



**CITY OF ROME
AND
FLOYD COUNTY**

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**INCLUDING
THE CITY OF CAVE SPRING**

**ADOPTED
APRIL 8, 2008**

PREPARED BY:

PLANNING WORKS

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CITY OF ROME, CITY OF CAVE SPRING, FLOYD COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Department of Community Affairs Approval Letter

Floyd County Resolution of Adoption

City of Rome Resolution of Adoption

City of Cave Spring Resolution of Adoption

COMMUNITY AGENDA

I. *Plan Overview*

A. **Purpose and Scope**

The Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) envisions the future of this community and suggests a course of action for achieving this vision. The Plan is a guide for cooperation and coordination between Floyd County, the cities of Rome and Cave Spring, other service providers, and private property owners as each anticipates and responds to new development and changing conditions. The goals, policies, and strategies contained in this Plan have been carefully crafted to support new development and redevelopment that is beneficial to the community. The Plan should be used to support decisions regarding the timing and location of growth, the provision of community facilities and services, and the community's quality of life over the next twenty years.

B. **Planning Area**

This Plan encompasses growth and development happening within the City of Rome as well as Floyd County. The City of Rome and County have managed development through a joint City/County Planning Commission since 1947. Cave Spring, while not a party to the City/County agreement, is referenced throughout this Plan because it is located within Floyd County and will be directly affected by the Plan's implementation.

Growth Management Defined

Growth management is not growth control or a limit on the amount of growth. It is the coordination of many decisions needed to accommodate projected growth in ways that achieve the goals stated in this Plan. These decisions include:

- Establishing minimum standards for the quality of development;
- Scheduling the timing and location of adequate public infrastructure investments;
- Defining appropriate levels of service for essential public facilities and services; and
- Coordinating the timing and location of growth with our ability to provide/fund adequate public facilities.

C. **Context for the Plan Update**

The planning process began in 2005. The City/County Planning Department, knowing that a required Comprehensive Plan update would be necessary in 2008, decided to begin the process early in order to address ongoing growth issues in a proactive manner. These issues included:

- Contentious industrial rezoning cases;
- Increasing traffic congestion;
- Concerns about the appearance and function of the highway corridors leading into and throughout the County;
- Concerns about the impact of sprawl on the rural and scenic character of unincorporated areas; and
- The challenges of managing growth without diminishing personal property rights.

D. Planning Process

The planning process has involved citizen input, as detailed in the Citizen Participation Plan (see **Appendix A**). Specific components of the planning process included:

- **Plan Kick-off Workshops.** Styled as a community ice cream social, the Kick-off Workshops invited community residents to discuss the needs and opportunities facing Rome and Floyd County, to share their concerns, and to identify their vision for the community. The Kick-off Workshops were held in October, 2005.
- **Focus Groups.** A variety of focus group conversations were held. Each focus group was centered on a particular topic, from farming to economic development, environmental concerns to the Hispanic community. Focus groups were conducted in the fall of 2005.
- **Questionnaires.** Questionnaires asking for feedback regarding issues facing the City and County were distributed at the Kick-off Workshops, focus group meetings, and by the Planning Department to gather feedback at the beginning of the planning process.
- **Steering Committee.** Composed of a variety of stakeholder representatives, including elected and appointed officials, property owners, school district representatives, developers, realtors, homebuilders, other business owners and neighborhood activists, the Steering Committee guided the development of the Plan goals and policies and the refinement of the Future Development and Future Land Use maps.
- **Development Allocation Workshops.** These community workshops, held in March, 2006, invited community residents to participate in an exercise to locate projected growth on a map of the County. Participants decided which growth patterns were most appropriate. The resulting maps were used to discuss the impacts of varied growth alternatives and to develop the preferred alternative that is reflected in the Future Land Use map and the policies of this Plan.
- **Joint City/County Workshops.** Workshops with the City and County Commissions were held to generate consensus on Plan goals and policies and to ensure that Commissioners for both jurisdictions were both comfortable with the direction of the Plan.
- **Plan Presentation Workshops.** In February, 2007, as the planning process was coming to a close, community workshops were held to present the Plan to the community and provide an opportunity for community residents to see the identified future for the community and to critique the Plan.

II. Issue & Opportunities

The following issues reflect the challenges that Rome, Cave Spring and Floyd County will face over the next 25 years. The issues were identified by participants in the October, 2005 focus group meetings and community workshops, as well as in responses to questionnaires distributed at the workshops. While no effort has been made to resolve conflicting opinions, those opinions have been grouped to highlight the range of perspectives from citizens, business owners, service providers and other

participants in the meetings. The issues and opportunities identified below are also discussed in the Community Assessment (**Appendix B**).

A. Community Identity

When asked to describe the character of Rome and Floyd County, residents give very similar responses: an excellent place to live and to raise kids; wonderful small town character. Downtown Rome is also seen a major asset to the area's character.

Retain Small Town and Rural Character

One common theme was that residents don't want to become part of Atlanta. Many people praised the small town character of Rome and the rural atmosphere of Floyd County. They worried that this character will be lost if the community becomes a bedroom community or suburb of Atlanta.

Retain Diversity

As housing prices in the region continue to escalate, there is increasing concern that rising prices will preclude young families from home ownership. To retain a balanced community with a cross-section of ages and incomes, a diversity of residence types are needed.

Embrace Inclusiveness and Diversity

Workshop participants cited the growth of the Hispanic community as an important change in the area and encouraged greater participation by and outreach to this segment of the population.

Remain Cognizant of Safety and Security

In response to the events of September 11, 2001, the community is much more aware of the potential of both man-made and natural hazards and desirous of doing all it can to protect the drinking water and food supplies, schools and hospitals, industrial and agricultural sites where potentially dangerous substances are stored, and the homes that form the backbone of our community. Encouraging safe, crime-free environments has always been a goal of the City of Rome and Floyd County and both governments continue to work to ensure that area citizens enjoy a safe and secure community.

B. Land Use

Land use concerns in the County cover a wide range, from the protection of agricultural operations to the responsible development and redevelopment of Rome and its environs.

Promote Infill and Redevelopment. The practice of infill and redevelopment maximizes efficient use of existing public infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and roads, and helps accomplish other goals, such as retaining rural character, alleviating pressures on agricultural land, and promoting evolving diversity within

the urban areas of Floyd County. The City of Rome and Cave Spring offer much of the infrastructure needed to support a variety of residential, non-residential and mixed use neighborhoods. By encouraging infill development and redevelopment, the cities and the County can capitalize on existing infrastructure such as utilities, schools, parks and other community services. In addition, promoting private investment within developed areas will strengthen these communities' abilities to fund services that improve the quality of life and reduce burdens on rural taxpayers.

Retain Agriculture by Reducing Encroachment of Incompatible Uses

Agriculture is still a desired use in Floyd County. Viable agricultural operations are threatened by residential encroachment. Noises, dust and odors from normal agricultural operations can be nuisances to rural residences. To protect existing agricultural operations, the County should minimize potential conflicts between agricultural operations and rural residences. Where rural residential development is appropriate, conservation subdivision design and other strategies can be used to buffer homes from agricultural and timber operations, thereby protecting each use.

Allow Greater Flexibility to Capitalize on Agriculture-Related Businesses

A new development in the County's agricultural scene is the emergence of agri-tourism. This type of tourism ranges from working farms that accept guests who participate in farm activities to farms that offer seasonal activities such as apple-picking. Agri-tourism can provide a new income stream that does not require the sale of any property, preserving the many intangible benefits of agriculture. In other areas, greater flexibility for cottage industries and home-based businesses can provide the economic support to retain agriculture. While not all farmers will choose to undertake these activities, they offer important options for economic development in the rural areas of the County.

Find ways to address agricultural operators' concerns about trails

While many residents desire more trails throughout the County, many agricultural operators are concerned that the risks may outweigh the benefits. Rural landowners are concerned about damage to their land, crops, and animals. Farm animals and agricultural practices create a risk for trail users and potential liability problems for the land owner. Fences, indemnification of agricultural operations and guarantees for protection from damages by trail users might help with the acceptance of trails in rural areas, but concerns remain about the loss of security that might result from increased public access to private lands. There are several opportunities for rails to trails conversions within the County, but this opportunity could be lost without a complete inventory of inactive rail lines, good communications with the railroads currently controlling the right-of-way and a coordinated effort to address the concerns of those with property abutting potential trails.

