

# Winston

## Small Area Plan

A CONNECTED EFFORT TO THE

**DOUGLAS COUNTY**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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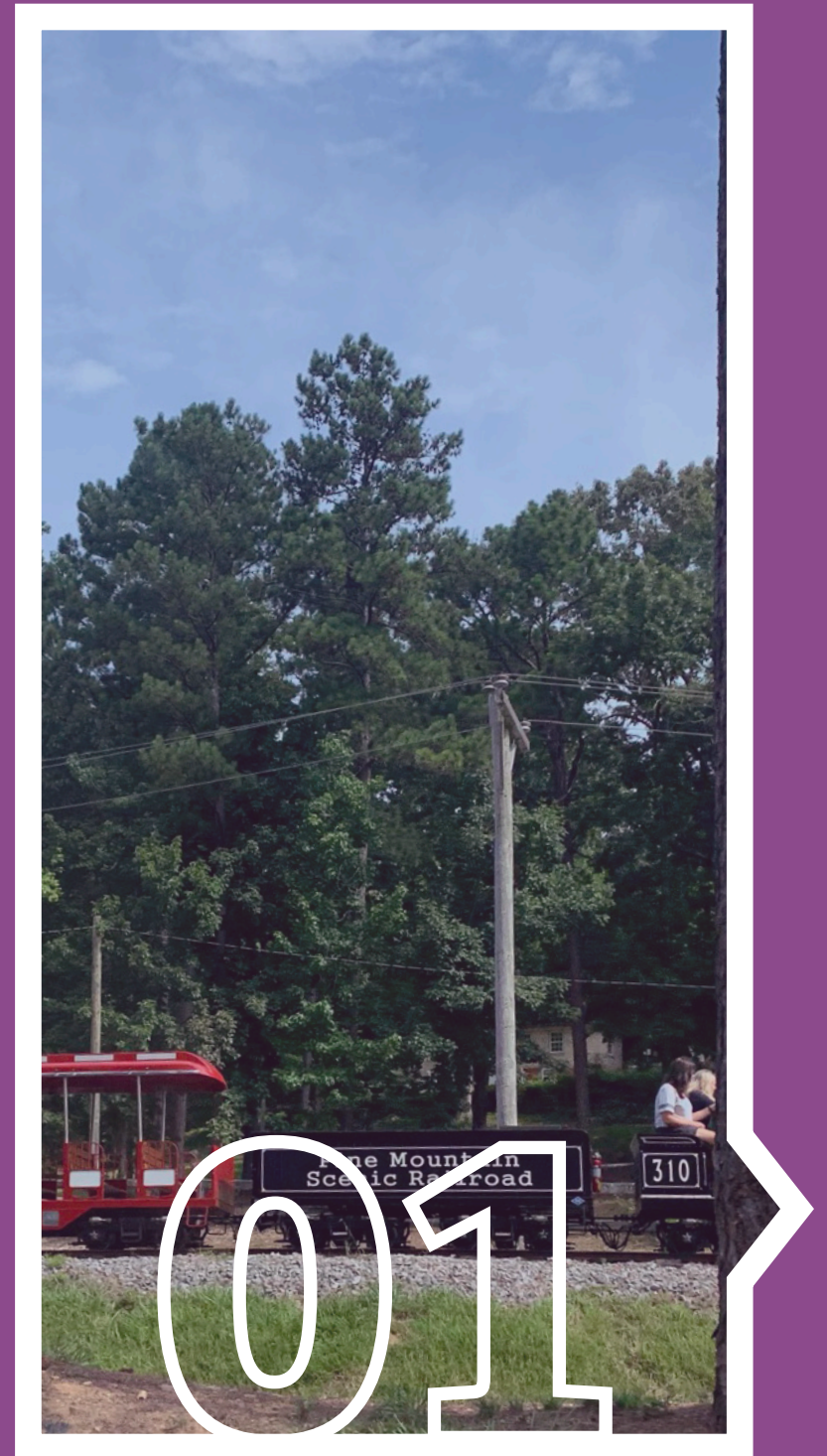
# INTRODUCTION

**Study Area History**

**Winston Today**

**Plan Purpose**

**Process**



# INTRODUCTION

## Study Area History

Historically known as Weddington and Winn Town, Winston was incorporated as the Town of Winston from 1906 to 1950. Winston's location along the Georgia Pacific (Southern) Railroad made it a prime location for two grist mills<sup>i</sup>. The Winston train depot, one of three depots in the County, provided Winston with regular shipments of mail, freight, and passenger service<sup>ii</sup>.

Winston residents successfully petitioned to revoke the town's charter in 1951 and the community's commerce center shifted from railroad to auto-centric with focused development along VMH and later I-20<sup>iii</sup>. The Winston study area is shown in Map 1 on Pg. 4 of this document.

## Winston Today

Today, the Winston community remains a distinct area in the northwest portion of Douglas County. Anchored in the south by the intersection of I-20 and Post Road, Winston stretches from the western boundary of the City of Douglasville to the eastern boundary of the City of Villa Rica.

The Winston community has shifted from a bustling mill town with direct rail access to a quieter, more rural area. Winston is still in close proximity to larger urban centers for goods

and services with easy access to I-20. Known for its "country crossroads," Winston is characterized by rural residential areas, rural charm, and ample open space/forest cover. The area is also characterized by hard rock deposits, major flood zones, and high-grade bluffs making the current landscape challenging for development.

Demographically, compared to the rest of Douglas County, Winston is more sparsely populated at just under 3,000 people. Winston is also less racially diverse (almost 60% White), has a lower overall educational attainment, and a slightly lower, albeit more equitably distributed, household income than the County overall.

## Plan Purpose

Winston is one area identified for further analysis as part of the Douglas County Comprehensive Plan effort due to Ultimately, finding a balance between known environmental challenges, economic development opportunities, and maintaining the historic character will be crucial in supporting the Winston community. For these reasons, the County is creating a detailed land use plan for the Winston area that will set a course for land uses, water and sewer services, transportation infrastructure, and future development of Winston.

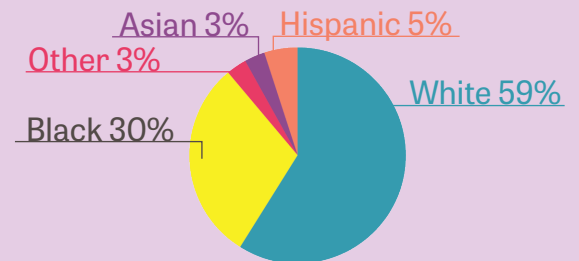
## Winston At A Glance

### Population

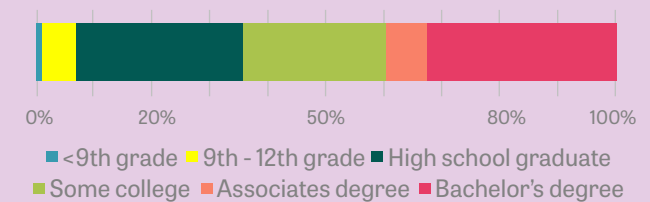


**2,975**  
(331/square mile)

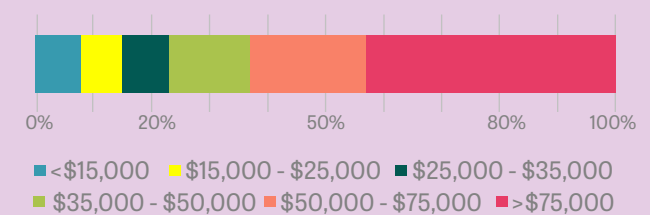
### Race/Ethnicity



### Age & Education



### Household Income



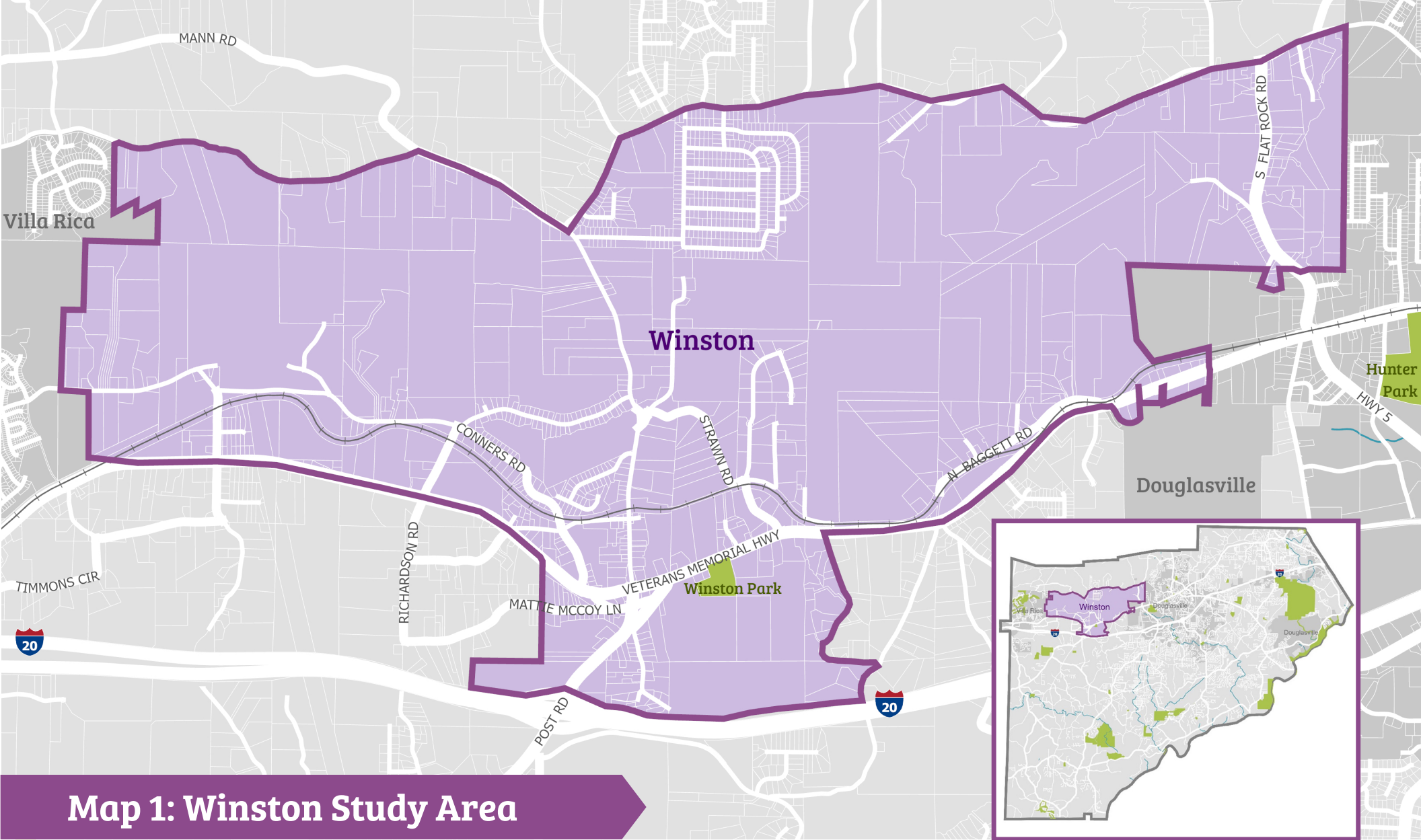
<sup>i</sup> The Heritage of Douglas County Georgia 1870-2002, Inc. Douglas County Genealogical Society, 2003.

<sup>ii</sup> Douglas County Historic Resources Survey, 1999, Douglas County Board of Commissioners & Historic Preservation Commission.

<sup>iii</sup> Douglas County, Georgia From Indian Trail to Interstate 20, 1987, Fannie Mae Davis.

