Pickens County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2023-2027 DRAFT

Including the Municipalities of Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock

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Pickens County Joint Comprehensive Plan

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2023 - 2027

Including the Municipalities of Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock

Adopted by:

Pickens County –

Jasper-

Nelson-

Talking Rock-

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Prepared by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
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Acknowledgements

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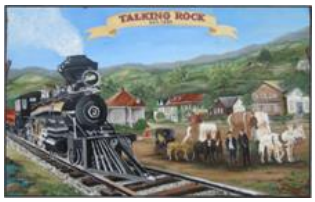

Stakeholder Committee

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Adoption Resolution- Pickens County

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Adoption Resolution City of Jasper

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Adoption Resolution City of Nelson

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Adoption Resolution Town of Talking Rock

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Introduction

Pickens County and the Cities of Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock have joined together in an effort to meet the challenges ahead; working together as citizens, elected officials, professional staff, business leaders, and property owners, they have prepared the *Pickens County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update 2023-2027.*

Why We Plan

For Pickens County and the Cities of Jasper, Nelson, and the Town of Talking Rock, the 2023-2028 Joint Comprehensive Plan represents both a shared cooperative vision and individual action steps for community success. The comprehensive plan describes the traits and values of each municipality, and balances future growth and development with these values, for growth that is respectful to local cultural attitudes and the scenic natural beauty of the area. The plan provides a predictable environment for local businesses and industry, investors, taxpayers, and the general public, to ensure a vibrant, resilient, and healthy community. The plan discusses the surveyed preferences of the local citizenry, perceptions of strengths and weaknesses, development type preferences, local needs and opportunities, and future work program items.

The joint comprehensive plan also displays the State of Georgia's commitment to its communities' success, by promoting and helping provide for a vibrant and healthy future for each community. In 1989, the Georgia Planning Act established a requirement for local governments to create a joint comprehensive plan according to set standards and procedures (*Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning; March 1, 2018*) to maintain Qualified Local Government status (QLG) and eligibility for state grants, loans, and permits. The joint comprehensive plan and five-year community work program also demonstrate the importance of local projects to funding agencies such as the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration.

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Plan Requirements and Elements

This update to the Joint Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning (effective October 1, 2018). This plan contains the following required elements for Pickens County, City of Jasper, City of Nelson, and the Town of Talking Rock:

- Community Vision and Goals – A summary used to lay out a road map for the community's future, developed through a very public process involving community leaders and stakeholders making key decisions about the future of the community and its direction.

- Report of Accomplishments – A report on each work program item from the 2018 – 2022 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update and the status of completion. Items assessed as underway are automatically moved to the 2023 – 2027 Joint Comprehensive plan update, along with activities that were postponed.

- Community Needs and Opportunities – Input provided by stakeholders, members of the public, and government leaders, which reflects current conditions of the county and local municipalities, and what can be approved upon or enhanced.

- Land Use/Future Development Map and Narrative – Identified and mapped boundaries of sub-areas, districts, or neighborhoods described by character areas. Character area categories include, but are not limited to, the following: residential commercial, industrial, agriculture/ forestry, and conservation. Along with the Future Development Map, there is a written narrative/description with pictures or illustrations for each character area.

- Community Work Program – Specific activities the community plans to undertake during the next five years.

- Broadband Service Element – The most recent element established by the State of Georgia, required for all governments. Its intent is to assess current conditions and identify improvements needed to increase internet connectivity locally and state-wide. On May 5, 2022, Pickens County and the municipalities of Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock adopted a resolution to amend its Joint Comprehensive Plan to include a Broadband Element (2018-2028), which was reviewed in this update.

Public Hearings and Stakeholder Meetings

The initial public hearing was held on July 21st, 2022, at the Pickens County Administration Building in the City of Jasper. The legal advertisement for the public hearing was published in the local paper of record, the Pickens Progress, on July 7th, 2022 (Appendix B). At the public hearing, the 2023-2028 Joint

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Comprehensive Plan Update process for Pickens County, the City of Jasper, the City of Nelson, and the Town of Talking Rock, was discussed. Following the initial public hearing, each local government appointed residents having local knowledge, technical expertise, and community commitment to serve as Stakeholders.

These Stakeholders met three times to cooperatively discuss the future for Pickens and each municipality. The first meeting was held on October 18, 2022, at the Pickens County Administration Building in the Commissioners' Meeting Room (Appendix B). A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted. The SWOT results and stakeholder comments were used to develop a Community Survey. The second stakeholder meeting was held at Chattahoochee Technical College Appalachian Campus on November 1, 2022, to discuss the draft Community Survey questions that would be used to gather public input. The Community Survey was launched November 8, 2022 (Appendix A). The survey responses, as well as the Environmental Planning Criteria and the Coosa-North Georgia Water Plan, were discussed at the third meeting, held on February 20th, 2023, at the Pickens County Administration Building in Jasper (Appendix B).

On April 20, 2023, a second public hearing was held to allow public comment on the draft Joint Comprehensive Plan Update. The hearing was held at the Pickens County Administration Building within the City of Jasper. The public hearing was advertised in the Pickens County Progress on March 9, 2023 (Appendix B).

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Goals, Vision Statements, and Policies

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 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.

Creating a functional comprehensive plan begins with defining a common vision for the future development of the community. A community vision is the overall image of what the community wants to be and how it wants to look at some point in the future. It is the starting point for creating a plan and developing actions to implement the plan. A successful visioning process requires meaningful participation from a wide range of community stakeholders.

Pickens County and Jasper Joint VISION STATEMENT

Pickens County and City of Jasper are proud and vibrant communities that work 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 listed below:

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Economic Development

Actively promote and pursue new and innovative businesses to diversify and strengthen our local economy, while simultaneously investing in and retaining a high-quality environment for our existing businesses.

1. Pickens County and its cities will support an on-going, coordinated economic development program resulting in a diversified economic base, which will raise income levels.

2. We will encourage re-investment in older, declining commercial corridors.

Figure 1. Downtown Jasper.

3. We will support and assist existing businesses and industries to grow and expand in the county and cities.

4. We will enhance the historical, aesthetic, and economic vitality of our downtowns and other existing commercial areas to create a unique atmosphere for shopping, entertainment, and cultural activities.

5. We will support the development and promotion of tourism opportunities that utilize our mountain resources, marble mining heritage, and other historic events and places.

Housing

Promoting a diversified housing stock for our current and future residents of all socioeconomic tiers while protecting the character of existing neighborhoods from inappropriate development

Encourage infill housing within unfinished residential developments as well as neighborhood revitalization, especially in areas where blighted properties are common.

1. We will support affordable housing opportunities to ensure that all those who work in the community have a viable option to live here.

2. We will stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.

3. We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.

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4. We will support the development of housing opportunities and choices that allow people upward mobility from rental dependence to home-ownership.

5. We will support opportunities for "aging in place" and other housing needs.

Infrastructure and Facilities

1. We will continuously plan and develop an adequate and economical supply of water and wastewater service to meet the growth and development needs of the county and incorporated areas.

2. We will continually evaluate public water and wastewater service demands, and program system improvements in areas of the county and cities where development is planned.

3. We will support the development of private wastewater treatment facilities in planned communities where appropriate.

5. We will ensure that new development does not cause a decline in existing levels of service for the community's residents and employers.

6. We will limit development within the county to areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure.

7. We will ensure that public facilities and services needed to accommodate future development are provided concurrent with new development.

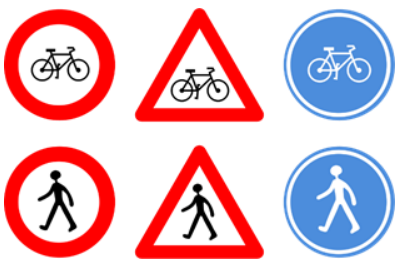
8. We will coordinate the provision of public facilities and services with land use planning to promote more compact nodal development in areas identified on the Future Development Map.

9. We will consider and support all alternative finance mechanisms (impact fees, special improvement districts, SPLOST, grants, etc.) necessary to provide needed public infrastructure and services.

10. We will support the development of neighborhood parks as well as larger county parks.

11. We will continually evaluate fire protection needs and program system improvements where needed.

Transportation



- Providing a variety of walkable neighborhoods with sidewalks, greenway trails, and bike lanes in appropriate locations.

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- 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.

  1. We will continually improve the transportation system to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within the county and cities and with adjoining counties.

  2. We will target transportation improvements to support desired development patterns for the community (recognizing that ready availability of transportation creates demand for and development in adjacent areas.)

  3. We will design and reconstruct roadways using context sensitive design considerations that enhance community aesthetics and minimize impacts on the environment and our historic resources.

  4. We will plan our new and/or reconstructed roadways to include consideration of multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities, parking, bicycle routes, public transit (if applicable) as well as local vehicular circulation.

  5. We will promote connectivity of our road network (such as fostering a grid network of streets, multiple connections between subdivisions) in the non-rural areas of the county.

Figure 2. Downtown Jasper Pedestrian Crossing.

  6. We support the creation of a community-wide greenway or multi-use path network for pedestrians and cyclists.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Embrace our history by supporting the preservation of historic resources and neighborhoods for the coming generations to enjoy .

Figure 3: Historic Tate Mansion in Pickens County

- Strongly enforce codes and ordinances to ensure our community remains clean, comfortable, nice, peaceful, and most of all family-friendly.

- Continue to support our technical college that, through its attractive programs and an enriching

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educational environment, produces a skilled workforce for our community and region.

Figure 4: Grandview Lake in Pickens County

- We will support Federal and State protection measures that preserve water quality and endangered species habitat.
- We will encourage the preservation of fragile mountain ecology and scenic views.
- We will ensure safe and adequate water supplies through protection of ground and surface water resources.
- We will promote the benefits of open space and tree preservation in all developments.
- We will support the preservation of important historic resources in the county.

Community Facilities and Services

- Become community rich with neighborhood parks and trail systems that provide recreational opportunities for our residents and visitors

Figure 5: Photo from Hinton Fest

- Research and pursue resources related to water and wastewater service areas to better plan for needed expansions regarding service areas or system capacity where it is found to be feasible and prudent

Land Use

Guiding future development with informed land use plans that take into account the protection of our natural resources, reduce sprawling development, and determine where future growth is or is not suitable by considering the Smart Growth goals below:

Healthier, Safer Communities

A central goal is to improve the quality of neighborhoods where we live. Our efforts will make our communities healthier, safer, more convenient, more attractive, and more affordable.

Protecting the Environment

Neighborhoods designed to reduce our dependence on automobiles also reduce our impact on the environment. By creating streetscapes that encourage walking and biking, we create

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opportunities for individuals to reduce their carbon footprint. Reducing environmental impacts may also occur through promotion of recycling throughout the community and strong enforcement of best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control.

Better Access, Less Traffic

Mixing land uses, clustering development, and providing multiple transportation choices helps us to encourage healthier lifestyles, manage congestion, pollute less, and save energy.

Thriving Cities, Suburbs, and Towns

By guiding development to areas already served by water and/or wastewater service, we maximize our investments in transportation, schools, libraries, and other public services. Our public dollars can serve the community where people live today.

Shared Benefits

Building a comprehensive transportation system and locating jobs and accessible housing within reach of each other expands opportunities for all income levels.

Lower Costs, Lower Taxes

Taking advantage of existing infrastructure keeps taxes down. Convenient transportation choices also reduce our household transportation costs, leaving families with more money for other needs.

Keeping Open Space Open

Protecting our natural resources creates healthier air and cleaner drinking water. From forests and farms to wetlands and wildlife, let us pass on to our children the landscapes we love.

Our Smart Growth goals will be implemented via the following principles:

1. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
2. Mix land uses.
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods.
5. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.
6. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
7. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.
8. Preserve Open Space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
9. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
10. Take advantage of compact building design and efficient infrastructure design.

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Intergovernmental Coordination

1. We will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.

2. We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions to develop solutions on multi-jurisdictional issues such as watershed protection, stormwater management and environmental protection.

3. We will share information with other jurisdictions when making decisions that are likely to impact them.

4. We will provide input to other jurisdictions when they are making decisions that are likely to impact our jurisdictions.

5. We will coordinate with the Pickens County Board of Education in regard to decisions to build new school facilities and the use of schools as community facilities.

6. Local public safety officials will work cooperatively with E.M.A staff to administer the Pickens Hazard Mitigation Plan 2013. The Emergency Management Agency (E.M.A.) is the local arm of Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) and Georgia Emergency Management Agency (G.E.M.A.) each of which are part of the Office of Homeland Security.

City of Nelson Vision Statement

The City of Nelson will retain its traditional small community roots while continuing to evolve into a dynamic, active town adjacent to the fast-growing suburbs of Cherokee County by utilizing the following implementation strategies:

- Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote a variety of commercial and industrial uses depending on location and demand.

Figure 6: City limits sign in Nelson

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- Work cooperatively with Pickens County and Cherokee County officers to maintain a safe community with clean streets and properties and structurally sound residences. If desired, consider contracting with service providers for an increased level of code enforcement.
- Continually maintain and increase parks & recreation facilities as well as community center facilities.
- Work with Cherokee Water & Sewer Authority representatives to plan for continual maintenance and, where possible, upgrades to existing water lines.
- Plan for whether or not future annexations and rezonings for higher uses (residential to commercial or residential to industrial as examples) may be appropriate. Consider whether or not, depending on ability to install an adequate septic system, rezonings for increased residential density may be appropriate.
- Continually maintain and, where appropriate, add sidewalks throughout the community.

Figure 7: Nelson's nature trailhead

Figure 8: Baseball Field at Nelson's City Park

Town of Talking Rock Vision Statement

Talking Rock will remain a rural town that retains its historical characteristics. The downtown area, including the popular park along Talking Rock Creek, will continue to be a dynamic, scenic destination for residents and visitors by adhering to the following implementation strategies:

Figure 9: Historic caboose in Talking Rock's town center

- Work with property owners to improve the septic systems in the downtown area so that a greater range of businesses can thrive, including the potential for one or more restaurants.

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- Work with the County Economic Development office Chamber of Commerce to continue to develop and promote tourism opportunities.

- Provide assistance to property owners to preserve and rehabilitate historical buildings.

- Develop and implement a streetscape plan (lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, pavilion or stage, etc.) in the downtown area to accommodate festivals and other events.

- Refurbish railroad cars for greater use as a tourist attraction.

- Support and promote positive community events at the park building, fire station, area churches, and other nearby facilities.

- Work cooperatively with business representatives and landowners for development and redevelopment for agri-business and agri-tourism in all areas of the community.

- Support and promote continual maintenance and expansion of the park.

- Support and promote redevelopment of properties near Talking Rock Creek while ensuring that actions are considerate of creek bank maintenance; stormwater best management practices; federally-designated floodplain areas; etc.

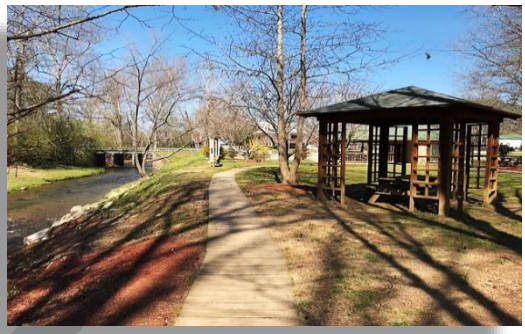

Figure 10: View of the extensive handicap accessible nature trail within the Town's park

Figure 11: Historic building along GA. Highway 136 in Talking Rock

Figure 12: Covered picnic area and sanitary facilities located in the town park

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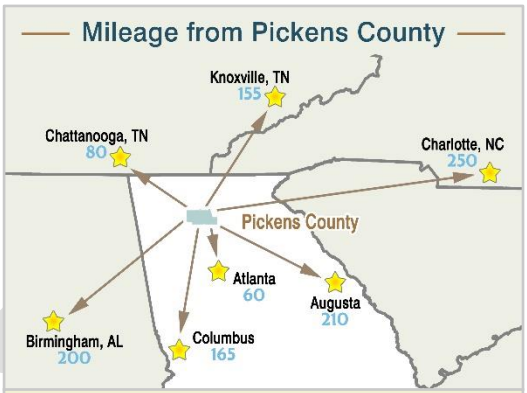
Pickens County Overview

Geography

Pickens County is conveniently located less than an hour from downtown Atlanta on the Interstate 575/Highway 515 corridor and located in the foothills of the Appalachians. The three incorporated cities of Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock along with several unincorporated communities such as Tate, Marble Hill, and Hinton are also located within Pickens County. The County was created by land derived from Cherokee and Gilmer Counties.



Geography

Total Area: 233 square miles

Highest elevation: The 3,288 foot summit of Mount Oglethorpe, the southernmost peak in the Blue Ridge Mountains and, for a number of years, the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. Other notable peaks: Sharp Top Mountain and Sharp Mountain. One of the best viewpoints of Sharp Top Mountain is from Grandview Lake Dam on Grandview Road.

Source: Pickens County Government Website

History

Pickens County, founded in 1853, is a community rich in history ranging from the Cherokee Indians to the Industrial Revolution and much more. Although it was named after Andrew Pickens, a Revolutionary War hero, Pickens County's history primarily revolves around the marble industry and railway. The county sits on a sea of the sought after stone, most of it Georgia white, but also some rare pink Etowah marble. The mining of this marble has been occurring in Pickens County since the 1830's, supplying it for the Lincoln Memorial, the U.S. Capitol Building, and still today for tombstones for the U.S. Military, as well as for use in pharmaceuticals, agriculture, cosmetics, and other properties. Marble has been the building material of choice for structures in the county, as well, such as the historic Tate House, the Pickens County Courthouse, and the historic Tate Elementary School, the only school in the U.S. built of marble.

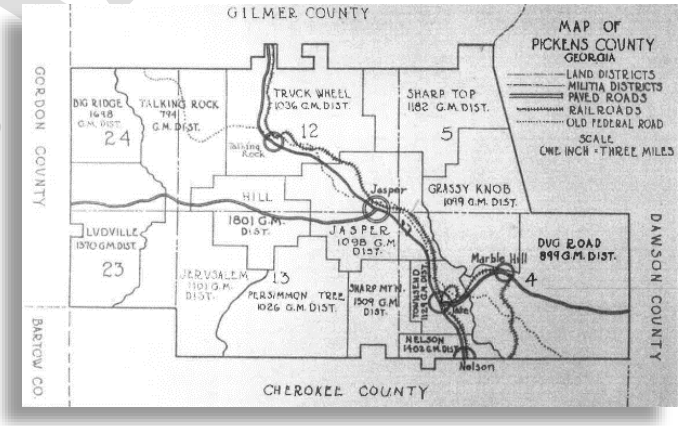


Figure 13: Historic map of Pickens County

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Educational Assets

Pickens County boasts strong community assets such as its healthcare systems and award-winning public schools. The nation's Head Start program was, in fact, pioneered here in Pickens County. Upon graduation, students may learn employable skills at Chattahoochee Technical College's Appalachian campus in Jasper, or go just a few miles away to earn college degrees at such quality institutions as Reinhardt University or the University of North Georgia.

Figure 14: Chattahoochee Tech located in Jasper, Photo courtesy of Pickens Chamber of Commerce

Healthcare System

Piedmont Mountainside Hospital anchors the area's healthcare systems and contributes to the community's focus on wellness. Pickens County ranks as the 32 healthiest of Georgia's 159 counties by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings for 2017. Pickens County residents are also served by the Pickens County Health Department, which ensures that even the neediest citizens can receive quality, low cost or no cost healthcare.

Figure 15: Piedmont Mountainside Hospital

Other Community Amenities

Although much of Pickens County would be classified as rural character, great places to shop, dine, and lodge can be found with only a brief commute. Social events and festivals such as *Jeep Fest* and the *Marble Fest* tend to draw rather large crowds from around the region and state. Given the abundance of natural land in Pickens County there are many locations that provide great locations for passive recreation opportunities to hike, bike, camp, and fish.

Figure 16: Marble Fest in Downtown Jasper, Photo courtesy of Pickens County Chamber of Commerce

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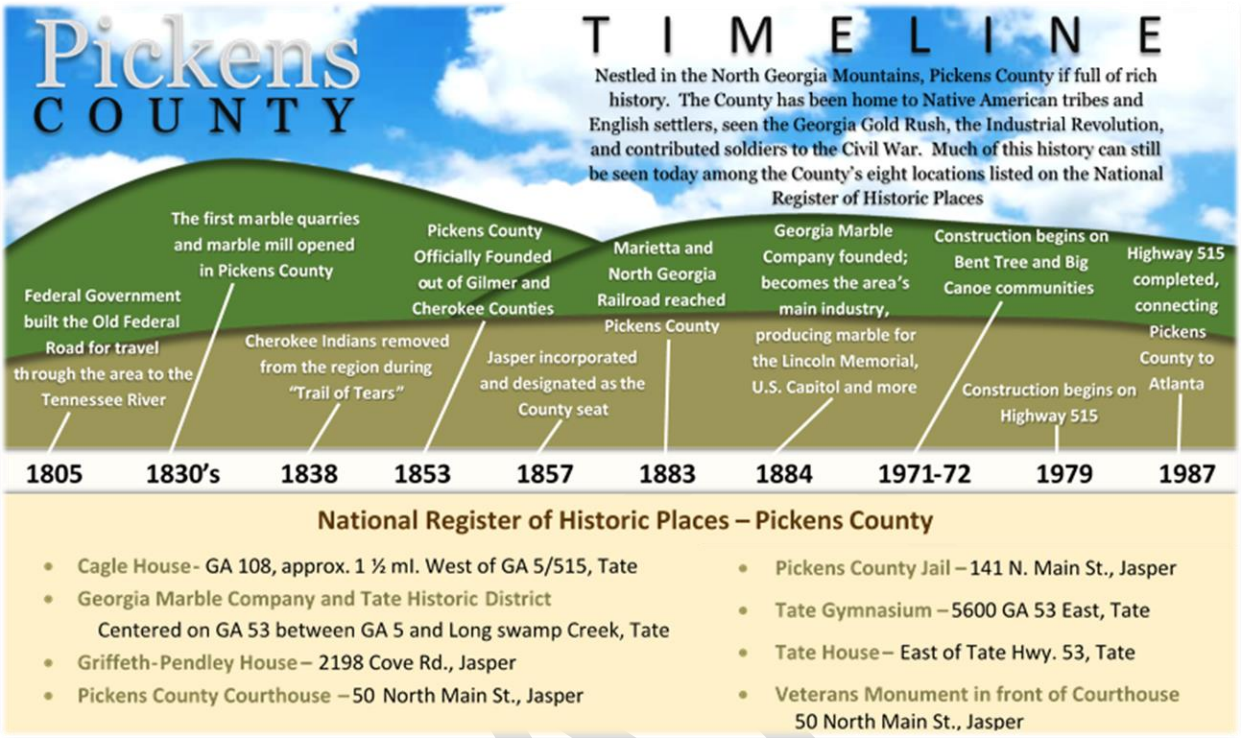


Figure 17: A timeline of significant events relevant to Pickens County

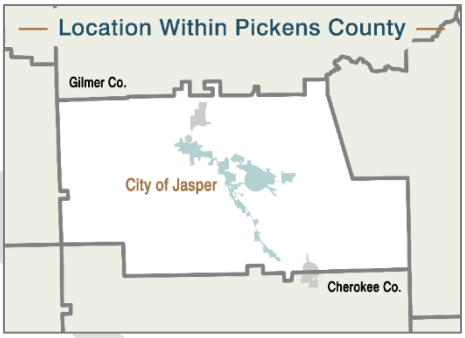
Figure 18: Photo from inside Blue Ridge Marble Co. in Nelson. Photo courtesy of Pickens County Marble Museum

Figure 19: Historic Tate Train Depot, recently restored and relocated

City of Jasper Overview

Geography

Perched on a ridge a little east of the geographic center of Pickens County sets the City of Jasper. Since the City's humble beginnings it has expanded its boundaries immensely. This growth is primarily attributed to the commercial and industrial development made possible by the railway and more recently State Route 515. Due to Jasper's placement on the ridge, one can enjoy a view of the surrounding mountains from almost anywhere inside the city.



History

The City of Jasper, founded in 1857 as the County's seat, was named after the Revolutionary War hero Sergeant William Jasper. As with most historically thriving communities, the railroad brought with it an opportunity for commerce that had not previously existed. The railroad was the City's conduit for importing equipment and supplies as well as exporting the heavy marble products from the County's mines and milling operations. Being the county seat, Jasper became the central business district within Pickens County facilitating both commercial and residential development. Jasper's overall growth can be mostly attributed to the creation and capacity of its water and wastewater utilities. As the use of the railroads decreased in recent decades, creation of the Appalachian Regional Highway (State Route 515) has allowed economic prosperity to continue in the City of Jasper.

Figure 20: Historic Kirby-Quinton Cabin restored and relocated to downtown Jasper

Figure 21: Fully Functional Historic Jasper Water Tower

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Other Community Amenities

Jasper is by far the largest and most dynamic city within Pickens County boasting a busy historic downtown, diverse residential housing stock, and ever-growing commercial corridor. Much of the growth and development in Jasper, as stated previously, was made possible by the City's water and wastewater infrastructure. Being the County's seat Jasper is home to many of the previously mentioned assets such as Chattahoochee Technical College, Piedmont Mountainside Hospital, and the location of Marble Fest. Jasper also has several recreational assets such as its main city park located on Pioneer Road, Peace Park, and Lee Newton Park offering a pond, two playgrounds, obstacle course, grills, tennis courts, bathrooms and walking trails.

Figure 22: Jasper's City Park, located on Pioneer Road

Figure 23: Peace Park, located in downtown Jasper

Summary of Land Use

One will observe more diverse land use characteristics within the City of Jasper than anywhere else in Pickens County. This is not unusual given that Jasper is both the largest municipality within Pickens County as well as the County's seat. Land use character varies from the city's historic downtown, historic and modern residential neighborhoods, industrial, and modern "big box" commercial development along or near State Route 515. The City's ability to serve its citizens and land owners public water and wastewater utilities created opportunities for increased density and high intensity uses not found in most areas of the Pickens County. By promoting their utilities the City of Jasper has the ability to continue to increase its incorporated boundaries prudently as prospective development occurs. The analytic methodology and character area style of land use planning for the City of Jasper followed the same technique as noted in initial Pickens County section.

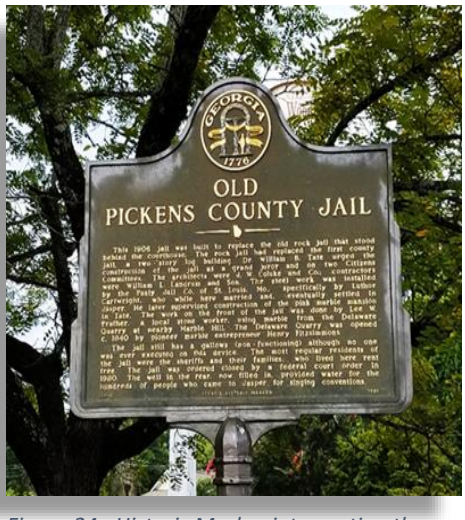

Figure 24: Historic Marker interpreting the Old Pickens County Jail in downtown Jasper

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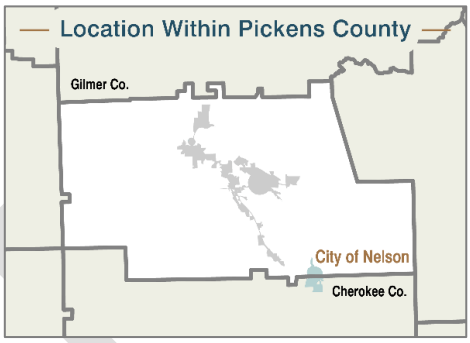
City of Nelson Overview

Geography

Along Pickens County's southern border with Cherokee County the City of Nelson lies just east of center. The City's incorporated boundaries span beyond Pickens' borders into Cherokee County creating a dual jurisdictional city. South on old 5 lies the City of Ball Ground and North is unincorporated Tate. The North end of I-575 and South end of State Route 515 are at the County line just to the Southwest of Nelson.



History

The City of Nelson is named after John Nelson, early landowner, farmer, and rifle maker. Nelson is served through its downtown by the Georgia Northeastern Railroad, and by the former route of State Route 5 along its Main Street. A railroad line built in 1883 from Atlanta through the valleys and mountain passes of Pickens County to Tate and Nelson made possible the development of large marble quarries. One of the largest marble veins in the world is in Pickens County, running at least four miles long. It is a half-mile deep and almost that wide in places. Over 60 percent of the monuments in Washington D.C. are made from Pickens County marble milled here in Nelson. Many stone cutters and other workers who migrated from either Italy or Scotland in the early years of the industry settled in Nelson to work in the area's marble industry. Today, the Georgia Northeastern Railroad operates between Tate, and the CSX Interchange at Elizabeth (Marietta) five days a week. The Georgia Marble rail lines at Tate, Marble Hill, and the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad at Blue Ridge, Georgia are also operated by GNRR.

Figure 25: Marble being shipped via rail from Blue Ridge Marble Co.

Truly an International City, Nelson was home to approximately 50 Italian families brought to Nelson by the Georgia Marble Company because of their skilled craftsmanship in marble carving and sculpting. They worked here side by side with other Nelson residents to craft some of the

most widely recognized structures in America, and even around the world today. Some of these include headstones at Arlington National Cemetery, the East front to the U.S. Capital Building, The Lincoln Memorial, the Russian Embassy, The New York Stock Exchange, The Federal Reserve Bank, and St. Peters Cathedral in the Loop Downtown Chicago. The Structural Division in Nelson was formed early in the industry's history to handle the many requests for structural marble. At the Nelson facility the marble was/is shaped into panels, columns, floor tiles and all special needs specified by the architect. The Structural Division has seen many architectural styles come and go over the past century, and can fabricate any type of design old or new.

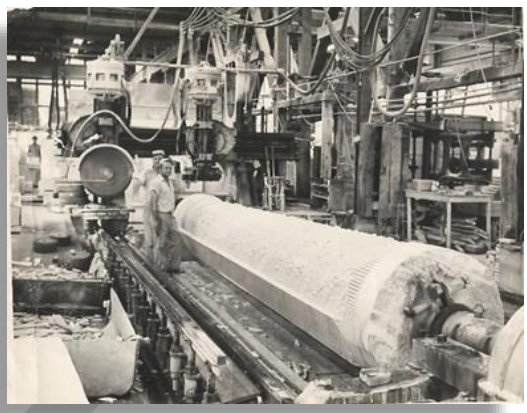


Figure 26: Marble Lathe inside Blue Ridge Marble Co.

Other Notable Amenities

The City of Nelson's city park and baseball field, nature trail, and marble museum are currently its most notable amenities. The Marble Museum is located in the Nelson City Hall. The Museum includes a year-round exhibit of examples of fine marble and shows the history of marble mining in Pickens County. All historical photos included in this document were provided by the Nelson Marble Museum.

Figure 27: Exhibits on display inside the Pickens County Marble Museum and Nelson City Hall

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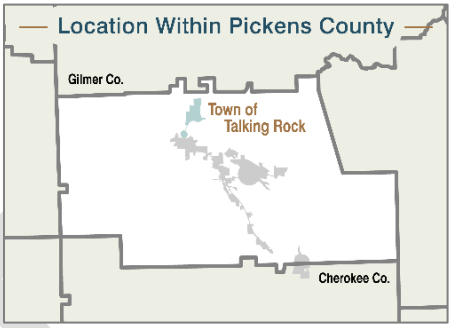
Town of Talking Rock Overview

GEOGRAPHY

The Town of Talking Rock is nestled in the foothills of the North Georgia Mountains between the cities of Ellijay and Jasper in Pickens County. Happily, the third smallest town in the state of Georgia, Talking Rock has not changed much since its beginning in 1883, when the train was the lifeline of the town.



HISTORY

Talking Rock's history is rich with stories about the Trail of Tears, the Civil War, the railroad, and the Great Depression. The origination of the town's name is unclear and there are many interesting stories regarding its derivation. Some individuals believe that it's from the noise of the water rolling over the rocks in our beautiful creek, while others like the story of folks sitting for a spell on a rock to have a talk with a neighbor. Still others believe that the name originated with the local Indians. The railroad played a vital part in the lives of the residents by providing a source for shipping cotton grown in the community, mail delivery, and travel to other parts of the state. The once busy depot saw an average of four trains a day. In more recent years the town has purchased two historic rail cars which rest on a former spur track in front of the town hall and parallel to the modern railway. The town's plan is to restore the railcars with the purpose of interpreting historic transportation related to the town's history. The town's historic schoolhouse, seen in figure 39, has been restored and is now yet another asset to the vintage aesthetics of the town center.

Figure 29: Historic Talking Rock Schoolhouse

Figure 28: Hollyhocks Antiques on Hwy 136 in Talking Rock

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Other Notable Amenities

While it may be lacking a bustling central business district, the Town of Talking Rock's town center has several notable assets such as the general store, a landmark antique shop, and a large passive recreation park adjacent to Talking Rock Creek which draws individuals and families from across the area. Talking Rock is also the location of Heritage Days, an annual festival that draws an impressive crowd year after year.

Figure 30: Heritage Days 2016, Photo courtesy of the Pickens County Progress

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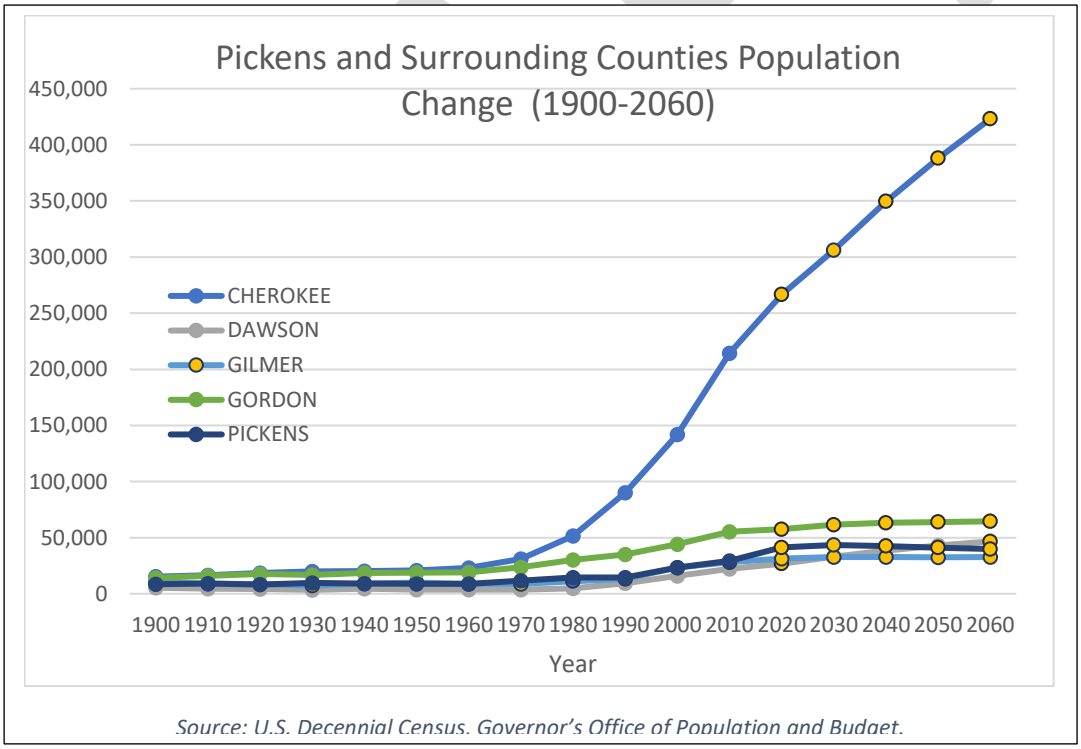
Demographics

Population

Pickens County is approximately 233 square miles in size and includes three municipalities: the City of Jasper, the City of Nelson, and the Town of Talking Rock. The most populated of these cities, the City of Jasper, serves as the County Seat of Government. Pickens County is surrounded by Gordon County to its west, Gilmer County to its north, Dawson County to its east, and Cherokee County to its south. Both Dawson County and Cherokee County are not within the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission area; instead, Dawson County is within the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission area, while Cherokee is part of the Atlanta Regional Commission.

