Implementation Strategies

- *Adopt hillside development/steep slope ordinance*

RURAL AGRICULTURAL RESERVE

The Rural Agricultural Reserve character area includes predominantly rural, undeveloped land that is suited for agricultural and large-lot residential uses. These areas are intended and designed to remain rural. Housing tends to be scattered across the landscape on very large lots and is typically not in proximity to major transportation networks, commercial areas, or sewer infrastructure. Development in the area should respect the community's rural tradition and active farms and maintain its rural, open spaces. These areas lack sewer infrastructure which makes urban and suburban scale development unsuitable.

Farms on large acreage dominate the countryside in northeast Whitfield County, which is home to the majority of the Rural Agricultural Character Area

The Rural Agricultural Reserve character area comprises much of the northeast, southwest and southeast portions of the County, including the following communities: Beaverdale, eastern Hopewell, Norton, Prater's Mill, Gordon Springs, Trickum, River Bend, and portions of Nance Spring and Tilton.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Protect farmland, open space and environmentally-sensitive areas by maintaining large lot sizes and adopting local policies promoting the right to farm
- Benefit from use of land conservation tools that may include conservation easements, conservation subdivisions, Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs), and Transfer of Development (TDRs)
- Preserve economic function of agriculture, livestock and forestry
- Promote and protect historic resources
- Preserve rural character, view sheds, hillsides and other natural features/resources
- Preserve natural hydrology and drainage ways
- Discourage extension of public utilities into these areas (*i.e.* public sewer)
- Carefully design roadway alterations to minimize scenic and environmental impacts
- Minimize impervious cover

Conservation subdivisions allow smaller lots in exchange for protecting large areas of open space and are appropriate in Rural/Agricultural areas. These type of developments can be appropriate within the Rural Agricultural Preserve

- Discourage excessive clearing and grading in order to protect trees, topography and water quality
- Accommodate low-intensity residential uses at a net density of 1 dwelling unit per 25 acres
- Protect water quality with appropriate soil erosion control and groundwater recharge protection area measures

Primary Land Uses

- Agricultural
- Rural residential
- Passive recreation
- Civic uses/Public/Institutional (at rural scale only)

Implementation Strategies

- *Adopt a policy that discourages extension of public utilities into Rural Agricultural Reserve character areas*
- *Prepare and adopt a Rural Agricultural Reserve zoning district or amend existing zoning districts to meet the minimum lot requirements envisioned by the Rural Agricultural Reserve Character Area*
- *Encourage use of Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) for Protecting Water Quality*
- *Prepare and adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance that allows for cluster development to preserve rural character, sensitive natural resources and large tracts of permanent green space*
- *Adopt typical street cross-sections and/or development standards for Rural Agricultural Reserve character areas that identify appropriate width and configuration and that require paved roads to use drainage swales in lieu of curb, gutter and sidewalk*
- *Promote the use of conservation easements and conservation tax credits by landowners to help preserve viable farmland*
- *Promote the use of Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs), and Transfer of Development (TDRs)*
- *Promote the use of common area drain fields and/or neighborhood-scale sewerage treatment systems to reduce parcel size in areas that must be served by septic tanks* ***(for areas proposing Conservation Subdivisions only)***

Large scale farms operations are found within the Rural Agricultural Character Area

RURAL CORRIDOR

The Rural Corridor character area includes sparsely developed or undeveloped public or private land on both sides of a rural arterial with significant natural, scenic or pastoral views that would be disrupted by leap frog, conventional suburban residential development along or near the corridor. Public roadway features, such as signs, roadside erosion control, drainage and materials storage also have a major impact on the scenic quality and character of these corridors. The overall character of the Rural Corridor character areas is similar to Rural Agricultural and Rural Residential areas, but it differs in that pressure for development tends to be greater along corridors. The Rural Corridor character area covers roughly 300 feet of property on each side of Rural Corridors shown on the Future Development Map.

Rural Corridor area along SR 53 east of Varnell

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Prohibit linear, commercial strip center development and concentrate commercial development at Rural Crossroads nodes
- Enact guidelines for new development that enhance the scenic value of the corridor and address landscaping and architectural design to protect rural scenery, historic resources and prevent unattractive sprawl development/visual clutter along the roadway
- Preserve tree lines and groves adjacent to the corridor
- Consider the use of drainage swales for paved roads in lieu of curb and gutter
- Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional rural character and do not include franchise or corporate architecture
- Limit parking in front of commercial properties
- Connect to regional networks of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes
- Provide bicycle accommodations
- Institute driveway controls and access management standards to facilitate traffic flow
- Promote and protect historic and natural resources

Rural Corridor area along SR 286/Dawnville Road in east Whitfield County

- Promote the Cohutta-Chattahoochee Scenic Byway spur to Prater's Mill

Primary Land Uses

- Passive or small active parks
- Agriculture
- Large lot residential

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare and adopt a Rural Corridor Overlay District*
- *Prepare an Access Management Plan for Rural Corridors with recommendations that include opportunities for driveway consolidation and interparcel access*

RURAL CROSSROADS

The Rural Crossroads character area includes key intersections in small communities in more rural areas of the County, including Cedar Valley, Cedar Ridge, Gordon Springs and Mill Creek. These areas are intended to serve adjacent residential or agricultural areas with limited goods and services concentrated around an intersection rather than spread out in a linear fashion along a roadway. Small scale retail uses, public facilities such as churches, fire stations, post offices and libraries, and agricultural support businesses such as commercial nurseries, farm implement sales and supply stores, farmer's markets and feed and seed stores are appropriate uses in this character area.

Rural Crossroads area in the Mill Creek Community

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Protect rural character
- Provide small-scale commercial opportunities for meeting local needs
- Cluster buildings at the area's center
- Maintain open space surrounding the center
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character rather than "franchise" or "corporate" architecture
- Limit clearing and grading
- Reduce access points along the highway
- Connect to greenways/trail system, wherever possible

Primary Land Uses

- Neighborhood or rural commerical uses
- Civic/institutional (at a rural scale only)
- Passive or active parks

Implementation Strategies

- *Adopt Rural Crossroads Zoning Overlay District that includes minimum standards for commercial building and site design*
- *Widen roadways only when absolutely necessary*

Site design that place parking in the rear or side of buildings help preserve rural character, while also providing retail and other services for surrounding communities

RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD REVITILIZATION

The Rural Neighborhood Revitalization character area encompasses the southern portion of the County, east of I-75 on both sides of U.S. 41/Dixie Highway. The character area includes residential uses (primarily low-density residential) as well as undeveloped or agricultural areas. Like the Rural Residential character area, development should respect the community's agricultural tradition and maintain its rural, open spaces, which can be achieved with the use of conservation subdivisions. Unlike the Rural Residential areas, this character area includes opportunities for infill development and community revitalization efforts in more established residential areas.

Example of the Rural Neighborhood Revitalization character area in southeast Whitfield County

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Stabilize and maintain existing housing stock
- Accommodate infill development that compliments the scale, setbacks and style of existing adjacent homes
- Preserve rural character, open spaces, view sheds, natural features/resources and farmland
- Preserve natural hydrology and drainage ways and utilize natural features for stormwater management
- Carefully design roadway alterations to minimize scenic and environmental impacts
- Minimize impervious cover
- Limit impacts of new development, including clearing and grading, on the environment
- Accommodate low-intensity uses
- Accommodate rural residential at a net density of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres
- Promote the use of conservation subdivisions
- Connect subdivisions to greenways/trails wherever possible
- Protect water quality with appropriate soil erosion and sedimentation control and groundwater recharge protection area measures

Primary Land Uses

- Rural residential
- Agricultural

- Passive recreation
- Civic uses/Public/Institutional (at rural scale only)

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare and adopt a new zoning district or amend existing zoning districts to meet the minimum lot requirements envisioned by the Rural Neighborhood Revitalization character area*
- *Prepare revitalization strategy for addressing housing needs identified in the Whitfield County Housing Condition Study for this area*
- *Prepare and adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance that allows for cluster development to preserve rural character, sensitive natural resources and large tracts of permanent green space*
- *Discourage extension of public sewer infrastructure into Rural Neighborhood Revitalization character areas*
- *Adopt typical cross-sections and/or development standards specific to Rural Neighborhood Revitalization character areas that identify*

Another example of the Rural Neighborhood Revitalization character area in southeast Whitfield County

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The Rural Residential character area includes predominantly rural, undeveloped land that is suited for agricultural, "conservation subdivision" and/or large-lot residential uses. Rural Reserve areas consist of privately owned areas where agricultural uses and low density development are common. These areas are intended and designed to remain rural. Housing tends to be clustered in hamlets or scattered across the landscape and typically not in proximity to major transportation networks, commercial areas, or infrastructure. Development in the area should respect the community's agricultural tradition and maintain its rural, open spaces.

Rural Residential character area is generally characterized by large-lot residential development

Lack of sewer infrastructure is common, which makes urban and suburban scale development unsuitable. Conservation subdivisions may be a suitable alternative to large-lot residential uses and an appropriate response to development pressures for neighborhood development in order to maximize existing open space and viewsheds.

Rural Residential character areas are located north of Dalton, east and west of the Emerging Suburban areas (see Emerging Suburban character area description) that parallel SR 71/Cleveland Highway, as well as in the southwestern of the County. The following communities are included in the Rural Residential character area: Cohutta Ridge, western Hopewell, Cedar Valley, Dawnville, Toonerville, Mill Creek, and Carbondale.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Protect farmland, open space and environmentally-sensitive areas by maintaining large lot sizes or clustering residential development in a design that incorporates significant amounts of open space and natural conservation areas
- Preserve economic function of agriculture, livestock and forestry
- Promote and protect historic and natural resources
- Preserve rural character, view sheds, and natural features/resource

Rural Residential area in the Carbondale area of south Whitfield County

- Preserve natural hydrology and drainage ways and utilize natural features for stormwater management
- Discourage extension of public utilities into these areas (*i.e.* public water and sewer)
- Carefully design roadway alterations to minimize scenic and environmental impacts
- Minimize impervious cover
- Limit impacts of new development, including clearing and grading, on the environment
- Accommodate low-intensity uses
- Accommodate rural residential with 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres
- Promote the use of conservation subdivisions
- Connect subdivisions to greenways/trails wherever possible
- Protect water quality with appropriate soil erosion controls and groundwater recharge protection measures, including Best Management Practices (BMP)

Conservation subdivision in south Fulton County, Georgia

Primary Land Uses

- Agricultural
- Rural residential
- Passive recreation
- Civic uses/Public/Institutional (at rural scale only)

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare and adopt a Rural Residential zoning district or amend existing zoning districts to meet the minimum lot requirements envisioned by the Rural Residential Character Area*
- *Prepare and adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance that allows for cluster development to preserve rural character, sensitive natural resources and large tracts of permanent green space*
- *Discourage extension of public sewer infrastructure into Rural Residential character areas*
- *Adopt typical street cross-sections and/or development standards for these areas that identify appropriate width and configuration and that require paved roads to use drainage swales in lieu of curb, gutter and sidewalk*
- *Encourage use of Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) for Protecting Water Quality*

- *Promote the use of common area drain fields and/or neighborhood-scale sewerage treatment systems to reduce parcel size in areas that must be served by septic tanks* ***(for areas proposing Conservation Subdivisions only)***

SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

The Suburban Neighborhood character area describes areas where conventional patterns of post-World War II suburban residential subdivision development have been the dominant pattern. In addition to conventional subdivisions, some multi-family uses are present in this character area. Neighborhoods tend to be characterized by low pedestrian orientation, larger lot sizes, high to moderate degree of building separation, and are predominantly residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns (often curvilinear) that include cul-de-sacs.

Suburban character area near Varnell

This character area is typically found in established neighborhoods that surround historic areas and in unincorporated areas where growth has occurred over the last thirty years. Examples can be found surrounding Dalton, Tunnel Hill, north and southwest of Varnell and in the communities of Plainview, Waring, Pleasant Grove, Rocky Face, Mt. Vernon, and Five Springs.

Example of Suburban Neighborhood development in the Mt. Vernon community of Whitfield County

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Accommodate infill development that compliments the scale, setback and style of existing adjacent homes
- Maintain existing tree cover
- Provide safe facilities for pedestrians, school buses, and bicyclists using the road right-of-way
- Incorporate sidewalks, traffic calming improvements and/or increased street interconnections, where appropriate, to improve walkability within existing neighborhoods as well as connectivity to neighboring communities and major destinations, including schools
- Connect to a network of greenways/trails, wherever possible
- Accommodate senior housing opportunities, which can be integrated into neighborhoods that benefit from close proximity to local shops and services
- Encourage the location of schools, community centers or well-designed small-scale commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences

Large lot Suburban Neighborhood character area development on the edge of Tunnel Hill

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family residential
- Parks
- Public/institutional

Implementation Strategies

- *Implement recommended sidewalk projects from the North Georgia Regional Bike and Pedestrian Facilities Plan*
- *Prepare and adopt a connector street plan*

Suburban Neighborhood development in Whitfield County typically has wide lots with a limited pedestrian network, as shown above

Suburban Neighborhood character area in north Tunnel Hill

Single-family homes on large lots define the character of the Suburban Neighborhood character area in Varnell

TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

The Town Neighborhood character area includes residential areas in older parts of the community typically developed prior to World War II. Characteristics include pedestrian-friendly streets with sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking, small, regular lots, shallow yards (relative to newer suburban counterparts), less space between buildings, and some mixed-use elements such as small neighborhood businesses. In Dalton, this character area includes the Murray Hill/Thornton Avenue and McCarty subdivisions, which are locally designated historic districts.

Single family home within the Town Neighborhood area located in the Murray Hill/Thornton Avenue Local Historic District

This character area is generally near traditional town centers, downtowns or crossroads, and is reflected in established residential areas in Varnell surrounding the East Varnell Street/ Varnell Railroad Street intersection.

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Maintain existing homes and character defining site features (*i.e.* drives, walls, lighting, landscaping, tree cover)
- Promote sensitive building rehabilitation that is in keeping with a building's existing architectural style and scale
- Accommodate infill development that compliments the scale, style and setbacks of existing adjacent homes
- Promote single-family uses
- Increase pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and activity centers
- Accommodate senior housing opportunities, which can be integrated into the existing development pattern and can benefit from close proximity to downtown goods and services
- Connect to a network of greenways/trails, wherever possible
- Maintain existing housing stock and preserve neighborhood character
- Protect historic structures and neighborhoods
- Adhere to locally-adopted design guidelines, where applicable

Town neighborhood area west of Downtown Dalton that includes the Murray Hill/Thornton Avenue Local Historic District

Single family residential home in Tunnel Hill's Town Neighborhood Revitalization area

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family residential
- Parks
- Public/institutional

Implementation Strategies

- *Amend the zoning ordinance to include flexible setback provisions for infill development*
- *Adopt a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) ordinance*
- *Prepare an existing conditions analysis of the City's sidewalks to identify substandard facilities and prioritize repair/replacement projects*
- *Implement recommended sidewalk projects from the Regional Bike and Pedestrian Facilities Plan for the North Georgia Region*

Town Neighborhood near the intersection of Woodland Avenue and Underwood Avenue

Historic homes shape the character in the Town Neighborhood character area of Varnell

TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

The Town Neighborhood Revitalization includes established neighborhoods north and east of downtown Dalton, including the following neighborhoods: Crown Mill, Fort Hill, East Dalton and Thread Mill. These neighborhoods are historic but have experienced disinvestment and decline due in part to the demolition of residences to accommodate commercial uses, parking areas, apartment buildings and industrial uses. Prevalent zoning of properties for industrial uses further contributes to the neighborhoods' instability and diminishing potential for revitalization. Recent planning efforts, including the City of Dalton Urban Redevelopment Plan (2012), Neighborhood Infill Guidelines (2003), Dalton Historic Housing Infill Study (2006), and the Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy address these areas and the issues of neighborhood revitalization, opportunities for new growth with infill, and inconsistencies between existing City regulations and desired development for the neighborhoods.

Town Neighborhood Revitalization area on Underwood Circle in East Dalton

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Support the findings of Dalton's focused studies pertaining to redevelopment and infill opportunities
- Provide opportunities for affordable housing with building rehabilitation and infill construction
- Stabilize and maintain existing housing stock
- Protect residential buildings from demolition
- Accommodate a mix of housing types and sizes with redevelopment, including small-lot single family, townhomes, and live/work units in areas identified in the Urban Redevelopment Plan
- Allow for limited neighborhood commercial uses to serve local residents
- Promote sensitive building rehabilitation that is in keeping with a building's existing architectural style and scale and that of neighboring homes
- Accommodate infill development that compliments the scale, style and setbacks of existing adjacent homes
- Promote single-family uses

- Increase pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and downtown Dalton, and between residences and neighborhood commercial uses
- Accommodate senior housing opportunities, which can be integrated into the existing development pattern and can benefit from close proximity to downtown goods and services
- Connect to a network of greenways/trails, wherever possible
- Prevent encroachment by commercial and industrial uses

Town Neighborhood Revitalization area in East Dalton

Primary Land Uses

- Single-family residential
- Townhomes
- Mixed use (live/work units)
- Neighborhood commercial (as identified in the City of Dalton Urban Redevelopment Plan's concept plans)
- Parks
- Public/institutional

Implementation Strategies

- *Amend the zoning ordinance to support appropriate infill standards, including flexible setback provisions that ensure new construction is compatible with existing development patterns*
- *Prepare an existing conditions analysis of the City's sidewalks to identify substandard facilities and prioritize repair/replacement projects*
- *Prepare and adopt a policy framework to prevent encroachment of inappropriate automobile-oriented development that would adversely affect the quality of life and public realm*
- *Prepare and adopt a Greenways Master Plan*
- *Prepare and adopt development regulations updates to address driveway and parking requirements*
- *Develop a City-wide vacant site inventory, identify those that are suitable for infill development and implement recommendations of infill studies already completed*
- *Create a City-wide inventory of buildings suitable for redevelopment*
- *Encourage the creation of neighborhood associations and neighborhood watch group*
- *Implement recommended sidewalk projects from the Regional Bike and Pedestrian Facilities for the North Georgia Region*
- *Implement recommendations of the City of Dalton Urban Redevelopment Plan for the Crown Mill and East Dalton Neighborhoods*

TRANSITION CORRIDOR

The Transition Corridor character area represents arterial or collector roads with frontage that generally developed with single family residences that have over the years seen increased traffic and resulting capacity improvements (i.e. road widening). These improvements resulted in increased traffic volume and associated impacts (e.g., noise, increased trash, street widening, etc.) making uses other than single-family residential more attractive. Some corridors are more densely developed with older structures and numerous curb cuts that may provide an opportunity for redevelopment, while others are less developed with a mix of lot sizes and uses, including undeveloped property. Transition Corridors have experienced or have the potential to experience piecemeal zoning changes that over an extended period result in front yard conversions to parking lots, unsightly home to business additions and conversions, and signage out of proportion to the structures. The Transition Corridor seeks to avoid this approach. Frontage properties along Transition Corridors should follow the development pattern described for the adjacent road-fronting character areas. However, upon completion of more detailed corridor master plans, these corridors could accommodate new commercial development concentrated in nodes at important intersections, but should not accommodate strip commercial between nodes. With a master plan, the Transition Corridor could also accommodate higher residential densities along the roadway between nodes, with lower density areas beyond the frontage properties. Master plans along with a zoning overlay are necessary to ensure that change along these corridors occurs in an orderly, comprehensive manner and applies consistent development standards throughout the corridor.

The Transition Corridor character area includes Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard is the only Transition Corridor in the City of Dalton.

This character area includes all or portions of the major corridors in Varnell – SR 201/Varnell Road, SR 2/Praters Mill Road and SR 71/Cleveland Highway.

