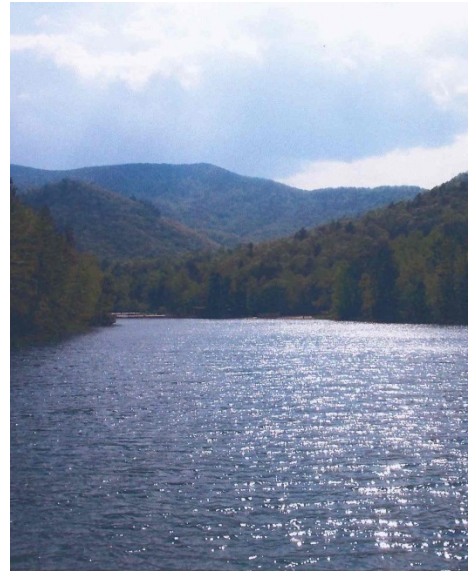


2017 Comprehensive Plan

Union County City of Blairsville



February, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

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

Statewide benefits of comprehensive planning

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

Local benefits of comprehensive planning

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

In short, local planning should recognize that:

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

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

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

Scope

This document addresses the local planning requirements and community development of both Union County and the City of Blairsville, Georgia. Some consideration has been given to neighboring areas and political entities that influence conditions within the county, but all the cited issues, objectives and opportunities discussed herein are solely focused on Union County and/or the City of Blairsville.

Plan Elements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to the core required elements Union County and Blairsville are presenting a modified land use element to aid in the coordination of their development goals and improvement projects. Neither community has a level of land use management policies in place to require this element, but there is a desire to coordinate activities on behalf of the Downtown Development Authority, the three Opportunity Zone districts within the county, and long-term planning with regards to infrastructure and utilities. As such, the Union County/Blairsville plan will incorporate a modified version of the Character Area discussion without emphasis on recommended land uses, until such time as the communities ever do reconsider implementation of land use policies.

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

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

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

Public Participation

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

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

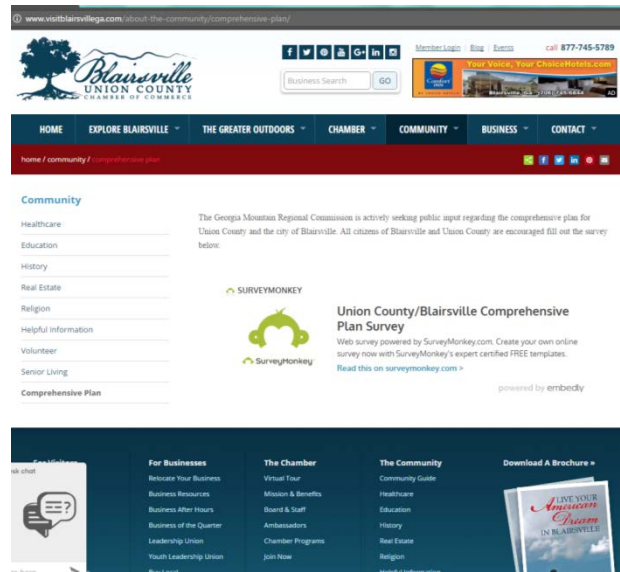
In late 2016 the County, City, Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce nominated various residents and business representatives to participate on the advisory committee. Twenty names were chosen, with 5 submitted from each organization, covering a cross section from local residents and land owners, business owners and managers, the local school system and local charities. The involvement from the Development Authority and Chamber was invited as these organizations have been crucial partners for the community and had recently engaged many of the local stakeholders for another small visioning exercise. The Advisory Committee was instructed in the planning process and provided copies of older materials for review, and would then proceed to provide comments and suggestions on critical issues, priority needs, and recommended actions for each government.

Open public meetings were also held, including 2 independent meetings in the Union County Community Center on January 24th and February 2nd to review values for the community visions and identify needs and opportunities. These meetings featured 13 and 40 people in attendance, respectively, and additional

meeting was held on March 6th for additional review and comment. Further, the regularly scheduled meetings for both the City and the County in January and February shared updates on the planning process and offered opportunity for public comments and input.

In addition, surveys were made available to everyone in paper and via online. By the end of February more than 250 different responses had been received by the GMRC. (Summary of results and comments provided in the appendices.) These provided valuable insight into the prevailing concerns and desires of area residents, and gave the Advisory Committee and elected officials some direction on how to address the issues facing Union County and Blairsville.

Surveys would remain available through March to ensure area residents and stakeholders have ample opportunity to provide their comments and voice their goals for the community.



Advisory Committee



- Darren Harper** - Downtown Development Authority
- Mitch Griggs** - Union County Development Authority
- Patrick Malone** - WJRB 95.1/WJUL97.7
- Stephen Allison** – Attorney/ former State Rep.
- Darrin Sparks** - Southern Bank and Trust in Blairsville
- Greg Owenby** - Coosa Creek Marketing Products, Noontootla Creek Farms and North Ga. Stone, Inc.
- Reid Dyer** - Hayes | James & Assoc.
- Renee Deibert** - North Georgia Technical College
- Chris Wadle** - CEO of Lamin-x
- Chris Collins** - Carter Insurance and Investments
- Joey Swanson** – Woodmen Life
- Chad Lariscy** - Keller Williams Realty
- Sonny Mahan** - Blue Ridge Mountain EMC
- Bill McGlamery** - The Wine Shoppe
- Leslie Daniels** - Union General Hospital
- Robert Rogers** - Blairsville Realty/ Developer
- Jim Marchman** - Fatz Cafe
- Jason Clemmons** - Owner, Sunrise Grocery/ JMC Artistic Photography

COMMUNITY VISION

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

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

Vision Statements

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

The following vision statements were derived from the various comments and suggestions raised during public meetings and through the available survey process. They reflect the consistent themes and issues cited in discussions about prioritizing the local residents over pursuit of change and the strong desire to retain the current level of “*small town charm*” that so many people used to affectionately describe their hometown. To the extent that the local governments pursue major projects and policies the citizens participating in the planning process stressed the need to remain focused on the well-being of current residents and to not sacrifice too much of the existing character of the community, as established by the prevailing scale and rustic nature of local development and the strong academic, civic, and other institutions that help bond the community.

The vision statements also reflect the established importance of the natural setting for Blairsville and Union County, the much celebrated and revered Appalachian foothills and mountains that create the beautiful landscape and many appreciated outdoor attractions. Most everyone here is so because of the appeal of the setting and wishes to see it preserved against the prospect of change and growth that might undue the very rural, country fabric at the heart of the community. As such, Union County and Blairsville should work to protect the agricultural areas and mountainsides as they are as best as possible, directing capital investments and supporting heavier development within areas more conducive to non-rural settings.

VISION STATEMENT	UNION COUNTY
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Union County, Georgia, is a hometown focused on its people, putting families first by celebrating its friendly, neighborly charm, providing a safe community, and investing in facilities and services that will provide the quality of life and opportunities for prosperity desired by its citizens.

Union County, Georgia, is a rural community respectful of its history and natural beauty, recognizing the value of, and striving to preserve for generations, its mountain setting, its agricultural roots and its Appalachian heritage.

Union County, Georgia, is a community that supports its local businesses and institutions, prioritizing education, partnering with the City of Blairsville, and investing in the infrastructure necessary to sustain economic opportunity.

Union County, Georgia, is a community dedicated to open and efficient governance, where residents feel welcome and vested in the well-being of their hometown through fair and bold government.

VISION STATEMENT	CITY OF BLAIRSVILLE
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The City of Blairsville, Georgia, is a proud civic and commercial destination serving area residents, business and visitors with small-town charm and southern hospitality.

The City of Blairsville offers a historical downtown that is inviting to all and serves as a cultural center for the community, providing facilities and opportunities that honor local heritage, encourage traditional business growth and serves as host for social events. The City will protect and enhance this small urban fabric as a defining trait of the community's character and in a way that keeps the city unique.

The City of Blairsville strives to provide efficient and high quality services in support of its citizens and local businesses. The City will be a wise steward of area financial and natural resources in pursuit of the well-being and prosperity of residents, enabling growth while focusing on the preservation of local character.

Needs & Opportunities

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

The following represents a refined listing of Issues and Opportunities for Union County and Blairsville. Some were carried over from the previous plan, but the list has been confirmed and/or refined based on the discussions and analyses throughout the current planning process.

City of Blairsville

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for long-term management/ expansion plans for utilities and infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update water/sewer demand forecast; Amend water/sewer network expansion plan as needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more sidewalks, bicycle trails and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop bicycle and sidewalk master plan (w/ County)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need expand downtown streetscape efforts, pursue more infill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop bicycle and sidewalk master plan • Develop adaptive reuse plans for targeted properties • Promote Urban Redevelopment Plan and funding resources for historic properties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need options for affordable housing and senior housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop adaptive reuse plans for targeted properties • Develop reference guide for urban housing models for seniors/ young adult households
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to expand commercial options within and around downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop adaptive reuse plans for targeted properties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to protect historic structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update inventory of historic sites and adopt preservation policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to improve telecommunications service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory infrastructure and service areas throughout county • Develop improvement plan with North Ga. Network and Ga DED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand to ensure strong communication with the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform survey assessing social media outreach for City and County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to address possible blighted and distressed properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance review of code enforcement procedures and policies • Develop annual monitoring report of enforcement activity.

Union County

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to increase job opportunities, especially with in goods production sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Dev. Authority in recruitment/expansion of local industry Develop targeted industry report for Union County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to revitalize the Hwy 19/ Murphy Hwy. corridor outside Blairsville 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory properties to identify redevelopment opportunities Develop local business profile to identify targeted businesses needed in the area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to revitalize the Gainesville Hwy. corridor outside Blairsville 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory properties to identify redevelopment opportunities Develop local business profile to identify targeted businesses needed in the area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to protect historic structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update inventory of historic sites and adopt preservation policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand to ensure strong communication with the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform survey assessing social media outreach for City and County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to address possible blighted and distressed properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance review of code enforcement procedures and policies Develop annual monitoring report of enforcement activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to ensure preservation of local environment and scenic resources 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to improve telecommunications service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory infrastructure and service areas throughout county Develop improvement plan with North Ga. Network and Ga DED

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Land Use Assessment

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

Union County's topography is rugged with steep slopes interspersed with small rough surfaced plateaus and narrow winding valleys. Private forest lands and U. S. Forest Service property comprise the vast majority of the county. Some of this is used for silviculture, natural buffering between land uses, agricultural experimentation, and as public woodland that provides much of the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities for the county. Combined, these lands represent more than 80% of the total land area (approximately 177,000 acres) with more than 98,000 acres of that land falling under jurisdiction of the U. S. Forest Service and Tennessee Valley Authority. Land limitations such as these are quite beneficial on one hand but tend to limit the types of industry that can locate in Union County. Limitations have a direct impact on local jobs causing most of Union County's working age population to seek employment elsewhere. This out-migration takes money out of local coffers and weakens the local economy on many levels.

The 1980s and 1990s saw a significant increase in retirees to Union County. This influx of older Americans has led to the development of much of the county's available land for retirement homes and resort communities. In addition, areas that have been historically inaccessible to heavy development such as high ridges and mountain tops, have become greatly impacted by out-of-towners seeking locations for seasonal residences or second homes. Additional residential oriented development can be found along the shores of Lake Nottely, the Nottely River, and smaller creeks and streams. Transient activity swarms into the area during the summer months, weekends and holidays causing periods of economic highs and lows for local businesses. Although some revenue is gained by allowing the development of places like ridge tops, the long-term impacts may adversely impact the local scenery, ecology and economy.

As the County seat, the only municipality, and the chief provider of water and sewer, Blairsville remains the focus of heavier development patterns. Centered around the historic downtown the city has some neighborhoods immediately surrounding a commercial and civic core, with pockets of industrial and institutional activity mixed in. The bypass that runs around the southwest corner of the city connects two arterials and provides a center for small industrial operations and the local schools.

Development Trends and Forces

- There are five independent water operations within Union County: The City of Blairsville, Coosa Water Authority, Notla Water Authority, the City of Young Harris and Towns County Water Authority. Both the City of Young Harris Water System and the Towns County Water Authority only provide water service to a small number residences and businesses in the extreme eastern portion of Union County, and are not planning significant expansions in the near future. The remaining providers handle areas in the central sections of the county as well as the City of Blairsville. Blairsville is the only wastewater service provider in Union County.
- US 76 is the primary east/west arterial road and harbors most of the auto-oriented uses such as strip shopping centers, most of which are in or adjacent to the city. US 129 is the north/south artery with access through the mountains to major medical and educational options south of Union County, as well as a route northward into North Carolina near Lake Nottely.
- The City of Blairsville recently completed a major streetscape project that has spurred redevelopment in and around downtown. Vacancy rates have dropped and there have been calls for increased in-town housing options. The City and Downtown Development Authority are pursuing an urban redevelopment strategy to explore options for expanding sidewalks, encouraging infill, and finding space for additional civic projects such as parks and a possible civic center.
- The only major industrial properties are west of town in the industrial park adjacent to the airport. There are some sites available for new tenants but the County does have limited utility capacity/distribution for major users of water and sewer, so opportunities for industrial growth beyond the existing areas may require substantial investment in utility improvements.
- Neither Union County nor Blairsville employ significant land use management policies save for subdivision regulations, nuisance ordinances and minimal environmental protections. Public debate about the possible costs and benefits of tools such as zoning or design guidelines have been discussed, with the most significant pressures coming from 1) fears of over-development scarring the natural beauty of the area and detracting from small town charm, and 2) a desire to see infill in the city that is compatible with existing forms.

Areas Requiring Special Attention

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

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

The only section of Union County considered experiencing rapid development would be the Hwy 76 corridor running east/west across the county. As the only significant expressway this road is the hub for industrial growth and newer commercial development. The pace of development is not considered a concern, however, and is generally in line with expectations of the community. (See *Mixed Use Commercial* character area)

The Highway 515 corridor is experiencing significant growth and interest in increased development. This is also the main corridor seeing conventional development forms that contrast with the regional, rural character of the community. (See *Hwy. 515/441 Corridor* character area)

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

Newer development is occurring within projected service delivery areas and has slowed enough to remain within suitable demand levels for public services. Existing services and/or planned expansions should suffice for managing short-term growth in Union County.

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

Downtown Blairsville has some properties that struggle to remain consistently viable and/or sustain their structural integrity. This is the only area within the City experiencing concentrations of areas in need of redevelopment.