The 2020 Decennial Census showed that Pickens County's population growth outpaced both that of the state of Georgia and that of the Northwest Georgia region, with the County's population increasing by 11.4% from 29,431 individuals to 33,216 individuals. The State of Georgia's population increased by 10.4% during this period, while Northwest Georgia as a whole increased by 5.8%.



Source: U.S. Decennial Census, Governor's Office of Population and Budget.

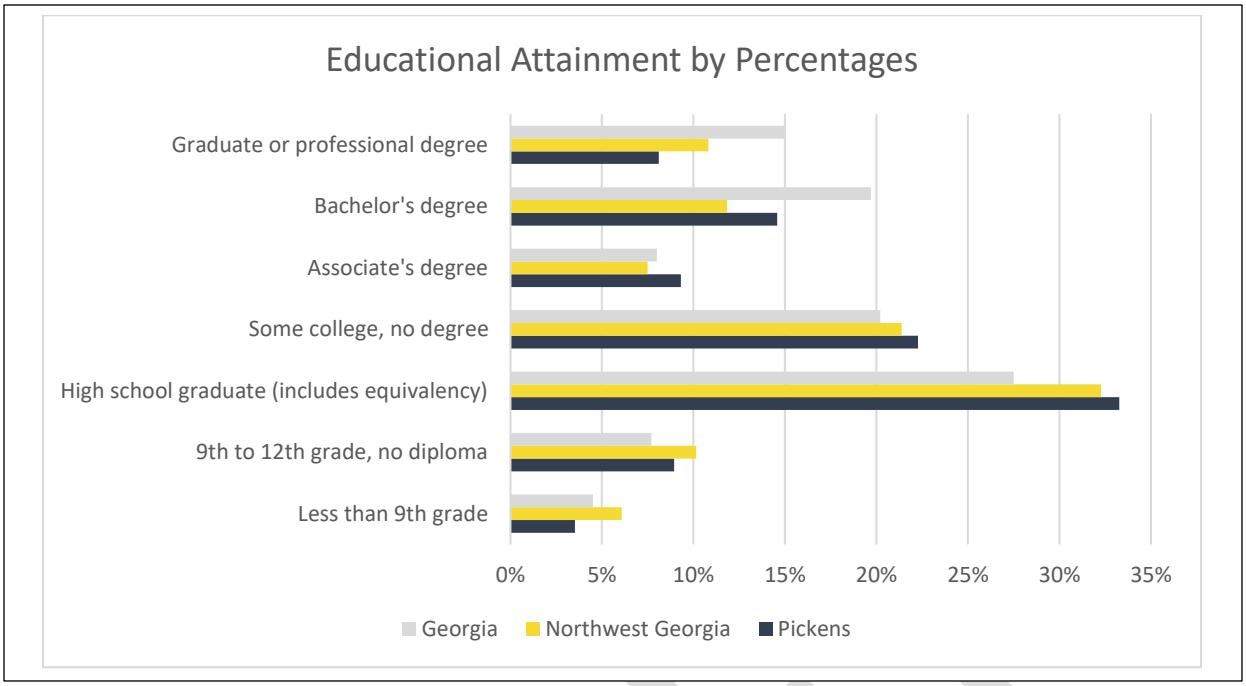
Education

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. Pickens County exceeds the average percentage by population for those with a high school degree or equivalent for Northwest Georgia Region for those 25 years and older, with an approximant 88% having at least a high school equivalent degree and at least some postsecondary education. For the Northwest Georgia Region, the percentage of those with at least a high school equivalent degree and some postsecondary education is at 83%. Both of these totals, for Pickens County and Northwest Georgia Region, still falls short of the state average of 90%.

Pickens County has a higher percentage of those with at least some additional post-secondary college education in both the category of some college and no degree and for an associate degree than the region and the state. Part of Pickens County's success in achieving post – secondary educational attainment is due to the presence of the Chattahoochee Technical College Appalachian Campus. Those 25 or older living in Pickens County also outperform the state totals in percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree, but below that of the Northwest Georgia region. Though Pickens County education totals for those of at least a high school education, those with some post-secondary education, those with an associate degree, for those 25 years and older, there is discrepancy for those achieving a graduate degree or professional degree versus that of both the region and state.

Educational Attainment for those 25 and Older

	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Bartow	3,156	6,631	25,475	16,408	5,396	9,630	4,448
Catoosa	1,474	3,709	15,177	11,598	3,941	7,292	3,459
Chattooga	1,847	2,899	6,570	3,058	1,093	1,039	626
Dade	674	1,389	4,088	2,230	1,016	1,260	498
Fannin	801	1,595	6,836	4,328	2,013	2,551	1,864
Floyd	4,198	6,474	21,804	13,563	5,338	7,906	6,057
Gilmer	1,411	2,178	8,149	4,513	1,796	2,950	1,971
Gordon	3,290	5,258	13,419	8,024	2,569	3,358	2,795
Haralson	1,024	2,583	7,422	4,622	1,191	2,188	1,326
Murray	2,899	4,480	9,105	5,358	1,943	1,967	857
Paulding	2,980	7,259	32,882	28,898	9,788	17,299	8,386
Pickens	824	2,095	7,787	5,212	2,179	3,411	1,895
Polk	2,143	3,227	10,832	5,962	2,166	2,204	1,349
Walker	2,551	5,663	16,670	10,555	3,984	5,768	3,578
Whitfield	9,644	9,610	20,683	12,739	3,617	6,983	4,067



When education totals are broken down further, by local municipality,

The highest percentage of those 25 and older and living and reported living within a municipal boundary of Pickens County and achieving a graduate or professional degree is seen for those living in the City of Nelson. These higher percentages may be due to Nelson's city boundary being actually located within both Pickens and Cherokee Counties. Cherokee County, being more urban, would create a demand for more professionals. This fact may be further reflected when comparing the percentage of those with a bachelor's degree. Though a discrepancy still exists in percentages between Nelson and Pickens' County seat of Jasper , 14.2% for those 25 years older or older and living in the City of Nelson versus 11.1% living in the City of Jasper, this discrepancy is not pronounced as seen in comparing the percentage of graduate's and professional degrees.

Educational Attainment of Adults Ages 25 or older in 2020

Location	High school graduate or equivalency	Some College	Associates degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or Professional
City of Jasper	6.1%	37.1%	18.2%	11.1%	3.1%
City of Nelson	2.5%	29.6%	19.6%	14.2%	5.3%
Town of Talking Rock	7.8%	22.1%	27.3%	7.8%	2.6%

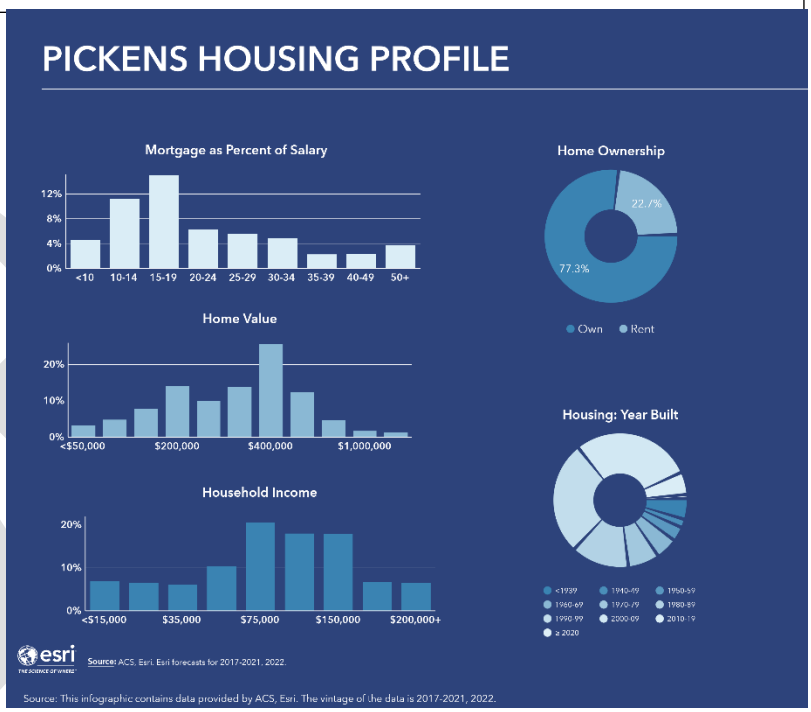
Housing and Economics

Pickens County is growing in population at a faster rate than the region and state, and is adding housing at a higher rate than neighboring Bartow County, but much more slowly than Cherokee and Dawson Counties. However, the rate of additional housing units appears to be increasing, as between 2010 and 2020, Pickens County added only 1,200 new units, but added 400 units in the last two years, 2020- 2022. Housing vacancy is decreasing in Pickens County and in surrounding counties.

Census 2020 PL 94-171 Profile

	Total Housing Units			Annual Rate of Change in Total Housing Units	Average Household Size		Total Housing Vacancy			Annual Rate of Change In Housing Vacancy
	2010	2020	2022	2010-2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2022	2010-2020
Location	Count	Count	Estimate				Count	Count	Estimate	
Bartow County	39,819	42,435	43,593	0.64%	2.77	2.69	4,041	2,390	2,651	-5.12%
Cherokee County	82,360	100,813	106,065	2.04%	2.80	2.76	6,424	4,897	5,313	-2.68%
Dawson County	10,425	11,926	12,645	1.35%	2.61	2.59	1,613	1,992	1,776	-2.09%
Forsyth Counthy	64,052	87,581	93,793	3.18%	2.94	2.99	4,619	4,030	3,589	-1.35%
Gilmer County	16,560	17,717	32,054	0.68%	2.48	2.43	5,248	4,885	5,095	-0.71%
Gordon County	22,282	22,736	23,022	0.20%	2.76	2.69	2,563	1,526	1,570	-5.05%
Murray County	15,979	16,038	16,064	0.04%	2.8	2.7	1,899	1,320	1,312	-3.57%
Pickens County	13,692	14,896	15,333	0.85%	2.57	2.51	2,401	1,776	1,843	-2.95%

Home ownership is strong in Pickens County, with over 70% of homes owned rather than rented; the majority of housing stock was built in 1970 or later. For most homeowners, their mortgage forms less than 30% of their income; most housing values range from $200,000 to $400,000. Median household incomes in the County vary, from Jasper's MHI of $33,570, to Nelson's MHI of $66,111, and the County's MHI of $68,365, which is higher than all surrounding counties except Cherokee County.



Location	Median Household Income
City of Jasper	$33,570
City of Nelson	$66,111
Town of Talking Rock	No data

Location	Median Household Income
Cherokee County	$84,817
Dawson County	$72,260
Gilmer County	$57,376
Gordon County	$48,662
Pickens County	$68,365

Pickens County's unemployment rate fell to 2.5% in 2022, from a high of 4.8% during Covid-19. With a labor force of 16,022 and an employed population of 15,629, there is a percentage of workers in Pickens County still available to be employed.

Labor Statistics for Pickens County (2017-2022)

Year	Employed	Labor Force	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2022	15,629	16,022	394	2.5%
2021	15,099	15,533	434	2.8%
2020	14,210	14,927	717	4.8%
2019	14,977	15,457	480	3.1%
2018	14,671	15,219	548	3.6%
2017	14,464	15,117	653	4.3%

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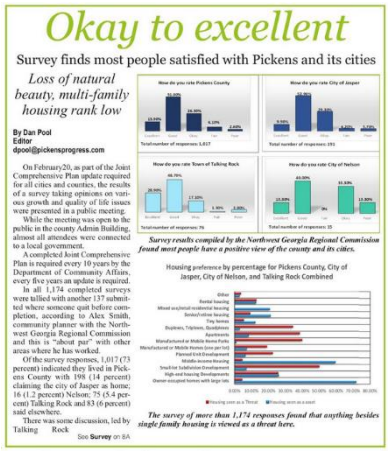
Healthcare system
Parks and Recreation
Sewer and Water Infrastructure availability
Sidewalks
Local School System and Higher Education
Public Services
Local Heritage
Proximity/access to highway 515/575
Smalltown atmosphere and Sense of community
Tourism
Scenic views and Natural beauty
Agri-tourism
Retail
Other
Airport
Public Safety

Pickens Progress Survey Results

The public survey gathered a total of 1,180 complete responses, with a completion rate of 84%. Full survey results are provided in Appendix B. The first series of questions asked respondents' place of residence, age, employment status, and about business ownership and location and internet availability. The remaining questions discussed perceptions of the community; for instance, the preferred housing development type. These questions also allowed survey respondents to select "Other," then to provide further information.



Okay to excellent

Survey finds most people satisfied with Pickens and its cities

Loss of natural beauty, multi-family housing rank low

By Dan Pool
Editor
dpool@pickensprogress.com

On February20, as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan update required for all cities and counties, the results of a survey taking opinions on various growth and quality of life issues were presented in a public meeting.

While the meeting was open to the public in the county Admin Building, almost all attendees were connected to a local government.

A completed Joint Comprehensive Plan is required every 10 years by the Department of Community Affairs, every five years an update is required.

In all 1,174 completed surveys were tallied with another 137 submitted where someone quit before completion, according to Alex Smith, community planner with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and this is "about par" with other areas where he has worked.

Of the survey responses, 1,017 (73 percent) indicated they lived in Pickens County with 198 (14 percent) claiming the city of Jasper as home; 16 (1.2 percent) Nelson; 75 (5.4 percent) Talking Rock and 83 (6 percent) said elsewhere.

There was some discussion, led by Talking Rock

See Survey on 8A

Survey results compiled by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission found most people have a positive view of the county and its cities.

Housing preference by percentage for Pickens County, City of Jasper, City of Nelson, and Talking Rock Combined

The survey of more than 1,174 responses found that anything besides single family housing is viewed as a threat here.

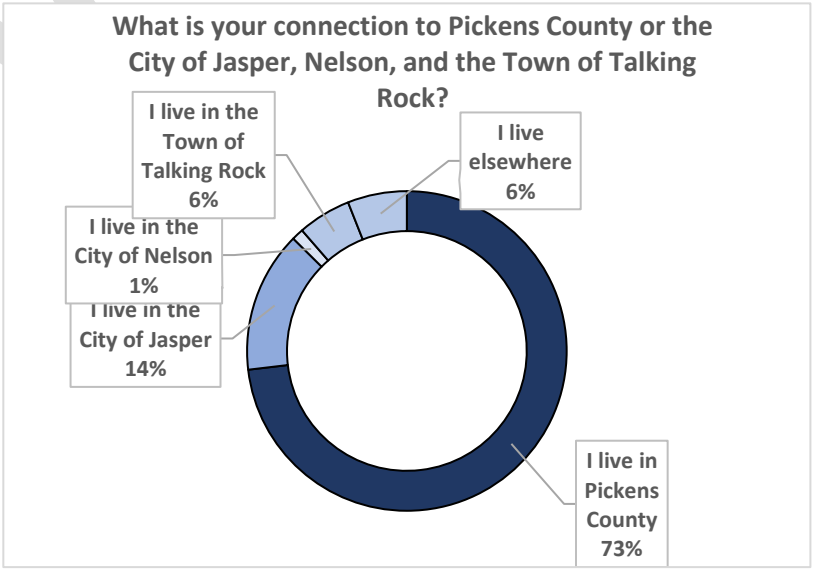
Of the 1,180 respondents, a majority of individuals (38%) were between the age of 35 to 54. The second largest age group (30%) were between ages 55 to 69. One in five (18%) of survey takers were between the age of 18-34. One in ten (13%) of those who responded were age 70 or older. One percent of respondents were 17 or under.

What age group do you represent?	
17 or Under	0.30%
18-34	18.00%
35-54	38.10%
55-69	30.60%
70 or Older	12.90%

As for employment status, 58.3% of participants were employed, while 23.2% were retired, 10.3% were self-employed, 4.5% were stay-at-home parents or caregivers, and less than 2% were students (both employed and unemployed).

More respondents reported their place of employment as outside Unincorporated Pickens County (37.3%) than within Unincorporated Pickens County (31.6%) or Jasper (29%). One in five (17.5%) owned a business, whether located in Unincorporated Pickens County (52%), outside the County (22%), or in Jasper (20%).

Question 11 and 12 gauged internet availability, with 63.8% of businesses owners and 63.8% of residents stating they had internet access with adequate speeds, while 2.3% stated that they had no internet access at all.



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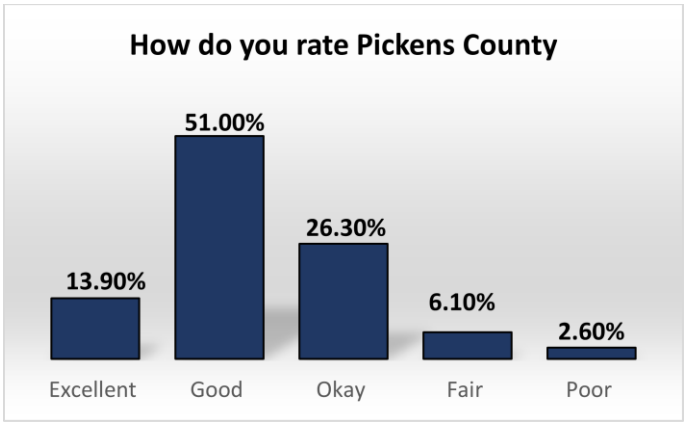
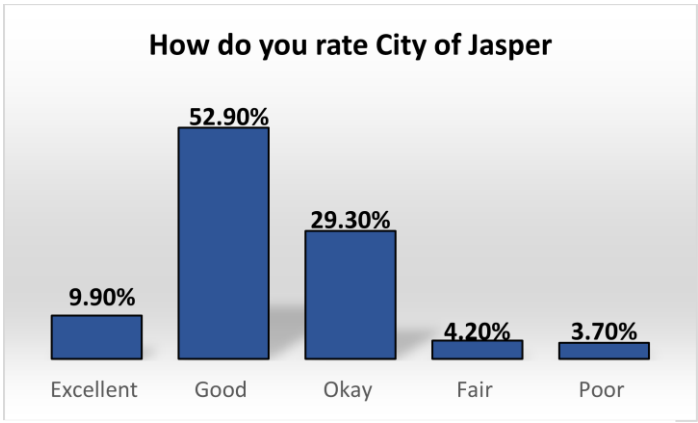
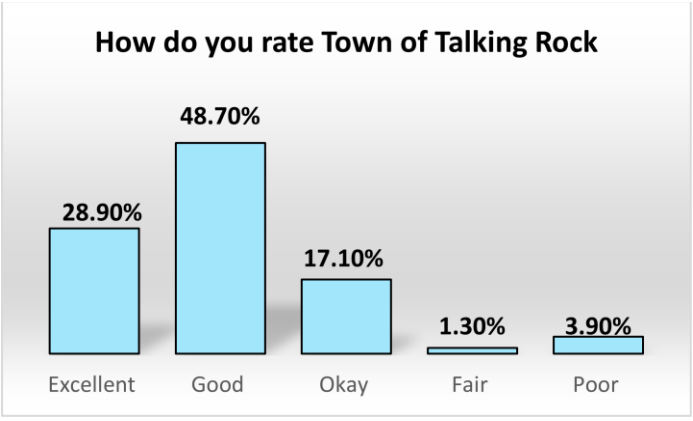


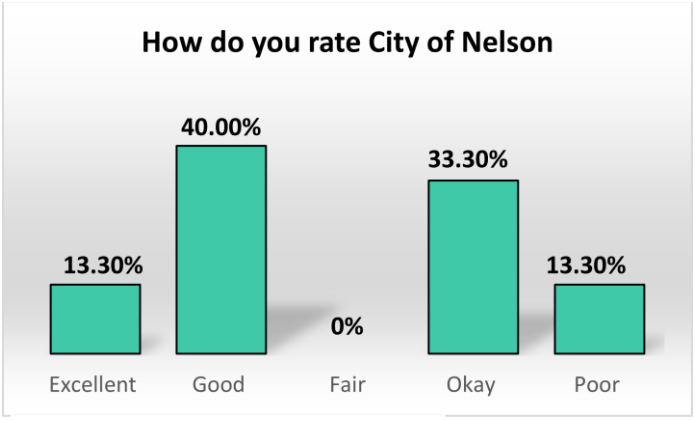
Total number of responses: 1,017



Number of responses: 191



Number of responses: 76



Number of responses: 15

The remaining questions addressed strengths of the community, threats to the community, preferred development density and housing types, and types of projects desired.

Survey Question #13. What are the strengths of where you live?	
Smalltown atmosphere and Sense of community	75.20%
Parks and Recreation	9.90%
Local Heritage	21.40%
Proximity/access to highway 515/575	35.90%
Scenic views and Natural beauty	78.90%
Tourism	1.80%
Agri-tourism	3.70%
Local School System and Higher Education	9.80%
Healthcare system	6.30%
Sidewalks	0.80%
Sewer and Water Infrastructure availability	4.60%
Retail	1.20%
Airport	0.80%
Public Safety	12.70%
Public Services	2.50%
Other	7.00%

Strengths

Respondents were asked to select 5 choices from a list of 16 traits that the Stakeholder Committee identified as strengths of the community. Responses valued Scenic views and natural beauty (78.9%); Smalltown atmosphere and sense of community (75.2%); Proximity/access to Highway 515/575 (35.9%); Local heritage (21.4%); Public safety (12.7%); Parks and recreation (9.9%); and Local school systems and higher education(9.8%).

Weaknesses and Threats

Of fourteen items listed, the highest concern or threat was the loss of natural and agriculture resources (31.3%0; followed by lack of water and wastewater infrastructure availability (30.8%); and water and wastewater infrastructure condition (26.6%); workforce availability (24.3%) and losing workforce to surrounding municipalities (24.2%); too many tourists (19.6%).

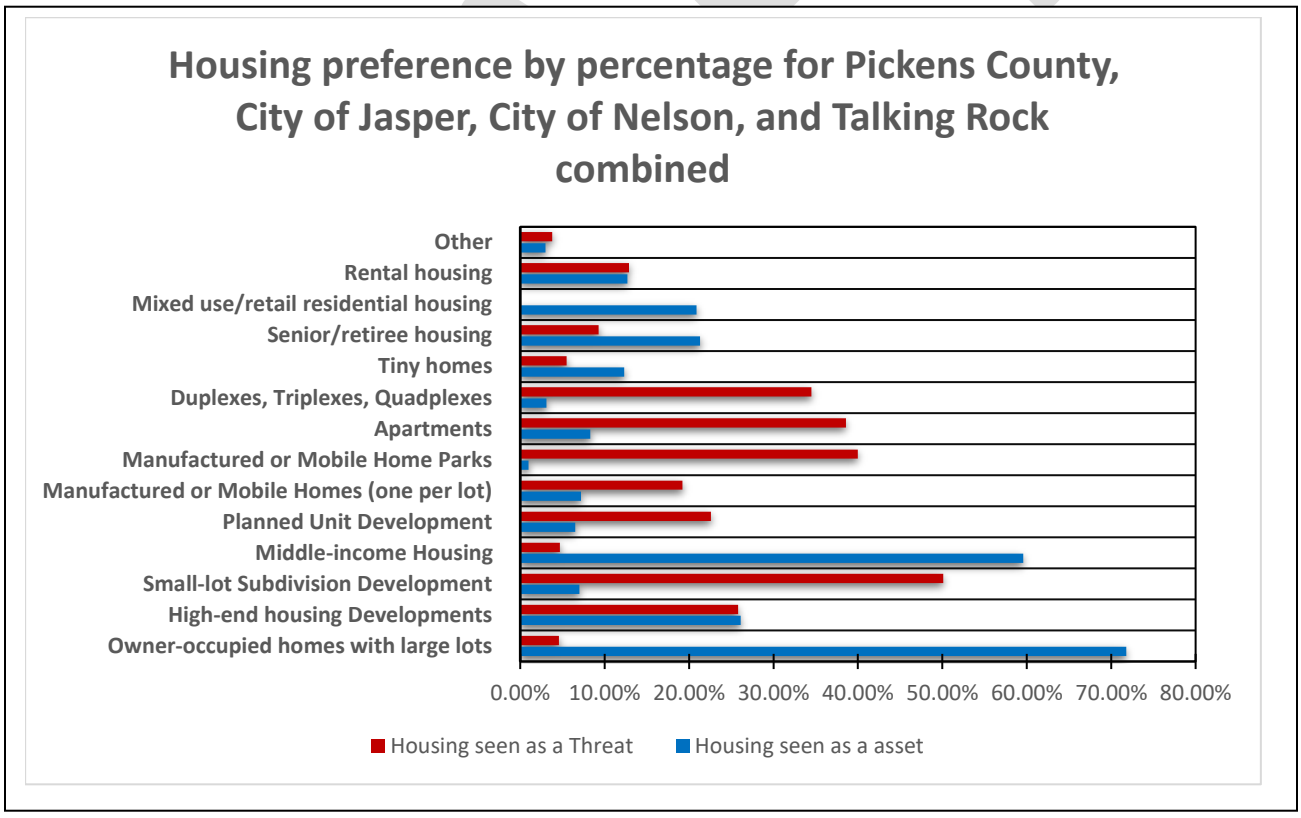
Survey Question #14. What are the weaknesses of where you live?	
Youth leaving	17.10%
Water and Sewer Infrastructure Availability	30.80%
Water and Sewer Infrastructure Condition	26.60%
Lack of Workforce	24.30%
Losing Workforce to Surrounding Counties and Municipalities	24.20%
Lack of Housing Options	23.10%
Loss of Natural Resources and Agriculture	31.30%
Aging Population	16.30%
Inadequate Ordinances	10.40%
Proximity and Access to Highway 575/515	4.20%
Lack of Sidewalks and Bike lanes	13.70%
Too Many Tourists	19.60%
Not Enough Tourists	6.30%
Other	18.60%

Future Growth

Questions 17 and 18 gauged public interest in types of projects, growth, and housing choices for the future. Projects most needed were Small business development (48.4%), Sewer and water improvement projects (43.5%), Local retail development (41.6%), and Broadband availability (30.8%).

Future Growth and Needed Projects	Percent
Small Business Development	48.3%
Sewer and Water Improvements	43.5%
Commercial	11.0%
Manufacturing	10.0%
Local Retail	41.6%
Tourism	10.9%
Broadband Availability	30.8%
Sidewalk Improvements	14.8%
Public Parks	39.1%
Government Facilities	3.2%
Other	11.0%

The final survey questions, questions 19 through 22, regarded housing preference. The Stakeholder Committee predicted that scenic views and small town atmosphere would be a local strength. The most popular housing options were Owner-occupied homes with large lots (71.8% an asset) and Middle-income housing developments (59.6% an asset). High-end housing development was seen by 26.1% as an asset and 25.8% as a threat. Housing types considered a threat were Small-lot subdivision developments (50.1%), Manufactured or mobile home parks (40%), and Multifamily options (apartments, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes) (38.6% and 34.5%)..



Broadband

Introduction

Access to high-speed Internet has become a necessity for businesses 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 the spring of 2018. This Act has allowed for the creation of the Georgia Broadband Development Initiative (GBDI) to help communities bring high-speed internet service even to the most rural areas. Pickens County, Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock would like to participate in the Broadband Ready Community program because they see a need to facilitate better Internet connectivity for all residents, regardless of how remote their homes are. Therefore, this broadband element is included in the comprehensive plan, and 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 and to signal that Pickens County has taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment.
- The second item is to apply for the Broadband Ready Community Designation.

GBDI Mapping Methodology

The GBDI model (*see map on pg. 40)* is inherently location-based. This means that the target broadband service must be available to more than 80% of locations in a census block to be served. Census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated as 'Unserved'. The map depicts access to broadband, not subscription to broadband. Broadband data is provided by the various Internet Service Providers of Georgia. Location data are from commercially available sources.

Current Service Areas

According to the GBDI map on page 40, there are a total of 3,482 unserved locations in Pickens County. This figure also shows a total of 16,933 locations that are served, which means that 17% of locations are unserved in Pickens County.

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 providers 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

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to funding. While a statewide grant program will make an impact on some unserved areas, the widescale change could require a broad spectrum of funding incentives and mechanisms.

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. Pickens County, Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock will appoint a Broadband Committee made up of local leadership as well as private broadband providers in order to strategically determine which unserved areas will be eligible and competitive to apply for broadband funding assistance.

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. Pickens County and the municipalities of Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock have adopted or will 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 **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 Mapping Methodology

The FCC Form 477 Broadband mapping model is based on census block resolution. This means that if the target broadband service is available to at least ONE location (residential or business) in a census block, the block appears served. Populated census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated as 'Unserved.'

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Unserved Areas of Focus

According to the FCC 477 Broadband Map, the amount of served locations within Pickens County is significantly greater than the GBDI mapping model. A close look at the FCC 477 map shows several significant areas as unserved or no locations. The highest concentration of unserved areas is seen along the entire far western side of the County. There are also notable unserved areas in and around the Town of Talking Rock and the unincorporated area of Marble Hill. The Pickens County Broadband Committee will assess both the FCC 477 and GBDI Broadband maps in order to determine the most effective strategy for funding infrastructural deployments into the unserved areas. Funding assistance will, most certainly, expedite the deployment of broadband infrastructure in the significantly unserved areas.

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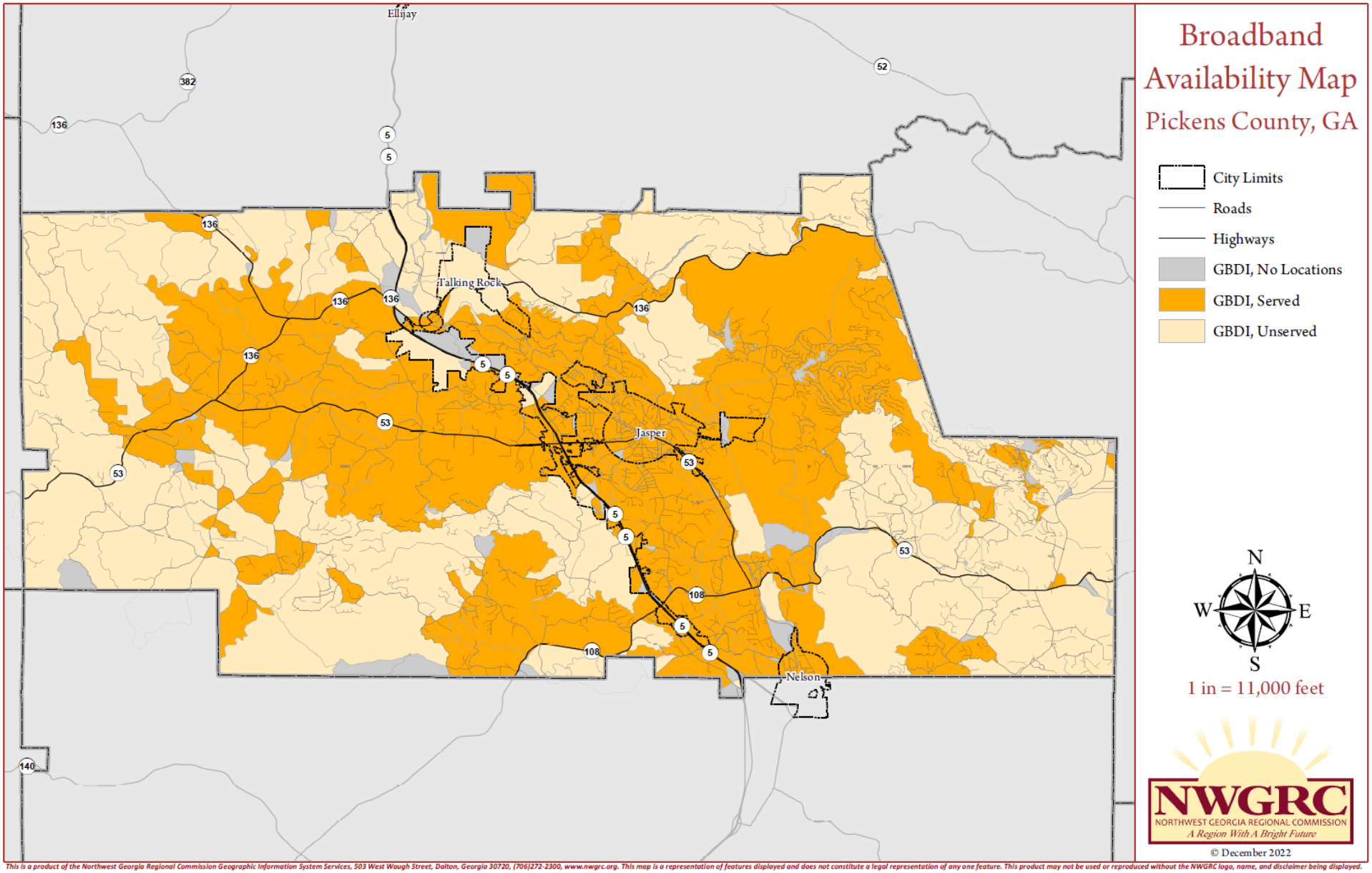

Broadband Availability Map

Pickens County, GA

- City Limits
- Roads
- Highways
- GBDI, No Locations
- GBDI, Served
- GBDI, Unserved

N
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1 in = 11,000 feet

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Land Use

The predominant land use throughout Pickens County continues to be rural in nature, which is due primarily to the lack of interstate access, mountainous terrain, current agricultural practices, and limited water and wastewater infrastructure. This overall rural character, however, is also the prevailing trait throughout the northwest Georgia region for many of the same reasons. Areas of greater population density throughout the county are mostly centralized within or surrounding Pickens' three municipalities, due to availability of waste and wastewater infrastructure. These areas of higher population density are also where commercial activity is typically focused. Unincorporated areas within the County were developed as large planned communities- Big Canoe and Bent Tree- which both display a concentrated density of residential development along with amenities to serve these private developments. Moderate population density and commercial land use can also be seen surrounding the County's arterial corridors like State Route 515, and Highways 108, 136, and 53. There are several crossroad communities throughout the County, which although lacking incorporated status, display traits of a Crossroad Community, namely, the Tate, Blaine, Marble Hill, and Hinton Communities. Commercial/industrial activity in Pickens County is generally seen along the primary corridors such as State Highways 515, 108, 136, and 53.

Figure 31: View of Sandy Bottom Farms from the Tate Mansion

Figure 33: Vacant store near the City of Nelson

Figure 32: Imerys Marble processing plant in the Marble Hill Community

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Figure 34: Panoramic view of Sharp Top Mountain in Pickens County

Land Use Analysis Methodology

This land use analysis relied heavily on GIS to identify and map current conditions, with a base map of the county's watersheds and ground water recharge areas sourced from Georgia DNR Environmental Criteria. Development of land and provision of services via infrastructure are heavily influenced by the contour of the land which varies greatly throughout Pickens County's mountainous terrain. Wastewater and drinking water systems optimize downslope flow; land development is less expensive on flat land, a rare commodity in Pickens County; and central travel corridors often follow ridge lines. Arguably, the most significant challenge for Pickens County's future, not unlike state and global challenges, is the management of its water. As previously stated, access to drinking water will be a limiting factor on the county's growth, while obligations to manage wastewater and stormwater can quickly become crippling government costs passed along to businesses, residents, and tourists, therefore making the county an expensive place to live and conduct business. The land use conversation revealed the need for continuing to direct future growth to areas already supplied with water and wastewater services, while encouraging future development to be impact-conscious in its footprint and connections. In prioritizing new development on vacant lots already served by water and wastewater, and prioritizing redevelopment in both established residential and commercial centers, both County government and future residents benefit from cost savings while natural resource impacts are minimized. Unmanaged development patterns can also worsen traffic and erode natural amenities highly valued among residents. As a result, the following character areas reflect strategies which leverage existing infrastructure and established neighborhoods while accommodating growth in more natural or rural expanses through moderation and character-specific approaches.