Existing attached housing along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, a five-lane thoroughfare in east Dalton

Businesses, such as the one above in north Tunnel Hill on U.S. 41, are an example of the Transition Corridor character area

In Tunnel Hill, this character area includes portions of U.S. 41/Chattanooga Road north and south of the Commercial Corridor character area.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- With a corridor master plan, cluster commercial and mixed use development at major nodes along the corridor that serve adjacent neighborhoods and provide for walkable, higher intensity housing choices located between nodes
- Accommodate conversion of existing residential uses into office or commercial uses while maintaining the existing building
- Preserve or increase traffic flow by consolidating driveways and encouraging interparcel access
- Limit signs and billboards and display unobtrusive business signs that are appropriately sized and constructed for the area
- Incorporate streetscape enhancements to improve the overall appearance of the corridors
- Depict clear physical boundaries and transitions between the edge of the character area and adjacent character areas, in particularly those that include residential uses
- Landscape parking lots to provide shade, reduce impervious surfaces, improve the appearance of a site, and shield parking areas from public view
- Encourage redevelopment that permits minimal building setbacks, mixed use development, screened parking, and requires quality materials and design (related to the building, the site, and signage)
- Reflect coordinated transportation/land use planning by coordinating land use planning with bike, pedestrian and transit opportunities
- Prevent encroachment of commercial uses into adjacent residential areas
- Better integrate stormwater treatment in site planning and design with additional site design standards

New development set back from the street on redeveloping Transition Corridors should protect mature trees where possible and include new landscaping and quality architectural design

Residential character remains within the Transitional Corridor area in Tunnel Hill, as shown above along U.S. 41 north of the Community Activity Center

Primary Land Uses

- Commercial/retail uses, professional offices, mixed use development (including residential uses above ground-floor retail or office space) and multi-family residential with a corridor master plan
- Single-family residential

Implementation Strategies

- *Prepare and adopt Corridor/Streetscape Master Plan for Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to guide enhancements*
- *Adopt a Transition Corridor overlay district to regulate building placement and design, sign placement, size and materials, landscaping, access and other elements that contribute to the look and function of the corridor.*
- *Amend land use regulations to require interparcel access, limit curb cuts, and require sidewalks with new development*

Transition Corridor in Varnell and adjacent Unincorporated Whitfield County along SR71/Cleveland Highway

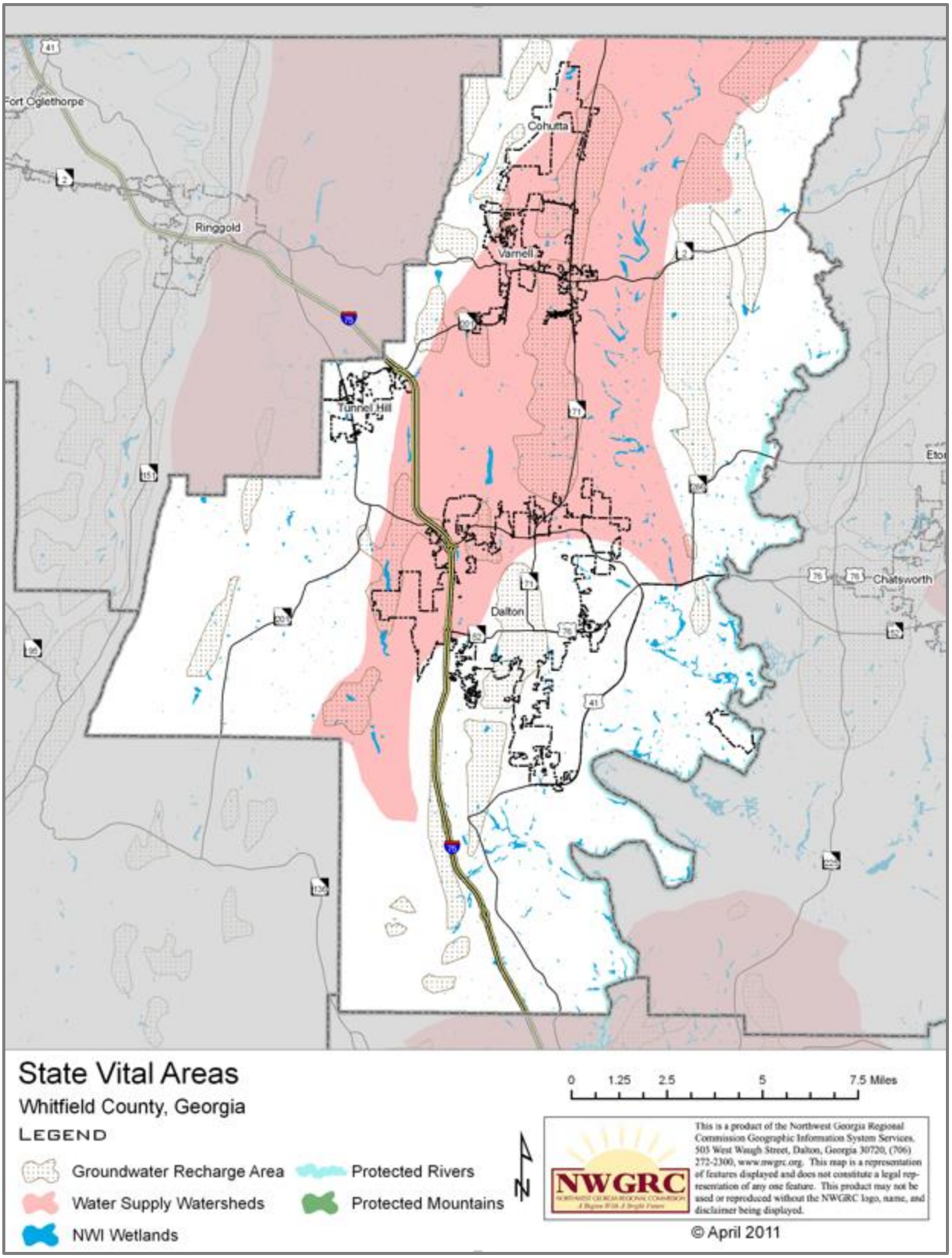


Figure 13: Map showing state vital areas sourced from the Regionally Important Resources plan adopted in 2012

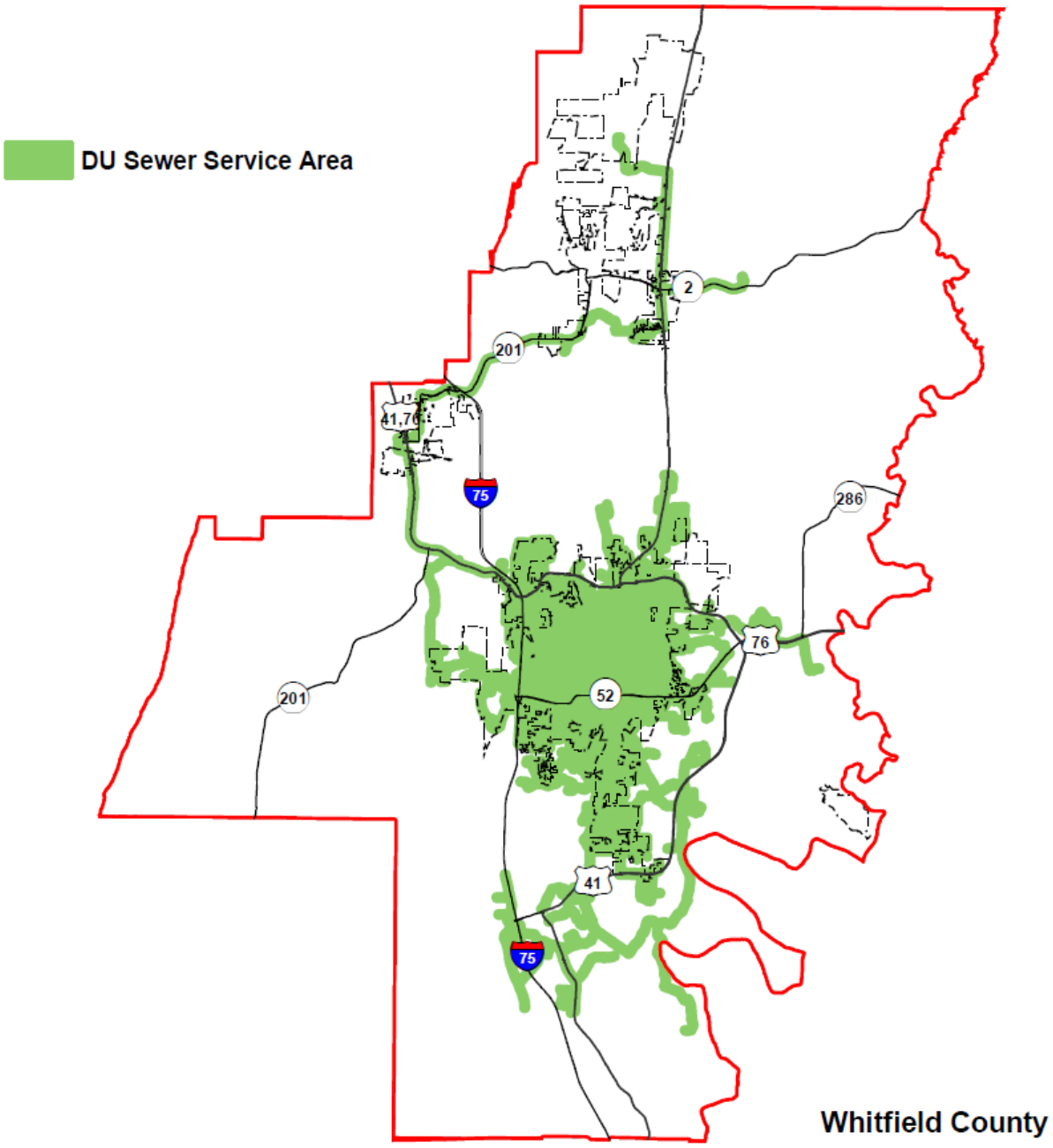
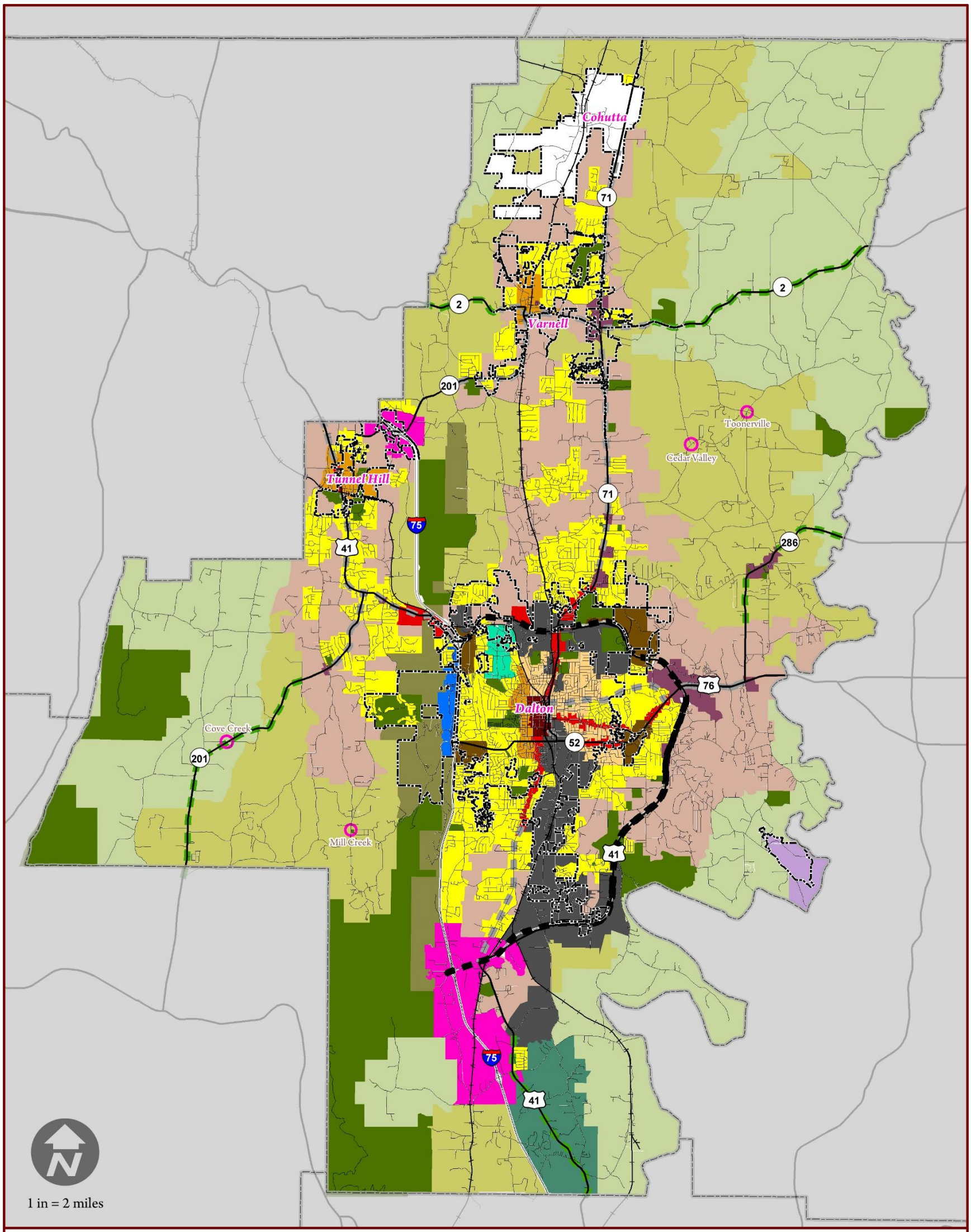


Figure 14: Dalton Utilities current public wastewater service area as of 2018

Future Development Maps



2018 Future Development Map
Whitfield County, Georgia

- Airport
- Cohutta City Limits
- Industrial
- Interchange
- Medical District
- Preserve
- Commercial Corridor
- Downtown/Town Center
- Dalton State/College Drive
- Regional Activity Center
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Rural Neighborhood - Revitalization
- Ridge Conservation
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Rural Residential
- Community Activity Center
- Rural Crossroads
- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

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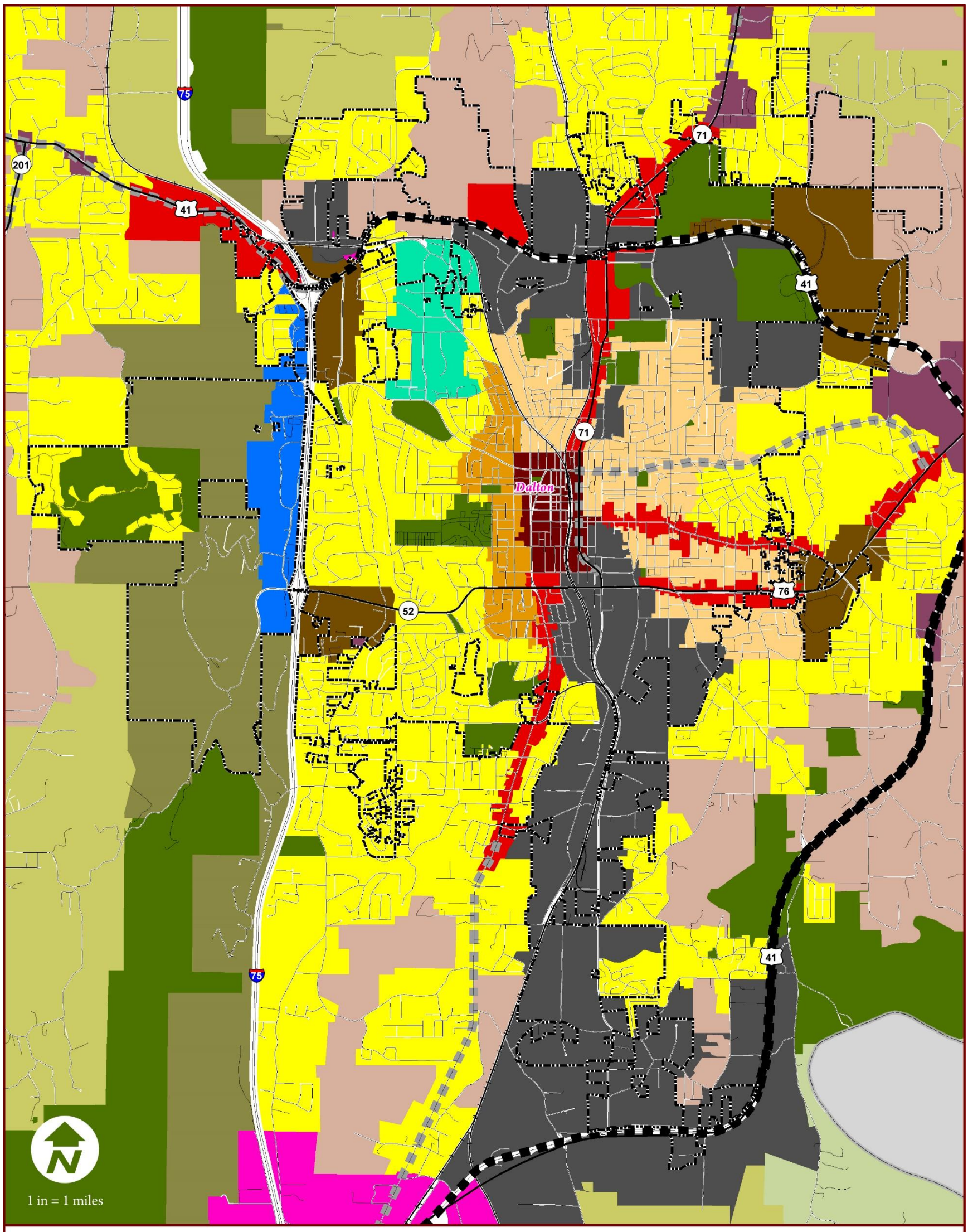

2018 Future Development Map
City of Dalton, Georgia

- Industrial
- Interchange
- Medical District
- Preserve
- Commercial Corridor
- Downtown/Town Center
- Dalton State/College Drive
- Regional Activity Center
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Ridge Conservation
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Rural Residential
- Community Activity Center
- Bypass Corridor
- Transition Corridor

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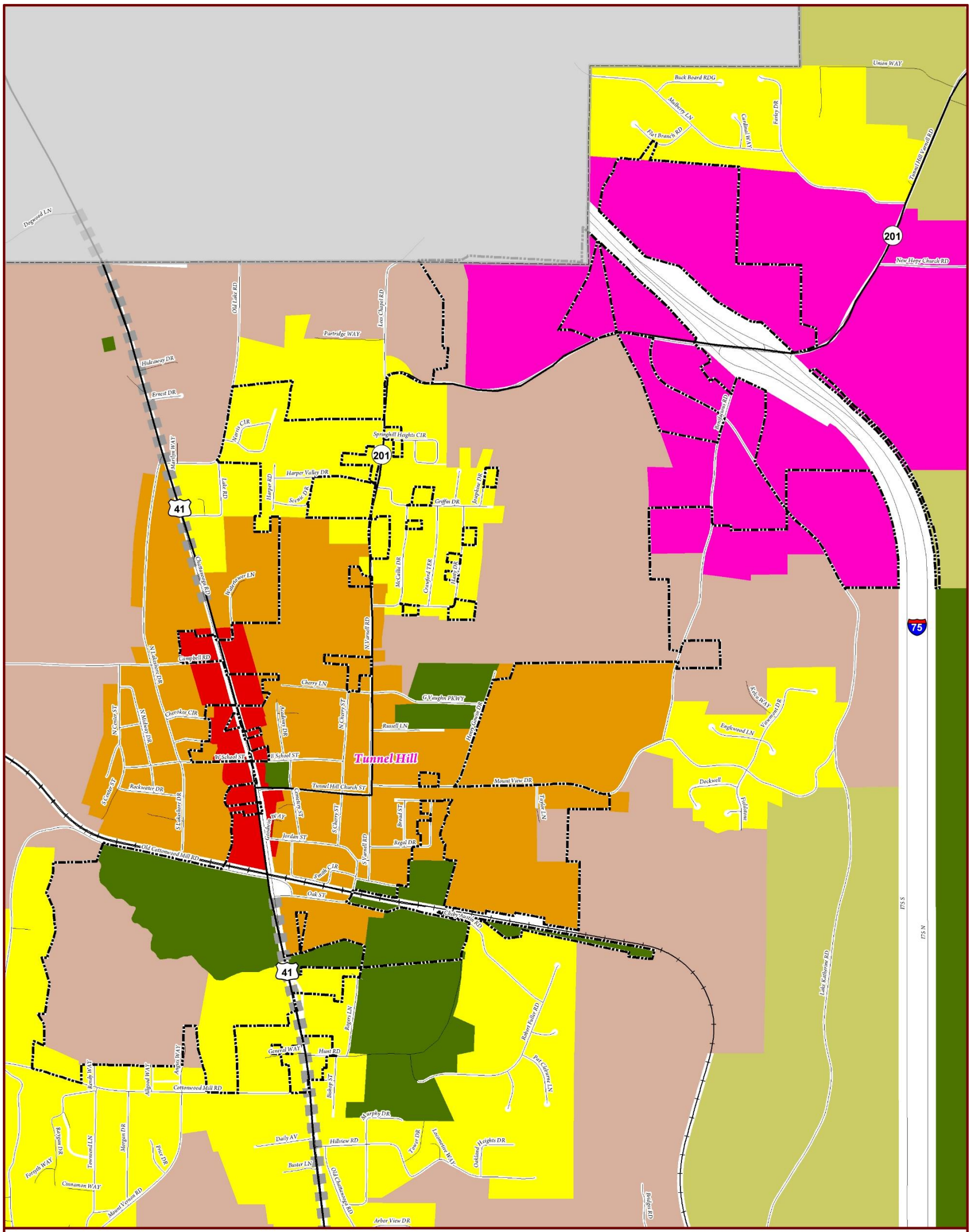

2018 Future Development Map
City of Tunnel Hill, Georgia

- Interchange
- Preserve
- Commercial Corridor
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Rural Residential
- Transition Corridor

1 in = 1,250 feet

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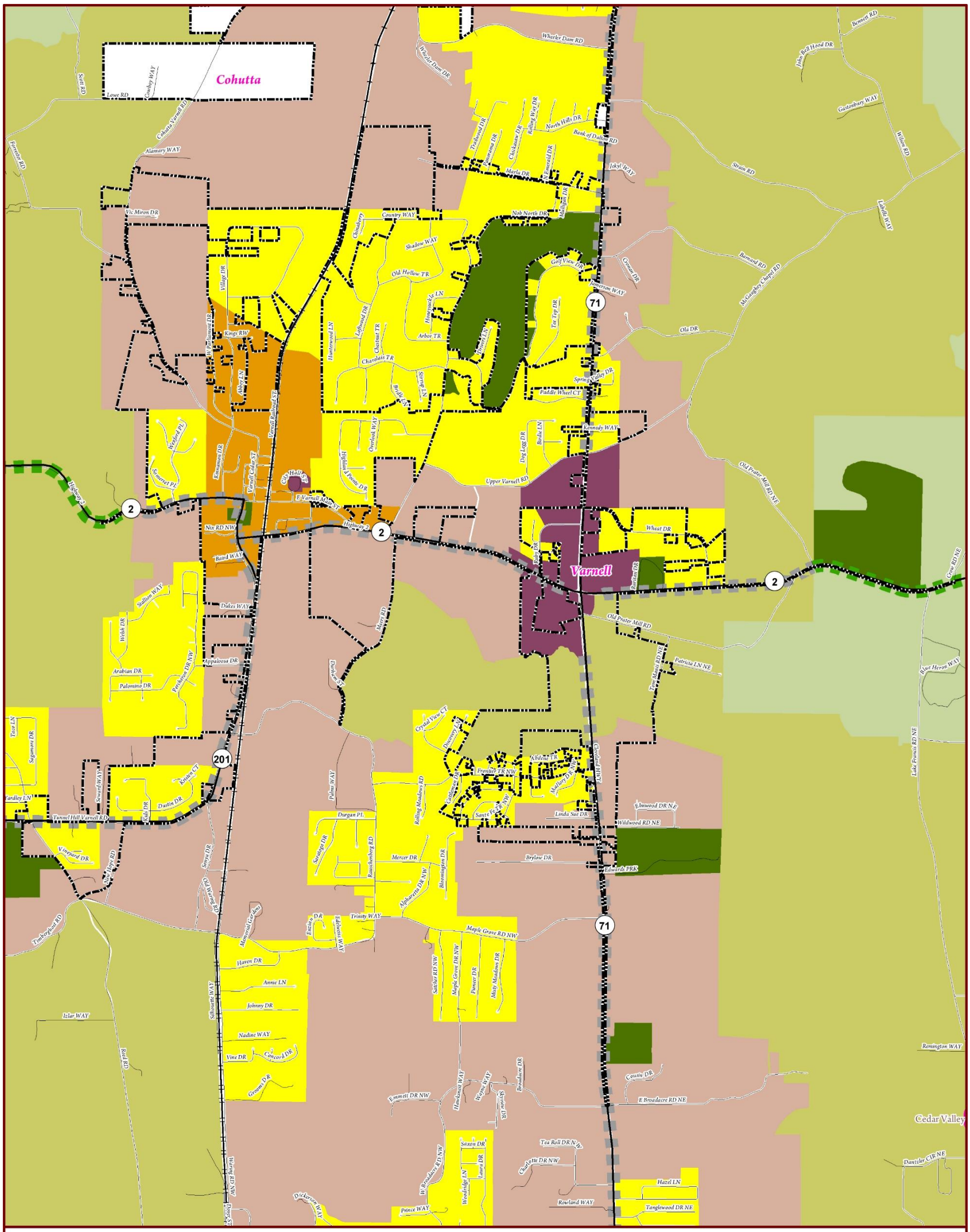

2018 Future Development Map
City of Varnelll, Georgia

- Cohutta City Limits
- Preserve
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Rural Residential
- Community Activity Center
- Rural Crossroads
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

1 in = 2,400 feet

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COHUTTA'S FUTURE LAND USE

Existing Land Use

Cohutta developed in the 19th century with the railroad, so the changing role of the railroad in the 20th century in Georgia from a passenger and freight delivery system providing a stop at a depot in Cohutta to purely a freight system with no stops in Cohutta left the town isolated from major transportation routes. Besides the railroad tracks themselves, there is very little land dedicated to transportation, communication, and utilities.