Source: FHWA STEAP Tool, US Census American Community Survey (2015-2019)





# INTRODUCTION

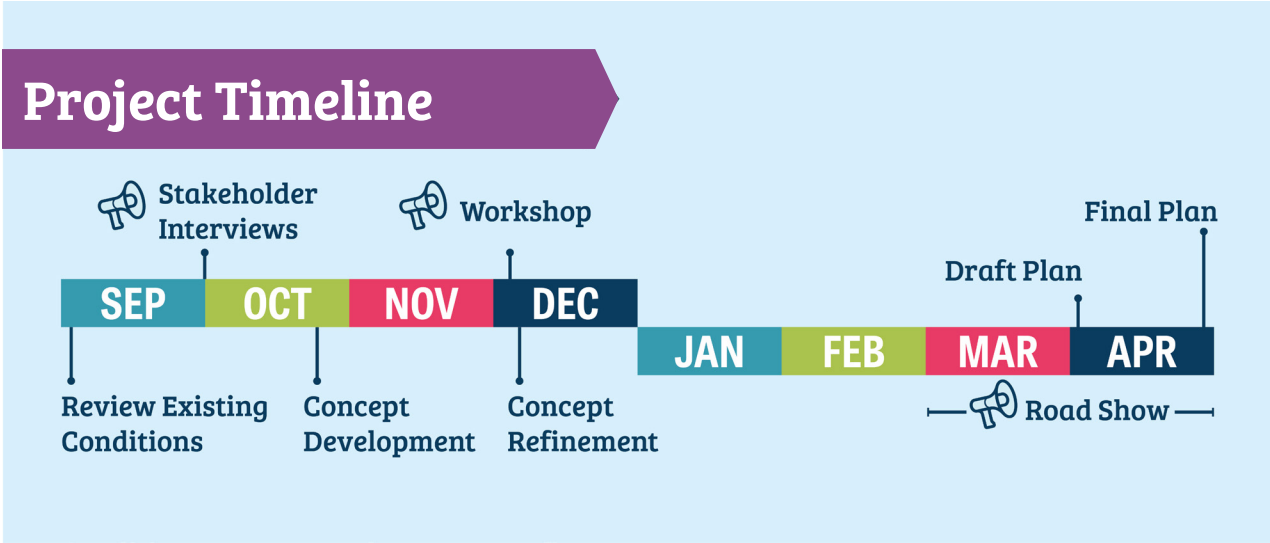
## Process

As shown in the figure below, the project team developed the Winston Small Area Plan over an 8-month time period starting in September 2022. This process mirrored that of the overall Comprehensive Plan process, but at a smaller scale for just the Winston area. The process started with a review of existing conditions and interviewing Winston community stakeholders to gain an understanding of Winston today.

Then, the project team worked to create development concept options for the Winston area that were presented to the public and stakeholders at a Workshop in early December. With input from the public, the project team refined the concept for a final

Winston Masterplan encompassing elements such as Future Land Use, parks and trails, and transportation. All of this came together to make-up the Winston Masterplan. This plan was included in the “Roadshow” where County staff presented and exhibited Comprehensive Plan and Small Area Plan information at various locations throughout the County in March and April 2023.

This document first summarizes the Winston area existing conditions and community engagement portions of the planning process. The final chapter showcases the overall Winston Masterplan and its associated recommendations for Future Land Use, transportation and infrastructure, parks and trails, and cultural and natural resources.





# EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

**Review of Existing Plans**

**Land Use**

**Zoning + Land Cover**

**Location + Development Access**

**Development Constraints**

**Transportation Infrastructure**





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Overview

Existing conditions were reviewed for the Winston area at the start of the project to establish a baseline of what Winston looks like today in comparison to its past and future. This analysis included a review of existing plans, land uses, economic development, transportation infrastructure, and more.

## Review of Existing Plans

A review of existing plans was conducted to identify relevant planning studies and initiatives that may impact the Winston Small Area Plan.

### *Villa Rica Comprehensive Plan*

The Villa Rica Comprehensive Plan was reviewed for potential land use impacts due to its proximity to the Winston study area. Based on the Plan's Future Development Map, the Winston SAP should consider connections to planned trail network in Villa Rica and ensure Future Land Use plans are consistent with the character of development planned especially in the eastern portion of Villa Rica.

### *Douglasville Comprehensive Plan*

The Douglasville Comprehensive Plan, similar to Villa Rica, was reviewed due to its proximity on the eastern side of the Winston study area. Per the Douglasville Plan, Future Land Use designations in the western portion of the City of Douglasville are low-density residential, light industrial, and heavy industrial. These should

be considered in the Winston SAP development as they are immediately adjacent to the eastern border of the Winston study area.

### *Douglas Forward 2025*

The Douglas Forward 2025 strategic plan provided overarching priorities for Douglas County that can help serve as guiding principles for the Winston Plan. Specifically, the strategic plan focused on active transportation and called for walkability, bikeability, and a mix of uses to create more connected, vibrant communities.

### *Douglas County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)*

The Douglas County CTP was completed in 2021 and was reviewed for relevant transportation projects slated for the Winston area. Some of these improvements included Post Road safety improvements, sidewalk additions/improvements, and various intersection improvements over the next 30 years.

### *Key Findings*

- Consider connections to planned trail network and ensure Future Land Use plans are consistent with the character of development planned in adjacent areas of Villa Rica.
- Integrate its goals with the Douglas County Strategic Plan.
- Leverage truck-friendly transportation improvements on Post Road.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Land Use

### *Future Land Use (from 2018 Comprehensive Plan)*

Winston's current Future Land Use designations from the 2019 Comprehensive Plan are much more diverse than its current zoning. Though the majority of the area's Future Land Use is still set aside for "Rural Places," much of the western half of Winston is designated a "Mixed Use Corridor" which calls for the co-location of residential and commercial uses. This is achieved through modest density that promotes walkability.

A significant amount of land is also designated for "Workplace Center" which calls for mostly commercial, office, and industrial development to promote economic development. The influence of the mixed-use corridor land use has already led to the industrial tone found in the existing local businesses in the study area.

It should also be noted that these current Future Land Uses have proposed changes as a result of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

## Zoning + Land Cover

### *Zoning*

The majority of the Winston study area (more than 80%) is zoned for residential uses, specifically rural-agriculture (R-A), low-density residential (R-LD), and also manufactured

housing (R-MH) in the Corn Crib community. Within zones designated R-A, a significant amount of land is vacant and most of these parcels face some environmental and/or infrastructural barriers to development, which is explored in later sections. The remaining portion of the Winston area is zoned for light industrial uses mostly located along US Hwy 278/VMH.

Several of the vacant parcels in Winston zoned for R-A or R-LD are held by limited liability corporations or limited partnerships (LLCs or LPs) which may indicate that developers or property managers are interested in exploring

development on these lands. Additionally, Douglas County has an overlay district to help regulate quality design and improve economic development opportunities along several well-traveled corridors in the County. In the Winston area, this overlay applies to Post Road as it feeds into the historic Winston Crossroads.

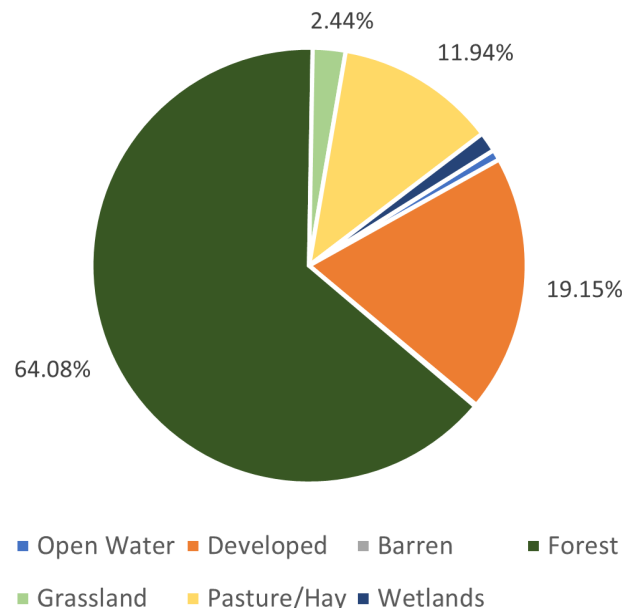
### *Land Cover*

Separate from land use, land cover describes the physical characteristics of the land: whether it's developed or natural and its natural cover. A majority of the Winston area (over 75%) is forested or pasture/grazing land. Developed land, which includes low-intensity development and manicured open space (e.g. lawns) comprises almost 20%.

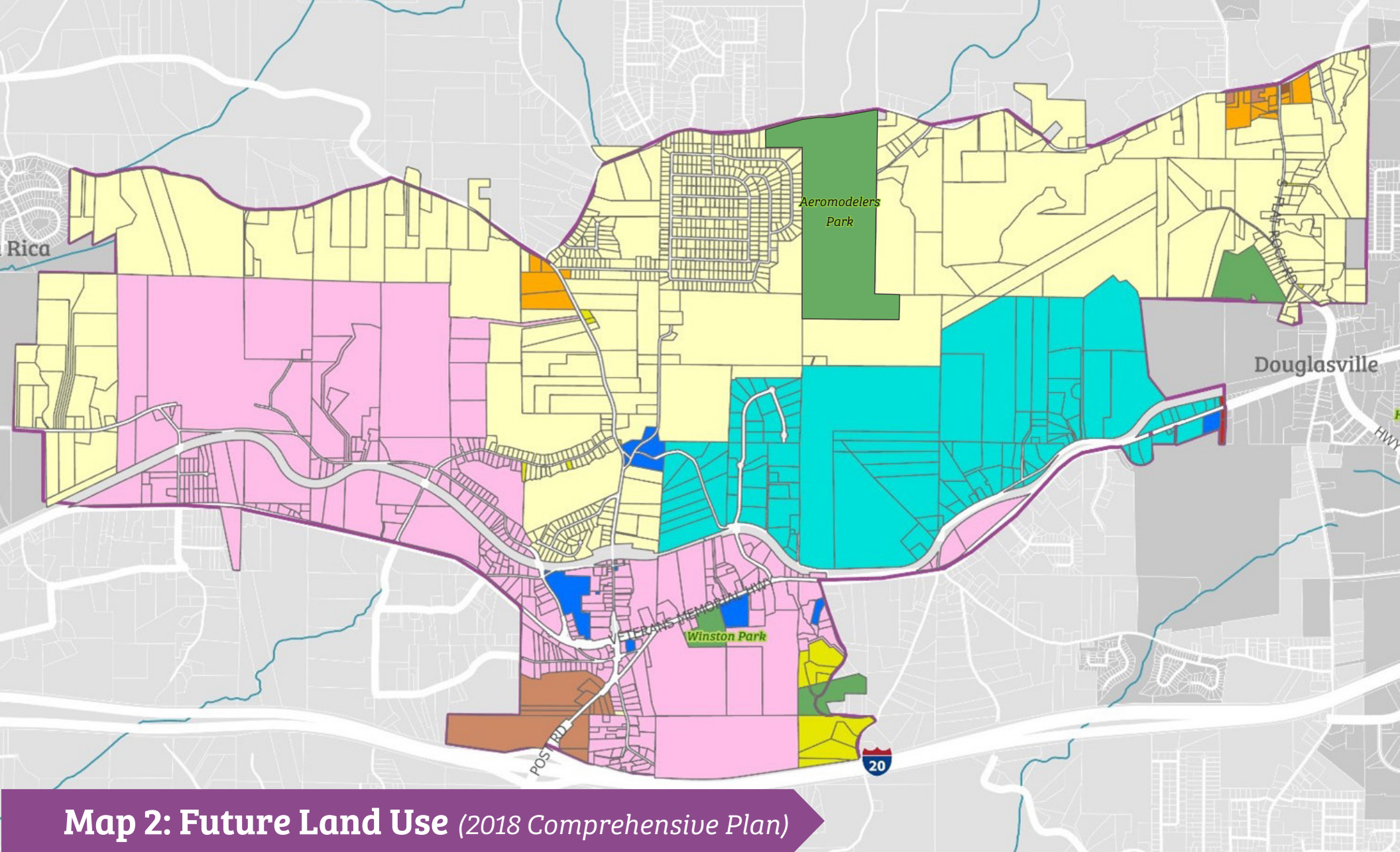
### *Major Land Use Findings*

Both Zoning and Future Land Uses support desired development; however, land cover findings indicate that not all parcels are being developed to these conditions, which may indicate there are environmental and infrastructure constraints that may impede desired development.

Winston Land Cover Percentage Breakdown







**Map 2: Future Land Use** (2018 Comprehensive Plan)

- |                             |                            |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| COMMUNITY VILLAGE CENTER    | ROW                        | WINSTON SMALL AREA PLAN    |
| INTENSIVE INDUSTRIAL        | RURAL PLACES               | CITIES                     |
| MIXED USE CORRIDOR          | SUBURBAN LIVING            | STREAM OR RIVER            |
| NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE CENTER | TRANSPORTATION / UTILITIES | GREEN SPACE                |
| PARKS / REC / CONSERVATION  | WORKPLACE CENTER           | GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS |
| PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL      |                            | FLOOD ZONES                |

0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 MILES





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Winston's Location + Development Access

The Winston study area has desirable access to downtown Atlanta and to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport via the Post Road interchange with I-20. Through a strategic plan, Elevate Douglas—the County's economic development arm—identified several target industries for Douglas County, one of which is advanced manufacturing and professional technology services. Winston's location along the Interstate is an advantage to attracting businesses within these target industries.

Further, the Mixed-Use Corridor and Work Place Center Future Land Use designations are perfectly situated to encourage development intensity to continue to cluster along Veterans Memorial Highway (VMH) and the east portion of North Baggett Road. However, despite Winston's prime location, there are several elements that have inhibited development in the past including the areas environmental features and lack of infrastructure and utilities.

### *Environmental Features*

The Winston study area features several environmental characteristics that impose constraints on the County's ability to service the area with infrastructure that can be supportive of future development. These constraints include protected watersheds, hard bedrock deposits, steep slopes, flood zones,

and groundwater recharge areas. Certain types of development—especially lower-intensity residential or commercial—could navigate around some of these constraints, but other more dense/intense developments may have more infrastructure needs that these environmental features would not allow.

