

**City of Whitesburg
2014-2034
Comprehensive Plan**



Prepared with technical assistance by

Three Rivers Regional Commission P.O. Box 1600 Franklin, Georgia 30217

PURPOSE: The purpose of the City of Whitesburg Comprehensive Plan is to provide a guide for the future growth and development of the City. The Plan was developed in cooperation and accordance with the Minimum Planning- Standards and Procedures of the 1989 Georgia Planning Act.

PROCESS: The City of Whitesburg Comprehensive Plan is the product of a six month process utilizing a framework as established, by the Planning Act. Community goals were addressed through citizen and government official input, and a new community vision for Whitesburg was devised and amalgamated into the City's vision statement. Building on currently defined maps of the City, a future development map with accompanying narrative was compiled using character areas delineated by the City's stakeholders. Character areas were mapped and defined to meet the land use requirement. In addition, needs and opportunities were also derived during this process. Finally, a community work program was developed by assessing the City's goals for future and current projects.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: Public participation was an integral part of the Planning process. Public hearings were held in May and August 2014 to inform the local citizens of preparation of the plan, and to include their input in the community vision and Character Area/Future Development Map. In addition, citizens also participated in online community survey as well as a paper survey that was distributed at the public library in Whitesburg.

LOCATION: Whitesburg is located in the southeast quadrant of Carroll County in the west-central part of Georgia, approximately 55 miles southwest of Atlanta.

COMMUNITY GOALS

Whitesburg Vision Statement

The City of Whitesburg will strive to be an inviting city to which business, citizens, and visitors interact together for the benefit of all while preserving its historic resources. The City will encourage development focused on tourism based economic development. The City should evolve as a progressive influence within the region. The City should protect and enhance its uniqueness and character, improve the visual and aesthetic quality of its greenways and corridors, and manage the growth that will occur. Whitesburg will have systems in place so that the City is prepared for current and future development and there will be continuity and consistency in planning and implementing plans and programs. The City of Whitesburg will strive to be known as "The Historic City of Whitesburg."

List of Community Goals

Economic Prosperity:

Whitesburg will 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.

Sense of Place:

Whitesburg will protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; 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.

Local Preparedness:

Whitesburg will identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; and leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges.

Regional Cooperation:

Whitesburg will 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.

Transportation Options

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

Efficient Land Use:

Whitesburg will 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.

Community Policies

Development Patterns

- Our decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
- We encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the community.
- We want development whose design, landscaping, lighting, signage, and scale add value to our community.
- Our gateways and corridors will create a "sense of place" for our community.
- Creation of recreational facilities and set-aside of greenspace are important to our community.
- We will encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.

Resource Conservation

- The protection and conservation of our community's resources will play an important role in the decision-making process when making decisions about future growth and development.
- We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
- We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- Our community will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.

-We will protect existing infrastructure investments (i.e., already paid for) by encouraging infill redevelopment, and compact development patterns.

-The community will use sequential, phased extension of utilities and services to encourage rational expansion of development to areas immediately contiguous to already developed areas of the community.

-We will invest in parks and open space to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.

Social and Economic Development

-We will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses that are a good fit for our community's economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.

-We will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.

-We will consider the employment needs and skill levels of our existing population in making decisions on proposed economic development projects

-We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.

-We will eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our community.

Governmental Relations

-We will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.

-We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection)

-We will pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions

-We will consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them.

-We will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decision that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Needs and Opportunities

Economic Development

- We need to improve our public facility capacity in order to attract new development.
- We need to promote tourism in our community, building off our history of the community as well as promoting nearby recreational opportunities.
- We need to promote revitalization of our downtown.
- We need to address crime in some areas of our community.
- We'd like to create more economic opportunities in our community.
- We'd like to develop a strategy for appropriate economic development of our community.

Development Patterns

- We'd like to develop in a manner that promotes tourism opportunities in our community.
- We'd like to improve the appearance of parts of our community.

