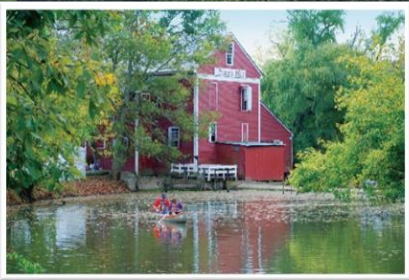


Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028



October 2023

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

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Whitfield County

Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

*Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for
Whitfield County Including the
Municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell*



City of Tunnel Hill



Prepared for:
Whitfield County
Town of Cohutta
City of Dalton
City of Tunnel Hill
City of Varnell

By:

n^rthwest
GEORGIA
PLANNING SERVICES

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

503 W. Waugh Street

Dalton Ga, 30721

(706) 272-2300

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Table of Contents

ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 6

INTRODUCTION 8

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN 13

JOINT LAND USE ELEMENT 16

 USING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP 18

 CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS 26

 Unincorporated Whitfield County Future Development Map 70

 City of Dalton Future Development Map 80

 City of Tunnel Hill Future Development Map 94

 City of Vanell Future Development Map 95

 COHUTTA’S FUTURE LAND USE 98

 TOWN OF COHUTTA FUTURE LAND USE MAP 104

RURAL BROADBAND 105

HOUSING 110

TRANSPORTATION 130

POLICY STATEMENTS 152

 Community Vision Survey Connections 159

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM 161

 Unincorporated Whitfield County 161

 Town of Cohutta 173

 City of Dalton 183

 City of Tunnel Hill 196

 City of Varnell 202

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY VISION SURVEY 208

APPENDIX B: POPULAITON AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA 221

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION DOCUMENTATION 238

ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS

**A RESOLUTION
TO ADOPT THE**

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell

Whereas, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan to retain their Qualified Local Government status and eligibility for State permits, grants, and loans; and

Whereas, the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell* is now complete; and

Whereas, such **Joint Comprehensive Plan Update** is approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as meeting Georgia’s Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures (effective October 1, 2018); and

Whereas, the second and final public hearing on the draft plan was held on Monday September 18th, 2023 at the City of Dalton City Hall located at 300 W. Waugh St at 6:00pm during the regular business meeting of the City of Dalton Mayor and Council.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Board of Commissioners of Whitfield County, Georgia hereby officially adopts the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell*.

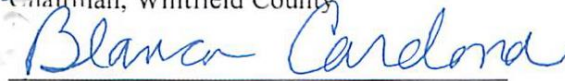
Resolved, this 23rd day of October, 2023.

BY:



Jevin Jensen
Chairman, Whitfield County

ATTEST:



Blanca Cardona, City Clerk
Whitfield County





**A RESOLUTION
TO ADOPT THE**

**Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of
Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell**

Whereas, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan to retain their Qualified Local Government status and eligibility for State permits, grants, and loans; and

Whereas, the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell* is now complete; and

Whereas, such **Joint Comprehensive Plan Update** is approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as meeting Georgia’s Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures (effective October 1, 2018); and

Whereas, the second and final public hearing on the draft plan was held on Monday September 18th, 2023 at the City of Dalton City Hall located at 300 W. Waugh St at 6:00pm during the regular business meeting of the City of Dalton Mayor and Council.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Mayor and Council of The Town of Cohutta, Georgia hereby officially adopts the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell*.

Resolved, this 10th day of October, 2023.

BY: 

Ron Shinnick
Mayor, Town of Cohutta

ATTEST: 

Pam Shinnick, City Clerk
Town of Cohutta

RESOLUTION 23-20

**A RESOLUTION
TO ADOPT THE**

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell

Whereas, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan to retain their Qualified Local Government status and eligibility for State permits, grants, and loans; and

Whereas, the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell* is now complete; and

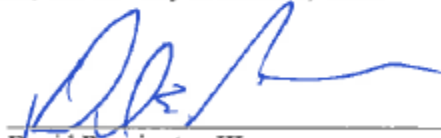
Whereas, such **Joint Comprehensive Plan Update** is approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as meeting Georgia’s Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures (effective October 1, 2018); and

Whereas, the second and final public hearing on the draft plan was held on Monday September 18th, 2023 at the City of Dalton City Hall located at 300 W. Waugh St at 6:00pm during the regular business meeting of the City of Dalton Mayor and Council.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Mayor and Council of City of Dalton, Georgia hereby officially adopts the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell*.

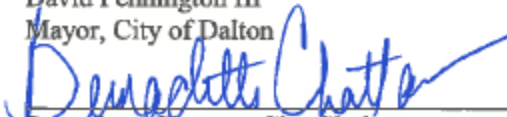
Resolved, this 16th day of October, 2023.

BY:



David Pennington III
Mayor, City of Dalton

ATTEST:



Bernadette Chattam, City Clerk
City of Dalton

**A RESOLUTION (2023-R3)
TO ADOPT THE WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN (2024-2028) INCLUDING THE MUNICIPALITIES OF
COHUTTA, DALTON, TUNNEL HILL AND VARNELL**

Whereas, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan to retain their Qualified Local Government status and eligibility for State permits, grants, and loans; and

Whereas, the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell* is now complete; and

Whereas, such **Joint Comprehensive Plan Update** is approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as meeting Georgia’s Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures (effective October 1, 2018); and

Whereas, the second and final public hearing on the draft plan was held on Monday September 18th, 2023 at the City of Dalton City Hall located at 300 W. Waugh St at 6:00pm during the regular business meeting of the City of Dalton Mayor and Council.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Mayor and Council of City of Tunnel Hill, Georgia hereby officially adopts the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell*.

Resolved, this 24th day of October, 2023.

BY:


Kenny Gowin
Mayor, City of Tunnel Hill

ATTEST:


Melinda Griffin, City Clerk
City of Tunnel Hill



**RESOLUTION 2023-10-12A
TO ADOPT THE**

**Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of
Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell**

Whereas, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan to retain their Qualified Local Government status and eligibility for State permits, grants, and loans; and

Whereas, the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell* is now complete; and

Whereas, such **Joint Comprehensive Plan Update** is approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as meeting Georgia’s Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures (effective October 1, 2018); and

Whereas, the second and final public hearing on the draft plan was held on Monday September 18th, 2023 at the City of Dalton City Hall located at 300 W. Waugh St at 6:00pm during the regular business meeting of the City of Dalton Mayor and Council.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Mayor and Council of City of Varnell, Georgia hereby officially adopts the *Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2024-2028) including the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell*.

Resolved, this 17th day of October, 2023.

BY: Tom Dickson
Tom Dickson
Mayor, City of Varnell

ATTEST: Kai Clayton
Kai Clayton, City Clerk
City of Varnell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHITFIELD COUNTY

Jevin Jensen <i>Chairman, Board of Commissioners</i>		
Barry Robbins Board of Commissioners District 1	John Thomas Board of Commissioners District 2	Robby Staten Board of Commissioners District 3
Greg Jones Board of Commissioners District 4	Blanca Cardona County Clerk	Robert Sivick County Administrator

TOWN OF COHUTTA

Ron Shinnick Mayor		
Sheila Rose Vice Mayor	Sandy Clayborne Council Woman	Shane Kornberg Councilman
Pam Shinnick Town Clerk		

CITY OF DALTON

David Pennington Mayor		
Dennis Mock Councilmember, Ward One		Tyree Goodlett Councilmember, Ward Three
Steve Farrow Councilmember, Ward Four	Bernadette Chattam City Clerk	Andrew Parker City Administrator

CITY OF TUNNEL HILL

Ken Gowin Mayor		
Jim Griffin Mayor Pro-Tem	Elizabeth Dennis Councilmember	Dennis Hammontree Councilmember
Jamey Middleton Councilmember	Melinda Griffin City Clerk	Blake Griffin City Administrator

City of Varnell

Tom Dickson Mayor		
Bill Caylor Councilmember	Sandy Pangle Councilmember	Pam Garrison City Clerk
Bob Roche Councilmember	Sarah Harrison Councilmember	Richard Lowe Councilmember
Mike Brown City Manager		

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

STEERING COMMITTEE

Jason Mock Dalton-Whitfield Chamber of Commerce President	Kent Benson Whitfield County Engineer	Robert Smalley Whitfield County Attorney
Mark Buckner Dalton Utilities	Terry Miller Dalton City Attorney	Jim Lidderdale Whitfield, Dalton, Varnell Planning Commission, Chairman
Carl Campbell Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority	Dirk Verhoeff Whitfield Solid Waste Authority	Todd Johnson Cohutta Town Attorney
Jacob Bearden Whitfield County Community Development	Jean Price-Garland Whitfield County Zoning Administrator	Brian Chastain Whitfield County Rec. Dept.
Blake Griffin Tunnel Hill City Manager	George Woodward Dalton Housing Authority	Allyson Coker Project Manager, Believe Greater Dalton
Robert Sivick Whitfield County Administrator	Chris Shiflett Whitfield, Dalton, Varnell Planning Commission. Vice-Chairman	Chad Townsend Director, Dalton Public Works
Andrew Parker Dalton City Administrator	Edward O'Brian Chief, Whitfield County Fire Dept.	Todd Pangle Dalton Asst. City Administrator
Ron Shinnick Mayor of Cohutta	Shane Kornberg Cohutta Councilman	Mike Brown Varnell City Manager

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

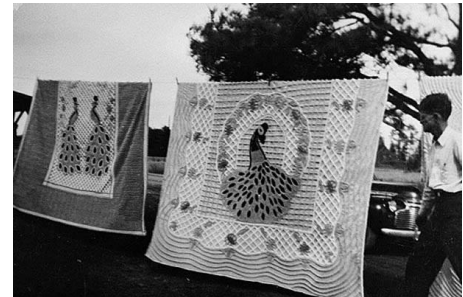
John Francis Social Services, Ret.	Kevin Harris ArrowStar, LLC	Todd Harrison Hamilton Healthcare
Levi Kilgore Windstream, Ret.	Jackie Killings K&M Technologies	John Lughart Dalton State College
Yugeily Manriquez Latin American Association	Mark Mixer CEO, Health One Alliance, LLC	Rachel Moffett Dalton State College, Student
Brad Ramsey First National Community Bank	Lisa Callaway Stone Public Health, Ret.	Debian Woods Retired Educator
Elizabeth Dennis Tunnel Hill Councilperson	Larry Harrison Varnell Citizen	Lisa Callaway Citizen
Jonathan Bagley Pheonix Chemical Company		Alisa Basaraba North GA EMC, Vice-President

NWGRC STAFF

Boyn Austin NWGRC Executive Director	Julianne Meadows Director of Regional Planning	Ethan Calhoun Asst. Director of Regional Planning
--	--	---

INTRODUCTION

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 “Flooring Capital of the World” due to its well-established floor covering industry, Whitfield County includes four municipalities: Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill and Varnell.



Whitfield's history as the carpet/flooring capital of the world had humble beginnings in the handmade tufted bedspread industry. (Photo courtesy of the Bandy Heritage Center)

Whitfield County and the Municipalities of Cohutta, 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 2024-2028*.

WHY WE PLAN

Comprehensive planning is an important management tool for promoting a thriving and resilient 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 Municipalities of Cohutta, 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 other facilities to maintain and improve the quality of life for the residents of Whitfield County.

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

PURPOSE

The *Joint Comprehensive Plan* represents the community’s vision, goals, policies, key needs 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.

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 October 2018. 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, 2023. For planning purposes, DCA classifies Whitfield County as an “Advanced” planning level jurisdiction.

This plan updates the *Whitfield County Comprehensive Plan 2019-2023* adopted in 2018 by the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners and the mayors and city councils of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell. Like the 2019 plan, this 2023 update will serve as the official comprehensive plan for unincorporated Whitfield County and the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell.

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 Housing Strategy (2023)*. 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.



Historic Praters Mill located in northern Whitfield County



The need for workforce housing was consistently ranked highest throughout the stages of the Comprehensive Planning process including both stakeholders and the public survey. (Photo Courtesy of Believe Greater Dalton)

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

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. 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 this *Joint 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 to ensure that the county and each municipality implement the plan.



Dalton's Grateful event in 2019 where hundreds come together to share food and fellowship in the city's historic downtown

COMMUNITY VISION SURVEY

The stakeholder committee and NWGRC staff determined that a community vision survey would be an effective strategy in gathering input from the general public. NWGRC staff worked with the stakeholder committee to compile a comprehensive survey based on the initial SWOT analysis findings. The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Survey entitled *Whitfield County Community Vision Survey* was uploaded on June 1, 2023, and the survey remained open until it was closed on July 1, 2023. The total number of responses were 1,167 with an 83.4% completion rate (meaning that some respondents did not complete the entire survey). The survey was translated into English and Spanish versions along with all other notifications to ensure inclusivity. Alchemer was utilized as the survey software provider. The survey was designed to be smartphone and tablet friendly, and the NWGRC website served as the host for the period the survey remained active. With the utilization of the NWGRC website, a direct URL was created (www.nwgrc.org/whitfieldplan) to the online survey to make it easily accessible for individuals that discovered the survey via flyer or newspaper articles. A QR code was created as well in order to provide convenient access to the survey. The survey was shared numerous ways that ranged from email blasts to city/county governments, school system, Chamber of Commerce, libraries, and other local organizations. Other digital outreach occurred including website links and social media posts throughout the period the survey remained active. Survey flyers were also posted in city and county buildings. Paper copies were made available to the senior center, libraries, and Latin American Association. All paper surveys were manually entered by NWGRC staff into the digital system in order to ensure all surveys were included in the results (see Appendix A). Once the survey results were compiled, they were presented to the stakeholder committee in order to ensure the priorities identified by the committee aligned with the general public.



PUBLIC HEARINGS

The initial public hearing was held at the Whitfield County Courthouse in the City of Dalton on December 19, 2022 as part of the Board of Commissioners' regular business meeting.

The final public hearing was held at Dalton City Hall on September 18, 2023 as part of the Mayor and Council's regular business meeting.

The public hearings were 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.



The 2023 class of Leadership Dalton-Whitfield participated in a SWOT Analysis exercise in January 2023

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

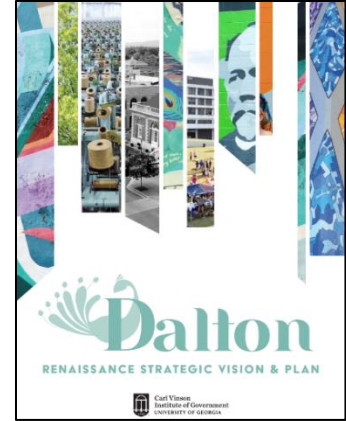
Prior to the official process of the *Comprehensive Plan* update, heavy interest in strategic planning had emerged throughout the community. This sudden interest seemed to arise in the wake of the recent recession that profoundly injured Whitfield's legendary local economy. Since the initial impacts of the recession, a notable recovery within this community altered the mindset of many from that of survival to that of optimism and forward thinking. After a few years of public outreach and research, the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce began launched a county-wide strategic plan in January 2018 dubbed *Believe Greater Dalton*. The plan was focused on improving the community in six key strategy areas of education, housing, entrepreneurship, economic development, downtown, and community pride. The goals of *Believe's* initial five-year plan were reached in 2021 and *Believe* has since updated their plan with new goals and initiatives for the next five years. *Believe Greater Dalton 2.0* will focus on many of the same key strategy areas, but the 2.0 plan created two new key strategies focused on Revitalization, engagement and unity. *Believe 2.0* focused heavily on community engagement with a public input survey that generated over 4,500 responses which more than doubled the previous survey's response rate.



Figure 1Believe's 3 2 1 launch party in March 2023

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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 delivered a downtown master plan facilitated by a skilled team of planners from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the university of Georgia. 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 attended. The Downtown Dalton Master Plan was completed in the Fall of 2018



Whitfield County has also continued to participate with the THRIVE Regional Partnership since it began in 2012. Since 2012, THRIVE has convened diverse partners across the tri-state region to address the complexities of regional growth. Thrive Regional Partnership inspires responsible growth through conversation, connection, and collaboration in the tri-state Chattanooga region. THRIVE convenes stakeholders across the region to ensure that as growth occurs in industry, prosperity, and population, the natural character of the communities is preserved for generations to come. THRIVE's regional footprint includes 16 counties across northeast Alabama, northwest Georgia, and southeast Tennessee. Highlights from the THRIVE Partnership can be found throughout the *Comprehensive Plan*.



Members of the Believe Greater Dalton Board of Directors discussing Believe 2.0

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 municipalities 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 format from the previous 2018 narrative was chosen in order to reduce unnecessary redundancy to maintain a unified and streamlined narrative since the introduction of DCA's 2018 minimum standards.



View of Buzzards Roost along the ridgeline facing the City of Dalton

- **The Land Use Element** of this plan is a joint section including an alphabetical list of character areas for the five 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 September 2023. 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. This plan will incorporate policies into a single joint section in order to reduce unnecessary repetition.
- **The Broadband Element** focuses solely on the strategic deployment of high-speed internet throughout Whitfield County. The Broadband element narrative utilizes multiple maps of Whitfield's current service areas as well as noting several funding programs that can be utilized to improve access to high-speed internet in unserved or underserved areas of the county.



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 shows 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 2019-2023. The local government officials reviewed the 2019-2023 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, 2024-2028*. However, projects noted as “Ongoing,” annual tasks, or policy statements will not be carried forward to the current 2024-2028 Community Work Programs.



The Dalton Convention center is host to numerous community events, trade shows, and private events

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.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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. SWOT 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 were 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 at the initial joint 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). Stakeholders addressed each category with the SWOT perspective. The results were collected by the NWGRC planners, and the responses were developed into a list of needs and opportunities. The list of needs and opportunities was then presented 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 overarching viewpoints discussed during the stakeholder meetings were better addressed via policy statements and other area specific approaches within the character descriptions.



Multiple railways are located adjacent to Dalton's downtown which spurred the need to establish a quiet zone as a method to continue marketing the downtown as a destination for urban and loft dwelling redevelopment

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.



The above pictured diesel lab, at Georgia Northwestern Technical College, is just one example of technical educational pathways available in Whitfield County

In the tables below, incomplete projects can be found from the previous 2019-2023 work program as well as new projects for the 2024-2028 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 2024-2028 work program as these items are not measurable 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 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 low-density 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

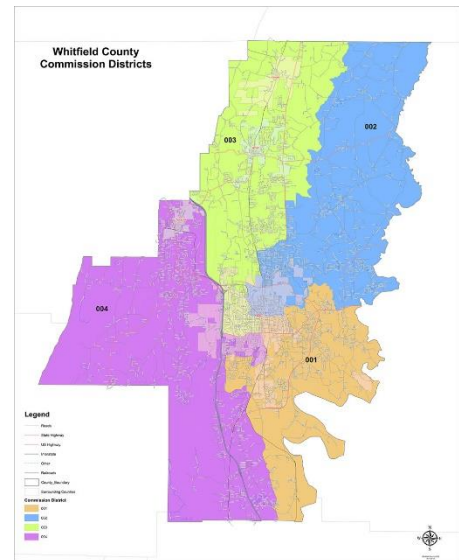
The south side of Whitfield County is located south of the City of Dalton. The area includes portions of the Chattahoochee National Forest located west of I-75, interchange areas at Carbondale and Connector 3 as well as historic rural communities located throughout the area. Southside Whitfield County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



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 regard 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 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 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. Wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, however, can become costly for new development. Large developments will be limited to areas either currently served or nearby existing wastewater infrastructure where economically prudent connections can occur. Revitalization of blighted or underutilized areas where utilities and other infrastructure already exist is an efficient method to accommodate sustainable growth. 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.



Loft Apartments under construction within Dalton's medical district creating opportunities for workforce housing in this district which includes the Hamilton Medical Center hospital

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.

<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Employment Options – A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	

The following tables illustrate which QCO’s are implemented within each character area for each local government.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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								X									
Infill Development							X	X		X	X		X	X			
Sense of Place	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		
Transportation Alternatives						X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regional Identity	X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X		X	
Heritage Preservation	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Open Space Preservation	X	X	X	X		X		X									
Environmental Protection	X	X						X								X	
Growth Preparedness	X	X			X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Appropriate Business						X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Employment Options						X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Housing Choices				X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X		
Educational Opportunities												X		X	X	X	
Regional Cooperation	X	X													X	X	X

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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			X	X		X	X									
Infill Development			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Sense of Place	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Transportation Alternatives			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regional Identity	X	X	X	X			X				X	X	X	X	X	
Heritage Preservation	X	X	X	X			X								X	
Open Space Preservation	X	X				X								X	X	
Environmental Protection	X	X				X							X			
Growth Preparedness	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Appropriate Business							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Employment Options							X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Housing Choices			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	
Educational Opportunities										X		X	X	X	X	
Regional Cooperation	X	X											X	X	X	X

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			X		X				
Infill Development			X	X	X	X	X		X
Sense of Place	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Transportation Alternatives			X		X	X	X	X	X
Regional Identity	X	X	X						X
Heritage Preservation	X	X	X						
Open Space Preservation	X	X			X				
Environmental Protection	X	X			X				
Growth Preparedness	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
Appropriate Business						X	X	X	X
Employment Options							X	X	X
Housing Choices			X	X	X		X	X	X
Educational Opportunities									
Regional Cooperation	X	X						X	

CITY OF VARNELL

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

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.



Dalton's historic freight depot

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.

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

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*



Maintenance Hangar at Dalton Municipal Airport



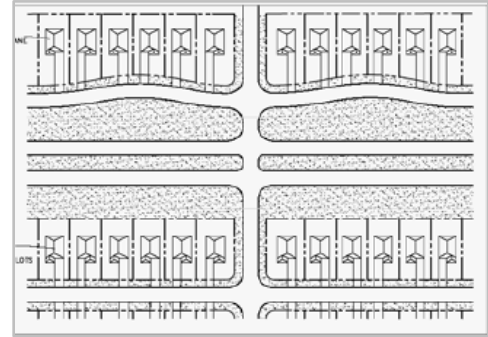
Runway at Dalton Municipal Airport; Facing Northwest



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



Dalton Bypass area east of Dalton's city limits

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



Interrupting the unnecessary, and often dangerous, sections of median to replace with trees and grass helps reduce heat, slow traffic, and create a more attractive gateway as seen in this illustration provided by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. This image represents a portion of Waugh Street, but the concept of green medians is recommended for all highway corridors.

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. 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.



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

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
- Reflect coordinated transportation/land use planning



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)

- 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
- 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



Commercial Development along SR 71/Cleveland Highway in Varnel

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.

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.

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



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



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



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.

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)



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



All new construction should contribute to the existing historic commercial character

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

- 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 Mill Line 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

Transforming Eye Sores to Assets



Conceptual design courtesy of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government as part of the 2018 Downtown Dalton Revitalization Plan

Alleyways are an important part of a downtown business's daily functions. Alleyways provide designated back-of-house areas for deliveries and loading zones, waste receptacles and grease traps, as well as public-right-way for utilities. They improve a downtown's overall connectivity, linking businesses with rear employee and patron parking lots, and providing short-cuts between destinations. They also serve as great patio and outdoor dining spaces, expanding the number of patrons a downtown business can serve in peak hours. On a beautiful day, patio seating is attractive to patrons, and businesses with outdoor seating options are in high demand. With real monetary benefit for business owners, and improved connectivity and experiences for downtown visitors, properly designed alleyways must be fully considered within a streetscape masterplan.

- Currently several businesses are seeing the benefits of alleyway use. The Dalton Little Theatre's alleyway connects its back parking lot with its front entrance. Perfect Cup Restaurant and Coffee Shop and Cherokee Brewing and Pizza Company are both utilizing their alleyways as large outdoor patio spaces. Though not a true alleyway, Crescent City Tavern has rolled with the punches of a devastating fire, transforming the adjacent former buildings into a patio large enough to provide a concert venue.
- Alleyways are key multi-function spaces for both business owners and patrons, making their appearance that much more important. These areas must be flexible enough to allow vehicular access when needed, while also being safe for pedestrian use, and well-maintained enough for outdoor dining opportunities. By unifying and beautifying waste receptacles and grease pit areas to a small portion of the alleyway, and enhancing the appearance of the building, these spaces can be used to better serve patrons and the public.
- Alleyways must also be maintained when new development comes to Dalton. The pursuit to maximize a developments square footage must be met with the realities of back-of-house services, overall downtown connectivity, and the real monetary value in outdoor dining.

EMERGING SUBURBAN

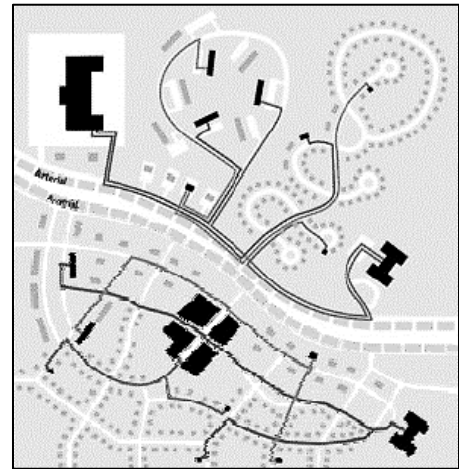
The Emerging Suburban character area covers areas primarily in the unincorporated county east of Dalton, west of I-75 around and south of Tunnel Hill, and along SR 71/Cleveland Highway that have experienced some residential growth and are positioned to accommodate more due to general land use trends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

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



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



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)

Primary Land Uses

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

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



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



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

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.

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



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



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

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



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

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.



Construction site of Hanwa Q Cells, A global manufacturer of solar panels, in Whitfield County's Carbondale industrial park. This company plans to create approximately 500 new jobs.

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.

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 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



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.

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



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

Primary Land Uses

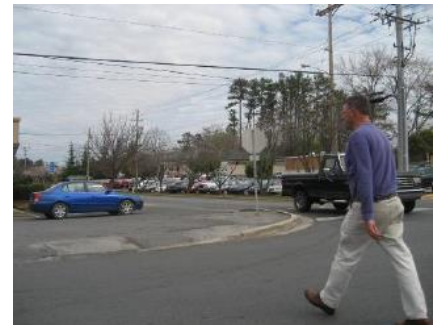
- Hospital or clinic
- Professional medical office
- Retail support (drugstore, restaurant)
- Residential (senior housing, assisted living facility, special needs housing, guest lodging for patients' families)
- Mixed use (upper floor office or residential and ground floor retail)



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.

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.

Primary Land Uses

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



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



Public 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

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.

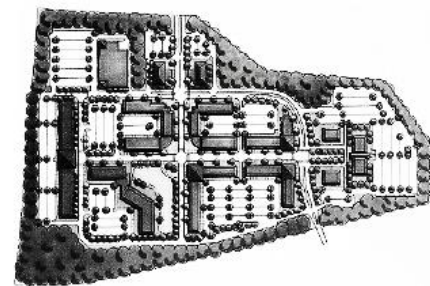
An example of this character area is West Walnut Avenue, located east of I-75. This area, which includes the Dalton Factory Outlet Stores and other commercial uses that benefit from close proximity to the interstate and serve both local residents as well as interstate traffic, is currently a retail center 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.
- Design should be very pedestrian oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses



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



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

- 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

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*



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

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.

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

Primary Land Uses

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

Implementation Strategies

- *Adopt hillside development/steep slope ordinance*



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



New residential development atop the ridge in the Ridge Conservation area



Dug Gap Road winds through the ridge west of Dalton

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.

The Rural Agricultural Reserve character area comprises much of the northeast, southwest and southeast portions of the County, including the following communities: Beavertdale, 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



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



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



Dalton's Downtown Farmer's Market at the Dalton Green

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 commercial 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 REVITALIZATION

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. 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 character area is generally characterized by large-lot residential development



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.

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.

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



Suburban character area near Varnell



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



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.

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



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



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.

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



Town Neighborhood Revitalization area on Underwood Circle in East Dalton



Improving walkability by creating more attractive and safe pathways both encourages pedestrian use as well as private land investment and redevelopment. Illustration courtesy of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.



Town Neighborhood Revitalization area in East Dalton

- 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

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



Before and after photos of a thorough renovation of a historic home in the Crown Mill Village by a local private developer proving that local redevelopment is not only possible but profitable.

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

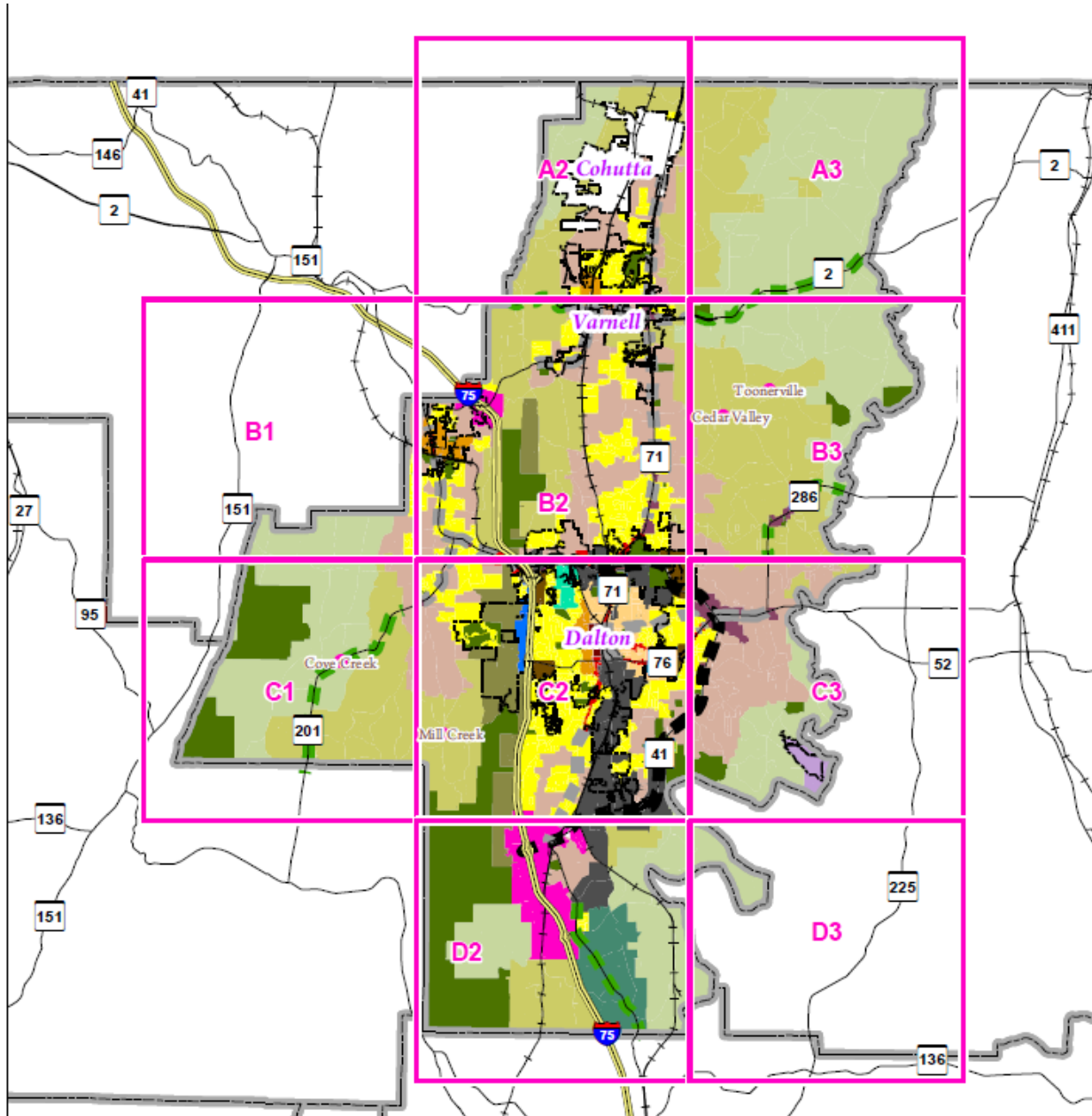
Implementation Strategies

- *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

Unincorporated Whitfield County Future Development Map



Future Land Use Category

- Airport
- Industrial
- Interchange
- Medical District
- Commercial Corridor
- Community Activity Center
- Downtown/Town Center
- Dalt on State/College Drive
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas

- Preserve
- Regional Activity Center
- Town Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Rural Neighborhood - Revitalization
- Ridge Conservation
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood

Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
 - Rural Corridor
 - Transition Corridor
- Additional Layers
- Rural Crossroads

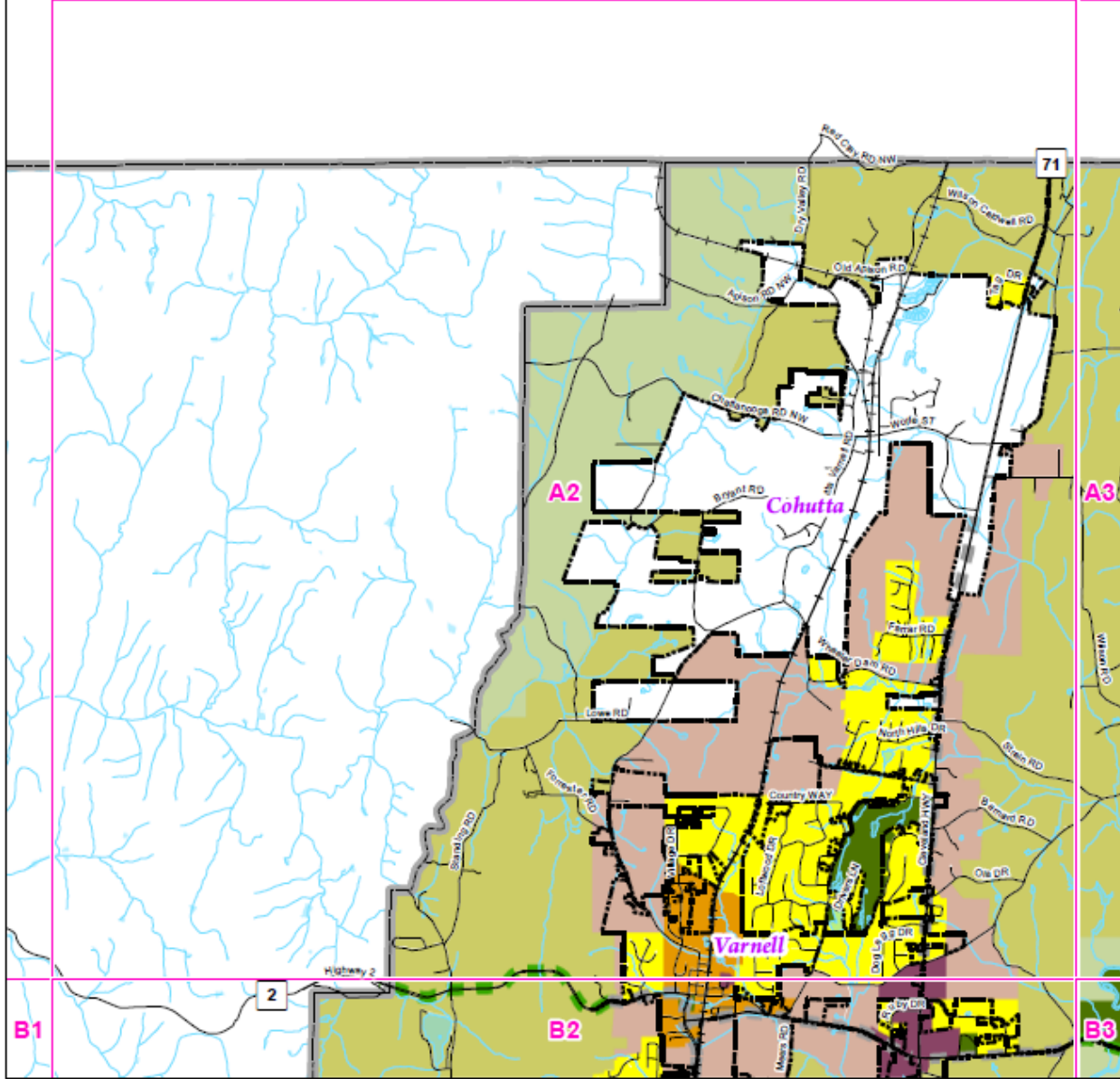
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Whitfield County, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Community Activity Center
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Preserve
- Town Neighborhood
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood

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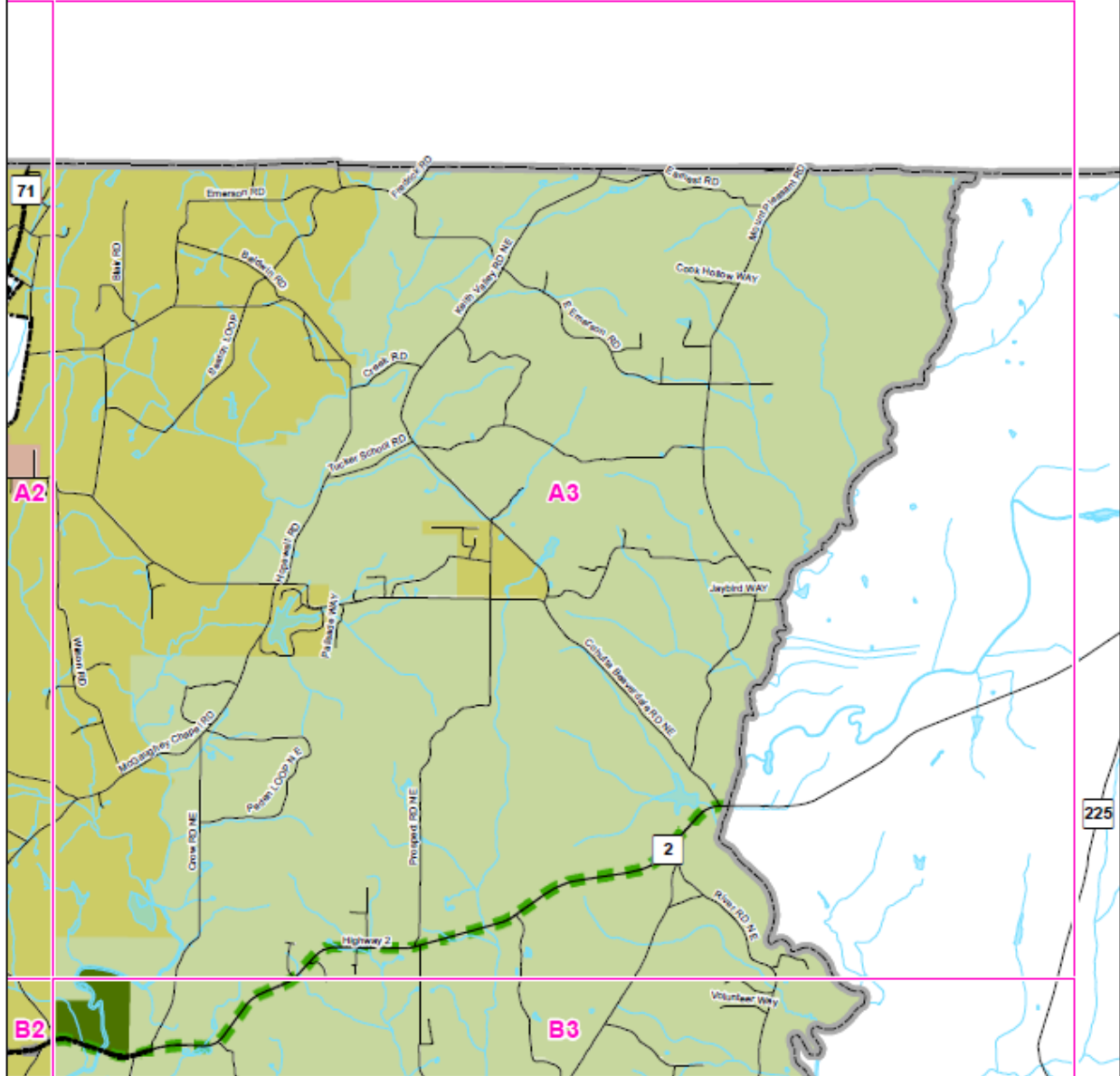


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Whitfield County, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Preserve
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Residential

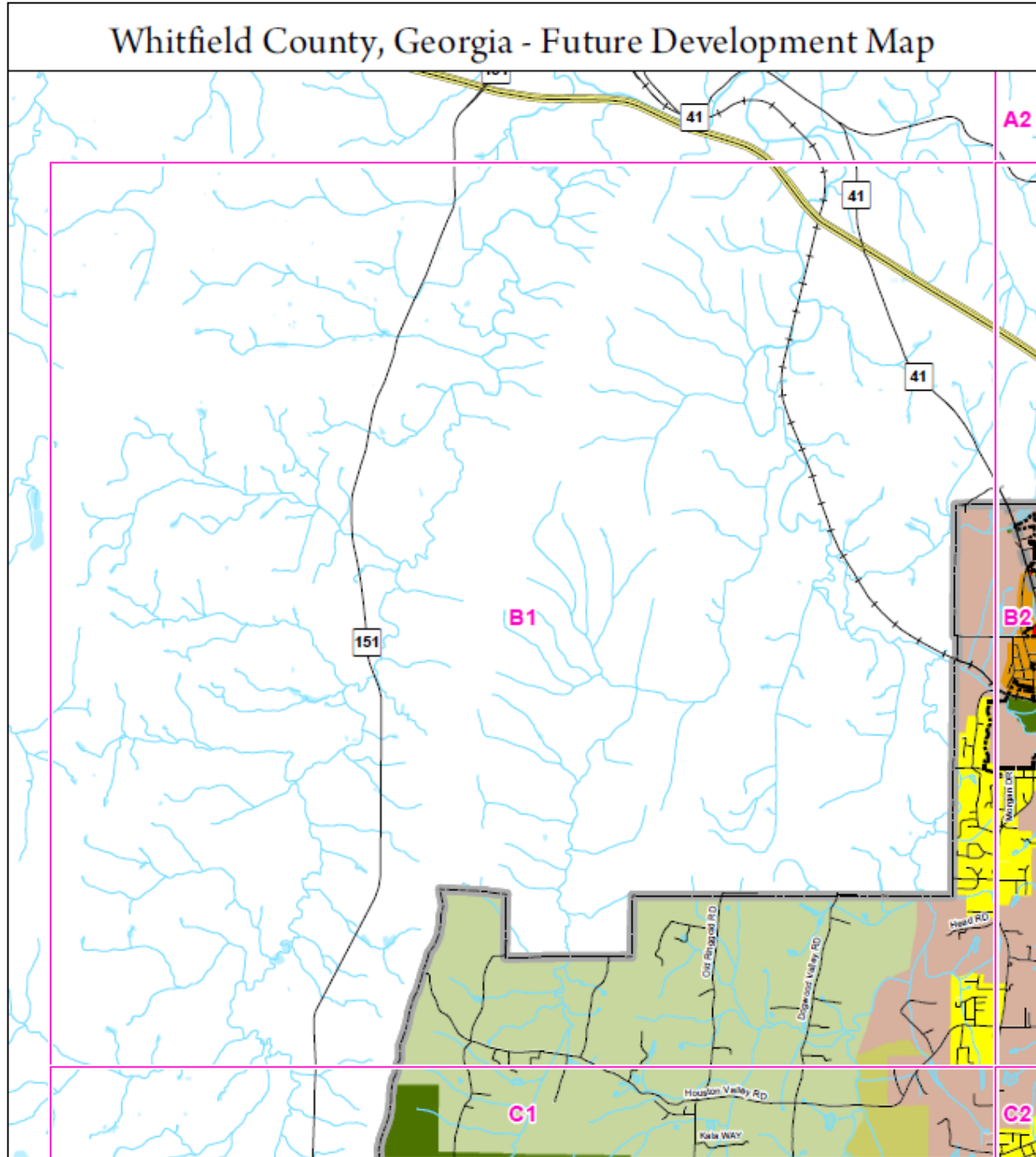
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Future Land Use Corridors

■ Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Commercial Corridor
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Preserve
- Town Neighborhood
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood

