



FLOYD COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT
8.15.2018

1 PLAN OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses the purpose of the comprehensive plan, outlines the planning process, and summarizes previous planning efforts that will likely impact the recommendations set forth later on in this plan.



Pages 4-5: Historic Clock Tower in Rome (source: Shane Clements via flickr.com)

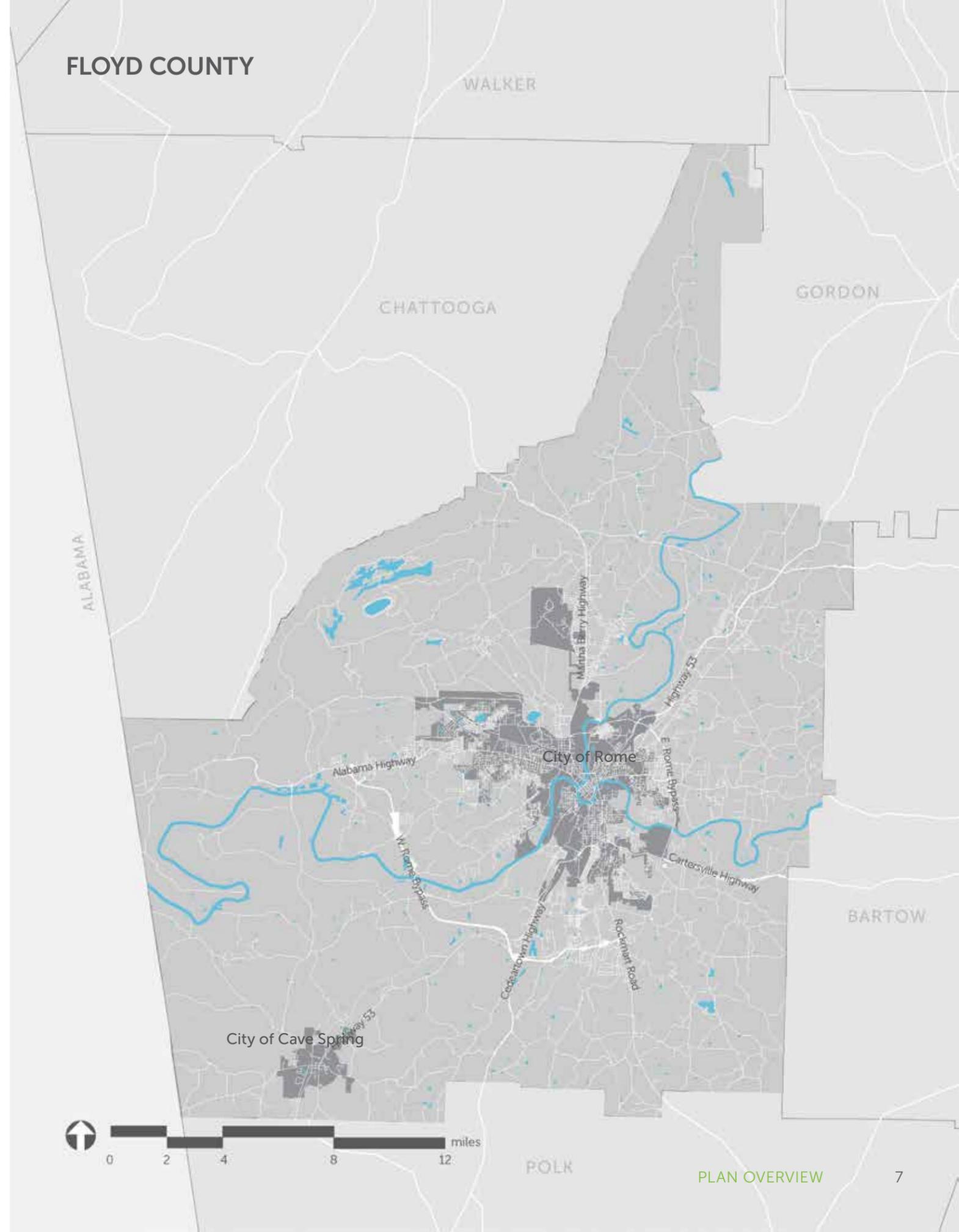
PURPOSE

This comprehensive plan envisions the future of Floyd County, and outlines the steps to be taken to fulfill it. As time passes and as conditions change, this plan will serve as a guide for cooperation and coordination between each of the municipalities, other service providers, and current and future property owners as a means to respond to those changes. The goals, policies, and strategies contained in this plan have been carefully crafted to support new development and redevelopment that is beneficial to the community and maintains its vision. The plan should be used to support decisions regarding growth management, transportation, housing, economic development, resource management, and the community's quality of life over the next few decades.

Furthermore, this plan fulfills the State of Georgia's requirements for local comprehensive planning, and the requirements to maintain Floyd County's status as Quality Local Governments.

STUDY AREAS

The Rome-Floyd/Cave Spring Comprehensive Plan covers the entire 518 square miles of Floyd County, Georgia.



PLANNING PROCESS

1 The first phase focused on researching and analyzing the community based on previous planning efforts, and collecting data on regulatory processes, on-the-ground conditions, and local preferences on land use, transportation, housing, and economic development, and other important planning elements.

2 The next phase consisted of bringing the results of the analyses to the public and using it to create realistic visions and goals for the new plan.

3 The Planning Team used all of the data and public input to draft unique recommendations for Floyd County, the City of Rome, and the City of Cave Spring and presented them to the public for comment.

4 During the final phase of the plan, the Planning Team refined recommendations based on public input, and then re-presented them for further input. The feedback was incorporated into the final recommendations that eventually were adopted by the Floyd County Commission, the Rome Commission, and the Cave Spring City Council.



PREVIOUS PLANS

CITY OF ROME AND FLOYD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN // 2008

