

# *2017 Comprehensive Plan*



**Stephens County**



**City of Avalon**



**City of Martin**

June, 2017  
October, 2017 (amended)

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# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The purpose of planning and community development is to provide guidance for everyday decision-making by local government officials and other community leaders. This document, the Stephens County *2017 Joint Comprehensive Plan*, represents the culmination of the efforts to plan for the future well-being of the governments, residents and various stakeholders by identifying the critical, consensus issues and goals for Stephens County and the municipalities of Avalon and Martin. Implementing the plan will help the communities address those critical issues and opportunities while moving towards realization of the unique vision for its future. These planning strategies are identified by Georgia's planning standards (see below):

### Statewide benefits of comprehensive planning

*(Local) comprehensive planning should be conducted in the context of Georgia's strong and vibrant intergovernmental system that clearly recognizes the important role cities and counties play in fostering the state's image as an attractive place to invest, conduct businesses and raise a family. City and county comprehensive planning enhances coordination at many levels.*

### Local benefits of comprehensive planning

*The highest and best use of comprehensive planning for local governments is to show important relationships between community issues. A local comprehensive plan is a fact-based resource for local constituents that tracks implementation of community-based policies. Furthermore, local comprehensive planning creates an environment of predictability for business and industry, investors, property owners, tax payers and the general public. In addition, the plan helps local governments to recognize and then implement important economic development and revitalization initiatives. For these reasons, the state finds that well-planned communities are better prepared to attract new*

*In short, local planning should recognize that:*

*Assets can be **accentuated** and **improved**;*

*Liabilities can be **mitigated** and **changed** over time; and*

*Potential can be **sought after** and **developed**.*

## Scope

This document addresses the local planning requirements and community development of Stephens County, Ga, and the municipalities of Avalon and Martin, Ga. The City of Toccoa, the County seat for Stephens County, developed their own independent comprehensive plan. In the development of this document some consideration has been given to neighboring areas and political entities that influence conditions within the county, but all the cited issues, objectives and opportunities discussed herein are solely focused on the unincorporated parts of the Stephens County and the cities of Avalon and Martin.

## Plan Elements

This comprehensive plan serves to meet the requirements and intent of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs's "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," as amended in 2013, and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is essential that the plan be prepared in compliance with these rules and guidelines in order for the County and the Cities to maintain their Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. Further, State law requires that the governments update their comprehensive plan every 5 years.

*"The purpose of Minimum Standards is to provide a framework for the development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans at the local, regional and state government level. They reflect an important state interest: healthy and economically vibrant cities and counties are vital to the state's economic prosperity."*

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

**Needs and Opportunities.** *This is the locally agreed upon list of Needs and Opportunities the community intends to address. Each of the needs or opportunities that the community identifies as high priority must be followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Community Work Program. The list must be developed by involving community stakeholders in carrying out a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) or similar analysis of the community.*

**Community Work Program.** *This element of the comprehensive plan lays out the specific activities the community plans to undertake during the next five years to address the priority Needs and Opportunities, identified Target Areas (if applicable), or to achieve portions of the Community Goals. This includes any activities, initiatives, programs, ordinances, administrative systems (such as site plan review, design review, etc.) to be put in place to implement the plan.*

Lastly, local comprehensive plans in Georgia are now required to include an assessment of compliance and consideration for the appropriate regional water plans for each community.

**Consideration of the Regional Water Plan and the Environmental Planning Criteria.** *During the process of preparing its comprehensive plan, each community must review the Regional Water Plan(s) covering its area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria... to determine if there is need to adapt local implementation practices or development regulations to address protection of these important natural resources. The community must certify that it has considered both the Regional Water Plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria when it transmits the plan to the Regional Commission for review.*

This is to certify that as part of this planning process appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Plan, the Georgia Mountains Regional Plan, and the Georgia State Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating this local plan. No conflicts were identified between this document and the other documents

In addition to the core required elements Stephens County and Martin must also include a land use element to aid in the coordination of their development goals and improvement projects. This element is required for communities that have zoning or other land use management policies to ensure the coordination of activities on behalf of partner organizations, and with regards to infrastructure and utilities. To maintain consistency and help coordinate future growth, all three communities are including a land use component to their comprehensive plan.

***Land Use Element.*** *The Land Use Element, where required, must include at least one of the two components listed below:*

*(a) Character Areas Map and Defining Narrative. Identify and map the boundaries of existing or potential character areas (see definition in Chapter 110-12-1-.05) covering the entire community, including existing community sub-areas, districts, or neighborhoods.*

*(b) Future Land Use Map and Narrative. Prepare a Future Land Use Map that uses conventional categories or classifications to depict the location (typically parcel by parcel) of specific future land uses. If this option is chosen, prepare the Future Land Use Map using either of the land use classification schemes described below and include a narrative that explains how to interpret the map and each land use category.*

## **Public Participation**

As a part of the planning process each local government must provide and implement opportunities to encourage public participation. The purpose of this is to insure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process, are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan elements, and have adequate access to the process of defining the community's vision, priorities, goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

At a minimum, the public participation program must provide for: adequate notice to keep the general public informed of the emerging plan; opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the plan; hold the required public hearings; and, provide notice to property owners through advertisements in the newspaper (legal organ) of the planning effort soliciting participation and comments. In addition, the local government must provide opportunities for public participation through other means and methods to help articulate a community vision and develop associated goals and implementation program.

Stephens County appointed several folks to serve as an advisory committee that would contribute diverse perspectives, with nominees and volunteers encouraged by the County Commission to give their thoughts on the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the community. The Cities of Avalon and Martin, being smaller, utilized their standing Councils as the primary committee with a few additional volunteers from each community also participating.

All told 5 public meetings were held between April and June to discuss the comprehensive plan update, sharing copies of past materials as well as drafts of the prospective new material. These meetings were used to foster discussion among the public and Committee members concerning the visions for each community and for the surrounding region. Over the course of the process meetings introduced the contents of a local comprehensive plan then moved into identifying the prevailing values desired for each community in the future. Later meetings established the priority needs and issues facing the city as well as outlining opportunities in how the governments and their partners can address each concern.

In addition, surveys were made available to everyone in early May via email alerts and directly accessed from the front page of the Stephens county web site. Surveys would remain available through July to ensure area residents and stakeholders have ample opportunity to provide their comments and voice their goals for the community. (A summary of results and comments provided in the appendices.) These provided valuable insight into the prevailing concerns and desires of area residents, and gave the Advisory Committee and elected officials some direction on how to address the issues facing Stephens County, Avalon and Martin.



### Advisory Committees

#### Stephens County

Phil Hobbs  
Alvin Brinkley  
James Addison  
Clint Simmons  
Jennifer Findley  
Clay Fisher  
Angie Ramage  
Shelby Gober  
Brittney Ivey

#### Avalon

Linda Dean  
George Dean  
Keith Presley  
Roger Craven  
Clint Craven  
Clay Black  
Diane Barns

#### Martin

Donald Foster  
Sandi Stovall  
Mark Gearhart  
Harold Alexander  
Johnny Hornick  
Roger Looney  
Robert Stovall

The screenshot shows the Stephens County, GA website with a survey pop-up. The pop-up is titled "We Welcome Your Feedback" and contains the following text:

**Stephens County Comprehensive Plan Survey**

Stephens County Comprehensive Plan Survey

**Want to tell your civic leaders what your community should be like in 20-30 years?**

powered by SurveyMonkey

anyone wishing to speak at a Stephens Commission meeting must fill out The Request to Speak at Meetings Form, 37 days prior to the Friday prior to the next Commission meeting.

The Request to Speak at Meetings Form was adopted on April 11, 2017 by the Stephens County Board of Commissioners.

The Request to Speak at Meetings Form will be filled out and turned in to the County Clerk's Office no later than the Friday prior to the next Commission meeting.

If you have not filled out the Request to Speak at Meetings Form and wish to speak, your request will be considered for the next Commission meeting.

Buttons on the page include: 2017 Tax Digest and 5 Year History, Notice of Property Tax Increase, Request to Speak at Meetings Form, and Comprehensive Plan Survey.

# COMMUNITY VISION

The Minimum Standards and Requirements for Local Comprehensive Planning defines a community vision as something “... *intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.*” It is required as an element of the comprehensive plan so that communities can truly establish a pure and simple ideal for themselves in a format that is easily expressed and understood.

Visioning provides communities with an opportunity to pause and consider the “big picture” as well as to attempt to clearly define their ideal future. Developing a vision means that the community has at least tried to identify current values, describe how they’re to be realized in the future and use that image as a foundation for short and long-term planning. As a process this also requires the community to develop a consensus on what conditions to change or to preserve.

## Vision Statement

A vision for the community’s future must be included in the comprehensive plan. The community vision is intended to provide a complete picture of what the community desires to become. The community vision must be based on public input, the assessment of current and future needs and be supported by the goals, policies and objectives in the comprehensive plan. In addition, there must be consistency between the community vision and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Quality Community Objectives as well as consistency with the community visions of other communities within the region.

The following vision statements were derived from the various comments and suggestions raised during public meetings and through the available survey process.

For Stephens County the majority of opinions reflected on existing assets that revealed the community’s potential, as well as the desire to see improvements in economic opportunity. Residents like their role as the gateway to the mountains and feel the access to many scenic areas and outdoor recreation opportunities in and around Stephens County are key elements to the local quality of life that should be celebrated. This entails measures to protect natural resources and find ways to shape new development in a fashion that embraces the rural, Appalachian context of the area. Residents also like the close knit nature of Toccoa and the surrounding neighborhoods, the presence of 2 colleges, the access to the interstate, and their military history. The general indications are the building blocks for a thriving community are already available in Stephens County, and augmented by other regional assets.

The remains room for improvement, however, and stakeholders identified a desire to expand upon some of the change and development that began prior to the recession. While the burgeoning industrial park is an asset the need for additional job opportunities remains. Local residents would also favor improving the commercial options available and expressed a need for improved workforce housing stock. Further, while the local schools and utilities were rated favorably, there was a desire for expanded park facilities and to address the various vacant and dilapidated properties around Toccoa. Some stakeholders also voiced concern for how SR17 may be mismanaged or overrun with low-grade retail options that detract from the county’s local character and/or hinder attempts to provide a more attractive gateway to the local cities.

**Comments regarding the values, strengths and weaknesses of Stephens County:**

Values to be emphasized:

- Safe, quiet place for families
- Rural beauty/ Access to nature
- Most modern amenities but in a small-town setting
- Improving quality of local facilities
- Good relationship with other communities
- Staying affordable
- We value our history

Things to be changed:

- Traffic management; aesthetic appeal of SR17
- Still need more/better job opportunities
- Need to help existing labor force match up with existing jobs
- Presence of run-down properties
- Declining agricultural sector

**VISION STATEMENT - STEPHENS COUNTY**

*Stephens County, Georgia...*

- ✓ *is a historic and proud community celebrating Georgia and Appalachia;*
- ✓ *is dedicated to preserving the safe, affordable and peaceful way of life that has characterized the area as it has transitioned from an agricultural community into a modern and hub for industry and education;*
- ✓ *will be ambitious in striving to grow stronger as a community and as an economy;*
- ✓ *will be a community known for offering effective and efficient, leadership, fiscal integrity, public safety and well-being, the protection of our natural resources, heritage, and culture, and fostering the expansion of economic opportunities.*

For Avalon the impetus was simple – The community had an overwhelming desire to remain a small rural town amidst the likely change and development to come along SR 17 from Toccoa or Lavonia. The anticipated development that would be attracted to the widened arterial road was something more suited for neighboring cities and urbanized areas. Avalon, meanwhile, preferred to stay a rural haven that resembled life outside the auto-oriented highway. Some development may occur but the community’s residents expressed a desire to avoid the type of businesses that would draw more traffic, especially heavier commercial traffic, into the city. Particularly in later hours of the evening. Instead, the emphasis on the future was staying rural and small but employing a more mindful control over the land uses within the city limits, in hopes of shaping projects to take on more low-key, pedestrian friendly scale and country-style architecture.

**Comments regarding the values, strengths and weaknesses of Avalon:**

Values to be emphasized:

- Country lifestyle
- Safe, affordable, and family friendly
- Some link to agricultural history
- Rural, pastoral scenery
- Still have access to amenities, but outside of the city
- Potential to shape some growth into a downtown

Things to be changed:

- Traffic management on/intersecting SR17
- Keeping heavier commercial/ industrial uses outside the city
- Amending City codes and ordinances



**VISION STATEMENT - CITY OF AVALON**

*The City of Avalon, Georgia, is a rural community dedicated to the preservation of its small-town character. It will embody the country lifestyle rooted in its agricultural past, offering families and visitors a serene environment to live and grow, while working with neighboring communities to support the economic development of the region. Avalon will also strive to maintain and improve the character of its built environment and supports the inclusion of small-scale commercial and institutional uses that complement the rural residential setting.*

Like Avalon, Martin faces the prospect of change and development to come along SR 17 from Lavonia. By comparison, however, Martin has the remnants of a historic main street that still harbors some commercial and institutional uses, and their closer proximity to the industrial parts of Lavonia and I-85 endow some thoughts of restoring some vitality to the community. There is the strong desire to retain the town's rustic character, hopefully finding businesses that can occupy the downtown in a fashion befitting rural Georgia, while more modern, auto oriented uses are placed along the new SR17 corridor.

**Comments regarding the values, strengths and weaknesses of Martin:**

Values to be emphasized:

- Small town charm; Some historic structures still intact
- Safe, affordable, and family friendly
- Rural alternative to suburbia
- Still have access to amenities, but outside of the city
- Potential to shape some growth into a downtown

Things to be changed:

- Lack of resources to be proactive
- Desire to attract businesses to historic main street
- Need to update codes and ordinances, including enforcement policies
- Need to explore long-term options for water and sewer in the area

**VISION STATEMENT - CITY OF MARTIN**

*The City of Martin is a proud, small, rural hometown amidst the agricultural crossroads mountain gateways of northeast Georgia. The City is dedicated to this rustic character through the preservation of their historic structures and main street, and by encouraging new development that embraces the area's scenic and rural charm. The City of Martin will be focused first on residents and households in being a safe and quiet community, and will work with neighboring communities in fostering economic growth for the region that capitalizes on our agricultural heritage.*

## Needs & Opportunities

To achieve its stated vision a community must understand those obstacles and issues that must be addressed in order to reach the goals implied. The comprehensive planning process asks communities to assess the information outlined in an effort to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered when trying to plan for the future. In doing so the communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions so as to better achieve the desired vision.

The following represents a refined listing of Issues and Opportunities for Stephens County and the municipalities of Avalon and Martin. Some were carried over from the previous plan, but the list has been confirmed and/or refined based on the discussions and analyses throughout the current planning process. *(Also shows year proposed or listed as policy)*

**Stephens County**

| Needs & Opportunities  | Mitigation Strategies   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to ensure optimal levels of natural resource protection and greenspace planning</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Parks and Rec Master Plan w/ Cities; Include greenspace component ('19)</li> <li>• Adopt/Promote conservation design policies ('18)</li> <li>• Develop report assessing all State listed waters in need of resource protection ('20)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to improve broadband infrastructure and telecommunications services</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory infrastructure and service areas throughout county ('17)</li> <li>• Develop improvement plan with broadband providers, the North Ga. Network and GDED ('17)</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to protect against conflicting land uses</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update codes and ordinances</li> <li>• Develop reference guide for architectural design</li> <li>• Coordinate with Cities to protect against conflicting land uses at boundaries</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to improve education and skill levels for local labor force</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support greater coordination among local industry, North Georgia Tech, Toccoa Falls College and Stephens County schools; Explore more options for internships and practical training exercises (P)</li> <li>• Develop annual forum with Cities on education and employment conditions within the region ('17)</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to address character of gateway corridors</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance review of code enforcement procedures and policies ('18)</li> <li>• Develop annual monitoring report of enforcement activity. ('18)</li> <li>• Develop beautification plans for major arterials coming into Toccoa ('19)</li> <li>• Start roadside clean-up campaign ('21)</li> </ul>                        |

*City of Avalon*

| Needs & Opportunities   | Mitigation Strategies   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to monitor long-term plans for utilities and infrastructure in the region.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in Stephens County Service Delivery Strategy</li> <li>• Seek an annual report on sewer capacities and improvement plans in the county</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to protect against conflicting land uses</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update codes and ordinances</li> <li>• Develop reference guide for architectural design</li> <li>• Develop a master plan for SR17 corridor &amp; Downtown Avalon</li> <li>• Coordinate with Martin and Stephens County to protect against conflicting land uses surrounding Avalon</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire/Potential to foster a more unique and functioning downtown.</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a master plan for SR17 corridor &amp; Downtown Avalon</li> <li>• Participate in County Bike and Pedestrian Plan (emphasize sidewalks)</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need new/renovated City Hall</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop adaptive reuse plan for City property</li> <li>• Secure funding for facility improvements</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to improve telecommunications services (both Wi-fi and landline)</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory infrastructure and service areas throughout county ('17)</li> <li>• Develop improvement plan with North Ga. Network and GDED ('17)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to improve intersections with new SR17</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually collect traffic and accident data for intersections</li> <li>• Solicit GDOT guidance on improvement process</li> <li>• Consult with County Public Works staff, GDOT on others in developing improvement plan</li> </ul>   |

*City of Martin*

| Needs & Opportunities   | Mitigation Strategies   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to monitor long-term plans for utilities and infrastructure in the region.</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in Stephens County Service Delivery Strategy</li> <li>• Seek an annual report on sewer capacities and improvement plans in the county</li> <li>• Develop a “build-out” scenario for utility line expansion into the area, highlighting possible lines in/near the city.</li> </ul>             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to protect against conflicting land uses</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update codes and ordinances</li> <li>• Develop reference guide for architectural design</li> <li>• Develop a master plan for SR17 corridor &amp; historic district</li> <li>• Coordinate with Avalon and Stephens County to protect against conflicting land uses surrounding Martin</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire to revitalize historic Main Street.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a master plan for SR17 corridor &amp; historic district</li> <li>• Participate in County Bike and Pedestrian Plan (emphasize sidewalks)</li> <li>• Develop streetscape improvements for Main Street</li> <li>• Explore options for new park space</li> </ul>                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to renovate new City Hall</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop adaptive reuse plan for City property</li> <li>• Secure funding for facility improvements</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to improve telecommunications services (both Wi-fi and landline)</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory infrastructure and service areas throughout county (‘17)</li> <li>• Develop improvement plan with North Ga. Network and GDED (‘17)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire/Potential to secure additional residential uses in surrounding neighborhoods</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update codes and ordinances</li> <li>• Develop reference guide for architectural design</li> <li>• Solicit development study for increased residential capacity within the city.</li> </ul>   |

# DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## Land Use Assessment

Land use management policies and programs represent guidelines for shaping development patterns that provide for efficient growth while also protecting sensitive social and environmental areas. As such communities should take into account their current and immediately projected conditions and assess the identified needs and issues regarding the built landscape and community services for the area. This section presents an inventory of existing land use patterns and development trends for the community, allowing the local government to produce the most effective policies needed to manage the demands from projected development.