1 inch = 1 miles

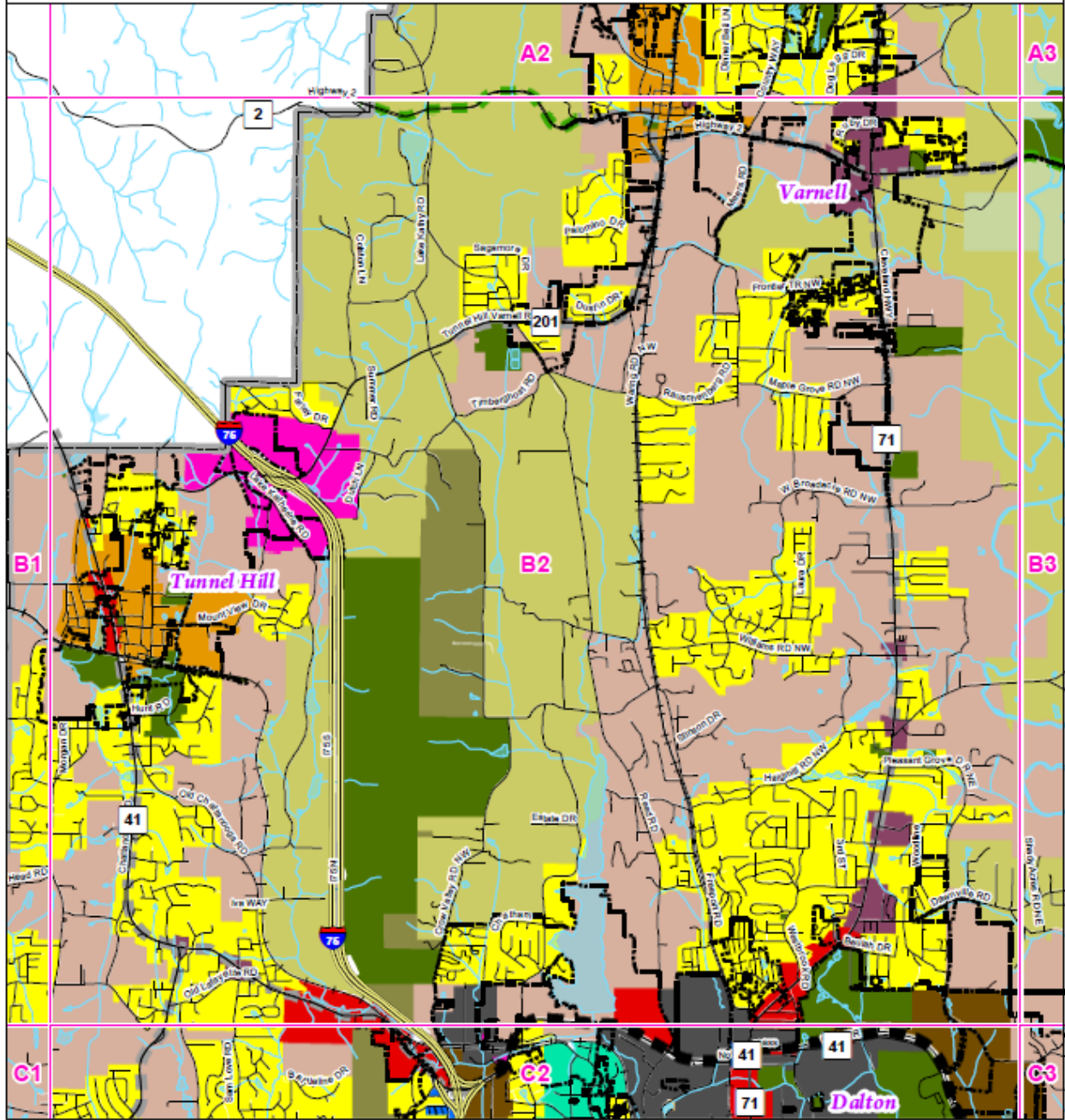


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Whitfield County, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

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

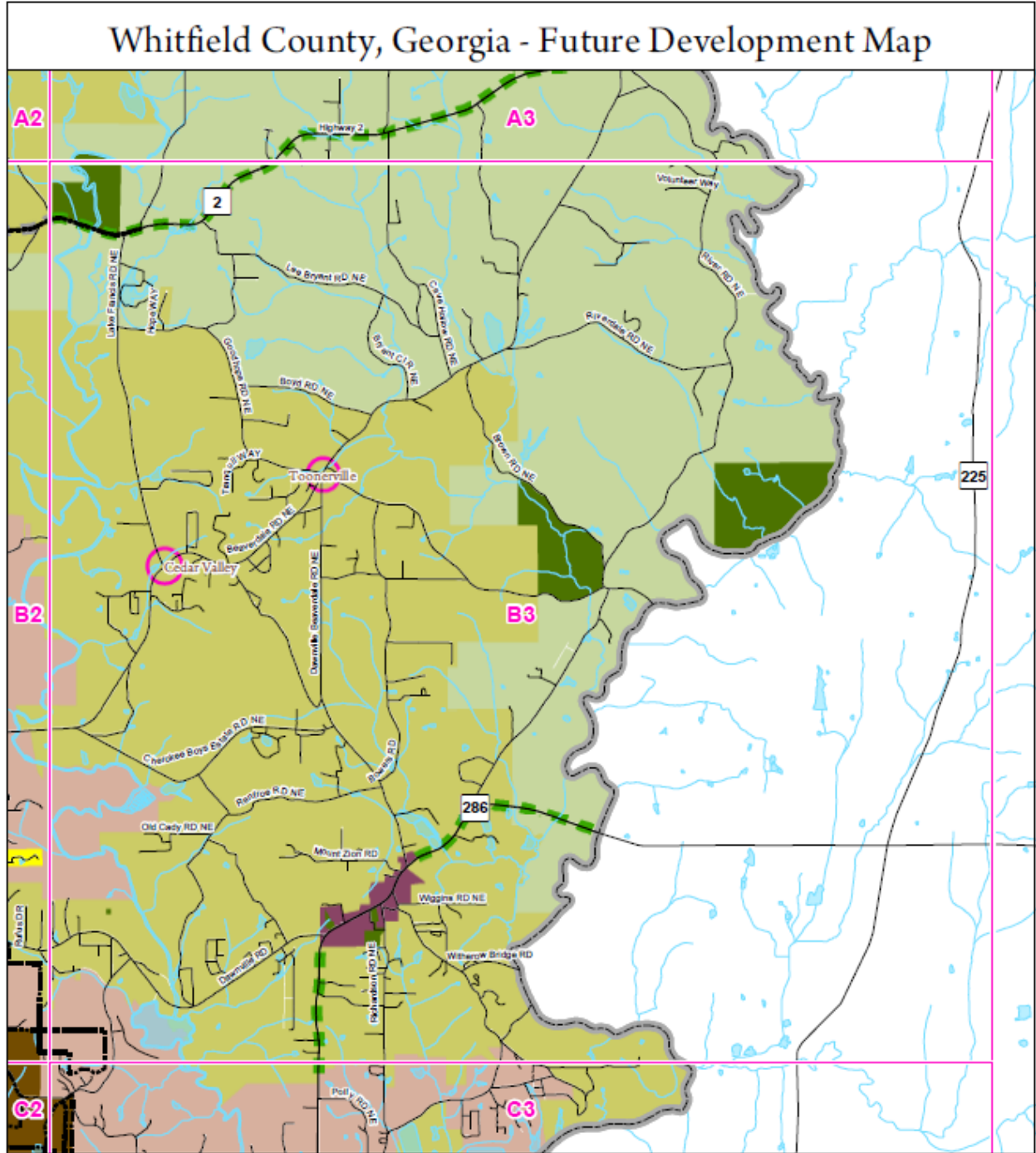
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Future Land Use Corridors

- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Community Activity Center
- Regional Activity Center
- Preserve
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Rural Residential

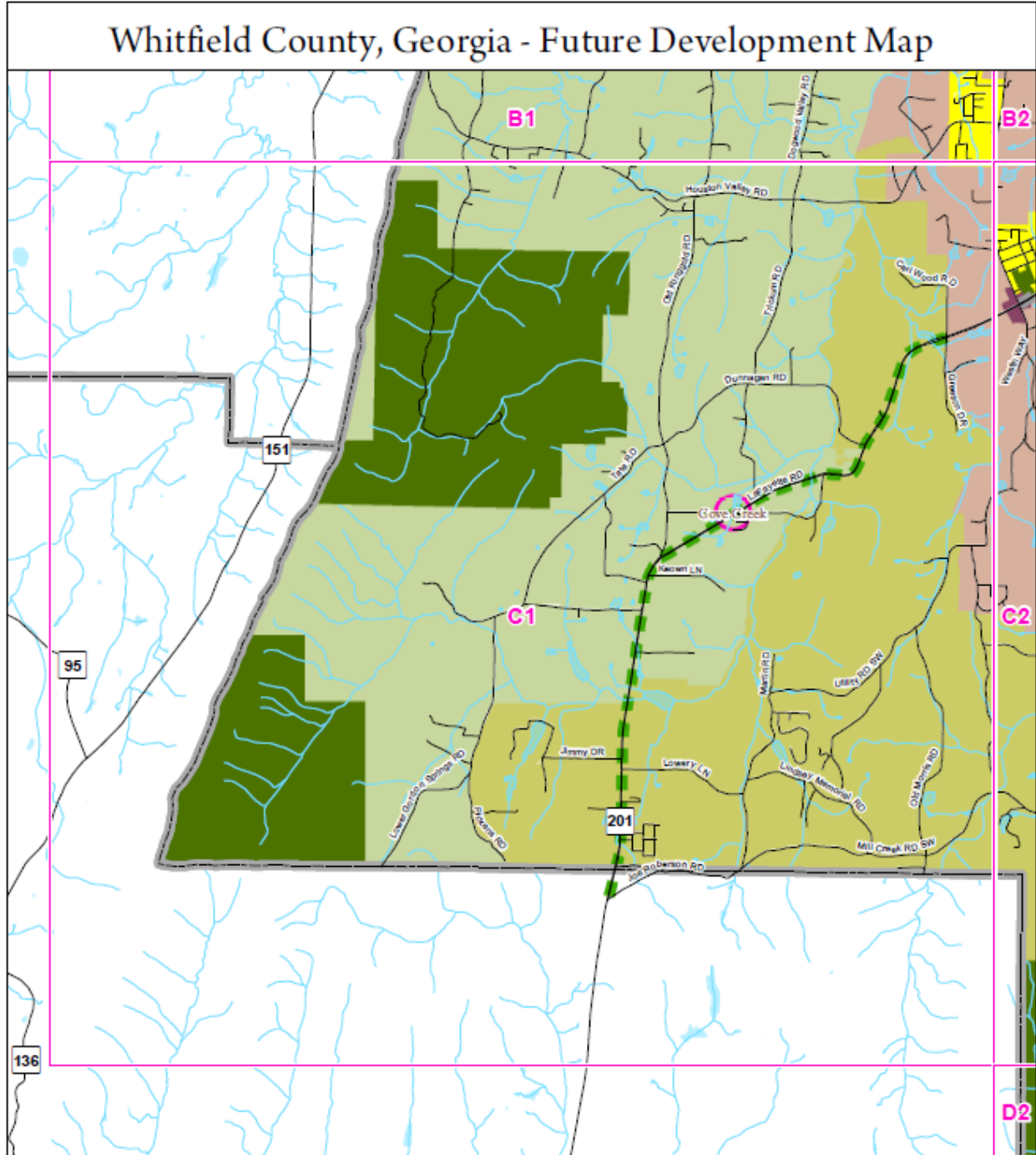
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Future Land Use Corridors
▬ Rural Corridor Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

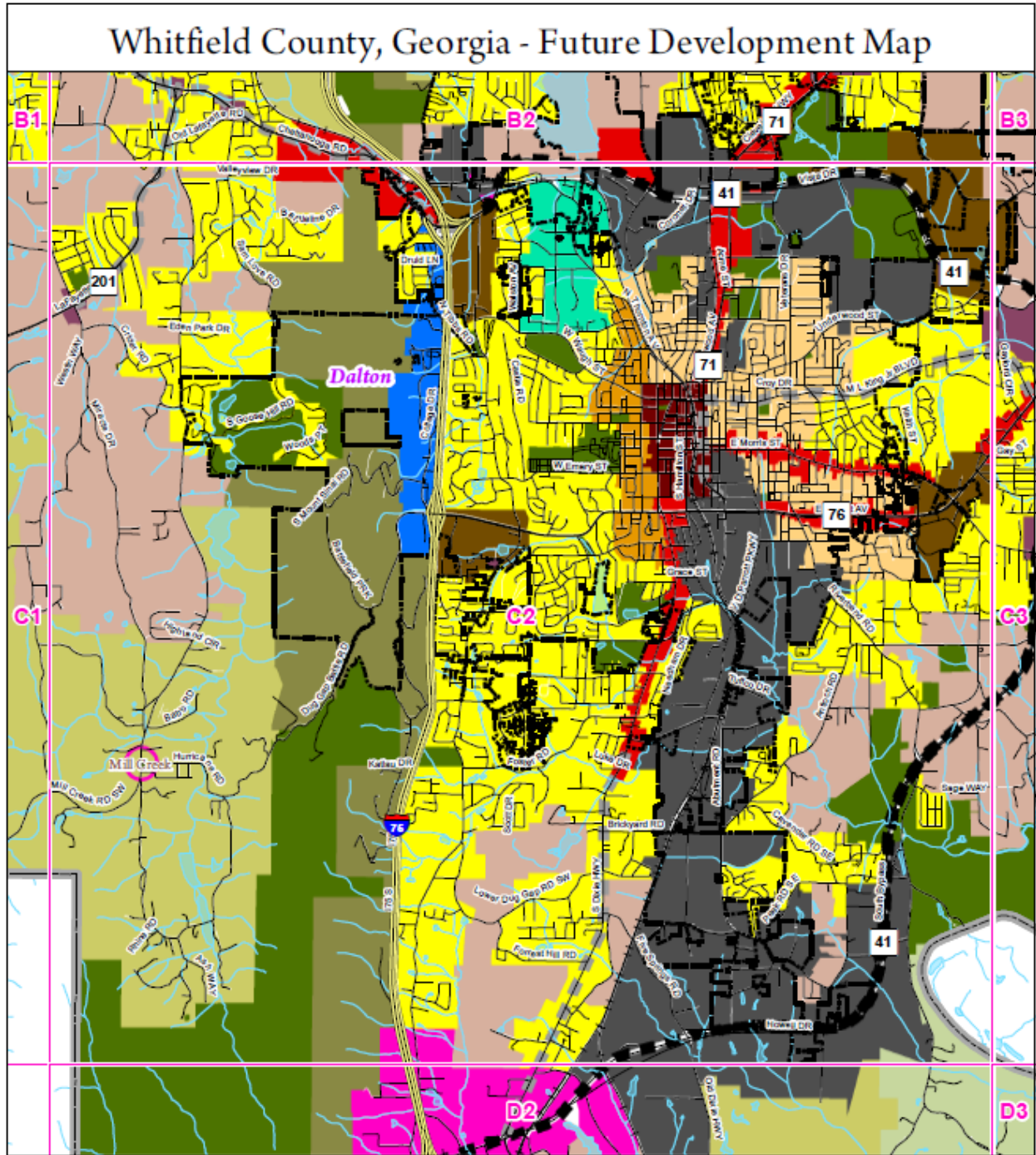
 Community Activity Center	 Preserve	 Rural Residential
 Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas	 Rural/Agricultural Reserve	 Suburban Neighborhood

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Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Interchange Medical District Commercial Corridor Community Activity Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtown/ Town Center Dalton State/College Drive Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas Preserve Regional Activity Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Neighborhood Town Neighborhood Revitalization Ridge Conservation Rural/Agricultural Reserve Rural Residential Suburban Neighborhood |
|---|--|---|

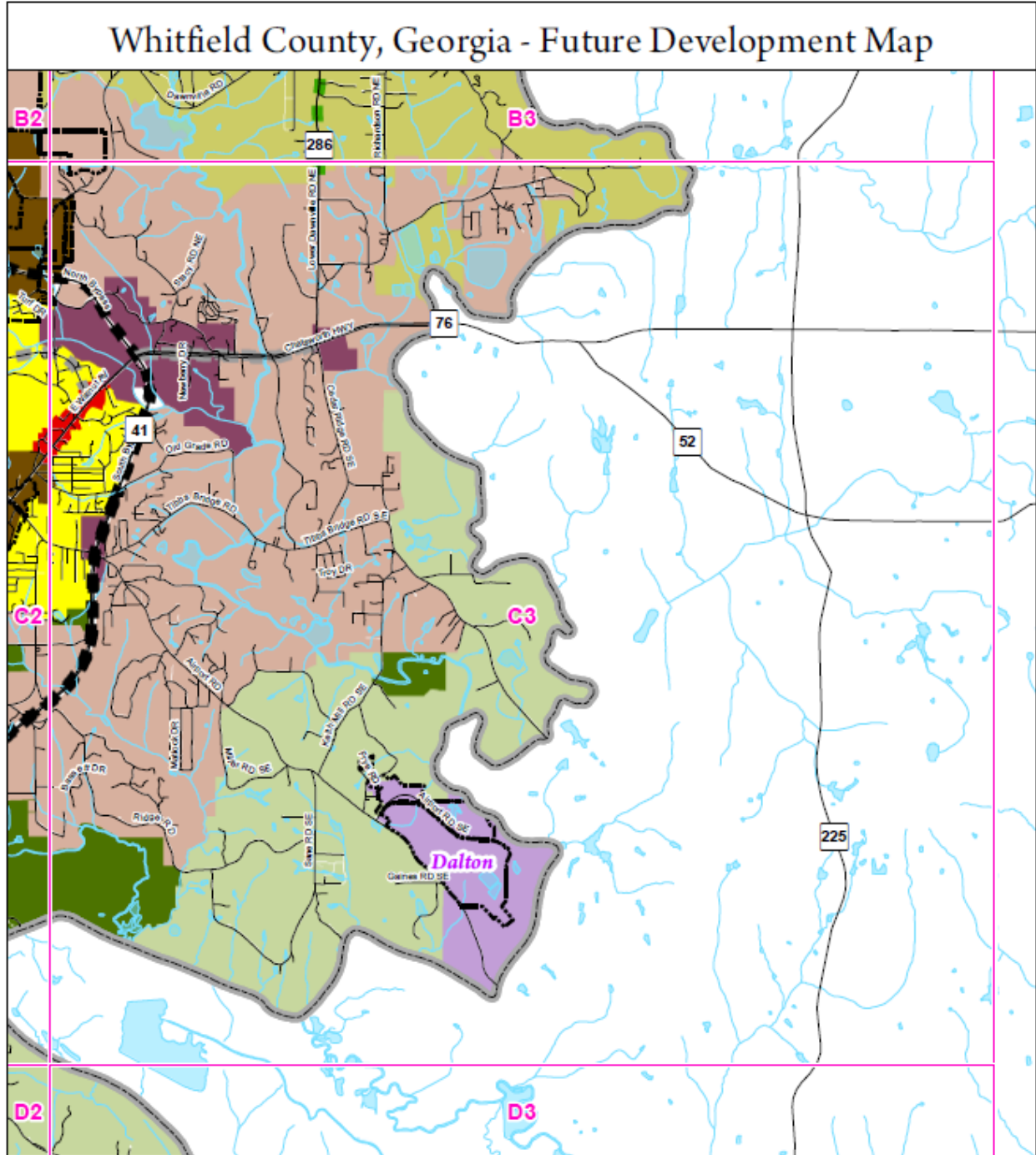
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Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Airport | Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas | Rural/Agricultural Reserve |
| Commercial Corridor | Preserve | Rural Residential |
| Community Activity Center | Regional Activity Center | Suburban Neighborhood |

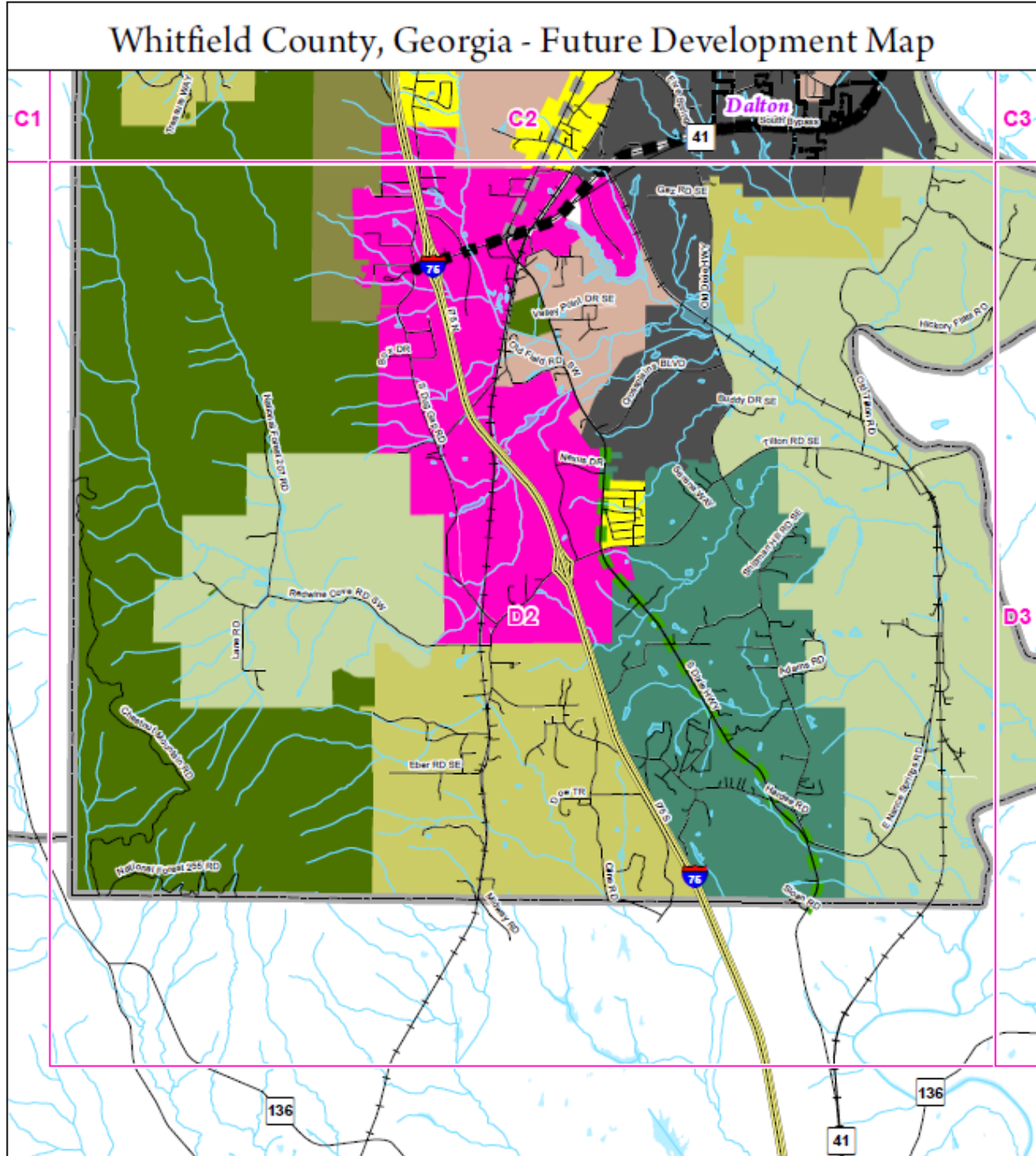
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Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Industrial | Preserve | Rural/Agricultural Reserve |
| Interchange | Rural Neighborhood - Revitalization | Rural Residential |
| Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas | Ridge Conservation | Suburban Neighborhood |

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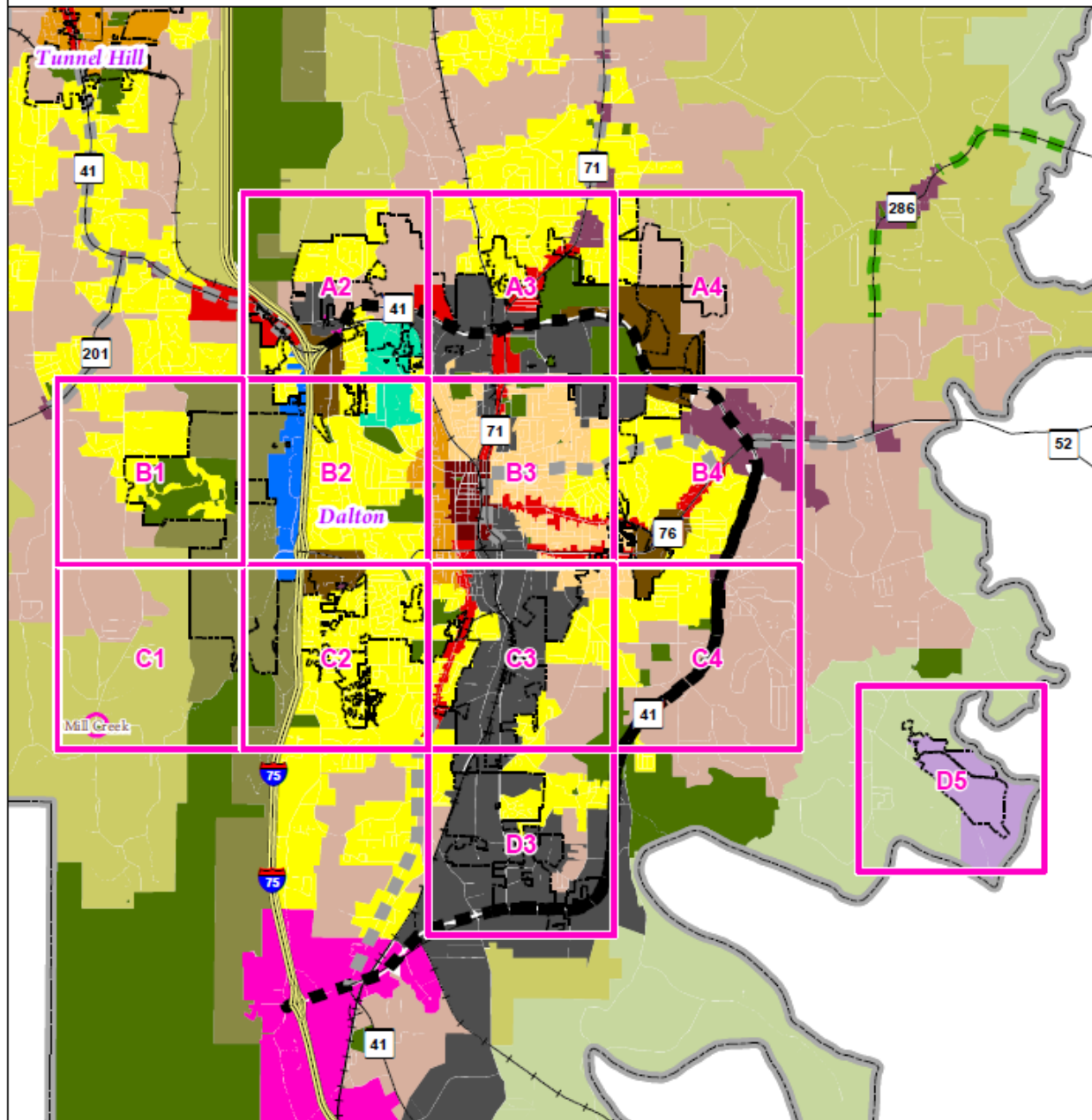


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City of Dalton Future Development Map



Future Land Use Category

- Airport
- Industrial
- Interchange
- Medical District
- Commercial Corridor
- Community Activity Center
- Downtown/Town Center
- Dalton State/College Drive
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas

- Preserve
- Regional Activity Center
- Town Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Ridge Conservation
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood

Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Additional Layers

- Rural Crossroads

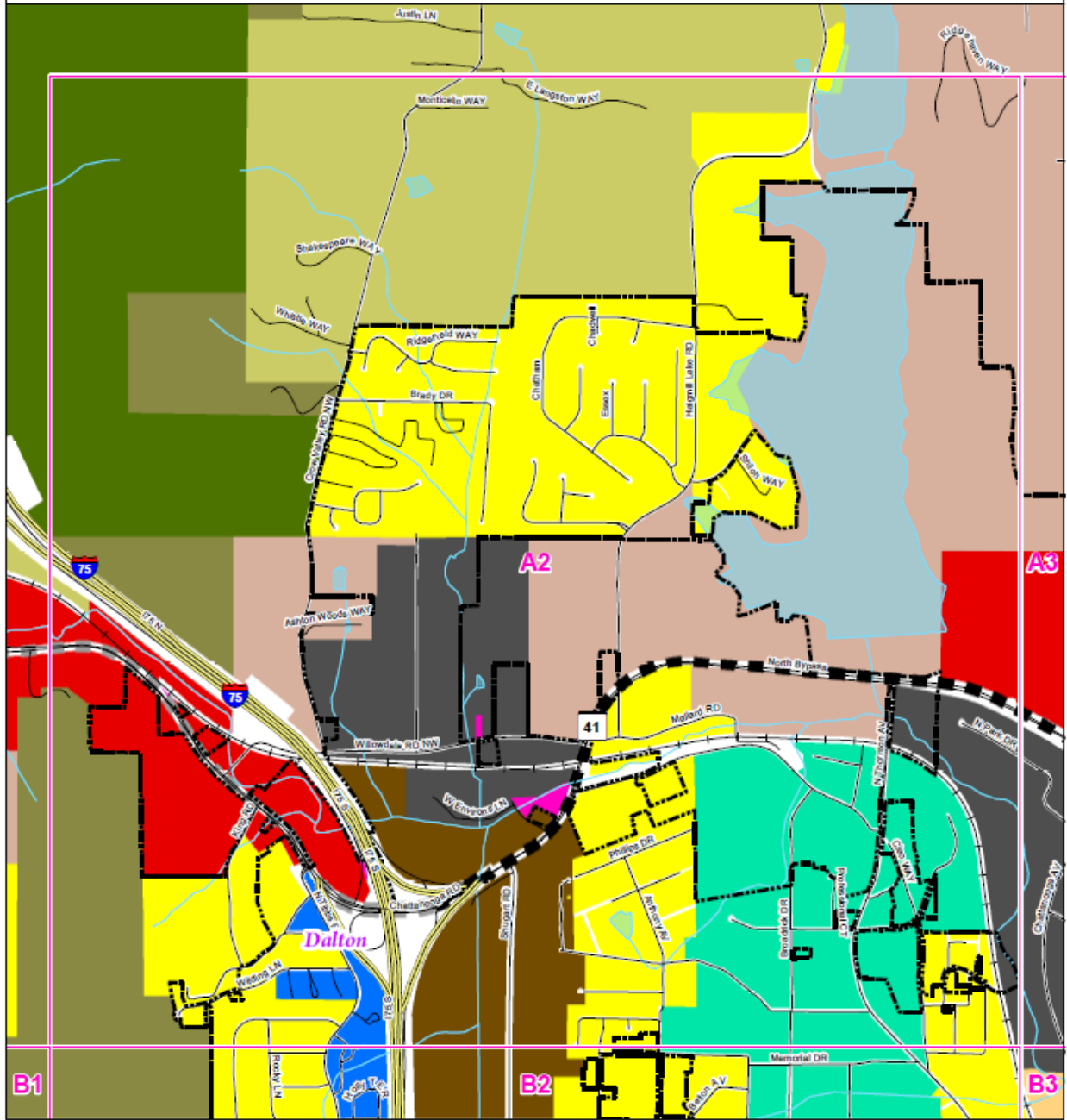
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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



- Future Land Use Corridors**
- Bypass Corridor
 - Rural Corridor
 - Transition Corridor
- Future Land Use Category**
- Industrial
 - Interchange
 - Medical District
 - Commercial Corridor
 - Dalton State /College Drive
 - Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
 - Preserve
 - Regional Activity Center
 - Town Neighborhood Revitalization
 - Ridge Conservation
 - Rural Residential
 - Suburban Neighborhood

1 inch = 0 miles

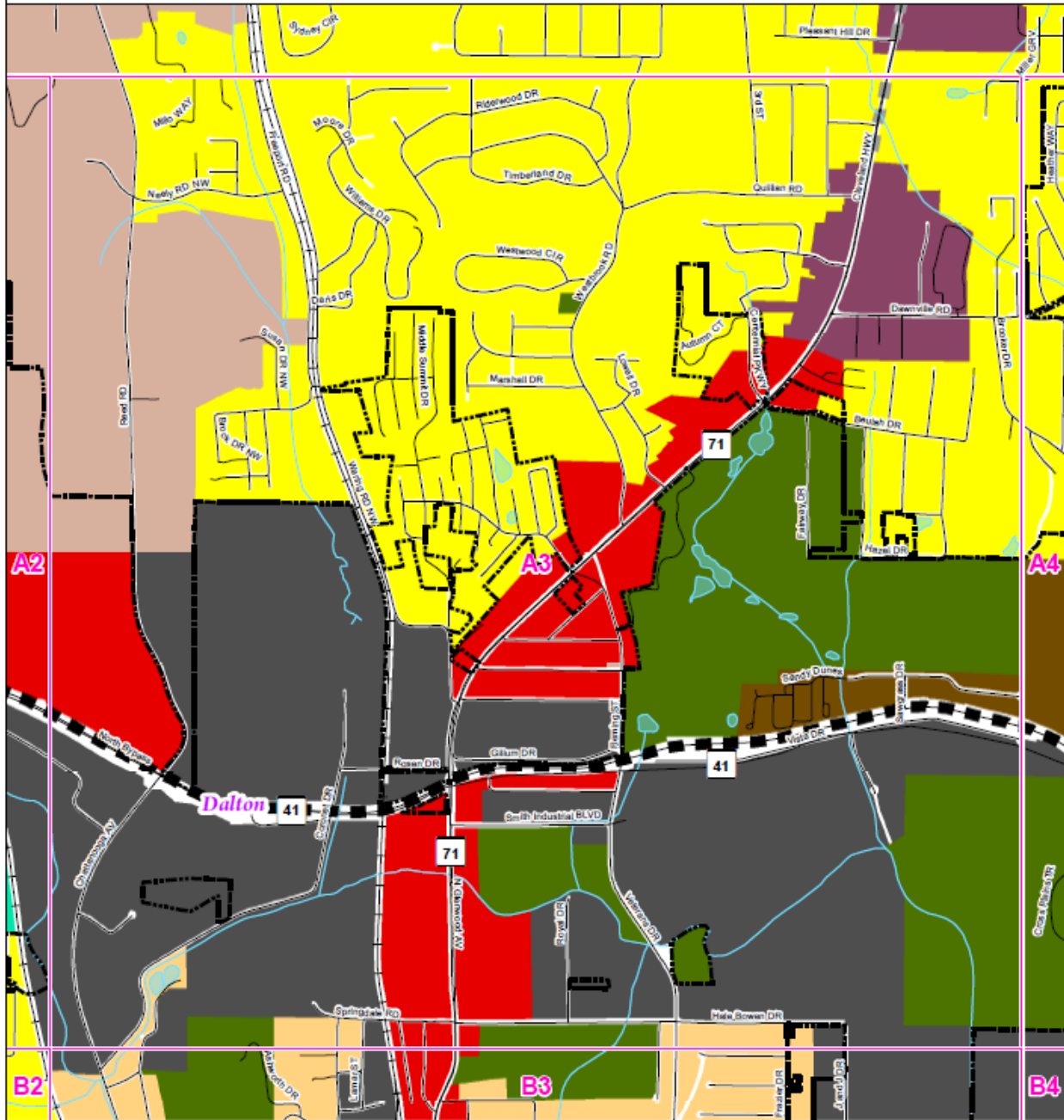
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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Industrial
- Community Activity Center
- Regional Activity Center
- Medical District
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Commercial Corridor
- Preserve
- Suburban Neighborhood

1 inch = 0 miles

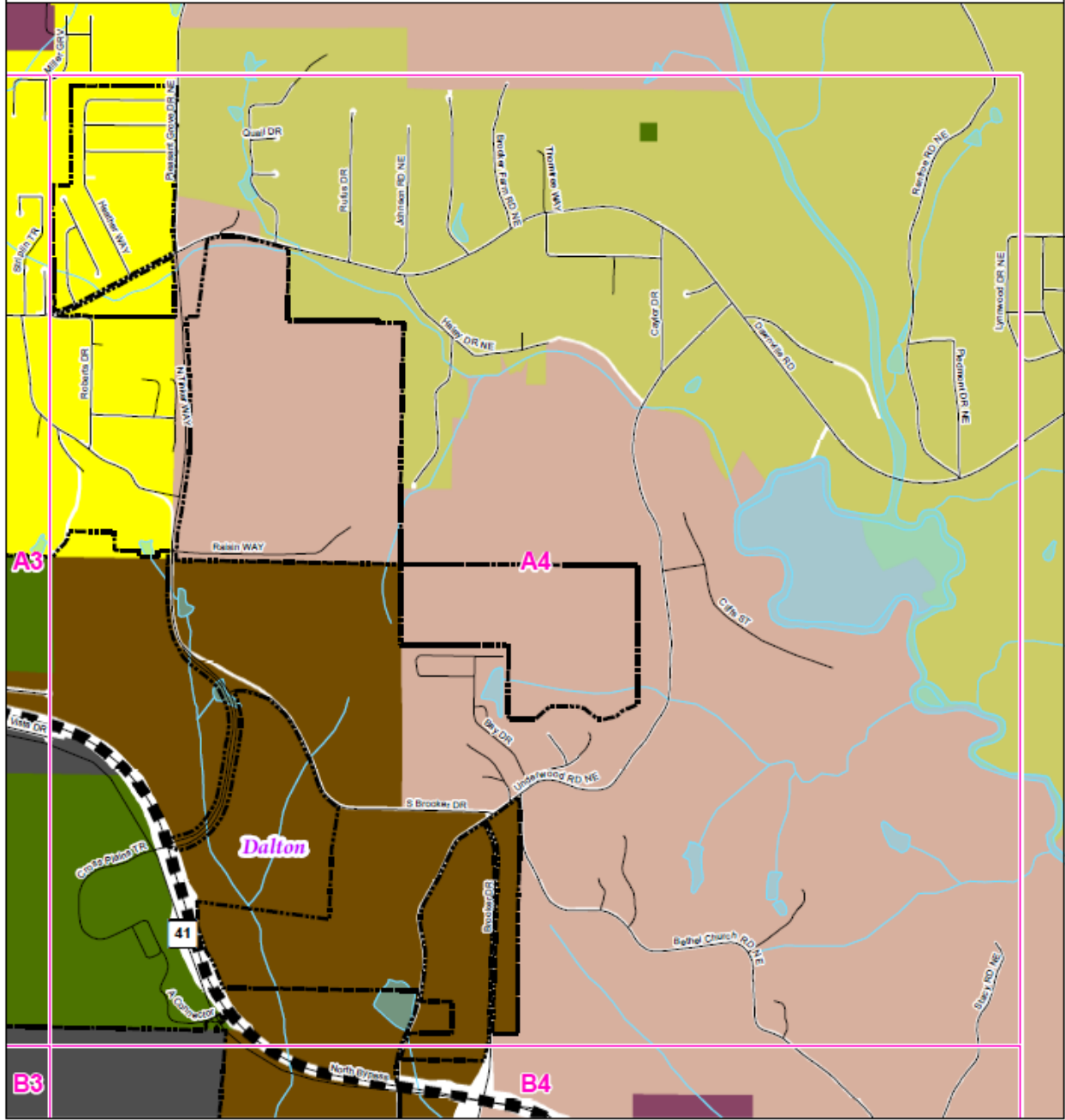


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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

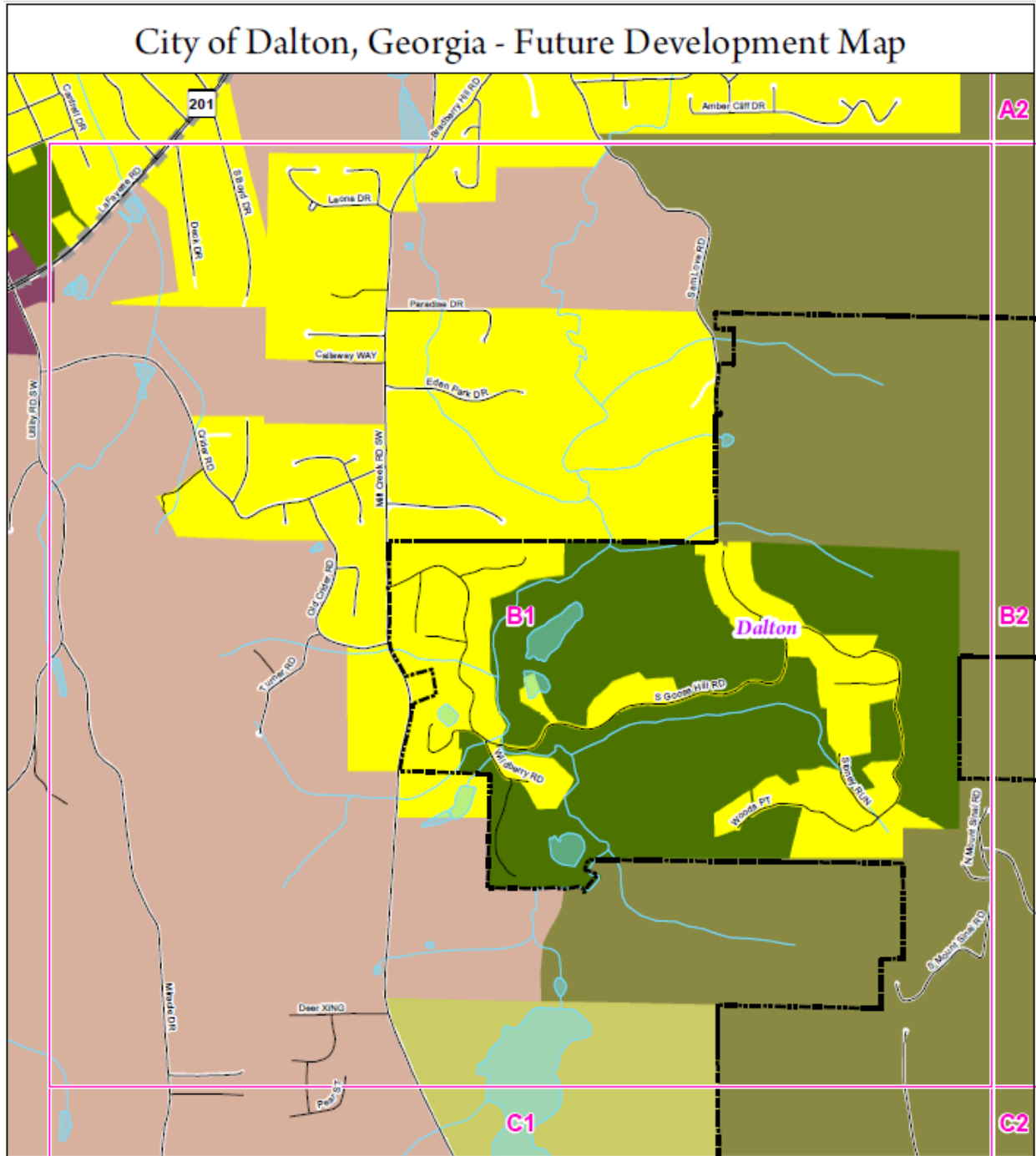
- Industrial
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Regional Activity Center
- Community Activity Center
- Preserve
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood

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- Future Land Use Corridors**
- Bypass Corridor
 - Rural Corridor
 - Transition Corridor
- Future Land Use Category**
- Community Activity Center
 - Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
 - Preserve
 - Ridge Conservation
 - Rural Residential
 - Suburban Neighborhood

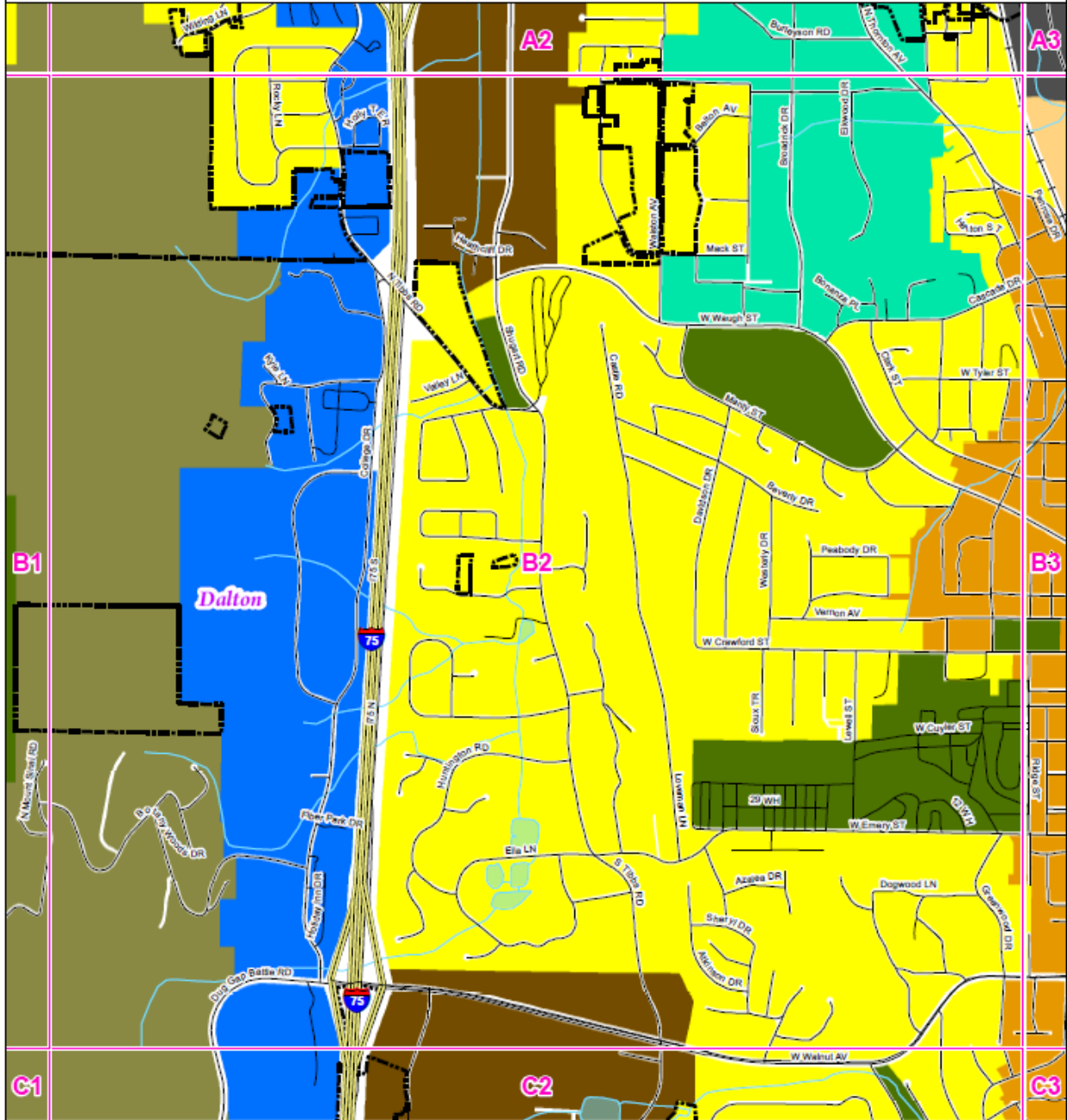
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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Industrial | Preserve | Town Neighborhood Revitalization |
| Medical District | Regional Activity Center | Ridge Conservation |
| Dalton State/College Drive | Town Neighborhood | Suburban Neighborhood |