This Land Use Plan supports the Community's Smart Growth Goals identified previously:

- PROTECT AND PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES- Protecting the Environment
- TARGET GROWTH- Keeping Open Space Open
- LEVERAGE AND PROMOTE EXISTING AND NEW ASSETS- Thriving Cities, Suburbs, and Towns
- CREATE CONNECTIONS- Better Access, Less Traffic, and Shared Benefits
- MAINTAIN FISCAL VIABILITY- Lower Costs, Lower Taxes

Overview of Character Area Planning

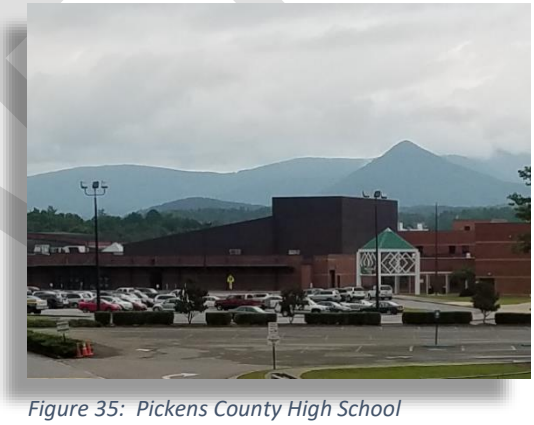

Figure 35: Pickens County High School

The Comprehensive Plan uses future development maps with character areas to describe and plan land use in the county. Character area planning combines form and function to define distinct areas in a community and move the community toward its vision. The goal is to identify overall patterns of development, not just individual land uses on a lot-by lot basis. A character area has unique characteristics, holds potential to develop into a unique area when given planning and guidance, or must be cared for in special ways because of its particular development issues. Character area planning gives consideration to geographical features, like floodplains and existing greenspace, when planning future development. The Comprehensive Plan also follows the Transect Model, where character areas run the gamut from the least developed, most rural area, "Greenspace/Conservation," to the most developed "Industrial" areas. Future development maps graphically guide managers in planning commercial, industrial, residential, and recreational development with geography and existing land uses in mind.

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Pickens County Character Areas

ARTERIAL COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Vision

A major transportation corridor, State Highway 515 and its surrounding parcels promote the free and efficient flow of traffic and goods and serve as an attractive gateway to Pickens County.

Narrative

Piedmont Mountainside Hospital

Development located at the Hwy. 53 and 515 intersection.

Looking north on Hwy. 515

Within Unincorporated Pickens County, State Highway 515 is the community's regional commercial corridor, containing a mix of highway oriented businesses, large scale auto dealers, big box retailers, the Piedmont Mountainside hospital, multifamily residential, the county airport, and the Airport Technology Business Park. Future development adjacent to the hospital may include medical facilities, one or more hotels, senior care facilities, retail, and dining services. State Highway 515 provides an easy means of access to the area from surrounding communities whose inhabitants want to shop, dine or enjoy other amenities. The success of this area depends upon the ability of the city and county governments to cooperate and coordinate in planning its development. In this corridor, too, is the Pickens County Airport, located just west of the intersection of Highway 515 and Highway 53, with a 5,000- foot full-service general aviation airport offering 24-hour fueling, flight planning and hangar storage for private and business aircraft, and support for law enforcement, military training, Civil Air Patrol, flight training, aerial photography and surveys. A 17-acre extension of airport property is designed for commercial aircraft hangar development to attract businesses whose operations require access to airport facilities. The runway accommodates general aviation traffic, including typical business jet aircraft. Local general aviation airports are recognized engines of business and economic development. With the extension of the runway to 5,500 feet, the leasing of parcels

for construction of commercial hangars, the planned addition of T-hangars to meet the demand for private aircraft storage, the expansion of on-field businesses offering aircraft maintenance and other services, and the anticipated construction of a new terminal facility, the airport is poised to attract new business and generate enhanced economic activity for the community.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Improve traffic flow and minimize traffic congestion at intersections by promoting inter-parcel access and development of a system of connecting streets and/or frontage roads between major intersections.
- Accommodate a mix of uses that serves both local and regional markets.
- Provide adequate buffers between commercial uses and adjacent residential areas.

Primary Land Uses

- A mixture of primarily retail, restaurants, services, offices, and institutional uses. High-density residential and/or senior residential may be appropriate. Proposals for industrial development would be reviewed based on a specific proposal and not on a speculative basis (for properties in unincorporated Pickens, NC or HB land use districts)

Implementation Strategies

- Review and modify, if necessary, County buffer requirements between commercial and residential areas.
- Extend water and wastewater services, where necessary, to growth areas of the corridor.
- Explore incentives for existing development to retrofit to updated design standards.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Growth Preparedness
- Regional Cooperation
- Regional Identity

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BENT TREE AND BIG CANOE

Vision

Bent Tree and Big Canoe are unique, creative, and imaginative places that provide a mix of uses that result in live, work, play arrangements and lifestyles while preserving the county's scenic and unique environmental resources.

Figure 36: Entrance at Bent Tree

Narrative

Bent Tree and Big Canoe, planned multi-use gated developments, are home to permanent as well as seasonal residents. These developments include homes and facilities dating from the 1970s to the present and have not yet been fully built-out. Bent Tree and Big Canoe are recognized throughout Georgia and beyond as quality developments that contribute to the quality of life of Pickens County. Each community has thousands of residences, scenic mountain views, and beautiful water features. Although the majority of Big Canoe is in Pickens County, a significant portion of the community is across the line in Dawson County. Due to the significance of these developments, Bent Tree and Big Canoe may influence the development of nearby areas. An example is a cluster of commercial establishments near the north entrance of Big Canoe. There may also be significant conservation areas present, such as the Potts Mountain area on the east side of Steve Tate Highway.

Figure 37: Scenic View from within Bent Tree

Development Patterns The development pattern should seek to:

- Preserve rural character, scenic views and environmentally sensitive resources. Cluster residential development in a conservation subdivision design that incorporates significant amounts of open space and natural conservation areas.
- Preserve natural hydrology and drainage ways.

Figure 38: Covered Bridge inside Big Canoe

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- Limit grading and clearing.
- Preserve sufficient tree canopy during project development and building construction.
- Carefully design new road way construction to minimize scenic and environmental impacts.
- Utilize natural features for stormwater management.
- Provide a mix of housing types to meet the diverse needs of the population.
- Incorporate traditional neighborhood design that offers a mix of neighborhood commercial, civic, institutional and public gathering places within walking distances of residential areas. Assure that all public facilities and services (roads, utilities, fire protection, recreation, solid waste, etc.) serving new development and redevelopment are adequate to accommodate the population.
- Plans within the gates of Bent Tree and Big Canoe may be dependent on covenants and association approvals.

Figure 39: Example of an entrance at Big Canoe

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed residential uses and densities (dependent upon the availability of centralized wastewater)
- Neighborhood commercial.
- Civic and institutional uses.
- Parks and recreation
- Open space and greenways.

Implementation Strategies

- Review and revise, if necessary, the County's Suburban Residential Private Community (SRPC) land use (zoning) district.
- Review and revise, if necessary, the County's development regulations related to planned communities.
- Encourage use of Conservation Design subdivision principles.
- Utilize *Stormwater Better Site Design Standards* from the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual to conserve natural areas, reduce impervious surfaces, and better integrate stormwater treatment in site planning and design. Support the development of private, centralized wastewater services.

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- Work cooperatively with Bent Tree and Big Canoe representatives on possible future signage and landscaping in nearby areas to improve gateways corridors to these communities, including Cove Road and Steve Tate Highway.
- Work cooperatively with representatives of new developments near these communities, such as new commercial and redeveloped commercial on Steve Tate Highway, to encourage quality design features in architecture and site design.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Open Space and Wildlife Preservation
- Environmental Protection

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CROSSROAD COMMUNITIES

Vision

Figure 1: Blaine Store near the Highway 136 and Swan Bridge Road intersection

Blaine, Hinton, Marble Hill, and Tate will remain low-density crossroads communities, presenting both residential and commercial opportunities. Each community has unique features that will be preserved.

Blaine: *The clearly defined roadbed of the Old Federal Road, and the site of Fort Newnan, an Indian removal fort, will be preserved, marked, and interpreted as significant Cherokee heritage sites, along with the adjacent cemetery. The old Blaine Store and the Masonic Lodge will remain important community landmarks, and will continue to serve the community.*

Hinton: *Hinton will continue to serve the surrounding area as a rural village center composed of a variety of low-intensity residential, commercial, and agricultural uses while accommodating growth. The agricultural and residential uses create Hinton's character while the need for a commercial core and the intersection create the location.*

Marble Hill: *This area in Southeast Pickens County will retain its historic significance of marble heritage and continue to grow with new development and redevelopment of single-family housing with a variety of price ranges.*

Tate *is a model of the quintessential small southern village. The community includes commercial retail and services; medical facilities; churches; a historic school; and a historic train depot anchored by a crossroads and surrounding traditional neighborhood.*

Narrative

Figure 40: Part of Georgia's Old Federal Road in the Marble Hill area

Each community features unique historic landmarks to preserve, as well as potential for growth and development fitting the nature and need of the community.

Blaine, near the site of the Cherokee village of Sanderstown, is the community centered near the intersections of Hwy. 136 and Swan Bridge Rd, and Hwy. 136 and Antioch Church Road. Low-density development, woods, and fields, and the old Blaine Store are defining features, as is the clearly-defined deep linear roadbed of the Old Federal Road (the Trail of Tears), which runs alongside the current Hwy. 136, and is clearly defined as a deep, linear depression in the ground.

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Marble Hill, along with Nelson and Tate, has historic roots in activities related to the area's marble quarries. The area also includes roads that reference the community's heritage related to religious institutions (Four Mile Church Road) and historic routes (Lawson Federal Road). The area has variable topography and variety of land cover that help to make it picturesque. State Highway 53 serves as the main arterial route through the area, and includes industrial, commercial, and other uses. Yellow Creek Road also serves as a major collector route connecting East Pickens with North Cherokee County.

Hinton stores

Hinton is the center of a rural area at the intersection of Hwy. 53, Carver's Mill Rd, Hwy. 136, and Bradley Rd, defined by its open spaces and agricultural uses. The commercial uses in Hinton are geared toward supplying goods towards farmers and general merchandise to residents. Several aesthetically unique and interesting buildings (primarily the feed & seed, and the old store) are central in defining its character. Hinton is a model of a rural, agricultural village center, with the Hinton fire station, community center, and nearby churches anchoring the area.

Church facilities at Hinton.

Tate was the historic center of marble production in Georgia and has experienced a resurgence thanks to projects such as the public depot renovation and private renovation of historic buildings. The Tate community retains a great deal of picturesque charm and historical character. Renovations of older homes and maintenance of an active community group have helped to maintain its unique character. The depot and rail line are resources for possible tourism and event promotion.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Preserve historic resources including the Blaine Store, the bed of the Old Federal Road, and the site of Fort Newnan, along with the associated cemetery, as defining features of the area.
- Maintain the low-density development pattern, and conserve open space.
- Maintain historic building setbacks, low density residential pattern, and open space characteristics.

Figure 41: Historic Tate Methodist Church along Highway 53

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Primary Land Uses

- Low density, single-family residential (ER, RR, SR county land use districts)
- Agriculture (AG, SA county land use districts)
- Neighborhood commercial (NC county land use district)
- Commercial along Highway 53, Highway 108 (HB, NC county land use districts) with the possibility of industrial (I county land use district)
- Institutional uses (Schools, churches, cemeteries, medical clinic, etc.)

Figure 42: Historic Tate Gymnasium

Implementation Strategies

- Coordinate with property owners to define the parameters of Fort Newnan and the associated cemetery; protect them along with the roadbed of the Old Federal Road; and, promote them together as significant Cherokee heritage sites.
- Continue to recognize the location of Sanderstown, and recommend that developers take account of the possibility of Indian burial sites and significant archaeological remains.
- Continually maintain and, where necessary, upgrade county water lines.
- Plan new community parks to include, if appropriate, playground equipment, a walking area, and/or other facilities.
- Repair existing sidewalks and install new sidewalks where needed.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives and landowners for development and redevelopment.
- Support and promote area community events, working with community groups and using facilities such as the renovated Tate depot.
- New commercial development should be agriculture-related and/or neighborhood focused retail or services unless located on Highway 53, where various commercial uses may be acceptable.

Figure 43: Yellow Creek Fire Station in the Marble Hill area

- Work cooperatively with the chamber of commerce to encourage tourism building upon its historical marble quarry character.

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- Maintain standards limiting size and height for new freestanding signs, especially on all local (non-State designated) roads.
- Consider new gateway landscaping, signage, etc. welcoming visitors driving into the county from Dawson County and Cherokee County.
- Assist owners of historic properties (Tate House, etc.) with acquiring grant funding for preservation and enhancement.
- Work with Pickens County Fire personnel regarding the possible relocation of the Tate fire station.

Figure 44: Commercial area near Highway 108 and Highway 53 intersection

Related Quality Community Objectives

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Open Space Preservation
- Growth Preparedness

Figure 45: Historic Tate Mansion along Highway 53

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EAST PICKENS CONSERVATION AREA

Vision

The county's most significant scenic views and environmentally sensitive area are preserved to maintain the County's image as the "Gateway to the Mountains."

Narrative

This area includes the high mountain ridges, steep slopes and stream valleys of eastern Pickens County. The higher elevations within the area qualify as "Protected Mountains" under the State Mountain Protection Act. Many of the streams and lakes contain endangered fish species, whose habitats can be negatively impacted by development activity. Because of its scenic qualities, this area is an attractive location for second home/retiree developments as well as permanent resident homes. Concerns about development in the area include water quality due to erosion from home construction and road construction; loss of trees; impacts on scenic views; and new commercial retail, which may not be appropriate in this low-intense development area. The intent of this character area is to maintain scenic views, tree cover, and water quality that contribute to the community's character as the "Gateway to the Mountains." Since 2000, thousands of acres in East Pickens have been saved for conservation green space by nonprofits as well as the county government. Public, private, and nonprofit (open to public) trails are present in the area. Numerous residents have stated that the area's scenic views, wildlife, and outdoor activities are contributing factors to the community's quality of life. When asked where residents would take out-of-town visitors, many residents stated that they would show visitors scenic spots on and adjacent to Burnt Mountain Road, Cove Road, Grandview Road, and Monument Road. In addition to scenic areas and conservation green space, tourism-related businesses and retreat centers are present.

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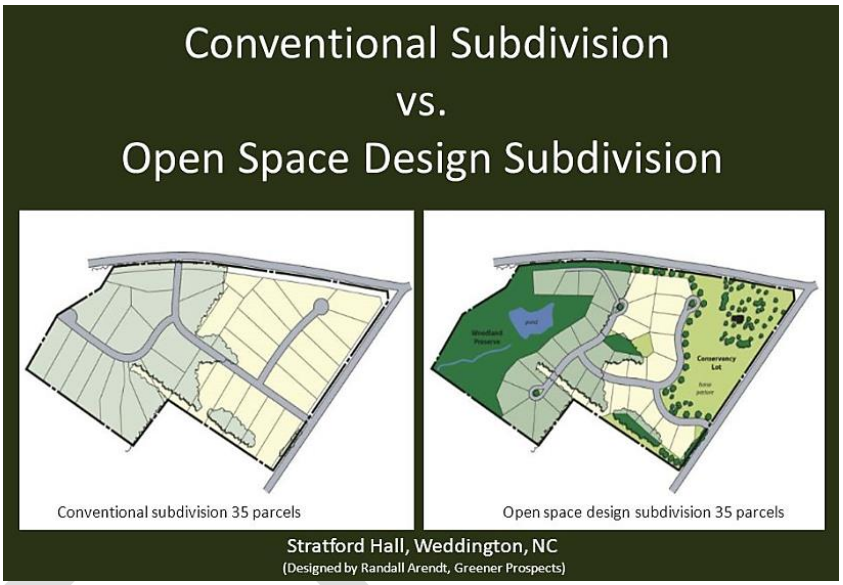
Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:



- Protect steep slopes, scenic views and environmentally sensitive areas by maintaining low density development.
- Encourage new residential development in a conservation subdivision design that incorporates significant amounts of open space and natural conservation areas.
- Connect new conservation subdivisions to create the opportunity for a countywide network of greenways.
- Limit grading and clearing.
- Preserve natural hydrology and drainage ways.
- Preserve existing trees and sufficient canopy cover during development activity.
- Carefully design roadway construction to minimize scenic and environmental impacts.
- Utilize natural features for stormwater management

Primary Land Uses

- Greenway and Conservation Areas (county AG land use district)
- Undeveloped land left in a natural state
- Low-intensity single-family residential (county SA, ER, RR land use districts)
- trails (hiking, equestrian, non-motorized bike trails, etc. that do not conflict with one another)
- Tourism related businesses, event centers, and other facilities that would need conditional use approval

Implementation Strategies

- Maintain large lot size requirements for properties that do not use conservation / open space design development.
- Provide incentives to encourage use of Conservation Design subdivision principles.
- Utilize Best Management Practices for any land disturbance activities, including tree harvesting and utility construction

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- Utilize *Stormwater Better Site Design Standards* from the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual to conserve natural areas, reduce impervious surfaces and better integrate stormwater treatment in site planning and design
- Promote the use of conservation easements and conservation tax credits by landowners to help preserve environmentally sensitive land.
- Utilize the Georgia Land Conservation Program as a source of grants, low interest loans and tax incentives for preservation of open space.
- Continually maintain city and county water lines serving the East Pickens area.
- Promote the East Pickens area as a senior retirement destination and work cooperatively with development representatives on new development proposals related to seniors.
- Work cooperatively with private and nonprofit groups with proposals for land conservation.
- Maintain standards for small freestanding signs – as an example, new freestanding signs on local (non-State) roads in East Pickens should not exceed 10 feet and should not exceed 32 square feet in size.
- Plan for addition of educational signs in the Burnt Mountain overlook area informing visitors of the area's historic (original start of the Appalachian Trail), environmental, and scenic significance.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued:

- Sense of Place
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Growth Preparedness

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FOOTHILLS CROSSROADS

Vision

This crossroads area is developed as a village center that provides a variety of commercial services in support of surrounding residential development. Development contributes to the rural scenic and mountain architectural characteristics of the area.

Narrative

This crossroad community is a commercial area that serves the surrounding population including the residents of the Marble Hill community and population of nearby Big Canoe - a major second home/retiree home development. Population growth will continue to occur in the area and increase the demand for convenience goods and services. The area surrounding this crossroads is also characterized by rural scenic views with foothill mountain characteristics.

Figure 46: Foothills Shopping Center

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Provide a range of businesses to serve the Marble Hill and East Pickens area (retail, restaurants, institutional facilities, offices, services, etc.)
- Establish sidewalks and bike paths to connect the commercial center to residential developments that are likely to occur.
- Limit the size and height of signs – as an example, freestanding signs over 15 feet tall and over 50 square feet in size may be excessive on the two-lane roads in this area.
- Landscape parking lots for new developments to provide shade and reduce impervious surfaces.
- Preserve the beautiful rural quality of the area immediately surrounding the area.
- Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain local characteristics of surrounding developments.
- Reduce driveway cuts on Steve Tate Highway, SR 53, and Yellow Creek Road by promoting inter-parcel access and connecting roads.

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Primary Land Uses

- Mixed land use consisting of commercial retail and services, offices and low density residential off the main roads (county NC and HB districts on main roads such as Steve Tate Highway and Hwy 53; county ER, RR, and SR districts for properties on adjacent smaller roads)
- Public-semi-public institutional uses (Schools, churches, and civic uses.)

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a neighborhood park for the Foothills area to include, depending on local needs, playground equipment, walking areas, and/or other facilities.
- Work cooperatively with private and/or nonprofit groups who may wish to add signage in the Foothills area directing visitors to nearby places such as Big Canoe; churches; Gibbs Gardens; etc.
- Continually maintain and, where necessary, upgrade county water lines serving the Foothills area.
- Encourage new multi-use paths that could be used by pedestrians, cyclists, golf carts, etc.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives to consider tourism-related uses in this scenic mountain area.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Open-space Preservation
- Appropriate Businesses
- Growth Preparedness

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RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Vision

The Rural Residential area represents "traditional" rural Pickens County. While the rest of Pickens County is growing rapidly, this area should retain its less-developed, rural, open space characteristics and maintain them for future generations.

Narrative

Figure 47: Typical agricultural and residential development in Rural Pickens County

The Rural Residential area includes western and northern Pickens County and consists of predominantly rural, less-developed land that is suited for agricultural, forestry and large-lot residential uses. Development should respect the county's farming and forestry tradition and maintain its rural characteristics. This area lacks a high level of public water, road surfaces and other public services needed to support more intense development. If subdivision of land for residential purposes occurs in this area, environmental (floodplain, steep slope, stormwater, etc.) and infrastructure (well water versus county or city water lines, soil type and other septic considerations, road conditions, etc.) should be carefully reviewed.

Development Pattern

Figure 48: Antioch Church in Pickens County

The development pattern should seek to:

- Protect farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas by maintaining low density development.
- Preserve the economic viability of agriculture, livestock production and forestry activities.
- Limit grading and clearing.
- Preserve natural hydrology and drainage ways.
- Carefully design roadway alterations and new road construction to minimize scenic and environmental impacts.
- Preserve rural character, viewsheds, and natural features/resources.
- Utilize natural features for stormwater management
- Accommodate low-intensity uses

Primary Land Uses

- Agricultural (AG, SA county land use districts)
- Forestry (AG county land use district)
- Low density single-family residential (ER, RR county land use districts)
- Recreational facilities
- Convenience goods and service establishments at strategic locations along major collector and arterial roads, especially State routes (NC, HB county land use districts)

Figure 49: Remnants of a former dwelling along Pleasant Union Road in Pickens County

Implementation Strategies

- Utilize Best Management Practices for land disturbance activities, including tree harvesting and utility construction.
- Utilize *Stormwater Better Site Design Stan*dards from the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual to conserve natural areas, reduce impervious surfaces and better integrate stormwater treatment in site planning and design.
- Promote the use of conservation easements and conservation tax credits by landowners to help preserve viable farmland.

Figure 50: Twin Mountain Lake in Pickens County

- Utilize the Georgia Land Conservation Program as a source of grants, low interest loans and tax incentives for preservation of agricultural land.
- Support and promote positive community events at community centers such as fire stations area churches, and other facilities.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives and landowners for development and redevelopment for agri-business and agri-tourism.
- Continually maintain and, where necessary, upgrade water lines serving the area.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection

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- Heritage Preservation

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Vision

This area is envisioned to become an extension of the broader Jasper community. Quality of life is enhanced by improved street connectivity, sidewalks, and trails (pedestrian, bike, golf cart, etc.) to provide alternative ways to get to parks, schools, and neighborhood commercial areas.

Narrative

These are areas around the city of Jasper that have some development and have the potential to develop further. The area can be generally described as from west of SR 515 to east of SR 53 (Jasper-Tate section), and north to south from Philadelphia Road to south of SR 108. These areas typically consist of single family residences at different price points served by a system of curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. Interspersed throughout the area are schools, a county park, a golf course and scattered commercial uses. Some agricultural uses are also found in the area. The residential areas have typically developed in a leap-frog fashion and tend to lack street connectivity, which adds to traffic congestion on collector roads. The area also contains significant tracts of vacant land with development potential. Without intervention, these areas are likely to evolve with low pedestrian orientation, larger lot residential areas with scattered civic buildings and various street patterns.

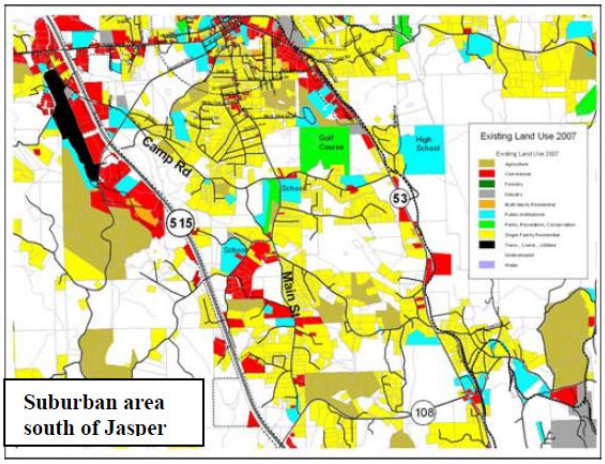

Figure 51: A variety of housing options should be available to offer workforce housing

This area contains a developed public water system and some wastewater utilities, a good road network and other community services that can be economically utilized and rationally extended to potential infill areas. Mixed used, higher density residential development opportunities should be encouraged and optimized in this area in order to minimize the current low density sprawl development patterns that are evident

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throughout the rest of the county. Encouragement of infill development would result in minimal jobs-to-housing travel distances and commuting times. Residential development should offer a range of housing choices related to size, cost, and housing types in order to increase the availability of affordable housing within the county. Traditional neighborhood development patterns are encouraged including compact development, and mixed residential uses within walking distances of one another and community amenities such as schools, parks and neighborhood commercial centers.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Provide a system of streets to improve connectivity between subdivisions as well as to the existing road network.
- Incorporate sidewalks, traffic calming measures, golf cart paths, and biking facilities to provide safe, alternative ways of travel within and between neighborhoods, and to improve connectivity to schools, parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.
- Accommodate infill development that compliments the scale, building setbacks, and the style of existing residential areas.
- Preserve existing mature trees during the development process.
- Preserve open space and greenway opportunities.
- Accommodate a mix of residential uses.
- Encourage neighborhood commercial uses at strategic locations along collector roads (S. Main Street/Refuge Road, Camp Road, and State Routes 53 and 108).

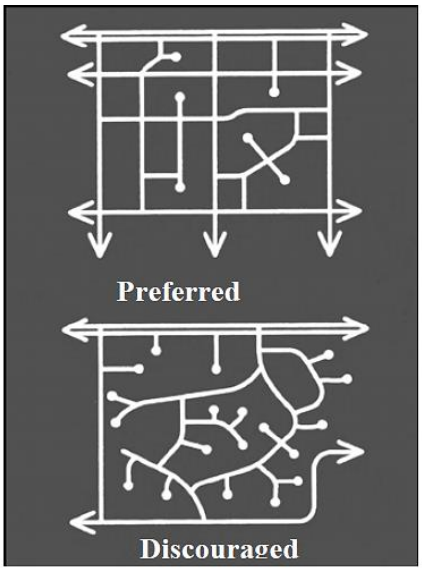

Figure 52: Example of preferred street design

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed residential uses and densities (dependent upon the availability of centralized wastewater).
- Parks and passive recreation areas.
- Civic and semi-public institutional uses
- Neighborhood commercial

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Implementation Strategies

- Develop a plan to improve the water system (with expansions where appropriate) and extend wastewater infrastructure to potential infill development areas. Continually maintain existing city and county water lines in the area.
- Develop a plan to assess where additional sidewalks, trails and bike route facilities can be provided.
- Amend development regulations to require all new developments to provide sidewalks.
- Expand/renovate Roper Park and continually investigate possible new park properties.
- Provide incentives to encourage use of "Conservation Design" principles for new subdivision development.
- Revise Jasper ordinances, if necessary, to accommodate higher density, mixed use residential development in the incorporated areas.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Transportation Alternatives
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Infill Development
- Housing Choices
- Growth Preparedness

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JASPER CHARACTER AREAS

EAST JASPER GATEWAY CORRIDOR

Vision

This gateway to the city from the east presents a favorable impression to visitors by maintaining the current mix of uses complemented by improved landscaping and other streetscape amenities.

Narrative

The section of the Burnt Mountain Road – Cove Road corridor in the City limits of Jasper includes the Appalachian campus of Chattahoochee Technical College; Jasper's City Hall; city park facilities; public housing; other multi-family housing; a public library, and commercial uses. This corridor is the entrance to the city from the east.

Figure 53: Chattahoochee Technical College campus in Jasper

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Accommodate a variety of activities on the Technical College campus, including community events as well as college-specific activities such as classes.
- Maintain the current mix of existing uses and encourage quality redevelopment of buildings and sites.
- Improve sidewalk conditions along the corridor and extend sidewalks to provide better connections between adjoining residential neighborhoods and the city park and library.
- Add landscaping on public properties and possibly on rights-of-way (where appropriate and not conflicting with site visibility and utilities) to provide shade and reduce impervious surfaces. Encourage redeveloping commercial developments to include added landscaping.

Primary Land Uses

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- Public and institutional uses
- Multi-family residential
- Neighborhood commercial uses.

Implementation Strategies

Figure 54: Example of a traffic circle for consideration

- Expand the downtown streetscape improvements theme along Burnt Mt. Road to the Cove Road intersection.
- Determine the feasibility of establishing a traffic circle at the intersection of Burnt Mt. Road and Cove Road instead of the current 3-way stop.
- Plan for Jasper gateway improvements at the Burnt Mt. Road and Cove Road intersection for added landscaping and possible signage.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise the Jasper commercial design standards for contributing quality new and redeveloped commercial structures.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise the Jasper development regulations for increased landscaping and sidewalks for new and redeveloped commercial sites.
- Continually maintain and, where appropriate, upgrade Jasper water and wastewater lines serving the area.
- Complete an assessment and evaluation of the current Jasper city park facilities and, where appropriate, redevelop and/or upgrade the area.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives on possible new commercial and redeveloped structures and sites.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Infill Development
- Sense of Place
- Transportation Alternatives

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HISTORIC DOWNTOWN JASPER

Vision

The Jasper Downtown area retains its strong sense of place and unique historic characteristics, and remains a viable community focal point for both residents and visitors.

Narrative

Pickens County Courthouse

Historic downtown Jasper includes the Central Business District as well as surrounding areas on both sides of Hwy. 53 that contain a blend of commercial businesses, professional offices, the courthouse, and a few historic residential properties. This area has consistent development patterns including traditional building facades, buildings close to the street, and use of sidewalks. Most of the buildings represent historic architecture that gives the downtown a strong sense of place. Public art is displayed at various points that utilize marble resources mined in the nearby Tate and Marble Hill communities. Maintaining the historic integrity of the downtown will be important to retain the sense of place; signage, exterior changes to buildings and new construction should honor the existing character. Encouraging a strong mix of uses, including commercial (restaurants, services, office, retail) as well as residential (above or behind commercial) will be important for economic vitality. Coordinating events downtown throughout the year helps to make this area dynamic and active.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Retain and enhance existing building stock with appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation that is consistent with historic characteristics.
- Maintain a mix of uses that continues to attract both residents and visitors.
- Encourage mixed uses within buildings such as residential development of underutilized second floors and sidewalk dining.

Figure 55: View of Jasper's downtown main street

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- Continue to utilize the downtown as a focal point for community activities, public art displays, and festivals.
- Maintain a strong connection with adjoining neighborhoods via sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities.

Figure 56: View of sidewalks and streetscapes in downtown Jasper

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed commercial including retail, professional offices and services.
- Civic/institutional
- Residential on upper floors as well as behind and adjacent to commercial structures.
- Parks, public gathering places.

Implementation Strategies

Figure 57: View of historic Downtown Jasper

- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Historic District.
- Seek designations such as the Better Home Town and Main Street programs available through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.
- Expand downtown streetscape improvements theme to West and East Church Streets, as well as other side streets.
- Expand parking opportunities.
- Improve gateway landscaping and signage entering into downtown from all directions.
- Continually maintain and, where appropriate, upgrade Jasper water and wastewater lines serving downtown.
- Encourage entrepreneurial creativity with uses and facilities downtown. Be flexible in working cooperatively with businesses and others on new ideas for downtown, including new development and redevelopment as well as various uses.

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Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Housing Choices

Figure 58: Historic Wood Bridge in Downtown Jasper

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JASPER ARTERIAL COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Vision

A major transportation corridor, State Highway 515 and its surrounding parcels promote the free and efficient flow of traffic and goods and serve as an attractive gateway to the City of Jasper.

Narrative

Piedmont Mountainside Hospital

Development located at the Hwy. 53 and 515 intersection.

Looking north on Hwy. 515

Within the City Limits of Jasper, State Highway 515 is the community's regional commercial corridor containing a mix of highway oriented businesses, large scale auto dealers, big box retailers, the Piedmont Mountainside hospital, multifamily residential, the county airport, and the Airport Technology Business Park. Future development adjacent to the hospital may include medical facilities, one or more hotels, senior care facilities, retail, and dining services. State Highway 515 provides an easy means of access to the area from surrounding communities whose inhabitants want to shop, dine or enjoy other amenities. The success of this area depends upon the ability of the city and county governments to cooperate and coordinate planning for this area. In this corridor, too, is the Pickens County Airport, located just west of the intersection of Highway 515 and Highway 53, with a 5000- foot full-service general aviation airport offering 24-hour fueling, flight planning and hangar storage for private and business aircraft, and support for law enforcement, military training, Civil Air Patrol, flight training, aerial photography and surveys. A 17-acre extension of airport property is designed for commercial aircraft hangar development to attract businesses whose operations require access to airport facilities. The runway accommodates general aviation traffic, including typical business jet aircraft. Local general aviation airports are recognized engines of business and economic development. With the extension of the runway to 5,500 feet, the leasing of parcels for construction of commercial hangars, the planned addition of T-hangars to meet the demand for private aircraft storage, the expansion of on-field businesses offering aircraft maintenance and other services and the

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anticipated construction of a new terminal facility, the airport is poised to attract new business and generate enhanced economic activity for the community.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Improve traffic flow and minimize traffic congestion at intersections by promoting inter-parcel access and development of a system of connecting streets and/or frontage roads between major intersections.
- Accommodate a mix of uses that serves both local and regional markets.
- Provide adequate buffers between commercial uses and adjacent residential areas.

Primary Land Uses

- A mixture of primarily retail, restaurants, services, offices, and institutional uses. High-density residential and/or senior residential may be appropriate. Proposals for industrial development would be reviewed based on a specific proposal and not on a speculative basis (for properties in unincorporated Pickens, NC or HB land use districts)

Implementation Strategies

- Review and modify, if necessary, City buffer requirements between commercial and residential areas.
- Review and modify, if necessary, City standards for new commercial developments including exterior finish materials, roof pitch, signage, and landscaping.
- Prepare a plan for developing a system of connecting streets, frontage roads and other inter-parcel connectivity along the corridor to minimize excessive driveway cuts directly on the Highway.
- Extend water and wastewater services, where necessary, to growth areas of the corridor.
- Explore incentives for existing development to retrofit to updated design standards.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Growth Preparedness
- Regional Cooperation
- Regional Identity

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JASPER TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Vision

Jasper's traditional neighborhoods provide a variety of housing choices in close proximity to the downtown and other commercial corridors. Accessibility is improved with continual maintenance and additions to the existing network of sidewalk and trails (may be for pedestrians, bikes, and/or golf carts).

Narrative

Jasper's traditional neighborhoods contain older housing stock and traditional development patterns. These areas consist of moderate to well-maintained single-family and scattered multi-family housing. Density is higher due to the presence of wastewater services. These neighborhoods are typically served with a grid system of streets and have shallower building setbacks. The neighborhoods are thought of as "in-town" due to their proximity and accessibility to the downtown. A few of the closer in neighborhoods contain sidewalks, which provide accessibility to the downtown. Vacant tracts of land are still available. New development and redevelopment may include cluster detached single-family homes; condos; townhouses; senior housing; and/or apartments.

A variety of housing is available in Jasper's traditional neighborhoods.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Maintain existing homes and character defining features such as drives, walls, landscaping, and tree cover.
- Promote building rehabilitation that is in keeping with a building's existing architectural style and scale and that of neighboring homes.
- Accommodate in-fill development that complements the scale, setbacks and style of adjacent homes.
- Increase pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods, the downtown, schools, parks, and other activity centers.

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- Accommodate senior housing, which can be integrated into the existing development pattern and can benefit from close proximity to the downtown area and other streets containing commercial uses.

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed residential uses with a variety of densities (cluster detached single-family homes, condos, townhouses, senior housing, and/or apartments.
- Civic, institutional uses
- Neighborhood commercial on arterial and major collector routes, especially at significant intersections
- Parks, recreational areas

Implementation Strategies

Figure 59: Traditional Neighborhood dwellings near downtown Jasper

- Prepare and adopt new residential architectural design standards to assure new development is compatible with old development.
- Repair existing sidewalks and install new sidewalks where needed.
- Improve and increase paths and trails (pedestrian, bike, and/or golf cart).
- Plan for acquisition of new land to increase parks and recreation offerings in Jasper. New park(s) may include playground facilities, ballfields, trails, tennis courts, and/or other facilities.
- Pursue Federal and State grants and other programs to rehabilitate houses and upgrade houses where needed.
- Encourage senior housing opportunities in close proximity to daily shopping, health and recreation needs.
- Prepare and adopt senior housing design standards to encourage “aging-in-place” that address home and site features that are more functional for the elderly.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise Jasper development regulations regarding new residential development and redevelopment regarding infill.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise Jasper zoning regulations regarding new residential development and redevelopment regarding infill.

