

NO. 2023-O-02

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALL GROUND, STATE OF GEORGIA, TO  
ADOPT THE 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorizes local governments throughout the State to prepare Comprehensive Plans to be used in guiding their future growth and development;

**WHEREAS**, the City of Ball Ground has prepared an Update to its Comprehensive Plan that covers the years 2023 through 2027 that was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning;

**WHEREAS**, the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning require that certain minimum public participation and other procedural requirements be met as part of updating local Comprehensive Plans; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2023 Ball Ground Comprehensive Plan Update was transmitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs on June 12, 2023 for review; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2023 Ball Ground Comprehensive Plan Update has been reviewed by Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and deemed to be in compliance with the procedures outlined in the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

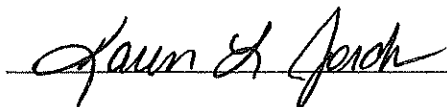
**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Ball Ground hereby adopts the 2023 Ball Ground Comprehensive Plan Update.

ADOPTED this 13th day of July, 2023

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALL GROUND



\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, City of Ball Ground



\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk, City of Ball Ground



Historic Downtown

BALL GROUND

Chartered 1883

GEORGIA

*ADOPTED 7/13/2023*

2023 Update  
Ball Ground

Comprehensive Plan

# Acknowledgements

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*THANK YOU TO THE MANY RESIDENTS AND  
BUSINESS OWNERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN.*

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# Executive Summary

# Checking In

## We Continue Changing

In the five years since our last update, Ball Ground has continued on the path of significant growth and change. The data returns from the 2020 Decennial Census prove this. Our growth rate from 2010 to 2020 was 78.6% taking us to a population of 2,560 residents in Ball Ground, up from 1433 in 2010 and 730 in 2000.

In addition to recently completed housing developments, we have greatly expanded our pedestrian facilities and added dozens of acres to our parkland inventory. The Gilmer Ferry Road corridor through downtown continues to attract new businesses, residents and visitors while vacancy rates remain relatively low.

With all of these changes, it is critical to check in with the whole community and update our Comprehensive Plan to ensure the City remains a great place to live, do business and enjoy amazing recreation opportunities.

## Importance of the Comprehensive Plan

Think of the Comprehensive Plan as a roadmap for the community's future, with the community in the driver's seat. To ensure we reach our desired destination, it is important to 'check the map' periodically. Generally, a comprehensive plan is a document to guide investment, development and the allocation of services within a jurisdiction. But cities, towns and counties are complicated places, and they make decisions about the future every day in response to new opportunities or unexpected problems. A Comprehensive Plan, like this one, is one tool that can help guide these decisions by:

- Looking ahead 5, 10 or 20 years - the long view



- Looking across many different elements of what the City does - it's comprehensive
- Looking to residents and business owners to understand the needs and desires of the City - thought through and intentional



## Why Now?

Ball Ground last updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2018 in partnership with Cherokee County. This document is an update to that Plan that reaffirms the big picture vision with minor adjustments and updates while describing the core issues and laying out the roadmap for future development. It also provides a list of achievable tasks for city leaders, staff and citizens to complete in order to implement the vision.

In Georgia, cities, towns and counties, must update their Comprehensive Plans every five years as required by the Minimum Standards of Local Comprehensive Planning. The development of a Comprehensive Plan helps a community to:

- Develop a vision for what it wants
- Establish priorities

- Encourage dialogue and actions
- Guide decision making
- Determine how to best allocate limited resources

## Our Plan Summarized

### *THE PROCESS*

Beginning in autumn of 2022, the development of this plan consisted of four phases; Data Collection, Public Engagement, Plan Development and Plan Approval. Each phase built upon the previous to ensure the final document had significant community input and is thorough in order to support plan implementation.

In the Data Collection phase, we brought together data and projections concerning growth. Then, while taking the pulse of the county through online surveys and an open house input session, community goals were formulated during the Public Engagement phase. We then moved into the Plan Development phase to put it all together. Finally, the state and regional planners review the plan during the Plan Approval phase before adoption by the elected body.

### *THE PLAN*

Organized into four interrelated sections, this plan focuses on the critical tools to guide the growth of Ball Ground with targeted policies to enhance our assets and address challenges. The sections are as follows:

- Community Introduction
- Our Vision
- Plan for the Future
- Vision into Action

In the *Community Introduction*, the stage is set to discuss the demographic trends facing the City in terms of population, housing and employment. Ball Ground has grown from a population of 1,434 in 2010 to a population of 2,560 in 2020 according to the U.S. Decennial Census. This represents a 7.9% annual growth rate for the City and nearly a doubling of population in this time period. This rate exceeds the 2010 to 2017 estimated annual growth rate of 6.1% as presented in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

Meanwhile, the City has become more diverse since the 2010 Census and the percentage of 65+ age residents is expected to continue increasing.

There is strong demand for new homes, with buyers interested in a wider range of house types. Jobs within and just outside the city limits will also increase as existing industries expand, new businesses are started, and outside companies locate new facilities nearby.



The City's needs and opportunities are discussed in the section titled *Our Vision* with greater detail given in the five Core Issues, which are as follows:

- Promoting Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure
- Preserve and Enhance Sense of Place and Historic Character
- Housing Choices and Opportunities
- Designing With the Environment
- Balanced Tax Base and Diverse Economic Opportunities

Each Core Issue contains implementation steps that inform the tasks listed in the Community Work Plan.

The *Plan for the Future* section contains the Future Development Map with the character area descriptions that we often associate with a

Comprehensive Plan. In this update process, each of the character area descriptions has been refined and enhanced with pictures that illustrate examples of these areas around the county.

Finally, *Vision Into Action* describes how this plan will be implemented. It will have an immediate impact on zoning and land use applications that come before the City Council. They will use this updated Plan to evaluate and make zoning decisions.

To provide continuity, the Recent Accomplishments lists the status of implementation tasks from the 2018 plan. The Community Work Plan (CWP) is a comprehensive list of work items (FY2023 to FY2028) to implement the vision of this Plan. This list includes rough cost estimates, if available, as well as those organizations that should be responsible for each item. While Ball Ground government has a key role to play through the use of regulations, capital spending and programs / staffing, a wide range of partners, including ordinary residents, will be involved in making this vision a reality.





# Community Introduction

# Community Introduction

## Brief History

Ball Ground is located in northern Cherokee County near the confluence of the Etowah River and Long Swamp Creek. Prior to incorporation in 1883, Ball Ground was almost exclusively agricultural, consisting of two country stores and a few dwellings. The city changed rapidly when the Marietta and North Georgia Railroad built its depot and rail lines through Ball Ground. In addition to cotton gins, saw mills and related wood working businesses, the city grew as a result of the marble-working industry. The railroad made it possible to ship finished marble products to the rest of the country.

In the 1950's and 1960's, poultry raising and processing became a major industry in Cherokee County. The rise of the poultry industry created much needed job opportunities for residents in related businesses such as hatcheries, feed stores, rendering plants, processing plants and equipment manufacturers.

Just as the railroad brought significant change to the city in 1882, the construction of I-575 in 1979, and its subsequent extensions, changed Ball Ground once again. The Howell Bridge Road interchange now serves as a primary gateway to the city.

Today, following a period of economic dormancy and population stagnation, Ball Ground is thriving again as businesses and homeowners move into the greater North Georgia area along the I-575 corridor and rediscover the City's immense assets, like the historic main street and homes, walkable parks and supportive environment for small business.

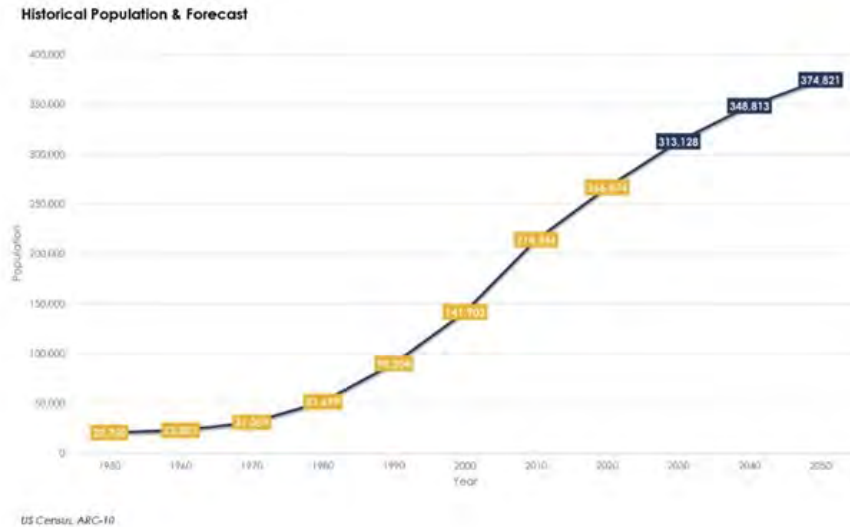


# Demographic Overview — Population Trends

## Demographics

### Population Growth

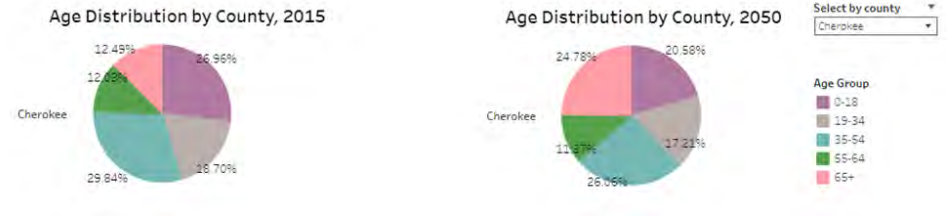
Between 2010 and 2020, Ball Ground saw a nearly 79% increase in population with 2,560 residents counted in the 2020 Census. The population is expected to continue rising through 2050, when the Atlanta Regional Commission estimates Cherokee County as a whole will house over 374,000 residents with Ball Ground likely contributing to that figure. Below is the Cherokee population projection according to the ARC.



### Age Distribution

Ball Ground is younger than Cherokee County and Georgia. The median age of a Ball Ground resident is 35.7 years which is lower than the state median of 37.5 years. Comparatively, the County skews higher than the state average. Furthermore, Ball Ground's 65+ population is around 12% which is lower than the state figure of about 15%. According to ARC projections, Cherokee County as a whole is aging, with the 65+ population bracket nearly doubling in percentage from 12% in 2015 to about 25% of

the County population in 2050. All other age ranges shrink in percentage towards the year 2050.



### Race, Ethnicity & Immigration

The U.S. Census Bureau posits that the Non-Hispanic White population of Ball Ground is greater than 90%, far exceeding the County figure of approximately 75% Non-Hispanic White, with the next two largest population groups in the City identifying as Hispanic (4%) and Black (1%). Data from the 2018 plan indicated that Cherokee County had become more diverse since 2010 but current projections from the ARC indicate a reverse in trend. This is presented in the graphs below.

About 97% of Ball Ground residents speak English at home with Spanish spoken by approximately 2%.

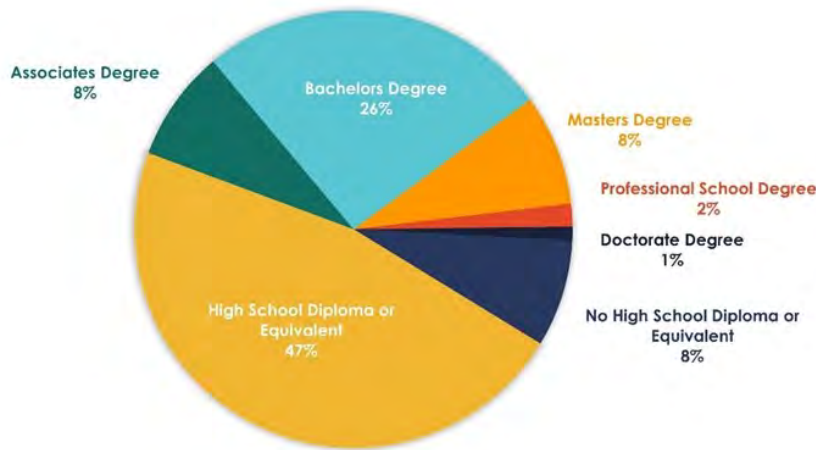
The 2% foreign born population of the City is much lower than the state's 10% and 74% of these residents are naturalized U.S. citizens.