### *Infrastructure + Utilities*

Another development constraint facing Winston is its lack of sewer infrastructure. Water lines have been installed along most arterial and local roads within the study area, but almost no properties in Winston are served by sewer infrastructure. There are two gravity mains that stop just shy of Winston's borders, one south of I-20 and one southeast of VMH.

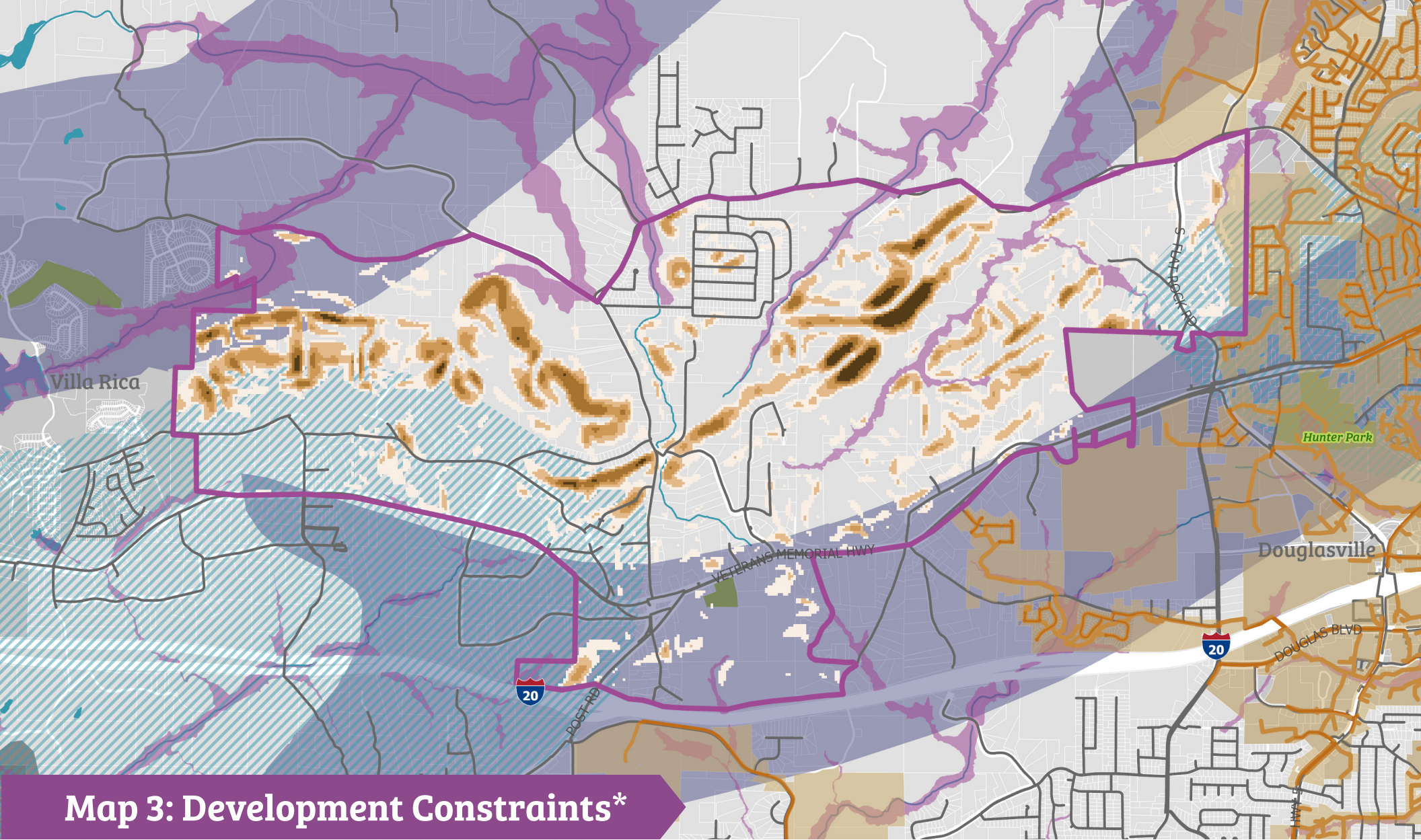
Higher-intensity development tends to follow sewer lines, as this infrastructure allows smaller lot sizes and larger commercial and industrial facilities. Plans have been discussed to expand sewer to the Winston area, though no exact locations have been solidified. This would dramatically expand development potential in Winston by reducing this critical infrastructure barrier.

## Development Constraints

Based on the current land policy, environmental features, and existing infrastructure within the Winston small area study boundary, the following themes emerged as related to

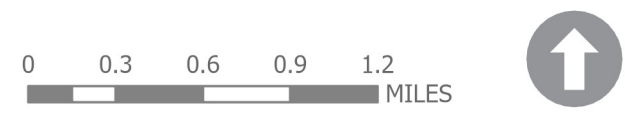
development constraints in the area:

- **Environmental Constraints:** Despite the prevalence of vacant parcels, environmental constraints bring barriers to development across Winston. Between hard bedrock deposits and ample forest cover—as well as flood zones along tributaries and the high-grade bluffs in between them—the landscape of Winston presents numerous challenges to development (see Map 3). It's not that development would not be feasible, just that it would be difficult and/or expensive. Developers may find greater prospects in other parts of Douglas County (or beyond the County line) that do not come with so many strings attached.
- **Lack of Sewer Infrastructure:** Historically, sewer lines have driven development patterns in Douglas County. This seems to be the case for Winston, for the most part (see existing sewer infrastructure in Map 3). Development (of any kind) for this area is only possible if sewer access is extended to the unsewered parts of Winston. Whether residential or Workplace Campus, this area would need sewer access to facilitate any development. Until that time, it is possible that other Future Land Use categories may make more sense for these unsewered areas.



**Map 3: Development Constraints\***

- |                  |                             |                            |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| GRANITE & GNEISS | SEWER MAINS                 | WINSTON SMALL AREA PLAN    |
| QUARTZITE        | PARCELS W/IN 50 FT OF SEWER | CITIES                     |
| 20-25% SLOPE     | WATER MAINS                 | STREAM OR RIVER            |
| 25-30% SLOPE     |                             | GREEN SPACE                |
| 30-35% SLOPE     |                             | GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS |
| 35-40% SLOPE     |                             | FLOOD ZONES                |
| 40-50% SLOPE     |                             |                            |



*\*Water and sewer coverages shown are for informational purposes only and accuracy is not guaranteed*



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Transportation Infrastructure

The center of Winston's civic and roadway infrastructure is focused at the crossroads between VMH and Mann Road. The road network radiates outward from here. Conners Road parallels VMH in the western half of Winston, and a few other local roads provide access to rural homes throughout. In the area's eastern half, Jason Industrial Parkway services a commercial/industrial area that is slowly being built out.

### Roadway Classification

Different types of development and land uses are geared for different types of roadway classifications. Reviewing the classification of Winston's roadways helped determine what type of future development and land uses are a good fit for certain parts of the Winston area. Douglas County utilizes the GDOT roadway functional classification system. This system defines the roles that each roadway serves to provide for different travel needs. The main functional classifications in the Winston area are interstates, arterials, and collectors.

The study area is bordered in the south by I-20 which connects the area to the rest of the County and region. VMH, a minor arterial, parallels I-20 and several collectors run north-south, connecting VMH to Cedar Mountain Road/Brewer Road that serves as the northern boundary of the study area. Mann Road run is the primary north-south collector in the study area that provides access to I-20 and VMH.

### Truck Percentages

Daily truck percentages in 2020 show trucks primarily concentrated on I-20, making up as much as 25% of the cars on the road. Post Road also experiences a relatively high truck volume, with up to 7.5% for the length of the study area. Post Road serves as the main connection for trucks and other vehicles between I-20 and the study area, sometimes creating an issue of truck congestion.

### Level of Service (LOS)

LOS is a standard means of classifying traffic conditions associated with volume levels relative to each roadway's carrying capacity and traffic flow conditions. LOS A, B, and C represent light and stable traffic flow. LOS D is characterized by longer delays, but still is considered an acceptable operational condition. LOS E and F are considered unacceptable conditions of extreme congestion and delay.

The existing LOS of Winston roadways during the PM peak hour are operating at an LOS A or B. An LOS C is observed on the roadway connecting to I-20 which is also operating at an LOS C, with portions of the Post Road interchange peaking at LOS E.

Projected PM peak period LOS in 2050 is expected to be similar with a majority of roadways in the study area still operating at an acceptable LOS in 2050. However, LOS is expected to decrease at the I-20 and Post Road interchange

and will continue to experience delay if not improved.

### Douglas Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The 2021 Douglas County CTP provides a detailed listing of short-, mid-, and long-term recommended transportation projects. Relevant CTP projects within the Winston study area include:

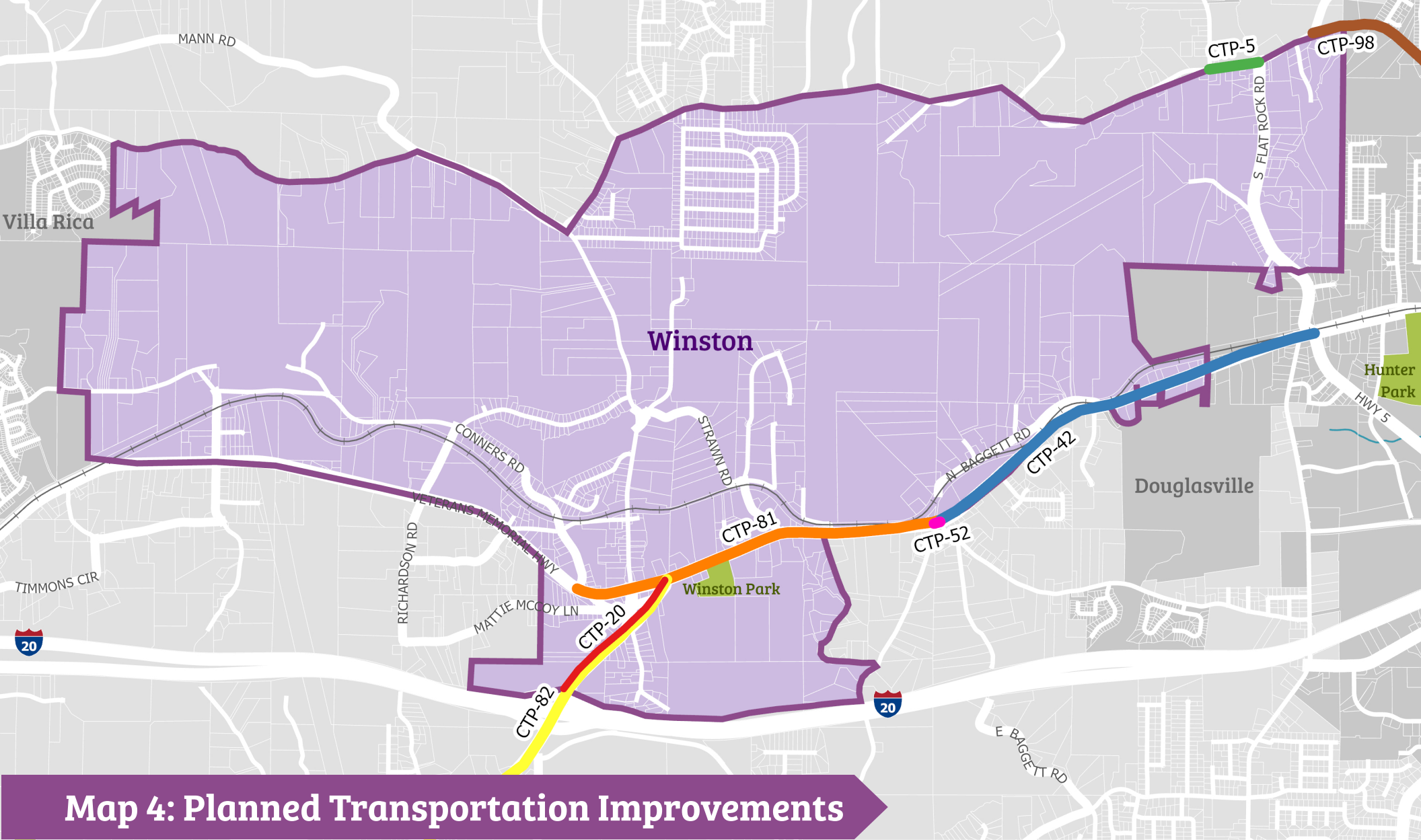
**Short-term (2022-2026):** safety improvements for truck movement on Post Road and an intersection improvement at US 78/Baggett Road (both are current County SPLOST projects)

**Long-Term (2032-2050):** intersection improvements at Cedar Mountain Road/Dorris Road and operational improvements along US 78 to include lane restriping and turn lane channelization

**Aspirational:** sidewalk improvements on US 78 and Post Road, expansion of Connect Douglas fixed-route transit service along US 78 from Douglasville to Villa Rica

Coordination with these efforts, particularly the short-term projects, is recommended as the Douglas County Comprehensive Plan and Winston Small Area Plan are implemented.