At one time, the town's rural character and rustic charm allowed it to be a recreational getaway spot. In the late 19th and early 20th century when the railroads provided transportation, people came to Cohutta to relax and bathe in the springs. The existing land use map is shown in Figure 18. The area of the town is now comprised mostly of the two land use categories designated residential and agriculture/forestry, as shown by the existing land use acreage table (Table 3), with 29 percent in the residential-single family category and 58 percent in the Agricultural/Forestry category. Almost all of the housing is single family and much of it is on larger lots. The lot size is affected by the zoning regulations for the town, which were in turn designed to deal with soil types that do not work well for septic systems. A single family dwelling with a well and a septic system requires a 2 acre lot, while single family dwellings with public water and septic require a half acre lot. Since individual septic systems are the only means of treating sewage in town, most lots are sized at a half-acre or more. There are only three areas of multifamily housing on a total of 7 acres, probably because of the septic system limitations. These housing units appear dated and substandard.

Figure 15: Commercial business in Cohutta along Cleveland Highway (SR 71)

There are a few businesses along the Cleveland Highway (Route 71) and in the town center along Wolfe Street. In the town center, empty buildings are evident, due in part to small lots that are inadequate for individual sewage disposal. Business opportunities nearer to work locations outside Cohutta also contribute to building vacancies.

There is very little functioning industry within the town limits. The Pilgrim Chicken Hatchery is the main industry, located on Cohutta-Varnell Road. In the mid-20th century a block plant operated along the rail line just south of the town center on Red Clay Road. The walls of this plant are still visible, a source of post-industrial blight that has given rise to discussions about viable alternatives.

Public facilities include the US Post Office, many churches, the Cohutta Elementary school, and a community building at Shugart Park that can be rented for events. The most notable public facility is the University of Georgia Cohutta Fisheries Center, located north of the town center on Red Clay Road. The station explores cutting-edge developments in fisheries. Cohutta is the only place in Whitfield County where such research is happening. Sturgeon for caviar production is the current focus. Many school groups, scout groups, and others come to the station to learn about biology and aquaculture. A small aquarium is open to the public for viewing fish native to North Georgia, and recreational fisherman are welcome to fish in some of the ponds. The research station property includes a picnic area across Red Clay Road with parking for several cars and a kiosk explaining the history of the area.

Figure 16. Sturgeon used to study caviar production at Cohutta Fisheries Center

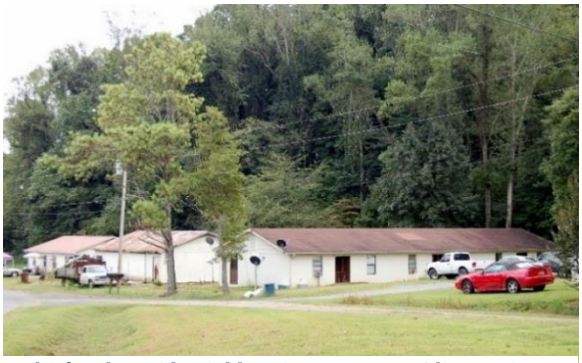
Shugart Park, in the middle of town, has many amenities, including tennis courts, a walking track, a gazebo, a play structure, baseball fields, a concession stand, the above-mentioned community center, and a large parking area. Nearby recreational facilities include the Red Clay State Historic Park just across the state line in Tennessee. The park entrance is a mile and quarter from the north edge of town. This historically and culturally important park marks the location of the last seat of the Cherokee national government before the removal of the Cherokee Nation to lands in the west in 1838. A trail, or a bike/foot path connection between these two parks could be an asset to the town.

Land Use categories:

Residential, single-family. The residential land use category is dominated by single family dwellings on lots approximately one acre in size. This land use category makes up 29 percent of the land within Cohutta town limits.

Single family residential housing on Cohutta-Varnell Road

Residential, multi-family. Buildings containing two dwelling units or more are located on this land use category. Of all the land use categories in Cohutta, this occupies the least acreage, 0.3 percent of the land within Cohutta town limits.



Multi-family residential housing on Mount Olivet Drive

Commercial. Land in this category is used for non-industrial businesses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment.

Retail store, Wolfe Street

Industrial. This category includes land used for manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining and mineral extraction activities, and other similar uses.

Pilgrim chicken hatchery on Cohutta Varnell Road

Public/Institutional. Public buildings and other facilities owned by the federal, state, or local government fall into this category as well as institutions that are not for profit.

University of Georgia Cohutta Fisheries Center

Transportation/Communication/ Utilities. Land in this category includes major transportation routes, railroad facilities, radio towers, and power generation plants.

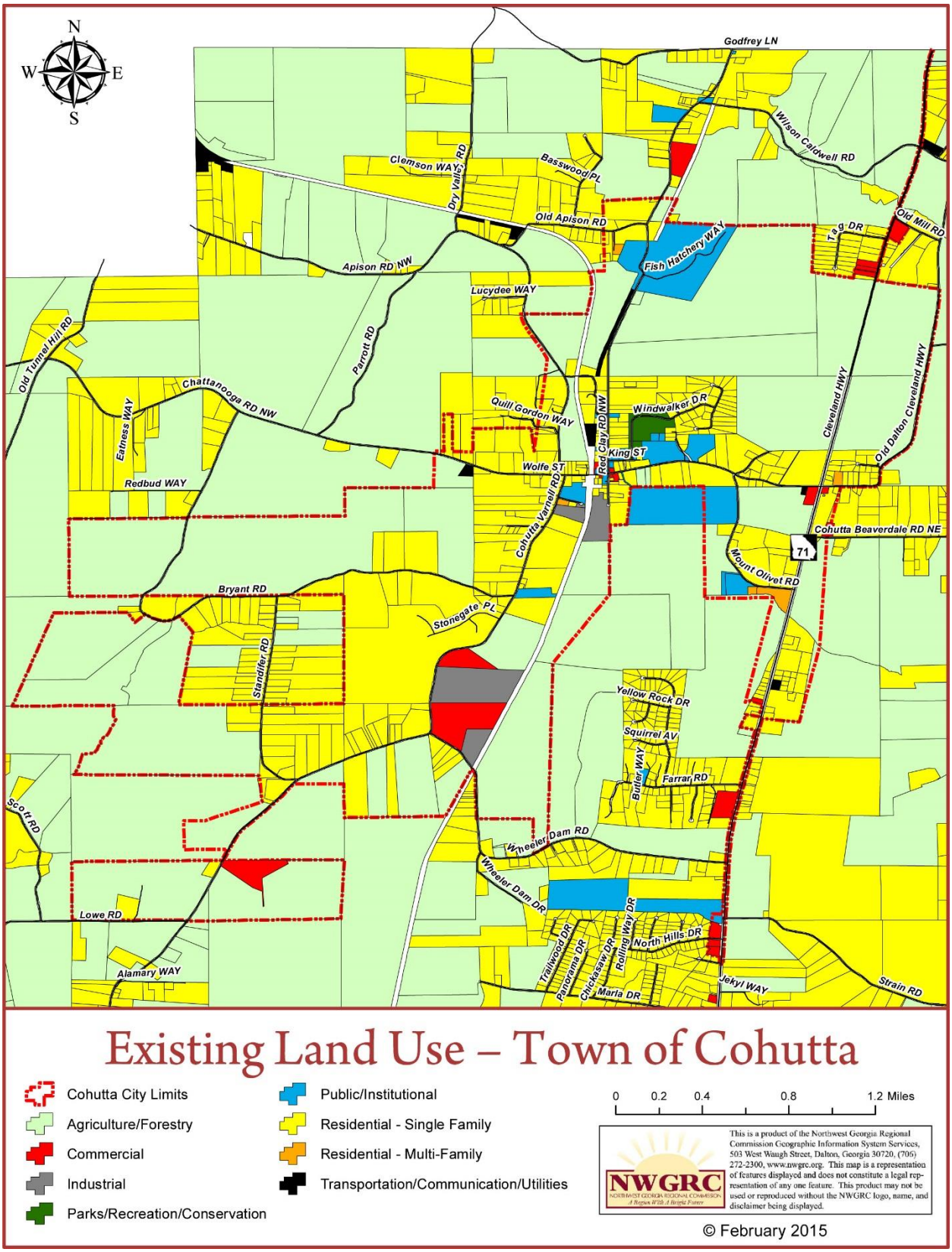
Norfolk Southern rail lines going north out of Cohutta

Parks/Recreation/Conservation. This land use category includes areas dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. This includes privately or publically owned playgrounds, parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national or state forests, golf courses, and recreation centers.

Shugart Park at Cohutta Elementary School

Agricultural/Forestry. Land in this category includes fields, pastures, feedlots and farmsteads used for farming, and forest areas used for commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting. This is the largest land use category within Cohutta's town limits.

Hay field and forest on Wolfe Street



Existing Land Use – Town of Cohutta

- Cohutta City Limits
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential - Single Family
- Residential - Multi-Family
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 Miles

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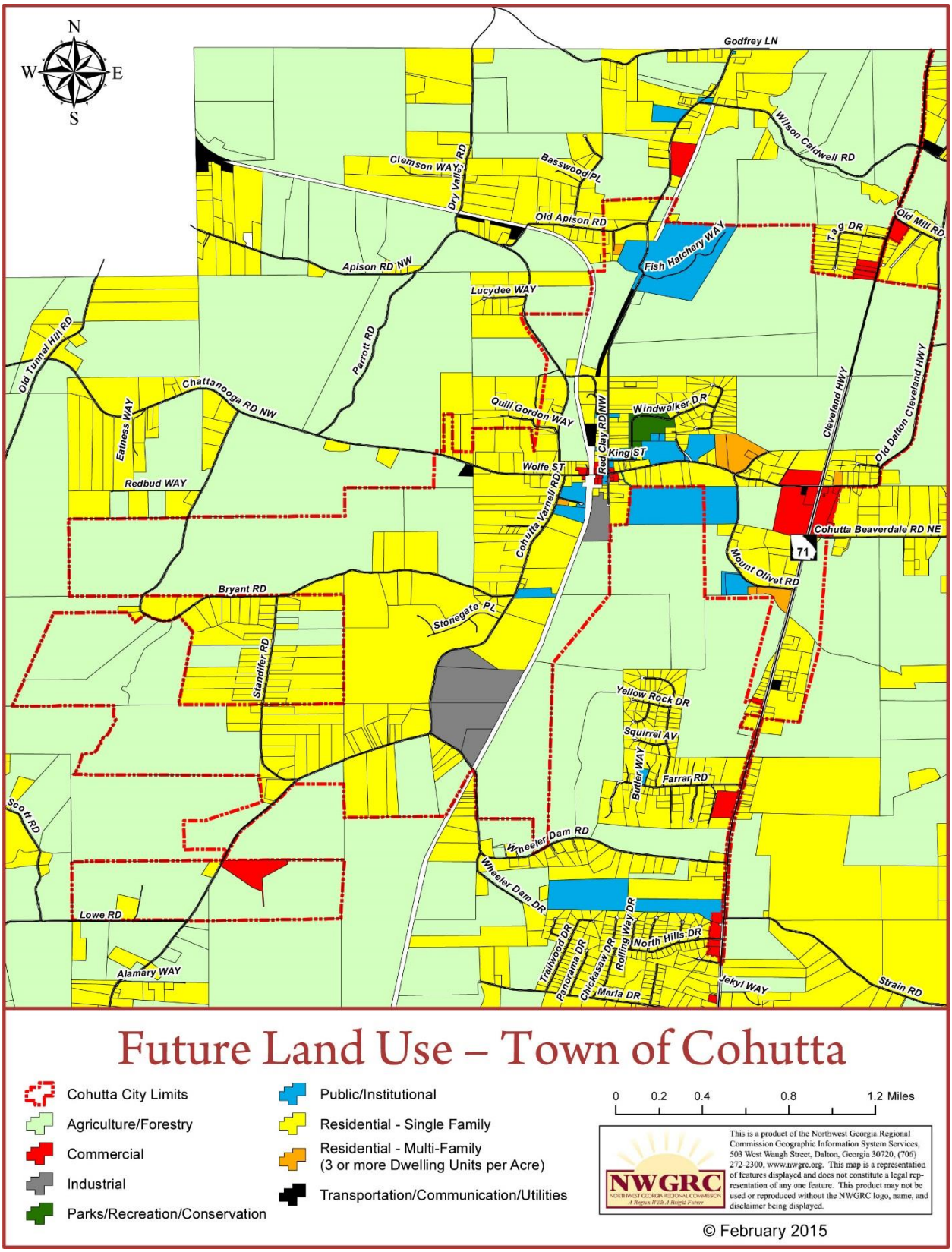

Future Land Use – Town of Cohutta

- Cohutta City Limits
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential - Single Family
- Residential - Multi-Family (3 or more Dwelling Units per Acre)
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 Miles

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Existing land use acreage within cohutta town limits

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent of Total
Agriculture/Forestry	1735.2	57.7%
Commercial	59.9	2.0%
Industrial	54.4	1.8%
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	11.8	0.4%
Public/Institutional	116.5	3.9%
Residential-Single Family	885.9	29.4%
Residential-Multifamily	9.1	0.3%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities*	135.5	4.5%
Total Area	3008.5	100.0%

Source: NWRGC Geographic Information System, 2014
*this total includes railroads, street rights of way, towers, and communication devices.

Future Land Use

When constructing this future land use map, staff consulted the future land use map from the last comprehensive plan (2000) in which Cohutta participated. The future land use map, shown in Figure 19, is not drastically different from the existing land use map (Figure 18), indicating that rates of change are predicted to be gradual in Cohutta. In fact, it varies little from the 2001 plan's future land use map. This supports our predictions for slow change for Cohutta in the next decade.

The acreages in each land use category are shown in Table 4. In general, in keeping with the desire to maintain the rural, agricultural aspect of the town, large areas of agricultural land remain within the city limits in this future land use map. Three agricultural areas were changed to single family residential because the lots were near residential areas, causing the percentage of land in the agriculture/forestry category to drop from 57.7 percent to 55.6 percent.

An area of multifamily residential housing designated on the north side of Wolfe Street near the school was on the 2001 future land use map and is included on this map. The area is slightly smaller in size than previously due to a land purchase by the school system since 2001. The area is deemed a suitable location for multifamily housing, especially if public sewerage is expanded into the Cohutta area.

The commercial node at Wolfe Street and the Cleveland Highway is expanded, but not as much as it was in the future land use map of 2001. Current development contrasts with the future land use map of 2001, which carried commercialization further to the east of the Cleveland Highway. That anticipated development did not occur; commercial development remains slow

here and some business have closed since 2001. A slightly larger commercial node where Strain Road enters the Cleveland Highway is shown on the future land use map. More of the core, or "downtown" area of Cohutta has been classified as commercial, including two lots on the west side of the railroad track. Public sewerage could help promote business development on several small lots in this area.

An effort was made on the map to consolidate the industrial land use around the existing Pilgrim Chicken Hatchery by changing adjacent commercial lots to industrial land use classification. Public sewerage could help this area as well.

An option for future growth in Cohutta for population as well as land area is available through annexation. History has shaped the town thus far and the one-hundred percent method, where owners of local property specifically request annexation, is the most-used annexation method. Properties generally must touch the existing corporate boundary by at least fifty feet to meet eligibility requirements. Growth southward has the most potential to increase population due to existing subdivisions in that area. Growth to the northwest could add area.

Future Land use acreage within Cohutta's Town limits

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent of Total
Agriculture/Forestry	16672.4	55.6%
Commercial	62.0	2.1%
Industrial	83.2	2.8%
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	11.9	0.4%
Public/Institutional	119.9	4.0%
Residential-Single Family	899.5	29.9%
Residential-Multifamily	24.1	0.8%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities*	135.5	4.5%
Total Area	3008.5	100.0%

Source: NWRGC Geographic Information System, 2014
* This total includes railroads, street rights of way, towers, and communication devices.

RURAL BROADBAND

Access to high speed Internet has become a necessity for business and greatly improves the quality of life for residents. In 2015, the Federal Communications Commission set the definition of high-speed internet, or broadband, at 25 megabits per second for download, (downstream) and 3 megabits per second for upload (upstream). The state of Georgia used this definition as a benchmark for high speed Internet service in Senate Bill 403, which was passed to become the "Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE)" Act in spring 2018. This Act has allowed for the creation of the Broadband Ready Program to help communities bring high speed internet service even to the most rural areas. Whitfield County, Cohutta, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell would like to participate in the Broadband Ready Community program because they see a real need to facilitate better Internet connectivity for all residents, regardless of how remote their homes are. Therefore, this broadband element is being added to the comprehensive plan, and three work program items have been added for each government.

- The first item is a commitment to pass a broadband ordinance covering the process of providing broadband to all residents.

- The second item states that they will participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance, and

- The third item is a commitment to apply for funding under the Broadband Ready program. The Northwest Georgia Regional Council has formed a Broadband Committee in response to the Broadband Ready Program. Chairman Laughter has participated in that committee to find solutions to the issue of rural areas without good Internet connection.

Whitfield County's primary utility provider, unlike most rural communities, offers high speed broadband along with their other conventional utilities. This broadband network is built on fiber optic infrastructure that is owned and operated by Dalton Utilities Optilink division. While there are other internet providers in Whitfield County the following map illustrates a common trend related to broadband infrastructure. It is typical for broadband providers to locate their costly infrastructure only where population density is high enough to create a prudent return on investment. Optilink will soon be completing a fiber optic extension to the Town of Cohutta which will be the first existence of high speed broadband in the rural town and will be available for both public and private use.

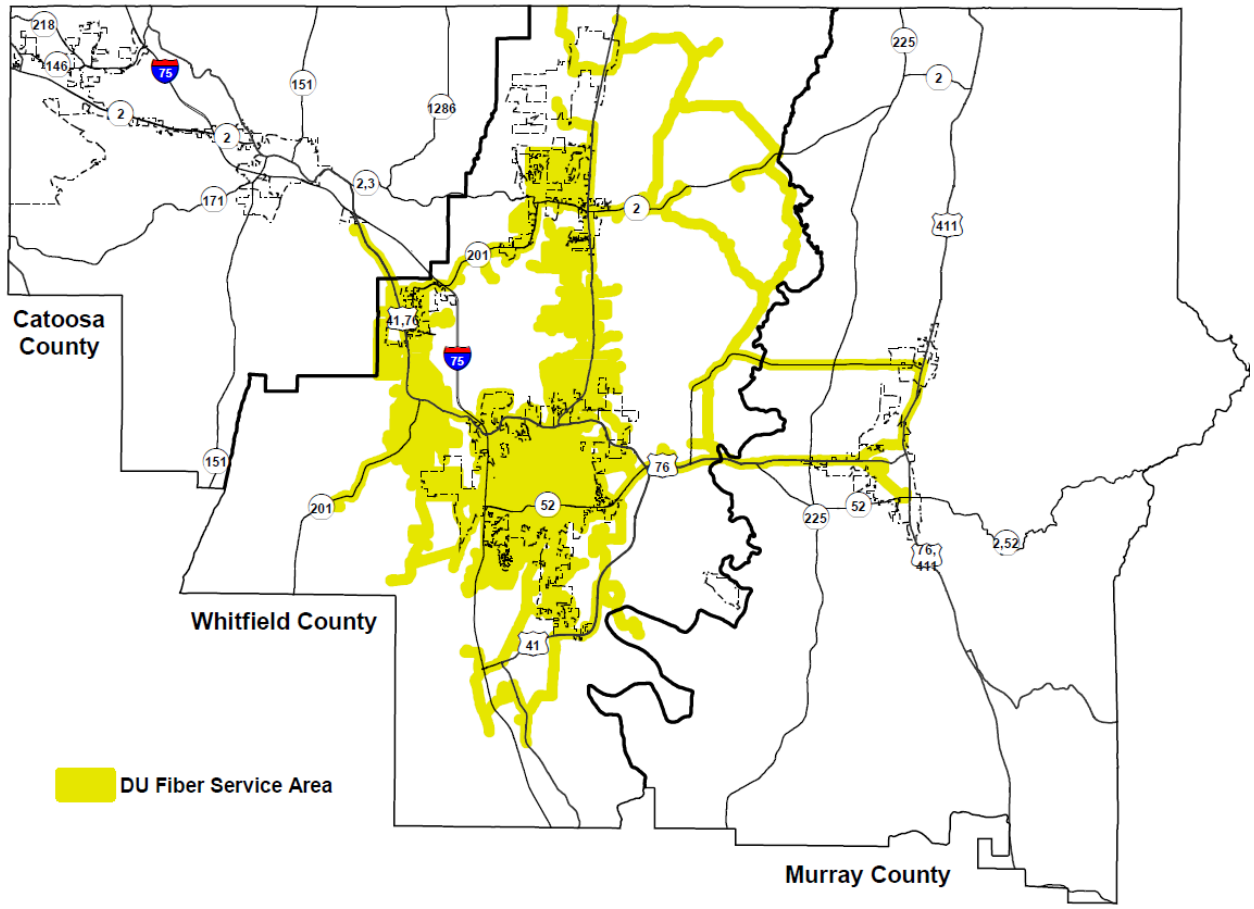


Figure 17: Map illustrating Dalton Utilities high speed fiber optic network

HOUSING

Believe Greater Dalton set forth six strategic priorities, including the goal to pursue a competitive and diverse housing stock as a means of:

- **Aiding talent attraction and retention,**
- **Appealing to a broad range of potential residents,**
- **Encouraging more workers to live in the immediate area, and**
- **Increasing local vitality and quality-of-place.**

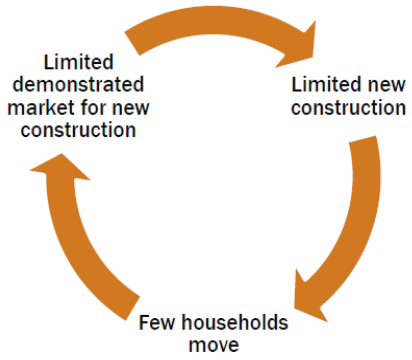
The Believe Greater Dalton initiative worked with private consultants to develop an in depth analysis of housing as it relates to Whitfield County as well as strategic action steps to meet the goals stated above. Exerts from the *Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy* will be used to highlight some of the key findings and strategies from the analysis. The complete document may be found through the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce's webpage or the Believe Greater Dalton webpage.

KEY FINDINGS

THE GREATER DALTON HOUSING MARKET HAS BEEN STAGNANT FOR A DECADE

- Dalton/Whitfield County faces a problem that is fundamentally about a lack of housing supply.
- The market today is characterized by a reinforcing cycle of limited housing options and limited home value appreciation.
- This study has identified significant demand for additional for-sale and rental housing in the Dalton area.
- Thus, in order to reverse the stagnant market cycle local policy and action is needed that encourages:
    - new, market-rate construction, both rental and for-sale, and
    - renovation of existing housing stock.