# Demographic Overview — Economy & Households

## Educational Attainment

The level of post-high school degree attainment is on par with that of Cherokee County (graph below), around 45% of the population, and 94% of the population has a high school diploma or equivalent. Acquiring a bachelor's degree is less common than the state average, with only 29% of Ball Ground residents doing so compared to the State at 35%.



American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate

The current level of school-aged children enrolled in school is 73%, exceeding the state level of 69%.

## Employment & Workforce by Industry

About 90% of workers in Ball Ground are employed privately.

Jobs in “professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services” lead at 19.3%. Following closely at 16.9% are jobs in “educational services, and health care and social assistance.”

The employment rate of 65.2% exceeds the state percentage of 59.

Much of Cherokee County's employees live in Cherokee County, however, some commute from and to other parts of the Metro Atlanta area. Over

78% of Ball Ground workers drive to work alone and they commute about 27 minutes to work; on par with the state figure.

## Income

The median household income of the City has risen greatly over the past decade, from \$60,486 in 2010 to \$73,783 in 2020. The 2021 ACS shows an even higher climb over the course of one year, to a median household income of \$92,404. For comparison, the state figure is \$66,559.

This change in household income creates more demand for services and high-cost housing while creating challenges for those with a lower income who may have difficulty finding affordable homes and services close to their home.

The ACS also presents an increase in the poverty status of Ball Ground. The 2021 survey estimates that 8.3% of City residents were below the poverty threshold, achieving this level after yearly increases from 2.6% in 2018. The 2021 level is still well below the state percentage of 14.

## Housing Occupancy

Both the City and the County have extremely high home occupancy rates of about 95%. This shows that the housing demand for its growing population is being met appropriately. Of the 95% Occupied housing, 76% are owner occupied.

Ball Ground's housing stock is primarily detached single-family homes, with some townhomes (attached) and a single apartment complex of 80 units to meet the demand for rental housing.

## Building Permits

From 2018 to 2022, there were 355 building permits issued with numbers trending upwards from 29 permits in 2018 to 114 issued in 2022. Like Cherokee County, housing demand remained strong during the Covid-19 pandemic with remote work allowing greater flexibility for home buying.

## Home Values & Gross Rent

Approximately one third of the homes in Ball Ground are valued between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Median local rental rates are in line with those seen throughout the state, about \$1,188 per month.

# Demographic Overview— Mobility

## Roadways

I-575 flanks the City and serves as the major route for regional connections, along with State Route 5. State route 372 is the only major east-west connection and provides a conduit for travel between the burgeoning bedroom communities of Pickens County and flourishing job centers of north Fulton County and the State Route 400 corridor.

Generally, the remainder of the local street network is a mix of suburban-style arterials and local streets with some rural roads on the periphery. The City maintains about 20 miles of roadway.

## Transit

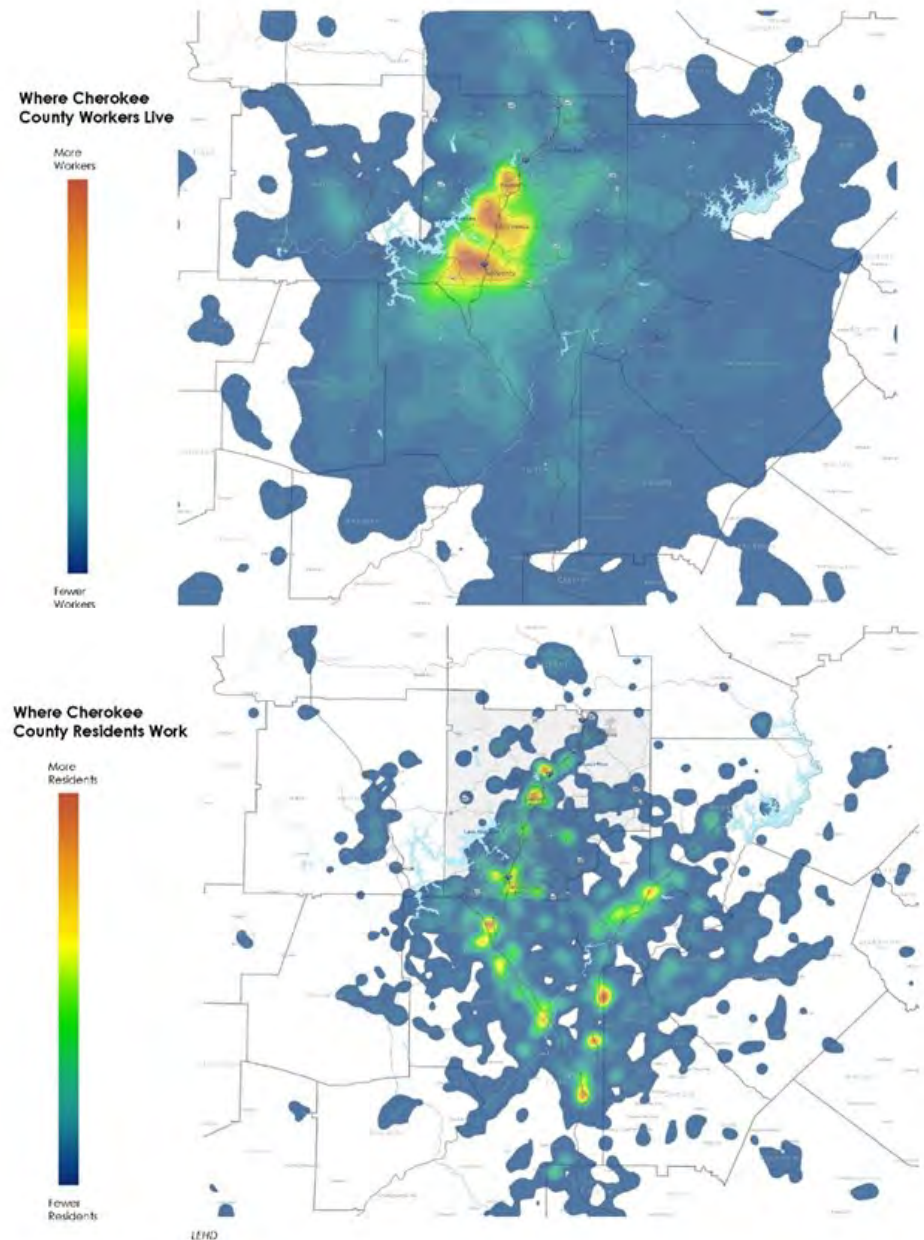
There are no fixed transit services that operate within the City and the bulk of City residents rely on personal vehicles to make their daily trips. Cherokee County Transportation System (CATS) provides on-demand services to all Cherokee County residents but does not travel outside the County.

Elsewhere in Cherokee County, the Xpress Service by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) provides service to areas outside Cherokee.

## Planned Transportation Projects

As both Cherokee County, the City and neighboring areas continue to grow, demand for roadway capacity and related projects has increased. The Ball Ground Truck Bypass is the paramount transportation project for the City and is under design in early 2023. This partnership with Cherokee County is intended to provide a new route that offers better connections for large trucks and relieves the historic downtown of this incompatible traffic. Other roadway projects on the horizon include local safety measures such as curbing, turn radii and speed control.

The City has also partnered with the County to plan sidewalks along Ball Ground/Canton Highway, better connecting residents to commercial and civic services.



# Putting Together the Plan

## *ROLE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*

Just as the previous 2018 Plan set the tone for the City, this update ensures that we remain focused on all of the City's priorities. We crafted guiding principles and character areas based on development patterns, trends, demographic projections, and community concerns. The Future Development Map and accompanying Character Areas area designed to guide development as well as help with the preservation of sensitive areas. This update enables us to track our progress thus far and will ultimately shape land use decisions. Whether you're a resident, business or property owner, or any combination, these land use decisions affect all of us.

## *YOUR VOICE*

Public engagement has played a significant role in this Comprehensive Plan update as well as the previous planning efforts. Throughout, we have sought perspectives of all members of the community. We consulted with the general public, community leaders, business owners, and elected officials, all of whom make key decisions about the future of the City. To provide feedback at various stages of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan development, we also utilized an Advisory Committee, with elected officials comprised of Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission members, mayors, and several involved citizens.

In order to reengage with the City and listen to new ideas, or affirmation of old ones, we held a public open house meeting with the help of Cherokee County and consulting group Pond and Assoc. Here we shared information on the community and solicited feedback from participants on the direction of the plan.

## *ONLINE PORTAL*

In addition to an in person meeting for public engagement, an online platform was established as an additional supplement. We recognize that weeknight meetings are oftentimes difficult for many to attend and some prefer the flexibility of an online method versus one in person. Again, the County and Pond offered their expertise in this arena and hosted a County-wide online survey, open to Ball Ground participants and featuring Ball Ground focused exercises, as well as a separate, Ball Ground-specific survey. The platform

provided both visual, mapping exercises and textual ones. The results of both, plus input from the in person meeting, have been incorporated into this plan update.

The City first utilized online engagement with the County in 2018 with Engage Cherokee, so residents could post their views on everything from how to improve traffic patterns to what they love most about Cherokee County. Engage Cherokee also included a survey with questions pertaining to each core issue addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The survey allowed us to obtain a more thorough collection of opinions, and enabled the community to conveniently share their views, particularly if they were unable to attend a meeting.

Considering the pace which the City has grown in recent years, many residents are concerned about increased congestion, over-development, and the potential loss of historic and natural resources that make the City serene and attractive to live in. Growth is an important contributor to the City's future, but maintaining our community character as we evolve is why



# Incorporating Related Plans

a comprehensive plan is essential. Through community engagement, we have heard your concerns and they have been incorporated into the final document of this plan.

To maximize impact of the Comprehensive Plan, it is important that we are still striving to be in sync with other major initiatives/plans in Cherokee County. These related plans, covering areas such as transportation, parks and greenspace, and economic development, play a crucial role in the shaping of our county. Each plan branches off the goals of the comprehensive plan to provide specific strategies/action items to reach those goals.

## *COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN*

The 2016 Cherokee County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) addresses multi-modal transportation issues through 2040. The final prioritized list of projects was developed from the ground up with input from citizens, business owners, elected officials, then evaluated for effectiveness. The seven groups of projects include Roadways, Safety, Bridges, Bicycle-Pedestrian-Trails, Transit, Freight and Aviation. The County has already begun to complete these projects as money has become available from federal, state and local sources. Besides the managed lane project on I-575, the two most important projects are the widening of State Route 20 (Cumming Hwy) east to Cumming and the widening / bridge on Bells Ferry. Both projects are slated to begin construction in the next 5 years.

Alternative modes of transportation besides roads are a major focus of the CTP. Sidewalks and multi-use trails were identified by county residents as important as transportation infrastructure. They want other options for making trips in their community. Appendix G - Trails Element identified trails and bike-ped routes that the county should pursue as road improvements are made and funds are available

While the CTP includes construction projects, there are improvements to our ordinances and development regulations that can help to preserve capacity, improve connectivity and support alternative modes of transportation. Likewise, there are changes that can be made to how we build roads to allow them to enhance the character of an area rather than erode it. Working with the County Engineer, we have incorporated these

types of projects into the Comprehensive Plan to achieve our goals for Cherokee County

## **Key Initiatives**

- Develop Access Management Standards for major corridors to enhance road safety and preserve capacity
- Create a range of street types to match rural, suburban and urban character areas
- Develop “Complete Streets”, multi-modal facilities that allow for motorists, transit riders, pedestrians, and cyclists to enjoy the road
- Update the county’s Functional Classification Map, which determines street classifications

## *OPPORTUNITY CHEROKEE 2015*

The Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) drafted the county’s economic development plan, Opportunity Cherokee in 2015. This plan, which included interviews, surveys, and group discussions with 2,400 participants, highlighted the county’s assets that make it an ideal employment center, along with strategies for creating jobs attracting people to live and work in Cherokee. COED identified five target markets for the county to focus on expanding-: Advanced Manufacturing, Commercial Development, Information Technology, Corporate Operations, and Film & Media. Essentially, Opportunity Cherokee expands on the comprehensive plan to provide a more specific overview of the existing industries and strategies that will grow jobs in the target market, and ultimately keep Cherokee County residents from having to commute outside the county. The plan also emphasizes the importance of education and job training programs to promote a strong workforce, as well as entrepreneurial programs that will cater to potential and current business owners. These elements, along with promoting a sense of place for workers, will help the county’s workplace and regional centers to thrive as planned.

