

Douglas County Comprehensive Plan Update

Steering Committee Meeting #1 – Thursday, September 8th, 2022

Today's Agenda



1. Lunch!
2. Welcome + Introductions
3. Project Overview
4. Draft Needs + Opportunities Discussion
5. Engagement Overview
6. Next Steps

Welcome + Introductions

Project Team



County Staff

James Worthington

Managing Director, Development Services

Allison Duncan, AICP

Planning and Zoning Manager, Planning and Zoning

Phil Shafer

Senior Zoning Administrator, Planning and Zoning

Jacqualle Johnson

Senior Planner, Planning and Zoning

Gary Dukes

Director, Parks and Recreation

Chad Griffin

Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation

Karla Poschedly

Traffic Operations Division Manager, Engineering and Transportation

Ron Roberts

Director, Connect Douglas

Project Team



Consultant Team

Allison Stewart-Harris, AICP

Project Manager, TSW

Anna Baggett, AICP

Deputy Project Manager, TSW

Audra Rojek, AICP

Principal-in-Charge, VHB

Kristine Hansen-Dederick, AICP

Engagement Lead, Sycamore Consulting

Nick Johnson

Land Use Analysis Lead, Georgia Conservancy

Carlos Perez, AICP

Parks, Green Space, and Trails Lead, Perez Planning + Design

Dr. Deborah Johnson-Blake

Engagement Consultant, The Writing Pad, LLC

Project Overview

Project Overview



1

Comprehensive Plan Update

- Update 2018 Comprehensive Plan

2

Small Area Plans

- Winston
- Lithia Springs

Project Overview



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- High-level, long-range look at development in a community
- Typically, a 20+ year outlook, but updated every 5 years
- Required by the State of Georgia to remain eligible for certain funding sources
- Minimum requirements differ by jurisdiction, but Douglas County needs the following in its plan:
 - Community goals
 - Needs and opportunities
 - Community work program
 - Land Use Element
 - Transportation Element
 - Broadband Element



Image from Georgia DCA

Project Overview

What are our goals?

- Update the 2018 Comprehensive Plan
 - Refine the future land use vision, including character areas
 - Add a Housing element
 - Translate the Comprehensive Transportation Plan into a new Transportation Element
 - Provide additional direction on parks, green spaces, and trails
- Build off existing planning efforts, particularly the County's Strategic Plan
- Exceed State requirements!
- Use the Winston and Lithia Springs Small Area Plans to fine-tune Comprehensive Plan ideas and policy directions