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- Continually maintain and, where appropriate, upgrade Jasper water and wastewater lines serving the area.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Traditional Neighborhoods
- Infill Development
- Housing Choices

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NORTH JASPER CORRIDOR

Vision

This gateway to the city from the north presents a favorable impression to visitors by maintaining this as a viable commercial corridor and industrial area.

Narrative

This area, located in the City limits of Jasper, consists of North Main Street and areas to the east along the railroad. A mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses are located along the road as it approaches the downtown area. The majority of the industrial uses and more intense commercial uses, including Pioneer Industrial Park, are located adjacent to the railroad to the east. North Main Street is the primary north entrance into the city of Jasper. Since Hwy. 515 opened and became the primary north-south corridor through the county, traffic volumes on North Main have diminished. A number of vacant tracts are scattered throughout the corridor. Inconsistent building setbacks, architecture and materials, mixed size and height of signage, and a lack of landscaping characterize the corridor. A number of residential subdivisions lie adjacent to the corridor with limited street connectivity to North Main Street.

Figure 60: View along North Main approaching downtown Jasper. Note poorly defined driveway entrances

Figure 61: Typical industrial Structure located in Pioneer Industrial Park.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Preserve the diverse industrial base and fill in vacant tracts within the industrial park.
- Provide adequate buffers between industrial areas and adjacent residential areas.
- Provide sidewalk connections between North Main Street and adjacent residential areas.
- Increase landscaping throughout the area, including parking lots to provide shade, reduce impervious surfaces, buffer parking areas and improve the appearance of individual sites and the entire corridor.
- Clearly define driveway cuts and entrances.
- Provide a mix of uses along North Main Street to serve populations north of the City.

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Primary Land Uses

- Industry
- Various commercial (offices, retail, services, etc.)
- Public and institutional uses

Implementation Strategies

- Seek grants to fund desired streetscape improvements such as improved or extended sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and underground utilities.
- Improve inter-parcel access and street connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise the Jasper commercial design standards for contributing quality new and redeveloped commercial structures.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise the Jasper development regulations for increased landscaping and sidewalks for new and redeveloped commercial sites.
- Continually maintain and, where appropriate, upgrade Jasper water and wastewater lines serving the area.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives on possible new commercial and industrial developments.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Infill Development
- Transportation Alternatives

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SOUTH JASPER GATEWAY CORRIDOR

Vision

This gateway to the city from the south presents a favorable impression to visitors by maintaining this as a viable commercial corridor while improving overall streetscape appearances.

Narrative

Figure 62: Recommendations for this corridor include vegetative streetscapes, underground utilities, and improved pedestrian infrastructure

The East Church Street corridor, located in the City limits of Jasper, is south of the downtown area along State Highway 53. This corridor was once the primary commercial highway leading into Jasper from the south. Since the construction of the four-lane Hwy. 515 west of the city, there has not been a significant number of new buildings constructed along the corridor. There has, however, been much redevelopment and reuse of existing buildings in recent years. The area includes a mix of older commercial establishments, scattered residential uses, the County Administrative Offices, and other public uses. Deep building setbacks, inconsistent building architecture and materials, mixed size and height of signage, and a lack of landscaping characterize the corridor. The railroad borders the eastern side of the corridor. A number of vacant tracts are located to the rear of the commercial uses that could be developed for multi-family or other higher density residential development. The presence of some sidewalks and proximity to the downtown also present the potential for pedestrian scale development.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Maintain viability as a commercial corridor while enhancing overall street appearance through landscaping, sign control, and pedestrian scale lighting.
- Improve sidewalk connections along the corridor and with adjoining residential neighborhoods.

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- Landscape parking lots to provide shade and reduce impervious surfaces.
- Encourage upgrades to the appearance of existing older commercial buildings with façade improvement or new architectural elements.
- Encourage shallow setbacks and quality construction for new construction.
- Accommodate a mix of uses that primarily serve the local market demand versus a regional market demand.
- Encourage multi-family or other high density residential to develop on vacant tracts that back up to the commercial uses.

Primary Land Uses

- Retail, offices, restaurants, and other commercial services
- Industry
- Multi-family or other high density residential
- Public and other institutional uses

Implementation Strategies

- Seek grants to fund desired streetscape improvements such as improved or extended sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and underground utilities.
- Improve inter-parcel access and street connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise the Jasper commercial design standards for contributing quality new and redeveloped commercial structures.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise the Jasper development regulations for increased landscaping and sidewalks for new and redeveloped commercial sites.
- Continually maintain and, where appropriate, upgrade Jasper water and wastewater lines serving the area.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives on possible new commercial and multi-family developments.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Infill Development
- Transportation Alternatives
- Housing Choices

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WEST JASPER GATEWAY CORRIDOR

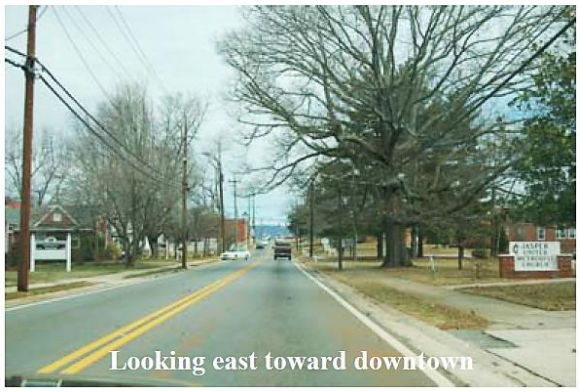
Vision

The Highway 53/ West Church Street corridor connects downtown Jasper to State Highway 515. As the gateway to the City of Jasper, this corridor serves as an extension of downtown providing a mixture of uses to serve residents and visitors alike.

Narrative

The Highway 53/ West Church Street corridor between Hwy 515 and historic downtown Jasper is the primary entrance to the city. This corridor is characterized by a mix of uses, numerous curb cuts that impede traffic flow, and a lack of landscaping and other streetscape amenities. A mix of signage size and heights also dominate the landscape. The corridor is also proposed for major widening in the near future. To draw people from Hwy. 515 into downtown, as well as serve surrounding neighborhoods, new development and redevelopment along this corridor should be inviting, attractive and contain a mix of uses. This can be done by a combination of incentives and requirements to improve landscaping, street lighting, landscaping, signage, and sidewalks. Improved public signage will help direct and inform visitors about downtown businesses and facilities.

Looking west toward Hwy 515



Looking east toward downtown

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Encourage the continued transition of this corridor into a commercial mixed-use link between the core of historic Jasper and the dynamic commercial/retail node on Hwy 515 at the intersection with Highway 53.
- Encourage and, where appropriate, require new and redeveloped buildings to have masonry exterior finish materials.
- Minimize traffic congestion by promoting inter-parcel access and development of a connecting system of streets that connects downtown Jasper with areas surrounding the corridor and Hwy. 515.

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- Limit the size and height of signs– as an example, freestanding signs over 20 feet tall and over 100 square feet in size may be excessive on this two-lane road.
- Incorporate streetscape enhancements such as underground utilities, sidewalks, landscaping and decorative streetlights to make it more pedestrian friendly.
- Continually maintain and, where appropriate, upgrade water and wastewater capacity in this area.
- Parking lots should be adequately landscaped to provide shade, and reduce impervious surfaces.
- Accommodate a mix of institutional, medical, office, restaurant, retail, and service uses.

Primary Land Uses

- Retail, restaurants, offices, and other services.
- Institutional uses
- Multi-family residential and senior residential where appropriate

Implementation Strategies

- Review and, if needed, revise signage at or near the intersection with Hwy. 515 to let the traveler know that this is the place they should turn off to get to downtown.
- Use signage and/or banners along the corridor to pull the consumer from Hwy 515 into the town.
- Strategically extend the existing grid network from downtown out along the corridor providing connections between existing roads and new access where there was none previously.
- Extend sidewalks on both sides of the road the entire length of the corridor.
    - Modify the Jasper *Sign Ordinance* to limit height, size and location of freestanding signs.
    - Revise the Jasper *Landscaping* regulations to enhance tree replacement requirements.
    - Adopt *architectural standards* for Jasper with a masonry requirement to improve the quality and aesthetics of commercial development.

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- Consider parking lot lighting requirements for Jasper – maximum height standards and requirement that new parking lot lighting face downward (for example, shoebox style lighting fixtures).
- Plan for alternative routes with signage giving trucks and other thru-vehicles options to get around West Church Street. Examples include A.W. Lawson Boulevard south of West Church Street and Philadelphia Rd north of West Church Street. If the proposed West Church Street widening project may not be feasible or may not be completed in the next five years, consider improving the alternate routes with wider shoulders and other road improvements.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Infill Development
- Sense of Place
- Transportation Alternatives
- Growth Preparedness

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NELSON CHARACTER AREAS

INDUSTRIAL

Vision

This area is envisioned to retain its industrial and manufacturing character for many years to come. Properties within this character area are largely responsible for Nelson's history and will continue to be a part of its future providing job opportunities, tax revenue, and a way of life for the community.

Figure 63: Skilled workforce inside Blue Ridge Marble Co.

Narrative

Although most of the industrial properties within Nelson have existed for many decades, they continue to produce their products consistently and on a large scale. Land used in higher intensity manufacturing, assembly, processing activities where noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics are not contained on-site.

Development Patterns

- Encourage buffers between industrial structures/uses and residential areas

Primary Land Uses

- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation

Implementation Strategies

More detailed sub-area planning:

- Have mix of small and large industry appropriately buffered from residential developments

New or revised local development regulations:

- Require percentage of open space on site

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Incentives:

- Tax breaks for incubators and small business for reuse and site cleanup

Public Investments:

- Install high-speed internet, provide alternative access roads

Infrastructure Improvements:

- Maintain and upgrade roads, install traffic lights, improve utilities

Quality Community Objectives

- Infill development
- Sense of place
- Transportation alternatives
- Regional identity
- Heritage preservation
- Open space preservation
- Environmental protection
- Growth preparedness
- Appropriate businesses
- Employment options

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NELSON SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

Vision

This area is envisioned to become an extension of the more recently developed Nelson community. Quality of life is enhanced by improved street connectivity, sidewalks, and trails (pedestrian, bike, golf cart, etc.) to provide alternative ways to get to parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.

Narrative

These are areas around the city of Nelson that have some development and have the potential to develop further. These areas typically consist of single family residences at different price points served by a system of curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.

Figure 64: A variety of housing options should be available to offer workforce housing

This area contains a developed public water system but no wastewater utilities, and a good road network and other community services that can be economically utilized and rationally extended to potential infill areas. Encouragement of infill development would result in minimal jobs-to-housing travel distances and commuting times. Residential development should offer a range of housing choices related to size, cost, and housing types in order to increase the availability of affordable housing within the county. Traditional neighborhood development patterns are encouraged including compact development, and mixed residential uses within walking distances of one another and community amenities such as schools, parks and neighborhood commercial centers.

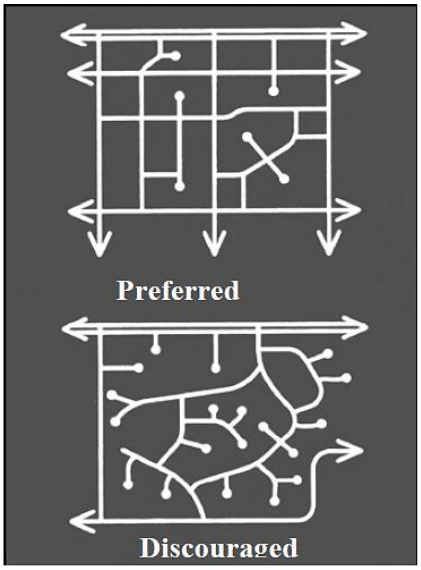

Figure 65: Example of preferred street design

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Provide a system of streets to improve connectivity between subdivisions as well as to the existing road network.

- Incorporate sidewalks, traffic calming measures, golf cart paths, and biking facilities to provide safe, alternative ways of travel within and between neighborhoods, and to improve connectivity to schools, parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.
- Accommodate infill development that compliments the scale, building setbacks, and the style of existing residential areas.
- Preserve existing mature trees during the development process.
- Preserve open space and greenway opportunities.
- Encourage neighborhood commercial uses at strategic locations along collector roads.

Figure 66: Entrance of Laurel Lake community

Primary Land Uses

- Single Family residential uses
- Parks and passive recreation areas.
- Civic and semi-public institutional uses
- Neighborhood commercial

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a plan to improve the water system (with expansions where appropriate) to potential infill development areas. Continually maintain existing city and county water lines in the area.
- Develop a plan to assess where additional sidewalks, trails and bike route facilities can be provided.
- Amend development regulations to require all new developments to provide sidewalks.
- Provide incentives to encourage use of "Conservation Design" principles for new subdivision development.

Figure 67: Example of density and design within the Laurel Lake community. Note the lack of pedestrian infrastructure.

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Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Transportation Alternatives
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Infill Development
- Housing Choices
- Growth Preparedness

Figure 68: Cul-de-sac within Laurel Lake Community

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NELSON TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Vision

Nelson's traditional neighborhoods provide a variety of housing choices in close proximity to the town center and other commercial corridors. Accessibility is improved with continual additions to the existing network of sidewalk and trails (may be for pedestrians, bikes, and/or golf carts).

Figure 69: Historic single family detached residence in Nelson

Narrative

Nelson's traditional neighborhoods contain older housing stock and traditional development patterns. These areas consist of moderate to well-maintained single family housing. Density is not high due to the lack of wastewater services. These neighborhoods are typically served with a grid system of streets and have shallower building setbacks. The neighborhoods are thought of as "in-town" due to their proximity and accessibility to the town center. Vacant tracts of land are still available. New development and redevelopment may include cluster detached single-family homes; townhouses; and senior housing.

Figure 70: Historic single family detached residence.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Maintain existing homes and character defining features such as drives, walls, landscaping, and tree cover.
- Promote building rehabilitation that is in keeping with a building's existing architectural style and scale and that of neighboring homes.
- Accommodate in-fill development that complements the scale, setbacks and style of adjacent homes.
- Increase pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods, the town center, parks, and other activity centers.
- Accommodate senior housing, which can be integrated into the existing development pattern and can benefit from close proximity to the downtown area and other streets containing commercial uses.

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Primary Land Uses

- Mixed residential uses with a variety of densities (cluster detached single-family homes, townhouses, and senior housing.
- Civic, institutional uses
- Neighborhood commercial on arterial and major collector routes, especially at significant intersections
- Parks, recreational areas

Implementation Strategies

- Repair existing sidewalks and install new sidewalks where needed.
- Improve and increase paths and trails (pedestrian, bike, and/or golf cart).
- Pursue Federal and State grants and other programs to rehabilitate houses and upgrade houses where needed.
- Encourage senior housing opportunities in close proximity to daily shopping, health and recreation needs.
- Prepare and adopt senior housing design standards to encourage "aging-in-place" that address home and site features that are more functional for the elderly.
- Review and, where appropriate, revise Nelson's development regulations regarding new residential development and redevelopment regarding infill.

Figure 71: Example of good pedestrian infrastructure serving a traditional style residential neighborhood in Jasper

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Traditional Neighborhoods
- Infill Development
- Housing Choices

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NELSON TOWN CENTER

Vision

The Nelson Town Center area retains its strong sense of place and unique characteristics, and remains a viable community center for both residents and visitors.

Narrative

Figure 72: Nelson City Hall along Kennesaw Avenue

Nelson's town center includes the Central Business District as well as surrounding areas on both sides of Kennesaw Avenue that contain a blend of commercial businesses, professional offices, and a few historic residential and industrial properties. This area has a blend of development patterns including non-traditional building facades, and lack of sidewalks. The commercial style buildings lack historic architecture. Encouraging a mix of uses, including commercial (restaurants, services, office, retail) as well as residential will be important for long range economic vitality and sense of a community center.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Retain and enhance existing building/housing stock with appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Promote a mix of uses to attract both residents and visitors.
- Develop the downtown as a focal point for community activities, public art displays, and festivals.
- Create a strong connection with adjoining neighborhoods via sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities.

Figure 73: Example of a commercial structure along Kennesaw Avenue near Nelson's City hall

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed commercial including retail, professional offices and services.

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- Civic/institutional
- Single Family detached Residential
- Parks, public gathering places.

Implementation Strategies

- Create streetscape improvements to help create a more pedestrian friendly environment.
- Improve gateway landscaping and signage entering into downtown from all directions.
- Encourage entrepreneurial creativity with uses and facilities in the town center. Be flexible in working cooperatively with businesses and others on new ideas for downtown, including new development and redevelopment as well as various uses.

Figure 74: Example of walkable town center residential development in downtown Jasper

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Housing Choices

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TALKING ROCK CHARACTER AREAS

TALKING ROCK RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Vision

The Rural Residential area represents "traditional" rural residential development. While surrounding areas are growing rapidly, this area should retain its less-developed, rural, open space characteristics and maintain them for future generations.

Figure 75 Rural Residential on Hwy 136.

Narrative

The Rural Residential area includes an eastern area in Talking Rock which is adjacent to rural residential areas in Pickens County, and consists of predominantly rural, less-developed land that is suited for agricultural, forestry and large-lot residential uses. Development should respect the farming and forestry tradition and maintain its rural characteristics. This area lacks a high level of public water, road surfaces and other public services needed to support more intense development. If subdivision of land for residential purposes occurs, environmental (floodplain, steep slope, stormwater, etc.) and infrastructure (well water versus county or city water lines, soil type and other septic considerations, road conditions, etc.) should be carefully reviewed.

Development Pattern

The development pattern should seek to:

- Protect farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas by maintaining low density development.
- Preserve the economic viability of agriculture, livestock production and forestry activities.
- Limit grading and clearing.
- Preserve natural hydrology and drainage ways.
- Carefully design roadway alterations and new road construction to minimize scenic and environmental impacts.
- Preserve rural character, viewsheds, and natural features/resources.
- Utilize natural features for stormwater management
- Accommodate low-intensity uses

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Primary Land Uses

- Agricultural (AG, SA county land use districts)
- Forestry (AG county land use district)
- Low density single-family residential (ER, RR county land use districts)
- Recreational facilities
- Convenience goods and service establishments at strategic locations along major collector and arterial roads, especially State routes (NC, HB county land use districts)

Implementation Strategies

- Utilize Best Management Practices for land disturbance activities, including tree harvesting and utility construction
- Utilize *Stormwater Better Site Design Stan*dards from the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual to conserve natural areas, reduce impervious surfaces and better integrate stormwater treatment in site planning and design
- Promote the use of conservation easements and conservation tax credits by landowners to help preserve viable farmland
- Utilize the Georgia Land Conservation Program as a source of grants, low interest loans and tax incentives for preservation of agricultural land.
- Support and promote positive community events at community centers such as fire stations area churches, and other facilities.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives and landowners for development and redevelopment for agri-business and agri-tourism.
- Continually maintain and, where necessary, upgrade water lines serving the area.

Figure 76. Rural Residential on Old Blairsville Hwy.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Heritage Preservation

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TALKING ROCK SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Vision

This area is envisioned to become an extension of the more recently developed Talking Rock community. Quality of life is enhanced by improved street connectivity, sidewalks, and trails (pedestrian, bike, golf cart, etc.) to provide alternative ways to get to parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.

Figure 77. Suburban Residential, Talking Rock.

Narrative

These are areas around the Town of Talking Rock that have some sparse development and have the potential to develop further. These areas typically consist of single family residences at different price points served by a system of county or state roads. Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs would be the preferred future design for new residential development in this area.

This area contains a developed public water system but no wastewater utilities, and a good road network and other community services that can be economically utilized and rationally extended to potential infill areas. Encouragement of infill development would result in minimal jobs-to-housing travel distances and commuting times. Residential development should offer a range of housing choices related to size, cost, and housing types in order to increase the availability of affordable housing within the county. Traditional neighborhood development patterns are encouraged including compact development, and mixed residential uses within walking distances of one another and community amenities such as schools, parks and neighborhood commercial centers.

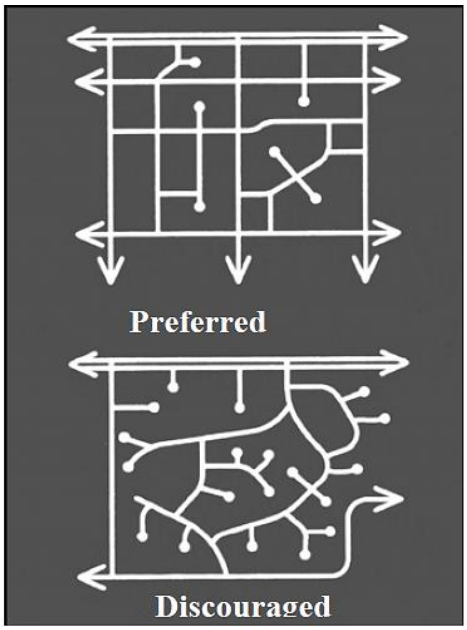

Figure 78: Example of preferred street design

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Provide a system of streets to improve connectivity between subdivisions as well as to the existing road network.

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- Incorporate sidewalks, traffic calming measures, golf cart paths, and biking facilities to provide safe, alternative ways of travel within and between neighborhoods, and to improve connectivity to schools, parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.
- Accommodate infill development that compliments the scale, building setbacks, and the style of existing residential areas.
- Preserve existing mature trees during the development process.
- Preserve open space and greenway opportunities.
- Encourage neighborhood commercial uses at strategic locations along collector roads.

Figure 79: Example of a modern suburban community entrance

Primary Land Uses

- Single Family residential uses
- Parks and passive recreation areas.
- Civic and semi-public institutional uses
- Neighborhood commercial

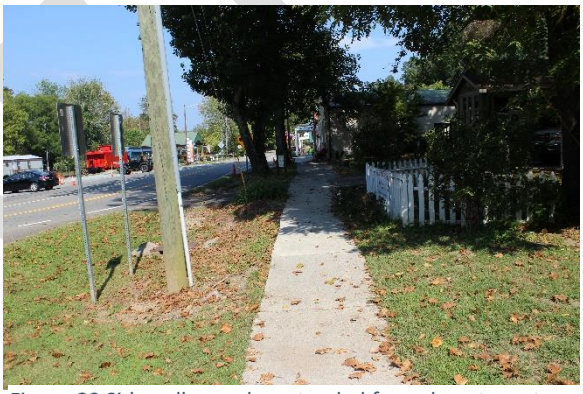

Figure 80 Sidewalks can be extended from downtown to residential areas.

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a plan to improve the water system (with expansions where appropriate) to potential infill development areas. Continually maintain existing city and county water lines in the area.
- Develop a plan to assess where additional sidewalks, trails and bike route facilities can be provided to connect residences to the town center.
- Consider amending development regulations to require all new developments to provide sidewalks.
- Consider providing incentives to encourage use of "Conservation Design" principles for new subdivision development.

Figure 81: Example of density and design within the Suburban character area. Preferably with pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, etc).

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Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Sense of Place
- Transportation Alternatives
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Infill Development
- Housing Choices
- Growth Preparedness

Figure 82: Cul-de-sac design for the Suburban character area

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TALKING ROCK TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Vision

Talking Rock's traditional neighborhoods provide a variety of housing choices in close proximity to the town center and other commercial highway corridors. Accessibility is improved with continual additions to the existing network of sidewalk and trails (may be for pedestrians, bikes, and/or golf carts).

Figure 83: single family detached residence along Highway 136 in Talking Rock

Narrative

Talking Rock's traditional neighborhoods contain older housing stock and traditional development patterns. These areas consist of moderate to well-maintained single family housing. Density is rather low due to the lack of wastewater services. These neighborhoods are typically served with a grid system of streets and have shallower building setbacks. The neighborhoods are thought of as "in-town" due to their proximity and accessibility to the historic town center. Vacant tracts of land are still available. New development and redevelopment may include detached single-family homes; and townhouses.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Maintain existing homes and historic character defining features such as drives, walls, landscaping, and tree cover.
- Promote building rehabilitation that is in keeping with a building's existing architectural style and scale and that of neighboring homes to retain the town's character.
- Accommodate in-fill development that complements the scale, setbacks and style of adjacent homes.
- Increase pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods, the town center, parks, and other activity centers.

Figure 84 Traditional residential, Talking Rock.

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Primary Land Uses

- Mixed residential uses with a variety of densities (cluster detached single-family homes, and townhouses.
- Civic, institutional uses
- Neighborhood commercial on arterial and major collector routes, especially at significant intersections
- Parks, recreational areas

Implementation Strategies

- Repair existing sidewalks and install new sidewalks where needed.
- Improve and increase paths and trails (pedestrian, bike, and/or golf cart).
- Pursue Federal and State grants and other programs to rehabilitate houses and upgrade houses where needed.
- Consider adopting senior housing design standards to encourage "aging-in-place" that address home and site features that are more functional for the elderly.

Figure 85: Example of good pedestrian infrastructure serving a traditional style residential neighborhood in Jasper.

- Review and, where appropriate, revise Talking Rock's development regulations regarding new residential development and redevelopment regarding infill.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Traditional Neighborhoods
- Infill Development
- Housing Choices

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TALKING ROCK TOWN CENTER

Vision

The Talking Rock Town Center area retains its strong sense of place as well as its unique historic characteristics and remains a viable community center for both residents and visitors.

Talking Rock Town Hall and Fire Station

Narrative

Talking Rock's town center includes the Central Business District as well as surrounding areas on both sides of Highway 136 that contain a blend of commercial businesses, professional offices, and a few historic residential properties. This area has a blend of development patterns including traditional building facades, and lack of sidewalks. The commercial style buildings display historic architecture. Encouraging a mix of uses, including commercial (restaurants, services, office, retail) as well as residential will be important for long range economic vitality and sense of a community center.

This home is an example of several historical structures in Talking Rock.

Development Patterns

The development pattern should seek to:

- Retain and enhance existing building/housing stock with appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Promote a mix of uses to attract both residents and visitors.
- Develop the downtown as a focal point for community activities, public art displays, and festivals.
- Create a strong connection with adjoining neighborhoods via sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities.

Figure 86: Bluegrass band performing during the Town's annual Heritage Days Festival

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Primary Land Uses

- Mixed commercial including retail, professional offices and services.
- Civic/institutional
- Single Family detached Residential
- Parks, public gathering places.

Figure 87: Talking Rock historic caboose.

Implementation Strategies

- Create streetscape improvements to help create a more pedestrian friendly environment.
- Improve gateway landscaping and signage entering into downtown from all directions.
- Encourage entrepreneurial creativity with uses and facilities in the town center. Be flexible in working cooperatively with businesses and others on new ideas for downtown, including new development and redevelopment as well as various uses.

Quality Community Objectives to be pursued

- Heritage Preservation
- Sense of Place
- Housing Choices

Figure 88. Talking Rock Park.

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Future Development Maps

Included within the Land Use Element are Future Development Maps describing current and expected future development patterns within Pickens County and each municipality. The Future Development Map uses character areas to describe each community's development pattern as they envisioned it to be in the future. These character areas combine both development pattern form and land use function to identify the unique features of an area. As described in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' *Discovering and Planning Your Community Character Guidebook,* each area is identifiable based on development intensity and patterns, street design and layout, location, the extent of civic buildings and public spaces, and the location of natural features. Character areas describe the unique traits of the area, while the future development map is the visual representation of all areas for a community. This visual representation allows decision-makers to be consistent in advancing commercial, industrial, and residential growth while promoting recreational opportunities and preserving rural and agricultural lands.

The Future Development Map can be consulted to advise officials on appropriate zoning decisions that are consistent with the character of the area. The Future Development Map and accompanying character area descriptions are less specific than zoning district descriptions. Though zoning designation is identified by the district, zoning is still prescribed on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Character areas describe the desired development type and theme of an overall area.

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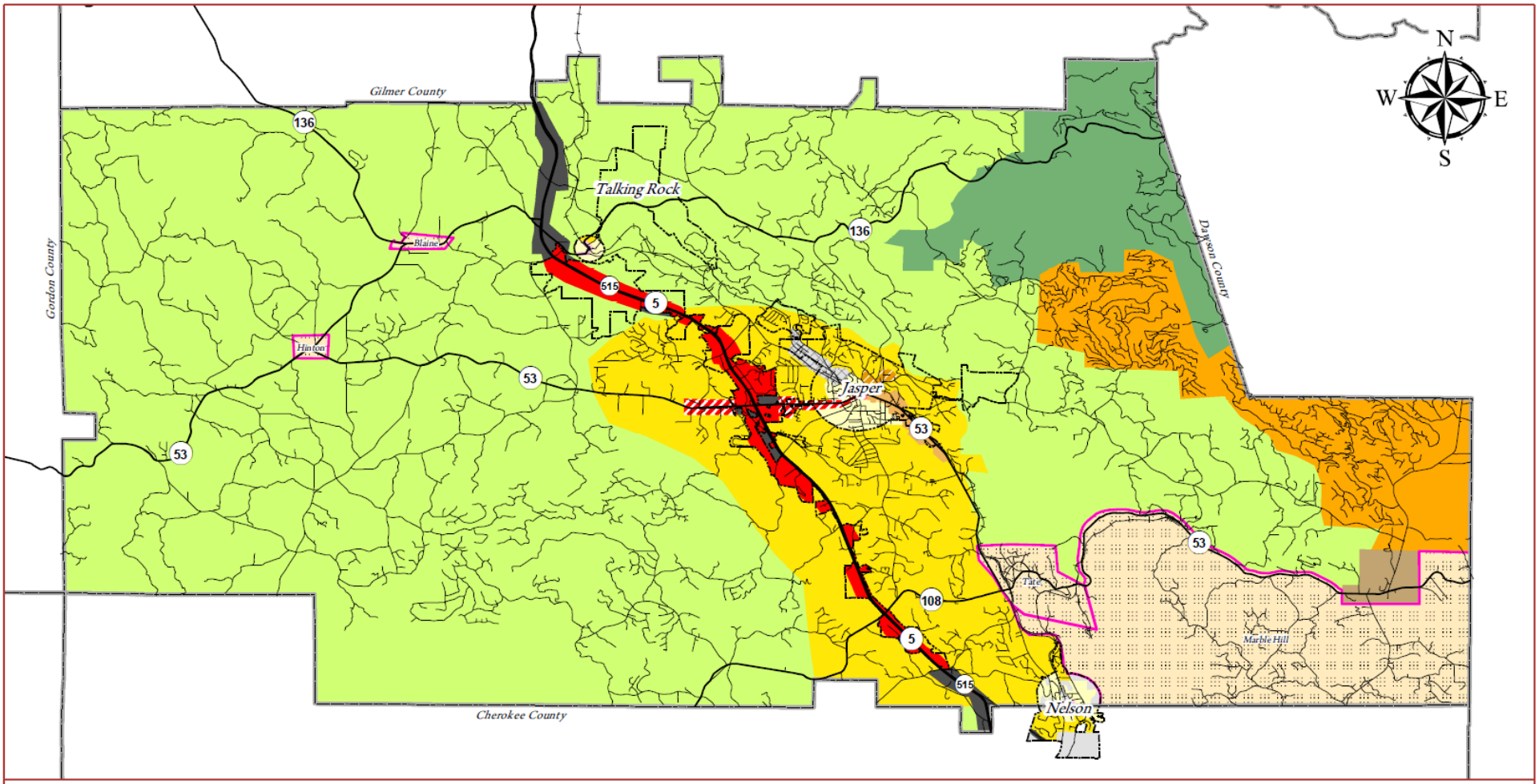

Future Development Map - Pickens County, GA

1 in = 2 miles

- Roads
- Highways
- Railroads
- City Limits
- Crossroad Communities

Character Areas

- Arterial Commercial Corridor
- Bent Tree and Big Canoe Area
- Crossroad Community
- East Jasper Gateway Corridor
- East Pickens Conservation Area
- Foothills Crossroads
- Historic Downtown Jasper
- Industrial
- Jasper Arterial Commercial Corridor
- North Jasper Corridor
- Rural Residential
- South Jasper Gateway Corridor
- Suburban Residential
- Town Center
- Traditional Neighborhood
- West Jasper Gateway Corridor

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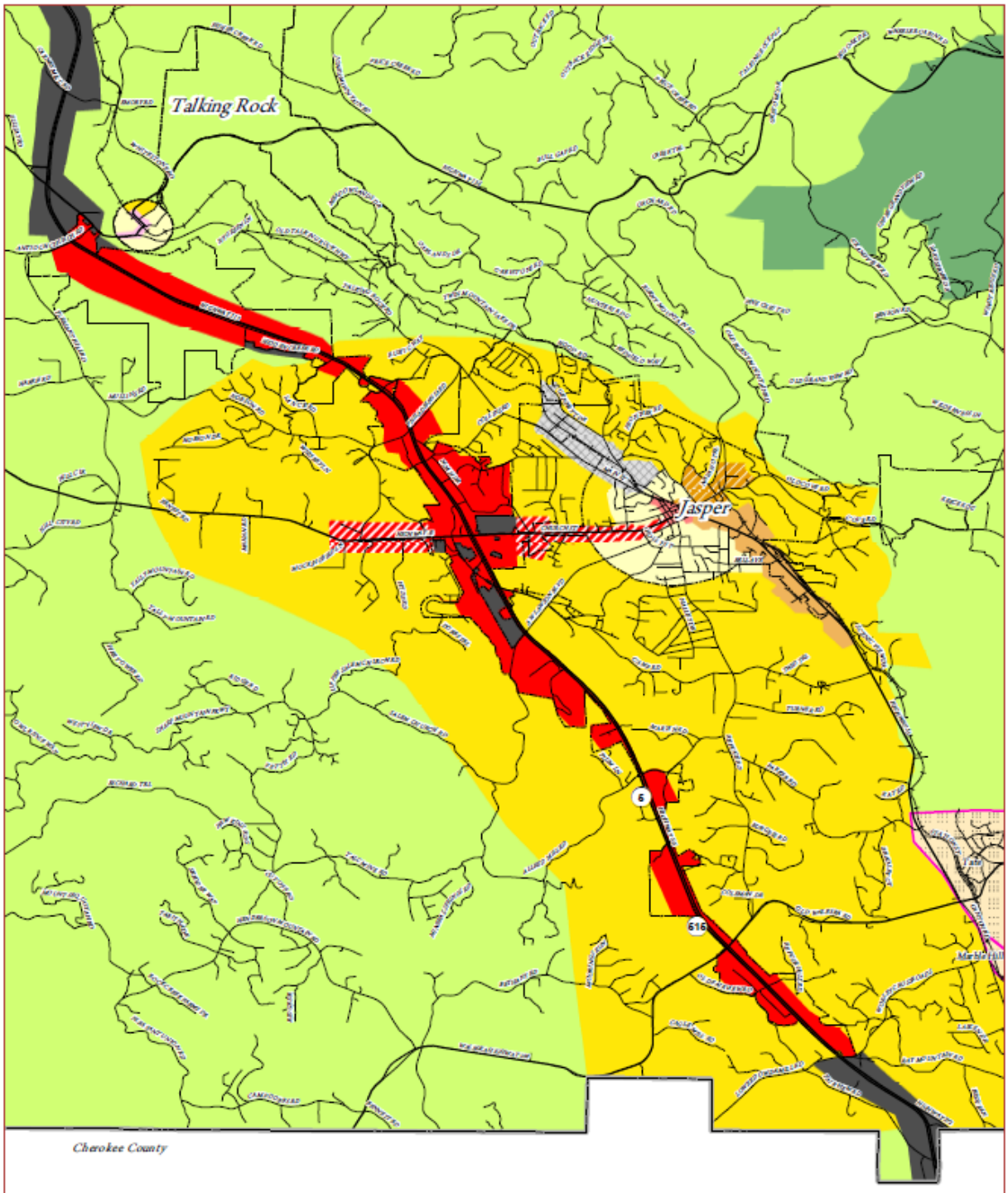

Future Development Map - Jasper, GA

- City Limits
- Railroads
- Highways
- Roads
- Crossroad Communities

Character Areas

- Arterial Commercial Corridor
- Crossroad Community
- East Jasper Gateway Corridor
- East Pickens Conservation Area
- Historic Downtown Jasper
- Jasper Arterial Commercial Corridor
- North Jasper Corridor
- Rural Residential
- South Jasper Gateway Corridor
- Suburban Residential
- Town Center
- Traditional Neighborhood
- West Jasper Gateway Corridor

