

## RESOLUTION

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

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Talmo, Georgia, was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures and adopted on September 10, 2019; and

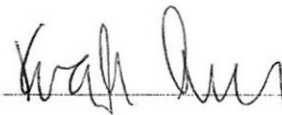
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Talmo that the amendment to the 2019 Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Talmo, Georgia dated November 7, 2023, is hereby adopted, and furthermore, that the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission shall be notified of said adoption within seven (7) days of the adoption of this resolution.

Adopted this 7 day of November, 2023.

City of Talmo



<Name>, Mayor



Clerk

# City of Talmo Comprehensive Plan

2019 Update (As Amended, 2023)



## Acknowledgements

### Steering Committee

Jill Elliott, Mayor  
David Jackson  
Kirk Jackson  
Chip McEver  
Wayne Miller, Business Owner

### Identified Stakeholders

Dr. Mark Spence, Talmo Baptist Church  
Mishea Dean, North Jackson Elementary School  
Jenna Davis, Talmo Library (Piedmont Library System)  
Anthony Woods, Woods Farm  
Ronald Ward, Ward Livestock  
Chip McEver, McEver Livestock  
Goldmine Used Cars  
Joe Elrod, Elrod Trucking  
Rick Elliott, Elliott Enterprise

### Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

Burke Walker, Executive Director  
Eva Kennedy, Planning & Government Services Director  
John Devine, AICP, Principal Planner (project lead)  
Mark Beatty, Planner  
Stephen Jaques, Project Specialist

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction & Overview

### Purpose

This comprehensive plan serves as a decision-making guide for local government officials and community leaders. Based on input from the public, stakeholders, and a steering committee, the plan identifies needs and opportunities, goals and policies, land use practices, and an implementation framework for key elements.

### Process

The comprehensive plan process follows the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective 10/1/2018.

## Public Involvement

### Public Input & Steering Committee

The planning process began with a public hearing and was followed by a series of community input sessions during which the public and a local steering committee were invited to discuss local trends and aspirations. An online questionnaire provided additional feedback opportunities, as did the availability of steering committee members to take questions and comments throughout the process (as presented at the first public hearing). A final public hearing was held before transmittal of the plan to the DCA for review.



### NEGRC's Role

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's (NEGRC) Planning & Government Services Division oversaw the development of this plan, including facilitating input meetings.

# Chapter 2

## Needs & Opportunities

The following list of needs and opportunities results from a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted at the first input meeting, with both the steering committee and public in attendance, as well as professional analysis of relevant data and results of the online questionnaire.

*\*Italicized entries indicate high priorities (with STWP project number in parentheses)*



## Population

Talmo's population stands at 297 and is projected to be 333 by 2023, with a median age of 39 years (rising to 40 by 2023). Age distribution is fairly even, with 27% of the population exceeding 55 years of age and 25% of the population 18 or younger (ESRI BAO); unlike many small towns in Georgia, this is projected to remain relatively stable.

Local officials estimate the population at around 180 people, including a much larger proportion of seniors than the data indicate. *Given the aging population, Talmo should develop a plan for senior service delivery. (1)*

Median income in Talmo is \$51,000 and the poverty rate is estimated at 14% (ESRI BAO). These figures are in line with state averages. An estimated 27.5% of people aged 25 or older do not have a high school diploma; nonetheless, 23.5% have a college degree and another 23.5% took college courses but did not graduate. White-collar jobs account for 59% of Talmo's employment base; blue-collar (31%) and services (9%) employment account for the balance (ESRI BAO).

Stakeholders list Talmo's small-town, family-friendly atmosphere as a strength, emphasizing that the city is a "great place to raise a family." However, input meeting attendees and online questionnaire respondents also reference a drug problem. *The city should work with local law enforcement and nonprofits to address drug-related issues. (2)*

## **Planning, Land Use, and Housing**

Talmo is overwhelmingly rural and residential, and detached single-family homes and mobile homes are the only housing options. Most of the housing stock has been constructed since 1980 and home values are expected to rise slightly from the current median of \$200,000 (ESRI BAO). An estimated 65% of units are owner-occupied, while 21% are rented and 14% are vacant.