Mobility

- We'd like to provide more multi-use trails.
- We'd like to provide more sidewalks and pedestrian facilities.

Community

- We'd like to increase the amount of greenspace in our community.
- We'd like to improve the curb-appeal of some commercial and residential areas.
- We'd like to discourage visual clutter (such as excessive signage) along roadways.
- We'd like to provide more protection of historic resources.

Conservation

- We'd like to ensure our community has enough water now and in the future.
- We'd like to manage our storm water run-off and drainage.
- We'd like to preserve our rural scenery, especially along the Chattahoochee River.
- We'd like to better protect our natural resources.
- We'd like to encourage development to locate in areas most suitable for new growth.

Livability

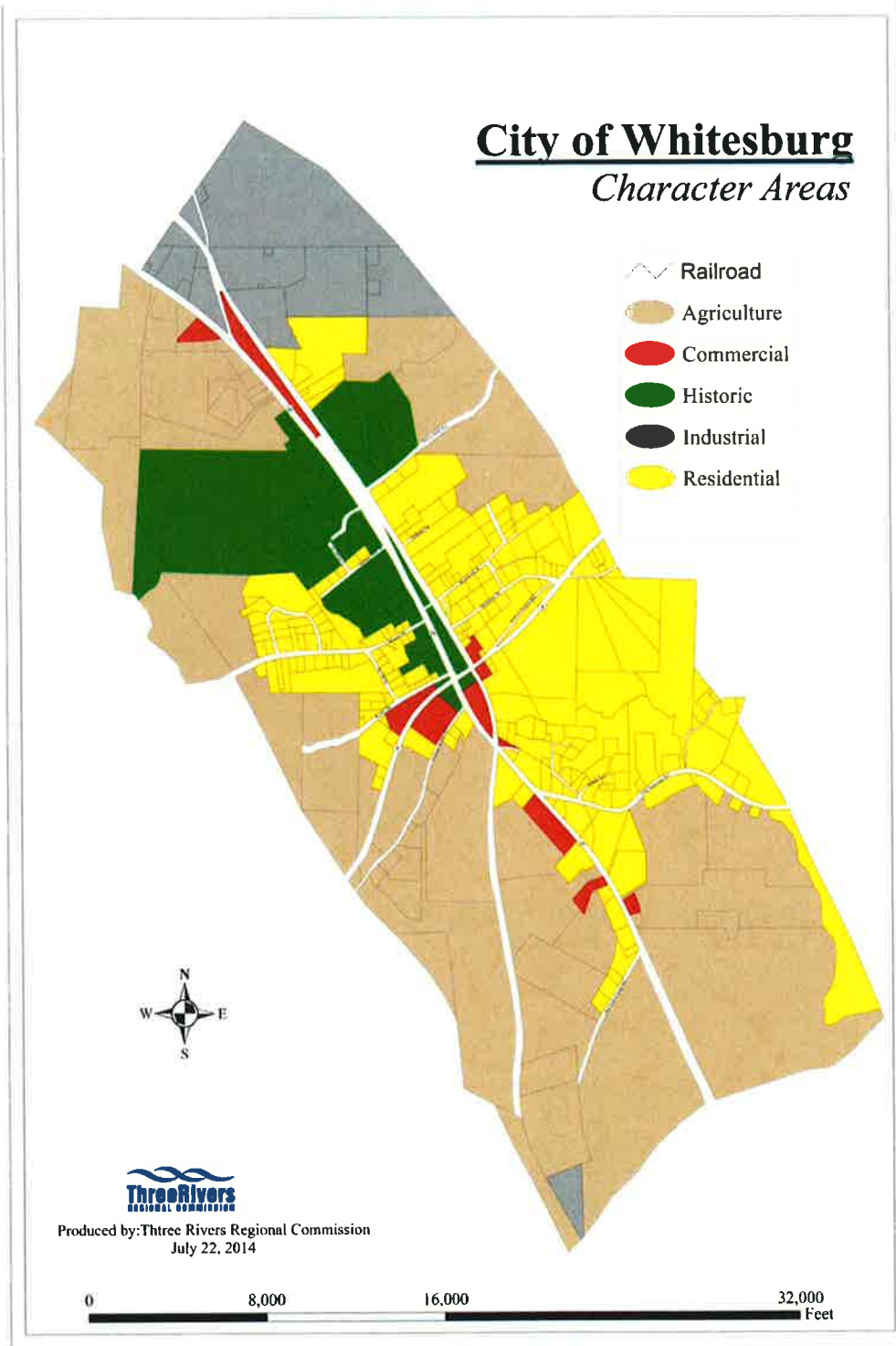
- We'd like to continue to support and promote the Whitesburg Library for patrons in the area.
- We'd like to provide more community gathering spaces.