The previous Rome-Floyd County comprehensive plan was adopted in 2008 and was the result of a three year process that relied heavily on public participation. The City of Cave Spring participated in the creation of this plan, despite their autonomy of the joint Rome-Floyd County administration. The plan included policy recommendations, a future land use plan and character areas (see pages 16-17 for those maps), and an implementation plan that includes a Community Work Program.

VISION

The 2008 vision for the future of Rome and Floyd County was based on input received from the community through focus groups, community workshops, and questionnaires. It is a statement of community values as well as a description of the desired future of Rome, Cave Spring, and Floyd County.

“Rome, Cave Spring, and the many communities and neighborhoods within Floyd County reflect the values and aspirations of our residents.

Our diverse backgrounds are reflected in our diversity of housing and commercial areas.

Our appreciation for rich natural resources is reflected in our high quality and well managed rivers, forests and fields.

Our pride in our community is reflected in the attractiveness of the developed environment.

Our respect for those who came before us is reflected in our retention of valuable cultural and historic resources.

Our desire to leave a better community for future generations is reflected in our active participation in community initiatives.”

GOALS

- » **Land Use.** To maintain a balanced, sustainable land use pattern that accommodates projected growth while fostering community vitality, improving the quality of the developed environment and protecting the integrity of the natural environment.
- » **Rural Area.** Preserve and protect important natural resources and agricultural and forestry areas from the undue encroachment of other land uses.
- » **Corridors.** To maintain the major highway corridors through the County as attractive and functional gateways to Rome and Floyd County.
- » **Urbanizing Areas.** To promote and sustain the vitality of developed areas of the County, including the cities of Rome and Cave Spring, and the urbanizing areas surrounding these cities.
- » **Redevelopment and Infill Development.** To promote compatible and sustainable redevelopment and infill development within the City of Rome, Cave Spring, and Floyd County.
- » **Local Economy.** Maintain a strong local economy that provides a stable economic base, employment opportunities for all segments of the local population and the fiscal resources to provide high quality public services to all residents.
- » **Agriculture.** Support the stability of agricultural and forestry uses by protecting their operations from nuisance complaints and by promoting agricultural entrepreneurship.
- » **Education.** Improve the job readiness and skill level of the local workforce to maintain high employment levels and attract new businesses to the County.