Land use, settlement patterns and economic development throughout Stephens County are clearly related to predominant physiographic features. Farming and pastures are located along gentle slopes or in the bottom lands where the soil is rich and the land level. Timber management and lumbering of woodlands have occurred in areas too poor to support farming. Mountain tops and steep slopes were maintained in a natural state because of their unsuitability for intensive use. Roads tend to follow narrow valleys, along ridge lines and streams. Since most of the valleys and ridges occur in a north-south alignment, most of the roads and rail follow the same direction.

With the establishment of the railroad, The County seat of Toccoa began to grow and prosper as a transportation and shipping outpost, as well as an industrial center manufacturing a variety of products and goods. The city evolved in a traditional urban street grid pattern, branching predominantly east-west along the rail line, with downtown encompassing several blocks of classic zero-lot-line structures and streetscapes, surrounding by more bucolic neighborhoods that yielded to roads with more scenic, winding forms and blocks shaped by the landscape. The prevailing parts of the county, however, remained sparsely occupied save for farms and various remote rural businesses. Northern and western mountainous parts of Stephens County were eventually reserved by the US Forest Service, along with a military outpost located at Currahee Mountain, just south of Toccoa.

To the south the towns of Martin and Avalon provided minor social and civic centers between Toccoa and Lavonia, originating as commercial stops along the route and RR between those cities. Martin was the larger town with a true railroad-fronting main street that harbored shops and neighborhood businesses that served the area and gave local farmers a closer destination to dine and worship. Avalon had a smaller core and evolved as an residential cluster adjoining Martin and providing a local community for non-farming residents in that part of the county.

Eventually the automobile industry became more prominent and housing developed further and further outside the urban core, with select arterials receiving destination status for regionalized commercial hubs. Indigenous growth is now following transportation corridors, with the most intense urban-scale development occurring along arterial road corridors and intersections, primarily where supporting

infrastructure is available. The Toccoa By-pass opened in 1987 and was soon followed by water and gas infrastructure, greatly influencing development south of the city.

The most recent decades have brought an influx of older people living in retirement homes and resort locations. In addition, much of the county contains a large, transient, second home or vacation lot population, which swarms into the area during the summer months, weekends and holidays. Engineering technology improvements and affordable construction costs have encouraged development to take place on sites (steep slopes) that were once impossible to access and build upon. “Retiree” residential development is occurring along connecting collector roads scattered throughout the County. Vacation homes are primarily located along the shores of Lake Hartwell, as well as various creeks and streams, and along the high ridge-lines that provide scenic views. Homes are also being constructed in areas adjacent to the Chattahoochee National Forest. The National Forest brings a quality of life amenity to the Stephens County area with its numerous recreational opportunities. Many retirees are interested in building homes that are either adjacent or in close proximity to the National Forest so that they can be protected or surrounded by permanent greenspace.

The County has to date been too remote from the larger metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Athens, and Greenville to have grown too rapidly, and as a result it retains a comparably tight knit development pattern centered around Toccoa. However, the increased capacity of arterial roadways and the growing commuting patterns have begun to shape Stephens County’s future. South of Toccoa, SR17 serves as the primary economic artery of the county. Leading to I-85 and Lavonia, cutting through Avalon and Martin along the way, SR17 has become the modern destination highway serving through traffic for tourists and commerce as well as the regional destination for larger employers and institutions. Industry in Stephens County has gradually moved to office parks along this corridor, such as manufacturers like Caterpillar and Sage Automotive, plus a satellite campus for North Georgia Technical College and a local elementary school. Several of the larger commercial agricultural operations are also located along this corridor, which eventually becomes more suburban as it reaches the I-85 interchange and the industrial parks north of Lavonia. Where SR17 continues northward to US441 endows the county with its formal title of “*Gateway to the Mountains.*”

## Areas Requiring Special Attention

Analysis of prevailing trends assists in identifying preferred patterns of growth for the future. Such analyses can identify those areas requiring special attention with regard to management policies, such as natural or cultural resources likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development.

- *Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur*

Development along SR17 consists of variations of industrial, commercial and residential use. The area is expected to receive more of such growth and development since the roadway has been completed as a 4-lane divided (mostly) highway between Toccoa and Lavonia, with land available within the existing industrial park for new business and the interchange at I-85 growing new businesses every year. The County will review development options after consideration of land use management objectives for the area. Avalon and Martin, however, have begun working on updating their policies to reflect control measures needed for along the actual roadway as well as ways to manage development types and scale elsewhere within the Cities so as to retain their small-town appeal. (See *SR17 Corridor* character area)

- *Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation*

The bulk of unincorporated Stephens County is rural and agricultural, save for select corridors and the commercial/industrial mix between Toccoa and Lavonia. There are limited utilities along parts of this SR17 corridor but growing demand. The limitation of sewer and gas expansion may be utilized as a tool for restricting the types and/or scales of growth in and around Avalon and Martin, which both aspire to remain small towns. Because of this dynamic there are no areas where development is outpacing utility capacity. (*Note: There could be considered an exception for high-speed telecommunications, but this issue is a part of a broader matter currently being addressed by the State.*)

- *Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)*

Outside of Toccoa there are no concentrations of, or large properties of, land in need of significant reinvestment in Stephens County, particularly within the unincorporated part of the county. The one area that does match this depiction is the old SR17 route that serves as the main street corridor for Avalon and Martin. Particularly for Martin, with its several historic structures, this stretch of road served as the social and commercial heart of these two small communities and for this portion of the county. With the bulk of the region's through traffic now diverted to the new highway there is the potential to restore the properties but the viability for commercial businesses may be at risk. The two cities are seeking to revitalize their downtown areas both as a means to preserve their identities amid suburbanization and to offer jobs and commerce to area residents. This will require significant support from businesses but the potential remains for this road to stay the cultural corridor of the cities. (See *Main Street Avalon-Martin* character area)

- *Large abandoned structures or sites, including possible environmental contamination.*

There are no large abandoned sites in Stephens County outside of Toccoa, and none with a suspicion of contamination. There are vacant properties within the industrial park but they're currently being marketed and have been maintained. Older farms and businesses in and around Toccoa may have had issues with various pollutants washing away with stormwater, but the foremost concerns were addressed through targeted mitigation efforts and/or the implementation of best practices during the past 20 years. Any lingering issues are likely the result of ongoing non-point source pollution that can only be addressed through continuing education and enforcement.

- *Areas with significant infill development opportunities.*

There are some properties along the old SR17 highway that are being encouraged for commercial use by the Cities of Avalon and Martin, including existing vacant structures or rural properties with the potential for slightly more intense development. This corridor has been targeted by the communities for potential reinvestment as a bona fide Main Street, so vacant and undeveloped properties in and around their respective cores would be opportunities for infill that would be supported by the local governments. (See *Main Street Avalon-Martin* character area)



- *Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole*

Apart from the Main Street Avalon-Martin corridor discussed above there are no concentrations of poverty or disinvestment in Stephens County. There are broad reaching concerns about housing affordability throughout the county and the region, whereby the most affordable housing units are typically older and dilapidated, with risk of historic contaminants or limited potential for cost-effective reinvestment. This is part of a larger economic issue, however, and is not restricted to a particular geographic area. Stephens County and the three municipalities are actively partnering in programs to bring economic development, support the schools and local job training programs.

- *Areas of significant natural or cultural resources in need of attention*

With respect to natural resources, both the Cities and Stephens County have enacted the necessary Environmental Planning Criteria and related development regulations. Much of the land within the county is protected through US Forest Service ownership. No significant action above existing measures has been identified for this element.



For cultural resources, there is the collection of historic structures within downtown Martin and the State historic site of Traveler's Rest near the state line that warrant historic resource protection. The latter is owned by the State and is a monitored and protected tourist amenity for the region, while downtown Martin is in need of reinvestment. The City will work with the GMRC, Georgia HPD and other partners to help promote the area for adaptive reuse and building restorations. (See *Main Street Avalon-Martin* character area)



## Character Area Assessment

Character area planning is designed to focus on the physical appearance (aesthetics) and function of a particular area. Development strategies are tailored and applied to each individual area. The goal is to enhance the existing character/function or promote a new, more desirable character for the future. Character areas identify portions of the community that have a unique or special character that needs to be preserved or require special attention because of unique development issues

A key component of the comprehensive planning process is the development of a Character Area Map that reflects the city's vision for future growth and development during the course of the planning period. This vision was developed through an extensive public visioning process and expresses the unique character of various portions of the city. The various character areas, then, are intended to support the overall future development strategy by organizing common themes of development patterns throughout the community. They promote the desired development patterns and provide a framework for coordination of capital improvement projects that may impact development. The following pages present the map and narratives of each Character area associated with Stephens County, Avalon, and Martin.

Each identified character area outlines a specific vision or plan that includes the following:

- Written description and pictures or illustrations that identify the patterns and scales of development encouraged in that area.
- Identification of implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns for the area, including more detailed sub-area planning, new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments, and infrastructure improvements.

| <b>CHARACTER AREAS</b>        |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Area</b>                   | <b>Development Types Allowed</b>   |
| <b>US Forest Service Land</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select rural residential, conservation, recreational and silviculture uses</li> <li>• National forest and preserved utility land</li> <li>• State Parks and wildlife management areas</li> <li>• Minimal construction or impervious surface</li> <li>• Preference for unpaved roads</li> </ul>  |
| <b>North Stephens County</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passive recreational or eco-tourism</li> <li>• State Parks and wildlife management areas</li> <li>• Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Low-impact, outdoor-themed retreat and conference facilities</li> <li>• Low impact agricultural</li> </ul>                                      |
| <b>Rural Stephens County</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Agricultural uses</li> <li>• Churches &amp; small-scale institutional</li> <li>• Minimize surface parking</li> <li>• Should blend with architectural character of community</li> <li>• Conservation design subdivisions</li> </ul>                  |
| <b>Suburban Service Areas</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential &amp; subdivisions with amenity areas</li> <li>• Churches &amp; small-scale institutional</li> <li>• Minimize surface parking</li> <li>• Should blend with architectural character of community</li> <li>• Conservation design preferred</li> <li>• Commercial, office, and low-impact warehousing or industrial</li> </ul> |
| <b>Rural Arterial</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural residential, subdivisions</li> <li>• Agricultural, agritourism</li> <li>• Recreational, institutional</li> <li>• Neighborhood commercial &amp; office</li> <li>• Conservation design preferred</li> </ul>   |
| <b>SR 17 Corridor</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal curb cuts and intersections, so as to maintain traffic flow</li> <li>• Commercial, office, institutional, and low-impact industrial uses</li> <li>• Manage lighting and other potential nuisances to protect adjoining properties</li> </ul>  |

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Rural Avalon-Martin</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Churches &amp; small-scale institutional uses</li> <li>• Minimize surface parking</li> <li>• Should blend with rural residential architectural character of community</li> <li>• Conservation design subdivisions preferred</li> </ul> |
| <b>Main Street Avalon-Martin</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood commercial, intuitional, and office uses</li> <li>• Residential and mixed-use residential uses</li> <li>• Sidewalks required, small parking lots preferred</li> <li>• Architecturally encouraged to match historic structures and small-town feel</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Martin Residential</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential uses</li> <li>• Small-scale institutional uses</li> <li>• Neighborhood parks</li> <li>• Country-style or appropriate historical architectural designs</li> <li>• Street connectivity required; Pedestrian accessibility encouraged</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Watershed Protection</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlay limiting impervious surfaces</li> <li>• Passive recreational or eco-tourism</li> <li>• State Parks and wildlife management areas</li> <li>• Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Low-impact, outdoor-themed retreat and conference facilities</li> </ul>      |

Narrative – US Forest Service Area

This district comprises currently established woodland reserved for commercial forestry and/or conservation. Approximately 24,000 acres, accounting for about 22% of land in the county, is included in the Chattahoochee National Forest and is under the management of the US Forest Service. The only notable intrusions into the property are unpaved roads, occasional residential structures or facilities required by utilities or the USFS to maintain the land.



Much of this is found on steeper slopes and ridgelines to the north and west of Toccoa, comprising the scenic vistas and outdoor recreation areas that help establish the area's identity as the Gateway to the Mountains. Currahee Mountain in particular, lying just south of the County seat, is home to a former military that is integral to the community's heritage and identity. These hills provide the scenic rolling landscape that enforces a rural lifestyle by buffering the urbanized core of the community, which when combined with the river/lake to the east effectively shields Stephens County from unwieldy growth on three sides.



Aspirations are to preserve these parts of the county as best as possible in their mostly natural state, prohibiting new development apart from replacing existing structures or sparsely-placed new forms that mimic the scale and context of existing structures in the rural area. To the extent possible driveways and roads in this area should remain unpaved and utilities should be limited, so as not to attract greater development pressures.

Implementation Measures – *US Forest Service Area*

- *Support the USFS* in maintenance and promotion of safety within the National Forest and wildlife areas (Policy)
- Routinely *review USFS Wildfire Management Plan* for coordination among first responders (Policy)
- *Promote the Firewise and Fire Adapted Community programs* (Policy)
- Maintain cooperation with DNR and *enforce State environmental laws and rules* regarding State Vital Areas and natural resources (Policy)
- *Update floodplain and environmental mapping* data every 5 years (Policy)

Complementing the preserved US Forest Service land is a public portion of northern Stephens County that exhibits much of the same natural wooded landscape and terrain. This area also features the transitioning waters of the Chattooga River as it gives way to a series of dams, forming small lakes before giving way to the northern reaches of Lake Hartwell. This location makes it an attractive transitional area between the preserved National Forest and the rest of rural Stephens County.



This character area is viewed as an overlapping of public or private land, suitable for various types of rural residential use, conservation, and recreation, with private lodging and conference facilities. Camp Mikell, a retreat and conference center managed by the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia, is located within this region, with the Georgia Baptist Conference Center located nearby in the adjoining Watershed Protection character area. Facilities such as these that enable controlled public access are considered assets to the community and a use in harmony with the rustic setting.



Protection of the natural environment is important but development that encourages tourism and connects to residential areas and other recreational amenities is welcome.

Implementation Measures - *North Stephens County*

- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan with the Cities.*** The City should work with Stephens County and other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- ***Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal strategy for the identification and protection of natural habitats, both to preserve local ecology and environmental resources and to promote passive outdoor recreation.
- Routinely ***review USFS Wildfire Management Plan*** for coordination among first responders (Policy)
- ***Promote the Firewise and Fire Adapted Community programs*** (Policy)
- Maintain cooperation with DNR and ***enforce State environmental laws and rules*** regarding State Vital Areas and natural resources (Policy)
- ***Update floodplain and environmental mapping*** data every 5 years (Policy)
- ***Limit expansion of sewer service*** outside of the city and existing urban areas, so as to minimize growth and scale of development in rural areas
- ***Adopt policies allowing conservation subdivision development*** patterns





The predominant character area within the county apart from the municipalities and mountains is the vast rural area throughout the center and south of Stephens County. This district is the catch-all for those larger lots that lie outside the urban neighborhoods or slightly more populated transitional zones. Primarily agricultural or forestry lands less suitable for intense urban development, this area is defined by a high degree of open space, agricultural activity, scenic amenities, and/or environmentally sensitive territory.