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

There are a few vacant industrial buildings surrounding Blairsville but none in a significant concentration to be considered a target area. Hwy 19 reaching northward from Blairsville does feature some pockets of impoverished housing and dilapidated commercial sites. The County and the Development Authority are planning a revitalization of this corridor. (See *Murphy Highway Corridor* character area)

- *Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites).*

There are no concentrations of sites available for infill development in Union County. There are some isolated properties within Blairsville that have been identified for infill by the Downtown Development Authority, but these are dispersed throughout the city. (See *Downtown* character area)

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

The first few miles of the Hwy 19 corridor heading northward from Blairsville features some concentration of dilapidated properties. Unemployment concerns for Union County are not confined to specific areas. (See *Murphy Highway Corridor* character area)

Character Area Assessment

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

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

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

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

As neither the County nor the City currently have formal land use management policies, there will not be any formal discussion of recommended or priority land uses within the character areas at this time. As either community considers land use management policies in the future they will update the Character Area descriptions accordingly.

CHARACTER AREAS

Downtown Blairsville

Gainesville Highway Corridor (O.Z.)

Murphy Highway Corridor (O.Z.)

Highway 515/441 Corridor (O.Z.)

Rural

US Forest Service

Narrative	<i>Downtown Blairsville</i>
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Blairsville is one of the smaller historic downtowns among GMRC cities, and as a result has fewer parcels available for commercial or other uses. This limits the ability of downtown to serve as a destination of retail or dining activity pending the nature and occupancy of the area, a condition worsened by half of one block facing the square given to private parking.

The anchors for downtown begin with two civic destinations: Blairsville City Hall and the historic courthouse. The Romanesque-design courthouse within the town square has been restored and serves as a local Union County Historic Society Museum and Cultural Center, providing a public amenity and focal point for social events on the square. It lacks sizable, ADA accessible event space, however, and is not considered large enough to draw volumes of visitors on its own. City Hall, which also houses the Police Department, does generate a sizable amount of traffic for common administrative and civic services.

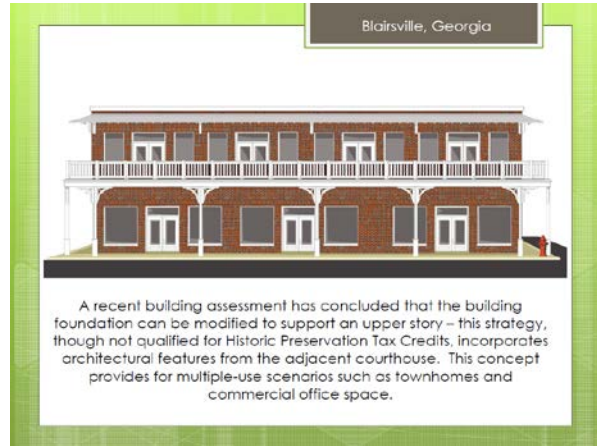
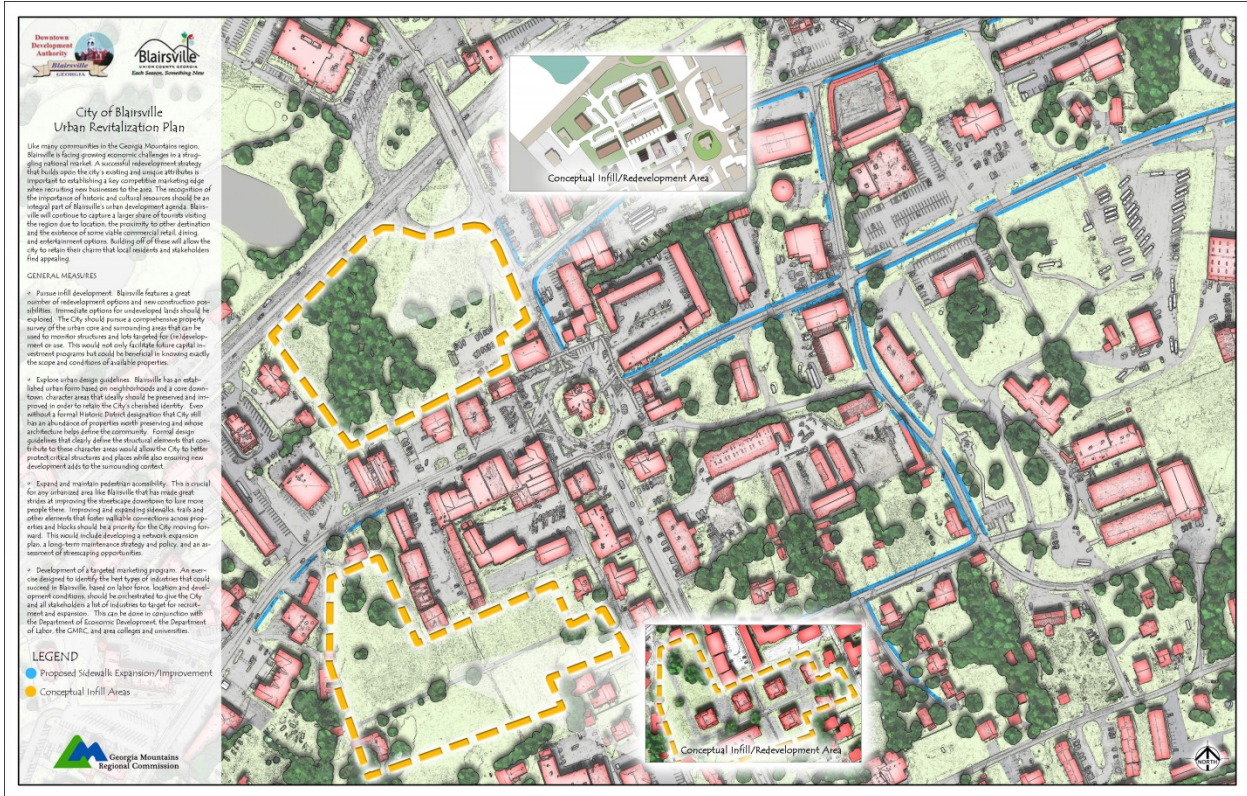
Just north of the square are a local Foodland grocery and the Country Kitchen restaurant generating a mix of daily traffic. Combined with the two restaurants directly on the square, including the locally popular Hole in the Wall, these businesses arguably produce the most frequent visitations to downtown.

Other retail shops in the area include a trophy shop, hardware, auto parts, resale clothing and a musical instruments shop. The bulk of remaining businesses are service oriented, including attorneys and PC repair. This overall mix of businesses is considered a moderate draw compared to the Blairsville market as a whole but still struggles to compete with the east/west running arterial highway of US 76 features an array of national chain shops and regional big-box stores.

Recent efforts focused on attracting new businesses to the square have concentrated on retail or office operations. Dining options for the area are considered sufficient, with all still hungry for more business. An overflow of service industries, however, particularly those catering to lower-end clientele or limited use, would provide occupancies but do little in driving up visitations.

Blairsville does have some strong assets, particularly the presence of a small motel right off the square. A small, ¼ arc truck route means most heavy vehicle traffic doesn't go through the square, aiding walkability. The city is underwnt a successful streetscape effort in 2013, as well, that upgraded lighting and sidewalks as well as renovating one intersection to increase parking and improve safety.





Implementation Measures *Downtown Blairsville*

- ***Pursue infill development.*** Blairsville features a great number of redevelopment options and new construction possibilities. Immediate options for undeveloped lands should be explored. The City should pursue a comprehensive property survey of the urban core and surrounding areas that can be used to monitor structures and lots targeted for (re)development or use. This would not only facilitate future capital investment programs but could be beneficial in knowing exactly the scope and conditions of available properties.
- ***Explore urban design guidelines.*** Blairsville has an established urban form based on neighborhoods and a core downtown, character areas that ideally should be preserved and improved in order to retain the City's cherished identity. Even without a formal Historic District designation that City still has an abundance of properties worth preserving and whose architecture helps define the community. Formal design guidelines that clearly define the structural elements that contribute to these character areas would allow the City to better protect critical structures and places while also ensuring new development adds to the surrounding context.
- ***Expand and maintain pedestrian accessibility.*** This is crucial for any urbanized area like Blairsville that has made great strides at improving the streetscape downtown to lure more people there. Improving and expanding sidewalks, trails and other elements that foster walkable connections across properties and blocks should be a priority for the City moving forward. This would include developing a network expansion plan, a long-term maintenance strategy and policy, and an assessment of streetscaping opportunities.
- ***Development of a targeted marketing program.*** An exercise designed to identify the best types of industries that could succeed in Blairsville, based on labor force, location and development conditions, should be orchestrated to give the City and all stakeholders a list of industries to target for recruitment and expansion. This can be done in conjunction with the Dept. of Economic Development, the Dept. of Labor, the GMRC, and area colleges and universities.
- ***Continue to push the Façade Rehabilitation Program.*** This program endows local property owners with access to tax credits and professional assistance in the restoration and adaptive reuse of older building exteriors. Blairsville has several properties that could benefit from this program and offer brighter, more inviting fronts to their businesses that would also enhance the public streetscape. The GMRC and the State offer assistance and guidance as part of their regular operations and could be available to help Blairsville with any of these efforts.
- ***Landscaping and decorative plantings.*** Building off of the initial streetscape project, adding decorative plantings and landscaping, as well as artistic elements and signage, can not only soften the scene and add visual appeal but can also enhance pedestrian safety. Flora can be chosen to add seasonal appeal and strengthen Blairsville's sense of place as a true mountain community.
- ***Add more artistic features throughout the city.*** Adding artistic elements to any park or streetscape not only adds to the decorative and visual appeal but these pieces often become intrinsic parts of the community's identity and social fabric. They may illustrate local artist's work, tell stories of local culture, or simply create focal points for gathering and make public spaces something more fun and interesting. Fountains, sculptures, gardens and monuments are samples of artistic elements commonly used in cityscapes to take public spaces and give them a broader sense of civic identity. Done properly Blairsville can identify places to introduce more artistic elements that will enliven the urban scene and build on the community character.

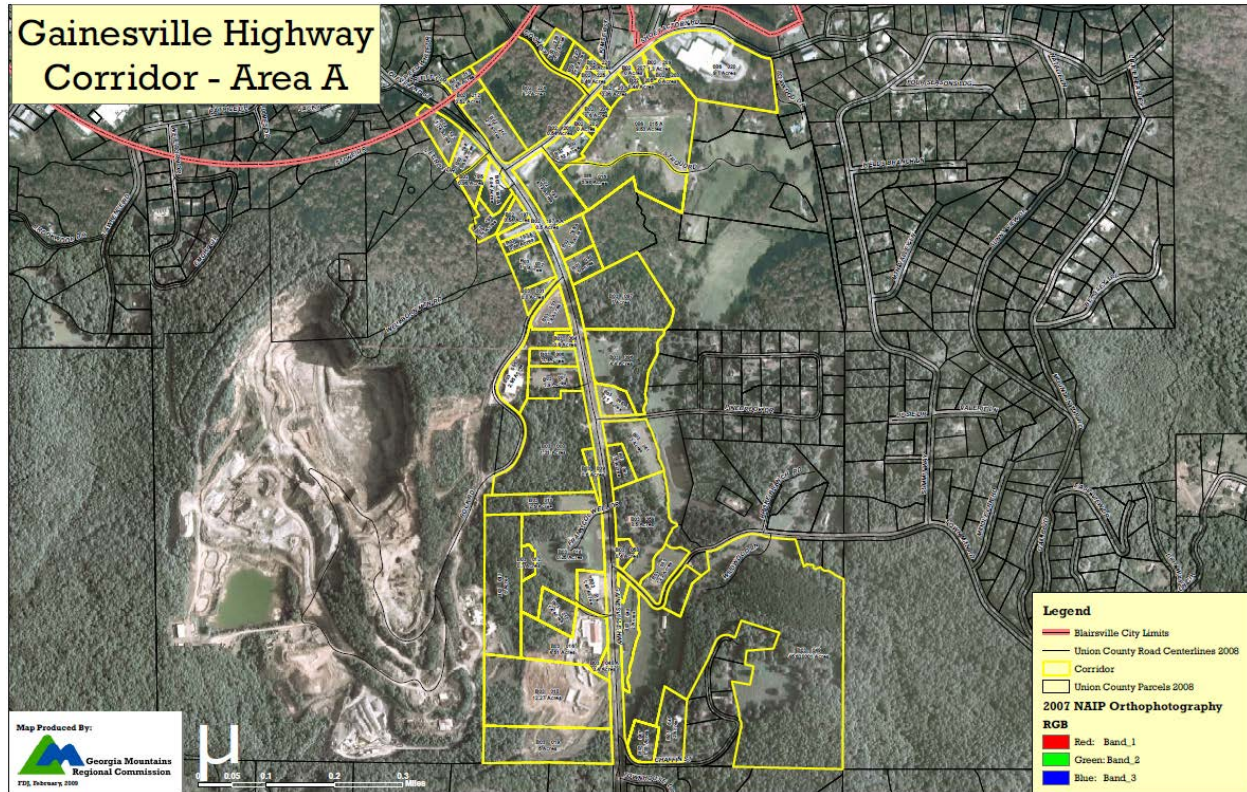
Narrative	<i>Gainesville Highway Corridor (OZ)</i>
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This target area is a mixed retail, commercial, industrial area that includes a small mixture of housing units with the Gainesville Highway portion of the target area being mainly retail. A good number of the retail is dependent upon the tourist trade. These businesses include restaurants, antique dealers and a flea market. A number of empty buildings were noticed on Gainesville Highway that includes businesses and houses. Also noticed were a number of vacant lots with “For Sale” signs. This corridor also includes Blairsville’s historic central business district and adjacent residential neighborhoods. All redevelopment planning should recognize the importance of historic architecture and the role it plays in the definition of character areas. Infill designs should complement older architecture in regards to established scale, height, and rhythm.



The Shoe Factory Road portion of the target area is mainly governmental, manufacturing, retail and a small number of houses. This section includes a large empty manufacturing plant that has been closed for a number of years. This manufacturing site has limited visibility and could become an area for criminal activity. Governmental sites, within this area, include schools, fire and ambulance, jails and county works. Mixed use small to medium commercial and manufacturing is located in this area. There are also a number of cleared vacant industrial sites but these would be a difficult to build due to the steep mountainous grades. One of the roads within the target area is just wide enough for two cars traveling in opposite directions to pass. Some of the vacant lots have large trucks parked in them and are used as an area to turn around. This is a very high-traffic area used by students, residents, large trucks, as well as people cutting through the area to avoid the City of Blairsville. The road is narrow and appears to be county maintained. With the large amount of vehicular traffic this road should be equipped with paved shoulders.