## Map 4: Planned Transportation Improvements

### DOUGLAS CTP PROJECTS

- CTP-20
- CTP-42
- CTP-5
- CTP-52
- CTP-81

CTP-82

CTP-98

WINSTON SMALL AREA PLAN BOUNDARY

GREEN SPACE

STREAM/RIVER

DOUGLAS COUNTY

CITIES

RAILROADS

0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 MILES



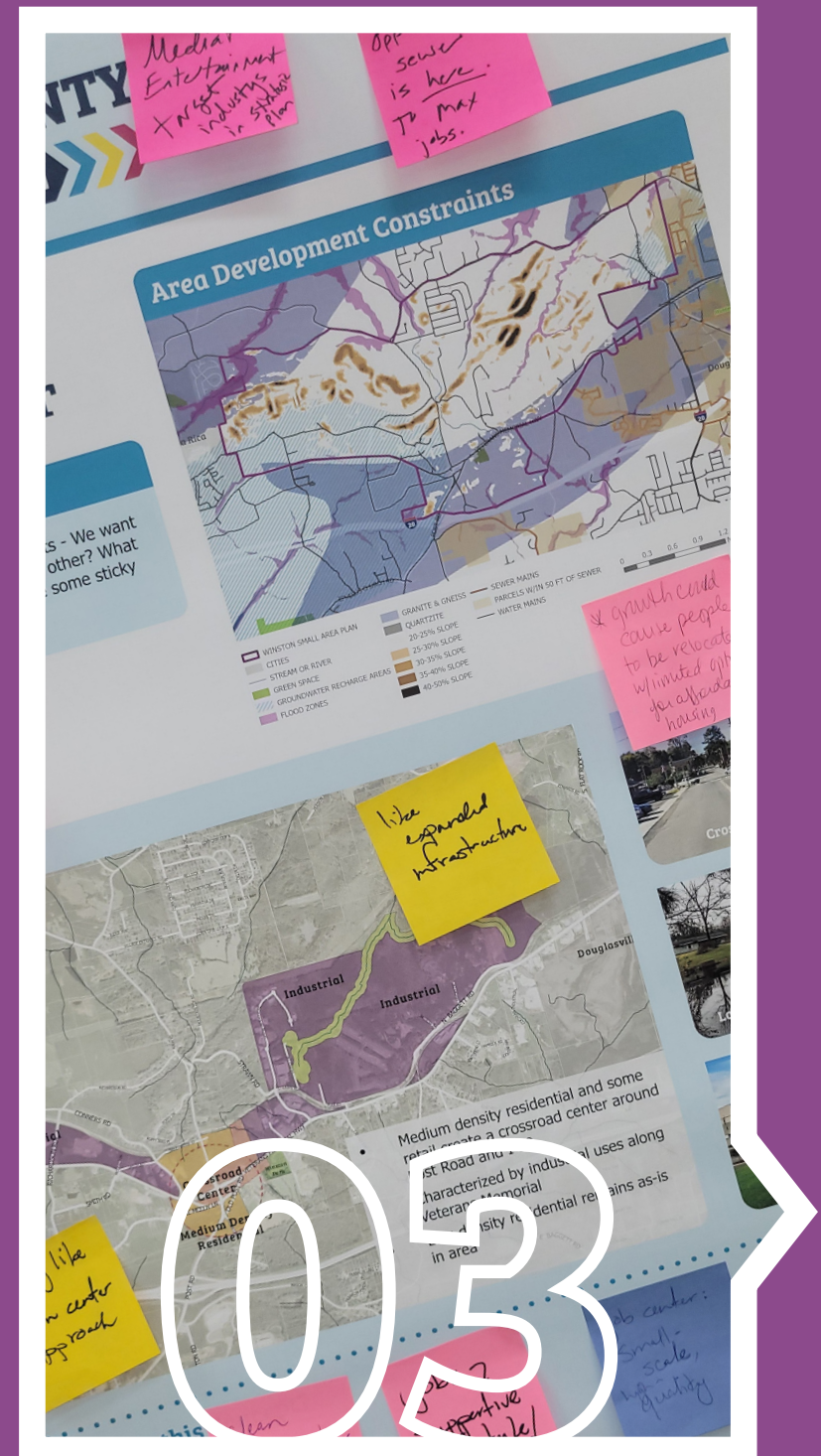
# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Stakeholder Interviews

Public Survey

Winston Workshop

Engagement Next Steps



# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Understanding community and stakeholder desires for Winston was fundamental in defining a clear vision for its future. Engagement efforts for the Winston Small Area Plan were closely coordinated with the Douglas County Comprehensive Plan Update, as the planning processes kicked off at the same time. The main methods used to garner input were stakeholder interviews, a public survey, a public workshop, and a “roadshow” of the final deliverables.

## Stakeholder Interviews

In Fall 2022, interviews were conducted with stakeholders who live or work in the Winston area. Stakeholders told us that Winston was valued for its undeveloped nature. Its low-density, large-lot homes, often in the hands of families that had owned them for generations, made the area feel like the Douglas County of a few decades ago. There was a disinclination towards new residential in the area, and the concern that expansion of infrastructure like roadways and sewer would bring not only new subdivisions to this unspoiled corner of the County but also the need to fund additional services like fire and police.

Similarly, there was a concern that additional truck traffic might continue to erode the area’s quality of life. All the same, interviewees indicated that the area needed a grocery store.

An interview with Elevate Douglas indicated their interest in the area for its potential as the

last large collection of parcels in the County that could still be aggregated for a Georgia State Department of Economic Development megasite, yet expressed the understanding that new development would need to respect Winston’s culture and community values. Elevate Douglas indicated that they were interested in a holistic plan for the Winston area that included new commercial uses but also was sensitive to the natural resources in the area and gave some thought to workforce housing for those who might be employed nearby.

Stakeholder interviews influenced the development of the Winston small area plan by centering the area’s need for preservation balanced with the need to accommodate new development that strengthens, rather than strains, the County’s tax digest.

## Public Survey

For the Comprehensive Plan Update, an online survey was used to collect input from residents and stakeholders in Douglas County regarding attitudes towards current land use conditions and future growth trends in the County. The survey launched on November 14, 2022 and remained open until December 22, 2022.

Findings from this survey influenced the Winston SAP. Respondents indicated that the top three investments that the Comprehensive Plan should encourage were: limiting additional warehouses/distribution centers (47%), attracting more shops and restaurants, things to do (45%), and investing in parks, trails, and open space (42%).

Open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide suggestions on where in the County additional commercial and industrial growth should occur. The top response for each question was “nowhere” with most respondents

## Top 3 Investments that the County should encourage:

46% 

Prefer attracting more shops and restaurants, things to do

47% 

Prefer limiting additional warehouses/distribution centers

42% 

Support investing in parks, trails, and open space

*Public Survey Results*



## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

desiring a slower pace of growth to secure the “small town feel” of Douglas County. However, other respondents did provide locations throughout the County to accommodate future commercial and industrial growth, mostly where this type of development already exists.

These responses influenced the amount and placement of new commercial land uses in Winston in the refined Masterplan concept. The light industrial land uses currently located in the study area were not expanded upon, and buffer areas between residential areas and existing and new proposed commercial uses were included in the plan to alleviate some of their visual and auditory externalities. Shops, restaurants and activities will be sought for the area's central node to provide services and amenities to nearby workers and residents.

Finally, parks, trails and open spaces have been woven throughout the land use plan preserve the rural look and feel of the area while also providing non-vehicular connectivity throughout the area and County.

# Winston Workshop

A public workshop was held on December 9, 2022 and was well attended by Winston residents, community representatives, and elected officials. Feedback was solicited for two draft land use concepts for the Winston area.

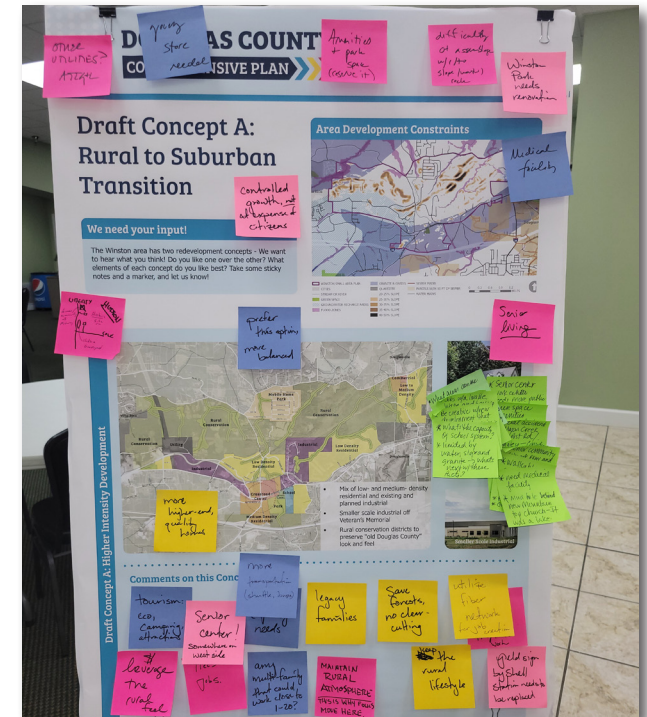
Workshop participants expressed general concern for protecting Winston's rural

character, but remained interested in right-sized growth with employment-generating uses. The community was supportive of transportation and public-service infrastructure expansion for the right development opportunities, but was cautious of growth for growth's sake.

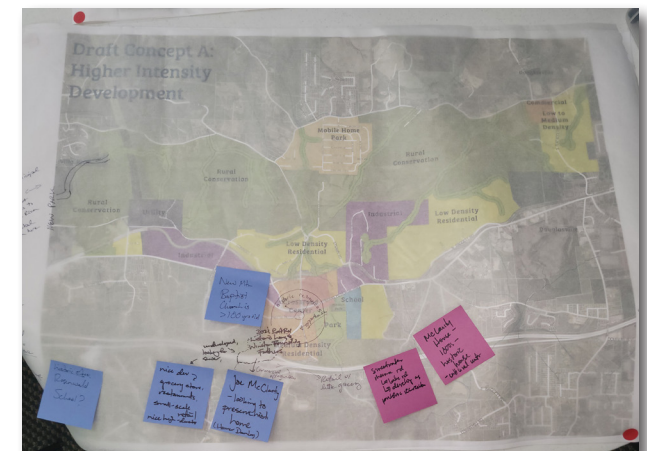
### Concept A Feedback

Draft Concept A proposed higher intensity development for the Winston area. This included a mix of low- and medium-density residential, existing planned industrial, smaller scale industrial off VMH, and large rural conservation districts to preserve the “Old Douglas” look and feel. Major feedback on this concept included:

- Desired trail connections to Villa Rica
- Preserve area historic resources and rural character
- More community amenities needed (i.e. grocery store, senior center, etc.)
- Controlled growth, “right” kind of jobs
- Creative uses: agri/eco tourism
- New development would mean more services/infrastructure are needed



### Concept A Feedback

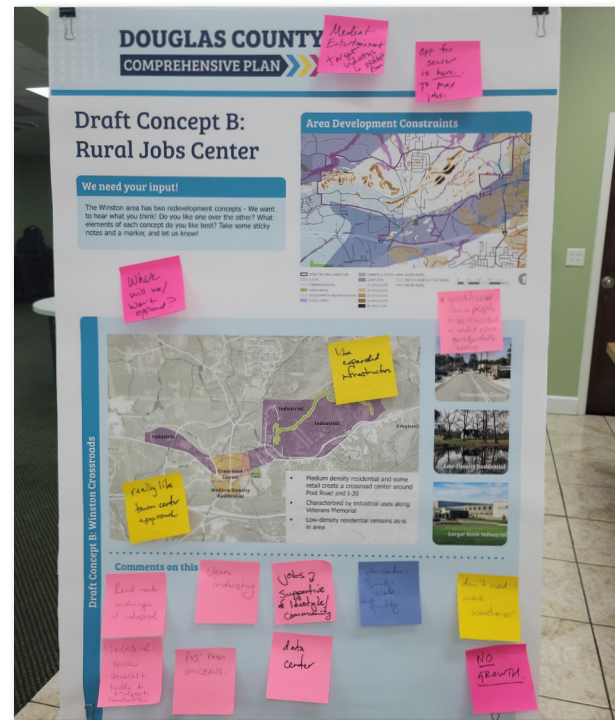


## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

### Concept B Feedback

Concept B focused on the Winston Crossroads area at Post Road/VMH as a rural jobs center. This concept proposed less intense development from a land use perspective than Concept A. Major feedback on this concept included:

- Focus on target industries (media + entertainment)
- “Clean growth” (i.e. data centers, industries that won’t put more trucks on the roads)
- Town center/crossroads approach was well received overall
- Transitional boundary with Villa Rica
- Preserve rural character – focus growth at VMH/Post Rd
- Concern of growth pricing out the Winston community



### Concept B Feedback



## Engagement Next Steps

Following the workshop, the project team moved forward on a final Masterplan concept for Winston that included expanded opportunities for development while preserving and leveraging the rural character of the Winston area. The development of this final Masterplan for the Winston area was closely coordinated with additional follow-up meetings with the District 4 Commissioner and Elevate Douglas. This helped create a balanced plan between the desires of the areas residents and representatives with the County's economic development vision for this area.