It may also include residential development of very low density. Many lots are simply large residential lots with most of the property left undeveloped, held over as more residents are tied to commercial or industrial jobs in the area but seek a country setting and lifestyle. These properties primarily feature a house with one or more storage or agricultural structures. Most are long established properties of 30 years or more. In a couple cases their residence is substantially improved and indicative of a high economic class. Others are simply modest homes on lots retained purely for their scenic, rural value.



This transition aids the rural areas outside the cities, as well, by softening the change in density and concentrations of development, adjoining agricultural uses and woodland experience less pressure for up-selling. Likewise, it aids utility and infrastructure management by marking the essential limits of urban-level services.



Implementation Measures - *Rural Stephens County*

- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- ***Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal strategy for the identification and protection of natural habitats, both to preserve local ecology and environmental resources and to promote passive outdoor recreation.
- Routinely ***review USFS Wildfire Management Plan*** for coordination among first responders (Policy)
- ***Promote the Firewise and Fire Adapted Community programs*** (Policy)
- Maintain cooperation with DNR and ***enforce State environmental laws and rules*** regarding State Vital Areas and natural resources (Policy)
- ***Update floodplain and environmental mapping*** data every 5 years (Policy)
- ***Limit expansion of sewer service*** outside of the city and existing urban areas, so as to minimize growth and scale of development in rural areas
- ***Adopt policies allowing conservation subdivision development*** patterns

Narrative *Suburban Service Area*



This consists of two suburbanized districts outside the city of Toccoa but along corridors that are expected to receive development in the future. Made up primarily of large, under-utilized land parcels these areas may currently feature small commercial uses, woodland, vacant properties or low density residential activity. The potential for higher densities or future mixed used development exists due in part to large lots and transportation connections. These areas consist of the transitional zones between the city and Rural Stephens County and the remaining portions of the city and county, where the urban fabric began to face suburban development patterns as new non-residential development moved to the outskirts of Toccoa and along arterial roads.

These areas feature a collection of building types, with an emphasis on more auto-oriented properties and more regional-scale commercial, service, and institutional uses. The building heights are less uniform and landscaping takes on less importance since these areas see less pedestrian accessibility.

The goal for these areas is to retain their commercial viability but help manage their compatibility with the surrounding parts of the city. Infill development and using the area to bring jobs and retail to the area is key, with a growing emphasis on incorporating more aesthetic design measures where possible. Maintaining the viability of the roadway corridors is also critical. Guidelines may be needed to facilitate development in this location to preclude subdivision growth in conservation areas throughout the county. Design of future developments here are encouraged to connect with surrounding residential, commercial, recreation, and transportation facilities.

Implementation Measures – *Suburban Service Area*

- ***Workforce/Starter housing strategic plan.*** The County will work with local realtors and bankers to develop a profile for affordable housing in the area, based on price points and prevailing wages. This will include recommendations for new/amended policies and identification of sites for available housing (re)development.
- ***Establish/Utilize brownfield redevelopment incentives.*** The County should establish an incentive package, through local resources or combined with State and federal options that can be used to attract redevelopment and reuse of suspected brownfield properties. This could include environmental assessments or job tax credits or other means that lead to the rehabilitation of vacant properties in the targeted areas.
- ***Attain/Maintain Enterprise Zone designation.*** The County should utilize every available State-authorized program and resource for encouraging job development within the area. Properties eligible for Enterprise and/or Opportunity Zone designation should be nominated for such, with the city implementing the policies and programs necessary to support those designations.
- ***Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity*** to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.
- ***Develop/Update long-term utility and infrastructure plans.*** Review and update as needed the long-term expansion and improvement plans for water, sewer, roads and other utilities in the area.

This district applies to areas of particular interest to the history and local culture of Stephens County, including buildings and sites, which may be grouped into districts or linear corridors within the rural countryside. The focus is on preserving character, both for future residents and in order to attract visitors.

These corridors will be the preferred location for accommodating the variety of non-residential uses that will arise within rural Stephens County. Commercial activity, mostly of the neighborhood-scale variety, is expected along these smaller main roads, where businesses will arise catering to local customer needs. This may include select retail, office, or dining establishments, with the predominant trait being a smaller size and limited demand for utilities and parking. Ideally structures will evoke a country architectural style to better blend with the host of farmhouses and agricultural structures in the area, featuring pitched roofs and a great deal of wood accent pieces.

Additional expected uses would include churches, small auto-oriented businesses such as fuel stations and repair shops, roadside produce stands and more. Typically these things will not cluster together or greatly alter traffic patterns due to any dependency on a more urban location or access. While these may tap into utility lines on the main roads there won't be an emphasis on driving utility improvements or expansion along these corridors in an effort to attract more development.



Subdivisions and agricultural uses are also welcome along these roads, with some of both already established within the area. Where possible and supported by proper utility access, subdivisions will be encouraged to exhibit conservation designs that preserve greenspace and help buffer developed areas from adjoining properties.



Implementation Measures – *Rural Arterial*

- ***Review and update development regulations.*** The City should annually review the performance of their development regulations, and identify and make changes as necessary.
- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- ***Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal strategy for the identification and protection of natural habitats, both to preserve local ecology and environmental resources and to promote passive outdoor recreation.
- ***Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity*** to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.



This district represents the main commercial corridor of Stephens County in the form of SR 17 as it runs southeast/northwest between Toccoa and Lavonia. In and adjacent to Toccoa it is a conventional arterial road with multiple lanes of traffic in each direction and harbors a variety of retail, dining, service and office operations that cater to both local residents and travelers in the area. Much of the development along this particular stretch is oriented around automobiles and drive-in customers, with only modest attention to pedestrian traffic. There are a few parcels available for redevelopment in the Big A Road Corridor. The road is designed to handle higher speeds and assist in getting travelers through the scene. The signage and curb-cuts imply the corridor is for moderate to heavy traffic, making it a conventional commercial area.

This highway features the connection with the Toccoa Bypass, providing a critical connection on the south side of the city to the western part of the county and US 441. Both roads handle a high volume of school-related traffic and serve several businesses.

The corridor has developed due to the access of the road way and the eventual connection southward to I-85 in Lavonia. It is considered an appropriate catchment area for such development patterns, providing the capacity and convenience desired by modern industrial facilities and major employment centers. Several industrial, institutional, and warehousing facilities can be found between Toccoa and Avalon. Utility demand will be the driving factor for any expansion as the County explores how to maximize capacity for existing residents and in a manner that keeps the county in a rural manner as desired by locals.



- ***Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity*** to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.
- ***Update traffic profile of SR17 corridor*** to identify any hazardous conditions and plan for any needed improvements.
- ***Amend development regulations to minimize automobile parking demands.*** The County should amend development standards and recommendations to reduce the amount of parking required and produce parking lots that are more environmentally sensitive, conducive to pedestrian connectivity and exhibits urban design characteristics.
- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- ***Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal strategy for the identification and protection of natural habitats, both to preserve local ecology and environmental resources and to promote passive outdoor recreation.
- ***Establishment of a beautification program/ Streetscape improvements.*** The County should create a general beautification program for the corridor. This would include guidelines for signage and landscaping, public amenities such as benches and lighting, as well as coordination of litter control and Gateway signage.



The Cities of Avalon and Martin both remain very small and have ambitions to remain rural. Some small-scale agricultural activity is ongoing within their city limits and they both currently lack the sewer service to foster any true urban density. The intention from both communities is to retain this sense of scale and country lifestyle.

To preserve and hone their identities as rural residential communities, both municipalities are intent on managing their development to restrict incompatible uses. The goal is to restrict utility expansions within the cities and keep development forms to the commercial and social core of Main Street and the more sparsely developed surrounding Rural Areas. These areas could serve as transitional buffers between the Main Street corridor and the true rural farmland of the unincorporated county. North of Avalon this will also serve as a transition between the City and the industrial properties along SR17.

Within this Rural Avalon-Martin district the desire is for almost exclusively residential and agricultural use, with the latter restricted to more passive and small-scale operations. (ie: No large corporate farms with excessive traffic or potentially excessive odors.) This can include the development of neighborhoods and subdivisions with accompanying amenity areas, where possible. Comparable uses such as churches and parks may also be accommodated, though facilities that may generate significant traffic should ideally be located along Main Street.



Architecturally these is a soft desire to see harmonious styles reminiscent of the favored country homes seen in the area, including a handful of historic properties with noted Colonial or Georgian styling. However, neither community is expecting to apply formal design criteria apart from having suggested guidelines. The primary criteria will be to ensure residential properties are up to modern code and meet minimal design requirements for pitched roofs and appropriate materials. Where possible, front porches, shuttered windows, wood and masonry materials, and residential landscaping will be encouraged,



- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- ***Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal strategy for the identification and protection of natural habitats, both to preserve local ecology and environmental resources and to promote passive outdoor recreation.
- ***Develop and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal strategy for maintaining and expanding parks and recreation facilities and services. This should include additional passive and active recreational opportunities at existing parks, as well as target new park opportunities and enhancing options at new or proposed parks. A special emphasis should be placed on outdoor adventure activities such as canoe and kayaking, off-road bicycling, and more.
- ***Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity*** to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.

Avalon and Martin evolved as stops along travel routes, with Martin in particular developing as a commercial stop along the prevailing road and rail line for the area. Each exhibit a main road running parallel to the railroad track, with houses and other structures along either side. Several historic or simpler older structures remain, defining both the prevailing form of the community but also indicating the sense of architectural styles explored in each cities respective past.



The ambition for this district is to help both communities find their place in the future of Stephens County, with an expectation that some growth and suburban (read: Auto-oriented) development will become more prevalent along the SR17 corridor. Amidst that general setting the two small cities wish to (re)establish a small core commercial strip along the old SR17. Using existing facilities and adding infill where possible, the two communities can harbor a variety of neighborhood retail, dining, service and institutional uses that caters to area residents more than thru-travelers. Done with the right character it can even enhance the appeal of each community as a residential hub.



Martin has an array of existing historic structures that line the street-front with a sidewalk in front. Some of the shops remain occupied while others are vacant and have fallen into disrepair. The City aspires to see this part of Main Street restored in vitality and provide a destination for local businesses and shoppers. The objective will be to work on a streetscape plan that will improve the curb appeal, pedestrian safety, and viability of the area for tenants and customers. The City will also work with the Development Authority, North Georgia Tech, and others to help promote the available structures and lots for prospective businesses in the area. When resources permit the City will also help owners with plans for adaptive reuse and restoration of historic properties. In time Main Street can become a social center for the adjoining neighborhoods more capable of hosting special events and strengthening Martin's identity.

Avalon currently lacks the collection of historic structures but at just under a mile north from Main Street Martin there is a comparable setting at a couple key intersections that could enable a small downtown to evolve. The aspiration of the City is to eventually attract businesses and institutions that could prosper in this small town setting and eventually provide a connection with Martin's core. This would also include opportunities for sidewalks and a possible park. This would also include the possibility of allowing such uses along S. Yow Mill Road that would lead to the house that's been purchased for future use as a new City Hall.

Implementation Measures – *Main Street Avalon-Martin*

- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- ***Develop reference material for design guidelines*** within the district. This would include an inventory of prevalent existing design features
- Work with the Development Authority and North Georgia Tech to ***identify and support the possibility for business incubators*** along Main Street. This would include the recruitment of businesses to the area and the possible establishment of an ongoing building renovation program.
- ***Develop and implement a streetscape plan for Main Street.*** For the entire length of Main Street between both communities, Avalon and Martin should develop a coordinated improvement plan for sidewalks, planters and landscaping, decorative lighting and signage, pocket parks and benches, and other elements that will make Main Street a destination.
- ***Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity*** to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.

Narrative – *Martin Residential*



This district refers to a section of Martin that exhibits more of a traditional neighborhood form than the rest of the rural portion of the city. It is a distinctly residential section apart from the more agricultural or countryside setting from the surrounding areas, and is connected with Main Street as a residential haven that once was the core of a growing crossroads community.



Today the neighborhood still persists and is connected to some of the historic older homes that line, or are near to, Main Street. This district features decidedly smaller lots than much of the more rural scenes. If this area expands by virtue of adjoining lands developing in comparable form, then it would mimic some of the more urban neighborhoods associated with larger cities, but with a less dense scale as dictated by limited utilities.



For Martin the opportunity to see this neighborhood retained and for new adjoining development to be in harmony with this area are critical parts of their vision for the future. Martin has the ability to harbor a larger resident and commercial base with existing infrastructure and properties. Seeing more of this growth with match the ideal of Martin not so much changing as simply becoming a larger and more comprehensive version of what exists today. The City aims to move toward this direction with intent, knowing utilities and other factors will see the rural nature retained by that with some commitment the community can become a slightly more populous and active hometown to anchor southeastern Stephens County.

Implementation Measures –*Martin Residential*

- ***Develop reference material for design guidelines*** within the district. This would include an inventory of prevalent existing design features
- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- ***Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity*** to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.

This district is defined by the variety of lake and river front development that permeates the north and eastern sides of Stephens County. However, the overarching goal of this area is pollution prevention and water quality management for the county’s water resources and that of Lake Hartwell.

The eastern boundary of Stephens County is formed by the Chattooga River as it gives way to the myriad of dams and small reservoirs such as Yonah Lake. As you move further downstream the waterside is dressed with a variety of waterfront residential properties and their docks, with the State of South Carolina just a few hundred feet away on the opposite shoreline. Though the Stephens County portions rarely reach more than 1,000’ in width, the waterbody is considered a prime recreational resource and a destination for many seasonal travelers and tourists.

As part of the Lake Hartwell watershed, the area is of critical importance as a public water resource for the region, supplying communities on both sides of the reservoir. Given this role it is important that development be managed not simply to ensure access to the lake but also to minimize the threats from contamination, erosion, and sedimentation. As such, development forms within the district are advised to remain sparsely developed and restricted from any activity that would feature toxic chemicals or high volumes or percentages of impervious surfaces. The County does enforce State required erosion and sedimentation standards plus the DNR environmental planning criteria, but where possible the County is also encouraged to foster best management practices with regard to stormwater runoff and xeriscaping. Conservation design and conservation easements are also encouraged, as are public and private parks with an emphasis on passive uses.

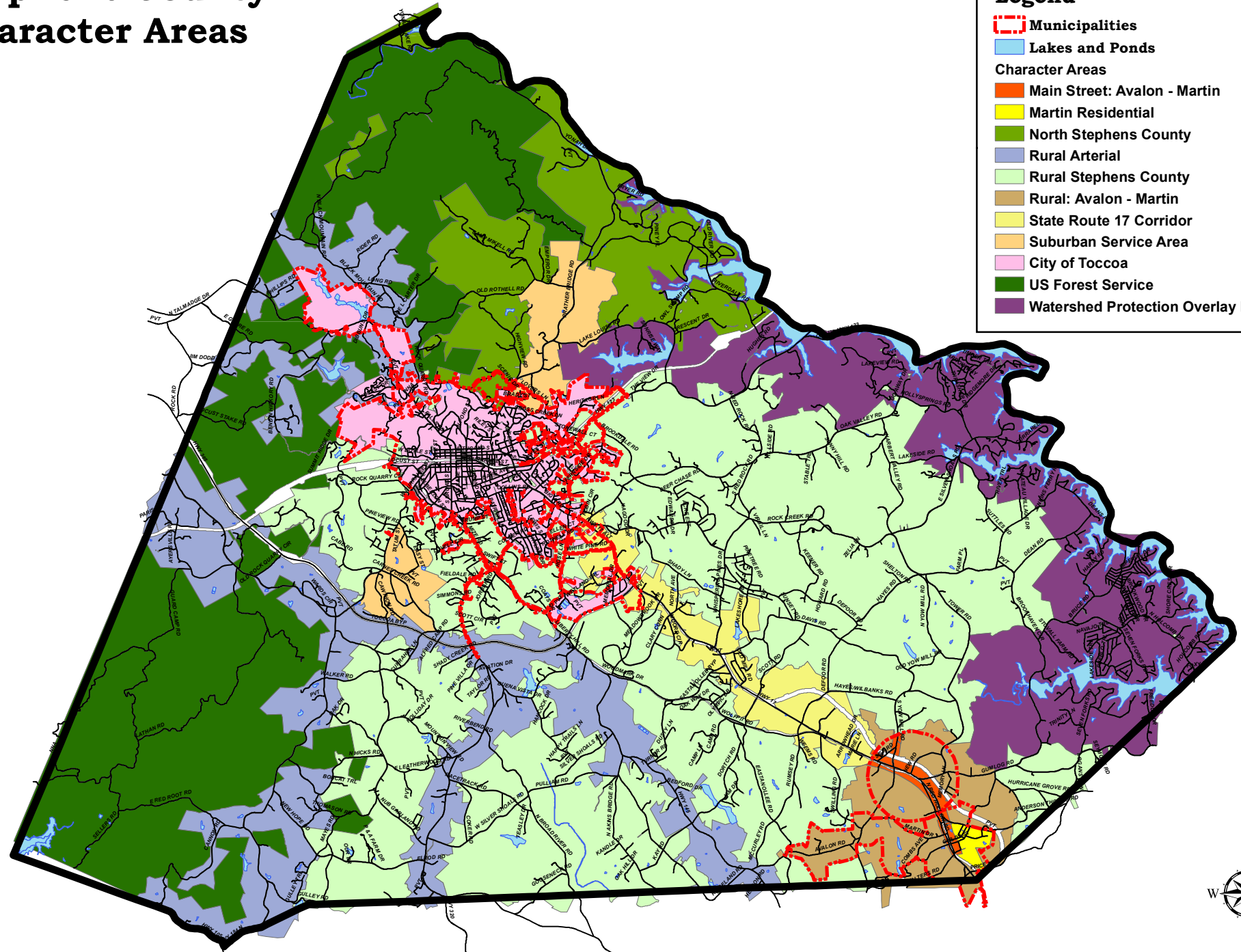




- ***Develop and implement a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal network of trails throughout the area, as well as plans for sidewalk expansion and long-term maintenance policies.
- Review/Amend as needed ***requirements for septic system installation and maintenance*** within the district.
- ***Develop a septic system inventory database*** for monitoring existing systems by age and reported malfunctions/violations.
- ***Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan.*** The County and Cities should work together and with other stakeholders to establish a formal strategy for the identification and protection of natural habitats, both to preserve local ecology and environmental resources and to promote passive outdoor recreation.
- Maintain cooperation with DNR and ***enforce State environmental laws and rules*** regarding State Vital Areas and natural resources (Policy)
- ***Update floodplain and environmental mapping*** data every 5 years (Policy)
- ***Limit expansion of sewer service*** outside of the city and existing urban areas, so as to minimize growth and scale of development in rural areas
- ***Adopt policies allowing conservation subdivision development*** patterns



