

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the 1989 Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 215, the Georgia Planning Act, requiring all local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures promulgated by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Partial Update for Elbert County's Comprehensive Plan for the City of Elberton, Georgia was updated and submitted to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission for review and comment in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City of Elberton that the Partial Plan Update for the Elbert County Comprehensive Plan, as amended and approved by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission is hereby adopted, and furthermore, that this Resolution shall be forwarded to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this 27th day of June, 2018.


THE CITY OF ELBERTON



Larry L. Guest, Mayor



Attest:


Cindy D. Churney, City Clerk

City of Elberton Comprehensive Plan

2018 Update

Developed by the Planning & Government Services Division
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission



Acknowledgements

Steering Committee

Larry Guest, Mayor
Lanier Dunn, City Manager
Cindy Churney, City Clerk
Bruce Herring, Housing Authority Manager
Jason Ray, Development Authority (economic dev. rep.)
Catrina Goudelock, Main Street Manager
Allen Lee, City Marshall/Zoning Officer

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

James R. Dove, Executive Director
Burke Walker, Planning and Government Services Division Director
Justin Crighton, Planner (project lead)

Table of Contents

Introduction & Overview.....	3
Needs & Opportunities.....	5
Vision.....	8
Land Use.....	10
Community Work Program.....	14

Chapter 1

Introduction & Overview

Purpose

A Comprehensive Plan is a community's guide for growth, development, and improvements to the character of the built environment. The Plan should represent the preferred vision for the community's future and provide a reasonable, rational, and tangible list of actions that the community is committed to undertaking in order to achieve that vision. It is intended to provide guidance to local elected officials on land use patterns, the location of facilities and services, protection and enhancement of the quality of life, and the preservation of the community's character in both now, and in the future.

The Plan seeks to establish the ground rules for the manner in which the community will develop and invest by asking three simple questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?

By considering current needs and existing opportunities the plan provides a solid foundation for decision-making in support of achieving the community's short and long-term goals and vision.

Process

The Comprehensive Plan process follows the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs ("DCA"), O.C.G.A. Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective March 1, 2014. The DCA rules state that the Comprehensive Plan consists of the following three distinct components:

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

An analysis of the community's needs and opportunities will help determine the existing conditions of the city. This will assist the community in identifying the issues that it needs to address and the opportunities on which it can capitalize.

COMMUNITY GOALS:

Through public and committee meetings, the City's vision, goals, and policies are developed to determine the community's future direction. As a part of this component, policies are identified to assist in making decisions that are consistent with community goals. Additionally, character areas, or focused areas of planning with special conditions or needs, are defined. This will help determine which parts of the community are to be enhanced or preserved, and how to guide zoning and policies in the future.

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM:

The final component of the comprehensive plan, the Community Work Program, outlines steps and strategies for achieving the community's goals and implementing its plans. The Work Program will include a short term work plan, identifying priority projects, potential collaborations, and funding strategies.

Public Involvement

Public Input & Steering Committee

The Comprehensive Plan Update relied heavily on public involvement. The planning process began with a community input session where the public was invited to discuss the assets and challenges found in the City, and their hopes for its future. Following the initial public meeting, several work sessions were held with a Citizens Advisory Committee, a group of citizens representing various communities and interests throughout the City. This Committee provided valuable feedback, guidance, and recommendations and served an integral role in developing a plan representative of the community's vision. Invited stakeholders included representatives from the Elbert County government, City of Elberton government, Housing Authority, Main Street program, Downtown Development Authority, City of Bowman government, and Development Authority.

The planning process began with a public hearing, and was followed by a series of community input sessions during which the public and a local steering committee were invited to discuss local trends and aspirations. A final public hearing was held before submittal of the plan to the DCA for review.

Community Involvement Events and Opportunities

Initial Public Hearing, 10/27/2015
Input Meeting, 10/27/2015
Input Meeting, 11/17/2015
Final Public Hearing, 4/2/2018

Additionally, plan-related input and discussion was welcome at monthly meetings of the City Council, Housing Authority, Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Development Authority.

