

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2016-2035 CITY OF NICHOLSON, GEORGIA



Adopted August 1, 2016

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## **CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSES**

The comprehensive plan is first, a physical plan intended to guide the physical development and redevelopment of the city by describing how, why, when, and where to build, rebuild, or preserve aspects of the community. Second, the comprehensive plan covers a long-range planning horizon of 20 years (i.e., to the year 2035). Third, the comprehensive plan is “comprehensive” in the sense that it covers the entire city limits, plus it encompasses all the functions that make a community work and considers the interrelatedness of functions. The comprehensive plan is based on the foundation that if the city knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there. Without looking ahead 20 years or more and articulating what it will need and what residents want the city to become, it is difficult for a city to foresee how it can reach its goals.

The ultimate client, for the comprehensive plan is the Nicholson Mayor and City Council. By adopting the comprehensive plan, the Mayor and City Council have made an extremely important expression of their consent and support for the policies and work program contained in this plan. Completion of the comprehensive planning process according to state rules allows a local government to maintain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) status and, thus, maintain its eligibility to receive certain state grants and loans.

### **ORGANIZATION**

This comprehensive plan is organized into five chapters and two appendices. The first chapter (this one) provides background and introduces the comprehensive plan document. Chapter 2 analyzes and describes all of the “needs and opportunities” which were identified and refined during the community participation process. Chapter 3 provides the city’s goals and policies. Chapter 4 is the city’s land use element. Chapter 5 focuses on implementation and includes a short-term (five-year) community work program. Appendix A provides the “report of accomplishments” required for cities that follow five-year update schedules. Appendix B provides public notices and meeting summaries from the public participation process.

### **PLANNING HISTORY**

The City of Nicholson’s initial comprehensive plan was adopted in 1998 as a part of the comprehensive plan for Jackson County and all other municipalities in the county except for Maysville. In 2009 a partial plan update was prepared which was adopted by the City Council in January 2010. A full comprehensive plan update was prepared and adopted later in 2010. The city followed up the comprehensive planning effort with a master plan for the town center, adopted in 2014.

This comprehensive plan is a substantial revision of the comprehensive plan adopted by the City of Nicholson in 2010. The comprehensive plan serves as a guide for city officials and community leaders for making decisions in support of the community’s stated vision. The plan identifies needs and opportunities for the community, as well as goals for the city’s future, and policies that provide guidance and direction for achieving these goals. The plan also offers insight into what types of land use and development are appropriate in the City of Nicholson. A community work program is included that specifies a route for working towards implementation of the plan.

## **PLANNING REQUIREMENTS**

This Comprehensive Plan must comply with substantive and procedural requirements specified in 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 following elements of the comprehensive plan are required and are included in this comprehensive plan for the City of Nicholson: community goals, needs and opportunities, land use, and a community work program. Procedurally, the comprehensive plan must be prepared with input from an appointed steering committee which must include the active participation of the city’s elected officials.

## **ABOUT NICHOLSON**

Nicholson was initially established as the town of “Cooper,” named after the owner of a large farm in the area. Cooper was named “Nicholson” in 1882. The city was incorporated in 1907. Nicholson is located within Jackson County northeast of the metropolitan Atlanta Region, just northwest of the Athens-Clarke County metropolitan region, and east of the Gainesville urbanized area. U.S. Highway 441, which runs through the center of the city in a north-south direction, links Nicholson to Athens and Commerce as well as the north Georgia Mountains to the north. Nicholson is about 10 miles from the county seat of Jefferson. A railroad track generally parallels U.S. Highway 441.

The city limits were initially laid out in a rectangular shape, along old Highway 441. Nicholson annexed approximately 491 acres of land between 2003 and 2008, according to annexation records of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. As of today, it consists of more than 2,500 acres in area (about 3.9 square miles). Nicholson is a relatively small and rural city, with a population of less than 2,000 persons. Jackson County is still mostly rural but rapidly suburbanizing. Nicholson and southeast Jackson County are witnessing growth pressures from the Athens-Clarke County region to the southeast.

## CHAPTER 2 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

As specified in the local planning requirements of state administrative rules, this chapter analyzes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and presents the locally agreed upon needs and opportunities the city intends to address in this comprehensive plan. This chapter is based on analysis and evaluation by the city's planning consultant and reviewed and revised by the city's appointed comprehensive plan steering committee. Each of the needs or opportunities that the city identifies as high priority must (per state administrative rules) be followed up with corresponding implementation measures in the community work program of this comprehensive plan.

### HOUSING AND POPULATION

A major strength of the city is its location, about a dozen miles from Athens with easy access to that region via U.S. Highway 441. Another strength is the city's rural character adjacent to growing regions. Nicholson is a desirable location for residence, within commuting distance to Commerce, Jefferson, Braselton, and Athens. Yet another strength is the affordability of the city's housing stock; as one indicator, the 2014 estimates of housing units from the American Community Survey reveal that a sizable majority (58%) of homes in Nicholson are manufactured homes, which tend to be more affordable for moderate-income households than stick-built homes.

Despite its strengths in terms of location and rural character, there are signs of continued housing market weaknesses in Nicholson. Estimates from the 2014 American Community Survey indicate that no new housing units were constructed in the city since 2010. Nicholson was home to about 654 housing units in 2010. American Community Survey estimates (subject to significant margins of error) reveal that Nicholson had 651 housing units in 2014. These numbers reveal a slight net loss in the city's housing stock but not necessarily a trend. Nonetheless, a declining housing stock, in terms of quantity, is a potential threat. It is desirable to avoid a decline in the quantity of housing, since a decline would limit housing choice locally and hinder the city's overall population stability.

The lack of new homebuilding in Nicholson can be explained in part by examining the housing market in Jackson County, which has been slow to recover from the great recession. Census estimates reveal that the total housing stock in Jackson County increased by less than 200 units from 2010 to 2015. Further, the excess hyper-platting of residential lots in unincorporated Jackson County prior to the great recession will severely limit market potential in Nicholson in the near-term and perhaps for the majority of the 20-year planning horizon, since so many opportunities are available there for homebuilding.

Nicholson's housing market is also weakened by limitations associated with a lack of sanitary sewer service. There is little housing choice in Nicholson. The existing housing stock in Nicholson is limited to stick-built and manufactured homes on rural-sized lots. This will remain the case in the near future. Higher-density residential development is just not possible without sanitary sewer service.

The 2014 American Community Survey estimates indicate that a sizable majority (58%) of homes in Nicholson are manufactured homes. Although Nicholson does not collect an ad valorem property tax, manufactured homes add little or nothing to the local property tax base (manufactured homes are generally treated for tax purposes as personal property unless placed

on a permanent foundation and owner occupied, in which case they are taxable as real property).

A trend toward higher housing vacancy rates is another sign of Nicholson’s housing market weakness and could even become a threat to neighborhood stability. A large number of vacant homes may be considered a threat if they remain vacant and deteriorate in place without maintenance. In 2010, approximately 10% of the city’s housing stock was vacant. As of 2014 American Community Survey estimates indicate that approximately 22% of all homes in Nicholson were vacant. If vacancy rates stay that high or increase in concentrated areas, neighborhood conditions could be adversely affected by absentee property owners and/or a lack of property and housing unit maintenance.

Since housing is a private market function, there is little if anything the city can do to affect local housing vacancy rates. As a small rural municipality, Nicholson is not expected to be active in influencing the local housing market or providing incentives or support for housing programs. For example, the city has no staff to monitor local housing conditions or pursue community development grants for housing and neighborhoods. The city has been active in addressing declining neighborhood conditions along Pace Drive (identified in the previous comprehensive plan as an area requiring special attention), via demolition of substandard units. The city has also established a more thorough and rigorous code inspection program as of 2016, which will help to avoid blighting or substandard housing conditions and stabilize property maintenance conditions.

The ratio of stick-built homes to manufactured homes is, and can continue to be, influenced by local zoning regulations. The city’s zoning ordinance and official zoning map provide opportunities for manufacturing housing in rural residential and agricultural zoning districts, which together are larger in land area than the suburban residential zoning district which does not permit manufactured homes. If city leaders are concerned about an over-reliance on manufactured homes as the predominant housing stock, changes to zoning regulations and the official zoning map might be made, although such changes are unlikely to make an appreciable difference in the ratio of stick-built to manufactured homes. Such changes also could undercut the very strength of the local housing market, which is amenable to manufactured homes.

The city’s current estimated population in 2015 (1,718 persons) is slightly higher than in 2010 (1,656 persons). The projections in the 2010 comprehensive plan were for 3,000+ people by 2030, which is no longer considered realistic given available land, infrastructure availability, and housing market trends in and affecting the city. The city’s population projections (which were based largely on projections in the Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2018, have been moderated substantially as a result, showing basically stable population in the short-term and modest increases in the latter half of the planning horizon. No annexation is assumed by these projections, but they do assume that the city will establish some limited sanitary sewer service in part of town during the latter half of the planning horizon.

**Table 2.1  
Population and Housing Unit Forecasts, 2010-2030, City of Nicholson**

<b>Projection</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>
City of Nicholson Population	1,718	1,790	1,820	2,000	2,200
City of Nicholson Housing Units	650	650	670	700	750

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2016, based on Census Bureau and American Community Survey estimates.



The strongest action that Nicholson can take in terms of addressing concerns about the lack of housing choice, and potentially declining housing quantity, is to institute sanitary sewer service to a part of the municipality. Doing so will open up opportunities for diversifying the housing stock in Nicholson. Such additions to the housing stock with sewer service could include higher-density single-family detached subdivisions, senior-friendly housing developments, apartments, condominiums, townhouses, dwellings in mixed-use buildings, and institutional living and care arrangements.

## **ECONOMY**

Nicholson is mostly an agricultural and rural residential community. Nicholson's commercial land use totaled 28 acres in 2016. Nicholson has no land uses classified as industrial. The state's quality community objectives with regard to "appropriate business" and "employment options" were evaluated and embraced in the city's 2010 community assessment. Nicholson has about 41 acres of public-institutional development, but that includes a school, city hall, and post office and thus does not account for major institutional employment. Put simply, Nicholson does not have much of a non-residential base of development to generate significant employment opportunities.

The lack of employment opportunities within the city limits is a significant concern to city officials. Without sanitary sewer service, recruitment of manufacturing establishments to Nicholson is unlikely to succeed. Nicholson has no finance and insurance establishments in town, either. It would be beneficial to get a local or regional branch bank to locate in Nicholson. The presence of one bank alone is likely to provide some local lending opportunities and may spearhead some additional non-residential development (2010 community assessment). Nicholson appears to be underserved by retail trade and food services establishments.

Nonresidential development can also be stymied by local land use regulations. As noted in the community assessment, the first zoning ordinance adopted by the city in 2008 provided very little if any capacity for new commercial development. That problem was remedied by the city with a comprehensive revision of its zoning ordinance and official zoning map in 2010, which added land zoned highway business and commercial town center.

As recognized in the 2010 community assessment (prepared as part of the previous comprehensive plan), planning for future sanitary sewer service is clearly fundamental to preparing for growth. There is an opportunity to spark economic development in Nicholson if sanitary sewer service can be provided in the town center during the planning horizon. The city has an opportunity to implement its master plan for the town center (adopted in 2014), if sanitary sewer service can be instituted. Therefore, the most important steps with regard to pursuing economic development objectives is for the city to institute sanitary sewer service to the town center and to implement the town center master plan, which has been incorporated into this comprehensive plan.

## **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Nicholson has few environmental conditions that will limit its development potential, and it has few if any natural resources such as flood plains or river corridors that need to be singled out as requiring special attention. There are no sites or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Nicholson, and there are few if any historic resources left in Nicholson that would warrant additional public regulation or programs (2010 Community Assessment).

Nicholson has put into place some significant land use regulations that will help ensure the environment is protected, but there are still some protection measures that are lacking or which need updating. Nicholson still needs to adopt regulations implementing the state's environmental planning criteria. The eastern half of the city limits of Nicholson lies within the Sandy Creek small water supply watershed. That watershed provides a supply of public drinking water for Athens/Clarke County. The city does not have in place any regulations to implement the environmental planning criteria for small water supply watersheds (included in community work program).

Nicholson also needs to adopt a floodplain management ordinance to incorporate flood plain maps prepared in 2010, in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Areas of flood hazard are limited in Nicholson to the extreme western edge of the city along SR 335, along a tributary of the North Oconee River, and along a stream in the southeastern part of Nicholson. It is important that the city initiate participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (included in the community work program).

Nicholson is not currently a "local issuing authority" for soil erosion and sedimentation control. Presently, review of development plans for soil erosion is relegated to the state. Some consideration might be given to becoming a "local issuing authority" under the state's soil erosion and sedimentation control act, or joining an existing local issuing authority for proper enforcement of land development activities.