# Stephens County Character Areas



**Legend**

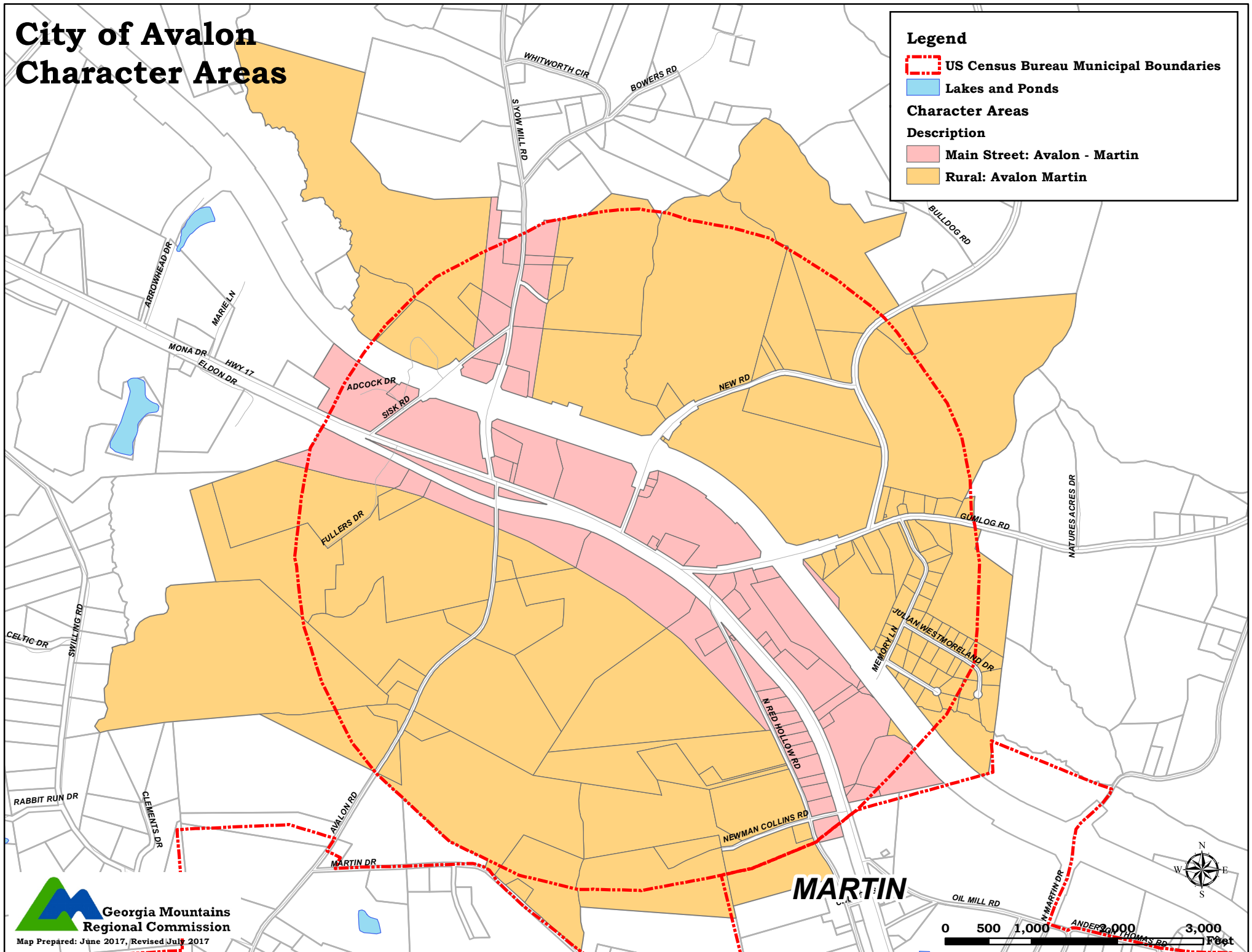
- Municipalities
- Lakes and Ponds
- Character Areas**
- Main Street: Avalon - Martin
- Martin Residential
- North Stephens County
- Rural Arterial
- Rural Stephens County
- Rural: Avalon - Martin
- State Route 17 Corridor
- Suburban Service Area
- City of Toccoa
- US Forest Service
- Watershed Protection Overlay District



# City of Avalon Character Areas

## Legend

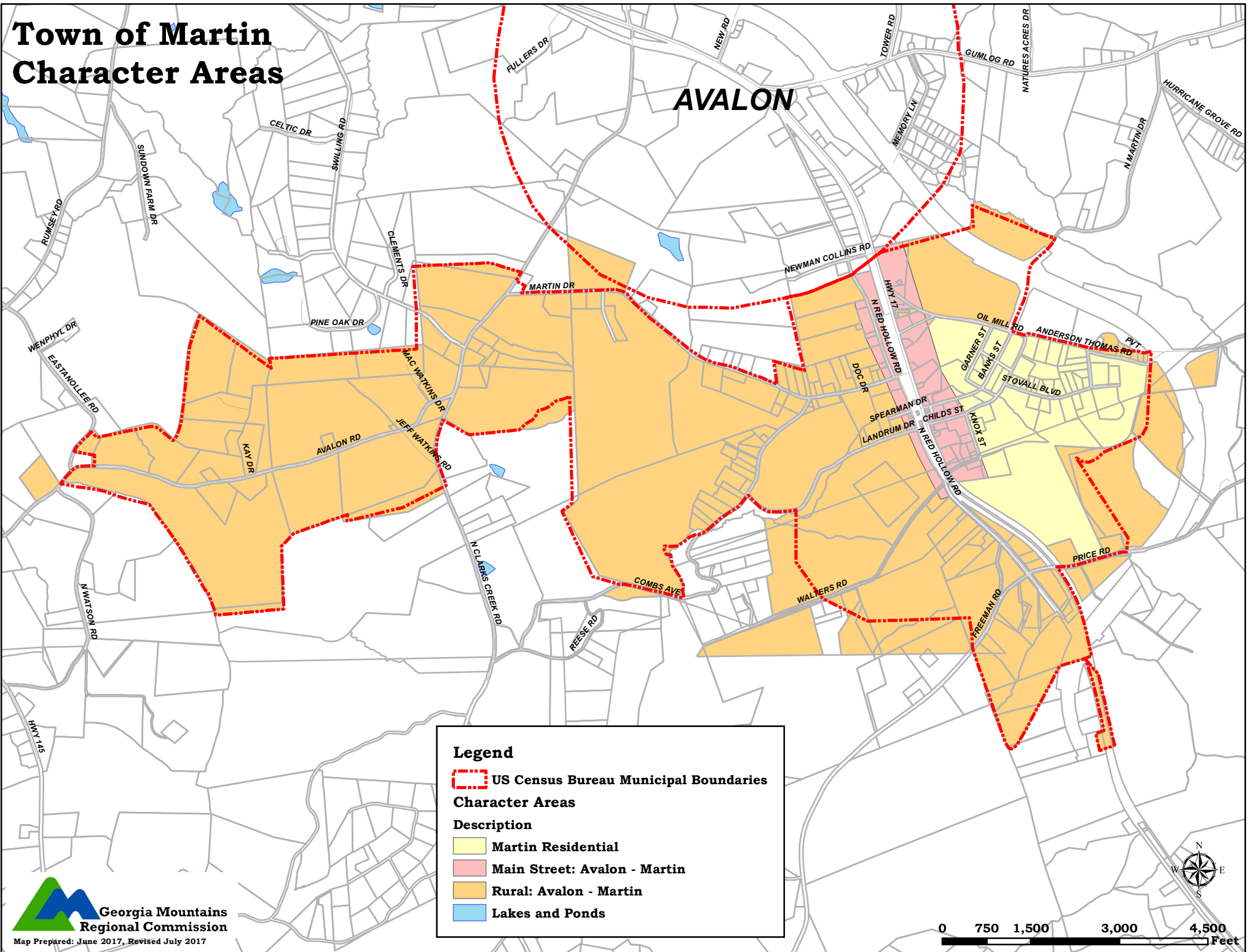
- US Census Bureau Municipal Boundaries
- Lakes and Ponds
- Character Areas**
- Description**
- Main Street: Avalon - Martin
- Rural: Avalon Martin








**MARTIN**

# Town of Martin Character Areas

## AVALON



**Legend**

-  US Census Bureau Municipal Boundaries
- Character Areas**
- Description**
-  Martin Residential
-  Main Street: Avalon - Martin
-  Rural: Avalon - Martin
-  Lakes and Ponds

## Quality Community Objectives Assessment

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to its fullest potential. This assessment should be used a tool by a community to compare how it is progressing toward the sustainable and livable objectives, but no community will be judged on its progress. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles. A majority of positive responses for a particular objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. Negative responses may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives. Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective it may consider this assessment a means of monitoring progress towards achievement.

### 1. Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

*While committed to retaining a rural atmosphere, the County and Cities, together with their partners, are equally committed to securing the economic viability of the region going forward. Economic prosperity enables individuals, households and communities to be stronger, and provide better for each other. The governments support the local Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Development Authority as part of ongoing efforts to foster economic development for the community. The governments also maintain contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the State for pursuit of assistance and outside funding opportunities in support of economic development opportunities.*

### 2. Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

*The County and the Cities recognize the value of their location as part of “The Gateway to the Mountains” and the impact of their agrarian and military heritage. The governments maintain contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to work for the protection and promotion of natural and cultural resources in the area. The governments also employ policies and practices related to State Vital Areas, National Wetland Inventory (FIRM) data and other applicable sources to monitor and enforce the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.*

### 3. Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

*Through this planning process, ongoing efforts to update area mapping, and regular communication with each other, the County and Cities work to ensure local development policies support sustainable development that enables economic growth while managing local resources, utilities and infrastructure.*

#### **4. Local Preparedness**

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

*Through this planning process and ongoing coordination among emergency responders, and through regular communication with other stakeholders (such as the regional hospital), the Cities and Stephens County work together to ensure the community is properly poised to prevent, manage and respond to growth pressures and natural and man-made hazards.*

#### **5. Sense of Place**

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

*The County and the Cities recognize the value of their location as part of "The Gateway to the Mountains" and the impact of their agrarian and military heritage. The governments maintain contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to work for the protection and promotion of natural and cultural resources in the area. The governments also employ policies and practices related to State Vital Areas, National Wetland Inventory (FIRM) data and other applicable sources to monitor and enforce the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. The Cities of Avalon and Martin will also be diligent in their efforts to foster more unique and appropriate rural main street settings at the heart of their communities.*

#### **6. Regional Cooperation**

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

*The County and Cities actively coordinate with each other and Toccoa in maintaining their local Service Delivery Strategy and SPLOST program, and participate with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and other appropriate regional organizations. The governments also maintain regular contact with various State Departments to ensure knowledge of, and access to, their programs and resources. The Cities and County are considered active partners in regional activities and do not feel threatened or adversely impacted by any regional partners.*

#### **7. Housing Options**

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs,

and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

*Stephens County policies encourage higher density housing to locate in accordance with utility capacity, but not necessarily within or adjacent to the cities. However, the County and the Cities all understand the need to raise the profile of the future housing stock, both to ensure the quality of life for area residents but also to ensure the communities' sustainable appeal to businesses for economic growth. All local governments will hone their policies to monitor the health of the existing supply, foster restoration/renovation where needed and possible, and encourage viable workforce housing among newer development.*

### **8. Transportation Options**

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

*Neither Stephens County nor the cities provide any form of sponsored public transit service. There is minimal service through State sponsored rural transit vans and shuttle programs. This will be reevaluated in 2018 once the Georgia Mountains Regional Transit Plan is completed and provides additional information about possible multi-jurisdictional programs.*

### **9. Educational Opportunities**

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

*The County and Cities work with the Stephens County School Board to ensure access for quality primary and secondary educational facilities and programs for area residents. The governments also work with other partners to ensure access to viable post-secondary resources such as Toccoa Falls College, North Georgia Technical College (with its Toccoa campus), and other area educational institutions.*

### **10. Community Health**

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

*The governments work with Stephens County Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital in Lavonia and the Stephens County Health Department to ensure access for quality health care facilities and programs for area residents. The governments also work with other partners to monitor residents' needs and requests in providing access to these services as the area grows.*

# IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The Implementation Program is the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision and for addressing each of the Community Needs and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures, both short and long-term, that must be undertaken by the community in order realize the community's goals. Identifying these items helps the community organize their actions

## **Policies, Long-Term Activities and Ongoing Programs**

One type of action a community can establish to achieve its vision is the establishment of policy. These are those ongoing principles and practices that the community will observe in order to realize specific objectives. Some policies may compliment single action-items while others may provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Vision or addressing Community Issues and Opportunities.

In addition to establishing policy, communities may also establish long-term or ongoing programs and activities that support identified objectives. These measures compliment policies or may simply be action items that must be employed more than once. These are recognized here so as to distinguish their need and conditions apart from the single-action items and to identify any required special terms or context.

In addition, several items have been identified as policies, general objections and directions for the communities in regards to different areas of concern. These policies will be used as guidelines for general, long-term practices for each government.

- Improve collaboration with regional and State groups, e.g. DCA's Office of Downtown Development, Georgia Council for the Arts, GA Trust, GMA, NE GA Travel Association
- Continue to improve quality of interaction between communities
- Maintain involvement with tri-county Development Authority
- Maintain or improve levels of service for all public facilities
- Maintain eligibility for Opportunity Zone status
- Support greater coordination among local industry, Toccoa Falls College, North Georgia Tech, and Stephens County School System
- Continue to expand greenspace
- Annually review USFS Wildfire Management Plan with first responders
- Support the USFS policy/activity within the National Forest and wildlife areas
- Update floodplain and environmental mapping data every 5 years
- Enforce State environmental laws and rules
- Promote the *Firewise* and *Fire Adapted Community* programs
- Limit expansion of sewer service in environmentally sensitive areas
- Develop and maintain long-term plans for all utilities and infrastructure
- Coordinate with Cities/County to protect against conflicting land uses at boundaries
- Annually review sewer capacities and improvement plans (Cities)
- Support the renovation/restoration of Camp Toccoa and affiliated properties as a tourism asset for the community and the region.

## Report of Accomplishments

This is the review of the STWP from the previous five years. As a new STWP is produced every five years, the items within the previous STWP must be identified for their status as either complete, in progress, postponed or cancelled. Those items that have been postponed or are in progress must be shown in the next STWP where appropriate, while those items that have been postponed or cancelled must also include a reason for their status.

