

The following constitutes the agenda for the regular scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia to be held at 6:30 p.m. on December 19, 2024

REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING

- **Invocation & Pledges**

- **Chairman Whitfield will Call to Order the Regular Meeting**

- **Establish a Quorum is present**

- **Approve Agenda**

- **Approve Minutes**

Minutes for the Regular Scheduled Meeting Held on November 14, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

- **Ceremonial**

Proclamation for Charles Wardlaw

- **Presentation**

Community Connectivity Plan, Shannon Millsaps & Virginia Pettite, Thrive Regional Partnership

- **Public Hearing - Ordinance Amendment**

Ordinance O-01-25 to Amend Chapter 34 (Utilities) of the Code of Walker County to adopt Broadband Ready Community Standards

- **Public Hearing - Planning & Zoning**

Hawks Ridge Holdings LLC requests a partial rezone from C-1 (Commercial) to PUD (Planned Unit Development) for property located at 180 Hutcheson Drive/104 Quarter Street, Rossville, GA 30741. Tax map & parcel number 0-119-002 & 002A.

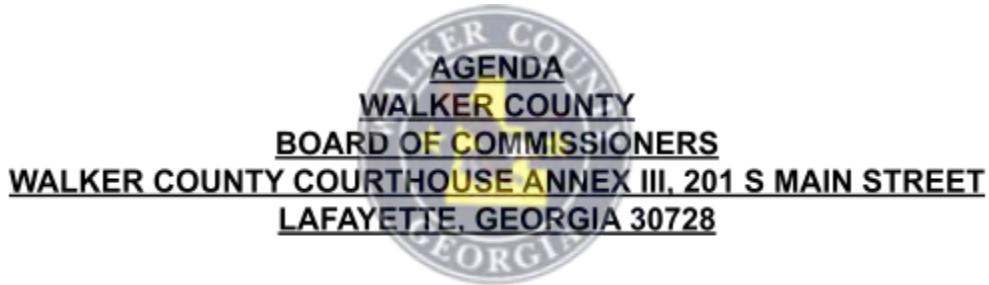
R.L. Wooten: Requests a rezone from A-1 (Agricultural) to C-1 (Commercial) for property located at 6560 Hwy 151 LaFayette, GA. 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-516-012A.

See Rock City c/o Doug Chapin: Requests a rezone from R-1 (Residential) to C-1 (Commercial) for property located at 0 Hwy 157 Lookout Mountain, GA. 30750. Tax map & parcel number 0-044-001.

Kelly Lee Griffin & Paige Griffin: Requests a rezone from R-2 (Residential) to C-1 (Commercial) for property located at 3404 N. Hwy 27 LaFayette, GA. 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-322-4-003.

Randal Dalton: Requests a variance for property located at 10161 N. Hwy 27 Rock Spring, GA 30739. Tax map & parcel number 0-325-026.

- **Public Comment**



- **Unfinished Business**

Ordinance O-01b-24 to Amend Chapter 22 (Land Use) of the Code of Walker County (*sections tabled on 11/14/24*)

Ordinance O-03-24 to Amend Chapter 6 (Animal Code) of the Code of Walker County

- **New Business**

Resolution R-045-24 / R-001-25 to Amend the Enabling Act of Walker County

Resolution R-046-24 to Repeal a Temporary Moratorium on the Acceptance of Permits Regarding Solar Energy Systems

Resolution R-047-24 to Participate in the Georgia Department of Transportation Local Bridge Replacement Program

Resolution R-048-24 to Adjust the Supplement to Compensation for the Solicitor General of Walker County Court

Resolution R-049-24 to Set the Annual Compensation for the Walker County Coroner

Resolution R-050-24 to Establish the Supplement to Compensation for the Sheriff of Walker County

Resolution R-051-24 to Declare Walker County Fire Rescue Property as Surplus

Resolution R-052-24 to Appoint a Member to the Bridge Health Board

Resolution R-053-24 to Appoint a Member to the Walker County Board of Assessors

Amend the List of State Roads in Walker County to Permit the Georgia Department of Transportation to Revise the Speed Limit on a Section of Highway 193 from 55 mph to 50 mph

Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit Drug Task Force Intergovernmental Contract

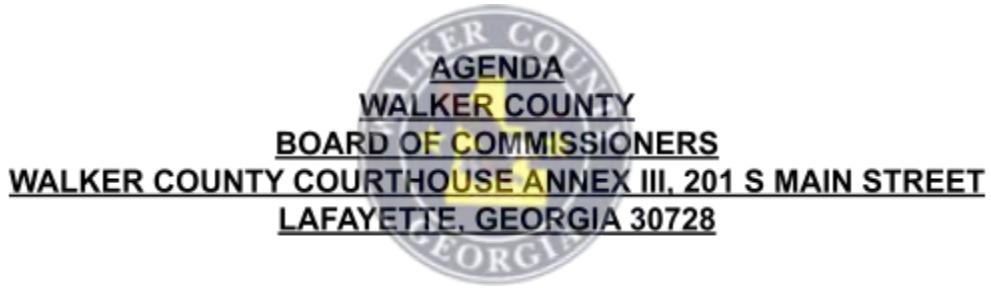
Office of the Governor Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Subgrant Award, Project Name: Mental Health Court, Subgrant Number: J25-8-073

Memorandum of Understanding Between Walker County, the City of Chickamauga and World Triathlon Corporation

Transportation Services Contract by Transit Alliance Group, Inc. with Walker County Transit

Purchase Order 2025-00000473 for \$52,862.00 to Prater's Ford for F250 Command Staff Vehicle for Walker County Fire Rescue

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November 2024 Department Statistics

- **Commissioner Comments**
- **Executive Session** (if necessary)
- **Adjourn**

NEXT MEETING - 6:30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025



Walker County Governmental Authority

101 South Duke Street, P.O. Box 445

LaFayette, GA 30728

706-638-1437

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

November 14, 2024 - 6:30 PM

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Shannon Whitfield called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners held at Courthouse Annex III, 201 S. Main Street, LaFayette, Georgia at 6:30 PM on November 14, 2024.

II. Attendees:

The following were present: Chairman Shannon Whitfield, Commissioner Robert Blakemore, Commissioner Mark Askew, Commissioner Brian Hart, Commissioner Robert Stultz, Legal and Policy Director David Gottlieb, Deputy Clerk Jessica Staton, Planning and Zoning Director Jon Pursley, Fire and Rescue Deputy Chief Nathan Farrow, Public Relations Director Joe Legge. Other guests signed in at the meeting as well. Please see the attached sign in sheet.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Chairman Whitfield stated that there was a need to amend the agenda to add a Purchase Order for the Fire Department and an access agreement between Walker County and Environmental Protection Division. Chairman Whitfield made a motion to approve the agenda with the modifications, seconded by Commissioner Hart, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Scheduled Meeting held October 24, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Stultz, 4 ayes and 0 nays, minutes were approved unanimously.

V. Public Hearing (Ordinance Amendments):

A. Ordinance O-01-24 to Amend the Land Use Code (Tabled on 10/24/2024)

1. Jamey Hulsey stated that he appreciated the separation of these items so that people can bring attention to certain items. He stated that he is for solar energy technology but his concern regarding solar panels are that they only produce energy 30% of the year, placement of these solar panels would take down trees and he's concerned about the disposal of the solar panels in the event that the solar panel company went bankrupt.
2. Scott McNabb stated his concern that no elaborate discussion was made by the Planning Commission and that they had tabled this draft ordinance.

B. Ordinance O-02-24 to Amend the Alcoholic Beverage Code

1. Ned Yates questioned if this ordinance would apply to farm wineries. The section to be amended only addresses retail liquor stores.

C. Ordinance O-03-24 to Amend the Animal Code

1. Ned Yates questioned how the ordinance would be enforced. He stated that there is not enough staff to enforce ordinances like these and he does not want someone coming onto his property without his permission.
2. Karen Miller thanked the staff of the Walker County Animal Shelter and Animal Control. She vocalized that people abandoning animals puts a burden on the shelter staff. She stated that she would rather see her tax dollars go to a spaying and neutering ordinance rather than euthanizing.
3. Jamey Hulsey spoke about his concern for overpopulation of animals.
4. Mary Mayo said she believes this is an example of extreme government overreach.

VII. Public Comment:

1. Scott McNabb discussed the commissioners splitting up Ordinance O-01-24. McNabb questioned why the Planning Commission Chair is not present at the meetings. He also questioned why Jon Pursley was the spokesperson for the planning ordinances at the meetings.
2. Jim Pope questioned Commissioner's Stultz interpretation of the exemption clause in the Enabling Act. He gave his opinion of what he thought the exemption clause meant.
3. Randy Pittman, a representative of the Walker County Historic Commission, talked about putting wreaths on the veterans graves at the Tennessee Georgia Memorial Park. He stated they were about $\frac{1}{2}$ from their fundraising goal and still needed volunteers. They will lay the wreaths on December 14 at 8 a.m. and thanked all the sponsors for this event.
4. Ned Yates questioned the commissioner's actions. He mentioned the lack of rent collected on the Rossville recreation center. He talked about his discomfort with changing the commission meetings to one time a month. He asked the board to do their due diligence. He added he wants to see Mountain Cove Farms profitable for Walker County.
5. Commissioner Askew stated that changing to one meeting a month gives the Board time to do their due diligence and get the answers the public is looking for.
6. Jamey Hulsey claimed the Enabling Act requires the Board to have two meetings a month. He stated that he believes there are not enough public hearings. He suggested that the county have committees and forums.

VIII. Unfinished Business

1. Ordinance O-01-24 to Amend the Land Use Code (Tabled on 10/24/2024)
 - a. Commissioner Hart stated this was presented originally as a package deal, however the Planning Commission work session is only an hour and due the amount of items within this ordinance, it was not enough time to discuss everything. Commissioner Hart stated he believes the Board should follow the Planning Commission's recommendation and table this ordinance.
 - b. Commissioner Stultz requested the Planning and Zoning Director Jon Pursely to come to the podium.
 - c. Jon Pursely stated that some verbiage will change. The reason for the change is that the land development code as a whole is changing. This is uniformed throughout all municipalities.
 - d. The Board discussed the life safety issues and their concern to get these voted on for the safety of the citizens.
 - e. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the Land Use Code with the exceptions of 12, 13, 14 and 15. Commissioner Blakemore seconded the motion. 4 ayes, 0 nayes motion approved unanimously.

IX. New Business

- A. Ordinance O-02-24 to Amend the Alcoholic Beverage Code
 - a. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve the ordinance, Commissioner Hart seconded the motion, 4 ayes, 0 nayes. Motion approved unanimously
- B. Resolution R-041-24 to Authorize the Filing of an Application with the Georgia Department of Transportation for Public Transportation Assistance.
 - a. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the resolution, Commissioner Askew seconded the motion, 4 ayes, 0 nayes. The resolution was approved unanimously.
- C. Resolution R-042-24 to Enact a Temporary Moratorium on the Acceptance of Permits Regarding Solar Energy Systems.
 - a. Commissioner Blakemore made a motion to approve the resolution, Commissioner Hart seconded the motion. 4 ayes, 0 nayes resolution approved unanimously.
- D. Resolution R-043-24 to Repeal a Temporary Moratorium on the Acceptance of Applications for New Licenses for Retail Package Sales of distilled Spirits.
 - a. Commissioner Hart made a motion to approve the resolution, Commissioner Stultz seconded the motion. Resolution R-043-24 approved unanimously.
- E. Resolution R-044-24 to Authorize Participation in the ACCG - Interlocal Risk Management Agency Supplemental Medical, Accident, and Disability Fund: First Responder PTSD Program
 - a. Commissioner Askew made a motion to approve the resolution, Commissioner Blakemore seconded the motion. 4 ayes, 0 nayes Resolution unanimously approved.
- F. Memorandum of Agreement between Georgia Department of Transportation and Walker County for Right of Way.
 - a. Commissioner Blakemore motioned to approve the memorandum of Agreement, Commissioner Stultz seconded the motion. 3 ayes, 0 Nayes, Commissioner Hart recused himself because his property adjoins this bridge, he did not vote due to a possible conflict of interest. Motion carried.
- G. Memorandum of Understanding between the Cottage of Walker, Dade, Catoosa, and Chattooga Counties Inc and the Walker County Board of Commissioners.
 - a. Commissioner Hart motioned to approve the memorandum of understanding, Commissioner Askew seconded the motion. 4 ayes, 0 nayes. Memorandum of Understanding unanimously approved.
- H. Grant of Easement between Garrison Investments, LLC and Walker County, Georgia.
 - a. Commissioner Stultz motioned to accept the grant of easement, Commissioner Hart seconded the acceptance. 4 ayes, 0 nayes. Acceptance approved.

- I. Purchase Order 2025-00000243 for \$34,658.24 to Point Security Inc. for courthouse security equipment (Funding from ARPA)
 - a. Commissioner Askew motioned to ratify the purchase order, Commissioner Blakemore seconded the motion. 4 ayes
- J. FY 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) - Local Solicitation
 - a. Commissioner Blakemore motioned to approve the Grant, Commissioner Hart seconded the motion, 4 ayes, 0 nayes. Motion carried.
- K. Purchase Order 2025-00000289 for \$45,000 to Municipal Equipment Co. LLC for an air compressor cascade system for Walker County Fire Rescue
 - a. Deputy Chief Nathan Farrow came forward to discuss that there was a demo available for purchase. This DEMO has 16 hours on it and comes with the same warranty as a new one. Purchasing this DEMO would save the county approximately \$15 thousand as the fire department intended on buying one after the beginning of 2025.
 - b. Commissioner Stultz motioned to approve the purchase order, Commissioner Askew seconded the motion. 4 ayes, 0 nayes. Purchase order approved.
- L. Acknowledgement and Grant of License and Access between Walker County and the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources
 - a. County Attorney David Gotlieb stated this is an access agreement for a chert pit that the county owns that adjoins private property that EDP has determined significant hazardous materials on it. This agreement will give access to EDP to access county property on N Marbletop RD to retrieve the hazardous materials. There are about 250 containers of hazardous materials on this property. Our Public Works Director and EPD have mapped out a trail for them to use to safely retrieve the materials.
 - b. Commissioner Hart motioned to approve the agreement, Commissioner Blakemore seconded the motion, 4 ayes, 0 nayes. Agreement approved.
- M. October 2024 Department Statistics
 - a. Mountain Cove Farms had 48 nights in September booked and 68 nights in October booked.
 - b. Newsletter subscriptions went down by 18 due to inactive accounts being cleaned from the subscriber roles, but there are still 6153 subscriptions.
 - c. Siren GPS had 131 new subscribers. This puts Walker County at 999 new subscribers for the year.

X. Commissioner Comments:

1. Commissioner Blakemore commented that he appreciates everyone coming out to the meeting and being involved. He appreciates the hard work and dedication of all our county employees and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.
2. Commissioner Askew thanked everyone for their participation. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.
3. Commissioner Hart thanked everyone for being at the meeting. He commented on several events that happened regarding Veterans day. He stated there are a lot of great events happening in Walker County.
4. Commissioner Stultz stated that he appreciates the hard work and dedication of our County Staff, He commented on the Veterans event that happened Tuesday and thanked Randy Pittman, Tina Gross for hosting a great event. He wished everyone a Happy and safe thanksgiving.
5. Chairman Whitfield announced that the ground breaking for Adventures Acres happened earlier this week. He stated that the target opening day is Memorial Day of 2025 and the county had contracted with Pillar Construction on the site prep. Chairman Whitfield thanked Joe Legge for all his hard work on this project as he has been the point for this project. Due to the holiday schedule, the next meeting will be on December 19th at 6:30pm. This will be the last meeting of the year.

XII. Adjournment:

Commissioner Hart made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Askew seconded the motion. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Shannon K. Whitfield
Chairman/CEO
Walker County Georgia

Date

Regular Scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting

Walker County Annex III

November 14, 2024

6:30 PM

Roll Call **Present/Absent**

Commissioner Blakemore Present

Commissioner Askew Present

Chairman Whitfield Present

Commissioner Hart Present

Commissioner Stultz Present



Sign in Sheet

Regular Scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting

November 14, 2024

6:30 PM

Name

Barc Phnt

Address

Randy P. Pittman - WCHP

KEITH HUNTER

151 HOLLY ROCK LANE

Melvin Mays

Logan

PAULIE ZOLY

Loganville

Rebby Mays

Scott Mays

Roswell

NET YATES

Rising Fm

Travis Middlefor

Flintstone

Gene Wilson

Flintstone

Jim Rose

Villanow

Karen Miller

7365 N Marble Top Rd

Greg Davidson

Road

Dianne Keith

424 Ridgeway Rd LaFayette

Carla Sims

Road Dept

Bobby W. Sudder

LaFayette GA

Mary Mayo

Flintstone

Dakota Center

Sally & David Worland 385 Hidden Hollow 30707

Rachel Boykin

Family Crisis Center

Robert Tait

LaFayette



Proclamation

BY THE WALKER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS *APPRECIATION FOR CHARLES WARDLAW*

WHEREAS: After graduating from high school, Charles Wardlaw worked for 12 years with the Georgia State Highway Department, serving as a Project Engineer; and

WHEREAS: Wardlaw left the State Highway Department in 1970 to start his own private land surveying business; and

WHEREAS: Upon the resignation of the Jack Kinsey as Walker County Surveyor, Probate Judge W.L. Abney appointed Wardlaw to serve the remaining two years of Kinsey's term on September 22, 1970; and

WHEREAS: Wardlaw was elected to the Surveyor's position on November 7, 1972 and re-elected to 12 additional terms; and

WHEREAS: Wardlaw has performed numerous surveys in his position, including boundary land surveys, topographical surveys and construction surveys;

THEREFORE: I, Shannon K. Whitfield, on behalf of the Walker County Board of Commissioners, do hereby recognize and congratulate Charles Wardlaw for his 54-years of distinguished service to our community and urge all citizens to extend their appreciation to Mr. Wardlaw as he prepares for his next endeavor..

Signed and sealed this 19th day of December in the year 2024.

Chairman Shannon K. Whitfield



ORDINANCE O-01-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 34 OF THE CODE OF WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA REGARDING UTILITIES; TO PROVIDE FOR BROADBAND READY COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION AND OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is the governing authority for Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Walker County desires for every resident to have reliable and affordable access to the internet, along with the necessary tools and skills that unlock opportunities for educational advancement, economic success, improved health and strengthened social ties; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Georgia General Assembly passed SB402, also known as Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act to encourage greater access to broadband services throughout the state by removing obstacles to the deployment of broadband infrastructure to homes and businesswise due to their location in rural and other underserved area; and

WHEREAS, the Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2022-2032 set forth a community goal to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment, adopt a strategy to promote broadband growth in the community, and attain Broadband Ready Community status from the state; and

WHEREAS, the County, as part of the Appalachian Digital Accelerator program and in collaboration with Thrive Regional Partnership, developed a “Community Connectivity Plan” to serve as a guiding document for making decisions about identified broadband deployment projects and digital skills training; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to leverage the data compiled in the Community Connectivity Plan to resolve identified gaps in broadband access and digital equity through federal programs such as the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity Act programs;

THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County that Chapter 34 of the Code of Walker County, Georgia is amended as follows:

ARTICLE I. IN GENERAL

Section 34-1. Community Connectivity Plan adopted.

The Walker County Community Connectivity Plan, which will be periodically updated, and its priorities, is adopted and shall serve to guide public and private policy to encourage greater access to broadband services throughout the county.

Section 34-2 – 34-11 Reserved.

ARTICLE II. BROADBAND NETWORK PROJECTS

Section 34-12. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings

ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Applicant means a person applying for a permit for a broadband network project.

Application means a written request on the form(s) designated by the County for a permit for a broadband network project.

Broadband network project means any deployment of broadband services.

Permit means any local permit, license, certificate approval, registration, or similar form of approval required by policy, administrative rule, regulation, ordinance, or resolution with respect to a broadband network project.

Section 34-13. Single Point of Contact.

The County shall appoint a single point of contact for all matters related to a broadband network project:

- a)** The single point of contact shall be the Walker County Planning Director, who may be reached at 706-638-4048 or planning@walkerga.us.
- b)** The single point of contact shall be available for matters related to a broadband network project or a related liaison who may direct such inquiry in real time, with general scope and responsibilities to include permitting and right-of-way.
- c)** The single point of contact information shall remain current with contact information updated within 15 calendar days of a change at walkercountyga.gov.

Section 34-14. Application Completeness Review.

- a)** The County shall determine whether an application is incomplete and notify the applicant, by email, of the determination by the County within 10 calendar days of receiving an application.
- b)** If the County does not respond to the applicant on whether the application is incomplete, within 10 calendar days, the application shall be assumed to be complete on the 11th day.

Section 34-15. Notification of Incomplete Application.

- a)** If the County determines that an application is not complete, the notification by email to the applicant shall specify all required components of the submitted application that were considered 'incomplete'; and
- b)** The County's response shall include a checklist of sequenced items that resulted in the application being deemed 'incomplete' and the review timeline shall be as follows:
 - i. The applicant has up to 40 calendar days from the date of notification of incompleteness to respond back with corrections; and
 - ii. If the applicant does not respond back within 40 calendar days, the application is deemed canceled.
- c)** If within 10 calendar days the County does not respond to the applicant on whether the corrected application is incomplete, the application shall be assumed to be complete on the 11th day.
- d)** The County shall require a new submission and reset the process and application fees, should an application be deemed incomplete a second time.

Section 34-16. Approval or Denial Notification.

If, on or before the 11th day as described in 34-14(b), an application is deemed complete, the County shall approve or deny an application within 10 calendar days, unless a joint meeting between the applicant and the County is deemed necessary.

- a) If a joint meeting is deemed necessary, the joint meeting must occur within 15 calendar days of notification of completion and the joint meeting shall include:
 - i. Where applicant is going to conduct work; and
 - ii. When the work will be conducted; and
 - iii. What type of work will be done; and
 - iv. Who the County can contact for specific details or related questions; and
 - v. Any permit seeking approval under application.

Following a joint meeting between the applicant and the County, the County shall deny or approve the application within 10 calendar days.

- b) Upon final approval, any required permit shall be deemed issued.

Section 34-17. Related Fees.

- a) Any fee imposed by the County to review an application, issue a permit, or perform any other activity related to a broadband network project shall be reasonable, cost based, and nondiscriminatory to all applicants.
- b) Any application fee that exceeds \$100.00 shall be considered unreasonable, unless the County provides documentation justifying such fee based on a specific cost.

Section 34-18. Other Information.

- a) **Double Fee:** The County shall not require an application or permit(s) when already approved by an authorized state or federal jurisdiction. Provider shall notify and provide a copy of the approved permit to the single-point-of-contact at the County prior to access of right-of-way within the County's jurisdiction.
- b) **Application Validity Timeline:** Any approved application shall be valid for six months from the date of approval. Should a provider not commence the service request qualified in the approved application within six months, the application shall expire, and it shall require a new permit approval and any associated fees, as applicable.
- c) **Single Service Drop:** The County shall not require a permit for a broadband service provider to perform an installation of broadband service at an individual customer's service address as long as the facility being utilized only transverses a de minimis portion of the public right-of-way to reach the customer's property. The provider must still comply with the provisions of Chapter 9 of Title 25 of the O.C.G.A.

Section 34-19. Broadband Ready Community.

Walker County acknowledges:

- a) A Georgia Certified Broadband Ready Community has an affirmative duty to notify the Georgia Department of Community Affairs of any changes to the information submitted as part of its application; and
- b) Failure to notify Georgia Department of Community Affairs of changes may result in revocation of Walker County's Broadband Ready Certification, should the certification be granted.

3.

This ordinance is effective immediately upon its adoption.

4.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

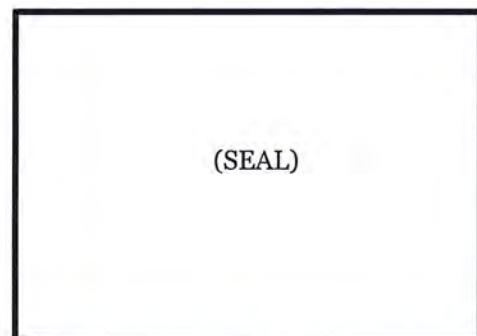
5.

If any section, clause, sentence, or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST:

Jessica Staton, Deputy Clerk



WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

ANGIE TEEMS, Chairwoman

The foregoing Ordinance received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY PLAN

Prepared by Thrive Regional Partnership



**WALKER COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan was created as part of the Appalachia Digital Accelerator, a Connect Humanity program funded by the Appalachia Regional Commission with additional support from Truist Foundation and Ford Foundation.

CONNECTIVITY PLAN AUTHORS

This plan was written by the following individuals:

- Shannon Millsaps, COO, Thrive Regional Partnership
- Virginia Petitte, Project Coordinator, Thrive Regional Partnership
- Joe Legge, Public Relations Director, Walker County
- Dakiya Porter, Communications Specialist, Walker County

CONTRIBUTORS

The following people and organizations were critical to the planning process:

- Michelle Smith, Data and Research Analyst, Thrive Regional Partnership
- Rhett Bentley, CCO, Thrive Regional Partnership
- Debra Socia, President/CEO, The Enterprise Center
- Sammy Lowdermilk, Program Director, The Enterprise Center

We would like to thank the following people who participated in interviews, shared insight, and gave feedback during the Asset Inventory research.

- April Ashley, Co-owner, Freedom From Laundry LLC
- Bob Swanson, Network Operations Supervisor, Walker County School System
- Chelsea Kovalevskiy, Assistant Director, Cherokee Regional Library System
- Damon Raines, Superintendent, Walker County School System
- Dwight Watt, EdD, CIST Instructor, Georgia Northwestern Technical College
- Glen Brown, Walker County School System
- John Donahoo, District Vice President, North Georgia Community YMCA
- Laura Beth Newsom, Coordinator, Walker Family Connections
- Lecia Eubanks, Director, Cherokee Regional Library
- Marlena Smith, LaFayette Housing Authority
- Marshana Sharp, Next Chapter
- Preston Lewis, Manager, Walker County Senior Life Services
- Sam Bowman, Cedar Grove Community Center
- Scott Harden, Coordinator of Technology, Walker County School System
- Wade Hutcheson, Extension Agent, UGA Extension Walker County

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Executive Summary

Walker County recognizes that digital connectivity is essential for all residents to participate in the workforce, have access to public healthcare, engage in community resources, support agriculture, connect with emergency response services, and provide educational opportunities. In response to the State of Georgia's Digital Connectivity Plan, Walker County conducted the following Connectivity Plan assessment to:

- *Understand the local community needs as they relate to the digital divide;*
- *Discover opportunities for digital connectivity;*
- *Identify gaps in broadband access and digital equity that could be resolved through federal funding programs such as the upcoming implementation of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity Act (DEA) programs.*

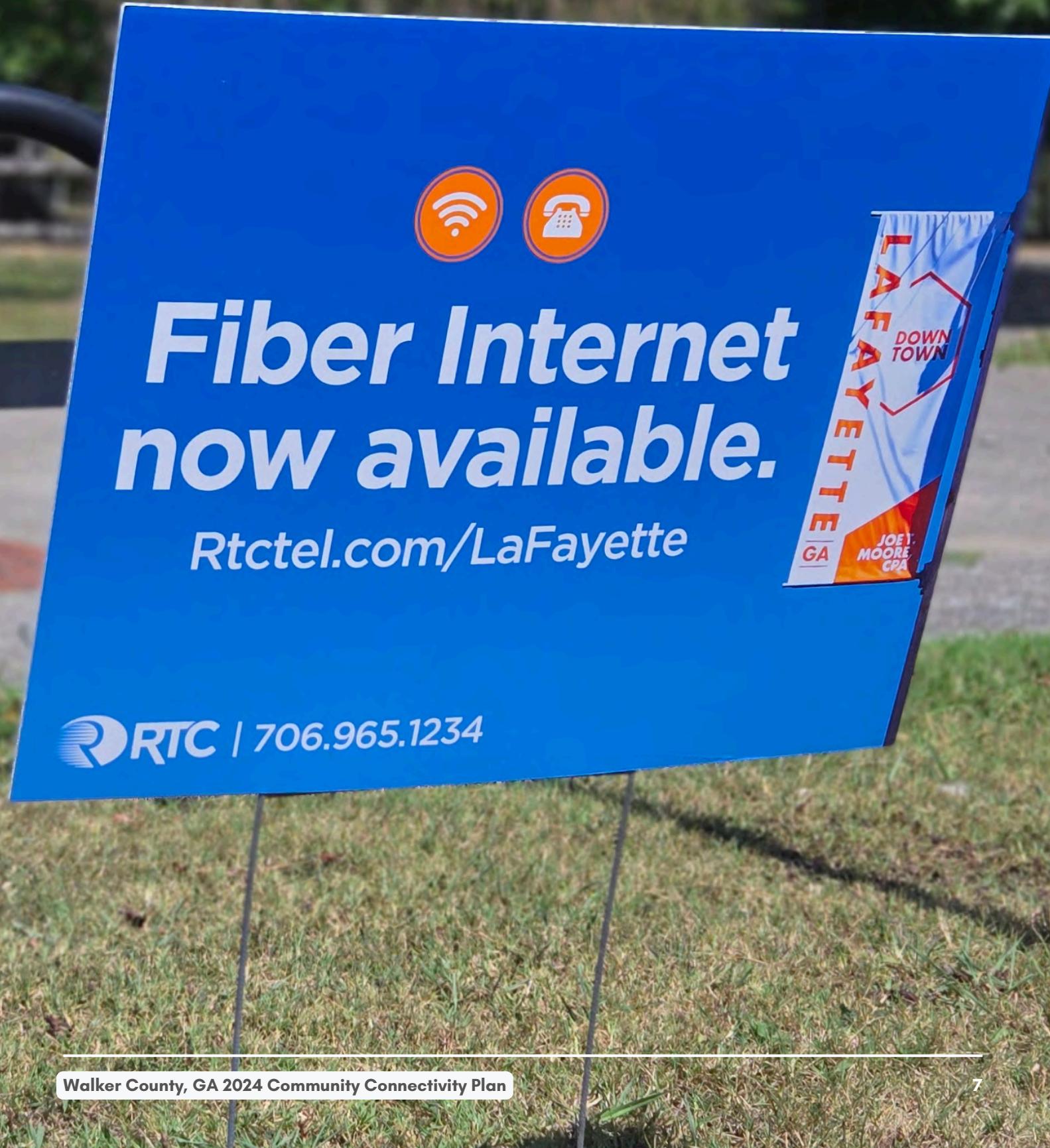
Walker County aims to ensure that all of its residents and businesses have access to fast, reliable internet service, providing equal opportunities for all throughout the county. The county also acknowledges the importance of a strategic plan to achieve this connectivity. This Digital Connectivity Plan marks the initial phase in developing a strategic plan and serves as a guiding document for Walker County in making decisions about identified broadband deployment projects and digital skills training. For maximum effectiveness, this document must be dynamic and continuously evolving.

Internet access is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity for schools, businesses and healthcare to function in the 21st century. Yet, there is a major disparity in broadband service across Walker County, ranging from variable speeds to unserved and underserved areas. Additionally, digital skills are required for most jobs (over 90% in the State of Georgia¹ and 92% of jobs nationally require at least one digital skill) and directly impact the median hourly wage received (wage increases in correspondence to the number of digital skills required in a role)². Residents of Walker County expect broadband service that is accessible, affordable, and reliable. In a post COVID-19 environment, the importance of connectivity has become all the more evident as a necessity for the welfare of residents.

Detailed recommendations are outlined within this plan, however, **the biggest need identified is for all Walker County residents and businesses to have access to fast and reliable internet service**. This can only be advanced through the collaboration and partnership of stakeholders across organizations and sectors. Yet service is not accessible if it is not also affordable. Many Walker County residents who have access to the internet are paying too much for inadequate service. While affordability cannot be addressed directly through potential grant opportunities, it is possible through the expansion of access options.

¹National Skills Coalition

²Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta



**Fiber Internet
now available.**

Rtctel.com/LaFayette

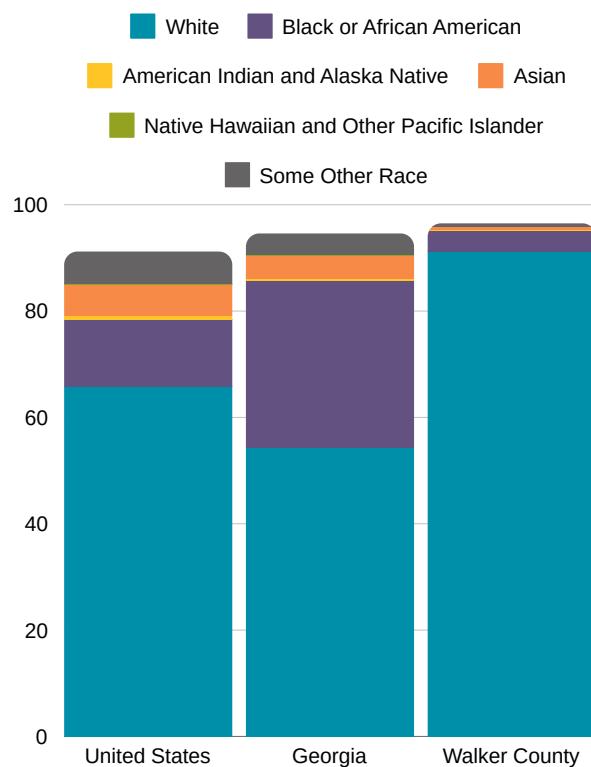
RTC | 706.965.1234

Preliminary Research and Readiness

Walker County, Georgia is located in northwest Georgia with a population of 68,065 residents according to 2022 census data³ and is considered to be located in the Valley and Ridge province of Georgia (flat ridges and fertile valleys with limestone aquifers)⁴. Walker County has a long history in agriculture which is still reflected in the composition of the land. Five cities are incorporated in the 446 square miles: Chickamauga, LaFayette, Lookout Mountain, Rossville, and a small portion of Fort Oglethorpe.

The most recent data from the 2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates is used to best represent Walker County, with the understanding that the years following 2020 have been ones of change and migration of place.

Demographic Profile



GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Demographic Data

Total Population Number	68,065
Square Miles Covered	446
Number of People per Square Mile	152
Residents Who Identify as White	91.2% ⁵
Residents Who Identify as Black	4%
Residents Who Identify as Hispanic or Latino	2.7%
Residents Who Identify as Asian	0.6%
Residents Who Identify as Indigenous	0.2%
Residents Who Identify as Native Hawaiian	0%
Residents Who Identify as Other	0.5%
Residents Who Identify as Two or More Races	3.5%

³ U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, 2022.

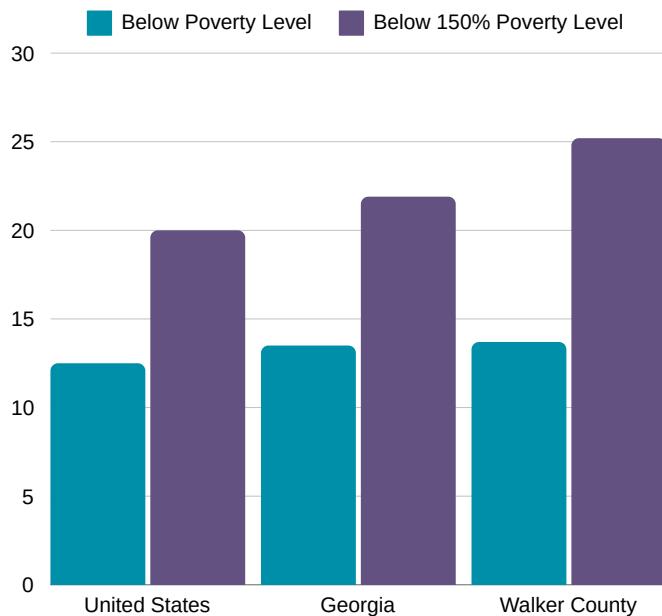
⁴ Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, 2022.

Preliminary Research and Readiness

Total Number of Households	26,087 ⁶
Households That Are Owner Occupied	74.3%
Average Household Size	2.55 ⁷
Mean Household Income	\$71,206 ⁸
Median Household Income	\$52,276
Unemployment Rate (16 years old and above)	5.5% ⁹
Individuals Living Below the Poverty Line	13.7% ¹⁰
Individuals Below 150% of Poverty Line	25.2%

Population Poverty Level



⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Housing Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04, 2022.

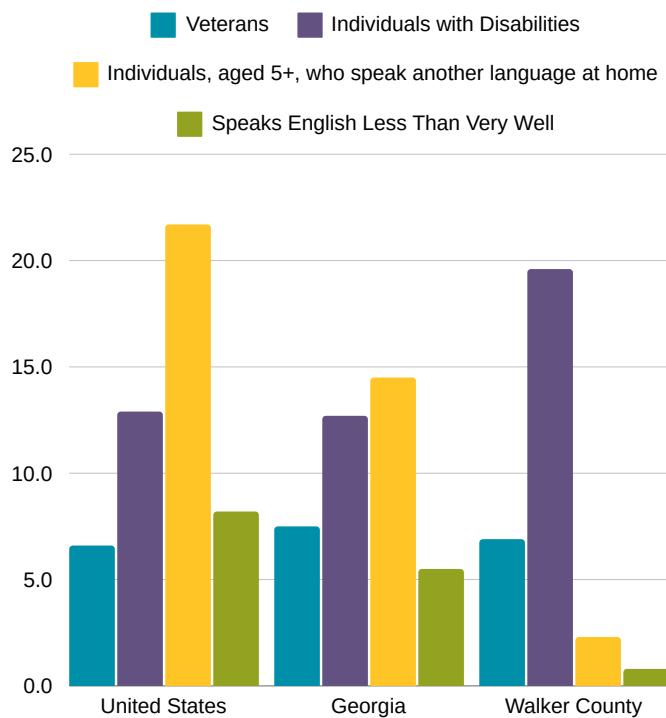
⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Social Characteristics in the United States." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP02, 2022.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. "Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1901, 2022.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Employment Status." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2301, 2022.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, 2022

Covered Populations



Individuals with a Disability	19.6% ¹¹
Aging Population (60 years old and older)	25.6% ¹²
Less than a 9th grade education (25 and older)	5.4% ¹³
Speak a language other than English at home (5 years and older)	2.3% ¹⁴
Speaks English less than very well	0.8%
Veterans	6.9% ¹⁵

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Disability Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1810, 2022

¹² U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2022

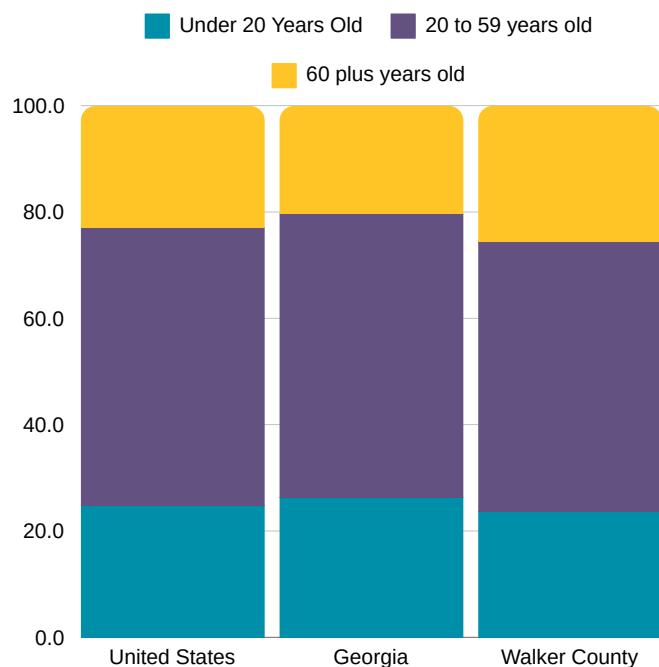
¹³ U.S. Census Bureau. "Educational Attainment." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1501, 2022

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. "Language Spoken at Home." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1601, 2022

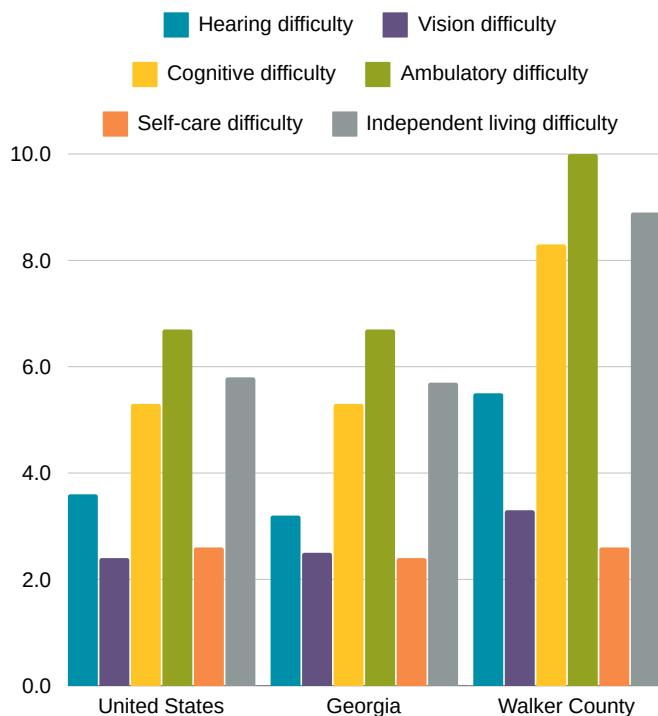
¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. "Veteran Status." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2101, 2022

Social determinants vary significantly from one community to another and addressing these determinants is crucial for promoting a strong, healthy, connected community for Walker County. Although there can be general assumptions about the impact of certain social determinants, the true story of the individual can never be wholly captured as often more than one social determinant impacts the individual, making addressing needs complex.

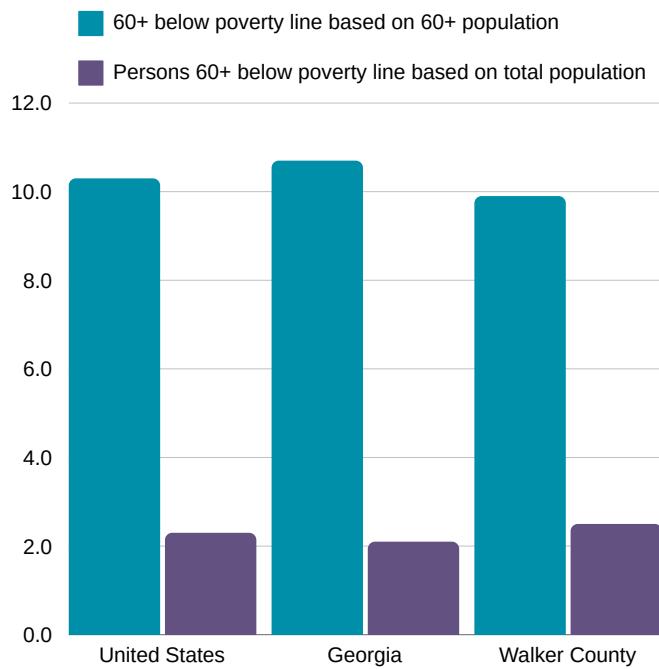
Population Distribution by Age



Disability by Type



Poverty Level Aged 60 plus



SOCIAL DETERMINANT

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Income Inequality

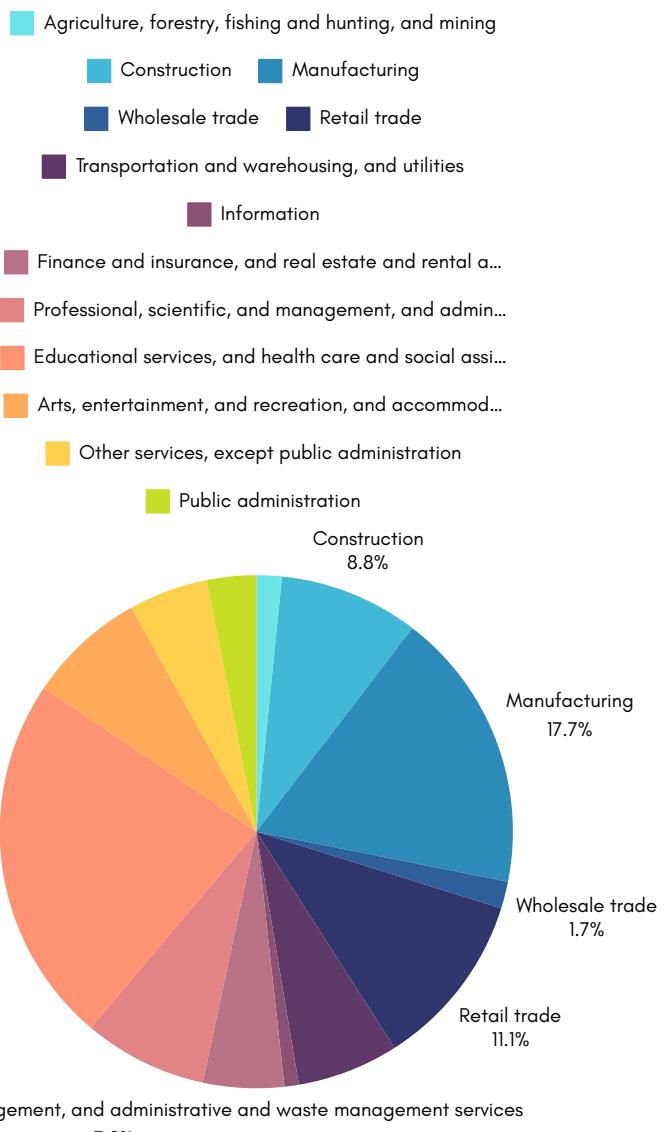
According to Living Wage Calculator, two working adults with one child need \$75,639¹⁶ annually in Walker County. However, the median household income (with an average household of 2.55 people) is \$52,276, showing a significant gap between the living wage required and household income earned. Compared with Georgia, the state Living Wage is \$87,202¹⁷ and median household income is \$71,355¹⁸, showing a smaller gap between actual earnings and true cost of living.

Unemployment Rate

59.86% of the population in Walker County is considered eligible for the workforce (between the ages of 18-64). Labor force participation for the population over 16 years is 58.8% ¹⁹ (lower than state and national averages) while unemployment rates are 5.5%. According to the National Skills Coalition, Georgia's most in-demand foundational digital skills needed for employment are: computer literacy, data entry, Microsoft Excel, Outlook and Word Processing, typing, and social media skills²⁰.

Educational services, and health care and social assistance
23.3%

Employment by Industry



¹⁶ Living Wage Calculator – Walker County

¹⁷ Living Wage Calculator - Georgia

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. "Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1901, 2022

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Economic Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, 2022.

B7.00, 2022

Poverty Levels

13.7% of the people in Walker County live below the poverty line which is similar to the state's poverty level of 13.5% ²¹. Yet there is a larger delta between the state and Walker County for those who live below 150% of the poverty line. 61.2% of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch (compared to Georgia with 59.6% and nationally of 53.5%²²) Female householders with children under 18 and no spouse are more vulnerable and require food stamps/supplemental nutrition assistance programs (27.5%, compared to male householders with 3.5%²³).

Lack of Economic Opportunities

Walker County is considered a Tier 3 Community based on state designated economic tiers enabling specific industries to be eligible for Job Tax Credits²⁴. LaFayette specifically is designated as a Rural Zone, which allows for Job Tax Credits, Investment Credits, and Rehabilitation Credits. Similarly, Rossville is also designated as a Rural Zone²⁵. Walker County's roots started in agriculture and include a history in the mill and textile industries. The lack of a geographic center of commerce requires the ability to travel for work. Currently, Roper Corporation is the largest employer in Walker County, which is also representative of the largest industry for employment - manufacturing.

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, 2022

²² NCES

²³ U.S. Census Bureau. "Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2201, 2022

²⁴ Georgia Job Tax Credit

²⁵ Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan

²⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. "Educational Attainment." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1501, 2022

²⁷ Walker County Business & Economic Development

EDUCATION

Educational Attainment

85% of the population 25 years and over have a high school education or higher. Of that 35.5% have high school only, 22% some college, 7.9% associate's degree, 12.5% bachelor's degree, and 7.2% higher²⁶.

Access to Quality Education

The Walker County School System is made up of 15 public schools, K-12, with 89.9% of students enrolled in public school. Georgia Northwestern Technical College, vocational-technical college, is located in Walker County. Walker County is home to the best welding school in the nation according to Skills USA which has consistently ranked Georgia Northwestern Technical College at the top in the Nation for this trade²⁷.

Ready for College, Ready for Work, Ready for Life

Walker Launch is a college and career academy enabling students to earn both college and high school credit at the same time through a partnership between Walker County Schools and Georgia Northwestern Technical College. Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) bridges the gap between core academic areas and a career.

HEALTHCARE

Healthcare Access

There are no hospitals in Walker County or after hour care. Residents must travel to bordering counties or utilize telehealth. Chickamauga, LaFayette, and Rossville all have medical offices for healthcare accessibility.

Health Insurance

86.6% of Walker County residents have health insurance and 13.4% are uninsured²⁸.

HOUSING

Affordable Housing

The cost of housing has increased steadily in Walker County. The median housing market value increased by 56% between 2015 and 2020²⁹. The median rent has increased from \$702³⁰ to \$847³¹ in the last five years. As of 2024, according to the Walker County Assessors' Office, there are approximately 465 duplexes, and only 27 triplexes in Walker County. There are 157 four or more unit complexes.

Housing Quality

Substandard housing effects 24.89% of Walker County³². Both LaFayette and Rossville are participating in the Georgia Initiative of Community Housing to address blight and new housing development³³. 63% of Rossville's housing stock was built over 50 years ago, while nearly 48% of LaFayette's housing stock is more than half a century old³⁴. County wide, over 50% of the homes were built before 1980³⁵.

Homeownership

Walker County has high rates of home ownership (74.3%³⁶ of homes are owner occupied). 52.3% housing units have a mortgage with the median mortgage being \$1,273. 24.28% of households live in cost burdened households with 45.1% of those being rental households³⁷. Only 1.9% of those who moved into a house in 2021 or later are owner-occupied.

CULTURAL CHARACTER

Natural

A limestone aquifer system provides the availability of clean water, while over 30,000 acres³⁸ have been preserved in conservation to protect mountains and watersheds from urban development. Rock Creek is an unpolluted, undisturbed tributary.

²⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Characteristics of Health Insurance Coverage in the United States." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2701, 2022

²⁹ Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan

³⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. "SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04, 2017

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Housing Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04, 2022

³² Sparkmap Community Needs Assessment - Walker County, GA

³³ Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan

³⁴ Housing Program - LaFayette and Rossville

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Housing Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04, 2022

³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Housing Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04, 2022

³⁷ Sparkmap - Community Needs Assessment Walker County, GA

³⁸ Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Crockford-Pigeon Mountain and Lulu Lake Land Trust

Historic

Originally Cherokee land, Walker County was formed in 1833 and was the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. In 1890, the site of the battlefield was dedicated as the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park. Coal deposits located in the Appalachian Plateau powered industrial production in the past. Walker County is made up of former mill towns and is home to 17 sites on the National Register of Historic Places, including the John Ross House, which was constructed in 1797.

Scenic

Unique rock formations and natural vistas draw visitors to Walker County to enjoy the beauty that abounds.



Canon and monument positioned in one of the park's open meadows. Photo courtesy: Bob Butters

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Infrastructure Investment

There has been a significant investment in the roads of Walker County in recent years. Funding made possible through a special tax for transportation projects has enabled the repaving of roads, bridge work and other transportation improvements³⁹. Additionally, there has been investment by the Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority to provide clean drinking water for the county, supplying water to underserved and unserved rural communities, and redirecting the sewer system from the north end of the county to a treatment plant in Chickamauga, rather than Chattanooga⁴⁰.

Environmental Hazards

There are a number of brownfield sites due to old manufacturing facilities that are no longer in operation and require specialized redevelopment. The county launched a brownfield assessment program in 2022 to develop cleanup plans for up to 30 sites. Chickamauga is largely located in a floodplain making further development an issue.

³⁹ TSPLOST

⁴⁰ Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority

Transportation Access

Walker County lacks a major interstate yet adjoins Hamilton County and the city of Chattanooga. As such, portions of Walker County are considered within the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization⁴¹. Walker County has a rural public transit service for residents who need transportation for health and employment related needs⁴². Fares cost \$4 per trip and require a one day notice reservation. Walker Transit trips have grown 9% from 2022 to 2023 (including the Roper route which provides a line for employees and which grew 41% in 2023)⁴³. Walker County is in the process of constructing a 2.2 mile connector trail for pedestrians and cyclists between the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park and downtown Chickamauga, known as the Chickamauga Battlefield Connector Trail⁴⁴ which is one part of a larger vision for 118 miles of connection between communities⁴⁵.



Entrance to the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. Photo courtesy: Walker County

Detention Center

The county detention center averages 215-250 inmates a day. The capacity of Walker State Prison is 444 inmates.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Community Resources

Limited access to social services and support networks. The northern portion of Walker County falls within the Chattanooga Metropolitan Planning Area with closer proximity to a metropolitan area whereas the southern and southern/west portions remain rural. Walker Family Connection exists to connect those in need of services to the appropriate resource.

Social Connection

Anchor institutions connect generations of residents through shared experiences. Schools, churches and various recreational activities create traditions that bind community members young and old.

⁴¹ Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan

⁴² Walker Transit

⁴³ Walker Transit

⁴⁴ Walker County Connector Trail

⁴⁵ Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan

Based on social determinants, geographic, and demographic information of Walker County, the following observations can be made:

- The disparity between living wage and actual wage is significant, forcing residents to compromise on what is considered basic needs. The affordability of broadband is a barrier to access.
- Digital skills have a direct impact on an increase in wages. Moving from a job that requires no digital skills to one that requires just one can result in an increase in wages of 23%. Examples of industry specific skills include the ability to use: medical record software, Computer Numeric Control (CNC) in manufacturing, retail software, and the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System⁴⁶.
- In Georgia, a majority of jobs (54%) require skills training beyond high school, but not a four-year degree. 69% of Georgians would take advantage of skills training if offered and 95% agree that access to skills training is a key characteristic of a good job. The National Skills Coalition found that 82% of black voters would take advantage of skills training, 75% under the age of 50, and 77% of those without a college degree⁴⁷.
- The residents of Walker County participate in improving and caring for the county and are willing to invest their financial resources to help their county.
- Education impacts poverty. The poverty rate is highest for those who have less than high school education at 22% for those 25 and older⁴⁸. As education levels increase, poverty rates decrease. Only 3.2% of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher is considered in poverty. Additionally, having "some college or an associates degree" has an impact on lower rates of poverty (with 9.1% compared to high school graduates in poverty of 16.7%).
- Healthcare options are limited for Walker County residents as there is no county hospital. Medical care requires traveling to neighboring counties for a hospital or specialized care, making telehealth access all the more important. Lack of transportation is an issue for residents to access resources for mental health.
- Walker County remains an excellent place for agriculture, with an identity strongly rooted in its history, as well as cultural heritage. The rural, agricultural areas of Walker County require connectivity for monitoring crops and livestock, advance warning of dangerous weather conditions, the implementation of advanced farming technology, and for staying up to date on the newest rules and regulations pertaining to growing/raising food.

⁴⁶ National Skills Coalition

⁴⁷ National Skills Coalition

⁴⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, 2022

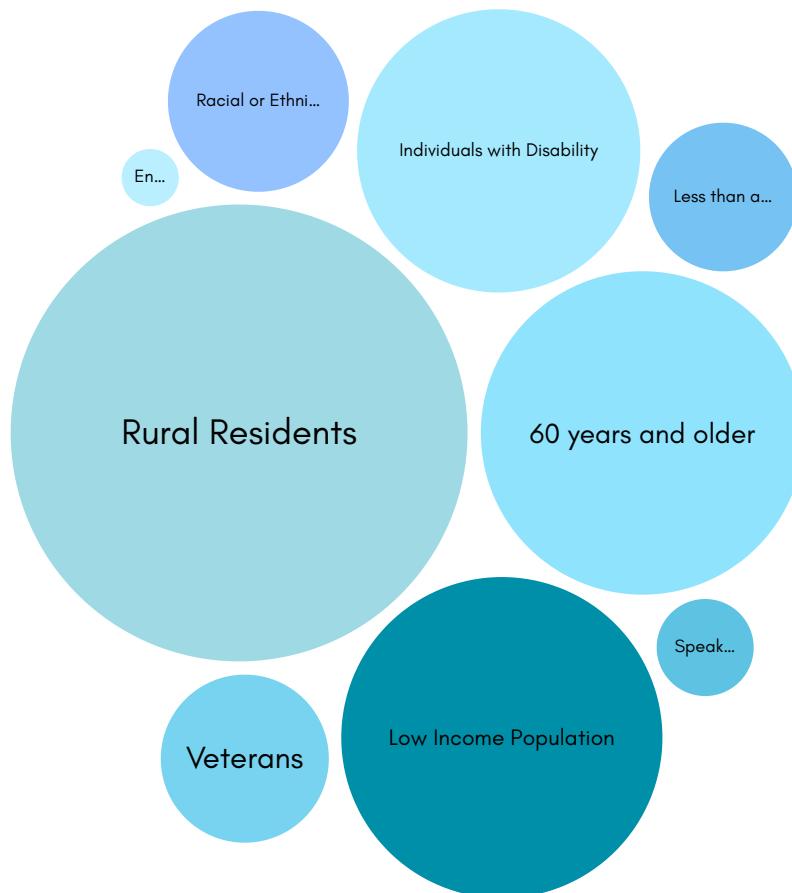
GENERAL COMMUNITY STATUS

Walker County recognizes the need for strategic goals which align with the State of Georgia's priority to Strengthen Rural Georgia and the impact increasing rural broadband access will have on economic opportunities for growth, empowering the continuing of education, and healthcare access for rural communities. According to Benson et al. (2023), "Research suggests people living in high poverty areas experience significant barriers to well-being whether or not they're poor themselves. The longer poverty exists in an area, the more likely the community lacks adequate infrastructure and support services."⁴⁹

"This county was a farming county for a long time and access is not there. It hasn't gotten to us yet."

Bob Swanson
Network Operations Supervisor

DOCUMENTED PRESENCE OF COVERED POPULATIONS



These covered populations, as defined in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), would see an impact from projects and outcomes that result from the Digital Equity and Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) programs. In Walker County, those covered populations identified as most prevalent are:

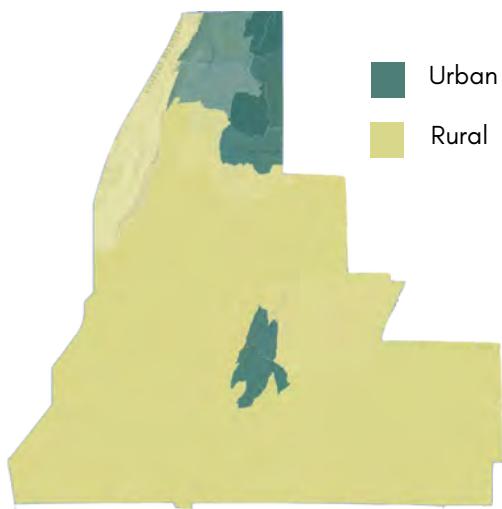
- Individuals living below 150% of the poverty level
- Residents of rural areas
- Individuals with disabilities
- The aging and elderly

⁴⁹ US Census – Persistent Poverty

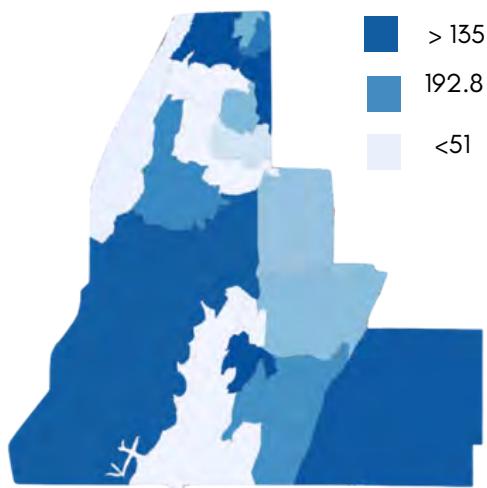
Preliminary Research and Readiness

Covered populations often overlap, with individuals likely being classified as part of multiple covered populations. The following mapping shows areas most likely to be impacted by targeted implementation strategies. Those living in rural areas are often negatively affected by limited infrastructure and stand to benefit from funding opportunities like the BEAD program. Similarly, individuals with disabilities and older adults are more likely to benefit from funding through the Digital Equity Act or a combination of programs.

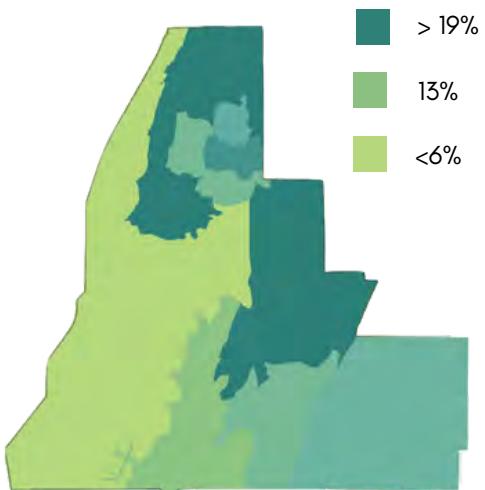
Map 1: Urban vs Rural Population⁵⁰



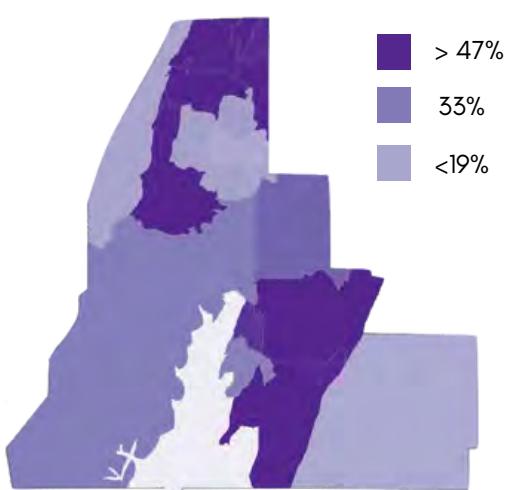
Map 2: Population 60+ below poverty⁵² (count)



Map 3: Population with Disability⁵¹



Map 4: Population 65+ with Disability⁵³



⁵⁰ Map generated through ESRI using U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics information

⁵¹ Map generated through ESRI using U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5-year estimates, Table(s) B18101, B18102, B18103, B18104, B18105, B18106, B18107, C18108

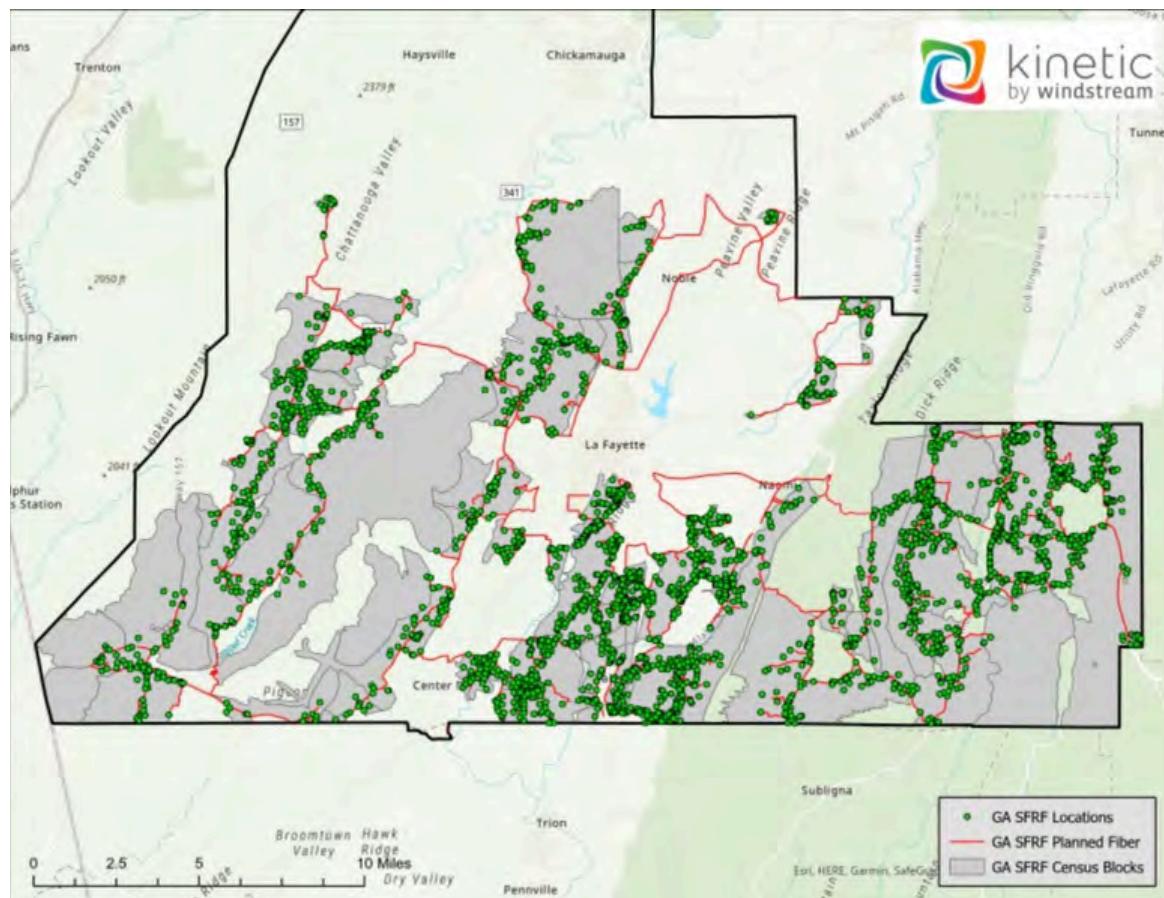
⁵² Map generated through ESRI using U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5-year estimates, Table(s) B18101

⁵³ Map generated through ESRI U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5-year estimates, Table(s) B17020, C17002

PREVIOUS FUNDING SOURCES FOR BROADBAND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Walker County was awarded \$6.3 million in grant money from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds program to expand broadband access throughout the southern half of the county. The county is collaborating with Georgia Windstream, LLC to leverage their existing infrastructure, engineering experience and construction management to deploy a Fiber-to-the-Premises (FTTP) solution to 3,339 homes and businesses in rural areas. The project involves extending 323 miles of fiber throughout the Armuchee Valley, Center Post and Kensington communities, among other locations by the end of 2026.

Map 5: Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds⁵⁴

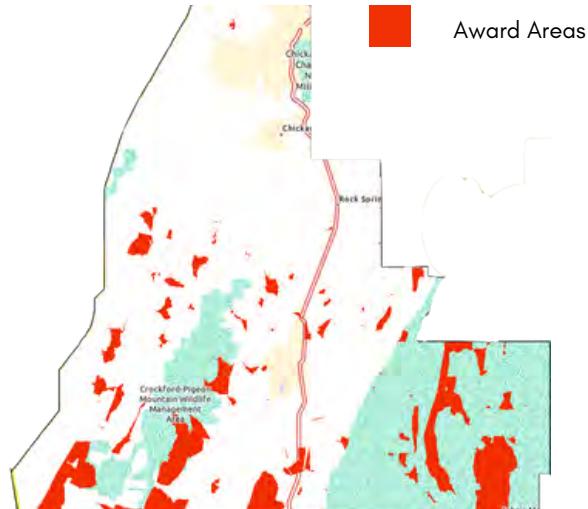


⁵⁴ Walker County Grant for Broadband Expansion

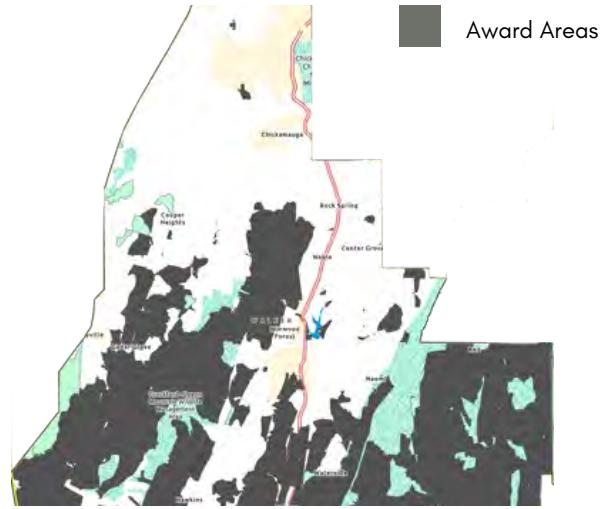
Preliminary Research and Readiness

With the exception of a few eligible areas, most of the potential census blocks were awarded funding (shaded dark gray), through previous grants from the Georgia Broadband Program (GBDI+FCC E-CAM) and Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF - see red sections).

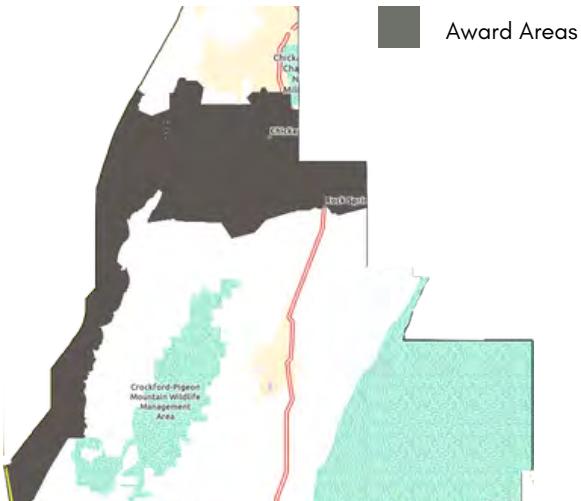
Map 6: Rural Digital Opportunity Fund



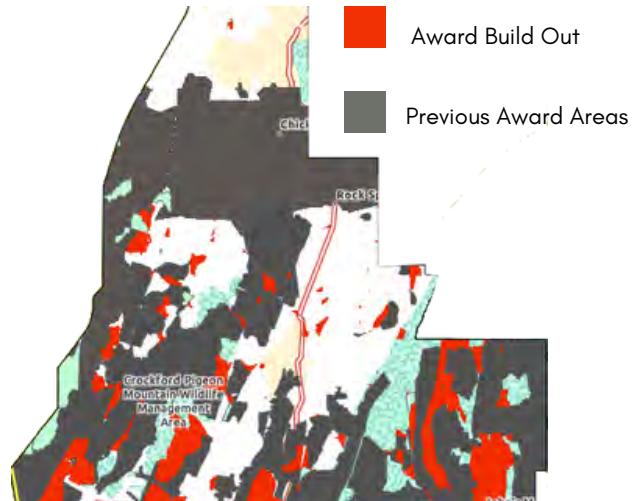
Map 7: Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative Program



Map 8: FCC E-CAM Award



Map 9: Potential Award Areas



STATE DATA

PREVIOUS BROADBAND STUDIES

As part of the State of Georgia's strategy for digital connectivity, a detailed assessment of the digital divide was created. Additionally, the state, in response to grant funds from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), has created a Five Year Action Plan and Initial Proposal(s) Volume I and II for how to distribute the funds and the resulting impacts for the State of Georgia.

<i>Broadband Plan</i>	<i>Purpose of Broadband Plan</i>
<i>State of Georgia Digital Connectivity Plan⁵⁵</i>	A detailed plan including all 15 requirements outlined in NTIA's State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), developed in strict compliance with the Digital Equity Act of 2021 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429.
<i>Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program Five-Year Action Plan</i>	A comprehensive plan including a needs assessment, the identified digital skills needed, and the state's goals.
<i>Initial Proposal Volume I</i>	Details how the State of Georgia will meet all requirements of NTIA's BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity. Includes existing efforts funded by the federal government or the State of Georgia within the state to deploy broadband, identifies unserved and underserved locations, how the state is addressing community anchor institutions, and the challenge process.
<i>Initial Proposal Volume II</i>	The State of Georgia has created a detailed broadband availability map ⁵⁶ that is reflective of this.
	Describes how the State of Georgia will distribute the allocated BEAD funding in compliance with state and federal requirements.

⁵⁵ Georgia's Digital Connectivity Plan

⁵⁶ Georgia Broadband Map

IDENTIFICATION OF STATE PRIORITIES

In its BEAD Five-Year Action Plan⁵⁷, the State of Georgia outlined several priorities for broadband deployment, including

1. Serve 100% of unserved locations (i.e., below 25/3 Mbps) with a minimum of 100/20 service within five years

2. Serve 100% of underserved locations (i.e., between 25/3 and 100/20) with a minimum of 100/20 service within five years

3. Deliver gigabit connections to community anchor institutions that do not have that level of service within five years

Should BEAD funds remain after the first three objectives are fulfilled, the State will continue to fund the next set of priorities

4. Address challenges related to line extension costs to unserved and underserved residences determined to be in extremely high-cost locations

5. Identify and connect unserved units in multiple-dwelling-unit buildings with a minimum of 100/20 Mbps service, while assessing and upgrading the internal wiring to facilitate high-speed internet access for all units simultaneously

6. Support programs that alleviate barriers to digital connectivity, enabling economic empowerment, promoting academic success, and enhancing community health

⁵⁷ Georgia's BEAD Five Year Action Plan

These priorities have been outlined by the State of Georgia in the Georgia BEAD 5 Year Action Plan to achieve the following broadband and digital connectivity goals and objectives:

Goals	Description
Ensure comprehensive high-speed internet accessibility	Ensure availability of high-speed connection for all Georgians, with a particular focus on populations most affected by limited service options. To achieve this will require collaboration with internet service providers, community anchor institutions, local government entities, and other community organizations both for the build out as well as the monitoring of quality and costs.
Empower workforce advancement and economic growth in unserved and underserved communities and population groups through broadband expansion projects	Employment of funding to economically distressed areas, incentivizing participation of small Georgia-based providers as well as expanding broadband workforce training initiatives through a state-led program.
Bolster cybersecurity across state networks, foster a cyber-ready workforce, and establish lasting partnerships for collaborative action	Requires compliance of GTA's information security policies and standards. The State of Georgia will cultivate an environment of cybersecurity education, training, research, and practical application for both private and public sectors.
Reduce obstacles to digital connectivity (equity) and foster an environment conducive to economic growth, academic achievement, and improved healthcare outcomes	Promotion of digital literacy programs and assistance of community anchor institutions to deliver technology-based training and services to maximize their transformative impact.

Preliminary Research and Readiness

The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) has identified priority recipients of BEAD funding, in the following order:

- Unserved locations
- Underserved locations
- Community anchor institutions
- Affordable housing

The fund allocations aim to cover all unserved locations in Georgia and expect that many underserved areas will also receive funding. However, community anchor institutions and lower-priority areas are unlikely to receive support through BEAD. BEAD funding will be restricted to infrastructure projects that improve broadband access in unserved or underserved areas. In the second round of funding, GTA may limit applications to unserved locations to achieve full coverage.

Walker County's main goal - for residents to have access to fast, reliable internet service - aligns with the broadband priorities of the State of Georgia. The county seeks funding opportunities to provide service to all unserved locations and underserved areas.

The State's Connectivity Plan describes how broadband connectivity impacts the following:

Economic and Workforce Development	Enables access to a wider range of employment through online job platforms, upskilling through online courses, and increased earning potential through remote work. Creates the ability to manage personal finances through online banking and financial platforms.
Educational Advancement	Enables access to educational resources, remote learning, self-paced learning, tutoring, and digital libraries. Enables skill-building through specialized online courses, certifications, and degree programs. Enhances access to adaptive learning tools tailored for people with disabilities and multilingual educational resources for English learners.
Health Outcomes	Enhances the ability to schedule appointments online, request FSA reimbursements, participate in telehealth consultations, and access critical health information. Use of remote monitoring technologies can improve quality of life and independence for aging and individuals with disabilities.
Strengthened Social Ties	Access to communities and social media can reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness for aging and individuals with disabilities. Specialized forums and online services can offer emotional support and reintegration assistance for veterans.

METHOD FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

To access BEAD funding, the State of Georgia developed a detailed, two-volume plan that demonstrates how unserved locations would be connected through BEAD. The State of Georgia's BEAD Initial Proposal Volumes 1& 2 describe the process of identifying eligible locations for funding and how it will be distributed⁵⁸, as shown below:

1. The State identified the existing broadband funding allocated within the state (Requirement 3), including sources of funding, description of the funded activities, total funding, amount expended and remaining funding available. This step was necessary to prevent any locations with existing broadband funding from being eligible to receive BEAD funding.
2. The State identified unserved locations as those with service below 25 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload speeds, and underserved locations as those with service below 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds (Requirement 5), utilizing FCC National Broadband Map data collected through the Broadband Data Collection process (data as of December 31, 2022).
3. The State identified the types of Community Anchor Institutions (Requirement 6) eligible to receive BEAD funding within the state, including schools, libraries, health clinics or medical providers with a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services identifier, public safety entities, higher education institutions, community support organizations that target covered populations, government entities.
4. The State confirmed that it will adopt the NTIA's BEAD Model Challenge process (Requirement 7), which will allow for all identified eligible locations to be reviewed and challenged ahead of the BEAD Subgrantee selection process.
5. Following the completion of the State's BEAD Challenge process, the State may modify the eligibility of certain locations with enforceable commitments, planned service deployment, etc. and allow for a rebuttal phase prior to making its final determination.

⁵⁸ Georgia Initial Proposal Volume I

Further details regarding the State's Deployment Subgrantee Selection process (Requirement 8), can be found in Volume 2 of the BEAD Initial Proposal. According to the State's plans, funding should be maximized to reach as far as possible, prioritizing fiber to the premises. Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) intends to limit its first round to fiber and award based on low cost and other public policy priorities. Although GTA will allow applicants to designate which locations they intend to serve, it is highly discouraged to "cherry pick" locations and applications may be disqualified. There will be a scoring phase and a negotiation phase. In some cases, there may be a post negotiation scoring phase. Applicants will be scored based on their following capabilities: financial, managerial, technical, and operational as well as their legal, cybersecurity, and supply chain compliance. Applicants will receive the majority of potential points based on being the most cost-efficient (total funding requested divided by number of locations proposed to serve) proposal submitted for a County Grant Area. Applicants will also receive points for secondary criteria that includes: speed of deployment (subgrantees must provide service no later than four years after the date of receiving the grant), community/local government support, connecting CAIs with one gigabit symmetrical, universality of application (to serve the greatest number of unserved and underserved locations), and speed of network. Unserved locations are first priority, underserved locations second, community anchor institutions third, and affordable housing following the first three.

GTA does not anticipate having non-deployment subgrantees. However, in the case that BEAD funds are remaining after the above priorities have been satisfied, non-deployment funds will be used for the following:

1. Identify and connect unserved units in multiple-dwelling-unit buildings with a minimum of 100/20 Mbps service, while assessing and upgrading the internal wiring to facilitate high-speed internet access for all units simultaneously.
2. Support programs that alleviate barriers to digital connectivity, enabling economic empowerment, promoting academic success, and enhancing community health.

