

Douglas County Comprehensive Plan Update + Small Area Plans Roadshow

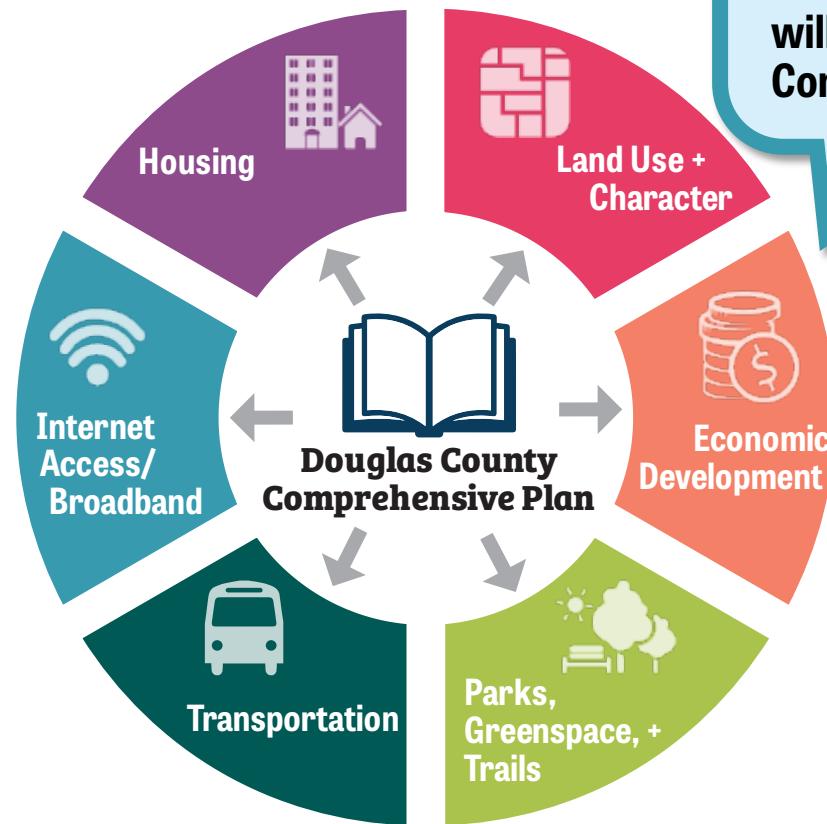
2023

Project Introduction

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan Is a...

- High-level, long-range (20+ years) framework to shape future growth, but required to be updated every 5 years
- Guide that local governments use to inform future policy and decision making, like what types of buildings/developments can be built and where
- Opportunity for local governments to engage the community to define a future vision and identify critical issues and opportunities



Every Comprehensive Plan is different and must meet certain requirements. These are key elements that will be in Douglas County's Comprehensive Plan*

*Important Note!

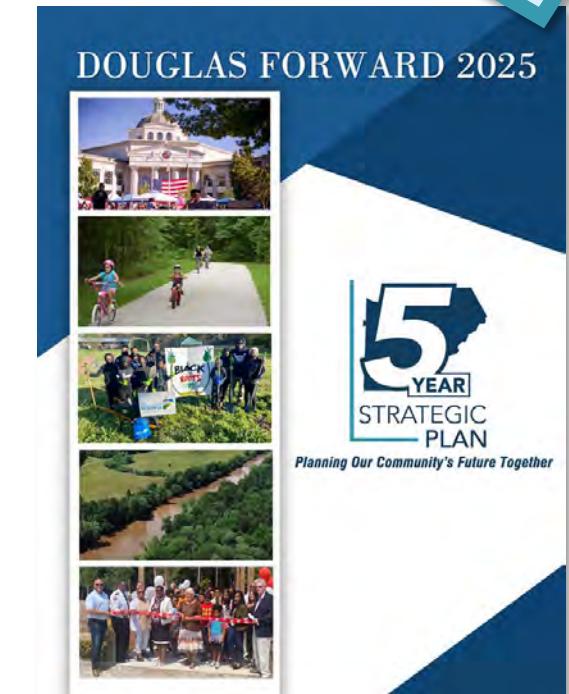
The Comprehensive Plan is focused on the unincorporated parts of the County, but we are coordinating with the Cities of Austell, Douglasville, and Villa Rica

How Does it Work?

Comprehensive Plan Framework



We pulled community goals, needs, and opportunities from other plans and asked the community for feedback. The Douglas County Strategic Plan, which charts a course for local government operations, served as the main framework for the Comprehensive Plan's goals.



Strategic Plan Goals

Douglas County's Strategic Plan goals will serve also as Comprehensive Plan Goals:

1 Public Safety

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

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.

3 Economic Development

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

4 Public Health

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

5 Recreation

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

6 Transform Douglas

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

Community Engagement is Key



Every step of this framework requires input from the community. We've engaged people in many ways!



A Combined Effort



3 Projects - 1 Effort

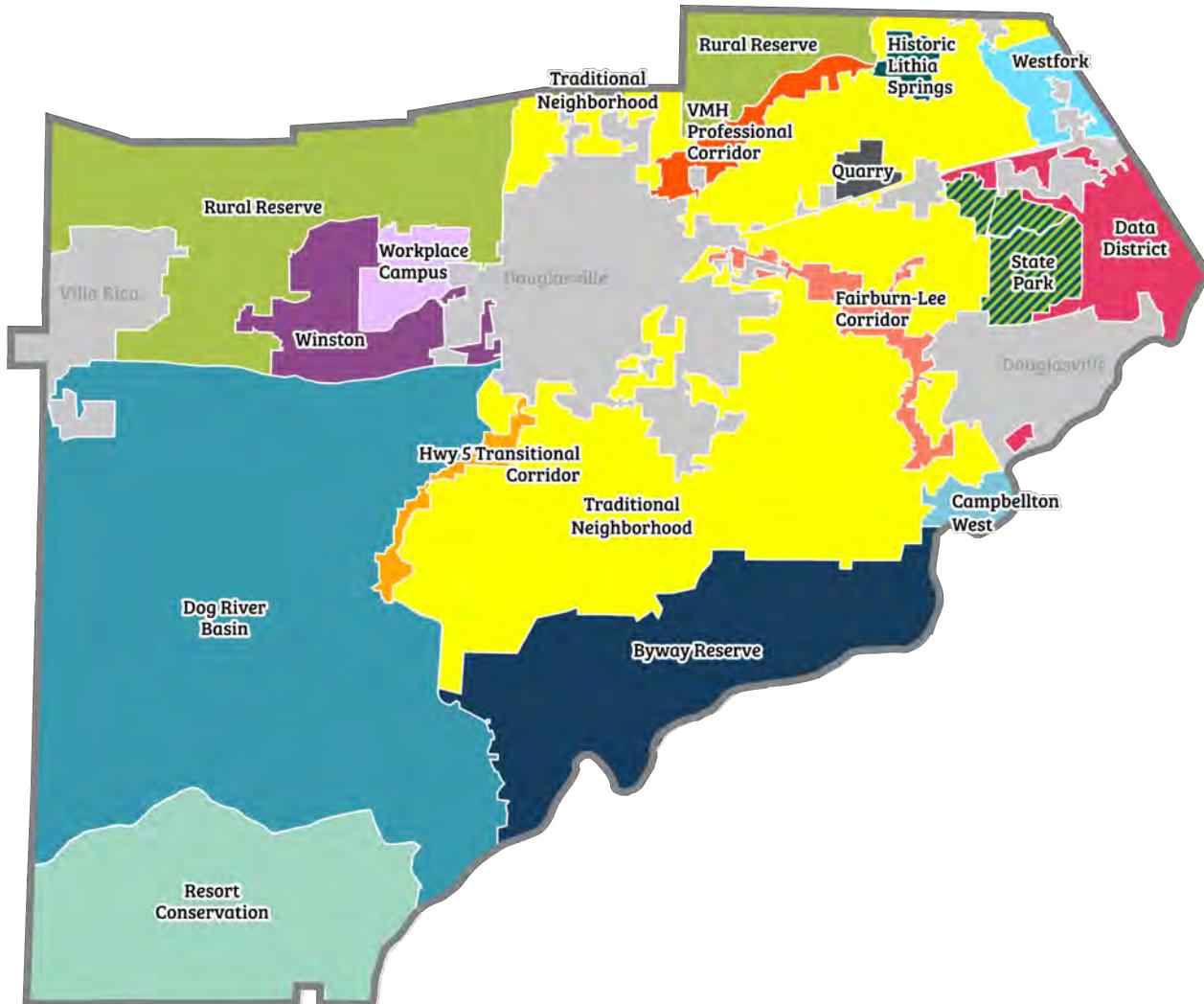
- In addition to the comprehensive plan, the team is producing two small area plans
- The small area plans are not officially part of the Comprehensive Plan, but are connected efforts that shared engagement and technical resources
- The Winston and Lithia Springs Small Area Plans are opportunities to fine-tune Comprehensive Plan ideas and policy directions

Where Are We in the Process?