## **Key Initiatives**

- Enhance COED’s organizational capacity
- Advance marketing and communication endeavors

- Continue to expand business retention and recruitment activities
- Create a culture for entrepreneurs
- Establish dynamic quality of place

### **CONSOLIDATED PLAN**

As part of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, Cherokee County is required to submit a 5-year Consolidated Plan for 2014-2018, along with an Annual Action Plan. The Consolidated Plan consists of a needs assessment, market analysis, and identification of needs to determine how well the county serves low to moderate income households (households making 50-80 percent of the Area Median Income or “AMI”). This analysis is compiled in part thanks to consultations with community members and local organizations that provide services to low and moderate income households, and helps provide the justification for CDBG grants.

#### **Key Initiatives**

- Increase the capacity of public facilities and infrastructure
- Increase the capacity of public services and economic opportunities
- Preserve and expand affordable housing

### **PARKS, RECREATION AND GREENSPACE PLAN**

Cherokee County residents love their parks, and they are vocal about this in community meetings. That’s where the Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace Plan comes into play. Drafted in 2018, the plan prioritizes action items that help improve the location connectivity in the county while developing and improving existing parks. This includes developing a system of linear parks and greenways that connect residents to amenities and services throughout the county, as well as constructing new facilities at existing parks that allow for a wider variety of activities. The plan also seeks to take advantage of the county’s natural resources by advocating for canoe/kayak launch points along the Etowah and Little Rivers. Finally, the plan includes a ‘gap analysis’ which analyzes areas of Cherokee County that lack parks and greenspace. In this capacity, the plan calls for additional parks to be developed north of Highway 20 and in southeastern Cherokee. The county believes that every family have convenient access to a park!

#### **Key Initiatives**

- Develop a system of linear parks and greenways
- Develop a multi-generational recreation center at Veterans Park
- Add facilities that allow for a wider range of contemporary activities (pickleball, tennis, skate park, etc.)

### **AIRPORT AREA MASTER PLAN**

The Airport Area Master Plan was developed in collaboration with the Cherokee Office of Economic Development and a large group of stakeholders representing long-time residents, property owners, business owners, utility providers and local government. The goal was to take advantage of a major county asset—the Cherokee County Regional Airport, opened in 1968. The plan outlined strategies to help make the airport a major economic engine for the region. The primary goals of the plan include the creation of a Regional Airport Area District, the adoption of development standards, the development of links between the Airport Area and nearby business centers, and the attraction of employers to the area. From this report, a Concept Plan was developed and included designated areas for business parks, a workplace zone, and low-intensity housing as part of the Master Plan. These elements were further explored in the Airport Area Target Report which is in the appendix to this Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Key Initiatives**

- Develop a Regional Airport Area District as an overlay zoning district
- Create a signage program to identify the district

### **TECHNOLOGY RIDGE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

This plan provides the background, goals, and strategies for redevelopment of what would become Cherokee County’s second Opportunity Zone—Technology Ridge, which sits along I-575 and reaches from Canton to the southern portion of Ball Ground. In recent years, this area has experienced underdevelopment and an increase in blighted properties. It has also faced a lack of retail market appeal, difficult access, and economic stagnation. To remedy this, the plan was aligned with the long-range visions of the Comprehensive Plans of Cherokee County, Ball Ground and Canton.

A primary goal of the plan includes designating Technology Ridge as an Opportunity Zone (since accomplished) that would make potential employers eligible for tax benefits for setting up shop in the area. Other



strategies include supporting the development of a variety of commercial uses to encourage activity and employment and encouraging businesses to utilize existing structures that are compatible with the surrounding character areas. Like previous small-area plans, the Technology Ridge Plan provides a localized guide that builds on the Comprehensive Plan's overall goals, especially with regard to increasing employment in the area.

### Key Initiatives

- Secure a multi-jurisdictional Opportunity Zone
- Encourage job creation to address widespread blight and disinvestment in this area
- Attract new non-residential development to the area to utilize the significant existing infrastructure

### *SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN*

The Cherokee County Solid Waste Management Plan was developed in 2010 and provides an overview and goals for the county's waste disposal policies, along with that of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Waleska, and Woodstock. Specifically, the plan addresses waste reduction, collection, disposal, land limitation, and education and public involvement. Cherokee County's population rapid growth warrants efficient waste disposal procedures that keep the County clean, but also highlights the need for waste reduction in the form of reuse, recycling, and waste preventative measures. This plan established the county's goal of reducing waste by 10 percent from 2007 to 2018.

Waste collectors in Cherokee County are either privately-owned or contracted by a city--depending on the jurisdiction--and transport the waste to one of the county's landfills. To ensure the protection of the surrounding environment, the Utilities / Services character area, to be mentioned later, provides guidelines for landfills and other facilities that require significant buffers from other development. Going forward, primary goals highlighted in the Solid Waste Management Plan include promoting waste reduction methods in schools, expanding recycling options, and reducing waste by 10 percent over ten years.



# Our Vision

# Our Vision

## Overall Vision

The future of Ball Ground depends on having a clear statement of the community's vision for the City. As the Atlanta metropolitan region continues to expand, being the most accessible, the most attractive or even the most affordable does not guarantee a community's success. The Vision for Ball Ground is based on choices and opportunities, paired with asset preservation. Today, the City is becoming a destination in its own right, and not simply a bedroom community between Canton and Jasper. The charge over the course of the next five years will be to thoughtfully accommodate the growth pressure without losing grip of the unique charms that make Ball Ground special.

This strong vision fits into the shared trajectory for Cherokee County. The County and its Cities seek to be a thriving community, where its rural heritage is preserved and cities provide the urban needs of the community. Retail services and employment are concentrated in walkable villages that have occupants in every storefront. People ride bicycles or walk in their neighborhoods and stop to chat. Accessibility and transportation choices are provided to all levels of citizens no matter what their economic status or age. Children have the choice to walk to school, and seniors can continue to be active. Shopping and services are neighborhood based. Employment opportunities allow people to make their living within their community. The Vision seeks a robust City that nurtures a community member's health and spiritual well-being. In addition to wise land use choices, services and institutions are abundant. The mind is challenged and souls are nurtured with schools, theaters, museums and galleries; places to kick back and rest or engage in recreation. Above all the Community Vision is about the desires and values of the people who live there.



## City Vision Statement

***“A self-contained, responsibly growing city that values its historic downtown while embracing a future of safe roadways, walkable neighborhoods, family-friendly activities and protected greenspaces.”***

## Needs and Opportunities

- Managing growth and protecting the historic core
- Providing additional commercial services: grocer, full-service restaurants
- Addressing vacant, underutilized commercial spaces downtown
- Tree protection
- Historic preservation
- Expanding pedestrian infrastructure
- Furthering the street grid to increase connections, relieve congestion
- Traffic calming and safety improvements
- Completing the truck bypass
- Determine and accommodate changing parks/rec needs

## Guiding Principals

- Growth should be guided to preserve and enhance the unique character of our communities.
- New development should not cause undue burden on public services, infrastructure and community facilities.
- The continued economic development of our area depends on a variety of new commercial and industrial development in appropriate locations and the continued support of our vibrant downtown.
- An array of housing choices is important to address the diverse needs of the population within our communities.
- Special natural areas, critical water resources, and animal habitats that should be preserved while respecting the rights of private property owners.

## Core Issues

### **PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Thanks to its rich history, cultural and natural resources, and its location in the Atlanta metro area, Ball Ground continue to attract many new residents and businesses. All of this translates to increased growth pressure. The population of these areas has increased dramatically in recent years and development has boomed along with it, making a rural county more suburban and in some areas even urban. Land development can be a burden on the existing infrastructure, such as roads, parks, public safety, etc. Care must be taken to make sure sufficient capacity exists to support proposed developments.



The road network and planned improvements are not enough to ensure future connectivity and mobility within the community. This problem needs to be addressed from several different angles, through roadway improvements, the development of alternative transportation facilities, and integrated community planning. At the level of a comprehensive plan, community planning strategies focus on the organization of neighborhoods, commercial areas and open spaces and their connectivity to the overall transportation network in order to increase overall capacity and mobility within our community.

### **Policies**

- Encourage growth in areas where it will be the most beneficial to the County and its cities. New development should be consistent with the Future Development Plan Map and the long range planning goals and policies.
- Look at new development proposals comprehensively by considering the benefit to the community overall, the character of the surrounding area, nearby land uses, and the availability and capacity of infrastructure.

- Focus growth within the core of downtown and throughout locations in the Valley that have adequate infrastructure to support the growth.
- Public facilities and infrastructure should be designed to support new development and redevelopment efforts, particularly in the areas of circulation, access and linkages.
- Ensure that natural resources are protected and that greenspace is abundant throughout the county.
- Promote the clustering of uses and compact site development in appropriate areas that are pedestrian-oriented, community-centered and minimize vehicular trips with increased internal connectivity.
- Developments should connect with the existing transportation network and adjacent properties.
- All roadways should be designed to match the character of the area and integrated with adjacent land use.

### **Growth Pressure Areas**

Growth pressure typically occurs in areas that are undergoing rapid change. In Cherokee County, this situation happens in the following areas:

- Where new road improvements are built or traffic volumes have increased significantly along major corridors.
- Rural areas of the county where sewer is available, especially around the edges of the cities.
- Areas where property owners want to realize the development value of family farms or large tracts of land.
- Land near new parks and schools.

It is critical to consider new developments as opportunities to plan the best possible new sustainable neighborhoods and communities. At the planning stages, it is important to involve the whole community in order to ensure development that fits the character of the area, addresses potential impacts to infrastructure and community facilities, and maximizes the benefits to the public. By talking about these issues in the early stages, there is an opportunity to consider creative solutions such as public-private partnerships, added road connectivity and dedicated greenspace.

### **Infrastructure and Service Capacity**

The City has experienced phenomenal growth in recent years. This growth will continue to have an impact on our infrastructure and community facilities. In a well-balanced community, infrastructure and services are available to support expected growth. Well planned, well-maintained and efficiently operated infrastructure systems contribute to a beneficial environment for both businesses and residents. As part of the zoning and development process, the City looks closely at infrastructure availability. Proposed developments should be evaluated for their impact on infrastructure in terms of traffic generation, water/sewer capacity and school/parks capacity.

- Traffic Impact Studies

Designed to evaluate the impact of a proposed development on the adjacent road system, this study may be completed by staff or by an outside consultant depending on the size of the project. From this information, staff can use an overall road network model to evaluate the cumulative effects of multiple development projects on the overall road network.

- Utilities Capacity Analysis

Typically, this analysis covers water and sewer capacity and is completed by the provider. The review may consider peak demand, fire flow, 10yr projections, industrial surcharge and pretreatment needs.



- Schools and Parks Capacity

Evaluating the impact of a proposed development on the K-12 public schools and nearby parks is important to ensure sufficient capacity. Schools are currently evaluated by CCSD staff during the application process. Parks should be added to this evaluation for residential projects.

## Capital Improvements Plan and Budget

As part of the Capital Improvements Plan and Budget process, it is very important to identify future sites or at least general locations for community facilities such as parks as early as possible. Early acquisition of sites minimizes ultimate land costs and ensures higher quality sites for community facilities. Capital facilities programming should be in conjunction with outlined land use patterns on the Future Development Map and policies within this Plan. The Capital Improvement Plan and Budget should include detailed project descriptions, location of desirable sites, cost estimates and any other available information.

## Building a Pedestrian-Friendly Environment

Internal and external pedestrian connectivity and linkages should be an integral part of every new project to provide safe and equitable choices for alternative transportation, such as walking or bicycling. New suburban and urban communities developed within the City should be built with sidewalks on all public rights-of-way. Internal pedestrian and bikeway trail systems that connect residents to amenities within the community and to the larger world outside their community are encouraged in large developments. By putting these other modes of transportation



on equal footing with automobiles, the community can reap significant transportation, environmental and health benefits.

