

# PICKENS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2018-2028

Executive Summary – plan adopted June 2018

Results based on staff analysis of survey (743 responses); stakeholder meetings (6); emails; interviews

## Community-wide majority consensus

- Citizens like: 1) Scenic views and wildlife 2) Small town atmosphere 3) Safe place to live
- Citizens do not like: 1) Lack of entertainment 2) Lack of local stores/restaurants 3) Lack of job options
- Citizens would support these projects: 1) Invest in downtowns 2) Improve parks 3) Recruit more local business and support existing ones 4) Improve education 5) Improve transportation infrastructure 6) Improve and increase water infrastructure

## Pickens County

- The predominant land use continues to be rural, due primarily to the lack of interstate access, mountainous terrain, current agricultural practices, and limited water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Target Growth - Keep Open Space Open. Protect and preserve natural resources.
- Maintain Fiscal Viability: Lower Costs, Lower Taxes
- Work cooperatively with business representatives for new industrial development and redevelopment in the Marble Hill and southeast Pickens, including efforts to report on the Opportunity Zone. Review and, where appropriate, revise allowed industrial uses in chapter 67 of the county code of ordinances.
- Conduct and continually evaluate business and industrial retention efforts, whether for traditional uses such as manufacturing or for trending uses such as agri-tourism. Review and revise, where appropriate, uses that may not be specifically mentioned in chapter 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances.
- Work cooperatively with business representatives for new developments in and around the Pickens County airport. Review and revise, where appropriate, airport-related business and industrial uses in chapter 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances.
- Promote the county as a less-regulated, more conservative, and safer alternative to Metro Atlanta. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 4, 6, 16, 18, 38, and 67 of county code of ordinances.
- Review and analyze building permit and business license policies to streamline processes and promote a business-friendly culture. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 4, 6, 16, and 18 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances to help streamline processes.
- Encourage and promote additional developments of single-family residential with septic systems and larger lots in the county. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances for increased promotion of this goal.
- Encourage and promote a variety of housing types in the county for affordability – various sizes; manufactured housing; modular housing; stick/site-built housing; etc. Flexibility in exterior finish material and roof pitch of housing in the county. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances for increased promotion of this goal.
- Work cooperatively with citizens for alternative housing options such as earthcraft/green building materials; tiny houses; etc. that must be code-compliant as safe, permanent residential structures. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 16, 38, and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding alternative housing definitions, uses, etc.
- Review and analyze East-West roads in the greater Jasper area such as Hwy 53, Philadelphia Rd, AW Lawson Blvd, to work cooperatively with Jasper on transportation options and alternatives for persons seeking to quickly drive East-West through and within the county. Improved signage may be one example that should be reviewed to improve traffic flow from one side of the county to the other.
- Continue to work cooperatively with arts groups such as Pickens Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA) and support and promote expansion of various arts programs. Examples include an active folk school and greater participation in events such as the Cornbread Reunion. Continue and enhance activities related to marble/mining heritage including the Marble festival; Native American heritage; and historic preservation. Support existing historic sites (Tate gym, Tate House, etc.) and identify new sites.
- Continue to work cooperatively with private and nonprofit groups to conserve greenspace, including sensitive environmental areas such as creeks, floodplain areas, and steep-slope mountainous portions of

the county. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapter 38 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding environmental and land development matters.