### *Stephens County*

| Action  | Status      | Comment                                  |
|---|-------------|--|
| Replace Sheriff Vehicle   | Complete    |  |
| Clean Up Illegal Dump Sites                                       | Complete    |  |
| Roadside Cleanup  | Complete    |  |
| Replace Ambulance   | Complete    |  |
| Upgrade DFACS Building  | Complete    |  |
| Road Striping of 325.3 Miles 38 Roads                             | Complete    |  |
| New Facility for Animal Control                                   | Complete    |  |
| Close C&D Landfill  | In Progress | Awaiting EPD certificate                 |
| Training Center for Fire Department                               | Complete    |  |
| Additional Fire Station   | Complete    |  |
| Narrowband Compliant Radios for Public Safety                     | Complete    |  |
| Repair Bridge on North Yow Mill Road                              | Complete    |  |
| Repair Bridge on Pulliam Road                                     | Complete    |  |
| Upgrade Self Contained Breathing Apparatus                        | Complete    |  |
| Recreations Safety Netting at Ball Fields                         | Complete    |  |
| Rebuilding Improvement Cost Tables                                | Complete    |  |
| Develop Land Use  | Complete    |  |
| Develop Countywide Greenspace Plan                                | Postponed   | Deferred until funding available         |
| New Road Equipment  | Complete    |  |
| CAD System Upgrade E911   | Complete    |  |
| Demolish Former Stephens County Middle School                     | Complete    |  |
| GIS Countywide  | Complete    |  |
| Martin Satellite Receiver System                                  | Complete    |  |
| Paving of 2.786 Miles of Rock Creek Road                          | Complete    |  |
| Relocation of Force Main for Hwy 17 Expansion                     | Complete    |  |
| Conduction of Audit for Personal Property                         | Complete    |  |
| Lowboy for Public Works   | Complete    |  |
| Comp Plan Update: Community Assessment and Participation Program* | In Progress | *= Plan being done to meet new standards |



**2017 Joint Comprehensive Plan  
Stephens County, Cities of Avalon and Martin**

***City of Avalon***

| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Status</b> | <b>Comment</b>                                      |
|---|---------------|---|
| Upgrade Existing Zoning Map                                     | Complete      |   |
| Establish Tax Millage Rate for City of Avalon at ½ Millage Rate | Complete      |   |
| Pave & Upgrade City Streets                                     | In Progress   | Ongoing City policy                                 |
| Develop Countywide greenspace plan                              | Postponed     | Deferred until funding is available                 |
| Support Highway 17 Corridor Study                               | Complete      |   |
| Conduct workshop to review labor force profile                  | Complete      |   |
| Construct New City Hall   | Postponed     | Property acquired but funding needed for renovation |

***City of Martin***

| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Status</b> | <b>Comment</b>                      |
|--|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program & Adopt a Floodplain Ordinance | Complete      |                                     |
| Water Line Repairs & Upgrades, Change 2" lines to 6" Lines                         | Complete      |                                     |
| Pave & Upgrade City Streets  | In Progress   | Ongoing City policy                 |
| Bring Additional Well On-Line to the Water System                                  | Postponed     | Deferred until funding is available |
| Sidewalk Maintenance (Based Upon Need)   | In Progress   | Ongoing City policy                 |
| Develop Countywide greenspace plan   | Postponed     | Deferred until funding is available |
| Support Highway 17 Corridor Study  | Complete      |                                     |
| Conduct workshop to review labor force profile                                     | Complete      |                                     |
| Add Playground Equipment to Park/Ball Fields                                       | Complete      |                                     |

## Short-Term Work Program

The third forward-thinking element of the Implementation Program is the Short-Term Work Program (STWP). This identifies specific implementation actions the local government or other entities intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This can include any ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, financing arrangements, or other programs or initiatives to be put in place to realize the plan goals.

### *Stephens County*

| Year | Action  | Estimated Cost | Funding Source | Responsibility                           |
|------|---|----------------|----------------|--|
| 2017 | Review/Update Service Delivery Strategy   | NA             | NA             | Cities, County                           |
| 2017 | Inventory broadband infrastructure and service areas in county                            | NA             | NA             | Cities, County                           |
| 2017 | Develop annual forum with Cities on education and employment conditions within the region | NA             | NA             | Cities, County, Dev. Auth., School Board |
| 2017 | Develop telecom improvement plan with broadband providers, North Ga. Network and GDEcD    | TBD            | TBD            | County, Dev. Auth. GDEcD                 |
| 2017 | Develop a septic system inventory database  | \$1,000        | DNR            | County                                   |
| 2018 | Establishment of a beautification / Streetscape program for SR17                          | \$1,000        | County         | County                                   |
| 2018 | Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity                                    | NA             | NA             | County                                   |
| 2018 | SUV for Fire Dept.  | 30k            | County, FPS    | Fire Dept.                               |
| 2018 | Update traffic profile of SR17 corridor   | NA             | NA             | County, GDOT                             |
| 2018 | Performance review of code enforcement procedures and policies                            | NA             | NA             | County                                   |
| 2018 | Adopt/Promote conservation design policies  | \$1,000        | County         | County                                   |
| 2018 | Develop bicycle and sidewalk/ pedestrian master plan (w/ Cities)                          | \$10,000       | County, GDOT   | County, Cities, GMRC                     |
| 2018 | Review and update development regulations & ordinances                                    | NA             | NA             | City                                     |
| 2019 | Amend regulations to minimize parking demands.  | NA             | NA             | County                                   |
| 2019 | Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan   | \$5,000        | DNR            | City, County, GMRC                       |
| 2019 | Develop and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan                                  | \$5,000        | DCA            | County, DCA                              |
| 2019 | Develop beautification plans for major arterials coming into Toccoa                       | \$5,000        | County         | County                                   |
| 2019 | Gear washing equipment at two locations   | 25k            | County         | Fire Dept.                               |

**2017 Joint Comprehensive Plan  
Stephens County, Cities of Avalon and Martin**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Estimated Cost</b> | <b>Funding Source</b> | <b>Responsibility</b> |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2019        | Rehab unit with trailer and equipment   | 90k                   | County, AFG           | Fire Dept.            |
| 2019        | Upgrade radio system to provide proper coverage                                 | TBD                   | County, FPS           | Fire Dept.            |
| 2019        | Develop Workforce/Starter housing strategic plan                                | \$10,000              | DCA                   | Cities, County, GMRC  |
| 2019        | Develop annual monitoring report of enforcement activity                        | NA                    | NA                    | County                |
| 2019        | Establish/Utilize brownfield redevelopment incentives                           | TBD                   | TBD                   | County, EPD           |
| 2019        | Review/Amend requirements for septic systems                                    | NA                    | NA                    | City                  |
| 2020        | Develop reference guide for architectural design                                | \$1,000               | County                | County                |
| 2020        | Develop report assessing all State listed waters in need of resource protection | \$1,000               | County, EPD           | County, GMRC          |
| 2020        | Update traffic profile of Big A Road corridor                                   | TBD                   | GDOT                  | City, County, GDOT    |
| 2020        | Station renovation (accommodate ladder truck)                                   | TBD                   | County, USDA          | Fire Dept.            |
| 2020        | Complete training center- Build pavilion, pave parking lot, restrooms           | 75k                   | County, USDA          | Fire Dept.            |
| 2021        | Update Comprehensive plan   | \$20,000              | DCA                   | County, City, GMRC    |
| 2021        | Start roadside clean-up campaign  | \$1,000               | County, GDOT          | County                |
| 2021        | Replace 2 brush trucks  | 125k                  | County                | Fire Dept.            |
| 2021        | Acquire or replace 3 aging Engines  | 350k                  | County                | Fire Dept.            |
| 2021        | Ladder Truck  | 300k                  | County                | Fire Dept.            |
| 2021        | Replace aging SCBA  | 200k                  | County, AFG           | Fire Dept.            |

***City of Avalon***

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Estimated Cost</b> | <b>Funding Source</b> | <b>Responsibility</b>                    |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>2017</b> | Update Service Delivery Strategy  | NA                    | NA                    | Cities, County                           |
| <b>2017</b> | Inventory broadband infrastructure and service areas in county                            | NA                    | NA                    | Cities, County                           |
| <b>2017</b> | Develop annual forum with Cities on education and employment conditions within the region | NA                    | NA                    | Cities, County, Dev. Auth., School Board |
| <b>2017</b> | Develop telecom improvement plan with broadband providers, North Ga. Network and GDEcD    | TBD                   | TBD                   | County, Dev. Auth. GDEcD                 |
| <b>2017</b> | Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity                                    | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| <b>2017</b> | Performance review of code enforcement procedures & policies                              | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| <b>2017</b> | Develop adaptive reuse plan for new City Hall   | \$1,000               | City                  | City                                     |
| <b>2017</b> | Solicit GDOT guidance on improvement process  | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| <b>2018</b> | Adopt/Promote conservation design policies  | \$1,000               | City                  | City                                     |
| <b>2018</b> | Develop bicycle and sidewalk/ pedestrian master plan (w/ County)                          | \$10,000              | County, GDOT          | County, Cities, GMRC                     |
| <b>2018</b> | Review and update development regulations & ordinances                                    | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| <b>2018</b> | Seek funding for facility improvements (City Hall)  | TBD                   | TBD                   | City                                     |
| <b>2018</b> | Collect traffic and accident data for SR17 intersections                                  | NA                    | NA                    | City, GDOT                               |
| <b>2019</b> | Develop improvement plan for SR17 intersection  | TBD                   | GDOT                  | City, GDOT                               |
| <b>2019</b> | Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan   | \$5,000               | DNR                   | Cities, County, GMRC                     |
| <b>2020</b> | Develop a master plan for SR17 corridor & Main Street                                     | \$5,000               | DCA                   | Cities, GMRC                             |
| <b>2020</b> | Develop reference guide for architectural design (Main St.)                               | \$1,000               | City                  | Cities, GMRC                             |
| <b>2021</b> | Update Comprehensive plan   | \$10,000              | DCA                   | County, City, GMRC                       |
| <b>2019</b> | Develop and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan                                  | \$5,000               | DCA                   | County, DCA                              |
| <b>2021</b> | Develop streetscape improvements for Main Street  | TBD                   | SPLOST, Grants        | City                                     |
| <b>2021</b> | Perform study to identify possible business incubators along Main Street                  | TBD                   | GDED                  | City, Schools, GDED                      |

***City of Martin***

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Estimated Cost</b> | <b>Funding Source</b> | <b>Responsibility</b>                    |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 2017        | Update Service Delivery Strategy  | NA                    | NA                    | Cities, County                           |
| 2017        | Inventory broadband infrastructure and service areas in county                            | NA                    | NA                    | Cities, County                           |
| 2017        | Develop annual forum with Cities on education and employment conditions within the region | NA                    | NA                    | Cities, County, Dev. Auth., School Board |
| 2017        | Develop telecom improvement plan with broadband providers, North Ga. Network and GDEcD    | TBD                   | TBD                   | County, Dev. Auth. GDEcD                 |
| 2017        | Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity                                    | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| 2017        | Performance review of code enforcement procedures & policies                              | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| 2017        | Develop adaptive reuse plan for new City Hall   | \$1,000               | City                  | City                                     |
| 2018        | Seek funding for facility improvements (City Hall)  | TBD                   | TBD                   | City                                     |
| 2018        | Adopt/Promote conservation design policies  | \$1,000               | City                  | City                                     |
| 2018        | Develop bicycle and sidewalk/ pedestrian master plan (w/ County)                          | \$10,000              | County, GDOT          | County, Cities, GMRC                     |
| 2018        | Review and update development regulations & ordinances                                    | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| 2019        | Develop and implement a Greenspace Plan   | \$5,000               | DNR                   | Cities, County, GMRC                     |
| 2019        | Develop and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan                                  | \$5,000               | DCA                   | County, DCA                              |
| 2019        | Develop reference guide for architectural design (Residential)                            | \$1,000               | City                  | Cities, GMRC                             |
| 2020        | Develop reference guide for architectural design (Main St.)                               | \$1,000               | City                  | Cities, GMRC                             |
| 2020        | Develop a master plan for SR17 corridor & Main Street                                     | \$5,000               | DCA                   | Cities, GMRC                             |
| 2021        | Update Comprehensive plan   | \$10,000              | DCA                   | County, City, GMRC                       |
| 2021        | Solicit development study for increased residential capacity within the city              | \$1,000               | City                  | City                                     |
| 2021        | Explore options for new park space  | NA                    | NA                    | City                                     |
| 2021        | Develop streetscape improvements for Main Street  | TBD                   | SPLOST, Grants        | City                                     |
| 2021        | Develop a “build-out” scenario for city   | TBD                   | City                  | City                                     |

# APPENDICES

**Population and Demographic Profile**

**Area Labor Profile for Stephens County**

**Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results**

**Public Meeting Sign-in Sheets**

## Population and Demographic Profile

### 2010 Census Profiles

|   | Stephens Co.  |        | Avalon     |         | Martin     |         |
|---|---------------|--------|------------|---------|------------|---------|
|   | #             | %      | #          | %       | #          | %       |
| <b>Total Population</b>                 | <b>26,175</b> |        | <b>213</b> |         | <b>381</b> |         |
| <15 yrs                                 | 4,891         | 18.69% | 36         | 16.90%  | 55         | 14.44%  |
| 15-64 yrs                               | 16,936        | 64.70% | 136        | 63.85%  | 271        | 71.13%  |
| 65+ yrs                                 | 4,348         | 16.61% | 41         | 19.25%  | 55         | 14.44%  |
| <b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>             |               |        |            |         |            |         |
| White                                   | 22,286        | 85.14% | 179        | 84.04%  | 318        | 83.46%  |
| Black or African American               | 2,845         | 10.87% | 22         | 10.33%  | 59         | 15.49%  |
| American Indian/ Alaska Native          | 77            | 0.29%  | 1          | 0.47%   | 0          | 0.00%   |
| Asian                                   | 178           | 0.68%  | 0          | 0.00%   | 0          | 0.00%   |
| Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander | 15            | 0.06%  | 5          | 2.35%   | 0          | 0.00%   |
| Some Other Race                         | 257           | 0.98%  | 0          | 0.00%   | 2          | 0.52%   |
| Two or More Races                       | 517           | 1.98%  | 6          | 2.82%   | 2          | 0.52%   |
| Hispanic or Latino (of any race)        | 633           | 2.42%  | 2          | 0.94%   | 6          | 1.57%   |
| Not Hispanic or Latino                  | 25,542        | 97.58% | 211        | 99.06%  | 375        | 98.43%  |
| <b>Households</b>                       |               |        |            |         |            |         |
| In Households                           | 25,627        | 97.91% | 213        | 100.00% | 381        | 100.00% |
| In Group Quarters                       | 548           | 2.09%  | 0          | 0.00%   | 0          | 0.00%   |
| Average Household size                  | 2.49          |        | 2.51       |         | 2.59       |         |
| Average Family Size                     | 2.96          |        | 2.97       |         | 2.87       |         |
| <b>Housing Occupancy</b>                |               |        |            |         |            |         |
| <i>Total housing units</i>              | 12,662        |        | 116        |         | 182        |         |
| Occupied housing units                  | 10,289        | 81.26% | 85         | 73.28%  | 147        | 80.77%  |
| Owner-occupied housing units            | 7,182         | 69.80% | 51         | 60.00%  | 101        | 68.71%  |
| Renter-occupied housing units           | 3,107         | 30.20% | 34         | 40.00%  | 46         | 31.29%  |
| Vacant housing units                    | 2,373         | 18.74% | 31         | 26.72%  | 35         | 19.23%  |
| Homeowner vacancy rate                  | 3.60%         |        | 3.80%      |         | 1.90%      |         |
| Rental vacancy rate                     | 13.00%        |        | 15.00%     |         | 22.00%     |         |

**Area Labor Profile for Stephens County**





## Area Labor Profile

# Stephens

# County



Updated: Feb 2017

## Labor Force Activity - 2015

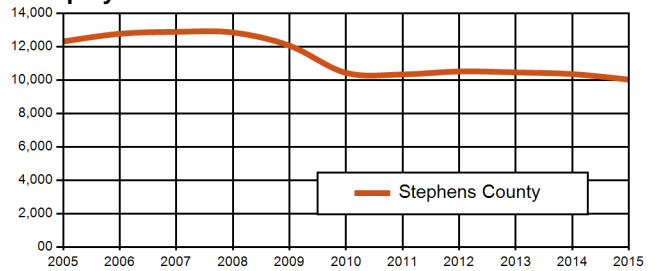
### 2015 ANNUAL AVERAGES

|                      | Labor Force   | Employed      | Unemployed   | Rate        |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Stephens             | 10,720        | 10,025        | 695          | 6.5%        |
| Banks                | 8,162         | 7,718         | 444          | 5.4%        |
| Franklin             | 9,203         | 8,624         | 579          | 6.3%        |
| Habersham            | 18,844        | 17,785        | 1,059        | 5.6%        |
| <b>Stephens Area</b> | <b>46,929</b> | <b>44,152</b> | <b>2,777</b> | <b>5.9%</b> |
| Georgia              | 4,770,873     | 4,490,931     | 279,942      | 5.9%        |
| United States        | 157,129,917   | 148,833,417   | 8,296,333    | 5.3%        |
| Oconee, SC           | 34,437        | 32,438        | 1,999        | 5.7%        |

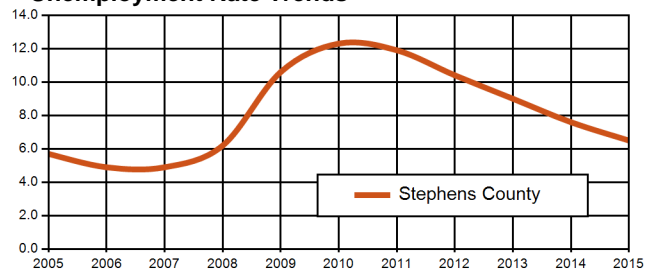
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