Although the housing stock may not currently be at risk due to age, vacant units may need to be inspected, inventoried, and targeted for code enforcement. Stakeholders reference the condition of several properties and a lack of code enforcement as weaknesses. *An arrangement with Jackson County to provide code enforcement services should be pursued. (3)*

## **Transportation**

Unsurprisingly, given its rural setting, trips within and originating from Talmo are made almost exclusively by car. Commuting long distances to work is the norm, with an estimated 75% of workers driving in excess of 20 minutes; roughly 15% drive 45-60 minutes (American Community Survey). Establishing local businesses and improving bicycling and walking infrastructure could help reduce the need to travel by car and give youth and seniors the opportunity to travel to local destinations like the park, library, and post office. *Stakeholders indicate the need for a basic plan for and development of walking and bicycling facilities, including trails. (4)*

## **Community Facilities and Services**

Meeting attendees cite the City's operation of a local park, fire department, train depot, and historic library/City Hall as strengths. *A very basic audit of the condition and maintenance needs of these facilities and a plan to improve the park should be developed. (5)*

Data from the Federal Communications Commission indicate that virtually all of Talmo has access to 300 Mbps (download) cable internet service from Comcast Corporation. Windstream Holdings, Inc. and, in some areas, AT&T Inc., offer 50-100 Mbps ADSL service, and an array of other ADSL and satellite providers offer lower-speed connectivity within the city. *Local officials should develop a basic broadband plan to ensure that Talmo's internet service stays competitive. (6)*

## **Intergovernmental Coordination**

Stakeholders note that law enforcement and animal control are weaknesses, with little coverage provided by Jackson County. *The City and County should update service provision agreements in these areas. (7)*

## **Economic Development**

Economic development in a community the size of Talmo, particularly with its limited availability of commercial space, may be difficult. Stakeholders worry about the threats posed by a lack of resources to generate revenue. *The City should convene an informal committee on local economic development and revenue generation; case studies from other small towns in Northeast Georgia could provide useful as examples of successful small-scale economic achievements. (8)*

# Chapter 3

## Vision

Talmo is a small town with strong community spirit that takes pride in its history. Downtown Talmo will be the social and cultural heart of the community, featuring cultural and historic resources, restaurants, quaint shops, and recreational opportunities to serve residents and visitors. Buildings old and new will honor the heritage of the community by avoiding “anywhere USA” franchise-style development. Neighborhoods will exude a small-town charm where people feel safe and secure, away from the stresses of big-city life.



## Goals & Policies

1. Develop a network of safe, complete streets and trails for all ages and abilities
2. Encourage development that respects and complements our rural and agricultural character
3. Target opportunities for community development through smart use of public funds to generate private investment
4. Work to eliminate substandard and dilapidated housing in our community
5. Show off the best of Talmo through beautiful public spaces, clean and attractive neighborhoods, wayfinding signage, and friendly residents
6. Actively seek opportunities to expand open space and recreational opportunities
7. Diversify our economy by supporting programs that retain, expand, and create businesses appropriate for our community
8. Strengthen our broadband internet access

# Chapter 4

## Land Use

Pursuant to the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the following Future Development Map and Defining Narrative provide the physical planning component of the comprehensive plan.

The DCA defines a character area as a specific district or section of the community that:

- Has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, [an] arts district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor);
- Has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern); or
- Requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.)

Character areas typically provide greater flexibility than traditional land use maps in which each parcel is assigned a single category such as Residential or Commercial.





**Character Areas Compatibility Index**

| Character Area                | Description  | Zoning Compatibility*                        | Appropriate Land Uses  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Historic Downtown</b>      | Focal point of community with commercial activity              | TC, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, PCD, C-1, C-2, and O-I | Residential, Public, Commercial, Office, Mixed-use, Recreation |
| <b>Highway Corridor</b>       | Corridor for commercial, residential, and community facilities | AG, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, PCD, C-1, C-2          | Residential, Office, Commercial, Public, Recreation            |
| <b>Rural Residential</b>      | Rural, undeveloped places and some residential                 | PCFD, AG, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, and PCD          | Residential, Agriculture, Public, Recreation                   |
| <b>Agriculture Area</b>       | Agricultural production  | PCFD, AG, AG-R, RR-3, and PCD                | Agriculture, Public, Recreation                                |
| <b>Community Access Point</b> | Important entrance to town                                     | PCFD, AG, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, and PCD          | Commercial, Office, Residential, Public, Recreation            |