Governance

- We'd like to coordinate with Carroll County and neighboring jurisdictions on shared needs.
- We'd like to reduce the cost of providing public services/facilities.

LAND USE ELEMENT

Character Area Map



Defining Character Area Narrative

Agriculture



Definition: This area represents most of the City's land and is actively farmed for vegetables and livestock. Homes in this area typically belong to the farmer and/ or owner of the land. Portions of this area are becoming increasingly threatened, as scattered new development continues to encroach further and further onto prime agricultural land. Most of the agriculture character area is along major highways running through the City.

Recommended development patterns: Whitesburg recommends very large minimum lot size requirements (25+ acres) to limit development density and protect farmland and rural character; preservation of environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trails, or greenbelts.

Specific land usage: This character area is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.

Implementation measures: *Purchase of Development Rights*-Purchase of private development rights, by a qualified conservation organization or government agency, to protect properties from development and preserve open space; *Scenic Byway Nomination Georgia's Scenic Byways*- Nominating and designating certain roads for recognition and preservation of their unique or significant intrinsic scenic, natural, archeological, historic or cultural qualities. State and national programs are linked.

Commercial



Definition: Whitesburg has a main commercial area that is declining and needs redevelopment to be vital in the future. Currently the most thriving businesses are gas stations and a few antique stores. Comprised primarily of unattractive, vacant, or under-utilized business, this area has the potential to be revitalized and transformed into a destination for antiques and historic tourism.

Recommended development patterns: Whitesburg recommends improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of commercial centers; redevelopment of older strip commercial centers in lieu of new construction further down the strip; and shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs

Specific land usage: Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

Implementation measures: *Community Improvement District (CID)* - Self-taxing entity formed by property owners, businesses, institutions and/or citizens, within a specific geographic area. A CID can be formed to provide additional services, to make the area safer and more attractive, or for various other purposes; *Enterprise Zones*- Offers incentives such as tax exemptions or fee abatements to private businesses to reinvest and rehabilitate underdeveloped or declining areas.

Historic



Historic: Whitesburg's location along a railroad has made for a rich history. Many of the historic buildings remain in good condition.

Recommended development patterns: Whitesburg recommends site plans, building design and landscaping that are sensitive to natural features of the site, including topography and views; using infrastructure availability to steer away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.

Specific land usage: Land dedicated to homes, sites, buildings and structures greater than 50 years of age.

Implementation measures:

Georgia Historic Resource Survey- Collection and recording of information about extant historic buildings, including architectural descriptions, age, history, setting and location in the community;

Georgia Register of Historic Places Nomination- State's official listing of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. Designation offers eligibility for incentives for preservation and rehabilitation;

Construct a multi-use trail to connect historic railroad buildings, recreation facility, school, and city hall.

Industrial



Definition: The smallest of Whitesburg's character areas is the industrial area. This area is located on the western end of the city adjacent to rail line.

Recommended development patterns: Whitesburg recommends commercial structures (warehouses, offices, etc.) located near street front with parking in the rear of buildings, making community more attractive and pedestrian friendly; and new industry or other major employers located close in to town, making jobs accessible to all residents by way or walking or bicycling.