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1 in = 5,000 feet

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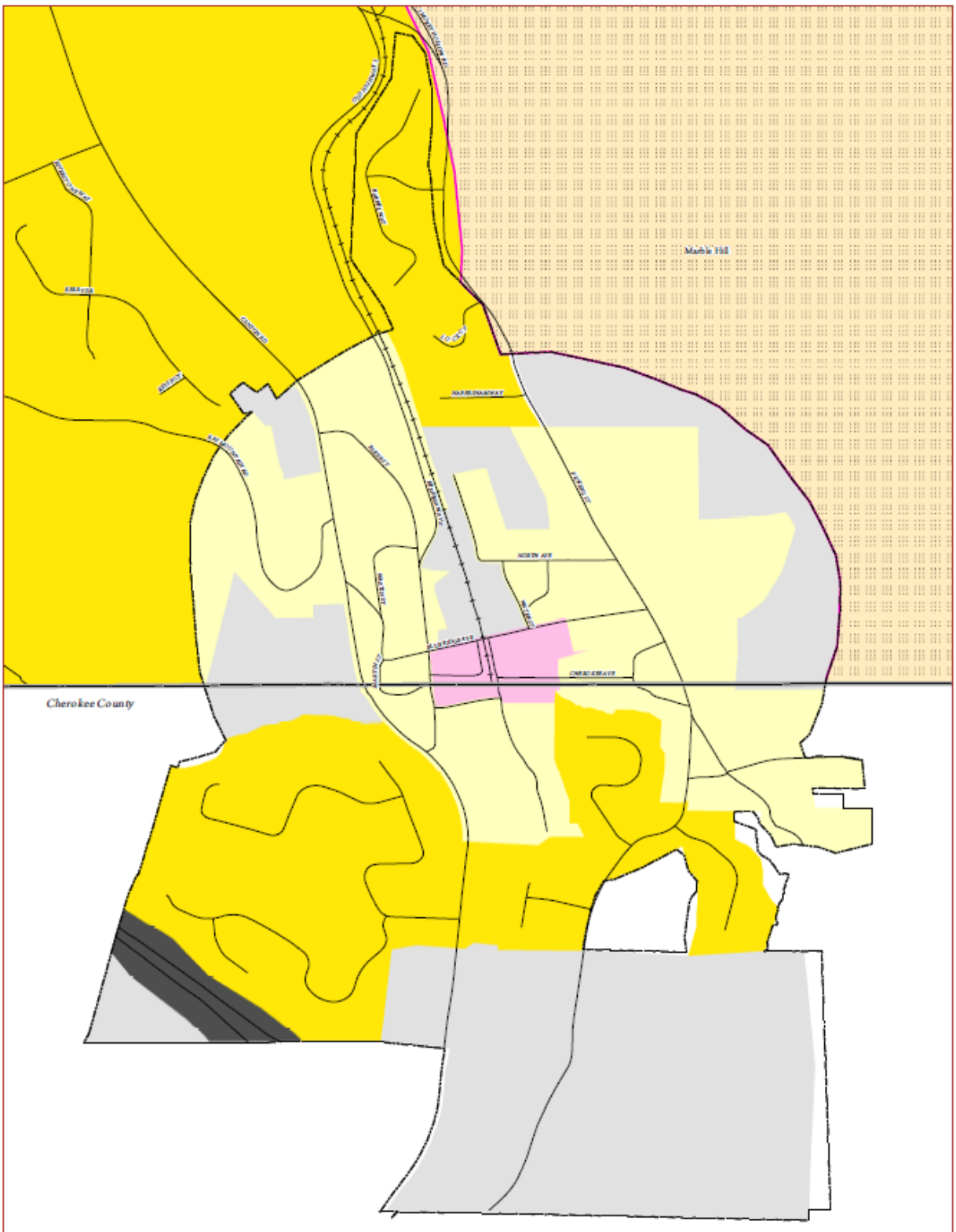

Future Development Map - Nelson, GA

1 in = 917 feet

N
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Roads
Highways
Railroads
City Limits
Crossroad Communities

Character Areas
Arterial Commercial Corridor
Crossroad Community
Industrial
Suburban Residential
Town Center
Traditional Neighborhood

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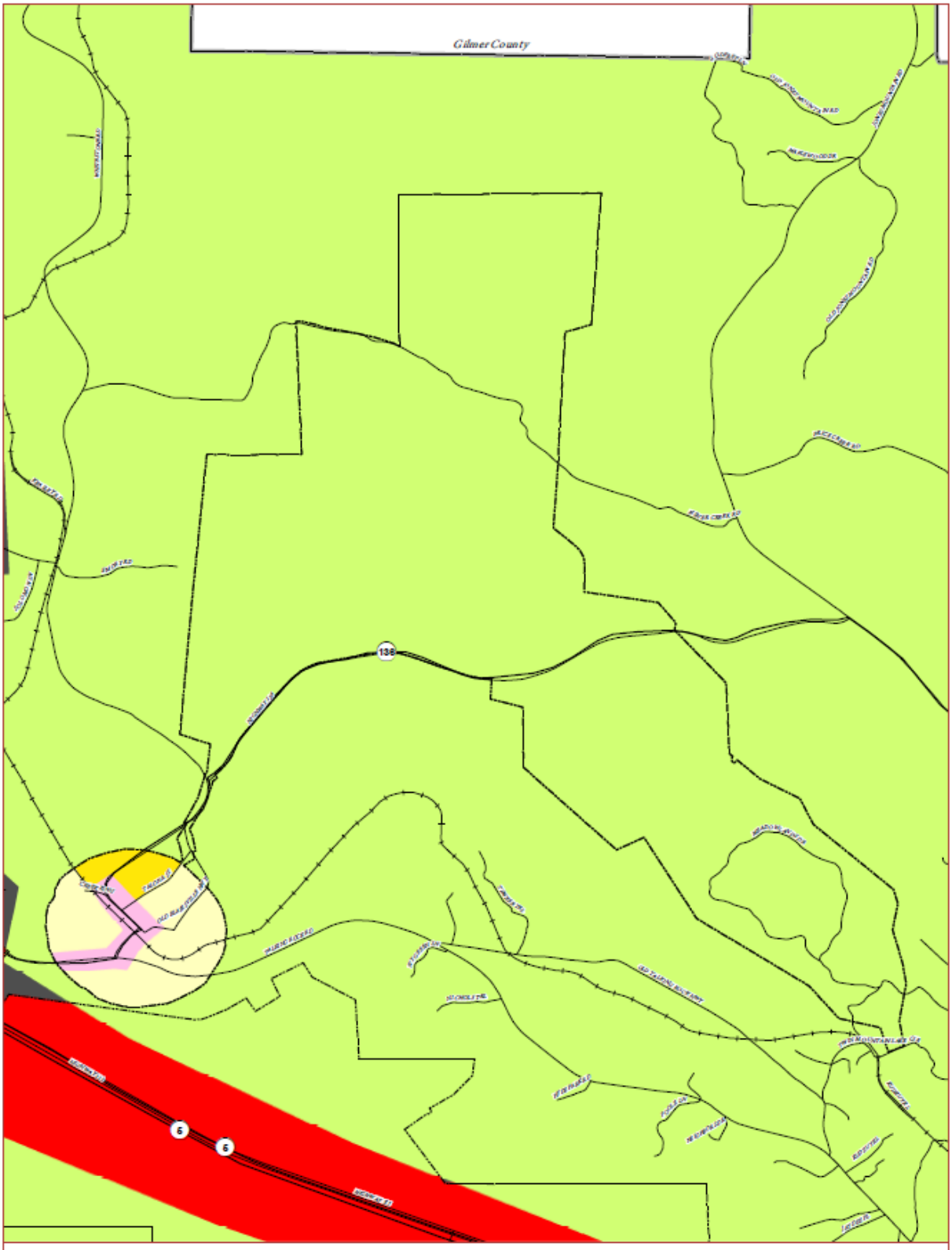

Future Development Map - *Talking Rock, GA*

1 in = 1,552 feet

N
W E
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Roads
Highways
Railroads
City Limits

Character Areas
- Arterial Commercial Corridor
- Jasper Arterial Commercial Corridor
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Town Center
- Traditional Neighborhood

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Implementation Programs

Reports of Accomplishments

The Reports of Accomplishment show the results of past planning efforts. The status of each work program item can be found here. Since work programs are updated every five years, the items under consideration here are from the 2018-2023 Joint Comprehensive Plan work programs. Pickens County, the City of Jasper, the City of Nelson, and the Town of Talking Rock reviewed their previous work program and noted each work program item as completed, underway, postponed, or dropped.

Completed and dropped items were excluded from being carried over to the current work program. Projects that were underway or postponed were carried over to the current work program of the 2023-2028 Joint Comprehensive Plan. Those projects that were underway were given an estimated date of completion. Since this is a planning document and not a binding legal agreement, there is no penalty for postponing or dropping a project, but an explanation is required. Some items listed in the previous work program were identified as policy statements, if they had begun several years ago and were now a routine function of government. These items were either checked complete or were rewritten and carried over. Those rewritten items are identified in the explanation column for dropped or postponed projects in green font.

Joint Needs and Opportunities

Stakeholder input is an important component of the comprehensive planning process. Each government appointed a diverse group of citizens and local officials to advise the direction to be taken in the planning process. The first Stakeholder meeting for the Pickens, Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock Joint Comprehensive Plan was held on October 18, 2022, at the Pickens County Administrative Building. During this meeting, Stakeholders from each location discussed local needs and completed a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. SWOT analysis is a brainstorming activity used to understand current conditions while also determining the future direction a community may wish to go. The SWOT analysis was conducted with Stakeholders writing on large poster-size paper strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the following categories: Economic development, housing, transportation, natural/cultural resources, community facilities and services, and land use. The collective comments were then used to create a public survey. Needs and Opportunities were developed from the SWOT analysis and from the results of the survey. The public survey specified locals' perceptions of their community. The public participation received through the survey, stakeholder input, and local government direction, informed joint Needs and Opportunities which are coded to connect each Need or Opportunity with a specific project in the community work programs. The joint

Should city and county combine water/sewage systems?

Some say joint services would improve efficiency; Others say if it's not broke, don't try to fix it

By Dan Pool
Editor
dpool@pickensprogress.com

Should the city of Jasper and Pickens County combine resources to form a joint water/sewage authority?

That question was the key discussion point of the Comprehensive Planning Session December 12th at the County Admin building. The comprehensive plan update is required in all Georgia counties on a regular basis. Pickens is expected to begin drafting a revision to the current plan early next year to submit to the state by summer of 2018.

For the discussion among the 30 or so citizens and employees of city governments and Pickens County, the idea of a joint water/sewage authority provoked an array of differing opinions.

Clayton Preble, who is on the county planning commission but was speaking as part of a citizen study group, presented some basics on authorities and sought to get a consensus that the idea of a joint operation merits further consideration. He got that, but clearly not universal approval among those at the meeting.

Preble worked with Roger Schultz and Don House to gather and present some basic information on authorities. He stated that none of their group has any interest in an

See Merger on 12A

Clayton Preble, standing, and Roger Schultz, seated to his right, lead a discussion on merging some operations of the county and city at a planning meeting last week.

Figure 89: Article written and published by the Pickens County Progress

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Needs and Opportunities listed below apply to Pickens County, Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock. Each community has specific Needs and Opportunities linked with their individual community work program.

Joint Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ED-1	Identify and address needs for industrial development and redevelopment, including
ED-2	Retain existing businesses and industries in both traditional and trending business sectors
ED-3	Recruit and locate businesses and industries based on assets such as the Airport, logistics, and available skilled workforce
ED-4	Create more jobs and economic opportunities in our community
ED-5	Expand/create more industry
ED-6	Increase commercial activity (retail, dining, etc.)
ED-7	Improve gateway signage to increase tourism
ED-8	Implement streetscaping, lighting, signage, and design projects to improve downtown visual appeal and ease of navigation
ED-9	Improve public access to information and the history of local communities, so to generate tourism and community pride.
ED-10	Create an environment that attracts tourism commercial retail developers/investors to the historic town center
ED-11	Improve the lack of adequate, available high-speed internet access in locations where either underserved or unserved by Broadband internet.
ED-12	Improve access to those traveling by flight into the Pickens County area

Housing

H-1	Inventory number of houses and conditions to estimate future need
	Improve the range of affordable housing options for the county or respective city.
H-2	Increase housing diversity appropriate for the county or respective city.
H-3	Incentivize multi-family and single-family housing at appropriate densities for a variety of income and age groups
H-4	Improve housing conditions for the county or respective city.
H-5	Preserve, and rehabilitate where needed, existing housing stock

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Community Facilities and Services

CF-1	Improve or repair recreation facilities and parks, and add new parks, open space, and green space
CF-2	Plan and provide for the extension of existing waterlines and water facilities to help provide public water services to citizens and business owners that currently rely solely on costly onsite wells.
CF-3	Develop additional local water reserves to increase current capacity.
CF-4	Plan for and provide emergency shelters for a variety of natural disasters; update and implement Hazard Mitigation Plan
CF-5	Plan for funding public service facilities, training, and operations, including fire facilities to improve coverage (high ISO rating in areas)
CF-6	Preserve safe living conditions by fully funding facilities and equipment needed by public services (fire, police, emergency providers)
CF-7	Increase water storage treatment capacity and infrastructure to serve areas where growth is desired and to meet future demands
CF-8	Increase wastewater treatment capacity and infrastructure to meet current and future demands for businesses and residents.
CF-9	Build more trails that are accessible to all users
CF-10	Ensure streets, sidewalks, trails, and facilities are ADA compliant
CF-11	Improve both wayfinding and gateway signage visibility and availability, and improve accessibility to local resources for tourism.
CF-12	Stormwater improvements are needed to prevent damage to streets and housing
CF-13	Plan and provide for streetscape projects; improving the feel, look, and function of the downtown area
CF-14	Improve or repair public sites and parks, including landscaping, facilities, parking and access.
CF-15	Add new parks with open space and green space

Transportation

T-1	Provide needed road improvements to increase visibility and safety, improve traffic flows and mitigate traffic congestion
T-2	Implement streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, median islands, striping, signage, lighting, and landscaping
T-3	Mitigate the impact of traffic congestion
T-4	Improve walkability and connections from the City Center to other areas of the City; use the Complete Streets approach to add bicycle and pedestrian facilities where possible

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Natural and Cultural Resources

NR-1	Protect and preserve greenspace in Pickens County as it is an irreplaceable asset
NR-2	Promote private parks including Eagle's Rest, and STPAL Bike Park for citizens and tourists.
NR-3	Seek out best management practices for both water and environmental issues
NR-4	Make local history more visible and accessible for guests and residents
NR-5	Restore the riparian buffer and stabilize the creek bank, while also improving the aesthetics to local resources, such as parks

Land Use

LU-1	Review land development, land use ordinances, and code enforcement in order to ensure all codes/ordinances are not in conflict with that other codes/ordinances
LU-2	Update and administer local land use and development regulations to improve how the downtown area looks, feels, and functions.
LU-3	Ensure land use ordinances and maps are in compliance with current State law
LU-4	Improve public access to the City's zoning ordinances, maps, and procedures

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Community Work Program

A Community Work Program is a list of specific projects a community plans to undertake over the next 5 years after the adoption of the plan. These listed items are associated with a specific need or opportunity identified from the community survey. The stakeholders, elected officials, and staff review the Needs and Opportunities, and the Community Work Programs. Local government officials have the final say in approving the content.

The work program itself is non-binding; there are no legal requirements that any project listed must be completed. Projects fall within the following categories: Economic development, housing, transportation, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, land use, and intergovernmental coordination. Those items that are underway or postponed from the previous work program (2018-2028 Joint Comprehensive Plan), as identified in the report of accomplishments, are carried over to the current work program. All projects are given an estimated timeline for completion, a cost estimate, and a potential funding source. The following is a list of potential funding sources referenced in the work programs.

Funding Source Agency	Funding Sources by Agency
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)	Multiple funding sources
Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Georgia Main Street Program
Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA)	Georgia Fund, Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRF), Georgia Reservoir Fund
Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Recreational Trail Program (RTP), Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)	Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
Georgia Environmental Protection division (GAEPD)	319 Grant
Georgia Historic Preservation District	National Registry of Historic Places, Historic Preservation Fund
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	USDA Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program
Local Government Funding	General Funds, Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)
Georgia Environmental Protection division (GAEPD)	319 Grant
Other	Grants and Loans, General funds

Pickens County Implementation Program

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Review alcohol ordinances and analyze whether or not changes may be appropriate to encourage and promote legitimate alcohol-related businesses such as restaurants. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapter 6 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances.	2018-2023	X				
Promote the county as a less regulated, more conservative, safer alternative to many Metro Atlanta communities. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapter 4, 6, 16, 18, 38, and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances for better promotion	2018-2023	X				Policy Statement; Pickens County Government, as an administrative activity continues to revise and review their local codes. Development Authority of Pickens County serves at the role advocate for promoting the county as a safer alternative to Atlanta.
Review and analyze building permits and business license policies to streamline processes and promote a business-friendly culture. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 4, 6, 16, and 18 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances to help streamline processes.	2018-2023	X				Policy Statement; Pickens County Government, as an administrative activity continues to revise and review their local codes.
HOUSING						

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Encourage and promote additional developments of single-family residential with septic systems and larger lots in the county. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances for increased promotion of this goal.					X	Not an administrative priority
Encourage and promote a variety of housing types in the county for affordability – various sizes; manufactured housing; modular housing; stick/site-built housing; etc. Flexibility in exterior finish material and roof pitch of housing in the county. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances for increased promotion of this goal.	2018-2023			X, 2025		Not an administrative priority at the time, carried over to new work program. ***Rewritten to read:*** *Review, revise and draft appropriate ordinances, as well as other relevant documents, to improve housing type variety and conditions within Pickens County. Variety in housing type may include, but not limited to, manufactured housing; modular housing; stick/site-built housing; etc.…*

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Work cooperatively with citizens for alternative housing options such as earthcraft/green building materials; tiny houses; etc. that must be code-compliant as safe, permanent residential structures. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 16, 38, and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding alternative housing definitions, uses, etc.	2018-2023			X, 2026		Not an administrative priority at the time*, carried over to new work program.* ***Rewritten to read:*** *Research and promote a variety of code-compliant, alternative housing options that are an appropriate fit for Pickens County. Review may include Pickens County Code of Ordinances.*
TRANSPORTATION						

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Continue to encourage and promote highest and best regional commercial uses on the Hwy 515 corridor. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 4, 16, 18, 38, and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding alternative housing definitions, uses, etc.	2018-2023				X	Policy Statement, Reoccurring administrative activity
Review and analyze East-West roads in the greater Jasper area such as Hwy 53, Philadelphia Rd, AW Lawson Blvd, to work cooperatively with Jasper representatives on transportations options and alternatives for persons seeking to drive East-West smoothly and quickly through and within the county. Improved signage may be one example of many possibilities that should be reviewed to improve traffic flow one side of the county to the other.	2018-2023			X, 2027		Not an administrative priority at the time
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Continue to work cooperatively with arts groups such as Pickens Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA) and support and promote expansion of various arts programs. Examples include an active folk school and greater participation in events such as the Cornbread reunion. Continue and enhance activities related to marble/mining heritage including the Marble festival; Native American heritage; and historic preservation. Continue to support existing historic sites (Tate gym, Tate House, etc.) and identify new sites.	2018-2023		X, 2027			Carried over to new work program
Continue to work cooperatively with private and nonprofit groups to conserve greenspace, including sensitive environmental areas such as creeks, floodplain areas, and steep-slope mountainous portions of the county. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapter 38 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding environmental and land development matters.	2018-2023			X, 2027		Policy Statement. Rewritten and carried over to new work program: ***Rewritten to read:*** *Review and revise, where appropriate, Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding environmental and land development matters, so to be responsible toward local natural resources (floodplain, steep slope, creeks and other waterbodies, etc.…).*

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Continue to encourage, support, and promote private parks such as Eagle's Rest and the STPAL (Southeastern Trust for Parks and Lands)	2018-2023		X, 2027			Policy Statement. Rewritten and carried over to new work program: ***Rewritten to read:*** *Work to maintain, promote, and expand Natural Recreational Resources, such as private partnerships with Eagle's Rest and the STPAL (Southeastern Trust for Parks and Lands)*
Continue to participate in continuing education sessions each year related to stormwater management; floodplain management; safe dams; best practices in soil erosion & sedimentation control; water quality; etc. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapter 38 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding stormwater management and related matters.					X	Policy Statement, Reoccurring administrative activity

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Continue to participate in regional water and environmental groups such as the Coosawattee Regional Water & Sewer Authority; Georgia Rural Water Association; North Georgia Water Resource Partnership; Upper Etowah River Alliance; etc. Review and revise, where appropriate, section of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances related to water based on changing regulations and policies.	2018-2023				X	Policy Statement
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Continue current renovations and expansions of the Roads department and Recycling center headquarters on Camp Road. Continue current county wide sign replacement. Continue replacing all old 6 inch engineered grade street name signs with new signs, size is determined by speed limit, which meet the current reflectivity or size requirements. These include Stop sign, yield sign, stop ahead signs, speed limit signs, etc.	2018-2023	X				

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Continue renovations to Roper Park on Camp Road, including the pool. Plan for park expansion if nearby property acquisition becomes feasible. Plan for one or more new significant size parks at one or more ends of the county (west, north, or east)	2018-2023		X, 2027			
Implement 2006 County Parks and Recreation Plans	2018-2023				X	Not an Administrative priority
Review feasibility of property acquisitions in various parts of the county (Blaine, Hinton, Ludville, Marble Hill, Tate, etc.) for new small parks and consider partnerships with private and nonprofit park properties)	2018-2023		X, 2026			Policy Statement as written. Rewritten and carried over to new work program: ***Rewritten to include as Three items: Item 1)*** *Review the feasibility of property acquisition in various parts of the county (Blain, Hinton, Ludville, Marble Hill, Tate, etc.) for a small park, under the consideration of partnerships with private and nonprofit entities;* ***Item 2)*** *Purchase property, at the most appropriate location int Pickens County, for a small park;* ***Item 3)*** *Develop a park on the site of the acquisitioned property.*

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Continue program of targeted, appropriate line extensions such as the Jones Mountain Rd line extension. Continue program of working with adjacent counties for regional water interconnectivity, including possible future connection with Dawson County (Etowah Water & Sewer Authority) lines.	2018-2023	x				
Continue current project for Grandview Lake dam reservoir. Continue to work cooperatively with public and private partners on this project.	2018-2023				X	Cost feasibility
Continue ongoing project for additional temporary emergency shelters for certain natural and/or manmade disasters/situations. Continue to utilize, evaluate, and revise the Pickens Hazard Mitigation Plan where needed. Continue ongoing project to have generator back-up capacity for various county facilities. Continue annual emergency management training and certification.	2018-2023			X		Not an Administrative priority. ***Rewritten in new work program as two items: Item 1)*** *Review and Revise Hazard Mitigation Plan.* ***Item 2)*** *Secure funds and purchase temporary emergency shelter for certain natural and/or manmade disaster/situations.*
Continue ongoing project to have generator back-up capacity for various count facilities. Continue annual emergency management training and certification.	2018-2023	x				

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Continue current project for new Carlan Rd fire station. Continue project to review possibilities for renovated or relocated Tate fire station. Continue to maintain great services and aim for lower ISO rating in various parts of the county.	2018-2023	X				
Sheriff's office will renovate and reuse a portion of the former Jasper Middle School building(s) and property for a public safety training facility	2018-2023	X				
Review feasibility of projects to improve existing sidewalk (especially the less than one mile section of Tate between the depot and elementary school) and add new sidewalk, multi-use paths, and other similar infrastructure.	2018-2023			X		Policy Statement as written. Rewritten and carried over to new work program. ***Rewritten to read:*** *Continue to evaluate sidewalk, multi-path, and other pedestrian infrastructure projects needed throughout Pickens County and make necessary investments to improve walkability and safety. An area of especial interest is the less than one mile section of Tate between the depot and elementary school).*
Review and analyze chapter 38 (land development) and chapter 67 (land use/zoning) sections of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances for possible needed revisions based on the comprehensive plan	2018-2023				X	Policy Statement: Pickens County Government, as an administrative activity continues to revise and review their local codes.

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022

Pickens County

WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	YEAR	STATUS				Explanation if postponed or dropped
		Complete	Underway; Projected Completion Date	Postponed	Dropped	
Review and evaluate ways to better enforce existing land use rules and regulations in the Pickens County Code of Ordinances. Review and revise, where appropriate, violations sections of various chapters (including 38 and 67) of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances.	2018-2023	X				Policy Statement: Pickens County Government, as an administrative activity continues to revise and review their local codes.
Encourage and promote commercial development and land use/zoning for commercial on Hwy 515 and Hwy 53, with industrial potential on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Encourage nonresidential development on other state routes to a lesser degree. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding this promotional goal.	2018-2023	X				Policy Statement: Pickens County Government, as an administrative activity continues to revise and review their local codes.
Encourage and promote residential and agricultural uses and land use/zoning on local (non-State) roads. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 regarding this promotional goal.	2018-2023	X				Policy Statement: Pickens County Government, as an administrative activity continues to revise and review their local codes.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Continue cooperative agreements for intergovernmental service provision. Continue agreements for back-up service	2018-2023	x				Policy Statement, Reoccurring Administrative activity

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2018-2022 Pickens County						
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	**STATUS**				**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
		Complete	**Underway; Projected Completion Date**	**Postponed**	**Dropped**	
provision in worst-case scenarios. Continue day to day communication with various organizations. Coordinate positive efforts between the Chamber, county, and cities to promote economic development efforts for new developments, redevelopment, and existing business retention throughout the community.						

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Pickens County Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ED-1	Expand/create more industry
ED-2	Improve the lack of adequate, available high-speed internet access in locations where either underserved or unserved by Broadband internet.

Housing

H1	Improve the range of affordable housing options for the county or respective city.
H-2	Increase housing diversity appropriate for the county or respective city.

Transportation

T-1	Provide needed road improvements to increase visibility and safety, improve traffic flows and mitigate traffic congestion
T-2	Implement streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, median islands, striping, signage, lighting, and landscaping
T3	Improve access to those traveling by flight into the Pickens County area

Natural and Cultural Resources

NR-1	Make local history more visible and accessible for guests and residents
NR-2	Promote public and private parks including Eagle's Rest, and STPAL Bike Park for citizens and tourists.
NR-3	Seek out best management practices for both water and environmental issues

Community Facilities and Services

CF-1	Improve or repair recreation facilities and parks, and add new parks, open space, and green space
CF-2	Plan for and provide emergency shelters for a variety of natural disasters; update and implement Hazard Mitigation Plan
CF-3	Plan for funding public service facilities, training, and operations, including fire facilities to improve coverage (high ISO rating in areas)
CF-4	Preserve safe living conditions by fully funding facilities and equipment needed by public services (fire, police, emergency providers)
CF-5	Plan and provide for the extension of existing waterlines and water facilities to help provide public water services to citizens and business owners that currently rely solely on costly onsite wells.

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CF-6	Develop additional local water reserves to increase current capacity.
CF-7	Improve both wayfinding and gateway signage visibility and availability, and improve accessibility to local resources for tourism.

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 PICKENS COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED1	Seek land for the Development of a Business Park	X	X	X			$500,000	ARPA, Grants	Pickens County Development Authority
ED2	Adopt a broadband ordinance	X					$1,000	Staff time	Pickens County Government
ED2	Apply for Georgia Department of Community Affairs Broadband Ready designation	X					$1,000	Staff time	Pickens County Government
	HOUSING								
H1, H2	Review, revise, and draft appropriate ordinances, as well as other relevant documents, to improve housing type variety and conditions within Pickens County. A variety of housing types may include, but are not limited to, manufactured housing; modular housing; stick/site-built housing;	X	X	X			$5,000/yr	Staff Time	Pickens County Planning and Development

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 PICKENS COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
H1, H2	Research and promote a variety of code-compliant, alternative housing options that are an appropriate fit for Pickens County. A review may include the Pickens County Code of Ordinances.	X	X	X	X		$5,000/yr	Staff Time	Pickens County Planning and Development
	TRANSPORTATION								
T1	Review and analyze East-West roads in the greater Jasper area such as Hwy 53, Philadelphia Rd, AW Lawson Blvd, to work cooperatively with Jasper representatives on transportations options and alternatives for persons seeking to drive East-West smoothly and quickly through and within the county. Improved signage may be one example of many possibilities that should be reviewed to improve traffic flow from one side of the county to the other.	X	X	X	X	X	$5,000/yr	Staff Time	Chamber of Commerce and Pickens County Planning and Development
T2	Continue to evaluate sidewalk, multi-path, and other pedestrian infrastructure projects needed throughout Pickens County and make necessary investments to improve walkability and safety. An area of special interest is that of less than a one-mile	x	x	x	x	x	$200,000	Georgia DOT, Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Grants, and other various funding sources	Pickens County Planning & Development, Parks & Recreation, and Road Department

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 PICKENS COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	section of Tate between the depot and the elementary school).								
T3	Construct New Airport Terminal	X	X	X			$1,200,000	GDOT Grant	Pickens County Airport Authority
	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NR1	Continue to work cooperatively with art groups such as Pickens Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA) and support and promote the expansion of various arts programs. Examples include an active folk school and greater participation in events such as the Cornbread reunion. Continue and enhance activities related to marble/mining heritage including the Marble festival; Native American heritage; and historic preservation. Continue to support existing historic sites (Tate gym, Tate House, etc.) and identify new sites.	X	X	X	X	X	$5,000/yr	Staff Time	Chamber of Commerce and Pickens County Planning and Development working with PACA

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 PICKENS COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
NR2	Work to maintain, promote, and expand Natural Recreational Resources, such as private partnerships with Eagle's Rest and the STPAL (Southeastern Trust for Parks and Lands)	X	X	X	X	X	$5,000/yr	Staff Time	Chamber of Commerce and Pickens County Planning and Development
NR3	Review and revise, where appropriate, Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding environmental and land development matters, so to be responsible toward local natural resources (floodplain, steep slope, creeks and other waterbodies, etc.…).	X	X	X	X	X	$5,000/yr	Staff Time	Chamber of Commerce and Pickens County Planning and Development
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CF1	Continue renovations to Roper Park on Camp Road, including the pool. Plan for park expansion if nearby property acquisition becomes feasible. Plan for one or more new significant size parks at one or more ends of the county (west, north, or east)	X	X	X	X	X	$75,000	Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), General funds, and other various funds	Pickens County Parks & Recreation Department
CF1	Review the feasibility of property acquisition in various parts of the county (Blain, Hinton, Ludville, Marble Hill, Tate, etc.) for a small park, under the	X	X				$50,000	Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF), T-Mobile Hometown Grant, General funds, ARPA, SPLOST, grants,	Pickens County Parks & Recreation Department

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 PICKENS COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	consideration of partnerships with private and nonprofit entities							loans, and other various funds	
CF1	Purchase property, at the most appropriate location in Pickens County, for a small park.	X	X	X			$55,000	Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), General funds, ARPA, SPLOST, grants, loans, and other various funds	Pickens County Parks & Recreation Department
CF1	Develop a park on the site of the new acquisition property.	X	X	X	X	X	$250,000	Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), General funds, ARPA, SPLOST, grants, loans, and other various funds	Pickens County Parks & Recreation Department
CF2	Secure funds and purchase a temporary emergency shelter for certain natural and/or manmade disasters/situations.	X	X	X	X	X	$200,000 (each)	Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) other various grants and loans	Pickens County Government
CF3	In partnership with the Town of Talking Rock, construct a Fire Department in Talking Rock	X	X	X			$500,000	United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD), ARPA, Grants	Pickens County

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 PICKENS COUNTY									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
CF3, CF4	Construct Fire Training Facility	X	X	X			$300,000	United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD), SPLOST	Pickens County
CF5, CF6	Research and secure grant funding to expand the water system and capacity	X	X				$2,000/yr	Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), Staff time, General Funds	Pickens County Government
CF5, CF6	Expand the water system and capacity	X	X	X	X	X	$16,000,000	ARC/Grants	Pickens County Government
CF7	Complete the Tate Train Depot display and create a tourism destination	X	X				$250,000	ARPA, Grants	Pickens County Government
CF2	Review and Revise Hazard Mitigation Plan.	X	X	X	X	X	$30,000	General Fund, Grants	Pickens County Government
CF2	Secure funds and purchase temporary emergency shelter for certain natural and/or manmade disaster/situations	X	X	X	X	X	$300,000	General Fund, Grants	Pickens County Government

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City of Jasper Implementation Program

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2018-2022 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

			STATUS			
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Establish Main Street Program for Downtown Development Authority	2018-2022		2028			
Sell and/or develop properties previously donated to the city and designate funds and/or properties in order to fully fund the city's retirement plan with GMA.	2018-2022				X	Change in administrative priorities
Extend a 10 inch water main from the northernmost 500 gal water tank located at Appalachian Court north to the city limits line located at Antioch Church Road and SR 515.	2018-2022			X, 2027		Project rewritten to extend water main north toward City limit line
Add a parallel line of sanitary sewer line and install four pump stations from Philadelphia Road north to Antioch Church Road and 515.	2018-2022		2023			Expected completion day is November of 2022, but at a minimum, project should be completed by early 2023.
Paint all poles on Main and directional wayfinding signage.	2018-2022		2024			Pending Rural Downtown Redevelopment grant approval. Search for other funding sources if not approved

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2018-2022 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
Lighting for downtown Main Street	2018-2022	X				
Develop the city property known as the Perrow/Pool/Roper Greenspace. If appropriate, depending on a majority consensus, development could be completed by a consultant.	2018-2022		2027			Pending ARC grant
HOUSING						
Housing Authority to build 20 units on Mary Street.	2018-2022				X	Lack of funding
Review and revise, if majority consensus agrees, City standards to encourage additional condos, townhouses, and apartments.	2018-2022	X				
TRANSPORTATION						
Implement streetscape improvements on West Church Street	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding
Implement streetscape improvements on Burnt Mountain Road	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding
Implement streetscape improvements on East Church Street	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding

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2018-2022 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
Implement streetscape improvements and install lighting on SR 515 within city limits	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding, Pending completion of Georgia DOT projects along 515
Construct four lane road and one-way pair on 53 west from SR515 thru Downtown Jasper	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding, Georgia DOT project
Revise Zoning Ordinance to create Overlay Districts for West Church St., East Church St., and SR 515 to address building setbacks, mixed uses, inter-parcel access, landscaping and lighting	2018-2022	X				Zoning ordinance was revised to address all issues. An overlay district was not required
Revise and improve Sign Regulations	2018-2022	X				
Update all street signage to meet MUTCD regulations	2018-2022	X				
Enhance traffic flow in Central Business District by creating north and south one way traffic if majority consensus occurs	2018-2022				X	Change in administration priorities
Roundabout construction – Burnt Mtn/ Pioneer Road	2018-2022				X	Change in administration priorities

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2018-2022 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
Roundabout construction – Burnt Mtn Road/ Cove Road	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding, seek additional funding sources
Roundabout construction – Pioneer Road/ Indian Forest Road	2018-2022				X	Change in administrative priorities
Adopt Architectural Standards with masonry requirements for commercial uses.	2018-2022	X				
Resurface all roads in city limits.	2018-2022	X				
Gateway at SR 515 and Hwy 53 intersection	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding
Gateway at SR 515 and Hwy 108 intersection	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding
Build a deceleration lane in front of middle school on Hwy 53 to Holly Street	2018-2022	X				
Improve Appalachian Trail to handle excess State Route 53 traffic	2018-2022				X	Change in administrative priorities
Resurface Main Street	2018-2022	X				
Repair and replace traffic lights on State Route 53 (replace with mast arms) at Main Street and Sammy McGee Blvd and SR 53	2018-2022	X				

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2018-2022 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
Construct parking from the wood bridge to Old Federal Road	2018-2022				X	Conduct parking study for downtown to determine needs.
Build a connection road from Brock Supply on SR 53 to Industrial Blvd at AW Lawson's pasture	2018-2022				X	Change in administrative priorities
Extend Pine Street to intersect Burnt Mountain Road and Pioneer Road including a roundabout intersection at Pioneer and Burnt Mountain Roads	2018-2022				X	Change in administrative priorities
Conduct downtown parking study to determine current and future needs.	2018-2022			X, 2023		Lack of funding
Collaborate with GDOT to add a right turn lane at the intersection of Camp Road and Hwy. 53.	2018-2022				X	Lack of funding and Policy statement. Project is to be carried over to new work program table.

