



# SW Cherokee Area Plan

## Cherokee County Planning and Zoning

*Adopted — June 18, 2019*

# Acknowledgements

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*Thank you to the many residents  
and business owners who  
generously gave their time  
to be engaged in the  
development of this plan!*

# Contents

## Executive Summary

- How has SW Cherokee Changed?
- Why is an Area Plan Important
- Relation to the Comprehensive Plan
- Our Plan in a Nutshell

## Community Context

- Recent History
- Demographic Profile
- Community Engagement
- Case Studies

## The Plan

- Vision Statement
- Core Issues
- Community Elements

## Vision Into Action

- Process
- 5-year Implementation Plan

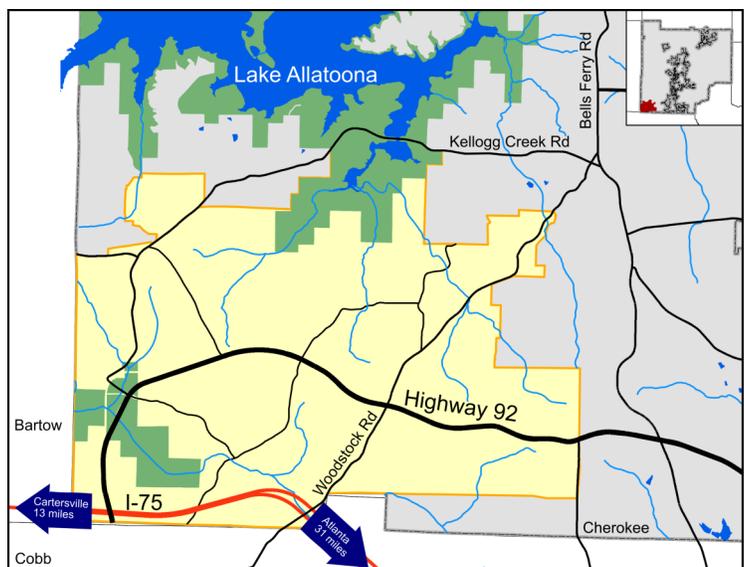
## Appendix

- Market Study

# Executive Summary

## SW Cherokee has Changed

In less than twenty years, SW Cherokee County has gone from a quiet residential community to a growing suburban and employment center. Subdivisions like Centennial Lakes, Ridgemill and Cameron Creek, along with industries like Inalfa Roof Systems, adidas, and YANMAR and retailers like Cabela's make up this former agricultural area. SW Cherokee's population, home values and traffic have all increased with this development. In short, people and businesses want to be here among the existing community. And like the rest of the County, SW Cherokee is evolving and needs strategies to help keep it an attractive place to live and work. In our 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update, one of the key tasks was to take a further look at the SW Cherokee area, and this plan represents the fulfillment of that task.



## Why is an Area Plan Important?

When drafting the comprehensive plan, we told everyone to think of it as “a roadmap to the community’s future, with the community in the driver seat.” Naturally, each portion of the County may face different issues to varying degrees, so an area plan is necessary to focus on one specific part of that map—in this case, SW Cherokee. While the comprehensive plan focuses on a community’s long range goals and ‘big picture’ outlook, an area plan:

- Focuses on a specific geography that shares common issues and characteristics
- Engages the local residents and business leaders to develop the plan
- Explores how the comp plan’s vision can be carried out on a much more detailed level with a clear set of implementation tasks
- Considers local elements for the community’s vision such as zoning, design guidelines, mixed-use centers, greenspace, and place-making ideas

## Relationship to the Comp Plan

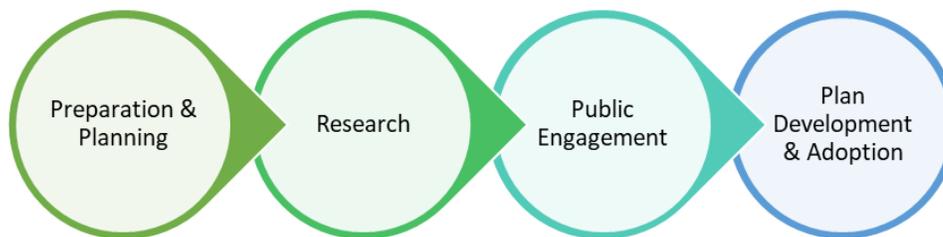
The SW Cherokee Area Plan serves as a spring board for the implementation tasks laid out in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update, which identified SW Cherokee as one of six target areas that warranted further analysis. The SW Cherokee Target Area Workshop, which took place in August 2017, produced an implementation plan that included developing a master plan and market study for the area. This implementation task came from residents' feedback emphasizing the need for more retail, hospitality, and mixed-use along Highway 92; preserving prime land for industrial uses; constructing pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and developing parks and amenities for the area. This Area Plan delves deeper into SW Cherokee's current issues to determine the relevancy of these needs and other issues that have risen in the community. The vision, implementation, and work plan are based on the needs initially identified in the Comp Plan and from resident feedback since then.

## The Plan in a Nutshell

The planning process for SW Cherokee began in October/November 2018, just as the Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted. Planning and Zoning began drafting the project plan for SW Cherokee with the purpose of developing a deeper understanding of SW Cherokee's current trends, issues and opportunities in order to work with residents, property owners and business leaders to develop a shared vision for the area. The four primary objectives this planning process are:

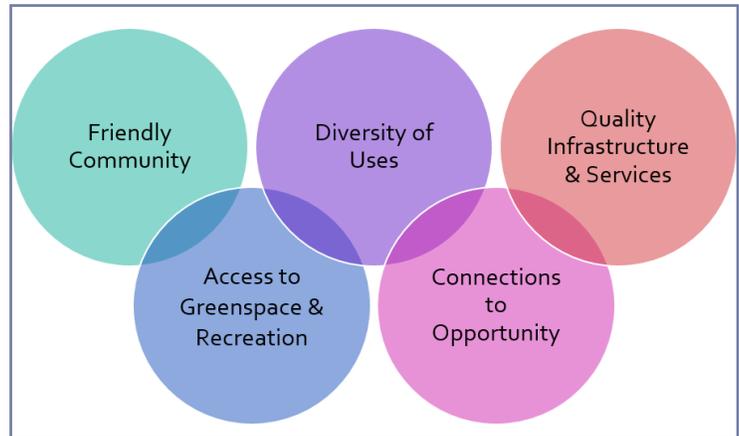
- To build a consensus about a shared vision for the future of SW Cherokee
- To clearly understand and describe the potential for increasing mixed-use development along Highway 92, particularly retail, service, and hospitality businesses
- To integrate trails and greenspace into SW Cherokee's vision
- To develop a list of action items for implanting this vision for the area

The planning process consisted of four phases: Preparation and Planning; Research; Public Engagement; and Feedback, Edits, and Approval. The Preparation and Planning phase involved

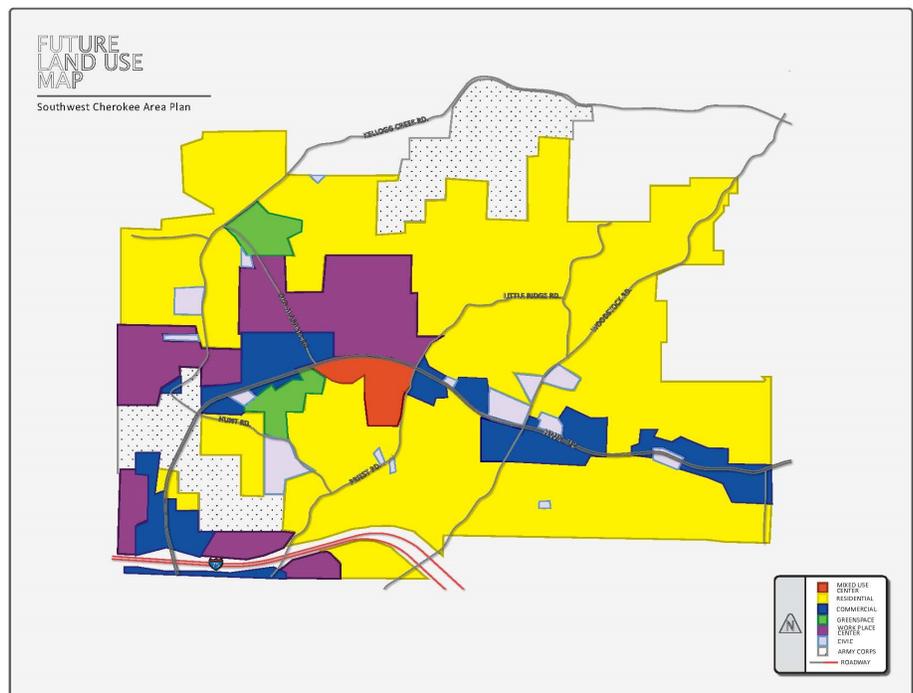


finalizing budget approval, securing meeting venues, and developing the stakeholders committee. During the Research Phase, staff obtained demographic, employment, and historical data (this involved contracting out to Bleakly Advisory Group for the Market Study), researched and developed case studies, developed and analyzed GIS maps. The Public Engagement phase involved two groups of meetings. First, a Stakeholder Committee formed with representatives from residents and businesses that met ahead of the public meeting and served as a sounding board for elements of the plan. Second, staff hosted three public meetings in March and April 2019 that involved interactive activities to engage participants to generate a vision for the future of the community. The market study consultant, Bleakly Group held some additional focus groups and interviews to narrow in on the challenges for SW Cherokee. The final phase saw the completion of the plan document, which was reviewed and refined based on feedback from the community, stakeholders and County officials.

This area plan is divided into three main parts—Community Context, The Plan, and Vision into Action. The Community Context explores SW Cherokee’s key demographics, summarizes the Market Study, and outlines the public engagement process critical to realizing the plan. Building on that section is The Plan, which describes SW Cherokee’s core values and priorities, illustrates the key elements of the map, and presents the final land use plan map. The Core Values, shown in the diagram, comprise basic principles that will help SW Cherokee become a more close-knit, connected and economically viable community. Each core value section describes that value’s relevance to SW Cherokee’s outlook, along with strategies to make that value a reality. Its also important to be realistic, so we also acknowledged potential challenges the County may face carrying out these strategies. The future land use plan developed by the public is an extension of these core values. The Community Elements section describes the map development process in detail.



Finally, the Vision Into Action section spells out how this plan will affect future land use decisions and steps that Cherokee County and its partners can take to implement this vision. The plan concludes with the 5-Year Implementation Plan which outlines initiatives that will fulfill SW Cherokee’s mission. Some of the initiatives are immediate while others will be addressed gradually, but the implementation plan will help the community measure progress toward implementing their vision for SW Cherokee.



# Community Context

## RECENT HISTORY

### **1900-1970**

At the turn of the twentieth century, SW Cherokee was a rural, farming community with significant forested areas. Homes were generally built by local homebuilders for individual families and not in organized subdivisions. The Army Corps of Engineers began building Lake Allatoona starting in 1946, and completed construction in 1949. The area began to change as a result of the lake and the growth of Metro Atlanta with the introduction of residential subdivisions and family owned-operated mobile home parks. In 1949, the Etowah Hills neighborhood became the first platted subdivision in SW Cherokee near the Corps Property. In 1966, Oak Hill Estates, the second subdivision was platted near Wade Green Road.