SUMMARY OF THE STATE DIGITAL EQUITY STRATEGIES

According to the State of Georgia's Digital Connectivity Plan, the following critical challenges of connectivity and strategies to address are:

Challenge	Strategies	Objectives
Lack of broadband availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure • Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve statewide broadband access: every Georgian can access 100/20 Mbps at home. • Increase broadband subscription statewide through a holistic awareness campaign. • Spur a significant increase in broadband subscription for Georgians living in counties with highest digital inequities.
Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services, devices, and technical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with ISPs and community stakeholders for improved broadband affordability and device accessibility • Establish a device ecosystem • Expand device ownership initiatives • Leverage CAIs to expand community-level device access • Prioritize and prepare for broadband and digital connectivity in counties with highest digital inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost ACP enrollment • Increase the percentage of ISPs with low-cost broadband service offerings. • Enhance device access for all covered populations through a sustainable device ecosystem. • Georgians in need can access affordable device options through digital connectivity organizations. • Increase device loaner programs and public computer labs through CAIs serving covered populations.
Ensuring digital inclusivity as Georgia advances in digital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources • Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of covered populations can access government services online. • Widen the accessibility and awareness of assistive technology. • Train and deploy specialized Digital Navigators within community spaces serving covered populations.

Challenge	Strategies	Objectives
<p>Covered populations need support to develop digital skills, including skills to protect themselves and their personal data online</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a foundational digital skills framework for all Georgians • Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills • Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy • Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy • Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms • Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and develop a statewide digital skills framework. • Expand digital literacy through community collaborations. • Increase digital skills program enrollment and proficiency among covered populations. • Covered populations in Georgia can effectively use the internet if they so choose. • Covered populations in Georgia can access information or training to learn how to protect their security and privacy online. • Enhance digital health literacy in covered populations. • Enhance workforce development and opportunities in telecom, technology, and broadband-related industries.
<p>Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital connectivity efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build collaboration among State, local, and nonprofit entities • Support and develop local capacity through a statewide consortium • Sustain and grow State and local efforts in digital connectivity • Create a repository of digital connectivity insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish local digital connectivity plans. • Establish a statewide digital connectivity consortium. • Establish a Digital Connectivity Insights Hub. • Monitor the financial sustainability of digital connectivity efforts.

APPLICANT GRANT READINESS

Walker County, GA has obtained the following federal registrations and information, as required to apply federal funding programs:

- Assigned and active Federal Tax ID
- Assigned and active Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number
- Completed entity registration in SAM.gov

CURRENT INTERNET ACCESS, ADOPTION AND USE

Assessing the current state of broadband infrastructure and services in Walker County will help target and prioritize areas to close the digital divide. This approach will advance broadband access for all residents and businesses by identifying gaps, barriers, and opportunities for a connected, resilient community.

Data analyzed by Thrive Regional Partnership for Walker County include, but were not limited to:

- Availability
 - Mapping created by Reid Consulting Group, LLC in June, 2024 for Connect Humanity, as part of the Appalachian Broadband Accelerator Program and analyzed by Thrive Regional Partnership
 - Speed tests from FCC data and Ookla
- Adoption and Device Information
 - Census data from the American Communities Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates
 - Data compiled by Jimmy Boogs of Generation West Virginia for Connect Humanity, as part of the Appalachian Broadband Accelerator Program and analyzed by Thrive Regional Partnership
- Type of Broadband Service and Internet Service Providers
 - Mapping created by Reid Consulting Group, LLC in June 2024 for Connect Humanity, as part of the Appalachian Broadband Accelerator Program and analyzed by Thrive Regional Partnership
 - FCC data
 - Census data from the American Communities Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates

The majority of the data tables referenced and analyzed from the FCC are based on census blocks; mapping utilized a combination of census tracts, blocks, or H3 geospatial indexing (hexagons). Ookla speed testing used tiles. In addition, most of the data analyzed in relation to internet service providers is based on connected population and may not add up to the entire state population/units/square miles.

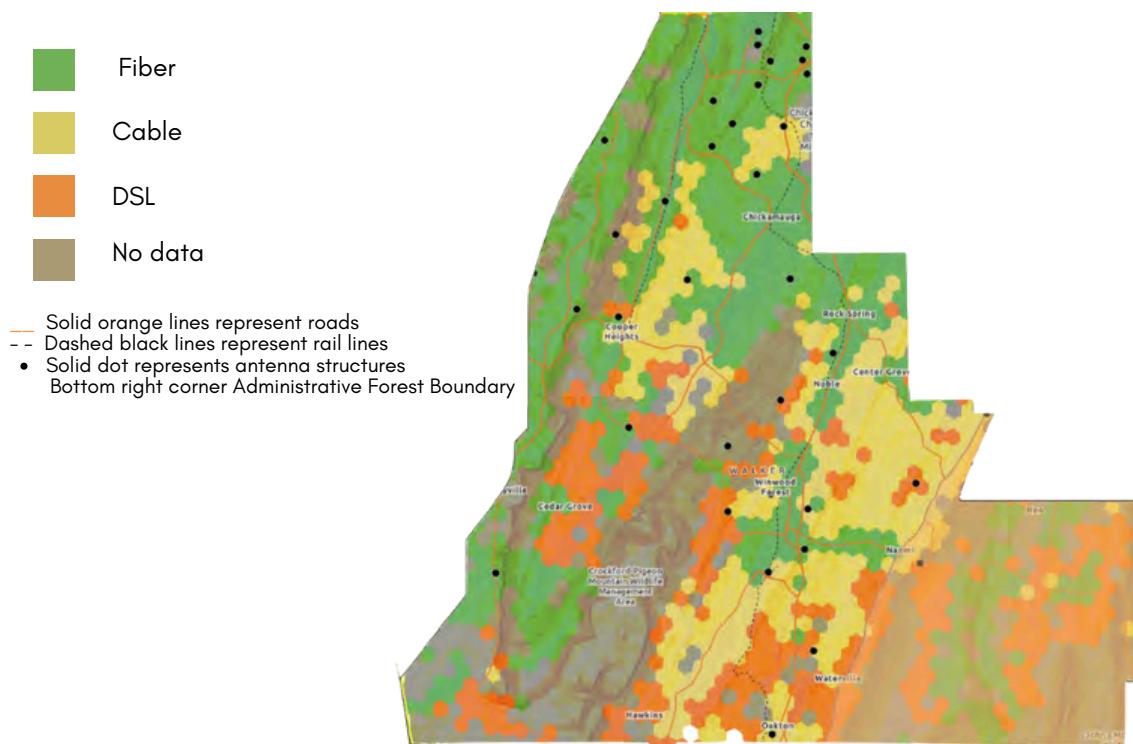
CURRENTLY AVAILABLE INTERNET SERVICES

To analyze available internet services, Walker County's project team reviewed data from Connect Humanity, which used publicly available broadband data and local datasets. They compiled this information to show the competitive landscape, including:

- An inventory of existing fiber networks within the county, including vertical structures, roads, ridges/slopes, and administrative forest overlay;
- An overview of previous awards, award eligibility, and qualified opportunity zones;
- An overview of current broadband providers' services and speed testing;
- An overview of poverty levels and previous ACP subscribers;
- To the best extent possible, the locations of existing fiber and broadband-related electronics;
- To the best extent possible, device by household; and
- To the best extent possible, areas of no access.

The landscape of Walker County includes steep slopes with canopy tree coverage. While there are registered vertical structures, they cannot provide additional connectivity due to slope and canopy issues. This map demonstrates the ridges, canopy, vertical structures, and an administrative forest boundary (in the lower right shaded corner). This challenge may cause difficult connections and/or possible permitting problems.

Map 10: Vertical Structures

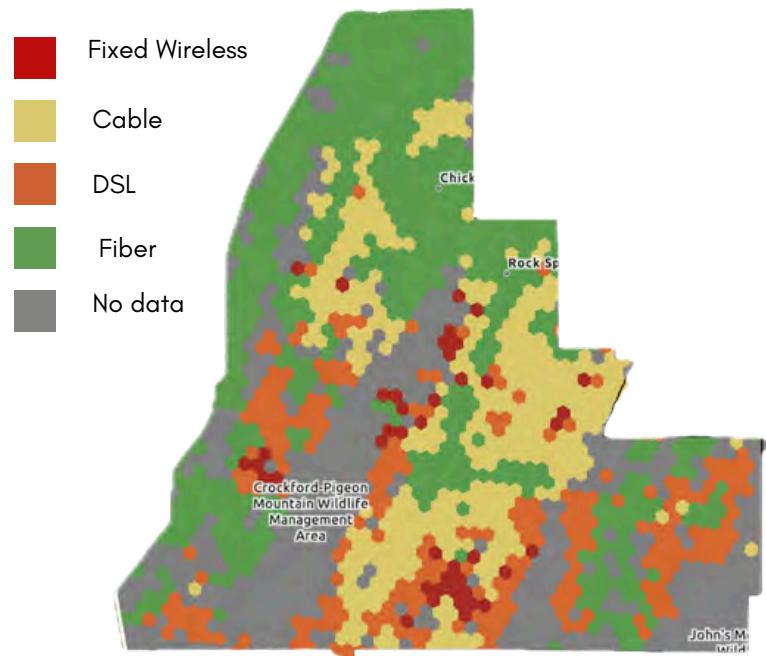


TRUTH ON THE GROUND

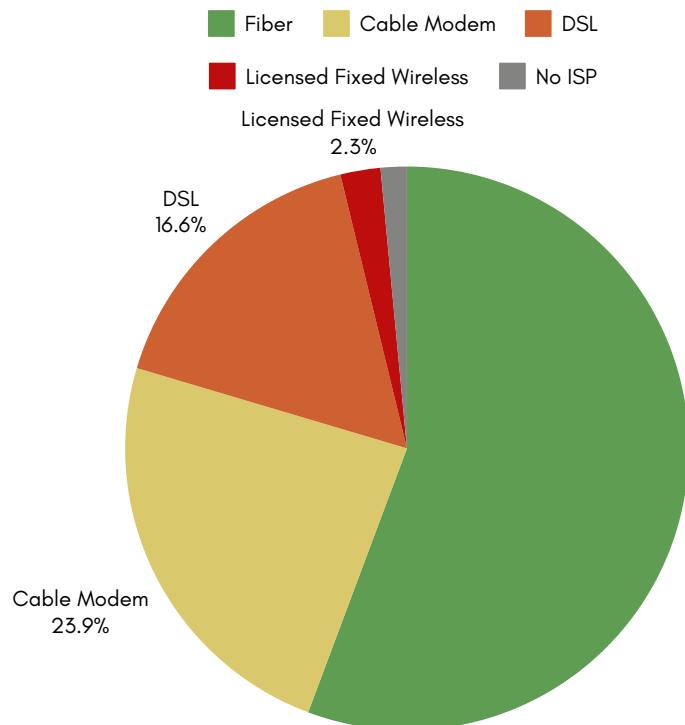
According to Broadband Deployment Data from the Federal Communications Commission, the following five technologies are currently deployed to connect Walker County residents and businesses to the internet:

- Wired Broadband: Fiber, Cable and Asymmetric DSL
- Wireless Broadband: Fixed Wireless and Satellite (not represented in pie chart or map)

Map 11: Top Technology



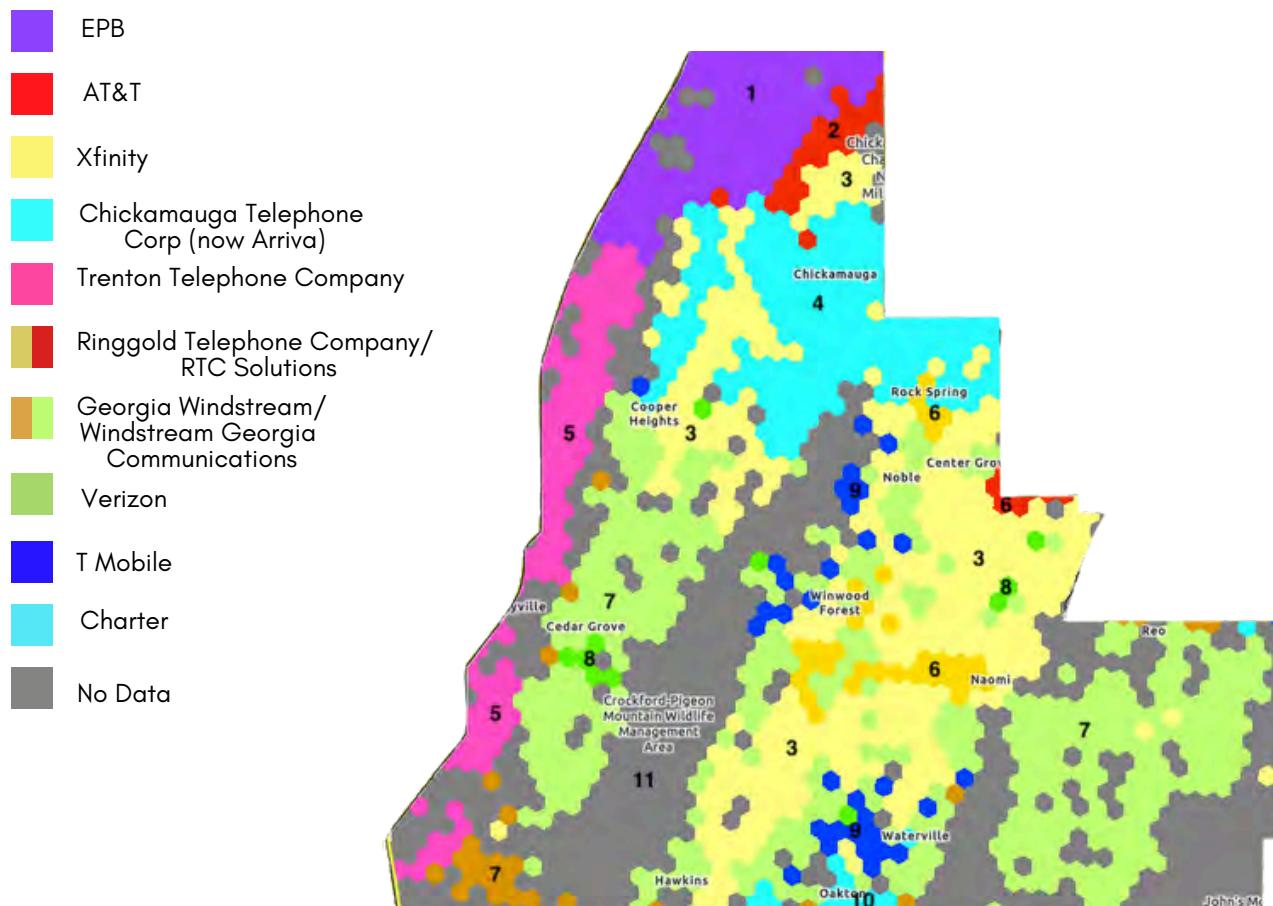
Technology Provided by Square Miles



Service Type	Total Census Units	Sq Mile Covered	% Sq Mile Coverage
Fiber	21,089	231.32	55.7%
Cable Modem	6,918	99.22	23.9%
DSL	852	83.42	16.6%
Licensed Fixed Wireless	153	9.48	2.3%

The FCC Broadband Deployment Data identifies the following top ten internet service providers (ISPs) in Walker County with the corresponding broadband technology they are currently providing throughout the county.

Map 12: Top ISP



These services are currently offered by ten ISPs listed below (see table in Appendix for details):

- Fiber: AT&T, Chickamauga Telephone Corp. (now operating as Arriva), EPB, Georgia Windstream, LLC, Ringgold Telephone Company, RTC Solutions, Inc, Trenton Telephone Company, and Windstream GA Communications, LLC
- DSL: Chickamauga Telephone Corp. (now operating as Arriva), Georgia Windstream, LLC, Windstream GA Communications, LLC
- Cable: Charter Communications Inc, Xfinity
- Licensed Fixed Wireless: T-Mobile US, Verizon

EPB has the largest number of census units of any one provider, accounting for over 27% of the total census units and census population. EPB is located in northern Walker County, close to its headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee, which enables it to extend into Walker County due to its existing service footprint. EPB performs fairly well with only a few pockets that have a lower speed test rating.

Xfinity services almost 23% of census units. Xfinity uses a cable modem and claims a speed of 1200/35 mbps. The speed test results tend to run slower. Additionally, it should be noted that they are servicing many rural areas.

AT&T uses fiber. Their advertised speed is 5000 Mbps symmetrical and speed tests show they perform fairly well.

Chickamauga Telephone Corp. (now operating as Arriva) uses mostly fiber with claimed speeds of 1000 Mbps symmetrical. This company performs well in the mid to east side of their service area but tends to be slower in the west and midwest side of their area, which is closer to steeper slopes. There is one census unit with DSL.

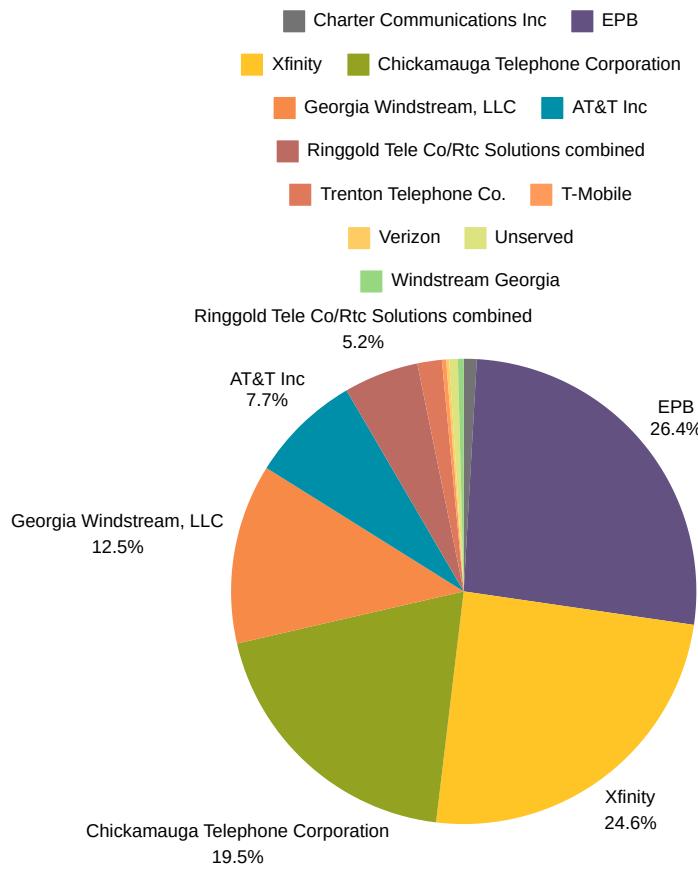
Ringgold Telephone Co/RTC Solutions and Trenton Telephone Company both claim 1000 Mbps symmetrical with their fiber and both do reasonably well according to speed tests.

Georgia Windstream/Windstream Georgia Communications uses both DSL and Fiber, with roughly a quarter of their customers using DSL. The DSL performs poorly compared with fiber.

The top two providers account for approximately 50% of the census units and census population. While EPB and Xfinity cover more census units and populations, Georgia Windstream LLC covers more square miles than any of the other ISPs.

Preliminary Research and Readiness

Population Served by Providers



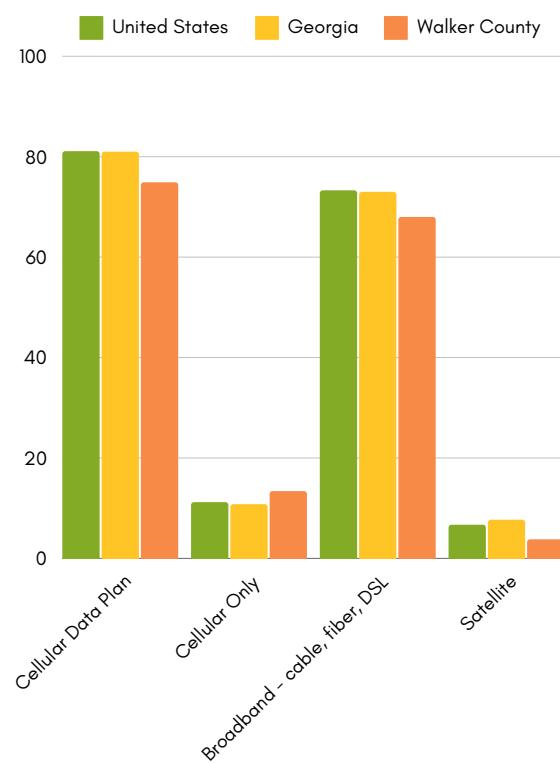
ISP	Top Tech	Top Speed
AT&T Inc	Fiber	5000 Mbps symmetrical
Chickamauga Telephone Corp. (now operating as Arriva)	Fiber	1 Gig symmetrical
EPB	Fiber	25000 Mbps symmetrical
Georgia Windstream, LLC.	Fiber	2000 Mbps symmetrical
Ringgold Telephone Co/RTC SOLUTIONS, INC	Fiber	1 Gig symmetrical
Trenton Telephone Co.	Fiber	1 Gig symmetrical
Charter Communications Inc	Cable Modem	1000 Mbps/35 Mbps
Xfinity	Cable Modem	1200 Mbps/35 Mbps
Georgia Windstream, LLC.	DSL	200 Mbps/ 52 Mbps
T-Mobile US	Licensed Fixed Wireless	100 Mbps/ 20 Mbps

INTERNET ADOPTION

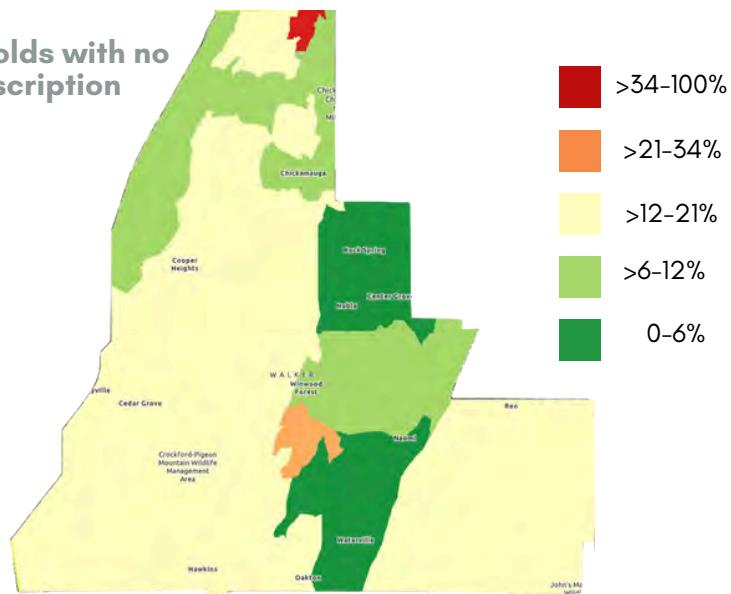
Walker County also analyzed broadband usage data from the ACS 5 year survey census data⁵⁹ specific to the community, which illustrates the overall percentage of internet adoption:

Internet/Usage Statistic	% per Household
Number of Total Households	26,087
Households with Broadband of Any Kind (DSL, Cable, Fiber)	83.5%
Households with Fixed Cellular	74.9%
Households with Satellite	3.8%
Households with Mobile (Cellular) Internet Only	13.4%
No Internet Subscription	16.2%

Internet Subscription



Map 13: Households with no Internet Subscription

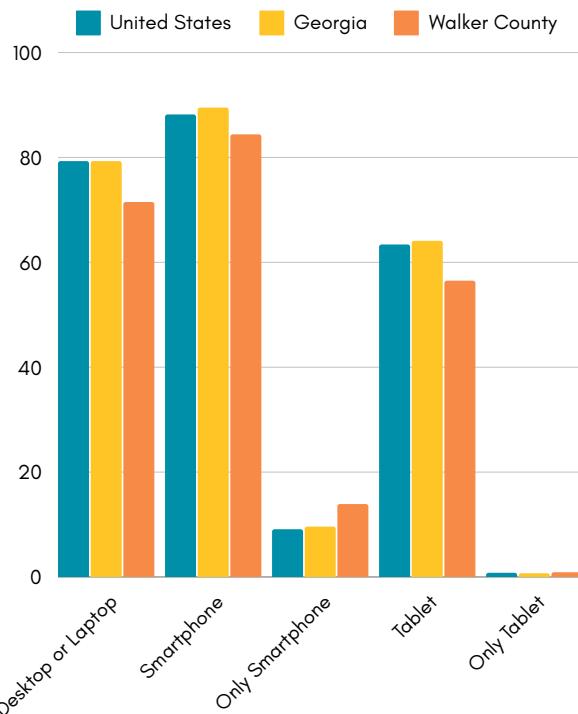


⁵⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2801, 2022

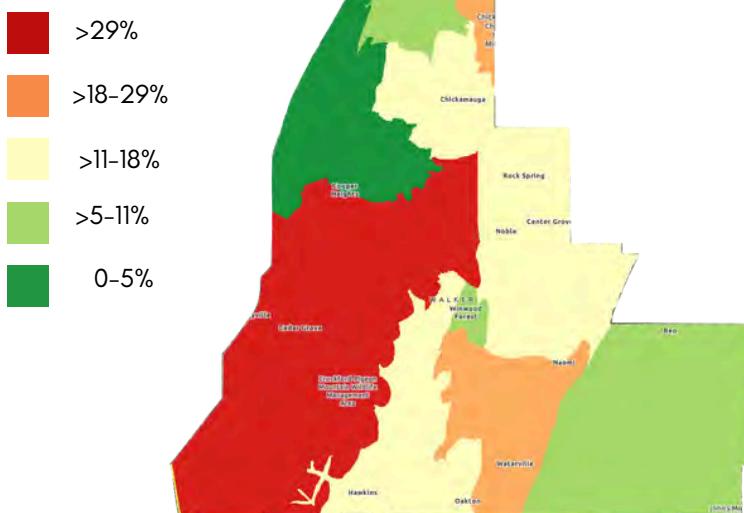
Preliminary Research and Readiness

Device Statistic	% per Household
Number of Total Households	26,087
Households with One or More Devices	91.4%
Households with a Desktop or Laptop Computer	71.5%
Households with a Smartphone	84.4%
Households with Only a Smartphone	13.9%
Households with a Tablet	56.5%
Households with Only a Tablet	0.9%
Households with No Computer	8.6%

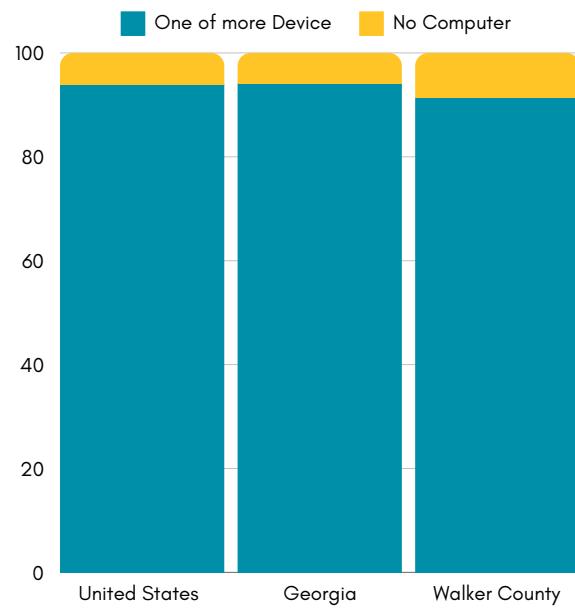
Type of Device



Map 14: Households with only Smart Phone



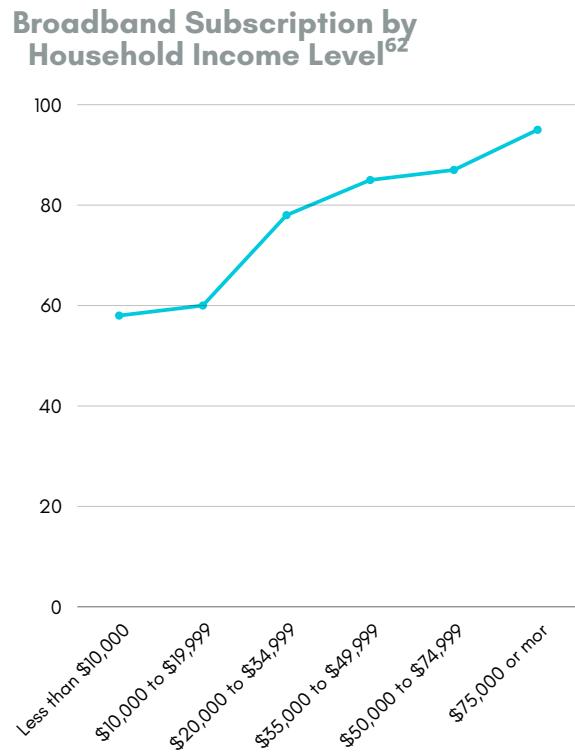
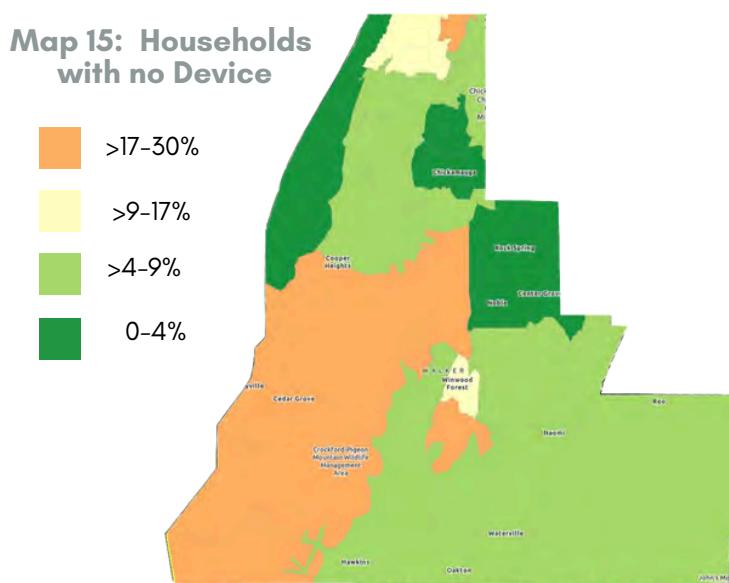
Device Ownership



OBSERVATIONS

Based on the internet usage and median household income information of Walker County, the following observations can be made:

- For incomes less than \$20,000 the ability to subscribe to an internet service is at risk. 40.8%⁶⁰ of those households in Walker County do not have an internet subscription, whether or not an ISP provides service in their community.
 - As salary brackets increase, the percentage of households without internet subscriptions decrease, showing a direct relationship to the affordability of internet services.
 - According to the Living Wage calculator, the average household monthly cost for both internet and mobile subscriptions are \$172/month⁶¹.



⁶⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. "Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Table S2801, 2022.

⁶¹ Living Wage Calculator – Walker County, GA

⁶² U.S. Census Bureau. "Household Income in the Last 12 Months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Presence and Type of Internet Subscription in Household." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B28004, 2022

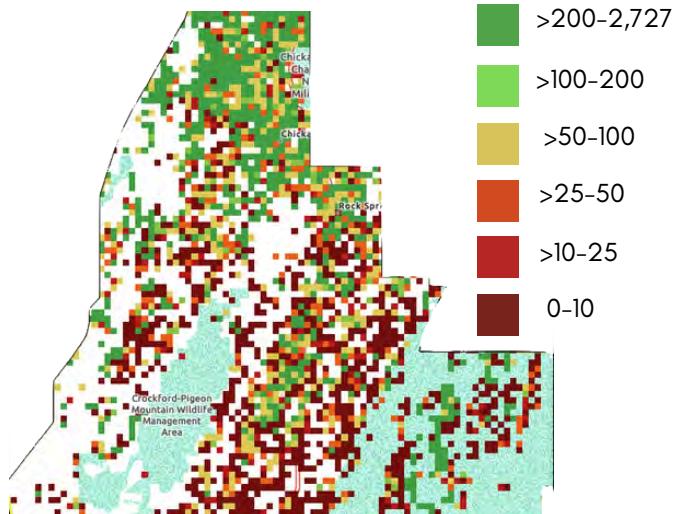
STATEMENT OF CONNECTIVITY NEED

Walker County recognizes the importance of public access to the internet. Although the priority is to address the infrastructure needed for all of Walker County to be considered served, Walker County has undergone a public wifi initiative by implementing wifi access points in county owned buildings to include the Civic Center campus, the main courthouse, and various community centers throughout the county. Center Post Community Center is expected to have public wifi by the end of 2024. Also, a project to provide public wifi at the Rossville Community Center was recently completed and grant funding has been obtained to provide public wifi and a device charging station at Walker Rocks Park. The goal is to provide 24x7 access to free wifi at all county facilities to help address the digital divide.

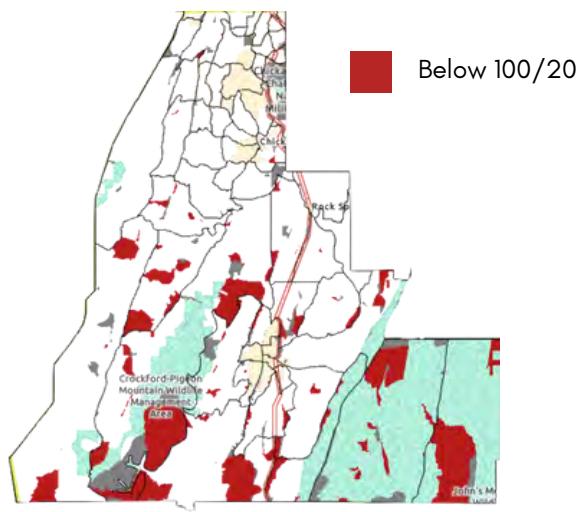
Fiber is considered the fastest, most durable, and reliable broadband technology, offering high symmetrical download and upload speeds. Symmetrical download and upload broadband speeds best provide robust, reliable, and fast service. Speeds below 100/20 Mbps service are considered underserved; speeds below 25/3 Mbps service are considered unserved. It is of critical importance for broadband expansion projects to utilize fiber to achieve high-speed, symmetrical internet.

The following broadband speed map is based on the FCC Broadband Deployment data representing the highest ISP-reported speed per census block. According to the FCC data the following areas are considered underserved, unserved and areas eligible for awards.

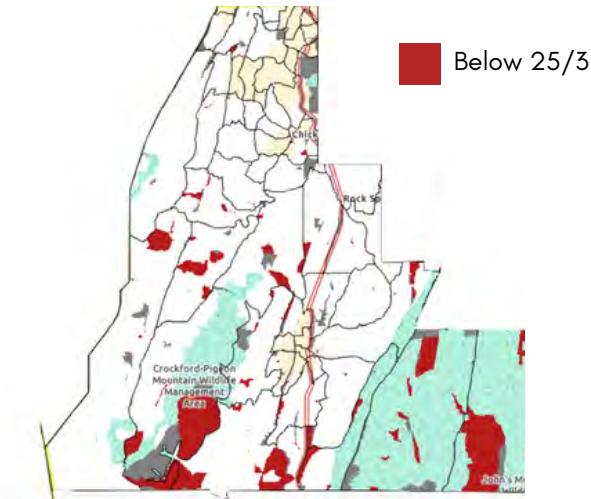
Map 16: Ookla Speed Tests



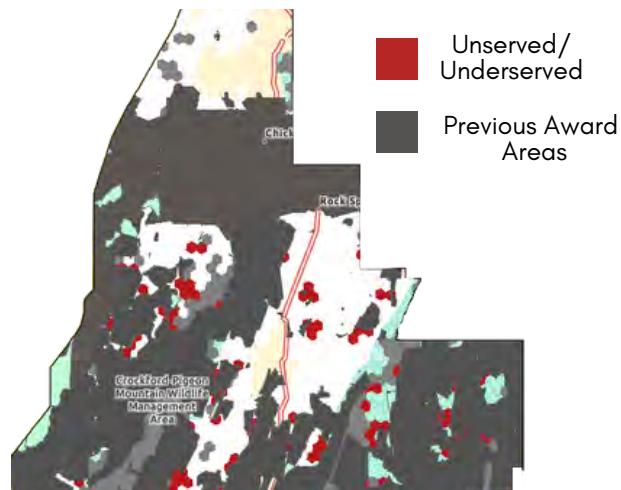
Map 17: Underserved



Map 18: Unserved



Map 19: Potential Award Areas





INTRODUCTION AND VISION FOR DIGITAL EQUITY

Walker County recognizes the value of a shared vision to achieve future results of growth and development. Walker County is committed to building a strong, healthy community and acknowledges the importance of achieving Digital Equity for this to be true.

Access to high-speed internet is necessary for business, education, healthcare, emergency response, agriculture, and social connection. Walker County adopts the State's goals and strategies as defined in the State of Georgia's Digital Connectivity Plan as Walker County's vision and mission.

Digital equity is more than infrastructure for broadband access. Walker County government is a steward of this place: of the natural resources that are to be protected and enjoyed, and the infrastructure and services needed for a thriving community. As the county grows, collaboration is key to achieving digital equity while preserving natural, historic, and scenic character.



Photo Courtesy: Cherokee Regional Library System

Problem Statement

There is a major disparity in broadband service across our community, with variable speeds ranging from unserved to underserved areas and unreliability. Internet access is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity for schools, businesses and healthcare to function in the 21st century.

Vision Statement

Our vision for a fully connected Walker County is to ensure that every resident has reliable and affordable access to the internet, along with the necessary tools and skills that unlock opportunities for educational advancement, economic success, improved health, and strengthened social ties. This will create a more connected, resilient, and prosperous community and cultivate an environment across the county where our workforce can thrive, our infrastructure can support growth, and our industries can continue to succeed.

Mission Statement

All of Walker County will have access to the following five critical elements of digital connectivity:

1. Access to affordable, reliable internet connectivity at home and in their community
 2. A computing device and the opportunity to maintain it
 3. The opportunity to learn and apply digital skills
 4. Tools and practical knowledge for safe online engagement
 5. Essential online government and community resources that are accessible for people of all abilities
-

Values

- Stewardship of the manmade and natural resources
 - Sensitive and responsive to issues of local and community concerns
 - Proactive in identifying and planning for emerging opportunities
 - Supportive of public-private partnerships to enhance broadband access, affordability and equity for the betterment of the community
-

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING GOALS

Walker County's Digital Equity vision, mission, and values support, and are aligned with, the following existing goals from the Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2022-2032)⁶³:

- *Strong management of and operational infrastructure*
- *Downtown revitalization*
- *Greenspace and natural resources preservation and development*
- *Balance between residential, commercial, and industrial development*
- *Growth management*
- *Considerate stewardship of both the manmade and natural environment*
- *Quality education*
- *Community and economic development*
- *Clear county-wide vision and agreed upon goals*
- *Regional collaboration*

Additionally, Walker County's goals are aligned with the following State of Georgia Digital Connectivity Plan priorities and goals:

- *Ensure comprehensive high-speed internet accessibility*
- *Empower workforce advancement and economic growth in unserved and underserved communities and population groups through broadband expansion projects*
- *Reduce obstacles to digital connectivity and foster an environment conducive to economic growth, academic achievement, and improved healthcare outcomes*

Walker County is adopting the State of Georgia's framework to be used for achieving these goals:

- *Targeted impact on key populations*
- *Collaboration and strengthening of partnerships*
- *Build on existing achievements and collaborations*
- *Prioritize data and information gathering*
- *Smart growth and lasting impact*

For Walker County, that requires identifying barriers to digital equity for covered populations and developing broad but achievable goals. Walker County recognizes the need to design strategies that guide the implementation of these activities with measurable objectives to monitor progress. Walker County is committed to ensuring alignment with the State's priorities while still understanding the needs of the individual communities that make up this county. The digital equity barriers identified determine the goals that the county has formed and the aligned strategies and objectives to support those goals. The implementation plan is based on federal and state funding opportunities which align with these goals.

⁶³ Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE RELATIONSHIP

The community of Walker County relies on private ISPs to provide broadband service. Currently there is duplicity of services being provided which allows for fair market pricing. However, the duplicity of efforts often does not provide as far reaching access to the more rural segments of the county. There is a small presence of a municipally owned broadband network in the northern most point of the county. However, their ability to expand is restricted to their current electrical power footprint.

Walker County has been collaborating with Georgia Windstream, LLC to leverage their existing infrastructure, engineering experience and construction management to deploy a Fiber-to-the- Premises (FTTP) solution to 3,339 homes and businesses in rural areas. The grant funded project involves extending 323 miles of fiber throughout the Armuchee Valley, Center Post and Kensington communities, among other locations by the end of 2026. Once complete, gigabit access will extend to an estimated 87% of the unserved census blocks in Walker County.

PLANNING PROCESS SUMMARY

Walker County's development of its Digital Equity vision, mission, goals, and values have been evolving over the years and was put into action during the 2022-2032 Walker County Joint Comprehensive Plan. During that process, it was identified that county residents believed an increase in internet speeds, as well as a lack of county-wide broadband, were areas to be addressed.

Thrive Regional Partnership coordinated with Walker County to identify and create this Digital Connectivity Plan. Walker County and any subsequent partners will be responsible for implementing the respective strategies to achieve its vision.

COMMUNITY DIGITAL EQUITY ASSET INVENTORY

For many residents of Walker County, public wifi has been the only option for connectivity due to lack of broadband access at home. As many businesses and offices shut their doors during the COVID-19 pandemic, one community anchor institution worked to not only keep their doors open, but to extend their hours. The Cherokee Regional Library System is truly an anchor institution in a large and rural county that has relatively few community resources available. As part of Walker County's Digital Equity planning process, a Digital Equity Asset inventory was taken, consisting of the following:

- Organizations serving covered populations
 - Returning citizen programs
 - University agricultural extension programs
 - Family Resource Advocate
 - Senior Center
 - Housing Authority
- Anchor institutions
 - Government owned buildings, i.e., Civic Center
 - Libraries
 - Schools (K-12 and higher education)
- Other community assets
 - ISPs
 - Small Businesses

ASSET INVENTORY, DATA COLLECTION, AND DISSEMINATION

To develop the Digital Equity Asset inventory, Walker County followed the steps below:

1. Consulted a variety of national and state templates for the asset inventory
2. Adapted a framework provided by Connect Humanity
3. Conducted a community survey which included a question on community resources
4. Reached out to organizations and community anchor institutions for in-depth conversations in regards to the work being done and barriers they face (see Appendix)

Throughout the Digital Equity planning process, Walker County leveraged partnerships with Thrive Regional Partnership to assist with gathering asset data and promoting awareness of the Digital Equity Community Survey and Asset inventory. The partners contributed significantly by identifying digital equity barriers for covered populations, assisting with community engagement sessions, and being actively involved with the implementation phase of the plan.

Walker County developed a comprehensive strategy for disseminating the data from the Asset inventory within the community. Methods utilized by Walker County, include, but are not limited to:

- Publishing content on Walker County Government's website
- Targeted email marketing
- Public engagement session for information sharing

A copy of Walker County's Digital Equity Asset Inventory is available in the Appendix of the Connectivity Plan with detailed descriptions of the resources, needs, and impacts of each of the community anchor institutions listed in this plan. This is not intended to be a static asset inventory. The resources listed are those which were uncovered during the research portion of writing this plan. The intent is for the asset inventory to continue to grow as a list of resources, to capture the work being done in the county, and to provide a list for potential future collaborations and partnerships. As the needs of Walker County continue to be identified, this asset inventory will help to close the gaps through resource sharing and collaboration.

MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

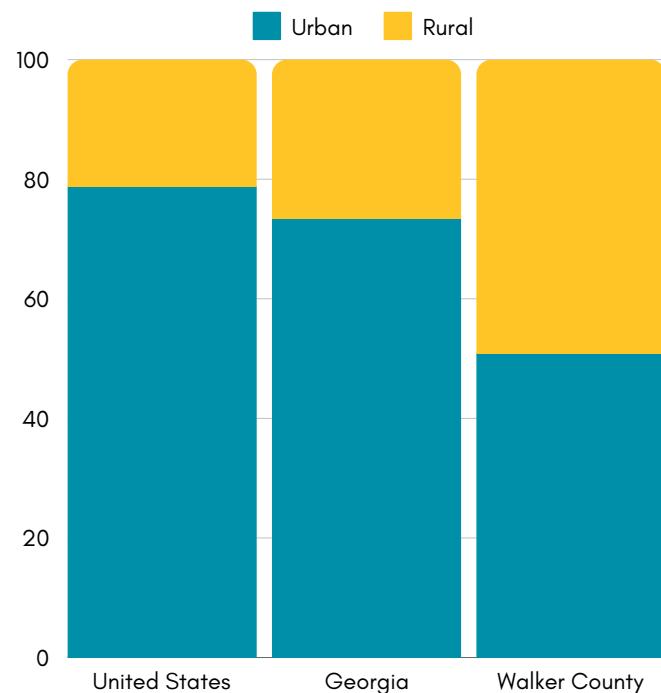
IDENTIFY COVERED POPULATIONS

Based on the demographic and internet usage of Walker County, the following groups have been identified as covered populations most at risk for being impacted by the digital divide:

- Rural residents
- Low income

According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau "Urban and Rural" Decennial Census, DEC Demographic and Housing Characteristics, just over half of Walker County is considered a rural population, which is almost two times that of Georgia, and roughly half of the housing units as displayed in the following graph⁶⁴.

Urban vs Rural Housing Units



⁶⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. "URBAN AND RURAL." Decennial Census, DEC Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table H2, 2020

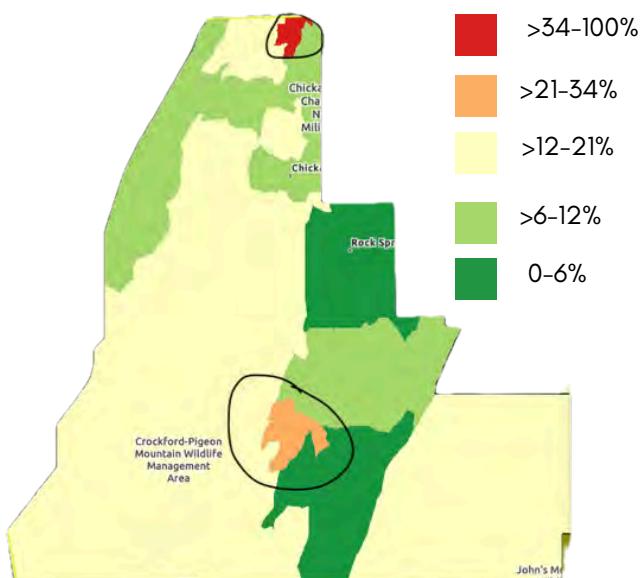
AFFORDABILITY

A table with a sample of plans available in Walker County from the top ten internet service providers is included in the Appendix.

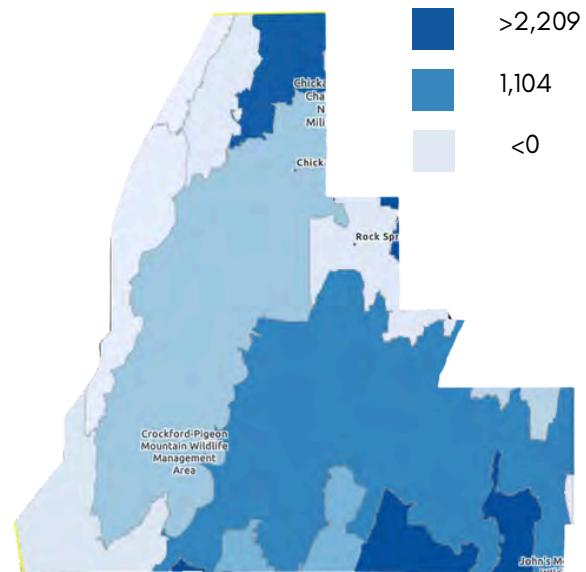
When looking at the households below the poverty line and that have no internet, two areas in the map below show more concern. The red area in the upper section is Rossville. EPB services this urban area and speed tests appear good. The assumption is this is a problem of affordability rather than lack of connectivity. This area is located in a Qualified Opportunity Zone.

The second area (orange) is in proximity to LaFayette. Since they are near a higher population area, there are providers servicing the area. Again lack of service is assumed to be due to affordability for this census tract rather than availability. Comparing the internet subscription map with the following ACP Enrollment, the Rossville area also had high household enrollment in the now defunct Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) (darker blue) while LaFayette also utilized ACP but at a lower level, indicating a need for assistance in affording broadband service.

Map 20: Households with no Internet



Map 21: Affordable Connectivity Program Enrollment (Count)



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

As part of an inclusive Digital Equity planning process, Walker County understands that it must work collaboratively and partner with community anchor institutions to ensure identified covered populations in the community are engaged, during both the planning and implementation phases, to achieve equitable internet for all.

Presently, Walker County is not monitoring the following meaningful data within the community:

- Internet adoption data
- Unserved/Underserved areas
- Internet speeds (download and upload)
- Type of broadband service
- Reliability or affordability of service

In order to continue to enhance digital services in the future, Walker County will have to build the capacity to utilize participation, feedback, and data from each of the covered populations to measure efficacy and progress toward meeting digital equity and complement overall State Digital Equity goals.



American Rescue Plan Act Grant Announcement
Photo Courtesy: Walker County Government

Community Resource	Organization Description	Covered Populations Served
Cherokee Regional Library System	<p>"All things to all people" – each community is a little different and the libraries vary a little in response to the interests and needs of those communities. People come to the library because there is a person there who can help.</p>	Low Income, Aging, Incarcerated, Veterans, Disabled, Language Barriers, Racial/Ethnic Minorities, Rural
Walker County School System	8,500 students in 15 schools	Low Income, Disabled, Language Barriers, Racial/Ethnic Minorities, Rural
North Georgia Technical College	Largest college in northwest Georgia with a campus in Walker County	Low Income, Veterans, Disabled, Language Barriers, Racial/Ethnic Minorities, Rural
North Georgia Community YMCA	Strong partner with schools providing meals for kids on weekends and 2 star quality rated after school program	Low Income, Language Barriers, Racial/Ethnic Minorities, Rural
Walker Family Connect	Bringing community partners together to develop, implement, and evaluate plans that address the serious challenges facing children and families	Low Income, Disabilities, Language Barriers, Racial/Ethnic Minorities, Rural
North Georgia Community Action - LaFayette Senior Center	Facility that has guest speakers who address cybersecurity and scams. Awareness campaigns.	Low income, Aging, Disabilities, Rural
LaFayette Housing Authority	Housing assistance for low income residents who are primarily disabled and aging	Low Income, Aging, Veterans



Community Engagement and Feedback Session at Walker County Civic Center
Photo Courtesy: Walker County Government

CREATE OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Walker County understands that it must utilize a variety of outreach strategies and methods to facilitate participation and engagement from the community's Digital Equity planning and implementation. Walker County values the feedback, engagement, support and buy-in from the community, to include partners who represent the covered populations that are most impacted by the digital divide.

As part of Walker County's Digital Equity planning process, the following potential Outreach and Engagement Plan has been developed for future continued work.

Digital Equity

Component	Description	Key Activities	Status	Future Action
Needs Assessment	Assess the digital equity needs of the target communities	Conduct surveys	Completed	Annual updates
Stakeholder Mapping	Identify key stakeholders and partners for collaboration.	Identify local nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations involved in digital equity and engage in discussions.	Completed	Annual updates
Community Engagement	Engage with the community to understand specific challenges and needs.	Host community meetings to gather input.	Completed	Continual engagement needed
Private Sector Engagement	Collaborate with businesses for support and partnership	Reach out to local companies for sponsorship and support; Organize corporate volunteer programs.	Future Action	
Progress Monitoring	Continuously track and evaluate progress.	Collect data on key performance indicators; Adjust strategies based on results.	Future Action	
Community Outreach Events	Host community events to promote digital equity.	Organize digital fairs, workshops, and awareness campaigns.	Future Action	

CONDUCT COMMUNITY SURVEY

Walker County developed a Digital Equity Community Survey to seek direct feedback from county residents to capture needs, unique challenges, and recommended engagement strategies to increase broadband access and adoption. The Community Survey was distributed in person at a community engagement session along with a page built on the county website for further feedback.

"I moved from the northern part of the county and paid roughly \$100/1GB for EPB and now spend \$150/month and need two different providers to have bad internet and it is still not enough for three adults living in the same household to have reliable internet. I face issues getting work done at home. I feel like I moved to a third world county". - Walker County resident

To conduct the Digital Equity Community Survey, Walker County utilized the Community Engagement Session to both disseminate information in regards to the work being done by the county, as well as to listen to the community's challenges in regards to broadband access. The survey was handed out during the meeting and was posted on the county website on June 17, 2024. The survey ended September 17th, 2024. Collectively, the Digital Equity Community Survey reached 31 respondents/participants. We acknowledge that a more targeted effort of covered populations and further engagement sessions with the community may have increased respondents/participants.

The Digital Equity Community Survey consisted of the following questions:

Section 1: Demographics

Name:

Email:

Area where you reside:

Section 2: Digital Opportunity

1. Why do you think it is important for your community to be digitally connected?
2. What barriers do you currently face in being digitally connected?
3. When you can access the Internet, do you feel confident that you have the skills necessary to use it?
4. What do you see already happening in the community that is helping to provide digital connection?
5. Where in the community do you prefer to use resources, go for help in regards to skills training, or for digital access such as free public wifi?
6. What have been the challenges accessing existing resources? Are there specific suggestions on making them more accessible?
7. What would you like to see prioritized in our Walker County Connectivity Plan?

Section 3: Speed Test Data

Download Speed:

Upload Speed:

Section 4: Additional Comments

(Open-ended response)

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

“The community is being forced to be digital without the actual accommodations to do so. There is a huge knowledge gap and with constant changes it leaves the community farther behind. Services that can make things easier make things harder when the connections aren’t available or working correctly.” - resident of LaFayette

When asked “why residents think it is important for their community to be digitally connected”, responses spoke to the world increasingly operating online and the requirements to be connected. Whether it is for a small business out of one’s home or working remotely, for emergency responses, education, inability to access resources if not online. The overwhelming majority of responses spoke to everything being online and the requirements for every aspect of life.

When asked “what barriers residents currently face in being digitally connected”, the majority spoke to the cost and affordability of the internet as compared to the service received (whether unreliable or too slow). Additional responses included lack of infrastructure in the area, lack of choice of ISP, and infrastructure vulnerabilities.

“Although I can afford the costs for being digitally connected today, the costs have increased significantly the last 2 to 3 years. I am retired and live on a fixed income.” - resident of Chickamauga

28 out of 31 survey respondents answered yes (or in the affirmative) to the question: “when you can access the Internet, do you feel confident that you have the skills necessary to use it”; two answered they have digital skills that they need help learning and one did not comment. We acknowledge that these answers were submitted online so that the respondent had to have had the digital skills necessary to complete the survey and that this question is not representative of the current digital skill assessment of Walker County. The original survey was created for in person engagement and the questions were compiled with that in mind.

When asked “Where in the community do you prefer to use resources, go for help in regards to skills training, or for digital access such as free public wifi?”, the library was mentioned the most and was the only place frequently mentioned, with 14 responses. Eight respondents said they do not access public wifi or they only use wifi at home. Three respondents said they use the internet at work. Of the following responses, each one was mentioned once: Walmart, McDonalds, government buildings, coffee shops, church, community centers, go to a neighboring county to access or through local businesses. Two respondents said they did not know and two did not answer. The survey responses were evidence of the importance of the Cherokee Regional Library Systems as a community anchor institution as the most frequented and trusted source for public wifi in Walker County.

Suggestions to the question “What have been the challenges accessing existing resources? Are there specific suggestions on making them more accessible?” included:

- Secure public access to the internet
- Having enough spots to connect everyone
- Public wifi in parks
- Resources in the southern part of the county
- More choice

Responses to the questions “What would you like to see prioritized in our Walker County Connectivity Plan?” included:

- Remote locations prioritized
- More options amongst ISP's
- Fiber
- Stable internet connection
- Low cost options for internet (affordability in general was mentioned frequently)
- Resilient infrastructure
- Connecting all addresses to broadband

In general, the Digital Equity Community Survey responses indicated the following themes and trends:

- Need for ISP accountability and transparency
- More affordability and competition in options
- Lack of necessary infrastructure for access to broadband
- Service does not mean reliability and adequate speeds
- Safety issues related to no access

In regards to internet service provider transparency, residents of Walker County want to know where the award money has been spent and want updates on the broadband infrastructure expansion; where has service been extended to through the funding provided by the award. During the August 26, 2024 engagement session, Walker County invited Windstream Georgia to participate and share an update on the progress that has been made thus far in the fiber buildout. As of August 26, 2024, 70% of the locations had fiber access. The current estimation is the project will be completed by the end of 2024 or beginning of 2025. One of the largest barriers to completion has been the delay in permitting as Windstream is required to receive permitting from different sectors to include Georgia Department of Transportation, pole owners, US Forest Service, etc. Additionally, Windstream spoke to the need for increased labor force to meet the buildout demands. The volume of the work being done needs to be streamlined. Further communication of both the project status and how residents can enroll in service is needed.

Although the community engagement session held on June 17, 2024 did not result in any completed surveys, feedback was collected through an interactive exercise. Walker County adjusted the questions slightly during the session. The information gathered was in line with the submitted survey responses with the addition of noting that multiple people use their cell phone as a hotspot and also use the library as a resource to check out hotspots. Additionally, many people commented that they would like to know if their address is eligible for fiber and if so when. The residents that attended the engagement session shared their individual frustrations and issues with the current service that they have/do not have.

- One man who operates his business out of his home spoke of not having enough speed to send an email with an attachment.
- One resident spoke of living at the south end of the county and cannot even get cell service. Their internet is in and out and not dependable.
- A Center Post resident spoke of their community center not having cell or internet service and the safety concern that it is having to drive five minutes up the road just to get a cell signal.
- A man from the High Point community shared his struggles of subscribing to DSL for \$79/month for only 2 Mbps and having to get up late at night to use the internet to do his banking.
- A man from Rossville shared he has service from EPB and uses a VPN and gets good service and has nothing to complain about, yet his concern is about accountability.
- Another High Point community member spoke of accountability and wanting to know where money is going from the grant awards previously given.

CARRY-OUT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

In addition to the Digital Equity Community Survey, Walker County engaged and will continue to engage the local community to obtain feedback and encourage participation in the digital equity plan development process.

Community Engagement Activities for Digital Equity	Description	Objective/Outcome	Date/Time	Location/Venue	Resources Needed
Community Meeting	Held a town hall-style meeting	Shared information on internet access	June 17, 2024 and August 26, 2024	Rock Spring, GA	Handouts with information on broadband access and digital equity
Stakeholder Roundtable	Convene key stakeholders	Discuss strategies and partnerships	Future Potential		
Public Awareness Campaign	Launch a digital equity program campaign	Raise awareness and promote	Future Potential		

AGGREGATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

The following key findings and observations resulted from the community engagement process:

- Collaboration across sectors is key for building relevant and meaningful impact
- This work cannot be done by just one agency
- Walker County as a community wants to partner in this and believes in the potential

UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Covered Population	Description
<i>Individuals who live in low income</i>	Even if infrastructure is accessible, affordability is a barrier to internet subscription. Often those who live in low income do not have the ability to access resources as easily and face more barriers than other income brackets. Individuals are faced with compromises between device or access and other necessities.
<i>Aging individuals</i>	Digital skills and cybersecurity training are needed in an increasingly online age to provide access to telehealth and additional benefit services in a predominantly rural area with no hospital. As individuals age and mobility decreases, the ability to connect is of increased importance.
<i>Veterans</i>	Services and benefits are increasingly only available online
<i>Individuals with disabilities</i>	Adaptive technology resources are needed to bridge gaps to meet individual needs
<i>Individuals with a language barrier</i>	Access to online resources and services in languages other than English to enable easier navigation and equity in resource accessibility
<i>Individuals who are English learners</i>	<i>Online educational tools and courses for assistance with learning English as well as providing access to resources in other languages</i>
<i>Those with low levels of literacy</i>	<i>Additional online educational resources which can improve educational outcomes and opportunities as well as provide access to increased job opportunities</i>
<i>Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group</i>	<i>Social ties and connection with family and friends in a county with very few minority groups</i>
<i>Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area</i>	<i>No service or unreliable service combined with high pricing limit options for those in rural areas to participate in small businesses, remote work, and e-commerce.</i>

Walker County's Digital Equity planning process has contributed to its understanding of unique barriers to achieving digital equity across a wide range of covered populations.

As a rural agricultural community, connectivity is key to continue to maintain thriving businesses and the cultural heritage of Walker County. Wade Hutchinson, from the UGA Extension office in Walker County, when asked how connectivity was used within agricultural communities, shared examples unique to agriculture from his conversations with local farmers:

- Cattle management software utilizes cloud data and storage
- Poultry houses are highly technical and send data such as the environmental conditions, water and feed line service needs or failure alerts
- The ability to work from home and manage the farm without having to split time and attention

Alan Painter, a local beekeeper, also shared how he uses technology to maintain his hives. He has implemented AI software which, similar to poultry farming, enables him to receive alerts and to monitor the health of his hives. Additionally, it is helping him to train the next generation beekeeper to understand and assess the vitality of his hives without the years of knowledge he has gained. Currently, due to lack of available service, Painter relies on cell phone data for monitoring his bees which continues to max out and does not provide the coverage he needs.

DEVELOPING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Based on the unique barriers to achieving Digital Equity identified in the previous section, Walker County identified the following existing programs that address the respective needs/barriers of the applicable covered populations. Many programs target and address multiple covered populations. We acknowledge this is not a comprehensive list of the work and resources in Walker County. This is a starting place of capturing work being done and will need to continue to be developed and evolved. More information is included in the Appendix.

Walker County is a primarily rural county and resources are largely isolated to the cities of Chickamauga, LaFayette, Rossville and Fort Oglethorpe. For those without transportation or in rural areas, resources are limited. The library system is the primary community anchor institution currently addressing the digital divide across all segments of the population. Many of the organizations at work are connected through the school system to the families in need of help. Yet, for those without children in school, it is harder to identify needs and where resources could provide opportunities for closing gaps.

Digital Equity

Community Resource	Organization Description	Types of Services
Cedar Grove Community Center	Services are free and open to the public. The center provides a space and place for people to connect with each other	Wifi Connectivity
Cherokee Regional Library System	All things to all people; the library serves people where they are.	Device Access, Wifi Connectivity, Hot Spot Lending, Device Lending, Cybersecurity Training, Support Resources
LaFayette Housing Authority	Housing assistance for low income residents who are primarily disabled and aging.	Cybersecurity Training, Support Resources
North Georgia Community YMCA	Strong partner with schools and 2-star quality rated after school program	Device Access, Support Resources
Northwest Georgia Technical College	Largest college in Northwest Georgia with a campus in Walker County	Wifi, Digital Skills Training, Device Lending
North Georgia Community Action - LaFayette Senior Center	Facility with guest speakers who address cybersecurity and scams; Awareness campaigns.	Cybersecurity Training
Walker County School System	8,500 students across 15 schools in the county.	Device Access, Wifi, Digital Skills Training, Device Lending, Cybersecurity Training, Adaptive Technology, Support Resources
Walker Family Connect	Bringing community partners together	Support Resources

NEW PROGRAMS/RESOURCES

In addition to the existing programs detailed above, Walker County identified areas where new digital inclusion resources and programs must be funded, developed, and implemented to meet the needs of the respective covered populations and to align with the State of Georgia goals and strategies as seen on pages 24-29 of this plan. These are potential programs that could be implemented, should funding be made available.

Community Resource	Potential for New Program or Resource Description	Types of Services
Center Post Community Center	Community space for public internet access	Wifi Connectivity
Cedar Grove Community Center	Community space for teaching digital skills	Digital Skills Training, Cybersecurity Training
Cherokee Regional Library System	Expand programs currently offered through increased funding	Hot Spot Lending, Digital Skills Training, Digital Navigator Program, Cybersecurity Training, Adaptive Technology
LaFayette Housing Authority	Community space for hosting computer classes, as well as increasing support which could include multiple resources	Device Access, Wifi Connectivity, Digital Skills Training, Digital Navigator Program, Cybersecurity Training, Adaptive Technology
North Georgia Technical College	Largest college in northwest Georgia with a campus in Walker County	Digital Navigator Program, Cybersecurity Training, Adaptive Technology, Support Resources
North Georgia Community YMCA	Partner for community engagement	Digital Skills Training, Digital Navigator Program, Cybersecurity Training, Adaptive Technology
North Georgia Community Action - LaFayette Senior Center	Facility that has guest speakers who address cybersecurity and scams	Device Access, Wifi Connectivity, Digital Skills Training, Digital Navigator Program, Adaptive Technology

Digital Equity

Community Resource	Potential for New Program or Resource Description	Types of Services
Tech Goes Home	"Learn to earn" train-the-trainer model for digital skills training curriculum	Device Access, Wifi Connectivity, Digital Skills Training, Digital Navigator Program, Support Resources
Walker County School System	8,500 students in 15 schools	Hot Spot Lending, Cybersecurity Training, Digital Navigator Programs
Walker Family Connect	Bringing community partners together to develop, implement, and evaluate plans that address the serious challenges facing children and families	Device Access, Hot Spot Lending, Digital Navigator Program

Conclusions and Next Steps



COUNTY SERVICE AREA GIS

Walker County requires an up to date and accurate assessment of the current broadband resources to enable the exploration of broadband delivery methods and identify strategies for increasing broadband resources in the county. Through the development of Walker County's Connectivity Plan, the collection of internet service coverage data for the county, includes at the minimum: a list of the Internet Service Providers (also referred to as ISP) in Walker County, as well as those operating just outside of county lines; maps of ISP coverage; upload and download speeds for ISPs to include advertised and actual; type of infrastructure/technology used by each ISP in Walker County; an assessment of geographic areas and communities considered unserved and underserved as defined by the State of Georgia (including natural and demographic indicators). The data collected is for the purpose of determining areas of service gaps and inequality. The results of this plan will assist in making future recommendations as to where infrastructure investments should be made and for targeting funding opportunities to address the identified needs.

ISP	Tech	Surrounding Counties
AT&T Inc	DSL	Whitfield, Dade, Murray
Chickamauga Telephone Corp. (now operating as Arriva)	Fiber	Catoosa
EPB	Fiber	Catoosa and Dade
Georgia Windstream/ Windstream Georgia Communications	Fiber	Chattooga, Murray, Whitfield
Ringgold Telephone Co/RTC SOLUTIONS, INC	Fiber	Catoosa
Trenton Telephone Co.	Fiber	Dade
Xfinity	Cable Modem	Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade
Charter Communications	Cable Modem	Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Murray, and Whitfield
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Murray, and Whitfield
Verizon	Fixed Wireless	Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Murray, and Whitfield

Conclusions and Next Steps

Geographically, Walker County is located mostly in the Valley and Ridge province of Georgia, which is characterized by flat ridges and fertile valleys. These soils are what have defined Walker County's identity and have made it rich in agricultural history. These valleys' limestone aquifer system provides water for Walker County, and which also is what has attracted industries in addition to the coal deposits located in a small portion of the northwest corner of the county located within the Appalachian Plateau. Today, the Plateau's unique rock formation and natural vistas remain a pride and attraction for Walker County and draw tourism to the area.

Infrastructure networks must be developed to steer new development away from sensitive natural resource areas and protect what has defined Walker County. Walker County must make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services and to ensure the greatest impact to the unserved and underserved areas of the county. In those locations in which existing infrastructure is in good, structural condition we will encourage use of existing infrastructure, so as to minimize cost. Utilities and services expansion are being phased, so to encourage new development to be contiguous with already present development and broadband expansion should mirror and follow alongside to ensure adequate coverage for new development.

The following GIS mapping assets and data points were obtained, analyzed, and utilized to diagnose the current state of broadband infrastructure and service in Walker County:

- Base map of county to include boundaries, subdivisions, parcels and street centerlines
- To the extent available, maps of existing infrastructure including water, sewer and conduits
- To the extent known to the public or from providers willing to share, existing fiber infrastructure in the Community
- To the extent known, already-funded broadband expansion projects in the community
- To the extent available, address-level speedtest ratings
- Vertical infrastructure, such as towers, water towers, tall buildings/rooftops
 - In some rural areas, this could include grain silos, some larger barn rooftops or other privately owned structures
- Address list for all homes and businesses
- Planned/phased broadband expansion routes
- Rights-of-way and easements
- Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric data points from the FCC

ENVIRONMENTAL, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION REQUIREMENTS

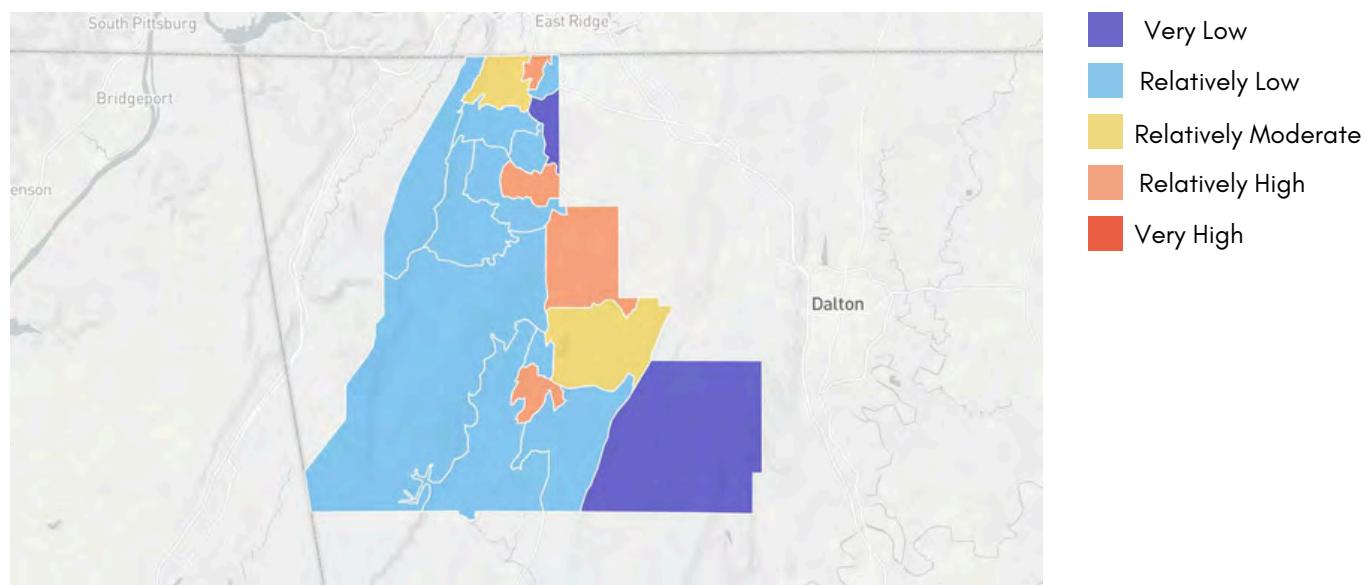
Walker County understands it is critical for potential broadband infrastructure partners to comply with environmental, historical, and cultural preservation requirements when federal funding is being utilized to deploy broadband network infrastructure. Before the commencement of any new construction activities, all applicable environmental screening must be completed, including those outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other applicable environmental regulations.

Essential for connecting residents and driving local economic growth, broadband networks are also vulnerable to damage from extreme weather events, such as wildfires, heatwaves, floods, and tornadoes, which can disrupt services and impede emergency response efforts. As communities plan for,

and work alongside ISP partners, to build out long-term broadband infrastructure – expected to last 20 years or more – it is crucial to address not only current environmental risks but also the anticipated impacts of climate change, including the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events. It is crucial to incorporate resilience strategies to safeguard connectivity in the face of these challenges.

According to the Center for Rural Innovation's Broadband Climate Risk Mitigation Tool⁶⁵, Walker County's overall hazard risk percentile is Relatively High (62/100). The top four primary natural hazards identified across the county include tornadoes, earthquakes, lightning, and riverine flooding – all falling at or above the 79th percentile. The full Broadband Climate Risk Mitigation Report can be found in the Appendix of this plan.

MAP 22: TRACT HAZARD RISK SCORE MAP



⁶⁵ Broadband Climate Risk Mitigation Tool

Conclusions and Next Steps

As noted in the Tract Hazard Risk Score Map (from the preceding page), four census tracts rise above the rest when assessing the average economic loss for a community in dollars resulting from natural hazards each year. These four tracts encompass the areas of Rossville, Rock Spring, Chickamauga, and LaFayette.

Acknowledgment of the impact of natural hazards on infrastructure also appears in Walker County's latest Joint Comprehensive Plan (2022-2032). "Chickamauga's greatest need now is the replacement of its aging infrastructure; specifically, the repairs and replacements needed are for sidewalks and sewer. Special attention should be devoted to stormwater, as a large portion of the city is within a floodplain."⁶⁶

There are a variety of mitigation strategies that should be considered as local internet service providers seek to complete their networks and connect all unserved and underserved areas of the county.

⁶⁶ Walker County's Joint Comprehensive Plan

CLIMATE RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

INITIAL HAZARD SCREENING AND POTENTIAL DAMAGE

Aerial: Structure stress, structural failure, fire damage, electrical short-circuit conditions, grid power failure, equipment damage

Buried: Structure stress, structural failure, electrical surge or short-circuit, grid power failure, equipment damage

Wireless: Structure stress, structural failure, service disruption, fire damage, electrical surge or short-circuit conditions, grid power failure, equipment damage

AERIAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Flood Protection: Avoid constructing infrastructure in flood-prone areas where feasible, and ensure proper drainage systems around poles or other components. Use Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) systems for backup power and generators for larger installations to maintain service during weather disruptions.

Wind and Structural Resilience: Use equipment rated for significant wind stress, such as composite or steel poles, and heavy-duty cable brackets where appropriate. Clear tree limbs and vulnerable structures from critical infrastructure. Whenever possible, bury cables to avoid damage from high winds. Harden essential network facilities, like hubs or central offices, to withstand destructive winds.

Lightning and Surge Protection:

Install lightning arrestors, grounding wires, and surge protectors to safely manage energy from strikes and voltage surges. Ensure cables include a properly rated grounding conductor to prevent damage from electrical storms.

Ice and Snow Load: Use materials designed to handle the added weight of ice accumulation, and adhere to National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards for clearance around transmission lines. Regularly clear tree limbs from nearby infrastructure to prevent ice-related damage. Backup power systems, including UPS and generators, are critical during severe winter events.

Earthquake Preparedness: In earthquake-prone areas, use materials and installation techniques that provide flexibility and durability to withstand seismic activity. Backup power should be ensured in all essential network facilities.

BURIED MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Flood Protection: Utilize materials such as waterproof conduits and fiber with water-resistant components (e.g., gel-filled cables) to protect against flooding. Avoid burying infrastructure in areas prone to erosion or washouts, and consider replacing underground installations with aerial infrastructure in high-risk flood zones.

Power Backup: Equip underground facilities with Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) systems to mitigate power loss during flooding or other emergencies. For larger control buildings, consider using generators to ensure continued operation during extended outages.

Electrical Surge Protection: Install surge protectors and use cables with properly rated grounding conductors to safeguard against voltage surges. These measures help protect buried infrastructure from electrical damage caused by power fluctuations.

Ground Shifting & Freeze Protection: In areas where freezing temperatures can lead to ground shifting, use materials and construction techniques designed for extra durability and flexibility to minimize the risk of damage. Backup power systems, including UPS and generators, are essential in maintaining uninterrupted service during these conditions.

Earthquake Resilience: In earthquake-prone areas, select materials and techniques that provide additional flexibility and durability to withstand seismic activity. Keep in mind that underground damage can be more unpredictable and harder to repair than aerial damage, making resilient design and power backup systems critical.

WIRELESS MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Flood Protection: Avoid constructing wireless base stations in flood-prone areas when possible. Ensure proper drainage around the base of towers and poles to prevent water damage. Equip installations with Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) systems to maintain service during power outages, and consider generators for larger facilities like data centers. For remote locations, alternative power sources, such as solar panels, can provide reliable backup power.

Wind and Structural Resilience: Utilize reinforced towers, antennas, high-strength equipment brackets, and enclosures to withstand significant wind stress. Keep tree limbs and other vulnerable structures clear from wireless infrastructure to prevent wind-related damage. Point-to-point connections should use high-strength brackets to avoid misalignment caused by strong winds. UPS systems and generators can provide critical backup power during windstorms.

Lightning and Surge Protection: Install lightning arrestors and grounding wires to safely transfer strike energy to the ground and protect against electrical surges. Backup power systems like UPS and generators should be in place to ensure wireless base stations and access points remain operational during outages.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Ice and Snow Load: Use materials designed to handle the extra weight of ice buildup on towers and antennas, and consider equipment enclosures with heating elements to prevent ice accumulation. Backup power, via UPS or generators, is essential to maintain service in harsh winter conditions.

Earthquake and Hail Resilience: In areas prone to earthquakes or hail, use materials and techniques with extra durability and flexibility to prevent damage. Ensure that all wireless base stations and access points have backup power options, including UPS and generators. Solar panels or other alternative power sources are beneficial for remote installations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND DIGITAL EQUITY ACT OBJECTIVES

Walker County's Digital Equity Plan includes the following potential implementation strategies to address the following needs for each of the covered populations in the community. These are suggestions and recommendations of the work that needs to be done to close the digital divide that exists in Walker County. However, these strategies are only possible through partnership and collaboration across sectors. The primary finding and recommendation is to create a Director of Community Development or Director of Broadband role for Walker County who will further assess and develop a roadmap for addressing the digital divide in Walker County.

BROADBAND ACCESS EXPANSION

Objective - Increase the availability of affordable high-speed internet access.

- Create partnerships with ISPs to bring affordable, reliable broadband internet access to underserved communities
- Collaborate with neighboring counties to target the edge zones in respective counties
- Develop a county resilience strategy in regards to broadband connectivity
- Implement the Broadband Ready Designation as a county to be eligible for increased funding opportunities
- Measure annually the work in closing the digital divide to continue to refine strategies to include monitoring reliability issues, track quality of internet, and associated costs
- Expand public wifi in all county buildings
- Initiate public wifi projects throughout rural areas of the county to provide additional access points

DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAMS

Objective - Improve digital literacy and technology skills among underserved populations.

- Create awareness campaign of the resources available in the community
- Collaborate with libraries and community centers in funding opportunities to expand digital literacy programs throughout the county
- Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and local industries to increase digital skills related to workforce opportunities
- Survey residents to target digital literacy programs and identify proficiencies
- Expand Next Chapter to Walker County jail through the partnership with the Cherokee Regional Library System
- Expand support of Walker Family Connection to provide resources to a growing English as a Second Language (ESL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) population

ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY OF PUBLIC RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Objective - Ensure everyone has the same opportunity to engage with public resources and services online to increase civic participation.