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2018-2023 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Expand wastewater treatment plant to 1.56 m.g.d. capacity to land application/reuse capability.	2018-2022		2025			
Participate in development of Impact Fee program to better account for current and future community needs.	2018-2022				X	Policy Statement, no action at this time
Construct a water reservoir – land has been purchased, but construction may be nearer to 2035. Conduct strategic planning and development feasibility study identifying needs, resources, and approval strategies.	2018-2022			X, 2028		Lack of funding. Priority need of the City
Expand water treatment plant to 3.0 m.g.d.	2018-2022	X				
Build a fire department station on SR 515	2018-2022			X, 2027		Lack of funding, but the project is a priority need of the City.
Acquire an aerial platform firefighting vehicle	2018-2022				X	Not needed at this time
Refurbish the city-owned cabin on Liberty Lane to hold new Police Precinct	2018-2022	X				
Develop off-road recreational trails, connecting to central business district	2018-2022				X	Change in administrative priorities

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2018-2023 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

			STATUS			
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
from Arbor Hills Subd to downtown Jasper (approx. Woodbridge area)						
Purchase Fire Engine Pumper Truck	2018-2022	X				
Work with local mining operations (Polycor and Imerys) to obtain raw water locations at Tate, Marble Hill and Whitestone	2018-2022	X				Attempted; Was Not Successful.
GIS mapping system to map all City infrastructure	2018-2022	X				GIS mapping is an ongoing municipal function
Build city public restrooms. Identify needs and follow all state-related standards (health, life safety, etc.) during construction	2018-2022		2024			Pending Rural Downtown Redevelopment grant approval. Search for other funding sources if not approved
Doris Wigington Park: two sets bathrooms, pavilion, and improve signage.	2018-2022		2023			Moved to Natural Resources
Jasper City Park: landscape top of water fall	2018-2022	X				
Maintain Wood Bridge	2018-2022				X	Maintenance of Bridge is an ongoing municipal function. Finances nor any special project is not needed at this time

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2018-2023 CITY OF JASPER REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
Paint all water tanks (5)	2018-2022				X	Maintenance of water tanks is an ongoing municipal function
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Revise or maintain the Service Delivery Strategy Agreements	2018-2022	X				Policy Statement. Ongoing municipal government function
Participate in the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership	2018-2022	X				Policy Statement. Ongoing municipal government function

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Jasper Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ED-1	Create an environment that attracts tourism commercial retail developers/investors to the historic town center
ED-2	Retain existing businesses and industries in both traditional and trending business sectors
ED-3	Identify and address needs for industrial development and redevelopment
ED-4	Implement streetscaping, lighting, signage, and design projects to improve downtown visual appeal and ease of navigation
ED-5	Improve the lack of adequate, available high-speed internet access in locations where either underserved or unserved by Broadband internet.

Transportation

T-1	Provide needed road improvements to increase visibility and safety, improve traffic flows and mitigate traffic congestion
T-2	Implement streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, median islands, striping, signage, lighting, and landscaping

Community Facilities and Services

CF-1	Plan and provide for the extension of existing waterlines and water facilities to help provide public water services to citizens and business owners that currently rely solely on costly onsite wells.
CF-2	Develop additional local water reserves to increase current capacity.
CF-3	Plan for funding public service facilities, training, and operations, including fire facilities to improve coverage (high ISO rating in areas)
CF-4	Improve or repair recreation facilities and parks, and add new parks, open space, and green space
CF-5	Plan and provide for streetscape projects; improving the feel, look, and function of the downtown area
CF-6	Improve or repair public sites and parks, including landscaping, facilities, parking and access.

Natural and Cultural Resources

NR-1	Promote public and private parks including Eagle's Rest, and STPAL Bike Park for citizens and tourists.

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 CITY OF JASPER									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
ED1	Establish Main Street Program for Downtown Development Authority					X	$25,000	General Funds	City of Jasper
ED2, ED3	Extend the city's water main north toward the city limit line at Antioch Church Road and SR 515 from the 500-gal water tank at Appalachian Court			X			$500,000	GEFA, ARC	City of Jasper
ED2, ED3	Add a parallel line of sanitary sewer line and install four pump stations from Philadelphia Road north to Antioch Church Road and 515.			X			$3,000,000	GEFA, ARC	City of Jasper
ED4	Paint all poles on Main and directional wayfinding signage.		X				$200,000	General funds	City of Jasper
ED2	Develop the city property known as the Perrow/Pool/Roper Greenspace – Phase 1	X	X	X			$2,056,096	ARC, General funds	City of Jasper
ED5	Apply for Georgia Department of Community Affairs Broadband Ready designation	x					$1,000	Staff time	City of Jasper

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 CITY OF JASPER									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	TRANSPORTATION								
T2	Implement streetscape improvements on West Church Street – SR 53 WIDENING PROJECT – GDOT PROJECT					X	No Cost to City	Georgia DOT	Georgia DOT
T1, T2	Implement streetscape improvements and other improvements on Burnt Mountain Road			X			$750,000	TAP, Georgia DOT, Grants	City of Jasper, Georgia DOT
T2	Implement streetscape improvements on East Church Street			X			$750,000	TAP, Georgia DOT, Grants	City of Jasper, Georgia DOT
T2	Implement streetscape improvements and install lighting on SR 515 within city limits – GDOT RESTRICTED					X	No Cost to City	Georgia DOT	Georgia DOT
T1, T2	Construct four lane road and one-way pair on 53 west from SR515 thru Downtown Jasper-GDOT (May include widening, streetscape and pedestrian safety components of projects listed above)	X	X	X	X	X	No Cost to City	GDOT	GDOT
T1, T2	Roundabout construction – Burnt Mtn Road/ Cove Road					X	$1,500,000	LMIG, Georgia Dot, Grants	City of Jasper

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 CITY OF JASPER									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
T1, T2	With the help of GDOT, add a right turn lane at the intersection of Camp Road and Hwy 53.					X	$2,000,000	LMIG, GDOT, Grants	City of Jasper, Georgia DOT
T1, T2	Gateway at SR 515 and Hwy 53 intersection					X	$750,000	GDOT, Grants, GEFA	City of Jasper, Georgia DOT
T1, T2	Gateway at SR 515 and Hwy 108 intersection					X	$750,000	GDOT, Grants, GEFA	City of Jasper, Georgia DOT
T1, T2	Conduct a downtown parking study to determine current and future needs.		X				$60,000	City, Grants	City of Jasper
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
CF1, CF2	Expand wastewater treatment plant to 1.56 m.g.d. capacity to land application/reuse capability.			X			$15,627,000	USDA	City of Jasper
CF1 , CF2	Construct a water reservoir – land has been purchased, but construction may be nearer to 2035. Conduct strategic planning and development feasibility study					X	$50,000,000	GEFA, ARC	City of Jasper

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COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2023-2027 CITY OF JASPER									
Need/ Opportunity Code:	**Activity Description**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**	**Responsible Party**
	identifying needs, resources, and approval strategies.								
CF3	Build a fire department station on SR 515			X	X	X	$4,000,000	GEFA, Grants, General Fund	City of Jasper
CF3, CF4, CF5	Build city public restrooms. Identify needs and follow all state-related standards (health, life safety, etc.) during construction		X				$450,000	General Fund	City of Jasper
	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
NR1, CF 5	Apply for funding for improvements to Doris Wigington Park: Add two sets of bathrooms and a pavilion, and improve signage. PHASE 1 - $200,000; PHASE 2 - $350,000	X	X	X	X	X	$550,000	Georgia DNR, COJ	City of Jasper

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City of Nelson Implementation Program

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2018-2023 CITY OF NELSON REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

			STATUS			
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Improve the City's website provide basic demographic, economic, and historical information about Nelson.	2018-2023	X				
Meet and cooperate with commercial and industrial property owners to facilitate industrial park site development. (Activity re-written)	2018-2023	X				
HOUSING						
Identify a specific area within the city with a concentration of low-income senior citizen home owners in order to apply for CDBG grant funding to assist with needed home improvements to create safe and decent housing for the City's aging population and prevent the deterioration of existing housing stock.	2018-2023			X		Change in Administrative Priorities. Senior housing needs are still a priority, but Nelson is focusing on the future housing need throughout the city. A new work program items has been written as: *Identify local issues in housing and inventorying local resources, so to create a comprehensive approach.*
Submit a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to find a qualified grant application author and administrator for the City's CDBG application for existing senior housing preservation and rehabilitation.					X	Change in Administrative Priorities. Senior housing needs are a priority Nelson plans to address. The RFQ is a part of the process this item is one piece of a more comprehensive process. The line items has been

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2018-2023 CITY OF NELSON REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

			STATUS			
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
						combined with the line item below and rewritten as: *Based on location of need, those areas where there are a concentration of low-income senior citizen home owners, apply for CDBG an eligible grant to address these needs. Actions taken may include the submission a Request for Qualification (RFQ) and the hiring a Grant Author to apply for funding for the rehabilitation of housing owned by seniors within a designated area.*
Hire a qualified grant application author to apply for the City's CDBG application for existing senior housing stock preservation and rehabilitation.	2018-2023				X	Change in Administrative Priorities. Senior housing needs are a priority Nelson plans to address. The RFQ is a part of the process this item is one piece of a more comprehensive process. The line items has been combined with the line item above and rewritten as: *Based on location of need, those areas where there are a concentration of low-income senior citizen home owners, apply for CDBG an eligible grant to address these needs. Actions taken may include the submission a Request for Qualification (RFQ) and the hiring a*

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2018-2023 CITY OF NELSON REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
						Grant Author to apply for funding for the rehabilitation of housing owned by seniors within a designated area.
TRANSPORTATION						
Improve pedestrian walkability from City Hall to other areas within the City. (Phase 1) Kennesaw Avenue starting at Blue Ridge Avenue to School Street.	2018-2023	X				
Connect the City center to other City areas. (Phase 2) School Street from Kennesaw Avenue to Dogwood Pass.	2018-2023		X, 2026			Carried over to the new Work Program table
TRANSPORTATION						
Connect the community center to other City areas. (Phase 3) Dogwood Pass from School Street back to Blue Ridge Avenue.	2018-2023		X,2027			Carried over to the new Work Program table
Create a turning lane at the intersection of Kennesaw Avenue and Blue Ridge Avenue which will be safer for residents and allow for truck traffic to better enter the Marble Plant.	2018-2023	X				
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Partner with a Historical/Heritage Society that will assist in managing and	2018-2023		X, 2025			

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2018-2023 CITY OF NELSON REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
promoting the City's local history museum.						
Create a comprehensive inventory of the contents of the Marble Museum which can be maintained and updated as items are needed.	2018-2023		X, 2025			Carried over to the new Work Program table
Create a project plan to organize, display, and preserve items housed in the Marble Museum.	2018-2023		X, 2025			Carried over to the new Work Program table

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Nelson Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ED-1	Identify and address needs for industrial development and redevelopment
ED-2	Retain existing businesses and industries in both traditional and trending business sectors
ED-3	Improve the lack of adequate, available high-speed internet access in locations where either underserved or unserved by Broadband internet.

Housing

H-1	Inventory number of houses and conditions to estimate future need
H-2	Improve housing conditions in Nelson
H-3	Preserve, and rehabilitate where needed, existing housing stock

Transportation

T-1	Implement streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, median islands, striping, signage, lighting, and landscaping
T-2	Improve walkability and connections from the City Center to other areas of the City; use the Complete Streets approach to add bicycle and pedestrian facilities where possible

Community Facilities and Services

CF-1	Improve both wayfinding and gateway signage visibility and availability, and improve accessibility to local resources for tourism.
CF-2	Stormwater improvements are needed to prevent damage to streets and housing

Natural and Cultural Resources

NR-1	Make local history more visible and accessible for guests and residents

Land Use

LU-1	Review land development, land use ordinances, and code enforcement in order to ensure all codes/ordinances are not in conflict with that other codes/ordinances
LU-2	Ensure land use ordinances and maps are in compliance with current State law
LU-3	Improve public access to the City's zoning ordinances, maps, and procedures

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2023 - 2027 City of Nelson Community Work Program

Code	Activity Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
ED1	Purchase and develop a light industrial park facility	X	X	X	X	X	$750,000	SPLOST	City of Nelson, Development Authority
ED1, ED2	Identify and make any necessary improvements to public infrastructure to respond to both current businesses and new industries.	X	X	X	X	X	$750,000	GEFA, ARC, SPLOST	City of Nelson
ED3	Apply for Georgia Department of Community Affairs Broadband Ready designation	X	X				$1,000	Staff time	City of Nelson
HOUSING									
H1	Identify local issues in housing and inventory local resources, so to create a comprehensive approach.	X	X	X	X		$8,000	GICH, CHIP, other funding sources	City of Nelson
H2, H3	Determine areas of need where there is a concentration of low-income or blighted housing; apply for grant funds and/or technical assistance to address housing needs.	X	X	X	X	X	$2,500	GICH, CHIP, other funding sources	City of Nelson
TRANSPORTATION									
T1, T2	Connect the City center to other City areas. (Phase 2) School Street from Kennesaw Avenue to Dogwood Pass.	X	X	X	X		$60,000	SPLOST, GDOT Grant	City of Nelson
T1, T2	Connect the City Center to other City areas. (Phase 3) Dogwood Pass from School Street back to Blue Ridge Avenue.	X	X	X	X	X	$75,000	SPLOST, GDOT Grant	City of Nelson

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2023 - 2027 City of Nelson Community Work Program

Code	Activity Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES									
CF1	Create a large "Welcome to Nelson" gateway sign at the main corridor entrance of the City representing the City's history and heritage.	X					$25,000	SPLOST, ARC	City of Nelson
CF2	Stormwater Improvement Project (Phase 3) Hillside area	X	X				$100,000	SPLOST, LMIG, GEFA, ARC	City of Nelson
LAND USE									
LU1, LU2	Review and amend the City's zoning ordinances, procedures, and standards to make sure they are compliant with current State Law.	X	X	X			$7,500	General Funds, Staff time	City of Nelson
LU1, LU2	Partner with NWGRC to update and digitize the City's zoning map.	X	X	X			$1,000	General Funds	City of Nelson
LU3	Make zoning map, ordinances, and procedures available digitally via the City's website.	X	X	X			$5,000 - $10,000	General Funds	City of Nelson
LU2	Enter into an intergovernmental agreement with a County to carry out zoning and code enforcement for the City.	X	X	X			$1,000 / Staff time	General Funds	City of Nelson

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2023 - 2027 City of Nelson Community Work Program

Code	Activity Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES									
NR1	Assist the Historical/Heritage Society in managing and promoting the city's local history museum. Assistance may be provided in the form of creating a comprehensive inventory, organizing, and helping with the display of museum items	X	X	X			$1,000 / Staff time	General Funds	City of Nelson
NR1	Create a comprehensive inventory of the contents of the Marble Museum which can be maintained and updated as items are needed.	X	X	X			$3,000 / Staff time	General Funds	City of Nelson
NR1	Create a project plan to organize, display, and preserve items housed in the Marble Museum.	X	X	X			$1,000 / Staff time	General Funds	City of Nelson

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Town of Talking Rock Implementation Program

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2018-2023 CITY OF TALKING ROCK REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

		STATUS				
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Restore railroad cars for use as tourist attractions and festival events.	2021	X				
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Establish a citizen committee to assemble historic facts that are worthy of publication and dedicated to making the Town of Talking Rock a tourism destination.	2020				X	Change in Administration Priority
Apply for grant funding to assist with restoring the riparian buffer along the Talking Rock Creek bank travelling through Talking Rock's town park with assistance from NWGRC environmental planners.	2019				X	Policy Statement
Restore creek bank vegetative buffer along Talking Rock Creek bank travelling through Talking Rock's town park with assistance from NWGRC environmental planners.	2021			X		Lack of Funding, Carried over to the new work program. Reads as " Restore and install a riparian buffer along Talking Rock Creek at the local park and in town Commercial area"

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2018-2023 CITY OF TALKING ROCK REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

			STATUS			
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES						
Build handicapped accessible trails in the town park (one-half length is now complete).	2019	X				
Complete streetscape plan for downtown street, parking areas, and Festival area.	2020			X		Lack of Funding, Rewritten for new work program, "Purchase and install new streetlights that are historic in appearance"
Increase parking at Park Pavilion on the railroad side to assist ingress and egress.	2020	X				
Create a plan for a joint on-site septic system to serve the town center commercial retail area of town.	2018-2023			X		Lack of Funding, Carried over to the new work program. Reads as "Create a plan for and install a joint on-site septic system to serve the town center and commercial retail in town"
LAND USE						
Review and revise Zoning Ordinance.	2020				X	Policy Statement

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2018-2023 CITY OF TALKING ROCK REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

			STATUS			
WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITY	**YEAR**	***Complete***	***Underway; Projected Completion Date***	***Postponed***	***Dropped***	**Explanation if postponed or dropped**
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Review and revise Service Delivery Agreements, if necessary.	2018	X				

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Talking Rock Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

ED-1	Identify and address needs for industrial development and redevelopment
ED-2	Retain existing businesses and industries in both traditional and trending business sectors
ED-3	Improve the lack of adequate, available high-speed internet access in locations where either underserved or unserved by Broadband internet.

Community Facilities and Services

CF-1	Increase wastewater treatment capacity and infrastructure to meet current and future demands for businesses and residents.
CF-2	Plan and provide for streetscape projects; improving the feel, look, and function of the downtown area

Transportation

T-1	Provide needed road improvements to increase visibility and safety, improve traffic flows and mitigate traffic congestion
T-2	Implement streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, median islands, striping, signage, lighting, and landscaping
T-3	Mitigate the impact of traffic congestion
T-4	Improve walkability and connections from the City Center to other areas of the City; use the Complete Streets approach to add bicycle and pedestrian facilities where possible
T5	Improve access to those traveling by flight into the Pickens County area

Natural and Cultural Resources

NR-1	Make local history more visible and accessible for guests and residents
NR-2	Restore the riparian buffer and stabilize the creek bank, while also improving the aesthetics to local resources, such as parks

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2023 - 2027 Town of Talking Rock Community Work Program

Code	Activity Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
ED1, 2	Create a plan for a joint on-site septic system to serve the town center and commercial retail in town (This would be considered both an Economic Development project and a Community Facility project for Town of Talking Rock)				X		$30,000	USDA Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program	Town of Talking Rock
ED1, 2	Adopt a broadband ordinance		x				$5,000 Staff Time	General Fund	Town of Talking Rock
ED3	Apply for Georgia Department of Community Affairs Broadband Ready designation		x				$5,000 Staff Time	General Fund	Town of Talking Rock
COMMUNITY FACILITIES									
CF1	Purchase and install new streetlights that are historic in appearance.		X				$50,000	General Fund, SPLOST?	Town of Talking Rock
CF2	Install a joint on-site septic system to serve the town center and commercial retail in town. (This would be considered both a Community Facility project and an Economic Development project for Town of Talking Rock)				X	X	$500,000	USDA Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program	Town of Talking Rock

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NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES									
NR2	Restore and install a riparian buffer along Talking Rock Creek at the local park and in town Commercial area					X	$50,000	Georgia Environmental Planning Department (GAEPD) 319 Grant. Georgia Outdoor Stewardship	Town of Talking Rock
NR1	Historic School House National Registry Assessment		X					General Fund, Grants, Technical Assistance	Town of Talking Rock
NR1	Restore Historic School House				X			General Fund, Grants, Technical Assistance	Town of Talking Rock

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Appendix A: Public Hearing and Participation

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Initial Public Hearing advertisement in July 7, 2022 edition of the Pickens Progress.

4-Her Spotlight

Micah Newton Chosen as Georgia 4-H Ambassador

A straight A student, Micah Newton will be a member of the PHS band next year in addition to involvement with the local 4-H program where he has excelled in the engineering projects.

Submitted by Pickens County 4-H

Pickens County Senior 4-Her Micah Newton, son of Matthew and Krista Newton, has been chosen as one of fifteen 4-Hers chosen from across the state to be a Georgia 4-H STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Ambassador.

Ambassadors are given opportunities to learn and lead within their chosen discipline. Subsequent to their intensive subject training, these high school students will spend the 2022-2023 academic year planning activities to share their knowledge with peers, younger children, and adults.

They will make a difference in their communities and represent Georgia 4-H as ambassadors in the field. Ambassadors are asked to create an annual action plan that outlines an individual path where they complete, at minimum, six learning experiences and six sharing activities during their year of service.

Micah was chosen through an application process that detailed his interest in the area of STEM. Micah had demonstrated his dedication to STEM through his 4-H project work by his studies in engineering and mechanics where he learned more about the complex inner workings of Rubix cubes. He interviewed engineers from Lockheed and Universal Alloy Corporation, attended Mission Make-It.

The Georgia 4-H Engineering Challenge at Rock Eagle, and taught STEM lessons at Cloverleaf Conference at Camp Wahsega. To expand his knowledge in this field, Micah toured and completed several challenges at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

He also led small groups in the local 4-H program where he taught STEM lessons. His extensive work in the area of engineering and mechanics led to a first-place win at District Project Achievement earlier this year. It was due to his success this year that he received a Pickens County Junior 4-H Achievement Scholarship.

Outside of his project area, Micah enjoys participating in many other 4-H activities. In the past year he went to summer camp at Rock Eagle, completed 4-H at Home for the Holidays activities, and competed in the Northeast District Cotton Boll contributing to a second-place team finish and taking third place for his communcial and demonstration in Consumer Judging.

He has been a leader in our local program and last year was elected as Co-President of the Junior Club. Micah enjoys the many opportunities that the Pickens County 4-H program offers for volunteering and community service as well.

Outside of the 4-H club, Micah has proven to be a standout among his peers as well. For his outstanding effort, citizenship, and extraordinary character, Micah received the Dragon Award and maintained straight A's and perfect attendance for the 2021-2022 school year.

Micah Newton leads a small group in the local 4-H program where he taught STEM lessons.

He is an assistant coach for an 11U Academy Soccer team and a member of the tennis team. His musical talent led to him being selected as a member of the 2021-2022 Georgia Music Educators Association District 9 Honor Band and sat third chair in the trombone section. He is looking forward to starting his journey with the Pickens High School marching band during his freshman year in August.

We are proud to call Micah Newton a Pickens 4-Her and looking forward to how he will represent our county as a Georgia 4-H Ambassador working to "make the best better", in keeping with the 4-H Pledge.

If you would like to learn more about the Pickens County 4-H program, you can find our Facebook page at Georgia 4-H Pickens County. If you have a young person in your life that might benefit from all the 4-H offers, you can also contact the office by phone at 706-253-8840.

Public Meeting Notice

The Amicalola Falls Scenic Byway Committee and sponsors (Dawson County Chamber of Commerce, Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce, Pickens County Chamber of Commerce, Gilmer County Development Authority, and Pickens County Development Authority) will host a series of public meetings to receive comments and questions pertaining to the designation of the Amicalola Falls Scenic Byway. The purpose of these meetings is to provide property owners along the proposed route with information about the byway designation process, benefits of designation, and the long-term vision for the Amicalola Falls Scenic Byway as well as receive community feedback.

Route Description

In Ellijay begin on Hwy 52 at US 76 overpass to roundabout at Hwy 52 near Amicalola Falls State Park.

At Crossroads Grocery at intersection of Hwy 52 and Clear Creek Road, Clear Creek Road to Fendley Road to Orchard Lane to Yukon Road.

Yukon Road toward Talking Rock (becomes Jones Mountain Road in Pickens County) to Hwy 136 in Downtown Talking Rock at Talking Rock Creek.

In Talking Rock begin on Hwy 136 at the intersection at Jones Mountain Road to Hwy 183.

In Dawsonville begin on Main Street/Hwy 53 at the Dawsonville Museum/Racing Hall of Fame to Shoal Creek Road to Hwy 136 to Bailey Waters Road to Hwy 52 to Amicalola Falls State Park.

In Dawsonville begin on Main Street/Hwy 53 at the Dawsonville Museum/Racing Hall of Fame to Hwy 183 at the square to Hwy 52 to Amicalola Falls State Park.

In Pickens County begin on Burnt Mountain Road at intersection of Hwy 136 to Cove Road in Jasper.

Public Meetings will be held on:

Wednesday, July 20, 2022
4:00pm – 5:00pm – Reece's Cider Company, 9110 SR-52, Ellijay, GA

Tuesday, July 26, 2022
4:00pm – 6:00pm – Painting Goat Vineyards & Winery, 201 Vineyard Way, Jasper, GA

Thursday, July 28, 2022
5:00pm – 6:00pm – Georgia Racing Hall of Fame, 415 Hwy. 53E, Dawsonville, GA

All property owners along the route and anyone else interested in learning more about the project is encouraged to attend. Individuals unable to attend one of the three public meetings may forward comments or questions to Janet Cochran, Project Manager, Georgia's Rural Center
404-276-9142 or janet.cochran@sbdc.edu

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
PICKENS COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF JASPER, NELSON, TALKING ROCK

UPDATE OF JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Pickens County and the Cities of Jasper, Nelson, and Talking Rock are beginning a five-year update of their Joint Comprehensive Plan that was previously adopted in June of 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 for April 2023, will ultimately be submitted for review to the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Plan approval by June 30, 2023 is required to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status of each local government, per the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, allowing continued eligibility for State loans, grants, or permits for another five years.

The Public Hearing will be held on July 21, 2022 at 5:00 pm in Suite 168 at the Pickens County Government Building, 1266 East Church Street, Jasper, Ga 30143.

Tater Patch Players welcome two new faces to stage

Submitted by Tater Patch Players Theater

Tater Patch Players is proud to welcome two new faces to our stage in our upcoming production, *Jellyfish*.

Melanie Espey originally hails from Houston, Texas. She moved to Atlanta to obtain her master's degree from Georgia State University.

After a 20 year career in telecommunications, she and her husband Clay retired to Big Canoe to enjoy the tranquility of a less hectic lifestyle.

Melanie has previously performed in *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. She is excited to join the cast of the Tater Patch Players. Melanie is playing the role of Judy Clubber in Jellyfish.

Tony Graham is a retired Physical Therapist and Vietnam era veteran of the USAF. After selling their home in the Middle Tennessee area, he and his wife Debbie decided it was time for a change. A close family member, who lives in nearby Ball Ground, told them about a new retirement community under construction in Jasper known as "Grandview at Gateway."

They loved the community, the city of Jasper, the beautiful scenery and many other amenities.

Although Tony is new to the Tater Patch Players' stage, he is not new to community theater. Tony has been involved with community theater for almost 30 years. Tony became involved in theater when his son showed an interested in acting, and this became a favorite father-son activity.

Two of his most memorable roles have been Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and King Arthur in *Spamalot*. He is excited to be cast in the role of Billy Dreamts in *Jellyfish*. His advice to our audience is to buckle up and hold on as you ride the emotional roller coaster of this production.

Please make your plans to see *Jellyfish* and meet these two new Tater Patch members. *Jellyfish* opens July 22 and runs for three weekends. Curtain is at 7:30 pm on Friday and Saturday and 2:00 pm on Sunday.

Tickets are available online at taterpatchplayers.org or can be purchased at the box office one hour before show time. This show is not recommended for children due to mature language and subject matter during the show.

Public hearing on draft joint comprehensive plan update advertised in March 16, 2023 Pickens Progress.

Continued From 1A

Shelter

flatly this was a lie. "I indicated that we would like to move in," he said. "I don't go around telling fire marshals and sheriff deputies what I am going to do."

Stancil said they sought the emergency injunction to prevent shelter residents from moving in, giving the sheriff's office authority to remove anyone trying to enter the building. He said they contacted Refuge in Jesus leaders and told them of the temporary petition hearing but they did not attend. A full hearing will be held later by a superior court judge.

Lovell emphasized in an interview Tuesday afternoon that they would not violate the stop work order, nor enter the building until this is sorted out.

When asked what they plan to do on March 15th, he said. "Move out [of the downtown location]. Law says we have to move out, it's a court order."

Lovell said they do not have another place lined up for shelter residents. "We will try to find places for the ones that we can. We know we can't find places for all of them. The rest will be back in the street and Wednesday night is a freezing night."

Stancil said the county is not telling them they can't locate in the county, but they will hold them to the same standards they would any other applicant.

Stancil said he had initially been cooperative with the shelter leaders, but stressed only if the shelter

A document prepared by Pickens County government traces the route through permitting and approval the Refuge in Jesus shelter will need to follow.

As of Tuesday, they had neither approved plans nor an approved septic system.

was put in a suitable location. He said they had first proposed a large building without nearby neighbors that Stancil thought might have been a good fit.

But Stancil said they are "well short" of what is needed for a certificate of occupancy with the Martin Road building and face a combination of septic, construction and land use codes preventing any quick fix or occupancy in the near future.

They need approved plans for both septic and the work inside before the stop work order will be lifted and they can resume construction. Only after final inspections can anyone move in.

"We don't let anyone move in while they are working on their house," Stancil said.

Stancil said despite what shelter leaders have claimed as a lack of cooperation from the county, the fire marshal and other county personnel have attempted to convey the specific issues "in e-mails, by phone and in person."

"We have made it [the code requirements] as plain as we can," he said. "We are not trying to pick on them."

He added that shelter supporters are putting out an image that the county is trying to make it hard on a homeless shelter but "take the emotion out of it, and just look at the codes."

With 16 potential residents, the building will need a larger septic than was installed there for an office, which had failed previously according to Stancil.

And the commission chair emphasized that the fire-codes, which are state regulations can't just be waived. If something happened, like a fire breaking out in the shelter and we had waived codes, "the catastrophe would all be on the county," Stancil said.

Lovell said they will continue to pursue the Martin Road location and if they resolve all the issues, they hope to be in there within a few months. Anyone offering help for the shelter residents can contact them at 803-840-0995 or 352-502-6088.

The county health board began discussing the septic situation Tuesday but the meeting did not end before press time.

Look for an update at PickensProgress.com later this week.

HUGE CHARITY YARD SALE

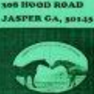
Friday, Sat and Sunday

March 17TH, 18th & 19th

9am - 5pm

306 HOOD ROAD

JASPER GA, 30145



ALL PROCEEDS GOES TO HELP FEED OUR COMMUNITY PETS & HORSES!

NOW ACCEPTING DONATIONS OF HOUSEHOLD ITEMS and PET FOODS! CALL 404-450-7455 or email hhqhs@aol.com Sunday March 19th we will be distributing free pet food beginning at 1:00 p.m. first come first serve while supplies last! Come out and support us for the animals! Make a Difference.

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Continued From 1A

Cross

downtown Ball Ground near the ballfields and back.

"He's out here rain, shine, whatever," said neighbor Gene Hyde, who let me interview Bennett on the porch of his home that's along the route. "Every day he drives home from work and walks. It's amazing."

Bennett was in jail for probation violation when God told him to build the cross. He said he was instructed to build it to specific dimensions, 8 ft. tall by 5 1/2 ft. wide; to carry it for a specific period of time, 40 days; and to walk through the middle of his hometown for four miles. The cross is made from 4x6s and weighs around 85 pounds.

The first day was difficult, Bennett recalled. It took over three hours to walk the route, and the sharp edges of the wood dug into his shoulders. He added pads to soften the load, and his walk now takes around an hour-and-a-half.

"I'm doing this for my love of Christ and his love for me and for everybody," he said. "I want people to know how much He sacrificed for us. I'm toting this for Him because He wants me to."

Bennett, 39, has been in and out of jail for addiction, drugs, and has other criminal incidents in his past. He was bedridden for months after a serious car accident. His best friend died in a different car accident. He lost his entire support system in a short period of time. During one of his stints in jail, at his bottom, he cried out to God to take his life if this was all life was going to be for him.

That's when he was saved and "fell to my knees and wept like a baby."

"He's pulled me through so many hard times, and through Him I've found a love that I've been looking for my entire life," Bennett said, his eyes welling up with that same joy I saw when I first said hello. "Love can conquer anything, and He is all love, that's it. I'm trying to find the words to express what God's love for us is but I can't."

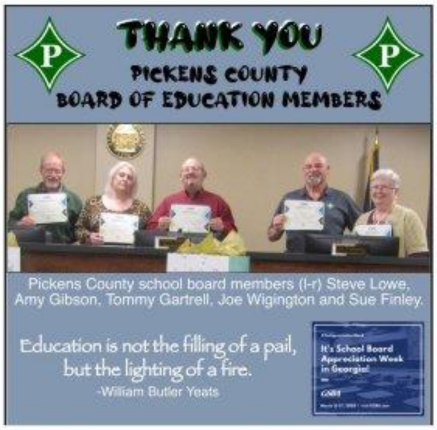
Bennett said after the 40 days came to an end he took a day off, but the next day God told him to continue carrying it until Easter.

"Oh yes I'm going to do it," he said. "I can't not do it, He's done so much for me. I felt like I was not deserving of forgiveness, but He allowed me to feel love and grace and mercy."

Bennett doesn't attend a church because he doesn't believe in the division of denominations in the Christan faith. He does, however, have a job in Dallas, Ga. at the St. Vincent de Paul Society Thrift Store. He drives and hour-and-a-half there, works a full day, drives and hour-and-a half back, then "totes the cross." He said the drive is worth it because he loves the people there and loves how they "do work that cares for people."

In the more than a month walking that same stretch of road, Bennett has had several people stop to ask what he's doing. A few people took up the cross themselves to walk for a short period. One man was elderly, over 80. Bennett helped him carry it across a parking lot.

"He wept and thanked Jesus every step of the way," he said. "Man, that was so inspirational to me. I'm doing this because I want people to know what God can do. He can mend the most scattered and broken life, like He did for me."



Pickens County school board members (l-r) Steve Lowe, Amy Gibson, Tommy Gartrell, Joe Wigington and Sue Finley.

Continued From 1A

Lots

there and there is already a house on the parcel.

•Realtor Machielle Hamilton received a recommendation to rezone 15 acres that she owns on Swan Bridge Road from Agricultural to Estate Residential for a future three or four parcel subdivision. She already has a builder lined up. Frye commented that the Swan Bridge area has a mixture of Ag. Rural Residential and this would fit in with the general area.

Local Matters

Support Community Journalism

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
PICKENS COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF JASPER, NELSON, TALKING ROCK
UPDATE OF JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Pickens County and the cities of Jasper, Nelson, and the town of Talking Rock have prepared a draft five-year update of their Joint Comprehensive Plan for 2023-2028 according to the 2018 Minimum Planning Standards set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

Accordingly, a joint public hearing is scheduled for the county and cities to accept comments on the draft Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for Pickens County and the cities of Jasper, Nelson, and the town of Talking Rock. The draft plan was prepared by Pickens County and the cities of Jasper, Nelson, and the town of Talking Rock with guidance from a Stakeholder Committee of public and private sector individuals. 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 June 30, 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.

The public hearing will be held on April 20, 2023 in the County Commissioner's Conference Room at 5:00 pm at the Pickens County Government Building, 1266 East Church Street, Suite 168, Jasper, Ga 30143.

Article on Community Survey Results in Pickens Progress.

Okay to excellent

Survey finds most people satisfied with Pickens and its cities

Loss of natural beauty, multi-family housing rank low

By Dan Pool
Editor
dpool@pickensprogress.com

On February20, as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan update required for all cities and counties, the results of a survey taking opinions on various growth and quality of life issues were presented in a public meeting.

While the meeting was open to the public in the county Admin Building, almost all attendees were connected to a local government.

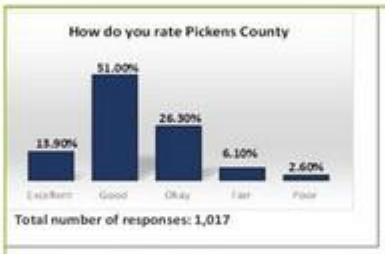
A completed Joint Comprehensive Plan is required every 10 years by the Department of Community Affairs, every five years an update is required.