NEGRC's Role

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Planning & Government Services Division oversaw the development of this plan, including facilitating public and steering committee meetings.

Review Process

According to the DCA's new rules for comprehensive planning, effective March 1, 2014, the City must transmit the plan to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) when all three components are complete. The transmittal must also include the community's certification that it has considered both the Regional Water Plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria. Once it completes its review, the NEGRC will forward the plan to the DCA for review. Once the plan has been found by the DCA to be in compliance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures, the approved Plan may be adopted.

Data & Statistics

The facts, figures, and statistics used to develop the Plan were generated from data compiled throughout the planning process. A large proportion of that data was gathered in the beginning stages, primarily late 2015 and early 2016. The data and analysis was used to identify general trends, and provide a reliable quantitative context to describe existing conditions and assist in informing the recommendations and policies.

Chapter 2

Needs & Opportunities

The following Needs and Opportunities were identified using the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment Tool, an analysis of relevant data, and a survey of community leaders and stakeholders who undertook an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that face Elbert County and its municipalities.

The list is intended to capture the most prescient needs that the community will have over the next 5 to 10 years, in order to establish a set of goals the community can work towards achieving in order to address those issues.

Economic Development

The City of Elberton is rich in history and culture. The granite industry has flourished and given the City a unique character, especially in the downtown, that could be used to draw visitors, tourists, conventions and events. The City also boasts the internet connection speeds that rival the Metro Atlanta area. The city is well suited for relocation of employers, as well as an attractive destination. The need to diversify the economy to something other than granite or granite related jobs is a concern expressed by the stakeholders

Needs

- Actively support existing businesses and industry in all sectors.
- Recruit new employers to complement and enhance the local economy by offering a more diverse range of employment options
- *Increase the City’s visibility as a destination*

Opportunities

- Available property with utilities including water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure in place
- Access to incentive programs for new and existing industries from the State, County, and City of Elberton are in place to foster economic growth.
- Existing workforce development programs include: Elbert County Comprehensive High School’s Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Program, and the Elberton Campus of Athens Technical College.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural and cultural resources are unanimously considered a strength among community feedback comments. The City should take proactive measures to protect them.

Needs

- Balance growth with protections for natural resources and the environment.

Opportunities

- *Control and guide growth through effective code enforcement and strategic infrastructure expansion.*

Transportation

An efficient and well-connected transportation network is critical to the long-term economic viability of the City as well as to a high quality of life for residents.

Needs

- Improve circulation for truck traffic in downtown Elberton.
- Work to improve transportation infrastructure in support of economic development goals.
- The rising cost of maintenance of current infrastructure is a challenge

Opportunities

- Developing more efficient systems to plan, build, and maintain transportation infrastructure
- Expanding mobility option.

Community Facilities and Services

The City has a robust, but aging physical infrastructure. Like many other places the cost of maintenance and replacement is rising.

Needs

- Replace aging and obsolete infrastructure to increase efficiency and improve delivery of services

Opportunities

- Strategic repair, and retrofit of infrastructure can be an incentive to attract new development in targeted locations.

Chapter 3

Vision

Elberton will be aesthetically distinctive and attractive, including streetscapes, signage, and public facility design. The City maintains policies that are sensitive to the environment while fulfilling the needs of all residents and visitors. Residents will be engaged to support projects that will improve our quality of life.

Goals & Policies

GOALS & POLICIES

The goals and policies below are designed to help Elbert County and its cities in the decision-making process. They are based on the Georgia Department of Community Affairs State Planning Recommendations and address the identified needs and opportunities. The policies apply to all jurisdictions within Elbert County unless noted.

Economic Development

- We will support programs that retain, expand and create businesses that provide a good fit for our communities' economies in terms of job skills required and links to existing businesses.
- Increase local employment opportunities through the promotion of orderly economic growth fostering both the attraction of new and retention of existing businesses and industries that diversifies the local economy and maximizes the strengths of the local labor force.
- Improve the talent of the local labor pool and improve high school graduation rates.
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- Prioritize expansion of facilities and services into development areas that are close to existing resources first before extending utilities and services to areas that require longer extensions.
- Support the use of planning studies, value studies, cost/benefit studies and analyses of sustainability to identify cost effective projects.
- We will consider the employment needs and skill levels of our existing population in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- Recruit diverse and environmentally sensitive industries that will provide jobs for residents.
- Support the growth of knowledge based industries in new development areas.
- Work with County and regional agencies to encourage business education support to small business owners.