Retain meaningful wildlife habitat and buffer areas

To retain wildlife diversity in Floyd County, adequate interconnected open space and buffer areas will be needed. Additional coordination with Department of Wildlife and other applicable agencies is essential to define the ideal locations, corridor widths and buffer dimensions to meet the needs of local wildlife.

Coordinate with Large Landowners

Large landowners are important players in questions of land use due to their large land holdings. Rome and Floyd County will need to continue to work closely with large landowners on land use and transportation matters.

Retain the housing mix needed for Floyd County workers

County residents are watching the development of affordable housing spreading up Highway 101 towards Rome with some trepidation. They don't want Floyd County to be dominated by starter homes. While there is a desire to see adequate affordable housing developed to provide for the needs of residents working within Floyd County, residents understand the fiscal and social costs associated with becoming a commuter county.

Protect Private Property Rights

Floyd County residents place a high value on private property rights. Development regulations and land use planning necessarily place some limits on private property rights. There is a desire to use incentives rather than mandates when possible to encourage desired development, foster an environment of trust through fair and predictable regulations, and equitably balance the rights of property owners with responsibilities to adjacent property owners and the community at large.

C. Transportation

Transportation system affects most residents' lives on a daily basis, which makes it a significant determinant of their quality of life. This plan addresses the following

Preserve attractive gateways and efficient travel routes

The highway corridors leading into Floyd County are vital conduits for goods and people. As gateways, they define local character and values, providing visitors' first impressions. Residents want attractive entryways that retain the natural rural character in rural areas and higher quality design within urban areas. Residents also understand the importance of limiting traffic congestion in these corridors. Stringent access control will be needed to avoid the proliferation of stop lights that snarls traffic in much of the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Address major corridor issues before a development boom

Several new transportation projects are on the horizon that will potentially result in increased development opportunities along several of the County's gateway corridors. These projects add some urgency to the concerns about retaining the form and function of these roads.

Providing for travel choices

With the exception of downtown Rome, Cave Spring and a few scattered neighborhoods, residents are heavily dependent on their cars. To conserve energy, reduce air pollutants and increase mobility for all residents, development patterns and improvements should support transit, bicycles and pedestrians. By establishing more developments that include a mix of uses and residential densities, the County will place itself in a much better position to weather rising energy costs and provide residents of all ages with a broader choice of safe ways to get to school, work, goods and services.

D. Water & Wastewater

Water was a concern both in the preservation of the river heritage of the area and in the provision of adequate water services into the future. The Service Providers Focus Group indicated that water supplies are judged to be adequate for the next 10 years and there are few concerns about providing additional water beyond that point.

County water is in good supply, especially in the southern part of the County. However, the water table is very shallow around Cave Spring and the use of septic systems could eventually create a water contamination problem.

While the City of Rome has access to ample water supplies, inter-basin water transfers without the return of highly treated wastewater to the basin of origin threaten to limit future water rights needed to support long-term growth.

Judicious use and planning involving capital improvement programs is necessary with respect to water and wastewater infrastructure. There is a further need to communicate the intended areas of expansion as well as those areas not slated for immediate expansion to the development community.

Address sediment issues

Sediment is a major water quality concern. The City and County should continue to monitor new development, dirt roads and driveways to limit erosion into waterways. Sediment is also a problem with water coming into the County from the east, especially in the Etowah River.

Support best agricultural management practices

Agricultural operations can be as great a threat to water quality as urban development. Support of state efforts to get the agriculture and timber industry to employ best management practices will help ensure that agriculture's environmental contributions are as positive as its contributions to local culture and the economy.

Monitor proliferation of septic systems

While properly designed and maintained public and private on-site wastewater systems can safely treat and dispose of effluent, local soils and terrain limit the density of systems that can be accommodated. Ongoing efforts to expand centralized collection and treatment systems in the Urbanizing Area will be

needed to reduce the risks of septic systems to surface and ground water supplies. Outside the Urbanizing Area, continued coordination with the State Department of Health, building future septic systems to community standards, as well as the observation of other Best Management Practices will assist in accomplishing the same goals.

Address stormwater issues

Stormwater management is a regional concern. In addition to affecting the potential for flooding, stormwater management is a key to improving surface water quality. The use of best management practices is one means to improve stormwater quality. Incentives that encourage developers to utilize innovative pervious surface paving techniques should be considered as well. To fund both efforts, the City and County should explore the option of establishing a stormwater utility, particularly for more urban areas.

E. Economic Development

The local economy is built on a strong foundation –four colleges and three hospitals. While the community has experienced ups and downs, such as the GE plant closing several years ago, there has been significant job growth along Technology Parkway and in other industrial areas. The Old Riverbend Mall, which was vacant for several years, has been redeveloped with Barnes and Noble, Kroger, and a variety of other shops. Continue collaboration between the public and private sector is necessary to keep the local economy in the best position to respond to the ever-changing economy.

Maintain spirit of cooperation with economic development efforts

Local governments and the Chamber consistently endeavor to maintain a high level of cooperation in efforts to promote economic development and attract new industries to Floyd County. The County has everything industry needs – transportation, resources, and culture – and desirable options for small town and rural lifestyles. Local economic efforts are based on the understanding that new industry must fit local values and resources. Efforts are focused on clean, stable industries that pay well and use the capabilities of the local labor force.

Prepare residents for the job market

Economic development efforts also focus on the capabilities of the local labor force. At a minimum, efforts must be made to ensure that students graduate from high school with basic work skills. After high school, residents should be encouraged to capitalize on opportunities to prepare for technical and other professional positions that foster economic and personal success.

Expand job opportunities

Both community workshops emphasized that residents would like to expand the job opportunities available to entice young people to return to or stay in Floyd County.

F. Planning & Zoning

The relatively new land development regulations have created challenges related to public education. Members of development community generally view the ULDC as a big step in the right direction, but cite the importance of consistent application of the rules to public and private sector development projects.

Improve communication between service providers and developers

The Service Providers Focus Group identified improved communication between utilities and developers as an important need. This group felt the ULDC provides a good foundation for development, but service providers should be more involved at the start of the development process to be informed about potential new demands and to better coordinate development and utility system improvements. Utility company representatives voiced concerns that adequate right-of-way should be provided to accommodate the full range of utilities (e.g., water, sewer, electric and telecommunications)

Streamline the development process

There is a clear desire for the development process to be streamlined. The lack of adequately zoned land is a key source of delays. Developers of any product other than large lot single family residents generally must go through the rezoning process before initiating development. Particularly in the industrial sector, the lack of adequately zoned land lowers the perception of the County as a good place to do business.

Enforce the ULDC strictly and fairly

Many focus group participants cited a concern that there is a lack of uniform enforcement of the ULDC. Much of this is due to a lack of clarity and the inclusion of unintended loopholes. Community workshop participants cited a desire for stricter enforcement of the ULDC and a stricter sign ordinance to reduce visual clutter.

Define the relationship between Cave Spring and Rome/Floyd County Plan

While Cave Spring residents have participated in the development of this Plan, they retain independence from the application of the plan or actions of the Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission. Cave Spring residents desire to retain the historic character of the community and surrounding rural and agricultural lands. Residents wish to retain their autonomy, while having a greater voice in the destiny of the rural areas that help establish their quality of life.

Continue public participation efforts

Participants in this planning process stressed the critical importance of public participation and public buy-in. This plan is an attempt to chart a course based on the priorities established by the community through the public participation process. It is incumbent on City and County officials to achieve and to maintain the highest degree of credibility by listening to and following through on public input.

III. Community Vision

A. Vision Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B. Future Development Map

The Future Development Map is an outgrowth of two different maps developed during the planning process: the Character Areas Map in the Community Assessment and the Growth Tiers Map developed with the project Steering Committee regarding infrastructure extensions. Those maps are synthesized in the Future Development Map, which addresses two main issues surrounding new development and redevelopment: the timing of growth with regard to the availability of public facilities and compatibility between development types.

Development, infill, and redevelopment should be focused where appropriate based on the existing levels of public facilities and services availability and the City's ability to efficiently provide additional facilities and services to support development. In some areas, the extension of facilities is planned but capital funds are not yet available to pay for the extension. In these areas, development may be delayed or the developer may choose to participate financially in the facility extension in order to expedite development.

