

2019 Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan



Rabun County
City of Clayton
City of Dillard
Town of Tiger
Town of Tallulah Falls
City of Sky Valley
City of Mountain City

Prepared by:
**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This document, the *Rabun County 2019 Joint Comprehensive Plan*, represents the culmination of the efforts to plan for the future well-being for the county, its five municipalities, the residents and various stakeholders by identifying the critical, consensus issues and goals for the community. The purpose of planning and community development is to provide guidance for everyday decision-making by local government officials and other community leaders. Implementing the plan will help the community address those critical issues and opportunities while moving towards realization of the unique vision for its future. As outlined by Georgia's planning standards (see below):

Statewide benefits of comprehensive planning

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

Local benefits of comprehensive planning

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

In short, local planning should recognize that:

- *Assets can be accentuated and improved;*
- *Liabilities can be mitigated and changed over time; and*
- *Potential can be sought after and developed.*

SCOPE

This plan is multi-jurisdictional and represents the land use and community development planning for Rabun County and the municipalities of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls, and Tiger to serve for the planning period 2019 through 2024. Some consideration has also been given to neighboring areas and political entities that influence conditions within the county but unless otherwise indicated all the issues, objectives and opportunities discussed herein are effective solely for Rabun County.

Rabun County lies in Georgia's northeastern corner along the US 441 corridor running between the metropolitan areas of Atlanta, GA and Asheville, NC, with a portion of the county along the borders with both Carolinas. With roughly 21,000 residents Rabun County remains relatively rural, but this location, coupled with investment from Rabun and surrounding counties, has seen

some notable growth in industrial activity. Now the area is looking beyond the existing agricultural character towards a more dynamic future defined by this transportation corridor.

Rabun County features 6 municipalities, 5 of which are aligned along the north/south US 441 corridor as it cuts through the mountains. Clayton is the county seat and largest city, located in the heart of the county. To the south are Tiger and Tallulah Falls, the latter of which sits beside the Tallulah Gorge itself. To the north of Clayton lie Mountain City and Dillard, which bookend the valley known as Rabun Gap and are home to several prominent farms, the Rabun County Industrial Park, and tourist destinations such as Black Rock State Park, the Dillard House, and the Foxfire Museum. Meanwhile, the large golf-club community of Sky Valley is nestled in the mountains overlooking Rabun Gap. Combined these communities represent the final transition from exurban Atlanta to truer Appalachia, with the topography and distance have forced Rabun County to develop a strong independence, and with that a strong sense of pride.

PLAN ELEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

In addition to the required core elements local comprehensive plans in Georgia must also include 1) an assessment of compliance and consideration for the appropriate regional water plans for each community, and 2) an assessment of their broadband capacity. As of July, 2018 the standards for the broadband element have not been established by the State of Georgia. The intention of the measure, however, is to facilitate the “*promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services*” throughout each community in recognition of how vital this technology is for economic development. In an effort to provide advance compliance with this standard the County and municipalities will provide a brief analysis of their needs and objectives regarding broadband technology.

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

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

As a community that has adopted a form of development regulations, Rabun County must also include the necessary land use element within their plan to aid in the coordination of their development policies and capital improvement projects.

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

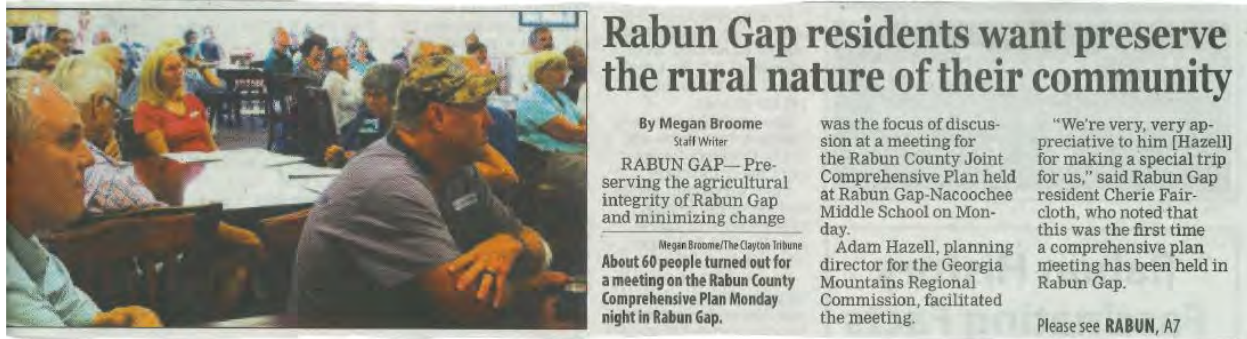
(a) *Character Areas Map and Defining Narrative.* Identify and map the boundaries of existing or potential character areas (see definition in Chapter 110-12-1-.05) covering the entire community, including existing community sub-areas, districts, or neighborhoods.

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

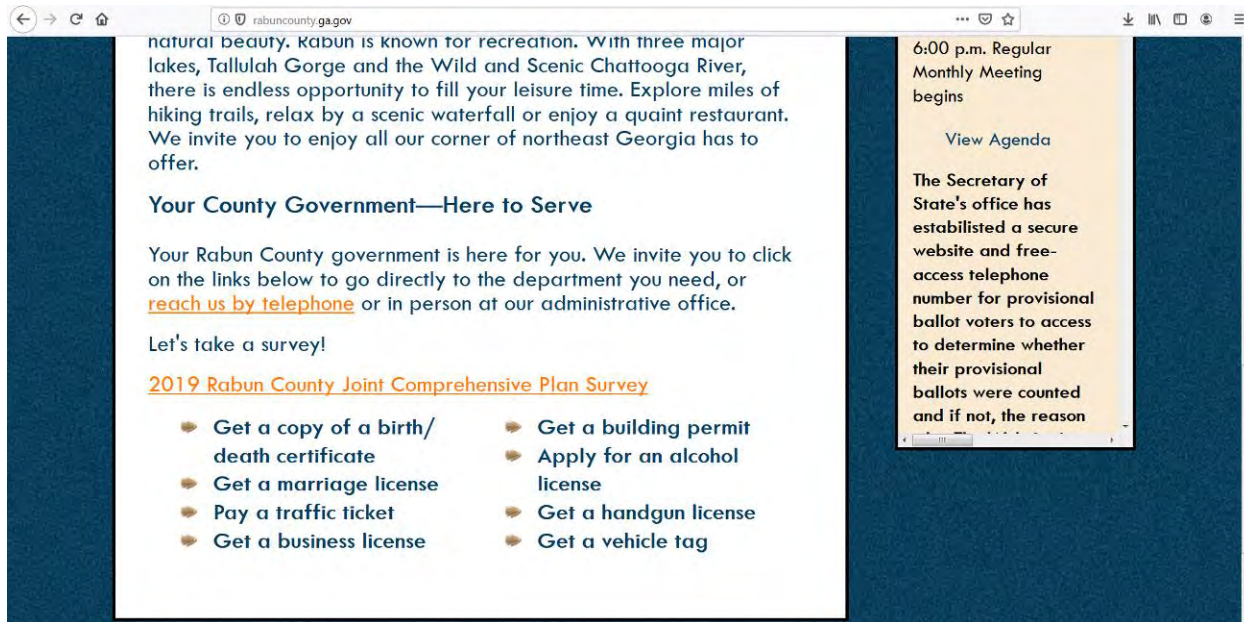
At a minimum, the public participation program must provide for: adequate notice to keep the general public informed of the emerging plan; opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the plan; hold the required public hearings; and, provide notice to property owners through advertisements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



Rabun County's planning process featured an Advisory Committee of 14 people, with various other staff and local officials participating throughout. The Committee met several times to discuss issues, consider updates to material from the existing comprehensive plan, and offering their thoughts on future development concerns. The Committee helped shape the questions and promotion for the online survey process and engaged other area stakeholders to build the discussion about the plan update in general.

A key component of the public involvement process was an online survey opportunity. The survey was shared via web links and promoted on social media and in the local press by the County, the Rabun County Chamber of Commerce, and other local partners. The online survey featured 28 questions and asked respondents to indicate their thoughts and satisfaction levels with various government services, the prospects for growth and development in the area, and to prioritize local needs on matters such as housing, economic development and natural resource protection. In all the survey produced more than 480 unique responses, the information from which was shared with the Advisory Committee and contributed a great deal to the consideration of Rabun County's values and priorities.

In addition to the online survey, several public meetings were held throughout the county throughout the summer, with at least one meeting in each jurisdiction. Attendance at these forums varied from several participants to one event with more than 60 people. Each meeting offered a brief overview of the comprehensive planning documents and process, then moved on to gather public input regarding needs and issues, SWOT analyses, and ultimately recommendations on how to take Rabun County forward. While each meeting focused on the host jurisdiction comments and questions were welcome about any participating community. (*A summary of survey results can be found in the appendix.*)



Several key themes were overwhelmingly popular among each form of public input, themes which resonated from recent issues that faced much the entire county since the previous comprehensive plan was completed in 2014.

- **Government Communication & Transparency** – Since 2014 the County and municipalities struggled to resolve their differences with the Service Delivery Strategy, leaving all governments without their QLG status for several years. This despite strong citizen protests and various outside experts brought in to help the process. As a result the residents across each jurisdiction called for efforts going forward that would endow greater openness and communication from their leaders, both to each other and with the public at large.
- **Retain the Area's Rural Character** – Even far removed from the exurban reaches of Atlanta residents of Rabun County have become aware of the balance required between seeking economic growth and dramatically altering what makes their community special. Rabun is distinct among most of Georgia in their mountainous nature, with almost 75% of the county given over to forest and the prominent foothills of Appalachia. People cherish how this setting provides scenic beauty, serene rural tranquility, and keeps the communities for now unique and connected to their past. Some growth and economic opportunity is desired, but should be pursued in a manner that builds upon the area's rural context and doesn't see the US 441 corridor become an anonymous cluster of chain commercial outlets.
- **Be Efficient in Managing Resources** – Both fiscally and in terms of natural resources, respondents want their governments to work within their means. Minimizing unencumbered debts will be crucial as the county explores options for economic growth, particularly in managing the future of water and wastewater systems. Similarly, there is strong concern over the well-being of area water resources. Area streams, rivers and reservoirs are vital to local water supplies and for the popular tourism/ outdoor recreation sectors, so keeping these resources healthy is regarded as critical to the communities.

COMMUNITY VISION

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

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

COMMUNITY PROFILES

Rabun County and its municipalities exist along a prominent travel corridor through the Appalachian foothills, originated among Indian trails, anchored by a past rail line, and now largely defined by US 441. This roadway winds its way through the valleys in a north-south direction, enabling travelers and local traffic alike to connect with one another and to reach outlying metropolitan areas like Gainesville and Atlanta to the south and Asheville, NC and Gatlinburg, TN to the north. In the absence of volumes of level land for farming it is along this route that the communities formed, each staking their spot along the route to call home.



The southernmost community, the Town of Tallulah Falls, grew out of the popularity of the area’s namesake natural attraction - Tallulah Gorge. This ancient, awesome 1000 foot chasm carved over millions of years by the Tallulah River, Tallulah Falls is actually a series of six waterfalls cascading down through the gorge. At the dawn of the 20th Century Tallulah Falls was a bustling resort town that rivaled Niagara Falls. People came from all over to see the waterfalls and the awesome gorge. Today it is a more subdued community almost exclusively residential in nature, with most commercial activity happening north or south of this tourist destination.

The City of Tiger lies off of Old 441, occupying a more serene part of the lower valley. The town sits at the base of 2,856-foot Tiger Mountain, a prominent Blue Ridge Mountain peak, located three miles south of Clayton. The most prominent attractions in Tiger include the Tiger Drive In, Goats on the Roof, Tiger Mountain Vineyards and Stonewall Creek Vineyards. Tiger is also home to the Rabun County High School, Middle School, Elementary School, and primary school as well as the county senior center, and assisted living center named Traces of Tiger.

Clayton is the County seat and the largest City in Rabun County. It features a revitalized and burgeoning traditional Main Street in addition to the volumes of auto-oriented chain commercial options along the main US 441 arterial highway. Clayton features a few blocks of traditional urban neighborhoods and several subdivisions that surround the key intersections in town. It is home to the City and County government operations as well as the new medical center and most

businesses in the area.



Just a few miles north of Clayton are Mountain City and Dillard, two cities that book-end a called commonly known as Rabun Gap. This area is home to the Rabun County Industrial Park, The Dillard House, the Rabun Gap - Nacoochee School, Black Rock Mountain State Park, and the Foxfire Museum and Cultural Center. This stretch of US 441 features an abundance of commercial options, including a few tourist-oriented shops in Dillard and the Osage Farms stand. This is the next most populous part of the county after Clayton, epitomizing how communities huddled around lowlands that offered agricultural opportunity amidst the mountainous backdrop.

To the northeast is Sky Valley, the highest municipality in Georgia. Originally conceived as a singular golf and skiing destination community, Sky Valley stands apart from the other cities in that its remote location limits commercial options. As a result, it is predominantly viewed as a destination for retirees or seasonal residents. The golf course remains the key source of business, but the City is located adjacent to many other regional attractions such as Scaly Mountain and Rabun Bald.



The majority of Rabun County is National Forest, State Park property, or conservation land held by Georgia Power. The location and topography have fostered a strong independence among the communities, with the local economy tied to the accessibility to and from the area offered by US 441. There is no rail service left and few locations to site new industry without significant cost and restrictions to land disturbance. However, these same conditions define much of what people love about the area and residents are keen to see Rabun County remain rural, rugged, and appealing to those who love the outdoors.

RABUN COUNTY, GEORGIA

TOTAL POPULATION

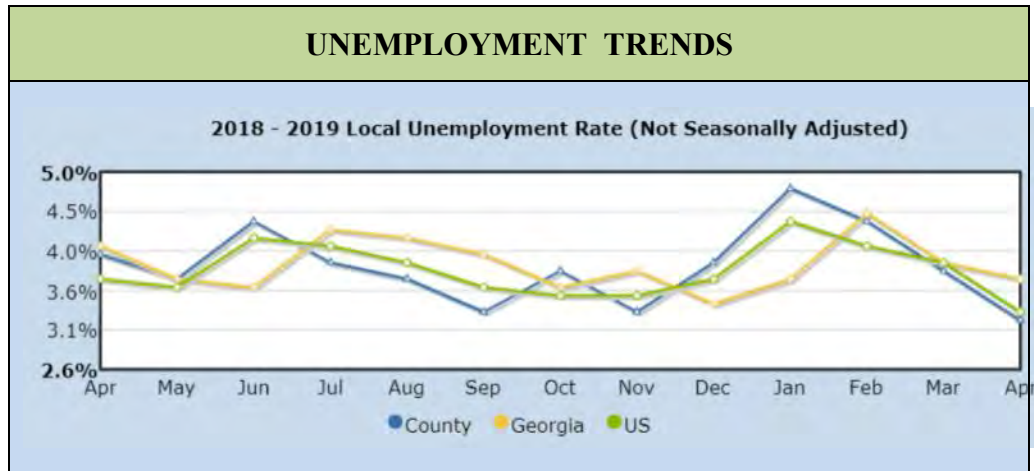
	2010	2017	CHANGE		2018
			#	%	
Georgia	9,713,521	10,429,379	715,858	7.37 %	AGE DISTRIBUTION < 18 yo 17.20 % 18-64 55.90 % 65+ 26.90 % GENDER DISTRIBUTION % Female 51.00 %
GMRC Region	619,62	703,279	83,655	13.50 %	
Rabun County	16,269	16,602	333	2.05 %	
Clayton city	2,155	2,250	95	4.41 %	
Dillard city	343	369	26	7.58 %	
Mountain City town	1,086	1,077	-9	-0.83 %	
Sky Valley city	270	267	-3	-1.11 %	
Tallulah Falls town (pt.)	70	69	-1	-1.43 %	
Tiger town	407	409	2	0.49 %	
Balance of Rabun Co.	11,938	12,161	223	1.87 %	

MINIMAL EDUCATION

Adults age 25+ / 2013-2017

< 9 th Grade	5.1 %
9 th – 12 th	11.1 %
HS Graduate	33.4 %
Some College	18.9 %
Assoc. Degree	6.2 %
Bach. Degree	14.2 %
Grad. Degree	11.2 %

UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS



HOUSING

New Residential Units	2014	2015	2016	2017	'17 Housing Conditions Rabun County	Share of Units
Banks	17	24	29	38	Single Family - Detached	72.9%
Dawson	177	173	492	310	Single Family - Attached	2.0%
Forsyth	3194	3502	3515	2982	Multi-Family	8.9%
Franklin	2	39	40	70	Mobile Home/ Trailer	16.1%
Habersham	35	17	96	192		
Hall	722	946	1578	1363	Built before 1939	5.5%
Hart	35	38	64	64	With incomplete kitchens	0.5%
Lumpkin	91	215	173	205	With incomplete plumbing	0.5%
Rabun	47	52	55	62		
Stephens	25	26	32	0		
Towns	103	115	128	57		Dollars
Union	87	129	155	170	Median Cost - Owner	\$576
White	38	55	70	88	Median Cost - Renter	\$667

Demographic data courtesy of the US Bureau of the Census
 Unemployment Rate courtesy Georgia Department of Labor

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES ASSESSMENT

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

1. Economic Prosperity

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

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

The County has recently sponsored the creation of Forward Rabun, an effort to organize their economic development efforts.

2. Resource Management

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

The County and municipalities maintain contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to work for the protection and promotion of cultural resources in the area. The County also works with the local Extension Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service to assist in local resource protection, as well as employing policies and practices related to State Vital Areas, soil and water conservation, National Wetland Inventory (FIRM) data and other applicable sources to monitor and enforce the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.

The municipalities of Clayton, Tallulah Falls, and Dillard are now actively pursuing more coordinated historic resource protection and reuse, in conjunction with infill development plans and downtown revitalization efforts. Additional measures are scheduled for updated

inventories of rural resources in the county. Several communities will be pursuing greenspace plans as a follow up to this process, and consideration for conservation design subdivisions will also be encouraged. The largest component of this effort will come from sustaining the agricultural sector through coordination of utility improvements and concentrations of development around the municipalities. Additional measures will be employed as part of efforts to upgrade water and sewer services throughout the county.

3. Efficient Land Use

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

Through this planning process, ongoing efforts to update area mapping, and regular communication across jurisdictions the County and municipalities work to ensure local policies encourage sustainable development that enables economic growth while managing local resources, utilities and infrastructure. The County and municipalities are currently in mediation regarding their Service Delivery Strategy. Once that is resolved they will be able to better plan and coordinate for future growth.

4. Local Preparedness

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

Through this planning process and ongoing coordination among emergency responders, and through regular communication with other stakeholders (including the recently opened Mountain Lakes Medical Center), the County worked to ensure the community is properly poised to prevent, manage and respond to growth pressures and natural and man-made hazards. The County and municipalities do maintain a Hazard Mitigation Strategy and the local fire protection services maintain a Local Emergency Response Plan as well as mutual aid agreements with adjoining counties.

The County also works with Georgia Power and the local ranger from the Chattahoochee National Forest to improve and coordination wildfire prevention. The County is supporting efforts to help communities incorporate FireWise practices and foster greater private sector awareness and fire prevention.

5. Sense of Place

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

As the individual municipalities evolve their character as small towns and cities will become more refined. All of the municipalities recognize the importance of their small-town character

with regard to tourism and local identity for area residents, and re actively striving to retain this character in light of proposed development and growth. Clayton works with their Downtown Merchants and Business Association to coordinate efforts that preserve and celebrate their historic main street district. Dillard and Mountain City are actively planning for ways to adapt as US 441 is widened through their town centers, which will include efforts to direct infill that complements existing commercial outlets but reaches out from the arterial roadway. Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls, and Tiger will each adapt as small towns with emerging neighborhood commercial options but predominantly rural residential forms surrounding their cores.

6. Regional Cooperation

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

Rabun County and its municipalities actively coordinate with each other in maintaining their local SPLOST program, and participate with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and other appropriate regional organizations. The County also maintains regular contact with various State Departments to ensure knowledge of, and access to, their programs and resources. The County is considered an active partner in regional activities and does not feel threatened or adversely impacted by any regional partners.

The County and municipalities are working through a court ordered mediation of their Service Delivery Strategy. Once this has been resolved the governments have indicated they will look to foster more regular communications and meetings over the related items in an effort to ensure they all realize the full benefits for sustained coordination and Qualified Local Government status.

7. Housing Options

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

As a result of increasing population and an increase in the shares of older adults, Rabun County as a whole is experiencing greater demand for alternative housing units. All communities are exploring options and will work jointly to foster enough quality units to sustain the demand, with the initial emphasis on providing more multi-family and special needs housing within the most urbanized areas with existing utility and service capacity. The City of Clayton currently has some low-income multi-family housing and is working with some residents and developers to explore options for additional affordable workforce housing. Sky Valley is also seeking options for multi-family housing and/or senior housing.

8. Transportation Options

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking,

cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

Rabun County and its municipalities do not have an active, comprehensive transportation planning program but does communicate their concerns and issues to the regional GDOT office and all communities do participate in the public involvement process for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as able. As the region grows additional transportation planning would be considered a benefit, if not a necessity. A Rural Transit Assessment will be done for the county in 2020.

9. Educational Opportunities

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

Every community has a vested interest in seeing existing local resources improved and enhancing post-secondary options within the region. The governments work with the Rabun County School Board and private institutions to ensure access for quality primary and secondary educational facilities and programs for area residents. They also work with other partners to ensure access to viable post-secondary resources such as North Georgia Technical College and other area educational institutions. Any opportunity to foster additional resources and/or to bring more post-secondary education to Rabun County will be pursued.

10. Community Health

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

There is a recently-opened primary care facility in Rabun County (Mountain Lakes Medical Center) plus facilities in three adjoining counties and the Rabun County Health Department to ensure access for quality health care facilities and programs for area residents. The governments also work with other partners to monitor residents' needs and requests in providing access to these services as the area grows.

GENERAL VISION STATEMENTS

The visioning process included a series of public hearings to consider and discuss those principles and goals that were important for each community. Surveys and small group discussions were provided to meeting participants as one means of soliciting input and ideas, with the subsequent nominated themes discussed in larger group settings.

While the resulting vision statements may be regarded as general, this has been done on purpose for several reasons. First and foremost, the communities and the region in general are involved in a state of flux. A global recession has evolved during this planning process, putting several local developments on hold and stagnating economic recruitment. Northeast Georgia is also waiting to see the results of recent court decisions that have heightened the pressure on metro Atlanta governments to secure public water resources. It is expected that in 3-5 years' time these matters will have resolved themselves such that Rabun County and its municipalities will have greater clarity in near and long-term opportunities, at which time they will review and update their visions and the comprehensive plan as needed.

RABUN COUNTY

Rabun County is a collection of communities woven together by the scenic beauty and historic Appalachian culture of the northeast Georgia mountains. It is a county based on providing safety and freedom to all residents, a courteous welcome to visitors, and a will to foster economic prosperity among native industry.

Rabun County is shaped by a myriad of valleys supporting a modest scale of residential and agricultural activity, yielding both crossroad communities and small cities. It supports the preservation of the area's rural character and rich natural resources while prioritizing growth and development in and around the towns and cities.

Rabun County will provide an efficient government, quality education and protective services so that all citizens can enjoy a high quality of life.



CLAYTON

The City of Clayton, Georgia, is the county seat and largest city in Rabun County. It is a home to both residents and visitors who treasure the wild and scenic Blue Ridge Mountains surrounding the city and who appreciate the multitude of outdoor recreational activities. It is a historic downtown featuring specialty shopping and dining venues recalling the city's Appalachian character, and a larger, modern business climate supporting local residents, visitors and employers. It is a community that blends small-town charm with urban amenities and a rural setting.

The City of Clayton will encourage economic growth by supporting sustainable private development for recreational, residential, and compatible business ventures while maintaining its historic character, sense of place and community identity.



DILLARD

The City of Dillard serves as a peaceful home for residents and as a prosperous destination for commerce and visitors to the North Georgia Mountains. It is a rustic community of homes surrounding a commercial core that blends historic structures with modern amenities, set amidst a valley that harbors agriculture and prominent local institutions. It provides a high quality of life based on rural, small town charms and scenic beauty that enables families to grow stronger and healthier.

The City of Dillard will seek to remain a place of pride that respects hard work and supports education and entrepreneurial spirit. Through quality services and attention the City will seek businesses and development types that serve local citizens and enhance the local economy in ways that add to the region's scenic value and outdoor spirit.



MOUNTAIN CITY

Mountain City is a modest Appalachian community rooted in agriculture and crafts, providing a safe home for families and preserving the area's rural history. Its character is shaped by the historic Foxfire Museum and the Rabun Gap valley tradition of farming that worked the land and supported local households. It is a small town with scenic beauty in natural surroundings and humble homes, combined with a deep respect for nature and civic pride but refined by the highway and visitors to the area.

Mountain City will preserve its agrarian culture and serve residents through quality services and respect for personal freedoms. It will strive to remain a small and safe home town that evokes a rustic spirit and celebrates its heritage while supporting economic growth.



SKY VALLEY

The City of Sky Valley is a small and active north Georgia mountain community of both primary and secondary residences surrounded by the beautiful Nantahala National Forest, striving to grow the population and tourism while preserving the sense of a quiet, safe, family oriented, resort community. The City of Sky Valley will encourage economic growth via the expansion of recreational, residential, and business opportunities compatible with the community's natural beauty and serenity.

*Cool Serenity
Exquisite Mountain Vistas
Abundant Hiking and Waterfalls
Championship Golf
The Ultimate Nature Lovers Paradise*

*Close Proximity to all the
Good Things in Life*



TALLULAH FALLS

The Town of Tallulah Falls is a charming, safe, unique and modest small town for residents and businesses wanting to live within a special part of north Georgia. Home of the scenic Tallulah Gorge State Park with its reservoir and waterfalls, the Town offers both residents and visitors local retail and a strong appreciation for nature and outdoor recreational opportunities.

The Town of Tallulah Falls celebrates its relationship with the Appalachian foothills by fostering events and providing services that enhance community spirit and support local businesses. It balances the community's rural character with the opportunity for economic growth within a popular tourist corridor by prioritizing residents' concerns and preserving the area's small town nature.



TIGER

Nestled in the valley of namesake Tiger Mountain, the Town of Tiger is a small, family oriented community with a quaint, walkable and historic “crossroads village” downtown showcasing local merchants and providing residents with a civic and social center.

The Town of Tiger will continue to encourage economic growth by supporting private development of available property for recreational, residential, and compatible business ventures. The Town also seeks capitalize on its location by serving as a hometown bedroom community for employees throughout the region. By preserving the village character of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, these opportunities will contribute to the health, and vitality of the community while maintaining the natural beauty, safety and serenity of the community.



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The effectiveness of any planning process requires identifying the needs that must be addressed in order to achieve a community's goals, clarifying the targets for the local government. To do this the planning process asks communities to assess the information outlined in an effort to identify their respective **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats. In doing this SWOT analysis the communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions to as to better achieve the desired vision.



This part of the planning process also reviewed various forms of data and information about each community. Information such as Census data and Department of Labor data was reviewed for insight into local conditions, plus each local government was asked to provide summaries of their immediate operational and capital improvement needs to give an indication of their priorities ahead of discussions about public objectives. When evaluating this data and information the planning process focused on whether it verified needs or opportunities identified previously, whether it uncovered new needs or opportunities not previously identified, and whether it indicates significant local trends that need to be considered in the planning process.