1 inch = 0 miles



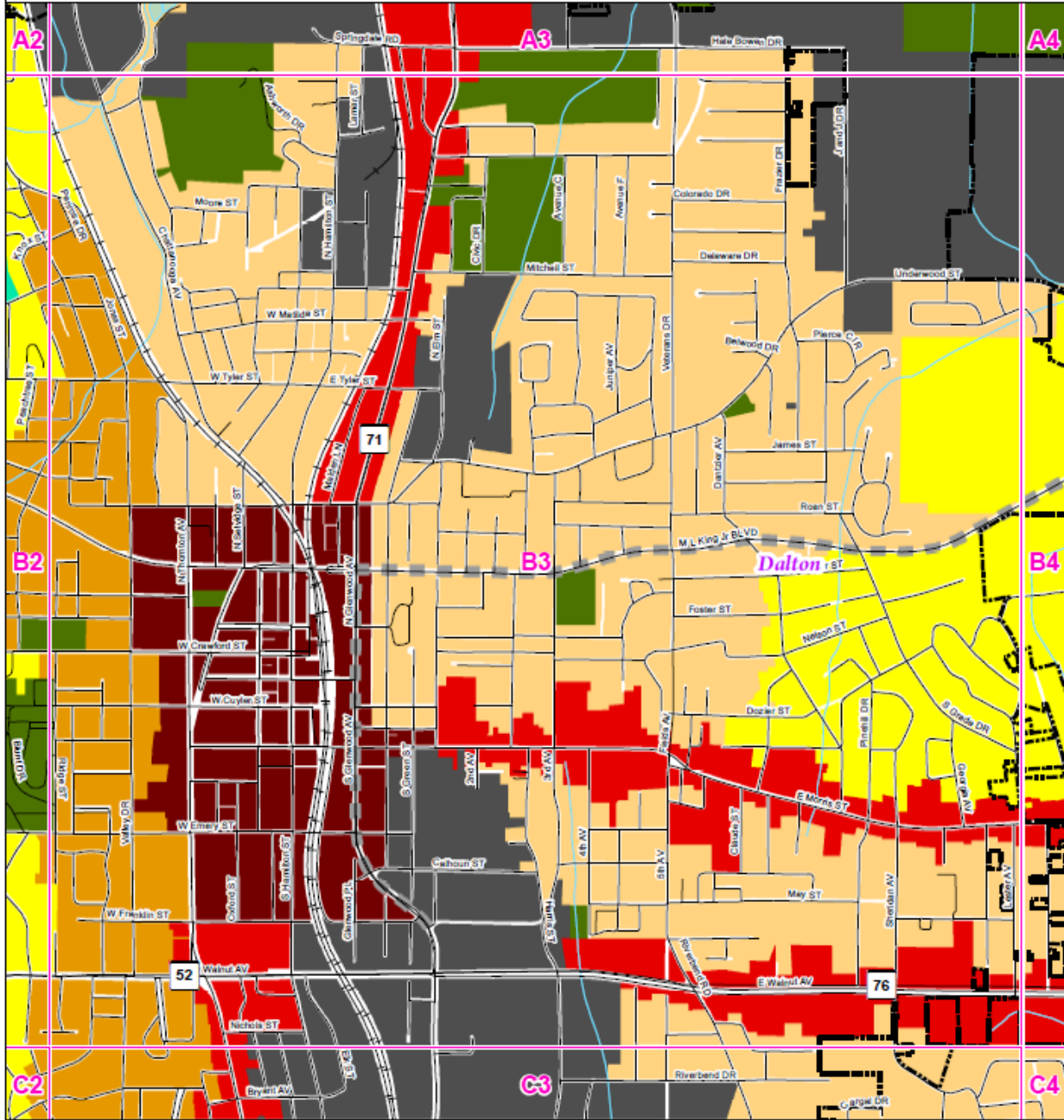
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Grid B2

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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Industrial
- Downtown/Town Center
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Medical District
- Preserve
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Commercial Corridor
- Town Neighborhood

1 inch = 0 miles

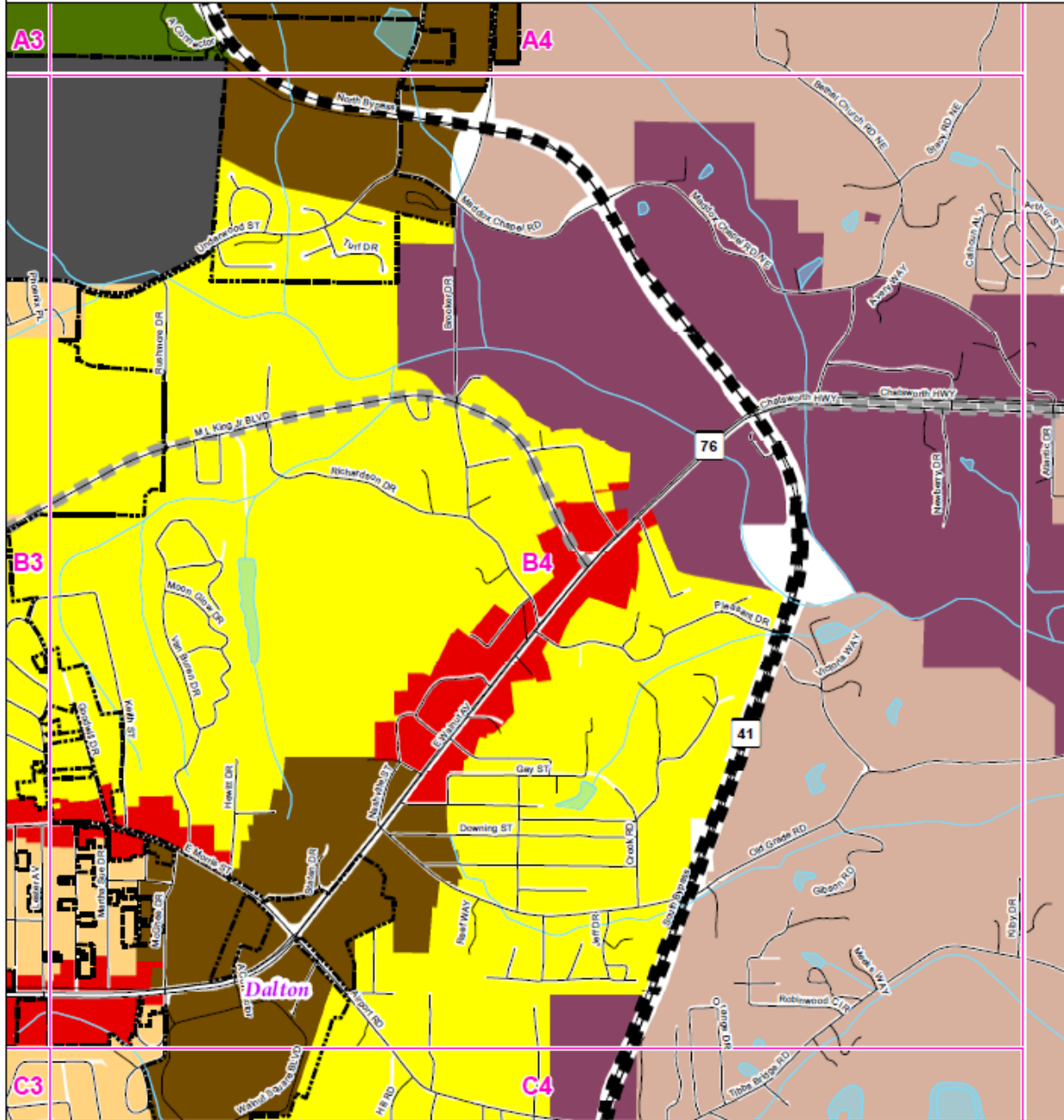


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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Industrial
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization
- Commercial Corridor
- Preserve
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Community Activity Center
- Regional Activity Center

1 inch = 0 miles

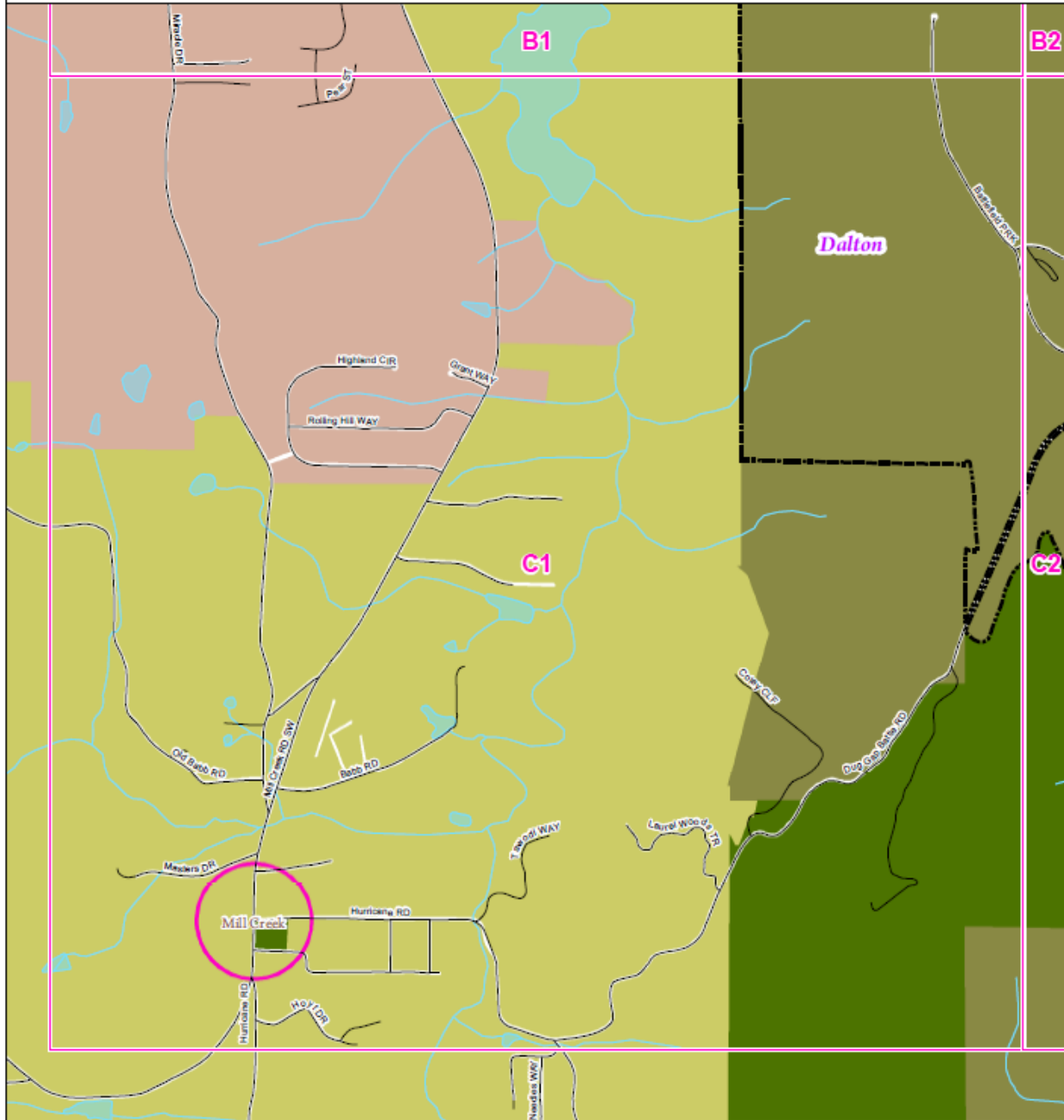


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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Preserve
- Ridge Conservation
- Rural Residential

1 inch = 0 miles

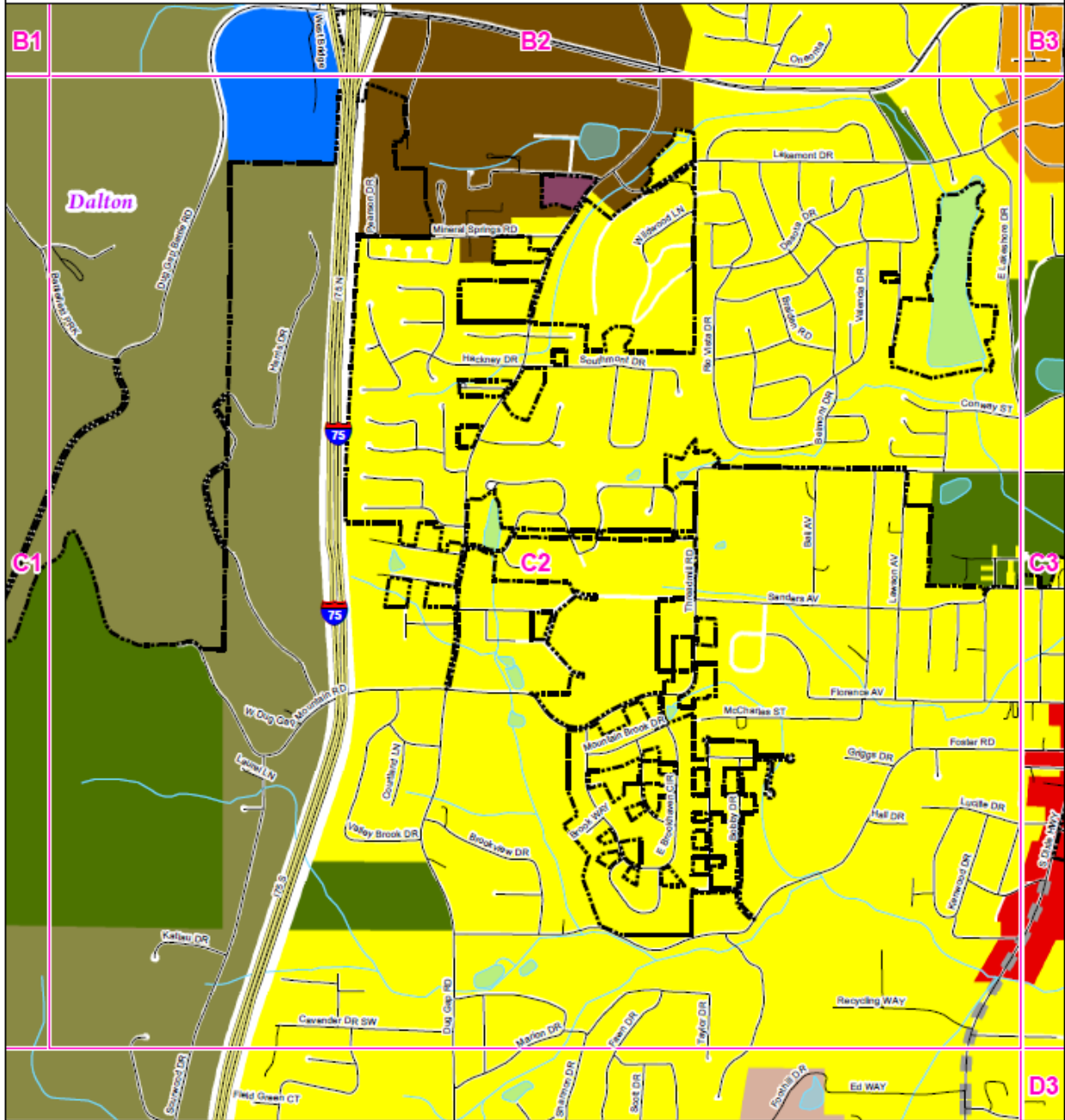


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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Commercial Corridor
- Community Activity Center
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Town Neighborhood
- Dalton State/College Drive
- Ridge Conservation Preserve
- Regional Activity Center
- Suburban Neighborhood

1 inch = 0 miles

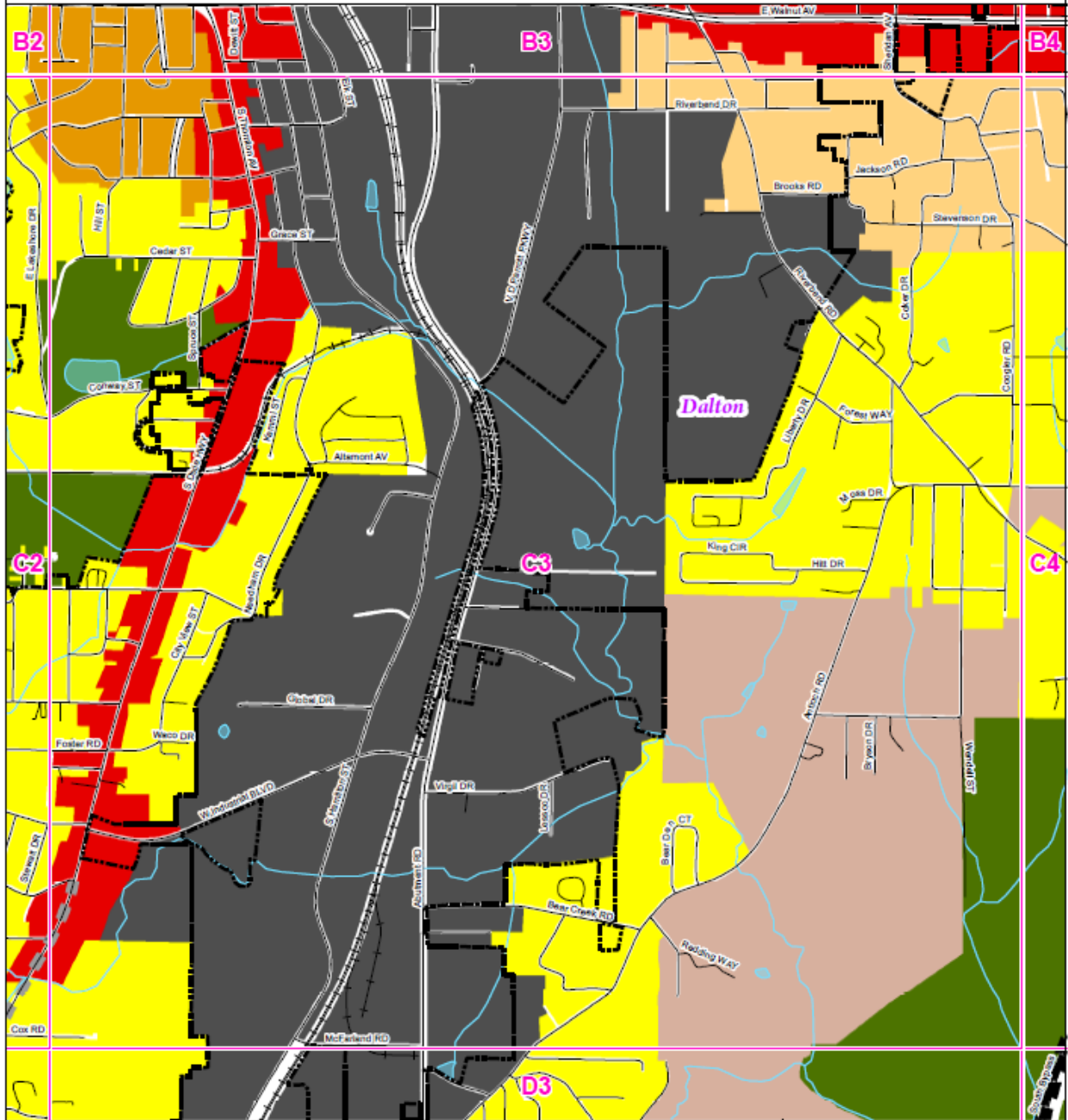


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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Industrial
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Town Neighborhood
- Commercial Corridor
- Preserve
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Town Neighborhood Revitalization

1 inch = 0 miles

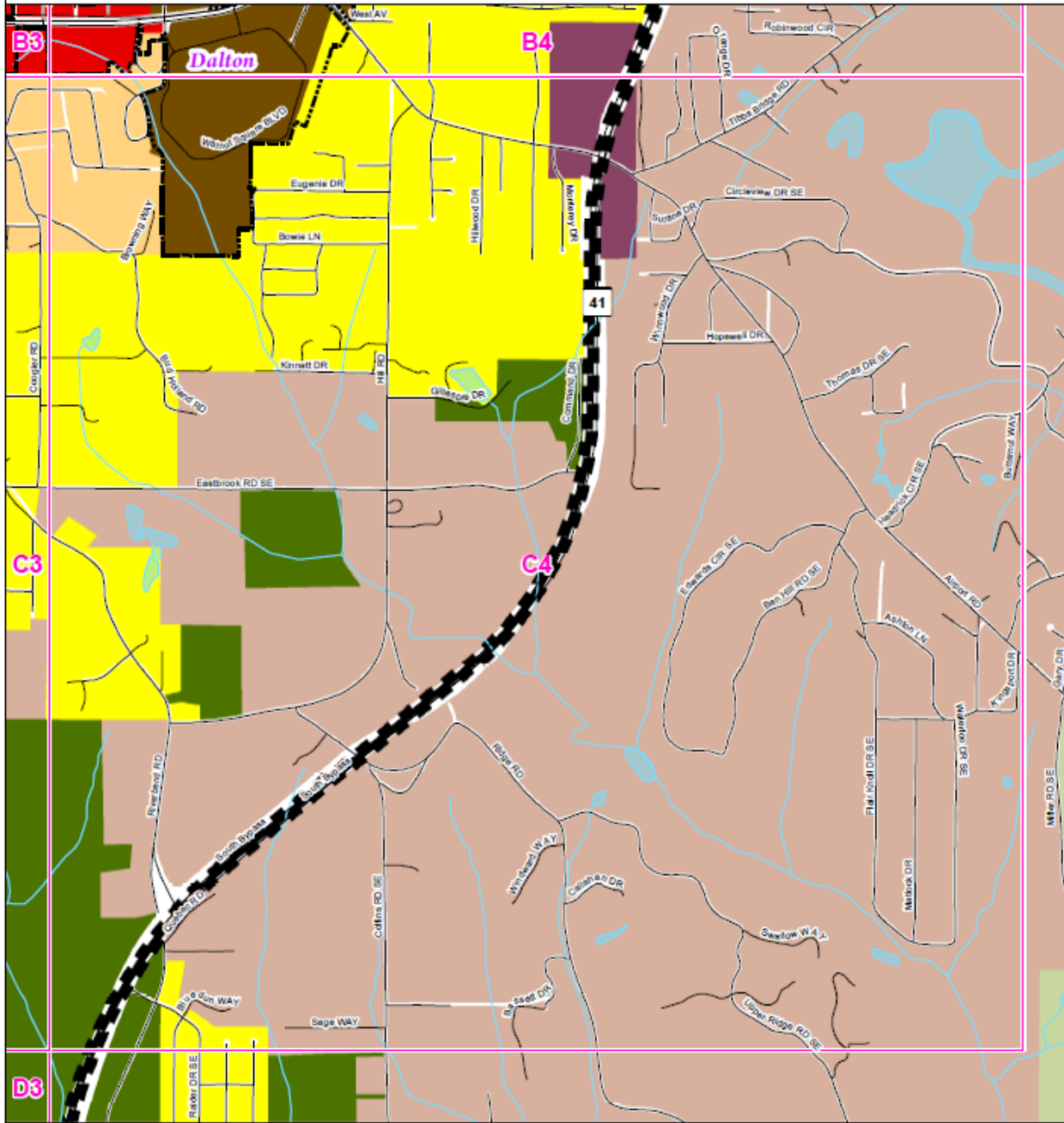


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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Commercial Corridor | Preserve | Rural/Agricultural Reserve |
| Community Activity Center | Regional Activity Center | Suburban Neighborhood |
| Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas | Town Neighborhood Revitalization | |

1 inch = 0 miles



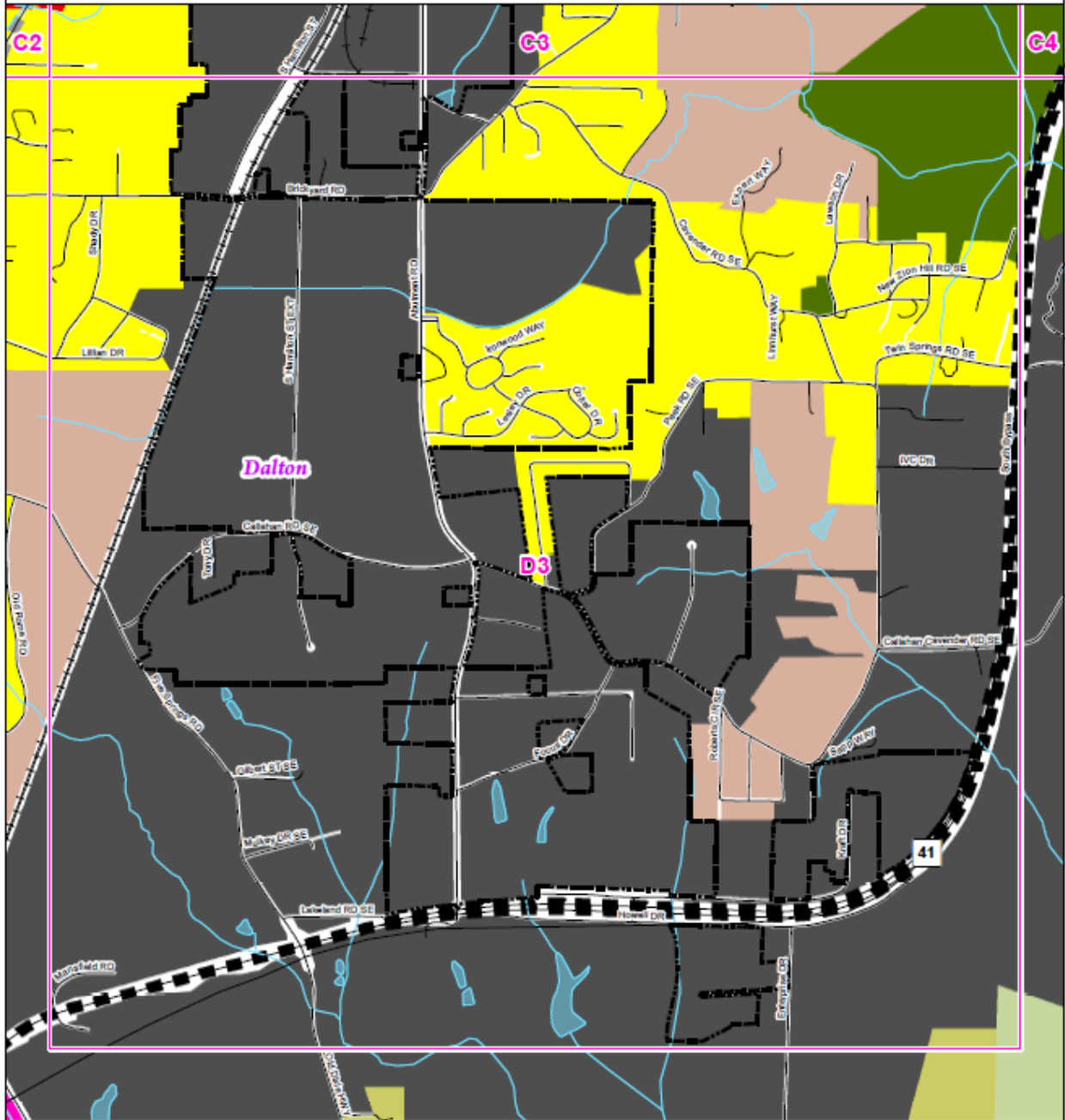
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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



Future Land Use Corridors

- Bypass Corridor
- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Future Land Use Category

- Industrial
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Rural Residential Suburban Neighborhood
- Interchange
- Preserve
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Commercial Corridor

1 inch = 0 miles

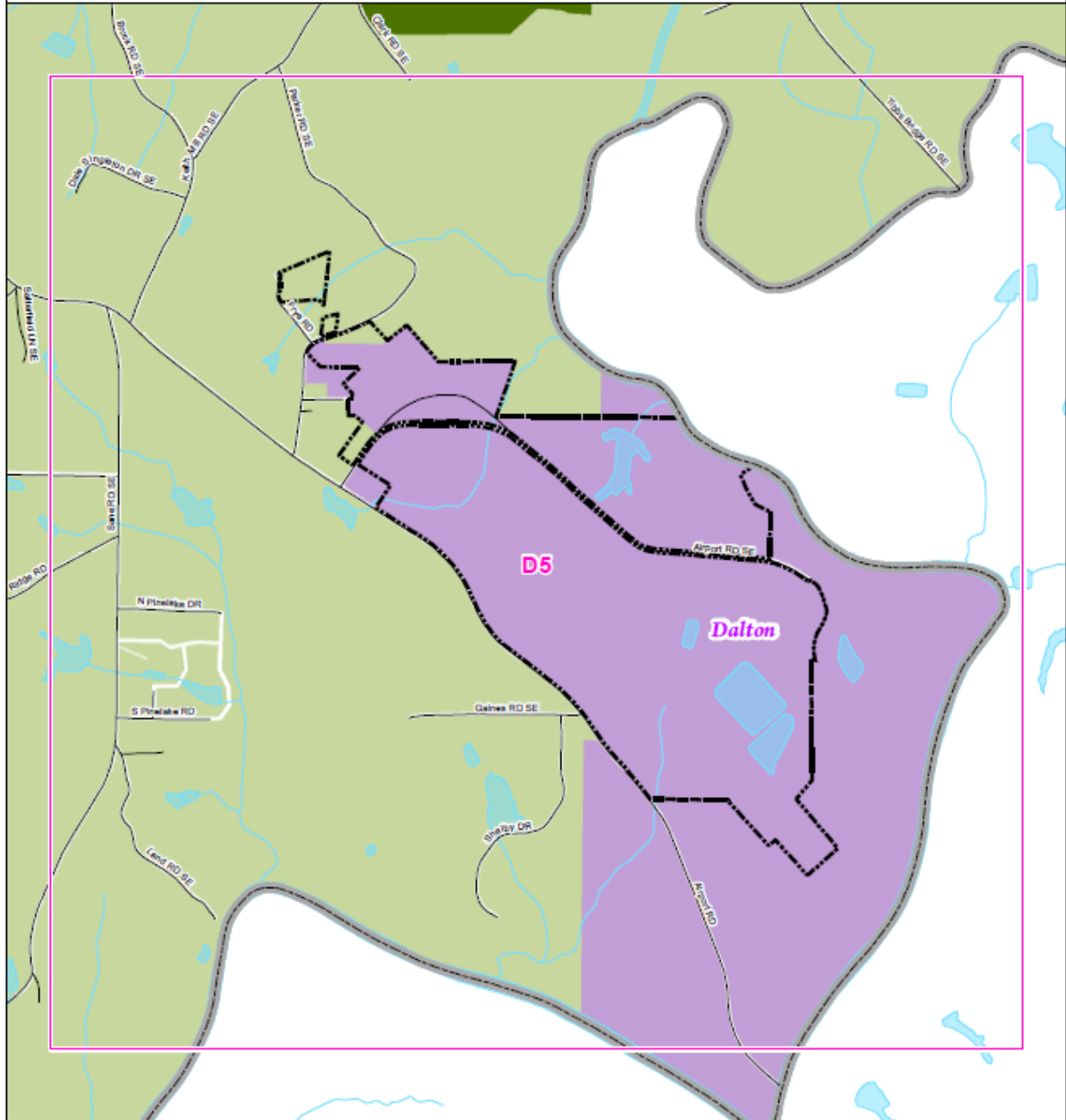


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City of Dalton, Georgia - Future Development Map



- Future Land Use Corridors**
- Bypass Corridor
 - Rural Corridor
 - Transition Corridor
- Future Land Use Category**
- Airport
 - Preserve
 - Rural/Agricultural Reserve

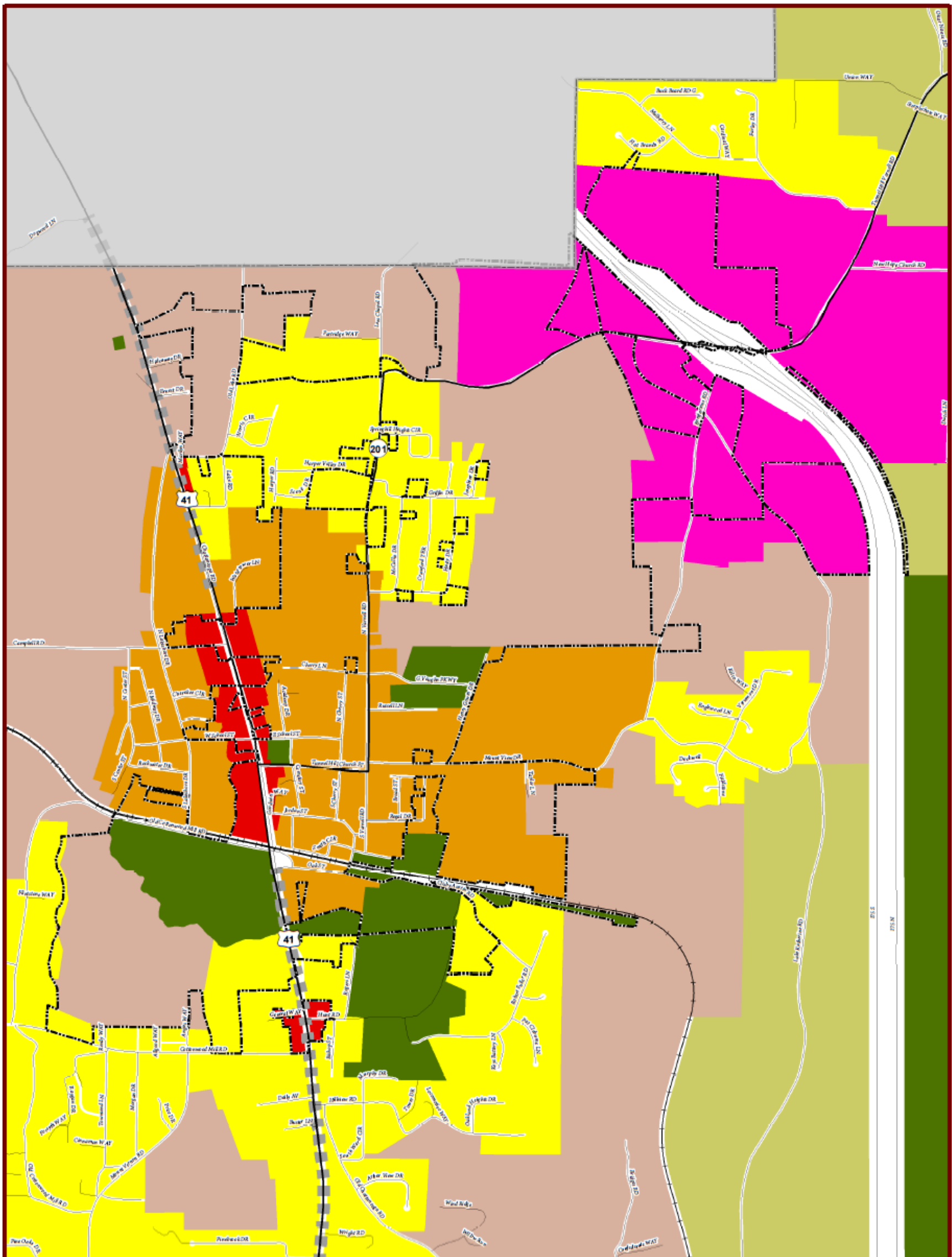
1 inch = 0 miles 

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City of Tunnel Hill Future Development Map



2023 Future Development Map - City of Tunnel Hill, Georgia

1 in = 1,292 feet



Future Development Character Areas

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

Future Development Corridors

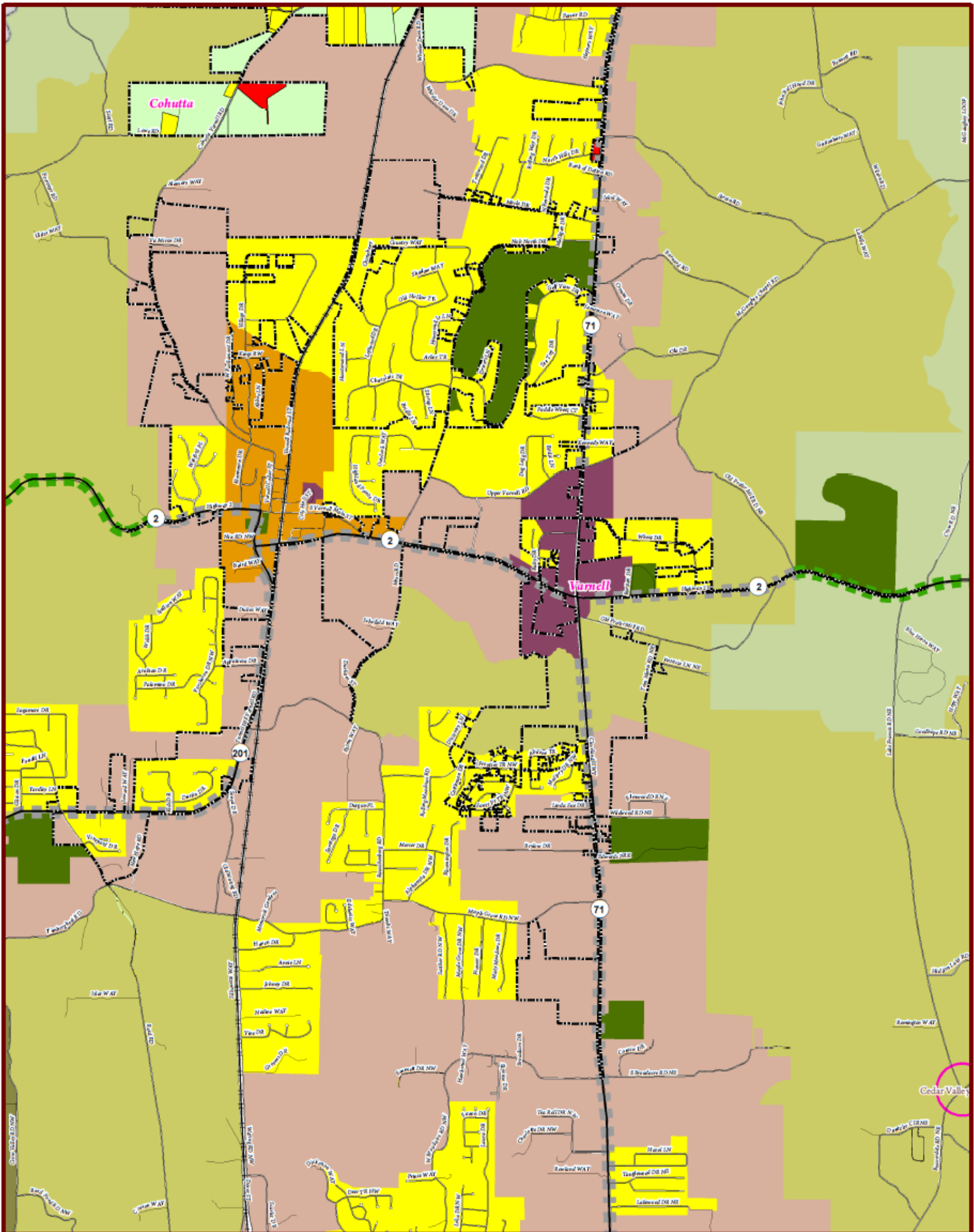
- Transition Corridor



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City of Varnell Future Development Map



2023 Future Land Use Map - City of Varnell, Georgia

Cohutta Future Land Use

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

Whitfield Co. Future Development Corridors

- Rural Corridor
- Transition Corridor

Whitfield Co. Future Development Character Areas

- Community Activity Center
- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Preserve
- Town Neighborhood
- Ridge Conservation
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood

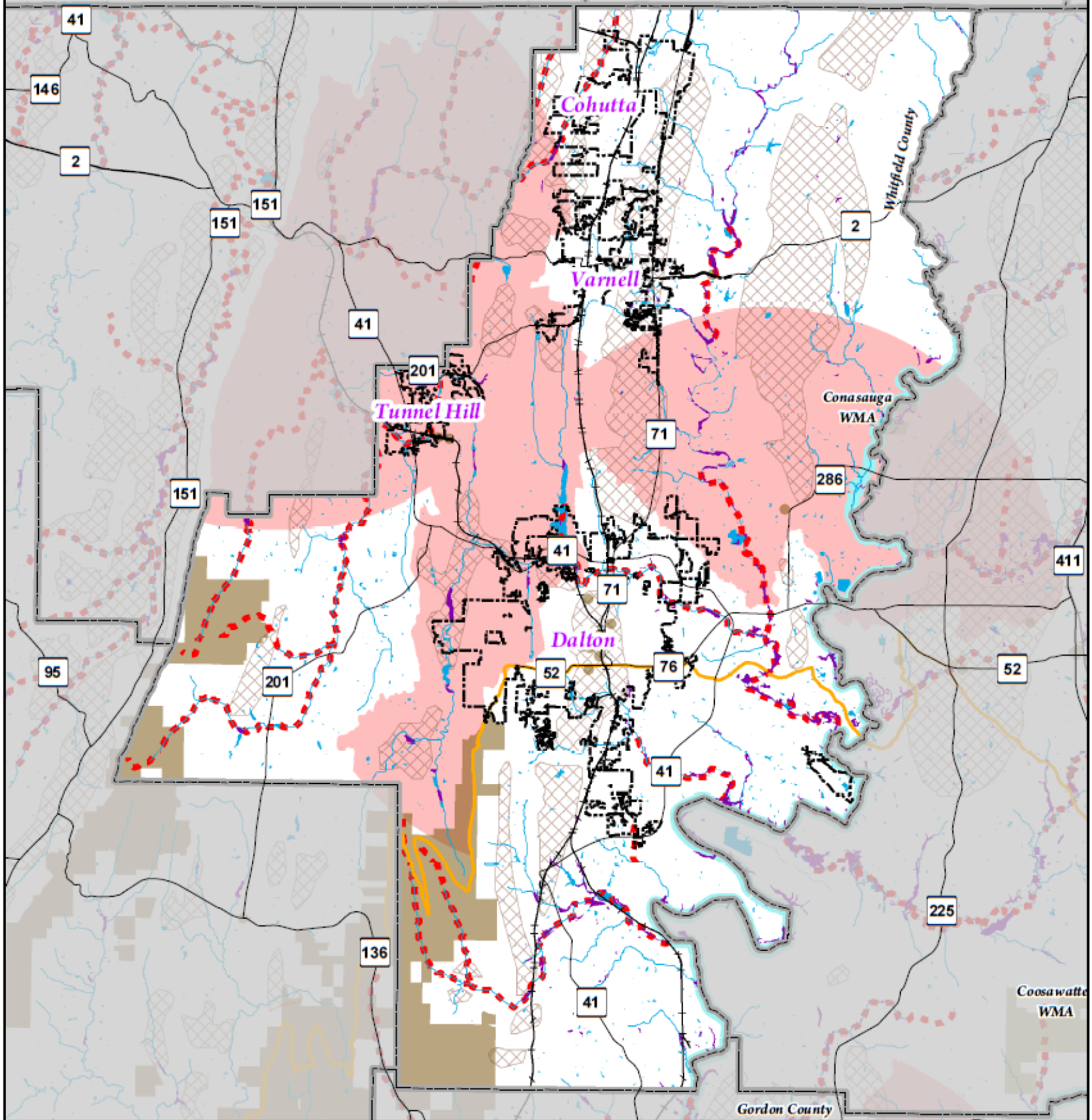
1 in = 2,575 feet



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Whitfield County, Georgia - Environmentally Sensitive Areas + Impaired Streams



- ■ ■ ■ Impaired Streams
- Perennial Streams
- Pinhoti Trail
- Protected Rivers
- National Register of Historic Places
- Georgia DNR Wildlife Management Areas
- Groundwater Recharge Area
- Lakes & Ponds
- NWI Wetlands
- State Parks / State Historic Sites
- US Forest Service
- Water Supply Watersheds

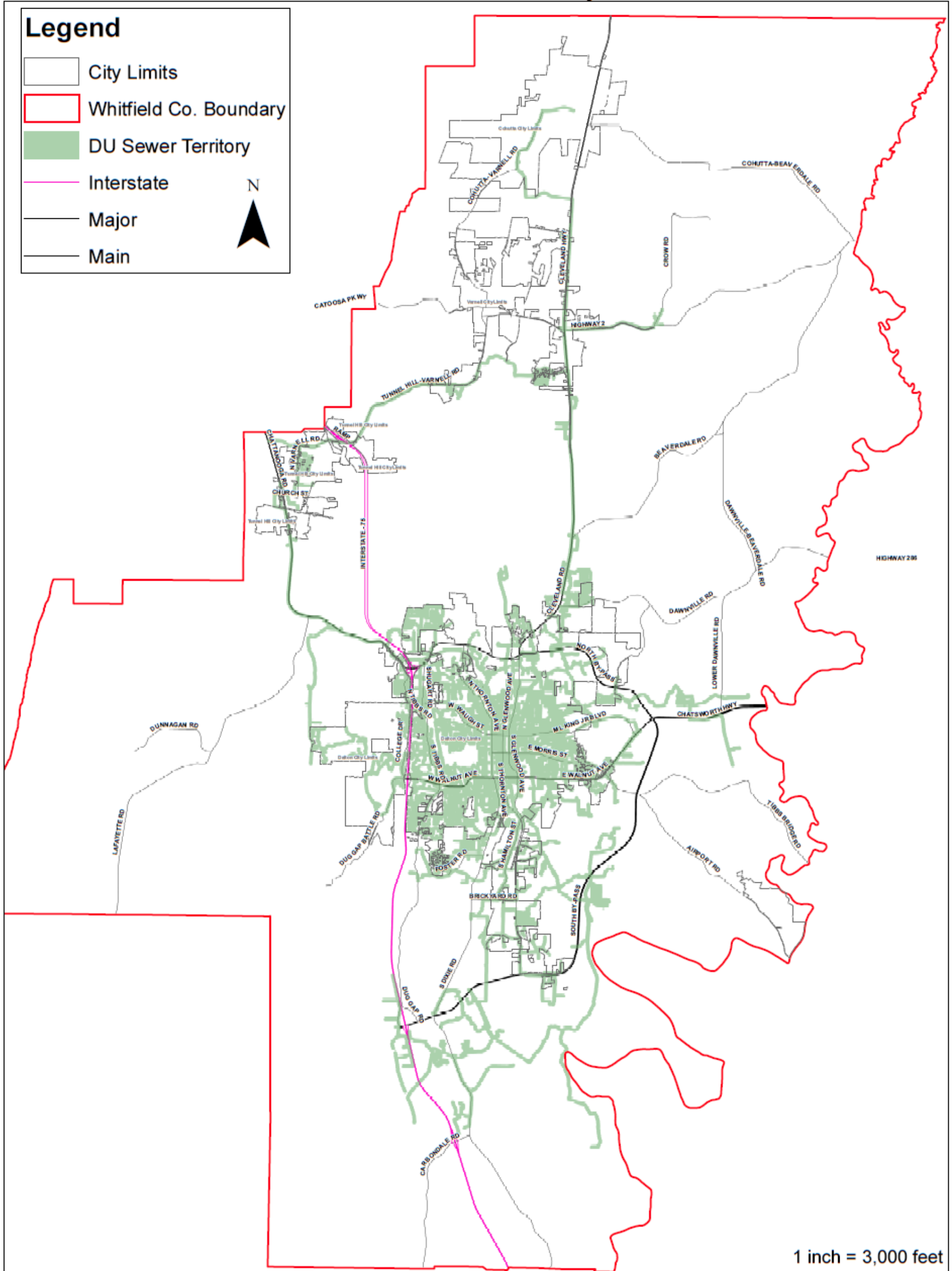


1 inch = 3 miles

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DU Sewer Territory



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.