- » **Tourism.** Develop a sustainable tourism economy based on the promotion of natural, arts and cultural, recreational and commercial resources within the Rome/Floyd County community.
- » **Housing.** Preserve a housing stock that provides adequate and attainable housing in diverse types that creates stable, viable neighborhoods.
- » **Public Facilities & Services.** Provide adequate public facilities and services for existing and future residents and businesses in an equitable and cost-effective manner.
- » **Transportation.** Provide a convenient and cost effective transportation system that emphasizes connectivity, safety, choices of modes, and harmony between transportation modes and land uses.
- » **Airport Facilities.** Protect the function of the airport and related economic development opportunities from incompatible uses and development.
- » **Wastewater.** Ensure that wastewater facilities and services are provided to adequately service the long-term needs of existing and proposed development.
- » **Water Supply.** Maintain the high quality of surface and groundwater and all public water supplies and ensure that water systems are adequately designed and constructed to meet the basic and emergency needs of the community.
- » **Solid Waste.** Promote the safe, efficient, and environmentally sensitive management of solid waste in a manner that minimizes negative impacts on County residents.
- » **Natural Resources.** Preserve and protect resources essential to sustain a healthy environment, including the County’s river and stream corridors, and woodland habitats.
- » **Cultural Resources.** Retain Floyd County’s historic, archaeological, artistic and cultural assets for future generations of residents and visitors.

NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

- » Retain small town and rural character
- » Embrace inclusiveness and diversity
- » Remain cognizant of safety and security
- » Promote infill and redevelopment.
- » Retain agriculture by reducing encroachment of incompatible uses
- » Allow greater flexibility to capitalize on agriculture-related businesses
- » Find ways to address agricultural operators’ concerns about trails
- » Retain meaningful wildlife habitat and buffer areas
- » Coordinate with large landowners
- » Retain the housing mix needed for Floyd County workers
- » Protect private property rights
- » Preserve attractive gateways and efficient travel routes
- » Address major corridor issues before a development boom
- » Providing for travel choices
- » Address sediment issues
- » Support best agricultural management practices
- » Monitor proliferation of septic systems
- » Address stormwater issues
- » Maintain spirit of cooperation with economic development efforts
- » Prepare residents for the job market
- » Expand job opportunities
- » Improve communication between service providers and developers
- » Streamline the development process
- » Define the relationship between Cave Spring and Rome/Floyd County Plan
- » Continue public participation efforts

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The previous comprehensive plan created a future land use map and table to identify the type and intensity of land uses for future development. It was intended to be used as a guideline for providing future services and evaluating future zoning and development requests. The future land use map can be found on page 16.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	TYPICAL USES	DENSITY/ INTENSITY RANGE	APPLICABLE ZONING
Agriculture	Agriculture, forestry, and agricultural-related activities on large parcels of land. Some large-lot residential uses may occur, ranging from farmhouses to clustered subdivisions that preserve agricultural or open space.	Less than 1 DU/Acre	Agricultural Residential; Suburban Residential
Suburban Residential	Suburban residential provides space for one home every 2 acres, on average. The land is generally held in private ownership and residents are not served by municipal utilities.	Up to 1 DU/ Acre	Agricultural Residential; Suburban Residential
Low Density Residential	Low density residential uses may include conventional subdivisions which are typically low density neighborhoods that include design components such as segregated uses, streets designed primarily for cars, cul-de-sacs, private open space, and large lots.	1-4 DUs/ Acre	Low Density Traditional Residential
Medium Density Residential	Townhomes and condominiums at moderate density are 2-3 stories tall. This type of development is generally be located on the busier streets of lower density residential neighborhoods.	4-9 DUs/ Acre	High Density Traditional Residential
High Density Residential	Triplexes, apartment buildings, condominiums, and townhomes at higher densities are included in this category. Buildings may be as tall as 4-5 stories.	10-14 DUs/ Acre	Duplex Residential; Multifamily Residential
Commercial	Commercial uses include a wide variety of retail uses, including restaurants, movie theaters, car dealerships, and stores. Commercial uses range from small boutiques to large "big box" centers.		All commercial zoning districts
Office Park	Office parks include buildings from 1 to 3 stories in height, and cover approximately a third of the site. Although office uses are predominant, small retail components may be included in these developments to serve on-site employees.		Neighborhood Office Commercial; Office Institutional
Industrial	Industrial uses sometimes require open space in order to buffer them from adjacent uses, and might include light industrial uses such as shipping and warehousing, technology industries and assembly plants, or more intense heavy industrial uses.		All industrial zoning districts
Mixed Use	Permits a mix of residential and nonresidential development. Typical combines multi-family dwelling units with commercial and office uses. Uses may be mixed within a building (such as apartments above retail shops) or within a development site.	10-14 DUs/ Acre	Planned Development, Urban Mixed Use