Specific land usage: Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing, and wholesale trade facilities, or other similar uses.

Implementation measures:

Analyzing Existing Industry in the Local Economy- Analyzing local economy composition and industry contribution, to find whether the community depends on a few industries, how local businesses are performing, and what opportunities exist for the local economy, and other information;

Inventory Choosing Businesses to Recruit and Support Process for identifying businesses that best suit the community. This requires gaining knowledge about local assets and capabilities, as well as the desires of the community;

Conduct a wastewater treatment feasibility study since sewer is the key to bringing more industry to the City.

Residential



Residential: Whitesburg's residential area is one of the largest components of the city. Most homes were built prior to 1990. There is one subdivision in the city that is 10% built out. Some of the house on the north side of town are in disrepair and abandoned.

Recommended development patterns: Whitesburg recommends a distribution of affordably-priced homes throughout the city; new residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles of older, closer-in neighborhoods or the community.

Specific land usage: Land designated for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.

Implementation measures:

Housing for Low to Moderate-Income Households and Special Needs Populations - Affordable housing to meet the needs of persons with disabilities; quality, affordable rental units for large families (rental units with 3 or 4 bedrooms); affordable rental housing to serve the elderly population; or new single family units for moderate-income, first-time homebuyers;

Program Board-Up- Code- Enforcement policy to protect open buildings from unlawful entry, stabilizing structures and encouraging rehabilitation as opposed to demolition.

Address dilapidated structures for threat to public safety.

Purchase properties in distress for public greenspace

Citizen Participation

Whitesburg Comprehensive Plan 2014-2034

Steering Committee Members

1. Robert Gamble-water department director, City of Whitesburg
2. Amy Williford-city council, City of Whitesburg
3. Ruth Fuller-librarian, City of Whitesburg Library
4. Imogene Frazier-retired post master and senior citizen, City of Whitesburg
5. Cordie Johnson-Whitesburg Senior Center Representative
6. Ronnie Pate-Mayor, City of Whitesburg
7. Mike Bryant-Business Owner in Whitesburg downtown

City of Whitesburg Comprehensive Plan 2014

The survey of 10 questions was electronically available on Survey Monkey and a paper version available to Committee members, City of Whitesburg Council members and City Hall. Request to fill out the survey was placed on our W. Ga. Regional Library webpage as well as on Facebooks: Friends of WB Lib., Harvey's House of Books, and WB Library for a two week period in June, deadline June 26, 2014.

We received a total of 100 responses on Survey Monkey, a free service. We received a total of 57 responses on the paper copy. A total of 157 responses were compiled.

Briefly, all ten questions received about 100 moderately to extremely important responses each. The City Planning Comprehensive Plan reflects these responses throughout the plan. These responses came from Whitesburg citizens and surrounding community members. There is no distinction between city or county residents.

Submitted by,

Ruth Fuller
Committee Member
July 28, 2014

City of Whitesburg

2014 City Planning Questionnaire

(Please fill in the circle that applies for each question. Thank you. Deadline 6/26/14.)

1. How important are bike trails/walking paths in Whitesburg?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
 - Not at all important
2. How important is a Whitesburg Community Garden?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
3. How important is a Whitesburg Historical Society?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
4. How important is economic development for Whitesburg?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
 - Not at all important
5. How important is Main Street beautification?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
 - Not at all important
6. How important is Whitesburg Public Library?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
 - Not at all important

7. How important is a Fast Food (i.e. McDonalds, Waffle House) for Whitesburg?
 - o Extremely important
 - o Very important
 - o Moderately important
 - o Slightly important
 - o Not at all important
8. How important is promoting tourism in Whitesburg?
 - o Extremely important
 - o Very important
 - o Moderately important
 - o Slightly important
 - o Not at all important
9. How important is a wastewater treatment system for Whitesburg?
 - o Extremely important
 - o Very important
 - o Moderately important
 - o Slightly important
 - o Not at all important
10. How important is promoting development of vacant sites/abandoned properties in Whitesburg?
 - o Extremely important
 - o Very important
 - o Moderately important
 - o Slightly important
 - o Not at all important

