

DOUGLAS COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Steering Committee #1

September 8, 2022 @ 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Douglas County Courthouse/Zoom

Attendees:

Commissioner Kelly Robinson, Board of Commissioners/ Elected Official Representative
Ricky Dobbs Jr., District 1 Appointee
Ron Anglin, District 3 Appointee
Yvonne Cuffie, District 3 Appointee
Cyrus Colley, District 4 Appointee
Sabine Kelley, District 4 Appointee
Sharon Bachtel, Chairman Appointee
Mickey Thompson, Citizen - Hwy 92 LCI
Vanessa Livingston, Citizen - Placemaking Subcommittee
Pam Daniell, Citizen - Scenic Byway Steering Committee
Ed Daniell, Citizen - Scenic Byway Steering Committee
Eddie Curtis, Citizen - Bike/ Ped Task Force
Chris Pumphrey, Elevate Douglas/ Economic Development Representative
Brian Keel, Douglasville/ Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority
Emily Lightner, Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/ Douglas County
Kevin Livingston, UGA Cooperative Extension
Chelsea Tubbs, City of Douglasville Planning Department
Ron Johnson, City of Villa Rica Planning Department
Orrick Currey, HOA Representative/ P&Z Board Member
Babs Russell, West Georgia Technical College

Project Management Team:

Allison Duncan, Planning and Zoning
Phil Shafer, Planning and Zoning
Jacqualle Johnson, Planning and Zoning
Chad Griffin, Parks and Recreation
Karla Poshedly, Engineering and Transportation
Ron Roberts, Connect Douglas
Anna Baggett, TSW
Allison Stewart-Harris, TSW
Audra Rojek, VHB
Nick Stephens, Perez Planning
Nick Johnson, Georgia Conservancy
Luben Raytchev, Georgia Conservancy
Kristine Hansen-Dederick, Sycamore Consulting, Inc.

Summary of Meeting:

Attendees were greeted upon arriving in-person or entering the Zoom platform. As an initial exercise, in-person attendees were asked to review display boards around the room depicting the six priority areas from the recently completed Strategic Plan and provide their input via post-it notes regarding needs and opportunities of the County.

Allison Duncan, Douglas County Planning and Zoning Manager, officially started the meeting at 11:30 a.m., welcoming the attendees and thanking them for their participation. Attendees were then asked to introduce themselves. Allison Stewart-Harris, TSW, and Anna Baggett, TSW, then began the presentation (attached) detailing the scope and schedule of the Comprehensive Plan update and the Winston and Lithia Springs small area plans, as well as the role of the Steering Committee.

After a short break for lunch, the group began discussion of the needs and opportunities exercise and the input received from the committee prior to the start of the meeting. Attendees participating via Zoom provided their input as well during this time. The following details the comments received, organized by the six strategic goals. An additional category of “Other” was added for those comments that fell outside of the six categories.

Draft Needs + Opportunities Exercise - Steering Committee Additions**1. Strategic Plan Goal 1: Public Safety**

- More police precincts dispersed throughout the county by area (Lithia Springs, south Douglas, Annawakee, Post Rd, Fairplay etc.)
- Need more code enforcement (includes animal control)
- Safe places to walk
- More deputies
- More fire department personnel – EMTs, paramedics
- More hydrants – critical for ISO ratings

2. Strategic Plan Goal 2: Infrastructure

- Understand impacts of transportation projects coming online
- Sidewalk connectivity to schools
- Strategic expansion of water and sewer
- Biggest need is maintenance of roads, public buildings, and parks
- Biggest need is transportation and less traffic
- Improve and expand existing roadways where appropriate (Skyview Drive, W. Bankhead, Annawakee Rd)
- Sufficient detail to plan future infrastructure needs
- Need bike lanes
- Traffic improvements are needed for development
- Better connectivity between subdivisions and commercial areas
- Need walkability
- Opportunity: walkability
- “Infrastructure Attention” – water, sewer lines; technology (broadband?)
- More bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure

- Parking garage at courthouse
- Improve mass transit options and availability
- Repave roads in Winston area, especially HWY 5 (past Fox Hall) and Liberty Rd (166 to I-20) also Lithia Springs area
- More scenic byways on environmentally sensitive routes
- Understanding the constraints is important; the plan can't be just a big wish list

3. Strategic Plan Goal 3: Economic Development

- Job opportunities
- Training/education to meet industry needs
- Big opportunity for higher end businesses and restaurants
- Opportunity commercial storefronts (façade improvement program?)
- Better quality clothing stores (e.g. Saks Fifth Ave, Gucci)
- Better quality restaurants (e.g. Houstons, PF Changs, Little Alley)
- Need for businesses to reflect community desires -> upscale
- Transit solutions for getting employees to work and constricted parking related to existing and new businesses
- Public art and placemaking: love where you live
- Rural character – clear cutting is an issue in Winston; tree preservation ordinance?

4. Strategic Plan Goal 4: Public Health

- Trails
- Matching seniors + character areas with suitable transportation issues
- Education on public health
- Crossover from others
- Access to fresh food

5. Strategic Plan Goal 5: Recreation

- Greenspace and areas that are scenic get healthy
- Kid-friendly areas
- Recreational facilities
- Theater performance space
- More people to enjoy parks – engagement?
- More green space for parks
- Improve capital investment and ball fields in existing parks
- Diversify recreational opportunities in existing parks
- Walkability to green space

6. Strategic Plan Goal 6: Transform Douglas

- Review and/or changes to overlay district uses allowed
- Improve exterior material of structures
- Coordination with city permitting to plan
- Resolution with city plan when there are differences of opinion
- Opportunity for more support and collaboration with other organizations and partners
- Consider transit study
- Partner with local foundations like 'fit for the future' or the "Ricky Dobbs Foundation" to expand on community outreach and involvement from the county

- Need to try to get more people within the community of Douglas County involved and in the know with planning efforts
- Recognize history between cities and county and the need to collaborate

7. Others?

- Affordable senior housing and accommodations
- Clean up – litter is quite evident
- Support services – individual family adult/child
- Need funding to improve communities not HOAs
- Need more regulations on ownership of rental properties
- Need more housing; better, residential
- Lithia springs revitalization
- Winston small area plan: keep industrial out and around I-20/where it is. Winston is our farmland.
- Develop a plan for the Lithia Springs area complete with a vision and appropriate zoning for their downtown area, higher density, and more diverse housing options; placemaking
- Segmentation
- Public after school activity or programs for the county
- Rationalize the current land use conditions (veterans memorial) on W Bankhead between Villa Rica + Douglasville
- Improve design standards for homes, commercial buildings (e.g. no vinyl, XX% masonry, etc.)
- Spaces
- Cooperation with the City is essential. There must be agreed goals to direct housing across jurisdictions.
- Understanding the constraints is important;
- Consensus from the group around housing being incorporated in Economic Development goal.

The presentation then continued with Kristine Hansen-Dederick, Sycamore Consulting, providing an overview of the stakeholder and public outreach program. There was discussion among the committee regarding outreach events in addition to the two September Saturday events and an online survey. It was suggested and agreed that attendance at the Taste of Douglas County event in May 2023 might work well with the timing of draft recommendations. After a short wrap-up summarizing the next steps, the attendees were thanked again for their time and participation and the meeting was adjourned.