- Strengthen cooperative effort with Athens Technical College to identify training resources to train and re-train local residents for prospective industries.

Land Use

- We want development whose design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale add value to our community.
- Provide incentives to rehabilitate existing buildings and to construct new buildings that are compatible with the period and feel of the existing exterior architecture.
- We will guide new development in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, and agricultural lands.
- Provide education programs for developers and property owners to use attractive community design as a means to enhance environmental protection and support the extension of community facility infrastructure.

Transportation, Facilities and Services

- We will work with GDOT, the Railroads and other Stakeholders to insure appropriate transportation infrastructure is developed and installed in support of economic development initiatives.
- Identify, encourage and protect desirable land uses and development patterns along transportation corridors.
- Provide a safe, efficient, and effective transportation system that reflects both existing and future needs while providing a variety of transportation options.
- We will guide development into appropriate areas close to existing transportation, as well as water & sewer infrastructure.
- Provide potable water service in a safe, clean, efficient, economical, and environmentally sound manner concurrent with new development.
- Provide sanitary sewer service in a safe, clean, efficient, economical, and environmentally sound manner, concurrent with urban development.
- Target infrastructure expansion to optimize commercial and industrial growth.

Chapter 4

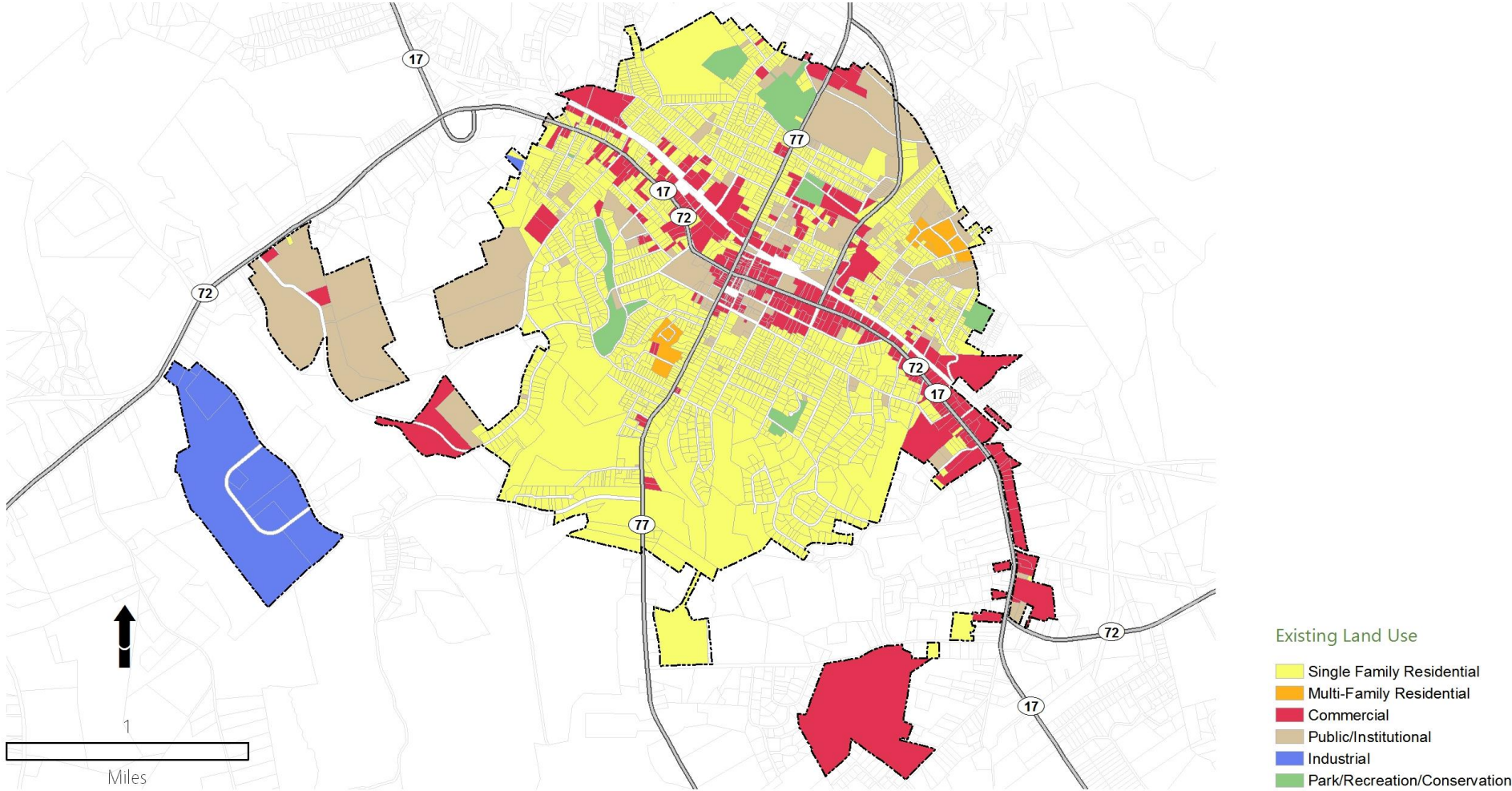
Land Use

The Land Use Chapter includes a review of existing land uses in all jurisdictions, a discussion of future development policies, and a Future Land Use Map. Previously, a “character area” methodology was required for land use planning that included generalized land use categories with implementation policies associated with each category. Character