The Current Market: A Negatively Reinforcing Cycle



Greater Dalton Housing Market:

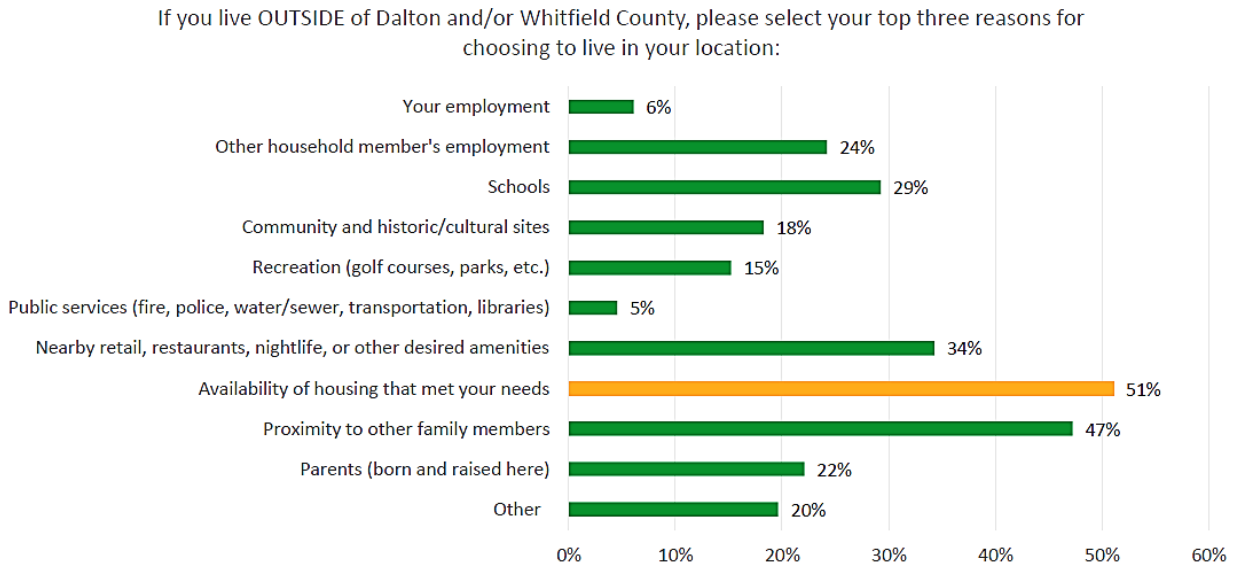
A large supply of lower-priced houses, which are often not marketable to a wide range of buyers, and an under supply of houses that are marketable, particularly to meet a growing middle-income demand.

Dalton/Whitfield County currently generally lacks three key components of a healthy housing market:

- **Existing Homes on the Market**
- **New Construction**
- **The Right Home for the Right Price**

Currently, 50% of Whitfield County workers earning more than $40,000 per year live outside the Dalton MSA based on 2016 Census data.

- A survey of over 700 people who work in Whitfield County but live elsewhere highlighted housing as a top reason for not living where they work.



SUPPLY/DEMAND MISMATCH

- The lack of supply, and corresponding mismatch between supply and demand, leads to:
- Potential new residents not able to find viable housing options.
- Mid-to-high-income home seekers able to choose lower-priced houses or, often, unable to find appropriate housing and forced into other nearby housing markets.

- Home pricing muted because of lack of middle-income housing, as middle-income commuter households choose to live elsewhere.
- Lower-income home seekers unable to compete with mid-to-high-income households for quality housing, even when they can afford it.
- Renters looking to buy and homeowners looking to upgrade having few options available.
- "Renters by choice" not finding local communities with the amenities they seek and forced into other nearby housing markets.
- Home renovations having little return on investment.

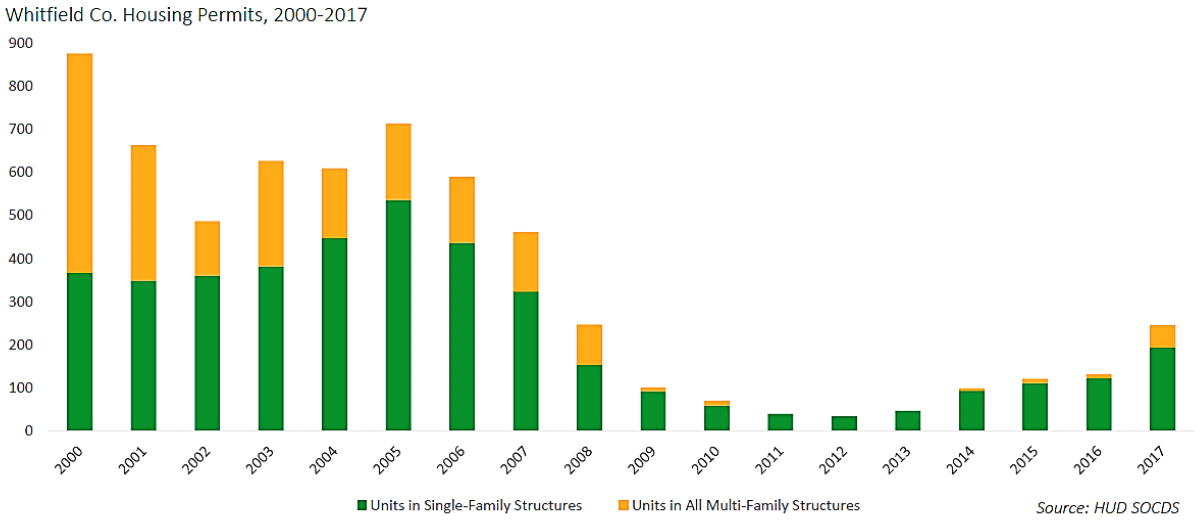
LACK OF NEW CONSTRUCTION

- Options are limited because of the lack of new construction of both single-family and multifamily homes over the past decade.
- Building permit issuance has been slowly increasing since the Great Recession, but is still well below pre-Recession levels.

- This has led to a lack of new housing supply even as jobs have returned to Whitfield County.

- Because of the lack of new construction, Whitfield County has too few local homebuilders.

- Homebuilders in nearby markets such as Chattanooga and Atlanta will need to be convinced of the market opportunity.

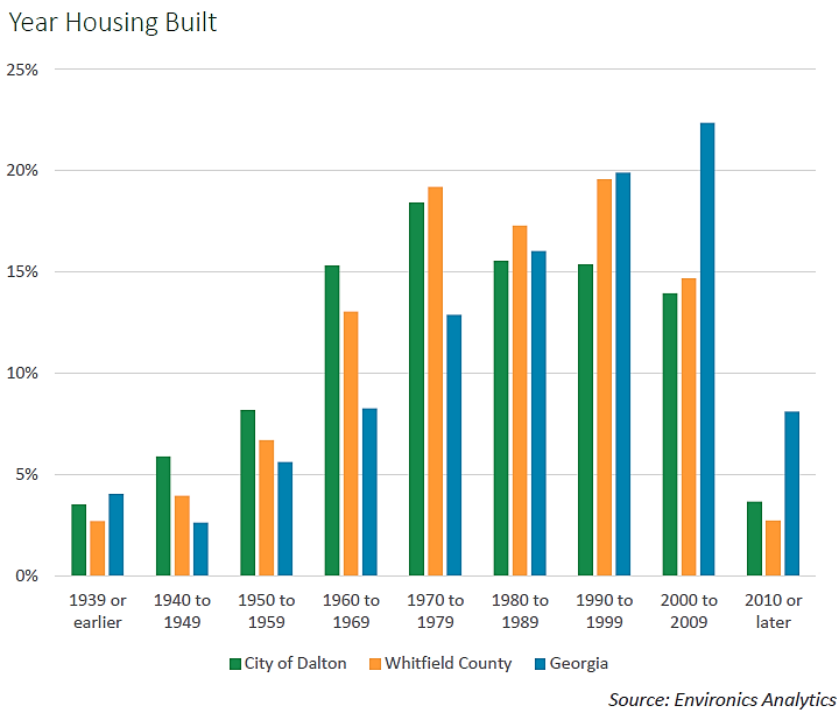


New construction in Whitfield County has not rebounded in the same way that construction in Hamilton or Bartow Counties have. Whitfield County and its immediate neighbors are experiencing similar levels of permitting today, and have tracked similarly since the recession.

- Housing stock in Dalton tends to be older than the overall average in Whitfield County.
- Only 18% of Dalton housing stock was built in the 21stcentury, compared to 31% in the state overall.

Strategy:

Because many areas in Dalton are nearly "built-out," to improve the current housing stock infill development opportunities should be identified and cultivated, particularly those near downtown and other activity nodes.



AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES

- Without appropriate new housing options, higher wage earners in Dalton often choose to live outside of the county.
- The county is in the 94th percentile for wages in Georgia, but only 62nd percentile for incomes.
- A wider variety of new housing options in Whitfield is possible due to the prevalence of higher income jobs in the county.

LOW TURNOVER RATES

- Turnover rates—the frequency with which people move—are low among both owners and renters in Whitfield County.
- Interviews and analysis for this study suggest that, despite demand present, there are currently few better local alternatives for households to move to, whether move-up households, move-down empty-nester households, etc.
- Turnover is approximately 16% among renters overall, equivalent to moving once every six years—in line with the national average.
- However, turnover among renters in professionally managed apartment complexes is half the national average.
- Thus, renter turnover is not in line with what would be expected in a competitive apartment market, pointing to a lack of desirable apartment supply in the area.

LACK OF THE RIGHT HOME FOR THE RIGHT PRICE

- Typically in today's housing market, young professionals who are not ready to buy homes seek amenity-rich developments close to attractive destinations.
- Most of Dalton's rental housing is in single-family homes and small, older apartment complexes.
- Renters who desire amenity-rich conventional apartment dwellings are forced to look elsewhere.

> *"We cannot find any (for-sale housing) in Dalton that does not need to be completely remodeled or costs a fortune. There does not seem to be very much in-between."*
>
> **--Survey Response**

- The homes that are on the for-sale market often need extensive renovation.
- Even homes that seem affordable for middle-income families become unaffordable once renovation costs are factored in.
- Buyers can purchase newer and larger homes for a lower price outside of Whitfield County.

THE MARKET IS STUCK

Because of the tight rental and for-sale market, people move less often than they would like and settle for housing that doesn't meet their needs.

ZONING TOOLS ARE IN PLACE

- Upon review of:
  - Whitfield County zoning code
  - Whitfield County zoning maps
  - Zoning code and maps of comparable nearby communities, particularly Ringgold, GA

Whitfield County appears to generally have the zoning tools to support housing development and redevelopment throughout the county and the city of Dalton.

Strategy:

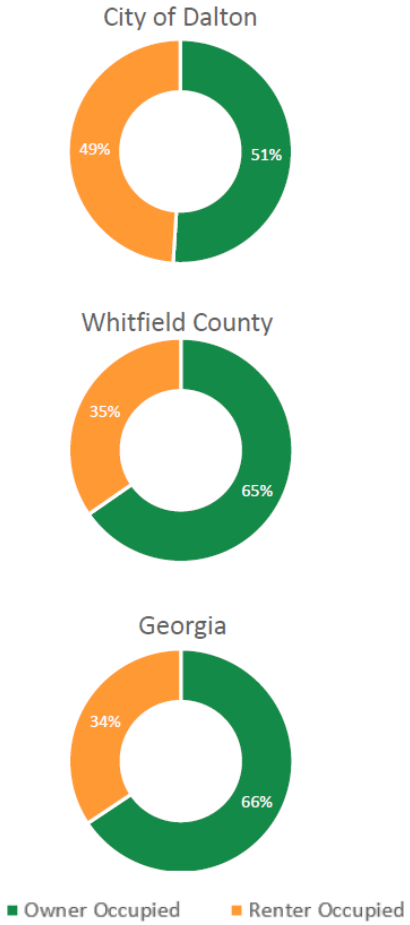
- Pre-emptively rezone targeted development areas to higher-density uses.
- This is especially true of areas downtown, where Central Business District zoning calls for "limited residential uses."
- Rezoning portions in/near downtown for higher-density residential or mixed-uses could increase the ability of attracting developers by limiting the need for a long entitlement process.
- Simultaneously work to ensure infrastructure is in place to attract development to targeted areas. Many higher-density requirements are predicated upon inclusion of city sewer infrastructure. *See current 2018 sewer service area in the Land Use Section along with the Future Development Maps for Whitfield County.*

HOUSING TENURE: OWNER / RENTER

- The proportion of renter housing is higher in Dalton as compared to the county and the state overall.
- Whitfield has over twice as many occupied rental homes than does Dalton.
  - City of Dalton
    - Housing Units, Owner-Occupied: 6,139
    - Housing Units, Renter-Occupied: 5,890
  - Whitfield County
    - Housing Units, Owner-Occupied: 23,261
    - Housing Units, Renter-Occupied: 12,336

    Source: Environics Analytics

- Over half the county's apartment stock was built in the 1970s and 80s.



Greater Dalton can work to unfreeze its housing market by seeking policies to build on:

Encourage construction of for-sale housing

- Identify priority redevelopment and greenfield sites that are large enough to attract the interest of experienced sophisticated developers. Specific property examples are included later in this section of the report.
- Apply zoning policies that allow for unique and differentiated housing types that allow for market segmentation.
- Market/develop residential development sites in the same way that industrial sites are marketed.
- The Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority and the Downtown Dalton Development Authority, particularly, can serve as key agents in inciting new housing.

Support renovation of existing housing stock

- Encourage renovation activity so that homeowners can enjoy a higher quality-of-life in their current home, realize the value of their investment upon sale, and increase the number of move-in ready homes in the market.
- Focus on targeted areas, such as the homes surrounding the Mill Village or the Green Hat, to maximize the impact of neighborhood rehabilitation.

Encourage construction of new, high quality rental apartments

- Create opportunity for the "renters by choice," often young professionals and couples, whose spending power could grow Dalton's economy.

- Supporting professionals in developing ties to Dalton will encourage them to buy homes in the city in the future.

- Leverage the potential for synergies between apartment development and retail development by incentivizing multifamily near priority mixed-use retail nodes, particularly downtown, the Crown Mill area, and key nodes in the county.

Continue to invest in Downtown Dalton

- Having a vibrant downtown is an asset and catalyst for the county-wide housing market, because a majority of home buyers and renters desire downtown amenities nearby, even if they live elsewhere.

- Encourage mixed-use development in the downtown core.

- Incentivize adaptive reuse downtown through streamlining approval processes.

- Implement the Green Hat Plan and/or the upcoming UGA Downtown Master Plan.

    - Turning Chattanooga Avenue into a Complete Street with a high-quality multi-use trail to connect downtown with the Crown Mill adaptive reuse development and further to Haig Mill would contribute to the local vitality and quality of life, and enhance the already present opportunities for infill housing along the corridor.
    - This project would tie into the trailhead of the Mount Rachel Trail and Mill Creek River Walk.

Downtown Dalton generates 2.7% of the City's taxes on just 1.8% of the City's land.

- 216 properties and 43.5 acres located within the City's Central Business District create an average of more than $1.85 million per acre in total appraised value.

In contrast:

- 360 properties and 958 acres that are classified as “Heavy Manufacturing” (Zoned M-2) create an average of $171,100 per acre in total appraised value.
- This is only 9% of the downtown real estate tax base on a per-acre basis.
- 762.5 acres of “General Commercial” (C2) property are valued at an average of $276,500/acre.

- Because of downtown’s regional significance, it will also be important to invest in connectivity to downtown with public walking, hiking, and bicycling infrastructure so that its impact extends beyond downtown.
- Consider a Complete Streets approach for transportation gateways to downtown.
- Complete Streets integrate people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks. This helps to ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, balance the needs of different modes, and support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments. (National Complete Streets Coalition)

RECCOMENDATIONS

- To attract and retain local households, and attract new housing development, it will be important to provide “experiences” for a wide range of locals and visitors. Amenities can help.
- While sufficient demand exists to grow additional housing development, demand still needs to be proven to additional builders and lenders who can impact the amount of new supply.
- New amenities, including shops and restaurants, parks, recreation areas, and historic/cultural attractions help generate “buzz” and energy about Dalton among residents and workers.
- This excitement helps move the market—giving residents and commuters more reasons to live in Dalton, and getting the attention of builders and lenders in the process.
- Amenities can help convince potential investors of a location’s possibilities for success.
- Encourage compact mixed-use development at higher, but still appropriate densities throughout the county in appropriate areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Presenting a comprehensive transportation narrative for Whitfield County including needs, opportunities, goals and policies

INTRODUCTION

Background

Following the 2000 US Census, the City of Dalton was officially classified as a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and became an urbanized area which is defined as a "densely settled territory that contains 50,000 or more people". The initial Dalton urbanized area recorded a population of 57,666 people in 2000. The 2010 Census recorded the Dalton/Whitfield's Urbanized Area (UA) population as 98,037. The existing UA encompasses the City of Dalton as well as areas outside the city limits in Whitfield County, including a portion of Murray County, Tunnel Hill and developments along Cleveland Highway and a fragment in Catoosa County. However, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization (CHCNGATPO) and the Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization (GDMPO) gives CHCNGATPO the transportation planning activities and responsibilities for that small portion of Catoosa County, Georgia that lies within the GDMPO UA and extends into the study area boundaries of the CHCNGATPO.

Management of the GDMPO

Federal law requires the creation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all urbanized areas to ensure that transportation investments are based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) planning process. The Governor of Georgia initially designated the North Georgia Regional Development Center (NGRDC) as the MPO for Dalton and Whitfield County in March 2003. In August 2009, the NGRDC merged with the Coosa Valley Regional Development Center to form the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) per Georgia House Bill 1216. This merger nullified NGRDC's MPO designation for the Dalton urbanized area. On September 30, 2009, the Governor of Georgia approved the designation of the Dalton-Tunnel Hill-Varnell-Whitfield County (Greater Dalton) Urban Transportation Study as the MPO and approved Whitfield County as the entity to staff the MPO. This designation along with an approved Memorandum of Understanding among the affected governments allowed the GDMPO to be recipients of Federal transportation planning funds.

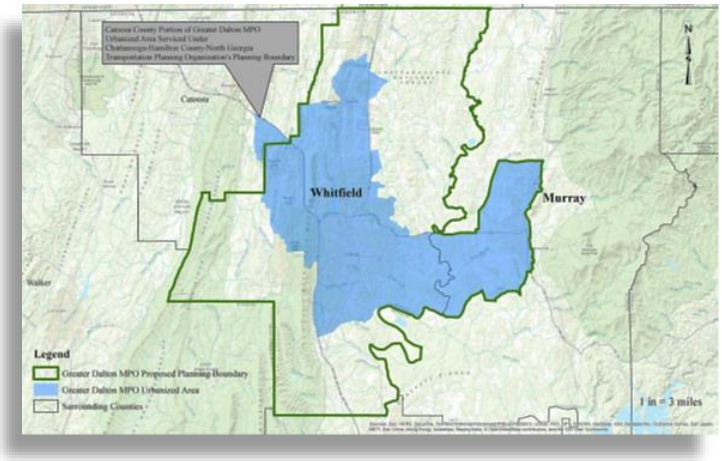


Figure 18: Boundary of GDMPO (blue shaded area)

**For the purposes of this plan we will only focus on transportation as it relates to Whitfield County and its municipalities with the exception of a few regional initiatives.*

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GREATER DALTON MPO 2040 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Overall Goal of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan:
Develop a guide for the orderly development of a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods which supports the land use and economic goals of the area and promotes quality of life.

Guiding Principles

A transportation system that is effective in providing an infrastructure and maintaining efficiently its quality and performance for the future needs of an urban area should be developed with the following guiding principles:

1. Includes all modes.
2. Be safe, convenient, and efficient.
3. Serve and enhance existing land use and planned growth.
4. Sustain the quality of the environment and preserve community values.
5. Be financially feasible, and support all sectors of the area's economy.
6. Provide access and connectivity with diverse land uses and modes.
7. Maintain performance measures to maintain the quality of the transportation system.
8. Be maintained through local official/citizen participation in transportation decision-making.

Figure 19: Dewayne Hunt, Whitfield County Public Works Director, showcasing the county's new milling machine

The Transportation System's Strengths

The existing transportation system in Whitfield County includes a network of physical structures of roads, bridges, sidewalks, rail lines, and a general aviation airport. These structures provide for the various trip purposes of motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, truck users, airplane passengers, and users of rail. Particularly these structures serve local public transportation operations and state bicycles routes within both counties. Together Whitfield and Murray Counties have approximately 1550 miles of public roads in its transportation system. The worker commuting patterns and the extensive truck freight shipping make continued maintenance and upgrading of the road system important. Interstate 75, with five exits to the Whitfield County area, supports the area as a major commercial and industrial center for North Georgia. The bypass around Dalton provides access and connectivity to diverse land use activities along its route and, while its original intent was for efficient movement for people and goods, there are congestion problems at some of the

Figure 20: Before and after of a culvert replacement on Beaverdale Rd. where Whitfield County saved approximately $300,00 by utilizing its on public works department rather than a contractor

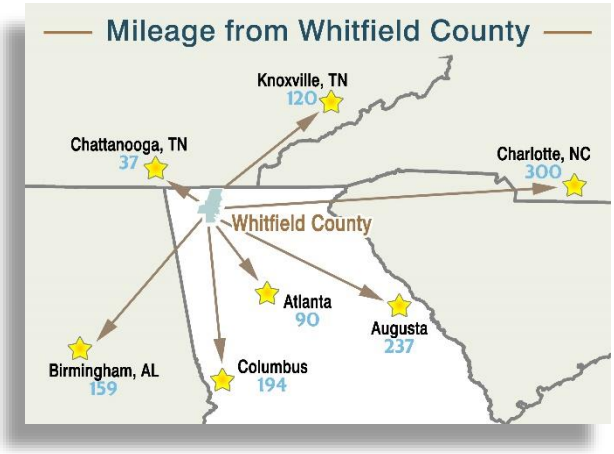
intersections with the surrounding network of local streets.

The Transportation System's Constraints

- Mountainous terrain
- CSX/Norfolk Southern Railroad at-grade crossings
- Conasauga River and Wetlands
- Funding limitations at the federal, state, and local levels of government
- Traffic signals that are not coordinated on main arterials
- Heavy congested traffic on I-75
- Historic districts and Civil War historic areas
- School bus schedules

Long-Range Transportation Needs and Opportunities

Mobility of People



- Reduce traffic congestion along Walnut Avenue particularly from I-75 to Tibbs/Dug Gap Rd.
- Improve access to development in south Whitfield County
- The intersection of North Glenwood at MLK Jr. Blvd. need turn lanes and the northbound left turn towards the west needs a protected left-turn signal.
- The intersection of North Glenwood Avenue/Cleveland Highway at Smith Industrial Blvd. needs improved vehicular detections to change the traffic signal.
- The intersection of SR 71/Cleveland Highway at the North Bypass needs improvements
- Airport Road at Sane Road needs intersection and traffic signal improvements.
- Extension and road widening is needed for Veterans Drive from Morris Street to Walnut Avenue at Riverbend Road.
- Improve the synchronization of traffic lights along major corridors like Walnut Avenue.
- Reed Road north of SR 201 needs to be improved.
- Improve Rauschenberg Road at Reed Road and Rauschenberg Road at Sonya Drive

Movement of Goods

- Need improved turn radii at intersections near truck freight terminals in Dalton
- Need improved truck routing in Dalton.