Compatibility is an important component of development and has an impact on the long-term stability of an area. Compatibility issues are often most obvious in already developed neighborhoods, where infill and redevelopment lies close to established uses. However, compatibility issues are also important in rural and undeveloped areas, where development has incremental impacts on rural character.

The Community Assessment identified ten character areas for the County; the Growth Tiers Map divided the County into three main areas based on infrastructure availability. The Future Development Map synthesizes those maps into seven character areas that encompass the entire County, from Town Center to Conservation Area. **Exhibit 1** summarizes these areas by describing typical uses in each area, the public facilities and services available to serve development, and the compatibility issues to be addressed to ensure the long-term stability of each area.

The Future Development Map (**Map 1, Appendix D**) is to be used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map to provide guidance for land use and development decision-making. The Future Land Use Map indicates

The policies in Chapter IV provide further guidance for each character area, including:

- Applicable infrastructure and growth coordination policies; and
- Implementation measures that will be used in the area to achieve stated goals.

Exhibit 1: Character Areas

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

Character Area	Typical Uses	Public Facilities & Services	Compatibility Issues
Rural Area	Land in an open or cultivated state, including agricultural and timber operations and rural residential uses, characterized by low population density, very large lots, open space and a high degree of building separation.	Limited public facilities and services are available.	Protect viable agriculture from incompatible development; maintain rural character through use of landscaping and setbacks.
Conservation Area	Undeveloped natural lands and environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development, including riparian buffers along rivers and streams, wetlands, flood plains, hills and mountains with steep slopes, scenic areas, and wildlife management areas.	Limited public facilities and services are available.	Best practices to ensure that changes result in appropriate resource protection.

C. Character Areas

The following pages contain the defining narrative for each character area found on the Future Development Map. These narratives delineate the vision and plan for action for guiding future development in each area.

Town Center

Land Uses

Mixed uses typical of a downtown or traditional neighborhood, including low to high density residential, neighborhood services, office and commercial uses, generally characterized by pedestrian orientation, including sidewalks and street trees; on-street parking; small, regular lots; and buildings close to or at the front property line. Land Uses (as described in Exhibit 2 and the Future Land Use Map) include:

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use

Compatibility Issues

- Retaining the historic character that is a cultural and economic resource through compatible design.

Public Facilities & Services

The full range of public facilities and services is available.

Characteristic Development Pattern:

- Homes, shops, small business, and institutions grouped together in attractive mixed use centers that service adjacent neighborhoods. Centers are very pedestrian friendly and include pleasant community gathering spaces. Residences bring round-the-clock activity to the area.
- Buildings in centers developed at a scale sufficient in size, bulk, and height to provide image identification for the center and the surrounding community.
- Commercial structures located near street front, with parking in rear of buildings, making community more attractive and more pedestrian friendly.
- New development matching typical densities of older community center.
- Residential development that offers a mix of housing types (single family, town home, live/work units, lofts, apartments), densities, and prices in the same neighborhood.



Downtown Rome contains a strong stock of well maintained historic buildings and new development that supports activity in the area.

Anticipated Implementation Measures:

- Development regulations
- Compatibility standards
- Redevelopment and infill incentives
- Access control measures
- Adequate public facilities ordinance
- Land bank
- Facility oversizing

Applicable Goals and Policies

While all of the Plan goals and policies are important and apply to development within the City and County, these policies are of particular interest and relevance to development within this character area:

- Goal 4, all associated policies
- Goal 5, all associated policies
- Policy 10.5, 10.7, 10.9, 10.10
- Policy 11.2, 11.3, 11.8
- Policy 14.1
- Policy 15.2, 15.3



Urban Area

Land Uses

Uses that provide a wide range of options for housing, employment, and recreation, with the greatest opportunities for infill and redevelopment. Land Uses (as described in Exhibit 2 and the Future Land Use Map) include:

- **Suburban Residential**
- **Low Density Residential**
- **Medium Density Residential**
- **High Density Residential**
- **Commercial**
- **Office Park**
- **Industrial**
- **Mixed Use**

Compatibility Issues

- Connectivity to other uses (work, play, and shopping) in these predominantly single-use neighborhoods; re-use and redevelopment of existing buildings should be context-sensitive.

Public Facilities & Services

The full range of public facilities and services is available.

Characteristic Development Pattern:

- Infill development on vacant sites or under-utilized sites closer in to the center of the community, matching the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Distribution of affordably-priced homes throughout region.
- Residential development that offers a mix of housing types (single family, town home, live/work units, lofts, apartments), densities, and prices in the same neighborhood.
- Residential development with a healthy mix of uses within easy walking distance of residences.



Rome's Urban Areas contain existing neighborhoods offering a variety of housing types as well as infill and redevelopment opportunities.

Anticipated Implementation Measures:

- Development regulations
- Compatibility standards
- Redevelopment and infill incentives
- Access control measures
- Adequate public facilities ordinance
- Land bank
- Facility oversizing

Applicable Goals and Policies

While all of the Plan goals and policies are important and apply to development within the City and County, these policies are of particular interest and relevance to development within this character area:

- Goal 4, all associated policies
- Goal 5, all associated policies
- Policy 10.5, 10.7, 10.9, 10.10
- Policy 11.2, 11.3, 11.8
- Policy 14.1
- Policy 15.2, 15.3



Urban Growth Area

Land Uses

Uses that provide a wide range of options for housing, employment, and recreation, expected to develop over the next twenty years. While some opportunities for infill and redevelopment may be available, most development in this area is likely to involve the development of previously undeveloped or agricultural land. Land Uses (as described in Exhibit 2 and the Future Land Use Map) include:

- **Agriculture**
- **Suburban Residential**
- **Low Density Residential**
- **Medium Density Residential**
- **High Density Residential**
- **Commercial**
- **Office Park**
- **Industrial**
- **Mixed Use**

Compatibility Issues

- Balanced land uses, including a mix of housing types, that provide connectivity to other uses (work, play, and shopping) and encourage high quality development.

Public Facilities & Services

The full range of public facilities and services is available or planned during the next 20 years.

Characteristic Development Pattern:

- Use of village centers in new developments that accommodate residents' commercial and service needs.
- Street layouts that match those in older parts of the community and connect to the existing street network at many points.
- Developments that have easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools, and other areas where residents travel daily.
- Distribution of affordably-priced homes throughout the area.
- Residential development that offers a mix of housing types (single family, town home, live/work units, lofts, apartments), densities, and prices in the same neighborhood.
- Residential development with a healthy mix of uses within easy walking distance of residences.



Growth continues on the outskirts of Rome, where new subdivisions are being built to accommodate new residents to the area.

Anticipated Implementation Measures:

- Development regulations
- Compatibility standards
- Access control measures
- Adequate public facilities ordinance
- Facility oversizing

Applicable Goals and Policies

While all of the Plan goals and policies are important and apply to development within the City and County, these policies are of particular interest and relevance to development within this character area:

- Goal 4, all associated policies
- Policy 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.10
- Policy 11.3, 11.8
- Policy 12.1, 12.8
- Policy 14.1, 14.5
- Policy 15.3



Activity Corridor

Land Uses

Corridors extending from the cities to the County line, providing for the safe and convenient movement of goods and people through the region, providing opportunities for commercial and industrial development with easy access to major transportation routes and generally characterized by traffic congestion, high vehicular traffic, and auto-oriented development. Land Uses (as described in Exhibit 2 and the Future Land Use Map) include:

- **Agriculture**
- **Suburban Residential**
- **Low Density Residential**
- **Medium Density Residential**
- **High Density Residential**
- **Commercial**
- **Industrial**
- **Mixed Use**

Compatibility Issues

- Appropriate access standards, setbacks, landscaping and signage requirements that result in safe and attractive corridors that serve the traveling public and nearby businesses while maintaining road capacity.

Public Facilities & Services

Roads, water, centralized wastewater and fire protection services are available or planned for extension.

Characteristic Development Pattern:

- Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of commercial centers.
- New industry or other major employers located close in to town, making jobs accessible to all residents.
- Driveway consolidation and inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- New developments at transportation nodes that contain a mix of residential, commercial uses, and community facilities.
- Use of infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.



Concept for proposed activity nodes at Norton/Nichols Roads and Alford Road

The concept plan for the 411 Corridor shows increased retail and employment activity along this key gateway into Floyd County.