Rabun County and its municipalities are in a remote part of the state with limited opportunities for large-scale growth, but the influx of residents, both full-time and seasonal, coupled with increasing commercial and tourist traffic along US 441 means even minimal growth and have a noticeable impact on each community. Widening of the arterial highway, for instance, would greatly alter the character and several businesses within Mountain City and Dillard. As these communities seek to ensure their financial viability and remain healthy destinations for residents and tourists alike, they need to balance growth opportunities with measures to retain their respective variations of rural character. As a result they all generally support modest conditional growth with an increasing eye toward revitalizing their commercial cores, utilizing infill in an effort to grow within developed areas before surrendering more forests and natural areas.

The following represents a refined listing of needs and opportunities for Rabun County. Some of these remain valid from the previous Joint Comprehensive Plan (2014). The list has been confirmed and/or refined based on the discussions and analyses throughout the planning process.

Rabun County

Strengths

- National Forest
- Environment (Resources; Scenic Beauty)
- Georgia Power
- Lakes and Rivers
- County Commission
- Seasonal Homes/ Tourism
- Climate
- Schools
- A very “giving” community
- Sid Webber Foundation
- Black Rock Mountain State Park
- Proximity to proposed Inland Port
- New hotels in the community
- US 441

Weaknesses

- No post-secondary school
- Need more medical offices
- Intergovernmental communication/cooperation is poor
- Limited financial resources
- High volume of impoverished households
- Need for improved transit services and walkability
- Need to retain and lure younger residents
- Need for improved ordinances and enforcement (signs, landscaping...)

Opportunities

- Proposed bike routes & trails
- Potential for strong branding
- Always room for more tourism
 - Regional tourist routes
- A unified economic development effort
- Promotion as a “farm-to-table” capital
- Outdoor recreation
- Stekoa Creek Greenway
- Retirees as a resource
- Consumer traffic from US 441

Threats

- “Snow Hwy”/ Crime/ Drugs
- Traffic on US 441
- Growing need for mental health care
- Changes to courts/ Too many different courts
- “NIMBY” crowd that stifles progress
- Water quality issues
- Invasive species threatening forests

Cited Issues

- Quality of life is vitally important and is linked with the natural surroundings and rural character.
- Development should not be too much too fast, should be concentrated in or near the cities when possible, and should match the existing character of the community.
- Affordable housing, for full-time residents and seniors, will be critical going forward.
- Preference is for economic development to focus on complementing existing themes of tourism, outdoor recreation, and smaller scales.
- Protection of water resources is important.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
Need to improve/sustain firefighting abilities throughout the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop coordinated water-line improvement and expansion strategy • Develop long-range plan and budget for emergency services facilities and equipment
Need to expand/improve water system and wastewater disposal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop coordinated sewer system improvement and expansion strategy • Develop coordinated water-line improvement and expansion strategy • Develop long-range plan and budget for emergency services facilities and equipment
Several public roads remain in need of paving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain road improvement schedule
Concern about growth altering area's character, diluting scenic beauty, threatening tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines • Review sign regulations and property maintenance codes; Amend as needed • Assess performance of mountain protection regulations
Need to manage risk of wildfires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue supporting Fire Wise/ Fire Adapted Communities programs. • Continue to work with USFS in maintaining wildfire management plan • Develop long-range plan and budget for emergency services facilities and equipment
Need employment opportunities for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement marketing plan for industrial space • Develop a workforce housing strategy
Need to expand/improve sidewalk and trail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop USBRS 15/ Rails-to-Trail Plan • Develop the Stekoa Creek Greenway
Need to upgrade/maintain parks and recreation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform study to identify additional outdoor recreation amenities • Develop/Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Need to maintain quality of water resources and local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain compliance with Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Plan • Develop a remediation strategy for non-compliant watersheds listed in State TMDL inventory

Clayton**Strengths**

- National Forest
- Environment (Resources; Scenic Beauty)
- Downtown/ Main Street
- Proximity to outdoor attractions
- US 441 commercial activity
- Growing brand appeal as tourist destination
- Vacant, underutilized properties
- New parks
- Civic operations in the city

Weaknesses

- Intergovernmental communication/cooperation is poor
- Limited financial resources
- Need for improved transit services and walkability
- Need to retain and lure younger residents
- Limited space for outward expansion/topography

Opportunities

- Proposed bike routes & trails
- Always room for more tourism
 - Regional tourist routes
- Stekoa Creek Greenway
- Growing DDA/ Main Street programs
- Utility capacity for multi-family development
- New Downtown Master Plan

Threats

- National retail chains diluting unique appeal
- Traffic on US 441
- “NIMBY” crowd that stifles progress

Cited Issues

- Opportunity to build on growing tourism appeal of Main Street.
- Development should prioritize on infill and matching community character.
- City should seek to maximize parks and trails in town.
- Traffic management along US 441 will be critical.
- Wayfinding and gateway appeal should be improved.
- Clayton the best (only?) space in Rabun County to accommodate multi-family housing options.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
Desire for more/ diversified commercial options;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns • Develop comparative commercial activity profile
Demand for increased educational opportunities at colleges, universities and trade schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop report profiling options for local education facilities
Need to expand/improve water system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop coordinated water-line improvement and expansion strategy
Residential neighborhoods losing character through improper and substandard development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guidelines needed for compatible infill development
Concern over blighted and substandard properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop property assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations • Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed
<p>US 441 corridor unattractive, lacks cohesion; Lack of proper gateway into Clayton</p> <p>Lack wayfinding signage (for parking, shopping, government)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement new streetscape strategy • Design guidelines needed for compatible infill development • Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations
Demand for more greenspace and outdoor recreational areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Stekoa Creek Greenway • Pursue/develop park land
Need to balance growth with small-town character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guidelines needed for compatible infill development • Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations
Need employment opportunities for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/ sustain marketing plan for vacant office and industrial space • Inventory all potential industrial sites
Need to expand/improve sidewalk and trail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans • Develop USBRS 15/ Rails-to-Trail Plan • Develop the Stekoa Creek Greenway

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Dillard

Strengths:

- US 441
- Sewer, water
- Dillard House
- Mountains
- Rabun Gap Nacoochee School
- Tourism reputation

Weaknesses:

- Traffic / safety
- Money for utilities
- Blighted properties
- Need housing
- Limited retail
- Intergovernmental communication/cooperation is poor
- Limited financial resources

Opportunities:

- USBR 15/ Rail-to-trail
- US 441 access
- Expansion of business park
- Chance to be a hub for craftsmen and makers
- Potential for a new Welcome Center
- Potential in revitalizing shopping center
- Improving marketing campaign

Threats / Trends:

- Possible overdevelopment
- Development types out of character for Dillard
- Loss of family/local businesses
- Losing the beauty of the valley

Cited Issues

- Managing US 441 expansion critical to City's future. Need to find a way to keep local businesses intact and successful after widening happens.
- Need to build upon the potential from tourists stopping in area between Atlanta and Appalachia. Foster more businesses enhancing Dillard's capacity as a destination
- Affordable housing, for full-time residents and seniors, is desired.
- Need to maintain quality/level of fire protection service.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
Desire for more/ diversified commercial options;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns • Develop comparative commercial activity profile • Develop profile of assets for making Rabun Gap area a hub for artists and craftsmen
Concern over impacts of GDOT's improvement/ maintenance plans for US 441	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management within city limits • Design guidelines needed for compatible infill development
Concern over blighted and substandard properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop property assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations • Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed
Need employment opportunities for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/ sustain marketing plan for vacant office and industrial space • Inventory all potential industrial sites • Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry
Need to expand/improve sidewalk and trail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans • Develop USBR 15/ Rail-to-Trail plan

Mountain City

Strengths:

- Foxfire
- Mountains
- Black Rock Mountain S.P.
- Potential for bike trail
- Utilities
- Osage Farms
- Rabun Gap Nacoochee School

Weaknesses:

- Traffic / safety
- Intergovernmental communication/cooperation is poor
- Limited financial resources
- Loss of identity
- Narrow city streets

Opportunities:

- USBR 15/ Rail-to-trail
- US 441 access
- Expansion of business park
- Chance to be a hub for craftsmen and makers

Threats / Trends:

- Possible overdevelopment
- Development types out of character for Mountain City
- Loss of family/local businesses
- Losing the beauty of the valley

Cited Issues

- Managing US 441 expansion critical to City’s future. Need to find a way to keep local businesses intact and successful after widening happens.
- Need to build upon the potential from tourists stopping in area between Atlanta and Appalachia. Foster more businesses enhancing Mountain City’s capacity as a destination
- Affordable housing, for full-time residents and seniors, is desired.
- Need to improve coordination with Foxfire and Black Rock Mountain.
- Need to work with County in improving road access to Foxfire.
- Seek opportunity to develop a craft business incubator.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
Desire for more/ diversified commercial options;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns • Develop comparative commercial activity profile • Assign committee to assess options for business incubator • Develop profile of assets for making Rabun Gap area a hub for artists and craftsmen
Concern over impacts of GDOT's improvement/ maintenance plans for US 441	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management within city limits • Design guidelines needed for compatible infill development
Demand for increased support for agriculture, agri-tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop agricultural sustainability program (assessing land use policies, potential for Food Bank, work with FFA and more)
Concern over blighted and substandard properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop property assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations • Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed
Need to expand/improve sidewalk and trail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans • Develop walking trail within Mountain City • Develop USBR 15/ Rail-to-Trail plan

Sky Valley

Strengths:

- Nature / natural beauty/ wildlife
- Safety
- Active living
- Diversity
- Climate
- Location / access
- Ems
- Winding roads / slow traffic
- New cell tower
- Water system
- Golf club

Weaknesses:

- Need more young folks
- Limited medical services
- Limited broadband
- Intergovernmental communication/cooperation is poor
- Limited financial resources
- Deferred maintenance of culverts / ditches / infrastructure
- Need more accommodations – senior facility
- Improved marketing plan needed
- Need improved transit access
- Location is a liability to employment/ Lack of major employers

Opportunities:

- Potential for recreation
- Work with school exchange programs
- Retired volunteers
- Movie industry
- Possibility of park space at waterfall

Threats / Trends:

- Aging population – affects marketing
- Newer developments / competition
- Billboards on 246 vs. scenic beauty

Cited Issues

- Sky Valley needs to find a way to bring commerce into the city.
- Affordable housing, for full-time residents and seniors, is desired.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
Desire for more/ diversified commercial options;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns • Develop comparative commercial activity profile
Limited utilities and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update service delivery agreement • Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan
Need to expand telecommunications access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of fiber-optic connections with North Georgia Network
Increasing need for retirement and elderly housing (Few options beyond single-family detached)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proposal to work with private sector for independent living community
Lodging options in the City restricted to rental homes and timeshares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proposal to work with private sector for hotel/conference facility

Tallulah Falls

Strengths

- Gorge / State Park
- Lake
- Natural resources
- Visible community / alive / thriving
- Community involvement
- Vibrant History
- Safe, Small-town environment
- Easy access location on US 441
- Slow, deliberate growth

Weaknesses

- No “there” there
- Intergovernmental communication/cooperation
- Limited financial resources/ tax base
- Limited retail businesses
- Lack of identity / brand
- Town split by highway / lake
- Limited residential growth
- Need revenue sources
- Aging, fragile water system
- Lack of sewer
- Limited broadband access
- Town not compellingly linked to surrounding amenities
- Geology limits development
- Town responsible for response services in St. Park

Opportunities

- Retail / hotel
- US 441 major traffic route
- Events and increased promotion
- Biking/ Extended trails
- Former whitewater festival
- Physical connection between gorge, lake, and town
- Regional tourism; Park visitors
- Potential for improved services
- Managed growth and development
- City owned properties can be revitalized
- Twin Rivers Challenge (bike ride)

Threats

- Disagreement on future direction
- Traffic and issues related to new inland port
- Loss of heritage
- Need to expound on history
- Failing infrastructure
- Failing to develop local economy
- Vulnerability of St. Park funding

Cited Issues

- Aging and fragile water system and lack of sewer
- Need to find a way to bring commerce to the city, preferably neighborhood scale
- Need to address costs of providing emergency services to State Park
- No strong funding resources to maintain facilities and services other than taxes
- Need safety and pedestrian access plan for US 441

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
Desire for more/diversified commercial options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop comparative commercial activity profile • Develop strategy for Scenic Route 15/US 441
Need to expand/improve water system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop phases of improvement • Identify funding sources
Need to develop wastewater disposal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore need for sewer system • Explore funding sources
Need to balance growth with small-town character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guidelines needed for development • Review and update zoning and development regulations
Need to expand/improve sidewalk and trail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans • Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations
Need to address financial burden of providing emergency response to State Park and Tallulah Falls School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop report outlining volume and cost of response calls • Continue dialog with State Park, School and County to explore options
Provide sustainable income source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement GCIC program • Secure water withdrawal permit revenues • Explore additional revenue sources

Tiger**Strengths**

- Agricultural history
- Natural resources
- Fire station
- Small town charm
- Water & sewer access
- Senior Center
- Drive-in theater
- Schools
- Proximity to US 441
- New City park
- Not yet urban
- Quality response services

Weaknesses

- Off the beaten path (not on US 441)
- Limited in-town commerce
- Intergovernmental communication/cooperation is poor
- Limited financial resources
- Aging housing supply/ Limited options
- Need more sidewalks
- No online or major marketing presence
- Limited commerce
- No playground/ space for kids

Opportunities

- Tallulah Falls Rail-to-Trail
- Old 441 Scenic Byway
- Neighborhood retail for area residents
- Agricultural theme/ Farm-to-table
- Vineyards/ Distilleries
- Potential for golf-cart paths
- Potential to use City Hall more

Threats

- Becoming lost amidst growth
- Becoming forgotten
- Growth making community unaffordable

Cited Issues

- Need to find a way to bring commerce to the city, preferably neighborhood scale.
- Need to address future of housing in the area. How to manage possible subdivisions?
- No strong funding resources to maintain/ improve facilities and services.
- Desire to retain identity as a small town, limiting growth.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
Desire for more/ diversified commercial options;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns • Develop comparative commercial activity profile
Pavilion needed for public park for events and public benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavilion planned in 2017
Need to balance demand for housing with small-town character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guidelines needed for compatible infill development • Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations
Need to balance growth with small-town character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guidelines needed for compatible infill development • Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations • Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management along US 441
Need to expand/improve sidewalk and trail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans • Continue to promote the Tallulah Falls Rails-to-Trail Greenway concept

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BROADBAND ASSESSMENT

As communities move forward the importance of access to reliable and high-speed, high capacity internet connections cannot be overestimated. Unserved and underserved areas of Georgia will not remain economically competitive without sufficient internet infrastructure, as this technology becomes the default utility for all manners of communication.

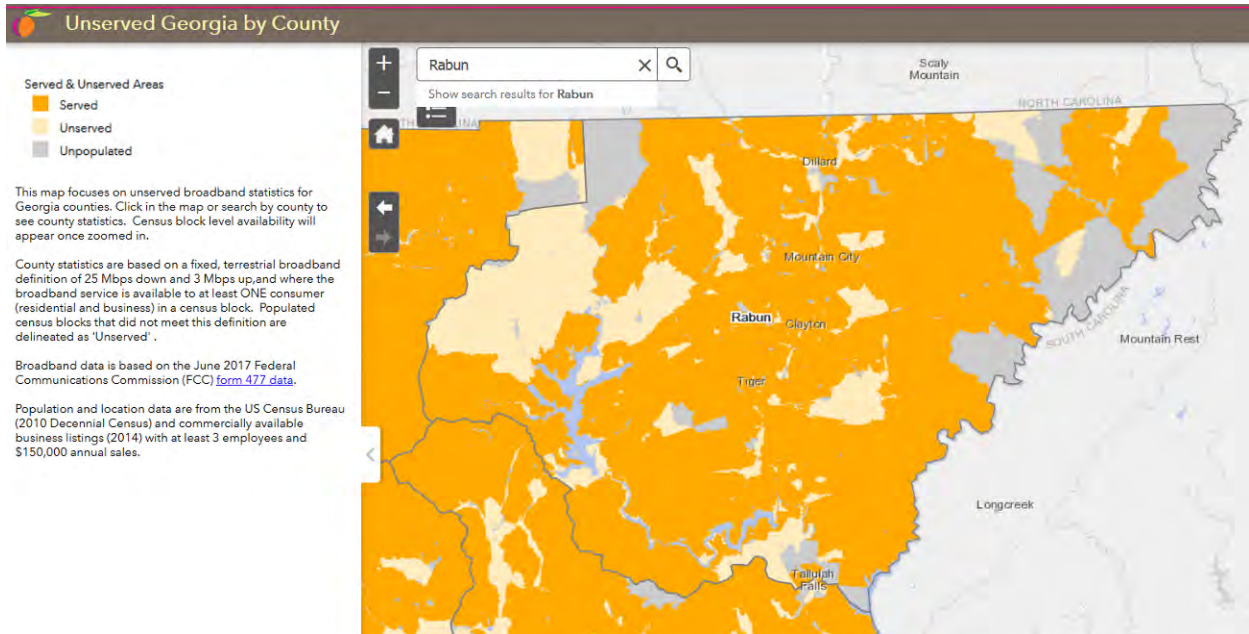
To address this issue in 2018 the Georgia General Assembly amended the provisions of local planning in Georgia by passing the "Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act," intended to facilitate the enhancement and extension of high-speed internet access in communities that lack such infrastructure and the vast resources it provides. In time the State will support programs and initiatives aimed at delivering the community improvement and empowerment potential that reliable, high-speed internet access can provide to even the most difficult-to-serve citizens, schools, and businesses. As the first step in planning for this critical, potentially catalytic infrastructure, the "Ace" Act requires all local governments to incorporate the "promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services" into their local plan.

Achieving these goals at the local level begins with communities pursuing the *Broadband Ready Community Designation*, demonstrating that they've taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment by incorporating a broadband assessment into their comprehensive plan and has adopted a model ordinance. Once these are in place the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Economic Development will identify and promote facilities and developments that offer broadband services at a rate of not less than 1 gigabit per second in the downstream to end users that can be accessed for business, education, health care, government.

One of the first products to come out of the Georgia Broadband Initiative was an inventory of general conditions across the State regarding access to high speed/ high capacity broadband technology. Utilizing demographic data from the US Census Bureau and cross-referencing that information with knowledge of broadband infrastructure, the Department of Community Affairs produced a series of maps depicting the state of broadband accessibility in rural areas.

<u>Rabun County</u>	
<i>Unserved Locations:</i>	15%
<i>Unserved Households:</i>	1,839
<i>Unserved Businesses:</i>	39
<i>Unserved Population:</i>	2,425
<i>Total Households:</i>	12,313
<i>Total Businesses:</i>	233
<i>Total Population:</i>	16,276

In assessing the Rabun County's access to higher grade broadband technology stakeholders were asked to rate the general satisfaction of existing internet service providers. Most population centers have fair access as they almost all lie within the US 441 corridor. There are several gaps in "last-mile" connectivity along more remote areas, such as Sky Valley, particularly with regard to higher speed and higher capacity lines. The majority provider within the area (based on geographic area) is Windstream, for which service ratings were considered below average.



Rabun County does have access to the North Georgia Network (NGN), an incorporated cooperative providing a regional fiber optic system with over 1,600 linear miles of infrastructure. The NGN was conceived as part of visions for a more prosperous rural Georgia, with the knowledge that a fiber optic network that is fast, reliable and affordable is vital to modern economic development. The NGN provides infrastructure that loops through the northeast Georgia mountains with 100 gigabit core line and connects to almost all the schools and colleges in the region as well as reaching many government structures and prominent business parks.

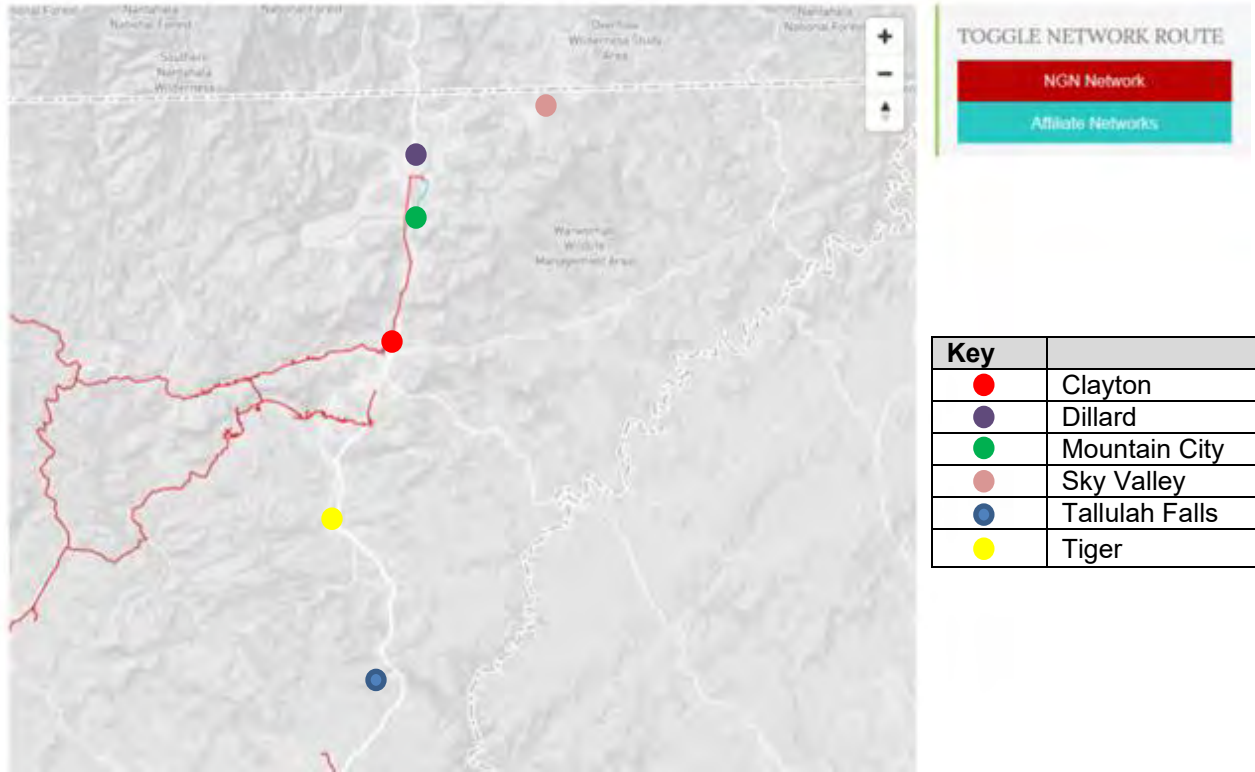
Based on comments and indications the biggest hurdle for broadband access within Rabun County is currently expanding the connections along the US 441 corridor to Sky Valley, the Warwoman Road area east of Clayton, and westward from US 441 in Rabun Gap and toward Hiawassee.

Priorities for Future Network Enhancements

- Ability to increase “last-mile” connections
- Higher-capacity trunk lines outward from US 441
- Expansion of NGN access to Sky Valley

Network Map

HOME > NETWORK MAP



As an additional reference Rabun County was included in the 2014 Georgia Mountains Digital Economy Plan (DEP), one of several such plans developed for each region across Georgia in accordance with standards defined by the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA). The DEP was designed to identify and coordinate the resources and efforts related to improving the region's infrastructure in support of hi-tech industries and economies. As each regional plan is completed, the State and its partners can begin directing their energy and resources with clearer focus and understanding of needs from every part of Georgia. While specific investment actions have not been identified as part of this initial process, the DEP provides a work scope that addresses key focus areas and recommendations that will help the GMRC, its member governments and regional stakeholders move forward with an understanding of the regional and state context for building network connectivity, improving educational resources and fostering technology hubs. With continued coordination and monitoring of progress, it is hoped these efforts will make the region a more effective and efficient place enabling all manners of business to realize their potential in accessing and utilizing electronic data.

SWOC Assessment – GMRC Digital Economy Plan

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Workforce/ Education	Higher Educational Institutions – University of North Georgia, Brenau, North Georgia Technical School, Lanier Technical School,	Limited existing hi-tech labor force	Economic and demographic growth of metro Atlanta	Attraction/ Retention of top technology talent
	Faster Business Start-up Time	Low family income	Job fairs held within the region by GMRC Workforce Development	Competition from other metro areas
	Dawson GigCenter – Business start-ups			
	GMRC Workforce Development			
Strong Development Authorities and Chamber offices to assist start-up businesses and industries				
Infrastructure	Cooperative EMC's that deliver good products	System Redundancy. Residents and Businesses need more choices for internet service.	Tourism/outdoor recreation related industry	Topographically the GMRC Region is difficult to traverse for aerial line installation
	North Georgia Network	Cost prohibitive		
	Access to metro Atlanta	Geographic isolation		
	Ga 400 – Technology Corridor			
Residents ability to telecommute				
Local Government	GMRC fostering cooperation	Limited funding resources	Educating local government on importance of broadband access	Finding Grant funds for broadband projects
	Quality Development Authorities and Joint Development Authorities	State needs to put more emphasis on education		Need a better way to communicate to State Legislators what is going on in the GMRC Region regarding broadband needs, initiatives and projects
<p>Goal: <i>Ensure new telecommunication networks for needed accessibility and reliability to support the growth of the regional economy.</i></p> <p>Strategy: <i>Prepare to meet industry and business telecommunication needs by assisting with fiber optic network development.</i> The purpose of this strategy is to support, develop, and provide educational opportunities regarding telecommunication systems in the region.</p> <p>Strategy: <i>Promote and support the use of health information technology (IT).</i> The purpose of this strategy is to encourage local partnerships between health providers and local leaders in using telecommunications and other information technology to improve care to patients and lower health costs.</p>				

TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT

Transportation concerns the level of accessibility of sites and development, and the demands for transportation facilities and services vary by land use, demographics and other factors. The dynamic nature of accessibility and the various factors that determine functional performance in infrastructure suggest transportation planning requires special attention.

Roads

Assessment of roadway infrastructure involves an inventory of roads by functional classification, a process by which streets and highways are grouped according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Individual roads and streets do not all serve the same function, nor do they manage travel independently but rather as part of a cohesive network. Transportation planning for roads, then, is used to determine how this travel can most efficiently move within the network, and functional classification assists with this process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a roadway network.

The road network throughout Rabun County is a predominantly 2-lane rural arterial arrangement that provides efficient coverage. The main arterial roadway is US 441, the north/south highway that bisects the county as it runs through the valley. US 441 has one segment remaining that is not a 4 lane divided highway and that segment is slated for improvement within the next three years to accommodate the expected increase in traffic from the new inland port being developed in Gainesville. US 441 is the main roadway for Tallulah Falls, Clayton, Mountain City, and Dillard, attracting both local and through-traffic users. The viability of this road is critical to Rabun County for drawing tourists and maintaining the local economies, so the local communities have a vested interest in seeing the improved road not only viable for through traffic but with enough traffic calming and accessibility to maintain local service functions.

