

DOUGLAS COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN >>>

Steering Committee #2

October 13, 2022 @ 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Douglas County Courthouse/Zoom

Attendees:

Ricky Dobbs Jr., District 1 Appointee
Rob Thomas, District 2 Appointee and P&Z Board Member
Sabine Kelley, District 4 Appointee
Mickey Thompson, Citizen - Hwy 92 LCI
Vanessa Levingston, Citizen - Placemaking Subcommittee
Pam Daniell, Citizen - Scenic Byway Steering Committee
Ed Daniell, Citizen - Scenic Byway Steering Committee
Eddie Curtis, Citizen - Bike/ Ped Task Force
Gil Shearouse, Douglasville/ Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority
Emily Lightner, Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/ Douglas County
Chelsea Tubbs, City of Douglasville Planning Department
Orrick Currey, HOA Representative/ P&Z Board Member
Babs Russell, West Georgia Technical College
Kwame Carr, Douglas County School System

Project Management Team:

Allison Duncan, Planning and Zoning
Jacqualle Johnson, Planning and Zoning
Karla Poschedly, Engineering and Transportation
Ron Roberts, Connect Douglas
Anna Baggett, TSW
Allison Stewart-Harris, TSW
Audra Rojek, VHB
Nick Stephens, Perez Planning + Design
Nick Johnson, Georgia Conservancy
Michaela Master, Georgia Conservancy
Dr. Deborah Johnson-Blake, Writing Pad
Kristine Hansen-Dederick, Sycamore Consulting, Inc.

Summary of Meeting:

Attendees were greeted upon arriving in-person or entering the Zoom platform and in-person attendees were offered lunch. 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. Anna Baggett, TSW, then began the presentation (attached) providing an update of tasks completed to date, with Kristine Hansen-Dederick reporting on completed outreach activities and themes of input received. Nick Johnson, Georgia Conservancy, then presented details on the land use analysis; Allison Duncan presented the draft "Character Areas"; and Allison Stewart-Harris led an exercise collecting input from the group on desired growth around the County, specific to three areas that the Land Use Analysis identified as facing growth pressure: Greater Douglasville and the HWY 5 and HWY 92 Corridors. The Resort Conservation area was also discussed.

The following is a summary of the comments received from the committee:

- Tension exists on Thornton Road between trucks and residential land uses; trucks present perceived and real safety issues.
- Important for people to know that all of Douglas County is not like Thornton Road.
- There is a large GDOT project to improve radii, improve the signal system, and other aspects that will enhance the safety of trucks traveling through the Thornton Road area.
- There has been some pushback from commercial owners on the 2022 property tax, something to consider as we talk about increased economic development and higher assessment values.
- Concerning housing, renting as an investment strategy can lead to absentee landlords, possible policy to protect the County?

Greater Douglasville

- I don't want Lee Road to become another Thornton Road, and have trucks take over.
- There is an opportunity to make Chapel Hill and the area around it safer, especially with sidewalks and continuity of the sidewalks. There is a Kroger, a Publix, shopping centers and a junior high. That is an area a lot of people are moving to, and we don't have the infrastructure that allows people to be able to move around and then we don't have transit in that area.
- There is opportunity for infill residential development in this character area
- I would recommend leaving south of I-20 single-family residential, and not target it for redevelopment; any new development will be inconsistent with what's existing and that could cause problems. Maybe look to the north of I-20 in the rural areas as an option for development – it can absorb higher density housing
- There needs to be sensitivity to the area north of I-20, there are concerns from existing residents about lack of amenities and investment in the area. Need rooftops for more amenities, though.

Resort Conservation

- The "Resort Conservation" area should stay natural as it is now, rural and accommodating to wildlife.
- Sewer "backbone" is in place in this area, development could come in and build a connection.

- I like development like the Dog River library. I would like amenities like walking trails. We need more of those.
- It would be nice if amenities like parks, trails, and aquatic centers are not built as car-accessible only. Having a way for kids to walk to the pool would be great.
- South of 166 should maybe be zoned 3-5 acres to keep it rural, like north of 166.
- We don't need any more grocery stores, big industry or shopping centers along 166. There are things like that in three different directions. Keep the natural beauty of the area.

Following the discussion, there was a short wrap-up summarizing the next steps. Allison Duncan invited the committee to attend a planning and zoning training on October 27th from noon until 1 p.m., virtual over Zoom. Next steps for the project include a community survey to take a deeper dive into the character areas; a third steering committee meeting on December 1st, and small area plans workshops in early December. The attendees were thanked again for their time and participation and the meeting was adjourned.