Commercial business in Cohutta along Cleveland Highway (SR 71)

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 town is now comprised mostly of the two land use categories of residential and agriculture/forestry, with residential-single family comprising approximately one-third of the town's existing land use and Agricultural/Forestry category comprising over half of Cohutta's existing land use. 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 were the only means of treating sewage in town for many years, most lots are sized at a half-acre or more. Since the extension of public sewerage to the Town of Cohutta in 2018, future residential development may have an opportunity for smaller lot sizes where prudent sewer extensions may be achieved. There are approximately 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.

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 and lots still remain, but a significant revitalization of the town center can be seen as compared to the previous 2018 Joint Comprehensive Plan.

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.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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.



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.

Cohutta Future Land Use categories by area		
	Sq Ft	Acres
Agriculture/Forestry	87066877	1998.78
Commercial	2637191	60.54156
Industrial	3626243	83.24709
Park/Recreation/Conservation	518071.6	11.89329
Public/ <u>Institutional</u>	5220954	119.8566
Residential Single Family	46231132	1061.321
Residential Multi Family	1051633	24.14217
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	400001.3	9.182767

Future Land Use

When constructing this future land use map, staff consulted the future land use map from the last comprehensive plan (2018) in which Cohutta participated. The future land use map, from the 2018 Joint Comprehensive Plan, is not drastically different from the 2023 future land use map 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 limited change for Cohutta in the next decade.

The acreages in each land use category are shown on page 85. 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. There has been, however, a slight decrease in agricultural land in Cohutta over the past 20-years due to individual tracts of land being developed for single-family residential housing.

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 deemed a suitable location for multifamily housing, especially now that public sewerage has been 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 and is predominantly focused on the redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings within the town center.

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. A revitalization of Cohutta's town center began in 2019 due to the expansion of public sewerage that was enabled by Appalachian Regional Development funding in order to serve the nearby poultry hatchery. Since the public sewerage expansion, Cohutta's largely vacant and blighted town center has become a target of investment by several local entrepreneurs. Despite the challenges resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic, Cohutta's town center has continued to revitalize and thrive. While the underlying commercial land use classifications may not change in the town center, the economic and aesthetic of the town center are expected to see continued investment and redevelopment throughout this planning period.

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 as well as available land suitable for development. Growth to the northwest could also add area.

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.



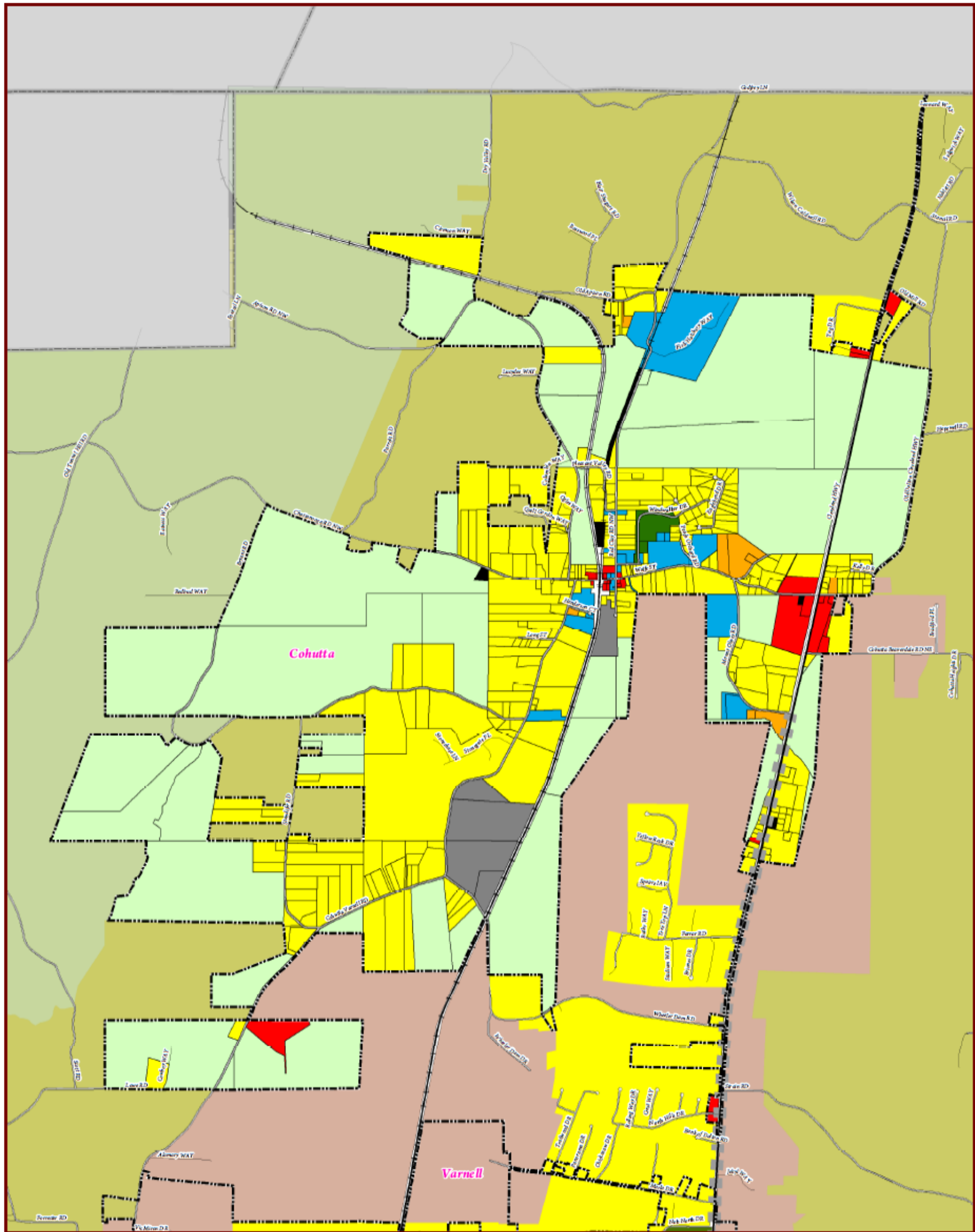
Shugart Park at Cohutta Elementary School

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.



Agricultural field and forest on Wolfe Street

TOWN OF COHUTTA FUTURE LAND USE MAP



2023 Future Land Use Map - Town of Cohutta, Georgia

Cohutta Future Land Use

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

Whitfield Co. Future Development Character Areas

- Emerging Suburban and Exurban Areas
- Preserve
- Rural/Agricultural Reserve
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Neighborhood

Whitfield Co. Future Development Corridors

- Transition Corridor

1 in = 1,975 feet



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RURAL BROADBAND

Introduction

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 two 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 apply to become a Broadband Ready Community.



Many students are tasked with homework requiring internet access. For those students living in rural areas internet access is often limited or altogether unavailable



In the age of wireless connectivity, invisible to the naked eye, costly physical infrastructure is required to provide reliable, high-speed broadband. This infrastructure primarily consists of buried fiber optic cable as shown above



Investment in Unserved Areas

Broadband infrastructure investment decisions are business-case based. They must provide a sustainable and positive ROI for providers to expand into unserved areas. The GBDI planning team partnered with local governments and provider partners on a plan to address unserved areas. Recommended strategies or policies must either lower broadband investment costs or provide financial assistance to broadband in unserved areas so that they can be served and become economically self-sustaining.

Access to Funding

The capital cost to provide broadband services to all unserved areas in Georgia is estimated at over one billion dollars. The deployment of broadband to unserved areas statewide will require significant access to funding. While a statewide grant program will make an impact to some unserved areas, widescale change could require a broad spectrum of funding incentives and mechanisms. By being designated as a broadband ready community, Whitfield County would have a competitive advantage when seeking broadband infrastructure expansion funding.



Telecommunications tech working on infrastructure in rural Northwest GA. Photo courtesy of Ellijay Telephone Co.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (P3) could play a critical role in bringing sufficient broadband to unserved areas. The legislation currently includes the use of P3 models on GDOT Interstate rights-of-way along Georgia interstates. These partnerships could take a variety of forms and could include coapplying for funding, working with providers to create carrier neutral locations and facilities, providing greater access to rights-of-way, providing incentives to providers to lower costs, or creating efficiencies to accelerate broadband deployment. There are examples in other states where governments and providers have partnered to increase broadband availability, and they will also be evaluated.

Broadband Model Ordinance

To assist local governments with the process of developing a useful local ordinance to encourage broadband investment and expansion, GBDI worked in collaboration with local governments and providers to develop a model ordinance. The purpose of the model ordinance is to demonstrate that the local

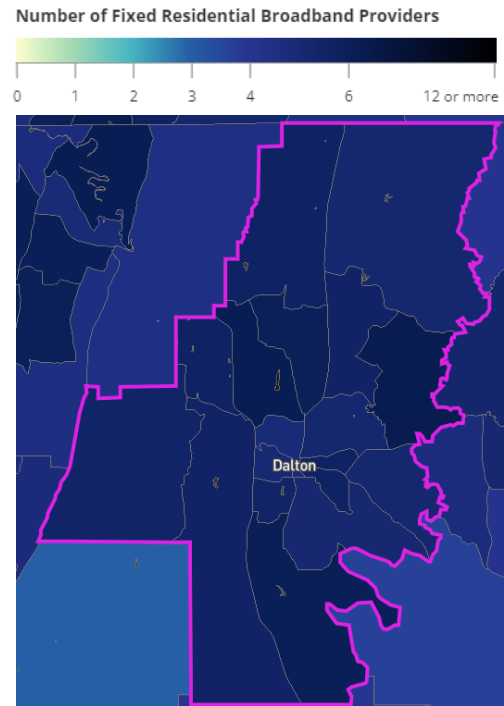
government has taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband deployment. The model ordinance has already been adopted by several communities in Georgia. Whitfield County and the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell plan to adopt the Broadband Model Ordinance as an action step to ensure that broadband deployment is not hindered in the community.

Federal Broadband Programs

The USDA Community Connect Program exists to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible applicants that will provide, on a “community-oriented connectivity” basis, broadband service that fosters economic growth and delivers enhanced educational, health care, and public safety benefits. The application window is currently open.

The USDA ReConnect Program is designed to bring internet service to parts of rural America that have been traditionally hard to reach by providing grants, loans, or grant/loan combinations to entities seeking to deploy broadband services in unserved or severely underserved regions. Within the USDA ReConnect funding application, projects can be awarded as many as 20 State Activity Points. The Georgia Broadband Office is offering technical assistance to USDA applicants by providing the Georgia Broadband Development Initiative Plan and a letter of support from the Governor.

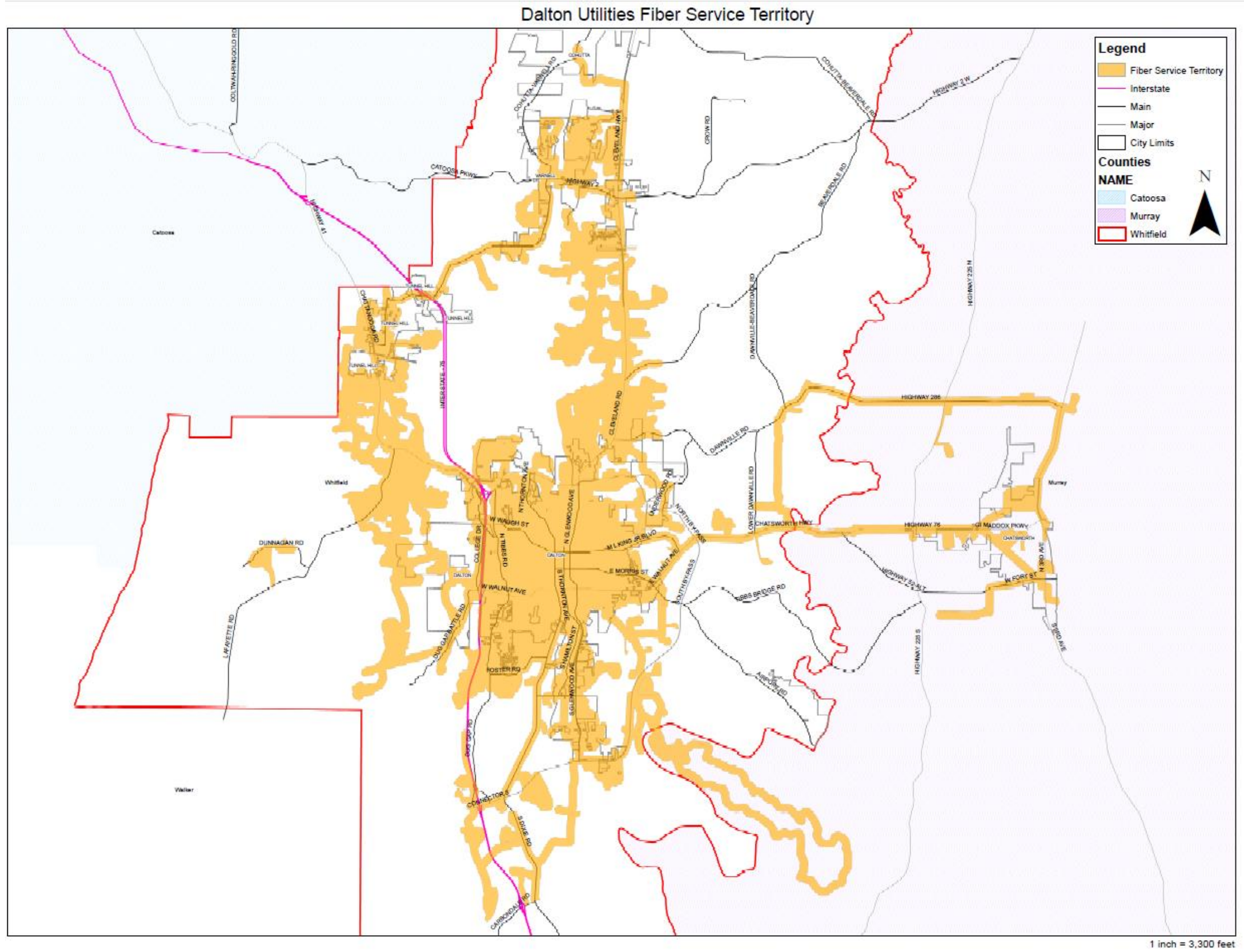
Both the USDA Community Connect and ReConnect programs base the applicant’s eligibility on several factors including the Federal Communication Commission’s (FCC) 477 Broadband Map.



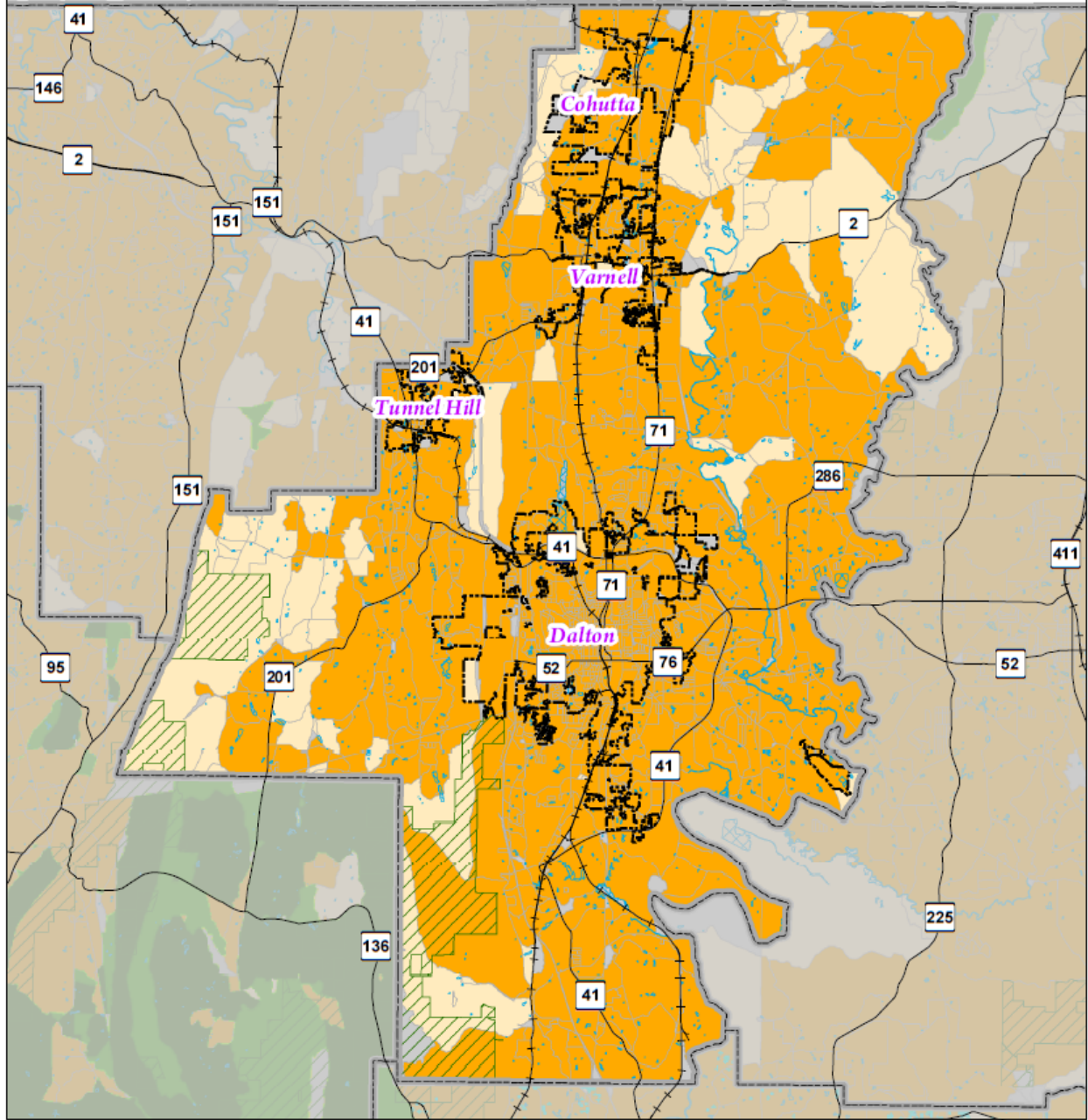
FCC Form 477 Fixed Broadband Deployment Data








Local Broadband Providers

Whitfield County’s primary utility provider, unlike many 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. Dalton Utilities began the practice of burying conduit in concert with sewer expansions several years ago, which enables expeditious deployment of fiberoptic cable when funding is available for future expansion. The following page illustrates the geographic service area related to Optilink’s fiber network, but the Dalton Utilities map does not account for other broadband service providers in Whitfield County.



Whitfield County, Georgia - Broadband Availability Map



	Lakes & Ponds		
	State Park, US Forest Service and WMAs		
GBDI Census Block Status*		Broadband Grant Programs	
	No Locations		FCC RDOF (Terrestrial)
	Served		ARPA Grant Projects
	Unserved		

* Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI) data as of June 2023.



1 inch = 3 miles

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HOUSING



Introduction

While notable progress has been made since the 2018 Joint Comprehensive Plan, housing continues to be a top priority in Whitfield County. With its ever-evolving local economy, impressive community amenities and natural resources, educational opportunities, and robust public infrastructure, Whitfield County is attractive to many potential residents. In order to meet the housing needs throughout Whitfield County, several public-private partnerships have emerged to collaborate with local governments with the goal of developing a strategic plan for future housing development. The Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority (JDA), Believe Greater Dalton initiative (Believe), and Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC) have continued to work in concert since the previous Joint Comprehensive Plan to meet the needs identified in the 2018 Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy. While numerous developments have occurred over the past five-year period, these groups continue to work proactively. Believe is currently in the final stages of their five-year update to the Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy. An executive summary of the housing strategy can be found on the following pages including recent data related to demographics, housing supply, as well as strategies and recommendations on how to encourage the specific types of housing development that will correct the current imbalance of supply and demand.



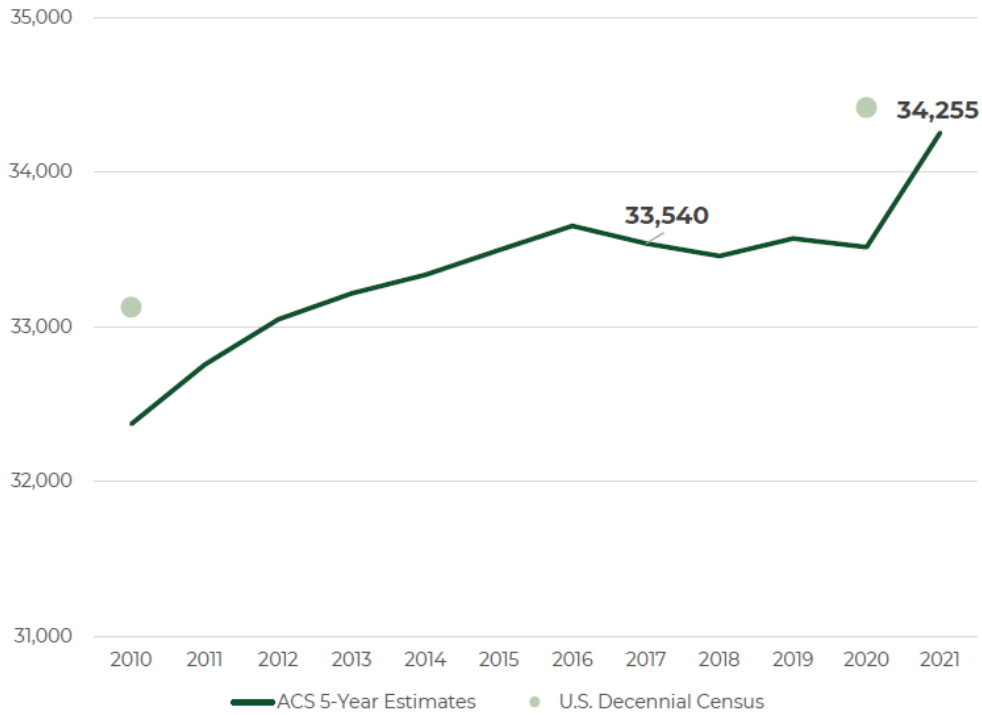
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit project located along Crow Valley Road in Whitfield County

Housing was noted as the top weakness, and opportunity, while the lack of housing was the number one threat during the Stakeholder's SWOT analysis. In the community vision survey respondents were asked to identify the what they believe to be the most significant issue facing Whitfield County, and the lack of available housing received the highest response rate out of twenty options. See appendix A for a detailed breakdown of the Community Vision Survey.

This narrative will focus on data and overall recommendations while each community's Community Work Program will address specific housing-related projects. Housing is also addressed in the Land Use section of this plan by illustrating the areas appropriate for future housing development and redevelopment.

Demographic Analysis

Population Growth Since 2010



Data Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2010, 2020, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017, 2021

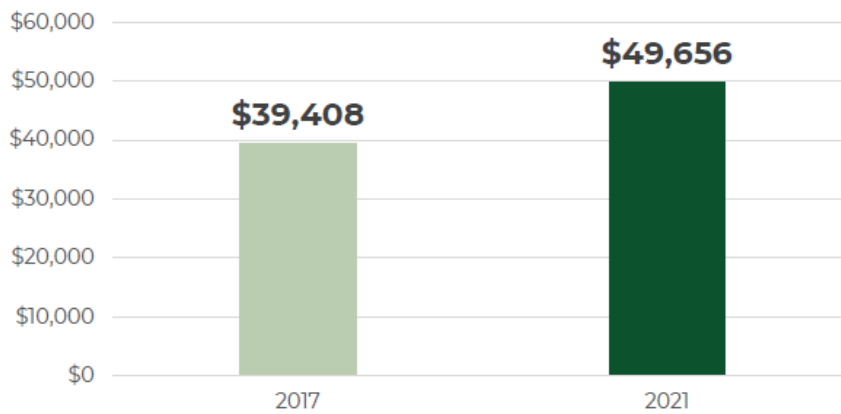
Demographic Analysis

Household Income

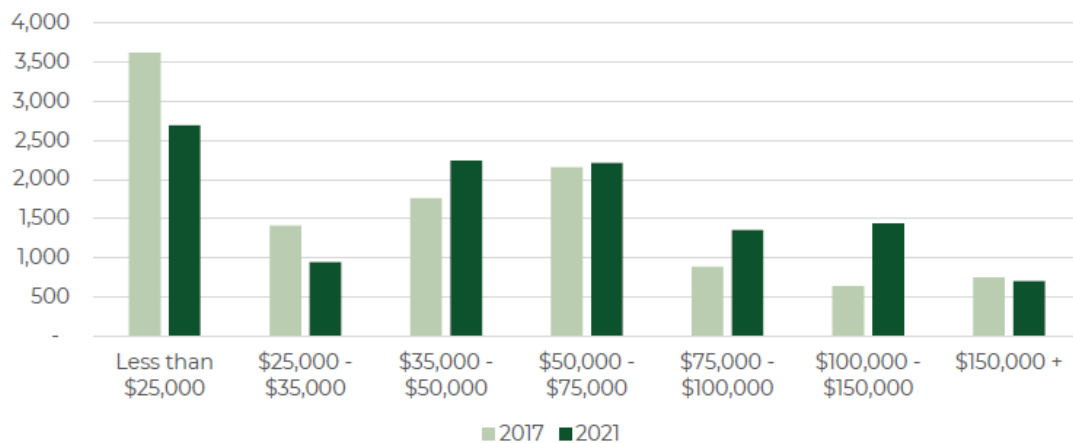
From 2017 to 2021, Dalton's median household income rose substantially. Dalton's median household income grew by over \$10,000 over a 5-year period.

The rise in incomes is further evidenced by household income distributions, where the largest gains were in households earning between \$100k and \$150k. The largest declines are in households with the lowest incomes.

Median Household Income, 2017 vs. 2021



Household Income Distribution, 2017 v. 2021



Data Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017, 2021

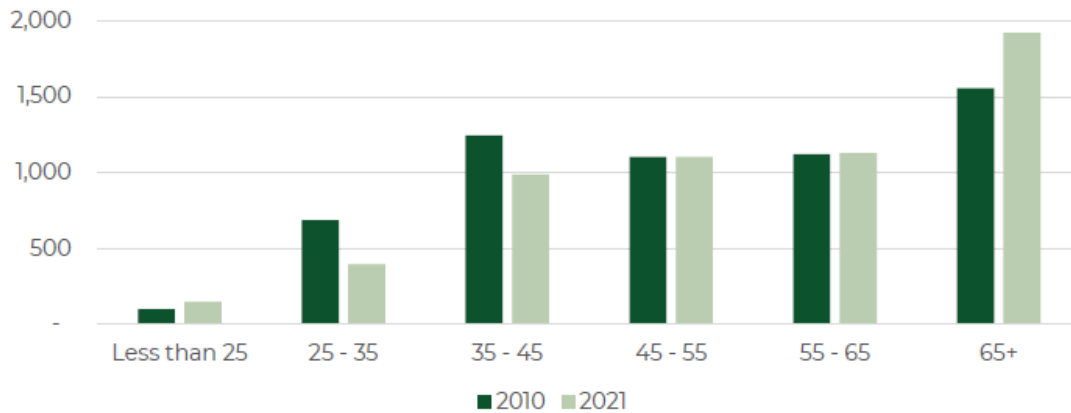
Demographic Analysis

Tenure by Age

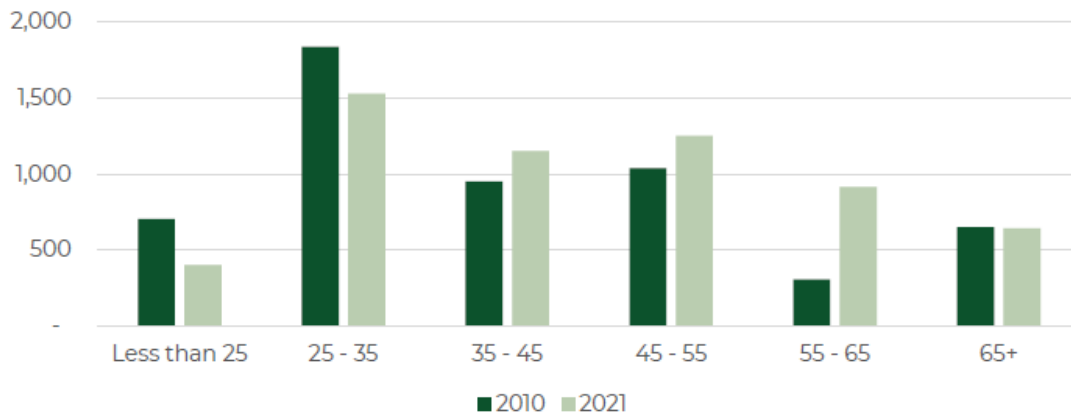
The only age cohort to experience a net increase in homeownership since 2010 was households older than 65. In all other age groups, homeownership was either stagnant or in decline.

Among renter households, there was an increase in households between the ages of 35 and 65. The largest increase in rentership was among households between 55 and 65. During this period, rentership decreased among households younger than 35.

Owners by Age, 2010 - 2021



Renters by Age, 2010 - 2021



Data Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2021

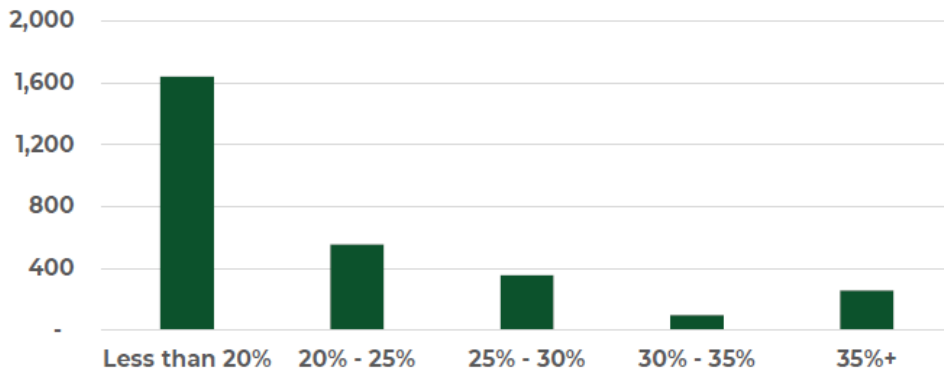
Demographic Analysis

Cost-Burdened Homeowners

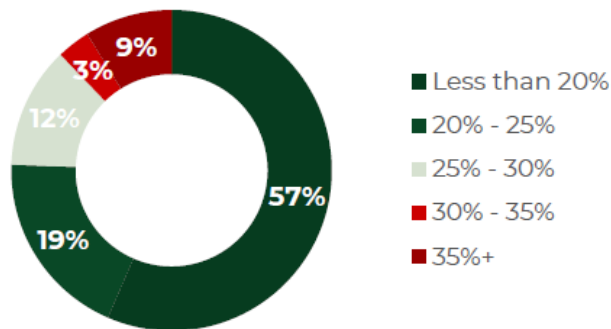
A household is cost-burdened if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing and housing-related expenses and severely cost-burdened if they spend more than 50% of their household income on housing and housing-related expenses. Cost-burden and severe-cost burden contribute to housing instability and ensure that households have less income to spend on other necessities like food, transportation, and medical expenses.

A majority of homeownership households (with a mortgage) in Dalton are well below the cost-burden threshold. More than half of homeownership households in Dalton spend less than 20% of their monthly household income on housing-related expenses.

Owner's Housing Costs as a % of Household Income, 2021



Owner's Housing Costs as a % of Household Income, 2021



Data Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017, 2021

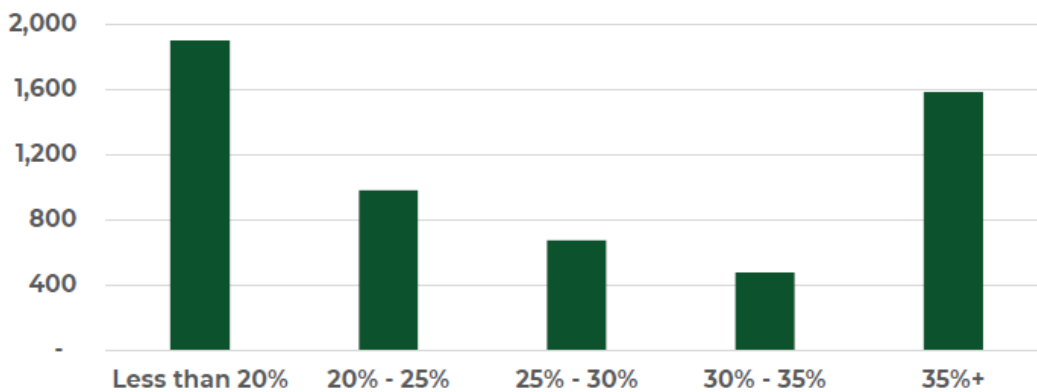
Demographic Analysis

Cost-Burdened Renters

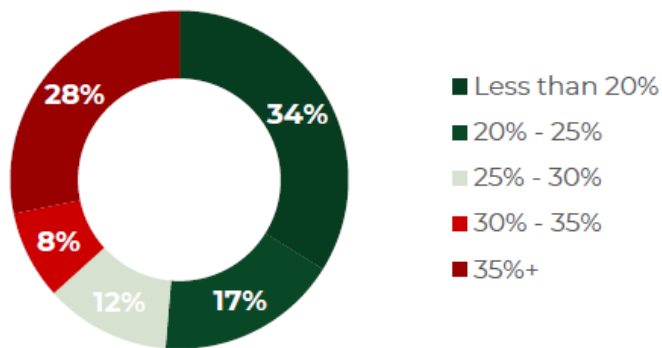
Cost-burden has many negative impacts on households and affects renters and low- and moderate-income households more severely. Cost-burdened households are more likely to experience housing instability and have higher risks for eviction, homelessness, food insecurity, truancy for school-aged children, and a variety of negative physical and mental health impacts.

More than one out of every three renter households in Dalton are cost-burdened.

Renter's Housing Costs as a % of Household Income, 2021



Renter's Housing Costs as a % of Household Income, 2021



Data Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017, 2021

Demographic Analysis

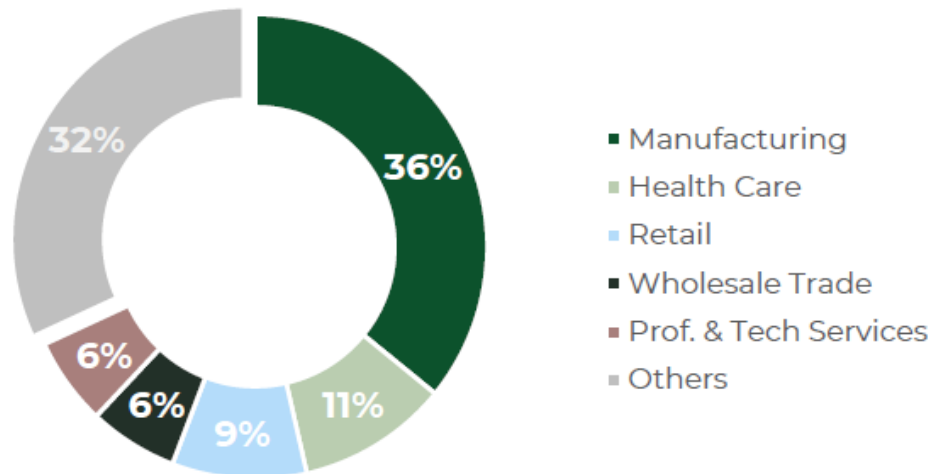
Employment, Wages, & Housing Cost

The top 5 industries by employee count in Whitfield County represent more than two-thirds of all jobs in the county.

The table below illustrates those top 5 industries, the average wage, how the average wage has changed over the last 5 years, and what the average worker could spend on housing using 30% of their income.

Industry Sector	Avg. Wages	Rent Budget	For-Sale Budget
Manufacturing	\$48,800	\$1,220	\$195,000
Health Care	\$60,600	\$1,510	\$242,000
Retail	\$33,600	\$840	\$134,000
Wholesale Trade	\$56,400	\$1,410	\$225,000
Professional & Tech	\$73,000	\$1,820	\$292,000

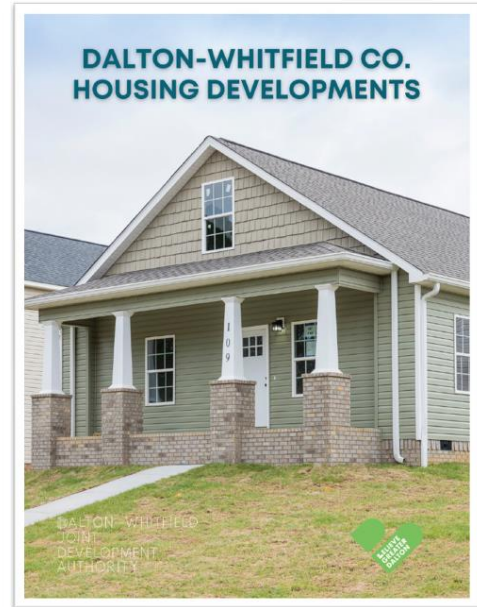
Top 5 Countywide Industries by Employee Count



Housing Supply Analysis

Recent Development Analysis

- We analyzed the recent developments using the work from the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority that compiled new housing permits from 2018 to 2021.
- Several trends emerged based on:
 - Location
 - Total permitting numbers
 - Housing Types
 - For Sale vs. Rental
 - Price Points

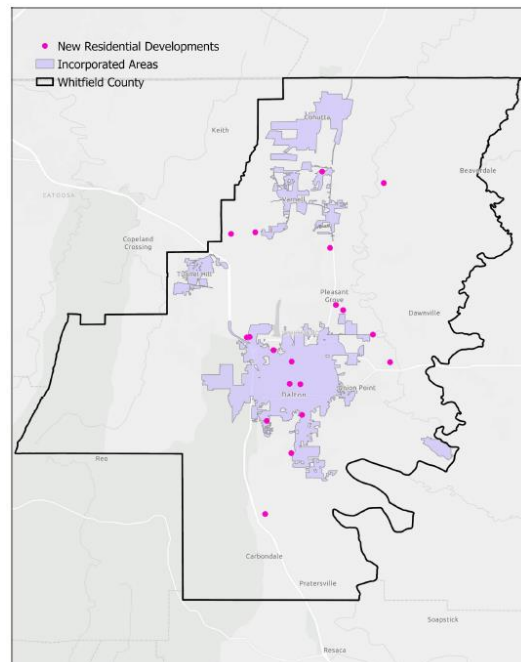


Data Source: Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, Believe Greater Dalton, Whitfield County Chamber of Commerce

Residential Pipeline

- There are nearly 1,300 residential units that have been permitted in Greater Dalton since 2018.
- Most of the development gravitates around the City of Dalton – either around the periphery or dispersed within the city’s boundary.
- 21% of the permitted units are located within the incorporated limits of Dalton, the remaining 79% of the units are located in the outlying areas of Whitfield County.
- Many of these residential developments are planned in areas just barely beyond the incorporated limits of the City of Dalton.

Data Source: Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, Believe Greater Dalton, Whitfield County Chamber of Commerce

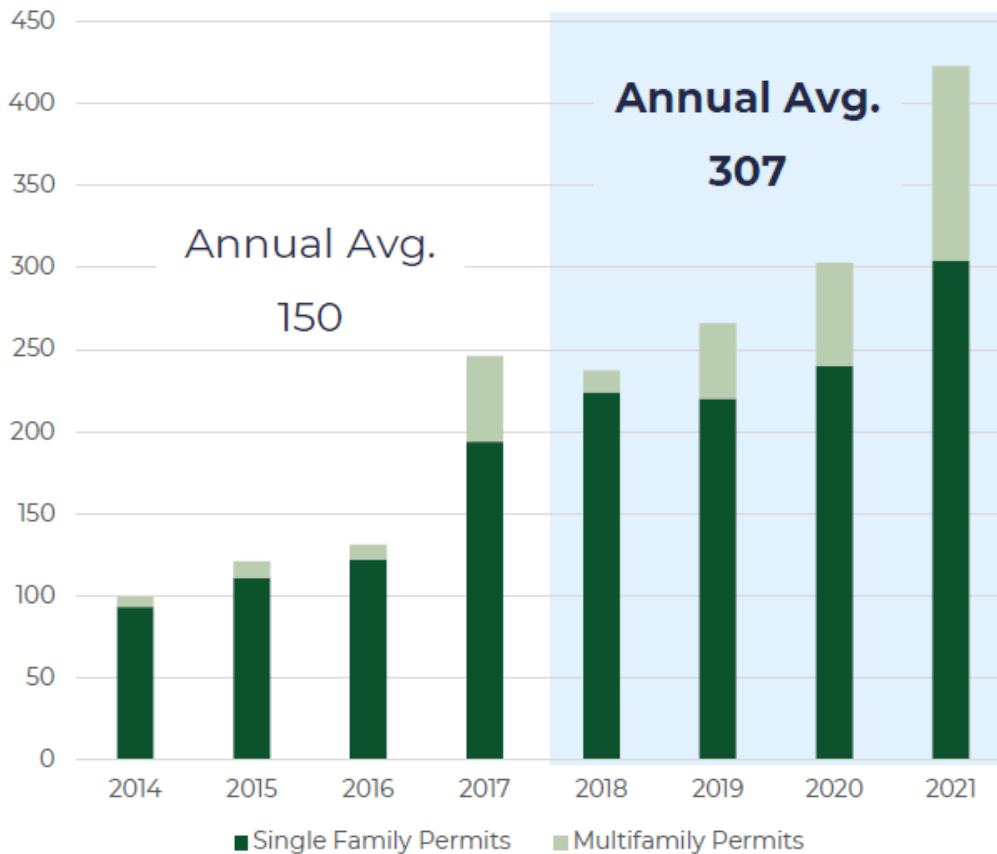


Housing Supply Analysis

Permitting

- Total permitting numbers post-2018 have doubled the permitting numbers of the years prior.
- Greater Dalton’s permitting has been the most active and robust since the Great Recession.
- The growth in permits is due to a significant increase in both single-family and multifamily developments.

