PLAN HAMILTON

AREA 7: Walden Plateau

AREA 8: Middle Valley/Lakesite

AREA 9: Northeast County

AREA 12: White Oak Mtn.

AREA 13: North End

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

Adopted by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, September 8, 2025.

PLAN HAMILTON

OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

7 WALDEN PLATEAU
AREA PLAN

Fairmount
Falling Water
Montlake
Mountain Creek
Mowbray Mountain
Town of Signal Mountain
Town of Walden

RPA

Adopted by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, Sept. 8, 2025.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. AREA SUMMARY **4**

1.1 PLAN SUMMARY 5
1.2 INTRODUCTION 6
1.3 STUDY AREA: WALDEN PLATEAU / AREA 7 7
1.4 HISTORY OF THE WALDEN PLATEAU 9
1.5 PAST PLANS 11

CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS **12**

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY 13
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE 15
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS 16
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES 18
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS 19

CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS **42**

3.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION 43
3.2 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK 44
3.3 AREA PLAN GOALS 48
3.4 VISION STATEMENT 49

CHAPTER 4. PLANS, POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS **50**

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW 51
4.2 PLACE TYPES 58
4.3 POLICIES 72

CHAPTER 5. NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION **84**

5.1 INTRODUCTION 85
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 88

CHAPTER 6. APPENDIX **100**

CHAPTER 1
AREA SUMMARY

1.1 PLAN SUMMARY
1.2 INTRODUCTION
1.3 WALDEN PLATEAU STUDY AREA
1.4 HISTORY OF THE WALDEN PLATEAU
1.5 PAST PLANS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

1.1 PLAN SUMMARY

The Hamilton County Area Plans represent a comprehensive approach to managing growth and change in our diverse communities, recognizing both the distinct identities of each Area and the interconnectedness of our County. With a focus on the specific challenges and opportunities within Hamilton County's unincorporated Areas, each plan addresses critical factors that shape community life—land use, infrastructure, environmental preservation, housing, and economic resilience. Throughout the planning process, we engaged with community members to create a vision that reflects local priorities and builds on the character and strengths of each Area.

From the rural expanse and scenic beauty of Sale Creek and Birchwood to the residential communities of Georgetown and Apison, to the vibrant mountain villages and outdoor offerings of the Walden Plateau, or the waterfront community of Lakesite, all places where many families have multi-generation histories attached to the landscape, the plans recognize the local topographic, geologic, and infrastructure constraints found in these unique areas. This approach allows for tailored strategies that honor local heritage, rural qualities, and natural landscapes while accommodating sustainable growth.

The planning process began with in-depth research and analysis to understand the existing conditions, demographic trends, and economic drivers across Hamilton County. By examining land use, transportation networks, environmental features, and community facilities, we identified both opportunities and constraints in each area. This research also shed light on trends such as housing demands, population shifts, and economic patterns, allowing us to anticipate future needs and create a foundation for adaptable, forward-looking plans.

The visions articulated in these Plans emerged from collaborative dialogue with residents, local stakeholders, and County officials. Community workshops, surveys, and public meetings provided residents the opportunity to voice their aspirations, concerns, and ideas for the future of their neighborhoods. The resulting goals and policies emphasize maintaining rural character, supporting local businesses, enhancing outdoor recreation, and fostering a sense of place in each community. Across the County, residents expressed a desire to balance growth with preservation—ensuring that new developments are thoughtfully integrated and contribute positively to the character of their communities.

To bring these visions to life, the Area Plans detail policies and actions centered on Community Character and Land Use, Natural Resources, Economic Health and Community, and Funding Mechanisms. These categories have been refined to address the County's evolving needs and offer the most impactful steps forward. These plans use tools like a Conceptual Land Use map that is illustrative and Place Types maps that define development patterns and set policies for future growth.

The implementation strategies focus on practical, collaborative actions that turn these plans into reality. Partnerships with local and regional organizations, support for small businesses, and investments in community facilities are vital to advancing these initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation will be critical to ensure the plans stay flexible, allowing policies to adapt as new challenges and opportunities emerge. Each Area Plan is intended as a living document, responsive to ongoing community input and changing needs over time.

As we move from planning to action, the success of this Plan relies on commitment, collaboration, and community engagement. Hamilton County is dedicated to working closely with residents, businesses, and local leaders to implement these policies in a way that fosters a resilient and inclusive future. By advancing these Plans with a shared sense of purpose, we can create communities that are not only livable and economically vibrant but also reflective of the unique character and heritage that residents value. Through strategic growth, environmental stewardship, and respect for community identity, the Comprehensive Plan will encourage each Area to thrive for generations to come.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

As Hamilton County's population grows, thoughtful planning is crucial to managing the upcoming changes while efficiently using limited resources. The goal is to create resilient communities where neighborhoods, commercial centers, parks, and natural spaces flourish, striking a balance between development and conservation.

To guide this growth, Comprehensive Plans are presented to local legislative bodies for adoption. These Plans become essential in shaping zoning, guiding private development, and influencing public infrastructure investments. They serve as a blueprint for determining where growth, redevelopment, and conservation should occur.

Once adopted, Plans equip Hamilton County leadership with the tools necessary to make strategic community investments in infrastructure, staff, and services, ensuring a livable community with sustained economic opportunities.

Community input is essential to shaping Hamilton County's long-term planning efforts, ensuring that residents and business owners help define the County's future. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan established a responsible land-use framework that prioritizes environmental preservation and community character. Complementing this, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) forecasts transportation needs and guides infrastructure investment.

Area Plans provide more specific localized guidance on development, zoning, infrastructure, and conservation. These plans use tools like Conceptual Recommendations Maps and Place Types maps to outline development patterns and set policies for future growth. They are shaped by prior planning, community feedback, and professional analysis. Key goals include creating vibrant, well-defined spaces and balancing growth while preserving each area's character and meeting future demands.

Although Area Plans do not regulate development or change zoning directly, they guide policy and decisions related to infrastructure, housing diversity, and commercial centers. They emphasize efficient investment in public services, transportation, and natural resource preservation, especially in rural areas. Constraints like limited sewer capacity, emergency services, and infrastructure demands shape policies to ensure sustainable growth while maintaining residents' quality of life.

The Walden Plateau / Area 7 Plan features five chapters which cover the following:

1.3 STUDY AREA: WALDEN PLATEAU / AREA 7

The entirety of Walden's Ridge is just over 70 miles long and marks the eastern edge of the Cumberland Plateau. The ridge is also an escarpment, and its dramatic and sudden change of elevation is highly visible from the Tennessee River valley near Chattanooga. The southern end of Walden's Ridge is known as Signal Mountain due to its use by Cherokee and Creek native American tribes, and later Civil War troops, to signal messages between it and Lookout Mountain to the south.

Several communities emerged on Walden's Ridge, from Fairmount to Summertown. The Town of Signal Mountain was incorporated in 1919 and grew around the Signal Mountain Inn—a resort established in 1913. The Area's only other town, Walden, grew out of the Summertown community and was incorporated in 1975. The rest of Walden's Ridge remains unincorporated.

The southern portion of the Walden's Ridge Plateau Area Plan (Area 7) is the focus of this plan and sits almost entirely atop Signal Mountain / Cumberland Plateau with Sequatchie County to the west and Soddy-Daisy to the east and TN SR 111 bordering to the north. The Plateau is bisected by the newly named North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park, preventing vehicular travel in the north south direction. **The towns of Walden and Signal Mountain are incorporated and therefore, not governed by this plan.** However, the only concentration of infrastructure, schools, emergency services, and commercial businesses are in these communities. These community hubs are the logical centers for growth over time as infrastructure allows and are important to the surrounding community. Limited points of access up and down the mountain, access to hospitals and acute care, limited utility capacity, potential for flooding of stormwater infrastructure, and limited availability of suitable soils and depth for on-site septic systems are all growth limiting factors for Area 7. A rural residential development pattern with generous setbacks from roads and greenspaces is desired by residents and most consistent with infrastructure limitations.

This Area Plan is intended to guide the sustainable growth of the community and inform decisions on future development and supporting infrastructure. An emphasis on "placemaking" is paramount to this plan because Walden's Ridge is a unique and beautiful place in Hamilton County and development sensitive to its environment will aid in preserving its unique sense of place. Walden Plateau in particular is focused on preserving its rural character and maintaining its unique identity while also improving the characteristics that make it special such as their trail systems, large-lot single-family homes, and rural character.

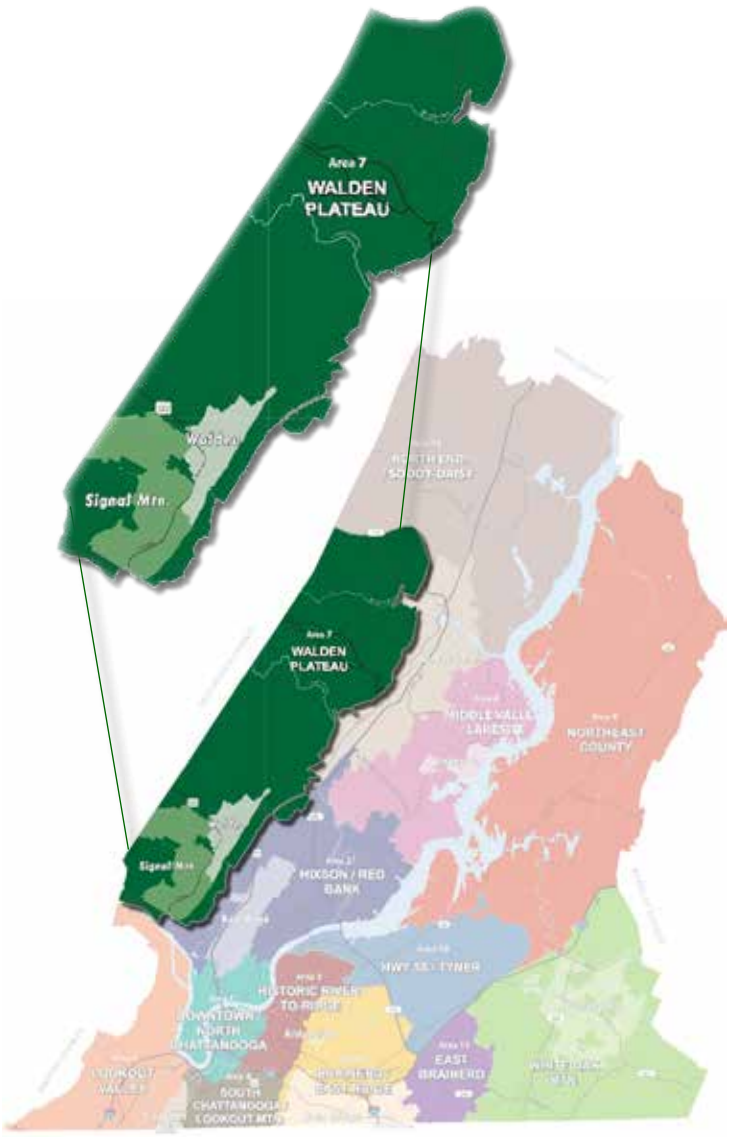


Figure 1.1: Walden Plateau Area 7 as a part of Hamilton County study Area

Walden Plateau (Area 7) Map

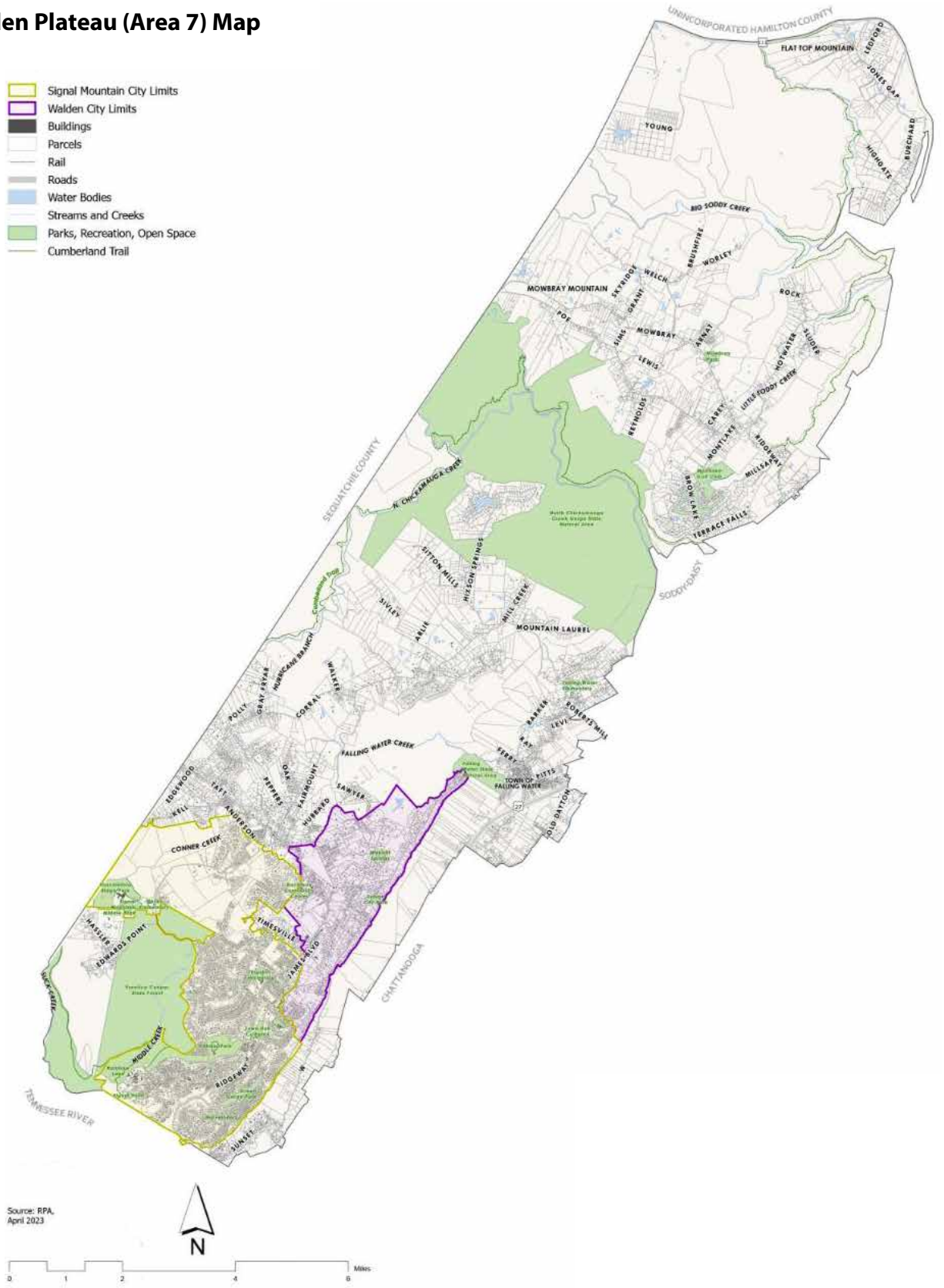


Figure 1.2: Walden Plateau (Area 7) Map

1.4 HISTORY OF THE WALDEN PLATEAU

The Walden Plateau, boasts a rich history intertwined with the cultural and natural heritage of the region with a prominent geographical feature. Located on the Cumberland Plateau, it offers stunning vistas, rugged terrain, and a unique ecosystem. Historically, this plateau has been a home to indigenous peoples, early settlers, and pioneers who traversed its landscape, seeking refuge and resources. The Area is also noted for its role in the development of local industries, such as coal mining and timber, which have shaped the economic and social fabric of the region. The Walden Plateau is also bisected from north to south travel by the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Natural Area. Area 7 is also home to two of the smaller municipalities in Hamilton County including the Towns of Signal Mountain and Walden. The brief history discussed in this plan is focused on how the unique access to the plateau shaped the development pattern seen today.

THE TURNPIKE (US-127)

Early development on the Walden Plateau can be attributed to two different Tennessee legislations. The first in 1840 was approved but not fully constructed leading to a second legislation in 1848 that authorized a second turnpike over the same route (US-127 / Anderson Pike) from Sequatchie Valley over Walden Plateau into the north bank of the City of Chattanooga. Four years later, the road was operational and by 1854 the ownership rights of land adjacent to the turnpike were sold to James Conner, Hamilton County Sheriff who built a toll house and home at the intersection of Fairmount Road and Anderson Pike (pictured to the right).

The Toll House
Source: Waymark

THE W ROAD

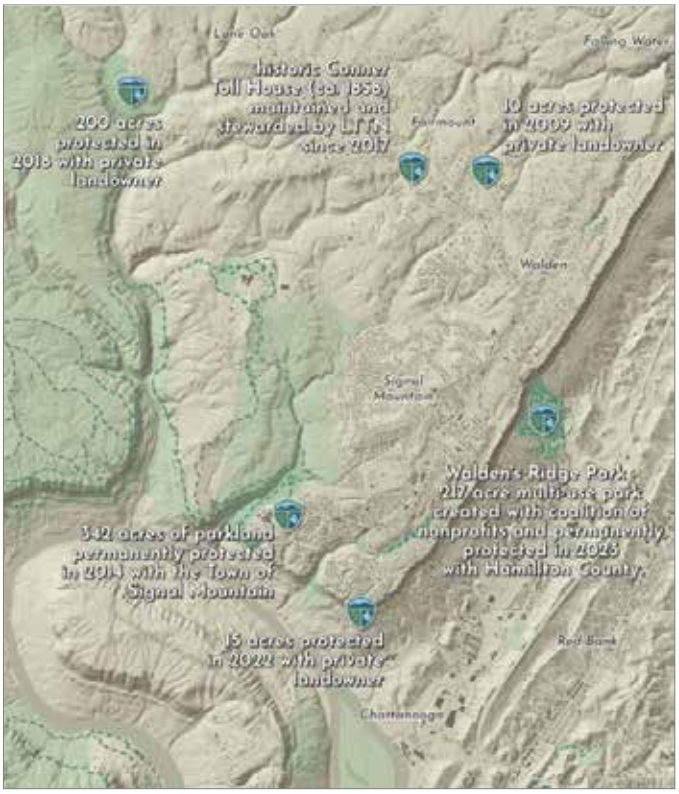
From Chattanooga, there a few ways to access Walden's Ridge, US-127 (Signal Mountain Road) as mentioned above or another, narrower road known as the "W Road". Before the forced removal of the Cherokee from the Chattanooga Area, Native Americans created a general path up the ridge for hunting. Even after white settlers began to colonize this Area, few roads existed and conditions were unfavorable for travelers. This road which was previously known as Rogers Gap Road and had a V shape at the top with a steeper slope than what exists today. A July 19, 1892 *Chattanooga Times* article announced that "A new road up Walden's Ridge has been surveyed, the County stockade has been built, and it is thought work will commence on it within a fortnight". This road was created in order to provide quicker access than the main highway down into the valley and allowed for the rural lifestyle to remain in spite of the development occurring around the main highway.

The W Road Before Cars (1907)
Source: Chattanooga History

INCORPORATION OF WALDEN & SIGNAL MOUNTAIN

Town of Walden
Source: Town of Walden, TN

Incorporated in 1919, the town of Signal Mountain, Tennessee offers panoramic view of the Tennessee Valley below. This picturesque community was named after the Signal Point from which Native Americans once signaled warnings. It was also used by Union troops during the Civil War as a relay station and observation Area, and was the only location in Chattanooga where the Union had high ground prior to the siege of the city in 1863. Nearby, the Town of Walden was incorporated in 1975, adding its own unique charm to the plateau. Named after the influential Walden family, this quaint town blends historic roots with modern-day serenity, where forests and rolling landscapes create a retreat from the bustle of city life. This Town first saw white settlers when disease spread through the city of Chattanooga and people sought higher elevations. Both towns, while distinct in their histories, share a commitment to preserving the natural beauty and close-knit community spirit that define the Cumberland Plateau region. These unique towns, while incorporated, largely influence the unincorporated Areas of the Walden Plateau.



Conservation Areas on Signal Mountain
Source: TN Land Trust

CONSERVATION AND PUBLIC LAND

The Walden Plateau has nearly 2,000 acres of protected land in conservation. The Land Trust for Tennessee (LTTN) has protected over 800 acres including public parks, private properties protected in coordination with their landowners, to properties owned and maintained by the Land Trust for Tennessee (Rainbow Lake, Walden's Ridge Park, Conner Toll House). Each of the projects is under the obligation of perpetual stewardship by the LTTN. The LTTN is also serving on the Cumberland Trail task force to assist in completing the 300-mile long trail that passes through this Area. Additionally, the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park was officially named a state park in September of 2024 which bisects the plateau preventing north south vehicular travel taking up over 1,000 additional acres of land Area on the Ridge.

1.5 PAST PLANS

WALDEN'S RIDGE PLATEAU AREA PLAN (1997)

Led by the RPA, the Walden's Ridge Plateau Area Plan represented a collaborative effort among local elected officials of Hamilton County, the Town of Signal Mountain, and the Town of Walden to address growth and other related issues that faced the plateau. The plan was aimed at guiding the location of new development by identifying the most appropriate locations for residential and commercial developments and addresses the impact on the natural landscape with sections for Development Policy, Development Standards, Services/Capital Improvements Policy, and Capital Expenditures. The plan addressed 3 main concerns:

1. **Orderly and Cohesive Development Pattern**

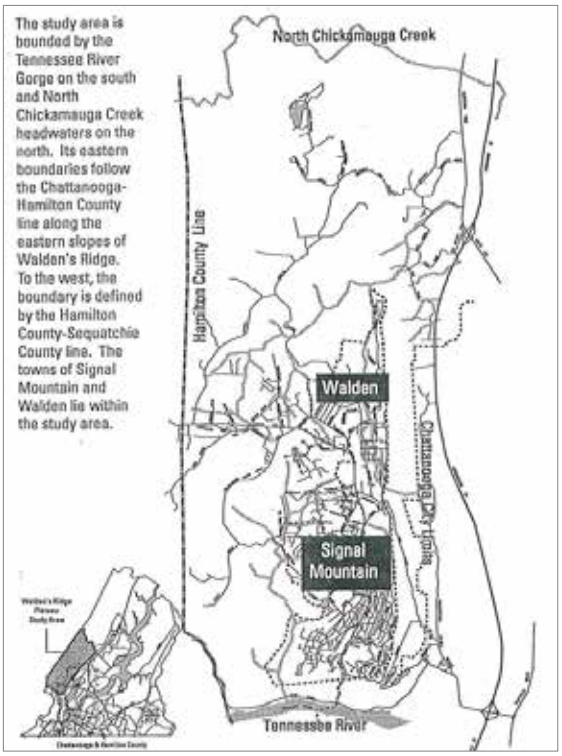
   "Recent growth trends are producing development trends that are contrary to the overall vision for the Area. These trends include strip commercial development, inconsistent quality of development (lack of landscaping, integrity of design, etc.), and sporadic apartment development."

2. **Natural Landscapes/Open Spaces**

   "Single-family subdivisions are being developed in a manner that is insensitive to natural landscape features, leaving little to no remaining open space for the enjoyment of residents."

3. **Services**

   "Without planned improvements to services such as road improvements, fire services, and commercial facilities, growth can cause an overall reduction in the accessibility and quality of these resources."



Original Walden Plateau Study Area
Source: RPA

AREA 7 PLANNING EFFORTS (2021-2022)

The Area 7 Plan began as an independent effort spearheaded by the RPA's consultant, Common Ground Design, with a focus on addressing the unique needs and characteristics of the Walden Plateau region. Initially, the intent was to craft a tailored plan for this Area, however, planning for the entire unincorporated portions of Hamilton County gained momentum. Integrating the Area 7 Plan into the larger Countywide Unincorporated Plan Hamilton effort became part of the cohesive and strategic approach.

The consultant's work, combined with extensive community involvement, generated a wealth of information specific to the Walden Plateau. Rather than letting these insights remain isolated, they were embedded into the broader framework of Plan Hamilton. This approach ensures that the unique identity and challenges of the Walden Plateau are fully addressed, creating a well-rounded and inclusive plan.

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Area 7 sits almost entirely atop Signal Mountain on the Walden / Cumberland Plateau bordering Marion and Sequatchie Counties to the west and Soddy Daisy to the east. While the towns of Walden and Signal Mountain are not governed by this plan, the only concentration of infrastructure, schools, emergency services, and commercial businesses are in these communities. These community hubs are the logical centers for growth over time as infrastructure allows. Limited points of access up and down the mountain, the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park bisecting the plateau, access to hospitals and acute care, limited utility capacity, stormwater runoff, and limited availability of suitable soils and depth for on-site septic systems are all factors that limit growth for Area 7. A rural residential development pattern with generous setbacks from roads and green spaces is desired by residents and most consistent with infrastructure limitations.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Community emphasis on the environment and mountain lifestyle.
- High quality of life with an abundance of active and passive recreational opportunities.
- High performing schools with well supported extracurricular activities make this community a popular Area to live.
- Strong sense of community with emphasis on religious and philanthropic organizations, families, and social interaction.

REGIONAL FACILITIES AND ASSETS

Parks:

The Area features large park holdings including those with historical significance such as Signal Point, managed by the National Park Service, as well as the McCoy House/Althaus Park. Other parks include:

- Cumberland Trail State Park
- Falling Water State Park
- North Chickamauga Gorge State Park
- Prentice Cooper State Park
- Shackleford Ridge Park
- Walden's Ridge State Park

Walden's Ridge Park
Source: Travel Southeast TN

PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS

Topography:

- Mountain terrain results in limited points of access. Due to topography, roads from the plateau to the valley are steep and curvy.
- Terrain results in limited road network capabilities and creates greater service distance for first responders during extreme weather events and fire emergencies.
  - The shallow rocky soil structure common in this Area is not suitable for septic systems.
  - Soil conditions result in rapid run-off with low infiltration and high potential for flooding after severe storms.
- Steep slopes from the plateau to the valley floor.
- North Chickamauga Creek bisects the plateau preventing north/south vehicle connectivity.

The W Road
Source: Chattanooga Times Free Press

Land Availability:

- Many of the largest tracts of land are in public domain/conservation.

Utility Capacity:

- Limited availability and capacity for centralized sewage infrastructure.

North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park
Source: TN State Parks

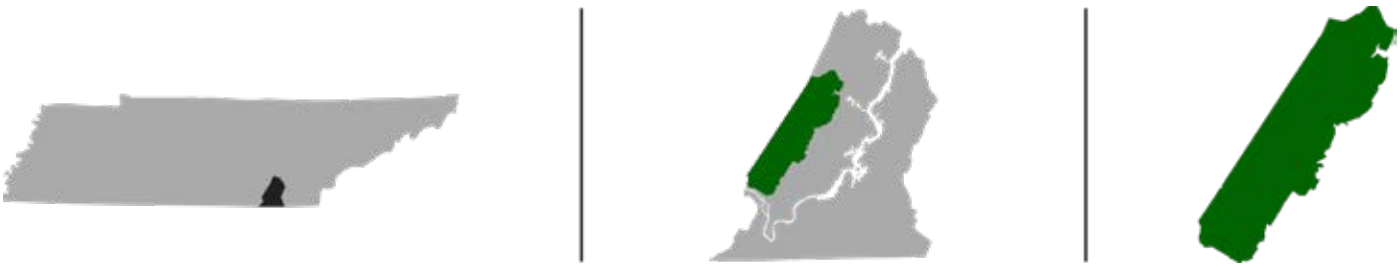


Figure 2.1: Walden Plateau Area Context

2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE

70%

of residents are influenced by access to Parks, Greenways, and Open Space when choosing Walden Plateau to live.

42%
Master's Degree +

40%
Bachelor's Degree

12%
Some College

Source: ACS

70%

Believe that large-lot single-family homes should be encouraged in Area 7.

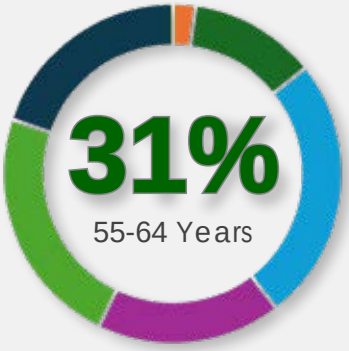
76%

Believe that preservation of farmland, rural character, wooded & riparian Areas should be priorities.

53%
Lived in Hamilton County for 20+ Years

18%
Lived in Hamilton County for 5-19 Years

29%
Lived in Hamilton County for 0-4 Years



20%
65 or Over

18%
35-44 Years

Source: ACS

2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS

DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

Hamilton County Census data reveals a balanced distribution across age groups, with a notable presence of young families (30-34 Years), working professionals (25-29 Years), and retirees (60-69 Years). The County upholds a high level of educational attainment and a skilled workforce, reflecting the Area's commitment to quality education and lifelong learning. In comparison to the state of Tennessee as a whole, Hamilton County has a higher median income, advanced education background, higher employment rate, lower poverty rates, and lower commute times. These factors continue to contribute to growth in Hamilton County in both the incorporated and unincorporated Areas.

GROWTH TRENDS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Walden Plateau has experienced steady population growth and economic development over the past decade, driven by strategic investments in infrastructure, education, and residential development. Future prospects remain positive, with planned developments emphasizing smart growth principles that enhance connectivity, sustainability, and quality of life for residents. By prioritizing the preservation of the region's distinctive character and promoting responsible development, ongoing efforts aim to attract new businesses and support entrepreneurial ventures that align with the community's vision, further diversifying the economic base and creating new growth opportunities. To anticipate these needs, the RPA engaged RCLCO to complete a detailed market analysis to asses market opportunities for housing needs over the next 20 years.

HAMILTON COUNTY CENSUS DATA

39
Median Age

63%
Employment Rate

$76,219
Median Household Income

38.4%
Bachelor's Degree +

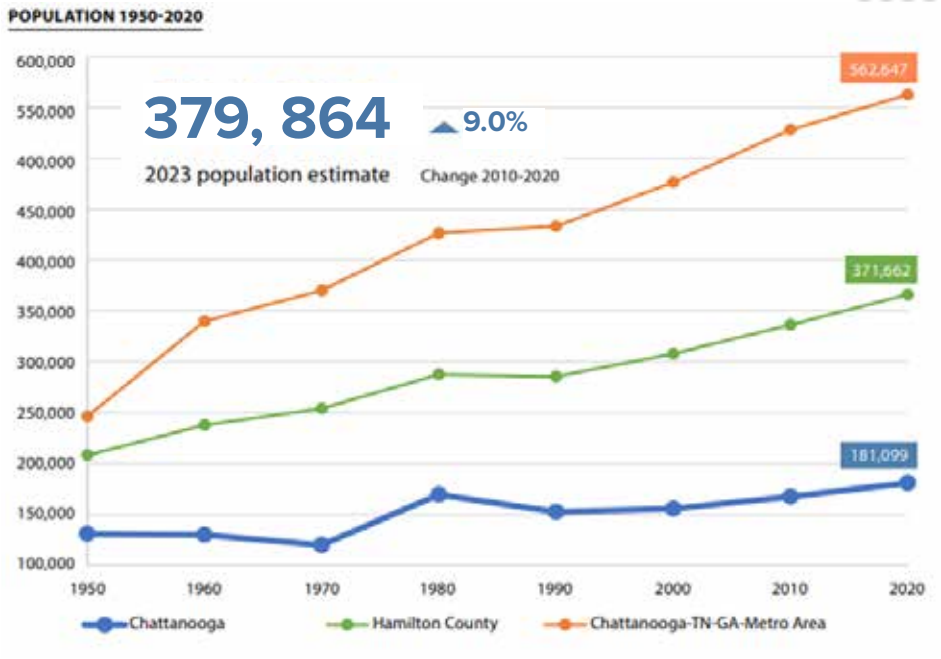


Figure 2.2: Hamilton County Census Data

ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

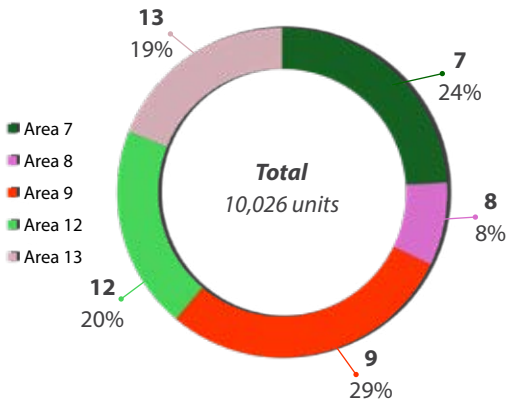
The economy of Walden Plateau is supported by a mix of traditional industries and emerging sectors. Key economic drivers include agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing. Tourism thrives on the region's natural beauty, historical sites, and recreational opportunities, attracting visitors year-round and supporting numerous local businesses. Efforts to maintain the Area's unique character are integral to economic strategies, ensuring that growth aligns with the community's values and environmental stewardship. The southern-most portion of Area 7 have among the most affluent suburban communities in Tennessee, including Signal Mountain, where the average household income has approached $200,000. Signal Mountain and Walden Plateau are fairly well-developed with the central portion of Area 7 is seeing extensive new housing development, enhancing market opportunities for commercial businesses in the central portion of the Area. Utilizing the findings in the RCLCO market analysis, a forward-looking demand was projected across residential and non-residential product types so that we can understand how these patterns will impact growth in unincorporated Hamilton County.

The following growth is anticipated in Area 7 over the next 20 years which is predominantly focused on residential growth and supporting commercial services. This Area is projected to have approximately 24% of the detached single-family growth in the unincorporated County.

Drivers of future single-family residential growth:

- High quality of schools with capacity for growth
- High median income and quality of services
- Desirable natural setting and recreational opportunities
- Low crime
- Moderate summer temperatures

Chart 1: Single- Family (Detached) Projections



2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES

The Plan Analysis section provides a detailed examination of the current conditions, opportunities, and challenges within each Area, offering insights that will guide strategic decision-making and inform the implementation of targeted initiatives. Grounded in the four Community Themes - Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities, this analysis establishes a comprehensive framework that evaluates each Area's unique characteristics. This section includes the following categories:

2.4.1 Land Use and Development Character

Zoning:
Examination of land use patterns, existing zoning district designations to ensure that development harmonizes with the Area's unique geological features.

Land Use:
Examination of existing land use patterns and street patterns in combination with existing zoning.

Building Permits:
Evaluates the current state and number of permits being issued within the Area and its impact on the surrounding community.

Development on Walden Plateau:
Overall analysis of how development in general is impacting or influencing the community and how it's changed its character.

2.4.2 Resiliency

Natural Resources:
Evaluation of natural assets including parks, recreation, open spaces, slopes, waterways, aiming to balance preservation with development.

Infrastructure:
Evaluation of the existing adequacy of public utilities, including sanitary sewer, and water.

2.4.3 Transportation & Mobility

Transportation:
This section evaluates the existing transportation infrastructure, including roadways, pedestrian and cycling paths. It also considers future development needs and the potential impacts of anticipated growth.

2.4.4 Community Facilities

Schools and Major Institutions:
Examination of the role of these institutions in fostering learning and innovation while assessing their current state and future needs in the context of regional growth and development.

City, County, State/Land or Property:
Examination of ownership patterns and its impact on land management and development potential.

Emergency Services:
Examination of emergency response capabilities, encompassing fire, police, medical, and evacuation plans.

2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

In general, the community feedback phase was focused on identifying metrics for success based on critical outcomes. The desired outcomes have been organized into a framework of Community Themes or Drivers to provide structure to the plan analysis, recommendations, and implementation solutions. Identifying these themes and utilizing them as a framework for organizing each Area Plan will provide community leaders with a set of filters for future strategic, policy, and project based decisions. The following graphic identifies the 4 Community Themes and the public consensus that framed the analysis, goals, and policies within Area 7.

1 LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

- Focus higher density housing only in centers.
- In A-1 and R-1 areas hold new development to base density on larger lots with large buffers from primary roads.
- If developments are requesting rezoning for additional density and decentralized sewer; require protected public open space.

RESILIENCY 2

- Create a mechanism to acquire prime agricultural, natural resource, and recreation lands or otherwise protect them.
- Provide better resources and transparency for staff level reviews of technical and environmental reports.

4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Preserve school capacity and factor this into assessment of growth potential.
- Limit growth in areas not served by centralized sewer or with emergency services limitations.
- Pursue connections to the Cumberland Trail

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY 3

- Make transportation infrastructure investments as growth occurs.
- Adopt corridor/access management criteria for the W Road, Roberts Mill Road and Taft Hwy.

2.5.1 CURRENT LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

The Land Use and Development Character analysis examines zoning regulations, land use, permitting history, and development patterns and how these factors influence both conservation efforts and the scope for future growth. The plateau's steep terrain, forested Areas, and ecological sensitivity create distinct land management challenges that have shaped current land use decisions. The analysis provides a detailed assessment of how the plateau's physical characteristics impact development, offering insights into the strategies needed to balance environmental preservation with strategic growth.

LAND USE

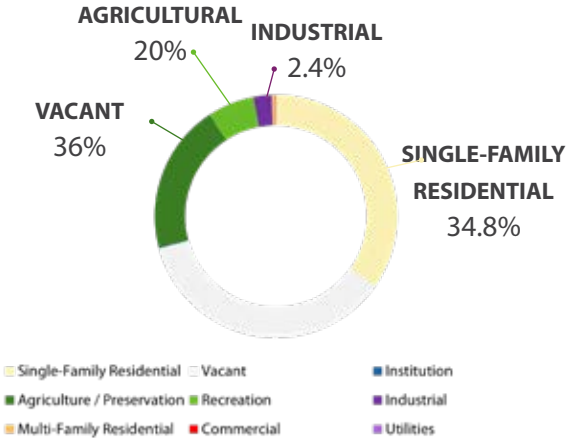
Area 7 is primarily categorized as residential, with 35.24% (refer to Figure 2.3) of the land used for some type of residential purpose. Land devoted to commercial or industrial uses is under 3%, and institutional uses (such as schools or religious facilities) are under 1%, indicating very little non-residential activity in comparison. Of the 52,074 acres in the Area, approximately 36% is vacant which may be undeveloped property, wooded land, empty lots or otherwise unimproved tracts of land with an additional 8,844.06 acres categorized as natural resource use, including agriculture.

The primary land use in the unincorporated Areas of Walden's Ridge is single-family residential which exists in a variety of contexts, from large farms to conventional subdivisions, the latter becoming the predominant pattern of development. Commercial uses are primarily concentrated along Taft Highway in several clusters near intersections with Hollister Road and Corral Road, however, there are some sporadic non-residential uses between these clusters such as Montlake and Jones Gap, ensuring that commercial activity supports rather than dominates the landscape. These commercial nodes provide essential services to residents while maintaining the overall rural and residential character of the region.

This land use pattern highlights the plateau communities' commitment to preserving its rural pattern while accommodating gradual growth and development. By maintaining a clear distinction between residential, commercial, and natural resource Areas, Walden's Ridge balances the needs of its residents with the desire to protect its unique environmental and cultural assets.

Source: RPA

Chart 3: Percentages of Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use Map

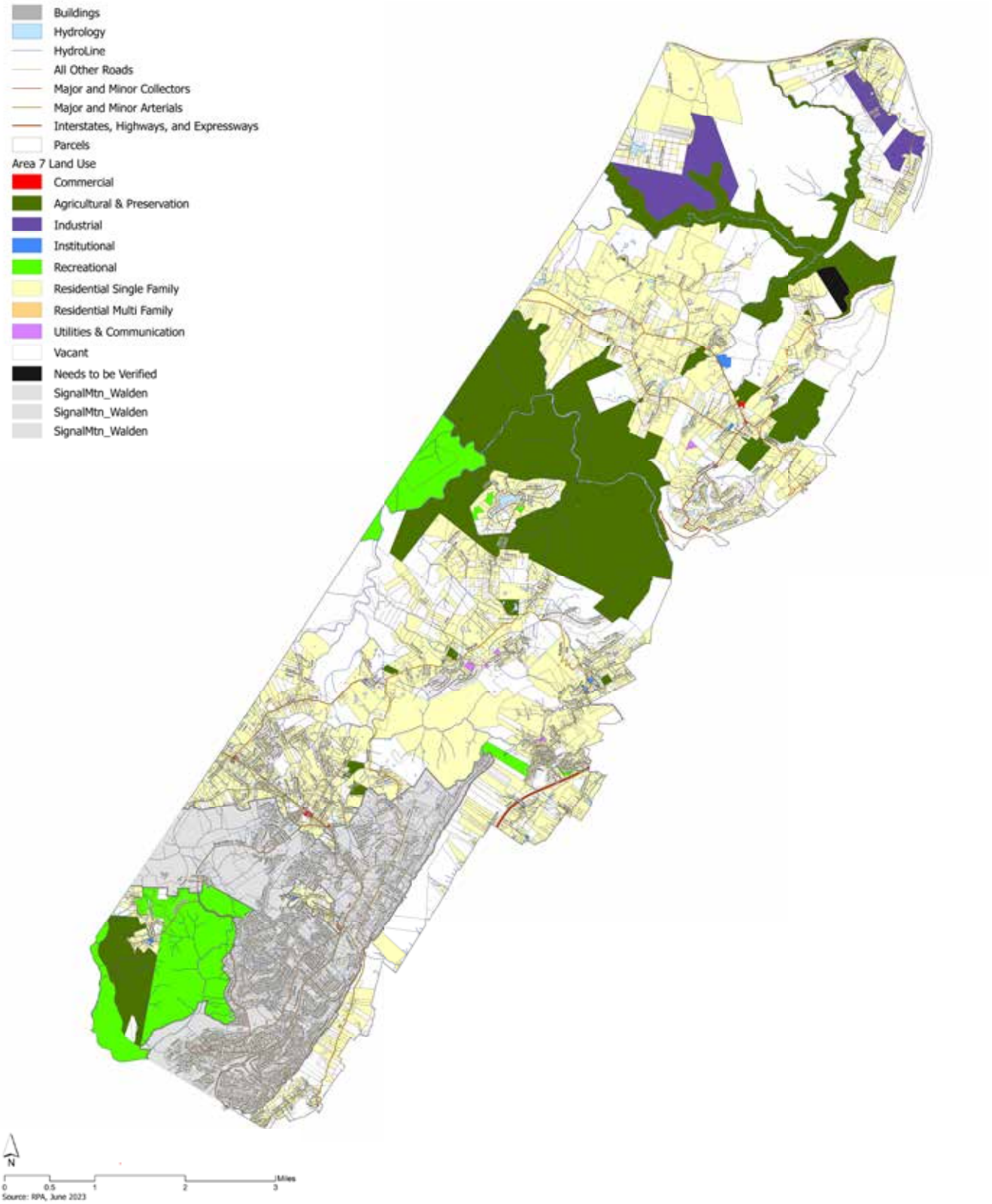


Figure 2.3: Existing Land Use Map (2023)

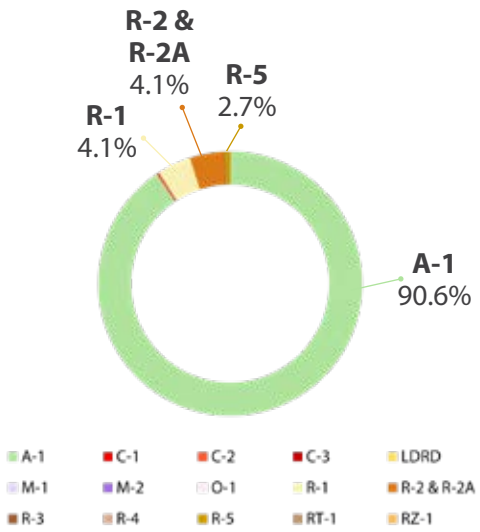
ZONING

Most properties in the unincorporated Areas are zoned A-1 (refer to Figure 2.4), which permits agricultural uses and single-family residential development with a maximum density of two dwelling units per acre. This zoning classification preserves the rural character and open spaces that define much of the region, ensuring that agricultural activities and low-density housing remain predominant. The second most common zoning is R-1, which permits single-family residential development at a base density of two dwelling units per acre for traditional septic systems.

North of Walden's town limits, in an Area known as Fairmount and a few other sporadic locations, properties are zoned R-2 and R-2A. This designation permits single-family and two-family dwellings, including manufactured homes. The R-2A zoning accommodates a variety of housing needs and promotes a more diverse community structure, providing options for different family sizes and economic levels.

Commercial activity is primarily concentrated in Areas with C-2 zoning, which is limited to portions of Taft Highway, Fairmount Road, and Sawyer Road. The C-2 commercial zoning supports a wide variety of commercial and non-residential uses, contributing to the economic vitality of the region. These Areas are not just hubs for businesses but also permit single-family dwellings, including manufactured homes.

Chart 2: Percentages of Existing Zoning



Existing Zoning Map

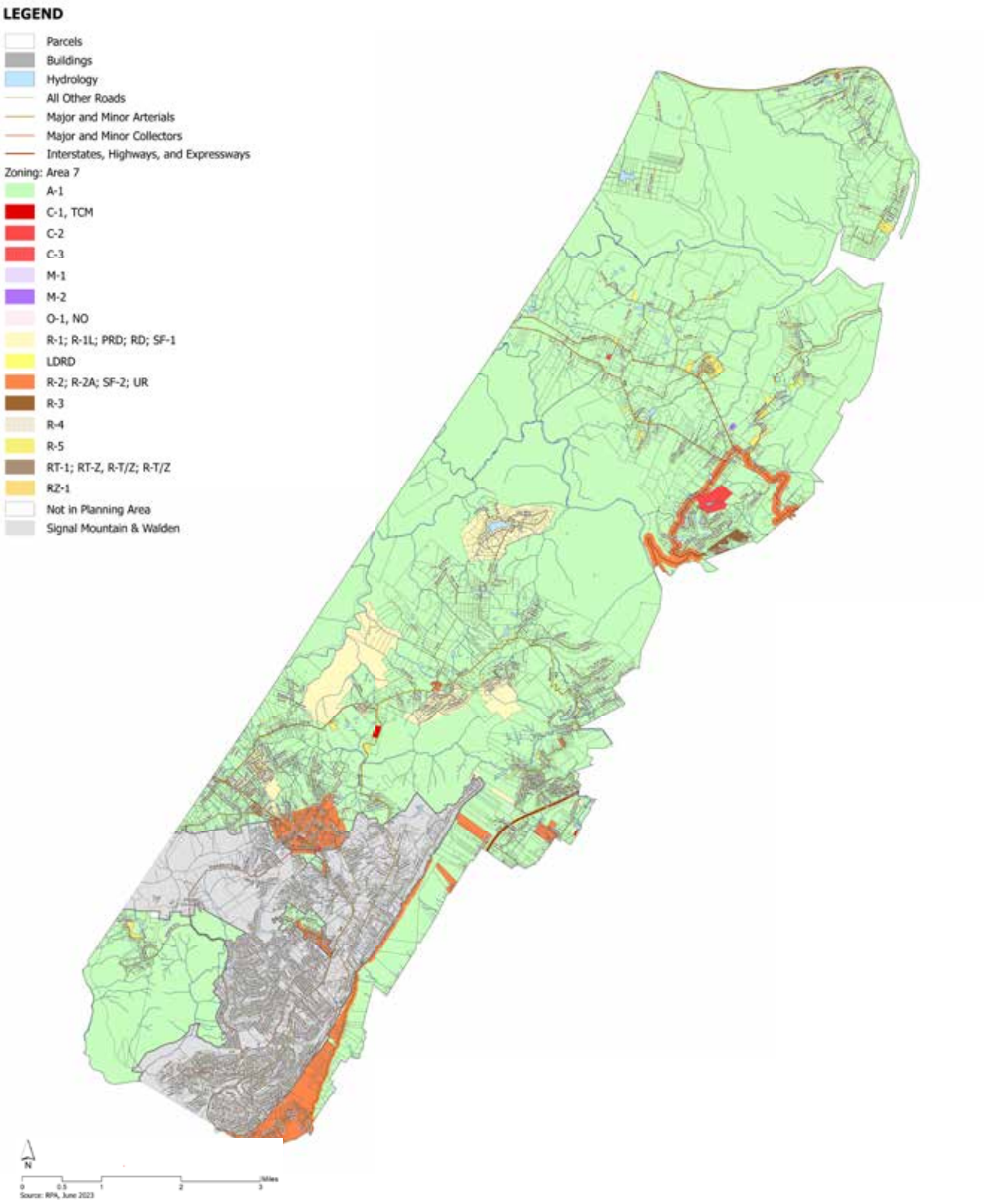


Figure 2.4: Existing Zoning Map (2023)

BUILDING PERMITS & DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Over the past decade, Walden's Plateau has witnessed fluctuations influenced by economic conditions, population growth, and shifting residential and commercial demands. As urbanization extends its reach, the plateau has experienced increased activity in both new construction and renovation projects. Analyzing these trends offers valuable insights into the growth patterns, regulatory impacts, and future development prospects, highlighting the dynamic nature of Walden's Plateau's built environment.

Figure 2.3 reveals that the majority of permits issued have been for single-family homes, which aligns with the existing and desired character of the community. The preference for single-family homes is anticipated to continue, as detailed in Chapter 2.3. The emphasis on low-density housing, ample green spaces, and community-centered amenities reflects a deliberate effort to sustain the Area's unique charm.

Following single-family residential permits, the "Other" classification represents the second-highest category for permit issuance as identified in Table 2. This activity reflects the Area's evolving economic condition as well as its desire to be primarily residential. There were no new commercial permits issued in the 10 year period (2013-2023).

The analysis of building permit trends also highlights how economic and demographic shifts have shaped development. Population growth, driven by the Area's desirability and quality of life, has further fueled demand for housing and services, prompting a balanced approach to development that meets diverse needs.

Development on Walden Plateau is significantly shaped by its rural character, the local regulations, and community input which ensures that new development align with the community's values. The Area's appeal lies in its natural beauty, expansive landscapes, and slower pace of life, attracting residents who prioritize tranquility and a strong sense of community.

Chart 4: Permits by Area in Unincorporated vs. Incorporated Hamilton County.

Table 1: Permit Classification Comparison

Permit Classification	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 12	Area 13
Commercial / Office	-	6	19	49	1
Commercial Solar	-	1	2	1	-
Hotel, Motel, Tourist Cabin	-	-	1	1	-
Industrial	-	1	-	3	1
Multi-Family/ Mixed Residential	-	10	-	29	3
Other Permits*	592	1,005	1,898	1,983	516
Public Works / Utilities	-	-	-	1	2
Single Family Residential	879	1,063	2,883	2,339	876
Total (Per Area)	1,471	2,086	4,803	4,406	1,399
Total (Unincorporated County)	14,165				

- *The "Other" Permit Classification Category Includes: Demolition permits, Residential Additions & Alterations, Religious Institutions, Parking Garages, Hospitals, and Non-Residential Additions & Alterations.*
- *Permit Classifications shown are reflective of the anticipated growth pattern in Hamilton County and the categories selected in the Economic Analysis projections in the RCLCO study.*

Building Permits Map (2013-2023)

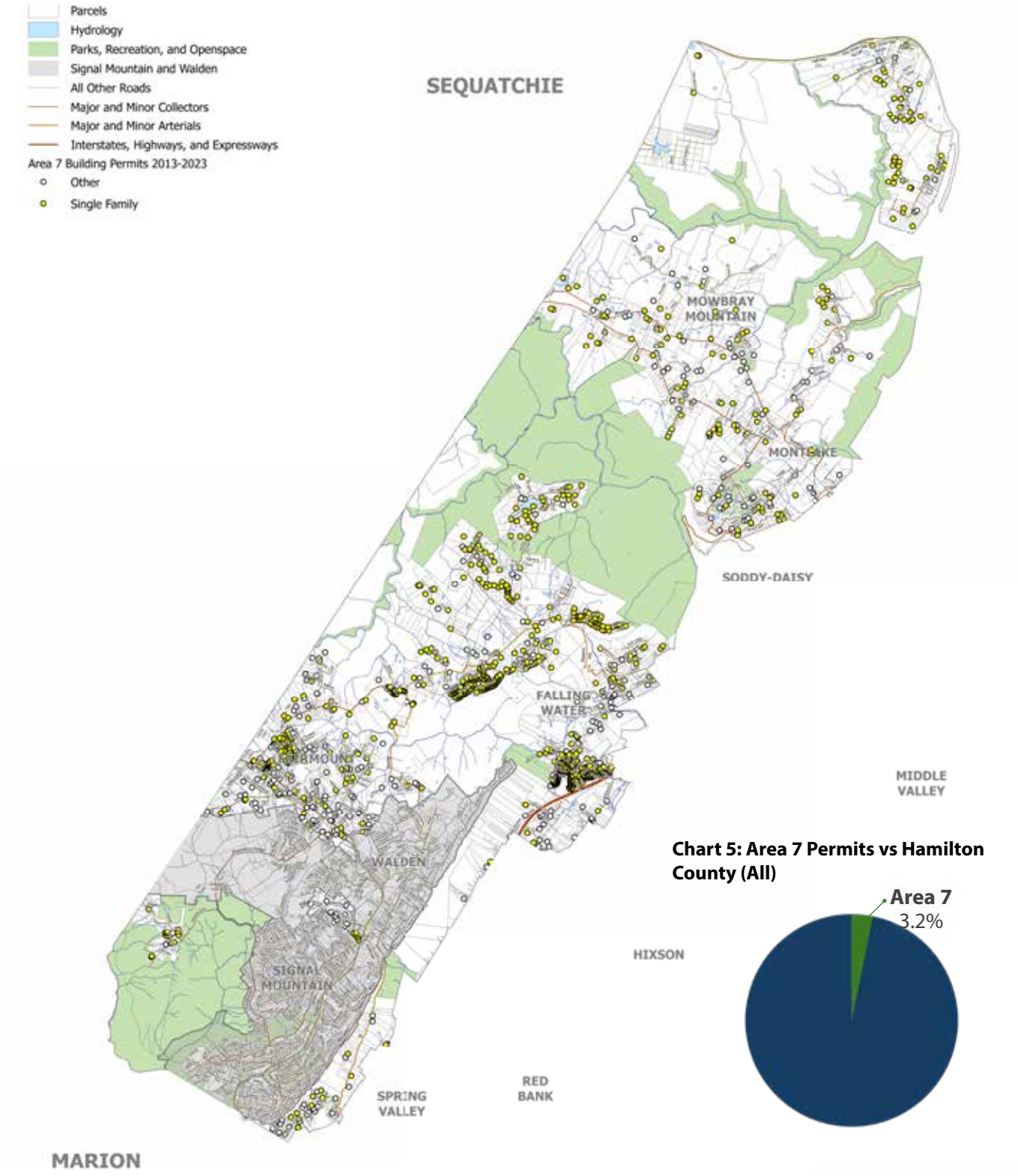


Chart 5: Area 7 Permits vs Hamilton County (All)

Figure 2.5: Building Permits Map (2013-2023)

The map (Figure 2.5) identifies the building permits that were approved over the last 10 years including single-family residential permits and other permits.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

2.5.2 RESILIENCY

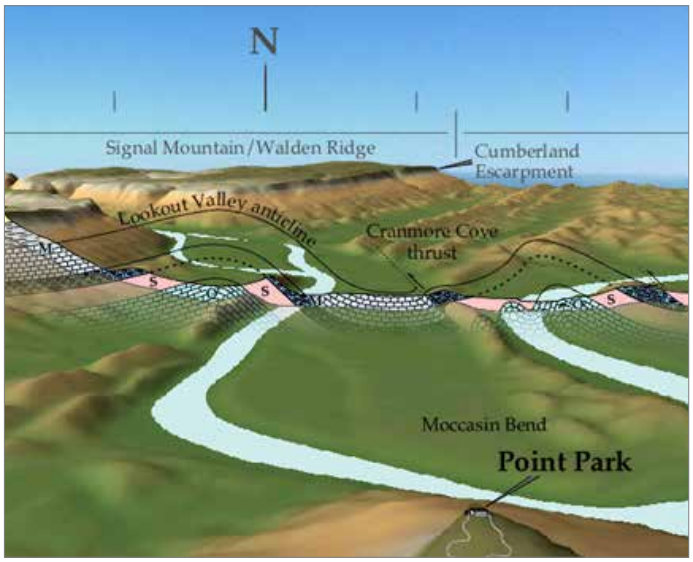
The Resiliency Community Theme for the Walden Plateau reveals a strategic intersection underscoring the importance of harmonizing built environments with the natural landscape. A key focus is on developing resilient infrastructure while preserving and enhancing the Area's rich natural resources. The analysis highlights water management systems, renewable energy solutions, conservation efforts, and sustainable land use practices. These elements are crucial in maintaining a balance between development and environmental stewardship, ensuring that the community not only thrives but also respects and protects the Walden Plateau's natural heritage.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Walden Plateau is rich in natural resources, featuring diverse water sources, parks, and landscapes. These resources support local ecosystems and offer opportunities for recreation and sustainable development. Proper management of these natural assets is crucial for maintaining the region's beauty and ecological health. The map (Figure 2.4) indicates points within the study Area that feature natural resources deemed sensitive in terms of water function, steep slopes or habitat as identified in the adopted 2016 Comprehensive Plan for Hamilton County. In the Walden Plateau Area, 27.6% of the land is 25% or greater slope and 0.4% is in the 100-year Floodplain. Waterways are shown to indicate the Floodway and 100-year and 500-year floodplains along with Impaired Waterways (303D) which indicate water quality status based on monitoring of sediment, pollution (metals, pesticides/ fertilizer run-off, etc.), erosion or changes in flow/ volumes. Development in the floodway is prohibited.

The escarpment of the Walden's Ridge creates a unique system of slopes, waterways, and infrastructure considerations for Hamilton County.

North Chickamauga Creek - the headwaters of the creek are in The Horseshoe, a part of Walden Ridge in southeastern Sequatchie County, Tennessee. The creek runs through the study area. Source: Creek Conservancy



Geologic Cross Section
Source: East TN Geological Society

Wastewater

The Chattanooga Department of Wastewater and Hamilton County Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) are tasked with planning and administration of sewer services under state and federal laws. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater manages the Moccasin Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant which is the primary treatment facility for both the City of Chattanooga and unincorporated Hamilton County.

RPA staff has coordinated closely with the City of Chattanooga Wastewater Department staff during the development of the Comprehensive Plans to ensure adequate sewer capacity is available to accommodate the anticipated residential, commercial, and industrial development growth. This coordination is a technical evaluation with ongoing coordination of local agencies to ensure long term capacity.

WWTA staff has provided information to RPA that existing capacity and available financial support substantially limits new sewer availability in the unincorporated county in the short and mid-term. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater has provided guidance that adequate sewer capacity is available for anticipated development during the next 5 years.

RPA staff working with both WWTA and County staff to support new development and achieve the best outcomes possible regarding managing growth in the unincorporated area.

Septic Systems

Due to sewer capacity and availability, septic is the most common wastewater treatment option in Unincorporated Hamilton County. Generally, the minimum lot size required for septic systems is 25,000 square feet. Residential development in rural areas without sewer service must therefore be built with these larger lots.

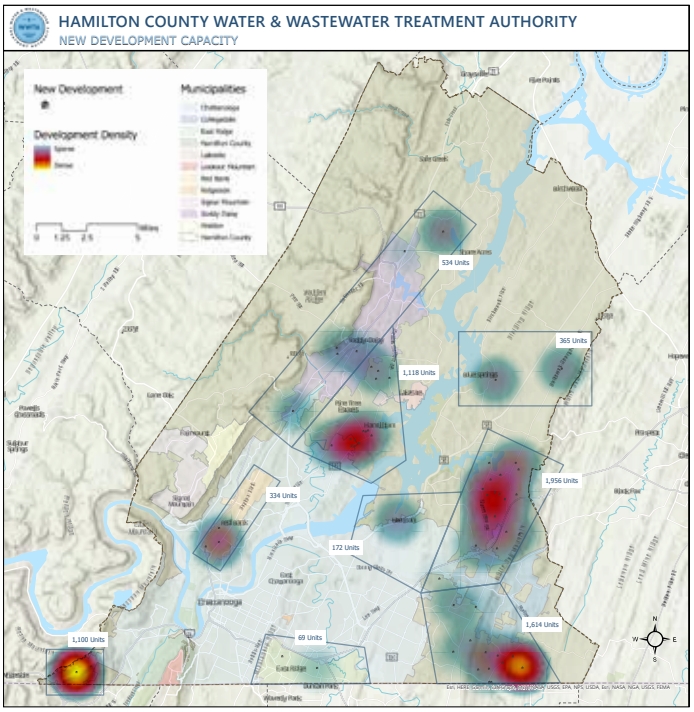
Information Highlight

Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems

A decentralized wastewater treatment system is like a combination of traditional septic and sewer. In a decentralized system, buildings or groups of buildings have a septic tank on-site as an initial treatment. Wastewater is then piped to a central location for additional treatment and disposal. Currently, Hamilton County only has a few examples of existing systems but anticipates them to become more common.

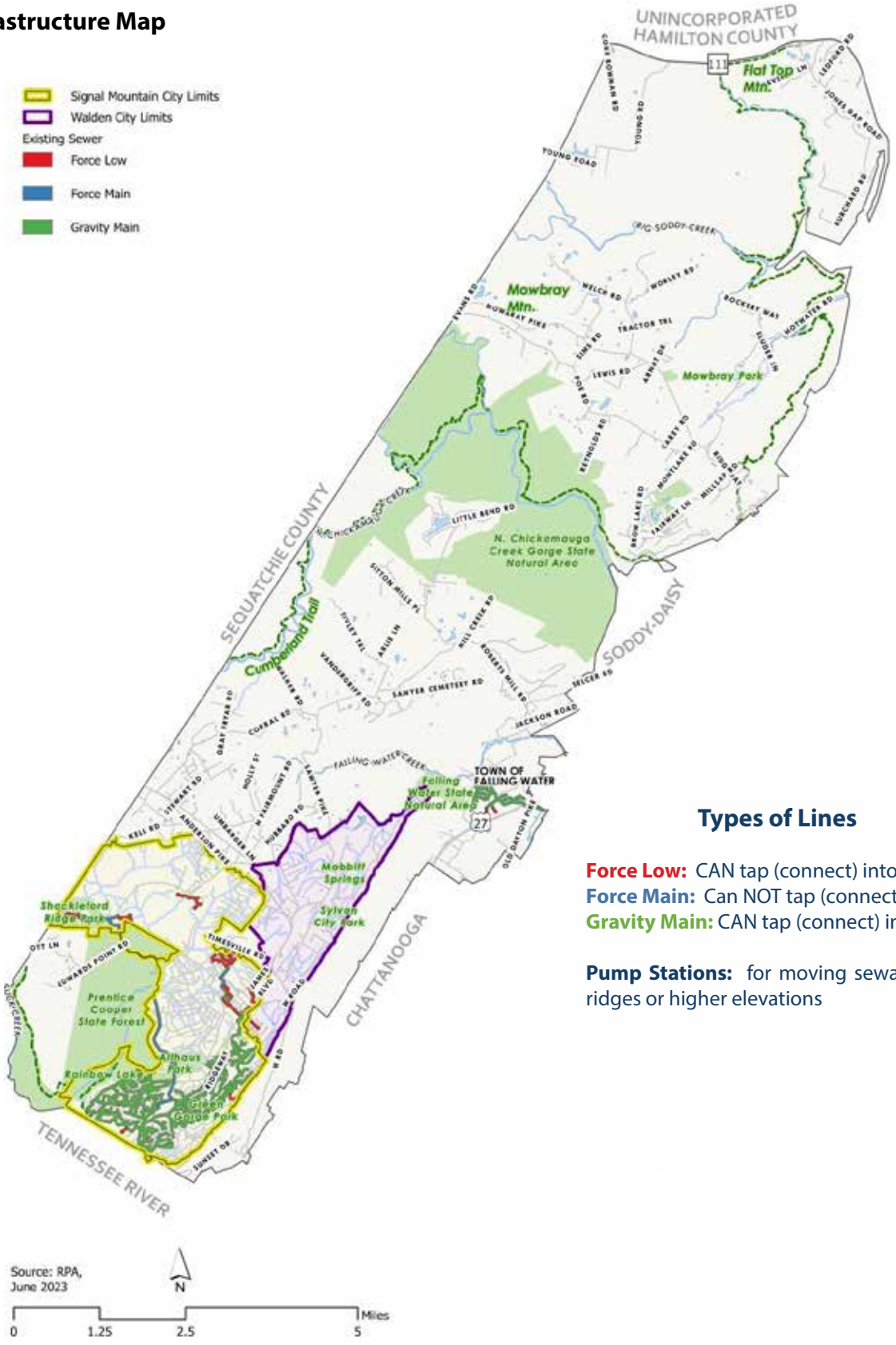
One key advantage in these systems is off-site disposal, which provides flexibility in housing types and helps preserve valuable open spaces. Additionally, centralizing the final stages of treatment and disposal reduces the risk of individual system failures, positively impacting the environment. WWTA provides oversight on these systems.

Note: If approved, these systems allow development to be approved at a density/intensity as if it were on sewer.



New Development Capacity (June 2023)
Source: WWTA

Sewer Infrastructure Map



Types of Lines

Force Low: CAN tap (connect) into
Force Main: Can NOT tap (connect) into
Gravity Main: CAN tap (connect) into

Pump Stations: for moving sewage over ridges or higher elevations

Figure 2.5: Sewer Infrastructure Map

PARKS, RECREATION & GREENWAYS

The Walden Plateau is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, boasting an extensive network of parks and recreation areas Area 7 includes Falling Water State Natural Area, North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park, Prentice Cooper State Forest, Rainbow Lake, and others. These spaces offer residents and visitors a variety of activities, from hiking and biking to picnicking, wildlife observation, etc. The parks and greenways are designed to highlight the natural beauty of the Area, providing both accessible and adventurous options for recreation and relaxation. These spaces not only enhance the quality of life but also play a crucial role in preserving the region's natural landscapes and promoting environmental stewardship.

These green spaces serve a purpose beyond recreation. They are critical for environmental preservation, offering habitats for diverse wildlife and contributing to the overall health of the region's ecosystems. This preservation nurtures a sense of environmental stewardship, as the community becomes more connected to the land they enjoy. With a total of 4,271 acres of public recreation space and 280 acres of private recreation space in Area 7, as noted in Tables 2 and 3, these green spaces play a crucial role in safeguarding the environmental integrity of the region. A separate analysis was conducted to measure the total approximate acreage for all aspects of parks, recreation, and open space which is approximately 27% of the total land area.

By prioritizing the protection of these landscapes, we ensure the continued survival of Walden Plateau's biodiversity while also securing a legacy of natural beauty for future generations. Whether through careful planning or the community's growing engagement with these outdoor spaces, this Area stands as a testament to the balance between progress and preservation, reminding us all of the importance of maintaining the delicate ecosystems that define Hamilton County's identity.

Chart 6: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in Area 7

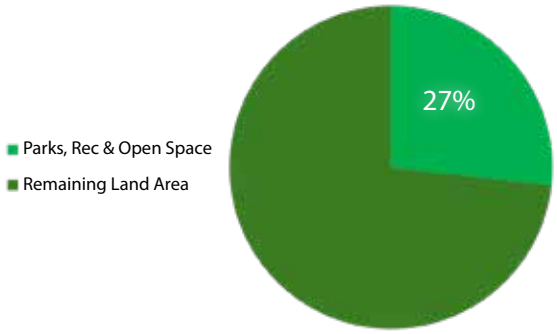
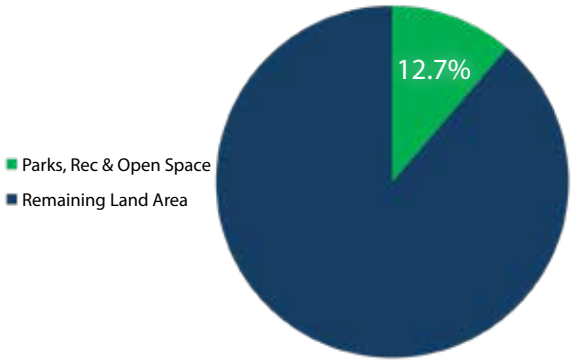


Chart 7: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in all 5 Plan Hamilton Areas



Falling Water State Natural Area
Source: Timber Root

Table 2: Public Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Falling Water Community Park	Church Community Park	1.2
Falling Water State Natural Area	Natural Area	129
Mowbray Park	Municipal Recreation Area	21
North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park	State Park	1,781
Pretice Cooper State Forest	State Recreation Area	1,862.6
Rainbow Lake	Municipal Community Park	177.8
Shackleford Ridge County Park	County Recreation Area	86
Walden's Ridge Park	County Park	212
Total		**4,271**

Table 3: Private Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Montlake Golf Course	Daily Fee Golf Course	142.2
Signal Mountain Golf & Country Club	Membership Required Golf Course	137.9
Total		**280.1**

Prentice Cooper State Forest
Source: Travel Southeast Tennessee

Natural Resources Map

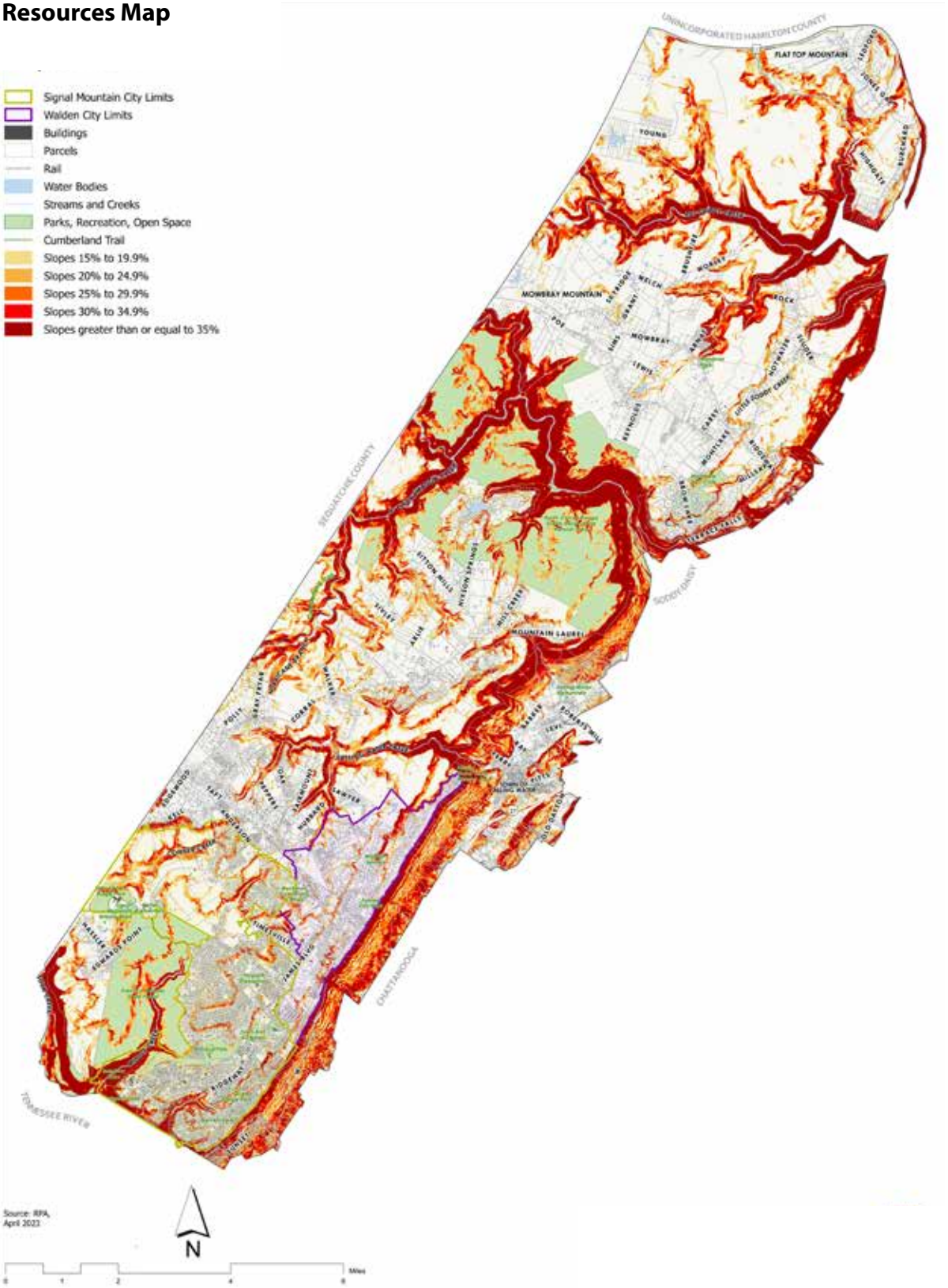


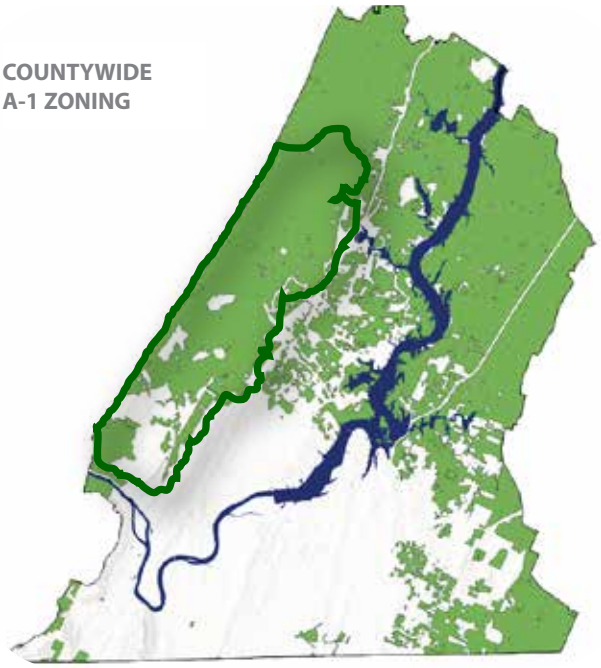
Figure 2.4: Natural Resources Map

AGRICULTURE

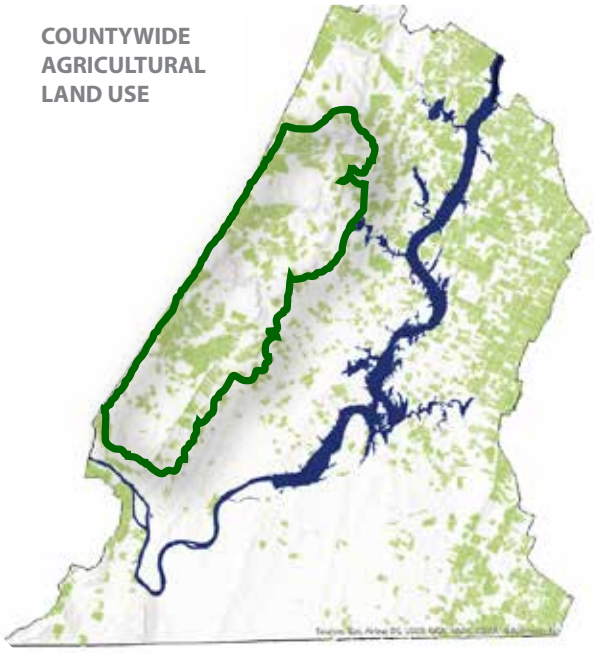
Hamilton County has a long history of agricultural activity in areas like Apison, Sale Creek, Flat Top Mountain, Georgetown and the Hwy 58/Birchwood area. A portion of Area 9 consists of agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses and may also include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes. Usually zoned as an A-1 district, they often include single-family homes on large lots as well as accessory buildings such as barns and greenhouses. Properties given the "Greenbelt" status (15 acres or more) usually feature a farm or single-family home with surrounding open space, pastures or forests retained and with tax benefits available. Development centered around farming is typically on septic systems. Agricultural uses in Hamilton County range from commercial businesses or large production facilities, such as a dairy or orchards, to horse stables, to roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores.

Not only do these agricultural uses add to the rural character of the area, but they also provide many benefits to the local community such as healthy food sources, educational programs, agritourism opportunities and improved environmental function for clean air and water quality - when significant vegetated areas are preserved and low impact farming practices (limited pesticide use or organic farming) are put in place. Programs that promote local agriculture and conserve open space and natural resources are readily available. Conservation practices may also include the use of clustered residential homes with farm amenities or scenic views and open space set aside. Another tool used to help preserve agricultural places and provide income includes special event facilities such as barns or pavilions, guesthouses or wedding chapels for instance.

COUNTYWIDE A-1 ZONING



COUNTYWIDE AGRICULTURAL LAND USE



AREA 7

90.6% A-1 Zoning
34.7% Single-Family Parcels
3.2% of Permits issued in the County
28% of Area in Steep Slopes & Floodway
27% of Area in Parks, Recreation & Open Space

HAMILTON COUNTY

56% of the County in A-1 Zoning
30% of the County has Agricultural Land Use

2.5.3 MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION

While the single-occupancy vehicle remains the predominant mode of transportation and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future, it is crucial not to overlook multi-modal transportation options. This analysis will focus on the network of pathways that underpin the Areas mobility and accessibility. The Area's road network forms the backbone of its transportation system, connecting neighborhoods, commercial centers, and outlying regions. The existing network of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trails is assessed for connectivity, safety, and accessibility. These modes are equally important in these Areas as they are in urban settings, serving purposes such as recreation, exercise, and social interaction.

Functional Classification organizes roads by their traffic volume, connectivity, purpose, and ownership, drawing distinctions between local, state, and federal roadways. This classification shapes road functions across arterials, collectors, and local roads. For instance, within Area 7, Taft Highway functions as a primary arterial, Montlake Road serves as a collector, and Fairmount Road W is a local street. This classification directly impacts roadway improvements, influencing available funding and determining the agency responsible for the project.

Walden's Ridge currently has four primary access points: Highway 127 (Taft Highway/Signal Mountain Boulevard), the W Road, and Roberts Mill Road, and Hwy 111. Despite discussions about creating a new access road connecting to Suck Creek Road, these three thoroughfares are likely to remain the main access routes in the foreseeable future. Therefore, improving these key roads and developing systems to ensure multiple means of access when one or more of these roads are impassable should be a priority.

Neighborhood connectivity is vital for several reasons. Connected developments allow for traffic dispersion, enabling streets to be designed narrower, which naturally calms traffic. Additionally, connectivity ensures that emergency services such as police, fire, and ambulance can quickly and easily reach residents in case of emergencies.

The transportation analysis provides a detailed and dynamic overview of the current and future state of the Area's transportation network. By addressing the diverse needs of all users—drivers, transit riders, pedestrians, cyclists, and freight operators—the Area Plans aim to create a balanced, efficient, and forward-thinking transportation system that supports the region's growth and enhances the quality of life for its residents.

Montlake Road
Source: PJAMM Cycling

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) uses functional classification to "define the role each element in the roadway network plays in serving travel needs." Roads are categorized by location (urban or rural), capacity, and alignment with future development plans. This classification system also differentiates between locally-owned, state-owned, and federally-owned roads, which can influence the funding sources and oversight agencies involved in roadway improvements. For example, improvements to state routes are generally proposed by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the FHWA, with additional input from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This coordinated approach ensures that infrastructure upgrades align with both state and local priorities.

The functional classification categories at the local level in Area 7 are as follows:

- Arterial
  - Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
- Collector
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
- Local Roads

Arterials

Arterials are classified based on their high level of mobility. Arterial routes are typically the longest and have higher capacity compared to the other roads in the transportation network. They have few access points and only connect to other Arterials within the network. Most travel that occurs on an Arterial is over long distances, such as inter-state travel. Arterial routes typically account for the highest traffic volumes within the transportation network, but less than 15% of the physical transportation network. For example, Interstates consist of 3% of the vehicle miles traveled and between 17% and 38% of the vehicle miles traveled in a transportation network. Arterials are further classified as principal or minor arterials. Examples of Principal Arterials include interstates, freeways, and expressways. Minor arterials serve trips of shorter lengths than principal arterials connect smaller geographic areas to the transportation network.

Collectors

Collectors connect local roads to the arterial routes within a transportation network. They are shorter routes than arterials and have lower speed limits with more access points. Collector routes are typically used for intra-county travel rather than statewide travel like the Arterial routes. Collector routes make up approximately a third of the transportation network. Collector routes are further classified into major and minor collectors. Major collectors usually allow for higher levels of mobility within an area and minor collectors often have more access points. The distinction between major and minor collectors is often determined by speed limits, driveway spacing, and annual average traffic volumes.

Local Roads

Typically local roads account for less than 25% of the vehicle miles traveled but make up between 62% and 74% of the transportation network. They are usually characterized as having a low number of lanes, low speed limits, and low traffic volumes. Local roads are classified after the arterials and collectors have been identified within the network.

Crash Data Map

The transportation analysis of Area 7 reviewed functional classifications, traffic operations, and safety. Potential improvements were identified by analyzing historic and projected traffic volumes, crash data, and delay levels, with roads ranked by priority. No capacity improvements were needed based on projected volumes, but Roberts Mill Road, W Road, and Montlake Road were flagged for safety concerns due to recent crash data, detailed in Figure 2.6.

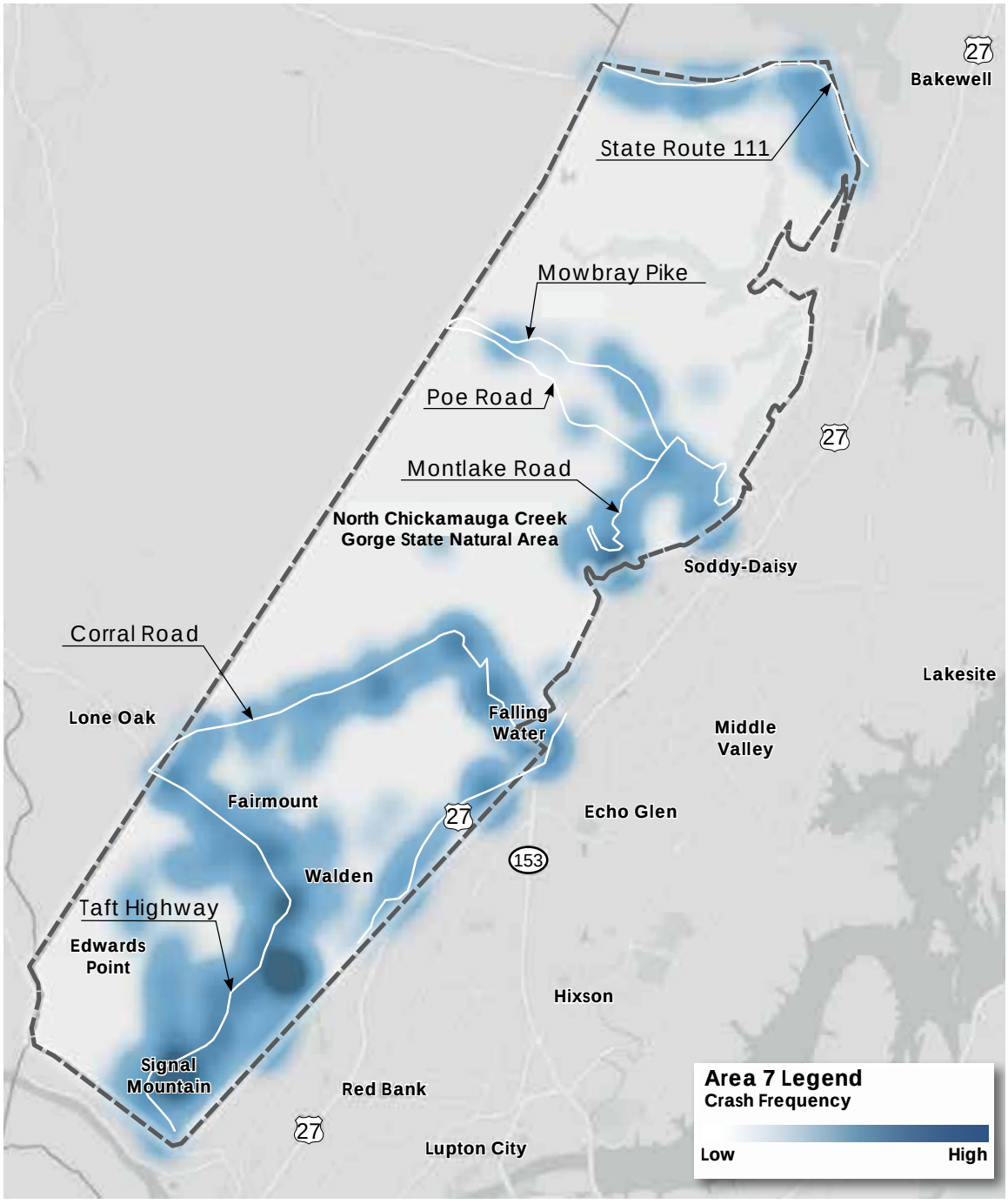


Figure 2.6: Area 7 Crash Data Map (08/24/2020-08/24/2023)

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Roadway improvement considerations began with a thorough inventory and analysis of Hamilton County's existing roadway network. This initial assessment included a detailed review of traffic operations and crash patterns to identify potential safety enhancements. From this analysis, a list of roadway improvements was developed and organized by priority, focusing on areas that would benefit most from strategic upgrades.

To assess traffic operations, we used a combination of historical traffic count data collected annually, future traffic forecasts from the RPA's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, and general Level of Service (LOS) criteria. This approach allowed us to pinpoint current capacity constraints and anticipate areas likely to face similar issues as the County grows. Roadway segments already at or nearing capacity were flagged for inclusion in the improvement list to address these pressing needs.

The safety review analyzed three years of crash data across Hamilton County roadways to calculate crash rates on key segments. We then compared these rates to statewide averages to identify roads that might benefit from targeted safety studies or projects.

Table 4: Proposed Roadway Improvements (All Areas)

Priority Group	Roadway	Project Location	Area	Type of Improvement
Short-term	Hunter Road	at Lebron Sterchi Drive	9	Intersection
Short-term	Hunter Road	at curve near Crooked Creek Drive	9	Safety
Short-term	Hilltop Drive	between Hunter Road and Volkswagen Drive	9	Extension
Short-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Safety
Short-term	Standifer Gap Road	from Banks road to Camp Road	12	Safety
Short-term	Daisy Dallas Road	from Harrison Lane to Hixson Pike	8	Safety
Short-term	Middle Valley Road	from Hixson Pike to Daisy Dallas Road	8	Safety
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Daisy Dallas Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Walnut Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Gann Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Hunter Road	at Garfield Road	9	Intersection
Medium-term	Roberts Mill Road	from Dayton Pike to Mountain Laurel Trail	7	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Mahan Gap Road	9	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Amos Road	9	Capacity
Medium-term	E Brainerd Road	at London Lane	12	Intersection
Long-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Capacity
Long-term	Standifer Gap Road	at Bill Reed Road	12	Intersection
Long-term	Armstrong Road	from Hixson Pike to Lee Pike	13	Safety
Long-term	Harrison Bay Road	from Hwy 58 to Birchwood Pike	9	Safety
Long-term	McCallie Ferry Road	from US 27 to Spradling Road	13	Safety
Long-term	Gann Road	from Middle Valley Road to Daisy Dallas Road	8	Safety
Long-term	Montlake Road	from Dayton Pike to Mowbray Pike	7	Safety
Long-term	W Road	from Mountain Creek Road to Anderson Pike	7	Safety

Planned Transportation Projects Map

The average crash rates for Tennessee were used as a benchmark to identify roadways that could benefit from targeted safety studies or projects to better understand crash patterns and to implement strategies to reduce crash frequency or severity. Within Area 7, W Road, Montlake Road, and Roberts Mill Road were recognized as candidates for safety improvements, particularly given that Montlake Road had two fatalities recorded in its recent crash history.

Projects

(Considerations for future investments)

- Principal Arterials
  Dayton Pike (TN 111) from County line to US-27.
  Signal Mountain Rd (US-127) from Suck Creek Rd to US-29.
- Major Collectors
  Signal Mountain Blvd (Maryland Ave) from Fairmount Ave to Taft Hwy (US-27)
- Minor Collectors
  Montlake Road & Mowbray Pike

Figure 2.7: Area 7 TPO Planned Transportation Projects Map

2.5.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Walden Plateau offers a comprehensive array of community facilities designed to enhance the quality of life for its residents. These facilities include educational institutions, healthcare centers, libraries, and recreational amenities, and emergency services. Each facility is integrated into the community to ensure accessibility and to meet the diverse needs of the population and support sustainable growth. While some of these facilities are within the incorporated limits of Walden and Signal Mountain they are included due to the use of the residents of the unincorporated residents of Hamilton County.

SCHOOLS AND MAJOR INSTITUTIONS

It is imperative that Hamilton County Schools be part of the conversation when it comes to growth in the Walden Plateau Area. New schools tend to attract new growth in the form of residential development. As the area continues to grow, schools may approach, or exceed, capacity due to increasing student enrollment. Factors such as transportation, access, and space needed for buildings, parking, and recreation must be considered as new schools are planned.

Hamilton County Opportunity 2030 Strategic Plan

Hamilton County Schools introduced a 7 Year Strategic Plan "Opportunity 2030" to engage stakeholders and align strategies to directly respond to the needs of the students, staff, and the community.

The HCDE mission is:
To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and supports to thrive in life.

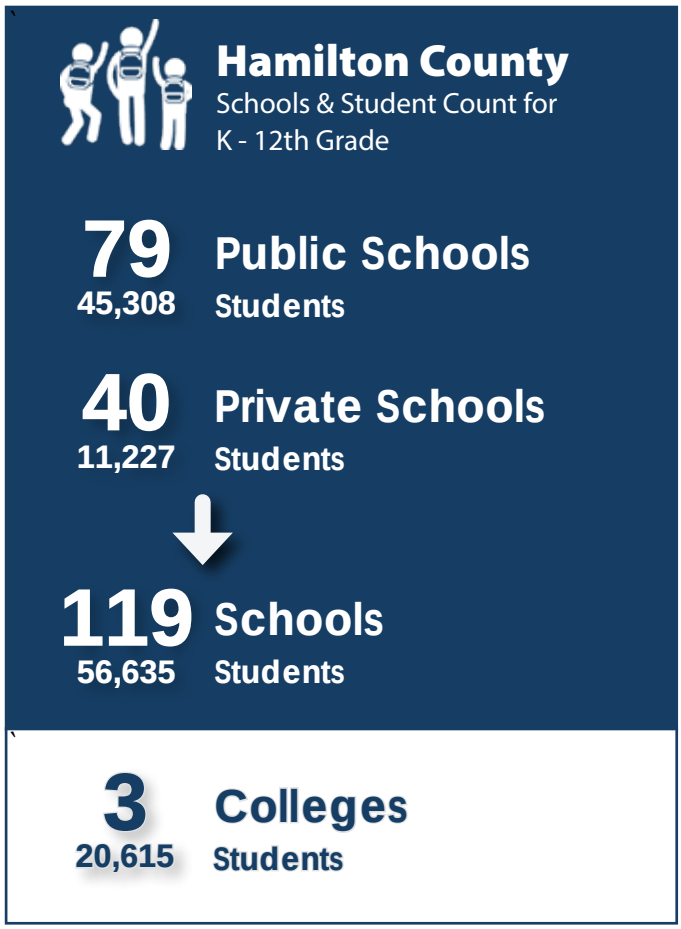
The HCDE vision is:
By 2030, Hamilton County Schools will be a leader in developing our diverse graduates to be connected, competitive, and life ready.

The HCDE 2030 plan has made 5 commitments:

1. Every Student Learns
2. Every Student Belongs
3. Every School Equipped
4. Every Employee Valued
5. Every Community Served

In 2024, the County established 250 million in bonds in anticipation of upcoming school needs.