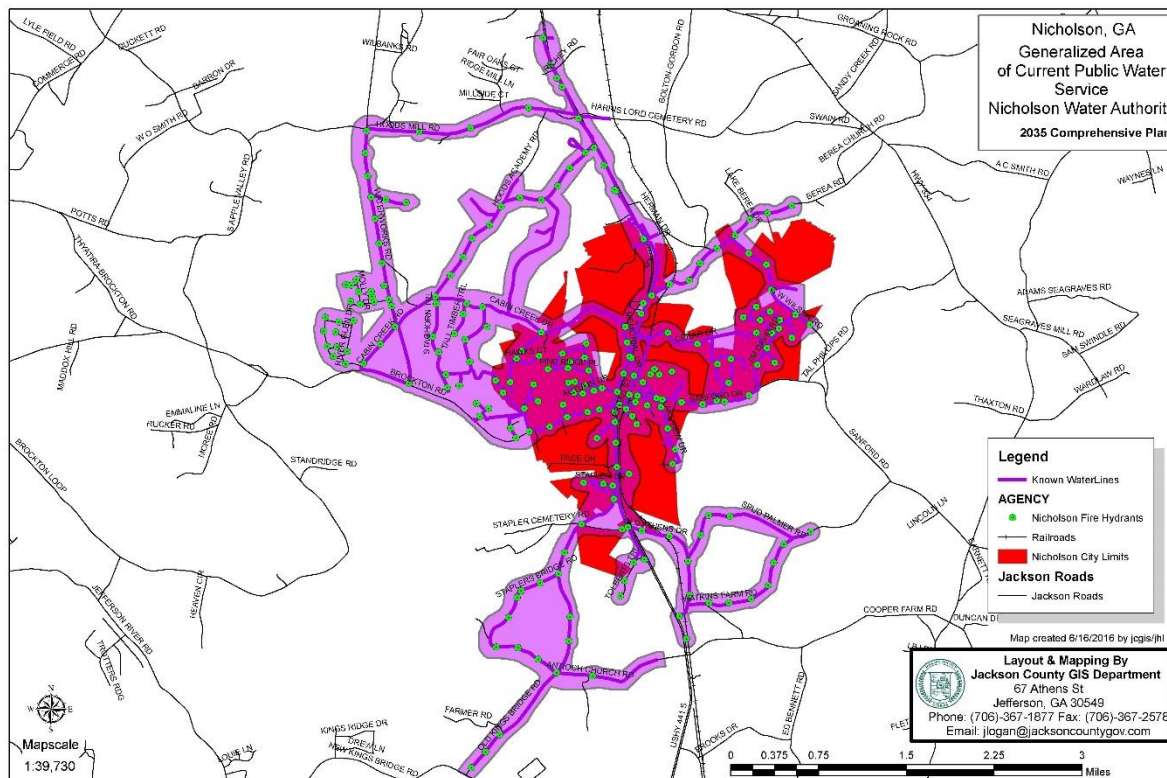
## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Nicholson has a library, a city hall, a community center, a post office, and a fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) station. There is one school (Benton Elementary) inside the city limits. Nicholson is served by Jackson County's East Jackson Park, which is also within the city limits. The city operates public cemeteries. Generally, there are no other significant community facilities in Nicholson. In the recent past, Nicholson has considered but decided not to initiate its own municipal police force.



**City Cemetery in Nicholson**

The City of Nicholson is served by the Nicholson Water Authority with water lines through much if not all of the current city limits. The Nicholson Water Authority has completed projects to replace two-inch water pipes in the City with four-inch and six-inch pipes for fire protection and future growth opportunities. The city's Fire ISO rating was reduced from 9 to 5 as a result of these improvements. The city has planned adequately to meet future water distribution needs.

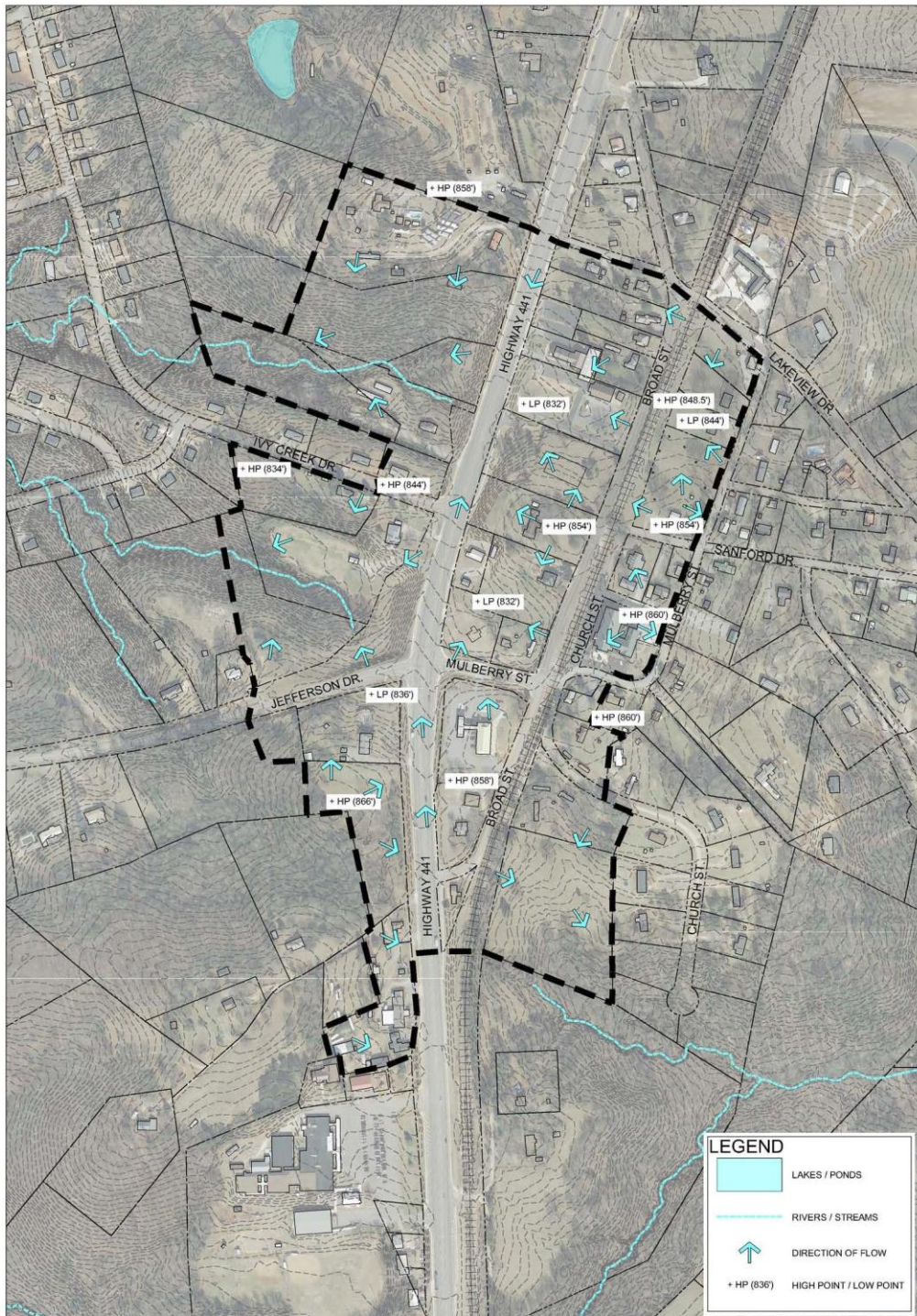


A lack of sanitary sewer service is the chief weakness with regard to community facilities and services, as already noted in this needs assessment. Provision of sanitary sewer service is within the purview of the Nicholson Water Authority. Although the authority should take the lead in such efforts to provide sanitary sewer service, the provision of sewer is so important that the city must take on a strong participatory role in sanitary sewer feasibility and development (included in community work program). The hydrology plan for the Nicholson Town Center is a first step in determining feasible options for sanitary sewer treatment (see figure).

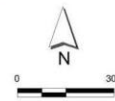
The 1998 comprehensive plan alluded to evolving service needs in southeast Jackson County. In particular, it was suggested in the 1998 comprehensive plan that Nicholson and southeast Jackson County need to be better served by county public health facilities. Later plans of the city recognized and articulated the need for a municipal and county shared community service center, and the town center plan suggested a future location.

This comprehensive plan suggests that Nicholson pursue a government service center in Nicholson. That government service center may include the highest identified priority for future county government facilities in Nicholson: a health center. Also, over the longer term Nicholson may want to build a new city hall (identified as a long-range project), and if so, a location between Broad Street and U.S. Highway 441 at the north end of the town center zoning district would be an appropriate joint venture (co-location) with a county health service center.

A city-county community services center is included as a long-range project in this plan (see Table 5-2). Also, acquisition of land for construction of Town Center park (recommended in the Master Plan) is included as a long-range project in Table 5-2.



**Nicholson Town Center  
Master Plan**  
*Nicholson, Georgia*



Hydrology  
Plan  
Illustration 2

## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The city did not have a zoning ordinance to regulate land uses in the city until 2008. The first zoning ordinance and official zoning map had a number of issues which were corrected with adoption of a new zoning ordinance and official zoning map in 2010. The city also shortly thereafter adopted a basic set of subdivision and land development regulations.

With only one administrative employee, the city has historically been challenged to adequately manage development and administer zoning regulations. Since 2010, the city has had a private planning consultant assist the city clerk with zoning administration. The city established a planning commission in 2010 which has also helped improve land use, zoning, and comprehensive planning functions. Due to leadership by its planning commission, the city adopted a design review process as an amendment to its zoning ordinance in 2013 and also adopted design guidelines to improve the function and aesthetics of nonresidential development in the city.

One of the most pressing needs is for the city to revise its sign ordinance. There are also additional steps that need to be taken to ensure administration of zoning and development regulations in a proper, efficient fashion. That includes preparation of development process summaries and placing administrative forms on the city's web page.

## TRANSPORTATION

Nicholson is well served by a fully improved U.S. Highway 441, which bisects the city (runs through the middle of it) in a north-south direction. The other principal means of travel into and out of Nicholson is SR 335, which leads west to the City of Jefferson. SR 335 is not presently overburdened with traffic but is experiencing increasing traffic volumes, raising the issue in the countywide roads planning process whether SR 335 will need widening in the longer-term future.



**U.S. Highway 441 in Nicholson**

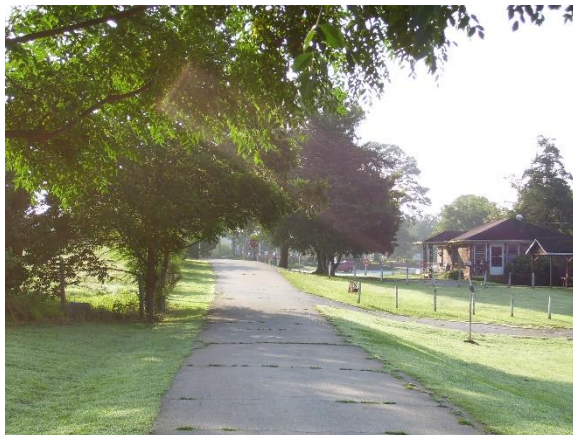
Although sidewalks exist along both sides of U.S. Highway 441, the highway itself remains a major barrier to pedestrians even if traffic is relatively light. For Nicholson to grow its town center in a pedestrian-friendly way, additional, safe pedestrian crossings of U.S. Highway 441 would be needed at appropriately spaced intervals to unify properties on the west and east sides of U.S. Highway 441 into a pedestrian-accessible town center. One of the greatest potential needs is for a pedestrian crossing at Ivy Creek Road's intersection with U.S. Highway 441. In order to provide safety and refuge, pedestrians may need refuge islands to cross the 5-lane cross section of U.S. Highway 441 safely and comfortably.

The existing local road network is not as adequate. During the citizen participation process, citizens expressed some concern that the roadway network in the city was too narrow to facilitate additional improvement. Road improvements are needed where the travel widths do not facilitate safe two-way travel, but it is also recognized that some of the narrow city streets

cannot be improved without acquisition of additional right of way. Road resurfacing is included in the community work program.

Also, per public input, the work program includes an engineering study to evaluate stop signs and other traffic considerations, including a traffic management plan for major events such as the Daisy Festival, which may include temporary one-way routing.