Anticipated Implementation Measures:

- Design standards
- Landscaped buffers
- Adequate public facilities ordinance
- Access management

Applicable Goals and Policies

While all of the Plan goals and policies are important and apply to development within the City and County, these policies are of particular interest and relevance to development within this character area:

- Goal 3, all associated policies
- Policy 11.2
- Goal 12, all associated policies
- Policy 14.1
- Policies affecting Urban and Urban Growth Areas

Rural Commercial Corridor

Land Uses

Corridors extending from the cities to the County line, providing for the safe and convenient movement of goods and people through the region and an attractive gateway to the County and Cities. Land Uses (as described in Exhibit 2 and the Future Land Use Map) include:

- **Agriculture**
- **Suburban Residential**
- **Commercial**
- **Industrial**
- **Mixed Use**

Compatibility Issues

- Appropriate access standards, setbacks, landscaping and signage requirements that minimize interruptions to continuous traffic flow and reflect the rural character of the surrounding area.

Public Facilities & Services

Roads, water, and centralized wastewater services may be available or planned for extension in the next 20 years. Services are limited in areas further from the cities. Response times may be longer.

Characteristic Development Pattern:

- Clustering high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive rural residential development.
- Driveway consolidation and inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Landscaped medians separating traffic lanes.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.



Rural Commercial Corridors provide some services, but mainly serve to provide safe and convenient travel through the County.

Anticipated Implementation Measures:

- Design standards
- Landscaped buffers
- Adequate public facilities ordinance
- Access management

Applicable Goals and Policies

While all of the Plan goals and policies are important and apply to development within the City and County, these policies are of particular interest and relevance to development within this character area:

- Goal 3, all associated policies
- Policy 11.2
- Goal 12, all associated policies
- Policies affecting Rural Areas



Rural Area

Land Uses

This character area includes land in an open or cultivated state, including agricultural and timber operations and rural residential uses, characterized by low population density, very large lots, open space and a high degree of building separation. Land Uses (as described in Exhibit 2 and the Future Land Use Map) include:

- **Agriculture**
- **Suburban Residential**
- **Commercial**
- **Industrial**

Compatibility Issues

- Protect viable agriculture from incompatible development.
- Maintain rural character through use of landscaping and setbacks.

Public Facilities & Services

Limited public facilities and services are available.

Characteristic Development Pattern:

- Use of significant site features, such as wetlands, streamways, viewsheds, and topography, as amenities that shape identity and character of the area.
- Very large lot sizes limit development density and protect farmland and rural character.
- Site plans, building design, and landscaping are sensitive to natural features, including topography and views.



Rural Areas in Floyd County offer opportunities for agricultural operations as well as rural living.

Anticipated Implementation Measures:

- Agricultural buffering
- Agricultural use notices
- Right-to-farm protections
- Conservation subdivisions
- Rural design guidelines
- Development regulations
- Adequate public facilities ordinance

Applicable Goals and Policies

While all of the Plan goals and policies are important and apply to development within the City and County, these policies are of particular interest and relevance to development within this character area:

- Goal 2, all associated policies
- Goal 7, all associated policies
- Policy 11.2 and 11.4
- Policy 12.7, 12.8, 12.11, & 12.14
- Policy 14.3 & 14.4
- Policy 15.2



Conservation Area

Land Uses

Undeveloped natural lands and environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development, including riparian buffers along rivers and streams, wetlands, flood plains, hills and mountains with steep slopes, scenic areas, and wildlife management areas. Land Uses (as described in Exhibit 2 and the Future Land Use Map) include:

- Agriculture
- Suburban Residential
- Industrial

Compatibility Issues

- Best practices to ensure that changes result in appropriate resource protection.

Public Facilities & Services

Limited public facilities and services are available.

Characteristic Development Pattern:

- Very large lot sizes limit development density and protect farmland and rural character.
- Urban growth or service boundary that discourages growth in this area.



Floyd County's Conservation Areas include significant riparian buffers along the County's rivers and streams.

Anticipated Implementation Measures:

- Agricultural buffering
- Agricultural use notices
- Right-to-farm protections
- Conservation subdivisions
- Rural design guidelines
- Development regulations

Applicable Goals and Policies

While all of the Plan goals and policies are important and apply to development within the City and County, these policies are of particular interest and relevance to development within this character area:

- Goal 2, all associated policies
- Policy 11.2
- Policy 15.2
- Policy 17.2



D. Future Land Use Map

The future land use map identifies the type and intensity of land uses for future development. This map (**Map 2, Appendix D**) should be used as a guideline for providing future services and evaluating future zoning and development requests.

The Future Land Use Map was based on the maps generated by participants at the Development Allocation Workshops. The workshop maps were distilled into three alternative scenarios which were analyzed to examine the impacts each scenario would have on City and County facilities and services (**Appendix C**). The Steering Committee then selected components from each scenario to develop a preferred scenario that formed the basis for the Future Land Use Map.

The Future Land Use Map includes nine categories of land uses, shown in **Exhibit 2**. These land uses are not zoning districts; the Future Land Use Map is a guideline to future zoning for the City of Rome and Floyd County. **Exhibit 2** specifies which zoning districts are anticipated for use within each Future Land Use category.

Exhibit 2: Future Land Use Table

Future Land Use Category	Typical Uses	Density/ Intensity Range	Applicable Zoning
Agriculture	Agriculture, forestry, and agricultural-related activities on large parcels of land. Some large-lot residential uses may occur, ranging from farmhouses to clustered subdivisions that preserve agricultural or open space.	Less than 1 DU/Acre	Agricultural Residential, Suburban Residential
Suburban Residential	Suburban residential provides space for one home every 2 acres, on average. The land is generally held in private ownership and residents are not served by municipal utilities.	Up to 1 DU/Acre	Agricultural Residential, Suburban Residential
Low Density Residential	Low density residential uses may include conventional subdivisions which are typically low density neighborhoods that include design components such as segregated uses, streets designed primarily for cars, cul-de-sacs, private open space, and large lots.	1-4 DUs/Acre	Low Density Traditional Residential
Medium Density Residential	Townhomes and condominiums at moderate density are 2-3 stories tall. This type of development is generally be located on the busier streets of lower density residential neighborhoods.	4-9 DUs/Acre	High Density Traditional Residential
High Density Residential	Tri-plexes, apartment buildings, condominiums, and townhomes at higher densities are included in this category. Buildings may be as tall as 4-5 stories.	10 to 14 DUs/Acre	Duplex Residential, Multifamily Residential

Future Land Use Category	Typical Uses	Density/ Intensity Range	Applicable Zoning
Commercial	Commercial uses include a wide variety of retail uses, including restaurants, movie theaters, car dealerships, and stores. Commercial uses range from small boutiques to large "big box" centers.		Community Commercial, General Heavy Commercial, Central Business Commercial
Office Park	Office parks include buildings from 1 to 3 stories in height, and cover approximately a third of the site. Although office uses are predominant, small retail components may be included in these developments to serve on-site employees.		Neighborhood Office Commercial, Office Institutional
Industrial	Industrial uses sometimes require open space in order to buffer them from adjacent uses, and might include light industrial uses such as shipping & warehousing, technology industries and assembly plants, or more intense heavy industrial uses.		Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial
Mixed Use	Permits a mix of residential and non-residential development. Typical combines multi-family dwelling units with commercial and office uses. Uses may be mixed within a building (such as apartments above retail shops) or within a development site.	10-14 DUs/acre;	Planned Development, Urban Mixed Use

IV. Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies are intended for use by elected and appointed officials and the development community in making decisions on future development in the City and County. These goals and policies were developed by the citizens of Floyd County through the public participation plan described in **Appendix A**.

A. Growth Coordination

GOAL 1 – Land Use: To maintain a balanced, sustainable land use pattern that accommodates projected growth while fostering community vitality, improving the quality of the developed environment and protecting the integrity of the natural environment.

Policy 1.1: Use the Future Development Map (**Map 1**) to coordinate infrastructure investment with City and County growth goals.

Policy 1.2: Use the Future Development Map (**Map 1**), Future Land Use Map (**Map 2**) and the Character Areas and Future Land Use Table (**Exhibits 1 & 2**) to guide land use and development decisions. The maps illustrate public facility needs and compatibility issues and the general distribution and type of future land uses. The City and County shall establish a mechanism that allows interpretations and minor boundary adjustments in the Future Land Use Map without requiring formal plan amendments.

Policy 1.3: Prior to amending the Official Zoning Map, the City Commission and Board of County Commissioners should consider whether the proposed amendment:

- a. Is consistent with adopted goals and policies (including referenced maps);
- b. Is or will be compatible¹ with the Future Development Map and future land use as shown in the Future Land Use Map; and
- c. Will enhance the overall quality of life in the County.

Policy 1.4 The Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission shall make recommendations on proposed annexation or de-annexation issues, including identifying applicable state laws and assessing potential effects on land use, zoning, schools, service and facility needs.

GOAL 2 – Rural Area: Preserve and protect important natural resources and agricultural and forestry areas from the undue encroachment of other land uses.

¹ Compatibility is the ability of adjacent land uses to coexist without reducing each other's long-term viability. Different land uses can be considered compatible if they are adequately buffered and other measures have been taken to mitigate incompatible noise, odors, traffic and other nuisances that may be generated. Responsibilities for mitigation are described in the policies of the plan and will be enacted through the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC).

- Policy 2.1: Promote land use compatibility and sustainability in Rural Areas and Conservation Areas shown in **Map 1** as follows:
- Support and protect agricultural operations² from potential nuisance complaints through buffering, agricultural use notices, right-to-farm protections and nuisance easements.
 - Provide greater flexibility for operation of home occupations, cottage industries and agricultural support activities within rural areas rather than within suburban and urban areas.
 - Encourage retail and service development at intersections of arterial streets.
- Policy 2.2: Ensure that rural residential development is located and designed to minimize conflicts with adjacent agricultural and forestry operations.
- Policy 2.3: Encourage the use of conservation subdivisions in the unincorporated County to allow residential development that retains the rural character of rural area roadways and preserves agricultural land and/or open space.
- Policy 2.4: Encourage the preservation of the rural character through the establishment and use of rural design guidelines that:
- Preserve mature trees and vegetation screening the project;
 - Protect view corridors to maintain views of prominent scenic features; and
 - Locate perimeter fences gates, pillars, monuments, and other entry structures back from the roadway.
- Policy 2.5: Consider the establishment of a land evaluation and assessment system to determine the suitability of land conversion.

GOAL 3 –Corridors: To maintain the major highway corridors through the County as attractive and functional gateways to Rome and Floyd County.

- Policy 3.1: Ensure that new development and redevelopment are designed to be compatible with the function of the corridors designated in **Map 1**, and maintain an attractive environment for users of corridors. Design standards in corridors should address landscaping, screening, building form and materials, parking area design, signs and other site design factors. For rural commercial corridors a combination of existing and

² Agricultural Operations are defined in the ULDC as “the raising, harvesting, marketing, or storing of products of the field or orchard; feeding, breeding, or managing livestock (including but not limited to cattle, swine, equine, goats, sheep and rabbits) or poultry (including but not limited to chickens, ducks, turkeys and ratites); producing and/or storing feed for use in the production of livestock or poultry; the production of aquacultural, horticultural, dairy, livestock, poultry, eggs and apiarian products; forestry land management practices including harvesting trees; and constructing farm buildings and farm ponds. These activities may also involve the application of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and animal wastes and irrigation, tillage of the soil and harvesting of crops. Execution of these activities may create noise, odors and dust at any time of any day of the week.”

new landscaping should be used to reinforce the desired scenic character of these portions of the highway corridor.

- Policy 3.2: Facilitate property access from a system of collector or side streets that are generally parallel to the highway corridor and minimize the number of access points to highway corridor.
- Policy 3.3: Encourage nodal development patterns and avoid shallow strip development along corridors where commercial uses interconnect with each other and adjacent residential neighborhoods through common access points along highway corridors.
- Policy 3.4: Ensure that adequate public facilities are available concurrently with development in these corridors. Participate in the development costs of these public facilities when consistent with available funding and adopted economic development objectives and policies.
- Policy 3.5: In addition to the preceding policies, Corridors are subject to the policies of the Rural, Urban, or Urban Growth Area to which they are adjacent.

GOAL 4 – Urbanizing Areas: To promote and sustain the vitality of developed areas of the County, including the cities of Rome and Cave Spring, and the urbanizing areas surrounding these cities.

- Policy 4.1: Coordinate with the cities of Rome and Cave Spring to develop a long-range sewer extension plan and ensure that future development decisions in these areas are consistent with the efficient extension of the full range of urban services
- Policy 4.2: Collaboratively develop consistent land use and improvement standards and procedures for development within Town Centers, Urban Areas, and Urban Growth Areas designated in the Future Development Map (**Map 1**) to:
- a. facilitate efficient long-term urban service provision;
 - b. ensure that land uses are consistent with adopted growth plans;
 - c. ensure that densities/intensities are consistent with plans to provide centralized water, sewer and other public facilities;
 - d. require all development to be served by essential public or equivalent private facilities at adopted levels of service;
 - e. ensure that public improvements are consistent with applicable plans and design standards;
 - f. coordinate the installation of private on-site facilities (e.g., septic tanks and water wells) with potential infrastructure extensions to avoid creating barriers to urban growth and the efficient extension of centralized facilities;
 - g. establish consistent and rational urban street cross-sections;
 - h. streamline development review processes to encourage planned development and minimize procedural redundancy;

- i. clearly assign regulatory and enforcement responsibilities to the appropriate jurisdiction;
 - j. coordinate residential, commercial and industrial development with the efficient extension of centralized wastewater service, water service and transportation system improvements; and
 - k. protect the rights of property owners.
- Policy 4.3 Limit rural development in planned urban areas that will interfere with the efficient extension of urban infrastructure or the establishment of sustainable urban land use patterns.
- Policy 4.4 Ensure that residential and commercial development pays its proportionate share of the costs of extending essential public facilities³ (see policies under **Goal 11** for more details).
- Policy 4.5: Ensure that dissimilar adjacent land uses are compatible through standards that buffer or otherwise mitigate negative impacts.
- Policy 4.6: Preclude new residential development within planned industrial areas, airport approach zones, and identified environmental hazard areas.
- Policy 4.7: Facilitate mixed-use development that compatibly incorporates and integrates a variety of housing unit types, support services, recreational and educational facilities, and employment opportunities.
- Policy 4.8: Ensure that extensions of municipal services into the Urbanizing Area are located, designed and timed to facilitate planned urban growth at appropriate densities through a coordinated Capital Improvements Program.⁴
- Policy 4.9: Permit interim development within the Urbanizing Area provided that:
- a. Development is designed to be compatible with planned land uses;
 - b. Residential lots are clustered and do not exceed 1 acre, except as necessitated by environmental constraints;
 - c. Centralized water service meeting adopted fire protection standards is available; and
 - d. Funding and design provisions are made for future connection to centralized water and sewer facilities for development at densities of one or more dwellings per acre.
- Policy 4.10: Coordinate the expansion of the Urbanizing Area with plans for the extension of centralized water and sewer service. Avoid premature expansions that would promote sprawl development patterns.

GOAL 5 – Redevelopment and Infill Development: To promote compatible and sustainable redevelopment and infill development within the City of Rome, Cave Spring and Floyd County.

³ Essential public facilities include centralized water and sewer systems, transportation, stormwater, schools and emergency service facilities. See policies under Goal 11 for more explanation of the application of this policy.

⁴ See the Implementation section of this Plan for more discussion of the Capital Improvements Program.

- Policy 5.1 Encourage the adaptive re-use of vacant or under-used buildings for residential, commercial, or mixed-use projects where such buildings are in a prominent location, have historic significance, or have the potential to revitalize a neighborhood.
- Policy 5.2 Provide greater flexibility for site design and building code requirements applied to the rehabilitation of older buildings that include standards appropriate to the renovation of older buildings.
- Policy 5.3 Cooperate with redevelopment organizations such as the South Rome Redevelopment Corporation to seek State and Federal funds for revitalization projects.
- Policy 5.4 Develop criteria for the application of the full range of redevelopment and infill incentives that may be available to qualified projects, including but not limited to:
- a. State Enterprise Zones;
 - b. Local Development Fund;
 - c. Redevelopment Fund Program;
 - d. Housing Tax Credit Program; and
 - e. Local funding or incentive programs that may be developed by the Rome, Cave Spring or Floyd County.

B. Economic Development

GOAL 6 – Local Economy: Maintain a strong local economy that provides a stable economic base, employment opportunities for all segments of the local population and the fiscal resources to provide high quality public services to all residents.

- Policy 6.1 Coordinate land use decisions to ensure that residential development does not create negative impacts on the viable operation of agricultural, commercial and industrial uses.
- Policy 6.2 Support the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce in its efforts to promote entrepreneurial development and small business expansion.
- Policy 6.3 Support local efforts to provide job training, placement services, night day care and other services.
- Policy 6.4 Identify and support opportunities for regular and continuing communication between the local governments, the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce, other local economic development interests, and the State Department of Economic Development.
- Policy 6.5 Ensure that financial incentives are linked to specific performance criteria, such as specified numbers of jobs, wage rate targets,

redevelopment objectives and/or other measurable economic development objectives.

- Policy 6.6 Integrate land use planning, economic development and infrastructure planning decisions, including the development of a coordinated countywide capital improvement plan that addresses short- and long-term infrastructure needs.
- Policy 6.7 Identify key economic development activity centers and corridors and help develop area and sub-area plans for development of land and public facilities.
- Policy 6.8 Support appropriate commercial development areas within Floyd County by identifying areas with available and planned infrastructure, limiting intensive commercial uses to areas served by adequate public facilities and services, and ensuring that sufficient land is allocated for future commercial, industrial and office space to allow for a growing, viable economy.
- Policy 6.9 Develop area plans to coordinate infrastructure investment in targeted industrial development areas while maintaining an inventory of industrial development sites that have access to adequate public facilities.
- Policy 6.10 Plan infrastructure and service improvements designed to serve industrial uses within existing and potential industrial areas.

GOAL 7 - Agriculture: Support the stability of agricultural and forestry uses by protecting their operations from nuisance complaints and by promoting agricultural entrepreneurship.

- Policy 7.1 Promote the use of conservation subdivision design to facilitate retention of meaningful green space in rural areas.
- Policy 7.2 Allow non-agricultural land uses that directly support the economic viability of agriculture within agriculturally zoned areas. Such uses may include: agri-tourism, ecotourism, home occupations, country inns, the processing, packaging, and direct marketing of agriculture products, farm related cottage industries, equipment repair and feed/seed dealers.
- Policy 7.3 Support economic development initiatives that promote value added activities and the direct marketing of agriculture products that allow local producers to capture a greater share of the consumer's food and product expenditures. Direct marketing ventures include: farmer's markets, internet sales, sales to local institutions, "pick-your-own" operations, farm stands and community supported agriculture.

- Policy 7.4 Encourage the consumption of locally produced agricultural products by local businesses and institutions, such as meal preparation in public schools, prisons, senior centers and local colleges and universities.

GOAL 8 – Education: Improve the job readiness and skill level of the local workforce to maintain high employment levels and attract new businesses to the County.

- Policy 8.1 Facilitate discussions between all schools and educational institutions in the County to increase the efficiency of operations and the educational opportunities for students in both districts
- Policy 8.2 Assist the Floyd County School System and the Rome City School System with the coordination of long-term facility plans with projected County and City growth.
- Policy 8.3 Encourage private sector and local government internships and work study opportunities for secondary and post secondary students.
- Policy 8.4 Improve the value of the local workforce by supporting programs and businesses which provide skills assessment, job training and worker retraining, and coordinating with the public schools, and local post-secondary educational institutions to develop programs for training in communication and interpersonal skills through links to employers and private institutions.
- Policy 8.5 Encourage appropriate educational and training programs to help unemployed and underemployed local residents take advantage of business expansion and new development.

GOAL 9 – Tourism: Develop a sustainable tourism economy based on the promotion of natural, arts and cultural, recreational and commercial resources within the Rome/Floyd County community.

- Policy 9.1 Work with tourism-related entities within the community, including the Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Rome Area Council on the Arts to determine goals for tourist attraction.
- Policy 9.2 Participate in State and regional forums that relate to tourism development that may affect the community resources and character that attract visitors to the area.
- Policy 9.3 Protect and interpret cultural resources in the region, including the human and natural history of the area.

- Policy 9.4 Pursue a branding program for the area on which to base marketing materials and signage.

C. Housing

GOAL 10: Preserve a housing stock that provides adequate and attainable housing in diverse types that creates stable, viable neighborhoods.

- Policy 10.1 Encourage new suburban residential neighborhoods to provide for ongoing maintenance of green-space unless the City, County or some other approved entity accepts responsibility for ongoing maintenance.
- Policy 10.2 Allow the creation of private internal subdivision streets provided that construction and long-term maintenance is the responsibility of the subdivision residents. Private streets must be constructed to the applicable minimum standard and must provide access for public service provision.
- Policy 10.3 Require assurances that private, community water and wastewater facilities will meet City/County standards, be accepted for operation and maintenance by a public agency, and be fully funded by the new development being served.
- Policy 10.4 Create and maintain a housing stock inventory, which includes substantial data on the condition, value and characteristics of residential structures.
- Policy 10.5 Examine potential tax, development fee, or other fiscal incentives to promote private investment in the existing housing stock.
- Policy 10.6 Disseminate information to rental housing property owners regarding the HOME Rental Housing Tax Credit Programs to promote substantial rehabilitation.
- Policy 10.7 Proactively identify dilapidated structures and take appropriate measures to compel or encourage property owners to demolish or rehabilitate unsafe structures, such as through fee waiver for building or demolition permits. Consider the establishment of a land bank.
- Policy 10.8 Collaborate with non-profits and other community-based organizations to identify community needs for affordable housing and to develop joint strategies to meet those needs.
- Policy 10.9 Protect existing residential neighborhoods from incompatible encroachment of commercial and industrial uses.

- Policy 10.10 Encourage the development of a mix of housing types to meet the needs of residents throughout their lives (e.g., starter homes through nursing facilities).
- Policy 10.11 Support the study of increased homestead exemptions in lieu of ongoing property tax assessment freeze.

D. Public Facilities & Services

GOAL 11: Provide adequate public facilities and services for existing and future residents and businesses in an equitable and cost-effective manner.

- Policy 11.1 Target development in those areas where public facilities (including water, wastewater, roads, and schools) can be provided efficiently without compromising service or increasing costs to existing citizens and businesses.
- Policy 11.2 Define acceptable levels of service for the purposes of facility planning and subdivision review that are consistent with **Exhibit 3**. Development of levels of service should be coordinated with the cities and rural service providers in the County.
- Policy 11.3 Require development within Town Center, Urban and Urban Growth Areas to receive an urban level of service as defined by the adjacent City.
- Policy 11.4 Ensure that residential development proposals in the Rural Area have access to adequate public facilities.
- Policy 11.5 In areas that are not planned to be served by capital facilities within the next two years in the adopted Capital Improvements Program, allow developers to advance construction of needed facilities. Require subsequent development using the advanced facilities to pay their proportionate share of infrastructure and service capacity to reimburse the developer who funded the facilities.

Exhibit 3: Public Facility Standards

Facility	Growth Tier		
	Town Center, Urban, and Urban Growth	Activity Corridor, Rural Commercial Corridor	Conservation, Rural
Roads	LOS D ⁵ except along designated constrained segments	LOS C	LOS C Unpaved roads are not to exceed 250 vehicles per day
Water	Centralized service with adequate fire flow	Centralized service with adequate fire flow	Wells or rural water
Wastewater	Centralized Service	Centralized Service	On-site systems
Parks	Neighborhood park access required in accordance with NRPA recommendations. Private facilities may be counted toward park dedication requirements	Not required	Community park access required in accordance with NRPA recommendations. Private facilities may be counted toward park dedication requirements
Fire Protection / EMS	4 minute response time or LOS standard of applicable city	8 minute response time	Varies
Schools	To be developed in coordination with the City of Rome and Floyd County School Districts.		

- Policy 11.6 Develop a coordinated, County-wide capital improvements program (CIP) involving all service providers that is linked to anticipated growth.
- Policy 11.7 Evaluate annual CIP projects for potential state, federal, or other funding sources.
- Policy 11.8 Target funding for significant infrastructure improvements related to:
- Providing appropriate infrastructure and service capacity to identified industrial development areas. (See Policies 6.7, 6.9, and 6.10); and
 - Urban infrastructure and service improvements within the Town Centers, Urban, and Urban Growth Areas (See Policy 4.1).