Not only should the City develop pedestrian infrastructure and require pedestrian connectivity within and between developments, but also this environment should be safe and pedestrian friendly. Elements such as pedestrian entrances, large windows and pedestrian scaled facades adjacent to pedestrian ways will increase the comfort and usability of sidewalks and path systems. Adequate separation of pedestrian infrastructure from on going traffic with such elements as landscaping and on-street parking will greatly increase the safety for pedestrians.

## Connections to the Community

Transportation efficiency is enhanced when there are consistent and adequate street connections that allow many routes of travel through the community. Gated communities, private road systems and the introduction of disconnected cul-de-sac systems create barriers and diminish the connectivity of the whole system. Proper street connectivity reduces miles traveled, increases non-motorized trips, and supports transit use.

All properties, except for individual residential dwellings, should be required to provide interconnectivity to the adjacent properties. Streets and sidewalks/paths should be extended to the boundary lines of the tract, unless prevented by topography or other physical conditions. Standards should be set for each Character Area with respect to number and spacing of these connections. These requirements will allow greater flexibility within developments, reduce the need for curb cuts, and create less interference with pedestrian systems.

## Implementation Steps

- Frequently review and revise, as needed, the zoning ordinance and development regulations to ensure consistency with the Plan's Vision, Guiding Principles, Policies and Character Areas in order to maximize Comprehensive Plan implementation.
- Review the Future Development Map, rezonings and other plan data yearly based on changes to actual population, growth and potential adjustments.
- Continue to maintain and update a 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan.
- Coordinate implementation efforts for the other City and County-wide plans, such as the Transportation Plan, the Parks, Recreation and Greenspace Plan, and the Economic Strategic Plan.
- Review and develop a comprehensive infrastructure-financing plan, which may include an impact fee program. Ensure that new development pays its fair share of infrastructure costs.
- Review Service Delivery strategies and level of services, and develop a plan to provide services to accommodate projected new growth.
- Continue to investigate alternative transportation - sidewalk needs, and bicycle suitability and connectivity to lessen congestion within the City.
- Adopt requirements that developments connect to any identified pedestrian linkage within the City as part of the development approval. Pedestrian linkages include greenways and existing sidewalks.

- Revise development ordinances to encourage shared parking and parking maximums in mixed-use areas to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Adopt requirements to establish a limit to the number of entrances for arterial roadways. For example, each development should provide inter-parcel vehicle access points between all contiguous commercial, office, or industrial tracts, if feasible.
- Continue to identify, fund and implement LCI projects.
- Increase pedestrian safety by developing specific roadway types and pedestrian related facilities by character area. Guidelines should include minimum widths, connectivity, and accessories.
- Continue to prioritize the development of a truck bypass to enable the free flow of shipping throughout the City and help safety and quality of life in the downtown areas.

***PRESERVE AND ENHANCE SENSE OF PLACE AND HISTORIC CHARACTER***

Communities that craft a vision and set standards for development and construction will encourage the development of exceptional places with a variety of housing choices and modes of transportation. The environment created from such standards will strengthen and reinforce the sense of community among residents and businesses. The preservation of historic, rural and cultural resources is critical to enhancing the places that are unique to Ball Ground

**Policies**

- Protect and preserve unique historical resources, specifically buildings, structures, neighborhoods, or areas of historical, architectural, or cultural significance.
- The historic downtown must continue to be developed as a family friendly and lively mixed-use environment that provides viable live, work, shopping and entertainment choices.
- New development and redevelopment should be of the highest quality and incorporate design and site elements that address the community's Vision and Character Area intent.

- Focus new growth into appropriate character areas, thereby lifting development pressure from historic districts and rural communities.
- Public Services, Infrastructure and Community Facilities should be developed to promote the character of the community in the building form, site design and materials.

**Historic Preservation**



The protection of historic resources is accomplished on the local level with its inclusion in historic preservation planning, growth strategies, and comprehensive planning. Historic preservation helps to maintain the quality of life within a community while instilling a sense of pride and the familiarity of place. Recognition of significant historic structures

encourages their continued use and upkeep. Federal and state programs also provide incentives for renovation and rehabilitation of local historic properties.



Currently historic, archaeological and rural resources in Cherokee County have very little protection. There are National Historic Districts in Ball Ground and Canton that encompass some of their historic downtown areas. Aside from the Historical Society, there is no centralized public or quasi-public organization to support

or encourage preservation on a larger scale. Other individuals throughout the county have worked independently to nominate properties to the National Register or to restore individual properties.

Preservation of significant historic resources should become an integral part of land use planning. As such, historic resources should be recorded,

mapped, and evaluated in existing land use inventories, and their desirability for preservation should be determined. The Cherokee County Historical Society is very active in collecting information on historic properties throughout the County. The Historical Society periodically updates their historic structures survey for the county. Emphasis has been placed on both rural resources and the historic core of the cities, including the conversion of historic buildings for adaptive reuse.

### Character Area Specific Roadway Design

Roadways have taken on a much greater role than just transportation corridors; they can greatly affect the overall image of a community, the economic vitality, the recreational potential, the safety and security and our personal outlook on our community. If roadways through a community look bad and function poorly, it affects everything around it. At the same time, if our roadways are attractive and function well, our communities tend increase in monetary and spiritual value.

Roadways are endowed with two attributes: capacity and character. “Capacity” is the number of vehicles that can move safely through a segment of the roadway within a given time period. It is physically manifested by the number of lanes, their width, by the centerline radius, and the super elevation of the pavement. “Character” is the suitability of a thoroughfare as a setting for pedestrian activities and as a location for a variety of building types. The character of a roadway is shaped by the combination of the surrounding context, traffic speed and design elements beyond the capacity dimensions such as the type of drainage, the presence of sidewalks / paths or traffic calming devices.

Character Area specific design solutions for roadways incorporate the appropriate capacity and character elements for the specific situation. As project decisions and design choices focus more on the surrounding context and how the roadway “fits” within a community, we can better explore new shared-use opportunities for recreation and public transportation, as well as the basic safety factor of kids safely walking to school or people safely crossing busy streets.

Roads include a broad range of roadway types, from rural lanes where two cars can barely pass to state highways and urban streets lined with multi-story buildings along sidewalks. It is critical that the roadways for new developments be appropriate to the character of the surrounding community.

- Rural Roadways -

These types of roads are usually two lanes with a wide range of posted speeds depending on the functional classification of the road; local, collector or arterial, and the design of the road. Rural roadways usually have asphalt pavement with wide shoulders with grassy swales to manage stormwater runoff.

- Neighborhood Streets -



These are local, slow movement thoroughfares that are suitable for neighborhoods and lower intensity nonresidential. A neighborhood street is suburban in character typically with concrete curbs and sidewalks in denser developments.

- Mixed-Use / Urban Streets -

These streets connect Character Areas and neighborhoods and cater to both intensive pedestrian activity and vehicle movement. These urban streets provide frontage for higher-density, mixed-use buildings such as residential, shops and offices.

Where possible a landscaped median or parking bump-out should be incorporated into the overall design. All road improvements shall include a provision for the bicyclist and the pedestrian. A mixed-use/urban street typically includes on-street parking and traffic calming measures.

### Implementation Steps

- Coordinate redevelopment of potential National or State historic register properties through the Historic Society prior to the issuance of building permits to facilitate preservation or rehabilitation where possible.
- Offer information and assistance to property owners who may be interested in having their potentially eligible property listed on the



National Register of Historic Places, and to the development community regarding redevelopment and adaptive reuse.

- Update the historic resource map and create a database of properties contained in the 2005 Historic Resources Survey inventory, as well as the cemetery location map.
- Investigate preservation incentives and preservation tools such as easements, transfer of development rights, and overlay zoning.
- Design and incorporate appropriate new street and sidewalk design concepts into the development regulations for each character area. All street designs should include provisions for alternative modes of transportation.
- Identify and implement traffic calming measures within all new development and appropriate existing neighborhoods that are experiencing cut-through traffic.
- Create and adopt a historic preservation ordinance

## ***HOUSING CHOICES AND OPPORTUNITIES***

Our Community Vision describes the development of strong neighborhoods providing a range of housing options that give people the opportunity to choose housing that best suits them, while maintaining and enhancing the value of existing neighborhoods. A greater mix of uses and housing choices in neighborhoods focused around human scale, and mixed-use centers that are accessible by multiple transportation modes, provides an atmosphere of inclusiveness of lifestyle, lifecycle and economic realities.

### **Policies**

- As employment opportunities diversify in our communities, ensure adequate amounts, types and densities of housing needed to support desired commercial and industrial growth.
- Encourage a variety of housing stock to serve a range of incomes, age groups and lifestyles to provide choices and opportunities.
- Promote and support affordable housing by supporting by providing information on funding sources, appropriate locations and the zoning and development process.

### **Discussion**

Although there has been an increase in the number of completed attached and multi-family homes, single-family detached homes continue to be the predominate housing type, both completed and permitted in the City. The demographic characteristics of those who already live here are changing as they have children, age in place, etc. The living environments that this variety of households will need, such as lower maintenance housing for aging baby boomers, more affordable housing options for the workforce population, increasing single and small households, will help to shape future development.

### **Smaller Households**

The number of persons-per-household has been decreasing slowly over the past years, and is anticipated to continue to decrease moderately. The decreasing household size may be attributed to the attraction of first time homebuyers with no children (either as families or single), empty nesters, and single persons entering the local job market, and is relative to the national trend of smaller household sizes/fewer children. However, as a variety of market pressures increase the price of starter single-family housing, a small but growing share of new housing product is expected to be townhomes or similar attached product.

### **Essential Workforce Housing**

Within the County and its cities, there is a shortage of workforce housing. This is housing that is intended to meet the needs of “essential workers” in the community, including police officers, firefighters, teachers, medical personal, manufacturing and other service workers. In the single-family market, fewer new, lower priced detached homes are being built in



Cherokee County. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in executive and move-up housing opportunities, particularly conservation subdivision developments, and subdivision communities with community amenities. The proportion of manufactured homes in the community, typically a valuable resource for lower-cost housing options, is decreasing,

primarily due to aging and/or replacement of these types of housing, especially in the course of redevelopment. The development of attached housing is oftentimes met with resistance

### Executive Housing

Within the metropolitan area, Cherokee County maintains a relatively high



level of household income, the proportion of which is expected to grow, although representation in the highest income groups is lower than in adjacent counties. Comparatively the proportion of those below the poverty line is also lower than in other surrounding metropolitan counties, suggesting a financially solid, yet not

extremely affluent community. The availability of executive and move-up housing is linked to the creation and attraction of new businesses to an area and the overall economic development of a community. Keeping this in mind, the City should ensure an adequate supply of high-end housing options to meet this demand.

### Overall Housing Outlook

Various housing types will be required to meet the lifestyle characteristics of the area. The majority of residential development in the past five years has been single-family residential units at a variety of prices and sizes.

Higher density, multi-family or mixed-use type development fills an economic need for quality housing choices, as well as addressing the needs of special residential population groups such as seniors, or single person households.

Such housing is easily integrated into the more dense character envisioned for the City's core and contributes toward the vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, accessible, and mixed-use environment that is desired.

### Implementation Strategies

- Review development regulations to remove constraints to the development of second units (i.e., accessory or granny flats) in

appropriate areas in order to provide additional affordable housing opportunities in areas where infrastructure already exists.

- Continue the use of creative planning techniques such as mixed-use development, traditional neighborhood development, small area plans, Downtown Master Plans, Overlay Zones, and Character Areas as a means of enhancing housing diversity and choice.

- Identify areas with adequate infrastructure for medium density housing developments, designed to meet the needs of singles and young families, such as townhouses, lofts, and small lot single-family homes. These areas should be adjacent or attached to villages or centers to promote access to jobs, goods and services.



- The County and cities should work together in partnership to promote the development of projects with affordable housing financed through the full range of tax credits, and exempt bonds while investigating other federal and state funding assistance resources.

- Encourage the utilization of available first-time homebuyer financing programs.