- Continue to encourage, support, and promote private parks such as Eagle's Rest and the STPAL (Southeastern Trust for Parks and Land) parks.
- Continue to participate in continuing education sessions each year related to stormwater management; floodplain management; safe dams; best practices in soil erosion & sedimentation control; water quality; etc. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapter 38 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding stormwater management and related matters.
- Continue to participate in regional water and environmental groups such as the Coosawattee Regional Water & Sewer Authority; Georgia Rural Water Association; North Georgia Water Resources Partnership; Upper Etowah River Alliance; etc. Review and revise, where appropriate, sections of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances related to water based on changing regulations and policies.
- Continue current renovations and expansions of the Roads department and Recycling center headquarters on Camp Road. Continue current county wide sign replacement. Continue replacing all old 6 inch engineered grade street name signs with new signs, size is determined by speed limit, that meet the current reflectivity standards set forth by the MUTCD. Also continue replacing all road signs in the county that do not meet the current reflectivity or size requirements. These include stop signs, yield signs, stop ahead signs, speed limit signs, etc, just to name a few.
- Continue renovations to Roper Park on Camp Road, including the pool. Plan for park expansion if nearby property acquisition becomes feasible. Plan for one or more new significant size parks at one or more ends of the county (west, north, or east).
- Review feasibility of property acquisitions in various areas (Blaine, Hinton, Ludville, Marble Hill, Tate, etc.) for new small parks and consider partnerships with private and nonprofit park properties
- Continue program of targeted, appropriate water line extensions such as the Jones Mountain Rd line extension. Continue program of working with adjacent counties for regional water interconnectivity, including possible future connection with Dawson County (Etowah Water & Sewer Authority) lines.
- Continue current project for Grandview Lake dam reservoir. Continue to work cooperatively with public and private partners on this project.
- Continue ongoing project for additional temporary emergency shelters for certain natural and/or manmade disasters/situations. Continue to utilize, evaluate, and revise the Pickens Hazard Mitigation Plan where needed. Continue ongoing project to have generator back-up capacity for various county facilities. Continue annual emergency management training and certification.
- Continue current project for new Carlan Rd fire station. Continue project to review possibilities for renovated or relocated Tate fire station. Continue to maintain great services and aim for lower ISO rating in various parts of the county.
- Sheriff's office will renovate and reuse a portion of the former Jasper Middle School building(s) and property for a public safety training facility at no cost to county taxpayers.
- Review and analyze chapter 38 (land development) and chapter 67 (land use/zoning) sections of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances for possible needed revisions based on the comprehensive plan
- Review and evaluate ways to better enforce existing land use rules and regulations in the Pickens County Code of Ordinances. Review and revise, where appropriate, violations sections of various chapters (including 38 and 67) of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances.
- Encourage and promote commercial development and land use/zoning for commercial on Hwy 515 and Hwy 53, with industrial potential on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Encourage nonresidential development on other state routes to a lesser degree. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 of the Pickens County Code of Ordinances regarding this promotional goal.
- Encourage and promote residential and agricultural uses and land use/zoning on local (non-State) roads. Review and revise, where appropriate, chapters 38 and 67 regarding this promotional goal.
- Character Areas: Arterial Commercial Corridor (Hwy 515); Bent Tree and Big Canoe Area; Blaine; East Pickens Conservation Area; Foothills Crossroads; Hinton; Marble Hill; Rural Development Area; Suburban Infill Area; Tate

## Jasper

- City's ability to serve its citizens and land owners water and wastewater utilities creates opportunities for increased density and high intensity uses not found in most areas of the Pickens County.
- Establish Main Street Program for Downtown Development Authority
- Sell and/or develop properties previously donated to the city and designate funds and/or properties in order to fully fund the city's retirement plan with GMA.
- Extend a 10 inch water main from the northernmost 500 gal water tank located at Appalachian Court north to the city limits line located at Antioch Church Road and SR 515
- Add parallel sewer line and install 4 pump stations from Philadelphia Rd to Antioch Church Rd & 515.
- Paint all poles on Main and directional wayfinding signage
- Lighting for downtown Main St
- Develop the city property known as the Perrow/Pool/Roper greenspace
- Housing Authority to build 20 units on Mary St
- Implement streetscape improvements on West Church St; Burnt Mtn Rd; East Church St
- Implement streetscape improvements and install lighting on SR 515 within city limits
- Construct four lane road and one-way pair on 53 west from SR515 thru Downtown Jasper
- Revise Zoning Ordinance to create Overlay Districts for West Church St., East Church St., and SR 515 to address building setbacks, mixed uses, inter-parcel access, landscaping and lighting
- Revise and improve sign regulations
- Update all street signage to meet MUTCD regulations
- Enhance traffic flow in CBD by creating north and south one way traffic
- Roundabout construction – Burnt Mtn Rd / Cove Rd and Pioneer Rd / Indian Forest Rd
- Adopt architectural standards with masonry requirements for commercial buildings
- Resurface all roads in city limits
- Gateway at Hwy 515 & Hwy 53 intersection and Hwy 515 & Hwy 108 intersection
- Improve Appalachian Trail to handle excess Hwy 53 traffic
- Expand wastewater treatment plant to 1.56 MGD capacity to land application/reuse capability
- Expand water treatment plant to 3.0 MGD
- Build a fire station on Hwy 515
- Acquire an aerial platform firefighting vehicle
- Purchase fire engine pumper truck
- GIS mapping system to map all City infrastructure
- Build city public restrooms
- Landscape top of waterfall at Jasper City Park
- Doris Wigington Park improvements: two sets bathrooms, pavilion, improve signage
- Maintain Wood Bridge
- Paint all 5 city water tanks
- Character Areas: East Jasper Gateway Corridor (Burnt Mtn Rd & Cove Rd areas); Historic Downtown Jasper; Jasper Traditional Neighborhood Area; North Jasper Corridor (N. Main St); South Jasper Gateway Corridor (East Church St); West Jasper Gateway Corridor (W. Church St)

## Nelson

- Nelson will retain its traditional small community roots while continuing to evolve into a dynamic, active town adjacent to the fast-growing suburbs of Cherokee County.
- Character Areas: Nelson Industrial; Nelson Suburban Neighborhood; Nelson Traditional Neighborhood Area; Nelson Town Center

## Talking Rock

- Talking Rock will remain a rural town that retains its historical characteristics. The downtown area, including the popular park along Talking Rock Creek, will continue to be a dynamic, scenic destination.
- Character Areas: Talking Rock Suburban Area; Talking Rock Traditional Neighborhood Area; Talking Rock Town Center