Residential Permits by Type, 2014-2021



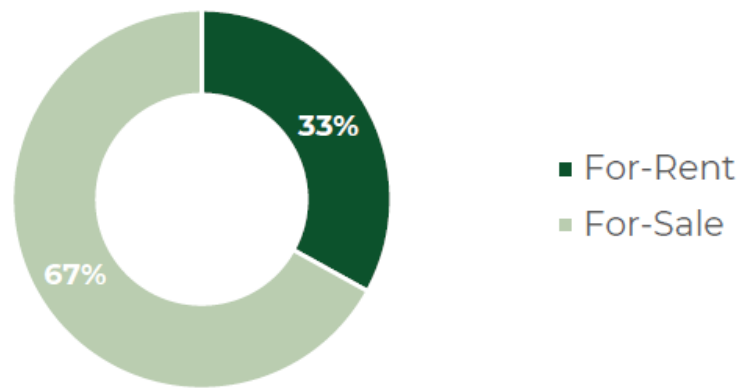
Data Source: Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, Believe Greater Dalton, Whitfield County Chamber of Commerce

Housing Supply Analysis

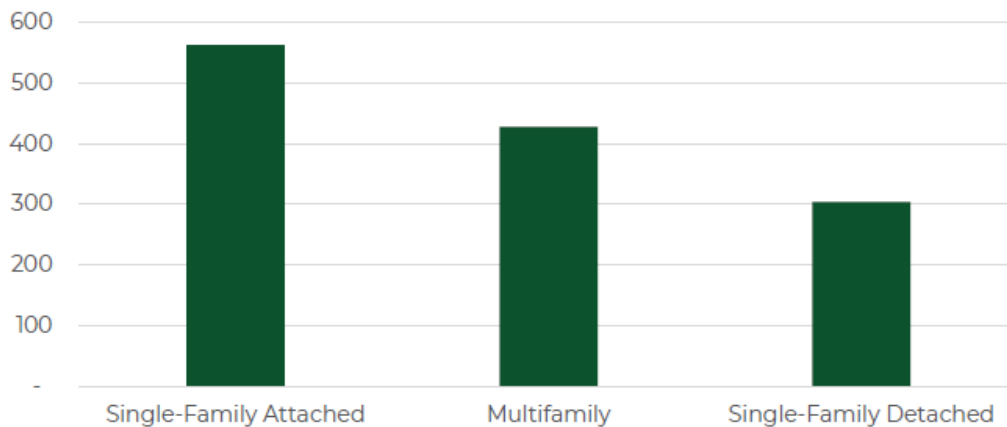
Housing Types & Tenures

- Based on permitting data, two-thirds of new developments since 2018 have been for sale, while the remaining third have been for rent.
- Single-family attached products have been the most-permitted housing product post-2018.

Permitted Units for Purchase & Lease



Housing Types by Units Permitted



Data Source: Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, Believe Greater Dalton, Whitfield County Chamber of Commerce

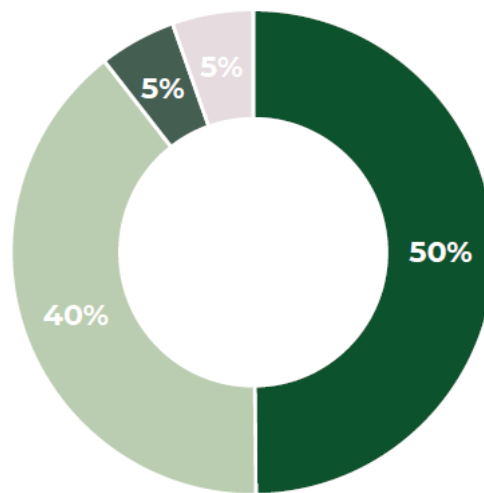
Housing Supply Analysis

Housing by Household Income

- Analyzed price data on the developments that have been built and sold/leased since 2018.
- Calculated what a “typical” household would need to earn in order to afford each of the products – using 30% of their household income.

Household Income	Rent Budget	For Sale Budget	Percentage of Units Permitted Post-2018
Less than \$50k	Less than \$1,250	Less than \$175k	0%
\$50k - \$75k	\$1,250 - \$1,875	\$175k - \$260k	50%
\$75k - \$100k	\$1,875 - \$2,500	\$260k - \$350k	40%
\$100k - \$150k	\$2,500 - \$3,750	\$350k - \$525k	5%
\$150k +	\$3,750 +	\$525k +	5%

Percentage of Permitted Units Attainable by Household Income



- \$50k - \$75k
- \$75k - \$100,000
- \$100k - \$150k
- \$150k +

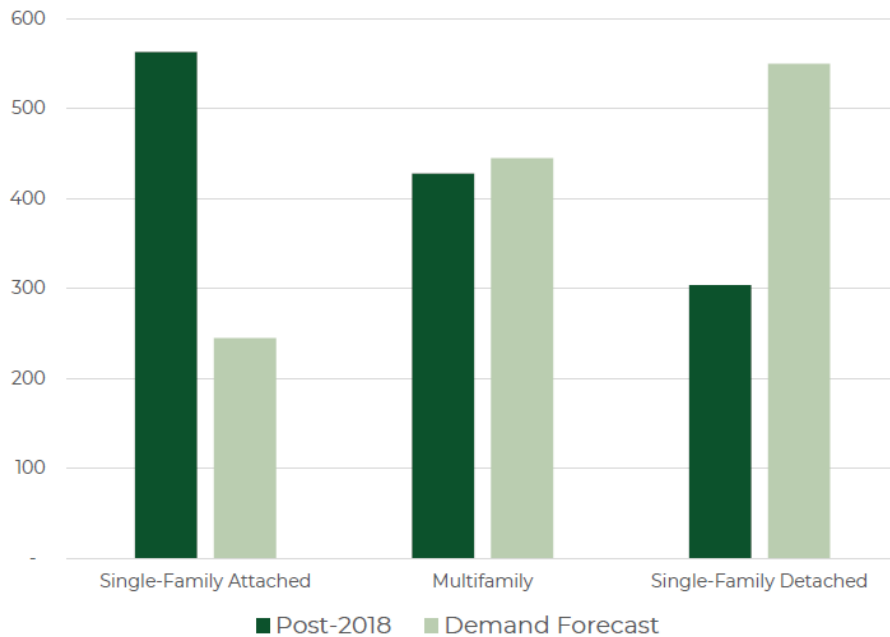
Data Source: Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, Believe Greater Dalton, Whitfield County Chamber of Commerce

Housing Supply Analysis

2018 Housing Demand Retrospect

- “The right home for the right price” – the driving philosophy behind “market segmentation”.
- The 2018 report forecasted that the Greater Dalton housing market could absorb 150-160 new for-sale units and 90-100 new rental units annually between 2019 and 2024. This amounts to 1,200 – 1,300 new housing in 5 years.
- Since the 2018 report, there have been 1,295 new units permitted, according to the JDA’s report.

Comparing the 2018 Demand Forecast w/ Real Development Patterns



Data Source: Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, Believe Greater Dalton, Whitfield County Chamber of Commerce

Housing Supply Analysis

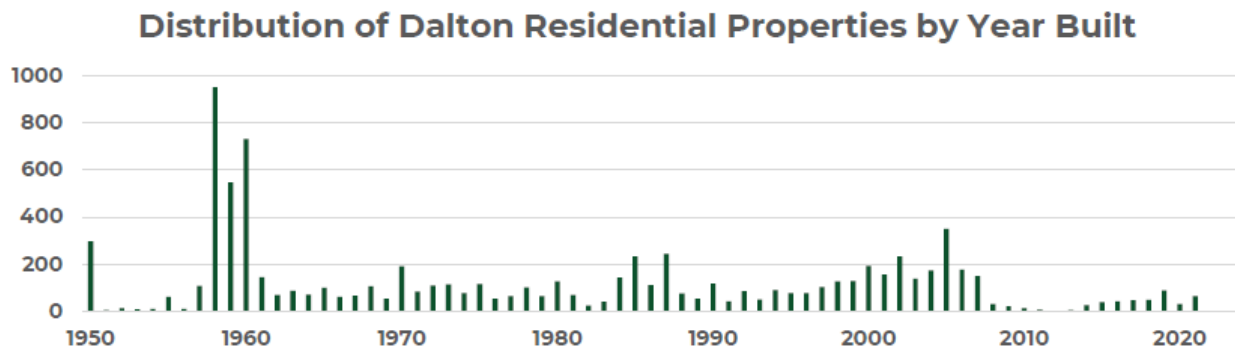
Historical Development Patterns

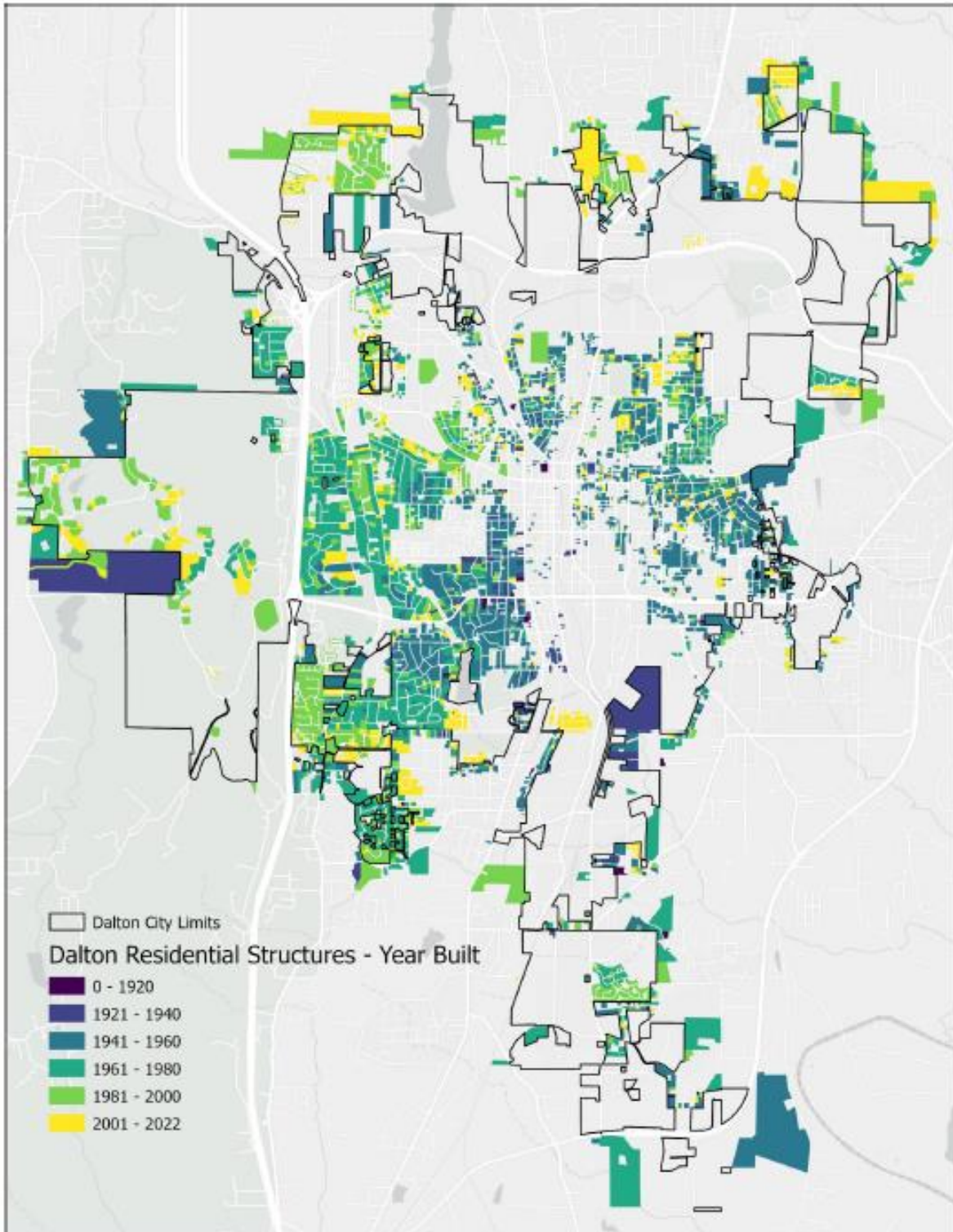
Residential development in the city of Dalton has occurred radially outwards from the downtown area, with the oldest buildings in the city located in downtown Dalton and progressively newer bands of development surrounding the downtown area.

Most of the residential properties in Dalton were constructed in the 1960s, with other noticeable upticks in development in the 1980s and 2000s. This suggests that Dalton’s housing stock is quite old, and that in some places there may be a need for replacement or renovation of aging housing units

Many of the newest residential properties in Dalton are not actually in the city of Dalton itself, again suggesting that development in unincorporated portions of the Dalton community are favored due to there being fewer fees, taxes and other costs of development associated with building just outside of the city limits.

Distribution of Dalton Residential Properties by Year Built





Data Source: Whitfield County GIS Department

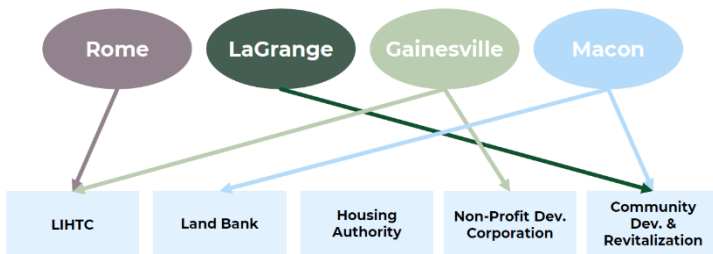
Comparative Cities Assessment

Population and Housing Units

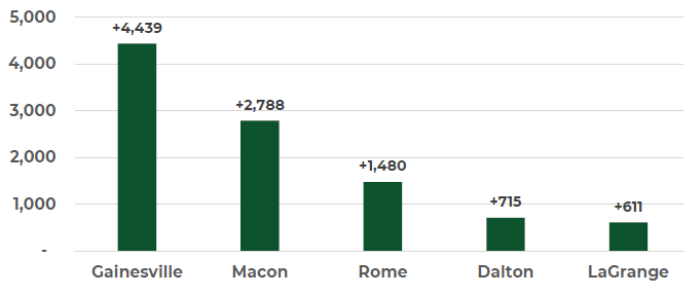
The population of every city in this analysis has increased over the past five years. The city that gained the most new residents was the city of Gainesville, adding nearly 4,500 new residents. Macon and Rome also added on average between 300 and 600 new residents annually between 2017 and 2021. While Dalton and LaGrange both grew in population across this interval, the growth of population in both cities occurred at a slightly slower pace than in the other cities in this analysis, adding on average between 125 and 150 new residents annually.

While all five cities' population grew between 2015 and 2021, the number of housing units in each of the cities also grew, though the rate at which cities added new housing units was not always the same rate at which the cities gained population. LaGrange, for example, added the third highest number of housing units over the five-year period, outstripping their growth in population. All of the other cities in this comparison added fewer units than population, Gainesville and Macon again leading the way, producing 3,079 and 1,477 housing units respectively.

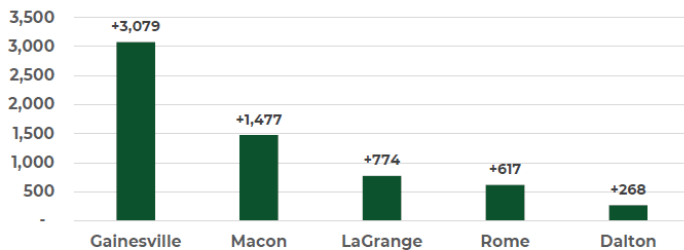
While Dalton's housing unit growth may seem to lag behind the other cities in this comparison, it is important to recognize that Dalton has seen significant growth in housing units just beyond its city limits, which if incorporated into this comparison might place Dalton closer to the third highest producer of housing units among the selected communities.



Change in Population, 2017-2021



Change in Housing Units, 2017-2021



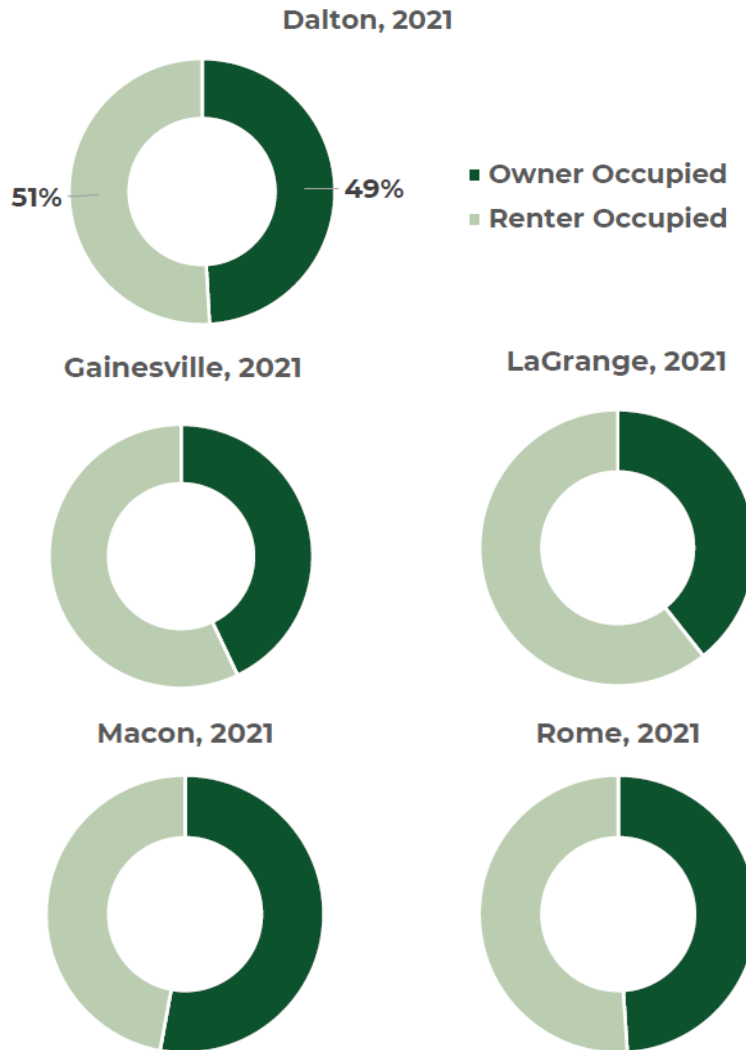
Data Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017, 2021

Comparative Cities Assessment

Tenure

Owner-occupied units have represented around half of all occupied residential units in each of the cities in this comparison, including Dalton. Macon is the one exception, wherein owner-occupied units have typically represented a higher proportion of the city's occupied units. Since 2010, the proportion of owner-occupied units has decreased in every city in this comparison except for Gainesville, which saw a modest increase in its proportion of owner-occupied units between 2010 and 2021.

The proportion of renter-occupied units have increased in all of the cities in this comparison besides Gainesville. The cities of LaGrange, Macon and Rome have all seen around a 6% increase in the proportion of renter-occupied units in each of those cities. The city of Dalton has seen a slightly smaller increase of around 2%.



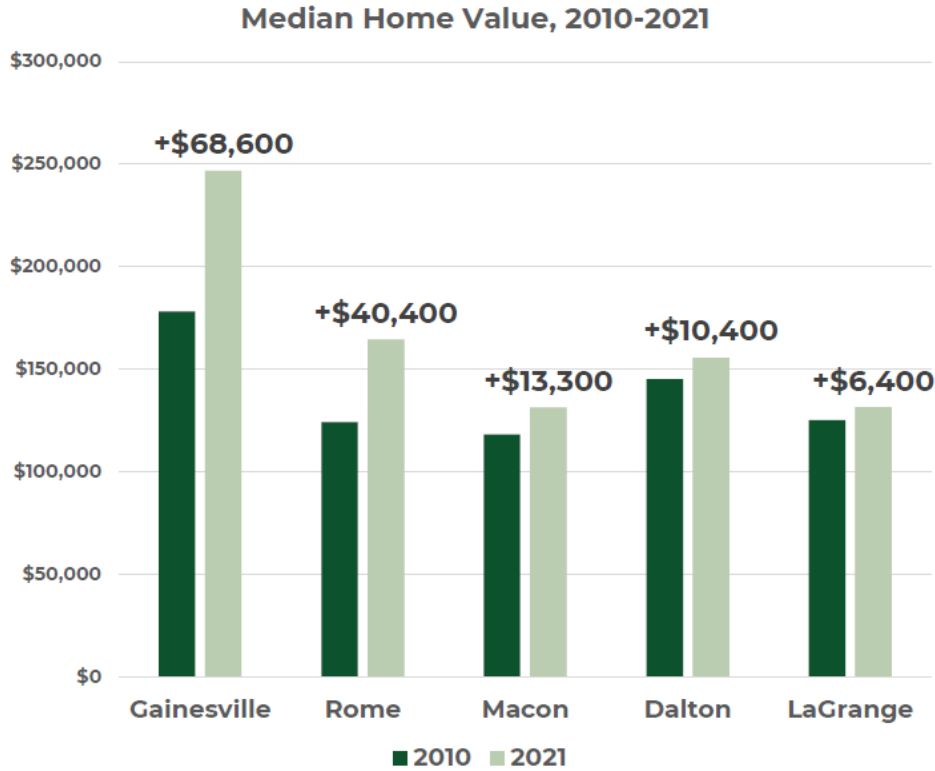
Data Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates 2021

Median Home Price

Median home values have increased across all the cities in this comparison.

In Dalton, LaGrange and Macon, the increases in median home price have amounted to around \$10,000 between 2010 and 2021.

Gainesville and Rome have seen the most dramatic increases in median home value, increasing by nearly \$70,000 in Gainesville and by \$40,000 in Rome.



Data Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017, 2021

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

Average Rents

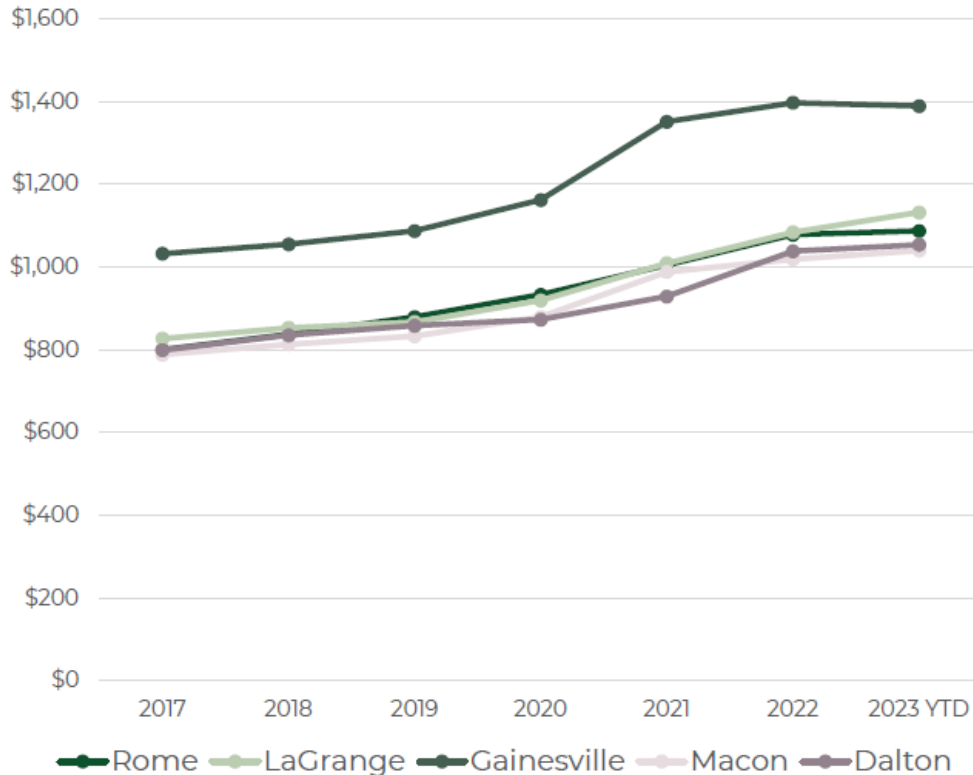
Average rents have increased in each of the comparable markets since 2017.

Rome, LaGrange, Macon, and Dalton markets have experienced similar rent growth – between \$220 and \$280.

Gainesville markets experienced the largest rent growth since 2017.

Rome	LaGrange	Gainesville	Macon	Dalton
\$250	\$279	\$334	\$227	\$219

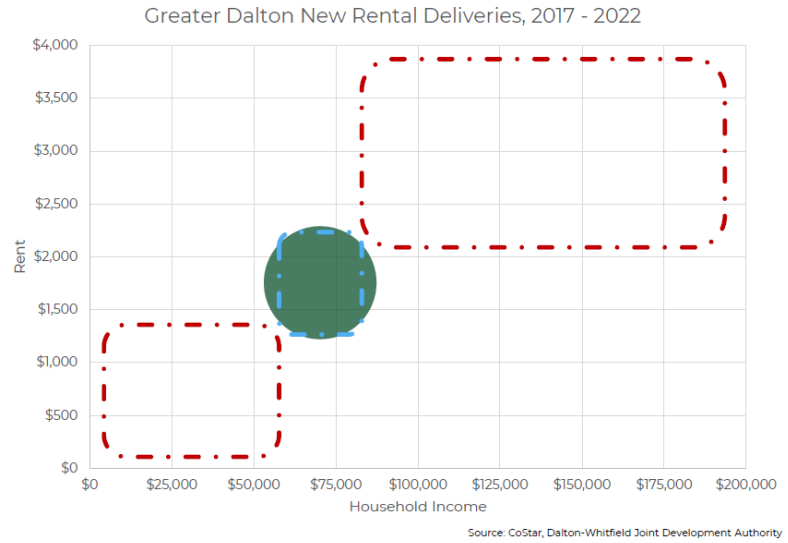
Avg. Rent Growth, 2017 - 2023



Data Source: CoStar

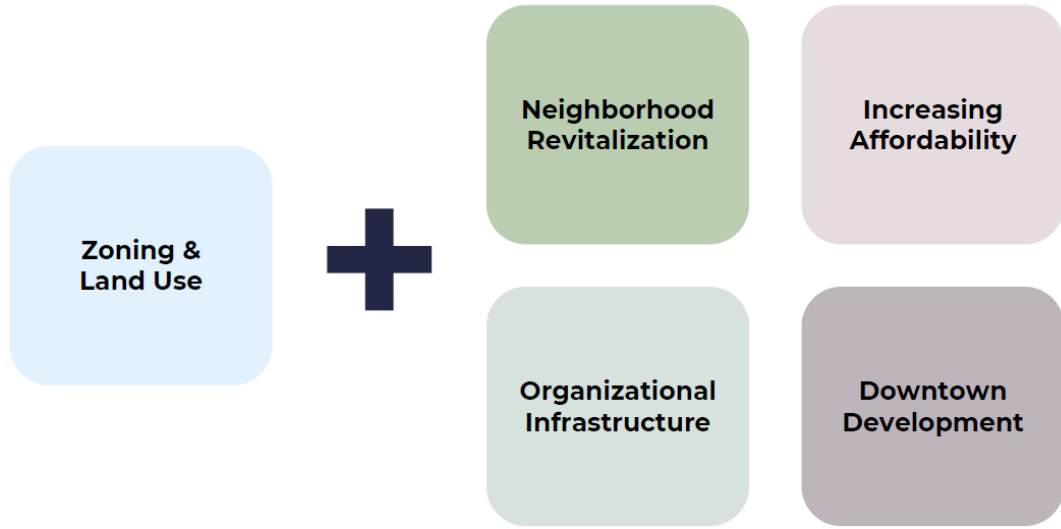
Housing Analysis

- The latest rental delivery prices new units between \$1,350 and \$2,300.
- The lack of new rental deliveries in the market illustrates gaps at the upper and lower ends.



Strategies & Recommendations

Next Steps



Strategies + Recommendations

Zoning & Land Use



1

Continue to encourage and allow townhomes, duplexes, quadplexes, and cottages across appropriate locations in Greater Dalton



2

Encourage and plan for residential land uses Downtown and close to job centers and amenities.



3

Plan for the future by ensuring flexible land use and zoning that considers the “mismatch” between trending household size and housing product.



1

Make Dalton more attractive to smaller households who often seek amenities outside the home and smaller homes. Recognize that households without children are a majority and are the fastest growing and focus on infrastructure to help improve to quality of life for these households, especially regarding Downtown development.

2

Enhance economic development efforts by attracting a broad range of new construction housing, including middle- and upper-income housing to attract professionals who currently work but don't live in Dalton/Whitfield.

3

Attract and preserve workforce housing via enhanced productivity from the Dalton Housing Authority and the Land Bank Authority.

4

Improve housing conditions for lower-income households in order to improve social outcomes. Pilot home renovation and homeownership programs that also incorporate community building in the Crown Mill area.

TRANSPORTATION

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



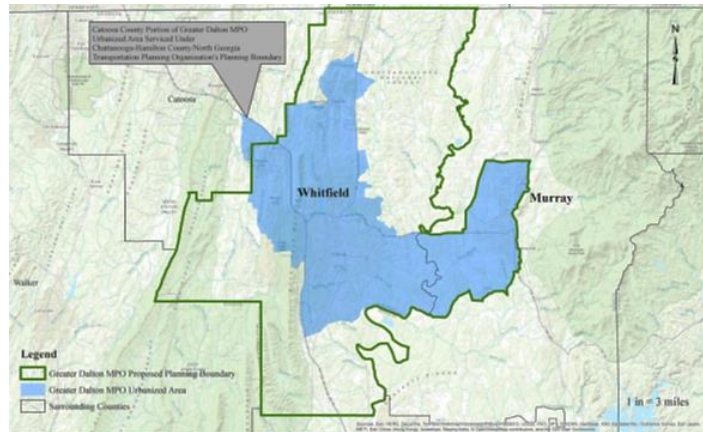
INTRODUCTION

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



Boundary of GDMPO (blue shaded area)

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.

Bill 1216.

**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 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Overall Goal of the 2045 Metropolitan 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. 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.



Whitfield County Public Works Director, showcasing the county's new milling machine

The Transportation System's Strengths

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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 intersections with the surrounding network of local streets.



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

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.



Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

- 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

Greater Dalton Planning Area Population Projections

Year	Population	Percent Change
1980	65,775	Base
1990	72,462	10.2%
2000	83,525	15.3%
2015	142,792	71%
2045	183,837	28.7%

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

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

- 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
- 2 middle schools
- 2 high schools

Secondary Schools

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

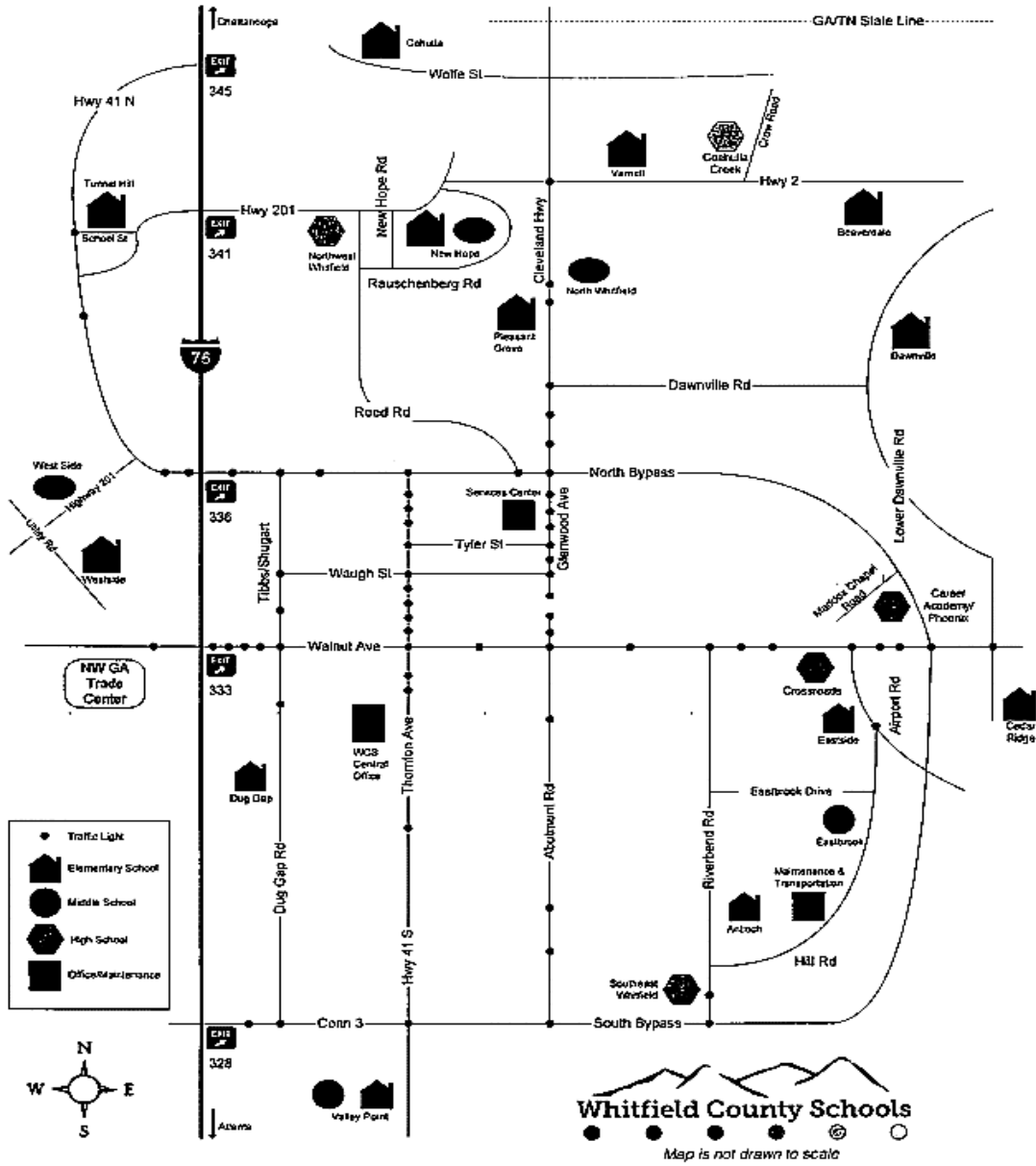
In addition, Dalton/ Whitfield County provide technical training through one of the campuses of the Georgia Northwestern Technical College. The other four campuses have locations in Rome, Calhoun, Rockmart, and Rock Springs. These 5 campuses together have an annual credit enrollment of 8,200 students, 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 enrollment opportunities for students outside the commutable range. There are currently 356 dormitory units available for students that chose to live on-campus.

School Enrollment Projections

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

The projected 2045 total school enrollment for Whitfield County was calculated to be 37,800. This total was determined as a result of dividing the base year 2015 enrollment (29,300) by the base year 2010 population (102,578) and multiplying that ratio by the projected population (148,996).⁵ The 2045 school enrollment projection of 37,800 is an increase of 29%.



Map 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:



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 on the following pages lists long range projects specific to the Whitfield portion of the GDMPO planning area listed in the MPO's 2045 MTP.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

All Projects Considered in Greater Dalton 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Project ID	Project Type	Name/Location	Extents
2	Widening	SR 225 (GDOT PI 631550)	SR 52 ALT to Spring Place Smyrna Road
3	New Location	SR 225 Bypass (North & South) (GDOT PI 0003061)	SR 225 @ Imperial Blvd to SR 52/US76 & N to SR 225
6	Bridge	SR 52 ALT (GDOT PI 0007047)	Town Branch
8	Intersection	SR 286 (GDOT PI 0006064)	Cobb Road and at Tom Gregory Road
9	New Location	SR 201 Realignment & Improve SR 201	US 41 to I-75 Interchange
10	Operational	Hill Road	Eastbrook Road to Airport Road
11	Intersection	Riverbend Road	Walnut Avenue/US 76
12	Intersection	SR 2 at SR 201	SR 201
13	Bridge	Old Tilton Road	Swamp Creek
14	Bridge	McGaughey Chapel Road	Coahulla Creek
15	Widening	North Tibbs Road	College Drive to Shugart Road
16	Intersection	SR 3 (Chattanooga Road)	North Tibbs Road
17	Alignment	Reed Road	SR 201 to Lake Kathy
18	Multiple Intersections	Reed Road	SR 3 to SR 201
19	Operational	SR 201	SR 3 to Old LaFayette Road
20	Operational	Old LaFayette Road & Intersection w/ SR 201	SR 201 to SR 3
21	Operational	Underwood Street	Glenwood to Bypass
22	Bridge	Underwood Street	Mill Creek
24	Intersection	Intersection Improvements - 8 locations	Various
29	New Location	CR 688/Louise Lane Extension	Eber Road to Redwine Cove

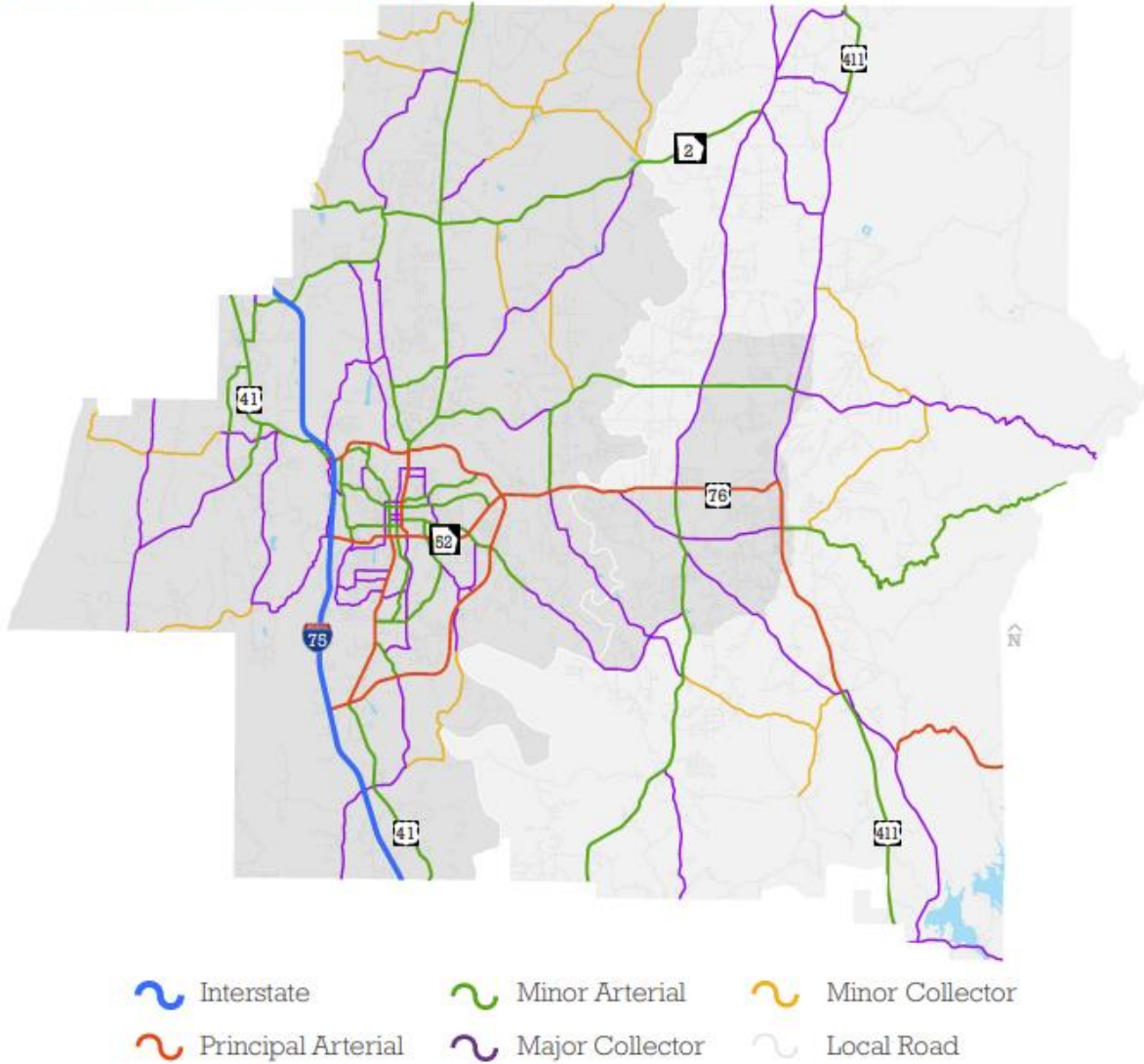
Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

Project ID	Project Type	Name/Location	Extents
31	Intersection	Chattanooga Road/Wolfe Street & Red Clay Road	City of Cohutta
32	Bike & Ped	SR 71	Beaverdale Road to Williams Road & Frontier Trail to Prater Mill Road
35	Intersection	South Dixie Highway	W. Industrial Boulevard at Foster Road
36	Grade Separation	North Dalton Bypass	At Cleveland Highway
37	Operational	Underwood Road	North Dalton Bypass to Dawnville Road
38	Operational	Airport Road	South Dalton Bypass to Tibbs Bridge
39	Operational	Airport Road/Brown Bridge Road/ New Hope Road	Tibbs Bridge to SR 225
41	Bridge	Redwine Cove Road	Swamp Creek
42	Operational	SR 201	I-75 Interchange to US 411
56	Widening	SR 52 Alt	SR 225 to SR 52/US 76
57	Intersection	US 76/Chatsworth Highway	SR 3 Bypass to US 76
58	Intersection	Lake Francis Road	SR 2/Prater Mill Road
59	Intersection	Dawnville-Beaverdale Road	SR 286 & Cherokee Estate Road
60	Widening	Carbondale Road	Redwine Cove Road to I-75 Interchange
61	Widening	Rauschengerg Road	Sonya Drive to Waring Road
67	Widening	SR 560/East-West Highway (GDOT PI 0004298)	SR 151 to SR 3
68	Widening	SR 560/East-West Highway (GDOT PI 0004299)	I-75 to SR 2
69	Widening	SR 560/East-West Highway (GDOT PI 0004300)	SR 3 to US 411
70	Study	Walnut Avenue Access Management Study	I-75 to Dug Gap Road

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

Project ID	Project Type	Name/Location	Extents
71	Operational	Walnut Avenue Access Management Improvements	I-75 to Dug Gap Road
73	Bike & Ped	Thorton Avenue Sidewalks	SR 3 to Waugh Street
74	Bike & Ped	Downtown Sidewalk	Various
75	Bike & Ped	School Sidewalk Program	Various
77	Intersection	Dawnville Rd	At SR 286
81	Widening	SR 3/South Dixie Road (GDOT PI 632670)	SR 136/Gordon to South Dalton Bypass
82	Bridge	SR 201 (GDOT PI 0013816)	Tanyard Creek

Functional Classification in Whitfield and Murray Counties



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

Bridges

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

GDOT calculates sufficiency ratings for each bridge by evaluating its overall condition, taking into account all factors from low load to filed/visual observation of deficiencies. GDOT's Office of Bridge Maintenance recommends that structures with a sufficiency rating less than 50 be replaced rather than improved. Bridges with a rating between 60 and 70 are candidates for rehabilitation or reconstruction. Bridges with ratings above 70 should be in acceptable condition over the life of the plan as long as routine maintenance is conducted.