Rabun's next biggest issue with regard to roads is the long-term maintenance. As a rural county Rabun has a high volume of roads-per-household, with many rural arterials and collectors seeing traffic from tourists. The terrain and exposure to some of Georgia's harsher winter climates means maintenance of these roads and bridges is critical, so the County and municipalities are searching for ways to improve funding for road projects.

Pedestrian Accessibility

Pedestrian accessibility refers to the level of connections available within a community to people via walking, biking or other non-motorized means. Traditionally this is provided through sidewalks and trails.

Clayton has a modest sidewalks system in and around their downtown, while the other municipalities have only sparse sections and/or only sections that abut the more dangerous US 441 highway. Many of these systems are older and need some repair or feature outdated intersections lacking full ADA compliance, but portions have also been refurbished as part of recent revitalization efforts and streetscape grants. Mountain City and Dillard will be consulting with GDOT to incorporate pedestrian concerns along the segment of US 441 to be widened in the near future, while Tallulah Falls is also searching for ways to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity between their town and the State Park across the dam/road.

While none of the communities has a formal sidewalk or trail master plan that is being planned. A preliminary route for Route #15 of the US Bike Route System is projected along the same north/south corridor as the envisioned Tallulah Falls Rail-to-Trail concept. This would create an independent bike/ped trail from Cornelia, GA to Franklin, NC, running right through Rabun County. A preliminary on-road route has been identified and will be marked in the near future, while incremental efforts are being made to secure rights-of-way for the trail, but the realized concept is still not expected for another 10+ years. Once completed, however, this trail would connect every community except Sky Valley and could become a grand tourist attraction for the region that fits with local designs for enhanced outdoor recreations and adventure tourism.

Alternate Transportation

Rabun County only has transit service for seniors as managed through the County Senior Center. Public access transit or dial-a-ride services have been discussed but remain unrealized. A Rural Transit Assessment for Rabun County is being developed in 2020.

Airports and Rail Service

The same topography that gives the area majestic scenery and prime natural resources also means Rabun County does not have any operable railroad access. The old short-line Tallulah Falls Railroad has been closed for generations and no other connections are planned.

Similarly, Rabun County does not have an airport. There are options within 20 miles south in both Toccoa and Baldwin.

<u>County</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>ID</u>	<u>Runway Length (ft.)</u>	<u>Runway Width (ft.)</u>	<u>Level*</u>
Habersham	Baldwin				
Stephens	Toccoa	TOC	5,000	100	II

Source: Georgia Airport Association

* Georgia Aviation System (20-year) Plan - All public use airports in Georgia are assigned one of three functional levels as relates to the state's transportation and economic needs:

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The following is provided as a simplified assessment of critical environmental conditions in effect throughout Rabun County. The locations for any identified conditions can be found on the correlating map.

Clean Water Act Compliance

Y	Any "not supporting" 303(d) listed waterbodies? If yes, these waterbodies have been found contaminated to the extent that they are not considered supporting their designated use. As such the local community should seek to manage land uses within the watershed so as to yield healthier water quality.
Y	Any 305(b) listed waterbodies?
N	If yes, do the Implementation Plans/Watershed Management Plans require any outstanding actions from the local government? If so, please include these actions within the Implementation Program.

There are several listed stream segments within Rabun County, predominantly for fecal coliform (bacteria) and for sedimentation, however the County, municipalities, and other area stakeholders have worked hard to greatly improve water resource stewardship practices and water quality standards. The main concerns are Stekoa Creek, which serves as the primary water source for the City of Clayton water system, and the Little Tennessee River, which serves in the same capacity for the Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority. Both water bodies are being monitored but remain in need of additional remediation measures. There is currently an ongoing effort on behalf of the Stekoa Creek watershed being managed by the Chattooga Conservancy which is seeking to produce stormwater mitigation improvements as well as stream bank restoration. Regional partners such as the Chest-Chat Resource Conservation and Development Council, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the local Cattleman's Association can assist the County with monitoring best management practices needed and/or employed in the area and aid in local resource management.

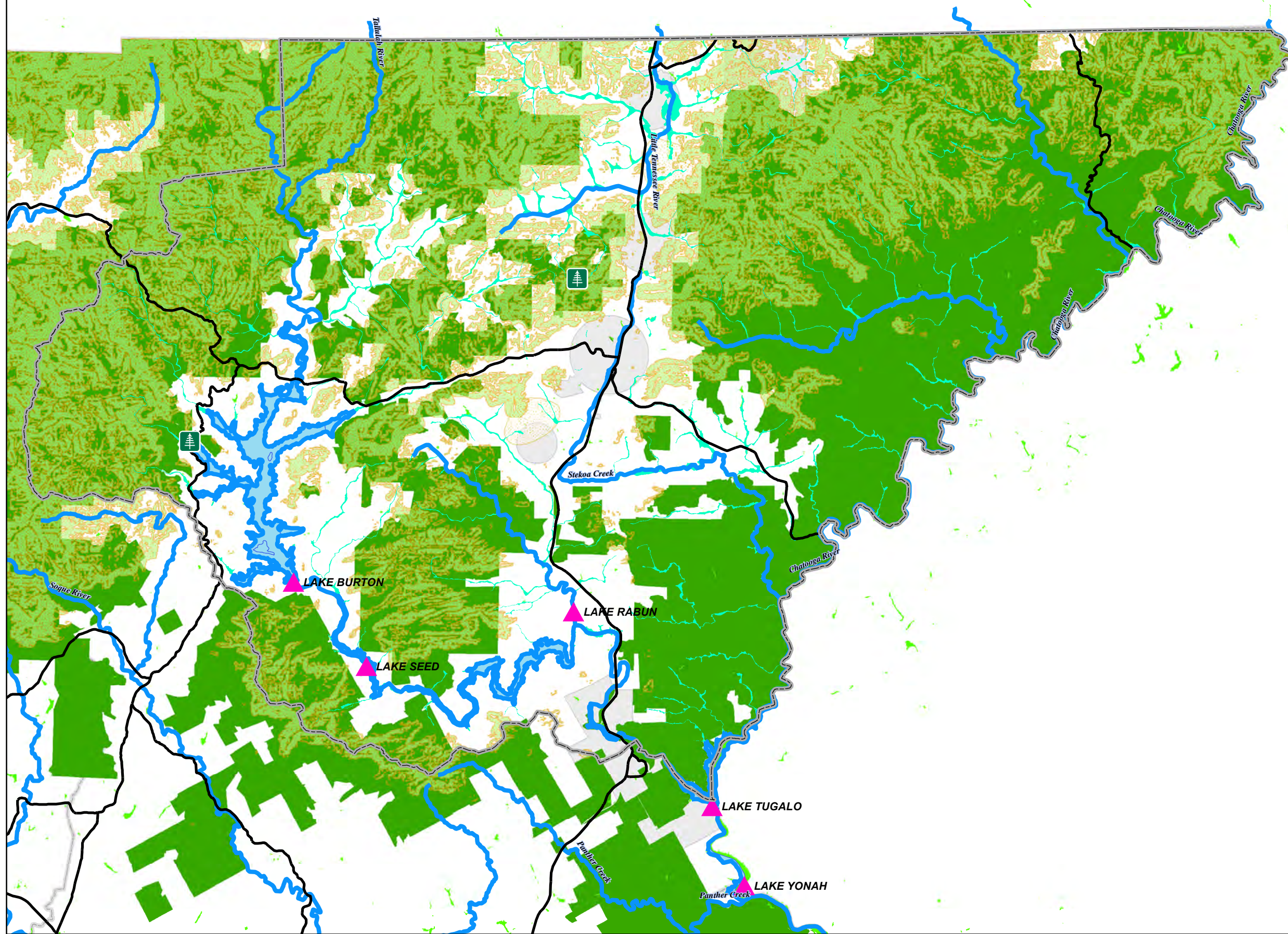
Environmental Planning Criteria

<i>CHARACTERISTIC</i>	<i>Rabun County</i>	<i>Clayton</i>	<i>Dillard</i>	<i>Mountain City</i>	<i>Sky Valley</i>	<i>Tallulah Falls</i>	<i>Tiger</i>
Floodplains	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Forest Lands	X				X	X	
Ground Water Recharge Areas	X						X
Plant & Animal Habitat	X						
Prime Agricultural Lands	X		X	X			
Protected Mountains	X		X	X	X	X	
Steep Slopes	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Water Supply Watersheds	X	X		X		X	
Wetlands	X	X	X	X	X		
Protected Rivers	X					X	












There are various environmentally sensitive areas located throughout the county, though some occur at smaller scales and limited to single properties. All of the jurisdictions have adopted some form of protective measures in accordance with the DNR Part V criteria, though some have expressed possible needs for improved monitoring and enforcement.

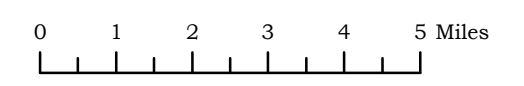
The County and municipalities are aware of Rabun's inclusion within the Savannah-Upper Ocoee Watershed Management Plan as part of Georgia's State Water Planning process. The local governments have spoken with Rabun representatives on the Water Planning council and understand the necessity for them and related permit holders to be compliant with that document. As of this writing there are no concerns over the ability for Rabun County stakeholders to achieve/sustain compliance, nor are there any notable grievances with the document.

Rabun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan Environmentally Sensitive Areas



LEGEND

-  Water Reservoirs
-  State Parks
-  Major Roads
-  Railroad
-  Major Rivers and Streams
-  Major Lakes
-  Rabun County FEMA DFIRM 2009
-  Protected Mountains
-  Ground Water Recharge Areas
-  National Wetlands Inventory
-  US Forest Service and State Conservation Areas



DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND INFLUENCES

- Rabun County is almost exclusively defined by the prevailing mountains and valleys, so the bulk of residential and commercial development lies within the spine of the county along US 441. Most of the rest of the county remains sparsely developed as National Forest, State Park land, or timber reserve held by Georgia Power. This leaves little land to be developed, which is favorable for the communities as they seek to preserve the natural beauty of the area, but it also suggests any surge in growth will turn smaller communities into smaller urban centers.
- Rabun County is expecting a degree of traffic increases from the inland port and other industry developing to the south in Hall and Habersham Counties. The US 441 highway, which will be widened so as to have 5 lanes throughout Rabun, will serve as the primary truck and tourist route for travelers connecting between metro Atlanta and western North Carolina. Plus it will continue to serve the tourists that come to Rabun County. This volume of traffic is expected to grow by potentially 400 additional freight trips per-day alone, plus more for possible commuters and commercial tourism. Safety and operational management along this corridor will be key as more folks move into the area, especially as some do so with the express intent of trying to capitalize on this traffic for commercial purposes.
- There is an increasing demand for newer affordable housing, both on account of volume and aging inventory, plus interest in pockets of urbanism in the small cities. Part of those concepts go hand in hand in trying to keep the area affordable and accommodate residents who will live and work within the same small community, especially as the county absorbs more workers outside the agricultural or manufacturing fields. As a result communities will have to explore their potential to evolve in a fashion that preserves their respective small-town feel but also feature modern developments that appeal to future residents and business owners.

ANALYSIS OF AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

As part of this process communities should take into account their current and immediately projected conditions and assess the identified needs and issues regarding the built landscape and community services for the area.

Areas of significant natural or cultural resources in need of attention

Clayton is in the early stages of planning for a downtown revitalization effort, including measures to restore and preserve select structures, incorporate a linear greenway and trail and introduce additional commercial space within the district.

The area and facilities associated with the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center are seeking improved access and updating measures to restore and preserve several structures. This is in conjunction with hopes from Mountain City to improve the retail and tourism between Clayton and Dillard.

The Lakemont community (unincorporated) lies along the proposed Tallulah Falls Railroad Trail and Greenway, and features several historic structures that have become a modest attraction for the area and have strong potential as a rural commercial center. Plans are

underway to incorporate some pedestrian access features and restore some of the buildings in advance of the proposed greenway.

The county does feature numerous State Parks and US Forest Service land that receive protection through State and federal management, with support from the local governments, as well. Establishment and enforcement of the State's minimum environmental protection standards would further this effort.

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

The US 441 corridor is the most developed and progressive part of Rabun County, particularly between southern Clayton and Dillard. Most new non-residential development is expected to occur within this linear area. However, given current downturns in development there has been less pressure than originally projected, and most new development is within the parameters expected for the corridor.

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

The stretch of US 441 through Clayton, and some of the residential uses immediately beyond the City's core, feature the most aggressive development interests in the area and are increasing the demands for water and wastewater. Given the already taxed state of the local system, significant volumes of new development tapping into the service might adversely impact the level of service and/or the ability to resolve standing discharge issues.

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

In addition to the efforts in Clayton, the downtown areas of Mountain City and Dillard are susceptible to adverse development pressures due to US 441 running directly through the heart of the cities. Though formal downtown plans have not yet been developed, both cities favor and are pursuing measures that increase pedestrian safety and accessibility in these areas.

The City of Tiger is also considering long-term plans to revitalize its downtown, beginning with select improvements for streetscaping and civic accommodations. This will also include expanding outdoor recreational activities by utilizing existing greenspace areas for future use and development. All development will strive to maintain the current defining characteristics that contribute to Tiger's quality of life and sense of place and not sacrifice the country village atmosphere which the town is known for.

Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated

There are no significant abandoned sites or structures within the County. Any/all empty industrial properties are already being marketed through local economic development organizations and renovation efforts will have support and guidance from the respective local government.

Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)

There are several undeveloped properties between downtown Clayton and US 441, including some along Stekoa Creek that will be featured within a new greenway. Plans are being made to incorporate the greenway, trails and park elements where possible, and will be used to assist the compatibility of new development in these areas.

RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS

To further assist in identifying development needs and target areas it is crucial to understand not only the land use patterns but also the prevailing character and context of a community. It is possible to identify these sub-areas within the community defined by architectural scale and style, functions and roles, traffic flow, and other factors that differentiate one area from the next. These can include the areas requiring special attention identified above and/or existing community sub-areas for which plans have already been prepared.

These recommended Character Areas (CAs) provide general direction for the types of land use and designs to be considered within each designation. While some details are provided as guidance for development, each decision must also take into account individual project details, current conditions and local concerns in evaluating the appropriateness of each development proposal. The information included herein must be used in conjunction with local codes and standards, as well as weighed with other objectives and priorities discussed elsewhere within the comprehensive plan, such as the economic development or community facilities elements.

Included with the definition of each CA is a list of general land-use types permitted or restricted within that area, the Quality Community Objectives being addressed, and the subsequent measures to be used in implementing the proposed area. Where applicable, some areas will reference outside sources for additional development considerations.

Character Areas	Rabun Co.	Clayton	Dillard	Mountain City	Sky Valley	Tallulah Falls	Tiger
Village Commercial			X		X	X	X
Village Residential		X	X	X	X	X	X
Downtown Clayton		X					
Clubhouse					X		
Highway 441 – Clayton		X					
Highway 441	X		X	X		X	
Agriculture/ Rural Residential		X	X	X		X	X
Conservation/ Forestry	X	X			X	X	X
Parks/ Recreation/ Greenspace/ Trails	X	X		X	X	X	
Industrial	X						
Office/ Institutional/ Campus	X	X				X	
Waterfront Development	X					X	
Rabun Gap	X						

Applicable QCO's per Character Area

DCA Quality Community Objective	Economic Prosperity	Resource Mgmt.	Efficient Land Use	Local Preparedness	Sense of Place	Regional Cooperation	Housing Options	Transportation Options	Educational Opportunities	Community Health
Village Commercial	X		X	X	X					X
Village Residential		X	X	X	X		X			X
Downtown Clayton	X				X		X			X
Clubhouse	X				X					X
Highway 441 – Clayton	X		X		X	X		X		X
Highway 441	X		X		X	X		X		X
Agriculture/ Rural Residential		X	X		X	X	X			
Conservation/ Forestry		X	X	X	X	X				
Parks/ Rec./ Greenspace/ Trails		X	X	X	X			X		X
Industrial	X					X				
Office/ Institutional/ Campus	X								X	
Waterfront Development		X	X	X	X		X			
Rabun Gap		X	X		X					

Village Commercial

Village commercial districts are pockets of retail, dining, office or institutional uses located in crossroad settings or along select arterial and collector roads. They are designed to serve area residents by providing a rural destination for commercial and civic activity, while blending into the mountainous context and small-town charm preferred by residents.

These areas will feature modest design considerations to minimize surface parking and promote architectural design that reinforces the community's rural, Appalachian culture. Units may be detached or attached but must exhibit variations in structure for every 2-3 units and should avoid the appearance of a long, continuous structure, such as a conventional shopping center. They will typically be 1-2 stories and remain within close proximity (under 70 feet) to the prevailing roadway, visible to travelers along the street and framing the streetscape.

Additional characteristics recommended for the district, which are intended to sustain the area's rural character, include limited sizes and distribution of signage and limited lighting displays.

Development Encouraged

- Small scale commercial, office or institutional uses
- Minimal parking on front and sides; Attached units permitted
- Rural/ Mountain themed design elements preferred
 - Pitched roofs
 - Wood or stone siding
 - Front porches
- Sited along 2-3 lane arterials
- Concentrated at nodal intersections or key stretches

Implementation Measures

- Amend/adopt development regulations as needed
- Develop design guideline reference material
- Develop *Iconic Images* database
- Develop/ Implement streetscape plans (cities)

Village Commercial



Village Residential

Village residential refers to those neighborhoods adjoining activity centers throughout Rabun County. Typically, these feature smaller, sometimes urban lot sizes, large enough for the structure and accompanying yards. The districts are almost exclusively residential in use but are immediately connected to a commercial district or some cultural center, often with pedestrian access provided.

These areas incorporate connecting streets and homes that are usually within 25-50 feet of the roadway. The units are also built to an overall density to indicate a true neighborhood, a cluster of units large enough to endow a community and not feel isolated.

Clayton's neighborhood district consists of the various urban-scale residential blocks surrounding the Main Street district. For some blocks there are direct sidewalk connections to Main Street and the commercial district, as befitting traditional urban neighborhoods.

Most housing in these neighborhoods are predominantly site-built in design, with some units dating from the 1930's and most older than 30 years. The typical sites range from ½ to ¼ acres, each with a single-story house within 40-50 feet of the road frontage. Many units have carports or no garage at all, and most are on crawl spaces.

There are a variety of styles present, most with pitched roofs and front porches. Some units have been expanded or renovated and based on the visual impact and occupancy rates the district as a whole appears economically stable. In some cases, the transitions alongside the rural parts of the city/county are seamlessly experienced thanks to the mature trees and comparable architectural styles of rural housing.

Development Encouraged

- Single family residential development (attached or detached)
- Light office, commercial and institutional uses conditional
- Rural/ Mountain themed design elements preferred
 - Pitched roofs
 - Wood or stone siding
 - Front porches

Implementation Measures

- Conduct forum reviewing/amending development regulations as needed
- Develop design guideline reference material
- Develop *Iconic Images* database

Village Residential



Downtown Clayton

Clayton is a classic rural city that emerged from a crossroads community to a mid-20th century urban core. The several blocks surrounding the intersections of Main and Savannah Streets are the retail, civic and social hub for the city while also serving as the defining spaces and forms that give Clayton its rural, small-town character.

The defining elements include the urban scale blocks and massing of buildings, the prevalence of commercial, civic and service uses befitting a historic town center. Most of the structures are traditional shop-front buildings of 2-3 stories with frontage right along the sidewalks. Design elements feature a variety of brick, stone and wood construction with familiar displays of signage and windows depicting commercial settings oriented around luring pedestrians.

Ancillary elements exhibit traditional small-scale urban form. Sidewalks connect Main Street with surrounding blocks, including nearby residential neighborhoods. There are various planters, lampposts and garbage receptacles along the walkways. Pocket parks are located on two sides of the main intersection, along with the historic Rock House, a popular local architectural landmark. On-street parking is provided in diagonal array.

Main Street, the original US 441 route, is the social center and economic hub for residents and visitors alike, complete with popular local restaurants and unique, boutique shops. The Tallulah Falls Railroad depot site located on Savannah Street has the potential to become a future gateway to a proposed Rails-to-Trails project and the Stekoa Creek Greenway.

The downtown Clayton district is likely to retain its form but possibly expand in scale as businesses respond to the growing popularity of this area. A new streetscape plan will beautify the area and further enhance recent efforts to rehabilitate many older structures. Additional plans call for new park space, improved signage, and coordination of events around downtown, all intended to enhance the Main Street district's role as the city's social center.

Development Encouraged

- O/Near lot line development
- Mix of uses; preference for commercial along Main Street
- Minimize surface parking; Preference for public lot
- Office, institutional and residential uses acceptable
- Should blend with architectural character of the neighborhoods and Main Street;

Implementation Measures

- Support preservation of existing structures
- Conduct forum reviewing/amending development regulations as needed
- Develop design guideline reference material
- Develop *Iconic Images* database
- Implement streetscape plans
- Develop Stekoa Creek Greenway Plan
- Conduct study assessing opportunities for new park space
- Create development plans for Gateway Corridors



Clubhouse District (Sky Valley)

The Clubhouse District is the heart of Sky Valley’s original resort. The area was intended to be the public, quasi-civic gathering space for City residents and club visitors, mimicking a town square or plaza.

The former and current clubhouse structures serve as the anchors for the space, with the pool and tennis courts also nearby. Residents desire additional retail and dining options for the community, preferably in this location. There are also aspirations for lodging and event facilities in the area.

Structures should evoke the community’s rural, mountain character. Use of wood and stone is preferred as well as sharply pitched roofs. Scale can vary from 1-4+ stories depending on design and utility service. Massing of the structures should emphasize presence and orientation around the center of the district, with parking placed in the rear or heavily dispersed.



Development Encouraged

- Small-scale retail or dining
- Conference-style event facility, preferably with adjoining specialty lodging
- Possible new City Hall or civic structure
- Rural/ Mountain themed design elements preferred
 - Pitched roofs
 - Wood or stone siding
 - Front porches
- Design and orientation of structures and parking should reflect welcoming, pedestrian friendly area

Implementation Measures

- Conduct forum reviewing/amending development regulations as needed
- Develop design guideline reference material



Highway 441 - Clayton

The current Highway 441 is the central arterial roadway serving Rabun County. It is the north-south axial connector to regional centers for employment, retail and medical services not available within Clayton, and the main route for tourists traveling to and through the area. For this, at least one of the roles required of this roadway is the ability to manage through traffic and commercial/industrial trucking.

As Highway 441 winds through Clayton the roadway becomes the primary location for large scale and national brand commercial centers. This includes hotels, chain restaurants and retailers, plus some local businesses and services as well as larger institutional uses such as medical facilities, making it the busiest roadway in the county. It is also the single point within the county with a prevalence of elements that are not distinctly Clayton or Rabun in nature

Objectives for the corridor include a more cohesive identity more closely linked to the area's community character. While some structures reflect mountain architectural themes with their use of wood, stone or roofing design, many more employ conventional shopping center forms and large parking lots. The desire is to curtail and possibly reverse the trend with more context sensitive development, with limitations on monolithic forms and placing structures in clusters that are closer to each other and the street. This can include attached units or grouping units so as to minimize buildings as islands within parking lots.

Redevelopment or infill of space at existing properties is also encouraged. As 441 runs closer to downtown Clayton the preference is for increased density and more pedestrian friendly arrangements, including possible incorporation of the Stekoa Creek Greenway and adaptive reuse of older commercial structures.

Development Encouraged

- Commercial, office or institutional uses
- Limited, managed access onto Hwy 441
- Rural/ Mountain themed design elements preferred
 - Pitched roofs
 - Wood or stone siding
 - Front porches
- Appropriate buffering from adjoining properties
- Parking should be dispersed
- Properties should feature pedestrian network accessibility
- Limitations on large, monolithic designs for multi-unit structures

Implementation Measures

- Conduct forum reviewing/amending development regulations as needed
- Consider guidelines for signage and lighting
- Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed



Highway 441

The current Highway 441 is the central arterial roadway serving Rabun County. It is the north-south axial connector to regional centers for employment, retail and medical services not available within Clayton, and the main route for tourists traveling to and through the area. For this, at least one of the roles required of this roadway is the ability to manage through traffic and commercial/industrial trucking.

Between Tallulah Falls and Clayton the corridor exhibits steeply sloped terrain and limited opportunity for large scale development. A variety of commercial, office and institutional uses are found scattered along the highway, including the local attraction Goats on the Roof and the joint school campus.

As Highway 441 winds up the hills beyond Clayton and runs through Mountain City and Dillard, it changes character to reflect a much more rural scene. Farms and farm stands dot the landscape, and most shops and structures along the roadway are much smaller in scale and passive in design. There is a density reflective of everyday use, but most of the businesses and commerce showcase the area's agrarian, rustic nature. Signature elements include the vistas of the valley and several farms, the campus of Rabun Gap – Nacoochee School and downtown Dillard.

Further development along the road is encouraged provided it is sensitive to the existing character and scale. Larger, generic commercial or office structures should be limited or restricted in favor of designs that reflect the intimate scenes already present. The preference is for structures to be within 70 -100 feet of the roadway and employing design elements from rural mountain communities, such as front porches and pitched roofs.

Development Encouraged

- Commercial, office or institutional uses
- Limited, managed access onto Hwy 441
- Appropriate buffering from adjoining properties
- Village-scale development, comparable with rural setting

Implementation Measures

- Conduct forum reviewing/amending development regulations as needed
- Consider guidelines for signage and lighting
- Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed



Agricultural/ Rural Residential

This district is a catch-all designation for those larger lots that lie outside the urban neighborhoods or slightly more populated transitional zones. There is little agricultural activity within City limits, and almost all of that is of a non-commercial scale. Many lots are simply large residential lots with most of the property left undeveloped.

These properties primarily feature a house with one or more storage or agricultural structures. Most are long established properties of 30 years or more. In a couple cases their residence is substantially improved and indicative of a high economic class. Others are simply modest homes on lots retained purely for their scenic, rural value.

This is a transitional space between established neighborhoods and the vast forestland throughout the county. It consists mostly of undeveloped land or recently built suburban housing. By type the subdivisions are attempting to fit in with the predominantly residential character surrounding the cities, but in form they differ by relying on insular road networks and a departure from the classic urban grid. Some of the houses are also larger both in structure and in terms of lot size than found within the urban neighborhoods.

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

Development Encouraged

- Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached
- Agricultural uses
- Churches
- Small-scale institutional
- Minimize surface parking
- Should blend with architectural character of community
- Conservation design subdivisions

Implementation Measures

- Maintain development regulations; Refine as needed (Policy)
- Support preservation of existing agricultural lands and structures (Policy)
- Maintain/Pursue policies that encourage appropriate infill development (Cities)



Conservation/ Forestry

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

Much of this is found on steeper slopes and ridgelines, comprising the scenic vistas and outdoor recreation areas that help define Rabun County. Aspirations are to preserve this part of the landscape as best as possible, prohibiting new development apart from replacing existing structures or from forms that mimic the scale and context of existing structures in the area.

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



Development Encouraged

- National forest and preserved utility land
- State Parks and wildlife management areas
- Minimal construction
- Preference for unpaved roads

Implementation Measures

- Maintain cooperation with USFS, Ga Power and DNR (Policy)
- Attain/ enforce State environmental standards (Policy)
- Update floodplain and environmental mapping data every 5 years



Parks/ Recreation/ Greenspace/ Trails

This district is reserved for naturally landscaped areas that are designated for specific recreational use and/or as a buffer within developed areas. This can include passive or active parks, trails, larger public gardens or popular spots designated for hiking, camping, etc. Greenways can provide safe, efficient pedestrian linkages and at the same time give users an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. Properly designed greenways can serve as an alternative transportation network, accommodating commuting to work or shopping as well as recreational biking, walking, jogging, and other activities.