- Consider policies and regulations to support the development of quality housing choices. For example, incentives could be added to the zoning ordinance for developments which reserve a proportion of units available for purchase or rent for households at or below 50 percent of the County median income.

### **DESIGNING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT**

The natural resources enjoyed by the residents of Ball Ground are presently abundant and varied but finite. The number of uses and demands against these resources is large, and growing as development pressures increase.

Lands previously available for wildlife management are being developed. The amount of timber farming and general agriculture is declining. As development continues to spread across the county, the need to preserve our environment has become more pressing.

### **Policies**

- Proactively preserve our rural resources and character with incentives, land use regulation and other means of preservation.
- Adopt policies and practices that create environmentally responsible and sensitive design, development and construction.
- Protect and conserve natural areas, which have important recreational, ecological and aesthetic values, including hydrologically sensitive areas, floodplains, steep slopes, protected mountains, wetlands, stream corridors and watersheds.
- Support wildlife management efforts and the protection of animals and plant species listed as of statewide importance, threatened and endangered.
- Sustainable communities should contain civic spaces to encourage healthy exercise habits and social interaction. Civic spaces include open space/conservation areas; greenways, parks, greens, squares and plazas; as well as special sites reserved for civic buildings.
- Specific conservation areas and greenways should be identified in a county-wide plan so that preserved land in existing and new developments will interconnect to form a network of protected lands.

### **Discussion**

Growth needs to be balanced with the need to retain and protect significant ecological and natural resources, i.e., streams, wooded areas, wildlife habitats and open spaces throughout the county. It is also important to identify and protect historic sites, areas of steep slope, watersheds and water supplies. Development should be steered away from these valuable resources,



including implementing additional measures to assess and protect the natural and historic resources of the City, particularly in the pre-development assessment phase. The local governments should identify targeted areas for conservation proactively, and not just react when faced with a development request.

The County and its cities have begun to initiate pro-active measures to protect natural resources. The use of the Watershed Protection Ordinance, Floodplain Regulation Ordinance, the Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance, the County's Tree Preservation and Replanting Ordinance, the Soil Sedimentation and Control Ordinance, and adoption of the minimum DNR standards will ensure the protection of these important features within the County. The Future Development Map utilizes a designation for Nature Preserve. This designation includes active and passive parkland, dedicated greenspace, forests, lakes, the Little River and the Etowah River. The Rural Places Character Area represents pastures, farming and livestock areas, as well as land used for timber production or pulpwood harvesting. On a parallel course, Ball Ground and Waleska have adopted regulations that mirror the County's ordinances for environmental protection.

To implement this plan, we need to further revise our Codes and Regulations to guide development away from sensitive areas. The creation of greenway connections between passive parks, as well as open space areas in conservation subdivisions, should be sought to ensure habitat for wildlife as well as humans. Sites where species of special concern are located should receive priority for protection and acquisition. Increased education of the general public and developers on environmental issues will bring about increased awareness of the importance of maintaining a proper balance between people and their natural and built environment.

### **Civic Spaces**

All development should provide appropriate private and public civic space. Parks, plazas, squares, recreational areas, trails or greens are all types of Civic Spaces. Formal outdoor spaces will be provided and should serve as a focal point for public interactions. They should not be just unbuildable or left over space after buildings have been sited. Larger developments should include more spaces than smaller developments and should break them up into several smaller spaces, as per the requirements in each character area. Existing trees and vegetation should be preserved wherever possible.

### Open Space and Conservation Areas

Open space is essential for protection of wildlife, habitat and water quality, and other critical resources. Open space should accomplish the following;

- Provide for passive recreational opportunities;
- Provide for direct health and safety benefits, such as flood control, protection for water supply and groundwater recharge areas, and improve air quality;
- Provide for the protection of important critical areas and natural systems and wildlife habitats; and
- The utilization of natural features and open space to define the character of an area;



### Greenway Trails

Greenway trails are paved or natural (mulch, gravel, etc.) with a minimum of twelve feet and greenspace on either side for use by pedestrians, horses and non-motorized vehicles. These trails provide a variety of recreation opportunities and should be connected to provide a network that is easily accessible. Boardwalks, bridges and pervious paving are permitted within floodplain and stream buffers.

### Parks

A park is a large open area available for recreation and gathering. Its landscape comprises paved paths and trails, open lawn, trees, and open shelters, all naturalistically disposed and requiring limited maintenance. At least fifty percent of a park's perimeter should be accessible by streets, paths or other pedestrian ways. A park should have no more than twenty percent of its area covered with impervious surfaces. Tree plantings within parks should be predominately large deciduous trees.

### Greens

A medium sized civic open space available for unstructured recreation, its landscape predominantly consisting of grassy areas and trees, naturalistically disposed, and requiring only limited maintenance. Tree

plantings within greens should be predominately large, deciduous shade trees. A focal point should be provided within the Green.

### Plazas and Squares

These small areas provide an urban oasis for passive activities as well as civic purposes and impromptu commercial and entrainment activities. They often have a focal point, such as a fountain, waterfalls or public art. Shade trees, lush landscaping and pedestrian amenities are features within a square. Plazas are primarily paved with concrete, stone, brick or unit pavers. Plaza and Squares should be at least ¼ acre in size.

### **Implementation Steps**

- Coordinate with other jurisdictions and agencies on water supply, wastewater, and stormwater issues to provide efficient services and comprehensive plans for management and expansion.
- Continue to promote conservation subdivisions as a method for preserving private open space and pursue relationships with land trusts to preserve this open space.
- Adopt regulations to require open space to be set-aside and connections to any identified path system with every new development.
- Comprehensively document & map sensitive environmental areas, acquired and planned greenspace and other significant resources. Compile the findings to be consulted during the zoning and development process, especially for the enforcement of the environmental protection requirements.
- Continue to actively educate the public, local elected officials, developers, economic agencies, etc. about resource conservation and protection through a partnership with Cherokee County Water & Sewerage Authority and environmental non-profit groups.

### ***BALANCED TAX BASE AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES***

A balanced tax base is one of the keys to a successful community. As residential development continues, Ball Ground must balance that residential growth with commercial and industrial growth. Economic development goals include encouragement of existing business expansion and new business creation, continued diversification of the types of

employment within the City, and expansion of broadband services for residents and businesses ensuring the job skills of residents match employers' needs. These economic development strategies are key to creating an economically competitive community.

### **Policies**

- Work towards creating regional job centers with a mix of commercial and industrial uses that leverage the market demand for regional retail, local-serving office and light manufacturing/warehouse space.
- Promote the growth of small-medium size businesses through a coordinated series of programs and support networks for existing and new business owners.
- Strive to attract higher paying and professional jobs through the encouragement of executive housing, quality education and area-wide amenities, such as greenspace and the arts.
- Encourage the expansion of tourism opportunities.
- Provide for the daily commercial needs of residents, to help reduce vehicular trips and traffic.

### **Employment Growth and Patterns**

Jobs in the County have historically been in manufacturing, with this industry accounting for more than 25 percent of the employment in the 1980's. Over the past two decades, there have been major shifts in the national and regional economy towards a "knowledge"/service economy including professional and administrative services, technology, education, and health and social services.

It is important for our economic development policies and strategies to reflect this change.

We recognize the need for economic development to ensure sustained growth. This will most certainly be important to the future of the whole community in creating a broad and diverse economic base for a robust local economy that can



withstand the fluctuations in the larger markets. Issues to be addressed include:

- A high percentage of residents commute outside of the county for employment, which is typical for bedroom communities;
- Many of the jobs within the county are in retail or services,
- Ever growing need for access to broadband to support local businesses, education and quality of life,
- There is a need for more professional level jobs and career opportunities, and
- Residents' potential sales tax income is being spent outside of the county's borders--We need a broader range of retail to capture more of this spending.

Although the County continues to grow economically, it continues to remain primarily a bedroom community for the Atlanta Metro area, based on analysis of commuting patterns. Cherokee County faces the challenge of not having a sufficient supply of jobs that complement the skills of current county residents. Current employers are small to medium in size and generally produce parts and components for products from larger national companies or offer services to the Northern Metro Atlanta market.

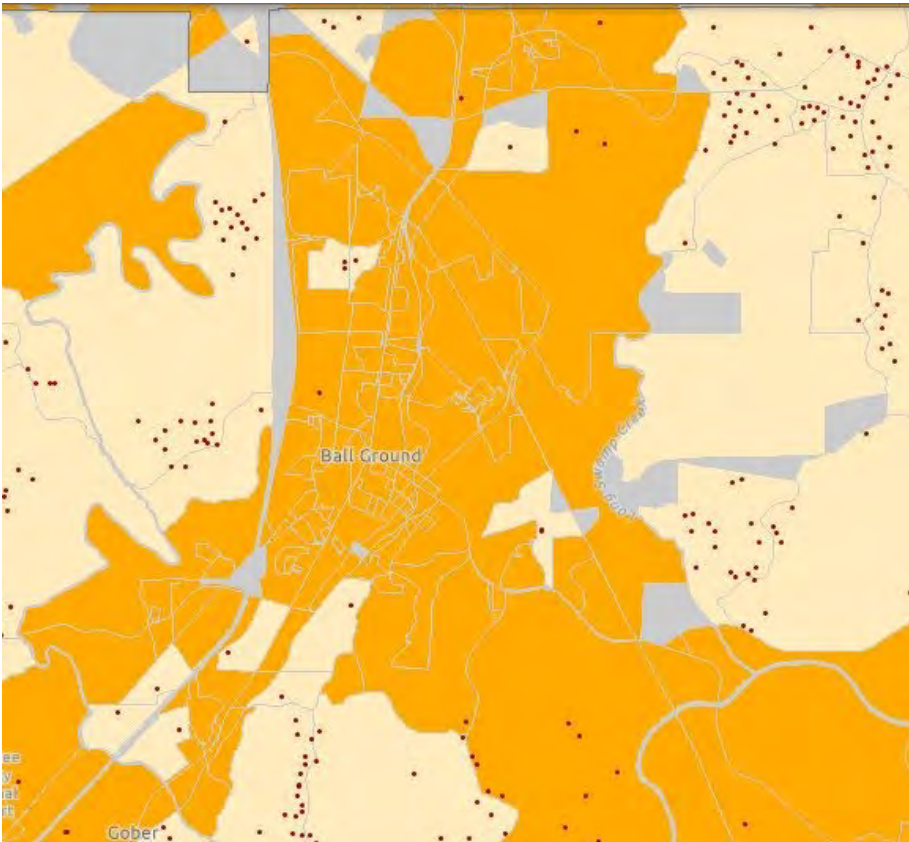
Presently, residents are commuting out of the County to the professional jobs, while others are commuting into the County for the existing industrial and service-oriented jobs. This pattern may be changing as interest in Cherokee County by firms with professional jobs has increased significantly in the last few years. Efforts to "raise the profile" of the community seems to be paying off but this new interest needs to be translated into new offices being opened and operations started. It is critical that local government actions be strongly supportive of this type of economic expansion in order for it to be successful.

Typically, employment growth is lower in places where the housing supply is more constrained. If Cherokee County is to continue on the path toward becoming an employment center, leaders need to be mindful of the wider range of housing required in order to reach this goal. In general, the whole community will need more workforce and executive housing in order to support these economic goals.

Opportunity Cherokee 2015 proposes strategies to accomplish the ultimate goal of diversifying the economy, including: expansion of identified target business sectors; expansion of tourism opportunities; promotion and support of local entrepreneurs and small business and minority business owners; and tying local incentives to the creation of quality jobs. Successful economic development strategies confront challenges to the business climate, including workforce and education, infrastructure, business costs and environment, housing and quality of life.

### **Broadband Services**

In 2018, the Georgia legislature passed the ACE Act—Achieving Connectivity Everywhere, which requires local communities to evaluate their access to broadband service. Broadband access is critical to the state of Georgia and is equally as important as other utilities. “Broadband service” means the provision of access to the Internet or computer processing, information storage, or protocol conversion. In general, this



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refers to a service that can transmit data at a rate of not less than 25 megabits per second in the downstream direction and at least three megabits per second in the upstream direction to users (25Mbps/3Mbps).