This area has a mixture of residential structures and commercial buildings dating from the early to mid 20th century. Although there remain remnants of early farmsteads, the overall character of this section is primarily urban in nature. Although there appear to be very few abandoned properties, the majority are currently in various stages of disrepair and neglect. The restoration of period details found on existing historic architecture is recommended. All new construction and infill should be designed to establish a standard setback from the right-of-way, with a preference for building heights limited to two stories. Attention should also be given to the planting of trees and the preservation of green space in this area.



Implementation Measures *Gainesville Highway Corridor*

- *Continue to promote the Opportunity Zone* for recruitment/expansion of employment options within the district.
- *Develop an inventory/profile of properties* for potential redevelopment, for use in marketing to prospective employers or land developers.
- *Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity* of corridor to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.
- *Develop/Update an inventory of local business* to identify mix of local commerce and retail; Assess needed or desired businesses for potential recruitment.
- *Update traffic profile of corridor* to identify any hazardous conditions and plan for any needed improvements.

Narrative *Murphy Highway Corridor (OZ)*

This target area is mixed retail, commercial, industrial and residential and is used primarily by commercial, tourism and residential traffic. There are many vacant businesses along this route and has the appearance of one of the older true business sections of Union County. Industrial sites include concrete and gravel business that fronts the Murphy Highway. The area is characterized by many deteriorated buildings that need to be either torn down or upgraded to meet current usage requirements. The City of Blairsville also owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility that is to the rear of the first two lots entering the project area.

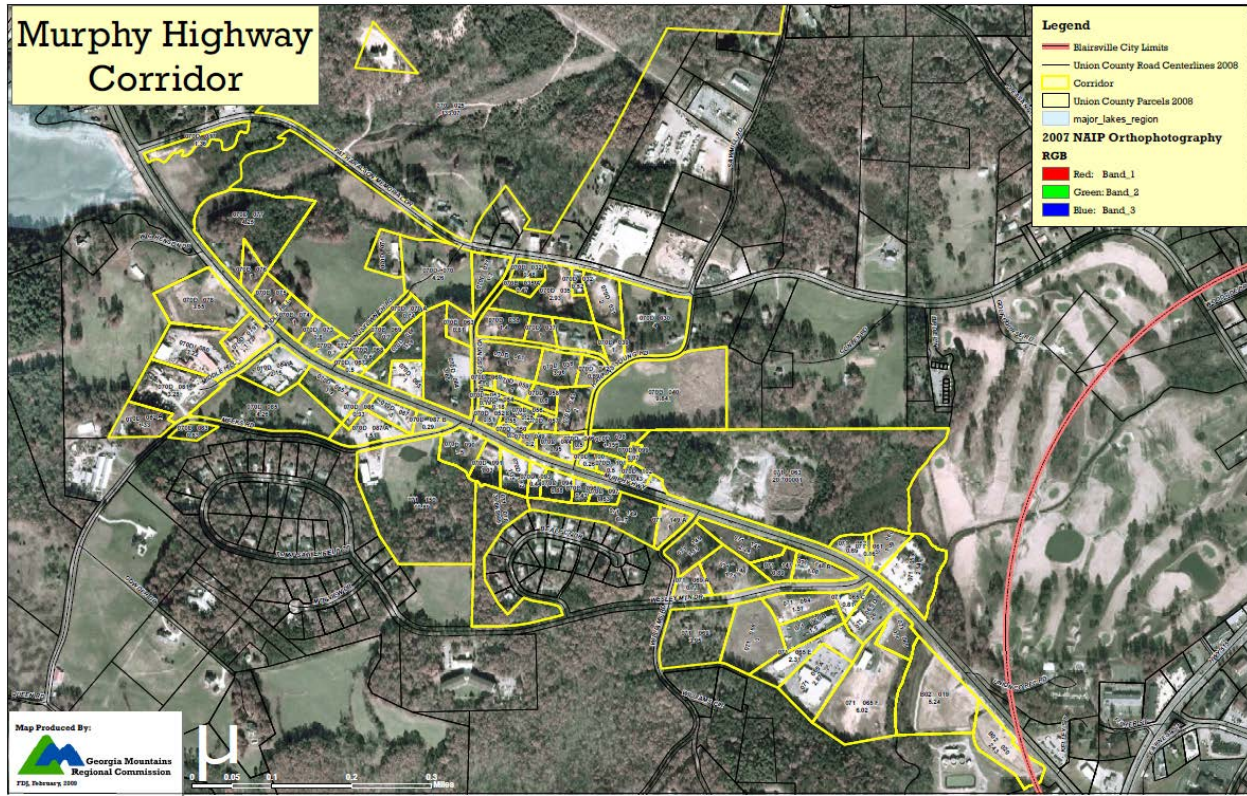
Tourists generally use this corridor when traveling to Murphy, North Carolina. This area could be upgraded and be much more appealing to the tourism market. Without tax incentives, this area will inadvertently maintain a downward progression of businesses and building appearances, thus negatively impacting the tourism economy for Union County and the City of Blairsville.

Murphy Highway Corridor: This area has an assortment of residential, commercial, and multifunctional architecture that date from the early to late 20th century. Setbacks in this area are inconsistent and add a sense of visual confusion to the area. Blighted and vacant buildings are numerous as well as vacant and underutilized lots and potential brownfield areas. Although newer buildings tend to be in better shape, older buildings tend to lack general maintenance and upkeep. High traffic volume, excessive speeds, and poor visibility hinder the safe navigation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.



The Murphy Highway and Gainesville Highway Corridors have the highest concentration of potential brownfield sites. Abandoned construction staging areas, petroleum filling stations, used car lots and auto repair facilities are all associated with the use of hazardous chemicals and ground contaminants and will eventually require testing.





Implementation Measures *Murphy Highway Corridor (OZ)*

- *Continue to promote the Opportunity Zone* for recruitment/expansion of employment options within the district.
- *Develop an inventory/profile of properties* for potential redevelopment, for use in marketing to prospective employers or land developers.
- *Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity* of corridor to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.
- *Develop/Update an inventory of local business* to identify mix of local commerce and retail; Assess needed or desired businesses for potential recruitment.
- *Update traffic profile of corridor* to identify any hazardous conditions and plan for any needed improvements.

Narrative *Highway 515/441 Corridor (OZ)*

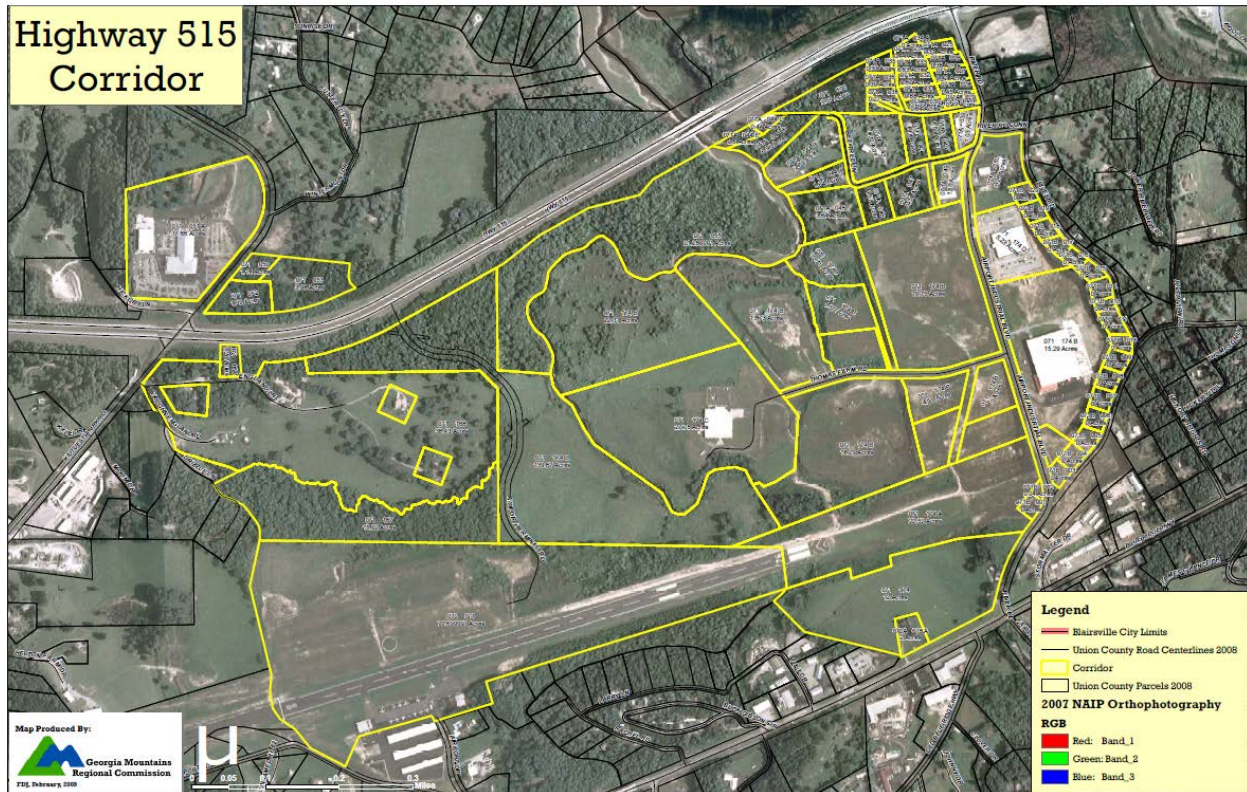
Highway 515 Corridor: The majority of the older building located along this corridor were demolished during the construction of the four lane highway. The older buildings that do remain tend to be associated with early 20th century farmsteads. New construction tends to be large scale, big box retail, commercial, and institutional oriented architecture. Large, steeply graded slopes and storm water drainage systems are the predominant features located within the right-of-way. The Blairsville Airport Regional Industrial Park abuts a low to moderate income mid-20th century residential area where houses tend to be in various stages of repair and disrepair. The Blairsville Regional Airport is located in the southwestern section of the corridor.



This target area includes the Blairsville Airport Regional Industrial Park and the Blairsville Airport. This area has been designated for intense commercial and industrial use, but is severely underutilized. The businesses that have located within the industrial park have traditionally been considered stable but recent assessments are now showing significant downturns. These include the United Community Bank training facilities (UCB), Applewood Door and Window and Cobb-Vantress Hatchery. Applewood is suffering tremendous losses due to the declining housing market. They have recently had to lay off 60-percent of their workforce and could file Chapter 11 within a year. The United Community Bank has shown economic shortfalls associated with increased foreclosures and write-offs. Considered the county's largest employer, UCB has experienced significant downturns in stock value and shareholder equity. Cobb-Vantress is currently operating under very little constraint.

Water and sewer are provided by the City of Blairsville. This is a very well-planned industrial park with future business sites graded and available for minor ground preparation. This industrial park is unique to the Northeast Georgia area because of the terrain. For this industrial Park to be successful the local and state governments must come together to formulate incentives for businesses to move there. Local governments have widely advertised the site for future economic benefits as well as its convenient proximity to the local airport.





Implementation Measures *Highway 515/441 Corridor (OZ)*

- *Continue to promote the Opportunity Zone* for recruitment/expansion of employment options within the district.
- *Develop an inventory/profile of properties* for potential redevelopment, for use in marketing to prospective employers or land developers.
- *Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity* of corridor to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.
- *Develop/Update an inventory of local business* to identify mix of local commerce and retail; Assess needed or desired businesses for potential recruitment.
- *Update traffic profile of corridor* to identify any hazardous conditions and plan for any needed improvements.
- *Develop/Update long-term utility demand report* for industrial park
- *Update Airport Management Plan*

Narrative *Rural*

This district is a catch-all designation for those larger lots that lie outside Blairsville or slightly more populated transitional zones. There is no agricultural activity within City limits, and any activity near Blairsville is of a non-commercial scale. Many lots are simply large residential lots with most of the property left undeveloped. Much of this area feature properties with just a single house, though often one or more storage or agricultural structures. Most are long established properties of 30 years or more. In a couple cases their residence is substantially improved and indicative of a high economic class. Others are simply modest homes on lots retained purely for their scenic, rural value.

There are some older subdivisions and homes clustered around the lake or local streams. Most of these still comprise of lots at 1 acre or larger due to dependence on private wells and/or septic systems. This is a transitional space between established neighborhoods and the vast forestland throughout the county. It consists mostly of undeveloped land or recently built suburban housing. By type the subdivisions are attempting to fit in with the predominantly residential character surrounding the cities, but in form they differ by relying on insular road networks and a departure from the classic urban grid. Some of the houses are also larger both in structure and in terms of lot size than found within the urban neighborhoods.

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



Implementation Measures***Rural***

- *Promote the Firewise and Fire Adapted Community programs*
- *Enforce State environmental laws and rules* regarding State Vital Areas and natural resources
- *Limit expansion of sewer service* outside of the city and existing urban areas, so as to minimize growth and scale of development in rural areas
- *Adopt policies allowing conservation subdivision development* patterns



Narrative	<i>Mixed Use Commercial</i>
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This district represents the main commercial corridor of Union County in the form of US 76 as it runs east/west through Blairsville and the heart of the county. It is a conventional arterial road with multiple lanes of traffic in each direction and harboring the variety of retail, dining, service and office operations that cater to both local residents and travelers in the area. Much of the development along this particular stretch is oriented around automobiles and drive-in customers, with only modest attention to pedestrian traffic. The road is designed to handle higher speeds and assist in getting travelers through the scene, and the signage and curb-cuts imply the corridor is for moderate to heavy traffic, making it a conventional commercial area.

The east side of this highway features the connection with the Glenn Gooch bypass, which serves as the main road for the local schools and several businesses going to or around downtown Blairsville. Coming in toward downtown the highway also features a few chain restaurants and local big-box style shopping centers featuring a Home Depot and Ingles super market. The midway point of the highway features an interchange providing direct access to downtown.



The west side features comparable retail and office development, including more fast-food dining options, additional shopping centers and gas stations. The far end of this corridor includes a regional athletics park and access to the industrial park and airport.