Douglas County,
Georgia
Comprehensive Plan
Update

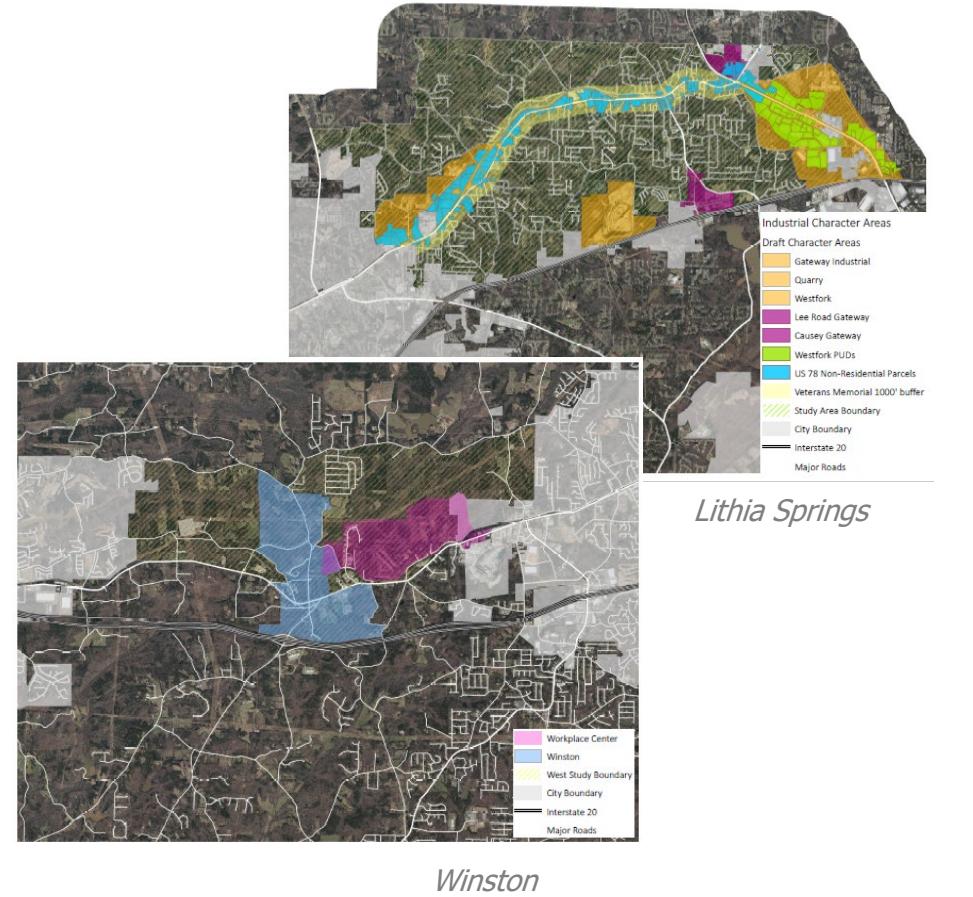
Adopted November 6, 2018



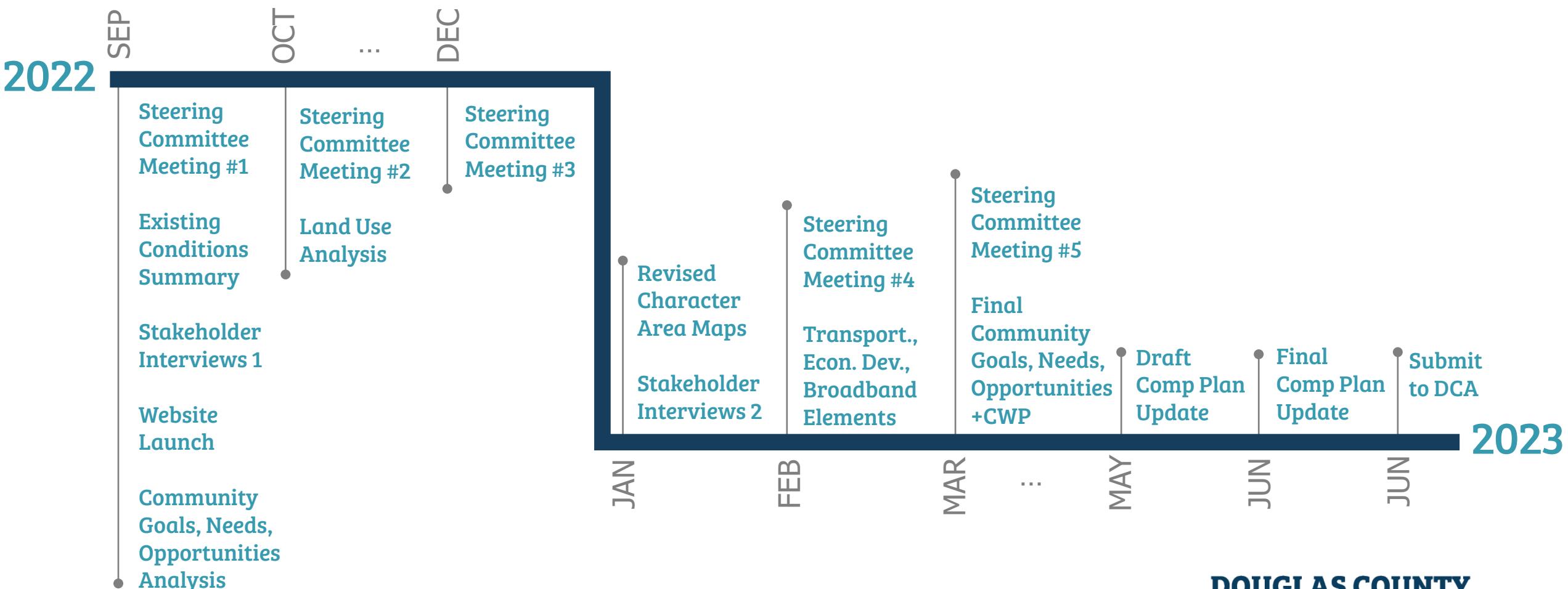
Project Overview

A few points of clarification...

- The Comprehensive Plan will only cover unincorporated Douglas County (but considers cross-jurisdictional challenges and coordination needs)
- Does not change zoning of individual parcels
- The small area plans are not officially part of the Comprehensive Plan, but are connected efforts that will share engagement and technical resources



Project Schedule



Steering Committee Role

We would like you to...