*\*Note that not all zoning classifications will necessarily be appropriate in every location within a character area; for example, while Historic Downtown welcomes commercial-zoned property, some locations within that district may be ill-suited to that type of use.*

## Historic Downtown

The Historic Downtown consists of the traditional rural village on Main Street. It is currently anchored by the post office, City Hall, Talmo Baptist Church, the Talmo Fire Station, and several historic structures including the train depot. The Historic Downtown will remain the focal point of the community and will feature attractive, pedestrian-friendly places where people gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

The rural atmosphere will be maintained while accommodating retail and commercial uses within the Historic Downtown. New projects and re-development will have small-town, historic character and the downtown will have a clear boundary. Compatible architectural styles that maintain the rural character should be encouraged. Wherever possible, the Historic Downtown will connect to local greenspace. Historic buildings will be protected from demolition and rehabilitation encouraged with appropriate incentives. Historic properties should be maintained, rehabilitated, and restored. New development in the area should be of a scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of this area.

The City has already taken an active role in preserving and protecting the character of this area through tree protection, sign, mixed use, and other ordinances.

| Zoning Compatibility                         | Appropriate Land Uses  |
|--|--|
| TC, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, PCD, C-1, C-2, and O-I | Residential, Public, Commercial, Office, Mixed-use, Recreation |

## Implementation Measures

- Access Control Measures
- Design Guidelines
- Flexible Parking Standards
- Flexible Street Design Standards
- Historic Preservation Standards
- Landscaping and Buffers
- Historic Preservation Committee or Commission
- Adaptive Use
- Landscaping and Buffer Requirements
- Mixed Use Zoning



## Highway Corridor

The Highway Corridor is the currently undeveloped and underdeveloped area along US 129, south of the Talmo Trail intersection. Little current development pressure exists in this area. The long-term vision for this corridor includes a combination of well-designed commercial, residential, and community facilities.

The Hwy 129 Corridor Overlay District in the zoning ordinance covers this character area. The ordinance includes access control and buffers to protect aesthetics. New developments must be required to strictly adhere to existing design guidelines, such as vegetated buffers, setbacks, access roads, shared driveways, etc. Billboards should be excluded. The most important implementation measure for this Character Area is the Overlay District; it should be strictly enforced and routinely reviewed and adjusted as necessary.

| Zoning Compatibility                | Appropriate Land Uses                               |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| AG, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, PCD, C-1, C-2 | Residential, Office, Commercial, Public, Recreation |

## Implementation Measures

- Scenic Corridor Overlay Districts
- Sign Controls for Rural Corridors
- Access Control Measures
- Design Guidelines
- Flexible Parking Standards
- Flexible Street Design Standards
- Landscaping and Buffers
- Complete Streets
- Signage Regulations



## Rural Residential

Rural Residential areas are largely undeveloped places that may face development pressure for low-density residential development. The goal of this character area is to maintain the rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential development. General development strategies that address this goal are as follows:

- Require rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporates significant amounts of open space
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the rural character and discourage “franchise” or “corporate” architecture