These are spaces restricted from new development save for the maintenance and expansion of amenities designed to enhance the property's role as a park. Parking and facilities should be minimized and development should incorporate high degrees of locally-appropriate landscaping. These spaces should be attractive to, and serve the interests of, the residents and visitors to the area as a primary way to appreciate the rural and Appalachian culture of Rabun County.

Development Encouraged

- Parks, recreation areas, trails
- Large lot residential or agricultural uses
- Minimal land disturbance
- Conservation design subdivisions

Implementation Measures

- Develop/ Maintain a Parks and Rec Master Plan
- Develop Stekoa Creek Greenway Plan
- Conduct study assessing opportunities for new park space
- Support development of the Tallulah Falls Trail & Greenway (Policy)



Industrial

Areas used in low intensity manufacturing, wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics.

Currently Rabun County has few sites suitable for goods manufacturing, but does intend to accommodate some industrial growth for the future. Currently, the Rabun Business Park offers 950,000 square feet of modern manufacturing space, over 20,000 square feet of office space, and 96 acres of property for new build-to-suit facilities. Additional, smaller properties scattered across the county are capable of hosting independent operations with limited needs for heavy traffic access.

These spaces are targeted for accommodating industrial needs, and as such are dispersed to minimize their impact on local communities or the natural environment. Design should include buffers and restrictions against ecological impacts, with a preference for green technology in design or operation. Minimal traffic impacts are preferred, both due to limitations of the local roadways and to protect the communities and residents within the valleys.



Development Encouraged

- Industrial, low-impact mining, warehousing and distribution
- Large-scale institutional uses
- Requirement for appropriate buffering from adjoining properties

Implementation Measures

- Inventory all potential industrial sites
- Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry



Office/ Institutional/ Campus

This district is for specialized office, lodging and institutional settings that often function as collective developments, or campuses. These may or may not entail overnight use but often feature shared amenities, roadway access and signage. The intent is to create a coordinated development for one or multiple uses with a united function or design scheme.

This could include passive use, extended stay facilities within rural settings, such as small resorts or conference facilities that complement their surroundings and build off the low-intensity tourism of Rabun County’s outdoor recreation industry. Such facilities can connect with existing communities and neighborhoods or be located in isolated settings with proper utilities and site management.

This can also include schools or civic structures, conference and meeting facilities or smaller offices.

Developments of these types should provide coordinated design schemes that also match the context of their surroundings. Buffering against adjoining properties should be employed if the nature of the uses presents possible adverse impacts.



Development Encouraged

- Office parks
- Small-to-medium sized institutional settings
- Lodging
- Specialty multi-family residential
- Conference-style event facilities
- Schools campuses

Implementation Measures

- Conduct forum reviewing/amending development regulations as needed



Waterfront development

This is for the variety of developments, existing and developing, surrounding Lake Burton, Lake Rabun and the Tallulah River. It is also regarding development along the myriad of mountain streams and waterways that exist throughout Rabun County.

To ensure local water quality and to preserve the scenic character that's so valuable to the area, developments in this character area should implement stream buffers and/or setback protections. Land disturbance should be minimized, public sewer should be used where available, and impervious surfaces should be kept to a minimum.



Development Encouraged

- Single-family Residential, attached or detached
- Small-scale resort structures
- Marinas, docks and ancillary watercraft storage units
- Parks and recreation facilities

Implementation Measures

- Conduct forum reviewing/amending development regulations as needed
- Enforce State environmental standards (Policy)
- Update floodplain and environmental mapping data every 5 years

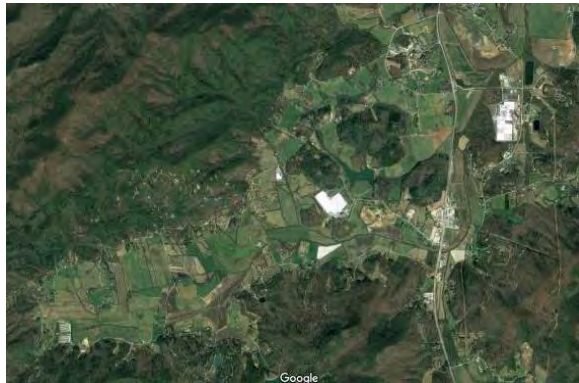


Rabun Gap

Rabun Gap (also known as Rabun Gap-Wolffork Valley) is an unincorporated community nestled near Mountain City and Dillard. It has historically been a hub for farming because of the relatively flat topography in the river valley of the natural gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Accessed predominantly by Wolffork Road and Betty Creek Road, Rabun Gap features several prominent local institutions including the Hambidge Center, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Sylvan Falls Bed & Breakfast Inn, and the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.

Residents and stakeholders in the area desire to keep the community pastoral and largely agricultural, without ceding to suburbanization or undue growth from US 441. There is also a strong desire to improve/retain the quality of local natural resources, especially area streams and watersheds.



Development Encouraged

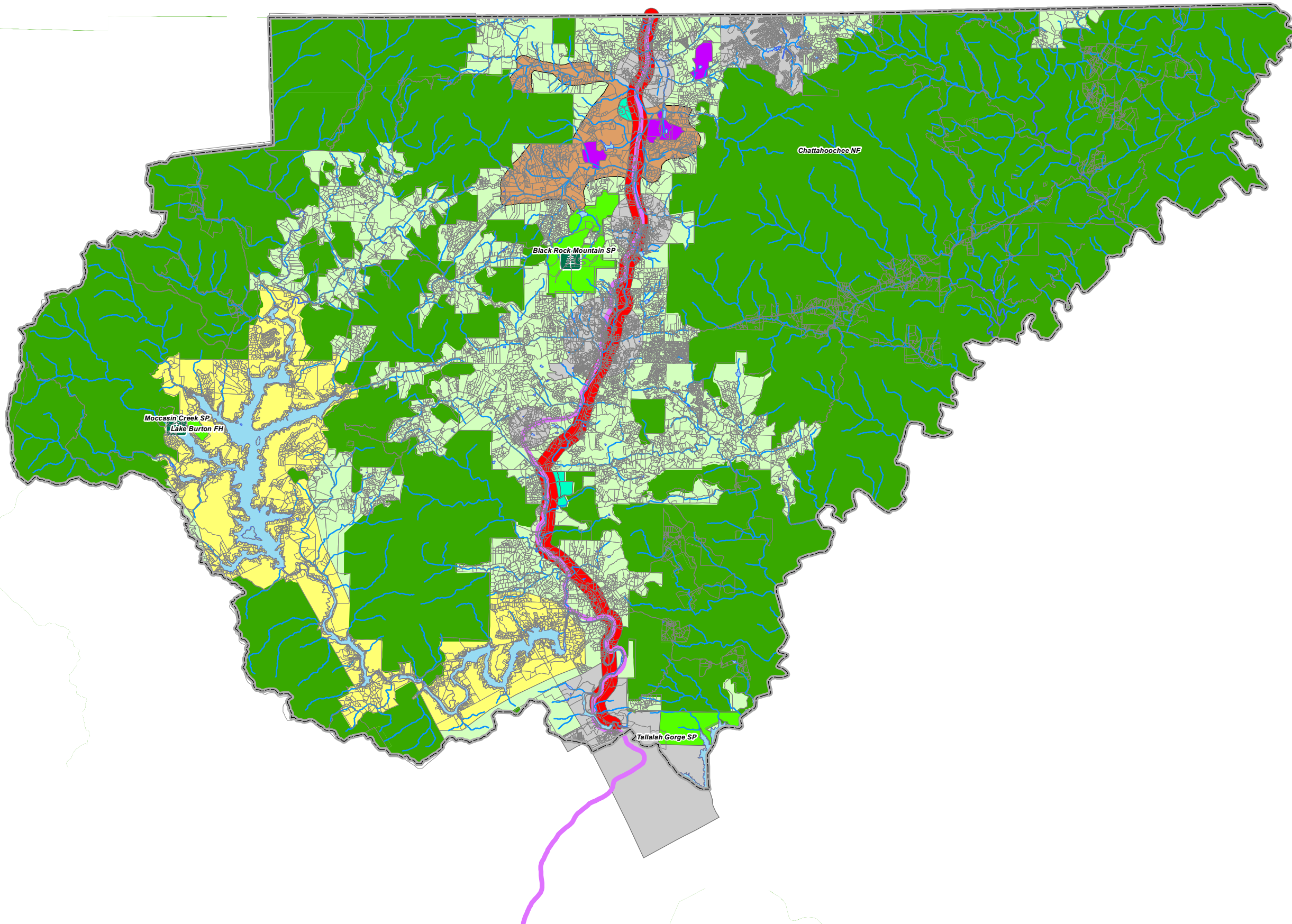
- Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached
- Agricultural uses
- Churches
- Small-scale institutional
- Minimize surface parking
- Should blend with architectural character of community
- Conservation design subdivisions

Implementation Measures

- Seek recognition as official unincorporated community
- Develop community development strategy in concert with Rabun County
- Review development regulations; Refine as needed
- Support preservation of existing agricultural lands and structures (Policy)
- Pursue updated Watershed Management Plan for Little Tennessee River

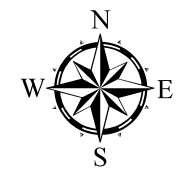


Rabun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan Character Areas



LEGEND

- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Municipalities
- Tallulah Falls Railway - Greenspace Trail
- Highway Corridor
- Lakeside and River Residential
- Agriculture/Rural Residential
- Office/Institutional
- Industrial
- Rabun Gap
- Parks/Recreation/Green Space
- Conservation/Forestry

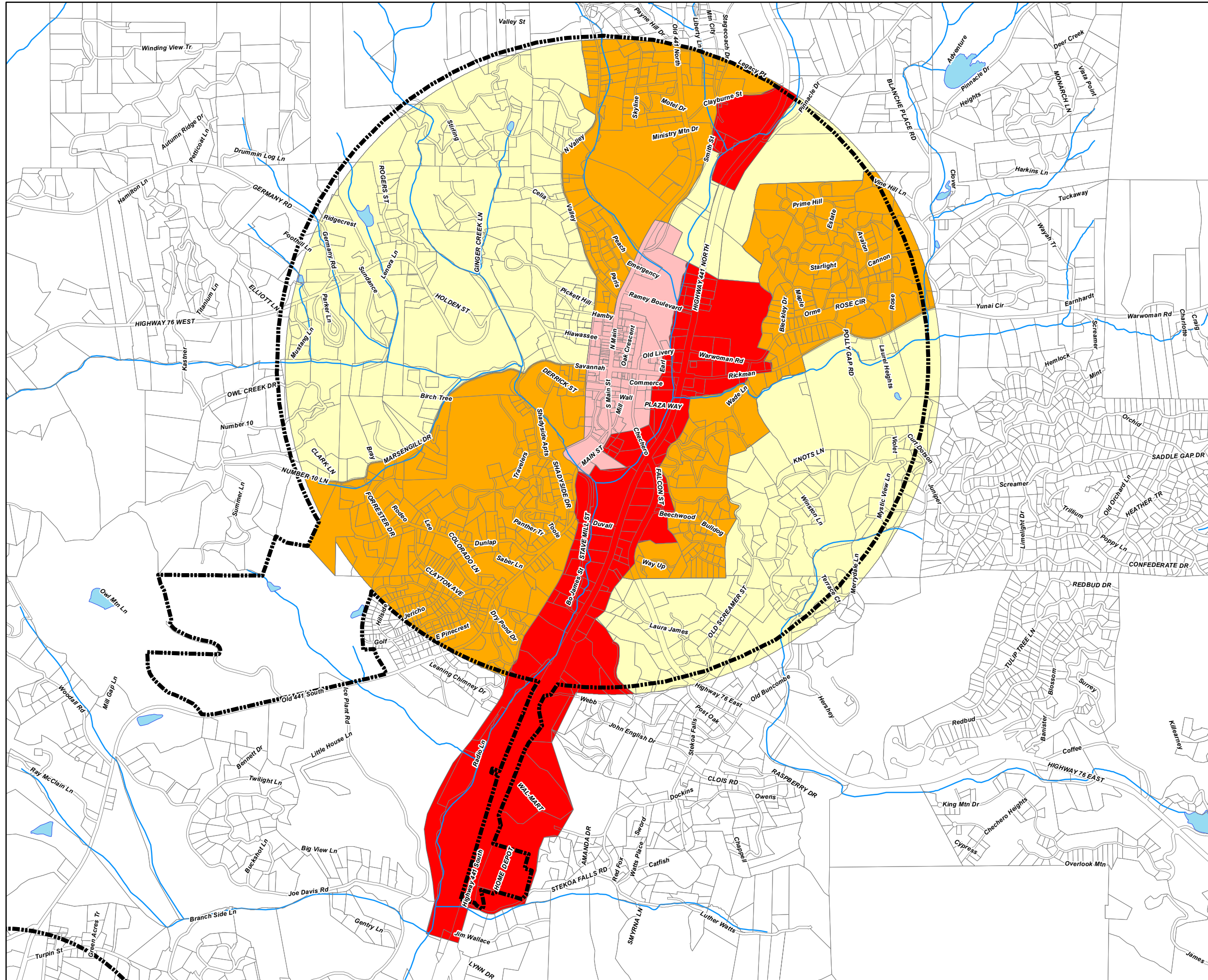


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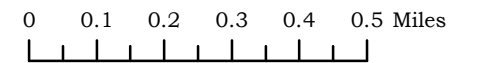
Map Prepared By: FDB, October, 2019

Rabun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan City of Clayton Character Areas



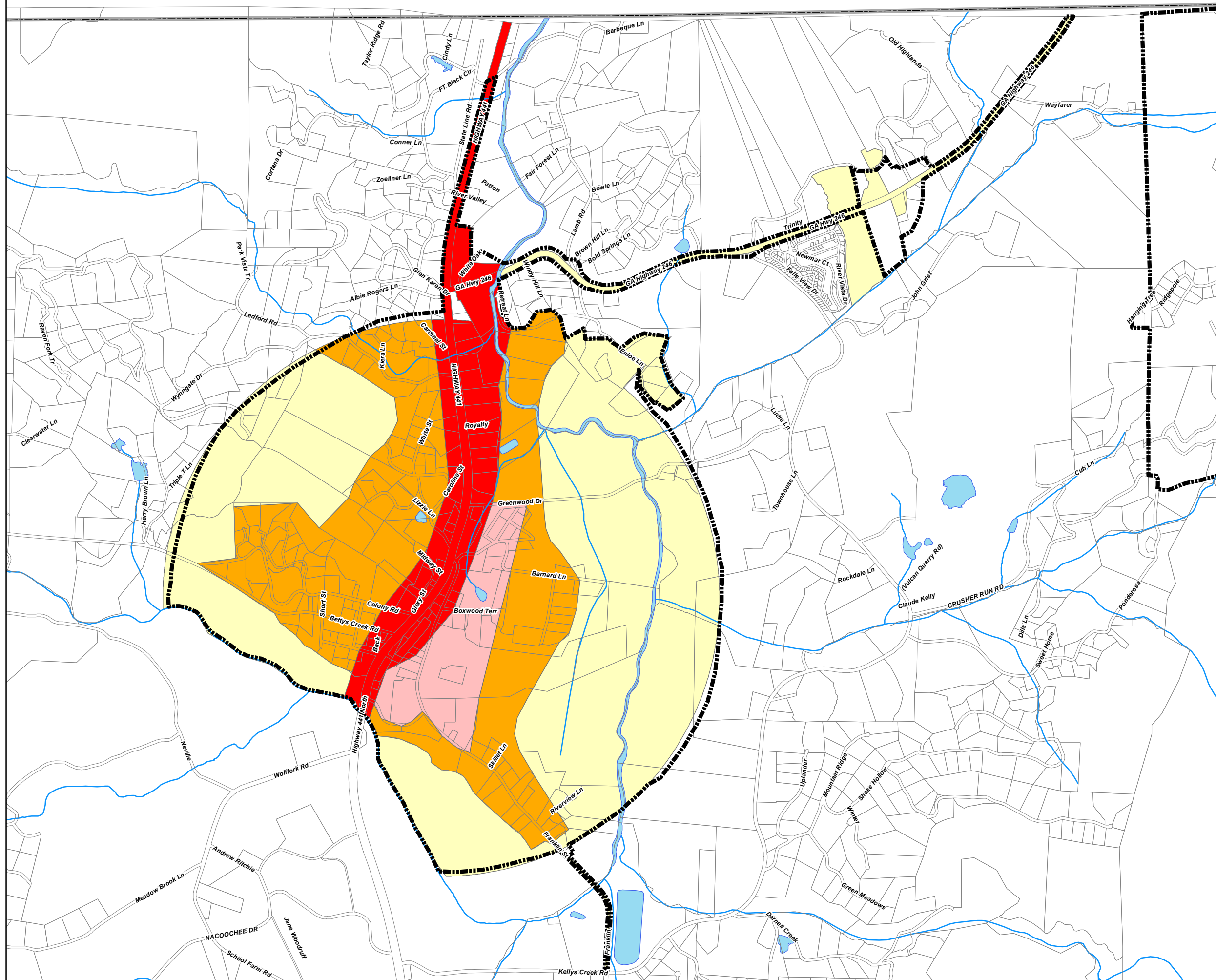
LEGEND

-  Rivers and Streams
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  Municipalities
-  Rural Residential
-  Village Residential
-  Main Street Clayton
-  US Highway 441/Clayton
-  Forestry/Greenspace



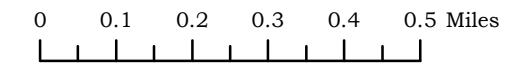
Map Prepared By: FDB, August, 2019

Rabun County
2019 Comprehensive Plan
City of Dillard
Character Areas



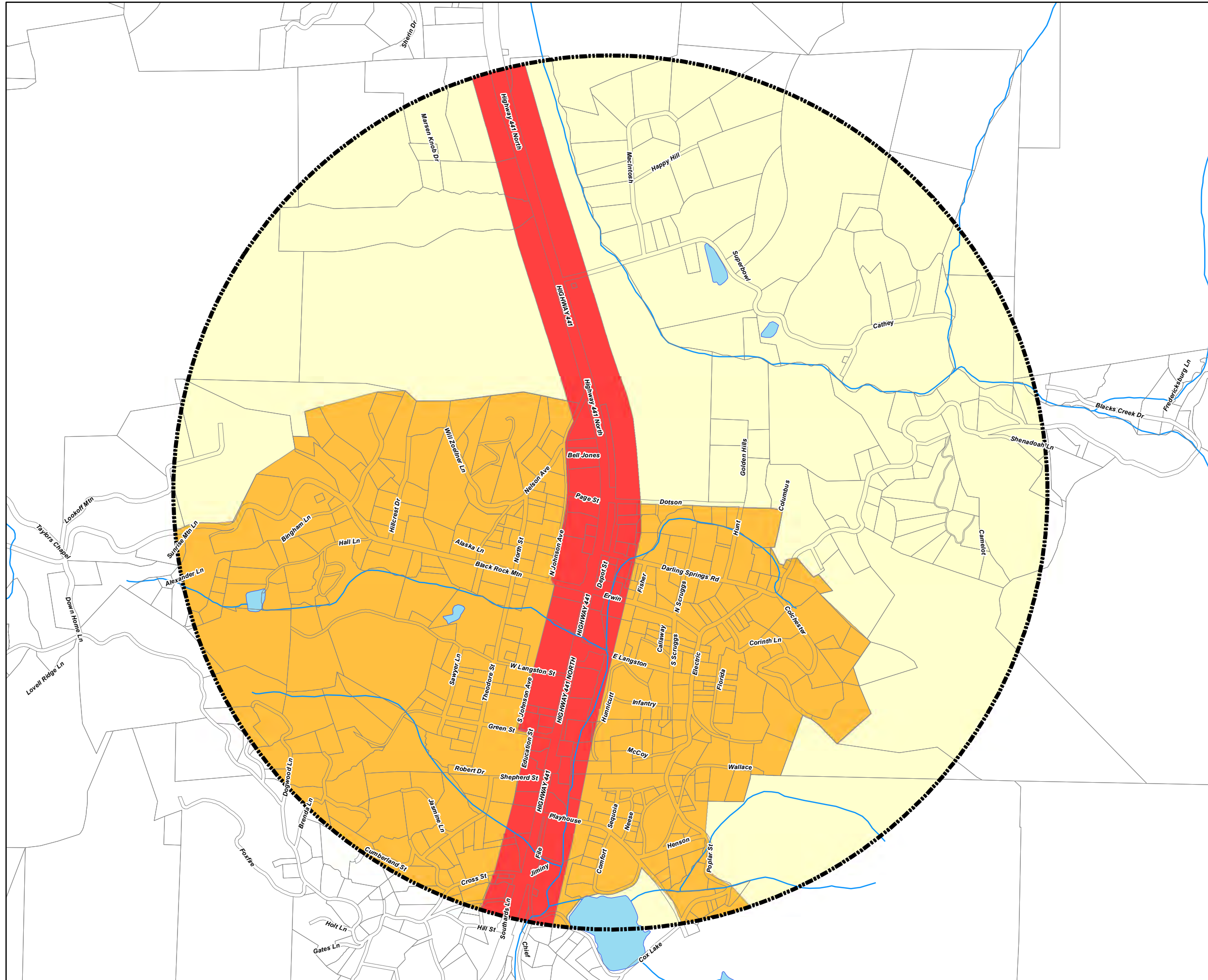
LEGEND

- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Municipalities
- Village Residential
- Agricultural/Rural Residential
- Highway 441/Rabun Gap
- Village Commercial



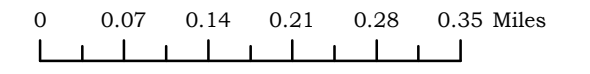
Map Prepared By: FDB, August, 2019

Rabun County
2019 Comprehensive Plan
City of Mountain City
Character Areas



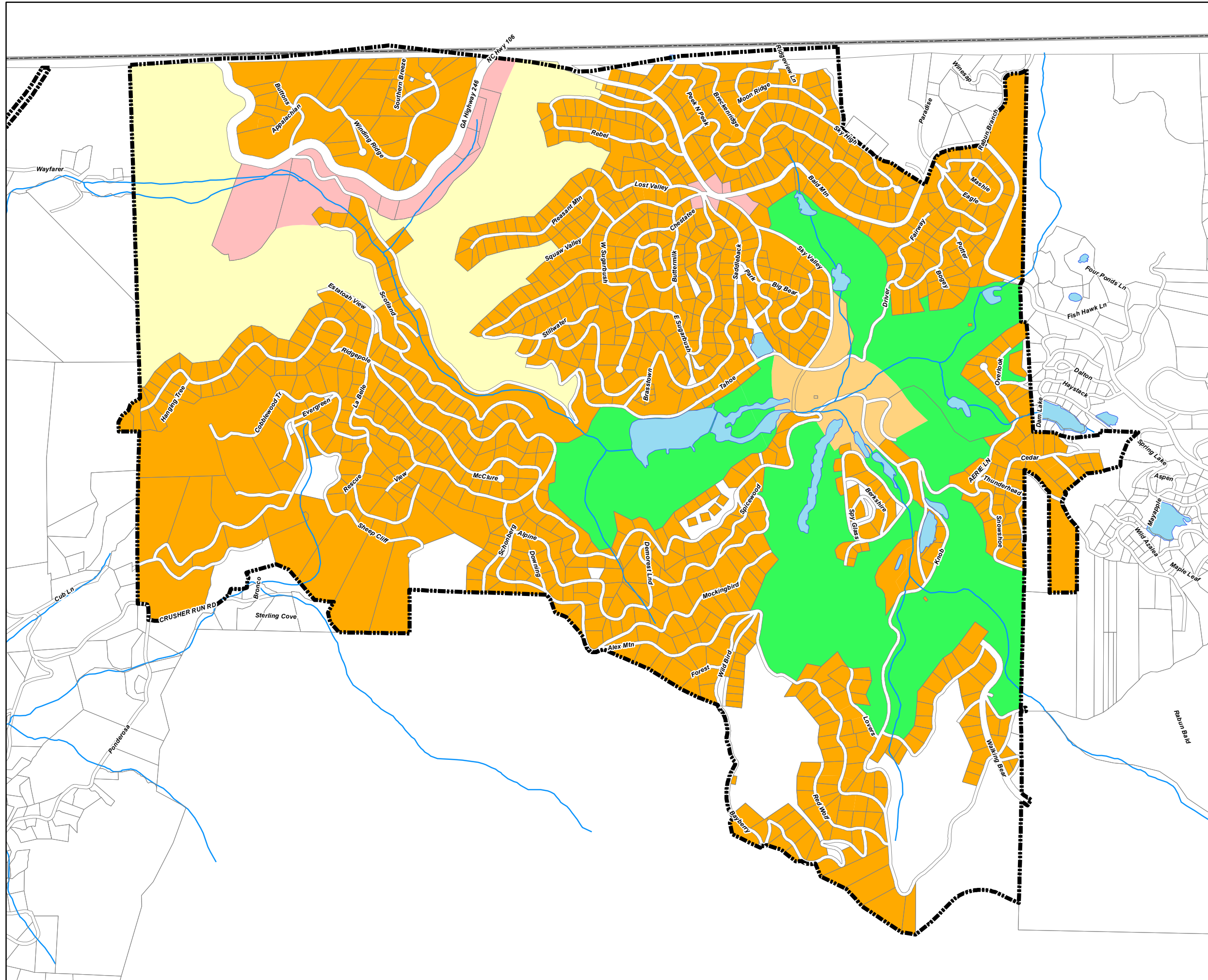
LEGEND

- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Municipalities
- Village Residential
- Agricultural/Rural Residential
- Highway 441/Rabun Gap



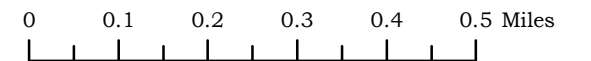
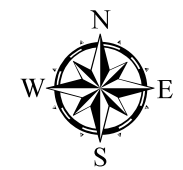
Map Prepared By: FDB, August, 2019

Rabun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan City of Sky Valley Character Areas