Bridges in Whitfield and Murray Counties with Sufficiency Rating of 70 or below, 2019

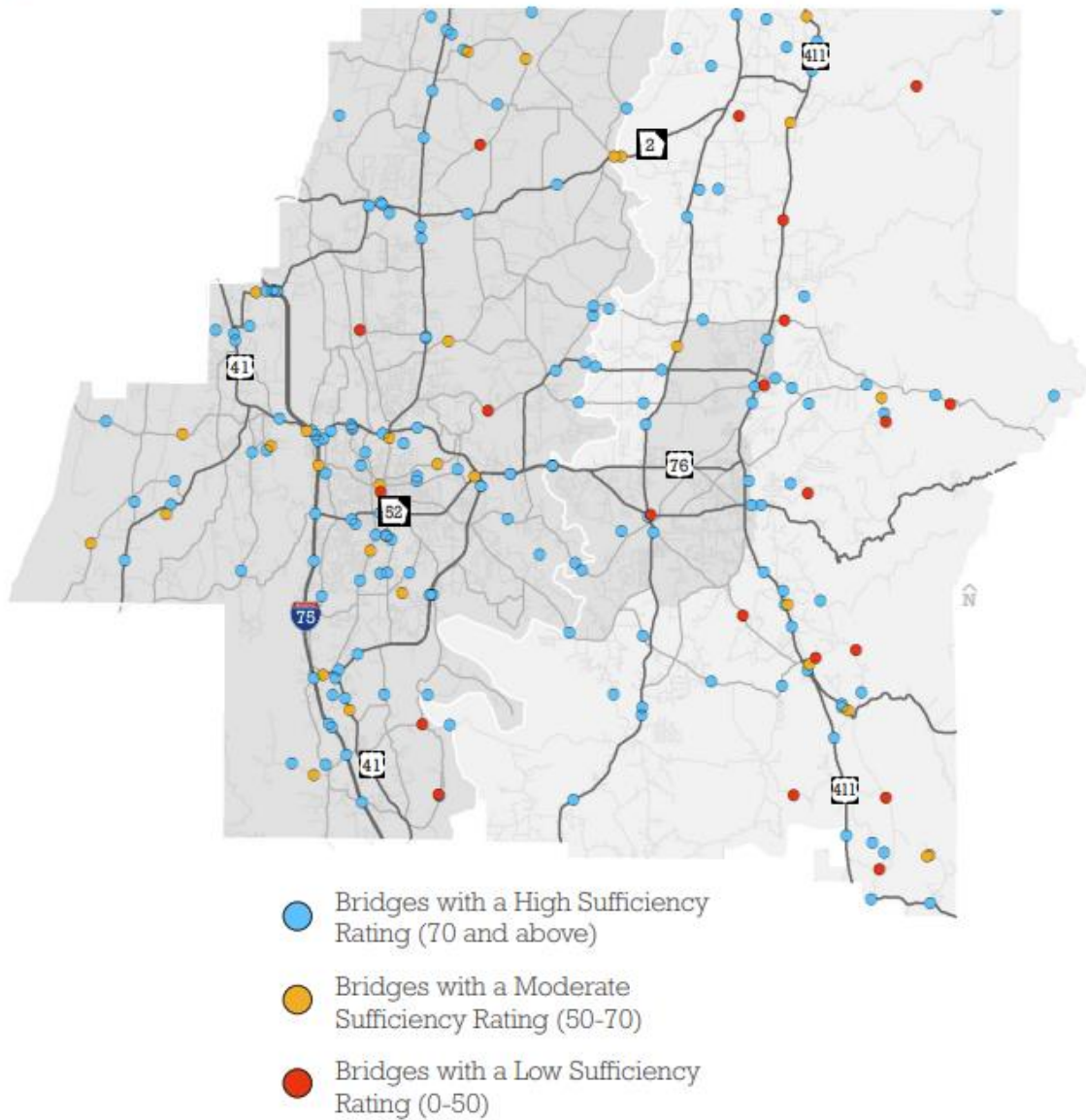
Bridge ID	County	Name/Location	Sufficiency Score
213-5041-0	Murray	McNelly Road over a Conasauga River Tributary	4.0
213-5004-0	Murray	Dennis Mill Road over Rock Creek	16.0
213-5036-0	Murray	Peeples Spur over Rock Creek	17.5
213-5015-0	Murray	Coniston Road over Sugar Creek	18.6
213-5007-0	Murray	Old Federal Road over Mill Creek	19.7
313-0063-0	Whitfield	Gordon Street over Norfolk-Southern Railroad	21.4
213-5009-0	Murray	Loughridge Road over Mill Creek	22.1
213-0048-0	Murray	CCC Road over Emery Creek	24.3
213-5027-0	Whitfield	Hasslers Mill Road over Mill Creek	27.6
313-5031-0	Whitfield	Reed Pond Road over Poplar Spring Creek	32.4
213-5039-0	Murray	Old SR 2 over a Conasauga River Tributary	33.6
313-5053-0	Whitfield	Nance Springs Circle over a Conasauga River Tributary	35.1
313-0068-0	Whitfield	Dawnville Road over Coahulla Creek	36.3
313-5008-0	Whitfield	Old Tilton Road over Swamp Creek	36.3
313-5050-0	Whitfield	McGaughey Chapel Road over Coahulla Creek	36.8
213-0017-0	Murray	US 411/SR 61 over Sumac Creek	39.8
213-0043-0	Murray	Old US 411 over the Coosawattee River	41.4
213-0044-0	Murray	Old US 411 over Willbanks Branch	41.6
213-0004-0	Murray	Ramhurst Road over Holly Creek	42.4
213-5028-0	Murray	Cool Springs Road over CSX Railroad	45.6
213-0007-0	Murray	SR 52 Alt. over Town Branch	47.4
313-5002-0	Whitfield	Redwine Cove Road over Swamp Creek	52.2
213-5032-0	Murray	Cool Springs Road over Holly Creek	52.9
313-0004-0	Whitfield	SR 2 over the Conasauga River	53.0
313-5039-0	Whitfield	Houston Valley Road over East Chickamauga Creek	53.3
213-0018-0	Murray	US 411/SR 61/SR 2 over CSX Railroad	54.7

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

Bridge ID	County	Name/Location	Sufficiency Score
313-5033-0	Whitfield	Willowdale Road over Mill Creek	54.9
213-0033-0	Murray	US 76/SR 282 over Rock Reek	55.7
313-5028-0	Whitfield	Putnam Road over Mills Creek	55.9
213-0045-0	Murray	Old Highway 411 over Chicken Creek	57.3
213-0021-0	Murray	US 411/SR 61 over SR 182/CSX Railroad	57.4
313-0020-0	Whitfield	SR 52 over Mill Creek	58.2
213-0001-0	Murray	SR 2 over the Conasauga River Overflow	58.7
313-0009-0	Whitfield	Old US 41 over Tar Creek	59.0
313-5012-0	Whitfield	Cavender Road over Stacy Branch	59.1
313-5041-0	Whitfield	Freeman Springs over East Chickamauga Creek	59.8
313-0025-0	Whitfield	West Waugh Street over Norfolk-Southern Railroad	60.4
213-0035-0	Murray	US 76 over Sugar Creek	60.7
313-0056-0	Whitfield	Beaverdale Road over Coahulla Creek	60.8
CEPSAMG A0000005	Murray	Carters Intake Access over Carters Emergency Spillway	61.0
213-5001-0	Murray	CR 1 over Carters Lake Overflow	61.2
313-0066-0	Whitfield	Tibbs Road over I-75	61.8
313-5015-0	Whitfield	Underwood Street over Mill Creek	63.6
313-0035-0	Whitfield	SR 201 over Tanyard Creek	63.8
313-5043-0	Whitfield	Gordon Springs Road over East Chickamauga Creek	63.9
213-0030-0	Murray	SR 225 over Pinhook Creek	66.2
313-5060-0	Whitfield	Green Valley Drive over a Mill Creek Tributary	68.0
313-0026-0	Whitfield	Glenwood Avenue over Mill Creek	68.3
313-0005-0	Whitfield	US 41 over Swamp Creek	68.6
313-5029-0	Whitfield	Hopewell Road over Coahulla Creek	69.3
313-0016-0	Whitfield	SR 3 Connector over Little Swamp Creek	70.0

Source: National Bridge Inventory, FHWA

Bridges in Whitfield and Murray Counties by Sufficiency Rating, 2019



Source: National Bridge Inventory, FHWA

Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems



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



Existing signage along the Cohutta-Chattahoochee scenic byway

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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.

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 | Utility Road |
| GA 201 | White Road |
| Mount Vernon Road | Mill Creek Road |



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

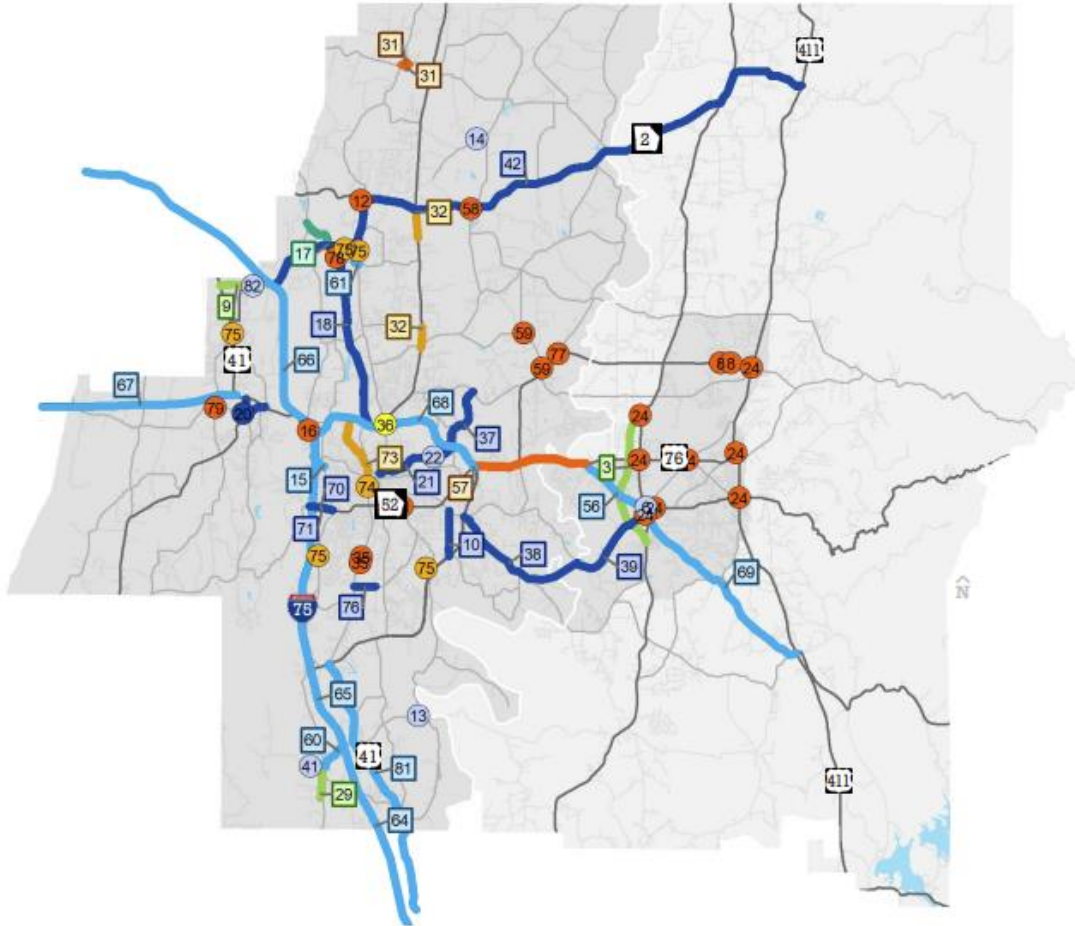
Mountain Crossing - State Route 90 runs east/west across the mountains and north between Walker County (south of Chattanooga) and Rabun County, in the northeast corner of the state. Within Whitfield County, the Mountain Crossing Route traverses 21.4 miles. The route crosses Dalton State College, I-75, 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 | College Drive/Holiday Avenue |
| Mill Creek Road | Walnut Avenue |
| Bradberry Hill Road | Thornton Avenue |
| Sam Love Road | Morris Street/Murray Avenue |
| Old Lafayette Road | Airport Road |
| US 41 | Tibbs Bridge Road |
| Tibbs Road | Keith Mill Road |



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

All Projects Considered in Greater Dalton 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan



Projects by Type

	Alignment		Operational
	Bicycle and/or Pedestrian		New Location
	Bridge		Study
	Grade Separation		Widening
	Intersection(s)		

Sidewalks and Trails

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

Unincorporated Whitfield County boasts three notable trail networks. The first of these trails is a section of the Pinhoti Trail, the longest foot trail in Georgia. Pinhoti's section 13 is a paved trail beginning at Dug Gap Mountain on Dug Gap Battle Road and traveling Walnut Avenue, Airport road, and Tibbs Bridge Road into Murray County. Whitfield County is also home to Raisin Woods Mountain Bike Park where over five miles of mountain bike trails can be found for all skill levels. For those interested in paddle sports, Whitfield County currently maintains two canoe launch sites with parking and safe access to the river.



Pinhoti Trail Marker

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/>.



Red dots show the current Conasauga canoe launch points in Whitfield County

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 50. 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 Street. 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.



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

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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.

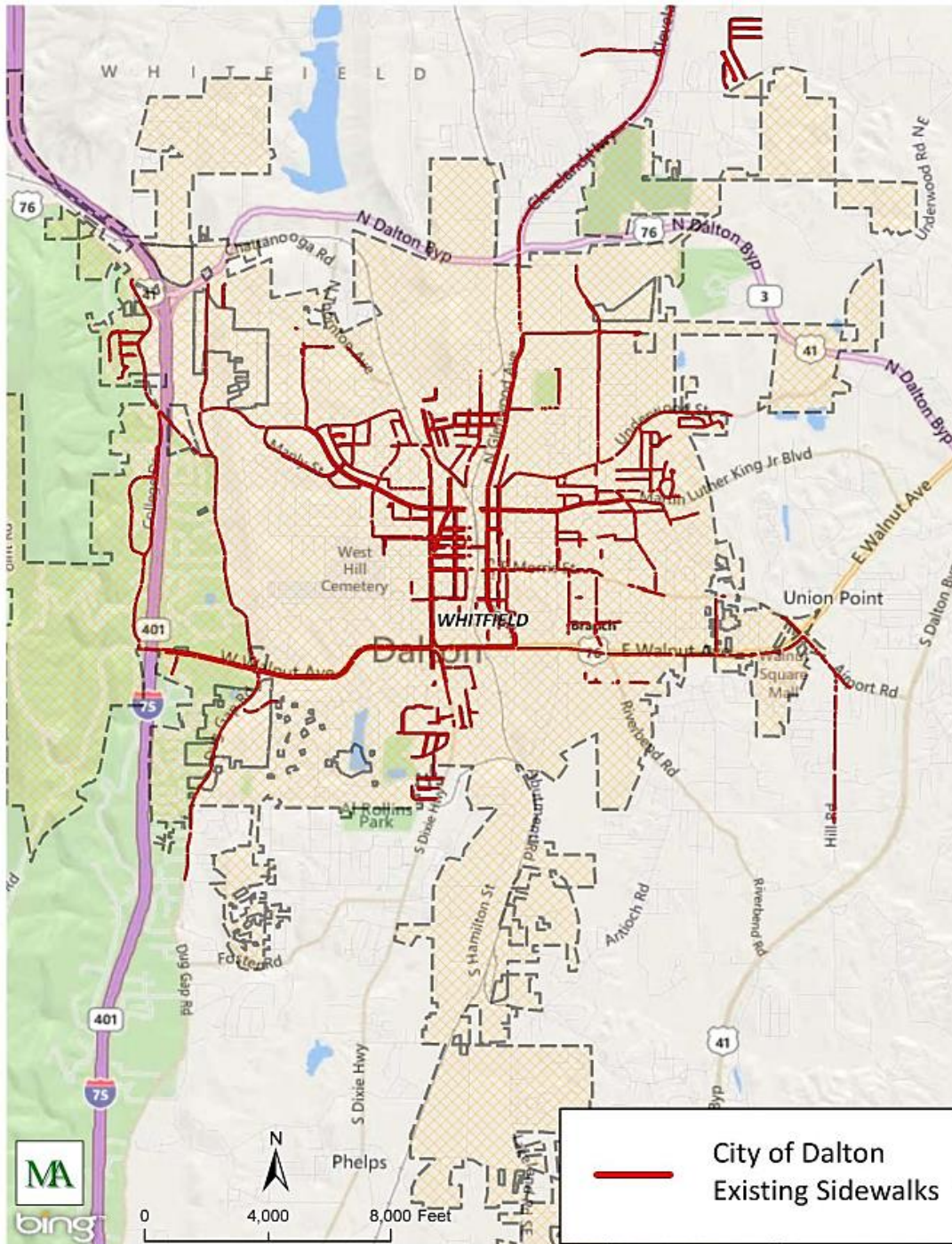


Nature trail in Varnell

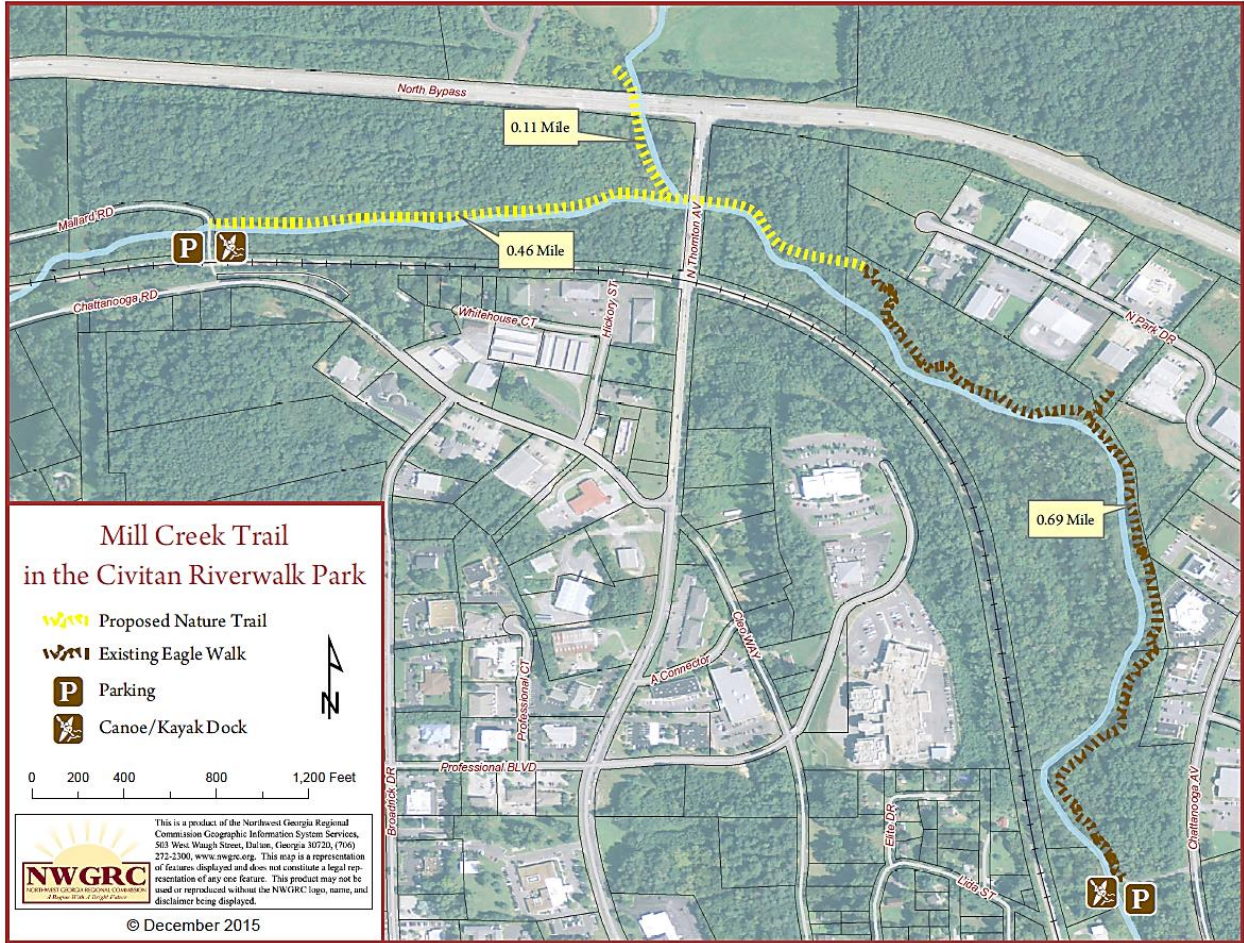
The City of Tunnel Hill's sidewalk system is also rather limited, but there is an existing network of sidewalks within the city. The majority of sidewalk infrastructure within the City of Tunnel Hill is located along Highway 41 where the city's commercial character area is found, but this section of 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.



Raisin Woods Mountain Bike Park in Whitfield County



2: Existing sidewalk infrastructure in Dalton



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



Conceptual plan for crosswalk improvements at the intersection of Tyler Street and Chattanooga Avenue provided by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government

Rail Systems

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.



Rail freight and transportation has played a significant role throughout Whitfield County since before the Civil War

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 from 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.

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:



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.

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



Example of an ITS equipped traffic light

POLICY STATEMENTS

Introduction

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 Needs and Opportunities. Policy statements are identified for each planning element. This plan will incorporate policies into a single joint section in order to reduce unnecessary repetition.

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 through programs such as CHIP, infill construction, and code enforcement.
- Create housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community.
- Encourage development and redevelopment 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 (homeownership).
- Increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income families to move into attainable 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 attainable 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.
- Encourage public/private partnerships focused on housing development and redevelopment through the use of Tax Allocation Districts (TADs), grant applications, and support of the Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC).
- Encourage redevelopment of blighted, underdeveloped, or vacant areas surrounding downtown Dalton that can be redeveloped for urban-style residential neighborhoods. Such as: pocket neighborhoods, apartments, mixed-use, and planned unit developments.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

- Improve the quality of residential development to maintain community character and ensure stable long-term property values and neighborhoods.
- Identify mechanisms and programs to eliminate substandard and dilapidated housing, and aggressively pursue building and housing code enforcement to prevent neighborhood deterioration.

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.
- Consider access to housing and impacts on transportation when considering economic development projects.
- Consider 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 (TADs), Commercial Improvement Districts (CIDs), and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to finance enhancements along important corridors and growth areas.
- Support workforce development efforts in coordination with local K-12 schools as well as Georgia Northwestern Technical College and Dalton State College to prepare our workforce for expanded opportunities available in a more diverse advanced manufacturing 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

- Ensure strategic expansions of public infrastructure and utilities are economically prudent in regard to long-term operation and maintenance.
- 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.
- Guide development within our community to areas that can be effectively served by public utilities and infrastructure.
- Promote extension of public sewer infrastructure to serve existing and future housing development in order to protect surface and ground water quality.
- 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.
- Ensure that development adjacent to agricultural areas is separated by a buffer in order to protect and preserve the rural viewsheds in 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 setting 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.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

- Ensure that development codes and ordinances are easily accessible, harmonious, and streamlined to avoid confusion and/or unnecessary delays for homeowners as well as those willing to invest in the community.
- 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.

Community Vision Survey Connections

Community survey responses (1,167) informed the Future Development Maps, Policies, Needs and Opportunities, and Community Work Programs. The following narrative shows the highest response rates for each non-demographic survey question as well as how these responses resulted in plan policies and projects in the Community Work Program.

Survey Question 7: What do you like about Whitfield County (including the Cities)?

- **Small town atmosphere (64%)**- Future development maps include Rural Residential, Rural Crossroads, and Rural Corridors areas. Policies include “Improve the quality of residential development to maintain community character and ensure stable long-term property values and neighborhoods.”
- **Local businesses and restaurants (59%)**- Policies include “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.” Projects include “Bury aerial utility lines in the town center, complete streetscape (Cohutta)” and “Downtown Railroad quiet zone (Dalton).”
- **Scenic views and natural wildlife assets (51%)** Future development maps include Ridge Conservation areas. Policies include “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.” Projects include “Hiking trail at Rocky Face Ridge Battlefield Park (Whitfield Co).”

Survey Question 8: What don't you like about Whitfield County (including the Cities)?

- **Blight and unkept properties (43%)** Policies include “Identify mechanisms and programs to eliminate substandard and dilapidated housing, and aggressively pursue building and housing code enforcement to prevent neighborhood deterioration.” The Future Development Map includes Rural and Town Neighborhood Revitalization areas, and projects include “Update the City’s Urban Revitalization Plan (Dalton).”
- **Not enough housing options (38%)** – The Future Development Maps include a range of housing, from Dalton’s Downtown (high density, multi-family residential), to Whitfield’s Rural Residential (low-density, rural). Policies include “Accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities, and costs in each neighborhood.”
- **Lack of entertainment for all ages (37%)**- Policies include “Promote the development of lifestyle amenities, especially in areas such as entertainment, restaurant and shopping in existing and emerging community and regional activity centers.” Projects include “Construct walking/bike path between Crown Mill Area and Haig Mill Park (Dalton)” and “Tennis and Pickleball court rehabilitation and redesign (Tunnel Hill).”

Survey Question 9: What types of management actions would you support for future development?

- **Agricultural and forest conservation (50.7%)** Policies include “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

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

(PDR).”

- **Provide sidewalks/ bike lanes (48%)** Policies include “Support creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.” Projects include new sidewalks on North Thornton Ave from Tyler St. to hospital campus.

Survey Question 10. What type of housing are you interested in seeing developed in your community?

- **Workforce/ affordable housing (53%)** Policies state “Create housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community,” and projects include “Create and adopt design guidelines for multi-family housing development...(Dalton).”
- **More housing catering to the needs of retirees and/or seniors (38%)** Policies include “Promote a range of housing opportunities, including attainable housing, single-family and multi-family options, senior housing, and higher value housing.”
- **Owner -occupied homes with large lots (36%)** Policies include “Improve the quality of residential development to maintain community character and ensure stable long-term property values and neighborhoods.”

11. What types of projects would you support to make Whitfield County a better place?

- **Improvements to transportation infrastructure (50%)** Policies include “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 projects.” Projects include intersection improvements, roadway reconstruction, and roundabouts.
- **Removal of blighted buildings for new development (50%)** Policies include “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.”
- **Invest in beautifying highways such as Walnut Avenue, Glenwood Avenue, and Cleveland Highway (47%)** Policies include “Design new and reconstructed roadways using context sensitive design considerations to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize environmental impacts.” Projects include multiple streetscape improvements.

12. In your opinion, what is the most significant issue to Whitfield County and its four municipalities?

- **Not enough housing options (13%)** Policies include “Promote a range of housing opportunities, including attainable housing, single-family and multi-family options, senior housing, and higher value housing.” Projects include “Create and adopt design guidelines for multi-family housing development within [Dalton].”
- **Not enough good jobs (11%)** Policies include “Support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for our community’s economy- job skill requirements, linkages to existing businesses, and diversification of our economic base.” Projects include “Purchase 50-100 acres of property for future industrial development.”
- **Young professionals leaving (9%)** Policies include “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.”

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 2018-2023 planning period, a list of current Needs and Opportunities, and finally a new Community Work Program for the current 2024-2028 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, and vibrant 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



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



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

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

WHITFIELD COUNTY

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Varnell	2020			2024		
Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance	2020			2024		
Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program	2022				X	Funding no longer available
TRANSPORTATION						
Bridges and culvert installation	2020-2023	X				
SR 201 Realignment and improvements from US 41 to I-75 Interchange	2019-2021	X				
Improvements to Old LaFayette Road along SR 201 to SR 3	2023		2024			
Old Tilton Road at Swamp Creek Bridge replacement/upgrades	2023		2024			
South Dixie Highway, W. Industrial Blvd. and Foster Road intersection improvements	2023		2025			

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

WHITFIELD COUNTY

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Underwood Road, N. Dalton Bypass to Dawnville Road reconstruction	2023			2025		Other projects took priority
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Pursue greenspace preservation / acquisition opportunities and development of connected greenways with trails.	2020		Ongoing			Policy Statement
Implement the Whitfield County Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations.	2020		Ongoing			Policy Statement More specific projects will be included in the 2024-2028 CWP
Grant Farm Park Infrastructure to protect and showcase Civil War archaeological features	2019-2021	X				
Designate the entire Prater's Mill site as a local historic site.	2019				X	Not a priority at this time
Seek National Register designation for the entire Prater's Mill Site	2020				X	Not a priority at this time
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Fire Station Renovations	2020-2023		Spring 2024			Pay Go was just released in Spring of this year.
Quick Response Trucks	2020-2023	X				

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

WHITFIELD COUNTY

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
New Vehicles – Sheriff Dept.	2020-2023	X				
Animal Shelter Renovations	2020-2023	X				
Construct Admin Building & Courthouse Renovations	2020-2023	X				Courthouse renovations complete but new admin building was dropped
Jail Renovations	2020-2023		ongoing			Jail renovations are a matter of operations and maintenance and will not be included in the new CWP
Construct Fire Station #12	2020-2023	X				
New Fire Engines	2020-2023	X				
Library Upgrades	2020-2023	X				
Construct South Park Pool	2020-2023				X	Pool project was replaced by a new playground
Construct South Park Infrastructure	2020-2023	X				
Construct Westside Community Center	2020-2023		2028			Awaiting funding. Reworded in new Community Work Program to include the purchase of property
Add infrastructure Edwards Park	2020-2023	X				

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

WHITFIELD COUNTY

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Prepare and implement a unified road development ordinance with Whitfield County, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell.	2020-2022				X	Whitfield County is responsible for all road maintenance except the City of Dalton
Gain at least one more municipality in the Unified Zoning Ordinance	2023				X	Not a priority at this time

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development: The need or opportunity is to:

- ED1** Promote and invest into efforts to improve accessibility to high-speed broadband for both commercial and residential users in areas of low population density
- ED2** As the Carbondale Business Park nears capacity, identify investments in additional land for industrial development according to land use and infrastructure plans
- ED3** Greater expansion and diversification of industries and employment opportunities is needed

Housing: The need or opportunity is to:

- H1** Promote housing opportunities for a diversified array of new housing options and price levels
- H2** Lack of public infrastructure including wastewater currently limits the potential for new housing developments
- H3** Existing housing stock is aging and outdated and is not attracting current buyers
- H4** Whitfield County is a regional leader in industrial and manufacturing employment and there is a great need to provide housing in Whitfield County for all workforce segments, from technicians to high-level management
- H5** Improve infrastructure in underserved portions of the unincorporated county

Transportation: The need or opportunity is to:

- T1** Address aging transportation infrastructure by refurbishing or replacing road infrastructure, with a focus on bridges with low GDOT sufficiency ratings and intersection improvements
- T2** Improve safety, visibility and accessibility of commercial corridors to reduce conflict points and improve the flow of traffic
- T3** Continue investment in roundabout construction at key intersections to improve safety and traffic flow
- T4** For improved safety of roadways and greater cost-effectiveness, upgrade maintenance equipment
- T5** Additional mobility options including expansion of transit is needed to ensure all Whitfield County residents are able to access needed goods and services

Natural and Cultural Resources: The need or opportunity is to:

- NC1** Protect and preserve the county's historical assets and landmarks from adverse impacts associated with future growth
- NC2** Expand access to key historic and cultural resources and add amenities to promote good site usage- trails, restrooms, parking- while preventing adverse impacts
- NC3** Capitalize on the county's abundance of intact Civil War battlefields and associated assets, and add amenities and access as needed
- NC4** Preserve natural greenspace
- NC5** There is a need to expand Parks and Recreation offerings, programs, and facilities. This includes adding new parks and fields, adding new features and amenities to existing parks and fields, and adding lighting and safety features within the parks
- NC6** There is a need for an additional community center to serve western Whitfield County
- NC7** Improve active and passive recreation infrastructure

Community Facilities and Services: The need or opportunity is to:

- CF1** Ensure that public safety departments have the equipment needed to improve the already high level of service throughout the county
- CF2** Continue investing in the county's fire service including renovations, expansion of infrastructure to stations, and equipment for EV needs
- CF2** Ensure residents have access to animal welfare information
- CF4** Address the issues regarding aging public buildings via renovation or reconstruction

Land Use: The need or opportunity is to:

- LU1** Update ordinances to comply with new requirements and to create more fluidity and easier administration as development steadily increases

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028									
WHITFIELD COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	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	Legal Fees, General Fund	Community Development
ED-1	Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance		X				\$1,000	General Fund	Community Development
ED-2 ED-3	Purchase 50-100 acres of property for future industrial development	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000,000	JDA Funds	JDA
HOUSING									
H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5	Expand sewer from Cleveland Highway to serve future housing development		X	X			\$1,000,000	CDS Grant Matching Funds	Community Development Dalton Utilities
TRANSPORTATION									
T-2 T-3	Improvements to Old LaFayette Road along SR 201 to SR 3	X					\$3,200,000	LMIG	County Engineer, Public Works
T-2	Old Tilton Road at Swamp Creek Bridge replacement/upgrades	X					\$1,200,000	LMIG	County Engineer, Public Works

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

WHITFIELD COUNTY

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
T-1 T-2	South Dixie Highway, W. Industrial Blvd. and Foster Road intersection improvements		X				\$1,800,000	LMIG	County Engineer, Public Works
T-1 T-2	Underwood Road, N. Dalton Bypass to Dawnville Road reconstruction		X				\$1,200,000	LMIG	County Engineer, Public Works
T-4	Add an additional mowing crew with a new tractor and Mowing Max machine		X	X			\$450,000	SPLOST Additional Salaries	Public Works
T-3	Houston Valley + Mt. Vernon intersection roundabout	X	X				\$1,000,000	SPLOST	Engineering Dept.
T-4	Brine Spray equipment and batch facility	X	X				\$175,000	General Fund	Public Works
T-5	Purchase three new transit busses			X	X		\$350,000	5307 Funds and 10% Match	Transit Dept.
T-5	Construct additional bus storage at bus barn			X	X		\$20,000	5307 Funds and Match	Transit Dept.
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES									

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

WHITFIELD COUNTY

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
NC-2	Praters Mill new restroom facility	X	X				\$80,000	BIL Grant Match	Parks & Rec
NC-2 NC-4	Praters Mill walking track		X	X			\$50,000	BIL Grant Match	Parks & Rec
NC-2 NC-1	80 additional parking spaces at Praters Mill		X	X			\$100,000	BIL Grant Match	Parks & Rec
NC-7	Tennis Ball and Pickle ball courts at Edwards Park	X	X				\$1,100,000	SPLOST	Parks & Rec
NC-5	LED light retrofit at Edwards Park for walking tracks and parking lot			X			\$1,000,000	SPLOST	Parks & Rec
NC-7	Westside Park soccer field and walking track	X					\$2,700,000	SPLOST	Parks & Rec
NC-2 NC-3 NC-4	Hiking trail at Rocky Face Ridge Battlefield Park and privy	X	X				\$100,000	LWCF + matching funds	Parks & Rec

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

WHITFIELD COUNTY

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
NC-2 NC-1	Additional restroom facilities at Rocky Face Ridge Battlefield Park			X	X		\$200,000	SPLOST	Parks & Rec
NC-6	Purchase property and Construct Westside Community Center			X	X	X	\$6,000,000	SPLOST	Parks & Rec
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES									
CF-1 CF-2 CF-4	Fire Station Renovations	X	X				\$550,000	SPLOST	Fire Dept.
CF-2	Sewer expansion to fire stations			X	X		\$625,000	SPLOST	Fire Dept.
CF-1 CF-2	Water tender for additional water to suppress electric vehicle fires			X			\$895,000	SPLOST, Fire Fund Grant	Fire Dept.
CF-2	Develop and launch an education program aimed at spay and neuter promotion to reduce animal shelter occupancy over time		X	X			\$10,000	Staff Time	Animal Shelter
CF-4	Redesign Senior Center parking lot to improve traffic flow	X	X	X			\$10,000	Staff Time Materials	Senior Center Maintenance Dept.
LAND USE									

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

WHITFIELD COUNTY

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
LU-1	Adopt new parking requirements in the Unified Zoning Ordinance	X	X				\$5,000	Staff Time Legal Fees	Planning and Zoning

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.



Previously utilized as the Town Clerk's Office, this building is now home to a gourmet ice cream parlor in the town center

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 by ensuring these new investments are appropriately scaled to maintain the character of our small town.

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.

Consider scale capability of new commercial development to ensure that said development compliments the existing character of the town.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

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.

Continue to add streetlights as the community grows



Since 2018, Cohutta's quaint town center has been transformed from vacant buildings to a thriving business district with more investment expected to follow. See photos above illustrating the revitalization of underutilized and vacant commercial buildings along Wolfe St.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

TOWN of COHUTTA

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Coordinate with Dalton Utilities to extend Optilink infrastructure to the residential and commercial areas of town.	2020		2028			
Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Cohutta	2020	X				
Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance	2020		2025			
Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program	2022				X	Funding no longer available
TRANSPORTATION						
Improve Parking areas in the town center, streetscapes, new striping for on and off-street parking	2023		2026			New light posts installed and striping completed as well as a new crosswalk. Project reworded for streetscape and moved to economic development in new CWP
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

TOWN of COHUTTA

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Apply for a National Register Historic District for Andrew's Chapel and associated grounds and structures.	2020				X	Building stabilization and repair takes precedence at this time
Prepare and install interpretive signage for existing historic structures (possibly link with trails and Scenic Byway).	2023		2027			
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Upgrade Garbage Truck	2020		2026			
Coordinate with Dalton Utilities to extend Sewer infrastructure to the residential and commercial areas of town.	2020	X				
Waste containers for residences	2020		2026			
Upgrade lighting along the walking track	2022	X				
Technology hardware and software upgrades for Town Hall and public works	2020	X				
Create a Cohutta Welcome sign	2021		2025			

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

TOWN of COHUTTA

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Update the town of Cohutta website with links to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	2021	X				
Prepare and adopt a façade ordinance	2023	X				
Amend subdivision regulations for conservation design criteria.	2023	X				

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development: The need or opportunity is to:

- ED1** There is a need to improve the appearance and connectivity of downtown infrastructure to attract and retain businesses and customers
- ED2** Broadband speeds and availability can be improved through partnerships with providers and participation in Georgia's Broadband Ready program
- ED3** While Cohutta is a small town, resources can still be relatively spread out and not walkable. Improvement in connectivity is needed from recreation assets to central Cohutta

Natural and Cultural Resources: The need or opportunity is to:

- NR1** Preserve the heritage and history of Cohutta's African American community
- NR2** The Cohutta-Chattahoochee Scenic Byway is a tourism development tool which can be used to draw visitors and revenues to downtown Cohutta

Community Facilities and Services: The need or opportunity is to:

- CF1** Additional recreation amenities are needed, as are improvements to existing facilities
- CF2** Investment in solid waste services equipment and vehicles are needed
- CF3** Due to a loss of the previous police station, a new station is needed
- CF4** Signage is needed to provide placemaking and to welcome visitors to Cohutta

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028									
TOWN OF COHUTTA									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
ED-1	Bury aerial utility lines in the town center and complete streetscape			X	X		\$500,000	SPLOST ARC Grant	Mayor & Council
ED-2	Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance	X	X				\$1,000	Staff Time & Legal Fees	Mayor & Council
ED-3	Create a master plan to improve and connect recreation assets to the town center		X	X			\$50,000	ARC Grant	Mayor & Council
ED-2	Coordinate with Dalton Utilities to extend Optilink fiberoptic network to the residential and commercial areas of the town.	X	X	X	X	X	\$250,000	Grant Funding	Dalton Utilities
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES									
NR-1	Andrews Chapel stabilization	X	X	X			\$150,000	SPLOST Grants	Mayor & Council
NR-2	Prepare and install interpretive signage for existing historic structures (possibly link with trails and Scenic Byway).			X	X		\$5,000	General Fund	Mayor & Council
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES									

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

TOWN OF COHUTTA

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CF-1	Tennis and pickle ball courts		X	X			\$80,000	LWCF Grant	Mayor & Council
CF-2	Upgrade Garbage Truck			X			\$250,000	SPLOST USDA Grant	Mayor & Council
CF-1	Repave walking track	X					\$50,000	General Fund	Whitfield Public Works
CF-3	Build or lease new police station	X					\$300,000	SPLOST USDA Grant/loan	Mayor & Council
CF-2	Waste containers for residents	X	X	X			\$50,000	General Fund	Mayor and Council
CF-4	Create a Cohutta welcome sign		X	X			\$25,000	SPLOST	Mayor and Council

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:

- Coordination and efficient use and expansion of the City's public facilities and services
- A community offering a variety of alternative transportation connections such as sidewalks, greenway trails, bike lanes, and multi-use corridors
- A thriving and resilient downtown showcasing numerous historic resources that serves as the business/civic center of the community
- The revitalization of blighted commercial centers and aging industrial areas making way for adaptive reuse and redevelopment to serve the needs of the modern economy
- Preserving the character of established neighborhoods and supporting revitalization efforts to increase housing opportunities and neighborhood stability
- Housing options that meet the needs of the entire community



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



Reducing traffic congestion and improving the aesthetics of Dalton's gateway corridors, such as Walnut Ave, continues to be a high priority



Since the 2018 update of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, the City of Dalton has seen continuous investment in the redevelopment of the City's downtown as seen in the above photo of E. Morris Street

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF DALTON

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
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	2020-2021	X				
Improve property values and community safety by destruction or remodel of 30 blighted or unsafe structures	2019-2023		2025			The City has made significant progress on blight removal. This project will evolve into the creation of housing improvement zones in the new CWP
HOUSING						
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	2021-2023	X				
TRANSPORTATION						

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF DALTON

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Retrofit all decorative streets with LED fixtures on Hamilton Street, Pentz Street, City Hall and Cemetery	2020	X				
Install curbing/gutter, sidewalks and drainage on North Thornton Avenue from Tyler Street north to Memorial Drive	2020		2025			
Install mast arm signals and pedestrian signals/crosswalks on Thornton Avenue at Crawford, Cuyler, Morris & Emery Streets intersections	2021		2025			
Streetscape work, such as sidewalks, decorative street lights, trees, new drainage, etc. for remaining portions of Cuyler, Pentz and Gordon Streets	2023		2025			
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	2022		2028			
Gordon Street Bridge structural repairs and upgrades construction phase	2020-2021	X				
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	2023		2027			Fredrick to Grimes St. complete. Green St. to Fredrick St. and Grimes St. to Walnut Ave. remain

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF DALTON

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Facilitate the sale of the historic Dalton Depot into private ownership and ensure its renovation as a historic landmark and commercial space	2020	X				
Restoration of the West Hill Cemetery Chapel	2020	X				
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Renovate John Davis Recreation and community center as rec dept. headquarters and multi-use community center	2021-2022		2024			
Construct walking/bike path between Crown Mill Area and Haig Mill Park	2020		2028			Phase 1 complete
Conduct engineering and survey work for trail connection between Crown Mill Area and Heritage Point Park	2021-2022			2030		Other projects have taken priority. This project, while desired, will not be revisited until 2030
Increase hangar lease space at Dalton Airport by 16 t-hangers, and 4 large hangars	2020-2023		2025			
Acquire property and construct joint public safety training center along abutment rd. adjacent to fire station #2	2021-2023		2027			

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF DALTON

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Construct new City Fire Station (move Station #2) Use existing Station #2 as part of the new public safety training center	2023		2026			
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)	2021-2022				X	Issues with traffic flow resulting from the conversion
Riverwater Drinking Water Treatment Plant Overhaul consisting of a new chemical feed system, new raw water intake structure and pumping station and will construct a new filter building to utilize pressurized membrane filters to replace traditional filter media filtration.	2019-2021	X				
LAND USE						
Annex properties necessary to place Haig Mill Lake Park within corporate limits of Dalton	2020-2021		2024			
Determine a residential/commercial ratio for urban dwellings in Downtown C-3 District	2022	X				

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF DALTON

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Evaluate property tracts within the C-3 District and identify candidate locations for 100% residential dwellings as recommended in the Greater Dalton Housing Strategy	2019-2021		2024			Reworded in new CWP: The Planning Department is developing an Urban PUD to address this issue
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	2022		2024			
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Work with the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government to complete the downtown master plan	2019	X				
Work with the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to complete two of the four properties in the city	2020	X				
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	2021-2023		2028			

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development: The need or opportunity is to:

- ED1** Blight and neglect of residential properties are negatively affecting housing conditions and opportunity for reinvestment
- ED2** Dalton’s historic location on two railroad tracks has also led to noise concerns that can be disruptive to the downtown visitor experience

Housing: The need or opportunity is to:

- H1** To continue to address and improve housing conditions using redevelopment tools including local and state resources, an updated Urban Redevelopment Plan is needed

Transportation: The need or opportunity is to:

- T1** Increasing development, pervious surfaces, and transportation demands call for additional investment in street infrastructure, including sidewalks, curb and gutter, and drainage, to address stormwater, signalization, and pedestrian mobility needs
- T2** Additional investments are also needed in streetscape design, esthetics, and amenities to ensure safe, accessible, attractive connectivity to retail, community services, and parks
- T3** Pedestrian and bicycle connections are needed to link key recreation resources
- T4** Additional mobility options are needed to ensure all Dalton residents are able to access needed goods and services
- T5** Stormwater demands are increasing, and additional resources are required to address identified needs to improve stormwater infrastructure

Natural and Cultural Resources: The need or opportunity is to:

- NR1** Maintaining cemeteries serves a critical community and heritage function
- NR2** To identify recreation needs and allocate resources to serve all Dalton residents, a new parks and recreation master plan is needed
- NR3** There is an increasing need for public resources for mental health

Community Facilities and Services: The need or opportunity is to:

- CF1** Community-facing and internal office and meeting space needs are growing and can be met by upgrading existing facilities for reuse
- CF2** Improvements in airport capacities and services are required to meet changing needs
- CF3** Renovate and reuse existing facilities and add new facilities as needed to meet public safety training requirements
- CF4** Add fire stations and services necessary to maintain and improve level of fire service
- CF5** There is a need to expand recreational offerings and facilities to serve the growing City population. This includes adding new parks, adding new features, courts, and amenities to existing parks and fields, and adding connectivity within the parks

Land Use: The need or opportunity is to:

- LU1** To better serve Dalton residents, bring additional land into City to meet expanding recreation needs
- LU2** Additional planning and land use tools are needed to incentivize redevelopment in key areas
- LU3** Additional planning and land use tools are needed to ensure equitable and high-quality multi-family housing product

Intergovernmental Coordination: The need or opportunity is to:

- IG1** Work with state and federal agencies to address vacant housing units in the city

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028									
CITY OF DALTON									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
ED-1	Creation of housing improvement districts to address blight and incentivize reinvestment		X				\$5,000	General Fund	Code Enforcement
ED-2 H-1	Downtown Railroad quiet zone		X	X			\$2,500,000	SPLOST Grant Funds	City Administrator
HOUSING									
H-1	Update the City's Urban Revitalization Plan	X	X				\$5,000	Staff Time	NWGRC, Housing Authority, Planning and Zoning
TRANSPORTATION									
T-1	Install curbing/gutter, sidewalks and drainage on North Thornton Avenue from Tyler Street north to Memorial Drive		X				\$250,000	SPLOST	Public Works
T-1 T-2 T-3	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

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF DALTON

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
T-1 T-2 T-3	Streetscape work, such as sidewalks, decorative streetlights, trees, new drainage, etc. for remaining portions of Cuyler, Pentz and Gordon Streets		X				\$2,500,000	SPLOST BIL Grant for Cuyler St.	Public Works Street Division
T-1 T-2 T-3	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	SPLOST	Public Works
T-1 T-2 T-3	East Morris St. Improvements: Correct drainage issues, add curb/gutter, add sidewalks and update corridor esthetics from Green St. to Fredrick St. and Grimes St. to Walnut Ave.				X		\$2,000,000	SPLOST	Public Works
T-1 T-2 T-3	Construct walking/bike path between Crown Mill Area and Haig Mill Park	X	X	X	X	X	\$4,500,000	SPLOST &Gen Fund, RTP	Mayor and Council
T-4	Micro On-Demand Transit Study		X				\$20,000	Federal 5307 funds	MPO
T-1 T-4	Construct new sidewalks along N. Thornton Ave. from Tyler St. to the hospital campus			X	X	X	\$4,000,000	SPLOST ARC	Public Works
T-5	Implement Arcadis stormwater management plan including level 1A pipe lining, Bridgewater Apartments flood storage, Olivia Dr. Acquisition and flood zone restoration, Westerly Heights detention ponds, Tar Creek detention ponds, Threadmill Rd.	X	X	X	X	X	\$16,660,000	SPLOST General Fund	Public Works

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF DALTON

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
	improvements, Broadview Terrence flood storage, and stream bank restoration								
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES									
NR-1	West Hill Cemetery Master Plan		X				\$50,000	General Fund	City Administrator
NR-2	Parks and Rec Master Plan			X			\$130,000	ARC Grant, Matching Funds	Parks and Rec
NR-3	Launch Mental Health Response Unit		X				\$250,000	DPD budget	Police Department
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES									
CF-1	Renovate John Davis Recreation and community center as rec dept. headquarters and multi-use community center	X					\$3,000,000	SPLOST & Gen Fund	Parks and Rec
CF-2	Increase hangar lease space at Dalton Airport by 16 t-hangers, and 4 large hangars	X	X				\$1,500,000	SPLOST & Gen Fund	Airport

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF DALTON

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
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	SPLOST	Police and Fire Departments
CF-4	Construct new City Fire Station (move Station #2) Use existing Station #2 as part of the new public safety training center	X	X	X			\$5,500,000	General Fund Public Safety Grant	Fire Department
CF-4	Standard of Cover Fire Service	X					\$30,000	Fire Dept. Budget	Fire Department
CF-5	Heritage Point Park Improvements: Walking trails, shade structures, pedestrian bridges, lights and fencing		X	X			\$3,750,000	Federal Grant, SPLOST	Parks and Rec
CF-5	Create 12-15 new Pickleball courts at Al Rollins and James Brown Park to reduce long wait time at the 6 existing courts			X	X		\$3,500,000	SPLOST LWCF	Parks and Rec
CF-5	New ADA accessible dog park near Broadus-Durkan Complex or Heritage Point Soccer Complex			X	X		\$300,000	SPLOST LWCF	Parks and Rec
CF-5	James Brown Park walking path and pedestrian bridges to connect the parks features		X	X			\$500,000	SPLOST LWCF	Parks and Rec
LAND USE									

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF DALTON

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CF-5 LU-1	Annex properties necessary to place Haig Mill Lake Park within corporate limits of Dalton	X					\$5,000	Staff Time	Asst. City Administrator
LU-2	Develop an Urban PUD to create more opportunities for urban redevelopment	X					\$5,000	Staff Time Legal Fees	Planning & Zoning Department
LU-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					\$5,000	Staff Time Legal Fees	Planning & Zoning Department
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION									
IG-1	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	X	X	\$1,000	Staff Time	NWGRC Housing Authority

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



Historic Tunnel continues to be a focal point of the city and an attraction for both history and railroad enthusiasts



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



The adaptive renovation of the City's historic train depot has become a tremendous success story. Transformed from near ruins, the depot is now a premier event venue for both city residents as well as the general public.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF TUNNEL HILL

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Sewer Expansion: Jordan St to Main St	2020	X				
Sewer Expansion: Harry Griffin Park	2021	X				
Sewer Expansion: Springhill Drive	2022	X				
Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Tunnel Hill	2020		2024			
Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance	2020		2025			
Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program	2022				X	Funding no longer available
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Historic Train Depot Rehabilitation	2020	X				
Adopt GA DNR "Part V" Environmental Ordinances for river corridor, watershed protection and groundwater recharge areas.	2019				X	City is focused on increasing sewer accessibility as a means to address ground and surface water quality
LAND USE						

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

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.	2021	X				

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development: The need or opportunity is to:

- ED1** Promote and invest into efforts to improve accessibility to high speed broadband for both commercial and residential users in areas of low population density
- ED2** Broadband speeds and availability can be improved through partnerships with providers and participation in Georgia's Broadband Ready program.