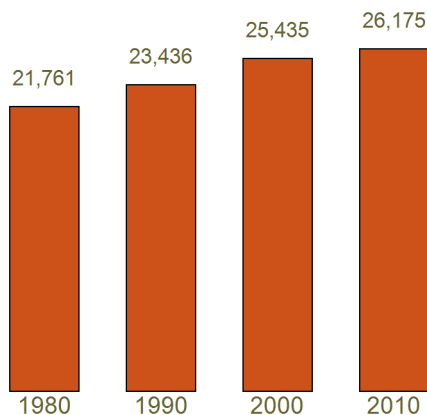
### Employment Trends



### Unemployment Rate Trends



### Population Estimates



### Population

|                      | 2010 Census    | 2015 Rank  | 2015 Estimate  | % Change 2000-2015 | 2025 Projected* | % Change 2010-2025 |
|----------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Stephens</b>      | <b>26,175</b>  | <b>150</b> | <b>25,586</b>  | <b>-2.3</b>        | <b>26,087</b>   | <b>-0.3</b>        |
| City of Toccoa       | 8,491          |            |                |                    |                 |                    |
| <b>Stephens Area</b> | <b>181,678</b> |            | <b>186,101</b> | <b>2.4</b>         | <b>205,565</b>  | <b>13.1</b>        |
| Georgia              | 9,687,653      |            | 10,214,860     | 5.4                | 11,538,707      | 19.1               |
| United States        | 308,745,538    |            | 321,418,820    | 4.1                | 349,439,199     | 13.2               |
| Oconee, SC           | 71,983         |            | 75,713         | 5.2                | 87,500          | 21.6               |

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, \*Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

**MARK BUTLER - COMMISSIONER, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
**Equal Opportunity Employer/Program**  
**Auxiliary Aids and Services Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities**

**Workforce Statistics & Economic Research; E-mail: [Workforce\\_Info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:Workforce_Info@gdol.ga.gov) Phone: (404) 232-3875**

# Industry Mix - 3rd Quarter of 2016

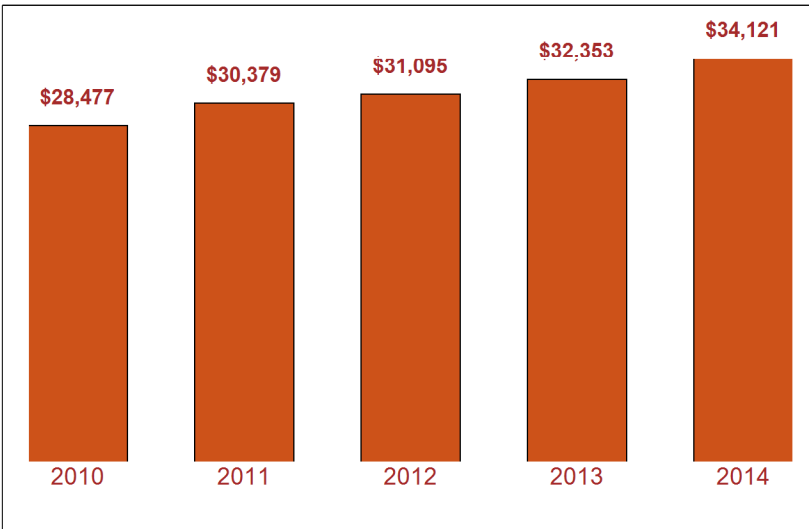
| INDUSTRY   | Stephens        |                   |              |             | Stephens Area   |                   |              |             |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
|  | NUMBER OF FIRMS | EMPLOYMENT NUMBER | PERCENT      | WEEKLY WAGE | NUMBER OF FIRMS | EMPLOYMENT NUMBER | PERCENT      | WEEKLY WAGE |
| <b>Goods-Producing</b>   | <b>128</b>      | <b>2,452</b>      | <b>26.7</b>  | <b>823</b>  | <b>441</b>      | <b>9,580</b>      | <b>27.0</b>  | <b>867</b>  |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting                               | 3               | *                 | *            | *           | 40              | 815               | 2.3          | 999         |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction                            | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 2               | *                 | *            | *           |
| Construction   | 60              | 258               | 2.8          | 804         | 227             | 932               | 2.6          | 731         |
| Manufacturing  | 64              | 2,136             | 23.3         | 826         | 172             | 7,813             | 22.1         | 868         |
| Food   | 2               | *                 | *            | *           | 9               | *                 | *            | *           |
| Textile Mills  | 6               | 392               | 4.3          | 742         | 11              | 1,357             | 3.8          | 632         |
| Textile Product Mills  | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 2               | *                 | *            | *           |
| Apparel  | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 4               | 34                | 0.1          | 368         |
| Wood Product   | 3               | 83                | 0.9          | 469         | 21              | 271               | 0.8          | 599         |
| Paper  | 2               | *                 | *            | *           | 3               | *                 | *            | *           |
| Printing and Related Support Activities                                  | 2               | *                 | *            | *           | 9               | 157               | 0.4          | 739         |
| Petroleum and Coal Products  | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 1               | *                 | *            | *           |
| Chemical   | 2               | *                 | *            | *           | 4               | 233               | 0.7          | 976         |
| Plastics and Rubber Products   | 3               | 24                | 0.3          | 843         | 7               | 423               | 1.2          | 665         |
| Nonmetallic Mineral Product  | 3               | *                 | *            | *           | 10              | 41                | 0.1          | 768         |
| Primary Metal  | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 1               | *                 | *            | *           |
| Fabricated Metal Product   | 11              | 197               | 2.1          | 874         | 33              | 694               | 2.0          | 788         |
| Machinery  | 5               | 504               | 5.5          | 959         | 10              | 968               | 2.7          | 1,354       |
| Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component                           | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 2               | *                 | *            | *           |
| Transportation Equipment   | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 8               | 387               | 1.1          | 989         |
| Furniture and Related Product  | 18              | 602               | 6.6          | 826         | 26              | 649               | 1.8          | 805         |
| Miscellaneous  | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 11              | 940               | 2.7          | 1,161       |
| <b>Service-Providing</b>   | <b>427</b>      | <b>4,936</b>      | <b>53.8</b>  | <b>634</b>  | <b>1,715</b>    | <b>19,250</b>     | <b>54.4</b>  | <b>593</b>  |
| Utilities  | 1               | *                 | *            | *           | 7               | 174               | 0.5          | 1,435       |
| Wholesale Trade  | 34              | 213               | 2.3          | 655         | 124             | 925               | 2.6          | 842         |
| Retail Trade   | 103             | 1,171             | 12.8         | 487         | 418             | 4,521             | 12.8         | 476         |
| Transportation and Warehousing   | 9               | 92                | 1.0          | 833         | 48              | 1,088             | 3.1          | 915         |
| Information  | 7               | 64                | 0.7          | 1,180       | 21              | 540               | 1.5          | 902         |
| Finance and Insurance  | 34              | 187               | 2.0          | 777         | 118             | 605               | 1.7          | 861         |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing                                       | 20              | 59                | 0.6          | 450         | 56              | 185               | 0.5          | 511         |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services                         | 34              | 111               | 1.2          | 756         | 130             | 477               | 1.3          | 886         |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises                                  | 4               | 587               | 6.4          | 1,302       | 14              | 737               | 2.1          | 1,236       |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 32              | 329               | 3.6          | 538         | 128             | 1,377             | 3.9          | 499         |
| Educational Services   | 3               | *                 | *            | *           | 13              | 956               | 2.7          | 665         |
| Health Care and Social Assistance  | 61              | 955               | 10.4         | 731         | 202             | 2,544             | 7.2          | 731         |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation                                      | 6               | 100               | 1.1          | 562         | 25              | 324               | 0.9          | 435         |
| Accommodation and Food Services  | 43              | 669               | 7.3          | 238         | 196             | 4,022             | 11.4         | 264         |
| Other Services (except Public Administration)                            | 36              | 158               | 1.7          | 432         | 129             | 652               | 1.8          | 534         |
| <b>Unclassified - industry not assigned</b>                              | <b>23</b>       | <b>34</b>         | <b>0.4</b>   | <b>599</b>  | <b>86</b>       | <b>119</b>        | <b>0.3</b>   | <b>561</b>  |
| <b>Total - Private Sector</b>  | <b>578</b>      | <b>7,422</b>      | <b>80.9</b>  | <b>696</b>  | <b>2,156</b>    | <b>28,830</b>     | <b>81.4</b>  | <b>684</b>  |
| <b>Total - Government</b>  | <b>31</b>       | <b>1,757</b>      | <b>19.1</b>  | <b>651</b>  | <b>151</b>      | <b>6,588</b>      | <b>18.6</b>  | <b>676</b>  |
| Federal Government   | 4               | 67                | 0.7          | 1,070       | 25              | 224               | 0.6          | 1,103       |
| State Government   | 14              | 124               | 1.4          | 536         | 56              | 906               | 2.6          | 618         |
| Local Government   | 13              | 1,566             | 17.1         | 642         | 70              | 5,458             | 15.4         | 669         |
| <b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>  | <b>609</b>      | <b>9,179</b>      | <b>100.0</b> | <b>688</b>  | <b>2,307</b>    | <b>35,417</b>     | <b>100.0</b> | <b>683</b>  |
| <b>ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia</b>  |                 |                   |              |             | <b>302,499</b>  | <b>4,275,556</b>  |              | <b>970</b>  |

Note: \*Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cannot be released. These data use the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categories. Average weekly wage is derived by dividing gross payroll dollars paid to all employees - both hourly and salaried - by the average number of employees who had earnings; average earnings are then divided by the number of weeks in a reporting period to obtain weekly figures. Figures in other columns may not sum accurately due to rounding. All figures are 3rd Quarter of 2016.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. These data represent jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

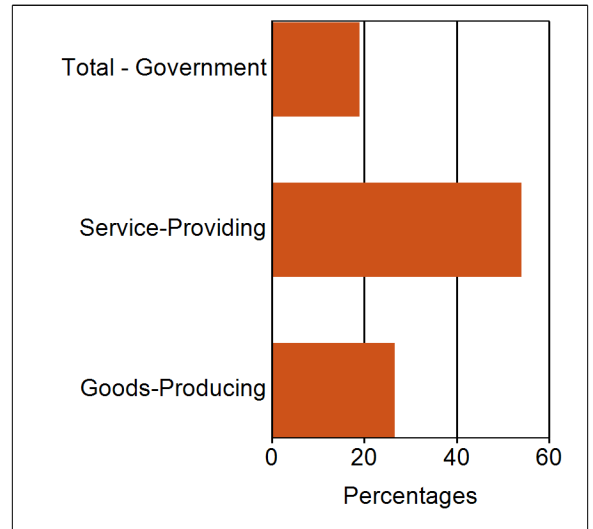
## Stephens Per Capita Income

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



## Stephens Industry Mix 2016

Source: See Industry Mix data on Page 2.



## Top Ten Largest Employers - 2016\*

### Stephens

Eaton Aeroquip, LLC  
 Employment Staffing, Inc.  
 GEM Southeast, Inc.  
 Heritage Healthcare of Toccoa, LLC  
 Patterson Pump Co  
 Pruitt Corporation  
 Sage Automotive Interiors  
 Toccoa Clinic Medical Associates  
 Toccoa Falls College  
 Walmart

\*Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state colleges and universities. Data shown for the Third Quarter of 2016. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

### Stephens Area

Autozoners, Inc.  
 Carry-On Trailer, Inc.  
 Ethicon, Inc.  
 Georgia Department of Corrections  
 Ingles Markets, Inc.  
 Mt. Vernon Mills, Inc.  
 Patterson Pump Co  
 PCS  
 Piedmont College  
 Pruitt Corporation

### COUNTY

Franklin  
 Franklin  
 Habersham  
 Habersham  
 Habersham  
 Habersham  
 Habersham  
 Stephens  
 Habersham  
 Habersham  
 Stephens

## Commuting Patterns

### EMPLOYED RESIDENTS OF

#### Stephens

| COUNTY WHERE EMPLOYED   | NUMBER        | PERCENT OF TOTAL |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Stephens, GA            | 7,175         | 69.3             |
| Franklin, GA            | 993           | 9.6              |
| Habersham, GA           | 600           | 5.8              |
| Hall, GA                | 321           | 3.1              |
| Oconee, SC              | 188           | 1.8              |
| White, GA               | 175           | 1.7              |
| Clarke, GA              | 127           | 1.2              |
| Hart, GA                | 120           | 1.2              |
| Other                   | 651           | 6.3              |
| <b>Total Residents:</b> | <b>10,350</b> | <b>100.0</b>     |

### PERSONS WORKING IN

#### Stephens

| COUNTY OF RESIDENCE     | NUMBER        | PERCENT OF TOTAL |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Stephens, GA            | 7,175         | 68.3             |
| Franklin, GA            | 914           | 8.7              |
| Habersham, GA           | 698           | 6.6              |
| Hart, GA                | 309           | 2.9              |
| White, GA               | 217           | 2.1              |
| Banks, GA               | 208           | 2.0              |
| Oconee, SC              | 179           | 1.7              |
| Orange, FL              | 99            | 0.9              |
| Other                   | 614           | 5.8              |
| <b>Total Residents:</b> | <b>10,512</b> | <b>100.0</b>     |

Note: Other category represents employment from U.S. counties only.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2010 County-To-County Worker Flow Files.

# Education of the Labor Force

## Stephens Area

|                       | PERCENT<br>OF TOTAL | PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE |        |        |        |        |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|                       |                     | 18-24                       | 25-34  | 35-44  | 45-64  | 65+    |
| Elementary            | 8.7%                | 2.5%                        | 9.7%   | 6.0%   | 6.4%   | 18.3%  |
| Some High School      | 16.0%               | 16.6%                       | 14.9%  | 15.0%  | 15.3%  | 18.8%  |
| High School Grad/GED  | 37.6%               | 40.3%                       | 32.3%  | 39.0%  | 40.1%  | 34.4%  |
| Some College          | 19.5%               | 36.5%                       | 20.5%  | 17.5%  | 16.9%  | 13.3%  |
| College Grad 2 Yr     | 5.0%                | 1.7%                        | 8.8%   | 5.7%   | 5.0%   | 3.5%   |
| College Grad 4 Yr     | 8.4%                | 2.4%                        | 9.2%   | 10.5%  | 10.3%  | 6.7%   |
| Post Graduate Studies | 4.9%                | 0.0%                        | 4.7%   | 6.4%   | 6.0%   | 5.0%   |
| Totals                | 100.0%              | 100.0%                      | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 - 65+. The "Some College" category represents workers with less than two years of college and no degree.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2010 Decennial Census.

## High School Graduates - 2015

|                      | PUBLIC<br>SCHOOLS | PRIVATE<br>SCHOOLS* | TOTAL      |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Banks                | 189               | --                  | 189        |
| Franklin             | 201               | --                  | 201        |
| Habersham            | 366               | --                  | 366        |
| Stephens             | 231               | --                  | 231        |
| <b>Stephens Area</b> | <b>987</b>        | <b>--</b>           | <b>987</b> |



Note: Public schools include city as well as county schools systems.

\* Private schools data is not available for 2015 from Georgia Independent School Association.

Source: The Governor's Office of Student Achievement of Georgia.

## Colleges and Universities

### Stephens Area

#### Franklin

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Emmanuel College | <a href="http://www.ec.edu">http://www.ec.edu</a> |
| Emmanuel College | <a href="http://www.ec.edu">www.ec.edu</a>        |

#### Banks

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Milledgeville Campus (Satellite campus of Central Georgia Technical College) | <a href="http://www.centralgatech.edu">www.centralgatech.edu</a> |
|--|--|

#### Habersham

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| North Georgia Technical College | <a href="http://www.northgatech.edu">www.northgatech.edu</a> |
| Piedmont College                | <a href="http://www.piedmont.edu">www.piedmont.edu</a>       |

#### Stephens

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Currahee Campus (Satellite campus of North Georgia Technical College) | <a href="http://www.northgatech.edu">www.northgatech.edu</a> |
| Toccoa Falls College  | <a href="http://www.tfc.edu">www.tfc.edu</a>                 |

Note: The colleges and universities listed include public and private institutions. This list is updated periodically as information becomes available.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

# Technical College Graduates - 2015\*

| PROGRAMS  | TOTAL GRADUATES |      |      | PERCENT CHANGE |           |
|---|-----------------|------|------|----------------|-----------|
|   | 2013            | 2014 | 2015 | 2013-2014      | 2014-2015 |
| Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping°                                 | 31              | 23   | 35   | -25.8          | 52.2      |
| Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General°                        | 53              | 38   | 43   | -28.3          | 13.2      |
| Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Other°                              | 82              | 71   | 23   | -13.4          | -67.6     |
| Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician°                              | 25              | 28   | 26   | 12.0           | -7.1      |
| Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician°                            | 36              | 30   | 28   | -16.7          | -6.7      |
| Business Administration, Management and Operations, Other                         | 7               | 12   | 17   | 71.4           | 41.7      |
| Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician  | 10              | 5    | 5    | -50.0          | 0.0       |
| Commercial Photography°   | 16              | 13   | 13   | -18.8          | 0.0       |
| Computer Installation and Repair Technology/Technician°                           | 2               | 4    | 4    | 100.0          | 0.0       |
| Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General°   | 68              | 72   | 56   | 5.9            | -22.2     |
| Criminal Justice/Safety Studies   | 28              | 33   | 35   | 17.9           | 6.1       |
| Culinary Arts/Chef Training   | 26              | 22   | 17   | -15.4          | -22.7     |
| Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation                        | 2               | 5    | 6    | 150.0          | 20.0      |
| Electrician°  | 10              | 27   | 24   | 170.0          | -11.1     |
| Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)°                          | 50              | 55   | 57   | 10.0           | 3.6       |
| Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other                             | 10              | 5    | 7    | -50.0          | 40.0      |
| Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant°                          | 18              | 20   | 13   | 11.1           | -35.0     |
| Golf Course Operation and Grounds Management°                                     | 7               | 8    | 4    | 14.3           | -50.0     |
| Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General°                           | 29              | 53   | 77   | 82.8           | 45.3      |
| Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/° | 52              | 42   | 55   | -19.2          | 31.0      |
| Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology°                                  | 11              | 37   | 11   | 236.4          | -70.3     |
| Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training                                      | 31              | 27   | 30   | -12.9          | 11.1      |
| Lineworker°   | 45              | 52   | 45   | 15.6           | -13.5     |
| Machine Shop Technology/Assistant°  | 19              | 23   | 22   | 21.1           | -4.3      |
| Marine Maintenance/Fitter and Ship Repair Technology/Technician                   | 10              | 4    | 9    | -60.0          | 125.0     |
| Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, Other                               | 5               | 1    | 1    | -80.0          | 0.0       |
| Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder°  | 7               | 7    | 8    | 0.0            | 14.3      |
| Medical Office Assistant/Specialist°  | 20              | 6    | 16   | -70.0          | 166.7     |
| Medical/Clinical Assistant  | 18              | 30   | 27   | 66.7           | -10.0     |
| Network and System Administration/Administrator°                                  | 16              | 12   | 22   | -25.0          | 83.3      |
| Pharmacy Technician/Assistant   | 11              | 13   | 11   | 18.2           | -15.4     |
| Professional, Technical, Business, and Scientific Writing°                        | 4               | 2    | 3    | -50.0          | 50.0      |
| Tool and Die Technology/Technician°   | 8               | 5    | 7    | -37.5          | 40.0      |
| Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design°                    | 5               | 7    | 3    | 40.0           | -57.1     |

## Technical College Graduates - 2015\*

| PROGRAMS                   | TOTAL GRADUATES |      |      | PERCENT CHANGE |           |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------|------|----------------|-----------|
|                            | 2013            | 2014 | 2015 | 2013-2014      | 2014-2015 |
| Welding Technology/Welder° | 88              | 87   | 91   | -1.1           | 4.6       |

Definition: All graduates except those listed as technical certificates(°) are diploma and degree graduates. Diploma and degree programs are one to two years in length. Technical certificates are less than a year in length. Duplication may occur due to graduates with multiple awards.