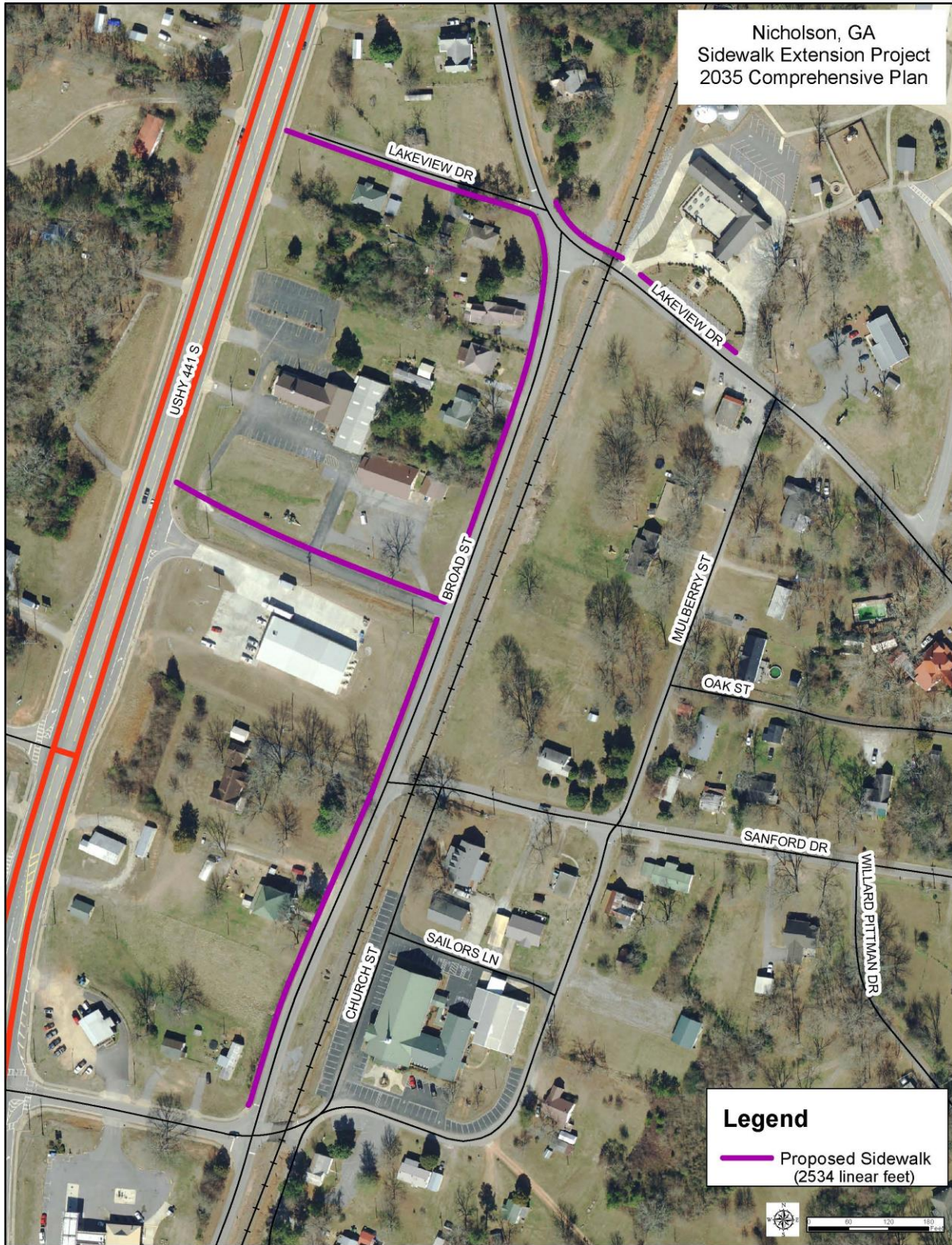
In response to prior public input on the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the city has arranged for the installation of street lights along U.S. Highway 441 in the city. Nicholson is not served by public transportation except for Jackson County's Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program. The city has no bicycle facilities and a very limited sidewalk network.



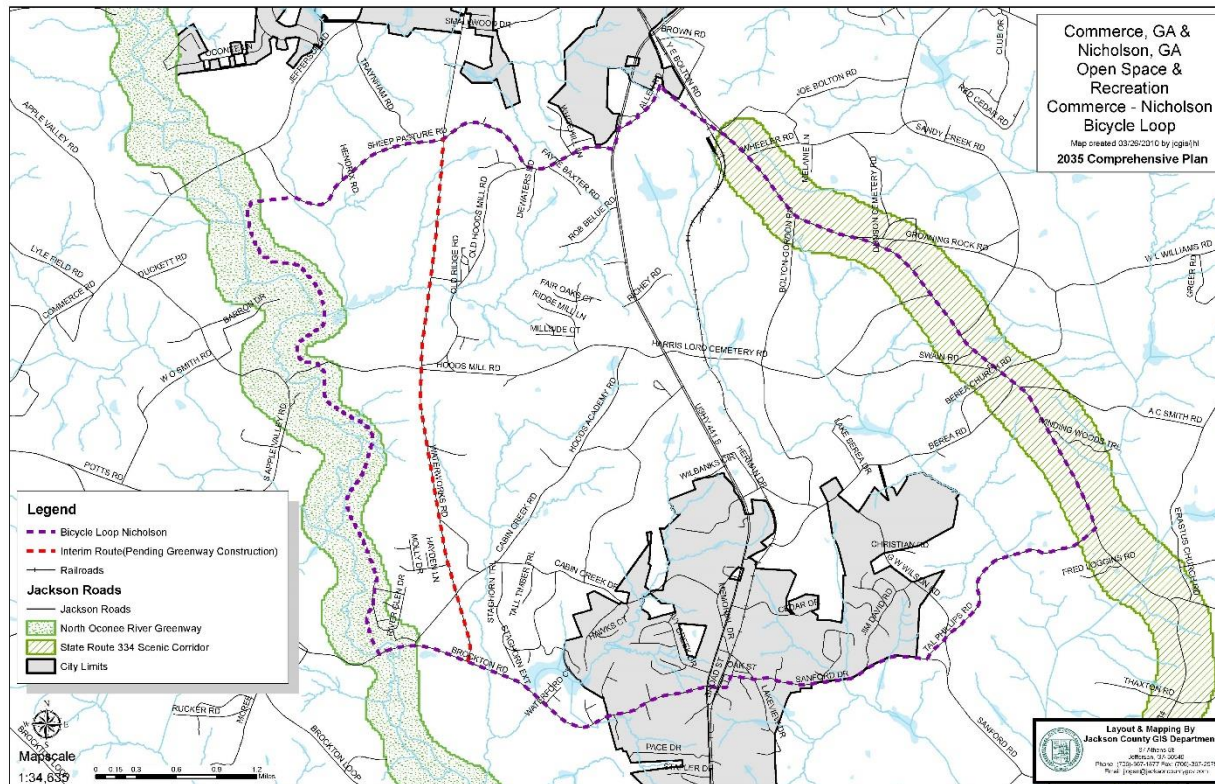
**Lakeview Drive, a local street,  
looking east from U.S. Highway 441**

Nicholson is proposed to be an origin-destination in the broader plan of Jackson County to provide a bicycle loop route between Nicholson and Commerce. Facilities for bicyclists do not presently exist in Nicholson, however. One of the most important bicycle access improvements needed is a crossing of U.S. Highway 441 at SR 335 /Mulberry Street, as well as a designated bicycle lane or route along SR 335 and Mulberry Street in Nicholson. Other bicycle lane or route additions are also needed to implement the bicycle route planned over the long-term between Nicholson and Commerce.

A sidewalk extension program was prepared as part of the town center master plan to improve pedestrian access and movement in the evolving downtown area. Nicholson should pursue grants in order to secure funds to construct sidewalk improvements in conjunction with town center development.



Sidewalk Extension Plan for Town Center



### Long-Range Regional Bicycle Loop Route

The city has been approached by property owners along private roads asking that they become public. The city needs a measured response to this complicated issue. This is included in the community work program.

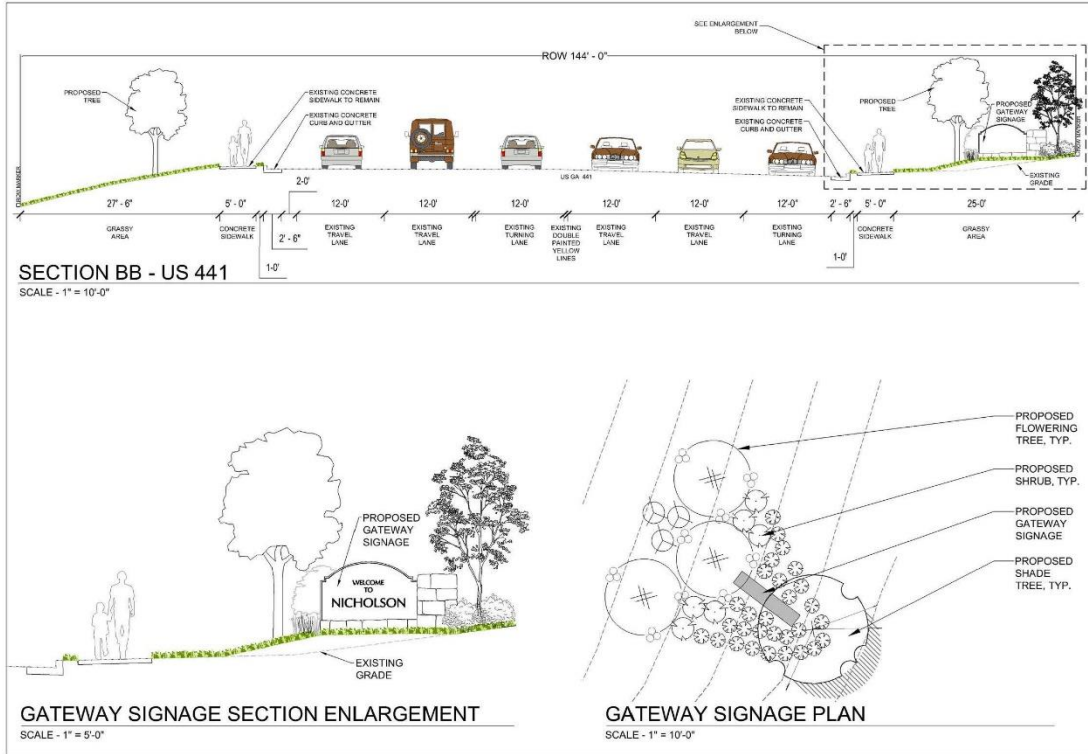
A long-range project was called for in the 2010 comprehensive plan and is retained in this plan: a regional bike loop route connecting Nicholson to Commerce via SR 334 and the North Oconee River greenway (also a long-range project). Other long-range transportation projects recommended in the Town Center Master Plan include improvements to Mulberry Street and Broad Street. These are included in Table 5-2.

### BEAUTIFICATION AND AESTHETICS

As noted elsewhere, Nicholson in 2013 amended its zoning regulations to require design review for nonresidential developments, and in 2014, it adopted a set of design guidelines for development. In addition, the town center master plan, also adopted in 2014, addressed gateway, beautification, and aesthetics issues, including a prototype for gateway improvements (see figure). A number of properties owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation along U.S. Highway 441 are now “surplus” and are prime candidates for landscaping, gateway, and other aesthetic improvements.

The community work program includes an annual outlay for landscaping and beautification projects. Some of the aggressive landscaping and beautification projects called for in the Town Center Master Plan are considered long-range and are included in Table 5-2.





## CHAPTER 3 POLICIES

### ANNEXATION

1. Annexation and subsequent development should be in compliance with the county's comprehensive plan and, to the extent it may be addressed, the city's comprehensive plan.
2. An annexation request should not be the result of an applicant seeking relief by the city due to the filing of a request with Jackson County which was denied by the county.

### ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

1. **Environmental and Resource Protection.** Encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
2. **Wetlands – Preservation and Mitigation.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).
3. **Wetlands – Review for Development Impacts.** Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):
  - Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
  - Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
  - Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
  - Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
  - Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
  - Whether the project contains significant State historical and archaeological resources, defined as "Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
  - Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
  - Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.
4. **Wetlands – Uses.** Uses of wetlands may include: Timber production and harvesting; wildlife and fisheries management; wastewater treatment; recreation; natural water quality treatment or purification; and other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Unacceptable uses may include: receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste or other contaminants; and hazardous or sanitary waste landfills.

5. **Water Supply Watersheds.** Maintain in the city zoning ordinance regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds (391-3-16-.01, "Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds").
6. **Floodways and Floodplains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters.
7. **National Flood Insurance Program.** Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Adopt and periodically amend the flood damage prevention/floodplain management ordinance to comply with changes to ordinances specified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
8. **Floodways and Floodplains – Observed But Not Mapped.** Extend floodplain management, flood hazard area prevention, and floodway prohibitions to areas of flooding which are not officially mapped but are known through additional study or observation to experience flooding. Maintain and share data on such additional floodways and floodplains with the public and development applicants.
9. **Soils with Severe Limitations.** Avoid development using septic tanks in those areas with severe limitations on septic tank absorption fields.
10. **Tree Protection.** Promote the protection and preservation of trees and green open spaces in all new developments. As development occurs along the west side of U.S. Highway 441 north and south of SR 335, concerted efforts should be made to retain trees and the forest buffer that currently exists. This is especially important because few trees exist in other parts of the town center. Natural vegetation on the west side will provide "edge" and separation to help define the boundary of Town Center.
11. **Open Space Conservation.**
  - **Conservation.** When subdivision or land development involves land designated on the future land use plan map as conservation, such subdivision or land development should protect all (or at least the vast majority) of the land designated as conservation as permanent open space.
  - **Land Development Impacts.** If land development within a conservation area is permitted, it needs to minimize the impact on water quality and the environment. Acceptable mitigation practices for land development in conservation areas may include limiting pavement and impervious surfaces, natural buffers, and low impact development designs which feature naturalized designs for stormwater management.
  - **Annexation.** If Nicholson annexes land designated as conservation, it should provide for the permanent protection of the land designated as conservation by appropriate means in a manner consistent with county policies for the conservation character area.