CHARACTER AREAS

The previous comprehensive plan identified seven "character areas" that address two main issues surrounding new development and redevelopment: the timing of growth with regard to the availability of public facilities and compatibility between development types. The resulting Future Development Map was intended to be used along with the Future Land Use map to provide another layer of guidance for decision-making. The character area map can be found on page 17.

CHARACTER AREA	TYPICAL USES	PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES	COMPATIBILITY ISSUES
Town Center	Mixed uses typical of a downtown or traditional neighborhood, including low to high density residential, neighborhood services, office and commercial uses, generally characterized by pedestrian orientation, including sidewalks and street trees; on-street parking; small, regular lots; and buildings close to or at the front property line	The full range of public facilities and services is available.	Retaining the historic character that is a cultural and economic resource through compatible design.
Urban Area	Uses that provide a wide range of options for housing, employment, and recreation, with the greatest opportunities for infill and redevelopment.	The full range of public facilities and services is available.	Connectivity to other uses (work, play, and shopping) in these predominantly single-use neighborhoods; reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings should be context-sensitive.
Urban Growth Area	Uses that provide a wide range of options for housing, employment, and recreation, expected to develop over the next twenty years. While some opportunities for infill and redevelopment may be available, most development in this area is likely involve the development of previously undeveloped or agricultural land.	The full range of public facilities and services is available or planned during the next 20 years.	Balanced land uses, including a mix of housing types, that provide connectivity to other uses (work, play, and shopping) and encourage high quality development.
Activity Corridor	Corridors extending from the cities to the County line, providing for the safe and convenient movement of goods and people through the region, providing opportunities for commercial and industrial development with easy access to major transportation routes and generally characterized by traffic congestion, high vehicular traffic, and auto-oriented development.	Roads, water, centralized wastewater and fire protection services are available or planned for extension.	Appropriate access standards, setbacks, landscaping and signage requirements that result in safe and attractive corridors that serve the traveling public and nearby businesses while maintaining road capacity.

CHARACTER AREA	TYPICAL USES	PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES	COMPATIBILITY ISSUES
Rural Commercial Corridor	Corridors extending from the cities to the County line, providing for the safe and convenient movement of goods and people through the region and an attractive gateway to the County and Cities	Roads, water, and centralized wastewater services may be available or planned for extension in the next 20 years. Services are limited in areas further from the cities. Response times may be longer.	Appropriate access standards, setbacks, landscaping and signage requirements that minimize interruptions to continuous traffic flow and reflect the rural character of the surrounding area.
Rural Area	Land in an open or cultivated state, including agricultural and timber operations and rural residential uses, characterized by low population density, very large lots, open space and a high degree of building separation.	Limited public facilities and services are available.	Protect viable agriculture from incompatible development; maintain rural character through use of landscaping and setbacks.
Conservation Area	Undeveloped natural lands and environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development, including riparian buffers along rivers and streams, wetlands, flood plains, hills and mountains with steep slopes, scenic areas, and wildlife management areas.	Limited public facilities and services are available.	Best practices to ensure that changes result in appropriate resource protection.