- Support and partner with the library and other community anchor institutions to maximize their transformative impact
- Create wifi mapping to provide public wifi awareness
- Create a Director of Community Development or Director of Broadband position in the county to lead the future strategy and implementation of broadband expansion and digital equity
- Provide all government services online (examples: permitting, digital payment, courthouse services such as property records, case files, etc.)
- Consider establishing a data insight hub to collect, analyze and present data from various sources to provide insight to residents and stakeholders

AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF CONSUMER DEVICES

Objective - Ensure access to affordable devices and software.

- Build a device eco-system through funding ownership programs, loaner, retrofit/refurbish/upgrading computer labs
- Implementing programs such as "Tech Goes Home", where program graduates receive low cost computers
- Partner with Digital Navigators for device maintenance
- Support the Cherokee Regional Library System's hotspot loaner program to expand scope

AWARENESS AND USE OF CYBERSECURITY AND ONLINE PRIVACY TOOLS

Objective - Empower individuals, organizations, and communities to protect their digital assets, personal information, and online activities from cyber threats and privacy breaches.

- Digital Navigator as a community shared resource to implement and manage cybersecurity classes throughout the library system and county
- Utilize the Georgia Cyber Center for training and education
- Collaborate with libraries and community centers in funding opportunities to expand cybersecurity programs throughout the county
- Expand cybersecurity training courses to the community

COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY HUBS

Objective - Establish community centers equipped with technology resources.

- Fund and support the creation of technology hubs for the aging population such as through the Housing Authority or Senior Center
- Expand wifi access points to community centers, parks, housing authority and senior centers
- Establish partnerships in rural areas of the county to target accessibility issues to include assistive technology
- Partner with the Cherokee Regional Library System and community centers to expand adaptive technology resources

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Objective - Foster collaboration between government, businesses, and nonprofits.

- Create a Broadband Committee to collaborate across government, business, and nonprofits to open lines of communication and ensure efforts are coordinated to reduce redundancy and increase impact of collective energy
- Implement policies across county projects that would enable ISP's to lay conduit during sewer and water expansion projects or to work with future developments and urban sprawl to implement broadband projects
- Work on the county level to streamline permitting in regards to broadband expansion
- Partner with the library system and Walker Family Connection to implement a program similar to Next Chapter for non-native English speakers and immigrants
- Partner with North Georgia Community YMCA to establish a digital skills engagement with parents

Walker County recognizes that much of the work needing to be done will require partnership and collaboration across sectors. There are many strategies that will need to be developed to meet the needs of the population of Walker County. There needs to be accountability from ISPs in regards to services provided. It is not enough to provide internet if it is not quality internet - reliable and affordable. To support the work of ISPs, Walker County needs to address the barriers they face with permitting and partner with them on expansion projects.

Closing the digital divide will take work in stages. With the current funding opportunities, Walker County is prioritizing supporting broadband expansion to unserved and underserved communities. However, Walker County recognizes that accessibility is also based on affordability. As there are limited federal resources available for subsidizing subscriptions, other means will need to be pursued to help residents of Walker County afford subscribing to broadband services, such as expanding public wifi access points in rural areas.

Further work that is outside Walker County's capacity relates to resilience work. Evaluating the broadband infrastructure and planning for major outages and monitoring disruptions to make sure the impact to the county is minimized requires partnership with ISP's. Additionally, the expectation is Walker County's broadband network will only increase and scalability is a consideration, with future increases in bandwidth demands and load balancing requirements.

DIGITAL EQUITY EVALUATION STRATEGY

Walker County understands the importance of alignment of the community's Digital Equity Plan with the State of Georgia's Digital Connectivity Plan to:

- Track progress towards achieving Digital Equity:
 - Walker County currently does not have the capability to monitor and measure advancements in achieving digital equity, nor a process in place to assess and document progress toward achieving Plan goals, yet recognizes the value and potential of monitoring and measuring progress.
- Demonstrate how progress furthers the State's priorities:
 - Walker County's Digital Equity Plan will align with and contribute to the broader priorities, objectives, and goals of the State to advance digital equity.

As Walker County works to implement digital equity strategies, it will be important to put a system in place to measure impact and progress toward addressing the unique challenges and barriers to affordability, access, and adoption faced by covered populations. To assist in these efforts, a Digital Equity Evaluation Plan Template has been provided in the Appendix of this document for county leadership to reflect on their progress toward addressing these respective barriers. It is our recommendation that Walker County continue to expand this practice throughout the implementation phase of this plan.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Workforce development needs are an issue the State and its partners are attempting to mitigate. Significant investment in the broadband deployment sector will place intense demands on the State's labor market, which is already strained according to public and private stakeholders in Georgia. Hiring a sufficient workforce for some of the key roles required to execute this work—like communications line workers—will require a concerted recruitment and training effort across the public and private sectors, according to GTA's 2022 Georgia Broadband Annual Report.

CONSTRUCTION PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

COST OVERRUNS

To best advocate for taxpayers and residents, Walker County should request that internet service providers seeking their support make efforts to mitigate cost overruns with respect to the deployment of the proposed project(s). The county could, for example, require that:

- All contractors must have operating history and are extensively vetted by the Project Team.
- Contractors will have performance requirements and penalty payments will be assessed for projects behind schedule.
- Letter of credit required from contractor for non-performance.
- Insurance required for each project and liquidated damages tied to performance.

MAKE-READY DELAYS

The examples below describe how Walker County can work with service providers to mitigate make-ready delays with respect to the deployment of the proposed project(s).

- Engage with utility companies early to secure approvals and align schedules, preventing conflicts and unexpected delays.
- Conduct site surveys and use professional engineering services to identify and address potential make-ready issues before construction starts.
- Advocate for One-Touch Make-Ready (OTMR) policies, allowing a single contractor to perform all necessary work, reducing the need for multiple crews.
- Develop contingency plans for critical project segments and maintain clear communication with stakeholders to manage expectations and promptly address concerns.

PERMITTING, LICENSING, AUTHORIZATIONS, AND APPROVALS DELAYS

The examples below describe how Walker County can potentially help mitigate permitting delays (particularly railroads and federal lands) with respect to the deployment of its proposed project(s).

- Initiate discussions with local, state, and federal permitting agencies early in the planning process to understand requirements, timelines, and potential challenges.
- Assist service providers with preparing and submitting complete, accurate permit applications with all required documentation and ensure compliance with regulations to avoid back-and-forth revisions.
- Identify and utilize any available expedited or priority permitting programs for broadband infrastructure projects to shorten approval timelines.
- Assign a dedicated team member to maintain regular follow-ups with permitting agencies, track application statuses, and address any issues promptly to keep the process moving forward.

PLANNED PUBLIC WORKS

The examples below describe how Walker County can coordinate Dig Once opportunities with ongoing and planned public works projects (i.e., opening of roads, right-of-way, or easements) to avoid delays:

- Establish partnerships with local governments, utility companies, and transportation agencies to align broadband deployment with planned infrastructure projects, such as roadwork or utility upgrades.
- Develop a shared project schedule that outlines upcoming construction activities in the area. This will help identify opportunities to coordinate trenching or conduit installation with other projects to minimize excavation needs.
- Attend local and regional planning meetings to stay informed about upcoming infrastructure projects and advocate for the inclusion of broadband conduit installations in those plans.
- Establish a system for receiving notifications about planned excavations and roadwork, allowing the project team to proactively coordinate Dig Once opportunities with relevant stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATION LOGISTICS AND REQUIREMENTS

Walker County's strategy for broadband expansion and adoption involves a dynamic, multi-phase approach to enhance digital connectivity and equity across the county. Rather than focusing on a single project, the county is exploring several initiatives that will be executed in partnership with service providers and external support teams.

To ensure seamless coordination and effective implementation, Walker County would benefit from establishing a dedicated internal position within the county government. This role will be crucial for overseeing the execution of the county's broadband connectivity plans. The primary responsibilities of this position should include:

- Project Coordination: Managing day-to-day activities across various broadband projects, including scheduling, budgeting, and ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements. This role will act as the central point of contact for all stakeholders, ensuring that each initiative aligns with the county's overall digital strategy.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Building and maintaining strong relationships with ISPs, tech support teams, bulk installation contractors, and community organizations. This could involve negotiating contracts, coordinating on-the-ground activities, and addressing any challenges that arise during the deployment phase.
- Data Collection and Analysis: Monitoring the progress of each project by collecting new data on service coverage, adoption rates, and community feedback. This information can be used to refine ongoing efforts and to support applications for state and federal funding.
- Digital Equity Initiatives: Working closely with community partners to identify and address gaps in digital access and literacy. This includes developing programs to support low-income households, senior citizens, and other underserved populations in gaining reliable internet access and the skills needed to use it effectively.

In addition to the internal broadband coordinator, Walker County should engage external partners for additional technical support. By leveraging the strengths of both internal resources and external partners, the county can find success building a robust, future-ready digital infrastructure that serves all residents and supports economic growth and community well-being.

FUNDING STRATEGY AND REMAINING GAPS

Walker County understands that funding gaps exist and additional grant funding will likely be required to support the financial sustainability of the broadband network infrastructure projects necessary to connect all homes, schools, and businesses. Walker County is encouraged to explore a combination of federal and/or state grant funding, ISP match, local match, and financing options.

The table below provides a structured framework for planning and executing a broadband partnership and financing structure. It is essential to tailor these components to the specific needs and circumstances of the broadband project and community in question.

Component	Description	Key Stakeholders	Financing Sources
1. Project Objectives	Define the goals and objectives of the broadband project.	Government Agencies, Private Partners, Community	Grants, Public Funds, Private Investments
2. Partnership Formation	Identify key partners and their roles in the project.	Government Agencies, ISPs, Infrastructure Providers	Public-Private Partnerships, Joint Ventures
Public Sector	Government agencies responsible for regulation, funding, and oversight.	Local, State, and Federal Government	Grants, Bonds, Public Funds
Private Sector	Internet Service Providers (ISPs), infrastructure providers, and technology companies.	ISPs, Infrastructure Providers, Technology Companies	Private Investments, Loans, Equity
Community Engagement	Involvement of the local community and organizations.	Community Groups, Nonprofits, Local Businesses	Community Contributions, Grants

Conclusions and Next Steps

3. Financial Planning	Develop a financial plan for the project.	Financial Analysts, Project Managers	Grants, Loans, Bonds, Equity
<i>Budget Allocation</i>	Allocate funds for infrastructure, operations, and maintenance.	Project Managers, Financial Analysts	Public Funds, Grants, Loans
<i>Revenue Generation</i>	Identify revenue streams, such as subscription fees and service charges.	Finance Team, ISPs	Subscription Fees, Service Charges
4. Funding Sources	Identify sources of funding for the project.	Funding Agencies, Private Investors	Grants, Loans, Equity
<i>Government Grants</i>	Federal, state, or local grants for broadband infrastructure.	Government Agencies	Government Grants
<i>Public Bonds</i>	Issuing municipal or revenue bonds for project financing.	Finance Team	Public Bonds
<i>Private Investments</i>	Attract private investors for equity or debt financing.	Private Partners, Investors	Private Investments, Loans
5. Revenue Sharing Agreements	Establish agreements for revenue sharing among partners.	Government Agencies, Private Partners	Revenue Sharing Terms
<i>Risk Allocation</i>	Define how risks and liabilities are shared among partners.	Legal Team, Partners	Risk Allocation Terms

Conclusions and Next Steps

6. Project Governance	Define the governance structure for decision-making and oversight.	Governing Board, Project Manager	Governance Structure	
	Steering Committee	A committee overseeing the project's progress and compliance.	Steering Committee Members	Decision-Making Protocols
	Project Manager	Appoint a project manager responsible for day-to-day operations.	Project Manager	Reporting, Execution
	Reporting and Monitoring	Implement mechanisms for progress reporting and performance monitoring.	Project Manager, Oversight Team	Reporting Framework
7. Risk Mitigation Strategies	Develop strategies to mitigate project risks.	Risk Management Team	Risk Mitigation Plans	
	Contingency Plans	Create contingency plans for unexpected events.	Risk Management Team	Contingency Plans
	Insurance	Purchase insurance to cover potential losses.	Risk Management Team	Insurance Policies
8. Performance Metrics	Define key performance indicators (KPIs) for the project.	Project Manager, Oversight Team	KPIs and Measurement Metrics	
	Broadband Accessibility	Measure the percentage of the population with access to broadband.	Oversight Team	Coverage Percentage
	Service Quality	Monitor the quality of broadband services provided.	ISPs, Oversight Team	Service Level Agreements (SLAs)
9. Review and Adaptation	Establish a process for project review and adaptation.	Steering Committee, Project Manager	Review Schedule, Adaptation Strategies	

MATCH AND LETTER OF CREDIT

Walker County understands that accessing federal broadband grant opportunities such as the NTIA's BEAD program will require a minimum 25% match and an additional Letter of Credit in the amount equal to 25% of the federal grant request. Any potential ISP grant application partner for the BEAD program will also require a Letter of Credit. The NTIA recently announced a waiver⁶⁷ granting flexibility to the Letter of Credit requirement, allowing certain subgrantees to utilize credit unions, performance bonds, and reduction of Letter of Credit/Performance Bonds upon completion of milestones.

⁶⁷ Waiver

FUNDING ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

BROADBAND GRANT ASSESSMENT

The Broadband Grant Assessment can be used as a guide and reference when pursuing existing public, private, and philanthropic grant opportunities and accompanies Walker County's Connectivity Plan as a separate attachment.

Acronyms:

DHS - FEMA Department of Homeland Security - Federal Emergency Management Agency

FCC - USAC Federal Communications Commission - Universal Service Administrative Company

USDA-RD United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development

USDOC-EDA United States Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration

USDOC-NTIA National Telecommunications and Information Administration

USDHUD United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

PREPARING FOR GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Based on previous experience working with other communities regarding the development of funding applications, it is recommended that several studies and narratives be completed prior to applying for federal grant funding opportunities. Each of these documents are required by the funding agencies in order to satisfy various programmatic and federal requirements and their completion ahead of time provides greater flexibility for Walker County when considering multiple avenues of funding proposed network solutions.

Below are several studies that are uniform requirements for seeking federal funding:

Preliminary and Final Engineering Feasibility Report (EFR)

- The Preliminary and Final EFR is the document that is utilized by the funding agencies to understand the needs and existing conditions of the community and the proposed solution to address those needs. The EFR includes an overview of the project's scope, size, cost and alignment with the communities' priorities (i.e. closing the Digital Divide, economic development, workforce development, etc.). Typically, funders will accept a Preliminary EFR during the grant application phase and once funding is awarded, the agency will provide comments based on their review to finalize the document. Prior to the release of funding for construction, most funding agencies will require the EFR to be approved to ensure project feasibility.

General Application Information

- Depending on the nature of the grant, applicants are required to provide some general application information including a project description, stakeholders involved, documenting public and business support, anticipated economic impact, alignment with the agency and grant programs goals and objectives, project schedule, and proposed equipment.

Proforma

- Federal agencies typically request a proforma that projects fiscal expenditures (planning/design, construction, and operations) and revenue over a long-term period, 10 - 20 years, etc., to understand the financial sustainability of the project.

Environmental Narrative

- To satisfy National Environmental Policy Act requirements, applicants seeking federal funding must provide information to the funding agency regarding the project's potential impact on the environment. Since a variety of federal regulations exist, such as the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, etc. it is important for the applicant to document how the proposed project impacts the environment. For projects that are located in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, brownfields, preservation areas, etc. it is critical that the applicant document how the project will not negatively impact the environment. Typically, the federal funding agency will review the Environmental Narrative/Questionnaire to determine if any additional studies are required prior to issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). If additional studies are required such as Archeological, Air Quality, or Geotechnical surveys, the federal funding agency will require that these be completed prior to issuing a FONSI and beginning construction activities. Additionally, the federal funding agency may require coordination with other federal agencies (i.e. United States Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife, Department of Interior, etc.) for their respective reviews prior to issuing a FONSI.

Through past experience applying and obtaining financial assistance, communities who have the required engineering and technical information completed ahead of time are most prepared, confident, and competitive when seeking grant funding. Often, federal agencies only provide between 45 - 60 days for application submission which leaves very little time to begin these studies and assessment while the application period is open. If Walker County is strongly interested in seeking grant funding to address its broadband infrastructure and accessibility gaps, we recommend that they conduct these efforts as soon as possible so they are prepared and ready for future funding opportunities.

Additionally, prior to applying for grant funding, it is strongly recommended that Walker County coordinate closely with the Georgia Technology Authority and other key stakeholders to ensure that their proposal is aligned with state planning efforts and to include Walker County's needs with respect to project costs to reach unserved and underserved areas. It is also important to note that partnerships with related stakeholders can possibly strengthen potential applications for funding, however more weight is given to partnerships that have been formally established prior to applying for funding. Lastly, due to the varying amount of local matching funding required to pursue these opportunities, we suggest that Walker County identify sources and amounts of matching funding to determine the respective capacity to secure grant funding.

PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED GRANTS

To date, Walker County has previously obtained federal and/or state grant funding to support broadband infrastructure development within the community, including, but not limited to the following:

State of Georgia - 2022 American Rescue Plan Act

- Project Name: Georgia Windstream Fiber-to-the-Premises
- Grant Award Amount: \$6,253,152
- Total Project Amount: \$11,264,066

This grant award has been utilized by Walker County to collaborate with Georgia Windstream, LLC to deploy a Fiber-to-the-Premises (FTTP) solution to 3,339 homes and businesses in rural areas. The project involves extending 323 miles of fiber throughout the Armuchee Valley, Center Post and Kensington communities, among other locations. Under the requirements of the ARPA grant, the fiber deployment must be completed by the end of 2026.

HISTORICAL FINANCIALS

Walker County understands the importance of demonstrating strong financial capacity and ability to sustain broadband network infrastructure investments. Walker County is prepared to demonstrate its financial strength and stability by providing audited financial statements for the previous three fiscal years. Additionally, if Walker County partners with an ISP partner to pursue future joint network investment opportunities such as grants, the respective entity will also be expected to provide audited financial statements at the time of a grant application.



APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adaptive Technology - is a form of assistive technology which is specifically designed for people with a disability

Annualized Frequency - the expected frequency or probability of a hazard occurrence per year

Ariel Fiber (Aerial Installation) - installed on poles

Assistive Technology - term used for assistive products and services; may be used to help or improve functioning or participation of an individual. Assistive technology may be used by aging population or people with disabilities.

Asymmetrical - upload and download speeds do not match

Bandwidth - the maximum amount of data that can pass through a network connection at any time. Bandwidth is measured by speed in Megabits per second (Mbps) and Gigabits per second (Gbps).

Base Monthly Price - cost of the plan before any additional charges and fees are included (such as rentals for modems or taxes)

Broadband - high-capacity transmission technology that sends data, voice, and video across long distances and at high speeds. Examples of broadband infrastructure are coaxial cables, fiber optic cables, wireless, and satellite.

Broadband Accessibility - access to the internet. Those who do not have access are classified as unserved or underserved.

Broadband Adoption - residential subscription to broadband, meaning the daily access to the internet

Broadband Equity, Access And Deployment Program (BEAD) - \$42.45B federal grant program available to states and territories for closing the availability gap (infrastructure) of broadband

Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSL) - geographic coordinates of all structures where a broadband connection can be installed (residential and commercial locations)

Building Exposure - defined as the dollar value of the buildings determined to be exposed to a hazard. The maximum possible building exposure of a geographic area (census block, census tract, or county) is its building value as recorded in Hazus 6.0.

Cable Internet - broadband Internet access that uses the infrastructure of cable TV networks to provide Internet services

Census Unit - Census count of housing units in a census block (the smallest level of geography designated by the US Census Bureau)

Census Population - Census count of total population in a census block

Coaxial Cable (Coax) - A type of cable used to transmit data such as the internet, video and voice communications

Community Anchor Institutions - An entity such as a school, library, health clinic, health center, hospital or other medical provider, public safety entity, institution of higher education, public housing organization, or community support organization that provides access to broadband service to covered populations, including, but not limited to, low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, children, the incarcerated, and aged individuals.

Computing Device - either a computer or a phone that is enabled with access to the internet

Covered Populations - defined in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Section 60301 et seq. (Digital Equity Act of 2021) as: individuals who live in covered households (those whose income from the most recent year is not more than 150% of the poverty level), aging individuals (60 years and older), incarcerated individuals (other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility), veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners and have low levels of literacy, individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

Cybersecurity - the safe use of the internet to prevent against a cyberattack (any intentional effort to steal, disable, or harm data or a device through the unauthorized access to the physical device or the network it is using)

Digital Connectivity - when people and communities are able to access and use affordable, high-speed, reliable internet to meet their needs

Digital Divide - the gap between people who have access to affordable, reliable Internet service, and the skills and computers or phones needed to use it, and those who do not have access

Digital Equity - individuals and communities are able to fully participate in the society and economy of the United States digitally

Digital Equity Act (DEA) - \$2.75 billion in federal funding to promote digital inclusion and equity as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

Digital Literacy - the ability to use technologies to find and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills

Digital Navigators - trained community members whose role is to assist other community members with support with connectivity, devices, and/or digital skills

Digital Skills - requires both knowledge and technical skills to use the internet to meet the needs of an individual. Essential digital skills include but are not limited to: turning on a device, knowing where to go on the device to access the internet, understanding the information that can be found through the use of the internet, connecting to a safe and secure internet connection, ability to browse the internet, and understanding how and why it is important to keep personal information safe and secure online.

Download Speed - how quickly data is pulled from a server to your computer. The download speed will be advertised first when listed by your service provider. Download is usually faster since the expectation is that most people are using their internet for web browsing, streaming videos, and downloading content.

DSL - technology that uses copper wire telephone lines to provide connection to the internet

Expected Annual Building Loss - the average economic loss to buildings in dollars resulting from natural hazards each year

Fiber - A fiber optic cable is made up of bundles of hair-thin strands of very pure glass or plastic. Data passes over them in the form of light pulses created by lasers. Data can travel farther and faster on fiber than on copper wires with much less loss of data.

Fiber-to-the-premises - connection of a fiber optic cable to a home or building

Fixed Broadband (fixed wireless as opposed to mobile wireless) - data is transmitted between two fixed antennas using radio waves. Unlike Wi-Fi, the radio beams need to be narrow for optimum strength with antennas being installed high such as on the roof of buildings since line of sight is necessary.

H3 Geospatial Indexing - is a hierarchical geospatial index. Geospatial indexing is a database storage and retrieval system based on geographic location that enables identification of objects or data located within a geographic region.

Hazard ratings - provided in one of five qualitative categories describing the geographic area's Expected Annual Building Loss values in comparison to all other communities at the same geographic level. Rating categories range from "Very Low" to "Very High."

Very High: 80th to 100th percentiles

Relatively High: 60th to 80th percentiles

Relatively Moderate: 40th to 60th percentiles

Relatively Low: 20th to 40th percentiles

Very Low: 0th to 20th percentiles

Historic Building Loss Ratio - a natural hazard consequence factor that represents the estimated percentage of the exposed building value expected to be lost due to a natural hazard occurrence. Arizona State University's SHELDUS loss data are used to calculate Historic Loss Ratio for most hazard types.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) - federal bill to provide funding for infrastructure projects

Internet Service Providers (ISP's) - a company that provides subscribers with access to the internet

Last mile - connecting the individual customer's home or business from the middle mile network

Low latency - Latency describes the reaction time of the connection - the delay between a request for data and the response to that request. A low latency (fast ping) means a more responsive connection. Latency generally is measured in milliseconds (ms).

Middle Mile - the infrastructure that enables the connection between the last mile, or the home/business connection, and the Internet network that supplies the broadband service

Mobile Network (Mobile wireless Internet) - accessed via smartphones. Data is transferred between cell phone towers.

Network - shared connection between computers provided through utilizing the same source of broadband connection

Qualified Opportunity Zone - federal designation for an economically distressed community which is eligible for preferential tax treatment

Risk scores - national percentile ranks derived from Expected Annual Building Loss estimates

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) - \$20.4 billion fund for rural homes and businesses that lacked broadband service

Server - a centralized computer that send and receives requests to other computers through a shared network providing information

Appendix

Social Determinants - factors that influence health outcomes. They are a set of conditions that shape the conditions of life for a resident.

Speed - measurement of how quickly data can pass through a network connection, measured by Megabits per second (Mbps) or Gigabits per second (Gbps)

Speedtest - measures your connection in Mbps, or megabits per second, which is what your broadband plan should use to describe the speed so you can easily compare

Symmetrical - upload and download speeds match

Take Rate - percentage of those subscribing to a service divided by the number of people who could take the service

Top ISP - FCC provider name for the provider with the top technology and speed in a census block

Top Tech - technology provided by the top provider in a census block

Underserved - Under BEAD, an underserved location is a broadband serviceable location reflected on the FCC's Broadband DATA Map that is lacking access to reliable broadband service with speed of at least 100 Mbps for downloads and 20 Mbps for uploads

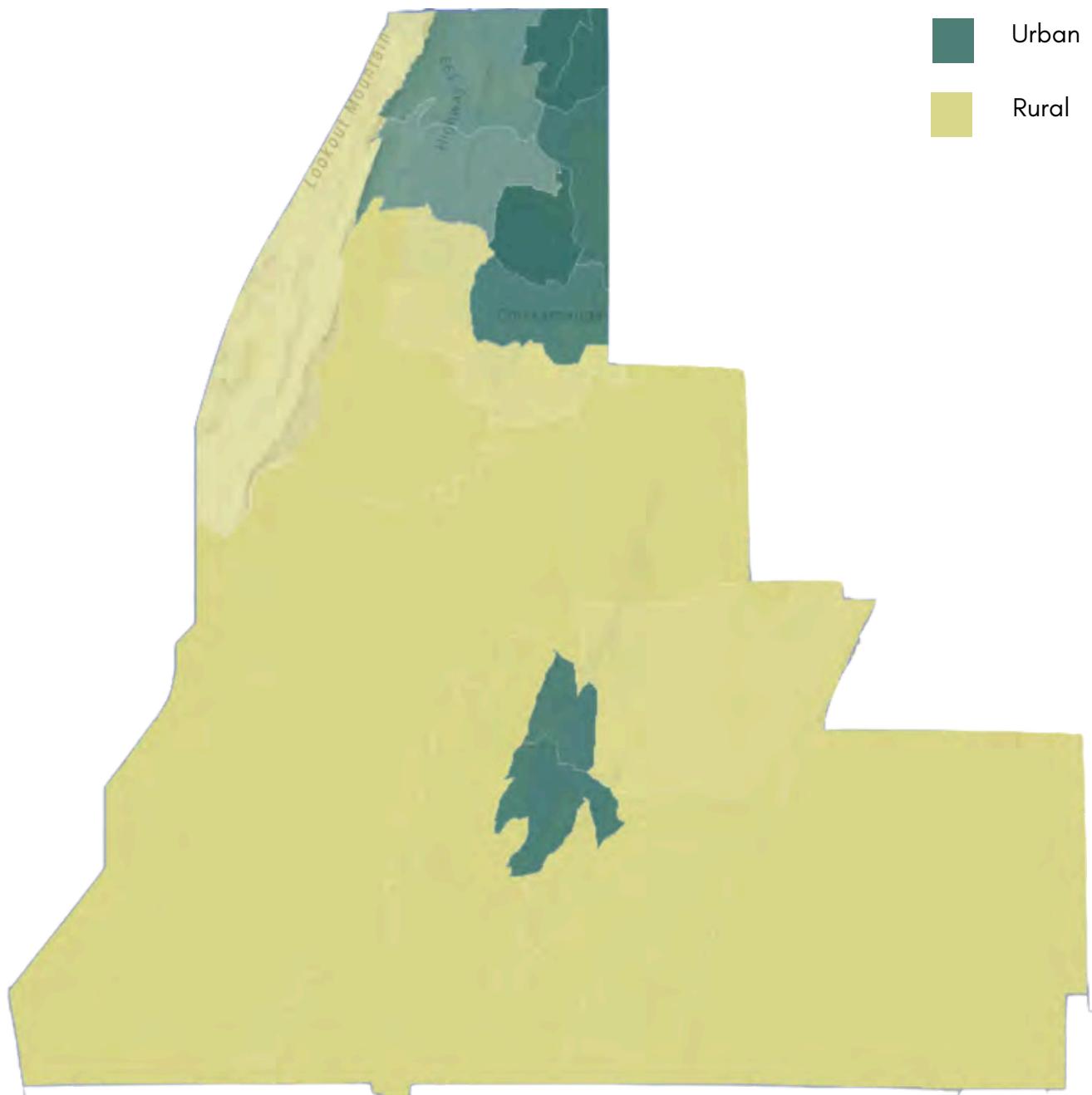
Unserved - Under BEAD, an unserved location is a broadband serviceable location reflected on the FCC's Broadband DATA Map that has no access to broadband service or reliable broadband service with speed of at least 25 Mbps for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads

Upload speed - how quickly data is sent from your computer to a server. This is necessary for video calls, sending large files by email, or for sending a video to someone by wifi enabled text.

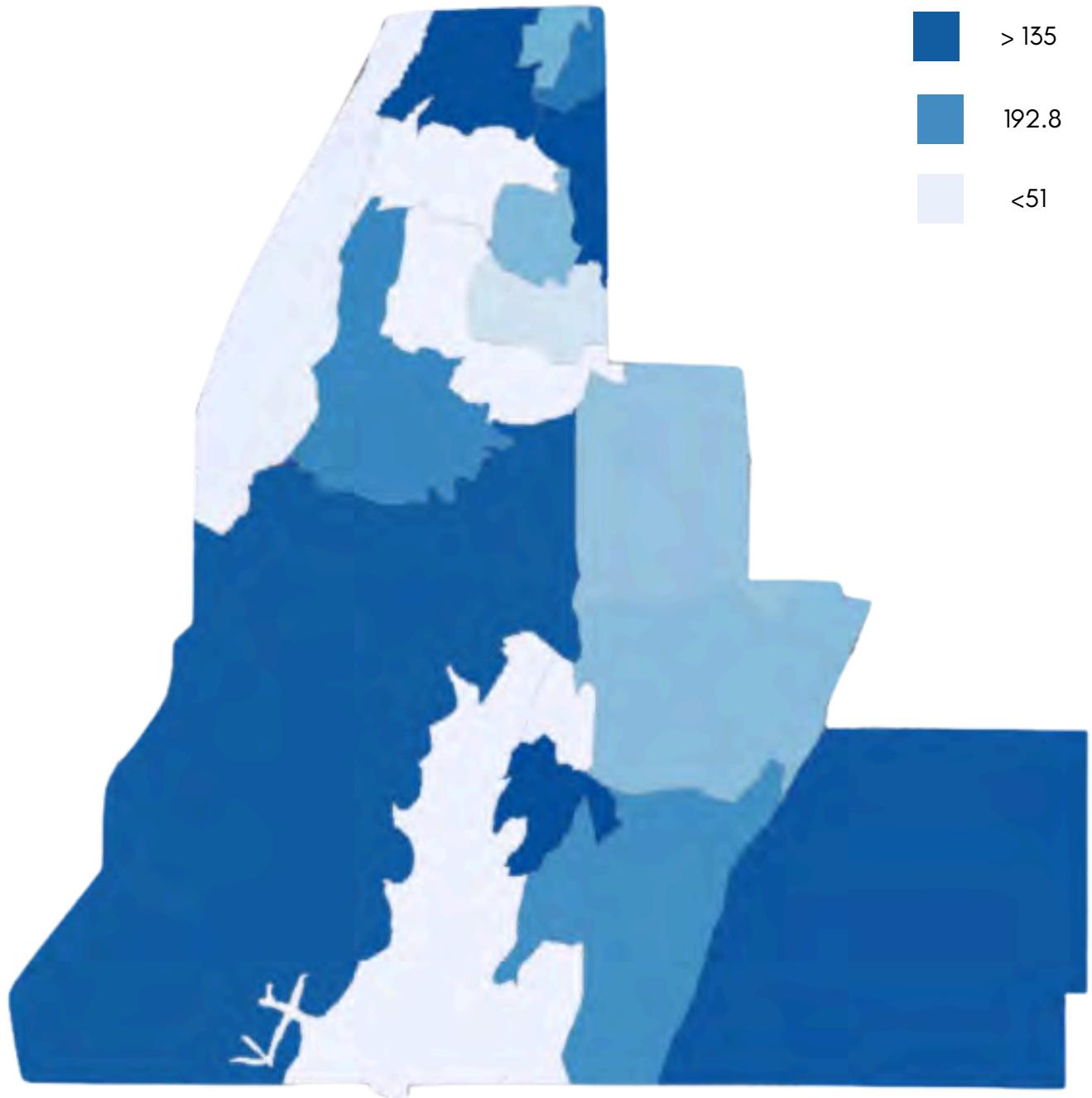
Wifi - local area network that is wireless and allows a computer or device to connect to the Internet. The router which transmits the wireless wifi to devices must be connected to the network with cables or wires.

APPENDIX B: MAPPING

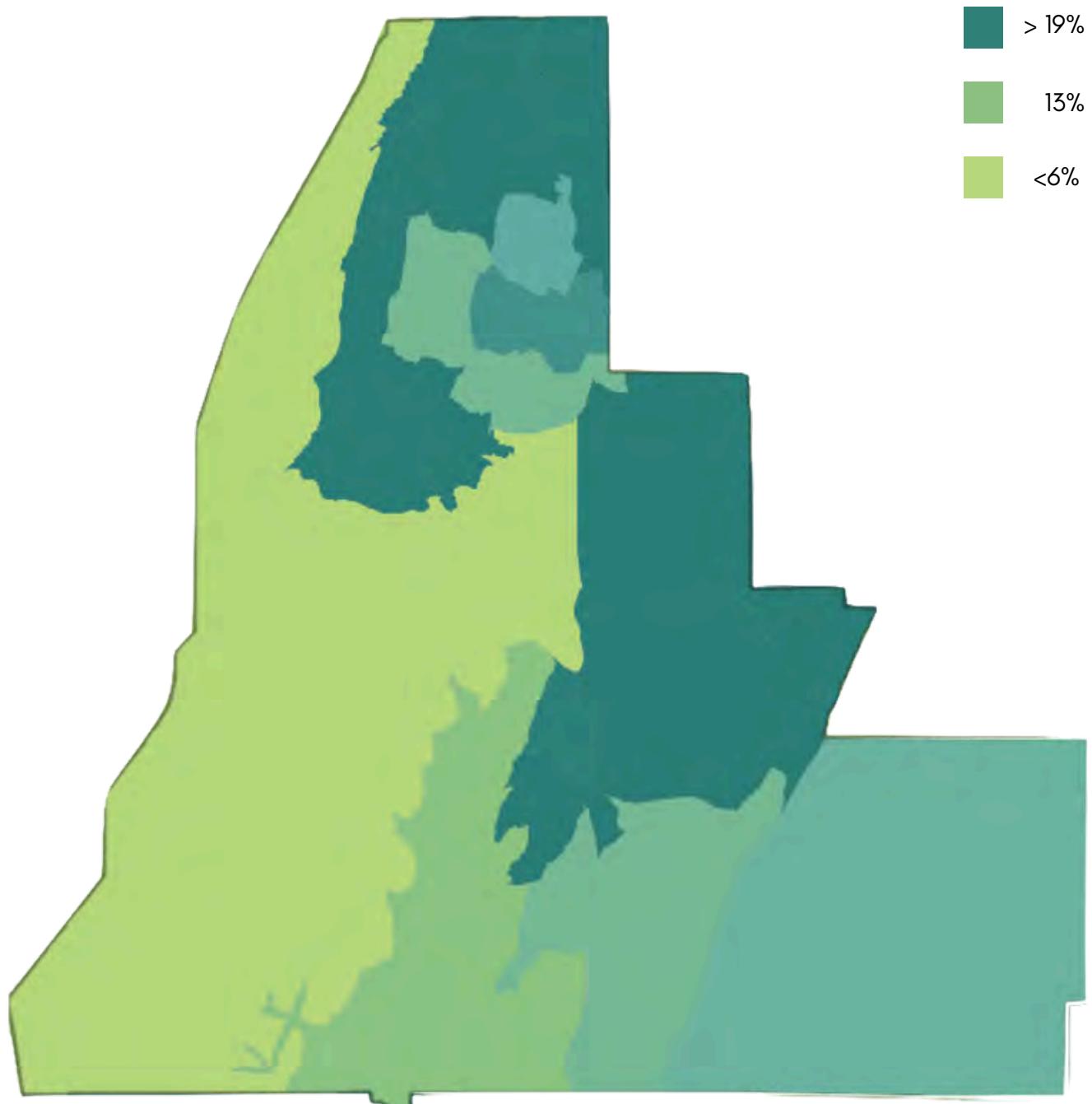
MAP 1: URBAN VS RURAL POPULATION



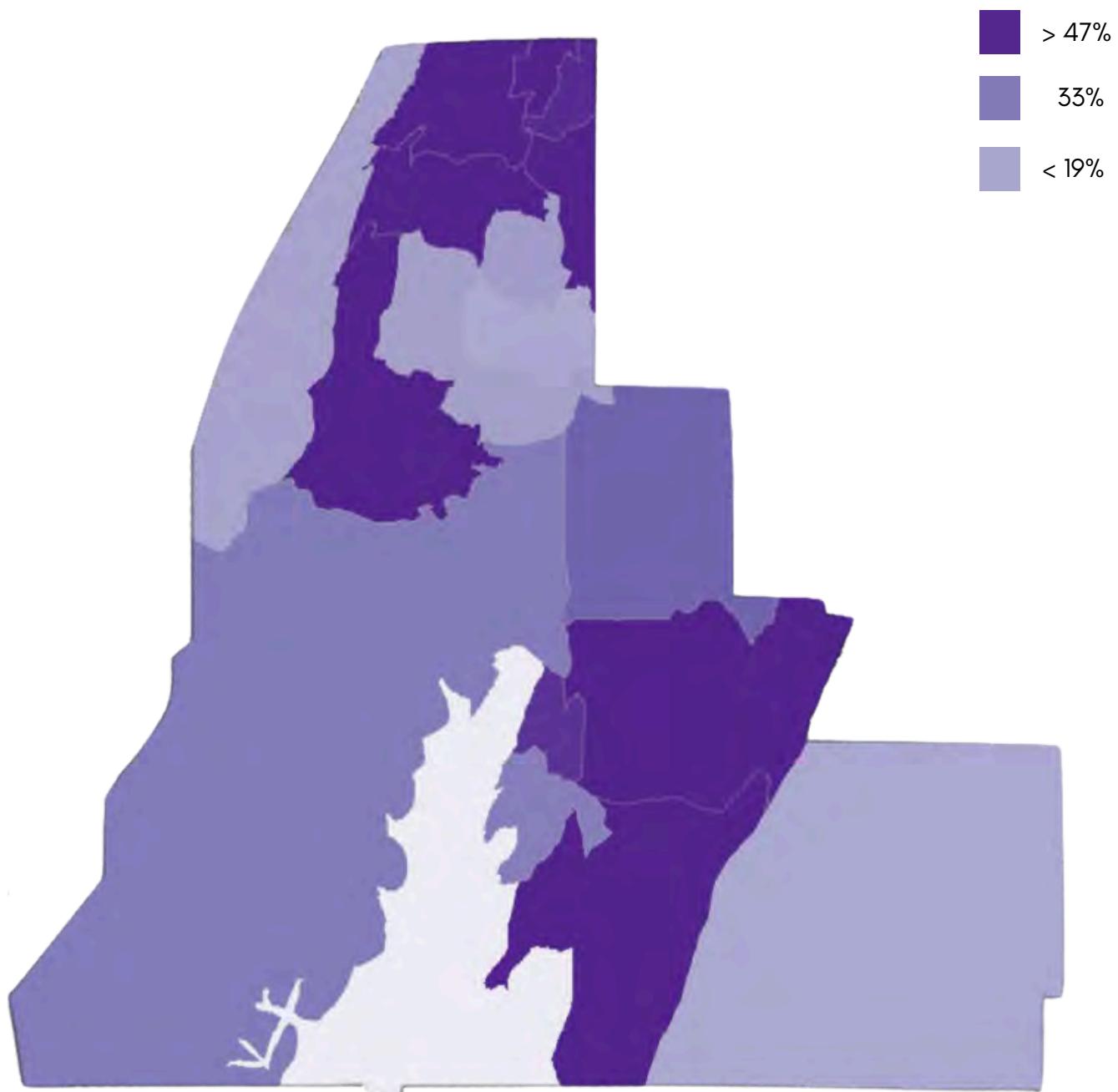
**MAP 2: POPULATION 60+ BELOW POVERTY
(COUNT)**



MAP 3: POPULATION WITH DISABILITY

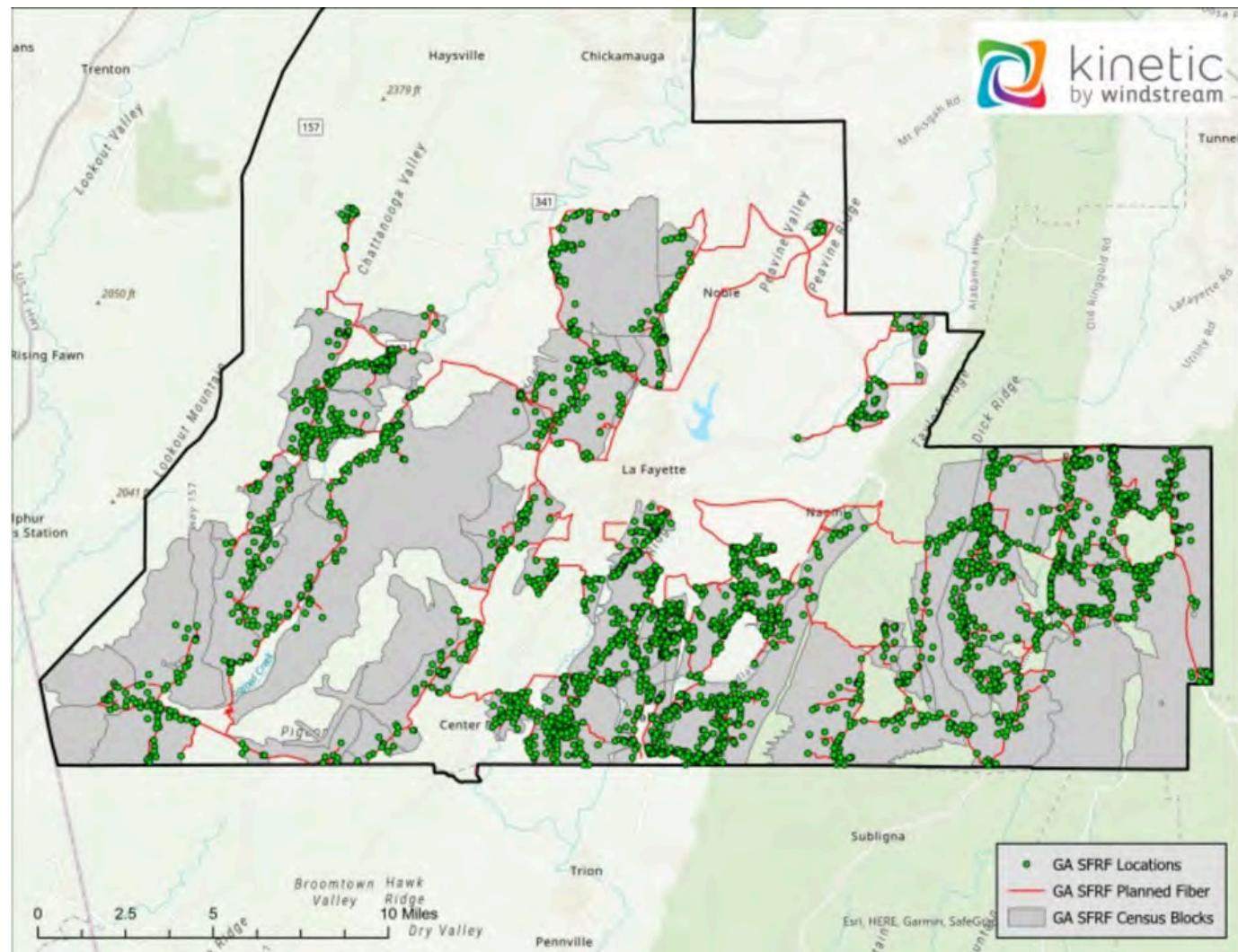


MAP 4: POPULATION 65+ WITH DISABILITY

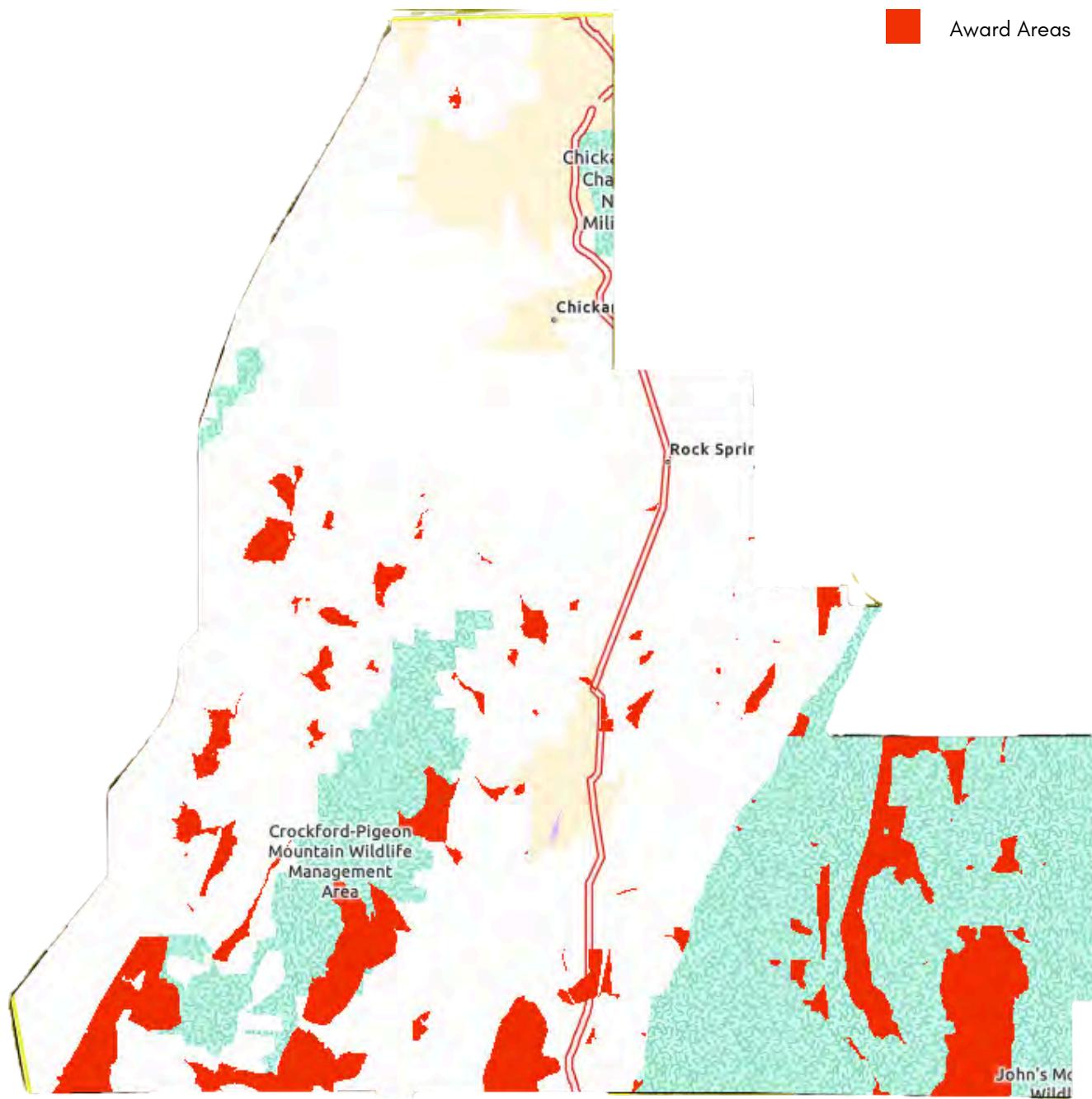


Appendix

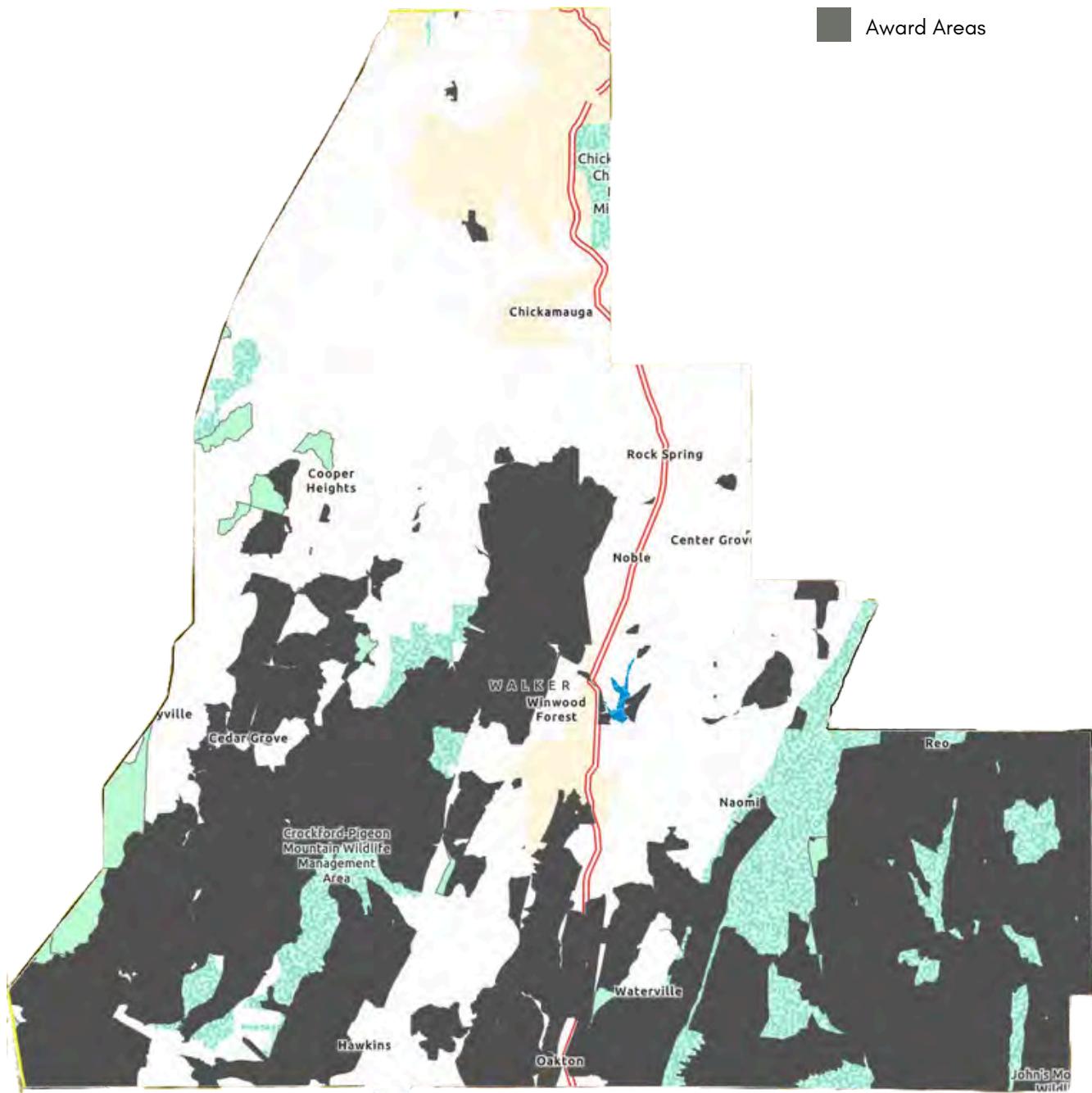
MAP 5: CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS PROGRAM



MAP 6: RURAL DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY FUND



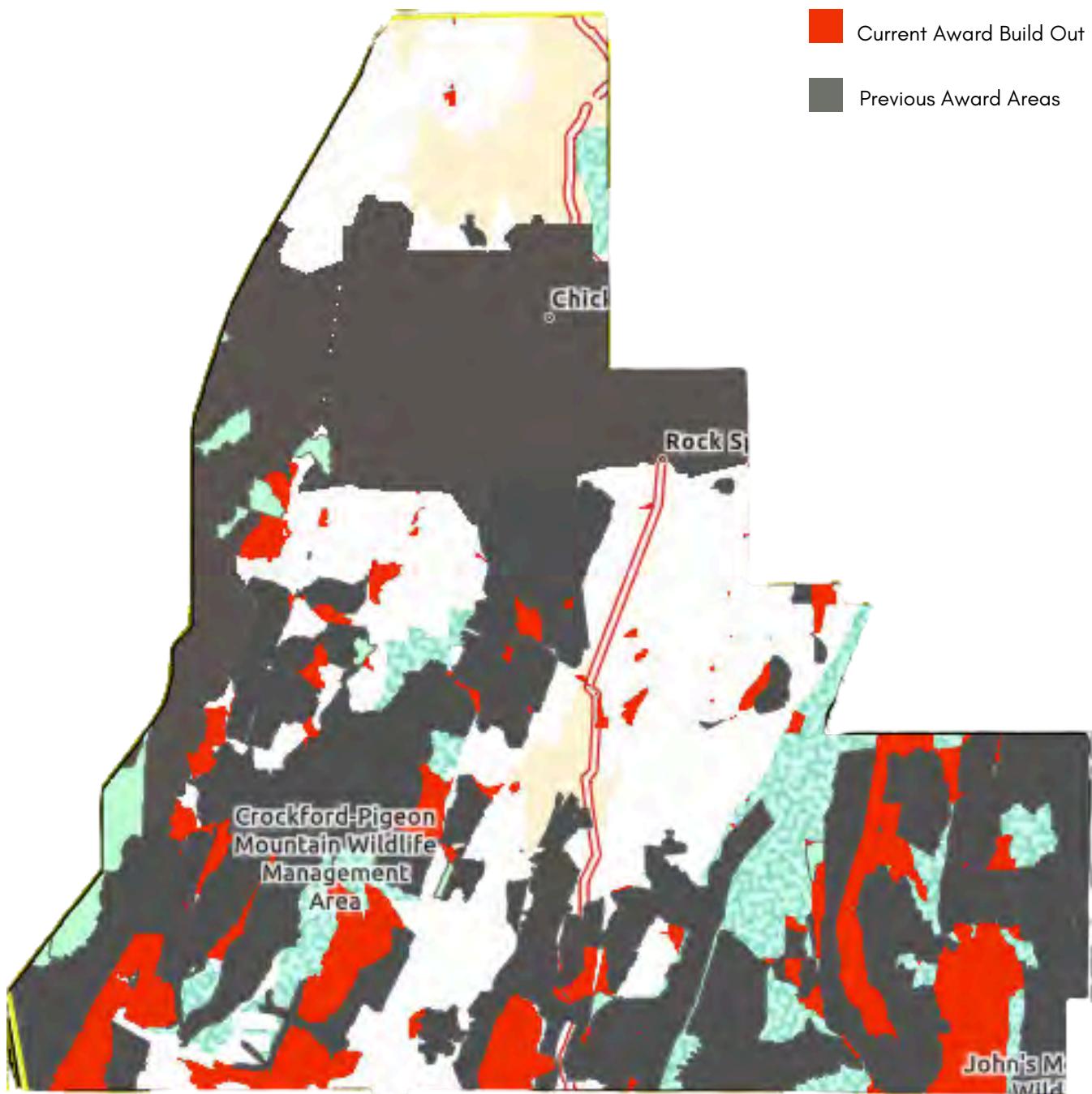
MAP 7: GEORGIA BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM



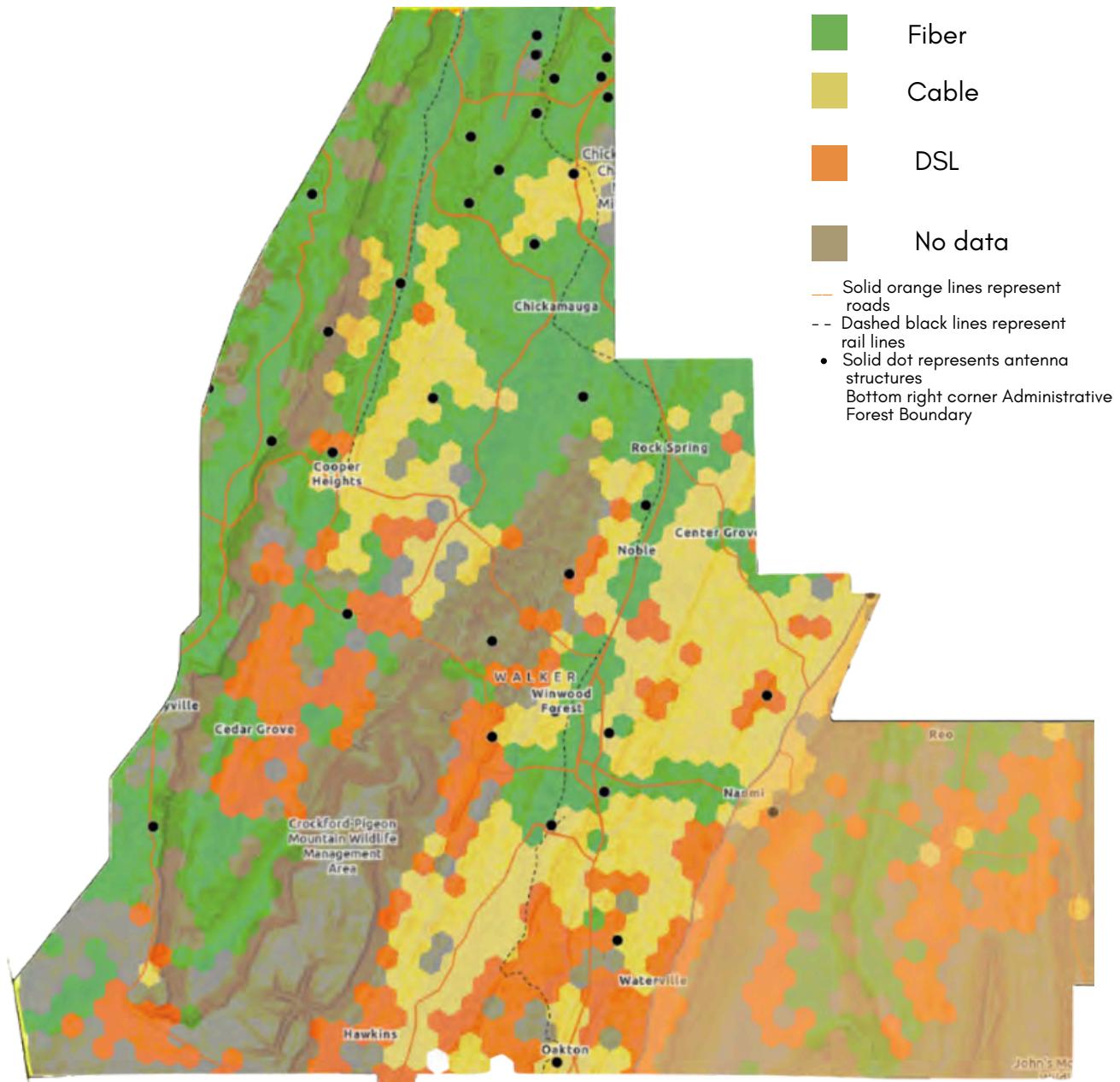
MAP 8: FCC E-CAM AWARD



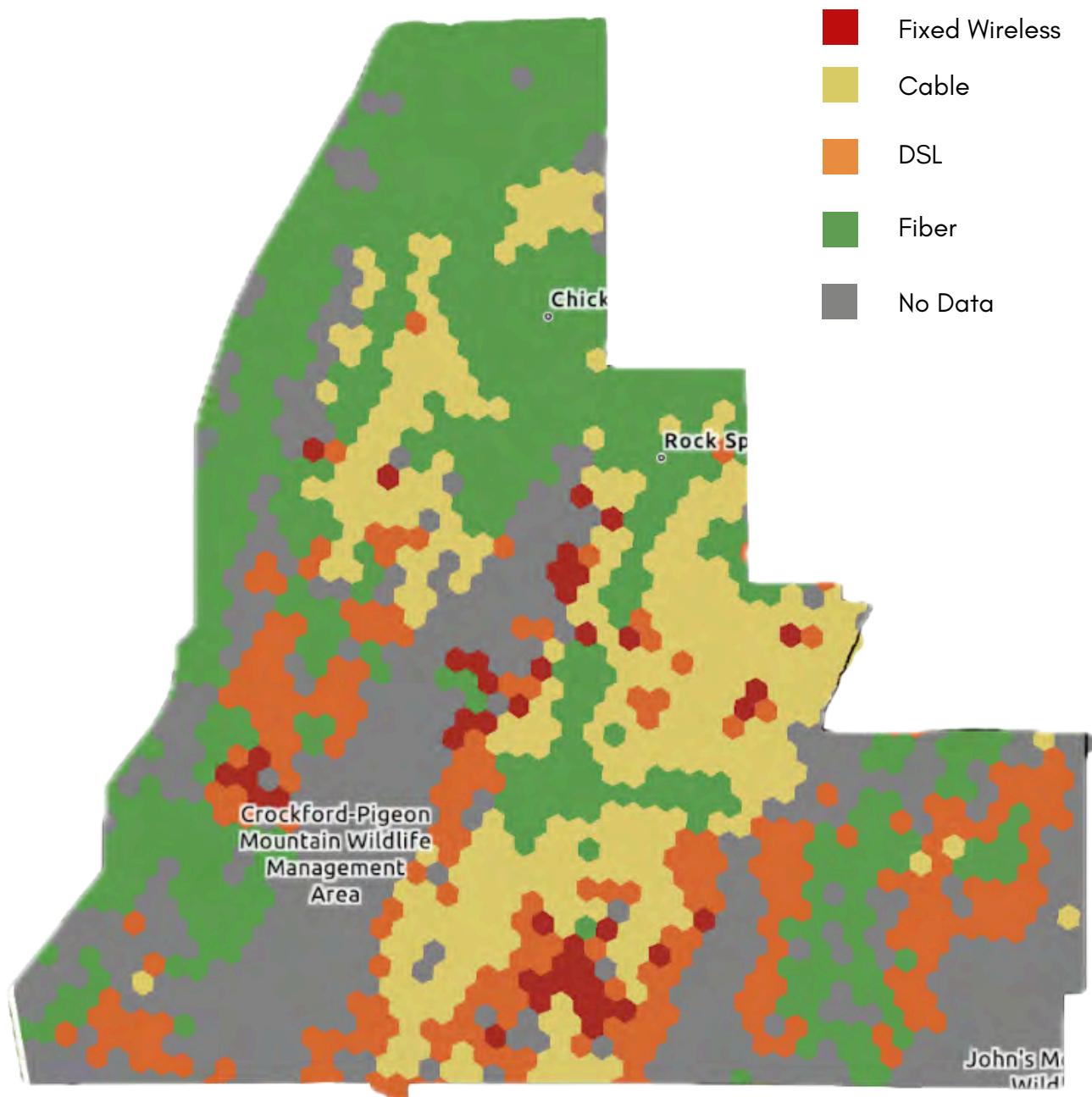
MAP 9: POTENTIAL AWARD AREAS



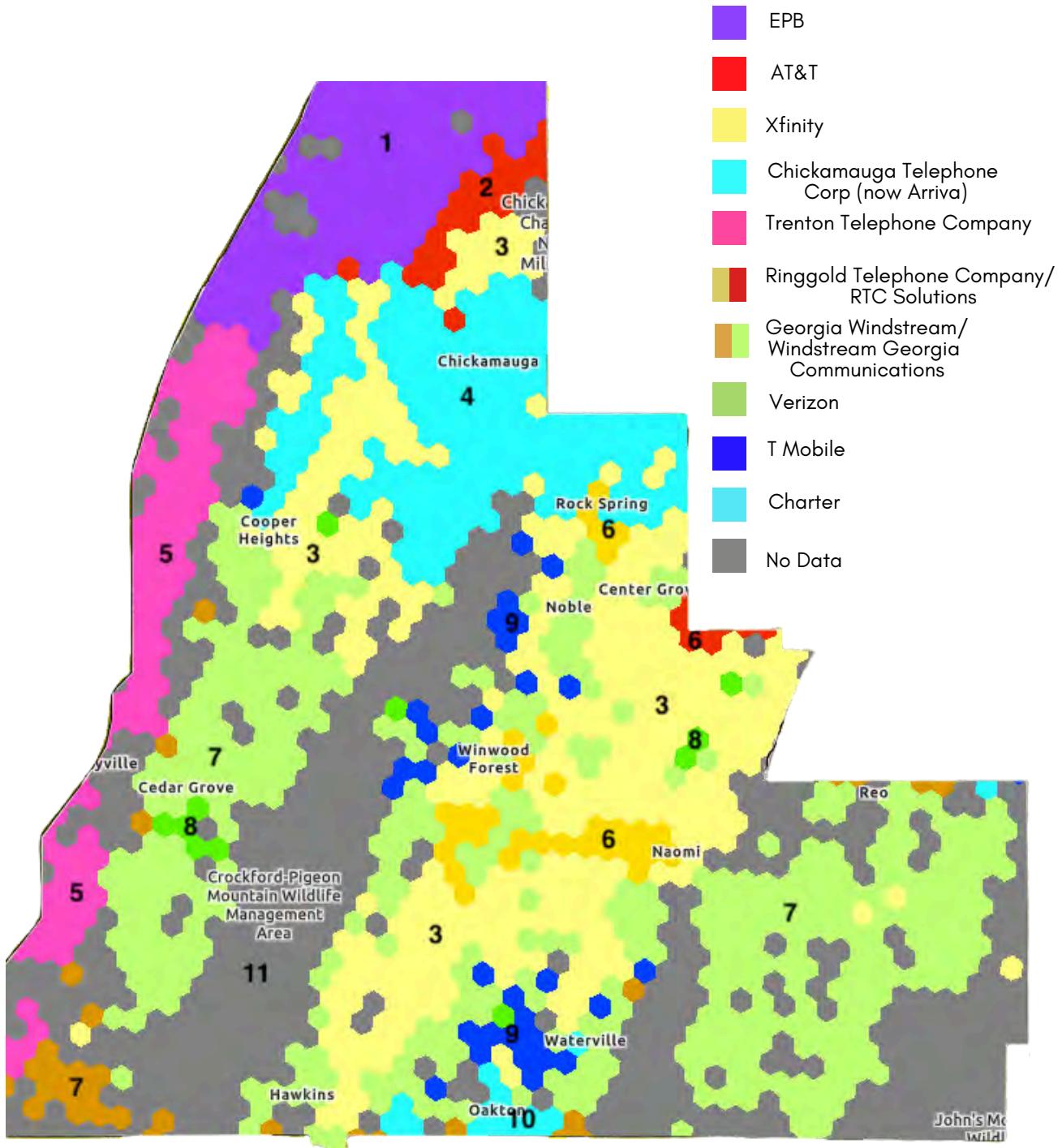
MAP 10: VERTICAL STRUCTURES



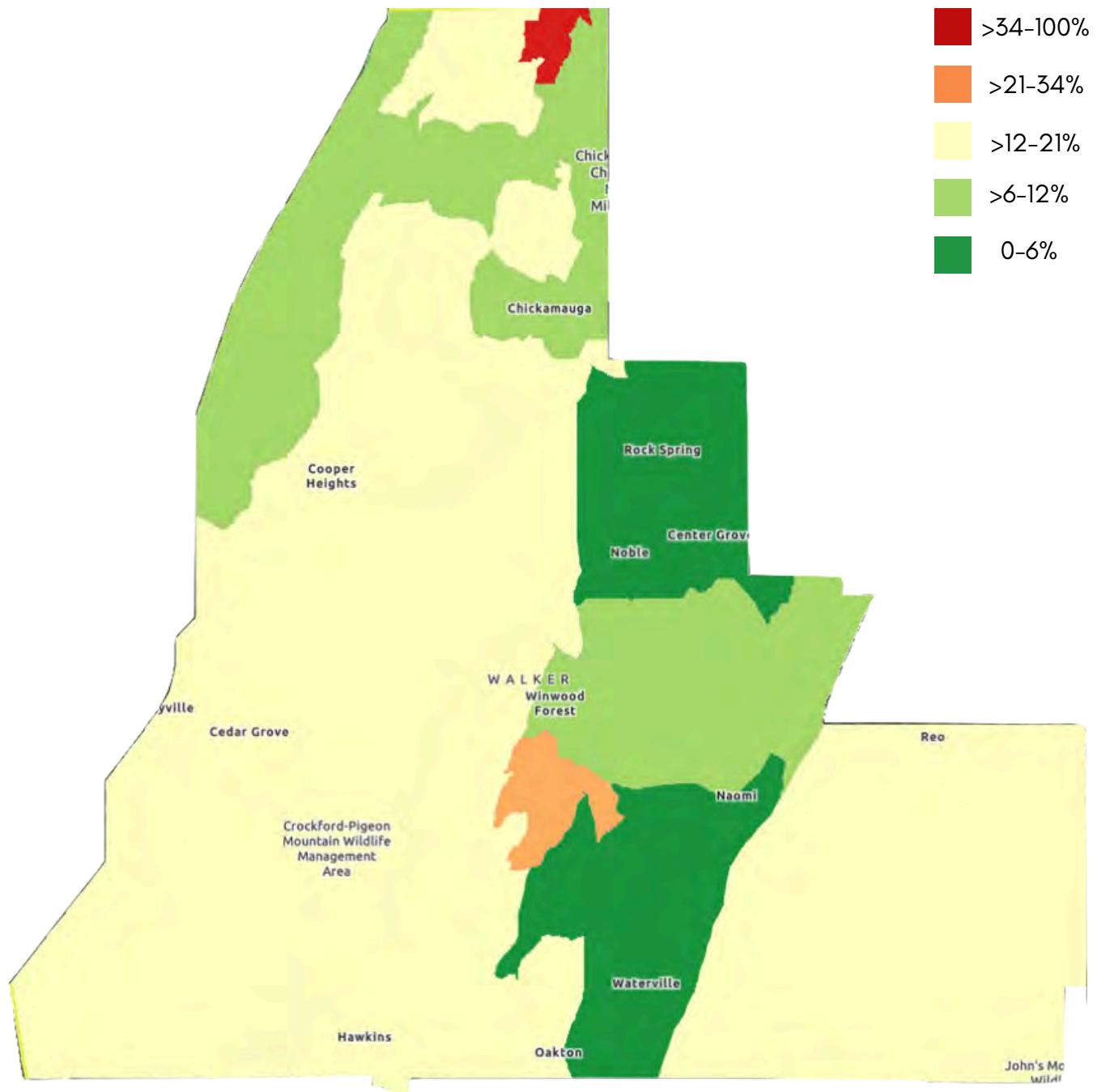
MAP 11: TOP TECHNOLOGY



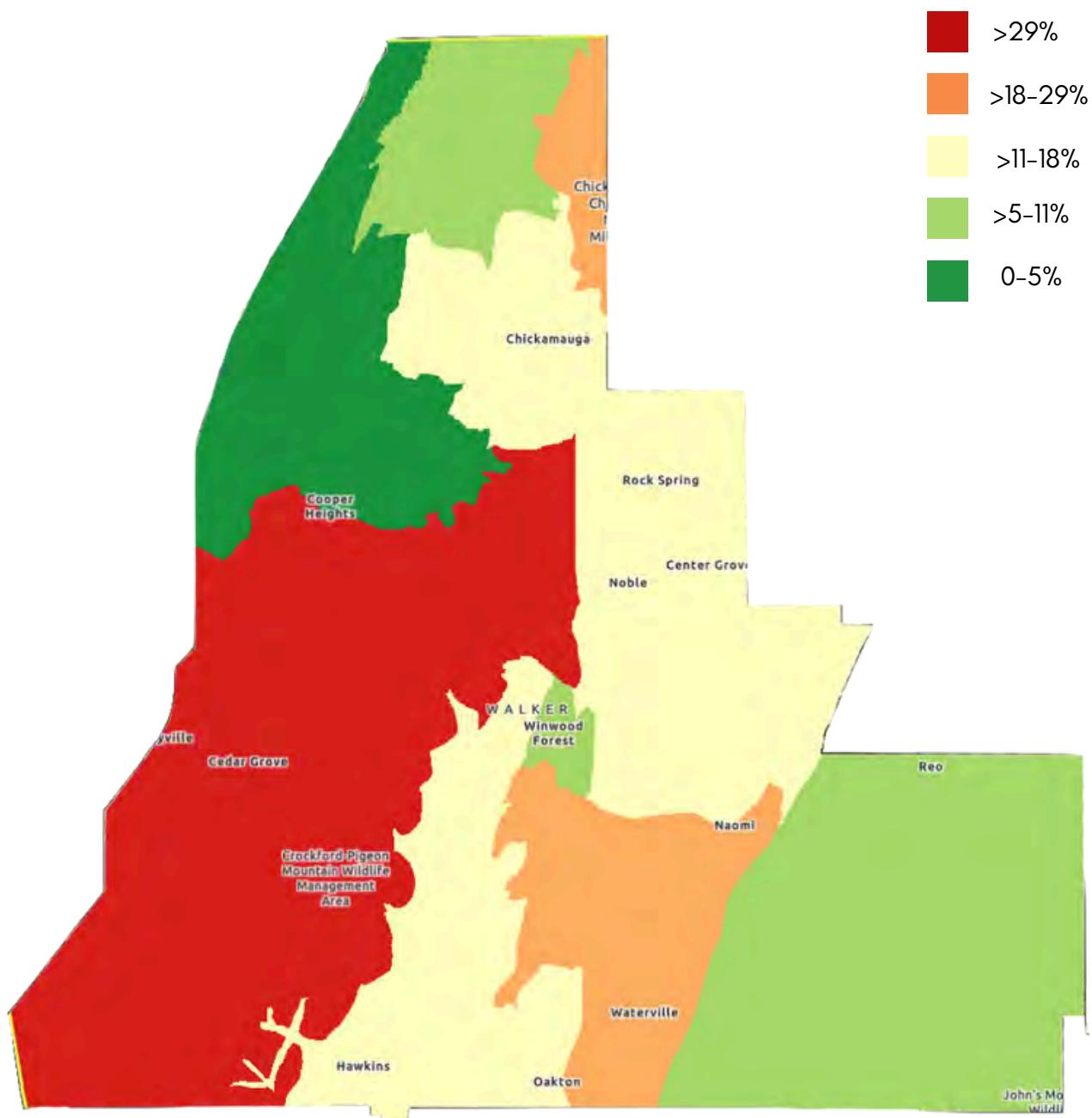
MAP 12: TOP ISP



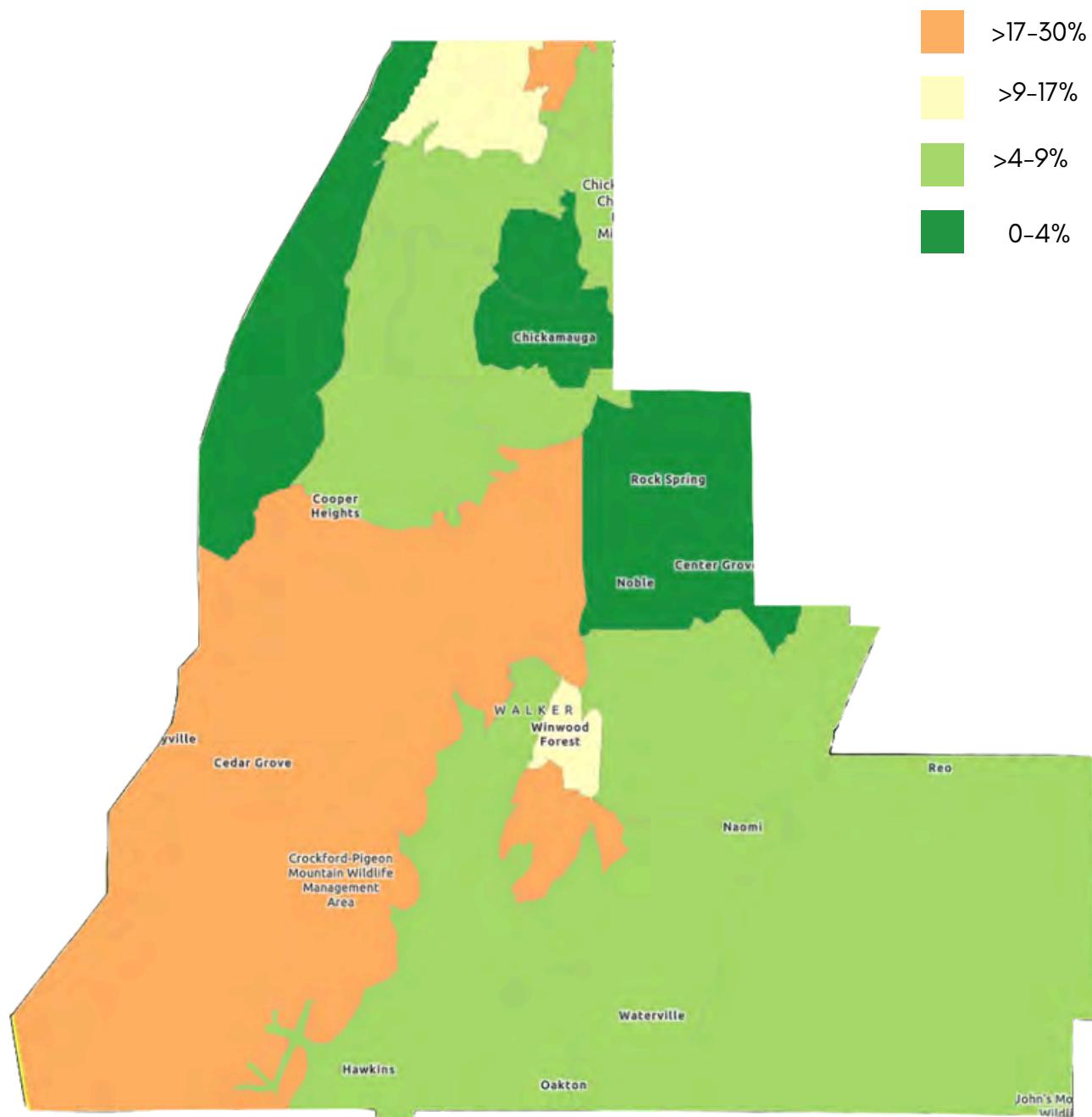
MAP 13: HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION



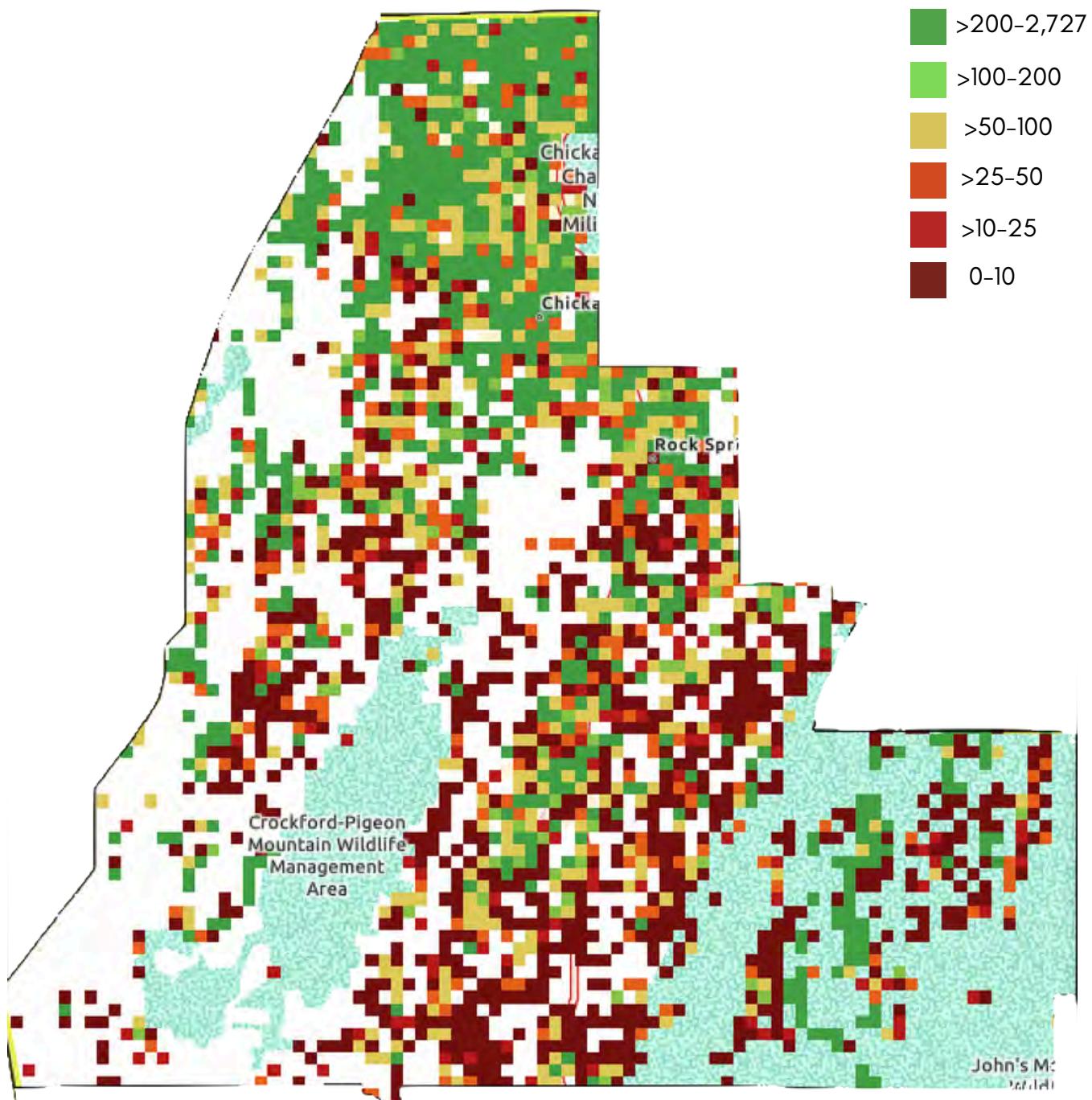
MAP 14: HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONLY SMART PHONE



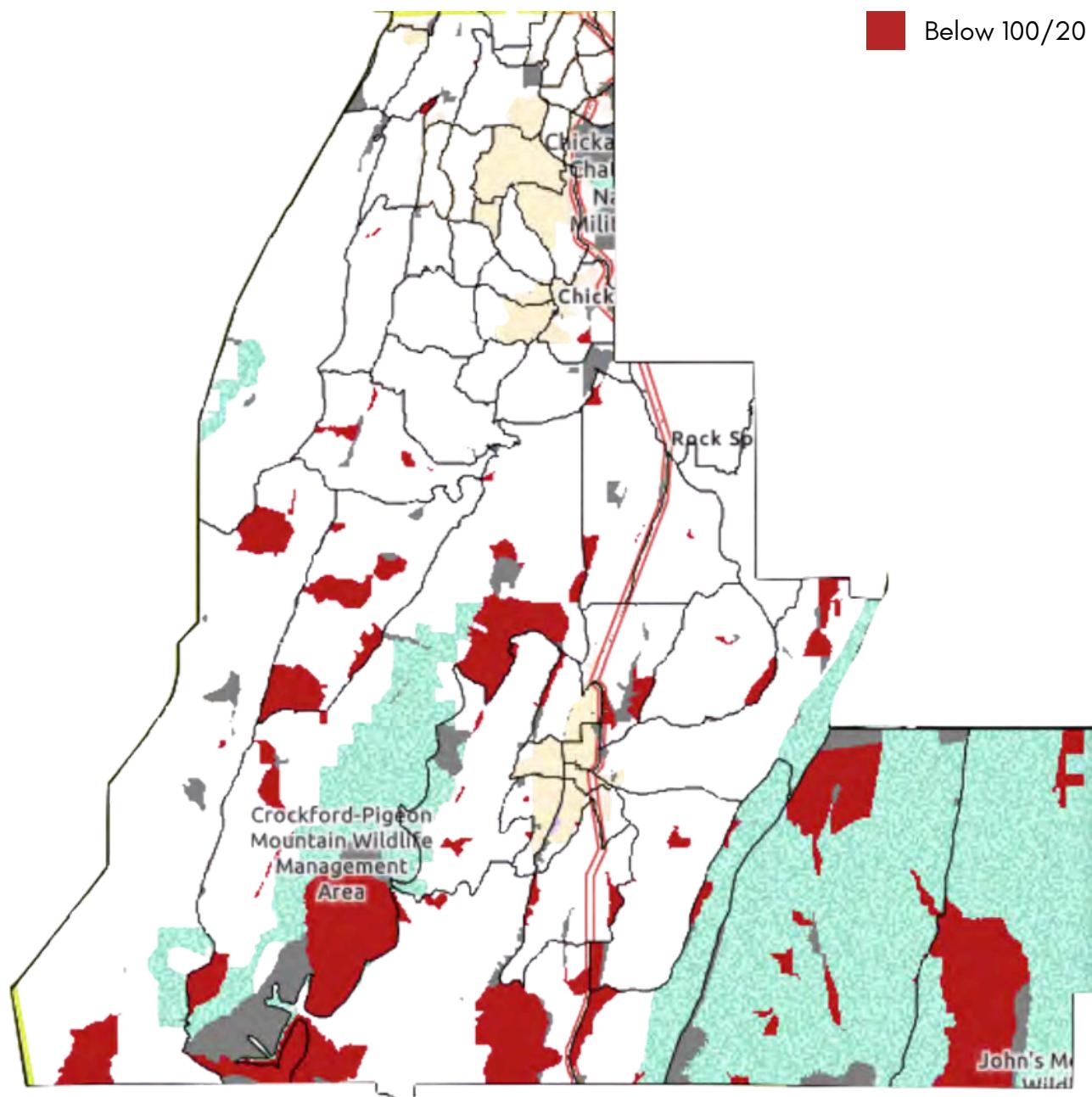
MAP 15: HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO DEVICE



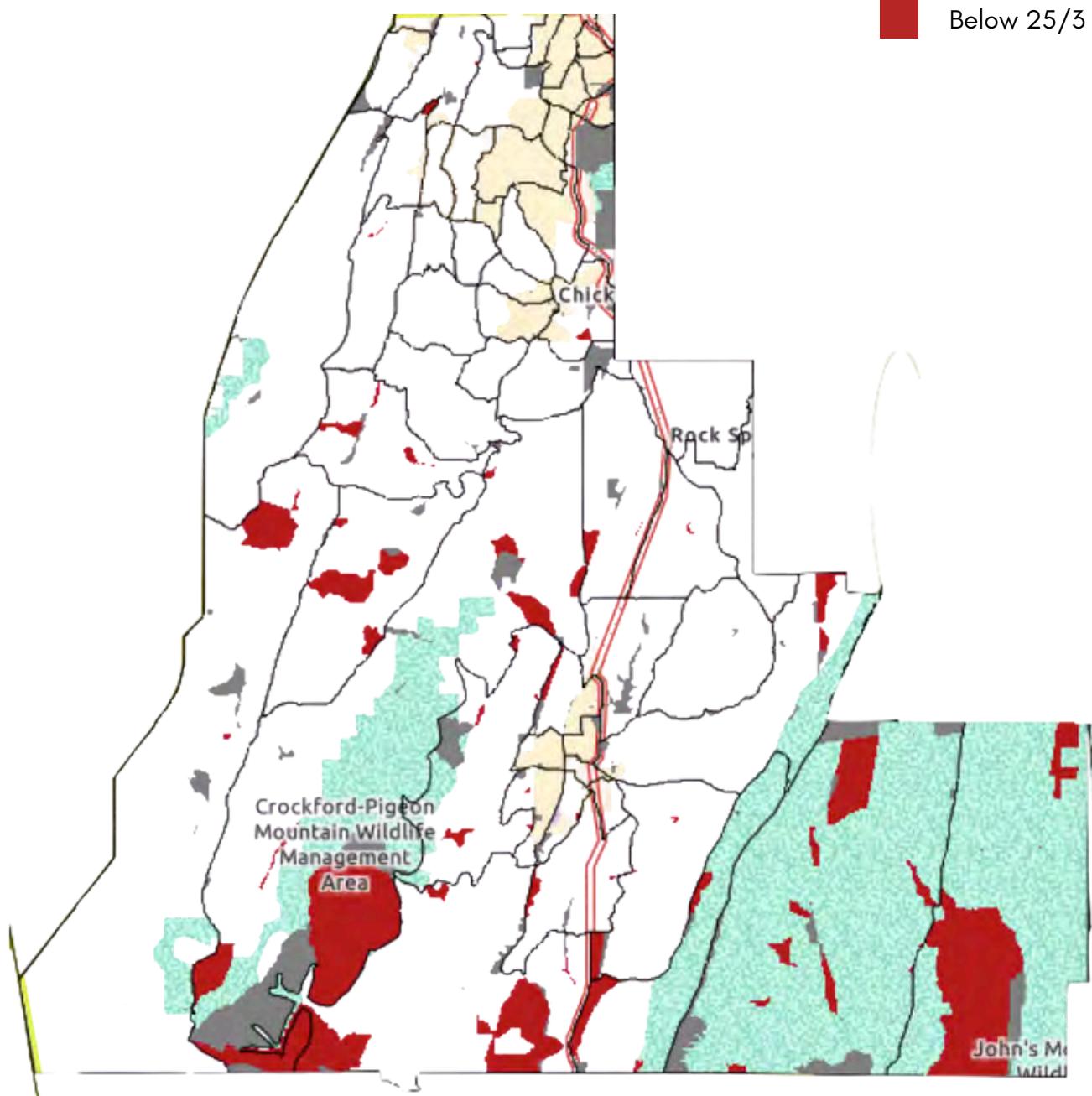
MAP 16: OOKLA SPEED TESTS



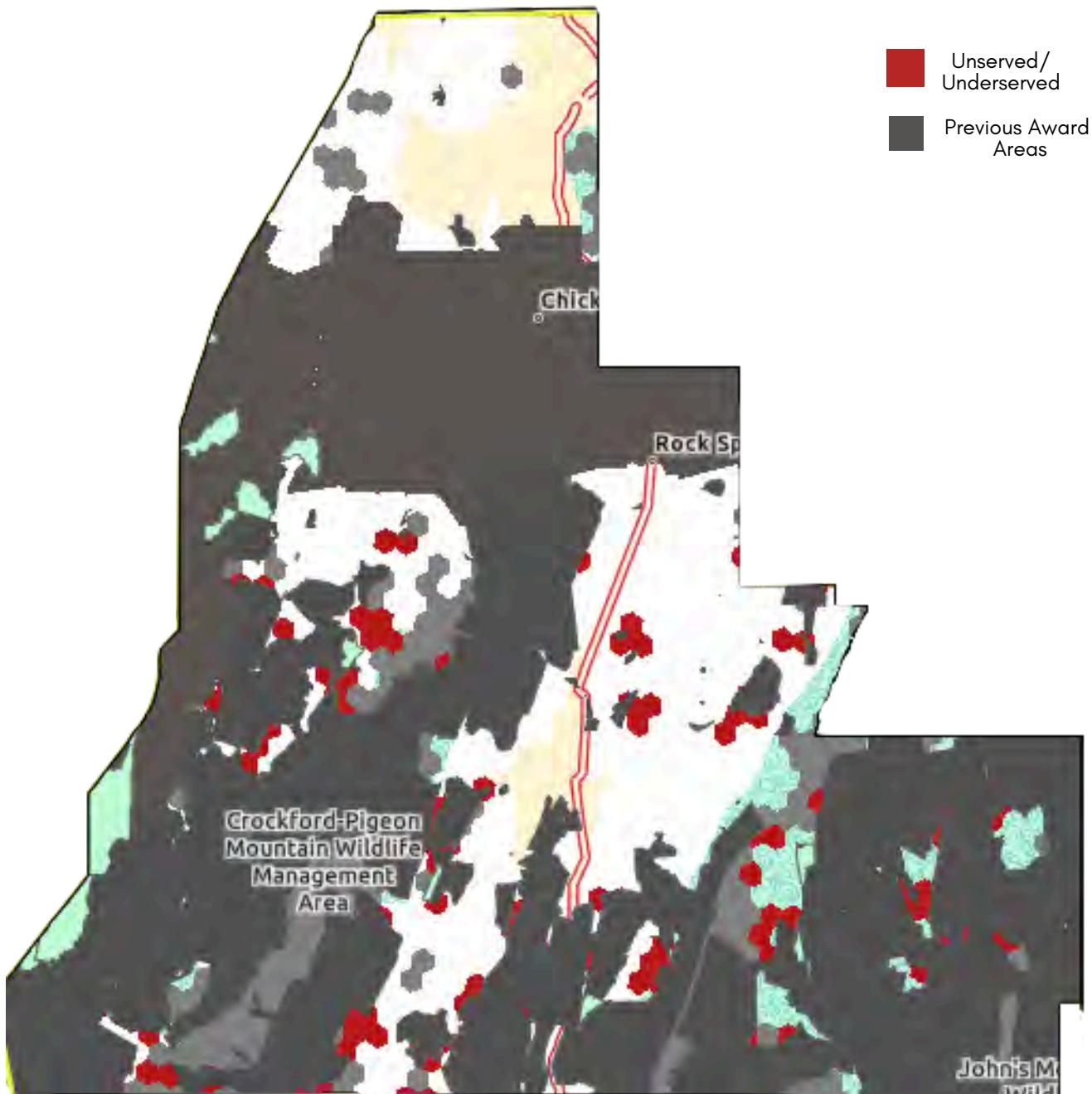
MAP 17: UNDERSERVED



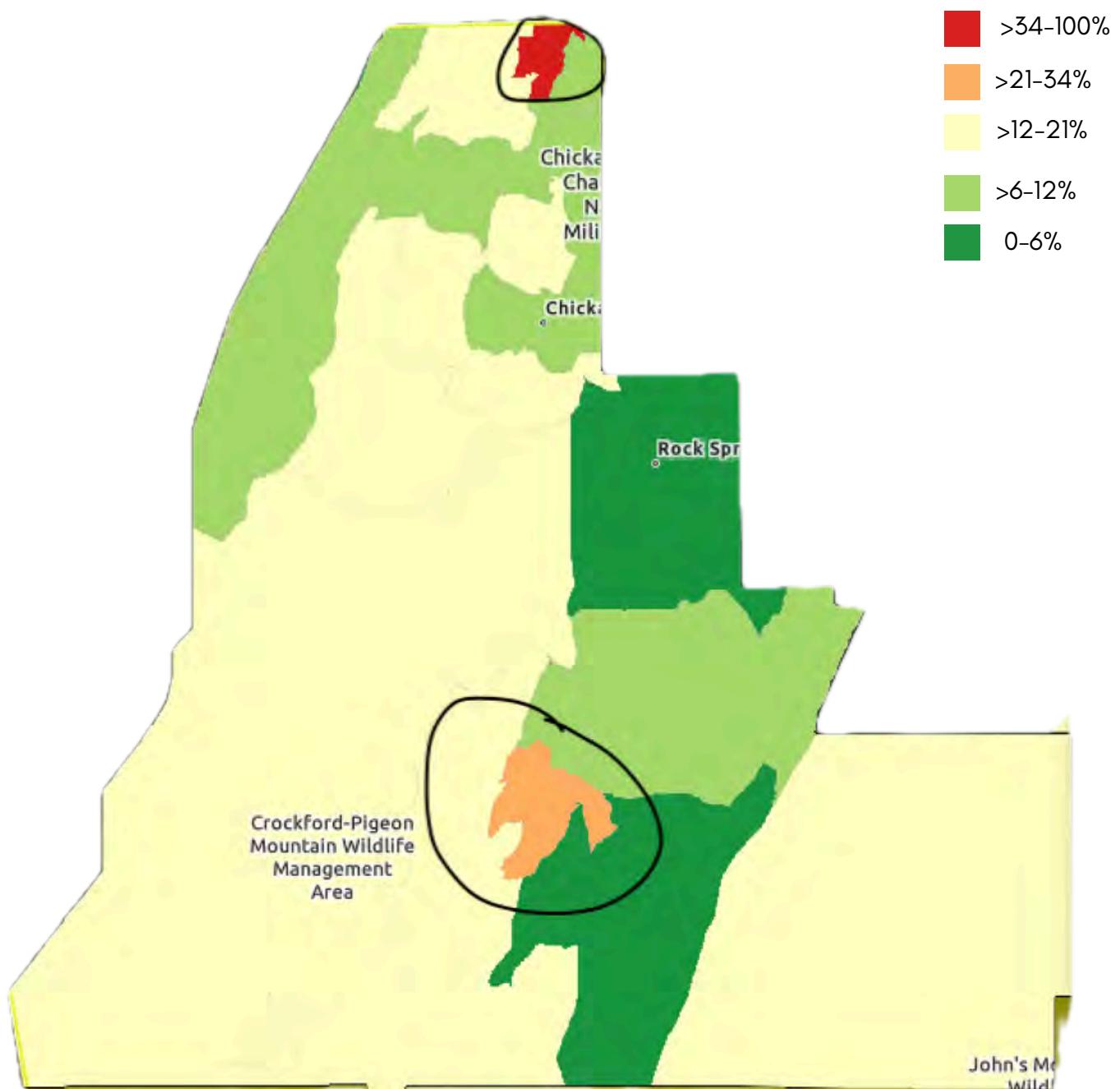
MAP 18: UNSERVED



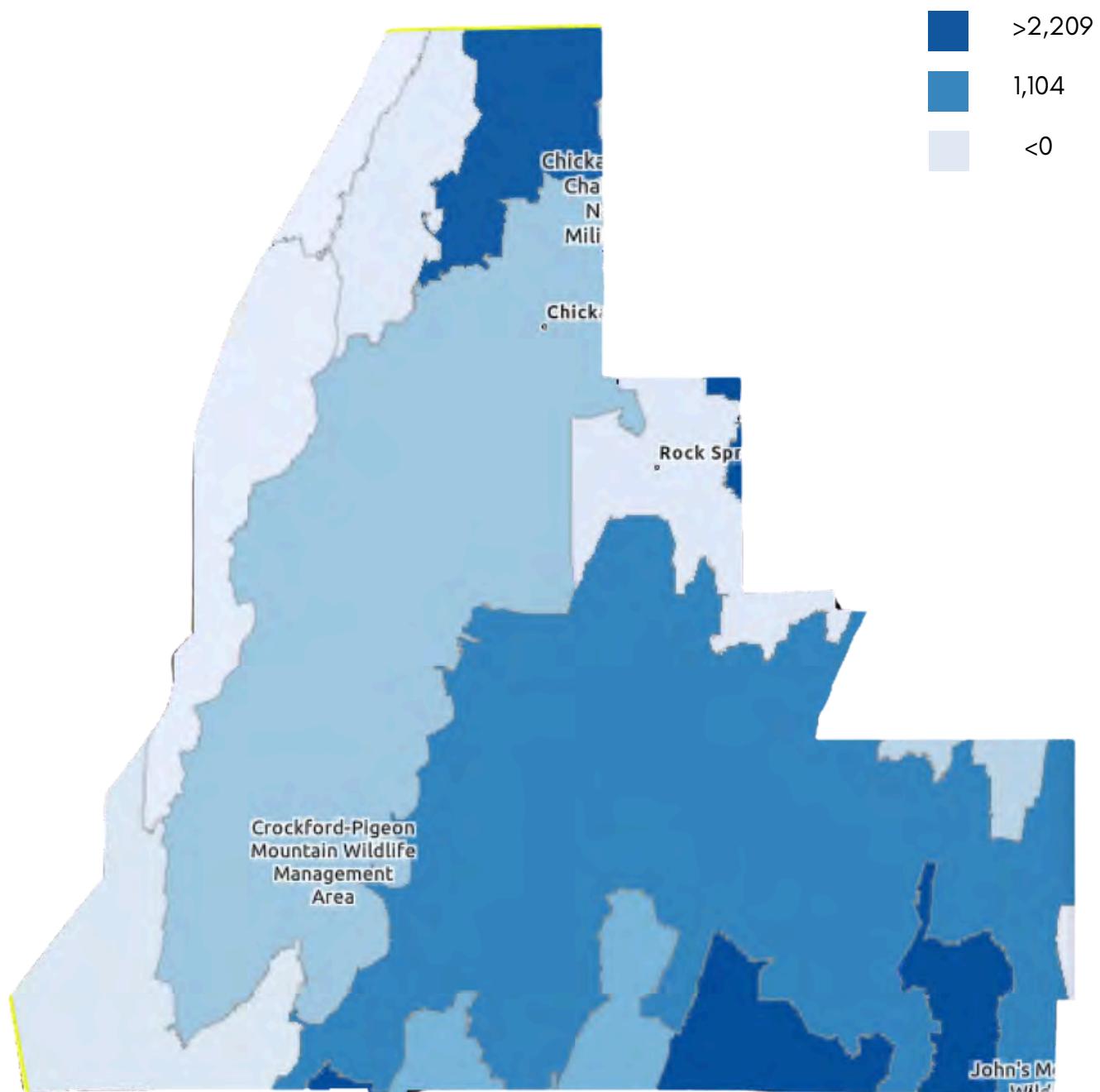
MAP 19: POTENTIAL AWARD AREAS



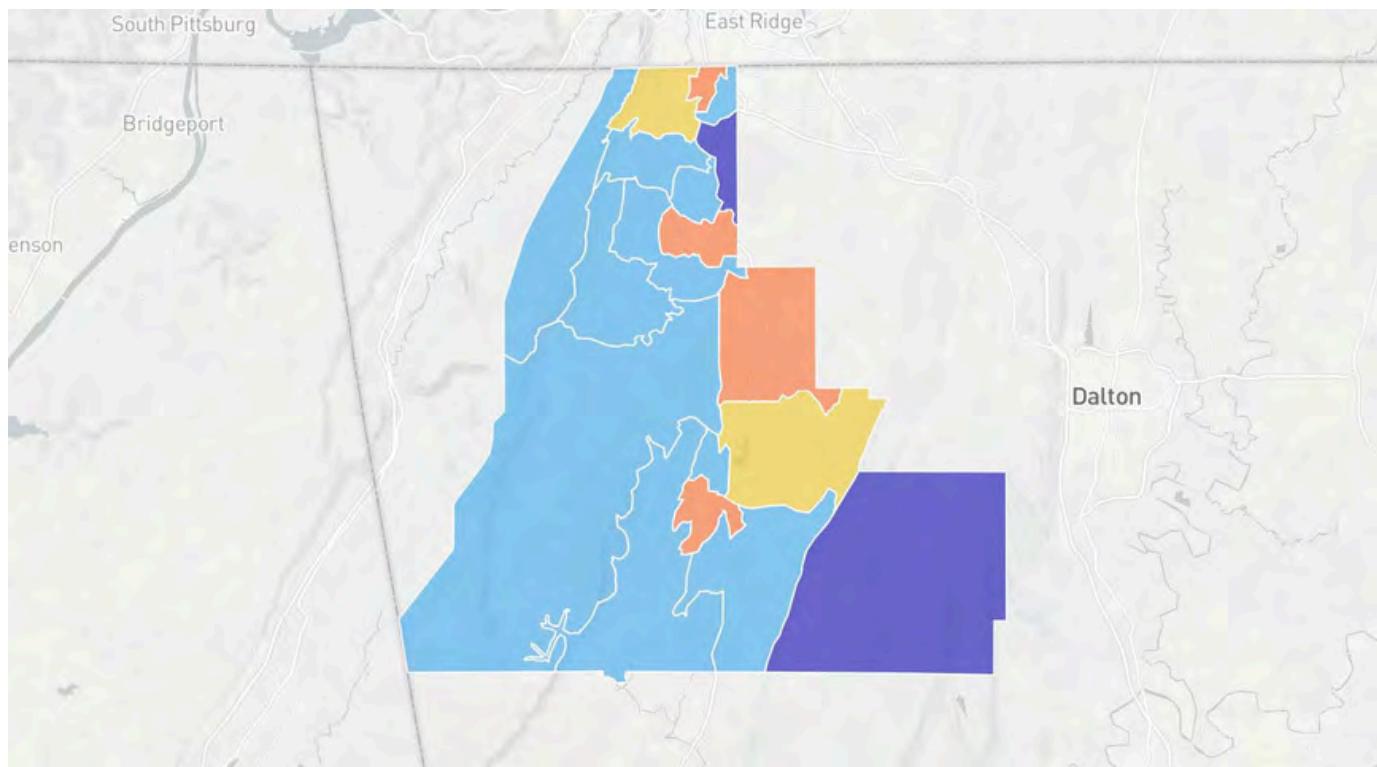
MAP 20: HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO INTERNET



MAP 21: AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM ENROLLMENT (COUNT)



MAP 22: TRACT HAZARD RISK SCORE MAP



- Very Low
- Relatively Low
- Relatively Moderate
- Relatively High
- Very High

APPENDIX C: INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS TOTAL COVERAGE TABLE

ISP	Top Tech	Total Census Units	% of Total Units	Sq. Mile Coverage	% Square Mile
EPB	Fiber	7,988	27.42%	32	7.24%
Xfinity	Cable Modem	6,652	22.83%	93	20.95%
Chickamauga Telephone Corp. (now operating as Arriva)	DSL, Fiber	5,577	19.14%	51	11.50%
Georgia Windstream, LLC.	DSL, Fiber	3,848	13.21%	149	33.43%
AT&T Inc	Fiber	2,309	7.92%	4	0.86%
Ringgold Tele Co/Rtc Solutions combined	Fiber	1,482	5.09%	11	2.51%
Trenton Telephone Co.	Fiber	612	2.10%	39	8.85%
Charter Communications Inc	Cable Modem	266	0.91%	6	1.30%
Windstream Georgia Communications, LLC	DSL, Fiber	125	0.43%	13	2.98%
T-Mobile US	Licensed Fixed Wireless	93	0.32%	5	1.23%
VERIZON	Licensed Fixed Wireless	60	0.21%	4	0.90%

Note: If an ISP is listed for a census block, even with no census unit, then it is included in that ISP total

Addresses sourced from housing for sale on Zillow in the following zipcodes: 30728, 30739, 30741, 30750, 30707, 30725, 30742. Addresses were random and did not correspond to unserved vs served designations. Additionally, although addresses picked may not have service currently available, does not mean other locations in that same zip code may not be servicable. This is just an example of potential availability and pricing across service providers for the same addresses. Pricing sourced September 25, 2024.

Provider	Availability	Service Name	Service Type	Monthly Fees	Service Details	ISP Reported Speeds (Mbps, latency)	ISP Served Addresses
AT&T	Not available at addresses searched for these cities: LaFayette, Rock Spring, Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga	Internet Air (Rossville)	Not specified	\$65/month for unlimited data, Advertised price after \$5/month AutoPay discount (within 2 bills). Paperless billing required. Late payment fees \$9.99, \$2.00 for non-return of equipment fee; Visit att.com/aidiscounts for available billing discounts and pricing options for broadband service bundled with other services like video, phone, and wireless service, and use of your own equipment like modems and routers. AT&T may temporarily slow data speeds if the \$60 network is busy.	\$65/month for unlimited data, Advertised price after \$5/month AutoPay discount (within 2 bills). Paperless billing required. Late payment fees \$9.99, \$2.00 for non-return of equipment fee; Visit att.com/aidiscounts for available billing discounts and pricing options for broadband service bundled with other services like video, phone, and wireless service, and use of your own equipment like modems and routers. AT&T may temporarily slow data speeds if the \$60 network is busy.	75-225 Mbps/10-30 Mbps 36-60 milliseconds (ms)	What does the ISP mean?
		Internet 25 (Flintstone)	Copper	\$60/month (usually \$70)	Monthly price \$70, \$99 installation fee, \$9.99 late payment fee, \$150 non-return equipment fee; taxes vary by location. Visit att.com/ibidiscounts for available billing discounts and pricing options for broadband service bundled with other services like video, phone, and wireless service, and use of your own equipment like modems and routers. 1.5 TB data: \$10/50GB data charged for additional usage.	32.5 Mbps/5.3 Mbps, 29 ms	What does the ISP mean?
Charter		Internet 50 (Ft Oglethorpe)	Copper	\$60/month (usually \$70)	Monthly price \$70, \$99 installation fee, \$9.99 late payment fee, \$150 non-return equipment fee; taxes vary by location. Visit att.com/ibidiscounts for available billing discounts and pricing options for broadband service bundled with other services like video, phone, and wireless service, and use of your own equipment like modems and routers. 1.5 TB data: \$10/50GB data charged for additional usage.	58 Mbps/11.6 Mbps, 26 ms	What does the ISP mean?

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Provider	Address/Notes	Plan	Service Type	Monthly Fees	Advertiser Fees	Service Details	ISP Reports (Download/Upload)	ISP Says this means?
							What does the ISP say this means?	
Arriva (formerly Chickamauga Telephone Co)	Not available in addresses searched for these cities: LaFayette, Rossville, Lookout Mountain, Flintstone, Fort Oglethorpe	400 Mbps	symmetrical	\$57.99			With 400 Mbps you should have enough bandwidth for: light streaming, HD streaming up to 2 devices, single player online gaming, smart home device connected (both plans include a local phone line at no additional cost)	
		1 Gig	symmetrical	\$67.99			With 1 Gig you should have enough bandwidth for: heavy data users, little to no buffering when multiple users are streaming, gaming, and browsing on multiple devices at the same time, ideal for 4k and 8k streaming, unlimited connected devices, best for smart home device support, multiplayer online gaming	
		Limited to Rossville area					With 300 Mbps you should have enough bandwidth for: fastest speeds for individuals and couples with basic bandwidth demands, dependable speed, buffer-free streaming, video chatting and more	
EPB		300 Mbps	Fiber	\$57.99			With 1 Gig you should have enough bandwidth for: faster than average uploads and downloads for learning, working, streaming and connecting on multiple devices at once	
		Gig	Fiber	\$67.99				

Addresses sourced from housing for sale on Zillow in the following zipcodes: 30728, 30739, 30741, 30750, 30707, 30725, 30742. Addresses were random and did not correspond to unserved vs served designations. Additionally, although addresses picked may not have service currently available, does not mean other locations in that same zip code may not be servicable. This is just an example of potential availability and pricing across service providers for the same addresses. Pricing sourced September 25, 2024.

Provider	Address/Name	Service Type	Monthly Fees	Service Details	ISP Reported Speeds (Mbps)	ISP Download/Upload Speeds (Mbps)	What does this mean?
Georgia Windstream	No address search available for Rock Spring, Rossville, Lookout Mountain, Flintstone, Fort Oglethorpe	Gig 2.5 (includes wifi)	Fiber	\$97.99			With Gig 2.5 you should have enough bandwidth for: insanely fast for tech-savvy homes with dozens of gaming, working, entertainment, and smart home devices
		Gig 10	Fiber	\$299.99			With Gig 10 you should have enough bandwidth for: fast transferring enormous files, hosting online servers or managing at home datacenters
		3 Mbps (LaFayette only)		\$40			
		300 Mbps (Chickamauga)		\$39.99			With 300 Mbps you should have enough bandwidth for: video calling, HD streaming, online gaming
		1 Gig (Chickamauga)		\$69.99 (\$39.99 for first three months)			With 1 Gig you should have enough bandwidth for: glitch free video calling, buffer-free 4k streaming, multiplayer gaming
		2 Gig (Chickamauga)		\$99.99			With 2 Gig you should have enough bandwidth for: highest quality group video calling, instant 8k multi-stream 4k viewing, pro-level gaming and VR with ultra low lag
Ringgold Telephone Company	All addresses outside of listed territory						
T-Mobile							

Addresses sourced from housing for sale on Zillow in the following zipcodes: 30728, 30739, 30741, 30750, 30707, 30725, 30742. Addresses were random and did not correspond to unserved vs served designations. Additionally, although addresses picked may not have service currently available, does not mean other locations in that same zip code may not be servicable. This is just an example of potential availability and pricing across service providers for the same addresses. Pricing sourced September 25, 2024.

Provider	Available Notes	Service Name	Plan Speed	Service Type	Advertiser Fees	Monthly Fees	Service Details	ISP Reports (download/upload)	What does this mean?
			150 Mbps				\$40/month for 12 months after which is \$66/month. There is no term contract. Plan includes access to Xfinity WiFi public hotspots. This price does not include the autopay and paperless discount of up to \$10/mo. Optional modem or gateway lease \$0 for the first 12 months and the monthly price after 12 months is \$15/mo. Optional xFi Complete \$10/month. This is a promotional price; the monthly price after 12 months is \$25/mo. Includes Unlimited Data, Gateway Lease, Tech Upgrade, Advanced Security on the Go, and Whole Home WiFi. Professional Install Fee (only option) \$100. 1.2 TB data included. \$10/50 GB after that, with a maximum of \$100/month. Or \$30 unlimited data for customer-owned modems.	175.96 Mbps/23.37 Mbps, 20.083 ms	With 150 Mbps you should have enough bandwidth to: browse web, stream music and movies
			300 Mbps				\$55 monthly price for 12 months (requires 12 month contract). \$86/month after 12 months. Includes access to Xfinity wifi public hotspots. Up to \$10 in discounts with autopay and paperless billing. \$10/month for Optional xFi complete for first 12 months, then \$25/month (unlimited data, gateway lease, tech upgrade, whole home wifi), self-installation fee \$39.99, professional installation fee \$100, late payment fee \$10, early termination fee \$110, taxes vary, 1.2TB data and \$10/50 GB after, \$30 for unlimited data for customer owned modems	351.04 Mbps/23.37 Mbps, 19.316 ms	With 300 Mbps you have enough bandwidth to: download medium files, download music and podcasts, stream in HD quality
			500 Mbps				\$65/month for 24 months, after it is \$96/month. Includes public hotspots and available for additional discounts with autopay and paperless billing (\$10), \$10/month for optional xFi Complete. For first 24 months than \$25/month. \$39.99 self-installation fee, \$100 professional install fee, \$10 late payment, \$20 early termination fee, taxes vary, 1.2 TB data and than \$10/50 GB with max of \$100/month, \$30 unlimited data for customer-owned modems	583.13 Mbps/23.37 Mbps, 14.123 ms	With 500 Mbps you have enough bandwidth to: download medium files quickly, work and learn from home, low lag when streaming

Addresses sourced from housing for sale on Zillow in the following zipcodes: 30728, 30739, 30741, 30750, 30707, 30725, 30742. Addresses were random and did not correspond to unserved vs served designations. Additionally, although addresses picked may not have service currently available, does not mean other locations in that same zip code may not be servicable. This is just an example of potential availability and pricing across service providers for the same addresses. Pricing sourced September 25, 2024.

Provider	Available Notes	Plan Speed/Name	Service Type	Service Details	ISP Reproved (download/upload)	ISP Speeds (a, latency)	What does the ISP say this means?
		1000 Mbps	Advertised Fees	\$65 (\$75 in Chittanooga + Fort Oglethorpe)	\$85/month for 24 months and then \$116/month. \$110/month discount with autopay and paperless billing. \$10/month for optional XFi Complete for first 24 months then \$25/month. \$30.99 self-installation fee. \$100 professional install fee. \$10 late payment. \$230 early termination fee. Taxes vary. 1.2 TB data and then \$10.50/GB with max of \$100/month. \$30 unlimited data for customer-owned modems	1141.56 Mbps/23.27 Mbps, 14.473 ms	With 1000 Mbps you should have enough bandwidth to download large files, stream all Favs, Ultra GW BG
		1200 Mbps	Advertised Fees	\$105/month after additional fees. This monthly price is an introductory rate for 24 months. This monthly price requires a 24 month contract. The post introductory price for this plan is currently \$126/mo and is subject to change. Includes access to Xfinity WiFi public hotspots. This price does not include the autopay and paperless discount of up to \$10/mo. Modem or gateway lease \$15/month. Self-installation plus fee \$39.99. Professional install Fee \$100. Unlimited data for customer-owned modems \$30. Charges for Additional Data Usage \$10/50 GB	\$95 (comes with 1.2 TB)	1302.26 Mbps/40.52, 14.209 ms	With 1200 Mbps you should have enough bandwidth to share and download at lightning-fast speeds, connect and stream in 4k on every device, ultra low lag

APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

COMMUNITY ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS ASSET INVENTORY

The following is a narrative of the different organizations, community anchor institutions, and resources that exist in Walker County.

Cedar Grove Community Center

Located in Chickamauga, GA, the Cedar Grove Community Center is a meeting center that targets its outreach to help the youth of the area. "Everything is to help kids" - Sam Bowman. The fundraisers throughout the year are to raise money to sponsor kids to go to camp. They also provide bookbags for back to school with all the supplies that are needed. This year they donated 100 bookbags. The majority of the events and meetings held do not require connectivity. Everything they do is free and open to the public. It is more about providing a space and place for people to connect with each other. The building is a disaster relief center, owned and managed by the county, with smart technology that controls the building (to include a 24x7 public wifi access point). Cedar Grove Community Center is there to help people. People come to connect with each other. It is not a place people are coming to thinking about accessing the internet or being online. Yet, it is a location that is available for rent and would be able to facilitate skills training due to its connectivity.

Cherokee Regional Library System

The Cherokee Regional Library System, with branches in Chickamauga, Rossville, and LaFayette, as a community anchor institution believes their goal is to be all things to all people. They believe in open access to all - the aging, incarcerated, veterans, children, individuals with disabilities, with language barriers, of low income or low literacy, ethnic or racial minorities. They recognize that each community in Walker County is unique and the libraries located in those communities need to vary in response to the interests and needs of those communities. Chickamauga, for example, has had the highest demand for books which aligns with the growth of the city. During COVID many government resources closed their doors and moved online (the department of labor, child services, food stamps, etc); the libraries opened their doors and extended their hours, making their wifi 24x7 in the parking lot, so even if their doors were closed, access was not. People come to the library because there is a person who is there to help.

- For the aging population, the Cherokee Regional Library System has identified they are the most likely to need help with digital skills. Everything from how to use a phone or education on scams. They are the population that utilizes the library the most for help in this area.
- The Cherokee Regional Library System worked with the Dade County Sheriff to develop a Next Chapter Program⁶⁸, a re-entry program for the Dade County Jail. Through a grant, they were able to fund a videographer to create video modules that teach basic digital literacy along with financial and life skills. The program is overseen by the Dade County Jail and the video courses were developed by the Cherokee Regional Library System. In order to participate, inmates must have committed a non-violent crime and commit to completion of the program.
- The Cherokee Regional Library System partners with the YMCA in literacy programming.

Lecia Eubanks, Director of Cherokee Regional Library System, shared that most people make it a priority to get a device even if they cannot really afford it. The people who come to the library typically are those who really have a need and do not have their own device (or do not have enough devices to meet everyone's needs in a household), do not have internet service (to include cell service), live in dead zones, or who rely on hotspots for access to the internet.

⁶⁸ Next Chapter

Resources: Device access and internet are the primary two offerings. The libraries provide device access, device lending, wifi, and hotspot lending. The library system takes pride in the fact that there is no disparity between the library locations - they all have exceptional speeds. The library system all has very reliable 1Gb speeds. They use Parker FiberNet for their service and believe it to be exceptionally reliable. The number of devices at the individual libraries fit the size of the community it is in. They are a chrome device environment and guests can check these devices out and use them in the library or can take them home. The hotspots can also be checked out as well as renewed for continued home use. The hotspots are to be used for educational purposes and can restrict streaming services (except youtube) and also enable video conferencing.

Programming: is heavily geared towards youth but does include some aging population programming as well. They offer a tutor program that is funded through a local foundation that averages 350 sessions each month systemwide, with June of 2024 being their busiest month yet. Although the tutoring is not for digital skills or literacy, it shows the capacity of the Cherokee Regional Library System for offering one on one educational assistance and a resource the community relies on. They do offer programming to the aging population, however they have not been well attended and have found it is better to offer one on one training or help. As part of the monthly programming, they offer cybersecurity content on how to be aware of scams etc. They work with external partners to provide this.

Identified needs: Funding. The library system participates in ERATE for internet subscription coverage which is applied for by the state and distributed at the county level. Funding support is external and is often grant dependent. Although grants are wonderful, the library system is short staffed and grants are time consuming to apply for and to report on. Public libraries are vulnerable because they are not constitutionally mandated - each branch has to raise funds locally. Currently, Walker County, the cities of Chickamauga, Rossville, and LaFayette, and the board of education all are funding the Cherokee Regional Library System but these funds are not guaranteed year after year. The hourly rate of their staff needs to be increased with the rising cost of living. They are vulnerable to staffing loss due to their limited financial resources. As grants are often on one year funding cycles, they cannot be fundraising annually for salaries. Additionally, they cannot afford to continue to provide the twenty five hotspots they were providing during COVID (due to the data plan costs). Currently they are providing five per library and twenty five devices per branch. As part of ERATE, there is an opportunity to apply for cybersecurity funding but that would require an assessment of their needs. The library system needs a dedicated technologist salaried position, who can manage this, as well as serve as a digital navigator for their library system. The library system has also identified the need for generators for each of their locations in the case of emergencies - the library is a place to have people come beyond shelters in times where help is needed to have access to essential services.

Potential: When people are new to the area, the library is one of the first places they come. There is an opportunity to be a resource for information sharing. They provide a safe environment for those who come; they are a community hub for many residents. The library is free to use during the day (and can be rented for a small fee at night). It is a place for people to come, to congregate, to socialize. They have heard time and time again that if they had not been there, people would not have known where to go for help.

LaFayette Housing Authority

Marlena Smith, Housing Manager, at the LaFayette Housing Authority, shared that the majority of low income individuals who live at the LaFayette Housing Authority are elderly and disabled and do not want or cannot afford the internet. In an increasing age of digital technology, services and resources are moved online, yet the residents do not know how to access or navigate these. Often residents seek help from Marlena Smith and the other staff for how to apply for benefits, health insurance, or how to use a smartphone. The LaFayette Housing Authority has a community room in their main office which is a resource that can be used for hosting digital skills or cybersecurity training in the future through partnership with digital equity stakeholders.

Next Chapter

A re-entry program that was a collaboration between the Dade County Jail, Seth Houts, and the Dade County Public Library, a branch of the Cherokee Regional Library System. After several years of work, with research and community engagement, Chelsea Kovalevskiy, Assistant Director of the Cherokee Regional Library System, was brought on board to help with the implementation stage. Through a grant opportunity with the Cherokee Regional Library System equipment was able to be procured and professional videographers engaged. Although this program is being conducted in Dade County, there is potential to expand to Walker County as the program is open to inmates outside of Dade County. Currently there are 633 registered users with the self-guided niche academy program. The program has had a good response thus far. The pilot program is still out and consists of parenting, financial resources, adult "101" classes. They work with libraries since they are everywhere. The program includes digital skills training, cybersecurity, and resume writing as well. The program's origins began in the Cherokee Regional Library system with a simple statement from a man saying "I'm not in orange". The goal of the program is to help support inmates before re-entry so that they will not return to jail or to prison.

North Georgia Community YMCA

The North Georgia Community YMCA Program Center is located on the campus of Fort Oglethorpe United Methodist Church and is a strong partner with the Walker County School System. The majority of the work being done in Walker County is directed to youth, specifically those who are of lower socioeconomic status, those with low literacy, and rural populations. The North Georgia Community YMCA provides meals for youth through a program called "Backpack Blessings". There are currently approximately 830 students per week who are provided food for the weekend. John Donahoo, District Vice President, spoke to the fact that many children move a lot over the course of a year and are vulnerable to food insecurity. The program provides children 2-3 lbs of food per week to each of the 830 students. The YMCA also provides an after school program (a 2 star quality rated child care center) and cares for 160 students at four Walker County schools. As part of the afterschool program, they provide math and reading tutoring, using almost 1:1 iPad technology, for 45 minutes to an hour each day. They are on a mission to reduce screen time as they recognize the impact to health and development, yet still provide impactful educational assistance.

Opportunities: The YMCA is working towards a monthly parent meeting which is a platform for parent engagement and a resource to support and partner with parents, such as providing basic digital skills training or helping to sign up for benefits.

Potential: The YMCA has great support from the county and the school system. They are able and willing to fill gaps. "We don't usually do it alone. We will go where the support is." - John Donahoo

North Georgia Technical College

North Georgia Technical College is the largest college in NW Georgia with six campuses and an aviation center. 95% of students receive financial aid, and part of those receive complete tuition. There is a large population of low income, first generation college students, and primary language other than English (Spanish). The student population is as much as 10% veterans. Most classes tend to be online except for certain technical courses. The college has received an award for being a technical innovator. Every class is required to have an online component (or hybrid capability). Courses are Windows based classes. North Georgia Technical College is not a chrome book environment, especially those who take IT courses. Programs are Windows based and device access can be an issue. There are tutoring labs on each campus and each student has to take a Comp1000 (literacy course) with basic Microsoft Office and Windows skills taught. This course is also available to anyone in the public, offered online or in person at at least 5-6 campuses. It is also taught in the high schools for dual enrollment credit.

There are computer labs on campus which are closed Saturday and Sunday with limited hours during the week. 20% of students are working full time and the expectation is they would have difficulty accessing the computer lab. Students who have their own device must have enough memory and disk space; less than 10% do not have strong enough machines which is a barrier for them. The college does lend out laptops for use to certain students and also has online virtual machines available for students. A dedicated fiber line from Rome's campus runs to each campus, providing broadband service. Broadband access is a necessity. Given the area, a fair number of people only have dial up internet through Windstream. Students taking certain classes are not able to participate with dial up where speeds need to be minimum 100 Mbps and above. Many go to the public library or to a friend's or relatives' homes. Tech failure is not an excuse for not doing work.

Walker County Senior Life Services

Preston Lewis, Manager of the Walker County Senior Life Services, shared that very few of the individuals who come to the center have computers and many have hearing or sight impairments, needing adaptive technology. The center has guest speakers who come as part of the programming, which include cybersecurity information. However, they do not have the ability to expand their facility and are limited on space and cannot accommodate any computer room on premises as compared to the Catoosa County Senior Center. Additionally, they do not have the funding for laptops or equipment as their staffing is critical and the priority. The center is open 8am-1pm. They are a resource for information sharing and hosting programs related to digital literacy and cybersecurity.

Walker County Health Department

Services are currently only available in person. There are no available online resources.

Walker County School System

"If we don't embrace technology, we are missing a huge opportunity. The Walker County School system is teaching students how to best use devices and technology to serve them and those around them. Connectivity shows students, who for the most part do not leave the county, what is possible, what is out there. Connectivity is what bridges the gap for the students." - Superintendent Raines

Appendix

The Walker County School system consists of fifteen public schools and serves 8,500 students currently, including low income, low literacy, disabled, ethnic and racial minority groups, individuals with language barriers and those who live in rural areas. All schools are Title 1 schools (except Fairyland ES) and all schools (to include Fairyland ES) are qualified under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for free breakfast and lunch for the next four years. Kids are changing and so is education. Teachers are facilitators in the school. During the pandemic, Walker County Schools outfitted their buses with wifi and parked them throughout the county to provide hotspots for families in rural areas without internet access. This was funded through a two year grant. The school is currently working on outfitting two buses specifically for work with the ESOL population (language barrier populations) to provide digital training and engagement. These buses will respectively service north and south schools except Fairyland Elementary. They will deploy in early 2025. The school system recognizes that most students have cell service generally; it is estimated around half have home internet access. Due to the lack of internet access at home, the school system is shifting teaching such that they are not sending work home that requires technology. Students below 6th grade are only sent reading home. They are all given digital library cards so that if they do have internet access, they can read online. The schools have a one to one device program (devices stay at the school and generally do not go home). Teachers have Macbooks, K-2 are provisioned with iPads, 3rd-8th use chromebooks. For students 9th-12th grade, they are issued their own chromebook device which upon graduation will be theirs to keep. With current device lifetimes being five to seven years, and with many students not being able to afford their own device, the school started this program to empower students with devices for college or beyond. However, the school system is actually shifting away from the amount of time students spend on screens due to the negative effects of technology. There are "no screen days" one day per week. Safety and security is one of the primary concerns and requirements for connectivity. They have camera systems that are connected to 911 and have mapping to all doors to direct security to. Providing a safe environment is of top priority.

Resources: 90% have google classrooms, with smartboards in every classroom, and many teachers are google certified. There is a Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator (which is required and part of the budget) who identifies those families who are having issues with connectivity and informs the school system so they can provide a hotspot or additional resources as needed. Wifi is available to students in the school parking lots and playground, which is open after school hours. Currently the wifi is not public access. The State of Georgia provided outside access points and they are running at full power so users can get wifi before you even see the school and enables full access to google, ClassDoJo, which have appropriate firewalls, based on state restrictions. These are being used mostly by bus drivers (they track usage) compared to during COVID. However, users can bring any device to login and there are no bandwidth limitations. Keyboarding and computing classes are taught in the schools and there are technology standards from 3rd-12th grades according to the state ELA standards. One aspect of this is the career pathways which are offered starting in 7th grade. Additionally, students are taught how to care for a machine, the costs of what it takes to maintain, repair and replace it. They are also taught the value of appropriate filters, which is part of being taught good digital habits. The IT department is trained through state cybersecurity training and information is dispensed to teachers. They provide the required State of Georgia training on "know before" and phishing scams and have gotten their click rate to only 1%. The state tests their systems to maintain and guard against any potential compromise. The school uses software that give alerts if keywords are searched specifically that relate to suicidal ideation or mental health issues. Parents are given access to ClassDojo for parent-teacher communication along with PowerSchool and Remind. The Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator helps parents with access such as logging in and how to use the platform.

Opportunities: Broadband issues continue in the school district. They have already rewired the buildings so all devices can connect and to resolve bandwidth issues. The Network Operations Supervisor, Bob Swanson, has migrated disparate systems (three different ones) and flattened them to just one creating equality across all schools so they experience the same service. The schools get service through the state and they have enough bandwidth to divide amongst the schools to properly run the google classrooms. They also run a second system for normal browsing and internet traffic and a redundant system with firewalls and core switching. However, fiber gets cut and goes out. The school system has moved to days without technology and are prepared for how to teach when this happens. Two years ago, the Walker County School system had an expert assess their system and they went from 400 access points to 1400 after, in response to the number of devices on the system. The real vulnerability is testing week as this impacts state reporting if the internet goes down and student testing is impacted. Resiliency is needed. All utilities are on the same poles - it doesn't matter who the vendor is, all services are vulnerable when a pole goes down. Power companies own all the poles. The Network Operations Supervisor has tried working with the local ISP's to create a round robin line that would connect the schools such that they would have an inside county connection to feed back - if north schools went out it would feed back from south schools and vice versa. It is estimated to cost \$1.6 million to build this out for emergency preparedness. They are thinking of implementing starlink as a secondary/redundant backup with load balancing and firewall but the cost would be \$800/site implementation + \$100/month/site use and then \$800-1000/site for licensing and watchdog. There was an incident with a semi a couple years ago on I-75 in TN which took out two poles causing the schools to be out of internet for ten days. To repair the line required the State of TN to shut down an interstate to run lines across six lanes of traffic to restore internet access in Georgia schools. The systems as built are vulnerable.

Potential: The school is focused on teaching lessons in good digital citizenship. The school system is always open to partnerships. They know they cannot do it alone. They are focused on developing citizens and the future workforce. They are willing to do anything to help their kids. There is potential to set up guest access for public wifi. It would have bandwidth limitations, unlike student access, and would only take two days to get it done but due to capacity issues, this is not a priority at this time.

"Regarding Technology, I will speak on our department's behalf regarding truancy and connectivity. Our 1:1 initiative compiled with our safety systems (formerly GoGaurdian) now, Securly, allows students to work from anywhere in the world regarding communication platforms such as Google Classroom etc. However, that is not the reason for truancy to be down in Walker County. The systems/processes we have in place with our Mission Support Team (School Teachers/Staff, Guidance and Administrators) working together to make sure that student and parent relationships with the schools is the biggest factor. Technology is great but the relationships that have been built with our processes have been irreplaceable. Students don't just go missing for weeks or months anymore. Conversations are had and plans are put into place to help aid families and situations as they arise. Mitigation strategies working with all the great partners that our Superintendent has solidified has helped bridge the gap from past shortcomings and communications as a whole. We have resources to help make sure that no student/parent fails for a lack of support. It's not about numbers here in Walker County, it's about the whole child. It's everyone doing what is best for the kids and families potentially going through a tough time and or crisis and eliminating those obstacles for them. Making sure that they know we are aware and knowledgeable and most importantly, willing to help them meet the needs for their families.

Internet connectivity is vital for a communication hub and collaboration efforts but I want to make sure that it is very clear that this is not the fix all for what we have been able to accomplish as a District. Our graduation is up from the past of being at 58% just 13 years ago, our scores on our testing sources are up and growing, as well as our overall ACT scores are averaging around a 23 as a District. This took the implementation of a process that Superintendent Raines brought to the table.

This was a vision of his and Mission Support was a result of that vision. The leadership direction of our school system was such that relationships would play a key part in our future success. No longer would we let kids fail and fall out of school without the family being provided options and services to aid them. Then 2020 AKA, COVID happened.... The need for technology and connectivity for ALL of our students was at the greatest of all times.

Many strategies were put into place to connect students at that time. We literally were partnering with local linemen to hang our internet broadcast hubs on the tops of telephone poles in area of weak service, we had technology specialists (Aaron Watkins to name one), climbing on top of barns to install connection devices so that families could stay connected during that time. We also installed connection devices on school buses and placed them throughout our community. Since then we continue to value the need to communicate and for students/parents stay informed of options. We continue to find better ways to keep our students safe while surfing the net but allowing them to stay connected to our teachers and instruction.

Lastly, although it's not just about the numbers in Walker County, it's truly about the families and kids first, we continue to see our kids strive to new heights. Our students are receiving more dual enrollment credits than ever before, our students are passing and earning more AP Classes and that is a result of the efforts from everyone continuing to buy into the processes and keeping our kids best interests first. Connectivity is super important to our District and helps as a key component of helping aid the process but isn't the reasoning for all of the success of our students. The success starts at the very top and the vision has been bought into by all in order to make Walker County Schools great!" - Scott Harden, Coordinator of Technology

Walker Family Connection

Family Connection is in all counties in Georgia and is a hub for connecting agencies and people in need to the appropriate resources. It is a coordination service - understanding people's needs and how to meet those needs and then connecting them to the appropriate resources. Very often the people who come to Family Connection for assistance are suffering poverty and trauma. Walker Family Connection works closely with the school system as it is one of the easiest ways to reach people and families.

Walker County's landmass is unique and large. It presents its own problems of access. According to Laura Beth Newsom, of Walker Family Connection, many pockets without internet access tend to be in areas with high poverty. The immigrant population generally does not yet have the paperwork to get the services they need and are a very high poverty population and a vulnerable population. Those who do have service generally have poor service and do not have the correct devices for their needs. Laura Beth Newsom shared how many of the families she works with have to access wifi at McDonald's or Walmart because they do not have internet access in their homes and also do not have phone numbers (due to lack of paperwork) and can only work off of wifi on their devices.

Transportation is a huge issue - not having reliable transportation or only one car per household is limiting. Without areas where wifi is walkable, access is further out of reach. The majority of people live more than two miles out of town and cannot access the public hotspots. Laura Beth Newsom shared of a woman she was working with who could not get to a facility for counseling because she did not have reliable transportation. The woman also did not have reliable internet service and was not even able to conduct a telehealth appointment which also required the use of a translation app for the appointment. Residents of Walker County who have lack of access are usually experiencing more than one barrier to access.

Needs: Digital literacy training. Many residents are frustrated with everything being online and the difficulty they are experiencing with lack of skills. Being able to reach people where they are at and provide them with the resources that already exist is a challenge. Maintenance and management of devices is critical.

"Access to digital services puts everyone at an even playing field, where they can access the same info and resources to be successful. Every child should be able to access the information they need."
- Laura Beth Newsom

Additional Resources:

Additional community resources identified in Walker County in the research and writing of this plan include but are not limited to:

- Assistive Technology in Walker County School System
- Veterans Services in LaFayette, GA
- Chamber of Commerce in Rock Spring, GA
- Walker State Prison in Rock Spring, GA
- Center Post Community Center
- Chickamauga City School District
- Chickamauga Senior Life Services
- Rossville Senior Center
- Armuchee Valley Community Center
- Mt. Pleasant Community Center

DIGITAL EQUITY ASSET INVENTORY

Asset Category	Description	Key Resources	Population Served	Availability
1. Infrastructure	Physical resources supporting digital access.			
<i>Public Wi-Fi</i>	Locations with public Wi-Fi access.	Cherokee Regional Library System, Community Centers (Cedar Grove, Armuchee Valley, Mt. Pleasant), County facilities including the courthouse and civic center campus	Public	24 x 7
<i>Computer Labs</i>	Community or organization-owned computer labs.	Cherokee Regional Library System, Georgia Northwest Technical College	Public	Monday-Friday during business hours
<i>Device Loan Program</i>	Programs offering device loans to underserved individuals.	Cherokee Regional Library System	Public	Availability to rent out and use for the duration of the loan program
<i>Device Access Program</i>	Ability to access 1:1 device use	Walker County Schools, North Georgia YMCA After School program	Students	During school hours and after-school program hours
<i>Digital Literacy Centers</i>	Centers providing digital literacy training and resources.	None identified		

Appendix

2. Devices	Availability of computing devices.			
<i>Laptops</i>	Number and availability of laptops.	Walker County Schools	Students	1:1
<i>Tablets</i>	Number and availability of tablets.	Walker County Schools, North Georgia YMCA After School program	Students	1:1
3. Training & Support	Programs and resources for digital literacy training.			
<i>Digital Literacy Programs</i>	Digital literacy training and resources.	Georgia Northwest Technical College	Public	Online or in-person
<i>Digital Literacy Workshops</i>	Availability of workshops and training programs.	None identified		
<i>Online Learning Platforms</i>	Platforms for online courses and resources.	Georgia Northwest Technical College, Next Chapter	Public, Inmates	
<i>Technical Support</i>	Availability of technical support for digital issues.	Georgia Northwest Technical College; Walker County School System	Students	During school hours
<i>Digital Instructors</i>	Trained individuals or volunteers providing instruction.	Cherokee Regional Library System	Public	During business hours

DIGITAL EQUITY EVALUATION PLAN TEMPLATE

This Digital Equity Evaluation Plan Template is being made available as a framework example for the county's future use in strategic planning to evaluate Walker County's digital equity goals and how they align with those of the State.

Outcomes	Impact	Progress
<i>Economic and Workforce Development</i>	[Insert narrative describing how the community's Digital Equity Plan has impacted the State's economic and workforce development goals, objectives, and plans].	[Insert narrative describing Walker County's progress towards addressing the State's priorities, i.e., not started, on-going, in progress, complete, etc.]
<i>Education Outcomes</i>	[Insert narrative describing how the community's Digital Equity Plan has impacted the State's educational goals, objectives, and plans].	[Insert narrative describing Walker County's progress towards addressing the State's priorities, i.e., not started, on-going, in progress, complete, etc.]
<i>Health Outcomes</i>	[Insert narrative describing how the community's Digital Equity Plan has impacted the State's health-related goals, objectives, and plans].	[Insert narrative describing Walker County's progress towards addressing the State's priorities, i.e., not started, on-going, in progress, complete, etc.]
<i>Civic and Social Engagement</i>	[Insert narrative describing how the community's Digital Equity Plan has impacted the State's civic and social engagement goals, objectives, and plans].	[Insert narrative describing Walker County's progress towards addressing the State's priorities, i.e., not started, on-going, in progress, complete, etc.]
<i>Other Essential Services</i>	[Insert narrative describing how the community's Digital Equity Plan has impacted the State's essential services goals, objectives, and plans].	[Insert narrative describing Walker County's progress towards addressing the State's priorities, i.e., not started, on-going, in progress, complete, etc.]

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

Digital Equity and Inclusion Community Survey Response

Survey Period: June 17-September 16, 2024

Total Responses: 31 as of September 17, 2024

Survey Purpose: To assess the digital connectivity needs and challenges within our community and gather input on potential solutions.

Areas received responses from: Chattanooga Valley, Flintstone, Chickamauga, Kensington, Center Post, LaFayette, Villanow, Rossville, Lookout Mountain

Why do you think it is important for your community to be digitally connected?

- Jobs and sources of employment, to include secondary sources of income
- Emergency response services (to include alerts)
- Part of today's everyday life for information, paying bills, shopping, learning, remote work
- Remote job opportunities - enables living where one desires and the ability for people to move to Walker County
- Access to information
- Means of communication
- Education to include continuing education
- Tele-health
- Entertainment
- Home resale value
- World centers around being connected
- Small businesses necessity
- Weather information (to include alerts)
- Creates sense of community

What barriers do you currently face in being digitally connected?

- High prices - to get good internet service requires having to pay for extra speed.
- Lack of ISP's willing to service area
- Current service is far too expensive (one resident reported paying over \$200 for 12 Mbps download)
- Slow speeds
- Starlink being the only option area
- Unreliable service
- Slow response to outages by ISPs
- Increasing costs
- Issues with employment when working remote and unreliable service
- Poor customer service by ISP's
- Lack of ISP options
- Services vulnerable to weather

When you can access the internet, do you feel confident that you have the skills necessary to use it?

The overwhelming majority felt confident in their skills. Yet there were a few specific responses that targeted areas of potential for digital skills training including, specifically for workforce development and understanding how to use different types of devices.

Where in the community do you prefer to use resources, go for help in regards to skills training, or for digital access such as free public wifi?

- Places of employment
- Cherokee Regional Library System
- Coffee shops
- Walmart
- Government buildings
- Church
- Community Center
- Neighboring county
- McDonald's parking lot

What do you see already happening in the community that is helping to provide digital connection?

- Residents reported not seeing any action being taken to provide digital access
- Residents reported believing competition was being blocked
- Residents reported seeing fiber coming closer to home and are encouraged but others are frustrated by not having answers or a timeframe for connection.

What have been the challenges accessing existing resources? Are there specific suggestions on making them more accessible?

Challenges:

- Survey respondent does not believe taxpayers should pay to help people learn digital literacy/skills
- Costs

Suggestions:

- Fiber to all customers
- ISP transparency
- Secure public access to the internet
- Enough coverage to connect everyone
- More digital choices
- Reliability
- Wifi in public parks

What would you like to see prioritized in our Walker County Connectivity Plan?

- Resiliency in infrastructure planning, to use underground cables where possible rather than ariel (as trees take down the lines), and making sure there is future growth accounted for
- More affordable high speed internet availability in rural areas
- Cost savings
- Fiber optics
- Access in rural areas
- Connecting all addresses to broadband
- More stable connections
- High speed internet
- More provider choice
- More communication through more outlets in addition to more comprehensive communication

Appendix

Examples of self-reported speed testing : 272.53/23.56, 894 Mbps (download speed), 12/1, 0.1 Mbps (upload speed), 85/16, 36/1, 95.2 (download speed), 25/18, 26.84/23.41, 27.31/1.8, 18/1, 8.07/1.12, 1.91/0.42, 76.7/15.6 , 11.92/4.69

As evidenced, the speeds in Walker County are far from consistent or equitable. There is a wide variance of self-reported speeds amidst the same communities in Walker County.

Many survey responses cited the desire for EPB to expand their service and revealed a need to share the reasons why EPB is not able to expand their digital footprint in Walker County. In 2016, the Sixth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals struck down an order from the FCC that would have allowed municipally-owned telecommunication companies to expand beyond their traditional service footprint. This ruling restricted EPB from being able to expand further than their current footprint, and is not a possible solution to broadband infrastructure expansion in Georgia⁶⁹.

Survey responses also revealed satisfaction with Chickamauga Telephone Company's (now operating as Arriva) service in Chickamauga.

⁶⁹ FCC Releases Order Preempting TN Municipal Broadband Restrictions

Walker County, GA

Geographic identifier: 13295

Overall hazard risk percentile is
Relatively High (62/100)



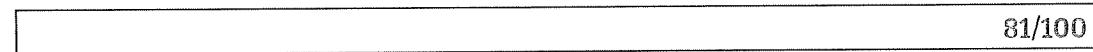
Primary natural hazards

Risk scores are national percentile ranks derived from Expected Annual Building Loss estimates in the National Risk Index. Expected Annual Building Loss represents the average economic loss for a community in dollars resulting from natural hazards each year. [Click here to read more about how Expected Annual Loss scores are calculated.](#)

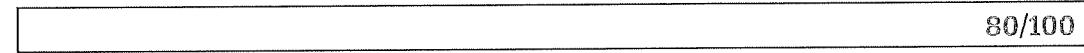
Tornado



Earthquake



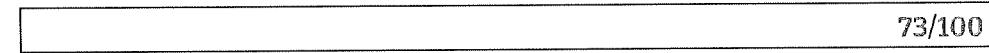
Lightning



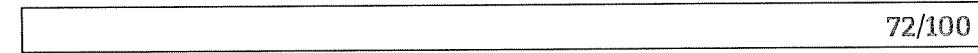
Riverine Flooding



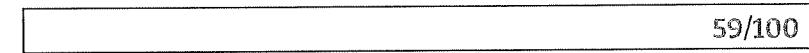
Ice Storm



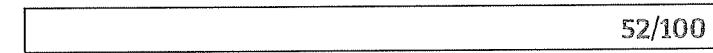
Hail



Cold Wave



Strong Wind



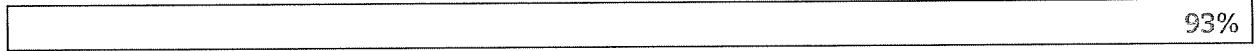
Broadband access

"25/3" and "100/20" are broadband speed profiles denoting internet connections with download/upload speeds of 25 Mbps/3 Mbps and 100 Mbps/20 Mbps, respectively. The former is considered the minimum threshold for broadband service by the federal government, suitable for basic online activities, while the latter offers faster speeds, supporting more bandwidth-intensive tasks like video streaming.

Fiber access refers to internet connectivity provided through fiber-optic cables, utilizing light signals to transmit data at incredibly high speeds, resulting in reliable and efficient connections.

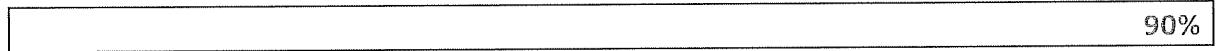
Broadband serviceable locations are residential and business locations (or structures) in the U.S. where fixed broadband internet access service is or can be installed.

Percent of locations with access to **25/3**



93%

Percent of locations with access to **100/20**



90%

Percent of locations with access to **fiber**



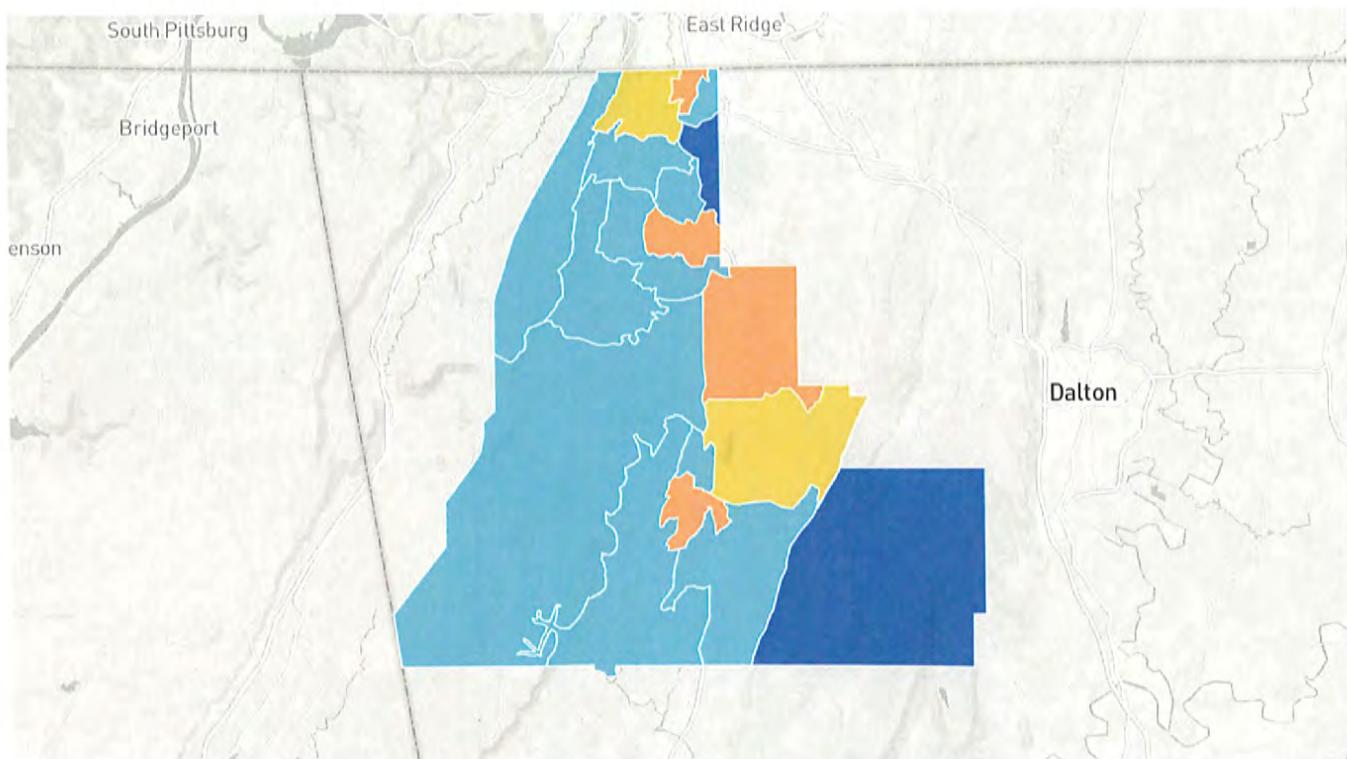
53%

Explore tract hazard risk and broadband access

Click on a tract below to view detailed risk and broadband data

Hazard risk score 25/3 access 100/20 access Fiber access

Very Low Relatively Low Relatively Moderate Relatively High Very High



© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap Improve this map

[Download map data](#)

About our application: Broadband Climate Risk Mitigation Tool

Welcome to the Broadband Climate Risk Mitigation Tool, a web application designed by the Center on Rural Innovation to help communities and organizations make informed decisions about broadband deployment while considering natural hazard risks. Our tool combines hazard risk data with broadband access information so communities can maximize the resilience and effectiveness of their broadband infrastructure projects funded under the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program.

The challenge: Weather- and climate-related risks to broadband networks

Broadband networks play a critical role in connecting communities and fostering economic growth. However, networks face numerous challenges posed by extreme weather. Wildfires, extreme temperatures, flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes, and other weather-related events can disrupt and damage broadband infrastructure, leading to service outages and hindering emergency response efforts. Since retrofitted and new infrastructure for broadband might be expected to have a lifetime of 20 years or more, entities applying for BEAD funding must account not only for current risks but also for the changing climate and increased frequency of extreme weather events.

Our solution: Informed decisions for resilient broadband deployment

The Broadband Climate Risk Mitigation Tool provides entities with a comprehensive set of resources to evaluate and address weather- and climate-related risks during broadband infrastructure planning and deployment. Our application enables the following:

- 1. Initial hazard screening and identification:** Identifies which geographic areas require an initial hazard screening for current weather-related risks. By inputting location data, users can assess potential hazards affecting the proposed broadband infrastructure. Hazard risk and broadband access data are overlaid so that users can identify hazard risks in areas with the greatest broadband need.
- 2. Mitigation strategies:** From selecting appropriate technology platforms to adopting alternative siting and redundancy measures, the tool offers high-level recommendations to safeguard broadband assets.

Data sources

- 1. FCC:** Broadband Data Collection (BDC) provides information about the internet services available to broadband serviceable locations (BSLs) across the country.

As part of the BDC, all ISPs must file data with the FCC twice a year on where they offer mass-market Internet access service using their own broadband network facilities. Our tool uses BDC data last updated on July 25, 2023.

2. **FEMA:** The National Risk Index (NRI) is a measure of the relative risk of natural hazards for each county and census tract in the United States. In our application, we focus on the NRI's Expected Building Loss estimates as a proxy for broadband infrastructure vulnerability. The source includes data on natural hazards, social vulnerability, and community resilience.

Key terms

- **Expected Annual Building Loss** is the average economic loss to buildings in dollars resulting from natural hazards each year. [Click here](#) to learn more about how Expected Annual Loss is calculated.
- **Risk scores** are national percentile ranks derived from Expected Annual Building Loss estimates.
- **Historic Building Loss Ratio** is a natural hazard consequence factor that represents the estimated percentage of the exposed building value expected to be lost due to a natural hazard occurrence. Arizona State University's SHELDUS loss data are used to calculate Historic Loss Ratio for most hazard types.
- **Annualized Frequency** is the expected frequency or probability of a hazard occurrence per year.
- **Building Exposure** is defined as the dollar value of the buildings determined to be exposed to a hazard. The maximum possible building exposure of a geographic area (census block, census tract, or county) is its building value as recorded in Hazus 6.0.
- **Hazard ratings** are provided in one of five qualitative categories describing the geographic area's Expected Annual Building Loss values in comparison to all other communities at the same geographic level. Rating categories range from "Very Low" to "Very High."
 - Very High: 80th to 100th percentiles
 - Relatively High: 60th to 80th percentiles
 - Relatively Moderate: 40th to 60th percentiles
 - Relatively Low: 20th to 40th percentiles
 - Very Low: 0th to 20th percentiles

Questions?

To learn more, reach out to us at **broadband@ruralinnovation.us**

Support

Development of this tool was made possible with support from Connect Humanity.