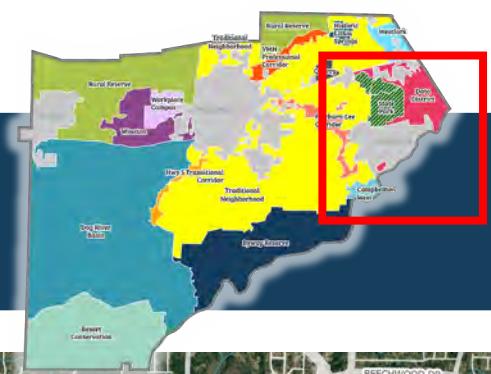
Comprehensive Plan – Big Ideas

Character Areas

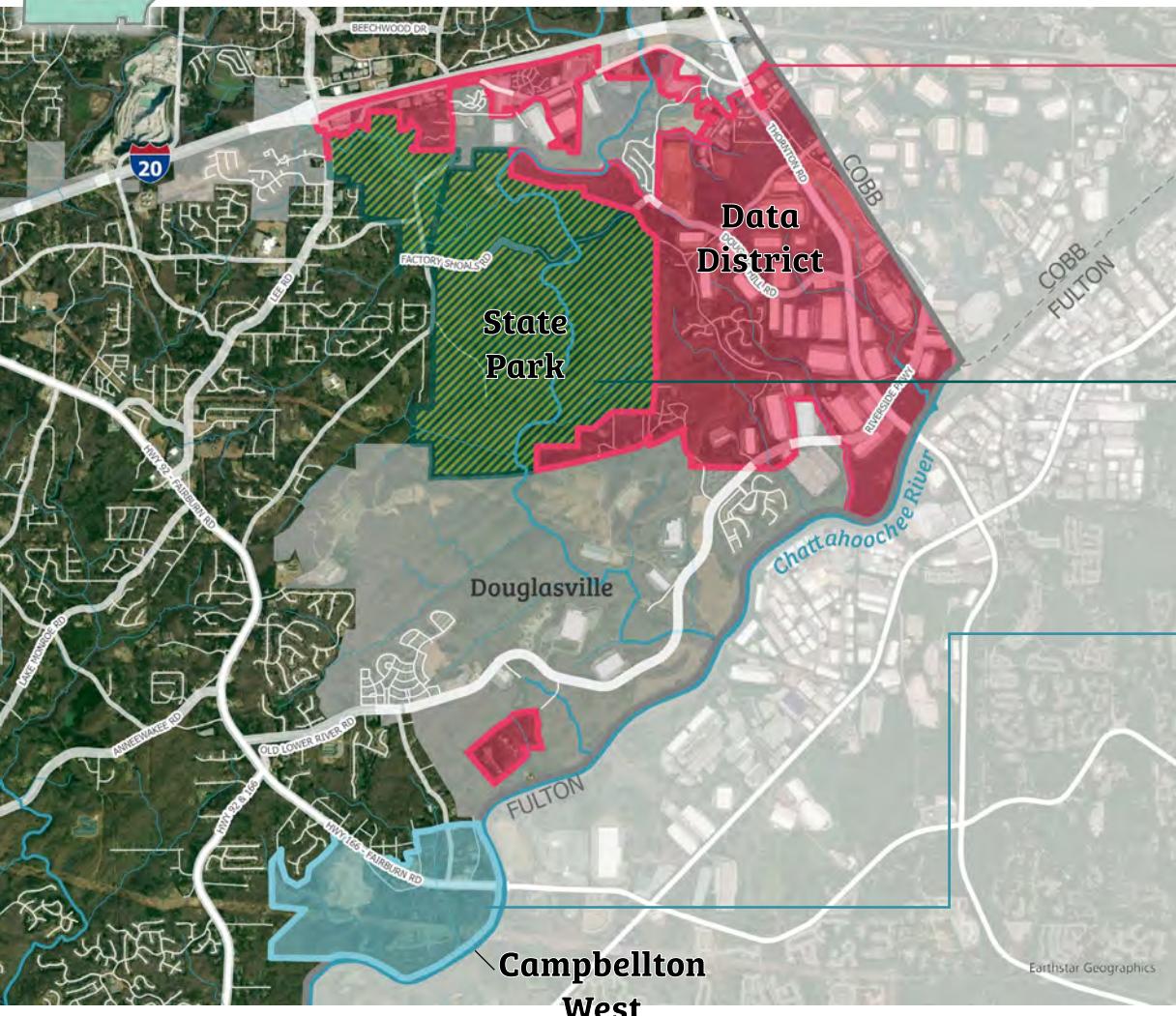


What's a Character Area?

- Geographical areas that have a similar look and feel
- Usually similar current land uses, but can be based on future land use instead
- A more holistic way to look at future land use and help guide development decisions



Character Areas



- **Data District**

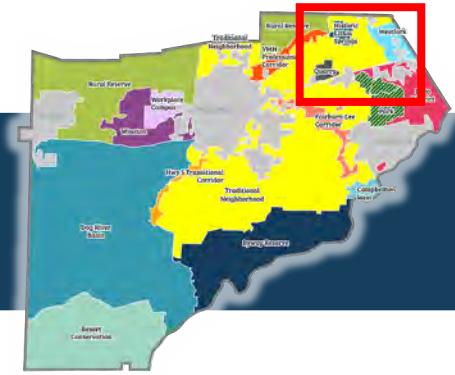
Home to new, large-scale light industrial technology and data centers, like Switch and Google. Residential uses should **not** be expanded in this area.

- **State Park**

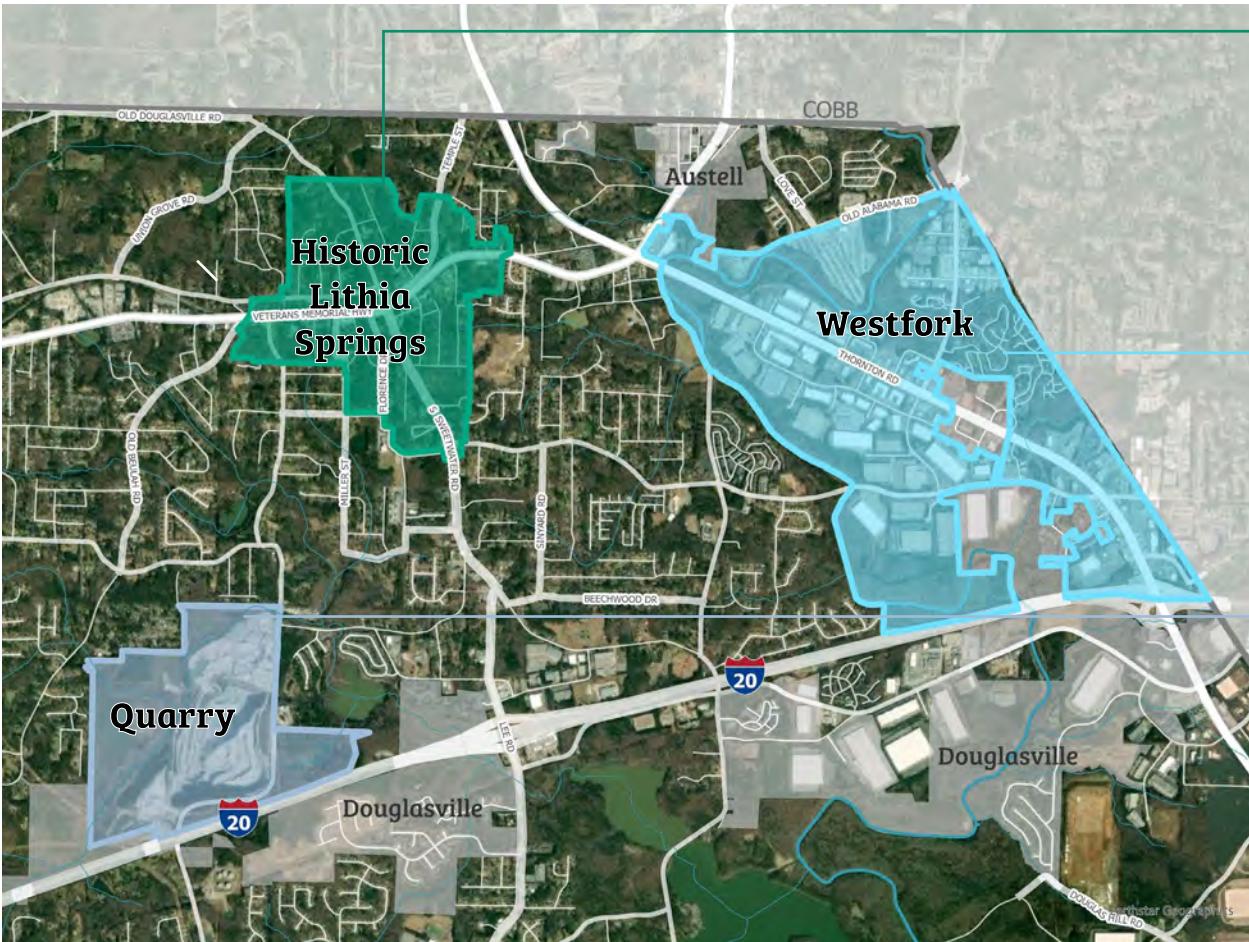
Contains conservation lands for Sweetwater Creek State Park. Future development is prohibited here.

- **Campbellton West**

An area under development for the next generation of industrial and commercial uses. Residential should not be expanded here. Trail development near Chattahoochee is encouraged.



Character Areas



- **Historic Lithia Springs**

People-scaled historic town center in need of revitalization. A mix of walkable uses is envisioned here, such as restaurants and retail, and a great place to encourage small businesses.