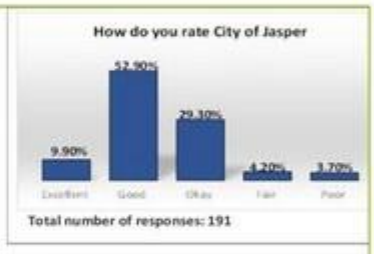
In all 1,174 completed surveys were tallied with another 137 submitted where someone quit before completion, according to Alex Smith, community planner with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and this is "about par" with other areas where he has worked.

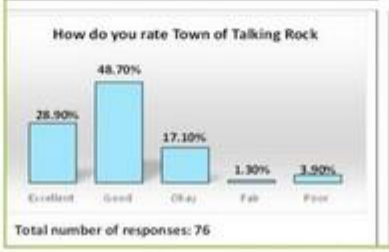
Of the survey responses, 1,017 (73 percent) indicated they lived in Pickens County with 198 (14 percent) claiming the city of Jasper as home; 16 (1.2 percent) Nelson; 75 (5.4 percent) Talking Rock and 83 (6 percent) said elsewhere.

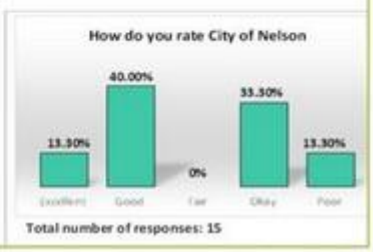
There was some discussion, led by Talking Rock

See **Survey** on 8A



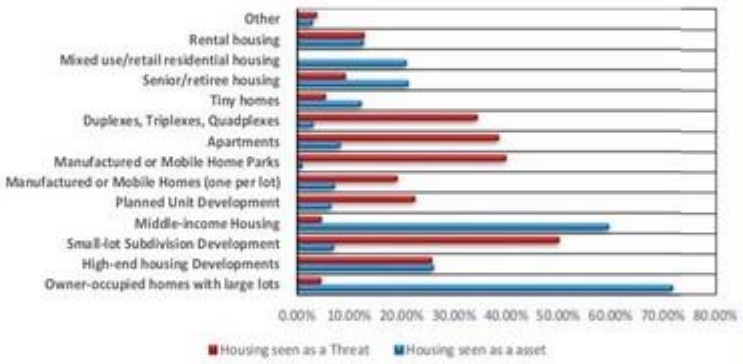




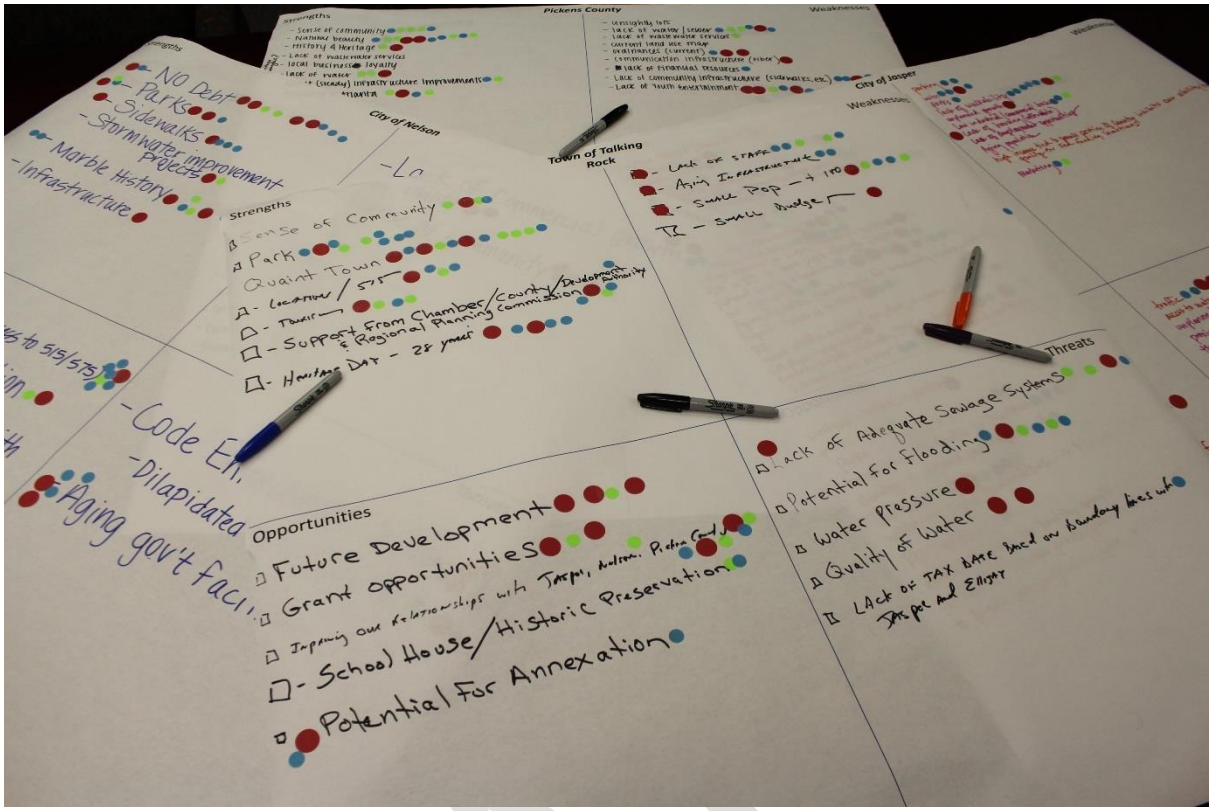


Survey results compiled by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission found most people have a positive view of the county and its cities.

Housing preference by percentage for Pickens County, City of Jasper, City of Nelson, and Talking Rock Combined



The survey of more than 1,174 responses found that anything besides single family housing is viewed as a threat here.



SWOT Worksheets.

DRAFT

1st STAKEHOLDER
PICKENS COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF JASPER, NELSON, TALKING ROCK
JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
6:00 pm
Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Commissioner's Meeting Room,
Pickens County Administrative Building,
1266 E Church St, Jasper, GA 30143

PLEASE SIGN IN:	
Name	Local Municipality
Josh Tippens	Pickens County
Michele Mellgren	Pickens Co.
Kelsey Riehl	Nelson
Miranda McDaniel	Nelson
Ashley Craig	Pickens County
Mary Brogantini	Talking Rock
James W. Bryant, Jr	Talking Rock
Bethany Brown	Pickens County
Haley Bouchie	Pickens County
Tim Moran	Pickens
Clayton Pickle	Pickens
[illegible]	Jasper
Anne Speve	Jasper
Laura Coleman	Jasper
[illegible]	[illegible]
Kay Lawrence	Jasper

1st STAKEHOLDER
PICKENS COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF JASPER,
NELSON, TALKING ROCK
JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
6:00 pm
Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Commissioner's Meeting Room,
Pickens County Administrative Building,
1266 E Church St, Jasper, GA 30143

PLEASE SIGN IN:	
Name	Local Municipality
Jim Looney	Jasper
Bill Cagle	Jasper
Kim Goldener	Jasper
Sonia Jammes	Jasper
Keith Ray	Pickens
Larry Cavender	Pickens Co. Progress
[illegible]	Jasper
Green Suttles	Development Authority Pickens Co
Joe Hammon	Pickens

STAKEHOLDER
PICKENS COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF JASPER,
NELSON, TALKING ROCK
JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
6:00 pm
Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022

Cherokee Room,
Chattahoochee Technical College,
100 Campus Dr, Jasper, GA 30143

PLEASE SIGN IN:	
Name	Local municipality
Sonny Procter	Jasper
Anne Sneve	Jasper
Kirk Ratfield	Jasper
Jim Looney	Jasper
Steve Lawrence	Jasper
Bonia James	Jasper
Tim Morgan	Jasper
Shawna Coleman	Jasper
Sylvia Geer	Nelson
Miranda McDowell	Nelson
Graham Parker	Pickens
Bethany Brown	Pickens
Tanya Cavender	Progress/Media
Josh Tippens	Pickens County
Keith Ray	Pickens County
Mary Bregantini	Talking Rock

PLEASE SIGN IN:	
Name and local municipality	Local municipality
John Sheue	JASPER
Kay Lawrence	Jasper
Robert Keller	Jasper
Amberle Godfrey	Jasper
Tim Prather	Pickens County
Kim Goldmer	Jasper

Thank you for attending!

Pickens, Jasper, Nelson, & Talking Rock
Joint Comprehensive Plan,
Stakeholder Meeting #3

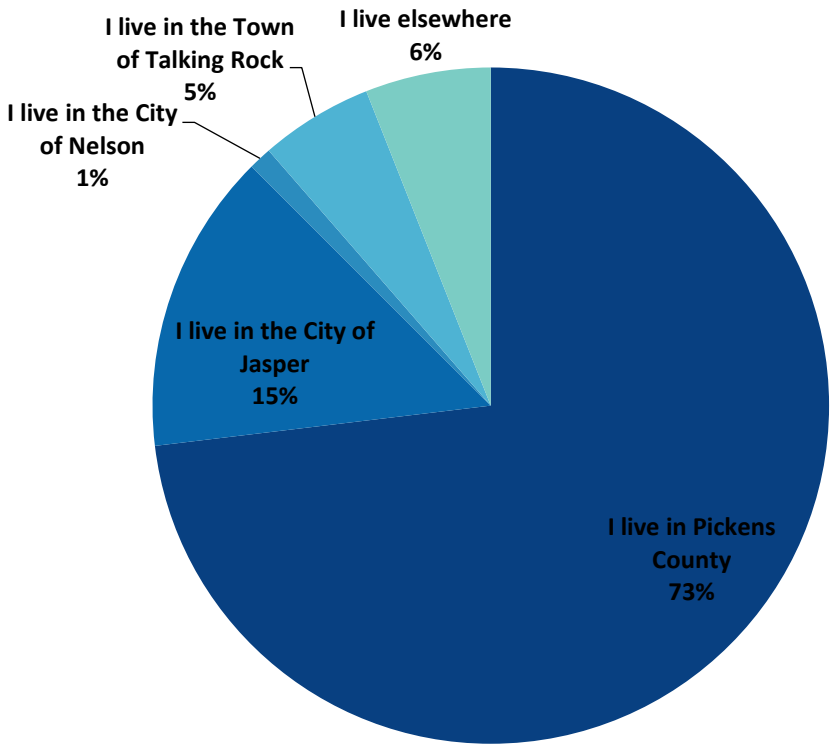
Sign-in Feb. 20, 23

Bethany Brown	
Wes Frye	
Kelsey Essig	
Kay Lawrence	
Steve Lawrence	
Sonia James	
Mari Lusey	mari@knowpickens.com
Steve McClure	mcclure6@gmail.com
Jenna Prince Farmer	jennaleepf@gmail.com
Rosene Ruschman	rosenecreativellc@gmail.com
Sonny Proctor	fcpiii@hotmail.com
Jim Looney	jim.looney52@gmail.com
Dan Pecl	dpecl@pickensprogress.com
Mary Bregantini	
James Bryan	

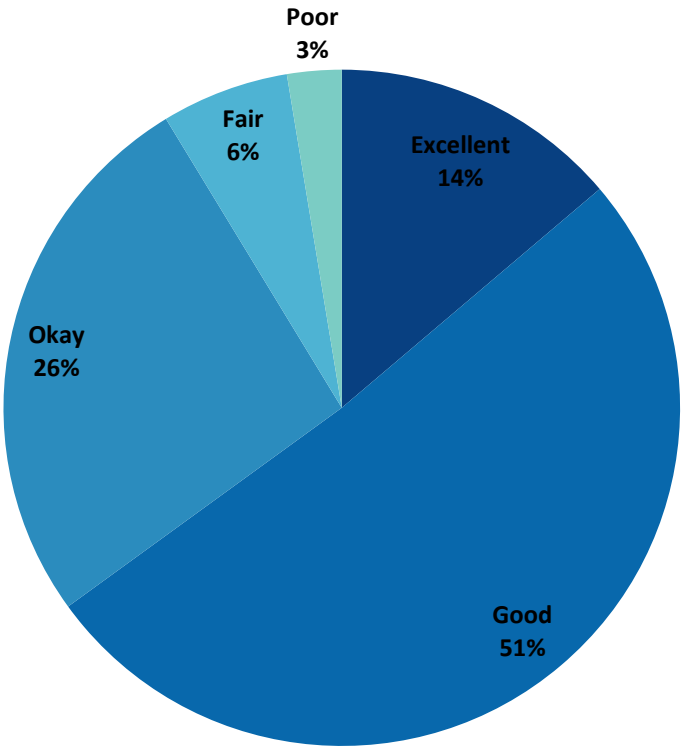
Appendix B: Community Survey Results

Report for Pickens Progress: A Joint Comprehensive Plan Survey

1.What is your connection to Unincorporated Pickens County or the City of Jasper, Nelson, and the Town of Talking Rock? (Select ONLY one)

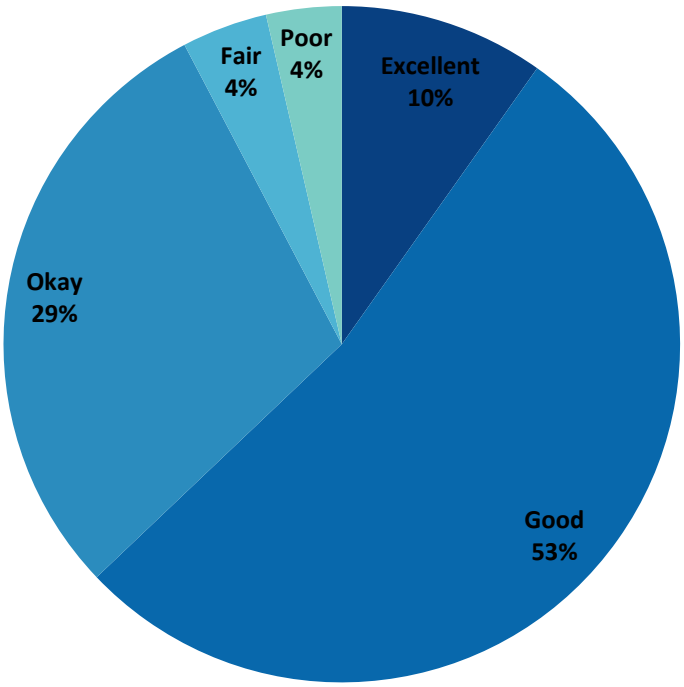


2.How do you rate Unincorporated Pickens County overall? (Select ONLY one)



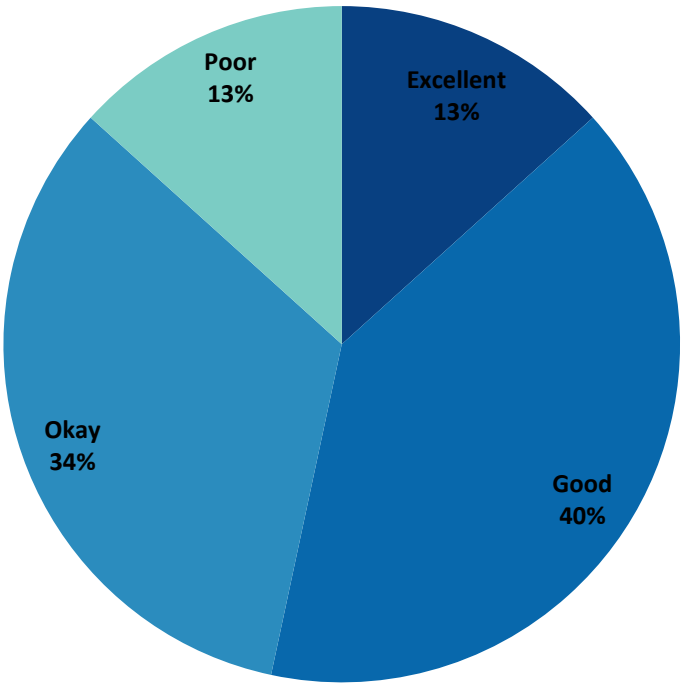
Value	Percent	Count
Excellent	13.8%	134
Good	51.2%	496
Okay	26.3%	255
Fair	6.1%	59
Poor	2.6%	25
	Totals	969

3. How do you rate City of Jasper overall? (Select ONLY one)



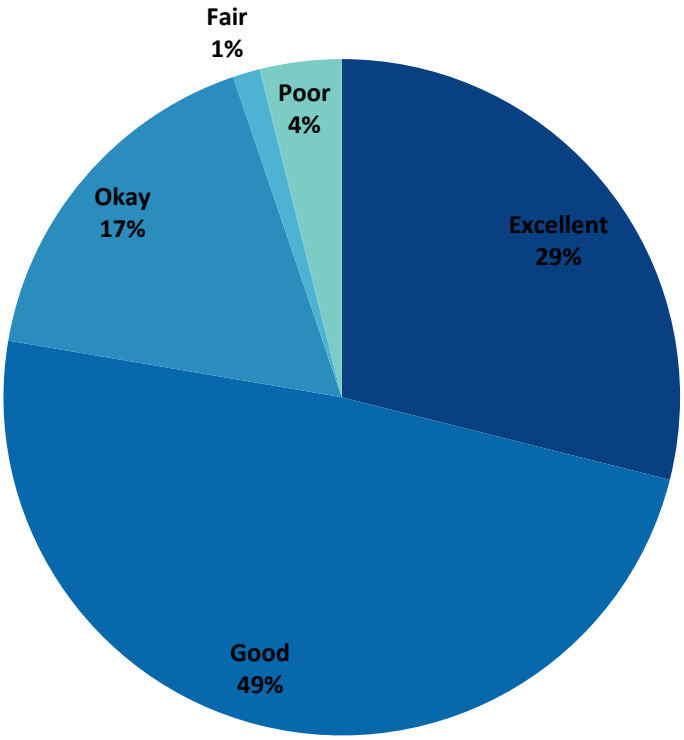
Value	Percent	Count
Excellent	9.8%	19
Good	53.1%	103
Okay	29.4%	57
Fair	4.1%	8
Poor	3.6%	7
	Totals	194

4.How do you rate City of Nelson overall? (Select ONLY one)



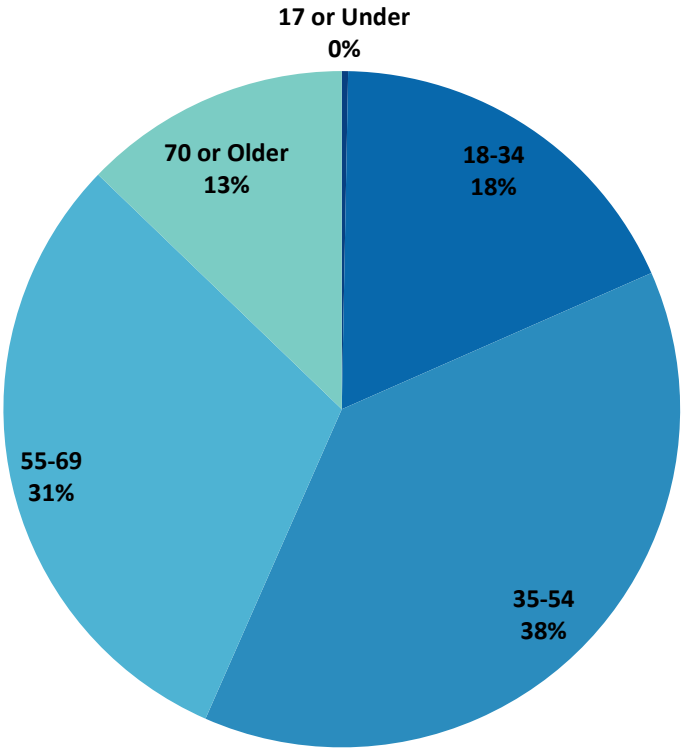
Value	Percent	Count
Excellent	13.3%	2
Good	40.0%	6
Okay	33.3%	5
Poor	13.3%	2
	Totals	15

5.How do you rate Town of Talking Rock overall? (Select ONLY one)



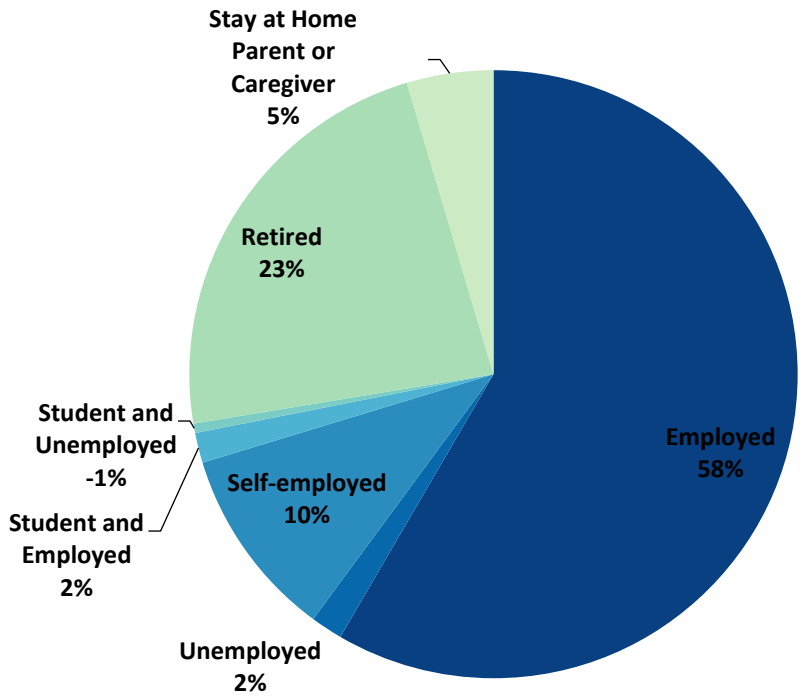
Value	Percent	Count
Excellent	28.9%	22
Good	48.7%	37
Okay	17.1%	13
Fair	1.3%	1
Poor	3.9%	3
	Totals	76

6.What age group do you represent?



Value	Percent	Count
17 or Under	0.3%	4
18-34	18.1%	241
35-54	38.2%	507
55-69	30.6%	406
70 or Older	12.8%	170
	Totals	1,328

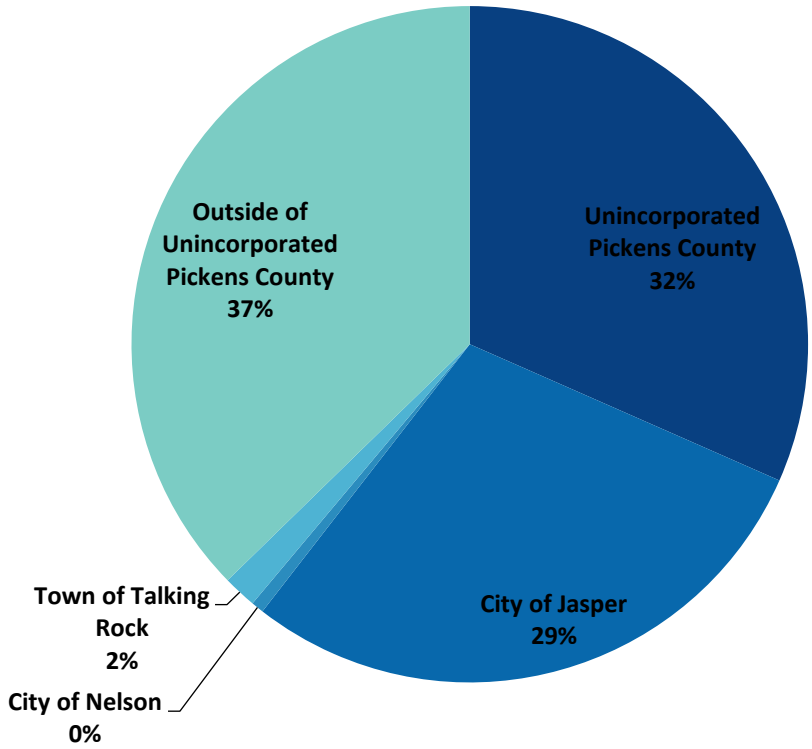
7.Which would best describe your current status?



Value	Percent	Count
Employed	58.4%	776
Unemployed	1.7%	22
Self-employed	10.2%	136
Student and Employed	1.6%	21
Student and Unemployed	0.5%	6
Retired	23.0%	306
Stay at Home Parent or Caregiver	4.6%	61
	Totals	1,328

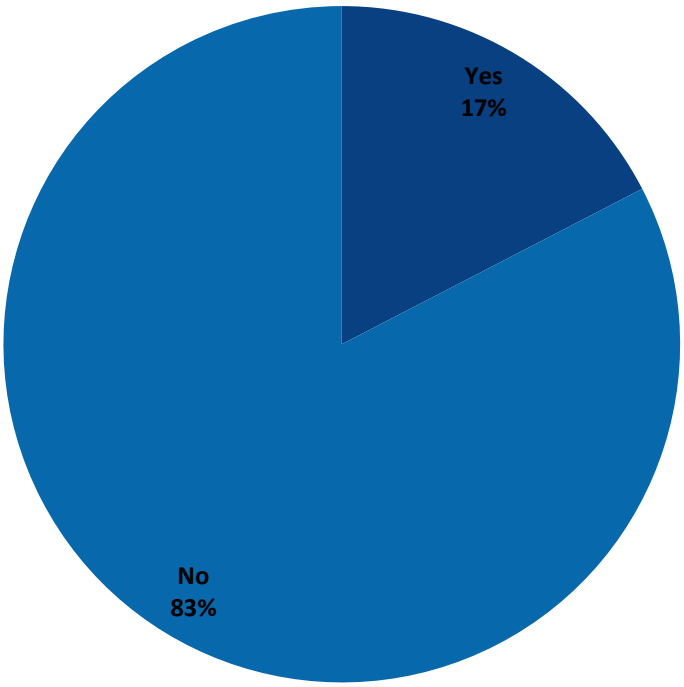
DRAFT

8.If employed, where is your primary location of employment?



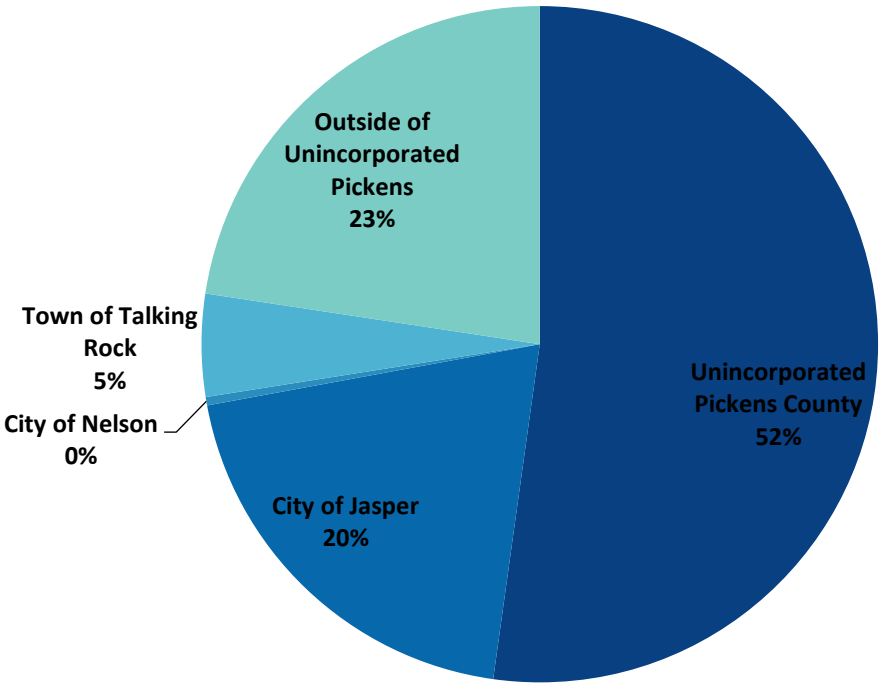
Value	Percent	Count
Unincorporated Pickens County	31.6%	324
City of Jasper	28.9%	297
City of Nelson	0.6%	6
Town of Talking Rock	1.6%	16
Outside of Unincorporated Pickens County	37.3%	383
	Totals	1,026

9.Do you own a business?



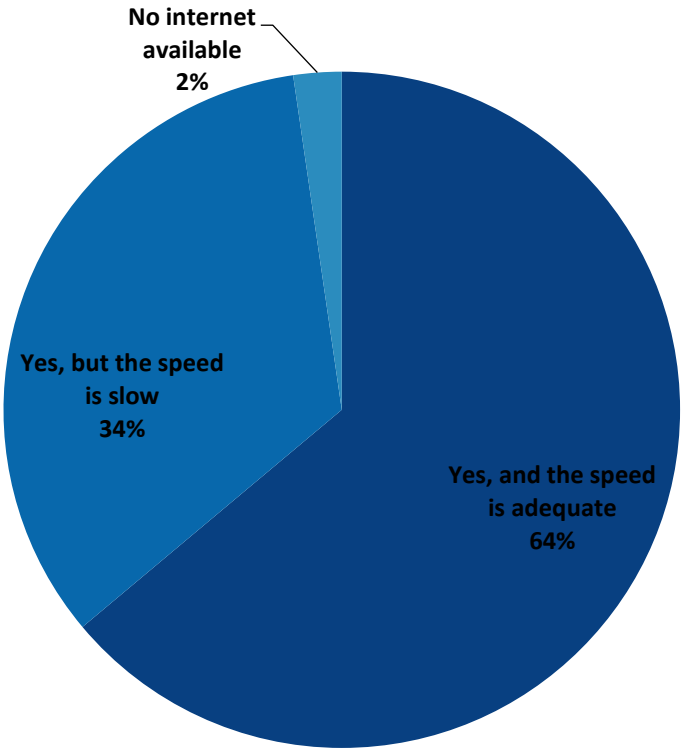
Value	Percent	Count
Yes	17.4%	230
No	82.6%	1,089
	Totals	1,319

10.Where is the location of your Business? (Select the one that best applies)



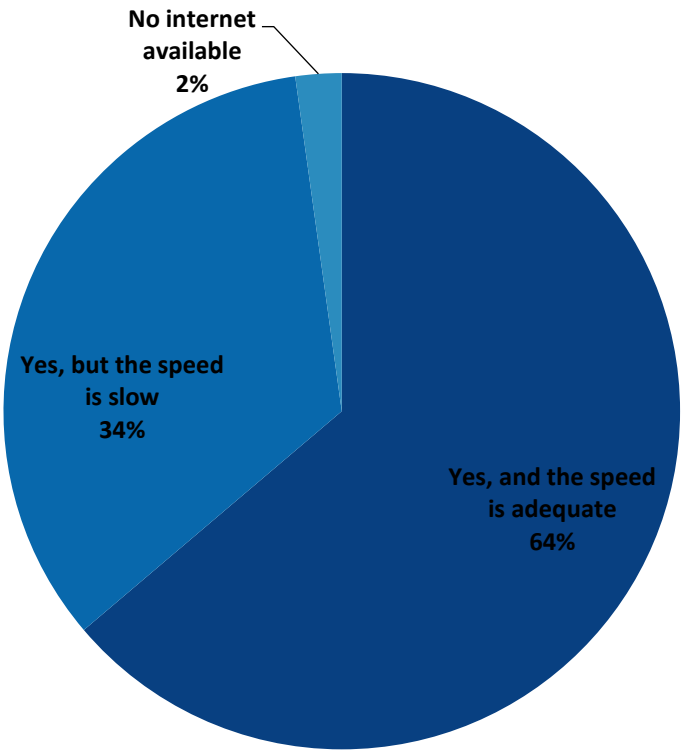
Value	Percent	Count
Unincorporated Pickens County	52.2%	118
City of Jasper	19.9%	45
City of Nelson	0.4%	1
Town of Talking Rock	4.9%	11
Outside of Unincorporated Pickens	22.6%	51
	Totals	226

11.Do you have internet access and adequate internet speed at your business?



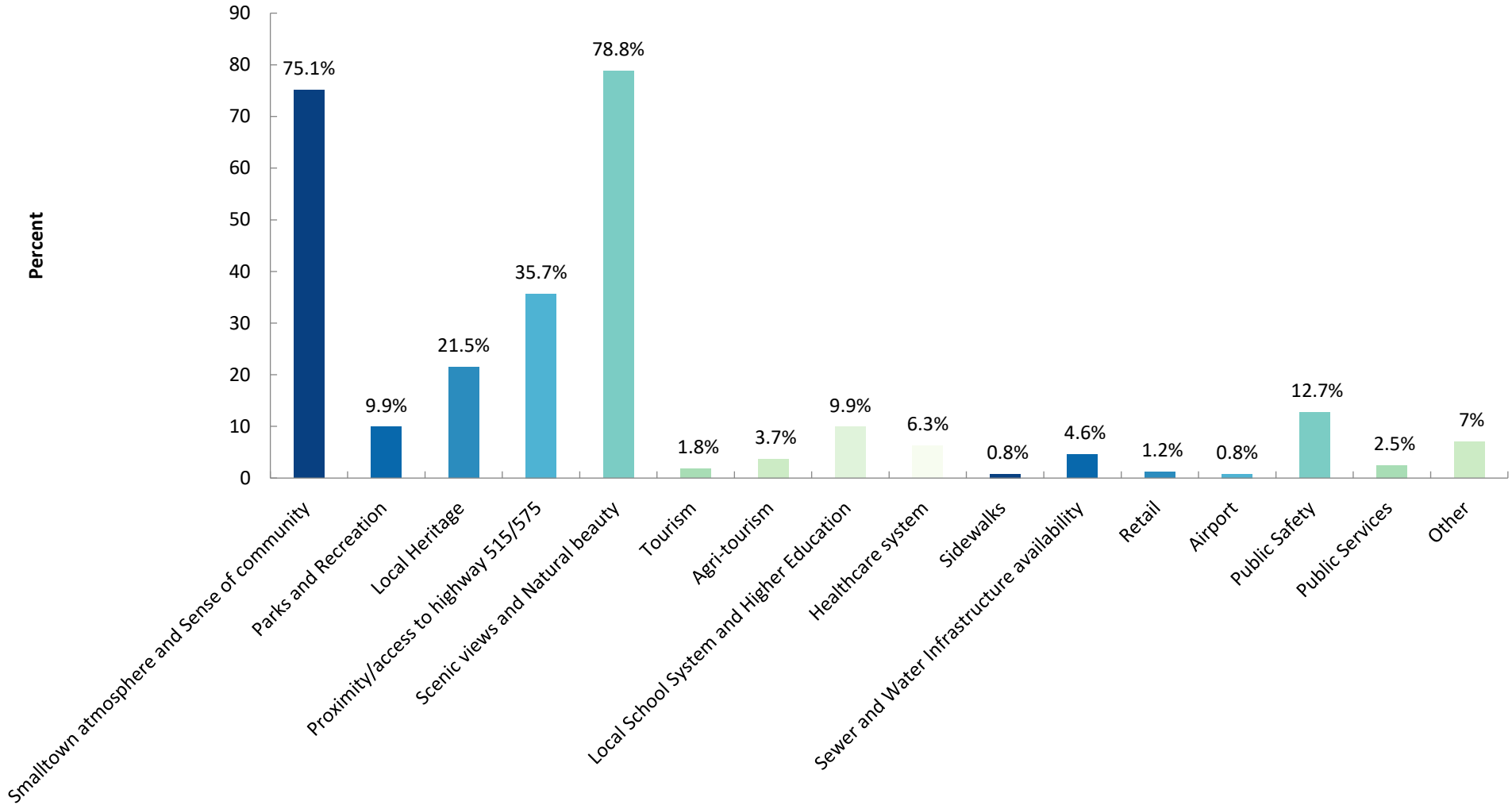
Value	Percent	Count
Yes, and the speed is adequate	63.9%	140
Yes, but the speed is slow	33.8%	74
No internet available	2.3%	5
	Totals	219

12.Do you have internet access and adequate internet speed at your home?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes, and the speed is adequate	63.8%	832
Yes, but the speed is slow	34.0%	443
No internet available	2.2%	29
	Totals	1,304

13.What are the strengths of where you live (Unincorporated Pickens County, Jasper, Nelson, Talking Rock)? (Select ONLY 3)



14.If other is selected for strength, please explain or hit next.