area-based land use planning has provided for more mixed use district categories as well as a simplified method of engaging with the public on land use decisions. However, the inclusion of mixed use within all business districts or “activity centers” may potentially diminish local governments’ ability to regulate specific land uses.

Existing Land Use

It is important to have a firm understanding of what the current land use pattern as they will have the most significant influence over future growth and development. The following highlights the existing land use within Elbert County.

- Single Family Residential – Smaller, more dense, traditional single family residential
- Multi-Family Residential- Two or more attached residential units.
- Commercial –Retail and Service
- Public/Institutional – Schools, Churches, Government
- Industrial – Manufacturing, Warehousing, Distribution
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation – Parks, Recreation Centers, Wildlife Refuges



Future Land Use

For this update to the City of Elberton's Comprehensive Plan a traditional Future Land Use Map has been included to serve as the guiding legal document for regulation of land use.

Residential

Residential land includes housing and related activities. The existing housing stock is predominantly single-family detached residential. There is a small amount of manufactured housing. There is currently very little attached housing in the County.

- Low Density – average one or fewer lots per acre
- Medium Density – average 1-4 lots per acre
- High Density – average five or more lots per acre
- Multi-Family – multiple units per building

Commercial

Commercial land includes retail sales, restaurants, office, services, and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

Office / Professional

Office / Professional accommodates business concerns that do not provide a product directly to customers on the premises, or do not, as a primary activity involve the manufacture, storage, or distribution of products. This category includes small single-occupant structures, as well as large office parks with a variety of tenants in multi-story buildings.