At the end of the process, the entire Comprehensive Plan and its small area plans for Winston and Lithia Springs, will be taken on a “roadshow” by County staff to share with the public at various locations throughout the County.



# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

**Masterplan Overview**

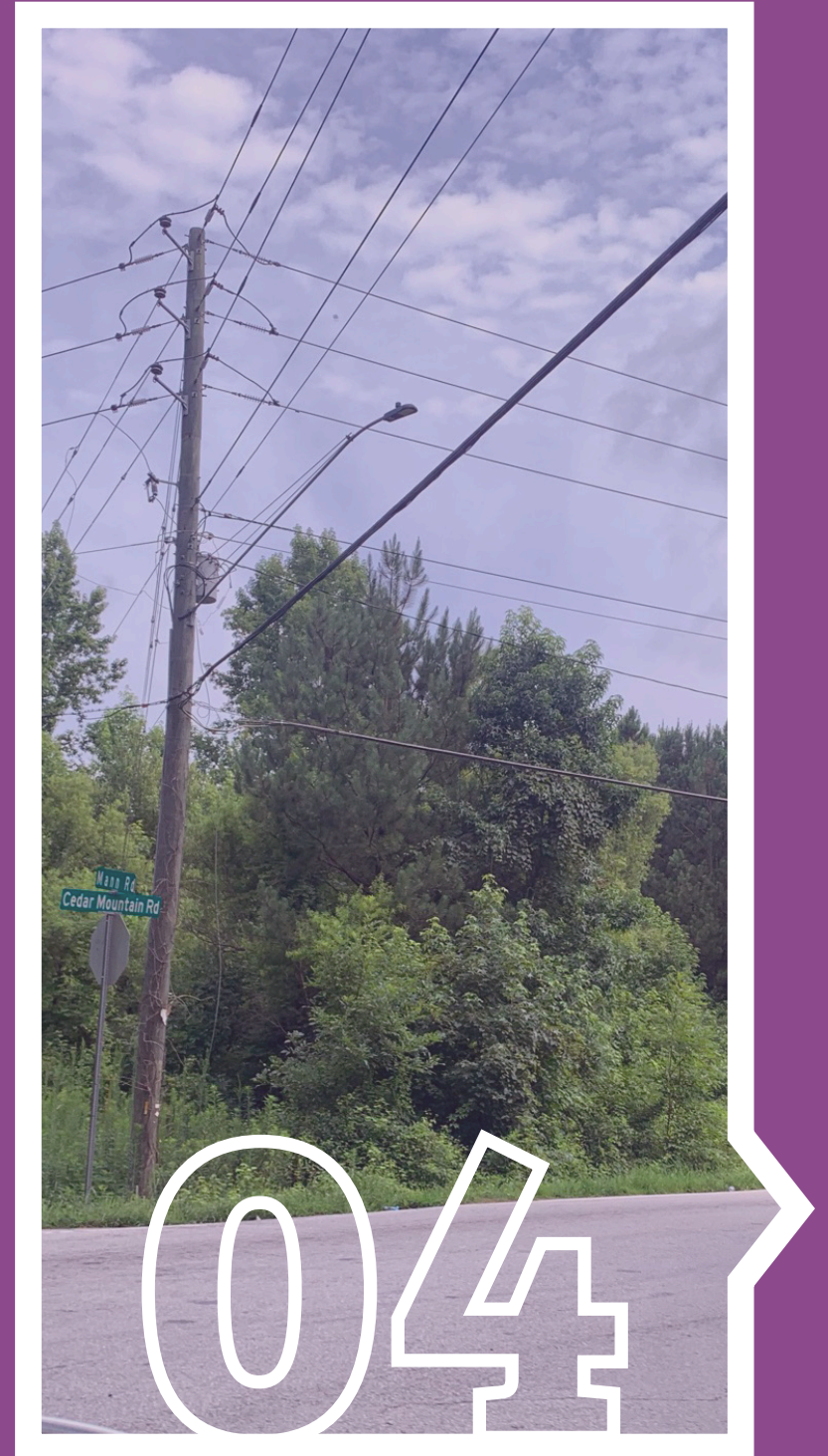
**Connecting to the Comprehensive Plan**

**Land Use Plan**

**Transportation + Infrastructure Plan**

**Parks + Trails Plan**

**Natural + Cultural Resources Plan**





# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## Masterplan Overview

Throughout the planning process, the consistent goal was to retain and protect Winston's rural/natural character, avoid sprawling residential subdivision development, and yet remain open to the right type of development opportunities that would provide jobs. This sentiment is reflected in the Winston Masterplan and its balance of preserving rural character in much of the Winston community while focusing on attracting key services and commercial activity to the Crossroads Center and right-sized development in the Workplace Campus areas. The Masterplan for the Winston area is shown in Map 6.

To support the Future Land Uses across Winston, the Masterplan also shows key opportunities for expansion of roadway and utility infrastructure to support growth in specific areas. The Masterplan also identifies key areas for expansion of parks and greenspace, notably surrounding Winston Park and Elementary School, and opportunities for preservation of cultural, historic, and natural resources. These elements of the Winston Masterplan are detailed on the following pages.

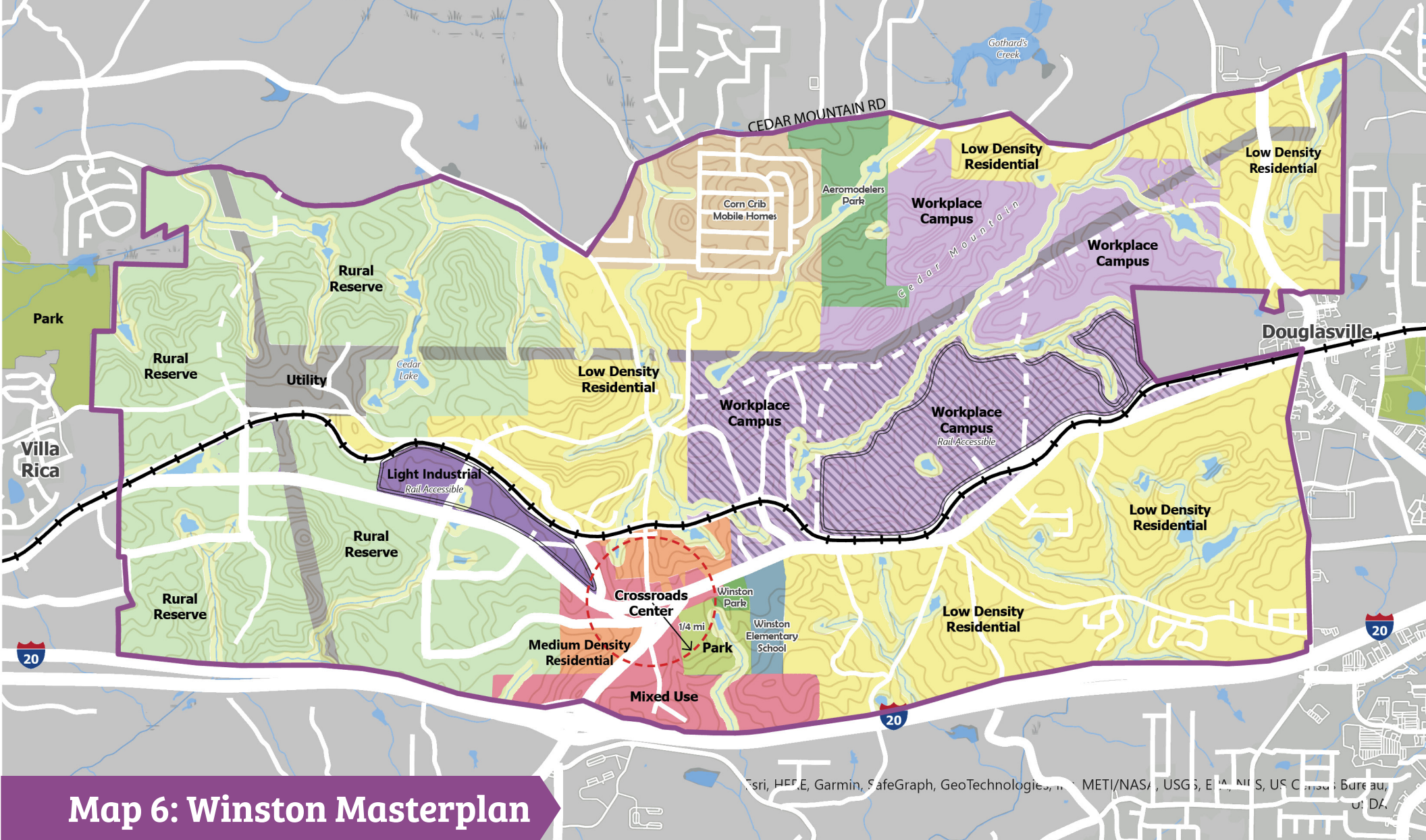


*Waldrop Angus Farms, Winston Post Office & Douglas County Fire Station #2, existing housing stock sample*



*Historic Winston building (Winston Denture Services), existing housing stock sample, and Winston's Corn Crib Community*





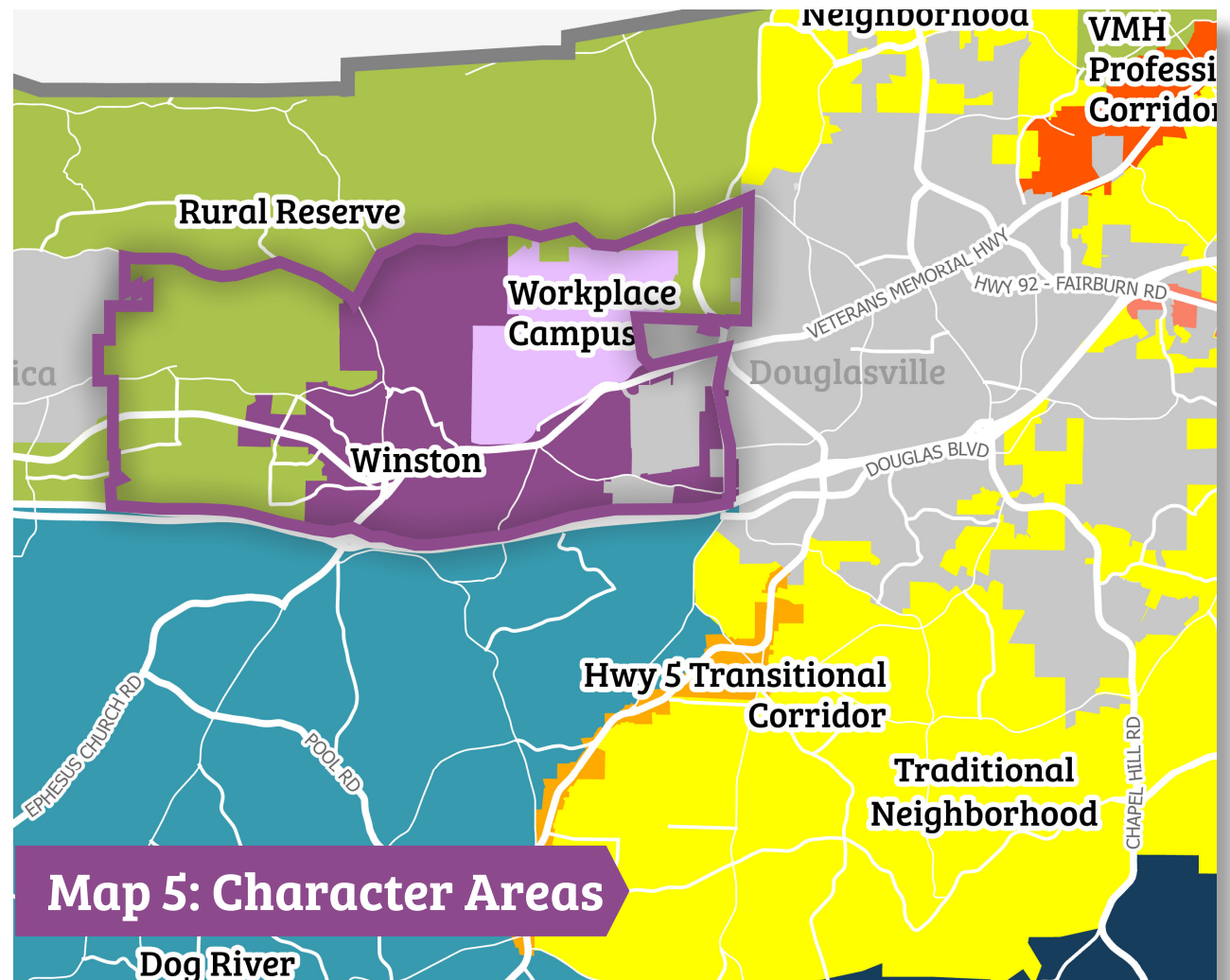


# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## Connecting to the Comprehensive Plan

In addition to Future Land Use designations, the Winston Masterplan informed character areas for the Comprehensive Plan for the Winston area. Character Areas prescribe what the agreed-upon feel and character of an area at a higher level than land use or zoning. Within the Winston area, there are three Comprehensive Plan Character Areas (Shown in Map 5):

- 1 *Workplace Campus*
- 2 *Winston*
- 3 *Rural Reserve*



Winston Small Area Plan Boundary

# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## ① *Workplace Campus*

Workplace Campus is dissimilar from the other employment focused Character Areas in the County in that it currently remains largely undeveloped and rural-residential in nature. The area lacks infrastructure and other utilities to develop at this time, but it is critical to define the vision for this area so as to manage future growth that reflects the desire of the community.