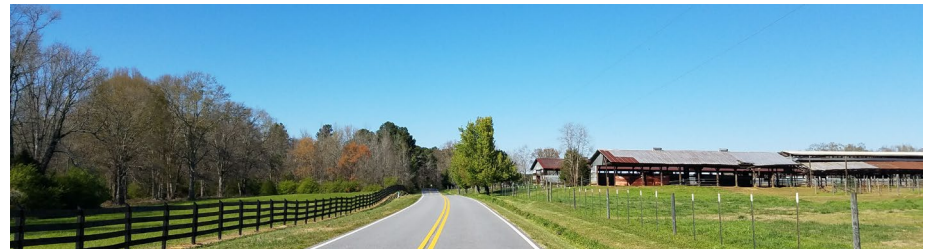
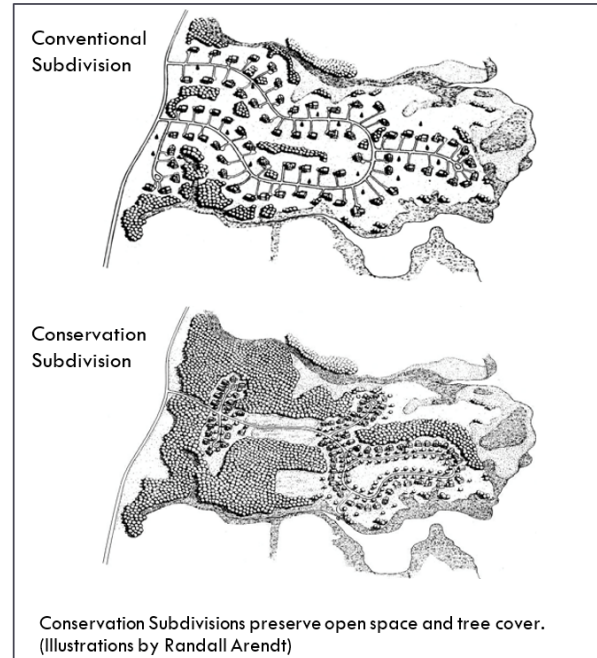
Rural character can be maintained through design that reinforces the landscape and utilizes the clustering of buildings within the center, maximizing open space.

The City has already taken an active role in preserving and protecting the character of this area through its zoning and tree protection ordinances. The zoning ordinance includes many measures that are included in the State Planning Recommendations, such as accessory units and conservation subdivisions.

| Zoning Compatibility                | Appropriate Land Uses                        |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| PCFD, AG, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, and PCD | Residential, Agriculture, Public, Recreation |

## Implementation Measures

- Signage Regulations
- Cluster Development
- Large Lot Zoning
- Open Space Requirements
- Conservation Easements



## Agricultural Area

The Agricultural Areas are large parcels of land that are currently zoned Planned Commercial Farm District or Agricultural. The community intends for these areas to remain in agricultural production throughout the 20-year planning horizon.

Talmo’s Agriculture Areas are adequately protected through the existing zoning ordinance. The most important thing the City can do to maintain the Agriculture Areas is to enforce the zoning ordinance and not allow incompatible development.

## Implementation Measures

- Strictly limit new development
- Promote use of conservation easements by land owners
- Residential subdivisions should be severely limited, but if minor exceptions are made, they should be required to follow a rural cluster zoning or conservation subdivision design; any new development should be required to use compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character
- Widen roadways only when absolutely necessary
- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations

| Zoning Compatibility          | Appropriate Land Uses           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PCFD, AG, AG-R, RR-3, and PCD | Agriculture, Public, Recreation |



### Community Access Point

Community Access Points are the important entrances to Talmo on Main Street and US 129. Talmo is a very small town: access points are more appropriate than extended access corridors.

Talmo has appropriate signage and landscaping at several of its Community Access Points. Directional/way-finding signage featuring community amenities and developments is already installed. The City should continue to maintain its gateway and way-finding signage.

### Implementation Measures

- Creation of Scenic Corridor Overlay Districts
- Sign Controls for Rural Corridors

| Zoning Compatibility                | Appropriate Land Uses                               |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| PCFD, AG, AG-R, RR-2, RR-3, and PCD | Commercial, Office, Residential, Public, Recreation |