The corridor has developed due to the access of the road way, the terrain allowing larger scale development, and the presence of utilities from the City of Blairsville. It is considered an appropriate catchment area for such development patterns, affording the City the chance to retain downtown in a more historic manner and reserving the rest of the county for traditionally rural forms. Utility demand will be the driving factor for any expansion as the City and County both wish to maximize capacity for existing residents and in a manner that keeps the county in a rural manner as desired by locals.



Implementation Measures	<i>Mixed Use Commercial</i>
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- *Develop monitoring report of code enforcement activity* of corridor to ensure safety and general appearance of structures and properties.
- *Develop/Update an inventory of local business* to identify mix of local commerce and retail; Assess needed or desired businesses for potential recruitment.
- *Update traffic profile of corridor* to identify any hazardous conditions and plan for any needed improvements.
- *Develop/Update long-term utility demand report* for area

Narrative *US Forest Service*

This district comprises currently established woodland reserved primarily for commercial forestry and/or conservation. The only notable intrusions into the property are unpaved roads, occasional residential structures or facilities required by utilities or the USFS to maintain the land.



Much of this land is found on steeper slopes and ridgelines, comprising the scenic vistas and outdoor recreation areas that help define Union County. Aspirations are to preserve this part of the landscape as best as possible, prohibiting new development apart from replacing existing structures or from forms that mimic the scale and context of existing structures in the area. Structures that are constructed in this area are encouraged to fit into the surrounding context through use of wood and stone materials and evoking rural or rustic mountain style architecture.

To the extent possible driveways and roads in this area should remain unpaved and utilities should be limited, so as not to attract greater development pressures.



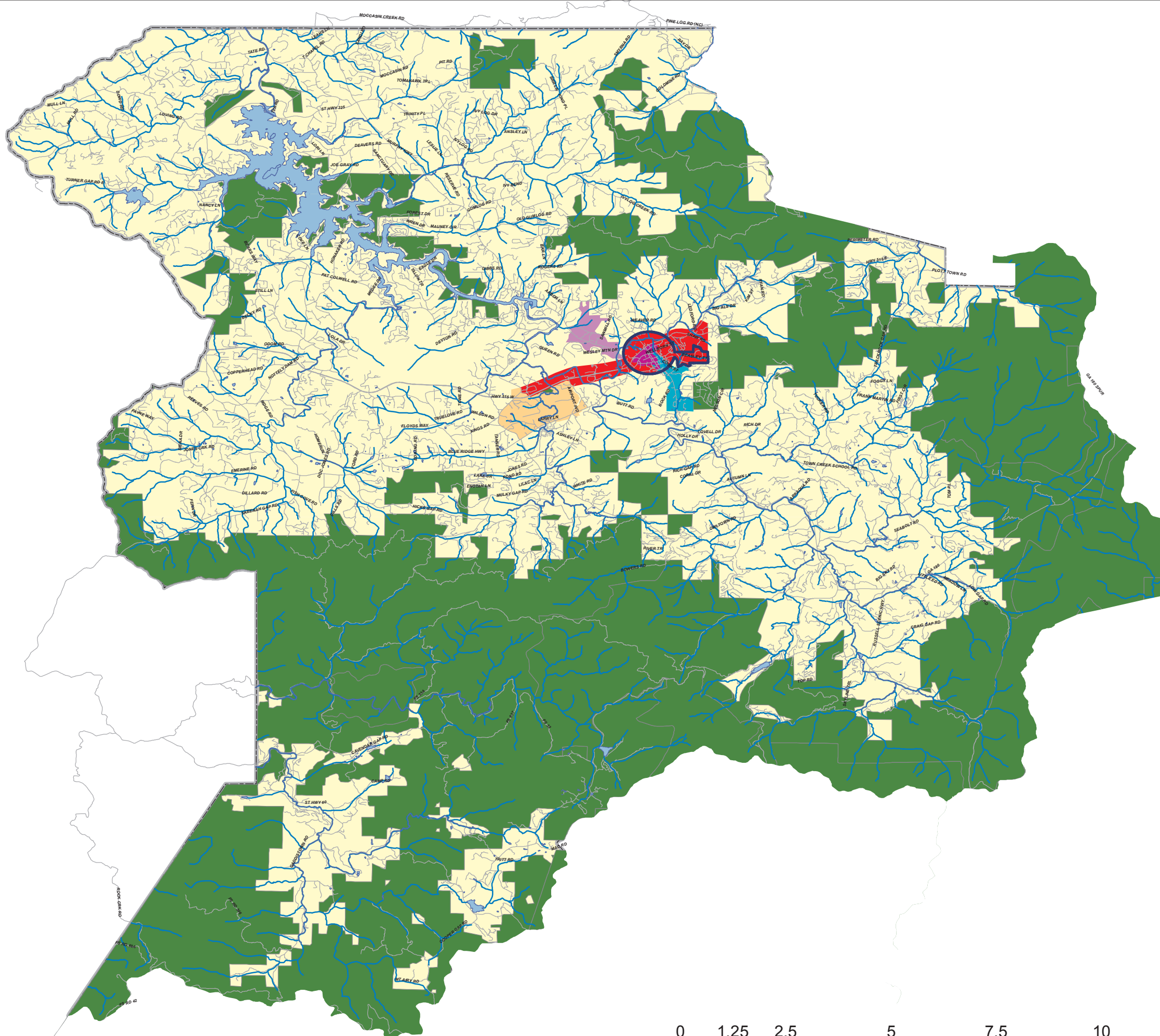
Implementation Measures *US Forest Service*

- ***Support the USFS*** in maintenance and promotion of safety within the National Forest and wildlife areas
- ***Routinely review USFS Wildfire Management Plan*** for coordination among first responders
- ***Promote the Firewise and Fire Adapted Community programs***
- ***Enforce State environmental laws and rules*** regarding State Vital Areas and natural resources

Union County Character Areas

Legend

- Blairsville City Limits
- Mixed Use Commercial
- Rural
- Downtown Blairsville
- Highway 515/441 Corridor
- Gainesville Highway Corridor
- Murphy Highway Corridor
- U.S. Forest Service



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

Map Prepared by: BC, March, 2017

Quality Community Objectives Assessment

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

1. Economic Prosperity

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

The governments and their partners recognize the importance of a strategic approach to sustaining their strong economy and maintaining the area's vital character. The City and County supports the local Chamber of Commerce, the Industrial Development Authority, and the Downtown Development Authority as part of ongoing efforts to support economic development for the community. The governments also maintain contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the State for pursuit of assistance and outside funding opportunities in support of economic development opportunities.

2. Resource Management

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

The governments maintain contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to work for the protection and promotion of cultural resources in the area. The governments also employ policies and practices related to State Vital Areas, National Wetland Inventory (FIRM) data and other applicable sources to monitor and enforce the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.

3. Efficient Land Use

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

Through this planning process, ongoing efforts to update area mapping, and regular communication with each other, the City and County work to ensure local development policies

support sustainable development that enables economic growth while managing local resources, utilities and infrastructure.

4. Local Preparedness

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

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

5. Sense of Place

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

The City and Downtown Development Authority are pursuing their Downtown Master Plan, and through additional ongoing planning practices the City of Blairsville is working to preserve and build upon the existing character of the historic city center. The City and County will both regularly monitor development trends and local land use policies to ensure all is being done to maintain the historic sense of community that defines Union County and Blairsville.

6. Regional Cooperation

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

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

7. Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

Through this and ongoing planning processes, the City of and County are actively working to monitor local housing needs and work to enforce policies that promote quality, affordable housing options as needed.

8. Transportation Options

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

Neither the City of Blairsville nor union County has an active, comprehensive transportation planning program. However, both local governments communicate their concerns and issues to the regional GDOT office and all communities do participate in the public involvement process for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as able. As the region grows additional transportation planning would be considered a benefit, if not a necessity.

9. Educational Opportunities

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

Both governments work with the Lumpkin County School Board to ensure access for quality primary and secondary educational facilities and programs for area residents. Both governments also work with other partners to ensure access to viable post-secondary resources such as the University of North Georgia, North Georgia Technical College, and other area educational institutions.

10. Community Health

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

The governments work with union General Hospital and the Union County Department of Public Health to ensure access for quality health care facilities and programs for area residents. The governments also work with other partners to monitor residents' needs and requests in providing access to these services as the area grows.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

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

Policies, Long-Term Activities and Ongoing Programs

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

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

In addition, several items have been identified as policies, general objections and directions for Union County and the City of Blairsville in regards to different issues. These policies will be used as guidelines for general, long-term practices for the respective government.

- Support the local Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority and other partners in efforts of community and economic development for Blairsville and Union County
- Participate in all appropriate intra-county programs such as SPLOST and Service Delivery Agreements.
- Maintain, and regularly review, codes and development policies
- Take necessary actions to protect the public water supply
- Continue to revitalize downtown
- Continue working to improve coordination and collaboration with City/County and local civic partners, such as the School Board and the Development Authority
- Maintain enforcement of mountain protection measures and other policies that support the County's mountain character and tourism
- Maintain enforcement of environmental protection measures that sustain water quality

- Continue to promote the local *Opportunity Zones*
- Pursue/Support infill development of developed but vacant properties
- Explore design guidelines in urbanized portions of Blairsville
- Expand and maintain pedestrian accessibility throughout the city
- Continue to encourage and support the Façade Rehabilitation Program.
- Add more artistic features throughout the city.
- Continue to maintain and upgrade local roads and bridges
- Continue to support historic preservation of critical public structures and eligible/interested private properties
- Support expansion of North Georgia Tech curriculum offering job training and entrepreneurship, higher education
- Limit expansion of sewer service outside of the city and existing urban areas, so as to minimize growth and scale of development in rural areas
- Promote Urban Redevelopment Plan and funding resources for historic properties
- Continue landscaping and decorative plantings throughout city
- Promote the Firewise and Fire Adapted Community programs
- Enforce State environmental laws and rules
- Limit expansion of sewer service outside of the city and existing urban areas, so as to minimize growth and scale of development in rural areas
- Support the USFS in maintenance and promotion of safety within the National Forest and wildlife areas
- Routinely review USFS Wildfire Management Plan

Report of Accomplishments

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

City of Blairsville

Action	Status	Comment
Develop Rural Transit Plan	Complete	
Tourism and Marketing Strategy with County or other parties	Complete	
Utilize State, regional and federal programs which provide funding, staff and services to enhance the City's historic preservation program	Complete	Now Ongoing Policy
Finish Comp Plan update: Community Agenda	Cancelled	Deferred to current planning process
Improve and expand infrastructure in the City	Complete	
Review and update environmental protection policies	Complete	
Develop neighborhood sustainability plans	In Progress	
Develop Bicycle and Pedestrian Accessibility Master Plan	In Progress	
Review Service Delivery Strategy	In Progress	
Prevention Guide for Greasetrap Use	Complete	
Downtown Revitalization	Complete	
Housing & Economic Development Study and Forum – Follow up from recession	Postponed	Scheduled for 2017
Utility expansion and improvement	Postponed	Scheduled for 2018
Review/ update policies for managing housing stock (density, type)	Postponed	Scheduled for 2018
Joint Comp Plan update - Community Assessment and Participation Program	In Progress	Deferred to current planning process
Joint Comp Plan update – Community Agenda	In Progress	Deferred to current planning process

Union County

Action	Status	Comment
Complete historic restoration old school	Completed	
Develop historic resource mgmt. policy	In Progress	Working with historic society - 2017
Restore Old Gym	In Progress	Still in future SPLOST
Update GIS data for land use and environmental conditions	Complete	
Suches Community Center	Complete	
Identify and train primary and secondary teams for business recruitment	Complete	Consolidated to Dev. Authority
Appoint a NGT representative to serve on the UCDA Board	Postponed	Still need done in next vacancy
Expand NGT curriculum offering job training and entrepreneurship, higher education	Complete	Made long-term objective
Byron Herbert Reece Farm Improvements	Complete	
Continue Roads and Bridges	Complete	
Old Courthouse Elevator	Complete	
Develop plan to support entrepreneurs and small businesses in include a SCORE chapter, small business training at NGT	In Progress	Grant applied for - 2017
Evaluate, update, and adopt the Nottely River water supply watershed protection ordinance	Cancelled	Law changed; No longer EPD focus
Develop Bicycle Trails	Complete	
Study to identify house for a voting precinct	Complete	
Meeks Park Amphitheater and north recreation park	In Progress	North park done; Amphitheater scheduled for 2020
Develop Historic Resources Report	In Progress	2018 - Working with historic society
Expand Fire Dept. Station 1	Complete	
Publish and distribute a guide of historic properties, scenic routes and tourist excursions	In Progress	2018 - Being addressed by Chamber
Host economic development forum concerning Hwy 19, US 76 and related industrial sites	Complete	
Pull over lanes on mountain (19/129S)	Complete	
Spec buildings for industrial park	Complete	
Update Union County SDA	In Progress	Part of current planning process
Joint Comp Plan update - Community Assessment and Participation Program	In Progress	Part of current planning process
Senior Center Expansion	Completed	
Scenic overlooks and trail system to Bridal Falls (US19/129S)	In Progress	1 st grant failed. 2 nd grant in process - 2017
Joint Comp Plan update – Community Agenda	In Progress	Part of current planning process
Expand Jail	Cancelled	Not needed due to population reduction
Improve Solid Waste Facility	Complete	
Expand Annex building	Cancelled	Determined not needed

Short-Term Work Program

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

City of Blairsville

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2017	Complete Comprehensive Plan update	\$20,000	DCA	County, City; GMRC
2017	Develop Bicycle and Pedestrian Accessibility Master Plan	\$10,000	GDOT	City, GMRC
2017	Inventory infrastructure and service areas throughout county	NA	NA	City, County
2017	Review/Update Service Delivery Strategy	NA	NA	City, County
2017	Housing & Economic Development Study and Forum – Follow up from recession	NA	NA	City, Chamber, Dev. Auth., County
2017	Adopt water loss control program	\$10,000	EMI	City
2017	Residential meter accuracy testing policy	\$500	City	City
2017	Consumption Report review (by 3 rd party)	NA	Auditor	City
2017	Enact policy establishing random field checks of inactive meters	NA	NA	City
2018	Update inventory of historic sites and adopt preservation policies	TBD	DNR	City, GMRC
2018	Utility expansion and improvement	\$800,000	GEFA, ARC, GDOT	City
2018	Review/ update policies for managing housing stock (density, type)	NA	NA	City, GMRC
2018	Develop neighborhood sustainability plans	NA	NA	City, GMRC
2018	Purchase water leak detection equipment	\$2,000	City	City
2019	Social media outreach survey	\$3,000	TBD	City, County
2019	Update water/sewer demand forecast; Amend water/sewer network expansion plan as needed	\$5,000	City	City, Dev. Auth.
2019	Develop reference guide for urban housing models for seniors/ young adult households	\$3,000	DCA	City, GMRC
2019	Develop improvement plan with North Ga. Network and Ga DED	\$5,000	DED, ARC	City, County, Chamber, Dev. Auth.
2020	Develop adaptive reuse plans for targeted properties	TBD	City	City, DDA, GMRC
2020	Develop targeted marketing program	NA	NA	City, DDA
2021	Update Comprehensive plan	\$20,000	DCA	County, City, GMRC
2021	Performance review of code enforcement procedures and policies	NA	NA	City
2021	Develop annual monitoring report of enforcement activity	NA	NA	City