- **Access to Abutting Conservation Lands.** Subdivisions and land developments are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide pedestrian easements or fee-simple land dedications to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties.
12. **Habitat Protection.** Consider habitat information in review of land developments, including but not limited to the database of the DNR Natural Heritage Program, USFWS County Listing of Threatened and Endangered Species and the DNR Listing of Locations of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities.
13. **Stormwater Management.**
- Design man-made lakes and stormwater ponds for maximum habitat value and to be amenities for the development.
  - Sites should be designed where possible to drain to the rear or side, where detention ponds are more appropriately located. Fenced detention ponds in front yards are strongly discouraged if not prohibited altogether.
  - When stormwater detention or drainage is placed adjacent to the right-of-way, slopes should be gentle enough to avoid fencing requirements, and the area should be attractively landscaped.
  - New, major residential subdivisions should be required to ensure that adequate funding is available for maintenance of any on-site stormwater detention facilities.
14. **Low Impact Development.** Promote low impact development that preserves the natural topography and existing vegetation of development sites, and utilizes natural drainage patterns as much as possible.
15. **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).** Nicholson encourages LEED certifications for buildings. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), is a voluntary, consensus-based, national standard for developing high performance, environmentally sustainable buildings and communities. The Rating System addresses six major areas, which include: Sustainable sites; Water efficiency; Energy and atmosphere; Materials and resources; Indoor environmental quality; and Innovation and design process. LEED certification is granted solely by the U.S. Green Building Council. To earn certification, a building project must meet certain prerequisites and performance benchmarks (“credits”) within various categories. Projects are awarded Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification depending on the number of credits they achieve.

## HOUSING

1. **Housing Options.** Provide for and encourage new land uses that enhance housing options in the community. These include an openness to single-wide manufactured homes, estate-style subdivisions, institutionalized living and care arrangements, and housing for the disabled.

2. **Substandard Housing.** Eliminate or mitigate substandard or dilapidated housing in the community.
3. **Housing for Persons with Disabilities.** Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.
4. **Avoid Regulatory Barriers.** In amending zoning and development regulations, the city should consider the potential impact of such amendments on housing affordability, in order to possibly avoid creating or sustaining “regulatory barriers.”
5. **Nonprofit Housing Organizations.** Encourage the creation of, and cooperate with, community-based housing organizations in the pursuit of affordable workforce housing.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. **Economic Development Generally.** Expand the economic base and increase employment opportunities while protecting environmental, historic, and community character.
2. **Appropriate Businesses.** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in Nicholson should be suitable in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the county or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities (Quality Community Objective, Appropriate Business).
3. **Business Recruitment.** Increase the supply of jobs in the community. Develop support, and participate with the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce in programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for Nicholson’s economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.
4. **Range of Jobs Available.** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce (Quality Community Objective, Employment Options).
5. **Industry and Manufacturing.** Nicholson does not have an industrial park, has not set aside land areas for industry and manufacturing, and presently does not have sanitary sewer to serve such development. Therefore, industry should be limited, if developed at all in Nicholson, to the U.S. 441 corridor and should consist of low-impact storage, warehousing, and cottage-type industrial establishments that are small in nature and consistent with the city’s small town character.
6. **Infrastructure.** Provide and maintain sanitary sewer capacity in order to attract new commercial and service activities along U.S. Highway 441 and in the Town Center.
7. **Positive Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the city.
8. **Balanced Regulation.** Balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of commercial and other properties with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.

9. **Education and Training.** Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in the city to permit residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions (Quality Community Objective, Educational Opportunities). Increase skill levels of the resident labor force, in order to attract higher paying employers.

## LAND USE – GENERALLY

1. **Prevailing Land Use Patterns.** Respect and maintain prevailing land use patterns, unless the future land use plan clearly suggests changes are appropriate.
2. **Protect Residences from Incompatible Land Uses and Nuisances.** Where designated residential on the future land use plan map, maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of residences at current densities. Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods. Protect residential areas (whether rural, suburban, or urban) from nuisances (e.g., excessive noise, odor, traffic and lighting) and from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
3. **Preservation of Residential Neighborhoods.** The consideration of the preservation of the integrity of residential neighborhoods shall be considered to carry great weight in all rezoning decisions.
4. **Transitional Properties and their Impacts on Residential Neighbor-hoods.** In those instances in which property proposed for rezoning from residential to nonresidential use fronts on a major thoroughfare and also adjoins an established residential neighborhood, the factor of preservation of the residential area shall be considered to carry great weight in all rezoning decisions.
5. **Natural Areas, Open Space and Recreation.** New residential development should preserve the natural amenities of the land through maintenance of conservation areas and open spaces. When new major residential subdivisions are developed, there should be a minimum of 20 percent of the total development area set aside for green space, open space, and active or passive recreational opportunities.
6. **Creativity and Flexibility.** Encourage creativity in development design and provide for design flexibility. The city is open to considering land planning and development concepts that may be new to the city but have been implemented successfully in other places.
7. **Sustainable Development Practices.** Communities and individual land developments which are developed consistent with generally accepted principles of sustainable development should receive priority consideration over developments relying on conventional designs and features. Any available incentives should be used to reward development which meets generally accepted sustainable development principles.

## LAND USE – TOWN CENTER

1. Enhance the City of Nicholson's image as a unique community and retain that image in attractive and orderly development that preserves existing character of a historic railroad community.

2. Cultivate distinctiveness so that the City of Nicholson remains unique among Jackson County and communities in the northeast Georgia region.
3. Encourage the creation and development of a downtown in central Nicholson which is a compact, vibrant, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly center of the community.
4. Promote high quality nonresidential development. Establish and maintain architectural and site design standards as appropriate in nonresidential areas to encourage increased quality of site development, architectural appearance, and building materials.
5. Require new development to respect the scale and character of nearby structures and minimize or mitigate abrupt and excessive differences.
6. Ensure that development in the downtown area has a human/pedestrian scale and a building scale appropriate for a small town.
7. Provide guidelines and/or regulations to ensure the desired character of downtown is met.

#### **LAND USE – HIGHWAY BUSINESS**

1. Improve community identity. Create civic gateways to the City that produce a sense of arrival. These entryways should incorporate streetscape elements, signage, and landscaping that enhance the image and function of the City. Encourage the provision of public green spaces in gateway areas as private development occurs. Support and encourage private and public efforts to install signage and unique gateway features that identify the city, particularly its focal point(s).
2. Promote high quality nonresidential development. Establish and maintain architectural and site design standards as appropriate in nonresidential areas to encourage increased quality of site development, architectural appearance, and building materials.
3. Initiate community-based streetscape beautification partnerships. Encourage the greening of Nicholson's railroad right of way and U.S. Highway 441 corridor through the planting and maintenance of street yards and the provision of street trees along major corridors.
4. Avoid unattractive and inefficient strip development along U.S. Highway 441. Regulate and promote commercial development with designs, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale that add value to the community, consistent with regulations proposed by Jackson County for the U.S. Highway 441 corridor. Discourage patterns of "strip" commercial development. Encourage building designs which do locate all of the off-street parking provided on the commercial lot between the road and the building.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

1. **Local Street Improvements.** Subject to budget limitations, improve existing city streets by widening substandard roads (where sufficient right of way exists or can be acquired), improving intersections where they pose traffic safety problems, and installing street lighting.

2. **Access Management.** Adopt adequate access management standards to control the connections and access points of driveways and roads to other roadways.
3. **Inter-parcel Access.** Minimize unnecessary vehicular trips on roadways by implementing techniques such as requiring non-residential uses to provide cross-access (inter-parcel) easements during the site plan review and approval process to ensure that drivers can directly access abutting non-residential uses without having to use the abutting road or street.
4. **Traffic Calming.** Consider future needs for traffic calming (raised speed humps, raised tables, etc.) to slow speeding and/or discourage cut-through traffic.
5. **Sidewalk Improvements.** Build new sidewalks with priority going to the town center of Nicholson, in support of downtown place-making.
6. **Regional Bicycle Loop.** One or more local roads from East Jackson Park connecting to State Route 334 should be improved with a bike lane or multi-use trail/path.
7. **Railroad and Road Grade Separation.** Maintain safe railroad crossings for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians by installing gates, lights, and warning signage.



## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

1. **Regional Cooperation.** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources (Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation).
2. **Regional Solutions.** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer (Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions).
3. **Support for Regional Policies.** Coordinate local policies and regulations to support regional policies. Ensure that goals and implementation programs of the city's comprehensive plan are consistent with adopted coordination mechanisms and consistent with applicable regional and state programs.



4. **Consultation.** Consult other public entities in the area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.
5. **Resource Sharing.** Seek and pursue opportunities to share services and facilities with Jackson County and other municipalities, when mutually beneficial.
6. **Conflict Resolution.** Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.

## CHAPTER 4 LAND USE

Because the City of Nicholson has adopted a zoning ordinance and official zoning map, a land use element is required per state administrative rules for local comprehensive planning. When Nicholson prepared its comprehensive plan “community agenda” in 2010, the state’s requirements for local comprehensive plans included a future development map showing character areas and a narrative description of character areas. Under those rules, a future land use plan was optional. Nicholson’s previous (2010) plan included both a future development map of character areas and a future land use plan map. The latest state administrative rules (effective May 1, 2014) for local comprehensive planning leave it to the local government to decide whether it should incorporate the character area approach, or a future land use planning approach, or both, in its comprehensive plan.

While there is some merit in retaining both a character area approach and future land use plan, this comprehensive plan includes only a future land use plan map and thus repeals the character area approach utilized in the 2010 community agenda. One of the reasons for that choice is that there is substantial overlap and similarity between the two approaches, and retaining two approaches can lead to unintended conflicts and may also lead to confusion by those who read the plan. It is also believed that the future land use plan is the stronger basis for supporting the city’s zoning ordinance and official zoning map.

### LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

The existing land use and future land use plan maps utilize land use categories described in the following paragraphs.

#### Vacant/Undeveloped

This category includes lands that have not been improved with structures or buildings and which cannot be classified as agricultural or forestry. This category is used only on the existing land use map. It is not used on the future land use plan map, because each parcel in the city should have some recommended future use.

#### Park/Recreation/Conservation

This category includes lands dedicated to both active and passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned, and they may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, forest preserves, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses. In Nicholson, these include the East Jackson Park and, on the future land use plan map, flood plains in the city.



**East Jackson Park**

### **Agricultural/Forestry**

These areas consist of active farms, pasture lands and large, undeveloped open spaces. Many of these properties are within the county's preferential tax assessment (current use assessment) program for farmland and/or timber. Residential uses exist agricultural/forestry areas, but they are typically farm-related.



**An agricultural scene south of Sanford Drive**

### **Residential Subcategories**

Nicholson's land use maps divide residential land uses into three categories: conventionally constructed (stick/site built) detached, single-family homes (dubbed suburban residential), manufactured homes (referred to as rural residential), and multi-family areas. The treatment of manufactured homes differently from site-built homes in the land use inventory and on the future land use plan reflects community preferences that manufactured homes should not be permitted in all residential zoning districts, as well as the city's current zoning map. The multi-family designation reflects existing duplexes and in one case a small apartment building; expansion of multi-family residential is not contemplated in the short term in the future land use plan, given the current lack of sanitary sewer service.

### **Rural Residential**

Rural residential areas are primarily platted and developed for detached, single-family (conventional/site built) and manufactured homes on larger lots (i.e., more than one acre), mostly on the periphery of the Nicholson city limits. There is a large subdivision consisting mostly of manufactured homes, north of Sanford Road, which is designated as large lot-rural residential. Another significant concentration is located west of the town center, north and south of Jefferson Road (SR 335).



**Manufactured housing is common in rural residential areas of Nicholson.**

Large lot-rural residential areas do not require infrastructure improvement or additional public investment, nor are subarea plans necessary. The primary implementation mechanism will be the city's zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development regulations.

### Suburban Residential

These areas are mostly located close to U.S. Highway 441 and are, for the most part, geographically close enough to the Town Center area to promote walking. Dwellings are limited to detached, single-family (excludes manufactured homes). Lots are usually smaller (generally less than one acre) than that found in rural residential areas. Some of the road patterns are curvilinear with cul-de-sacs, while others are more linear, with lots fronting on existing roads and highways.



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Planning & Development Consultants

### Public/Institutional

This category includes federal, state, and local government uses, and a wide variety of institutional land uses. Government uses include county-owned facilities, fire stations, post offices, and schools. Private institutional uses include schools, colleges, churches, cemeteries, and private non-profit meeting halls, among others.

### Commercial (Town Center and Highway Business)

This category applies to lands dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, offices, services and entertainment facilities. It is implemented with the Town Center and Highway Business zoning districts. The master plan for Nicholson’s Town Center began with a delineation of the Town Center character area (about 75 acres), as established in the Nicholson 2010 comprehensive plan. That geography is the same as the Town Center (TC) zoning district boundary, as established in the City of Nicholson Zoning Ordinance and on the Official Zoning Map. It includes some 41 parcels.