Org Name:	Science	Funder Description / Mission:	Org Type:	What organizations do they fund?* The funder funds in what states/portion of a state a new source, all or approximately all of a source?	Do they fund broadcast or connecting related initiatives?	Funding Area: (in case you're exploring opportunities to benefit your BE or broadcast and media)	Website:	Provider Location (SIC/Geographies)
Appalachian Community Capital	AFN	AfC, and its members are committed to 1) providing affordable financial products and non-bank, and woman-owned small businesses in Appalachia, as well as to small businesses in coal-dependent and other distressed rural communities that have been impacted by 1) the opioid crisis and 2) building the capacity of the CDFI ecosystem to support these communities.	CDFI	All Appalachian states	Yes	Bridged Finance, Faculty, Knowledge & Learning Platform, Technology Transformation, Structured Finance Faculty	https://altermatchnetwork.com/abundanceoflife.org/	VA
Best Buy Foundation	Foundation	The Best Buy Foundation™ funds organizations that, along with other foundations, focus on education, youth and technology-focused initiatives. We also have regional priorities to promote vibrancy in our hometowns of Minneapolis-St. Paul and Seattle.	501(c)(3)	National	Yes	The Best Buy Foundation™ is a 501(c)(3) organization that supports educational and career opportunities for teens and promotes vibrant communities.	https://www.bestbuyfoundation.org/	MINN
Chorus Foundation	AFN	The Chorus Foundation™ funds organizations that support the new basis of political, economic, and cultural power in the United States. We support communities on the front lines of the old, extractive economy to build new bases of political, economic, and cultural power for systemic change.	Foundation	National	Yes	Education, Economic Development, Community Development, Health	https://chorusfoundation.org/	MA
Educational Foundation of America	AFN	The Educational Foundation of America advances progressive change through support for education initiatives working toward equality, access, and equity.	Family foundation	National	Not specifically	Acts, environment, reproductive health and justice, gender, racial and ethnic justice, disability rights, creativity and free expression, civic engagement and government	https://www.thefed.org/	NY
Ford Foundation	Foundation Center	Across eight decades, our mission has been to reduce poverty and injustice, and to give everyone an opportunity to participate in our democracy.	Private Foundation	International	Yes	Technology and Society, Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice, Disability Rights, Creativity and Free Expression, Civic Engagement and Government	https://WWW.FORDEFUNDATION.ORG	CO
Instructional Telecommunications Foundation Inc	Foundation Center	Instructional Telecommunications Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation that got its start transmitting educational video programs to schools in the mid-80s using franchises regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). ITF, Inc. continues to provide services to schools and nonprofits nationwide, engage in philanthropic programs centered on social equality, and participate in other entrepreneurial endeavors. For more information about ITF's range of efforts and initiatives, please contact us.	Nonprofit	National	Yes	Media and democracy, polling and research, impact assessments,	https://WWW.ITEI.ORG	FL
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Inc.	Foundation Center	We are social investors who support a more effective and accountable media, and a more engaged, arts and culture community. We work in the southeast, and in Miami, where the Knight brothers once published newspapers.	Nonprofit foundation	National*	Yes	Access & equity, arts & culture, conservation, parks & recreation, urban design & development, impact assessments,	https://www.knightfoundation.org	TN
LymanTravis Foundation Inc	Foundation Center	The LymanTravis Foundation invests in collaborative endeavors that support equitable, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes for the benefit of humanity. We pursue this goal through strategic awards, events and programs.	Grand-making Foundation	All-state, sixteen-county region including Chattanooga and portions of the Lower Tennessee River and Upper Coosa River watersheds.	Yes	Discovery and innovation, Partnerships, Infrastructure, Education	https://www.lymantravis.org	IL
Marconi Society Inc	Foundation Center	The Marconi Society encourages and celebrates innovators who push the technical, creative and entrepreneurial boundaries of information and communications technology for the benefit of humanity. We pursue this goal through strategic awards, events and programs.	Nonprofit	National	Yes	Economy, Equity, Environment	https://www.marconsociety.org	CA
Mozilla Foundation	Foundation Center	The Mozilla Foundation works to ensure the internet remains a public resource that is open and accessible to us all.	Global nonprofit	International*	Yes	Discovery and innovation, Partnerships, Infrastructure, Education	https://www.mozilla.org	VA
National Science Foundation Employees Association	Foundation Center	NSF was established in 1950 by Congress to: Promote the progress of science; Advance the interests of science; Secure the national defense.	Independent Federal agency	all 50 states and U.S. territories	Yes	Economy, Equity, Environment	https://www.nsf.gov	WV
Partner Community Capital	AFN	By providing flexible capital and advisory services to small and medium-sized companies, farms, and non-profits, Partner Capital (PCap) catalyzes economic vitality and socially responsible business development and wealth creation in rural, minority, and low wealth communities.	CDFI	Central Appalachia and the Southeast, including West Virginia and North Carolina and the Appalachian regions of Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia	Yes	The Foundation has six funding programs: Conservation, Economic Development, Economic Effectiveness, Health & Well-Being, Organizational Excellence, Infrastructure, Housing, and Disaster Recovery.	https://WWW.RAMEOSS.ORG	PA
Richard King Mellon Foundation	Foundation Center	Since 1947, The Richard King Mellon Foundation has funded visionaries with bold ideas to advance prosperity in Southwest Pennsylvania, and environmental conservation across the United States.		Rural communities (National)	Yes	Infrastructure, Broadband, Housing, and Disaster Solutions.	https://www.richardkingmellon.org	N/A
Rural LISC	AFN	With residents and partners, Rural LISC supports resilient, and inclusive rural communities as great places to live, work, and innovate. Rural LISC strives to identify priorities and opportunities and deliver the most appropriate support to rural areas needed. We also have a focus on rural broadband connectivity, broadband, Creative Capital, Broadband & Infrastructure, Workforce Development, Housing, and Disaster Solutions.		Bank	Yes* (cannot find anything on the site but they have worked with CH)		https://www.rural-lisc.com/	
Trust	AFN	We want to care for our residents and communities in every way we can. Imagine—and in new ways we discover every day. From thoughtfully-designed check-in accounts to free financial education, here are just a few ways we're making it happen.	Federally-state partnership	Appalachia	Yes		https://www.acf.hhs.gov/	DC
United States Appalachian Regional Commission	Foundation Center	The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is an economic development partnership entity of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 423 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, attract, invest in, build community capacity, and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia,					https://www.arc.gov/	

Grid Name	Source	Funder Description / Mission	Can 'Digital'...	Funding Activities	Does your funder have a research or development effort?	Website	Funder Location / SIC Explanations
United States Economic Development Administration	Foundation Center	Federal government, guided by the US Small Business Administration, to promote growth and success in the worldwide economy.	National	"The fund only [in one state, portion of a state, or a few states, all of a department, an agency, or a country] are you seeking opportunities to combine with DE or Ds and others?" Yes		https://www.acf.hhs.gov/	DC
United States Institute of Museum and Library Services	Foundation Center	The mission of IMLS is to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations, through grantmaking, research, and policy development.	National	"Support broad-based efforts to provide museums, libraries, and archives with resources to advance digital access and inclusion."	Yes	http://www.imls.gov/	N/A
United States National Institute Of Food Standards And Technology	Foundation Center	NIFA supports research, educational, and extension efforts in a wide range of scientific fields related to agricultural and behavioral sciences.	National			https://www.nifa.usda.gov/	DC
United States National Institutes of Health	Foundation Center	NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and origin of disease and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.	National			https://www.nih.gov/	MD
United States Rural Utilities Service	Foundation Center	USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) provides much-needed information or infrastructure improvements to rural communities. These include water and waste treatment, electric power and telecommunications services. All of these services help to expand economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for rural residents.	Part of U.S. Dept of Agriculture	Addressing Climate Change and Environmental Justice, Addressing Rural Justice, Addressing Economic and Opportunity, Creating More and Better Market Opportunities		https://www.rusda.usda.gov/	DC
United States Small Business Administration	Foundation Center	The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) helps Americans start, grow and build resilient businesses. SBA was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to encourage the development, expansion, and improvement of the overall economy of our nation. SBA reviews Congressional legislation and testifies on behalf of small businesses. It assesses the impact of regulatory burden on small businesses.	National		Yes	https://www.sba.gov/	DC
Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs	Appalachian Community Capital	ACE is a Georgia 501(c)(3) nonprofit and community development financial institution (CDFI) that provides capital, coaching, and connections to help borrowers create and grow sustainable businesses that generate jobs. We have provided more than \$200 million in loans and loans to advocacy services to a dozen CDFIs for Disadvantaged.	CDFI, 501(c)(3)	Serving 100 Georgia Counties, including all of North Georgia, Metro Atlanta, the Southeastern region, and now South Georgia	No	http://www.acfenterprises.org/	GA
LifeFund	Appalachian Community Capital	LifeFund is a mission to provide credit and services to small business owners who do not have access to local banks or other sources and to provide leadership and innovation in the microlending industry.	CDFI, CDC	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Houston, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas		http://www.lifefund.com/	TX - serving selected Appalachian states

APPENDIX H: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES SPEED TESTS

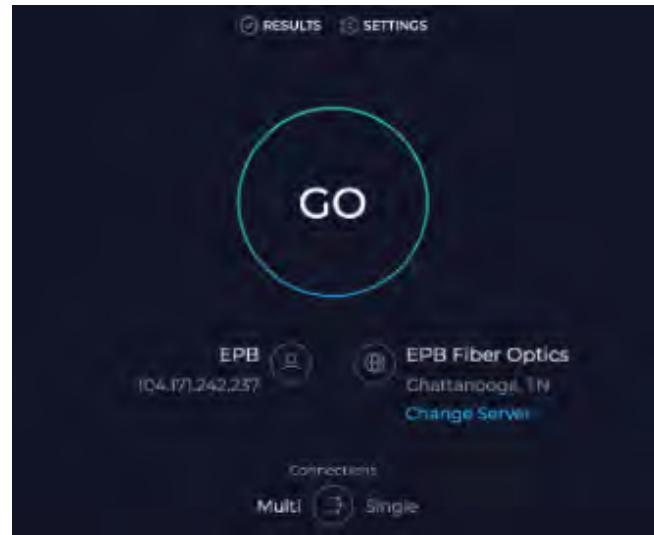
Why are speed tests important: Speed tests provide measurements that reflect the quality of service - the speed and performance of the internet provided. Internet performance is about connection - “low latency” for gaming, high-quality video streaming (such as watching movies on Netflix or Hulu), upload speeds for video calls (like facetime or over zoom), and download speeds for fast page load times while browsing online.

Suggested website (app) for speed tests: Ookla (<https://www.speedtest.net/>)

What is happening during a test: While the test is being run, multiple “requests” to multiple services are sent to check your connection. The Speedtest app determines your device connectivity strength based on the success of these requests.

Speedtest by Ookla will “ping” nearby servers and choose the server with the lowest response time (the shortest time between sending and receiving a response to the server). The server with the lowest response time is considered closest. For more information you can visit the support page at speedtest.net.

How to perform a speed test: Go to <https://www.speedtest.net/>. Click or tap on the “GO” button (not “start” or “click here” as these are advertisement buttons). It will take a few seconds until your download and upload speeds have been analyzed. The download speeds will run first, followed by the upload speeds.



The circle around the Go button is color coordinated to signal whether your device is online or not. A blue/green circle indicates you are connected. A yellow circle means that something is not working as it should. A red circle means you are most likely disconnected. You will be able to take a speedtest with either a green or yellow circle. If you are on a mobile device, such as a cell phone, and have a red circle, you will need to search for a better signal before taking the test. If you have a red circle on a wifi or fixed broadband, such as with a computer, that means there is an issue with your internet connection.



BANDWIDTH

What is bandwidth?

The network bandwidth describes the maximum capacity of a network connection in a given amount of time. Bandwidth is not a measure of network speed although it is represented by the number of bits, kilobits, megabits, and/or gigabits that can be transmitted per second.

Why does it matter?

The larger the bandwidth, the more data can be sent or received at the same time. The higher the bandwidth, the higher the cost of a network connection. That means if your plan is for up to 250 Mbps it will be less expensive than 1 Gbps will cost you.

Understanding your bandwidth needs are important for selecting the right network plan and only paying for what you need.

How do speed and bandwidth differ?

Speed is the rate at which data can be transmitted while bandwidth is the capacity for that speed. Speed is how quickly the data is transmitted while bandwidth is the amount of data over a set amount of time.

How does your bandwidth impact your connection?

Multiple devices that are connected on the same network share the same bandwidth. Some devices or uses require larger bandwidth and can “hog” the bandwidth. Bandwidth impacts speed on multiple devices.

Calculate what you need:

1. How many devices do you have in your home that share a network (ex smart tv, computer(s), smart phone(s))?
2. How are these devices being used (ex: tvs streaming videos or a computer used for web browsing)?
3. Determine the bandwidth requirements of these devices.
4. If multiple devices are performing the same use, multiply the number of devices by the bandwidth requirements.
5. Add all the bandwidth requirements together.

APPENDIX I: SOURCES

CONNECT HUMANITY DATA SOURCES

Source Name	Source Type	Source Description	Data Collected & Analyzed	Purpose
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	Public	Federal Agency responsible for implementing and enforcing America's communications law and regulations (Federal Communications Commission (2022). About the FCC. Available at: https://www.fcc.gov/about/overview)	FCC Form 477	Determine broadband incumbents and technology penetration
BroadbandNow & BroadbandSearch	Private	Online databases of internet service options available in a given area (BroadbandNow (2022). About BroadbandNow's Team. Available at: https://broadbandnow.com/about ; Broadbandsearch (2022). About. Available at: https://www.broadbandsearch.net/about)	Advertised internet service offerings including providers, speed, price and technologies	Determine broadband speed and corresponding price
FiberLocator	Private	Online telecommunications database of fiber infrastructure (FiberLocator (2022). Resources: Available at: https://www.fiberlocator.com/)	Existing fiber infrastructure in the County	Define metro fiber networks (regional level - middle mile; local level - last mile) to evaluate network redundancy. Define long haul fiber networks (national level) to be leveraged by the County to connected middle mile

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County approves PTSD insurance for first responders

By Tamara Wolk
TWalk@CatoosaNews.com

Walker County's 228 first responders will have insurance coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) events beginning with the new year.

A new law passed by the state, House Bill 451, requires municipalities to carry PTSD insurance for their first responders.

The Walker County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution unanimously at its Nov. 14 meeting, stating that since it is already a member of ACCG (Advancing Georgia's Counties), an organization that helps counties with insurance and other issues, and since it already participates in

ACCG's insurance funds that draw counties together to find better rates for them, it would continue on that path to comply with HB 451.

According to ACCG, HB 451 states that first responders who qualify for benefits after a PTSD diagnosis will receive a lump sum of \$3,000 and after that, depending on various circumstances, can receive 60% of their pay (maximum \$5,000) a month for up to 36 months.

Volunteer first responders can receive \$1,500 a month.

Conditions apply. The first responders must be diagnosed by approved professionals, must be deemed unable to work because of occupational PTSD and must receive treatment. Continuation of benefits is dependent on the opinion of the professionals treating the affected person.

Benefits can apply to PTSD cases dating to July 1, 2024.

ACCG states that the cost will run about \$150 annually per first responder employee, which would run the county a little over \$34,000 a year.

ACCG says on its website that it has made arrangements with MetLife for the counties in the state that wish to work through ACCG and its partner on the project, the Georgia Municipal Association.

Tamara Wolk is a reporter for The Catoosa County News in Ringgold, Ga., and Walker County Messenger in LaFayette, Ga.

MORE INFORMATION

HB 451 can be read here: <https://tinyurl.com/bztky2ny> (legiscan.com/GA/text/HB451/2023)

House Bill 451 includes these first responders: communications officer, emergency medical professional, firefighter, jail officer, peace officer (including law enforcement officer with the Department of Natural Resources), correctional officer, emergency medical technician, highway emergency response operator, juvenile correctional officer, and probation officer.

HB 451 is also referred to as the Ashley Wilson Act. Wilson was a police officer in Gwinnett County in

2018 when on a call, her partner, Antwan Toney, was shot six times through the windshield of a patrol car.

Wilson was with Toney, providing aid along with others, until they got to a hospital. In the end, Toney could not be saved. Wilson slipped into depression, heavy drinking and thinking about suicide. She finally got help and has recovered from her PTSD. She became an advocate for HB 451.

She shares her story here: <https://tinyurl.com/5cd4b3w> (youtube.com/watch?v=YOLOYXbAeE)

Ga. Arts Council Grant will fund Honeybee Festival art

From Media Release

LaFayette Downtown Development Authority (LDDA) has been awarded a Vibrant Communities grant from Georgia Council for the Arts, part of the Georgia Department of Economic Development's efforts to support arts and culture, for fiscal 2025.

The Vibrant Communities grant supports a variety of arts programming throughout the state, including murals, artist residencies, performances in schools, community theater productions, festivals, and concerts.

As part of this year's Vibrant Communities awards, 47 entities in 37

counties will receive over \$190,890 in funding.

"Thriving arts organizations cultivate vibrant communities, and Georgia Council for the Arts is excited to help our arts organizations provide programming that brings arts education to schools, draws tourists who support local businesses, and breathes new life into downtowns," said Georgia Council for the Arts Executive Director Tina Lilly. "Investments in the arts provide long-term benefits for organizations and communities and fuel Georgia's economy, improving quality of life across the state."

The Georgia Council for the Arts received applications from schools,

libraries, cities, historical societies, community theaters, boys and girls Clubs, and arts and other related organizations. In an effort to support projects across the state, Vibrant Communities grants were awarded to entities in counties where no organization had already received Georgia Council for the Arts funding for fiscal year 2025 grants cycle.

The Vibrant Communities grant will help fund The Hidden Bees of LaFayette, a public art initiative celebrating LaFayette's annual Honeybee Festival, which has become a symbol of the community's revitalization and draws more than 50,000 visitors each year. The project will feature 10 unique cast-metal bee

sculptures, each hidden in downtown LaFayette to encourage exploration and engagement, offering new way for both residents and visitors to experience the charm of LaFayette.

Each bee sculpture will be named in honor of a local woman who has significantly impacted the community, with an online "Hidden Bee" webpage sharing each honoree's story. The application to nominate a woman honoree is free, with submissions opening later this year. If selected, a \$400 sponsorship fee will be required from the nominating organization or individual, contributing to the matching funds for the grant. For updates on the nomination process, follow Downtown LaFayette on Facebook.

"Our community is honored to receive this grant, which allows us to uniquely incorporate art into the downtown spaces of LaFayette," said Julie Carter, chair of the LaFayette Downtown Development Authority. "The Hidden Bees project celebrates the incredible women who have helped shape our city, while fostering community connection through art. We're thrilled to bring this interactive experience to both locals and visitors."

Funding for these grants is provided through appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly.

WWII's 6888th Battalion to be honored at Chickamauga

From National Park Service

On Saturday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m., Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park will present a one-hour ranger-led program that will take place at the Chickamauga

Battlefield Visitor Center. The program will begin in the visitor center, then move outside. Participants are urged to dress for the weather and bring a chair and a bottle of water.

Have you heard about a special group of ladies during World War II who faced great odds to

serve their country? Not only has their story been in the news recently, but now their story is being shared in select theaters around the country.

The 6888th Central Postal Battalion was the only predominately all African American female battalion to go

overseas during World War II. Their mission was to get a two-year backlog of mail out to the soldiers stationed on the front lines. These soldiers faced extreme prejudice from the time they entered the army. However, the prejudice they faced at home was nothing

compared to what they faced in the European Theatre of Operations. The park invites you to come and hear about these soldiers who faced unimaginable racism during their training at Fort Oglethorpe and how they faced it during the rest of their tour of duty.

For more information about programs at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, contact the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center at 706-866-9241, the Lookout Mountain Battlefield Visitor Center at 423-821-7786, or visit the park website at nps.gov.

ARREST REPORTS

Walker County arrests: Monday, Nov. 18, to Sunday, Nov. 24

The Walker County Sheriff's Office provided this information on those booked into the county jail.

The listings include name of inmate (last, first, middle), race/sex, age, felony/misdemeanor (misd), arresting officer, and charge(s).

Here are some of the abbreviations used: FVA=Family Violence Act; FTA=Failure to appear; VGCSA=Violation of the Georgia Controlled Substances Act; FTML=Failure to maintain lane.

*WEBB REBECCA LYNN W/F 34 FELONY OFFICER CRAIG PROBATION VIOLATION

*CARRINGTON HAYLEY NICOLE W/F 28 OFFICER RAMEY RETURN FROM CITY COURT

*TORRENCE DEVIN ALBERTO B/M 17 FELONY OFFICER GOLOWICH SIMPLE ASSAULT FVA, CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY 2ND FVA

*DANIELS PHILLIP B/M 66 Misd OFFICER ALMELIDA PUI

*MOONEYHAM KIMBERLY DENISE W/F 55 SELF HOLD FOR COURT

*JOHNSON JOHN SCOTT W/M 51 FELONY OFFICER DUNN CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY 2ND

*HEADRICK PHILLIP WAYNE W/M 59 Misd OFFICER TEMPLETON DISORDERLY CONDUCT

*SHELTON RAYMOND GUY W/M 24 Misd OFFICER JONES FTA

*SACHSE MADELYNNE NOELLE W/F 18 Misd OFFICER KING DUI DRUGS

*SIPSY CHRISTIAN JENNIS W/M 24 Misd OFFICER BALLARD FTA

*ASH BRAILEY DANIELLE W/F 22 Misd OFFICER BALLARD DUI

*MARIDALMAELIZABETH SALANIC H/F 27 Misd OFFICER SIMPSON DRIVING WITHOUT LICENSE

*TAYLOR BOBBY JOE W/M 41 FELONY OFFICER TEMPLETON POSSESSION METH, POSSESSION DRUG REL OBJECTS

*GRAY JAMES DARRELL W/M 63 Misd OFFICER

DOYLE DRIVING ON SUSPENDED, HIT AND RUN, TOO FAST FOR CONDITIONS, DRIVING ON WRONG SIDE OF ROAD, FTML

*ROBERTSON CAROLYN DENISE B/F 54 Misd OFFICER BROWN THEFT BY SHOPLIFTING

*HALL LONNIE WILLIAMS W/M 43 RETURN FROM HEALTH DEPT

*TURNER TIFFANIE MICHELLE W/F 35 Misd OFFICER MCNICHOLS FTA

*PRATHER SARAH MICHELLE W/F 32 Misd OFFICER LEAMON PROBATION VIOLATION

*IMHOFF CLARK DAVID W/M 18 Misd OFFICER HENCHIN SIMPLE BATTERY X 2

*POWELL JOHN DAVIS W/M 43 RETURN FROM HEALTH DEPT

*JORDAN TONY LAMAR W/M 66 Misd OFFICER ALMELIDA CRIMINAL TRESPASS FVA

*THOMPSON KEISHA LEAH W/F 44 Misd OFFICER SIMPSON CRIMINAL TRESPASS

*MC DANIEL, DAVID DEWAYNE B/M 27 FELONY OFFICER GOLOWICH THEFT BY BRINGING STOLEN VEHICLE INTO STATE X 2, POSS MARIJUANA LESS 1 OZ

*CLARK KAREN DIANNE W/F 52 Misd OFFICER ALMELIDA BATTERY FVA, ASAULT FVA

*BRITO MARCANO EDUARDO JUNIOR H/M 26 Misd OFFICER HYDE NO LICENSE /NO INSURANCE / SEAT BELT VIOLATION (CHILD) / FAILURE TO OBEY TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICE

*WHATLEY BRAYDEN NAIKI B/M 23 FELONY OFFICER LEAMON MURDER /AGGRAVATED ASSAULT /ARMED ROBBERY

*ROBINSON BILLY DEWAYNE W/M 42 FELONY OFFICER LEAMON POSSESSION OF METH / FAILURE TO APPEAR - Misd

*GATES JAMES RAYMOND W/M 40 Misd OFFICER HAVEN DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED

*AKERY AUSTIN BLAKE W/M 31 Misd OFFICER YOUNG FAILURE TO APPEAR - Misd

*COX TIMOTHY CHARLES W/M 63 Misd OFFICER YOUNG FAILURE TO AP-

DO W/M 23 OFFICER PETTY RETURN FROM MEDICAL * BRAVO ISAAC ANTONIO W/M 25 Misd OFFICER HUNTING UNDER THE INFLUENCE / OBSTRUCTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT - Misd / STRIKING FIXED OBJECT

* DODSON MARTHA LOUISE W/F 49 Misd OFFICER THOMASON DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED

* MARTIN CAROLYN JILL W/F 50 Misd OFFICER THOMASON FAILURE TO APPEAR - Misd

* JONES DAVID BRUCE W/M 52 FELONY OFFICER YOUNG FAILURE TO APPEAR - FELONY

* CAMP KYLE LLOYD W/M 33 Misd OFFICER SHACKLEFORD DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE / SPEEDING

* WHITE TERESA GODRIDGE W/F 56 FELONY OFFICER PHILLIPS POSSESSION OF METH

* WINDMON FREDERICK DAMARIO B/M 35 FELONY OFFICER PERRY SALE OF MARIJUANA / POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA - FELONY

* VAUGHN JASON DANIEL W/M 50 Misd OFFICER MILLER 6X CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

* WILLIAMS JOSHUA WADE W/M 42 FELONY OFFICER PHILLIPS AGGRAVATED STALKING / BURGLARY 2ND DEGREE

* MURRAY TRAVIS JAMES B/M 30 FELONY OFFICER PHILLIPS POSSESSION OF METH

* JACKSON ELI NATHANIEL LEE W/M 36 Misd OFFICER STEPHENS SIMPLE BATTERY - FVA

* SIMS KELLY EDWIN W/M 53 FELONY OFFICER TUCKER VIOLATION OF PROBATION - FELONY

* SWANN CHRISTOPHER DAVID W/M 34 FELONY OFFICER WILLIAMSON VIOLATION OF PROBATION - FELONY

* MANNIS BRITTANY MICHELLE W/F 36 FELONY OFFICER WILLIAMSON VIOLATION OF PROBATION - FELONY

* CLAYTON JUSTIN LAMAR W/M 18 FELONY OFFICER HOLLOWAY VIOLATION OF PROBATION - FELONY

* FOUTZ ROGER EUGENE W/M 53 FELONY OFFICER SUMNER DIGITIGE - HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE / PAYING DRUG

* BELL CHRISTIAN VANCE W/M 25 FELONY OFFICER YOUNG AGGRAVATED ASAULT

* BELL STEPHEN WAYNE W/M 44 FELONY OFFICER LEAMON FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE

* SIMMONS BENNY WAYNE W/M 39 FELONY OFFICER MILLER PROBATION VIOLATION

* BALLIQUE W/M 37 FELONY OFFICER YOUNG PROBATION VIOLATION

* GUICE, VALISSA B/F 37 FELONY OFFICER MILLER

PEAR - Misd ER MURDER 2ND DEGREE, CRUELTY TO CHILDREN 2ND DEGREE * GOFF KIMBERLY DEFENCE W/F 41 FELONY OFFICER LEAMON FTA

* TACKETT MICHAEL SHANE W/M 40 FELONY OFFICER MATTHEWS VGCSA * FLOYD ROBERT KENNETH W/M 51 Misd OFFICER GILREATH BATTERY - FVA

* MULLINS JOEL WAYNE W/M 52 Misd OFFICER GILREATH FTA, DRIVING ON SUSPENDED, NO INSURANCE, FAILURE TO REGISTER VEHICLE, REMOVING / AFFIXING TAG TO CONCEAL IDENTITY OF VEHICLE

* AVANS BRYAN JONATHAN W/M 43 OFFICER ROBERTS RETURN FROM DR APIT

* MURPHY ANGELA NICOLE W/F 40 FELONY OFFICER LEAMON PROBATION VIOLATION

* RAMIREZ-CHUN FREDY H/M 27 Misd OFFICER GOLOWICH FALSE NAME, DRIVING ON SUSPENDED, NO INSURANCE, FAILURE TO AFFIX REVALIDATION DECAL

* CHAMBERS CHARLEY ROBERT W/M 53 OFFICER BRAGG RETURN FROM HOSPITAL

* SWANN CHRISTOPHER DAVID W/M 34 FELONY OFFICER WILLIAMSON VIOLATION OF PROBATION - FELONY

* MANNIS BRITTANY MICHELLE W/F 36 FELONY OFFICER WILLIAMSON VIOLATION OF PROBATION - FELONY

* CLAYTON JUSTIN LAMAR W/M 18 FELONY OFFICER HOLLOWAY VIOLATION OF PROBATION - FELONY

* FOUTZ ROGER EUGENE W/M 53 FELONY OFFICER SUMNER DIGITIGE - HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE / PAYING DRUG

* BELL CHRISTIAN VANCE W/M 25 FELONY OFFICER YOUNG AGGRAVATED ASAULT

* BELL STEPHEN WAYNE W/M 44 FELONY OFFICER LEAMON FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE

* SIMMONS BENNY WAYNE W/M 39 FELONY OFFICER MILLER PROBATION VIOLATION

* BALLIQUE W/M 37 FELONY OFFICER YOUNG PROBATION VIOLATION

* GUICE, VALISSA B/F 37 FELONY OFFICER MILLER

PROBATION VIOLATION * ROBLOERO-SANCHEZ HUGO H/M 27 Misd OFFICER HYDE NO INSURANCE, NO LICENSE, SUSPENDED TAG

* BENNETT STEVEN EDWARD B/M 57 Misd OFFICER GOLOWICH CRUELTY TO CHILDREN 3RD DEGREE, SIMPLE BATTERY FVA

* PRICKETT DAVID AUGUSTA W/M 24 Misd OFFICER GOLOWICH DUI LESS SAFE, FTM

* BURNETTE JACK DYLAN W/M 21 Misd OFFICER SCARBROUGH SIMPLE BATTERY FVA

* BURNETTE JACK DEREK W/M 54 Misd OFFICER SCARBROUGH SIMPLE BATTERY FVA

* COMBS ADAM EDGAR W/M 45 FELONY OFFICER ALMEIDA AGGRAVATED ASAULT, SIMPLE ASSAULT X 2, CRUELTY TO CHILDREN 3RD

* COOK RONNIETIMMON JR W/M 36 Misd OFFICER SIMPSON FAILURE TO APPEAR

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Public notice is hereby given that the Walker County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on December 19, 2024 at Courthouse Annex III (201 S. Main Street in LaFayette) on the following item:

Hawks Ridge Holdings LLC requests a partial rezone from C-1 (Commercial) to PUD (Planned Unit Development) for property located at 180 Hutcheson Drive/104 Quarter Street, Rossville, GA 30741. Tax map & parcel number 0-119-002 & 002A.



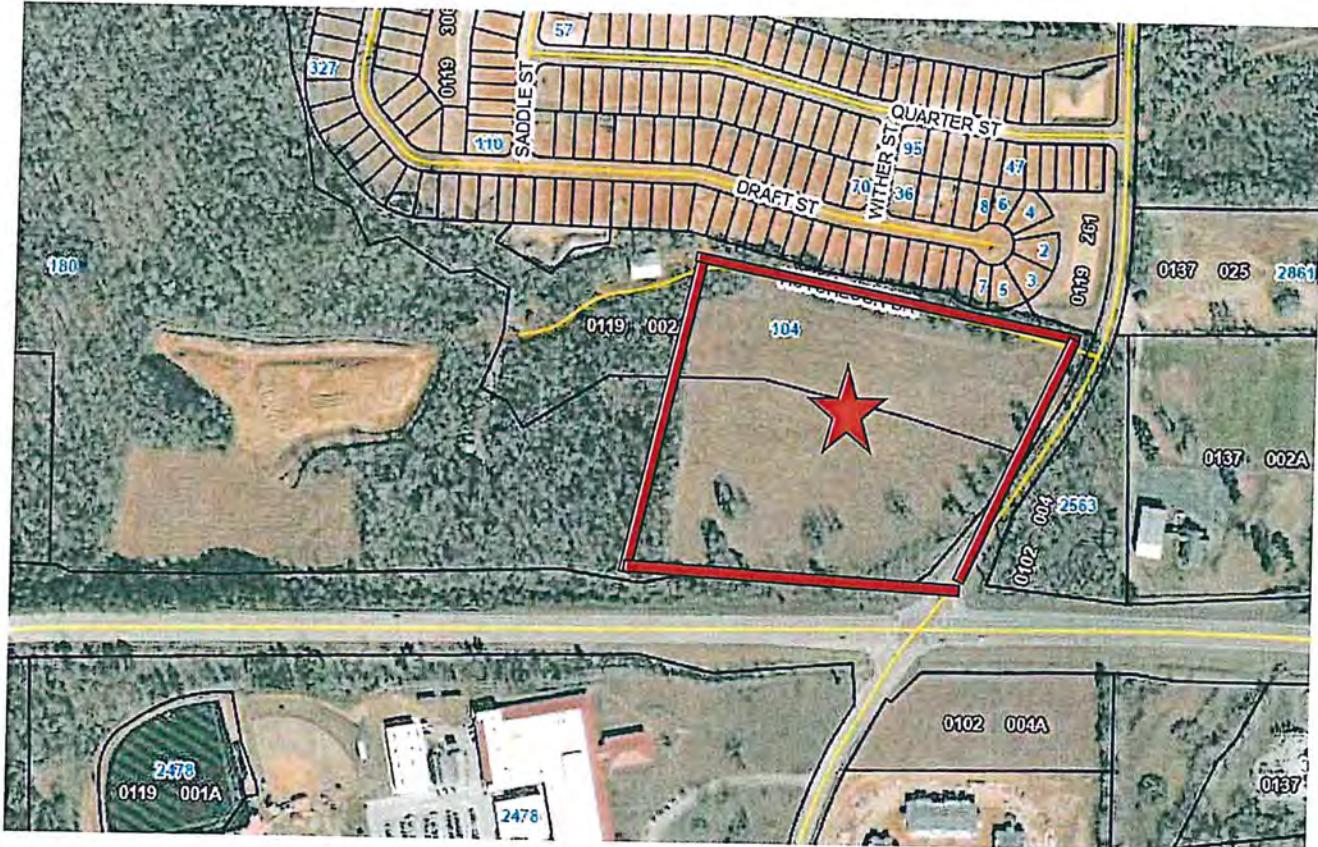
**WALKER COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA ITEM**

Owner: Hawks Ridge Holdings LLC
 Petitioner: Same
 Location of 180 Hutcheson Drive/
 Property: 104 Quarter Street
 Rossville, GA. 30741

Tax map & parcel number 0-119-002/002A

	PC Meeting Date:	10/17/2024
	Present Zoning:	C-1 (Commercial)
APPLICANT'S INTENT:	To rezone part of this parcel from C-1 to PUD	
DETAILS OF REQUEST:	Requesting that 6.2 of the 11.8 commercial part of Hawks Ridge be rezoned to PUD in order to add 32 more building lots to the development. This will leave a total of 5.6 for commercial development.	

Projected Area:



CONSIDERATION OF ZONING CRITERIA

1. **Existing land uses and zoning of nearby property:** The zoning of the nearby property is currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development) & C-1 (Commercial)
2. **Suitability of the subject property for the zone purposed:** Yes
3. **Extent to which property values of the subject property are diminished by the particular zoning restrictions:** None
4. **Extent to which the destruction of property values of the subject property promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public:** None that we know of.
5. **Relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner:** This would be reducing the size of the commercial lot for future business.
6. **Whether the subject property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned:** Yes
7. **Length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the vicinity of the property:** The tax records show the property has been owned by J&E Pichardo since 2020.
8. **Whether the proposed zoning will be a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property:** Yes.
9. **Whether the proposed zoning will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property:** Unknown
10. **Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan:** The Future Land Use Map shows Mixed Use.
11. **Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools:** Unknown.
12. **Whether there is other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal:** Would be reducing the amount of land for commercial use.



RaganSmith
a Pape-Dawson company

Narrative

TO: Walker County Planning Department FROM: Ben Hagaman
ATTENDEES: Jon Pursley Avery Cowan
Kristy Parker Justin Johnson
planning@walkerga.us DATE: November 20, 2024
REFERENCE: Hawks Ridge Development
JOB NUMBER: 21-0203

Dear Jon and Kristy,

Ragan-Smith and Associates, Inc. (Ragan-Smith), as consultant to Hawks Ridge Holdings, (Hawks RH) is submitting this letter of request for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment for portions of the following parcels (also shown on attachments):

1. **0119 002A:** 21.32 AC. ± tract at 104 Quarter St. / Rossville, GA 30741 (currently zoned PUD and C-1) and owned by NGA Harrier Developers Inc. – only a portion of the southeastern section (currently zoned C-1).
2. **0119 002:** 86.83 AC. ± tract at 180 Hutcheson Dr. / Rossville, GA 30741 (currently zoned PUD and C-1) and owned by Hawks Ridge Holdings, LLC. – only a portion of the southeastern section (currently zoned C-1).

NASHVILLE
315 Woodland Street
P.O. Box 60070
Nashville, TN 37206

CHATTANOOGA
35 Station Street
Chattanooga, TN 37408

MURFREESBORO
1500 Medical Center Parkway
Suite 2 J
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

FRANKLIN
4068 Rural Plains Circle
Suite 290
Franklin, TN 37064



July 13, 2021

Narrative

Page 2

Addressing Section 3.08 (Planned Unit Development District) in the 2000 Edition of the Walker County, GA Land Development Regulations

A Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment is requested for portions of the affected properties as a large-scale planned development, logically organized and adapted to the topography, aquatic resources and existing utility facilities and easements on the affected properties, to result in a higher overall quality of community development than if accomplished in incremental or unplanned stages. Appropriate site improvements will be incorporated into the PUD layout to establish compatible relationships between the various land uses within and adjacent to the site. This PUD layout has been creatively arranged to preserve open space and protect and enhance unique environmental features and cluster residential development, improving both development effectiveness and efficiency of public services delivery. The proposed PUD Amendment will be compatible with the December 2016 Future Development Map found in the current Walker County Comprehensive Plan.

The site for this proposed PUD Amendment is approximately 4.25 acres and will be added to the already approved PUD of 167.6 acres, keeping it above the 25-acre required minimum. There will be approximately 346 LF of Happy Valley Road right-of-way, above the required 100 LF minimum. The remaining 7.55 acres of the southeastern portion will remain zoned C-1. The lot count that has already been approved for the previous PUD will remain the same at 550 Single-Family detached units, lowering the total density of the total development from 3.28 Dwelling units per acre to 3.20 Dwelling Units per acre.

This letter is intended to serve as the written report for the proposed PUD amendment and accompanies a site exhibit prepared using the required guidelines found in Section 3.08 of the Land Development Regulations.

Additional Project Information and Details

The only use proposed within this PUD amendment is for single-family detached residential units, appropriately interconnected with streets and sidewalks (situated within public right-of-way). The proposed site is a single road, double loaded with single-family detached lots on both sides. The proposed lot count for this site is 21, which will accumulate to 399 total lots for the Hawks Ridge Development. The approved PUD currently allows for 550. This proposed site location will allow for the western, densely wooded portion of the site to remain undisturbed, while still allowing for sustainable growth within the development.

The street profile and building setbacks will be compliant with the approved PUD and previous phases. All proposed housing will meet or exceed current Walker County Building Codes.



July 13, 2021

Narrative

Page 3

All proposed utility extensions and services (sanitary and water) will be reviewed and approved by Walker County Water and Sewerage Authority. The stormwater design will align with both state and local design requirements and be reviewed by the state and Local Issuing Authority for compliance. All boundaries of the approved PUD and proposed amended PUD that abut a C-1 zone will have a vegetated screen with a berm. The development of is portion of the Hawks Ridge project will commence prior to the completion of Hawks Ridge Phase 4 which is currently being constructed.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this opportunity for your consideration. Please reply to schedule a meeting for further discussion or otherwise contact us at your convenience.

Sincerely,

RAGAN-SMITH ASSOCIATES, INC.

Colin Johnson, P.E.
Market Vice President
(423-490-9400)
cjohnson@ragansmith.com

Justin Johnson, P.E.
Senior Project Manager
(423-490-9400)
jjohnson@ragansmith.com

Attachments

Ga. House leaders seek federal disaster relief

By Dave Williams
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — State House speakers in six Southeastern states affected by three hurricanes in recent months — including Georgia House Speaker Jon Burns — sent a letter to congressional leaders Monday, Oct. 21, asking for disaster relief funds.

Significant portions of Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, and Tennessee sustained heavy damage from hurricanes Debbie, Helene, and Milton, devastating communities and farms.

In a letter to U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La.; House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y.; Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.; and Sen-

ate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the state legislative leaders suggested Congress send block grants to the affected states, as was done following Hurricane Michael in 2018.

"Timely delivery of disaster assistance is extremely important as farmers will be unable to secure financing for planting next year's crop without this support," the letter stated. "The groundbreaking Congress laid after Hurricane Michael was extremely beneficial through providing block grants to the affected states."

The letter also asked Congress to provide a special supplemental appropriation through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that could be used to help states with long-

term recovery, restoration of infrastructure, housing, and economic development.

A third request seeks funding through the Federal Highway Administration to rebuild roads and bridges destroyed along the paths of the hurricanes.

"These historic storms have left countless citizens, farmers, and businesses facing generational impacts on their way of life and the places they call home," said Burns, R-Newington. "This aid will be critical to ensuring the timely assistance of our most heavily impacted states."

This story is available through a news partnership with Capitol Beat News Service, a project of the Georgia Press Educational Foundation.

Georgia unemployment held steady in September

By Dave Williams
Capitol Beat News Service



ATLANTA — Georgia continued to set employment records last month even as the state's unemployment rate held steady.

The Peach State's jobless rate stood at 3.6% in September, unchanged from August and five-tenths lower than the national average.

Georgia set all-time highs in several categories, including the number of jobs in the state's economy, the number of employed Georgians and the size of the workforce.

"Every job created represents another paycheck in the pocket of hardworking Georgians," state Commissioner of Labor Bruce Thompson

said. "With record-breaking job growth, an expanding workforce, and rising key industries, we're continuing to build better lives for families across our state."

The number of jobs increased by 6,800 last month to nearly 5 million, a record. The sectors with the most over-the-month gains were health care and social assistance, which gained 4,700 jobs, and accommodation and food services, which posted an increase of 3,200 jobs.

The private educational services sector was down by 1,400 in September, and

transportation and warehousing lost 1,000 jobs.

The number of employed Georgians rose by 1,761 last month to more than 5.2 million, another all-time high, while the state's labor force increased by 4,777 to more than 5.4 million, also a record.

At the same time, the

ranks of the unemployed

were up by 3,016 to more

than 195,000, the highest level since July 2021.

Initial unemployment

claims declined by 3,595 in September to 19,600.

This story is available through a news partnership with Capitol Beat News Service, a project of the Georgia Press Educational Foundation.

Committee to explore impacts of AI on Georgia courts

By Dave Williams
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia Chief Justice Michael Boggs announced the formation of an ad hoc committee that will assess the risks and benefits of using artificial intelligence in the state's court system.

The committee, to be chaired by Justice Andrew Pinson, will look for ways to maintain public trust and confidence in Georgia's judiciary as the use of AI increases during the coming years.

"We recognize that, while

there is much discussion around this subject, many of the opportunities and threats associated with AI are unknown at this point," Pinson said. "We hope the work of this committee will educate and guide the judiciary as we explore this new technology."

The committee will include representatives of the various classes of state courts as well as partner agencies that work within the judicial system.

The Judicial Council of Georgia, which serves as the policymaking body for the judicial branch of state

government, will support the committee's work.

The potential impacts of AI technology are being examined throughout state government. The State Bar of Georgia has created its own committee to explore this subject.

The Georgia House and Senate also have separate study committees addressing the topic.

This story is available through a news partnership with Capitol Beat News Service, a project of the Georgia Press Educational Foundation.

Marsh House board of trustees minutes

Special

October 21, 2024, 6:00 pm, meeting by Zoom and in-person.

Present: David Boyle, Mary Beth Dykes, Connie Forester, Davene Nichols, Joan Fowler, Mary McConnell (by proxy), Mark Robles. Proxies were to David Boyle, Stacey Suttle, staff; Don Coleman and Tina Brewer, guests.

David Boyle presided. The Minutes of the Marsh House Board of Trustees for September 16 were approved unanimously on a motion by Mary Beth (1) and Connie (2).

Treasurer's report: September Income: \$1469.34. Expenses: \$920.00. Balance in Checking: \$24,576.83.

OLD BUSINESS

The restoration of the carriage shed turned out quite well. Still waiting on repair of the carriage.

Chinking of the cabin is completed.

Repair of the irrigation and replanting of the raised beds on the south, pending.

Heritage Day — small atten-

dance, but with good earnings and good tours. Income: Yard sale — 260; Gift shop-16; bake sale-215; tours-300; donations-500.00 Total: 1435.00. There was a discussion of possible enhancements for next year to be planned in January.

NEW BUSINESS

Ghost Tours planning. Thursday-Saturday, Oct. 24-26. 7-9 pm. Details of the tours were worked out with Connie leading all the house tours each evening. Tina will be in the informal parlor with a casket and a talk about Victorian Mourning Customs, including a funeral cookie.

Friends membership mailing to go out by November 1.

Candlelight Tours will be Sat., Sun., December 14, 15, 21, 22; 6-8 pm.

Mary Beth Dykes (1) and Connie Forester (2) nominated Wade Gilbert for the Board of Trustees. Passed unanimously.

WORK AREA REPORTS

Administration/House

management — Work Day on Oct. 11 with workers from Roper in coordination with AA Museum. Cleared much of the back lot, opening up for more lawn and a picnic table. Table from CCC Camp? With a QR code for the story. Connie received a number of donated items from a local woman. She will review them and then we will decide what to keep and what to send to the archives. Don reported that the new sign for the sidewalk arrived, but was broken. He has reordered it.

Staff report. Stacey Suttle. 27 guests in September. Mailed out newsletter. Interpretation/Events — looking for several new documents.

Building and Grounds: Plaster/wall paper damage in formal parlor — pending repairs. One guesstimate. Hanging the bell in the back yard. Will need a new chairperson next year for Building and Grounds — George Rogers is moving away.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

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WALKER COUNTY, GA

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, November 1, 2024

at 6:00 P.M.

Walker County Civic Center

Rock Spring, GA 30732

The Walker County Planning Commission will meet and review the following requests for permits and/or variances for new business:

1. R. W. Wooten: Requests a rezone

from A-1 (Agricultural) to C-1 (Commer-

cial) for property located at 30728, Tax

map & parcel number 0-314-012a.

2. See 201, City of Rome, GA, 30728, Tax

map & parcel number 0-314-012b.

3. Kevin Lee & Pölke Griffin: Requests a rezone from C-1 (Commercial) to C-2 (Residential) for property located at 3404 N. Hwy 27 LaFayette, GA, 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-322-4403

4. Ronald Dalton & Hibbings Properties: Requests a variance for property

8003 Public Hearing

located at 10161 N. Hwy 2729, Tax map & parcel number 0-325-206.

Old Business:

1. Amendments to Land Development Regulations: Requests a variance on these requests will be heard by the Walker County Board of Commissioners at the Walker County Courthouse Annex, III located at 201 S. Main Street, Rock Spring, GA, 30732.

For further information, please call Walker County Planning and Development at 704-404-4048.

Walker County Planning Office will hold a public work session starting at 5:00 P.M. November 30, 2024 prior to the regular meeting at 6:00 P.M. November 30, 2024.

10:30, 11:45, 2024

8004 Public Sales/Auctions

located at 10161 N. Hwy 2729, Tax map & parcel number 0-325-206.

Old Business:

1. Sale of Self Storage Sale: Please take notice FreeUp Storage - 10161 N. Hwy 2729, Rock Spring, GA, 30729 intends to hold a public sale to the public property stored thereon, (furniture, household items, office, etc.) the public sale to the highest bidder will occur as an Online Auction on 11/20/2024 at 10:00AM.

Unless stated otherwise the description of property includes all goods, furniture and garage essentials. Doreene Vanzant unit #C16:

P. Sean Contrell unit #A10;

Kevin J. Foster unit #A8;

Robert Zimmerman unit #A7;

The sale will be held at 10:00 a.m. of time without notice. Certain terms and conditions apply.

10:30, 11:45, 2024

8005 Adoptions

located at 10161 N. Hwy 2729, Tax map & parcel number 0-325-206.

Old Business:

1. Adoption of Paul Adam Fountain and Lori Ann Fountain by Suzannah Lynn Loftory and Nicholas Loftory, natural father and son of Suzannah Lynn Loftory and Nicholas Loftory.

You are hereby notified that Paul Adam Fountain and Lori Ann Fountain have filed a petition for the adoption of Suzannah Lynn Loftory and Nicholas Loftory.

You are required to file with the Clerk of the Superior Court and to serve the parties with a copy of the petition and the summons.

1. Paul Adam Fountain and Lori Ann Fountain, Petitioners, and Suzannah Lynn Loftory, Respondent.

Civil Action No: 24AD1561

TO: Nicholas Loftory, Natural Father of Suzannah Lynn Loftory

1. Nicholas Loftory, Natural Father of Suzannah Lynn Loftory.

2. Nicholas Loftory, Natural Father of Suzannah Lynn Loftory.

3. Nicholas Loftory, Natural Father of Suzannah Lynn Loftory.

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37. Nicholas Loftory, Natural Father of Suzannah Lynn Loftory.

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Walker County Planning Commission Work Session

November 21, 2024
6:00P.M.
Walker County Civic Center

ATTENDEES:

Planning Commission Members

Michael Haney
Jon Hentz
Randy Pittman
Zack Chapman
Will Ingram
Cindy Askew
Stan Porter
John Morehouse
Rob Walthour
Todd Holt

Walker County Planning Staff

Jon Pursley, Planning Director
Kristy Parker, Planning Commission Secretary

Chairman Haney asked Cindy Askew to go over the proposed poultry ordinance. Cindy explained that she had met with some local farmers, and they listed the recommendations they had. She read over the recommendations. See attached exhibit A. She said that the only thing that was not correct was in section (g) under the recommendations the last sentence should read as follows. "A 200-foot minimum setback will be required from the centerline of the road to the nearest point of a new feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation." This would change 300 feet to 200 feet. After reading the recommendations John Morehouse asked about the number of cattle that would be allowed. Cindy explained that they tried not to make that definition and that cattle because there are the USDA regulations. Stan Porter asked what the adequate tree buffer would be. Cindy explained that if there was no existing tree buffer then there were types of trees that would need to be planted, and her and Jon went over that. Rob Walthour asked if the wooded buffer would just apply to A-1 against residential properties and he was told no that it would apply to all properties.

Chairman Haney then asked Jon Pursley to read over the Proposed Solar ordinance. After reading the proposed ordinance and discussion by the members on some changes they would like they went back over to clarify what changes they would like made to present to the Board of Commissioners. In number (3) Zack Chapman suggested C & CN (commercial) zones and Jon Hentz suggested zoning I (industrial) zone be the only zones allowing for this and that the minimum setback be 500 feet from any property lines including roads with an adequate vegetative buffer. In (5) they recommended that it include that no illuminated signs be allowed.

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In number (10) to say that a bond be required every 12 month in case for decommissioning the site for clean-up.

Chairman Haney at that time closed the work session.

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Walker County Planning Commission Minutes

November 21, 2024
Walker County Civic Center
6:00 PM

ATTENDEES:

Planning Commission Members

Michael Haney
Randy Pittman
Todd Holt
Will Ingram
Cindy Askew
Stan Porter
John Morehouse
Rob Walthour
Zack Chapman
Jon Hentz

Walker County Planning Staff

Jon Pursley, Planning Director
Kristy Parker, Planning Commission Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Haney called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

III. READING & APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 17, 2024 MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Haney stated that there were some revisions on the minutes. He asked Kristy Parker to read the following changes. (5. McLemore Club LLC: Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to approve or deny and if deny a reason why. Stan Porter asked if the proper procedures were done for this application. Mr. Horton came up and stated that he thought some of that information was about the buildings and not the request. He also stated that he saw the map that was sent for the first time tonight and that it was shifted and not correct. The applicant said he would not feel comfortable with the Planning Commission voting on this due to that and stated he would like to withdraw and resubmit. Per County Code Section 22-109(b) "an applicant may withdraw the application at a time prior to the vote by the Planning Commission but may not resubmit an application for the same amendment for a period of 6 months from the date of withdrawal." Regardless, a motion to deny was made by Zack Chapman due to the ordinance saying a buffer of 500 feet is required and no plans show that. Michael Hicks seconded the motion to deny. A unanimous vote to deny was held.) Zack Chapman stated that he did not believe they asked for a withdrawal and felt Chairman Haney was correct when he asked for a withdrawal, deny or approve and that the minutes should reflect that. Chairman Haney said that they did show

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there was a unanimous motion to deny. Zack Chapman said that the word "like" should be taken out where it said that the applicant would like to withdraw and have resubmit also removed. He said that where Chairman Haney asked for a motion to withdraw, deny or approve be added. Section 5 McLemore Club LLC minutes now read as follows. (5. McLemore Club LLC: Stan Porter asked if the proper procedures were done for this application. Mr. Horton came up and stated that he thought some of that information was about the buildings and not the request. He also stated that he saw the map that was sent for the first time tonight and that it was shifted and not correct. The applicant said he would not feel comfortable with the Planning Commission voting on this due to that and stated he would recommend a withdrawal. Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to withdraw, deny or approve and if deny a reason why. Zack Chapman made a motion to deny due to the ordinance saying a buffer of 500 feet is required and no plans show that. Michael Hicks seconded the motion to deny. The vote was unanimous to deny. Motion to deny carried.) Zack Chapman made a motion to revise the minutes with these changes. Randy Pittman seconded the motion. The vote to revise the minutes with these changes was eight in favor with Will Ingram abstaining due to not being at that meeting. Motion to revised carried.

IV. MOTION TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Haney asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Rob Walthour made a motion to open the public hearing. John Morehouse seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion to open the public hearing carried.

V. PUBLIC HEARING:

Rezone:

1. **R.L. Wooten:** Chairman Haney if there was anyone present for Mr. Wooten. Mr. Wooten and Bobby Blakemore came forward. Mr. Blakemore said he was trying to buy the property from Mr. Wooten. He said he has a business in Walker County and trying to keep it in Walker County. Jon Pursley stated that the building has been used as commercial since it was built around 2002. Jamie Hulsey asked if C-1 was allowed in A-1 zones and Jon Pursley said not necessarily but every case is unique. Mr. Husley mentioned the comprehensive plan and to please consider that. Zack Chapman asked if Mr. Wooten had a business license.
2. **See Rock City:** Chairman Haney stated that Rock City has requested that their request be tabled until the next meeting and that they will have to go through the process again. A lady stood up and stated they were there on behalf of the neighbors by Rock City and asked if they would be notified of their next meeting and Kristy Parker said yes that she would mail letters back out with new dates. The gentleman asked if letter could be mailed out to others around besides the adjoining neighbors and Chairman Haney said that it just says to send to the adjoining properties.
3. **Kelly Lee & Paige Griffin:** Chairman Haney asked if anyone was present for Kelly and Paige Griffin. Paige Griffin came forward and stated they were trying to sell the property and wanted it rezoned to help with the sell. She asked if it could go to CBOD and Jon Pursley said that was the Overlay District toward the north end of the county. Jon then explained that a couple of parcels had just been rezoned to residential in the past year. It was explained that this location was the old Pine Motel.

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Variance:

1. **Randal Dalton:** Chairman Haney stated that the address was listed on the front page wrong but it was advertised and mailed out correct. He then asked if there was anyone present for Mr. Dalton. Bobby Howard came forward and stated that they would like to request a variance on the number of parking spaces as they have in the past. He stated this store will be right across from the Civic Center. He talked about the entrance. He stated that they are going to be doing this store in stack rock and back and board. Tina Groce came forward and asked if anything could be done about the fact that when you GPS the address it takes you to Snow Drive. Mr Howard said that Mr. Dalton made an agreement with the people on Snow Drive and has blocked that off and how the drive will be slightly moved. Mr. Ken ? that lives on Snow Drive said that they have got together and are planning on putting up a gate to keep it private.

VI. MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to close the public hearing. Todd Holt made a motion to close the public hearing. Zack Chapman seconded the motion. Cindy Askew asked about when the amendments would be voted on and discussed. Chairman Haney stated that he would open the public meeting back up.

VII. MOTION TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Haney asked for a motion to reopen the public hearing. Stan Porter made a motion to reopen the public hearing. Todd Holt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion to reopen the public hearing carried.

Amendments To Land Development Regulations:

Sec. 22-156 Poultry Operations: Chairman Haney asked Cindy Askew to read over the Poultry House Regulation proposals. Cindy stated that she had worked with some of the local farmer and they have come up with these recommendations. See exhibit A.

Sec.22-334 Solar Energy System Special Use Permit: Chairman Haney read over the proposed ordinance see exhibit B. with recommended changes in (3) to have a minimum of 500 feet setback on all sides and only allowed in zones C-1 & I. (5) That no illuminated signs allowed. In (10) Add a section (e) to say that a bond be required every 12 month in case for decommissioning the site for clean-up.

Chairman Haney then allowed questions from the audience and Jamie Hulsey came forward and thanked the Board for ammending the minutes. He also said he did not understand how the Board of Commissioners takes action on preliminary minutes from this Board. He said it states in the enabling act that the Chairman represets the Board and he looks forward to seeing him, Mr. Haney at the meetings to represent the Planning Commission. He then spoke on the proposed solar ordinance and hoped they did not rush into it. Ned Yates then came forward and said he was glad that they are looking at C-1 for the zone.

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VII. MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to close the public hearing. Todd Holt made a motion to close the public hearing. Rob Walthour seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion to close the public hearing carried.

IX. MOTION TO GO INTO NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to open new business. John Morhouse made a motion to open new business. Todd Holt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion to open new business carried.

X. NEW BUSINESS:

1. R.L. Wooten: Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to approve or deny and if deny a reason why. Randy Pittman made a motion to approve. Jon Hentz seconded the motion to approve. Todd Holt, Will Ingram, Stan Porter and Rob Walthour all voted in favor of the motion to approve the rezone. Zack Chapman, Cindy Askew and John Morehouse voted against the motion to approve. The motion to approve carried.

2. See Rock City. Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to table the request made by Rock City. Todd Holt made a motion to table. Will Ingram seconded the motion to table. The vote was unanimous. Motion to table carried.

3. Kelly and Paige Griffin: Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to approve or deny and if deny a reason why. Tod Holt made a motion to approve. Stan Porter seconded the motion to approve. The vote was unanimous to approve. Motion to approve carried.

4. Randal Dalton: Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to approve or deny and if deny a reason why. Zack Chapman made a motion to approve. Todd Holt seconded the motion to approve. The vote was unanimous. Motion to approve carried.

5. Amendments to Land Development Regulations Sec. 22-156 Poultry Operations & Sec. 22-334 Solar Energy System Special Use Permit: Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to approve or deny with the proposed recommendations made tonight. John Morehouse made a motion to approve with the recommendations. Zack Chapman seconded the motion to approve with the recommendations. The vote was unanimous. Motion to approve with recommendation carried.

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XI: ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Haney asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Todd Holt made a motion to adjourn. Rob Walthour seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Motion to adjourn carried.

Date Submitted: Planning Commission Chairman

Date Submitted: Planning Commission Secretary

Date Submitted: Planning Commission Director

EXHIBIT A

11.

ARTICLE IV. ZONING, DIVISION 2: DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT REGULATIONS; Section 22-156-178 is amended as follows:

Sec. 22-156. Poultry Operations.

(a) Minimum acres required for 1-4 standard poultry houses containing 20,000 sq.ft. Per house (40X500) shall require a minimum of 35 acres and meet all setback/buffer requirements. Applicants building poultry houses containing more than 20,000 sq.ft. Will need to work with the Planning Office to determine the minimum acres needed to construct poultry houses and still meet all buffer/setback requirements. Each additional poultry house and or waste storage facility will require an additional 5 acres and meet all existing buffer/setback requirements. Producers should be aware that this minimum is based on a perfect square and additional acreage could be needed to place houses and meet all buffer/setback requirements.

Recommendation: Due to the significant variation in operation requirements, remove Sec. 22-156 (a) in its entirety and allow buffer/setback requirements to dictate acreage necessary for individual operations

(b) A waste storage facility/stack house is subject to the same buffer/setbacks as a poultry house: 400-feet from the property line. Reciprocal buffer/setbacks apply from new residences to a waste facility: 200-feet from the property line/ 400-feet from an existing waste facility. The farm owner/operator or a residence provided to employees shall be exempt from setback requirements.

Recommendation: A waste storage facility/stack house is subject to the same buffer/setbacks as a poultry house: 200-feet from the property line. Reciprocal buffer/setbacks apply from new residences proposed adjacent to existing poultry operations utilizing a waste storage facility: 200-feet from the property line/400-feet from an existing waste facility. The farm owner/operator or a residence provided to employees shall be exempt from setback requirements.

ARTICLE IV. ZONING, DIVISION 3: SITE IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS; Section 22-184(e)-(h) is deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

(e) A buffer or setback of at least 400-feet is required between the A-1 Agriculture District and property zones A-1, R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1 and C-N. The measurement shall be from the property line to the nearest point of the poultry house. Such buffer/setback may be used for general or low intensity agricultural purposes but may not be used for feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operations.

Recommendation: A buffer of at least 400-feet is required between the A-1 Agriculture District and property zones R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1 and C-N. The measurement shall be from the property line to the nearest point of the feedlot, poultry, hog, or dairy operation. Such buffer/setback may be used for general or low intensity agricultural purposes. A buffer of at least 200-feet with adequate woody vegetative measures installed if not existing will be required in A-1 property zones. The measurement shall be from the property line to the nearest point of the feedlot, poultry, hog, or dairy operation. Such buffer/setback may be used for general or low intensity agricultural purposes.

(f) A buffer or setback of at least 400-feet shall be required and maintained from any residential or commercial structure to the nearest point at which a feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation is taking place, within an A-1 district. The buffer/setback can be used for other general and low intensity agricultural uses. The farm operator/owner's or a residence provided to employees shall be exempt from the set back requirements.

Recommendation: Leave as is

(g) A buffer or setback of 400-feet will be required from a new residence to an existing poultry house or 200-feet from the property line to an existing poultry house. A 300-foot minimum setback will be required from the centerline of the road to the nearest point of a new poultry house.

Recommendation: A buffer or setback of 400-feet will be required from a new residence to an adjoining existing feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation structure or 200-feet from the property line. A 300-foot minimum setback will be required from the centerline of the road to the nearest point of a new feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation.

(h) In the event of a screen, wall, fence, planted dividing strip or any type of buffer(hereinafter referred to as "Buffer") is required by this article , for any use the Buffer shall be subjected to periodic inspections by the County Office of Planning and Enforcement to determine that the Buffer is being properly maintained. Failure to properly maintain the Buffer to an acceptable standard may be deemed a violation of this section.

Recommendation: Leave as is

Sections (l) and (j) are additions/clarifications proposed based on public input:

(l) Property line setbacks may be waived between family members deeding property to family members to the third degree for the purpose of constructing production facilities. Property line and residence setbacks to neighboring A-1 properties shall remain as aforementioned.

(j) Regarding feedlots, poultry, hog or dairy operations in active production as of the date of this amendment, any new construction required due to fire, natural disaster, or mandated upgrades will be allowed on the existing footprint of the operation. Expansion of the operation will be subject to setbacks in place at the time of this revision.

EXHIBIT B

ARTICLE IV. ZONING, DIVISION 5: SPECIAL USES AND PERMITS is amended to include the following:

Subdivision IV. Solar Energy System (SES) Special Use Permit

Sec. 22-334. Solar Energy System Special Use Permit

Any SES shall meet the following requirements in order for a SES Special Use Permit to be issued:

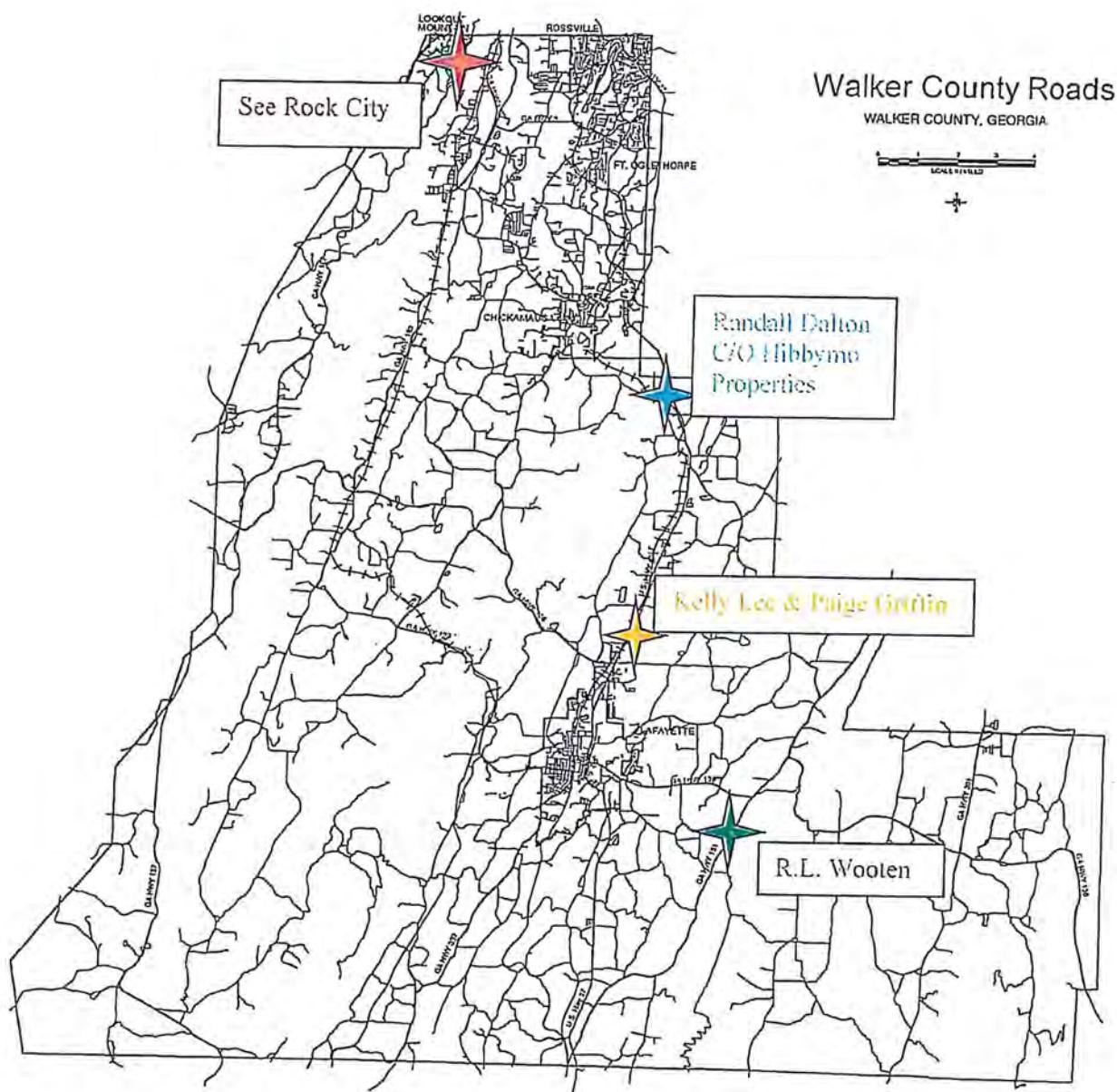
1. A SES shall be constructed on a minimum of three or more acres, but shall not cover more than 20% of any parcel.
2. A SES connected to the utility grid shall provide a "proof of concept letter" from the local utility company acknowledging the SES will be interconnected to the utility grid in order to sell electricity to the utility entity.
3. A SES shall be setback from the property line a minimum of 50-feet in every zoning district where allowed. A SES shall be encircled by a security fence or wall a minimum of 6-feet tall. Screening vegetation shall be provided outside the security fence.
4. A ground mounting plan and process must be submitted with the permit application to the county. The ground mounting plan may consist of standard solar manufacturer installation plans and processes for ground mounting.
5. Signage. The names of the manufacturers, installers, facility owners, and facility operators, and their addresses and phone numbers shall be posted on the required fencing at each entrance of a SES. In addition, signage shall include a 24-hour emergency contact phone number and state the risks that may result from contact with a SES. No advertising or other signage shall be allowed around the solar energy system, with the exception of educational material.
6. Glare and lighting. In order to prevent a glare that may constitute a nuisance to neighboring properties, all panels shall be constructed of non-reflective materials or shall be treated with an anti-reflective material. If lighting is required, it shall:
 - a. Be limited to the minimum reasonably necessary for safe operation;
 - b. Be directed downward where reasonably feasible;
 - c. Incorporate full cut-off fixtures; and
 - d. Reasonably utilize motion sensors.
7. The operation of the SES shall comply with the following:
 - a. Solar panels shall not be placed in the vicinity of any airport in a manner that would interfere with airport flight patterns. Acknowledgement from the Federal Aviation Administration may be necessary.
 - b. All power transmission lines from a ground mounted solar energy system shall be located underground after connection from the solar panel combiners to the interconnection point.

- c. Clearing of natural vegetation shall be limited to that which is necessary for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the ground mounted solar energy system and shall comply with the requirements of the county zoning code. Any disturbed land shall be stabilized by a permanent seeding of perennial vegetation, such as grass or other dense surface cover, that will protect the soil surface from eroding.
 - d. The applicant shall demonstrate that the proposal will not have an adverse effect on neighboring properties or endangered wildlife species.
- 8. A written emergency response plan is required for any SEC. The plan shall be approved by the county's planning department, fire department, and emergency management agency prior to start of operations. Each SES owner or operator shall update its emergency response plan no later than the first Monday in January of each year with a copy provided to all departments and agencies named in this subsection. The emergency response plan shall include the following:
 - a. The phone number, email address, and street address for all manufacturers, installers, owners, and operators.
 - b. The phone number, email address, and mailing address for a representative of the SES responsible for responding to public inquiries.
 - c. The material safety data sheets that apply to any materials on the SES.
 - d. Clearly marked means and instructions for authorized staff to shut down the SES.
 - e. A representative for the owner or operator should have a reasonable response to the location in the event of an emergency.
- 9. In addition to a Special Use Permit, an applicant wanting to construct a SES shall also apply for and meet all of the requirements for a building/development permit.
- 10. Decommissioning. Unless otherwise approved, decommissioning shall begin no later than 12 months after a SES has ceased to generate electricity:
 - a. The SES and all structures associated with it shall be removed and recycled or otherwise reused to the extent reasonably practicable, at the owner(s) or operators expense.
 - b. The SES site shall be restored to as natural condition as possible within six months of the removal.
 - c. All disturbed land shall be stabilized by a permanent seeding of perennial vegetation such as grass or other dense surface cover that will protect the soil surface from erosion, prevent sediment and runoff at the site.
 - d. Before any project breaks ground, there must be a solar decommission plan in place for the future.

Secs. 22-335—22-354. Reserved.

19.

This ordinance is effective immediately upon its adoption.



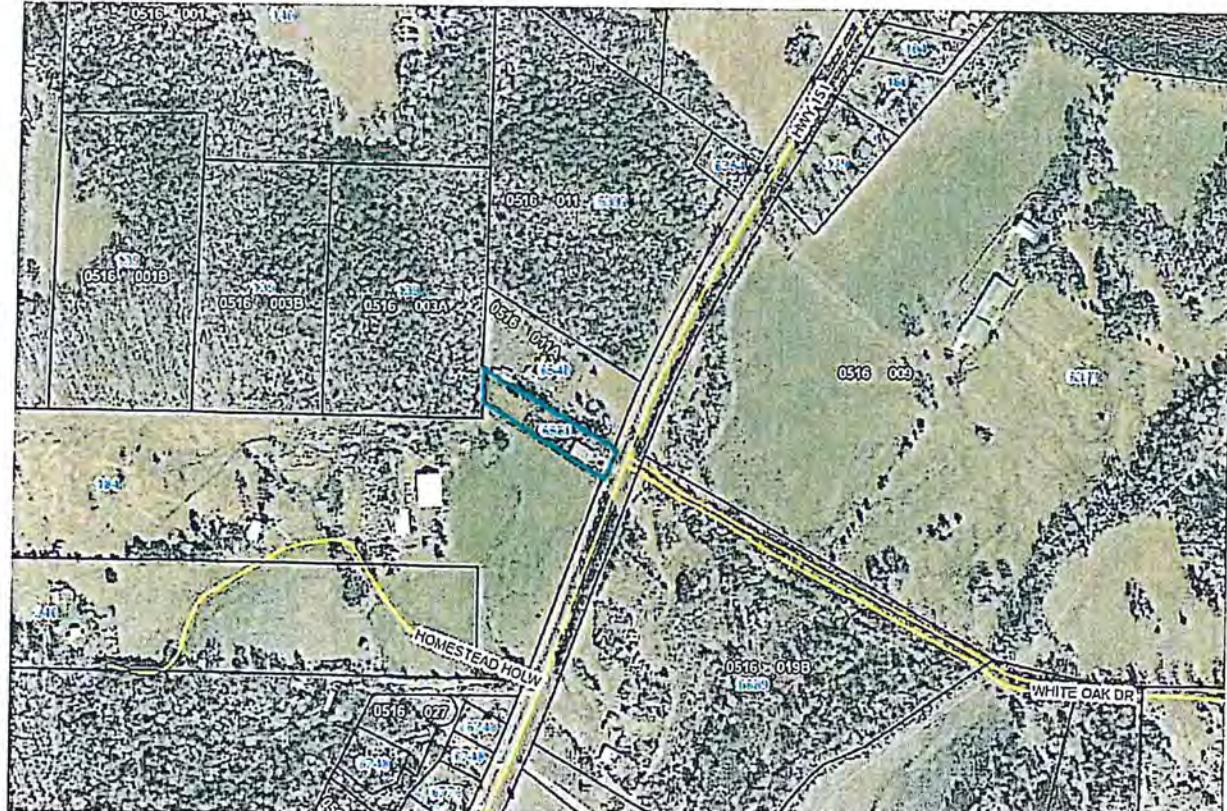
**WALKER COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA ITEM**

Owner: R.L. Wooten
Petitioner: Same
Location of
Property: 6560 Hwy 151
LaFayette, GA. 30728

Tax map & parcel number 0-516-012A

	PC Meeting Date:	11/21/2024
	Present Zoning:	A-1 (Agricultural)
APPLICANT'S INTENT:	Mr. Wooten has a potential buyer for the property that would like to have his diesel repair shop on the property. The property is 1.09 acres.	
DETAILS OF REQUEST:	Same as above	

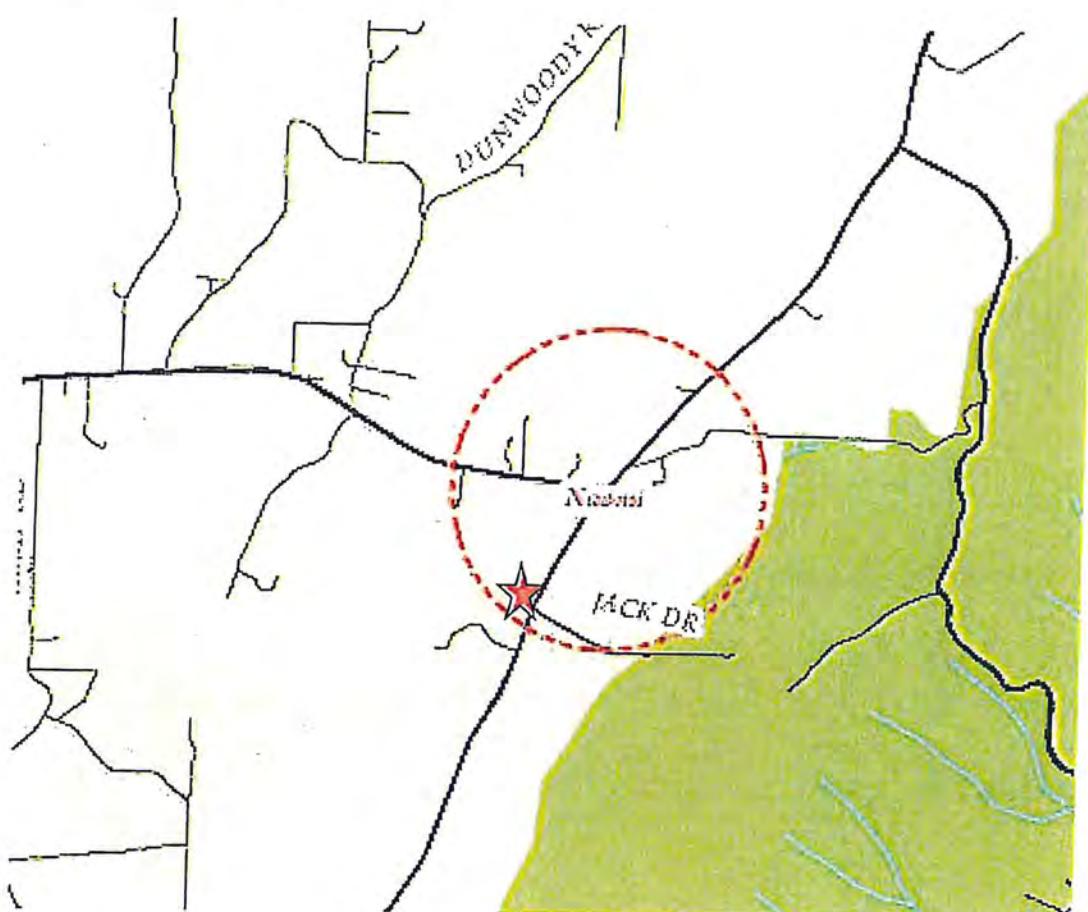
Projected Area:



Zoning Map:



Future Land Use Map:



— Roads + Railroads { Lakes & Ponds] Crossroad Community
 — Highways Rivers & Streams [City Limits

Character Areas

Activity Center	Downtown Mixed Use	Historic Mill Redevelopment Area	Residential Redevelopment Area
Activity Destination District	Estate Residential	Industrial	Rural Residential
Agriculture / Forestry	Fairyland Proper	Lookout Mountain Neighborhood	School
Airport	Gateway Corridor	Mill Village	Taxon Center
County Suburban	Greenspace / Conservation Area	Missionary Ridge Residential	Traditional Neighborhood
Downtown Business District	Historic Downtown	Mixed Use	



Figure 50. Villanow Community, Walker County Georgia

Crossroads Community: Chickamauga and Walker County

Description: Rural unincorporated historic communities located at the intersection of main thoroughfares. Crossroad Communities contains a mixture of uses, such as single family residential and commercial, but public/institution activities, such as a fire department. These locations are typically automobile focused, lacking infrastructure needed for pedestrian mobility. Commercial retail in these locations often provides household goods and groceries. Other activities often include local retail services

Suggested Development Strategy:

1. Provide incentives or revise local development regulations for beautification, landscaping, and signage.
2. Provide needed infrastructure to support additional commercial activities and residential development at the Crossroads Community, preventing fragmenting the surrounding rural landscape. Infrastructure improvements may include high speed internet, water and sewerage, and sidewalks.
3. Encourage small retail establishments over big box stores.
4. Permit conservation subdivision designs that protect nearby open space.
5. Whenever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-vehicular means of transportation.

Land uses:

- Commercial
- Residential
- Public/Institutional

Key Word Objectives: Main throughfares intersections, Local retail commercial, Residential, Cluster or conservation subdivision, new infrastructure, improved infrastructure, pedestrian friendly, Sense of place, Trails.

Sec. 22-148. Allowable and prohibited uses.

Allowable uses within each land use district are as follows:

Land Use	Land Use District									
	A-1	R-A	R-1	R-2	R-3	CBOD	C-1	CN	I	PUD
Residential	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	P	A
Institutional	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Outdoor recreational	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	A
Professional service and office	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	A
Neighborhood commercial	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A
General commercial	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	A
Public service	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A
Utilities	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Low intensity agriculture	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	P	P	P
General agriculture	A	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
Silvicultural	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	A
Industrial	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
Mining	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P

Notes:

A—Allowed use, must meet all applicable development and compatibility standards.
P—Prohibited use

(Code 2005, § 34-235; Ord. of 7-20-1994, § 3.04; Ord. of 1-29-2009(2), § 34-235)

Sec. 22-147. - Specific uses allowed

(6) General commercial. A wide variety of general commercial, commercial recreational, entertainment and related activities is included in this group of uses. All uses are subject to approval by authorities involved in the type of development or use proposed, such as Environmental Health Services, Emergency Services, Georgia DOT, etc. Examples include professional and office uses listed in subsection (b)(4) of this section, as well as the following specific uses, and all substantially similar types of uses:

y. Vehicle sales, rental, service and repair, including truck stops, body shops, road services, car wash facilities and the sale, rental, repair and service of new or used automobiles, boats, buses, farm equipment, motorcycles, trucks, recreational vehicles and mobile homes.

CONSIDERATION OF ZONING CRITERIA

1. Existing land uses and zoning of nearby property: The zoning of the nearby property is currently zoned A-1 (Agricultural)
2. Suitability of the subject property for the zone purposed: No
3. Extent to which property values of the subject property are diminished by the particular zoning restrictions: Unknown
4. The extent to which the destruction of property values of the subject property promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public: None that we know of.
5. Relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner: No gain to the public
6. Whether the subject property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned: Yes
7. Length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the vicinity of the property: The tax records show the property has been owned by Mr. Wooten since 2012.
8. Whether the proposed zoning will be a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property: No.
9. Whether the proposed zoning will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property: Unknown
10. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan: The Future Land Use Map shows Crossroads Community.
11. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools: Unknown.
12. Whether there is other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal: This property has always been zoned as agricultural but had a garage building built on it in 2002. The property is surrounded by agricultural property.