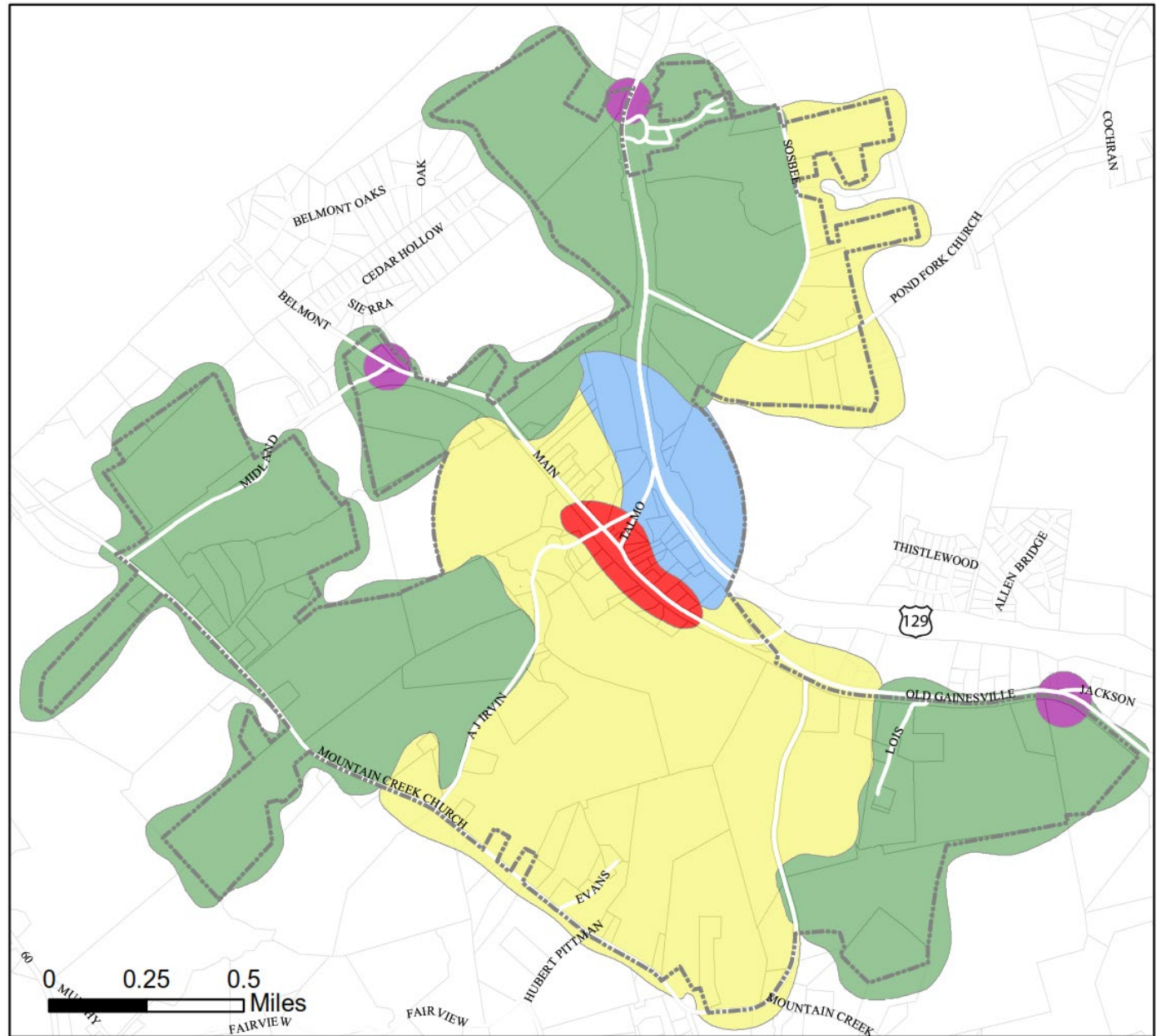


### Future Development Map

- Agricultural Area
- Community Access Points
- Highway Corridor
- Historic Downtown
- Rural Residential



July 18, 2019  
 Prepared by: NEGRRC, PGS Division



# Chapter 5

## Community Work Program

The Short-Term Work Program (2019-2024), updated every five years, provides a list of specific activities that the community plans to address as immediate priorities. A Report of Plan Accomplishments, which provides status commentary on the previous work program (2014-2018), follows.