Union County

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2017	Complete Comprehensive Plan update	\$20,000	DCA	County, City; GMRC
2017	Adopt policies allowing conservation subdivision development	NA	NA	County
2017	Inventory infrastructure and service areas throughout county	NA	NA	City, County
2017	Review/Update Service Delivery Strategy	NA	NA	City, County
2018	Inventory Opportunity Zone properties to identify redevelopment potential	NA	NA	County, Dev. Auth., Chamber
2018	Develop local business profile to identify targeted businesses needed in the area	\$3,000	DED	County, Dev. Auth., Chamber
2018	Develop targeted industry report for Union County	\$3,000	DED	County, Dev. Auth., Chamber
2017	Publish and distribute a guide of historic properties, scenic routes and tourist excursions	\$1,000	County	County, GMRC
2019	Develop/Update long-term utility demand report	\$5,000	County	County, Dev. Auth.
2017	Scenic overlooks and trail system to Bridal Falls (US19/129S)	\$100,000	DNR	County
2017	Develop plan to support entrepreneurs and small businesses in include a SCORE chapter, small business training at NGT	\$20,000	DED, ARC	County
2017	Shotgun Trap Range	\$750,000	Grant/Local	County
2017	New Double Gym	\$2.5M	SPLOST	County
2017	Pickle Ball Court	\$100,000	SPLOST	County
2017	Saddle Club Improvements	TBD	SPLOST	County
2017	Appoint a NGT representative to serve on the UCDA Board	NA	NA	County, Dev. Authority
2017	Golf Course Irrigation	\$750,000	SPLOST	County
2017	Helton Creek Access Improvements	TBD	Grant/5	County
2018	Update inventory of historic sites and adopt preservation policies	TBD	DNR	City, GMRC
2017	Develop Historic Resources Report	\$5,000	DNR	Chamber, Historical Soc. GMRC
2018	Road Entrance @ Farmers Market	\$500,000	GDOT/Grants	County, GDOT
2018	New Potteet Creek Camp Sites	\$100,000	SPLOST	County
2018	Boat Docks/ Ramps @ Lake Nottley	TBD	DNR/ TVA	TVA
2019	New Park/ Athletic Fields	\$500,000	SPLOST	County
2020	New Fire Station #13	\$1,000,000	SPLOST	County
2019	Southside Convenience Center	\$250,000	SPLOST	County
2019	Restore Old Gym	\$500,000	Grants, SPLOST	County
2019	Social media outreach survey	\$3,000	TBD	City, County

Union County (Cont'd)

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2019	Develop improvement plan with North Ga. Network and Ga DED	\$5,000	DED, ARC	City, County, Chamber, Dev. Auth.
2020	Update traffic profile of corridor in Opportunity Zones			
2020	Transfer Station Improvements	\$250,000	SPLOST/Private	County
2020	Meeks Park Amphitheater	\$50,000	Grants, SPLOST	County
2021	Update Comprehensive plan	\$20,000	DCA	County, City, GMRC
2021	Update Airport Management Plan	\$5,000	FAA	Airport Authority
2021	Performance review of code enforcement procedures and policies	NA	NA	County
2021	Develop annual monitoring report of enforcement activity	NA	NA	County

APPENDICES

Population and Demographic Profile

Area Labor Profile for Union County

Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results

Population and Demographic Profile

2010 Census Profiles

	Union County		Blairsville	
	#	%	#	%
Total Population	21,356	1	652	1
<15 yrs	3,137	14.7 %	71	10.9 %
15-64 yrs	12,544	58.7 %	452	69.3 %
65+ yrs	5,675	26.6 %	129	19.8 %
Race & Ethnicity				
White	20,668	96.8 %	593	91 %
Black or African American	99	0.5 %	30	4.6 %
American Indian and Alaska Native	72	0.3 %	4	0.6 %
Asian	75	0.4 %	1	0.2 %
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4	0.1 %	0	0.0 %
Some Other Race	184	0.9 %	14	2.1 %
Two or More Races	254	1.2 %	10	1.5 %
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	519	2.4 %	30	4.6 %
Not Hispanic or Latino	20,837	97.6 %	622	95.4 %
Households				
In Households	20,977	98.2 %	479	73.5 %
In Group Quarters	379	1.8 %	173	26.5 %
Average Household size	2.3		1.92	
Average Family Size	2.75		2.68	
Housing Occupancy				
<i>Total housing units</i>	<i>14,052</i>		<i>301</i>	
Occupied housing units	9,116	64.9 %	249	82.7 %
Owner-occupied housing units	7,268	79.7 %	74	29.7 %
Renter-occupied housing units	1,848	20.3 %	175	70.3 %
Vacant housing units	4,936	35.1 %	52	17.3 %
Homeowner vacancy rate	6 %		2.6 %	
Rental vacancy rate	14 %		12.9 %	

Area Labor Profile for Union County

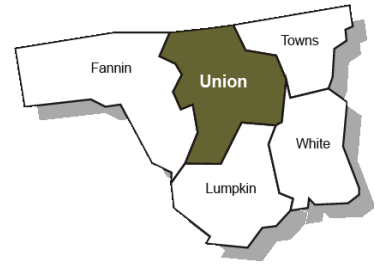


Georgia

Area Labor Profile

Union

County



Updated: Feb 2017

Labor Force Activity - 2015

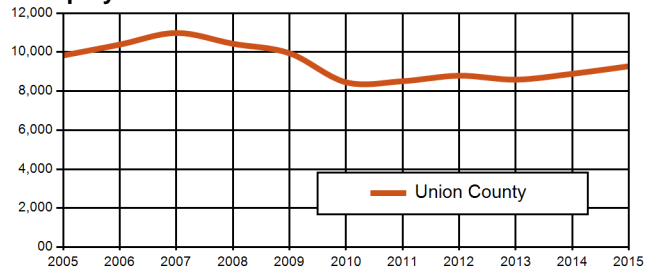
2015 ANNUAL AVERAGES

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Union	9,786	9,278	508	5.2%
Fannin	10,094	9,484	610	6.0%
Lumpkin	15,170	14,360	810	5.3%
Towns	3,900	3,596	304	7.8%
White	13,740	13,042	698	5.1%
Union Area	52,690	49,760	2,930	5.6%
Georgia	4,770,873	4,490,931	279,942	5.9%
United States	157,129,917	148,833,417	8,296,333	5.3%
Cherokee, NC	11,170	10,445	725	6.5%
Clay, NC	4,100	3,849	251	6.0%

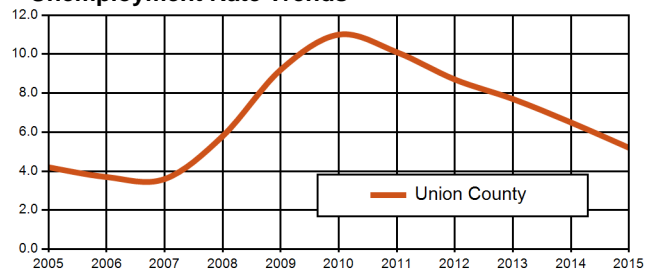
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

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

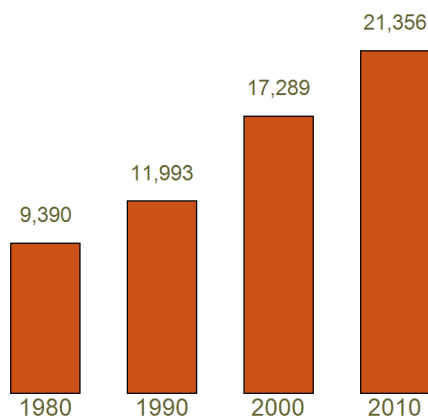
Employment Trends



Unemployment Rate Trends



Population Estimates



Population

	2010 Census	2015 Rank	2015 Estimate	% Change 2000-2015	2025 Projected*	% Change 2010-2025
Union	21,356	171	22,267	4.3	23,241	8.8
City of Blairsville	652					
Union Area	149,195		155,360	4.1	171,526	15.0
Georgia	9,687,653		10,214,860	5.4	11,538,707	19.1
United States	308,745,538		321,418,820	4.1	349,439,199	13.2
Cherokee, NC	26,250		27,178	3.5	32,693	24.5
Clay, NC	10,326		10,703	3.7	12,947	25.4

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

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

Workforce Statistics & Economic Research; E-mail: Workforce_Info@gdol.ga.gov Phone: (404) 232-3875

Industry Mix - 3rd Quarter of 2016

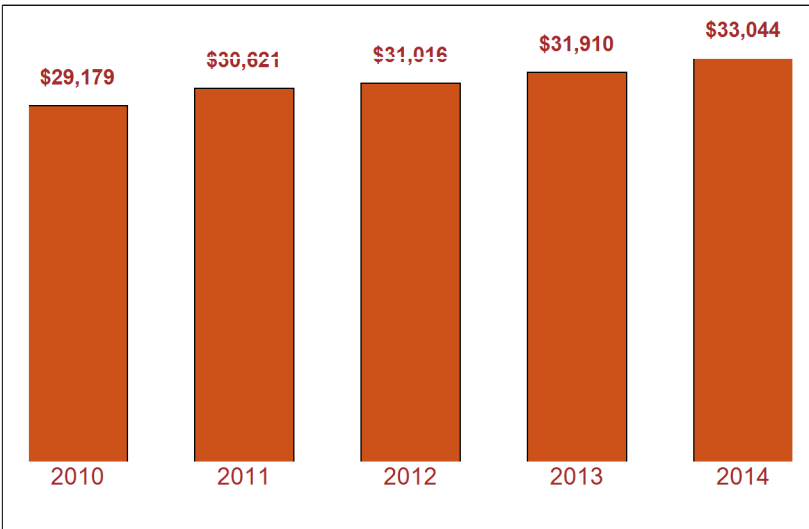
INDUSTRY	Union				Union Area			
	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE
Goods-Producing	133	729	10.3	728	528	4,656	14.5	759
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	7	130	1.8	799	29	488	1.5	658
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2	*	*	*	7	36	0.1	1,216
Construction	91	254	3.6	626	356	1,546	4.8	776
Manufacturing	33	333	4.7	756	136	2,587	8.0	761
Food	2	*	*	*	11	219	0.7	522
Beverage and Tobacco Product	1	*	*	*	11	131	0.4	525
Apparel	1	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Wood Product	3	*	*	*	13	366	1.1	540
Printing and Related Support Activities	4	11	0.2	389	12	21	0.1	372
Petroleum and Coal Products	1	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Chemical	2	*	*	*	6	38	0.1	833
Plastics and Rubber Products	1	*	*	*	5	147	0.5	842
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	2	*	*	*	8	35	0.1	625
Primary Metal	1	*	*	*	1	*	*	*
Fabricated Metal Product	5	118	1.7	851	13	307	1.0	979
Machinery	2	*	*	*	4	114	0.4	837
Computer and Electronic Product	1	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Transportation Equipment	2	*	*	*	10	*	*	*
Furniture and Related Product	4	10	0.1	382	13	32	0.1	482
Miscellaneous	1	*	*	*	15	87	0.3	518
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	0	0	0.0	0	3	185	0.6	597
Textile Product Mills	0	0	0.0	0	5	76	0.2	438
Service-Providing	443	4,552	64.2	615	2,240	20,897	64.9	552
Utilities	3	14	0.2	526	10	316	1.0	1,188
Wholesale Trade	20	149	2.1	859	102	726	2.3	850
Retail Trade	94	1,191	16.8	423	461	4,843	15.0	448
Transportation and Warehousing	24	308	4.3	853	86	907	2.8	705
Information	3	*	*	*	32	*	*	*
Finance and Insurance	32	146	2.1	1,233	133	612	1.9	1,029
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32	54	0.8	693	136	383	1.2	563
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	44	153	2.2	830	228	736	2.3	729
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2	*	*	*	5	*	*	*
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16	94	1.3	882	114	688	2.1	548
Educational Services	4	*	*	*	19	1,284	4.0	422
Health Care and Social Assistance	76	646	9.1	866	271	3,585	11.1	721
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	37	0.5	258	42	385	1.2	393
Accommodation and Food Services	52	640	9.0	279	312	5,120	15.9	321
Other Services (except Public Administration)	33	120	1.7	526	166	598	1.9	513
Unclassified - industry not assigned	22	24	0.3	553	123	155	0.5	585
Total - Private Sector	598	5,305	74.8	631	2,768	25,553	79.4	590
Total - Government	37	1,788	25.2	676	142	6,630	20.6	713
Federal Government	7	49	0.7	1,139	25	245	0.8	1,088
State Government	18	212	3.0	571	67	1,818	5.6	777
Local Government	12	1,527	21.5	676	50	4,567	14.2	668
ALL INDUSTRIES	635	7,092	100.0	642	2,910	32,184	100.0	615
ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia					302,499	4,275,556		970

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

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

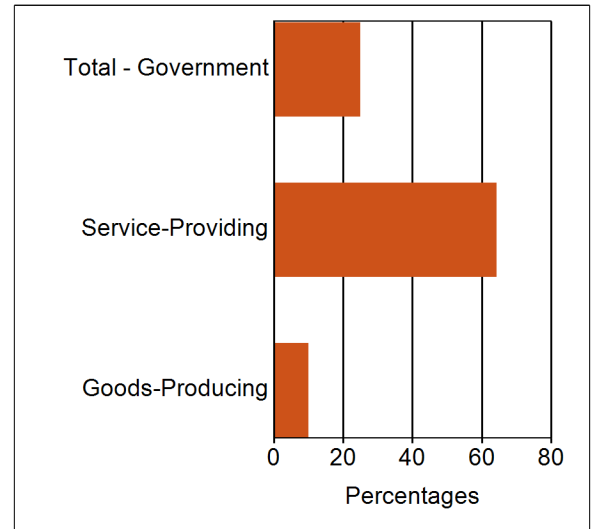
Union Per Capita Income

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Union Industry Mix 2016

Source: See Industry Mix data on Page 2.