TOWN CENTER



RURAL COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR



URBAN AREA



RURAL AREA



URBAN GROWTH AREA



CONSERVATION AREA



ACTIVITY CORRIDOR

LEGEND

- Suburban Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Park
- Agriculture/Conservation

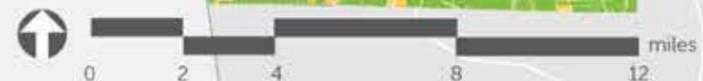
FLOYD COUNTY FUTURE LAND USE

WALKER

CHATTOOGA

ALABAMA

POLK



LEGEND

- Conservation
- Rural Area
- Urban Growth Area
- Urban Area
- Town Center
- Activity Corridors
- Rural Commercial Corridors

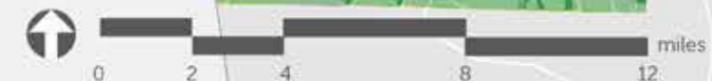
FLOYD COUNTY CHARACTER AREAS

WALKER

CHATTOOGA

ALABAMA

POLK



2017-2022 REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY // 2017

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) completed their five year update of the Northwest Georgia Economic Development Strategy for the years 2017 through 2022 in the fall of 2017. The study area covers the entire northwestern corner of Georgia, including Floyd County. The plan is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development that examines how to leverage and/or improve on factors related to human capital, community assets, essential infrastructure, and business climate.

VISION

"Northwest Georgia strives to become a region where economic opportunities are available for all citizens; where our natural resources are used wisely and conserved for future generations; where community facilities and services support the needs of everyone; where cooperation among the public, private, and non-profit sectors is common-place, and where citizens have opportunities to enjoy a healthy and productive life."

KEY ISSUES

- » Regional economic base has historically depended on manufacturing and flooring, but the Great Recession forced many layoffs and manufacturing as an industry has changed and requires less human labor.
- » The Northwest Georgia region is performing below the national average - the unemployment rate is higher than that of the nation and per capita income is only 67% of the national average.
- » The region needs more skilled workers with technical training, certifications, and degrees.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

HUMAN CAPITAL

- » **Workforce Skills.** Increase the number of residents skilled in advanced manufacturing (and other middle-skill, living wage occupations) in order to meet current and changing needs of northwest Georgia employers.
- » **Educational Attainment.** Expand the number of students in the region that are prepared for future employment in skilled and professional positions through enhanced educational opportunities and active career counseling.
- » **Human Services.** Ensure appropriate human services are available to meet the needs of the region's current and future workforce.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

- » **Tourism and Film Industry.** Increase tourism, visitor spending, and revenue earned from the film industry in northwest Georgia.
- » **Quality of Life.** Enhance quality of life amenities in the region to retain talent and gain a competitive advantage when recruiting new businesses and industry.
- » **Housing.** Ensure adequate housing is available to meet the needs of the northwest Georgia workforce, which is affordable, decent, and safe.

ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- » **Industrial Properties.** Ensure northwest Georgia has sufficient, ready to develop industrial properties available to meet the region's current and future needs.
- » **Transportation.** Advocate for transportation projects that are critical for regional economic development.
- » **High Speed Internet.** Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet for residential, commercial, and industrial areas, with a focus on rural areas.

- » **Traditional Infrastructure.** Ensure communities in the region have adequate basic infrastructure to implement their community and economic development objectives.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

- » **Improved Business Climate.** Increase entrepreneurship and innovation by supporting business development in existing and emerging sectors.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

HUMAN CAPITAL

- » **Workforce Skills.** Increased number of students in career and technical education programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training programs.
- » **Educational Attainment.** Increased number of residents that have high school diplomas, have graduated from College and Career Academies, and have received post-secondary certificates or degrees.
- » **Human Services.** Increased number of programs that remove barriers to participation in the workforce (such as childcare, affordable healthcare, and public transportation).