For the future of Ball Ground residents and businesses, it is important to have high broadband speeds and multiple broadband providers to help ensure competitive pricing for service. This map shows the broadband availability in Ball Ground according to the Georgia Broadband Availability Map. It demonstrates that nearly all of the populated portions of the City have coverage, with only undeveloped or sparsely developed areas on the periphery now lacking access. This map does not show the additional coverage that has been provided in recent months by new service providers installing their infrastructure within the City.

Access to broadband internet has greatly improved since 2018 and new providers are installing new infrastructure within the City limits at present. Established providers have recently been permitted to expand their local footprints.

As Ball Ground continues to attract residents and businesses, it is crucial that high-speed broadband availability increases throughout the city. New service providers will help with competition and customer rates. Therefore, there is a need to consider possible local government actions to address this issue such as working with the private development community to provide greater services and streamlining permitting on the City's end.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Maintain an adequate supply of quality prepared business and manufacturing sites.
- Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized commercial spaces, especially those downtown, to broaden the retail and personal service offerings within the City.
- Review and consider options to address local barriers to the provision of broadband services.
- Recruit businesses to fill voids for missing services in the City, such as grocers and restaurant

Plan for the Future

# Plan for the Future

## The Power of Character Areas

Character Areas are used to identify places and areas that show a common form of development and land use pattern, lifestyle and “feel,” intensity of use, design elements or other factors that collectively define the character of a place or areas, whether existing or intended in the future. The use of Character Areas provides a much more comprehensive picture of the community vision for a place instead of individual land use categories.

The Character Area designations indicate the primary and secondary types of land uses and the infrastructure necessary for that type of development. These descriptions serve as a guide in the determination of the future development approvals. The design of these distinct Character Areas is based on the classification of development patterns, their distinct differences and their relationship to one another.

Character Areas:

- Encourage a “holistic” approach to long-range planning by integrating the community’s vision and desires with actual land use patterns;
- Directly link the Comprehensive Plan to regulations and implementation strategies, such as impact fees and development codes;
- Provide solutions “outside the box” by integrating new and exciting concepts in land use planning and community design; and
- Allow the maximum amount of flexibility in land use planning.

### Future Development Map

The Future Development Map was developed through the analysis of current and future conditions





and land use patterns on the Existing Land Use Plan Map, the Current Zoning Maps, approved developments, an economic market study, topographic characteristics, natural resource sensitivity, the availability of infrastructure, infrastructure programming and needs demonstrated by residential and employment forecasts. These analyses provided an essential base of information for Character Area development. This base was used to provide background data to the public for the development of the Vision and Guiding Principles. Utilizing the communities' Vision and Guiding Principles, distinct areas were outlined and developed into character areas. The Future Development Map:

- Applies the overall Vision, guiding principals and policies to land use patterns of the Comprehensive Plan to the City of Ball Ground;
- Was developed in conjunction with infrastructure planning and availability, land use compatibility and existing zoning;
- Acknowledges projected growth and provides for capacity for this growth in appropriate areas of the county and cities;
- Identifies specific corridors and areas that are appropriate for redevelopment activities and further study;
- Provides strong emphasis on integrated design, beneficial mixing of uses and connectivity; and
- Utilizes character areas to provide a richer description of how an area should function, look and feel.
- The use of Character Areas instead of standard land use categories strengthens the concepts of attraction, containment, mixed-use communities and compatibility between uses.

### **Why Use Character Areas?**

- Provides a strong link between the a community's Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals and the Future Development Map;
- Provides additional protection, enhancement and clarification for zoning and land development; and
- Provides additional guidance to developers regarding the qualitative issues the County and Cities will consider during the rezoning process.

### **Benefits of Character Areas**

- Provides for strong land use compatibility and transitional standards;
- Looks at an overall area for both internal and external connectedness, with an emphasis on the mixing and integration of appropriate and complimentary uses;
- Identifies intensity levels, compatibility considerations and infrastructure considerations;
- Spells out the overall “feel” of an area in quantitative terms, thereby giving decision makers additional guidance during the rezoning and development review process; and
- Coordinates economic development, natural resource and capital facility policies within land use planning.

### **How it Works**

- Character Area guidelines are intended to establish a general direction and a base level of development quality and compatibility with surrounding areas;
- Character Areas provide an area wide view of how a specific use on a specific property will interact with a larger area;
- Character Areas allow additional qualitative controls while small area and corridor studies are completed.
- A use must still fit the intent of the Character Area and any associated criteria. A potential type of non-residential development may be “allowed,” but it may still not be appropriate.

### **Zoning Decision Process with Character Areas**

- Step 1: Identify the Character Area, and Node or Corridor where applicable, where the property is located on the Future Development Map.
- Step 2: Refer to the Character Area Summary Table for a brief summary.
- Step 3: Review the Guiding Principles and the policies under each related Core Issue, for applicability.
- Step 4: If located within a Character Area, review the detailed description for the Character Area.
- Step 5: If located within a Node or Corridor, review the detailed description

for the Node or Corridor and the underlying Character Area.

Step 6: Determine whether the zoning or development proposal is consistent with all elements of this Comprehensive Plan, including:

- A) the Future Development Map,
- B) the applicable policies and design considerations, and
- C) the detailed description of the applicable Character Area, and Node or Corridor where applicable.

Step 7: Evaluate the immediate area (roughly a ¼ mile radius) surrounding the property for evidence of the elements of the Character Area and Node or Corridor, if applicable. If the majority of existing development around the property is more intensely developed or used, then a more intense—but complementary—proposed use may be appropriate. On the other hand, a limited number of dispersed parcels should not be considered as representative of the predominant development intensity of the area. Care should be taken to consider appropriate transitions between areas of different levels of intensity.

Step 8: Present findings concerning Comprehensive Plan consistency as one of the factors in the rezoning or development decision process. Different jurisdictions have varied standards but some generally accepted factors are as follows:

- Suitability of the use for the proposed site
- Adverse affects on adjacent and nearby properties
- Use of property as currently zoned
- Impact of proposed use on existing streets, schools, sewers, water resources, police and fire protection, or other utilities
- Conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Plan
- Other conditions affecting the use and development of the property

### Interpretation

This plan is developed based on the idea that the Future Development Map and the text are to be used as an integrated whole, with the map being a graphic representation of the text.



Interpretation of the Future Development Map is a process, which rests on the guiding principals, goals and policies expressed in the text. The Character Area designations on the map, both in terms of overall definition and intensity of land use types, require that policies and intent statements regulating the development and the location of each land use type, be evaluated and applied in the process of plan implementation.

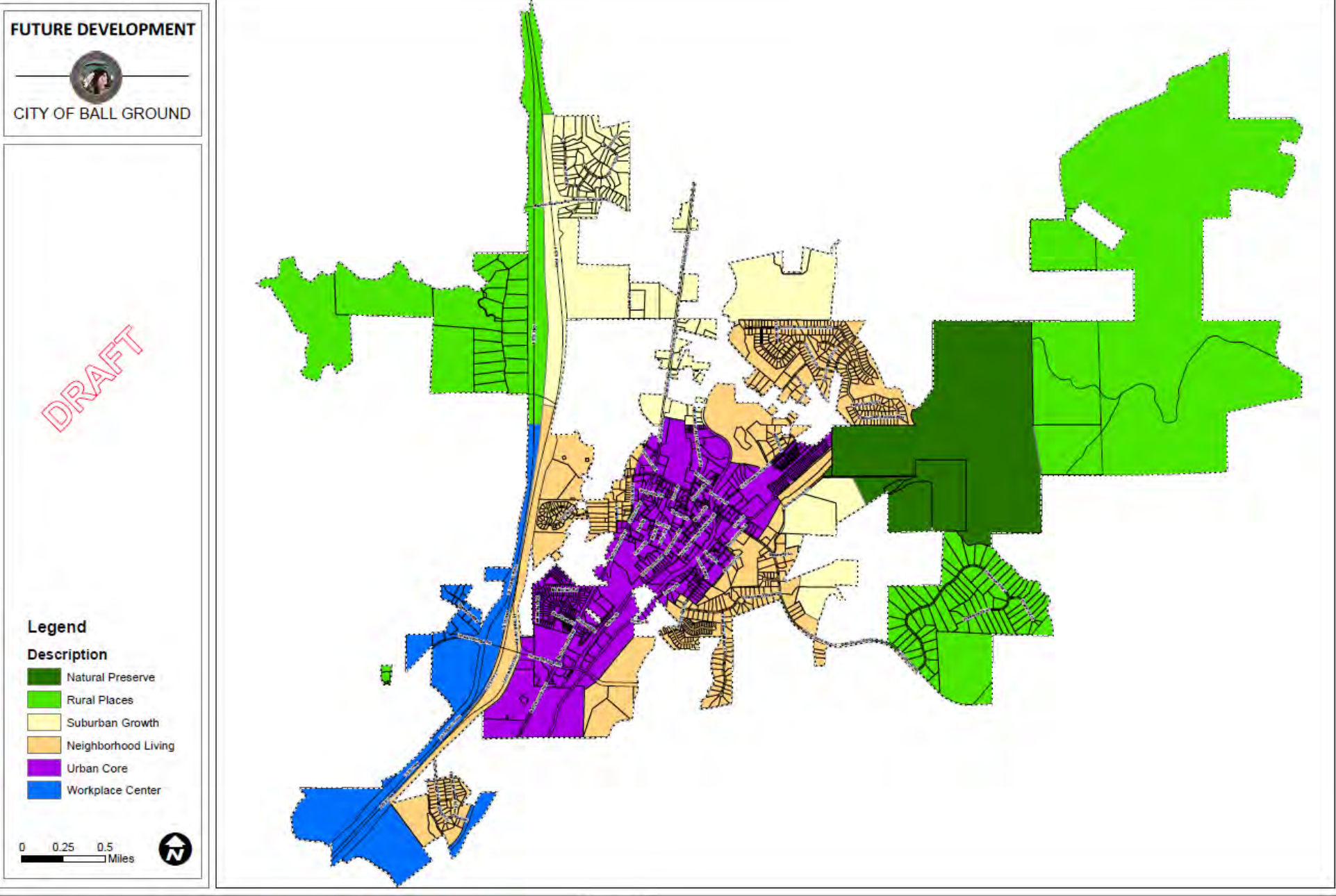
Plan implementation is carried out through the application of regulations such as the Zoning Ordinance and through projects and programs outlined in the Short Term Work Program. The City Council administers the Map with input from the Planning Commission and planning staff.

The initial contact for plan interpretation begins with the Staff. It is at this point that the proposal is evaluated for its conformity and compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and other functional plans. In the event a use or development proposal is inconsistent with the Future Development Map or Comprehensive Plan policies, that fact is addressed as one of the Standards for Zoning Review already adopted by each jurisdiction in their Zoning Ordinance.

# Character Area Summary Table — Ball Ground

Future Development Map Symbol	Character Area	Description of Character and Primary Land Uses	Community Facilities & Infrastructure	Suggested Zoning Districts	Suggested Residential Density
	Natural Preserve	Undeveloped lands with significant natural features that currently have some form of protection from development.	Very low level of services and community facilities	AG	0.1 dua max.
	Rural Places	Outlying rural areas with large undeveloped area of forestland, active farming and scattered single-family housing on large lots. Preservation of sensitive natural resources is important.	Low level of services and community facilities. Potentially with public water but sewer is not planned.	AG & R-80	0.54 dua max.
	Suburban Growth	Areas located outside identified centers that are experiencing a high volume of residential growth pressure, primarily single-family houses.	Public water available, public sewerage available or planned; local public facilities	R-80, R-40, R-30 & R-20	0.54 to 2.18 dua
	Neighborhood Living	Urbanized and growth oriented areas, adjacent to identified activity centers with redevelopment pressure and higher densities. Various types of residential dwellings, and mixed-use developments.	Full urban services; regional public facilities.	R-20, R-15, RZL, RM-4 & TND	2 to 6 dua
	Urban Core	Traditional downtown area of Ball Ground—corresponds with the 2007 Master Plan area.	Full urban services; regional public facilities.	RZL, RM-4, TND, NC, GC, BGH, CC-C, CC-T & CC-R	4 to 10 dua
	Workplace Center	Major employment centers utilizing a mixture of manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, commercial and office. Retail and high intensity residential are accessory uses.	Full urban services	GC, LI & HI	

# Ball Ground Future Development Map



# Natural Preserve

## Description

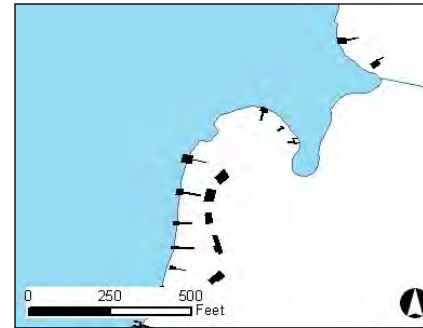
The Natural Preserve character area consists of undeveloped land with significant or unique natural or ecological features like lakes, streams, view sheds, wetlands, and other natural areas. You are likely familiar with Roberts Lake Park and Trail; this is a prime example of Natural Preserve lands within the City; perpetually protected from development and restricted in use. Archaeological sites containing Native American artifacts and remnants of early settlements serve as important pieces of the county's heritage and should be included in this character area.