Top Ten Largest Employers - 2016*

Union

Corrugated Replacements Inc
 Aviagen North America, Inc.
 Davenport Transportation, Inc.
 Ingles Markets, Inc.
 Mountain Education Center, Inc.
 Panel Built, Inc.
 Regency Hospice of Georgia, LLC
 The Home Depot
 United Community Bank
 Walmart

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

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Union Area

Black Bear Treatment Center, LLC
 Chatuge Regional Hospital, Inc.
 Freudenberg-NOK General Partnership
 Mountain Education Center, Inc.
 United Community Bank
 University of North Georgia
 Walmart
 Walmart
 Walmart
 Young Harris College

COUNTY

White
 Towns
 White
 Union
 Union
 Lumpkin
 White
 Union
 Lumpkin
 Towns

Commuting Patterns

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS OF

Union

COUNTY WHERE EMPLOYED	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Union, GA	5,312	65.0
Towns, GA	556	6.8
Fannin, GA	521	6.4
Cherokee, NC	365	4.5
Clay, NC	261	3.2
Hall, GA	194	2.4
Gilmer, GA	139	1.7
White, GA	121	1.5
Other	704	8.6
Total Residents:	8,173	100.0

PERSONS WORKING IN

Union

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Union, GA	5,312	74.3
Fannin, GA	513	7.2
Cherokee, NC	329	4.6
Towns, GA	321	4.5
Clay, NC	297	4.2
White, GA	105	1.5
Gilmer, GA	66	0.9
Lumpkin, GA	42	0.6
Other	168	2.3
Total Residents:	7,153	100.0

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

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

Education of the Labor Force

Union Area

	PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE				
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	6.3%	1.6%	1.6%	4.5%	5.2%	14.0%
Some High School	12.1%	17.8%	13.8%	10.0%	11.1%	11.4%
High School Grad/GED	34.4%	27.5%	37.8%	37.4%	35.2%	33.0%
Some College	23.2%	44.6%	26.1%	19.5%	20.1%	18.3%
College Grad 2 Yr	6.5%	4.8%	6.3%	8.4%	7.9%	4.2%
College Grad 4 Yr	10.5%	3.7%	10.0%	14.0%	11.8%	10.0%
Post Graduate Studies	7.0%	0.0%	4.5%	6.3%	8.9%	9.2%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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

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

High School Graduates - 2015

	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	PRIVATE SCHOOLS*	TOTAL
Fannin	180	--	180
Lumpkin	218	--	218
Towns	83	--	83
Union	180	--	180
White	565	--	565
Union Area	1,226	--	1,226



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

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

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

Colleges and Universities

Union Area

Union

Blairsville Campus (Satellite campus of North Georgia Technical College) www.northgatech.edu

Lumpkin

University of North Georgia www.northgeorgia.edu

White

Truett-McConnell College www.truett.edu

Towns

Young Harris College www.yhc.edu

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

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Technical College Graduates - 2015*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2013	2014	2015	2013-2014	2014-2015
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping°	127	124	126	-2.4	1.6

Technical College Graduates - 2015*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2013	2014	2015	2013-2014	2014-2015
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General°	88	66	61	-25.0	-7.6
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist°	16	21	20	31.3	-4.8
Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Other°	104	91	36	-12.5	-60.4
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician°	38	52	52	36.8	0.0
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician°	91	132	117	45.1	-11.4
Business Administration and Management, General°	35	40	63	14.3	57.5
Business Administration, Management and Operations, Other	7	12	17	71.4	41.7
CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician°	8	11	6	37.5	-45.5
Child Care and Support Services Management°	2	2	1	0.0	-50.0
Child Care Provider/Assistant°	88	99	82	12.5	-17.2
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician	16	14	10	-12.5	-28.6
Commercial Photography°	16	13	13	-18.8	0.0
Computer Installation and Repair Technology/Technician°	11	23	29	109.1	26.1
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General°	179	185	187	3.4	1.1
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies°	79	50	76	-36.7	52.0
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	26	22	17	-15.4	-22.7
Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation	2	5	6	150.0	20.0
Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, General°	19	18	24	-5.3	33.3
Data Processing and Data Processing Technology/Technician°	23	25	13	8.7	-48.0
Dental Assisting/Assistant	14	12	14	-14.3	16.7
Design and Visual Communications, General°	9	6	12	-33.3	100.0
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General°	15	8	6	-46.7	-25.0
Early Childhood Education and Teaching°	42	38	27	-9.5	-28.9
Electrical and Power Transmission Installation/Installer, General°	12	10	14	-16.7	40.0
Electrician°	21	33	39	57.1	18.2
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)°	98	119	116	21.4	-2.5
Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies°	4	1	5	-75.0	400.0
Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other	10	5	7	-50.0	40.0
Fire Prevention and Safety Technology/Technician°	1	2	4	100.0	100.0
Fire Science/Fire-fighting°	9	15	12	66.7	-20.0
Fire Services Administration	1	2	7	100.0	250.0
Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant°	18	20	13	11.1	-35.0
Golf Course Operation and Grounds Management°	7	8	4	14.3	-50.0
Graphic Design°	2	4	1	100.0	-75.0
Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General°	45	67	97	48.9	44.8
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/°	78	76	84	-2.6	10.5
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology°	90	116	73	28.9	-37.1

Technical College Graduates - 2015*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2013	2014	2015	2013-2014	2014-2015
Interior Design°	3	6	34	100.0	466.7
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	84	53	76	-36.9	43.4
Lineworker°	45	52	45	15.6	-13.5
Machine Shop Technology/Assistant°	60	76	60	26.7	-21.1
Marine Maintenance/Fitter and Ship Repair Technology/Technician	10	4	9	-60.0	125.0
Marketing/Marketing Management, General	5	1	6	-80.0	500.0
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, Other	7	1	6	-85.7	500.0
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder°	13	11	11	-15.4	0.0
Medical Office Assistant/Specialist°	63	39	33	-38.1	-15.4
Medical Office Management/Administration	8	5	15	-37.5	200.0
Medical/Clinical Assistant	143	135	113	-5.6	-16.3
Network and System Administration/Administrator°	44	42	52	-4.5	23.8
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide°	144	147	135	2.1	-8.2
Pharmacy Technician/Assistant°	21	13	11	-38.1	-15.4
Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist°	15	15	13	0.0	-13.3
Professional, Technical, Business, and Scientific Writing°	4	4	8	0.0	100.0
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	17	17	13	0.0	-23.5
Retailing and Retail Operations°	3	1	4	-66.7	300.0
Surgical Technology/Technologist	13	14	8	7.7	-42.9
Tool and Die Technology/Technician°	8	5	7	-37.5	40.0
Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design°	7	17	5	142.9	-70.6
Welding Technology/Welder°	206	210	218	1.9	3.8

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

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

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

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

Georgia Department of Labor Location(s)

Career Center(s)

1048 Appalachian Hwy
Blue Ridge GA 30513

Phone: (706) 632 - 2033 Fax: (706) 632 - 7316

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

Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results

The following represents the summary results of survey's provided throughout January and February of 2017. Combined paper and online (SurveyMonkey) responses totaled more than 250 submissions.

I am a:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Resident	81.6%	200
Both	13.1%	32
Business Owner	6.5%	16
Neither	1.6%	4
Other (please specify)	7.3%	18

How much growth and development should Blairsville pursue?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Some	48.1%	117
A little	26.3%	64
A lot	15.6%	38
None	5.8%	14
Other (please specify)	6.2%	15

How much growth and development should unincorporated Union County pursue?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Some	45.7%	111
A little	27.2%	66
A lot	14.4%	35
None	10.7%	26
Other (please specify)	4.1%	10

Your community's most important asset that should be preserved in the future is:

Natural Beauty/ Rural Nature (94)

- Beauty and quiet.
- Agricultural land and natural beauty of trees and mountains. Let Blue Ridge be for shopping. Let Blairsville be for hiking and mountains and nature.
- History and ruralness
- Natural resources, schools, and respect for thy neighbors.
- Nature
- The natural mountain environment.
- Unspoiled beautiful natural resources, rural atmosphere, and friendly people.
- The National Forrest.
- "Rural mountain environment.
- Protect and preserve trees and forested land."
- natural beauty - trees and wildlife, rural character
- Parks and forestry land
- Mountain views and a beautiful, commercial free lake.
- Our mountains
- Natural beauty and recreation
- Agriculture
- The mountains, parks and the hometown feel.
- The natural features such as the Lake, hiking trails, fishing, hunting, mountains/woods.
- Green space
- Parks, Hiking Trails, Lakes and rivers.
- The mountains and streams. If we shave the top off of the mountains to build it takes from the beauty.
- Beauty of nature
- Wildlife. Simplicity. Both should stay exactly the same and is why people flock here. No big stores (except for Walmart) and peace without pawn stores on every corner and MARTA transport every 500 feet
- Also... Lake Nottely and the surrounding natural mountains, trails, streams.
- The beautiful mountains and abundant streams to be protected from the impact from unplanned construction sites.
- Trees rivers wildlife
- Lake Nottely
- The rural beauty. Many people come to this area for the connection with nature. It is important to maintain the waters and forests of the area. Meeks Park has been a great success in preserving this and allowing people access. We also have a wonderful health care community here, which is vital to the area being a retirement mecca. Our road department is fantastic! We couldn't ask for better services from them.
- Environment!!!!
- Natural resources
- THE MOUNTAINS, parks, roads
- Mountains
- Water and forest
- "Nature attractions
, Historical attractions"
- Beauty of our surroundings and a small town atmosphere.
- Its' undeveloped and rural quality

- History and natural resources.
- Rural, mountain nature
- The natural beauty of the area, remove billboards, limit signage size
- Nature
- Chattahoochee National Forest
- Land
- Lakes, forests, parks
- Nottely Lake
- It's natural beauty
- Scenic beauty.
- It's wildlife and beauty.
- Nature and green space.
- The parks.
- forest land
- Lake Nottely, parks and forest areas
- Nature!!!
- Mountain range, free from houses. Housing on the mountains is so UGLY, and it is almost too late.
- Forest
- National parks and trail systems.
- Undeveloped land & mountains.
- Scenic beauty and recreational activities to promote tourism and retirees.
- Mountains, lakes, creeks
- National Forest
- Recreation space and good clean water for fishing, boating and swimming.
- Lake Nottely and the nature surrounding it. Keep the 70% lakefront forest land.
- Natural resources
- less home building on mountains. It takes away the wonderful views that we have. I love seeing that downtown is being cleaned up.
- Environment
- parks
- The peaceful tranquility of the county.
- The natural beauty - mountains, rivers, lakes, peace and quiet. Small town atmosphere. Low-crime.
- natural beauty
- The natural environment
- Natural mountains, undeveloped
- Natural Beauty and peacefulness you feel when you are here
- Natural Resources
- Rural, natural environment
- Trees
- Union County's Rural Character
- Forests, lakes, streams, etc
- Public land
- Green space
- The beauty. Meeks Park is very important. New tennis courts with lights would be great. The exercise equipment is greatly appreciated.
- The biggest asset of Union County is the rural feel and beauty that we have. Very rare to find.
- Mountain scenery, Lake Nottely
- Natural habitat for tourist and residents with the Nottely Lake, trails and parks

- natural resources & community feel
- Our natural beauty
- It's scenic natural beauty
- Natural resources & the ability to enjoy them
- The focus on our parks and rec
- Natural beauty
- Parks and public areas.
- It's mountains and waterways
- Wilderness, beauty, ruralness
- Scenic beauty.
- Keeping the area clean and natural
- Natural Beauty and Environment and friendliness
- Our Natural beauty and Environment. People visit here because of our scenic beauty, too much development will take away our biggest asset.

Small Town Charm/Friendly People (69)

- Small town atmosphere.
- Small town/county environment.
- Small town atmosphere
- What drew me to this town was it's small town quaintness.
- Small town feel
- Small town, safe family atmosphere
- Small town feel. Don't turn into Blue Ridge. Not overly commercialized.
- The atmosphere. No matter how large the town gets, we should still give visitors and residents the feeling of "home."
- "Small town flavor
- Small town charm
- Small town filled with locals not tourist. More people means more Crime,Trash,Traffic,Once it gets full of to many people you can never go back. The traffic is ridiculous now.
- small town feel
- It should feel like a small hometown
- Small town charm and natural beauty
- The friendly small town feel and the pristine land and majestic mountain scenery.,
- The history and the small town feel. Blue Ridge has become to commercialized. Don't become Blue Ridge
- Hometown feeling
- Hometown feeling
- Parks, open spaces and small town feel!
- Stay a small town
- Small town.
- Forests, small town feel
- Small town atmosphere.
- small town and rural aspects
- Small town feel
- It's hard to pick any one thing that makes "small town charm" but we don't want to loose that in the name of progress.
- Small town friendliness
- Our small town atmosphere is the biggest asset!

- the home town feel
- Keep growth to a minimum. We moved to Blairsville because of the small town atmosphere and to get away from the areas of big growth and the traffic, crime, etc that comes with it. I would HATE to see Blairsville become just another "metro Atlanta" like town!
- Small town charm. We do not need Blairsville to turn into Blue ridge.
- Its small town atmosphere and natural beauty. The lack of over commercialization the town and county.
- The safe and congenial peaceful lifestyle many folks enjoy here.
- The small town feel.
- Hometown feel
- The close-knit hometown feel we have always had, but is slowly fading as more and new residents find homes in Blairsville. Most of the influx are visitors who find vacation homes here, but are not full time participants in our community. We need to preserve our community closeness and atmosphere. Our full time residents represent our community and we need to preserve the natural, normal feel of "hometown" life. We need to preserve "our" way of life without letting new influences dictate how our community should evolve. Our community should evolve naturally without too much pressure from new influences. Our new visitors and residents move here because of how we live and our standard of "hometown" makes them feel comfortable and welcomed.
- Hometown closeness.
- Small hometown farming community
- The small town, small population feel.
- The look of the town (inside city limits) and small town charm.
- Small town atmosphere, natural beauty
- Mountain trails and scenery/greenery along with traditions and "small town" ways of doing things (e.g., Halloween on the square, Friday night concerts at the courthouse)
- Small community feeling; the government offices open door policy.
- the feel of a hometown community
- Hometown appeal
- SMALL mountain town with beautiful views, wonderful park and nature areas, and a laid-back, hometown feel.
- Our way of life.
- The culture
- Our small town feel
- Hometown feel and friendly people who truly care for the people who aren't afraid to show their love for God.
- Small town atmosphere.
- Small town atmosphere and local attraction
- Our small town atmosphere. Cultural activates
- Maintain small town atmosphere
- The "small town" atmosphere
- The natural beauty and small-town charm
- Our nature beauty and friendly people
- Friendly and safe town for the residents
- Local people.
- It's permanent residents,(which likely requires a few more small businesses to provide good jobs).
- We are a community of "individuals" who live here for the peace and serenity, away from the madness of larger towns.
- Quality of LIfe
- To continue to be known friendly helpful people. Our small town atmosphere.