WALKER COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA ITEM

Owner: See Rock City

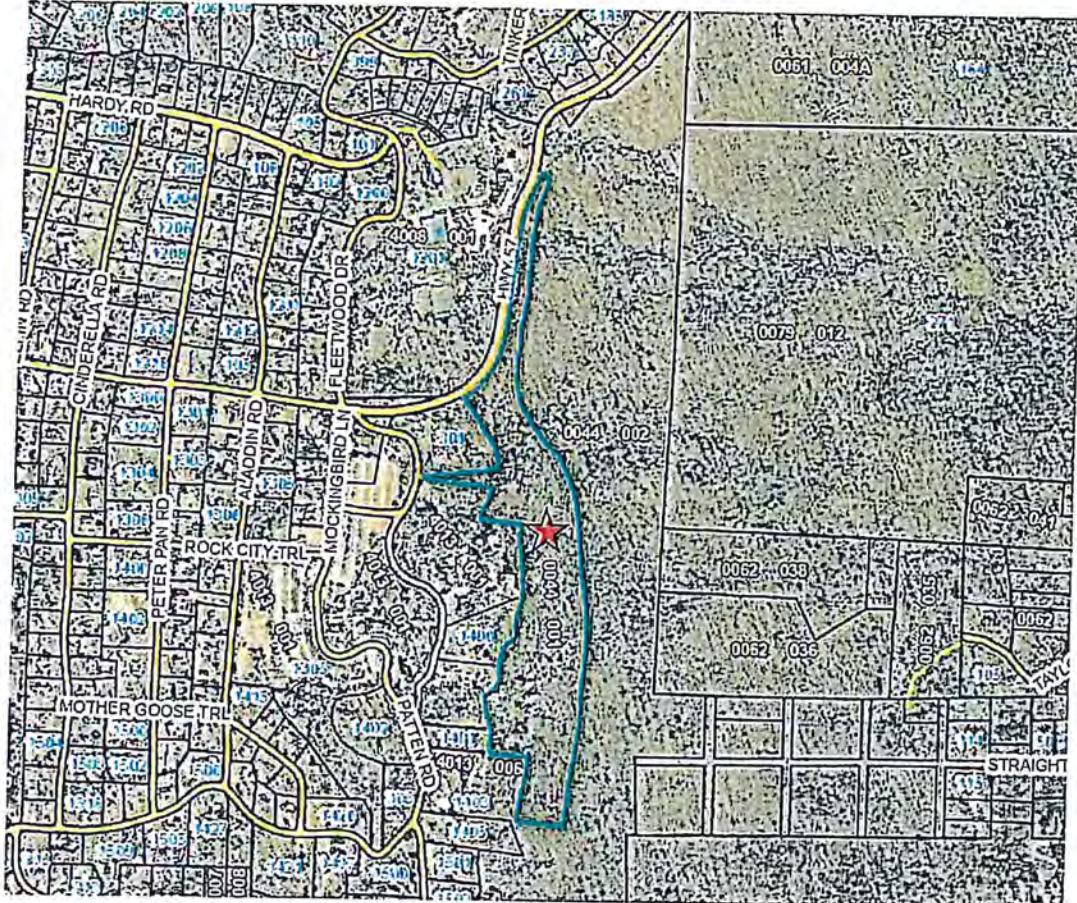
Petitioner: Doug Chapin

Location of
Property: 0 Hwy 157
Lookout Mountain, GA. 30750

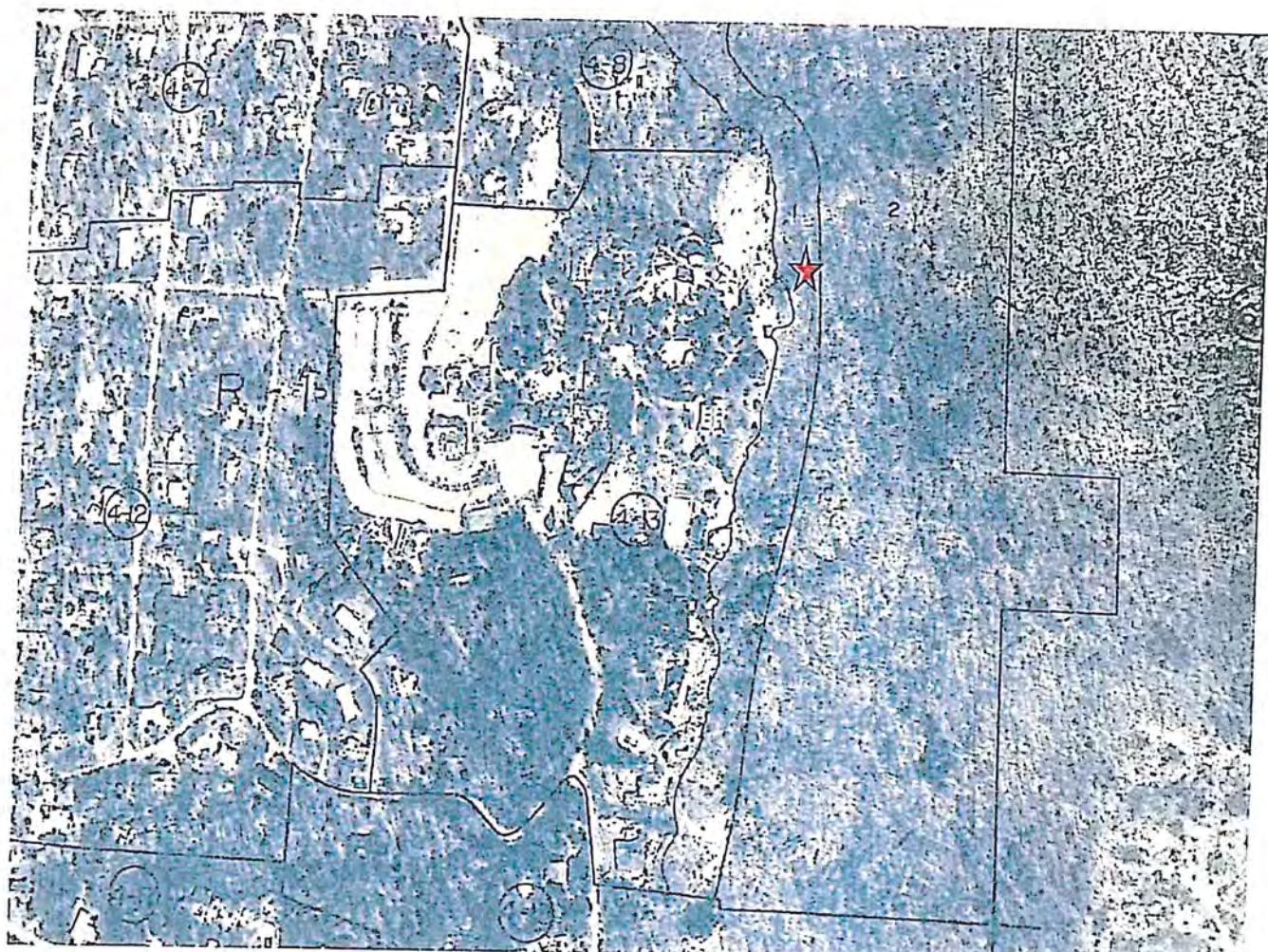
Tax map & parcel number 0-044-001

	PC Meeting Date:	11/21/2024
	Present Zoning:	R-1 (Residential)
APPLICANT'S INTENT:	To change zoning to allow for trail expansion.	
DETAILS OF REQUEST:	Same as above	

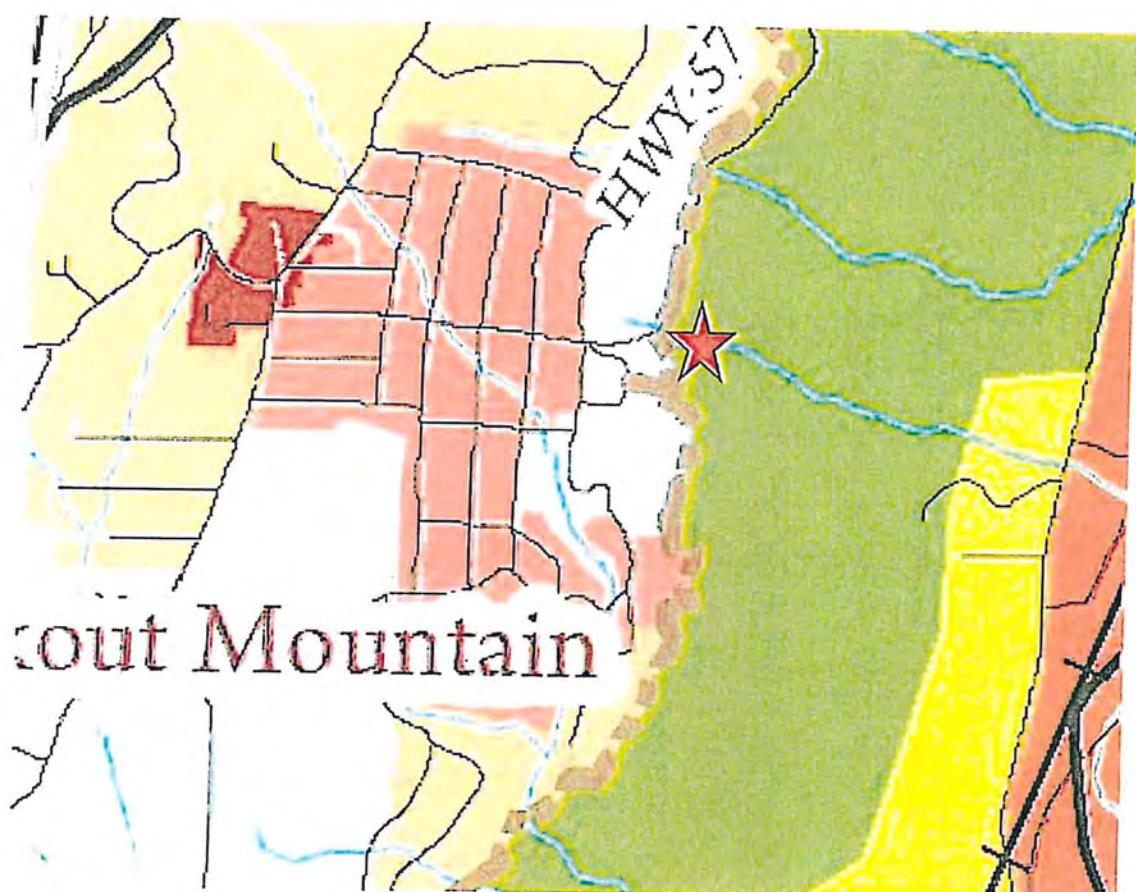
Projected Area:



Zoning Map:



Future Land Use Map:



— Roads —+— Railroads — Lakes & Ponds —+— Crossroad Community
— Highways — Rivers & Streams —+— City Limits

Character Areas

Activity Center	Downtown Mixed Use	Historic Mill Redevelopment Area	Residential Redevelopment Area
Activity Destination District	Estate Residential	Industrial	Rural Residential
Agriculture / Forestry	Fairfield Proper	Lookout Mountain Neighborhood	School
Airport	Gateway Corridor	Mill Village	Town Center
County Suburban	Greenspace / Conservation Area	Missionary Ridge Residential	Traditional Neighborhood
Downtown Business District	Historic Downtown	Mixed Use	



Figure 49. Old Mineral Springs Road

Greenspace/Conservation: Chickamauga, LaFayette, and Walker County

Description: These are undeveloped or sparsely developed lands more suitable for environmental protections, e.g. scenic views, steep slopes where development unsustainable, floodplains, wetlands, and wildlife management areas. Example locations within Walker County are Crockford-Pigeon Mountain Wildlife Management Areas, Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Lula Land Trust, and Zahnd Wildlife Management Area.

Suggested Development Strategy:

1. Promote passive-use tourism and recreational activities, e.g. hiking, biking, hunting, and fishing.
2. Invest in infrastructure that promotes recreational activities in hiking, biking, hunting, and fishing.
3. When appropriate, apply for and promote the purchasing of conservation easements.
4. Public investments in new park creation.
5. Public investments in park maintenance.

Land uses:

- Parks/Recreation/Conservation

Key Word Objectives: Recreational activities, Open space preservation, Regional cooperation, private investments, Park creation, Park maintenance

CONSIDERATION OF ZONING CRITERIA

1. Existing land uses and zoning of nearby property: The zoning of the nearby property is currently zoned R-1 (Residential)
2. Suitability of the subject property for the zone purposed: Yes
3. Extent to which property values of the subject property are diminished by the particular zoning restrictions: Unknown
4. The extent to which the destruction of property values of the subject property promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public: None that we know of.
5. Relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner: Expansion of Rock City
6. Whether the subject property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned: Yes
7. Length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the vicinity of the property: The tax records show the property has been owned by Rock City since 1985.
8. Whether the proposed zoning will be a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property: Yes.
9. Whether the proposed zoning will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property: Unknown
10. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan: The Future Land Use Map shows Greenspace/Conservation.
11. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools. No.
12. Whether there is other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal: This will be a trail expansion for Rock City

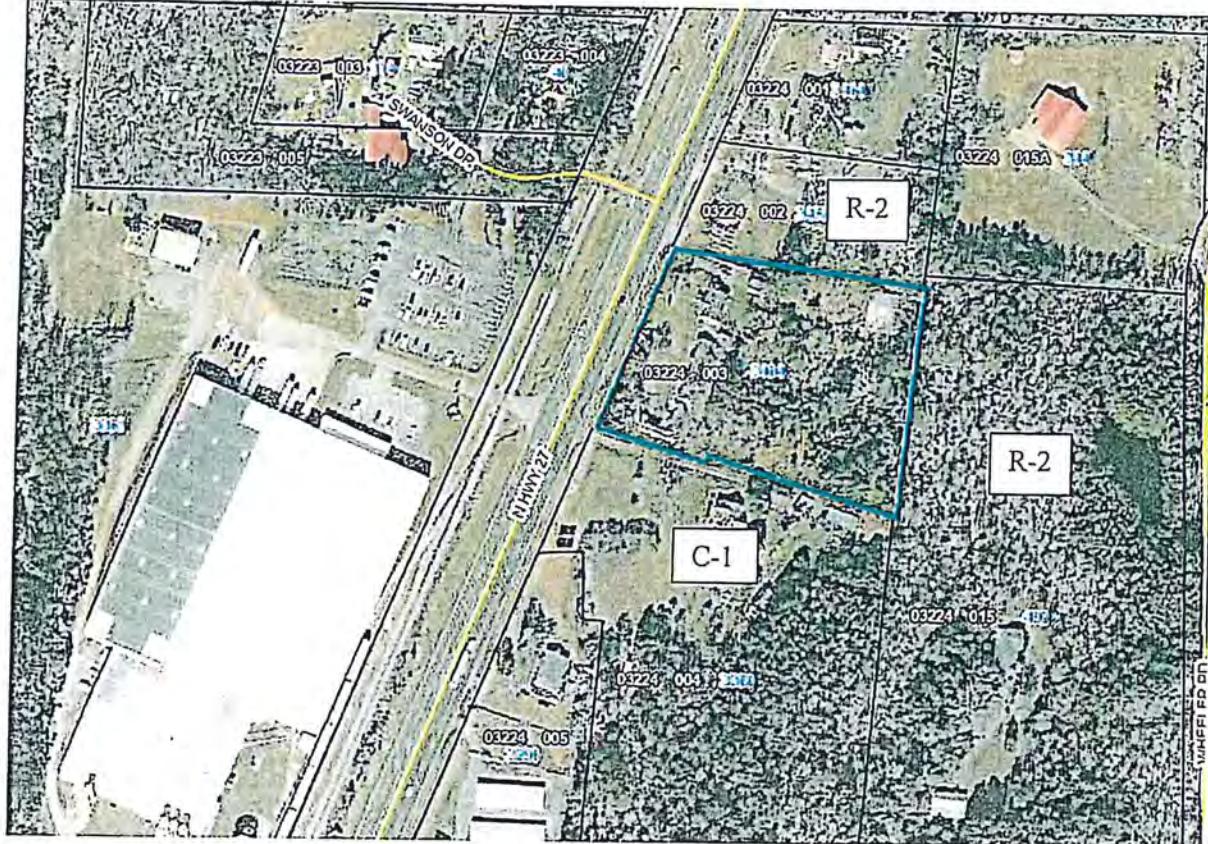
WALKER COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA ITEM

Owner: Kelly Lee & Paige Griffin
Petitioner: same
Location of Property: 3404 N. Hwy 27
LaFayette, GA. 30728

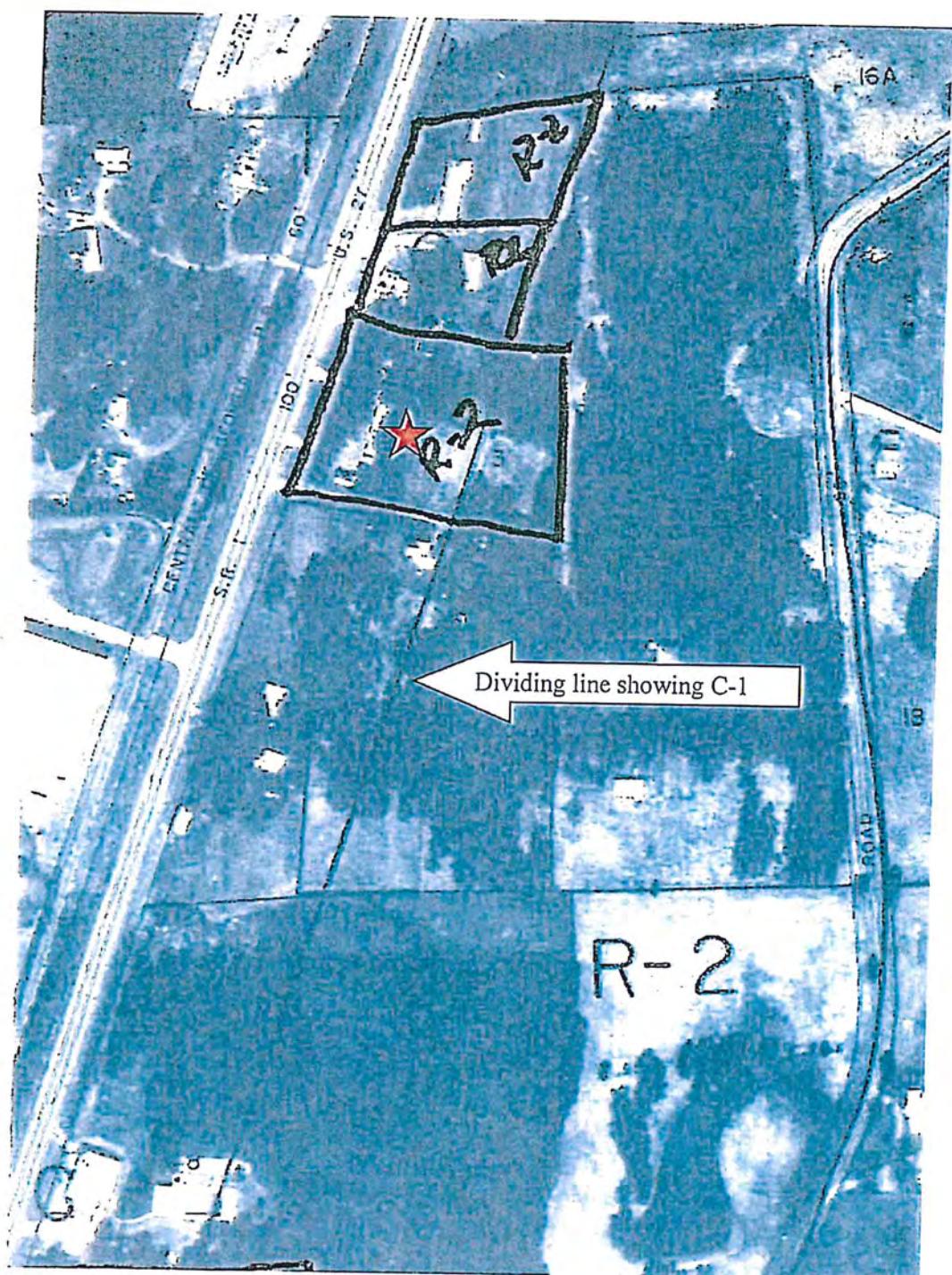
Tax map & parcel number 0-322-4-003

	PC Meeting Date:	11/21/2024
	Present Zoning:	R-2 (Residential)
APPLICANT'S INTENT:	Would like to rezone the property back to commercial. This property is where the old Pine Motel sits.	
DETAILS OF REQUEST:	Same as above	

Projected Area:



Zoning Map:



Future Land Use Map:

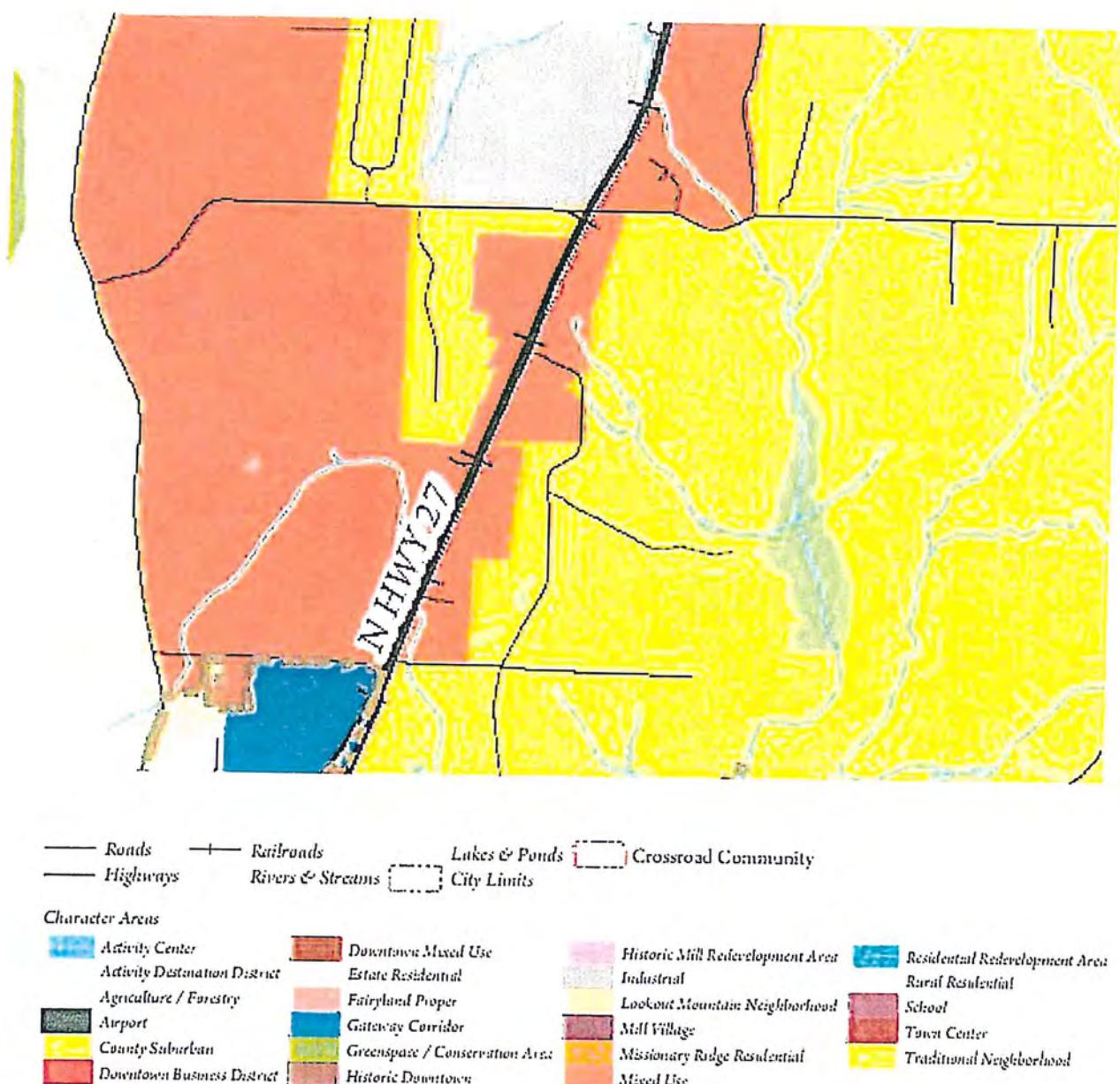




Figure G3. Fieldstone Farms Mixed Use Planned Unit Development – Phase I

Mixed use: LaFayette and Walker County

Description: A location containing mix of offices, housing, and commercial uses. This mix of uses may consist of single and/or multi story buildings. Often multi story buildings contains retail or office space on the first story. Additional floors of any building often contain a separate use to that of the first floor.

Suggested Development Strategy:

1. Provide design guidelines for stores and offices. These guidelines may be for building design, landscaping, regulatory setbacks, parking, stormwater, and etc.
2. Create a plan for the vision, upkeep, growth, and development of the mixed-use area. Creating a plan will help provide an identity to the area and attract appropriate businesses.
3. Improve water and sewer services to attract new growth and to meet future needs.
4. Improve broadband availability, including upload and download speed.
5. Infill vacant lots or underutilized property, improving overall aesthetics of the area.
6. Provide environmental protections to nearby streams and other waterbodies.
7. Provide protections to historic and cultural resources of the area so they will not be lost
8. Provide public investments into storm water management, community recreational spaces and facilities, public transit, bike and pedestrian facilities.
9. Make available pocket parks with seating.
10. Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails that are available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-vehicular means of transportation.
11. Cluster new buildings so to improve pedestrian access and walkability to different surrounding uses.
12. Invest in infrastructure improvements to roads and sidewalks, increasing pedestrian mobility and safety.

Land uses:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Office
- Public/Institutional

Key Word Objectives: Office space, Commercial retail, Local retail, Residential, Parks, Infill development, Design guidelines, Infrastructure investments, Sewer and Water infrastructure, Road and Sidewalk improvements, walkability, Broadband availability

CONSIDERATION OF ZONING CRITERIA

1. Existing land uses and zoning of nearby property: The zoning of the nearby property is currently zoned R-2 (Residential) & C-1 (Commercial)
2. Suitability of the subject property for the zone purposed: Yes
3. Extent to which property values of the subject property are diminished by the particular zoning restrictions: Unknown
4. The extent to which the destruction of property values of the subject property promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public: None that we know of.
5. Relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner: Would add more commercial property along Hwy 27
6. Whether the subject property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned: Yes
7. Length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the vicinity of the property: The tax records show the property has been owned by the Griffins since 1969.
8. Whether the proposed zoning will be a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property: Yes.
9. Whether the proposed zoning will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property: Unknown
10. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policies and intent of the Comprehensive Plan: The Future Land Use Map shows Mixed Use.
11. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools: Unknown.
12. Whether there is other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal: This property is where the old Pine Motel sits and was rezoned from commercial to residential back in 2002. They are now wanting to sell the property as commercial, so they are requesting the rezone back to C-1. It does touch C-1 to the south.

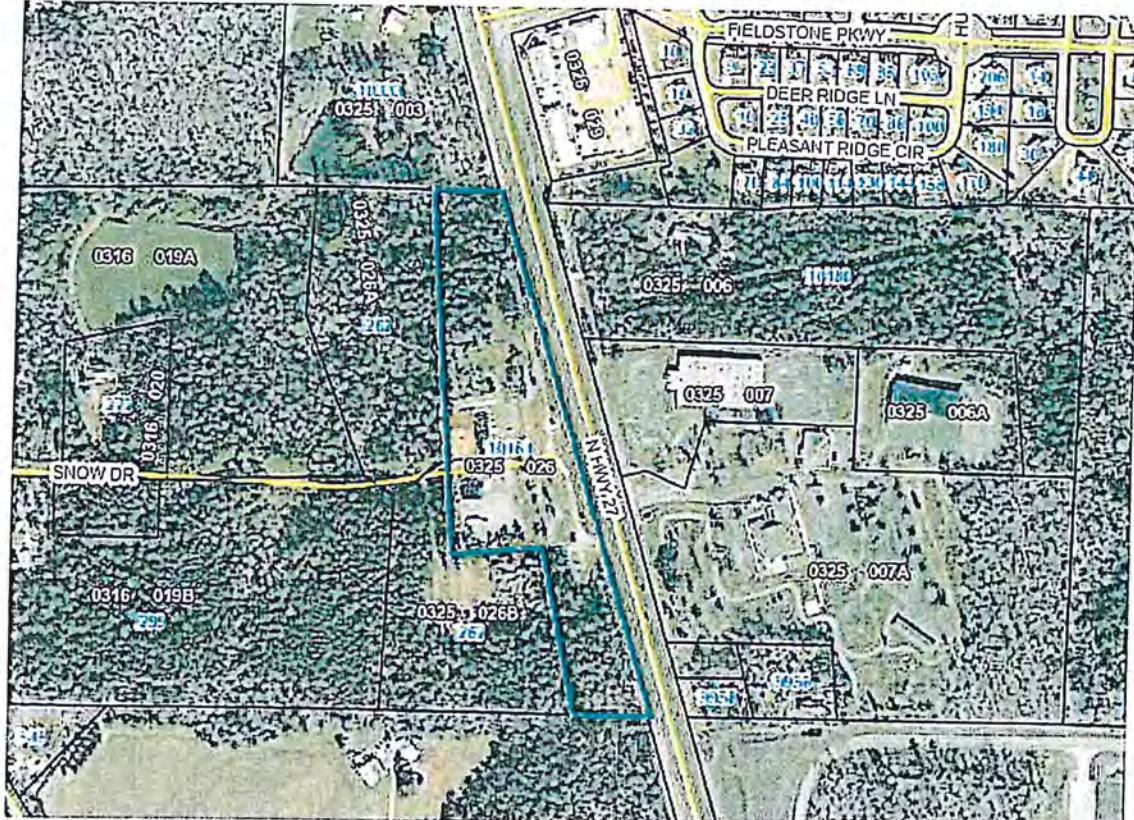
WALKER COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA ITEM

Owner: Randal Dalton
Petitioner: Hibbymo Properties
Location of
Property: 10161 N. Hwy 27
Rock Spring, GA. 30739

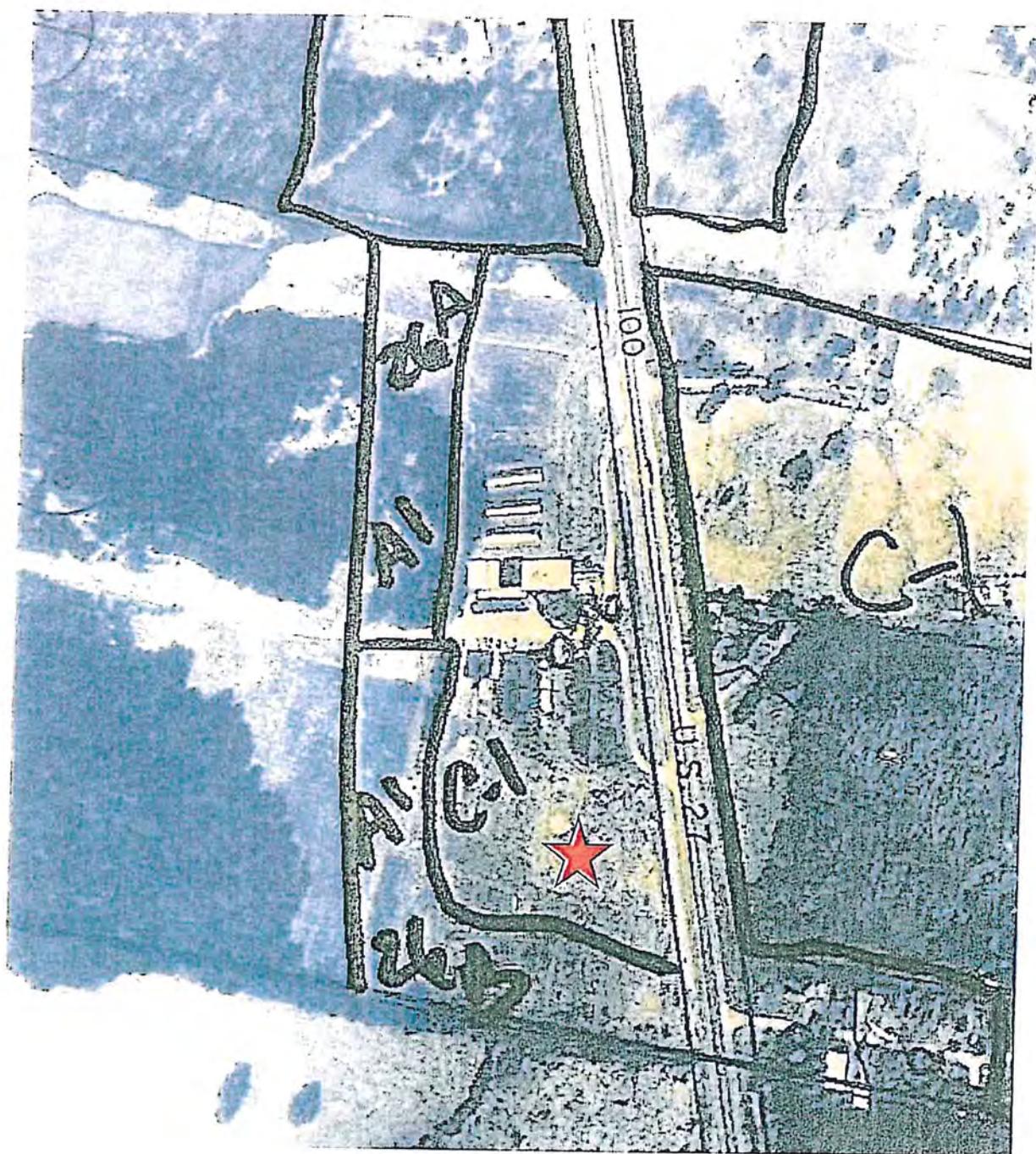
Tax map & parcel number 0-325-026

	PC Meeting Date:	11/21/2024
	Present Zoning:	C-1 (Commercial)
APPLICANT'S INTENT:	Requesting a variance on the number of required parking spaces	
DETAILS OF REQUEST:	Hibbymo properties is requesting a variance on the number of required parking spaces from 53 to 35.	

Projected Area:

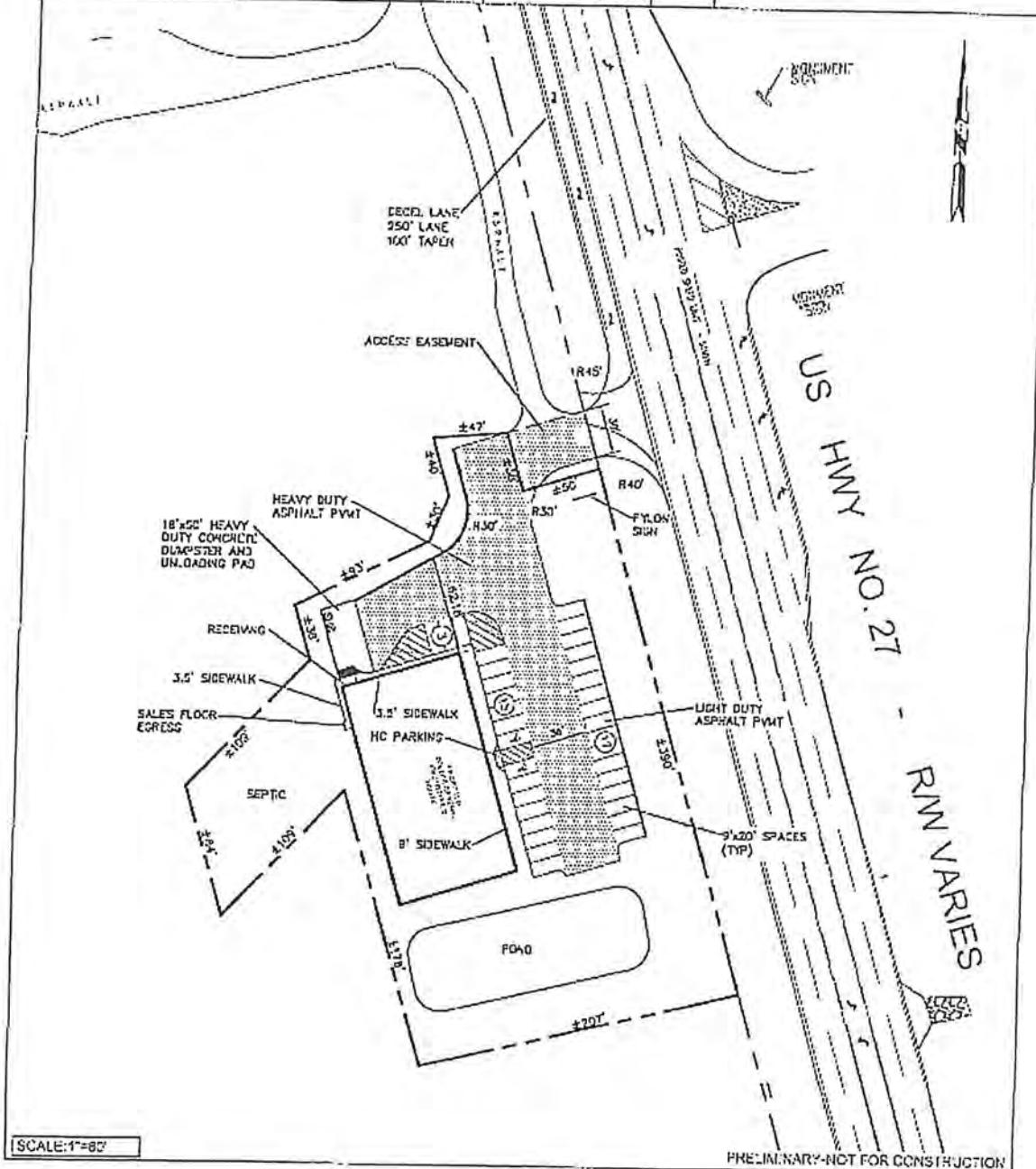


Zoning Map:

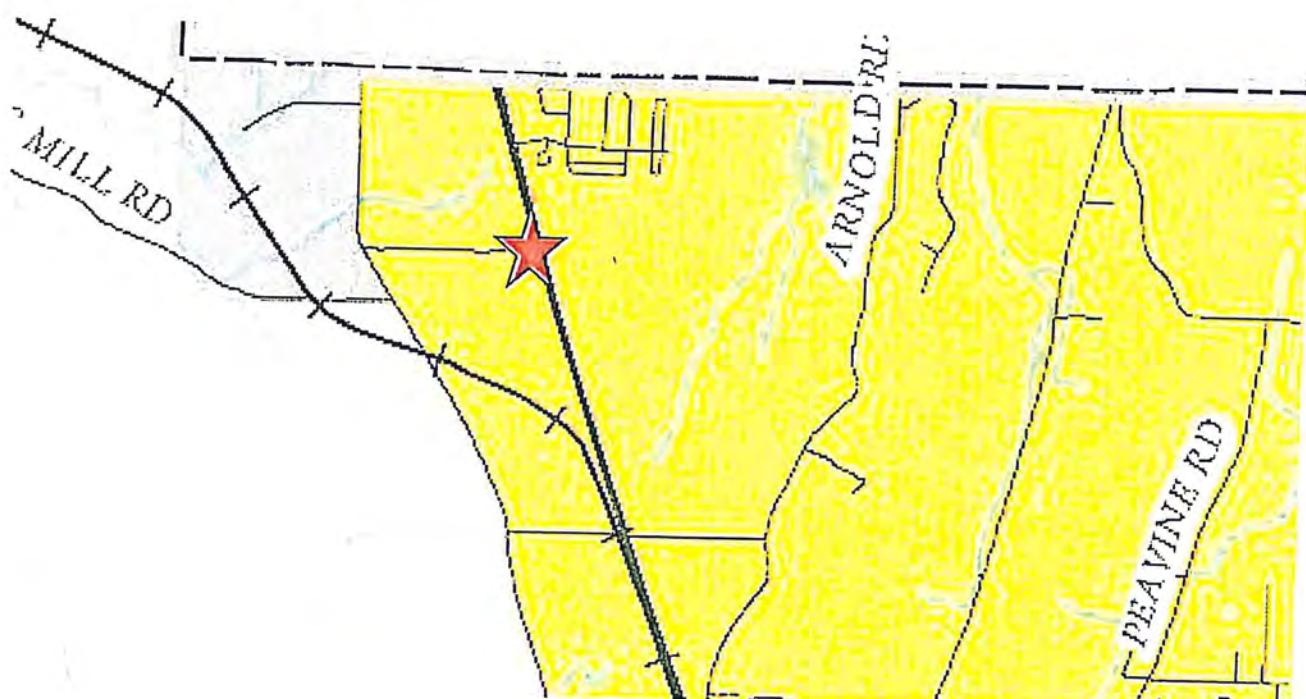


PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN		CITY/STATE - ROBERT US Hwy 27 - Walker County, GA	
PROTOTYPE:	D	DEVELOPER	DESIGNER
BLOCK/ACRES SF:	12,140 SF/ACRES	COMPANY:	Housing Properties
ACR/BLDG:	± 1.77	NAME:	Bobby Howell
PARKING SPACES:	35	PHONE #:	(404) 935-0022

EXHIBIT B1



Future Land Use Map:



— Roads + Railroads Lakes & Ponds [---] Crossroad Community
 — Highways Rivers & Streams [----] City Limits

Character Areas

Activity Center	Downtown Mixed Use	Historic Mill Redevelopment Area	Residential Redevelopment Area
Activity Destination District	Estate Residential	Industrial	Rural Residential
Agriculture / Forestry	Fairytale Proper	Lookout Mountain Neighborhood	School
Airport	Gateway Corridor	Mill Village	Town Center
County Suburban	Greenspace / Conservation Area	Missionary Ridge Residential	Traditional Neighborhood
Downtown Business District	Historic Downtown	Mixed Use	



Figure 52. Residential development in the Mountain View area

County Suburban: Walker County

Description: Location of predominately Post-WWII residential single family housing within subdivided parcels of large amounts of open space. County suburban housing is often found in proximity of public water. These locations are characterized by low pedestrian mobility, little or no transit, a high amount of open space, and a high to moderate degree of residential building separation. Smaller retail establishments may be found in these locations also. Public institutional uses may be found at these locations in the form of fire departments, public school, recreational facilities, and ect.

Suggested Development Strategy:

1. Provide only limited planned expansion of water and sewer infrastructure so to control the rate of growth.
2. Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails made available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-vehicular means of transportation.
3. Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the desired, local character, and do not include "franchise" or "corporate" architecture.
4. Discourage tourist-based industries
5. Permit conservation subdivisions, accessory housing units, and well-designed multifamily residences to increase neighborhood density versus traditional suburban development
6. Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, street trees, and increased street interconnection to improve walkability and slow traffic within existing neighborhood.

Land uses:

- Single family residential
- Commercial
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional

Key Word Objectives: Post- WWII housing, Subdivision, Building separation, Limited commercial, Public Water, Open space, Recreation, Conservation, Traditional neighborhood, Sense of place, Alternative multimodal transportation, regional identity, Heritage Preservation, Infill development, Open space preservation, Environmental protection

Sec. 22-185. Off-street automobile parking and storage.

- (a) Off-street automobile parking or storage space shall be provided on every lot on which any of the uses as set forth in the table in subsection (d) of this section are established. Such automobile parking or storage space shall be provided with vehicular access to a street or alley and shall be equal in area to at least the minimum requirements for the specific use as set forth below. Each off-street parking space shall be at least 8 feet 6 inches wide and 18 feet deep.
- (b) If the required automobile parking or storage space cannot be provided on the same lot on which the principal use is located, the Board of Appeals may permit such space to be provided on other off-street property, provided such space is within 500 feet of such principal use. Such space shall be associated with the permitted use and shall not thereafter be reduced or encroached upon in any manner.
- (c) All off-street automobile parking and storage space in residential districts shall be arranged so that vehicles will not be required to back onto a major or arterial street, road or highway when leaving the premises.
- (d) Off-street automobile parking and storage space shall be provided as follows:

Off-Street Parking and Storage

<i>Use Classifications</i>	<i>Minimum Requirements</i>
Single-family residential structures	2 spaces for each dwelling unit
Two-family and multifamily residential structures	2 spaces for each dwelling unit
Rooming house and boardinghouse	1 space for each rental unit
Churches, synagogues, and other places of worship	1 space for each 4 seats in the main assembly room
Tourist homes, tourist courts, or motels	1 space for each guest accommodation
Hospitals, nursing homes, and similar institutions	1 space for each 2 beds intended for patients, plus 1 space for each employee at maximum employment on a single shift
Retail businesses	1 space for each 200 square feet of total floor area
Service stations	3 spaces for each grease rack or similar facility, plus 1 space for each 250 square feet of total floor area
Mortuaries and funeral parlors	1 space for each 4 seats in the chapel, 1 additional space for each 2 employees, 1 additional space for each resident family, and 1 additional space for each funeral vehicle
Restaurants and similar eating establishments	1 space for each 2 seats provided for patron use and 1 additional space for each 2 employees
Wholesaling	1 space for each employee
Industrial	1 space for each employee at maximum employment on a single shift, with additional space for shift change



ORDINANCE O-01b-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 22 OF THE CODE OF WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA REGARDING LAND DEVELOPMENT; TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; TO REPEAL ANY AND ALL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND PARTS OF ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY; AND TO PROVIDE FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, Walker County desires to amend its Land Development Code to provide clarity regarding certain zoning matters, poultry operations, solar energy systems, and mobile homes, among other topics; and

WHEREAS, on November 14, 2024, Walker County adopted Sections 1-11 and Sections 16-18 of O-01-24 to amend its Land Development Code; and

WHEREAS, Walker County tabled Sections 12-15 to be considered following a Planning Commission work session; and

WHEREAS, Planning Commission recommendations have been incorporated into this document;

THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County that the Code of Walker County, Georgia is amended as follows:

12.

ARTICLE IV. ZONING, DIVISION 2: DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT REGULATIONS; Section 22-156 – 178 is amended as follows:

Sec. 22-156. Poultry Operations.

- (a) A waste storage facility/stack house is subject to the same buffer/setbacks as a poultry house: 200-feet from the property line. Reciprocal buffer/setbacks apply from new residences proposed adjacent to existing poultry operations utilizing a waste storage facility: 200-feet from the property line / 400-feet from an existing waste facility. The farm owner/operator or a residence provided to employees shall be exempt from setback requirements.

~~Secs. 22-156 – 22-178. Reserved.~~

~~Secs. 22-157—22-178. Reserved.~~

13.

ARTICLE IV. ZONING, DIVISION 3: SITE IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS; Section 22-181 table is amended as follows:

					<i>Front Setback from State and Federal Highways (ft)</i>	
--	--	--	--	--	---	--



						<i>Federal Highway right of way (ft)</i>	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

14.

ARTICLE IV. ZONING, DIVISION 3: SITE IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS; Section 22-184(e) – (h) is deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

- (c) ~~A 400-foot buffer is required between the A-1 Agriculture District and property zoned R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1 or CN. The buffer area shall be measured from the property line from which the buffer is required, and such buffer may be used for general or low intensity agricultural purposes, but may not be used for a feedlot, poultry, hog and dairy operations.~~
- (e) A buffer or setback of at least 400-feet is required between the A-1 Agriculture District and property zones R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1 and C-N. The measurement shall be from the property line to the nearest point of the feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation. Such buffer/setback may be used for general or low intensity agricultural purposes. A buffer of at least 200-feet with adequate woody vegetative measures installed, if not existing, will be required in A-1 zones. The measurement shall be from the property line to the nearest point of the feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation. Such buffer/setback may be used for general or low intensity agricultural processes.
- (f) ~~A buffer of at least 400 feet shall be required and maintained from any residential or commercial structure to the nearest point at which a feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation is taking place within an A-1 district. The buffer will be maintained by the owner of the land used for a feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operations; however, said buffer can be used for other general and low intensity agricultural uses. Buffer requirements under this subsection are applicable where the residential or commercial structure is in existence prior to the construction of the feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation.~~
- (f) A buffer or setback of at least 400-feet shall be required and maintained from any residential or commercial structure to the nearest point at which a feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation is taking place, within an A-1 district. The buffer/setback can be used for **other general and low intensity agricultural uses. The farm operator/owner's or a residence provided to employees shall be exempt from setback requirements.**
- (g) ~~In the event a screen, wall, fence, planted dividing strip or any other type of buffer is required by this article for any use, such screen, wall, or other buffer will be subjected to periodic inspections by the Office of Planning and Enforcement to determine that such required wall, fence, etc., is being properly maintained. Failure to maintain such required wall, fence, etc., to an acceptable standard may be deemed a violation of this section.~~
- (g) A buffer or setback of 400-feet will be required from a new residence to an adjoining existing feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation structure or 200-feet from the property line. A 200-foot minimum setback will be required from the centerline of the road to the nearest point of a new feedlot, poultry, hog or dairy operation.
- (h) In the event a screen, wall, fence, planted dividing strip or any other type of buffer **(hereinafter referred to as "Buffer") is required by this article, for any use, the Buffer shall be subjected to periodic inspections by the County Office of Planning and Enforcement to determine that the Buffer is being properly maintained. Failure to properly maintain the Buffer to an acceptable standard may be deemed a violation of this section.**
- (i) Property line setbacks may be waived between family members deeding property to family members to the third degree for the purpose of constructing production facilities. Property line and residence setbacks to neighboring A-1 properties shall remain as aforementioned.
- (j) Regarding feedlots, poultry, hog or dairy operations in active production as of the date of this amendment, any new construction required due to fire, natural disaster or mandated upgrades will be allowed on the existing footprint of the operation. Expansion of the operation will be subject to setbacks in place at the time of this amendment.



15.

ARTICLE IV. ZONING, DIVISION 5: SPECIAL USES AND PERMITS is amended to include the following:

Subdivision IV. Solar Energy System (SES) Special Use Permit

Sec. 22-334. Solar Energy System Special Use Permit

Any SES shall meet the following requirements in order for a SES Special Use Permit to be issued:

1. A SES shall be constructed on a minimum of three or more acres, but shall not cover more than 20% of any parcel.
2. A SES connected to the utility grid shall provide a "proof of concept letter" from the local utility company acknowledging the SES will be interconnected to the utility grid in order to sell electricity to the utility entity.
3. A SES shall only be allowed in a C-1 or I zone and shall be setback from the property line a minimum of 50-feet 500-feet on all sides. ~~in every zoning district where allowed~~. A SES shall be encircled by a security fence or wall a minimum of 6-feet tall. Screening vegetation shall be provided outside the security fence.
4. A ground mounting plan and process must be submitted with the permit application to the county. The ground mounting plan may consist of standard solar manufacturer installation plans and processes for ground mounting.
5. Signage. The names of the manufacturers, installers, facility owners, and facility operators, and their addresses and phone numbers shall be posted on the required fencing at each entrance of a SES. In addition, signage shall include a 24-hour emergency contact phone number and state the risks that may result from contact with a SES. No advertising or other signage shall be allowed around the solar energy system, with the exception of educational material. No illuminated signage shall be permitted.
6. Glare and lighting. In order to prevent a glare that may constitute a nuisance to neighboring properties, all panels shall be constructed of non-reflective materials or shall be treated with an anti-reflective material. If lighting is required, it shall:
 - a. Be limited to the minimum reasonably necessary for safe operation;
 - b. Be directed downward where reasonably feasible;
 - c. Incorporate full cut-off fixtures; and
 - d. Reasonably utilize motion sensors.
7. The operation of the SES shall comply with the following:
 - a. Solar panels shall not be placed in the vicinity of any airport in a manner that would interfere with airport flight patterns. Acknowledgement from the Federal Aviation Administration may be necessary.



- b. All power transmission lines from a ground mounted solar energy system shall be located underground after connection from the solar panel combiners to the interconnection point.
 - c. Clearing of natural vegetation shall be limited to that which is necessary for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the ground mounted solar energy system and shall comply with the requirements of the county zoning code. Any disturbed land shall be stabilized by a permanent seeding of perennial vegetation, such as grass or other dense surface cover, that will protect the soil surface from eroding.
 - d. The applicant shall demonstrate that the proposal will not have an adverse effect on neighboring properties or endangered wildlife species.
8. A written emergency response plan is required for any SEC. The plan shall be approved by the county's planning department, fire department, and emergency management agency prior to start of operations. Each SES owner or operator shall update its emergency response plan no later than the first Monday in January of each year with a copy provided to all departments and agencies named in this subsection. The emergency response plan shall include the following:
 - a. The phone number, email address, and street address for all manufacturers, installers, owners, and operators.
 - b. The phone number, email address, and mailing address for a representative of the SES responsible for responding to public inquiries.
 - c. The material safety data sheets that apply to any materials on the SES.
 - d. Clearly marked means and instructions for authorized staff to shut down the SES.
 - e. A representative for the owner or operator should have a reasonable response to the location in the event of an emergency.
9. In addition to a Special Use Permit, an applicant wanting to construct a SES shall also apply for and meet all of the requirements for a building/development permit.
10. Decommissioning. Unless otherwise approved, decommissioning shall begin no later than 12 months after a SES has ceased to generate electricity:
 - a. The SES and all structures associated with it shall be removed and recycled or otherwise reused to the extent reasonably practicable, at the owner(s) or operators expense.
 - b. The SES site shall be restored to as natural condition as possible within six months of the removal.
 - c. All disturbed land shall be stabilized by a permanent seeding of perennial vegetation such as grass or other dense surface cover that will protect the soil surface from erosion, prevent sediment and runoff at the site.
 - d. Before any project breaks ground, there must be a solar decommission plan in place for the future.
 - e. A bond for decommissioning will be required every 12 months for site clean-up.

Secs. 22-335—22-354. Reserved.



20.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

21.

If any section, clause, sentence, or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

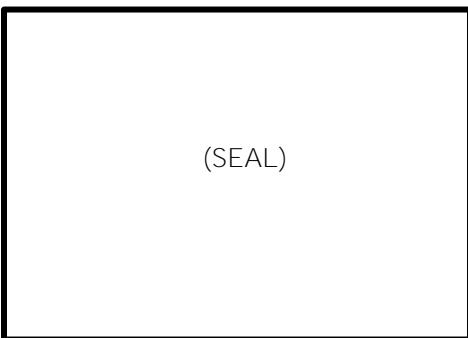
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

Jessica Staton, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Ordinance received a motion for approval from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.



ORDINANCE O-03-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 6 OF THE CODE OF WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA REGARDING ANIMALS; TO PROVIDE FOR SPAY/NEUTER AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR CATS AND DOGS; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY AND OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is the governing authority for Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Walker County desires to address the growing number of unwanted animals in our community; and

WHEREAS, Walker County desires to amend its Animals Code to provide for spay/neuter requirements for cats and dogs;

THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County that Chapter 6 of the Code of Walker County, Georgia is amended as follows:

1.

ARTICLE II. DIVISION 1. Section 6-21 – Definitions is amended to include the following:

Altered animal: Any animal that has had its reproductive organs surgically removed or sterilized in order to render the animal unable to reproduce. This includes any surgery, procedure such as intratesticular injection, or event rendering the animal physically incapable of reproducing offspring. This includes the removal of ovaries or castration. This is commonly referred to as spay or neuter.

Unaltered animal: Any animal that has not been spayed, neutered or sterilized.

2.

ARTICLE II. DIVISION 1. Sections 6-26 – 6-53 are amended to include the following:

Section 6-26. - Spay/neuter requirements:

- (a) No person may own, keep, or be in possession of a dog that is six months of age or older which has not been spayed or neutered, unless they hold a license for an unaltered animal or are exempt from this requirement under subsections (e), (f), or (g) hereunder.
- (b) No person may own, keep, or be in possession of a cat that is four months of age or older which has not been spayed or neutered, unless they hold a license for an unaltered animal or are exempt from this requirement under subsections (e), (f), or (g) hereunder.
- (c) Whether a dog or cat shall have obtained the age set forth under subsections (a) or (b) above shall be determined by any authorized County animal control officer, or by any licensed veterinarian, or by reliable veterinarian medical records.
- (d) Prior to the court date listed on the citation, any citation issued for a violation of this section may be dismissed if the owner provides proof to the Walker County Magistrate Court that he or she has since had the animal altered so as to be in compliance.



- (e) Any dog or cat is exempt from the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) above if the person holds an active registered commercial breeder's license or a pet dealer's license issued by the Georgia Department of Agriculture.
- (f) Any dog or cat is exempt from the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) above if a licensed veterinarian has signed a document expressing a medical opinion that the dog or cat should not be spayed or neutered for health reasons for the duration of the relevant health condition.
- (g) Any dog or cat is exempt from the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) above if the dog or cat is deemed to be a working animal as hereinafter defined. A working animal is defined as a dog or cat trained and employed for farming, herding, hunting, service or show, with written proof such as training, law enforcement, or other actual activity as a working or documented service animal. A dog or cat is not a working animal if the dog or cat does only has the common traits of a working animal but does not frequently perform the activities of a working animal set forth above in this subsection.

Section 6-27. – Licensing of Unaltered Animals

- (a) It shall be the duty of each owner, custodian, or harborer of any dog over six months or cat over four months of age kept, maintained, or harbored within the unincorporated area of Walker County to obtain a license for such dog or cat should they remain unaltered.
- (b) The fee for said license shall be set forth in the fee schedule for the Walker County Animal Shelter established by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County.
- (c) A license for an unaltered animal shall be issued on an annual basis. The beginning date of the license is the date it is purchased. Failure to renew the license within ten business days of the renewal date shall constitute a violation of this Code section.
- (d) The license will be issued in the form of a metal tag that shall be affixed to the animal's collar at all times.
- (e) Revenue generated from unaltered animal licenses shall be kept in a separate account from other funds of the County and earmarked exclusively to fund low cost spay / neuter and microchipping options for the community.

Secs. 6-28—6-53. - Reserved.

3.

This ordinance is effective immediately upon its adoption.

4.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

5.

If any section, clause, sentence, or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

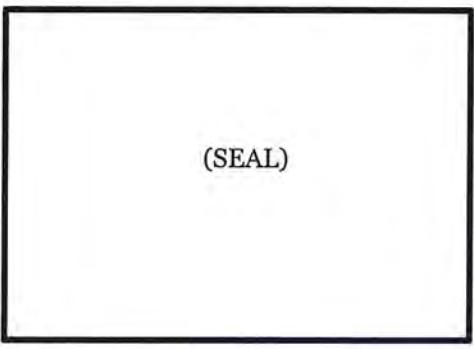
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Ordinance received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.

\$2,000 for Stocking Full of Love



Mason Family Dentistry in LaFayette made a \$2,000 donation to the Al Millard Memorial Stocking Full of Love, which provides Christmas gifts and essentials to underprivileged children and families in the county. Dr. George D. Mason and his staff have been longtime supporters of the Christmas charity. From left: Sheriff Steve Wilson, Dr. Mason and his elves.

ARREST REPORTS

Walker County arrests: Monday, Nov. 25, to Sunday, Dec. 1

The Walker County Sheriff's Office provided this information on those booked into the county jail.

The listings include name of inmate (last first middle), race/sex, age, felony/misdemeanor (misd), arresting officer, and charge(s).

Here are some of the abbreviations used: FVA=Family Violence Act; FTA=Failure to appear; VGCSA=Violation of the Georgia Controlled Substances Act; FTML=Failure to maintain lane.

♦ STONE ALEXIS MARIE W/F 20 MISD OFFICER DIAW PROBATION VIOLATION — MISD

♦ SHIRLEY ROBIN LEIGH W/F 45 FELONY OFFICER DIAW BATTERY — FVA / OBSTRUCTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT — MISD

♦ WALKER DAVID LAMAR W/M 55 MISD OFFICER LEAMON DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

♦ CHOATE CAMERON TAYLOR W/F 23 MISD OFFICER THOMASON DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE / SPEEDING

♦ SHINE BRADYON KENDARIUS B/M 21 FELONY OFFICER TATE FUGITIVE

♦ HARDIN DERRICK WESLEY W/M 35 MISD OFFICER DELACRUZ HOLD FOR COURT

♦ MILLER ETHAN KYLE W/M 31 FELONY OFFICER LEAMON VIOLATION OF PROBATION — FELONY

♦ DAVIS JEREMIAH WILLIAMS W/M 26 FELONY OFFICER MILLER VIOLATION OF PROBATION — FELONY

♦ FARMER AMBER NICOLE W/F 31 MISD OFFICER LEAMON VIOLATION OF PROBATION — MISD

♦ POAG STACEY DEWAYNE W/M 48 FELONY OFFICER THOMASON POSSESSION OF SCHEDULE II CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE

♦ WILLIAMS GLOYA HEATH W/M 44 FELONY OFFICER THOMASON DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE / POSSESSION OF METH

♦ SLATON JUSTIN RICHARD W/M 44 FELONY OFFICER THOMASON VGCSA

♦ MOONEYHAM KIMBERLY DENISE W/F 55 SELF HOLD FOR COURT

♦ WOOD JAXON SCOTT W/M 21 FELONY OFFICER SIMPSON VIOLATION OF PROBATION — FELONY

♦ BROOKS WENDELL BARRY B/M 50 FELONY

OFFICER SUMNER POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA — FELONY / NO INSURANCE / FAILURE TO REGISTER VEHICLE / CONCEALING IDENTITY OF VEHICLE

♦ MOSES JOHN DEKTOA W/M 29 MISD OFFICER WILSON FAILURE TO APPEAR — MISD

♦ CARRINGTON HAYLEY NICOLE W/F 28 OFFICER WILSON HOLD FOR FLOYD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

♦ HOOD DEWAYNE ANTHONY W/M 37 OFFICER PETTY RETURN FROM MEDICAL TRANSPORT

♦ MATTHEWS TIMOTHY LEE W/M 53 DOC HOLD FOR COURT

♦ RITCHIE JAMIE MARIE W/F 32 OFFICER DELACRUZ HOLD FOR COURT

♦ MCDONALD MAKAYLA NICOLE B/F 29 OFFICER DELACRUZ HOLD FOR COURT

♦ MAXWELL CASEY CARMILLE W/F 32 FELONY OFFICER PHILLIPS VIOLATION OF PROBATION — FELONY

♦ MCCREE KRISTEN SHAE W/F 36 MISD OFFICER LEAMON FAILURE TO APPEAR — MISD

♦ CRUZ RIGOBERTO ANDRES H/M 32 MISD OFFICER HAVEN DRIVING WITHOUT A VALID LICENSE / HEADLIGHT REQUIREMENT

♦ MCCEE KRISTEN SHAE W/F 36 MISD OFFICER LEAMON FAILURE TO APPEAR — MISD

♦ COPELAND MICHAEL DARRYL B/M 33 MISD OFFICER DUNN DRIVING WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE

♦ SMITH CARR MELVA VIRGINIA W/F 81 FELONY OFFICER CREIGHTON TERRORISTIC THREATS

♦ FARMER AMBER NICOLE W/F 31 MISD OFFICER LEAMON VIOLATION OF PROBATION — MISD

♦ POAG STACEY DEWAYNE W/M 48 FELONY OFFICER THOMASON POSSESSION OF SCHEDULE II CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE

♦ WILLIAMS GLOYA HEATH W/M 44 FELONY OFFICER THOMASON VGCSA

♦ MOONEYHAM KIMBERLY DENISE W/F 55 SELF HOLD FOR COURT

♦ WOOD JAXON SCOTT W/M 21 FELONY OFFICER SIMPSON VIOLATION OF PROBATION — FELONY

♦ BROOKS WENDELL BARRY B/M 50 FELONY

♦ FLEETWOOD JERMAINE DA'SHAUN B/M

/ POSSESSION OF COCAINE

♦ HARVEY STEVEN DENNIS W/M 33 FELONY OFFICER GAYLON POSSESSION OF METH / POSSESSION OF COCAINE / TRAFFICKING METH

♦ JIMENEZ GARCIA JENNY ESTUARDO H/M 24 MISD OFFICER HAVEN DRIVING WITHOUT A VALID LICENSE / FAILURE TO MAINTAIN LANE

♦ TAYLOR JAYLEN KESHAUN B/M 19 MISD OFFICER THOMASON D.U.I. DRUGS LESS SAFE, FTML, SPEEDING

♦ WARDELL RICHARD WAYNE W/M 34 MISD OFFICER POSEY DRIVING W/O LICENSE

♦ GRAVITT STEPHANIE MARIE W/F 42 F OFFICER POSEY POSS OF METH, EAST RIDGE TN WARRANT

♦ STARGIN RANDY B/M 27 MISD OFFICER SHACK

* CAAL JUL BILLY AL EXANDER H/M 24 MISD OFFICER BUCKNER UNLICENSED, FAILURE TO MAINTAIN LANE

♦ HARRIS JEREMY B/M 29 MISD OFFICER CREIGHTON TERRORISTIC THREATS-M, SIMPLE ASSAULT- FVA

♦ HARGIS BONNIE SUE W/F 44 FELONY OFFICER SUMNER LOITERING AND PROWLING, POSS OF DRUG RELATED OBJECTS

♦ DUKE ALEXANDER SCOTT W/M 21 MISD OFFICER BALLARD D.U.I., SPEEDING

♦ HALL HALEY KATHERINE W/F 29 MISD OFFICER SHACKLEFORD D.U.I., FAILURE TO STOP AT STOP SIGN

Find the latest breaking news online at catoosawalkernews.com.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Governing Authority of Walker County, Georgia proposes to update its code of ordinances.

O-01-25 proposes to amend Chapter 34 (Utilities) to adopt Broadband Ready Community standards.

Public hearings on the proposed ordinance change will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2024 and 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 9, 2025 at Walker County Courthouse Annex III, 201 S Main Street in LaFayette.

A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for review at the Board of Commissioner's Office (101 S Duke St, LaFayette) and online at walkercountyga.gov.

NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO WALKER COUNTY ENABLING LEGISLATION REGARDING MINIMUM NUMBER OF MONTHLY REGULAR MEETINGS

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia will consider an amendment to Section 9 of the Act creating the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia, 2017 Ga. Laws (Act No. 165), pursuant to the Georgia Constitution, Article IX, Section II, Paragraph I(b)(1) at the Board's regular meetings on December 19, 2024 and January 9, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. in the Courthouse Annex III building, 201 S Main Street, LaFayette, GA 30728. The proposed amendment shall reduce the required number of regular meetings held each month from two (2) to one (1), to repeal conflicting laws, and for other purposes. Copies of the proposed amendment are on file in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Walker County and the Walker County Clerk to the Board of Commissioners. Any member of the public shall have a right to examine and inspect the proposed Resolution at these locations.

Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia.

Free basket-weaving classes for Walker County students

Special

Basket-weaving is an art used traditionally by Africans, Europeans and Native Americans. This craft has been passed down from generation to generation.

Walker County African American Historical and Alumni Association Inc. has received a grant for \$1,000 to offer a free basket-weaving class to Walker County students, 9-18 years old.

This grant will receive a match (\$125) via a partnership with the Chickamauga Woman Club. An additional match of \$375 is needed to complete the project.

Classes are planned to be scheduled at the Chickamauga Library, Wallaceville community and the Walker County African American Museum and Multicultural Center in LaFayette.

Also, WCAAHAA has partnered with Stone Creek Elementary School art class, Jennifer Wolfe teacher, to provide free supplies to complete 356 baskets.

Kay Worsham of the Northwest Georgia Art Guild will teach adult leaders to guide the students.

Parents must accompany students during classes held at the library, museum and in the Wallaceville Community.

WCAAHAA is offering this project, hoping the



joy of art will be a teaching tool of cultural similarities, beauty, and how art such as basket-weaving can produce items that may be used for chores, organization and storage.

Chickamauga Library (1/18/2025, register before 1/11/2025), Museum (date to be announced) and Wallaceville (date to be announced) classes have limited space; therefore, students must register by calling Beverly Foster at 678-371-4106. Stone Creek Elementary students, please see Mrs. Wolfe.

This program is supported in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriation of the Georgia General Assembly. Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency—the National Endowment for the Arts.

Article submitted by Beverly C. Foster, president of WCAAHAA Inc.

RESOLUTION R-045-24 / R-001-25

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY TO AMEND THE WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA ENABLING LEGISLATION TO MODIFY THE NUMBER OF REGULAR MEETINGS TO BE HELD EACH MONTH

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County ("Board") is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Georgia, approved by the voters of the State in November 1982, and effective July 1, 1983, provides in Article IX, Section 2, Paragraph 1 thereof, that the governing authority of the County may adopt clearly reasonable ordinances, resolutions, and regulations; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the Constitution of the State of Georgia, approved by the voters of the State in November 1982, and effective July 1, 1983, specifically provides in Article IX, Section 2, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph (b)(1) thereof, that the governing authority of the County may, by resolution, amend local acts applicable to the governing authority; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County desires to amend the local act creating the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, approved May 2, 2017 (Ga. L. 2017, Act No. 165), and ratified by the voters on November 6, 2018, so as to reduce the number of regular meetings held each month from two (2) to one (1), to repeal conflicting laws, and for other purposes; and

WHEREAS, 2017 Ga. Laws (Act No. 165), § 9 currently provides:

Each month, at the county seat, the board of commissioners shall hold a minimum of two regular meetings. All meetings shall be open to the public as required by law and shall provide a time period exclusively for public comment. The time, date, and place of the meetings shall be determined by the board in the first meeting of the year. Any resolution passed by the board regarding the time, date, and place of its monthly meetings shall be published in the official organ once a week for two weeks during a period of 30 days immediately following the passage of the resolution. The board of commissioners may hold such additional meetings as shall be necessary when called by the chairperson or any two commissioners, provided that all members of the board of commissioners shall have been notified at least three days in advance of such special meeting which is open to the public. Three district commissioners or the chairperson and any two district commissioners shall constitute a quorum. No official action shall be taken except upon the affirmative vote of at least three members of the board of commissioners and except upon compliance with Chapter 14 of Title 50 of the O.C.G.A. The chairperson shall be entitled to vote on a question only if the chairperson's vote would affect the outcome of any vote or issue before the board. The vice chairperson while serving as chairperson shall be entitled to vote on all matters before the board. All regular and called meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County wishes to modify 2017 Ga. Laws (Act No. 165), § 9 such that it reads as follows (red are changes):

Each month, at the county seat, the board of commissioners shall hold a minimum of **one** regular meeting. **The meeting** shall be open to the public as required by law and shall provide a time period exclusively for public comment. The time, date, and place of the meetings shall be determined by the board in the first meeting of the year. Any resolution passed by the board regarding the time, date, and place of its monthly meetings shall be published in the official county organ once a week for two weeks during a period of 30 days immediately following the passage of the resolution. The board of commissioners may hold such additional meetings as shall be necessary when called by the chairperson or any two commissioners, provided

that all members of the board of commissioners shall have been notified at least three days in advance of such special meeting which is open to the public. Three district commissioners or the chairperson and any two district commissioners shall constitute a quorum. No official action shall be taken except upon the affirmative vote of at least three members of the board of commissioners and except upon compliance with Chapter 14 of Title 50 of the O.C.G.A. The chairperson shall be entitled to vote on a question only if the chairperson's vote would affect the outcome of any vote or issue before the board. The vice chairperson while serving as chairperson shall be entitled to vote on all matters before the board. All regular and called meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article IX, Section II, Paragraph I, Subparagraph (b)(1) of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, local acts may be amended by a resolution or ordinance duly adopted at two regular consecutive meetings of the county governing authority not less than seven nor more than 60 days apart and a notice containing a synopsis of the proposed amendment shall be published in the official county organ once a week for three weeks within a period of 60 days immediately preceding its final adoption;

WHEREAS, those requirements applicable to amendments to local acts of the General Assembly by a resolution or ordinance duly adopted by the county governing authority as set forth in Article IX, Section II, Paragraph I, Subparagraph (b)(1) of the Constitution of the State of Georgia have been met and satisfied, and, specifically, notice of the consideration of this Resolution has been advertised and this Resolution has been duly adopted by the governing authority at two regular consecutive meetings; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Walker County Board of Commissioners that the Act creating the Board of Commissioners for Walker County, Ga. L. 2017, Act No. 165, § 9 hereby amended by modifying Section 9 as follows (red are changes):

Each month, at the county seat, the board of commissioners shall hold a minimum of **one** regular meeting. **The meeting** shall be open to the public as required by law and shall provide a time period exclusively for public comment. The time, date, and place of the meeting shall be determined by the board in the first meeting of the year. Any resolution passed by the board regarding the time, date, and place of its monthly meetings shall be published in the official county organ once a week for two weeks during a period of 30 days immediately following the passage of the resolution. The board of commissioners may hold such additional meetings as shall be necessary when called by the chairperson or any two commissioners, provided that all members of the board of commissioners shall have been notified at least three days in advance of such special meeting which is open to the public. Three district commissioners or the chairperson and any two district commissioners shall constitute a quorum. No official action shall be taken except upon the affirmative vote of at least three members of the board of commissioners and except upon compliance with Chapter 14 of Title 50 of the O.C.G.A. The chairperson shall be entitled to vote on a question only if the chairperson's vote would affect the outcome of any vote or issue before the board. The vice chairperson while serving as chairperson shall be entitled to vote on all matters before the board. All regular and called meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any other Ordinance, Resolution, or local law, or portion thereof, now in effect, that is in conflict with any of the provisions of this Resolution is hereby repealed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be approved at two back-to-back meetings of the Board of Commissioners wherein such meetings are not less than seven (7) nor more than sixty (60) days apart.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon such dual approvals being achieved, a copy of such amendment, along with a notice of publication and publisher's affidavit, shall be filed with the Georgia Secretary of State's office. (Ga. Const. Art. 9, § 2, ¶ 1(g)).

The public health, safety, and welfare demanding it.

FIRST APPROVAL occurring at a duly called meeting of the Walker County Board of Commissioners on _____ day of _____, 2024.

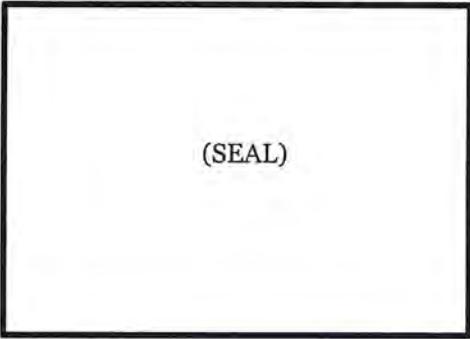
WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

ATTEST:

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to _____ the Resolution.

SECOND APPROVAL occurring at a duly called meeting of the Walker County Board of Commissioners on _____ day of _____, 2025.

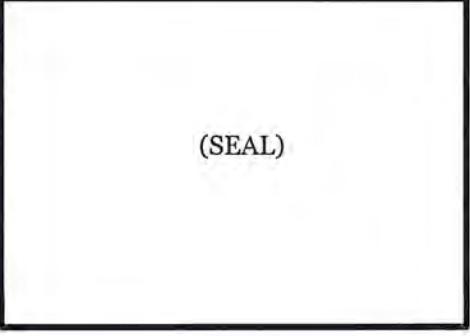
WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

ANGIE TEEMS, Chairwoman

ATTEST:

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to _____ the Resolution.

RESOLUTION R-046-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY FOR THE PURPOSE OF REPEALING A TEMPORARY EMERGENCY MORATORIUM ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS FOR ZONING APPROVALS, BUILDING PERMITS, LAND DISTURBANCE PERMITS, AND ANY OTHER APPROVALS OR PERMITS, OR PROCESSING OF OR ISSUANCE OF DECISIONS ON ANY SUCH APPLICATIONS, REGARDING NEW SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS OR THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING OPERATIONS THAT PRODUCE SOLAR POWER

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners (“Board”) passed Resolution R-042-24 on November 14, 2024 enacting a temporary emergency moratorium on the acceptance of applications for permitting solar energy systems; and

WHEREAS, the Board needed time to prepare appropriate amendment(s) to the County zoning ordinance and prepare any other necessary ordinances regarding solar energy systems, to hold public hearings required by law, and to adopt such amendment(s) and other ordinances; and

WHEREAS, with the adoption of Ordinance O-01b-24, the need for a temporary emergency moratorium on the acceptance of applications for permitting solar energy systems no longer exists;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia does hereby repeal Resolution R-042-24.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024.

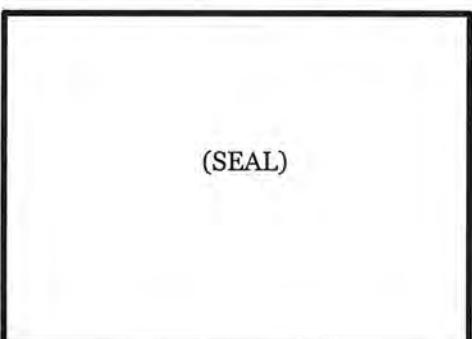
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to _____ the Resolution.

RESOLUTION R-047-24

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION LOCAL
BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) created the Local Bridge Replacement (LOCBR) Program in 2017 to target the replacement of locally-owned posted bridges using federal funds; and

WHEREAS, GDOT provides preliminary engineering costs, any utility relocations, all construction costs and 50-percent of the preliminary right of-way (ROW) estimate that includes all acquisition fees and other related costs; and

WHEREAS, GDOT has identified two candidate bridges in Walker County for the LCBR program, which include:

- Old Bethel Road at West Chickamauga Creek (construction in FY2029)
- Glass Mill Road at West Chickamauga Creek (construction in FY2029); and

WHEREAS, in order to participate, Walker County must provide financial support and agree to pay a portion of the cost of right-of-way for these projects, ranging from \$50,000 to \$75,000 per bridge; and

WHEREAS, GDOT requires support from the local governing authority and confirmation of financial support for the replacement of bridges in the LCBR program;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia confirms support and financial participation for the replacement of these bridges.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024.

ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)

The foregoing Resolution received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to _____ the Resolution.

RESOLUTION R-048-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE WALKER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO INCREASE THE SUPPLEMENT TO COMPENSATION FOR THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL OF WALKER COUNTY STATE COURT

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. § 15-18-67(a) provides that Solicitors-general of state courts shall be compensated from county funds as provided by local law; and

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. § 15-18-67(b) states the county governing authority is authorized to supplement the minimum compensation to be paid to the solicitor-general of the state court of that county as provided by local law, but no solicitor-general's compensation or supplement shall be decreased during his or her term of office; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County (Board) is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the Board included a 4% cost of living adjustment for employees in the County's Fiscal 2025 budget; and

WHEREAS, pay changes for elected officials take place on January 1st of each year;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that the annual county supplement to compensation paid to the Solicitor-general of Walker County State Court shall be increased \$3,560.00, effective January 1, 2025.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024.

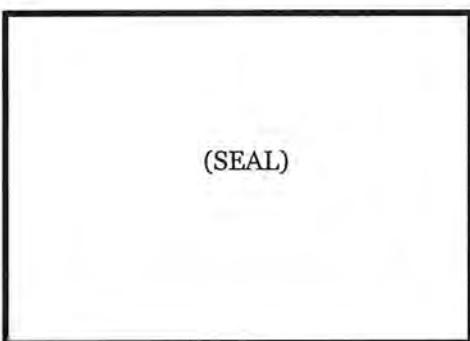
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for passage from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.