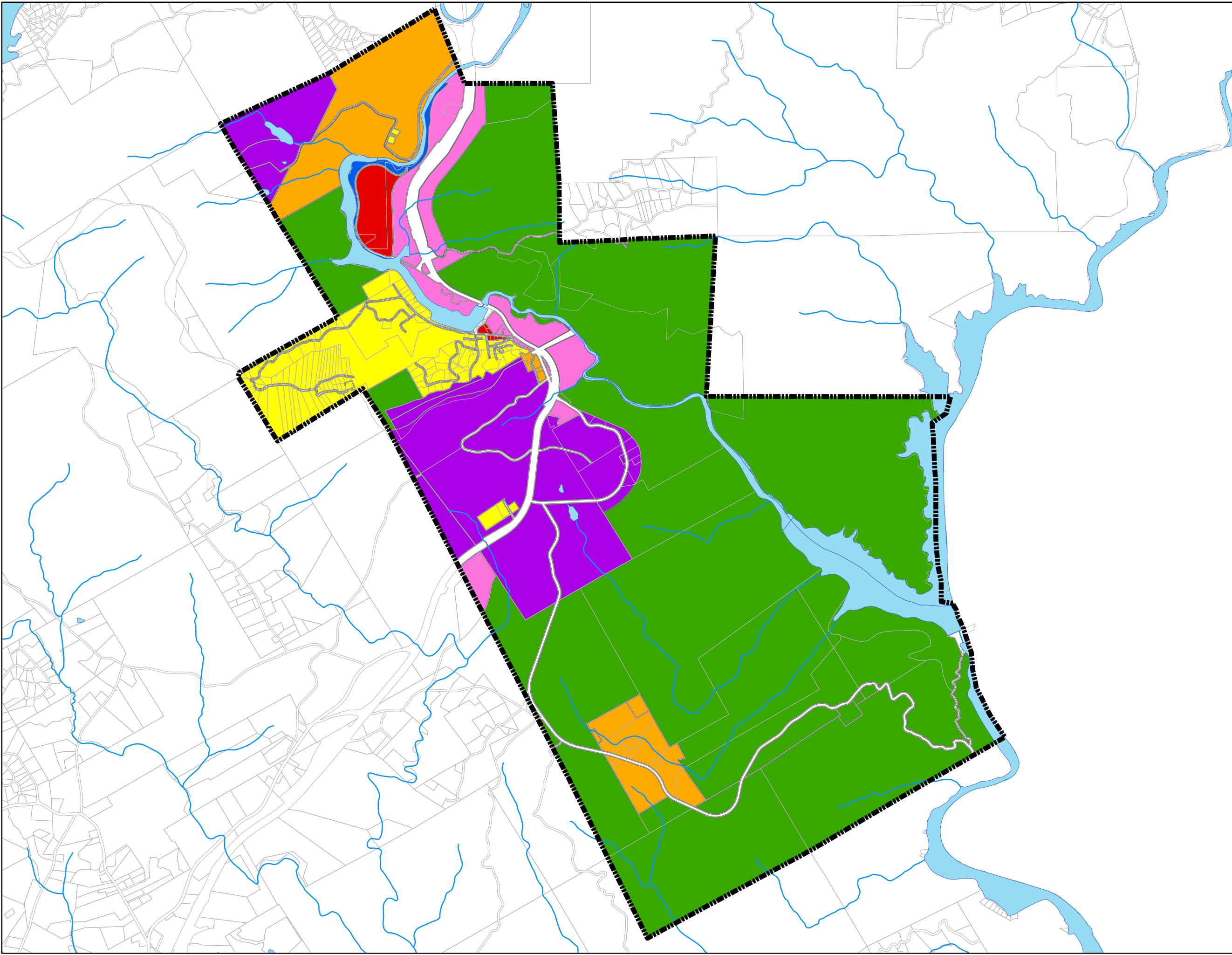
LEGEND

- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Municipalities
- Conservation/Forestry
- Village Residential
- Agriculture/Residential
- Village Commercial
- Club House
- Conservation/Forestry
- Park/Recreation













Map Prepared By: FDB, August, 2019

Rabun County
2019 Comprehensive Plan
Town of Tallulah Falls
Character Areas



Legend

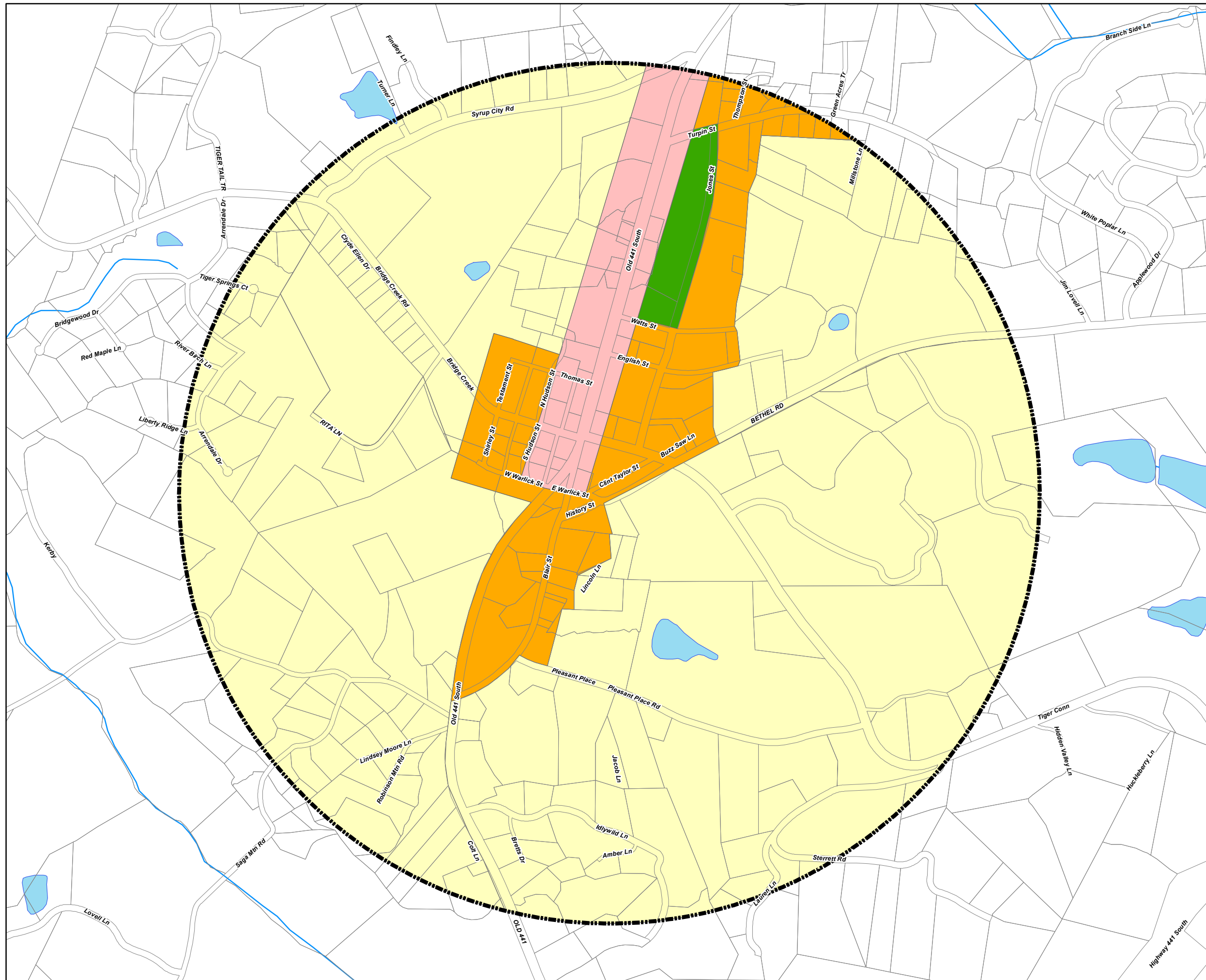
- Tallulah Falls Character Areas**
-  Ag Residential
 -  Conservation Forestry
 -  441 Development
 -  Office Institutional
 -  Village Commercial
 -  Village Residential
 -  Waterfront Development
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  Municipal Boundary






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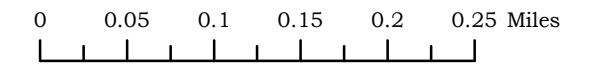
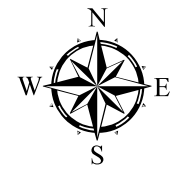


Rabun County
2019 Comprehensive Plan
City of Tiger
Character Areas



LEGEND

-  Rivers and Streams
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  Municipalities



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The Implementation Program constitutes the inventory of final recommended actions items to be undertaken by the community. It comprises of three elements that summarize the status of past action items, the proposal of action items for the near future, and the list of those long-term projects to be considered and addressed when possible beyond the planning horizon. This is done formally in three parts:

List of Accomplishments

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

Community Work Program

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

Many programs listed will explore assistance through the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) via their discretionary contract elements with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Note: Where applied, "DCA funding" is used to indicate potential funding source for GMRC support of an item eligible for the Local Discretionary Assistance element of the RC/DCA contracts

Policies and Long-Term Objectives

While the future development strategy projects the physical conditions expressed within the Vision, the Implementation Program is the overall strategy for achieving the Vision and for addressing each of the Community Issues and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures, both short and long-term, that must be undertaken by the community in order realize the community's goals.

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

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - RABUN COUNTY

Action	Status	Comment
Update service delivery agreement	In Progress	
Develop Iconic Images database	Complete	
Renovations/Upgrades at Fire Station #10	Complete	
Road paving schedule – Bob Mark Trail; Dock Coleman Road	Complete	
Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	In Progress	To be addressed with SDS update
Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	Complete	To be paired with Forward Rabun
Update/develop websites for communities	Complete	
Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	Postponed – 2022	Deferred: Not a priority at this time
Develop study of pedestrian connections with school campuses	Complete	GMRC product with County
Complete creation of Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority	Complete	
Develop the Stekoa Creek Greenway plan	In Progress	
Develop formal agri-tourism strategy; Farm-to-Table program	Complete	
Construct sewer line from Parkdale Mfg. to US 441	Complete	
Develop long-range plan and budget for emergency services facilities and equipment	Complete	
Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations	Postponed – 2022	Deferred: Not a priority at this time
Review sign and lighting regulations and property maintenance codes; Amend as needed	Postponed – 2022	Deferred: Not a priority at this time
New potable water plant in Rabun Gap	Complete	
Road paving schedule – Oscar Rock Rd.; Sandy Ford Rd.	Complete	
Inventory all potential industrial sites	Complete	
Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	Postponed – 2022	Deferred: Not a priority at this time
Develop County-wide Firewise and Fire Adapted Community campaign	Complete	
Develop agricultural sustainability program	In Progress	
Renovate county gymnasiums	Complete	
Build tennis courts and new ball field at County park	Complete	
Develop marketing plan for vacant office and industrial space	In Progress	
Develop/Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Postponed – 2024	Deferred for lack of funding
Renovations/Upgrades at Fire Station #8	In Progress	
Road paving schedule – Wolf Creek Rd.; Cross St.	In Progress	Next Phase to be done in 2021
Completion of fiber-optic connections with North Georgia Network	Complete	

Perform study to identify additional outdoor recreation amenities	Postponed - 2022	Deferred for lack of funding
Replace irrigation system and upgrade club house at golf course	In Progress	
Assess performance of mountain protection regulations	Postponed – 2023	Deferred: Not a priority at this time
Renovations/Upgrades at Fire Station #3	Complete	
Road paving schedule – Timber Bluff Rd.; Taylor’s Chapel Rd.	Postponed – 2024	Deferred for lack of funding
Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen involvement in clubs/ charities	Complete	
Update floodplain and environmental mapping data	Complete	
Road paving schedule – Blalock/ Goldmine Rd.	Postponed – 2024	Deferred for lack of funding
Replace Bridge at Cat Gap road	Postponed – 2025	Deferred for lack of funding

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM – RABUN COUNTY

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2020	Update service delivery agreement	NA	NA	County, Cities
2020	Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	TBD	Utilities	County, Cities, Joint WSA
2020	Renovations/Upgrades at Fire Station #8	TBD	Grants, Loans, SPLOST	County
2020	Develop agricultural sustainability program	\$10,000	DED, Gen funds	County, Mtn. City
2020	Replace irrigation system and upgrade club house at golf course	\$50,000	User Fees, DED	County
2021	Develop community development strategy for Rabun Gap	\$10,000	DCA, donations	County, GMRC
2021	Develop a workforce housing strategy	NA	NA	County, GMRC, Chamber
2021	Develop the Stekoa Creek Greenway plan	\$10,000	GDOT	County, Clayton
2022	Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations	\$2,000	DCA	County, Clayton, GMRC
2022	Review sign and lighting regulations and property maintenance codes; Amend as needed	\$2,000	DCA	County, Clayton, GMRC
2022	Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	\$5,000	IDA	IDA, GDOT, GMRC
2022	Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	\$3,000	DCA	County, Cities, GMRC
2022	Water transmission line between 2 water plants	\$5,000,000	SPLOST, Gen. Funds	County
2022	Develop a remediation strategy for non-compliant watersheds listed in State TMDL inventory	\$10,000	DCA, EPD	County, GMRC, Chest-Chat RC&D
2022	Pursue updated Watershed Management Plan for Little	\$25,000	EPD	County, GMRC, Chest-Chat RC&D

	Tennessee River			
2021	Road paving schedule – Wolf Creek Rd.; Cross St.	\$100,000	GDOT, SPLOST	County Road Dept.
2023	Perform study to identify additional outdoor recreation amenities	\$3,000	Grants; Gen Fund	County Parks and Rec
2023	Assess performance of mountain protection regulations	NA	NA	County, GMRC
2023	Court House Security/ADA updates	\$3,000,000	SPLOST, Gen. Funds	County
2024	Road paving schedule – Timber Bluff Rd.; Taylor’s Chapel Rd.	\$100,000	GDOT, SPLOST	County Road Dept.
2024	Develop/Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan	\$5,000	County, DNR	County Parks and Rec
2024	Road paving schedule – Blalock/ Goldmine Rd.	\$100,000	GDOT, SPLOST	County Road Dept.
2025	Replace Bridge at Cat Gap road	TBD	GDOT	County
2025	Jail Expansion	\$4,000,000	SPLOST, Gen. Funds	County
2025	New Sheriff’s office	\$1,000,000	SPLOST, Gen. Funds	County

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CLAYTON

Action	Status	Comment
Update service delivery agreement	In Progress	
Pedestrian nature walk and bike trail	Complete	
Renovation of Old Clayton Elementary School	Complete	
Phase II Reclamation Plant	Complete	
Develop <i>Iconic Images</i> database	Postponed - 2025	Deferred due to changing priorities
Create development plan for Gateway Corridors	Postponed - 2025	Deferred dur to lack of funding
Develop a coordinated utility improvement/ expansion plan	In Progress	To be addressed with SDS update
Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	Complete	To be paired with Forward Rabun
Update/develop websites for communities	Complete	
Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	Complete	
Develop study of pedestrian connections with school campuses	Complete	GMRC product with County
Complete creation of Rabun Co. Water and Sewer Auth.	Complete	
Develop the Stekoa Creek Greenway plan	In Progress	
Conduct forum reviewing zoning, signage, lighting and development regulations; Amend as needed	In Progress	
Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed	In Progress	
Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	Postponed - 2021	Deferred due to GDOT schedule
Develop Community Center and Cannery	In Progress	
Sewer Infrastructure Replacement	Complete	
Historical Preservation District	Complete	
Inventory all potential industrial sites	Complete	
Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	In Progress	
Develop County-wide Firewise and Fire Adapted Community campaign	Complete	
Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	Complete	
Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	In Progress	
Assess potential for design guidelines for development	Complete	
Study assessing options for acquisition of park space	Postponed - 2021	Deferred until downtown master plan complete
Road Improvements (Repaving Projects)	Complete	
Implement new streetscape strategy (sidewalk improvements)	Postponed - 2021	Deferred until downtown master plan complete
Transportation Enhancement	Cancelled	Replaced by new Streetscape program
Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen	Complete	

involvement in clubs/ charities		
Develop comparative commercial activity profile	In Progress	
Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	In Progress	
Develop report profiling options for local education facilities	Complete	

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM – CLAYTON

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2020	Update service delivery agreement	NA	NA	County, Cities
2020	Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	TBD	Utilities	County, Cities, Joint WSA
2020	Develop Community Center and Cannery	\$100,000	TBD	City
2020	Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	\$5,000	DED, DCA	County, DA, GMRC
2020	Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	NA	NA	City
2020	Develop comparative commercial activity profile	\$10,000	DED, DCA	City, Chamber, GMRC
2020	Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	\$10,000	DED, DCA	City, Chamber, GMRC
2021	Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	\$25,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC, GDOT
2021	Study assessing options for acquisition of park space	TBD	TBD	City
2021	Implement new streetscape strategy (sidewalk improvements)	\$50,000	TE Grant; CDBG	City
2021	City Hall Park - Reorganize parking lot and access; create bio-swales; install permeable paving	\$950,000	General fund; SPLOST	City
2021	Construct pocket park proposed by the DDA by Wilson Alley	?	DDA; donations	DDA
2021	Gateway signage at Savannah Street and 441	\$150,000	General fund; DDA	City; Downtown Merchants' & Business Association; DDA
2021	Clean up and remediate Stekoa Creek	TBD	General fund, EPA grants, other grants	City
2021	Acquire right-of-way to accommodate roundabout at Ramey Boulevard and Main Street	\$120,000	Public Works; SPLOST	City
2021	Savannah Street Streetscape Project: Old Livery Street to Main Street	\$900,000	Public Works; GDOT; FHA	City; GDOT
2022	Façade and building rehabilitation for City Hall Building	TBD	General fund; SPLOST	City

2023	Savannah Street Streetscape Project: 441 to Old Livery Street	\$1,200,000	Public Works; GDOT; USDOT	City; GDOT; USDOT
2024	Acquire right-of-way to accommodate Church Street streetscape	\$85,000	Public Works; SPLOST	City
2024	Acquire additional right-of-way along Ramey Boulevard to accommodate new street section	\$52,000	Public Works; SPLOST	City
2025	Develop <i>Iconic Images</i> database	TBD	TBD	City, GMRC
2025	Create development plan for Gateway Corridors	\$10,000	TBD	City, GMRC
2025	City Hall Park - Create internal trail network; expand community garden; build orchard	\$550,000	General fund; SPLOST	City
2025	Main Street Streetscape Project between Ramey Boulevard and Savannah Street	\$2,400,000	Public Works; SPLOST	City

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - DILLARD

Action	Status	Comment
Update service delivery agreement	In Progress	
Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	Postponed - 2021	Deferred until SDS completed
Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	Complete	To be paired with Forward Rabun
Update/develop websites for communities	Complete	
Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	In Progress	
Develop study of pedestrian connections with school campuses	Complete	GMRC product with County
Complete creation of Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority	Complete	
Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations	In Progress	
Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed	In Progress	
Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	Postponed – 2021	Deferred due to GDOT schedule
Review appointments with Historic Preservation Commission	In Progress	
Inventory all potential industrial sites	Complete	
Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	In Progress	
Develop County-wide Firewise and Fire Adapted Community campaign	Complete	
Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	In Progress	
Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	Postponed - 2022	Deferred due to work load
Assess potential for design guidelines for development	In Progress	
Study assessing options for acquisition of park space	Complete	
Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management along US 441	Postponed – 2021	Deferred due to GDOT schedule
Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen involvement in clubs/ charities	Complete	
Develop comparative commercial activity profile	In Progress	
Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	Postponed - 2022	Deferred while finalizing US 441 plans

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM – DILLARD

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2020	Update service delivery agreement	NA	NA	County, Cities
2021	Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	TBD	Utilities	County, Cities, Joint WSA
2020	Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	\$3,000	DCA	County, Cities, GMRC
2020	Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations	\$2,000	DCA	County, Clayton, GMRC
2020	Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed	NA	NA	City
2020	Review appointments with Historic Preservation Commission	NA	NA	City
2020	Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	\$5,000	DED, DCA	County, DA, GMRC
2020	Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	\$5,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC
2020	Assess potential for design guidelines for development	\$5,000	DCA	City, GMRC
2020	Develop comparative commercial activity profile	\$10,000	DED, DCA	City, Chamber, GMRC
2020	Report identifying benchmarks for hiring more police	NA	NA	City
2020	Gateway corridor plan for US 441	\$10,000	DCA	County; Cities GDOT; GMRC
2021	Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	\$25,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC, GDOT
2021	Sewer Line for Betty Creek Rd.	\$1,000,000	GEFA	City; WSA
2021	Water & sewer lines for Colony Rd.	\$1,000,000	GEFA	City; WSA
2022	Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	NA	NA	City
2022	Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	\$10,000	DED, DCA	City, Chamber, GMRC
2023	Develop an affordable housing strategy			City; GMRC
2024	Update Service Delivery Strategy	NA	NA	County; Cities
2024	Update Comprehensive Plan	\$40,000	DCA	County; Cities; GMRC

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MTN. CITY

Action	Status	Comment
Update service delivery agreement	In Progress	
Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	Postponed - 2021	Deferred until SDS completed
Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	Complete	To be paired with Forward Rabun
Update/develop websites for communities	Cancelled	Deferred due to costs
Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	Cancelled	
Develop study of pedestrian connections with school campuses	Complete	GMRC product with County
Complete creation of Rabun Count Water and Sewer Authority	Complete	
Installation of additional sewer lines	Complete	
Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations	Cancelled	Deferred as a priority
Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed	In Progress	
Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	In Progress	
Develop formal agri-tourism strategy; Farm-to-Table program	Complete	
Inventory all potential industrial sites	Complete	No viable options within City
Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	Cancelled	No industrial sites available
Develop County-wide Firewise and Fire Adapted Community campaign	Complete	
Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	In Progress	
Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	In Progress	
Assess potential for design guidelines for development	Cancelled	Deferred as a priority
Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management along US 441 (<i>See "Management plan for 441"</i>)	Postponed – 2021	Deferred due to GDOT schedule
Develop agricultural sustainability program	In Progress	
Work with Rabun County BOE on purchase of old school building	Completed	
Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen involvement in clubs/ charities	In Progress	
Develop walking trail within Mountain City	In Progress	
Pursue purchase and restoration of old Playhouse (MC)	Cancelled	Cost prohibitive

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM – MTN. CITY

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2020	Update service delivery agreement	NA	NA	County, Cities
2020	Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed	NA	NA	City
2020	Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	\$5,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC
2020	Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	NA	NA	City
2020	Develop agricultural sustainability program	\$10,000	DED, Gen funds	County, Mountain City
2020	Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen involvement in clubs/ charities	\$3,000	Grants	County, Cities
2020	Develop walking trail within Mountain City	\$15,000	SPLOST; Grants	City
2020	Sell former City Hall building	NA	NA	City
2020	Road Improvement – Shepherd St.	\$100,000	GDOT; LMIG	City
2021	Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	TBD	Utilities	County, Cities, Joint WSA
2021	Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	\$25,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC, GDOT
2022	Pursue purchase and restoration of old Playhouse (MC)	TBD	Grants, Loans	City
2022	City Hall complex renovations	\$50,000	Grants; Loans; General Fund	City
2022	Park renovations	TBD	Grants	City
2024	Update Service Delivery Strategy	NA	NA	County; Cities
2024	Update Comprehensive Plan	\$40,000	DCA	County; Cities; GMRC

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SKY VALLEY

Action	Status	Comment
Update service delivery agreement	In Progress	
Support construction of cell tower servicing Sky Valley	Complete	
Develop <i>Iconic Images</i> database	In Progress	
Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	Postponed – 2021	Deferred until SDS completed
Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	Complete	To be paired with Forward Rabun
Update/develop websites for communities	Complete	
Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	Complete	
Develop study of pedestrian connections with school campuses	Complete	GMRC product with County
Complete creation of Rabun Count Water and Sewer Authority	Complete	
Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed	In Progress	
Conceptual development study of former Ski Lodge	Complete	
Conceptual development proposal for independent living facility	Postponed – 2022	Deferred as a priority
Conceptual development proposal for hotel/conference facility	Postponed - 2021	Deferred as a priority
Develop new marketing strategy	Complete	
Inventory all potential industrial sites	Complete	No viable options within City
Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	Cancelled	No industrial sites available
Develop County-wide Firewise and Fire Adapted Community campaign	Complete	
Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	In Progress	
Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	Postponed - 2022	Deferred as a priority
Study assessing options for acquisition of park space	In Progress	
Completion of fiber-optic connections with North Georgia Network	Postponed - 2022	Deferred for lack of funding
Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen involvement in clubs/ charities	Complete	
Develop comparative commercial activity profile	Complete	
Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	Cancelled	No longer a priority
Feasibility study for proposed new road/ gateway corridor	Postponed - 2023	Deferred for lack of funding

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM – SKY VALLEY

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2020	Update service delivery agreement	NA	NA	County, Cities
2020	Develop <i>Iconic Images</i> database	TBD	TBD	City, GMRC
2020	Review property maintenance codes and enforcement policies; Amend as needed	NA	NA	City
2020	Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	\$5,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC
2020	Study assessing options for acquisition of park space	TBD	TBD	City
2021	Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	TBD	Utilities	County, Cities, Joint WSA
2021	Conceptual development proposal for hotel/conference facility	NA	NA	City
2022	Conceptual development proposal for independent living facility	NA	NA	City
2022	Develop structure assessment and tracking mechanism for reported code violations	NA	NA	City
2022	Completion of fiber-optic connections with North Georgia Network	TBD	TBD	County, Sky Valley
2023	Feasibility study for proposed new road/ gateway corridor	\$5,000	GDOT	City, GMRC
2024	Update Service Delivery Strategy	NA	NA	County; Cities
2024	Update Comprehensive Plan	\$40,000	DCA	County; Cities; GMRC

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - TALLULAH FALLS

Action	Status	Comment
Main Street Sidewalks	Cancelled	Lack of funding
Review/Update Ordinances	In Progress	
Develop City park space w/playground	Postponed - 2023	Deferred for lack of funding
Improve Interior/Exterior Town Hall	Complete	
Infrastructure/Sewer	Complete	Handled privately
Continue work on water system	In Progress	
Water line – W. end of Town	Complete	
Update service delivery agreement	In Progress	
Construct new well	Complete	
Upgrade storm drainage at City Hall	In Progress	
Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	Postponed - 2021	Deferred until SDS completed
Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	In Progress	
Update/develop websites for communities	Complete	
Consideration of conservation design subdivision guidelines	Cancelled	Low priority; No space for subdivisions
Develop study of pedestrian connections with school campuses	Complete	GMRC product with County
Complete creation of Rabun Count Water and Sewer Authority	Postponed – 2021	Deferred due to GDOT schedule
Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	In Progress	
Inventory all potential industrial sites	Complete	No viable options within City
Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	Cancelled	No industrial sites available
Develop County-wide Firewise and Fire Adapted Community campaign	Complete	
Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funding
Assess potential for design guidelines for development	In Progress	
Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management along US 441 (<i>See “Management plan for 441”</i>)	Postponed – 2021	Deferred due to GDOT schedule
Install 3” water line on Hickory Mtn. Road	Cancelled	Project being redesigned
Rebuild filtering system for water service	Complete	
Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen involvement in clubs/ charities	Cancelled	No longer a priority
Develop comparative commercial activity profile	In Progress	
Plan for improved pedestrian access across dam	In Progress	
Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	In Progress	
Conceptual development study for Scenic Route 15	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funding