- **Westfork**

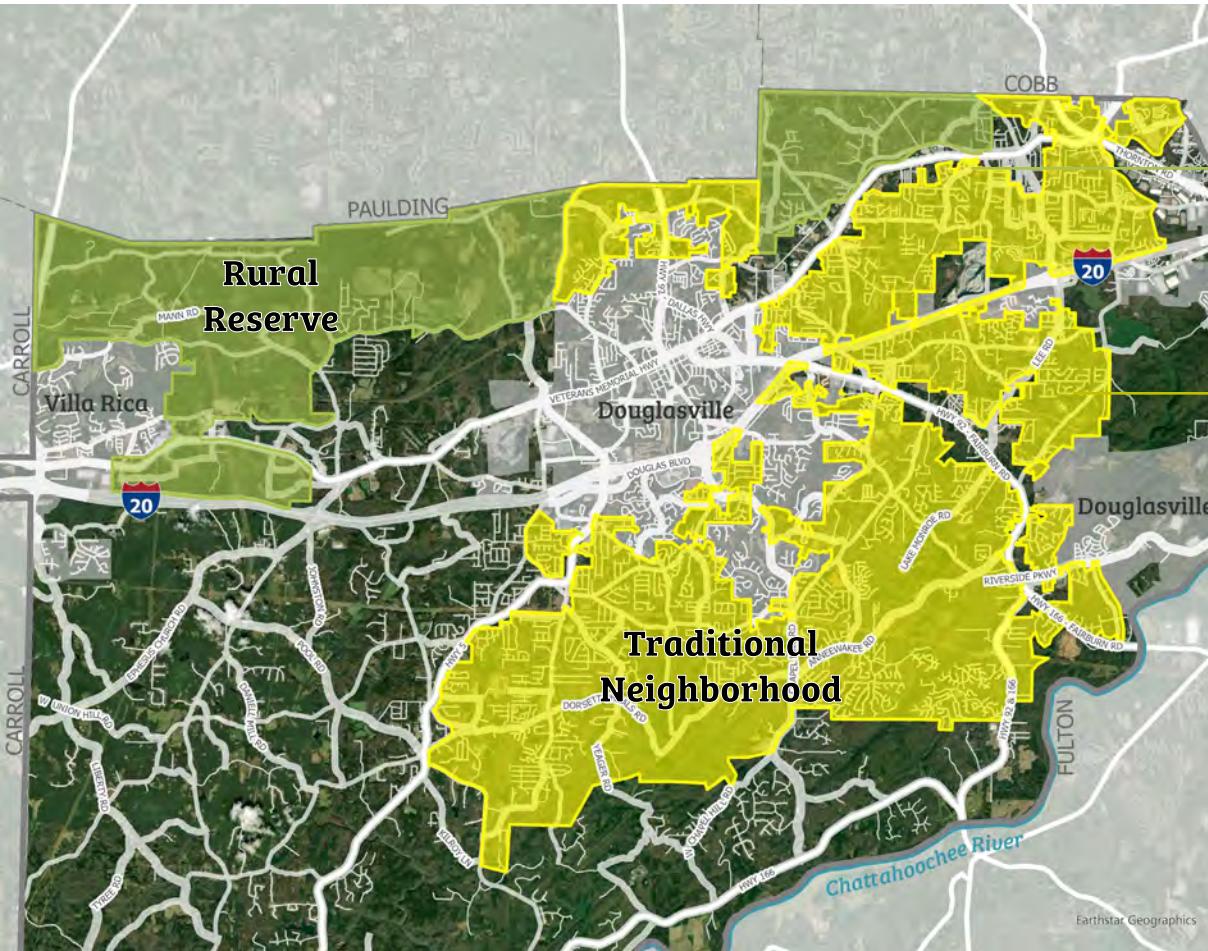
A master-planned commercial-industrial district. Its core can serve as a small-business incubator space for office and commercial and its outer edges support industrial and distribution.

- **Quarry**

An intensive industrial area that requires special attention to mitigate impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. Determining the future of the quarry once operations stop is also important.



Character Areas

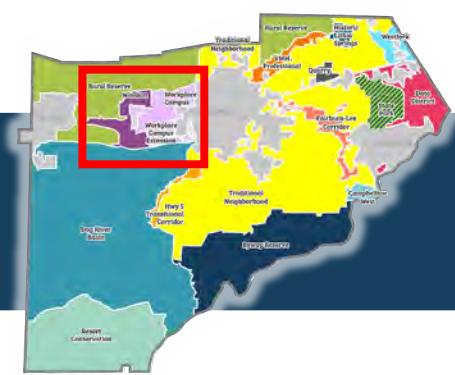


- **Rural Reserve**

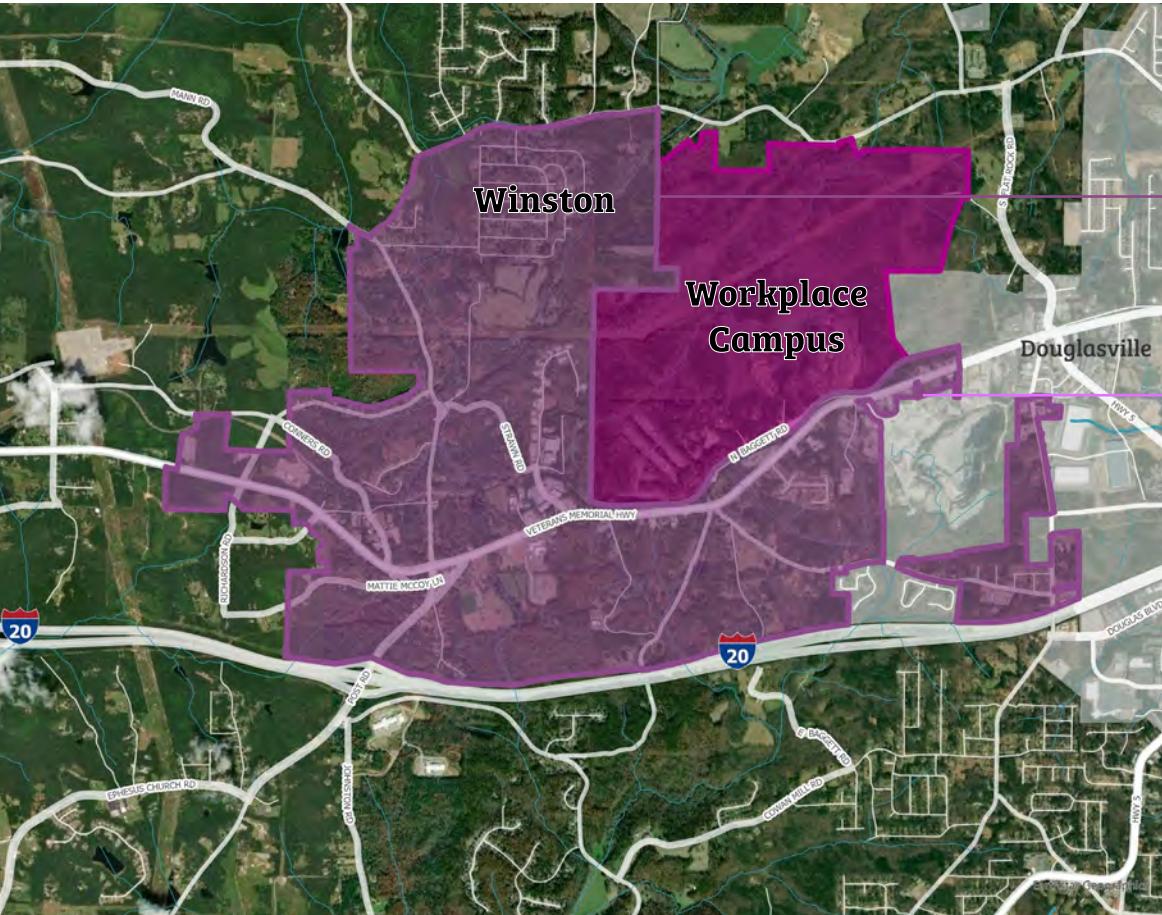
Areas where rural character should be preserved. Hobby agriculture and agriculture-related tourism is encouraged here.

- **Traditional Neighborhood**

Communities that support high-quality suburban lifestyles. This area predominantly has single family neighborhoods, but diverse housing types are welcome where appropriate. Neighborhood-serving shopping centers appear at key intersections.



Character Areas

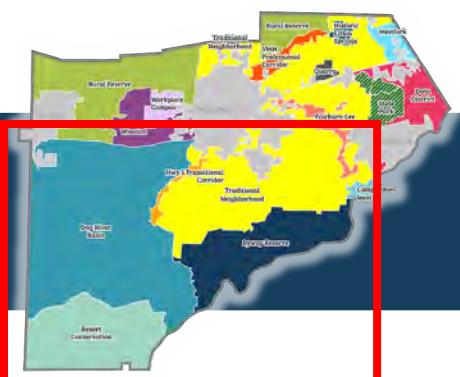


Winston

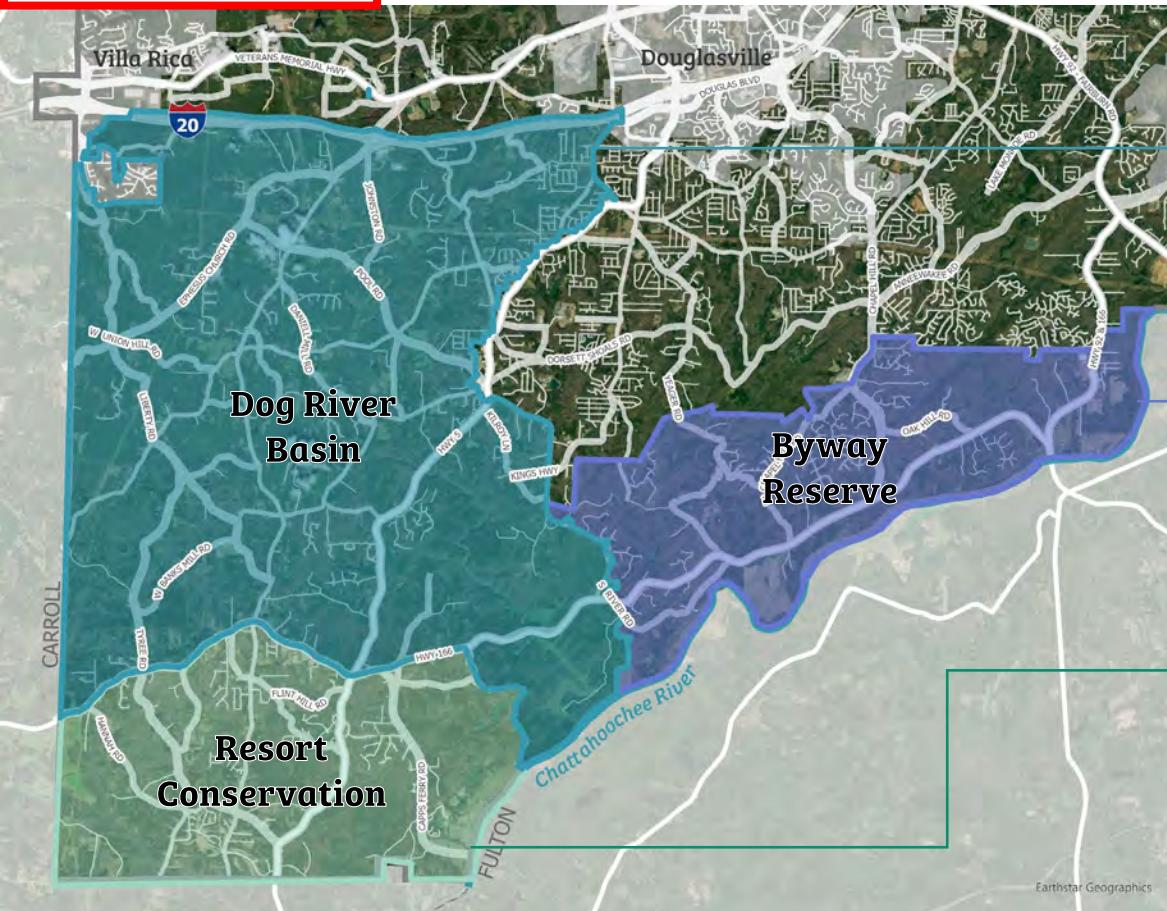
Rural area centered around a crossroads center with restaurants, retail, grocery store, and other services.