**Short-Term Work Program, 2019-2024**

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

| #   | Activity  | Timeframe | Responsible Party      | Cost Estimate     | Funding Source                    |
|-----|---|-----------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1   | Develop a needs assessment and plan for serving senior citizens   | 2022      | Mayor & Council        | None              | NA                                |
| 2   | Form work group and define plan to address drug-related issues  | 2019      | Mayor & Council        | None              | NA                                |
| 3   | Establish formal code enforcement arrangement with Jackson County   | 2019      | Mayor & Council        | None              | NA                                |
| 4   | Develop and adopt complete streets and trails plan  | 2020      | Mayor & Council        | \$500             | General Fund, GDOT                |
| 5   | Conduct basic facilities audit to establish maintenance and operating needs; define plan to improve town park, begin implementation if possible | 2020      | Mayor & Council, Clerk | \$500             | General Fund, DCA, SPLOST, grants |
| 6   | Develop a basic broadband plan to ensure that Talmo's internet service stays competitive  | 2020-2021 | Mayor & Council, Clerk | \$500 for plan    | General Fund, DCA, grants         |
| 7   | Update service provision agreements for law enforcement and animal control with Jackson County  | 2020      | Mayor & Council        | None              | NA                                |
| 8   | Convene informal committee to identify ways to strengthen Talmo's economy and grow and diversify revenue generation                             | 2020      | Mayor & Council        | None              | NA                                |
| 9*  | Conduct citywide housing inventory to assess conditions   | 2020      | Mayor & Council, Clerk | \$500             | General Fund, DCA                 |
| 10* | Begin implementation of complete streets/trails plan (including multi-use trail near city park)   | 2020-2024 | Mayor & Council        | Varies by project | General Fund, SPLOST, grants      |
| 11* | Work in partnership with Jackson County to redevelop former Agri-Cycle property for passive recreation use                                      | 2021      | Mayor & Council, Clerk | \$13M             | EPD                               |
| 12* | Develop incentive package to recruit and retain businesses in downtown  | 2020-2021 | Mayor & Council        | TBD               | General Fund, grants              |
| 13  | Purchase commercial washing machine for fire department   | 2022      | Mayor & Council        | \$5,000           | General Fund, SPLOST, grants      |
| 14  | Purchase new turnout gear for fire department   | 2020      | Mayor & Council        | TBD               | General Fund, SPLOST, grants      |

| #  | Activity                          | Timeframe | Responsible Party | Cost Estimate | Funding Source               |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 15 | Renovate upper floor of City Hall | 2020-2024 | Mayor & Council   | TBD           | General Fund, SPLOST, grants |

**Report of Plan Accomplishments, 2014-2018**

| # | Activity   | Status    | Notes  |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| 1 | Conduct housing inventory throughout city to assess conditions   | Underway  | 2020 completion, carry over to STWP                            |
| 2 | Apply for grant and other funding to remedy dilapidated or deteriorated homes                              | Abandoned | No longer relevant   |
| 3 | Develop a multi-use trail near city park   | Postponed | 2021 completion, funding was not available, carry over to STWP |
| 4 | Work in partnership with Jackson County to redevelop former Agri-Cycle property for passive recreation use | Underway  | 2021 completion, carry over to STWP                            |
| 5 | Develop incentive package to recruit and retain appropriate business in downtown                           | Postponed | 2020 completion, no location was available, carry over to STWP |
| 6 | Develop necessary infrastructure, such as sanitary sewer, in downtown to support economic growth           | Abandoned | No longer a priority, unrealistic                              |

# Appendix

## Appendix: Participation Records

### Public Hearings: 3/5/19 & 8/6/19

| NEGRC                                    |  | Talmo Comprehensive Plan Update<br>Public Hearing #1: March 5, 2019<br>Talmo City Hall |                        |
|--|--|--|------------------------|
| NORTHEAST GEORGIA<br>REGIONAL COMMISSION |  |  |                        |
| NAME                                     | TITLE  | ADDRESS  | EMAIL                  |
| Jill Elliott                             | Mayor  | PO Box 53, Talmo, GA   | jillmceliotte@aol.com  |
| Chip McEver                              | Chairman Jefferson <sup>Talmo</sup> Planning | Box 126, Talmo, GA   | cmcever@windstream.net |
| Myra McEver                              | Council                                      | PO Box 126, Talmo, GA  | mmcever@windstream.net |
| Jill B Miller                            | Council                                      | P.O. Box 68, Talmo   | talmoranch@aol.com     |
| Mirk Jackson                             | council                                      | 571 Mt. Creek Ch. Rd, <sup>Ponders</sup> <sup>ga</sup>                                 | kirknoval@gmail.com    |
| David Jackson                            |  | 569 Mt Creek Ch Rd, <sup>Ponders</sup> <sup>ga</sup>                                   |                        |
| Wayne Miller                             |  | PO Box 68, Talmo, GA   |                        |