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

\*Data shown represents Annual 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.

## Georgia Department of Labor Location(s)

### Career Center(s)

112 N Alexander Street

Toccoa GA 30577

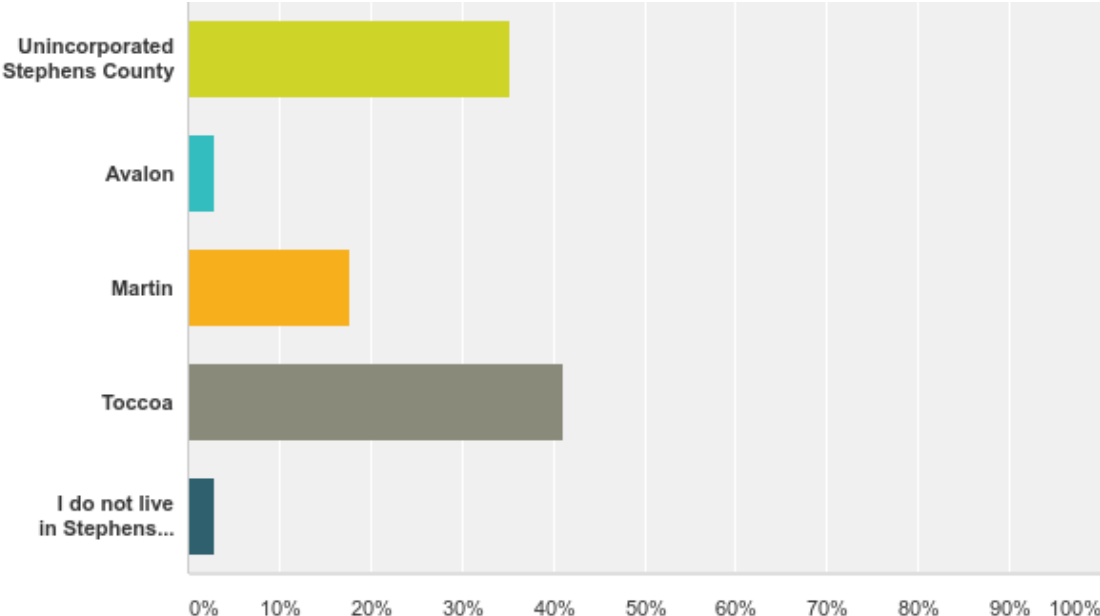
**Phone:** (706) 282 - 4514

**Fax:** (706) 282 - 4513

For copies of Area Labor Profiles, please visit our website at: <http://dol.georgia.gov> or contact Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Georgia Department of Labor, 148 Andrew Young International Blvd N.E. Atlanta, GA. 30303-1751. Phone: 404-232-3875; Fax: 404-232-3888 or Email us at [workforce\\_info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:workforce_info@gdol.ga.gov)

**Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results**

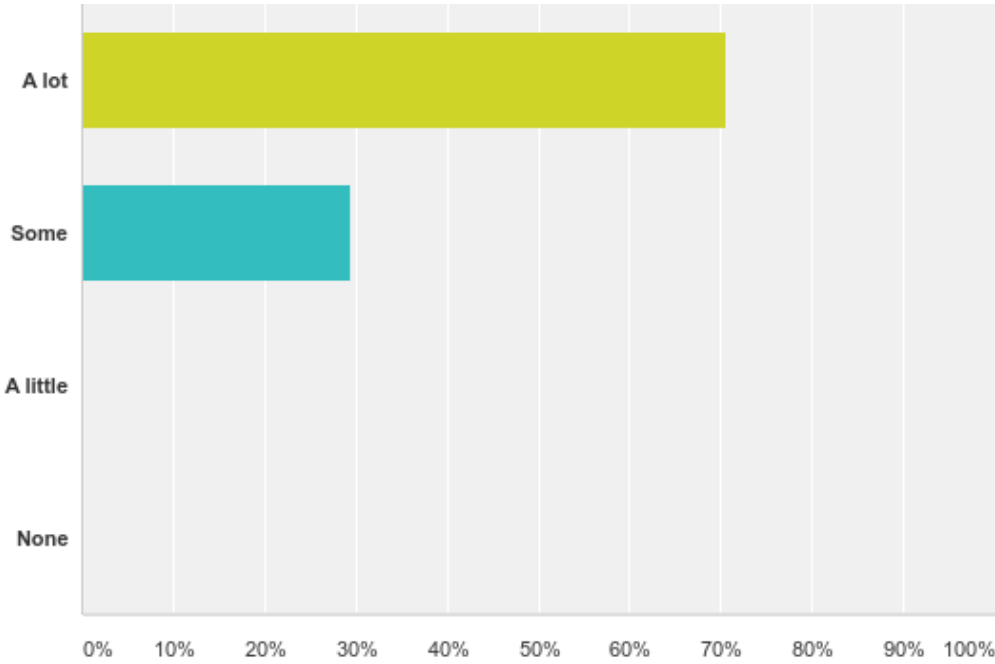
# Q1: I am a resident in:



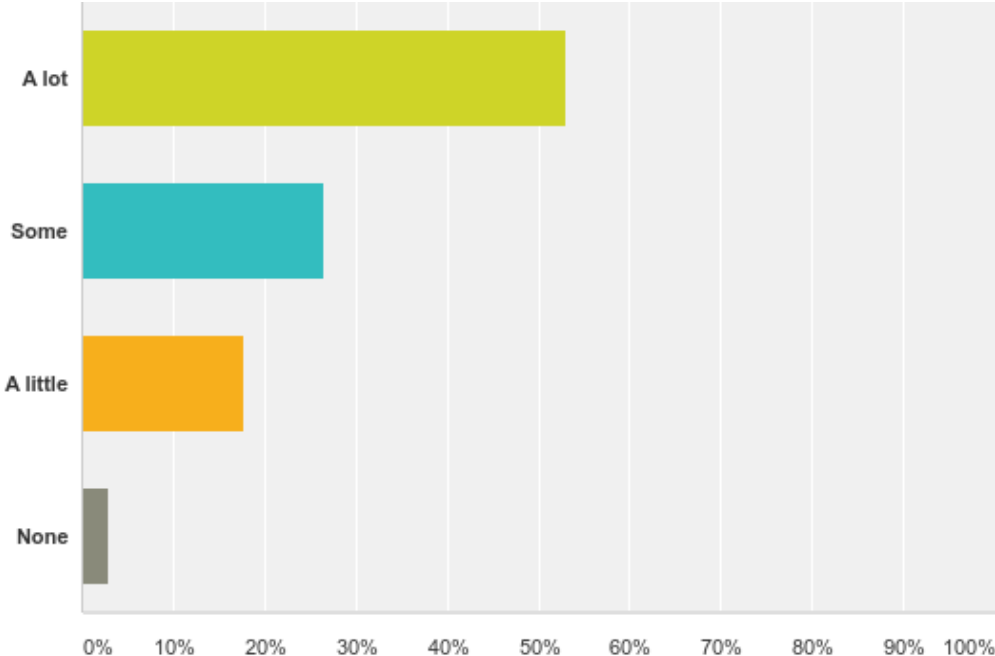


# Q2: How much growth and development should Stephens County pursue?

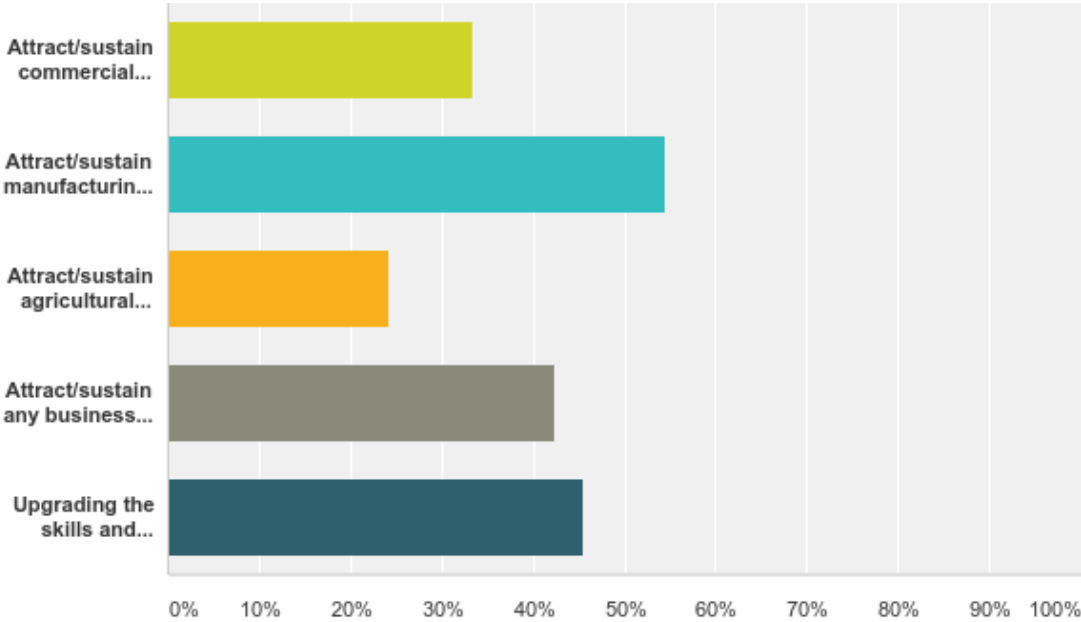
Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



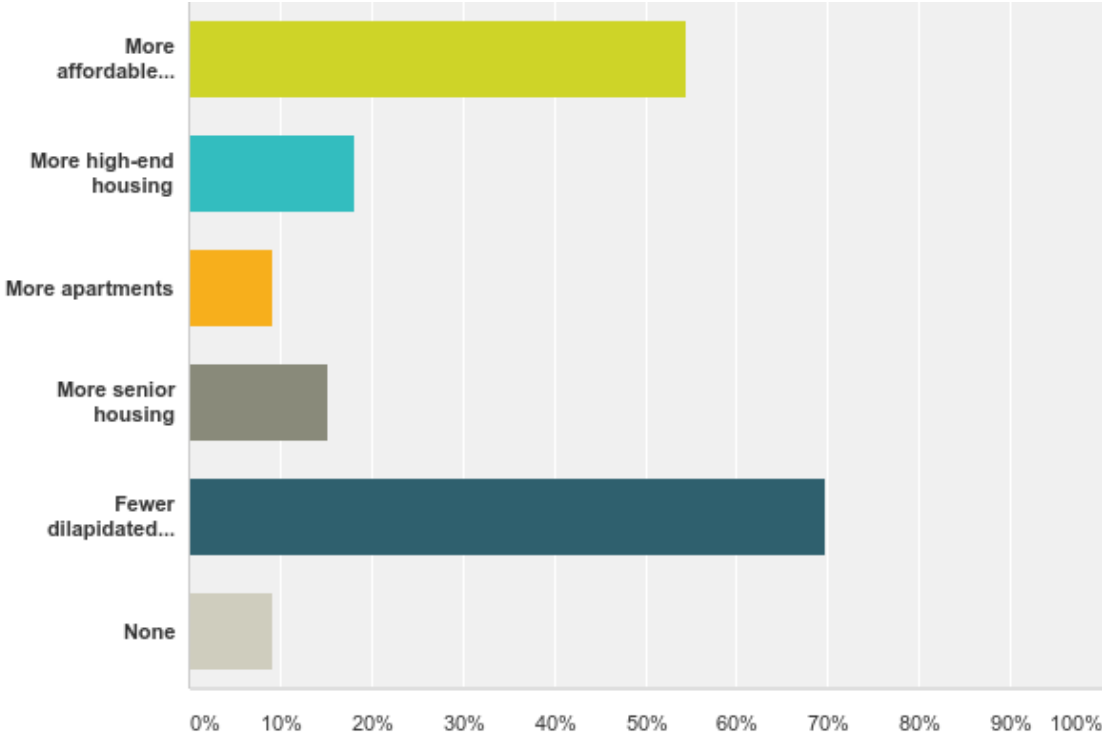
# Q3: How much growth and development should Avalon and Martin pursue?



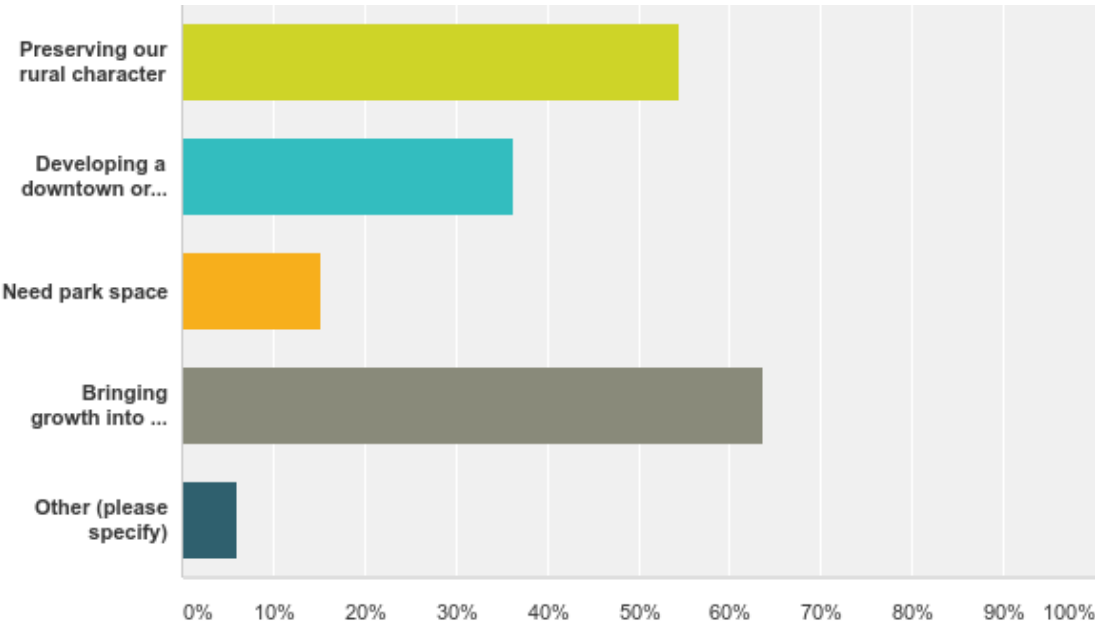
# Q6: Our top two economic development priorities should be (pick 2):