### **1970-2000**

The 1970s saw an dramatic increase in suburban development. Notably, Interstate 75 was completed up to Highway 92 in 1974. The construction of the Interstate opened SW Cherokee for additional subdivisions in the 1970s and 1980s since it was now much easier to commute by car to Metro Atlanta job centers. The homes in this wave of subdivisions were on septic. The extension of sewer from Towne Lake brought another wave of residential developments in the 1990s, including developments along Woodstock Road and Victory Drive. The Centennial Lakes Golf Course opened in 1989 (though it closed 15 years later). Another important initiative in this period was the Highway 92 Village Ordinance. Adopted in 1997, this overlay district allows for certain uses while prohibiting others, and establishes site and architectural design guidelines for the Highway 92 corridor.



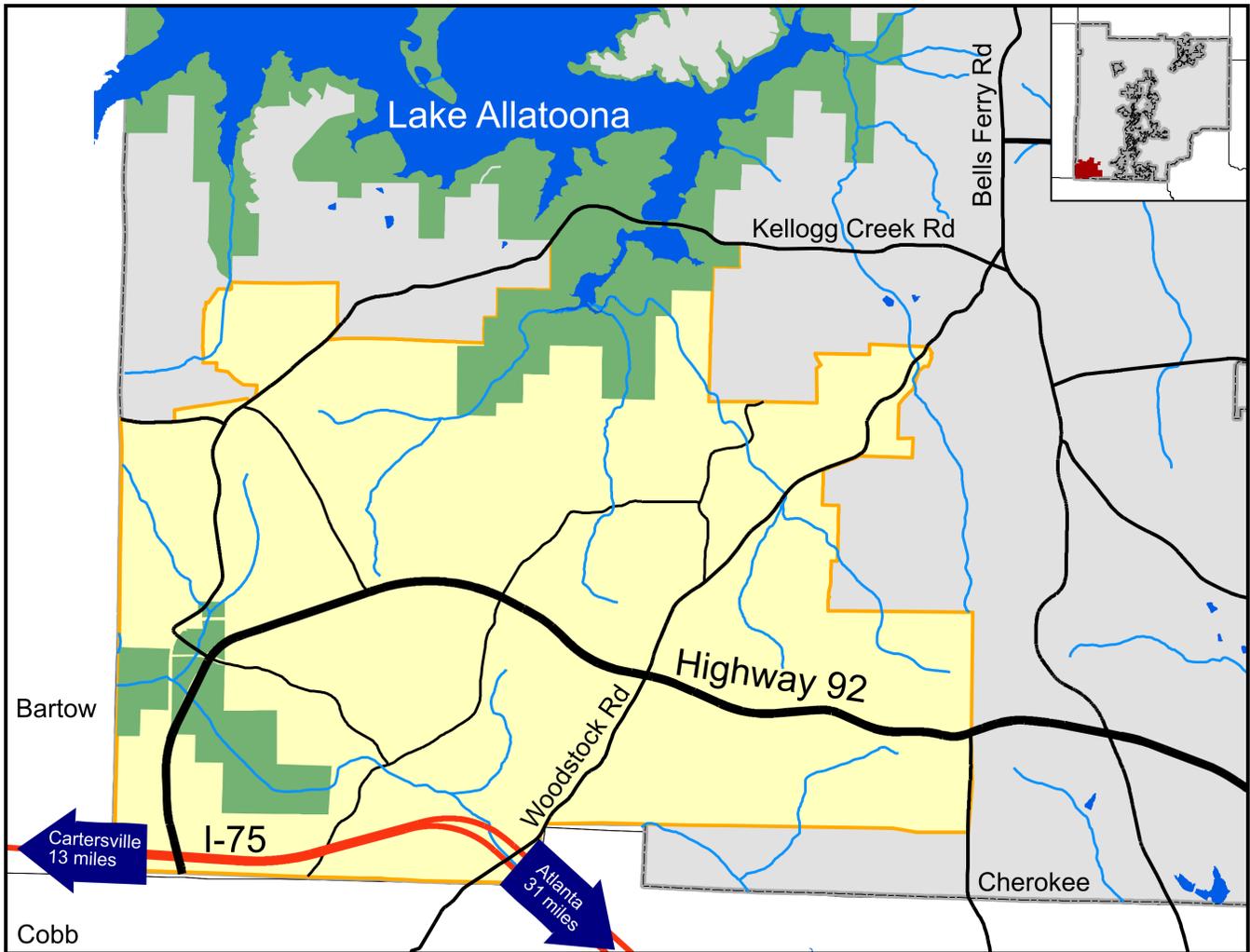
## 2000-Present

Many changes have come to the SW Cherokee area in this period including major rezonings, transportation improvements and the designation of an opportunity zone. The Centennial Lakes Golf Course and adjacent properties were rezoned for residential development in a series of cases between 2003 and 2005. These properties were subsequently developed into the Centennial Lakes neighborhood. Majestic Realty rezoned property along I-75 for commercial and industrial development that is now home to Cabela's and an industrial park in 2005 as well. Between 2006-2009, Georgia DOT worked to widen Highway 92 through SW Cherokee from 2 to 4 lanes with a divided median. In the process, they also rerouted the road in 3 sections to straighten the path of the road and improve safety. 2009 saw the first rezoning of property for the Cherokee 75 Corporate Park development, specifically the existing mulch plant where the adidas SPEEDFACTORY facility stands today. At the same time, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs approved the designation of the SW Cherokee Opportunity Zone, which allows new and expanding businesses to qualify for significant state tax credits for new jobs created within the zone. As a result of these major changes in the community, the past decade has seen the development of numerous new residential subdivisions and new commercial/industrial projects.

New Residential Subdivisions	New Commercial & Industrial Projects
Village at Oak Grove	Cherokee Commerce Center
Sable Trace	Cabela's
Cameron Creek	CVS at Woodstock Road
Ridge Mill Townhomes	Inalfa Roof Systems
Creekwood Place	MSK
Autumn Ridge	YANMAR EVO//Center
Woodland Trace	thyssenkrupp — Acclaim Lighting
Sable Trace Ridge	Jaipur Living Global HQ
Centennial Lakes	adidas SPEEDFACTORY
Waterford Oak	Cabot — Atlanta Bonded Warehouse
Grace	Woodstock Furniture Outlet HQ & Distribution Center
Centennial Ridge	

# LOCATION OVERVIEW

Working with elected officials and community leaders, the boundary of the SW Cherokee Area was drawn to include roughly 6,000 acres of property. The boundary to the west stretches from the I-75 and Highway 92 interchange area to Kellogg Creek Road to the north to Wade Green Road to the east and the county line to the south. This area is well connected to the Atlanta Region and the I-75 corridor. In the last 40 years, residential development in SW Cherokee has increased the population of the area. Only recently, has the area seen significant industrial growth near the I-75 interchange and in the Cherokee 75 Corporate Park. There is also a large amount of land owned by a variety of federal and local government entities. The statistics below give more detail about these government



**6,035 acres total**

5,355 ac  
parcels

680  
ROW

- 676.9 acres — Army Corps of Engineers
- 103.9 acres — Cherokee County Government
- 61.8 acres — Cherokee County School District
- Roughly 13% is owned by the Federal Government

# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE — People & Households

## Population Basics

<b>12,554</b>	2019 Population Estimate
<b>5%</b>	Percentage of County Population
<b>50.4%</b>	Population Change since 2000
<b>9.43</b>	Square Miles
<b>1,331</b>	Population Density (people per sq. mile)
<b>38.4</b>	Median age
<b>36%</b>	College-educated percentage
<b>13%</b>	African American
<b>12%</b>	Hispanic

## Household Profile

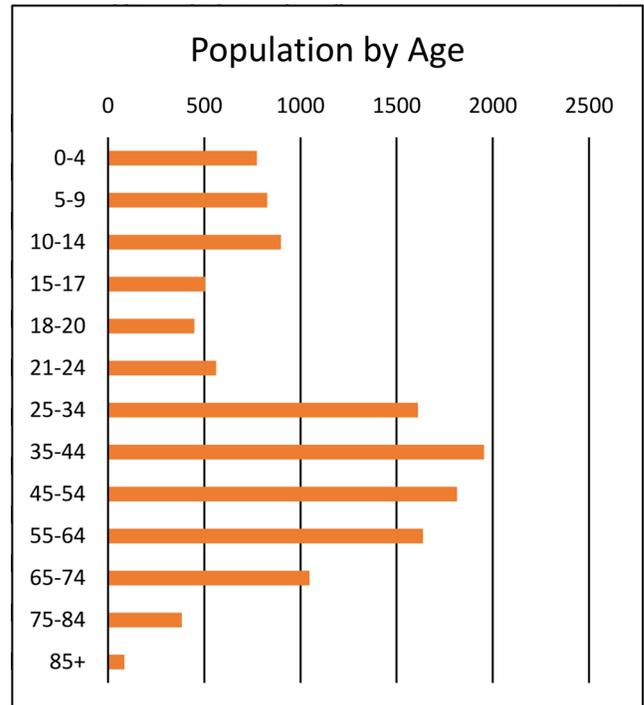
<b>4,428</b>	2019 Households Estimate
<b>2.82</b>	Average household size
<b>30.2%</b>	Households contain 4 or more people
<b>471</b>	Households per square mile
<b>41%</b>	Households with children under age of 18 living at home
<b>37.5%</b>	Married couple family households
<b>84.5%</b>	Homeowner households
<b>13.2</b>	Average length of residence among homeowners in years
<b>16%</b>	Renter households
<b>5</b>	Average length of residence among renters in years

lands.

## Analysis

The population of SW Cherokee has grown from 8,344 in 2000 to 12,557 est. in 2019, which is an increase of more than 50% in less than 20 years. This area of Cherokee County is slightly younger, more educated and more diverse than the rest of the County.

SW Cherokee households are predominately married couples with children living at home that are homeowners. The graph below shows these primary groups in the distribution of population by age. This is a very stable area with a longer than average length of residence for both homeowners and renters. With an average commute time of 37 minutes, this area is currently a quintessential “bedroom community” where people live but have significant commutes to their jobs.



# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE — Housing

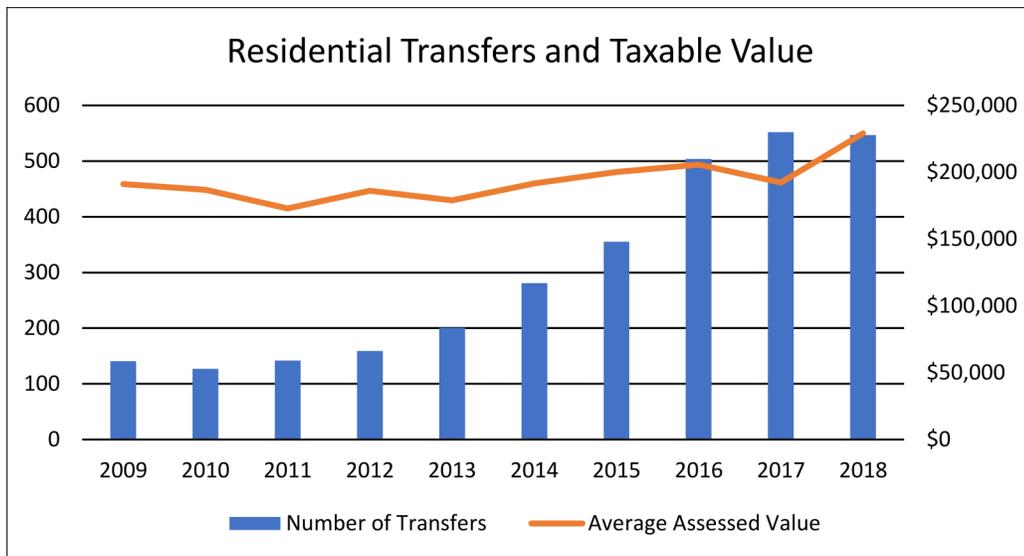
Housing Stock	
<b>4,726</b>	Total Housing Units
<b>88%</b>	Single-Family Detached
<b>5%</b>	Townhomes
<b>5%</b>	Mobile Homes
<b>2%</b>	Small Multi-Family
<b>\$194,677</b>	Median Home Value
<b>1994</b>	Median Age of Housing (Year Built)

SW Cherokee Home Market	
<b>\$191,091</b>	2009 Average Assessed Value
<b>141</b>	2009 Total Real Estate Transfers
<b>\$229,088</b>	2018 Average Assessed Value
<b>547</b>	2018 Total Real Estate Transfers
<b>25-30%</b>	Percentage of new home sales
<b>9</b>	New Residential Developments (in process)
<b>755</b>	Units — including
	265 Single-family Homes
	148 Townhomes
	342 Apartments

## Analysis

Nearly 90 % of the housing in the SW Cherokee area is single-family detached with a smattering of townhomes and mobile homes but almost no existing multi-family units. Compared with the whole County, roughly 10%of the County housing stock is make up of multi-family units (apartments).