Workplace Campus

High tech jobs center in a campus-like development. Uses that attract truck traffic are discouraged.



Character Areas



Dog River Basin

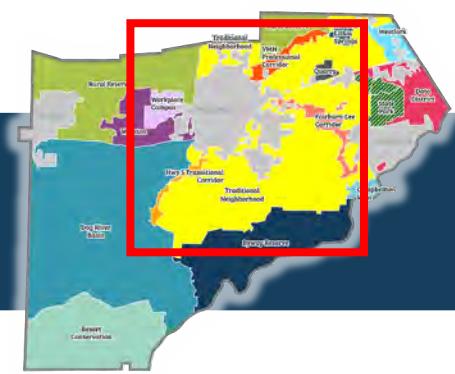
Limits development to protect the Dog River Watershed. Low density residential uses and clustered uses combined with conservation lands are encouraged.

Byway Reserve

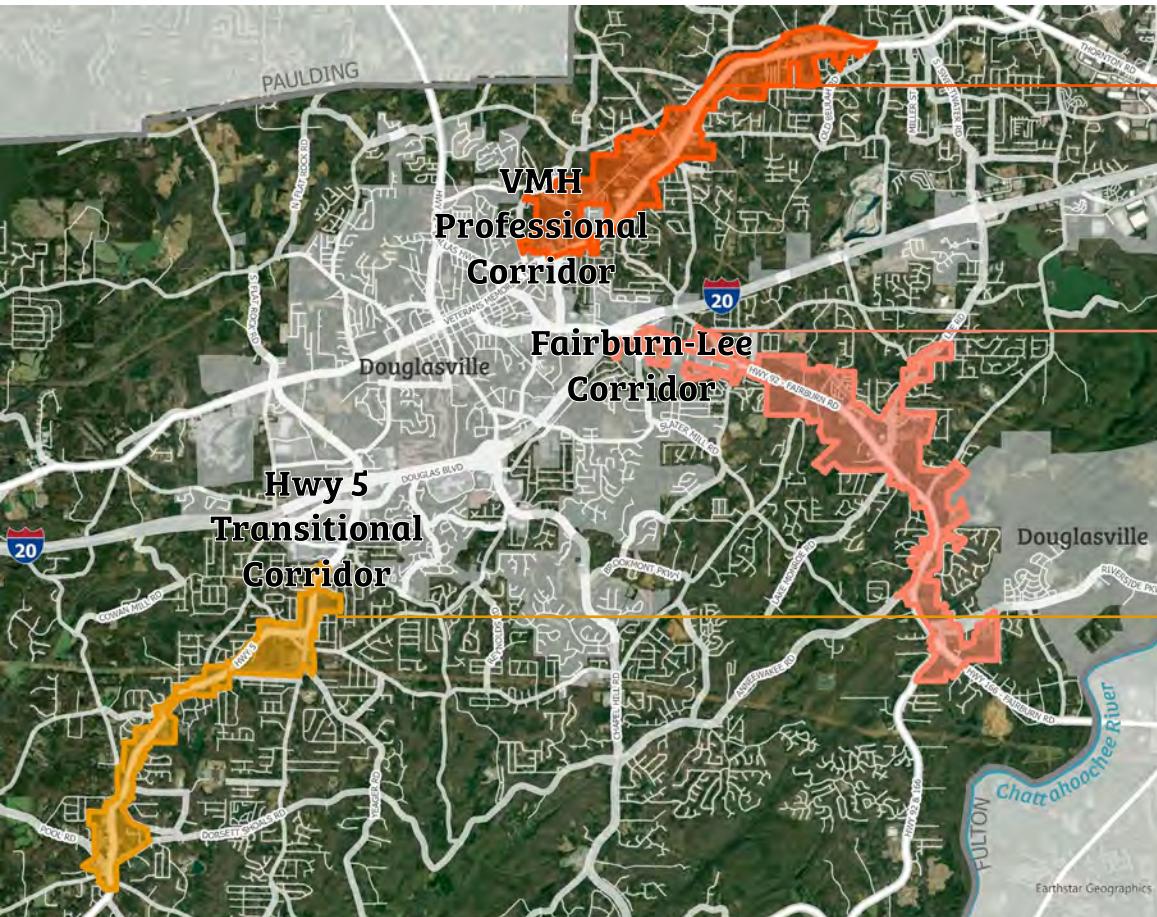
Estate residential, other low density residential uses, and conservation are appropriate here. Preserving rural views from South Douglas Scenic Byway is paramount.

Resort Conservation

Rural woodlands characterize this area. Rural residential and high-end resorts are primary uses here.



Character Areas



- **VMH Professional Corridor**

Focus of job-generating uses, like office, industrial, and commercial.

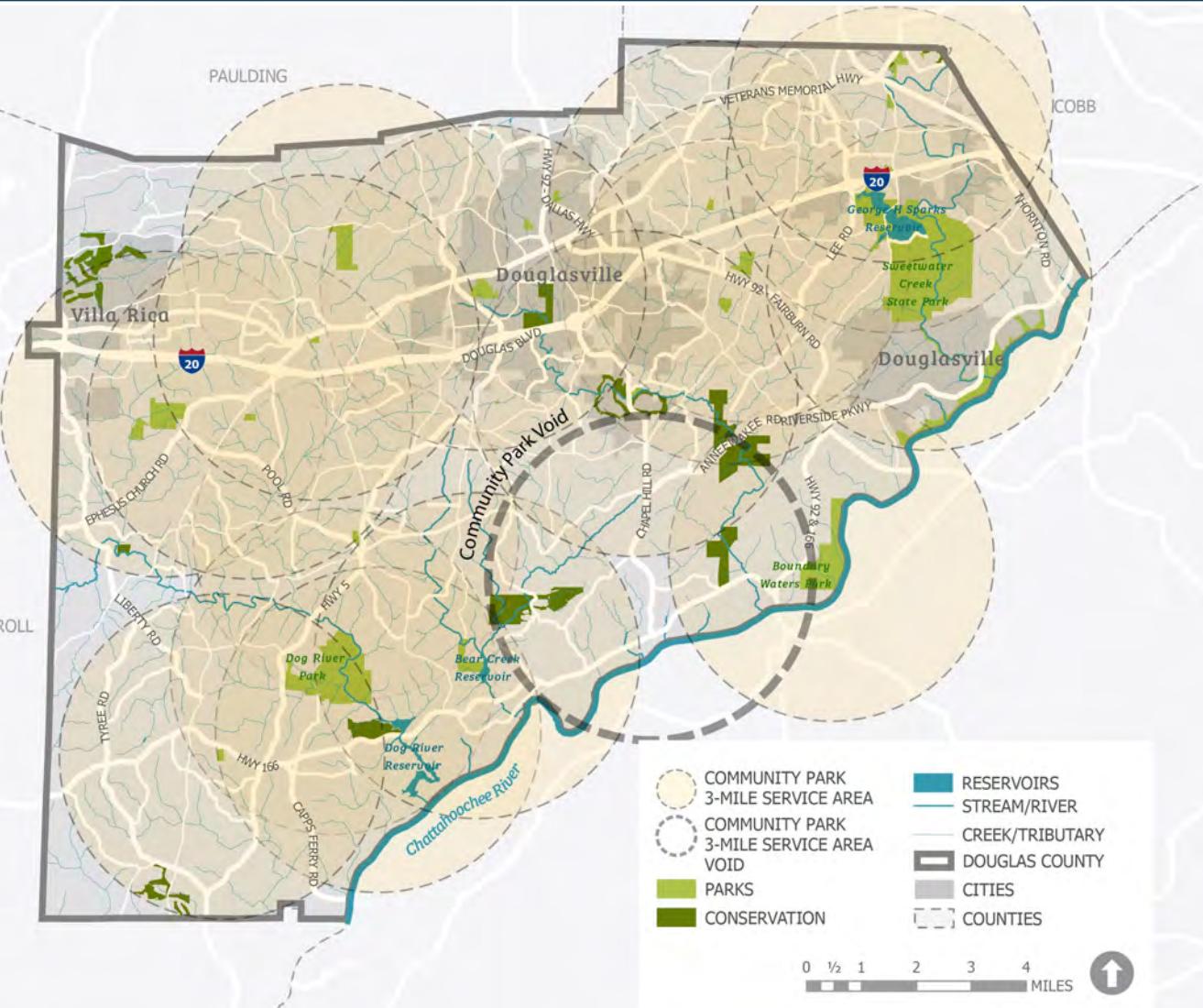
- **Fairburn-Lee Corridor**

Focus on commercial mixed use to serve surrounding neighborhoods and higher-density residential developments to further support businesses.

- **Highway 5 Transitional Corridor**

Transition between rural and residential uses to commercial crossroads. This corridor may absorb more density to accommodate conservation in the Dog River Basin.