Hamilton County is home to many private and public K-12th Grade institutions and colleges, the following is a countywide total of all schools and students:



Schools Map

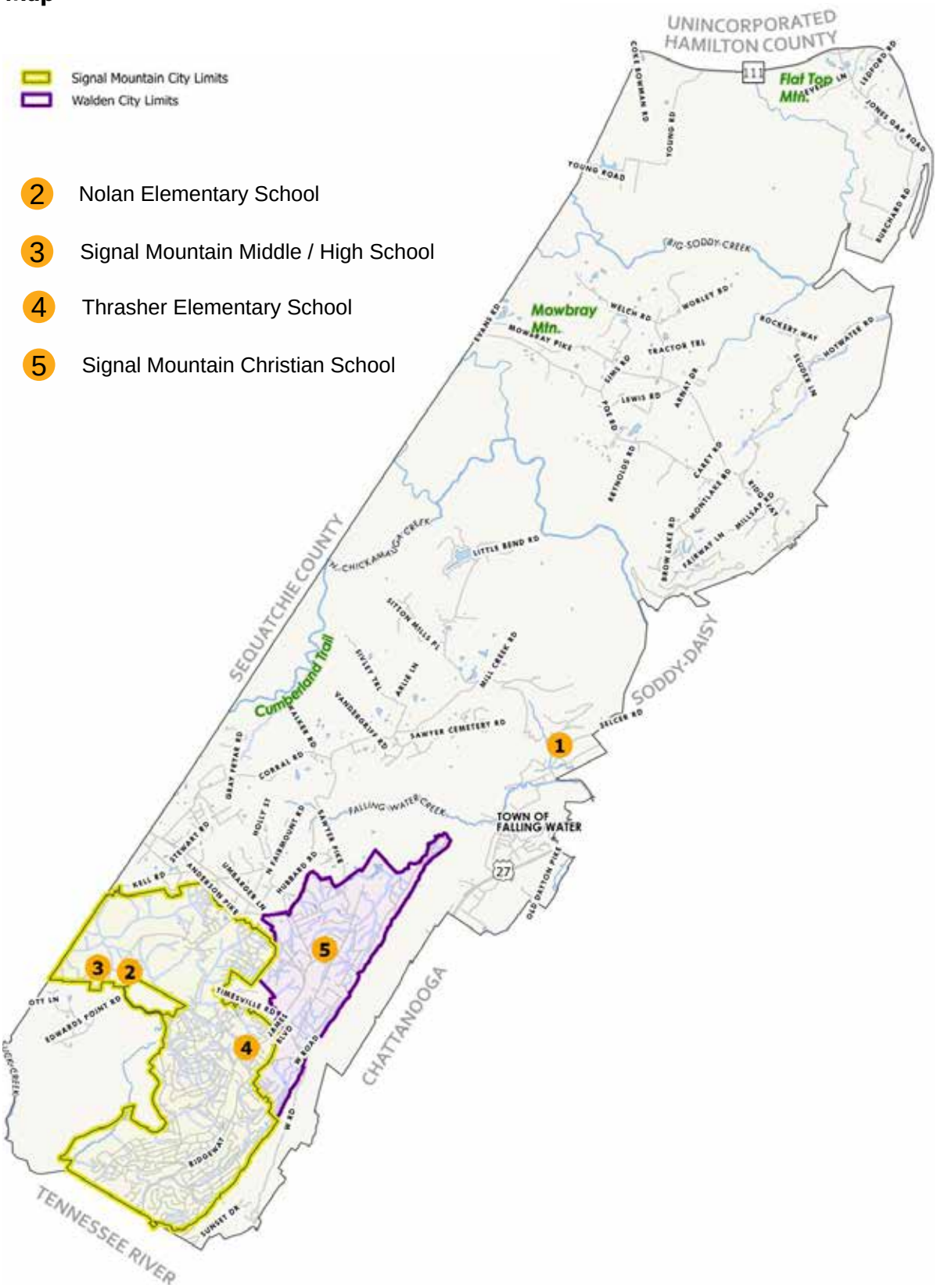
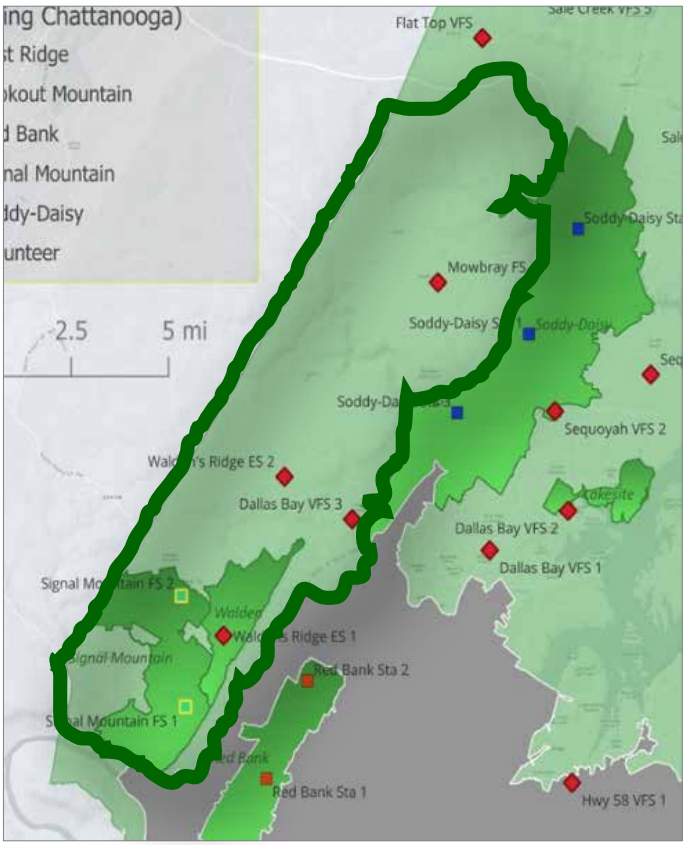


Figure 2.8: Schools Map (2023)

TENNESSEE State Parks

THE LAND TRUST FOR TENNESSEE



Fire Station Locations
Source: 2024 Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation Report (Tri-Star)

PARKS & GOVERNMENT OWNED LAND

There are a number of open spaces, parks, and state forests on the Walden Plateau. In addition to preserving sensitive environmental assets, these Areas are a recreational assets that draw hikers, bikers, horse riders, and campers from all over. As noted in chapter 4, the Cumberland Trail, eventually a 300 mile long state trail, traverses the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park and will ultimately connect to Signal Point. Publicly used parks in Area 7 when combined total approximately 2,057.80 acres. Privately used parks in Area 7 when combined total approximately 280.14 acres.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

In 2024, Tri Star conducted a Fire and Emergency Response Evaluation of the unincorporated areas to identify current levels of fire protection service, geographic coverage, response time, areas of need, etc. There is one station (Station 2) in the unincorporated Area of this plan and it is located on Sawyer Road near its intersection with Tuckahoe. The newest WRES station is located in the Town of Walden and there are also stations in the Town of Signal Mountain. Hamilton County Emergency Services (HCEMS) has one station (Medic 8) located on Taft Highway in the heart of the Town of Signal Mountain. WRES is a volunteer fire department, but there is anticipation that it will eventually transition to a full-time fire department. An addition to Station 2 in the unincorporated Area is in the planning stages. As growth on the mountain continues, there is some benefit to considering a relocating Medic 8 to a more central location to improve response times. WRES has confirmed that while they cannot transport patients, their apparatus has the same medical equipment as HCEMS and there are many locations where Lifeforce can land. This should provide peace of mind to residents in the unincorporated Areas. Nevertheless, as growth continues, it will be important to review emergency service and response and improve accordingly.

Hamilton County Emergency Management owns and constantly updates evacuation routes and plans for natural disasters.

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS

3.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
3.2 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
3.3 GOALS
3.4 VISION STATEMENT

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

3.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Shaping a vision for the future of the Walden Plateau involves exploring its potential and engaging with residents and business owners to understand their aspirations for the next decade. What qualities do people value? What elements make this Area unique or special? To identify these community values, two surveys were distributed during the planning process. During public meetings, participants were invited to identify issues and prioritize potential solutions. While some concerns were specific to particular sub-Areas, many were relevant to the entire region. Advisory Committee members played a key role in drafting the original vision statement for the future of the Walden Plateau in 1997.

The initial feedback produced four key Community Themes which ultimately outlined the analysis portion of this plan. Those key themes helped shaped the remainder of this plan and are identified in Chapter 2 of this plan.

Survey responses, input from community meetings, feedback from the Advisory Committee, and professional guidance from staff and technical advisors, were used to draft goals, a vision statement, and recommendations to reflect the shared values of the Northeast County community to establish a direction for the future.

A community's **GOALS** form the foundation of its identity and guide is actions and decisions. They identify the driving forces of the community, by adhering to these core goals, the community fosters a sense of unity and purpose, enabling all members to work together towards a common vision of a prosperous and harmonious future.

A **VISION STATEMENT** outlines the collective aspirations and core values of the community. It serves as a guide, highlighting the community's desired future and setting a clear direction for growth and development. Crafted through collaborative input, the vision statement emphasizes key principles such as preservation, recreation, infrastructure, housing, and overall quality of life.

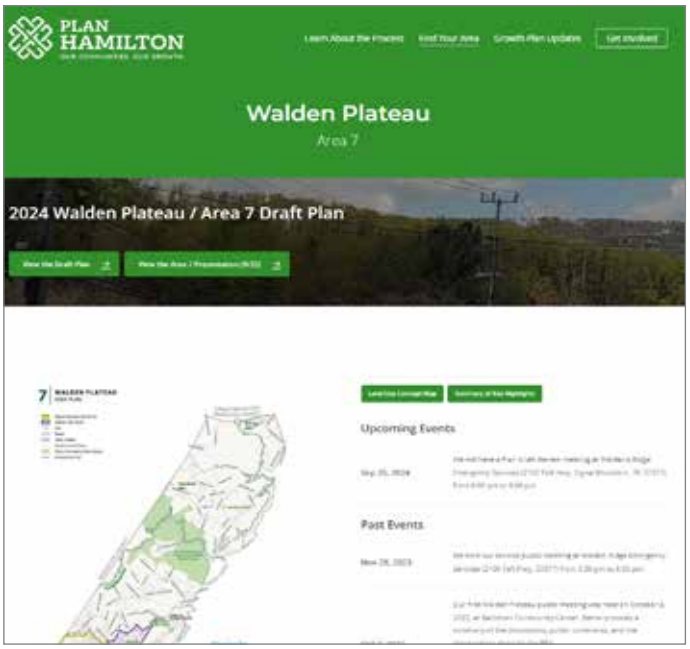
Public Meeting
Source: RPA

3.2 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community feedback is crucial in creating an Area Plan because it ensures that the voices of those who live, work, and play there are heard and valued. The residents have an intimate understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within their community, providing insights that outside experts might overlook. Engaging the community fosters a sense of ownership and collaboration, making the planning process more inclusive and transparent. By incorporating diverse perspectives, we can create a more comprehensive and effective plan that reflects the true needs and aspirations of the people it serves.

Public input is vital to the success of any planning process and in the Area Planning process for Hamilton County. Understanding the perspectives of those who live and work in a community every day provides invaluable insights to experts developing concepts and recommendations. Several opportunities were offered for the public to share their thoughts and feedback in various formats with the goal of developing a shared vision. This section outlines the engagement efforts of each event

Plan Hamilton Landing Page
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/



Area 7 Website
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/walden-plateau/

1600
Approximate # of people participatedng person at various meetings.

505
people participated in the online survey.

35
Community, online, commission meetings, etc.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The following outlines the public meetings held to provide a platform for the community to express concerns, share priorities, and offer feedback on the proposed strategies within the Area Plan. Through an analysis of the themes and perspectives that emerged, this section highlights the key issues raised by participants. Input from these meetings plays a crucial role in shaping the recommendations, ensuring the Area Plan aligns with the community's needs and values.

Kick-Off

In October 2023, a kick-off meeting took place at the Bachman Community Center. The goal of the first meeting was to introduce to the purpose of Area planning as well as the process as a whole and gather initial feedback from the community. A summary of the input received at the kick-off meeting is included in Appendix D.

Public Meeting #2

In November 2023, the second public meeting was held at Walden Ride Emergency Services. The goal of this meeting was to not only update the community on the process but to understand the community vision so that was the forefront of the Area planning process before the documents were created.

Public Opinion Survey

In addition to in-person engagement, we conducted a comprehensive public opinion survey from August 2023 through October 2023. This survey covered a wide range of topics, including recent and current development, future development, environmental issues, and mobility. The valuable insights gained from the survey are included in Appendix C.

Online Informational Meetings

Two countywide informational meetings were held online by the RPA in January of 2024 to discuss 4 topics with the public including: Traffic & Transportation, Commercial Centers & Corridors, Housing, and Parks & Greenways.

Draft Plan Meeting

In September 2024, a draft Area Plan meeting was held at Walden Ridge Emergency Services. The goal of this meeting was to present the 75% draft version of the Area 7 plan to the community and for the RPA to provide an update of the overall process, how the plan addresses community concerns, and how this plan will guide growth moving forward.

Area 7 Plan Draft Meeting
Source: RPA

Table 5: Community Outreach Timeline for Plan Hamilton

OUTREACH TECHNIQUE	DATE	LOCATION	AREA REACHED
Survey (Online)	08/25 - 10-07/2023	Online	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
1st Round Public Meetings	10/03/2023	Bachman Community Center	7
	09/07/2023	Chester Frost Park Pavilion	8
	08/24/2023	Ooltewah High School	9
	08/29/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	08/21/2023	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
2nd Round Public Meetings	11/28/2023	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	12/05/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	8
	11/16/2023	Ooltewah High School	9 & 12
	09/14/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
	12/05/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
Online Informational Meeting 1	01/18/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Online Informational Meeting 2	01/25/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Community Meetings	04/19/2023	Collegedale City Hall	12
	06/14/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/15/2023	Veteran's Building, Sequoyah Road	8
	08/16/2023	Lakesite City Hall	8
	09/21/2023	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	9/30/2023	Soddy Lake Park (Booth)	13
	11/09-11/11/2023	Hamilton County Fair	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	1/23/2024	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
	05/16/2024	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	06/20/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/25/2024	The Commons	12
	08/01/2024	Century Club Banquet Hall	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	10/24/2024	Century Club	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Draft Plan Review Meeting	09/19/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	09/25/2024	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	09/26/2024	Hwy 58 Volunteer Fire Department	9
	10/01/2024	Sale Creek Middle/High School	13
	10/16/2024	Clear Creek Church of Christ	8
Public Hearings	3/28/2023	County Courthouse	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	03/06/2023	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	12/09/2024	Planning Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	----	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Mass Emails & Social Media	*Additional outreach was conducted through regular email announcements and Facebook updates as well as media releases to local news outlets. The mailing list on average numbered over 2,000 contacts who had registered via the website or at meetings*		

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Commercial uses and services most needed:

1. Food & Beverage
2. Grocery
3. Leisure / Entertainment

47%

Experience mild congestion during peak rush hours

The top 3 infrastructure investments needed:

1. Roads
2. Parks, Greenways & Open Space
3. Schools

Civic uses and services most needed:

1. Trails, Greenways & Sidewalks
2. Parks & Open Space
3. Emergency Services

Type of Commercial Development the community would support:

72% Neighborhood Commercial

51% Mixed-Use Commercial

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

"Use existing commercial space before building new"

"Connect to North Chickamauga Creek and Cumberland Trail"

"More Conservation easements"

"Architectural design and setbacks, limit visual impact on ridgeways (escarpment)"

"Consider traffic issues created by new development"

"Single-Family development"

3.3 AREA PLAN GOALS

These seven general Area Plan goals apply to all five unincorporated Areas and create a blueprint for balanced and sustainable growth in Hamilton County, enhancing its unique character and natural beauty. These goals are based on the four Community Themes established in Chapter 2 including Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities.

By focusing on strategic growth management, we aim to harmonize new development with existing community values and landscapes, fostering economic vitality while preserving the charm of our neighborhoods. Our commitment to conserving natural resources ensures they are protected and enhanced for future generations, promoting sustainable practices. Providing diverse and affordable housing options is essential for an inclusive and thriving community. Ensuring housing meets the needs of all residents supports a diverse population and fosters socioeconomic stability.

By addressing these interconnected goals, Hamilton County is committed to creating a resilient, vibrant, and sustainable future that enhances the quality of life for all residents. Each goal is paired with specific policy recommendations and strategies to ensure successful implementation and long-term benefits for our community.

3.4 VISION STATEMENT

As we look toward the future of the unincorporated Areas of Hamilton County, we aim to craft a vision statement that captures our shared aspirations and values. This statement isn't just a list of goals; it's a reflection of our dedication to honoring our rich heritage while embracing sustainable growth. We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents through thoughtful development, preserving our natural resources, and fostering economic opportunities. By engaging in collaborative and transparent planning, we will build resilient, connected, and thriving neighborhoods where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations. This vision statement will serve as our guide, illuminating the path toward a vibrant and inclusive future for Hamilton County's unincorporated Areas.

To create vibrant and SUSTAINABLE communities that honor our heritage while embracing growth. We aim to ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE by promoting THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT, preserving NATURAL RESOURCES, and fostering ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES. Through collaborative and transparent planning, we will build RESILIENT, CONNECTED, and THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations.

CHAPTER 4
PLANS, POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW
4.2 PLACE TYPES
4.3 POLICIES

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW

A wide range of resources are used to determine the most suitable land uses within Hamilton County. While standard practices such as zoning often guide these decisions, it's crucial to recognize that the rich history of our neighborhoods and the specific desires and needs of the community extend beyond these conventional frameworks.

This chapter outlines the three key steps in the planning process used as part of the Comprehensive Planning effort. The primary aim of these steps is to prioritize community character, ensuring that each area's unique identity and needs are at the forefront of decision-making. While these steps prioritize the preservation of each area's identity, it's important to note that they operate alongside public input and community programming integrated throughout the process. The process begins with a thorough assessment of each area's unique characteristics and needs. By using planning models to understand the impacts of factors such as population and job growth on land use, the RPA developed Place Types that address the specific conditions of each of the unincorporated areas within Hamilton County. These Place Types serve as a foundation for developing customized conditions and recommendations. The final step involves formulating specific Policies, which provide best practices for implementing the earlier planning stages.

This planning approach is multi-layered, incorporating best management practices tailored to the needs of each individual Area. This method ensures that land use decisions are not only guided by standard practices but also by a deep understanding of local context, resulting in a planning process that is responsive to the diverse needs of Hamilton County's communities.

#1

PLANNING MODELS

The RPA and their consultants have developed Countywide Growth Capacity Modeling to show current trends. This influenced the Centers and Corridors approach to planning which is graphically displayed in the Conceptual Land Use Map. These maps identify Centers, Corridors, and general land use determinations in advance of Place Type mapping that were informed by community feedback, existing policy, existing code, proposed policy and Place Types, as well as general community character.

#2

PLACE TYPES

The RPA has created a palette of 23 Place Types to describe the various uses, forms, and character that development can take throughout the County. and its jurisdictions. The section identifies how they are used and which ones exist in Area 7. The RPA's Place Types Matrix addresses a range of contexts from most urban to most rural based on the transect model. Each Place Type policy includes a general description, real-world examples, recommended land uses, guidance on intensity and form, mobility, and infrastructure.

#3

POLICIES

The policy recommendations are inspired from the 4 Community Themes which created the 7 Goals for Unincorporated Area Plans. Each Area Plan will have customized Policy Recommendations based on the community's character, needs, land use, zoning, Place Types, planning models,etc. The policy recommendations are intended to be a guide for implementation at the regulatory level and create a standard by which this document is regulated.

CENTERS AND CORRIDOR APPROACH

The Centers and Corridors Approach is a land development strategy that the RPA has developed to address growth and redevelopment throughout Chattanooga and Hamilton County and which will influence this plan's recommendations. It has three essential concepts:

- Walkable, clustered Centers where retail uses are concentrated.
- Corridors comprised of a mix of uses when in suburban areas or with deep setbacks to preserve rural character.
- Medium and higher density housing near Centers and Corridors to support their economic vitality and local transit viability, where feasible.

This approach addresses plan's Goals and community's preferences:

1. Complete Communities

A mix of housing types in close proximity to centers and corridors gives residents convenient access to daily needs, employment, recreation, and transportation options.

2. Connected Communities

Connected communities enable walking, biking, and transit options, all of which depend on a mix of uses in close proximity. Concentrating businesses in Centers and at key locations along transit Corridors makes these alternate transportation modes more feasible, helping to reduce congestion.

3. Healthy Communities

Communities, where active transportation options and public greenways and parks are available, tend to be healthier: Proximity to these amenities allows people to recreate and get around by providing the built environment to do so.

4. Safe Communities

The Centers and Corridors Approach promotes more eyes on the street, by locating buildings up to the sidewalk, animating the street edge with doors and windows, and more frequent pedestrian activity. Corridors with sidewalks, street trees, and bike lanes promote safe and efficient movement for all users of the street, including motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

5. Unique and Attractive Communities

Place Types emphasize form and character which helps preserve and foster distinctive and memorable places. Due to changes in commercial corridors throughout the County having vacancies, new opportunities are presented for multi-family housing providing redevelopment opportunities for more compact site planning, smaller tenant spaces suited to local businesses, and integrated attached single-family and multi-family. This can increase profits for businesses, reduce traffic and congestion related impacts, and help to preserve the character of existing single-family neighborhoods consistent with input from local residents.

6. Economically Vibrant Communities

Given finite government resources, the Centers and Corridors approach helps prioritize where City resources are invested. Walkable, compact Centers have significant economic impacts for the County Centers require a certain number of households within a given proximity (depending on their size) in order to sustain businesses. Businesses also tend to be more successful in Centers where retail, services, and housing are all clustered in a compact, walkable environment. Also, compact development yields more tax revenue per acre than dispersed development, thus contributing to the overall wealth and economic vitality of the area.

4.1.2 CONCEPTUAL LAND USE MAP

The Conceptual Land Use map is intended to identify the high-level areas for initial recommendations to inform the place type mapping. The Conceptual Land Use Map is illustrative, whereas the Place Types Map defines development patterns and sets policies for future growth. These Concept maps were created early in the process to identify potential major Centers and Corridors, Resort/Recreation, Special Districts and Residential. The purpose of these maps is to provide guidance to residents, development interests, utility providers, planners, and County leadership on what areas should be primarily preserved in their current form with incremental growth and where new growth should be planned for to support economic opportunity and a balance of services across the County. The conceptual land use maps also identify areas with challenging topographic or hydrologic constraints, existing agricultural use, locations of regional facilities, and recreational assets. While parcel size and density was considered this map is generalized to highlight projected trends and opportunities and to provide guidance on where public and private sector investments are most warranted.

Centers & Corridors

Centers and Corridors are planned considering a variety of factors including utility infrastructure capacity, transportation factors, proximity to schools and emergency services, environmental conditions, recreational access, housing opportunities, and access to commercial services. Centers provide the opportunity to integrate commercial services into our communities in a predictable manner with accompanying infrastructure investments and site considerations.

Center Example
Source: Continuum

Corridor designations have been applied in rural areas to indicate opportunities to preserve rural landscape, views, and development patterns, consolidate points of access to primary roadways, limit congestion, and to support rural lifestyles. In suburban settings, corridors are utilized to demonstrate primary transportation corridors that will experience continued development pressure and warrant access management improvements.

Rural Corridor
Source: RPA

Residential

Residential Place Types are the places (outside of centers and corridors) that make up the places we call home. They can be urban or rural, vertical and dense, or secluded retreats and are the building blocks of most traditional neighborhoods and modern suburbs.

Residential Cont.

When a community wants to incorporate space for a school, a corner restaurant or coffee shop, a convenience store, an accountant's office or even a care facility for elderly family members; the residential Place Types may not accommodate these uses. This is the reason for the variety of scale and intensity of Centers which may be used to complement residential areas to provide for daily needs services and a place mixed residential units. This approach protects single-family residential areas and provides for a more complete community.

Residential Example
Source: Marco Homes

Resort/Recreation

Resort Recreation Centers are introduced in this plan as a specialty district Place Type. Hamilton County has a wealth of recreational assets from highly programmed parks, to blended park-preserves such as Enterprise South Nature Park, to traditional passive use natural areas and preserves. These special use areas have all found a place in the hearts of recreation enthusiasts as varied as league sports athletes, paddlers, fitness walkers, bird watchers, runners, cyclists, nature photographers, and neighborhood residents looking for a safe quiet walk. Not as easily identified is the economic potential of these assets and the user groups who love them. Working from community and stakeholder input, locations have been identified where commerce can be sustainably integrated with recreation to provide jobs, tax base, and income while enhancing and preserving our community recreational resources.

Resort Recreation Example
Source: City of Rockwood, TN

Specialty Districts

Specialty Districts are used to designate the places that form the fabric of our community. They may not be where we live or shop but they house many of the other essential resources we require to thrive in modern society. These include the campuses where our children attend school, the land and facilities that produce our food, power our utility grids, clean our water, house our medical and emergency response facilities, build our communities, and manufacture the products we utilize every day. In many cases, this means they are also our places of employment.

Specialty District Example
Source: Volkswagen

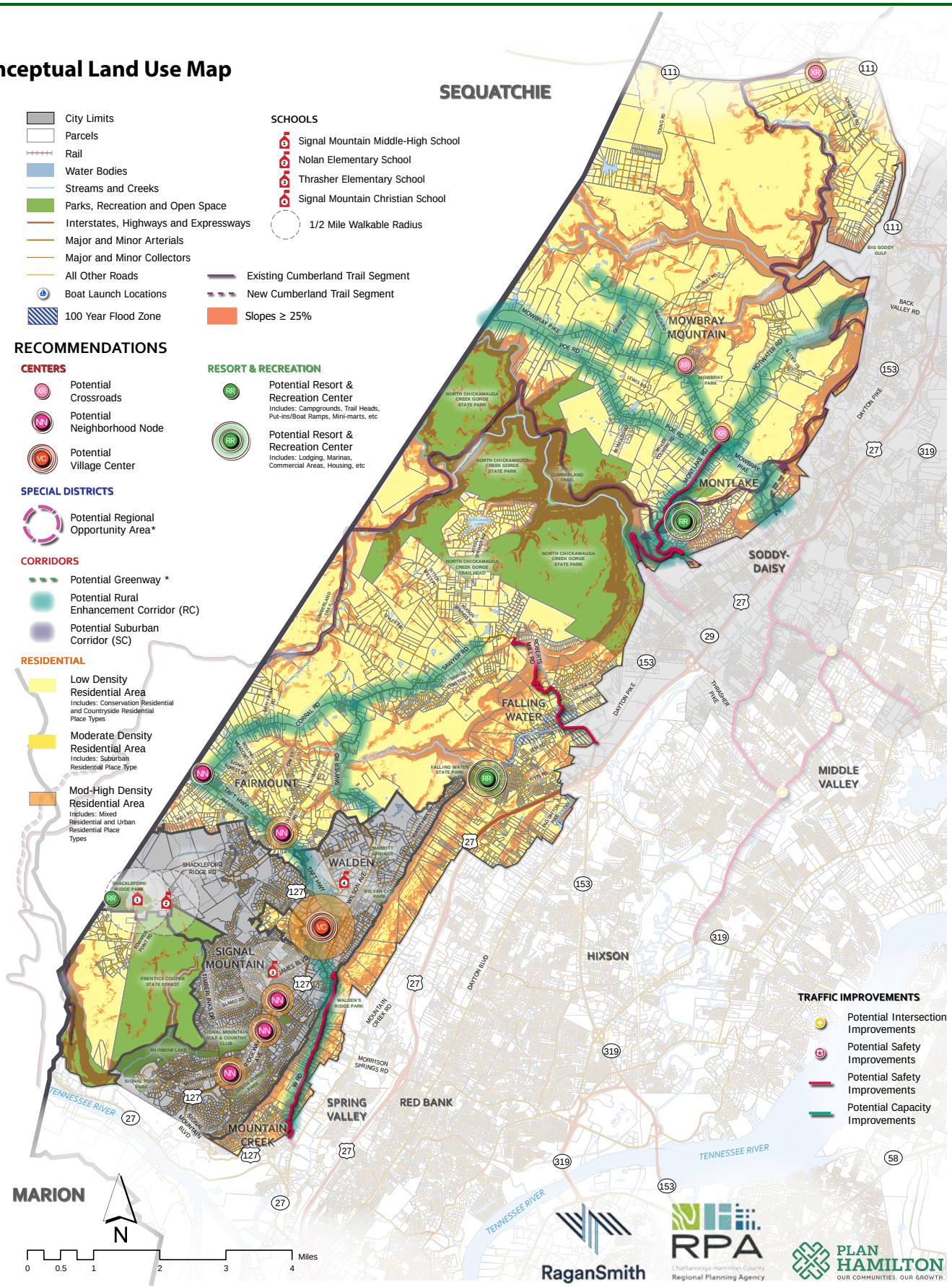


Figure 4.1: Conceptual Land Use Map

4.1.3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The growth opportunities for Area 7 should be tempered by constraints related to natural features, terrain, and infrastructure. In general, the growth should be primarily rural residential in nature and consistent with the base zoned density. It should provide buffers from primary roads with open space around natural features and to provide neighborhood walking paths and recreation. Service and Commercial development to serve adjacent neighborhoods should be located in Centers and Corridors:

Recreation and Resort Centers:

The opportunity for Recreation and Resort Centers could occur at a variety of scales from small campgrounds with recreational amenities to small lodges or cabin developments with restaurants, outfitters, and services for destination visitors. The potential for recreation-based development is supported by the wealth of high value natural assets and parks in Area 7 including Prentice Cooper State Park, the Rainbow Lake trail complex, Signal Point, Shackleford Ridge Park, Mabbit Springs, Falling Water State Park, North Chickamauga Gorge State Park, and the potential for the Cumberland Trail to link these assets as a cohesive system. Additionally, these centers are a form of development that could generate a new tax base and financial returns for landowners with lower cumulative impacts on roads, schools, utilities, and environmental assets than suburban residential growth.

Corridors:

Rural Corridors are identified through much of Area 7 and should be utilized to establish criteria for rural development that protects the public right of way, maintains good traffic flows, and preserves the rural character of these Areas. Rural Corridor criteria should create reasonable setbacks for new development and minimize access points to primary roads by promoting internal connections between parcels and carefully planning and aligning development access points.

Centers:

New centers should be of a scale to primarily serve existing local residents and co-located with existing commercial or community services. Small clusters of commercial use should feature connections and be required to provide safe pedestrian crossings where they include development on both sides of a road. A mix housing at higher densities than the surrounding Areas may be appropriate in centers and crossroads and should be include internal walking paths with connections to adjacent commercial uses.

Development Examples
Source: RPA and rendering by Dover Kohl

» The previously completed draft plan for the southern portion of Area 7 near Signal Mountain / Town of Walden provided for a potential new Town Center near the Taft Highway Ace Hardware and the intersection of Taft Highway and Fairmount Pike. Smaller Crossroads Centers were identified on Taft Highway near the Signal Plaza development (Pruett's Market) and in the vicinity of Althaus Park and Signal Mountain Town Hall. This plan makes no changes to those previously identified locations.

» Potential Crossroads or Neighborhood Nodes for limited convenience retail, commercial or community services, and housing variety are identified near the intersections of Corral and Hollister Roads with Taft Highway (SR127).

» A potential small Resort Recreation Center is proposed off Mowbray Pike. This center could provide lodging, services, trailhead capacity, and complementary recreational programming to the newly designated state park at North Chickamauga Gorge, additional state owned recreation land around the Cumberland Trail, and a growing segment of climbing, paddling, and outdoor recreation-centered businesses in the vicinity. Crossroads Centers are proposed along Mowbray Pike / Montlake Road with the Mountain General Store as an existing anchor and another further up the mountain near the intersections with Lewis Road and Welch Road centered around Grant's Station and C-Store. A Crossroads at SR 111 and Jones Gap Road anchored by the Eagle Travel Center could expand to a Neighborhood Node in the future to provide housing options and additional services to the north end of Area 7 and the Area 13 neighborhoods along Back Valley Road. Neighborhood commercial services, landscaping, and outdoor products, and sale of agricultural products would all be appropriate. The market for a larger center at this location may take many years to develop.

4.2 PLACE TYPES

Place Types are carefully designated to guide future development and align with the community's vision and adopted plans. These designations indicate whether an area is slated for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with minimal alterations. Key considerations include existing zoning, proximity to centers, schools, and parks, as well as the presence of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services. Once Area Plans are adopted, these Place Type designations become essential tools for the Regional Planning Agency (RPA) in making informed zoning decisions. Recommendations for zoning changes are made based on how well the proposed zone aligns with the intended characteristics of the Place Type.

Place Types illustrate a desired character to guide development across a range of community types, from the most urban to suburban, to the most rural places. This distinction is prominently noted in the names of most Place Types, such as Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, and Countryside Residential. Some key elements that contribute to Hamilton County's sense of place include important vistas, the river and its setting within the forested ridges, our diversity of trees, and our historic buildings. This sense of place can occur at multiple levels - across an entire city, within individual neighborhoods, or in a specific block. The transect graphic below identifies seven general levels of the natural environment to the built environment. The Place Types were partially based on this transect model to ensure that all aspects of Hamilton County's character were considered.

To promote good placemaking, the RPA uses Place Types to influence the form and character of development. This is done alongside the Centers and Corridors approach, as described in Chapter 4.1, to guide different types of development to the most suitable locations. This is based on factors such as Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Mobility and Transportation, and Community Facilities.

By designating Place Types, we are not just planning for the present but also safeguarding the unique essence of Hamilton County for future generations. Whether it's the urban vibrancy, suburban charm, or rural tranquility, each Place Type plays a crucial role in maintaining the region's distinct identity and ensuring thoughtful, cohesive development.

Figure 4.2: Transect Zones from Natural (left) to Special District (right).
Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company

4.2.1 HOW ARE THEY USED?

Place Types reflect whether the community vision and adopted plan identifies an area for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with little change. Other factors, such as the surrounding or existing zoning, proximity to Centers, schools or parks, the location of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services are considered. Once Area Plans are adopted, the Place Type designations within those Plans are used by the RPA to inform zoning decisions. A recommendation for a zoning change is based on whether the requested zone will result in the Place Type characteristics described in this chapter. The

following Place Types represent the full palette of Place Types available throughout the County but not all Place Types are used in all areas.

The Area Plan recommendation and Place Types are not intended to limit development during the subdivision platting process for properties zoned R-1 Residential District or other residential zoning district or having a Special Exceptions Permit for a Planned Unit Development prior to plan adoption. Existing zoning density and conditions should not be overridden by Plan Hamilton for platting purposes in residential or commercial zones, but all setback and buffering language should apply to new preliminary plats (those not already accepted by RPA at the time of plan adoption). The subdivision of such land shall follow the Hamilton County Subdivision Regulations standard procedures.

Place Types layout out a vision for future land uses and they are intended to guide development choices, they are not zones. Once a plan and its associated Place Type map is adopted, then a request to study new zoning designations and assess what tools are needed to achieve the adopted vision may occur. A zoning study typically follows within 6 months to a year of plan adoption depending on the level of change desired or other influences.

- Place Types are not zoning.
- Place Types are recommended future development patterns.
- Place Types are policy.
- Place Types are used to inform zoning decisions.
- Zoning is a regulation.
- One or more zoning districts may be used to develop a Place Type.

Predominant Uses, Limited Uses, and Density

Place Types intentionally promote a mix of uses as a means of providing residents with more housing choices and more access to daily needs and jobs. Each Place Type listed in this subchapter provides examples of potential uses, along with other elements that generally define its character and are divided into:

1. **Predominant Uses** – The most prevalent, most frequently
2. **Limited Uses** – Less common, but can still be compatible with the predominant use if limited to certain locations, limited in size, buffered from adjacent uses, etc.

> *"Place Types do not necessarily describe what exists today, but rather the desired vision of what a place may become."*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA)*

While limited uses are less prevalent in a Place Type, they can provide additional services and housing options, while maintaining compatibility with the predominant use. However, a proliferation of limited uses will change the character of an area, and the original intent of the Place Type can be lost. Often, rezoning requests are for these limited uses, and where Limited Uses are listed additional guidance has been provided regarding the appropriateness of integrating the use into the Place Type.

Each of the following Place Types includes:

- A two or three letter abbreviation, and the color, used to identify each on the Place Types map.
- A general description of the typical, or ideal, situation.
- A list of characteristics that are generally needed to support the intended development form of the Place Type.
- Examples of the predominant uses.
- Examples of the limited uses.
- Illustrative photos, presented as examples only.

4.2.2 CATEGORIES & PLACE TYPES IN AREA 7

There are 23 Place Types in total as provided and amended from time to time by the RPA on their website here. The four categories with listing of Place Types are below. On the pages following in this section are the individual Place Types that appear in Walden Plateau as shown on the Place Type Map (Figure 4.6).

RESIDENTIAL

- *Countryside Residential (CR)*
- *Suburban Residential (SR)*
- *Urban Residential (UR)*
- *Mixed Residential (MR)*

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

- *Preserve (PR)*
- *Agricultural (AG)*
- *Resort & Recreation (RR)*
- *Industrial (IN)*
- *Maker District (MD)*
- *Campus (CA)*
- *Regional Facility (RF)*

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

- *Crossroads (XR)*
- *Neighborhood Node (NN)*
- *Neighborhood Center (NC)*
- *Village Center (VC)*
- *Town Center (TC)*
- *Downtown Core (DC)*
- *Suburban Corridor (SC)*
- *Mixed-use Corridor (MC)*
- *Transit Corridor (TRC)*

OVERLAYS

- *Natural Resources (NR)*
- *Rural Corridor (RC)*

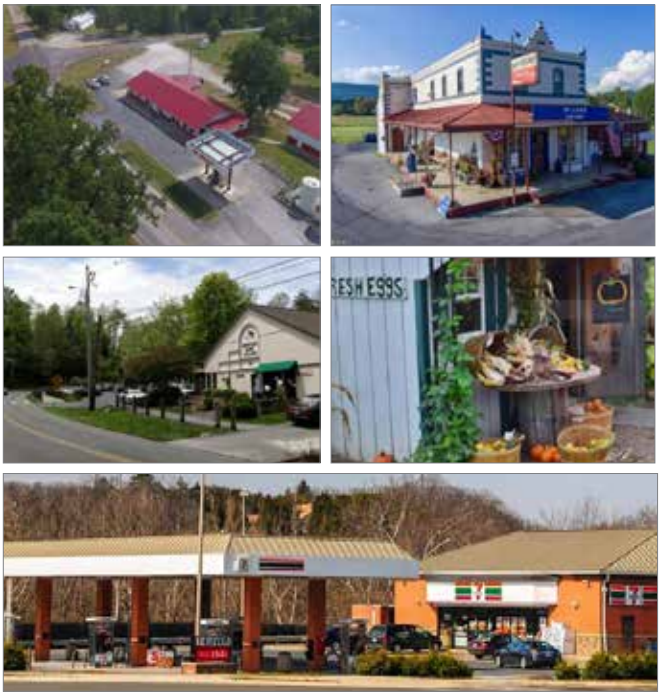
Table 6: Density

PLACE TYPE	MAXIMUM DENSITY	GENERAL INTENSITY
CR Countryside Residential	*See Place Type*	Low Density
SR Suburban Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Low to Medium Density
SR Suburban Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Medium Density
MD Maker District	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
NN Neighborhood Node	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
NC Neighborhood Center	Maximum of 8 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
UR Urban Residential	Maximum of 15 dwelling units/acre	High Density
SC Suburban Corridor	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
VC Village Center	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	High Density
RR Resort & Recreation	N/A	Varies if Type A or B *See Place Type Description*

CENTERS

XR Crossroads

Generally four acres or less, Crossroads are smaller than Village Centers or Town Centers and are most often located in rural Areas. They may serve as gateways to adjacent neighborhoods. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection of two arterial or collector streets, or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses meets some of the daily needs of the immediate residents with stores, restaurants and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Over time when the infrastructure needed to support more intense development is in place, Crossroads may grow into the larger Village Center.



Uses

Retail, restaurants, garden centers, personal services, offices, gas stations, small markets, auto repair, landscape businesses, and small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops).

NN Neighborhood Node

Located in urban or suburban Areas, and generally a total of only two acres or less, Neighborhood Nodes are much smaller than Village or Town Centers. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses provides goods and services, such as laundromats, restaurants, small grocers, and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses, to the immediate surrounding community. Residential uses over retail or office are common.

Uses

Small retail and restaurants, convenience stores, personal services, offices, farmers' markets, small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops), live/work, short-term vacation rental, and two, three and four-unit dwellings

When a Neighborhood Node is located along a Mixed-use Corridor or Transit Corridor, the building size in the Neighborhood Node should be consistent with its surrounding corridor type (typically larger than described above), but the uses at that location should include ground-floor commercial or services.

NC Neighborhood Center

Usually found in suburban locations, Neighborhood Centers are shopping centers of 5–15 acres that provide goods and services primarily to the surrounding neighborhoods. They are not part of a continuous "strip" of commercial uses along a corridor, but rather are limited to a single quadrant of an intersection and surrounded by residential development. They usually have large, shared parking lots with a few outparcel buildings that face the street. Some include smaller commercial properties on the other corners of the intersection. Neighborhood Centers often have one large building that houses multiple stores, deeper building setbacks, an emphasis on vehicle access, and limited civic services. Neighborhood Centers may be redeveloped as Village or Town Centers with a more walkable and urban form, over time.

Uses

Grocery stores, retail and restaurants, offices, personal services, small workshop/industries (such as studios, work spaces, bakeries, breweries, woodworking shops or other low impact production) townhomes and minor auto service/repair

VC Village Center

Larger than Neighborhood Nodes, but smaller than Town Centers, the Village Center (generally 2–10 acres) is a pedestrian-oriented cluster of medium footprint buildings, with a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Multi-story buildings with residential uses over retail or offices are common. Due to their intensity, Village Centers are typically located along transit routes, but primarily serve local residents. Walking, biking and transit are prioritized over auto use in Village Centers, with shared parking lots providing a park-once environment. Pedestrian entrances front directly onto the sidewalks, with window displays at the ground floor to provide interest for pedestrians. Village Centers are often organized around a central public square or park. Village Centers may, over time, grow into Town Centers.

Uses

Civic institutions, public square or park, retail, restaurants, offices, personal services, lodging, live/work, small industries/workshops (such as studios, bakeries, breweries, or woodworking, or other low impact production), townhomes, short-term vacation rentals and two, three and four-unit dwellings.

CORRIDORS

SC

Suburban Corridor

Suburban Corridors have a linear configuration because they are located along major commercial streets, however they differ from Mixed-use and Transit Corridors in that the development along them tends to be more spread out. They are not typically served by frequent transit. Businesses along Suburban Corridors serve a large geographic Area and are primarily accessed by car. Buildings tend to be single-story and house a single use with deep setbacks from the street. Some developments have a horizontal mix of uses within a larger site. The types of businesses found along Suburban Corridors range from stand-alone restaurants and stores, to "strip" shopping centers, to regional malls, medical centers, multi-story office buildings, and hotels. Multi-unit residential is also a growing use along suburban corridors, either as new construction or as retrofits of older retail centers or hotels.

Predominant Uses

Retail, multi-unit housing, offices, restaurants, personal services, medical facilities, lodging, small workshops and artist studios, recreation and entertainment (such as bowling, mini golf, conference centers, theaters) and assisted living facilities.

Limited Uses

Auto-oriented services when located along a major corridor or at the corner of a major intersection.

RESIDENTIAL

CR

Countryside Residential

Countryside Residential Place Types have a very rural character and consist primarily of single-family homes on large lots. Countryside Residential may include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes, as well as accessory buildings, such as barns and greenhouses. This Place Type also includes the County's agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses ranging from roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores to larger production facilities.

Residences and development centered around farming are typically on septic systems. Residences are generally further from key destinations than in other residential Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs. Fixed-route transit is not feasible, and sidewalks are not likely, due to the low density of these Areas.

Countryside Residential maximum densities are as follows:

- 1.5 dwelling units per acre (development on septic),
- 3 dwelling units per acre (developed on sewer), and
- 2.75 dwelling units per acre (developed on decentralized sewer systems or where new approved technology allows*)

** When new information or technological improvements to the decentralized systems becomes available, staff will present information to the County Commission for direction.*

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached, farming activities, accessory buildings (barns, greenhouses, etc.), manufactured homes

Limited Uses

Event facilities, golf courses, and campgrounds where appropriate infrastructure exists and development impacts such as noise, traffic, and activity are directed away from existing residential uses.

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- Buffer and setback from right-of-way:
  - Require a 30' wide planted landscape buffer from existing ROW.
  - For exterior street facing garages, garage doors must be set back 20' from the right-of-way.
- Perimeter buffer:
  - Plant 2 inch caliper trees around entire perimeter of development; minimum of 30' on center. If existing vegetation is equivalent to or greater along the perimeter, the existing vegetation would count towards this requirement.
  - Behind said buffer- require a 25' rear setback and a 10' side setback if the side of the house is adjacent to the buffer.
- Floodplains
  - Floodplains may be filled up to three fifths the distance of the length of the floodplain on the property. For instance if a floodplain is 100' in length from a water body – one can fill up to 60 feet in length of that floodplain length.
- Steep Slopes
  - Adopt a steep slope vegetation policy and planting requirements *(Reference: City of Chattanooga Code Sec. 31-324.4)*

SR Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential Place Type has a predominantly low intensity, single-family detached, residential development pattern, especially within the same block. Some moderate density residential development, such as small lot houses or attached townhomes, may exist, but are located on a major street or near a transit route or school. When next to lower density residential development, this moderate intensity infill development maintains the existing rhythm and feel of the street. Factors that play into this rhythm and feel include lot width, setbacks, building massing, and height. Open spaces are typically private (back yards), but greenways may provide connectivity. Residences in this Place Type are generally further from key destinations than those in other Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs.

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units/acre, accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

Limited Uses

The following uses when located within a 1/4 mile of a public school or park or center where appropriate infrastructure exists: single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units an acre; townhomes (up to 4 massed units per building); and two, three, and four unit housing

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- *Require ADA compliant sidewalks in Suburban Residential Development Standards unless the average lot size is 1 acre or above, in all plans, to ensure pedestrian infrastructure in denser subdivisions.*

MR Mixed Residential

The Mixed Residential Place Type is intended to provide a wide range of housing options for residents at various stages of life, and walkable destinations in close proximity. Due to their intensity, Mixed Residential developments are located along major streets, or within walking distance (1/4-mile) of a transit route. The Mixed Residential Place Type includes moderate to higher intensity housing. Taller multi-family buildings are located along streets, with shorter buildings on local streets to provide a transition to any less intense residential uses.

Predominant Uses

Two, three and four unit residences, multi-family residential with 5–12 units per building, cottage courts, townhomes, manufactured home parks, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Limited Uses

Multi-family of over 12 units per buildings should directed towards major streets/corridor or adjacent to a center.

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

PR Preserve

Preserves are large expanses of forest, floodplains and other natural resources, as well as public parks and recreation Areas that have been set aside as places where general development is not allowed. They may also include privately-owned land that is permanently protected by conservation easements and remains in a largely undeveloped state. Some may be used for passive recreation, while others are largely off limits to human use due to sensitive natural resources or their remote location. Development within the Preserve is minimized, and is limited to cultural, educational or recreational uses.

Uses

Undisturbed open space, visitors' centers, nature centers, public parks, active and passive recreation, trails, cemeteries, and accessory structures such as concessions, storage and parking.

RR Resort and Recreation

The Resort and Recreation Place Type supports outdoor activities such as camping, boating, golfing, bouldering, mountain biking, as well as corporate nature retreats, and eco-tourism activities. These places are focused on enjoying nature, exceptional views, or historic landmarks. However, unlike Preserves, which are primarily government-owned properties with very limited development, such as a state or County park, the Resort and Recreation Place Type can include multiple private businesses with more development, such as marinas, hotels, restaurants and even housing. Properties may range in size from a 20-acre campground to 100+ acre resorts with a marina, lodge, restaurant, and individual house lots.

Resort Type A accommodates a more intense outdoor recreation and park experience and could include hotels, conferences centers, large campgrounds/RV parks and related uses or even a full resort. Oftentimes these are located in or adjacent to state or county parks or may develop from a golf course or event facility such as a fairground or agritourism site. The development size and location should be designed so that the impact of this larger-scale format lessens potential negative aspects.

Resort Type B accommodates smaller-scale or less intense recreational activities such as golf courses, ballfields, cultural facilities, marinas, and related accessory use such as parking areas, small campgrounds or cabins, and related retail goods such as camp stores, farm stands, and equipment rental (kayaks/canoes, bicycles, etc.)

Predominant Uses

Campgrounds/RV parks, hotels, cabins, restaurants, marinas, camp stores, golf courses, agriculture-related businesses (e.g. boarding stables, riding academies), farming activities

Limited Uses

Single-unit housing (detached and attached) and reception facilities as a secondary use integrated into a resort.

CA Campus

Campus Place Types are characterized by one major activity such as educational, office, industrial, medical, or religious. Campuses are typically based on a master plan that incorporates buildings, open spaces, streets, pedestrian networks, and parking in a unified manner. Campuses have clearly defined edges—often delineated with gateway structures and landscape—that distinguish them from adjacent Place Types. Residential buildings and small convenience services often support the predominant use. Campuses function as major employment and activity centers and are often served by public or private transit.

Uses

Institutions (such as academic, medical, religious or research facilities), offices, clubhouses/ meeting halls, athletic facilities, non-noxious/non-nuisance manufacturing and industrial, open space, multi-family residences (residence halls and dormitories), onsite retail and food services, and staff housing.

Existing schools, large medical and church campuses, government facilities, and corporate headquarters are identified as the Campus Place Type. However, as land use and property owners change over time, the Campus designation may no longer be applicable. In that case, the plan goals, surrounding Place Types, and context should all be considered in identifying future use/ reuse of the former Campus site.

IN Industrial

The Industrial Place Type supports a variety of manufacturing uses. Unlike the Maker District Place Type, the Industrial Place Type includes both non-noxious operations (no hazardous materials or pollution) and noxious industries (heavy industrial production). The latter are not located adjacent to residential Areas, but are not so far away as to be a commute burden. The size of lots (2+ acres) and buildings are often larger than those in the Maker District Place Type.

Uses

Light manufacturing and industrial facilities, including assembly facilities, offices, distribution, warehousing, wholesaling, retail specifically related to the primary use and self storage facilities.

Limited Uses

Heavy manufacturing should be located along major transportation infrastructure and directed away from existing development.

There are limited areas of industrial uses in the County today. Some smaller scale industrial areas may appropriately transition to Maker Districts supporting a combinations of contractors, skilled trades, repair specialists, artists and artisans, food production, and service centers.

MD

Maker District

Maker District Place Types are live-work districts where housing and workplaces are located in close proximity to each other, providing residents with convenient access to employment. They include a mix of light manufacturing, assembly, and contractor businesses, along with multi-family residential and commercial uses. Older smaller industrial structures that have been adapted for new purposes are frequently found here. Industrial facilities are non-noxious (no hazardous materials or pollution), and non-nuisance (no odors, excessive light, or heavy truck traffic). Due to these smaller buildings, short block lengths, and the mix of other uses, these Areas are generally walkable. Parks, plazas, and neighborhood-serving retail enhance the character and livability of the Area.

Uses

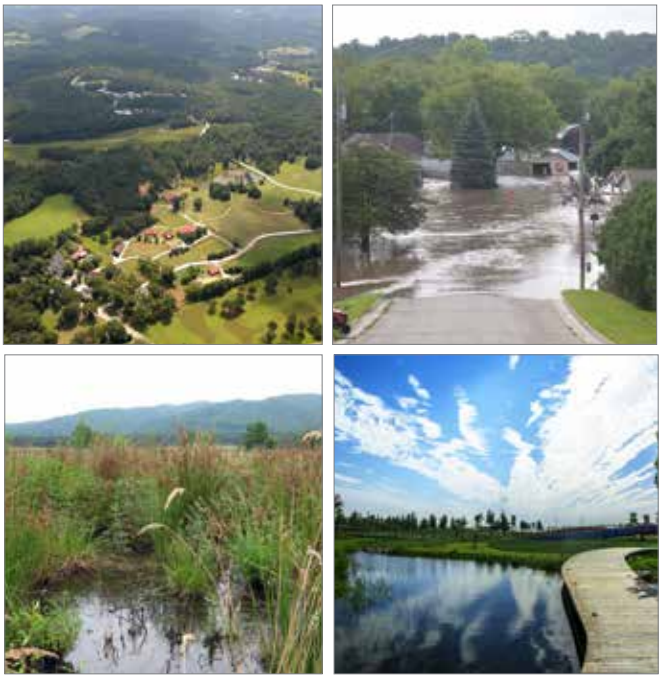
Non-noxious/non-nuisance light manufacturing, assembly, distribution, small workshop/industries (such as woodworking shops, bakeries, or other low impact production), studios, breweries, contractor's offices, live/work, multi-unit residential, retail, offices, restaurants, vehicle repair, gas stations, outdoor storage yard, and self storage facilities

OVERLAYS

NR

Natural Resources Overlay

The Natural Resources Overlay is not a Place Type in and of itself. It is an Overlay on top of the underlying Place Type that identifies Areas considered sensitive due to the presence of steep slopes, floodplains or wetlands. Sites within this overlay are not protected by law from development. The purpose, therefore, is to identify these sensitive Areas so that they are given consideration for protection, or incorporated as amenities within new developments. Some sites are already developed and the overlay designation does not mean development cannot expand in these Areas; it merely identifies the location of floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.



Predominant Uses

Uses are defined by the underlying Place Type.

RC Rural Corridor

Primarily located in rural parts of the County, and are characterized by lots of open fields and woodlands. Development along Rural Corridors is sparse with farms or single unit homes on large estate lots. A few scattered subdivisions with smaller lots may have entries along these corridors, but the homes are separated from the corridor by distance (50 - 100 feet), and by dense vegetated buffers, in order to preserve the rural character of the corridor. Rural Corridors do not have the more dense, connecting street networks. They are typically two-lane roads. Rural Corridors may however, also take the form of a major thoroughfare, such as a state designated scenic parkway, with mountainside or lakefront views. A few commercial uses, often located at a Crossroads intersection, or as a stand-alone business, may be found along Rural Corridors, but no long stretches of commercial businesses.

The purpose of the rural corridor overlay is primarily to address new subdivision development. A rural corridor setback for a subdivision for the purposes of the plan refers to a required distance that new development must maintain from a designated corridor, as detailed on the Place Type map. The intent of the setback is to protect the character and environmental integrity of the rural landscape. The setback does not apply to individual homes outside a major subdivision.

Development Standard

The following development standard will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- A 50-foot setback from right of way of existing roadway for any structure including water quality features;
- a 30-foot type A landscape buffer is required along the entire frontage;
- adequate right of way as determined by the County Engineer should also be required as a condition to be given to accommodate an additional lane if a rezoning case is requested along the Rural Corridor overlay.

4.2.3 PLACE TYPES MAP

See separate Place Type Map. Not included due to size.

4.2.4 CENTERS & CORRIDORS VISION

The Centers and Corridors Vignettes bring to life a vision for thoughtfully guided growth in key locations across our communities. By focusing on high-potential centers and strategically important corridors, these vignettes illustrate how balanced land use—combining residential, commercial, and recreational spaces—can shape places that are both dynamic and resilient. Each vignette reveals how carefully aligned planning can elevate connectivity, support walkable neighborhoods, and foster economic growth while preserving Hamilton County's distinctive character, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. Through these targeted narratives, we explore how well-designed centers and corridors not only strengthen community identity but also

The following depictions are intended to represent one idea of potential future development at these locations. Any future development or redevelopment at these locations would need to be initiated by the private property owner. Where there is a mismatch between a vignette and the Place Type map, the Place Type map reflects the official policy.

Figure 4.3: Vignette Recommendation, Crossroads at Hollister Road & US Highway 127/Taft Highway

enhance access to essential services, encourage diverse transportation options, and bolster the area's long-term sustainability. This vision aligns with the unique needs and values of Hamilton County residents, building a legacy of vibrant, and adaptable communities.

Figure 4.4: Vignette Recommendation, Recreation Center at Mowbray Pike & Hotwater Road

4.3 POLICIES

The goals and policy recommendations outlined in Area Plans represent a comprehensive framework designed to guide sustainable development and enhance community well-being. These initiatives are crafted to ensure that future growth respects and enhances the County's and Area 7 distinct community character while preserving its abundant natural resources.

Emphasizing the importance of balanced growth, the plans prioritize the development of accessible parks and recreation Areas that promote active lifestyles and environmental stewardship. Infrastructure improvements are a cornerstone, aimed at improving the connectivity of transportation networks, enhancing water and wastewater management systems, and integrating sustainable solutions. Additionally, the plans emphasize the need for diverse and affordable housing options to support a growing and inclusive population.

By aligning these goals with thoughtful policy recommendations, Hamilton County seeks to foster a resilient and cohesive community. This approach not only prepares the County for future challenges but also enhances its livability and ensures that development is carried out in a manner that respects and preserves its unique character and natural beauty.

The following section identifies the 7 goals which are consistent amongst all five unincorporated Areas. Following each goal is a policy recommendation to implement that goal.

> *"Comprehensive Plans offer a strategic approach to where and how we grow. They address areas for change and areas to preserve."*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA)*

4.3.1 GOAL 1 & POLICIES

GOAL 1
BALANCE GROWTH, ECONOMY & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Policy 1.7.1 Adopt the Walden's Ridge Place Types Map as the RPA's official land use policy and use it to inform municipal decisions on development proposals.

Policy 1.7.2 Develop Conservation Development standards to implement this option for large parcels zoned A1 and R1. Emphasize larger lots and setbacks at base density and clustering of smaller lots if density is increased. Adopt a separation distance of 100 ft. minimum between major streets

Policy 1.7.3 identified as Rural Corridors and lots within residential subdivisions with requirements to preserve mature tree canopy or plant an effective, natural buffer for new development.

Policy 1.7.4 Review the land use policy in the Walden's Ridge Area Plan every five years and adjust it as needed to reflect changes in community preference, market conditions, school capacity, infrastructure, or other factors that could affect the quality of life.

Policy 1.7.5 Setback and buffering requirements as detailed in Place Types should also apply to residential plats in agricultural zones.

Policy 1.7.6 Amend the A-1 Agricultural District to change to the Maximum Density to 1.5 dwelling unit per acre on traditional septic.

4.3.2 GOAL 2 & POLICIES

GOAL 2
PROTECT & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES

Policy 2.7.1 Review current standards for stormwater management, steep slopes, and tree preservation/replacement for potential updates to reflect best management practices.

Policy 2.7.2 Update stormwater management regulations and provide a manual of best management practices at community-wide, development, and lot scale.

Policy 2.7.3 Consider the upper limits of property slope for residential construction based on state of the practice in other similar communities. Consider the environmental and life-safety aspects of more hillside or steep slope development.

Policy 2.7.4 Adopt a tree preservation and replacement ordinance for wooded areas. Require specimen trees to be surveyed and protected during all construction phases. Consider a requirement to replace specimen trees that could not be located outside the footprint of critical infrastructure or were unintentionally damaged during construction.

Policy 2.7.5 Develop Conservation Subdivision Development criteria that incentivize this option for large parcels zoning for agricultural or residential.

Policy 2.7.6 Work with National, State, and local conservation organizations to develop a program for purchase and protection of environmentally sensitive lands, prime agricultural parcels, and recreational assets. Provide for public use and access where appropriate.

4.3.3 GOAL 3 & POLICIES

GOAL 3
PRESERVE & ENHANCE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Policy 3.7.1 Work with Federal, State, and local preservation organizations to initiate mechanism whereby land with high natural resource and recreation value can be purchased, preserved and managed for public benefit.

Policy 3.7.2 Work with TDEC, Hamilton County Parks, and others to fully develop the Cumberland Trail Route through Hamilton County. Work at the neighborhood scale to connect gaps between existing segment, identify and develop viable trailheads, create wayfinding signage, and establish programming /use guidelines for this asset.

Policy 3.7.3 Promote public-private partnerships and public sector collaboration to enhance facilities and management of natural resource / recreation assets including: North Chickamauga Creek Gorge SP, Falling Water Falls Natural Area, Prentice Cooper State Forest, the Cumberland Trail, Signal Point Park, Rainbow Falls preserve. Evaluate the potential for these resources to provide long term economic benefits, jobs, and tax base by allowing for resort and recreation-based development on adjacent lands, where appropriate.

4.3.4 GOAL 4 & POLICIES

GOAL 4
PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Policy 4.7.1 Evaluate the potential to require connectivity easements between projects under development and larger undeveloped parcels. Encourage developers to review RPA zoning and subdivision dashboards to identify opportunities to connect to future development.

Policy 4.7.2 Initiate a study for Highway 127, Robert's Mill Rd, and the W Rd to identify improvements for safety and emergency / natural disaster access strategies.

Policy 4.7.3 Consider joint development between Hamilton County, Signal Mountain and Walden of a Greenways & Trails Master Plan to identify desired multi-use pathway connectivity between existing trail systems, parks, schools, and other community assets. Trailhead parking, facilities, and signage should also be addressed. This can set the stage to develop funding, ROW acquisition, and potential participation from individual developers in strategic locations.

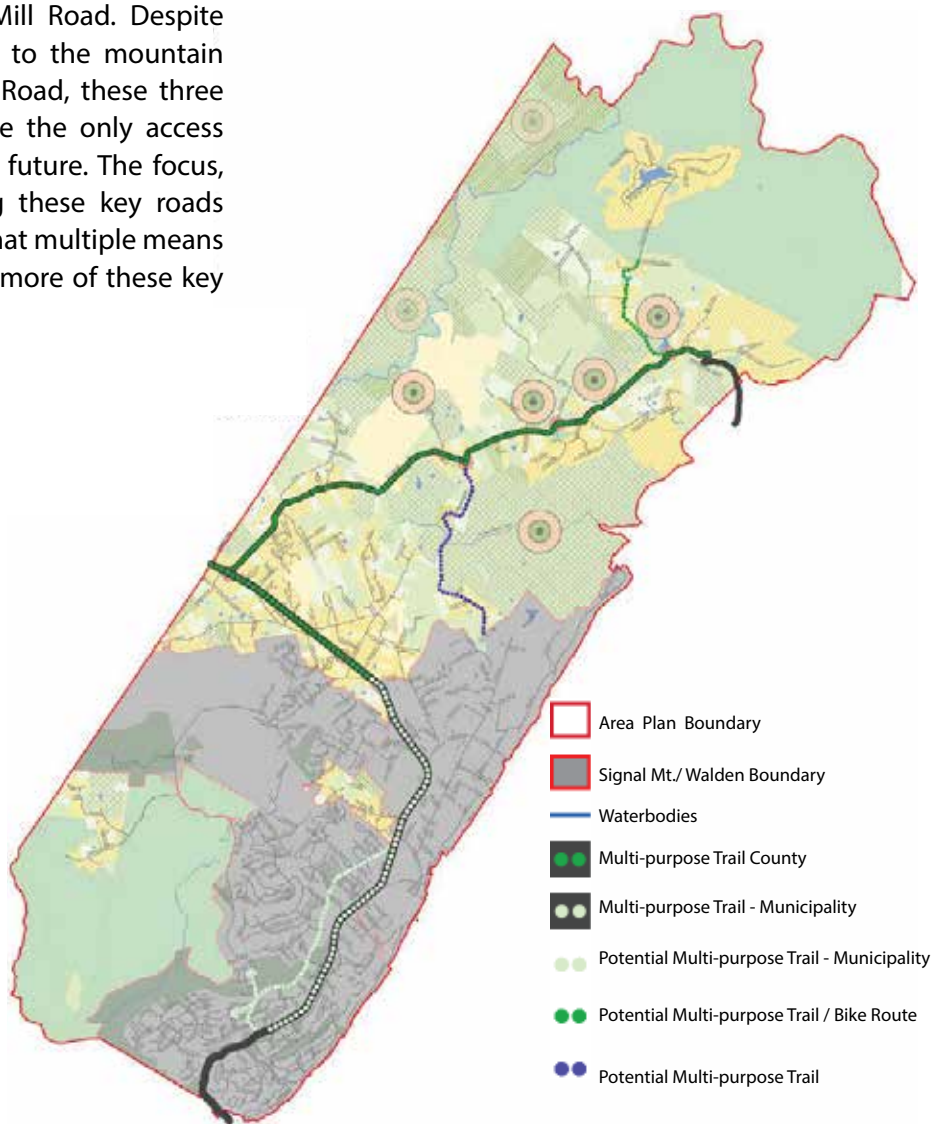
Policy 4.7.4 Work with the County Engineer's Office, the Roads Committee, the MPO, the RPA, and TDOT to implement the recommended studies and transportation improvement in Appendix E.

The integration of multi-modal options is essential for creating a dynamic and accessible community. This plan ensures that all residents can travel safely and efficiently, whether by car, bike, or on foot. By providing well-designed roads for vehicles, dedicated bike lanes, and extensive pedestrian pathways, Walden Plateau aims to enhance mobility, reduce traffic congestion, and promote sustainable living. These transportation options not only improve the quality of life by encouraging active lifestyles and reducing environmental impact, but also support local economic development by making it easier for people to reach businesses and services throughout the Area.

Walden's Ridge has three points of access from the valleys below, Highway 127 (Taft Highway/Signal Mt. Blvd.), The W Road, and Roberts Mill Road. Despite ideas to create a new access road to the mountain that would connect to Suck Creek Road, these three existing thoroughfares will likely be the only access to the mountain in the foreseeable future. The focus, therefore, should be on improving these key roads and developing systems to ensure that multiple means of access are possible when one or more of these key roads are impassable.

Connectivity between neighborhoods is crucial for several key reasons. It helps disperse traffic, reducing congestion and allowing for narrower, safer streets. It also ensures that emergency services like police, fire, and ambulances can quickly reach residents. By connecting neighborhoods, we create safer, more efficient, and better-served communities.

Greenway Concept Map



4.3.5 GOAL 5 & POLICIES

GOAL 5
PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy 5.7.1 Recognize the severe limitations of access to centralized sewer capacity through WWTA and development of traditional septic tank-leach field systems based on depth to rock and suitable soils.

Policy 5.7.2 Strengthen County water quality management ordinances and include best management practices. Provide adequate staffing for review and ongoing inspection of engineered designs for Erosion Control Plans, Site Stabilization, and permanent stormwater infrastructure. Add incentives for low-impact development solutions. Consider the possibility of publicly funded centralized stormwater collection in highly sensitive areas.

Policy 5.7.3 Work with local full time and volunteer fire and EMS districts to address coverage gaps, equipment needs, cross training and funding as recommended by the Rural Hamilton County Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation Report - March 2024, see Appendix G.

4.3.6 GOAL 6 & POLICIES

GOAL 6
PROVIDE SUITABLE COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE CENTERS

Policy 6.7.1 Evaluate infrastructure gaps related to the center Place Types indicated on the Conceptual Land Use Map.

Policy 6.7.2 Support development of a Crossroads over time encompassing existing and future uses at Anderson Pike and SR 127 with connectivity between commercial, public, park, and institutional assets. Evaluate the potential to address gaps in infrastructure design and capacity to support this center should it develop in Walden.

Policy 6.7.3 Evaluate the potential for the growth in the existing Crossroads at Hollister Road and SR 127 to evolve into a Neighborhood Node incorporating small pockets of multifamily housing interspersed with existing and future commercial use.

Policy 6.7.4 Explore the ability to serve the proposed Resort Recreation Center off Montlake Road near North Chickamauga Gorge SP to provide potential lodging, food, and commercial amenity support to the diverse range of recreational assets found in this Area.

Policy 6.7.5 Allow these proposed centers to focus infrastructure investments, development impacts, and economic activity in areas best suited for this growth. Planning for growth in these areas will also help to preserve the natural setting and quiet mountain lifestyle that area residents have expressed a clear desire to maintain.

4.3.7 GOAL 7 & POLICIES

GOAL 7
PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Policy 7.7.1 Provide an education program county-wide on Agricultural zoning and what legal actions are possible with Commissioner support. These could include changes that could lower density of housing.

Policy 7.7.2 Utilize identified centers from Crossroads (XR) to Village Centers (VC) to accommodate a range of housing types potentially including small lot single-family, townhomes, cottage courts, live/work and two, three and four unit dwellings.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

AREA 7 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Residents in Area 7 are primarily concerned with managing growth in a way that aligns with the area's unique topographic and infrastructure limitations. Much of Area 7 is located atop Signal Mountain or along its steep slopes transitioning to the valley floor. The mountain roads have challenging geometry and topography, limiting both capacity and reasonable investment. The ability to increase centralized sewage disposal capacity is constrained by the terrain and distance from treatment facilities. While on-site systems are feasible in some locations, they are restricted in others by soil depth and infiltration challenges.

Residents would prefer the Area remain with its rural and low-density suburban character. They've expressed an attachment to the recreational opportunities, quiet lifestyle, excellent schools, and minimal traffic and crime. These qualities not only define the community but will continue to make it attractive to new residents and developers.

Tools & Strategies

Conservation Subdivisions:

- Residents may support a future decrease in A-1 density in this planning area.
- A Conservation Subdivision provision should be established providing for modest density increases in exchange for significant provision of protected open space, natural resource areas, and protected public access to trails.
- Other methods for preservation of agricultural and forested land and public access must be pursued with conservation partners now to offer viable choices for landowners who desire to realize a return on their land without developing their properties.

Centers:

- Outside of the towns of Walden and Signal Mountain, the only recommended areas for increased density or commercial use are in small footprint Crossroads Place Types centered around existing commercial or government services.
- Resort Recreation Place Types are recommended in a limited number of locations as another means of supporting economic returns for landowners and providing local jobs while limiting development impacts and the demand for investments in education, utility, and transportation infrastructure. Where approved, they must come with a commitment to preservation of natural resource areas and provisions for public access to recreational assets on or near the property. Lodging tax and potentially an increment in retail sales taxes should be reinvested in local recreational assets and related infrastructure to localize the benefits. Potential for additional public benefits at: The Cumberland Trail, Falling Water Falls State Natural Area, the newly designated North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Park, and the newly completed Walden Ridge County Park.

Corridors:

» No Suburban Corridors are recommended in Area 7 at this time although this designation could make sense in future plan updates on road segments leading in and out of Center developments to slow traffic, focus attention on safe pedestrian crossings, and limit the length and frequency of curb cuts.

» The Rural Corridor designation is broadly recommended along the arterial and major collector roads in the Area. This designation will require development setbacks allowing for placement of access improvements, pedestrian and school bus facilities, storm water facilities, and maintain the rural character of the area where new residential subdivisions are developed.

Transportation Infrastructure:

» Transportation Infrastructure must be improved in the areas identified for priority investments in the Transportation Project Priorities List. The County should immediately create requirements limiting the size/density of developments with a single point of access, providing for safe pedestrian infrastructure within developments, and governing intersection spacing and access design for new subdivisions.

General:

» The RPA should extend the offer for joint planning efforts with Signal Mountain and the Town of Walden to encourage future growth and economic vitality in municipal areas and coordinate delivery of required infrastructure and services between jurisdictions.

CHAPTER 5

NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX
5.3 PLAN SUMMARY

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the essential bridge between each community's vision and the actions needed to make it a reality, translating broad goals and strategies into specific, actionable steps. By outlining processes for tracking progress, identifying funding opportunities, and fostering ongoing community involvement, this chapter offers a clear roadmap to bring these plans to life—guiding Hamilton County's growth in ways that honor its unique character, address residents' needs, and protect the qualities that define each community.

Hamilton County's growth has varied significantly across the five Areas examined in this plan, reflecting a wide range of factors. Rapid development has shaped East Brainerd, Ooltewah, and incorporated Collegedale in Area 12, along with parts of Harrison in Area 9 and Middle Valley in Area 8. Similarly, steady interest surrounds Signal Mountain and Walden in Area 7. In contrast, most of Area 13 and the northern sections of Area 9 have largely preserved their rural landscapes and agricultural heritage.

Key infrastructure corridors, particularly US-27, have been instrumental in fostering growth over the past two decades, fueling employment hubs, retail centers, and other commercial services. Interstate access and centralized sewer services has created favorable conditions for development and infrastructure investments in these corridors. Major employers like Erlanger Hospital and Kubota, along with their networks of suppliers, have driven demand for nearby housing and led to increased commercial activity. High-performing schools in the Walden Plateau area have contributed to further residential demand.

Infrastructure

The presence of sewer trunk lines and available capacity remains one of the single biggest predictors for residential growth. However, the overall availability of sewer capacity is a significant constraint, presenting Hamilton County planners and leadership with critical decisions on where to allocate resources for sewage treatment and collection expansion. Currently, most funding is dedicated to increasing storage for combined sewer flows, aimed at preserving treatment capacity and avoiding regulatory actions tied to water quality.

An integrated approach is essential to addressing challenges facing the sewer facilities that serve Chattanooga and Hamilton County. This includes an intensified focus on reducing stormwater impacts through both engineered and low-impact development practices. Investing in more comprehensive stormwater infrastructure reviews across both commercial and residential projects could provide significant returns, mitigating maintenance costs tied to sewer capacity. Incentives for low-impact development, as implemented in other communities, could help retain stormwater on-site, reduce flow rates into combined systems, and enhance water quality within critical watersheds. Better mapping of sewer and water infrastructure is also needed to provide planners with the tools they need to identify infrastructure gaps, investment targets, and areas of the county that can be planned as future growth centers.

Transportation

The County's economic and population growth has created challenges such as driving demand for efficient and safe transportation alternatives. This need is especially evident in areas experiencing the most rapid expansion. Keeping pace with these demands through infrastructure maintenance, improvement, and expansion is a significant challenge faced at every level of government, and Hamilton County is no exception. As growth continues in the County and the greater Chattanooga and northwest Georgia region, strategic investments in the transportation system will be essential to support future mobility and enhance residents' quality of life.

Hamilton County's role as a regional transportation hub underscores its significance. Interstates 24, 59, and 75 provide critical connectivity for freight, recreation, and commuter traffic across the Southeast and key corridors to the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Florida. Additionally, the county is served by Class I railroads, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railway, offering freight movement alternatives nationwide. The Tennessee River further enhances freight transport options as a navigable waterway.

As Hamilton County grows, a more focused approach to transportation planning will be essential. Key strategies include corridor management plans, access management strategies, and road safety audits. Corridor management plans for routes such as Ooltewah Ringgold Road, Highway 58, Hixson Pike, and Middle Valley Road can reduce traffic friction and improve access efficiency for businesses and residential areas. Access management strategies, including regulating driveway placement, optimizing intersection design, and promoting shared access points, offer a more detailed approach to improving traffic flow and safety. Regular road safety audits for high-crash routes will proactively identify and address safety concerns.

Many of Hamilton County's critical routes are under TDOT jurisdiction. Leveraging funding for improvements to those routes would begin with adding the desired route or improvement to the long range transportation plan (RTP) so that state and/or federal funding can be allocated based on the prioritization of needs by the MPO. Ongoing monthly or quarterly coordination meetings are recommended between the Hamilton County Roads Committee, RPA-MPO planners and the staff at TDOT Region 2 to advocate for future projects. This will also allow County leadership to stay informed of changes or opportunities for funding new projects or spot improvements.

To effectively address the unique needs of each Area, strategies must be tailored to specific locations and projects. These approaches should be further refined through detailed, site-specific safety and design studies. Potential tools include:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)– This would be particularly useful in areas where growth is expected to increase traffic demand. The McDonald Farm is a good example of somewhere in Hamilton County that TIF could be applied.
- Business Improvement Districts (BID)– This would be a similar approach as the TIF but would be more applicable to developed commercial areas to complete smaller road, multimodal, or streetscape projects.
- Alternative Transportation Funding – Projects involving electric vehicle infrastructure (charging stations) or other solutions such as bike-share or ride-share services often qualify for different funding programs. Given the rural character in part of the County, these types of projects would need to be located in places with the highest probability of success.
- Public-Private Partnerships – This can be an important tool for funding large infrastructure projects with private companies when the opportunity for an industrial, commercial, or residential projects arise with benefits to the County. The costs, financing, and effort of project delivery can be shared when working with private companies.

The transportation analysis for these Area Plans aimed to identify impactful projects that might otherwise be overlooked in the TIP process but are critical to Hamilton County residents. Potential projects addressing roadway safety and traffic congestion were identified across all five Areas and prioritized based on their impact and cost. This list serves as a valuable tool for County transportation planners and engineers, helping to advocate for major projects within the MPO–TIP planning process while also providing a strategic roadmap for efficient local investments that can deliver meaningful results in the near term.

The recommended projects include both design and construction initiatives, as well as engineering studies to refine potential solutions and anticipate future transportation needs. These recommendations are designed to address existing traffic and roadway safety challenges and can be seen as deferred investments needed to support growth that has already occurred. If fully funded and implemented, the Transportation Project Priorities List would create synergistic improvements, significantly enhancing the county's transportation network. However, as new growth unfolds, additional evaluations and investments will be essential to meet evolving demands.

Emergency Services

To support the analysis of current conditions, the County and RPA also commissioned a Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation. Unincorporated Hamilton County is primarily served by a patchwork of dedicated and resourceful volunteer fire departments. With findings that reveal life safety implications tied to new growth, the report underscores the need for careful planning on where and how future developments occur, taking into account building types, heights, and roadway connectivity in order to adequately protect residents, business owners, and their structures.

Addressing Future Challenges

The benefit of planning for growth within the centers and corridors framework is that it greatly increases the odds of predicting where future sewer, transportation, emergency services, stormwater, water, communications, education, and recreational infrastructure investments will be required. However, realizing these goals will require significant financial and human resources. Outside projections estimate the combined need for infrastructure investments across Hamilton County at around $3.8 billion—a figure that poses challenges for per capita affordability.

Individual views of elected leaders on where and how much infrastructure investment is needed will undoubtedly vary, but it is clear that higher levels of funding and planning are essential to address existing backlogs across various infrastructure categories. Without an approved Comprehensive Plan, County leadership and staff have had difficulty focusing growth and predicting where infrastructure improvements will be needed next.

While certain areas have already developed strong market dynamics due to key employers, shopping centers, and transportation infrastructure, balanced investments in both traditional and social infrastructure could promote more equitable growth across Hamilton County. However, without adequate sewer capacity, education facilities, and emergency services, further growth-oriented policies may have limited impact.

Hamilton County stands at a critical crossroads where leaders are grappling with past deficiencies in infrastructure investments driven by sustained growth associated with national and regional migration and natural or endemic growth. The county continues to attract residents drawn by job opportunities, climate, quality of life, and comparatively affordable living. Meanwhile, existing residents often express a strong desire to preserve the rural character, safety, and quality education opportunities for their families.

The implementation strategies within this plan aim to directly address these priorities and lay the groundwork for a sustainable future:

1. A multifaceted approach to increasing the quality and capacity of existing infrastructure.
2. Seeking synergies between land use and infrastructure planning and improved standards for new development that maximize the efficiency, capacity, and return on investment for both private and public infrastructure construction and spending.
3. Planning and design strategies that reduce development impacts and maximize existing education, transportation, recreation, and natural resource assets.
4. Initiate new strategies to preserve rural lifestyles, agricultural production, and associated land.
5. To identify new potential revenue streams, financial vehicles, and public-private partnerships for addressing the needs identified by Hamilton County residents.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The implementation process for the Area plans is built on strong partnerships, strategic tools, and targeted funding, all aimed at bringing each community's vision to life (see Community Themes). Collaboration between local governments, stakeholders, and residents is at the heart of this process, ensuring that efforts are aligned and resources are effectively utilized. Key projects are prioritized, with clear timelines and responsibilities, while a range of tools and funding mechanisms are deployed to support these initiatives. This comprehensive approach ensures that the plans are not only actionable but also adaptable, allowing for continued progress as community needs and opportunities evolve.

POLICY SUBCATEGORY (TOOLS & STRATEGIES)

The Implementation Matrix organizes recommendations into specific focus areas, providing a clear structure, by breaking down broader policy goals into targeted subcategories. This section enables a more detailed approach to land use, infrastructure, environmental conservation, and community services allowing Hamilton County to meet the unique needs of each planning area while advancing cohesive, Countywide objectives. These categories are were tailored based on the overall policy objectives in the introduction chapter and the input received throughout the community feedback process. Within the matrix, here are 5 topics with each covering various community aspects of Plan Implementation:

1. **Community Character & Land Use Patterns**
2. **Natural Resources**
3. **Infrastructure & Transportation Network**
4. **Economic Health & Community Opportunity**
5. **Funding Mechanisms**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations outline targeted actions to support Hamilton County's vision for balanced, sustainable growth. Each recommendation offers guidance for decision-makers, addressing key areas such as land use, infrastructure, resiliency, and community development. These recommendations are crafted to reflect the unique needs of each planning area, ensuring that policies not only guide growth but also strengthen community character, enhance infrastructure, protect natural resources, and improve residents' quality of life.

APPLICABILITY

Identifies where each recommended action is most relevant across Hamilton County's planning Areas. By specifying how and where the policies can be applied, this category ensures that recommendations are tailored to the unique conditions, needs, and priorities of each community. This targeted approach allows for flexible, area-specific strategies that respect local character while addressing shared Countywide goals.

This helps guide effective implementation, making sure that resources and efforts are directed where they will have the greatest impact.

Case Study/ Example Ordinance

Provides practical insights and proven strategies from other communities that have successfully addressed similar challenges. By examining these real-world examples and ordinances, Hamilton County can draw valuable lessons to inform its own policies and practices. This section highlights adaptable approaches for land use, infrastructure planning, environmental conservation, incentives, economic development, and impact fees offering a foundation for local initiatives that align with the unique needs and goals of each Area.

Timing

Establishes a strategic timeline for each recommended action, guiding when and how these initiatives should be undertaken. By setting immediate (0-1 Years), medium (1-5 Years), and long-term priorities (5+ Years), this category helps coordinate efforts, align resources, and build momentum toward the community's goals and policy implementation.

Area Specific Recommendations

As outlined in Chapter 4, The Area Specific Recommendations___highlighted tailored actions designed to address the overarching recommendations within each Area. By focusing on area-specific solutions, this category provides a roadmap for targeted investments and initiatives that support sustainable growth, protect local assets, and enhance quality of life in each community.

PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS and UPDATES

In order to ensure that Plan Hamilton best reflects the existing conditions and future vision of Hamilton County, the Plan Hamilton update cycle shall be as follows:

- Full plan review - every five years
- Annual review of policy and map changes - annual review by staff
- Applicant Requested Plan Amendments - as necessary and when requested by rezoning applicant
  - Zoning decisions are based primarily on area plans, which are components of the adopted general plan, in this case Plan Hamilton. The County's five different Area Plans were developed to include Place Type (land use) and capital improvement recommendations to inform rezoning requests.
  - Requested plan changes will alternate for one side of the Tennessee River every other month to the other side to permit changes six times per year, per side of the river.
  - An Area Plan amendment and its companion rezoning case may be heard on the same agenda.

Table 7: Implementation Matrix

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.1 Community Character & Land Use Patterns			
5.1.1 Access Management	Utilize TDOT's Highway System Access Manual for driveway spacing, median openings, and separation distances from signalized intersections.	Start with all State Routes where the existing TDOT Highway System Access Manual has standing. Expand to other principal arterials, minor arterials, and major collectors. Create manual, access management requirements, and corridor management plans before new development impacts are felt. Work with land owners to voluntarily contribute in-kind contributions (ROW, Design, Etc) or require development fees for a proportionate fair share of improvement costs as development applications are approved.	0-1 Years
	Target segments of suburban corridor with high rates of traffic congestion, safety incident history, or new development permit approvals. Improve traffic safety, congestion, pedestrian infrastructure and aesthetics by creating corridor management plans and agreements with state and local partners for high priority suburban corridors		1-5 Years
5.1.2 Rural Corridors	Develop policy to maintain rural corridor character including setbacks and vegetative buffers for new subdivisions.	All mapped Rural Corridor segments in the Conceptual Land Use and Place Type Maps and those designated in future map updates.	0-1 Years
5.1.3 Centers	Work with land owners at Center locations to facilitate development, including district/center specific plan, according to center principles and preferred uses.	All designated center Place Types designated on current and future place type maps.	0-1 Years
	Once approved, partner with developers to install and construct streets and streetscape elements in the form of direct participation or financing vehicles like business improvement districts.	Focus joint development efforts on Village and Town Center areas with regional impacts. Expand to smaller centers where local governance and residents request implementation help and have previously participated in a small area plan.	5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.1.4 Conservation Subdivisions	Create a Conservation Subdivision option to cluster housing that features at least half of its potentially buildable land area devoted to undivided, permanently protected open space.	Conservation Subdivisions should be an opt in tool available to land owners who want to balance financial returns with conservation legacy. Creation of Conservation subdivision provision in the county subdivision regulations will provide a tool to augment land purchase, and voluntary conservation efforts.	1-5 Years
	The use of an Overlay District , P.U.D., or Zone is recommended for implementation of more specific development criteria associated with each of the above Place Types.		1-5 Years
	Establish Conservation Subdivision provisions and evaluation criteria in the subdivision ordinance.	All of these tools are necessary to preserve the continuity of productive agricultural land, riparian corridors, and recreational assets at a regional or landscape scale. This tool should be selectively applied in A-1 zoned areas adjacent to existing public land or with high conservation value.	1-5 Years
5.1.5 Medium Density Residential	Co-locate future Medium Density Residential adjacent to Suburban Corridor and Center Place Types. Where future Medium Density Residential abuts a Suburban Corridor or Center allow zero lot line single-family and townhomes on a percentage of the overall property. Consider allowing small-scale multifamily in these same areas (6-12 units 3 story maximum).		5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2 Natural Resources			
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection	Build a stakeholder coalition including: NRCS, Trust for Public Land, Land Trust for Tennessee, North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, Chattanooga Audubon Society, Land Conservation Assistance Network, Soil & Water Conservation District, Thrive Regional Partnership, Tennessee State and others to coordinate farmland and open space preservation efforts in Hamilton County.	Resident input from Areas 7, 9, 12, an 13 all emphasized a strong preference to preserve agricultural land uses, property, and rural character. All five planning areas include riparian corridors that if preserved would help to mitigate flood risks, provide opportunities for contiguous recreational and alternative transportation corridors, storm water quality, and habitat benefits. Development pressures are increasing across the county and in some areas the window for conservation efforts is limited. The time to begin building a coalition of landowners, conservation entities, and funding sources is now.	0-1 Years
	Identify riparian corridors for preservation that have the potential to contribute multiple community benefits including farmland preservation, stormwater filtration, flood resilience, recreation, and habitat. Pursue strategies at landscape scale and on a property by property basis as development is proposed.	Prioritize: North Chickamauga Creek - (Area 8), Wolftever Creek, Johnson Branch - (Area 12), Long Savannah Creek - (Area 9) Falling Water Creek - (Area 7), Possum Creek, and Sale Creek - (Area 13).	0-1 Years

REMAINDER OF PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection *Continued*	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of active farms and prime agricultural land.	Farmland preservation is often a unifying place to begin conservation efforts. The first step is identifying the soils and parcels that characterize productive agricultural land. Local Soil and Water Conservation Office personnel and academic partners should be engaged in this process. Making tangible progress on the ground requires partnership between federal programs such as NRCS and local conservation groups who can bridge funding gaps and provide stewardship and monitoring support. Developing relationships with Agricultural land owners and the farming community in Area 13, the northern half of Area 9, and the eastern portions of Area 12 is a critical first step.	0-1 Years
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies	Engage UTC - School of Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Build on existing successes like South Chickamauga Creek and Wolftever Creek. Invest or seek funding for agricultural demonstration projects, educational, and recreation assets.		1-5 Years
	Pursue partnerships to preserve forested land with an emphasis on areas that further regional trail connections, enhance access to unique recreational, historical, or cultural assets.	Cumberland Plateau in Area 7 and Area 13, Big Ridge Area 9, and White Oak Mountain Area 12.	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies *Continued*	Pursue multiple creative mechanisms and funding for preserving critical recreation and natural resource assets. Look for opportunities to create value in these areas through recreational tourism, wetland or stream bank creation, and consider the value of reduced flood risks and other socio-environmental factors in assessing return on investments.		
5.2.3 Resiliency, Natural Resource Protections, and Development Impact Mitigation	Establish natural resources protection standards for wooded areas, drainages, steep slopes, as well as currently regulated wetlands and streams.	Countywide	1-5 Years
5.3 Infrastructure & Transportation Network			
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management	Review fire code regarding the number of lots allowed in new subdivision triggering a secondary point of access.	County Wide	0-1 Years
	Require walking path or sidewalk for new residential subdivisions with connections to a safe harbor school bus waiting area.		0-1 Years
	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management implement spacing requirements for both full and partial (restricted turn movement) intersections on arterial and major collector roadways. (1/4 mile for full access)	Countywide on Arterials and Major Collectors	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management *Continued*	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management consider modifications to the subdivision ordinance implementing internal connectivity index standards for developments of more than 500 lots.		1-5 Years
5.3.2 Improvements to Local Roads, Intersections, and Safety Design Features	Follow the Hamilton County Transportation Project Priorities List in this document. Continue to invest County funds and leverage with State and Federal funds to make continuous progress on deferred transportation improvements.	Countywide	0-1 Years On - going
	Explore the use of alternative financing vehicles such as Tennessee's State Infrastructure Bank to amplify County investments.		0-1 Years
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System	Continue to build system storage capacity, resilience for storm events, and greater predictability / flexibility to plan collection system expansion or new treatment capacity. Continue to pursue WIFIA and other capital funding specific to water and wastewater.		On - Going
	Target financing solutions and infrastructure investment to areas that have been identified as suitable for future growth. Proactively plan to shore up capacity or extend collection systems to these areas as necessary to better balance growth impacts.	See Funding Mechanisms	On - Going
	Add further specificity and criteria for utilization of decentralized sewage treatment systems.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate whether tap fees are keeping pace with infrastructure		0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System *Continued*	Evaluate decentralized systems and track projects using the systems to determine rules for use.		1-5 Years
	Evaluate the use of trilateral agreements to add flexibility, predictability, and fairness for developers who choose to collaborate with WWTA in design and construction modifications for future capacity to recoup costs of infrastructure developed beyond project needs.		1-5 Years
5.3.4 Stormwater Infrastructure, LID Features, and Resiliency	Provide resources for complete and expeditious review of stormwater plans including pre-constuction site review and post construction inspections.		0-1 Years
	Begin codifying more of Hamilton Co Stormwater quality BMP's.		1-5 Years
	Phase in additional resources for review and enforcement.		1-5 Years
	Develop a more comprehensive approach to stormwater site assessment, design, incentives, and regulations.		1-5 Years
	Implement stormwater fee structures that incentivize BMP's.		1-5 Years
	Evaluate establishing a program for neighborhood or watershed based storm water infrastructure to capture storm water closer to where it falls and reduce combined sewer flows.		0-1 Years
	Develop policy with WWTA on decentralized sewer systems with robust criteria and design standards.	Countywide	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.5 Fire & EMS	Consider the findings of the Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation March 2024 to identify future service improvements.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate sources of funding to increase full-time personnel and standardize equipment purchases and training to simplify inter-local agreements.		
5.4 Economic Health & Community Opportunity			
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers	Engage land owners where resort recreation centers have been identified to participate in small area plans or joint planning sessions. Work to provide examples that would establish the scale and scope of future projects. Help landowners or potential developers understand infrastructure requirements, neighborhood concerns, and connect them with resources to create plans compatible with goals for this place type.	Prioritize land near designated Resort Recreation Centers and with close proximity to existing state and regional recreational facilities and natural areas.	0-1 Years
	Require that resort recreational development on lands adjacent to public land or waterways be a catalyst for securing and enhancing public access to recreational assets in addition to creating private recreational development.	Countywide in designated centers	0-1 Years
	Look for partners to start a recreation and tourism based business incubator/accelerator program.		1-5 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendation	Applicability	Timing
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers *Continued*	Engage UTC School of Sport, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Engage Tennessee Department of Tourism, Chattanooga Tourism Co, SETDD, and SETTA in creating a small recreational resort promotional plan and programming assistance.		0-1 Years
	Explore potential for agriculture based resort or event centers to contribute to agricultural revenue streams. Consider McDonald Farm as a potential case study for synergies between rural resort economic development, traditional agriculture, and recreation.	Sale Creek - McDonald Farm; Birchwood	0-1 Years
	Evaluate outcomes from existing case studies - including preservation goals, impacts on existing farms, housing costs, property taxes, etc.		
	Study Industrial opportunities - both as larger industrial/corporate scaler and smaller Maker District		
5.4.2 Growing the job Base	Pursue development study of future employment centers including emerging industries and manufacturing districts		

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.5 Funding Mechanisms			
5.5.1	Consider use of RIDA as an incentive for developers who voluntarily meet specific infrastructure standards such as: improved street and pedestrian connectivity, LID stormwater improvements, provide easements for regional greenways, trails, or watershed protection.		0-1 Years
	Explore use of alternate funding mechanisms such as TDOT's State Industrial Access (SIA) Program	Hilltop Drive Extension; matching funds for other prioritized projects	0-1 Years
	Consider strategic utilization of Business Improvement Districts, Tax Increment Financing, Trilateral Agreements, or Infrastructure Trust Funds to set the table for desired development patterns (sidewalks/ connectivity, roads and utility infrastructure, landscape buffers, LID enhancements) in identified current and future centers. (Village Centers, Neighborhood Centers, Neighborhood Nodes, Maker Districts, etc.) i.e. Joint Development		1-5 Years
	Use the Capital Funding for Mid-Sized Cities & Counties study as a guide to identifying innovative funding and financing approaches for capital improvements.		

REMAINDER OF PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

APPENDIX

Scrivener's Note: with the exception of the Chamber Memo, all other Appendices were removed per the Regional Planning Commission's vote on September 8, 2025 for the adoption of Resolution 825-18

A. CHATTANOOGA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMO

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce Memo

The Urgent Need for New Manufacturing Locations in Hamilton County, Tennessee

Hamilton County has been known as a manufacturing magnet for much of its history and it's county seat, Chattanooga was called the "Dynamo of Dixie" in the late 19th century. This legacy continues to ring true today due to the County's logistic assets including three interstate highways, two class-1 rail lines and the navigable Tennessee River. However, the county now faces an imperative challenge: identifying new locations for manufacturing operations. The necessity for this strategic move stems from several factors, including economic growth, technological advancements, environmental considerations, and community development. This summary explores the multifaceted reasons behind this need and the potential benefits it could bring to the county. The current Plan Hamilton growth plan has not identified additional areas for manufacturing uses however, the County should be working to identify areas for this use in order to continue to create new jobs and drive economic prosperity and diversification.

Economic Growth and Diversification

In recent years, Hamilton County has experienced significant economic growth. As industries expand and new businesses emerge, the demand for manufacturing space has increased but the number of acres zoned for manufacturing has declined. From 2014 to 2024 acreage with M-1 zoning designation in Hamilton County declined by 1,684 acres. During this timeframe, the county's Centre South Industrial park reached full capacity and all available parcels in Enterprise South have been sold or have been optioned by companies for future expansion. Furthermore, current facilities for several existing businesses across the county are at capacity and cannot accommodate additional growth, putting continued investment by those companies at risk. Without new locations, the county risks stifling its economic potential. Diversifying the manufacturing base is essential to sustain growth, attract investorment, and create job opportunities, thereby ensuring long-term economic stability for the county and its residents.

Demographic Alignment

The manufacturing sector is one of the few industries that provides high-wage, full-time jobs for individuals with various education attainment levels. Approximately 30% of manufacturing jobs are white collar jobs requiring mostly 4-year college degrees. The remaining 70% of jobs in manufacturing require less than a four-year degree and, in some instances, do not require a high school degree. This aligns well

with Hamilton County's demographics where just over 30% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a high school diploma or less and only 37% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a 4-year degree. Jobs in the manufacturing sector are typically high-wage and include benefits as demonstrated by Hamilton County's average manufacturing wage of $74,256.