## Intent

This character area identifies large contiguous areas that are under some form of protection from development, such as easement, acquisition or other means. These areas serve critical environmental functions such as habitat protection, stormwater management and filtration of surface and ground water. Some of these lands are also open for passive recreation.

## Strategies

- Work with federal and state programs to increase the level of protection on environmentally sensitive areas.
- Widen roadways in Natural Preserve areas only when absolutely necessary and design the alterations to minimize visual impact.
- Create additional public access areas that do not disturb the natural environment.
- Create connections between these areas for wildlife movement and low-impact human uses such as hiking.



Intensity	Suggested Zoning Districts — AG Suggested Residential Density — 0.1 units per acre max.
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Undisturbed/conservation uses Timber management Passive Recreation <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Homesteads
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenways, trails, path systems, private roads/drives for cars/pedestrians</li> <li>• Generally no sewer</li> </ul>
Greenspace	Open space and conservation areas

# Rural Places

## Description

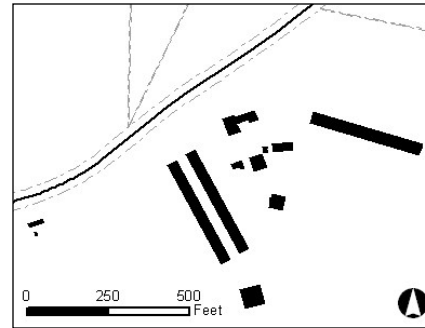
Rural Places are characterized by a balance between the natural environment and human uses with low density residential, farms, forests, outdoor recreation and other open space activities. In a sense, Rural Places remains the heart of Cherokee County with its expanses of undisturbed forest, farmland and agricultural industries and a sizable portion of the City falls in this category. Land in Rural Places is typically cultivated as pasture, farmland, or woodlands under forestry management, or sparsely settled homes on individual tracts.

## Intent

The Rural Places Character Area is an agricultural-residential community, which benefits from its scenic rural landscape while accommodating limited residential growth. Large-scale suburban development is not compatible within this Character Area due to conflicts such as agricultural smells or other forms of pollution resulting from raising animals and crop production. Focused efforts should be made to encourage and support agricultural businesses, promote flexible site design to fit the land and allow open space / the natural landscape to dominate this character area.

## Strategies

- Discourage the conversion of undeveloped land into residential developments
- Utilize appropriate transitions between existing and newer developments to prevent incompatible uses
- Provide services at a level appropriate to the development pattern to help maintain the area's rural character



Intensity	Suggested Zoning Districts — AG & R-80 Suggested Residential Density — 0.54 units per acre max.
Future Development	<p><b>Primary Land Uses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active farming, timbering and conservation uses</li> <li>Homesteads on individual lots</li> <li>Large lot estate-style single-family residential development</li> <li>Undeveloped</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary Land Uses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor recreation</li> <li>Semi-public and institutional uses</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easement and private driveway access</li> <li>• Roads have grassy swales and narrow lanes</li> <li>• Public water may be available</li> <li>• Sewer is generally not available or planned</li> </ul>
Greenspace	Significant greenspace often on private property

# Suburban Growth

## Description

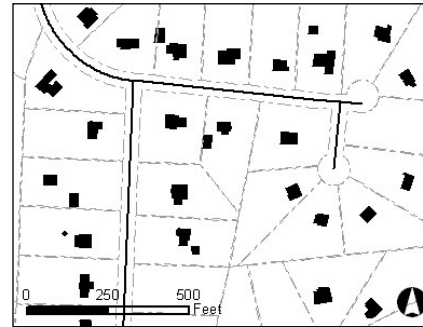
The Suburban Growth character area generally consists of single family detached homes situated on lots ranging in size with shallower setbacks than in rural areas. Suburban Growth areas have limited existing development but occur where growth pressure is the greatest due to adjacency with current or proposed community infrastructure (such as sewer and water, and transportation). This is an area in transition from rural types of development to suburban ones, often characterized by pockets of development interspersed among a rural landscape.

## Intent

The primary purpose of this area is to channel growth pressures to areas that are suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment to create more sustainable communities. The intent of this Character Area is to preserve the primarily residential nature of these areas while promoting new residential communities that foster a sense of community and provide mobility, recreation and open space. It is critical in Suburban Growth areas to ensure new development is compatible and located where existing infrastructure (i.e. roads, schools, water/sewer, etc.) is available.

## Strategies

- Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, libraries, and health facilities at suitable locations near homes
- Provide connections to adjacent land uses and future developments
- Encourage innovative development that integrates greenspace within its design such as conservation subdivisions, master planned and traditional communities in appropriate locations



Intensity	Suggested Zoning Districts - R-80, R-40, R-30, & R-20 Suggested Residential Density — 0.54 to 2.18 units per acre max.
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Single-family detached housing Conservation Subdivisions <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Semi-public and institutional uses
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads have a combination of swales and curb / gutter</li> <li>• Public water is available</li> <li>• Sewer may be available or planned for the future</li> </ul>
Greenspace	Open space and conservation areas in neighborhoods Public parks and greenspaces

# Neighborhood Living

## Description

Neighborhood Living areas are mostly residential in nature but may include small commercial areas. This character area includes townhouses and duplexes, along with single-family homes intended for empty nesters, seniors, singles, small families, and workers employed in the county. The Neighborhood Living Character Area is more dense than suburban areas because it is generally located in and around cities in Cherokee County where there are full urban services and infrastructure.

## Intent

The intent of this Character Area is to create new moderate-density neighborhoods to accommodate a range of housing types to suit a variety of lifestyles, price points and stages of life while being respectful of existing neighborhoods. Community facilities and commercial uses are common in these areas to provide for close and convenient services with pedestrian and trail connections to encourage the use of walking and bicycling.

## Strategies

- Integrate commercial establishments such as corner markets and mixed-use buildings as part of new developments
- Locate parks, squares, and other greenspace close to all new homes
- Locate parking to the sides or rear of residential and non-residential buildings, and screen all parking from the public pedestrian view



Intensity	<p>Suggested Zoning Districts - R-20, R-15, RZL, RM-4 &amp; TND</p> <p>Suggested Residential Density — 2 to 6 units per acre max.</p>
Future Development	<p><b>Primary Land Uses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small lot single-family homes</li> <li>Attached single-family duplexes &amp; townhouses</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary Land Uses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public and Institutional Uses</li> <li>Mixed-use buildings</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides</li> <li>• Full urban services (water and sewer)</li> </ul>
Greenspace	<p>Smaller civic spaces (i.e. pocket parks, playgrounds, etc.) within the residential areas</p>



# Urban Core

## Description

The Urban Core Character Area of Ball Ground is the vibrant heart of the city including the “Main Street” area along Gilmer Ferry, the commercial areas along Canton Highway, the Interstate 575/Howell Bridge interchange and the Ball Ground Historic District. Interspersed within the area are a wide variety of institutions and community facilities, such as the library, post office, elementary school, city hall, fire station, several parks and a number of churches. This area includes the widest range of housing options, everything from townhouses to active adult cottages to historic homes.

## Intent

The City’s Master Plan integrates land use and transportation planning with the community to create a detailed vision for this area focused on building a better Ball Ground. All development within this Urban Core Character Area should be consistent with the Plan to bring to life the community’s vision for enhancing the existing historic buildings, connecting new neighborhoods to downtown and creating a safe, walkable heart to the city.

## Strategies

- Encourage the adaptive use of older buildings into newer uses
- Ensure that new developments connect to existing infrastructure to promote walkability and maintain the urban feel of the area
- Market the historic core to attract additional businesses and ultimately grow the downtown area



Intensity	Suggested Zoning Districts - RZL, RM-4, TND, NC, GC, BGH, CC-C, CC-T & CC-R Suggested Residential Density — 4 to 10 units per acre max.
Future Development	<b>Primary Land Uses</b> Attached single-family duplexes & townhouses Multi-family flats Mixed-use buildings Single-use commercial <b>Secondary Land Uses</b> Public and Institutional Uses
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban streets with sidewalks on both sides</li> <li>• Full urban services (water and sewer)</li> </ul>
Greenspace	Smaller civic spaces (i.e. pocket parks, playgrounds, etc.) within the residential areas Patio and Courtyards for commercial areas

# Workplace Center

## Description

The Workplace Center represents major employment areas, including professional and corporate offices, regional offices, and light industrial districts. Retail developments are secondary uses that complement these employment centers. Civic spaces that connect workplaces together are integral as well, providing employees with opportunities to enjoy the outdoors on their breaks.

## Intent

Development within a Workplace Center should be focused into villages, centers and compact activity centers. Workplace Centers are located close to major transportation connections and have a high level of access. An integrated mix of uses and building types, along with external and internal connectivity would create a synergy between retail, office, industry and surrounding developments.

## Strategies

- Develop a master plan for various Workplace Center developments, including provisions for trails, greenways and other civic spaces.
- Encourage the “clustering” of office and retail uses that are integrated with parking, landscaping, and pedestrian areas
- Install buffers between incompatible uses in the character area



Intensity	Suggested Zoning Districts - GC, LI & HI
Future Development	<p><b>Primary Land Uses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office buildings &amp; complexes</li> <li>Light industrial / manufacturing &amp; warehousing</li> <li>Mixed-use buildings</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary Land Uses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail &amp; services commercial development</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburban streets with a sidewalk on one side</li> <li>• Full urban services (water and sewer)</li> </ul>
Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trails connecting to passive recreation areas and surrounding residential areas</li> <li>Private on-site amenities for employees</li> </ul>

Vision Into Action

# Vision Into Action

## Implementation Process

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan is not the end but the beginning of the implementation process to translate the community vision into reality. The three-step process outlined here is the best way to ensure effective community planning for Ball Ground. These three points appear simple but require many more detailed steps to be successful. This section will discuss a series of ways to use the Comprehensive Plan to guide growth.

### ***COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY***

#### COMMUNITY PLANNING THREE-STEP PROCESS

1. Develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan
2. Use the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate proposals for rezonings and other approvals
3. Establish regulatory measures necessary to protect and enhance our community character

Each community should use the policies and character area standards outlined within this Comprehensive Plan Update while reviewing specific proposals for rezoning and development. The character area standards are intended to establish a general direction and a base level of development quality and compatibility with surrounding areas.

New rezonings and developments should be compared against the Comprehensive Plan—policies and character areas for consistency and intent.

- Guiding principles, policies and development strategies are developed from the Vision; all new development should relate and coordinate with policy;



- Review general design considerations for consistency with Character Area descriptions, and Node or Corridor descriptions if applicable;
- Character Areas suggest qualitative controls until small area and corridor studies are completed for specific areas; and
- Character Areas, Nodes and Corridors are not regulations, and therefore will allow flexibility during project review.

As the project proceeds through the rezoning or development process it will be judged on how that specific proposal works on that specific site, utilizing Zoning Ordinance review standards already adopted by the jurisdiction.