- Provide guidance regarding local preferences
- Serve as a sounding board for recommendations
- Review and give comment on draft plan materials
- Help get the word out to the community



Draft Needs + Opportunities Discussion

Needs + Opportunities Discussion



Needs + opportunities overview:

- Comprehensive Plan must include a list of needs and opportunities
- Want to build on existing/previous plans as much as possible
- Used the six goals/priorities of the County's Strategic Plan as the framework

Plans we drew draft needs + opportunities from:

- Current Comprehensive Plan (2018)
- Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2021)
- Lee Road Small Area and Corridor Plan (2019)
- Community & Economic Development Strategic Plan (2017)
- Sweetwater Master Plan (2017)
- Housing Market Study (2017)
- Highway 92 Corridor LCI (2009)

County's Strategic Plan: 6 Goals



1 Public Safety

Douglas County is place where citizens feel safe at home, work and in the community.

Objectives:

- *Provide timely and quality services*
- *Improve community resilience through better prevention, preparedness and recovery*
- *Strengthen resiliency of critical infrastructure*

Draft Needs + Opportunities



Very few stated needs and opportunities in existing plans around public safety. Suggests a need to:

- Evaluate current public safety services
- Identify areas of infrastructure vulnerability

County's Strategic Plan: 6 Goals

2

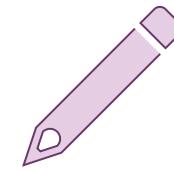
Infrastructure

Douglas County is place where citizens can move efficiently, affordably and safely via our well-designed and maintained network of roads, sidewalks, trails, and transit options.

Objectives:

- *Improve and modernize transportation infrastructure*
- *Promote a clean, beautiful, and sustainable community*

Draft Needs + Opportunities



- Roadway maintenance
- Address roadway safety issues
- Lack of roadway connectivity/network outside of cities
- Improve key corridors, particularly with new streetscapes, fewer curb cuts, and more mode choices
- Enable freight mobility but need to reduce conflicts
- Build out multi-use path network
- Preservation of rural/small town character
- Maintain easy access to I-20

County's Strategic Plan: 6 Goals

3

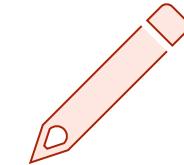
Economic Development

Douglas County is place where citizens, businesses and places are thriving economically.

Objectives:

- *Improve access to employment supports*
- *Attract and support business*
- *Leverage partnerships, collaboration, and competition*

Draft Needs + Opportunities



- Take advantage of great location in region/access to HJAIA
- Attract key industry clusters: advanced manufacturing, professional technology services, media + entertainment
- Tell the Douglas County story
- Need more and better quality retail and restaurants
- Need more workforce development programs and support
- Attract new workers to Douglas County
- Need to identify specific sites suitable for industrial and commercial development
- Support local small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Plan carefully to reduce impacts of industrial and commercial areas on residential areas
- Have undeveloped/underdeveloped land, but many have environmental constraints

County's Strategic Plan: 6 Goals

4

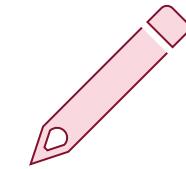
Public Health

Douglas County is place where citizens can attain their highest level of health and well-being within a healthy sustainable environment.

Objectives:

- *Support healthy communities*
- *Expand access to health services and information*

Draft Needs + Opportunities



Not many explicit needs and opportunities in existing plans, but could address active lifestyles and environmental/water quality under this goal, such as:

- Improve and expand opportunities for walking and bicycling
- Create safe connections to schools
- Sustain quality and quantity of water supply

County's Strategic Plan: 6 Goals

5

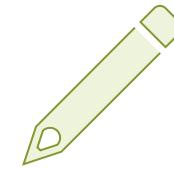
Recreation

Douglas County is place where citizens can participate in quality arts, sports, recreation, and cultural enriching activities.

Objectives:

- *Improve availability and access to cultural and recreational services*
- *Heighten awareness, appreciation and promotion of diverse cultures*

Draft Needs + Opportunities



- More access to parks and open spaces
- Better connections to existing parks and resources, like Sweetwater State Park and the Chattahoochee River
- Need more cultural programming/things to do

County's Strategic Plan: 6 Goals



6 Transform Douglas

Douglas County is place where citizens trust that their government responsibly manages resources, provides exceptional services, and equitably represents them.

Objectives:

- *Ensure Inclusive Community Engagement, Representation and Governance*
- *Attract, Develop and Retain a Great Workforce*
- *Develop a Strong Workplace Culture*
- *Continuously Improve Process Effectiveness*
- *Be Responsible Stewards of County Resources*
- *Leverage Technology to Modernize and Ensure Full Utilization of County Facilities*

Draft Needs + Opportunities



- Equitable services across the County
- Alignment of land development decisions with infrastructure investments
- Enhanced coordination between County and School District around growth and planning
- Maintaining engagement with the community

County's Strategic Plan: 6 Goals



What is NOT covered?