- The slow pace. The quiet life. A place to get away to.
- The small town feeling. One of the reasons we love it here.
- Friendly and engaging residents. A small town feel in a frowning world. We can grow without becoming heartless.
- We should honor our history and our small town feel.
- The small country town feel. We lived in the city and moved back here because we hated the "cold" and "hectic" feel of the city. We enjoy the peace of the mountain towns.
- Low key life style

Local Amenities (25)

- Farmer's Market
- Meek's Park
- Meeks Park, Butternut golf course, the horse arena are all wonderful venues for our county and should be preserved.
- Meeks Park
- Meeks Park, Lake Notely, Court House.
- Meeks Park
- Hospital and Meeks park
- Meeks Park
- Butternut creek golf course
- Meeks Park, without a doubt or a moment of hesitation. It is simply amazing.
- Lake Nottely and Meeks Park
- Union General Hospital System (including its wellness center) and Nursing Home, public schools (including its technical college and lifelong learning programs), public parks and recreation facilities, and downtown restaurants like and wine store. We drive from Atlanta for your Italian restaurant and wine store. Also your public library system, public safety and fire services/EMS must be supported, adequately funded, and well resourced.
- Meeks Park
- Meeks Park
- Meeks park
- Schools
- Schools
- Park
- Meeks park
- Meeks Park
- Meeks Park
- Meeks park
- Court House, square area, Meeks park
- The natural beauty of the area - the National Forest, our beautiful Meeks Park, Vogel State Park and the surrounding areas.
- Schools

Downtown/ Courthouse/History (23)

- Older architecture and nature.
- Old court house
- Heritage
- History of how our community came to be. Really enjoy the Old Courthouse
- Historic City Hall and Courthouse and museum.

- All historical homes and buildings.
- The entire city of Blairsville, mainly the town square.
- Our parks and historical sites and heritage.
- "Heritage
- The town square
- Our schools and downtown area are very important. So are preserving our mountains from being over developed.
- Historical homesteads and Meeks park.
- It's history.
- Downtown and historic buildings and our schools and Meeks park
- It's history.
- Old courthouse
- architectural history and Appalachian culture
- Tourism. Restore historical stores, houses, etc. Farms and farmland
- Restoration of older buildings and further develop tourism. Preserving farms and farmland
- Downtown Blairsville
- History of the city. It's beauty. Grow to accommodate new business
- Home town feel and look especially the main part of town
- The courthouse and look of the square. Love the older buildings, but having chic shops in them gives a cool modern rustic vibe.

Safety (8)

- Safety
- Safety and lack of violent crime
- Peace and quiet
- The peaceful country lifestyle.
- Safe environment to live in
- Safety and Security
- The wholesome family environment!
- SAFETY of all residences.

Other

- Mr. Paris already doing great job here.
- To quit putting our county in debt.
- The view of developed land
- Tourism. Historical aspect
- Existing character!
- Clean water!
- Anything that will draw in the tourist trade, like historical sites. Natural resources, parks and the Appalachian trail.
- education
- Low density residential development. Preserve areas of large lot size, ensure transportation infrastructure develops in lock step with residential (impact fees?)
- "conservatism
- We value or remoteness and our beautiful landscape and small population and light traffic. There is already evidence that developers are willing to destroy our skyline to provide a few newcomers to ave a private view.
- The willingness to continue to improve and increase our infrastructure and community projects

- People, history, and natural beauty
- Sole commissioner
- The independently owned, small business, retail shops on the Blairsville square.
- "Jobs, low property taxes, better exemptions for our senior citizens.
- We could probably use a community center for indoor activity such as basketball, exercise classes for Union County residents only. All others could pay a fee to use the facility."

Your community's biggest liability that should be changed in the future is:**Growth Management (30)**

- The attitude of grow for growth's sake. And the lost of the appreciation for a clean and visual appearance of the areas surrounding the main arteries.
- The view of developed land
- Neighborhoods that chop up the top of the mountains.
- recent large scale sub division development and government emphasis on industrial development
- Building on top of the mountains. We need some standards set to preserve our mountain views and ridge lines. I know as we grow that housing needs to be built, but the very thing that attracts tourist is being demolished. An example of this is coming into town from Blue Ridge. There is a place where the mountainside has been cleared and houses now line the top. I feel that building should "blend" into the areas view.
- We need zoning. Not the large city version where homeowners are told what they can have in their yard but the type that establishes Rural, Agricultural, light industrial and (God help us) multi-family. I know the Sole Commissioner struggles with this often but if the long established residents are assured that no overly restrictive demands will be placed on them and their individual rights won't be violated I think we can accomplish this. I have seen first hand here in Union County that a greedy person can come into an established community and open a business that will destroy their peace, safety and tranquility. This type of activity will be common place with the desires of the Camber and Growth Committees. Common sense and County Commissioners that will fight to keep Union County strong but independent from greedy developers is a must. Yes, I believe that it may be time for a three member Commission, and yes, that can be a dangerous thing to accomplish.
- stop the building on mountains they are beautiful left alone
- No clearing on mountain ridges. Fewer obnoxious bicyclist and motorcycles.
- Too many people moving here
- Too much growth and commercialization.
- Too much commercialism
- Overdevelopment
- Indiscriminate utility construction. Lack of zoning laws and commission.
- Too much growth
- Over built and over crowded
- Selling off of all the land
- Empty buildings, overbuilding.
- There are too many new housing developments.
- Our community's biggest liability is the spread of urban life into our small town living space. Most residents love and appreciate our hometown, small town feel and urban life highly contradicts the way of living most seek when they find Blairsville. Let's not get "too big for our britches." There is nothing wrong with maintaining a small town, homey atmosphere. People are rushing here just for that feeling of closeness and sincerity that our community offers.
- Not building so many houses on mountain tops.
- "Too much emphasis on new residents, move-ins, and tourism. Makes life miserable for full-time residents. I moved here 13 years ago and am very unhappy with the push for move-ins. Most local Blairsville people and retirees don't like it either. We didn't move from the city to see our little town become a city and ugly like Blue Ridge and Ellijay.
- Stop chain restaurants and the need to have overdeveloped plans that take away from downtown
- Unregulated growth, especially of residential areas, recreational/camping areas.
- Uncontrolled growth. Keep out payday lenders,
- Local individual's understanding of the benefits of "controlled and focused growth."

- I think that there should be a ceiling on the development of new housing.
- Commercialization
- Growth that is too rapid that takes away Blairsville and Union County being a small town and rural.
- Too much construction and old buildings and homes deteriorating
- Endless participation in SPLOST

Road Conditions/Traffic (27)

- The traffic is booming.
- Speeding traffic on main roads.
- High volume traffic on 129N with only one traffic light.
- "The 4 lane is headed to look like elijay. That's sad.
- We need to keep our small town feel. We need planned growth that meet a signage plan and not a million fast food chains."
- Highway 19/129 needs widening.
- Lack of traffic signals on Hwy 129 north(Pat Colwell)///Hwy 76 in front of Wal-mart...
- Add a stop light at the intersection of 515 and 325
- Walmart road frontage, too many accidents, maybe an additional light, save our community and
- The roads, our roads are horrible. The passing zones are up hills or in areas that passing is difficult. There are only two passing lanes on the northern half of 129. I've seen 30 cars stuck behind someone doing 30 in in a 55 because passing is difficult. There are a lot of accidents in those areas also because people don't pay attention to the signs to merge.
- Road expansion for 19/2129
- Red light at wal mart needs a turn signal
- Safer roadways and intersections.
- traffic along Hwy 19/129
- Need for more guard rails north of town on 129 N
- Traffic and roads
- Some four way intersections
- More traffic lights needed at major intersections
- Roads
- infrastructures
- Roads should be improved.
- The new ramp in town NEEDS to be a four way stop
- Walmarks only exit should be at the traffic light.
- pave county maintained roads to reduce annual costs, reduced hazardous driving conditions
- That terrible "off ramp" at food land
- Roads
- Intersection at Walmart, chick fil a intersection
- The new by-pass across from food land. Disaster worrying to happen right there.

Public Facilities and Services (16)

- The fire department is in bad shape and the county really needs to focus by putting funds into the department, by growing the paid staff with more stations open with 24 hour man power in them.
- lack of community transportation for the elderly and disabled
- Sidewalks, the lack of sidewalks presents an issue for travelers, walker's, and kids or families amongst the city limits. Pedestrian accessibility!
- Keep key law enforcement in the county, so we don't lose personal to other agencies. Bringing pay scale in line with the state, also fire personal.

- Additional waste water treatment facilities through out the county.
- We need a 4 court basketball gym with an elevated walking track.
- EMS services in Suches. it takes way to long to get that kind of help to this rural area. These people deserve the same care as anyone else does.
- Better fire dept. coverage, we are class 10.
- Lack of sidewalks
- More public safety personnel
- The county dump if you think people will pay \$10 to throw away a old television your wrong they will just take them up in the mountains and dump them on the side of the road along with other things that they are not going to pay \$10 to dump what was you thinking letting them raise the price that high
- The Bond Debt is Our Biggest Liability and the Debt on the Golf Course Community Center, This should have been paid off by now.
- Consolidate water and sewer department's I.e. City of Blairsville,Notla Water and Coosa Water
- County debt.
- Lack of countywide water and sewer authority
- Separate city - county Government. Too many duplicated services.

Need for Employment Options (16)

- The limited availability of NON-service and NON-government jobs for high school grads and adults. We do not need more restaurants in downtown Blairsville but we sure would benefit from more manufacturing and distribution employers. It'd benefit us all if our native population could earn enough to afford a meal out -- not just the immigrant retirees!
- lack of good paying jobs
- We need more jobs. Better jobs. Families want to raise their families here, but finding decent work nearby is impossible.
- Diversity and higher paying jobs
- More job opportunities
- Lack of jobs for young people.
- Job growth
- Lack of good job careers
- Not having enough jobs.
- Lack of opportunities for high paying jobs
- Lack of well paying local jobs.
- Small manufacturing companies that have minimal impact on the environment but create good paying jobs for the citizens of Union County.
- Lack of quality jobs.
- We are two dependent on our large employers (Hospital, School System, UCB, ...Etc. Need other avenues of employment for our citizens
- Economic Development outside of tourist and service industries
- Full time employment, major retailers

Dilapidated Properties (13)

- Clean up trashy looking areas – yards adjacent to road frontage,
- Trashy looking locations. cleanup abandoned junk cars and debris in yards
- "Visual appearance of properties aling major roadways.
- Owners should be required to clean up derelict and abandon structures."
- Run down or abandoned buildings and homes.
- Buildings that are falling down on property and create an eyesore.

- Unkept properties. The trash and junked cars in yards of houses is unbelievable! Where are the ordinances in this beautiful county?
- Roadside trash
- Store fronts that are run down.
- Junk properties. Why is our local government so against having people maintain their property. Ie. Rachael Dockery on Pat Colwell Rd., the Carney property on Lake Cove Lodge rd....rat holes....no excuse for trash like this and it's all over the county. Shameful.
- Unsightly trash around residences.
- Junk on personal property
- Dilapidated houses surrounded by trash and vehicles that don't run or barns that have fallen down but I've never been removed. We need some codes and code enforcement on maintaining property .
- Abandoned homes/mobile homes/vehicles, etc.

Government/Leadership (11)

- Sole County Commission form of government. Should be changed to a multi-seat commission.
- "politicians that don't listen to their constituents
- The opinion of one person, sole commissioner, need to be enlarged to include more diversity.
- Good old boy network
- Decision making in areas where the decision makers do not have expertise. The lack of a community indoor recreation center. Blue Ridge and Towns both offer than amenity. We are trying to attract more professional jobs but lack the amenities that professionals seek outside of work. We continue to expand our fast-food restaurants; neither a draw for professionals nor tourists.
- The cliques in government
- Bubba Gump mentality that the old guard that owns most everything seems to have.
- Resistance to change - though I don't think this is as big of an issue as it is in some other towns.
- Influence from individuals or groups that are self-serving.
- Making the wrong choices. Think plans thru before implementing them. I see so many things start the process of development and watch what could have been a great plan turn to crap because of poor choices.
- Control from a select few

Telecommunications (6)

- Need better fiber optics throughout. Helps employ people from home.
- complete fiber
- Our inadequate connectivity to the outside. IE – lack of true high speed internet that reduces business and industrial growth.
- Internet service, crippling both business and citizens quality of life
- Lack of high speed internet
- Poor residential internet access

Drugs/Crime (4)

- Drugs!
- Control drugs
- Drugs
- Drug problem

Other Comments

- Narrowmindedness and tunnel vision. Not sure how you fix that.
- As I have noticed as a truck driver it would be nice to see a small manageable truck stop. This will help with the industrial growth and help local businesses thrive. As the closest truck stop is better than 100 miles away it would allow for drivers to be less fatigued and better set to load or off load and the revenue from the local trucks and companies.
- Not sure
- There currently is little or no artistic community. Would love to see more music and art
- Affordable housing needs to be improved for lower income families. Property values have spiked up again, which is good, but makes housing options for lower income families even fewer. Most lower income families end up living in older rundown trailers that are not really fit to live in for high rent relative to the type of home landlords are providing. The community also lacks enough decent jobs. Pursuing manufacturing seems to be inappropriate as manufacturing jobs are not likely to want to locate to our area. Maintaining the few that we have now is important though. Other commercial businesses need to be focused on. It is also critical to attract more businesses to the downtown area to keep the area vital.
- "retirees
- -a person who has retired from employment."
- Just look at all the signage. We look like a sign junkyard!
- Trailer parks
- Downtown!!
- Tight alcohol restrictions
- No big industrial chicken or pig farms. No industry of any kind allowed on the lake.
- "Becoming a seasonal, tourist-based shell of a true community
- (like Blue Ridge is headed towards)"
- The historic downtown area needs to attract active businesses and more customers and tourists to increase tax revenue. Why do we have a defunct bank on the old courthouse square? This part of town is very nice and could be a vibrant area with more stores and restaurants.
- Downtown area needs to be more vibrant - get rid of bank on corner and other stores that are not open.
- Education
- NO ZONING!!!
- Lack of locally owned restaurants....NOT chain restaurants!!!
- Infrastructure
- Making Union County a Tourist Trap. Leave it alone. Once the growth and overcrowding is here it will never be the same. Keep mom and pop stores. Once the commercial business moves in they will be gone forever.
- Not sure it's a liability, but it would certainly help growth if restaurants would serve alcohol in downtown Blairsville.
- Create a place through the mountains of Blairsville for the bikes and motorcycles to ride and be safe, and the traffic to move efficiently through the mountains. This creates too many fatal accidents.
- Do we have a liability? Have lived here for 16 years and am not sure I see one, except for the growth in traffic.
- Not accepting people from other places
- "Loud motorcycles and bicycles hogging the road.
- Vacation rental homes in residential neighborhood"
- Lack of visible or known diverse ethnic dining opportunities. Lack of a thriving downtown shopping and dining scene. A few little rundown stores selling useless and overpriced antiques and trinkets is not useful or appealing. Rundown hotel off community square is an eyesore. Looks like a hotbed for

potential prostitution and drug activity. It's also not anti-American or anti-Christian NOT to fly American flags atop or near a Christian Cross. Most folks prefer NOT to know a business owner's political or religious preferences. In fact, most people prefer not to know or discuss someone's political or religious preferences. We should discuss and share religion in our churches and discuss and share government at City Hall. Backwards religious and political ideology that does not embrace everyone will impede meaningful progress in your city and in your county.