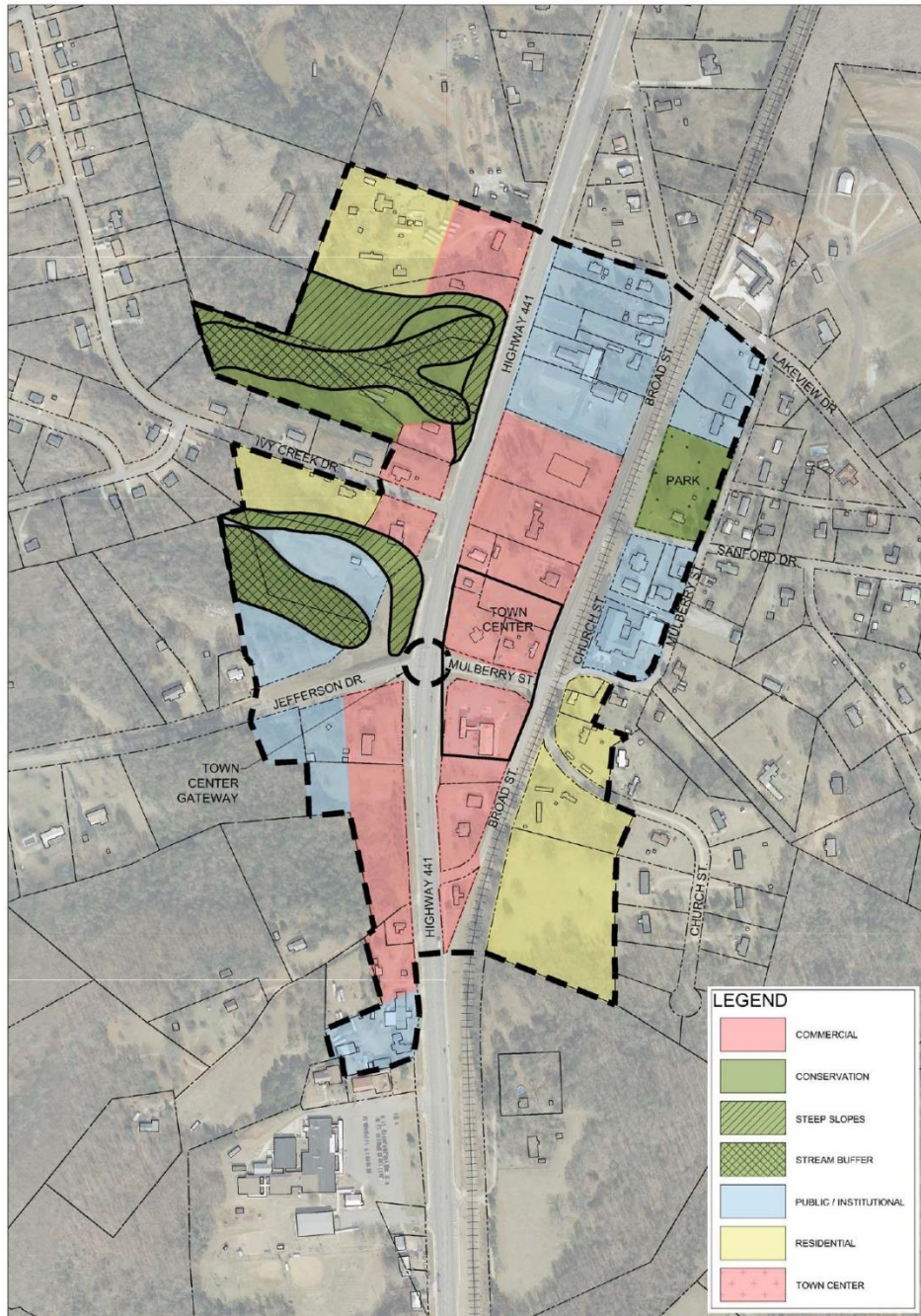


**Desired Scale and Character  
Nicholson’s Town Center**

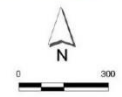
Nicholson does not have any existing development that resembles a “Main Street” design (i.e., pedestrian-oriented development including shop-front buildings built close to the right of way). In short, Nicholson needs to create a “place” within the town center that replicates or resembles one or more downtown commercial blocks in the “Main Street” style of development. Mulberry Street between US Highway 441 and Broad Street is chosen as the best potential for main street-style development. Developing a block of Main Street-style development north of Mulberry Street would require the redevelopment of properties and land uses as well as lot combinations or property line reconfigurations.

### Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities

This category applies primarily to electricity facilities like power substations and major transmission lines and cell towers. One substation is reflected on the land use maps, along the east side of U.S. Highway 441.



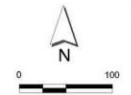
**Nicholson Town Center  
Master Plan**  
*Nicholson, Georgia*



Land Use  
Plan  
Illustration 1

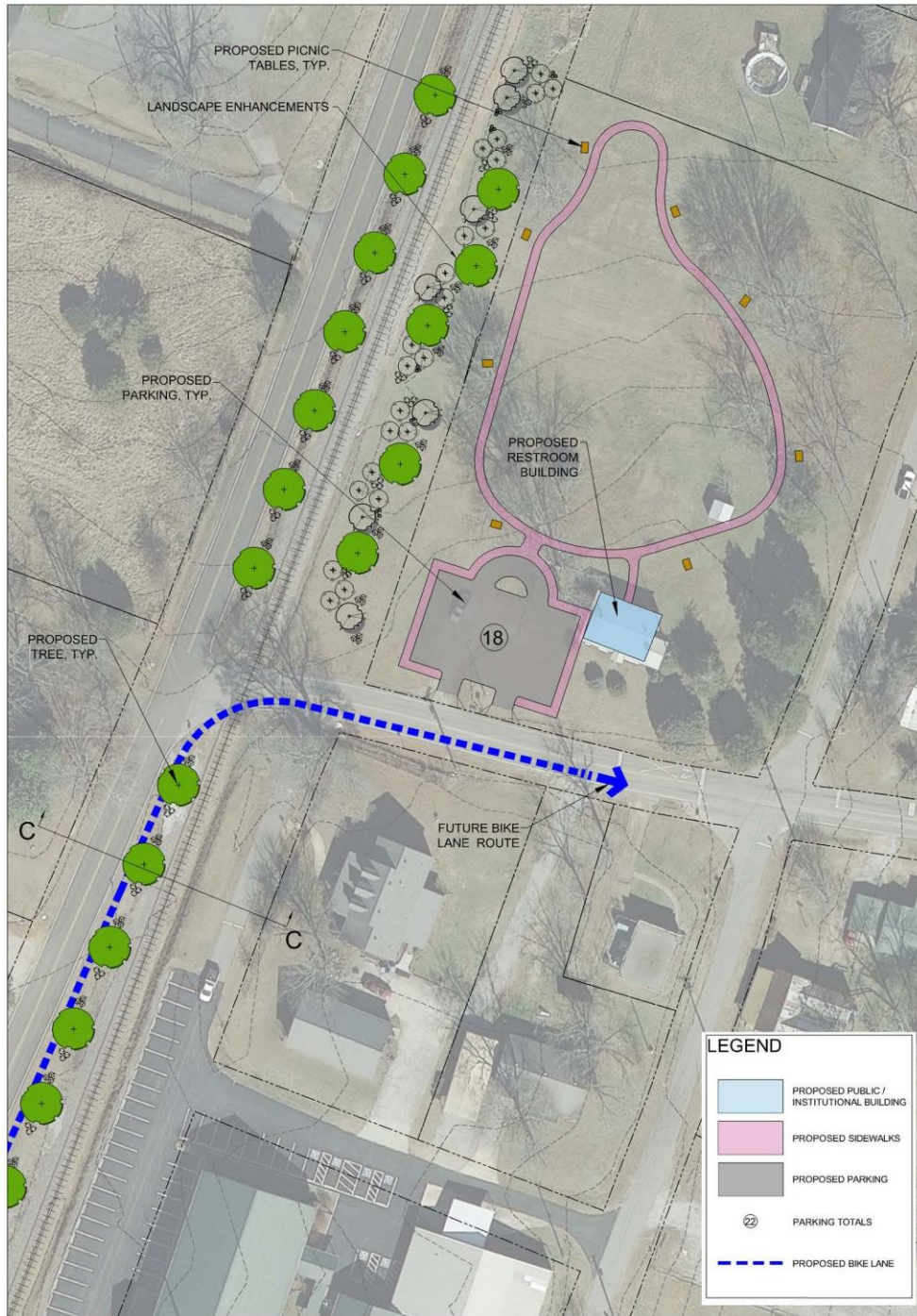


**Nicholson Town Center  
Master Plan**  
Nicholson, Georgia



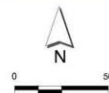
Town Center  
Enlargement  
Landscape Plan  
Illustration 3

*This plan illustrates desirable building placements to achieve the Main Street-style development. It also shows proposed bike lanes along Mulberry Street, the planting of street trees along highway and road frontages, and proposed gateway signage in two places in the Town Center.*



**Nicholson Town Center  
Master Plan**

Nicholson, Georgia



Park  
Enlargement  
Landscape Plan  
Illustration 4

*This plan shows the proposed location of a town center park complete with a path, restroom facilities, and parking. It also shows proposed landscape treatments along Broad Street and the railroad next to the park.*

**EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE**

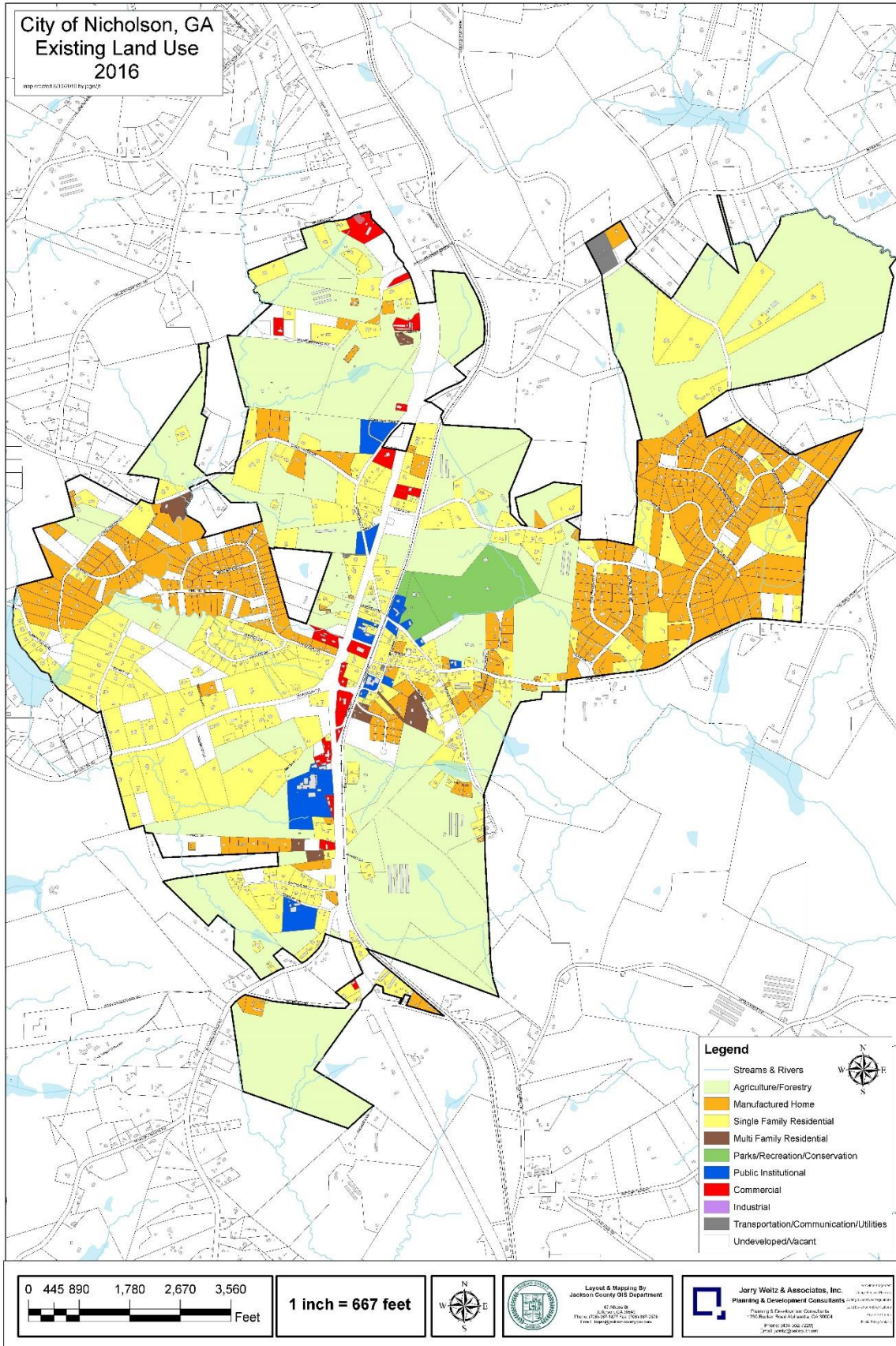
Land use in Nicholson was inventoried in 2008 and updated in 2016. The future land use plan map included in the adopted 2010 community agenda was used as a starting point but updated where appropriate. Also, the Town Center Master Plan provided a refinement of the 2010 future land use plan map which has been incorporated. Nicholson’s residential uses are divided almost equally among site-built (or stick-built) homes and manufactured homes, in terms of acreage.