| NEGRC                                    |            | Talmo Comprehensive Plan Update<br>Public Hearing #2: August 6, 2019<br>Talmo City Hall |                                     |
|--|------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| NORTHEAST GEORGIA<br>REGIONAL COMMISSION |            |   |                                     |
| NAME                                     | TITLE      | ADDRESS   | EMAIL                               |
| Adrienne Watkins                         | City Clerk | Talmo, GA   | ashae@adrienne.watkins@talmo.ga.gov |
| Jill Elliott                             | Mayor      | Talmo, GA   | jillmceliotte@aol.com               |
| Mirk Jackson                             | council    | Ponders, GA   | kirknoval@gmail.com                 |
| James Buffington                         | Council    | Talmo   | jbuffington633@aol.com              |
| Jill B Miller                            | Council    | Talmo   | talmoranch@aol.com                  |
| Myra McEver                              | Council    | Talmo, GA   | mmcever@windstream.net              |
| Margaret Dea                             | citizen    | Talmo   |                                     |
| David Jackson                            | Citizen    | Talmo   |                                     |

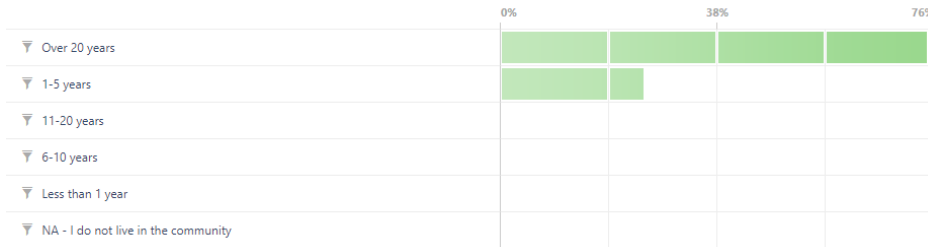
**Input Meetings: 3/5/19 & 6/4/19**

| NEGRC<br>NORTHEAST GEORGIA<br>REGIONAL COMMISSION |                       | Talmo Comprehensive Plan Update<br>Input Meeting #1: March 5, 2019<br>Talmo City Hall |                        |
|---|-----------------------|---|------------------------|
| NAME  | TITLE                 | ADDRESS   | EMAIL                  |
| Wayne Miller                                      | Steering Committee    | P.O. Box 33, Talmo, GA  | talmo ranch@aol.com    |
| Myra McEver                                       | Council               | P.O. Box 126, Talmo, GA   | mmcever@windstream.net |
| Gil Miller  | Council               | P.O. Box 126, Talmo, GA   | talmo ranch@aol.com    |
| Mark Jackson                                      | Council               | 571 Mt. Creek Ch. Rd. Pendley, GA   | kirknoy21@gmail.com    |
| David Jackson                                     | Steering Committee    | 369 Mt. Creek Ch. Rd. Pendley, GA   |                        |
| Skip McEver                                       | Person Talmo Planning | Box 126, Talmo, GA  | mmcever@windstream.net |
| Jill Elliott                                      | Mayor                 | P.O. Box 53, Talmo, GA  | jillmcelliot@aol.com   |

| NEGRC<br>NORTHEAST GEORGIA<br>REGIONAL COMMISSION |            | Talmo Comprehensive Plan Update<br>Input Meeting #2: June 4, 2019 5:30 p.m.<br>Talmo City Hall |                                  |
|---|------------|--|----------------------------------|
| NAME  | TITLE      | ADDRESS  | EMAIL                            |
| Jill Elliott                                      | Mayor      | P.O. Box 53, Talmo, GA 30575   | jillmcelliot@aol.com             |
| Mark Jackson                                      | council    | 571 Mt. Creek Ch. Rd. Pendley, GA 30567  | kirknoy21@gmail.com              |
| Wayne Miller                                      | " "        | 1150 Silver Rd   |                                  |
| David Jackson                                     |            | 369 Mt. Creek Ch. Rd. Pendley, GA 30567  |                                  |
| Skip McEver                                       |            | Box 126, Talmo, GA   | mmcever@windstream.net           |
| Wendy Watkins                                     | City Clerk | 553 Railroad Wilson Commerce   | talmo@cityoftalmo.comcastbiz.net |

**Selected Questionnaire Results**

**Question 03** How long have you lived in the community? (Mandatory)



**Question 05** What are three defining characteristics of the community that you would like to see preserved?

- History, Small town charm and citizens watching out for each other
- park, library and depot
- Small town atmosphere
- Cleanliness
- People