Public / Institutional

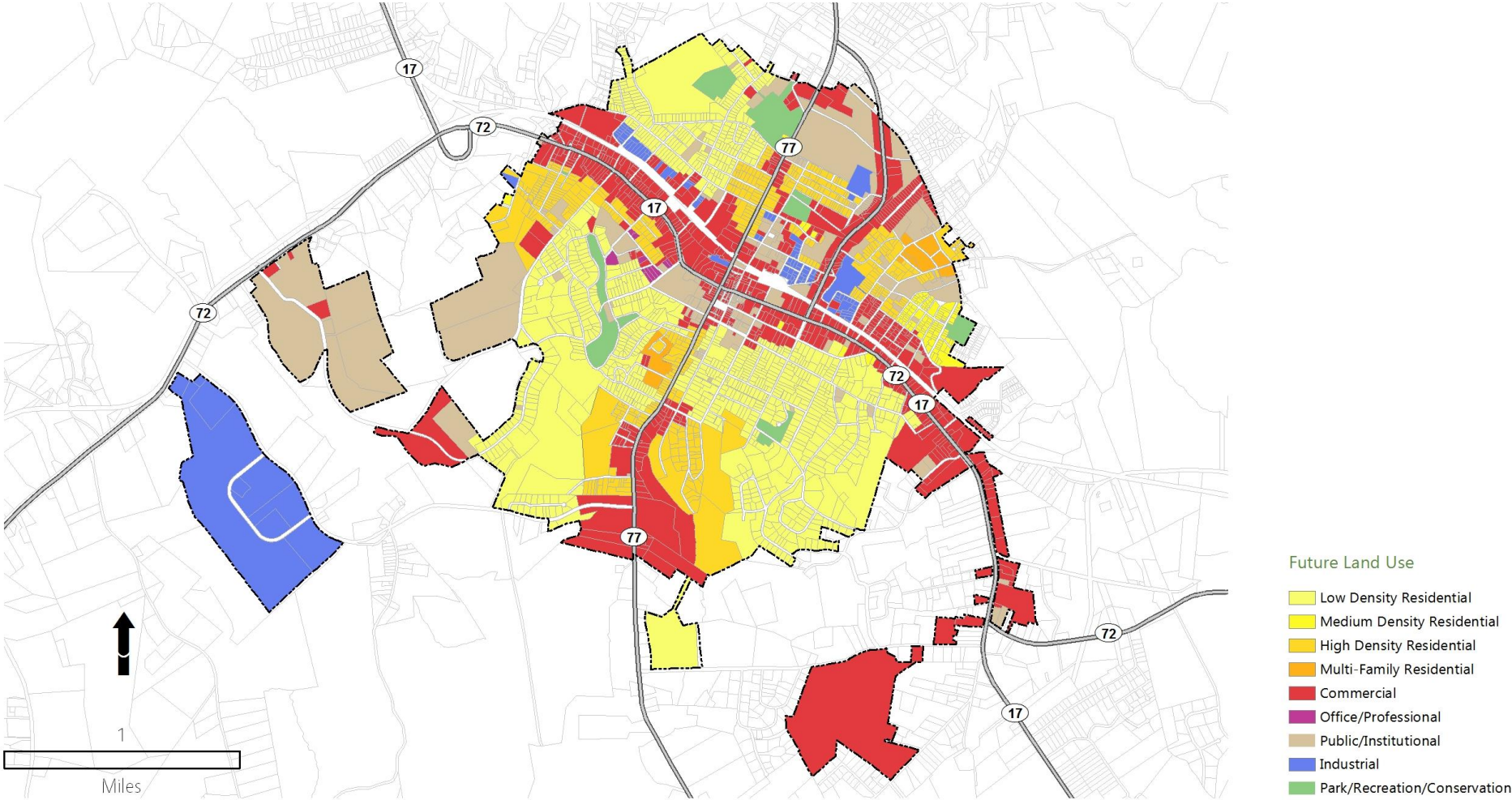
Public / Institutional land includes community facilities, certain state, federal, or local government uses and institutional land uses.

Industrial

Industrial land includes land dedicated to warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, mining or mineral extraction facilities or other similar uses.

Parks / Recreation/ Conservation

Parks / Recreation / Conservation land is dedicated to active or passive recreational uses and natural resource conservation. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, and similar uses. Conservation subdivisions may also include some land preserved as greenspace or recreational land through easements.



Chapter 5

Community Work Program

The Short-Term Work Program (2018-2022), updated every five years, provides a list of specific activities that the community plans to address as immediate priorities. A Report of Plan Accomplishments, which provides status commentary on the previous work plan (2013-2017), follows.