Other Modes of Transportation

- In Cohutta, there are no continuous sidewalks and bicycle routes in the city.
- Additional sidewalks are needed on SR 71.

Safety
- Improve schedules of work shifts, truck freight movements, and school traffic due to start times and dismissals
- Need more warning/information signs and way finding signs at strategic locations

Maintenance
- Need improved maintenance along Buckingham Street

Population Characteristics

Whitfield County Population 1980 -2040

Year	Population	Percent Change
1980	65,775	Base
1990	72,462	10.2%
2000	83,525	15.3%
2010	102,578	22.8%
2040*	148,996	45.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Statistics/GDMPO Staff

Schools

Public Schools

Whitfield County School System is the 26th-largest of Georgia's 180 public school districts. More than 13,000 students attend 24 schools that include:
- 13 elementary schools
- 5 middle schools
- 3 comprehensive high schools
- 1 charter high school career academy
- 1 special-purpose high school

The Dalton School System has an enrollment of approximately 5,700 students and includes 9 schools. These schools include:
- 6 elementary schools,
- 1 middle school
- 2 high schools.

Secondary Schools

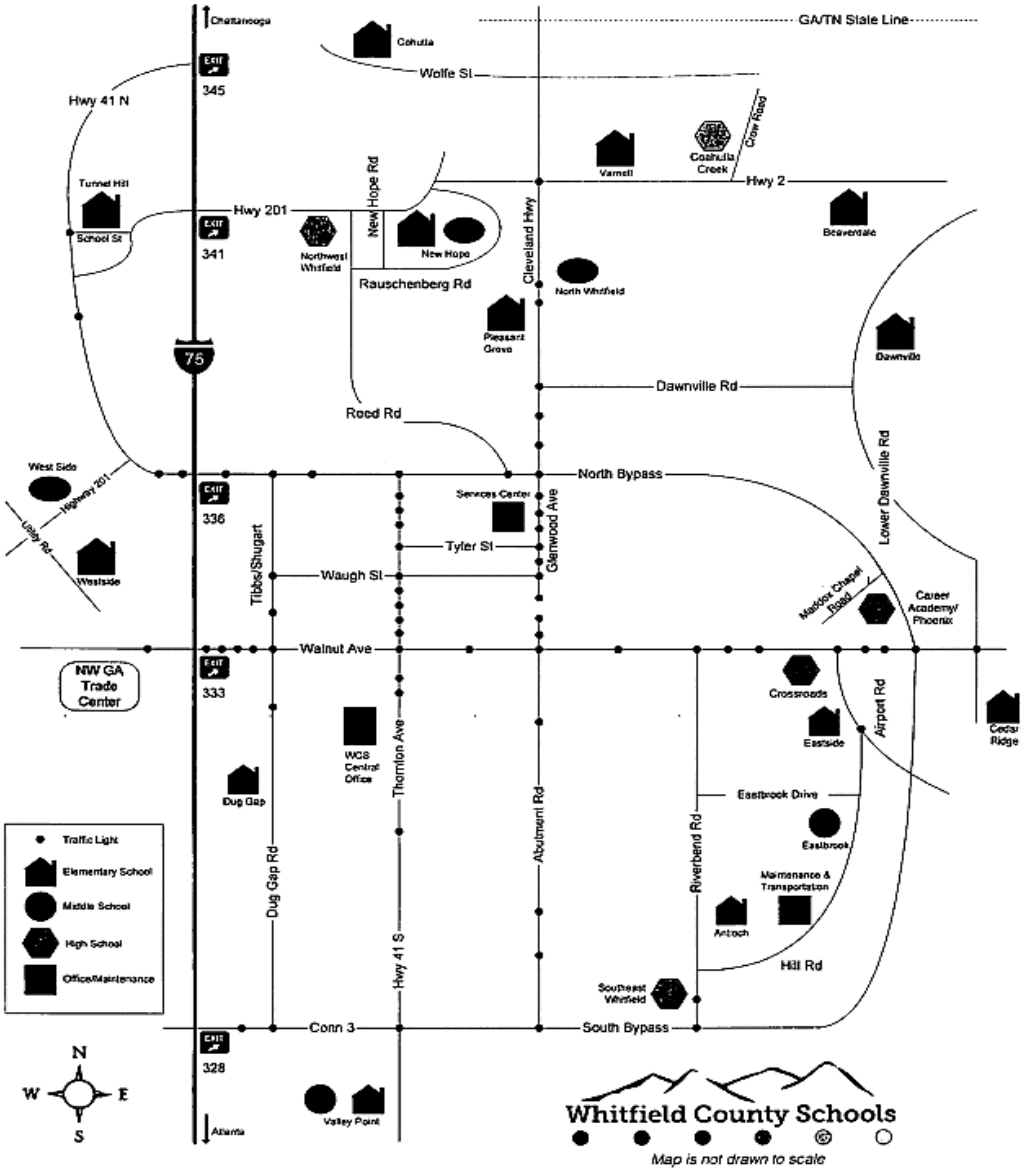
Dalton State College is also located in Whitfield College with an annual enrollment of approximately 5,000 students.

In addition, Dalton/ Whitfield County provide technical training through one of the campuses of the Georgia Northwestern Technical College. The other four campuses have locations in Rome, Calhoun, Rockmart, and Rock Springs. These 5 campuses together have an annual credit enrollment of 8,200 students, which makes this college the largest technical college in Northwest Georgia and the fifth largest in Georgia.

Both Dalton State College and the Georgia Northwestern Technical College could be described as commuter colleges, meaning that the overwhelming majority of students commute to the campuses from throughout the region rather than live on-campus. Dalton State College, however, has begun a student housing program intended to provide enrolment opportunities for students outside the commutable range. There are currently 356 dormitory units available for students that chose to live on-camous.

School Enrollment Projections

The projected 2040 total school enrollment for Whitfield County was calculated to be 40,044. This total was determined as a result of dividing the base year 2010 enrollment (27,569) by the base year 2010 population (102,578) and multiplying that ratio by the projected population (148,996).5 The 2040 school enrollment projection of 40,044 is an increase of 45.2%.



21: Graphic showing the locations of all Whitfield County Schools and associated complexes

Inventory of Roads

The roadway network, composed of freeways (I-75), arterials, collectors, and local streets serves the basic trip purposes of the counties' work commuters, tourists, and its business and commercial activities. This network of roads provides access to properties and provides major connections between major land use activities throughout the counties. The existing major roads in Whitfield County include the following:

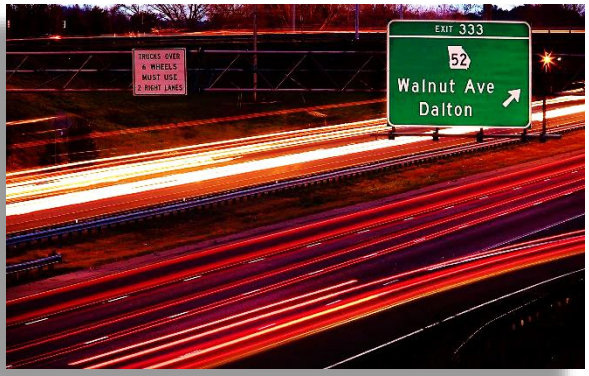


Figure 22: Exit 333 signage along I-75 corridor

- **Interstate-75** – This major north-south corridor and gateway into Whitfield County from the urban areas of Chattanooga, Tennessee and Atlanta, Georgia. This corridor serves commuters, tourists, and major goods movements by trucks through the county.
- **State Route 71**- This arterial also known as the Cleveland Highway runs from the North Dalton Bypass to the Tennessee state line
- **US 76/US 41/SR 3 (The Dalton Bypass) and the State Route 3 Connector**- This bypass provides a multi-lane route around central Dalton along the north, east, and south sides. Due to mountainous terrain, the bypass does not extend west of I-75.
- **State Route 2**- This arterial enters Whitfield County from the west at the Catoosa County line and extends through Varnell and exits Whitfield County into Murray County on the east side.
- **State Route 201** – This road enters Whitfield County from the east in Walker County and extends through Tunnel Hill, where it terminates in Varnell at State Route 2.
- **State Route 3/US 41**- This major road enters Whitfield County on the south from Gordon County and extends north to the South Dalton Bypass/SR 3 Connector and traverses north through Tunnel Hill and into Catoosa County on the west side.
- **State Route 52/Walnut Avenue**- This major east-west road begins at I-75 and extends through Dalton.
- **State Route 52/US 76/Chatsworth Highway**- This road extends east and west through Dalton into Murray County.
- **State Route 286**- This route begins at SR 52/US76 in Dalton and extends east into Murray County.

The table below lists long range projects specific to the Whitfield portion of the GDMPO planning area listed in the MPO's 2040 LRTP.

COUNTY	PROJECT	FROM – TO	TYPE OF PROJECT
Whitfield	SR 201	SR 3 to Old Lafayette Rd	Improve poor site visibility
Whitfield	Old Lafayette Rd	SR 201 to SR 3	Curve improvement & turn lanes
Whitfield	SR 3	N. Tibbs Road	Widen for RT into N. Tibbs Rd
Whitfield	SR 3	SR 201 to Shugart Rd including interchange improvements	Widening of Roadway and Widening of Ramps of interchange from 1 to 2 lanes
Whitfield	N. Tibbs Rd	College Drive	Intersection improvement – Add RT & LT lanes on N. Tibbs Rd.
Whitfield	N. Tibbs Rd	SR 3 to Shugart Rd.	Widening
Whitfield	Old Dixie Highway	South Dalton Bypass to Cross Plains Blvd	Widening
Whitfield	SR 3 (South Dixie Rd)	South Dalton Bypass to Cross Plains Blvd	Widening
Whitfield	South Bypass	I-75 off-ramp to SR 3 (South Dixie Rd)	Add one EB lane
Whitfield	South Bypass	I-75 off-ramp to SR 3 (South Dixie Rd)	Widening of Roadway and Widening of Ramps of interchange from 1 to 2 lanes

Whitfield	North Bypass/SR 3	Cleveland Ave/Reed Road	Intersection improvement – Add RT & LF lanes on Chattanooga Ave and Reed Rd
Whitfield	North Bypass/SR 3	Cleveland Hwy/SR 71	Intersection Grade Separation Project SR 3/North Bypass would be bridged over SR 71/Cleveland Hwy
Whitfield	North Bypass/SR 3	Chattanooga Ave/Reed Rd to Cleveland Hwy/SR 71	Widening
Whitfield /Murray	US 76/Chatsworth Hwy	SR 3 to Alt SR 52	Widening
Whitfield	Carbondale Road	Redwine Cove Rd to I-75 Interchange	Widening
Whitfield	New Connector Roadway	Airport Road to South Dalton Bypass near Riverbend Road & Conasauga Rd	New location highway
Whitfield	SR 3 (Admiral Mack Gaston Pkwy)	Airport Road	Intersection Improvement – Additional turn lanes
Whitfield /Murray	SR 560/East-West Hwy	SR 3 in Whitfield to US 411 in Murray	New location Highway
Whitfield	SR 560/East-West Hwy	SR 151 in Catoosa to SR 3/Whitfield	New location Highway
Whitfield	I-75	CR 665/Carbondale Rd to SR 3	Widening
Whitfield	I-75	SR 3 to SR 151	Widening
Whitfield	SR 3	SR 136 in Gordon to SR 3 Connector in Whitfield	Widening
Whitfield	SR 201 Extension and Improvement	US 41 at Campbell Rd to SR 201 and Improvement of SR 201 from SR 201 Extension to I-75 Interchange	Extension & Improvement
Whitfield	SR 201	I-75 Interchange to Reed Road	Widening
Whitfield	SR 201	Reed Rd to SR 2 (Prater Mill Rd)	Widening
Whitfield	Lake Francis Road	Good Hope Rd to SR 2 (Prater Mill Rd)	Widening
Whitfield	Dawnville-Beaverdale Road	SR 286 to Cherokee Estate Road	Widening
Whitfield	Reed Road	SR 201 to SR 222	Improve curves with shoulders
Whitfield	SR 2	SR 201	Roundabout
Whitfield	Reed Road	Rauschenberg Road	Intersection improvement
Whitfield	Rauschenberg Road	Sonya Drive to Waring Road/Dye Drive @ Railroad Crossing	Intersection improvements – Widening
Whitfield	Riverbend Road	Walnut Ave/US 76	Intersection imp – Turn Radii
Whitfield	Gordon Street	NS Railroad (719083G)	Bridge Replacement
Whitfield	Seaton Road	Mills Creek	Bridge Replacement
Whitfield	Old Tilton Road	Swamp Creek	Bridge Replacement
Whitfield	Redwine Cove Rd.	Swamp Creek	Bridge Replacement
Whitfield	McGaughey Chapel Rd.	Coahulla Creek	Bridge Replacement
Whitfield	Nance Springs Road	Conasauga River Tributary	Bridge Replacement
Whitfield	Chattanooga Rd and Red Clay Rd	City of Cohutta	Sidewalks, Streetscape & Bike Paths
Whitfield	Along SR 71	From Beaverdale Rd to Williams Dr and From Frontier Trail to Prater Mill Road	Sidewalks
Whitfield	Streets within 0.5 mile of Schools		Sidewalks

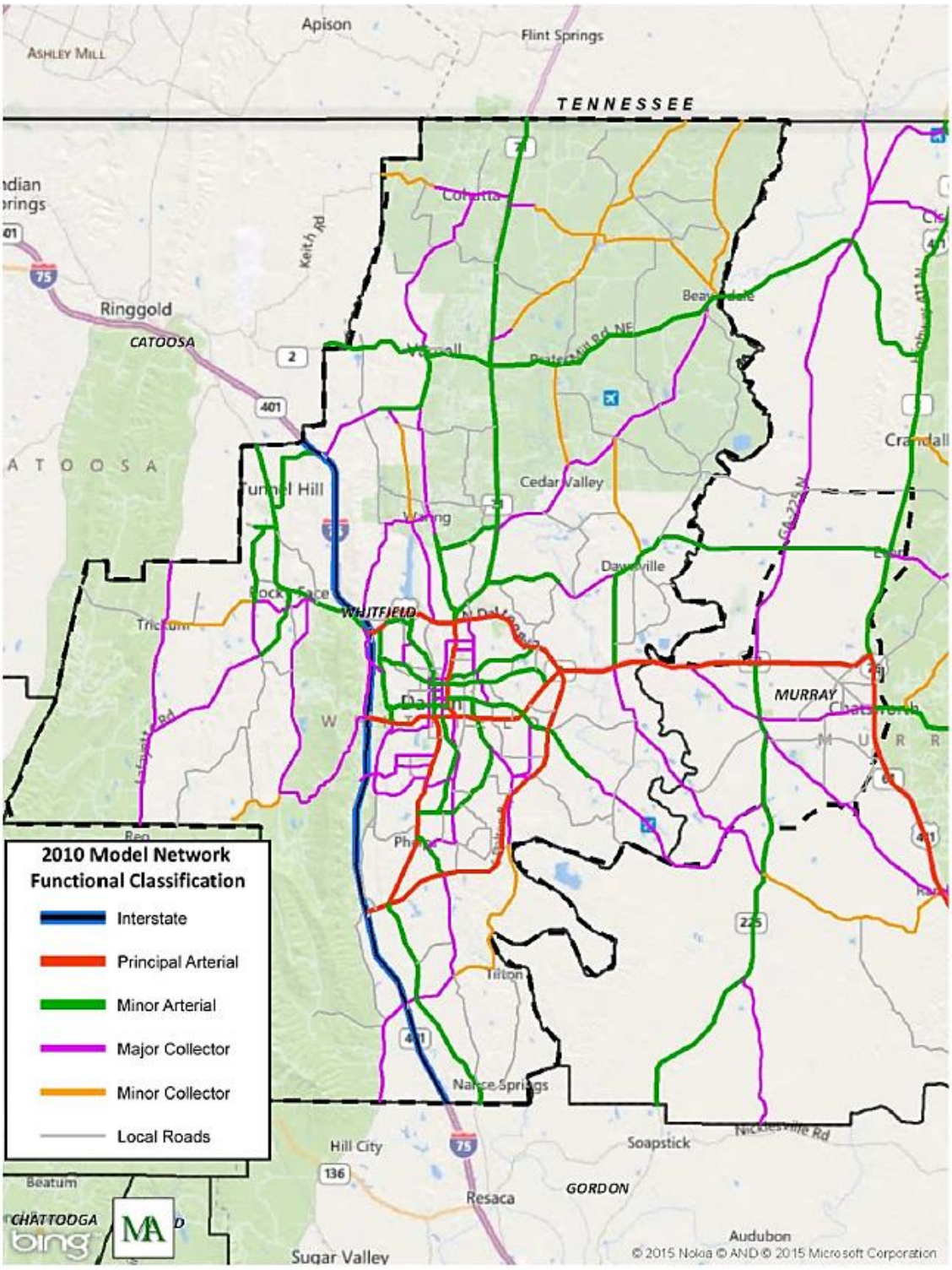


Figure 23: Highway/Major Road Network

Bridges

The GDOT calculates sufficiency ratings for each bridge by evaluating its overall condition, taking into account all factors from low load to field/visual observation of deficiencies. From a project perspective,

GDOT's Office of Bridge Maintenance suggests structures with a sufficiency rating less than 50 be replaced rather than improved. This rating is used to estimate when a bridge would need rehabilitation or reconstruction. With a 30-year planning horizon, bridge structures with a rating above 70 should be in acceptable condition as long as routine maintenance is provided. Bridges with a rating between 60 and 70 are candidates for rehabilitation or reconstruction by 2025 and bridges with ratings between 50 and 60 are candidates for reconstruction by 2020. Tables 22 through 24 reveal the bridge ID number, location, and Sufficiency Ratings for bridges in Whitfield County.

Table 22: Bridge Sufficiency Rating below 50

Bridge ID	County	Roadway	Feature Intersection	Sufficiency Rating
313-0063-0	Whitfield	Gordon Street	NS Railroad (719083G)	49.60

Source for Bridge Sufficiency Ratings: GDOT.

Table 23: Bridge Sufficiency Rating between 50 and 60

Bridge ID	County	Roadway	Feature Intersection	Sufficiency Rating
313-0006-0	Whitfield	US 41	Little Swamp Creek	51.60
313-5008-0	Whitfield	Old Tilton Road	Swamp Creek	54.40
313-5002-0	Whitfield	Redwine Cove Road	Swamp Creek	54.90
313-5050-0	Whitfield	McGaughey Chapel Road	Coahulla Creek	55.60

Source for Bridge Sufficiency Ratings: GDOT.

Table 24: Bridge Sufficiency Ratings between 60 and 70

Bridge ID	County	Roadway	Feature Intersection	Sufficiency Rating
313-5031-0	Whitfield	Reed Pond Road	Poplar Spring Creek	61.90
313-0004-0	Whitfield	SR 2	Conasauga River	62.00
313-0043-0	Whitfield	I-75	SR 3(US 41)	64.00
313-0068-0	Whitfield	Dawnville Road	Coahulla Creek	64.10
313-0020-0	Whitfield	SR 52	Mill Creek	66.00
313-5053-0	Whitfield	Nance Springs Circle	Conasauga River Tributary	66.00
313-5080-0	Whitfield	SR 3 Conn	I-75	66.00
313-0026-0	Whitfield	Glenwood Avenue	Mill Creek	66.60
313-0009-0	Whitfield	Old US 41	Tar Creek	67.00
313-5043-0	Whitfield	Gordon Springs Road	East Chickamauga Creek	68.00
313-5015-0	Whitfield	Underwood Street	Mill Creek	68.70
313-5028-0	Whitfield	Putnam Road	Mills Creek	68.70
313-5040-0	Whitfield	Houston Valley Road	Dry Creek	69.00
313-5019-0	Whitfield	Boyles Mill Road	Spring Creek	69.50
313-0047-0	Whitfield	I-75	M-1506-CSX RR (340554R)	69.80
313-0050-0	Whitfield	I-75	SR 201	69.90
313-0073-0	Whitfield	US 41/SR 3	CSX RR-Mill Creek	69.90

Source for Bridge Sufficiency Ratings: GDOT.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems

The following Bicycle Facilities goals were included in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan:

- Promote and encourage bicycle travel as a viable form of transportation, as healthy forms of exercise, and as a positive benefit to the environmental and the community.
- Provide a system of bicycle facilities that is safe, convenient, and accessible for all users.
- Promote coordinated and continuous bicycle facility planning and development.