Since 2013, the average assessed value of homes in the SW Cherokee area have trended upwards. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in the number of residential real estate transfers, particularly in 2016 –2018. It is important to note that 25-30% of these are new homes sales.



# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE — Income & Employment

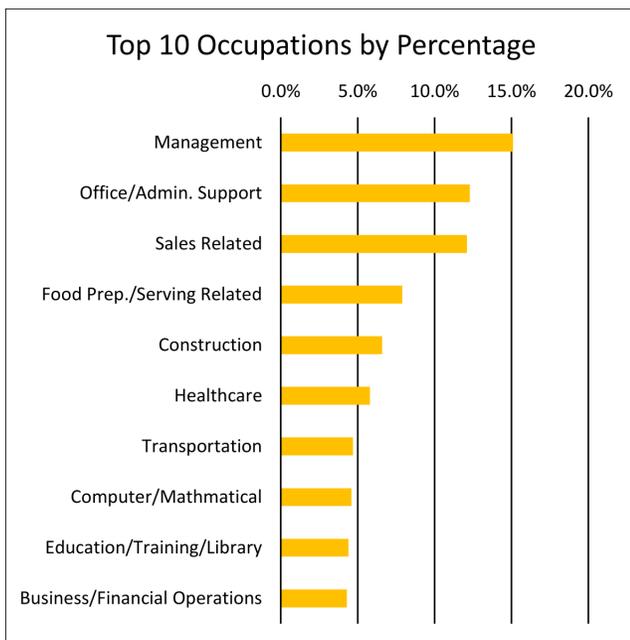
## Analysis

Households in SW Cherokee are solidly middle income with over half earning between \$50,000 and \$125,000 per year. This area also has a relatively low poverty rate with less than 6% of households with incomes below the poverty level. With these strong household income numbers, it is not surprising that there is significant household retail demand around \$53,200 each per year. Considering retail sales within the study area, over half of this demand is being met outside of SW Cherokee with \$27,900 going to the surrounding areas of Bartow, Cherokee and Cobb counties.

The majority of working adults in SW Cherokee are in white collar occupations. Nearly 6% of the employed are working from home. This is similar to the rest of Cherokee County where there are a lot of home-based businesses. Commutes from the area average about 37 minutes, which is typical of bedroom communities. Most are commuting to adjacent counties for jobs.

## Household Income

<b>\$78,975</b>	Median household income
<b>\$91,520</b>	Average household income
<b>54.1%</b>	Households earning between \$50,000 and \$125,000 per year
<b>&lt; 6%</b>	Households below poverty level
<b>\$53,200</b>	Retail demand per household
<b>\$25,300</b>	SW Cherokee sales per household
<b>\$27,900</b>	Surplus retail demand per household



## Employment & Commuting

<b>63%</b>	Working in white collar occupations
<b>5%</b>	Local unemployment
<b>5.8%</b>	Working from home
<b>37</b>	Average commuting time (minutes)
<b>78.8%</b>	Drive to work alone
<b>12.6%</b>	Travel to work in a carpool
	Most traveling to job centers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along I-75 in Cobb</li> <li>• Woodstock/Towne Lake</li> <li>• GA 400 Corridor</li> </ul>

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public input played a significant role in the development of the SW Cherokee Area Plan. To start, the County formed a stakeholder committee which included representatives from SW Cherokee’s neighborhood and business communities. This committee met four times over a seven week span, during which they discussed the progress and findings of the public meetings, strategies to better integrate neighborhood and business interests, and serve as liaisons between the County and community. In addition, the County held 3 public meetings during March and April 2019, which consisted of a 1)public kickoff, 2)community visioning meeting, and a 3)charrette.

## Public Kickoff Meeting

The SW Cherokee Area Plan held its first meeting on March 20 and was well-attended. First, staff presented a slideshow outlining the history of SW Cherokee, a recap of the Target Area Workshop held in August 2017, and an overview of current demographics and trends. This meetings primary goal was to learn how community members currently view SW Cherokee and how they hope it will change in the future. After the presentation, participants were divided into three groups each led by a county staff member, where they were tasked with SW Cherokee’s assets, challenges, and needs—an alternative to the traditional SWOT analysis. The next activity was a Word Association where participants brainstormed key words that represented the County’s present status and potential future. Both activities helped reveal concerns and priorities from the community, and assisted the County with drafting potential core values, visions, and guidelines. The word cloud on the right shows residents’ hopes and priorities for SW Cherokee’s future, based on the meeting feedback.

Public Meetings	Stakeholder Meetings
<i>Public Kickoff</i> Wednesday, March 20, 2019 6:30pm—8:30pm	Wednesday, March 6, 2019 8:00am-10:00am
<i>Community Visioning</i> Thursday, April 11, 2019 6:30pm—8:30pm	Thursday, March 28, 2019 8:00am-10:00am
<i>Planning Charrette</i> Wednesday, April 24, 2019 6:30pm—8:30pm	Wednesday, April 17, 2019 8:00am—10:00pm
	Wednesday, May 1, 2019 8:00am-10:00am

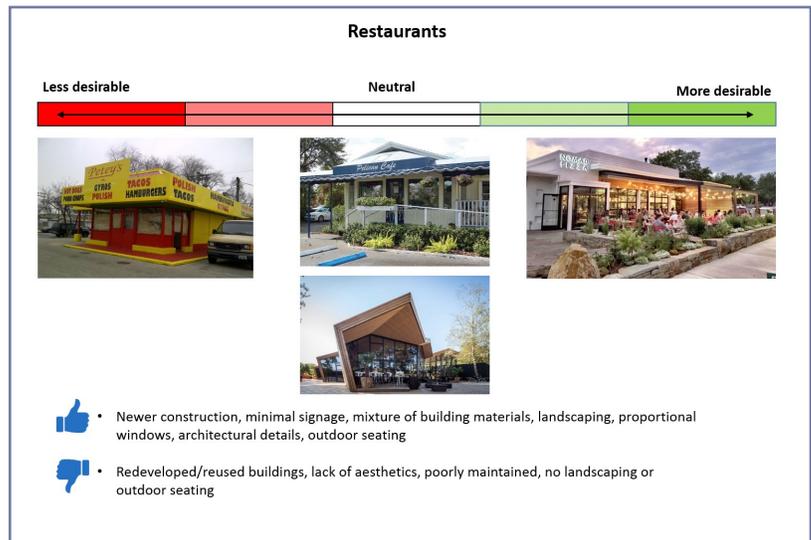


Future of SW Cherokee Word Association Results

## Community Visioning Meeting

The goal of the Community Visioning meeting was to determine various architectural styles and physical layouts that the community preferred. During the meeting, the County surveyed the residents' development preferences for restaurants, commercial (small, medium, large), mixed-use, attached residential, workplace center, bike & pedestrian paths, streetscapes, parking facilities, signage, and recreation. They were shown a 200-image Community Preference Survey of buildings,

streetscapes, trails, parks, bike lanes and parking lots, and tasked with ranking each image on a scale of 1 through 5 (with 5 being most desirable). The survey revealed that bike & pedestrian paths and recreational uses were two of the community's highest priorities. It also indicated that residents value architectural details, landscaping, "drive to" mixed-use centers, streetscapes lined with varying building styles, and plenty of sidewalk buffering to protect pedestrians from vehicles.



## Planning Charrette

The third and final public meeting consisted of a planning charrette. In short, a charrette is an intense work-effort to find solutions to critical problems or issues. In the planning field, this consists of interactive group activities where participants label a map or diagram according to their future vision of the community. The participants were divided into three groups where they brainstormed and recorded their ideal locations for amenities and other developments on a vellum basemap. They also had overlay maps showing current government lands and developable areas to guide them. The groups were assigned a series of 5 specific design challenges to address in their final product. Attendees used different color markers to denote different types of development on the map. A sample map from one of the groups is shown to the right. This process will be discussed in more depth in the Community Elements section.



# Case Studies

## Overview

In order to better understand how SW Cherokee can successfully manage growth and promote compatible uses that do not conflict with residents' quality of life, County staff explored the initiatives of other Metro Atlanta communities that have faced the same issue. We chose six different municipalities based on a few key criteria—they are located in predominately suburban environment, with a major state or county road, and contained an industrial presence with established residential neighborhoods. The six municipalities are: McFarland Parkway (Forsyth County), Douglas County, Town Center (Cobb County), City of Peachtree Corners, City of Suwanee, and the Fulton Industrial District. Each case study did not necessarily bear resemblance to SW Cherokee's current state, as some of the municipalities are considerably more built out. But the range of areas observed enabled staff to learn how denser communities manage growth, so SW Cherokee may be armed with similar strategies for the future.

To begin the case study research, the Planning and Zoning department scheduled visits with the six municipalities travelled on site to each one. They asked about the successes and challenges they have encountered when managing growth and reflected on their lessons learned. County staff also explored each area themselves, taking notes on development patterns, landscaping and screening, and the quality of light industrial and manufacturing sites. The following case studies represent the outcome of this research.

### Atlanta Region Case Studies

- McFarland Parkway (Forsyth County)
- Sweetwater Creek-Thornton Road (Douglas County)
- Town Center CID (Cobb County)
- City of Peachtree Corners
- City of Suwanee
- Fulton Industrial CID (Fulton County)



A festival at the City of Suwanee's Town Center

## McFarland Parkway (Forsyth County)

McFarland Parkway is an established industrial corridor located in the southern part of Forsyth County. It contains major industries along McFarland, Shiloh Road, and McFarland 400 Boulevard. Both new and established residential neighborhoods sit near the corridor. On February 21, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Vanessa Bernstein-Goldman and Heather Ryan of the Forsyth County Planning and Community Development staff to discuss their experience balancing residential and industrial development.

Many of Forsyth County's successes, including McFarland Parkway, are due to their overlay districts that set higher design standards along McFarland and Shiloh Road, discouraging certain uses. Their standards for landscaping and buffering made for picturesque business parks. Tree screening, berms, and other plantings helped soften the industrialized appearance of the corridor. These natural barriers made residential areas feel untouched by the commercial/industrial areas. The Halcyon development, slated to open this spring, will provide a much-needed mixed-use center to the county.