Any comments/suggestions:



Menu

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Whitesburg City Planning Survey 2014

Exit this survey

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Done

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**City of Whitesburg Comprehensive Plan 2014
Stakeholder Committee Meeting #1
June 4, 2014
Sign In sheet**

Name	Address	Phone	Email
Ruth Fuller			ruth@wgrl.net
Kimberly Duth			Ksdutton@thruverrrc.com
Robert Camble	788 main st whitesburg (302)	770 550 4459	whitesburgcity@net.com

City of Whitesburg Community Work Program 2014-2019



City of Whitesburg Community Work Program 2014-2019

Category	Action/Implementation Strategy	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Community Facilities & Services	Install a new water tank and booster pump.		X	X				City	\$1,000,000	General Fund, grants or loans
Community Facilities & Services	Construct a multi-use trail to connect historic railroad buildings, recreation facility, school, and city hall.			X	X			City	\$150,000	General Fund, grants
Community Facilities & Services	Expand the recreation department with a tennis court and swimming pool.				X	X		City	\$200,000	General fund, grants, SPLOST
Community Facilities & Services	Construct a community garden.	X	X					City	\$1,000	General fund
Economic Development	Develop a tourism marketing plan.	X	X					City	\$1,000	Town
Natural & Cultural Resources	Appoint a committee to undertake Historic Preservation Issues.	x	x					City	\$0	No cost.
Transportation	Create beautification areas and signage at City limits along state routes.			x				City	\$4,000	Town, grants
Community Facilities & Services	Conduct a wastewater treatment feasibility study.	x	x					City	\$1500	Town, Grants or loans

Category	Action/Implementation Strategy	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Housing	Purchase properties in distress for public greenspace.		X	X	X	X	X	City	\$1,000,000	City
Housing	Address dilapidated structures for threat to public safety	X	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$0	No cost
Land Use	Amend zoning ordinance as needed.	X	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$5,000	City
Economic Development	Conduct a feasibility study for a riverside casino.	X	X					City	\$1500	City, grants
Community Facilities & Services	Increase high speed internet and HD television availability in the City.	X	X	X	X	X	X	City, Utility Companies	TBD	Local & grants

City of Whitesburg Report of Accomplishments from Short Term Work Program 2008-2013

Project or Activity from Previous STWP	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Not Accomplished Activity
1. Develop a tourism marketing plan.			X		Lack of funds.
2. Develop a business retention/expansion plan.				X	Project no longer a priority.
3. Obtain Better Hometown Designation.				X	Lack of funds.
4. Continue to cooperate with County for solid waste reduction.	X				
5. Construct Phase I wastewater system.				X	Lack of funds.
6. Construct Phase II wastewater system.				X	Lack of funds.
7. Participate in the West GA Development Authority.	X				

Project or Activity from Previous STWP	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Not Accomplished Activity
8. Complete improvements to the recreation dept.	X				
9. Computerize the water meter reading system.				X	Project no longer a priority.
10. Upgrade City and Police Department computer systems.	X				
11. Furnish environmental education for elected officials.				X	Project no longer a priority.
12. Appoint a committee to undertake Historic Preservation Issues.		X			

A Resolution

Whereas, the City of Whitesburg has developed an updated twenty year Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

Whereas, the updated Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Three Rivers Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

Whereas, the public had the opportunity for input into the Comprehensive Plan in a public hearing held on the 4th day of August, 2014.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council shall officially adopt the updated Comprehensive Plan for the twenty year period of 2014-2034.

So resolved this 6th day of October, 2014.

City of Whitesburg

S.R. Pate
Mayor

ATTEST:

William P. Swadlow
City Clerk