- Meeks Park and the lakes
- water levels should be maintained longer which would extend lake season and increase tax revenues
- Lower taxes.
- Lake level
- Hard for me to say since we are new residents here (not quite a year). So far we love it here.
- The town itself should have more trees and flowers. The animal control for the county should be revamped and broadened. I find the animal situation deplorable.
- No real downtown. No easy way to get to/from Blairsville to greater Atlanta area and airport.
- Need more walking space near town. Not just at the park, but in town.
- Growth for the sake of growth
- Cost of owning a house in Union County is watching too high for locals
- Two school board members.
- Lack of diversity
- What I hear from my customers and I feel myself - more restaurants - some more businesses for shopping; we're limited when we need a gift, etc. too far from a store other than Walmart
- poverty
- Lack of entertainment for anyone under 65.
- Business owners lack of collaboration of efforts across different industries
- Lack of being able to draw in good physicians
- I don't like the strip mall feel going on in a few places, like where dominoes is.
- "The old recreation gym
- The intersection (new) across from foodland. It's dangerous !
- The downtown area needs a lot of work and updating !! "
- Lack of low income housing.
- Affordable housing
- Stop building and developing the schools, which the tax payers will be stuck with maintaining in the future. This town is mainly a retirement town and there is no explosion of children here. Lamar Paris and his vision of grandiose projects that would rival larger cities. Stop the school expansion, this is a retirement town
- School Tax exeption for seniors and lower land for everyone. School tax exeption would bring in more seniors to live in Union County and bring growth.
- No more RV parks. No bicycle ralleys or races. Noise level of mororcycles
- Aggressive economic development
- Firing guns on your property should not be allowed. We need a choosing range. There are homes close together outside the city limits where gun owners are permitted to shoot.
- Golf carts should be ticketed when on the main road. Bicyclists should be ticketed if they are not riding single-file on the side of the road. Motorcycles should be required to travel at the same speed as everyone else. Not racing at 100 m.p.h.
- lack of housing for low to moderate income families. More apartments, condos, townhomes, etc....especially in the city center.

Our top two economic development should be (pick 2):		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Attract/sustain business to downtown areas	56.8%	134
Attract/sustain agricultural industries	43.6%	103
Attract/sustain business with high paying jobs	35.2%	83
Attract/sustain manufacturing and industry	28.0%	66
Attract/sustain commercial businesses	27.1%	64
Other (please specify)		33

- Include full time fire fighters to assist sustaining what good we have.
- We do not need any more growth at this time. County can barely handle what it has now.
- A multiuse Recreation Center// PICKLEBALL courts for tournaments.
- Parks and natural attractions...hiking, boating.
- Entice Union County (Blairsville) to include free events at the Suches fire dept. and community ctr.
- Attract/sustain small commercial business
- Airport and or train to and from Atlanta
- Do not attempt to attract ANY development
- This survey is rigged. This is a rural area.
- Keep the area small and rural!!!
- Recreational businesses
- The shops downtown are cute, but those kinds of businesses don't pay very well, and are... dependent on tourists. The younger people... need to have work that they can support their families with.
- All of the above
- Tourism is a major financial gain.....
- Old style building and construction of mom and pop stores.
- Routes for alternative transportation, sidewalks downtown and through the city limits linking the square to Meeks park.
- I picked three because agriculture is very important to this county.
- A water park
- I am aware that agricultural land is limited and that close to 80% of total land in county is gvmt. land?
- Preserve our history
- Attract High Tech Companies
- Entertainment business
- Sustain what we have!
- None of the above
- Attract the outdoor adventure enthusiasts.
- Sustain downtown businesses.
- To clarify, attract and sustain small businesses.
- But not overwhelming growth downtown.
- All of the above. Why can't we attract all these things? We can grow without becoming over grown!
- Year-round avenue for local artists to sell goods, w/ main focus on attract/ sustain light manufacturing
- Attract, improve and sustain tourism, 2nd home ownership, resort-like vacationers
- Huge need for jobs for young professionals
- Develop tourist attractions for families
- Encourage cottage industries and technical skills with our youth.
- Steer youth into technical skills that are needed in the community
- Attract tourism

Our top two most important housing needs are (pick 2):		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fewer dilapidated houses	54.8%	132
More affordable housing	44.8%	108
More senior housing	30.7%	74
More apartments	18.3%	44
More high-end housing	12.4%	30
None	11.2%	27
Other (please specify)		36

- Housing for the Elderly more than assisted living housing.
- Appropriate zoning, Codes & enforce. Cover animals, too.
- Do not overbuild!!!
- Affordable rental properties.
- This area needs to be cleaned up. I've seen homes that look like something out of a horror film next to a well-managed housing area.
- a program to level the dilapidated houses
- The demand will dictate what is necessary, not to be decided by the Chamber or Politicians.
- Apartments north of town so that the casino employees are able to have a short commute
- More acreage per home.
- There is plenty of high-end housing, but not enough to affordable housing that isn't older run down trailers for the lower income families.
- Most apartments are for low income, we need just normal apartments for people moving here
- More short / long term rentals
- 55 and over golf course community. Patio style homes with screen porches and some views. Two bedroom, two bath, 1200 to 1600 Square feet, open plan. Similar to The Villages in Florida but not as huge.
- Fewer trailer parks
- Blairsville is a college town, closer to young Harris. Although young Harris has some apartments, as a college student myself just for housing / boarding at a college can determine if some even are able to attend college. Many work part time to help pay but over time many will drop out because they can no longer afford it due to excessive fees a college institution imposes. As well as many families starting out that are from the Blairsville area have a hard time finding housing. Newlyweds etc there's not enough in Blairsville by a LARGE margin. There are a couple of apartment complexes, filled with waiting lists to get in, and trailers that are notorious for a bad reputation. Blairsville needs more affordable housing and apartment complexes that are geared towards ANY income level, and not just a specific fixed rate.
- Fewer trailer/RV parks
- 55+ housing
- Code enforcement of dumping items in yards
- Not turn into Blue Ridge but housing that is affordable and green
- NO APARTMENTS!!!!
- Less low income housing, as it attracts a bad element
- More cluster/townhomes
- No more apartments they're ugly
- Restrict building on mountains side and land clearing for developments.
- Try to save the older, historic houses in the area.

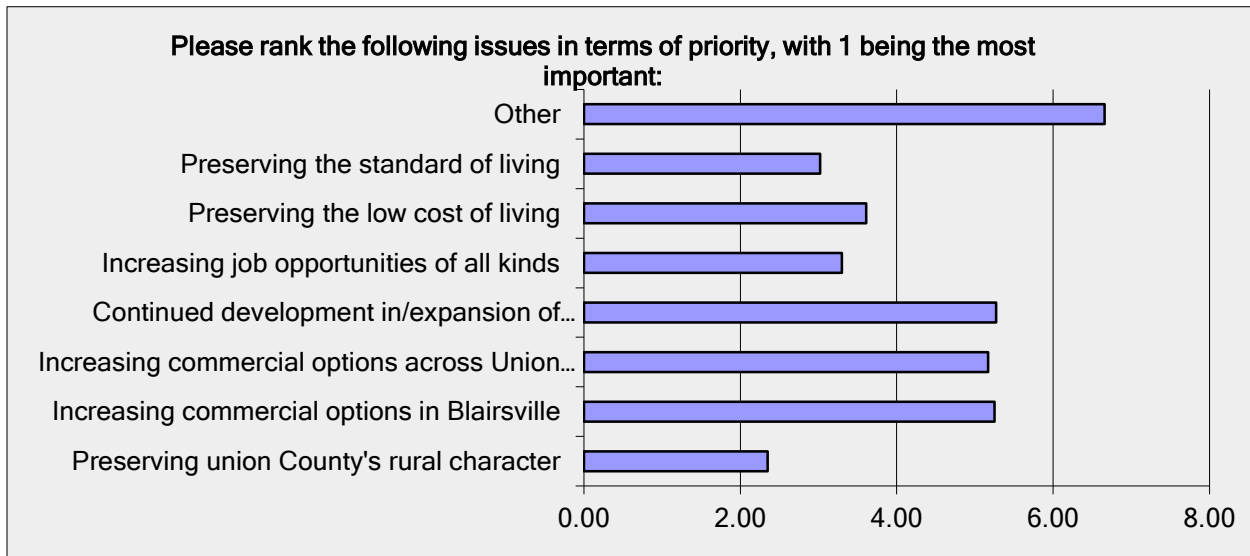
- More rentals... very hard to find here
- More mixed use properties that incorporate retail and housing on various levels;
- Leave the old home alone they may look dilapidated to you but it's a home to someone
- Condo's for Middle Class
- Restore older homes and make them affordable for low income families as well as building more affordable housing.
- Environmentally friendly housing areas (tiny home subdivision, eco communities, shared common areas & gardens, more COMMUNITY style living with neighborly interaction)
- It'd be nice to give some families an affordable way to get out of those trailer parks in Union County.
- Middle of the road housing not low end that attracts low end clients
- There are NO affordable housing options if you are a minimum wage earner, which is the bulk of jobs here
- Less rental property and fewer RV parks
- RV parks should be stopped at this point. There are enough. Vacation rentals should not be allowed in residential areas.
- Add recreational facilities and lodges on lake
- Clean up of abandon lots and/or privacy fence
- Clean up anything abandoned
- Clean up of abandoned lots

Our top two most important issues regarding cultural resources are (pick 2):		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Preserving existing historic structures	65.8%	160
Design guidelines for new development	47.3%	115
Improving sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility around City	32.1%	78
Management of/Access to Lake Nottely	26.7%	65
Need for more park space	13.2%	32
None	2.9%	7
Other (please specify the most important asset that should be preserved)	10.7%	26

- Water conservation.
- The fire department
- Need a multi-purpose sports facility with pickleball courts.
- See numbers 3, 5, and 6
- Preserving mountain areas and lines of sight by limiting residential development on mountainsides and peaks.
- Access to and from Atlanta
- Preserve our rural heritage
- This is a rigged survey.
- Hiking/biking trails
- See previous note about preserving our mountain views and ridge lines!
- Design decided by the residents.
- Union County Middle & High School need a "joint-venture" competitive swimming pool to host meets, with hotels and restaurants available for participants
- Park space downtown
- Forest and trees not cutting every tree to build preservation
- Quit paving every road. you're taking the country out of the country
- Parking in downtown
- Updating dangerous intersections with red lights or proper signs and lights.
- Need more antique, art type stores to bring more tourists similar to Blue Ridge Downtown
- Meeks Park...Please do not over develop it.
- All of these are vital
- Undeveloped land
- We do not need more rules and regulations we have plenty now.
- More support for the various festivals & parades
- Preserve the fort down town its in disrepair, turn it in to a museum
- Need a space for young adults 21 and up to spend time in the winter months besides bars
- Bike & walking paths that connect Meeks to downtown, and downtown to the farmer's market.
- Wider sidewalks, city parks, etc....make it a more walkable/bikeable city and the people will come downtown.

On a scale of 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good), please rate the current quality of your water service:							
Utility	1	2	3	4	5	Avg.	Rsp.
Water	6	8	24	71	81	4.12	190
Sewer	10	4	8	31	37	3.90	90
EMS	5	14	20	64	134	4.30	237
Fire Protection	2	7	36	62	128	4.31	235
General Government	5	2	27	95	110	4.27	239
Parks and Recreation	1	9	15	79	139	4.42	243
Roads	6	17	40	103	76	3.93	242
Other	7	6	37	100	81	4.05	231

- Need to make picking up of trash on roadways a priority.
- Police department
- Government agencies pushing development
- This is a rigged survey.
- We live close to the NC line, so UCSO, fire and rescue takes longer than living closer to town. Any improvements would be appreciated.
- Sheriff's Office
- City should be more responsible for fire protection a ladder truck is needed to protect city property . City should provide funding to offset county cost to provide fire protection
- E911 is under paid understaffed, outdated radio equipment
- Sheriff's dept. investigator Lamar dyer is inadequate
- We have for years been on a 3/4 miles gravel/dirt road with 12 homes with minimal service
- Charities up here are super!
- Excellent schools



- Get Lamar Paris to stop doing some of the silly projects with SPLOST money which the tax payers have to maintain in the future.
- Stop doing silly projects with SPLOST money that has to be maintained at the tax payer expense in the future
- Why doesn't Lamar get the folks at the farmers market to pay their 3% sales tax? That would help with his SPLOST money for his projects. It is because he wants to keep getting elected? Need to find someone with better sense and money management to run Blairsville.
- Complete fiber throughout county. EMC Fiber grant \$. Research. 1. Was there any amount returned/not used? 2. Why was 100% of NC service provided and only a portion of Union County provided service? 3. Have our service area completed – have our officials push/demand this completion