COMMUNITY ASSETS

- » **Tourism and Film Industry.** Increase in tourism and visitor spending in the region; increased participation in Georgia's Camera Ready Communities program.
- » **Quality of Life.** Number of projects completed aimed at improving quality of life amenities in the region, such as trail, parks, recreation programs, community centers, and public safety programs.
- » **Housing.** Number of projects completed that increases or improves availability of workforce housing, which is affordable, decent, and safe.

ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- » **Industrial Properties.** Increase in ready to develop industrial parks, spec buildings, and Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development (GRAD) sites.
- » **Transportation.** Number of projects completed that are critical for regional economic development.
- » **High Speed Internet.** Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet in northwest Georgia.
- » **Traditional Infrastructure.** Number of projects completed that provide or improve basic infrastructure that allow communities to implement their community and economic development objectives.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

- » **Improved Business Climate.** Increase number programs supporting business development in existing and emerging sectors; enhanced access to capital; and number of new or improved business centers that act as incubators and accelerators providing business development services and space.

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR 2040 // 2016

The Rome-Floyd County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required to prepare a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) every four years. This recent version of the LRTP was adopted in 2016. The LRTP process is based on federal requirements, Transportation Demand Modeling, and public input. The goal of the process was to produce a list of transportation projects that is fiscally constrained, meets the transportation goals of the community, and conforms to air quality requirements.

VISION

“The citizens of Rome and Floyd County envision an accessible, multi-modal transportation system in Floyd County that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, and moves people and goods in an energy efficient manner. It will position Floyd County to compete in the global economy of the 21st century, and to prepare for future technologies and future limits on fossil fuels. Citizens value a transportation system that will support sustainable economic development and quality of life, while preserving investment in neighborhoods, natural resources, historic sites, and air and water quality. They want a system that meets both personal and business transportation needs, and provides affordable, safe, convenient choices for transportation, including bike and pedestrian connectivity. The public wants full participation in transportation planning to ensure a system that is physically and economically accessible to all citizens of Rome and Floyd County. Citizens want transportation planning integrated with overall community planning and land use policies, so that transportation design is pro-active and supports planned, orderly growth; rather than being reactive to development.”

KEY GOALS

- » Continue to support public transit within the City of Rome, and continue to evaluate expansion of service to unincorporated areas. Evaluate transit routes and stops to maximize service, especially along major corridors
- » Connect and expand the bike/pedestrian system within the community and connect with regional trail systems, especially the Silver Comet Trail via Rockmart or Cedartown and the Sims Mountain Trail. Encourage the construction and maintenance of sidewalks within and between residential, recreational, educational, and commercial developments.
- » Pursue additional bike, pedestrian, and other modes of transportation within downtown Rome. Consider adoption of a Complete Streets Policy.
- » Commit adequate funding to maintain and repair existing streets, sidewalks, bridges, trails, and highways to promote an efficient transportation
- » Complete the south and southeastern segments of the Rome bypass to allow through traffic an opportunity to avoid inter-city streets. Investigate the best routes for completion of the northern and northwestern segments
- » Provide improved and more direct connection from Rome and Floyd County to I-75 via SR-140, US-411, and/or a new route
- » Integrate transportation planning with comprehensive land use planning so transportation needs can be met proactively, rather than reactively
- » Work with other counties in the region to optimize use of financial resources

PROJECT LIST

PI #	PROJECT NAME/DESCRIPTION
SHORT-TERM PRIORITY 2016-2023	
621600	South Rome Bypass UTL
621600	South Rome Bypass CST
0013718	SR-1/SR-20/US-27 at Etowah River & NS#719103R PE
0013718	SR-1/SR-20/US-27 at Etowah River & NS#719103R ROW
0013718	SR-1/SR-20/US-27 at Etowah River & NS#719103R CST
0013937	SR-1/US-27 at Big Dry Creek PE
0013937	SR-1/US-27 at Big Dry Creek ROW
0013937	SR-1/US-27 at Big Dry Creek CST
632760	SR-101 Interchange ROW
650540	SR-1/SR-101 UTL
650540	SR-1/SR-101 CST
662420	Southeast Rome Bypass UTL
662420	Southeast Rome Bypass CST
0007019	SR-140/Turkey Mountain Widening PE
MID-TERM PRIORITY 2024-2030	
0000400	SR-101 Widening ROW
0000400	SR-101 Widening UTL
0000400	S.R.101 Widening CST
621690	SR-101 Widening UTL
621690	SR-101 Widening CST
632760	SR-101 Interchange UTL
632760	SR-101 Interchange CST
LONG-TERM PRIORITY 2031-2040	
0006019	SR-20 Widening PE
621740	Cave Spring West Bypass PE

ROME-FLOYD COUNTY MPO BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND TRAIL MASTER PLAN // 2015

In the summer of 2014, the Rome-Floyd County MPO began developing a bicycle, pedestrian, and trail plan for Rome-Floyd County. The purpose of the plan is to provide a clear framework for the development of new facilities, programs, and policies that will support safe and convenient walking and biking conditions for transportation and recreation.

VISION

“Walking and biking in Rome-Floyd County will be safe, convenient, and enjoyable forms of transportation and recreation. Creating favorable walking and biking conditions and expanding route options for a wider range of cyclists and pedestrians is key for the community’s economic, environmental, social, and physical well-being. When implemented, the improved and connected walkway and bikeway network will enhance connections between neighborhoods, job centers, tourist attractions, shops, schools, places of worship, and other daily destinations.”

KEY GOALS

- » Achieve Bicycle Friendly Community Designation by 2018
- » Achieve Walk Friendly Community Designation by 2018
- » Double the number of people that walk and bike to work within 5 years
- » Create a 27 mile on-street bikeway network
- » Create a 45 mile trail network
- » Expand the sidewalk network along major roadways and around parks and schools

OPPORTUNITIES

- » At the time this report was written, the only bike lane in Rome-Floyd County was along Armuchee Connector from Oostanaula River and the end of the Heritage Park Trail to US-27.
- » Bicycle parking is available in some areas, such as at schools and downtown Rome.
- » Sidewalks, marked crosswalks, curb ramps, and signalized intersections provide dedicated space for pedestrians and help people navigate intersections safely.
- » Trails in Rome and Floyd County allow the community to connect with natural areas, such as the rivers, and connect between neighborhoods. Several pedestrian bridges help pedestrians and bicyclists cross the rivers throughout downtown Rome.

CONSTRAINTS

- » A lack of a network of on-street bikeways.
- » Busy roads without bicycle facilities also present major challenges, not only for riding safely along these roadways but also for simply crossing them.
- » Sidewalk gaps and broken sidewalks can make it difficult to walk along streets, particularly major corridors. Lack of frequent crossings makes it difficult to cross roads, particularly along major corridors.
- » Gaps between existing trails limit route options, length of trips, and connections to destinations in the community. The width of trails in many places is narrow, making it difficult or unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists to pass one another.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Form a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- » Safe Routes to School
- » Safety and trail user etiquette campaigns
- » Open street event
- » Bicycle and pedestrian resource webpage
- » National Bike Month events
- » Employer-based programs
- » Hike and bike map
- » Wayfinding program
- » Safety training for officers
- » Conduct annual bike/pedestrian counts at key locations
- » Conduction of roadway safety audits
- » Complete Streets policy

KEY PROJECTS

- » Trail from Berry College to the River
- » Berry College to Shorter University rail-to-trail
- » Etowah River Trail
- » Cave Spring Trail
- » Buffered bike lane on Technology Parkway
- » Buffered bike lane on Riverside Parkway/Braves Boulevard
- » Buffered bike lane on 12th Street
- » 3rd Street bike lane
- » 5th Avenue bike lane
- » 1st Street/Broad Street bike lane
- » Broad Street bike lane
- » 6th Avenue bike lane
- » Cycle track on 1st Avenue
- » Cycle track on 4th Street
- » Cycle track on 2nd Avenue/6th Street/Maple Street