Transportation: The need or opportunity is to:

- T1** To improve walkability and connectivity throughout town, and to parks and key community features, additional sidewalks are needed.

Community Facilities and Services: The need or opportunity is to:

- CF1** As community interest in racquet sports increases, improvements are needed to aging courts.
- CF2** Park safety improvements are needed to support continued and increased usage.
- CF3** Expanding public sewer availability would provide additional opportunities for business and housing in the vicinity

Land Use: The need or opportunity is to:

- LU1** Improve usability and access to land use tools.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF TUNNEL HILL

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	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 Tunnel Hill	X					\$1,000	Staff time Legal Fees	City Manager NWGRC
ED-2	Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance		X				\$1,000	Staff time Legal Fees	City Manager NWGRC
TRANSPORTATION									
T-1	Varnell Road sidewalks from Spring Hill Dive to Main Street.	X	X				\$50,000	SPLOST General Fund	City Manager
T-1	Sidewalks from Cherry Steet to School Street				X	X	\$75,000	SPLOST General Fund	City Manager
T-1	Sidewalks connecting Tunnel Hill Depot to Main St.			X	X		\$30,000	SPLOST General Fund	City Manager
T-1	Sidewalks connecting School Street to 41 Highway				X	X	\$50,000	SPLOST General Fund	City Manager
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES									

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF TUNNEL HILL

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CF-1	Tennis and Pickleball court rehabilitation and redesign			X	X		\$75,000	LWCF Matching Funds	City Manager
CF-2	City Park fencing		X	X			\$25,000	LWCF Matching Funds	City Manager
CF-3	Sewer expansion to Regal Drive	X	X				\$100,000	SPLOST Grant Funds	City Manager
CF-3	Sewer Expansion to Mt. View Drive		X	X			\$750,000	SPLOST Grant Funds	City Manager
CF-3	Sewer Expansion to Bonifacious Road				X	X	\$1,000,000	SPLOST Grant Funds	City Manager
CF-3	Sewer expansion to Old Lake Road			X	X		\$400,000	SPLOST Grant Funds	City Manager
LAND USE									
LU-1	Digitize the City Zoning Map	X					\$50	General Funds	NWGRC City Manager

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



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



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

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF VARNELL

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Pay off capitalization debt	2020	X				
Pass a Broadband Ordinance covering the process of providing broadband access to the citizens of Varnell	2020	X				
Participate in the Broadband Ready Community Program, with its adopted ordinance	2020		2024			
Apply for funding through the Broadband Ready Program	2022				X	No funding available
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Replace maintenance building	2021				X	Lack of funds
Add dog park	2020			X		
Renovate ball field area	2021			X		
Improve playground at peacock alley	2021		X			
Add sidewalks to springs area to connect the Main Street picnic shelter to the road behind the community center	2021			X		
Pave spring parking lot	2022				X	Stormwater runoff issues

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2019-2023

CITY OF VARNELL

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Sanitation truck to replace existing model	2023	X				
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.	2021				X	Other park projects have taken priority
Add parking cover for city vehicles	2020				X	Will be achieved by new maintenance and police building

LAND USE

Land acquisition of two remaining lots adjacent to existing city property on main street for future expansion	2021			2025		
Add additional facilities to track area such as a splash pad and pavilion large enough for approximately 100 guests	2021			2028		

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

PURCHASE 5 POLICE CAR/EQUIPMENT	2020-2023		2024			
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Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development: The need or opportunity is to:

- ED1** Broadband speeds and availability can be improved through partnerships with providers and participation in Georgia's Broadband Ready program

Community Facilities and Services: The need or opportunity is to:

- CF1** There is a need to expand recreational offerings and facilities to serve the growing City population. This includes adding new parks, renovating and improving equipment and facilities at existing parks, fields, and playgrounds, and adding facilities to existing parks
- CF2** A new public safety and maintenance building is needed due to the city's growth. The city will also add new police vehicles and equipment in phases over the next five year period
- CF3** The city's solid waste services are expanding and new vehicles are needed
- CF4** Expansion of wastewater service to serve new areas is needed
- CF5** To improve walkability and connectivity to parks and community facilities, additional sidewalks are needed
- CF6** Expansion of city facilities is needed to support future needs

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF VARNELL

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
ED-1	Adopt the Broadband Ready Community Program ordinance	X					\$1,000	Legal Fees and staff time	City Manager
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES									
CF-1	Varnell Park	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500,000	SPLOST Grants	City Manager
CF-2 CF-6	New maintenance and police operations building			X	X		\$600,000	SPLOST	Public Works
CF-3	New Garbage Truck					X	\$450,000	General Fund	City Manager
CF-2 CF-6	Add two police cars to account for city growth				X	X	\$130,000	General Fund	Police Dept.
CF-4	Marla Drive sewer expansion		X	X			\$300,000	SPLOST Grant	City Manager
CF-1 CF-6	Playground equipment expansion at City Hall Park	X	X	X			\$50,000	SPLOST	City Manager

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2024-2028

CITY OF VARNELL

Need/ Opportunity Code:	Activity Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
CF-1	Add dog park	X	X				\$20,000	LWCF SPLOST	City Manager
CF-1	Renovate ball field area	X	X	X			\$250,000	SPLOST LWCF	City Manager
CF-1	Improve playground equipment at peacock alley	X	X				\$100,000	SPLOST LWCF	City Manager
CF-5	Add sidewalks to springs area to connect the Main Street picnic shelter to the road behind the community center		X	X			\$30,000	SPLOST RTP	City Manager
CF-1 CF-6	Land acquisition of two remaining lots adjacent to existing city property on main street for future expansion			X			\$250,000	SPLOST	City Manager
CF-1 CF-6	Add additional facilities to track area such as a splash pad and pavilion large enough for approximately 100 guests				X	X	\$100,000	SPLOST	City Manager
CF-2 CF-6	Purchase 5 police cars & equipment	X					\$60,000	SPLOST General Fund	Police Dept.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY VISION SURVEY

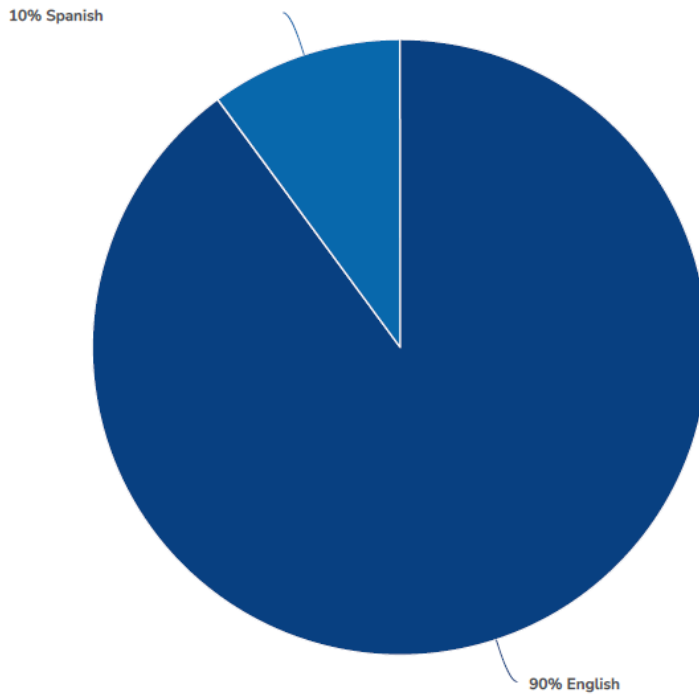
Report for Whitfield County Community Vision Survey

Response Counts



Totals: 1,167

1. Which language?



Value	Percent	Responses
English	89.9%	1,043
Spanish	10.1%	117

Totals: 1,160

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

2. Which community best describes where you live? (Check only one)

Value	Percent	Responses
City of Dalton	33.1%	320
North Whitfield County	19.2%	186
South Whitfield County	11.5%	111
Another county; List Other County	9.4%	91
West Whitfield County	8.1%	78
City of Varnell	6.2%	60
City of Tunnel Hill	5.3%	51
Town of Cohutta	3.8%	37
East Whitfield County	3.5%	34

Totals: 968

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

3. In what community do you work? (Check only one)

Value	Percent	Responses
City of Dalton	48.1%	464
Unincorporated Whitfield County	19.1%	184
Retired or otherwise not working	13.7%	132
Work from home	6.6%	64
Another county; List other county	5.8%	56
City of Varnell	3.4%	33
City of Tunnel Hill	1.9%	18
Town of Cohutta	1.3%	13

Totals: 964

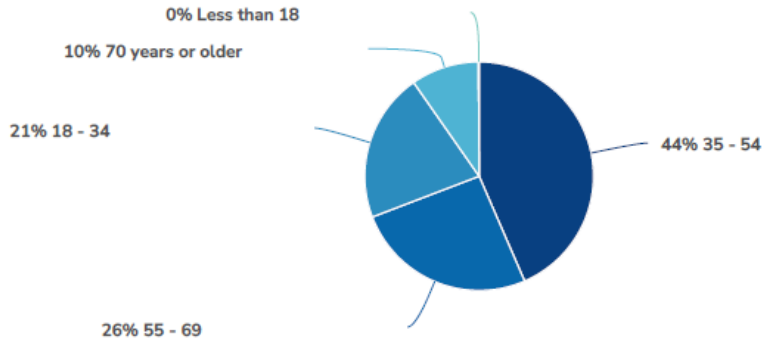
4. What best describes your employment?

Value	Percent	Responses
Education	30.6%	289
Other	23.1%	218
Manufacturing/Industrial	12.4%	117
Professional Services such as legal, financial, etc.	11.4%	108
Government	9.0%	85
Medical	5.4%	51
Retail	2.6%	25
Construction	2.5%	24
Food Service/Restaurant	2.0%	19
Automotive	1.0%	9

Totals: 945

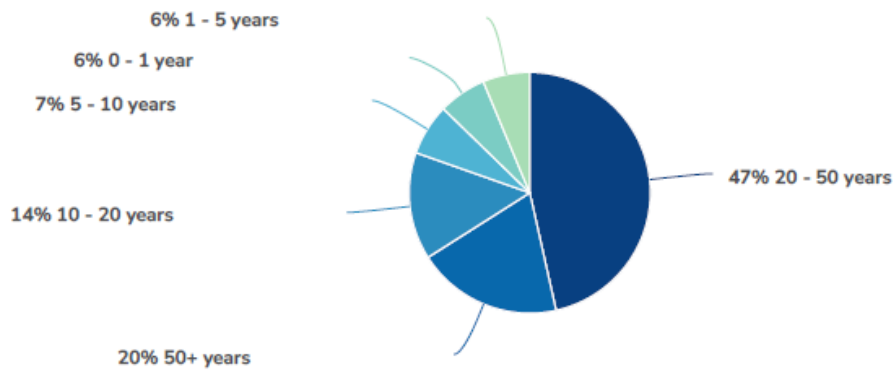
Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

5. What is your age? (Check only one)



Value	Percent	Responses
35 - 54	43.5%	420
55 - 69	25.7%	248
18 - 34	21.1%	204
70 years or older	9.6%	93
Less than 18	0.1%	1
		Totals: 966

6. How long have you lived in Whitfield County? (Check only one)



Value	Percent	Responses
20 - 50 years	46.5%	444
50+ years	19.5%	186
10 - 20 years	14.4%	137
5 - 10 years	6.9%	66
0 - 1 year	6.4%	61
1 - 5 years	6.3%	60

Totals: 954

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

7. What do you like about Whitfield County (including the cities)? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Responses
Small town atmosphere	64.2%	614
Local businesses and restaurants	59.4%	568
Scenic views and natural wildlife assets	51.4%	491
Friendly and helpful neighbors	48.2%	461
Public schools and libraries	46.0%	440
Good EMS, fire and police protection	43.2%	413
Outdoor activities (fishing, hiking, paddling, etc.)	42.9%	410
Access to hospital facilities	35.9%	343
Cultural diversity	35.1%	336
Accessible public buildings and parks	32.6%	312
Many neighborhood churches	30.4%	291
Lots of active recreation (sports-related)	28.8%	275
Educational opportunities (post high school)	28.7%	274
Career opportunities	20.5%	196
Philanthropy	16.8%	161
Variety of housing choices	8.9%	85

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

8. What don't you like about Whitfield County (including the cities)? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Responses
Blight and unkept properties	43.2%	412
Not enough housing options	37.9%	361
Lack of entertainment for all ages	37.3%	355
Not enough major retail stores	35.3%	336
Limited public transportation	32.0%	305
Young professionals leaving	30.8%	294
Lack of sidewalks/bike lanes	29.1%	277
Lack of job diversity	25.8%	246
Poor access to high-speed internet broadband	25.8%	246
Not enough good jobs	23.9%	228
Not enough local stores and restaurants	23.7%	226
Too much litter	23.5%	224
Loss of scenic views and natural areas to growth	23.3%	222
Lack of growth	22.6%	215
Concerns over local schools	20.6%	196
Lack of public sewer	19.8%	189
Too much development	18.4%	175
Lack of diversity in community involvement	16.6%	158
Too much traffic	16.5%	157
Inadequate public services	10.4%	99


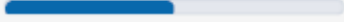
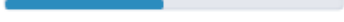
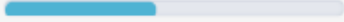
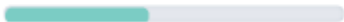
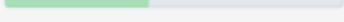
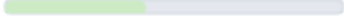
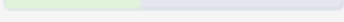
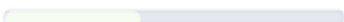
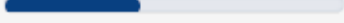
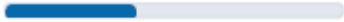
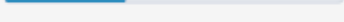
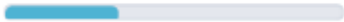
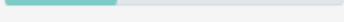
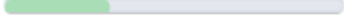
9. What types of management actions would you support for future development? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Responses
Agricultural and forest conservation	50.7%	464
Provide sidewalks/bike lanes	44.7%	409
Limiting mountain slope development	30.1%	275
Stronger land use regulations/zoning	28.9%	264
Limiting development in floodplains	24.0%	220
Lower density in planned rural areas	23.9%	219
Requiring stream buffers	21.9%	200
Acquisition of land for public uses	21.5%	197
Growth limitation boundaries	18.0%	165
Higher density in planned city areas	15.5%	142
Limiting total annual development	13.9%	127
None	11.0%	101
Higher density in planned rural areas	8.2%	75

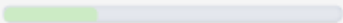
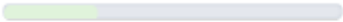
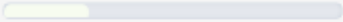
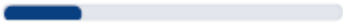
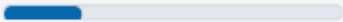
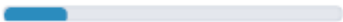


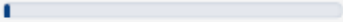
10. What type of housing are you interested in seeing developed in your community? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Responses
Workforce/affordable housing	53.4%	505
More housing catering to the needs of retirees and /or seniors	38.4%	363
Owner-occupied homes with large lots	36.2%	342
More rental housing options	24.6%	233
Townhouses/Condos	23.8%	225
Assisted living/long-term care facilities	21.0%	199
High-end housing developments	16.1%	152
Large planned subdivisions	15.8%	149
More apartments	14.2%	134
None	13.2%	125

11. What types of projects would you support to make Whitfield County better place? (Check all that apply)

Value	Percent	Responses
Improvements to transportation infrastructure such as: roads, intersections, street lighting, etc.	50.2% 	478
Removal of blighted buildings for new development	49.5% 	472
Invest in beautifying highways such as Walnut Avenue, Glenwood Avenue, and Cleveland Highway	46.6% 	444
Invest into the downtowns to preserve historic landmarks, improve walkability, increase parking, etc.	44.7% 	426
Projects aimed at improving education	43.2% 	412
Protect more scenic open spaces and woodlands	42.9% 	409
Increase and improve public water and sewer infrastructure	42.0% 	400
Improve high speed internet broadband access throughout county	39.8% 	379
Preserve more farms & agricultural land	39.6% 	377
Better access to behavioral health treatment	39.5% 	376
Recruit more local businesses	39.2% 	374
Improvements in public parks such as: parking, trails, signs, and other amenities	35.6% 	339
More sidewalks and bike lanes	34.3% 	327
Increase outdoor recreation	32.9% 	314
Recruit more commercial retail and dining businesses	30.7% 	293

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

Value	Percent	Responses
Invest in and improve public safety	28.1% 	268
Enhanced public transportation program	27.8% 	265
Incentives for new housing development	24.7% 	235
Increase number of free public Wifi locations	23.4% 	223
More strict land use ordinances to control future growth	22.6% 	215
Increase efforts to promote tourism	19.0% 	181
Recruit more industrial and manufacturing companies	16.4% 	156
More community owned industrial parks	8.9% 	85
None of the above	1.8% 	17

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

12. In your opinion, what is the most significant issue to Whitfield County and its four municipalities? (Check only one)

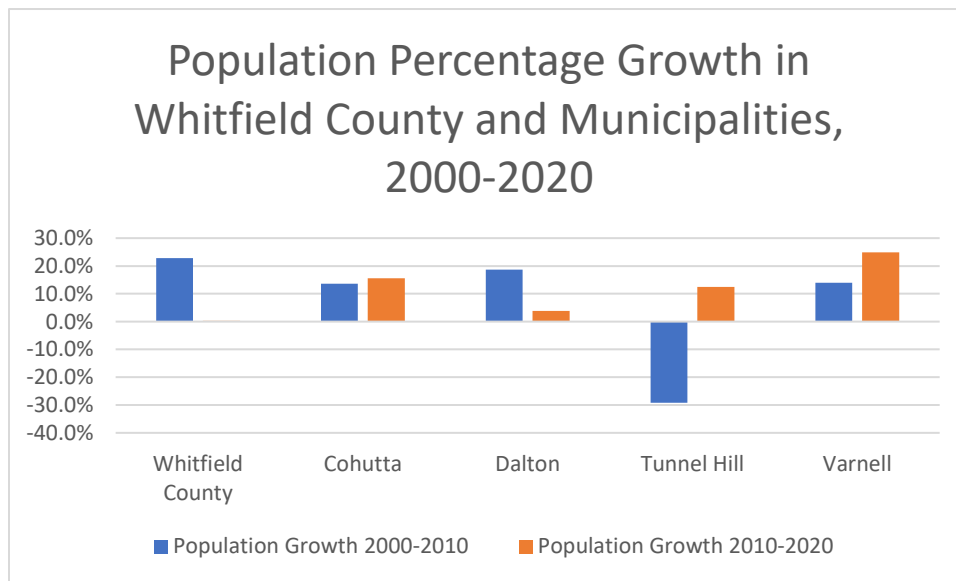
Value	Percent	Responses
Not enough housing options	13.0%	122
Not enough good jobs	11.0%	103
Young professionals leaving	9.2%	86
Blight and unkept properties	8.9%	83
Lack of growth	7.5%	70
Too much development	7.5%	70
Lack of job diversity	5.4%	51
Lack of entertainment for all ages	4.3%	40
Concerns over local schools	4.2%	39
Poor access to high-speed internet broadband	4.1%	38
Too much traffic	3.7%	35
Loss of scenic views and natural areas to growth	3.3%	31
Lack of public sewer	3.1%	29
Limited public transportation	3.1%	29
Not enough local stores and restaurants	2.7%	25
Not enough major retail stores	2.7%	25
Too much litter	2.0%	19
Lack of sidewalks/bike lanes	1.7%	16
Lack of diversity in community involvement	1.5%	14
Inadequate public services	1.2%	11

Totals: 936

APPENDIX B: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

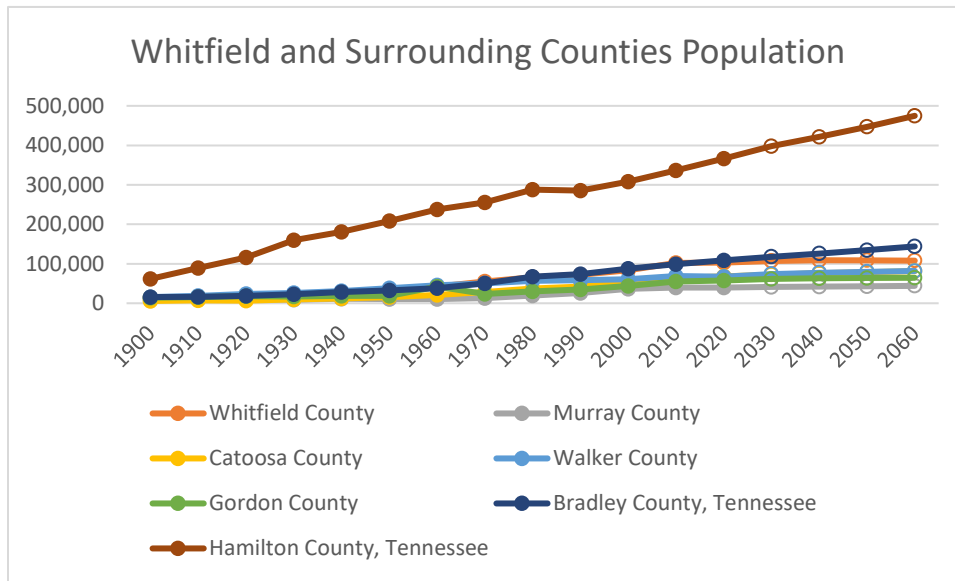
Population

Whitfield County, Georgia is part of the fifteen-county Northwest Georgia Regional Commission planning region. Murray County is located to the east, Walker County is located to the southwest, Murray County is located to the west, Gordon County is located to the south, Bradley County, Tennessee is located to the north, and Hamilton County, Tennessee is located to the northwest. The county is approximately 291 square miles in area and has a population of 102,864 according to the 2020 Census. There are four municipalities in the county, Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell. Cohutta is 4.92 square miles and has a population of 764. Dalton is 21.16 square miles and has a population of 34,417. Tunnel Hill is 1.98 square miles and has a population of 963. Varnell is 3.83 square miles and has a population of 2,179.



Population Growth in Whitfield County and its Municipalities Between 2000 and 2020. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census Official Publications, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/decennial-publications.2020.html>; "Table P1: Race," <https://data.census.gov>

Whitfield County and all four municipalities experienced population growth between 2010 and 2020. This growth ranged from Whitfield County’s 0.3% to Varnell’s 24.9%. Three of the four municipalities experienced larger population growth between 2010 and 2020 than between 2000 and 2010. These three were Cohutta, which went from 13.6% growth to 15.6% growth, Tunnel Hill, which went from a 29.2% decline to 12.5% growth, and Varnell, which went from 13.9% growth to 24.9% growth. The county declined from 22.8% growth to 0.3% growth while Dalton went from 18.7% growth to 3.9% growth.



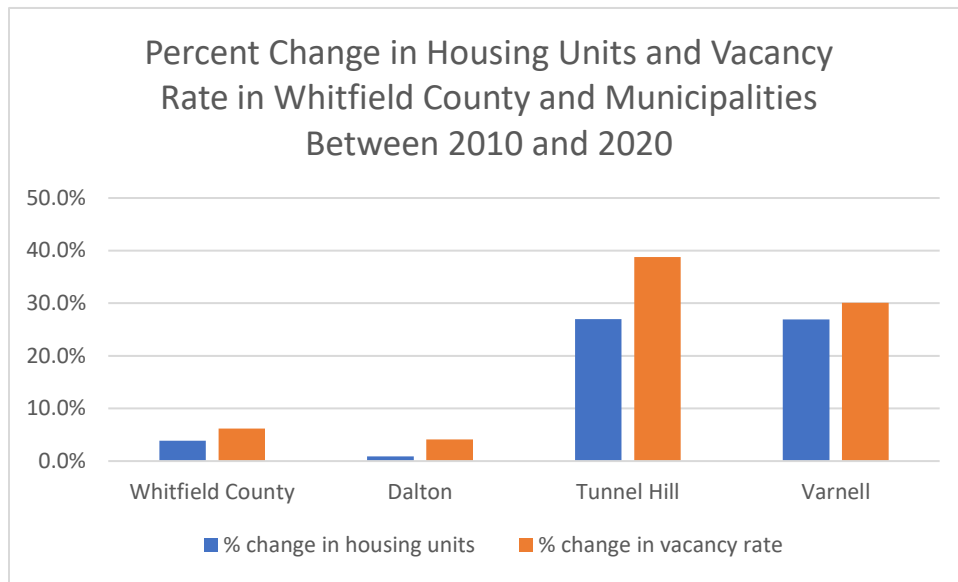
Population of Whitfield and adjacent Counties from the US Census 1900 Decennial count through 2020, followed by population projections from the Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, 2021 projections and population projections from the University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2022 projections. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Official Publications, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/decennial-publications.2020.html>, Table P1: Race, <https://data.census.gov>, Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, <https://opb.georgia.gov/census-data/population-projections>, and Boyd Center Population Projections, <https://tnsdc.utk.edu/estimates-and-projections/boyd-center-population-projections/>

Whitfield and all neighboring counties are expected to increase in population between 2020 and 2060. Hamilton, Bradley, and Walker counties are expected to have the largest increases numerically at 108,570, 35,291, and 14,239, respectively. Murray, Whitfield, and Gordon counties are expected to have the smallest increases numerically at 4,083, 5,171, and 7,029, respectively.

Housing

According to the 2016-2020 5-year American Community Survey (ACS), there are 40,236 housing units in Whitfield County, of which 253 are in Cohutta, 13,250 are in Dalton, 419 are in Tunnel Hill, and 702 are in Varnell.

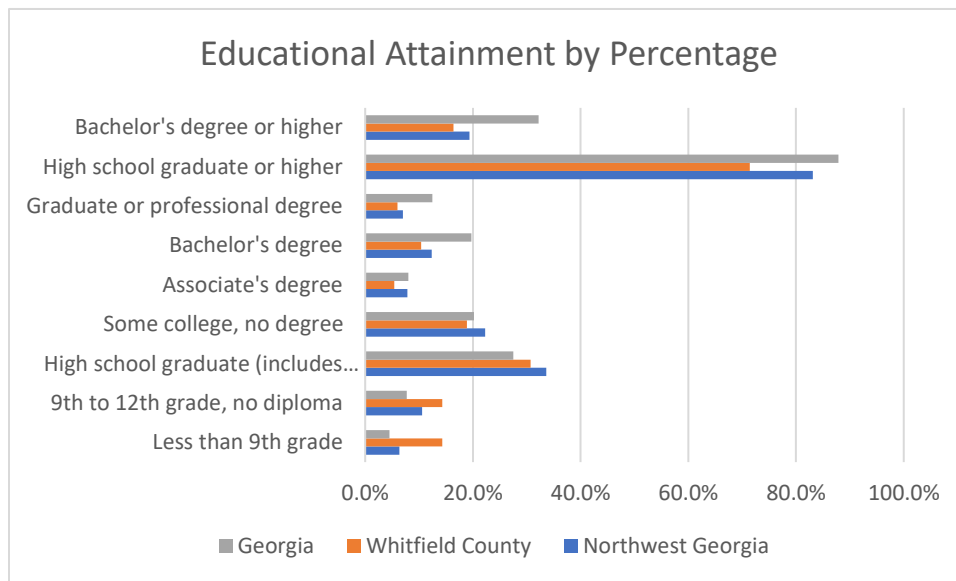
The vacancy rate in Whitfield County is 9.5%. Dalton is the only municipality that has a higher vacancy rate at 11.1%. Tunnel Hill has the lowest vacancy rate at 1.0%.



Housing Units and Vacancy Rate in 2010 and 2020, Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, "Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics," <https://data.census.gov>

Whitfield County and the three municipalities for which 2010 data could be located experienced an increase in both housing units and vacancy rates between 2010 and 2020 according to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 2016-2020 ACS. 2010 data for Cohutta was not located, so it is unknown how its housing situation has changed in the past decade. Whitfield County and Dalton had small increases in housing and vacancy rates while Tunnel Hill and Varnell had large increases.

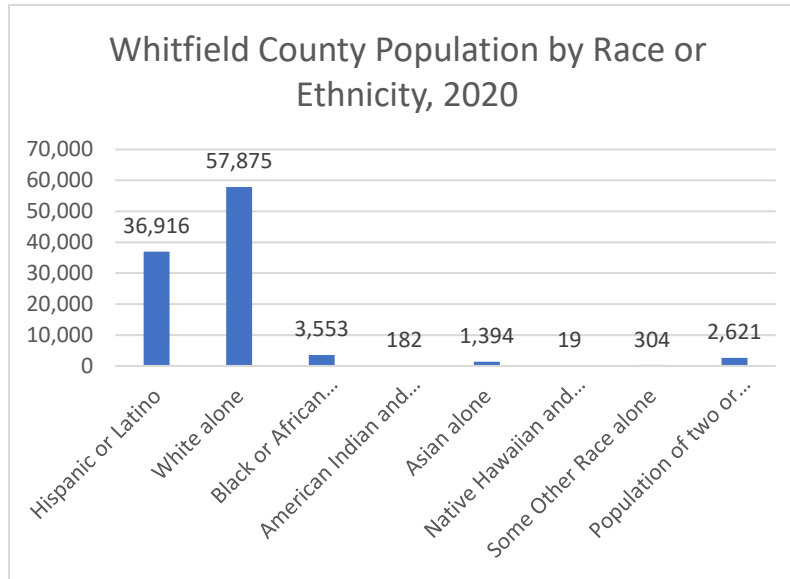
Education



Educational attainment comparisons for Whitfield County, Northwest Georgia, and Georgia levels for those 25 and older. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, "Table DP02. Selected Social Characteristics." <http://data.census.gov>

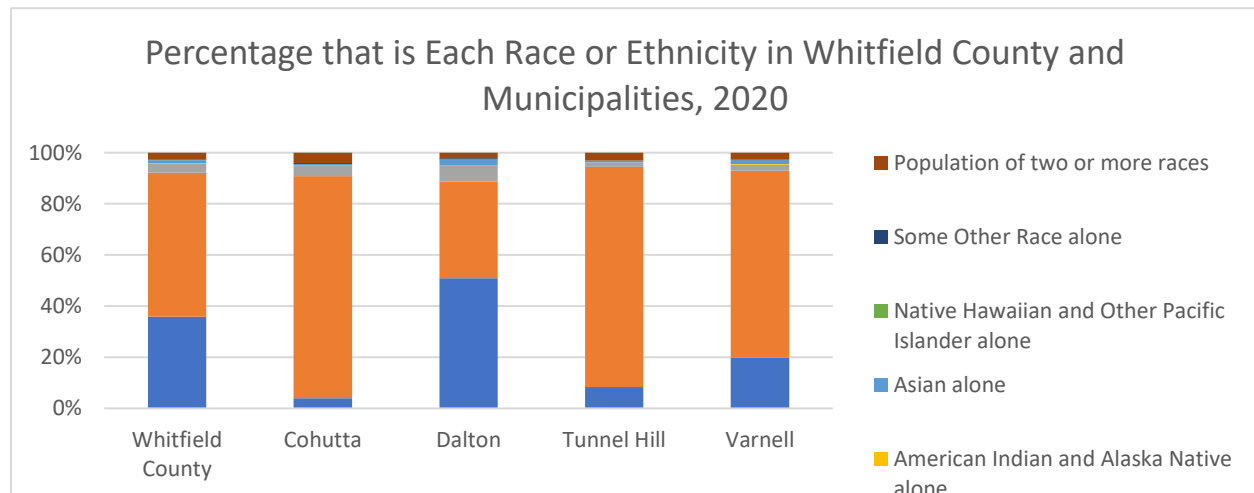
Educational attainment is important for each community of the Northwest Georgia region, as it provides for greater employment opportunities, attracts businesses, and increases the overall contentment of residents. Whitfield County has significantly lower levels of education than both the region and the state, having more people with less than 9th grade education or between 9th and 12th grade than either the state or the region and having less people with a high school degree, less people with some college, less people with an associate’s degree, less people with a bachelor’s degree, and less people with a graduate or professional degree. This leaves the county less attractive than the Northwest Georgia region and the state of Georgia in terms of attracting employers that are looking for an educated workforce.

Race and Ethnicity



Population of Whitfield County and Municipalities by Race or Ethnicity. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census, "Table P2: Hispanic or Latino." <https://data.census.gov>

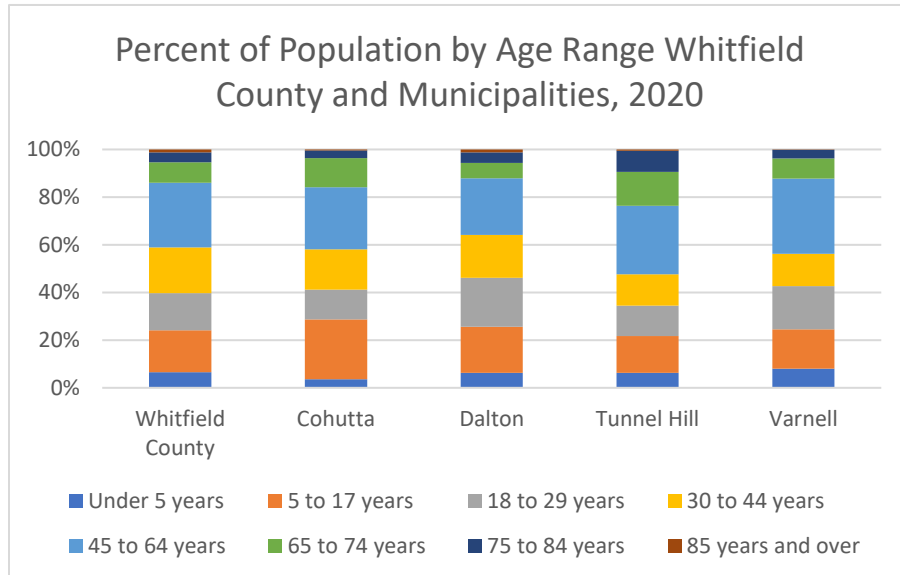
A small majority of the people in Whitfield County are non-Hispanic White. Hispanic or Latino people make up most of the rest of the residents of the county. Smaller portions of the county are non-Hispanic Black or African American, non-Hispanic Asian, or non-Hispanic and of two or more races.



Percentage of Each Race and Ethnicity in Whitfield County and Municipalities by Race or Ethnicity. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census, "Table P2: Hispanic or Latino." <https://data.census.gov>

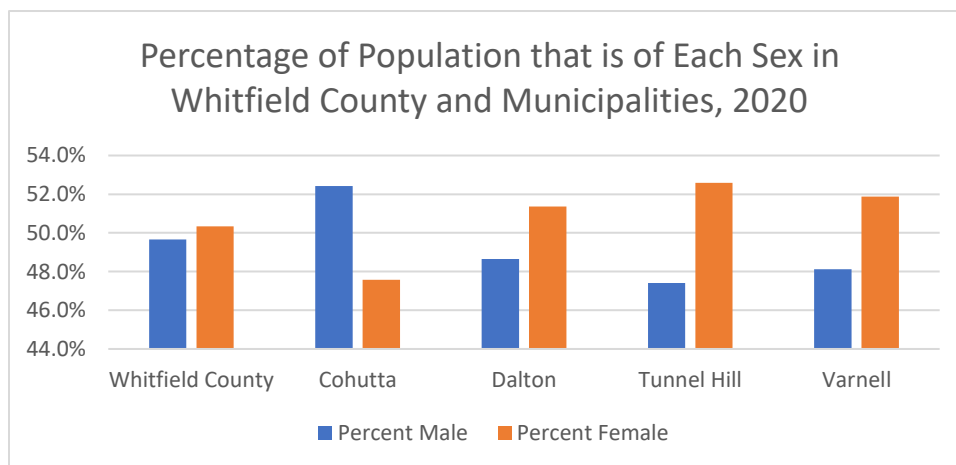
Just like with the county, three of Whitfield County's four municipalities have majority non-Hispanic White populations. Cohutta, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell have more than 70% non-Hispanic White populations, even more than the 56.3% figure for the county. As a result, their Hispanic populations are significantly smaller at 3.9%, 8.3%, and 19.9%, respectively, compared to the county's 35.9%. Dalton has significantly larger percentage of the population that is Hispanic and a significantly smaller percentage of the population that is non-Hispanic White at 50.8% and 37.9%, respectively.

Age and Sex



Age of Population in Whitfield County and Municipalities, 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, "Table S0101: Age and Sex." <https://data.census.gov>

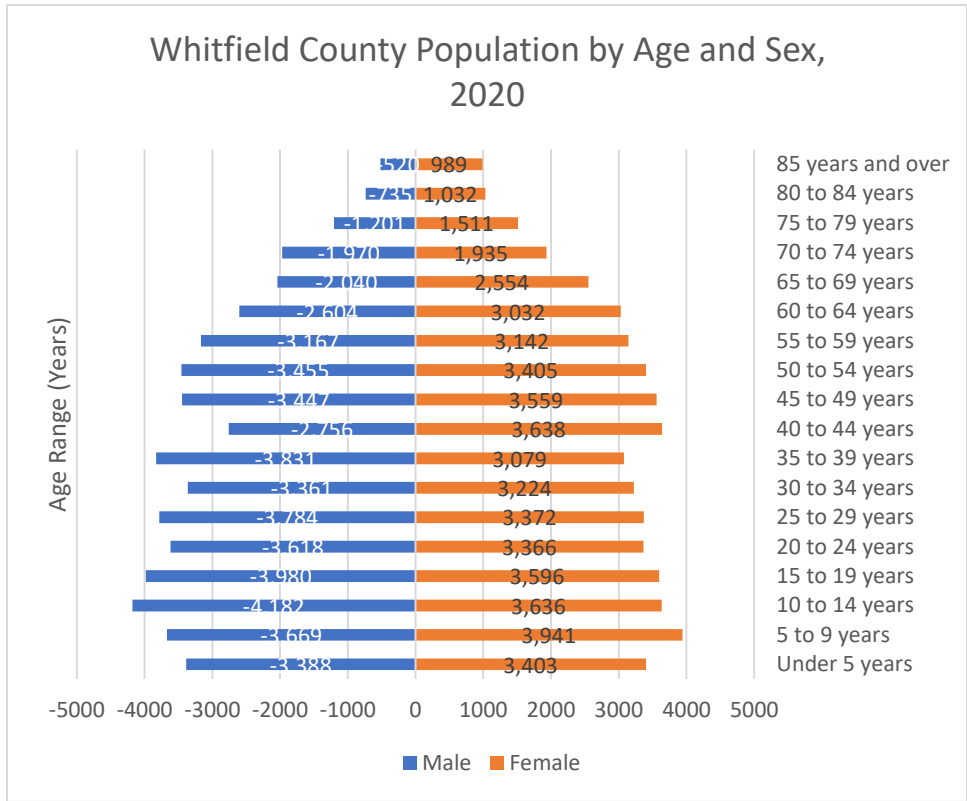
Most of the population in Whitfield County is between 5 and 64 years old. The largest share of any one age group is 45-64 at 27.7% of the population. Tunnel Hill has a significantly larger percentage of the population that is 65 or older than the county at 23.7% compared to 13.9% for the county. This is due to having a significantly larger share of the population between 65 and 84 at 23.1% compared to the county's 13.0%. Cohutta has a significantly larger share of the population that is between 5 and 17 at 25.1% compared to the county's 18.0%.