The County has anticipated an expansion of its workforce footprint to the western side of Douglasville since at least 2004. This plan refines this vision for Workplace Campus in the eastern portion of the Winston study area to include:

1. Data and other large-scale technology uses in campus-like development
  - Private greenspace
  - Discouragement of job center uses that attract truck traffic to the community

Workplace Campus would be contained within an established footprint and buffered from incompatible uses. It is envisioned to develop as a concentration of technology jobs in a campus-like setting with limits on truck-oriented uses.





# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## 2 Winston

The Winston Character Area encompasses the crossroads center at the core of Winston at the intersection of VMH and Post Road. The Character Area extends east along VMH and north along Post Road up to the Corn Crib community. This area is primarily envisioned to include:

- Low density rural residential surrounding the county crossroads
- Crossroads center providing neighborhood services such as grocery, restaurants, and other stores
- Parks and trails





# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## 3 Rural Reserve

Rural Reserve is the third and final Character Area in the Winston study area and covers a majority of the area west of Post Road. This character area is meant to protect and preserve existing rural spaces across Douglas County, including much of the Winston area. This Character Area should primarily focus on:

- Preserving rural character
- Encouraging uses such as rural resorts, agritourism, and hobby agriculture uses
- Discouraging suburban residential development





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# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## Land Use Plan

### Overview

The key Future Land Use designations for the Winston area are detailed in this section and shown in Map 7. These were identified through the Future Land Use designations used in the County's Comprehensive Plan. These designations also helped inform the overall character and intent of the Winston Masterplan.

### Workplace Campus

The major Future Land Use change proposed in this Plan is the addition of the Workplace Campus land use. This land use would extend to the north and east of the study area taking advantage of planned future infrastructure expansion and building on the density already encroaching on the eastern end of the study area. The proposed Workplace Campus designated area stops just short of Cedar Mountain Road in the north and Flat Rock Road in the east to allow for Low Density Residential frontage of those roadways. The boundary of the Workplace Campus refines the overall Workplace Center concept for this area shifting the anticipated future land use away from a sprawling corridor adjacent to US 78 and I-20 envisioned in previous plans, to a more compact boundary. Future land use west of Mann Road has been reclassified in anticipation of its largely rural-residential character to be consistent with the Rural Reserve Character Area.

Throughout the engagement process for this plan, it was noted that uses such as a data center might be a good fit for a Workplace Campus development in this area: development which provided a good number of jobs, but was considered “clean” and low in amount of associated vehicular/truck traffic. Douglas Planning and Zoning will need to draft policy and code that will govern any future mega site development selected for this land use area type. The addition of this land use designation will make it easier, from a regulatory perspective, for right-sized, employment-centric development to occur in designated areas of the Winston community.

## Winston Future Land Uses

### Rural Places

Predominantly rural residential development, including large lot, single-family residential development and single-family planned subdivisions

### Suburban Living

Established single-family residential neighborhoods in areas that typically have access to both public water, sewer, and good access to transportation networks

### Transitional Corridor

Along major transportation corridors where there will be demand to increase the density of residential uses

### Mixed Use Corridor

A mix of non-residential uses in proximity to major thoroughfares and support a greater urban density of form, scale and use

### Community Village Center

Higher intensity of commercial activity—like grocery stores and offices—designed to serve more than one neighborhood

### Public/Institutional

Sites and facilities in public ownership for uses such as medical, educational, cultural, governmental, administrative, etc.

### Workplace Campus

Data and other large-scale technology uses in campus-like development with ample private greenspace

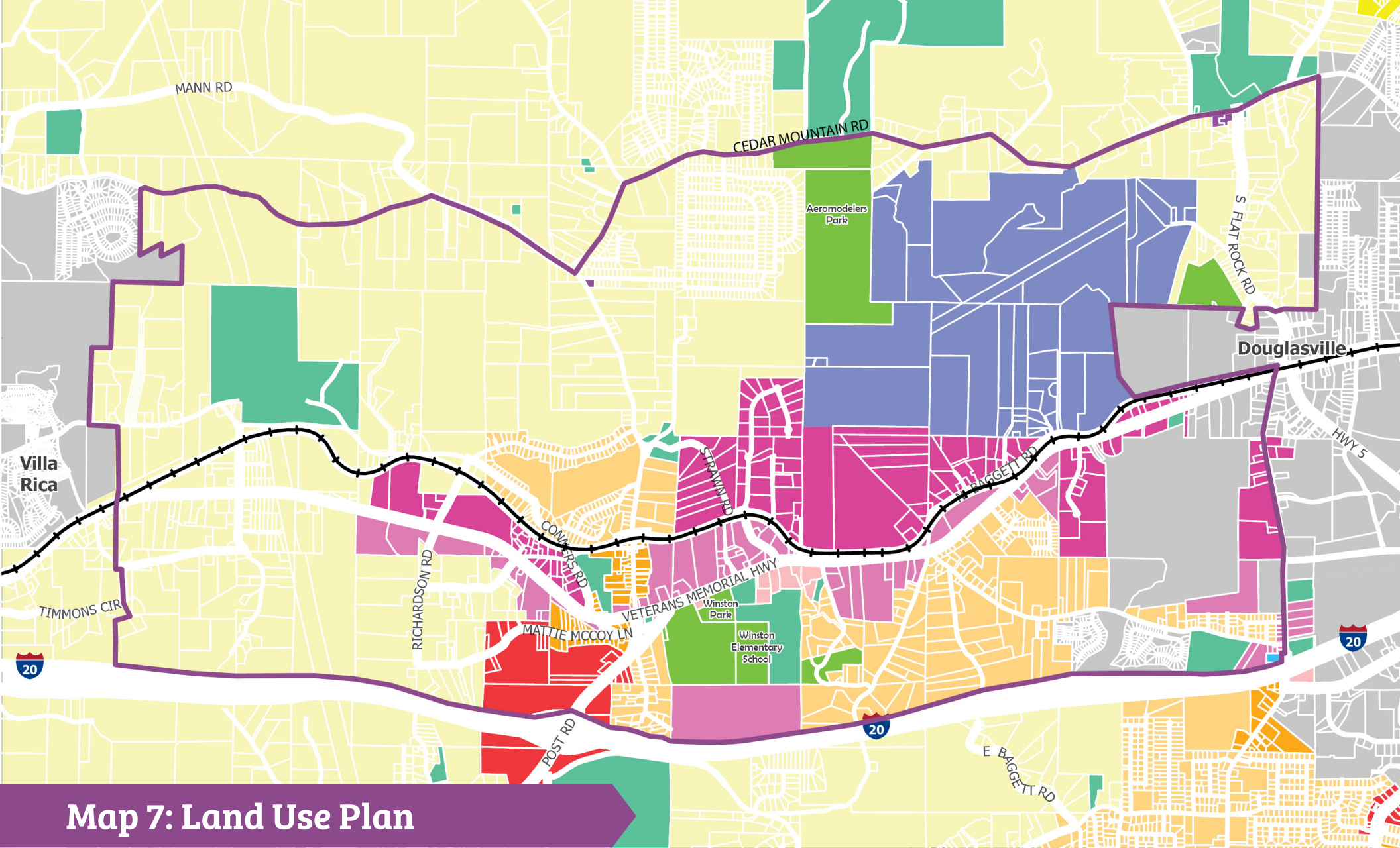
### Parks/ Recreation/ Conservation

Areas developed for park or recreation use, or designated as permanent open space

### Workplace Center

Current and future intensive commercial, office and technology development along major corridors that are major employment generators





## Map 7: Land Use Plan

- |                       |                             |                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Winston SAP           | Community Village Center    | Public / Institutional            |
| Rural Places          | Workplace Center            | Parks / Recreation / Conservation |
| Suburban Living       | Mixed Use Corridor          | Resort Mixed Use                  |
| Urban Residential     | County Crossroads           | Workplace Campus                  |
| Transitional Corridor | Neighborhood Village Center | Water                             |
| Commerce Center       | Quarry                      |                                   |

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 US Feet



# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## Transportation + Infrastructure Plan

Throughout the engagement process, stakeholder feedback indicated that the Winston area is valued by many County residents for its undeveloped nature. The unique challenge for Winston will be to strike a balance between controlled growth of both land uses (such as the proposed Workplace Campus expansion) and infrastructure (both transportation and utilities), and honoring that rural character that Winston is known for.

### Roadway Infrastructure

Residents and stakeholders were averse to wholesale roadway network expansion in Winston on the grounds that it could bring new truck traffic and/or undesired new sprawl-style development. However, feedback was also clear that this did not preclude the right type of development and expansion opportunities.

With this outlook in mind, Winston's transportation goals over the next 30 years should be regular maintenance and upkeep of existing infrastructure and focusing on key growth strategies that will not negatively impact roadway functions. Thus, the following roadway extensions and new roadway considerations are proposed to increase connectivity while maintaining efficient traffic flow.

No wholesale, new roadways are definitively

recommended for the Winston area. The following suggested roadways should only be considered in conjunction with new development in the Workplace Campus areas. Even then, any new roadways should be carefully reviewed and revised to suit new development needs and community desires. The proposed roadway/infrastructure expansions are split into two phases (shown in Map 8). Phase 1 is higher priority Workplace Campus and Phase 2 is Rural Reserve and has a lower priority build-out.

### Phase 1 Area: Workplace Campus

- 1 New roadway connection from Post Road at medium density residential area (north of Strawn Road/Richardson Rd intersections with Post Road). Connects northeast to Edwards Road and S. Flat Rock Road through new workplace campus land uses
- 2 New roadway connecting VMH north to proposed new roadway #1 from existing Polk Road
- 3 New roadway connecting VMH north to proposed new roadway #1 from existing Vansant Road

### Phase 2 Area: Rural Reserve

- 4 Extension of Andy Mountain Road to the north to connect with Brewer Road

### Planned Transportation Projects

At a minimum, Douglas County should coordinate closely with the County Transportation Department and GDOT on the following planned transportation projects in Winston:

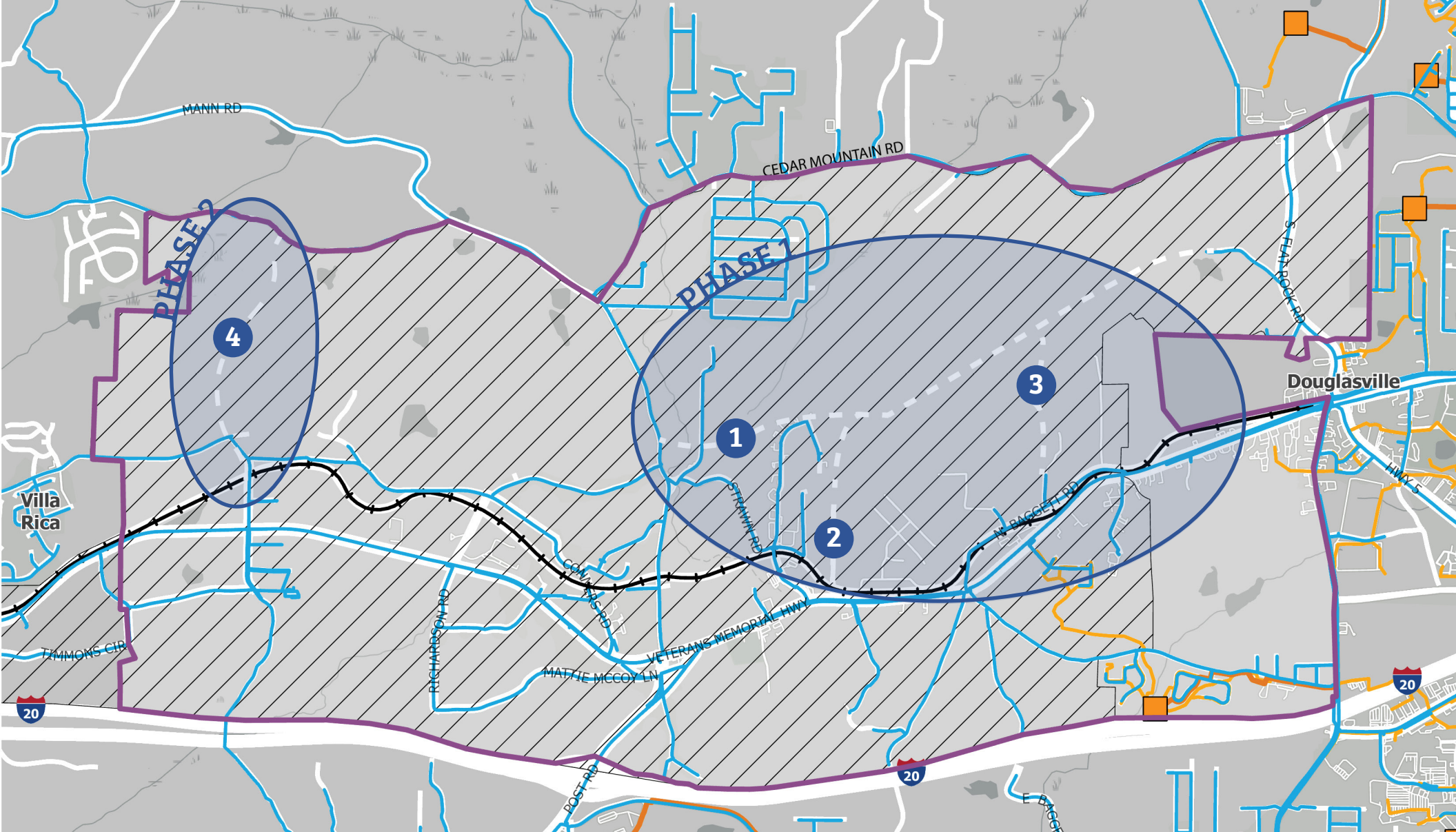
- Short term safety improvements at Post Road from I-20 to US 78 (CTP-20).
- Planned sidewalk infrastructure updates along US 78 and Post Road (Aspirational projects CTP-81/82) and identify ways of integrating streetscape elements that will be unique to Winston (i.e. landscaping, signage, and wayfinding).