Forsyth staff discussed challenges as well, including the natural market forces that make it difficult to attract retail. While Halcyon may help, the task remains an uphill battle. Another challenge is the simple ability to track public opinion on development encroachment. Forsyth County staff could not recall any specific complaints they have received, but acknowledged they did not actively track it either due to the challenges of that task.

Overall, Forsyth staff did not seem to have specific initiatives to address this issue. Many of the industries predated the recent residential development so it has been more accepted, or developers were conscious of resident preferences. Cherokee staff also learned that the number of rooftops affects the ability to attract retail, thus explaining why SW Cherokee struggles in this area.



### McFarland Overlay Standards

Landscaping

Board Fences

Architectural Building Materials

Parking Areas

Service, refuse collection & dumpsters

Off-street Loading Areas

Screening of Open Storage Yards

Outdoor display of vehicles, equipment, and merchandise

Canopies



## Sweetwater Creek—Thornton Road (Douglas County)

Over time, Douglas County has become a popular destination for light industrial development, which is present, along with commercial establishments, along Highway 92, US-78, and Thornton Road. Similar to SW Cherokee, Douglas County is a popular market for the industrial sector, where they are surrounded by long-established neighborhoods. The county has also prioritized attracting incubators and tech companies. In addition to numerous industrial establishments, Douglas County is now home to Google and Switch and is preparing for the development of two new 145,000 square foot data centers near Sweetwater Creek. This area is slated to be a major employment area, and the Sweetwater Creek Master Plan—updated in 2016—is its guide. Cherokee Planning and Zoning met with Planning Director Ron Roberts on February 25, 2019 to discuss their successful management of land uses.

Douglas County’s strategies for maintaining a healthy separation between industry and residential include a truck parking ordinance that requires trucks to park within 400 feet of the adjacent use. The site must also be at least 200 feet from a residential zone and be screened with natural elements such as trees, shrubs, or berms. These features help isolate industry and truck traffic from the public, making transportation easier and neighborhoods more livable, while still enjoying access to work center hub.

The interaction between freight and passenger traffic has been a concern for residents, so the county also has designated truck routes which help improve the flow of traffic and decrease the potential burden in residential areas (noise, pollution, quality of life, etc.) The Douglas County Comprehensive Transportation Plan designates primary truck routes for Interstate 20, US-78, and Highways 92, 6, and 5, while secondary truck routes consist of Highways 166 and 61, and Capps Ferry Road, Post Road, Lee Road, and Douglas Boulevard. Like many jurisdictions, Douglas County finds it difficult to attract retail. A Kroger grocery store was originally supposed to be built, but impervious surface requirements have kept grocery stores from being developed, highlighting their difficulties in attracting retail amenities.

Through the current development going on in Douglas County, and their initiatives laid out in the Sweetwater Master Plan, staff realized the importance of area/master planning to map out truck routes, bike plans, and development. SW Cherokee would also do well to avoid attracting industries that create significantly more truck traffic.



## Town Center CID

The Town Center Community Improvement District (CID) is located in Cobb County and occupies an area roughly spanning from the 75/575 interchange, the Cobb County Airport, Town Center Mall, and Kennesaw State University. The CID was formed in 1997 and is a major activity center for Marietta, Kennesaw, and even southern Cherokee County. Commercial areas are present around the interstates and along Barrett, Chastain Meadows, and Cobb Parkways. These areas are flanked by established neighborhoods on Bells Ferry Road and Big Shanty Road, and are collectively referred to as the Bells Ferry Homeowners Association. The CID completed their master plan update in 2017, which builds on growth that the area experienced upon recovering from the 2008 recession. On February 12, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Alisha Smith of Town Center CID to discuss their experience healthily maintaining an array of land uses.

One of the most successful projects in tying together land uses is the development of the 7-mile Noonday Creek Trail. Taking advantage of the area's natural resources, the trail was developed in 2011 as a means to connect the existing greenspace. While it was initially received with skepticism from residents, today it is valued by residents and businesses alike. The trail head starts near Bells Ferry Road, which is buffered and screened from the houses, and traverses the area behind the new Chastain Meadows business park, and along several multi-family developments.

Community engagement is a major initiative for the CID. Staff keeps public informed from the very beginning of a project. They also post public meeting notes on their website to keep residents and business in the loop.

They send public meeting invites to Homeowners Associations to ensure they are maximizing their scope of public involvement. The CID typically includes a couple of neighborhood representatives on their stakeholder committees as well. These initiatives empower residents because it keeps them informed about commercial and residential developments which helps to quell potentially negative perceptions.

In talking with Town Center staff and observing the physical environment, Cherokee staff learned the value of public input in gaining trust—especially for trail projects. Also reinforced was the importance of tracking a community's truck traffic. In the CIDs case, there was not need for a truck ordinance due to the small amount of trucks present and their limited radius. Nonetheless, there is value in the practice.



## City of Peachtree Corners

Peachtree Corners is a recently incorporated city in Gwinnett County with a population of approximately 43,000. It is located northeast of Doraville and Norcross, and south of Johns Creek. A dense suburban community that includes a mix of residential, commercial, and light/heavy industrial, Peachtree Corners was first incorporated in 2011, but has long been a magnet for families and businesses. Peachtree Corners remains a densely built-out suburban area with Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Peachtree Parkway serving as the city's main thoroughfares. Industry is prevalent in the southwest corner, and at various parts along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Peachtree Parkway is comprised of commercial establishments, business parks, and serves as an access point to many of the city's single-family subdivisions. On February 5, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Jeff Conkle and Diana Wheeler of the Community Development department.

Soon after incorporation, Peachtree Corners developed a roadmap to guide future development in their 2033 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan divided the city into several character areas—Regional Mixed-Use, Corridor Mixed-Use, Preferred Office, Mixed Housing Types, and Chattahoochee River Area. A major success for the city was the formation of a public-private partnership with Fuqua Development for a mixed-use center. The city purchased land that would later be zoned to Central Business District (and was originally planned as an apartment complex), sent out an RFP, and was able to secure a partnership with Fuqua. Peachtree Corners sold off the potentially profitable parts of the property to Fuqua, while paying for parking decks with SPLOST funding. The Town Center development features 51,000 square feet of restaurant space, 18,570 square feet of commercial, and 70 residential units. It also includes an amphitheater and greenspace to improve the community feel. The public-private partnership is a vehicle that brought a development partner who helped to attract retail and provided the community with a much-needed sense of place.

Other important strategies are simple changes to zoning ordinances. In Peachtree Corners, industrial areas lie fairly close to some residential neighborhoods, but there is not much opposition thanks to certain uses banned from designated parts of the city. A 2012 zoning ordinance banned certain uses on M-1 zoned property in the city's CBD. Prohibited uses include automobile repair shops, self-storage facilities, truck rental centers, and cold storage plants. Architectural/design standards have also naturally weeded out many incompatible uses. These strategies have helped Peachtree Corners maintain a healthy separation of uses, even as they continue growing from the already developed area they once were—which is a lesson Southwest Cherokee can learn from.



## City of Suwanee

The city of Suwanee is located in Gwinnett County, approximately 35 miles northeast of Atlanta. Formerly a rural community, the area has grown into a thriving suburban city over the past three decades. Suwanee is bordered by Fulton County to the north, Sugar Hill to the east, Duluth to the west and I-85 to the south. On February 5, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with Kylie Adams and Alyssa Durden of Suwanee's Planning and Inspections department.



Due to Suwanee's developed status, the city seeks to preserve the industrial corridors because they help keep the tax base stabilized and are major employment hubs. Suwanee is experiencing a demand increase for multi-family development, making it critical to accommodate growth while maintaining community character. In the 1990s, Suwanee, like Southwest Cherokee currently, was primarily suburban with incompatible uses significantly buffered from each other—buffers that remain today. Up through the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and after, smarter growth became a priority for the city.



In 2005, the Suwanee Downtown Development Authority (DDA) formed a public-private partnership with Terwilliger Pappas to create a mixed-use building on 3.5 acres owned by the DDA. The project produced Suwanee's new city hall, which was paid for by the partnership and many commercial developments to serve the growing population. While Suwanee maintains a suburban style development, Town Center provides a sense of place with access to amenities, compact housing and green space. Meanwhile, it respects the surrounding character areas. Buffering has proved successful in Suwanee. Suwanee also counts political support as a success. With several city council members possessing a planning and/or sustainability, Suwanee enjoys political support for planning legislation and initiatives. They had no issue attracting retail, since there are so many commercial nodes near the city's boundaries—a valuable insight Cherokee County has come to learn.



While Suwanee's current challenges primarily involve addressing blight on the southern side of the city, their successes thanks to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, buffering practices and political support were valuable takeaways from the meeting

## Fulton Industrial CID

The Fulton Industrial District lies on the southwestern edge of Fulton County and sits along the Chattahoochee River. Since the late 1950s it has been a hub for industry, and is one of the densest industrial developments in the metro area. Fulton Industrial Boulevard is the district's main thoroughfare. Most of the district is part of the Boulevard Community Improvement District (CID). On February 1, 2019, Cherokee Planning and Zoning staff met with the Gil Prado, director of the Boulevard CID, to discuss the district's successes and challenges.

A major success has been the creation of the Boulevard CID in 2009, which allowed a more localized jurisdiction to implement changes tailored specifically to the industrial area. This includes an environmental justice ordinance, alternative truck routes, and landscaping requirements around businesses. Aesthetics are a major part of the district's success as well, including public art installations, gateway signage, and wayfinding signage.

Challenges include improving the district's reputation, especially among residents in newly incorporated South Fulton, as well as attracting additional retail. Boulevard CID claims that there are not enough residential rooftops to attract a grocery store or other major retailer. While the crime rate has improved, Fulton Industrial's reputation persists as an over-industrial gritty area.

Through this meeting, Cherokee County staff learned that alternative truck routes are a potentially effective way of limiting industrial encroachment and that community engagement can foster peace between residents and businesses, and help quell perceptions of the area's safety and value. Finally, we learned that area planning, such as this document, should steer us away from industrial development if necessary.



# The Plan

## SW Cherokee Vision

This vision describes the desired future for the SW Cherokee area based on the community values, assets and needs identified through this plan. As the community evolves, there will be new opportunities and challenges. This vision statement will help us to stay focused on where we are going and guide the decisions of local leaders toward that future.

SW Cherokee has transitioned from an agricultural to a “bedroom” community while maintaining a relatively spacious feel. Newer subdivisions have brought even more people to live in SW Cherokee. In recent years, it has also attracted light industry and other businesses along Highway 92. Having a clear community vision is crucial in order to ensure an excellent quality of life in SW Cherokee, while expanding business opportunities and protecting the unique, natural environment of the area.

The vision for SW Cherokee is a connected community with diverse housing, employment and amenities—allowing people to “live, work and play” here. A variety of housing types and amenities will serve existing residents and the increasing newcomers. Varying land uses throughout the area will help to create a developed spine along Highway 92 with adjacent housing that decreases in intensity as you move away from the roadway. Everyone may enjoy a mixed-use center with a public plaza and restaurants, but the area will also retain some of the existing spacious character. As the area continues to grow, more people will have the option to live and work in SW Cherokee plus have access to natural resources such as the Corps Property, Kellogg Creek, and numerous parks and trails. All these factors contribute to the future of SW Cherokee as a welcoming community.