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM – TALLULAH FALLS

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2020	Review/Update Ordinances	\$3,000	DCA	Town, GMRC
2020	Continue work on water system; Hickory Nut Mtn.	\$125,000	SPLOST; Water Fund; GEFA Grants	Town
2020	Update service delivery agreement	NA	NA	County, Cities
2020	Upgrade storm drainage at City Hall	\$10,000	LMIG; Gen Fund	Town
2020	Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	\$10,000	DED, EDA	County, Cities
2020	Develop coordinated management plan for US 441	\$25,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC, GDOT
2020	Assess potential for design guidelines for development	\$5,000	DCA	Town, GMRC
2020	Develop comparative commercial activity profile	\$10,000	DED, DCA	Town, Chamber, GMRC
2020	Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	\$10,000	DED, DCA	Town, Chamber, GMRC
2020	Renovate Town-owned properties	\$450,000	General Fund; Grants; Loans; Donations	Town
2020	Water withdrawal permit	TBD	Water Fund	Town
2021	Plan for improved pedestrian access across dam	\$5,000	GDOT, DNR	Town, DNR, GDOT, GMRC
2021	Develop road improvement plan	\$5,000	General Fund	Town
2021	Broadband improvements	TBD	Ga Broadband; General Fund	Town
2021	Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	TBD	Utilities	County, Cities, Joint WSA
2022	Study re: Costs/ benefits for full-time EMS crew	\$10,000	General Fund; Grants; DNR	Town; County
2022	Study re: Costs/ benefits of more police personnel	\$10,000	General Fund	Town
2023	Pursue GDOT study for pedestrian underpass of US 441	\$15,000	GDOT; DNR	GDOT
2023	Develop City park space w/playground	\$25,000	Grants; General Fund	City
2024	Study re: Costs/ benefits for a Public Works Dept.	\$10,000	General Fund	Town
2024	Update Service Delivery Strategy	NA	NA	County; Cities
2024	Update Comprehensive Plan	\$40,000	DCA	County; Cities; GMRC
2025	Replace fire truck	TBD	SPLOST; General Fund	Town; County

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS - TIGER

Action	Status	Comment
Acquisition of greenway property	Cancelled	No longer a priority
Develop a small recreational park	Complete	
Update service delivery agreement	In Progress	
Review regulation of mtn. protection areas and groundwater recharge areas	Complete	
Build a new maintenance building.	Complete	
Purchase a new utility vehicle.	Postponed	Deferred until funds available
Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	In Progress	To be addressed with SDS update
Update/develop brands and marketing themes for communities	Complete	To be paired with Forward Rabun
Update/develop websites for communities	In Progress	
Develop study of pedestrian connections with school campuses	Complete	GMRC product with County
Complete creation of Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority	Complete	
Construction of sidewalks from senior center to downtown area and provide additional sidewalk repair and maintenance	Complete	
Installation of additional sewer lines	Postponed	Deferred to new Water and Sewer Authority
Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations	Postponed	
Purchase new maintenance and service utility vehicles	Cancelled	Duplicate of above
Inventory all potential industrial sites	Complete	No viable options within City
Develop utility and commercial traffic assessment for growing industry	Cancelled	No industrial sites available
Develop County-wide Firewise and Fire Adapted Community campaign	Complete	
Develop sidewalk maintenance and expansion plans	Cancelled	No longer a priority
Assess potential for design guidelines for development	Postponed	Deferred as a priority
Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management along US 441 (<i>See "Management plan for 441"</i>)	Postponed – 2021	Deferred due to GDOT schedule
Develop comprehensive City Zoning Ordinance	Postponed	Deferred as a priority
Construct new pavilion in City Park	Cancelled	Old City Park no longer in use
Develop promotional campaign encouraging citizen involvement in clubs/ charities	Cancelled	No longer needed
Develop comparative commercial activity profile	Postponed	To be done with new Forward Rabun
Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	Postponed	To be done with new Forward Rabun

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM – TIGER

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2020	Update service delivery agreement	NA	NA	County, Cities
2020	Develop comparative commercial activity profile	\$10,000	DED, DCA	City, Chamber, GMRC
2020	Develop infill inventory and targeted marketing campaign for downtowns	\$10,000	DED, DCA	City, Chamber, GMRC
2021	Purchase a new utility vehicle.	TBD	SPLOST	Town of Tiger
2021	Develop a coordinated utility improvement and expansion plan	TBD	Utilities	County, Cities, Joint WSA
2021	Update/develop websites for communities	\$5,000	DED, EDA	County, Cities
2022	Conduct forum reviewing zoning and development regulations	\$2,000	DCA	County, Clayton, GMRC
2022	Assess potential for design guidelines for development	\$5,000	DCA	City, GMRC
2022	Develop comprehensive City Zoning Ordinance	\$5,000	City, DCA	City
2023	Develop coordinated proposal for traffic calming, signalization and turn-lanes for improved management along US 441	\$10,000	GDOT	Cities, GMRC, GDOT
2024	Installation of additional sewer lines	\$500,000	Grants & Loans	City
2024	Update Service Delivery Strategy	NA	NA	County; Cities
2024	Update Comprehensive Plan	\$40,000	DCA	County; Cities; GMRC

POLICIES and LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

All

- Continue to support the Dev. Authority, Chamber, and other economic development organizations
- Continue to work with US Forest Service in maintaining wildfire management plan
- Adopt/maintain State Vital Area standards
- Support and promote the Tallulah Falls Rails-to-Trail Greenway concept
- Support the Medical Care Advisory Committee
- Continue to invest in maintaining and improving utilities, infrastructure, facilities and services.
- Support Historic Society activities
- Support Adult Literacy Program
- Support the Rabun Beautiful program
- Maintain, and routinely assess, existing development regulations
- Support agricultural lands and structures in rural areas.
- Continue to promote tourism in the area
- **Additional Note:** In an effort to improve intergovernmental communication, coordination, and cooperation, the County and municipalities shall seek to meet on a regular basis (annually at minimum, preferably quarterly) to discuss capital improvement projects, land use and development trends, and the realization of projects related to Service Delivery and any outstanding SPLOST programs.

Rabun County

- Support housing efforts for low to moderate income citizens
- Strive to increase the number of visitors and seasonal residents
- Coordinate patrol of lake properties with private firms

Clayton

- Implement streetscape beautification measures for historic downtown areas
- Develop Tallulah Falls Historical Railroad Tourist Attraction
- Implement parking improvements for tourism
- Promote more tourism activities as economic development drivers
- Establish Historic Preservation District and development guidelines.
- Promote Tourism DDA
- Support Agricultural Community Gardens
- Support keep American Beautiful/Clayton/Rabun
- Promote Events/ Festivals

Dillard

- Continue to lobby DOT for study of median breaks in Dillard
- Working with Dept. of Natural Resources on protection of Little Tennessee River
- Review development plans for compliance with all applicable regulations before approval
- Work with Dillard merchants and Rabun County CVB to beautify Dillard
- Review development plans for compliance with all applicable regulations
- Work with Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant, DOT, and Community Development Block Grants to resurface and pave streets and roads and improve drainage
- Inspect and enforce ENS measures. City does inspections of ENS & EPD does permitting
- Limit development in floodplain and preserve farmland

Mountain City

- Work with Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant, DOT, and Community Development Block Grants to resurface and pave streets and roads and improve drainage
- Work with County and other cities on the strategy for the US 441 widening
- Continue efforts to mitigate pollution to Stekoa Creek.
- Promote Community Events
- Improve park facilities

Tallulah Falls

- Fiscal health of the town
- Economic development (capitalizing on tourism in area)
- Water system enterprise being operationally self-sufficient
- Water system expansion to be able to support all customers in our service region
- Optimize public safety expenditures (police, fire, emergency medical) in cooperation with other jurisdictions
- Support Tallulah Falls Business Association
- Continue efforts to extend railroad bed (Rails to Trails) across lake and through town
- Continue to improve Town road surfaces and drainage
- Maintain Volunteer Fire Department

Sky Valley

- Review development plans for compliance with all applicable regulations before approval.
- Ensure compliance with “Designated Trout Stream” Regulations through public education and plan review.
- Ensure protection of Estatoah and Mud Creek Waterfalls and all others within the City of Sky Valley
- Continue ongoing maintenance and operation of existing municipal utility systems.

Tiger

- Promote historic preservation activities; Actively recruit volunteer support
- Protect mountain areas from incompatible development

APPENDIX

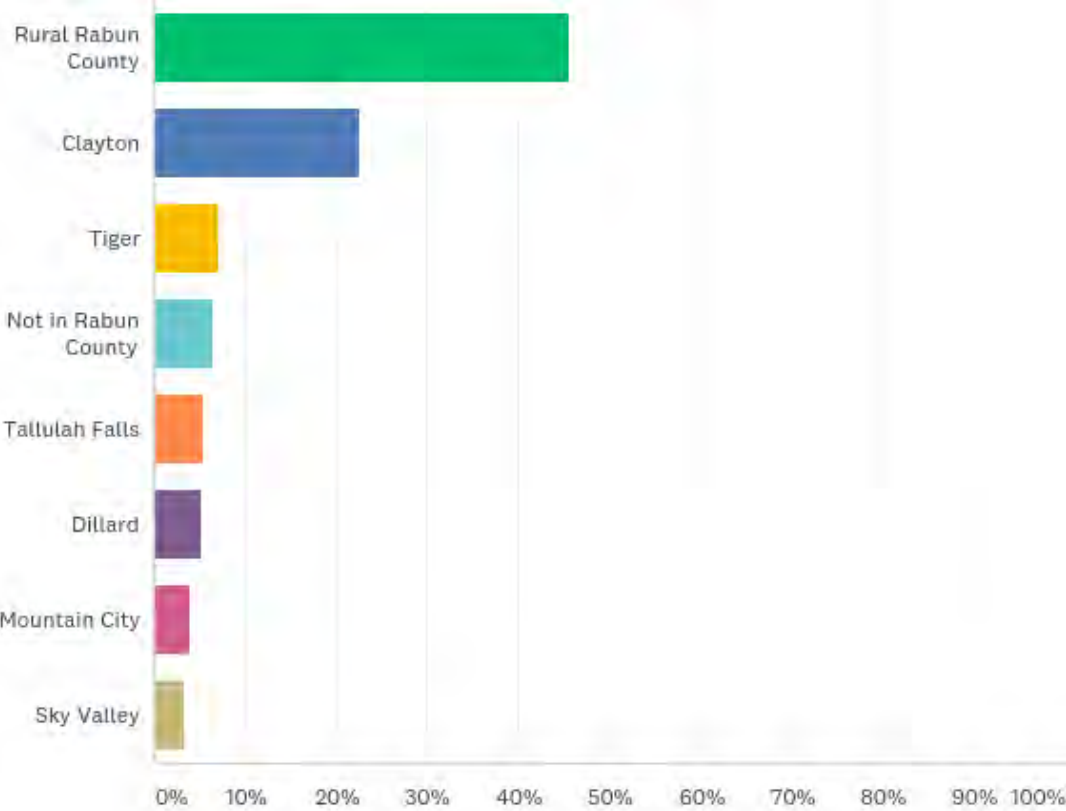
Summary of Public Surveys

Sample News Articles

Copies of Sign-in Sheets

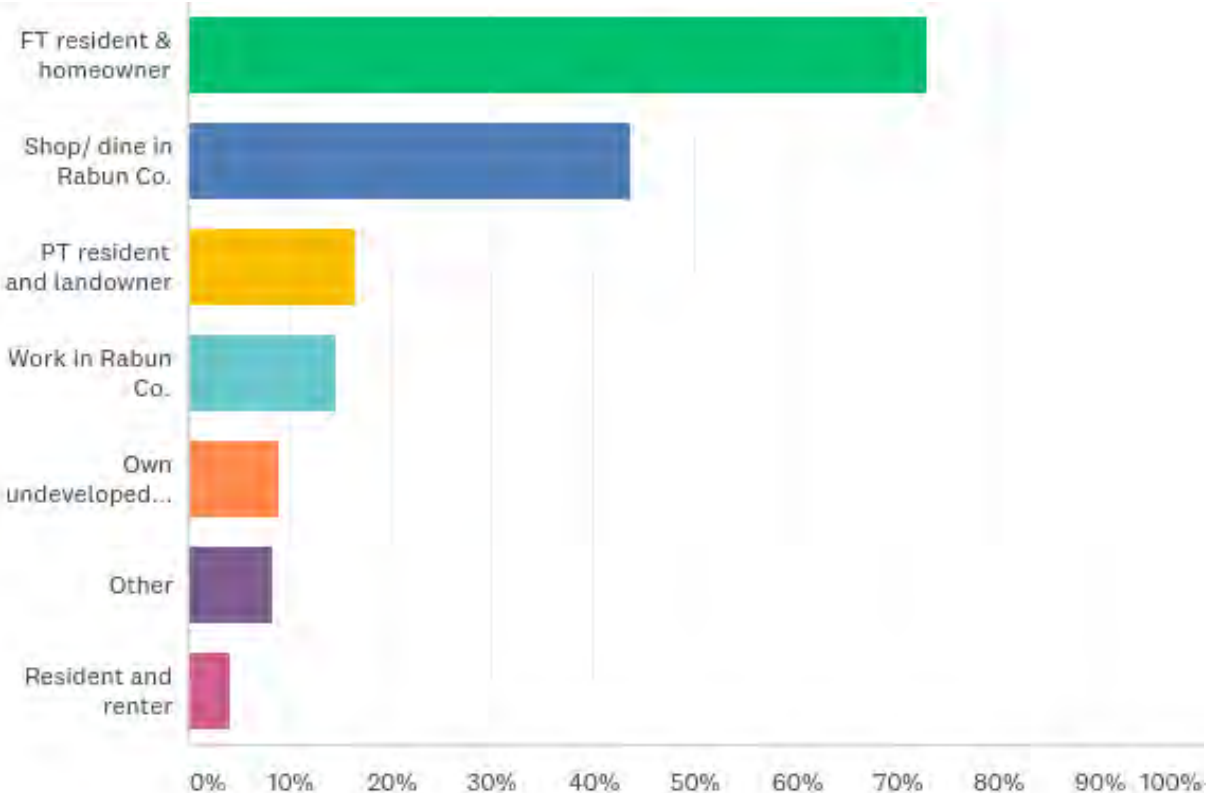
Q1: Please tell us in which part of Rabun County you live.

Answered: 493 Skipped: 5



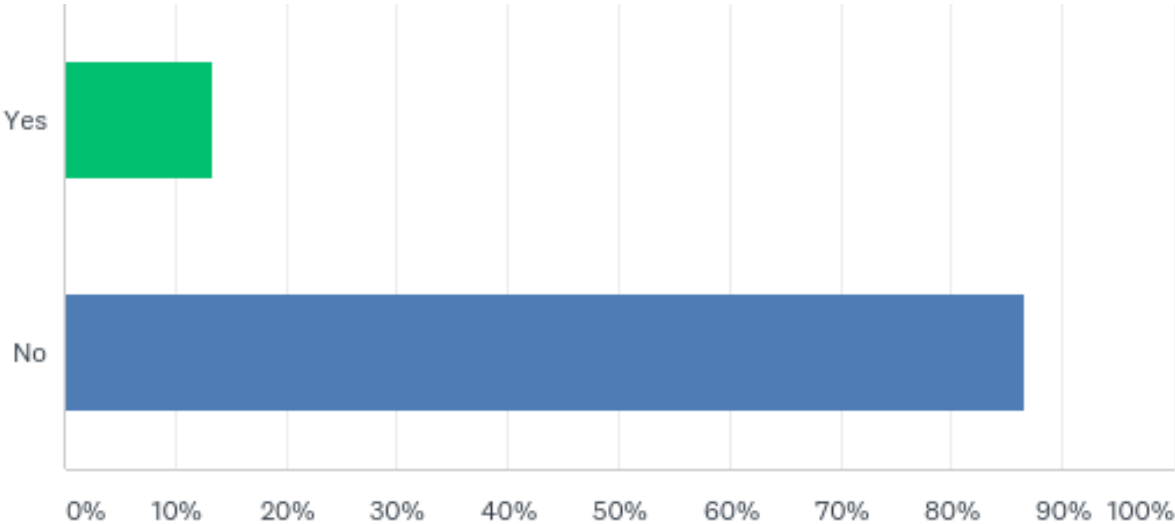
Q2: Please indicate which of the following applies to you. (Mark all that apply)

Answered: 497 Skipped: 1



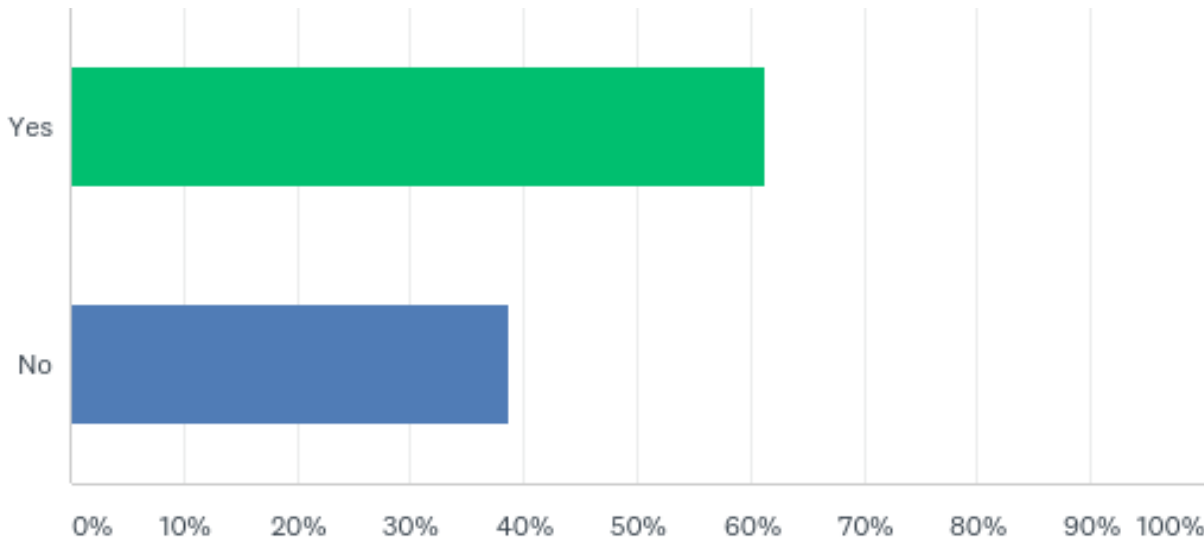
Q4: Does your household have any school-age children? (18 years old or younger)

Answered: 494 Skipped: 4



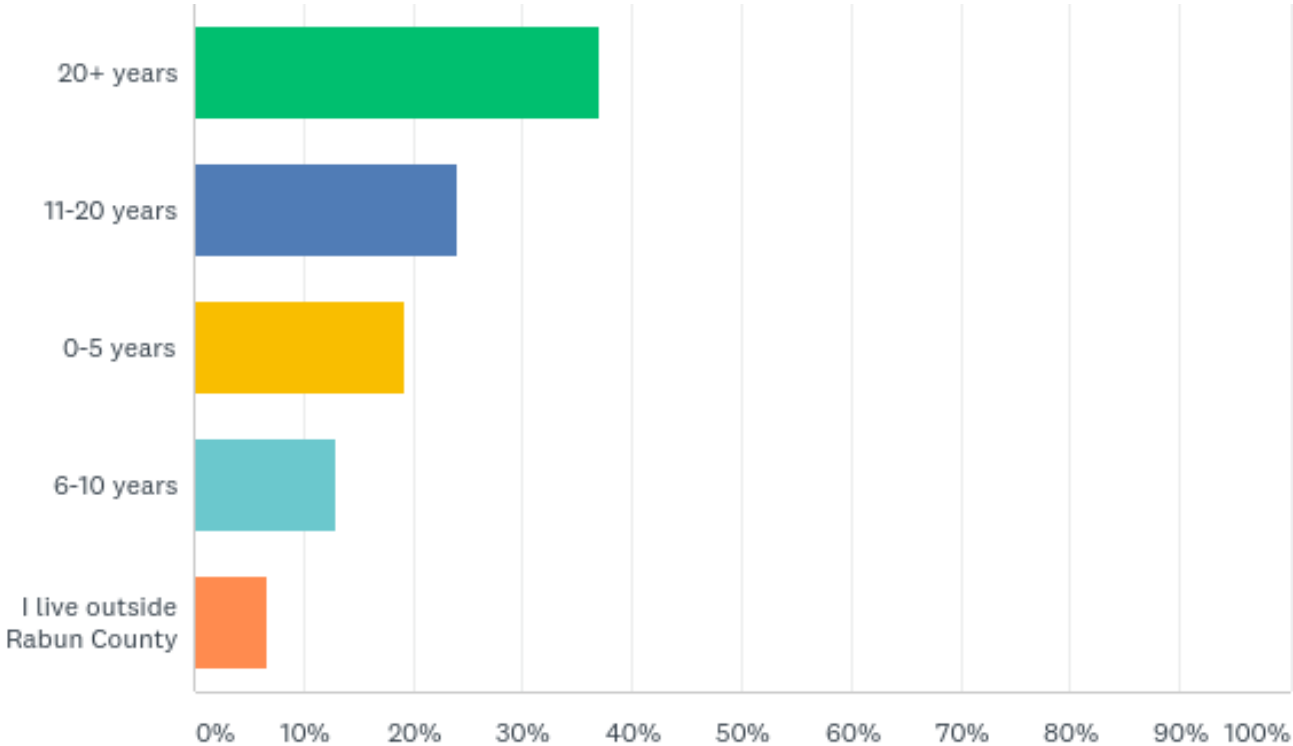
Q5: Does your household have any seniors age 65 or older?

Answered: 495 Skipped: 3



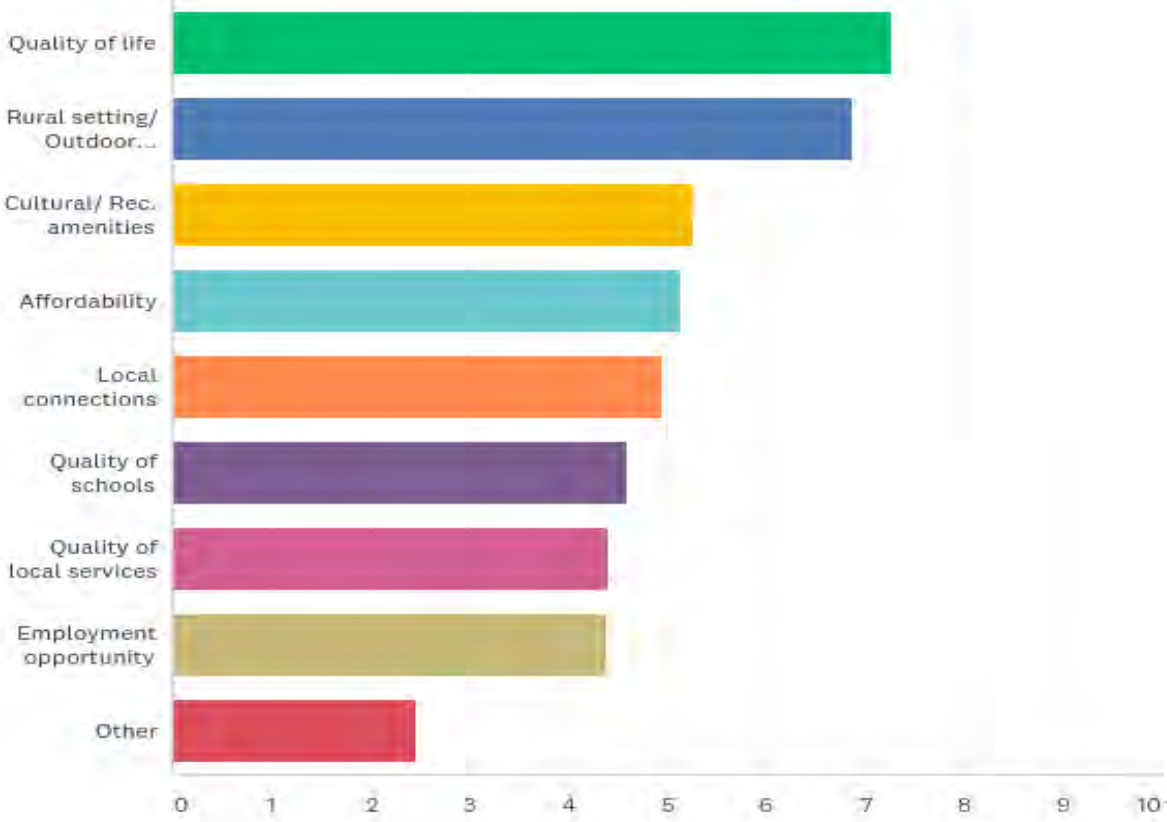
Q6: How long have you lived in Rabun County?

Answered: 497 Skipped: 1



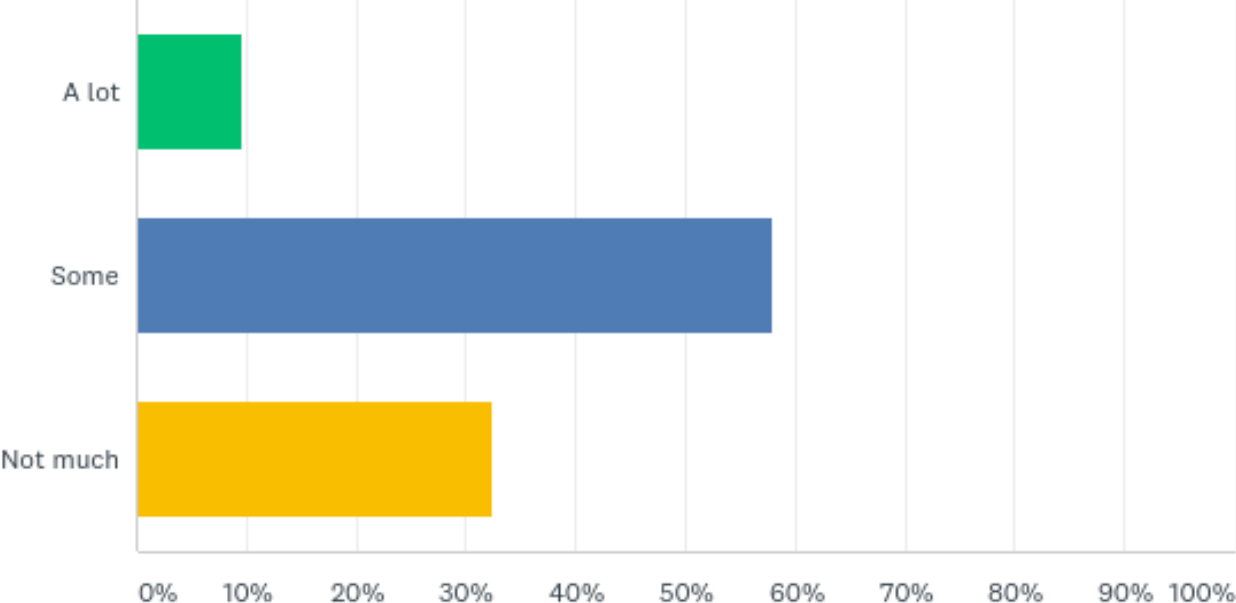
Q7: Please rank the following characteristics that you consider the most important for Rabun County.

Answered: 495 Skipped: 3



Q9: If Rabun County is expected to see some growth in the future, how much would you like to see?

Answered: 494 Skipped: 4



Q10: If you live in the unincorporated County, do you agree or disagree with the following statements for the future?

Answered: 374 Skipped: 124

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Develop in/ around cities	78.15% 279	12.32% 44	9.52% 34	357
Develop along US 441	61.86% 219	26.27% 93	11.86% 42	354
Develop south of Clayton	38.53% 136	30.59% 108	30.88% 109	353
Develop north of Clayton	25.21% 89	43.34% 153	31.44% 111	353
Develop vacant properties	67.87% 245	20.78% 75	11.36% 41	361
Allow mixed uses	51.25% 184	34.54% 124	14.21% 51	359

Q11: If you live in a City/Town, do you agree or disagree with the following statements for the future?