RESOLUTION R-049-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE WALKER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO SET THE ANNUAL COMPENSATION FOR THE WALKER COUNTY CORONER

WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly enacted a Local Act (Ga. Law 1965, p. 2710) that established the salary to be paid to the Walker County Coroner; and

WHEREAS, the Local Act has been amended from time to time; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County (Board) is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the Board is responsible for payment of the Coroner's salary; and

WHEREAS, the Board previously set the Coroner's salary by Resolution (R-052-23) at \$34,400.00, or \$2,866.67 per month, effective January 1, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Board included a 4% cost of living adjustment for employees in the County's Fiscal 2025 budget; and

WHEREAS, pay changes for elected officials take place on January 1st of each year;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that the County Coroner's position shall be set at an annualized salary of \$35,776.00, or \$2,981.33 per month, for services rendered, effective to January 1, 2024.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024

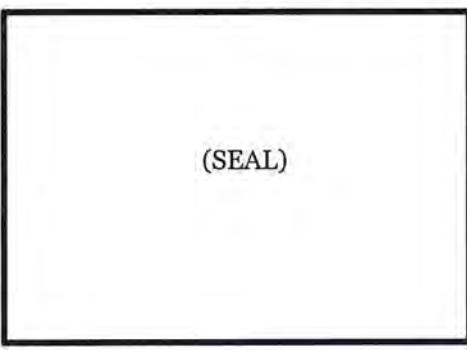
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.



RESOLUTION R-050-24

**A RESOLUTION OF THE WALKER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO
ESTABLISH THE SUPPLEMENT TO COMPENSATION FOR THE SHERIFF OF
WALKER COUNTY**

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. § 15-16-20 establishes the minimum annual salary of each sheriff in the State of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, in addition to a base salary, a sheriff is entitled to longevity increases and cost of living increases whenever state employees subject to compensation plans authorized and approved in accordance with Code Section 45-20-4 receive a cost-of-living increase or general performance based increase of a certain percentage or a certain amount; and

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. § 15-16-20.1 provides that the sheriff of any county who performs the duties of a sheriff for a state court, probate court, magistrate court, juvenile court, or county recorder's court shall receive an additional salary of not less than \$385.90 per month, to be paid from the funds of the county, for this service. A sheriff who serves in more than one such court shall receive such salary for up to two courts; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that beginning January 1, 2025, the Sheriff of Walker County shall not receive any additional local supplement to the minimum compensation provided by general law.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024.

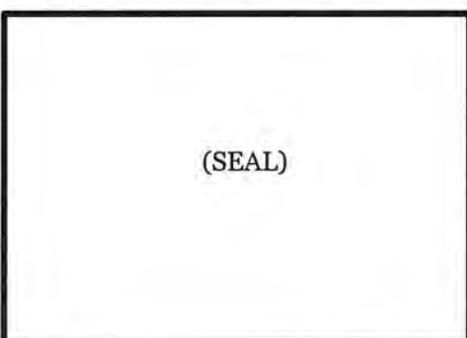
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for passage from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.

RESOLUTION R-051-24

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY TO
DECLARE PROPERTY AS SURPLUS AND REMOVED FROM THE COUNTY
INVENTORY**

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. § 36-9-2 provides that the county governing authority shall have the control of all property belonging to the county and may, by order entered on its minutes, direct the disposal of any real property which may lawfully be disposed of and make and execute good and sufficient title thereof on behalf of the county; and

WHEREAS, Walker County Fire Rescue has requested 250 50-foot sections of 3-inch fire hose be deemed surplus and further requests that the property be removed from the County inventory;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that 250 50-foot sections of 3-inch fire hose be hereby declared unserviceable surplus, removed from the County inventory.

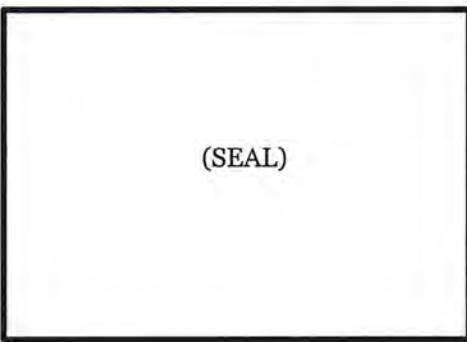
SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024.

ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

(SEAL)



SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

The foregoing Resolution received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.



Joe Legge <j.legge@walkergera.us>

Agenda item for December

Blake Hodge <b.hodge@walkergera.us>
To: Joe Legge <j.legge@walkergera.us>

Tue, Dec 10, 2024 at 9:49 PM

I would like to add an item to the December agenda. WCFR will surplus 250- 50' sections of 3 inch fire hose that is out-of-service. We would like to donate the hose to water authorities in Walker County.

Thank you
Sent from my iPhone



RESOLUTION R-052-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY TO APPOINT A MEMBER TO THE BRIDGE HEALTH BOARD

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County ("Board") is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, one of the duties delegated to the Chairman of the Board is to appoint members to all committees of the Board with the approval of the Board; and

WHEREAS, the State of Georgia created the Bridge Health board, formerly known as Lookout Mountain Community Services, in accordance with the law; and

WHEREAS, the bylaws of the Bridge Health Board call for board members to serve three (3) year terms; and

WHEREAS, the term of Eddie Upshaw, a Walker County member, expired on November 14, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Chairman Whitfield submits the following appointment to serve as a representative of Walker County on the Bridge Health Board:

Susan Tankersley - for a term beginning immediately and expiring on December 31, 2027

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that the appointment of Susan Tankersley is approved.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024.

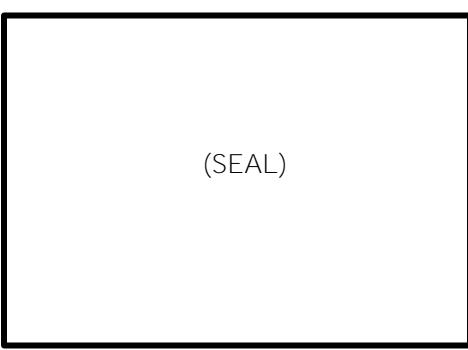
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for passage from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.



RESOLUTION R-053-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WALKER COUNTY TO APPOINT A MEMBER OF THE WALKER COUNTY BOARD OF ASSESSORS

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Walker County (“Board”) is the governing authority of Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. § 48-5-295 provides that members of the county board of assessors shall be appointed by the county governing authority; and

WHEREAS, one of the duties delegated to the Chairman of the Board is to appoint members to all committees of the board with the approval of the board; and

WHEREAS, a vacancy will exist at the end of the year on the Walker County Board of Assessors due to the expiration of a term; and

WHEREAS, Chairman Whitfield submits the following appointment to serve as a member of the Walker County Board of Assessors:

Karen Deck - for a term beginning January 1, 2025 and ending on December 31, 2029

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia that the appointment of Karen Deck to the Walker County Board of Assessors is approved.

SO RESOLVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of December, 2024.

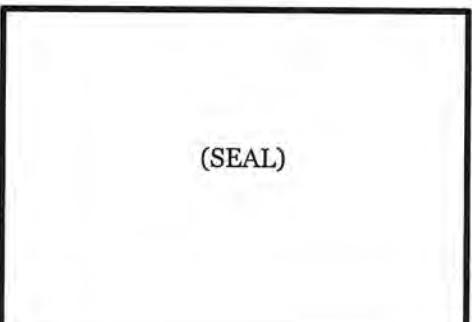
ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

JESSICA STATON, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman

(SEAL)



The foregoing Resolution received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.

**LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17**

ON SYSTEM

STATE ROUTE	WITHIN THE CITY/ TOWN LIMITS OF and/or SCHOOL NAME	FROM	MILE POINT	TO	MILE POINT	LENGTH IN MILES	SPEED LIMIT
1 US 27		Chattooga County Line	0.00	0.50 mile north of SR 151	0.95	0.95	55
1 US 27		0.50 mile north of SR 151	0.95	0.20 mile south of SR 337	5.32	4.37	65
1 US 27		0.20 mile north of SR 337	5.32	0.05 mile north of CR 847 South Crest Drive (South LaFayette City Limit)	6.87	1.55	55
1 US 27	LAFAYETTE	0.05 mile north of CR 847 South Crest Drive (South LaFayette City Limit)	6.87	0.20 mi. north of State Route 136	8.33	1.46	45
1 US 27	LAFAYETTE	State Route 136 (North Lafayette City Limit)	11.08	0.20 mile south of CR 587 Bicentennial Drive	15.79	4.71	55
1 US 27		0.20 mile south of CR 587 Bicentennial Drive	15.79	0.18 mile north of CR 154 Rock Spring Road	17.11	1.32	45
1 US 27		0.18 mile north of CR 154 Rock Spring Road	17.11	Catoosa County Line	19.16	2.69	55
1 *** SCHOOL ZONE ***	SADDLE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	0.17 mile north of CR 163 Turnipseed Road	18.24	0.50 mile north of CR 163 Turnipseed Road	18.57	0.33	45
<i>This section of roadway is an exception with Catoosa County for 1.32 miles from MP 19.16 to MP 20.48.</i>							
1 US 27		Catoosa County Line	20.48	CR 215 Park Street (South Chickamauga City Limit)	20.94	0.46	55
1 US 27		CR 710 Wilder Road (North Chickamauga City Limit)	22.51	0.02 mile south from State Route 2 off ramp (North Ft Oglethorpe City Limit)	27.32	4.81	55
1 US 27		0.02 mile south from State Route 2 off ramp (North Ft Oglethorpe City Limit)	27.32	Catoosa County Line	27.70	0.38	55
<i>This section of roadway is an exception with Catoosa County for 1.45 miles from MP 27.70 to MP 29.15.</i>							
1		Catoosa County	29.15	0.04 mile north of	29.88	0.73	45

LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17

STATE ROUTE	WITHIN THE CITY/ TOWN LIMITS OF and/or SCHOOL NAME	FROM	MILE POINT	TO	MILE POINT	LENGTH IN MILES	SPEED LIMIT
US 27		Line		CR 865 Lane Road (South Rossville City Limit)			
2		State Route 193	0.00	State Route 1/ US 27	3.42	3.42	55
2		<i>This segment of roadway runs common with State Route 1/US 27 from MP 3.42 to MP 4.31 end Catoosa County.</i>					
95		State Route 151	0.00	0.08 mile south of CR 585 Meadow Brook Drive	7.21	7.21	50
95		0.08mile south of CR 585 Meadow Brook Drive	7.21	State Route 1/ US 27	7.78	0.57	40
95 *** SCHOOL ZONE ***	ROCK SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	0.09 mile north of CR 585 Meadow Brook Drive	7.36	0.11 mile north of CR 158 Peavine Road	7.54	0.18	30
136		Dade County Line	0.00	State Route 1/ US 27 (West LaFayette City Limit)	14.44	14.44	55
136		CS 505 Patterson Road (North LaFayette City Limit)	18.01	Gordon County Line	36.29	18.28	55
136 *** SCHOOL ZONE ***	NAOMI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	0.03 mile west of CR 32 Harris Lane	20.93	0.33 mile east of CR 32 Harris Lane	21.29	0.36	30
151		State Route 1/US 27	0.00	State Route 136	8.64	8.64	55
151		<i>This segment runs common with State Route 136 from M.P. 8.64 to M.P.10.07</i>					
151		State Route 136	10.07	Catoosa County Line	14.78	4.71	55
157		Chattooga County Line	0.00	Dade County Line	11.12	11.12	55
<i>This section of roadway is an exception with Dade County for 1.49 miles from MP 11.12 to MP 12.61.</i>							
157		Dade County Line	12.61	0.20 mile south of State Route 136	16.26	3.65	55
157		0.20 mile south of State Route 136	16.26	0.38 mile north of CR 379 Denham Road	19.07	2.81	50

LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17

STATE ROUTE	WITHIN THE CITY/ TOWN LIMITS OF and/or SCHOOL NAME	FROM	MILE POINT	TO	MILE POINT	LENGTH IN MILES	SPEED LIMIT
157		0.38 mile north of CR 379 Denham Road	19.07	0.02 mile north of CR 380 Old Ascalon Road	20.08	1.01	45
157		0.02 mile north of CR 380 Old Ascalon Road	20.08	CR 709 Lula Lake Road	25.85	5.77	55
157		CR 709 Lula Lake Road	25.85	Dade County	27.47	1.62	30
<i>This section of roadway is an exception with Catoosa County for 3.69 miles from MP 27.47 to MP 31.16.</i>							
157		Dade County Line	31.16	0.36 mile south of State Route 189 (South Lookout Mountain City Limit)	31.17	0.01	30
189		Dade County Line	0.00	Dade County Line	0.39	0.39	50
193		0.02 mile north of CR 80 Hillsdale Road (North LaFayette City Limit)	2.15	State Route 136	13.98	11.83	55
193 *** SCHOOL ZONE ***	GILBERT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	0.03 mile west of CR 80 Hillsdale Road (West LaFayette City Limit)	2.15	0.17 mile west of CR 81 S Burnt Mill Road	2.30	0.15	45
193		0.03 mile west of CR 80 Hillsdale Road (West LaFayette City Limit)	2.15	0.18 mile north of Harold Stevens Road	12.00	9.85	55
193		0.18 mile north of Harold Stevens Road	12.00	0.20 mile south of CR 192 Kendricks Switch Road	16.92	4.92	50
193		0.20 mile south of CR 192 Kendricks Switch Road	16.92	0.05 mile south of CR 206 Williams Road	17.86	0.94	45
193		0.05 mile south of CR 206 Williams Road	17.86	0.42 mile north of CR 804 High Point Circle	18.72	0.86	35
193		0.42 mile north of CR 804 High Point Circle	18.72	0.02 mile north of CR 392 Nick-A-Jack Road	21.69	2.97	45

LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17

STATE ROUTE	WITHIN THE CITY/ TOWN LIMITS OF and/or SCHOOL NAME	FROM	MILE POINT	TO	MILE POINT	LENGTH IN MILES	SPEED LIMIT
193		0.02 mile north of CR 392 Nick-A-Jack Road	21.69	0.02 mile north CR 838 Old Chattanooga Valley Road	26.97	5.28	55
193		0.02 mile north CR 838 Old Chattanooga Valley Road	26.97	Tennessee State Line	27.16	0.19	45
201		State Route 136	0.00	Whitfield County Line	3.24	3.24	55
337		Chattooga County Line	0.00	0.32 mile south of CR 772 West View Drive	7.63	7.63	50
337		0.32 mile south of CR 772 West View Drive	7.63	0.04 mile south of CR 772 West View Drive	7.91	0.28	45
337		0.04 mile south of CR 772 West View Drive	7.91	0.03 mile east of CR 772 West View Drive(West LaFayette City Limit)	7.98	0.07	35
337		0.01 mile west of CR 69 Foster Mill Drive(East Lafayette city limits)	8.94	0.25 mile north of CR 69 Foster Mill Drive	9.20	0.26	45
337		0.25 mile north of CR 69 Foster Mill Drive	9.20	State Route 1/US 27	9.89	0.69	50
341		State Route 193	0.00	0.20 mile south of State route 136	3.12	3.12	55
341		0.20 mile south of State route 136	3.12	0.06 mile south CR 200 Garretts Chapel Road	8.69	5.57	50
341		0.06 mile south CR 200 Garretts Chapel Road	8.69	0.06 mile south of CS 790 Patterson Street (South Chickamauga City Limit)	8.94	0.25	45
341		0.06 mile south of CR 222 Cleveland Road (North Chickamauga City Limit)	10.72	0.03 mile south of CR 536 Mark Road	14.97	4.25	35
341		0.03 mile south of CR 536 Mark Road	14.97	State Route 193	15.50	0.53	45

**LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17**

SIGNS TO BE ERECTED BY THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

*****SCHOOL ZONE HOURS EFFECTIVE*****

A. M. from 30 minutes prior to commencement times to 30 minutes after commencement time—

SCHOOL DAYS ONLY

P.M. from 30 minutes prior to dismissal time to 30 minutes after dismissal time –

SCHOOL DAYS ONLY

OFF-SYSTEM

ROAD NAME	WITHIN THE CITY / TOWN LIMITS OF <u>and/or</u> School Name	FROM	TO	LENGTH IN MILES	SPEED LIMIT
Chattanooga Valley Road (CR 838)		CR 837 Old Chattanooga Valley Road	State Route 193	4.06	35
Chattanooga Valley Road ***** School Zone *****	Chattanooga Valley School	0.17 mile north of CR 488 Mountain View Drive	0.01 mile north of CR 426 South Avenue	0.25	25
East Reed Road (CR 123)		State Route 1/US 27	0.60 mile east of State Route 1/US 27	0.60	25
East Reed Road (CR 123)		0.60 mile east of State Route 1/US 27	CR 132, Ringgold Road	1.62	35
Dry Valley Road (CR 363)		CR 236 West Schmitt Road	CR 835 Happy Valley Road	2.44	35
Glass Mill Road (CR 166)		CR 165 Old Lafayette Road	CR 169 Old Bethel Road	1.04	35
Happy Valley Road (CR 835)		CR 838 Old Chattooga Valley Road	0.01 mile west of CS 720 Bethune Street (Rossville City Limit)	4.15	45
Happy Valley Road ***** School Zone *****	Ridgeland High School	0.32 mile north of CR 750 Turner Ridge Road	0.10 mile south State Route 2	0.27	35
Jenkins Road (CR 270)		CR 948 Lytle Road	CR 834 McFarland Avenue	1.37	30
Jenkins Road ***** School Zone *****	Fairview Elementary School	0.06 mile south of CR 274 Circle Drive	0.06 mile north of CR 277 Ivy Street	0.25	25
Johnson Road (CR 264)		CR 220 Five Points Road	CR 704 Mission Road	2.76	45

LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17

ROAD NAME	WITHIN THE CITY / TOWN LIMITS OF <u>and/or</u> <u>School Name</u>	FROM	TO	LENGTH IN MILES	SPEED LIMIT
Lake Howard Road (CR 722)		State Route 1/US 27	State Route 95	4.62	35
North Long Hollow Road (CR 260)		CR 704 Mission Ridge Road	CR 255 Osburn Road	2.46	35
Long Hollow Road (CR 720)		CR 154 Kay Conley Road	CR 719 East Long Hollow Road	2.11	45
Lytle Road (CR 948)		State Route 1/US 27	CR 704 Mission Ridge Road	1.35	35
Mission Road (CR 704)		State Route 341	CR 834 McFarlane Avenue	3.85	40
North Marble Top Road (CR 182)		State Route 136	CR 192 Kendricks Switch Road	2.80	35
North Marble Top Road (CR 192)		CR 182 North Marble Top Road	CR 203 Lisbon Road	1.03	35
North Marble Top Road (CR 203)		CR 192 North Marble Top Road	CR 721 Garretts Chapel Road	0.29	35
North Marble Top Road (CR 721)		CR 203 North Marble Top Road	CR 228 Water Tank Hill Road	2.09	35
North Marble Top Road (CR 721)		CR 209 Grand Center Road	State Route 341	1.07	35
Cordell Road (CR 133)		CR 132 Ringgold Road	State Route 95	2.50	35
Old LaFayette Road (CR 165)		CR 496 Old US 27	Catoosa County Line	2.25	35
Osburn Road (CR 255)		0.04 mile CR 254 Oakwood Terr (Chickamauga City Limit)	CR 253 Chandler Road	0.54	30
Osburn Road ***** School Zone *****	Osburn Elementary School	0.02 mile north of Chandler Road	0.02 mile south of State Route 1/US 27	0.25	25
Peavine Road (CR 158)		State Route 95	CR 719 East Long Hollow Road	2.32	35

LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17

ROAD NAME	WITHIN THE CITY / TOWN LIMITS OF <u>and/or</u> <u>School Name</u>	FROM	TO	LENGTH IN MILES	SPEED LIMIT
Pond Springs School Road (CR 201)		State Route 341	CR 200 Garrets Chapel Road	0.79	30
<i>Pond Springs School Road ***** School Zone *****</i>	<i>Pond Spring School</i>	<i>CR 528 Fescue Drive</i>	<i>0.10 mile south of CR 743 Pine Street</i>	<i>0.25</i>	<i>25</i>
Round Pond Road (CR 130)		0.01 mile south of CS 646 Byrd Wilson Road (LaFayette City Limit)	CR 132 Ringgold Road	0.70	35
Round Pond Road (CR 130)		CR 132 Ringgold Road	CR 722 Lake Howard Road	3.59	45
Straight Gut Road (CR 119)		State Route 136	CR 165 Old LaFayette Road	6.59	45
Trion Highway (CR 55)		Chattooga County Line	CR 713 Trion Road	3.74	45
Trion Highway (CR 494)		CR 713 Trion Road	State Route 1/US 27	3.31	45
Vittetoe Road (CR 265)		CR 264 Johnson Road	CR 270 Jenkins Road	1.13	35
West Armuchee Road (CR 706)		Chattooga County Line	State Route 136	6.89	55
Wilder Road (CR 710)		0.34 mile north of CR 220 Five Points Road (Chickamauga City Limit)	State Route 1/US 27	0.75	35
Wilson Road (CR 350)		CR 835 Happy Valley Road	Tennessee State Line	1.73	35
Wilson Road ***** School Zone *****	Rossville Elementary School	0.03 mile south of CR 964 Crestview Drive	0.03 mile north of CR 348 Ridgewood Street	0.25	25

*****SCHOOL ZONE HOURS EFFECTIVE*****

A. M. from 30 minutes prior to commencement times to 30 minutes after commencement time—

SCHOOL DAYS ONLY

P.M. from 30 minutes prior to dismissal time to 30 minutes after dismissal time –

SCHOOL DAYS ONLY

***LIST OF ROADS
WALKER COUNTY
NUMBER 03/02/17***

THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE WHEN APPROPRIATE SIGNS ARE ERECTED.

APPROVED:

CHAIRPERSON

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

ATTESTED:

CLERK

DATE

Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit Drug Task Force Intergovernmental Contract

Pursuant to the Georgia Constitution Art. IX, Sec. III, Para. I and O.C.G.A. § 36-69-1 *et seq.*, the following counties, municipalities, and constitutional officers (hereinafter referred to as "Entities") enter into this intergovernmental contract (hereinafter referred to as "Agreement") to operate the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit Drug Task Force (hereinafter referred to as "DTF"). This Agreement establishes a mutual aid law enforcement capability among the participating Entities herein in order to prevent and detect drug related crimes. The DTF operates by and through the consent of the participating agencies Entities set forth below, to-wit:

Chattooga County Sheriff
Chattooga County
City of Trion
City of Lafayette
Dade County Sheriff
Dade County
Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit District Attorney
Walker County Sheriff
Walker County

The Entities identified above enter into this Agreement pursuant to the following particulars.

WHEREAS, the DTF Entities seek to rid their respective communities and the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit of illicit drug and other criminal activity by actively enforcing the laws of the State of Georgia through the arrest and prosecution of criminal actors; and,

WHEREAS, the Entities agree that a collaborative effort is key to reducing drug use, sales, trafficking, and other criminal activity in the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit through the parameters of this Agreement as authorized under O.C.G.A. § 36-69-1 *et seq.*; and,

WHEREAS, the Entities seek funding through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (hereinafter referred to as "Byrne-JAG") in order to further this collaborative effort; and,

NOW BE IT KNOWN, the Entities of this Agreement are dedicated to this collaborative crime control initiative and are committed to the particulars of the Agreement. The Agreement shall become valid upon the effective date of Byron-JAG funding in 2025 and shall be active through the end of the grant period. The Entities shall re-examine the extent and need of this Agreement and the roles of the Entities participants at the expiration of the grant period. This Agreement can be amended, revised, or otherwise renewed upon Agreement of the Entities.

A. ASSIGNMENT OF PERSONNEL

1. The Entities assign personnel to the DTF as follows:
 - a. Chattooga County Sheriff assigns 2 deputies.
 - b. Dade County Sheriff assigns 1 deputy and 1 support staff.
 - c. Town of Trion assigns 1 police officer.
 - d. Walker County Sheriff assigns 2 deputies.
 - e. City of Lafayette assigns 1 police officer.
2. Nothing herein is intended or should be construed in any manner as creating or establishing the relationship of co-partners between the Entities hereto or as constituting one of the Entities as the agent, representative or employee of another Entity for any purpose or in any manner whatsoever, whether deputized or not, except as specifically stated otherwise in the Agreement Personnel assigned to the DTF by one of the Entities shall not be considered temporary or permanent employees, volunteers, or agents of the DTF or of any other Entities for any purpose whatsoever, including liability, or be entitled to or any rights or benefits of another Entity, whether deputized or not by such other Entity.
3. The Entities acknowledge it is their individual and sole responsibility to provide all applicable salary compensation and fringe benefits to their respective employees assigned to the DTF.
4. When authorized by the chief law enforcement officer of the Entity in which the DTF is acting, the employees and agents of responding Entities shall have the same powers, duties, rights, privileges, and immunities as if they were performing their duties in the jurisdiction where they are officially employed whenever performing authorized tasks pursuant to this Agreement.

B. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND USE OF BYRNE-JAG GRANT FUNDS

Each Entity agrees to the following with regard to expenses associated with personnel assigned to the DTF:

1. Chattooga County (hereinafter "Fiscal Agent") will serve as the application, recipient, and Fiscal Agent of Byrne-JAG funding on behalf of the participating Entities.
2. As the recipient of Byrne-JAG funding, the Fiscal Agent will establish and maintain an adequate accounting system and financial records, and accurately account for grant funds. An adequate accounting system must be able to accommodate a fund and account structure to separately track funds for each grant reward.
3. Each participating Entity will fund the initial costs of the detached personnel listed in Section A of this Agreement.
4. The Fiscal Agent, on behalf of the DTF, will accept quarterly reimbursement payments from the Byrne-JAG for personnel costs paid by participating.
5. DTF operations will be supported through the use of Byrne-JAG funding, appropriations from Entities, funding acquired through the Federal Equitable Sharing Program, funding acquired through Georgia Uniform Civil Procedure Act, and from other funds as authorized by the Control Board.
6. When quarterly Byrne-JAG reimbursement is distributed to the Fiscal Agent, each Entity shall be provided with a salary reimbursement for detached personnel to the DTF as follows:
 - Town of Trion – 1/8
 - Dade County – 2/8
 - Walker County – 2/8
 - Chattooga County – 2/8
 - City of Lafayette – 1/8
7. Each participating Entities shall be provided with a quarterly budget, quarterly operating expenses, and quarterly reimbursement request for DTF operating expenses. Each participating Entities shall provide a reimbursement for DTF quarterly operating expenses as agreed upon by the DTF Control Board.

8. Each Entity shall to ONLY seek reimbursement for uses permitted under the 2025 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.
9. As the DTF is not a separate legal Entity, no property or vehicles shall be titled in the name of the DTF. All vehicles purchased by the DTF using Federal Equitable Sharing Program, Georgia Uniform Civil Forfeiture Procedure Act, or any other funds approved by the Control Board shall be voted on by the DTF Control Board for approval and shall be titled in the name of the local Entities as deemed by the Commander of the DTF based on issuance to Agents and their respective agencies.
10. The records, accounts, documents, etc., of the Fiscal Agent relating to the DTF shall be open for inspection or audit by the Control Board of this Agreement with reasonable notice during regular business hours. The Fiscal Agent shall provide reports to the DTF Control Board as requested.

C. DTF OPERATING CONTROL BOARD

1. The DTF shall be administered by the DTF Control Board. Each participating Sheriff, Chief of Police, and District Attorney of the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit or their designee, shall serve as members of the Control Board. The Control Board will select from its participating law enforcement agencies a chair to conduct meetings. The members of the Control Board may also select other officers as deemed appropriate.
2. The Control Board shall meet quarterly. A quorum shall be established by the Control Board and official votes of the Control Board may be taken whenever the established quorum is present at the time of the vote. A vote shall be settled whenever a simple majority is reached. Written minutes of all official actions of the Control Board must be taken and retained.
3. The DTF shall adopt policies and procedures to ensure that the work of the DTF and all agents comply with applicable law and generally accepted law enforcement operational and management practices. Any policy and procedures not covered in the DTF's policy and procedure, agents will revert to their respective home agencies policy and procedure.

4. The Control Board should approve or amend the DTF's quarterly operating budget as necessary. Within the fiscal limits of DTF funds, the Control Board may authorize expenditures for acquisition of equipment, vehicles, supplies, goods, services, or other commodities necessary for DTF operation. Any such purchases acquired by funding with Federal Equitable Sharing Program, Georgia Uniform Civil Forfeiture Procedure Act, and any other funds approved by the Control Board that requires a title, shall be titled in the name of Entities as deemed necessary by the Commander of the DTF.
5. If any property, vehicles, equipment, etc. purchased by DTF with Control Board approval using funding from Federal Equitable Sharing Program, the Georgia Uniform Civil Forfeiture Procedure Act or any other funds approved by the Control Board that is titled to Entity and is deemed unusable or surplus by the Control Board or DTF Commander, the Entities will return titles to the DTF Commander. The DTF Commander will dispose the unusable or surplus items in accordance with Federal and State Law. Any unusable or surplus items deemed of value by the DTF Commander may be auctioned to the highest bidder pursuant to Federal and State Law with proceeds from said auction to be deposited in the DTF forfeited account as agreed upon by the Control Board. Any items deemed by the DTF Commander as not of value for auction shall be destroyed and documented pursuant to Federal and State Law. Vehicles, equipment, etc. may be reassigned to participating Entities upon approval of the Control Board in accordance with Federal and State Law.

D. INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

1. Each Entity shall maintain a policy of liability and/or law enforcement insurance covering the activities of its respective personnel participating on the DTF.
2. Unless otherwise expressly agreed, each Entity shall not be required to provide or maintain a policy of liability and/or law enforcement insurance covering the employees, agents, and volunteers of the other participating Entities operating under DTF policies even where assigned officers are deputized by one or more sheriffs.
3. Each Entity to this Agreement expressly declines responsibility for the acts or omissions of another party and/or its elected officials, officers, agents, volunteers and employees, whether deputized or otherwise. The Entities to this Agreement are not liable for the acts or omissions of another Entity to this Agreement except to the extent they have agreed in writing to be responsible for the acts or omissions of the other parties and/or its elected officials, officers, agents, volunteers and employees.

4. Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a waiver of any immunities or defenses, and the limits of liability under any property and casualty insurance policy for some or all of the Entities may not be added together to determine the maximum amount of liability for any Entity.
5. Nothing herein shall be construed to provide insurance coverage or indemnification to an officer, employee, or volunteer of any Entity for any act or omission for which the officer, employee, or volunteer of said Entity is guilty of malfeasance in office, willful neglect of duty, or bad faith. Insurance coverage shall be determined by the terms of any applicable coverage policy.
6. Each Entity shall be responsible for providing insurance coverage for injuries or death to its respective individual personnel. Each Entity will maintain workers' compensation insurance or self-insurance coverage, covering personnel assigned by its law enforcement department while they are assigned to the DTF or are otherwise participating in or assisting DTF operations or activities, as required by law.

E. COOPERATION OF JURISDICTIONS

The Entities shall cooperate and use their best efforts to ensure that the various provisions of the Agreement are fulfilled. All Entities of this Agreement will act in good faith to undertake resolution of any disputes in an equitable and timely manner and in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and applicable law.

F. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Should a court of competent jurisdiction rule any portion, section or subsection of this Agreement to be invalid or nullified, that fact shall not affect or invalidate any other portion, section, or subsection; and all remaining portions, sections, or subsections shall remain in full force and effect.
2. All Entities of this Agreement agree that the undersigned official is authorized by the jurisdiction to sign this Agreement for and on behalf of the Entity and by affixing his or her signature to the Agreement on behalf of a jurisdiction, the signing official indicates to the other jurisdictions, that the signing individual has already secured, if required, the ordinance or resolution manifesting prior approval from the Entity.

3. This Agreement may be executed simultaneously in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original and all of which together shall constitute but one and the same instrument. One originally signed copy of each counterpart shall be forwarded to and permanently maintained on file at the DTF office in accordance with the Byrne-JAG Grant.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Agreement has been executed and its effective and operative as to each of the Entities as herein provided as of the day and year written below by the attached signatories:

- Town of Trion – Attachment A [Located on Page 8](#)
- Chattooga County – Attachment B [Located on Page 9](#)
- Dade County – Attachment C [Located on Page 10](#)
- Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit District Attorney - Attachment D [Located on Page 11](#)
- Walker County – Attachment E [Located on Page 12](#)
- City of Lafayette – Attachment F [Located on Page 13](#)

Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit Drug Task Force
Local Government Participants Intergovernmental Contract

Attachment E

Walker County, Georgia

BY: _____

Shannon Whitfield

Board of Commissioners

Approved: Steve Wilson

Steve Wilson

Sheriff, Walker County

_____ Date

11/7/24

Date

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL
ENHANCEMENT & INNOVATION SUBGRANT AWARD
ACCOUNTABILITY COURT GRANT

SUBGRANTEE: Walker County BOC

SUPPLEMENTAL STATE FUNDS: \$44,000

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY: Walker County

PROJECT NAME: Mental Health Court

SUBGRANT NUMBER: J25-8-073

GRANT PERIOD: 01/01/25-06/30/25

This award is made under the Accountability Courts State of Georgia Grant program. The purpose of the Accountability Court Grants program is to make grants to local courts and judicial circuits to establish specialty courts or dockets to address offenders arrested for drug charges or mental health issues. This grant program is subject to the administrative rules established by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

This Subgrant shall become effective on the beginning date of the grant period, provided that a properly executed original of this "Subgrant Award" is returned to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council by December 27, 2024.

AGENCY APPROVAL

SUBGRANTEE APPROVAL



Jay Neal, Executive Director
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Signature of Authorized Official

Date Executed: 01/01/25

Typed Name & Title of Authorized Official

Employer Tax Identification Number (EIN)



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This memorandum of understanding (“MOU”) is entered into effective this _____ day of December, 2024 (“Effective Date”) between Walker County, Georgia (“County”), City of Chickamauga, Georgia (“City”), and World Triathlon Corporation (“WTC”). The County, City and WTC are sometimes referred to herein individually as “Party” and collectively as “Parties.” The Host parties indicted in this document are Walker County, Georgia and the City of Chickamauga, Georgia (“Host”).

WHEREAS, WTC desires to conduct an IRONMAN 70.3 branded endurance triathlon event (“Event”) on May 18, 2025 and May 17, 2026 (each, a “Race Date”) that includes a 56-mile bicycle ride through unincorporated portions of the County and through portions of the City limits (the “Venue”); and the County and City desire for WTC to conduct said Event; and

WHEREAS, WTC will be required to obtain a special event permit from the County and the City in order to conduct the Event; and

WHEREAS, the County and the City will provide certain services and equipment (“Host Support Services”) in the preparation and operation of the Event; and WTC will make a donation described hereinafter to the County and the City for its services and equipment incurred in regard to the Event;

THEREFORE, In consideration of the actions by the Parties in regard to the Event, and other good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the Parties agree as follows:

Financial Matters. WTC shall make a one-time donation, or cause a one-time donation to be made, in the amount of USD \$30,000.00 to the Chickamauga Battlefield Connector Trail project within 30 days of the Effective Date. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Parties acknowledge that if WTC obtains permission from The Ironman Foundation, a Florida not-for-profit corporation, then WTC shall have the option to have all or part of the donation be made instead by The Ironman Foundation.

WTC shall be entitled to receive and retain all Event entry fees, and all other revenues and value in-kind in connection with the Event, including without limitation all revenues from merchandise sales, sponsorships, hospitality passes, VIP passes, exposition booth sales, product licenses, television licenses, and photograph sales.

Operations, Equipment, and Personnel. Except to the extent required to be provided or obtained by Host, or as may be otherwise required under this Agreement, WTC shall provide for (or cause to be provided) all Event-related equipment, supplies, personnel (including volunteers and a local Event Director), training of personnel (including volunteers), race manuals/programs, race course route determination and design, race course set-up and tear-down, online and on-site athlete registration and check-in, welcome functions, award ceremonies, procurement of facilities, facility decoration, and all other technical and operational aspects of the Event.

Approvals & Permits. Host shall ensure that, at no cost to WTC, WTC timely receives all City and County governmental approvals, permits, access rights, business licenses, consents, ordinance exemptions, commitments, and licenses necessary or useful in connection with

performance by Host or WTC of this Agreement, including without limitation the conducting of the Event, closures of roadways, use of amplified sound and music by WTC in connection with the Event (the “**Approvals & Permits**”), provided WTC takes the appropriate and required action necessary to obtain the Approvals & Permits. Host shall ensure that, 30 days prior to the Event, all Approvals & Permits with respect to the Event are obtained, and that all Approvals & Permits will remain in effect for and during the Event; in each case at no cost to WTC (e.g., no charges for site fees, access fees, rental fees, closure fees, licensee fees, application fees, environmental impact fees, permit fees, etc.), provided WTC has taken the appropriate and required action necessary to obtain the Approvals & Permits.

Ambulance Service. Host shall use its best efforts to ensure ambulances will be distributed strategically along the race route and the Event medical area. WTC shall provide its official medical plan to Host and shall provide a reasonable opportunity for Host to review and comment on the official medical plan at least 90 days prior to the Event. Host shall use its best efforts to ensure dedicated EMS units will be on hand to respond to emergency transport needs and the general public on the day of the Event. For the avoidance of doubt, WTC is responsible for the cost of all race day ambulance and EMS dedicated units.

No Construction. Host shall use its best efforts to ensure that no structural, engineering, beautification, or other works occur that could in any way interfere with the race or any other aspect of the Event.

Police and Emergency Services. Host shall ensure that the local and regional police services will command and ensure all emergency services needed to maintain public safety throughout the duration of each Event. For the avoidance of doubt, WTC is responsible for the cost of all Event police and emergency services. Host shall be incorporated as part of the communications and “Incident Action Plan” for race day, including communication with the unified command post and emergency operations center.

Operational Aspects. In order to facilitate proper and timely planning, implementing, and conducting of each Event by WTC, Host shall, and shall cause each of its representatives, agents, and contractors to, follow instructions, solely regarding Event-related operational or technical issues, from WTC or any third party designated by WTC.

Representations and Warranties. Each Party represents and warrants that:

- a. It has the full right and legal authority to enter into and fully perform this Agreement in accordance with the terms and conditions contained herein;
- b. This Agreement is a legal, valid, and binding obligation of such entity, enforceable against such entity in accordance with its terms; and
- c. Neither the execution, delivery, nor performance of this Agreement by it violates or will violate or cause a breach of any other agreements or obligations to which it is a party or to which it is bound, and no approval, consent, notice, or other action by or to any third party or any commission, board, or other governmental authority or agency (collectively, “**Authorities**”) is required in connection with the execution, delivery, or performance of this Agreement (except, with respect to WTC, certain permits, approvals, consents, notices, and other actions by Authorities may be required in connection with performance by WTC of this Agreement).

Force Majeure. In the event either Party is prevented from performing any of its obligations under this Agreement by reason of any event outside of such Party’s control, including, without limitation, fire, weather, unsafe conditions, volcano, explosion, flood, landslide, epidemic, acts of nature, war, terrorism, or other hostilities, strike, civil commotion, domestic or foreign governmental acts, orders, or regulations (“**Force Majeure Event**”), then such obligations of

such Party during the duration of such Force Majeure Event, and for a reasonable time thereafter, will be suspended. In the case of cancellation of an Event due to a Force Majeure Event, the Parties agree to negotiate a date to reschedule such Event if practicable. If such canceled Event cannot reasonably be rescheduled or relocated within the Venue, neither Party shall be deemed to be in breach of this Agreement solely because of such cancellation. Neither any such cancellation, rescheduling, or relocation, nor the inability to reschedule or relocate, will, by itself, cause this Agreement to terminate. For purposes of this Agreement, neither the cancellation by WTC of any portion of the Event, nor the modification of the Event (e.g., distances, routes, etc.), will be deemed to be a cancellation of the Event.

Event Changes. WTC may in its reasonable discretion, in order to improve any Event, institute changes in the implementation or structure of such Event; provided, however, that no material change may be made to any previously confirmed location or venue(s) without the prior written consent of both Parties.

Exclusivity.

- a. **Use of Racecourse and Event-Related Areas.** Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Agreement: During the period between (and including) the Monday preceding the Race Date until (and including) the Friday following the Race Date (collectively, the “**Event Period**”), Host shall not produce, conduct, host, or permit any event (other than such Event) that takes place, in whole or in part, on any portion of the race course or at any Event-related area; provided, however, that during the Event Period (excluding race day) private functions and corporate events may take place but only if such events do not include any of the following:
 - i. include any endurance-, running-, road cycling-, or swimming-related race, competition or event;
 - ii. include any vendor exposition, tradeshow, and/or the selling of any merchandise and/or services;
 - iii. occur on the race course or at any other area where any part of the Event is being conducted, or adversely affect the ingress or egress to or from any such areas;
 - iv. in any way jeopardize or adversely impact Event production or operations;
 - v. infringe on any WTC intellectual property rights; or
 - vi. include or constitute Ambush Marketing or otherwise promote themselves as purportedly being part of or in connection with the Event. “**Ambush Marketing**” is the selling (e.g., including, but not limited to, sponsorship, merchandise, vendor space), advertising, or marketing, by any third party that is not a WTC-authorized sponsor, merchandiser, and/or vendor of the Event, where such selling, advertising, or marketing (1) is in connection with, or in proximity to, the Event, or (2) otherwise has the effect of exploiting the goodwill of the Event and/or gaining market exposure by way of intrusive and/or associative marketing practices.

Indemnification. To the extent permitted by applicable law, each Party agrees to be responsible for and indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the other Party, including its officers, employees, agents, and representatives, from and against any and all claims, damages, losses, liabilities, and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees) arising out of or related to the negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of the indemnifying party, its employees, agents, or representatives, in the performance of this Agreement.

Insurance. WTC, throughout the Term, obtain and maintain its own comprehensive general liability insurance for each Event from a reputable insurance company for, without limitation,

any and all claims of bodily injury, death, property damage, and advertising liability, and any and all litigation, arbitration and settlement costs, related to any claims for or by any Event participants, volunteers, referees, officials, scorekeepers, spectators, sponsors, and staff with a minimum combined single limit equal to but not less than two million U.S. dollars (\$2,000,000.00) per occurrence for any one incident or accident, and not less than five million U.S. dollars (\$5,000,000.00) in aggregate, which limits may be satisfied with any combination of primary and excess coverage; provided, that, any such excess coverage follows form of the primary coverage. WTC shall cause the City and County to be named as an additional insured in connection with each Event. Certificates evidencing the foregoing required insurance must be provided, upon request, to the Host.

Intellectual Property of WTC. Except with respect to the Event logo, Host shall not, without WTC's prior written consent, use any intellectual property rights of WTC, including without limitation the Ironman®, 70.3®, Iron Girl®, IRONKIDS®, Cape Epic®, 5150®, and Rock 'n' Roll® marks and names, the "M-Dot" logo, and the "K-Dot" logo.

Relationship of the Parties. The Parties are acting herein solely as independent contractors. Nothing herein contained will create or be construed as creating a partnership, joint venture, or agency relationship between the Parties. Each Party acknowledges and agrees that it neither has nor will give the appearance or impression of having any legal authority to bind or commit the other Party in any way. Each Party will be solely responsible for all wages, income taxes, worker's compensation, and any other requirements for all personnel it supplies in connection with this Agreement. As set forth above in this Agreement, WTC is responsible for payment of compensation and the issuance of all 1099 IRS filings for all Event police, emergency services, ambulances and dedicated EMS units.

Term of Agreement. This Agreement is effective beginning on the Effective Date, and will continue in effect until the date that is thirty (30) days after the **2026** Event, unless this Agreement is sooner terminated in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

Termination. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, WTC may immediately terminate this Agreement at any time if WTC gives written notice to Host that WTC has determined, in its reasonable judgment, that an Event is unlikely to occur or be sufficiently profitable to WTC whether due to: (A) revocation or cancellation of, or failure to timely obtain, any of the Approvals & Permits; (B) an insufficient number of paid entries or sponsorships received; or (C) any condition with respect to the Venue that could jeopardize the practicability of conducting the race as planned, or that could create a safety risk for any race participants or other Event visitors.

Announcements. Host shall not make any public announcements of a marketing or promotional nature (whether in writing, orally, via the Internet, or otherwise) of any Event without the prior written consent of WTC in each instance (which consent will not be unreasonably withheld), except that no such consent will be required to the extent such announcements are required of Host as part of the Host Support Services (or otherwise required of Host under the terms of this Agreement), or that: (1) are entirely administrative in nature, such as announcements informing the public regarding operational logistics or public safety matters (e.g., road closures, Event dates, Venue access); (2) include only information in the public domain; and (3) are not for purposes of marketing or promotion.

Entire Agreement. This Agreement sets forth the entire agreement and understanding of the Parties relating to the subject matter hereof, and, with respect to such subject matter, supersedes all prior agreements, arrangements and understandings, written or oral, between the Parties. Except as may be expressly set forth herein, there are no promises, conditions, representations, understanding, interpretations or terms of any kind as conditions or inducement to the execution hereof or in effect between the Parties.

The Parties have executed and delivered this Agreement as of the Effective Date.

WTC:

WORLD TRIATHLON CORPORATION

HOST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

By: _____

Name: SHANE FACTEAU

Title: COO

By: _____

Name: SHANNON K. WHITFIELD

Title: Chairman/CEO

CITY OF CHICKAMAUGA, GEORGIA

By: _____

Name: Trey Deck

Title: Mayor

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES CONTRACT

By

TRANSIT ALLIANCE GROUP, INC.

With

Walker County Transit

SECTION I: GENERAL CONTRACT PROVISIONS

PARA #101: CONTRACT BETWEEN:

This contract is made and entered into by and between the CONTRACTOR, the **Transit Alliance Group, Inc.**, legally empowered to contract pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) and hereinafter referred to as "TAG";

AND

Walker County Transit

Legally empowered to contract pursuant to the laws of Georgia, and hereinafter referred to as the "SUBCONTRACTOR".

This contract is deemed to be made under and shall be construed and enforced in every respect according to the laws of the State of Georgia.

Nothing contained in this contract shall be construed to constitute the SUBCONTRACTOR or any of its employees, agents, or sub-SUBCONTRACTORS as a partner, employee, or agent of TAG, nor shall either party to this contract have any authority to bind the other in any respect, it being intended that each shall remain an independent SUBCONTRACTOR.

The person signing this document on behalf of SUBCONTRACTOR has full power and has been properly authorized and empowered to enter into this Contract.

PARA #102 PERIOD OF CONTRACT:

This contract has an effective beginning date of **July 1, 2024** and shall terminate on **June 30, 2025**, unless terminated earlier under other provisions of this contract.

TAG's annual contract with DHS will terminate on June 30, 2025. TAG will not renew the contract with DHS after this date. Please note that should TAG's contract be terminated by DHS prior to June 30, 2025, it will also result in early termination of this subcontract.

Subsequent subcontracts for DHS Coordinated Transportation will need to be negotiated for FY26 with the new DHS contractor that will begin operations on July 1, 2025.

PARA # 103 TAG AND SUBCONTRACTOR AGREEMENTS:

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, TAG needs and desires a coordinated transportation system for human service agency clients and the public and

WHEREAS, the SUBCONTRACTOR has represented to TAG its desire and ability to provide this service

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants herein set forth, it is agreed by and between the parties hereto as follows:

A. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees:

1. To provide transportation services for residents of the service area location whose services are ordered by DHS Human Service Providers (HSP) and authorized by the DHS Planning and Service Area, Region One, in accordance with the Statement of Work described in Annex A. The primary county for which the SUBCONTRACTOR will provide service is Walker County. However, SUBCONTRACTOR will be responsible for transporting consumers outside their primary service area for consumers who attend human service agencies in other counties within Region One; and to provide supportive employment transportation for consumers from the agencies within Walker County if needed and requested. These locations may include, but not be limited to surrounding counties within Region One.
2. To provide and/or coordinate transportation of consumers who reside in the counties of Region One and are served at DHS sites located within Region One.
3. To make transportation services available twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week. Core hours are between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., Sunday through Saturday; however, the SUBCONTRACTOR must provide scheduled trips within non-core hours of 6:01PM through 5:59 AM as demand warrants.
4. To register and process all trips through the DHS TRIP\$ (electronic registration system) for a trip to be provided and billed. All trip orders from Human Service Providers must be entered in TRIP\$ and submitted to the transportation provider by noon the day prior to the date the service is requested. (Urgent trips or emergencies will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.) Any trip order that has incomplete or unclear information will not be accepted for service and will be returned by the transportation provider to the HSP. **See the TRIP\$ manual for instructions (for HSPs and Transportation Providers) regarding registering, ordering, and providing transportation via the TRIP\$ system.*
5. To attend TRIP\$ training provided by DHS and TAG for HSPs and Transportation Providers.
6. To submit an electronic Subcontractor's Invoice Backup Report (Invoice) and a Subcontractor's Invoice Summary Report to TAG by the 5th business day following the end of each month that details the total trips provided (and no-shows). These reports will provide the names of each consumer, the date of service provision, and numbers of

trips provided (for each consumer) during that month. *See the TRIP\$ manual for instructions regarding disposition of trips in the TRIP\$ system.

7. To submit a Monthly Programmatic (Usage) Report that provides the number of miles traveled, the hours worked, the number of drivers and the total number of vehicles used in that service month. This report will be completed by the transportation provider and submitted electronically with the monthly invoice by the 5th workday of the month. The report is attached as Annex C.
8. To submit a Report of Certified or In-Kind Cost to TAG with the Monthly Invoice by the 5th workday following the end of each month **for transportation providers receiving Aging dollars** each month. Transportation providers may claim In-Kind costs (if appropriate and available) in lieu of cash match for their aging reimbursements. The Certified Cost Form is attached as Annex D.
9. To attend scheduled meetings with the Regional Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) and called meetings as determined necessary by TAG and/or the DHS Regional Transportation Coordinator.
10. To attend SUBCONTRACTOR and Human Service Provider training and meetings as scheduled and deemed necessary by TAG.
11. To implement such service expansions or improvements as may be recommended by the RTCC and accepted by TAG and DHS, or as may otherwise be agreed upon between the parties from time to time.
12. To maintain updated internet accessibility and an updated Microsoft Windows operating system, both within the last two released versions, to be able to properly access and utilize a web-based trip ordering system.
13. To be willing to assist with evacuation efforts in a governor-declared state of emergency.
14. That if the SUBCONTRACTOR elects to use the DHS vehicles offered by the DHS and TAG to provide services, the SUBCONTRACTOR will be responsible for, maintaining the vehicle(s) (including preventive maintenance, cleaning and repair and component replacement as necessary) in accordance with the DHS Office of Facilities and Support Services Transportation Manual. SUBCONTRACTOR will provide all vehicle insurance coverage in accordance with the DHS Office of Facilities & Support Services Risk Management Programs and Claims Manual; SUBCONTRACTOR will defend all suits brought upon such claim and will pay all cost and expenses incidental thereto. However, agencies shall have the right, at their own expense, to participate in the defense of any suit, without relieving the SUBCONTRACTOR of any obligation thereunder. The SUBCONTRACTOR will return DHS vehicles to TAG/DHS in good condition upon termination of their contract with TAG. The SUBCONTRACTOR will be responsible for any expenses incurred by the DHS or TAG due to the failure of the SUBCONTRACTOR to return any vehicles in good condition. Expenses incurred by the DHS or TAG to restore vehicles to good condition shall be deducted from the final payment to the SUBCONTRACTOR, or if the expenses exceed final payment, billed to the SUBCONTRACTOR.
15. That the SUBCONTRACTOR is responsible for notifying TAG of any incidents or

accidents associated with the DHS transportation program and/or vehicles as outlined in the new DHS Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual, Part IX, and the Office of Facilities & Support Services Transportation Manual. An electronic copy of the DHS Transportation Manual can be downloaded at <https://dhs.georgia.gov/manuals-guides> and click on DHS Transportation Manual. Additionally, the required forms for reporting accidents or incidents are on TAG's website under the Forms section at www.transitag.org.

B. TAG will:

1. Monitor and evaluate SUBCONTRACTOR activities for effectiveness throughout the contract year.
2. Provide technical assistance, guidance, consultation, management support and other necessary support as needed and requested.
3. Provide Driver Improvement Training and Passenger Safety and Sensitivity training which also includes wheelchair securement to all drivers that transport DHS consumers. This training is for providers under subcontract with TAG.

PARA #104: DEPARTMENT AND SUBCONTRACTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

A. Mailing Addresses: The mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and contact persons listed below for the Transit Alliance Group, Inc. (TAG) and the SUBCONTRACTOR may be changed during the term of this contract by written notification to the other party by TAG office representatives or by the SUBCONTRACTOR.

1. TAG mailing address and telephone number for correspondence, reports, and other matters relative to this contract, except as otherwise indicated, are:

Transit Alliance Group, Inc.
1422 Green Road, Suite O
Chatsworth, GA 30705
ATTN: Barbara Hurst, Chief Executive Officer
Telephone #: (706) 971-3542
Fax #: (706) 971-3702
Email: barbarahurst@transitag.org

2. The SUBCONTRACTOR's mailing address and telephone number for correspondence, reports, and other matters relative to this contract are:

Walker County Transit
P. O. Box 445
101 South Duke Street
LaFayette, GA 30728
Amanda Shropshire, Transit Director
Telephone: (706) 375-0803
Fax: (706) 638-1437
Email: a.shropshire@walkerqa.us

PARA #105: NONDISCRIMINATION BY SUBCONTRACTORS AND SUB-SUBCONTRACTORS

- A. **NONDISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES:** The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to comply with federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and the Department of Human Services' policy relative to nondiscrimination in employment practices because of political affiliation, religion, race, color, sex, handicap, age, creed, veteran status or national origin. Nondiscrimination in employment practices is applicable to employees, applicants for employment, promotions, demotions, dismissal, and other elements affecting employment/employees.
- B. **NONDISCRIMINATION IN CLIENT/CLIENT SERVICE PRACTICES:** The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to comply with federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and the Department of Human Services' policy relative to nondiscrimination in consumer/customer/client service practices because of political affiliation, religion, race, color, sex, handicap, age, creed, veteran status or national origin. Neither shall any individual be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted or supported by the Department of Human Services and TAG.
- C. **COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to comply with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any relevant federal and state laws, rules, and regulations regarding employment practices toward individuals with disabilities and the availability/accessibility of programs, activities, or services for consumers/customers/clients with disabilities.
- D. **SUBSUBCONTRACTOR COMPLIANCE:** The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to require any subSUBCONTRACTOR performing services funded through this contract to comply with all provisions of the federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and policies described in this paragraph.

PARA #106 CONFIDENTIALITY OF INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION

The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to abide by all state and federal laws, rules and regulations, and the Department of Human Services policy on respecting confidentiality of an individual's records. SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees not to divulge any information concerning any individual to any unauthorized person without the written consent of the individual employee, client, or responsible parent or guardian.

PARA #107: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- A. The SUBCONTRACTOR and TAG certify that the provisions of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 45-10-20 through 45-10-28, as amended, which prohibit and regulate certain transactions between certain state officials or employees and the State of Georgia, have not been violated, and will not be violated, in any respect.
- B. **CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST / ANTI FRAUD PROCEDURES:** No officer, employee, or agent of the SUBCONTRACTOR shall solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from suppliers, or potential suppliers, including subSUBCONTRACTORS under this contract.

PARA #108: CONTRACT MODIFICATION/ALTERATION

- A. No modification or alteration of this agreement will be valid or effective unless such modification is made in writing and signed by both parties and affixed to this contract as an amendment indicating the contract number involved, the original contracting parties and the original effective date of the contract and the paragraphs(s) being modified or superseded, except as stated in subparagraph B immediately below.
- B. If either of the sources of reimbursement for services under this contract (appropriations from the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, or the Congress of the United States of America) are reduced during the term of this contract, TAG has the absolute right to make financial and other adjustments to this contract and to notify the SUBCONTRACTOR accordingly. Such adjustment(s) may require a contract amendment including, but not limited to, termination of the contract. The certification by either the Chief Executive Officer of the Transit Alliance Group, Inc. or the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Services of the occurrence of either of the reductions stated above shall be conclusive.

PARA #109: TAG RIGHT TO SUSPEND CONTRACT

TAG reserves the right to suspend the contract/sub-grant in whole or in part under this contract provision if it appears to TAG that the SUBCONTRACTOR is failing to substantially comply with the quality of service or the specified completion schedule of its duties required under this contract, and/or to require further proof of reimbursable expenses prior to payment thereof, and/or to require improvement, at the discretion of TAG, in the programmatic performance or service delivery.

PARA #110: SEVERABILITY

Any section, subsection, paragraph, term, condition, provision or other part (hereinafter collectively referred to as "part") of this Contract that is judged, held, found, or declared to be voidable, void, invalid, illegal, or otherwise not fully enforceable shall not affect any other part of this Contract, and the remainder of this Contract shall continue to be of full force and effect. Any agreement of the parties to amend, modify, eliminate, or otherwise change any part of this Contract shall not affect any other part of this Contract, and the remainder of this Contract shall continue to be of full force and effect.

PARA #111: TERMINATION

- A. Due to non-availability of funds. Notwithstanding any other provision of this contract, in the event that either of the sources of reimbursement for services under this contract (appropriations from the General Assembly of the State of Georgia or the Congress of the United States of America) no longer exist or in the event the sum of all obligations of TAG incurred under this and all other contracts entered into for this program exceeds the balance of such contract sources, then this contract shall immediately terminate without further obligation of TAG as of that moment. The certification by either the Chief Executive Officer of the Transit Alliance Group, Inc. or the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Services of the occurrence of either of the events stated above shall be conclusive.
- B. Due to default or for cause. This contract may be terminated for cause, in whole or in part, at any time by TAG for failure of the SUBCONTRACTOR to perform any of the provisions hereof. Should TAG exercise its right to terminate this contract under the provisions of this paragraph, the termination shall be accomplished in writing and specify the reason and termination date. The SUBCONTRACTOR will be required to submit the final contract

expenditure report no later than 30 days after the effective date of written notice of termination. Upon termination of this contract, the SUBCONTRACTOR shall not incur any new obligations after the effective date of the termination and shall cancel as many outstanding obligations as possible. The above remedies are in addition to any other remedies provided by law or the terms of this contract.

- C. For Convenience. This contract may be cancelled or terminated by either of the parties without cause; however, the party seeking to terminate or cancel this contract must give written notice of its intention to do so to the other party at least 60 days prior to the effective date of cancellation or termination. If the SUBCONTRACTOR fails to give proper notice and/or fails to provide services throughout the entire 60-day notice period, such action shall be considered in breach of contract and/or gross negligence. The penalty for a breach of contract and/or gross negligence can result in the calling in of posted performance bond and/or withholding of any outstanding reimbursements.
- D. Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, this contract may be immediately terminated without any opportunity to cure, if any of the following events occurs:
 - 1. SUBCONTRACTOR becomes insolvent or liquidation or dissolution or a sale of the SUBCONTRACTOR's assets begins.
 - 2. SUBCONTRACTOR or any subSUBCONTRACTOR violates or fails to comply with any applicable provision of federal or state law or regulation.
 - 3. SUBCONTRACTOR or any subSUBCONTRACTOR knowingly provides fraudulent, misleading or misrepresentative information to any consumer/customer/client of DHS or to DHS, or to TAG.
 - 4. SUBCONTRACTOR has exhibited an inability to meet its financial or services obligations under this contract or fails to comply with Paragraph 114 of this agreement.
 - 5. A voluntary or involuntary bankruptcy petition is filed by or against the SUBCONTRACTOR under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code or any similar petition under any state insolvency law.
 - 6. An assignment is made by the SUBCONTRACTOR for the benefit of creditors.
 - 7. A proceeding for the appointment of a receiver, custodian, trustee, or similar agent is initiated with respect to the SUBCONTRACTOR.
 - 8. TAG deems that such termination is necessary if the SUBCONTRACTOR or any subSUBCONTRACTOR fails to protect or potentially threatens the health or safety of any consumer/customer/client of DHS and/or to prevent or protect against fraud or otherwise protect TAG or the State of Georgia's personnel, consumers/customers/clients, facilities, or services.
 - 9. SUBCONTRACTOR is debarred or suspended from performing services on any public contracts and/or subject to exclusion from participation in the Medicaid or Medicare programs.

PARA #112: COOPERATION IN TRANSITION OF SERVICES

The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees upon termination of this contract, in whole or in part, for any reason to cooperate as requested by TAG to effectuate the smooth and reasonable transition of the care and services for DHS consumers/customers/clients as directed by TAG. This will include but not be limited to the transfer of the consumer/customer/client records, personal belongings, as directed by TAG. The SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees that should it go out of business and/or cease to operate, all original records of consumers/customers/clients served pursuant to this contract shall be transferred by the SUBCONTRACTOR to TAG and/or DHS immediately and shall become the property of TAG.

PARA #113: FORCE MAJEURE

Each party will be excused from performance under this contract to the extent that it is prevented from performing, in whole or in substantial part, due to delays caused by an act of God, civil disturbance, civil or military authority, war, court order, acts of public enemy, and such nonperformance will not constitute a default under this contract or be a basis for termination for cause. Nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to relieve the SUBCONTRACTOR from its liability for work performed by any subSUBCONTRACTOR. If the services to be provided to TAG are interrupted by a force majeure event, TAG will be entitled to an equitable adjustment to the fees and other payments due under this contract.

PARA #114: ACCESS TO RECORDS AND INVESTIGATION

- A. The state and federal government, the Department of Human Services, and TAG shall have full and complete access to all consumer/customer/client records, administrative records, financial records, pertinent books, documents, papers, correspondence, including e-mails, management reports, memoranda, and any other records of the SUBCONTRACTOR and subSUBCONTRACTOR to conduct or review audit examinations, excerpts, and transcripts. At the request of TAG, SUBCONTRACTOR shall make any such records available to TAG within 48 hours of receipt of notice. SUBCONTRACTOR and subSUBCONTRACTOR record retention requirements are five years from submission of final expenditure report. If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the six-year period, the records shall be retained until all litigations, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved.
- B. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees that TAG and/or the DHS Office of Fraud and Abuse (upon the request of the DHS Commissioner or his designee), has full authority to investigate any allegation of misconduct in performance of duties arising from this contract made against an employee of the SUBCONTRACTOR. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to cooperate fully in such investigations by providing the Office of Investigative Services full access to its records and by allowing its employees to be interviewed during such investigations.
- C. TAG shall have the right to monitor and inspect the operations of the SUBCONTRACTOR and any subSUBCONTRACTOR for compliance with the provisions of this Contract and all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, with or without notice, at any time during the term of this Contract. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to cooperate fully with these monitoring and inspection activities. Such monitoring and inspection activities may include, without limitation, on-site health and safety inspections, financial and behavioral health/clinical audits, review of any records developed directly or indirectly because of this Contract, review of management systems, policies and procedures, review of service authorization and utilization activities, and review of any other areas, activities or materials relevant to or pertaining to this Contract. TAG will develop a report of its findings and may require the SUBCONTRACTOR to develop corrective action plans as appropriate. Such corrective action plans may include requiring the SUBCONTRACTOR to make changes in service authorization, utilization practices, and/or any activity deemed necessary by TAG.

PARA #115: TAG APPROVAL OF SUBCONTRACTS

- A. Any subcontracts or delegations of the authority herein will be submitted to TAG for approval prior to execution. The SUBCONTRACTOR will be responsible for the

performance of any subSUBCONTRACTOR to whom any duties are delegated under any provision of this contract. In no event shall the performance of any provision of this contract be subcontracted without the prior written consent of TAG.

- B. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to reimburse TAG for any federal or state audit disallowances arising from the subSUBCONTRACTOR's performance or non-performance of duties under this contract, which are delegated, to the subSUBCONTRACTOR.
- C. If the SUBCONTRACTOR subcontracts for the provision of any deliverables pursuant to this contract, the SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to include the following in each subcontract:
 - 1. Stipulations that the subSUBCONTRACTOR is required to adhere to each provision of this contract related to the quality and quantity of deliverables, compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, confidentiality, auditing, access to records, and contract administration.
- D. The SUBCONTRACTOR shall promptly pursue, at its own expense, appropriate legal and equitable remedies against any subSUBCONTRACTOR who fails to adhere to the contract requirements. The SUBCONTRACTOR's failure to proceed against a subSUBCONTRACTOR will constitute a separate breach by the SUBCONTRACTOR in which case TAG and/or DHS may pursue appropriate remedies because of such breach.
- E. The Chief Executive Officer of TAG is the nonprofit's approving authority for subcontracts and delegation of authority.

PARA #116: SUBCONTRACTOR/SUBSUBCONTRACTOR LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to maintain any required city, county and state business licenses and any other special licenses required, prior to and during the performance of this contract.
- B. The SUBCONTRACTOR is responsible for ensuring that subSUBCONTRACTORS are appropriately licensed.
- C. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees that if it loses or has sanctioned any license, certification, or accreditation required by this Contract or state and federal laws, that this contract may be terminated immediately in whole or in part.

PARA #117: PUBLICITY

SUBCONTRACTOR must ensure that any publicity given to the program or services provided herein identify the Department of Human Services (DHS) and TAG as sponsoring agencies. Publicity materials include, but are not limited to, signs, notices, information pamphlets, press releases, brochures, radio or television announcements, or similar information prepared by or for the SUBCONTRACTOR. Prior approval for the materials must be received from TAG Chief Executive Officer and/or the DHS Regional Transportation Coordinator. All media and public information materials must also be approved by the Commissioner's Office of Policy and Government Services, Office of Communications. In addition, the SUBCONTRACTOR shall not display DHS' or TAG's name or logo in any manner, including, but not limited to, display on SUBCONTRACTOR's letterhead or physical plant, without the prior written authorization of the DHS Commissioner and the Chief Executive Officer of TAG.

PARA #118: CONSULTANT/STUDY CONTRACT

- A. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees not to release any information, findings, research, reports, recommendations, or other material developed or utilized during or because of this contract until the information has been provided to TAG and the Department of Human Services, appropriately presented to the Board of Human Services, and made a matter of public record.
- B. The SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees that any research, study, review, or analysis of the consumers/customers/clients served under this contract by any outside individual or organization must be reviewed and approved by TAG and the Department of Human Services.

PARA #119: DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

- A. If SUBCONTRACTOR is an individual, he or she hereby certifies that he or she will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or marijuana during the performance of this contract.
- B. If SUBCONTRACTOR is an entity other than an individual; it hereby certifies that it will comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D; 41 U.S.C. 701 et seq.) and that:
 1. A drug-free workplace will be provided for the SUBCONTRACTOR's employees during the performance of this contract; and
 2. It will secure from any subSUBCONTRACTOR hired to work in a drug-free workplace the following written certification: As part of the subcontracting agreement with (SUBCONTRACTOR's Name), (subSUBCONTRACTOR's Name), certifies to the SUBCONTRACTOR that a drug-free workplace will be provided for the subSUBCONTRACTOR's employees during the performance of this contract pursuant to paragraph 7 of subsection B of Code Section 50-24-3.
- C. SUBCONTRACTOR may be suspended, terminated, or debarred if it is determined that:
 1. The SUBCONTRACTOR has made false certification hereinabove; or
 2. The SUBCONTRACTOR has violated such certification by failure to carry out the requirements of Official Code of Georgia Section 50-24-3.

PARA #120 CRIMINAL RECORDS INVESTIGATIONS

- A. The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees that, for the filling of positions or classes of positions having direct care/treatment/custodial responsibilities for services rendered under this contract, applicants selected for such positions shall undergo a criminal record history investigation, which shall include a fingerprint record check pursuant to the provisions of Section 49-2-14 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (refer to **Annex E**). Fingerprint record checks shall be submitted via Live Scan electronic fingerprint technology. SUBCONTRACTOR must utilize one of the following methods to comply with this requirement:
 1. SUBCONTRACTOR will register their employee/applicant with the Georgia

- Applicant Processing Services (GAPS) at www.aps.gemalto.com and follow the instructions provided at that website. The registration number assigned by Gemalto will be provided to the employee/applicant to have fingerprinting done.
2. SUBCONTRACTOR will send a copy of the employee/applicant authorization form along with the registration number to TAG for verification of employment eligibility via Gemalto.
 - B. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 49-2-14, TAG, after receiving and reviewing the criminal history report generated through the Live Scan process, will advise the SUBCONTRACTOR if any information contained in the report indicates a crime prohibited by duly published criteria within the Department. Under such circumstances, the individual so identified will not be employed to provide services under this contract.
 - C. Provisions of this paragraph of the contract shall not apply to persons employed in day-care centers, group day-care homes, family daycare homes, child-caring institutions or child care learning centers which are required to be licensed, registered, or commissioned by the Department or by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, or to personal care homes required to be licensed, permitted, or registered by the Department.

PARA #121 AIDS POLICY

The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees, as a condition to provision of services to the Department of Human Services clients/patients, not to discriminate against any client/patient who may have AIDS or be infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). The SUBCONTRACTOR is encouraged to provide or cause to be provided appropriate AIDS training to its employees and to seek AIDS technical advice and assistance from TAG and appropriate division or office of the DHS, as the SUBCONTRACTOR deems necessary. The SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees to refer those clients/patients requesting additional AIDS related services or information to the appropriate county health department.

PARA #122: FEDERAL AND DEPARTMENTAL PROHIBITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO LOBBYING

- A. Pursuant to Section 1352 of Public Law 101-121, the SUBCONTRACTOR agrees that:
 1. No federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the SUBCONTRACTOR, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any federal agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement;
 2. As a condition of receipt of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement exceeding \$100,000, the SUBCONTRACTOR shall file with TAG a signed "Certification Regarding Lobbying," attached hereto as Annex E;
 3. If any funds other than federally appropriated funds have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee

of a member of Congress in connection with this federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the SUBCONTRACTOR shall complete and submit Standard Form "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions, copies of which may be obtained from the Department; and

4. A disclosure form will be filed at the end of each calendar quarter in which there occurs any event that requires disclosure or that materially affects the accuracy of the information contained in any disclosure form previously filed by SUBCONTRACTOR under subparagraphs (b) or (c) of this paragraph. An event that materially affects the accuracy of the information reported includes:
 - i. A cumulative increase of \$25,000 or more in the amount paid, or expected to be paid, for influencing or attempting to influence a covered federal action; or
 - ii. A change in the person(s) or individual(s) influencing, or attempting to influence, a covered federal action; or
 - iii. A change in the officer(s), employee(s), or member(s) contacted to influence or attempt to influence a covered federal action.

Any SUBCONTRACTOR who makes a prohibited expenditure or who fails to file or amend the disclosure form, as required, shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such expenditure.

An imposition of a civil penalty under this section does not prevent the United States from seeking any other remedy that may apply to the same conduct that is the basis for the imposition of such civil penalty.

The SUBCONTRACTOR shall require that the prohibitions and requirements of this paragraph be included in the award documents for all sub awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

B. SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees that in accordance with the federal appropriations act:

1. No part of any federal funds contained in this contract shall be used, other than for normal and recognized executive legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, for the preparation, distribution or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or video presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress or any State legislature, except in presentation to the Congress or any State legislature itself.
2. No part of any federal funds contained in this contract shall be used to pay the salary or expenses of any grant or contract recipient, or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the Congress or any State legislature.

C. SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees that no part of state funds contained in this contract shall be used for the preparation, distribution or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, Internet, or video presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the General Assembly or any committee thereof, or the approval or veto of legislation by the Governor or for any other related purposes.

PARA #123: INDEMNIFICATION / HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE

SUBCONTRACTOR hereby waives, releases, relinquishes, discharges and agrees to indemnify, protect, and save harmless the State of Georgia (including the State Tort Claims Trust Fund), DHS, TAG, and their officers and employees (collectively "Indemnities") of, from any and all claims, demands, liabilities, losses, costs, or expenses for any loss or damage for bodily injury, including but not limited to death, personal injury, property damage, attorneys' fees caused by growing out of, or otherwise happening in connection with, this Contract, due to any act or omission on the part of SUBCONTRACTOR, its agents, employees, subSUBCONTRACTORS, or others working at the direction of SUBCONTRACTOR or on SUBCONTRACTOR's behalf, or due to any breach of this Contract by SUBCONTRACTOR (collectively, the "Indemnity Claims").

This indemnification extends to the successors and assigns of the SUBCONTRACTOR, and this indemnification and release survives the termination of this Contract and the dissolution or, to the extent allowed by law, the bankruptcy of the SUBCONTRACTOR.

If, and to the extent, such damage or loss as covered by this indemnification is covered by the State Tort Claims Fund or any other self-insurance funds maintained by the Department of Administrative Services (collectively, the "funds"), the SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to reimburse the Funds for such funds paid out by the Funds. To the full extent permitted by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Georgia and the terms of the Funds, the SUBCONTRACTOR and its insurers waive any right of subrogation against the State of Georgia, the Indemnities, and the Funds and insurers participating there under, to the full extent of this indemnification.

SUBCONTRACTOR shall, at its expense, be entitled to and shall have the duty to participate in the defense of any suit brought against the State of Georgia and/or TAG.

PARA #124: DEBARMENT

In accordance with Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, and implemented at 45 CFR Part 76, 100-510, SUBCONTRACTOR certifies by signing Annex G that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this contract by any federal department or agency. SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all lower tier transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

PARA #125: PROPERTY MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees:

- A. That all DHS property assigned to the SUBCONTRACTOR during the term of this contract and all previous contracts is property of the State of Georgia and the DHS and is subject to the rules and regulations of the DHS throughout the life and disposition of said property. Said property cannot be transferred or otherwise disposed of without prior written approval of the DHS Asset Services Section.
- B. To adhere to all policies and procedures as promulgated in the DHS Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual, Part IX, and the Office of Facilities & Support Services Transportation Manual, which are by reference made a part of this contract. SUBCONTRACTOR understands that the requirements for inventory of property and a control system to safeguard against loss, damage or theft as contained in the property

manual and shall be followed.

- C. In the event the contract is terminated prior to expiration or is not renewed, SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to properly transfer or dispose of all state property as follows:
 1. Prepare Form 5086, Equipment Status Change form listing all state equipment in the SUBCONTRACTOR's possession and send this form to the Department of Human Services - Office of Facilities and Support Services - Regional Transportation Coordinator for final determination.
 2. Upon notification by the Office of Facilities and Support Services, SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to transport the state property to the designated state surplus facility. Expenses incurred by the SUBCONTRACTOR in transporting this equipment may be charged to the terminated contract.

The DHS property coordinator will confirm, by written notification to the Office of Facility and Support Services that all surplus property listed on completed Form 5086 has received proper transfer or disposition.

PARA # 126: VIOLATIONS OF THIS CONTRACT

TAG will impose sanctions and/or penalties for violations or breaches of the terms of this contract. Sanctions and penalties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Withholding payment to the SUBCONTRACTOR until the violation has been corrected;
- B. Disallowance of costs associated with or created by the violation;
- C. De-obligation of funds from this contract;
- D. Termination of this contract in accordance with PARA #111.

SECTION II: BUDGET REQUIREMENTS AND PAYMENT PROVISIONS,

PARA #201: PAYMENT TO SUBCONTRACTOR AND SUBCONTRACTOR MATCH REQUIREMENT

TAG will reimburse the SUBCONTRACTOR for all one-way completed and no-show passenger trips that are processed and approved in the TRIP\$ electronic data entry system. Reimbursements will be made monthly with the SUBCONTRACTOR's billing cycle beginning with the first day of the month and ending with the last day of the month.

A projected budget for the fiscal year is provided to the SUBCONTRACTOR that outlines the number of (projected) trips that are expected to be provided during the fiscal year; the agreed upon trip rate for each service; and the projected funding amounts (for the fiscal year) to cover those trips. This funding amount cannot be exceeded without authorization and approval by TAG and DHS. SUBCONTRACTORS should use the fiscal year budget projections to determine their anticipated service levels and revenues. See ANNEX B for fiscal year trip projections and revenues.

Refer to Annex A – DHS Statement of Work – Section IV (Trip Classification and Reimbursement) for an explanation of types of trips by service, order of priority, and reimbursement criteria.

Payment to the SUBCONTRACTOR will be issued within two (2) business days following the receipt of DHS payment by TAG. The SUBCONTRACTOR is to contact TAG for all payment and

billing issues. Such issues include, but are not limited to, reimbursements, billing errors, billing resolution, and payment schedules. Under no circumstances should the SUBCONTRACTOR contact the Department of Human Services to resolve these issues.

PARA #202: INVOICE SUBMISSION

The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to submit an invoice in accordance with the fixed rate/progress payment schedule not later than the 5th work day after the end of each month during the term of this contract. The invoice and client data forms to be used are part of the TRIP\$ electronic reporting system. The electronic invoice and summary reports are to be completed by the SUBCONTRACTOR and submitted as "Excel" documents to TAG by the 5th workday of each month. DHS and TAG reimburses for services provided and verified through TRIP\$; therefore, any service provided but not entered and processed through TRIP\$ will not be reimbursed. TAG reserves the right to request additional documentation and data as deemed necessary.

PARA #203: REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFIED COST AND/OR IN-KIND MATCH:

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and Title III funding used for provision of Aging trips require an associated match relative to the funding source. In-Kind matches may be used in lieu of cash matches for these fund sources; however, regardless of whether match is verified with In-Kind or cash match, a Certified Cost Form must be completed, signed, and submitted with the SUBCONTRACTOR'S monthly invoice and reports to verify the amount of the associated match relative to SSBG and Title III Aging dollars.

*Note: No associated match is required for DFCS or DBHDD funding.

PARA #204: LIABILITY COVERAGE

The SUBCONTRACTOR must purchase and retain insurance coverage for DHS and Non-DHS vehicles used for coordinated transportation.

All SUBCONTRACTORS must carry the required amount of insurance as stipulated by DHS to provide transportation for their consumers. These limits pertain to all transportation providers and all vehicles, regardless of whether they are DHS-owned or non-DHS vehicles.

Per DOAS' guidance, terminology and explanation, the limits listed below are mandated by DHS.

*Refer to the DHS Coordinated Transportation Manual, <https://dhs.georgia.gov/manuals-guides>, Chapter III, Risk Management and Insurance for additional information or clarification.

The insurance limits must be stated on the SUBCONTRACTOR'S Certificates of Insurance (COI).

Commercial General Liability – insurance that pays and renders service on behalf of a contractor for the loss arising out of a contractor's responsibility due to negligence, imposed by law or assumed by contract.:

\$1,000,000 per occurrence	<i>(Each Occurrence Limit – indicates the amount of coverage the contractor has under a liability policy for any one occurrence other than Personal & Advertising injury occurrences.)</i>
\$3,000,000 aggregate	<i>(Aggregate Limit – indicates the amount of coverage (for other than Products/Completed Operations Liability occurrences) the contractor</i>

(has under a liability policy for the policy period; no matter how many separate losses that may occur.)

Automobile Liability:

\$1,000,000 per occurrence	<i>(Each Occurrence Limit – indicates the amount of coverage the contractor has under a liability policy for any one occurrence other than Personal & Advertising injury occurrences.)</i>
\$3,000,000 aggregate	<i>(Aggregate Limit – indicates the amount of coverage (for other than Products/Completed Operations Liability occurrences) the contractor has under a liability policy for the policy period; no matter how many separate losses that may occur.)</i>

Automobile Liability policies with a Combined Single Limit (CSL) of \$1,000,000 must also indicate the \$3,000,000 aggregate. This is based on the DOAS definition of Combined Single Limit (CSL) - typically expressed when referring to liability limits in an automobile policy. Refers to an aggregate limit of liability coverage for bodily injury and property damage in one accident or occurrence.