Technological Advancements

The manufacturing industry is evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancements such as automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. These innovations require modern facilities equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure. As technological advances in the manufacturing sector continue to grow, manufacturing wages will increase as well, assuring living wage jobs for county residents in advanced manufacturing sectors. Hamilton County is home to dozens of established companies that produce pharmaceuticals, heavy equipment and automobiles and the county has a growing cadre of tech-based manufacturing startups that have been supported by Hamilton County's Business Development Center. These early stage companies leverage 3-D printing, provide research and development services in the battery space and produce sensor and robotic equipment. Making sure that Hamilton County has shovel-ready sites, zoned for manufacturing will help the county both legacy companies as well as early-stage high tech manufacturers as they continue to grow.

Multiplier Effect of Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector is considered a "traded industry sector" which means it produces goods that are sold outside of the local region. Traded industry sectors are critical because they bring in revenue from outside of the local economy, increasing the county's gross domestic product (GDP). This new revenue then circulates in the economy, creating additional jobs. Research by firms such as EMSI shows that manufacturing jobs have a significant multiplier effect with one manufacturing job creating an additional nine jobs in the community. With more than 29,000 people working in manufacturing in Hamilton County, the sector drives significantly economic activity and job creation in the community across retail, healthcare, construction and several other industries.

Site considerations and conclusions

The need for Hamilton County to identify new locations for manufacturing will require future amendments to the Plan Hamilton growth plan. Due to increasing land prices inside Chattanooga city

limits, it is likely that any new locations for manufacturing uses will be in unincorporated Hamilton County. Proximity to infrastructure will also be critical with consideration given to properties that have 4-lane highway access, rail infrastructure and proximity to sewer infrastructure. The county's recent utilization of tax increment financing (TIF) should serve as a model for financing infrastructure improvements for sites with limited infrastructure.

The manufacturing sector has been a critical economic driver for Hamilton County. Much of the recent job growth the county has experienced can be tied to the development of Enterprise South Industrial Park by the City and County and the location of Volkswagen in the park. With the county's industrial parks now at capacity and multiple manufacturers reaching full build out on their sites, it is critical that Hamilton County identify new locations for the county's second largest industry sector.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

PLAN HAMILTON

OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

8 MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE
AREA PLAN

Clearwater Acres
Greens Mill
Greenway Village
Lake Dweller
Lakeside Park
Lakesite
Middle Valley
Port Serena
Prairie Peninsula

RPA

Adopted by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, Sept. 8, 2025.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. AREA SUMMARY **4**

1.1 AREA PLANNING SUMMARY 5
1.2 INTRODUCTION 6
1.3 MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE STUDY AREA (AREA 8) 7
1.4 HISTORY OF MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE 9
1.5 PAST PLAN 11

CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS **12**

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY 13
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE 15
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS 16
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES 18
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS 19

CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS **44**

3.1 INTRODUCTION 45
3.2 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK 46
3.3 AREA PLAN GOALS 50
3.4 VISION STATEMENT 51

CHAPTER 4. PLANS, POLICIES RECOMMENDATIONS **52**

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW 53
4.2 PLACE TYPES 60
4.3 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 74

CHAPTER 5. NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION **80**

5.1 INTRODUCTION 81
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 84

CHAPTER 6. APPENDIX **96**

CHAPTER 1
AREA SUMMARY

1.1 PLAN SUMMARY
1.2 INTRODUCTION
1.3 MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE STUDY AREA
1.4 HISTORY OF MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE
1.5 PAST PLANS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

1.1 AREA PLANNING SUMMARY

The Hamilton County Area Plans represent a comprehensive approach to managing growth and change in our diverse communities, recognizing both the distinct identities of each Area and the interconnectedness of our county. With a focus on the specific challenges and opportunities within Hamilton County's unincorporated Areas, each plan addresses critical factors that shape community life—land use, infrastructure, environmental preservation, housing, and economic resilience. Throughout the planning process, we engaged with community members to create a vision that reflects local priorities and builds on the character and strengths of each Area.

From the rural expanse and scenic beauty of Sale Creek and Birchwood, to the residential communities of Georgetown and Apison, to the vibrant mountain villages and outdoor offerings of the Walden Plateau, or the waterfront community of Lakesite, all places where many families have multi-generation histories attached to the landscape, the plans recognize the local topographic, geologic, and infrastructure constraints found in these unique areas. This approach allows for tailored strategies that honor local heritage, rural qualities, and natural landscapes while accommodating sustainable growth.

The planning process began with in-depth research and analysis to understand the existing conditions, demographic trends, and economic drivers across Hamilton County. By examining land use, transportation networks, environmental features, and community facilities, we identified both opportunities and constraints in each area. This research also shed light on trends such as housing demands, population shifts, and economic patterns, allowing us to anticipate future needs and create a foundation for adaptable, forward-looking plans.

The visions articulated in these Plans emerged from collaborative dialogue with residents, local stakeholders, and county officials. Community workshops, surveys, and public meetings provided residents the opportunity to voice their aspirations, concerns, and ideas for the future of their neighborhoods. The resulting goals and policies emphasize maintaining rural character, supporting local businesses, enhancing outdoor recreation, and fostering a sense of place in each community. Across the county, residents expressed a desire to balance growth with preservation—ensuring that new developments are thoughtfully integrated and contribute positively to the character of their communities.

To bring these visions to life, the Area Plans detail policies and actions centered on Community Character and Land Use, Natural Resources, Economic Health and Community, and Funding Mechanisms. These categories, rooted in the community themes established in Chapter 2, have been refined to address the County's evolving needs and offer the most impactful steps forward.

The implementation strategies focus on practical, collaborative actions that turn these plans into reality. Partnerships with local and regional organizations, support for small businesses, and investments in community facilities are vital to advancing these initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation will be critical to ensure the plans stay flexible, allowing policies to adapt as new challenges and opportunities emerge. Each Area Plan is intended as a living document, responsive to ongoing community input and changing needs over time.

As we move from planning to action, the success of this Plan relies on commitment, collaboration, and community engagement. Hamilton County is dedicated to working closely with residents, businesses, and local leaders to implement these policies in a way that fosters a resilient and inclusive future. By advancing these Plans with a shared sense of purpose, we can create communities that are not only livable and economically vibrant but also reflective of the unique character and heritage that residents value. Through strategic growth, environmental stewardship, and respect for community identity, the Comprehensive Plan will encourage each Area to thrive for generations to come.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

As Hamilton County's population grows, thoughtful planning is crucial to managing the upcoming changes while efficiently using limited resources. The goal is to create resilient communities where neighborhoods, commercial centers, parks, and natural spaces flourish, striking a balance between development and conservation.

To guide this growth, we develop specific Plans that are later presented to local legislative bodies for adoption. These Plans become essential in shaping zoning, guiding private development, and influencing public infrastructure investments. They serve as a blueprint for determining where growth, redevelopment, and conservation should occur.

The Plans will equip Hamilton County leadership with the tools necessary to make strategic community investments in infrastructure, staff, and services, ensuring a livable community with sustained economic opportunities.

The Introduction Chapter serves as the background for the planning process and sets the tone for

- Planning Framework
- Existing Planning Goals
- What is An Area Plan?
- Hamilton County Planning Areas
- Policy Focus
- Area Plan Process
- Outline of the Area Plans

Community input is essential to shaping Hamilton County's long-term planning efforts, ensuring that residents and business owners help define the County's future. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan established a responsible land-use framework that prioritizes environmental preservation and community character. Complementing this, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) forecasts transportation needs and guides infrastructure investment.

Area Plans provide localized guidance on development, zoning, infrastructure, and conservation. These plans use tools like Conceptual Recommendations Maps and Place Types maps to outline development patterns and set policies for future growth. They are shaped by prior planning, community feedback, and professional analysis. Key goals include creating vibrant, well-defined spaces and balancing growth while preserving each area's character and meeting future demands.

Although Area Plans do not regulate development or change zoning directly, they guide policy and decisions related to infrastructure, housing diversity, and commercial centers. They emphasize efficient investment in public services, transportation, and natural resource preservation, especially in rural areas. Constraints like limited sewer capacity, emergency services, and infrastructure demands shape policies to ensure sustainable growth while maintaining residents' quality of life.

The Middle Valley / Lakesite Area 8 Plan features five chapters which cover the following:

1.3 MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE STUDY AREA (AREA 8)

The Middle Valley / Lakesite community in unincorporated Hamilton County exemplifies the character of rural and lake living, offering a tranquil contrast to the pace of downtown Chattanooga. Located in the northern part of the County, this area is shaped by the expansive Chickamauga Lake, which not only forms a natural boundary but also provides residents with stunning water views and abundant opportunities for boating, fishing, and other water-based activities. Area 8 is a region defined by its open spaces, rolling farmlands, and a blend of rural homes and lakeside retreats that reflect a deep connection to the outdoors.

While the Area maintains its rural charm, it also supports a network of local businesses that meet the daily needs of residents. Small, family-owned shops, local eateries, and essential services are woven into the fabric of the community, ensuring convenience without compromising the Area's rural character.

As Hamilton County continues to grow, Middle Valley/Lakesite remains a valued part of the County, balancing the desire for peaceful, rural living with the conveniences of modern life.

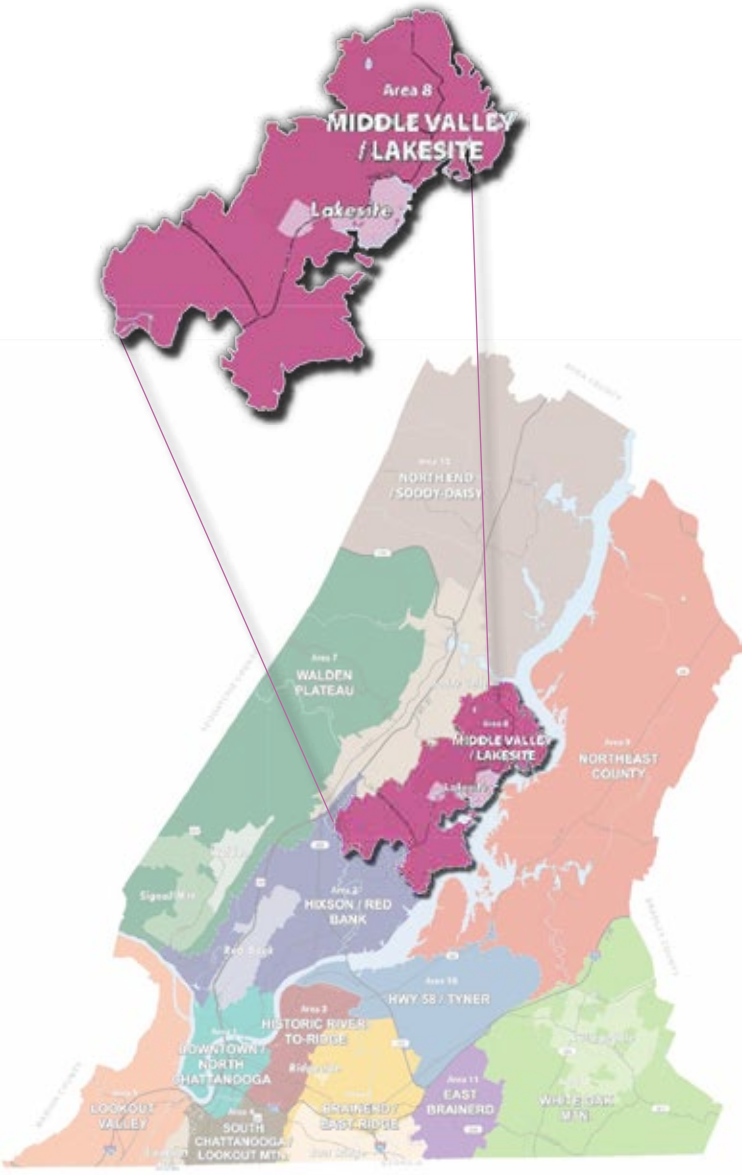


Figure 1.1: Middle Valley / Lakesite Area 8 as a part of Hamilton County Study Area

Middle Valley / Lakesite Map

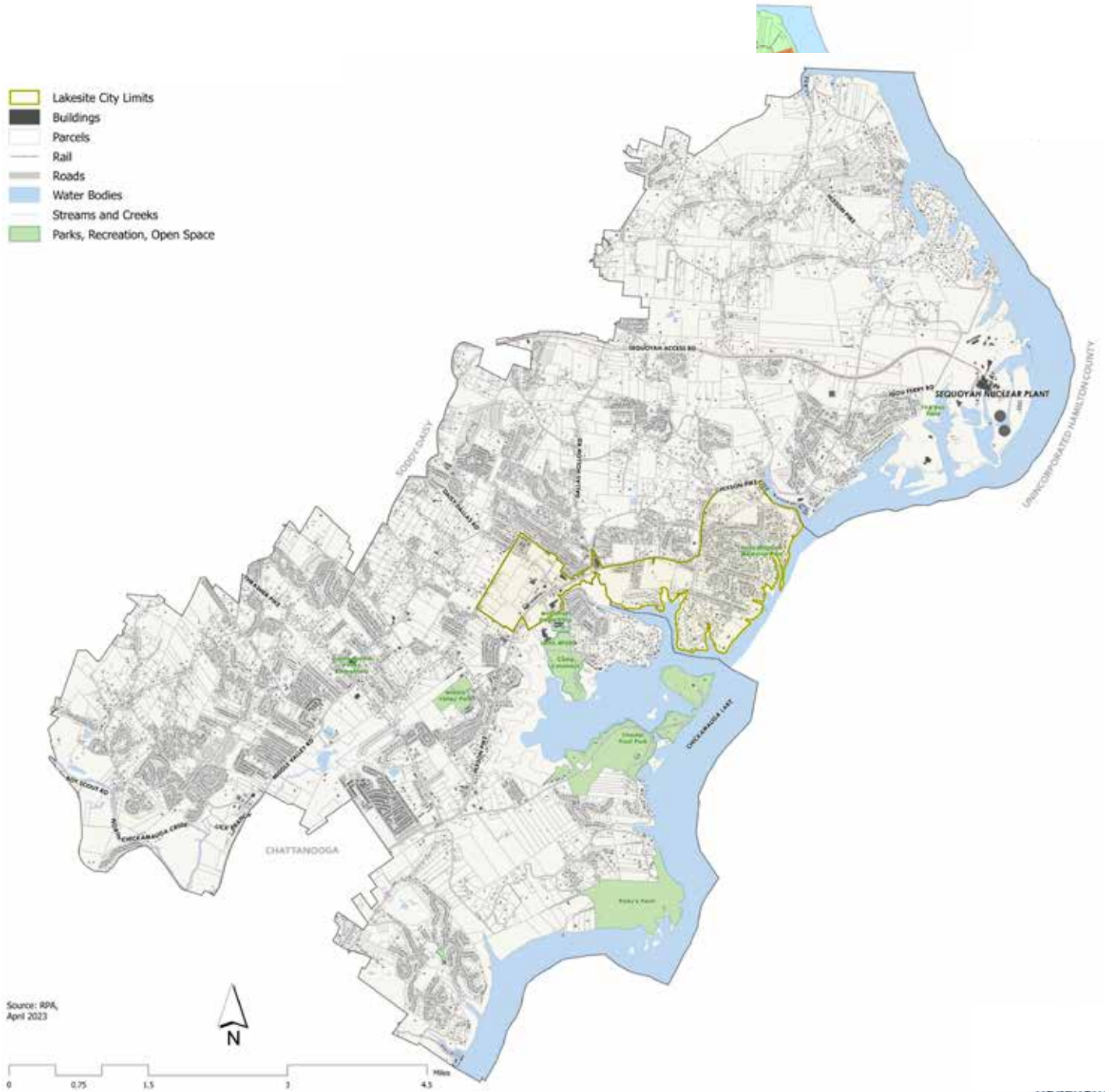


Figure 1.2: Middle Valley / Lakesite Area 8 Map

1.4 HISTORY OF MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE

The history of the Middle Valley and Lakesite Area in Hamilton County is marked by the influence of natural features and early Native American settlement patterns. Originally inhabited by Indigenous peoples who utilized the rich resources of Dallas Bay and surrounding Areas, the landscape saw dramatic changes with the arrival of settlers who established agricultural operations. The construction of the Chickamauga Dam in the 1930s transformed the region further, creating Chickamauga Lake and altering the flow of the Tennessee River. This development, along with the expansion of the North River, spurred suburban growth in Middle Valley and Lakesite, leading to the eventual establishment of the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant. These elements collectively shaped the Area's agricultural and residential character.

HIXSON / NORTH RIVER

From the prior Area Plan Document:

On October 25th, 1819, the U.S. Government acquired the Hixson-North River Area from the Cherokee Indians. This purchase preceded the purchase of land south of the Tennessee River in 1838 which resulted in the "Trail of Tears". During the Civil War, North Chickamauga Creek was used as a staging Area for Union Troops on their way to fight the Battle of Missionary Ridge. Soon after the Civil War, the Area's first mills were constructed – "Upper Mill" located on Chickamauga Creek at Boyscout Road, and "Lower Mill" at Lower Mill Road. During the early 1900's, more people began to reside and conduct business in the Hixson-North River Area. Lupton City, a classic mill town, was established by Dixie Yarns company during the 1920's. The Area's growth trend accelerated with the building of Chickamauga Dam in 1940. The growth in this Area led to the expansion and growth further north.

North River
Source: Chattanooga Pulse

CHICKAMAUGA DAM

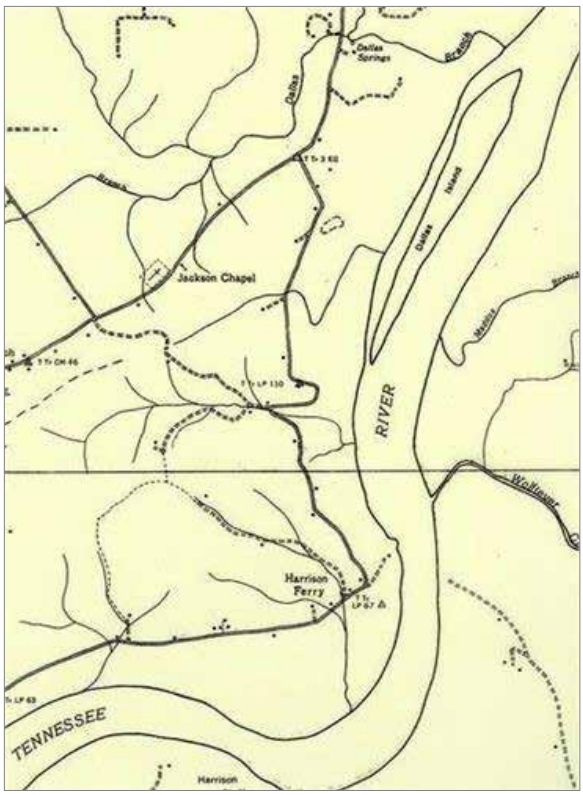
The history of the Middle Valley area can date as far back as the founding of Hamilton County in 1819. When the County was first established, its leaders wanted to locate the County seat at a river landing because of the constant travel on the Tennessee River. Because of this, the "Hamilton County Courthouse Community" was established in what is now Chester Frost Park. In March 1935, the TVA announced the construction of the Chickamauga Dam upstream from Chattanooga to control downstream flooding. For the dam to function properly, a 33,500-acre reservoir was created, submerging several communities, including Old Harrison. The rising waters required TVA to remove many remaining structures.

FIRST DIRT FLIES ON DAM PROJECT HERE

—Times Staff Photos by Hall.

The TVA turned its first spade of dirt on the Chickamauga dam project yesterday when it started excavating for foundations for the administration office building. The top photo shows a lumber yard being built along the railway line. The lower picture shows a crew of workmen excavating for the administration building foundations. Carpenter work commences today.

Chickamauga Dam Groundbreaking
Source: Chattanooga Times (January 22, 1936)



Dallas Bay
Source: Chattanoogan.com

Welcome to Lakesite Sign
Source: City of Lakesite

DALLAS BAY & THE LOST COMMUNITY OF DALLAS

Present day Dallas Island is the Area noted by Chester Frost Park but before the TVA released the spillway waters, it was an 84 acres island home to over 200 citizens. This land Area has undergone multiple renaming throughout the years. One of the first names originated in the 1700s which was "Oolequah" from the Cherokee Indian settlements. Following that the community was named the "Hamilton County Courthouse" to ensure it was easily locatable. When the County seat moved to the nearby town of Old Harrison, the community was renamed to "Dallas" after the American statesman Alexander James Dallas, who served as Secretary of the treasury, reporter for the US Supreme Court and cabinet member for James Madison. Dallas is one of the two towns in Hamilton County that was lost to the waters of the TN river and is now part of Lake Chickamauga and continues to prevent flooding of the greater Chattanooga Area and further south.

LAKESITE

Nestled southeast of Soddy-Daisy along the shores of Chickamauga Lake, Lakesite is one of Hamilton County's nine smaller municipalities, each with a story shaped by local resilience. In the late 1960s, Chattanooga's nearby annexations—including Middle Valley—prompted Lakesite residents to take matters into their own hands, leading to its incorporation in January 1972. Growth continued over the years, and by 1994, neighboring communities began advocating for annexation into Lakesite, nearly doubling its population by the next year. This momentum led to the opening of a new City Hall in 2000, further establishing Lakesite's identity and commitment to its residents. Embodying the town's small-town charm, the first annual Fishing Rodeo was held in 2015 at Little Chickey Pond in Hans Bingham Park—a cherished community event that celebrates Lakesite's close-knit spirit. Today, with a population just under 2,000, Lakesite preserves the sense of community that defines it.

1.5 PAST PLAN

HIXSON - NORTH RIVER AREA PLAN (2002, UPDATED 2004)

Led by the RPA, the Hixson-River North River Area Plan represented a collaborative effort among local elected officials, residents, business owners, developers, natural resource advocates and civic leaders. The plan sought to create a unifying vision, define policy for future development, identify community assets, and guide future investments in capital improvements. The study Area boundary was Lupton Drive, the Tennessee River and Chickamauga Lake to the south and east, Thrasher Pike to the north, and Boy Scout Road, US 27 and Red Bank to the west and covered more than 16,000 acres of land. The plan was organized into five (5) sections:

1. Area Assessment
2. Planning Process
3. Vision & Principles
4. Plan Recommendations
5. Land Use Plan

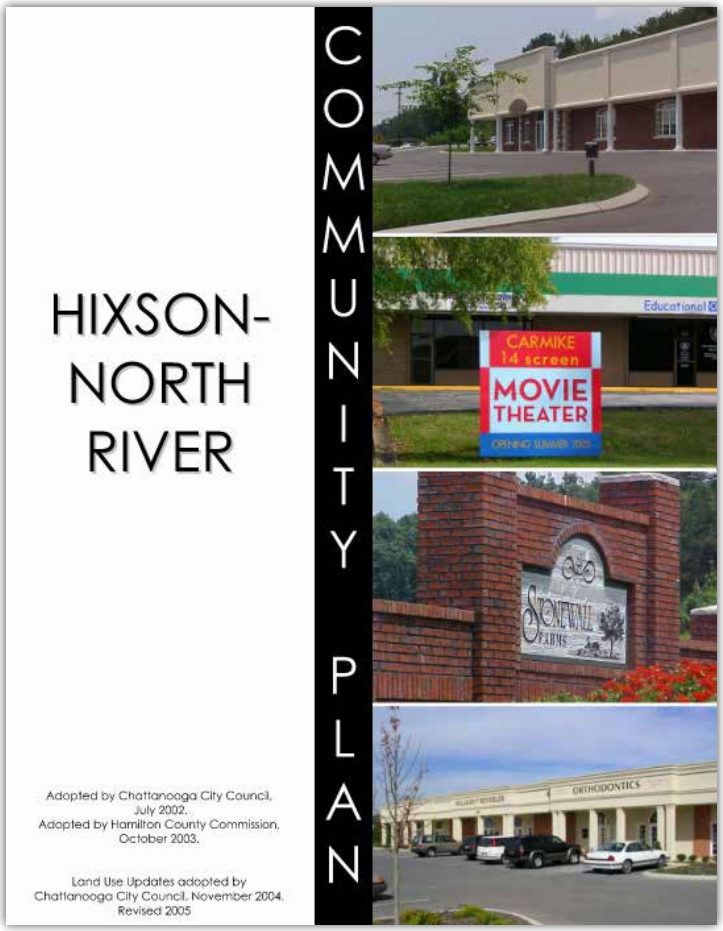
Plan Purpose:

Area stakeholders indicated that community atmosphere, quality natural environment and positive business environment are what they value most. These assets should be enhanced and protected as the community grows.

"To create a place that promotes community, accessibility and a high quality of life for all residents through planned growth that maintains a visually attractive and cohesive built environment, convenient public facilities, strong businesses, and protection of the natural environment"

The plan identified six (6) key recommendations that were based on the community vision:

1. Develop a Town Center Complex in the Northgate Mall Area.
2. Promote Planned Growth.
3. Develop a Community Wide Park-Trail System.
4. Improve Public Education.
5. Upgrade Substandard Road Infrastructure.
6. Promote more housing for seniors and younger families.



Hixson / North River Community Plan
Source: RPA

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Area 8 has proximity and direct connectivity to Downtown Chattanooga, Red Bank, Lakesite and Soddy-Daisy. Proximity to jobs, quality of schools, and access to shopping and recreational assets has led to steady growth in the development of residential communities and commercial properties. Market demand for residential and commercial opportunities is likely to continue or accelerate in Area 8 as sewer capacity and road infrastructure is improved to accommodate the anticipated growth.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Easy access to jobs and shopping and interconnected to neighboring communities.
- Moderate Density (5-8 DU/Acre) with growth potential south of Sequoyah Access Road.
- Above average schools for the region.
- Easy access to recreation opportunities.
- Views of the lake and lakefront homes along Hixson Pike and other locations (Camp Columbus, Chester Frost Park, Pinky's Point, etc.)

REGIONAL FACILITIES AND ASSETS

- Camp Columbus
- Sequoyah Nuclear Plant
- Middle Valley Park
- Chester Frost Park & Pinky's Point
- Lakesite Park & City Hall
- Manufacturing & Industrial Clusters

Chester Frost Park
Source: Choose Chattanooga

PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS

Roadways:

» Hixson Pike, Middle Valley Road, Gann Road, and Daisy Dallas Road are critical Area arterials that have been identified as needing targeted improvements. Corridor and access management strategies should be employed to maintain the capacity and efficiency of the transportation network for Area 8.

Hixon Pike in Middle Valley
Source: Google Earth Pro

Area Boundaries:

» The entire eastern boundary of Area 8 is the Chickamauga Lake / TN River and nearly the entire western boundary is the City of Soddy-Daisy creating both natural and jurisdictional barriers to growth on both sides.

Flood Plain & Drainage:

» The flood zones associated with North Chickamauga Creek and associated tributaries and Chickamauga Lake present natural barriers that should be respected in planning for growth in Middle Valley, particularly in the Boy Scout Road Area. These features influenced the recommendations for boundaries of low versus moderate density residential Areas.

» The portion of Area 8 south of Gann Road is impacted by flood plain and stormwater for properties in the North Chickamauga Creek/ Lick Branch drainage basin. These constraints are reflected in a pattern of larger parcels and a more rural development pattern.

North Chickamauga Creek
Source: Nathan Barnes, Google Maps

2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE

69%

of residents are influenced by the cost of housing when choosing the Middle Valley / Lakesite Area to live.

35%

Bachelor's Degree

28%

Some College

27%

Master's Degree +

Source: ACS

63%

Believe that large-lot single-family homes should be encouraged in Area 8.

71%

Believe that preservation of farmland, rural character, wooded & riparian Areas should be priorities.

55%

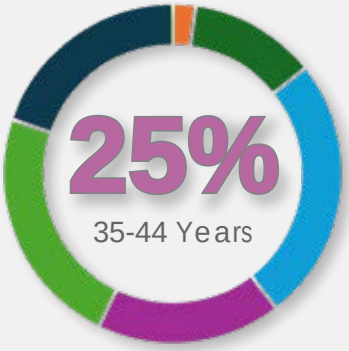
Lived in Hamilton County for 20+ Years

33%

Lived in Hamilton County for 5-19 Years

12%

Lived in Hamilton County for 0-4 Years



25%

65 or Over

22%

55-64 Years

Source: ACS

2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS

DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

Hamilton County Census data reveals a balanced distribution across age groups, with a notable presence of young families (30-34 Years), working professionals (25-29 Years), and retirees (60-69 Years). The County upholds a high level of educational attainment and a skilled workforce, reflecting the Area's commitment to quality education and lifelong learning. In comparison to the state of Tennessee as a whole, Hamilton County has a higher median income, advanced education background, higher employment rate, lower poverty rates, and lower commute times. These factors continue to contribute to growth in Hamilton County in both the incorporated and unincorporated Areas.

GROWTH TRENDS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Area 8 has experienced steady population growth and economic development over the past decade, driven by the availability of flat land for residential development. Future prospects remain positive, with planned developments emphasizing smart growth principles that enhance connectivity, sustainability, and quality of life for residents. By prioritizing the preservation of the region's distinctive character and promoting responsible development, ongoing efforts aim to attract new businesses and support residential growth, supporting commercial services, and appropriate industrial and public facilities that align with the community's vision, further diversifying the economic base and creating new growth opportunities. To anticipate these needs, the RPA engaged RCLCO to complete a detailed market analysis to asses market opportunities for housing needs over the next 20 years.

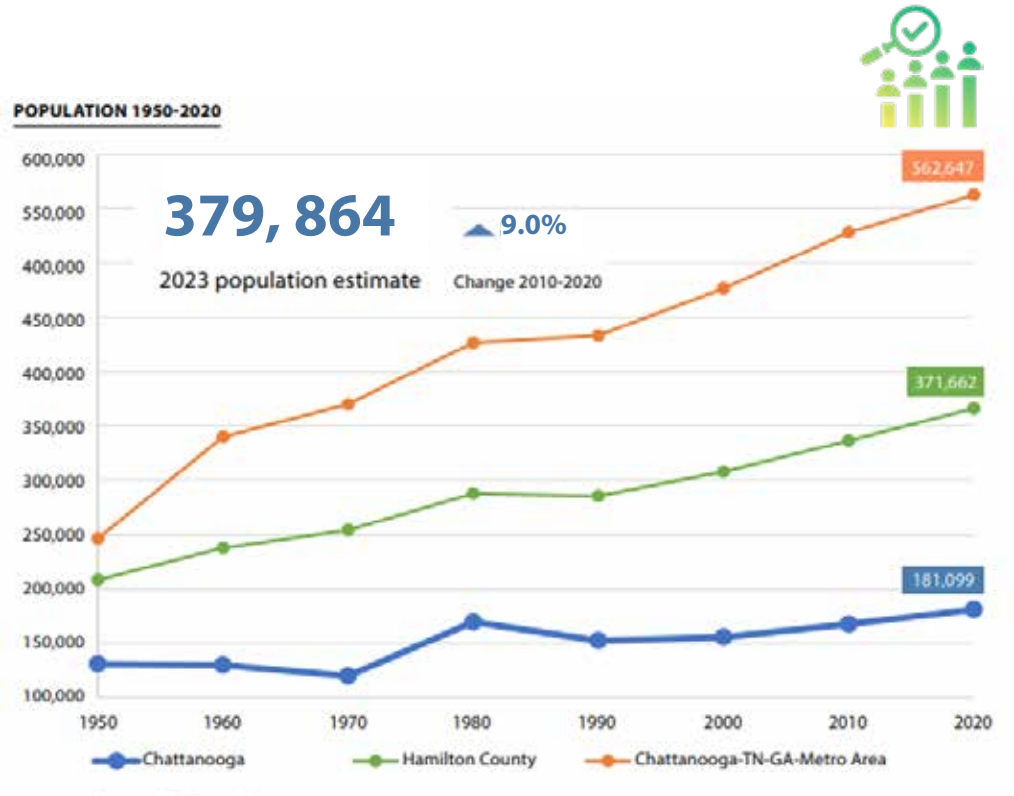
HAMILTON COUNTY CENSUS DATA

39
Median Age

63%
Employment Rate

$76,219
Median Household Income

38.4%
Bachelor's Degree +



ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

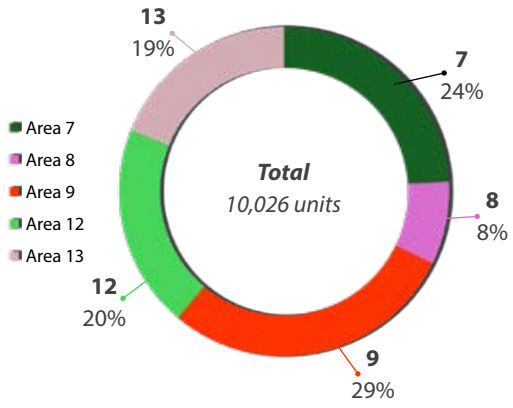
Area 8 has a relatively diverse mix of uses and is centrally-located within the County, providing excellent opportunities for housing to supply the regional workforce. Less topographically defined or challenged as some other parts of Hamilton County, the Middle Valley offers some rare flat land for development. As a result, much of the southern and central portions of the Area have already been developed with residential uses. Lakefront properties have secured a premium, with a recreation component focused less on rugged adventure recreation and trails, and more on fishing and boating on the lakes that define the Area's eastern edge. The northern part of the area is largely occupied by the Sequoyah Nuclear Power Plant, which has experienced minimal related development so far.

The following growth is anticipated by the RCLCO report in Area 8 over the next 20 years which is predominantly focused on residential growth and supporting commercial services. This Area is projected to have approximately 8% of the detached single-family growth in the unincorporated County.

Additional market findings include:

- Based on availability of flat land, school capacity/ quality, and utility capacity RGDE concurs with land use recommendations that Area 8 can accommodate additional medium density single family housing as well as medium density housing clusters around Village, Town, and Neighborhood Centers.
- Additional retail commercial may be warranted in centers as residential units are occupied.
- Recommend additional coordination with TVA to understand future use of the Sequoyah site and compatible adjacent uses.
- Resort Recreation Centers should be smaller commercial footprints, campgrounds, storage, or outfitters in support of existing recreational assets. Larger lodging, restaurants, entertainment, or retail commercial projects should be accommodated in the Town Center to preserve synergies.

Chart 1: Single- Family (Detached) Projections



2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES

The Plan Analysis section provides a detailed examination of the current conditions, opportunities, and challenges within each Area, offering insights that will guide strategic decision-making and inform the implementation of targeted initiatives. Grounded in the four Community Themes - Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities, this analysis establishes a comprehensive framework that evaluates each Area's unique characteristics. This section includes the following categories:

2.5.1 Land Use and Development Character

Zoning:
Examination of land use patterns, existing zoning district designations to ensure that development harmonizes with the Area's unique geological features.

Land Use:
Examination of existing land use patterns and street patterns in combination with existing zoning.

Building Permits:
Evaluates the current state and number of permits being issued within the Area and its impact on the surrounding community.

Development in Middle Valley/Lakesite:
Overall analysis of how development in general is impacting or influencing the community and how it's changed its character.

2.5.2 Resiliency

Natural Resources:
Evaluation of natural assets including parks, recreation, open spaces, slopes, waterways, aiming to balance preservation with development.

Infrastructure:
Evaluation of the existing adequacy of public utilities, including sanitary sewer, water, and trash?

2.5.3 Transportation & Mobility

Transportation:
This section evaluates the existing transportation infrastructure, including roadways, public transit systems pedestrian and cycling paths. It also considers future development needs and the potential impacts of anticipated growth.

2.5.4 Community Facilities

Schools and Major Institutions:
Examination of the role of these institutions in fostering learning, innovation while assessing their current state and future needs in the context of regional growth and development.

City, County, State/Land or Property:
Examination of ownership patterns and its impact on land management and development potential.

Emergency Services:
Examination of emergency response capabilities, encompassing fire, police, medical, and disaster response services.

2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

In general, the community feedback phase was focused on identifying metrics for success based on critical outcomes. The desired outcomes have been organized into a framework of Community Themes or Drivers to provide structure to the plan analysis, recommendations, and implementation solutions. Identifying these themes and utilizing them as a framework for organizing each Area plan will provide community leaders with a set of filters for future strategic, policy, and project based decisions. The following graphic identifies the 4 Community Themes and the public consensus that framed the analysis, goals, and policies within Area 8.

1 LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

- Create mixed-use centers/nodes to centralize commercial services and focus infrastructure investments.
- Establish standards for development setbacks from primary roads.
- Create visual buffers and improve safety.
- Preserve natural beauty, lake and agricultural lifestyle, and rural feel.

RESILIENCY 2

- Infrastructure must keep pace with growth.
- Need to preserve farmland, wetlands, steep slopes, and flood plains.
- Supportive of creative and comprehensive storm water strategies.
- Need better preservation of wooded areas, streams, and areas prone to flooding.

4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Need to plan for more schools.
- Need for more libraries, recreation centers, and public recreation areas.
- Preserve existing trails and support for Sequoyah "rails to trails" greenway along old track to the power plant.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY 3

- Improve criteria for connectivity between projects to limit congestion on primary routes.
- Current roads are not matching the pace and size of new developments.
- Limit congestion and driveway cuts along evacuation routes.

2.5.1 CURRENT LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

The Land Use and Development Character analysis examines zoning regulations, land use, permitting history, and development patterns and how these factors influence both conservation efforts and the scope for future growth. The Area's terrain, forested Areas, and ecological sensitivity create distinct land management challenges that have shaped current land use decisions. The analysis provides a detailed assessment of how the Area's physical characteristics impact development, offering insights into the strategies needed to balance environmental preservation with strategic growth.

LAND USE

Area 8 is primarily categorized as residential with 61.6% of the land being used for single-family residential. Vacant land makes up approximately 23.9%. Agricultural Land is approximately 3.1% of the land area. The commercial and industrial land uses combined make up less than 5% of the land Area with industrial at 0.1%, commercial at 0.9%, and utilities at 3.8 %indicating very little non-residential activity in comparison.

The primary land use in the unincorporated Areas of Middle Valley/Lakesite is single-family residential, like much of the unincorporated Areas of Hamilton County. This specific land use exists in a variety of contexts, from large farms to conventional subdivisions, and in this Area includes the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant which are second in terms of prevalence. Commercial and Industrial uses are primarily concentrated along Sequoyah Access Road, Hixson Pike, and Middle Valley Road . These commercial nodes provide essential services and amenities to the residents while maintaining the overall rural and residential character of the region. There are also some sporadic non-residential uses interspersed between these clusters, ensuring that commercial activity supports rather than dominates the landscape.

This land use pattern highlights the region's commitment to preserving its rural pattern while accommodating gradual growth and development. By maintaining a clear distinction between residential, commercial, and agricultural Areas, Middle Valley/ Lakesite balances the needs of its residents with the desire to protect its community character.

Example Residential Subdivision
Source: RPA

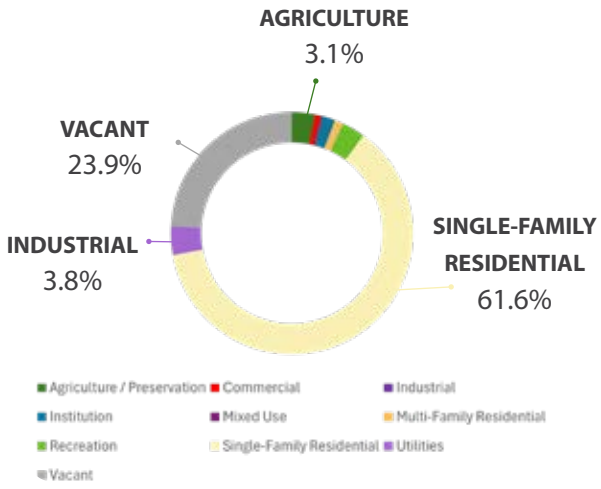


Chart 3: Percentages of Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use Map

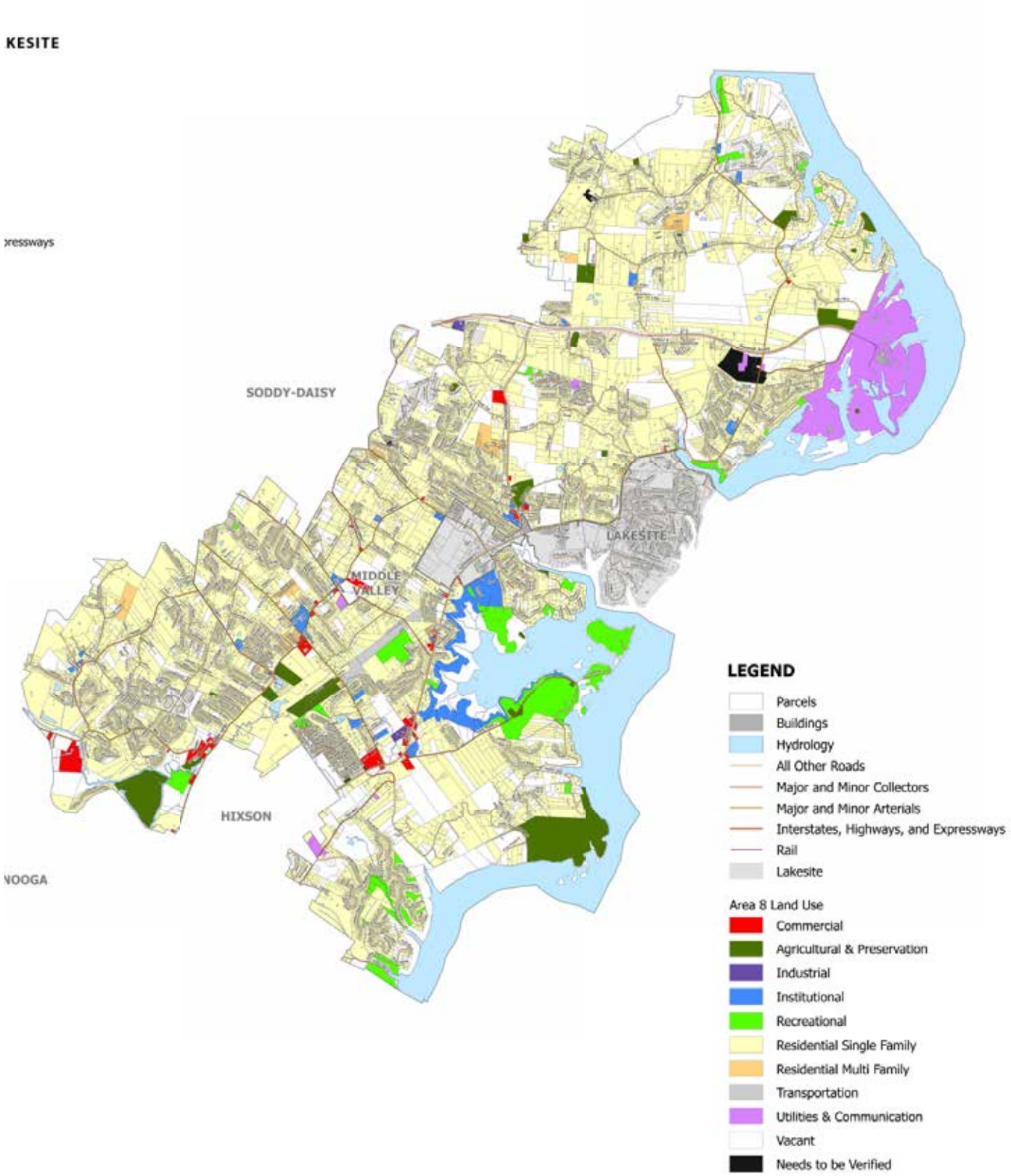


Figure 2.1: Existing Land Use Map (2023)

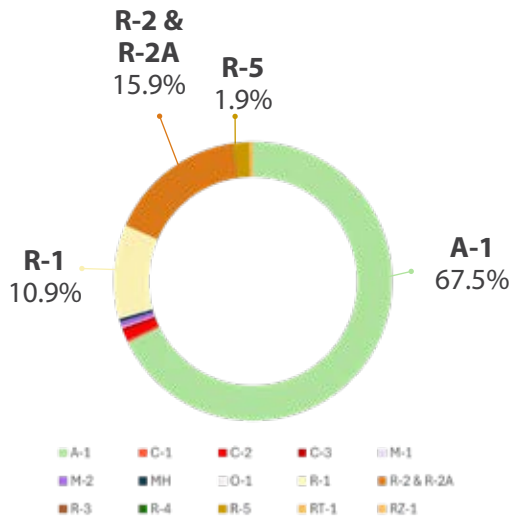
ZONING

Most properties in the unincorporated portion of Area 8 are zoned A-1 (67.5%), which permits agricultural uses and single-family residential development with a maximum density of two dwelling units per acre. This zoning classification preserves the rural character and open spaces that define much of the region, ensuring that agricultural activities and low-density housing remain predominant, an important aspect of maintaining the community character. The second most common zoning is R-1 (10.9%), which permits single-family residential development at a base density of two dwelling units per acre for traditional septic systems and on public sewer it is closer to 7.5 du/ac. The zoning categories of A-1 and R-1 making up 78.4% of the land Area is consistent with the existing community character and the land use and development character community theme.

Following the A-1 and R-1 categories the most predominant categories are zoned R-2 & R-2A (15.9%) which permits single-family and two-family dwellings, including manufactured homes.

Commercial and industrial activity is concentrated along Sequoyah Access Road, Hixson Pike, and Middle Valley Road with the remainder of the Area being residential or agricultural in nature.

Chart 2: Percentages of Existing Zoning



Lakesite commercial center
Source: RPA

Existing Zoning Map

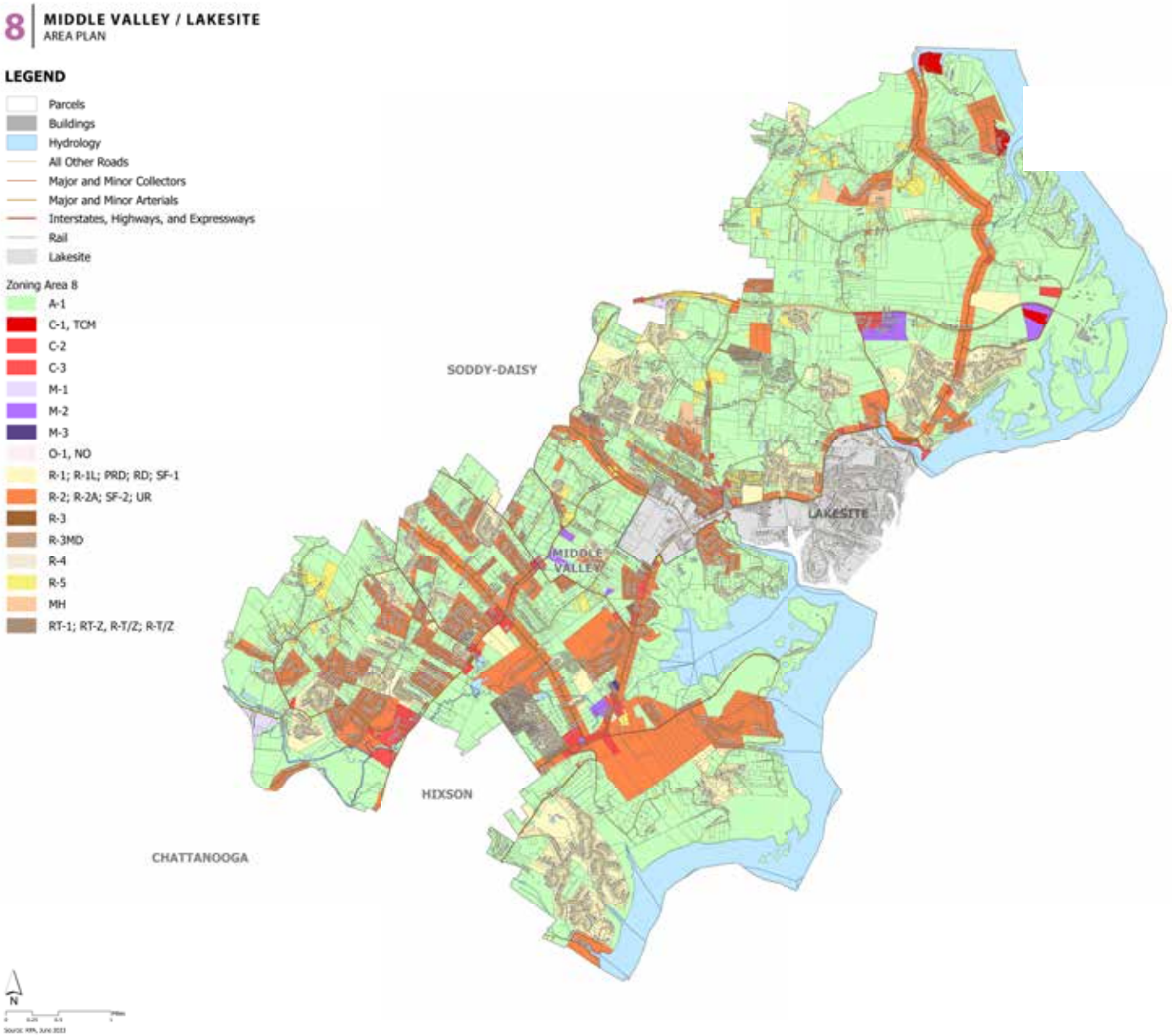


Figure 2.2: Existing Zoning Map (2023)

BUILDING PERMITS & DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Over the past decade, the Middle Valley/Lakesite Area has witnessed fluctuations influenced by economic conditions, population growth, and shifting residential and commercial demands. As residential needs expand, the Area has experienced increased activity in new construction. Analyzing these trends offers valuable insights into the region's growth patterns, regulatory impacts, and future development prospects, highlighting the dynamic nature of Area 8's built environment.

Figure 2.3 reveals that there is a close correlation between single-family permits and "Other" permits which aligns with the existing and desired character of the community. The preference for single-family homes is anticipated to continue, as detailed in Chapter 2.3. The emphasis on low-density housing, agriculture, and community-centered amenities reflects an effort to sustain the Area's "small town" development pattern.

The "Other" classification represents the second-highest category for permit issuance as identified in Table 1. This activity reflects the Area's evolving economic condition as well as its desire to be primarily residential. There were less than 10 new commercial permits issued between 2013-2023.

Development in Middle Valley/Lakesite is significantly shaped by its rural character and the community's preference for maintaining residential character. The Area's appeal lies in its natural beauty, expansive landscapes and lake living.

The map on the following page (Figure 2.3) identifies the building permits that were approved over the last 10 years including single-family residential permits and other permits.

Example Single-family Residential
Source: RPA

Chart 4: Permits by Area in Unincorporated vs. Incorporated Hamilton County.

Table 1: Permit Classification Comparison

Permit Classification	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 12	Area 13
Commercial / Office	-	6	19	49	1
Commercial Solar	-	1	2	1	-
Hotel, Motel, Tourist Cabin	-	-	1	1	-
Industrial	-	1	-	3	1
Multi-Family/ Mixed Residential	-	10	-	29	3
Other Permits*	592	1,005	1,898	1,983	516
Public Works / Utilities	-	-	-	1	2
Single Family Residential	879	1,063	2,883	2,339	876
Total (Per Area)	1,471	2,086	4,803	4,406	1,399
Total (Unincorporated County)	14,165				

- *The "Other" Permit Classification Category Includes: Demolition permits, Residential Additions & Alterations, Religious Institutions, Parking Garages, Hospitals, and Non-Residential Additions & Alterations.*
- *Permit Classifications shown are reflective of the anticipated growth pattern in Hamilton County and the categories selected in the Economic Analysis projections in the RCLCO study.*

Existing Permits Map

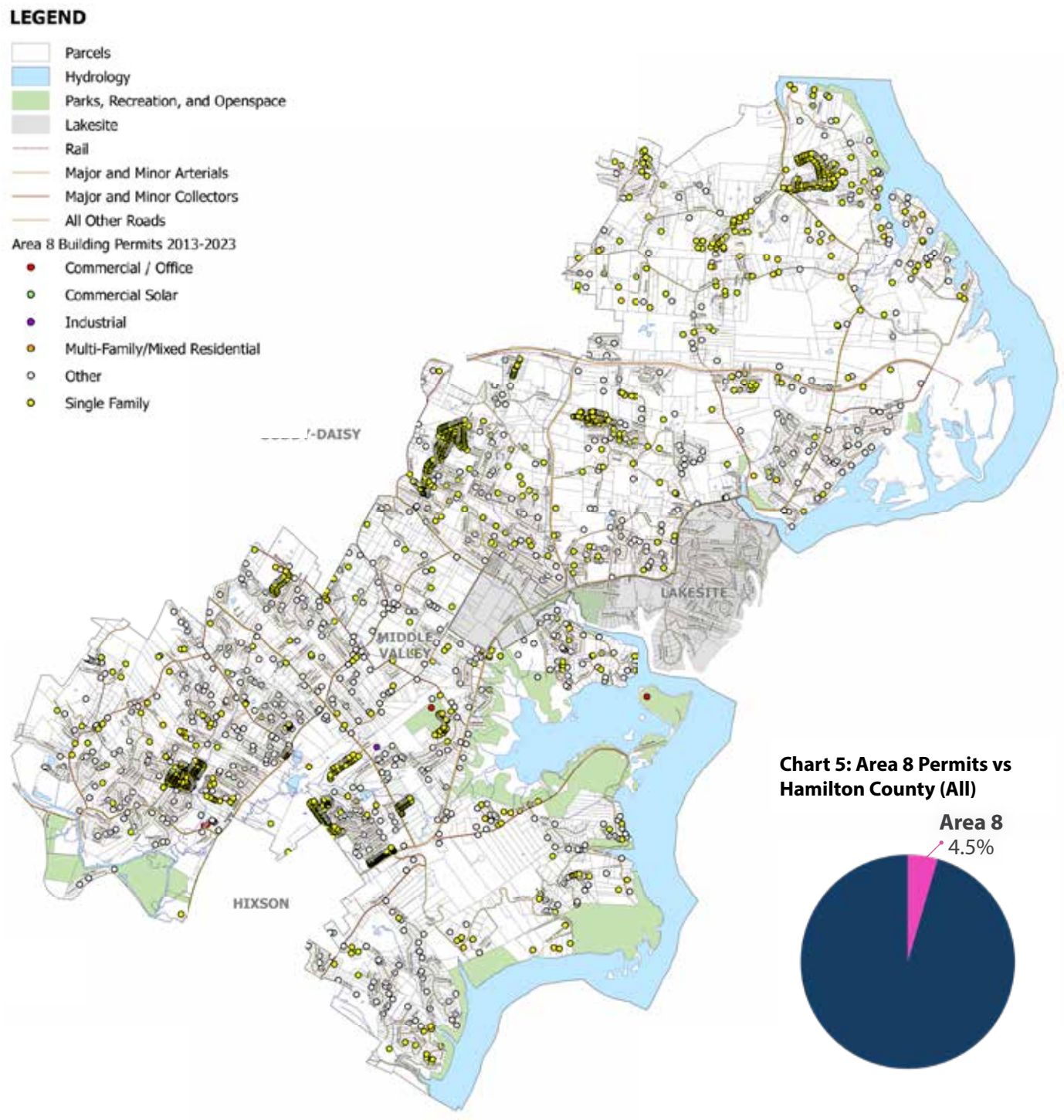


Chart 5: Area 8 Permits vs Hamilton County (All)

Figure 2.3: Building Permits Map (2013-2023)

2.5.2 RESILIENCY

The Resiliency Community Theme for Middle Valley/Lakesite reveals a strategic intersection underscoring the importance of harmonizing built environments with the natural landscape. A key focus is on developing resilient infrastructure while preserving and enhancing the Area's natural resources and rural lake lifestyle. The analysis highlights water management systems, renewable energy solutions, conservation efforts, and sustainable land use practices. These elements are crucial in maintaining a balance between development and environmental stewardship, ensuring that the community not only thrives but also respects and protects the Area's natural heritage.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Middle Valley/Lakesite Area is located between Walden's Ridge and Lake Chickamauga, featuring the North Chickamauga Creek, parks, and rolling hills. These resources support local ecosystems and offer opportunities for recreation and sustainable development. The nuclear power plant is located within Area 8. Proper management of these natural assets is crucial for maintaining the region's beauty and ecological health. The map (Figure 2.4) indicates points within the study Area that feature natural resources deemed sensitive in terms of water function, steep slopes or habitat as identified in the adopted 2016 Comprehensive Plan for Hamilton County. In the Middle Valley/Lakesite, 8.8% of the land is 25% or greater slope and 19.2% is in the 100-year floodplain. Waterways are shown to indicate the floodway and 100 year and 500-year floodplains along with Impaired Waterways (303D) which indicate water quality status based on monitoring of sediment, pollution (metals, pesticides/ fertilizer run-off, etc.) and erosion or changes in flow/ volumes. Development in the floodway is prohibited.

Besides the southeast corner of Area 8, the topography of Middle Valley/Lakesite is not as steep as the other unincorporated Areas of Hamilton County and creating a unique system of water flow, and infrastructure considerations for the community.

A facility unique to Area 8 that feeds from the natural resources is the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant which is owned and operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and sits on 525 acres within Area 8 along the TN River. It officially opened for commercial service on July 1, 1981 and is licensed through 2041. The facility supplies enough power to meet the needs of approximately 1.3 million homes in the Tennessee Valley.

Sequoyah Nuclear Plant
Source: After Action Report, FEMA

North Chickamauga Creek & Boy Scout Road (Floodway Zone)
Source: Google Earth

Natural Resources Map

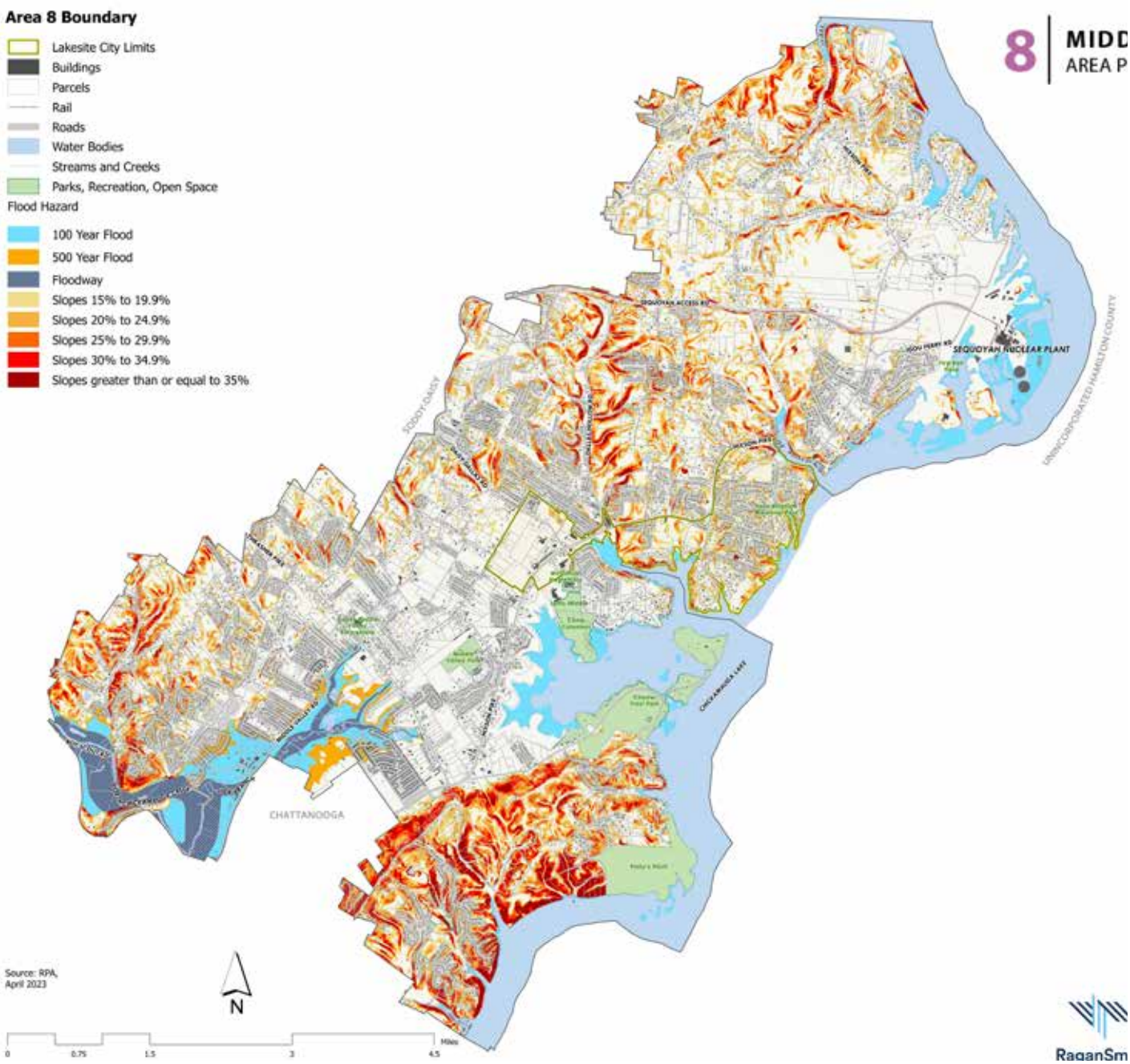


Figure 2.5: Natural Resources Map

With North Chickamauga Creek State Park, the Cumberland Trail, and a portion of John P. Wilson Cumberland State Park all located in Area 13, there are multiple opportunities to connect the communities of north Hamilton County as well as Lakesite, Red Bank, Hixson, Falling Water, Walden and Dayton. Additionally, expansion of the Great Eastern Trail network is underway providing connections in a broader, state to state context. This system of trails may provide access to public recreational facilities since the Area is well connected to Walden's Ridge's rock climbing, hiking, and biking trails, and water sport activities tied to the Tennessee River and local waterways.

Water Quality BMP's (Best Management Practices) focus on the above goals of Protect, Reconnect, Restore and Sustain
Source: Stormwater runoff diagram tu.org, SETD Green Infrastructure Handbook

PARKS, RECREATION & GREENWAYS

Like much of Hamilton County, Middle Valley/Lakesite has multiple recreation options for outdoor enthusiasts. This includes Chester Frost Park, Middle Valley Park, Pinky's Point, the TVA Ball Field, Camp Columbus, and others. These spaces offer residents and visitors a variety of activities, from hiking and biking to picnicking, wildlife observation, etc. The parks and greenways are designed to highlight the natural beauty of the Area, providing both accessible and adventurous options for recreation and relaxation. These spaces not only enhance the quality of life but also play a crucial role in preserving the region's natural landscapes and promoting environmental stewardship.

These green spaces serve a purpose beyond recreation. They are critical for environmental preservation, offering habitats for diverse wildlife and contributing to the overall health of the region's ecosystems. This preservation nurtures a sense of environmental stewardship, as the community becomes more connected to the land they enjoy. With a total of 577 acres of official public recreation space and 72 acres of private recreation space in Area 8, as noted in Tables 2 and 3 on the following page, these green spaces play a crucial role in safeguarding the environmental integrity of the region. A separate analysis was conducted to measure the total approximate acreage for all aspects of parks, recreation, and open space which is approximately 6% of the total land area.

By prioritizing the protection of these landscapes, we ensure the continued survival of Middle Valley/Lakesite's biodiversity while also securing a legacy of natural beauty for future generations. Whether through careful planning or the community's growing engagement with these outdoor spaces, this Area stands as a testament to the balance between progress and preservation, reminding us all of the importance of maintaining the delicate ecosystems that define Hamilton County's identity.

Chart 6: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in Area 8

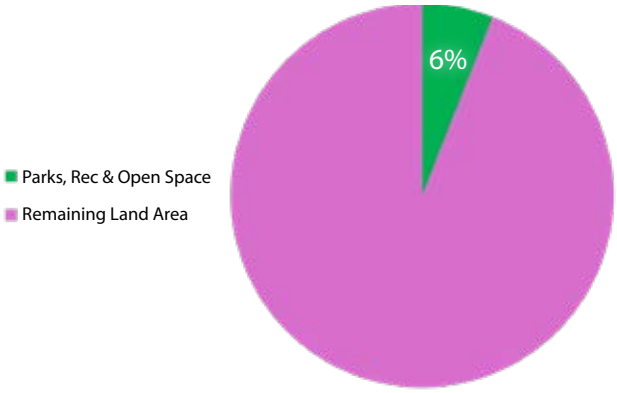
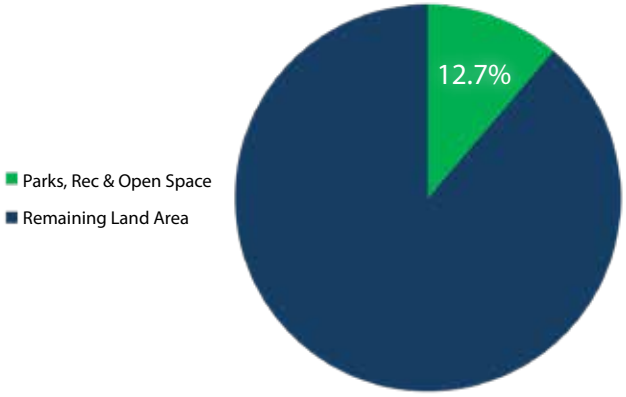


Chart 7: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in all 5 Plan Hamilton Areas



Harbor Lights Marina
Source: RV Park Store

Table 2: Public Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Chester Frost Park	Municipal Recreation Area	285
Ganns Middle Valley Elementary School	School Recreation Area	6
Hidden Harbor Pool, Tennis Courts, and Track	Neighborhood Recreation Area	6
Loftis Middle School Athletic Complex	School Recreation Area	19
McConnel Elementary School Playground	School Playground	8
Middle Valley Park	Municipal Recreation Area	39
Pinky's Point	Federal Recreation Area	212
TVA Ball Field	Federal Recreation Area	2
Total		**577**

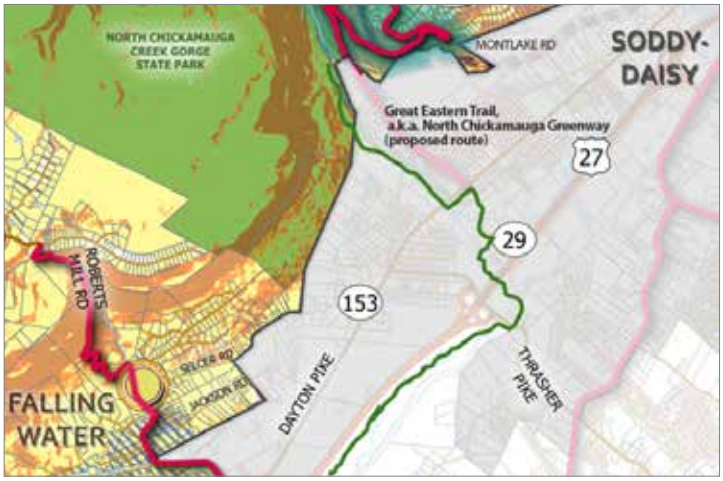
Table 3: Private Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Camp Columbus	Membership Required Recreation Area	61
Harbor Lights Marina	Boat Rentals & Yacht Club	11
Total		**72**

Chester Frost Park
Source: Hamilton County Parks and Recreation

There are multiple opportunities to connect Area 8 and the communities of north Hamilton County to Soddy-Daisy, Hixson, Falling Water, Sale Creek, Walden and Dayton. A connected system of greenways is envisioned with a study of options well underway to explore routes throughout the region. Whether expansion occurs as trails, sidewalks or blueways, many opportunities exist in the area. Portions of Sequoyah Access Road may be eligible for the conversion of railroad right-of-way as an important new east-west bike/ped facility. The North Chickamauga Creek Greenway is an established route that runs from the TVA dam to the Clear Creek Church of Christ property off Hixson Pike near Middle Valley Road. An expansion of this route is being plannd in partnership with Chattanooga Parks and Outdoors to identify a trail route following the creek bank and through areas that flood regularly or serve as riparian habitat.

Additionally, expansion of the Great Eastern Trail network is underway to provide connections in a broader, state to state context and locally to unite Hixson & Red Bank with communities in the northern portions of Hamilton County and beyond. This system of trails may provide access to already established public recreational facilities since the region features rock climbing, hiking and biking trails, camping and water sport activities including extensive fishing tournaments tied to the Tennessee River and Lake Chickamauga.



Greenways offer access to nature while also providing both recreational use and transportation aspects, especially when there are schools, businesses or residential neighborhoods nearby.
Source: RPA

Wastewater

The Chattanooga Department of Wastewater and Hamilton County Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) are tasked with planning and administration of sewer services under state and federal laws. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater manages the Moccasin Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant which is the primary treatment facility for both the City of Chattanooga and unincorporated Hamilton County.

RPA staff has coordinated closely with the City of Chattanooga Wastewater Department staff during the development of the Comprehensive Plans to ensure adequate sewer capacity is available to accommodate the anticipated residential, commercial, and industrial development growth. This coordination is a technical evaluation with ongoing coordination of local agencies to ensure long term capacity.

WWTA staff has provided information to RPA that existing capacity and available financial support substantially limits new sewer availability in the unincorporated county in the short and mid-term. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater has provided guidance that adequate sewer capacity is available for anticipated development during the next 5 years.

RPA staff working with both WWTA and County staff to support new development and achieve the best outcomes possible regarding managing growth in the unincorporated area.

Septic Systems

Due to sewer capacity and availability, septic is the most common wastewater treatment option in Unincorporated Hamilton County. Generally, the minimum lot size required for septic systems is 25,000 square feet. Residential development in rural areas without sewer service is often built on these larger lots. Unless a decentralized/private sewer system is used, then density is treated as if its served by public sewer.

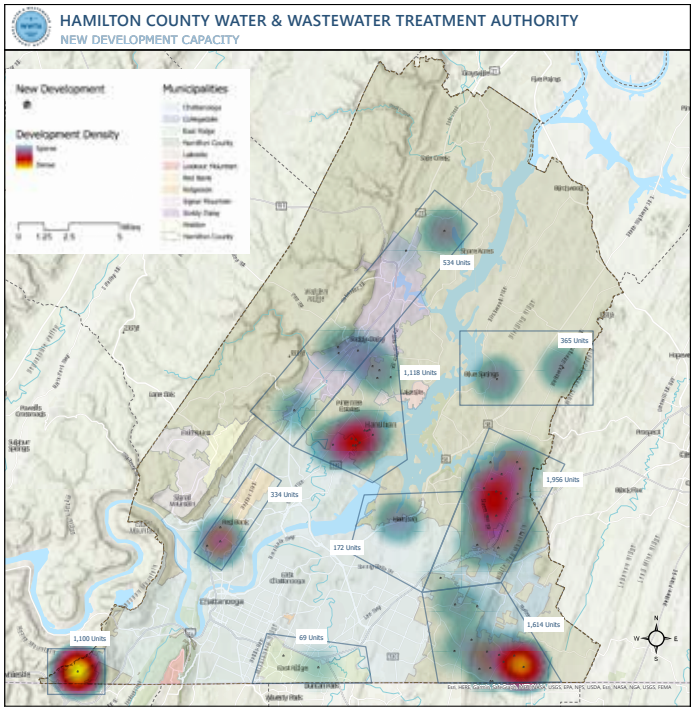
Information Highlight

Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems

A decentralized wastewater treatment system is like a combination of traditional septic and sewer. In a decentralized system, buildings or groups of buildings have a septic tank on-site as an initial treatment. Wastewater is then piped to a central location for additional treatment and disposal. Currently, Hamilton County only has a few examples of existing systems but anticipates them to become more common.

One key advantage in these systems is off-site disposal, which provides flexibility in housing types and helps preserve valuable open spaces. Additionally, centralizing the final stages of treatment and disposal reduces the risk of individual system failures, positively impacting the environment. WWTA provides oversight on these systems.

Note: If approved, these systems allow development to be approved at a density/intensity as if it were on sewer.

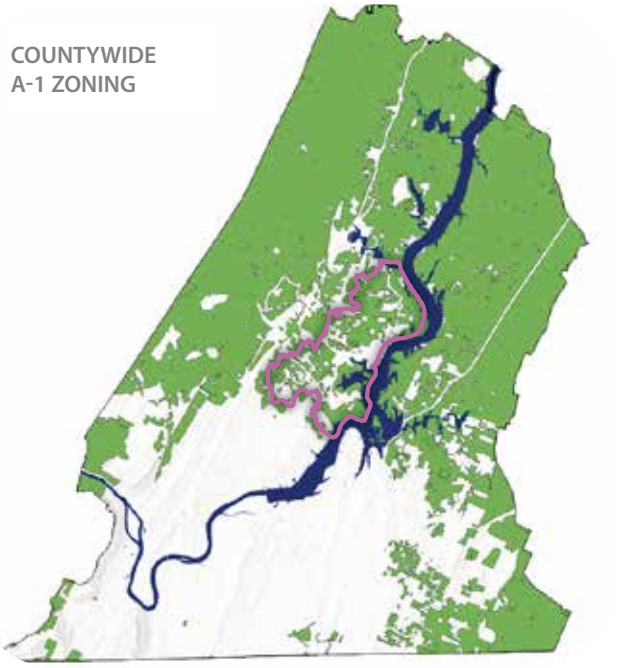


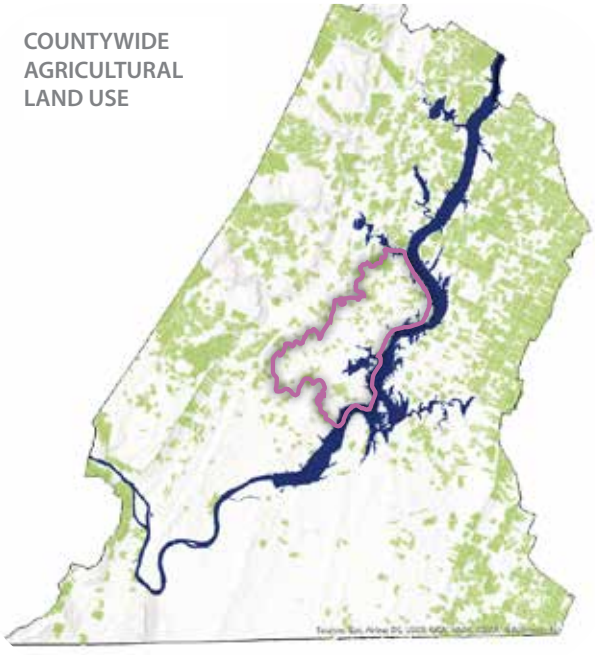
New Development Capacity (June 2023)
Source: WWTA

AGRICULTURE

Hamilton County has a long history of agricultural activity in areas like Apison, Sale Creek, Flat Top Mountain, Georgetown and the Hwy 58/Birchwood area. A portion of Area 8 consists of agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses and may also include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes. Usually zoned as an A-1 district, they often include single-family homes on large lots as well as accessory buildings such as barns and greenhouses. Properties given the "Greenbelt" status (15 acres or more) usually feature a farm or single-family home with surrounding open space, pastures or forests retained and with tax benefits available. Development centered around farming is typically on septic systems. Agricultural uses in Hamilton County range from commercial businesses or large production facilities, such as a dairy or orchards, to horse stables, to roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores.

Not only do these agricultural uses add to the rural character of the area, but they also provides many benefits to the local community such as healthy food sources, educational programs, agritourism opportunities and improved environmental function for clean air and water quality - when significant vegetated areas are preserved and low impact farming practices (limited pesticide use or organic farming) are put in place. Programs that promote local agriculture and conserve open space and natural resources are readily available. See TN Dept of Agriculture Conservation practices may also include the use of clustered residential homes with farm amenities or scenic views and open space set aside. Another tool used to help preserve agricultural places and provide income includes special event facilities such as barns or pavilions, guesthouses or wedding chapels for instance.





AREA 8

67.5% A-1 Zoning
61.6% Single-Family Parcels
4.5% of Permits issued in the County
28% of Area in Steep Slopes & Floodway
6% Of Area in Parks, Recreation & Open Space

HAMILTON COUNTY

56% of the County in A-1 Zoning
30% of the County has Agricultural Land Use

Sewer Infrastructure Map

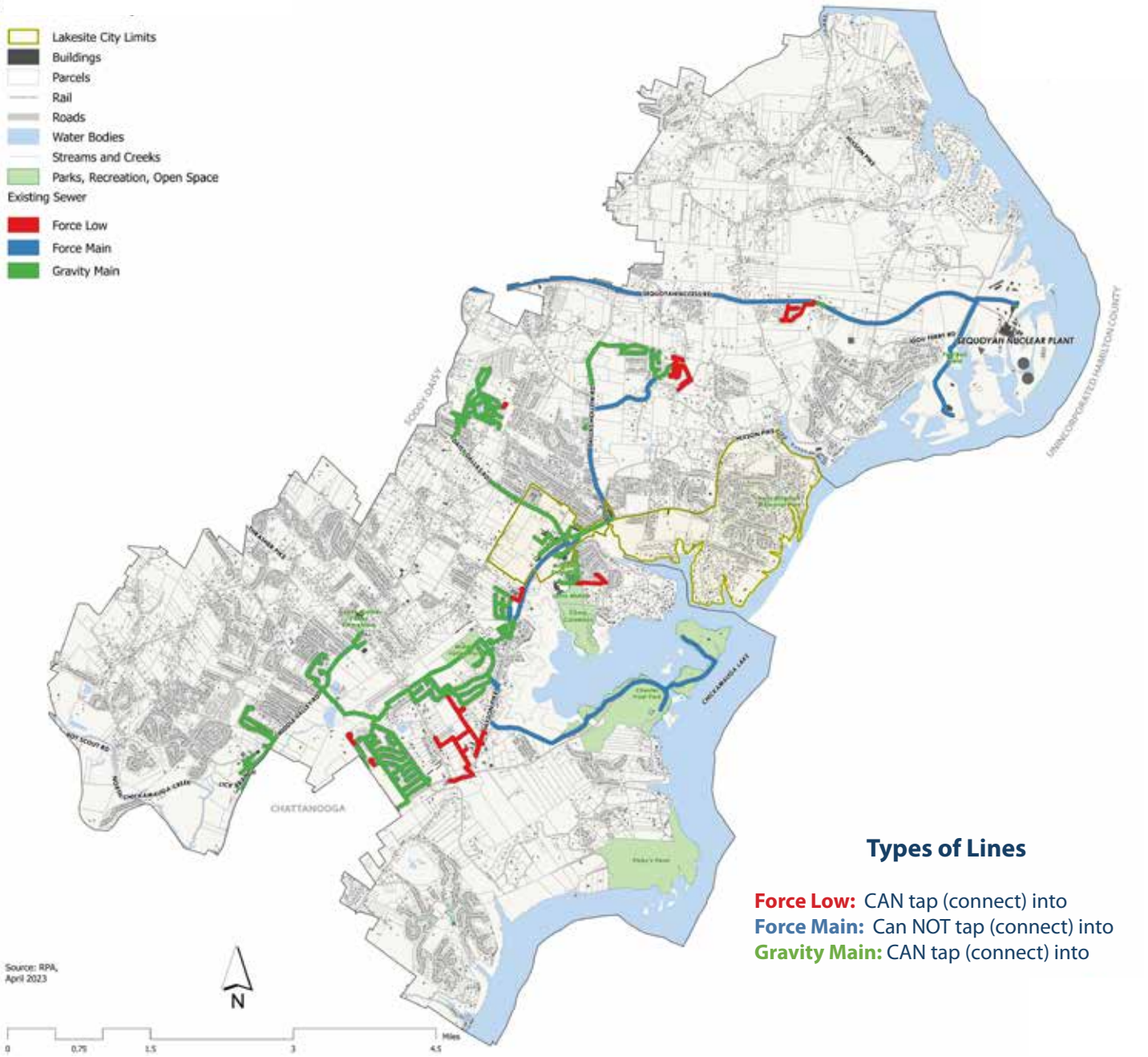


Figure 2.4: Sewer Infrastructure Map (2023)

2.5.3 MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION

While the single-occupancy vehicle remains the predominant mode of transportation and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future, it is crucial not to overlook multi-modal transportation options. This analysis will focus on the network of pathways that underpin the Area's mobility and accessibility. The Area's road network forms the backbone of its transportation system, connecting neighborhoods, commercial centers, and outlying regions. The existing network of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trails is assessed for connectivity, safety, and accessibility. These modes are equally important in these Areas as they are in urban settings, serving purposes such as recreation, exercise, and social interaction.

The transportation network in Area 8 is mostly reliant on vehicular trips. Most arterials and collectors located within Area 8 do not have pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure available. Previous planning documents referenced that citizens requested more pedestrian and bicycle facilities when they were originally written, and it can be anticipated that the current citizens will also desire these facilities. Portions of TN-319 / Hixson Pike have been improved to include sidewalks when widening projects were constructed. The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Transportation Authority's (CARTA) routes do not serve Area 8, with the exception of the Dial-a-Ride service. Both the Hixson-North River Community Plan and the City of Lakesite listed adding a transit shuttle as one of the goals for the communities.

Functional Classification is a system for how roads are designated based on traffic volume, connectivity, use, and other factors. This often distinguishes between locally owned roads and state or federally owned roads. The main functional classes are arterials, collectors, and local roads. For example, within Area 8, Hixson Pike (TN-319) is considered an arterial, Middle Valley Road is considered a collector, and Dallas Lake Road is classified as a local street. Roadway improvements can be affected by functional classification either through funding or by the agency overseeing the project.

Within Area 8, there are several arterial roads to provide connectivity across the Area. Both principal arterials can be accessed by numerous connector roads. The majority of these connector roads are two lane roads that may have horizontal and vertical curves as a result of the geography in the Area. Another hindrance to mobility to the Area is the Chickamauga Lake which serves as a natural boundary between Area 8 and Area 9.

The transportation analysis provides a detailed and dynamic overview of the current and future state of the Area's transportation network. By addressing the diverse needs of all users—drivers, transit riders, pedestrians, cyclists, and freight operators—the Area plans aim to create a balanced, efficient, and forward-thinking transportation system that supports the region's growth and enhances the quality of life for its residents.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) uses functional classification to "define the role each element in the roadway network plays in serving travel needs." Roads are categorized by location (urban or rural), capacity, and alignment with future development plans. This classification system also differentiates between locally-owned, state-owned, and federally-owned roads, which can influence the funding sources and oversight agencies involved in roadway improvements. For example, improvements to state routes are generally proposed by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the FHWA, with additional input from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Metrolpolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This coordinated approach ensures that infrastructure upgrades align with both state and local priorities.

The functional classification categories at the local level in Area 8 are as follows:

- Arterial
  - Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
- Collector
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
- Local Roads

Arterials

Arterials are classified based on their high level of mobility. Arterial routes are typically the longest and have higher capacity compared to the other roads in the transportation network. They have few access points and only connect to other Arterials within the network. Most travel that occurs on an Arterial is over long distances, such as inter-state travel. Arterial routes typically account for the highest traffic volumes within the transportation network, but less than 15% of the physical transportation network. For example, Interstates consist of 3% of the vehicle miles traveled and between 17% and 38% of the vehicle miles traveled in a transportation network. Arterials are further classified as principal or minor arterials. Examples of Principal Arterials include interstates, freeways, and expressways. Minor arterials serve trips of shorter lengths than principal arterials connect smaller geographic areas to the transportation network.

Collectors

Collectors connect local roads to the arterial routes within a transportation network. They are shorter routes than arterials and have lower speed limits with more access points. Collector routes are typically used for intra-county travel rather than statewide travel like the Arterial routes. Collector routes make up approximately a third of the transportation network. Collector routes are further classified into major and minor collectors. Major collectors usually allow for higher levels of mobility within an area and minor collectors often have more access points. The distinction between major and minor collectors is often determined by speed limits, driveway spacing, and annual average traffic volumes.

Local Roads

Local roads account for less than 25% of the vehicle miles traveled but make up between 62% and 74% of the transportation network. They are usually characterized as having a low number of lanes, low speed limits, and low traffic volumes. Local roads are classified after the arterials and collectors have been identified within the network.

Crash Data

The transportation analysis of Area 8 reviewed functional classifications, traffic operations, and safety. Potential improvements were identified by analyzing historic and projected traffic volumes, crash data, and delay levels, with roads ranked by priority. Review of historic crash data identified Middle Valley Road, Daisy Dallas Road, and Gann Road as exceeding the statewide average crash rate based on the frequency and severity of crashes over the past three years. The historic crash data is shown on Figure 2.6.

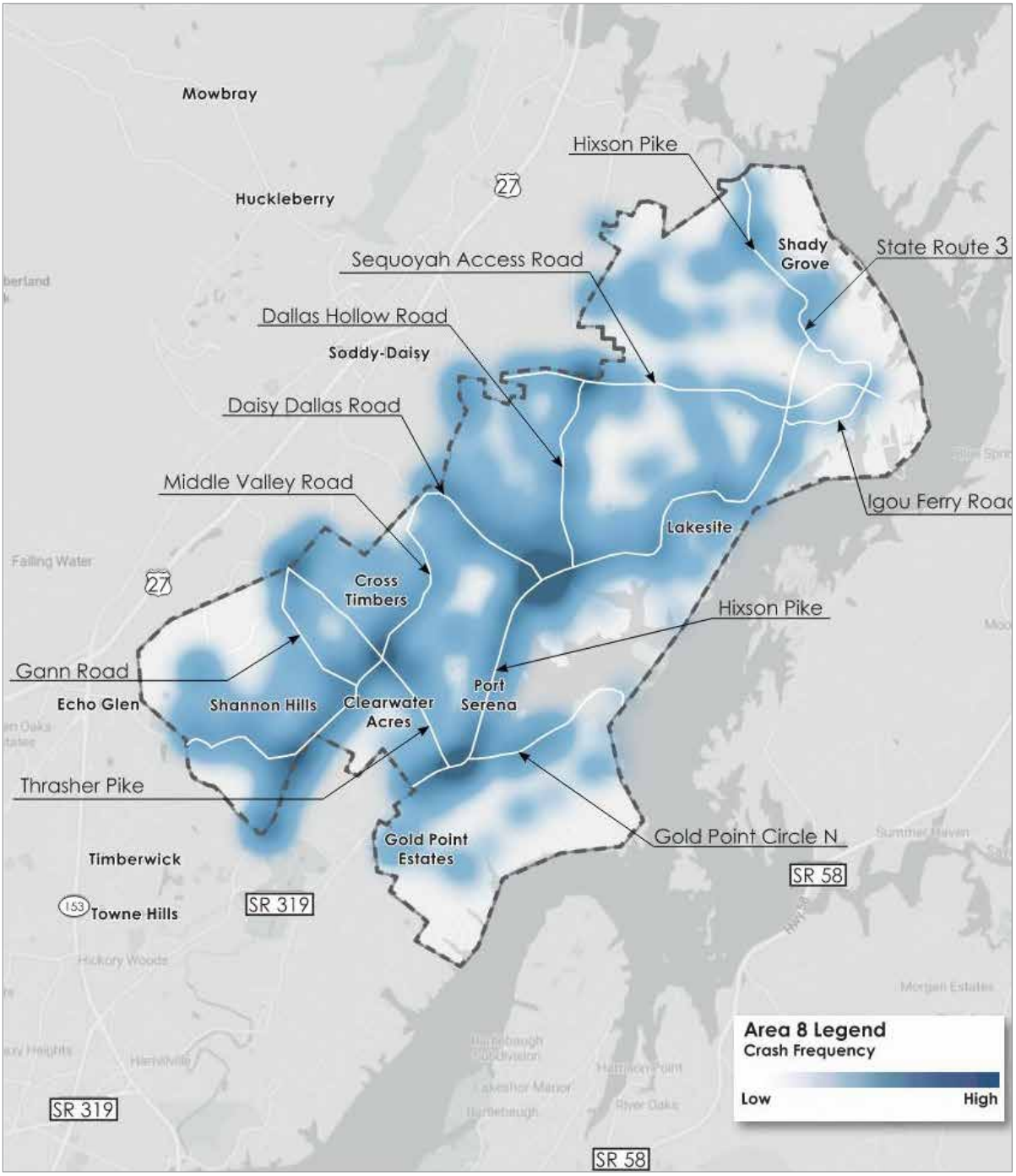


Figure 2.6: Area 8 Crash Data Map (08/24/2020 - 08/24/2023)

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Roadway improvement considerations began with a thorough inventory and analysis of Hamilton County's existing roadway network. This initial assessment included a detailed review of traffic operations and crash patterns to identify potential safety enhancements. From this analysis, a list of roadway improvements was developed and organized by priority, focusing on areas that would benefit most from strategic upgrades.

To assess traffic operations, we used a combination of historical traffic count data collected annually, future traffic forecasts from the RPA's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, and general Level of Service (LOS) criteria. This approach allowed us to pinpoint current capacity constraints and anticipate areas likely to face similar issues as the County grows. Roadway segments already at or nearing capacity were flagged for inclusion in the improvement list to address these pressing needs.

The safety review analyzed three years of crash data across Hamilton County roadways to calculate crash rates on key segments. We then compared these rates to statewide averages to identify roads that might benefit from targeted safety studies or projects.

Table 4: Proposed Roadway Improvements (All Areas)

Priority Group	Roadway	Project Location	Area	Type of Improvement
Short-term	Hunter Road	at Lebron Sterchi Drive	9	Intersection
Short-term	Hunter Road	at curve near Crooked Creek Drive	9	Safety
Short-term	Hilltop Drive	between Hunter Road and Volkswagen Drive	9	Extension
Short-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Safety
Short-term	Standifer Gap Road	from Banks road to Camp Road	12	Safety
Short-term	Daisy Dallas Road	from Harrison Lane to Hixson Pike	8	Safety
Short-term	Middle Valley Road	from Hixson Pike to Daisy Dallas Road	8	Safety
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Daisy Dallas Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Walnut Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Gann Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Hunter Road	at Garfield Road	9	Intersection
Medium-term	Roberts Mill Road	from Dayton Pike to Mountain Laurel Trail	7	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Mahan Gap Road	9	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Amos Road	9	Capacity
Medium-term	E Brainerd Road	at London Lane	12	Intersection
Long-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Capacity
Long-term	Standifer Gap Road	at Bill Reed Road	12	Intersection
Long-term	Armstrong Road	from Hixson Pike to Lee Pike	13	Safety
Long-term	Harrison Bay Road	from Hwy 58 to Birchwood Pike	9	Safety
Long-term	McCallie Ferry Road	from US 27 to Spradling Road	13	Safety
Long-term	Gann Road	from Middle Valley Road to Daisy Dallas Road	8	Safety
Long-term	Montlake Road	from Dayton Pike to Mowbray Pike	7	Safety
Long-term	W Road	from Mountain Creek Road to Anderson Pike	7	Safety

TPO Planned Transportation Projects Map

Average crash rates for the entire state of Tennessee were used for comparison to identify roads that might benefit from a safety study or project that would identify detailed crash patterns or implement improvements or strategies that could reduce the number or types of crashes. Three roads within Area 8 were identified as candidates for safety projects including Middle Valley Road, Daisy Dallas Road, and Gann Road. There was one fatality noted in the crash history of Gann Road.

Projects

(Considerations for future investments)

- **Principal Arterials**
  - *Dallas Hollow Rd from Seqouyah Rf to Hixson Pike*
  - *Hixson Pike from Thatcher Rd to Hamby Rd*
  - *Hixson Pike from Hamby Rd to Daisy Dallas Rd*
  - *Hixson Pike from Daisy Dallas Rd to Thrasher Pike*
- **Minor Arterials**
  - *Sequoyah Access Rd*
  - *Daisy Dallas Rd from Lovell Rd to Hixson Pike*
  - *Boy Scout Rd*
- **Minor Collectors**
  - *Lovell Rd, Thrasher Pike, Gann Rd,*

Moses Rd, Bowman, Rd

- *Middle Valley Rd from Daisy Dallas to Thrasher Pike*
- *Middle Valley Rd from Thrasher Pike to TN 319*

Figure 2.7: Area 8 TPO Planned Transportation Projects Map

2.5.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Area 8 offers a comprehensive array of community facilities designed to enhance the quality of life for its residents and business owners. These facilities include educational institutions, healthcare centers, libraries, and recreational amenities, and emergency services. Each facility is integrated into the community to ensure accessibility and to meet the diverse needs of the population and support sustainable growth. While some of these facilities are within the incorporated limits of Soddy-Daisy they are included due to the use of the residents of the unincorporated residents of Hamilton County.

SCHOOLS AND MAJOR INSTITUTIONS

It is imperative that Hamilton County Schools be part of the conversation when it comes to growth in the Lakesite/Middle Valley Area. New schools tend to attract new growth in the form of residential development. As the area continues to grow, schools may approach, or exceed, capacity due to increasing student enrollment. Factors such as transportation, access, and space needed for buildings, parking, and recreation must be considered as new schools are planned.

Hamilton County Opportunity 2030 Strategic Plan

Hamilton County Schools introduced a 7 Year Strategic Plan "Opportunity 2030" to engage stakeholders and align strategies to directly respond to the needs of the students, staff, and the community.

HCDE's mission is:
To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and supports to thrive in life.