Short-Term Work Program, 2018-2022

(*entries with an asterisk represent carryover items from the previous STWP)

#	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
1	Promote and market Samuel Elbert Hotel for private and/or public reuse.		City; DDA	\$5 million	Loan
2	Promote economic development within the downtown square and main street districts		Local	\$15,000 - \$30,000	Local, Other
3	Promote Elmhurst Cemetery.		Local	None	N/A
4	Work with state agencies to identify opportunities for business and industrial recruitment.		City	None	NA
5	Study local economic characteristics and conditions to address the potential for economic diversification.		City	None	NA
6	Continue to support the Economic Development Authority.		City	None	Local
7	Develop teleconferencing capabilities to allow for distance learning educational opportunities.		City	\$75,000	Local
8	Promote infill residential development to developers.		City	None	NA
9	Minimize the negative environmental impacts of residential development.		City	None	NA
10	Minimize the negative environmental impacts of development.		City	None	NA
11	Coordinate new development with existing and planned community facilities.		City	None	NA
12	Assist Special needs population with receiving government assistance to improve housing conditions.		City	None	NA
13	Seek government funding to rehabilitate substandard housing and to ensure a continued supply of low-to-moderate income affordable housing options.		City	None	NA

#	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
14	Façade Grant		City; DDA	\$5,000/year	Local; Private Donations
15	Work with county to develop public education program to promote recycling.		City	\$2,500/year	Local
16	Coordinate new development with the local school board to minimize impacts on the school system.		City	None	NA
17	Continue sewer system Inflow & Infiltration remediation projects		Local	\$800,000	Local
18	Replace all bare steel natural gas main, 15 miles		City	\$2 million	Local
19	Add storm water, electric, and broadband infrastructure to GIS mapping system		Local	\$80,000	Local
20	Utilize Future Land Use map to coordinate new development in appropriate areas serviced by necessary infrastructure.		City	None	NA
21	Utilize the Future Land Use map to coordinate new economic development in appropriate areas serviced by the necessary infrastructure.		City	None	NA
22	Utilize the Future Land Use map to coordinate new development with the Comprehensive Plan.		City	None	NA
23	Address the Future Land Use map every two years to ensure it adequately reflects prevailing development patterns.		City	None	NA
24	Develop a cooperative relationship between local government, Athens Tech, and local businesses and industries to monitor labor force conditions and needs.		City	None	NA
25	Coordinate new development with the local school board to minimize impacts on the school system.		City	None	NA
26	Coordinate tourism and cultural resource development efforts to include all jurisdictions and appropriate state agencies. (See Cultural Resources Element for detailed description of projects.)		City, County, Bowman, State Agencies	None	NA
27	Improve transportation infrastructure according to community needs.		City	Varied according to project.	Local

Report of Plan Accomplishments, 2013-2017


#	Activity	Status	Notes
1	Promote and market Samuel Elbert Hotel for private and/or public reuse.	Complete	Facility Opened in 2016
2	Promote economic development within the downtown square and main street districts	Ongoing	
3	Promote Elmhurst Cemetery.	Ongoing	
4	Work with state agencies to identify opportunities for business and industrial recruitment.	Ongoing	
5	Study local economic characteristics and conditions to address the potential for economic diversification.	Ongoing	
6	Continue to support the Economic Development Authority.	Ongoing	
7	Develop teleconferencing capabilities to allow for distance learning educational opportunities.	Complete	Initiated in 2007
8	Promote infill residential development to developers.	Ongoing	
9	Minimize the negative environmental impacts of residential development.	Ongoing	
10	Minimize the negative environmental impacts of development.	Ongoing	
11	Coordinate new development with existing and planned community facilities.	Ongoing	
12	Seek government funding to rehabilitate substandard housing and to ensure a continued supply of low-to-moderate income affordable housing options.	Ongoing	
13	Organize "Clean and Beautiful" initiatives to promote and improve downtown aesthetics.	Ongoing	
14	Work with county to develop public education program to promote recycling.	Ongoing	
15	Coordinate new development with the local school board to minimize impacts on the school system.	Ongoing	
16	Adopt and begin to implement an urban redevelopment plan	Complete	Adopted in 2017
17	Renovate the Elberton Arts Center	Complete	
18	Construct backstage addition to Elbert Theatre	Cancel	Determined project was not needed at this time.
19	Refurbish Hickory Drive Park	Ongoing	