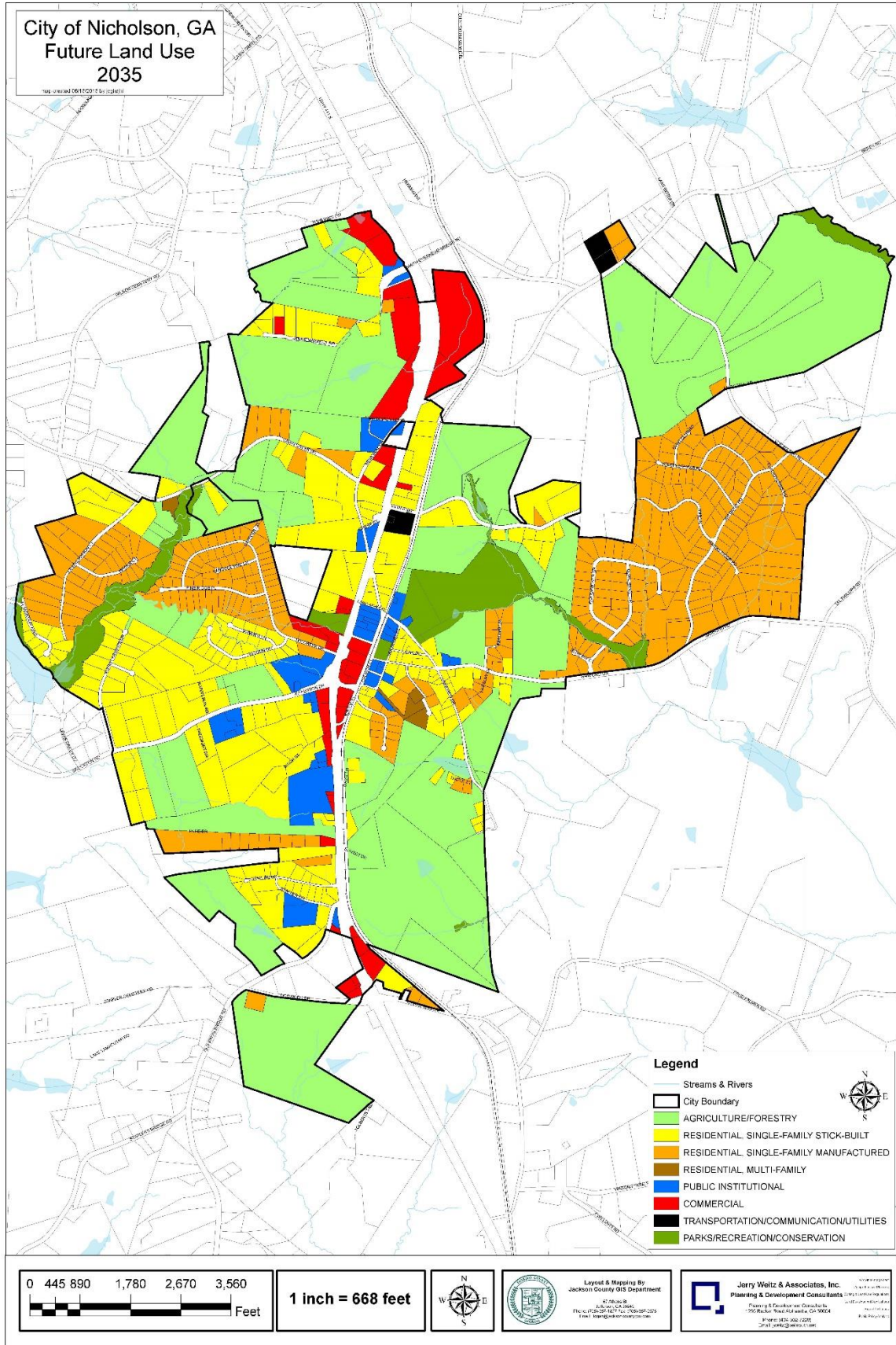
**Table 4.1  
Land Use Acreage by Land Use Category, 2016 and 2035  
City of Nicholson**

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>2016 Acres</b>	<b>% Total City</b>	<b>2035 Acres</b>	<b>% Total City</b>	<b>2016-2035 Change in Acres</b>
Agricultural/Forestry	1,083	43%	1,054	42%	-29
Residential, single-family, site/stick built (suburban – future)	545	22%	499	20%	-46
Residential, single-family, manufactured (rural - future)	428	17%	512	20%	+89
Residential, duplex, apartment, manufactured home park	14	--	7	--	-7
Public/Institutional	41	2%	69	3%	+28
Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities	6	--	10	--	+4
Commercial	28	1%	104	4%	+76
Parks, Recreation, and Conservation	49	2%	114	4%	+65
Vacant/Undeveloped	173	7%	--	--	-173
Right of ways	143	6%	143	6%	--
<b>Total, City of Nicholson</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>--</b>

Source: Jackson County GIS Department, Revised July 1, 2016.







## **CHAPTER 5 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM**

The community work program, which follows in Table 5.1, covers the period of 2016 through 2021. In presenting the work program, the city hereby articulates a number of important qualifiers and caveats. The city has included the projects listed in the work program because they were (a) identified by the comprehensive plan steering committee or city staff; (b) called for in the previous work program but deferred; and/or (c) suggested by the city's planning consultant based on a variety of professional planning standards and considerations.

Consistent with state rule requirements for local comprehensive plans, the community work program is tied precisely to the needs and opportunities identified in Chapter 2 of this comprehensive plan. Each specific project or action identified in Chapter 2 is included in the community work program. All projects listed in Table 5.1 are considered a priority for the City of Nicholson to implement during the next five years. Those projects that are not attainable in the short-term but which are critically important to the city, are listed as long-range projects in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.1  
Community Work Program, 2016-2021  
City of Nicholson**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Year(s) To Be Implemented</b>	<b>Estimated Cost (\$)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Possible Funding Sources</b>
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>				
Adopt a floodplain management ordinance	2016-2017	\$1,500	City Council; consulting planner	General Fund
Enroll in the National Flood Insurance Program after ordinance adoption	2018-2019	Staff Time	City Clerk	General Fund
Amended regulations to implement small water supply watershed protection for the Sandy Creek watershed and other applicable environmental planning criteria	2016-2017	\$1,000	City Council; consulting planner	General Fund
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>				
Codify all city ordinances into an official city code	2017-2018	Per Proposal	Mayor and City Council	General fund
<b>LAND USE</b>				
Produce rezoning and land use application forms and make available via city website	2016-2017	\$1,000	City Clerk; Webmaster; consulting planner	General fund
Prepare and adopt new sign ordinance	2016-2017	\$5,000 + legal review	Planning Commission; consulting planner	General fund
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>				
Investigate engineering feasibility of initial (interim) sewer service and longer range sewer service to Nicholson Town Center	2016-2017	\$20,000 (city share)	Mayor and City Council; City Engineer	Nicholson Water Authority; City General Fund; JCWSA; GEFA, ARC
Cemetery maintenance	2016-2021	Unknown	Public Works	General Fund
Participate with Jackson County and the Northeast Ga. Regional Commission in county and regional solid waste management planning	Per recertification schedule	Unknown	Mayor and City Council	General Fund (if costs apply)
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
Resurface city and county streets based on pre-determined prioritization program	2016-2021	Per capital program	Public Works	General Fund; intergovernmental funds
Institute beautification efforts including tree planting, landscaping, and gateway improvements along U.S. Highway 441, RR right of way, and entrances to city	2016-2012	\$15,000 annually (see also long range)	Mayor and City Council	General Fund; Keep Jackson County Beautiful
Install railroad crossing safety improvements	2016-2021	TBD	Railroad	Private
Construct sidewalks along Broad St. and Lakeview Drive to connect US Highway 441 sidewalks to city hall, post office, and county park entrance	2016-2021	\$350,000	Administration	Capital fund; possible grant(s)
Complete engineering study of local street traffic control and a traffic management plan for major events in town; include recommendations for bicycle lanes and shared-use facilities	2016-2017	TBD	Public Works	General Fund
Adopt policy for public acceptance of private streets	2016-2017	Staff time or consultant	Public Works	General Fund

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION</b>				
Reconsider and revise intergovernmental agreements, as appropriate	2016-2021	Staff Function	Administration	General Fund
Revise/seek agreement of countywide service delivery strategy	Per recertification schedule	Staff Function	Administration	General Fund

Abbreviations:

ARC = Appalachian Regional Commission  
 GEFA = Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority  
 JCWSA = Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority

**Table 5.2  
 Long-Range Projects, City of Nicholson**

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Plan and construct regional bike route through Nicholson (per illustration in plan)	Long Range	TBD	Mayor and City Council	Intergovernmental partnership
New City Hall, to be constructed as part of the Nicholson-Jackson County government service center complex north of Town Center	Long Range	TBD	Mayor and City Council	Intergovernmental partnership
Mulberry Street complete street	Long Range	\$191,000	Mayor and City Council	Grant(s)
Broad Street improvements	Long Range	\$31,600	Mayor and City Council	Grant(s)
Gateway signage and landscaping	Long Range	\$134,600	Mayor and City Council	Grant(s)
Town Center park, land acquisition and construction	Long Range	\$350,000	Mayor and City Council	Grant(s)

Note: Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) is a potential funding source for projects.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Report of Accomplishments, 2010 Comprehensive Plan**  
**2009-10 to 2014-15 Short-Term Work Program**

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Completion Status and Notes (As of June 2016)
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>		
Adopt a floodplain management ordinance	2010-2011	Incomplete. Included in new work program.
Amended regulations to implement small water supply watershed protection for the Sandy Creek watershed and other applicable environmental planning criteria	Underway	Incomplete. Included in new work program.
<b>HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>		
Participate in a countywide inventory of historic resources	2011-2012	Cancelled. Not funded by Jackson County. No longer considered a priority.
Encourage the nomination of worthy historic structures to the National Register of Historic Places	2013-2015	Cancelled since the historic resources inventory did not take place. No known structures are eligible for listing.
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
Arrange for part-time professional assistance for city administration	2010-2011	Cancelled. The City Clerk has overseen all administrative functions with assistance from Mayor and City Attorney. Not considered a priority.
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Initiate discussions with the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce to see what specific assistance can be provided with regard to business recruitment in the city	Ongoing (2010-2014)	Cancelled. It has been determined that the Chamber's emphasis is more on industrial development and not targeted at small town economic development
Participate in countywide strategic master policy plan for economic development	2011-2012	Cancelled. Not funded by Jackson County. Included in updated STWP.
<b>LAND USE</b>		
Arrange for professional assistance for zoning administration and development plan review	Ongoing (2010-2015)	Complete and ongoing. City Clerk consults with professional planner in matters of zoning administration. A current agreement is in place for these consultations to continue.
Establish a Local Planning Commission; and provide for initial training	2010	Complete. The Planning Commission has been appointed and is operational. Training is ongoing.
Produce web-accessible pdf files of all existing regulations and maps related to land use management; post on city website	2011	Complete
Produce rezoning and land use application forms and make available via city website	2011	Postponed. Included in new work program.
Comprehensively review and rewrite city zoning ordinance, development regulations, sign ordinance, and related codes	Underway (2010)	Complete. New zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinances completed and adopted in 2010. Sign ordinance has not been rewritten (postponed) but is included in new work program.
Prepare a subarea plan for the Nicholson Town Center Character Area	2011-2012	Complete, with starting date of August 2013 and adoption in 2014, including amendments to zoning ordinance establishing design review in certain zoning districts.
Prepare update to short-term work program of community agenda and report of plan accomplishments	2015	Complete as part of this comprehensive plan (2016).
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>		
Upgrade/replace water lines as needed	Ongoing (multiple years)	Ongoing and in process but incomplete. This is not listed in the new work program since it is

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Completion Status and Notes (As of June 2016)
Extend water lines to areas not presently covered, as development occurs	2011-2015	the responsibility of the Nicholson Water Authority rather than the City of Nicholson. Not applicable since little if any new development has occurred needing water service (great recession). This is not listed in the new work program since it is the responsibility of the Nicholson Water Authority rather than the City of Nicholson.
Investigate engineering feasibility of initial (interim) sewer service and longer range sewer service to Nicholson Town Center	2010-2011	Ongoing but incomplete – not yet funded; however, general planning feasibility was investigated as part of the Nicholson Town Center master plan (2014); Included in city’s new work program even though this is mostly the responsibility of the Nicholson Water Authority.
Cemetery maintenance	2010-2015	Complete and Ongoing. Included in new work program.
Participate with Jackson County and the Northeast Ga. Regional Commission in county and regional solid waste management planning	Per recertification schedule	Ongoing. Included in new work program.
Participate in discussions with Jackson County about joining planning efforts for increasing water supplies in the long term	Ongoing (multiple years)	Incomplete because the county has not initiated intergovernmental discussions about future water supplies given water demand has not increased with effects of the great recession. This is not listed in the new work program since it is the responsibility of the Nicholson Water Authority rather than the City of Nicholson.
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Resurface city and county streets based on pre-determined prioritization program	2012-2013 to 2014-2015	Partially complete (one street resurfaced) and ongoing. Included in new work program
Institute beautification efforts including tree planting, landscaping, and gateway improvements along U.S. Highway 441, RR right of way, and entrances to city	2011 to 2015	Partially complete and ongoing; city has met to discuss beautification issues; Gateways and landscaping for the Town Center area have been identified. Included in new work program.
Include access management controls in revised zoning regulations per countywide major roads plan	Ongoing	Complete. The zoning ordinance included basic provisions for access management. Along with state rules for driveways on highways, these provisions are considered adequate at this time.
Install railroad crossing safety improvements	2011-2015	Incomplete. Included in new work program.
Construct sidewalks along Broad St. and Lakeview Drive to connect US Highway 441 sidewalks to city hall, post office, and county park entrance (per illustration in this plan)	2014-2015	Postponed; reconfirmed in 2014 town center master plan; included in new work program.
Regional bike route through Nicholson (per illustration in plan)	Long Range	This is a long range project and recognized as such in Table 5.1 of this plan.
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION</b>		
Reconsider and revise intergovernmental agreements, as appropriate	2010-2015	Complete and ongoing; city revised animal control ordinance in 2011; including in new work program.
Revise/seek agreement of countywide service delivery strategy	Ongoing	Nicholson will participate in this as appropriate. Included in new work program.
Initiate petitions to annex unincorporated islands	2010	In process as of June 2016.