Percentage of the Population of Whitfield County and Municipalities that is of Each Sex, 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. "Table S0101. Age and Sex." <http://data.census.gov>

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028

The population of Whitfield County is almost entirely split evenly between men and women, 49.7% are male and 50.3% are female. Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell have larger shares of the population that are female at 51.4%, 52.6%, and 51.9%. Cohutta has a majority male population at 52.4%.



Whitfield County Population by Age and Sex, 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. "Table S0101. Age and Sex." <http://data.census.gov>

The data indicates that there is currently a healthy balance between the sexes at most age ranges in Whitfield County, with only the 40-44 age range having a noticeable gap. The chart indicates that aging is not currently a large problem in the county and is unlikely to be a serious problem in the next few decades given the relatively even spread across all 5-year intervals before age 65.

Economics

Income

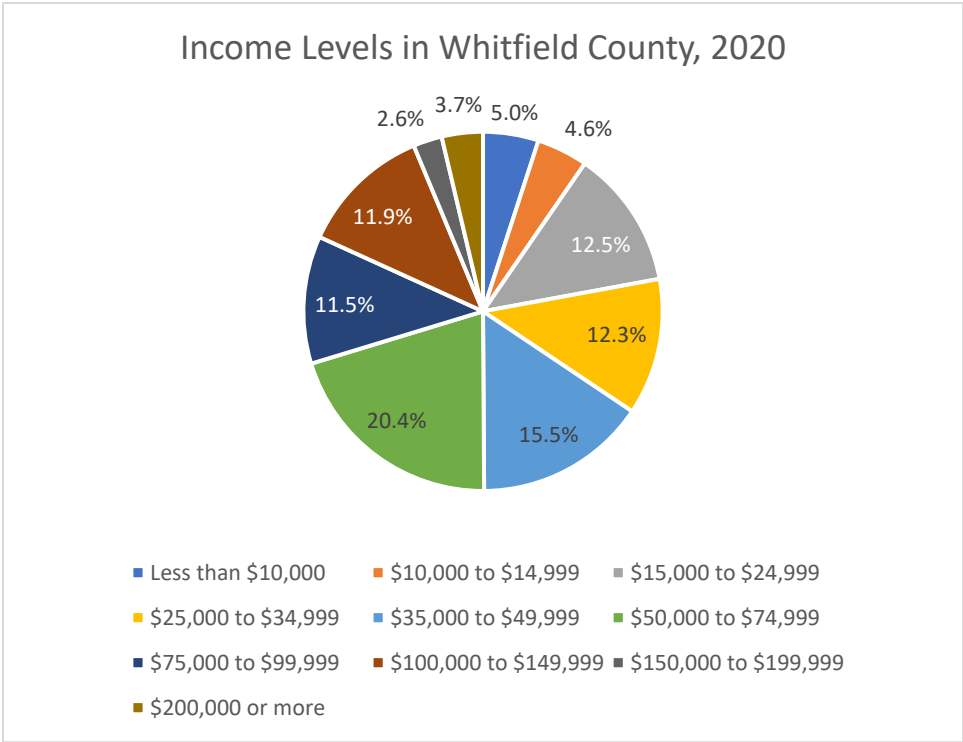
According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the mean household income level in Whitfield County is \$67,316 and the per-capita income is \$24,361.

Median Household Income Levels

<u>Location</u>	<u>Median Income</u>
Whitfield County, Georgia	50,055
Murray County, Georgia	51,133
Catoosa County, Georgia	58,932
Walker County, Georgia	46,601
Gordon County, Georgia	48,662
Bradley County, Tennessee	51,872
Hamilton County, Tennessee	56,606
Cohutta city, Georgia	52,396
Dalton city, Georgia	46,894
Tunnel Hill city, Georgia	50,859
Varnell city, Georgia	63,693
Georgia	61,224

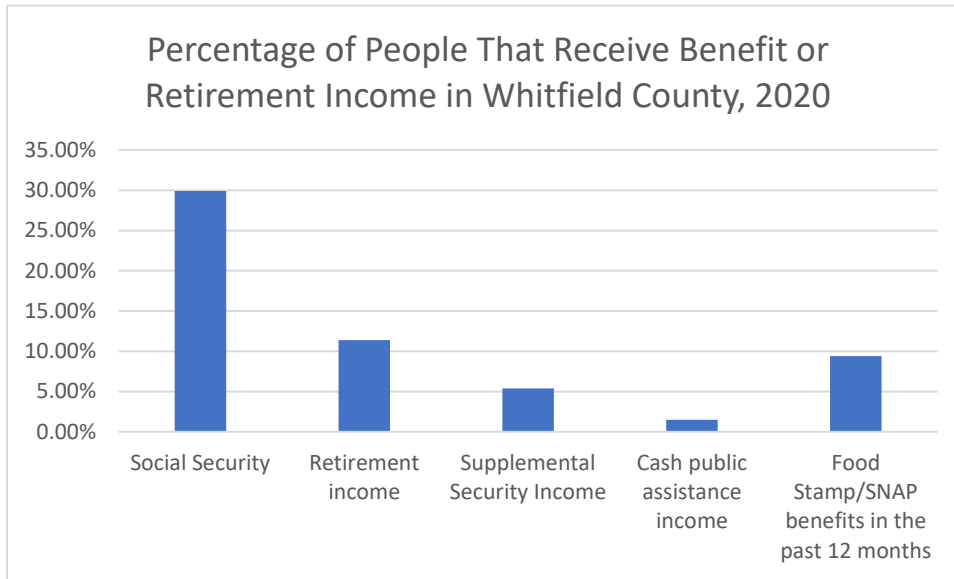
Median Household Income in Whitfield County, Surrounding Counties, Georgia, and Whitfield County Municipalities, 2016-2020. Source: "Table B19013: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)." <http://data.census.gov>

The median household income in Whitfield County is \$50,055, which is higher than two of the seven neighboring counties and lower than the state. Cohutta, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell have higher median household incomes than the county while Dalton has a lower median household income.



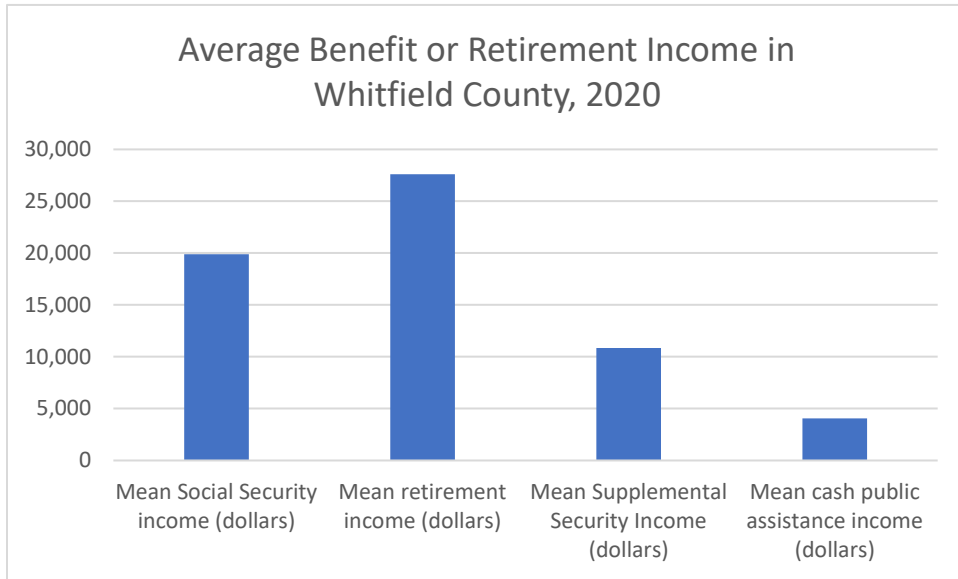
Income Levels in Whitfield County, 2016-2020. Source: "Table S1901: Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)." <http://data.census.gov>

The most common income level in Whitfield County is between \$50,000 and \$74,999 at 20.4%. The other common income levels are between \$35,000 and \$49,999 at 15.5%, between \$15,000 and \$24,999 at 12.5%, between \$25,000 and \$34,999 at 12.3%, between \$100,000 and \$149,999 at 11.9%, and between \$75,000 and \$99,999 at 11.5%.



Percentage of People That Receive Benefit. Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. "Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics." <http://data.census.gov>

The most common form of benefit or retirement income tracked by the American Community Survey in Whitfield County was Social Security at 29.9%. The next most common form was retirement income at 11.4%. Supplemental Security Income and cash public assistance income and food stamp/SNAP benefits were significantly rarer at 5.4% and 1.5%, respectively.



Percentage of People That Receive Benefit. Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. "Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics." <http://data.census.gov>

The average Social Security and retirement incomes in Whitfield County were \$19,902 and \$27,597, respectively. This is significantly lower than average incomes in the area, even combined, likely indicating reliance on additional forms of income in retirement. Similarly, the even lower \$4,062 average cash public assistance income indicates that it can only act as a supplement to other forms of income.

Poverty

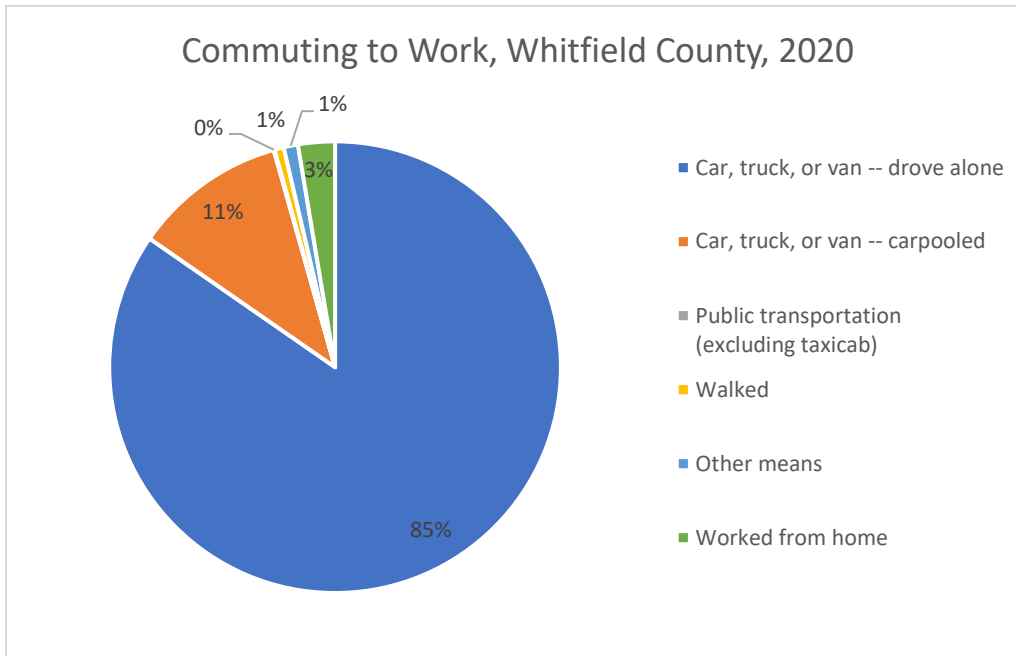
Poverty Income Level

<u>Location</u>	<u>Percent Below Poverty Level</u>
Whitfield County, Georgia	16.20%
Murray County, Georgia	16.00%
Catoosa County, Georgia	9.00%
Walker County, Georgia	15.10%
Gordon County, Georgia	15.90%
Bradley County, Tennessee	15.60%
Hamilton County, Tennessee	12.60%
Cohutta city, Georgia	3.90%
Dalton city, Georgia	20.90%
Tunnel Hill city, Georgia	7.90%
Varnell city, Georgia	8.00%
Georgia	14.30%

Percentage of People Below Poverty Level in Whitfield County, Municipalities, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia, 2016-2020. Source: "Table S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months." <http://data.census.gov>

The poverty rate in Whitfield County is 16.2%, which is higher than all six adjacent counties and the state. The poverty level in Cohutta, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell is lower than the county while the poverty level in Dalton is higher. The poverty rate for people below the age of 18 in Whitfield County is 24.7%.

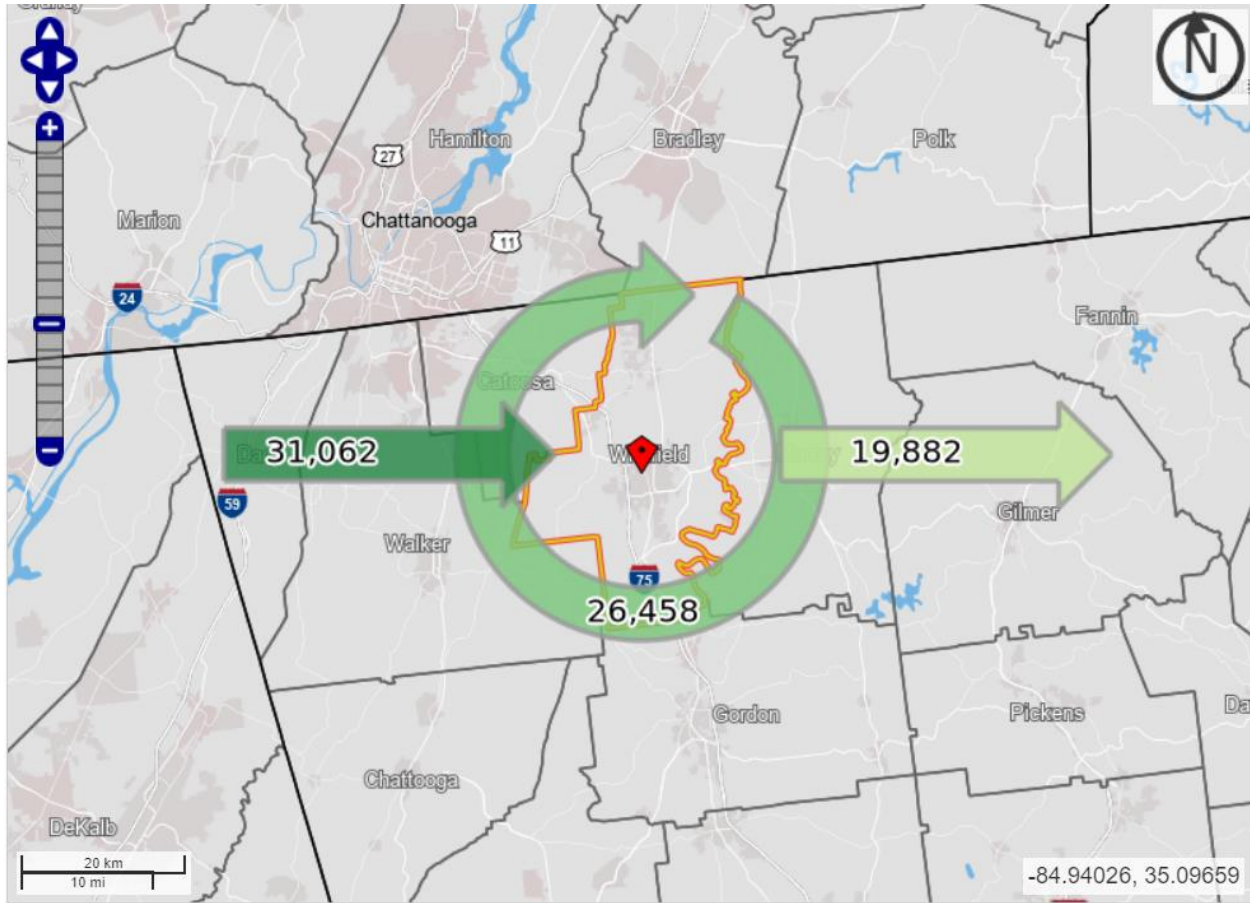
Commuting



Commuting to Work, Whitfield County, 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. "Table B08006: Sex of Workers by Means of Transportation to Work." <http://data.census.gov>

85% of workers in Whitfield County commuted solo by car, truck, or van. The other common methods of commuting were carpooling at 11%.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, On The Map, Whitfield County 2019.
<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

26,458 out of 57,520 or 46.0% workers employed in Whitfield County also live in the county while 31,062 or 54.0% live outside the county. 26,458 out of 46,340 or 57.1% of people living in Whitfield County are also employed in the county while 19,882 or 42.9% are employed outside the county.

Employment

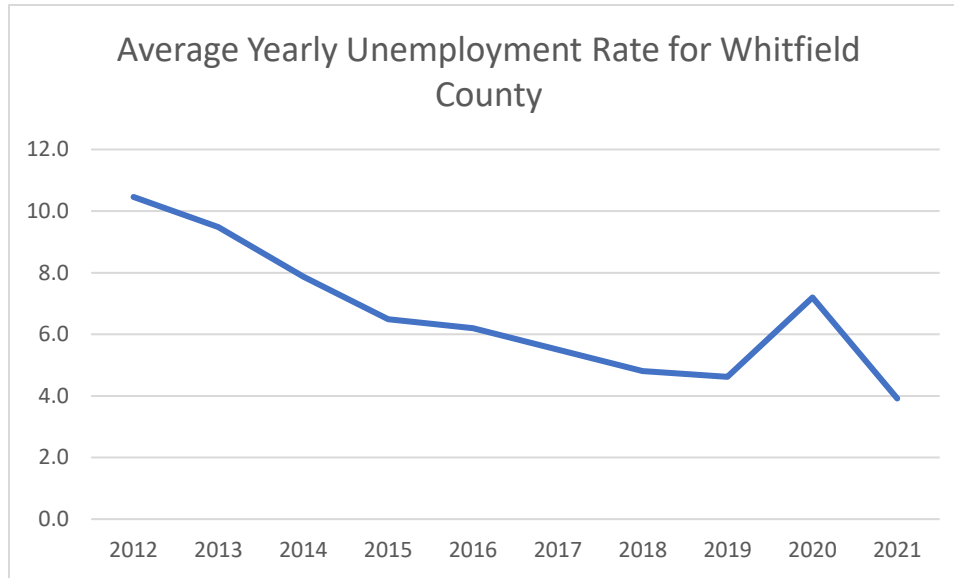
Local Unemployment Rate

<u>Location</u>	<u>Unemployment Rate</u>
Whitfield County, Georgia	6.00%
Murray County, Georgia	6.50%
Catoosa County, Georgia	3.50%
Walker County, Georgia	6.80%
Gordon County, Georgia	3.50%
Bradley County, Tennessee	5.40%
Hamilton County, Tennessee	4.60%
Cohutta city, Georgia	0.00%
Dalton city, Georgia	5.00%
Tunnel Hill city, Georgia	2.50%
Varnell city, Georgia	8.10%
Georgia	5.60%

Local Unemployment Rate. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. "Table S2301: Employment Status." <http://data.census.gov>

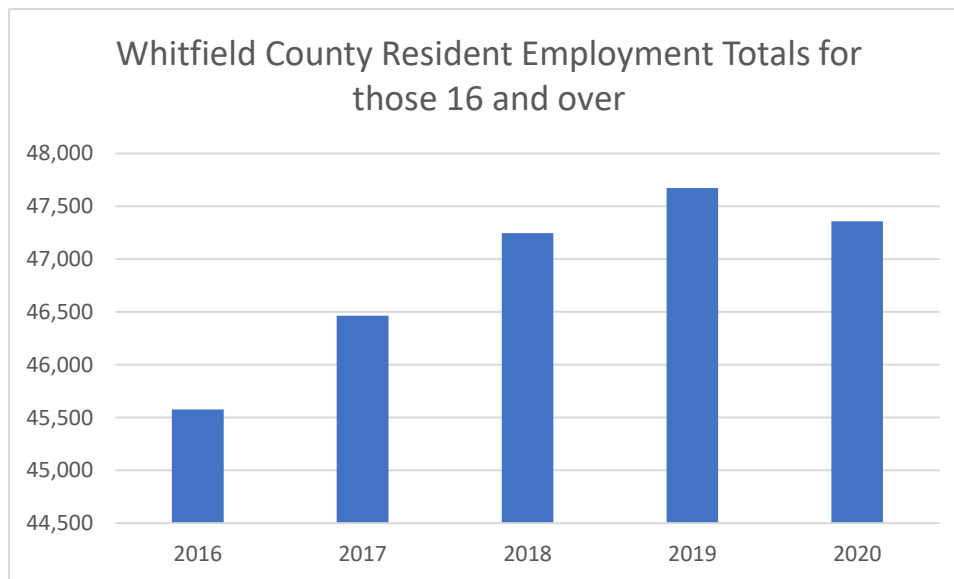
Whitfield County has a higher unemployment rate than four of the six neighboring counties and the state at 6.0%. Cohutta, Dalton, and Tunnel Hill have lower unemployment rates than the county while Varnell has a higher unemployment rate than the county.

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028



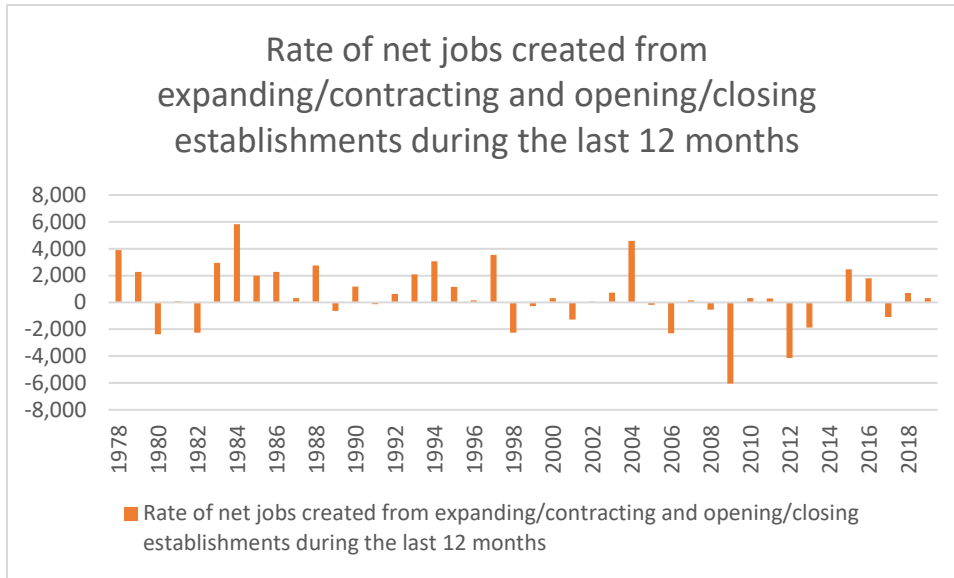
Average Yearly Unemployment Rate for Whitfield County, GA, 2012-2021. Source: Whitfield County, GA unemployment - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LAUCN13015000000003>

Whitfield County's unemployment consistently dropped between 2012 and 2019, went up due to COVID-19 in 2020 before falling below 2019 levels in 2021.



Whitfield County Resident Employment Totals for those 16 and over, 2012-2016 through 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. "Table S2401: Occupation by Sex for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over." <http://data.census.gov>

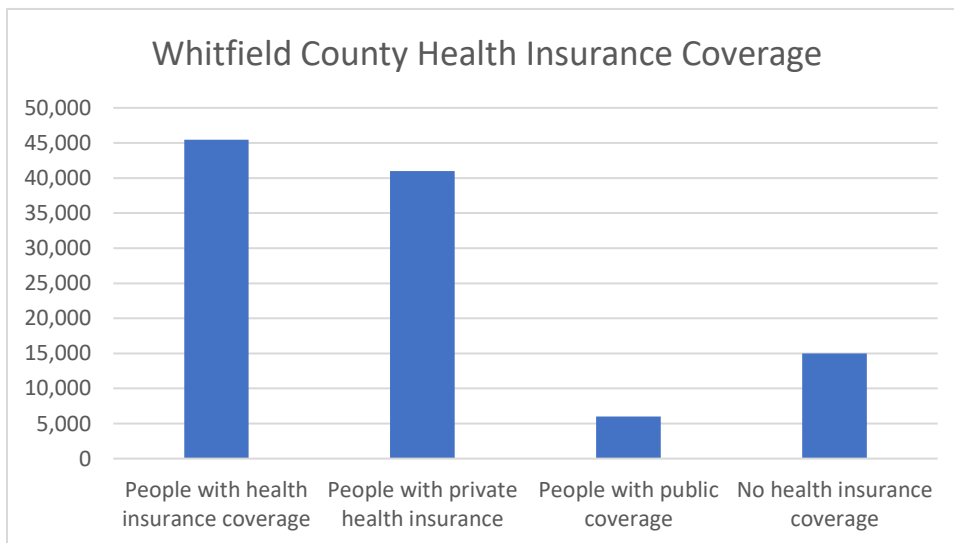
Whitfield County's employment consistently went up between 2016 and 2019, before dropping in 2020. This indicates that the employment situation was healthy before 2020, and it is too soon to tell whether the decline is a temporary decline due to COVID-19 or is a sign of a bigger issue.



Rate of net jobs created from expanding/contracting and opening/closing establishments during the last 12 months in Whitfield County, 1978-2019. Source: US Census Bureau, Economic Business Dynamics Statistics, <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/bds/data/>

For the most part, the rate of net jobs created in Whitfield County has been positive. The main exceptions have been 1980, 1982, 1998, 2006, 2009, and 2012.

Health Insurance



Health Insurance Coverage. Source: "Table B27011: Health Insurance Coverage Status and Type by Employment Status." <http://data.census.gov>

Most people in Whitfield County have health insurance coverage. Most health insurance coverage comes from private sources.

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION DOCUMENTATION

Initial Public Hearing Legal Ad

6B Friday, November 18, 2022

DALTON DAILY CITIZEN

Legals	Legals	Legals	Legals	Legals	Legals
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NOTICE OF INTENT TO INCORPORATE

Notice is given that Articles of Incorporation which will incorporate **PLEASANT GROVE CHURCH OF WHITFIELD COUNTY, INC.**, a domestic non-profit company, will be delivered to the Secretary of State for filing in accordance with the Georgia Business Corporation Code. The initial registered office of the corporation will be located at 512 S. Thornton Avenue, Dalton, Georgia 30720, and its initial registered agent at such address is Gregory H. Kinnamon.

PROBATE COURT OF WHITFIELD COUNTY

RE: PETITION OF ALAN WILLIAM PRICE AND PENNY PRICE SMITH FOR DISCHARGE AS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE ESTATE OF BOBBIE JEAN PRICE, DECEASED.

All and singular the heirs/beneficiaries of said decedent and to whom it may concern:

This is to notify you to file objection, if there is any, to the above referenced petition, in this Court on or before 11/28/22.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All pleadings/objections must be signed before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your pleadings/objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact

3145 Avalon Ridge Place, Suite 100, Peachtree Corners, GA 30071
Telephone Number: (877) 813-0992
Case No. DORIG-20-00185-3
Ad Run Dates 11/11/2022, 11/18/2022, 11/25/2022, 12/02/2022

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF WHITFIELD COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA IN THE INTEREST OF:
N.N.R.
CASE NO. 2200479
SEX: F
AGE: ONE YEAR
DOB: 07/22/2021
A Child Under 18 Years of Age
NOTICE OF SUMMONS PURSUANT TO APPLICABLE GEORGIA STATE LAW

TO: Kayda Roark
You are hereby notified that a Petition seeking to terminate your parental rights to the above-named child was filed in the Juvenile Court of Whitfield County, Georgia on July 27, 2022. The ground for termination is that the child is dependent under O.C.G.A. §15-11-2 and O.C.G.A. §15-11-310. A copy of the Petition may be obtained from the Office of the Clerk of the Whitfield County Juvenile Court located at 205 N. Selvidge Street, Dalton, Georgia. You are hereby notified that you are required to appear before the Juvenile Court of Whitfield County, Georgia in Dalton, Georgia on the 18th day of January, 2023 at 1:30 p.m., for a final hearing should you desire to contest the Petition. If you fail to appear, the court can terminate your rights in your absence. If the court at the trial finds that the facts set out in the petition to terminate parental rights are true

BOOK 0814, PAGE 49, WHITFIELD COUNTY, Georgia Records, conveying the after-described property to secure a Note in the original principal amount of **SEVENTY-FOUR THOUSAND AND 0/100 DOLLARS (\$74,000.00)**, with interest thereon as set forth therein, there will be sold at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash in the ground floor atrium area within the courthouse of Whitfield County, Georgia within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in December, 2022, the following described property:
SEE EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF.
The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of, among other possible events of default, failure to pay the indebtedness as and when due and in the manner provided in the Note and Security Deed. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of this sale, as provided in the Security Deed and by law, including attorney's fees (notice pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 13-1-11 having been given).
Said property will be sold subject to any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, but not yet due and payable), the right of redemption of any taxing authority, any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and any matters of record including, but not limited to, those superior to the Security Deed first set out above. Said property will be sold on an "as-is" basis without any representation, warranty or recourse

Personal Representative:
Angela Cottrell
c/o Joseph Blake Evans P.C.
150 West King Street Suite A
Dalton, GA 30720
(706)226-0001
joseph@jevansfirm.com
11/04 11/11 11/18 11/25

PUBLIC NOTICES AFFECT US ALL STAY INFORMED!

STATE OF GEORGIA WHITFIELD COUNTY NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
RE: Estate of PAUL DANIEL KNIGHT, JR.
All debtors and creditors of the Estate of Paul Daniel Knight, Jr. deceased, late of Dalton, Whitfield County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render their demands and payments to the Personal Representative(s) of the estate, according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the Personal Representative(s).
This 2022
Personal Representative:
Earsie Paulkette Knight
971 Miracle Dr.
Rocky Face, GA 30720
11/11 11/18 11/25

LEE THE INSURANCE COMPANY LLC, 1502, Elaine Way, Dalton, Georgia 30720
11/11 11/18

TUNNEL HILL AND VAHNNELL UPDATE OF THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Whitfield County and the municipalities of Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Vannell are beginning a five-year update of their Joint Comprehensive Plan that was previously adopted in October 2018. The plan update will be prepared according to the 2018 Minimum Planning Standards set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. This initial public hearing is being held to explain the process for the plan preparation and the opportunities for public participation in the development of the updated plan. The affected governments intend to appoint citizens to participate as part of a Stakeholder Committee to work with planners for the plan preparation. In addition, broad citizen participation at every meeting related to the plan preparation is desirable and recommended. The plan document, estimated for completion in draft form August 2023, will ultimately be submitted for review to the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Plan approval by October 31, 2023 is required to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status for each local government, per the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, allowing continued eligibility for State loans, grants, or permits for another

TODAY!!

NOTICE TO: To Whom It May Concern:
ROBERT MICHAEL WITHROCK has petitioned to be appointed Administrator of the estate of **CRYSTAL ANNE WITHROCK** deceased, of said County. The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver or reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. 53-12-261. All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the court on or before 11/21/22. All pleadings/objections must be signed under oath before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your pleadings/objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel at the following address/telephone number for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.
SHERI H. BLEVINS, JUDGE OF THE PROBATE COURT
By: **DELANE JACKSON**
Deputy Clerk
205 N. Selvidge St. Ste G
Dalton, GA 30720
706-275-7400
10/28 11/04 11/11 11/18

Plan Draft Review Public Hearing Ad

DALTON DAILY CITIZEN

Friday, August 18, 2023 5A

More

> Continued from 2A

Whitfield counties, will hold its regular quarterly meeting at 5:00 p.m. at the Chatsworth-Murray County Public Library, located at 706 Old Dalton Ellijay Road in Chatsworth. This meeting is open to the public.

Wednesday

■ The Emery Center, an African-American heritage and cultural center, is open for tours at 10:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. Tours can be booked by appointment on other days of the week. The center is at 110 W. Emery St. Call the Emery Center at (706) 277-7633 or (706) 280-7695 for reservations.

■ The Highland Rivers Behavioral Health Governing Board of Directors meets at 10:30 a.m. at the Cartersville Chamber of Commerce, 122 W Main St. The meeting is open to the public. For more information, call (706) 270-5000.

Thursday

■ The Whitfield County Senior Center hosts Jennifer Dixon, Medicare specialist, for the monthly Bonus Bingo Game at 10:30 a.m. This game is free and open to the public. For more information, call the Senior Center at (706) 278-3700.

■ The Georgia State Retirees Association holds its August meeting at noon at the Western Sizzlin on Cleveland Highway. There will be speakers from Whitfield County to provide information on the new Rocky Face Ridge Park and Riverbend Park as well as various hiking trails. The association looks forward to welcoming Barry Robbins, Whitfield County commissioner from District

1; Jess Hansen, Whitfield County GIS (Geographic Information System) coordinator; Brian Chastain, Whitfield County Parks and Recreation director; and Bob Sivick, Whitfield County administrator. All retired state employees are invited.

Aug. 25

■ The historic Blunt House is open for tours every Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and by request other days. The home is at 506 S. Thornton Ave.

Aug. 26

■ The Murray County High School Class of 1973 holds its 50-year reunion at the Grandview at Fort Mountain in Chatsworth. A sit-down meal, program and entertainment are included, along with several special guests (former teachers/coaches/administrators). Reservations,

along with your contact information, should be submitted by Aug. 12. Cost for the evening is \$35 per person and can be submitted via post/mail to MCHS Class of 1973, 1308 Leonard Bridge Road, Chatsworth, GA 30705, or may be sent via Venmo to @Vickie-Sales-1. For more information, call (706) 517-0047 and leave a message.

■ The 10th annual Kennedy Carter Dinner is at 6 p.m. at the Dalton Elks Lodge, bringing together Democrats from North Georgia, state party leadership and candidates for lively conversation and fellowship. The event is hosted by the Whitfield County Democratic Committee. Featured speakers will be candidates who have filed to run for Congress from the 14th District, Matthew Wilson, first vice chair of the Democratic Party of Georgia; and keynote speaker Scout Smith, vice chair of candidate recruit-

ment for the Democratic Party of Georgia. There will be individual tickets, as well as Friend, Champion and Defender table sponsorship levels. Tickets may be purchased at <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/kc2023dinner> or by calling (706) 264-2789. Those planning to attend are asked to respond as soon as possible. Proceeds will fund the

committee's 2024 election cycle activities.

Aug. 28

■ The Benton Mackaye Trail Association sponsors a moderate to strenuous 7.3-mile hike on the BMT Dyer Gap to Flat Top Mountain and a return Dyer Gap to South Fork Trail briefly for upper and lower Shadow Falls,

then to the Pinhoti Trail intersection. Hike leader: Steve Dennison. For more information, contact hike-leaderSD@bmtmail.org.

■ The NAACP Dalton-Whitfield Chapter meets at 6:30 p.m. at the Mack C. Gaston Community Center. The meetings are open to the public. Community support and ideas are welcomed.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE WHITFIELD COUNTY, COHUTTA, DALTON, TUNNEL HILL, and VARNELL JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Whitfield County, Cohutta, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, and Varnell have prepared a draft Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for 2024-2028 according to the 2018 Minimum Planning Standards set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. This draft plan was prepared with public participation and with guidance from a Stakeholder Committee of public and private sector individuals, including representatives from local government, economic development, and community leadership.

Accordingly, a joint public hearing is scheduled for the County and Cities to accept comments on the Draft Joint Comprehensive Plan. After the public hearing and receipt of public comment, the draft plan will be submitted for review by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Plan approval by October 31, 2023 is required to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status for each local government per the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 allowing continued eligibility for State loans, grants, or permits for another five years.

This public hearing will be held at the Mayor and Council Meeting, Dalton City Hall, 300 W Waugh Street, Dalton, GA 30722, at 6:00 pm, on September 18, 2023.

Copies of the draft plan will be available for review by September 11, 2023 on the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission website, nwgrc.org and at the public hearing.



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Calhoun - 289 Highway 53 E
Ft. Oglethorpe - 503 Battlefield Pwy
Chattanooga, TN - 6933 Lee Hwy, Suite 200A

Serving Christ - Helping Others

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028



WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Stakeholder Committee Meeting **April 20, 2023**
Mack Gaston Community Center **6:00PM**
 218 N Fredrick St. Dalton, GA 30721

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Appointment of Committee Chairman
- III. Comprehensive Plan Process and History
- IV. Population and Economic Trends
- V. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Exercise
- VI. Community Input Survey
- VII. Schedule Next Meeting



WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Stakeholder Committee Meeting **May 16, 2023**
Edwards Park Community Center **6:00PM**
 115 Edwards Park Entrance, Dalton, GA 30721

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Recap of previous meeting
- III. Comprehensive Plan Community Survey draft review
- IV. A review of Whitfield's Regionally Important Resources and the Coosa-North GA Regional Water Plan
- V. Future Land Use discussion and map review
- VI. Schedule Next Meeting



WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Stakeholder Committee Meeting **June 15, 2023**
Riverbend Park Community Center **6:00PM**
 1819 Riverbend Road Dalton, GA 30721

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Recap of previous meeting
- III. Comprehensive Plan Community Survey update
- IV. Presentation on transportation by the Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization and Q&A
- V. Schedule Next Meeting



WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Stakeholder Committee Meeting **July 20, 2023**
Dalton State College- Peoples' Hall, Room 115 **6:00PM**
 650 College Dr, Dalton, GA 30720

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Recap of previous meeting
- III. Comprehensive Plan Community Survey results overview
- IV. Presentation on the Believe Greater Dalton Housing Study by Geoff Koski
- V. Schedule final meeting and community open house for the draft plan

Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2024-2028



WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Stakeholder Committee Meeting
Riverbend Park Community Center
 1519 Riverbend Road Dalton, GA 30721

Sept 9, 2023
6:00PM

Agenda

- I. Welcome and recap of the previous meetings
- II. Review of Vision Statements, Goals, and policies
- III. Review and input on Community Work Program projects
- IV. Public Hearing on the plan draft September 18th at 6:00pm during the City of Dalton's mayor and council meeting



LEADERSHIP

DALTON-WHITFIELD

Wifi is COO Public. Open a web browser if not prompted and navigate to google, then the user will see splash page to accept terms and conditions. Once accepted, the user will be connected.

Agenda
LEADERSHIP DALTON-WHITFIELD
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SESSION
 Thursday, January 19, 2023
Dalton City Hall Council Chambers
 300 W. Waugh Street, Dalton
 Session Chairs: Andrew Parker, Dennis Mock,
 Jevin Jensen and Bob Sivick
 8:00 am to 4:40 pm

8 am	Breakfast	
8:10	Welcome & Announcements	Brenda Knowles, LDW President (LDW Class of 2009)
8:20	Local Government Pop Quiz (using poll anywhere)	Brenda Knowles
8:30	Organizational Overview of Whitfield County What does the County do?	Jevin Jensen, Chairman, Whitfield County Commission (IDC) Bob Sivick, County Administrator
9:10	Q & A	
9:25	Organizational Overview of the City of Dalton What does the City do?	Dennis Mock, Councilman, City of Dalton Andrew Parker, City Administrator, City of Dalton (LDW Class of 2012)
10:05	Q & A	
10:20	Break	
10:30	City of Dalton Projects	Andrew Parker and Dennis Mock
11:10	Q & A	
11:20	Walk to Café Ostro for lunch	
11:30	Lunch options: <i>Side item of pita and hummus available. Choice of chicken, beef or shrimp bowl with turmeric rice with fresh vegetables, cucumbers, cabbage, lettuce, tomato and pickles, served with hummus and Ostro sauce. Dessert: tiramisu</i>	
12 Noon	Walk to the area near the parking deck to sample Disc Golf (weather permitting)	
12:30	Return to City Hall	
12:45	About the Transit Service	Diane Franklin, Director, Transit Service
1:05	Q & A	
1:15	About the Downtown Dalton Development Authority	Candace Eaton, Director
1:35	Q & A	
1:45	Break	
2:00	Elected Officials Panel Discussion	David Pennington, III, Mayor, City of Dalton (LDW Class of 1998) Kenny Gowin, Mayor, City of Tunnel Hill Ron Shinnick, Mayor, Town of Cohutta Tom Dickson, Mayor, City of Varnell (LDW Class of 1995) Jevin Jensen, Chair, Whitfield County Board of Commissioners
2:35	Q & A	
2:50	Homework Interviews (share in groups and report out)	
3:10	Facilitated discussion on services that are missing	Andrew Parker, Dennis Mock, Bob Sivick
3:20	Comprehensive Strategic Plan and Class Input	Ethan Calhoun, County Engineer, Whitfield County (LDW Class of 2019)
4:20	You Can Become Involved Locally How to Run for Office Closing Remarks and Wrap Up	Dennis Mock
4:30	Reflections of the Day Scan QR Code and complete the evaluation Personal Action Plan and Closing Announcements	Brenda Knowles



WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION	TIME	EVENT DATE	LOCATION
Stakeholder Committee Meeting #1	6pm	4/20/2023	Mack Gaston Community Center
VOLUNTEER NAME	AREA OF EXPERTISE/ORGANIZATION		
1 Allison Braswell	NCEM		
2 Allison Coker	Bellevue Greater Dalton Chamber		
3 Jason Mack	Greater Dalton Chamber		
4 Larry Harrison	Buitaya / Bank		
5 Brad Ramsey	Banking / Finance First National Comm. Bank		
6 Jonathan Baylory	Dr. of Procurement Obligantive LLC		
7 Missa Calabary	Retired Public Health/Health Promotion		
8 Shubert	City of Unwell		
9 Chris Spiffeth	Banking / Real Estate Quithall Bank.		
10 John Francis	Social Services / Mental Health		
11 Levi Kilgore Jr.	Retired / City of Dalton		
12 Mark Myler	FRESH ONE Alliance		
13 Jackie Killings	Khenani Business Advisors		
14 Dick Verhoff	Dalton - Whitfield Joint WAPN Authority		
15 John Logthart	Dalton State College / National Resources		

WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION: Stakeholder Committee Meeting #2
 EVENT DATE: 5/16/2023
 LOCATION: Edwards Park Community Center

VOLUNTEER NAME	AREA OF EXPERTISE/ORGANIZATION
1 Jason Mock	Dalton Chamber
2 Bob Sivick	Whitfield County
3 Jonathan Bagley	Polycentric
4 Keyni Harris	Joint Development Authority
5 Todd Harrison	Hamilton Health Care System
6 Jackie Killings	Community Advocate / Khenzani Business Advisors
7 Chris Smith	Banking IRE
8 Brad Ramsey	Banking
9 DICK VERHOEFF	DWSIA
10 Ethan Calhoun	NWRC
11 Marne Meadows	NWRC
12 Gretchen Langthert	NWRC
13 Blaine Cardona	Whitfield County
14 Alisa Besaraba	NGEMC
15 Yugeily Marquez	LAA

WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION: Stakeholder Committee Meeting #3 TIME: 6pm EVENT DATE: 6/15/2023 LOCATION: Riverbend Park Community Center

VOLUNTEER NAME	AREA OF EXPERTISE/ORGANIZATION
1 <i>Yang Johnson</i>	
2 <i>Mark Myler</i>	
3 <i>Liz Dennis</i>	
4 <i>Alisa Pasartava</i>	
5 <i>Dick Verwert</i>	
6 <i>John Francis</i>	
7 <i>Kent Benson</i>	
8 <i>Bob Sivic</i>	<i>Whitfield County</i>
9 <i>Lee Gansse</i>	
10 <i>Allyson Coker</i>	
11	

WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION	TIME	EVENT DATE	LOCATION
Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4	6pm	7/20/2023	Dalton State College Peoples Hall
VOLUNTEER NAME	AREA OF EXPERTISE/ORGANIZATION		
1 Elizabeth Dennis	City Council Tower Hill		
2 JOHN FRANCIS	Everyday in NUGRE		
3 Gretchen Lythart	DAKTON WHITFIELD TDA		
4 Carol Campbell			
5 KEVIN HARRIS			
6 ANDREW PALCENE	CITY OF DAKTON		
7 Brian Cotsig	Shaw Industries		
8 Macki Bobbins	Bobbins Properties		
9 Jason Mock	Chamber of Commerce		
10 Jacob Bearden	Dalton - Whitfield Zoning		
11 Allison Cooper	Member/retiree greater Dalton		
12 Todd Henson	Hamilton Healthcare		
13 Jackie Williams			
14 Andrew Parker	City of Dalton		
15 Yuseily Moniquez			
16 Dirk Verhoeff	Solid Waste Management		
17 Brad Ramsey	First National Bank		
18 Ailsa Basenba	NGEMC		
19			

WHITFIELD COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION: Stakeholder Committee Meeting #5
 TIME: 6pm
 EVENT DATE: 9/7/2023
 LOCATION: Riverbend Park Complex

VOLUNTEER NAME	AREA OF EXPERTISE/ORGANIZATION
1 Chris Sniely	Planning Commission
2 Dier Verwoest	Solid Waste Authority
3 Lisa Callaway	Retired Public Health
4 Lisa Brashear	EMS
5 Todd Harrison	Hamilton Health Care System
6 Jonathan Bagley	Polytechnic
7 William Cooper	Bellevue Greater Dayton
8 Jason Mook	Greater Dayton Chamber
9 Simone Medbos	NWGRE
10 Ethan Colham	NWGRE
11 Judd Bearden	Transportation + Zoning/Development
12 Blake Griffin	Tunnel Hill
13 Bob Swick	County Manager
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