### *Vision Statement*

***GROW** SW Cherokee into an even better place to call home and do business by capitalizing on the great schools, transportation network, and outdoor recreation opportunities that make the area unique.*

***FOCUS** on SW Cherokee Core Values:*

- *Diversity of Land Uses*
- *Connections to Opportunity*
- *Quality Infrastructure and Services*
- *Access to Greenspace & Recreation*
- *Friendly & Safe Community*

## Diversity of Land Uses

Implementing smart land use policies will help SW Cherokee achieve its vision. Cherokee remains overwhelmingly comprised of single-family detached homes, There are a few townhouses and almost no multifamily developments. This makes it difficult to have enough rooftops in the area to support other forms of retail and amenities that existing residents want. Having an array of land uses helps to meet the future needs of this area while accommodating the projected growth in an efficient manner. Ideally, the more intensive uses would be organized along Highway 92 with greenspace and the intensity would diminish the farther you moved away from 92.

### Attracting Retail and Amenities

SW Cherokee faces a few issues when it comes to attracting retail and amenities to the area, especially regarding grocery stores. Based on current business models, grocers expect typical households to be willing to drive up to three miles to a grocery store. Our market study confirms that nearly every household in SW Cherokee is already within three miles of at least one grocery store. The amount of retail development just outside the study area is also preventing additional amenities from moving in.

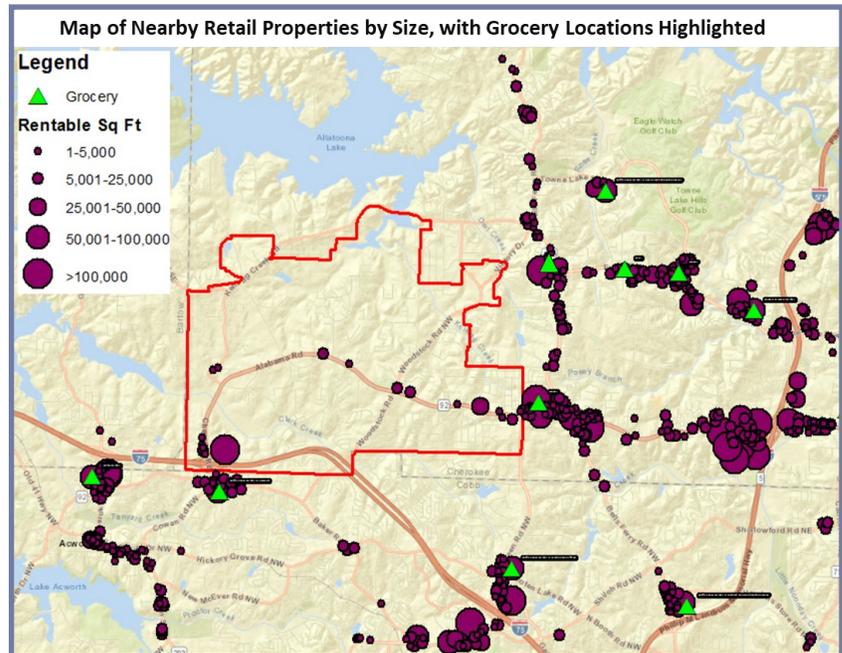
Commercial nodes around Bells Ferry Road, the Acworth city limits, Cowan Road, Shiloh Road, and Towne Lake Parkway have kept amenities and their developers at bay. Also complicating matters is the lower population density in SW Cherokee compared to the more developed adjacent areas. Another issue is land availability for retail. Property along Highway 92 is being developed for either industrial or residential. The Highway 92 Overlay allows townhomes at 6 units per acre by right and this has fueled a townhome boom. If this trend is left to continue all of the suitable sites for retail will be already developed by the time there are enough households (i.e. rooftops) to interest retailers.

### Creating a Live/Work/Play Environment

A theme consistent throughout our public meetings was a desire for a live/work/play community. Current zoning makes this difficult to accomplish. The Highway 92 Village Overlay has not provided as much guidance as expected for creating this type of environment. Besides providing a sense of place and community center, a mixed-use center could also be a catalyst for attracting additional amenities. Like the Town Center development in the city of Peachtree Corners, now home to thirteen restaurants, shops and other businesses with twelve more scheduled to open in the coming months. While it would require a large parcel, a mixed-use development could help attract amenities, greenspace and higher-density housing.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Revise the Highway 92 Village Ordinance to prevent development of prime sites for residential.
- Consider strategies to reserve key sites by working with the Cherokee Office of Economic Development.
- Actively recruit desired development for mixed-use and a live/work/play atmosphere.



## Connections to Opportunity

SW Cherokee's economic base has been growing since the early 2000s, attracting light industry, warehouses, and modern manufacturing companies. SW Cherokee has added more than 1.3 million square feet of new industrial and commercial development since 2010—an average of 165,000 square feet per year. At the same time, all of these new companies have many new jobs in the area. These new jobs are well paid with the average skilled wage in Cherokee 75 Corporate Park is \$72,000 per year, while the average unskilled wage is \$36,000 per year.



### Making Connections

Helping people make Connections to Opportunity is a huge part of the “live work play” mission of this area but there are challenges to making this happen. Since 2000, the community has attracted newer residents who typically have education and skills suited to white-collar jobs. As a result, there is somewhat of a mismatch in the skills of these local residents and the majority of new jobs created by the manufacturing and warehouse development.

It is probably unrealistic to expect that all of these new jobs would be filled by people living in the SW Cherokee Study Area. There is such good transportation access to this area that the jobs are likely to be filled by residents of all three counties, Bartow, Cherokee and Cobb. Going forward, it is important to make SW Cherokee residents aware of these job opportunities and dispel some of the myths about pay and working conditions at these businesses.

### Supporting Our Success

The 2015 Opportunity Cherokee Plan from the Cherokee County Office of Economic Development (COED) described five target markets that COED would focus on to bring jobs to Cherokee County. These target markets are: Advanced Manufacturing, Commercial Developers, Corporate Operations, Film & Media, and Information Technology. COED has been very successful at attracting Advanced Manufacturers, Commercial Developers and Corporate Operations to Cherokee County, with the majority coming to SW Cherokee. All of this development and job creation helps the whole county by diversifying our economy. A multitude of benefits come from this type of development including a more sustainable tax base, quality jobs available to county residents and reduced demand for government services compared to residential development. The County should continue to support this type of development in places that make sense for the community.

### Local/community-friendly Businesses

One of the challenges experienced by both Cherokee County and other jurisdictions around metro Atlanta is the perception and presence of light industrial and manufacturing companies. It is not uncommon for residents to have a negative view of these land uses. However, as we learned from the Fulton Industrial District and Town Center CID, an important part of community-friendliness means reaching out to residents and having open dialogue to improve communication and promote working together to resolve community issues.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Hold/reserve smaller parcels for office/flex or mixed-use development—especially for small businesses to grow
- Promote the overall benefits of industry's presence in the neighborhood, especially in regards to salary, experience, etc

## Quality Infrastructure and Services

As SW Cherokee adds more amenities and new residents move here, the infrastructure must be updated. New demands need to be met regarding connectivity, transportation and school planning. The primary infrastructure issues facing SW Cherokee are a lack of sidewalks and bike facilities, lack of road connectivity, and potential for overcrowded schools. These areas must be addressed to fulfill SW Cherokee's vision as a livable community.



### Pedestrian/Sidewalks

Currently, very few sidewalks exist in SW Cherokee except along Highway 92 and sporadically along secondary roads. Some of the newer residential developments have them internally but they may or may not connect to other parts of the area. Many residents want to feel safer while walking around SW Cherokee but they are discouraged by the current state of affairs. Sidewalks not only provide this safety but also help emphasize connectivity and improve the aesthetic quality of the neighborhood.

### Bicycle Facilities

In general, the narrow 4 to 5 foot wide sidewalks found around SW Cherokee are not safe for use by bicycle riders. They are too narrow to be safe when a pedestrian and cyclist meet or pass. There is a significant need in this area for facilities that can accommodate bicycles. In the community preference survey, the attendees preferred separated bike paths or trails over on-street facilities like bike lanes. This will be a challenge since the trails may require the County to acquire additional right-of-way or easements, which can add cost to such projects.

### New/Improved Roads

Thanks to the increasing traffic and age of the infrastructure, road improvements should be prioritized to ensure the safety of residents and people traveling through the area. This will be especially important as development and the general population increases. New roads that extend from neighborhoods onto Highway 92 or secondary roads could be valuable in improving connectivity.

### School Quality

Oak Grove and Clark Creek Elementary Schools are great schools, but they are either overcrowded or nearing capacity. Oak Grove is currently at 65 percent capacity while Clark Creek is at 103 percent and now requires trailers to accommodate additional students. It is important for SW Cherokee to communicate with the Cherokee County School District (CCSD) to understand population projections that could affect the number of incoming students, plans for school expansions, or potential new schools to maintain the quality reputation of SW Cherokee's schools.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Develop an alternative transportation plan for SW Cherokee that maps out potential sidewalk and bicycle routes that connect neighborhoods and amenities
- Ensure the SW Cherokee Plan is incorporated into the next Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update so major transportation improvements can be planned for this area.
- Continue to identify and implement project-related transportation improvements through the rezoning and land disturbance process.
- Coordinate with CCSD to monitor SW Cherokee student demographics and enrollment projections

## *Access to Greenspace and Recreation*

Natural resources and greenspaces are some of Cherokee County's most valuable assets, so it is important to promote policies that allow for their development and preservation in SW Cherokee. There are currently no County developed parks, trails or recreational areas in the study area. Only limited parts of the Army Corps property in SW Cherokee is accessible to the public. Much of it is either leased to private groups or designated for wildlife management with no public access. There is tremendous opportunity to take advantage of the area's natural resources and open space if we focus on the development of a variety of parks and trails for SW Cherokee.



But it's not simply about blindly developing open spaces. An integral part of greenspace, trails, and park development is understanding the demographics of SW Cherokee—particularly age. SW Cherokee has many seniors and an increasing number of families with children, so providing activities that fit this age range is crucial to satisfying the entire community.

### Need for Parks, Greenspace and Facilities

Creating a vibrant connected community means giving residents access to parks and recreational areas to enjoy and maintain health. This area has already been identified in the new Cherokee County Recreation, Parks, Greenspace and Trails Master Plan as underserved and in need of active and passive park areas. The Plan specifically suggested some athletic fields and an indoor recreation center. The exact location has not been determined but the County owns several pieces of property that may be suitable. This issue came up at several of the public meetings. There was a sense that there needed to be more study done in order to determine the best types of facilities and amenities. Some meeting attendees were concerned that too much resources would be invested in ball fields to serve a few while a wider range of recreation options was needed due to the changing demographics of the area.

Based on community input from the public meeting charrette, ideal park locations could be the Thompson property along Kellogg Creek Road and/or the Dunn property along Highway 92. It is important to keep in mind that the County will have to consider a range of issues before settling on a park site. This area needs more study in order to evaluate different sites and consider the costs and benefits of each to the SW Cherokee area and the County as a whole.

### Access

A critical part of greenspace development is ensuring public access to parks, trails and recreational fields. This especially holds true for the Army Corps property in northern SW Cherokee. The property borders several existing neighborhoods and would benefit residents who may want to easily access Lake Allatoona. It may be a challenge to gain access to certain parts of the Army Corps property but the results will be worth the effort, especially to build a trail network.

### Trails Development

There are currently no trails in SW Cherokee. Trails would allow people to enjoy SW Cherokee's natural resources while connecting neighborhoods, amenities and parks together. The charrette groups proposed trails that followed Kellogg Creek out to the Army Corps property and along Woodstock Road. Trails could connect Highway 92 with neighborhoods, retail, work centers, and schools. The Cherokee County Development Authority is also planning to develop trails connecting to

Cherokee 75. This will provide residents and workers with the ability to walk to work or a mixed-use center. It will also improve neighborhood cohesiveness, because people would be able to talk to parks/amenities, rather than drive there.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Assist Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Agency to evaluate park sites and find funding for the SW Cherokee park.
- Develop a detailed trail plan for SW Cherokee to refine potential trails identified by the community.
- Build relationship with Army Corps of Engineers and be involved in the update to the Lake Allatoona Master Plan.