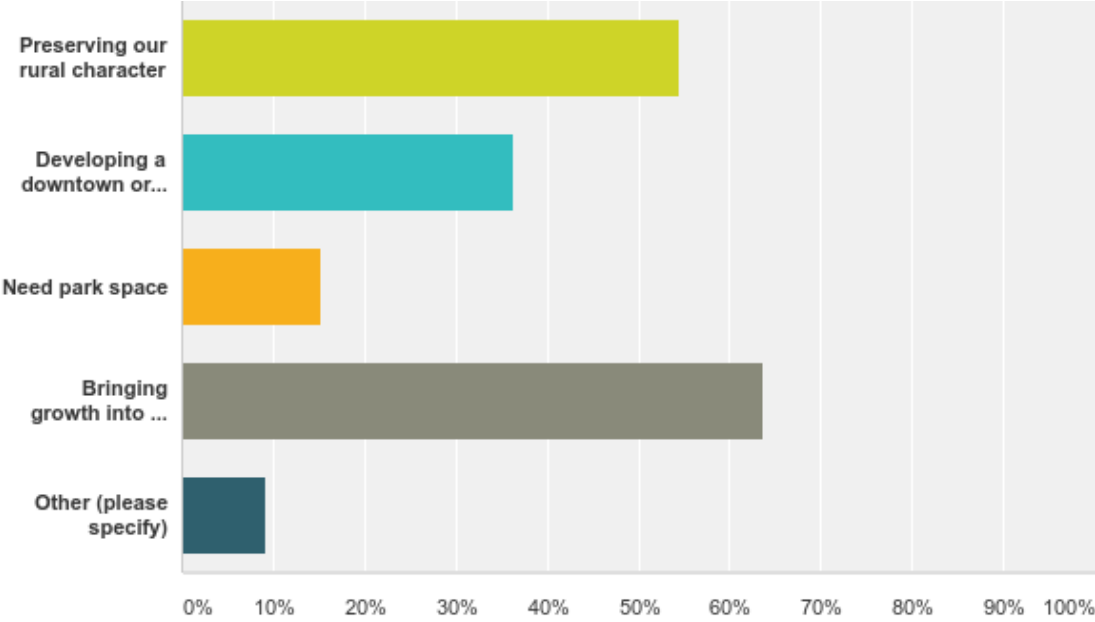
# Q7: Our top two most important housing needs are (pick 2):



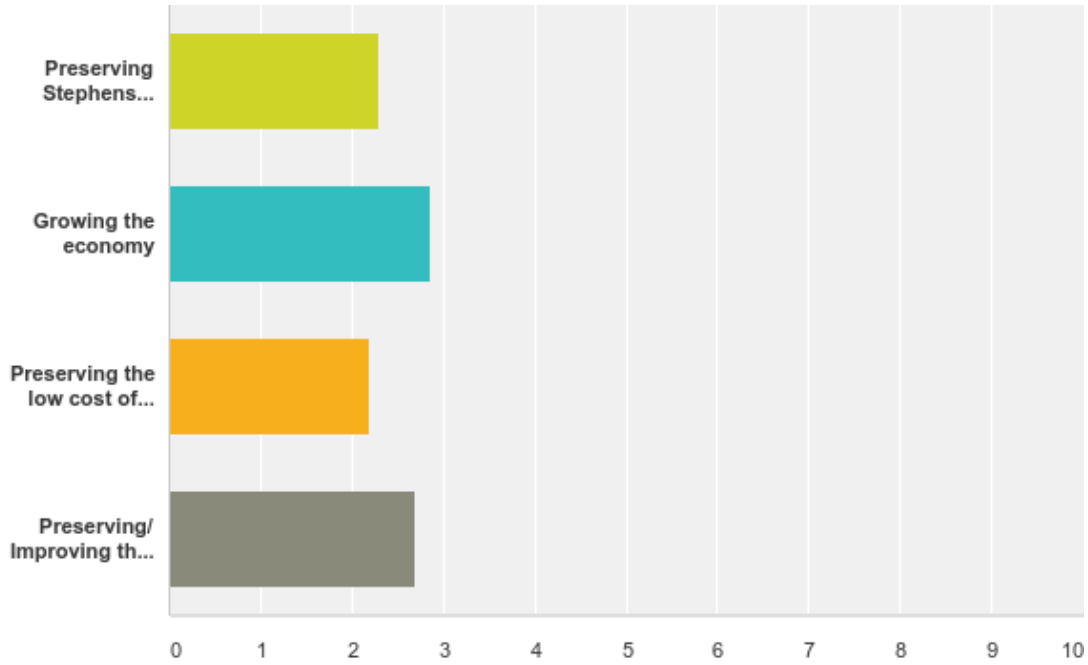
# Q8: The top two priorities for Avalon are (pick 2):



# Q9: The top two priorities for Martin are (pick 2):

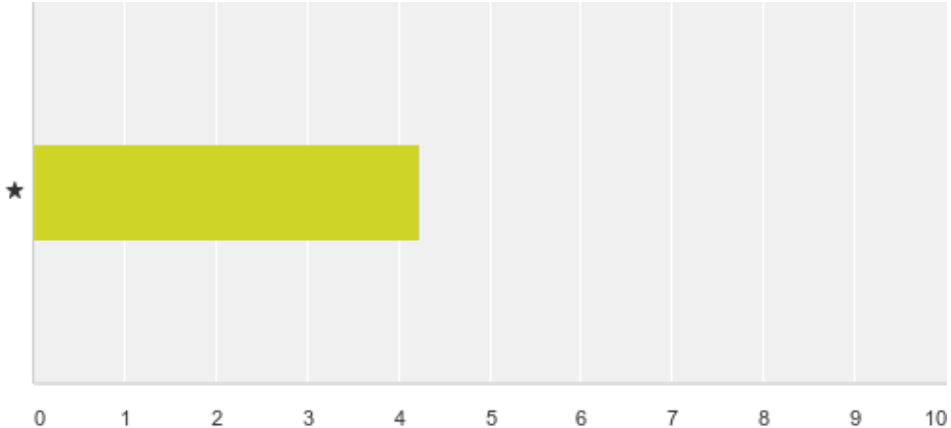


# Q17: Please rank the following issues in terms of priority, with 1 being the most important:



# Q10: On a scale of 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good), please rate the current quality of your water service:

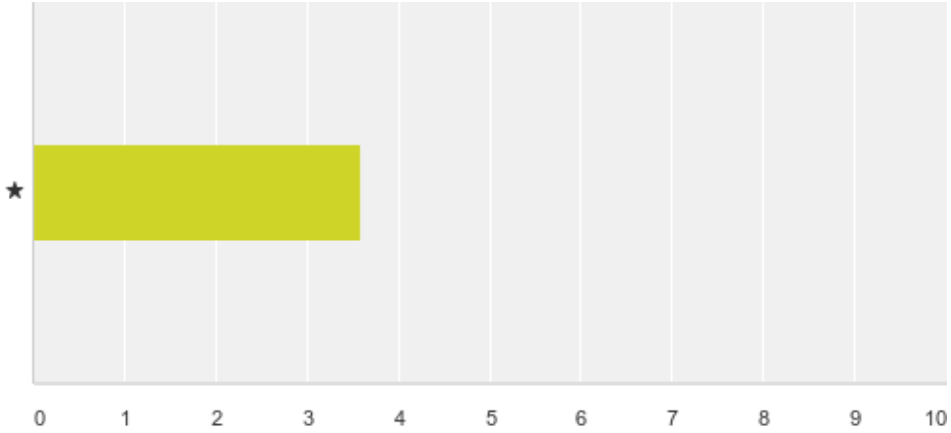
Answered: 30 Skipped: 4





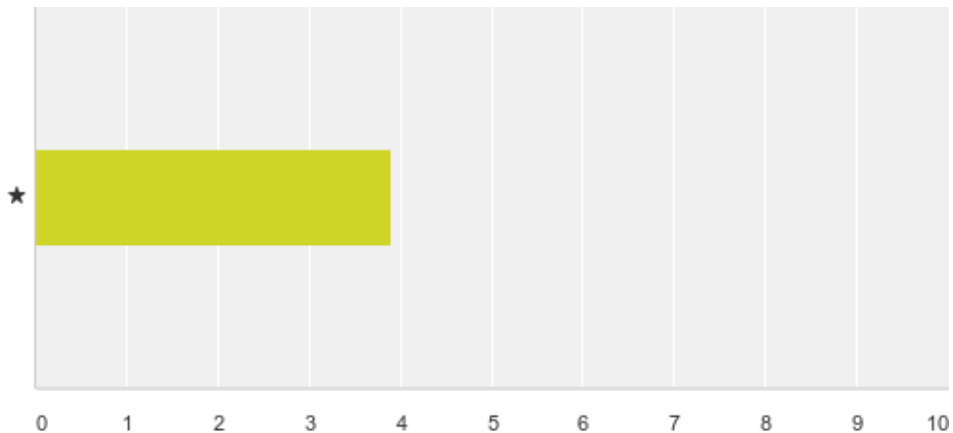
# Q11: On a scale of 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good), please rate the current quality of your sewer service:

Answered: 20 Skipped: 14



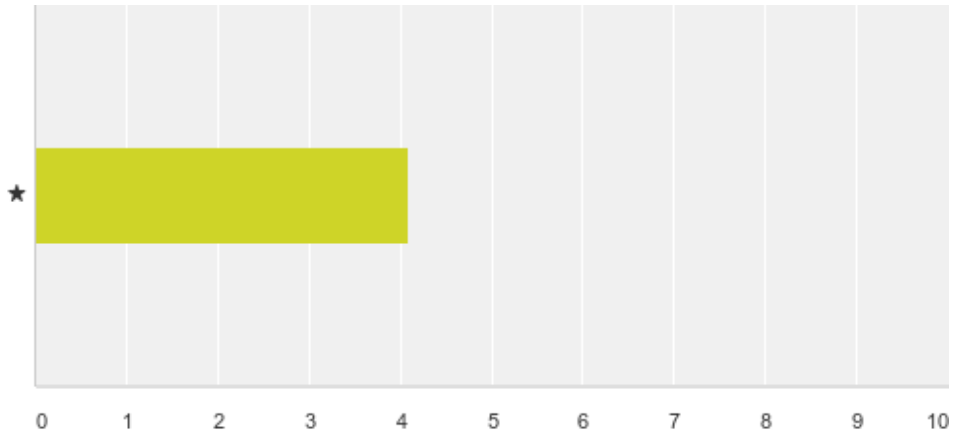
# Q12: On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), please rate the current quality of your Police/Public Safety/EMS service:

Answered: 32 Skipped: 2



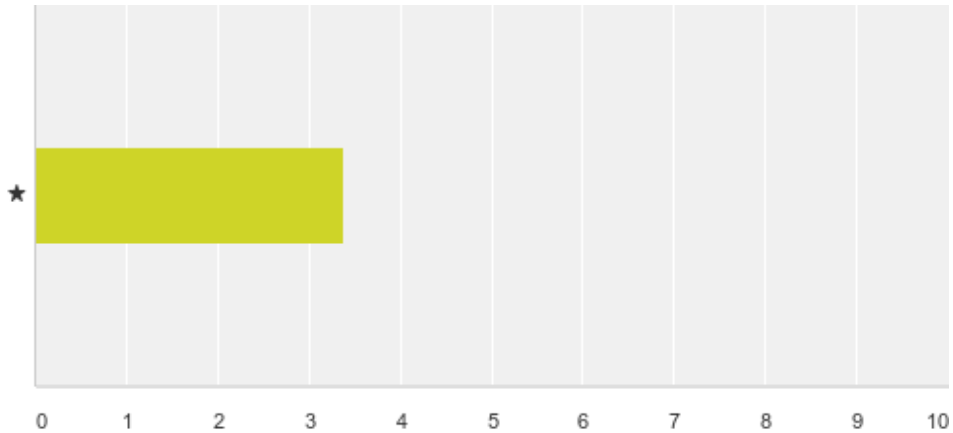
# Q13. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), please rate the current quality of your Fire Protection service:

Answered: 32 Skipped: 2



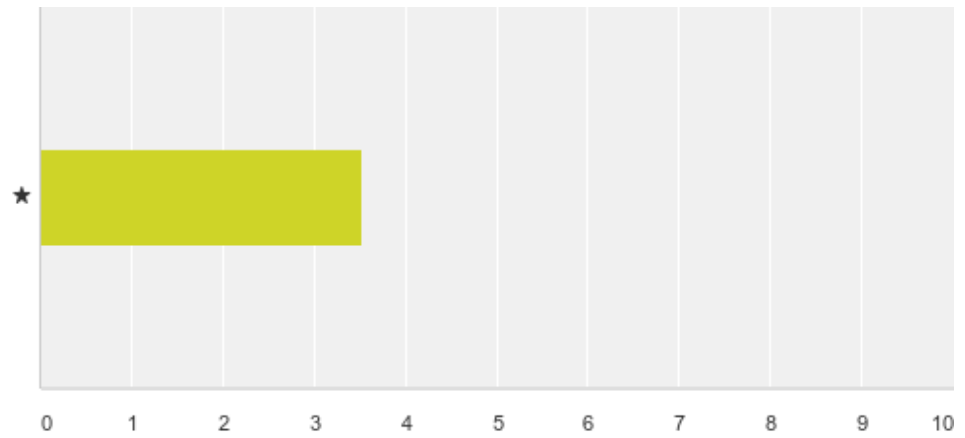
# Q 14. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), please rate the current quality of your General Government service:

Answered: 31 Skipped: 3



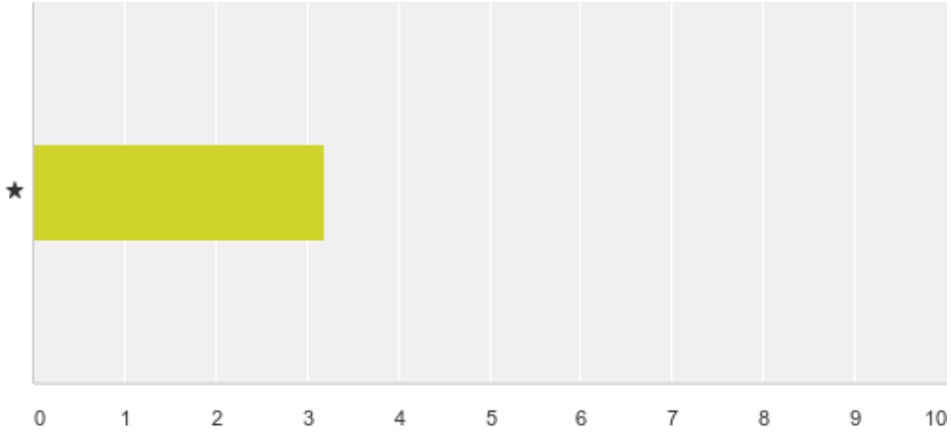
# Q15. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), please rate the current quality of your Parks and Recreation service:

Answered: 32 Skipped: 2



# Q16: On a scale of 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good), please rate the current quality of your Roads service:

Answered: 31 Skipped: 3



**Public Meeting Sign-in Sheets**

4/24

# Stephens Co Plan Mtg

Name

Clay Fisher

Director - TruVista Communications

Angie Ramage

Marketing 1<sup>st</sup> Franklin Financial

Phil Hobbs

G.M. - WHEG Radio

Clint Simmons

Project Mgr. Patterson Pump

Jennifer Findley

City of Toccoa, Clerk of Court

Alvin Brinkley

Retired Citizen

James Addison

Retired

Shelby Gober

1<sup>st</sup> Franklin



6/12/17

Avalon Plan Mtg.

Name

Grace H. Dean

Hinda Dean

Clay Beate

Regina

Dianne Barnes

Art Craven

6/15

Stephens Co. Plan Mtg.

Name

Jennifer Findley

Alvin Brinkley

Brittany Ivey

Angie Ramag



**A RESOLUTION OF STEPHENS COUNTY, GEORGIA  
ADOPTING THE  
2017 STEPHENS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS:** The County Commission, the governing authority of Stephens county, Georgia has participated in the update to the Stephens County Joint Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS:** The update was prepared in accordance with the Rules and Procedures of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, including requirements for public hearing opportunities; and

**WHEREAS:** The update has been reviewed and approved by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs;

Now, therefore, **BE IT RESOLVED** by the County Commission that the update to the 2017 Stephens County Joint Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

Adopted by the County Commission this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2018.

*Michelle Swester*

Chairman

ATTEST:

*Beth Rider*

Clerk

# CITY OF AVALON

P. O. Box 301 • Martin, GA 30557 • 706-779-2066 • avalon.clerk@gmail.com

## A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF AVALON, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE 2017 STEPHENS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**WHEREAS:** The Town Council, the governing authority of Avalon, Georgia has participated in the update to the Stephens County Joint Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS:** The update was prepared in accordance with the Rules and Procedures of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, including requirements for public hearing opportunities; and

**WHEREAS:** The update has been reviewed and approved by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs;

Now, therefore, **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council that the update to the 2017 Stephens County Joint Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

Adopted by the Town Council this 17<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2019.



Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Clerk

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF MARTIN, GEORGIA  
ADOPTING THE  
2017 STEPHENS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS:** The Town Council, the governing authority of Martin, Georgia has participated in the update to the Stephens County Joint Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS:** The update was prepared in accordance with the Rules and Procedures of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, including requirements for public hearing opportunities; and

**WHEREAS:** The update has been reviewed and approved by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs;

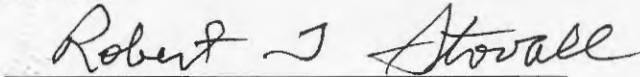
Now, therefore, **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council that the update to the 2017 Stephens County Joint Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

Adopted by the Town Council this 21st day of January, 2019.



Chairman/Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk