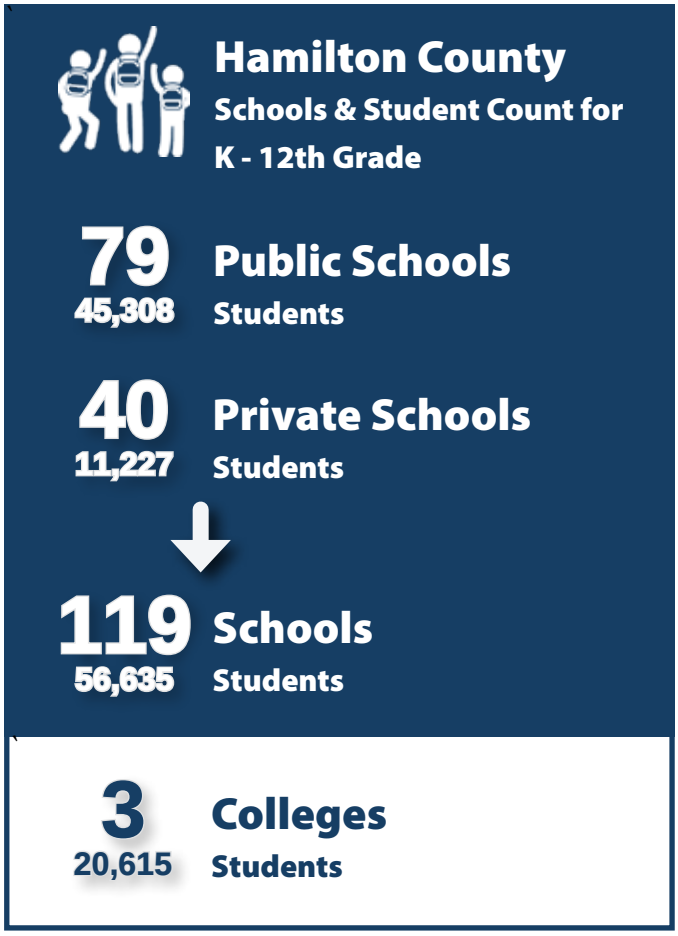
HCDE's vision is:
By 2030, Hamilton County Schools will be a leader in developing our diverse graduates to be connected, competitive, and life ready.

The HCDE 2030 plan has made 5 commitments:

1. Every Student Learns
2. Every Student Belongs
3. Every School Equipped
4. Every Employee Valued
5. Every Community Served

In 2024, the County established 250 million in bonds in anticipation of upcoming school needs.

Hamilton County is home to many private and public K-12th Grade institutions and colleges, the following is a Countywide total of all schoools and students:



Schools Map

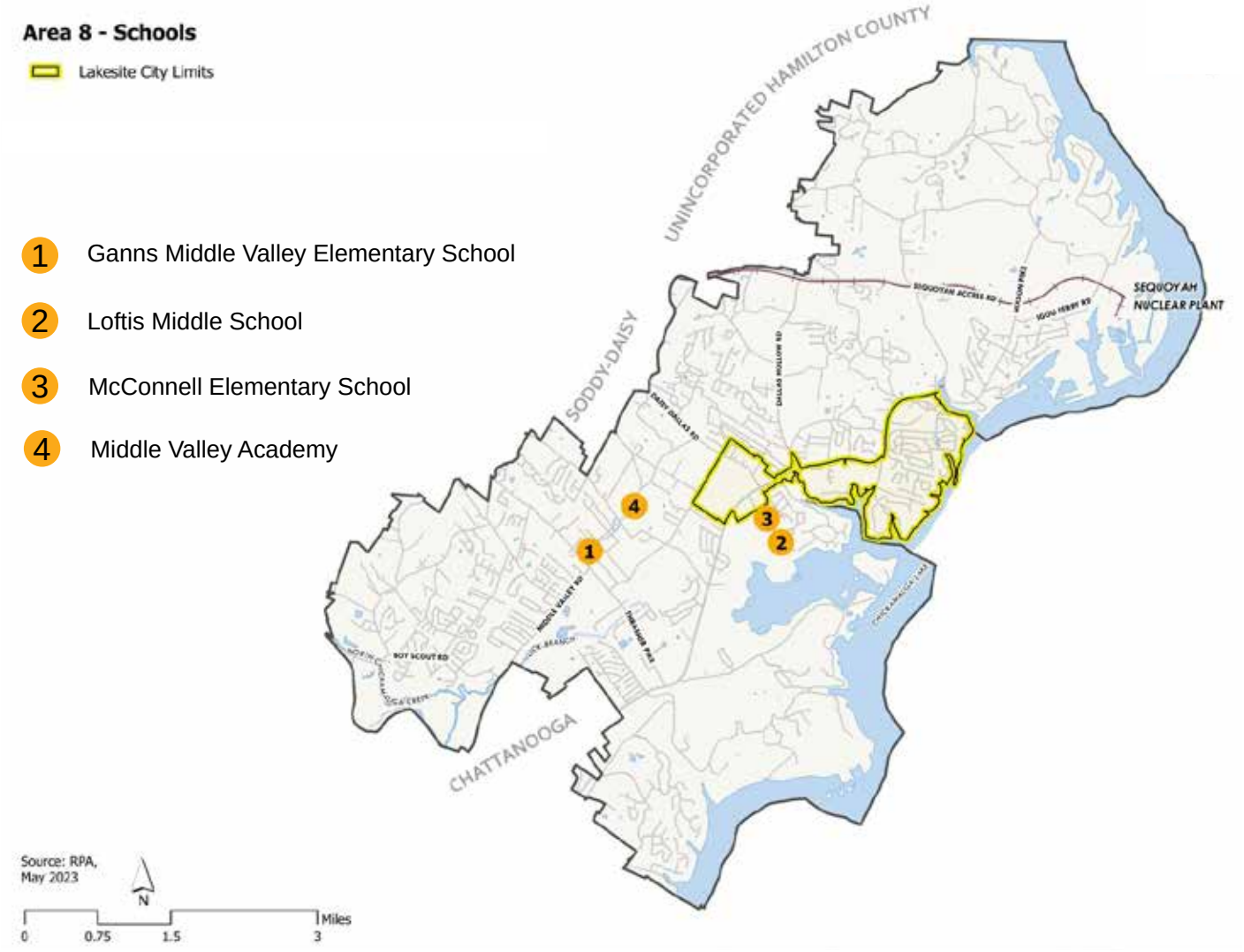


Figure 2.8: Schools Map (2023)

PARKS & GOVERNMENT OWNED LAND

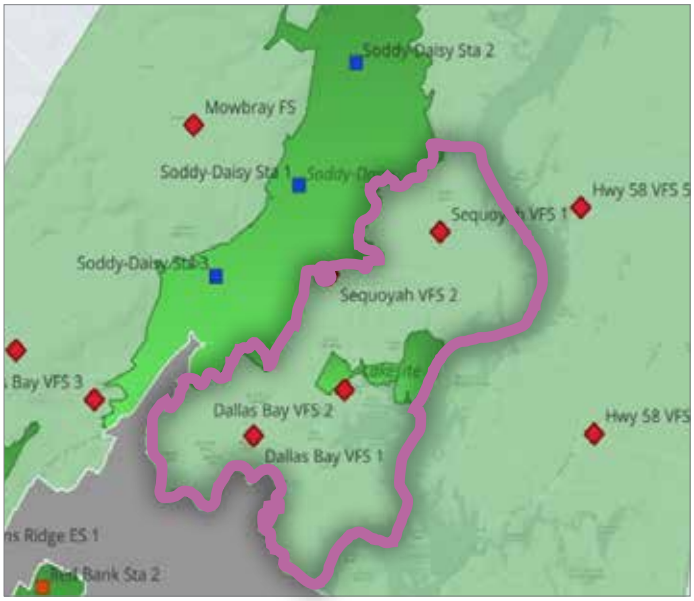
Given the predominantly residential nature of Area 8 and number of schools, there is a significant presence of public recreational facilities. While this section also appears in the Resiliency section it is also important to note the impact that public recreational facilities have on the overall community environment. In addition to preserving sensitive environmental assets, these Areas are a recreational asset that draw hikers, bikers, boat riders, horse riders, and others. Unlike other Areas of unincorporated Hamilton County, there are not significant lands under conservation. Publicly used parks in Area 8 when combined total approximately 577 acres.

Access to public recreational facilities, hiking and biking trails is not as proximate as other portions of unincorporated Hamilton County which presents an opportunity for new programs such as "rails to trails" programs where abandoned railway is reused for public pedestrian and multimodal pathways. There is also an opportunity to connect to existing greenways outside of Area 8 and create new greenways throughout the Area.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

In 2024, the Tri-Star conducted a Fire and Emergency Response Evaluation of the unincorporated Areas to identify current levels of fire protection service, geographic coverage, response time, Areas of need, etc. Within Area 8, there are four (4) volunteer fire departments (VFD) including Dallas Bay VFD 1 and 2 and Sequoyah VFD 1 and 2 as pictured in figure 2.9 below with an outline of Area 8. The stations are evenly distributed throughout the Area and the report did not identify any gaps in coverage. The report did however, identify that the VFD's in Area 8 are one of the less populated Areas with an estimate of 25,322 people and therefore, has one of the lowest demands for emergency services within all of the unincorporated Areas. As growth continues in Area 8, it will be necessary to continue to evaluate emergency service and response and improve accordingly.

Hamilton County Emergency Management owns and constantly updates evacuation routes and plans for natural disasters.



Fire Stations in Middle Valley / Lakesite
Source: Tri-Star Public Solutions, Fire & Rescue Services Evaluation

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS

3.1 INTRODUCTION
3.2 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
3.3 GOALS
3.4 VISION STATEMENT

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Shaping a vision for the future of the Middle Valley involves exploring its potential and engaging with residents and business owners to understand their aspirations for the next decade. What qualities do people value? What elements make this Area unique or special? To identify these community values, two surveys were distributed during the planning process. During public meetings, participants were invited to identify issues and prioritize potential solutions. While some concerns were specific to particular sub-Areas, many were relevant to the entire area.

The initial feedback produced four key Community Themes which ultimately outlined the analysis portion of this plan. Those key themes helped shaped the remainder of this plan and are identified in Chapter 2 of this plan.

Survey responses, input from community meetings, feedback from the Advisory Committee, and professional guidance from staff and technical advisors, were used to draft goals, a vision statement, and recommendations to reflect the shared values of the Northeast County community to establish a direction for the future.

A community's **GOALS** form the foundation of its identity and guide is actions and decisions. They identify the driving forces of the community, by adhering to these core goals, the community fosters a sense of unity and purpose, enabling all members to work together towards a common vision of a prosperous and harmonious future.

A **VISION STATEMENT** outlines the collective aspirations and core values of the community. It serves as a guide, highlighting the community's desired future and setting a clear direction for growth and development. Crafted through collaborative input, the vision statement emphasizes key principles such as preservation, recreation, infrastructure, housing, and overall quality of life.

Presentation briefing at County Commission
Source: RPA

3.2 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community feedback is crucial in creating an area plan because it ensures that the voices of those who live, work, and play there are heard and valued. The residents have an intimate understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within their community, providing insights that outside experts might overlook. Engaging the community fosters a sense of ownership and collaboration, making the planning process more inclusive and transparent. By incorporating diverse perspectives, we can create a more comprehensive and effective plan that reflects the true needs and aspirations of the people it serves. Ultimately, community feedback ensures that the final plan promotes sustainable development, enhances quality of life, and preserves the distinctive character of the Middle Valley / Lakesite.

Public input is vital to the success of any planning process and in the area planning process for Hamilton County. Understanding the perspectives of those who live and work in a community every day provides invaluable insights to experts developing concepts and recommendations. Several opportunities were offered for the public to share their thoughts and feedback in various formats with the goal of developing a shared vision. This section outlines the engagement efforts of each event

Plan Hamilton Landing Page
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/

Area 8 Website
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/middle-valley-lakesite/

1600
approximate # of people participating in person at various meetings.

505
people participated in the online survey.

35
Community, online, commission meetings, etc.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The following outlines the public meetings held to provide a platform for the community to express concerns, share priorities, and offer feedback on the proposed strategies within the Area Plan. Through an analysis of the themes and perspectives that emerged, this section highlights the key issues raised by participants. Input from these meetings plays a crucial role in shaping the recommendations, ensuring the Area Plan aligns with the community's needs and values.

KICK-OFF

In September 2023, a kick-off meeting took place at Chester Frost Park Pavilion. The goal of the first meeting as to introduce to the purpose of Area planning as well as the process as a whole and gather initial feedback from the community. A summary of the input received at the kick-off meeting is included in Appendix D.

PUBLIC MEETING #2

In December 2023, the second public meeting was held at Soddy-Daisy High School. The goal of this meeting was to not only update the community on the process but to understand the community vision so that was the forefront of the Area planning process before the documents were created. The insights and ideas gathered from all these meetings are summarized in the appendix of this plan and have directly influenced the goals and policies.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In addition to in-person engagement, we conducted a comprehensive public opinion survey from August 2023 through October 2023. This survey covered a wide range of topics, including recent and current development, future development, environmental issues, and mobility. The valuable insights gained from the survey are included in Appendix C.

ONLINE INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Two Countywide informational meetings were held online by the RPA in January of 2024 to discuss 4 topics with the public including: Traffic & Transportation, Commercial Centers & Corridors, Housing, and Parks & Greenways.

Draft Plan Meeting

In October 2024, a draft Area Plan meeting was held at Clear Creek Church of Christ. The goal of this meeting was to present the 75% draft version of the Area 8 plan to the community and for the RPA to provide an update of the overall process, how the plan addresses community concerns, and how this plan will guide growth moving forward.

Public Meeting
Source: RPA

Table 5: Community Outreach Timeline for Plan Hamilton

OUTREACH TECHNIQUE	DATE	LOCATION	AREA REACHED
Survey (Online)	08/25 - 10-07/2023	Online	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
1st Round Public Meetings	10/03/2023	Bachman Community Center	7
	09/07/2023	Chester Frost Park Pavilion	8
	08/24/2023	Ooltewah High School	9
	08/29/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	08/21/2023	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
2nd Round Public Meetings	11/28/2023	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	12/05/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	8
	11/16/2023	Ooltewah High School	9 & 12
	09/14/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
	12/05/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
Online Informational Meeting 1	01/18/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Online Informational Meeting 2	01/25/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Community Meetings	04/19/2023	Collegedale City Hall	12
	06/14/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/15/2023	Veteran's Building, Sequoyah Road	8
	08/16/2023	Lakesite City Hall	8
	09/21/2023	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	9/30/2023	Soddy Lake Park (Booth)	13
	11/09-11/11/2023	Hamilton County Fair	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	1/23/2024	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
	05/16/2024	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	06/20/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/25/2024	The Commons	12
	08/01/2024	Century Club Banquet Hall	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	10/24/2024	Century Club	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Draft Plan Review Meeting	09/19/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	09/25/2024	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	09/26/2024	Hwy 58 Volunteer Fire Department	9
	10/01/2024	Sale Creek Middle/High School	13
	10/16/2024	Clear Creek Church of Christ	8
Public Hearings	3/28/2023	County Courthouse	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	03/06/2023	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	12/09/2024	Planning Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	TBD	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Mass Emails & Social Media	*Additional outreach was conducted through regular email announcements and Facebook updates as well as media releases to local news outlets. The mailing list on average numbered over 2,000 contacts who had registered via the website or at meetings*		

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Commercial uses and services most needed:

1. Food & Beverage
2. Leisure / Entertainment
3. Retail

38%

Experience mild congestion during peak rush hours

The top 3 infrastructure investments needed:

1. Roads
2. Parks, Greenways & Open Space
3. Schools

Civic uses and services most needed:

1. Trails, Greenways & Sidewalks
2. Pool or Recreation Center
3. Parks & Open Space

Type of Commercial Development the community would support:

74%
Neighborhood Commercial

44%
Mixed-Use Commercial

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

"Reuse old commercial land"

"Flooding and lack of stormwater engineering"

"Connection across the river would improve the east-west connectivity"

"Support of Sequoyah Greenway "Rails to Trails""

"Leave large natural areas as natural land"

"Need recommendations for better connectivity between subdivision congestion from dead-end cul-de-sac"

"Protection of farmland, wetlands, and flood areas"

3.3 AREA PLAN GOALS

These seven general Area plan goals apply to all five unincorporated Areas and create a blueprint for balanced and sustainable growth in Hamilton County, enhancing its unique character and natural beauty. These goals are based on the four Community Themes established in Chapter 2 including Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities.

By focusing on strategic growth management, we aim to harmonize new development with existing community values and landscapes, fostering economic vitality while preserving the charm of our neighborhoods. Our commitment to conserving natural resources ensures they are protected and enhanced for future generations, promoting sustainable practices. Providing diverse and affordable housing options is essential for an inclusive and thriving community. Ensuring housing meets the needs of all residents supports a diverse population and fosters socioeconomic stability.

By addressing these interconnected goals, Hamilton County is committed to creating a resilient, vibrant, and sustainable future that enhances the quality of life for all residents. Each goal is paired with specific policy recommendations and strategies to ensure successful implementation and long-term benefits for our community.

3.4 VISION STATEMENT

As we look toward the future of the unincorporated Areas of Hamilton County, we aim to craft a vision statement that captures our shared aspirations and values. This statement isn't just a list of goals; it's a reflection of our dedication to honoring our rich heritage while embracing sustainable growth. We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents through thoughtful development, preserving our natural resources, and fostering economic opportunities. By engaging in collaborative and transparent planning, we will build resilient, connected, and thriving neighborhoods where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations. This vision statement will serve as our guide, illuminating the path toward a vibrant and inclusive future for Hamilton County's unincorporated Areas.

To create vibrant and SUSTAINABLE communities that honor our heritage while embracing growth. We aim to ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE by promoting THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT, preserving NATURAL RESOURCES, and fostering ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES. Through collaborative and transparent planning, we will build RESILIENT, CONNECTED, and THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations.

CHAPTER 4
PLANS, POLICIES RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW
4.2 PLACE TYPES
4.3 POLICIES

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW

The RPA draws on a wide range of resources to determine the most suitable land uses within Hamilton County. While standard practices such as zoning often guide these decisions, it's crucial to recognize that the rich history of our neighborhoods and the specific desires and needs of the community extend beyond these conventional frameworks.

This chapter outlines the three key steps in the planning process used as part of the comprehensive planning effort. The primary aim of these steps is to prioritize community character, ensuring that each area's unique identity and needs are at the forefront of decision-making. While these steps prioritize the preservation of each area's identity, it's important to note that they operate alongside public input and community programming integrated throughout the process. By leveraging distinct planning models, the RPA has developed Place Types that cater to the specific conditions of each of the unincorporated areas within Hamilton County. The process begins with a thorough understanding of each area's unique characteristics and needs. These Place Types serve as a foundation for developing customized conditions and recommendations. The final step involves formulating specific Policies, which provide best practices for implementing the earlier planning stages.

The RPA's approach is uniquely multi-layered, incorporating best management practices tailored to the needs of each individual Area. This method ensures that land use decisions are not only guided by standard practices but also by a deep understanding of local contexts, resulting in a planning process that is responsive to the diverse needs of Hamilton County's communities.

#1

PLANNING MODELS

The RPA and their consultants have developed Countywide Growth Capacity Modeling to show current trends. This influenced the Centers and Corridors approach to planning which is graphically displayed in the Conceptual Land Use Map. These maps identify Centers, Corridors, and general land use determinations in advance of Place Type mapping that were informed by community feedback, existing policy, existing code, proposed policy and Place Types, as well as general community character.

#2

PLACE TYPES

The RPA has created a palette of 23 Place Types to describe the various uses, forms, and character that development can take throughout the County. and its jurisdictions. The section identifies how they are used and which ones exist in Area 8. The RPA's Place Types Matrix addresses a range of contexts from most urban to most rural based on the transect model. Each Place Type policy includes a general description, real-world examples, recommended land uses, guidance on intensity and form, mobility, and infrastructure.

#3

POLICIES

The policy recommendations are inspired from the 4 Community Themes which created the 7 Goals for Unincorporated Area Plans. Each Area Plan will have customized Policy Recommendations based on the community's character, needs, land use, zoning, Place Types, planning models,etc. The policy recommendations are intended to be a guide for implementation at the regulatory level and create a standard by which this document is regulated.

CENTERS AND CORRIDOR APPROACH

The Centers and Corridors Approach is a land development strategy that the RPA has developed to address growth and redevelopment throughout Chattanooga and Hamilton County and which will influence this plan's recommendations. It has three essential concepts:

- Walkable, clustered Centers where retail uses are concentrated.
- Corridors comprised of a mix of uses when in suburban areas or with deep setbacks to preserve rural character.
- Medium and higher density housing near Centers and Corridors to support their economic vitality and local transit viability.

*This approach addresses the plan's 7 Goals and the **community's preferences**:*

1. Complete Communities

A mix of housing types in close proximity to centers and corridors gives residents convenient access to daily needs, employment, recreation, and transportation options.

2. Connected Communities

Connected communities enable walking, biking, and transit options, all of which depend on a mix of uses in close proximity. Concentrating businesses in Centers and at key locations along transit Corridors makes these alternate transportation modes more feasible, helping to reduce congestion.

3. Healthy Communities

Communities, where active transportation options and public greenways and parks are available, tend to be healthier: Proximity to these amenities allows people to recreate and get around by providing the built environment to do so.

4. Safe Communities

The Centers and Corridors Approach promotes more eyes on the street, by locating buildings up to the sidewalk, animating the street edge with doors and windows, and more frequent pedestrian activity. Corridors with sidewalks, street trees, and bike lanes promote safe and efficient movement for all users of the street, including motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

5. Unique and Attractive Communities

Place Types emphasize form and character which helps preserve and foster distinctive and memorable places. Due to changes in commercial corridors throughout the County having vacancies, new opportunities are presented for multi-family housing providing redevelopment opportunities for more compact site planning, smaller tenant spaces suited to local businesses, and integrated attached single-family and multi-family. This can ; increase profits for businesses, reduce traffic and congestion related impacts, and help to preserve the character of existing single-family neighborhoods consistent with input from local residents.

6. Economically Vibrant Communities

Given finite government resources, the Centers and Corridors approach helps prioritize where City resources are invested. Walkable, compact Centers have significant economic impacts for the County Centers require a certain number of households within a given proximity (depending on their size) in order to sustain businesses. Businesses also tend to be more successful in Centers where retail, services, and housing are all clustered in a compact, walkable environment. Also, compact development yields more tax revenue per acre than dispersed development, thus contributing to the overall wealth and economic vitality of the area.

4.1.2 CONCEPTUAL LAND USE MAP

The Conceptual land use map is intended to identify the high-level areas for initial recommendations to inform the place type mapping. These maps identify more of the major Centers and Corridors, Resort/Recreation, Special Districts and Residential. The Conceptual land use map is intended to identify the high-level areas for initial recommendations to inform the place type mapping. The Conceptual Land Use Map is illustrative, whereas the Place Types Map defines development patterns and sets policies for future growth. These Concept maps were created early in the process to identify potential major Centers and Corridors, Resort/Recreation, Special Districts and Residential. The purpose of these maps is to provide guidance to residents, development interests, utility providers, planners, and county leadership on what areas should be primarily preserved in their current form with incremental growth and where new growth should be planned for to support economic opportunity and a balance of services across the County. The Conceptual land use maps also identify areas with challenging topographic or hydrologic constraints, existing agricultural use, locations of regional facilities, and recreational assets. While parcel size and density was considered this map is generalized to highlight projected trends and opportunities and to provide guidance on where public and private sector investments are most warranted.

Centers & Corridors

Centers and Corridors are planned considering a variety of factors including utility infrastructure capacity, transportation factors, proximity to schools and emergency services, environmental conditions, recreational access, housing opportunities, and access to commercial services. Centers provide the opportunity to integrate commercial services into our neighborhoods in a predictable manner with accompanying infrastructure investments and site considerations.

Center Example
Source: Continuum

Corridor designations have been applied in rural areas to indicate opportunities to preserve rural landscape, views, and development patterns, consolidate points of access to primary roadways, limit congestion, and to protect rural lifestyles. In suburban settings, corridors are utilized to demonstrate primary transportation corridors that will experience continued development pressure and warrant access management improvements.

Rural Corridor
Source: RPA

Residential

Residential Place Types are the places (outside of centers and corridors) that make up the neighborhoods we call home. They can be urban or rural, vertical and dense, or secluded retreats and are the building blocks of most traditional neighborhoods and modern suburbs.

Residential Cont.

When a community wants to incorporate space for a school, a corner restaurant or coffee shop, a convenience store, an accountant's office or even a care facility for elderly family members; the residential Place Types may not accommodate these uses. This is the reason for the variety of scale and intensity of Centers which may be used to complement residential areas to provide for daily needs services and a place for mixed residential units. This approach protects single-family residential areas and provides for a more complete community.

Source: Marco Homes

Resort/Recreation

Resort Recreation Centers are introduced in this plan as a specialty district place type. Hamilton County has a wealth of recreational assets from highly programmed parks, to blended park-preserves such as Enterprise Nature Park, to traditional passive use natural areas and preserves. These special use areas have all found a place in the hearts of recreation enthusiasts as varied as league sports athletes, paddlers, fitness walkers, bird watchers, runners, cyclists, nature photographers, and neighborhood residents looking for a safe quite walk. Not as readily recognized has been the economic potential of these assets and the user groups who love them. Working from community and stakeholder input locations have been identified where commerce can be sustainably integrated with recreation to provide jobs, tax base, and income while enhancing and preserving our community recreational resources.

Resort Recreation Example
Source: City of Rockwood, TN

Specialty Districts

Specialty Districts are used to designate the places that form the fabric of our community. They may not be where we live or shop but they house many of the other essential resources we require to thrive in modern society. These include the campuses where our children attend school, the land and facilities that produce our food, power our utility grids, clean our water, house our medical and emergency response facilities, build our communities, and manufacture the products we utilize every day. In many cases, this means they are also our places of employment.

Specialty District Example
Source: Volkswagen

Conceptual Land Use

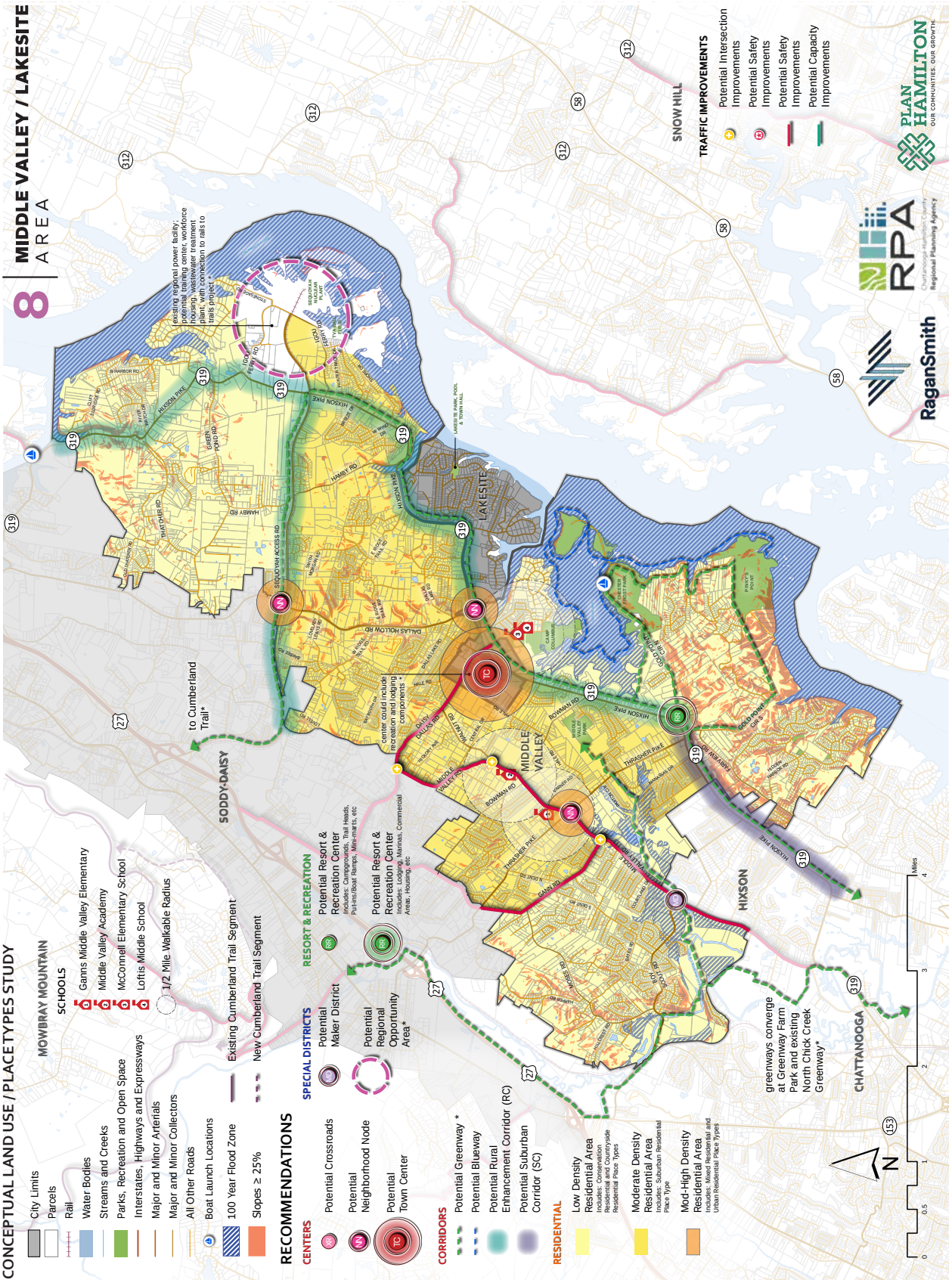


Figure 4.2: Conceptual Land Use Map

4.1.3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The growth opportunities for Area 8 should be tempered by constraints related to natural features, infrastructure, and community vision. In general, the growth should be primarily rural residential. The residential developments should be supported by thoughtful commercial or mixed-use developments that align with the character of the community including a combination of Corridors, Regional Opportunity Areas, Town Centers, Neighborhood Nodes, and Crossroad Centers.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space:

» Lake Chickamauga, Chester Frost Park, and North Chickamauga Creek are unifying assets. They warrant protection and enhancement strategies to capitalize on the value they provide for recreation, resiliency, and economic development.

Regional Opportunity Area:

» A Regional Opportunity Area has been identified around the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant including the potential site for a wastewater treatment plant.

Corridors:

» Hixson Pike between the municipal limits of the City of Chattanooga and Lakesite still has a desirable natural setting and provides an efficient north/south transportation link. Hixson Pike should be a top priority for implementing corridor and access management solutions. Development setbacks, access coordination/consolidation, and development of infrastructure for multi-modal transportation should all be employed to preserve transportation function and enhance user experience.

» Greenway connections should be explored over time along the entire length of Hixson Pike as well as connections into Chester Frost Park and Greenway Farms, and a route paralleling North Chickamauga Creek.

Centers:

- An expansion of the Town Center is proposed at Hixson Pike and Daisy Dallas Road near the edge of Lakesite. The concentration of commercial services, schools, traffic controls and existing utilities make this an appropriate location to co-locate higher density housing, office, and government services to create a true community hub.
- A Neighborhood Center is proposed at Dallas Hollow Road and Hixson pike northeast of the Town Center .
- A Neighborhood Node is proposed at Dallas Hollow Road and Sequoyah Access Road.
- A Crossroads is proposed at Middle Valley Road and Thrasher Pike to support small neighborhood services.

Additional Opportunities:

- Resort & Recreation Center uses near the parks and recreation assets along Hixson Pike.
- Expansion of existing industrial uses at Boy Scout Road and Middle Valley Road.
- Build out of existing light manufacturing / light Industrial space near the existing Tri-Start Beverage facility at the edge of Soddy-Daisy and off Thrasher Pike.
- Significant additional moderate density residential growth is also projected in Area 8 south of Sequoyah Access Road through most of Middle Valley to Thrasher Pike or Gann Road.

Development Examples
Source: RPA, with Genesis Studios rendering of Maker District/Industrial Hybrid

4.2 PLACE TYPES

Place Types are carefully designated to guide future development and align with the community's vision and adopted plans. These designations indicate whether an area is slated for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with minimal alterations. Key considerations include existing zoning, proximity to centers, schools, and parks, as well as the presence of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services. Once Area Plans are adopted, these Place Type designations become essential tools for the Regional Planning Agency (RPA) in making informed zoning decisions. Recommendations for zoning changes are made based on how well the proposed zone aligns with the intended characteristics of the Place Type.

Place Types illustrate a desired character to guide development across a range of community types, from the most urban to suburban, to the most rural places. This distinction is prominently noted in the names of most Place Types, such as Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, and Countryside Residential. Some key elements that contribute to Hamilton County's sense of place include important vistas, the river and its setting within the forested ridges, our diversity of trees, and our historic buildings. This sense of place can occur at multiple levels - across an entire city, within individual neighborhoods, or in a specific block. The transect graphic below identifies seven general levels of the natural environment to the built environment. The Place Types were partially based on this transect model to ensure that all aspects of Hamilton County's character were considered.

To promote good placemaking, the RPA uses Place Types to influence the form and character of development. This is done alongside the Centers and Corridors approach, as described in Chapter 4.1, to guide different types of development to the most suitable locations. This is based on factors such as Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Mobility and Transportation, and Community Facilities.

By designating Place Types, we are not just planning for the present but also safeguarding the unique essence of Hamilton County for future generations. Whether it's the urban vibrancy, suburban charm, or rural tranquility, each Place Type plays a crucial role in maintaining the region's distinct identity and ensuring thoughtful, cohesive development.

Figure 4.3: Transect Zones from Natural (left) to Special District (right) Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company

4.2.1 HOW ARE THEY USED?

Place Types reflect whether the community vision and adopted plan identifies an area for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with little change. Other factors, such as the surrounding or existing zoning, proximity to Centers, schools or parks, the location of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services are considered. Once Area Plans are adopted, the Place Type designations within those Plans are used by the RPA to inform zoning decisions. A recommendation for a zoning change is based on whether the requested zone will result in the Place Type characteristics described in this chapter.

The following Place Types represent the full palette of Place Types available throughout the County but not all Place Types are used in all areas.

The Area Plan recommendation and Place Types are not intended to limit development during the subdivision platting process for properties zoned R-1 Residential District or other residential zoning district or having a Special Exceptions Permit for a Planned Unit Development prior to plan adoption. Existing zoning density and conditions should not be overridden by Plan Hamilton for platting purposes in residential or commercial zones, but all setback and buffering language should apply to new preliminary plats (those not already accepted by RPA at the time of plan adoption). The subdivision of such land shall follow the Hamilton County Subdivision Regulations standard procedures.

Place Types layout out a vision for future land uses and they are intended to guide development choices. Once a plan and its associated Place Type map is adopted, then a request to study new zoning designations and assess what tools are needed to achieve the adopted vision may occur. A zoning study typically follows within 6 months to a year of plan adoption depending on the level of change desired or other influences.

- Place Types are not zoning.
- Place Types are recommended future development patterns.
- Place Types are policy.
- Place Types are used to inform zoning decisions.
- Zoning is a regulation.
- One or more zoning districts may be used to develop a Place Type.

PREDOMINANT USES, LIMITED USES, AND DENSITY

Place Types intentionally promote a mix of uses as a means of providing residents with more housing choices and more access to daily needs and jobs. Each Place Type listed in this subchapter provides examples of potential uses, along with other elements that generally define its character and are divided into:

1. **Predominant Uses** – The most prevalent, most frequently
2. **Limited Uses** – Less common, but can still be compatible with the predominant use if limited to certain locations, limited in size, buffered from adjacent uses, etc.

> *"Place Types do not necessarily describe what exists today, but rather the desired vision of what a place may become."*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA)*

While limited uses are less prevalent in a Place Type, they can provide additional services and housing options, while maintaining compatibility with the predominant use. However, a proliferation of limited uses will change the character of an area, and the original intent of the Place Type can be lost. Often, rezoning requests are for these limited uses, and where Limited Uses are listed additional guidance has been provided regarding the appropriateness of integrating the use into the Place Type.

Each of the following Place Types includes:

- A two or three letter abbreviation, and the color, used to identify each on the Place Types map.
- A general description of the typical, or ideal, situation.
- A list of characteristics that are generally needed to support the intended development form of the Place Type.
- Examples of the predominant uses.
- Examples of the limited uses.
- Illustrative photos, presented as examples only.

4.2.2 CATEGORIES & PLACE TYPES IN AREA 8

There are 23 Place Types in total as provided and amended from time to time by the RPA on their website here. The four categories with listing of Place Types are below. On the pages following in this section are the individual Place Types that appear in Hamilton County and as shown on the Place Type Map (Figure 4.6).

RESIDENTIAL

- *Countryside Residential (CR)*
- *Suburban Residential (SR)*
- *Urban Residential (UR)*
- *Mixed Residential (MR)*

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

- *Preserve (PR)*
- *Agricultural (AG)*
- *Resort & Recreation (RR)*
- *Industrial (IN)*
- *Maker District (MD)*
- *Campus (CA)*
- *Regional Facility (RF)*

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

- *Crossroads (XR)*
- *Neighborhood Node (NN)*
- *Neighborhood Center (NC)*
- *Village Center (VC)*
- *Town Center (TC)*
- *Downtown Core (DC)*
- *Suburban Corridor (SC)*
- *Mixed-use Corridor (MC)*
- *Transit Corridor (TRC)*

OVERLAYS

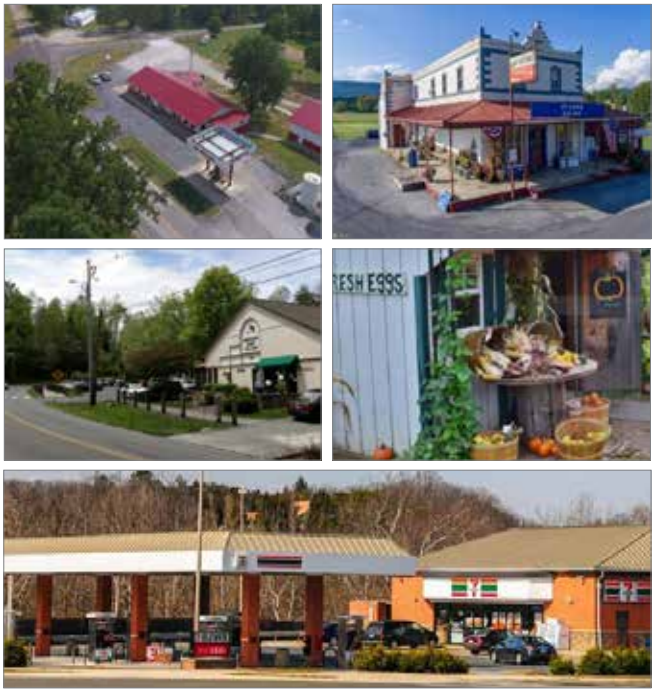
- *Natural Resources (NR)*
- *Rural Corridor (RC)*

Table 6: Density

PLACE TYPE	MAXIMUM DENSITY	GENERAL INTENSITY
CR Countryside Residential	*See Place Type*	Low Density
SR Suburban Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Low to Medium Density
SR Suburban Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Medium Density
MD Maker District	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
NN Neighborhood Node	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
NC Neighborhood Center	Maximum of 8 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
UR Urban Residential	Maximum of 15 dwelling units/acre	High Density
SC Suburban Corridor	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
VC Village Center	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	High Density
RR Resort & Recreation	N/A	Varies if Type A or B *See Place Type Description*

CENTERS

XR Crossroads



Generally four acres or less, Crossroads are smaller than Village Centers or Town Centers and are most often located in rural Areas. They may serve as gateways to adjacent neighborhoods. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection of two arterial or collector streets, or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses meets some of the daily needs of the immediate residents with stores, restaurants and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Over time when the infrastructure needed to support more intense development is in place, Crossroads may grow into the larger Village Center.

Uses

Retail, restaurants, garden centers, personal services, offices, gas stations, small markets, auto repair, landscape businesses, and small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops).

NN Neighborhood Node

Located in urban or suburban Areas, and generally a total of only two acres or less, Neighborhood Nodes are much smaller than Village or Town Centers. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses provides goods and services, such as laundromats, restaurants, small grocers, and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses, to the immediate surrounding community. Residential uses over retail or office are common.

Uses

Small retail and restaurants, convenience stores, personal services, offices, farmers' markets, small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops), live/work, short-term vacation rental, and two, three and four-unit dwellings

When a Neighborhood Node is located along a Mixed-use Corridor or Transit Corridor, the building size in the Neighborhood Node should be consistent with its surrounding corridor type (typically larger than described above), but the uses at that location should include ground-floor commercial or services.

NC Neighborhood Center

Usually found in suburban locations, Neighborhood Centers are shopping centers of 5–15 acres that provide goods and services primarily to the surrounding neighborhoods. They are not part of a continuous "strip" of commercial uses along a corridor, but rather are limited to a single quadrant of an intersection and surrounded by residential development. They usually have large, shared parking lots with a few outparcel buildings that face the street. Some include smaller commercial properties on the other corners of the intersection. Neighborhood Centers often have one large building that houses multiple stores, deeper building setbacks, an emphasis on vehicle access, and limited civic services. Neighborhood Centers may be redeveloped as Village or Town Centers with a more walkable and urban form, over time.

Uses

Grocery stores, retail and restaurants, offices, personal services, small workshop/industries (such as studios, work spaces, bakeries, breweries, woodworking shops or other low impact production) townhomes, and minor auto service/repair.

VC Village Center

Larger than Neighborhood Nodes, but smaller than Town Centers, the Village Center (generally 2–10 acres) is a pedestrian-oriented cluster of medium footprint buildings, with a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Multi-story buildings with residential uses over retail or offices are common. Due to their intensity, Village Centers are typically located along transit routes, but primarily serve local residents. Walking, biking and transit are prioritized over auto use in Village Centers, with shared parking lots providing a park-once environment. Pedestrian entrances front directly onto the sidewalks, with window displays at the ground floor to provide interest for pedestrians. Village Centers are often organized around a central public square or park. Village Centers may, over time, grow into Town Centers.

Uses

Civic institutions, public square or park, retail, restaurants, offices, personal services, lodging, live/work, small industries/workshops (such as studios, bakeries, breweries, or woodworking, or other low impact production), townhomes, short-term vacation rentals and two, three and four-unit dwellings.

CORRIDORS

SC

Suburban Corridor

Suburban Corridors have a linear configuration because they are located along major commercial streets, however they differ from Mixed-use and Transit Corridors in that the development along them tends to be more spread out. They are not typically served by frequent transit. Businesses along Suburban Corridors serve a large geographic Area and are primarily accessed by car. Buildings tend to be single-story and house a single use with deep setbacks from the street. Some developments have a horizontal mix of uses within a larger site. The types of businesses found along Suburban Corridors range from stand-alone restaurants and stores, to "strip" shopping centers, to regional malls, medical centers, multi-story office buildings, and hotels. Multi-unit residential is also a growing use along suburban corridors, either as new construction or as retrofits of older retail centers or hotels.

Predominant Uses

Retail, multi-unit housing, offices, restaurants, personal services, medical facilities, lodging, small workshops and artist studios, recreation and entertainment (such as bowling, mini golf, conference centers, theaters) and assisted living facilities.

Limited Uses

Auto-oriented services when located along a major corridor or at the corner of a major intersection.

RESIDENTIAL

CR

Countryside Residential

Countryside Residential Place Types have a very rural character and consist primarily of single-family homes on large lots. Countryside Residential may include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes, as well as accessory buildings, such as barns and greenhouses. This Place Type also includes the County's agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses ranging from roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores to larger production facilities.

Residences and development centered around farming are typically on septic systems. Residences are generally further from key destinations than in other residential Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs. Fixed-route transit is not feasible, and sidewalks are not likely, due to the low density of these Areas.

Countryside Residential maximum densities are as follows:

- 1.5 dwelling units per acre (development on septic),
- 3 dwelling units per acre (developed on sewer), and
- 2.75 dwelling units per acre (developed on decentralized sewer systems or where new approved technology allows*)

** When new information or technological improvements to the decentralized systems becomes available, staff will present information to the County Commission for direction.*

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached, farming activities, accessory buildings (barns, greenhouses, etc.), manufactured homes

Limited Uses

Event facilities, golf courses, and campgrounds where appropriate infrastructure exists and development impacts such as noise, traffic, and activity are directed away from existing residential uses.

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- Buffer and setback from right-of-way:
  - Require a 30' wide planted landscape buffer from existing ROW.
  - For exterior street facing garages, garage doors must be set back 20' from the right-of-way.
- Perimeter buffer:
  - Plant 2 inch caliper trees around entire perimeter of development; minimum of 30' on center. If existing vegetation is equivalent to or greater along the perimeter, the existing vegetation would count towards this requirement.
  - Behind said buffer- require a 25' rear setback and a 10' side setback if the side of the house is adjacent to the buffer.
- Floodplains
  - Floodplains may be filled up to three fifths the distance of the length of the floodplain on the property. For instance if a floodplain is 100' in length from a water body – one can fill up to 60 feet in length of that floodplain length.
- Steep Slopes
  - Adopt a steep slope vegetation policy and planting requirements *(Reference: City of Chattanooga Code Sec. 31-324.4)*

SR Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential Place Type has a predominantly low intensity, single-family detached, residential development pattern, especially within the same block. Some moderate density residential development, such as small lot houses or attached townhomes, may exist, but are located on a major street or near a transit route or school. When next to lower density residential development, this moderate intensity infill development maintains the existing rhythm and feel of the street. Factors that play into this rhythm and feel include lot width, setbacks, building massing, and height. Open spaces are typically private (back yards), but greenways may provide connectivity. Residences in this Place Type are generally further from key destinations than those in other Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs.

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units/acre, accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

Limited Uses

The following uses when located within a 1/4 mile of a public school or park or center where appropriate infrastructure exists: single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units an acre; townhomes (up to 4 massed units per building); and two, three, and four unit housing

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- *Require ADA compliant sidewalks in Suburban Residential Development Standards unless the average lot size is 1 acre or above, in all plans, to ensure pedestrian infrastructure in denser subdivisions.*

MR Mixed Residential

The Mixed Residential Place Type is intended to provide a wide range of housing options for residents at various stages of life, and walkable destinations in close proximity. Due to their intensity, Mixed Residential developments are located along major streets, or within walking distance (1/4-mile) of a transit route. The Mixed Residential Place Type includes moderate to higher intensity housing. Taller multi-family buildings are located along streets, with shorter buildings on local streets to provide a transition to any less intense residential uses.

Predominant Uses

Two, three and four unit residences, multi-family residential with 5–12 units per building, cottage courts, townhomes, manufactured home parks, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Limited Uses

Multi-family of over 12 units per buildings should directed towards major streets/corridor or adjacent to a center.

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

PR Preserve

Preserves are large expanses of forest, floodplains and other natural resources, as well as public parks and recreation Areas that have been set aside as places where general development is not allowed. They may also include privately-owned land that is permanently protected by conservation easements and remains in a largely undeveloped state. Some may be used for passive recreation, while others are largely off limits to human use due to sensitive natural resources or their remote location. Development within the Preserve is minimized, and is limited to cultural, educational or recreational uses.

Uses

Undisturbed open space, visitors' centers, nature centers, public parks, active and passive recreation, trails, cemeteries, and accessory structures such as concessions, storage and parking.

RR Resort and Recreation

The Resort and Recreation Place Type supports outdoor activities such as camping, boating, golfing, bouldering, mountain biking, as well as corporate nature retreats, and eco-tourism activities. These places are focused on enjoying nature, exceptional views, or historic landmarks. However, unlike Preserves, which are primarily government-owned properties with very limited development, such as a state or County park, the Resort and Recreation Place Type can include multiple private businesses with more development, such as marinas, hotels, restaurants and even housing. Properties may range in size from a 20-acre campground to 100+ acre resorts with a marina, lodge, restaurant, and individual house lots.

Resort Type A accommodates a more intense outdoor recreation and park experience and could include hotels, conferences centers, large campgrounds/RV parks and related uses or even a full resort. Oftentimes these are located in or adjacent to state or county parks or may develop from a golf course or event facility such as a fairground or agritourism site. The development size and location should be designed so that the impact of this larger-scale format lessens potential negative aspects.

Resort Type B accommodates smaller-scale or less intense recreational activities such as golf courses, ballfields, cultural facilities, marinas, and related accessory use such as parking areas, small campgrounds or cabins, and related retail goods such as camp stores, farm stands, and equipment rental (kayaks/canoes, bicycles, etc.)

Predominant Uses

Campgrounds/RV parks, hotels, cabins, restaurants, marinas, camp stores, golf courses, agriculture-related businesses (e.g. boarding stables, riding academies), farming activities

Limited Uses

Single-unit housing (detached and attached) and reception facilities as a secondary use integrated into a resort.

CA Campus

Campus Place Types are characterized by one major activity such as educational, office, industrial, medical, or religious. Campuses are typically based on a master plan that incorporates buildings, open spaces, streets, pedestrian networks, and parking in a unified manner. Campuses have clearly defined edges—often delineated with gateway structures and landscape—that distinguish them from adjacent Place Types. Residential buildings and small convenience services often support the predominant use. Campuses function as major employment and activity centers and are often served by public or private transit.

Uses

Institutions (such as academic, medical, religious or research facilities), offices, clubhouses/ meeting halls, athletic facilities, non-noxious/non-nuisance manufacturing and industrial, open space, multi-family residences (residence halls and dormitories), onsite retail and food services, and staff housing.

Existing schools, large medical and church campuses, government facilities, and corporate headquarters are identified as the Campus Place Type. However, as land use and property owners change over time, the Campus designation may no longer be applicable. In that case, the plan goals, surrounding Place Types, and context should all be considered in identifying future use/reuse of the former Campus site.

IN Industrial

The Industrial Place Type supports a variety of manufacturing uses. Unlike the Maker District Place Type, the Industrial Place Type includes both non-noxious operations (no hazardous materials or pollution) and noxious industries (heavy industrial production). The latter are not located adjacent to residential Areas, but are not so far away as to be a commute burden. The size of lots (2+ acres) and buildings are often larger than those in the Maker District Place Type.

Uses

Light manufacturing and industrial facilities, including assembly facilities, offices, distribution, warehousing, wholesaling, retail specifically related to the primary use and self storage facilities.

Limited Uses

Heavy manufacturing should be located along major transportation infrastructure and directed away from existing development.

There are limited areas of industrial uses in the County today. Some smaller scale industrial areas may appropriately transition to Maker Districts supporting a combinations of contractors, skilled trades, repair specialists, artists and artisans, food production, and service centers.

MD

Maker District

Maker District Place Types are live-work districts where housing and workplaces are located in close proximity to each other, providing residents with convenient access to employment. They include a mix of light manufacturing, assembly, and contractor businesses, along with multi-family residential and commercial uses. Older smaller industrial structures that have been adapted for new purposes are frequently found here. Industrial facilities are non-noxious (no hazardous materials or pollution), and non-nuisance (no odors, excessive light, or heavy truck traffic). Due to these smaller buildings, short block lengths, and the mix of other uses, these Areas are generally walkable. Parks, plazas, and neighborhood-serving retail enhance the character and livability of the Area.

Uses

Non-noxious/non-nuisance light manufacturing, assembly, distribution, small workshop/industries (such as woodworking shops, bakeries, or other low impact production), studios, breweries, contractor's offices, live/work, multi-unit residential, retail, offices, restaurants, vehicle repair, gas stations, outdoor storage yard, and self storage facilities

OVERLAYS

NR

Natural Resources Overlay

The Natural Resources Overlay is not a Place Type in and of itself. It is an Overlay on top of the underlying Place Type that identifies Areas considered sensitive due to the presence of steep slopes, floodplains or wetlands. Sites within this overlay are not protected by law from development. The purpose, therefore, is to identify these sensitive Areas so that they are given consideration for protection, or incorporated as amenities within new developments. Some sites are already developed and the overlay designation does not mean development cannot expand in these Areas; it merely identifies the location of floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.

Predominant Uses

Uses are defined by the underlying Place Type.

RC Rural Corridor

Primarily located in rural parts of the County, and are characterized by lots of open fields and woodlands. Development along Rural Corridors is sparse with farms or single unit homes on large estate lots. A few scattered subdivisions with smaller lots may have entries along these corridors, but the homes are separated from the corridor by distance (50 - 100 feet), and by dense vegetated buffers, in order to preserve the rural character of the corridor. Rural Corridors do not have the more dense, connecting street networks. They are typically two-lane roads. Rural Corridors may however, also take the form of a major thoroughfare, such as a state designated scenic parkway, with mountainside or lakefront views. A few commercial uses, often located at a Crossroads intersection, or as a stand-alone business, may be found along Rural Corridors, but no long stretches of commercial businesses.

The purpose of the rural corridor overlay is primarily to address new subdivision development. A rural corridor setback for a subdivision for the purposes of the plan refers to a required distance that new development must maintain from a designated corridor, as detailed on the Place Type map. The intent of the setback is to protect the character and environmental integrity of the rural landscape. The setback does not apply to individual homes outside a major subdivision.

Development Standards

The following development standard will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- A 50-foot setback from right of way of existing roadway for any structure including water quality features;
- a 30-foot type A landscape buffer is required along the entire frontage;
- adequate right of way as determined by the County Engineer should also be required as a condition to be given to accommodate an additional lane if a rezoning case is requested along the Rural Corridor overlay.

4.2.3 PLACE TYPES MAP

See separate Place Type Map. Not included due to size.

4.2.4 CENTERS & CORRIDORS VIGNETTES

The Centers and Corridors Vignettes bring to life a vision for thoughtfully guided growth in key locations across our communities. By focusing on high-potential centers and strategically important corridors, these vignettes illustrate how balanced land use—combining residential, commercial, and recreational spaces—can shape places that are both dynamic and resilient. Each vignette reveals how carefully aligned planning can elevate connectivity, support walkable neighborhoods, and foster economic growth while preserving Hamilton County's distinctive character, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. Through these targeted narratives, we explore how well-designed centers and corridors not only strengthen community identity but also enhance access to essential services, encourage diverse transportation options, and bolster the area's long-term sustainability. This vision aligns with the unique needs and values of Hamilton County residents, building a legacy of vibrant, and adaptable communities. The following depictions are intended to represent one idea of potential future development at these locations. Any future development or redevelopment at these locations would need to be initiated by the private property owner.

Figure 4.7: Vignette Recommendation, Maker District at Middle Valley and Boy Scout Road

The following depictions are intended to represent one idea of potential future development at these locations. Any future development or redevelopment at these locations would need to be initiated by the private property owner. Where there is a mismatch between a vignette and the Place Type map, the Place Type map reflects the official policy.

Figure 4.8: Vignette Recommendation, Recreation Center at Hixson Pike & Gold Point Circle

4.3 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and policy recommendations outlined in Area plans represent a comprehensive framework designed to guide sustainable development and enhance community well-being. These initiatives are crafted to ensure that future growth respects and enhances the County's and Area 8 distinct community character while preserving its abundant natural resources.

> *"Comprehensive Plans offer a strategic approach to where and how we grow. They address areas for change and areas to preserve."*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA)*

Emphasizing the importance of balanced growth, the plans prioritize the development of accessible parks and recreation Areas that promote active lifestyles and environmental stewardship. Infrastructure improvements are a cornerstone, aimed at improving the connectivity of transportation networks, enhancing water and wastewater management systems, and integrating sustainable solutions. Additionally, the plans emphasize the need for diverse and affordable housing options to support a growing and inclusive population.

By aligning these goals with thoughtful policy recommendations, Hamilton County seeks to foster a resilient and cohesive community. This approach not only prepares the County for future challenges but also enhances its livability and ensures that development is carried out in a manner that respects and preserves its unique character and natural beauty.

The following section identifies the 7 goals which are consistent amongst all five unincorporated Areas. Following each goal is a policy recommendation to implement that goal.

4.3.1 GOAL 1 & POLICIES

GOAL 1
BALANCE GROWTH, ECONOMY & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Policy 1.8.1 Plan for the continued growth of Lakesite and the central valley of Area 8 north of Gann Road and south of Sequoyah Access Road. Invest in schools, identified transportation needs, and recreation infrastructure to maintain high quality of life for residents keeping pace with new development.

Policy 1.8.2 Plan for the continued growth of the existing Lakesite Town Center. This center is already the primary commercial shopping Area for the north end of Hixson Pike and should be allowed to grow in a coordinated fashion providing the area with gathering spaces, dining & entertainment, lodging, and diverse range of housing in comprehensively planned Town Center.

Policy 1.8.3 Setback and buffering requirements as detailed in Place Types should also apply to residential plats in agricultural zones.

Policy 1.8.4 Amend the A-1 Agricultural District to change to the Maximum Density to 1.5 dwelling unit per acre on traditional septic.

4.3.2 GOAL 2 & POLICIES

GOAL 2
PROTECT & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES

Policy 2.8.1 Develop a conservation plan with recreation and conservation partners (North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, Soil & Water Conservation District, TPL, Land Trust for Tennessee, Hamilton Co. Parks, etc) to acquire or buffer development from properties along the lake front and the North Chickamauga Creek Corridor that can provide recreation access, resilience from storm events, and preserve the viewsheds and natural setting along these water bodies.

4.3.3 GOAL 3 & POLICIES

GOAL 3
PRESERVE & ENHANCE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Policy 3.8.1 Consider further investment and expansion of Middle Valley Park and Chester Frost Park to meet the needs of Hamilton County residents and as assets to stimulate recreation and tourism based economic growth.

Policy 3.8.2 Consider development of a greenway in partnership with TVA, USACE, TDEC, and others. Study feasibility of a route from Loftis Middle School to Pinky's Point.

Policy 3.8.3 Develop a coalition for a combined flood protection, water quality, and recreation based conservation effort along North Chickamauga Creek / Lick Branch / Rogers Branch. Recreational aspects could include: blueway, greenway, fishing, birding, walking, and paddling access. Bike / Ped transportation routes between Chickamauga Gorge SP, Hixson High, Greenway Farms, Chester Frost Park, and Middle Valley Park could be established over time.

Policy 3.8.4 Consider commissioning an economic impact analysis to consider the potential return on these investments considering recreational, tourism, reduction of natural disaster related expenses, and community health benefits.

4.3.4 GOAL 4 & POLICIES

GOAL 4
PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Policy 4.8.1 Evaluate a new greenway route along N. Chickamauga Creek from Greenway Farm Park east to and north to Chester Frost and Middle Valley Park.

Policy 4.8.2 Develop plans for a separated multi-use pathway along Hixson Pike connecting recreation nodes at Chester Frost Park to the Lakesite Town Center and along the old Sequoyah Rail Line.

Policy 4.8.3 Work with TDEC, Hamilton County Parks, TVA, Tennessee Riverline Project and others to develop a blueway with safe points of access for paddlers and multiple locations including: Pinky's Point, Chester Frost, Camp Columbus, and Lakesite.

4.3.5 GOAL 5 & POLICIES

GOAL 5
PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy 5.8.1 Set aside funding for recommended intersection and road improvements to Middle Valley Road, Gann Road, and Daisy Dallas Road (Appendix E).

Policy 5.8.2 Continue to support WWTA's plans to expand sewage treatment capacity to serve Middle Valley and other areas of unincorporated Hamilton County.

4.3.6 GOAL 6 & POLICIES

GOAL 6
PROVIDE SUITABLE COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE CENTERS

Policy 6.8.1 Work with property owners in and surrounding the existing Lakesite Town Center to add connectivity between parcels and improve mobility across transportation modes. Make zoning compatible with lodging, restaurant, and entertainment uses to serve locals, league and tournament play at Middle Valley Park, and outdoor recreation associated with Chester Frost Park, and Chickamauga Lake.

4.3.7 GOAL 7 & POLICIES

GOAL 7
PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Policy 7.8.1 Larger center types such as the Neighborhood Center and Village Center at the periphery of Lakesite are appropriate for multi-family housing. Housing around designated center should taper in density and project size the further a is from the commercial and civic core.

Policy 7.8.2 Neighborhood Nodes and Crossroads in Area 8 are generally reflective of existing commercial or civic uses and should be encouraged through zoning to incorporate residential townhomes or small single family projects on immediately adjacent parcels if identified as such on the Place Type map. Public investment in sidewalks, intersection improvements, and connecting roadways should be considered.

AREA 8 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Bounded on the west by incorporated Soddy Daisy and the US 27 corridor and on the east by Chickamauga Lake; Area 8 serves as a key transitional zone between Chattanooga's urban core and its surrounding agricultural outskirts. As the region experiences growth, medium-density neighborhoods and multifamily housing, typical of Hixson, are beginning to extend into the southern portion of Area 8, reshaping its development character. The area's largely traffic-free access to Chattanooga, Red Bank, and Soddy-Daisy employment hubs, its high-quality schools, and centralized sewer infrastructure position Middle Valley as an attractive location for residential expansion and continued development interest.

The incorporated communities of Lakesite and Soddy-Daisy offer prime opportunities for commercial growth, while areas along North Chickamauga Creek, the adjacent floodplain, steep ridges, and the shorelines of Chickamauga Lake demand thoughtful planning. The pastoral landscapes north of Sequoyah Access Road should remain at their base density zoning, characterized by larger setbacks and lot sizes, with recreational development considered carefully as a potential exception. Middle Valley has long been a haven for small contractors and entrepreneurs supporting the region. Additionally, Chickamauga Lake and its associated recreational assets—Chester Frost County Park, Middle Valley Park, Pinky's Point, Camp Columbus, and a network of private marinas—form a robust recreational framework.

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

Centers:

- Larger commercial developments should be concentrated within the incorporated limits of Lakesite and Soddy-Daisy, where residents already rely on established hubs for goods and services.
- The Town Center in Lakesite is an existing commercial hub including: housing diversity near schools and shopping, local employment, and some resort recreation aspects (potential lodging), commercial entertainment uses, and general merchandise.
- The western balance of Middle Valley is accustomed to seeking commercial services and retail needs in Soddy-Daisy which is anticipated to continue.
- There is an opportunity for a mid-sized Resort Recreation Center on Hixson Pike at Gold Point Circle and the entrance to Chester Frost Park

Corridors:

- The southern stretches of Hixson Pike should evolve from a Suburban Corridor into a Rural Corridor as it approaches Chester Frost Park, creating a welcoming gateway to the recreational area.
- Sequoyah Access Road should shift from a Suburban Corridor near Soddy-Daisy and US-27 to a Rural Corridor (with access management) east of Dallas Hollow Road. This would mitigate congestion, maintain roadway capacity, and ensure safe passage to nearby schools. It also offers space for a greenway along the old Sequoyah rail line while preserving critical access and evacuation routes from the Sequoyah Power Plant.

Transportation Infrastructure:

- Transportation Infrastructure must be improved in the areas identified for priority investments in the Transportation Project Priorities List. The county should immediately create requirements limiting the size/density of developments with a single point of access, providing for safe pedestrian infrastructure within developments, and governing intersection spacing and access design for new subdivisions.

General:

- The RPA should extend the offer for joint planning efforts with Lakesite and Soddy-Daisy to encourage future growth and economic vitality in municipal areas and coordinate delivery of required infrastructure and services between jurisdictions.

CHAPTER 5

NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX
5.3 PLAN SUMMARY

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the essential bridge between each community's vision and the actions needed to make it a reality, translating broad goals and strategies into specific, actionable steps. By outlining processes for tracking progress, identifying funding opportunities, and fostering ongoing community involvement, this chapter offers a clear roadmap to bring these plans to life—guiding Hamilton County's growth in ways that honor its unique character, address residents' needs, and protect the qualities that define each community.

Hamilton County's growth has varied significantly across the five Areas examined in this plan, reflecting a wide range of factors. Rapid development has shaped East Brainerd, Ooltewah, and incorporated Collegedale in Area 12, along with parts of Harrison in Area 9 and Middle Valley in Area 8. Similarly, steady interest surrounds Signal Mountain and Walden in Area 7. In contrast, most of Area 13 and the northern sections of Area 9 have largely preserved their rural landscapes and agricultural heritage.

Key infrastructure corridors, particularly I-75, have been instrumental in fostering growth over the past two decades, fueling employment hubs, retail centers, and other commercial services. Interstate access and centralized sewer services has created favorable conditions for development and infrastructure investments in these corridors. Major employers like Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, along with their networks of suppliers, have driven demand for nearby housing and led to increased commercial activity. High-performing schools in the mid-county area have contributed to further residential demand.

Infrastructure

The presence of sewer trunk lines and available capacity remains one of the single biggest predictors for residential growth. However, the overall availability of sewer capacity is a significant constraint, presenting Hamilton County planners and leadership with critical decisions on where to allocate resources for sewage treatment and collection expansion. Currently, most funding is dedicated to increasing storage for combined sewer flows, aimed at preserving treatment capacity and avoiding regulatory actions tied to water quality.

An integrated approach is essential to addressing challenges facing the sewer facilities that serve Chattanooga and Hamilton County. This includes an intensified focus on reducing stormwater impacts through both engineered and low-impact development practices. Investing in more comprehensive stormwater infrastructure reviews across both commercial and residential projects could provide significant returns, mitigating maintenance costs tied to sewer capacity. Incentives for low-impact development, as implemented in other communities, could help retain stormwater on-site, reduce flow rates into combined systems, and enhance water quality within critical watersheds. Better mapping of sewer and water infrastructure is also needed to provide planners with the tools they need to identify infrastructure gaps, investment targets, and areas of the county that can be planned as future growth centers.

Transportation

The County's economic and population growth has created new challenges such as driving demand for efficient and safe transportation alternatives. This need is especially evident in areas experiencing the most rapid expansion. Keeping pace with these demands through infrastructure maintenance, improvement, and expansion is a significant challenge faced at every level of government, and Hamilton County is no exception. As growth continues in the County and the greater Chattanooga and northwest Georgia region, strategic investments in the transportation system will be essential to support future mobility and enhance residents' quality of life.

Hamilton County's role as a regional transportation hub underscores its significance. Interstates 24, 59, and 75 provide critical connectivity for freight, recreation, and commuter traffic across the Southeast and key corridors to the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Florida. Additionally, the county is served by Class I railroads, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railway, offering freight movement alternatives nationwide. The Tennessee River further enhances freight transport options as a navigable waterway.

As Hamilton County grows, a more focused approach to transportation planning will be essential. Key strategies include corridor management plans, access management strategies, and road safety audits. Corridor management plans for routes such as Ooltewah Ringgold Road, Highway 58, Hixson Pike, and Middle Valley Road can reduce traffic friction and improve access efficiency for businesses and residential areas. Access management strategies, including regulating driveway placement, optimizing intersection design, and promoting shared access points, offer a more detailed approach to improving traffic flow and safety. Regular road safety audits for high-crash routes will proactively identify and address safety concerns.

Many of Hamilton County's critical routes are under TDOT jurisdiction. Leveraging funding for improvements to those routes would begin with adding the desired route or improvement to the long range transportation plan (RTP) so that state and/or federal funding can be allocated based on the prioritization of needs by the MPO. Ongoing monthly or quarterly coordination meetings are recommended between the Hamilton County Roads Committee, RPA-MPO planners and the staff at TDOT Region 2 to advocate for future projects. This will also allow County leadership to stay informed of changes or opportunities for funding new projects or spot improvements.

To effectively address the unique needs of each Area, strategies must be tailored to specific locations and projects. These approaches should be further refined through detailed, site-specific safety and design studies. Potential tools include:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)– This would be particularly useful in areas where growth is expected to increase traffic demand. The McDonald Farm is a good example of somewhere in Hamilton County that TIF could be applied.
- Business Improvement Districts (BID)– This would be a similar approach as the TIF but would be more applicable to developed commercial areas to complete smaller road, multimodal, or streetscape projects.
- Alternative Transportation Funding – probability of success.
- Public-Private Partnerships – This can be an important tool for funding large infrastructure projects with private companies when the opportunity for an industrial, commercial, or residential projects arise with benefits to the County. The costs, financing, and effort of project delivery can be shared when working with private companies.

The transportation analysis for these Area Plans aimed to identify impactful projects that might otherwise be overlooked in the TIP process but are critical to Hamilton County residents. Potential projects addressing roadway safety and traffic congestion were identified across all five Areas and prioritized based on their impact and cost. This list serves as a valuable tool for County transportation planners and engineers, helping to advocate for major projects within the MPO–TIP planning process while also providing a strategic roadmap for efficient local investments that can deliver meaningful results in the near term.

The recommended projects include both design and construction initiatives, as well as engineering studies to refine potential solutions and anticipate future transportation needs. These recommendations are designed to address existing traffic and roadway safety challenges and can be seen as deferred investments needed to support growth that has already occurred. If fully funded and implemented, the Transportation Project Priorities List (Appendix E) would create synergistic improvements, significantly enhancing the county's transportation network. However, as new growth unfolds, additional evaluations and investments will be essential to meet evolving demands.

Emergency Services

To support the analysis of current conditions, the County and RPA also commissioned a Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation. Unincorporated Hamilton County is primarily served by a patchwork of dedicated and resourceful volunteer fire departments. With findings that reveal life safety implications tied to new growth, the report underscores the need for careful planning on where and how future developments occur, taking into account building types, heights, and roadway connectivity in order to adequately protect residents, business owners, and their structures.

Addressing Future Challenges

The benefit of planning for growth within the centers and corridors framework is that it greatly increases the odds of predicting where future sewer, transportation, emergency services, stormwater, water, communications, education, and recreational infrastructure investments will be required. However, realizing these goals will require significant financial and human resources. Outside projections estimate the combined need for infrastructure investments across Hamilton County at around $3.8 billion—a figure that poses challenges for per capita affordability.

Individual views of elected leaders on where and how much infrastructure investment is needed will undoubtedly vary, but it is clear that higher levels of funding and planning are essential to address existing backlogs across various infrastructure categories. Without an approved Comprehensive Plan, County leadership and staff have had difficulty focusing growth and predicting where infrastructure improvements will be needed next.

While certain areas have already developed strong market dynamics due to key employers, shopping centers, and transportation infrastructure, balanced investments in both traditional and social infrastructure could promote more equitable growth across Hamilton County. However, without adequate sewer capacity, education facilities, and emergency services, further growth-oriented policies may have limited impact.

Hamilton County stands at a critical crossroads where leaders are grappling with past deficiencies in infrastructure investments driven by sustained growth associated with national and regional migration and natural or endemic growth. The county continues to attract residents drawn by job opportunities, climate, quality of life, and comparatively affordable living. Meanwhile, existing residents often express a strong desire to preserve the rural character, safety, and quality education opportunities for their families.

The implementation strategies within this plan aim to directly address these priorities and lay the groundwork for a sustainable future:

1. A multifaceted approach to increasing the quality and capacity of existing infrastructure.
2. Seeking synergies between land use and infrastructure planning and improved standards for new development that maximize the efficiency, capacity, and return on investment for both private and public infrastructure construction and spending.
3. Planning and design strategies that reduce development impacts and maximize existing education, transportation, recreation, and natural resource assets.
4. Initiate new strategies to preserve rural lifestyles, agricultural production, and associated land.
5. To identify new potential revenue streams, financial vehicles, and public-private partnerships for addressing the needs identified by Hamilton County residents.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The implementation process for the Area plans is built on strong partnerships, strategic tools, and targeted funding, all aimed at bringing each community's vision to life (see Community Themes). Collaboration between local governments, stakeholders, and residents is at the heart of this process, ensuring that efforts are aligned and resources are effectively utilized. Key projects are prioritized, with clear timelines and responsibilities, while a range of tools and funding mechanisms are deployed to support these initiatives. This comprehensive approach ensures that the plans are not only actionable but also adaptable, allowing for continued progress as community needs and opportunities evolve.

POLICY SUBCATEGORY (TOOLS & STRATEGIES)

The Implementation Matrix organizes recommendations into specific focus areas, providing a clear structure, by breaking down broader policy goals into targeted subcategories. This section enables a more detailed approach to land use, infrastructure, environmental conservation, and community services allowing Hamilton County to meet the unique needs of each planning area while advancing cohesive, Countywide objectives. These categories are were tailored based on the overall policy objectives in the introduction chapter and the input received throughout the community feedback process. Within the matrix, here are 5 topics with each covering various community aspects of Plan Implementation:

1. **Community Character & Land Use Patterns**
2. **Natural Resources**
3. **Infrastructure & Transportation Network**
4. **Economic Health & Community Opportunity**
5. **Funding Mechanisms**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations outline targeted actions to support Hamilton County's vision for balanced, sustainable growth. Each recommendation offers guidance for decision-makers, addressing key areas such as land use, infrastructure, resiliency, and community development. These recommendations are crafted to reflect the unique needs of each planning area, ensuring that policies not only guide growth but also strengthen community character, enhance infrastructure, protect natural resources, and improve residents' quality of life.

These implementation recommendations, as part of an adopted plan, are intended in themselves to act as policies guiding future action, including work program activities, coordination, and as an additional reference for future rezoning applications and zoning, subdivision and other development regulation amendments.

APPLICABILITY

Identifies where each recommended action is most relevant across Hamilton County's planning Areas. By specifying how and where the policies can be applied, this category ensures that recommendations are tailored to the unique conditions, needs, and priorities of each community. This targeted approach allows for flexible, area-specific strategies that respect local character while addressing shared Countywide goals.

This helps guide effective implementation, making sure that resources and efforts are directed where they will have the greatest impact.

Case Study/ Example Ordinance

Provides practical insights and proven strategies from other communities that have successfully addressed similar challenges. By examining these real-world examples and ordinances, Hamilton County can draw valuable lessons to inform its own policies and practices. This section highlights adaptable approaches for land use, infrastructure planning, environmental conservation, incentives, economic development, and impact fees offering a foundation for local initiatives that align with the unique needs and goals of each Area.

Timing

Establishes a strategic timeline for each recommended action, guiding when and how these initiatives should be undertaken. By setting immediate (0-1 Years), medium (1-5 Years), and long-term priorities (5+ Years), this category helps coordinate efforts, align resources, and build momentum toward the community's goals and policy implementation.

AREA PLANS

Zoning decisions are based primarily on area plans, which are components of the adopted general plan, in this case Plan Hamilton. The County's five different Area Plans were developed to include Place Type (land use) and capital improvement recommendations to inform rezoning requests.

Area Specific Recommendations

As outlined in Chapter 4, Area Specific Recommendations highlighted tailored actions designed to address the overarching recommendations within each Area. By focusing on area-specific solutions, this category provides a roadmap for targeted investments and initiatives that support sustainable growth, protect local assets, and enhance quality of life in each community.

PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS AND UPDATES

In order to ensure that Plan Hamilton best reflects the existing conditions and future vision of Hamilton County, the Plan Hamilton update cycle shall be as follows:

- Full plan review - every five years
- Annual review of policy and map changes - annual review by staff
- Applicant Requested Plan Amendments - as necessary and when requested by rezoning applicant
    - Zoning decisions are based primarily on area plans, which are components of the adopted general plan, in this case Plan Hamilton. The County's five different Area Plans were developed to include Place Type (land use) and capital improvement recommendations to inform rezoning requests.
    - Requested plan changes will alternate for one side of the Tennessee River every other month to the other side to permit changes six times per year, per side of the river.
    - An Area Plan amendment and its companion rezoning case may be heard on the same agenda.

Table 7: Implementation Matrix

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.1 Community Character & Land Use Patterns			
5.1.1 Access Management	Utilize TDOT's Highway System Access Manual for driveway spacing, median openings, and separation distances from signalized intersections.	Start with all State Routes where the existing TDOT Highway System Access Manual has standing. Expand to other principal arterials, minor arterials, and major collectors. Create manual, access management requirements, and corridor management plans before new development impacts are felt. Work with land owners to voluntarily contribute in-kind contributions (ROW, Design, Etc) or require development fees for a proportionate fair share of improvement costs as development applications are approved.	0-1 Years
	Target segments of suburban corridor with high rates of traffic congestion, safety incident history, or new development permit approvals. Improve traffic safety, congestion, pedestrian infrastructure and aesthetics by creating corridor management plans and agreements with state and local partners for high priority suburban corridors		1-5 Years
5.1.2 Rural Corridors	Develop policy to maintain rural corridor character including setbacks and vegetative buffers for new subdivisions.	All mapped Rural Corridor segments in the Conceptual Land Use and Place Type Maps and those designated in future map updates.	0-1 Years
5.1.3 Centers	Work with land owners at Center locations to facilitate development, including district/center specific plan, according to center principles and preferred uses.	All designated center Place Types designated on current and future place type maps.	0-1 Years
	Once approved, partner with developers to install and construct streets and streetscape elements in the form of direct participation or financing vehicles like business improvement districts.	Focus joint development efforts on Village and Town Center areas with regional impacts. Expand to smaller centers where local governance and residents request implementation help and have previously participated in a small area plan.	5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
	Create an Overlay Commercial Zone or District to provide site and building design standards or other guidelines so new commercial development adds value to the community and is compatible with the rural character sought.		0-2 Years
5.1.4 Conservation Subdivisions	Create a conservation subdivision option to cluster housing that features at least half of its potentially buildable land area devoted to undivided, permanently protected open space.	Conservation Subdivisions should be an opt in tool available to land owners who want to balance financial returns with conservation legacy. Creation of Conservation subdivision provision in the county subdivision regulations will provide a tool to augment land purchase, and voluntary conservation efforts.	1-5 Years
	The use of an Overlay District, P.U.D., or Zone is recommended for implementation of more specific development criteria associated with residential and mixed use Place Types.		1-5 Years
	Establish Conservation or Cluster Bonus subdivision provisions and evaluation criteria in the subdivision ordinance.	All of these tools are necessary to preserve the continuity of productive agricultural land, riparian corridors, and recreational assets at a regional or landscape scale. This tool should be selectively applied in A-1 zoned areas adjacent to existing public land or with high conservation value.	1-5 Years
5.1.5 Medium Density Residential	Co-locate future Medium Density Residential adjacent to Suburban Corridor and Center Place Types. Where future Medium Density Residential abuts a Suburban Corridor or Center allow zero lot line single-family and townhomes on a percentage of the overall property. Consider allowing small-scale multifamily in these same areas (6-12 units 3 story maximum).		5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2 Natural Resources			
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection	Build a stakeholder coalition including: NRCS, Trust for Public Land, Land Trust for Tennessee, North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, Chattanooga Audubon Society, Land Conservation Assistance Network, Soil & Water Conservation District, Thrive Regional Partnership, Tennessee State and others to coordinate farmland and open space preservation efforts in Hamilton County.	Resident input from Areas 7, 9, 12, an 13 all emphasized a strong preference to preserve agricultural land uses, property, and rural character. All five planning areas include riparian corridors that if preserved would help to mitigate flood risks, provide opportunities for contiguous recreational and alternative transportation corridors, storm water quality, and habitat benefits. Development pressures are increasing across the county and in some areas the window for conservation efforts is limited. The time to begin building a coalition of landowners, conservation entities, and funding sources is now.	0-1 Years
	Identify riparian corridors for preservation that have the potential to contribute multiple community benefits including farmland preservation, stormwater filtration, flood resilience, recreation, and habitat. Pursue strategies at landscape scale and on a property by property basis as development is proposed.	Prioritize: North Chickamauga Creek - (Area 8), Wolftever Creek, Johnson Branch - (Area 12), Long Savannah Creek - (Area 9) Falling Water Creek - (Area 7), Possum Creek, and Sale Creek - (Area 13).	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection *Continued*	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of active farms and prime agricultural land.	Farmland preservation is often a unifying place to begin conservation efforts. The first step is identifying the soils and parcels that characterize productive agricultural land. Local Soil and Water Conservation Office personnel and academic partners should be engaged in this process. Making tangible progress on the ground requires partnership between federal programs such as NRCS and local conservation groups who can bridge funding gaps and provide stewardship and monitoring support. Developing relationships with Agricultural land owners and the farming community in Area 13, the northern half of Area 9, and the eastern portions of Area 12 is a critical first step.	0-1 Years
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies	Engage UTC - School of Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Build on existing successes like South Chickamauga Creek and Wolftever Creek. Invest or seek funding for agricultural demonstration projects, educational, and recreation assets.		1-5 Years
	Pursue partnerships to preserve forested land with an emphasis on areas that further regional trail connections, enhance access to unique recreational, historical, or cultural assets.	Cumberland Plateau in Area 7 and Area 13, Big Ridge Area 9, and White Oak Mountain Area 12.	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies *Continued*	Pursue multiple creative mechanisms and funding for preserving critical recreation and natural resource assets. Look for opportunities to create value in these areas through recreational tourism, wetland or stream bank creation, and consider the value of reduced flood risks and other socio-environmental factors in assessing return on investments.		
5.2.3 Resiliency, Natural Resource Protections, and Development Impact Mitigation	Establish natural resources protection standards for wooded areas, drainages, steep slopes, as well as currently regulated wetlands and streams.	Countywide	1-5 Years
5.3 Infrastructure & Transportation Network			
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management	Review fire code regarding the number of lots allowed in new subdivision triggering a secondary point of access.	County Wide	0-1 Years
	Require walking path or sidewalk for new residential subdivisions with connections to a safe harbor school bus waiting area.		0-1 Years
	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management implement spacing requirements for both full and partial (restricted turn movement) intersections on arterial and major collector roadways. (1/4 mile for full access)	Countywide on Arterials and Major Collectors	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management *Continued*	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management consider modifications to the subdivision ordinance implementing internal connectivity index standards for developments of more than 500 lots.		1-5 Years
5.3.2 Improvements to Local Roads, Intersections, and Safety Design Features	Follow the Hamilton County Transportation Project Priorities List in this document. Continue to invest County funds and leverage with State and Federal funds to make continuous progress on deferred transportation improvements.	Countywide	0-1 Years On - going
	Explore the use of alternative financing vehicles such as Tennessee's State Infrastructure Bank to amplify County investments.		0-1 Years
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System	Continue to build system storage capacity, resilience for storm events, and greater predictability / flexibility to plan collection system expansion or new treatment capacity. Continue to pursue WIFIA and other capital funding specific to water and wastewater.		On - Going
	Target financing solutions and infrastructure investment to areas that have been identified as suitable for future growth. Proactively plan to shore up capacity or extend collection systems to these areas as necessary to better balance growth impacts.	See Funding Mechanisms	On - Going
	Add further specificity and criteria for utilization of decentralized sewage treatment systems.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate whether tap fees are keeping pace with infrastructure		0-1 Years
	Develop policy with WWTA on decentralized sewer systems with robust criteria and design standards.		0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System *Continued*	Evaluate decentralized systems and track projects using the systems to determine rules for use.		1-5 Years
	Evaluate the use of trilateral agreements to add flexibility, predictability, and fairness for developers who choose to collaborate with WWTA in design and construction modifications for future capacity to recoup costs of infrastructure developed beyond project needs.		1-5 Years
5.3.4 Stormwater Infrastructure, LID Features, and Resiliency	Provide resources for complete and expeditious review of stormwater plans including pre-constuction site review and post construction inspections.		0-1 Years
	Hamilton County Water Quality BMP under Development		0-1 Years
	Phase in additional resources for review and enforcement.		1-5 Years
	Implement stormwater fee structures that incentivize BMP's..		1-5 Years
	Evaluate establishing a program for neighborhood or watershed based storm water infrastructure to capture storm water closer to where it falls and reduce combined sewer flows.		0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.5 Fire & EMS	Consider the findings of the Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation March 2024 to identify future service improvements.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate sources of funding to increase full-time personnel and standardize equipment purchases and training to simplify inter-local agreements.		
5.4 Economic Health & Community Opportunity			
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers	Engage land owners where resort recreation centers have been identified to participate in small area plans or joint planning sessions. Work to provide examples that would establish the scale and scope of future projects. Help landowners or potential developers understand infrastructure requirements, neighborhood concerns, and connect them with resources to create plans compatible with goals for this place type.	Prioritize land near designated Resort Recreation Centers and with close proximity to existing state and regional recreational facilities and natural areas.	0-1 Years
	Require that resort recreational development on lands adjacent to public land or waterways be a catalyst for securing and enhancing public access to recreational assets in addition to creating private recreational development.	Countywide in designated centers	0-1 Years
	Look for partners to start a recreation and tourism based business incubator/accelerator program.		1-5 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendation	Applicability	Timing
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers *Continued*	Engage UTC School of Sport, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Engage Tennessee Department of Tourism, Chattanooga Tourism Co, SETDD, and SETTA in creating a small recreational resort promotional plan and programming assistance.		0-1 Years
	Explore potential for agriculture based resort or event centers to contribute to agricultural revenue streams. Consider McDonald Farm as a potential case study for synergies between rural resort economic development, traditional agriculture, and recreation.	Sale Creek - McDonald Farm; Birchwood	0-1 Years
	Evaluate outcomes from existing case studies - including preservation goals, impacts on existing farms, housing costs, property taxes, etc.		
	Study Industrial opportunities - both as larger industrial/corporate scaler and smaller Maker District		
5.4.2 Growing the job Base	Pursue development study of future employment centers including emerging industries and manufacturing districts		

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.5 Funding Mechanisms			
5.5.1	Consider use of RIDA as an incentive for developers who voluntarily meet specific infrastructure standards such as: improved street and pedestrian connectivity, LID stormwater improvements, provide easements for regional greenways, trails, or watershed protection.		0-1 Years
	Explore use of alternate funding mechanisms such as TDOT's State Industrial Access (SIA) Program	Hilltop Drive Extension; matching funds for other prioritized projects	0-1 Years
	Consider strategic utilization of Business Improvement Districts, Tax Increment Financing, Trilateral Agreements, or Infrastructure Trust Funds to set the table for desired development patterns (sidewalks/ connectivity, roads and utility infrastructure, landscape buffers, LID enhancements) in identified current and future centers. (Village Centers, Neighborhood Centers, Neighborhood Nodes, Maker Districts, etc.) i.e. Joint Development		1-5 Years
	Use the Capital Funding for Mid-Sized Cities & Counties study as a guide to identifying innovative funding and financing approaches for capital improvements.		

REMAINDER OF PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

APPENDIX

Scrivener's Note: with the exception of the Chamber Memo, all other Appendices were removed per the Regional Planning Commission's vote on September 8, 2025 for the adoption of Resolution 825-18

A. CHATTANOOGA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMO

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce Memo

The Urgent Need for New Manufacturing Locations in Hamilton County, Tennessee

Hamilton County has been known as a manufacturing magnet for much of its history and it's county seat, Chattanooga was called the "Dynamo of Dixie" in the late 19th century. This legacy continues to ring true today due to the County's logistic assets including three interstate highways, two class-1 rail lines and the navigable Tennessee River. However, the county now faces an imperative challenge: identifying new locations for manufacturing operations. The necessity for this strategic move stems from several factors, including economic growth, technological advancements, environmental considerations, and community development. This summary explores the multifaceted reasons behind this need and the potential benefits it could bring to the county. The current Plan Hamilton growth plan has not identified additional areas for manufacturing uses however, the County should be working to identify areas for this use in order to continue to create new jobs and drive economic prosperity and diversification.

Economic Growth and Diversification

In recent years, Hamilton County has experienced significant economic growth. As industries expand and new businesses emerge, the demand for manufacturing space has increased but the number of acres zoned for manufacturing has declined. From 2014 to 2024 acreage with M-1 zoning designation in Hamilton County declined by 1,684 acres. During this timeframe, the county's Centre South Industrial park reached full capacity and all available parcels in Enterprise South have been sold or have been optioned by companies for future expansion. Furthermore, current facilities for several existing businesses across the county are at capacity and cannot accommodate additional growth, putting continued investment by those companies at risk. Without new locations, the county risks stifling its economic potential. Diversifying the manufacturing base is essential to sustain growth, attract investorment, and create job opportunities, thereby ensuring long-term economic stability for the county and its residents.

Demographic Alignment

The manufacturing sector is one of the few industries that provides high-wage, full-time jobs for individuals with various education attainment levels. Approximately 30% of manufacturing jobs are white collar jobs requiring mostly 4-year college degrees. The remaining 70% of jobs in manufacturing require less than a four-year degree and, in some instances, do not require a high school degree. This aligns well

with Hamilton County's demographics where just over 30% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a high school diploma or less and only 37% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a 4-year degree. Jobs in the manufacturing sector are typically high-wage and include benefits as demonstrated by Hamilton County's average manufacturing wage of $74,256.

Technological Advancements

The manufacturing industry is evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancements such as automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. These innovations require modern facilities equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure. As technological advances in the manufacturing sector continue to grow, manufacturing wages will increase as well, assuring living wage jobs for county residents in advanced manufacturing sectors. Hamilton County is home to dozens of established companies that produce pharmaceuticals, heavy equipment and automobiles and the county has a growing cadre of tech-based manufacturing startups that have been supported by Hamilton County's Business Development Center. These early stage companies leverage 3-D printing, provide research and development services in the battery space and produce sensor and robotic equipment. Making sure that Hamilton County has shovel-ready sites, zoned for manufacturing will help the county both legacy companies as well as early-stage high tech manufacturers as they continue to grow.

Multiplier Effect of Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector is considered a "traded industry sector" which means it produces goods that are sold outside of the local region. Traded industry sectors are critical because they bring in revenue from outside of the local economy, increasing the county's gross domestic product (GDP). This new revenue then circulates in the economy, creating additional jobs. Research by firms such as EMSI shows that manufacturing jobs have a significant multiplier effect with one manufacturing job creating an additional nine jobs in the community. With more than 29,000 people working in manufacturing in Hamilton County, the sector drives significantly economic activity and job creation in the community across retail, healthcare, construction and several other industries.

Site considerations and conclusions

The need for Hamilton County to identify new locations for manufacturing will require future amendments to the Plan Hamilton growth plan. Due to increasing land prices inside Chattanooga city

limits, it is likely that any new locations for manufacturing uses will be in unincorporated Hamilton County. Proximity to infrastructure will also be critical with consideration given to properties that have 4-lane highway access, rail infrastructure and proximity to sewer infrastructure. The county's recent utilization of tax increment financing (TIF) should serve as a model for financing infrastructure improvements for sites with limited infrastructure.

The manufacturing sector has been a critical economic driver for Hamilton County. Much of the recent job growth the county has experienced can be tied to the development of Enterprise South Industrial Park by the City and County and the location of Volkswagen in the park. With the county's industrial parks now at capacity and multiple manufacturers reaching full build out on their sites, it is critical that Hamilton County identify new locations for the county's second largest industry sector.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

PLAN HAMILTON

OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

9 NORTHEAST COUNTY
AREA PLAN

Birchwood
Georgetown
Harrison/Wolftever Creek
Snow Hill
Ooltewah

Adopted by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, Sept. 8, 2025.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION **4**

1.1 NORTHEAST COUNTY AREA 9 5
1.2 PAST PLAN: WOLFTEVER CREEK AREA PLAN (2007) 7

CHAPTER 2. CONTEXT **8**

2.1 DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY 9
2.2 COMMUNITY SUMMARY 10
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS 12
2.4 DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS 14
2.5 LAND USE 14
2.6 ZONING 16
2.7 BUILDING PERMITS 18
2.8 PARKS & RECREATION AREAS 21
2.9 AGRICULTURE 22
2.10 INFRASTRUCTURE 23
2.11 TRANSPORTATION ANALYSES AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS 26

CHAPTER 3. VISION & GOALS **32**

3.1 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK 33
3.2 SURVEY RESULTS 33
3.3 COMMUNITY MEETINGS 33
3.4 VISION 34
3.5 GOALS 35

CHAPTER 4. PLANNING PROCESS **36**

4.1 PLACE TYPES 37
4.2 HOW PLACE TYPES ARE USED 37
4.3 GOALS & POLICIES 47

CHAPTER 5. APPENDIX **48**

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 NORTHEAST COUNTY AREA 9

1.2 PAST PLAN: WOLFTEVER CREEK AREA PLAN (2007)

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

1.1 NORTHEAST COUNTY AREA 9

As Hamilton County's population grows, comprehensive planning is essential to support and protect existing communities, resident quality of life, and our natural resources. The Hamilton County Area Plans collectively guide responsible growth in unincorporated Hamilton County. The plans are intended to be a living document responsive to ongoing community input and changing needs.

Area Plans serve as a blueprint for determining where growth should occur and each plan will address land use, natural resource preservation, economy, and housing. Topographic, geologic, and infrastructure constraints are also considered, including sewer, emergency services, and road capacity.

The plans will help steer public infrastructure investments and shape zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, and stormwater regulations that govern development.

Key goals will be defined in each area plan. Policies and actions will be implemented to accomplish the goals. The Area Plans include Place Type Maps and descriptions that define future development patterns to facilitate responsible growth.

The plans do not change zoning directly, but they provide necessary information for zoning decisions. Development recommended by this plan does not guarantee rezonings and is subject to review and conditions, such as independent traffic studies, evacuation studies, and necessary infrastructure improvements.