## *Friendly Community*

SW Cherokee is a close-knit community with established residents and newcomers, an increasing number of white-collar jobs and valuable natural resources. These elements contribute to the welcoming community atmosphere, neighborhood pride and a desire for SW Cherokee to become the best it can be. Maintaining a welcoming community requires several initiatives—

- Creating a 'sense of place' that displays the community name and landmarks through signage
- Developing a mixed-use center that provides a central hub for the community and businesses
- Implementing code enforcement standards that prevent blight and encourage aesthetics in development



### Sense of Place/Signage/Local Org

Creating a sense of place means to build and maintain an inclusive community that residents/businesses are proud to be a part of. As seen in some of the case studies, gateway and wayfinding signage is an excellent way to create a sense of place because they literally label the community and highlight its main attractions, industries and amenities. The Fulton Industrial District uses public art, gateway signage and landscaping to signify the community boundary. The Town Center area contains many signs pointing pedestrians and drivers to important business centers and commercial areas like Town Center Mall. The improvements in both of these areas are driven by Community Improvement Districts (CID). The Woodstock Greenprints Alliance offers another local example of an organization that formed to push the implementation of a plan with great success, especially working in partnership with the city government. SW Cherokee needs an organization to champion these changes as long as it is driven by locals.

### Mixed-Use Center

Many thriving communities have a central location that serves as a hub for businesses and activities. Whether they are redeveloped or built from scratch, a mixed-use center provides space for businesses, public plazas and activities/performances—and even residents. Many suburban mixed-use centers are the result of public-private partnerships, where the jurisdiction forms an alliance with a private developer. The City of Suwanee's Town Center is one example, and consists of a 63-acre development that houses government offices, specialty shops and a 1,000 seat amphitheater. By

serving as a space for businesses, leisure activity and community events, a mixed-use center would make SW Cherokee feel more vibrant and community-oriented.

### Blight/Code Enforcement

Despite improvements thanks to the SW Cherokee Opportunity Zone, blight is still present in the community as residents can attest. In addition to promoting signage and mixed-use centers, addressing blighted properties that are an eyesore to neighborhoods will also help to improve SW Cherokee's sense of place and demonstrate the care and pride of the residents and business owners.

### **Policies/Strategies**

- Establish design guidelines and development standards (possibly as part of the revised Highway 92 Village Ordinance) that hold developers accountable for satisfactory building aesthetics
- Assist local residents and business leaders to form a group or committee that includes representatives from neighborhoods and businesses in the area who help direct resources to SW Cherokee
- Explore the feasibility/possibility of forming a public-private partnership for the creation of a mixed-use center
- Establish an ordinance/policy for wayfinding and gateway signage that marks the boundaries and important locations of SW Cherokee
- Work with the County Marshal on code enforcement in SW Cherokee, especially on blighted properties to improve housing conditions and community aesthetics
- Promote business-community activities that allow companies to teach residents about their mission, role in the community, and potential job opportunities.

# Community Elements

## Map Development

### Overview

This section of the Southwest Cherokee Plan contains the final products of a robust community engagement process. Five detailed, individual land use maps as well as one combination of them are the end results of a group process that gathered public input through a graphical exercise known as a community charrette.

### What is a Community Charrette?

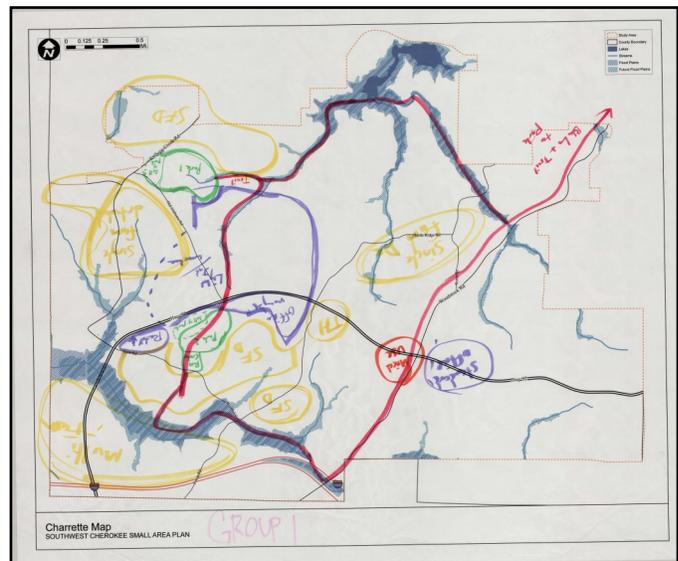
A community charrette, or workshop, is a quick and intensive design exercise organized by a facilitator but defined by the expressions and ideas of the community. Participants debate and affirm proposals that address pressing local issues using physical materials to rapidly, and oftentimes roughly, communicate intentions through graphical means. Typical outcomes of this process are hand drawn maps and diagrams which are then used by organizers to develop a refined community vision.

### Background of Our Community Charrette

On April 24, 2019, a community charrette was held during the last public meeting of the small area planning process. Open to the general public and attended by members of both the Stakeholder Committee and Board of Commissioners, three groups were formed with staff facilitators at each tasked with generating ideas towards an overall vision for Southwest Cherokee. Through this process, planners sought to gain a consensus on suitable areas for specific land uses as well as the establishment and expansion of transportation networks, including those for pedestrians and cyclists.

### The Charrette Process

To begin, staff prepared large base maps for each charrette group featuring useful information such as roadways, environmental constraints, infrastructure and other community assets to be used as references. Other maps with zoning, existing land use and future land use were also made available. A single sheet of clear paper was provided to each group to overlay these reference maps, capturing the community vision of each group through drawn responses to a sequence of exercises. Facilitators explained the charrette process and helped groups navigate through each step, marking the overlaid clear paper map with representational colors for each task.



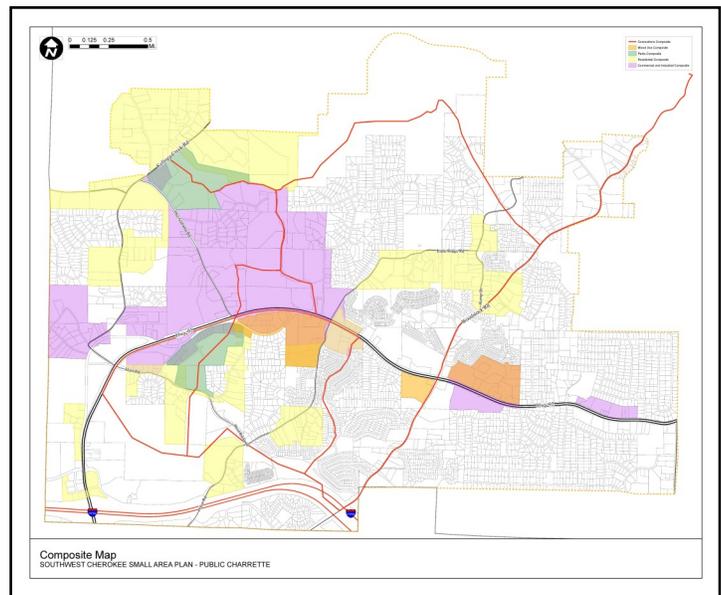
Charrette map showing a group's five exercise responses

The five main exercises of our charrette process were:

1. Identifying a site for a community park with an indoor recreation center, indicated on each group map with the color green. The location should be approximately 40-to-50 acres, serve a 1-to-3 mile radius, include a mix of active and passive activities for all ages. Groups were asked to think about how location fits with features on the base maps.
2. Selecting a location for a mixed-use center on 15-to-30 acres and considering transportation and access, relationships to existing businesses and residences and how the location fits with features on the base map. Orange was the identifying color for a mixed use center.
3. Locating areas for business expansion and work place centers was done with purple. Groups described the type of development desired, considered transportation and access, relationships to existing businesses and residences and how the location/s fit with features on the base maps.
4. Identifying areas for new residential development with yellow markings while considering transportation, access, relationships to other land uses and how the locations fit with features of the base maps. The type of residential development desired was described at each location.
5. Choosing routes for new trails and roadways. Groups established desired pedestrian networks with red lines and were asked to show any sought after roadway connections.

### Outcomes and Finalization of Maps

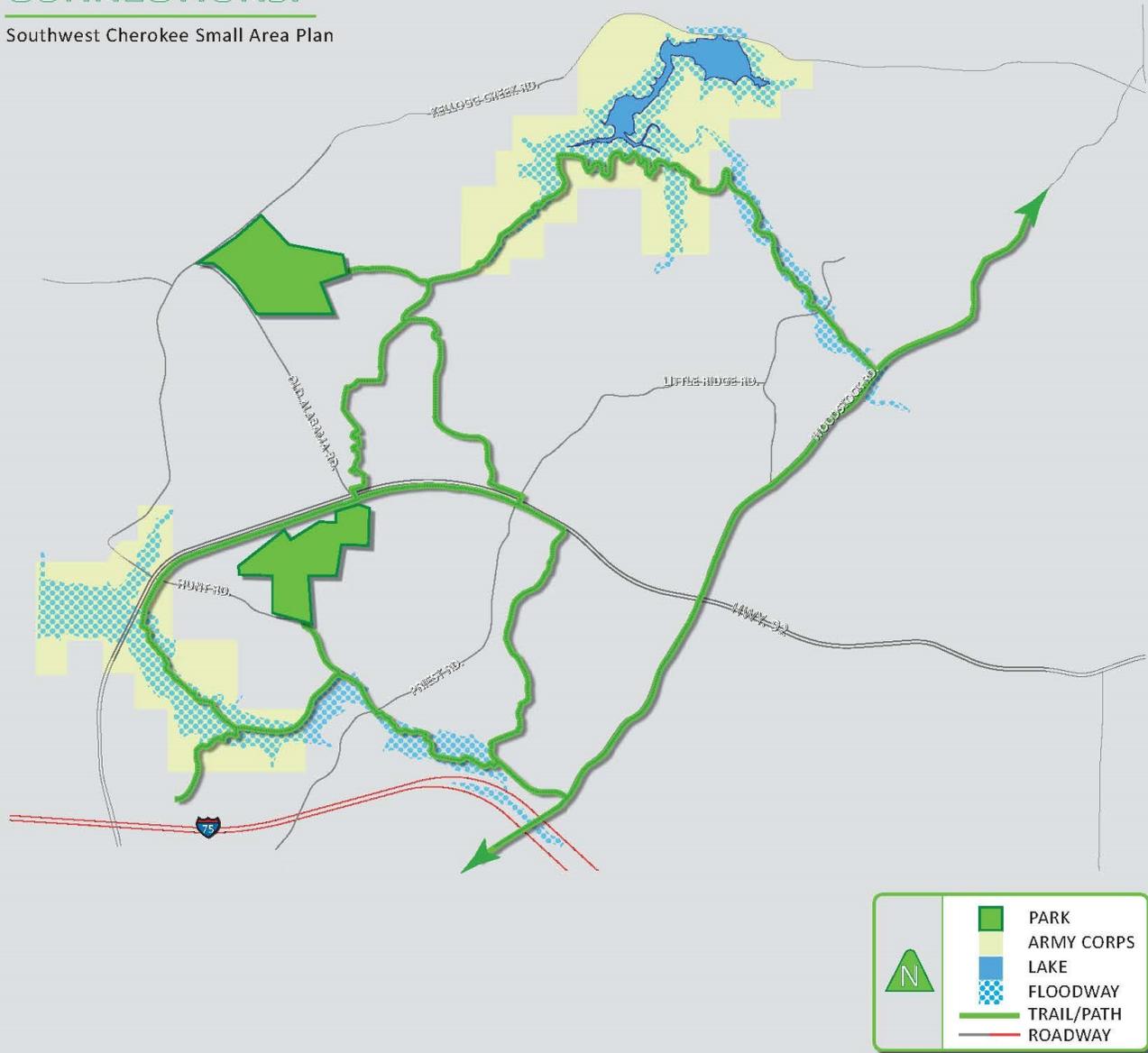
Following the five exercises of the community charrette, each group appointed a spokesperson to present their single map to all meeting attendees. A question and comment period was held before staff gathered the maps for review and processing. These were then scanned and digitized, geographically aligned and combined to a single map, using majority rule where any group's land uses may have been in conflict. Gaps on the composite map that were not identified by the groups for any particular land use were then filled in with appropriate uses by staff. These decisions



were made based upon knowledge of incoming projects, practicality of uses and development expectations of certain areas, consultation with elected leadership and so on. Charrette results and draft maps were then shared with the stakeholder committee and further refined before public presentation to the Board of Commissioners at the May 21, 2019 Work Session. Maps reflecting all final comments are found on the following pages. High ranking images from the Community Preference Survey corresponding to each land use are also included with these maps.