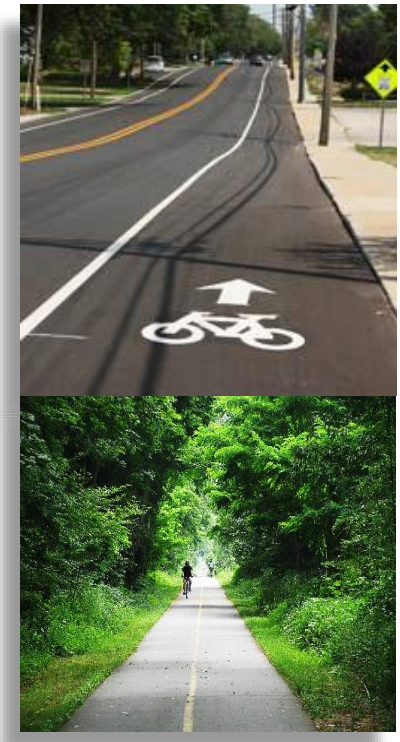


Figure 24: Examples of various bike lane designs that could be incorporated throughout Whitfield County for alternative transportation and recreation opportunities

The "March to the Sea" and the "Mountain Crossing" are two state bicycle routes in Whitfield County. Figure 26 shows the locations of these state bicycle routes that traverse the county. March to the Sea - State Route 35, runs northwest/southeast between the Tennessee State line near Chattanooga and downtown Savannah. Within Whitfield County the route traverses 11.7 miles. The route crosses Tunnel Hill and Mount Vernon and follows these roadways through Whitfield County:

US 41/US 71/GA 3
GA 201
Mount Vernon Road
Utility Road
White Road
Mill Creek Road

Mountain Crossing - State Route 90 runs east/west across the mountains and north between Walker County (south of Chattanooga) and Rabun County, in the northeast corner of the state. Within Whitfield County, the Mountain Crossing Route traverses 21.4 miles. The route crosses Dalton State College, I-75, the City of Dalton, and the Conasauga River, the eastern boundary of Whitfield County. The route follows these roadways through Whitfield County:

Lower Mill Creek Road
Mill Creek Road
Bradberry Hill Road
Sam Love Road
Old Lafayette Road
US 41
Tibbs Road
College Drive/Holiday Avenue
Walnut Avenue
Thornton Avenue
Morris Street/Murray Avenue
Airport Road
Tibbs Bridge Road
Keith Mill Road

Figure 25: New parks and bike paths have begun installing bike repair stations along with conventional bike racks

Figure 27: Existing signage along the Cohutta-Chattahoochee scenic byway

Figure 28: Red Clay Road near the start of the Cohutta-Chattahoochee scenic byway

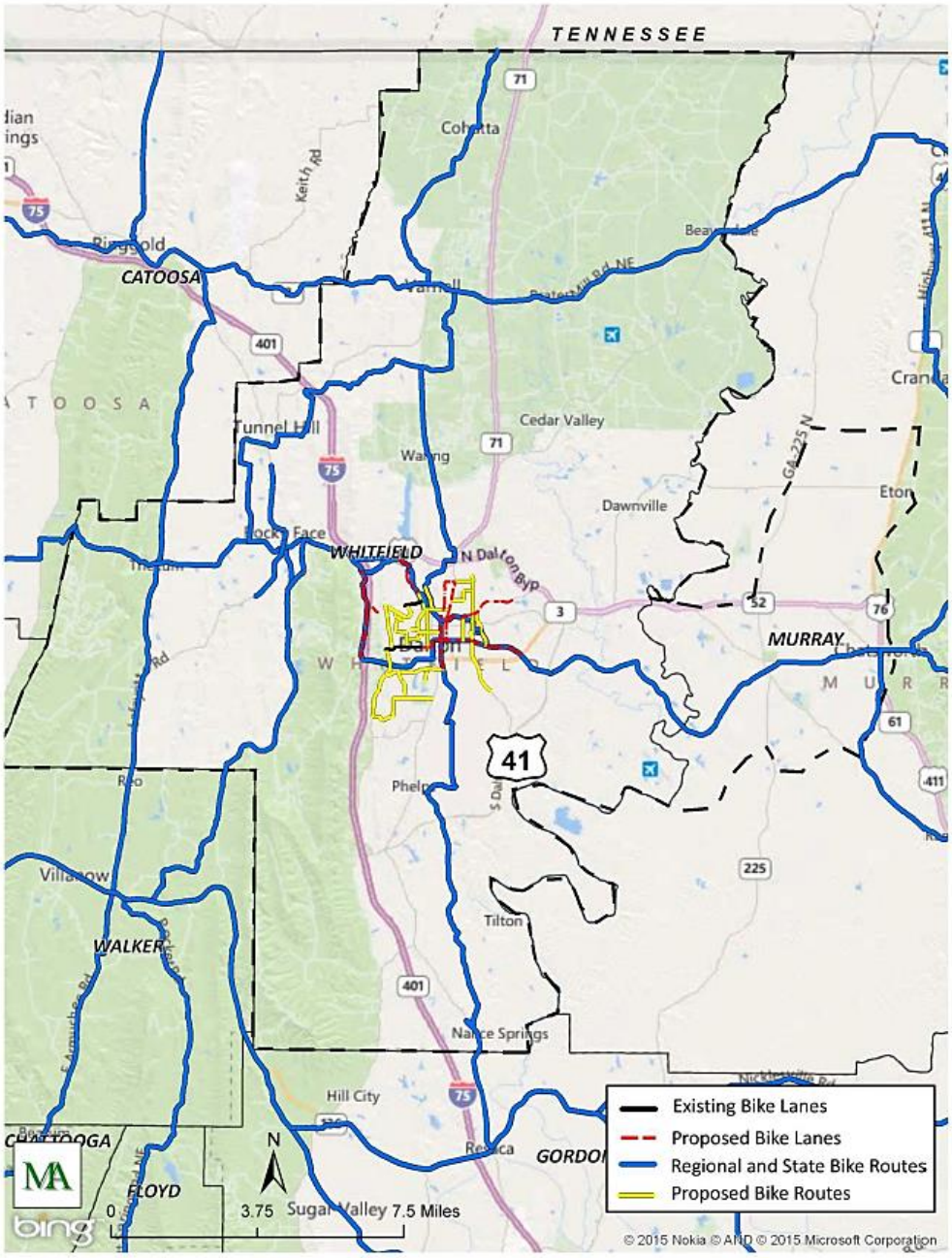


Figure 26: Existing and Proposed Bike Lanes and Routes

Sidewalks and Trails

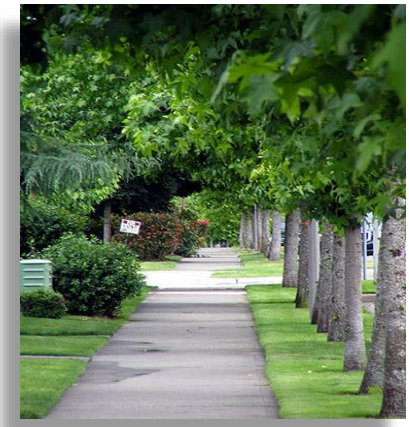


Figure 29: Good example of new sidewalk design incorporating trees that provide shade and aesthetic appeal as well as protection from street traffic

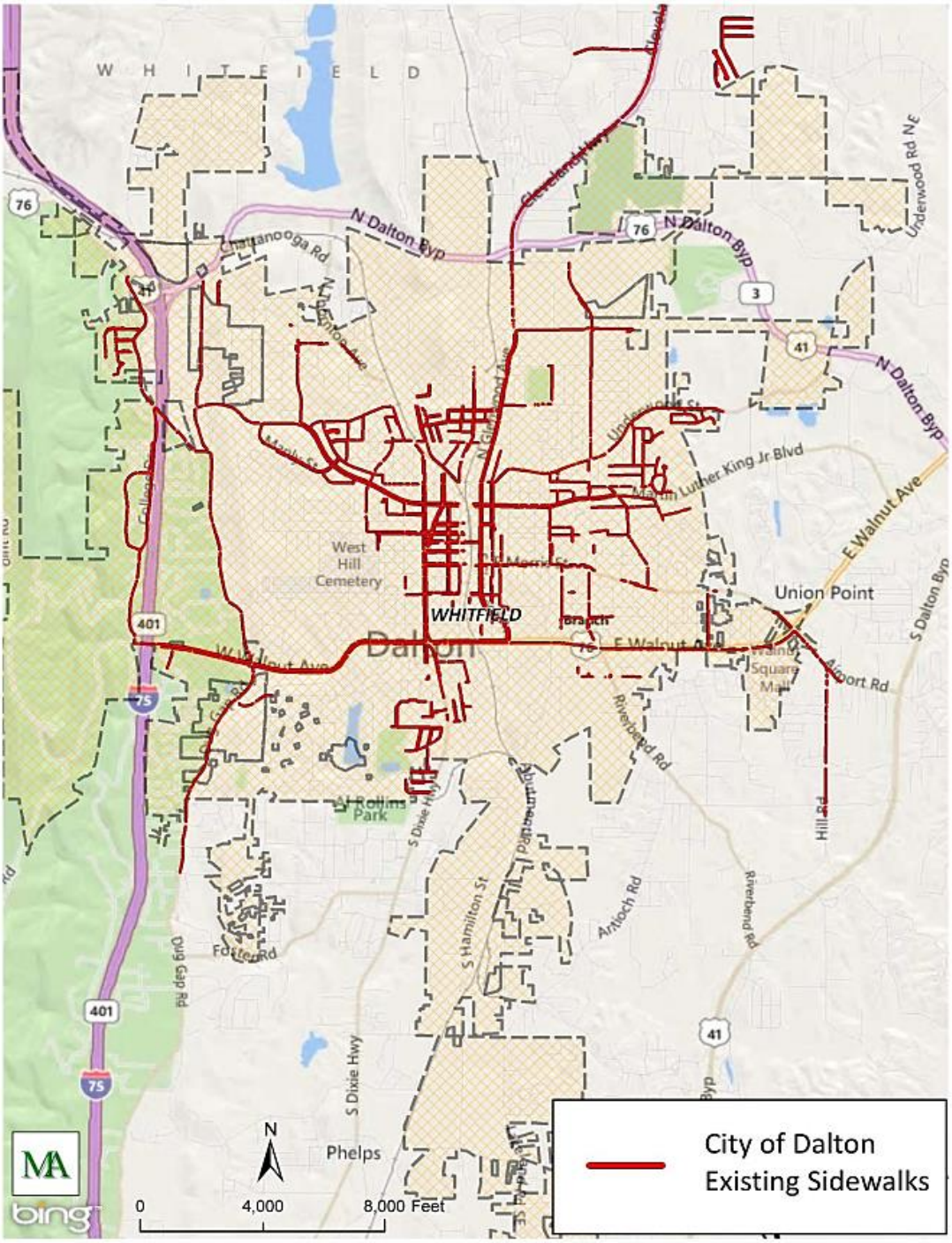
The Town of Cohutta currently has a severely limited amount of sidewalks, limited to Wolfe Street within the town center. The sidewalks alternate between opposing sides of the street. Sidewalks would be difficult to expand on parts of Wolfe Street due to buildings and houses that sit adjacent to the street, however connecting the town center with Shugart Park and Cohutta Elementary School would be a great start. As the town continues to grow and traffic volumes increase the need for sidewalks will only increase. It is recommended that these be included in future repaving efforts or road projects. New sidewalks typically cost an average of $35 per linear foot, according to http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/.

The City of Dalton's sidewalk infrastructure is the most complete and connected sidewalk system within Whitfield County. A map based inventory of the city's sidewalk infrastructure may be seen on figure 30. The ongoing maintenance and repair/replacement of this existing network is conducted routinely by the city's public works department. There are currently two notable pedestrian focused infrastructure projects the City of Dalton would like to focus on in the near future. One of these projects will be multi-faceted and strategic implementation of the Downtown Dalton Master Plan produced by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, which will have numerous pedestrian focused projects primarily aimed at those parts of the downtown currently underserved such as Cuyler Streel. Another pedestrian project for the City of Dalton will be the continued extension and creation of the Dalton Green Hat plan's greenway planned to connect Haig Mill Park, the city's most recent recreational amenity, to the existing hiking and biking trails on Mt. Racheal and thence forth into the downtown. Both the Green Hat greenway and the downtown street improvements will create greater pedestrian connectivity to several of the city's most coveted assets. The catalytic impact of these projects could have the potential to spur further investment into areas such as the historic Crown Mill Village revitalization area as well as underutilized portions of the downtown thus reinforcing the city's downtown as a regional destination for both locals and visitors.

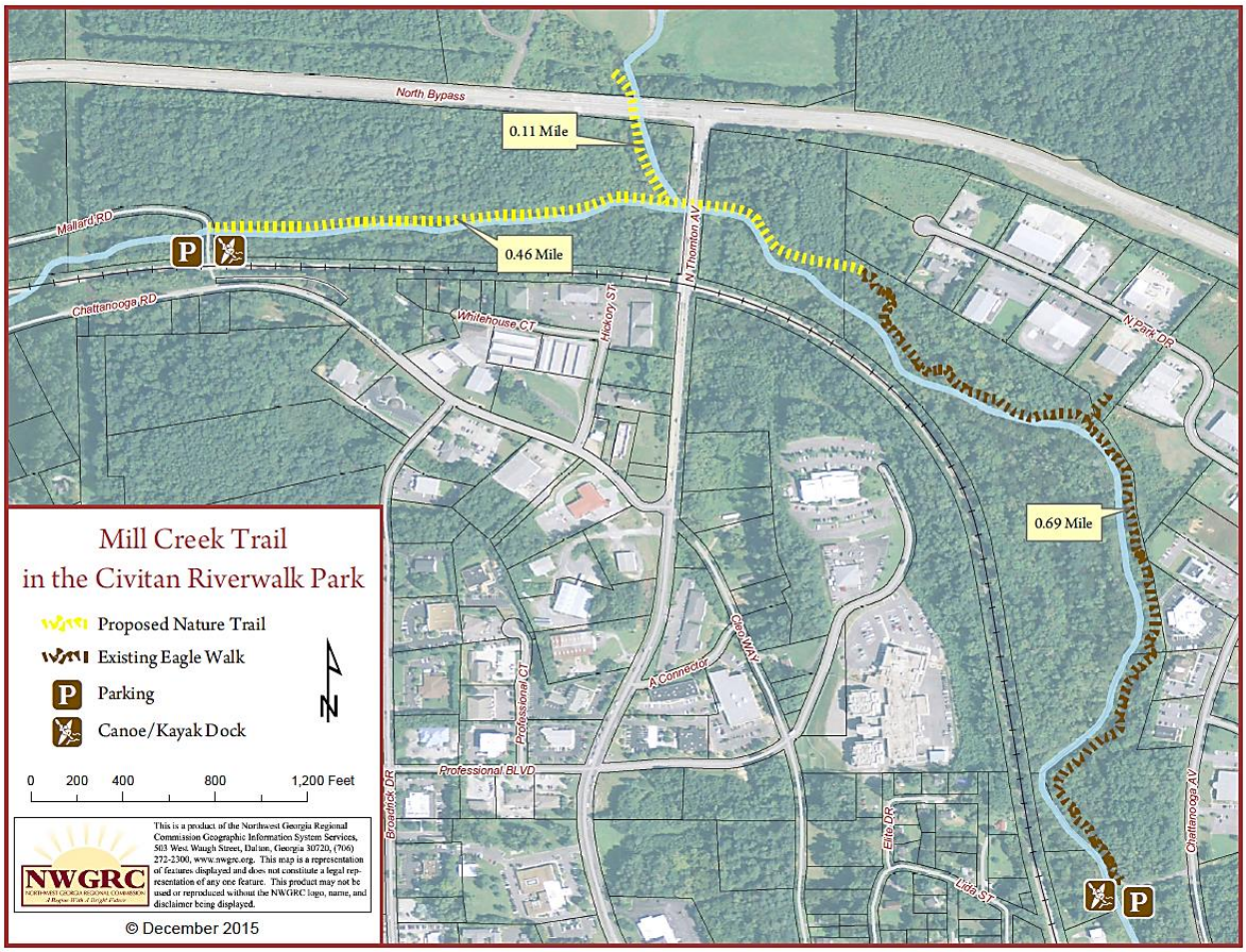
The City of Varnell's sidewalk system is quite limited due to a number of factors that make sidewalk construction costly and difficult. The residential developments of Highland Forrest and Non North Village have a private system of sidewalks maintained by their respective homeowner's associations. With that said, however, some sidewalk infrastructure exists adjacent to the city hall and community center area. There are plans for the city to connect the city hall/ community center area to the city's Main Street area by way of a nature trail travelling through the wooded area near the freshwater springs and picnic area. This proposed connection would be an ADA compliant cement pathway potentially funded by a future SPLOST.

The City of Tunnel Hill's sidewalk system is also rather limited, but there is an existing network of sidewalks within the city. The majority of sidewalk infrastructure within the City of Tunnel hill is located along Highway 41 where the city's commercial character area if found, but this section of sidewalk does not reach into the residential neighborhoods within the city or any of the city's recreation and historic sites. There is, however, one aging sidewalk that travels adjacent to School Street and connects Tunnel Hill Elementary School to Highway 41, but this sidewalk is in need of improvements or replacement. Future plans for sidewalk additions will be focused at

connecting the historic train depot (currently under renovation) to the City's park. Another phase of this project will be to connect the city park to the Spring Heights residential community.



30: Existing sidewalk infrastructure in Dalton



31: Graphic from the Dalton Green Hat Plan proposing a greenway to connect Haig Mill Park, Mt. Rachael, to Downtown Dalton

Rail Freight

Two freight rail systems operate in Whitfield County. Norfolk Southern (NS) connects Dalton, Varnell and Cohutta with Cleveland, Tennessee and Rome, Georgia. CSX connects Dalton with Chattanooga, TN and Cartersville, GA and operates more than 2,000 piggyback cars per month. A rail yard in Dalton serves both CSX and NS lines running north/south through Dalton. The two railroad lines actually cross in Dalton. At this crossing, one train must wait on the other, adding delays at upstream crossings. Train officials should work with Dalton officials to find solutions such as “breaking the trains” when more than a 15 minute delay is expected. There are three grade separations at railroad crossings in Dalton at SR 52/Walnut Ave., Gordon St., and Waugh St./MLK Blvd., which provide adequate east-west access in the mid and southern part of Dalton. The northern part of Dalton does not have a grade separation and frequent delays occur in this area.

Within Dalton, the NS and CSX railroads run on a common track carrying 50 trains per day with speeds from 15 to 50 miles per hour. Within Tunnel Hill, CSX operates 22-26 trains per day with speeds form 22 to 45 miles per hour. Within Varnell, NS operates 27-36 trains per day with speeds from 5 to 50 miles per hour. Within Cohutta, CSX operates 44 trains per day and Norfolk Southern operates between 18 to 27 trains per day with speeds ranging from 1 to 30 miles per hour and 5 to 50 miles per hour respectively.

Rail Transportation Recommendations & Strategies

CSX Railroad and Norfolk Southern have no long-range plans for the addition of new railroad tracks in the Whitfield/Murray urban area. To provide a quality infrastructure for the operations of freight movement by rail, maintenance of existing rail and replacement of railroad ties are the major activities of these railroad companies.

Figure 32: Governor Deal officially opening the Appalachian Regional Port for business in adjacent Murray County. The Appalachian Regional Port will soon change the dynamic of rail and truck freight logistics for the entire region and state.

Scheduled Infrastructure Upgrade Improvements:

- **Norfolk Southern –** Dalton - Upgrade passing track and construct yard improvements $5,000,000
- **CSXT -** Atlanta to Chattanooga - TM & W&A - Capacity Expansion, Bridge Upgrades/ connectivity.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

ITS represents the next generation of a more efficient transportation system with new and widened roads providing improved connectivity and capacity; however, these often generate new traffic that eventually requires additional improvements and increases the cost of infrastructure and negatively impacts the environment. Employment of the communication and information processing through ITS can help improve the management of existing and future traffic on the existing street system. The goal of a Regional ITS program is to manage and improve the performance of the existing transportation system. Measures of improved management and performance are reduction in traffic 88 congestion and reduced emergency response times. The following are some examples of ITS projects which can improve the management of traffic on the highway and street network:

Current ITS Projects:

The City of Dalton installed 18 cameras to observe traffic flow through closed circuit television and make adjustments to signal operations to improve traffic flow and notify emergency responders in the event of accidents or breakdowns. The following list shows where these cameras are located:

I-75 Northbound at Mile Marker 327.37
I-75 Southbound at S. Dalton Bypass
I-75 Southbound at Mile Marker 328.66
I-75 Southbound at Mile Marker 330.9 S.
I-75 Southbound at West Walnut Ave.
I-75 Southbound at Mile Marker 334.34
I-75 Southbound at Mile Marker 335.73
I-75 Southbound at Mile Marker 337.58
N. Dalton Bypass at Shugart Rd.
N. Dalton Bypass at Willowdale Rd.
N. Dalton Bypass at Cleveland Hwy/Glenwood
Cleveland Ave. at Dawnville Rd.
Dalton Bypass at Chatsworth Hwy.
Walnut Ave. at Airport Rd/Murray Ave.
Walnut Ave. at Glenwood Ave./Abutment Rd.
Walnut Ave. at S. Thornton Ave./S. Dixie Hwy.
Walnut Ave. at Tibbs Rd./Dug Gap Rd.
S. Dalton Bypass at Lakeland Rd.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Housing

- Eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community.
- Stimulate compatible infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.
- Stabilize existing neighborhoods by supporting and promoting appropriate rehabilitation activities, infill construction, and code enforcement.
- Create affordable housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community.
- Encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.
- Accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in each neighborhood.
- Encourage housing policies, choices and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence (home-ownership).
- Increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing.
- Support dispersion of assisted housing throughout the community in order to diversify neighborhoods and eliminate pockets of poverty.
- Encourage a mixture of housing types in developing areas, concentrating higher-intensity housing types (e.g. condominiums, apartments, etc.) into mixed-use developments that make it easy for residents to walk and bike to stores, services and activity centers.
- Encourage the use of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) to facilitate higher density, walkable, mixed-use neighborhood developments with a variety of housing types.
- Promote a range of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, single-family and multi-family options, senior housing, and higher value housing.
- Protect established residential areas from encroachment by non-residential uses and automobile-oriented development.

Economic Development

- Support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for our community's economy in terms of job skill requirements, linkages to existing businesses, and diversification of our economic base.
- Target reinvestment to declining, existing neighborhoods, vacant or underutilized sites or buildings in preference to new economic development projects in Greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of our community.
- Seek to balance the supply of housing and employment in our community and consider their location in relation to each other.
- Take into account access to housing and impacts on transportation when considering economic development projects.

- Take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.
- Consider the employment needs and skill levels of our existing population in making decisions on proposed economic development projects
- Carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- Coordinate economic development activities, including business recruitment efforts, with the County's jurisdictions and the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority.
- Leverage the County's assets of highway access, higher education, proximity to larger metropolitan areas and technological infrastructure to attract jobs and improve quality of life.
- Encourage the use of public-private mechanisms and private initiatives such as Tax Allocation Districts, Commercial Improvement Districts and Business Improvement Districts to finance enhancements along important corridors and growth areas.
- Support workforce development efforts to prepare our workforce for expanded opportunities available in a diverse economy.
- Support efforts to market downtown Dalton, to recruit a mix of businesses that generate activity in the downtown and provide local shopping, dining, entertainment and service options, and to encourage appropriate rehabilitation and redevelopment.

Community Facilities & Services

- Make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.
- Protect existing infrastructure investments (*i.e.*, already paid for) by encouraging infill redevelopment, and compact development patterns.
- Ensure that new development does not cause a decline in existing levels of service for the community's residents and employers.
- Limit development within our community to areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure.
- Restrict extension of public sewer infrastructure into rural areas where growth is not envisioned.
- Foster expansion of sewer services to include currently underserved, developed areas and to areas where growth is planned.
- Discourage septic tanks within areas designated for urban and suburban growth and promote the use of packaged systems that can later tap into an expanded sewer infrastructure.
- Ensure that capital improvements needed to accommodate future development are provided concurrent with new development.
- Coordinate provision of public facilities and services with land use planning to promote more compact urban development.
- Use sequential, phased extension of utilities and services to encourage rational expansion of development to areas immediately contiguous to already developed areas of the community.
- Use planned infrastructure expansion to support development in areas identified (in the comprehensive plan) as suitable for such development.

- Seek ways for new growth to pay for itself (in terms of public investment in infrastructure and services to support the development) to the maximum extent possible.
- Invest in parks and open space to enhance the quality of life for our citizens, including in areas where growth is planned.
- Work with the local school board to encourage school location decisions that support the community's overall growth and development plans.
- Support SPLOST as a successful local funding source.
- Utilize Tax Allocation Districts (TAD's) to incentivize investment in strategic areas where new development or re-development has been stagnant

Transportation

- Make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and other alternative transportation choices.
- Target transportation improvements to support desired development patterns for the community (recognizing that ready availability of transportation creates demand for land development in adjacent areas).
- New and reconstructed roadways will be appropriately designed, using context sensitive design considerations, to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize environmental impacts.
- New and reconstructed roadways will be designed to accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities, parking, bicycle routes, public transit (if applicable) as well as local vehicular circulation.
- Promote connectivity of our road network (such as fostering a grid network of streets, multiple connections between subdivisions).
- Support creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
- Encourage new development that supports and ties in well with existing and planned public transit options in the community.
- Ensure (through traffic calming and other design considerations) that excessive vehicular traffic will not harm the peaceful nature of our residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure that new development is compatible with existing airport facilities and does not impede its function.
- Coordinate with the MPO to plan for and implement transportation needs.
- Coordinate transportation and land use planning.
- Support local and regional public transit opportunities.
- Design new and reconstructed roadways using context sensitive design considerations to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize environmental impacts.
- Design new and reconstructed roadways using "Complete Street" concepts to accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities, parking, bicycle routes, public transit (if applicable) as well as local vehicular circulation.