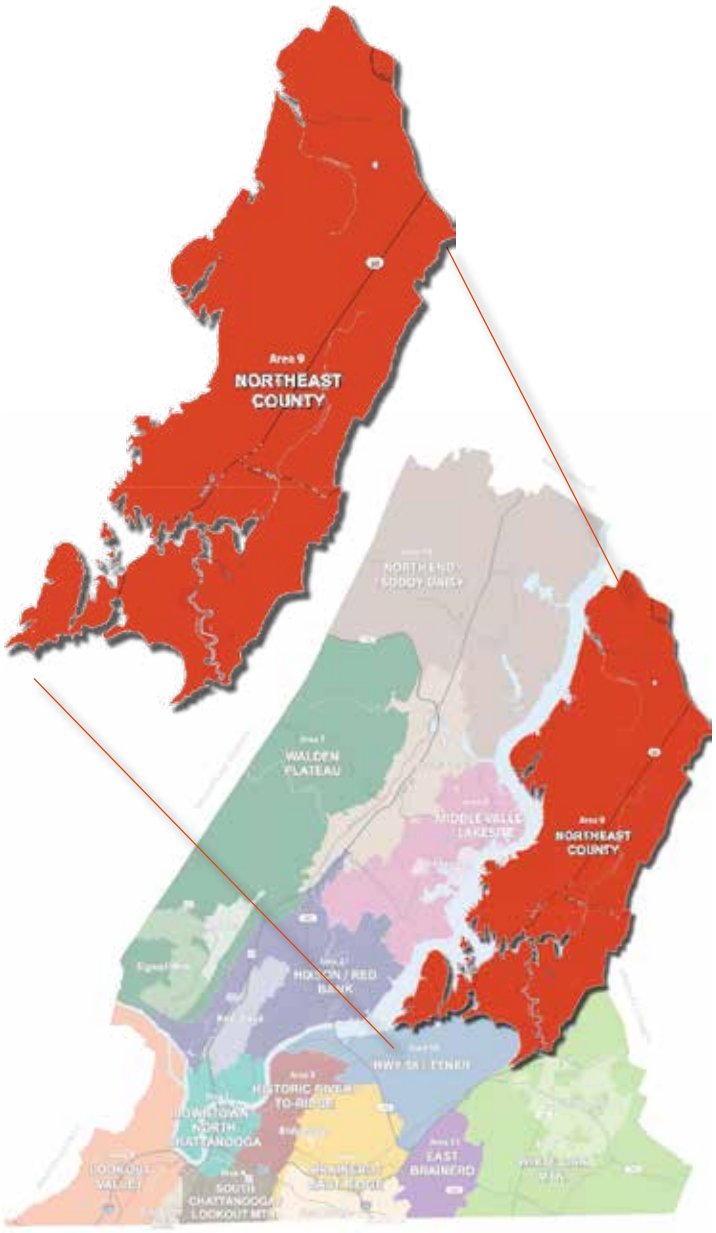


Figure 1.1 - Northeast County Area 9 Map as part of Hamilton County Study Area

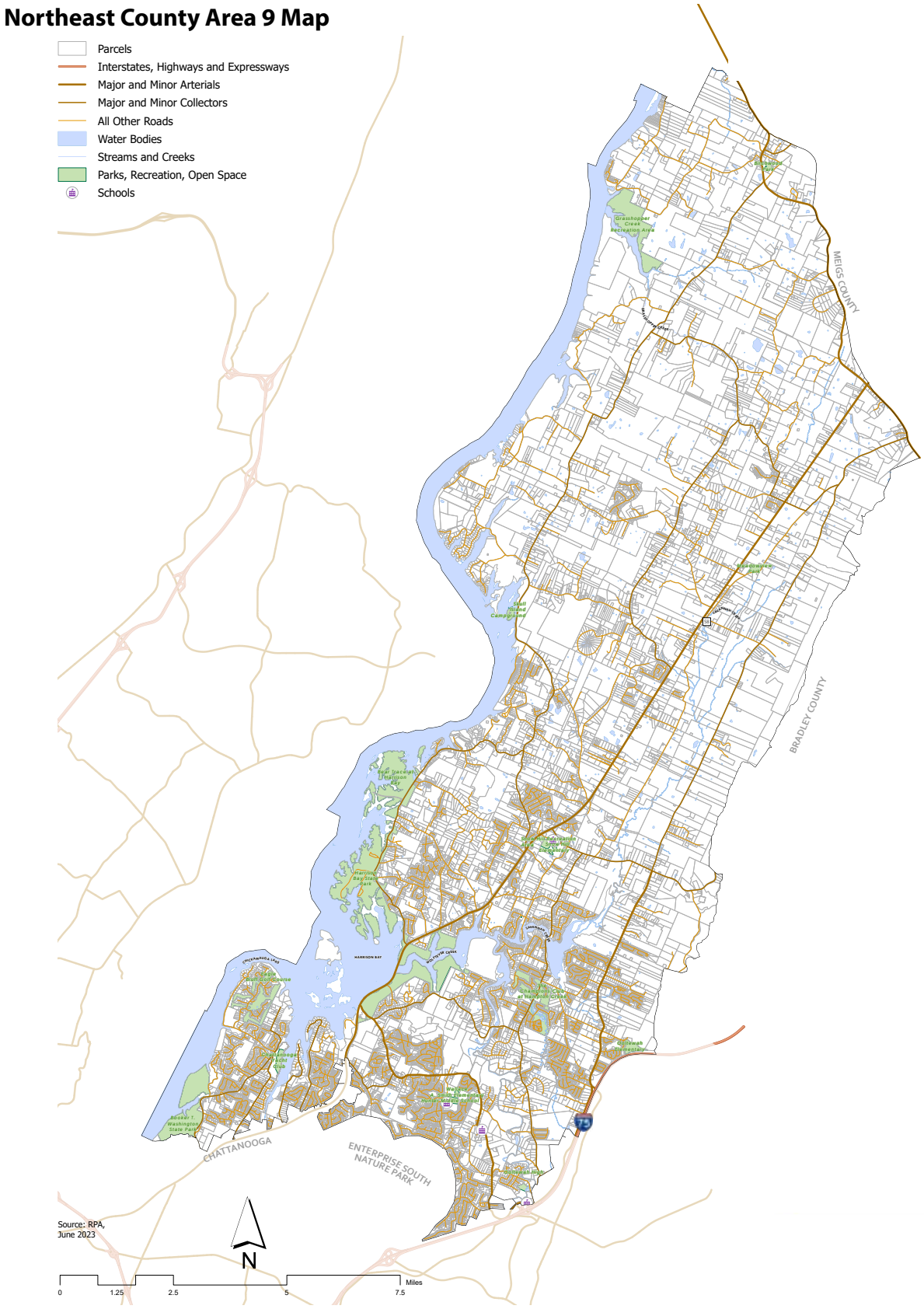


Figure 1.2 - Northeast County Area 9 Map

1.2 PAST PLAN: WOLFTEVER CREEK AREA PLAN (2007)

The 1989 Wolftever Creek Basin Area Study projected residential growth on Hunter Road but did not anticipate sewer service expansion and the accompanying growth along the Snow Hill and Ooltewah-Georgetown Road corridors.

The Wolftever Creek Area Plan, adopted by the Hamilton County Commission in 2007, established a vision for the community's future growth with guidance for changing land uses and transportation needs. The Wolftever Plan contains development types and models from Comprehensive Plan 2030 which was adopted by the Hamilton County Commission in 2006. The Wolftever Creek Area Plan has detailed land use recommendations.

But, rezoning decisions frequently ignored the plan, which resulted in overdevelopment and loss of some rural areas and natural resources. The rapid urbanization in portions of Area 9 has strained the infrastructure and led to over congested roads.

Residents expressed a strong desire for the new plan to prioritize responsible growth suited for the existing infrastructure. New development must preserve the rural character and natural resources and be limited to single family homes on large lots and small scale, single story commercial in designated areas.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXT

2.1 DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

2.2 COMMUNITY SUMMARY

2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS

2.4 DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

2.5 LAND USE

2.6 ZONING

2.7 BUILDING PERMITS

2.8 PARKS & RECREATION AREAS

2.9 AGRICULTURE

2.10 INFRASTRUCTURE

2.11 TRANSPORTATION ANALYSES AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

2.1 DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The Northeast County Area has a scenic beauty and community spirit that represents some of the best of what Hamilton County has to offer. The Tennessee River completely encompasses the western border, and the eastern border is framed by White Oak Mountain. This area is known for its rural charm and character. Rolling hills, farmland, lush green spaces, and picturesque waterways blend with existing neighborhoods.

Northeast Hamilton County is rich in history and cultural significance. It was home to the Cherokee until their forced removal in 1838. The region was part of James County, often called the Lost County of Tennessee. This plan seeks to preserve our historic rural character that has been enjoyed for generations. Fertile lands have provided a vast array of agricultural uses over the years, fostering a way of life that is deeply connected to the land. It is important to remember where we came from and honor those that lived here before us. Identifying historic sites will help protect them from inappropriate development. The Preserve Place Type includes historic sites such as those listed on the National Register of Historic Places, like the Hiram Douglas House and the Chief James Brown house.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON STATE PARK

Booker T. Washington State Park named after the renowned African American educator, is located on Chickamauga Lake, and completed in 1938. It was specifically created for the African American community. In 1962, all Tennessee parks were desegregated, and Booker T. Washington Park became a space open to everyone. Residents and visitors enjoy the swimming pool, fishing piers, boat ramp, and trails at this 353 acre park.

LOST TOWN OF OLD HARRISON

The lost town of Old Harrison was originally named Vannville, also known as Joseph Vann's Town after Cherokee Chief Joseph Vann. Following Cherokee Removal, it was renamed Harrison after President William Henry Harrison. It was the seat of Hamilton County from 1840 to 1870. In March 1935, TVA constructed the Chickamauga Dam which created the Chickamauga Reservoir and submerged Old Harrison. Remnants can still be seen on John A. Patten Island.

HARRISON BAY STATE PARK

Located on Chickamauga Lake became the first Tennessee State Park in 1937. The park was originally owned by Cherokee Chief Joseph Vann and was home to three villages. The park was one of the last campsites inhabited by the Cherokee before departure on the Trail of Tears. Today, the park includes a marina, campground, restaurant, and golf course where residents and visitors can enjoy the scenic beauty.

JAMES COUNTY

Formed in 1871 from part of Eastern Hamilton County and a small portion of western Bradley County. The new county was formed after Harrison lost the Hamilton County seat to Chattanooga in 1870. But, a few months after James County was formed Harrison would once again lose the county seat to Ooltewah. Harrison eventually rejoined Hamilton County in 1893. James County was dissolved in 1919 due to bankruptcy and the citizens voted to join Hamilton County.

Photo: The Lost Town of Old Harrison
Source: Local 3 News, John Martin

Booker T. Washington State Park
Source: TN State Parks

2.2 COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Area 9 stretches from the Chattanooga City limits north all the way to SR 60 and the Meigs County border. Chickamauga Lake to the west and White Oak Mountain to the east form the natural limits of Area 9.

RURAL CHARACTER

The Northeast County has a rural character and natural beauty that has been enjoyed for generations.

TOPOGRAPHY

Area 9 is characterized by a karst landscape with caves, springs, wetlands, sinkholes, and other features that have shaped the land. Rolling hills and valleys transition to open fields. Several creeks have carved their way through the landscape including Wolftever Creek, Rogers Branch, and Long Savannah Creek. The topography defines the areas suitable for growth.

Natural Resources Map

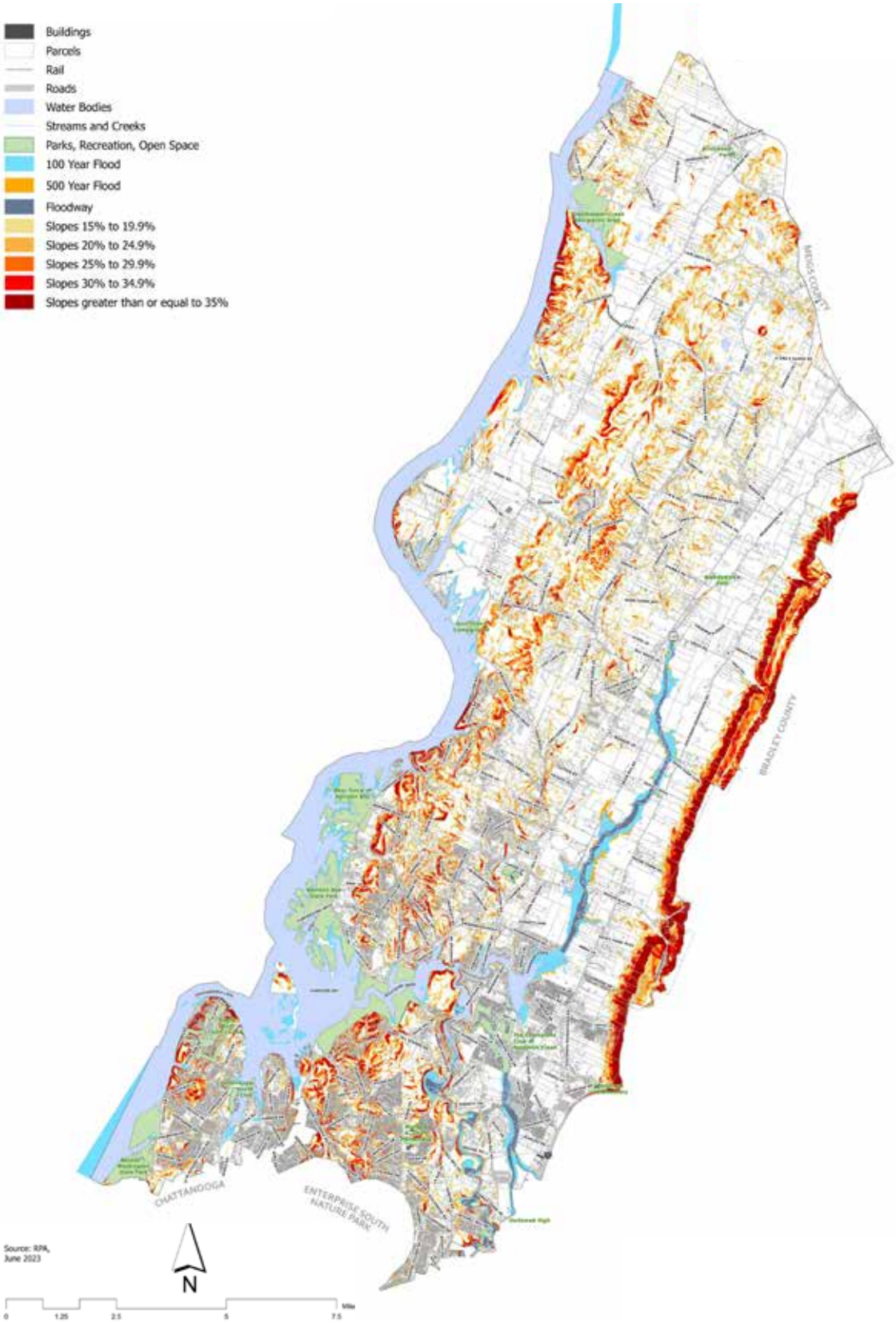
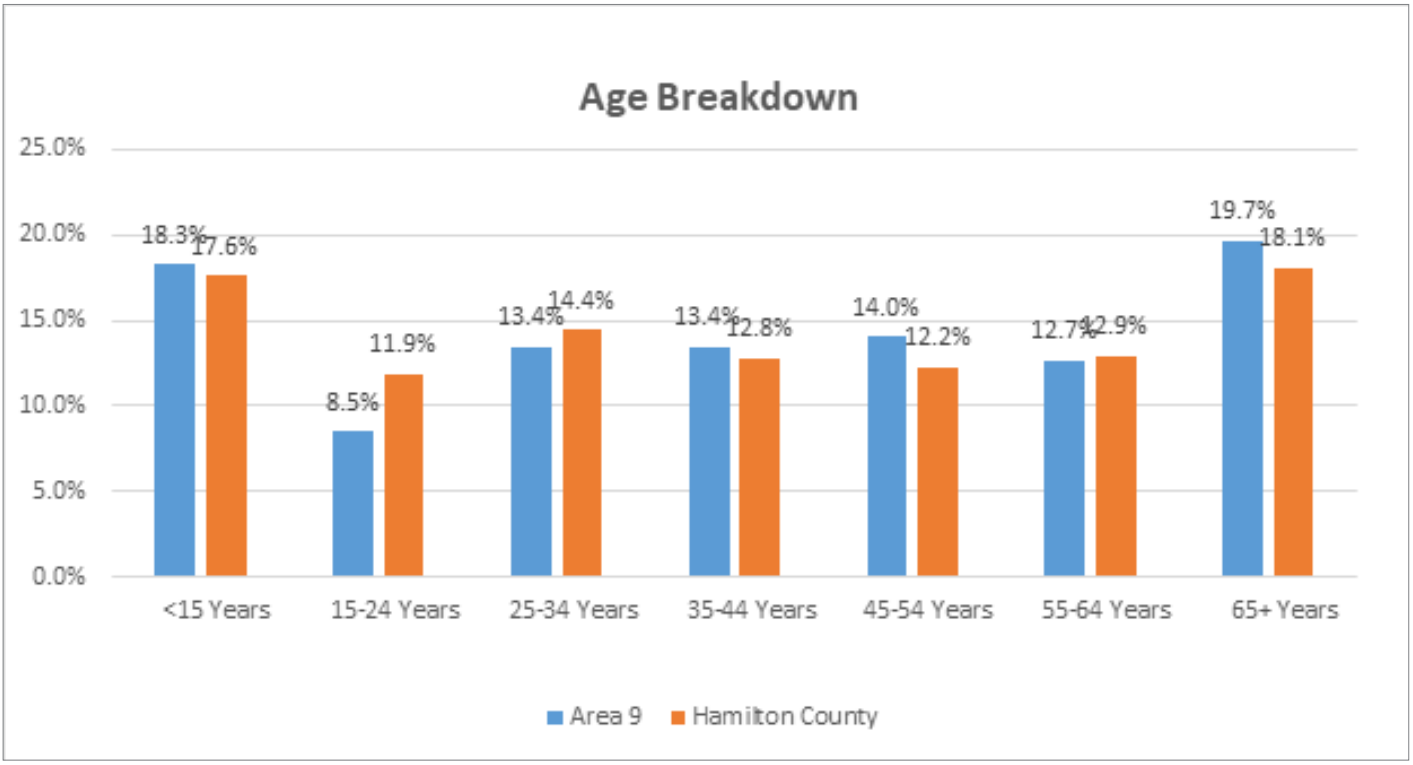
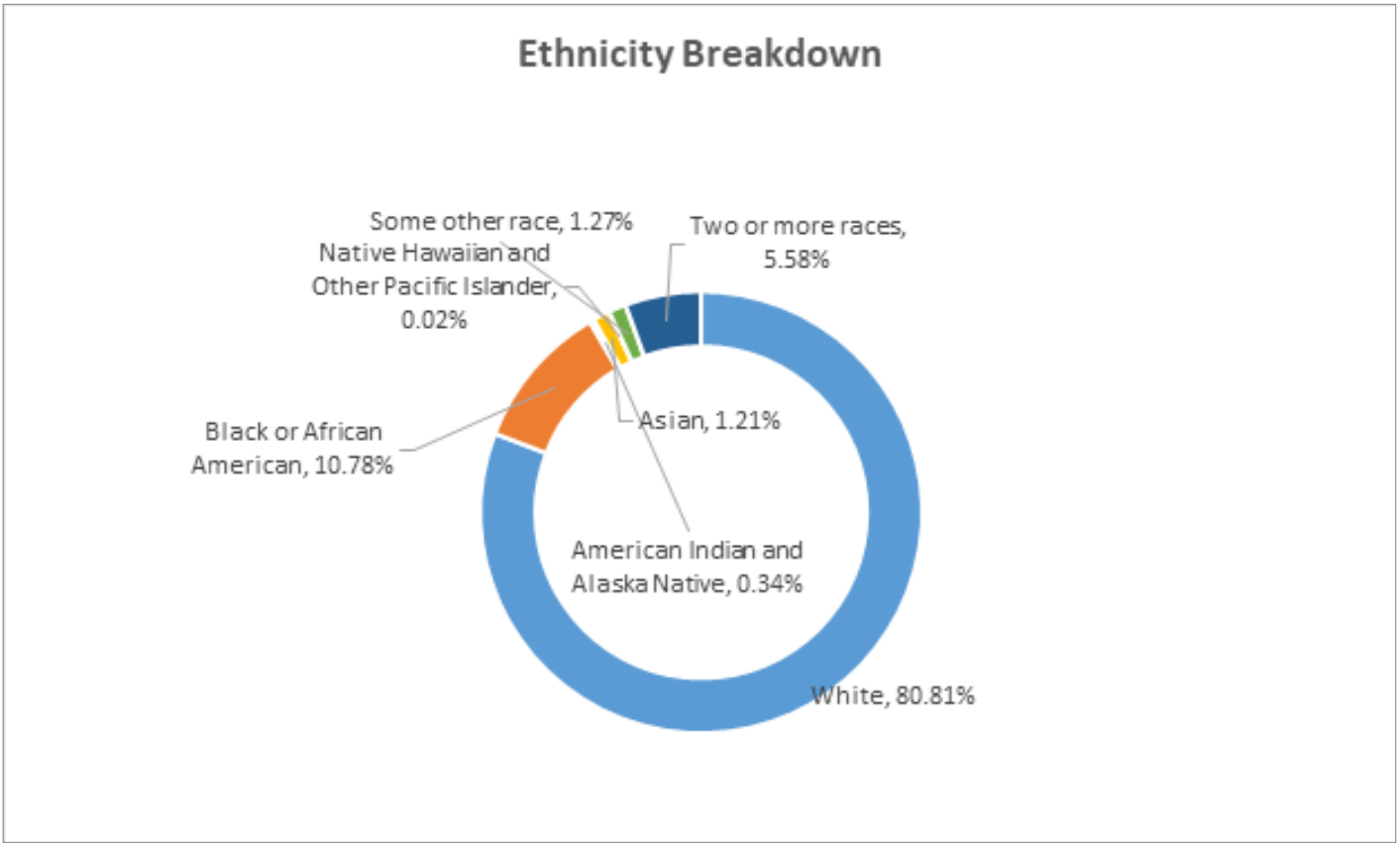


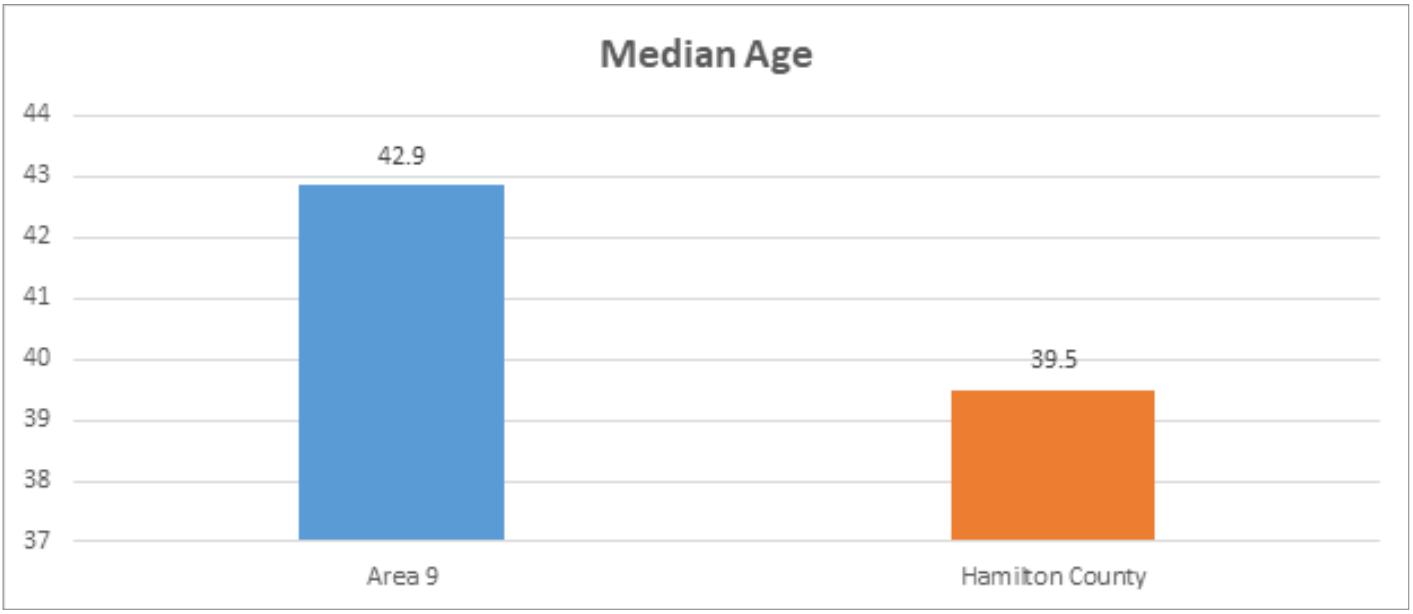
Figure 2.1: Natural Resources Map

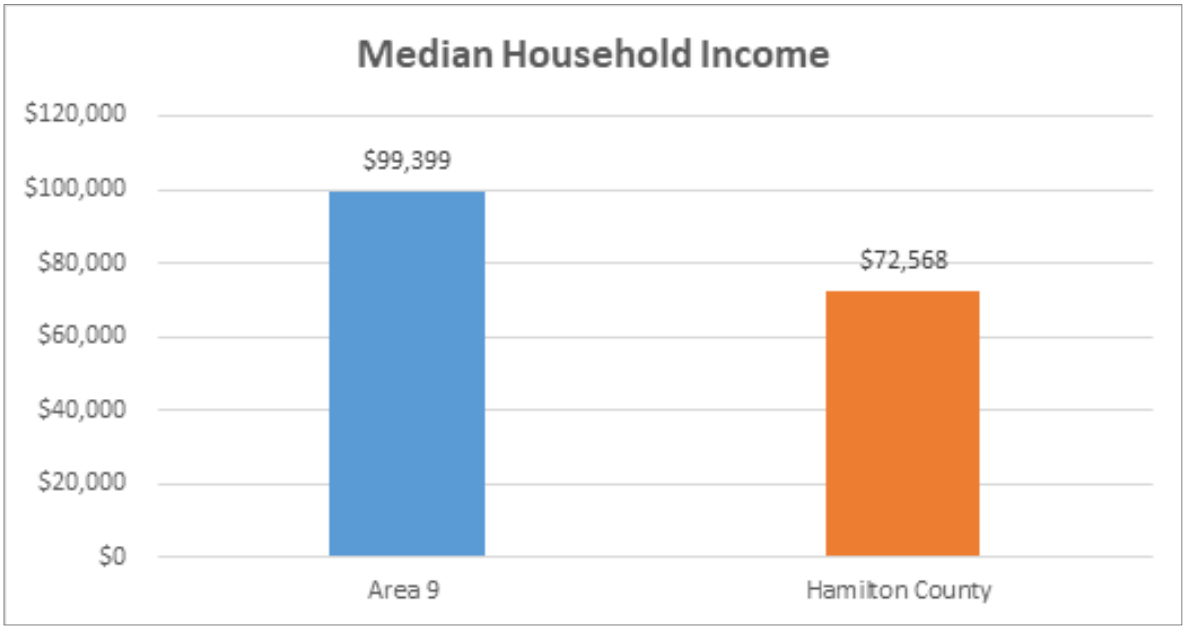
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS

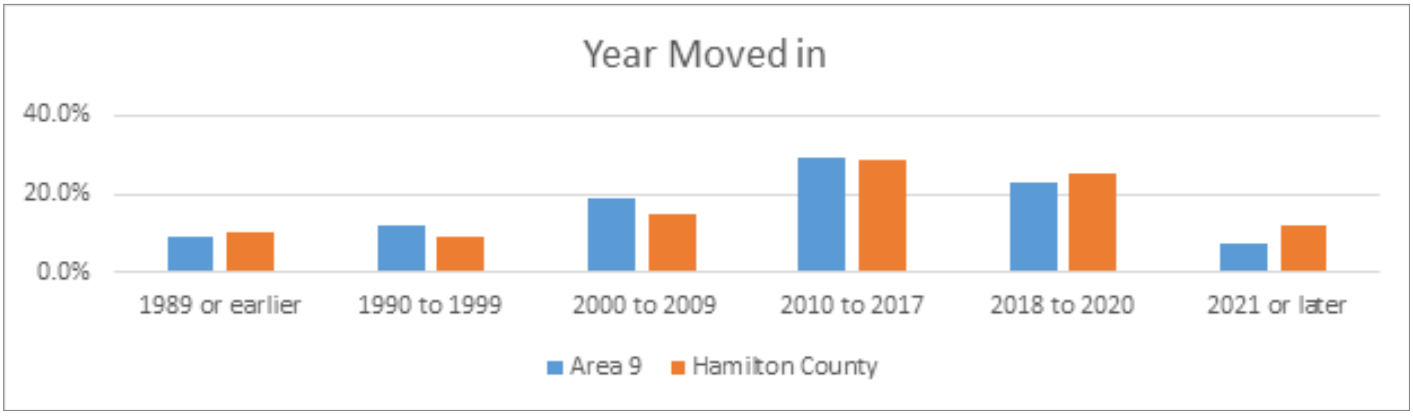
The source of the following data is the American Community Survey 5- year estimates 2019 - 2023 by Census Tracts.






Median Age
44
43
42
41
40
39
38
37
42.9
39.5
Area 9
Hamilton County


Median Household Income
$120,000
$100,000
$80,000
$60,000
$40,000
$20,000
$0
$99,399
$72,568
Area 9
Hamilton County


Year Moved in
40.0%
20.0%
0.0%
1989 or earlier
1990 to 1999
2000 to 2009
2010 to 2017
2018 to 2020
2021 or later
Area 9
Hamilton County

2.4 DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

CURRENT RESIDENTIAL

Northeast Hamilton County has experienced significant residential growth, especially in the Ooltewah/Snow Hill areas.

The areas north of Mahan Gap Road have retained most of the rural character. Older subdivisions and commercial development blend with the rural and agricultural areas.

Over the last 15 years, many areas south of Mahan Gap Road have seen substantial residential growth resulting in significant loss of rural character, scenic beauty, and natural resources. Residential development is concentrated along Snow Hill Road, Ooltewah-Georgetown Road, and Hunter Road at densities of approximately two to four dwelling units per acre. Newer subdivisions have smaller lot sizes and setbacks.

CURRENT COMMERCIAL

Commercial development is predominantly small scale, single story. Commercial development is located at the Mahan Gap Crossroads, the Highway 58 and Greenwood Rd intersection, and a few other areas throughout Northeast County.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Residents expressed a desire for responsible development that preserves the area's unique rural character and natural resources.

Future growth should prioritize low-density single-family residential and small-scale, single-story commercial development.

2.5 LAND USE

Over 60% of the land in Northeast County Area 9 is classified as residential which is predominantly single family detached housing. This substantial portion highlights the community's desire to preserve the rural character.

Land allocated for commercial or industrial purposes comprises less than 1% of the total Area. Institutional uses, such as schools and religious facilities, account for 5% of the land. Approximately 24,091 acres are classified as vacant. This represents about 36% of the Area. Developing this land at base densities of 2 per acre provides ample opportunities for future responsible growth without compromising existing rural character. Additionally, around 17,195 acres are devoted to natural resource uses, including agriculture, reflecting the ongoing commitment to preserve agricultural heritage and natural landscapes.

Existing Land Use Map

Figure 2.2: Existing Land Use Map (2023)

2.6 ZONING

Currently, the majority of the Northeast County is zoned for residential purposes, making up 80% of the Area. This includes both Residential and Agricultural Zones, the latter of which also permits residential development. Current zoning reflects the community's preference to maintain a predominantly residential landscape that supports a peaceful, rural character with opportunities for agricultural uses.

Commercially zoned areas comprise only 0.46% of the land. These commercial zones are strategically concentrated along Highway 58, Ooltewah Georgetown Road, and Mahan Gap Road. Essential services and retail opportunities are provided without disrupting the overall residential and rural ambiance of the area.

Future zoning changes must balance growth with the preservation of cherished rural character. Focusing on single family detached housing and agricultural areas with strategically placed small-scale, single-story commercial development will maintain Area 9's unique identity. Infrastructure needs must be addressed for future zoning changes to ensure a high quality of life for residents.

Area 9 Zoning Request Summary

Types	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	3	3	0	1	5	2	12	4	2	2	34
Special Permit	4	4	4	10	4	7	4	3	5	7	52
Zoning	10	2	5	4	4	4	12	12	6	3	62
Grand Total	**17**	**9**	**9**	**15**	**13**	**13**	**28**	**19**	**13**	**12**	**148**

Zoning Approved Cases (Zoning To)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
Agricultural				1			1	1	1		4
Commercial/Office	3		2	1			3	1	1		11
Group Home/Senior Living	1										1
Industrial	1		1				1	1			4
Industrial/Storage Facility									1		1
Mixed Use										1	1
Multi-Family Residential		1				1					2
Single Family (Attached)							1				1
Single Family (Detached)	3			2	3	2	4	5	1		20
Grand Total	**8**	**1**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**10**	**8**	**4**	**1**	**45**

Source: RPA

Note: Special permit including cell tower, wedding/event venue, short-term rentals, manufactured housing, etc.

Existing Zoning Map

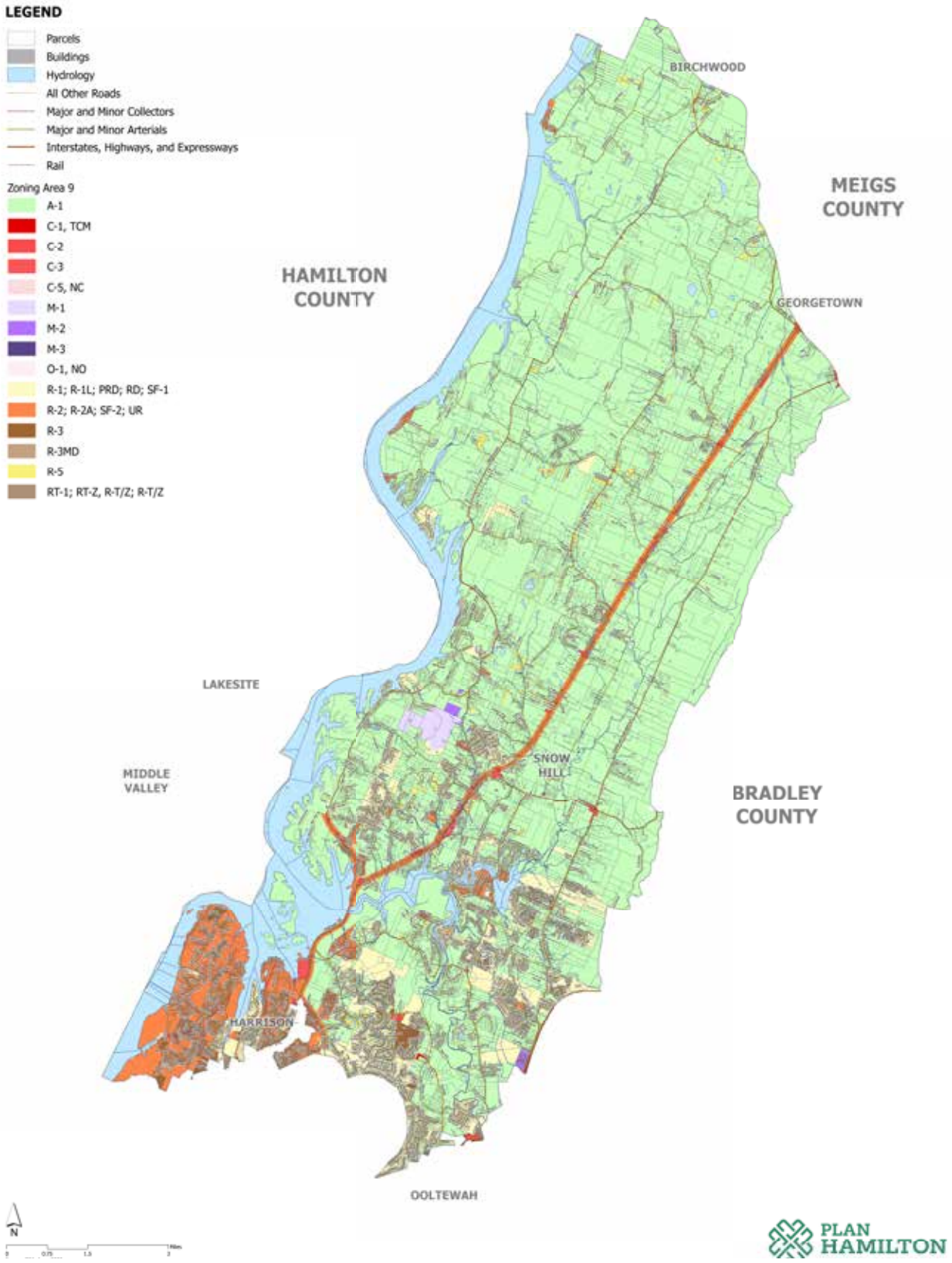


Figure 2.3: Existing Zoning Map (2023)

2.7 BUILDING PERMITS

Over the past decade, Northeast County Area 9 has experienced a tremendous increase in population growth and housing demand that is driven by the Area's rural charm, appeal, and quality of life. Residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve these characteristics for any future residential and commercial growth.

Analyzing building permits and development trends offers valuable insights into the region's growth patterns, infrastructure impacts, and future development.

Activity in both new construction and renovation projects has dominated the last 10 years.The majority of permits issued have been for single-family homes, which aligns with the existing and desired preference of the community.

The "Other" classification, which includes renovations, represents the second-highest category for permit issuance. Commercial development represents less than 1% of total permits issued.

The insights gained from building permit trends provide a roadmap for future development.

Growth in Area 9 over the past 20 years has strained the infrastructure and created excessive congestion. Recent rezonings will add to the strain.

Land use planning is an essential tool to ensure future development is responsible. Infrastructure and inadequate or nonexistent services and facilities must be addressed for any future development to occur.

The map on the following page (figure 2.3) identifies buildings permits that were approved over the last 10 years for a variety of uses from low-density residential to utilities and commercial uses.

Permitted Residential Units

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Hamilton County	2,148	2,252	2,565	2,326	2,009	1,883	3,685	2,936	3,113	3,512	26,429
Area 9	234	259	346	339	199	302	387	307	320	339	3,032
% of County Total	10.9%	11.5%	13.5%	14.6%	9.9%	16.0%	10.5%	10.5%	10.3%	9.7%	11.5%

Recorded Residential Lots including Mixed Use Developments

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Hamilton County	707	832	891	1,393	1,013	880	1,281	1,444	1,136	1,810	11,387
Area 9	168	240	179	282	155	79	176	507	264	349	2,399
% of County Total	23.8%	28.8%	20.1%	20.2%	15.3%	9.0%	13.7%	35.1%	23.2%	19.3%	21.1%

Lot Absorption

Year	Recorded lots	Permitted Housing Units	Non-built Lots*	
			#	%
2015	168	153	15	8.9%
2016	240	220	20	8.3%
2017	179	150	29	16.2%
2018	282	264	18	6.4%
2019	155	145	10	6.5%
2020	79	76	3	3.8%
2021	176	156	20	11.4%
2022	507	396	111	21.9%
2023	264	132	132	50.0%
2024	349	59	290	83.1%
Total	2,399	1,751	648	27.0%

* Non-built lots included community lots

Building Permits Map (2013-2023)

Figure 2.4: Building Permits Map (2013-2023)

2.8 PARKS & RECREATION AREAS

The Northeast County is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, boasting an extensive network of recreation and water-based activities. There are approximately 3,669 acres of public parks, campgrounds, and other recreational areas for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. There are also 568 acres of private recreation areas. See Tables 3 and 4. A separate analysis found all aspects of parks, recreation, and open space is approximately 7% of the total land area.

Harrison Bay State Park, Booker T. Washington State Park, campgrounds, and boat launches offer a variety of activities including hiking, picnicking, wildlife observation, boating, fishing, golf, and more. The parks and campgrounds are designed to highlight the natural beauty of the Area, providing recreation and relaxation that enhance the quality of life and preserve the region's natural landscapes and resources.

The parks also offer wildlife habitation and observation. Protecting the parks and surrounding area from inappropriate development will ensure that they will be enjoyed by future generations.

Table 3: Public Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

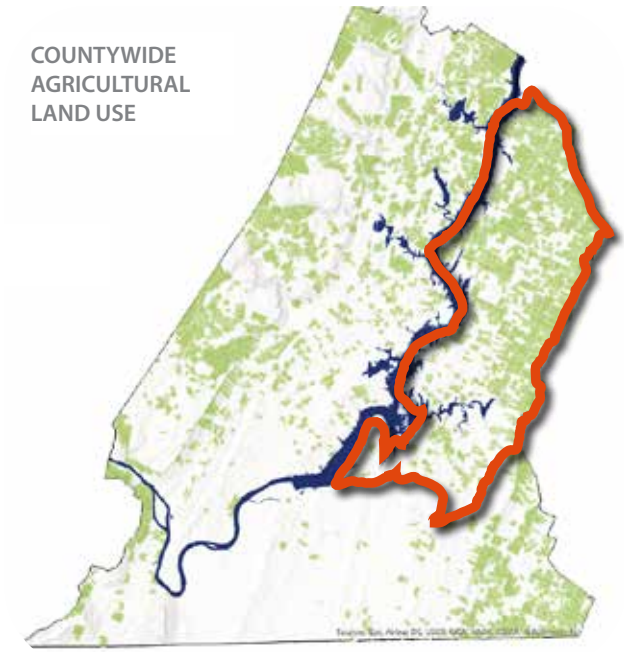
Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Bear Trace at Harrison Bay	Public Golf Course	387
Birchwood Elementary School Recreation Area	School Recreation Area	10
Booker T. Washington State Park	State Park & Natural Area	495
Grasshopper Creek Recreation Area	Campground & Natural Area	459
Harrison Bay State Park	State Park & Natural Area	2,221
Hunter Middle School Athletic Fields	School Recreation Area	24
Meadowview Park	County Recreation Area	21
Ooltewah High School Athletic Complex	School Recreation Area	>1
Skull Island	Campground & Boat Access	14
Snow Hill Elementary School Playground	School Recreation Area	9
Snow Hill Recreation Area	Recreation Area	27
Total		**3,669**

2.9 AGRICULTURE

Area 9 has a long history of agricultural activity that has added to the rural character and charm of the area. Agricultural land provides opportunities for healthy food sources, educational programs, and improved environmental function for clean air and water quality.

Development centered around farming often includes single family homes on large lots with accessory buildings such as barns and greenhouses. Agricultural land is typically zoned A-1 and utilizes septic systems.

Properties given the "Greenbelt" status (15 acres or more) usually feature a farm or single family home with surrounding open space, pastures or forests with tax benefits available.



AREA 9

80.8% A-1 Zoning
61.1% Single-Family Parcels
10.4% of Permits issued in the County
20.8% of Area in Steep Slopes & Floodway
7% Of Area in Parks, Recreation & Open Space

HAMILTON COUNTY

56% of the County in A-1 Zoning
30% of the County has Agricultural Land Use

2.10 INFRASTRUCTURE

As the County grows, managing stormwater, sewer, septic systems and overseeing decentralized sewer systems, becomes crucial in preserving these resources. These infrastructure elements play a direct role in protecting water quality, minimizing erosion, and ensuring safe wastewater disposal, particularly in environmentally sensitive and rural areas where traditional sewer systems may not be feasible.

STORMWATER

Stormwater runoff refers to rainwater or melted snow that flows over land surfaces instead of absorbing into the ground. As it travels across roads, rooftops, and other impervious surfaces, runoff can pick up pollutants, debris, and sediment, which may be carried into nearby rivers, lakes, or storm drains.

When new developments clear land, they often remove mature vegetation that naturally absorbs and slows runoff. Without trees, plants, and root systems to retain water, runoff flows more quickly across the landscape, increasing the risk of erosion and the transport of sediment into local waterways. This change not only affects the immediate development site but can also impact adjacent properties and flooding risks are increased in lower-lying areas.

The increased sediment and pollutants carried by unmanaged runoff can degrade water quality in rivers and creeks, impacting aquatic habitats and nearby communities.

Stream buffers and retention of wetlands can help to protect the water quality. Detention ponds, plantings, permeable paving materials, and other state approved methods for managing run-off can help to mitigate potential impacts if they are designed appropriately.

Stormwater Regulations must be reviewed and updated regularly to prevent negative impacts to streams, wetlands, floodplains, and neighboring properties.

WASTEWATER

The Chattanooga Department of Wastewater and Hamilton County Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) are tasked with planning and administration of sewer services under state and federal laws. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater manages the Moccasin Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant which is the primary treatment facility for both the City of Chattanooga and unincorporated Hamilton County.

RPA staff has coordinated closely with the City of Chattanooga Wastewater Department staff during the development of the Comprehensive Plans to ensure adequate sewer capacity is available to accommodate the anticipated residential, commercial, and industrial development growth. This coordination is a technical evaluation with ongoing coordination of local agencies to ensure long term capacity.

WWTA staff has provided information to RPA that existing capacity and available financial support substantially limits new sewer availability in the unincorporated county in the short and mid-term. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater has provided guidance that adequate sewer capacity is available for anticipated development during the next 5 years.

RPA staff working with both WWTA and County staff to support new development and achieve the best outcomes possible regarding managing growth in the unincorporated area.

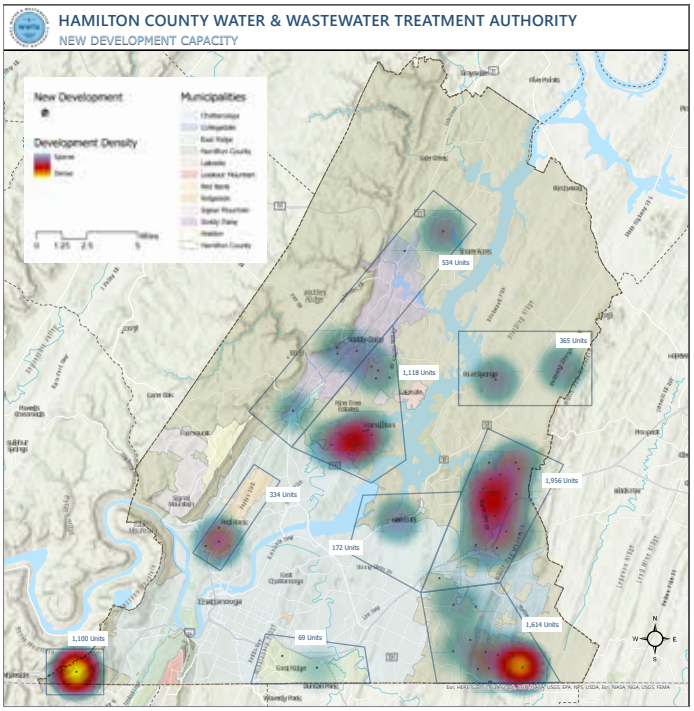
ALTERNATIVE SEWAGE SYSTEM

Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems are a combination of traditional septic and sewer. Buildings or groups of buildings have an on-site septic tank as an initial treatment. Wastewater is then piped to a central location for additional treatment and disposal or to a drip dispersal area. Currently, Hamilton County has several existing systems with WWTA providing oversight. Concerns include long distances from centralized sewage systems and failures which could result in groundwater contamination, surface water pollution, and pathogen spread to neighboring properties. Stricter Regulations must be implemented if these systems will be utilized in the future.

In March 2025, the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners voted to have the Hamilton County Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) to regulate and operate decentralized sewage systems. At the same time, WWTA is actively reviewing and updating its regulations and standards for decentralized wastewater systems, with a focus on ensuring proper operation and management within the county, particularly in areas where traditional sewer extensions are not feasible.

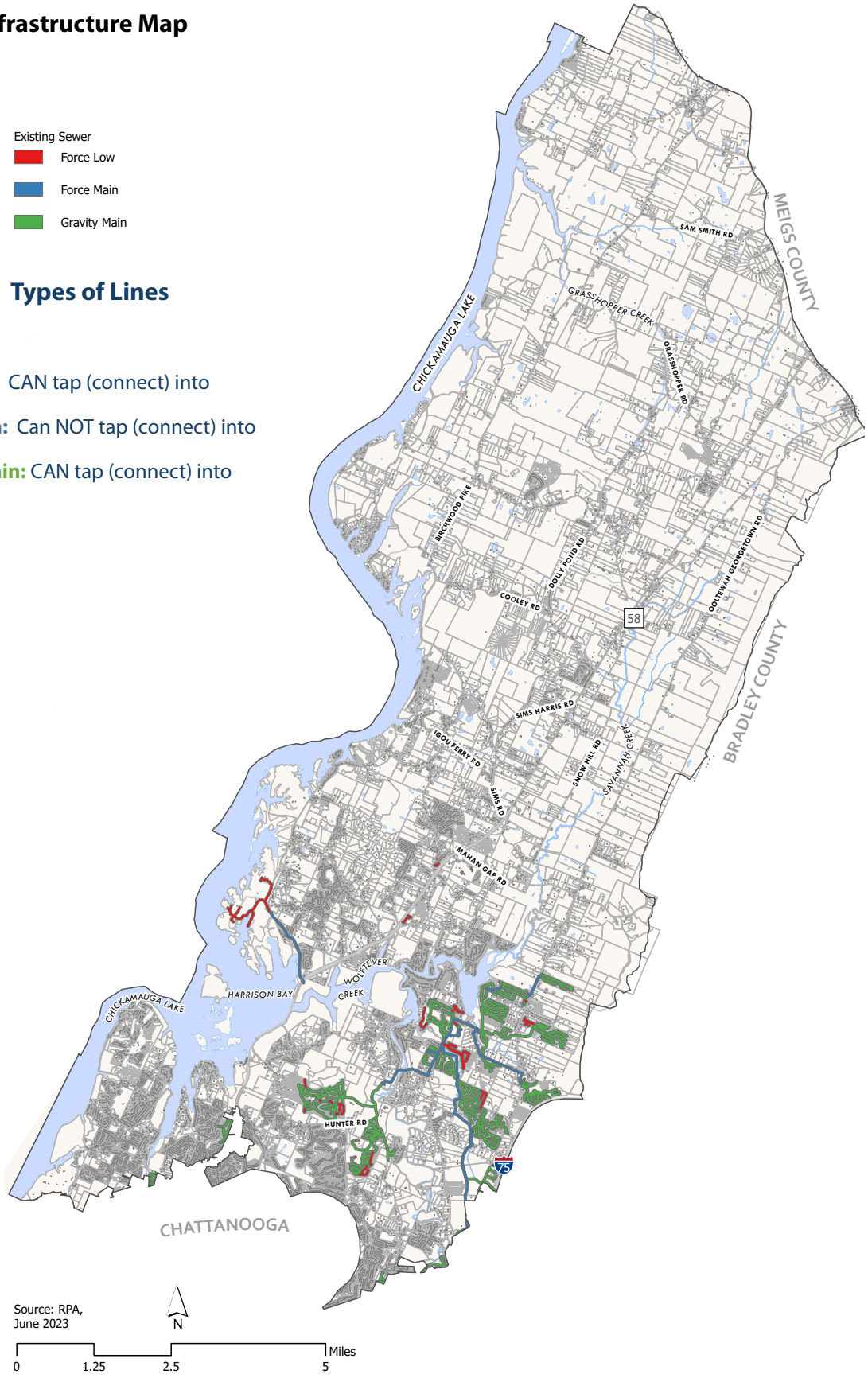
SEPTIC SYSTEMS

In Area 9, septic is the most common wastewater treatment option. Generally, the minimum lot size required for septic systems is approximately 25,000 square feet. Residential development in rural areas without sewer service must therefore be built with larger lots.



New Development Capacity (June 2023)
Source: WWTA

Sewer Infrastructure Map



Types of Lines

Force Low: CAN tap (connect) into

Force Main: Can NOT tap (connect) into

Gravity Main: CAN tap (connect) into

Figure 2.5: Sewer Infrastructure Map

2.11 TRANSPORTATION ANALYSES AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Northeast County's road network connects neighborhoods, commercial centers, and outlying regions. Area 9 is bordered by Hwy 60 to the north and I-75 to the southeast. The vast majority of the road network consists of two lane roads.There are two main north/south corridors. Highway 58 is a four lane divided highway that transitions into a two lane road and Mountain View Road / Ooltewah-Georgetown Road is a two lane corridor. There are very few east to west connector roads that are miles apart.

Mahan Gap, Snow Hill, Hunter, and other two lane roads feature topography and high traffic volumes that make it difficult and expensive for the County to accommodate medium or high-density developments. Further development along these three roads should be avoided.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Functional classification of the transportation network is used to categorize roadways based on their purpose and role. This classification system differentiates between local, state, and federally owned roads, which can influence the funding sources and oversight agencies. Functional Classification of roads in area 9 are:

The functional classification categories at the local level in Area 9 are as follows:

- Arterial
  - Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
- Collector
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
- Local Roads

Arterials

Arterials are typically long and have higher capacity and traffic volume compared to other roads with few access points. They typically connect to other arterials. Examples of Principal Arterials include interstates, freeways, and expressways. Minor arterials serve trips of shorter lengths than principal arterials and connect smaller geographic areas to the transportation network.

Collectors

Collectors are shorter and connect local roads to arterials. They have lower speed limits and are classified as major or minor. Major collectors usually allow higher levels of mobility within an area and minor collectors often have more access points. The distinction between major and minor collectors is often determined by speed limits, driveway spacing, and annual average traffic volumes.

Local Roads

Local roads make up between 62% and 74% of the transportation network. They are usually characterized as having a low number of lanes, low speed limits, and low traffic volumes. Local roads are classified after the arterials and collectors have been identified within the network.

CRASH DATA MAP

The safety review analyzed three years of crash data across Hamilton County roadways to calculate crash rates on key segments. We then compared these rates to statewide averages to identify roads that might benefit from targeted safety studies or projects.

Review of historic crash data identified Hunter Road, Snow Hill Road, and Harrison Bay Road as exceeding the statewide average crash rate based on the frequency and severity of crashes. The historic crash data is shown in Figure 2.6.

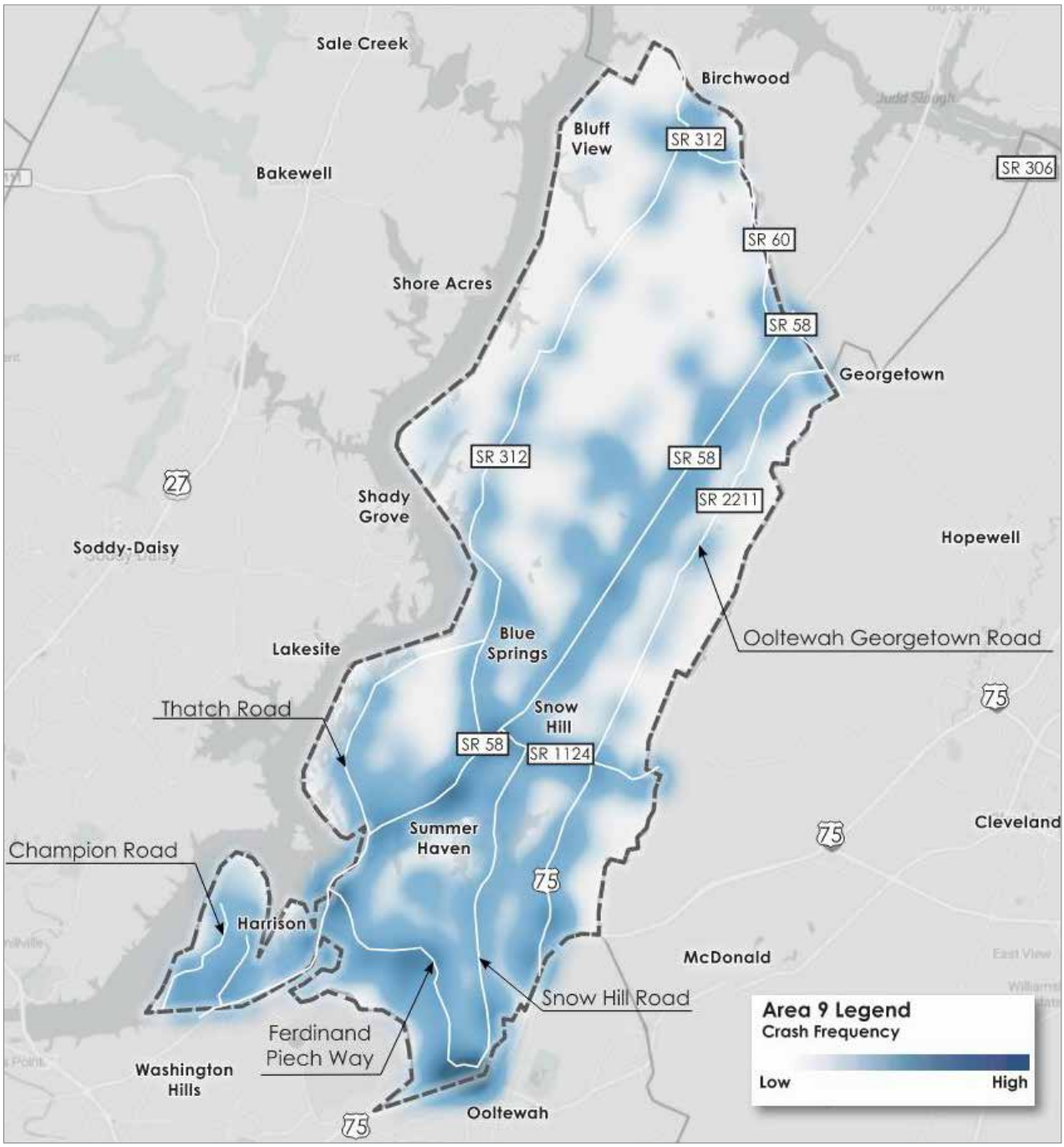


Figure 2.6: Area 9 Crash Data Map (08/24/2020-08/24/2023)

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Roadway improvement considerations began with a thorough inventory and analysis of Hamilton County's existing roadway network. This initial assessment included a detailed review of traffic operations and crash patterns to identify potential safety enhancements. From this analysis, a list of roadway improvements was developed and organized by priority, focusing on areas that would benefit most from strategic upgrades.

To assess traffic operations, we used a combination of historical traffic count data collected annually, future traffic forecasts from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/ North Georgia Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, and general Level of Service (LOS) criteria. This approach allowed us to pinpoint current capacity constraints and anticipate areas likely to face similar issues as the County grows. Roadway segments already at or nearing capacity were flagged for inclusion in the improvement list to address these pressing needs.

The safety review analyzed three years of crash data across Hamilton County roadways to calculate crash rates on key segments. We then compared these rates to statewide averages to identify roads that might benefit from targeted safety studies or projects.

Table 5: Proposed Roadway Improvements (Area 9 only)

Priority Group	Roadway	Project Location	Area	Type of Improvement
Short-term	Hunter Road	at Lebron Sterchi Drive	9	Intersection
Short-term	Hunter Road	at curve near Crooked Creek Drive	9	Safety
Short-term	Hilltop Drive	between Hunter Road and Volkswagen Drive	9	Extension
Short-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Safety
Medium-term	Hunter Road	at Garfield Road	9	Intersection
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Mahan Gap Road	9	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Amos Road	9	Capacity
Long-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Capacity
Long-term	Harrison Bay Road	from Hwy 58 to Birchwood Pike	9	Safety

MPO PLANNED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS MAP

Average crash rates for the entire state of Tennessee were used for comparison to identify roads that might benefit from a safety study or project that would identify detailed crash patterns or implement improvements or strategies that could reduce the number or types of crashes. Three roads within Area 9 were identified as candidates for safety projects including Harrison Bay Road, Snow Hill Road, and Hunter Road.

Projects
(Considerations for future investments)

- **Principal Arterials**
  - *Georgetown Rd (SR-60)*
- **Minor Arterials**
  - *SR-58*
  - *Hunter Rd*
  - *Ooltewah-Georgetown Rd*
  - *Snow Hill Rd*
- **Major Collectors**
  - *Birchwood Pike from Georgetown Rd to Igou Ferry Rd.*
  - *Birchwood Pike from Igou Ferry Rod to SR-58*
  - *Harrison Bay Rd from Birchwood Pike to SR-58*
  - *Mahan Gap Rd*
  - *Dolly Pond Rd*

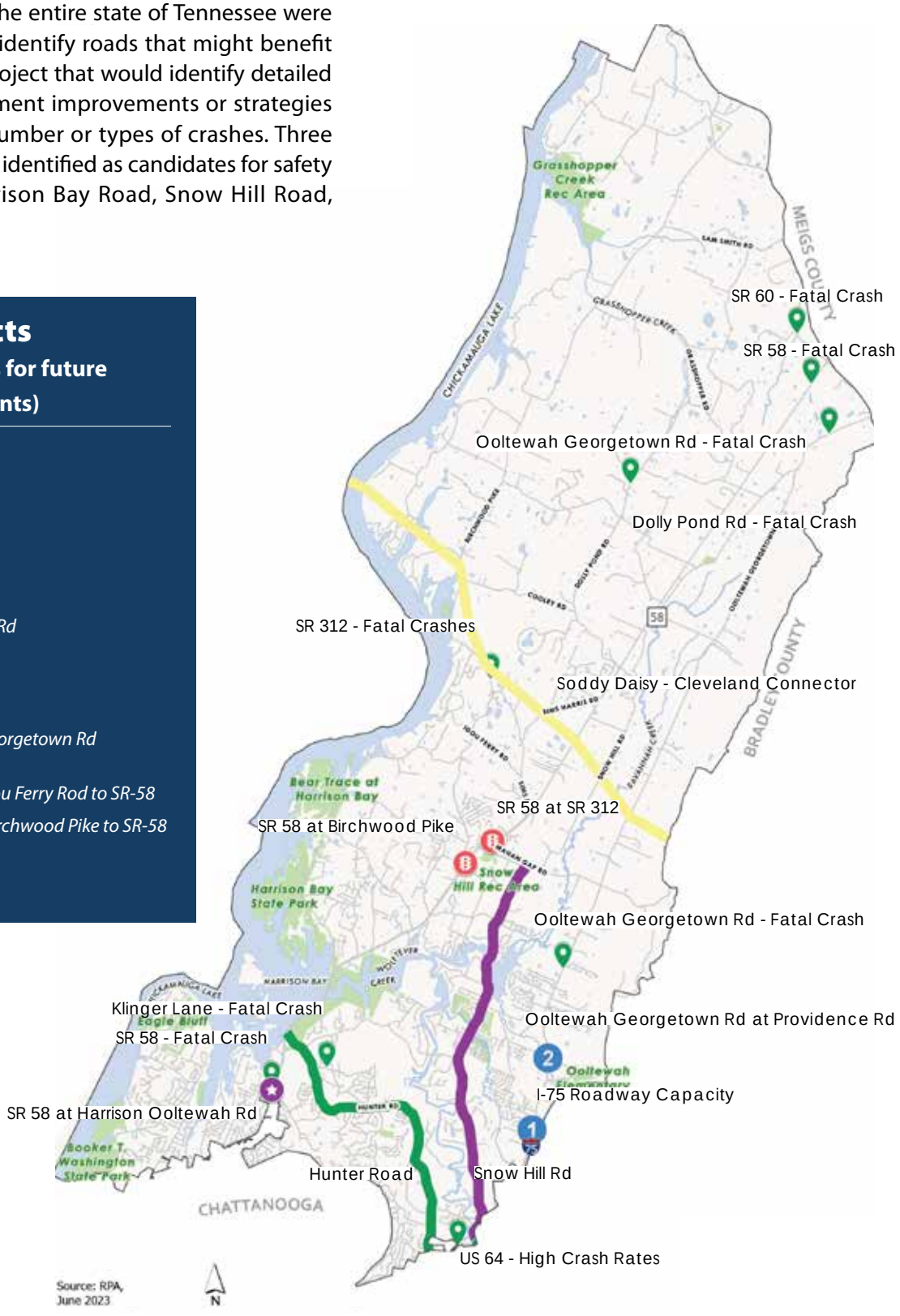


Figure 2.7: Area 9 TPO Planned Transportation Projects Map

SCHOOLS

It is imperative that Hamilton County Schools be part of the conversation when it comes to growth. As the area continues to grow, schools may approach, or exceed, capacity due to increasing student enrollment. Factors such as transportation, access, and space needed for buildings, parking, and recreation must be considered as sites for new schools are identified.

Area 9 Schools	Enrollment	Capacity	(%)	% Economically Disadvantaged
Elementary School				
Harrison Elementary School	845	1000	84.50%	54%
Wallace A. Smith Elementary School	633	702	90.17%	12%
Ooltewah Elementary School	935	1017	91.94%	13%
Snow Hill Elementary School	628	800	78.50%	26%
Middle School				
Brown Middle School	312	624	50.00%	45%
Hunter Middle School	742	1097	67.64%	14%
High School				
Central High School	636	839	75.80%	39%
Ooltewah High School	1236	1421	86.98%	22%
Magnet School				
Chattanooga School for the Liberal Arts	970	1000	97.00%	11%
Harrison Bay Future Ready Center	No data	-	-	No data

Notes: The above is a list of Hamilton County public school zones that are either primarily contained within or share a portion of their school zone with Planning Area 9. Magnet Schools in close proximity to Area 9 are also included.

Source: Hamilton County
Source for percent disadvantaged:
https://tdepublicschools.ondemand.sas.com/schools

EMERGENCY SERVICES

In 2024, Tri Star conducted a Fire and Emergency Response Evaluation of the unincorporated Areas to identify current levels of fire protection service, geographic coverage, response time, areas of need, etc. Within Area 9, there are five (5) volunteer fire department stations (VFD) including HWY 58 VFD 2,3,4, and 5 as well as Tri-Community VFD 2. Additionally HWY 58 VFD 1 and Tri-Community VFD 1 are just outside the boundary of Area 9 but both provide services inside the boundary of Area 9. The stations are evenly distributed throughout the Area. Highway 58 VFD serves the 2nd most populous Area in Hamilton County with an estimated population of 31,832.

Some areas in the north half of Area 9 have longer travel distances for fire and emergency services that result in slower response times. As growth continues, it will be necessary to continue to evaluate emergency service and response and improve accordingly.

Hamilton County Emergency Management owns and constantly updates evacuation routes and plans for natural disasters.

Area 9 is in Sequoyah Emergency Preparedness Plan's 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone. Highway 58 is a controlled evacuation route with traffic north from the intersection of Igou Ferry Road into Meigs County and south from the intersection into Chattanooga.

CHAPTER 3
VISION & GOALS

3.1 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

3.2 SURVEY RESULTS

3.3 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

3.4 VISION

3.5 GOALS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

The Plan's vision represents the community's desired future and directs a path for responsible growth. The Vision is further defined and facilitated through the Goals.

3.1 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community feedback was collected to craft the vision and goals for this plan. An online survey was conducted and meetings, both county sponsored and citizen led, were held to better understand the community's priorities for the future.

3.2 SURVEY RESULTS

The survey consisted of a series of questions with multiple choice answers. Most of the participants for the Area 9 survey lived within the area. The survey results are provided in Appendix C. Some of the results are listed below.

- 92% said they experience some form of congestion during peak hours and 70% experience congestion in non peak hours.
- 88% said the top infrastructure need is roads.
- 96% would like to preserve farmland and rural character, steep slopes, and wooded and riparian areas.

3.3 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Several Community Meetings were held for the Area 9 Plan.

The top concerns are listed below.

- Recent growth and already approved growth that will occur within the next few years. Residents were unhappy that current plans have not been followed, which led to urban sprawl. The loss of rural areas and character from recent growth. There was a strong desire for new development to preserve the rural character.
- Infrastructure has not kept up with development. Roads are congested and residents expressed a strong desire for improvements before future growth is approved or allowed. -- Residents would like to see more restrictions placed on decentralized sewage systems to mitigate environmental and health impacts.
- The loss of natural resources caused by new development. Residents would like to require new developments to preserve natural resources including ponds, streams, wetlands, steep slopes, natural drainage pathways, and mature trees.
- Future growth increasing evacuation times. Residents would like frequent studies to evaluate what effects current and future growth will have during an evacuation.
- Development in or near Harrison Bay State Park. Residents did not want inappropriate development in a historically significant area.

3.4 VISION

The following statement was crafted from the feedback provided to form a clear vision for the community's desired future.

"To sustain and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents. Ensure new growth complements or improves existing communities and honors our heritage. Development must be responsible and suited for existing infrastructure while preserving rural character and natural resources. Establish land use patterns that define the quality and character of growth while balancing the priorities and needs of residents."

3.5 GOALS

Goals describe steps to facilitate the plan's vision. Revising zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, stormwater regulations, and permits will align these documents to the Plan's Vision and Goals.

1. **Protect and preserve the rural areas and character**
   The rural area consisting of scenic waterways, forested areas, and large expanses of open spaces will be protected. New residential and commercial development will be required to blend and complement the existing rural character. Corridor management through buffer and year round screening requirements will protect the rural feel of the area.
2. **Match infrastructure with growth**
   Anticipate planned growth and ensure sufficient infrastructure is in place to serve both the residents and the business community. Studies for school capacity and new facilities will ensure the needs of students are met. Traffic studies must be conducted for new development to ensure mandatory improvements are identified and implemented. Analysis of the effects new development will have on estimated evacuation times will ensure the safety of residents.
3. **Protect natural resources**
   As growth occurs, special emphasis will be placed on protecting valuable natural resources such as existing waterways, forested areas, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas. Preservation of woodlands and wetlands will protect wildlife habitats and the natural environment. Requiring setbacks from karst features, such as sinkholes will provide valuable groundwater recharge and help prevent groundwater contamination. Implementing restrictions for development on slopes greater than 20 percent will provide slope protection and help prevent landslides.
4. **Preserve the single-family residential character**
   The Conservation Subdivision Model with large buffers and substantial open space can serve as an alternative way to preserve the residential character of the area. Decentralized Sewage Systems must follow WWTA rules and regulations, be managed and maintained by the WWTA, and be designed to protect existing residential areas.
5. **Blend commercial development with residential development**
   Commercial development must be single story and complement existing residential areas. Commercial areas are placed at crossroads or along major routes, but no long stretches of commercial businesses.
6. **Align zoning with the Area Plan and assure zoning regulations and subdivision regulations meet current standards**
   Zoning and Subdivision Regulations will be updated to align with the standards set in this plan. The Regulations should also be reviewed to ensure that current standards, such as flood, fire, and building regulations, are met.

CHAPTER 4
PLANNING PROCESS

4.1 PLACE TYPES

4.2 HOW PLACE TYPES ARE USED

4.3 GOALS & POLICIES

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

A wide range of resources was utilized to determine the most suitable land uses in Area 9. Current data, zoning, and land use patterns were examined in the planning process. It was also crucial to recognize the rich history of the Northeast County Area and the residents' specific desires and needs.

4.1 PLACE TYPES

Place Types were developed to serve as a foundation for future land use and to align with the community's vision and goals. Place Types will play a crucial role in maintaining the area's distinct identity and ensuring responsible development for current residents and future generations. Each Place Type will describe the various uses, forms, and character that development can take. Density allowed per acre is designated for each Place Type that allows residential development. Place Types are not zoning, and each one might include one or more zoning districts. The Place Type map was produced using key considerations such as existing zoning, necessary infrastructure, natural resources, and the community's needs.

4.2 HOW PLACE TYPES ARE USED

The Place Types and corresponding Place Type Map will become essential tools for making informed land use decisions such as rezonings and special permits. Zoning changes will be based on how well the proposed zone aligns with the intended characteristics of the Place Type. Additional considerations must also be addressed when making rezoning decisions such as the topography, road conditions, traffic studies, geological studies, natural resources impacts and effects on evacuations. If a proposed zoning change does not align with the Place Type and Map, the plan must be amended before a zoning change is considered.

The Area Plan recommendation and Place Types are not intended to limit development during the subdivision platting process for properties zoned R-1 Residential District or other residential zoning district or having a Special Exceptions Permit for a Planned Unit Development prior to plan adoption. Existing zoning density and conditions should not be overridden by Plan Hamilton for platting purposes in residential or commercial zones, but all setback and buffering language should apply to new preliminary plats (those not already accepted by RPA at the time of plan adoption). The subdivision of such land shall follow the Hamilton County Subdivision Regulations standard procedures.

4.2.1 CATEGORIES & PLACE TYPES IN AREA 9

There are 23 Place Types in total as provided and amended from time to time by the RPA on their website here. The four categories with listing of Place Types are below. On the pages following in this section are the individual Place Types that appear in Hamilton County and as shown on the Place Type Map (Figure 4.6).

RESIDENTIAL

- *Countryside Residential (CR)*
- *Suburban Residential (SR)*

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

- *Preserve (PR)*
- *Agricultural (AG)*
- *Resort & Recreation (RR)*
- *Industrial (IN)*
- *Campus (CA)*
- *Regional Facility (RF)*

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

- *Rural Commercial (RCO)*

OVERLAYS

- *Natural Resources (NR)*
- *Rural Corridor (RC)*

Table 7: Density

PLACE TYPE	MAXIMUM DENSITY	GENERAL INTENSITY
CR Countryside Residential	*See Place Type*	Low Density
SR Suburban Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Low to Medium Density
SR Suburban Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Medium Density
RR Resort & Recreation	N/A	Varies if Type A or B *See Place Type Description*

RESIDENTIAL

CR

Countryside Residential

Countryside Residential Place Types have a very rural character and consist primarily of single-family homes on large lots. Countryside Residential may include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes, as well as accessory buildings, such as barns and greenhouses. This Place Type also includes the County's agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses ranging from roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores to larger production facilities.

Residences and development centered around farming are typically on septic systems. Residences are generally further from key destinations than in other residential Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs. Fixed-route transit is not feasible, and sidewalks are not likely, due to the low density of these Areas.

Countryside Residential maximum densities are as follows:

- 1.5 dwelling units per acre (development on septic),
- 3 dwelling units per acre (developed on sewer), and
- 2.75 dwelling units per acre (developed on decentralized sewer systems or where new approved technology allows*)

** When new information or technological improvements to the decentralized systems becomes available, staff will present information to the County Commission for direction.*

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached, farming activities, accessory buildings (barns, greenhouses, etc.), manufactured homes

Limited Uses

Event facilities, golf courses, and campgrounds where appropriate infrastructure exists and development impacts such as noise, traffic, and activity are directed away from existing residential uses.

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- Buffer and setback from right-of-way:
  - Require a 30' wide planted landscape buffer from existing ROW.
  - For exterior street facing garages, garage doors must be set back 20' from the right-of-way.
- Perimeter buffer:
  - Plant 2 inch caliper trees around entire perimeter of development; minimum of 30' on center. If existing vegetation is equivalent to or greater along the perimeter, the existing vegetation would count towards this requirement.
  - Behind said buffer- require a 25' rear setback and a 10' side setback if the side of the house is adjacent to the buffer.
- Floodplains
  - Floodplains may be filled up to three fifths the distance of the length of the floodplain on the property. For instance if a floodplain is 100' in length from a water body – one can fill up to 60 feet in length of that floodplain length.
- Steep Slopes
  - Adopt a steep slope vegetation policy and planting requirements *(Reference: City of Chattanooga Code Sec. 31-324.4)*

SR

Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential Place Type has a predominantly low intensity, single-family detached, residential development pattern, especially within the same block. Some moderate density residential development, such as small lot houses or attached townhomes, may exist, but are located on a major street or near a transit route or school. When next to lower density residential development, this moderate intensity infill development maintains the existing rhythm and feel of the street. Factors that play into this rhythm and feel include lot width, setbacks, building massing, and height. Open spaces are typically private (back yards), but greenways may provide connectivity. Residences in this Place Type are generally further from key destinations than those in other Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs.

Predominant Uses	Limited Uses
Single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units/acre, accessory dwelling units (ADUs)	The following uses when located within a 1/4 mile of a public school or park or center where appropriate infrastructure exists: single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units an acre; townhomes (up to 4 massed units per building); and two, three, and four unit housing

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- *Require ADA compliant sidewalks in Suburban Residential Development Standards unless the average lot size is 1 acre or above, in all plans, to ensure pedestrian infrastructure in denser subdivisions.*

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

PR Preserve

Preserves are large expanses of forest, floodplains and other natural resources, as well as public parks and recreation Areas that have been set aside as places where general development is not allowed. They may also include privately-owned land that is permanently protected by conservation easements and remains in a largely undeveloped state. Some may be used for passive recreation, while others are largely off limits to human use due to sensitive natural resources or their remote location. Development within the Preserve is minimized, and is limited to cultural, educational or recreational uses.

Uses

Undisturbed open space, visitors' centers, nature centers, public parks, active and passive recreation, trails, cemeteries, and accessory structures such as concessions, storage and parking.

RR Resort & Recreation

The Resort & Recreation Place Type supports outdoor activities such as camping, boating, golfing, bouldering, mountain biking, as well as corporate nature retreats, and eco-tourism activities. These places are focused on enjoying nature, exceptional views, or historic landmarks. However, unlike Preserves, which are primarily government-owned properties with very limited development, such as a state or County park, the Resort & Recreation Place Type can include multiple private businesses with more development, such as marinas, hotels, restaurants and even housing. Properties may range in size from a 20-acre campground to 100+ acre resorts with a marina, lodge, restaurant, and individual house lots.

Resort Type A accommodates a more intense outdoor recreation and park experience and could include hotels, conferences centers, large campgrounds/RV parks and related uses or even a full resort. Oftentimes these are located in or adjacent to state or county parks or may develop from a golf course or event facility such as a fairground or agritourism site. The development size and location should be designed so that the impact of this larger-scale format lessens potential negative aspects.

Resort Type B accommodates smaller-scale or less intense recreational activities such as golf courses, ballfields, cultural facilities, marinas, and related accessory use such as parking areas, small campgrounds or cabins, and related retail goods such as camp stores, farm stands, and equipment rental (kayaks, canoes, bicycles, etc.).

Predominant Uses

Campgrounds/RV parks, hotels, cabins, restaurants, marinas, camp stores, golf courses, agriculture-related businesses (e.g. boarding stables, riding academies), farming activities

Limited Uses

Single-unit housing (detached and attached) and reception facilities as a secondary use integrated into a resort.

CA Campus

Campus Place Types are characterized by one major activity such as educational, office, industrial, medical, or religious. Campuses are typically based on a master plan that incorporates buildings, open spaces, streets, pedestrian networks, and parking in a unified manner. Campuses have clearly defined edges—often delineated with gateway structures and landscape—that distinguish them from adjacent Place Types. Residential buildings and small convenience services often support the predominant use. Campuses function as major employment and activity centers and are often served by public or private transit.

Uses

Institutions (such as academic, medical, religious or research facilities), offices, clubhouses/ meeting halls, athletic facilities, non-noxious/non-nuisance manufacturing and industrial, open space, multi-family residences (residence halls and dormitories), onsite retail and food services, and staff housing.

Existing schools, large medical and church campuses, government facilities, and corporate headquarters are identified as the Campus Place Type. However, as land use and property owners change over time, the Campus designation may no longer be applicable. In that case, the plan goals, surrounding Place Types, and context should all be considered in identifying future use/reuse of the former Campus site.

IN Industrial

The Industrial Place Type supports a variety of manufacturing uses. Unlike the Maker District Place Type, the Industrial Place Type includes both non-noxious operations (no hazardous materials or pollution) and noxious industries (heavy industrial production). The latter are not located adjacent to residential Areas, but are not so far away as to be a commute burden. The size of lots (2+ acres) and buildings are often larger than those in the Maker District Place Type.

Uses

Light manufacturing and industrial facilities, including assembly facilities, offices, distribution, warehousing, wholesaling, retail specifically related to the primary use and self storage facilities.

Limited Uses

Heavy manufacturing should be located along major transportation infrastructure and directed away from existing development.

There are limited areas of industrial uses in the County today. Some smaller scale industrial areas may appropriately transition to Maker Districts supporting a combinations of contractors, skilled trades, repair specialists, artists and artisans, food production, and service centers.

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

RCO Rural Commercial

The Rural Commercial place type is a small-scale, single-story commercial placetype intended to serve rural residents and nearby neighborhoods in Hamilton County. It provides essential goods and services while preserving the rural aesthetic and limiting sprawl. This placetype emphasizes compatibility with surrounding land uses and local economic vitality.

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be used to inform the creation of a new Rural Commercial District in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- **Uses:**
  - Limited to rural and neighborhood commercial activities, such as:
    - Grocery store
    - Café or coffee shop
    - General store or farm supply retailer
    - Local artisan shops (e.g., bakery, craft goods)
    - Small pharmacy or health clinic
    - Post office or shipping service
    - Limited service restaurant (e.g., diner or takeout)
  - Prohibited Uses -- Drive Thru Restaurants
- **Building Scale:**
  - Single-story structures only
  - Maximum height: 25 feet
  - Footprint: Individual buildings not to exceed 20,000 sq ft
- **Site Size:** 2–5 acres total, allowing for a cluster of 2–4 small buildings, parking, and open space

Design Standards

- **Setbacks:**
  - Front: 30 feet from the road to allow for landscaping
  - Side/Rear: Side/Rear: 30 feet minimum for property adjacent to residential or agricultural uses. Twenty (20) feet minimum for property adjacent to Commercial or Manufacturing.
- **Parking:**
  - Limited to 4 spaces per 1,000 sq ft of building area
  - Located to the side or rear to prioritize pedestrian access and visibility of storefronts
  - Use of permeable surfaces encouraged for sustainability
- **Signage:** Freestanding signs (max height 25') or building mounted signs. All signage shall have low intensity lighting. No illuminated billboards.
- **Lighting:** Downward-directed, low-intensity lighting to minimize light pollution
- **Landscaping:** Tree plantings along perimeters and in parking areas to enhance rural character and provide shade.
- **Buffering:** Provide thirty (30) feet deep landscape screening/buffer along the shared rear and side property line adjacent to agricultural or residential districts. Buffer shall be planted with:
  a. Evergreen trees placed in two (2) staggered rows (spaced a maximum of seven (7) feet apart
  b. Shrubs spaced a maximum of six (6) feet on center
  c. Two (2) rows of shade trees spaced a maximum of thirty (30) feet on-center.

  Retain existing natural vegetation to serve as a supplement to the required landscaping.

Infrastructure and Access

- **Access:** Shared entrances should be used to minimize curb cuts
- **Pedestrian Connectivity:** Sidewalks linking buildings and to the exterior sidewalk with crosswalks to adjacent residential areas or trails if present shall be considered if pedestrian network is present.

OVERLAYS

Natural Resources Overlay

The Natural Resources Overlay is not a Place Type in and of itself. It is an Overlay on top of the underlying Place Type that identifies Areas considered sensitive due to the presence of steep slopes, floodplains or wetlands. Sites within this overlay are not protected by law from development. The purpose, therefore, is to identify these sensitive Areas so that they are given consideration for protection, or incorporated as amenities within new developments. Some sites are already developed and the overlay designation does not mean development cannot expand in these Areas; it merely identifies the location of floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.

Predominant Uses

Uses are defined by the underlying Place Type.

RC Rural Corridor

Primarily located in rural parts of the County, and are characterized by lots of open fields and woodlands. Development along Rural Corridors is sparse with farms or single unit homes on large estate lots. A few scattered subdivisions with smaller lots may have entries along these corridors, but the homes are separated from the corridor by distance (50 - 100 feet), and by dense vegetated buffers, in order to preserve the rural character of the corridor. Rural Corridors do not have the more dense, connecting street networks. They are typically two-lane roads. Rural Corridors may however, also take the form of a major thoroughfare, such as a state designated scenic parkway, with mountainside or lakefront views. A few commercial uses, often located at a Crossroads intersection, or as a stand-alone business, may be found along Rural Corridors, but no long stretches of commercial businesses.

The purpose of the rural corridor overlay is primarily to address new subdivision development. A rural corridor setback for a subdivision for the purposes of the plan refers to a required distance that new development must maintain from a designated corridor, as detailed on the Place Type map. The intent of the setback is to protect the character and environmental integrity of the rural landscape. The setback does not apply to individual homes outside a major subdivision.

Development Standard

The following development standard will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- A 50-foot setback from right of way of existing roadway for any structure including water quality features;
- a 30-foot type A landscape buffer is required along the entire frontage;
- adequate right of way as determined by the County Engineer should also be required as a condition to be given to accommodate an additional lane if a rezoning case is requested along the Rural Corridor overlay.

4.2.2 PLACE TYPES MAP

Please reference a separate map. Map is not included in this online document due to file size.

4.2.3 AMENDMENT PROCESS AND UPDATES

In order to ensure that Plan Hamilton best reflects the existing conditions and future vision of Hamilton County, the Plan Hamilton update cycle shall be as follows:

- Full plan review - every five years
- Annual review of policy and map changes - annual review by staff
- Applicant Requested Plan Amendments - as necessary and when requested by rezoning applicant
  - Zoning decisions are based primarily on area plans, which are components of the adopted general plan, in this case Plan Hamilton. The County's five different Area Plans were developed to include Place Type (land use) and capital improvement recommendations to inform rezoning requests.
  - Requested plan changes will alternate for one side of the Tennessee River every other month to the other side to permit changes six times per year, per side of the river.
  - An Area Plan amendment and its companion rezoning case may be heard on the same agenda.

4.3 GOALS & POLICIES

4.3.1 GOAL 1 & POLICIES

GOAL 1
BALANCE GROWTH, ECONOMY & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Policy 1.9.1 Setback and buffering requirements as detailed in Place Types should also apply to residential plats in agricultural zones.

Policy 1.9.2 Amend the A-1 Agricultural District to change to the Maximum Density to 1.5 dwelling unit per acre on traditional septic.

APPENDIX

Scrivener's Note: with the exception of the Chamber Memo, all other Appendices were removed per the Regional Planning Commission's vote on September 8, 2025 for the adoption of Resolution 825-18

A. CHATTANOOGA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMO

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce Memo

The Urgent Need for New Manufacturing Locations in Hamilton County, Tennessee

Hamilton County has been known as a manufacturing magnet for much of its history and it's county seat, Chattanooga was called the "Dynamo of Dixie" in the late 19th century. This legacy continues to ring true today due to the County's logistic assets including three interstate highways, two class-1 rail lines and the navigable Tennessee River. However, the county now faces an imperative challenge: identifying new locations for manufacturing operations. The necessity for this strategic move stems from several factors, including economic growth, technological advancements, environmental considerations, and community development. This summary explores the multifaceted reasons behind this need and the potential benefits it could bring to the county. The current Plan Hamilton growth plan has not identified additional areas for manufacturing uses however, the County should be working to identify areas for this use in order to continue to create new jobs and drive economic prosperity and diversification.

Economic Growth and Diversification

In recent years, Hamilton County has experienced significant economic growth. As industries expand and new businesses emerge, the demand for manufacturing space has increased but the number of acres zoned for manufacturing has declined. From 2014 to 2024 acreage with M-1 zoning designation in Hamilton County declined by 1,684 acres. During this timeframe, the county's Centre South Industrial park reached full capacity and all available parcels in Enterprise South have been sold or have been optioned by companies for future expansion. Furthermore, current facilities for several existing businesses across the county are at capacity and cannot accommodate additional growth, putting continued investment by those companies at risk. Without new locations, the county risks stifling its economic potential. Diversifying the manufacturing base is essential to sustain growth, attract investorment, and create job opportunities, thereby ensuring long-term economic stability for the county and its residents.

Demographic Alignment

The manufacturing sector is one of the few industries that provides high-wage, full-time jobs for individuals with various education attainment levels. Approximately 30% of manufacturing jobs are white collar jobs requiring mostly 4-year college degrees. The remaining 70% of jobs in manufacturing require less than a four-year degree and, in some instances, do not require a high school degree. This aligns well

with Hamilton County's demographics where just over 30% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a high school diploma or less and only 37% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a 4-year degree. Jobs in the manufacturing sector are typically high-wage and include benefits as demonstrated by Hamilton County's average manufacturing wage of $74,256.

Technological Advancements

The manufacturing industry is evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancements such as automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. These innovations require modern facilities equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure. As technological advances in the manufacturing sector continue to grow, manufacturing wages will increase as well, assuring living wage jobs for county residents in advanced manufacturing sectors. Hamilton County is home to dozens of established companies that produce pharmaceuticals, heavy equipment and automobiles and the county has a growing cadre of tech-based manufacturing startups that have been supported by Hamilton County's Business Development Center. These early stage companies leverage 3-D printing, provide research and development services in the battery space and produce sensor and robotic equipment. Making sure that Hamilton County has shovel-ready sites, zoned for manufacturing will help the county both legacy companies as well as early-stage high tech manufacturers as they continue to grow.

Multiplier Effect of Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector is considered a "traded industry sector" which means it produces goods that are sold outside of the local region. Traded industry sectors are critical because they bring in revenue from outside of the local economy, increasing the county's gross domestic product (GDP). This new revenue then circulates in the economy, creating additional jobs. Research by firms such as EMSI shows that manufacturing jobs have a significant multiplier effect with one manufacturing job creating an additional nine jobs in the community. With more than 29,000 people working in manufacturing in Hamilton County, the sector drives significantly economic activity and job creation in the community across retail, healthcare, construction and several other industries.

Site considerations and conclusions

The need for Hamilton County to identify new locations for manufacturing will require future amendments to the Plan Hamilton growth plan. Due to increasing land prices inside Chattanooga city

limits, it is likely that any new locations for manufacturing uses will be in unincorporated Hamilton County. Proximity to infrastructure will also be critical with consideration given to properties that have 4-lane highway access, rail infrastructure and proximity to sewer infrastructure. The county's recent utilization of tax increment financing (TIF) should serve as a model for financing infrastructure improvements for sites with limited infrastructure.

The manufacturing sector has been a critical economic driver for Hamilton County. Much of the recent job growth the county has experienced can be tied to the development of Enterprise South Industrial Park by the City and County and the location of Volkswagen in the park. With the county's industrial parks now at capacity and multiple manufacturers reaching full build out on their sites, it is critical that Hamilton County identify new locations for the county's second largest industry sector.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

PLAN HAMILTON

OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

12 WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN AREA PLAN

Apison
Collegedale
East Brainerd
Ooltewah
Summit

RPA

Adopted by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, Sept. 8, 2025.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. AREA SUMMARY **4**

1.1 AREA PLANNING SUMMARY 5
1.2 INTRODUCTION 6
1.3 WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN: AREA 12 7
1.4 HISTORY OF WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN 9
1.5 PAST PLAN 11

CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS **12**

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY 13
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE 15
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS 16
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES 18
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS 19

CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS **44**

3.1 INTRODUCTION 45
3.2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH 46
3.3 AREA PLAN GOALS 50
3.4 VISION STATEMENT 51

CHAPTER 4. PLANS, POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS **52**

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW 53
4.2 PLACE TYPES 60
4.3 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 74

CHAPTER 5. NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION **84**

5.1 INTRODUCTION 85
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 88

CHAPTER 6. APPENDIX **100**

CHAPTER 1
AREA SUMMARY

1.1 PLAN SUMMARY
1.2 INTRODUCTION
1.3 WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN STUDY AREA
1.4 HISTORY OF WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN
1.5 PAST PLANS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

1.1 AREA PLANNING SUMMARY

The Hamilton County Area Plans represent a comprehensive approach to managing growth and change in our diverse communities, recognizing both the distinct identities of each Area and the interconnectedness of our County. With a focus on the specific challenges and opportunities within Hamilton County's unincorporated Areas, each plan addresses critical factors that shape community life—land use, infrastructure, environmental preservation, housing, and economic resilience. Throughout the planning process, we engaged with community members to create a vision that reflects local priorities and builds on the character and strengths of each Area.

From the rural expanse and scenic beauty of Sale Creek and Birchwood, to the residential communities of Georgetown and Apison, to the vibrant mountain villages and outdoor offerings of the Walden Plateau, or the waterfront community of Lakesite, all places where many families have multi-generation histories attached to the landscape, the plans recognize the local topographic, geologic, and infrastructure constraints found in these unique areas. This approach allows for tailored strategies that honor local heritage, rural qualities, and natural landscapes while accommodating sustainable growth.

The planning process began with in-depth research and analysis to understand the existing conditions, demographic trends, and economic drivers across Hamilton County. By examining land use, transportation networks, environmental features, and community facilities, we identified both opportunities and constraints in each area. This research also shed light on trends such as housing demands, population shifts, and economic patterns, allowing us to anticipate future needs and create a foundation for adaptable, forward-looking plans.

The visions articulated in these Plans emerged from collaborative dialogue with residents, local stakeholders, and County officials. Community workshops, surveys, and public meetings provided residents the opportunity to voice their aspirations, concerns, and ideas for the future of their neighborhoods. The resulting visions emphasize maintaining rural character, supporting local businesses, enhancing outdoor recreation, and fostering a sense of place in each community. Across the County, residents expressed a desire to balance growth with preservation—ensuring that new developments are thoughtfully integrated and contribute positively to the character of their communities.

To bring these visions to life, the Area Plans detail policies and actions centered on Community Character and Land Use, Natural Resources, Economic Health and Community, and Funding Mechanisms. These categories, rooted in the community themes established in Chapter 2, have been refined to address the County's evolving needs and offer the most impactful steps forward.

The implementation strategies focus on practical, collaborative actions that turn these plans into reality. Partnerships with local and regional organizations, support for small businesses, and investments in community facilities are vital to advancing these initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation will be critical to ensure the plans stay flexible, allowing policies to adapt as new challenges and opportunities emerge. Each Area Plan is intended as a living document, responsive to ongoing community input and changing needs over time.

As we move from planning to action, the success of this Plan relies on commitment, collaboration, and community engagement. Hamilton County is dedicated to working closely with residents, businesses, and local leaders to implement these policies in a way that fosters a resilient and inclusive future. By advancing these Plans with a shared sense of purpose, we can create communities that are not only livable and economically vibrant but also reflective of the unique character and heritage that residents value. Through strategic growth, environmental stewardship, and respect for community identity, the Comprehensive Plan will encourage each Area to thrive for generations to come.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

As Hamilton County's population grows, thoughtful planning is crucial to managing the upcoming changes while efficiently using limited resources. The goal is to create resilient communities where neighborhoods, commercial centers, parks, and natural spaces flourish, striking a balance between development and conservation.

To guide this growth, we develop specific Plans that are later presented to local legislative bodies for adoption. These Plans become essential in shaping zoning, guiding private development, and influencing public infrastructure investments. They serve as a blueprint for determining where growth, redevelopment, and conservation should occur.

The Plans will equip Hamilton County leadership with the tools necessary to make strategic community investments in infrastructure, staff, and services, ensuring a livable community with sustained economic opportunities.