Answered: 272 Skipped: 226

	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Increase allowed density	20.99% 55	61.83% 162	17.18% 45	262
Develop vacant properties	66.54% 177	21.80% 58	11.65% 31	266
Develop mixed uses	50.00% 131	36.26% 95	13.74% 36	262
Limit residential growth	45.74% 118	36.05% 93	18.22% 47	258

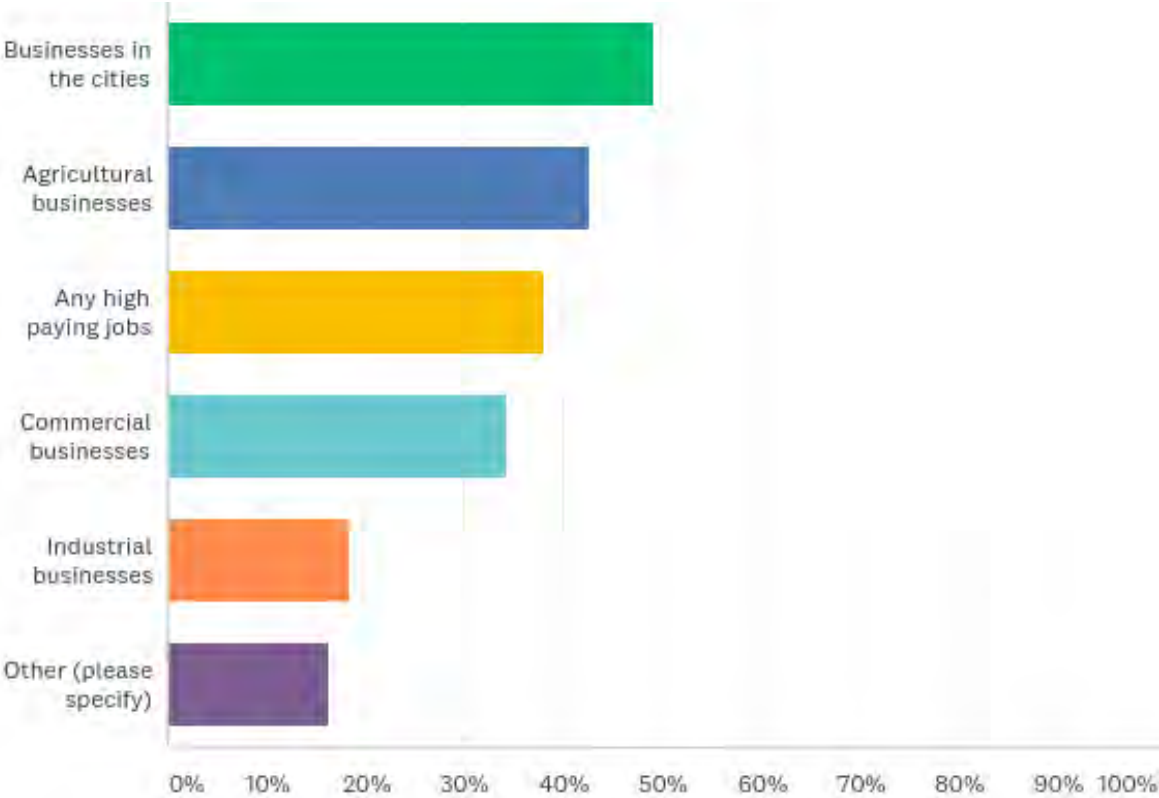
Q14: With regards to housing, please indicate which options are important issues for your community.

Answered: 494 Skipped: 4

	AGREE	NO OPINION/ NOT APPLICABLE	DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
More affordable SF units (< \$180,000)	64.30% 308	19.00% 91	16.70% 80	479	1.52
More high-end units (> \$350,000)	21.38% 99	31.97% 148	46.65% 216	463	2.25
More options for seniors	69.34% 328	23.04% 109	7.61% 36	473	1.38
More rental options	44.99% 211	22.81% 107	32.20% 151	469	1.87
Fix dilapidated properties	87.58% 423	7.04% 34	5.38% 26	483	1.18
Concentrating dev. in/near cities	69.39% 331	18.66% 89	11.95% 57	477	1.43
More special-needs housing	49.68% 232	38.12% 178	12.21% 57	467	1.63

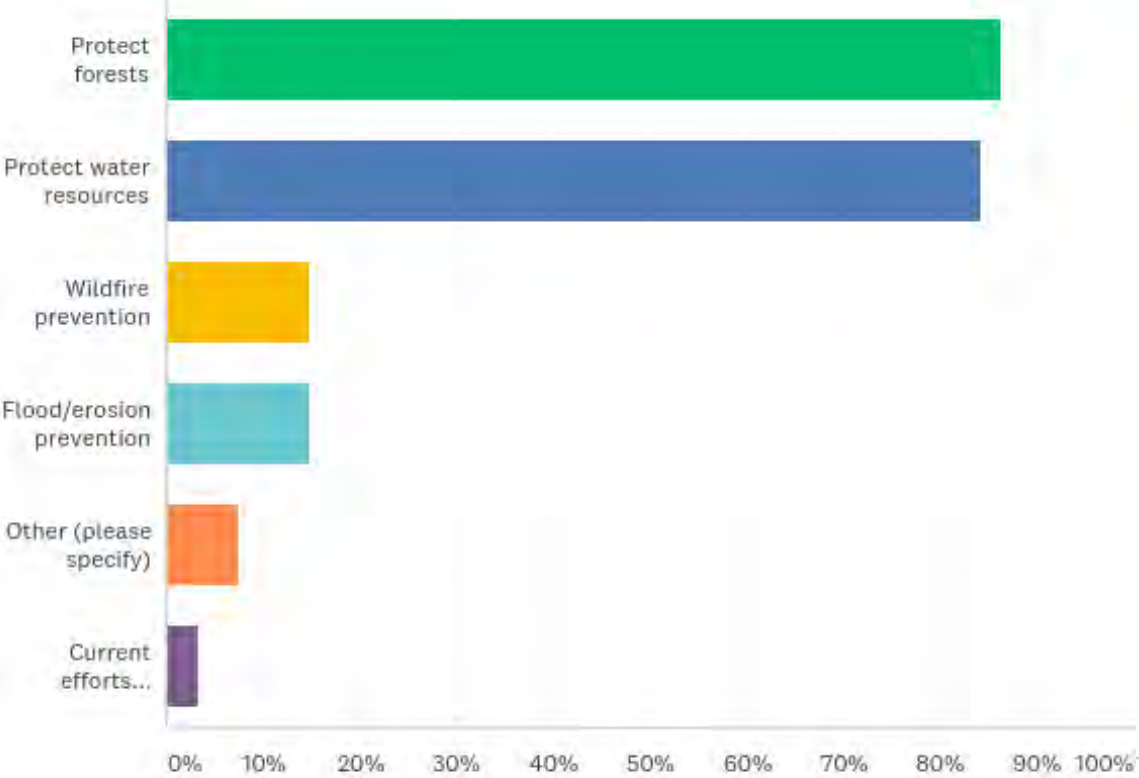
Q15: Our top two priorities with regard to economic development should be...

Answered: 489 Skipped: 9



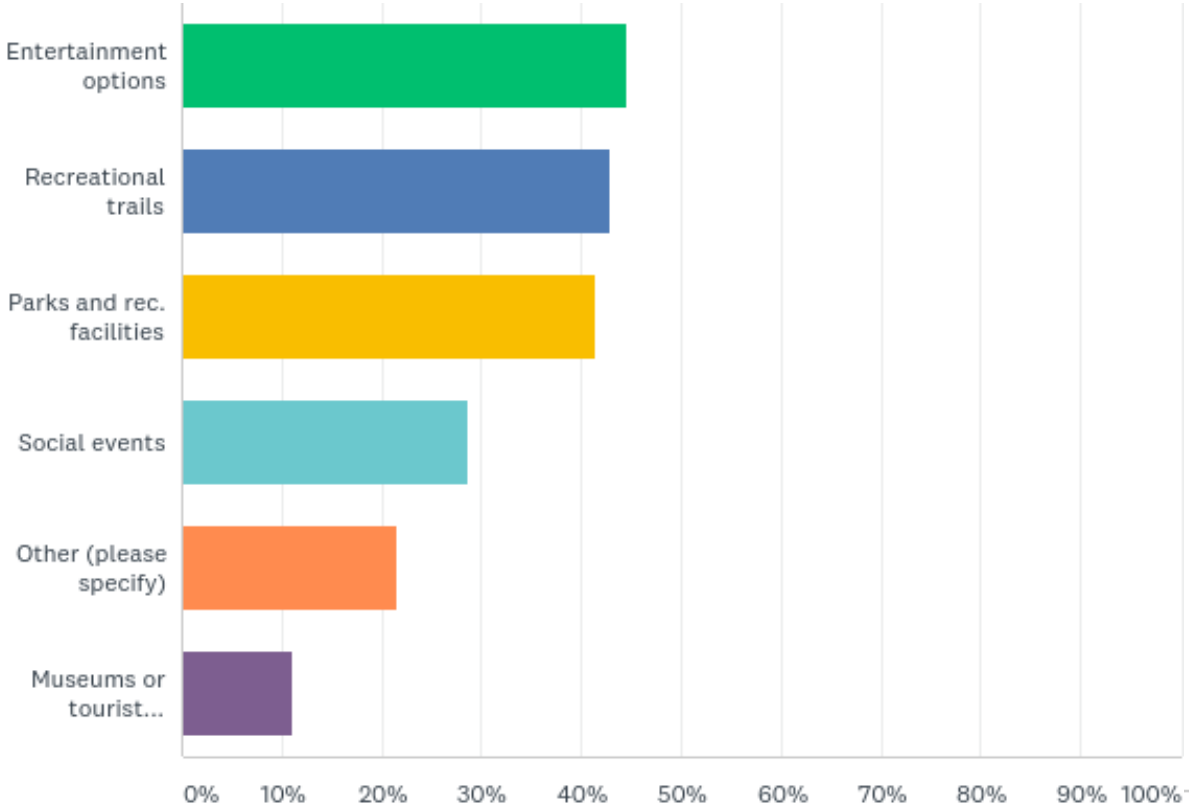
Q16: Our top two priorities regarding natural resources should be...

Answered: 493 Skipped: 5



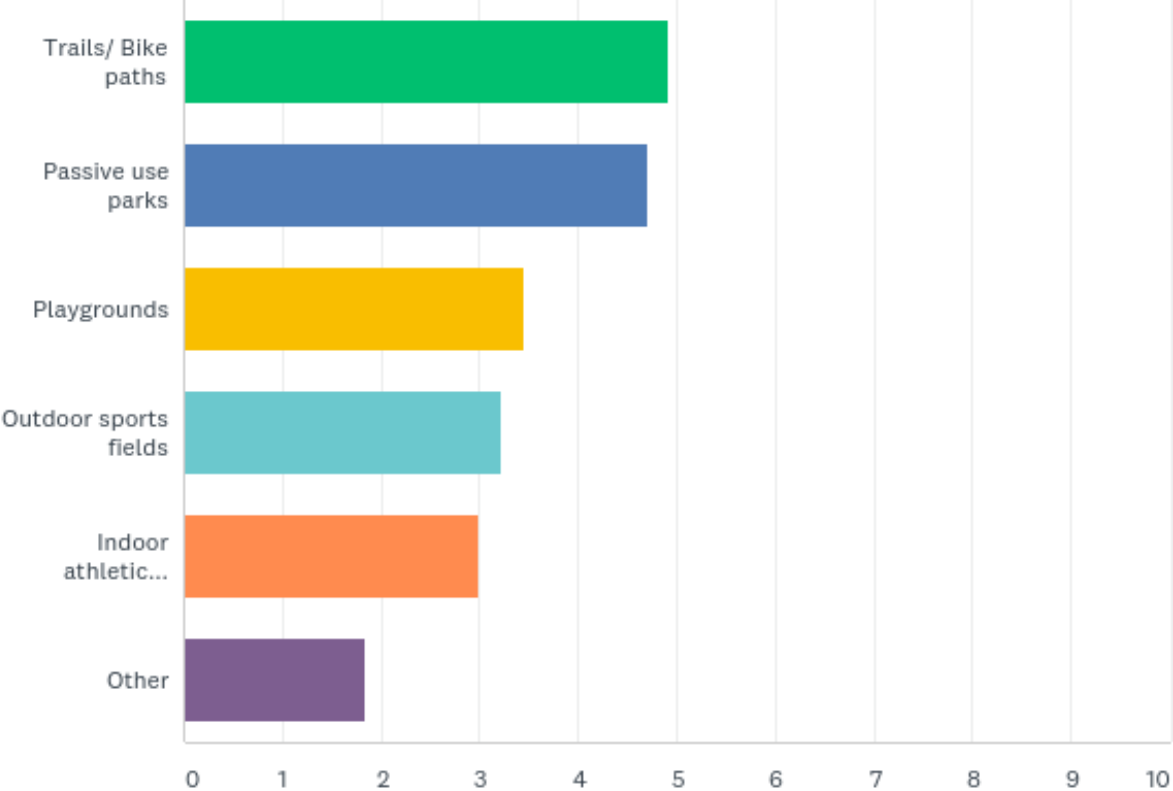
Q17: Our top two priorities regarding cultural amenities should be...

Answered: 473 Skipped: 25



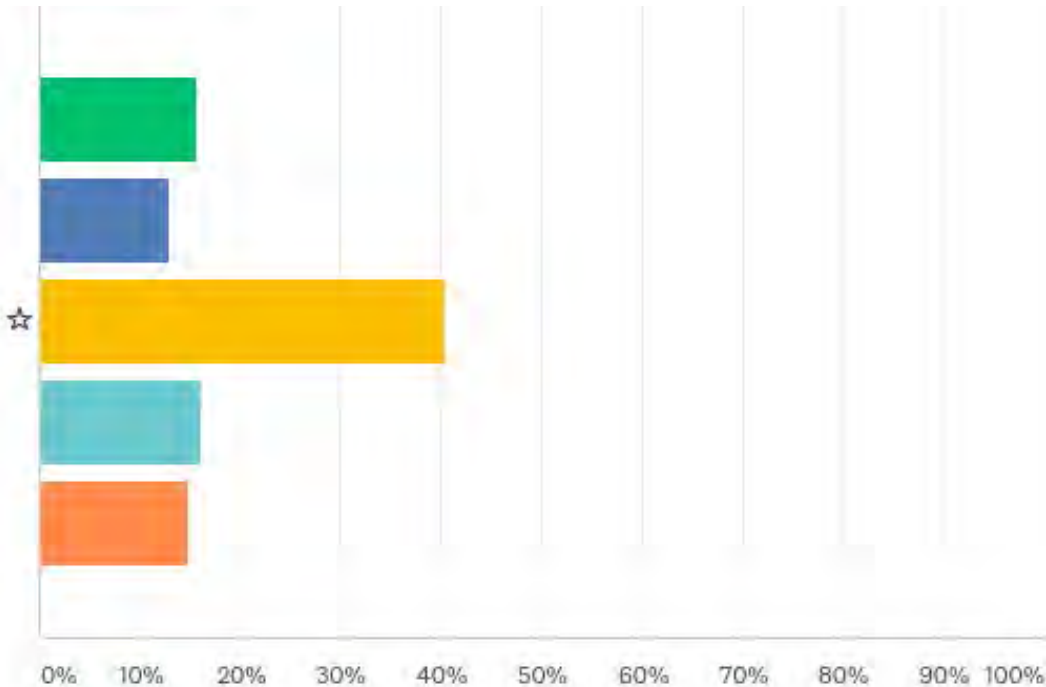
Q18: Please rank the following recreational facilities/services in order of importance for you?

Answered: 465 Skipped: 33



Q19: On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Great) please rate the quality of your public water service.

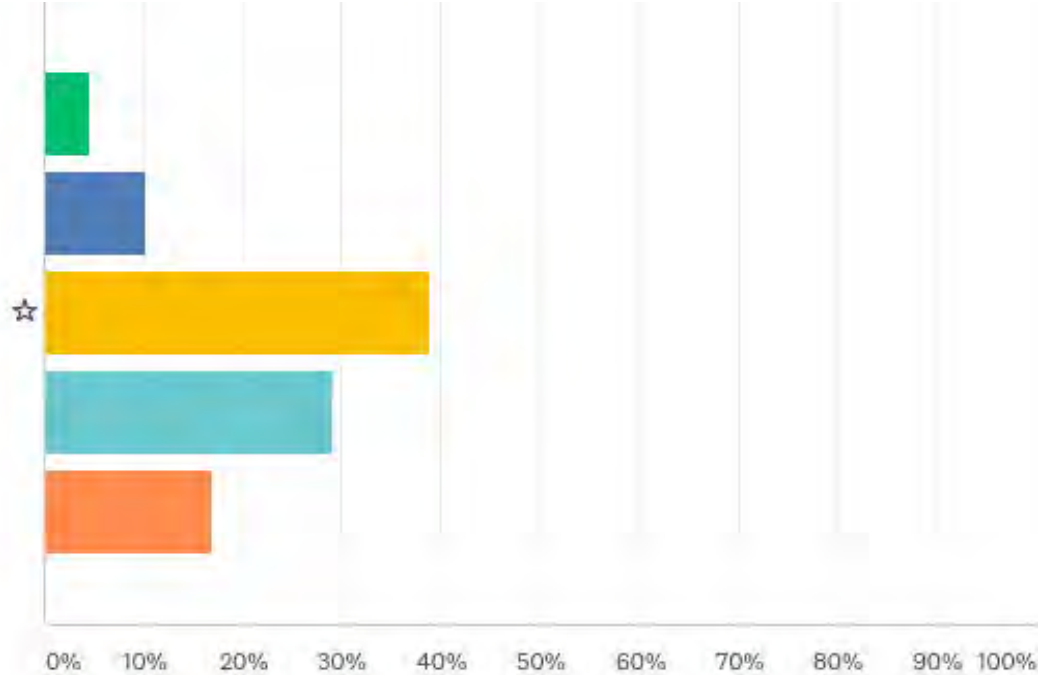
Answered: 230 Skipped: 268



Legend: Poor (green), (no label) (blue), Average (yellow), (no label) (teal), Great (orange)

Q20: On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Great) please rate the quality of your parks and recreation.

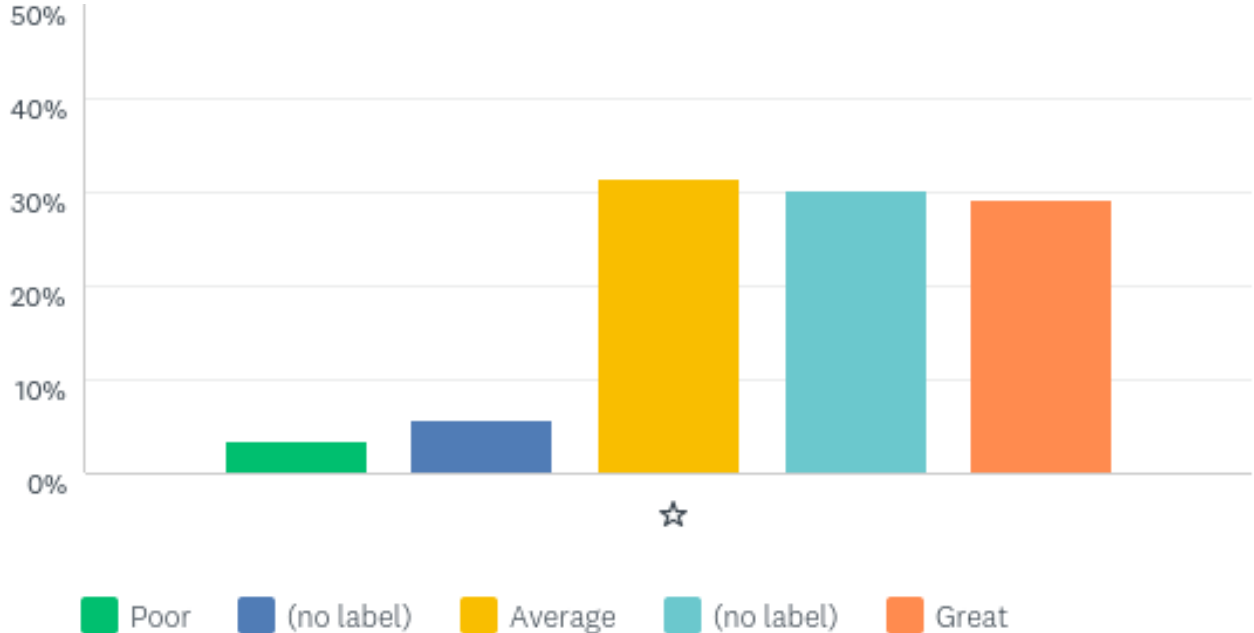
Answered: 470 Skipped: 28



Legend: Poor (green), (no label) (blue), Average (yellow), (no label) (teal), Great (orange)

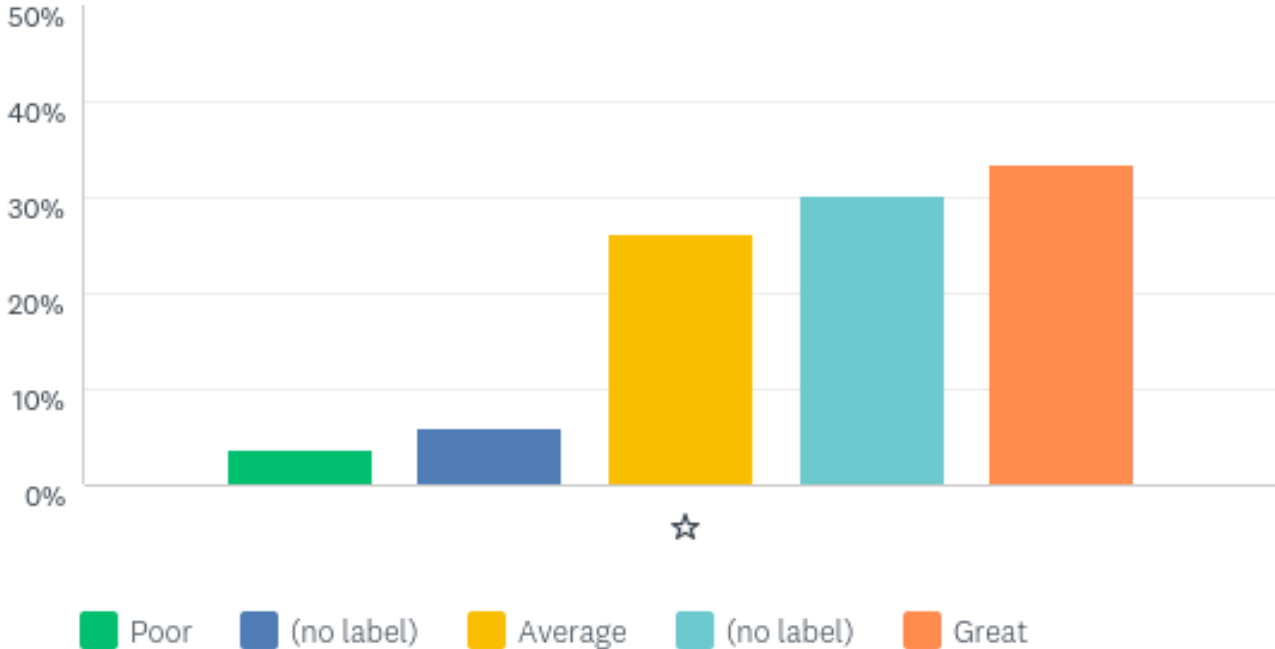
Q21: On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Great) please rate the quality of your local law enforcement.

Answered: 470 Skipped: 28



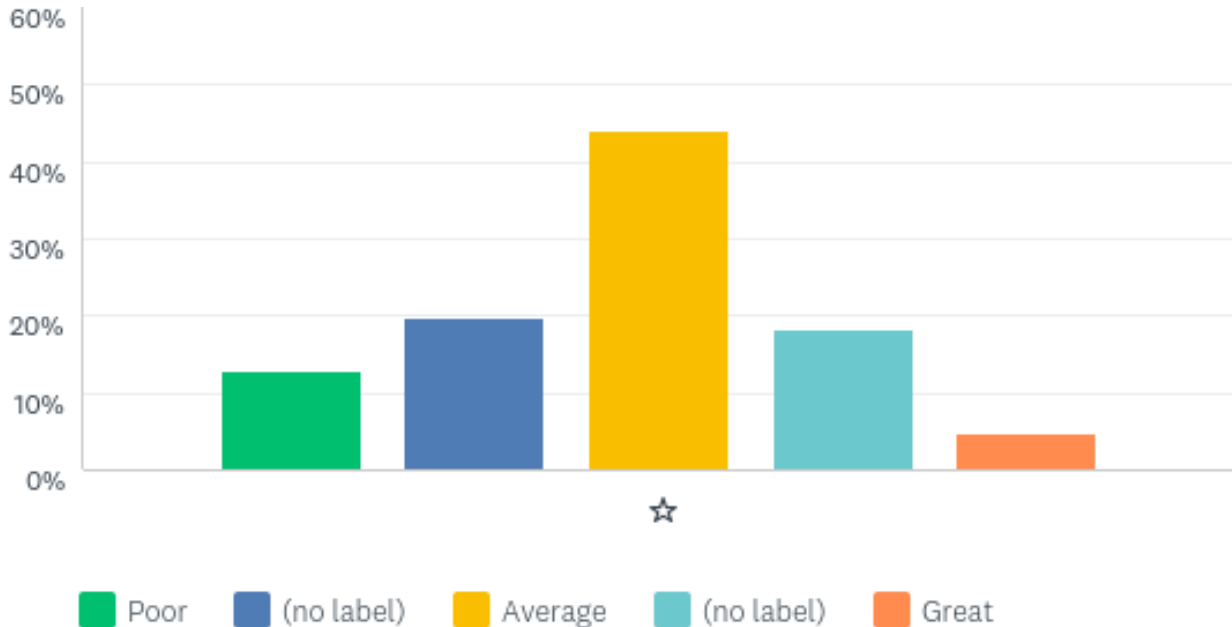
Q22: On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Great) please rate the quality of your local fire protection services.

Answered: 468 Skipped: 30



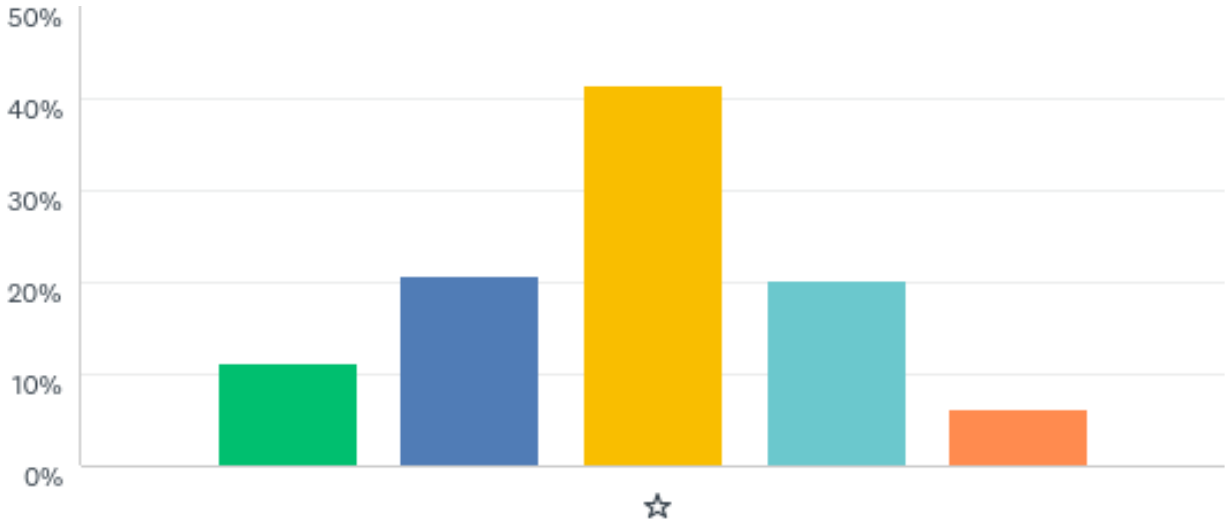
Q23: On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Great) please rate the quality of your local roads.