### Sewer Infrastructure






To-date, the Winston area has not developed as quickly as parts of Douglas County to its south and east largely because sewer service has not been extended in this area. In fact, the low-density residential and small industrial uses in the area rely on septic systems.

At this time, no additional sewer infrastructure is recommended in the Winston area. Reserving the introduction of new sewer service for the immediate future will allow the County to continue to preserve the area in its current state. Areas marked as Rural Reserve are intended to remain without sewer service, but sewer should be expanded into the workplace campus area if and when a developer suitable





## Map 8: Transportation + Infrastructure Plan\*

-  Winston SAP
-  Sewer Expansion Areas
-  Existing Sewer Infrastructure
-  Existing Potable Water Infrastructure
-  Proposed Road

0 1,500 3,000 6,000  
US Feet

\*Water and sewer coverages shown are for informational purposes only and accuracy is not guaranteed

# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

to the County's economic development purposes has been identified. Sewer expansion prioritization should follow the same phased priority areas as the aforementioned roadway network and be prioritized in Workplace Campus areas.

## *Other Infrastructure*

Any additional utility infrastructure expansion, such as power or fiber, should be in keeping with the sewer expansion approach. Rural Reserve areas are meant to remain without additional infrastructure for the immediate future but utility infrastructure expansion in Workplace Campus should occur when a development plan is in place.

## **Parks and Trails Plan**

Currently, Winston is served by two Douglas County parks (Winston Park and Aeromodelers Park) within the study area boundaries. There are also park spaces in neighboring Cities of Villa Rica and Douglasville just beyond the study area boundary. There are currently no shared use paths/trails in the study area, and limited sidewalks.

Winston's central location between Villa Rica and Douglasville offers significant opportunities for trail connections for active transportation and encouraging improvements and expansion of existing parks. Long-term, the park and trail recommendations encourage protecting forested land, providing non-vehicular

connectivity in the area, and providing recreational opportunities integrated with the proposed Workplace Campus and Rural Reserve land uses. Map 9 summarizes park and trail recommendations on the next page.

## *Park Recommendations*

### **Countywide Parks and Trails System Master Plan**

In keeping with the recommendations of the overall Douglas County Comprehensive Plan, the creation of a Countywide parks and trails system master plan is recommended to determine the need for additional parkland and facilities in the Winston area. Lack of a park system plan notwithstanding, vacant parcels adjacent to both Winston Park and Aeromodelers park present opportunities for expansion.

### **Winston Park**

Winston Park is primarily a sports field complex and is currently undergoing an updated plan for the upper fields (the first update to the park in recent history). There are also opportunities for expansion in the surrounding area.

- Directly east of the park is a 46-acre vacant, forested parcel owned by the Douglas County Board of Education (part of Winston Elementary School Site). Opportunities should be pursued to partner with the elementary school and the School Board to

allow use of the school site for park purposes after school hours and on weekends.

- Directly south of the park is a privately-owned, vacant, forested, 90-acre parcel which includes a stream. This parcel could be an opportunity for park expansion as the Winston area grows and the school and park capacity needs grow along with it.

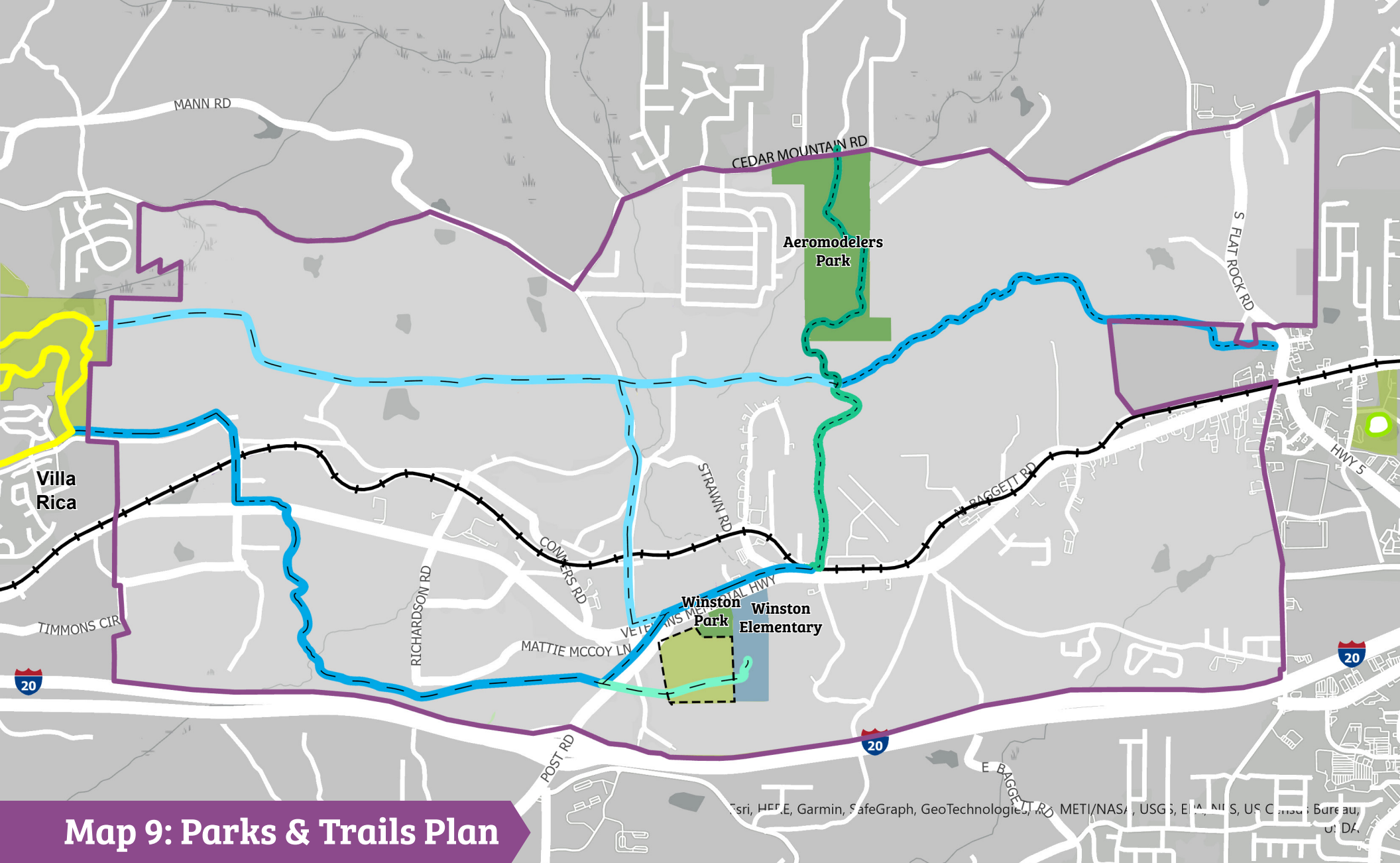
### **Aeromodelers Park**

- In the future, it may make sense to explore expanding Aeromodelers Park as the areas around it grow and develop, particularly as Workplace Campus areas are developed and provide potential trail connections to the park. However, the park is currently surrounded by large, privately-owned parcels so expansion is not anticipated at this time.

### **Trail Recommendations**

Based on Winston's proximity to neighboring Villa Rica and Douglasville and the ongoing trail development in those cities, a new paved trail network is recommended to allow residents a non-vehicular option to access local parks, schools, and amenities, as well as new passive recreational space. This recommendation aligns with survey results indicating high support for trails for both connectivity and recreation purposes.





# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

It is recommended that the paved trail network be the priority though it should be noted that there is substantial potential for unpaved hiking trails in areas such as Aeromodelers Park. The suggested paved trail alignments are notated below, but further study will be required to determine preferred alignments, based on feasibility, cost, community preference and challenges such as topography and private land ownership.

- Two conceptual alignments are recommended to connect, from east to west, a proposed shared use path on Chicago Avenue in Douglasville through the Workplace Campus area to Winston Park to Villa Rica's Conners Road Park. Both alignments make significant use of the Utility Corridor easements that bisect the study area.
- A paved trail through Aeromodelers Park is also proposed to expand connection from the park to other destinations, including a spur that would serve the Corn Crib community.
- Potential for developer-assisted trail development in future developments in Workplace Campus. Potential revisions to the zoning code should consider requiring a trail or trail investment in new developments

## Natural + Cultural Resources Plan

### *Natural Resources Recommendations*

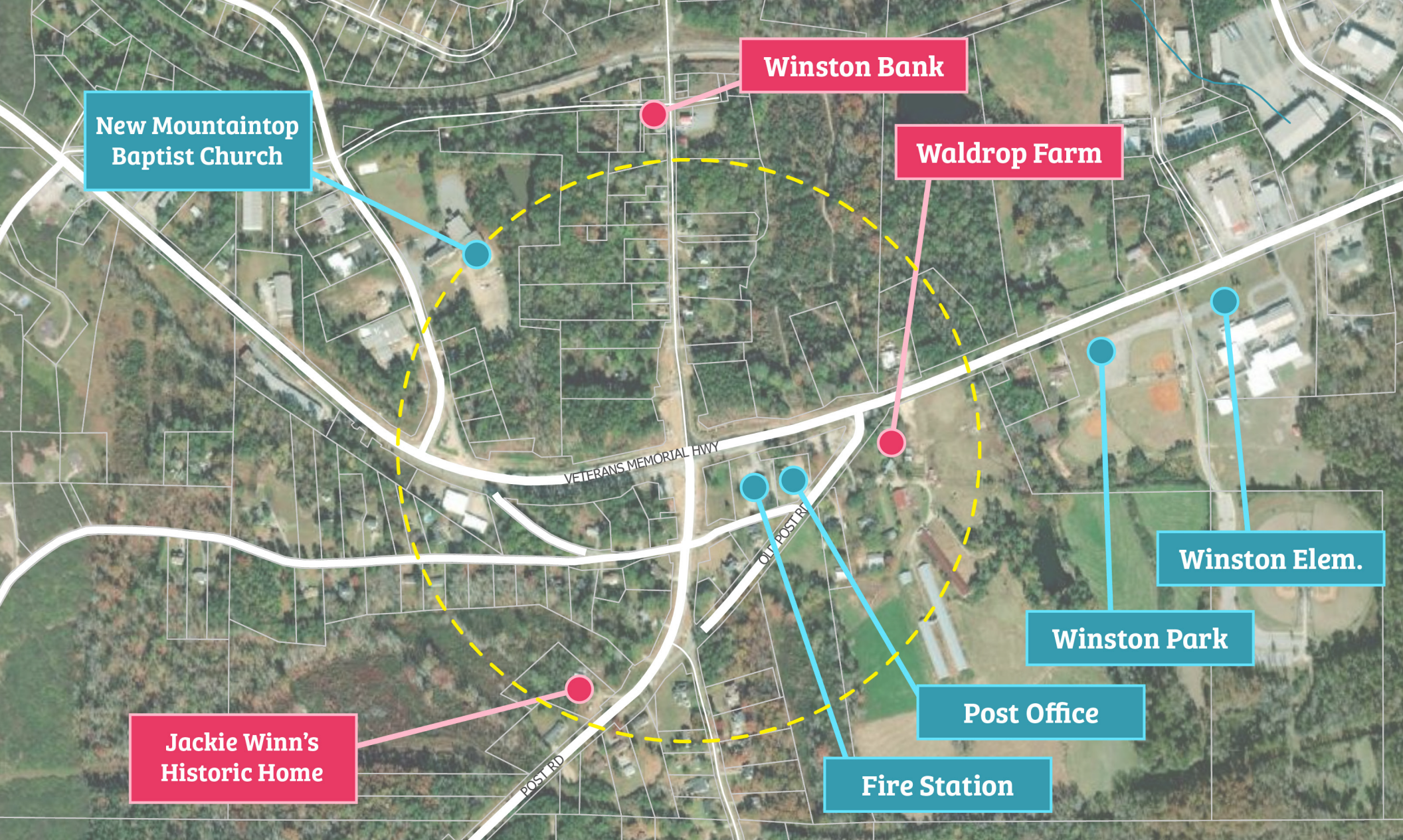
Douglas County already has strong environmental policy in place through its Unified Development Ordinance in which protections for tree canopy, water quality, and guidance on stormwater management are all present. However, any development will inevitably result in a reduction of the natural resources (mostly forested lands) currently found across much of the Winston area. Moving forward, especially in designated Workplace Campus areas in Winston, the County will need to consider appropriate maintenance and protection of these natural resources.