# GREENSPACE. RECREATION. CONNECTIONS.

## Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan

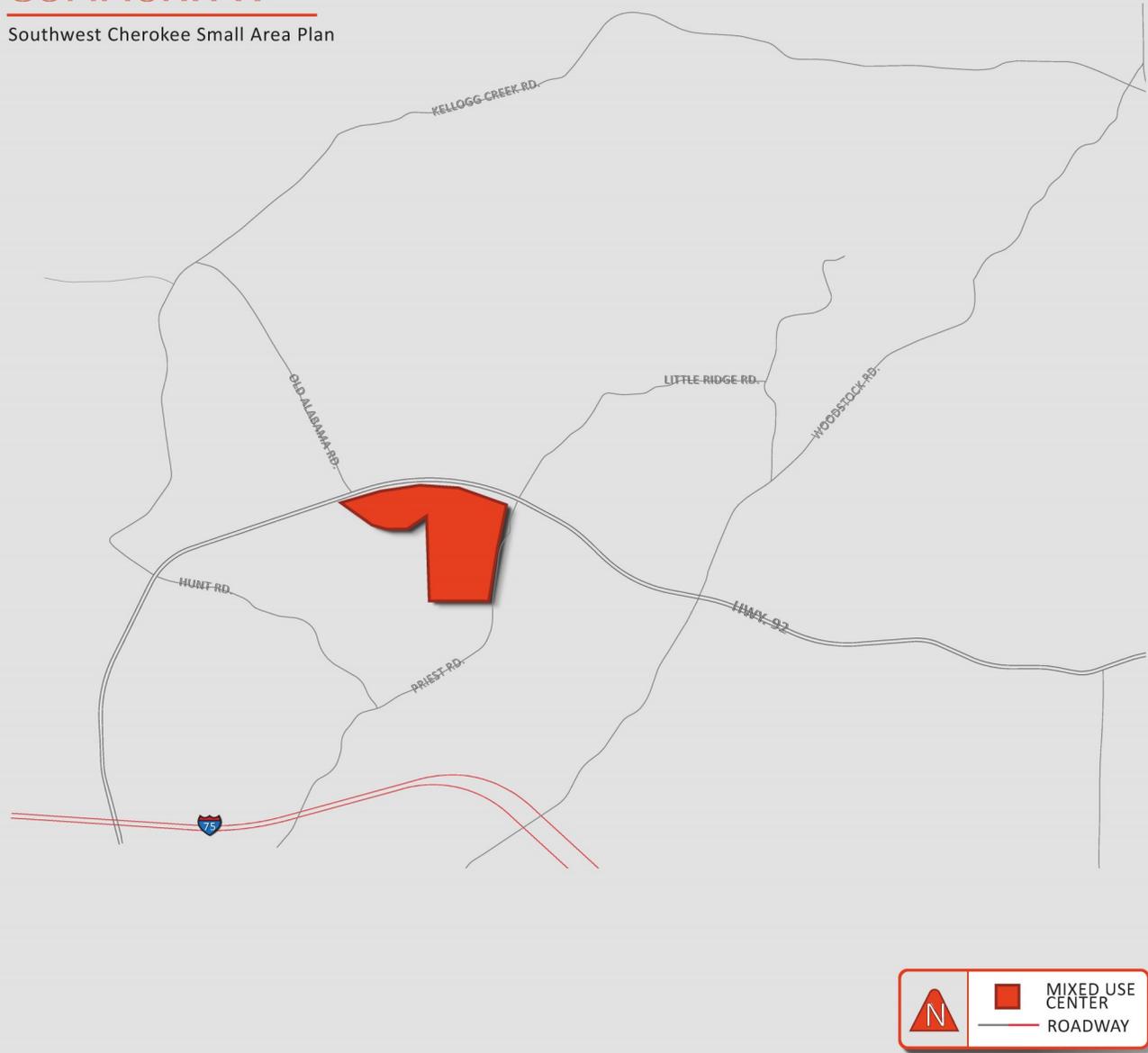


With limited accessible greenspace in SW Cherokee and an expressed demand, there are numerous opportunities available. Corps of Engineers land encircling Lake Allatoona along with undevelopable floodplain make suitable corridors for trails to link homes, jobs, schools, recreation and future mixed use centers. Some County-owned land may also be suitable for outdoor and indoor recreation facilities.



MIXED USE.  
LIVE-WORK-PLAY.  
COMMUNITY.

Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan

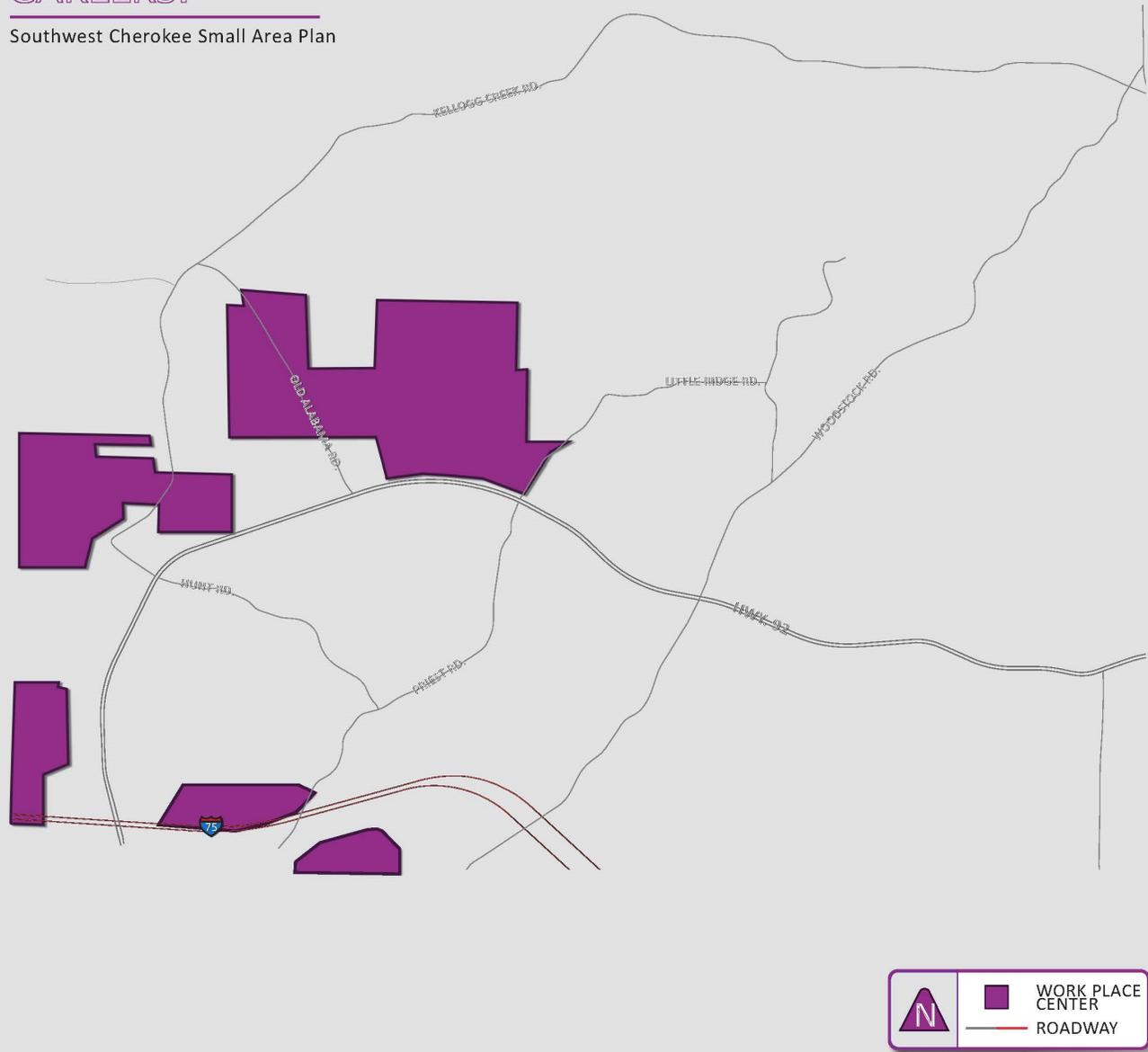


SW Cherokee lacks a distinct community core and affords few opportunities for public events, shopping and leisure. This could be realized with a mixed use center with a mixture of retail, office, restaurant, residential and civic uses likely featuring a public gathering space. A new, mixed use development may rise between 2-4 stories, include well landscaped and walkable streets with buildings of a variety of architectural styles.