Answered: 482 Skipped: 16



Q24: On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Great) please rate the quality of your general local government services.

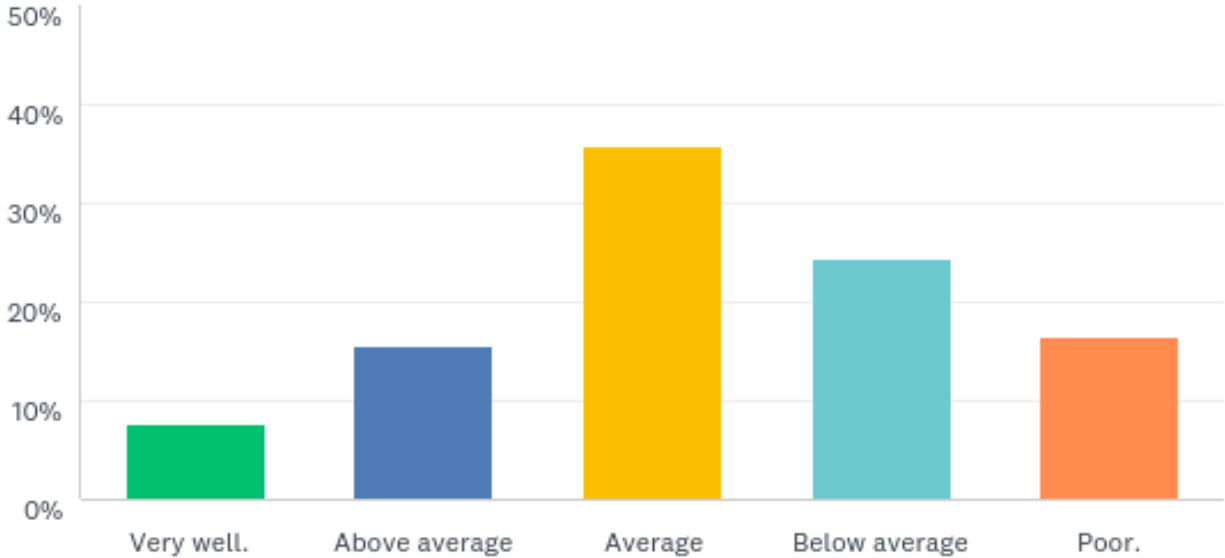
Answered: 470 Skipped: 28



Legend: Poor (green), (no label) (blue), Average (yellow), (no label) (teal), Great (orange)

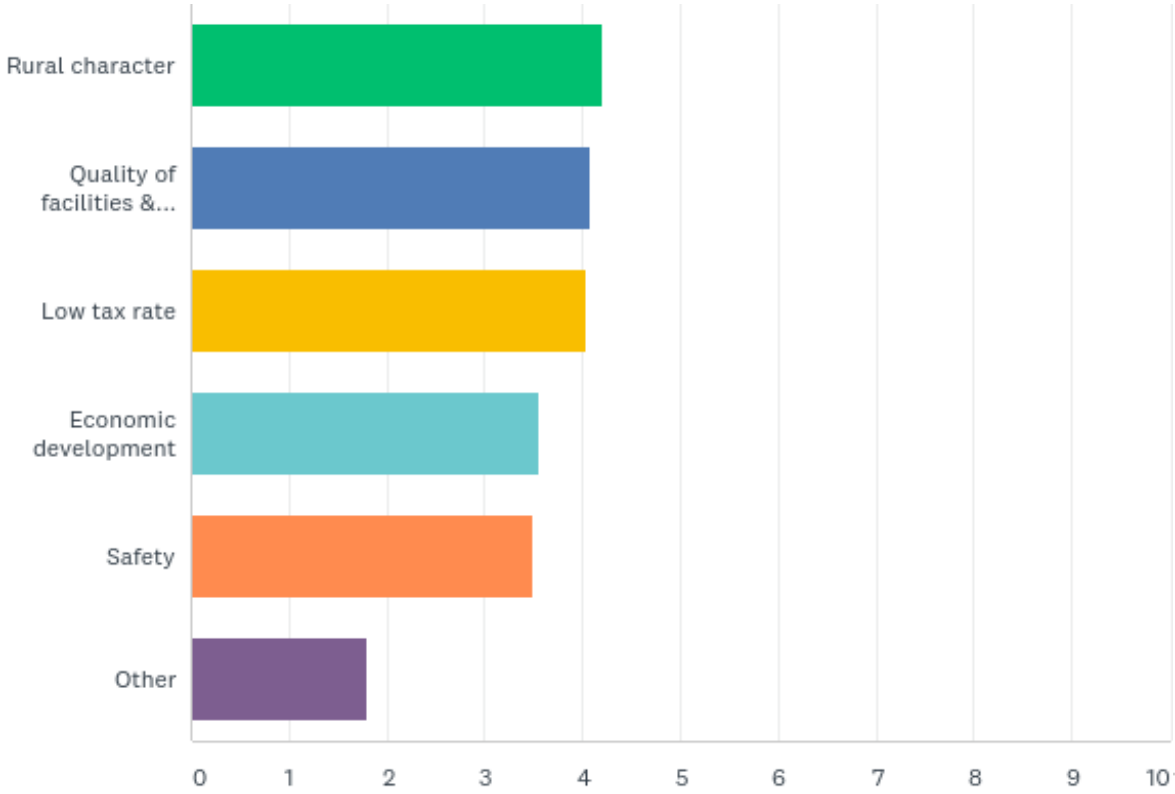
Q25: How well do you rate your local government with regards to openness and communicating with the public?

Answered: 474 Skipped: 24



Q26: For your local government, please rank the following objectives in terms of highest and lowest priority.

Answered: 481 Skipped: 17



Dillard talks beautification at Comprehensive Plan meeting

By Megan Broome
Staff Writer

DILLARD—The city of Dillard talked about the need to beautify the entrance to the city and the potential results when widening Highway 441 at the Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan meeting held at Dillard City Hall following their city council meeting on Tuesday.

Adam Hazell, planning director for the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, facilitated the meeting.

Hazell opened the meeting by explaining that the document is in essence a “business plan” for the government to determine the vision that they have for their city and ways to reach that vision.

“Where do we want to go a generation from now? Where do we want to be like?” Hazell asked the audience. Hazell said that the document can be used to show a vision that changes or stays the same. “It’s not just things you’re trying to change,” Hazell said. He said it’s important to identify what areas, if any, the city wants to stay the same so they can make sure they do not advocate for change in that area.

“You want to position yourself to be as in control as possible of what you don’t want and do want,” Hazell said. Hazell said that these public meetings are chances for citizens to tell public officials what they should be doing and focusing on while in public office.

Hazell then opened the floor for public comment by asking “what are those critical issues facing Dillard?” Councilmember Claude Dillard said that the city of Dillard could be beautified to look more attractive to people driving through.

“Particularly, the south side of Dillard,” Dillard said. He mentioned needed improvements to the entrance of the city of Dillard. It was noted that with the widening of Highway 441 looming ahead in the next few years, there was hesitation in investing in improving the appearance of the entrance because it is unknown what land is going to be sold and moved for the road widening.

“We’d like to put some kind of a business district beautification project in place,” an attendee said about after the completion of the highway. Dillard talked about Forward Rabun and how the Development Authority of Rabun County, Rabun County Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Center and a “tourism entity” would be working together for the betterment of Rabun County.

Dillard said that he believes it is a great thing for Dillard. “It’s a way to take the synergies from all of those organizations,” Dillard said. A resident asked about what residential and commercial projects are upcoming in Dillard and if the city is going to increase the size of its city limits.

It was noted that the county as a whole is seeking growth with jobs and contemplating the addition of “workforce housing.” It was brought up by several attendees that affordable housing is something that is needed in Rabun County.

One resident asked if there were any plans for sewer lines in particular areas. Hazell chipped in and said that it’s important to balance revenues with the costs of providing services. “We have to figure out that balance,” Hazell said. An attendee asked if the recently vacated building by Piggy Wiggle where Fred’s used to be is going to be renovated and asked if another tenant would be moving in there.

It was noted that there might be some interest in the building. Hazell said to consider that the expansion of Highway 441 might change some of the character of the town and they need to consider that in the comprehensive plan. He said they need to plan and develop regulations based on what they want the town to look like afterward. Hazell asked the audience what kinds of things they consider are most valuable as far as visual appeal for the city. Hazell said that the expansion of Highway 441 will be happening in the next few years. One woman attending asked why there were so many post offices in Rabun County and said that it is “overkill.” Hazell mentioned that every opinion would be documented or represented somewhere in the plan. “Every person has a

say. We lay out the options and choose where we go from there,” Hazell said. “Practical, reasonable will make process,” Hazell said about creating a vision and implementing change based on what is practical and reasonable for the town’s capacity and finances. “What’s the best thing for Dillard? What do you want to see preserved?” Hazell asked. Someone mentioned “small-town charm” and Hazell said that has been a common comment at all the comprehensive plan meetings. Hazell asked how they wanted to classify it as “small-town.” Is it that it looks like a small town in looks or is it a small town where everyone knows their neighbors?

“How much of it is the look versus the smallness?” Hazell asked. “Two attendees said that the look of a small town is most important to them. One way to ensure things stay the same in look and feel is to look at ordinances and make sure you are enforcing them. Someone mentioned that they like the way Julie Farns looks because they look small-town and

not commercial. Hazell said that often the best way to fight the prospect of growth is to not invest in water and sewer. That way, it can’t hold a larger capacity of people. Some residents said the greatest weaknesses in Dillard are lack of shopping stores and heavy car traffic.

Chief of Police Jeremy Parker talked about what the Dillard Police Department is doing to combat the speeding and driving while talking on the phone through Dillard. Hazell said that over the next month, the draft of the document will be looked over and changed. He said that amendments can still be made to the document after it is adopted by all of the city governments. Hazell encouraged everyone to take the online survey. It can be found by going to <http://rabuncounty.ga.gov/> and scrolling down to click on the link labeled “2019 Joint Comprehensive Plan Survey.” He said he can also be emailed with comments and questions at ahazell@gmrc.ga.gov. Be sure to list “Rabun Plan” in the subject line to ensure receipt.

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RABUN

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

Hazell thanked the attendees for their involvement in the planning process by attending the meeting.

"Thank you for your activism," Hazell said.

He noted that it makes the job of elected officials easier when residents express their thoughts and concerns about what they want to see in their community.

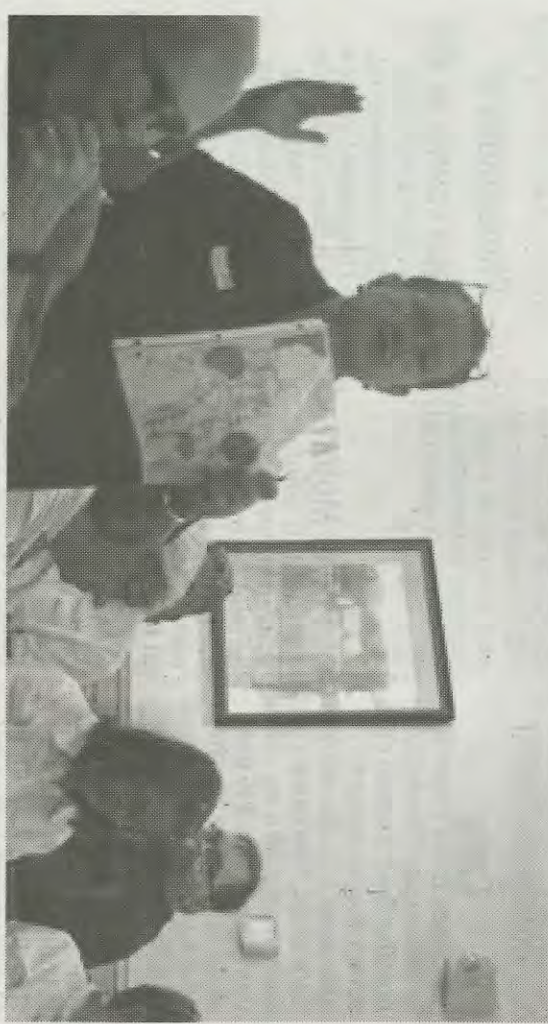
Hazell said that the comprehensive plan is the vehicle used to show the shared vision of the community and that the county is required to have it in order to be fully eligible for state funds.

"This is your opportunity to say exactly how you feel about Rabun Gap," Faircloth said and thanked government officials in attendance.

Hazell opened by asking attendees if they wanted what is best for their hometown and said that it's important to have open dialogue in order to form an accurate vision statement. "So that way there's clarity and consistency that's going toward a shared vision for the community," Hazell said.

Hazell said that this is an update to the current plan and that it should be updated about every five years.

He said that it will be sent to the state for



Megan Broome/The Clayton Tribune
Cherie Faircloth talks about the history of Rabun Gap to attendees at a Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan meeting held at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee Middle School on Monday.

approval, but it will also be put in front of local governments for adoption.

"It is a living document," Hazell said, noting that it can be amended and changed in the future.

Hazell said that community members should evaluate what matters the most to them in the community when creating the vision statement and consider what will be feasible with available resources.

Part of the comprehensive plan includes addressing the geography of the region and being detailed with the location of any problems, according to Hazell.

Hazell said that the implementation part of the document relays how these ideas will come to a resolution and asks, "What do you need to do to make that

happen?"

"Once we know the vision, you can figure out what you have to do to make that vision a reality," Hazell said. "If you affirm it, then you can act upon it."

Hazell encouraged attendees to download the existing copy of the plan and look over it to see if the vision and goals in this version were met and what should be done differently the updated version.

Hazell than gave the floor to attendees to express their thoughts and ask questions.

Someone said that they do not want fast food places to pop up in Rabun Gap and that the agriculture of the area should be preserved.

Another audience member was concerned about the obstruction of ridge tops with new developments

of "unsightly" areas with empty and unoccupied buildings that are not visually appealing. Another attendee wanted to include doing more to protect wildlife. Someone questioned how much weight the comprehensive plan document actually has when building new structures and in government decisions, and Hazell said that cities are required to abide by the plans outlined.

Hazell said that officials cannot simply pick and choose what parts of the plan they implement and the purpose of its creation in 1989 was for protection during a lawsuit.

"This document is used as the backbone of legal challenges," Hazell said.

One community member addressed the congestion on Highway 441 near the farm stand, Osage Farms.

They said that this area is very dangerous, especially with people trying to turn left and that something needs to be done to regulate traffic control.

There was an argument that government officials have been informed of this problem, but that the answer is always that it will be resolved once the highway is widened.

Hazell said that the general consensus seems to be that Rabun Gap wants to stay rural without much growth and that the best way

to do this is "don't get water, don't get sewer." He said that it doesn't make sense for developers to come in if they do not have water and sewer systems to support the businesses.

"I like things like they are," said an attendee who agreed with preserving the agricultural assets of the community.

Another member said that they want any development to be in a location that is hidden from the main roadway and one member said that they want to see development happen closer to Clayton.

"I'd like to see stuff put where you can't see it," an attendee said. "Sensible growth, sustainable growth," another member said.

The general consensus was that the community needs to work together in order to keep the aesthetics of Rabun Gap as an agricultural, beautiful location.

Hazell ended by giving everyone homework and told them to carve out a vision statement and go online to take the survey.

The survey can be found by going to <http://rabuncounty.ga.gov/> and scrolling down to click on the link labeled "2019 Joint Comprehensive Plan Survey."

Faircloth thanked Rabun Gap-Nacoochee Middle School for providing the venue for the comprehensive plan meeting.



Rabun Gap residents want preserve the rural nature of their community

By Megan Broome
Staff Writer

RABUN GAP—Preserving the agricultural integrity of Rabun Gap and minimizing change

About 60 people turned out for a meeting on the Rabun County Comprehensive Plan Monday night in Rabun Gap.

Megan Broome/The Clayton Tribune

was the focus of discussion at a meeting for the Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan held at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee Middle School on Monday.

Adam Hazell, planning director for the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, facilitated the meeting.

“We’re very, very appreciative to him [Hazell] for making a special trip for us,” said Rabun Gap resident Cherie Faircloth, who noted that this was the first time a comprehensive plan meeting has been held in Rabun Gap.

Please see **RABUN, A7**

PLAN

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

an online survey form on the county's website in addition to attending the meetings.

About 20 responses have been received so far.

"Let's see if we can get 2-3 hundred (responses)," Hazell said. "That would be ideal."

A comprehensive plan is a document used to coordinate capital improvement

projects and ensure compliance with state policies and programs. The plan will be supported by the GMRC as it is developed through October. GMRC is an organization that assists with monitoring and implementing local comprehensive plans.

"It's the people's county, and we need to provide the best we can for them. And if you can't do that, get the hell out of office. We still have a big problem of coming together. We're putting forward about six fiefdoms and a county instead of one unit. Somebody mentioned consolidated government could solve that problem. It could be solved without that if egos would step aside."

— Bob Fink

going, we know that in one way, shape or form, that will be resolved within this (five-year) planning time frame," he said.

"The only winner is that the people of Rabun County have been served," Fink said. "We have failed to do that as a government. I'm not placing blame anywhere. The governments, city and county, have both failed, and it's childish."

"We can perhaps note and offer some suggestions and advice for mechanisms, policies or means by which we want to

improve on the inter-governmental coordination that would prevent this from happening again," Hazell responded. "One of the great things about having failures and mistakes is the opportunity to learn from them."

"We

have got to convince the people that govern us that this is not (their) water,

The document paints a vision for each community," Hazell said. "It identifies some critical needs and issues that have to be addressed to achieve those visions, and it lays out a work program for how to get there."

Former county commissioner Bob Fink said inter-governmental cooperation must be improved, and quickly.

"I think part of this needs to be Clayton and Rabun (County) working together for the benefit of the people," Fink said. "Not individual cities, not individual counties. We've lost the meaning of governing. It's vital to this community right now."

Committee member Leckie Stack pointed out that although Clayton is the county hub for commerce, only city residents have a say in what happens inside the city.

"There's no doubt that Clayton is the commercial center of the county, but if you live outside the city, you have no input."

"That's a problem," Fink agreed. "Most of the owners of businesses in Clayton live outside Clayton, and they have no input."

The Service Delivery Strategy dispute was also brought up.

Committee member Kathy Ford pointed out that the 2014 comprehensive plan had identified the need to expand and improve the water system.

"So, are we going to say, okay, we should have done that five years ago, and we still haven't done it?" Ford asked. "So we put that back in again and keep our fingers crossed?"

Harrell said the courts will eventually resolve the SDS dispute, including water issues.

"I think it's safe to say, with where the SDS is

sewer or whatever," Fink said. "It's the people's county, and we need to provide the best we can for them. And if you can't do that, get the hell out of office. We still have a big problem of coming together. We're putting forward about six fiefdoms and a county instead of one unit. Somebody mentioned consolidated government could solve that problem. It could be solved without that if egos would step aside. But this is small town America. It's no different here than it is in New Hampshire."

On this issue of addressing future growth, Harrell said it's important to clarify expectations.

"What about the notion that people say, we moved here because it's a small town, and we want it to stay a small town," Hazell asked. "A lot of North Georgia is going through this same discussion. 'We want jobs, but we want to stay rural. We want the tourism, but I like that it's Mayberry. We need the money, but I want to stay low taxes.' We need to ask these folks, is it that you don't want to see the physical change regardless of how many people are passing through, or is it that as long as it looks rural, you could care less if there was another Starbucks or whatever moving in, if it's all built to look like the character of Clayton? Try to get these folks to say what it is they want to preserve."

The next hearing on the proposed plan will be hosted by Tallulah Falls July 9. There will also be a committee meeting July 30 at the Civic Center.

"Each community will have the opportunity to host one of these meetings," Hazell said.

Planning Rabun's future Comprehensive framework for growth is in planning stages

By Wayne Knuckles

The Clayton Tribune

CLAYTON—Growth. Transportation. Hotels. Tourism. Intergovernmental cooperation, or lack thereof.

Those are the topics the new Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan is expected to cover when completed.

On Monday, the second in a series of public meetings to discuss the new plan was held at Clayton City Hall.

Only three members of the general public were in attendance.

But during a planning committee meeting held beforehand, Adam Hazell, director of planning for the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC), said citizens can have a say in the final plan by filling out

Please see **PLAN, A9**



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

September 9th, 2019
Tiger City Hall

6:30 – Tiger

Please Sign In

Name	Community
CHAD BEDINGFIELD	TIGER, GA.
Karon Miller	Tiger GA
Margaret P. Thrasher	Tiger GA
AJ Thrasher	" "
Karen Jarrell	" "
Bryan Hansen	Tiger
Takota Vanderstelt	Tiger
Charles Burel	Tiger
Karen Lovell	Tiger
Renee Moore	Tiger
Mike Carnes	Tiger
Beckie Stach	Tiger
Jon Ramsey	Mayor Tiger



**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

August 13 th , 2019 City Halls, respectively	4:30 – Dillard 6:30 – Mountain City
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Please Sign In

Name	Community
Terry Wilson	Dillard
William H Robinson	Dillard
Jack Roberts	Dillard
Carson Bristol	Dillard
Megan Boone	Dillard the Clayton Manor.
Claude Dillard	Dillard
Donna Finke	Dillard
Janet Thomas	Dillard
Wynne Powers	Dillard
Boyd Johnson	Dillard
Patrick Hamlett	Dillard
Rick Story	Rabun Co. Development Auth.
David Okun	Dillard
John Erbeking	Dillard
Jenny Allen	Dillard



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

August 13 th , 2019 City Halls, respectively	4:30 – Dillard 6:30 – Mountain City
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Please Sign In

Name	Community
John Lup	Mountain City
Laura West	Talbot Falls (Also FoxFire)
T.J. Smith	Tiger (FoxFire)
Brenda Hooper	Mtn City
megan Broome	The Clayton mine
Robert Self	Mtn City
Grace Watts	Mtn City Mayor
Michael Holt	Mtn. City Council
Brenda Cannon	City Clerk - Mountain City
Tom Garrison	Mtn. City Police Chief
Anita Pittman	Lakeland (FoxFire Board)
Lechee Stack	Tiger (FoxFire Board)
Melanie Deitz	Mtn. City



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

July 30 th , 2019 Rabun County Civic Center	6:00 – Committee Meeting 7:00 – Public Meeting
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Please Sign In

Name	Community
Leckie Bach	Tiger
Kathy FORD	Tiger
Bob Link	Rabun
David Gottschalk	Lakemont
CASSANDRA CLOUSER	Clayton
SCOTT CRAVE	RABUN



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

July 30 th , 2019 Rabun County Civic Center	6:00 – Committee Meeting 7:00 – Public Meeting
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Please Sign In

Name	Community
Ella Fast	Sky Valley
Keith Nelms	Tallahah Falls
Cindy Brantley	Dillard
D. Robinette Kennedy	Mtn City
Patricia Howell	Mtn City
Megan BROWN	no clayton mtn
ANN IRVIN	Tallahah Falls
Richard & Cheryl CROUSE	Rabun near Lake
Cricket & John Werkheiser	Clayton
Larry Walker	Lakemont



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

July 16th, 2019
Sky Valley

11:00 – Public Meeting

Please Sign In

Name	Community
Megan Broome	TR clayton tribune.
Debbie Dalhouse	Sky Valley
Barbara Kohacker	Sky Valley
Moody BARRICK	Sky Valley
Midge Attis	Sky Valley
Wick Howard	Sky Valley
Lella Faust	Sky Valley
Yvonne Mullis	Sky Valley
Haren Plenny	Sky Valley
Robert Macdon	Sky Valley
Jo Kelly	Sky Valley
Hollie Steil	Sky Valley
Deborah McAfee	Sky Valley
Vaughn Estes	Sky Valley
Jim Carter	" "



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

June 24 th , 2019 City of Clayton Municipal Complex	5:30 - Advisory Committee Meeting 6:30 - Public Meeting
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Please Sign In

Name	Community
Anthony Welch	Mountain City
Leckie Stack	Tiger Leckie Stack@gmail.com
Bob Judd	Clayton
Jenice Tyler	Mtn. City
ANN IRVIN	TALLULAH FALLS
DAVID HART	TALLULAH FALLS
Scott Dills	Clayton
Kathy FORD	Tiger
Neal Arnett	Rabun County Uninc.



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

September 23 rd , 2019 Rabun County Civic Center	6:00 – Advisory Committee 7:00 – Public Hearing
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Please Sign In

Name	Community
Kathy FORD	
Keith Welms	Tallulah Falls
Bob. Fink	RABUN COUNTY
Ada B. Irvin	TALLULAH FALLS
Emory Brock	Clayton



**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission**

**RABUN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019 Update**

September 23rd, 2019
Rabun County Civic Center

6:00 – Advisory Committee
7:00 – Public Hearing

Please Sign In

Name	Community
Grace Watts	mtn city
Dunda Cannon	Mountain City
Gissy Henry	City of Clayton
How Fancher	RABUN GAP
Bob Sims	RABUN County
Kathy Ford	County
Arnold Irvin	Tallahah Falls, GA.
Keith R. Nelms	Tallahah Falls

7/22/19

Rabun County Joint Plan Mtg.

Please Sign In

Name

Cissy Henry

Conrad McCombe

Pam + Char Sinnott

Megan Broom - Clayton Tribune

Kathy Ford

JOEY BUREL

Kris + Don Martin

Rich + Patty Mallicote

Richard + Janice Cochran

Susan Brewer

Kathy + Charla Breithaupt

Dee Daley

W WADE WILLIAMS

Cricket Werkheiser

Tom Werkheiser

Chap Course

Lanette Esk

Mimi Nash

Elizabeth Chapman

GARY T. PARKER

Nichelle Dufrette

**TOWN HALL MEETING
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING
PLEASE SIGN IN
July 9, 2019, 6:00 PM**

Name	Email to be added to Town's Distribution List
Kathy FORD	
Rick Story	rstory@darcga.com
Carol Nelson	
[Signature]	
Megan BROOME	megan news@theclaytontribune.com
Ann IRVIN	
DAVID L. IRVIN	
RAY + JOYCE MARRIS	
Bill TURK	
Keith Nelms	
[Signature]	
BJ Martin	martinbj@panetco.com
Mary Beth Hughes	
Wayne + Judy McDaniel	wwayne@waynemcdaniel.com
Joe Dobbs	tdobbs@tallahfeelsga.gov
Linda Lapeyrouse	
Mike Early	
[Signature]	
Edward Rappas	