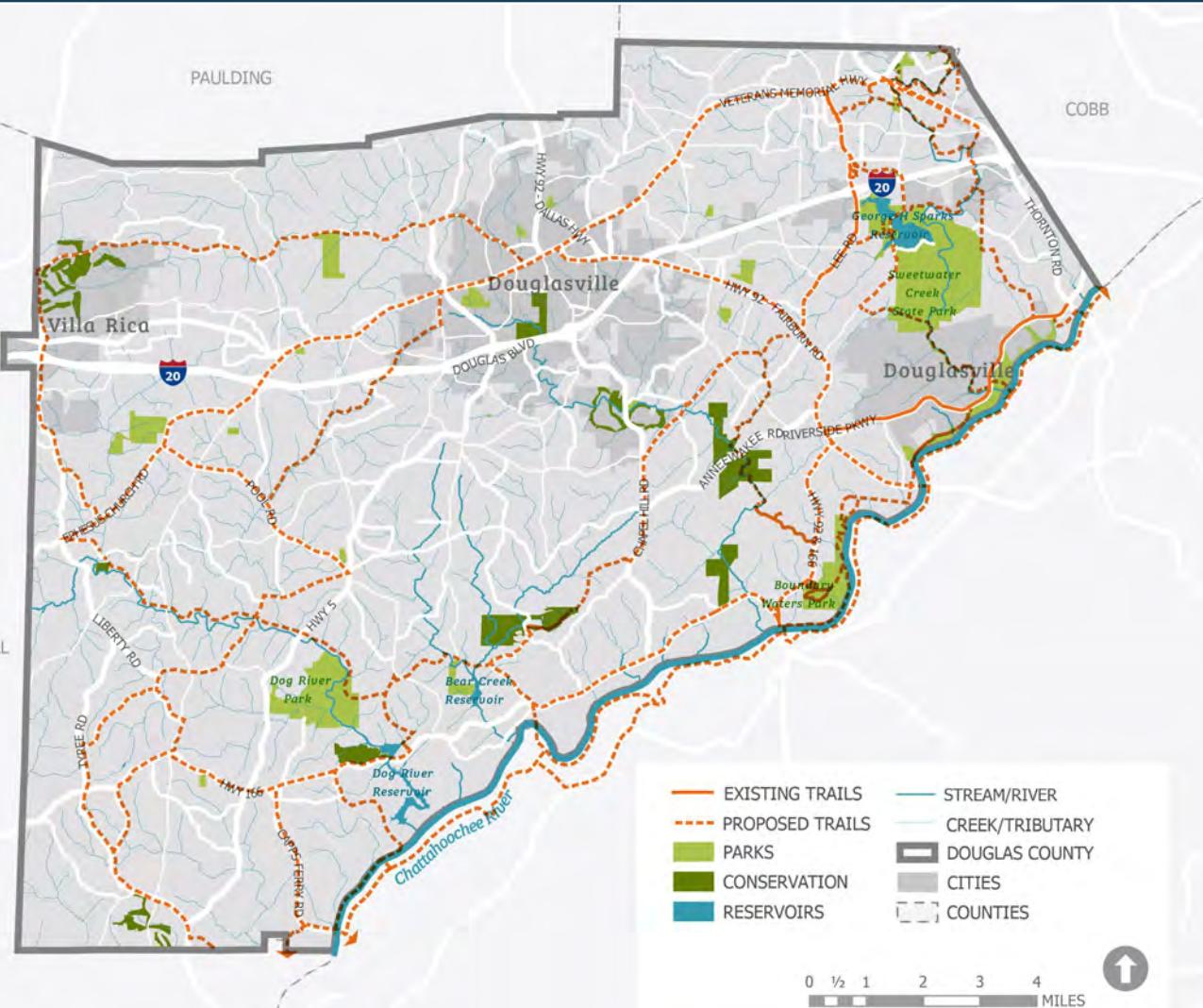
Parks, Greenspace, + Trails



Generally, Where do We Need Large, Community Parks?

- Looked at where existing community parks were
- Estimated that those serve communities within 3 miles
- Looked where gaps currently exist
- Central South Douglas may need a community park

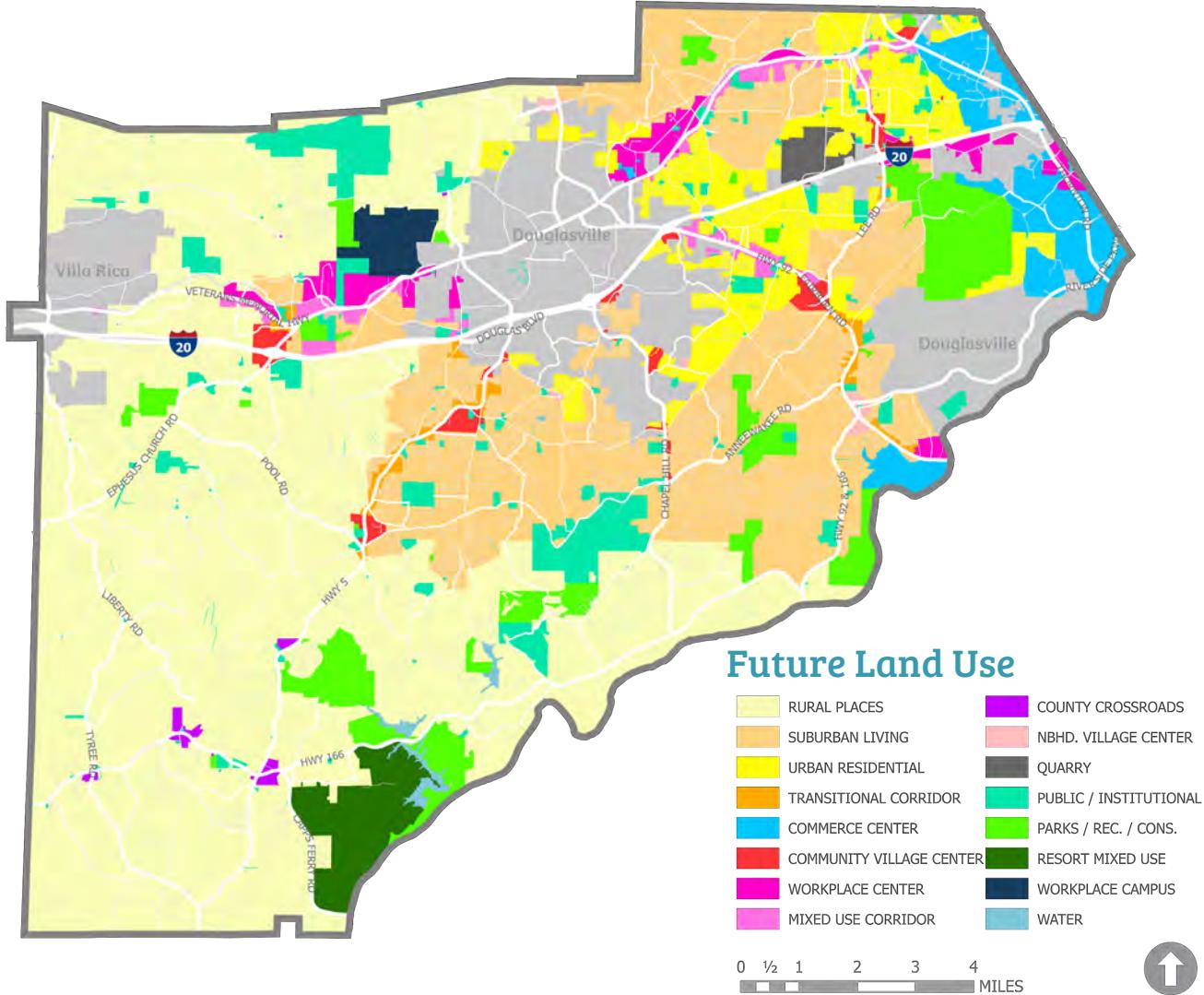
Parks, Greenspace, + Trails



What About Trails?

- Looked at where existing and planned trail networks were
- Evaluated needed connections
- Devised a general trail connection framework to set up for more detailed study

Future Land Use



What's Future Land Use?

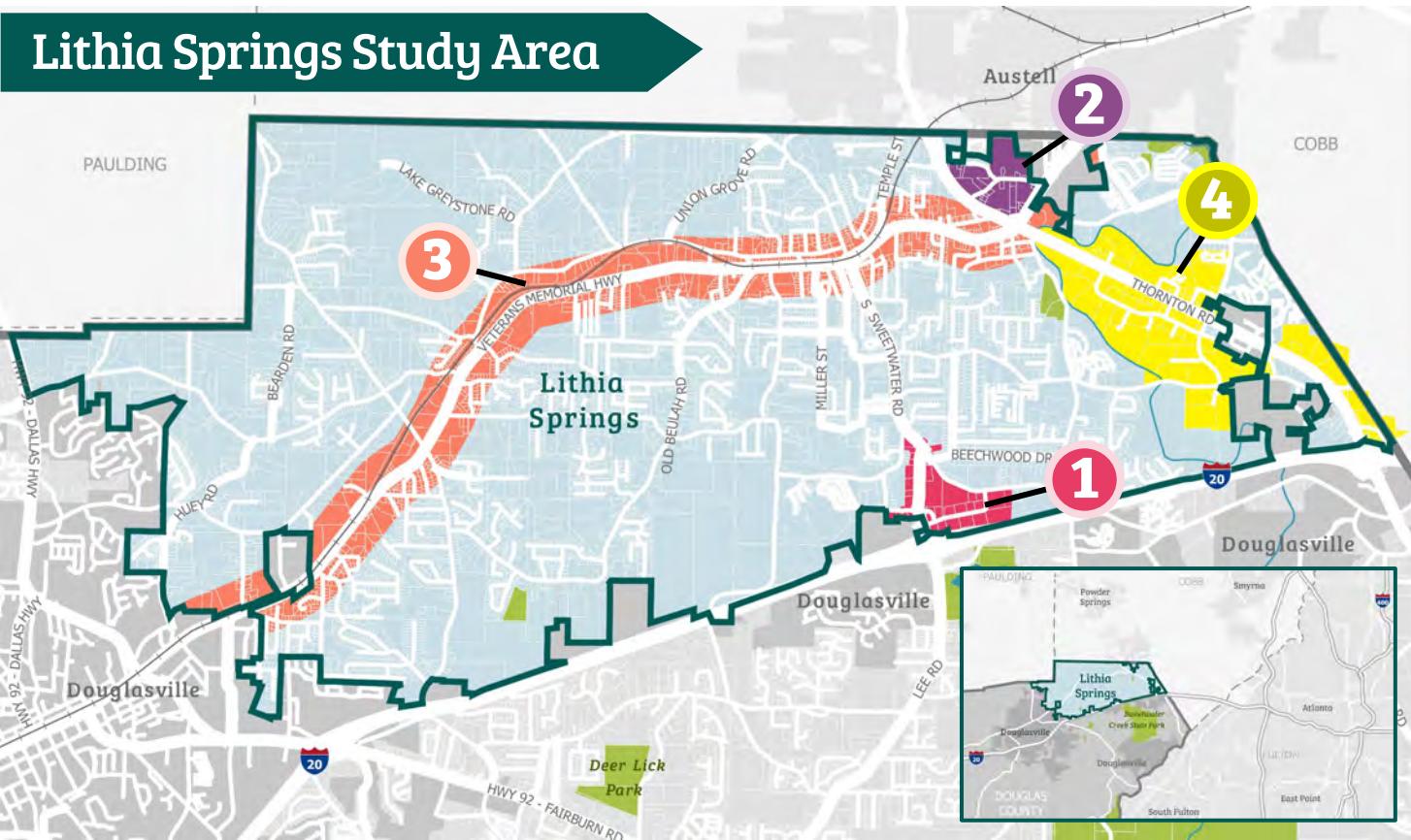
- Defines the intended land use characteristics for specific areas
- Ensures compatible and unified future development
- Guides zoning decisions