### **DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Development Regulations should reflect the Character Area guidelines and create a one to one relationship between this Plan and the implementing Codes. Typically, a natural outcome of a character area based Comprehensive Plan is a set of design regulations that speak to specific development characteristics such as site planning, massing, scale and density. This can be achieved in several ways: require detailed concept plans during the zoning and development review process to conform to the character area guidelines, a rewrite of the Codes to reflect a more performance based approach, the use of zoning overlay districts that supplement the current zoning provisions and safeguard the designated area from undesirable development patterns. By implementing these types of control measures, a community can work towards achieving their Vision.

The Ball Ground Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations need to be transformed so they can be modernized and calibrated to reflect the community's vision while creating a user-friendly format. Regulations that are not clear and easy to understand are likely to be poorly enforced or even worse, ignored all together. The importance of this implementation effort cannot be overstated. These regulations are valuable and necessary tools for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and for the creation of quality developments within the county.

### **DETAILED PLANNING STUDIES**

Detailed plans, such as the Downtown Master Plans, a Solid Waste Management Plan, Livable Centers Initiatives (LCI) Plans, Parks and Recreation Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, small area studies and design regulations may be adopted as implementing measures of the Comprehensive Plan. The public engagement during the planning process

has already identified the need for several small area plans to address areas that need coordination between land use, transportation and other infrastructure.

### **PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE**

To be a useful and influential tool in guiding growth and development in the future and in ultimately realizing each community's Vision for the future, the Comprehensive Plan must be kept current. Over time, changes will occur in the Community that may not have been anticipated and over which the Community may have no control—changing lifestyles, national or regional economic shifts, the impact of telecommuting or internet access on working and shopping patterns, etc. Annually monitoring these shifts against progress in plan implementation may lead to the need for amendments to the plan. At a minimum, a substantial Update will have to be undertaken every five years as per State requirements.

#### **Annual Plan Review**

The annual review should be accomplished in coordination with the annual budgeting and the CWP update process. At a minimum, the annual review should include:

- Pace of growth, in terms of housing units built and land absorbed by nonresidential development.
- Land development approvals over the past year as a score card of the Comprehensive Plan's Vision.
- Zoning approvals over the past year in relation to the Future Development Map.
- Future Development Plan Map changes.
- Planned Short Term Work Program activities compared to actual accomplishments. (Current list found in the next section)
- New Related Plans that should be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Community Work Program (CWP)**

The CWP may be updated annually, reflecting the results of the Annual Plan Review, but must be updated at least every 5 years. Any updates to the CWP must be forwarded to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for their files. A new CWP for 2023-2028 can be found at the end of this document.

### **Minor Plan Amendments**

As a result of the annual plan review, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan may be appropriate. If the needed changes are strictly local and not considered to have an effect on another local government, the changes may be adopted as a minor amendment to the Plan at any time during the year by action of the City Council. At the end of each year, a summary of all minor amendments is to be sent to the ARC with a statement that the individual and cumulative effects of the minor amendments do not significantly alter the basic tenets of the approved Plan.

### **Major Plan Amendments**

If, as a result of the annual plan review process, conditions or policies on which the Plan is based have changed significantly so as to alter the basic tenets of the Plan, the City will initiate a major Plan amendment. The public will be involved in preparation of the Plan amendment to the extent warranted by the degree of change that has occurred. Following State procedural guidelines, a public hearing will be held to inform the public of the community's intent to amend the Plan, and to seek public participation. The amendment will be submitted to surrounding communities for review in accordance with our agreement under HB 489, and to the ARC for review under the State's requirements, prior to adoption.

# Recent Accomplishments from 2018-2022 STWP

Project Description	Implementation				Notes
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>					
Create, adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance that respects personal property rights while helping to preserve the past		X			Draft ordinance prepared. Committee paused during COVID-19 era, requiring a reorganization
Negotiate price and if feasible acquire the Roberts lake Historic Dam Site for public green space	X				The City acquired 50 acres surrounding the old dam site and it has been dedicated as permanent green space and a .7 mile trail has been constructed to reach the property
Work with Cherokee County and Georgia Department of Natural Resources to establish two boat/canoe/kayak launches on the Etowah River between Ball Ground and Canton		X			Cherokee County purchased land along the Etowah River as requested by the City of Ball Ground. Ball Ground has committed financial resources to assist in a grant match for construction of launches at this location. Grant awards anticipated in August 2023. Approved park plans call for canoe/kayak launches at 2 county parks along the river.
Obtain historic marker plaques for downtown buildings of historic significance	X				We have added plaques to the downtown buildings.
<b>Economic Development</b>					
Develop a marketing plan for the downtown district		X			City Council is working to establish a body or staff member tasked with furthering the City's economic development goals, including marketing, tourism, business recruitment, etc.
Design and Implement Way Finding	X				All projects have been completed downtown
Develop a plan to promote Eco Tourism based on proximity to the Etowah River and the McGraw Ford Wildlife Area		X			City Council is working to establish a body or staff member tasked with furthering the City's economic development goals, including marketing, tourism, business recruitment, etc.
Develop a listing of lacking services within the community and work to recruit potential vendors to provide those services		X			City Council is working to establish a body or staff member tasked with furthering the City's economic development goals, including marketing, tourism, business recruitment, etc.
Work to promote alternatives to heavy truck traffic on SR 372 including designated truck route, re-routing of trucks, or implementation of noise, odor, and weight restrictions.		X			Ball Ground Truck Bypass project is underway with the first component, a roundabout at Ball Ground Hwy and Howell Bridge Rd in design phase
Work to develop a cohesive tourism strategy		X			City Council is working to establish a body or staff member tasked with furthering the City's economic development goals, including marketing, tourism, business recruitment, etc.
Review city ordinances & policies and consider options to address local barriers to the provision of broadband services.	X				We are actively working with developers and broadband providers. We have streamlined review and permitting. Nearly all City residents now have access to broadband. We have provided public wifi hotspots downtown and are working with a developer of more.

# Recent Accomplishments from 2018-2022 STWP

Project Description	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
<b>Community Facilities</b>					
Design and Build a New Community Center				X	After assessing cost, feasibility and need, the decision was made to drop this item. We are studying other options that can accomplish the City's goals of providing community gathering space such as pavilions, using the existing gymnasium, etc.
Partner with Cherokee County to increase staffing at the Ball Ground Senior Center to full time Status	X				Complete
Provide a minimum of 2 additional police officer positions and achieve a goal of 24/7/300 coverage		X			2 new positions have been added but we still lack approximately 3 hours per day in coverage as we assign
Develop plans for the creation of a trail system connecting downtown with Long Swamp Creek	X				Trails now connect downtown to LSC
Explore possible options with Patriot Rail to Determine Feasibility of allowing trails on RR Right of Way				X	RR was not receptive
Develop an additional 50 parking spaces in the downtown district	X				New public parking lots are now open
Complete the Valley Streetscapes Project	X				Complete with sidewalk, landscape, seating, shade structures, etc.
Plan for the relocation of the water main in A. W. Roberts Drive on SR 372	X				Line relocated and roadway repaved
Purchase software/hardware that will allow the start of conversion of the water system from Radio Read to Cellular Read	X				
Equip 5 additional sewer lift stations with Mission Communications for remote monitoring	X				
Complete a review, update, and adoption of a prioritized pedestrian facilities improvement plan		X			Will pursue in this CWP
Expand Parks and Recreation to include more adult recreation such as canoe/kayak trips or plan bus trips to cultural events/sporting events		X			We are reviewing the overall parks/rec needs and involving representatives of our Senior Center and sports leagues to determine which activities best suit our adults and how the City can accommodate these
Establish a baseline GIS program to facilitate planning and land use	X				Contracted with InterDev for continual service, overseen by City staff
Work with Cherokee County and GDOT to improve the condition of SR	X				Water lines were relocated from under the roadway and resurfacing was completed.
Update Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	X				CIP was updated and adopted in November 2022.



# Recent Accomplishments from 2018-2022 STWP

Project Description	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
<b>Housing</b>					
Conduct education outreach to inform residents within the Valley District of Ancillary Dwelling options	X				
Continue efforts with quality builders to promote small footprint infill	X				
<b>Land Use</b>					
Comprehensive review, update and adoption of the City of Ball Ground Development Code	X				
Establish a Corridor of Influence Ordinance to protect the main corridors within the City		X			Will pursue within the new CWP

# Community Work Plan

Project Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Responsible Party	Estimated Total Cost	Funding Sources
<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>									
Acquire additional natural preserve areas adjacent to Roberts Lake Park for greenspace preservation and passive recreation activities	X	X	X	X	X	X	TBD	TBD	TBD
Create and adopt a historic preservation ordinance that preserves significant historical structures, while respecting private property rights.	X	X					City Staff	No Cost	NA
Create and adopt a tree preservation ordinance that preserves both single, unique specimen trees and stands of significant trees		X	X				City Staff	No Cost	NA
Work with Cherokee County and Georgia Department of Natural Resources to establish two boat/canoe/kayak launches on the Etowah River between Ball Ground and Canton	X	X	X				City and County Staff	TBD	TBD
<b>Economic Development</b>									
Develop a cohesive tourism strategy that includes: the downtown district and eco-tourism based on proximity to the Roberts Lake Park, Etowah River and the McGraw-Ford Wildlife Area			X	X	X		City Staff Parks and Rec. Committee	\$15,000	General Fund
Develop a marketing plan for the downtown district		X	X	X			City Staff	\$15,000	General Fund
Create a list of lacking services within the community and work to recruit providers or these	X	X	X	X	X	X	City Staff	No Cost	NA
Work to promote alternatives to heavy truck traffic on SR 372 including designated truck route, re-routing of trucks, or implementation of noise, odor, and weight restrictions	X	X	X	X	X	X	Mayor, Council & City Staff, State, Fed	No Cost	NA
Provide/promote a yearly community events program to include cultural expos, festivals, concerts and other attractions for locals and tourists.	X	X	X	X	X	X	City Staff	\$15,000	NA
Engage owners of underutilized or vacant properties downtown to encourage property development and/or tenant occupancy.	X	X	X	X	X	X	City Staff	No Cost	NA
Pursue "Broadband Ready Community" certification		X	X	X			City Staff, Private Developers	No Cost	N/A

# Community Work Plan

Project Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Responsible Party	Estimated Total Cost	Funding Sources
<b>Community Facilities</b>									
Establish a 3rd water purchase point with CCWSA	X	X					City Staff	\$250,000	Water/Sewer
Conduct a sewer capacity study	X	X					City Staff & Consultant	\$55,000	Water/Sewer
Provide a minimum of 2 additional police officer positions and achieve a goal of 24/7/300 coverage	X	X					Chief of Police & City Manager	\$160,000	General Fund (Annually)
Renovate the pocket park downtown with new seating, refreshed landscaping and hardscaping, lighting, shade structures and other functional improvements	X	X					City Staff, Pocket Park Committee	\$75,000	General Fund, ARPA
Complete a review, update, and adoption of a prioritized pedestrian facilities improvement plan for sidewalk and trails, including additional length and connections	X	X	X	X	X	X	City Staff	No Cost	N/A
Complete a master plan for Calvin Farmer Park and the Community Building	X						City Staff, Parks and Rec Committee	No Cost	N/A
Implement traffic calming measures to further the safety of pedestrians, motorists and other users of City rights-of-way.		X	X	X	X		City Staff	TBD	TBD
Assess/determine feasibility of a splash pad.	X						City Staff	No Cost	N/A
Establish a Valley Street sidewalk connection across the railroad	X						City Staff	\$40,000	General Fund
Review and expand adult parks and recreation needs	X	X	X				City Staff	TBD	TBD

# Community Work Plan

Project Description	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Responsible Party	Estimated Total Cost	Funding Sources
<b>Land Use</b>									
Establish a Corridor of Influence Ordinance to protect and enhance the main corridors within the City	X	X					City Staff	No Cost	N/A
Update the City's sign regulations		X	X				City Staff	No Cost	N/A
Develop and adopt an impact fee program	X	X	X				City Staff, Consultant	\$55,350	General Fund
Implement a hotel/motel tax		X	X				City Staff	No Cost	NA
<b>Housing</b>									
Develop a comprehensive Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance		X	X	X			City Staff	No Cost	N/A
Amend the zoning code to reduce residential development pressure on the historic core and encourage housing near transportation corridors	X	X					City Staff	No Cost	N/A

Historic Downtown

BALL GROUND

Chartered 1883

GEORGIA