The Introduction Chapter serves as the background for the planning process and sets the tone for:

- Planning Framework
- Existing Planning Goals
- What is An Area Plan?
- Hamilton County Planning Areas
- Policy Focus
- Area Plan Process
- Outline of the Area Plans

Community input is essential to shaping Hamilton County's long-term planning efforts, ensuring that residents and business owners help define the County's future. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan established a responsible land-use framework that prioritizes environmental preservation and community character. Complementing this, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) forecasts transportation needs and guides infrastructure investment.

Area Plans provide localized guidance on development, zoning, infrastructure, and conservation. These plans use tools like a Conceptual Land Use map that is illustrative and Place Types maps that define development patterns and set policies for future growth. They are shaped by prior planning, community feedback, and professional analysis. Key goals include creating vibrant, well-defined spaces and balancing growth while preserving each area's character and meeting future demands.

Although Area Plans do not regulate development or change zoning directly, they guide policy and decisions related to infrastructure, housing diversity, and commercial centers. They emphasize efficient investment in public services, transportation, and natural resource preservation, especially in rural areas. Constraints like limited sewer capacity, emergency services, and infrastructure demands shape policies to ensure sustainable growth while maintaining residents' quality of life.

The White Oak Mtn. / Area 12 Plan is organized in five chapters as follows:

1.3 WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN: AREA 12

White Oak Mountain, located near the communities of Collegedale, Apison, Summit, and Ooltewah, is a region known for its distinct natural features and rich history. Stretching across the eastern landscape of Hamilton County, White Oak Mountain Area is marked by its rolling hills, Area 12 consists of approximately 47 square miles. The mountain itself is a prominent feature in the region, with its elevation changes creating a striking backdrop that can be seen from various points throughout Hamilton County.

Several communities have developed in the vicinity of White Oak Mountain, each benefiting from the area's natural beauty and resources. Collegedale, known for its educational institutions, and Apison, with its rural charm, are among the key communities that have grown in harmony with the mountain's landscape. Summit and Ooltewah, with their blend of residential and commercial areas, also contribute to the region's character, providing essential services and infrastructure while maintaining close ties to the natural environment.

The White Oak Mountain area is characterized by its rural and natural qualities. The mountain's steep slopes and limited points of access pose challenges for development, but they also help to protect the area's scenic beauty and rural character. The emphasis in this region is on maintaining low-density residential patterns, with large-lot single-family homes with generous setbacks. The area's green spaces, parks, and trails are treasured by residents and play a crucial role in the community's identity.

This Area Plan is designed to guide the sustainable growth of the White Oak Mountain Area and inform decisions on future development and supporting infrastructure. Development that is sensitive to the environment and community vision will help preserve the area's unique sense of place. The community values the preservation of its rural character, the enhancement of its trail systems, and the maintenance of its natural features, ensuring that the area's distinctive identity is upheld for future generations.

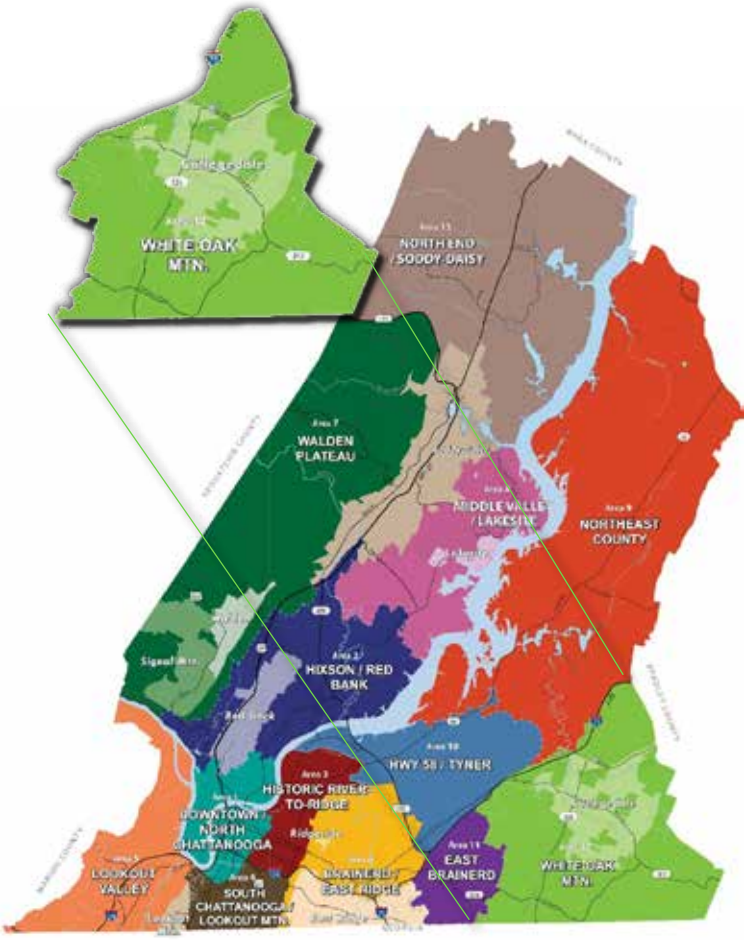


Figure 1.1: White Oak Mountain Area 12 as a part of Hamilton County Study Area

White Oak Mountain Map

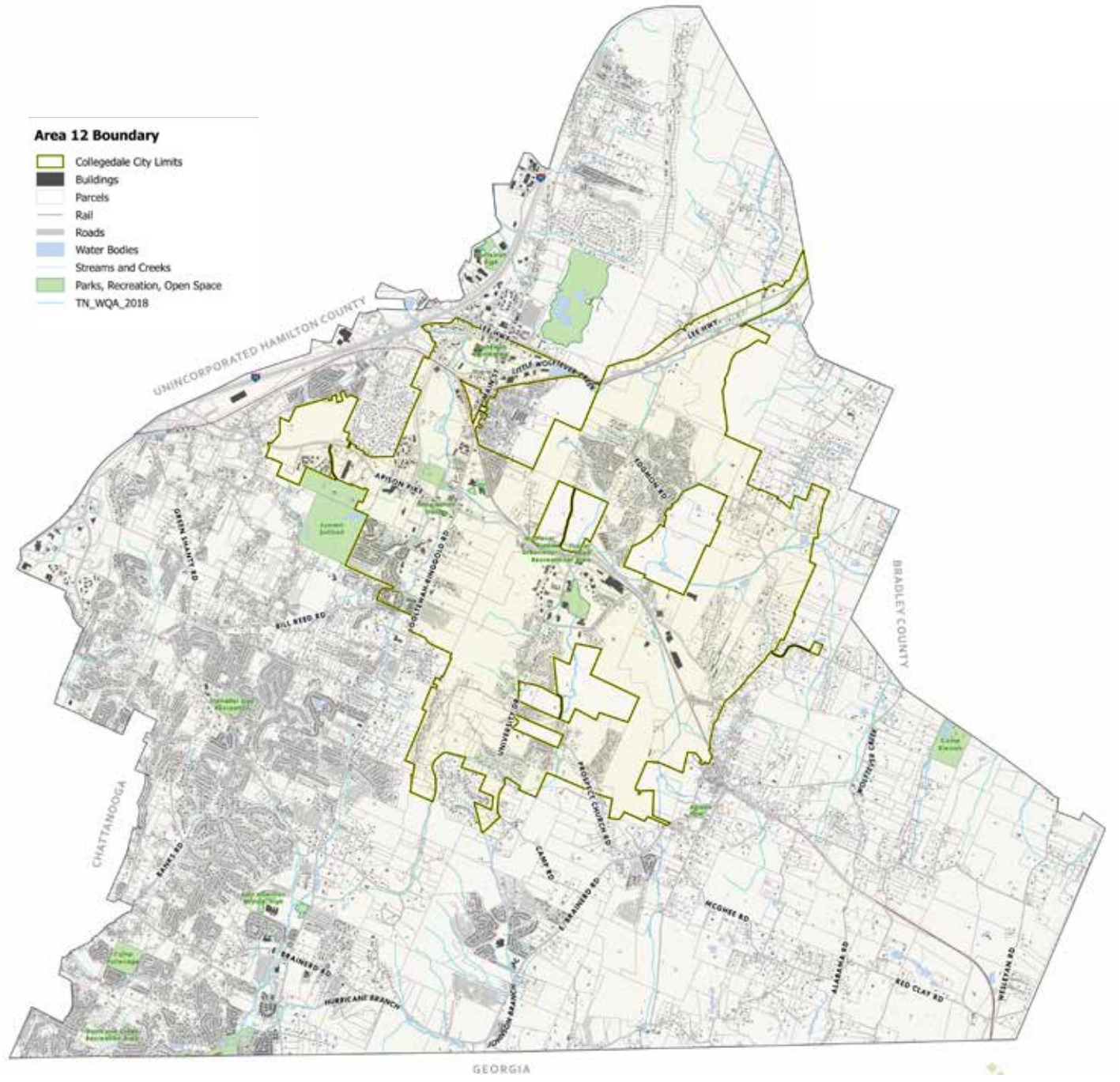


Figure 1.2: White Oak Mountain Area 12 Map

1.4 HISTORY OF WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN

The White Oak Mountain Area boasts a rich history intertwined with the cultural and natural heritage of the region. This area was part of James County (generally lands east of the Tennessee River) with Apison and Ooltewah serving as the primary towns. Established in 1871, James County was centered with Ooltewah serving as the County seat and existed until 1919 when reabsorbed into Hamilton County. A train depot was located in downtown Ooltewah near Main Street along with the James County Courthouse. Well served by rail, the area took part in the growing mining industry found throughout the region. This area featured bauxite mines, produced ore and limestone, and included farming, saw mills and small businesses. The brief history discussed in this plan is focused on how the unique topography, early beginnings, City of Collegedale and surrounding industry shaped the development pattern we see today.

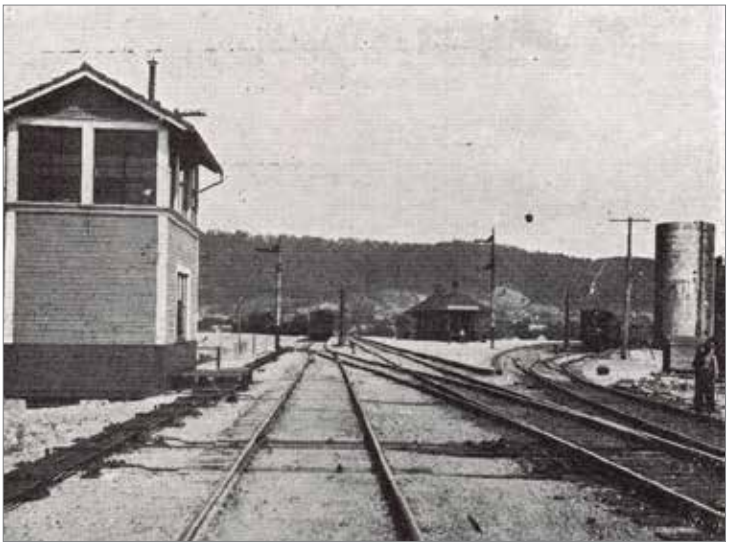
WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN

White Oak Mountain runs in a north/south direction through the middle of Area 12 through the unincorporated areas as well as the City of Collegedale. Collegedale itself has developed an extensive network of trails on White Oak Mountain and Bauxite Ridge, encouraging both residents and visitors to explore its beauty. The area is also home to a variety of wildlife, from deer and foxes to an array of bird species, making it a popular spot for wildlife observation. The elevation is similar to Missionary Ridge averaging approximately 1,368 feet above sea level.

White Oak Mountain
Source: Land Watch

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL BEGINNINGS

In the early twentieth century, the town of Apison worked to recruit people to this area known for its rich farm lands where forage crops, sweet potatoes and dairies thrived along with businesses and residences. As a connector to Bradley County, Lee Highway and Apison Pike served as thoroughfares to Cleveland, McDonald and the Red Clay area. White Oak Valley exists today as a reminder of the rural landscape once predominant during the twentieth century. With the advent of the Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant (VAAP) during World War II, the area experienced growth resulting in more housing for workers and many local churches being added to the Summit area. Once a place of farming and share cropping, Summit was established as an African-American community named for the high ridge tops.



The Ooltewah Cutoff
Source: Chattanoogan.com

The Commons - Collegedale
Source: Collegedale Parks and Recreation

Trail of Tears in Area 12
Source: National Park Service (NPS)

Little Debbie Park
Source: Visit Chattanooga

THE CITY OF COLLEGEDALE

The City of Collegedale was established as a municipality in 1968, its roots are deeply intertwined with the establishment of Southern Adventist University, a cornerstone that not only lent the town its name but also its purpose. What began as a modest settlement around a religious educational institution has grown into a city, where the values of its founders continue to resonate in its development. From its early days as a rural outpost to its evolution as part of James County, Colledgedale is now a vibrant suburban community.

TRAIL OF TEARS

The Indian Removal Act passed by U.S. Congress in 1830 forced the relocation of Native American tribes. Thousands of Cherokee people passed through this region on their westward journey to the designated Indian Territory. This event significantly influenced the area's demographics and social fabric, with remnants of the historic route still evident in the region's trails and markers. According to the National Park Service, the Trail of Tears passes through Ooltewah, crossing Little Debbie Parkway and Apison Pike.

INDUSTRY & GROWTH

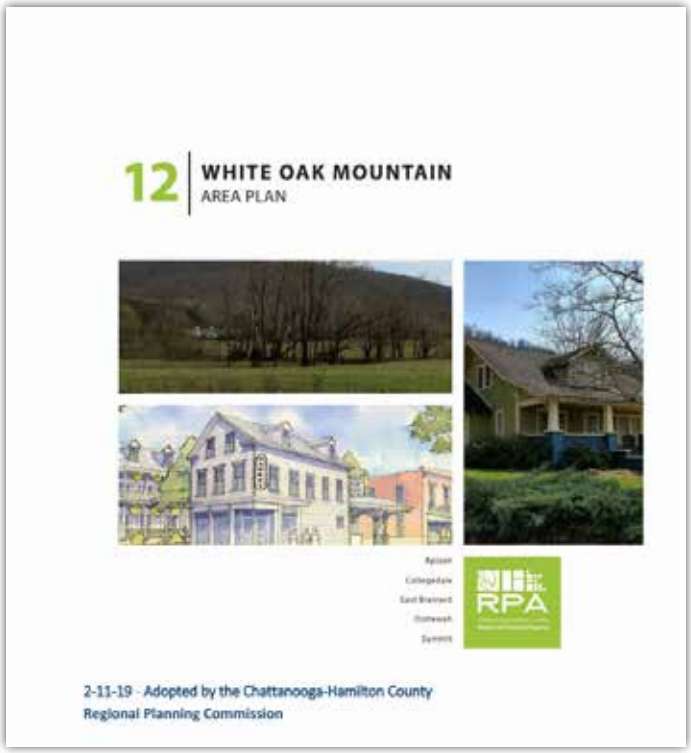
During the 1980's and 1990's, the area saw growth along the I-75 interstate with new development clustering along the exits and Lee Highway area. The Summit landfill was added to the Apison Pike area and was in operation for nearly twenty years. Now closed, the landfill site exists as a private softball complex and recreation area managed by the City of Chattanooga. Additionally, the East Brainerd area expanded towards Ooltewah-Ringgold Road with multiple subdivisions and the Westview Elementary school was added, changing the makeup of this once rural part of Hamilton County. The proximity to major employers such as Southern Adventist University, McKee Foods (Little Debbie), and Enterprise South continues to increase the residential growth of the White Oak Mountain area.

1.5 PAST PLAN

WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN AREA PLAN (2019)

Led by the RPA, the White Oak Mountain Area Plan was approved in February 2019 by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission. This plan represented a collaborative effort among local elected officials of Hamilton County, Chattanooga City Council, the City of Collegedale, business owners, and residents. The plan was created to guide growth by providing predictability, promoting coordination between new development and public services, and provides decision makers with the policy tools to promote development that enhances the area's unique features. The plan provides guidance by offering policy options for the built environment, transportation and natural resource systems. The plan is separated into four (4) chapter to guide the planning effort and has informed the outline of the new unincorporated Area Plans:

1. **Introduction/Background:**
   Overview of the planning framework, Area Plans in general, the White Oak Mountain study area, and the overall public process.
2. **Research & Analysis:**
   Background on the study area, study area profile, community priorities, overall plan analysis including the built environment, transportation, and natural resources.
3. **Community Principles & Vision:**
   Identification of the area's specific principles and Vision Statement.
4. **Goals & Policy Recommendations:**
   Overview of the goals and policy recommendations for the built environment, transportation, natural resources, Place Types, and centers.



Previous 2019 Area 12 Plan
Source: RPA

The plan also identified 3 main community concerns and aspirations that framed the analysis and recommendations of the plan document:

» Balance growth with adequate infrastructure. Traffic congestion is a growing concern among residents. As new schools are built, more people are moving to this area. Participants were concerned about housing growth having adequate services.

» Retain the "Rural Character" of the White Oak Mountain area. This was one of the top comments voiced during the public meetings and survey results. Maintaining existing character in areas where growth or change is occurring is a concern.

» Improve the quality of commercial development. There is a desire for additional retail, restaurants, medical and other commercial uses as part of the community's growth, but with better quality, landscape buffers and design that reflects the area's scenic character.

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY

White Oak Mountain is linked to East Brainerd / Chattanooga via East Brainerd Road, Standifer Gap Road, and Apison Pike. These connections influence transportation, economic drivers, and development patterns. The western half of Area 12 has experienced explosive residential and commercial growth based on several inputs. Primary drivers include proximity to Interstate 75 employment anchors in Chattanooga, at Enterprise South, and in the City of Collegedale. Relatively newer schools and district facilities, such as the Wolftever Greenway have also spurred growth in this portion of the district. A primary objective is to focus new growth and add predictability to commercial and higher density residential growth along the I-75/Lee Highway/Apison Pike corridors. White Oak Mountain, Bauxite Ridge, and the Wolftever Creek drainage areas are natural features that influence development patterns.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- The growing communities of Collegedale and Cleveland play a vital role in supporting the Area.
- The community has expressed a desire to maintain a more rural development pattern.
- Portions of this historically rural area transitioning to a moderate density suburban area.
- Opportunities for recreation and trail/greenway connectivity between several community centers and assets.
- Existing robust recreational trail network along the ridgeline.
- The Area has close proximity to job centers, I-75, and the continued expansion at VW.

REGIONAL FACILITIES AND ASSETS

- The Summit softball complex
- White Oak Mountain
- Bauxite Ridge Mountain Bike Trail
- Cambridge Square
- Hamilton Place Shopping Area
- McKee Foods
- Little Debbie Park
- Southern Adventist University, and
- Collegedale Airport*

Wolftever Creek Greenway
Source: Chattanoogan.com

McKee Foods Headquarters, Collegedale
Source: TN Department of Economic Development

PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS

Settlement Patterns:

» There is a long history of settlement in this area that allows for interpretation and story telling such as the James County Courthouse in Old Ooltewah, in Summit or for the Apison community that was once a thriving village centered around farming.

» For areas east of White Oak Mountain / Bauxite Ridge/ Collegedale, the community has expressed an interest in a more rural development pattern.

Aerial of Area 12
Source: Google Earth

Topography:

» Natural features like the Wolftever Creek, Hurricane Creek, and White Oak Mountain / Bauxite Ridge dictate development patterns and where additional growth should occur.

Roadways & Railways:

The pace of growth in Area 12 has created significant congestion on highly utilized segments of the road network and driven significant investment in sewer expansion. More investments in critical infrastructure will be required to mitigate existing growth before additional growth can be accommodated.

» I-75 and rail corridors form additional physical constraints to road network connectivity and resulting development pattern.

» Peak period congestion is an issue at several intersections in the Area 12 system. Access management strategies, intersections improvements, signal timing, and bike-pedestrian infrastructure improvements should be investigated at Ooltewah-Ringgold (SR 321)/ Apison Pike (SR 317), at the railroad crossings/ tunnels near historic Ooltewah, and at Lee Highway and Apison Pike.

Figure 2.1: White Oak Mountain Area Context

2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE

64%

of residents are influenced by personal safety and security when choosing the White Oak Mountain Area to live.

42%

Bachelor's Degree

32%

Master's Degree +

19%

Some College

Source: ACS

58%

Believe that large-lot single family homes should be encouraged in Area 12.

79%

Believe that preservation of farmland, rural character, wooded & riparian areas should be priorities

57%

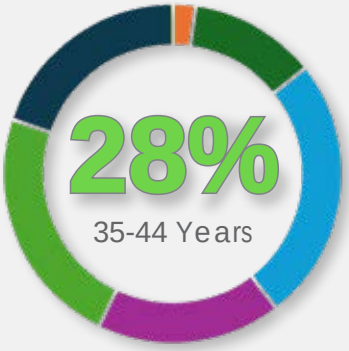
Lived in Hamilton County for 20+ Years

30%

Lived in Hamilton County for 5-19 Years

13%

Lived in Hamilton County for 0-4 Years



23%

45-54 Years

21%

65 or Over

Source: ACS

2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS

DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

Recent census data reveals a balanced distribution across age groups, with a mix of young families (30-34 Years), working professionals (25-29 Years), and retirees (60-69 Years). Emphasizing the preservation of its close-knit community, the region upholds a high level of educational attainment and a skilled workforce, reflecting the area's commitment to quality education and lifelong learning. In comparison to the state as a whole, Hamilton County has a higher median income, advanced education background, higher employment rate, lower poverty rates, and lower commute times. These factors continue to contribute to growth in Hamilton County in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas.

GROWTH TRENDS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

White Oak Mountain has experienced steady population growth and economic development over the past decade, driven by strategic investments in commercial and industrial facilities, education, and residential development. Future prospects remain positive, with planned developments that enhance connectivity, sustainability, and making quality of life for residents a priority moving forward. By prioritizing the preservation of the region's distinctive character and promoting responsible development, ongoing efforts aim to attract new businesses and support entrepreneurial ventures that align with the community's vision, further diversifying the economic base and creating new growth opportunities. To anticipate these needs, the CHCRPA engaged RCLCO to complete a detailed market analysis to asses market opportunities for housing needs over the next 20 years.

HAMILTON COUNTY CENSUS DATA

39
Median Age

63%
Employment Rate

$76,219
Median Household Income

38.4%
Bachelor's Degree +

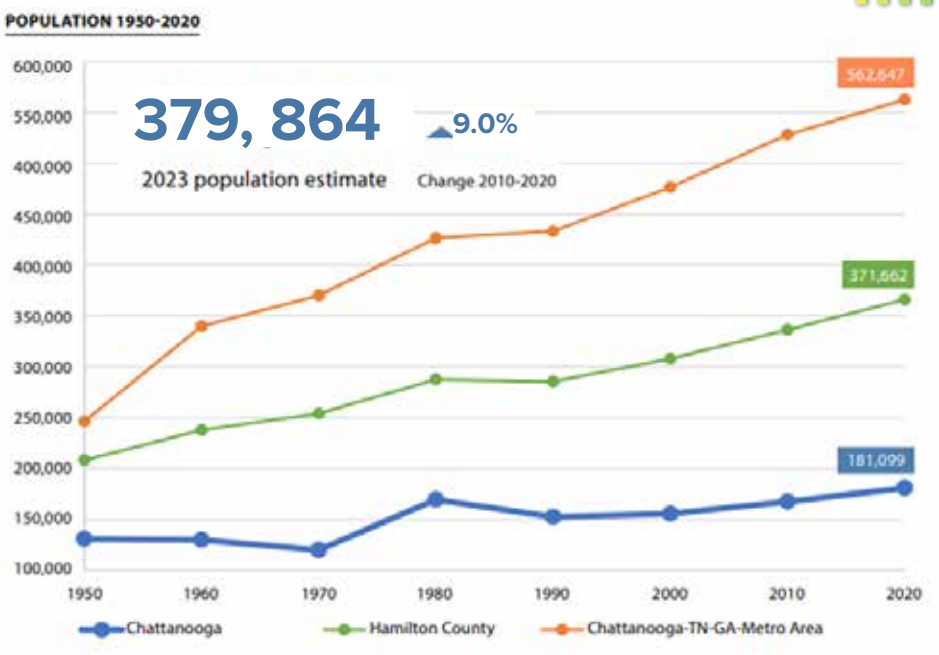


Figure 2.2: Hamilton County Census Data

ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

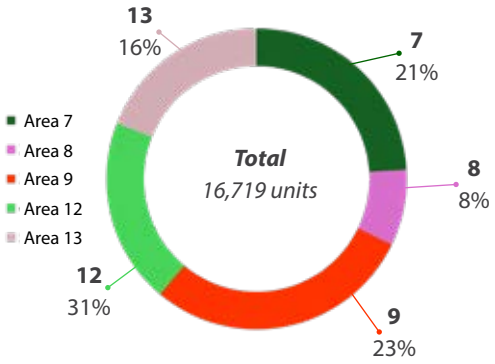
Area 12 is one of the more developed regions in Hamilton County outside Chattanooga. This development is concentrated largely in the western half, with the eastern side remaining relatively untouched due to the natural barrier of White Oak Mountain. The topography influences the distribution of infrastructure, which is predominantly found on the west side. The thriving suburban nodes of East Brainerd, Collegedale, and Ooltewah owe much of their success to their strategic proximity to downtown Chattanooga via I-75, Brainerd Road, and other key commuter routes. This area is further distinguished by notable institutions like Southern Adventist University and prominent businesses such as the McKee Foods plant. With access to I-75 and major commuter routes, downtown and industrial jobs, good schools, and amenities. Utilizing the findings in the RCLCO market analysis, a forward-looking demand was project across residential and non-residential product types to understand how these patterns will impact growth in unincorporated Hamilton County.

The following growth is anticipated in White Oak Mountain over the next 20 years which is projected to have the largest amount of residential growth (31%) than any other unincorporated planning area.

Additional market findings include:

- Proximity to the I-75 corridor, high quality schools with additional capacity, and existing infrastructure dictate Area 12 will remain an attractive location for future real estate development.
- At an average of 5 units per acre an additional 2000 units could be accommodated on 400 acres of available land. The extension of a sewer trunk line out London Lane towards Bill Jones Road adds to the potential for single family residential growth.
- Industrial growth areas have not been mapped and are potentially warranted on flat developable land near the highway.

Chart 1: Total Residential Projections



2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES

The Plan Analysis section provides a detailed examination of the current conditions, opportunities, and challenges within each Area, offering insights that will guide strategic decision-making and inform the implementation of targeted initiatives. Grounded in the four Community Themes - Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities, this analysis establishes a comprehensive framework that evaluates each Area's unique characteristics. This section includes the following categories:

2.4.1 Land Use and Development Character

Zoning:
Examination of land use patterns, existing zoning district designations to ensure that development harmonizes with the area's unique geological features.

Land Use:
Examination of existing land use patterns and street patterns in combination with existing zoning.

Building Permits:
Evaluates the current state and number of permits being issued within the Area and its impact on the surrounding community.

Development in White Oak Mountain:
Overall analysis of how development in general is impacting or influencing the community and how it has changed its character.

2.4.2 Resiliency

Natural Resources:
Evaluation of natural assets including parks, recreation, open spaces, slopes, waterways, aiming to balance preservation with development.

Infrastructure:
Evaluation of the existing adequacy of public utilities, including sanitary sewer, and water.

2.4.3 Transportation & Mobility

Transportation:
This section evaluates the existing transportation infrastructure, including roadways, pedestrian and cycling paths. It also considers future development needs and the potential impacts of anticipated growth.

2.4.4 Community Facilities

Schools and Major Institutions:
Examination of the role of these institutions in fostering learning and innovation while assessing their current state and future needs in the context of regional growth and development.

City, County, State/Land or Property:
Examination of ownership patterns and its impact on land management and development potential.

Emergency Services:
Examination of emergency response capabilities, encompassing fire, police, medical, and disaster response services.

2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

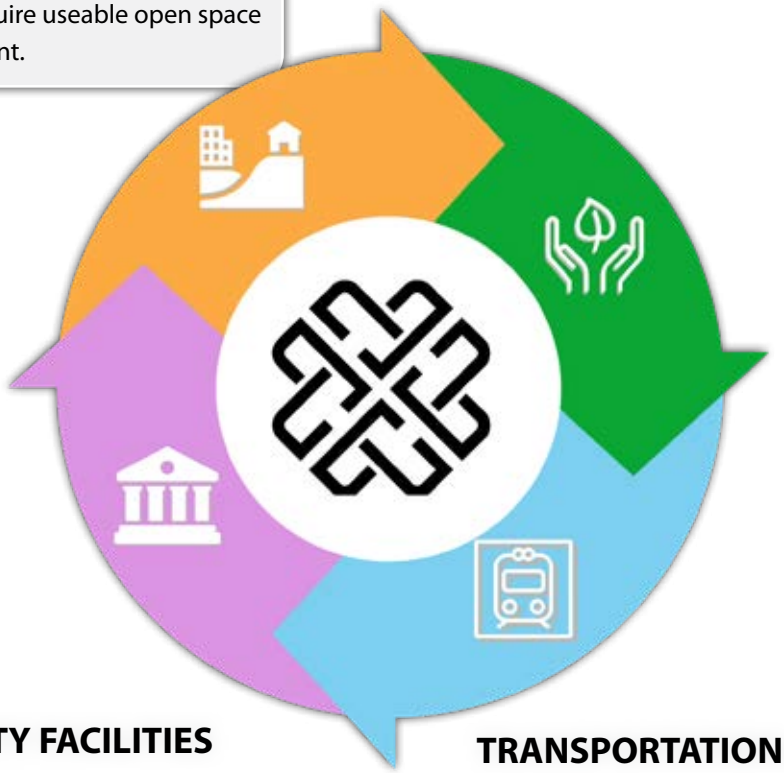
In general, the community feedback phase was focused on identifying metrics for success based on critical outcomes. The desired outcomes have been organized into a framework of Community Themes or Drivers to provide structure to the plan analysis, recommendations, and implementation solutions. Identifying these themes and utilizing them as a framework for organizing the plan will provide community leaders with a set of filters for future strategic, policy, and project based decisions. The following graphic identifies the four Community Themes and the public consensus that framed the analysis, goals, and policies.

1 LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

- Focus higher density housing where there exists appropriate infrastructure or where actions can be undertaken to make necessary improvements.
- In A-1 and R-1 Districts hold new development to base density.
- If developments are requesting rezoning for additional density require useable open space within the development.

RESILIENCY 2

- Hamiton County to create a mechanism to acquire prime agricultural, natural resource, and recreation lands or otherwise protect them.



4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- School capacity should be a factor when assessing growth potential.
- Anticipate growth along London Lane/Bill Jones Road and invest in infrastructure.
- Evaluate ways for the County to provide better connectivity than previous growth areas in East Brainerd and along Standifer Gap.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY 3

- Make transportation infrastructure investments as growth occurs.
- Continue to improve and expand the Wolftever Creek Greenway system.
- Address congestion and safety issues on Ooltewah Georgetown/ Ooltewah Ringgold Road corridor and Lee Highway/Apison Pike.

2.5.1 CURRENT LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

The Land Use and Development Character analysis examines zoning regulations, land use, permitting history, and development patterns and how these factors influence both conservation efforts and the scope for future growth. The plateau's steep terrain, forested Areas, and ecological sensitivity create distinct land management challenges that shape land use decisions. The analysis provides a detailed assessment of how the plateau's physical characteristics impact development, offering insights into the strategies needed to balance environmental preservation with strategic growth.

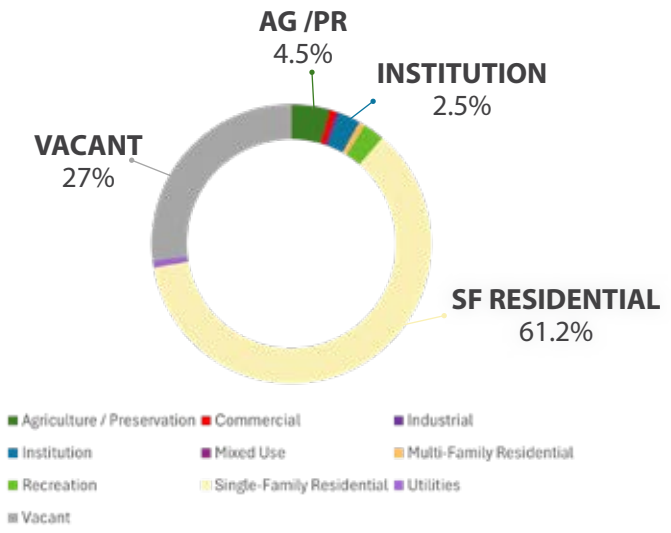
LAND USE

Area 12 is primarily categorized as residential with 61.2% of the land being used for single-family residential. Vacant land makes up approximately 27%. Agricultural Land is approximately 4.5% of the land area and institutional uses (such as schools or religious facilities) are 2.5%. The commercial and industrial land uses combined make up less than 3% of the land area with industrial at 1.8% and commercial at 1.1%, indicating very little non-residential activity in comparison. Although more commercial activity exists within the Collegedale city limits.

The primary land use in the unincorporated areas of White Oak Mountain is single-family residential, like much of the unincorporated areas of Hamilton County. This specific land use exists in a variety of contexts, from large farms to conventional subdivisions, the latter of which has become the predominant pattern of development in recent years. Commercial uses are primarily concentrated along Lee Highway and I-75. These commercial nodes provide essential services and amenities to the residents while maintaining the overall rural and residential character of the region. There are also some sporadic non-residential uses interspersed between these clusters, ensuring that commercial activity supports rather than dominates the landscape.

This land use pattern highlights the region's commitment to preserving its rural pattern while accommodating gradual growth and development. By maintaining a clear distinction between residential, commercial, and agricultural areas, White Oak Mountain seeks to balance the needs of its residents with the desire to protect its unique environmental and cultural assets.

Chart 3: Percentages of Existing Land Use



Typical businesses found in old Ooltewah along Main Street
Source: RPA

Existing Land Use Map

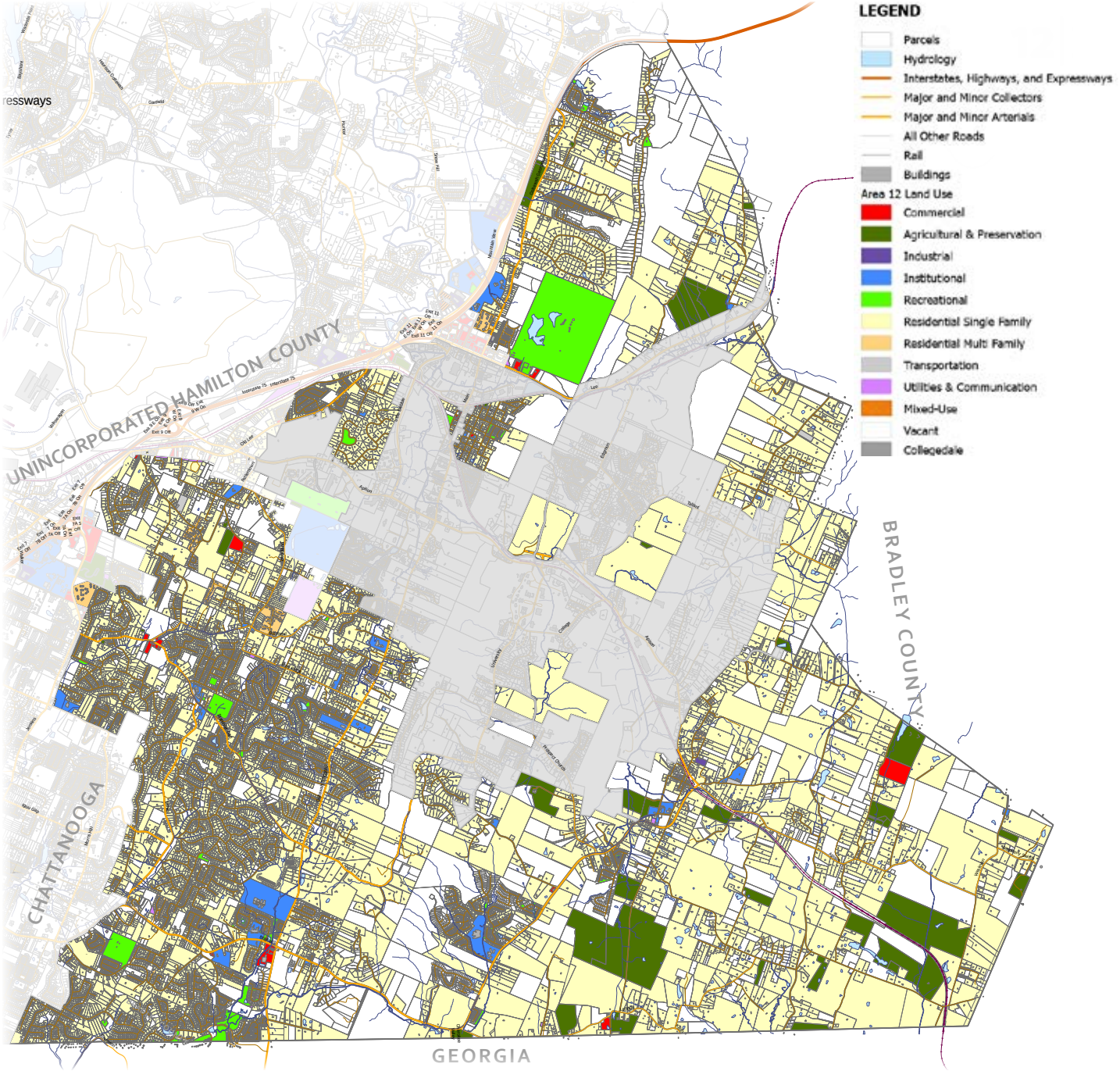


Figure 2.3: Existing Land Use Map (2023)

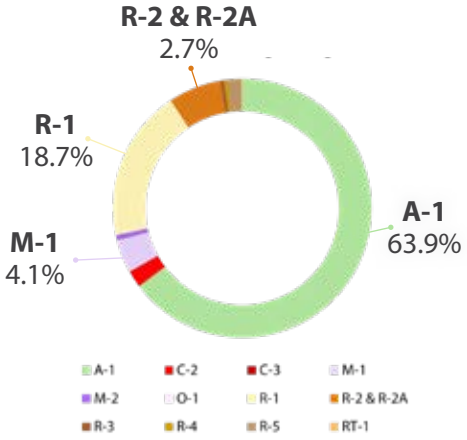
ZONING

Most properties in the unincorporated portion of Area 12 are zoned A-1 (63.9%), which permits agricultural uses and single-family residential development with a maximum density of two dwelling units per acre. This zoning classification preserves the rural character that defines much of the region, ensuring that agricultural activities and low-density housing remain predominant, an important aspect of maintaining the community character. The second most common zoning is R-1 (18.7%), which permits single-family residential development at a base density of up to four dwelling (now proposed to be four) units per acre on public sewer systems. This flexibility allows for more efficient land use and supports the region's growth while maintaining environmental standards.

Following the A-1 and R-1 categories the most predominant categories are zoned R-2A (2.7%) which permits single-family and two-family dwellings, including manufactured homes. The other category is M-1 (4.1%) which allows a wide range of intensive manufacturing uses.

Commercial and industrial activity is primarily concentrated along the northwestern portion of Area 12 in areas east of I-75 near Lee Hwy and Apison Pike There is also a variety of C-5, neighborhood Commercial parcels throughout Area 12 to serve the community.

Chart 2: Percentages of Existing Zoning



Cambridge Square
Source: RPA

Existing Zoning Map

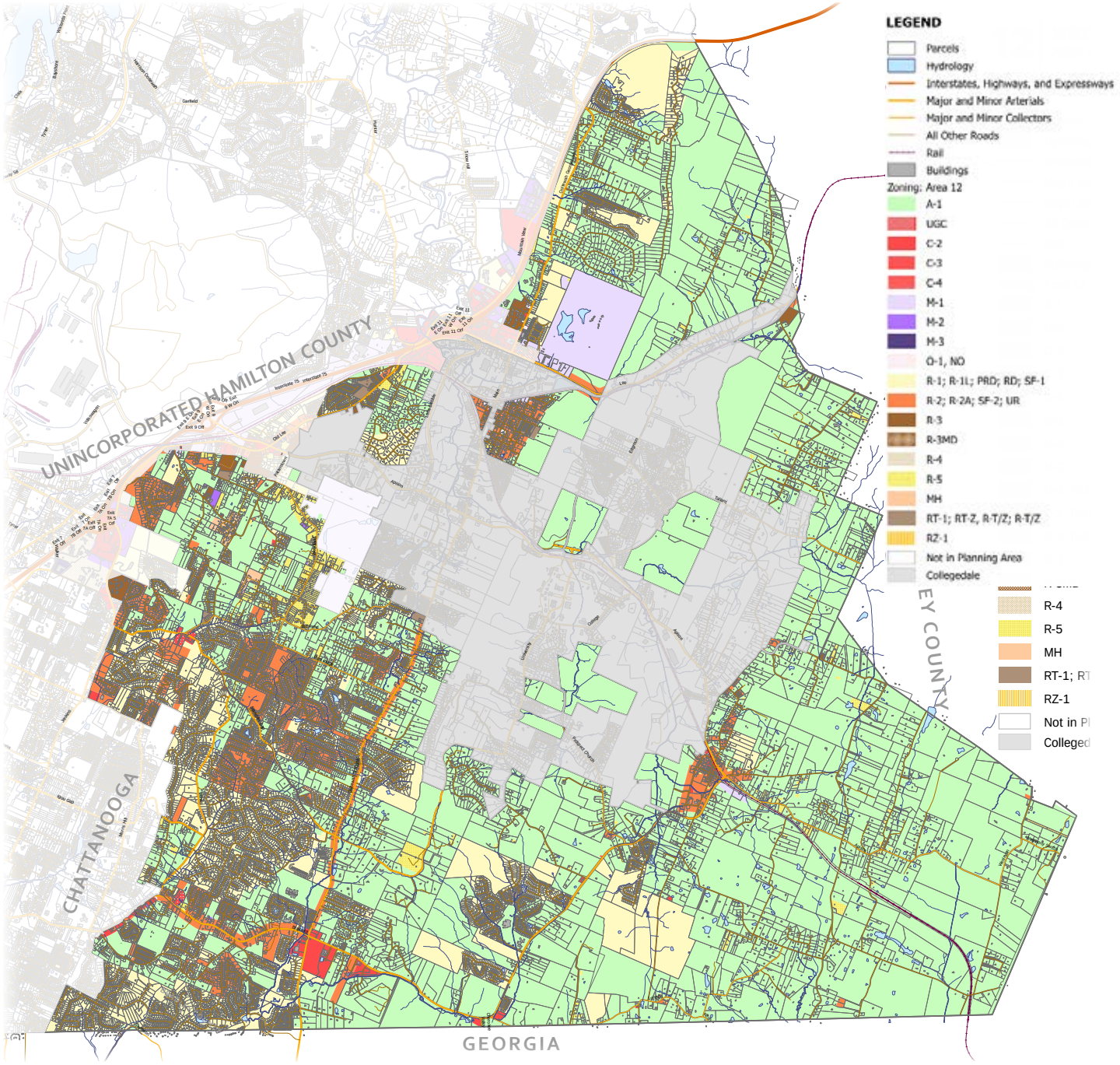


Figure 2.4: Existing Zoning Map (2023)

BUILDING PERMITS & DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Over the past decade, the White Oak Mountain Area has witnessed fluctuations influenced by economic conditions, population growth, and shifting residential and commercial demands. As residential needs expand, the area has experienced increased activity in both new construction and renovation projects. Analyzing these trends offers valuable insights into the region's growth patterns, regulatory impacts, and future development prospects, highlighting the dynamic nature of White Oak Mountain's built environment.

Figure 2.5 reveals that the majority of permits issued have been for single-family homes (or related), which aligns with the existing and desired character of the community. The preference for single-family homes is anticipated to continue, as detailed in Chapter 2.3. This consistency ensures that the area's charm and appeal are preserved even as it evolves.

Following single-family residential permits, the "Other" classification represents the second-highest category for permit issuance as defined in table 2. The total of commercial permits issued in the 10 year period consist of approximately 1.1% of the total permits issued in Area 12.

The analysis of building permit trends also highlights how economic and demographic shifts have shaped development. Population growth, driven by the area's desirability and quality of life, has further fueled demand for housing and services, prompting a balanced approach to development that meets diverse needs.

Looking ahead, the insights gained from building permit trends provide a roadmap for future development. Development in Area 12 is significantly shaped by its topography, rural character and the community's preference for maintaining residential character.

The map on the following page (figure 2.3) identifies buildings permits that were approved over the last 10 years for a variety of uses from low-density residential to utilities and businesses.

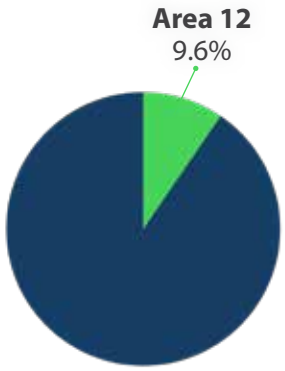
Chart 4: Permits by Area in Unincorporated vs. the City of Chattanooga and other municipalities

Table 3: Permit Classification Comparison

Permit Classification	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 12	Area 13
Commercial / Office	-	6	19	49	1
Commercial Solar	-	1	2	1	-
Hotel, Motel, Tourist Cabin	-	-	1	1	-
Industrial	-	1	-	3	1
Multi-Family/ Mixed Residential	-	10	-	29	3
Other Permits*	592	1,005	1,898	1,983	516
Public Works / Utilities	-	-	-	1	2
Single Family Residential	879	1,063	2,883	2,339	876
Total (Per Area)	1,471	2,086	4,803	4,406	1,399
Total (Unincorporated County)	14,165				

- *The "Other" Permit Classification Category Includes: Demolition permits, Residential Additions & Alterations, Religious Institutions, Parking Garages, Hospitals, and Non-Residential Additions & Alterations.*
- *Permit Classifications shown are reflective of the anticipated growth pattern in Hamilton County and the categories selected in the Economic Analysis projections in the RCLCO study.*

Chart 5:Area 12 Permits vs Hamilton County (All)



Building Permits Map

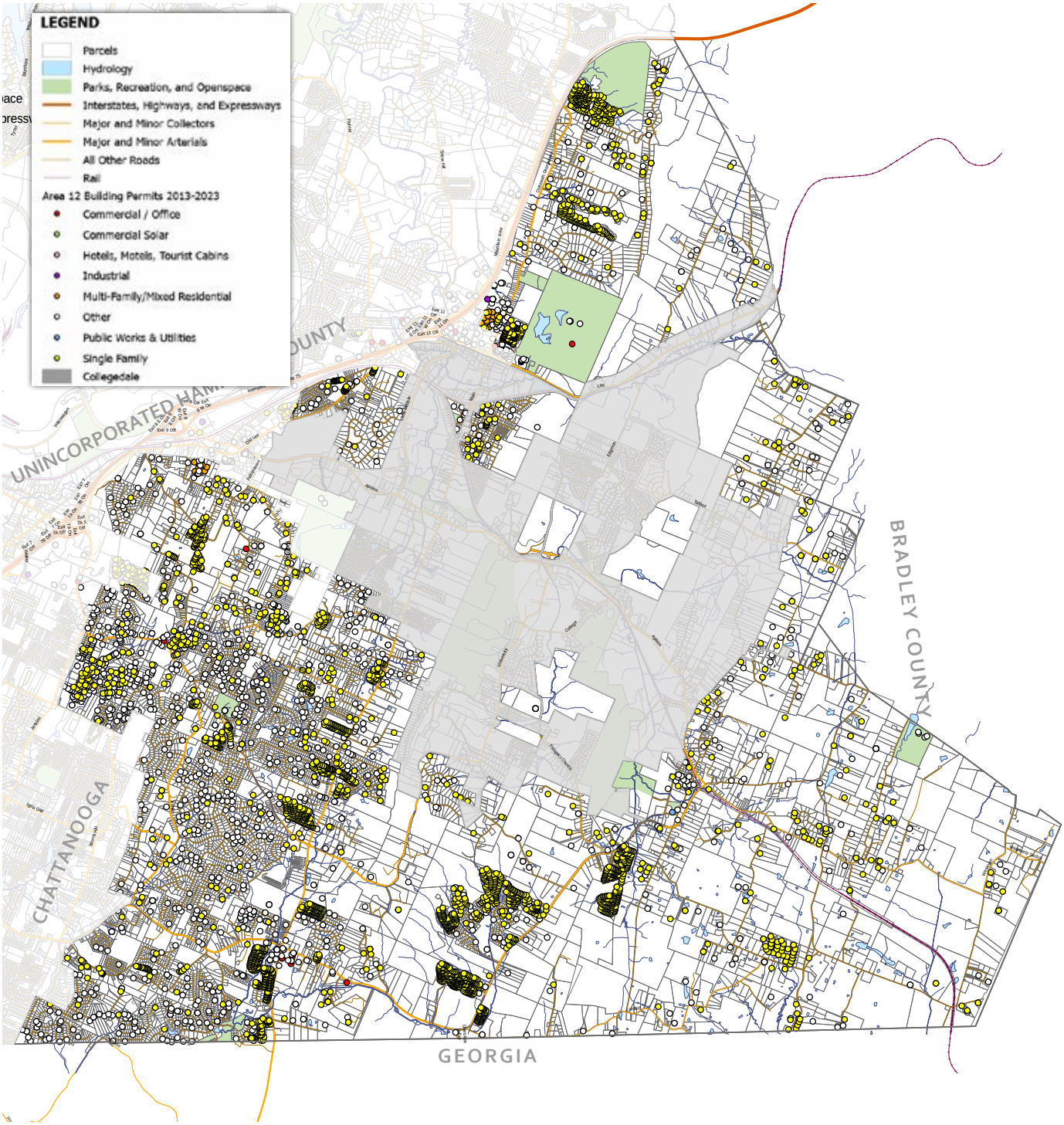


Figure 2.5: Building Permits Map (2013-2023)

2.5.2 RESILIENCY

The Resiliency Community Theme for White Oak Mountain reveals a strategic intersection underscoring the importance of harmonizing built environments with the natural landscape. A key focus is on developing resilient infrastructure while preserving and enhancing the area's rich natural resources. The analysis highlights water management systems, renewable energy solutions, conservation efforts, and sustainable land use practices. These elements are crucial in maintaining a balance between development and environmental stewardship, ensuring that the community not only thrives but also respects and protects the area's natural heritage.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The White Oak Mountain Area is rich in natural resources, featuring the Wolftever Creek, parks, and White Oak Mountain, Bauxite Ridge, and others. These resources support local ecosystems and offer opportunities for recreation and sustainable development. Proper management of these natural assets is crucial for maintaining the region's beauty and ecological health. The map (Figure 2.6) indicates points within the study area that feature natural resources deemed sensitive in terms of water function, steep slopes or habitat as identified in the adopted 2016 Comprehensive Plan for Hamilton County. In the White Oak Mountain Area, 14.8% of the land area falls under the natural resources category as shown in Figure 2.4. Waterways are shown to indicate the floodway and 100-year and 500-year floodplains along with Impaired Waterways (303D) which indicate water quality status based on monitoring of sediment, pollution (metals, pesticides/ fertilizer run-off, etc.) and erosion or changes in flow/ volumes. Development in the floodway is prohibited, unless special permits are obtained.

Typical Land in Area 12
Source: RPA

Wolftever Creek
Source: Chattanoogan.com

Natural Resources Map

Figure 2.6: Natural Resources Map

PARKS, RECREATION & GREENWAYS

White Oak Mountain, like much of Hamilton County, offers a wide array of recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. The parks, greenways, and recreation areas here provide residents and visitors alike with activities ranging from hiking and biking to picnicking and observing local wildlife. These spaces not only highlight the stunning natural beauty of the region's mountains and valleys but also serve as accessible, well-maintained venues for the public's use. The City of Collegedale boasts an extensive network of hiking and mountain biking trails that weave through White Oak Mountain and Bauxite Ridge, creating a seamless connection between nature and community.

These green spaces serve a purpose beyond recreation. They are critical for environmental preservation, offering habitats for diverse wildlife and contributing to the overall health of the region's ecosystems. This preservation nurtures a sense of environmental stewardship, as the community becomes more connected to the land they enjoy. With a total of 386 acres of public recreation space and 233 acres of private recreation areas in the unincorporated portion of Area 12 alone, as noted in Tables 4 and 5 on page 31, these green spaces play a crucial role in safeguarding the environmental integrity of the region. A separate analysis was conducted to measure the total approximate acreage for all aspects of parks, recreation, and open space which is approximately 1,623 acres or 5.4% of the total land area.

Whether through careful planning or the community's balance between progress and preservation, these delicate ecosystems define Hamilton County's identity and secure a legacy of natural beauty for future generations.

Chart 6: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in Area 12

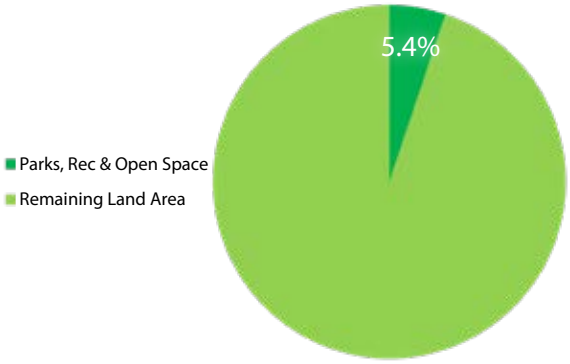
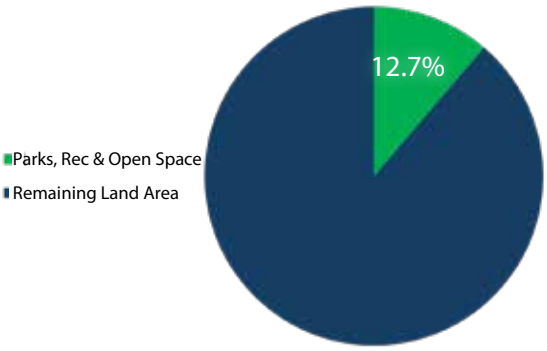


Chart 7: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in all 5 Plan Hamilton Areas



Wolftever Creek Greenway Bridge
Source: Chattanoogan.com

PARKS & GOVERNMENT OWNED PROPERTY

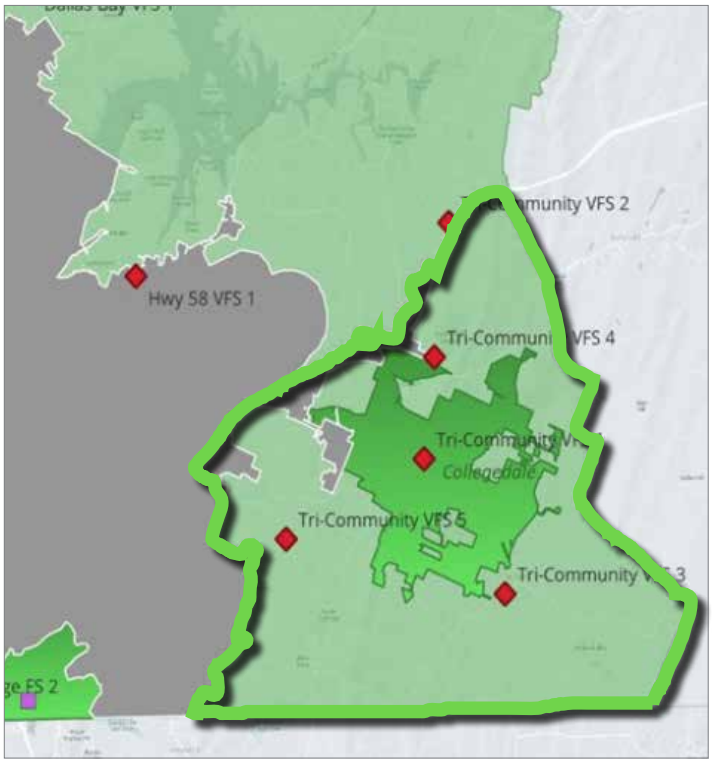
Given the predominantly residential nature of Area 12 and number of schools, there is a significant presence of public recreational facilities, within the incorporated limits of Collegedale. In addition to preserving sensitive environmental assets, these areas are a recreational asset that draws hikers, bikers, horse riders, and others. Unlike other areas of unincorporated Hamilton County, there are not significant lands under conservation, therefore, the focus of this section is on parks and the asset they provide to the residential aspects of the White Oak Mountain community. Publicly used parks in Area 12 when combined total approximately 386 acres.

Standifer Gap Park
Source: Hamilton County Parks & Recreation

EMERGENCY SERVICES

In 2024, Tri Star conducted a Fire and Emergency Response Evaluation of the unincorporated areas to identify current levels of fire protection service, geographic coverage, response time, areas of need, etc. Within Area 12, there are five (5) volunteer fire departments (VFD) including Tri-Community VFD 1,3,5,5-3, and CH. Additionally Tri-Community VFD-4 is directly on the border between Areas 9 and 12 and serves both and is included in the population estimate below. The stations are evenly distributed throughout the area and the report did not identify any gaps in coverage. The report did however, identify that the Tri-Community VFD's serves the most populous area in Hamilton County with an estimated population of 47,732 and therefore, has the highest demand for emergency services within all of the unincorporated areas. As growth continues, it will be necessary to continue to evaluate emergency service and response and improve accordingly.

Hamilton County Emergency Management owns and constantly updates evacuation routes and plans for natural disasters.



Fire Stations in White Oak Mountain
Source: Tri-Star Public Solutions, Fire & Rescue Services Evaluation

Table 4: Public Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Apison Park	Field; Tennis Courts; Horseshoe Pits; Dog Park; Walking Track	6
Collegedale Dog Park	Playground; Walking Trail; Swimming Pool; Open Green Space	0.5
East Hamilton County Park	Walking and Hiking Trails; Outdoor Swimming Pool	23
East Hamilton Middle High School Athletic Complex	Off Leash Dog Park	18
Holly Hills Pool and Basketball Court	6 Baseball Fields; Pavilion; Pond	2
Hurricane Creek Recreation Area	Football Fields; Baseball Field; Softball Field; Basketball Gym	4
Imagination Station	Outdoor Swimming Pool; Outdoor Basketball Court; Clubhouse	3
Mountain Shadows Pool, Courts, and Playground	Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts; Basketball Court; Clubhouse	1
Nature Nook	Playground; Pavilion; Walking Trail	1
Ooltewah Elementary School Playground and Ball Fields	Swimming Pool; Tennis Courts; Basketball Court; Playground	4
Ooltewah High School Athletic Complex	Amphitheater; Walking Trail	23
Ooltewah Middle School Athletic Complex	Playground; 3 Ball Fields	4
Standifer Gap Recreation	Football Field; Track; Baseball Fields; Basketball Gym; Tennis Courts	26
Student Park	Ball Fields; Tennis Courts; Soccer Fields; Community Center	32
Summit Field	Model Airplane Field; Walking Track; Open Green Space	159
Summit of Softball Complex	8 Softball Fields; Walking Track; Picnic Areas	71
Tucker Road Recreational Area	Soccer Field; Playground; Pavilion; Walking Trail	3
Veteran's Memorial Park	8 Softball Fields; Walking Track; Picnic Areas	2
Westview Elementary School Playground	Playground; Outdoor Basketball Court; Pavilions	3
Wolftever Creek Greenway	Walking Trail	>1
Total		**386**

Table 5: Private Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
The Honors Course	18-Hole Golf Course	196
Windstone Golf Club	18-Hole Golf Course; Tennis Courts; Outdoor Swimming Pool	37
Total		**233**

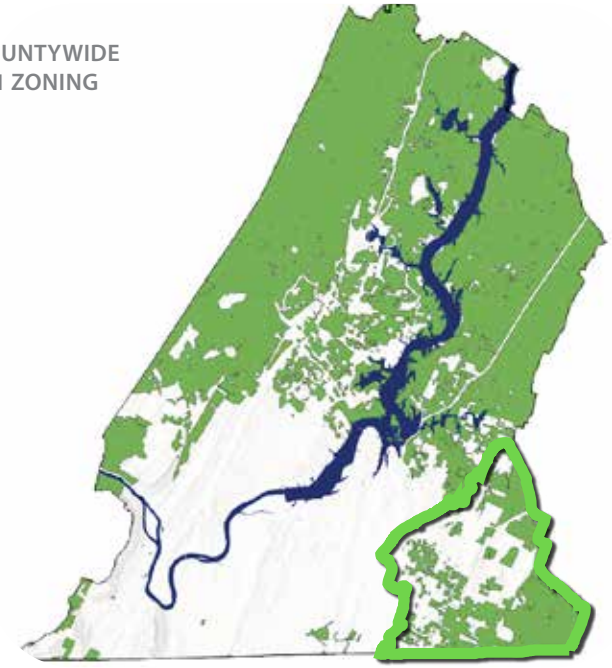
Natural resource areas are often designated as public parks or open space that may become tourist destinations.
Source: RPA

AGRICULTURE

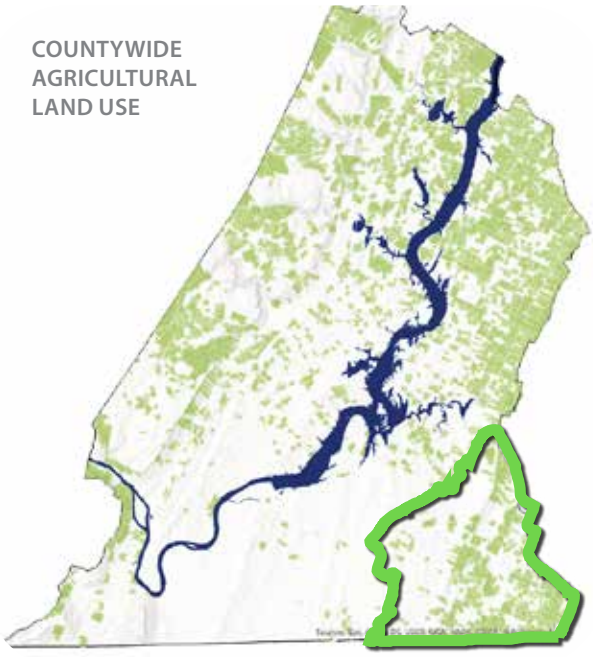
Hamilton County has a long history of agricultural activity in areas like Apison, Sale Creek, Flat Top Mountain, Georgetown and the Hwy 58/Birchwood area. A portion Area 12 consists of agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses and may also include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes. Usually zoned as a A-1 district, they often include single-family homes on large lots as well as accessory buildings such as barns and greenhouses. Properties given the "Greenbelt" status (15 acres or more) usually feature a farm or single-family home with surrounding open space, pastures or forests retained and with tax benefits available. Development centered around farming is typically on septic systems. Agricultural uses in Hamilton County range from commercial businesses or large production facilities, such as a dairy or orchards, to horse stables, to roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores.

Not only do these agricultural uses add to the rural character of the area, but they also provides many benefits to the local community such as healthy food sources, educational programs, agritourism opportunities and improved environmental function for clean air and water quality - when significant vegetated areas are preserved and low impact farming practices (limited pesticide use or organic farming) are put in place. Programs that promote local agriculture and conserve open space and natural resources are readily available. Conservation practices may also include the use of clustered residential homes with farm amenities or scenic views and open space set aside. Another tool used to help preserve agricultural places and provide income includes special event facilities such as barns or pavilions, guesthouses or wedding chapels for instance.

COUNTYWIDE
A-1 ZONING



COUNTYWIDE
AGRICULTURAL
LAND USE

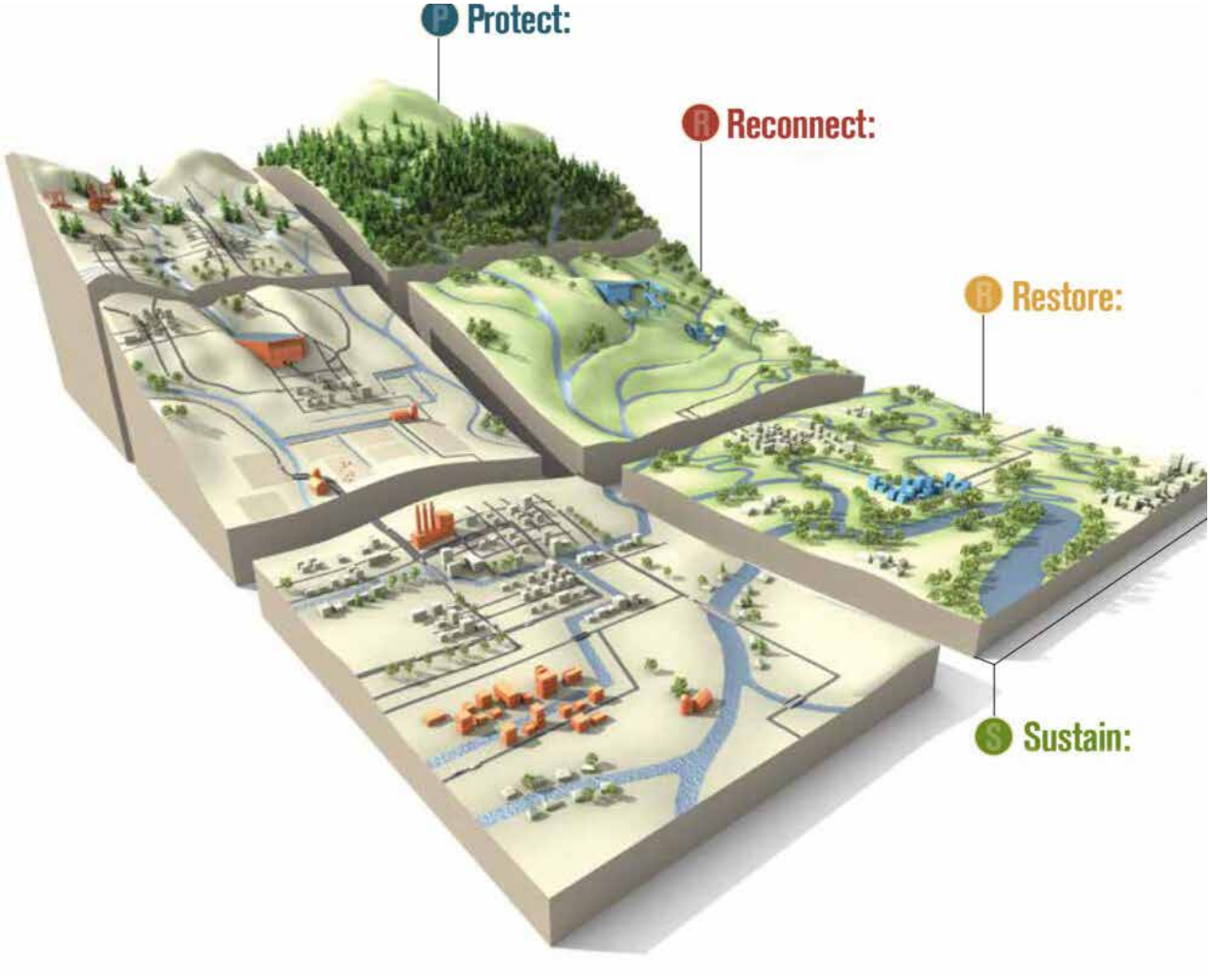


AREA 13

63.9% A-1 Zoning
61.2% Single-Family Parcels
9.6% of Permits issued in the County
14.8% of Area in Steep Slopes & Floodway
5.4% Of Area in Parks, Recreation & Open Space
30% of the County has Agricultural Land Use

HAMILTON COUNTY

56% of the County in A-1 Zoning
30% of the County has Agricultural Land Use



Water Quality BMP's (Best Management Practices) focus on the above goals of Protect, Reconnect, Restore and Sustain
Source: Stormwater runoff diagram tu.org and SETD Green Infrastructure Handbook

INFRASTRUCTURE

Wastewater

The Chattanooga Department of Wastewater and Hamilton County Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) are tasked with planning and administration of sewer services under state and federal laws. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater manages the Moccasin Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant which is the primary treatment facility for both the City of Chattanooga and unincorporated Hamilton County.

RPA staff has coordinated closely with the City of Chattanooga Wastewater Department staff during the development of the Comprehensive Plans to ensure adequate sewer capacity is available to accommodate the anticipated residential, commercial, and industrial development growth. This coordination is a technical evaluation with ongoing coordination of local agencies to ensure long term capacity.

WWTA staff has provided information to RPA that existing capacity and available financial support substantially limits new sewer availability in the unincorporated county in the short and mid-term. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater has provided guidance that adequate sewer capacity is available for anticipated development during the next 5 years.

RPA staff working with both WWTA and County staff to support new development and achieve the best outcomes possible regarding managing growth in the unincorporated area.

Septic Systems

Due to sewer capacity and availability, septic is the most common wastewater treatment option in Unincorporated Hamilton County. Generally, the minimum lot size required for septic systems is 25,000 square feet. Residential development in rural areas without sewer service must therefore be built with these larger lots.

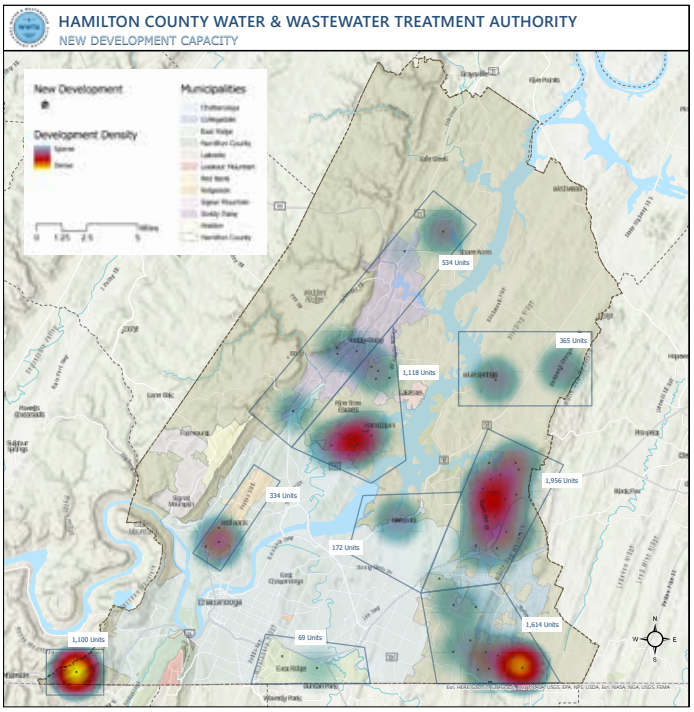
Information Highlight

Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems

A decentralized wastewater treatment system is like a combination of traditional septic and sewer. In a decentralized system, buildings or groups of buildings have a septic tank on-site as an initial treatment. Wastewater is then piped to a central location for additional treatment and disposal. Currently, Hamilton County only has a few examples of existing systems but anticipates them to become more common.

One key advantage in these systems is off-site disposal, which provides flexibility in housing types and helps preserve valuable open spaces. Additionally, centralizing the final stages of treatment and disposal reduces the risk of individual system failures, positively impacting the environment. WWTA provides oversight on these systems.

Note: If approved, these systems allow development to be approved at a density/intensity as if it were on sewer.



New Development Capacity (June 2023)
Source: WWTA

Sewer Infrastructure Map

Types of Lines

Force Low: CAN tap (connect) into
Force Main: Can NOT tap (connect) into
Gravity Main: CAN tap (connect) into

Pump Stations: for moving sewage over ridges or higher elevations

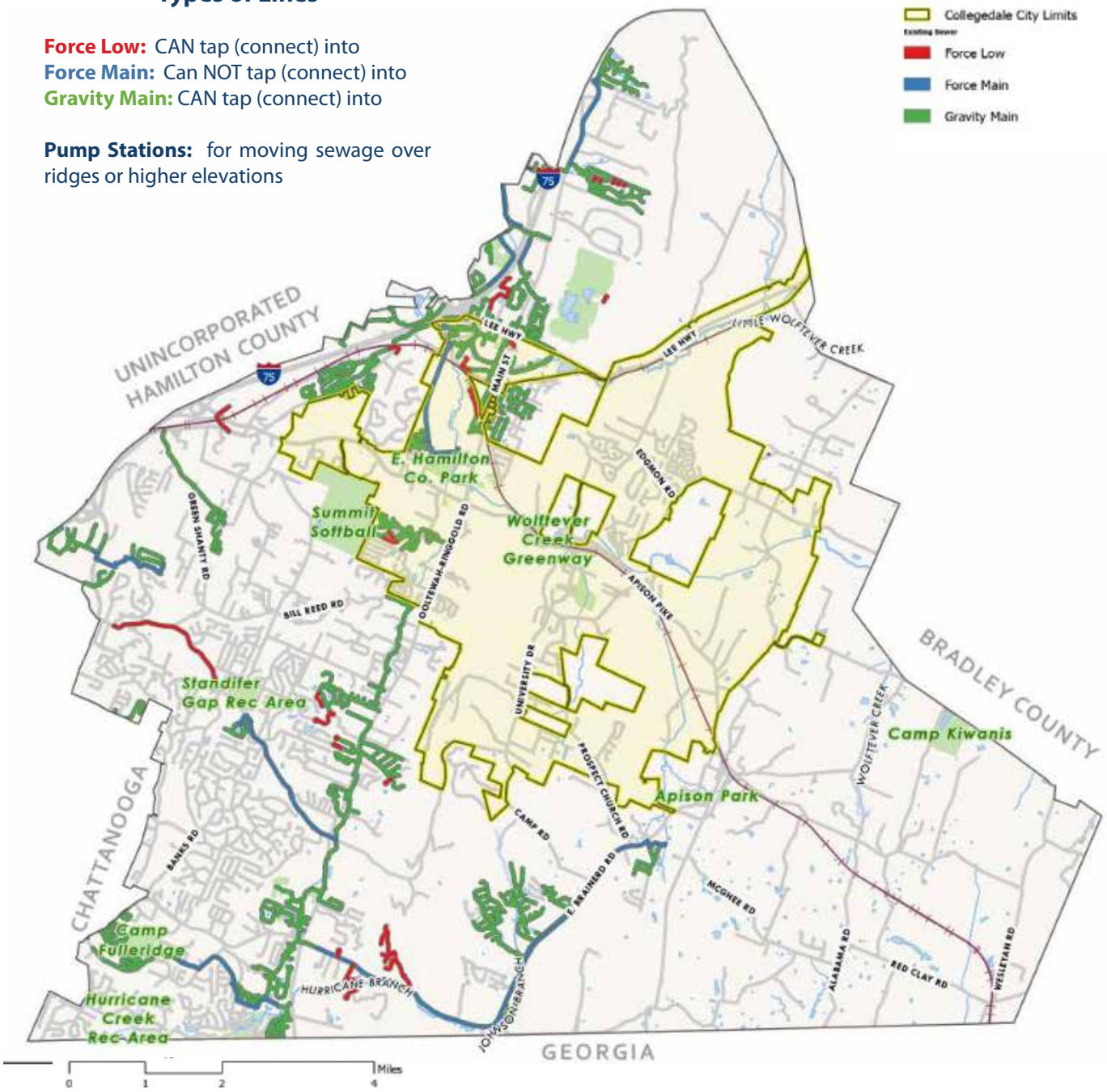


Figure 2.7: Sewer Infrastructure Map (2023)

2.5.3 MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION

While the single-occupancy vehicle remains the predominant mode of transportation and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future, it is crucial not to overlook multi-modal transportation options. This analysis will focus on the network of pathways that underpin the areas mobility and accessibility. The area's road network forms the backbone of its transportation system, connecting neighborhoods, commercial centers, and outlying regions. The existing network of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trails is assessed for connectivity, safety, and accessibility. These modes are equally important in these areas as they are in urban settings, serving purposes such as recreation, exercise, and social interaction.

East Brainerd Road
Source: TDOT

The street functional system categorizes roadways based on their purpose and role within the overall transportation network. This system distinguishes between different types of roads, such as local, collector, arterial, and expressways, each serving specific functions related to traffic movement and access.

The street network in Area 12 includes a few arterials that provide through connections, but there are limited minor connections between these arterials. Many subdivisions also include multiple culs de sac, but only provide one point of access to the greater street network. Since the automobile is currently the only practical mode of transportation for most trips in Area 12, this lack of connectivity on the local streets results in most traffic being funneled onto the arterials, which adds to congestion, especially during peak hours.

Although most of the area is not served by public transit, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Transportation Authority's (CARTA) Dial-a-Ride Route 6 serves the Rainbow Creek Apartments, the

Health Center at Standifer Place, and U.S. Express. The Dial-A-Ride bus service provides rides within the East Brainerd neighborhood and provides connections to Route 4 at Hamilton Place Mall. The Southeast Tennessee Human Resources Agency (SETHRA) offers on-demand shuttle service within some subdivisions. For pedestrian facilities, few sidewalks can be found along main roads, except along the newly completed portion of Apison Pike and Little Debbie Parkway. Similarly, few bike facilities exist in the area, but bike lanes were also added to Apison Pike as part of the widening project from Old Lee Highway to Ooltewah-Ringgold Road. Greenways can also be used for more than recreation, by providing alternative connections between residential areas, schools and commercial centers.

The transportation analysis provides a detailed and dynamic overview of the current and future state of the area's transportation network. By addressing the diverse needs of all users—drivers, transit riders, pedestrians, cyclists, and freight operators—the Area Plans aim to create a balanced, efficient, safer, and forward-thinking transportation system that supports the region's growth and enhances the quality of life for its residents and visitors alike.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) uses functional classification to "define the role each element in the roadway network plays in serving travel needs." Roads are categorized by location (urban or rural), capacity, and alignment with future development plans. This classification system also differentiates between locally-owned, state-owned, and federally-owned roads, which can influence the funding sources and oversight agencies involved in roadway improvements. For example, improvements to state routes are generally proposed by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the FHWA, with additional input from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This coordinated approach ensures that infrastructure upgrades align with both state and local priorities.

The functional classification categories at the local level in Area 12 are as follows:

- Arterial
  - Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
- Collector
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
- Local Roads

Arterials

Arterials are classified based on their high level of mobility. Arterial routes are typically the longest and have higher capacity compared to the other roads in the transportation network. They have few access points and only connect to other Arterials within the network. Most travel that occurs on an Arterial is over long distances, such as inter-state travel. Arterial routes typically account for the highest traffic volumes within the transportation network, but less than 15% of the physical transportation network. For example, Interstates consist of 3% of the vehicle miles traveled and between 17% and 38% of the vehicle miles traveled in a transportation network. Arterials are further classified as principal or minor arterials. Examples of Principal Arterials include interstates, freeways, and expressways. Minor arterials serve trips of shorter lengths than principal arterials connect smaller geographic areas to the transportation network.

Collectors

Collectors connect local roads to the arterial routes within a transportation network. They are shorter routes than arterials and have lower speed limits with more access points. Collector routes are typically used for intra-County travel rather than statewide travel like the Arterial routes. Collector routes make up approximately a third of the transportation network. Collector routes are further classified into major and minor collectors. Major collectors usually allow for higher levels of mobility within an area and minor collectors often have more access points. The distinction between major and minor collectors is often determined by speed limits, driveway spacing, and annual average traffic volumes.

Local Roads

Typically, local roads account for less than 25% of the vehicle miles traveled but make up between 62% and 74% of the transportation network. They are usually characterized as having a low number of lanes, low speed limits, and low traffic volumes. Local roads are classified after the arterials and collectors have been identified within the network.

Crash Data

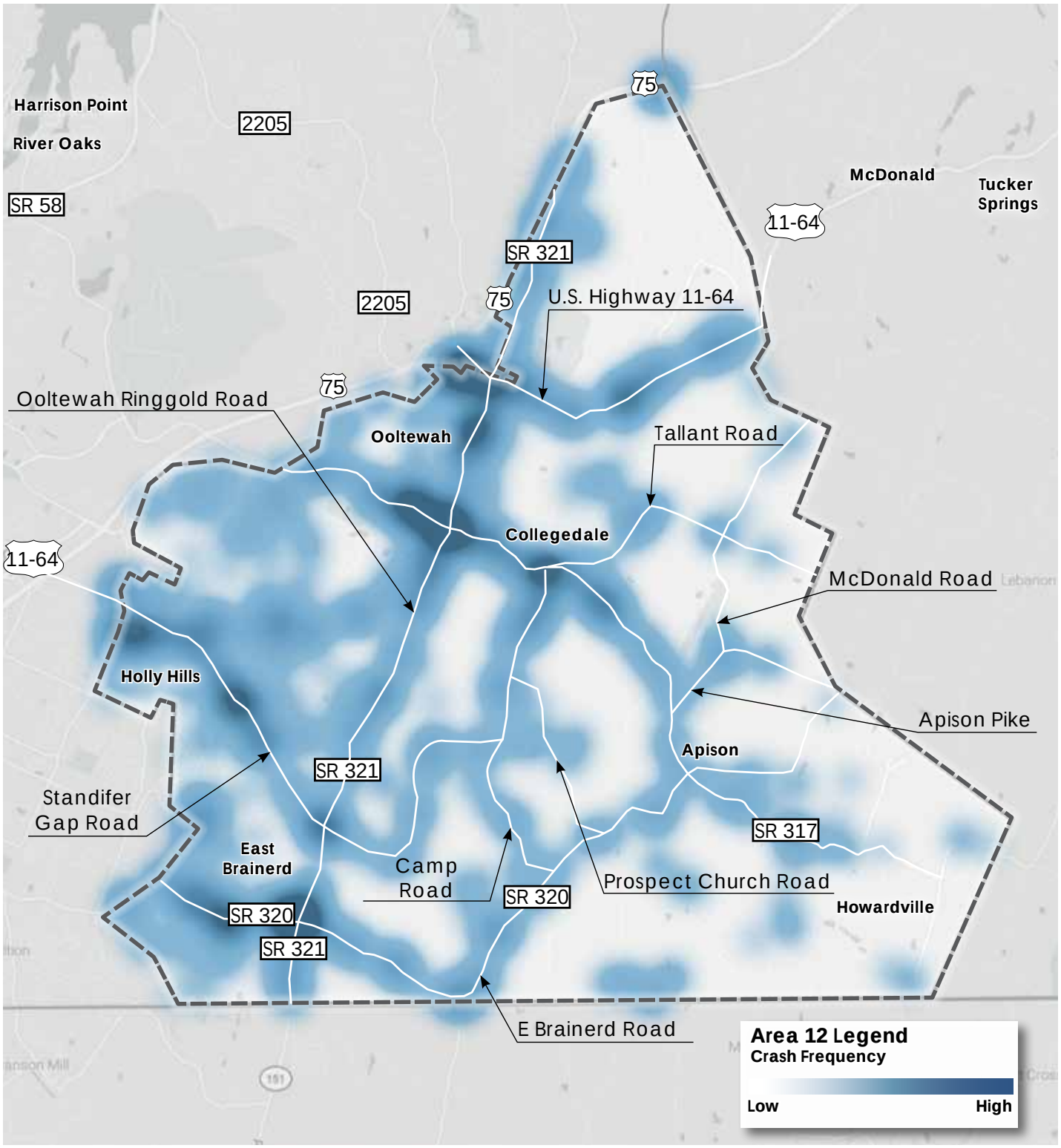


Figure 2.8: Area 12 Crash Data Map (08/24/2020-08/24/2023)

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Roadway improvement considerations began with a thorough inventory and analysis of Hamilton County's existing roadway network. This initial assessment included a detailed review of traffic operations and crash patterns to identify potential safety enhancements. From this analysis, a list of roadway improvements was developed and organized by priority, focusing on areas that would benefit most from strategic upgrades.

To assess traffic operations, we used a combination of historical traffic count data collected annually, future traffic forecasts from the RPA's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, and general Level of Service (LOS) criteria. This approach allowed us to pinpoint current capacity constraints and anticipate areas likely to face similar issues as the County grows. Within Area 12, no roadways were identified as capacity-constrained under existing traffic conditions, and projected conditions did not suggest the need for capacity improvements.

The safety review analyzed three years of crash data across Hamilton County roadways to calculate crash rates on key segments. We then compared these rates to statewide averages to identify roads that might benefit from targeted safety studies or projects.

Table 6: Proposed Roadway Improvements (All Areas)

Priority Group	Roadway	Project Location	Area	Type of Improvement
Short-term	Hunter Road	at Lebron Sterchi Drive	9	Intersection
Short-term	Hunter Road	at curve near Crooked Creek Drive	9	Safety
Short-term	Hilltop Drive	between Hunter Road and Volkswagen Drive	9	Extension
Short-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Safety
Short-term	Standifer Gap Road	from Banks road to Camp Road	12	Safety
Short-term	Daisy Dallas Road	from Harrison Lane to Hixson Pike	8	Safety
Short-term	Middle Valley Road	from Hixson Pike to Daisy Dallas Road	8	Safety
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Daisy Dallas Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Walnut Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Gann Road	8	Intersection
Medium-term	Hunter Road	at Garfield Road	9	Intersection
Medium-term	Roberts Mill Road	from Dayton Pike to Mountain Laurel Trail	7	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Mahan Gap Road	9	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Amos Road	9	Capacity
Medium-term	E Brainerd Road	at London Lane	12	Intersection
Long-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	9	Capacity
Long-term	Standifer Gap Road	at Bill Reed Road	12	Intersection
Long-term	Armstrong Road	from Hixson Pike to Lee Pike	13	Safety
Long-term	Harrison Bay Road	from Hwy 58 to Birchwood Pike	9	Safety
Long-term	McCallie Ferry Road	from US 27 to Spradling Road	13	Safety
Long-term	Gann Road	from Middle Valley Road to Daisy Dallas Road	8	Safety
Long-term	Montlake Road	from Dayton Pike to Mowbray Pike	7	Safety
Long-term	W Road	from Mountain Creek Road to Anderson Pike	7	Safety

Proposed Transportation Projects

The State of Tennessee passed the "Improving, Manufacturing, Public Roads and Opportunities for a Vibrant Economy" (IMPROVE) Act in 2017. The IMPROVE Act designated additional funding for transportation projects within Area 12. The projects funded by TDOT or the TPO are shown in Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9: Area 12 TPO Planned Transportation Projects Map

2.5.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Area 12 offers a comprehensive array of community facilities designed to enhance the quality of life for its residents and business owners. These facilities include educational institutions, healthcare centers, libraries, and recreational amenities, and emergency services. Each facility is integrated into the community to ensure accessibility and to meet the diverse needs of the population and support sustainable growth. While some of these facilities are within the incorporated limits of Collegedale they are included due to the use of the residents of the unincorporated residents of Hamilton County.

SCHOOLS AND MAJOR INSTITUTIONS

It is imperative that Hamilton County Schools be part of the conversation when it comes to growth. New schools tend to attract new growth in the form of residential development. As the area continues to grow, schools may approach, or exceed, capacity due to increasing student enrollment. Factors such as transportation, access, and space needed for buildings, parking, and recreation must be managed by the School System as new schools are planned.

Hamilton County Opportunity 2030 Strategic Plan

Hamilton County Schools introduced a seven Year Strategic Plan "Opportunity 2030" to engage stakeholders and align strategies to directly respond to the needs of the students, staff, and the community.

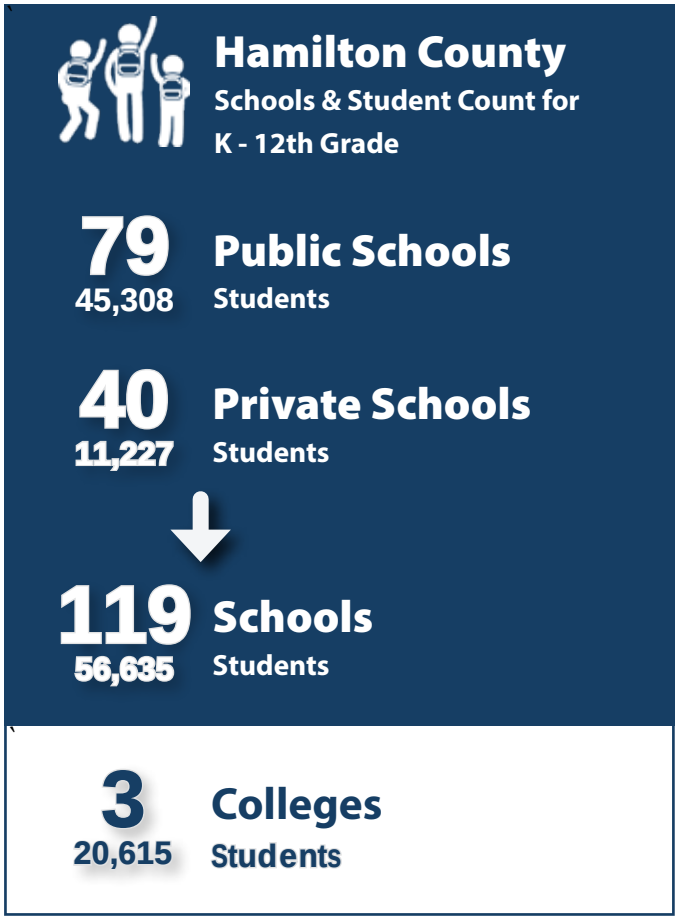
HCDE's mission is:
To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and supports to thrive in life.

HCDE's vision is:
By 2030, Hamilton County Schools will be a leader in developing our diverse graduates to be connected, competitive, and life ready.

The HCDE's 2030 plan has made 5 commitments:

1. Every Student Learns
2. Every Student Belongs
3. Every School Equipped
4. Every Employee Valued
5. Every Community Served

Hamilton County is home to many private and public K-12th Grade institutions and colleges, the following is a Countywide total of all schools and students:



In 2024, the County established 250 million in bonds in anticipation of upcoming school needs.

Schools Map

1. Apison Elementary School
2. Westview Middle School
3. East Hamilton High School
4. Lester Coon Apison School of SDA
5. Standifer Gap SDA School
6. Collegedale Academy High School
7. Collegedale Academy Elementary School
8. Collegedale Academy Middle School
9. Wolftever Creek Elementary School
10. Ooltewah Middle School
11. Ooltewah Adventist School
12. Ooltewah High School

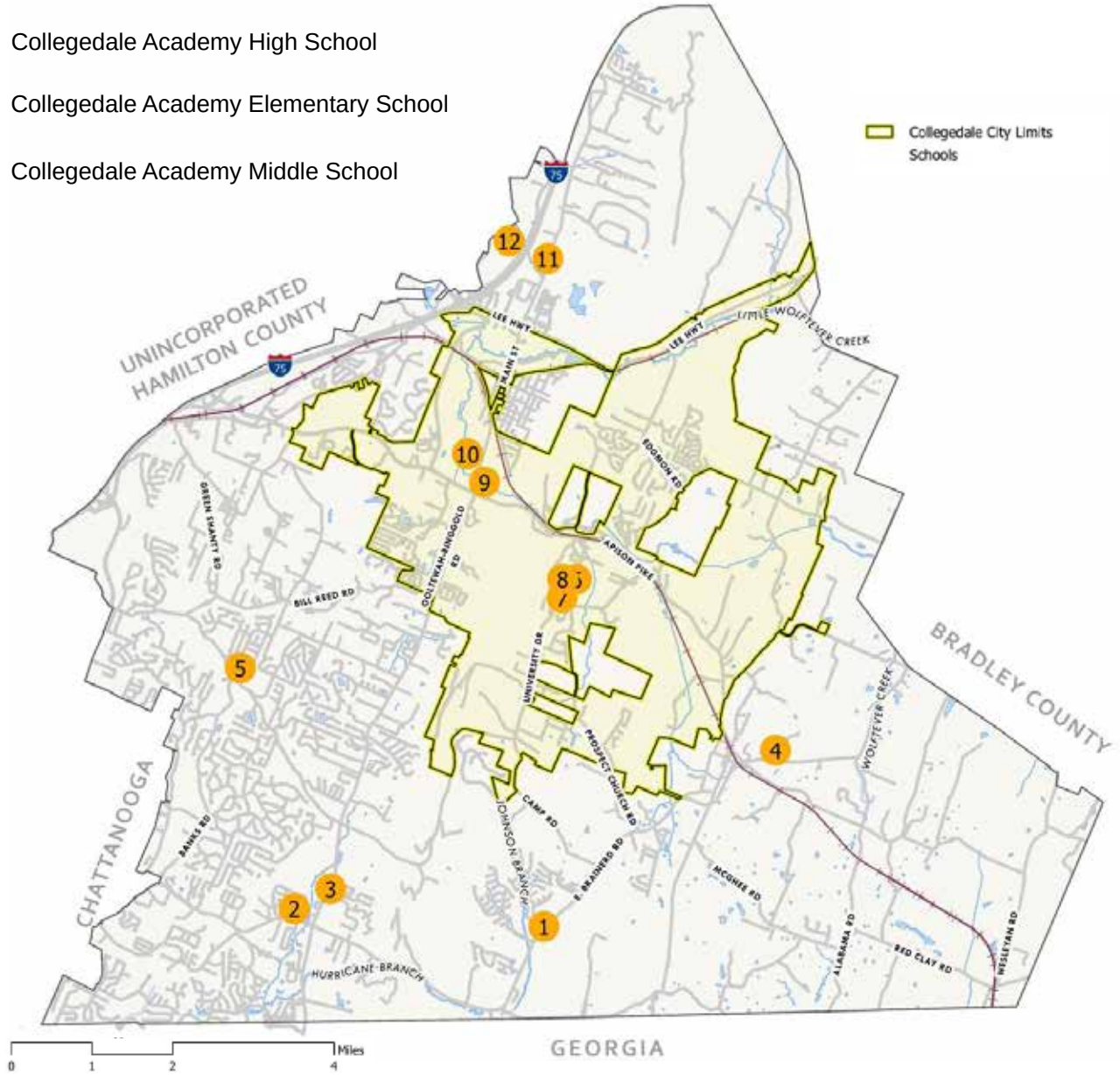


Figure 2.10: Schools Map (2023)

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS

3.1 INTRODUCTION
3.2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH
3.3 GOALS
3.4 VISION STATEMENT

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Shaping a vision for the future of the White Oak Mountain Area involves exploring its potential and engaging with residents and business owners to understand their aspirations for the next decade. What qualities do people value? What elements make this area unique or special? To identify these community values, two surveys were distributed during the planning process,. During public meetings, participants were invited to identify issues and prioritize potential solutions. While some concerns were specific to particular sub-areas, many were relevant to the entire area.