**APPENDIX B  
SELECTED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INFORMATION**

**City of Nicholson  
Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting Summary  
April 28, 2016**

The meeting was called to order in the Community Center in Nicholson at 5:30 p.m. by John Ring, Planning Commission Chairman, and Jerry Weitz, Planning Consultant. Notice of the public hearing and meeting was previously published in the *Jackson Herald*.

In Attendance:

Mike Barfield, City Council	Jan Webster, Mayor	Joel Logan, Jackson County
Max Whitlock, Member	Lamar Watkins, City Council	Jerry Weitz, Consultant
Doug Kesler, Member	John Ring, Plan. Comm. Chair	
Dusty Durst, Member	Roger Cosby, Plan. Comm.	

A handout titled “City of Nicholson, Georgia, Comprehensive Plan 2016 update: Primer for Steering Committee for April 28, 2016 Public Hearing” was distributed and discussed (attached). Jerry Weitz gave an overview of the requirements of the comprehensive plan, the expected role of the steering committee, recent plan accomplishments, a preliminary list of needs and opportunities, and an overview of major features of Nicholson’s adopted plans including the comprehensive plan and town center plan.

The section of the handout titled “Characteristics, Outlook, Issues, Needs, and Opportunities” was discussed and the following comments and additions were made about needs and opportunities:

- **Population count.** It was reported that the city’s current population estimate was lower than the 2010 census count and that the projection of 3,000+ residents by the year 2030 seemed unlikely to happen. The Committee was not aware of any particular losses of housing units or population, but the implication was that the population projections should be adjusted downward.
- **Economic development.** There was consensus on the need to marshal forces to get more economic growth in the city. It was observed that the city has no brand and no real distinction. Establishing a downtown development authority (DDA) or joining the “main street” program were mentioned as possible initiatives in response to this need.
- **Traffic safety analysis.** There was a need identified to look closely at how the city has set up stop signs. For instance, on Sanford Road there are stop signs everywhere. Severe accidents have occurred at Lakeview and Sanford. Related to this was a need identified to provide better traffic flow in and around city hall and the county park, especially when major events take place.
- **Road resurfacings.** The city had received monies for road resurfacing.

- **Public takeover of private roads.** The city has been approached by property owners along private roads asking that they become public. The city needs a measured response to this complicated issue.
- **Sidewalks.** The city has initiated efforts to construct sidewalks as called for in the comprehensive plan and town center plan, but such efforts are not yet completed.
- **Street lighting.** It was reported that the city had installed approximately 19 street lights in the city along U.S. Highway 441; the addition to the city of street lighting has been well received overall.
- **Railroad crossings.** It was noted that the railroad wants to close one railroad crossing in town.
- **Code enforcement.** The city has condemned one or more properties (e.g., Pace Drive). The city has recently hired a code enforcement office and services are up and running.
- **Cemeteries.** The city has two cemeteries which it is required to maintain.
- **Sanitary sewer in town center.** It was reported that there were various alternatives which have been investigated over time for providing sanitary sewer to the city's town center. It was mentioned that the Appalachian Regional Commission has a grant program for water and wastewater projects and matching funds of \$300,000 may be available. The city's consultant contacted Northeast Georgia Regional Commission staff, who were planning to attend an information meeting about these grant, and the staff agreed to share information with the city about the grant application process.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m. in time for the City Council meeting at 7:00 p.m.



**SHERIFF SPEAKS**  
Jackson County Sheriff Jans Mangum spoke at the recent Certified Literate Community Programs conference. Shown are: (L-R) Sandra Fite, Sheriff Mangum, Brenda Thomas, Lanier Technical College and Billie Izard, state director of the CLCP through TCSG.

### Sheriff speaks at Certified Literate Community

The Certified Literate Community Programs of Georgia held its annual conference at Callaway Gardens on March 30-31, and had as their special luncheon speaker Jackson County Sheriff Jans

Mangum. Sheriff Mangum was awarded the Georgia GED Graduate of the Year in 2014, by the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). The award was given in recognition

of all the great things Sheriff Mangum has accomplished since receiving her GED many years ago. Sandra Fite, director of the Jackson County Certified Literate Community Program, introduced Sher-

iff Mangum to the group that included TCSG staff, TCSG board members, GED testing staff, technical college representatives and Certified Literate Community directors from throughout the state.

### Certified Literate program plans fundraiser

The annual "Are You Smarter Than a 10 Year Old" will be held Tuesday, May 10, at 6 p.m. in the Jackson EMC auditorium in Jefferson.

"Sometimes we all wonder if we are as smart as kids in school today," leaders state. "We all like to think that we are but we still question."

Leaders say this is your chance to find out. At the event, attendees can see if they can answer some of the questions that adult teams will be asked. Teams of three adults from throughout the county will be vying for the right to say they are smarter than a 10-year old at the end of the evening.

Each team will be asked questions in different cat-

egories and will have an opportunity to get help from a group of 10-year old students from schools throughout the county. They can choose to use the students' answer or go with their own response. If a team gives an incorrect answer, they will have one opportunity to pay a multiplier to remain in the game, or they will be knocked out of competition.

Last year's winning team, City of Jefferson, will be trying to hold onto its title for another year. They will have some stiff competition from the other teams, leaders state.

This event is presented by the Jackson County Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP) to raise funds for the Jackson

County Adult Education Center located in Commerce in the Lanier Technical College campus, the part-time class in Braselton and all the other GED and ESL classes that are held in Jackson County.

There is no cost for any of these classes. The CLCP works to provide some CHD scholarships, post-secondary scholarships, buy books and equipment for the classes and other items that are needed to help provide an educational opportunity for adults in Jackson County that did not finish high school.

All proceeds for this event will be used for these purposes.

There will be a silent auction with several items

available for bids.

There will be audience participation prizes for those in the audience that correctly answer some questions asked by the master of ceremonies, Andy Garrison.

Admission is free but donations will be accepted to benefit the adult literacy program. This is a family friendly event.

Anyone that would like to donate items for the silent auction, items for door prizes or those needing more information about the event, contact Sandra Fite at 706-367-8574.

For information on any of the CHD, ESL, or basic education classes, contact Gwen Evans at 770-535-6277.

### History of education topic for woman's club

It was back in 1818 that the highly-acclaimed Martin Institute was started in Jefferson.

And that educational program has evolved into the Jefferson school system, one of the most highly-acclaimed in the state today.

Guy Dean Benson, a long time member of the Jefferson Board of Education, made these points when she addressed the Jefferson Woman's Club April 11.

Martin Institute had a reputation for fine scholarship and excellent teachers, she said. The school offered boarding facilities and students came from many areas to take advantage of the opportunities offered by Martin Institute. Club member Ruby Lynn Minish pointed out that she, as well as her father, had attended Martin Institute.

But the school burned in 1912. Classes were held in local churches, and

of town students boarded with local families until new schools could be built. Mrs. Benson pointed out.

These new schools, now designated as Jefferson High School and Jefferson Elementary School, were completed in 1946. The speaker noted with pride that she was a product of these schools.

Academics have been stressed from the beginning of Martin Institute through today, said Mrs. Benson. But the system now also has such assets as an award-winning Junior ROTC program, five state-funded pre-kindergarten programs and is considered a STEM (excellence in science, technology, engineering and math) system.

During the business session of the meeting, books, toys, crayons, Legos and wipes were collected for the Jackson County Head Start program. The meeting was held at the Savory Spoon.



**HEAD START DONATIONS**  
Woman's Club president, Terri Harvey (L) presented donations to Jackson County Head Start chairwoman Benesia Anderson (R).



**SPEAKS AT MEETING**  
Guy Dean Benson (L) was the guest speaker at the recent Jefferson Woman's Club meeting. Glenda Blackstock introduced her.

## Guest Column: Child Abuse Prevention Month observed in April

BY DEBBIE WILLIAMSON

Jefferson City Schools is proud to join other area school districts in signing the proclamation declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Jefferson City Schools supports any effort to raise awareness and prevention of child abuse. As well, we hope to offer a wide range of support services to students in need. Many steps have been taken to identify students who are exhibiting emotional and/or behavioral concerns, which can be an indicator of child abuse and/or neglect. Specifically, teachers complete an emotional/behavior screening form on all students in grades K-8 each year. Those students who

are identified as exhibiting high levels of emotional/behavioral symptoms, based on this screening, are provided additional supports through the Pyramid of Intervention (POI) process.

The POI process entails teachers, parents, and administrators meeting together to develop plans to increase the child's success in the classroom and to connect the parent/guardian to necessary community resources. Many different behavioral and academic support programs can be provided through the POI process. For example, we offer multiple forms of mentoring programs to meet the varied and diverse needs

of students. One particularly effective program is the Lindsay's Legacy Mentoring Program. The community volunteers who participate in this program are a great asset to our school district and provide a valuable service to students who are in need of extra encouragement. As well, school counselors provide counseling services, as available, in the school setting. Additional programs such as the Check-In/Check-Out Program have been shown to be effective at supporting students with emotional/behavioral needs. In this program, a staff member meets with the child each morning and afternoon and provides him/her with

positive words of affirmation and accountability on behavioral and academic goals. Many students thrive on this additional and daily individualized attention.

Jefferson City Schools would like to thank all of the school personnel and volunteers who work tirelessly to support the students of Jefferson City Schools. We are always seeking additional mentors and volunteers, particularly for older age students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the school counselor at your desired school.

*NOTE: Debbie Williamson is the school psychologist for Jefferson City Schools.*

### JHS graduate recognized

Dr. Neal A. Lester, a 1977 graduate of Jefferson High School, has received the 2016 Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Award from the Arizona State University Committee for Campus Inclusion.

The committee, in its announcement, highlighted Lester's dedication to

promoting diversity and inclusion at the university. Lester is the founding director of the award-winning Project Humanities initiative and a foundation professor of English at Arizona State University.

He has received numerous recognitions since he has been a professor at Arizona State University.

### Recycle this newspaper

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF NICHOLSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Please take notice that the City of Nicholson will conduct an initial public hearing regarding the update of its comprehensive plan on April 28, 2016, at 5:30 PM. The hearing will take place at the Nicholson Community Center, 129 Lakeview Drive, Nicholson, GA, 30565. The purpose of the public hearing is to brief interested individuals on the process and schedule to be followed in completing the update of the comprehensive plan and to request initial input on goals and policies. Interested individuals are invited to attend the public hearings. For more information, contact the City Clerk at 706-757-3408.

### Learning a language is free with program at public libraries

The Piedmont Regional Library System offers the Mango 1 languages online language-learning system at no charge to its patrons.

The Piedmont Region is one of the most active regions in the state to use the program since the service began in July 2016. Mango is free for all library patrons and can be accessed anywhere with an Internet connection. Each lesson combines read live

situations and audio from native speakers with simple, clear instructions.

The courses are presented with an application for cultural nuance and real world application by focusing on the four key elements of language learning: vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and culture.

Mango offers access to 60 foreign language courses and 17 English courses

taught completely in the user's native language. Some courses are just for fun, like "Talk Like a Pirate." Each month, a specific language is highlighted.

Mango can be accessed at the library, remotely, or even on the go with apps for iPhone®, Android™, Kindle® and Nook®.

Director Beth McIntyre said, "Since we joined the growing list of libraries

**City of Nicholson  
Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting Summary  
June 30, 2016**

The public hearing was called to order in the Community Center in Nicholson at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Webster with City Council present as well as planning commissioners and other steering committee members. Notice of the public hearing and meeting was previously published in the *Jackson Herald*.

Several questions were posed about the draft plan. The future land use map displayed at the meeting showed undesignated areas. It was confirmed that these were unincorporated areas. In response to a question about whether unincorporated islands would be annexed, it was reported that the process was underway to annex unincorporated islands.

There was a question whether there was a list of resources including grants available for Nicholson to implement the plan. The regional commission was suggested as a potential source of information about plan implementation grants and resources.

It was noted that the plan draft (p. 41, initial public hearing summary) indicated incorrectly that Ivy Creek Drive had been resurfaced. It was determined the city does not have right of way and the road is not a city street, and that the road was not resurfaced. Prior comments alluded to the possibility of resurfacing the road if right of way could be obtained.

The plan recommendation, to enter into a cooperative venture for construction of a new City Hall by the city and a new health center/government annex by Jackson County in Nicholson, was discussed. It was reported that the idea of a county government service center stemmed back to the 1998 comprehensive plan for Jackson County and its municipalities (excluding Maysville), prepared by (at that time) the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, and that the project had been retained as a long-range project and coupled with the city's eventual need for a new city hall. The location of such a city-county government center was not firm but was envisioned to be west of the existing city hall and east of U.S. Highway 441 providing a northern anchor to the city's town center. The project was not specific enough to suggest which direction the government building(s) would face.