# WORK PLACE CENTERS. PRODUCTION. CAREERS.

Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan

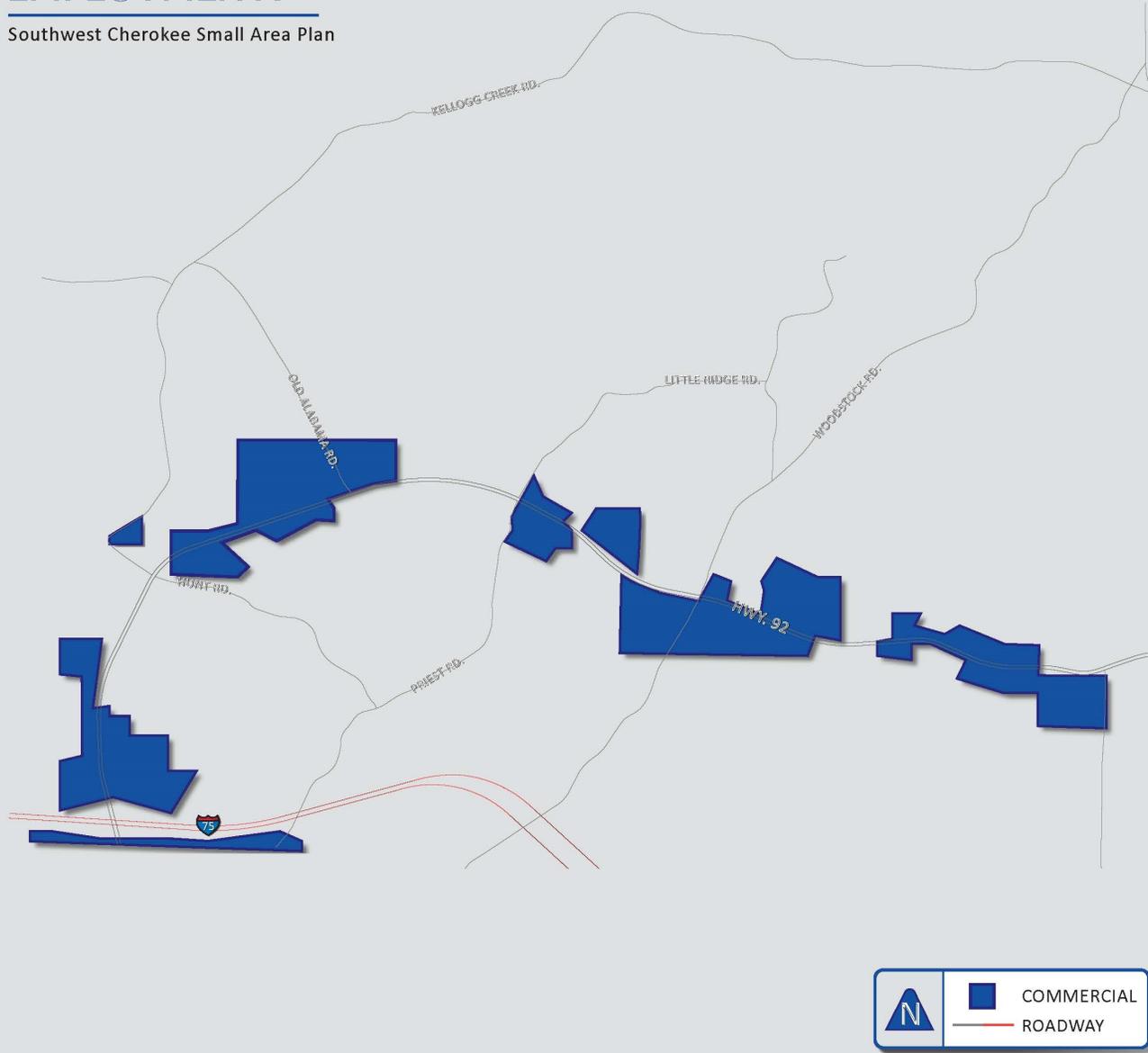


Work Place Centers offer diverse, quality jobs located in general offices, flex buildings and light industrial facilities. These easily access major thoroughfares but do not overrun residential neighborhoods with the intensity of use decreasing with proximity to residences. These areas are characterized by substantial perimeter buffering, quality landscapes and architecture as well as compatible lighting and truck traffic.



# COMMERCIAL ENTERTAINMENT. EMPLOYMENT.

## Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan

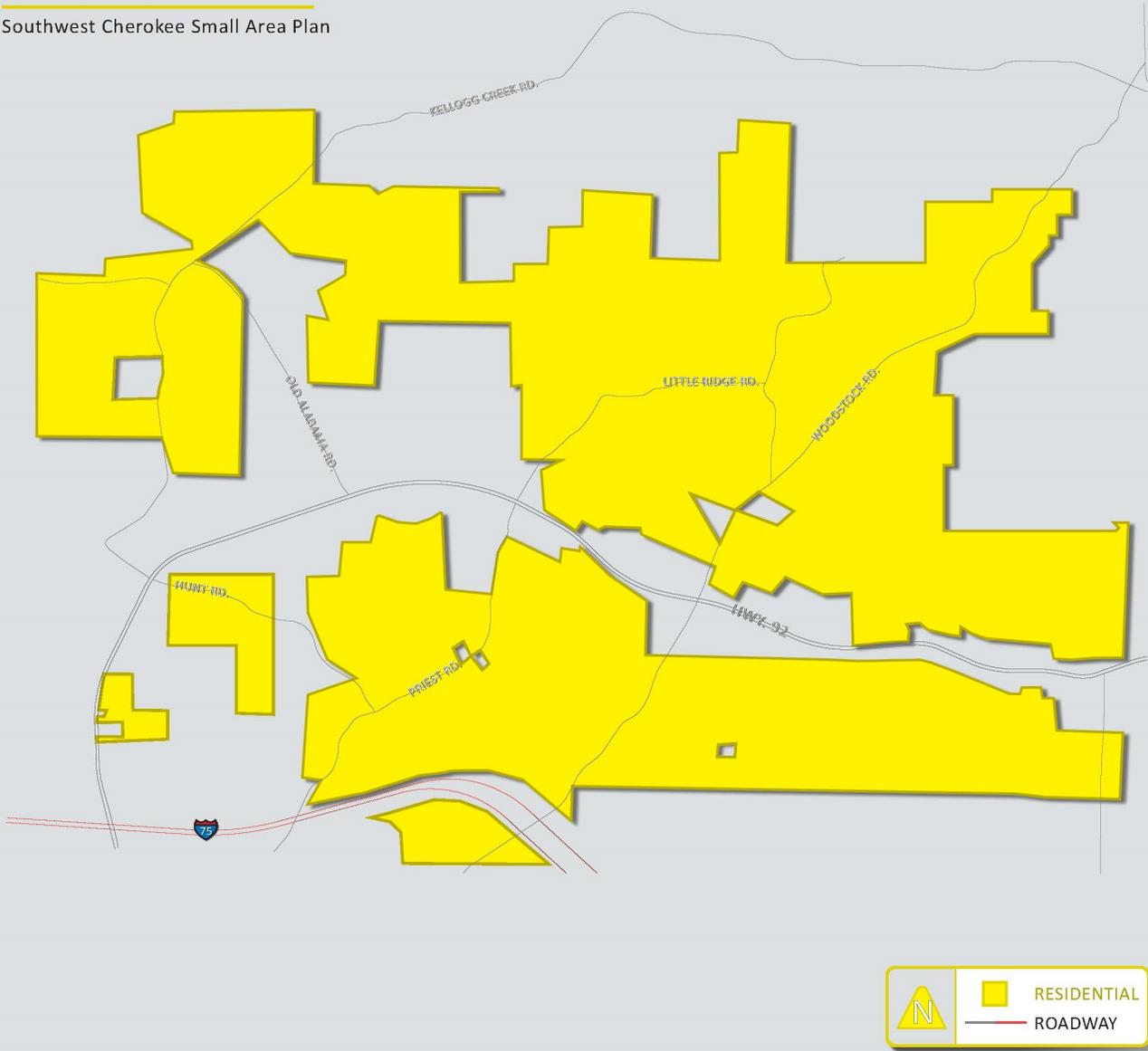


SW Cherokee has limited commercial resources with many residents and workers traveling outside the area for basic goods and services, even jobs. New centers of various sizes, comprised of restaurants, grocers, retail, services and office/flex space may locate in selected areas along Highway 92. Physical characteristics include walkability, superior landscaping and various architectural forms and materials.



# RESIDENTIAL. NEIGHBORHOODS HOMES.

Southwest Cherokee Small Area Plan



SW Cherokee has is an accessible, largely residential area marked by open space with recent development increasing the housing stock for single family homes and townhomes. No significant multi-family units existing. Growth will be spread throughout the area with larger, denser development concentrated on major roadways and within mixed use centers. Architecture should be tradition in nature with landscaped, walkable streets.





# Vision into Action

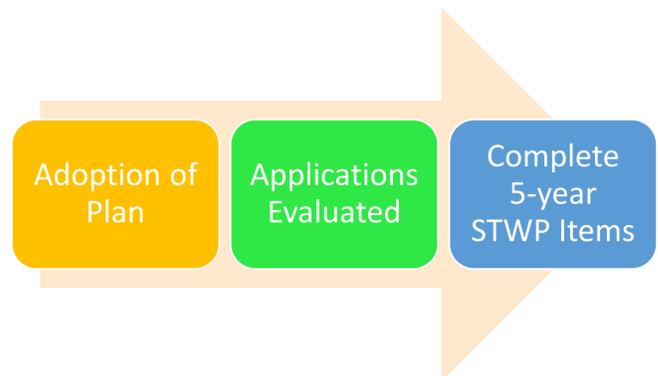
## Vision into Action

The vision section outlined SW Cherokee’s core values and strategies to achieve them along with challenges we may encounter. This plan’s final step is to put that vision into action. In short, this is a three-step process with many detailed steps in between.

First, the plan will be adopted as an amendment to the Cherokee County Comprehensive Plan, meaning it will become a the primary guide for the development of residential SW Cherokee. Upon adoption, this plan will be used to evaluate rezoning applications and development proposals for the area. Finally, the plan will help guide the implementation of items listed in the 5-year Short Term Work Plan (SWTP). For example, this list includes changes to county regulations (Zoning Ordinance and possibly Development Regulations), initiatives to improve the esthetics of the area and efforts to market the area for the desired types of development.

Upon adoption, this plan will serve as the guide for development and rezoning proposals in SW Cherokee. This new criteria will trickle down to many different planning decisions made by the developer and county staff. For example, a developer may propose a building plan that will reflect updated density and design requirements. The structure may contain more windows and a variety of building materials to meet the new standards, whereas this criteria would not have been required prior to the area plan’s adoption.

Carrying out SW Cherokee’s vision will require continued community engagement in land use planning, refining plans for greenspace, mixed-use, and other developments, and various analyses and steps depending on the particular action item listed in the plan. It will also require real estate analysis and planning to track supply and demand for retail and mixed-use development. These initiatives will occur over the next five years, during which many development projects will be proposed. Demographic and economic shifts may happen as well, so it is critical that the SWTP progress is monitored along with that of the area plan in general.



# Short Term Work Plan (2019-2023)

This section of the plan describes specific projects that came from the Core Issues section that are important to fully implementing the SW Cherokee Plan. The SWTP takes these items a step further by providing a timeframe, estimated cost, and responsible party for when each initiative. The STWP should be updated annually to will reflect the progress achieved toward the vision.

Project Description	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party
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## *Land Use Regulations*

Evaluate and revise current Highway 92 Village Overlay standards	X	X				Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
Revise Future Development Map to reflect desired land uses and zoning in SW Cherokee	X					Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
Develop enhanced buffer standards between industrial and residential development		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning

## *Greenspace, Parks & Trails*

Consolidate and refine trail plans from the CTP and Parks and Rec Master Plan		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
Create a pedestrian and bicycle master plan for SW Cherokee			X	X		Staff Time	Planning & Zoning, Engineering
Support evaluation of sites and design of new Regional Park		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning

## *Transportation*

Conduct a sidewalk survey and gap analysis to addresses on connectivity issues in existing sidewalk network.		X	X			Staff Time	Planning & Zoning, Engineering
Study additional transportation improvements		X	X	X		TBD	Engineering
Find funding for identified capital projects			X	X	X	Staff Time	Engineering, Planning & Zoning

## *Marketing & Recruitment*

Develop Marketing Plan for SW Cherokee that includes ideas for wayfinding and gateway signage		X	X			\$30,000	COED, Planning & Zoning
Target and protect key sites for Mixed Use Center	X	X	X	X	X	TBD	COED, Planning & Zoning
Identify smaller sites for offices and flex-space developments to support small to medium size businesses	X	X	X	X	X	Staff Time	COED, Planning & Zoning

# Appendix

**Market Study prepared by Bleakly Group**