The initial feedback produced four key Community Themes which ultimately, outlined in Chapter 2 of this plan. Those key themes informed the Community Vision, Goals, and Policy Recommendations of this Plan.

Survey responses, input from community meetings, feedback from the Advisory Committee, and professional guidance from staff and technical advisors, were used to draft goals, a vision statement, and recommendations to reflect the shared values of the Northeast County community to establish a direction for the future.

A community's **GOALS** form the foundation of its identity and guide is actions and decisions. They identify the driving forces of the community, by adhering to these core goals, the community fosters a sense of unity and purpose, enabling all members to work together towards a common vision of a prosperous and harmonious future.

A **VISION STATEMENT** outlines the collective aspirations and core values of the community. It serves as a guide, highlighting the community's desired future and setting a clear direction for growth and development. Crafted through collaborative input, the vision statement emphasizes key principles such as preservation, recreation, infrastructure, housing, and overall quality of life.

Public Meeting
Source: RPA

3.2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community feedback is crucial in creating an Area Plan because it ensures that the voices of those who live, work, and play there are heard and valued. The residents have an intimate understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within their community, providing insights that outside experts might overlook. Engaging the community fosters a sense of ownership and collaboration, making the planning process more inclusive and transparent. By incorporating diverse perspectives, we can create a more comprehensive and effective plan that reflects the true needs and aspirations of the people it serves.

Public input is vital to the success of any planning process and in the Area Planning process for Hamilton County. Understanding the perspectives of those who live and work in a community every day provides invaluable insights to experts developing concepts and recommendations.

Plan Hamilton Landing Page
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/

Area 12 Website
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/white-oak-mountain/

1600
Approximate # of people participating in person at various meetings.

505
people participated in the online survey.

34
Community, online, commission meetings, etc.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The following outlines the public meetings held to provide a platform for the community to express concerns, share priorities, and offer feedback on the proposed strategies within the Area Plan. Through an analysis of the themes and perspectives that emerged, this section highlights the key issues raised by participants. Input from these meetings plays a crucial role in shaping the recommendations, ensuring the Area Plan aligns with the community's needs and values.

KICK-OFF

In August 2023, a kick-off meeting took place at East Hamilton High School. The goal of the first meeting was to introduce the purpose of Area Planning as well as the process as a whole and gather initial feedback from the community. A summary of the input received at the kick-off meeting is included in Appendix D.

PUBLIC MEETING #2

In November 2023, the second public meeting was held at Ooltewah High School. The goal of this meeting was to not only update the community on the process but to understand the community vision so that was the forefront of the Area Planning process before the documents were created. The insights and ideas gathered from all these meetings are summarized in the appendix of this plan and have directly influenced the goals and policies.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In addition to in-person engagement, we conducted a comprehensive public opinion survey from August 2023 through October 2023. This survey covered a wide range of topics, including recent and current development, future development, environmental issues, and mobility. The valuable insights gained from the survey are included in Appendix C.

ONLINE INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Two Countywide informational meetings were held online by the RPA in January of 2024 to discuss 4 topics with the public including: Traffic & Transportation, Commercial Centers & Corridors, Housing, and Parks & Greenways.

DRAFT PLAN MEETING

In September 2024, a draft Area Plan meeting was held at East Hamilton High School. The goal of this meeting was to present the 75% draft version of the Area 12 plan to the community and for the RPA to provide an update of the overall process, how the plan addresses community concerns, and how this plan will guide growth moving forward.

Area 12 Public Meeting
Source: RPA

Table 7: Community Outreach Timeline for Plan Hamilton

OUTREACH TECHNIQUE	DATE	LOCATION	AREA REACHED
Survey (Online)	08/25 - 10-07/2023	Online	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
1st Round Public Meetings	10/03/2023	Bachman Community Center	7
	09/07/2023	Chester Frost Park Pavilion	8
	08/24/2023	Ooltewah High School	9
	08/29/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	08/21/2023	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
2nd Round Public Meetings	11/28/2023	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	11/30/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	8
	11/16/2023	Ooltewah High School	9 & 12
	09/14/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
	12/05/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
Online Informational Meeting 1	01/18/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Online Informational Meeting 2	01/25/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Community Meetings	04/19/2023	Collegedale City Hall	12
	06/14/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/15/2023	Veteran's Building, Sequoyah Road	8
	08/16/2023	Lakesite City Hall	8
	09/21/2023	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	9/30/2023	Soddy Lake Park (Booth)	13
	11/09-11/11/2023	Hamilton County Fair	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	1/23/2024	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
	05/16/2024	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	06/20/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/25/2024	The Commons	12
	08/01/2024	Century Club Banquet Hall	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	10/24/2024	Century Club	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Draft Plan Review Meeting	09/19/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	09/25/2024	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	09/26/2024	Hwy 58 Volunteer Fire Department	9
	10/01/2024	Sale Creek Middle/High School	13
	10/16/2024	Clear Creek Church of Christ	8
Public Hearings	3/28/2023	County Courthouse	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	03/06/2023	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	12/09/2024	Planning Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	TBD	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Mass Emails & Social Media	*Additional outreach was conducted through regular email announcements and Facebook updates as well as media releases to local news outlets. The mailing list on average numbered over 2,000 contacts who had registered via the website or at meetings*		

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Commercial uses and services most needed:

1. Food & Beverage
2. Leisure / Entertainment
3. Retail

56%
experience some congestion with long delays during peak rush hours

The top 3 infrastructure investments needed:

1. Roads
2. Schools
3. Parks, Greenways & Open Space

Civic uses and services most needed:

1. Trails, Greenways & Sidewalks
2. Parks & Open Space
3. Schools

Type of Commercial Development the community would support:

61%
Mixed-Use Commercial

57%
Neighborhood Commercial

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

"Green buffers with trees and sidewalks rather than just a fence by subdivisions and shopping areas"

"Prefer Area 12 to remain as a rural residential subdivision as much as possible."

"Better connectivity between projects"

"Concerned with pace and density of recent development along Ooltewah-Georgetown Road"

"Need to bolster stormwater assessment and improvement required at re-zoning and subdivision A levels. "

"More trails like White Oak Mountain"

3.3 AREA PLAN GOALS

These seven general Area Plan goals apply to all five unincorporated Areas and create a blueprint for balanced and sustainable growth in Hamilton County, enhancing its unique character and natural beauty. These goals are based on the four Community Themes established in Chapter 2 including Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities.

By focusing on strategic growth management, we aim to harmonize new development with existing community values and landscapes, fostering economic vitality while preserving the charm of our neighborhoods. Our commitment to conserving natural resources ensures they are protected and enhanced for future generations, promoting sustainable practices. Providing diverse and affordable housing options is essential for an inclusive and thriving community. Ensuring housing meets the needs of all residents supports a diverse population and fosters socioeconomic stability.

By addressing these interconnected goals, Hamilton County is committed to creating a resilient, vibrant, and sustainable future that enhances the quality of life for all residents. Each goal is paired with specific policy recommendations and strategies to ensure successful implementation and long-term benefits for our community.

3.4 VISION STATEMENT

As we look toward the future of the unincorporated areas of Hamilton County, we aim to craft a vision statement that captures our shared aspirations and values. This statement isn't just a list of goals; it's a reflection of our dedication to honoring our rich heritage while embracing sustainable growth. We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents through thoughtful development, preserving our natural resources, and fostering economic opportunities. By engaging in collaborative and transparent planning, we will build resilient, connected, and thriving neighborhoods where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations. This vision statement will serve as our guide, illuminating the path toward a vibrant and inclusive future for Hamilton County's unincorporated areas.

To create vibrant and SUSTAINABLE communities that honor our heritage while embracing growth. We aim to ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE by promoting THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT, CONSERVNG NATURAL RESOURCES, and fostering ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES. Through collaborative and transparent planning, we will build RESILIENT, CONNECTED, and THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations.

CHAPTER 4

PLANS, POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW
4.2 PLACE TYPES
4.3 POLICIES

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW

The CHCRPA draws on a wide range of resources to determine the most suitable land uses within Hamilton County. While standard practices such as zoning often guide these decisions, it's crucial to recognize that the rich history of our neighborhoods and the specific desires and needs of the community extend beyond these conventional frameworks.

This chapter outlines the three key steps in the planning process used as part of the Comprehensive Planning effort. The primary aim of these steps is to prioritize community character, ensuring that each area's unique identity and needs are at the forefront of decision-making. While these steps prioritize the preservation of each area's identity, it's important to note that they operate alongside public input and community programming integrated throughout the process. By leveraging distinct planning models, the RPA has developed Place Types that cater to the specific conditions of each of the unincorporated areas within Hamilton County. The process begins with a thorough understanding of each area's unique characteristics and needs. These Place Types serve as a foundation for developing customized conditions and recommendations. The final step involves formulating specific Policies, which provide best practices for implementing the earlier planning stages.

The RPA's approach is uniquely multi-layered, incorporating best management practices tailored to the needs of each individual Area. This method ensures that land use decisions are not only guided by standard practices but also by a deep understanding of local contexts, resulting in a planning process that is responsive to the diverse needs of Hamilton County's communities.

#1

PLANNING MODELS

The RPA and their consultants have developed Countywide Growth Capacity Modeling to show current trends. This influenced the Centers and Corridors approach to planning which is graphically displayed in the Conceptual Land Use Map. These maps identify Centers, Corridors, and general land use determinations in advance of Place Type mapping that were informed by community feedback, existing policy, existing code, proposed policy and Place Types, as well as general community character.

#2

PLACE TYPES

The RPA has created a palette of 23 Place Types to describe the various uses, forms, and character that development can take throughout the County. and its jurisdictions. The section identifies how they are used and which ones exist in Area 12. The RPA's Place Types Matrix addresses a range of contexts from most urban to most rural based on the transect model. Each Place Type policy includes a general description, real-world examples, recommended land uses, guidance on intensity and form, mobility, and infrastructure.

#3

POLICIES

The policy recommendations are inspired from the 4 Community Themes which created the 7 Goals for Unincorporated Area Plans. Each Area Plan will have customized Policy Recommendations based on the community's character, needs, land use, zoning, Place Types, planning models,etc. The policy recommendations are intended to be a guide for implementation at the regulatory level and create a standard by which this document is regulated.

CENTERS AND CORRIDOR APPROACH

The Centers and Corridors Approach is a land development strategy that the RPA has developed to address growth and redevelopment throughout Chattanooga and Hamilton County and which will influence this plan's recommendations. It has three essential concepts:

- Walkable, clustered Centers where retail uses are concentrated.
- Corridors comprised of a mix of uses when in suburban areas or with deep setbacks to preserve rural character.
- Medium and higher density housing near Centers and Corridors to support their economic vitality and local transit viability.

*This approach addresses the plan's 7 Goals and the **community's preferences**:*

1. Complete Communities

A mix of housing types in close proximity to centers and corridors gives residents convenient access to daily needs, employment, recreation, and transportation options.

2. Connected Communities

Connected communities enable walking, biking, and transit options, all of which depend on a mix of uses in close proximity. Concentrating businesses in Centers and at key locations along transit Corridors makes these alternate transportation modes more feasible, helping to reduce congestion.

3. Healthy Communities

Communities, where active transportation options and public greenways and parks are available, tend to be healthier: Proximity to these amenities allows people to recreate and get around by providing the built environment to do so.

4. Safe Communities

The Centers and Corridors Approach promotes more eyes on the street, by locating buildings up to the sidewalk, animating the street edge with doors and windows, and more frequent pedestrian activity. Corridors with sidewalks, street trees, and bike lanes promote safe and efficient movement for all users of the street, including motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

5. Unique and Attractive Communities

Place Types emphasize form and character which helps preserve and foster distinctive and memorable places. Due to changes in commercial corridors throughout the County having vacancies, new opportunities are presented for multi-family housing providing redevelopment opportunities for more compact site planning, smaller tenant spaces suited to local businesses, and integrated attached single-family and multi-family. This can ; increase profits for businesses, reduce traffic and congestion related impacts, and help to preserve the character of existing single-family neighborhoods consistent with input from local residents.

6. Economically Vibrant Communities

Given finite government resources, the Centers and Corridors approach helps prioritize where City resources are invested. Walkable, compact Centers have significant economic impacts for the County Centers require a certain number of households within a given proximity (depending on their size) in order to sustain businesses. Businesses also tend to be more successful in Centers where retail, services, and housing are all clustered in a compact, walkable environment. Also, compact development yields more tax revenue per acre than dispersed development, thus contributing to the overall wealth and economic vitality of the area.

4.1.2 CONCEPTUAL LAND USE MAP

The conceptual land use map is intended to identify the high-level areas for initial recommendations to inform the Place Type mapping. These maps identify more of the major Centers and Corridors, Resort/Recreation, Special Districts and Residential. The purpose of these maps is to provide guidance to residents, development interests, utility providers, planners, and County leadership on what areas should be primarily preserved in their current form with incremental growth and where new growth should be planned for to support economic opportunity and a balance of services across the County. The conceptual land use maps also identify areas, existing agricultural use, locations of regional facilities, and recreational assets. While parcel size and density was considered this map is generalized to highlight projected trends and opportunities and to provide guidance on where public and private sector investments are most warranted.

Centers & Corridors

Centers and Corridors are planned considering a variety of factors including utility infrastructure capacity, transportation factors, proximity to schools and emergency services, environmental conditions, recreational access, housing opportunities, and access to commercial services. Centers provide the opportunity to integrate commercial services into our neighborhoods in a predictable manner with accompanying infrastructure investments and site considerations.

Center Example
Source: Continuum

Corridor designations have been applied in rural areas to indicate opportunities to preserve rural landscape, views, and development patterns, consolidate points of access to primary roadways, limit congestion, and to protect rural lifestyles. In suburban settings, corridors are utilized to demonstrate primary transportation corridors that will experience continued development pressure and warrant access management improvements.

Rural Corridor Example
Source: RPA

Residential

Residential Place Types are the places (outside of centers and corridors) that make up the neighborhoods we call home. They can be urban or rural, vertical and dense, or secluded retreats and are the building blocks of most traditional neighborhoods and modern suburbs.

Residential Example
Source: DR Horton, Ooltewah

Residential Cont.

When a community wants to incorporate space for a school, a corner restaurant or coffee shop, a convenience store, an accountant's office or even a care facility for elderly family members; the residential Place Types may not accommodate these uses. This is the reason for the variety of scale and intensity of Centers which may be used to compliment residential areas to provide for daily needs services and a place for mixed residential units. This approach protects single-family residential areas and provides for a more complete community.

Mixed-residential Example
Source: RPA

Resort/Recreation

Resort Recreation Centers are introduced in this plan as a specialty district Place Type. Hamilton County has a wealth of recreational assets from highly programmed parks, to blended park-preserves such as Enterprise Nature Park, to traditional passive use natural areas and preserves. These special use areas have all found a place in the hearts of recreation enthusiasts as varied as league sports athletes, paddlers, fitness walkers, bird watchers, runners, cyclists, nature photographers, and neighborhood residents looking for a safe quite walk. Not as readily recognized has been the economic potential of these assets and the user groups who love them. Working from community and stakeholder input locations have been identified where commerce can be sustainably integrated with recreation to provide jobs, tax base, and income while enhancing and preserving our community recreational resources.

Resort Recreation Example
Source: City of Rockwood, TN

Specialty Districts

Specialty Districts are used to designate the places that form the fabric of our community. They may not be where we live or shop but they house many of the other essential resources we require to thrive in modern society. These include the campuses where our children attend school, the land and facilities that produce our food, power our utility grids, clean our water, house our medical and emergency response facilities, build our communities, and manufacture the products we utilize every day. In many cases, this means they are also our places of employment.

Specialty District Example
Source: Volkswagen

Conceptual Land Use

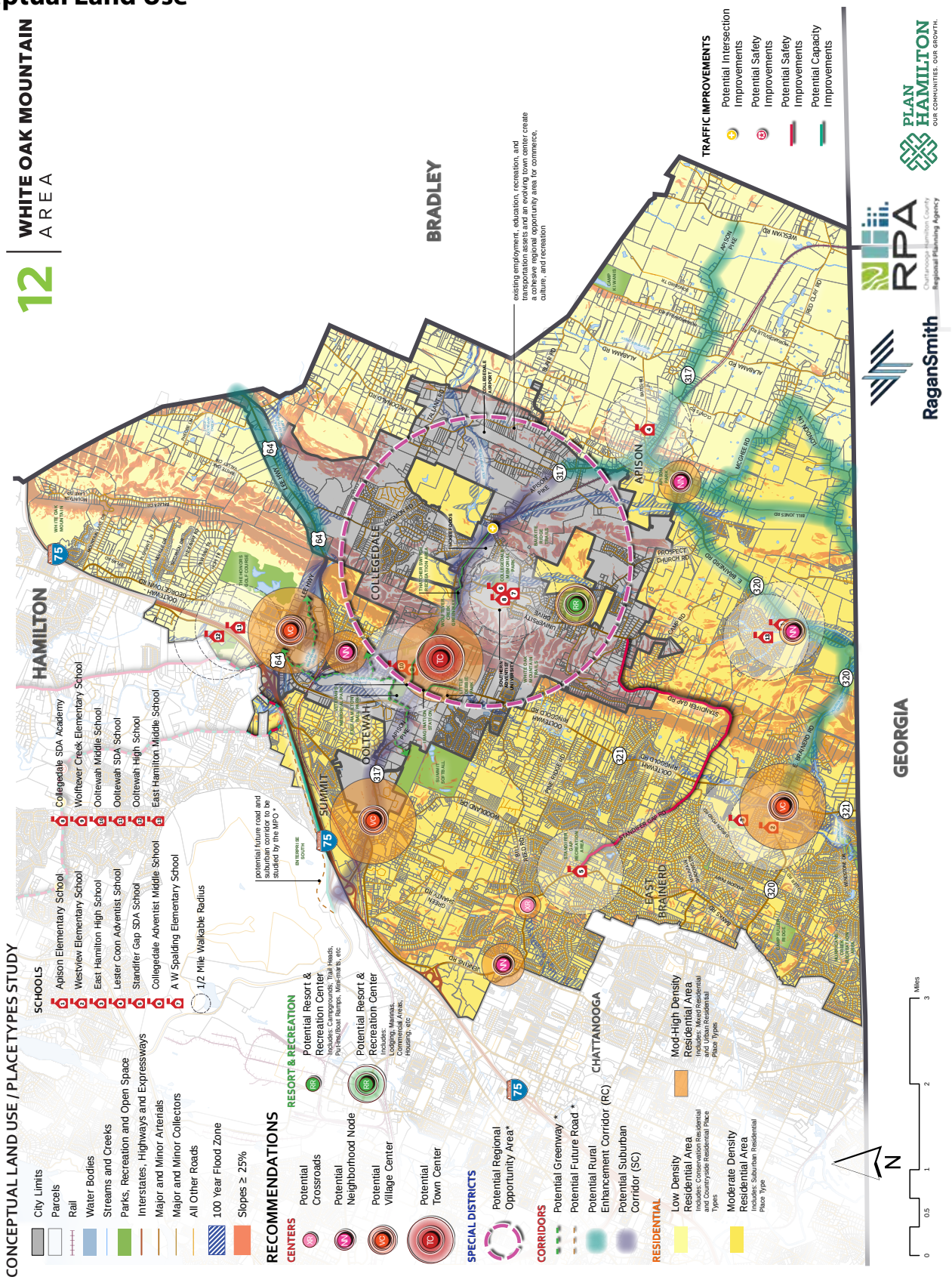


Figure 4.1: Conceptual Land Use Map

4.1.3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The growth opportunities for Area 12 are tempered by constraints related to natural features, terrain, and infrastructure, and community vision. In general, the growth should be primarily rural residential for areas east of White Oak Mountain.

Corridors:

Hamilton County and the municipalities of Collegedale and Chattanooga should explore expansion of the Wolftever Creek Greenway to connect neighborhoods and recreational assets across Area 12.

Centers:

Should serve local residents and visitors, and may locate with existing commercial or community services. Often these centers have served important functions for locals for many years.

Potential Village Center (VC) developments have been identified to include:

- Near the intersection of Apison Pike and Old Lee Highway.
- At East Brainerd Road and Ooltewah Ringgold Road.
- In the area around the existing Cambridge Square development.

Source: Rural Design Guide FHWA

Village Center **Example**
Source: RPA

Smaller Neighborhood Nodes (NN) have been identified as hubs for neighborhood commercial services, potential government services, and in recognition of existing development patterns that features more suburban development patterns:

- » Old Apison near park, post office and churches
- » London Lane, south of Apison Pike on East Brainerd Road at Apison Park,
- » Old Ooltewah along Ooltewah-Ringgold Road / Main Street.

Cross Roads (XR) are proposed at the following intersection:

- » Standifer Gap & Bill Reed Road (existing)

Additional Opportunities:

A robust recreational trail network already exists along the ridgeline. These landforms also provide an opportunity for lower elevation bike/pedestrian connections that are more universally accessible to a wide range of users and connect key community assets.

East of White Oak Mountain / Bauxite Ridge/ Collegedale, the community has expressed a desire to maintain a more rural development pattern with lower residential densities, larger setbacks from primary roadways with vegetated buffers and continued agricultural activities.

Source: Dover-Kohl

Source: RPA

Source: RPA

4.2 PLACE TYPES

Place Types are carefully designated to guide future development and align with the community's vision and adopted plans. These designations indicate whether an area is slated for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with minimal alterations. Key considerations include existing zoning, proximity to centers, schools, and parks, as well as the presence of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services. Once Area Plans are adopted, these Place Type designations become essential tools for the Regional Planning Agency (RPA) in making informed zoning decisions. Recommendations for zoning changes are made based on how well the proposed zone aligns with the intended characteristics of the Place Type.

Place Types illustrate a desired character to guide development across a range of community types, from the most urban to suburban, to the most rural places. This distinction is prominently noted in the names of most Place Types, such as Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, and Countryside Residential. Some key elements that contribute to Hamilton County's sense of place include important vistas, the river and its setting within the forested ridges, our diversity of trees, and our historic buildings. This sense of place can occur at multiple levels - across an entire city, within individual neighborhoods, or in a specific block. The transect graphic below identifies seven general levels of the natural environment to the built environment. The Place Types were partially based on this transect model to ensure that all aspects of Hamilton County's character were considered.

To promote good placemaking, the RPA uses Place Types to influence the form and character of development. This is done alongside the Centers and Corridors approach, as described in Chapter 4.1, to guide different types of development to the most suitable locations. This is based on factors such as Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Mobility and Transportation, and Community Facilities.

By designating Place Types, we are not just planning for the present but also safeguarding the unique essence of Hamilton County for future generations. Whether it's the urban vibrancy, suburban charm, or rural tranquility, each Place Type plays a crucial role in maintaining the region's distinct identity and ensuring thoughtful, cohesive development.

Figure 4.2: Transect Zones from Natural (left) to Special District (right) Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, DPZ

4.2.1 HOW ARE THEY USED?

Place Types reflect whether the community vision and adopted plan identifies an area for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with little change. Other factors, such as the surrounding or existing zoning, proximity to Centers, schools or parks, the location of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services are considered. Once Area Plans are adopted, the Place Type designations within those Plans are used by the RPA to inform zoning decisions. A recommendation for a zoning change is

based on whether the requested zone will result in the Place Type characteristics described in this chapter. The following Place Types represent the full palette of Place Types available throughout the County but not all Place Types are used in all areas.

The Area Plan recommendation and Place Types are not intended to limit development during the subdivision platting process for properties zoned R-1 Residential District or other residential zoning district or having a Special Exceptions Permit for a Planned Unit Development prior to plan adoption. Existing zoning density and conditions should not be overridden by Plan Hamilton for platting purposes in residential or commercial zones, but all setback and buffering language should apply to new preliminary plats (those not already accepted by RPA at the time of plan adoption). The subdivision of such land shall follow the Hamilton County Subdivision Regulations standard procedures.

Place Types layout out a vision for future land uses and they are intended to guide development choices, they are not zones. Once a plan and its associated Place Type map is adopted, then a request to study new zoning designations and assess what tools are needed to achieve the adopted vision may occur. A zoning study typically follows within 6 months to a year of plan adoption depending on the level of change desired or other influences.

- Place Types are not zoning.
- Place Types are recommended future development patterns.
- Place Types are policy.
- Place Types are used to inform zoning decisions.
- Zoning is a regulation.
- One or more zoning districts may be used to develop a Place Type.

PREDOMINANT USES, LIMITED USES, AND DENSITY

Place Types intentionally promote a mix of uses as a means of providing residents with more housing choices and more access to daily needs and jobs. Each Place Type listed in this subchapter provides examples of potential uses, along with other elements that generally define its character and are divided into:

1. **Predominant Uses** – The most prevalent, most frequently
2. **Limited Uses** – Less common, but can still be compatible with the predominant use if limited to certain locations, limited in size, buffered from adjacent uses, etc.

> *"Place Types do not necessarily describe what exists today, but rather the desired vision of what a place may become."*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA)*

While limited uses are less prevalent in a Place Type, they can provide additional services and housing options, while maintaining compatibility with the predominant use. However, a proliferation of limited uses will change the character of an area, and the original intent of the Place Type can be lost. Often, rezoning requests are for these limited uses, and where Limited Uses are listed additional guidance has been provided regarding the appropriateness of integrating the use into the Place Type.

Each of the following Place Types includes:

- A two or three letter abbreviation, and the color, used to identify each on the Place Types map.
- A general description of the typical, or ideal, situation.
- A list of characteristics that are generally needed to support the intended development form of the Place Type.
- Examples of the predominant uses.
- Examples of the limited uses.
- Illustrative photos, presented as examples only.

4.2.2 CATEGORIES & PLACE TYPES IN AREA 12

There are 23 Place Types in total as provided and amended from time to time by the RPA on their website here. The four categories with listing of Place Types are below. On the pages following in this section are the individual Place Types that appear in Hamilton County and as shown on the Place Type Map (Figure 4.6).

RESIDENTIAL

- *Countryside Residential (CR)*
- *Suburban Residential (SR)*
- *Urban Residential (UR)*
- *Mixed Residential (MR)*

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

- *Preserve (PR)*
- *Agricultural (AG)*
- *Resort & Recreation (RR)*
- *Industrial (IN)*
- *Maker District (MD)*
- *Campus (CA)*
- *Regional Facility (RF)*

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

- *Crossroads (XR)*
- *Neighborhood Node (NN)*
- *Neighborhood Center (NC)*
- *Village Center (VC)*
- *Town Center (TC)*
- *Downtown Core (DC)*
- *Suburban Corridor (SC)*
- *Mixed-use Corridor (MC)*
- *Transit Corridor (TRC)*

OVERLAYS

- *Natural Resources (NR)*
- *Rural Corridor (RC)*

Table 8: Density

PLACE TYPE	MAXIMUM DENSITY	GENERAL INTENSITY
CR Countryside Residential	*See Place Type*	Low Density
SR Suburban Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Low to Medium Density
SR Suburban Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Medium Density
MD Maker District	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
NN Neighborhood Node	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
NC Neighborhood Center	Maximum of 8 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
UR Urban Residential	Maximum of 15 dwelling units/acre	High Density
SC Suburban Corridor	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
VC Village Center	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	High Density
RR Resort & Recreation	N/A	Varies if Type A or B *See Place Type Description*

CENTERS

XR Crossroads

Generally four acres or less, Crossroads are smaller than Village Centers or Town Centers and are most often located in rural Areas. They may serve as gateways to adjacent neighborhoods. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection of two arterial or collector streets, or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses meets some of the daily needs of the immediate residents with stores, restaurants and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Over time when the infrastructure needed to support more intense development is in place, Crossroads may grow into the larger Village Center.

Uses

Retail, restaurants, garden centers, personal services, offices, gas stations, small markets, auto repair, landscape businesses, and small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops).

NN Neighborhood Node

Located in urban or suburban Areas, and generally a total of only two acres or less, Neighborhood Nodes are much smaller than Village or Town Centers. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses provides goods and services, such as laundromats, restaurants, small grocers, and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses, to the immediate surrounding community. Residential uses over retail or office are common.

Uses

Small retail and restaurants, convenience stores, personal services, offices, farmers' markets, small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops), live/work, short-term vacation rental, and two, three and four-unit dwellings

When a Neighborhood Node is located along a Mixed-use Corridor or Transit Corridor, the building size in the Neighborhood Node should be consistent with its surrounding corridor type (typically larger than described above), but the uses at that location should include ground-floor commercial or services.

NC Neighborhood Center

Usually found in suburban locations, Neighborhood Centers are shopping centers of 5–15 acres that provide goods and services primarily to the surrounding neighborhoods. They are not part of a continuous "strip" of commercial uses along a corridor, but rather are limited to a single quadrant of an intersection and surrounded by residential development. They usually have large, shared parking lots with a few outparcel buildings that face the street. Some include smaller commercial properties on the other corners of the intersection. Neighborhood Centers often have one large building that houses multiple stores, deeper building setbacks, an emphasis on vehicle access, and limited civic services. Neighborhood Centers may be redeveloped as Village or Town Centers with a more walkable and urban form, over time.

Uses

Grocery stores, retail and restaurants, offices, personal services, small workshop/industries (such as studios, work spaces, bakeries, breweries, woodworking shops or other low impact production) townhomes, and minor auto service/repair

VC Village Center

Larger than Neighborhood Nodes, but smaller than Town Centers, the Village Center (generally 2–10 acres) is a pedestrian-oriented cluster of medium footprint buildings, with a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Multi-story buildings with residential uses over retail or offices are common. Due to their intensity, Village Centers are typically located along transit routes, but primarily serve local residents. Walking, biking and transit are prioritized over auto use in Village Centers, with shared parking lots providing a park-once environment. Pedestrian entrances front directly onto the sidewalks, with window displays at the ground floor to provide interest for pedestrians. Village Centers are often organized around a central public square or park. Village Centers may, over time, grow into Town Centers.

Uses

Civic institutions, public square or park, retail, restaurants, offices, personal services, lodging, live/work, small industries/workshops (such as studios, bakeries, breweries, or woodworking, or other low impact production), townhomes, short-term vacation rentals and two, three and four-unit dwellings.

CORRIDORS

SC

Suburban Corridor

Suburban Corridors have a linear configuration because they are located along major commercial streets, however they differ from Mixed-use and Transit Corridors in that the development along them tends to be more spread out. They are not typically served by frequent transit. Businesses along Suburban Corridors serve a large geographic Area and are primarily accessed by car. Buildings tend to be single-story and house a single use with deep setbacks from the street. Some developments have a horizontal mix of uses within a larger site. The types of businesses found along Suburban Corridors range from stand-alone restaurants and stores, to "strip" shopping centers, to regional malls, medical centers, multi-story office buildings, and hotels. Multi-unit residential is also a growing use along suburban corridors, either as new construction or as retrofits of older retail centers or hotels.

Predominant Uses

Retail, townhomes with no more than four units per building, offices, restaurants, personal services, medical facilities, lodging, small workshops and artist studios, recreation and entertainment (such as bowling, mini golf, conference centers, theaters) and assisted living facilities.

Limited Uses

Auto-oriented services when located along a major corridor or at the corner of a major intersection.

RESIDENTIAL

CR

Countryside Residential

Countryside Residential Place Types have a very rural character and consist primarily of single-family homes on large lots. Countryside Residential may include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes, as well as accessory buildings, such as barns and greenhouses. This Place Type also includes the County's agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses ranging from roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores to larger production facilities.

Residences and development centered around farming are typically on septic systems. Residences are generally further from key destinations than in other residential Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs. Fixed-route transit is not feasible, and sidewalks are not likely, due to the low density of these Areas.

Countryside Residential maximum densities are as follows:

- 1.5 dwelling units per acre (development on septic),
- 3 dwelling units per acre (developed on sewer), and
- 2.75 dwelling units per acre (developed on decentralized sewer systems or where new approved technology allows*)

** When new information or technological improvements to the decentralized systems becomes available, staff will present information to the County Commission for direction.*

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached, farming activities, accessory buildings (barns, greenhouses, etc.), manufactured homes

Limited Uses

Event facilities, golf courses, and campgrounds where appropriate infrastructure exists and development impacts such as noise, traffic, and activity are directed away from existing residential uses.

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- Buffer and setback from right-of-way:
  - Require a 30' wide planted landscape buffer from existing ROW.
  - For exterior street facing garages, garage doors must be set back 20' from the right-of-way.
- Perimeter buffer:
  - Plant 2 inch caliper trees around entire perimeter of development; minimum of 30' on center. If existing vegetation is equivalent to or greater along the perimeter, the existing vegetation would count towards this requirement.
  - Behind said buffer- require a 25' rear setback and a 10' side setback if the side of the house is adjacent to the buffer.
- Floodplains
  - Floodplains may be filled up to three fifths the distance of the length of the floodplain on the property. For instance if a floodplain is 100' in length from a water body – one can fill up to 60 feet in length of that floodplain length.
- Steep Slopes
  - Adopt a steep slope vegetation policy and planting requirements *(Reference: City of Chattanooga Code Sec. 31-324.4)*

SR Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential Place Type has a predominantly low intensity, single-family detached, residential development pattern, especially within the same block. Some moderate density residential development, such as small lot houses or attached townhomes, may exist, but are located on a major street or near a transit route or school. When next to lower density residential development, this moderate intensity infill development maintains the existing rhythm and feel of the street. Factors that play into this rhythm and feel include lot width, setbacks, building massing, and height. Open spaces are typically private (back yards), but greenways may provide connectivity. Residences in this Place Type are generally further from key destinations than those in other Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs.

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units/acre, accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

Limited Uses

The following uses when located within a 1/4 mile of a public school or park or center where appropriate infrastructure exists: single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units an acre; townhomes (up to 4 massed units per building); and two, three, and four unit housing

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- *Require ADA compliant sidewalks in Suburban Residential Development Standards unless the average lot size is 1 acre or above, in all plans, to ensure pedestrian infrastructure in denser subdivisions.*

MR Mixed Residential

The Mixed Residential Place Type is intended to provide a wide range of housing options for residents at various stages of life, and walkable destinations in close proximity. Due to their intensity, Mixed Residential developments are located along major streets, or within walking distance (1/4-mile) of a transit route. The Mixed Residential Place Type includes moderate to higher intensity housing. Taller multi-family buildings are located along streets, with shorter buildings on local streets to provide a transition to any less intense residential uses.

Predominant Uses

Two, three and four unit residences, multi-family residential with 5–12 units per building, cottage courts, townhomes, manufactured home parks, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Limited Uses

Multi-family of over 12 units per buildings should directed towards major streets/corridor or adjacent to a center.

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

PR Preserve

Preserves are large expanses of forest, floodplains and other natural resources, as well as public parks and recreation Areas that have been set aside as places where general development is not allowed. They may also include privately-owned land that is permanently protected by conservation easements and remains in a largely undeveloped state. Some may be used for passive recreation, while others are largely off limits to human use due to sensitive natural resources or their remote location. Development within the Preserve is minimized, and is limited to cultural, educational or recreational uses.

Uses

Undisturbed open space, visitors' centers, nature centers, public parks, active and passive recreation, trails, cemeteries, and accessory structures such as concessions, storage and parking.

RR Resort and Recreation

The Resort and Recreation Place Type supports outdoor activities such as camping, boating, golfing, bouldering, mountain biking, as well as corporate nature retreats, and eco-tourism activities. These places are focused on enjoying nature, exceptional views, or historic landmarks. However, unlike Preserves, which are primarily government-owned properties with very limited development, such as a state or County park, the Resort and Recreation Place Type can include multiple private businesses with more development, such as marinas, hotels, restaurants and even housing. Properties may range in size from a 20-acre campground to 100+ acre resorts with a marina, lodge, restaurant, and individual house lots.

Resort Type A accommodates a more intense outdoor recreation and park experience and could include hotels, conferences centers, large campgrounds/RV parks and related uses or even a full resort. Oftentimes these are located in or adjacent to state or county parks or may develop from a golf course or event facility such as a fairground or agritourism site. The development size and location should be designed so that the impact of this larger-scale format lessens potential negative aspects.

Resort Type B accommodates smaller-scale or less intense recreational activities such as golf courses, ballfields, cultural facilities, marinas, and related accessory use such as parking areas, small campgrounds or cabins, and related retail goods such as camp stores, farm stands, and equipment rental (kayaks/canoes, bicycles, etc.)

Predominant Uses

Campgrounds/RV parks, hotels, cabins, restaurants, marinas, camp stores, golf courses, agriculture-related businesses (e.g. boarding stables, riding academies), farming activities

Limited Uses

Single-unit housing (detached and attached) and reception facilities as a secondary use integrated into a resort.

CA Campus

Campus Place Types are characterized by one major activity such as educational, office, industrial, medical, or religious. Campuses are typically based on a master plan that incorporates buildings, open spaces, streets, pedestrian networks, and parking in a unified manner. Campuses have clearly defined edges—often delineated with gateway structures and landscape—that distinguish them from adjacent Place Types. Residential buildings and small convenience services often support the predominant use. Campuses function as major employment and activity centers and are often served by public or private transit.

Uses

Institutions (such as academic, medical, religious or research facilities), offices, clubhouses/ meeting halls, athletic facilities, non-noxious/non-nuisance manufacturing and industrial, open space, multi-family residences (residence halls and dormitories), onsite retail and food services, and staff housing.

Existing schools, large medical and church campuses, government facilities, and corporate headquarters are identified as the Campus Place Type. However, as land use and property owners change over time, the Campus designation may no longer be applicable. In that case, the plan goals, surrounding Place Types, and context should all be considered in identifying future use/ reuse of the former Campus site.

IN Industrial

The Industrial Place Type supports a variety of manufacturing uses. Unlike the Maker District Place Type, the Industrial Place Type includes both non-noxious operations (no hazardous materials or pollution) and noxious industries (heavy industrial production). The latter are not located adjacent to residential Areas, but are not so far away as to be a commute burden. The size of lots (2+ acres) and buildings are often larger than those in the Maker District Place Type.

Uses

Light manufacturing and industrial facilities, including assembly facilities, offices, distribution, warehousing, wholesaling, retail specifically related to the primary use and self storage facilities.

Limited Uses

Heavy manufacturing should be located along major transportation infrastructure and directed away from existing development.

There are limited areas of industrial uses in the County today. Some smaller scale industrial areas may appropriately transition to Maker Districts supporting a combinations of contractors, skilled trades, repair specialists, artists and artisans, food production, and service centers.

MD Maker District

Maker District Place Types are live-work districts where housing and workplaces are located in close proximity to each other, providing residents with convenient access to employment. They include a mix of light manufacturing, assembly, and contractor businesses, along with multi-family residential and commercial uses. Older smaller industrial structures that have been adapted for new purposes are frequently found here. Industrial facilities are non-noxious (no hazardous materials or pollution), and non-nuisance (no odors, excessive light, or heavy truck traffic). Due to these smaller buildings, short block lengths, and the mix of other uses, these Areas are generally walkable. Parks, plazas, and neighborhood-serving retail enhance the character and livability of the Area.

Uses

Non-noxious/non-nuisance light manufacturing, assembly, distribution, small workshop/industries (such as woodworking shops, bakeries, or other low impact production), studios, breweries, contractor's offices, live/work, multi-unit residential, retail, offices, restaurants, vehicle repair, gas stations, outdoor storage yard, and self storage facilities

OVERLAYS

NR Natural Resources Overlay

The Natural Resources Overlay is not a Place Type in and of itself. It is an Overlay on top of the underlying Place Type that identifies Areas considered sensitive due to the presence of steep slopes, floodplains or wetlands. Sites within this overlay are not protected by law from development. The purpose, therefore, is to identify these sensitive Areas so that they are given consideration for protection, or incorporated as amenities within new developments. Some sites are already developed and the overlay designation does not mean development cannot expand in these Areas; it merely identifies the location of floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.

Predominant Uses

Uses are defined by the underlying Place Type.

RC Rural Corridor

Primarily located in rural parts of the County, and are characterized by lots of open fields and woodlands. Development along Rural Corridors is sparse with farms or single unit homes on large estate lots. A few scattered subdivisions with smaller lots may have entries along these corridors, but the homes are separated from the corridor by distance (50 - 100 feet), and by dense vegetated buffers, in order to preserve the rural character of the corridor. Rural Corridors do not have the more dense, connecting street networks. They are typically two-lane roads. Rural Corridors may however, also take the form of a major thoroughfare, such as a state designated scenic parkway, with mountainside or lakefront views. A few commercial uses, often located at a Crossroads intersection, or as a stand-alone business, may be found along Rural Corridors, but no long stretches of commercial businesses.

The purpose of the rural corridor overlay is primarily to address new subdivision development. A rural corridor setback for a subdivision for the purposes of the plan refers to a required distance that new development must maintain from a designated corridor, as detailed on the Place Type map. The intent of the setback is to protect the character and environmental integrity of the rural landscape. The setback does not apply to individual homes outside a major subdivision.

Development Standards

The following development standard will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- A 50-foot setback from right of way of existing roadway for any structure including water quality features;
- a 30-foot type A landscape buffer is required along the entire frontage;
- adequate right of way as determined by the County Engineer should also be required as a condition to be given to accommodate an additional lane if a rezoning case is requested along the Rural Corridor overlay.

4.2.3 PLACE TYPES MAP

See separate Place Type Map. Not included due to size.

4.2.4 CENTERS & CORRIDORS VIGNETTES

The Centers and Corridors Vignettes bring to life a vision for thoughtfully guided growth in key locations across our communities. By focusing on high-potential centers and strategically important corridors, these vignettes illustrate how balanced land use—combining residential, commercial, and recreational spaces—can shape places that are both dynamic and resilient. Each vignette reveals how carefully aligned planning can elevate connectivity, support walkable neighborhoods, and foster economic growth while preserving Hamilton County's distinctive character, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. Through these targeted narratives, we explore how well-designed centers and corridors not only strengthen community identity but also enhance access to essential services, encourage diverse transportation options, and bolster the area's long-term sustainability. This vision aligns with the unique needs and values of Hamilton County residents, building a legacy of vibrant, and adaptable communities.

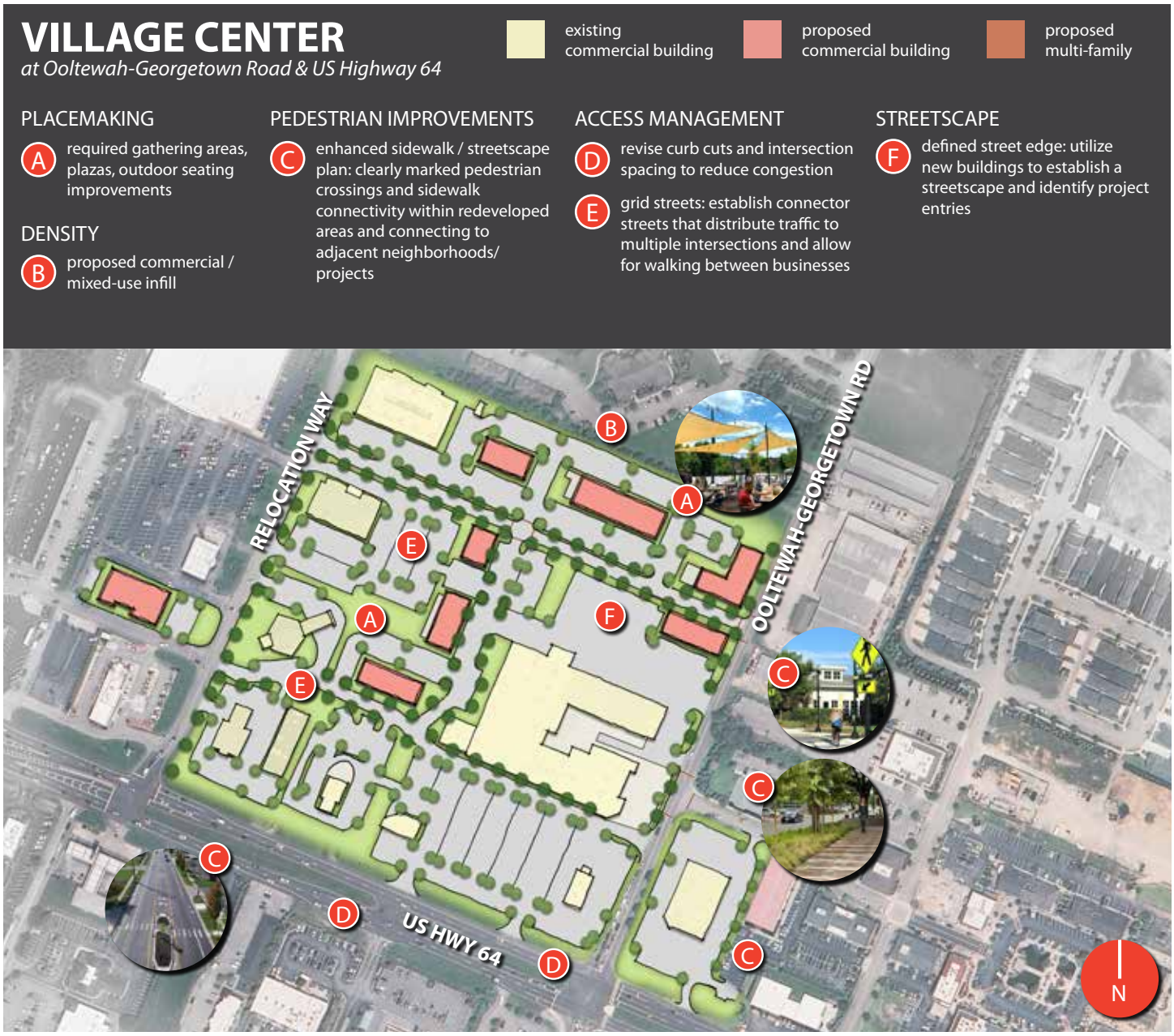


Figure 4.3 Recommendation, Village Center at Ooltewah-Georgetown Road

Figure 4.4: Recommendation, Village Center at Apison Pike & Old Lee Highway

The depictions shown above are intended to represent one idea of potential future development at these locations. Any future development or redevelopment at these locations would need to be initiated by the private property owner. Where there is a mismatch between a vignette and the Place Type map, the Place Type map reflects the official policy.

4.3 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals and policy recommendations outlined in Area Plans represent a comprehensive framework designed to guide sustainable development and enhance community well-being. These initiatives are crafted to ensure that future growth respects and enhances the County's and White Oak Mountain's distinct community character while preserving its abundant natural resources.

Emphasizing the importance of balanced growth, the plans prioritize the development of accessible parks and recreation areas that promote active lifestyles and environmental stewardship. Infrastructure improvements are a cornerstone, aimed at improving the connectivity of transportation networks, enhancing water and wastewater management systems, and integrating sustainable solutions. Additionally, the plans emphasize the need for diverse and affordable housing options to support a growing and inclusive population.

By aligning these goals with thoughtful policy recommendations, Hamilton County seeks to foster a resilient and cohesive community. This approach not only prepares the County for future challenges but also enhances its livability and ensures that development is carried out in a manner that respects and preserves its unique character and natural beauty.

The following section identifies the 7 goals which are consistent amongst all five unincorporated areas. Following each goal are policy recommendations to implement that goal.

> *Comprehensive Plans offer a strategic approach to where and how we grow. They address areas for change and areas to preserve.*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA)*

4.3.1 GOAL 1 & POLICIES

GOAL 1
BALANCE GROWTH, ECONOMY & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Policy 1.12.1 Make Village and Town Centers the locations for multifamily apartments/condos, large format retail, and other commercial uses with high trip generation factors. Structure zoning to support this model and target investments in transportation, sewage treatment, and pedestrian infrastructure in these centers.

Policy 1.12.2 Adopt a comprehensive set of corridor management provisions to strategically locate curb cuts and points of access to commercial properties, plan for safe pedestrian crossings and pathways, incentivize buildings to front the ROW, implement wayfinding signage, consider commercial sign standards, add roadway connectivity, and provide mixed-use opportunities. Take a first step by adopting TDOT's Access Management Manual for all state routes.

Policy 1.12.3 Consider creating a corridor management plan for Old Lee Highway to specify locations for more intense industrial and center development, establish setbacks, set aside ROW for multi-modal transportation options, transition zones, and rural/natural resource preservation areas.

Policy 1.12.4 Setback and buffering requirements as detailed in Place Types should also apply to residential plats in agricultural zones.

Policy 1.12.5 Amend the A-1 Agricultural District to change to the Maximum Density to 1.5 dwelling unit per acre on traditional septic.

4.3.2 GOAL 2 & POLICIES

GOAL 2
PROTECT & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES

Policy 2.12.1 Hamilton County to work with National, State, and local conservation organizations to develop a program whereby environmentally sensitive lands and prime agricultural parcels can be purchased or otherwise incentivized to remain in their natural state and where appropriate provide for public use.

Policy 2.12.2 Develop Conservation Subdivision Development criteria that incentivize this option for large parcels zoned for agricultural or low density residential.

Policy 2.12.3 Hamilton County to develop a coordinated conservation, recreation, and non-motorized transportation plan for the Wolftever Creek corridor. This corridor can provide buffer from higher density developments, public access to nature, recreation and wellness opportunities, enhanced water quality, and resiliency from storm impacts. Consider a similar strategy for the Chestnut Creek corridor.

4.3.3 GOAL 3 & POLICIES

GOAL 3
PRESERVE & ENHANCE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Policy 3.12.1 Build on the success of existing County and municipal assets (Summit Softball Complex, Summit Field, Collegedale Commons, Little Debbie and Imagination Station parks, and the Collegedale-Wolftever Creek Greenway System, White Oak Mountain and Bauxite Ridge trail system). Continue closing gaps in connectivity between these assets, area schools, and commerce centers.

Policy 3.12.2 Explore partnership opportunities to expand and further connect all of these existing trail networks. Consider funding planning and development of a Chestnut Creek Greenway as a complementary north-south recreation-transportation-conservation corridor to the Wolftever Creek Greenway system.

Policy 3.12.3 Work with developers of proposed Village Centers at Pattentown Road/Apison Pike and along Ooltewah-Ringgold Road to enhance adjacent recreational properties and extend greenway connections to benefit both the developments and the community at large.

4.3.4 GOAL 4 & POLICIES

GOAL 4
PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Policy 4.12.1 Explore partnership opportunities to expand and further connect existing trail networks and greenways to offer a comprehensive system of alternative transportation options between community recreation, institutional, and commercial hubs.

Policy 4.12.2 Consider funding planning and development of a Chestnut Creek Greenway as a complementary north-south recreation-transportation-conservation corridor to the Wolftever Creek Greenway system. This system could link employment centers such as McKee Foods and Southern Adventist University to future residential clusters in the Apison area while also providing recreation, conservation, and environmental benefits.

Policy 4.12.3 Work with TDOT to test the feasibility of a multimodal corridor paralleling Ooltewah-Ringgold Road as this corridor is being evaluated for standard individual auto based transportation enhancements.

Policy 4.12.4 Utilize suburban corridor provisions for consolidated points of access, green space buffers, and connectivity requirements to connect current and future developments along primary transportation corridors such as Ooltewah-Ringgold Road, East Brainerd Road, Banks Road, and Standifer Gap.

4.3.5 GOAL 5 & POLICIES

GOAL 5
PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy 5.12.1 Consult with school district officials to establish a system for regular reporting on school capacity for use in evaluating capacity for major subdivisions.

Policy 5.12.2 Work with WWTA to anticipate planned expansion of sewer trunk lines and plan for associated growth. Also establish standards for when decentralized systems will be considered and when density will be limited to be appropriate for individual septic system designs.

Policy 5.12.3 Require traffic impact studies (FOR THOSE DEVELOPMENTS WITH 100 OR MORE UNITS) as a standard evaluation tool for more types of subdivision applications. Derive these lists from current and future corridor studies and collaboration with TDOT, Hamilton County Roads Committee, the School District and others.

Policy 5.12.4 Continue to prioritize and fund projects identified in the current list of safety and congestion related transportation improvements. Establish tax districts to allow developers to make infrastructure improvements where the developer and County residents can benefit from such improvements.

Policy 5.12.5 Prioritize infrastructure spending in and around designated centers and funding of conservation tools in areas recommended for lower densities and preservation of agricultural operations and landscapes.

4.3.6 GOAL 6 & POLICIES

GOAL 6
PROVIDE SUITABLE COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE CENTERS

Policy 6.12.1 Incentivize growth to occur in recommended Village and Town Centers. Consider infrastructure investments, and financial vehicles to encourage desired forms of development in appropriate locations.

Policy 6.12.2 Consider similar public-private investment tools to promote redevelopment of existing highway oriented commercial developments into forms that lessen transportation impacts and improve housing choices.

Policy 6.12.3 Encourage the Village Center at Pattentown Road and the Resort Recreation Center in Collegedale to catalyze the recreational tourism economy by allowing for complementary lodging, restaurant, entertainment, and event facilities along with a mix of housing types to support these unique businesses.

4.3.7 GOAL 7 & POLICIES

GOAL 7
PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Policy 7.12.1 Allow centers, nodes, and crossroads of all types to accommodate a variety of housing types at a density and scale appropriate for the proposed location. Flexibility in housing types allows for educators, emergency personnel, and public employees to live closer to the communities they serve. Young professionals and older generations can live closer to family if they choose.

Policy 7.12.2 Additional density and housing variety at smaller centers maintains viability for a wider range of neighborhood commercial tenants to be successful in these nodes. It can also have the effect of reducing congestion at larger centers by minimizing the number and frequency of trips to these highly utilized areas.

AREA 12 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Area 12 is linked to East Brainerd, Chattanooga, and the I-75 corridor through key routes such as East Brainerd Road, Standifer Gap Road, and Apison Pike. Ooltewah-Ringgold Road serves as a vital north-south connection, extending access to the growing communities of Ringgold and Dalton in north Georgia. These corridors are pivotal in shaping transportation patterns, economic activity, and development trends across the region.

The western portion of Area 12 has witnessed rapid residential and commercial growth, driven by its proximity to employment hubs along I-75, including Chattanooga, Enterprise South, and Collegedale. The presence of newer schools and district facilities has further fueled this growth in areas like East Brainerd and Ooltewah. A key objective of this plan is to guide and bring predictability to commercial and higher-density residential development.

Natural features such as White Oak Mountain, Bauxite Ridge, and Wolftever Creek present important features and should be treated with respect in future planning efforts. While sewer infrastructure supports additional growth in the western half of Area 12, development should be concentrated in designated centers. Careful monitoring of school capacity, critical intersections, and sewer systems—including pump stations and collection lines—will be essential to addressing potential limitations on growth.

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

Conservation Subdivisions:

» Planned roadway and sewer improvements along East Brainerd Road and London Lane will increase development interest in this area. This area also encompasses some of the last remaining contiguous farmland in this part of the County. Landowners wishing to continue farming should be supported with increased landscaping provided by new developments and other policies outlined in the implementation toolbox. This is also an area that is well suited to cluster housing as conservation subdivisions supported by sewer and with potential lease back of preserved open space to the original landowner or an adjacent farmer. These conservation tools could also be utilized to provide public recreational trail access along Baker Ridge.

Farmland & Riparian Corridor Protection:

» Agricultural use should be prioritized in the area from Apison east to the County line. While development at A1 zoned density is allowed in this area, property owners who wish to continue agricultural use should be supported with with increased landscaping provided by new developments on adjacent properties and other policies outlined in the implementation toolbox.

Centers:

» Larger scale development requiring rezoning for commercial or higher density residential uses should only be considered as part of a master plan in designated Village Centers at Lee Highway/Ooltewah Georgetown Road, Apison Pike/Old Lee Highway, and East Brainerd/ Ooltewah Ringgold Road. Infrastructure capacity must be demonstrated before rezoning is considered. Access management plans must be adopted as these centers are developed.

» Small footprint infill commercial uses and opportunities for small clusters of mixed-residential townhomes should only be considered in designated Neighborhood Nodes or Crossroads and only on a small portion (less than 20%) of the overall property. However, infrastructure capacity must be demonstrated before rezoning is considered. The transportation projects found in the Hamilton County Transportation Project Priorities List at Bill Reed Road / Standifer Gap are priorities before or as part of Neighborhood Node or Crossroads development designated near that intersection.

» A Resort Recreation center is designated on unincorporated land in Hamilton County surrounded by Collegedale. Each of the areas that matches this description are suited to this use. They could provide lodging, restaurant, and recreational services to the community while preserving critical public recreational access, future trail connections to existing high value assets (Bauxite Ride-White Oak Mountain Trails, Wolftever Creek Greenway), and preservation of critical riparian corridors. Resort Recreation development could increase tax base, create jobs, training opportunities for students, support amenities for Mckee Foods and Southern Adventist University, while creating lower demand for infrastructure and educational resources than other likely forms of development.

Corridors:

» The Rural Corridor designation is broadly recommended along the rural portions of East Brainerd Road and Apison Pike, Bill Jones Road, McGhee Road, and London Lane. This designation will require development setbacks allowing for placement of access improvements, pedestrian and school bus facilities, storm water facilities, and maintenance of the rural character of the area where new residential subdivisions are approved.

» Where Suburban Corridor is designated, this is in recognition of the number of existing businesses or residential subdivision entrances populating this segment of road. It also recognizes the potential need to slow or manage traffic at the designated nodes or centers. The Suburban Corridor designation indicates that smaller setbacks of buildings may be appropriate and that access management strategies need to be employed to prevent future safety and congestion issues. The Suburban Corridor Definition is not meant to reflect any encouragement of infill commercial outside of designated Neighborhood Nodes.

Transportation Infrastructure:

» Suburban Residential in-fill is expected to continue in the portions of Area 12 west of Ooltewah Ringgold Road. However, the County may make recommendations to improve connectivity between projects and manage intersection design and access to arterials and collectors to avoid exacerbating congestion issues. The transportation projects found in the Hamilton County Transportation Project Priorities List on Standifer Gap must be prioritized prior to rezoning of A1 land along Standifer Gap.

General:

» Fire safety, and connectivity to existing trail systems and public access recreation are important components of development containing these natural features.

CHAPTER 5

NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX
5.3 PLAN SUMMARY

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the essential bridge between each community's vision and the actions needed to make it a reality, translating broad goals and strategies into specific, actionable steps. By outlining processes for tracking progress, identifying funding opportunities, and fostering ongoing community involvement, this chapter offers a clear roadmap to bring these plans to life—guiding Hamilton County's growth in ways that honor its unique character, address residents' needs, and protect the qualities that define each community.

Hamilton County's growth has varied significantly across the five Areas examined in this plan, reflecting a wide range of factors. Rapid development has shaped East Brainerd, Ooltewah, and incorporated Collegedale in Area 12, along with parts of Harrison in Area 9 and Middle Valley in Area 8. Similarly, steady interest surrounds Signal Mountain and Walden in Area 7. In contrast, most of Area 13 and the northern sections of Area 9 have largely preserved their rural landscapes and agricultural heritage.

Key infrastructure corridors, particularly I-75, have been instrumental in fostering growth over the past two decades, fueling employment hubs, retail centers, and other commercial services. Interstate access and centralized sewer services has created favorable conditions for development and infrastructure investments in these corridors. Major employers like McKee Foods and Volkswagen, along with their networks of suppliers, have driven demand for nearby housing and led to increased commercial activity. High-performing schools in the Ooltewah and Harrison areas have contributed to further residential demand.

Infrastructure

The presence of sewer trunk lines and available capacity remains one of the single biggest predictors for residential growth. However, the overall availability of sewer capacity is a significant constraint, presenting Hamilton County planners and leadership with critical decisions on where to allocate resources for sewage treatment and collection expansion. Currently, most funding is dedicated to increasing storage for combined sewer flows, aimed at preserving treatment capacity and avoiding regulatory actions tied to water quality. An integrated approach is essential to addressing challenges facing the sewer facilities that serve Chattanooga and Hamilton County. Better mapping of sewer and water infrastructure is also needed to provide planners with the tools they need to identify infrastructure gaps, investment targets, and areas of the county that can be planned as future growth centers.

Transportation

The County's economic and population growth has created new challenges such as driving demand for efficient and safe transportation alternatives. This need is especially evident in areas experiencing the most rapid expansion. Keeping pace with these demands through infrastructure maintenance, improvement, and expansion is a significant challenge faced at every level of government, and Hamilton County is no exception. As growth continues in the County and the greater Chattanooga and northwest Georgia region, strategic investments in the transportation system will be essential to support future mobility and enhance residents' quality of life.

Hamilton County's role as a regional transportation hub underscores its significance. Interstates 24, 59, and 75 provide critical connectivity for freight, recreation, and commuter traffic across the Southeast and key corridors to the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Florida. Additionally, the county is served by Class I railroads, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railway, offering freight movement alternatives nationwide. The Tennessee River further enhances freight transport options as a navigable waterway.

As Hamilton County grows, a more focused approach to transportation planning will be essential. Key strategies include corridor management plans, access management strategies, and road safety audits. Corridor management plans for routes such as Ooltewah Ringgold Road, Highway 58, can reduce traffic friction and improve access efficiency for businesses and residential areas. Access management strategies, including regulating driveway placement, optimizing intersection design, and promoting shared access points, offer a more detailed approach to improving traffic flow and safety. Regular road safety audits for high-crash routes will proactively identify and address safety concerns.

Many of Hamilton County's critical routes are under TDOT jurisdiction. Leveraging funding for improvements to those routes would begin with adding the desired route or improvement to the long range transportation plan (RTP) so that state and/or federal funding can be allocated based on the prioritization of needs by the MPO. Ongoing coordination meetings are recommended between the Hamilton County Roads Committee, RPA-MPO planners and the staff at TDOT Region 2 to advocate for future projects. This will also allow County leadership to stay informed of changes or opportunities for funding new projects or spot improvements.

To effectively address the unique needs of each Area, strategies must be tailored to specific locations and projects. These approaches should be further refined through detailed, site-specific safety and design studies. Potential tools include:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)– This would be particularly useful in areas where growth is expected to increase traffic demand. The McDonald Farm is a good example of somewhere in Hamilton County that TIF could be applied.
- Business Improvement Districts (BID)– This would be a similar approach as the TIF but would be more applicable to developed commercial areas to complete smaller road, multimodal, or streetscape projects.
- Alternative Transportation Funding – Projects involving electric vehicle infrastructure (charging stations) or other solutions such as bike-share or ride-share services often qualify for different funding programs. Given the rural character in part of the County, these types of projects would need to be located in places with the highest probability of success.
- Public-Private Partnerships – This can be an important tool for funding large infrastructure projects with private companies when the opportunity for an industrial, commercial, or residential projects arise with benefits to the County. The costs, financing, and effort of project delivery can be shared when working with private companies. This should also include an option for Special Tax District designations for new developments.

The transportation analysis for these Area Plans aimed to identify impactful projects that might otherwise be overlooked in the TIP process but are critical to Hamilton County residents. Potential projects addressing roadway safety and traffic congestion were identified across all five Areas and prioritized based on their impact and cost. This list serves as a valuable tool for County transportation planners and engineers, helping to advocate for major projects within the MPO–TIP planning process while also providing a strategic roadmap for efficient local investments by the County that can deliver meaningful results in the near term.

The recommended projects include both design and construction initiatives, as well as engineering studies to refine potential solutions and anticipate future transportation needs. These recommendations are designed to address existing traffic and roadway safety challenges and can be seen as deferred investments needed to support growth that has already occurred. If fully funded and implemented, the Transportation Project Priorities List would create synergistic improvements, significantly enhancing the county's transportation network. However, as new growth unfolds, additional evaluations and investments will be essential to meet evolving demands.

Emergency Services

To support the analysis of current conditions, the County and RPA also commissioned a Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation. Unincorporated Hamilton County is primarily served by a patchwork of dedicated and resourceful volunteer fire departments. With findings that reveal life safety implications tied to new growth, the report underscores the need for the County to address measures it needs to undertake as well as careful planning on where and how future developments occur, taking into account building types, heights, and roadway connectivity in order to adequately protect residents, business owners, and their structures.

Addressing Future Challenges

The benefit of planning for growth within the centers and corridors framework is that it greatly increases the odds of predicting where future sewer, transportation, emergency services, stormwater, water, communications, education, and recreational infrastructure investments will be required. However, realizing these goals will require significant financial and human resources. Outside projections estimate the combined need for infrastructure investments across Hamilton County at around $3.8 billion—a figure that poses challenges for per capita affordability.

Individual views of elected leaders on where and how much infrastructure investment is needed will undoubtedly vary, but it is clear that higher levels of funding and planning are essential to address existing backlogs across various infrastructure categories. Without an approved Comprehensive Plan, County leadership and staff have had difficulty focusing growth and predicting where infrastructure improvements will be needed next.

While certain areas have already developed strong market dynamics due to key employers, shopping centers, and transportation infrastructure, balanced investments in both traditional and social infrastructure could promote more equitable growth across Hamilton County. However, without adequate sewer capacity, education facilities, and emergency services, further growth-oriented policies may have limited impact.

Hamilton County stands at a critical crossroads where leaders are grappling with past deficiencies in infrastructure investments driven by sustained growth associated with national and regional migration and natural or endemic growth. The county continues to attract residents drawn by job opportunities, climate, quality of life, and comparatively affordable living. Meanwhile, existing residents often express a strong desire to preserve the rural character, safety, and quality education opportunities for their families.

The implementation strategies within this plan aim to directly address these priorities and lay the groundwork for a sustainable future:

1. A multifaceted approach to increasing the quality and capacity of existing infrastructure.
2. Seeking synergies between land use and infrastructure planning and improved standards for new development that maximize the efficiency, capacity, and return on investment for both private and public infrastructure construction and spending.
3. Planning and design strategies that mitigate development impacts and properly utilize existing education, transportation, recreation, and natural resource assets.
4. Initiate new strategies to preserve agricultural production, and associated land.
5. To identify new potential revenue streams, financial vehicles, and public-private partnerships for addressing the needs identified by Hamilton County residents.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The implementation process for the Area plans is built on strong partnerships, strategic tools, and targeted funding, all aimed at bringing each community's vision to life (see Community Themes). Collaboration between local governments, stakeholders, and residents is at the heart of this process, ensuring that efforts are aligned and resources are effectively utilized. Key projects are prioritized, with clear timelines and responsibilities, while a range of tools and funding mechanisms are deployed to support these initiatives. This comprehensive approach ensures that the plans are not only actionable but also adaptable, allowing for continued progress as community needs and opportunities evolve.

POLICY SUBCATEGORY (TOOLS & STRATEGIES)

The Implementation Matrix organizes recommendations into specific focus areas, providing a clear structure, by breaking down broader policy goals into targeted subcategories. This section enables a more detailed approach to land use, infrastructure, environmental conservation, and community services allowing Hamilton County to meet the unique needs of each planning area while advancing cohesive, Countywide objectives. These categories are were tailored based on the overall policy objectives in the introduction chapter and the input received throughout the community feedback process. Within the matrix, here are 5 topics with each covering various community aspects of Plan Implementation:

1. **Community Character & Land Use Patterns**
2. **Natural Resources**
3. **Infrastructure & Transportation Network**
4. **Economic Health & Community Opportunity**
5. **Funding Mechanisms**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Outlines targeted actions to support Hamilton County's vision for balanced, sustainable growth. Each recommendation offers guidance for decision-makers, addressing key areas such as land use, infrastructure, resiliency, and community development. These recommendations are crafted to reflect the unique needs of each planning area, ensuring that policies not only guide growth but also strengthen community character, enhance infrastructure, protect natural resources, and improve residents' quality of life.

APPLICABILITY

Identifies where each recommended action is most relevant across Hamilton County's planning Areas. By specifying how and where the policies can be applied, this category ensures that recommendations are tailored to the unique conditions, needs, and priorities of each community. This targeted approach allows for flexible, area-specific strategies that respect local character while addressing shared Countywide goals.

This helps guide effective implementation, making sure that resources and efforts are directed where they will have the greatest impact.

Case Study/ Exampe Ordinance

Provides practical insights and proven strategies from other communities that have successfully addressed similar challenges. By examining these real-world examples and ordinances, Hamilton County can draw valuable lessons to inform its own policies and practices. This section highlights adaptable approaches for land use, infrastructure planning, environmental conservation, incentives, economic development, and impact fees offering a foundation for local initiatives that align with the unique needs and goals of each Area.

Area Specific Recommendations

As outlined in Chapter 4, the Area Specific Recommendations highlight tailored actions designed to address the overarching recommendations within each Area. By focusing on area-specific solutions, this category provides a roadmap for targeted investments and initiatives that support sustainable growth, protect local assets, and enhance quality of life in each community.

AMENDMENT PROCESS & PLAN UPDATES

In order to ensure that Plan Hamilton best reflects the existing conditions and future vision of Hamilton County, the Plan Hamilton update cycle shall be as follows:

- Full plan review - every five years
- Annual review of policy and map changes - annual review by staff
- Applicant Requested Plan Amendments - as necessary and when requested by rezoning applicant
    - Zoning decisions are based primarily on area plans, which are components of the adopted general plan, in this case Plan Hamilton. The County's five different Area Plans were developed to include Place Type (land use) and capital improvement recommendations to inform rezoning requests.
    - Requested plan changes will alternate for one side of the Tennessee River every other month to the other side to permit changes six times per year, per side of the river.
    - An Area Plan amendment and its companion rezoning case may be heard on the same agenda.

Table 7: Implementation Matrix

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.1 Community Character & Land Use Patterns			
5.1.1 Access Management	Utilize TDOT's Highway System Access Manual for driveway spacing, median openings, and separation distances from signalized intersections.	Start with all State Routes where the existing TDOT Highway System Access Manual has standing. Expand to other principal arterials, minor arterials, and major collectors. Create manual, access management requirements, and corridor management plans before new development impacts are felt. Work with land owners to voluntarily contribute in-kind contributions (ROW, Design, Etc) or require development fees for a proportionate fair share of improvement costs as development applications are approved.	0-1 Years
	Target segments of suburban corridor with high rates of traffic congestion, safety incident history, or new development permit approvals. Improve traffic safety, congestion, pedestrian infrastructure and aesthetics by creating corridor management plans and agreements with state and local partners for high priority suburban corridors		1-5 Years
5.1.2 Rural Corridors	Develop policy to maintain rural corridor character including setbacks and vegetative buffers for new subdivisions.	All mapped Rural Corridor segments in the Conceptual Land Use and Place Type Maps and those designated in future map updates.	0-1 Years
5.1.3 Centers	Work with land owners at Center locations to facilitate development, including district/center specific plan, according to center principles and preferred uses.	All designated center Place Types designated on current and future place type maps.	0-1 Years
	Once approved, partner with developers to install and construct streets and streetscape elements in the form of direct participation or financing vehicles like business improvement districts.	Focus joint development efforts on Village and Town Center areas with regional impacts. Expand to smaller centers where local governance and residents request implementation help and have previously participated in a small area plan.	5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.1.4 Conservation Subdivisions Bonus Conservation Subdivisions	Create an Overlay Commercial Zone or District to provide site and building design standards or other guidelines so new commercial development adds value to the community and is compatible with the rural character sought.		0-2 Years
	Create a conservation subdivision option to cluster housing that features at least half of its potentially buildable land area devoted to undivided, permanently protected open space.	Conservation Subdivisions should be an opt in tool available to land owners who want to balance financial returns with conservation legacy. Creation of conservation subdivision provisions in the county subdivision regulations will provide a tool to augment land purchase, and voluntary conservation efforts.	1-5 Years
	The use of an Overlay District, P.U.D., or Zone is recommended for implementation of more specific development criteria associated with residential and mixed use Place Types.		1-5 Years
	Establish Conservation Subdivision provisions and evaluation criteria in the subdivision ordinance.	All of these tools are necessary to preserve the continuity of productive agricultural land, riparian corridors, and recreational assets at a regional or landscape scale. This tool should be selectively applied in A-1 zoned areas adjacent to existing public land or with high conservation value.	1-5 Years
5.1.5 Medium Density Residential	Co-locate future Medium Density Residential adjacent to Suburban Corridor and Center Place Types. Where future Medium Density Residential abuts a Suburban Corridor or Center allow zero lot line single-family and townhomes on a percentage of the overall property. Consider allowing small-scale multifamily in these same areas (6-12 units 3 story maximum).		5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2 Natural Resources			
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection	Build a stakeholder coalition including: NRCS, Trust for Public Land, Land Trust for Tennessee, North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, Chattanooga Audubon Society, Land Conservation Assistance Network, Soil & Water Conservation District, Thrive Regional Partnership, Tennessee State and others to coordinate farmland and open space preservation efforts in Hamilton County.	Resident input from Areas 7, 9, 12, an 13 all emphasized a strong preference to preserve agricultural land uses, property, and rural character. All five planning areas include riparian corridors that if preserved would help to mitigate flood risks, provide opportunities for contiguous recreational and alternative transportation corridors, storm water quality, and habitat benefits. Development pressures are increasing across the county and in some areas the window for conservation efforts is limited. The time to begin building a coalition of landowners, conservation entities, and funding sources is now.	0-1 Years
	Identify riparian corridors for preservation that have the potential to contribute multiple community benefits including farmland preservation, stormwater filtration, flood resilience, recreation, and habitat. Pursue strategies at landscape scale and on a property by property basis as development is proposed.	Prioritize: North Chickamauga Creek - (Area 8), Wolftever Creek, Johnson Branch - (Area 12), Long Savannah Creek - (Area 9) Falling Water Creek - (Area 7), Possum Creek, and Sale Creek - (Area 13).	0-1 Years

REMAINDER OF PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection *Continued*	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of active farms and prime agricultural land.	Farmland preservation is often a unifying place to begin conservation efforts. The first step is identifying the soils and parcels that characterize productive agricultural land. Local Soil and Water Conservation Office personnel and academic partners should be engaged in this process. Making tangible progress on the ground requires partnership between federal programs such as NRCS and local conservation groups who can bridge funding gaps and provide stewardship and monitoring support. Developing relationships with Agricultural land owners and the farming community in Area 13, the northern half of Area 9, and the eastern portions of Area 12 is a critical first step.	0-1 Years
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies	Engage UTC - School of Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Build on existing successes like South Chickamauga Creek and Wolftever Creek. Invest or seek funding for agricultural demonstration projects, educational, and recreation assets.		1-5 Years
	Pursue partnerships to preserve forested land with an emphasis on areas that further regional trail connections, enhance access to unique recreational, historical, or cultural assets.	Cumberland Plateau in Area 7 and Area 13, Big Ridge Area 9, and White Oak Mountain Area 12.	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies *Continued*	Pursue multiple creative mechanisms and funding for preserving critical recreation and natural resource assets. Look for opportunities to create value in these areas through recreational tourism, wetland or stream bank creation, and consider the value of reduced flood risks and other socio-environmental factors in assessing return on investments.		
5.2.3 Resiliency, Natural Resource Protections, and Development Impact Mitigation	Establish natural resources protection standards for wooded areas, drainages, steep slopes, as well as currently regulated wetlands and streams.	Countywide	1-5 Years
5.3 Infrastructure & Transportation Network			
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management	Review fire code regarding the number of lots allowed in new subdivision triggering a secondary point of access.	County Wide	0-1 Years
	Require walking path or sidewalk for new residential subdivisions with connections to a safe harbor school bus waiting area.		0-1 Years
	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management implement spacing requirements for both full and partial (restricted turn movement) intersections on arterial and major collector roadways. (1/4 mile for full access)	Countywide on Arterials and Major Collectors	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management *Continued*	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management consider modifications to the subdivision ordinance implementing internal connectivity index standards for developments of more than 500 lots.		1-5 Years
5.3.2 Improvements to Local Roads, Intersections, and Safety Design Features	Follow the Hamilton County Transportation Project Priorities List in this document. Continue to invest County funds and leverage with State and Federal funds to make continuous progress on deferred transportation improvements.	Countywide	0-1 Years On - going
	Explore the use of alternative financing vehicles such as Tennessee's State Infrastructure Bank to amplify County investments.		0-1 Years
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System	Continue to build system storage capacity, resilience for storm events, and greater predictability / flexibility to plan collection system expansion or new treatment capacity. Continue to pursue WIFIA and other capital funding specific to water and wastewater.		On - Going
	Target financing solutions and infrastructure investment to areas that have been identified as suitable for future growth. Proactively plan to shore up capacity or extend collection systems to these areas as necessary to better balance growth impacts.	See Funding Mechanisms	On - Going
	Add further specificity and criteria for utilization of decentralized sewage treatment systems.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate whether tap fees are keeping pace with infrastructure		0-1 Years
	Develop policy with WWTA on decentralized sewer systems with robust criteria and design standards.		0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System *Continued*	Evaluate decentralized systems and track projects using the systems to determine rules for use.		1-5 Years
	Evaluate the use of trilateral agreements to add flexibility, predictability, and fairness for developers who choose to collaborate with WWTA in design and construction modifications for future capacity to recoup costs of infrastructure developed beyond project needs.		1-5 Years
5.3.4 Stormwater Infrastructure, LID Features, and Resiliency	Provide resources for complete and expeditious review of stormwater plans including pre-constuction site review and post construction inspections.		0-1 Years
	Begin codifying more of Hamilton Co Stormwater quality BMP's.		1-5 Years
	Phase in additional resources for review and enforcement.		1-5 Years
	Develop a more comprehensive approach to stormwater site assessment, design, incentives, and regulations.		1-5 Years
	Implement stormwater fee structures that incentivize BMP's.		1-5 Years
	Evaluate establishing a program for neighborhood or watershed based storm water infrastructure to capture storm water closer to where it falls and reduce combined sewer flows.		0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.5 Fire & EMS	Consider the findings of the Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation March 2024 to identify future service improvements.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate sources of funding to increase full-time personnel and standardize equipment purchases and training to simplify inter-local agreements.		
5.4 Economic Health & Community Opportunity			
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers	Engage land owners where resort recreation centers have been identified to participate in small area plans or joint planning sessions. Work to provide examples that would establish the scale and scope of future projects. Help landowners or potential developers understand infrastructure requirements, neighborhood concerns, and connect them with resources to create plans compatible with goals for this place type.	Prioritize land near designated Resort Recreation Centers and with close proximity to existing state and regional recreational facilities and natural areas.	0-1 Years
	Require that resort recreational development on lands adjacent to public land or waterways be a catalyst for securing and enhancing public access to recreational assets in addition to creating private recreational development.	Countywide in designated centers	0-1 Years
	Look for partners to start a recreation and tourism based business incubator/accelerator program.		1-5 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendation	Applicability	Timing
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers *Continued*	Engage UTC School of Sport, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Engage Tennessee Department of Tourism, Chattanooga Tourism Co, SETDD, and SETTA in creating a small recreational resort promotional plan and programming assistance.		0-1 Years
	Explore potential for agriculture based resort or event centers to contribute to agricultural revenue streams. Consider McDonald Farm as a potential case study for synergies between rural resort economic development, traditional agriculture, and recreation.	Sale Creek - McDonald Farm; Birchwood	0-1 Years
	Evaluate outcomes from existing case studies - including preservation goals, impacts on existing farms, housing costs, property taxes, etc.		
	Study Industrial opportunities - both as larger industrial/corporate scaler and smaller Maker District		
5.4.2 Growing the job Base	Pursue development study of future employment centers including emerging industries and manufacturing districts		

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.5 Funding Mechanisms			
5.5.1	Consider use of RIDA as an incentive for developers who voluntarily meet specific infrastructure standards such as: improved street and pedestrian connectivity, LID stormwater improvements, provide easements for regional greenways, trails, or watershed protection.		0-1 Years
	Explore use of alternate funding mechanisms such as TDOT's State Industrial Access (SIA) Program	Hilltop Drive Extension; matching funds for other prioritized projects	0-1 Years
	Consider strategic utilization of Business Improvement Districts, Tax Increment Financing, Trilateral Agreements, or Infrastructure Trust Funds to set the table for desired development patterns (sidewalks/ connectivity, roads and utility infrastructure, landscape buffers, LID enhancements) in identified current and future centers. (Village Centers, Neighborhood Centers, Neighborhood Nodes, Maker Districts, etc.) i.e. Joint Development		1-5 Years
	Use the Capital Funding for Mid-Sized Cities & Counties study as a guide to identifying innovative funding and financing approaches for capital improvements.		

REMAINDER OF PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

APPENDIX

Scrivener's Note: with the exception of the Chamber Memo, all other Appendices were removed per the Regional Planning Commission's vote on September 8, 2025 for the adoption of Resolution 825-18

A. CHATTANOOGA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMO

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce Memo

The Urgent Need for New Manufacturing Locations in Hamilton County, Tennessee
Hamilton County has been known as a manufacturing magnet for much of its history and it's county seat, Chattanooga was called the "Dynamo of Dixie" in the late 19th century. This legacy continues to ring true today due to the County's logistic assets including three interstate highways, two class-1 rail lines and the navigable Tennessee River. However, the county now faces an imperative challenge: identifying new locations for manufacturing operations. The necessity for this strategic move stems from several factors, including economic growth, technological advancements, environmental considerations, and community development. This summary explores the multifaceted reasons behind this need and the potential benefits it could bring to the county. The current Plan Hamilton growth plan has not identified additional areas for manufacturing uses however, the County should be working to identify areas for this use in order to continue to create new jobs and drive economic prosperity and diversification.

Economic Growth and Diversification

In recent years, Hamilton County has experienced significant economic growth. As industries expand and new businesses emerge, the demand for manufacturing space has increased but the number of acres zoned for manufacturing has declined. From 2014 to 2024 acreage with M-1 zoning designation in Hamilton County declined by 1,684 acres. During this timeframe, the county's Centre South Industrial park reached full capacity and all available parcels in Enterprise South have been sold or have been optioned by companies for future expansion. Furthermore, current facilities for several existing businesses across the county are at capacity and cannot accommodate additional growth, putting continued investment by those companies at risk. Without new locations, the county risks stifling its economic potential. Diversifying the manufacturing base is essential to sustain growth, attract investorment, and create job opportunities, thereby ensuring long-term economic stability for the county and its residents.

Demographic Alignment

The manufacturing sector is one of the few industries that provides high-wage, full-time jobs for individuals with various education attainment levels. Approximately 30% of manufacturing jobs are white collar jobs requiring mostly 4-year college degrees. The remaining 70% of jobs in manufacturing require less than a four-year degree and, in some instances, do not require a high school degree. This aligns well with Hamilton County's demographics where just over 30% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a high school diploma or less and only 37% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a 4-year degree. Jobs in the manufacturing sector are typically high-wage and include benefits as demonstrated by Hamilton County's average manufacturing wage of $74,256.

Technological Advancements

The manufacturing industry is evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancements such as automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. These innovations require modern facilities equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure. As technological advances in the manufacturing sector continue to grow, manufacturing wages will increase as well, assuring living wage jobs for county residents in advanced manufacturing sectors. Hamilton County is home to dozens of established companies that produce pharmaceuticals, heavy equipment and automobiles and the county has a growing cadre of tech-based manufacturing startups that have been supported by Hamilton County's Business Development Center. These early stage companies leverage 3-D printing, provide research and development services in the battery space and produce sensor and robotic equipment. Making sure that Hamilton County has shovel-ready sites, zoned for manufacturing will help the county both legacy companies as well as early-stage high tech manufacturers as they continue to grow.

Multiplier Effect of Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector is considered a "traded industry sector" which means it produces goods that are sold outside of the local region. Traded industry sectors are critical because they bring in revenue from outside of the local economy, increasing the county's gross domestic product (GDP). This new revenue then circulates in the economy, creating additional jobs. Research by firms such as EMSI shows that manufacturing jobs have a significant multiplier effect with one manufacturing job creating an additional nine jobs in the community. With more than 29,000 people working in manufacturing in Hamilton County, the sector drives significantly economic activity and job creation in the community across retail, healthcare, construction and several other industries.

Site considerations and conclusions

The need for Hamilton County to identify new locations for manufacturing will require future amendments to the Plan Hamilton growth plan. Due to increasing land prices inside Chattanooga city limits, it is likely that any new locations for manufacturing uses will be in unincorporated Hamilton County. Proximity to infrastructure will also be critical with consideration given to properties that have 4-lane highway access, rail infrastructure and proximity to sewer infrastructure. The county's recent utilization of tax increment financing (TIF) should serve as a model for financing infrastructure improvements for sites with limited infrastructure.

The manufacturing sector has been a critical economic driver for Hamilton County. Much of the recent job growth the county has experienced can be tied to the development of Enterprise South Industrial Park by the City and County and the location of Volkswagen in the park. With the county's industrial parks now at capacity and multiple manufacturers reaching full build out on their sites, it is critical that Hamilton County identify new locations for the county's second largest industry sector.
grow, manufacturing wages will increase as well, assuring living wage jobs for county residents in

advanced manufacturing sectors. Hamilton County is home to dozens of established companies that produce pharmaceuticals, heavy equipment and automobiles and the county has a growing cadre of tech-based manufacturing startups that have been supported by Hamilton County's Business Development Center. These early stage companies leverage 3-D printing, provide research and development services in the battery space and produce sensor and robotic equipment. Making sure that Hamilton County has shovel-ready sites, zoned for manufacturing will help the county both legacy companies as well as early-stage high tech manufacturers as they continue to grow.

Multiplier Effect of Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector is considered a "traded industry sector" which means it produces goods that are sold outside of the local region. Traded industry sectors are critical because they bring in revenue from outside of the local economy, increasing the county's gross domestic product (GDP). This new revenue then circulates in the economy, creating additional jobs. Research by firms such as EMSI shows that manufacturing jobs have a significant multiplier effect with one manufacturing job creating an additional nine jobs in the community. With more than 29,000 people working in manufacturing in Hamilton County, the sector drives significantly economic activity and job creation in the community across retail, healthcare, construction and several other industries.

Site considerations and conclusions

The need for Hamilton County to identify new locations for manufacturing will require future amendments to the Plan Hamilton growth plan. Due to increasing land prices inside Chattanooga city limits, it is likely that any new locations for manufacturing uses will be in unincorporated Hamilton County. Proximity to infrastructure will also be critical with consideration given to properties that have 4-lane highway access, rail infrastructure and proximity to sewer infrastructure. The county's recent utilization of tax increment financing (TIF) should serve as a model for financing infrastructure improvements for sites with limited infrastructure.

The manufacturing sector has been a critical economic driver for Hamilton County. Much of the recent job growth the county has experienced can be tied to the development of Enterprise South Industrial Park by the City and County and the location of Volkswagen in the park. With the county's industrial parks now at capacity and multiple manufacturers reaching full build out on their sites, it is critical that Hamilton County identify new locations for the county's second largest industry sector.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

PLAN HAMILTON

OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

13 NORTH END / SODDY-DAISY AREA PLAN

Bakewell
Sale Creek
City of Soddy-Daisy

RPA

Adopted by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, Sept. 8, 2025.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. AREA SUMMARY **4**

1.1 AREA PLANNING SUMMARY 5
1.2 INTRODUCTION 6
1.3 NORTH END / SODDY-DAISY STUDY AREA 13 7
1.4 HISTORY OF NORTH END/ SODDY-DAISY 9

CHAPTER 2. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS **12**

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY 13
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE 15
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS 16
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES 18
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS 19

CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS **42**

3.1 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK 44
3.2 AREA PLAN GOALS 48
3.3 VISION STATEMENT 49

CHAPTER 4. PLANS, POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS **50**

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW 51
4.2 PLACE TYPES 58
4.3 POLICIES 71

CHAPTER 5. NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION **78**

5.1 INTRODUCTION 79
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 82

CHAPTER 6. APPENDIX **94**

CHAPTER 1
AREA SUMMARY

1.1 AREA PLANNING SUMMARY
1.2 INTRODUCTION
1.3 NORTH END / SODDY-DAISY STUDY AREA
1.4 HISTORY OF NORTH END / SODDY-DAISY

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

1.1 AREA PLANNING SUMMARY

The Hamilton County Area Plans represent a comprehensive approach to managing growth and change in our diverse communities, recognizing both the distinct identities of each Area and the interconnectedness of our County. With a focus on the specific challenges and opportunities within Hamilton County's unincorporated Areas, each plan addresses critical factors that shape community life—land use, infrastructure, environmental preservation, housing, and economic resilience. Throughout the planning process, we engaged with community members to create a vision that reflects local priorities and builds on the character and strengths of each Area.

From the rural expanse and scenic beauty of Sale Creek and Birchwood, to the residential communities of Georgetown and Apison, to the vibrant mountain villages and outdoor offerings of the Walden Plateau, or the waterfront community of Lakesite, all places where many families have multi-generation histories attached to the landscape, the plans recognize the local topographic, geologic, and infrastructure constraints found in these unique areas. This approach allows for tailored strategies that honor local heritage, rural qualities, and natural landscapes while accommodating sustainable growth.

The planning process began with in-depth research and analysis to understand the existing conditions, demographic trends, and economic drivers across Hamilton County. By examining land use, transportation networks, environmental features, and community facilities, we identified both opportunities and constraints in each area. This research also shed light on trends such as housing demands, population shifts, and economic patterns, allowing us to anticipate future needs and create a foundation for adaptable, forward-looking plans.

The visions articulated in these Plans emerged from collaborative dialogue with residents, local stakeholders, and county officials. Community workshops, surveys, and public meetings provided residents the opportunity to voice their aspirations, concerns, and ideas for the future of their neighborhoods. The resulting goals and policies emphasize maintaining rural character, supporting local businesses, enhancing outdoor recreation, and fostering a sense of place in each community. Across the county, residents expressed a desire to balance growth with preservation—ensuring that any new development is thoughtfully integrated by accelerating infrastructure planning and delivery, improving development review and design criteria, and that it contributes positively to the character of their communities.

To bring these visions to life, the Area Plans detail policies and actions centered on Community Character and Land Use, Natural Resources, Economic Health and Community, and Funding Mechanisms. These categories have been refined to address the County's evolving needs and offer the most impactful steps forward.

The Chapter 5 implementation strategies focus on practical and ready to implement policy changes and development principles, as well as, collaborative actions. Partnerships with local and regional organizations, support for small businesses, and investments in community facilities are vital to advancing these initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation will be critical to ensure the plans stay flexible, allowing policies to adapt as new challenges and opportunities emerge. Each Area Plan is intended as a living document, responsive to ongoing community input and changing needs over time.

As we move from planning to action, the success of this Plan relies on commitment, collaboration, and community engagement. Hamilton County and the RPA is dedicated to working closely with residents, businesses, and local leaders to implement these policies in a way that fosters a resilient future based on resident priorities and objectives. By advancing these Plans with a shared sense of purpose, we can create communities that are not only livable and economically vibrant but also reflective of the unique character that residents value. Through strategic growth, environmental stewardship, and respect for community identity, the Comprehensive Plan will encourage each Area to thrive for generations to come.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

As Hamilton County's population grows, thoughtful planning is crucial to managing the upcoming changes while efficiently using limited resources. The goal is to create resilient communities where neighborhoods, commercial centers, parks, and natural spaces flourish, striking a balance between development and conservation.

To guide this growth, we develop specific Plans that are later presented to local legislative bodies for adoption. These Plans become essential in shaping zoning, guiding private development, and influencing public infrastructure investments. They serve as a blueprint for determining where growth, redevelopment, and conservation should occur.

The Plans will equip Hamilton County leadership with the tools necessary to make strategic community investments in infrastructure, staff, and services, ensuring a livable community with sustained economic opportunities.

Community input is essential to shaping Hamilton County's long-term planning efforts, ensuring that residents and business owners help define the County's future. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan established a responsible land-use framework that prioritizes environmental preservation and community character. Complementing this, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) forecasts transportation needs and guides infrastructure investment.

Area Plans provide localized guidance on development, zoning, infrastructure, and conservation. These plans use tools like a Conceptual Land Use map that is illustrative and Place Types maps that define development patterns and set policies for future growth. They are shaped by prior planning, community feedback, and professional analysis. Key goals include creating vibrant, well-defined spaces and balancing growth while preserving each area's character and meeting future demands.

Although Area Plans do not regulate development or change zoning directly, they guide policy and decisions related to infrastructure, housing diversity, and commercial centers. They emphasize efficient investment in public services, transportation, and natural resource preservation, especially in rural areas. Constraints like limited sewer capacity, emergency services, and infrastructure demands shape policies to ensure sustainable growth while maintaining residents' quality of life.

The North End / Area 13 Plan features five chapters which cover the following:

1.3 NORTH END / SODDY-DAISY STUDY AREA 13

The North End/Soddy-Daisy area of Hamilton County is where the tranquility of rural life blends seamlessly with suburban conveniences, offering a unique community that's deeply connected to its landscape and history. Nestled between Walden's Ridge and the Tennessee River, this region is defined by its scenic vistas, farmlands and vibrant neighborhoods, each with its own distinct charm and story to tell.

Area 13's natural beauty is more than just a backdrop—it's a way of life. Rolling hills, verdant green spaces, and the presence of the Tennessee River along its western edge create a peaceful retreat for both residents and visitors. This dynamic area of Hamilton County is marked by a harmonious mix of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. From charming historic homes to modern developments designed for growing families, the housing options reflect the area's rich diversity. Strong educational institutions further enhance its appeal, making it an ideal place for families seeking quality schooling in a tranquil environment.

Beneath its serene exterior lies a complicated past. The North End's history is woven with stories of struggle and resilience — from the Trail of Tears to the industrial booms and busts that shaped the local economy. These experiences have forged a deep sense of identity and pride among its residents, who are committed to preserving the area's rural character even as it grows.