Natural & Cultural Resources

- The protection and conservation of our community's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process when making decisions about future growth and development.
- Minimize inefficient land consumption and encourage more compact urban development in order to preserve green open space and natural resource areas.
- Encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
- Factor potential impacts on air and water quality in making decisions on new developments and transportation improvements.
- Infrastructure networks will be developed to steer new development away from sensitive natural resource areas.
- Promote the protection and maintenance of trees and green open space in all new development.
- Promote low impact development that preserves the natural topography and existing vegetation of development sites.
- Work to redirect development pressure away from agricultural areas in order to conserve farmland to protect and preserve this important component of our community.
- Ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.
- Promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.
- Promote the use of Best Management Practices (BMP) for water quality protection.
- Support minimum state requirements for environmental resource protection and incorporate requirements into the land development review process.
- Protect greenspace and greenway corridors, and expand opportunities for public use with a connected system of greenways and trails.
- Promote the use of mechanisms to preserve greenspace and viable farmland, including grant funds, conservation easements, conservation tax credits, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).
- Promote natural, cultural and historic areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations.
- Whitfield County sits above a vast shale play containing natural gas. Therefore natural gas hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" shall not occur at the expense of the county's natural resources or the health of the community and, appropriate ordinances should be considered to proactively ensure this policy.

Land Use

- Review and update our comprehensive plan on a regular basis to ensure planned growth, and enact appropriate growth management ordinances.
- Decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
- Encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the community.

- Promote development that features design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale add value to our community.
- Use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
- Preserve the rural character of our community and provide the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the community. (Unincorporated *Whitfield County Only*)
- Gateways and corridors will create a "sense of place" for our community.
- Encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
- Commit to creating walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community, where people have easy access to schools, parks, and necessary services (grocery store, drug store) without having to travel by car.
- Creation of recreational facilities and set-aside of greenspace are important.
- Commit to providing pleasant, accessible public gathering places and parks throughout the community.
- Commit to redeveloping and enhancing existing commercial and industrial areas within our community in preference to new development in Greenfield (previously undeveloped) areas of the community.
- Support appropriate residential and non-residential infill development and redevelopment in ways that complement surrounding areas.
- Encourage mixed-use developments that are human-scale and less auto-oriented.
- Support increases in residential density in areas where community design standards, environmental constraints and available infrastructure capacities can satisfactorily accommodate the increased density.
- Support new land uses that contribute to protecting the environment and preserving meaningful open space.
- Support new land uses that enhance housing options in our community.
- Encourage development of a rational network of commercial or mixed use nodes (villages, or activity centers) to meet the service needs of citizens while avoiding unattractive and inefficient strip development along major roadways.
- Incorporate land planning and development concepts that may be new to our area but have been tried successfully in other places.
- Encourage the redevelopment of existing underutilized shopping centers (“greyfields”) with walkable, mixed use development.
- Promote the development of lifestyle amenities, especially in areas such as entertainment, restaurant and shopping in existing and emerging community and regional activity centers.

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
- Work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection)
- Pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions

- Consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
- Provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decision that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.
- Engage in cooperative planning between the local government and local school board in regard to the appropriate location and use of schools as community facilities.
- Coordinate economic development activities, including business recruitment efforts, among the jurisdictions and the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority
- Continue to update the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) to remain compliant and ensure the highest level of service in every community
- Continue Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) distribution is fair and equitable for each community

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

From hence forth the plan will focus on individual, rather than joint, needs of each community as previously stated in the *HOW TO USE THIS PLAN* section. Each community will provide a community statement and/or a list of goals, a Report of Accomplishments from the previous 2013-2017 planning period, a list of current Needs and Opportunities, and finally a new Community Work Program for the current 2018-2022 planning period.

Unincorporated Whitfield County

VISION STATEMENT

Whitfield County and its cities are a proud and vibrant community that works to promote sustainability and self-sufficiency. We embrace our history while coming together as a community to promote economic growth and development, protect our natural and cultural resources and build a successful future for our children through actions that include:

- Guiding future development with informed land use plans that take into account the protection of our natural resources
- Providing a variety of walkable neighborhoods with sidewalks, greenway trails and bike lanes
- Creating a variety of opportunities for our children, including recreational facilities, historical and educational oriented resources
- An inclusive community that offers a variety of public transportation opportunities for its residents, with special attention given to those disadvantaged by age, income, or special needs
- A community that embraces its history with preservation of historic resources and neighborhoods
- A clean, comfortable, nice, peaceful, family-friendly community
- A community that actively promotes and pursues innovative businesses, while investing in and retaining a high quality of life for our residents.
- A regional university that has attractive programs and an enriching educational environment
- A community rich with neighborhood parks

Figure 33: Preserving farmland is an important component of long-range planning in Whitfield County

Figure 34: Historic preservation will continue to play an important role in Whitfield County's future development

Figure 35: Canasauga River is a vital resource to the community both as a recreational asset as well as a public water supply

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

Whitfield County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Implement strategies outlined by the Target Industry Plan for Whitfield County.	2013-2017	X				
Implement strategies outlined by Whitfield County Situational Analysis and Strategic Implications reports.	2013-2017	X				
HOUSING						
Implement the Updated Dalton Urban Redevelopment Plan (2012)	2013-2017			X		Policy Statement
TRANSPORTATION						
Development of a street connectivity study/collector street plan.	2015-2017				X	Not a political priority at this time
Participate in regional efforts to promote the Chattanooga to Atlanta passenger High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) rail.	2013-2017			X		Policy Statement
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

Whitfield County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Implement the use of the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual's Stormwater Better Site Design Standards.	2013-2017	X				
Adopt GA DNR "Park V" Environmental Ordinances for river corridor protection, water supply watershed protection and groundwater recharge area protection.	2015				X	Not a political priority at this time
Incorporate minimum state requirements for environmental protection into land development review process.	2013-2017	X				
Follow Best Management Practices (BMP) for any land disturbance activities.	2013-2017	X				
Promote the use of conservation easements and conservation tax credits in Preserve and Ridge Conservation character areas.	2013-2017			X		Policy Statement
Pursue additional greenspace acquisition funding.	2013-2017	X				
Improve and adopt a landscaping ordinance (not inside the zoning ordinance).	2015-2017				X	No political interest

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

Whitfield County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Adopt and promote County standards for the use of common area drain fields and/or neighborhood-scale sewerage treatment systems for Conservation Subdivisions.	2015-2017				X	Not a political priority at this time
Support the completion and implementation of a long range water resources master plan.	2013-2017				X	Dalton Utilities assignment
Promote updated infrastructure master plans to establish consistency with the Future Development Map and implement infrastructure expansion that is consistent with the Future Development Map.	2013-2017				X	Policy Statement
Implement the Whitfield County Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations.	2013-2017		X 2019			
Pursue greenspace preservation / acquisition opportunities and development of connected greenways with trails.	2014-2017		X 2019			
LAND USE						

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

Whitfield County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Adopt a Rural Agricultural Reserve zoning district or amend existing zoning districts to reflect desired density.	2013-2017				X	Not a political priority at this time
Adopt a Hillside Development/Steep Slopes Ordinance.	2015-2017				X	Not a political priority at this time
Amend sign ordinance to implement desired development patterns of character areas.	2015-2017			X		Policy Statement
Adopt development and design review requirements for commercial and mixed use properties to achieve desired development patterns of character areas.	2015-2017			X		Policy Statement
Review existing ordinances to support the right to farm, including adequate buffers between agriculture and residential uses.	2013-2014	X				
Evaluate need for additional land use regulations to address development near the airport.	2013-2017	X				
Prepare and implement a unified Zoning Ordinance with Whitfield County, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell.	2013-2014	X				

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017 Whitfield County						
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	**STATUS**				**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
		Complete	**Underway; Projected Completion Date**	**Postponed**	**Dropped**	
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Continue to coordinate transportation planning activities with the MPO.	2013-2017		X 2019			Policy Statement
Maintain an adequate Whitfield County service delivery strategy and intergovernmental agreement concerning annexation.	2013-2017		X			Policy Statement

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
ED-1	Promote and invest into efforts to improve accessibility to high speed broadband for both commercial and residential users in areas of low population density

Transportation

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
T-1	Address aging transportation infrastructure by refurbishing or replacing with a focus on bridges with low GDOT sufficiency ratings
T-2	Improve safety, visibility and accessibility of commercial corridors to reduce conflict points and improve the flow of traffic

Natural and Cultural Resources

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
NC-1	Protect and preserve the county's historical assets and landmarks from adverse impacts associated with future growth
NC-2	Capitalize on the county's abundance of intact Civil War battlefields and associated assets
NC-3	Preserve natural greenspace

Community Facilities and Services

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
CF-1	Continue investing in the county's active and passive recreation infrastructure
CF-2	Ensure that public safety departments have the equipment needed to improve the already high level of service throughout the county
CF-3	Improve the county's animal shelter
CF-4	Address the issues regarding aging county buildings via renovation or reconstruction
CF-5	Improve infrastructure in underserved portions of the unincorporated county

Intergovernmental Coordination

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
IG-1	Increase participation in the Unified Zoning Ordinance
IG-2	Streamline ordinances to create more fluidity and easier administration as development steadily increases

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 WHITFIELD COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED-1	Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Varnell		X				$2,000	General Fund	BOC
ED-1	Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance		X				$5,000	General Fund	BOC
ED-1	Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program				X		$5,000	General Fund	BOC, NWGRC
	HOUSING								
	No projects identified at this time								
	TRANSPORTATION								
T-1	Bridges and culvert installation		X	X	X	X	10.2 million	SPLOST	BOC
T-2	SR 201 Realignment and improvements from US 41 to I-75 Interchange	X	X	X			6.5 million	Local, State, and Federal funds	BOC, GDOT, FHC, County Engineer, Public Works

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 WHITFIELD COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
T-2	Improvements to Old LaFayette Road along SR 201 to SR 3					X	3.2 million	Local Funds	BOC, County Engineer, Public Works
T-1	Old Tilton Road at Swamp Creek Bridge replacement/upgrades					X	1.2 million	Local Funds	Public Works, County Engineer
T-2	South Dixie Highway, W. Industrial Blvd. and Foster Road intersection improvements					X	1.8 million	Local Funds	Public Works, County Engineer
T-2	Underwood Road, N. Dalton Bypass to Dawnville Road reconstruction					X	1.2 million	Local Funds	Public Works, County Engineer
	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
CF-3, CF-1	Pursue greenspace preservation / acquisition opportunities and development of connected greenways with trails.		X				$50,000	Grants, General Funds	BOC
CF-1	Implement the Whitfield County Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations.		X				$50,000	General Fund	Parks and Rec. Dept.
NC-1, NC-2, CF-1	Grant Farm Park Infrastructure to protect and showcase Civil War archaeological features	X	X	X			$250,000	LWCF, and GRTP Grants, SPLOST,	BOC, NWGRC

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 WHITFIELD COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
NC-1	Designate the entire Prater's Mill site as a local historic site.	X					$5,000	NWGRC LSC Staff Time	NWGRC, local HPC, BOC, Site Owners
NC-1	Seek National Register designation for the entire Prater's Mill Site		X				$10,000	NWGRC LSC Staff Time	NWGRC, BOC, Site Owners
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CF-2, CF-4	Fire Station Renovations		X	X	X	X	1 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-2	Quick Response Trucks		X	x	X	X	700,000	SPLOST	BOC
CF-2	New Vehicles – Sheriff Dept.		X	X	X	X	2 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-3, CF-4	Animal Shelter Renovations		X	X	X	x	1.5 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-4	Construct Admin Building & Courthouse Renovations		X	X	X	X	30 million	SPLOST	BOC

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 WHITFIELD COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
CF-2 CF-4	Jail Renovations		X	X	X	X	1 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-2 CF-5	Construct Fire Station #12		X	X	X	X	3 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-2	New Fire Engines		X	X	X	X	1.3 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-4	Library Upgrades		X	X	X	X	500,000	SPLOST	BOC
CF-5 CF-1	Construct South Park Pool		X	X	X	X	10 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-5 CF-1	Construct South Park Infrastructure		X	X	X	X	5 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-5	Construct Westside Community Center		X	X	X	X	1.3 million	SPLOST	BOC
CF-1	Add infrastructure Edwards Park		X	X	X	X	350,000	SPLOST	BOC
	LAND USE								

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 WHITFIELD COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	No projects identified at this time								
	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
IG-2	Prepare and implement a unified road development ordinance with Whitfield County, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell.		X	X	X		10,000	Staff Time, Legal Fees	BOC, COD Council
IG-1	Gain at least one more municipality in the Unified Zoning Ordinance					X	1,000	General Fund	BOC, NWGRC

Town of Cohutta

Community Goals

Cohutta is a small town with a big sense of place and a desire to keep track of their rural foundations, close community, and friendly atmosphere as they move into the twenty-first century and face the changes the future may bring. Because they are not a large community, a sense of where they want to go is best described with a series of goals and accompanying policies developed to fit the town's specific needs. The goals cover seven planning categories for managing resources: Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, Natural and Cultural Resources, Community Facilities and Services, Land Use, and Intergovernmental Coordination. These goals and policies reflect the overarching needs and opportunities developed by the stakeholder committee and attending public in the SWOT analysis.

36: Town Clerk's Office on Wolfe Street

Economic Development

Goal
Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that broaden employment opportunities and income while minimizing impacts on local infrastructure and our rural environment.

Policy
Desirable businesses provide employment, good income, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
Business or industry impacts on infrastructure and the environment are serious considerations in our rural community.
Business activity nodes are preferable to random locations in the community.
Enhance attractiveness and viability of Main Street and the downtown/town center

Housing

Goal
Safe, adequate, and affordable housing should be available for all citizens.

Policy
We will work to eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community.
We will promote quality housing construction and subdivision development and also housing infill among existing lots.

Transportation

Goal
Support and participate in the county-wide transportation planning that can serve residents and enhance area economic development.

Policy
The design and construction of new or rebuilt streets, sidewalks and trails can help create efficiency and connectivity in the community.
Alternative transportation options, like bicycle and pedestrian systems, including trails and sidewalks, can work in our community and provide physical, social, and economic benefits for local residents.
Continue a working relationship with The Greater Dalton MPO.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Goal
Conservation and management of sensitive natural resources can enhance the green spaces that are characteristic of our rural environment.

Policy
The protection and conservation of our community's natural resources (trees, terrain, water, and open space) and historic homes, buildings, and sites will play an important role when making decisions about future growth and development.
Low impact development that preserves natural topography, existing vegetation, springs, and existing stream courses is a preference in our community.
Protection of water supply watersheds, ground water recharge areas, and wetlands are recognized as our responsibility.

Community Facilities and Services

Goal
Provide sufficient facilities to administer governance, maintain public safety, enhance quality of life, and be responsive to local growth and development.

Policy
Remain responsive and flexible to potential changes needed in the water and septic/sewer services available to the area.
Fire, police, solid waste, and emergency services and facilities are priorities for maintaining public safety and health.
Recreation and park facilities and services represent an investment in our quality of life and the social interaction of our population.
Maintenance and updates of public facilities, as needed, are visible statements about civic pride, community support, and the desire to be successful.

Land Use

Goal
Maintaining the rural, historic community atmosphere is an important quality of life issue for local residents.

Policy
Decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's rural, scenic character and historic sense of place.
Enhance features that make Cohutta walkable and improve pedestrian access to the core of the community surrounding the school, park, and business services.
Low density residential development is supportive of our rural environment.
New land uses must support protection of the environment and the preservation or creation of open space, buffers, greenbelts, and trails.
Agriculture and forestry remain a viable part of our community.
Continue to upgrade and implement the nuisance ordinance.
Explore means to buffer incompatible uses where city and county permitted land use conflicts.
Zone for assisted living facilities and senior living facilities.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal
Cooperation with other local governments, local agencies, and the State influence and contribute to our success.
Policy
Continue joint comprehensive planning efforts with all governments for efficiency and mutual benefits.
Update and implement the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for local decision-making.
Coordinate with the Whitfield County School Board for mutual use of the school as a community facility.
We are receptive to collaboration with other local governments on matters of mutual interest.
We are committed to the intent and occasional review and update of the Service Delivery Strategy.
Available grants are important to our success and can make our budget more efficient.
Add street lights as the community grows

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2016-2020

Town of Cohutta

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Enhance attractiveness and viability of Main Street and downtown.	2016-2020		**X**			Policy Statement
Encourage the location of business and industry that is compatible with city character.	2016-2020		**X**			Policy Statement
Contact eligible property owners to encourage desirable annexation growth.	2016-2020		X			Policy Statement
HOUSING						
See Land use section for work related to zoning.						
TRANSPORTATION						
Participate in implementation of County-wide Long Range Transportation Plan.	2016-2020		X			Policy Statement
Develop a bike and pedestrian plan	2017-2018	X				
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2016-2020

Town of Cohutta

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Implement Georgia Department of Natural Resources' minimum protection standards for water supply watersheds, ground water recharge areas, and wetlands through changes to zoning.	2017-2018		X			Policy Statement
Prepare and install interpretive signage for existing historic structures (possibly link with trails and Scenic Byway).	2020		X 2022			
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Upgrade equipment as funds permit: 3 new police patrol cars.	2017-2020	X				Purchased three new police patrol cars
Upgrade equipment as funds permit: Repair one (1) medical rescue unit.	2017-2020	X				
Sewer improvements – (Options: local match for purchase of property; local match for link to Dalton Utilities sewer system; or match for feasibility study)	2017-2020		X 2019			All initial steps complete, funding awarded, and permitting is underway
Renovations to Cohutta Town Hall Building has not been renovated since it was built in 1986; updates may include new bathrooms, flooring, and wall coverings.	2017-2020	X				

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2016-2020

Town of Cohutta

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Renovate the Walking Track	2017-2020		X 2020			
Add street lights as community grows	2016-2020		X			Policy Statement
Expand recreation programs to service all segments of population	2016-2020		X			Policy Statement
Create a Cohutta Welcome sign.	2017-2018		X 2020			
Purchase and install a storm siren or other warning system.	2016-2017	X				
Update the town of Cohutta website with links to: 1. Annual recreation and entertainment events in town. 2. Marketing the community to professional offices and other service businesses. 3. Whitfield County Transit for public transportation. 4. Marketing of the Community Center for use. 5. Orientation information for newcomers. 6. Promote the Cohutta-Chattahoochee Scenic Byway.	2016-2020		X 2020			

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2016-2020

Town of Cohutta

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Review and improve public parking (paving or signage).	2019-2020		X 2022			Refer to new CWP item for Downtown Parking Improvements
LAND USE						
Explore means to buffer incompatible uses where city and county permitted land use conflicts.	2017		X			Policy Statement
Prepare and implement a façade ordinance.	2016-2017			X 2022		
Continue to upgrade and implement the nuisance ordinance.	2016-2020		X			Policy Statement
Prepare and implement a sign ordinance.	2016-2018	X				
Update Cohutta Zoning Ordinance 1. Zone to avoid incompatible uses near school and park. 2. Buffers between incompatible land uses on the borders of Cohutta's incorporated area. 3. Buffer less the intense land use when agricultural and less intense land uses are next to each other. 4. Implement the GA DNR minimum protection standards for groundwater	2016-2018		X			Policy Statements

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2016-2020 Town of Cohutta						
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	**STATUS**				**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
		Complete	**Underway; Projected Completion Date**	**Postponed**	**Dropped**	
supply, ground water recharge areas, and wetlands in the zoning ordinance. 5. Amend the zoning ordinance to improve housing options. 6. Zone for assisted living facilities and senior living facilities.						
Amend subdivision regulations for conservation design criteria.	2017-2019		X			2022
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Revise or maintain the Service Delivery Strategy Agreements.	2018-2019	X				Policy Statement
Continue to cooperate in planning with all local governments (maintain the adopted Comprehensive Plan).	2016-2020	X				Policy Statement
Continue to actively pursue great programs to benefit the community.	2016-2020		X			Policy Statement
Continue a working relationship with The Greater Dalton MPO.	2016-2020		X			Policy Statement

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
ED-1	Use signage on Cleveland Highway (Rout 71) to direct visitors through the core of Cohutta on their way to Red Clay State Historic Park to increase visibility of Cohutta businesses.
ED-2	Promote and invest into efforts to improve accessibility to high speed broadband for both commercial and residential users
ED-3	Create an environment where in the town center commercial area that attracts entrepreneurs and creates an asset to the community
ED-4	Address the improvement of dilapidated and vacant buildings in the core areas of Cohutta by implementing a façade ordinance.

