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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Floyd County, located in northwest Georgia, was established in December of 1832 after state legislature passed a law extending its jurisdiction over Cherokee territory. Two years after the county's creation, the county seat was moved to a fertile area of land where the Etowah, Oostanula, and Coosa rivers meet: there, the city of Rome was born. Historically, Rome's claims to prominence were based on the transportation and cotton industries, unlike today where healthcare and education are important to the area's influence in northwest Georgia and nearby Alabama. A victim of Sherman's March to Atlanta during the Civil War, the city rapidly recovered during Reconstruction, and became a grander city, boasting beautiful architecture and a thriving downtown. Around the same time Floyd County was founded, the city of Cave Spring was incorporated in the southwestern end of the county. Named for the limestone spring, Cave Spring was once known as an educational hub with its Manual Labor School and School for the Deaf, the latter still operating there today. Today, Cave Spring is known for its historic character, the downtown, and the cave at Rolater Park.

In 2017, the administrations of the City of Rome and Floyd County retained consultants TSW, a planning, architecture, and landscape architecture firm located in Atlanta; and Bleakly Advisory Group, economic and market experts also located in Atlanta. The planning team, made up of the consultants and the Rome-Floyd County Department of Planning & Zoning, was charged with creating an update to Rome and Floyd County's comprehensive plan, last updated in 2008. The goal of this endeavor was to keep the current comprehensive plan relevant, while producing new and improved recommendations for implementation for Floyd County, the City of Rome, and the City of Cave Spring.

The process began in early 2018, with the city and county staff leading two kick-off meetings with the greater Rome-Floyd County community. The kick-off meetings provided information to supplement the existing conditions analysis made thus far by the consultants, and helped inform the facilitation of the planning workshops. The workshops produced recommendations tailored to each of the three identified planning areas: unincorporated Floyd County, the City of Rome, and the City of Cave Spring. The results of this process is an all-inclusive plan that examines and responds to the unique needs and opportunities of each area of the county. The plan provides a clear vision to be a community that provides equitable living options, efficient transportation, a strong local economy, and protection of natural and cultural resources; and a guide for appointed and elected officials, land owners, residents, business leaders, developers, and other stakeholders to use to make decisions to achieve that vision.

Features of this plan include:

- » 4 unified goals that guide policy;
- » Policies catered to Floyd County, Rome, and Cave Spring to address their unique needs and opportunities;
- » Recommended redevelopment plans with identified implementation strategies and best practices; and
- » Individual 5-year short term work programs for Floyd County, Rome, and Cave Spring.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The plan is broken down into three chapters and two appendices:

Plan Overview. This chapter provides a summary of the conditions that led to this plan's creation, the geographical areas studied, an overview of the planning process, introduces the public participation piece, and summarizes previous and current plans that informed the recommendations discussed later in this document.

Existing Conditions. This chapter examines the regulatory framework and physical conditions within Floyd County, the City of Rome, and the City of Cave Spring. Each municipality has its own unique section within this chapter for the benefit of administrative bodies and other plan users. A market study for the entire county was conducted, and the results of it are reported here.

Community Vision. The heart of this plan, this chapter discusses the overarching vision and goals of the entire planning area. Once again, Floyd County, the City of Rome, and the City of Cave Spring have their own sections within this chapter that breaks down community-specific policies and projects relating to land use, transportation, and economic development, and includes their 5-year community work plans as a means of implementation.

Appendices. Appendix 1 includes each municipality's Short Term Work Programs from the 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 planning periods. Appendix 2 outlines the public participation element in more detail, discussing marketing and outreach strategies, meeting summaries, and the results of the Community Input Survey.