GOAL 12 – Transportation: Provide a convenient and cost effective transportation system that emphasizes connectivity, safety, choices of modes, and harmony between transportation modes and land uses.

⁵ Level of Service (LOS) shall be defined in the ULDC in a manner that is consistent with the Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) standards.

- Policy 12.1 Adopt road level of service standards consistent with those listed in **Exhibit 3**.
- Policy 12.2 For the constrained roadway corridors shown in **Map 3 (Appendix D)**,
- a. Conduct periodic reviews of road segment and intersection levels of service (LOS) that account for existing traffic and approved, but unbuilt development;
 - b. Coordinate with GDOT to manage traffic in these constrained corridors.
- Policy 12.3 Minimize individual property access directly from arterial roads.
- Policy 12.4 Adopt property access design standards that:
- a. Establish connectivity between adjacent commercial or industrial properties;
 - b. Allow or encourage shared driveway access for adjacent properties; and
 - c. Establish appropriate driveway separation.
- Policy 12.5 Coordinate development of frontage roads or parallel collector streets along highway corridors to enhance property access (See Policy 3.2).
- Policy 12.6 Promote the use of traffic demand management techniques among governmental entities, institutions and within large employment centers. Appropriate techniques include:
- a. Incentives for carpooling;
 - b. Staggered work shifts;
 - c. Use of company shuttles and public transportation;
 - d. Preferential parking for carpoolers; and
 - e. Other techniques that reduce peak hour trips.
- Policy 12.7 Evaluate development proposals in rural areas to ensure that development occurs along roads that are designed to handle additional traffic.
- Policy 12.8 Require new residential subdivisions to have direct access to a hard surfaced road.
- Policy 12.9 **Map 4 (Appendix D)** shows the functional classification system of existing and planned roadways. Use this map to apply access standards, identify need rights-of-way and ensure that abutting development is consistent with the long term transportation needs of Floyd County.
- Policy 12.10 Coordinate with the Cities to maintain a County-wide existing and proposed primary road plan that:

- a. Establishes a functional road classification system that identifies a hierarchy of roads (e.g. arterial, collector and local roads);
- b. Sets forth basic design standards for right-of-way widths, roadway widths, design speeds, trip capacities, surface types and property access limitations for public and private roads; and
- c. Includes a thoroughfare map showing general location of arterial and major collector roads along with priority capital improvement areas.

Policy 12.11 Develop an interconnected trail system from the central urbanized areas into the unincorporated county ultimately seeking a coordinated Northwest Georgia trail system, through the implementation of the Rome Floyd County Trail Facilities Plan.

Policy 12.12 Where feasible, coordinate trail extensions as part of transportation projects.

Policy 12.13 Identify and pursue the opportunities for rails to trails conversions.

Policy 12.14 Prior to the establishment of a trail adjacent to an active agricultural operation, the governing body shall hold a public hearing to evaluate any adverse effects on that agricultural property and its security. The USDA Pre-Harvest Security Checklist shall be used to measure the impact of any proposed trail adjacent to an agricultural operation.

GOAL 13 – Airport Facilities: Protect the function of the airport and related economic development opportunities from incompatible uses and development.

Policy 13.1 Protect the function of Richard B. Russell Regional Airport and opportunities for its expansion by limiting residential encroachment into approach zones.

Policy 13.2 Establish an Airport Overlay zoning district in which land uses, intensities and structural heights are regulated to protect the functionality and safety of long-term airport operations.

Policy 13.3 Provide the Airport Commission and Airport Manager direct notification and the opportunity to comment on development proposals that may influence facility operations.

GOAL 14 – Wastewater: Ensure that wastewater facilities and services are provided to adequately service the long-term needs of existing and proposed development.

Policy 14.1 Require connection to a centralized wastewater system for all new development in the Town Center, Urban, and Urban Growth Areas and the Activity Corridor unless an alternative wastewater treatment

system does not pose a barrier to future extension of centralized wastewater service or a hazard to natural resources.

- Policy 14.2 Where alternative wastewater facilities are allowed, require that such facilities will meet local and state standards and be fully funded by the new development being served.
- Policy 14.3 Allow development within the Rural Area to be served by on-site wastewater treatment systems designed in accordance with County standards.
- Policy 14.4 Ensure that on-site wastewater systems do not threaten the quality of stream and river corridors, waterways, and wetlands.
- Policy 14.5 Participate in the oversizing of wastewater facilities for development projects in the Urban Growth Area if the projects support Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and sufficient funding is available.
- Policy 14.6 Establish a wastewater extension plan that identifies future wastewater service areas and prioritizes service areas for future improvements. Correspondingly, areas that are not slated for immediate infrastructure extension should also be generally identified.

GOAL 15 – Water Supply: Maintain the high quality of surface and groundwater and all public water supplies and ensure that water systems are adequately designed and constructed to meet the basic and emergency needs of the community.

- Policy 15.1 Work with the local USDA Service Center to promote best agriculture management practices proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Policy 15.2 Require the provision of adequate water in accordance with Policy 11.2. Adequacy standards shall be implemented through the ULDC.
- Policy 15.3 Participate in the oversizing of water facilities for development projects in the Town Center, Urban, and Urban Growth Area if the projects support Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and sufficient funding is available.
- Policy 15.4 Support water conservation programs aimed at reducing demands from new and existing development through public education efforts and requirements for water conserving fixtures in new or remodeled buildings. If water is taken by other communities, it should be restored to the point of origin, properly treated.

- Policy 15.5 Recognizing the potential for future growth in Floyd County and the surrounding areas, the community should support the development of a regional water storage facility.

GOAL 16 – Solid Waste: Promote the safe, efficient, and environmentally-sensitive management of solid waste in a manner that minimizes negative impacts on County residents.

- Policy 16.1 Actively participate in regional and state planning efforts to help provide for the safe and efficient disposal of solid wastes at appropriate locations
- Policy 16.2 Adopt locational standards for solid waste facilities. Such standards should address proximity to neighborhoods and other activity centers, hydrology, accessibility, and development trends. Facilities should be located so that they do not cause adverse impacts and to eliminate the risks of short and long term contamination of surface or groundwater resources. Solid waste facilities should not be located in growth corridors or other areas with a high potential for urbanization during the planned life of the facility.
- Policy 16.3 Support the provision of recycling facilities at appropriate locations, assist operators of recycling facilities in locating market for recycled goods, and provide information on recycling to the public.

E. Natural & Cultural Resources

GOAL 17 – Natural Resources: Preserve and protect resources essential to sustain a healthy environment, including the County’s river and stream corridors, and woodland habitats.

- Policy 17.1 Coordinate with state and federal agencies to protect wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes or land within stream and river corridors.
- Policy 17.2 Explore the feasibility of collecting funds for conservation acquisition. Such exploration should consider the use of such funds as leverage for State and Federal open space retention funding programs. Regional partnerships to pool funding should be examined. A local and updated Greenspace Plan is a useful tool to identify future properties for acquisition and conservation.
- Policy 17.3 Adopt and enforce site plan, construction standards and erosion mitigation measures as part of the zoning, subdivision and/or site development regulations.

- Policy 17.4 Create incentives to maximize buffers and greenspace to augment wildlife corridors and water quality, among other goals.
- Policy 17.5 Work with agricultural operators to communicate and attract state and federal resources to promote stream preservation and limit soil erosion, creating solutions to assist the viability of agricultural operations.

GOAL 18 – Cultural Resources: Retain Floyd County’s historic, archaeological, artistic and cultural assets for future generations of residents and visitors.

- Policy 18.1 Maintain a GIS-based inventory of historic, archaeological and cultural resources.
- Policy 18.2 Prepare and disseminate factual materials regarding historic assets in Floyd County.
- Policy 18.3 Coordinate with property owners to identify, and where feasible, protect historic and archeological assets prior to development of a site.
- Policy 18.4 Consider the creation of local tax incentives for the preservation and restoration of designated historic resources.
- Policy 18.5 Develop a Comprehensive Cultural Plan for Floyd County that includes an inventory of existing organizations, facilities, programs and resources; identification of community cultural needs to be addressed over the next twenty years; and strategies to implement the cultural plan. This plan should include the arts (visual, performing and literary), historical museums, festivals and heritage-related organizations and events in Floyd County.
- Policy 18.6 Support the development of a designated Arts District in coordination with area non-profit and redevelopment organizations.
- Policy 18.7 Explore possible public-private partnerships for arts and culture funding.