Small Area Plans

Lithia Springs Small Area Plan



Lithia Springs Study Area



Overview

- Historic community in need of commercial reinvestment
- Goal: Create redevelopment visions and ideas for 4 focus areas to breathe life back into Lithia Springs commercial corridors and nodes

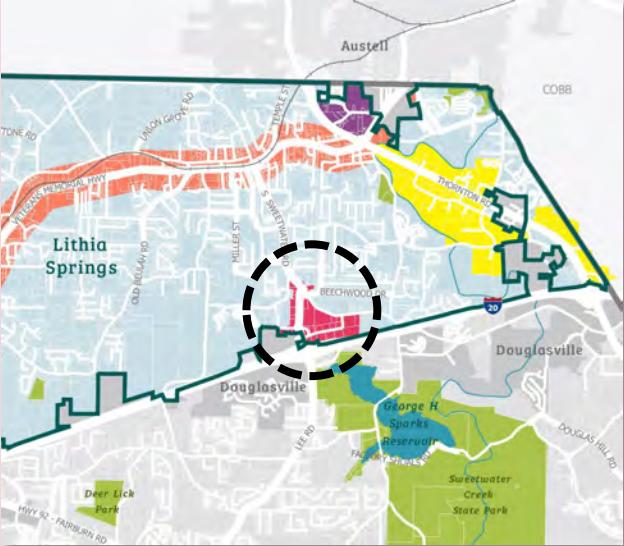
Focus Areas

- 1 Lee Road Gateway
- 2 Causey Gateway
- 3 VMH Corridor
- 4 Westfork

1

Lithia Springs : Lee Road Gateway

Lee Road Gateway Analysis



- Gateway into Lithia Springs from I-20 and near Sweetwater Creek State Park – needs a clear vision
- Currently a hodgepodge of light industrial, residential, and commercial uses
- Hard granite bedrock poses a challenge to development

Two Drafted Concepts



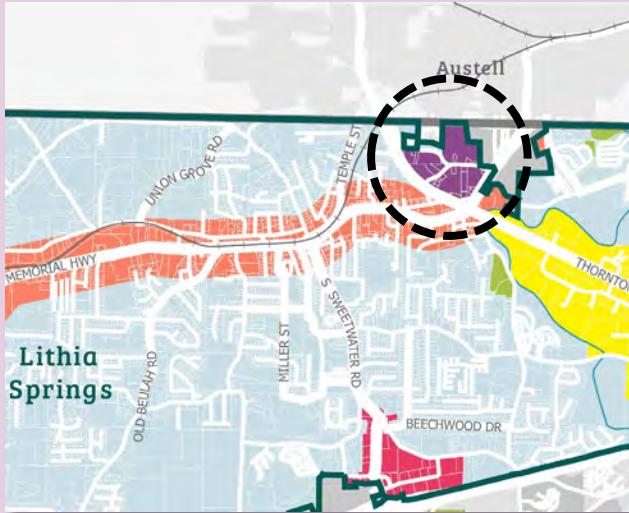
Refined Redevelopment Visions



2

Lithia Springs : Causey Gateway

Causey Gateway Analysis



- Gateway into Lithia Springs from Cobb and Austell at highly congested intersection of Thornton Rd and Veterans Memorial Hwy
- Mostly vacant, with some existing commercial and residential uses
- GDOT intersection plan and floodplains pose a challenge to development



Two Drafted Concepts



Refined Redevelopment Vision

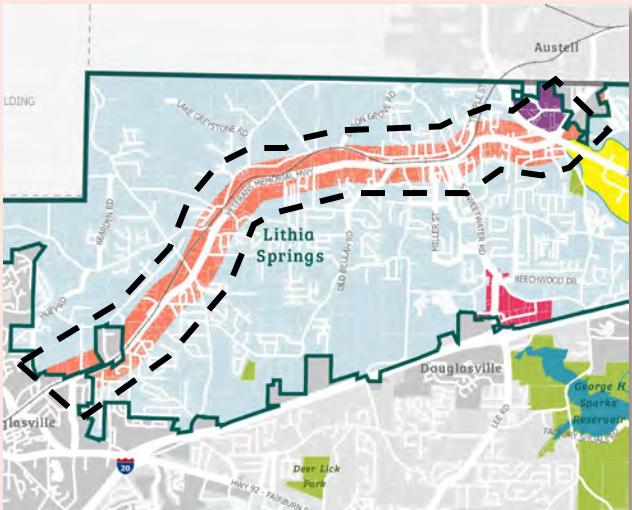


Neighborhood Village



3 Lithia Springs : VMH Corridor Plan

VMH Overview + Analysis

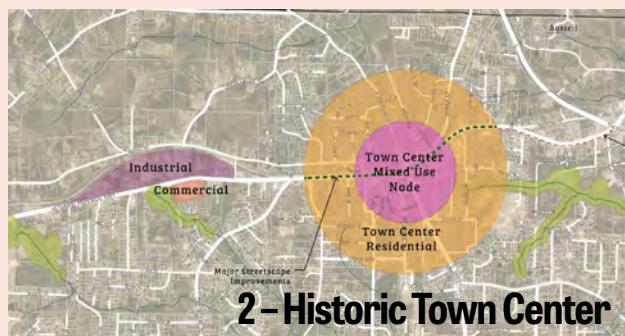


- “Main Street” of Douglas County
- Currently considered “old and country” – needs a refresh + streetscaping
- Hard granite bedrock and scattered sewer access pose challenges development
- Surrounding neighborhoods are stable