#	Activity	Status	Notes
20	Complete streetscape on N. Oliver St.	Complete	
21	Complete streetscape on Heard St.	Complete	
22	Construct electric tie line between #2 and #5 substations for redundancy to Industrial Park	Postpone	<i>Assessing cost/benefit; long-range, will not be carried over</i>
23	Reconstruct Hartwell Highway electric line	Ongoing	
24	Expand Silk Mill sewer lift station or divert industrial flows with force main	Postpone	<i>Assessing cost/benefit; long-range, will not be carried over</i>
25	Continue sewer system Inflow & Infiltration remediation projects	Ongoing	
26	Add storm water, electric, and broadband infrastructure to GIS mapping system	Ongoing	
27	Utilize Future Land Use map to coordinate new development in appropriate areas serviced by necessary infrastructure.	Ongoing	
28	Utilize the Future Land Use map to coordinate new economic development in appropriate areas serviced by the necessary infrastructure.	Ongoing	
29	Utilize the Future Land Use map to coordinate new development with the Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing	
30	Address the Future Land Use map every two years to ensure it adequately reflects prevailing development patterns.	Ongoing	
31	Develop a cooperative relationship between local government, Athens Tech, and local businesses and industries to monitor labor force conditions and needs.	Ongoing	
32	Coordinate new development with the local school board to minimize impacts on the school system.	Ongoing	
33	Coordinate tourism and cultural resource development efforts to include all jurisdictions and appropriate state agencies. (See Cultural Resources Element for detailed description of projects.)	Ongoing	
34	Improve transportation infrastructure according to community needs.	Ongoing	


Appendix

Sample Participation Records

The City initiated comprehensive plan development as part of a joint, countywide process. The first sign-in sheets reflect that scenario, while the latter shows the individual, city-only approach.

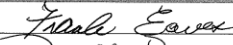
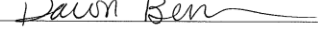
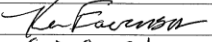
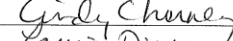

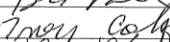



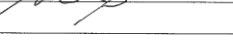

		Elbert County: Comprehensive Plan Update October 27, 2015 – 1:30 p.m. Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, Elberton, GA	
		Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, Elberton, GA	
NAME	TITLE	ADDRESS	EMAIL
Butch Smith	Planning & Zoning	Elberton	CostySmith@che1mac.com
Sara Furr Schatz	Landscape Architect	Bowman	landsara@mac.com
Betty Jo Maxwell	Bowman City Council	Bowman	bettyjo.maxwell@bmail.com
Patrick Hopp	Elbert Co. P&Z	45 Forest Ave. Elberton	phopp@elberton.net
Bob Thomas	Elbert Co. Admin	45 Forest Ave	bobthomas@elberton.net

Sign-in sheet for Initial Public Hearing and Input Meeting 1

		Elbert County: Comprehensive Plan Update November 17, 2015 – 1:30 p.m. Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, Elberton, GA	
		Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, Elberton, GA	
NAME	TITLE	ADDRESS	EMAIL
Patrick Hopp	Ecode Enforcement		phopp@elberton.net
Allen Lee	City Code Enforcement		alee@cityofelberton.net
ROBERT WHITWORTH	Civil Planning Comm		rwhdp@hotmai.com
Bob Thomas	Administrator		bobthomas@elberton.net
Jimmy Lyon	County Chairman		lyon@atlas-tech.edu



City of Elberton Comprehensive Plan Update
 Public Hearing
 April 2, 2018 5:30 pm
 Elberton City Hall

NAME	SIGNATURE
Frank Eaves	
Dawn Benson	
Dana Saylor	
Ke Evenson	
Cindy Churney	
Kanier Dunn	
Kyle Parkan	
Troy Colquhitt	
Larry Guest	
Bobby G. HUNT	
Carey Butler	
Steve Tomkins	

**City of Elberton
 PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

There will be a Public Hearing of the Mayor and Council of the City of Elberton on **Monday, April 2, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.**, for the purpose of soliciting public input on the City's Comprehensive Plan Partial Update as required by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. The meeting will be held at City Hall located at 203 Elbert Street, Elberton, Georgia.

Legal notice ad published in newspaper