Commercial Umbrella Policy (Occurrence). An umbrella policy may cover the aggregate policy limits required above. There must be no gap between the \$1 million and \$3 million-dollar policy limits.

The Contractor's policy containing coverage amounts with higher limits than stated above will satisfy the requirements.

A.M. Best Rating

Insurance companies/carriers of SUBCONTRACTORS' that are not governmental entities are required to have an AM Best rating of B+ or higher. Any rating below B+ will not be accepted by DHS.

SECTION III: COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIFIC STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS, RULES, REGULATIONS, AND STANDARDS

PARA #301: STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS, RULES, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

SUBCONTRACTOR agrees that all work done as part of this contract will comply fully with all administrative and other requirements established by applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and assumes responsibility for full compliance with all such laws, rules and regulations, and agrees to fully reimburse TAG for any loss of funds or resources resulting from non-compliance by the SUBCONTRACTOR, its staff, agents, or subSUBCONTRACTOR as revealed in any subsequent audits. SUBCONTRACTOR understands that the following items specifically apply to this contract, but do not exclude any other applicable federal or state laws or requirements.

A. Compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA):

It is understood and agreed that TAG is a "covered entity" as defined by HIPAA of 1996

and the federal "Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information" promulgated there under at 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164. Further, it is agreed that as a business associate of TAG that its use or disclosure of any person's protected health information received from or on behalf of TAG will be governed by the Business Associate Agreement, attached hereto as Annex H which the SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to by signing and submitting with this contract. Such Business Associate Agreement is executed and is effective simultaneously with this contract/amendment. However, the Business Associate Agreement will survive this contract/amendment pursuant to Section E of the Business Associate Agreement.

- B. 45 CFR Part 74; as used in this contract, the word SUBCONTRACTOR is synonymous with the word Sub-grantee as used in this Code of Federal Regulations.
- C. Advance federal agency approval of cost:

It is agreed that it shall be the responsibility of the SUBCONTRACTOR to request in writing, from TAG, approval of expenditures which require advance federal agency approval. It shall be the responsibility of TAG to request approval of such expenditures from the Department of Human Services. It shall be the responsibility of the Department of Human Services to acquire written federal agency approval of these requests for advance approval received from the SUBCONTRACTOR and to notify TAG in writing of the approval. Expenditures requiring advance federal agency approval may not be made by the SUBCONTRACTOR prior to receipt of DHS written notification that federal agency approval has been granted.

- D. Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended.
- E. Social Services Block Grant (Title XX) Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1961, P.L. 97-35
- F. Federal Transit Act, Section 5310 – Grant #16-0024
- G. Social Security Act, Title IV, Part A, as amended; Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996; Public Law 104-193; Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Public Law 105-33 (for TANF).
- H. 45 CFR Part 1321, Administration on Aging, Older Americans Program, and Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended.
- I. Compliance with Federal and State Immigration Laws: The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to comply with E-Verify requirements and agrees that throughout the performance of this contract will remain in full compliance with all federal and state immigration laws, including but not limited to provisions 8 USC § 1324a and Act 457 of the 2006 Session of the Georgia General Assembly (Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, effective July 1, 2007) regarding the unlawful employment of unauthorized aliens and verification of lawful presence in the United States. SUBCONTRACTOR will ensure that only persons who are citizens or nationals of the United States or non-citizens authorized under federal immigration laws are employed to perform services under this contract or any subcontract hereunder. (Titles 13, 16, 35, 42, 43, 48 and 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, enacted effective July 1, 2007). Contract further certifies by signing Annex I (Immigration and Security Form), it will comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), D.L. 99-603 and the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act O.C.G.A.

13-10-90 et. seq., SUBCONTRACTOR further agrees to include the provisions contained in the foregoing paragraph in each subcontract for services hereunder.

SUBCONTRACTOR shall not retaliate against or take any adverse action against any employee or any subSUBCONTRACTOR for reporting or attempting to report a violation(s) regarding applicable immigration laws.

- J. Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 311, 42 U.S.C. 3030a, Section 604, 42 U.S.C. 3057c; Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973, as amended, Section 4(a), 7 U. S. C. 612c note; Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, Section 416, 7 U. S. C. 1431; Food and Agriculture Act of 1965, as amended, Section 709, 7 U. S. C. 1446a-1.

PARA #302: AUDITS AND FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to provide to TAG within 180 days after the close of the SUBCONTRACTOR's fiscal year, one (1) copy of audited financial statements prepared by an independent auditor for the organization. These statements should cover at a minimum all revenues, expenses (including any capital outlays) that directly or indirectly affect the services provided and costs reported under this contract.

SUBCONTRACTOR understands that failure to comply with the above audit and financial reporting requirements could be cause for TAG to suspend payments, to terminate this contract, to require a refund of all monies received under this contract and to prohibit the SUBCONTRACTOR from receiving funds from any state organization for a period for twelve (12) months from the date of notification by TAG.

PARA #303 COLLECTION OF AUDIT EXCEPTIONS

The SUBCONTRACTOR agrees that TAG may withhold net payments (voucher deduction) equal to the amount that has been identified by an audit notwithstanding the fact that such audit exception is made against a prior or current contract. The SUBCONTRACTOR may also repay TAG for the total exception by certified check.

PARA #304 TITLE VI ASSURANCE

During the performance of this contract, the SUBCONTRACTOR, for itself, its assignees and successors in interest (hereinafter referred to as the "SUBCONTRACTOR") agrees as follows:

1. **Compliance with Regulations:** The SUBCONTRACTOR shall comply with the regulations relative to nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation (hereinafter "DOT") Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 21, as they may be amended from time to time (hereinafter, referred to as the Regulations), which are herein incorporated by reference and made a part of this contract.
2. **Nondiscrimination:** The SUBCONTRACTOR, regarding the work performed by it during the contract, shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin in the selection and retention of subSUBCONTRACTORs, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment. The SUBCONTRACTOR shall not participate either directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited by Section 21.5 of the Regulations, including employment practices when the contract covers a program set forth in Appendix B of the Regulations.

3. **Solicitations for Subcontracts, Including Procurement of Materials and Equipment:** In all solicitations either by competitive bidding or negotiation made by the SUBCONTRACTOR for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurement of materials or leases of equipment each potential subSUBCONTRACTOR or supplier shall be notified by the SUBCONTRACTOR of the SUBCONTRACTOR's obligations under this contract and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin.
4. **Information and Reports:** The SUBCONTRACTOR shall provide all information and reports required by the Regulations or directives issued pursuant thereto, and shall permit access to its books, records, accounts, other sources of information, and its facilities as may be determined by the Recipient or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to be pertinent to ascertain compliance with such Regulations, orders and instructions. Where any information is required, or a contract is in the exclusive possession of another who fails or refuses to furnish this information, the SUBCONTRACTOR shall so certify the Recipient, or the Federal Transit Administration, as appropriate, and shall set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.
5. **Sanctions for Noncompliance:** In the event of the SUBCONTRACTOR'S noncompliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of this contract, the Recipient shall impose such contract sanctions as it or the Federal Transit Administration may determine to be appropriate, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Withholding of payments to the SUBCONTRACTOR under the contract until the SUBCONTRACTOR complies, and/or
 - (b) Cancellation, termination or suspension of the contract in whole or in part.
6. **Incorporation of Provisions:** The SUBCONTRACTOR shall include provisions of paragraphs (1) through (5) in every subcontract, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment, unless exempt by the regulations, or directives issued pursuant thereto. The SUBCONTRACTOR shall take such action with respect to any subcontract or procurement as the grant agency or the Federal Transit Administration may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for non-compliance.

SECTION IV:

PARA #401 CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING

SUBCONTRACTOR has the responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of DHS clients/consumers/ customers served under this contract are not placed in any jeopardy. Therefore, the SUBCONTRACTOR shall have an effective response system when critical incidents occur. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to, all subSUBCONTRACTORs employed by the SUBCONTRACTOR to provide services pursuant to this contract.

- A. In the case of an emergency, SUBCONTRACTOR shall call the appropriate local emergency medical services, police, or fire services (i.e., 911).
- B. SUBCONTRACTOR shall have a formal written critical incident reporting procedure that is approved by the licensing or certification authority, if applicable, and by TAG.
- C. SUBCONTRACTOR is responsible for taking necessary actions to protect DHS

consumers from any possibility of harm. In doing this, SUBCONTRACTOR should preserve possible evidence for an investigation if one is to be conducted.

- D. SUBCONTRACTOR must notify TAG of the critical incident and results of any immediate action taken. SUBCONTRACTOR is expected to notify local law enforcement authorities in any situation where there is a potential violation of criminal law.
- E. SUBCONTRACTOR will complete the appropriate Incident/Accident forms as mandated by DHS and submit the completed form(s) and other applicable information to TAG according to specific guidelines and timelines for submission. These forms are listed as Annex J. An electronic copy is located on TAG's website at www.transitag.org under the Forms section.
- F. TAG will determine whether the SUBCONTRACTOR's actions were appropriate and sufficient, and/or whether additional corrective actions are warranted. In investigating a Critical Incident, TAG will determine:
 1. Whether or not client's health, safety, and welfare are adequately protected;
 2. That the response to the situation and event was reasonable and appropriate;
 3. That the SUBCONTRACTOR's procedures and system for responding to such incidents were adequate; and that relevant steps to prevent similar incidents were taken;
 4. That SUBCONTRACTOR and/or its staff or subSUBCONTRACTORS involved in the incident appear to be adequately trained or that additional training needed is to be provided pursuant to the Critical Incident Report.
- G. SUBCONTRACTOR agrees to cooperate with TAG in its investigation of all Critical Incidents and implement all corrective actions necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the individuals served under this contract.
- H. TAG will notify DHS of the incident and corrective action will be taken to resolve the issue.
- I. Each SUBCONTRACTOR shall post a "Notice Concerning Critical Incident Reporting." The signage shall be produced by the SUBCONTRACTOR and shall conform in content to the Sample Annex K which is attached to this contract. The Notice must be posted in a conspicuous, common area accessible to clients, consumers, and the public.

All other required reporting procedures (i.e., child abuse reporting, etc.) and the timelines of other required reports will remain in force and are not replaced or superseded by this process.

SUBCONTRACTOR shall not use or disclose any information received during the investigation of a critical incident for any purpose not connected with the administration of SUBCONTRACTOR's or the Department's responsibility under this contract, except with the informed, written consent of the client or the client's legal guardian, as required by law.

SECTION V: CONTRACT ANNEXES

PARA #501: CONTRACT ANNEX INCLUSION

This contract includes Annexes as listed below, which are hereto attached:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Annex A | Statement of Work – DHS |
| Annex B | Fiscal Year Trip Projections and Revenues |
| Annex C | Subcontractor's Monthly Usage Report |
| Annex D | Certified or In-Kind Cost Form |
| Annex E | Criminal History Records Check |
| Annex F | Certification Regarding Lobbying |
| Annex G | Debarment Certification |
| Annex H | HIPAA |
| Annex I | Immigration and Security Form |
| Annex J | Incident/Accident Report Forms |
| Annex K | Notice Concerning Critical Incident Reporting |

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have hereunto affixed their signatures the day and year first above written.

SUBCONTRACTOR EXECUTION:

Signature – Authorized Person

Typed Name and Title

Typed Name of Agency

Date Signed

TAG EXECUTION:

Barbara F. Hurst

Signature – Chief Executive Officer

Barbara F. Hurst, Chief Executive Officer

Typed Name and Title

Transit Alliance Group, Inc.

Typed Name of Agency

11/29/24

Date Signed

COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION
The Transit Alliance Group, Inc.

STATEMENT OF WORK

I. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

1. Eligibility for Coordinated Transportation service is determined through an assessment by the Human Service Provider (HSP). Eligibility criteria vary between the Divisions within DHS; therefore, each HSP will determine whether a consumer is eligible based on their Division's eligibility criteria.
2. Funding for each Division is limited and cannot be interchanged among Divisions; therefore, a priority list of trips is established by DHS. Funding is used to provide transportation to the services listed as highest priorities first. This priority list determines which trips will be provided contingent upon available funding.

*Refer to the Eligibility Determination Section of the DHS Coordinated Transportation Manual for a listing of eligibility criteria and the priority list of services by Division. The manual is located on the DHS Website at www.odis.DHS.state.ga.us. Access the Transportation Manual via "Index" – "Administration" – "Support Services" – "1425 Transportation" – "Manual 1425".

II. TRANSPORTATION SERVICE DELIVERY

1. Basic consumer profile information on each subscription and scheduled service passenger will be obtained by the Subcontractor AND will be provided to the drivers for reference in case of an emergency. Dispatchers and Supervisors will also have access to consumer information in case of an emergency. Consumer profiles may include levels of supervision and/or assistance for each consumer.
2. The Subcontractor is responsible for adhering to HIPPA regulations and confidentiality requirements and must ensure that all drivers, dispatchers, and other staff are informed of and trained on these guidelines and regulations and understand the penalties for failure to adhere to them,
3. The Subcontractor will ensure that children or disabled adults that are designated by the human service provider as requiring high levels of supervision are not left at destination points without the supervision of an adult. It is the responsibility of the HSP to communicate any special needs to the Subcontractor and to annotate specifically in TRIP\$ the special needs the consumer, (i.e. consumer cannot be left home alone; consumer has episodic behavioral outbursts, etc.)
4. The Subcontractor and their staff (drivers and dispatchers), Subcontractor and any other staff, shall comply with DHS policies regarding confidentiality of consumers.
5. The Subcontractor shall inform the HSP and TAG issues with transporting a consumer, whether related to safety, behavior, or other reason.
6. Parents or guardians will be asked to provide child restraint seats appropriate for the child (ren's) age(s). If the parent or guardian does not have the appropriate child safety seat, it will be the responsibility of the operator to provide the safety seat. The Human Service Provider will notify the Subcontractor in advance if a child safety seat is needed when the trip is ordered.

7. The HSP and the Subcontractor will have appropriate IT and internet capability to access and use the DHS TRIP\$ data entry system of ordering transportation for their consumers. Additionally, the Subcontractor will have an adequate number of dedicated staff to complete TRIP\$ data entry in a timely manner. These staff will receive appropriate DHS training on the use of TRIP\$ and will ensure that data entry is done timely and accurately.
8. Transportation shall be provided to participating consumers without the collection of any co-payment, unless specifically authorized in writing by TAG/DHS.
9. The Subcontractor will provide sufficient resources (numbers and types of vehicles and drivers) to provide services under this contract.

III. RECEIVING, SCHEDULING, AND PROVIDING TRIPS

1. The Human Service Provider (HSP), authorized by DHS to order services, will determine the DHS consumer's eligibility for service and upon their determination (of eligibility) will enter all pertinent information relative to the consumer and the service requested for the consumer into the TRIP\$ system. This information includes, but is not limited to, the consumer's name, address, telephone number, emergency contact person and their emergency contact information (telephone number), and trip information into the DHS TRIP\$ electronic registration and trip ordering system. Trip information will include the consumer's pick up- and drop off locations/addresses, times of pickups, day(s) of week for travel, and any special instructions for the consumer.
2. As stipulated in Section II, Item 2 in this document, it is the responsibility of the HSP to notify the Subcontractor of any pertinent special needs of a consumer and documentation of this must be in TRIP\$. It is the responsibility of the Subcontractor to acknowledge the special needs of a consumer and accommodate those special needs whenever possible. If the Subcontractor cannot meet the needs as specified by the HSP, the Subcontractor is responsible for communicating with the HSP regarding such. For example, if TRIP\$ is documented that a consumer cannot be left alone at the residence and the caregiver or designated adult is not present at the residence to receive the consumer when they are dropped off by the Subcontractor, the driver will contact their dispatcher or Supervisor and notify of the issue; the dispatcher or Supervisor will attempt to locate the caregiver. If the caregiver cannot be located or contacted, the HSP will then be contacted by the dispatcher or supervisor. The consumer will be delivered back to the care of the HSP until the consumer's caregiver can be located. **This can be billed as a completed trip by the Subcontractor as the trip was performed.**
3. The Subcontractor will check for special instructions when a passenger is entered into TRIP\$ and will ensure that the driver is made aware of them. Some passengers may need an attendant or escort to travel with them during transport. This is permitted by DHS and can be billed as an additional trip. It is the passenger or caregiver's responsibility to notify the HSP that an attendant or escort is needed and requested. The HSP must notify the Subcontractor of the attendant or escort. It is also the passenger or caregiver's responsibility to locate and secure an attendant or escort. The attendant or escort traveling with a passenger must board the vehicle with the passenger they are escorting and the must exit the vehicle with the passenger at drop-off. The attendant or escort must be registered as such in TRIP\$ for reimbursement.
4. The Subcontractor will update the TRIP\$ electronic registration and scheduling system provided by DHS daily verifying each trip they provided or each trip that was a no-show for their monthly billing and reimbursement. This system will be updated by the Subcontractor "daily" and will have all data entry completed by the 2nd workday of the following month. The Subcontractor's invoice will be processed in TRIP\$ for the previous service month by the 5th workday of the following month. **The Subcontractor will not be reimbursed for trips not entered into the TRIP\$ system.** DHS reimburses only for trips registered and approved in the TRIP\$ system.
5. The Subcontractor will monitor the TRIP\$ system throughout the workday for new, pending trip orders that have been registered by the HSP. It is the responsibility of the Subcontractor to retrieve the pending

trips from the TRIP\$ system and schedule it for service. If a trip request cannot be accommodated, the Subcontractor will notify TAG and the Human Service Provider (HSP) of the problem. Subcontractor will make every effort to provide the requested trip.

5. Trip Requests will be entered into TRIP\$ by the HSP, at the latest, by noon the day prior to the need for service. Should there be a trip scheduled for next day service by the HSP with less than 24-hour notice, the HSP should call or email the Subcontractor to advise of the trip and see if the Subcontractor can work the trip into the next day's schedule. Every effort should be made by the Subcontractor to work in requests for those trips where less than 24-hour advanced notice is given.
6. Subcontractor will establish a line of communication with each HSP for whom they provide transportation to introduce themselves and exchange contact names, email addresses, and telephone numbers for communication. Subcontractor should meet individually with new HSPs when service for the new HSPs consumers is scheduled to begin.
7. TAG /DHS will reimburse for any no-show trips that are scheduled in TRIP\$. The Subcontractor is responsible for cancelling ongoing service for a consumer that has had three (3) "consecutive" no-shows. The Subcontractor must notify the HSP of termination of ongoing service for the consumer due to three consecutive no-shows, and it is the responsibility of the HSP to cancel the ongoing trips in the TRIP\$ system. If the HSP chooses to reinstate service after discussion with the consumer about the no-shows, it is the responsibility of the HSP to re-register the consumer and order new trips. The Subcontractor will be reimbursed for up to three (3) consecutive no-shows. Anything after that will not be reimbursed. **If the AM trip is a no-show, the PM trips must be cancelled, and cannot be billed also as a no-show. The only way a morning no-show trip can be picked up in the afternoon is if the HSP contacts the subcontractor directly.**
8. Trip cancellations must be at least two hours (120 minutes) prior to the vehicle's scheduled arrival time at the passenger's home or service location. It is the HSP or consumer's responsibility to cancel the trip at least 2 hours in advance or the trip can be billed by the Subcontractor as a no-show.
9. Cancelled trips are non-billable trips by the Subcontractor.

IV. TRIP CLASSIFICATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement is made on a per-trip basis and is based on negotiated rates contingent upon the type trip ordered and the service provided. DHS Coordinated Transportation is provided for various agencies operating under the auspices of the DHS with specific funding attached to the service. Funding cannot be interchanged among the various service agencies; therefore, trips must be monitored by the HSP and the Subcontractor to stay within the specified funding allotment. Trips provided by the Subcontractor cannot exceed the stated trip amount or dollar amount as specified in the contract without prior approval by TAG.

Trips must be recorded accurately according the type trip provided by the Subcontractor. Trips are classified as:

- **Aging**
 - **Core trips** – provided Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.
 - **Group trips** – typically consist of three (3) or more people traveling from the same point of origin to the same destination. Group trips must be pre-arranged by the Human Service Provider with the transportation provider/Subcontractor to ensure availability of a vehicle.
 - Fewer than three people should be classified as individual trips for the purpose of reimbursement.
 - Group trips will be reimbursed according to the schedule listed in Annex F. Group trips are capped at eight (8) hours maximum per trip. Any group trips that are expected to exceed the eight-hour maximum must have prior authorization from TAG before the trip is made. Additionally, these trips will be approved by TAG contingent upon the availability of funding.
- **DFCS**
 - **Core trips** – provided Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.

- **Non-Core trips** – 6:01 p.m. through 5:59 a.m. Monday through Friday, weekend trips, and trips greater than 35 miles one-way. (These trips should be tracked for future budgeting purposes.)
- **No-Show trips** – a trip that is ordered by the HSP and not cancelled and/or the consumer does not utilize the service

➤ **DBHDD**

- **Core trips** - provided Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.
- **Non-Core trips** -6:01 p.m. through 5:59 a.m. Monday through Friday, weekend trips, and trips greater than 35 miles one-way (These trips should be tracked for future budgeting purposes.)
- **No-Show trips** - a trip that is ordered by the HSP and not cancelled and/or the consumer does not utilize the service
- **Supported Employment trips** – trips provided to support employment of the DBHDD consumer to include pre-vocational trips and out-patient clinic trips.
- **ADA trips** – long distance trips to crisis units to transport consumers following hospital discharge.

➤ **GVRA**

- **Core trips** - provided Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.
- **Non-Core trips** -6:01 p.m. through 5:59 a.m. Monday through Friday, weekend trips, and trips greater than 35 miles one-way (These trips should be tracked for future budgeting purposes.)
- **No-Show trips** - a trip that is ordered by the HSP and not cancelled and/or the consumer does not utilize the service.

“Special” trips for eligible DHS consumers that do not fall within the above criteria for regular DHS Coordinated Transportation trips will be provided on a case by case basis as approved by TAG and DHS.

Funding is allocated to Subcontractors based on a negotiated per trip cost. Trips and funding should be monitored monthly by the Subcontractor to ensure proper allocation to the end of the fiscal contract year. If the Subcontractor provides more than their projected monthly allocation of trips and consequently overspends their respective funds each month, this could result Subcontractor in an exhaustion of their funding prior to the end of the fiscal year. If there is no additional funding available to cover the Subcontractor shortfall, it will be the responsibility of the Subcontractor to continue to provide priority trips through the end of the fiscal year without additional reimbursement from DHS and TAG.

It is the discretion of the Subcontractor to provide other additional trips based on other sources of funding they may have available if this does not interfere with provision of mandatory DHS funded transportation services.

V. PICK UP AND DELIVERY STANDARDS

The Subcontractor must assure that transportation services are provided which comply with the following minimum pickup and delivery service requirements and which shall be delineated in any applicable transportation service agreements:

1. Timeliness is a requirement. The vehicles must be on time for pickup and delivery, unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond the Subcontractors' driver's control. A 95% on-time performance rate is required. A 10-minute pickup and delivery window period will be allowed (10 minutes before pick up time or 10 minutes past pick up time) for the Subcontractor. It is the responsibility of the Subcontractor to notify the HSP and the consumer prior to the scheduled pick up /drop off time if the vehicle will arrive late for any reason for the consumer's pick up/drop off.
2. The driver may arrive up to ten (10) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time; however, a consumer shall not be required to board the vehicle before the scheduled pick-up time. The Subcontractor is not required to wait more than five (5) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.
3. There should be regular contact persons designated for the HSP and the Subcontractor so that communication can occur should there be last minute cancellations or issues with late pickups or drop offs. In multiple-load situations, the Subcontractor must ensure that no DHS consumer being transported is

expected to remain in the vehicle for more than forty-five (45) minutes longer than the consumers average travel time for direct transport from point of pick up to destination.

4. Late arrival by more than 20 minutes will be reported to the dispatcher for the purpose of notifying the Human Service Program/Consumer of the late arrival. Subcontractor must advise scheduled riders of alternate pick up arrangements when required.
5. The Subcontractor will monitor trips to ensure that consumers are picked up and delivered timely. Subcontractor will maintain a tracking log of "untimely" pickups to include an explanation for the untimely arrival/departure.

VI. HOLIDAYS / ADVERSE WEATHER

The Subcontractor shall provide the HSP with a Subcontractor holiday schedule at the beginning of the fiscal year so alternate trip arrangements can be made well in advance of holiday closures. The Subcontractor and the HSPs will work out a schedule that is agreeable to all parties. Notwithstanding, the Subcontractor will need to have transportation services available and operational to accommodate DHS consumers work schedules, etc. during the holiday period. This agreement could be satisfied by the Subcontractor with an approved DHS driver "on-call" for transport of these consumers.

Transportation services may be temporarily disrupted during periods of inclement weather when the provisions of services would involve danger to DHS consumers, family members and employees. Subcontractor will notify the HSP, DHS consumers and/or family members as soon as possible in the event of a disruption of service due to weather

VII. SUSPENSION OF OR DENIAL OF SERVICE

The Subcontractor must notify DHS and TAG if they intend to suspend or terminate transportation service for a consumer due to disruptive behavior on the vehicle.

Continued service may be suspended or denied by the Subcontractor for a consumer who:

- Exhibits uncooperative behavior or misuses/abuses the transportation services;
- Is repeatedly (three times) not ready to board or refuses to board the transport five (5) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time; or
- The consumer refuses to wear a seatbelt or refuses to stay in their seat during transport.

The Driver must complete an Incident Report and submit it to their Supervisor. The Subcontractor must notify the HSP of the behavioral issues exhibited by the consumer. It is the responsibility of the HSP to contact the consumer's caregiver to discuss the consumer's behavior. If the behavior is not corrected, then the Subcontractor must provide notice in writing to the HSP and TAG the proposed consumer to be suspended from transportation or terminated from transportation altogether due to behavioral issues deemed inappropriate for transportation. The Subcontractor must provide "in writing" the specific reason for denial or termination.

Unless the behavior causes a threat to the driver, consumer, or other passengers, the Subcontractor must provide advance notice of termination of service by notifying the HSP and Consumer's Caregiver at least 5 days in advance of the suspension or termination of service to allow them to make other arrangements. If the behavior is egregious, then termination will be immediate following notification of the HSP, TAG, and DHS.

VIII. DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

1. All drivers must attend and successfully complete all training, and obtain all certifications as mandated by the DHS and TAG **within 90 days of hire**. Training & certifications include but are not limited to:

- a. General orientation to include reviewing job description, job requirements, etc.
 - b. CPR
 - c. First Aid
 - d. Biohazards and Bloodborne Pathogens
 - e. Driver Improvement Training
 - f. Passenger Assistance Sensitivity and Safety Training, to include "hands-on" wheelchair and occupant securement training (every two years)
- 2. All drivers must maintain current certifications and must attend re-certification training prior to expiration of their current certification. If a driver's certification expires, they are not allowed to transport DHS consumers until their certification is renewed.
- 3. **Driver Improvement and Customer Sensitivity & Securement (including wheelchair and occupant securement) training and certification must be completed by drivers prior to transporting DHS consumers.** Training is offered by TAG free of charge for drivers of current subcontractors of TAG. It is the Subcontractor's responsibility to notify TAG of any new hires and schedule a training date for them.
- 4. Preventative maintenance and record keeping requirements.
- 5. All drivers must have current Driver's License (licensed in the state of Georgia) and have clean MVR and background checks in order to transport DHS consumers. New Georgia residents are required to obtain a Georgia license within 30 days of establishing residence. Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have a minimum of three years' driving experience to provide transportation to consumers.
- 6. All drivers must obtain a seven-year MVR prior to employment. Subsequent annual MVRs must, at a minimum, cover a three-year period in the years following the initial/pre-employment MVR.
- 7. Drivers may not have six or more points against their driver's license, or a suspended or revoked driver's license, within the last five years for violations as indicated by the DDS. A Comprehensive list of violations and associated points can be found on the DDS website as a guide when interviewing/screening potential drivers. Drivers must report any ticket or traffic violations received immediately.
- 8. Drivers must complete a national background check with fingerprinting. The potential driver with prior convictions for a sexual crime or a crime of violence is not qualified to operate a vehicle for the State of Georgia. Any person convicted of a felony during the past five years are prohibited from operating state vehicles. DHS Personnel Policy 1301 will apply as it relates to convictions for substance abuse crimes. All drivers must notify their employer and their employer should notify TAG of any arrest and/or conviction within five calendar days of the date of arrest/conviction.
- 9. All drivers must notify their employer immediately, but no later than the first business day following notification if they should be notified of any suspension, revocation, cancellation or loss of privilege to operate a vehicle for any period. The subcontractor must notify TAG immediately in writing should this occur.
- 10. Drivers must be familiar with consumer confidentiality requirements.
- 11. Drivers must understand passenger assistance techniques for proper care and handling of children and disabled and elderly passengers; understand techniques required for seizures, have proper training on appropriately securing a wheel chair and the passenger, and be familiar with special equipment and use of child safety seats.
- 12. Subcontractor will ensure that all drivers and attendants successfully complete and maintain current First Aid and CPR certification.
- 13. The Subcontractor will ensure that dispatcher training includes, at a minimum, the following: use of dispatching equipment; grouping of trips for more effective utilization of vehicles and resources; record

processing and keeping; knowledge of special needs consumers; and familiarity with consumer confidentiality requirements.

14. The drivers must accept all individually authorized trip requests relayed to him/her by the dispatcher. There shall be no right of refusal, given vehicle availability (except the passenger maximum load factor or any consideration other than verifiable catastrophic mechanical failure of the vehicles in the fleet.)
15. Drivers will offer assistance to all passengers when boarding and exiting their vehicle. Drivers will secure all wheelchairs with the four- part floor securement system and will verify that all passengers are secured with the two-part occupant securement system to include both the lap and shoulder harness.
16. Driver will verify that all passengers are secured in seat belts and/or shoulder harnesses prior to movement of the vehicle. If a passenger refuses to wear a seat belt or shoulder harness following a request from the driver to do such, driver must radio or call Dispatch to advise their Supervisor and request additional instruction.
17. Drivers will confirm that their passengers are safely inside their residence or other intended destination prior to vehicle departure. Drivers do not enter the passenger's residence at any point; they can assist the passenger from the door of the residence to the vehicle but cannot enter a passenger's residence to assist.
18. For those passengers identified by the HSP as requiring adult supervision, drivers will verify, prior to vehicle departure, that passengers have adult supervision.
19. Drivers and passengers will refrain from smoking, grooming, eating, and drinking while in the vehicles. In addition, drivers are not permitted to use cell phones (making/receiving calls or texting) while driving and/or transporting consumers.
20. Drivers must never fuel a transportation vehicle while passengers are on board. Fueling must be done either prior to the first pick up of the day or at the end of the day once all passengers are off the vehicle. Should the vehicle require fueling during the day the driver must take care of this prior to picking up any passengers.
21. Drivers must not leave line of sight of their vehicle while passengers are on board. Restroom breaks, lunch breaks, etc. must be done when the vehicle is empty.
22. Subcontractors are encouraged to have all drivers and attendants always wear identification badges. It will be the responsibility of the Subcontractor to provide these badges. Badges are to include the following information: employee's full name, title, picture, company name, and company telephone number.

VIV. USE OF DHS VEHICLES

DHS will continue to hold title to any DHS vehicles used by the Subcontractor in the system. If the Subcontractor plans to use the vehicles offered by DHS and human service agencies as a supplement to provide services, the Subcontractor will pick up, take custody of, and be responsible for maintaining vehicles (including preventative maintenance, cleaning, repair, and component replacement as necessary). The vehicles operated under this contract must be maintained in a safe and good mechanical condition. The Subcontractor shall provide the personnel, parts, preventative, and repair maintenance to keep the vehicles clean and in good working order and must maintain the continuity of services. The vehicles will be inspected annually, at a minimum, by TAG and/or DHS, or as otherwise determined necessary by TAG and DHS.

X. GENERAL VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS

All vehicles must meet the following requirements:

- Vehicles interior must be cleaned daily. This includes sweeping the vehicle and removal of any trash left on the vehicle by the consumer. This also includes cleaning the seats and windows. The exterior of the vehicle must be cleaned (washed) weekly. A sign must be placed inside the vehicle informing consumers that eating, drinking, or smoking is not permitted at any time on the vehicle. This includes the driver.
- The transportation provider must provide a reliable means of communication between their driver(s) and Dispatch. Pagers are not an acceptable substitute. A driver or vehicle that does not have appropriate communication must be placed out-of-service until this is resolved.
- All vehicles must be equipped with adequate heating and air conditioning for drivers and passengers. Any vehicle with a non-functioning climate control system must be placed out-of-service until appropriate corrective action is taken.
- All vehicles must have functioning and accessible seat belts (and shoulder harnesses for wheel chair passengers) for each passenger seat position. All vehicles transporting wheel chairs must be equipped with 4-point tie downs and appropriate straps for securing wheel chairs during transport. At no time will seat belt extensions be used in place of tie downs. Each vehicle must utilize child safety seats when transporting children under age five (5). Each vehicle shall have at least two (2) seat belt extensions provided. Additionally, each vehicle shall be equipped with seat belt cutter(s), mounted above the driver's door, for use in emergency situations.
- All vehicles must have a functioning speedometer and odometer.
- All vehicles must have functioning interior light(s).
- All vehicles must have adequate sidewall padding and ceiling coverings.
- All vehicles must have two exterior rear-view mirrors, one on each side of the vehicle.
- All vehicles must be equipped with an interior mirror that shall be either clear-viewed laminated glass or clear-view glass bonded to the back that retains the glass in the event of breakage. This interior mirror shall be for monitoring the passenger compartment.
- The vehicle's interior and exterior must be clean and have exteriors free of broken mirrors and windows, excessive grime, rust, chipped paint, or major dents that detract from the overall appearance of the vehicle.
- The vehicle must have passenger compartments that are clean, free from torn upholstery or floor covering, damaged or broken seats, and protruding sharp edges and shall be free of dirt, oil, grease, or litter. Passenger seat belts must be clean and free of dirt, oil, stains, etc.
- The vehicle floor must be covered with commercial anti-skid, ribbed rubber flooring or carpeting. Ribbing shall not interfere with wheelchair movement between the lift and the wheelchair positions.
- All vehicles must include a vehicle information packet to be stored in the driver compartment. This packet should include:
 - Vehicle registration;
 - Insurance card; and
 - Accident procedures and forms.

XI. WHEELCHAIR VAN REQUIREMENTS

At no time will a consumer using a wheelchair be unsecured during transport. The consumer must use the required lap belt and shoulder harness, and the wheelchair must be secured using the 4-point wheelchair restraints.

All vehicles used to transport wheelchair passengers must, at a minimum, meet the following ADA requirements:

1. Maintain a floor-to-ceiling height clearance of at least fifty-six (56) inches in the passenger compartment and a minimum clear door opening of thirty (30) inches wide. The door threshold shall have no lip or protrusion of more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. The door shall be equipped with straps or locking devices to hold the door open when the lift is in use.
2. Have an engine-wheelchair lift interlock system that requires the vehicle's transmission to be placed in park and emergency brake engaged to prevent vehicle movement when the lift is deployed.
3. Must have a wheelchair lift – a hydraulically or electric powered wheelchair lift mounted so as not to impair the structural integrity of the vehicle that meets the following specifications:

For each wheelchair position, a wheelchair tie down device will be provided and will:

1. Be placed as near to the accessible entrance as practical, providing clear floor area of 30 inches by 48 inches. Up to six (6) inches may be under another seat if there is nine (9) inches height clearance from the floor. All wheelchairs shall be facing forward.
2. Be tested to meet a 30 M.P.H. /20 gm standard;
3. Securely restrain the wheelchair transport from movement forward, backward, lateral, and overturning movements in excess of two (2) inches;
4. Be adjustable to accommodate all wheel bases, tiers (including pneumatic) and motorized wheelchairs;
5. Be a lock system, belt system, or both and acceptable to DHS; and
6. Provide seat belts and/or shoulder harnesses that are attached to the floor or the side-wall of the vehicle, which shall be capable of securing both the passenger and the wheelchair.

XII. VEHICLE SAFETY

1. A basic first aid kit will be kept on each vehicle. This kit must always be stocked with essential first aid items, and these items replaced periodically to ensure cleanliness and sterility.
2. A workable multi-purpose dry chemical fire extinguisher for use on Class A, B, and C fires must always be on board each vehicle. Extinguishers must be mounted in a bracket readily accessible to the driver. Extinguishers must be inspected annually and have current inspection labels.
3. Drivers must wear seat belts whenever they operate a motor vehicle. Drivers must ensure that other occupants always employ appropriate restraints.
4. Vehicles will be free of hazardous debris or unsecured items and will always be operated within the manufacturers safe operating standards.
5. The engine is to be turned off, and the key removed whenever the driver leaves the vehicle.
6. Vehicle equipment, such as wheelchair lift attachments, must always be secured.

XIII. PASSENGER SAFETY

1. Passengers must wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is being operated.

2. Passenger occupancy will not exceed the vehicle manufacturer's approved seating capacity.
3. Vehicles will be parked or stopped so passengers will not be forced to cross streets.
4. An approved child safety seat or other specifically adapted seating appropriate to the age and size of the child must be used when transporting children.
5. Vehicles will be unoccupied during fueling and/or refueling. At no time will this be done while passengers are on board.

XIV. VEHICLE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Unless otherwise specifically required, the Subcontractor must maintain vehicle liability insurance coverage and general vehicle liability coverage as outlined in PARA #204 Liability Coverage of this Contract.

XV. ACCIDENT REPORTING

The Subcontractor will immediately report any accidents that occur while delivering services (to include accidents or incidents involving the vehicle, property damage, as well as consumer-related incidents such as injuries, assaults and inappropriate behavior).

- The Subcontractor will report the accident to TAG and the human service provider immediately.
- TAG will notify DHS within one (1) hour of the occurrence, or if the offices are closed, by 9:00 a.m. the next business day, unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- An initial written incident/accident report, completed by the Subcontractor, must be forwarded to TAG within 24-hours of the incident/accident.
- A copy of the investigating officer's accident report and/or any supplemental information must be forwarded to TAG within five (5) business days from the date of the accident. This should include items such as witness statements, pictures, policy reports, hospital info., etc.
- The emergency contact for each consumer on board will be notified immediately by the Subcontractor.
- All scheduled consumers not yet on board should be notified of delay and/or alternate transportation arrangements.
- The Subcontractor shall maintain copies of each accident report in the files of both the vehicle and the driver.

XVI. COMPLAINT PROCESSING

The Subcontractor shall be responsible for recording and responding to complaints regarding the delivery of services which will include complaints by consumers, HSPs, or any individual or group who contracts with the Subcontractor.

- Upon receipt of the complaint form, subcontractor will have **three business days** to submit the Complaint Resolution Form to TAG, in addition to any supplemental information (to include but not limited to, witness statements, pictures, etc.).
- Informal complaints will be made by the HSP directly to the Subcontractor via fax or email.
- The Subcontractor will work with the HSP to resolve the complaint and will provide a copy of the complaint and their resolution to TAG.
- If complaints are made via telephone, the Subcontractor and/or HSP will follow up with a fax or email confirming the complaint and the resolution with a copy to TAG.
- Informal complaints will be addressed and/or resolved within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint by the Subcontractor.
- If the complaint is not resolved within 24 hours, the HSP must complete and file a Formal Complaint with the Subcontractor and TAG.

- The Subcontractor will maintain a log of complaints and provide a copy of the log to TAG if requested.
- Customer evaluations will be conducted by DHS annually, at a minimum.
- These evaluations are sent by DHS to the HSP, consumers receiving transportation, and other division staff for input on transportation services.

XVII. BEHAVIOR INCIDENT PROCEDURES

Any conduct/action by a consumer, as determined by the transportation provider, that places himself/herself or other consumers at risk while being transported by the DHS Coordinated Transportation System will be subject to review. The following describes procedure for dealing with different categories of behavioral incidents.

1. **Category I** – Behavior or actions so serious that immediate assistance or intervention by police or other authorities is required. This includes, but is not limited to, suicide gestures/attempts, physical or sexual assaults, violent threats, weapon possession, homicidal behavior, medical emergencies, or fleeing the vehicle. Transportation is immediately suspended pending review by the DHS Transportation Review Team (TRT). The Transportation Review Team is comprised of a representative from each of the following agencies: TAG, human service provider, transportation provider, DHS Regional Transportation Coordinator and the Division's Regional Manager. A Corrective Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan will be developed by the TRT and continuation/discontinuation of transportation will be determined by the TRT on an individual basis.

Procedures:

- A. Driver should contact emergency personnel as needed.
- B. The driver should then contact the Dispatcher. A Transportation supervisor/dispatcher should immediately contact the human service provider, TAG and the appropriate emergency contact person by phone.
- C. The driver will complete any paperwork within 24-hours and provide it to TAG, so they can provide the DHS Regional Transportation Office with the required documentation.
- D. DHS Regional Transportation Office will convene the TRT before the next scheduled trip. If this cannot be accomplished, transportation for the consumer exhibiting the behavior will be suspended until resolved. The TRT, by consensus, will develop a Corrective Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan before the next scheduled trip or within 48 hours of incident.
- E. Corrective Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan and decisions of the TRT are immediately disseminated to all parties involved including the consumer and/or consumer's family or guardian.
- F. Status report from the human service provider and transportation provider should be submitted to the Regional Transportation Office within 10 days after the incident.
2. **Category II** – Any serious conduct or behavior that must be addressed before the next regularly scheduled trip takes place or within 48 hours. This includes, but is not limited to, acute non-emergency medical situations, fighting, self-mutilation/injury, aggressive behavior, indecent exposure or seemingly serious suicide threats. Transportation may be suspended until the TRT can review and make recommendations regarding the consumer's continued transport.

Procedures

- A. Driver should contact emergency personnel as needed.
- B. The driver should then contact the Dispatcher.
- C. Transportation supervisor/dispatcher should immediately contact the human service provider, TAG and the appropriate emergency contact person by phone.

- D. The driver will complete any paperwork within 24-hours and provide it to TAG, so they can provide the DHS Regional Transportation Office with the required documentation.
 - E. The DHS Regional Transportation Office convenes the TRT before the next scheduled trip.
 - F. The TRT by consensus will develop a Correction Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan before the next scheduled trip.
 - G. Corrective Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan and decisions of the TRT are disseminated to all parties involved immediately including the consumer and/or family.
 - H. Status report from the human service provider and transportation provider should be submitted to the Regional Transportation Office within five business days after the incident.
3. **Category III** – Any disruptive or unsafe behavior on the vehicle that has the potential of placing consumers at risk will be considered in this category. This may be a behavior that a rider exhibits only occasionally but which should be addressed for the safety of all the riders. This behavior may not pose immediate danger but if continued may cause extreme discomfort to other riders. Examples include, but are not limited to, refusal to stay seated, vulgar or suggestive language, unlocking seat belts, loud music, bullying/ harassment, and distracting the driver. This level will be addressed by the human service provider and transportation provider. A mutually agreed upon Corrective Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan must be in place within 48 hours of the occurrence. Transportation services will continue while a plan is being developed.

Procedures

- A. Driver should contact emergency personnel as needed.
- B. The driver should then contact the Dispatcher A Transportation supervisor/dispatcher should immediately contact the human service provider, TAG and the appropriate emergency contact person by phone.
- C. The driver will complete any paperwork within 24-hours and provide it to TAG, so they can provide the DHS Regional Transportation Office with the required documentation.
- D. Develop a mutually agreed upon Correction Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan.
- E. Fax copies of the Incident Report and Corrective Action Plan/Crisis Avoidance Plan to TAG. TAG will submit this to the DHS Regional Manager, and the Regional Transportation Office within 48 hours of the time the plan is developed.
- F. Status report from the human service provider and transportation provider should be submitted to the TAG and the DHS Regional Transportation Office within five business days after the incident.

XVIII. BILLING AND RECORD KEEPING

DHS no longer reimburses from the previous paper invoices submitted by Subcontractors. The Subcontractor must use the TRIP\$ system to accurately document and update any trips for which reimbursement is requested. TAG and DHS will not reimburse for any trips not processed in the TRIP\$ system; therefore, it is imperative that daily data entry and updates are performed (in TRIP\$) by the Subcontractor to maintain accurate records.

Record keeping and billing will be done as follows.

- Daily maintenance and monitoring of the DHS TRIP\$ transportation system by the Subcontractor for new trips or changes/cancellations to previously registered trips.

- Daily data entry and processing of trips in the TRIP\$ system as trips are provided, no-show, or cancelled.
- Submission of an electronic billing summary on a monthly basis due no later than the fifth (5th) work day of the month. This billing summary will include:
 - Subcontractors Invoice Backup Report for the appropriate service month; and
 - Subcontractors Invoice Summary listing the trips provided (by Subcontractor) during the service month. (The instructions are on page 15 of the TRIP\$ Subcontractor Training Manual.)
- Export these reports from TRIP\$ to an Excel spreadsheet and save them as Excel documents. Key in the appropriate trip rate(s) for each service you provide and verify that all amounts on the Subcontractor invoice are correct. Be sure to use the correct start and end date for the month.
- Monthly invoice information must be submitted by the 5th workday of the month following the service month.
- Submission of a Certified Cost Form to validate match dollars applicable to state/federal aging dollars
- Submission of a Monthly Usage Report to verify the number of vehicles used and the number of drivers used during the service month, the number of hours worked, and the number of miles traveled (in the service month).
- The Certified Cost Form and Monthly Usage report will be scanned and emailed to TAG along with the monthly reimbursement report and invoice.

(Revised 3/22/19)

Projected <u>FY25</u> Trips and Revenue	<u>FY25 Projected Trips (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)</u>	TPO Trip Rates	Projected TPO Payment
Aging			
Senior Center	2,683	\$18.00	\$48,294.00
NW GA Regional Commission	0	\$18.00	\$0.00
Total Aging Trips	2,683		\$48,294.00
DFCS/TANF			
DFCS	1,937	\$18.00	\$34,866.00
Total DFCS	1,937		\$34,866.00
DBHDD			
	0	\$18.00	\$0.00
Total DBHDD	0		\$0.00
GVRA			
GVRA	0	\$18.00	\$0.00
Total GVRA	0		\$0.00
CHILD SUPPORT			
Child Support	159	\$18.00	\$2,862.00
Total Child Support	159		\$2,862.00
Total Sum of all DHS Transportation Trips	4,779		\$86,022.00

The trip totals listed above are best estimates as they are based on the projected availability of funding per fund source and per fiscal year. Trip numbers or monies cannot be interchanged between fund sources. These numbers should be used for budget projections only as they could change during the fiscal year.

Transportation subcontractors and human services providers (HSP) have separate budgets and allocations. Trip usage and revenue in your transportation subcontract are driven by the transportation allocation provided to the HSPs by DHS; therefore, the HSP allocations will subsequently determine what is used in this subcontractor budget. Please note also that TAG's contract with DHS will terminate on June 30, 2025; however, should DHS terminate TAG's contract prior to June 30, 2025, it will also result in early termination of this subcontract.



Department of Human Services
Office of Facilities and Support Services, Transportation Services Section
DHS Monthly Program Report – Trip, Miles, and Hours Analysis

Prime Contractor: Transit Alliance Group

Subcontractor: _____

Month of Service: _____

	DHS Miles/Hours	DOT/Other Miles/Hours
Total Transport Miles	0	_____
Total Transport Hours	0	_____
Total # of Drivers	0	_____
Total # of Vehicles	0	_____
Total DHS Trips:	0	_____
Non-DHS Trips	0	0
	DOT Trips	DCH Trips
	0	0
	Other Trips	Total Non-DHS
	0	0

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Georgia Department of Human Services
REPORT OF CERTIFIED OR IN-KIND COST
SECTION I COMPLETED BY CONTRACTOR
for the period

ANNEX D

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

FROM: Transit Alliance Group
Name of Contractor

THROUGH: DHS - OFSS District 1 Compliance

TO: Accounting Services, DHS

Certified Cost In-Kind Cost

Title of Program: DHS Coordinated Transportation, Region 01

DHS Contract #: Contract #: Identification #: Control #:

Name and Address of Provider of Certified or In-Kind Cost:

Transit Alliance Group
1422 Green Road, Suite O
Chatsworth, GA 30705

Cost:

A. Personnel (attach continuation, if needed)

NAME	TITLE	SALARY	FRINGE BENEFITS	%TIME	APPLICABLE AMOUNT
TAG Subcontractors <u>\$ 0.00</u>					

Sub-Total..... \$ 0.00

B. Other Cost (attach continuation, if needed)

TAG Subcontractors - Rent, utilities, insurance, audits, etc. \$0.00

Sub-Total..... \$0.00

Grand Total..... \$0.00

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the above certified or in-kind match cost have been provided/received in compliance with the requirements and
Conditions of the applicable federal program. I further certify that my office has available a set of accounting records relative to these certified cost that specifically identifies each specific detailed transaction directly to this federal program and that these records are available for DHR or federal auditors review.

(signed):

Date

President/Chief Executive Officer, Transit Alliance Group, Inc.

SECTION II TO BE COMPLETED BY PROGRAM STAFF, DHS

Organization _____ Project _____
Code: _____ Date: _____

Fund Source: _____ (signed): _____

Title

**GEORGIA CRIME INFORMATION CENTER
AWARENESS STATEMENT**

Access to Criminal Justice Information, as defined in GCIC Council Rule 140-1-02 (amended), and dissemination of such information are governed by State and Federal laws and by GCIC Council Rules. Criminal Justice Information cannot be accessed or disseminated by any employee except as directed by superiors and as authorized by approved standard operating procedures which are based on controlling State and Federal laws, relevant Federal regulations, and the Rules of the GCIC Council.

O.C.G.A. § 35-3-38 establishes criminal penalties for specific offenses involving obtaining, using, or disseminating criminal history record information except as permitted by law. The same statute establishes criminal penalties for disclosing or attempting to disclose techniques or methods employed to ensure the security and privacy of information or data contained in Georgia criminal justice information systems.

The Georgia Computer Systems Protection Act (O.C.G.A. § 16-9-90 et seq.) was enacted to provide statutory protection for public sector and private sector computer systems, including communications links to such computer systems. The Act establishes major felony penalties for four criminal offenses: Computer Theft, Computer Trespass, Computer Invasion of Privacy, and Computer Forgery. The Act defines each of the felonies in broad terms. The criminal penalties for each offense include maximum sentences of confinement for 15 years, fines up to \$50,000.00, and civil penalties. The Act also establishes Computer Password Disclosure as a criminal offense with penalties of confinement for not more than one year and a fine up to \$5,000.00, or both.

These above-cited statutes have broad application in Georgia, to private citizens, to public officials, and to employees of governmental agencies. The Georgia Criminal Justice Information System Network, operated by the Georgia Crime Information Center in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 35-3-31, and all of the data bases accessible via Network terminals, are protected by the Computer Systems Protection Act. Similar communications and computer systems operated by municipal/county governments are also protected by the Act.

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read this Awareness Statement.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name (Please Print): _____ Position Title: _____

Witnessed: _____ Date: _____

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the federal contract, grant loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by Section 1352, Title 31, U. S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

By _____
(Signature of Official Authorized to Sign)

Date _____

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING
DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION LOWER TIER COVERED
TRANSACTION**

- (1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
- (2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Name and Title of Authorized Representative	Signature	Date
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to whom this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to whom this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.
6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include this clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion – Lower Tier Covered Transactions," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the Nonprocurement List (Telephone 202/245-0729).
8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

ANNEX H
TRANSIT ALLIANCE GROUP, INC.

This Business Associate Agreement (hereinafter referred to as "Agreement"), effective the day and year first written above, is made and entered into by and between the Transit Alliance Group, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "TAG") and the Contractor (hereinafter referred to as "Business Associate").

WHEREAS, TAG is required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191 ("HIPAA"), to obtain satisfactory assurances that its Business Associates will provide appropriate safeguards of Protected Health Information ("PHI") that a business associate may receive or create on behalf of TAG or the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS), pursuant to this Contract and to document those assurances by entering into Business Associate Agreements with certain entities that provide functions, activities, or services involving the use of PHI;

WHEREAS, Business Associate may provide functions, activities, or services involving the use of PHI;

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the mutual promises, covenants and agreements contained herein, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, TAG, and Business Associate (each individually a "Party" and collectively the "Parties") hereby agree as follows:

- A. Terms used, but not otherwise defined, in this Agreement shall have the same meaning as those terms in the Privacy Rule, published as the Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information in 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 ("Privacy Rule").
- B. Except as limited in this Agreement, Business Associate may use or disclose PHI only to extent necessary to meet its responsibilities as set forth in the Contract provided that such use or disclosure would not violate the Privacy Rule if done by TAG and/or DHS.
- C. Unless otherwise required by Law, Business Associate agrees:
 1. That it will not request, create, receive, use or disclose PHI other than as permitted or required by this Agreement or as required by law.
 2. To establish, maintain and use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the PHI other than as provided for by this Agreement.
 3. To mitigate, to the extent practicable, any harmful effect that is known to Business Associate of a use or disclosure of PHI by Business Associate in violation of the requirements of this Agreement.
 4. That its agents or subbusiness Associates are subject to the same obligations that apply to Business Associate under this Agreement and Business Associate agrees to ensure its agents or subbusiness Associates comply with the conditions, restrictions, prohibitions and other limitations regarding the request for, creation, receipt, use or disclosure of PHI, that are applicable to Business Associate under this Agreement.
 5. To report to TAG and DHS any use or disclosure of PHI that is not provided for by this Agreement of which it becomes aware. Business Associate agrees to make such report to TAG and DHS in writing in such form as TAG may require within twenty-four (24) hours after Business Associate becomes aware.
 6. To make any amendment(s) to PHI in a Designated Record Set that TAG or DHS directs or agrees to pursuant to 45 CFR 164.526 at the request of TAG and/or DHS or an Individual, within five (5) business days after request of TAG, DHS or of the Individual. Business Associate also agrees to provide TAG and/or DHS with written confirmation of the amendment in such format and within such time as TAG and/or DHS may require.
 7. To provide access to PHI in a Designated Record Set to TAG or DHS upon request, within five (5) business days after such request, or, as directed by TAG or DHS, to an Individual. Business

Associate also agrees to provide TAG and/or DHS with written confirmation that access has been granted in such format and within such time as TAG or DHS may require.

8. To give TAG, DHS, the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (the "Secretary") or their designees access to Business Associate's books and records and policies, practices or procedures relating to the use and disclosure of PHI for or on behalf of TAG within five (5) business days after TAG, DHS, the Secretary or their designees request such access or otherwise as TAG, DHS, the Secretary or their designees may require. Business Associate also agrees to make such information available for review, inspection and copying by TAG, DHS, the Secretary or their designees during normal business hours at the location or locations where such information is maintained or to otherwise provide such information to TAG, DHS, the Secretary or their designees in such form, format or manner as TAG, DHS, the Secretary or their designees may require.
 9. To document all disclosures of PHI and information related to such disclosures as would be required for TAG and/or DHS to respond to a request by an Individual or by the Secretary for an accounting of disclosures of PHI in accordance with the requirements of the Privacy Rule.
 10. To provide to TAG and/or DHS or to an individual, information collected in accordance with Section 3.1 of this Agreement, above, to permit TAG and/or DHS to respond to a request by an Individual for an accounting of disclosures of PHI as provided in the Privacy Rule.
- D. Unless otherwise required by Law, TAG agrees:
1. That it will notify Business Associate of any new limitation in TAG and/or DHS's Notice of Privacy Practices in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Rule if, and to the extent that, TAG determines in the exercise of its sole discretion that such limitation will affect Business Associate's use or disclosure of PHI.
 2. That it will notify Business Associate of any change in, or revocation of, permission by an Individual for TAG and/or DHS to use or disclose PHI to the extent that TAG determines in the exercise of its sole discretion that such change or revocation will affect Business Associate's use or disclosure of PHI.
 3. That it will notify Business Associate of any restriction regarding its use or disclosure of PHI that TAG has agreed to in accordance with the Privacy Rule if, and to the extent that, TAG determines in the exercise of its sole discretion that such restriction will affect Business Associate's use or disclosure of PHI.
- E. The Term of this Agreement shall commence on the day and year first written above, and shall terminate when all of the PHI provided by TAG and/or DHS to Business Associate, or created or received by Business Associate on behalf of TAG and/or DHS, is destroyed or returned to TAG and/or DHS, or, if it is infeasible to return or destroy PHI, protections are extended to such information, in accordance with the termination provisions in this Annex.
1. Termination for Cause. Upon TAG's knowledge of a material breach by Business Associate, TAG shall either:
 - a. Provide an opportunity for Business Associate to cure the breach or end the violation, and terminate this Agreement if Business Association does not cure the breach or end the violation within the time specified by TAG;
 - b. Immediately terminate this Agreement if Business Associate has breached a material term of this Agreement and cure is not possible; or
 - c. If neither termination nor cure is feasible, TAG shall report the violation to the DHS.
 2. Effect of Termination.
 - a. Except as provided in paragraph (A) (2) of this Section, upon termination of this Agreement, for any reason, Business Associate shall return or destroy all PHI received from TAG and/or DHS, or created or received by Business Associate on behalf of TAG and/or DHS. This provision shall apply to PHI that is in the possession of subbusiness Associates or agents of Business associate. Neither Business Associate nor its agents nor subbusiness Associates shall retain copies of the PHI.
 - b. In the event that Business Associate determines that returning or destroying the PHI is not feasible, Business Associate shall send TAG detailed written notice of the specific reasons why it

believes such return or destruction is not feasible and the factual basis for such determination, including the existence of any conditions or circumstances which make such return or disclosure infeasible. If TAG determines, in the exercise of its sole discretion, that the return or destruction of such PHI is not feasible, Business Associate agrees that it will limit its further use or disclosure of PHI only to those purposes TAG may, in the exercise of its sole discretion, deem to be in the public interest or necessary for the protection of such PHI, and will take such additional action as TAG may require for the protection of patient privacy or the safeguarding, security and protection of such PHI.

- c. If neither termination nor cure is feasible, TAG shall report the violation to the DHS.
 - d. Section E.2 of this Agreement, regarding the effect of termination or expiration, shall survive the termination of this Agreement.
- F. Interpretation. Any ambiguity in this Agreement shall be resolved to permit TAG to comply with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations, and the Privacy Rule, and any rules, regulations, requirements, rulings, interpretations, procedures or other actions related thereto that are promulgated, issued or taken by or on behalf of the DHS, provided that applicable federal laws, rules and regulations and the laws of the State of Georgia shall supersede the Privacy Rule if, and to the extent that, they impose additional requirements, have requirements that are more stringent than or provide greater protection of patient privacy or the security or safeguarding of PHI than those of HIPAA and its Privacy Rule.

All other terms and conditions contained in the Contract and any amendment thereto, not amended by this Annex, shall remain in full force and effect. The undersigned Business Associate agrees, by signing this Agreement below, that it will comply with all provisions of HIPAA and the federal "Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information" promulgated thereunder at 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164, and that it assures to TAG that it will provide appropriate safeguards of Protected Health Information ("PHI") as an entity that provides functions, activities, or services involving the use of PHI.

Transit Alliance Group, Inc.

Signature – Authorized Person

Typed Name and Title

Date Signed

Barbara F. Hurst

Signature – Authorized Person

Barbara F. Hurst, President/CEO

Typed Name and Title

11/29/24

Date Signed

ANNEX I

(see Security & Immigration Certificate attached)

Accident/Incident Protocol

1. Notification to TAG within one hour of accident/incident
2. Send the names of all passengers onboard at the time of the accident/incident when notifying TAG of accident/incident (Be sure to note which passengers are DHS consumers)
3. Medical care should ALWAYS be offered to passengers, no matter how minor the accident/incident appears to be
4. Notify TAG if there were any injuries as a result of the accident/incident and whether anyone was treated/taken to the hospital (and which hospital they were taken to)
5. Contact HSP/emergency contact of consumers onboard immediately (within one hour) of accident/incident
6. Send Initial Accident/Incident Form to TAG/DHS within 24-hours of accident/incident
7. Always take pictures when possible
8. Obtain witness statements (preferably in writing)
9. Supporting documentation (police reports, pictures, etc.)
10. ONLY state factual information; do not write your opinion on the report
11. Completed Accident/Incident Follow-up Form/supporting documentation (if applicable) to DHS within five business days

Complaint Protocol

1. Notification to TAG within one hour of complaint received
2. Send the names of all passengers onboard at the time of the accident/incident (if applicable) when notifying TAG of accident/incident (Be sure to note which passengers are DHS consumers)
3. Medical care should ALWAYS be offered to passengers, no matter how minor the accident/incident appears to be
4. Notify TAG if there were any injuries as a result of the complaint and whether anyone was treated/taken to the hospital and which hospital they were taken to (if applicable)
5. Contact HSP/emergency contact of consumers onboard immediately (within one hour) of accident/incident (if applicable)
6. Send Initial Complaint Form to TAG/DHS within 24-hours of complaint
7. Names/contact information of all parties to be submitted with form, so complaint can be thoroughly investigated
8. Always take pictures when possible
9. Obtain witness statements (preferably in writing)
10. Supporting documentation (police reports, pictures, etc.)
11. ONLY state factual information; do not write your opinion on the report
12. Completed Complaint Resolution form to DHS within three business days



Department of Human Services
Office of Facilities and Support Services, Transportation Services Section
Vehicle Operator Initial Accident and Incident Reporting Form

This form is to be completed by local vehicle operators to report accidents and/or incidents involving consumers of the Coordinated Transportation or those transported in a Department of Human Services' (DHS)/Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' (DBHDD) vehicle, and accidents involving administrative vehicles. This may include vehicle accidents, consumer injuries, behavior incidents or any incident the vehicle operator feels should be reported. Complete this form with as much detail as possible and send/email to the appropriate DHS Regional Transportation Office within 24 hours of the accident/incident. Requests for additional information may follow.

Vehicle Accident **Incident** **Illness** **Observation** **Other***

*If Other, please explain: _____

Date of Incident: _____ **Time:** _____ **Location:** _____

Vehicle #: _____ **Tag #:** _____ **Vehicle Operator:** _____

Vehicle Operator Type: **DHS/DBHDD** **Direct Contractor** **Subcontractor**

Police Notified: **Yes** **No**** **Report Filed:** **Yes** **No****

**If No, please explain: _____

Description (Be specific, include all consumers involved and add additional pages if necessary): _____

Any witnesses to the accident/incident? **Yes** **No*** **# of consumers on board:** _____

Were consumers Injured? **Yes** **No**

Medical treatment provided? **Yes** **No** **Medical treatment refused?** **Yes** **No**

Location of medical treatment: _____

Human Service Provider (HSP) notified: **Yes** **No** **HSP phone:** _____

HSP name (attach a list for multiple HSPs): _____

Parent or guardian of consumer notified? **Yes** **No** **Person notified:** _____

Name of person issuing this report (print name): _____ **Phone:** _____

On behalf of: _____

DHS Staff Use Only

Last DHS inspection of vehicle operator (date): _____ **Corrective Actions?** **Yes** **No**

Corrective actions followed up on by TSS? **Yes** **No** **Completed?** **Yes** **No**

DHS Staff involved in inspections: _____

DHS Staff reviewing and submitting report: _____

Date report was received by RTO: _____

Date RTO sent to TSS Atlanta: _____



ANNEX J(c)

Department of Human Services

Office of Facilities and Support Services, Transportation Services Section
Vehicle Operator Accident and Incident Follow-Up Form

Date of accident/incident: _____ Date follow up received by RTO: _____

Vehicle Operator: _____ Vehicle #: _____ Tag #: _____

Items being submitted with this follow up:

Police Report

Witness Statements

Agency Report

Inspection Report

Other*

*If Other, please explain: _____

Pertinent details not previously provided (if more space is needed, include additional sheets):

Was a resolution needed/requested? Yes No

Describe the resolution (if more space is needed, include additional sheets):

Was a consumer behavior plan needed/requested? Yes No

Describe what steps have been taken to prevent further behavior incidents (add sheets as needed):

Date follow up sent to TSS Atlanta: _____

NOTICE CONCERNING CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING

Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) requires that its contractors/service providers make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety of the individuals served through its programs.

To report an incident or situation that you feel may lead to serious injury or death of a DHS client or consumer, please contact the Transit Alliance Group, Inc. The Transit Alliance Group will notify the DHS of the incident and the action taken to resolve the issue.

Barbara F. Hurst, President/CEO
Telephone: (706) 971-3524
Email: barbarahurst@transitag.org

or

Diana Smith, Director of Operations
Telephone: (706) 971-3524
Email: dianasmith@transitag.org

or

Melissa Scott, Operations & Compliance Manager
Telephone: (706) 971-3524
Email: melissascott@transitag.org

Fax: (706) 971-3702

Fwd: FY25 Transportation Subcontract attached

1 message

Amanda Shropshire <a.shropshire@walkerqa.us>
To: Shannon Whitfield <commissioner@walkerqa.us>

Fri, Dec 6, 2024 at 2:37 PM

We may need to discuss this on Tuesday as well.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Barbara Hurst** <barbarahurst@transitag.org>

Date: Fri, Dec 6, 2024 at 2:30 PM

Subject: FY25 Transportation Subcontract attached

To: Amanda Shropshire <a.shropshire@walkerqa.us>, g.mcconnell@walkerqa.us <g.mcconnell@walkerqa.us>

Good afternoon.

Please find attached your FY25 subcontract for provision of transportation services for DHS consumers.

There are multiple signatures needed on this subcontract.

Please complete and sign:

- Page 22 of the subcontract
- Annex E
- Annex F
- Annex G
- Annex H

Once you have reviewed and signed the required forms, please

- Scan the *entire* document and email it back to me.
- I do not need an original signed document mailed to me as electronically signed documents are sufficient.
- The original signed document should be retained by your agency (or county office).

As you are aware, TAG is not renewing the contract with DHS for continued services, nor did we apply for a contract with DHS to provide transportation services for multiple regions.

Unless DHS changes the terms of their contract with TAG, our subcontract with you will remain in effect until June 30, 2025. You should be notified by DHS or their newly selected contractor regarding subcontracts for FY26 that will begin July 1, 2025.

My thanks to all of you for all you do to help all those in need of transportation.

Barbara

 **Walker County Transit- FY25 Subcontract.pdf**
909K

SHIP TO
WALKER COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE
107 ALEX DRIVE
CHICKAMAUGA, GA 30707

BILL TO
WALKER COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE
107 ALEX DRIVE
CHICKAMAUGA, GA 30707

PURCHASE ORDER NO. 2025-00000473

DATE 12/11/2024

VENDOR 56889 PRATER FORD INC

CONTACT
PRATER FORD INC
P O BOX 818
704 S WALL ST
CALHOUN, GA 30703

DELIVER BY
SHIP VIA
FREIGHT TERMS
ORIGINATOR
RESOLUTION #
PAYMENT TERMS

Christina O'Toole

QUANTITY	U/M	DESCRIPTION	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST
1.0000	EA	Capital - Vehicles - F250 Command Staff Vehicle	\$52,862.0000	\$52,862.00
			TOTAL DUE	\$52,862.00

APPROVED BY _____

PAGE 1 OF 1

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

CNGP530

==> _____

VEHICLE ORDER CONFIRMATION

11/21/24 11:01:47

Dealer: F21422

Page: 1 of 2

Order No: 2443 Priority: M3 Ord FIN: QD389 Order Type: 5B Price Level: 515
 Ord PEP: 603A Cust/Flt Name: WALKER COUNTY PO Number:

RETAIL

W2B F250 4X4 CREW/C \$55700

10000# GVWR PKG

160" WHEELBASE

425 50 STATE EMISS NC

PQ RACE RED

43B BACKGLASS DEF 60

3 40/20/40 CLOTH

512 SPARE TIRE/WHL2 NC

S MED DARK SLATE

AMFM/MP3/CLK

603A PREF EQUIP PKG

JACK

.XLT TRIM

76C EX BACKUP ALARM 220

99A .6.8L DEV V8 ENG

85S TOUGH BED- Spray-In 595

44F 10-SPD AUTOMATIC

TOTAL BASE AND OPTIONS 58520

LT275/65BSWAS18

TOTAL 58520

X37 3.73 REG AXLE

THIS IS NOT AN INVOICE

JOB #1 BUILD

* MORE ORDER INFO NEXT PAGE *

FLEET SPCL ADJ

F8=Next

FRT LICENSE BKT

F3/F12=Veh Ord Menu

166 CARPET DELETE

(50)

F1=Help F2=Return to Order

F4=Submit F5=Add to Library

S006 - MORE DATA IS AVAILABLE.

QC00257

V1DP0094

2,6

\$ 52,862.00



Walker County Planning Office
Rezone, Conditional Use Variance & Variance Application

Rezone Conditional Use Variance Variance

Current Zoning:	Requested Change:	
C-1	PUD AMENDMENT	
Map & Parcel	Date:	Fee:
0119 002A /002	09/10/2024	400.00

Applicant/Owner & Phone: HAWKS RIDGE HOLDINGS, LLC (423)718-5530

Street Name & Number: 180 HUTCHESON DRIVE ROSSVILLE, GA 30741
104 QUARTER STREET ROSSVILLE, GA 30741

Mailing Address: 1209 POINTE CENTRE DRIVE, STE 101

City, State, Zip Code: CHATTANOOGA, TN, 37421

Request: THIS REZONING REQUEST HAS THE GOAL TO AMEND THE APPROVED PUD

FOR THE HAWKS RIDGE DEVELOPMENT LOCATED AT 180 HUTCHESON DRIVE ROSSVILLE,

GA 30741. SEE THE ATTACHED NARRATIVE AND EXHIBIT.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

10-17-2024 DENIAL

Denied due to requesting a PUD rezone
Without a PUD rendering

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

DENIAL

The following disclosure is required of the applicant(s) by Section 36-67A of O.C.G.A. The following is for disclosure purposes only and does not disqualify the petition.

Within the past two years, have you made either campaign contributions totaling \$250.00 or more and/or given gifts having value of \$250.00 or more to a local government official who will be responsible for making a recommendation or decision on the application? YES NO If YES, then on a separate page, please furnish the following information;

- A) The name of the local government official(s) to whom cash contribution or gift was made.
- B) The total dollar amount(s) of each campaign made by the applicant to each local official during the two years immediately preceding the filing of the application.
- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years.

Signature of Applicant/Owner:

Janet D. Harbin 9/10/2024
APPLICANT/OWNER DATE



Walker County Planning Office
Rezone, Conditional Use Variance & Variance Application

Rezone Conditional Use Variance Variance

Current Zoning:	Requested Change:	
A-1	C-1	
Map & Parcel	Date:	Fee:
0-516-012A	10-1-24	300.00

Applicant/Owner & Phone: R. L. Whalen 706-996-3881

Street Name & Number: 6560 Hwy 151 LaFayette

Mailing Address: 788 Northridge Est

City, State, Zip Code: Tion, Ga. 30753

Request: Rezone property to C-1 Commercial to have diesel repair

Randy Pittman made a motion to approve. Jon Hentz seconded the motion to approve. Todd Holt, Will Ingram, Stan Porter and Rob Walthour all voted in favor of the motion to approve the rezone. Zack Chapman, Cindy Askew and John Morehouse voted against the motion to approve. The motion to approve carried.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

11-21-2024

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

DENIAL

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

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- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years.

Signature of Applicant/Owner:

R. L. Whalen
APPLICANT/OWNER

10-1-24
DATE



Walker County Planning Office
Rezone, Conditional Use Variance & Variance Application

Rezone Conditional Use Variance Variance

Current Zoning:	Requested Change:	
R1	C1	
Map & Parcel	Date:	Fee:
0044 001	10/11/24	300.00

Applicant/Owner & Phone: See Rock City, Inc. / Doug Chapin
Street Name & Number: Hwy 157 706-419-4000
Mailing Address: 1400 Patten Road
City, State, Zip Code: Lookout Mountain, GA 30750
Request: Change of zoning to allow for trail expansion.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

11-21-2024

TABLED

Todd Holt made a motion to table. Will Ingram seconded the motion to table. The vote was unanimous. Motion to table carried.

DENIAL

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

DENIAL

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- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years.

Signature of Applicant/Owner:

 10/11/24
APPLICANT/OWNER DATE



Walker County Planning Office
Rezone, Conditional Use Variance & Variance Application

Rezone Conditional Use Variance Variance

Current Zoning:	Requested Change:	
R2	C1	
Map & Parcel	Date:	Fee:
03224 003	8-14-2024	300.00

Applicant/Owner & Phone: Kelly Lee & Paige Marie Griffin

Street Name & Number: 3204 N. Hwy. 27

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: LaFayette, GA. 30728

Request: Request to rezone property back to
commercial.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

11-21-2024

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

Todd Holt made a motion to approve.
Stan Porter seconded the motion to approve.
The vote was unanimous to approve.
Motion to approve carried.

DENIAL

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

DENIAL

The following disclosure is required of the applicant(s) by Section 36-67A of O.C.G.A. The following is for disclosure purposes only and does not disqualify the petition.

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- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years.

Signature of Applicant/Owner:

Paige M. Griffin

8-14-2024

APPLICANT/OWNER

DATE



Walker County Planning Office
Rezone, Conditional Use Variance & Variance Application

Rezone Conditional Use Variance Variance

Current Zoning:	Requested Change:	
C1 / A1	Parking Variance Request	
Map & Parcel	Date:	Fee:
0325026	10-10-24	150.00

Randall Dalton, Lisa G. Dalton, Bradley Dalton & Amanda Barrett
Applicant/Owner & Phone: (423)421-3029 (Current property owner)

Street Name & Number: 10161 No. Hwy 27, Chickamauga, GA 30707

Mailing Address: 43 Hidden Hills Drive

City, State, Zip Code: Chickamauga, GA 30707

Request: To reduce the required parking spaces for a 10,640 SF Dollar General store

from 53 spaces to 35 spaces.

Zack Chapman made a motion to approve.

Todd Holt seconded the motion to approve.

The vote was unanimous. Motion to approve carried.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

11-21-2024

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

DENIAL

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

TABLED

DENIAL

The following disclosure is required of the applicant(s) by Section 36-67A of O.C.G.A. The following is for disclosure purposes only and does not disqualify the petition.

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- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years.

Signature of Applicant/Owner:

Randall Dalton

APPLICANT/OWNER

Applicant is : Hibbymo Properties - Twin, LLC
443 Elm Street, Calhoun, GA 30701

10-10-24

DATE

10/10/24

Walker County Departmental Statistics - November 2024



Department	Monthly Totals				YTD Totals		YTD Totals		Yearly Totals		Yearly Totals		Yearly Totals			
	October		November		2024		2023		2022		2021		2020		2019	
Animal Services																
Animal Shelter	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats
Intake	74	109	109	88	1,085	789	1,066	469	1,138	452	1,322	648	1,093	516	1,094	295
Adopted	43	20	22	18	387	155	252	84	191	150	31	91	33	65	208	152
Rescued	14	0	49	0	466	224	615	234	720	245	999	494	919	397	766	119
Returned to Owner	40	68	60	73	263	223	179	21	249	17	238	18	119	6	112	3
Euthanized	2	2	6	4	108	37	48	16	35	27	17	23	20	6	31	7
Animal Control Calls	108		93		1,201		785		1066		917		807		n/a	
Codes Enforcement & Litter																
Inspections	124		1		1,863		1,619		3,553		19,409		6,672		9,309	
Closed Cases	0		0		22		54		73		154		161		58	
Roadside Trash Pounds	1,100		1,300		109,660		26,220		74,000		143,723		143,800		143,330	
Elections																
Active Voters (see YTD total)					43,940		41,961		43,200		43,025		43,719		40,281	
Fire Rescue																
Calls for Service	586		552		6,708		6,550		6,148		4,173		3,478		6,091	
Units Handling Calls for Service	308		764		9,498		9,429		9,433		7,024		5,705		8,815	
Smoke Alarms Installed	6		16		121		139		190		368		322		781	
Mountain Cove Farms																
Total Nights Booked	68		164		677		789		1,016		892		840		1,102	
Planning																
Single Family New Home Construction	19		20		250		352		142		157		150		128	
Building Inspections	304		255		3,180		4,395		2,291		1,755		1,595		1,424	
Public Relations																
External Media Impressions (stories)	40		20		317		297		327		460		460		451	
Facebook Followers Added (19,377 total)	387		83		1,813		2,185		2,722		1,227		2,768		1,880	
Facebook Posts (main page)	29		16		316		372		342		519		888		602	
WalkerCountyGA.gov views	70,247		44,787		527,875		526,068		504,354		568,384		668,051		357,989	
Newsletter Subscribers Added (6,153 total)	-18		0		29		219		345		1,376		1,104		971	
SirenGPS Subscribers (6,494 total)	131		2		1,001		489		645		2,716		391		1,243	
Public Works																
Patching/Potholes	616		320		4,468		4,423		3,124		4,157		5,785		6,148	
Walker Transit																
Total Trips	2,598		2,062		25,182		30,456		27,869		18,420		17,436		26,535	

Best Friends: Data Matrix



Criteria:

Enter from date: 11/01/2024

Enter to date: 11/30/2024

	Species					
	Canine			Feline		
	Adult	Up to 5 months	Unknown Age	Adult	Up to 5 months	Unknown Age
Beginning Animal Count 2024-11-01	138	24	0	27	22	0
Intakes: Stray/At Large	19	3	0	4	4	0
Intakes: Transferred in from Municipal Shelter	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intakes: Transferred in from Other Rescue Group	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intakes: Owner Requested Euthanasia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intakes: Relinquished by Owner	66	18	0	67	13	0
Intakes: Returns	6	0	0	0	0	0
Intakes: Other Intakes	3	0	0	0	0	0
Live Outcomes: Adoption	20	2	0	16	2	0
Live Outcomes: Returned to Owner	58	2	0	64	9	0
Live Outcomes: Returned To Field	0	0	0	0	0	0
Live Outcomes: Transferred to Municipal Shelter	0	0	0	0	0	0
Live Outcomes: Transferred to Other Rescue Group	35	14	0	0	0	0
Live Outcomes: Other	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other Outcomes: Died in Care	0	0	0	0	4	0
Other Outcomes: Lost in Care	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Outcomes: Euthanasia	6	0	0	2	2	0
Other Outcomes: Owner Requested Euthanasia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ending Animal Counts 2024-11-30	117	22	0	19	19	0
Spays/Neuters: Pre- Adoption	72	4	0	74	8	0

	Species					
Spays/Neuters: Free for Low-Income Families	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spays/Neuters: Low-Cost for Low-Income Families	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spays/Neuters: Low-Cost for General Public	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spays/Neuters: TNR	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spays/Neuters: Other	0	0	0	0	0	0

Report: **Figures -> Best Friends: Data Matrix**

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