- Housing
- Land use
- K-12 schools/education

Draft Needs + Opportunities



- Need more housing, and more diverse housing options*
- Need more multi-family development*
- Need policies that reduce institutional ownership of single-family homes*
- Balancing land use, particularly between industrial and residential demands
- Need to support and improve K-12 education

* From 2017 Housing Study and will need refinements

Engagement Approach

Engagement Approach

How will we engage the community?

- Build on previous engagement
- Douglas Forward 2025
 - 3 Guiding Principles, 6 Priorities (Goals)
 - Visioning & Priorities
 - Goals and Objectives



Engagement Program



How will we engage the community?

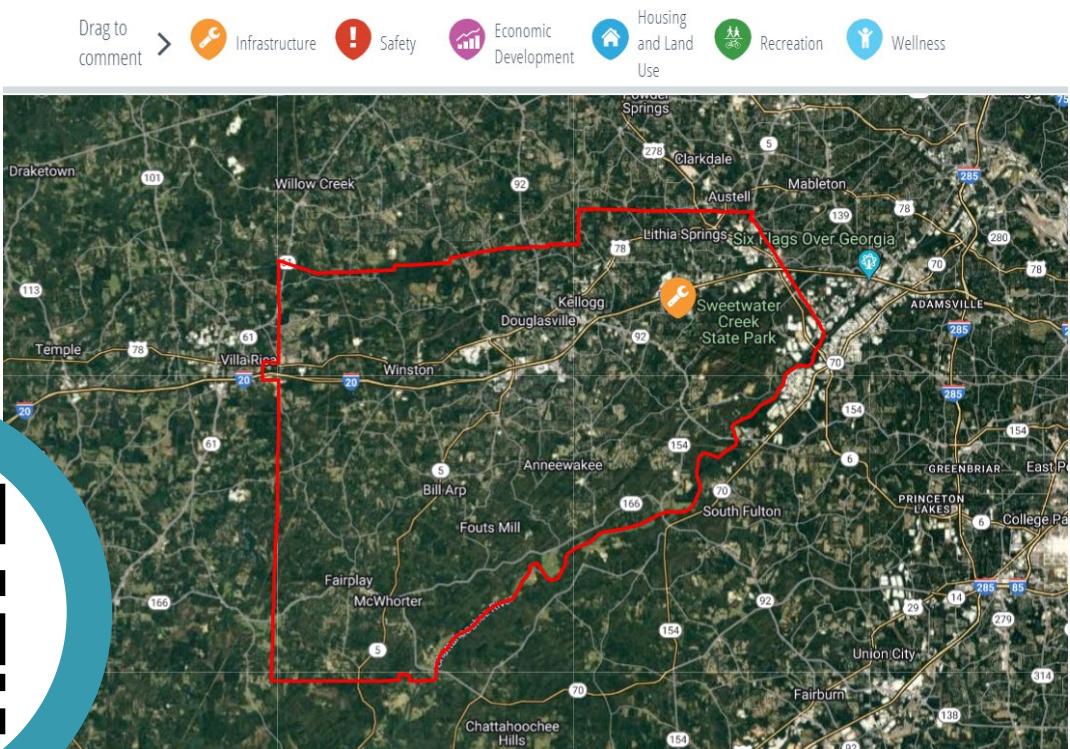
- Steering Committee
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Web-based tools
- Social Media
- Communications – how do we best reach the community?
- Four General Engagement Opportunities:
 - Two September Saturdays
 - One online survey
 - Thoughts on the fourth?

Online Tools



Four methods:

- Project Website - <https://bit.ly/DouglasCompPlan>
- Interactive Map
- Survey
- Open House



Small Area Studies Outreach



How will the small area studies fit in?

- Input from Comp Plan outreach
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Workshops

Looking Ahead

Next Steps



Project Team:

- Prepare for September Saturdays engagement
- Begin technical land use analysis
- Prepare for Steering Committee #2
- “Final” Needs + Opportunities
- Report on engagement findings to-date
- Preliminary Land Use Analysis Findings

Steering Committee

- Become familiar with the Strategic Plan
- Mark your calendar for the next Steering Committee meeting on October 13
- Consider attending a September Saturday
 - September 17 and September 24
 - 11am-5pm



Allison Duncan, AICP
Planning and Zoning Manager
aduncan@douglascountyga.gov



Allison Stewart-Harris, AICP
Project Manager, TSW
astewart-harris@tsw-design.com



Anna Baggett, AICP
Deputy Project Manager, TSW
abaggett@tsw-design.com

Thank you + stay in touch!