V. Implementation Program

A. Overview

In Georgia, Comprehensive Plans are not law. They are policy documents that require a strong local commitment to achieve the Plan's vision. Community change occurs through a series of incremental decisions and investments that are made by the public and private sectors. Development decisions made by private property owners, staff and the appointed and elected officials will cumulatively determine Rome's and Floyd County's successes in achieving their goals. While the Plan's goals, objectives and policies provide guidance for many decisions, effective implementation of the plan will require the adoption of a variety of regulatory, budgetary and administrative tasks. In addition, as the community changes, the Plan may need to be altered to effectively respond to these changes. This element provides for the implementation and ongoing administration of the Comprehensive Plan by:

- Describing specific implementation tools and techniques to achieve the Plan's goals;
- Describing the processes for monitoring and amending the plan over time; and
- Establishing an Implementation Work Program that specifies attributes of tasks to implement the Plan.

B. Implementation Tools and Techniques

The Plan Implementation Work Program includes specific actions, tools, techniques and documents to be used by Rome, Cave Spring, and Floyd County to achieve Plan goals. The key implementation tools and techniques alluded to in the work program are described below.

Development Regulations

On a day-to-day basis, the development regulations (zoning and subdivision regulations) are the most important tools for Plan implementation. Local land use, transportation, public facility, housing, environmental and community services goals and objectives are achieved through a myriad of incremental public and private development decisions. Amendments to the ULDC should be consistent with the Plan to ensure that incremental actions on development requests support the Plan's goals, policies and recommendations.

Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) should ensure that the local governments have planned the most cost effective facilities and have determined whether they will have the capability to fund needed public facilities. The CIP consists of short-term (5-year) and long-term (10- to 20-year) components. The 5-year CIP should list short-term projects needed to maintain existing levels of service, with each project being assigned a responsible party, cost estimate, funding sources and a time frame for completion. The CIP also should delineate the proportion of project costs that is designed to provide new capacity and the proportion that is required to fund existing deficiencies. This delineation will enable local governments to quantify the capital costs associated with new development and to monitor the expenditure of development fees. The five-year CIP should be updated annually to reflect the city and county budgetary decisions.

The long-range CIP should reflect the size, approximate location and estimated costs of improvements needed to serve anticipated growth for the next 10 to 20 years. This program is not an engineering document, but should provide enough specificity to determine which costs are required to remedy existing deficiencies and which costs provide new capacity that will be demanded by new development. The long-range CIP should be updated at least once every five (5) years or when significant changes to the base systems modify the long-term capital investment strategies (e.g., changes in service areas, significant changes in the Future Land Use Plan, changes in service demand or delivery patterns).

Budget

The annual budget is one of the most potent tools for plan implementation because it sets priorities for action each year. Capital and operational funding decisions should directly reflect the goals, objectives and policies of this Plan. The Plan should serve as the basis for the staff's recommended work programs and a focus for the Board's discussion of priorities from year to year. Staff and Planning Commission should review the Plan's Short Term Work Program as well as the Cave Spring Short Term Work Program and recommend appropriate strategies to achieve the Plan goals in a manner that is consistent with Plan policies. If specific work program tasks are not funded, the City Commission or Board of County Commissioners should evaluate whether they should be omitted from the Plan. When there is a conflict between budget priorities and Plan policies, decision-makers should consider whether the specific goals, objectives or policies remain valid. If they are valid, then they should reevaluate budget priorities.

Inter-governmental Agreements

Since public challenges do not start or stop at jurisdictional boundaries, responses to those challenges will require inter-governmental coordination. Inter-governmental agreements (IGAs) are treaties between two or more units of government for the mutual benefit of all parties. Within the context of this plan, legal agreements between Floyd County, Rome, Cave Spring, the school districts and/or other service providers could address compatible growth and infrastructure issues throughout the County. Such agreements should establish each party's rights, responsibilities and recourse within a cooperative growth management process designed to implement the policies of this Plan, notably the Urban Service Area policies. Items typically addressed in local government IGAs include: development review authority, annexation processes, site development standards, infrastructure projects, building and related codes, public safety mutual aid agreements, impact fees and IGA administrative procedures.

Adequate Public Facilities

An Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) or requirement requires public facilities and services to be available when needed to serve new development at an adopted Level of Service (LOS). APFOs can require availability and adequacy for any type of public facility (roads, water, wastewater, public safety, schools, etc.) prior to development or make development conditional upon public facilities, even if the local governments does not own or operate the facilities. If development is contingent upon meeting APFO requirements, the local jurisdiction may provide for the payment of an impact fee or other

financial surety to make necessary improvements to comply with the adopted level of service.

Area and Facility Plans

To guide land use transitions and ensure that development is consistent with the Plan, compatible with existing and planned land uses in the area and sustainable from a market perspective, a variety of detailed land use and facility plans that should address the timing, land use transitions and other standards for development and redevelopment. Facility plans are similar in concept to area land use plans, but the primary focus is on the development of new capacity to serve anticipated growth.

C. Plan Maintenance

This Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to be a dynamic document -- one that responds to changing needs and conditions. To assess the Plan's effectiveness in responding to changing conditions, the Cities of Rome and Cave Spring and Floyd County will need to monitor actions affecting the Plan. As a result of these monitoring efforts or private development requests, the Plan will need to be amended periodically. However, amendments should not be made lightly. The Rome City Commission, Cave Spring City Council, County Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission members should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether or not it is consistent with the Plan's goals and policies. In addition, the cumulative effect of several minor changes may be a change in policy direction. For this reason, amendments must be evaluated in terms of their significance to overall policy.

Annual Monitoring

Prior to development of each budget, the Planning Commission should:

- evaluate the City's and County's successes in achieving plan goals through the recommended strategies of the Short Term Work Program discussed at the end of this Chapter;
- propose strategies to be pursued under the coming year's budget;
- identify unlisted strategies that will achieve Plan goals;
- evaluate growth trends and compare those trends to Plan projections; and
- summarize development actions that affect the Plan's provisions.

This annual review should include statements identifying the County's progress in achieving the goals of the Plan, the impact of the Plan on service provision, and proposed programs to help achieve the goals. The annual review should be used as a tool to help set budgetary priorities.

Land Use Plan Amendments

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide public and private development and land use decisions. The City and County should adopt a formal amendment process that will be codified in the ULDC. Future Land Use Plan amendments are anticipated as growth occurs and market conditions change. While land use amendments may occur more frequently than policy changes, they should not occur more than twice per year unless the Board finds that such changes are needed for public health, safety or economic development purposes. By limiting opportunities to amend the Future Land Use Plan, the potential for incremental land use changes to result in unintended policy shifts will be reduced.

Policy Changes

The Goals, Objectives and Policies of this Plan establish the framework for the Implementation Program. To ensure that the Plan remains an effective guideline for decision-makers, the Planning Commission should conduct periodic major evaluations of the Plan goals, objectives and policies. These evaluations should be conducted every three to five years, depending on the rate of change, and should consider the following:

- Progress in implementing the Plan;
- Changes in conditions that form the basis of the Plan;
- Fiscal conditions and the ability to finance public investments recommended by the Plan;
- Community support for the Plan's goals, objectives and policies; and
- Changes in State or federal laws that affect the County's tools for Plan implementation.

The major review process should encourage input from businesses, neighborhood groups, developers, local governments and other community interests through the Planning Commission. Comprehensive Plan amendments that appear appropriate as a result of this review would be processed according to the adopted Plan amendment process.

Short Term Work Program Update

The Implementation Program should be reviewed on an annual basis to identify the previous years accomplishments and to modify the work program tasks establishing a reasonable timeline for key plan implementation tasks. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) planning standards require that either an annual work program review or 5-year review must be submitted to the DCA to ensure consistency statewide planning goals and the adopted local Comprehensive Plan.⁶

⁶ Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Supra note 8. at Chapter 110-12-1.04(7).

Appendix A. Citizen Participation Plan

Appendix B. Community Assessment

Appendix C. Scenarios Analysis

Appendix D. Community Agenda Maps