The most important step the County can take in executing development in Winston is to court specific developers interested in partnering to construct a clean, contextually-appropriate workplace campus that seeks reduced alteration of the landscape and explores pathways for environmental stewardship and recreation. These recommendations highlight specific negotiation points for the County when identifying and partnering with site developers as pertaining to natural resources protection/maintenance.

## Stream buffers and water quality

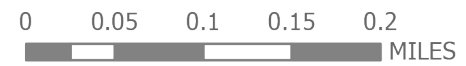
- During the site plan review process for areas within the workplace campus designation, consider negotiating for developers to go above and beyond minimum stream buffer and water quality protection requirements provided for in the Environmental Protection Ordinance. If possible, leave greater than 50 ft. riparian buffers alongside streams.
- Encourage developers to pursue stormwater credits in exchange for site design measures that strengthen natural resources. This could include streamside solutions or higher elevation green infrastructure to slow water down.
- Increase minimum vegetated buffer width along tributaries of Sweetwater Creek above 50 ft. While this would not make set-asides of larger than 50 ft. in width eligible for permanent protection as "primary conservation areas" under Division VI, Sec. 920 of the Douglas County Unified Development Ordinance, it would afford some greater protections to the wider buffer areas.





**Map 10: Existing Cultural Resources**

- HISTORIC RESOURCE
- CIVIC/RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION
- PARCELS
- 1/4-MILE "CROSSROADS CENTER" RADIUS





# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## **Tree Protection and Replacement**

Consider negotiating with developers to go beyond minimum tree conservation and replanting requirements provided in the Tree Ordinance. These solutions could qualify developers for additional stormwater credits. This could include:

- Increase minimum tree density per acre for industrial sites included in workplace campus above base requirement of 15 units/acre
- Increase minimum tree density per acre for residential subdivisions serving the workplace campus above the base requirement of 18 units/acre at the time of subdivision
- Encourage site plans to employ natural buffers between zones as opposed to structural buffers (fences, berms, etc.)
- Increase minimum parking lot planting percentage above 8% of total area
- Encourage green infrastructure strategies in parking lots serving industrial buildings that go beyond base requirements
- If site conditions within workplace campus area mandate the use of and payment into the County Tree Replacement Fund, consider routing funds received into one or a combination of existing park areas and adjacent to future trail corridors

## **Time-Limited Conservation Programs**

Consider working with individual landowners to explore tax relief covenants for “soft conservation” of forested and agricultural tracts located within the “rural reserve” zone. One option is the Forest Land Use exemptions under the Forest Land Protection Act. This provides a property tax exemption for tracts equal to or over 200 acres, where 50% or more of the property’s primary use is for either timber production or maintenance of natural habitat. The covenant lasts for 10 years, and the property owner must agree to keep the property in qualifying use for the duration.

## ***Cultural Resource Recommendations***

Since its establishment in the mid-1800s, Winston has maintained an independent personality from the rest of Douglas County. The area has a rich cultural history rooted in elements ranging from Native American culture to goods trading/transport due to the railroad.

Today, the crossroads area still serves as the civic and cultural center of Winston and the this plan seeks to strengthen that center. The following recommendations rely on community engagement and citizen champions who seek to celebrate Winston’s history, culture, and identity.

## **Protect Historic Structures**

There are a few buildings in the Winston area that hold or could hold historic significance. Some are occupied by civic uses (i.e. the post office) and are unlikely to change. However, some are held as private property and could benefit from plans for their ongoing longevity.

- Consider assessing two properties (the former Winston Bank and “Uncle Jackie” Winn’s house) for historic significance and/or architectural soundness.
- Coordinate with above property owners about recognizing their properties through memorial plaques, placement in historic trusts, etc. and consider programming that highlights their connection to Winston (i.e. self-guided tours, wayfinding, etc.)

## **Form a Historical and Cultural Society**

With enough momentum, a group of dedicated citizens, in partnership with the County, could recover and tell Winston’s stories. Example tasks this society could own are:

- Identify/contact local historians to conduct research on Winston
- Organize storytelling events among legacy residents and families
- Compile materials for an exhibit on Winston’s history for placement in a small community-focused museum. Consider identifying a local building that could host such an exhibit.]



# WINSTON MASTERPLAN

## Neighborhood Programming

Consider organizing a neighborhood festival or other programming that brings local community members from across Douglas County to celebrate Winston. The festival could include coordinating with local and civic institutions to develop interactive programming and partnering with local businesses to sponsor/volunteer to increase commercial activity.

## Leverage Winston Elementary

With its proximity to Winston Park and its large site, Winston Elementary could serve as a community hub. The County should consider ways to leverage this site and set up the school for success as more residents and families are attracted to Winston.

- Engage with the parent-teacher association on programming opportunities that tie together the school's location and historical/cultural resources and coordinate with school leadership and Douglas County Schools on future expansion/facility needs
- Regularly gather the PTA with representatives from Parks & Rec to discuss shared-use opportunities for public recreation offerings

## Beautification and Wayfinding

- Consider adding Winston-specific plaques or insignia to Winston street signs, providing a visual reminder of where you are

- Consider adding wayfinding signage downtown, pointing to community destinations such as Winston Park or historic structures in close proximity to the crossroads.
- Begin with “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” (LQC) projects that engage volunteers and show buy-in on behalf of the County. These could include crosswalk painting, DIY murals, community clean-ups, etc.
- Survey Winston businesses to gauge appetite for special funding structures to assist with aesthetic improvements, including special tax districts or tax increment financing.

## Case Studies

### The Lakes at Green Valley | Griffin, GA

This eco-industrial park promotes clean manufacturing to support sustainability of the site's surrounding natural environment. The site was chosen due to its proximity to I-75, existing rail corridors, fiber capability, and the scenic landscape of the Georgia Piedmont. Swap I-75 for I-20 and these qualities are all shared by Winston and greater Douglas County.

During the development process, there was minimal tree removal and grading which left much of the site undisturbed. Each building on the site is required to achieve an “eco” rating; higher scores in this rating system can provide additional incentives for tenants (i.e. tax relief). The Lakes development was funded by the 2008 TSPLOST in partnership with Griffin-Spalding Development Authority, Georgia Power, and the Georgia Dept. of Economic Development (among others).

### Stanton Springs | Newton County, GA

Quickly growing into Georgia's premier high-tech industrial park, this campus-style industrial park hosts top biomedical, tech, and pharmaceutical research centers and manufacturing firms. The site also features the Georgia BioScience Training Center which offers educational spaces, technology and other resources for aspiring employees and students. While this project has less focus on natural resources, the attempts to foster a mixed-use campus with highly technical jobs could be an interesting model for Winston.

# IMPLEMENTATION

**Overview**

**Short-Term Action Items**

**Implementation + Funding Considerations**

**Community Work Program**





# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

## Overview

The above sections proposed several recommendations for realizing the development vision for the Winston area. Many of these items are meant to be spearheaded by local community members and leaders in concert with County officials. This implementation strategy identifies short-term action items that the County should focus on for the Winston Area as well as key projects to include in the Community Work Program (Table A).

## Short-Term Action Items

1. Organize and host a developers round-table for the Winston area bringing together private developers with specific interest in Workplace Campus style developments.
2. Create a developer “Welcome Packet” to educate and inform potential developers on the unique Workplace Campus opportunity in Winston and the natural resource incentive potential.
3. Create a developer “Welcome Packet” to educate and inform potential land owners/developers on the unique Rural Reserve opportunity in Winston for eco/agri-tourism.
4. Begin conversations with Winston Elementary for shared use of their playground/park area on weekends and after school hours.
5. Engage key Winston land and business owners, especially near the Crossroads Center and owners of historic properties, on forming an Historic and Cultural Society.

6. Begin working now with neighboring jurisdictions and private developers on identifying opportunities for trail connectivity.
7. Coordinate with GDOT on safety improvements at Post Road from I-20 to US 78 (CTP-20).
8. Engage in a countywide Parks and Trails System Masterplan.

## Implementation + Funding Considerations

There are some funding and implementation tools available specific to parks and trails, natural and cultural resources, and economic development, that the County and its partners should consider as part of the implementation of this Plan.

### *Parks, Trails, and Natural Resources*

Two state-administered funding sources are uniquely well-positioned to assist Douglas County in executing a vision for the Winston area that balances natural resources with economic development.

- **Recreational Trails Program:** State-administered competitive grant program that provides funding for trail projects that support motorized and non motorized uses. Awards up to \$200,000 in reimbursement-based funding.
- **Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program:** State-administered program that provides

competitive grants (reimbursement-based funding) for greenspace acquisition and stewardship projects. These projects are mostly intended to conserve greenspace, either with or without public access. Project effects on water quality is one criteria with elevated importance.

### *Cultural Resources + Economic Development*

Various programs could assist with the development of historical resources in Winston, thus assisting in economic development efforts.

- **Tourism Product Development:** Explore Georgia, the tourism wing of Georgia’s Department of Economic Development, offers grants to conduct tourism product development resource surveys for small communities across the state. These are highly technical and content-rich studies that examine potential for business development utilizing natural assets of specific communities.
- **Georgia Economic Placemaking Collaborative:** Modeled after the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) program, this 2-year curriculum offers insight into asset-based economic development through lessons on place planning and visioning and small-scale funding opportunities.

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Table A. Community Work Program Items							
Comprehensive Plan Goal	Project/Initiative	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Department
<b>Recreation</b>	Engage in a countywide Parks and Trails System Masterplan.	X	X				Parks & Recreation, Planning & Zoning
<b>Recreation</b>	Explore opportunities for expanding Winston Park	X	X	X			Parks & Recreation, Planning & Zoning
<b>Recreation</b>	Begin conversations with Winston Elementary for shared used of their playground/park area on weekends and after school hours.	X					Parks & Recreation, Planning & Zoning, Board of Education/ Winston Elementary
<b>Economic Development</b>	Host a developers round-table for the Winston area bringing together private developers with specific interest in Workplace Campus style developments	X					Planning & Zoning, Elevate Douglas
<b>Economic Development</b>	Develop a developer “Welcome Packet” to educate and inform potential developers on the unique Workplace Campus opportunity in Winston and the natural resource incentive potential.	X					Planning & Zoning, Elevate Douglas
<b>Economic Development</b>	Create a developer “Welcome Packet” to educate and inform potential land owners/developers on the unique Rural Reserve opportunity in Winston for eco/agri-tourism.	X					Planning & Zoning, Elevate Douglas
<b>Economic Development</b>	Engage key Winston land and business owners, especially near the Crossroads Center and owners of historic properties, on forming an Historic and Cultural Society.	X					Planning & Zoning, Elevate Douglas



# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Table A. Community Work Program Items							
Comprehensive Plan Goal	Project/Initiative	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Department
Infrastructure	Work with site developers to identify specific roadway and other infrastructure needs		X	X	X	X	Planning & Zoning, Transportation, Elevate Douglas, Douglas County Water & Sewer
Infrastructure	Coordinate with site developers and surrounding communities (i.e. Cities of Villa Rica and Douglasville) to identify key trail connections.	X	X				Planning & Zoning, Transportation, Parks & Recreation
Infrastructure	Coordinate with GDOT on safety improvements at Post Road from I-20 to US 78 (CTP-20).	X	X	X			Planning & Zoning, Transportation
Infrastructure	Coordinate with GDOT on planned sidewalk infrastructure updates along US 78 and Post Road (Aspirational projects CTP-81/82) and identify ways of integrating streetscape elements that will be unique to Winston (i.e. landscaping, signage, and wayfinding).			X	X	X	Planning & Zoning, Transportation