Response
the mountains
nothing
The strength of the meth and such addicts and their driving recklessly without insurance or vehicles that would pass any inspection along with their free reign, unobstructed by law enforcement.
Abundance of wildlife
I feel like there is none. Pickens County has lost its sense of home.
No strengths live in the east end with nothing beneficial
You misspelled strength, and this county has none!
Strong community service organizations
Locally owned businesses
Strength is spelled wrong
Away from major population
Proximity to Atlanta
It's not to crowded, for now!
Space, not crowded
Quiet, serene locations

DRAFT

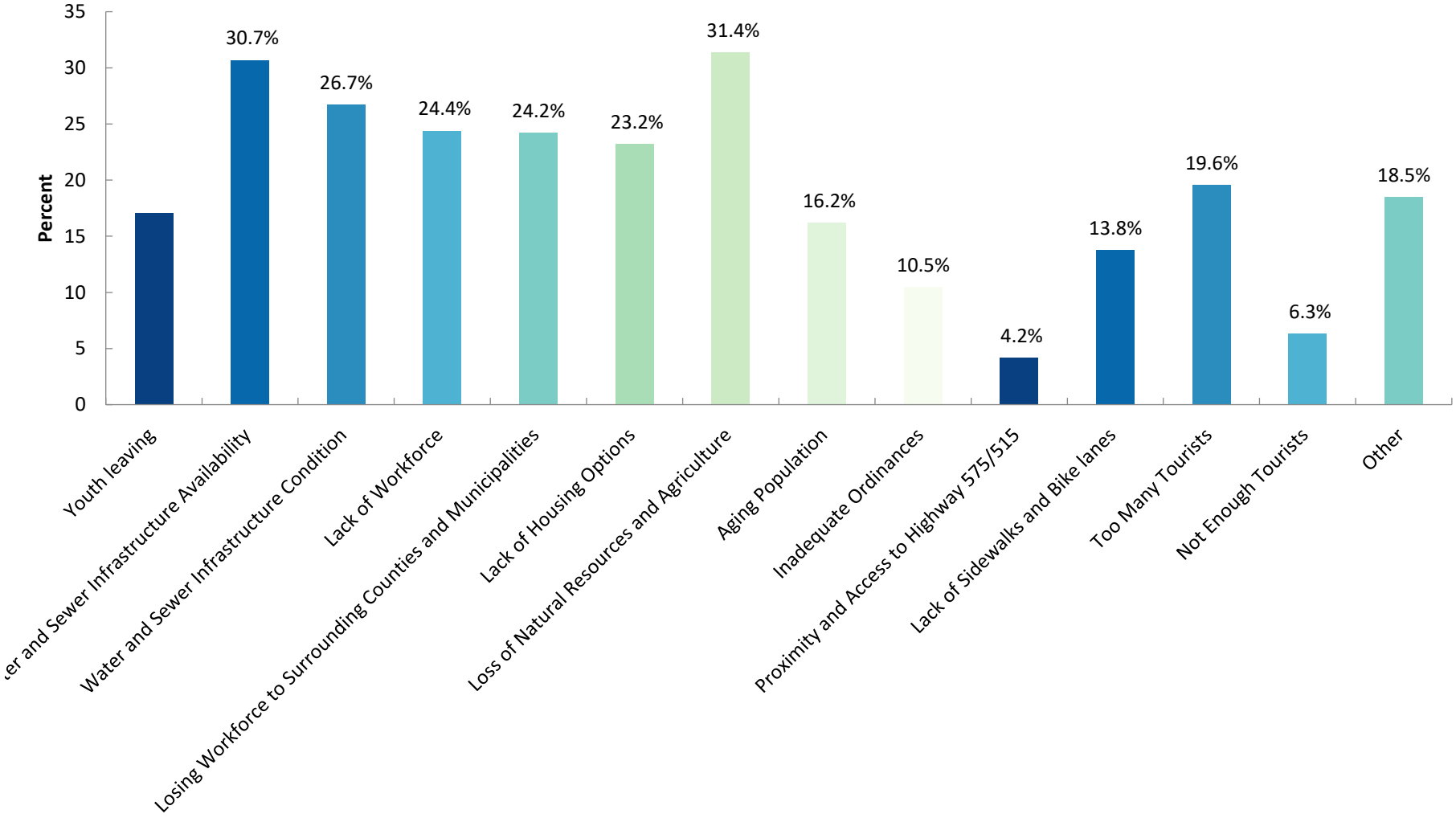
Lots of woodlands and wilderness
road safety
Less population, farming, livestock
Small neighborhood with friendly people
Vacation
I don't want no more subdivision built
Possibility of growth
Quality of life
Low population density
Peaceful country living.
I didn't agree with any of the other statements
Only been here for four months.
Sense of security
Pickens has zero strengths
Family area
Close to attractions
I could only pick 3 but many factors we take for granted also add to the strength.

DRAFT

I live in Cherokee County
I do not live in any of these cities.
None
I live outside of PIckens County but work in Pickens County.
Live outside of Pickens County
Land
Finding a community that has golf and the beauty that surrounds us.
Great place to motorcycle
The list does not list any assets. Parks and rec is a joke, there aren't sidewalks, we don't have our own water, retirees don't qualify for a break on property taxes ever, the school system is bad with no alternative options, and there's nothing for us or our kids to do here. PLEASE HELP!!!
Nothing to do, no sidewalks, to much new home construction
501-C's within the county
Less crowded compared to cities further North or South
Agriculture

DRAFT

15.What do you feel are weaknesses or threats to where you live (Unincorporated Pickens County, Jasper, Nelson, Talking Rock)? (Select ONLY 3)



16.If other is selected for weakness or threat, please explain or hit next.

Response
the political environment is hateful and useless to the citizenry of the city
Parks- places to walk/run
Parks and Rec
Highway speeds on Hwy 53 west are too fast for how close it is to a large number of homes
Poor law enforcement
Lack of restaurants and shopping
to many people moving here
Roads and traffic.
Too many houses being built without roads, water, sewer and business to support it
Too many people moving into area.
Lack of business/manufacturing base.
None of any of them
Need significant investment in public safety. There are very few ambulances int he county, and they have very long response times. Fire engines are understaffed, and if there is any fire, most ambulances go out of service to fight fire.
To much new housing

DRAFT

Having seniors continue to pay the school portion of their homeowners tax.
Over building in a community known for its natural beauty
Too many people moving to Pickens, no housing for locals
threat of big corporations taking over farm and timber land
No parks or recreation
All of the above! This county is podunk!
AFFORDABLE housing
Not proper planning by officials for growth
Road conditions and adequate or appropriate repairs
Building a lot, people selling farms and stuff and moving
I'm concerned with our local school system. One, because of the lack of consistent leadership, and two, for the threat of losing tax revenue through a school tax exemption for residents of a certain age. That works great for a county like Cherokee with a good mix of ages, but if we exempt all older residents, even those with higher income, from school taxes, the community will die.
Lack of decent places to eat
Entertainment venues for school age children: bowling, movie theater, skate park, etc.
Local government and BOE corruption
Too much development destroying the landscape
Not enough businesses/points of interest for families with children

DRAFT

Too many neighborhoods being built
Unplanned and wrong kind of growth. Destruction of beautiful views.
Need more dining options/variety, need Publix, traffic control
Traffic jams
Overpopulation
Influx of people trying to change Pickens County to meet big city convenience instead of appreciating the small town we are.
Too many people moving in because of the subdivisions being built. Outsiders are trying to change the culture of the area
Poor public safety in jasper
Slow internet and no park with hiking/running trail
Lack of preparation for inevitable growth, county leadership is myopic
Out of control building
Overdevelopment
Too much growth and too quickly. No longer feeling small town. People moving in and taking roles in county government making changes to be like where they came from.
Billboards trash the highways- get the down!!
roads are dangerous and not marked correctly for travel down 53 west !
Lack of retail

DRAFT

Parks and recreation
Not enough retail places
Development of housing that we DON'T need
Not a lot of things for teens to do. No movies or skating rink.
Too many fast food restaurants
Bad internet service that effects ability to work. We need a water source so we don't depend upon other counties to provide the majority of our water.
Still have dirt roads in Pickens county where I live. When both ends of my road are paved and the center of it is not as much county taxes we pay. It needs to me paved or at least tar and gravel.
No accessibility for disabled!
Drugs and weak judicial system
Poor Maintenance of the roads
Too much low income housing. Losing the small town feel.
Public safety in entire county
Outsiders moving in
Stop the building, traffics a nightmare as it is. Plus losing prime farm land and the beauty of this area.
No break in school taxes for senior citizens.
Fiber internet availability

DRAFT

Lack of infrastructure due to growing population. Roads, highways, redlights etc.
More retail
Buliding useless buildings all over the place
Too much high density housing. School system is going down hill. Inadequate thought given to asthetics on new development.
New residents arriving and wanting area to become a large town, tourist area ie Canton, Woodstock, Blue ridge
Truck Traffic on Local Roads and Litter
Road repair needed
The town is not up to date with the rest county's near by. Dawson is built up. Cherokee is built up. That's what people are looking for
Parks and rec
Roads are ineed of repair
Ones moving in verbalize that they are more important than the residents who have always lived here.
Poor planning for developments and zoning
Approving businesses that we already have. No need to have 5 Mexican restaurants, 5 pizza places, etc. put in a chick fil a!!!!!!
Big city encroachment
Poor internet connectivity outside of city, increased traffic without proper road development (ex: need for turning lanes, traffic lights and widened roads)

DRAFT

Lack of businesses
Lack of parks and recs facilities
Need to keep small town feel by limiting over expanding our community
Lack of education culture—more emphasis on demanding that "our" tax-payer funded technical college provide more programs for the community and more educational opportunities at this campus.
Lack of accessible & strong internet
Our hospital system is not large enough/well equipped enough to handle the massive growth in population. Especially the growth of assisted living communities/nursing homes.
Getting gravel roads paved.
Lack of quality recreational spaces/facilities. (Aquatic center)
Parks being build over the years but not maintained.
Too much development!
Development limited to number of units per square mile
High density urbanization
New housing developments, loss of small town community feel, urban sprawl, people moving in from elsewhere and trying to change things, people pushing for growth and change where its not wanted
Fire protection. Internet speed. Concerns about growth - managing it responsibly to preserve what we all love about this area.
Political extremism

DRAFT

Bad schools & healthcare systems
Property taxes
Pickens is in dire need of an overall zoning plan, business conditions to operate in pickens, and sign ordinance. For example, there is a business less than a mile from Hwy 53's Foothills center with handmade spray paint signage and a parking lot full of broken down vehicles. How is this possible?
No growth for popular businesses. Example: Canton/Ellijay restaurants blow Jasper out of the water.
We need more business like shopping stores (for clothing, restaurants,)
I know just that all options which were selectable or those which would require increased "Atlanta-like" expansion. More human inflow, more development, bringing in more taxes, to be spent on providing for the influx. I know it is impossible to hold back the "system" forever but I pray that there will be a strong enough vision of the simple good life, to resist the "progress" and the profits!
New developments taking over once beautiful scenery and land
Housing developments
Not a lot of shopping availability having to go out of town to spend money for things
Too high of taxes and school taxes for people that don't have children in schools
Airport expansion not welcome
Development and slow internet for people who work from home
Road conditions - lack of pavement
Lack of new businesses to provide entertainment and dining, as well as job oppourtunites.
A lot of drug activity and lack of emphasis on education.

DRAFT

Places to eat/shop
Individuals moving into Jasper that are from here.
Expanding town and population
Losing our small town, to outside people moving in.
lack of decent internet
Destroying open land to develop housing with no job developments to support them
Drugs
Lines on the road need repainted in more areas. There should be a better location for physical exercise such as biking and running paths that are safe.
Too many houses being built without road conditions being considered. Growth too fast for the rest of the county. Housing prices too high for a starter family
There isn't a variety of job opportunities within the county. Most seem to be in retail or service industries.
inadequate internet options. TDS is awful and ETC will not come to my area.
I'm in the Tate district and we need a grocery store, even a Dollar General would help the older citizens to not have to drive to Ball Ground or Jasper for Milk or Bread.
Too many people moving to this area.
too much new housing
Pay for county employees inadequate, especially for those in school system. Paraprofessionals deserve more..

DRAFT

Traffic/Traffic lights on 515
Lack of good grocery/retail
Too much development and growth is occurring too rapidly without a solid plan in place to manage growth
More red lights are needed on 515 to protect our youth. One should be at Harmony School Road and the Racetrac.
Lack of activities within the community
Lack of businesses and inadequate tax base
The need for ordinances to not mix residential property with retail/business and to have ordinances that even residential property had to limit "junk" in the yards.
Parks/Playgrounds
Lack of retail stores
High property taxes on elderly
Lack of affordable housing options
Lack of excellent schools
no senior discount on property taxes
ALL OF THE ABOVE.
Reckless housing growth
lack of law enforcement

DRAFT

lack of things to do and limited dining
Lat of diverse retail/commercial opportunities
Lack of parks
worst parks and rec options in the region
High speed internet
Too much growth
Uncontrolled housing development and loss of rural landscapes important for biodiversity
Need for more schools for the growing population
Developement
Overdevelopment. Also our roads are not adequate for the traffic growth.
Lack of regulation concerning building above a certain elevation
County law enforcement presence
Tripled home ins cost due to lack of adequate fire services
Lack of AFFORDABLE housing, schools not able to handle additional students
Too much building of homes that the road infrastructure and water/power cannot support.
Lack of off leash dog parks
Traffic

DRAFT

Too much housing development. The small town atmosphere is being lost. Our streets are becoming crowded with too much traffic.
Too much development changing the county.
City of Jasper arrogance as to city council lack of input in decision making.
Houses being built too close together, not enough land with houses, or affordable housing
Cost of living too high
gravel roads
Issuance of building permits and land development. We do not want developments and small lot neighborhoods. We do not want development like cobb, cherokee or forsyth. Stop developers and do not issue permits for homes on less than five acre tracts. Do not permit industrial or commercial in East Pickens.
Speed limit needs to be reduced. Most fly by at 15 mph over listed speed. According to paper many police stops but not nearly enough tickets given.
Lack of accountability in government
poor development planning
INCREASING TRAFFIC CONGESTION
Weak and very limited parks and rec department.
too many houses being built
Inadequate planning for growth
Recreation dept far behind other counties

DRAFT

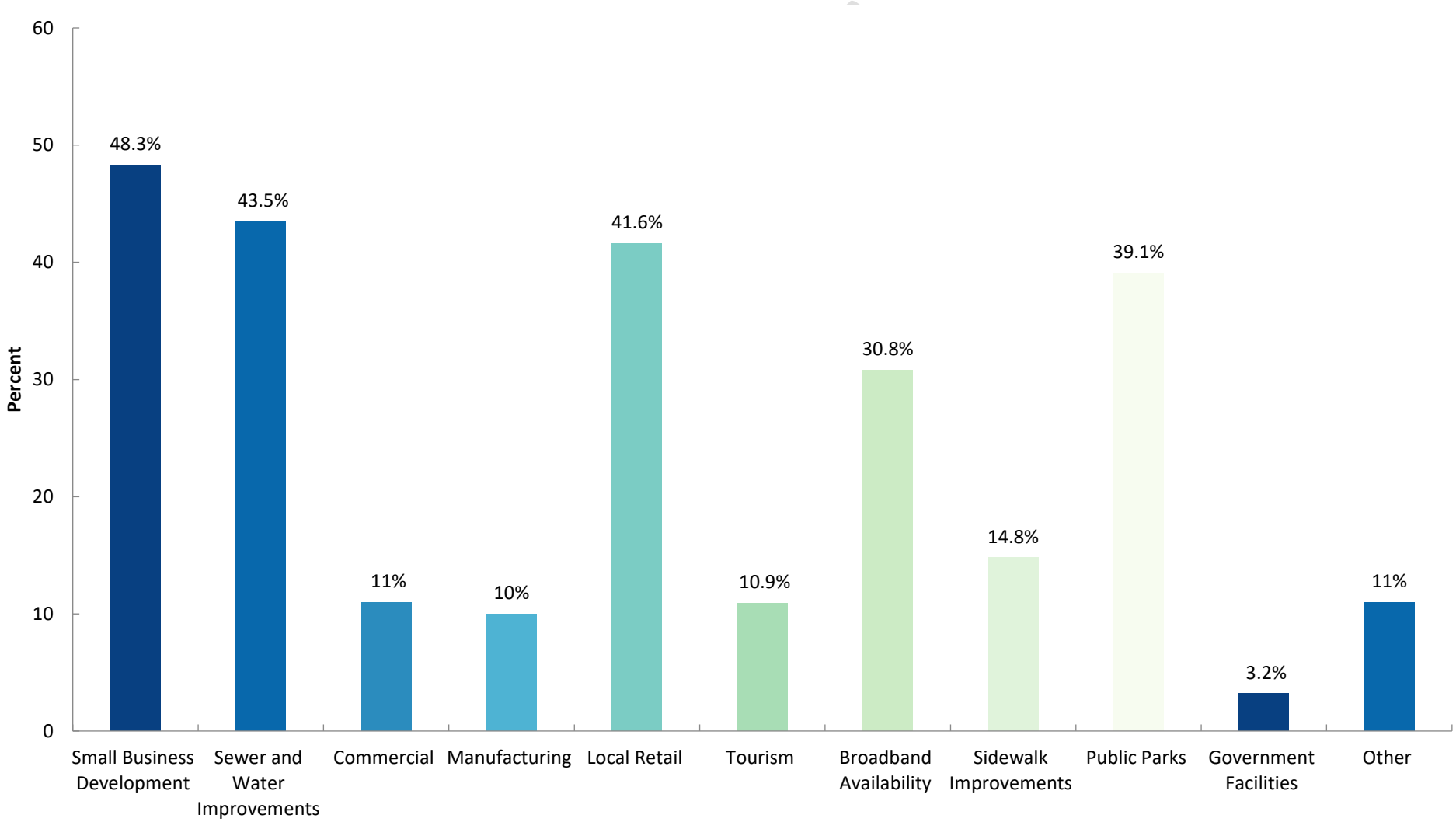
The sudden increase in high density yet still unaffordable housing.
Traffic light needed at 515 and Worley Crossroad. It's extremely dangerous
Corruption. Over Development.
Growing to much with house and people but that's it nothing else
Lack of good paying jobs
Too much building with limited natural resources and too much destruction of farmland
Public safety
Too much growth and development
Over Building Our hometown community
Increasing number of event venues
515 needs improvement at the intersection of Worley Crossroads and lower dowda mill rd. With so much traffic now it takes either side to get onto 515 sometimes we sit there up to 20 minutes waiting to go north on 515 . And crossing over from Worley Crossroads and Lower Dowda Mill is getting so dangerous because you have to wait for a long time to get into 515
Too much new construction and not enough resources.
Traffic light needed on Hwy 515 at subdivision entrance
High taxes and no tax breaks for seniors
Highway safety. Too many people. Water and sewer
We need to limit the growth and destruction of the small town life

DRAFT

Too much nonlocal "investors"
The parks are mostly single use (dont keep you coming back again and again) and/or in major disrepair
Litter along highways, side roads—very unsightly. Detracts from natural beauty!
Zoning anything other than 3 acre homes and farms
Too much destruction of land & nature to build more housing and businesses we do not need! Our small town is on its way to being every other city with crime, too many people, too many unnecessary businesses, traffic & no more small town feel. There is nothing wrong with driving to the next town for something we don't need here . If it's not here it's 10-15 minutes away, STOP DESTROYING THE LITTLE BEAUTY WE HAVE LEFT EHICH IS WHAT MADE THIS TOWN SPECIAL

DRAFT

17.What type of projects or growth are you interested in seeing within your community? (Check Only 3)



18.If other is selected for projects, please explain or hit next.

Response
Affordable housing
Aquatic Center
Less development
A cap on growth and development to protect large parcels of ag and undeveloped land
Road infrastructure. Highway 515 needs to be an interstate with exit ramps.
No more growth
Too much development already.
Bigger businesses that actually open nights, weekends , and don't close every other day for nonsense
More business of any kind that brings good paying jobs
None
More things that will keep our youth out of trouble, I.e. after school programs. Local things to do
Keep the community small and local
A sheriff and county commissioner that does there jobs and stops putting the little people in danger for just __and giggles
Doesn't need any development. I like the small town.
More farm land, less housing and sub divisions

DRAFT

Projects and development are ruining Pickens County
Too much growth.
All of the above. Bring in some tourism so the county can spend money on the residents that pay land taxes til they die. A parks and rec overhaul would also be nice. Nothing happens here. No wonder the youth want to leave. We spend all our time and money save for land taxes, outside of Pickens.
Not interested in seeing any more growth
Would like to see better ordinances for pet owners
Try to make it so young people can stay and it doesn't turn into a big city
Better Schools
Keep Pickens rural.
Better choices for restaurants
Ordinances to protect rural property from big development
A complete overhaul of local government, police, and BOE
Parks and recreation
Youth activities for free
Better roads
Affordable housing
None

DRAFT

road safety ! roads are not mated with double lines after hintin milling to have safety to get into our roads , they have passing lanes when we try to turn left !
Lack of care for youth (Better recreations and sports)
More restaurants
Agriculture
More agriculture
Bringing our infrastructure to meet our citizens needs that already live here. If it's not able to take care of it's residents that already live here then you can't build or bring in more people
Sidewalks exist, but that doesn't mean things are accessible. Disabled people exist.
Stop building cluster subdivisions and retirement homes
More places to eat
Manufacturing meaning eco friendly established companies.
Agriculture, dairy, tourism - so that they come and go
More availability for pickleball for active adults which would bring in more revenue and visitors.
Fix the roads to decrease congestion
Small business restaurant
Cellular service
Technology-based companies - a recruitment effort aimed at technology companies.

DRAFT

Aquatic center
Less development
More restaurants like surrounding towns have. A Publix store too.
Improving current parks, make bathrooms available again.
Agriculture. We need more cows, chicken houses and farms, NOT low income housing developments and subdivisions
Available housing
Fire protection.
Less fast food restaurants and more real food. Publix. TJMaxx
Roads need repairs and widened
independent restaurants
Pickens needs an overarching plan for the way businesses and residential develop looks (signage, lighting, and landscape ordinances) and improved enforcement of conditions.
Historic preservation
Restaurant or market off Hwy 53 West
No more development. We can drive to anything we want. Last thing we need is a bunch of traffic
An aquatic center
None

DRAFT

better business choices
Restaurants
We need to make a plan to improve roads and get gravel roads paved and safe.
Outside activates readily available to kids and convenient for parents dealing with transportation issues
Other than the Rec department, more inexpensive facilities with indoor rooms and plumbing are needed for families to gather and for parties with something to do besides sit in a big room.
The county does not offer incentives for things that young teens, adults can do in our city. They go to other counties for food, entertainment and work.
Roads are not ready for all this new traffic. We have to have additional traffic lights for schools and buses, especially at Harmony Sxhoolr
Places for our youth to attend other than sports. Ex: Theatre, Bowling, Skating, activities for them to enjoy.
None of the above
Restaurants
We need to attract better Restaurants and ones that are opened for dinner.
a comeback of farm land and hunting land
Affordable Housing
DISC GOLF COURSES
Publix

DRAFT

Restaurants
More development and restaurants
All of the above. Pickens needs HELP! Bring in tourism, beef up parks and rec, create some things up here so residents and guests WANT to spend their money here. We all leave the county to spend because no one is welcome to set up businesses here. They're not welcome, so we spend elsewhere. Pickens is incredibly backward! I hope there's an overhaul. We hate it here!!
Restaurants
Police and fire: better pay and more staff
Better options for restaurants & grocery stores
Saving current businesses who need better sewer and infrastructure
Gov't programs to assist ALL of the community's pooulation
Food policy council to support small farms and give consumers incentives to purchase locally. As Pickens county becomes the recycling hub of North Georgia, we could also be more proactive in building a local food economy. Appalachian sustainable agricultural project (ASAP) even includes Pickens County in the North Georgia region. But, most importantly, we do need to limit large housing developments as turning into Cherokee county is not appealing.
None
Work to protect what we have through designation as green space, protected habitate, historical preservation, or whatever else we need to do to stop development unless it is to preserve what we have. Jasper could use a big city sight like ballground has if you have to build something.
A little leniency with changing rural plots
Improved fire services in Talking Rock.

DRAFT

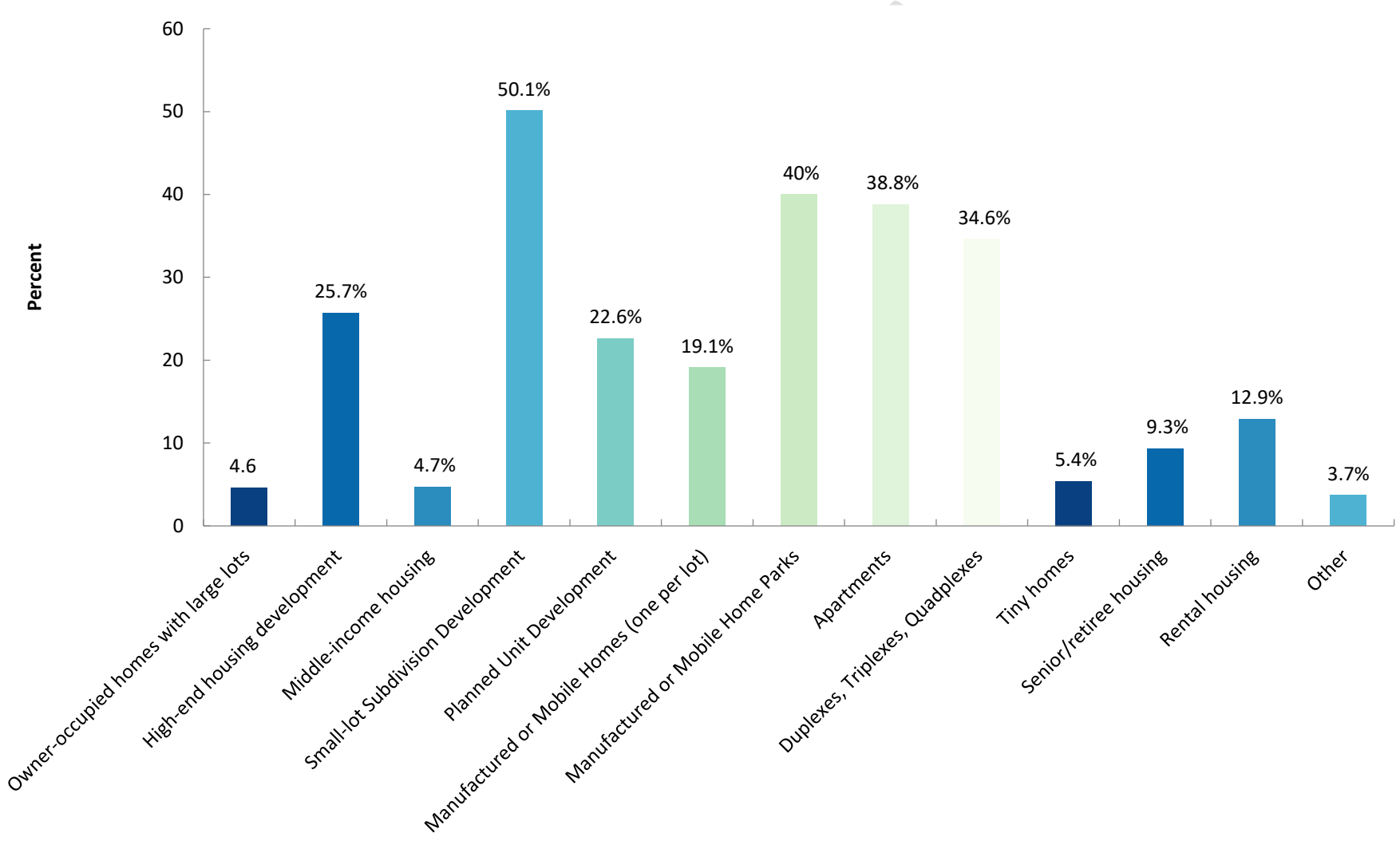
An adequate fire department with local fire fighters
Recreation department sports areas available
Reduced school taxes for seniors
Tate Elementary is not suitable for the numbers of students and if we keep building/bringing in more families, where will be put them school wise?
Higher paying jobs
Development of avenues of input by local business owners and getting away from 3 people deciding the fate of our community.
Homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter, etc
Better Restaurant Chains
pave roads
Restaurants.
Light industry
MANAGE TRAFFIC BETTER SO WE CAN ATTRACT HIGHER END JOBS, SAY TECH JOBS OR ECO FRIENDLY MANUFACTORING WHILE INCREASING OUR WATER RESOURCES, THEN INCREASE FIRST RESPONDERS THAT WILL BE NEEDED, NOT BIG CITY ALPHARETTA TYPE OF GROWTH,QUALITY OF LIFE TYPE OF GROWTH
More developed parks and rec facilities, sports, and activities for kids/families
More restaurants with something different. A Chick-fil-A would be nice!

DRAFT

More preservation of greenspace for State or natural parks, for hiking, picnicking, & camping. Too much natural beauty here to destroy it all.
Nothing
A YMCA would be great. Better parks and recreation
I would be glad to see a storage of growth.
We love the peace & quiet, the natural beauty.
affordable housing, 1200 a month
Enertainment and decent hotels are severely lacking
Grocery store with gas station (food city, kroger, etc)
Beautification—-litter of roadways cleaned up on a routine basis
Stop zoning, stop growth
NONE!!! Leave this town alone! We have enough crap we don't need here! We don't need to draw in more people, crime & traffic!

DRAFT

19.What type of new residential developments do you most consider as a threat? (Select Only 3)



20.If other housing development is selected, please explain or hit next.

Response
Chicken houses and Chris stancil and Donny creag sending them down a narrow road to keep them off the main road cause Donnie's best friend and business partner don't want truck on his road due to property value
I don't consider any of them a threat if the planning is on point and infrastructure can handle it.
Townhouse
I'd say all of the above; I can't choose just three
Too many people potentially moving here
Subsidized housing
Storage facilities trashing highways
Town houses
Single family, with about 1acre
Anything that takes away large amounts of land like the cow fields on Philadelphia
Low income housing/apartments
Low income housing
Government subsidized housing
Air B&Bs

DRAFT

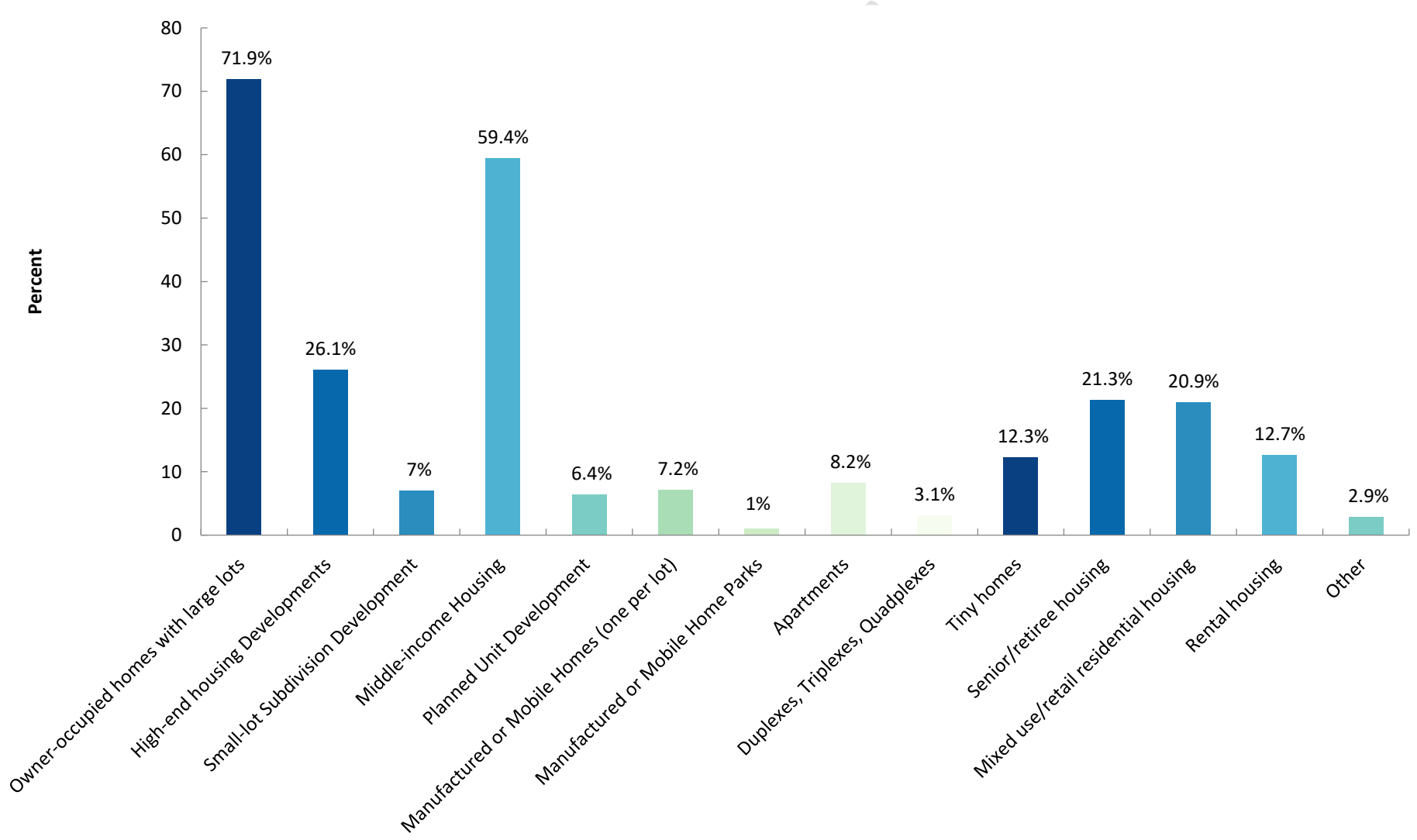
Water prices are a huge threat!
Habitat Housing
I would say any large developments that do not encourage long-term occupancy.
More affordable housing
None
No of these are a threat
I don't see any threats other than people thinking there's nothing out here so there's no reason to move out this way.
Lack of county ordinances, too many redneck shacks
Ones that destroy or block the beautiful views for those who already live here.
Sprawling development rather than smart growth
I live off Twin Oaks trace and hood rd , since the industrial building and Chem building went up across the street I have barely enough water pressure to shower .
Any clear cutting, new homes being built on previously primitive land, especially as second homes
Affordable housing for existing homes. Rich retirees running out families
Housing without proper planning.
Low income/Section 8
APARTMENTS, DUPLEXS ETC WILL BECOME A DRAIN ON FIRST RESPONDER SERVICES WHICH YOU NEITHER HAVE OR ARE PLANNING FOR THAT INCREASE, TO MY KNOWLEDGE,

DRAFT

Nursing homes
Too many of any type without the infrastructure to support them.
Camping Facilities

DRAFT

21.What type of residential development do you consider as assets? (Select ONLY 3)



22.If other housing development is selected, please explain in 10 words or less.

Response
tent cities
Farmland and undeveloped timber
Large subdivision with high end homes
Agriculture land
Agriculture developments. Farm centered, horse centered, etc
Townhouse
Farm
Rentals
More people equals more issues. No.
Subsidized housing
Kris stance
Don't need more homes or traffic
Had no other choice
Agriculture

DRAFT

Farms and such
Homeless Veterans Housing
With aesthetics ,landscaping and green spaces,trails conducive to nature
Need to attract people who can pay taxes and contribute to tax base
Air B&Bs
No more. More=higher prices and more traffic
None
Habitat for Humanity Housing
I would say any large developments that do not encourage long-term occupancy.
Slow down growrh
none
N/A
To many moving here. Will not keep small town vibe They are bringing to much from city life
All of this applies
Less development and keeping the natural environment
Too much traffic in our area with no way out!

DRAFT

Need zoning rules and enforcement
Leave the farms, parks undeveloped mountain lands alone!
Too much development is happening in this county. Keep it rural
Leave the woods alone!
To many houses
No housing developments
Farms
Responsible and sustainable building
Already too many housing developments. They need to stop.
Don't kill the green space with multiple housing units
Low income/Section 8
Arbor Hills is a prime example of a successful housing dev, two apt complexes here are trashed, hospital and hood rd examples
Nursing homes
I don't want any more people to come to Jasper. I came here 10 years ago to get away from people
A place to park campers

DRAFT

Expensive homes few can afford
No more building
No more new housing

DRAFT