Transportation

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
T-1	Improve parking around the town center area

Natural and Cultural Resources

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
NC-1	Protect and preserve the town's historical assets
NC-2	Explore options for interpretive signage in order to better illustrate the town's historical assets

Community Facilities and Services

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
CF-1	Add streetlights to make the core area of Cohutta more walkable and expand trail systems to link greenspaces and the larger Cohutta planning area and beyond.
CF-2	Improve the convenience and quality of the sanitation department
CF-3	Improve the Town's technological capabilities
CF-4	Making public sewer available could increase business, industry, and housing opportunities in the vicinity

Land Use

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
LU-1	Ensure that the town's visual character is protected
LU-2	Create opportunities for unique types of residential development

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 TOWN OF COHUTTA									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED-2, ED-3	Coordinate with Dalton Utilities to extend Optilink infrastructure to the residential and commercial areas of town.		X				$50,000	ARC, SPLOST, Dalton Utilities	Mayor and Dalton Utilities staff
ED-3	Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Varnell		X				$2,000	General Fund	Mayor
ED-3	Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance		X				$5,000	General Fund	Mayor
ED-3	Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program				X		$5,000	General Fund	Mayor, NWGRC
	HOUSING								
	No Projects Identified								
	TRANSPORTATION								
T-1	Improve Parking areas in the town center, streetscapes, new striping for on and off-street parking					X	$50,000	SPLOST, ARC	Mayor, Public

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 TOWN OF COHUTTA									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
									Works, NWGRC
	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NC-1	Apply for a National Register Historic District for Andrew's Chapel and associated grounds and structures.		X				$10,000	NWGRC Staff Time	NWGRC and Mayor
NC-2	Prepare and install interpretive signage for existing historic structures (possibly link with trails and Scenic Byway).					X	$4,000	General Fund	Mayor
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CF-2	Upgrade Garbage Truck		X				$200,000	SPLOST, USDA Rural Development Assistance	Mayor
ED-2, ED-3, CF-4	Coordinate with Dalton Utilities to extend Sewer infrastructure to the residential and commercial areas of town.		X				$650,000	ARC, SPLOST, Dalton Utilities	Mayor and Dalton Utilities staff
CF-2	Waste containers for residences		X				$30,000	SPLOST, USDA Rural	Mayor

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 TOWN OF COHUTTA									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
								Development Assistance	
CF-1	Upgrade lighting along the walking track				X		$20,000	SPLOST	Mayor
CF-3	Technology hardware and software upgrades for Town Hall and public works		X				$20,000	SPLOST	Mayor
ED-1	Create a Cohutta Welcome sign			X			$5,000	General Fund	Mayor
CF-3	Update the town of Cohutta website with links to: 1. Annual recreation and entertainment events in town. 2. Marketing the community to professional offices and other service businesses. 3. Whitfield County Transit for public transportation. 4. Marketing of the Community Center for use. 5. Orientation information for newcomers. 6. Promote the Cohutta-Chattahoochee Scenic Byway.			X			$2,500	General Fund	Mayor
	LAND USE								

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 TOWN OF COHUTTA									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
LU-1	Prepare and adopt a façade ordinance					X	$1,000	General Fund	Mayor, council, Planning Commission, City Attorney
LU-2	Amend subdivision regulations for conservation design criteria.					X	$1,500	General Fund	Mayor, council, Planning Commission, City Attorney
	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
	No Projects Identified								

City of Dalton

Vision Statement

Dalton shares with the unincorporated Whitfield County community the collective vision for the area while also owning some of its own uniqueness. So, in addition to the collective vision, the City of Dalton has defined its future vision that includes:

- Growth Management policies that deliver efficient, sprawl preventing growth patterns and promote cooperation, coordination and efficient use and expansion of the City's public facilities and services
- A community offering a variety of neighborhood connections such as sidewalks, greenway trails and bike lanes
- Protecting and promoting downtown's historic resources and its traditional role as the business/civic center of the community
- Preserving the character of established neighborhoods and supporting revitalization efforts to increase housing opportunities and neighborhood stability
- Increase the number of residential dwelling units in the R-2 zone districts by 100 units by 2022
- Increase number of residential dwelling units in the C-3 zone districts by 150 units by 2022
- Increase the number of multi-family units in the city by 500 units by 2022

Figure 37: Dalton State College's ever-growing degree programs continue to produce a skilled workforce for the community and region

Figure 38: Reducing traffic congestion like the photo above of Walnut Ave. continues to be a high priority

Figure 39: Haig Mill Reservoir and park is one of Dalton's greatest assets offering a multitude of active and passive recreation within biking distance from the city's historic downtown

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Dalton

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Continue to support and promote efforts of Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority	2013-2017	Completed (Funded $157,500 per year)				Policy Statement
Continue to support and promote efforts of the Dalton Downtown Development Authority.	2013-2017	Completed (Funded $60,000 per year)				Policy Statement
HOUSING						
Implement the Dalton Urban Redevelopment Plan as updated (2012)	2013-2017		Underway; 2022			
Support the Housing Authority's participation in Georgia Initiative for Community Housing's (GICH) 4 year planning program.	2013-2017				X	Policy Statement
Establish a down payment assistance program to encourage City of Dalton employees to reside in the City of Dalton	2014-2015				X	This project was determined to be economically and legally unfeasible
Support the Housing Authority ongoing efforts to demolish and/or rehabilitate aged housing stock.	2013-2017	Complete Funded $237,969 through CDBG				Policy Statement
TRANSPORTATION						

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Dalton

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Coordinate with MPO Traffic Signalization Study	2013-2014	X				Note: Signal Coordination done by GDOT Consultant
Extend Streetscape improvements along Crawford Street	2013-2014	X				
Install pedestrian crosswalks at Thornton Ave. intersections to establish greater connectivity between Downtown and in-town neighborhoods.	2014-2015			X		Project has been postponed due to funding resources.
Prepare a structural analysis and upgrade the Gordon Street Bridge.	2014-2017		Completion by Spring of 2019			
Resurface Abutment Road	2013-2014	X				
Better coordinate utility pole replacement throughout city to eliminate double and triple poling.	2013-2017			X		Not getting any cooperation from Windstream and Charter utility companies. Policy Statemment
Fixed Route Transit Between Dalton State College and Downtown Student Housing.	2015-2017	X				Note: Signal Coordination done by GDOT Consultant
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Support the completion and implementation of a long range water resources master plan.	2013-2017	X				

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Dalton

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Adopt GA DNR "Part V" Environmental Ordinances for steep slopes, water support watershed protection and groundwater recharge areas.	2013-2017				X	No areas identified for implementation at this time
Restore the wetlands at Lakeshore Park for environmental purposes and to protect the natural resources in that area.	2015-2017	X				Collaborated with Dalton State College environmental science dept.
Review Trees, Plants and Shrubs Ordinance and update; if needed, to ensure landscaping and tree protection provisions support desired development patterns for each character area.	2014-2015		Ordinance review is underway and expected to be completed by late fall 2018			Policy Statement Note: City has just recently obtained an on-staff City Arborist who is reviewing Tree Ordinance
Promote the use of conservation easements and conservation tax credits by landowners in Preserve and Ridge Conservation character areas in concert with the Thrive 2055 Regional Plan.	2014-2015		Still in process possibly by 2020			Policy Statement
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Support a renewed emphasis on Code Enforcement through the City's Public Safety Departments.	2013-2017	X				

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Dalton

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Develop a showcase park at the "Dalton Green" site located between Dalton City Hall and the Whitfield County Courthouse.	2015-2017				X	This plan has been altered due to the ongoing development of a showcase park at the "Old Lee Printing Company" Site downtown
Build a natatorium to accommodate our increasing aquatic needs in the community and attract sports tourism.	2015-2017				Dropped	This project was dropped for this period due to lack of economic funding and change in community priorities
Add to the Dalton greenway project to create connectivity and promote active transit.	2014 2017	X				
Replace roof on City owned historic Dalton Depot	2013-2014	X				
Eight (8) new tennis courts at Lakeshore park to accommodate the growing tennis population in the community and attract sports tourism.	2015-2017	X				
North Georgia Trade and Convention Center Improvements	2013-2017	X				
LAND USE						

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Dalton

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Prepare and implement a unified Zoning Ordinance with Whitfield County, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell complete with overlay districts for important corridors and activity centers to enhance the look and function of the areas as desired by each municipality.	2014	X				
Continue to follow the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, and encourage use of the Stormwater Better Site Design Standards for new development.	2013-2017	X				Policy Statement
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Maintain an adequate service delivery strategy and intergovernmental agreement with Whitfield County	2013-2017	X				Policy Statement
Continue to coordinate transportation planning activities with the MPO.	2013-2017	X				Policy Statement
Memorialize ongoing street paving program based on percentage of center lane mile in Service Delivery Agreement (per 2012 LOST renegotiation).	2013-2017		Underway; 2022			Policy Statement

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
ED-1	Attract young professionals to Dalton
ED-2	Invest in utility infrastructure downtown to better serve existing private investment as well as catalyze continued private investment
ED-3	Create an environment where new development and re-development is not hindered by complex ordinance related confusion
ED-4	Address the improvement of dilapidated and vacant buildings in the core areas of Dalton by strictly implementing code enforcement.

Housing

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
H-1	Increase mixed-use residential development in the downtown
H-2	Create opportunities for strictly residential areas in the downtown
H-3	Increase owner occupancy in single-family residential areas
H-4	Address the issues related to multi-family residential development in the city

Transportation

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
T-1	Improve pedestrian infrastructure and connectivity throughout the city but with an emphasis on the downtown
T-2	Create greenways and bike infrastructure connecting various neighborhoods and city assets to the downtown

Natural and Cultural Resources

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
NC-1	Preserve the city's historical assets and landmarks and incentivize sustainability of said assets

Community Facilities and Services

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:

CF-1	Re-invest in city's aging structures that have become burdensome to maintain
CF-2	Meet the growing demand for hangar space at Dalton Municipal Airport
CF-3	Continue investing in public safety to ensure low ISO rating and improve response times for first responders

Land Use

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
LU-1	Annex city owned property where possible

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF DALTON									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED-3	Conduct an evaluation of the entire permitting process for development of property, make improvements to streamline, and ensure that the process is accessible in many communication mediums		X	X			$10,000	Staff Time	M&C; Dalton Fire Department; WC Engineering and Inspections
ED-4	Improve property values and community safety by destruction or remodel of 30 blighted or unsafe structures	X	X	X	X	X	$600,000	General Fund	Police Code Enforcement
	HOUSING								
H-1, ED-1	Facilitate development of Mixed-Use locations within the Downtown C-3 District, and areas adjacent to Downtown by amending restrictive ordinances to provide more flexibility while still ensuring public safety and the preservation of the downtown's integrity			X	X	X	$5,000	Staff Time	Developers; M&C; Engineering and Inspections
	TRANSPORTATION								
ED-2	Retrofit all decorative streets with LED fixtures on Hamilton Street, Pentz Street, City Hall and Cemetery		X				$390,000	2007 SPLOST	Public Works Traffic Division

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF DALTON									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
T-1, ED-1	Install curbing/gutter, sidewalks and drainage on North Thornton Avenue from Tyler Street north to Memorial Drive		X				$250,000	2015 SPLOST	Design work by engineering consultant. Construction bid out by PW to private contractor
T-1, ED-2, ED-1	Install mast arm signals and pedestrian signals/crosswalks on Thornton Avenue at Crawford, Cuyler, Morris & Emery Streets intersections			X			$350,000	2019 SPLOST & General Fund	Public Works Street & Traffic Divisions
ED-1, ED-2 T-1	Streetscape work, such as sidewalks, decorative street lights, trees, new drainage, etc. for remaining portions of Cuyler, Pentz and Gordon Streets					X	$2,500,000	2019 SPLOST	Public Works Street Division & bid portion out to private contractor
ED-1, ED-2, T-1	South Thornton Avenue Improvements: Correct drainage issues, add curb/gutter, add sidewalks and update corridor esthetics from Walnut Avenue south to Threadmill Road. Length is: 1.05 Miles				X		$2,000,000	2019 SPLOST	Public Works will bid out to private contractor
ED-1, ED-2, T-1	Gordon Street Bridge structural repairs and upgrades construction phase		X	X			$2,300,000	2015 SPLOST	Public Works

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF DALTON									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
ED-1, ED-2, T-1	East Morris St. Improvements: Correct drainage issues, add curb/gutter, add sidewalks and update corridor esthetics from Walnut Ave. to Fredrick St. Length is 2.5 miles					X	$2,000,000	2019 SPLOST	Public Works
	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NC-1, ED-1	Facilitate the sale of the historic Dalton Depot into private ownership and ensure its renovation as a historic landmark and commercial space		X				15,000	General Fund	City Admin. Mayor and Council
NC-1	Restoration of the West Hill Cemetery Chapel		X				$50,000	General Fund	HPC, City Admin.
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CF-1, ED-1	Renovate John Davis Recreation and community center as rec dept. headquarters and multi-use community center			X	X		$3,000,000	SPLOST &Gen Fund	Mayor and Council
ED-1, T-1, T-2	Construct walking/bike path between Crown Mill Area and Haig Mill Park		X				$1,800,000	SPLOST &Gen Fund	Mayor and Council
ED-1, T-1, T-2	Conduct engineering and survey work for trail connection between Crown Mill Area and Heritage Point Park			X	X		$100,000	SPLOST &Gen Fund	Mayor and Council

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF DALTON									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
CF-2	Increase hangar lease space at Dalton Airport by 16 t-hangers, and 4 large hangars		X	X	X	X	$1,500,000	SPLOST &Gen Fund	Mayor and Council
CF-3	Acquire property and construct joint public safety training center along abutment rd. adjacent to fire station #2			X	X	X	$2,500,000	2019 SPLOST	Mayor and Council
CF-1, CF-3	Construct new City Fire Station (move Station #2) Use existing Station #2 as part of the new public safety training center					X	$2,000,000	General Fund Public Safety Grant	Mayor and Council
ED-1, T-1, T-2	Develop walking path/signage for safe pedestrian and bike travel from East Dalton to Downtown via Gordon Street Bridge. (See 2018 UGA Downtown Master plan for concepts)			X	X		$100,000	General Fund	Engineering M&C
	LAND USE								
LU-1	Annex properties necessary to place Haig Mill Lake Park within corporate limits of Dalton		X	X			$5,000	Staff Time	Mayor and Council
ED-1, H-1	Determine a residential/commercial ratio for urban dwellings in Downtown C-3 District				X		$5,000	Staff Time	City Adm. NWGRC Planning
ED-1, H-2	Evaluate property tracts within the C-3 District and identify candidate locations for 100% residential dwellings as recommended in the Greater Dalton Housing Strategy	X	X	X			$5,000	Staff Time	M&C DDDA

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF DALTON									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
ED-1, H-4, ED-3	Create and adopt design guidelines for multi-family housing development within the city to ensure new multi-family structures are of a quality to meet the city's housing needs and promote sustainable development				X		$10,000	Staff Time	City Admin, NWGRC Planning
	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
ED-1, ED-2	Work with the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government to complete the downtown master plan	X						Lynd Hurst Grant, Staff Time	City Adm. DDDA, Chamber
H-3	Work with the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to complete two of the four properties in the city		X				$170,000	NSP Funding, Private investment	NWGRC NSP Dept.
H-3	Work with the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to develop the remaining two properties in the city after funding is made available from the previous sales			X	X	X	$180,000	NSP Funding, Private investment	NWGRC NSP Dept.

City of Tunnel Hill

Vision Statement

Tunnel Hill shares with Whitfield County the collective vision for the County while also owning some of its own uniqueness. So, in addition to the collective vision, the City of Tunnel Hill has defined its future vision that includes:

- A community that provides for a variety of opportunities to live and work in Tunnel Hill
- A community that preserves its historic resources, neighborhoods and unique character
- Future development that supports and preserves its rural and natural setting while also providing for traditional neighborhood development patterns
- Preserving manufacturing jobs while also creating new commercial opportunities

Figure 40: Tunnel Hill's small town charm creates a character that the community wants to maintain as it grows

Figure 41: Industrial growth and development are possible in the city's Interchange character area provided that public sewer capacity is adequate

Figure 42: Tunnel Hill's historic depot renovation will be a top priority project resulting from multiple ARC grants and SPLOST funding

Figure 43: Historic Tunnel continues to be a focal point of the city and an attraction for both history and railroad buffs

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Tunnel Hill

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
ARC Sewer Project (to a business portion of US 41).	2013-2015		Finalizing drawing and working on easements. Expected to be completed in 2018			Separated into three specific projects in new work program
HOUSING						
Increase code enforcement throughout the City to speed repair or removal of dilapidated homes and littered properties (including abandoned "junk trailers).	2014	X				
TRANSPORTATION						
Coordinate with the MPO on the Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update.	2013-2017	X				
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Follow Best Management Practices (BMP) for any land disturbance activities to protect water quality.	2013-2017	X				

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Tunnel Hill

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Adopt GA DNR "Part V" Environmental Ordinances for river corridor, watershed protection and groundwater recharge areas.	2014-2015			X		Looking to adopt relevant criteria in 2018
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Participate in the creation of a long range water resources master plan.	2015				X	Policy Statement
Coordinate with the County to update infrastructure master plans to establish consistency with comprehensive plan and implement infrastructure expansion that is consistent with the plan.	2015				X	Policy Statement
Identify new park land for small neighborhood parks in Emerging Suburban areas along with green space preservation/acquisition opportunities and development of connected greenways with trails.	2017	X				Lands have been identified but no formal plans have been proposed.
Land Use						
Prepare and implement a unified Zoning Ordinance with Whitfield County, Dalton, and Varnell.	2013-2014				X	City of Tunnel Hill voted against joining in 2015

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Tunnel Hill

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Prepare and adopt necessary code amendments to require inter-parcel access, limit curb cuts, and require sidewalks or alternative pedestrian path systems with new development.	2016			X 2020		Still an interest for the city but has been postponed due to larger projects
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Continue to coordinate transportation planning activities with the MPO.	2013-2017	X				Policy Statement
Maintain an adequate Whitfield County service delivery strategy and intergovernmental agreement concerning annexation.	2013-2017	X				Policy Statement

Needs and Opportunities

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
ED-1	Improve utilities in underserved areas to better serve existing development and catalyze new development
ED-2	Improve broadband service to business and citizens
NC-1	Restore the city's historic Railroad depot so that it may be a functional asset to the community
NC-2	Protect the city's natural assets and community health
LU-1	Update development standards to ensure quality infrastructure is installed in all new development uniformly

Though brief, the list of top-priority needs and projects identified for the City of Tunnel Hill are large, complex and expensive projects that are expected to be great catalysts for future development. In order for the city to be able to realistically complete these projects and continue operations and maintenance, with a limited staff and budget, these will be the only capital projects will be the primary focus of the city for the next five years.

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF TUNNEL HILL									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED-1	Sewer Expansion: Jordan St to Main St		X				$55,000	General Fund, ARC	City Admin, Dalton Utilities
ED-1	Sewer Expansion: Harry Griffin Park			X			$55,000	2019 SPLOST, ARC	City Admin, Dalton Utilities
ED-1	Sewer Expansion: Springhill Drive				X		$55,000	2019 SPLOST, ARC	City Admin, Dalton Utilities
ED-2	Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Tunnel Hill		X				$2,000	General Fund	City
ED-2	Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance		X				$5,000	General Fund	City
ED-3	Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program				X		$5,000	General Fund	City, NWGRC
	HOUSING								
	No projects identified at this time								
	TRANSPORTATION								

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF TUNNEL HILL									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	No projects identified at this time								
	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NC-1	Historic Train Depot Rehabilitation		X				1.1M	2015 SPLOST, ARC Grant, General Fund	City Admin, NWGRC ED Staff
NC-2	Adopt GA DNR "Part V" Environmental Ordinances for river corridor, watershed protection and groundwater recharge areas.	X					$2,000	General Fund, Staff Time	City Admin, Mayor/ Council
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
	No projects identified at this time								
	LAND USE								
LU-1	Prepare and adopt necessary code amendments to require inter-parcel access, limit curb cuts, and require sidewalks or alternative pedestrian path systems with new development.			X			$2,000	General Fund, Staff Time	City Admin, Mayor/ Council

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF TUNNEL HILL									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
	No projects identified at this time								

City of Varnell

Vision Statement

Like Tunnel Hill and the other cities in Whitfield County, Varnell has identified its future vision that buildings on the collective county vision. Varnell's community vision includes:

- A community where development is guided by land use plans take into account existing/proposed utility infrastructure and the protection of watersheds
- A community offering a variety of neighborhood connections such as sidewalks, greenway trails and bike lanes
- A clean and aesthetically appealing community
- Providing cultural activities and educational opportunities to both residents and tourists visiting the area
- Development that is tied to the historic and rural character of the area

Figure 44: Single family homes on large lots define the majority of Varnell's development

Figure 45: Sidewalks and greenway connections will continue to improve Varnell's walkability and improve access to some of the city's natural and cultural assets

Figure 46: Varnell's Gymnasium provides recreation for area residents

Figure 48: Varnell is surrounded by rural agricultural areas as seen here along SR 71/Cleveland Hwy.

Figure 47: Undeveloped land still exists within Varnell's city limits creating opportunities for new development

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Varnell

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
No activities identified.						
HOUSING						
No activities identified.						
TRANSPORTATION						
Coordinate with the MPO on the Long-Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update.	2013-2017		X			Policy Statement
Adopt specific cross sessions for roads that cross Preserve Character areas.	2013-2014				X	
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
No activities identified.						
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Coordinate with Dalton Utilities to expand sewer service to include currently underserved, developed areas and to areas where growth is planned. (On-going)	2013-2017		X			Policy Statement

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Varnell

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Coordinate with the County to implement the Whitfield County Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations. (On-going)	2013-2017		X			Policy Statement
Participate in the creation of a long-range water resources master plan.	2013-2014	X				
Coordinate with County to update infrastructure master plans to establish consistency with comprehensive plan and implement infrastructure expansion that is consistent with the plan.	2013-2017		X			Policy Statement
Coordinate school planning and community planning efforts; establish requirements for land dedication for new schools in large planned developments.	2013-2017		X			Policy Statement
Identify new park land for small neighborhood parks in Emerging Suburban areas along with green space preservation/acquisition opportunities and development of connected greenways with trails.	2013-2107		X 2020			
Land Use						

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2013-2017

City of Varnell

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Prepare and adopt necessary code amendments to require inter-parcel access, limit curb cuts, and require sidewalks or alternative pedestrian path systems with new development.	2013-2017	X				
Review sign ordinance for inconsistencies with the desired development pattern and amend accordingly.	2014-2015	X				
Prepare and implement a unified Zoning Ordinance for Whitfield County, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell.	2013-2014	X				Varnell Joined the UZO in 2015, Implementation of this ordinance is a policy statement
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Maintain an adequate Whitfield County service delivery strategy and intergovernmental agreement concerning annexation. (On-going)	2013-2017	X				Policy Statement
Continue to coordinate transportation planning activities with the MPO. (On-going)	2013-2017	X				Policy Statement

Needs and Opportunities

ID:	The need or opportunity is to:
ED-1	Attract young professionals and families to the city
ED-2	Improve broadband service to business and citizens
CF-1	Improve the City's financial capabilities
CF-2	Re-invest in city properties, structures, and equipment to best serve the community and city staff
CF-3	Improve and expand the City's recreational assets
CF-4	Connect Parks, neighborhoods and city properties with trails, bike lanes and sidewalks

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF VARNELL									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
CF-1	Pay off capitalization debt		X				$390,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
ED-1 ED-2	Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Varnell		X				$2,000	General Fund	Mayor & Council
ED-1 ED-2	Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance		X				$5,000	General Fund	Mayor & Council
ED-1 ED-2	Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program				X		$5,000	General Fund	Mayor & Council, NWGRC
	HOUSING								
	No Projects Identified at this time								
	TRANSPORTATION								
	No projects identified at this time								
	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
	No projects identified at this time								

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF VARNELL									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CF-2 CF-3	Replace maintenance building			X			$150,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
CF-2	Add dog park		X				$15,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
CF-2 CF-3	Renovate ball field area			X			$250,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
CF-2 CF-3	Improve playground at peacock alley			X			$100,000	SPLOST, LWCF	Mayor & Council, NWGRC
CF-3 CF-4	Add sidewalks to springs area to connect the Main Street picnic shelter to the road behind the community center			X			$25,000	SPLOST, GRTP	Mayor & Council
CF-2 CF-3	Pave spring parking lot				X		$25,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
CF-2	Sanitation truck to replace existing model					X	$240,000	SPLOST, USDA/RD	Mayor & Council, NWGRC

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2018-2022 CITY OF VARNELL									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
CF-3 CF-4	Identify new park land for small neighborhood parks in Emerging Suburban areas along with green space preservation/acquisition opportunities and development of connected greenways with trails.			X			$1,000	Staff Time	Mayor & Council
CF-2	Add parking cover for city vehicles		X				$25,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
	LAND USE								
CF-2	Land acquisition of two remaining lots adjacent to existing city property on main street for future expansion			X			$250,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
CF-2 CF-3	Add additional facilities to track area such as a splash pad and pavilion large enough for approximately 100 guests			X			$100,000	SPLOST	Mayor & Council
	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
CF-2	PURCHASE 5 POLICE CAR/EQUIPMENT		X	X	X	X	$225,000	SPLOST	Police Chief, Mayor & Council