Two Drafted Frameworks



Encourage development at several different nodes – spread effort



Encourage development at historic town center – concentrate effort

Refined Land Use Framework

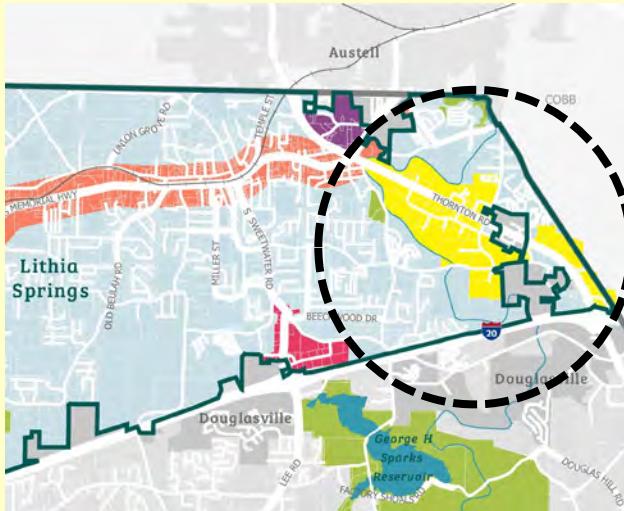


Historic Town Center
Mix of both frameworks

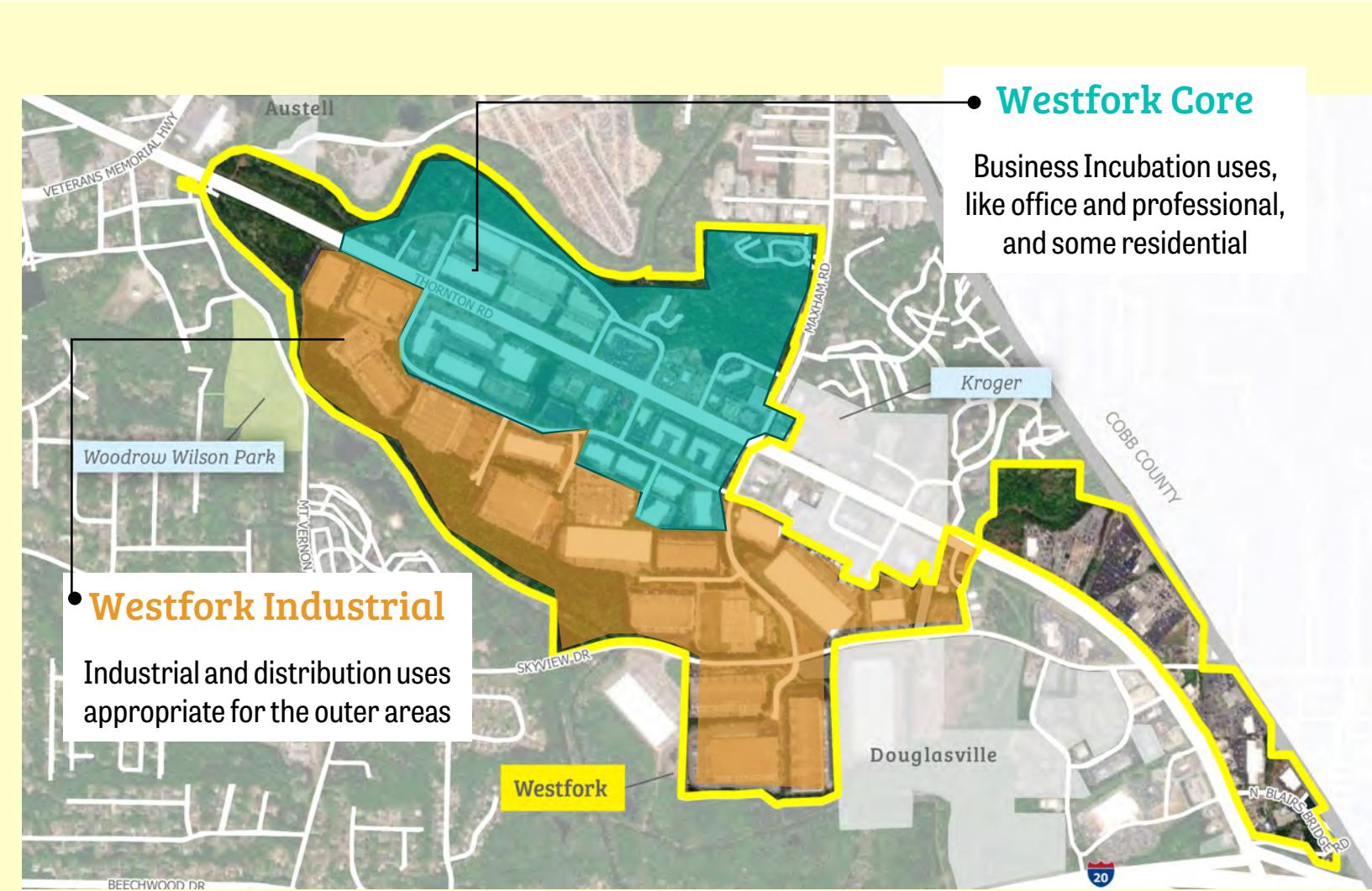


Lithia Springs : Westfork

Westfork Analysis



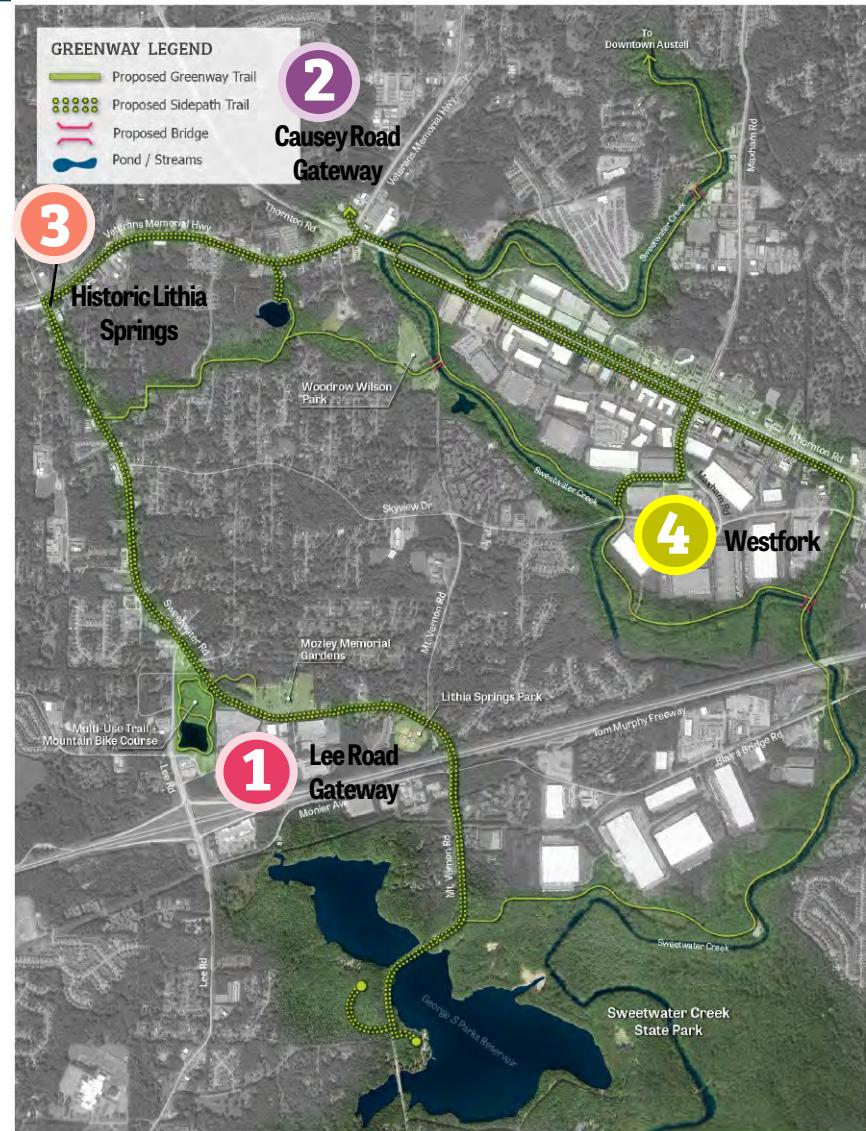
- Light industrial/commercial district largely built out – redevelopment is not envisioned
- Current Planned Unit Development (PUD) is difficult to administer and not clear on appropriate uses
- Focus is on clarifying uses and implementing urban design improvements



Lithia Springs – Tying it All Together

Sweetwater Creek Greenway

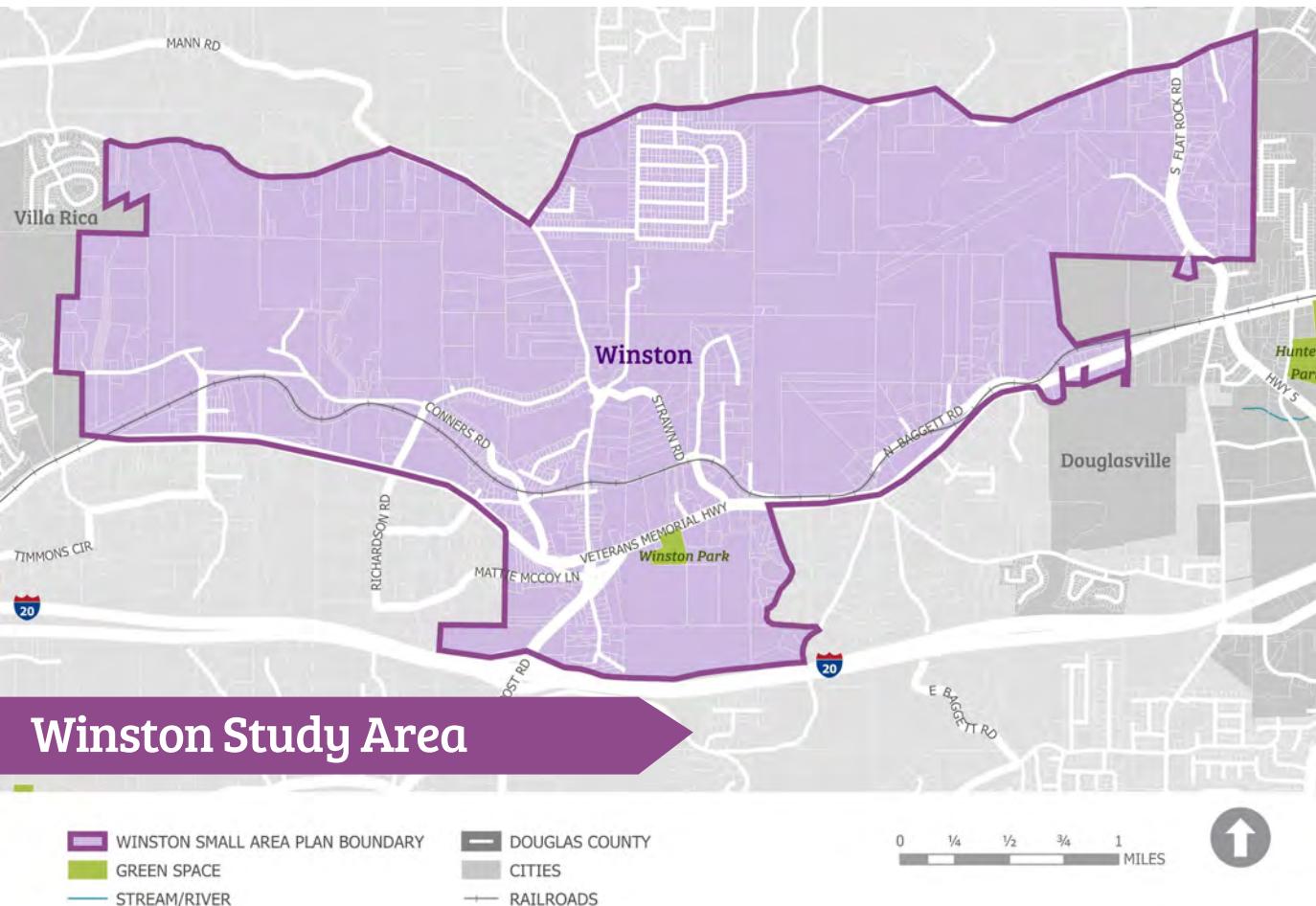
- Greenway would follow Sweetwater Creek to connect Sweetwater State Park to the City of Austell
- Spur trails would connect four focus areas
- A mix of urban/suburban sidepaths and rural, off-street greenways
- Greenways could spur development interest