The question was raised whether changes had been made to the existing land use and future land use plan maps since the last draft. It was stated that the existing land use map had been updated to account for land use changes during the last five years. The future land use plan map was the same except for minor parcel and city boundary line changes. The estimates of acreage by land use category for the 2009 and 2030 maps were updated to 2016 and 2035.

The long-range project to have a regional bicycle loop from Nicholson to Commerce and then back again was discussed. It was explained that the regional bicycle loop was still a central long-range project that was tied to the city's plan for building a town center. The town center plan had incorporated the vision statement from the prior comprehensive plan and included such features as a small city park with restrooms/comfort building and plans for bicycle facilities including the addition of bike lanes. It was questioned whether bicyclists would stimulate the economy. In addition to possibly visiting stores, it was suggested that the bicycle loop project and the idea of catering to bicyclists could develop into annual events and then possibly more frequent bicycling and walking events that then would begin to help stimulate the economy.

Ideas on how to begin the process of bringing the bicycle projects into reality rather than just considering them as a long-range project. It was determined that some of the recommendations to facilitate bicycle travel were relatively inexpensive, such as striping of bike lanes, markings, and signs. It was agreed that the comprehensive plan draft, community work program, should be revised to show a project that would “jump start” the process of planning for future bicycle facilities in Nicholson. Some discussion of bicycle facility standards took place. It was determined that the best way to jumpstart the long-range project was to consider a tentative plan for marking bicycle paths or shared use facilities in conjunction with the community work program item calling for a traffic engineering study (which would determine rights of way and traffic improvement considerations). The initial work to jump start bicycle facilities in Nicholson should also include contacting the Georgia Department of Transportation to see what could be done on State Routes 335 and 334.

Finally, there was brief discussion about implementing the sidewalk projects proposed in the plan. It was determined that the city had hired a civil engineer to do a simple plan for the sidewalk segments proposed in the plan. The cost estimates for the project were modified upward based on that preliminary plan for sidewalks.

The public hearing was adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m. and City Council resumed its work session to discuss other items on the agenda.



**PILING ON**  
Jackson County basketball player Rose Boyd carries a couple of campers during the Lady Panthers' youth camp last Wednesday.  
Photo by Ben Munro

**ALL-STAR GOLFER**  
Jackson County's Cierra Gunnin (right) was a recent member of the GHSGCA allstar golf team, which competed earlier this month. Gunnin is pictured with Banks County golfer Morgan Rylee.  
Submitted photo



**Sports notes**

**Jackson County HS hosting soccer camp**

Jackson County Comprehensive High School will host its Junior Panther Soccer Camp June 20-23 at Panther Stadium from 6-8 p.m. nightly.

The camp, which costs \$75, is open to players in grades K-8.

The JCCHS coaching staff and players will host the camp emphasizing the areas of dribbling, passing and shooting. The camp will include games.

Parents can enroll their child's form or intent to participate to coach Bob Betz at [bbetz@jackson.k12.ga.us](mailto:bbetz@jackson.k12.ga.us). Payment is then due on the first day of camp. On-site registration is also available during the first two days of camp, starting at 5 p.m.

**Tumbling camp to be held at JCCHS**

A tumbling camp will be held at the Jackson County Comprehensive High School old gym located at 1608 Winder Hwy. in Jefferson Wednesday, June 22, through Friday, June 24, from 6-9 p.m. nightly.

The camp is open to children from toddler ages up to 13 years old and will be limited to 45 participants.

The camp will feature a water play day June 24 and college cheerleaders.

The cost is \$15 for gym members and

\$35 for non gym members. A \$10 sibling discount is available.

To reserve a spot, call 678-249-4030 or send an email to [tumbling@jchhs.org](mailto:tumbling@jchhs.org).

**JCCHS holding summer camps**

Jackson County Comprehensive High School will host several camps this summer. These camps include:

- Soccer: June 20-23, 6-8 p.m.
- Basketball: July 11-13, 6 p.m.
- Wrestling: July 18-21, beginners, 9-11 a.m.; advanced, 1-3 p.m.
- Volleyball: July 27-July 28, 1-3 p.m.

**EJCHS holding summer camps**

East Jackson Comprehensive High School (EJCHS) will host several athletic camps this summer. These camps include:

- Baseball: June 22-23, 9 a.m. to noon at the EJCHS baseball field for grades 1-8. The cost is \$40. Contact Todd Sims at [ccache@jchsbaseball.org](mailto:ccache@jchsbaseball.org).
- Football: July 18-21, 5-7 p.m. at the EJCHS football stadium for grades K-7. The cost is \$25. Contact Christian Hinnant at [chinnant@jackson.k12.ga.us](mailto:chinnant@jackson.k12.ga.us).

**Wester ... continued from 1B**

football and he around some great guys overall that are going to help me excel more as a man and not just as a football player," he said.

Wester turned down football scholarship offers from Berry, Swain, Southern Virginia, LaGrange and Worcester. This wasn't an easy decision for Wester, but ultimately, he couldn't pass up the excellent BYU offer. He wants to enter either the medical or dental field.

Attending BYU also gives Wester the chance to play Division I FBS football if he can conquer his tryout.

Wester has communicated with BYU's receivers coach, who was impressed with

what Wester might offer the Cougars (who went 9-4 last year but are under new coach Kalani Sitake). Tryouts are set for late August and early September.

Knowing the challenge ahead of him, Wester has been training everyday — either at a local training facility or with high school coaches at Jackson County — and coming right to moment he's in the best shape possible when the time comes.

"I have no one who all is going to be trying out," Wester said. "It could be four, it could be 400. My mindset is that it's going to be 400 people all fighting for four spots." And it's that mindset and

that element of competition that drives Wester through this summer. He knows that chasing a dream isn't easy work. He's willing to pay the price for it to happen.

"Every rep, honestly, I envision that that rep is going to get me a scholarship or a spot on the team," he said. "That's the best way to see it. That's always the best way to try to envision it. That that one rep is going to get you a spot, that one rep is going to be something somebody else isn't doing."

**Swimming**

**Sea Dragons overwhelm competition at Splash meet**

The Jefferson Sea Dragon swim team dominated Saturday's North Georgia Swimming League Splash Meet in Habersham County with 1,507 points in a convincing first-place finish.

Jefferson won the eight-team event by an 829-point margin. The Sea Dragons, who took 90 swimmers to the meet, dominated both the boys and girls divisions.

"Many of our swimmers earned top placing in their events, were swimming personal best times, and swimming newly-learned strokes," Jefferson coach Tess Nunnally said. "We have many first-year swimmers that are able to compete in all four strokes and be a force in their age group."

The Sea Dragons have started strong through two regular season meets as they prep for the district and state meets later this summer.

"I am very happy with how our swimmers are swimming and performing," Nunnally said. "We are really working towards our district meet coming up on June 30 that will decide who we take to our state competition."

The state meet is July 15-16 in Tifton.



**MAKING A SPLASH**  
The Sea Dragons' Nic Aquila (pictured) and several other swimmers earned first-place finishes Saturday at the Splash Meet. Submitted photo

Swimmers who earned first place finishes at the Splash meet are as follows:

- Sophia Burns, 0L, first, 25-yard freestyle, 26.20; first, 25-yard backstroke, 26.87.
- Anselmy Nunnally, 8U, first, 25-yard freestyle, 15.81; first, 25-yard backstroke, 20.79.
- William Johnson, 10U, first, 50-yard freestyle, 34.49; 25-yard breaststroke, 20.17.
- Mason Kinick, 10L, first, 25-yard butterfly, 17.53; 100-yard IM, 1:37.59.
- Katy Joy Belle, 12U, first, 100-yard freestyle, 1:09.55.
- McKenzia Kinick, 14U, first, 100-yard freestyle, 57.68; first, 50-yard freestyle, 28.92; 100-yard IM, first, 1:05.87; first, 50-yard backstroke, 29.38; first, 50-yard butterfly, 28.66.
- Nic Aquila, 18U, first, 50-yard breaststroke, 23.97.

The Sea Dragons return to action Saturday when they return to Habersham County for the North Georgia Swimming League Invitational.

**College baseball**

**Braselton's Hutch earns 'Gold Glove'**

University of West Georgia outfielder Tyler Hutch was recently named to the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA)/Rawlings Gold Glove Team.

Hutch, a senior from Braselton, was voted to the squad in balloting conducted among the nation's Division II baseball coaches. He is the first UWG player to claim the Gold Glove honor

since the honor began following the 2007 season.

Hutch becomes a two-time Gold Glove winner after receiving the honor in 2013 as a freshman at Gordon State.

Hutch — the older brother of former Jefferson baseball players Christian and Joshua Hutch — had impressive numbers to support his selection for the

Gold Glove honor. In 2016 he had 107 points, six assists, and to errors for a perfect fielding percentage of 1.000.

The ABCA/Rawlings Gold Glove honor is not the first this post season for Hutch. He was earlier this month named a second team member of the 2016 All-All South Conference Baseball Team.

**Panther basketball**

Everybody has got to fulfill their spot and execute a different aspect of their game for us where we can be successful," Butler said. "It's a fun process. It's challenging but fun."

Though Jackson County is transitioning to a new cast of players, the culture that last year's group established remains in tact, according to Butler.

And that provides this young team a solid foundation on which it can get started.

"We hope we can just keep building with it," Butler said. "We know that it's challenging because they don't have a lot of experience but we know we'll get them."

**School is Out Summer is in**  
Let the flip jump stunt tumble dance begin!

Wednesday, June 22nd - Friday, June 24th  
6:00pm - 9:00pm  
Jackson County High School Old Gym  
1608 Winder Hwy, Jefferson, GA 30558

Free T-Shirt! College Cheerleader  
Tumb. Fun, Fun!

**Thunder Tumbling** Starts June Friday 23rd

General Gym Member: \$15.00  
Non-Gym Member: \$35.00  
Sibling Discount: \$10.00

Ages: 7th - 13th yrs  
Limited to 45 participants

Reserve Your Spot!!  
[thunder@nicholson.com](mailto:thunder@nicholson.com)  
678-249-1030

**Jackson Co. Planning Commission PUBLIC HEARING**

The Jackson County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 23, 2016 at the Jackson County Administration Building, Auditorium, 67 Adams Street, Jefferson, Georgia 30559, to consider the following matters:

- New Business —
1. RZ-16-10 — Joey Wright, 2047 Bill Wright Rd., Jefferson, GA; 10 acres; rezone from A-2 to I-1. (Map 078/Parcel 017A)
  2. RZ-16-11 — Kevin Gordon, 361 Hale Lane, Athens, GA; 3 acres; rezone from A-2 to M-1. (Map 045/Parcel 013C)

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners will address the recommendations of the Planning Commission Board at a public hearing on July 13, 2016 at 6:00 pm at the Jackson County Courthouse, 3000 Jackson Parkway, Jefferson, GA 30549 in the Jury Assembly Room.

Complete applications, plats, texts, maps, and public hearing procedures are available for review in the Planning Division Office, of the Department of Public Development during regular office hours Monday thru Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm or online at [www.jacksoncounty.gov](http://www.jacksoncounty.gov). All interested persons are invited to attend.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF NICHOLSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Please take notice that the City of Nicholson has prepared a draft comprehensive plan, and the Nicholson City Council with planning commissioners and steering committee members present will conduct a public hearing on the draft plan on June 30, 2016, at 7:00 P.M. The hearing will take place at the Nicholson Community Center, 129 Lakeview Drive, Nicholson, GA, 30565. The purpose of the public hearing is to brief interested individuals on the contents of the comprehensive plan and to receive comments and suggestions for revisions. A copy of the draft plan is available for public review, and interested individuals are invited to review the document and attend the public hearing. For more information, contact the City Clerk at 706-757-3408.

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CITY OF NICHOLSON  
COUNTY OF JACKSON  
STATE OF GEORGIA

**RESOLUTION**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF THE  
CITY OF NICHOLSON APPROVING AND ADOPTING  
THE CITY OF NICHOLSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS; In order to maintain qualified local government certification, and thereby remain eligible for selected state funding and permitting programs, each local government in Georgia must prepare, adopt, maintain, and implement a comprehensive plan as specified in state administrative rules; and

WHEREAS; The City of Nicholson has prepared an updated comprehensive plan, with appropriate opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders, an appointed steering committee, and the general public; and

WHEREAS; Public hearings as required by the state's administrative rules have been held; and

WHEREAS; The City of Nicholson has transmitted the comprehensive plan for review by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as required by local planning requirements of the state; and

WHEREAS; The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission has notified the county of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA's) determination that the comprehensive plan meets minimum requirements of DCA Rules; Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective March 1, 2014;

Now, therefore IT IS RESOLVED as follows:

1.

The City of Nicholson Comprehensive Plan is hereby adopted.

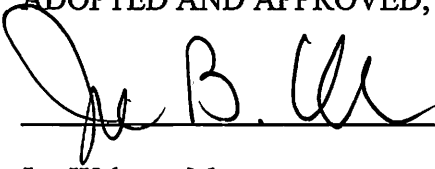
2.

The City Clerk is hereby directed to submit a certified copy of this Resolution to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission within seven days of the date of adoption.

3.

To publicize adoption, the adopted comprehensive plan should be maintained on the City of Nicholson's website.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED, THIS THE 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2016.



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Jan Webster, Mayor  
City of Nicholson

ATTEST:



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Debra Fontaine, City Clerk

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