3 What could these visions look like in the future?



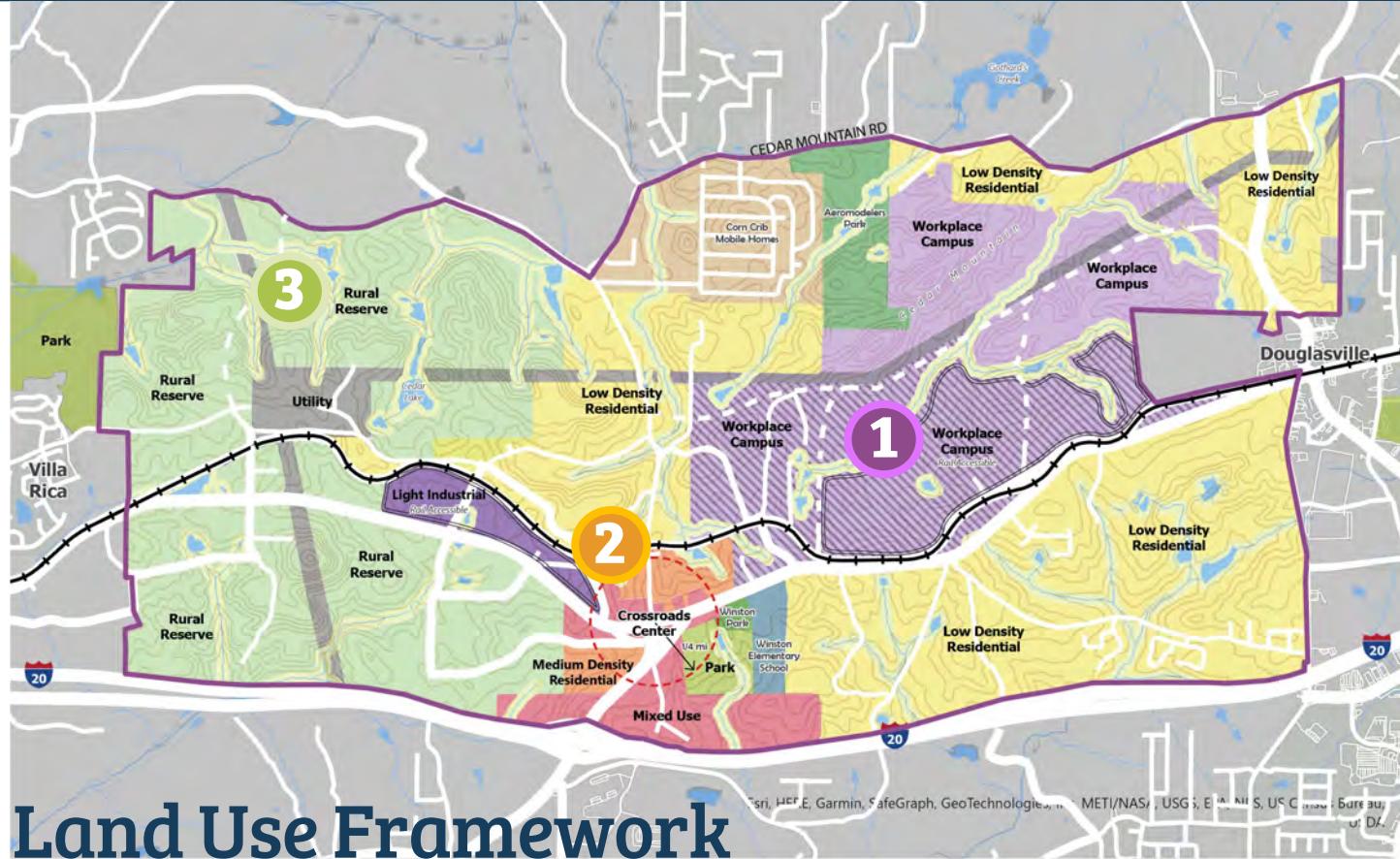
Winston Small Area Plan



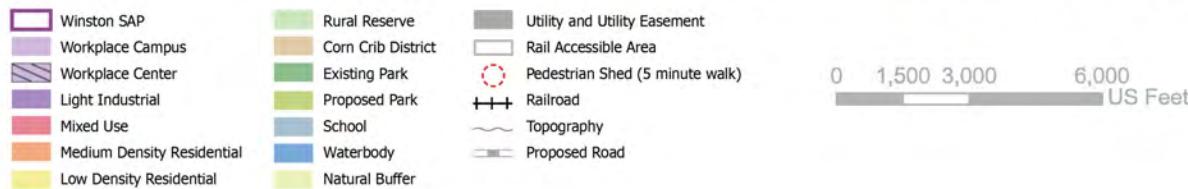
Overview

- Quaint rural community experiencing development pressure
- Last area for large-scale development of industrial technology
- Goal: devise a future vision that strikes a balance between preserving charm and accommodating job center

Winston Small Area Plan



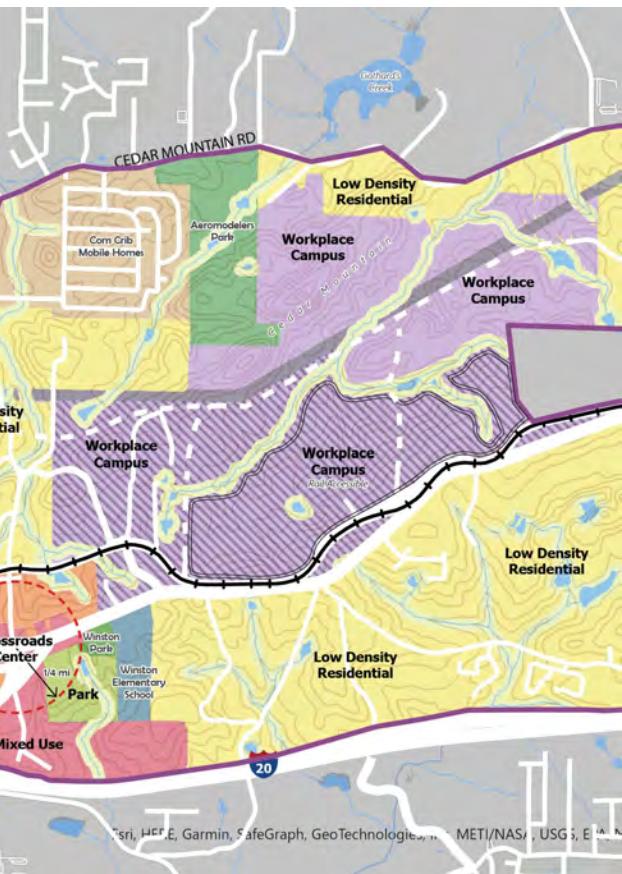
Land Use Framework



Key Components

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

Winston Small Area Plan



1 Workplace Campus

- Eastern side of study area developed into jobs center
- Data and other large-scale technology uses in campus-like development
- Private greenspace
- Uses that attract truck traffic to community are discouraged

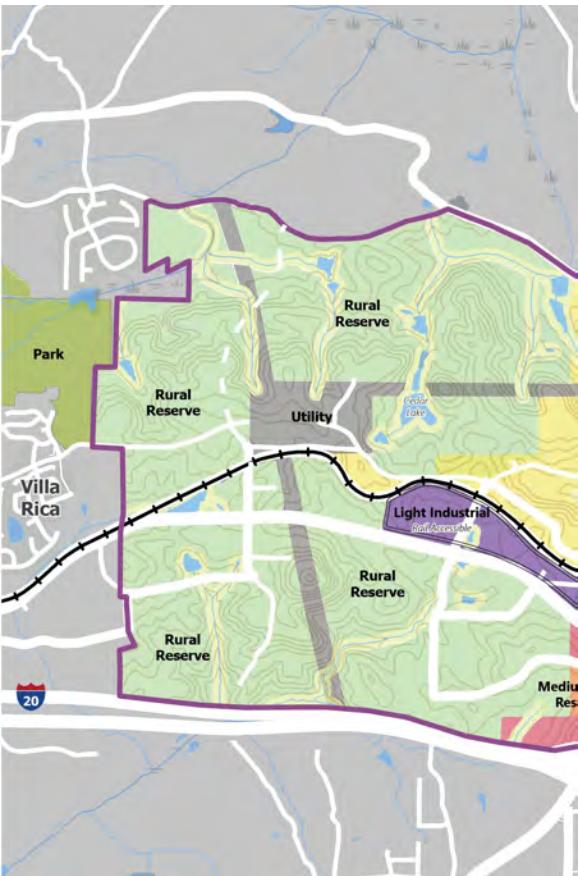
Winston Small Area Plan



② Winston Core

- Low density rural residential surrounds county crossroads
- Crossroads center provides neighborhood services, like grocery and restaurants
- Parks and trails

Winston Small Area Plan



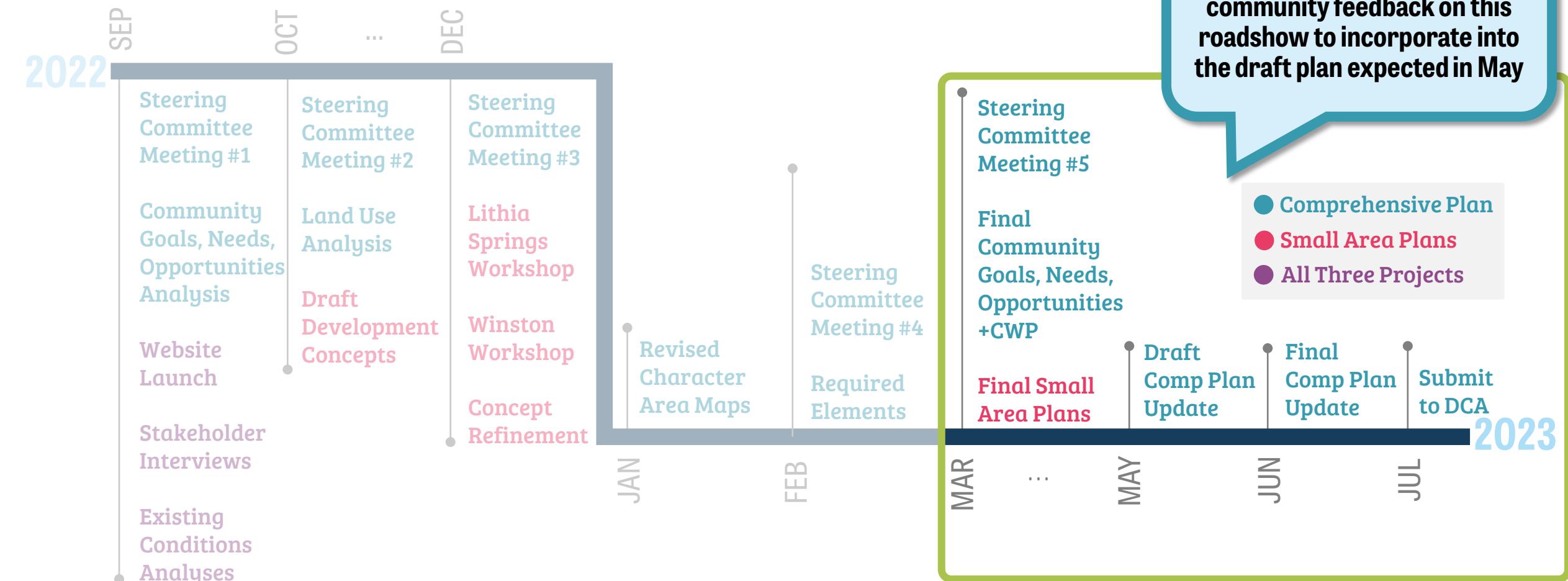
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Rural Reserve

- Western side conserved as predominantly rural
- Rural resorts, agritourism, and hobby agriculture uses
- Suburban residential development discouraged here

Next Steps

Where Are We Going?





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Thank you + stay in touch!



Visit the website!

<https://bit.ly/DouglasCompPlan>