Economically, the North End thrives on the strength of its small businesses, retail centers, and professional services. Its strategic location ensures easy access to major transportation routes, connecting residents to nearby urban centers while supporting the region's economic vitality. For outdoor enthusiasts, the North End is a haven. The area's numerous parks, trails, and nature reserves and proximity to Lake Chickamauga invite exploration and an active lifestyle, with the community's dedication to preserving these green spaces ensuring that nature remains at the heart of life here.

Community engagement is woven into the fabric of the North End, where local events, farmers' markets, and cultural activities bring residents together, fostering a strong sense of belonging and civic pride. As Hamilton County continues to evolve, the North End/Soddy-Daisy area remains a focal point for thoughtful planning and sustainable development.

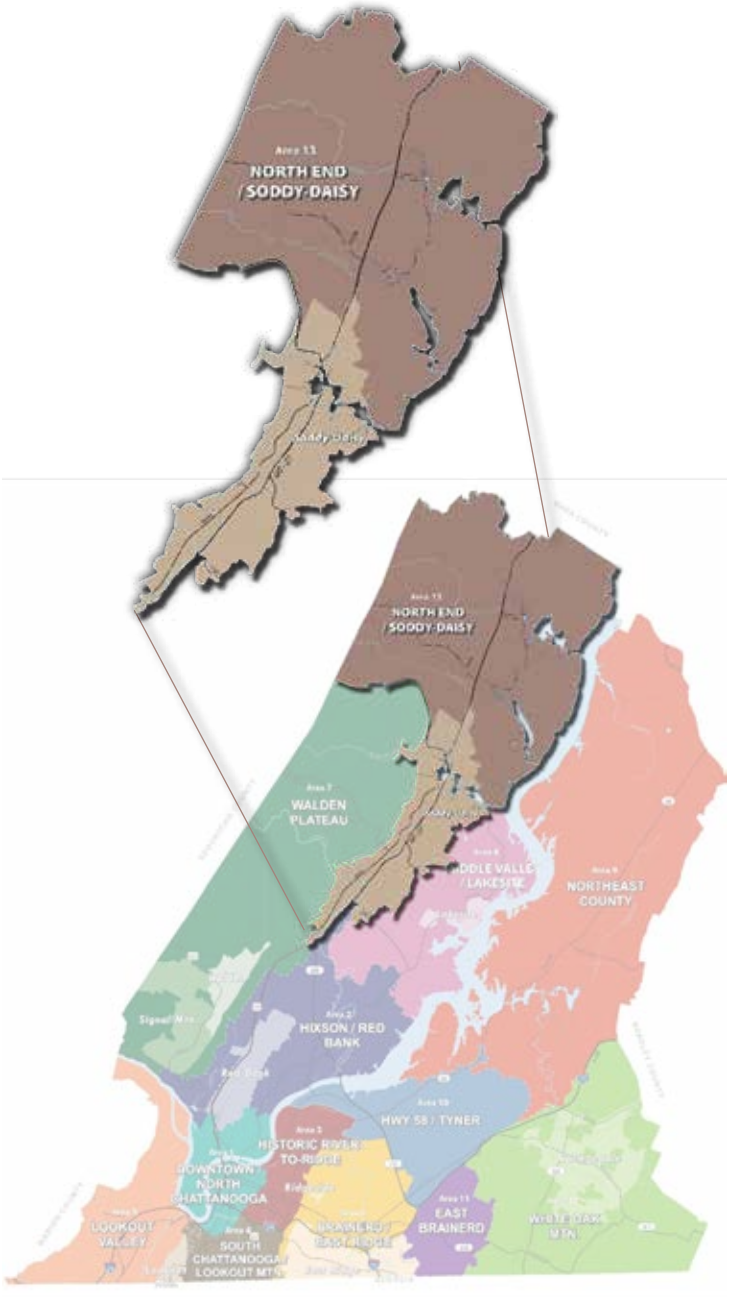


Figure 1.1: North End / Soddy-Daisy Area 13 Map as a part of Hamilton County study area

North End / Soddy-Daisy Area 13 Map

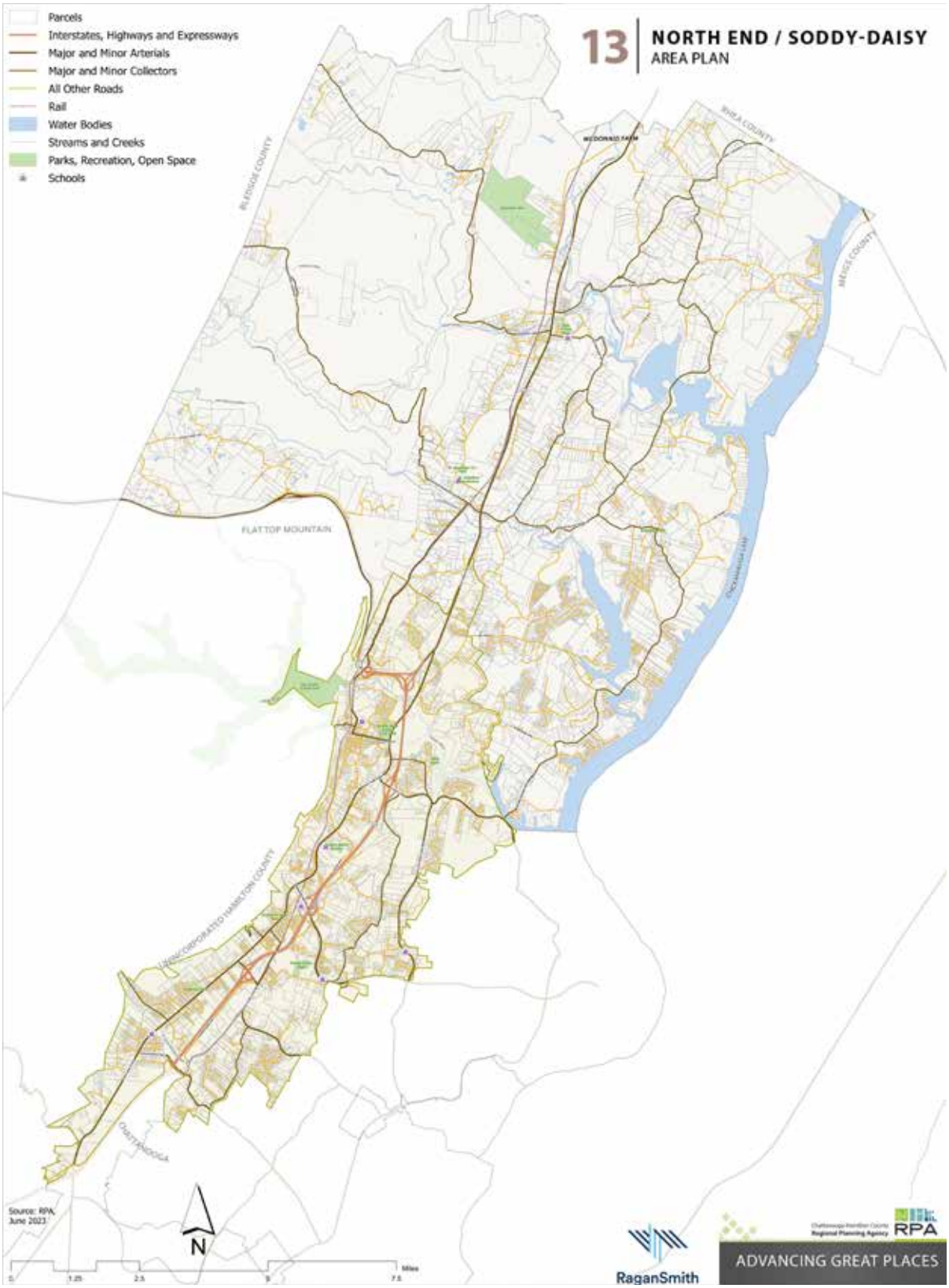


Figure 1.2: North End / Soddy-Daisy Area 13 Map

1.4 HISTORY OF NORTH END/ SODDY-DAISY

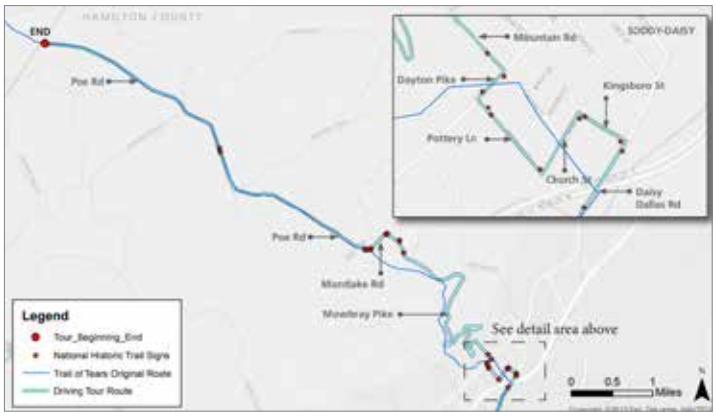
The North End/Soddy-Daisy area of Hamilton County is steeped in history and cultural significance, with landmarks and narratives that reflect its rich past. The Tennessee River, a vital lifeline for centuries, has witnessed key events such as the Cherokee-American War and Civil War skirmishes that have left an indelible mark on the landscape. The McDonald Farm, a historical and agricultural cornerstone, exemplifies the area's deep agricultural heritage and connection to the land. This region's historical and cultural fabric is woven with stories of resilience and adaptation with the Trail of Tears crossing directly through this area, underscoring the importance of preserving its scenic landscapes and agricultural heritage as the area continues to evolve.

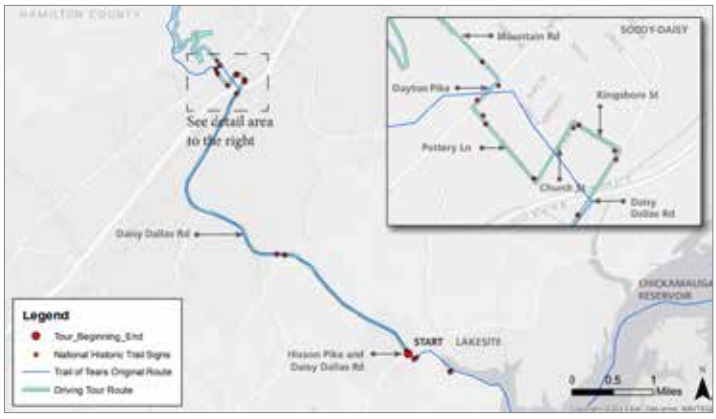
TRAIL OF TEARS

The Trail of Tears is a significant historical event that left a lasting impact on the cultural and geographical landscape of Hamilton County. The Indian Removal Act passed by U.S. Congress in 1830 forced the relocation of Native American tribes. Thousands of Cherokee people passed through this region on their journey to the designated Indian Territory. This event significantly influenced the area's demographics and social fabric, with remnants of the historic route still evident in the region's trails and markers.

There are approximately 12 miles of navigable route remaining for the Trail of Tears starting in Area 8 and terminating in Area 13. The maps on the right identify the starting and ending route where the paved roadways follow along the original route. The Trail of Tears is a crucial aspect of history, reflecting the broader national policies and events that have shaped the development and character of the community.

Riverfront Trail of Tears Marker
Source: HMdb.org





Trail of Tears starting in Soddy Daisy & Lakesite
Source: National Park Service

Sale Creek Sign
Source: northhamiltontn.com

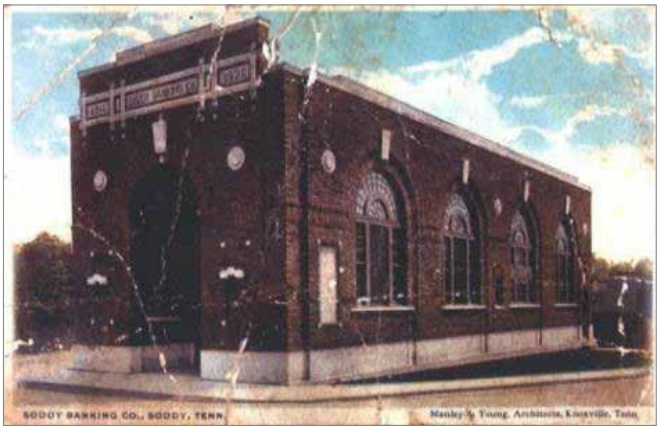
SALE CREEK

Sale Creek is one of the three main neighborhoods that make up Area 13. Now with approximately a population of approximately 3,021 in the 2020 Census , the area has a strong military history. Sale Creek initially received its name due to an auction in 1779 during the Cherokee-American wars with items the frontiersmen collected during the war. One of the main creek's that runs through this area was also named Sale Creek in honor of this community. This area was also occupied during the Civil War from September to December 1863 by the 6th Tennessee Infantry.

McDonald Farm
Source: Fox Chattanooga (WTVC)

MCDONALD FARM

McDonald Farm has a rich history that reflects the agricultural heritage of the region. The farm which was initially occupied by native american tribes was established in the late 19th century, the farm was owned by the McDonald family, who played a significant role in the local community through their farming operations. Spanning over 2,100 acres, the farm became well-known for its dairy and cattle production, contributing to the agricultural economy of Hamilton County. In late 2021, Hamilton County purchased the entire site for approximately $16 million to ensure that it not only brings recreational opportunities to Hamilton County residents but future uses are anticipated to create new jobs within the County limits.



Good Old Days Museum
Source: Chattanoogan.org

SODDY-DAISY HISTORY

The origins of the names "Soddy" and "Daisy" are tied to local history. "Soddy" may derive from the Cherokee word "Tsati," meaning "sipping place," possibly referencing the area's lakes, creeks, and streams. Another theory links the name to William Sodder's Trading Post. Daisy was named after Daisy Parks, the daughter of a coal company vice-president. Both communities thrived as coal mining towns until the 1930s, with industries such as a hosiery mill, turpentine plant, and pottery kilns also active. In April 1969, Soddy and Daisy were incorporated into one city, stretching about nine miles along US-27.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY
2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE
2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS
2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES
2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

2.1 COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Area 13 includes the remainder of Hamilton County through Chickamauga Lake, Flattop Mountain, and Soddy-Daisy. This area of Hamilton County focuses on agricultural operations and is a rural area of Hamilton County with the entirety of the eastern unincorporated border on the TN River/Chickamauga Lake Reservoir waterfront. The southern portion of Area 13 is within the incorporated limits of Soddy-Daisy and the remainder of the area is conveniently located on both sides of Interstate 27 and other local roads promoting connectivity between surrounding communities. With a significant number of schools, this area serves predominantly residential and rural residential neighborhoods. A primary objective of this area is to focus on infrastructure needs and maintaining the agricultural objectives of the community. Growth in this area should focus on infrastructure needs first and the growth of the agricultural heritage and the natural beauty throughout this area.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Predominantly rural portion of Hamilton County populated by families who have often lived within the area for generations.
- Both lakefront and mountain living are available along with multiple subdivisions, small towns, and good schools.
- Agricultural operations are still a critical employment sector, source of cultural identity, and feature of the landscape.
- TN Scenic Parkway US-27 bisects Area 13 along its North/South axis promoting convenient access throughout the area and to surrounding communities.
- Opportunities for recreation and trail/greenway connectivity between community centers and assets associated with the mountains and river.
- A robust recreational system exists that includes the Cumberland Plateau and local waterways.

McDonald Farm
Source: Old McDonald Farm, Facebook.com

REGIONAL FACILITIES AND ASSETS

Area 13 contains prime farmland and is largely zoned for agricultural use in areas outside of Sale Creek and Soddy-Daisy where commercial development is located and includes easy access from Hwy 111 to the plateau.

McDonald Farm:

One of the key future assets of unincorporated Hamilton County. The county has many existing parks in established areas that will continue to provide benefits. The county has owned the property since 2022 and due to its size, it can become both an important regional park asset and economic opportunity. The former farm currently serves as a public open space and event venue. The County Fair was re-launched in 2023 at this location. The RPA has undertaken an economic impact analysis of the site to guide future uses. Opportunities for the site are outlined further in Chapter 4.

Parks:

The Tennessee River, Rock Creek, Possum Creek and significant preserved natural areas (Audubon Mtn, State Parks, and forest lands), and a well established trail network including segments of the Cumberland Trail offer many recreational opportunities including:

- Holly Circle - County boat ramp
- Big Soddy Creek Gulf
- Poe's Tavern Historical Park
- North Soddy Lake Park
- Veterans Park
- North Chickamauga Creek
- McDonald Farm County Park
- Sale Creek launch & ramp

PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS

Community Concerns:

Area 13 residents have articulated concerns about the potential pace of growth and development and the need to first address gaps in area infrastructure, emergency services, and a strategy for preserving agricultural lifestyles and business operations.

Drainage & Water:

A series of creek drainages run throughout Area 13 from east to west. Possum Creek, Middle Creek, Rock Creek, Big Soddy Creek and Little Soddy Creek, McGill Creek, N. Chickamauga Creek and Sale Creek all flow to the Tennessee River. These creeks and drainages make road connectivity a challenge and result in large land areas that are prone to flooding.

» Very limited access to centralized sewer and water infrastructure outside of that existing within Soddy-Daisy jurisdictional authority.

Roadways & Railways:

The sparse nature of the road network and natural features that must be navigated lead to slower point-to-point travel times, making emergency service response times a potential liability for new development.

» Apart from US-27 and its associated exits, the remainder of the road network in Area 13 out side of Soddy- Daisy is sparse and connectivity is inhibited by several significant creek drainages, a rail corridor, and available public ROW.

North Chickamauga Creek
Source: RPA

Hwy 111
Source: RPA

2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE

69%

of residents are influenced by personal safety and security when choosing the North End / Soddy-Daisy Area to live.

40%

Have Some College or Associate's Degree

34%

Bachelor's Degree

15%

Master's Degree +

Source: ACS

62%

Believe that large-lot single family homes should be encouraged in Area 13.

78%

Believe that preservation of farmland, rural character, wooded & riparian areas should be priorities.

61%

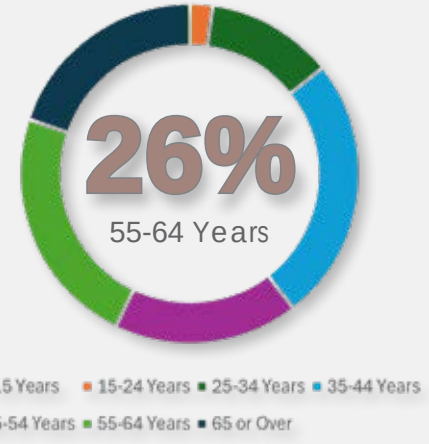
Lived in Hamilton County for 20+ Years

19%

Lived in Hamilton County for 5-19 Years

20%

Lived in Hamilton County for 0-4 Years



23%

55-64 Years

22%

35-44 Years

Source: ACS

2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC TRENDS

DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

Hamilton County Census data reveals a balanced distribution across age groups, including young families (30-34 Years), working professionals (25-29 Years), and retirees (60-69 Years). The County upholds a high level of educational attainment and a skilled workforce, reflecting the Area's commitment to quality education and lifelong learning. In comparison to the state of Tennessee as a whole, Hamilton County has a higher median income, advanced education background, higher employment rate, lower poverty rates, and lower commute times. These factors continue to contribute to growth in Hamilton County in both the incorporated and unincorporated Areas.

GROWTH TRENDS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Hamilton County has experienced steady population growth and economic development over the past decade, driven by strategic investments in infrastructure, education, and residential development. Future prospects remain positive, with planned developments emphasizing smart growth principles that enhance connectivity, sustainability, and quality of life for residents. By prioritizing the preservation of the region's distinctive character and promoting responsible development, ongoing efforts aim to attract new businesses and support entrepreneurial ventures that align with the community's vision, further diversifying the economic base and creating new growth opportunities. To anticipate these needs, the CHCRPA engaged RCLCO to complete a detailed market analysis to asses market opportunities for housing needs over the next 20 years.

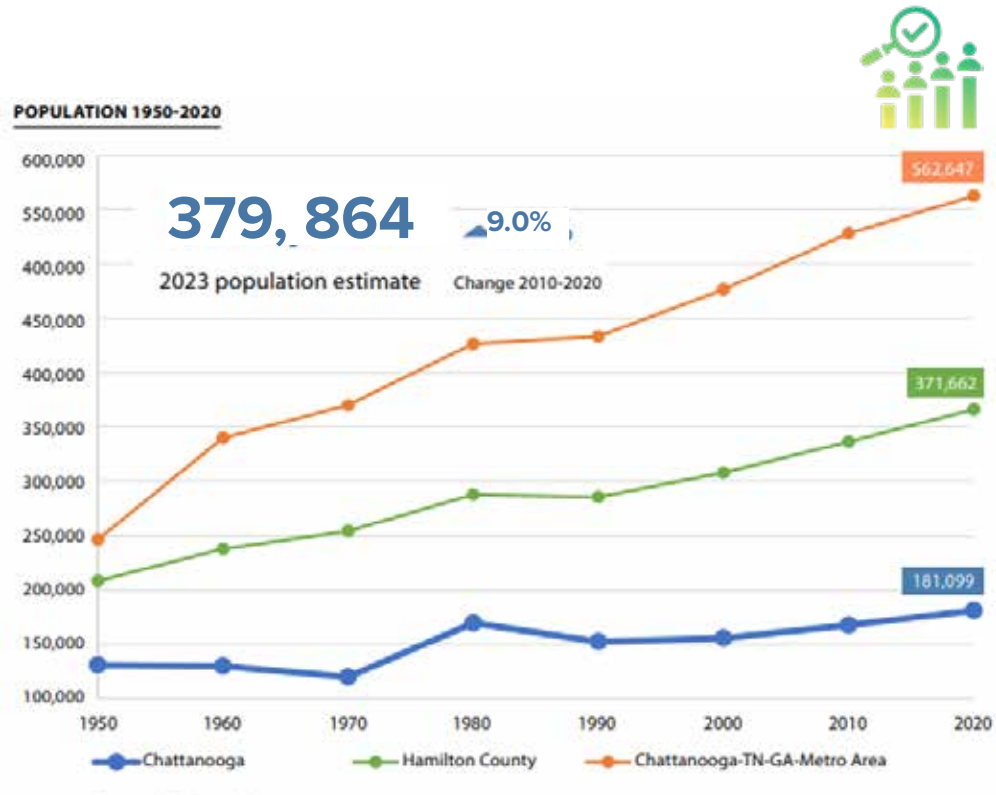
HAMILTON COUNTY CENSUS DATA

39
Median Age

63%
Employment Rate

$76,219
Median Household Income

38.4%
Bachelor's Degree +



ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

As RCLCO highlights in their comprehensive market analysis for Hamilton County, the North County/Soddy-Daisy area stands out as "one of the more remote subareas, with very little development and plenty of large, vacant parcels." Beyond the suburban boundaries of Soddy-Daisy, the region retains a distinctly rural character, with only modest settlement in Sale Creek and a few scattered sites throughout the expansive Area.

While U.S. Highway 27 remains the main thoroughfare connecting Chattanooga to Dayton, extending north to Fort Wayne, Indiana, and south to Miami, Florida, much of the tourist traffic has long since shifted to Interstate 75, located 27 miles eastward. Additionally, the area is 23 miles from Interstate 24 to the west, leaving it with neither direct nor indirect interstate highway access. There is a Norfolk-Southern trunk rail line runs through the area, connecting New Orleans to Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, with further connections to Detroit and Cleveland. This high-capacity line, capable of accommodating 315,000 pounds, is one of only three in the Norfolk-Southern system with such capacity. Despite this robust rail infrastructure, Area 13 has not experienced significant or sustained development in manufacturing or other industries utilizing the line.

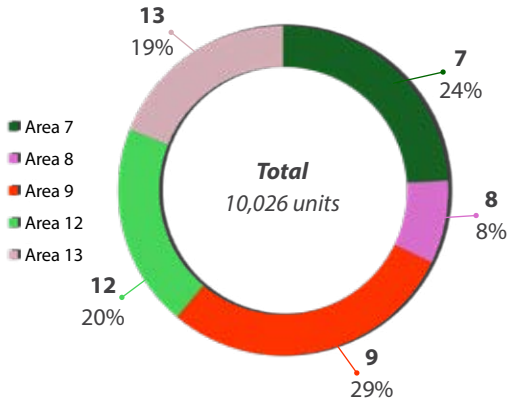
The RCLCO study projects a strong growth in both industrial and residential development within Area 13 including:

- 1,900 units of detached single family residential
- 830 multifamily rental apartments
- 4,000,000 SF of Industrial
- 240,000 SF of commercial/retail

Additional comments & Driving Factors:

- A large extent of the industrial projections are based on McDonald Farm being built out with Industrial uses.
- The increase in industrial facilities will increase the need for retail and additional housing.
- It is anticipated that Area 13 will generate Recreation and Tourism uses such as lodging, event facilities, marinas as well as specific recreational activities.
- This area has a lot of potential for agricultural related businesses and Research and development due to the already existing significant agricultural component of the community.

Chart 1: Single- Family (Detached) Projections



2.4 COMMUNITY THEMES

The Plan Analysis section of the Area Plans provides a detailed examination of the current conditions, opportunities, and challenges within each Area, offering insights that will guide strategic decision-making and inform the implementation of targeted initiatives. Grounded in the four Community Themes - Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities - this analysis establishes a comprehensive framework that evaluates each Area's unique characteristics. This section includes the following categories:

2.4.1 Land Use and Development Character

Zoning:
Examination of land use patterns, existing zoning district designations to ensure that development harmonizes with the areas unique geological features.

Land Use:
Examination of existing land use patterns and street patterns in combination with existing zoning.

Building Permits:
Evaluates the current state and number of permits being issued within the Area and its impact on the surrounding community.

Development in North End/ Soddy-Daisy:
Overall analysis of how development in general is impacting or influencing the community and how its changed its character.

2.4.2 Resiliency

Natural Resources:
Evaluation of natural assets including parks, recreation, open spaces, slopes, waterways, aiming to balance preservation with development.

Infrastructure:
Evaluation of the existing adequacy of public utilities, including sanitary sewer, water, and trash?

2.4.3 Transportation & Mobility

Transportation:
This section evaluates the existing transportation infrastructure, including roadways, pedestrian, and cycling paths. It also considers future development needs and the potential impacts of anticipated growth.

2.4.4 Community Facilities

Schools and Major Institutions:
Examination of the role of these institutions in fostering learning, innovation while assessing their current state and future needs in the context of regional growth and development.

City, County, State/Land or Property:
Examination of ownership patterns and its impact on land management and development potential.

Emergency Services:
Examination of emergency response capabilities, encompassing fire, police, medical, and disaster response services.

2.5 PLAN ANALYSIS

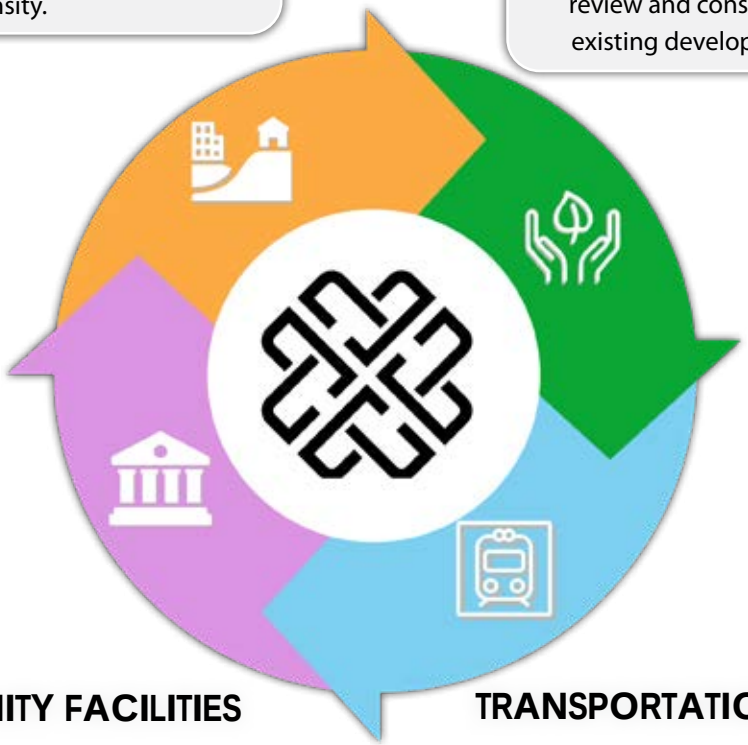
In general, the community feedback phase was focused on identifying metrics for success based on critical outcomes. The desired outcomes have been organized into a framework of Community Themes or Drivers to provide structure to the plan analysis, recommendations, and implementation solutions. Identifying these themes and utilizing them as a framework for organizing each Area plan will provide community leaders with a set of filters for future strategic, policy, and project based decisions. The following graphic identifies the 4 Community Themes and the public consensus that framed the analysis, goals, and policies within Area 13.

1 LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

- Need standards for increased buffers from new development. Preference for larger lots.
- New development should contribute to preservation of rural character/landscape.
- Need clear and predictable development standards and restrictions for engineering review, site protections, infrastructure requirements, and density.

2 RESILIENCY

- Need mechanisms for preservation farmland, riparian buffers, and tree canopy.
- Desire greenway and pedestrian connection to parks and natural areas.
- Protect watershed, access, integrity of N. Chickamauga creek and gorge buffers.
- Desire for increased level of infrastructure review and construction oversight for new and existing developments.



4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Concern of access to emergency services including fire hydrants or alternative fire flow capacity to serve new development.
- More amenities at McDonald Farm to serve the community.
- Better coordination between schools and traffic patterns.

3 TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- Need safe pedestrian crossings in Sale Creek.
- Need subdivision connectivity standards to mitigate congestion on primary roads.
- Establish McDonald Farm connection to Cumberland Trail.
- Sidewalks needed to connect commercial businesses along Dayton Pike and US-27.

2.5.1 CURRENT LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

The analysis of Land Use and Development Character in the North End/Soddy-Daisy area underscores the importance of preserving the region's rural identity while managing future growth. Located between Walden's Ridge and the Tennessee River, this area is marked by low-density residential zones, agricultural lands, and expansive natural spaces. The analysis highlights the need for a balanced approach to development, ensuring that any new growth aligns with the community's commitment to maintaining its scenic beauty and rural charm, while carefully integrating necessary services and amenities to support a sustainable future.

LAND USE

Area 13 is predominantly residential, with 38.5% of the land designated for single-family residential use. This substantial portion highlights the community's commitment to fostering a living environment that supports family life and neighborhood cohesion. Another approximately 26.5% of the land is used for agricultural/preserve purposes.

Land allocated for commercial or industrial purposes comprises less than 1% of the total area, underscoring the County's strategic approach to concentrating economic activities in specific zones that minimize disruption to residential areas. These commercial and industrial zones are essential for providing local employment opportunities and services but are carefully managed.

Institutional uses, such as schools and religious facilities, account for 0.5% of the land. This indicates a modest but vital presence of institutions that serve the educational and spiritual needs of the community, reinforcing the County's focus on fostering a supportive and well-rounded environment for its residents.

Approximately 31.6% of the area is classified as vacant offering potential for future development that can be thoughtfully planned to enhance the community without compromising its existing character. This mixture of existing land uses reflects the current community's desire for agricultural and residential preservation.

Source: RPA

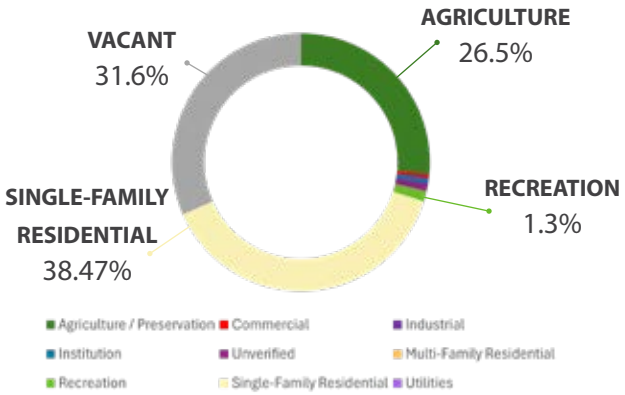


Chart 3: Percentages of Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use Map

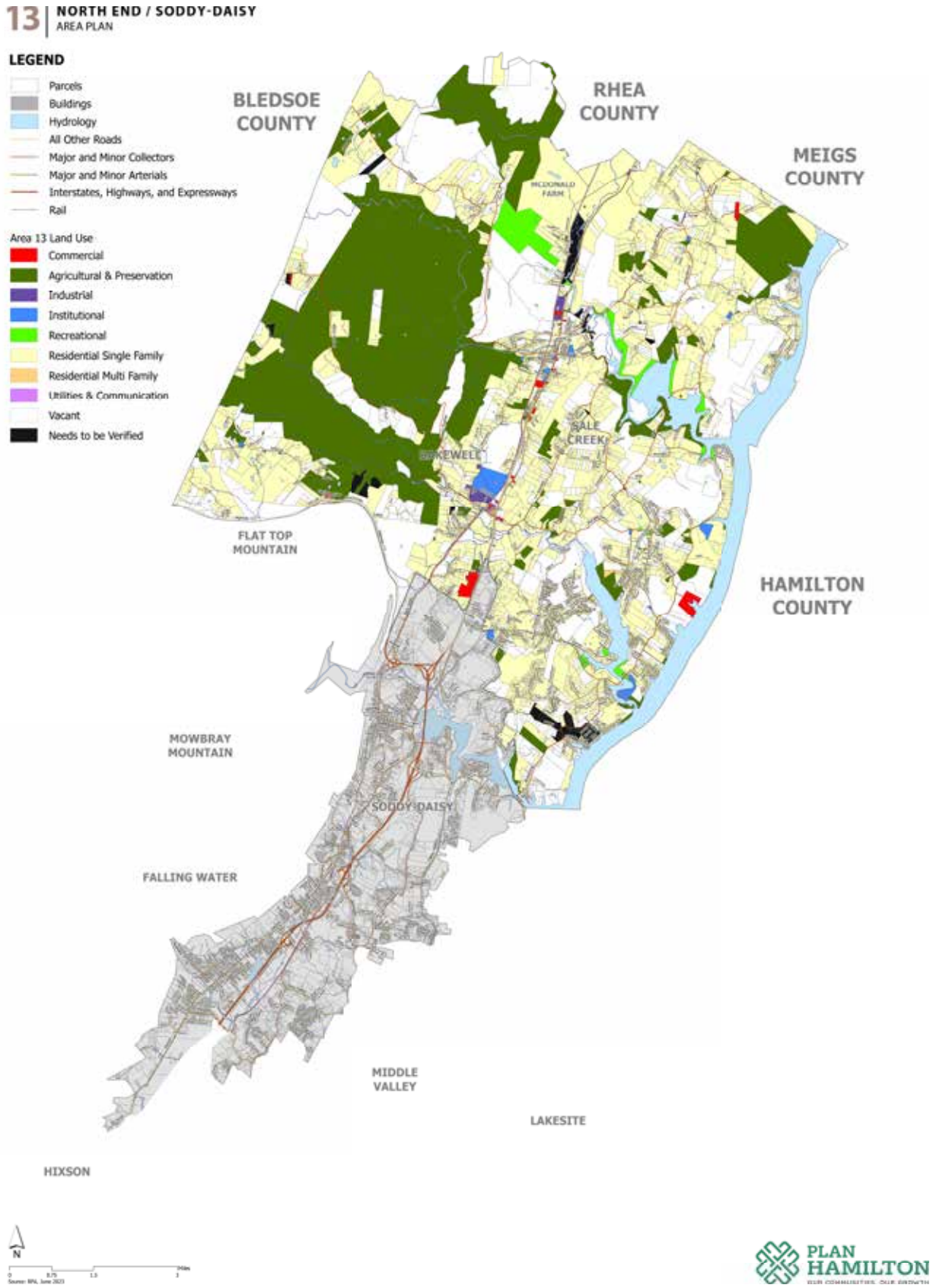


Figure 2.1: Existing Land Use Map (2023)

ZONING

Currently, the majority of Area 13 is zoned for low-density residential purposes, making up over 95% of the area. This includes A-1 Agriculture zone (90.7%), R-2 & R-2A Rural Residential (4.3%), R-1 single-family residential (1.8%), and R-5 (2%). These zoning classifications preserve the rural character and open spaces that define much of the region, ensuring that agricultural activities and low-density housing remain predominant, an important aspect of maintaining the community character.

Commercially and mixed-use zoned areas, on the other hand, are relatively scarce, comprising of slightly over 1% of the land. These commercial zones are strategically concentrated along two primary corridors: Dayton Pike (Hwy 27) and Sequoyah Road. These commercial corridors provide essential services and retail opportunities while the remainder of the area is zoned agricultural or residential.

This zoning landscape highlights the North End/Soddy-Daisy's thoughtful planning approach, balancing growth and development with the preservation of its cherished rural character. By focusing on residential and agricultural zones while strategically placing commercial areas, the County maintains its unique identity and ensures a high quality of life for its residents.

Example of large lot residential typically found in A-1 zoning
Source: RPA

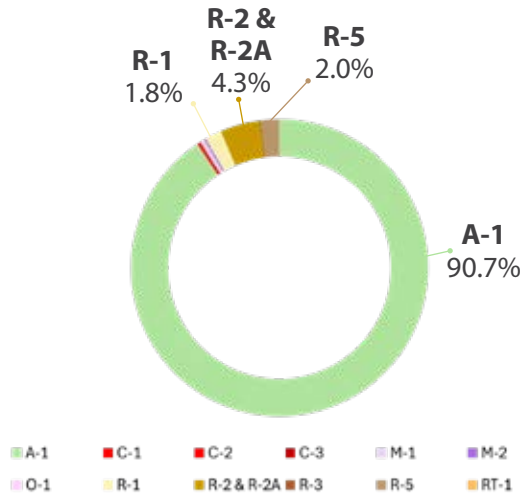


Chart 2: Percentages of Existing Zoning

Existing Zoning Map

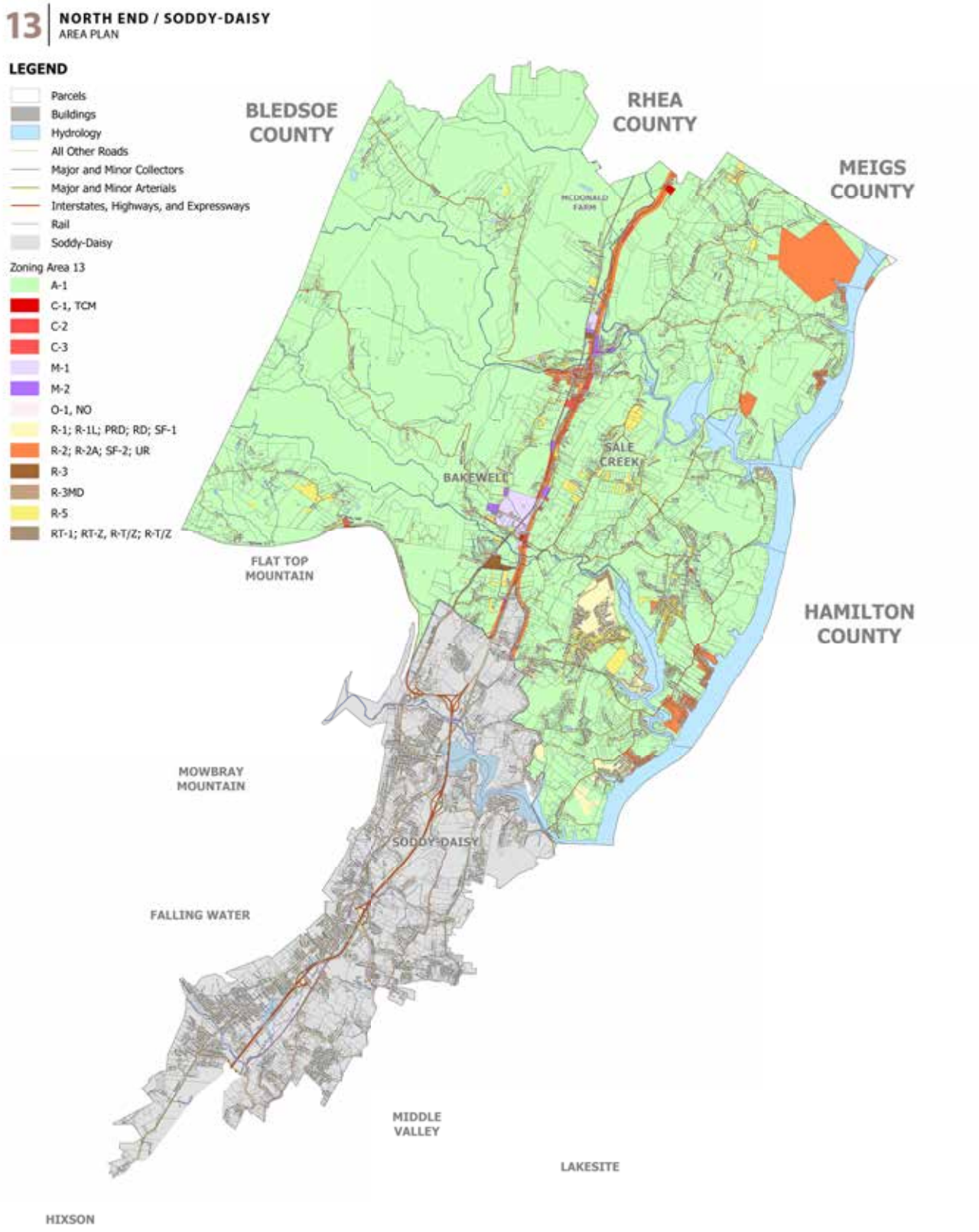


Figure 2.2: Existing Zoning Map (2023)

BUILDING PERMITS & DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Over the past decade, the North End/Soddy-Daisy Area has witnessed fluctuations influenced by economic conditions, population growth, and shifting residential and commercial demands. As residential needs expand, the Area has experienced increased activity in new construction as infrastructure has allowed. Analyzing these trends offers valuable insights into the region's growth patterns, regulatory impacts, and future development prospects, highlighting the dynamic nature of Area 13's built environment.

Figure 2.3 reveals that the majority of permits issued have been for single-family homes which aligns with the existing and desired character of the community. The preference for single-family homes is anticipated to continue, as detailed in Chapter 2.3. The emphasis on low-density housing, agriculture, and community-centered amenities will most likely continue as there is a market demand for continued residential growth.

Following single-family residential permits, the "Other" classification represents the second-highest category for permit issuance as identified in Table 2. This activity reflects the Area's evolving economic condition as well as its desire to be primarily residential. There were less than 10 permits issued in the remaining categories issued between 2013-2023.

The analysis of building permit trends also highlights how economic and demographic shifts have shaped development.

Development in North End/Soddy-Daisy reflects the rural character and the community's preference for single-family residential, which prompts the need for continued land use planning. The area's appeal lies in its natural beauty, recreational opportunities and expansive landscapes, attracting residents who prioritize rural, lake living, and mountain lifestyles.

The map on the following page (Figure 2.3) identifies the building permits that were approved over the last 10 years including single-family residential permits and other permits.

Chart 4: Permits by Area in Unincorporated vs. Incorporated Hamilton County.

Table 2: Permit Classification Comparison

Permit Classification	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 12	Area 13
Commercial / Office	-	6	19	49	1
Commercial Solar	-	1	2	1	-
Hotel, Motel, Tourist Cabin	-	-	1	1	-
Industrial	-	1	-	3	1
Multi-Family/ Mixed Residential	-	10	-	29	3
Other Permits*	592	1,005	1,898	1,983	516
Public Works / Utilities	-	-	-	1	2
Single Family Residential	879	1,063	2,883	2,339	876
Total (Per Area)	1,471	2,086	4,803	4,406	1,399
Total (Unincorporated County)	14,165				

- *The "Other" Permit Classification Category Includes: Demolition permits, Residential Additions & Alterations, Religious Institutions, Parking Garages, Hospitals, and Non-Residential Additions & Alterations.*
- *Permit Classifications shown are reflective of the anticipated growth pattern in Hamilton County and the categories selected in the Economic Analysis projections in the RCLCO study.*

Building Permits Map

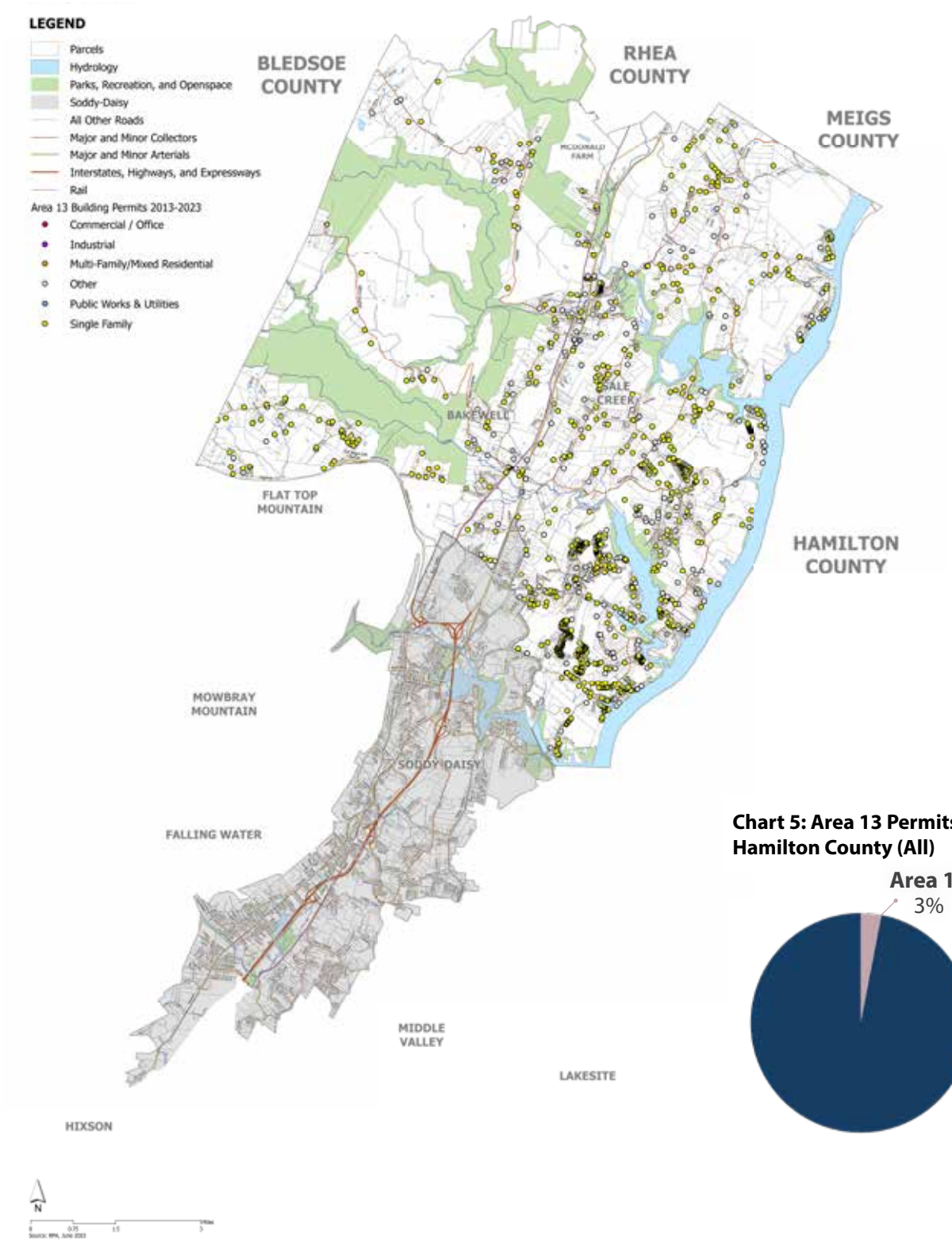


Chart 5: Area 13 Permits vs Hamilton County (All)

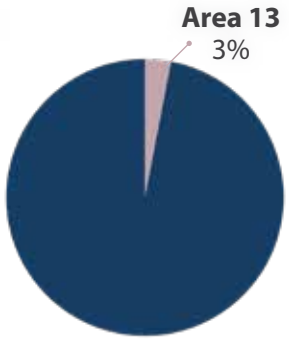


Figure 2.3: Building Permits Map (2013-2023)

2.5.2 RESILIENCY

Resiliency in the North End/Soddy-Daisy region is closely connected to the management of its natural resources, the development of parks and recreational spaces, and the strength of its infrastructure. As this area continues to grow, its future will be shaped by sustainable practices that protect key natural features such as rivers, forests, and open spaces—elements that are essential to the region's ecological health and community character. Preserving and enhancing these natural assets, along with well-planned recreational areas, will be crucial for maintaining the quality of life for residents. Additionally, adaptable will play a critical role in supporting the community's ability to manage growth and respond to environmental challenges. By integrating environmental stewardship with strategic infrastructure planning, the North End/Soddy-Daisy area can prepare for a future that respects its natural heritage while addressing the demands of the community.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The North End/Soddy-Daisy Area is rich in natural resources, featuring diverse water sources, parks, natural areas, and agricultural resources. These resources support local ecosystems and offer opportunities for recreation and sustainable development. Proper management of these natural assets is crucial for maintaining the region's beauty and ecological health. The map (Figure 2.4) indicates points within the study area that feature natural resources deemed sensitive in terms of water function, steep slopes or habitat as identified in the adopted 2016 Comprehensive Plan for Hamilton County. In the North End/ Soddy-Daisy Area, 20.2% of the land is 25% or greater slope and 8.8% is in the 100-year floodplain. Waterways are shown to indicate the floodway and 100-year and 500-year floodplains along with Impaired Waterways (303D) which indicate water quality status based on monitoring of sediment, pollution (metals, pesticides/fertilizer run-off, etc.) and erosion or changes in flow/volumes. Development in the floodway is prohibited.

Area 13 is home to multiple creeks that flow from Walden's Ridge to the Tennessee River. Possum Creek, Middle Creek, Rock Creek, Big and Little Soddy Creek, McGill Creek, N. Chickamauga Creek and Sale Creek all flow to the Tennessee River. The location and number of these creeks throughout the area result in flooding and create development limitations and infrastructure limitations.

Possum Creek
Source: Google Earth Pro

Big Soddy Creek
Source: RPA

Natural Resources Map

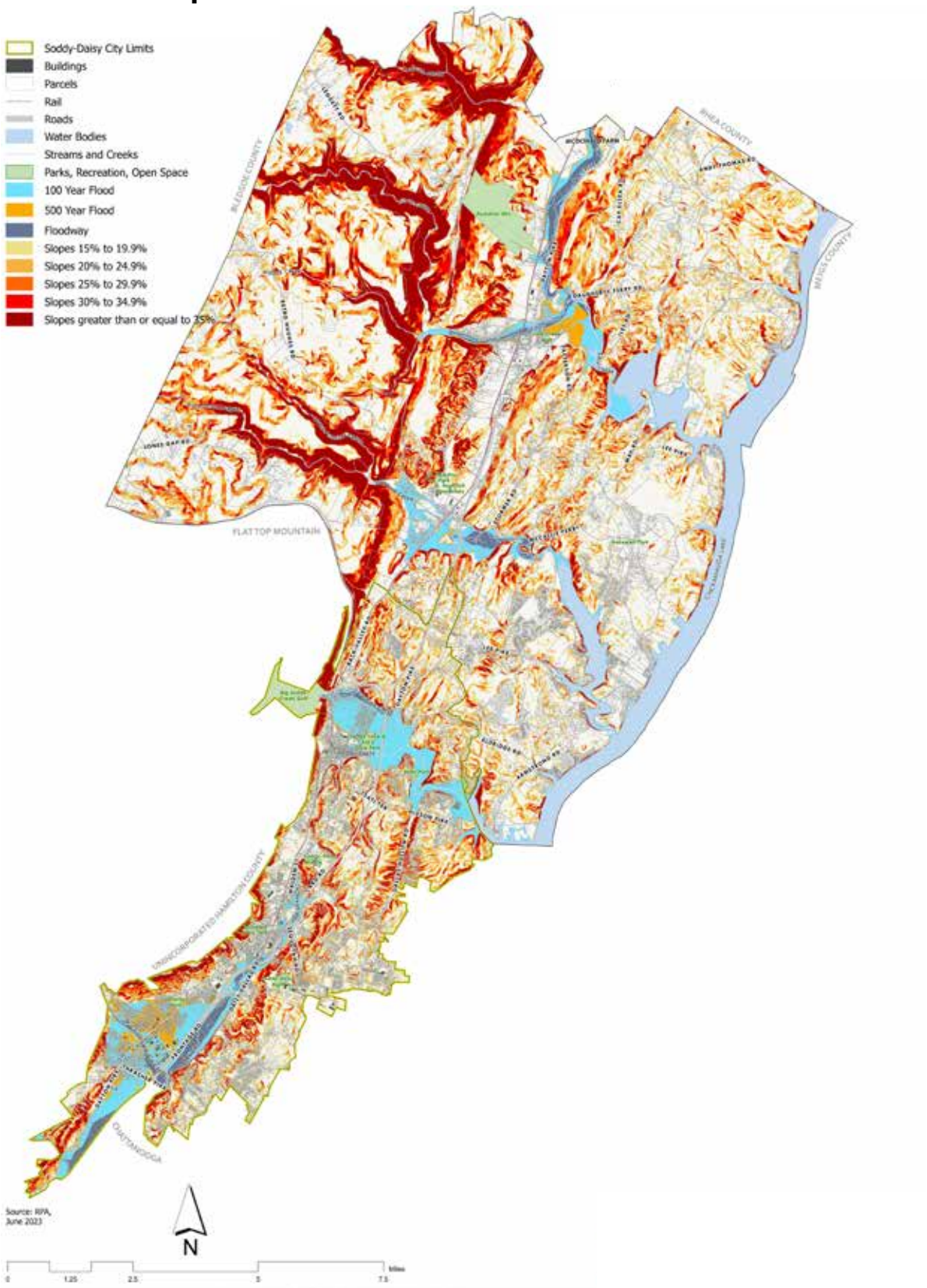


Figure 2.5: Natural Resources Map

With North Chickamauga Creek State Park, the Cumberland Trail, and a portion of John P. Wilson Cumberland State Park all located in Area 13, there are multiple opportunities to connect the communities of north Hamilton County as well as Lakesite, Red Bank, Hixson, Falling Water, Walden and Dayton. Additionally, expansion of the Great Eastern Trail network is underway providing connections in a broader, state to state context. This system of trails may provide access to public recreational facilities since the Area is well connected to Walden's Ridge's rock climbing, hiking, and biking trails, and water sport activities tied to the Tennessee River and local waterways.

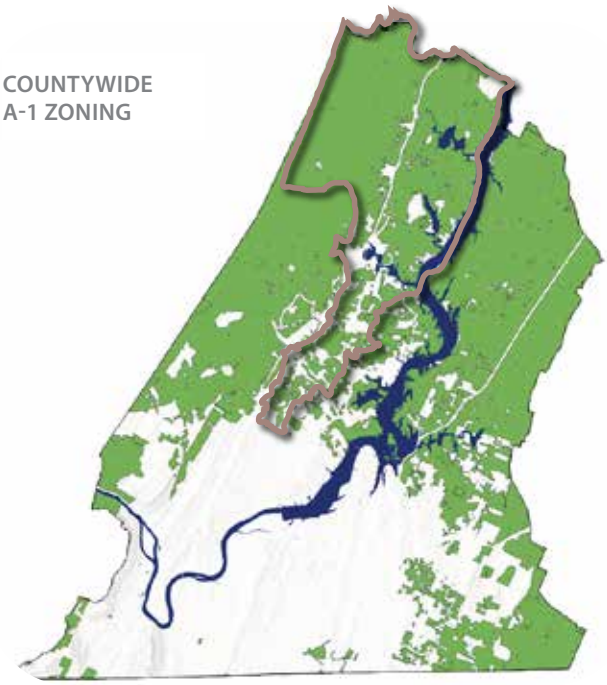
Natural resource areas are often designated as public parks or open space that become tourist destinations.
Image Sources: RPA

AGRICULTURE

Hamilton County has a long history of agricultural activity in areas like Apison, Sale Creek, Flat Top Mountain, Georgetown and the Hwy 58/Birchwood area. A portion Area 13 consists of agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses and may also include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes. Usually zoned as an A-1 district, they often include single-family homes on large lots as well as accessory buildings such as barns and greenhouses. Properties given the "Greenbelt" status (15 acres or more) usually feature a farm or single-family home with surrounding open space, pastures or forests retained and with tax benefits available. Development centered around farming is typically on septic systems. Agricultural uses in Hamilton County range from commercial businesses or large production facilities, such as a dairy or orchards, to horse stables, to roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores.

Not only do these agricultural uses add to the rural character of the area, but they also provides many benefits to the local community such as healthy food sources, educational programs, agritourism opportunities and improved environmental function for clean air and water quality - when significant vegetated areas are preserved and low impact farming practices (limited pesticide use or organic farming) are put in place. Programs that promote local agriculture and conserve open space and natural resources are readily available. Conservation practices may also include the use of clustered residential homes with farm amenities or scenic views and open space set aside. Another tool used to help preserve agricultural places and provide income includes special event facilities such as barns or pavilions, guesthouses or wedding chapels for instance.

COUNTYWIDE A-1 ZONING



COUNTYWIDE AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

AREA 13

90.7% A-1 Zoning
34.7% Single-Family Parcels
3.1% of Permits issued in the County
29% of Area in Steep Slopes & Floodway
17% Of Area in Parks, Recreation & Open Space

HAMILTON COUNTY

56% of the County in A-1 Zoning
30% of the County has Agricultural Land Use

PARKS, RECREATION & GREENWAYS

An analysis of the parks and recreation resources in the North End/Soddy-Daisy area of Hamilton County indicates that the region's natural assets are pivotal to the community's identity and quality of life. This Area has many public recreation spots including Bakewell Park, Big Soddy Creek Gulf, Mowbray Park, Sale Creek Recreation Area, Soddy Lake, Veteran's Park, and others. Additionally, Area 13 is in close proximity to large County and state parks in Areas 7 and 8. These spaces offer residents and visitors a variety of activities, from hiking and biking to picnicking, wildlife observation, etc. These spaces not only enhance the quality of life but also play a crucial role in preserving the region's natural landscapes and promoting environmental stewardship.

These green spaces serve a purpose beyond recreation. They are critical for environmental preservation, offering habitats for diverse wildlife and contributing to the overall health of the region's ecosystems. This preservation nurtures a sense of environmental stewardship, as the community becomes more connected to the land they enjoy. There is a total of 494 acres of official public recreation space and 23 acres of private recreation space in Area 13, as noted in Tables 3 and 4 on page 31, these green spaces play a crucial role in safeguarding the environmental integrity of the region. A separate analysis was conducted to measure the total approximate acreage for all aspects of parks, recreation, and open space which is approximately 17% of the total land area.

By prioritizing the protection of these landscapes, we ensure the continued survival of North End/Soddy-Daisy's biodiversity while also securing a legacy of natural beauty for future generations. Whether through careful planning or the community's growing engagement with these outdoor spaces, this Area seeks a balance between progress and preservation in maintaining the delicate ecosystems that define Hamilton County's identity.

Chart 6: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in Area 13

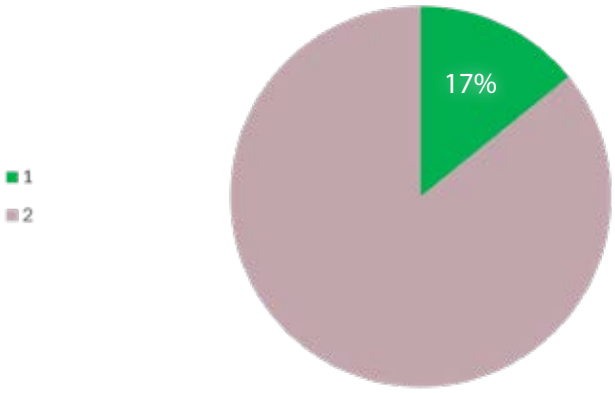
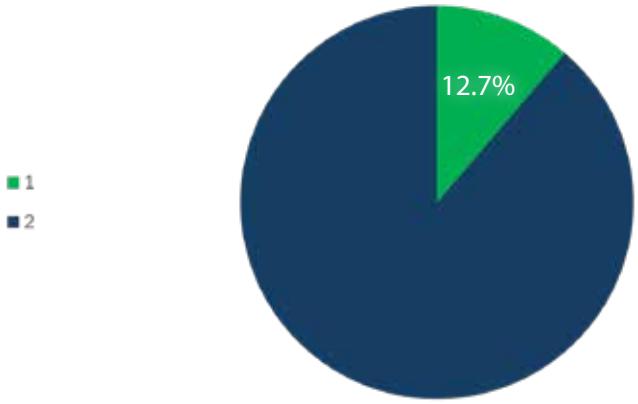


Chart 7: Percentage of Parks, Recreation & Open Space in all 5 Plan Hamilton Areas



Big Soddy Gulf
Source: Exploring Chatt.com

Table 3: Public Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Bakewell Park	Public Park and Ball Field	6.1
Big Soddy Creek Gulf	Natural Area with Trails	285
Holly Park	Recreational Area and Boat Lauch	26.5
Mowbray Park	Recreational Area with Sport Fields	21
Kids Park (Northend Ball Fields)	Recreational Area with Sport Fields	97
Poe's Tavern Historical Park	Historical Park - Cultural Site	7.7
Sale Creek Recreation Area	Park and Boat Ramp	27.5
Soddy Lake & Kid's Club Complex	Recreational Area and Fishing Pier	n/a
Soddy-Daisy Park Bird Sanctuary	Recreational Area and Bird Watching	6
Veteran's Park	Historic Park and Recreational Area	17
Total		**493.8**

Table 4: Private Parks, Recreation, and Greenways

Name	Type of Recreation Area	Size (Acres)
Pine Harbor Marina	Marina	2.5
Sale Creek Marina	Marina	8
Shady Grove Harbor	Marina	12.9
Total		**23.4**

Soddy Lake Park
Source: City of Soddy-Daisy Tennessee

Water Quality BMP's (Best Management Practices) focus on the above goals of Protect, Reconnect, Restore and Sustain
Source: Stormwater runoff diagram tu.org and SETD Green Infrastructure Handbook

INFRASTRUCTURE

Wastewater

The Chattanooga Department of Wastewater and Hamilton County Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) are tasked with planning and administration of sewer services under state and federal laws. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater manages the Moccasin Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant which is the primary treatment facility for both the City of Chattanooga and unincorporated Hamilton County.

RPA staff has coordinated closely with the City of Chattanooga Wastewater Department staff during the development of the Comprehensive Plans to ensure adequate sewer capacity is available to accommodate the anticipated residential, commercial, and industrial development growth. This coordination is a technical evaluation with ongoing coordination of local agencies to ensure long term capacity.

WWTA staff has provided information to RPA that existing capacity and available financial support substantially limits new sewer availability in the unincorporated county in the short and mid-term. Chattanooga Department of Wastewater has provided guidance that adequate sewer capacity is available for anticipated development during the next 5 years.

RPA staff working with both WWTA and County staff to support new development and achieve the best outcomes possible regarding managing growth in the unincorporated area.

Septic Systems

Due to sewer capacity and availability, septic is the most common wastewater treatment option in Unincorporated Hamilton County. Generally, the minimum lot size required for septic systems is 25,000 square feet. Residential development in rural areas without sewer service must therefore be built with these larger lots.

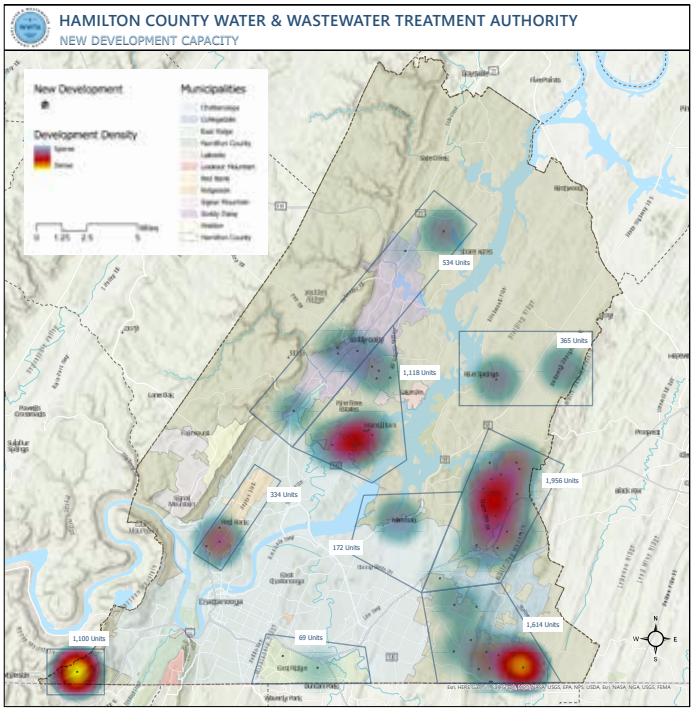
Information Highlight

Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems

A decentralized wastewater treatment system is like a combination of traditional septic and sewer. In a decentralized system, buildings or groups of buildings have a septic tank on-site as an initial treatment. Wastewater is then piped to a central location for additional treatment and disposal. Currently, Hamilton County only has a few examples of existing systems but anticipates them to become more common.

One key advantage in these systems is off-site disposal, which provides flexibility in housing types and helps preserve valuable open spaces. Additionally, centralizing the final stages of treatment and disposal reduces the risk of individual system failures, positively impacting the environment. WWTA provides oversight on these systems.

Note: If approved, these systems allow development to be approved at a density/intensity as if it were on sewer.



New Development Capacity (June 2023)
Source: WWTA

Sewer Infrastructure Map

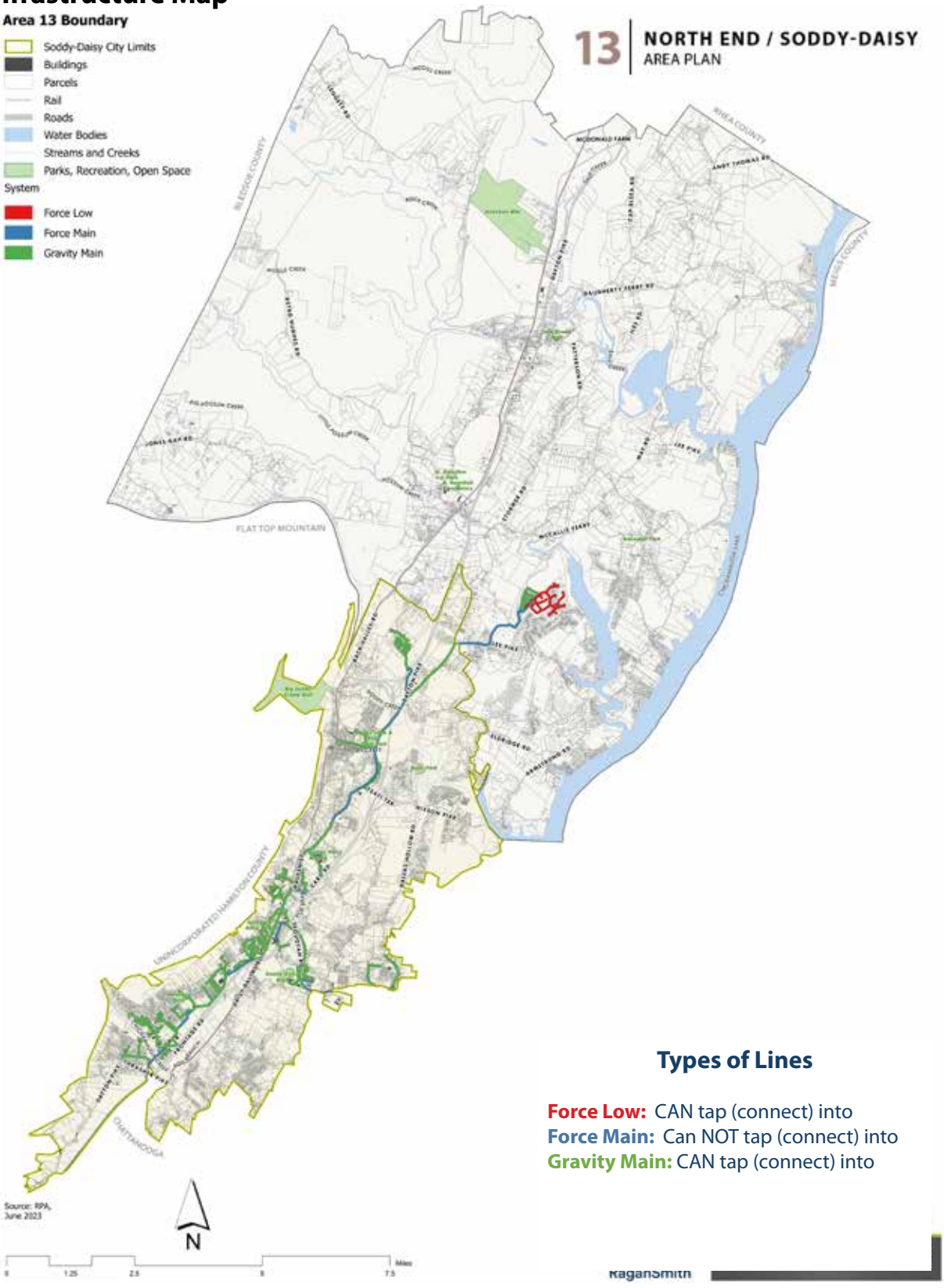


Figure 2.4: Sewer Infrastructure Map (2023)

2.5.3 MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION

While the single-occupancy vehicle remains the predominant mode of transportation and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future, it is crucial not to overlook multi-modal transportation options. This analysis will focus on the network of pathways that underpin the Areas mobility and accessibility. The Area's road network forms the backbone of its transportation system, connecting neighborhoods, commercial centers, and outlying regions. The existing network of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trails is assessed for connectivity, safety, and accessibility. These modes are equally important in these Areas as they are in urban settings, serving purposes such as recreation, exercise, and social interaction.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) uses functional classification to "define the role each element in the roadway network plays in serving travel needs." Roads are categorized by location (urban or rural), capacity, and alignment with future development plans. This classification system also differentiates between locally-owned, state-owned, and federally-owned roads, which can influence the funding sources and oversight agencies involved in roadway improvements. For example, improvements to state routes are generally proposed by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the FHWA, with additional input from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization (MPO). This coordinated approach ensures that infrastructure upgrades align with both state and local priorities.

The functional classification categories at the local level in Area 13 are as follows:

- Arterial
  - Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
- Collector
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector
- Local Roads

Arterials

Arterials are classified based on their high level of mobility. Arterial routes are typically the longest and have higher capacity compared to the other roads in the transportation network. They have few access points and only connect to other Arterials within the network. Most travel that occurs on an Arterial is over long distances, such as inter-state travel. Arterial routes typically account for the highest traffic volumes within the transportation network, but less than 15% of the physical transportation network. For example, Interstates consist of 3% of the vehicle miles traveled and between 17% and 38% of the vehicle miles traveled in a transportation network. Arterials are further classified as principal or minor arterials. Examples of Principal Arterials include interstates, freeways, and expressways. Minor arterials serve trips of shorter lengths than principal arterials connect smaller geographic areas to the transportation network.

Collectors

Collectors connect local roads to the arterial routes within a transportation network. They are shorter routes than arterials and have lower speed limits with more access points. Collector routes are typically used for intra-county travel rather than statewide travel like the Arterial routes. Collector routes make up approximately a third of the transportation network. Collector routes are further classified into major and minor collectors. Major collectors usually allow for higher levels of mobility within an area and minor collectors often have more access points. The distinction between major and minor collectors is often determined by speed limits, driveway spacing, and annual average traffic volumes.

Local Roads

Typically local roads account for less than 25% of the vehicle miles traveled but make up between 62% and 74% of the transportation network. They are usually characterized as having a low number of lanes, low speed limits, and low traffic volumes. Local roads are classified after the arterials and collectors have been identified within the network.

Crash Data Map

The transportation analysis of Area 13 reviewed functional classifications, traffic operations, and safety. Potential improvements were identified by analyzing historic and projected traffic volumes, crash data, and delay levels, with roads ranked by priority. Analysis did show anticipated capacity constraints along US-27 and Thrasher Pike. Review of historic crash data identified Armstrong Road and McCallie Ferry Road as exceeding the statewide average crash rate based on the frequency and severity of crashes over the past three years. The historic crash data is shown on Figure 2.6.

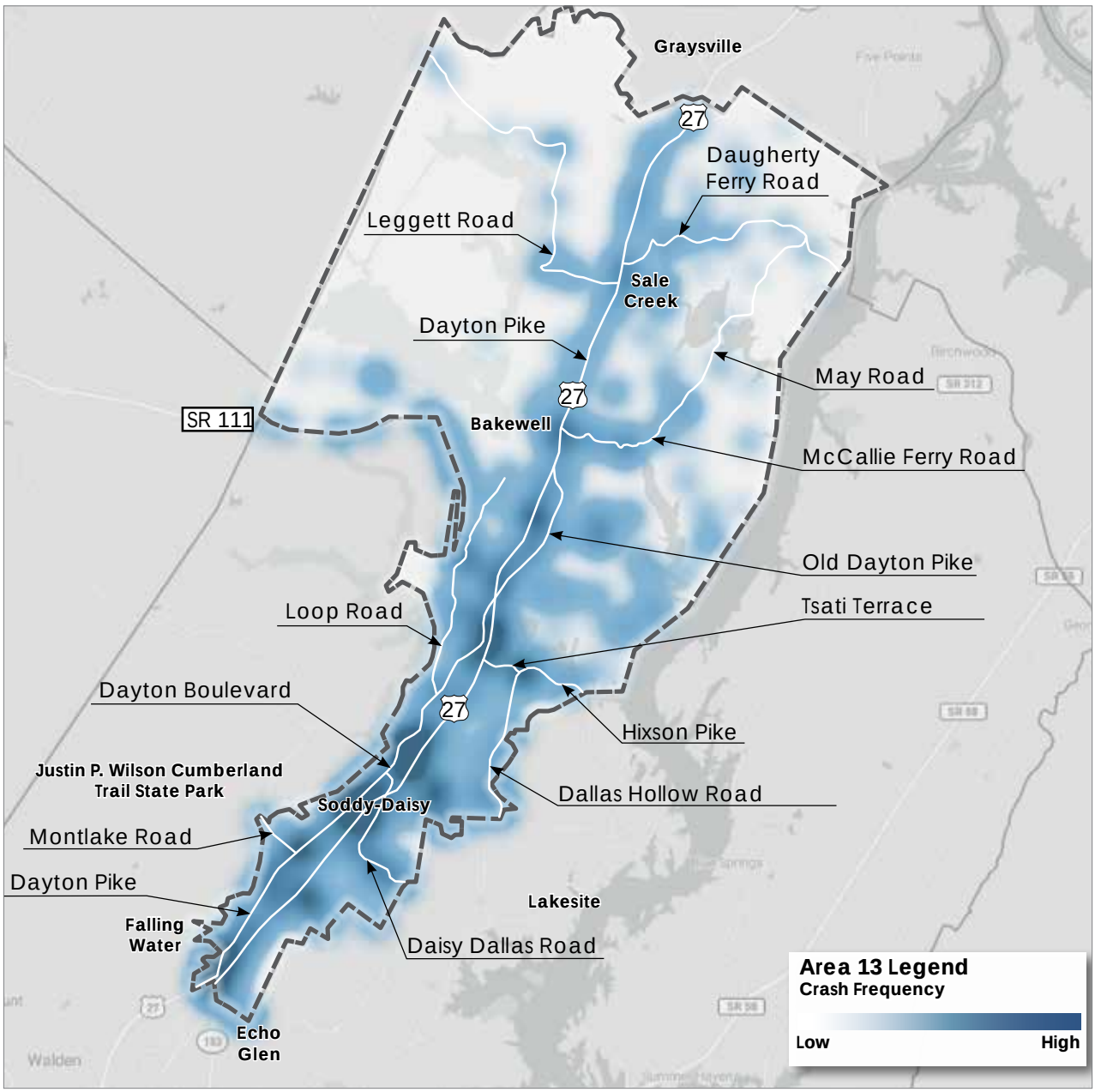


Figure 2.6: Area 13 Crash Data Map (08/24/2020 - 08/24/2023)

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Roadway improvement considerations began with a thorough inventory and analysis of Hamilton County's existing roadway network. This initial assessment included a detailed review of traffic operations and crash patterns to identify potential safety enhancements. From this analysis, a list of roadway improvements was developed and organized by priority, focusing on areas that would benefit most from strategic upgrades.

To assess traffic operations, we used a combination of historical traffic count data collected annually, future traffic forecasts from the RPA's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, and general Level of Service (LOS) criteria. This approach allowed us to pinpoint current capacity constraints and anticipate areas likely to face similar issues as the County grows. Roadway segments already at or nearing capacity were flagged for inclusion in the improvement list to address these pressing needs.

The safety review analyzed three years of crash data across Hamilton County roadways to calculate crash rates on key segments. We then compared these rates to statewide averages to identify roads that might benefit from targeted safety studies or projects.

Table 5: Proposed Roadway Improvements (All Areas)

Priority Group	Roadway	Project Location	Area	Type of Improvement
Short-term	Hunter Road	at Lebron Sterchi Drive	**9**	Intersection
Short-term	Hunter Road	at curve near Crooked Creek Drive	**9**	Safety
Short-term	Hilltop Drive	between Hunter Road and Volkswagen Drive	**9**	Extension
Short-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	**9**	Safety
Short-term	Standifer Gap Road	from Banks road to Camp Road	**12**	Safety
Short-term	Daisy Dallas Road	from Harrison Lane to Hixson Pike	**8**	Safety
Short-term	Middle Valley Road	from Hixson Pike to Daisy Dallas Road	**8**	Safety
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Daisy Dallas Road	**8**	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Walnut Road	**8**	Intersection
Medium-term	Middle Valley Road	at Gann Road	**8**	Intersection
Medium-term	Hunter Road	at Garfield Road	**9**	Intersection
Medium-term	Roberts Mill Road	from Dayton Pike to Mountain Laurel Trail	**7**	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Mahan Gap Road	**9**	Safety
Medium-term	Snow Hill Road	from Mountain View Drive to Amos Road	**9**	Capacity
Medium-term	E Brainerd Road	at London Lane	**12**	Intersection
Long-term	Hunter Road	from Hwy 58 to Lee Highway	**9**	Capacity
Long-term	Standifer Gap Road	at Bill Reed Road	**12**	Intersection
Long-term	Armstrong Road	from Hixson Pike to Lee Pike	**13**	Safety
Long-term	Harrison Bay Road	from Hwy 58 to Birchwood Pike	**9**	Safety
Long-term	McCallie Ferry Road	from US 27 to Spradling Road	**13**	Safety
Long-term	Gann Road	from Middle Valley Road to Daisy Dallas Road	**8**	Safety
Long-term	Montlake Road	from Dayton Pike to Mowbray Pike	**7**	Safety
Long-term	W Road	from Mountain Creek Road to Anderson Pike	**7**	Safety

MPO Planned Transportation Projects Map

Average crash rates for the entire state of Tennessee were used for comparison to identify roads that might benefit from a safety study or project that would identify detailed crash patterns or implement improvements or strategies that could reduce the number or types of crashes. Two roads within Area 13 were identified as candidates for safety projects including McCallie Ferry Road and Armstrong Road. There was one fatality noted in the crash history of Armstrong Road.

Projects
(Considerations for future investments)

- **Principal Arterials**
  US-27 from County Line to SR-111
  Tsati Terrace Hixson Pike from Dallas Hollow to Armstrong Rd
- **Minor Arterials**
  US-27 from SR-111 to Hwy 153
  Durham St & Dayton Pike
  Dallas Hollow Rd from Tsati Terrace to Seqouyah Access Rd
  Thrasher Pike from Dayton Pike to Gann
  Daisy Dallas Rd from US-27 to Lovell Rd
- **Minor Collectors**
  Shipley Hollow Rd,Daugherty Ferry Rd, Patterson Rd,Stormer Rd, May Rd, McCallie Ferry Rd, Lee Pike, Lovell Rd, Mowbray Pike, Armstrong Road, Montlake Road Gann Rd from Daisy Dallas Rd to Thrasher Pike

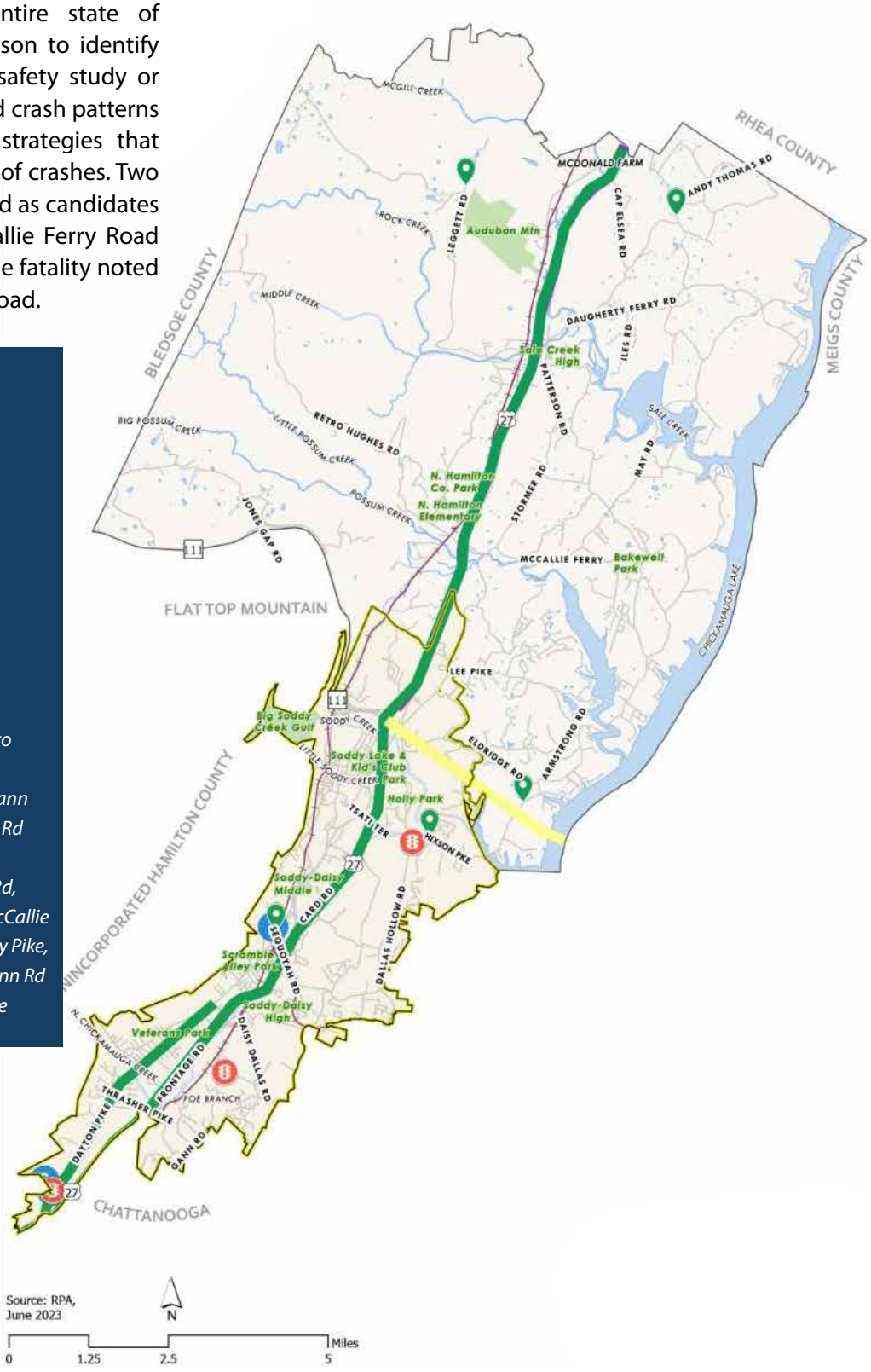


Figure 2.7: Area 13 TPO Planned Transportation Projects Map

2.5.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The North End/Soddy-Daisy offers a comprehensive array of community facilities designed to enhance the quality of life for its residents. These facilities include educational institutions, healthcare centers, libraries, and recreational amenities. Each facility is integrated into the community to ensure accessibility and to meet the diverse needs of the population.

SCHOOLS AND MAJOR INSTITUTIONS

It is imperative that Hamilton County Schools be part of the conversation when it comes to growth in the Sale Creek Area. New schools tend to attract new growth in the form of residential development. As the area continues to grow, schools may approach, or exceed, capacity due to increasing student enrollment. Factors such as transportation, access, and space needed for buildings, parking, and recreation must be considered as new schools are planned.

Hamilton County Opportunity 2030 Strategic Plan

Hamilton County Schools introduced a seven Year Strategic Plan "Opportunity 2030" to engage stakeholders and align strategies to directly respond to the needs of the students, staff, and the community.

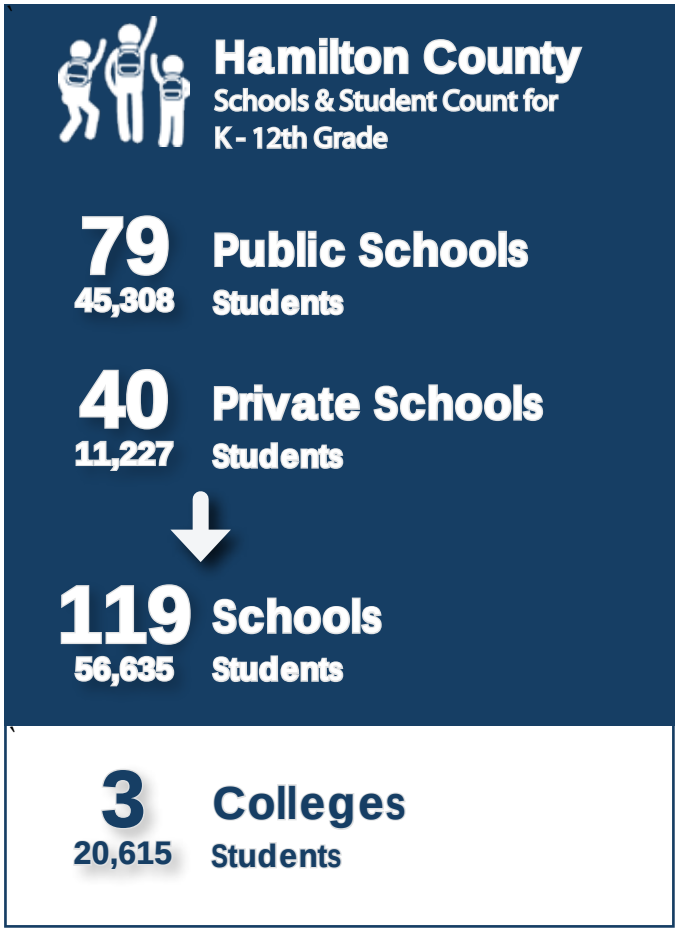
> **HCDE's mission is:**
> To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and supports to thrive in life.
>
> **HCDE's vision is:**
> By 2030, Hamilton County Schools will be a leader in developing our diverse graduates to be connected, competitive, and life ready.

<u>The HCDE 2030 plan has made 5 commitments:</u>

1. Every Student Learns
2. Every Student Belongs
3. Every School Equipped
4. Every Employee Valued
5. Every Community Served

In 2024, the County established 250 million in bonds in anticipation of upcoming school needs.

Hamilton County is home to many private and public K-12th Grade institutions and colleges, the following is a Countywide total of all schoools and students:



Schools Map

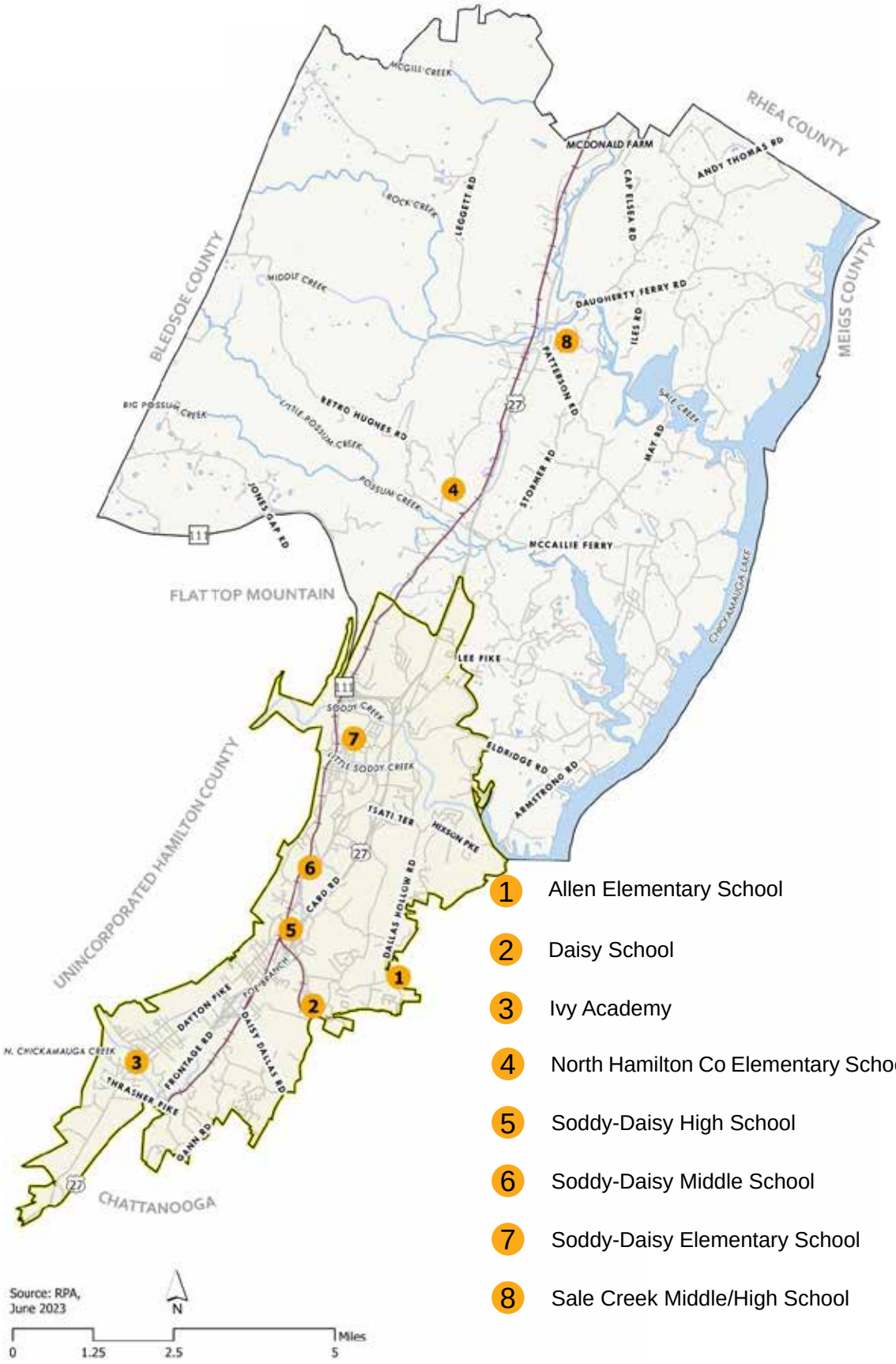


Figure 2.8: Schools Map (2023)

PARKS & GOVERNMENT OWNED LAND

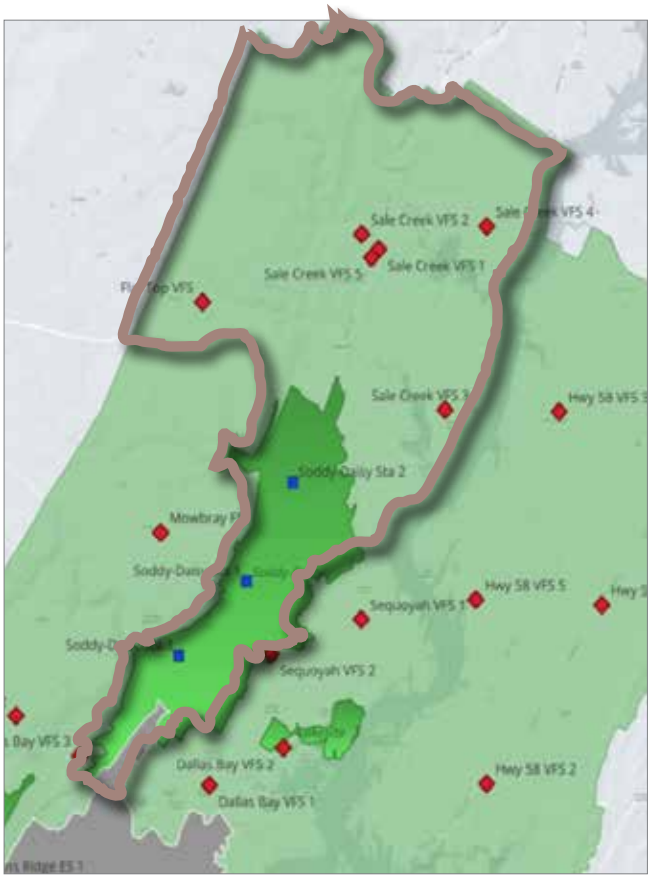
There are many parks and recreational areas in North End/Soddy-Daisy. These areas are a recreational asset that draws hikers, bikers, horse riders, and campers from all over. There is approximately, 494 acres of public parks, recreation, and greenways within Area 13 for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. There is also a portion of John P. Wilson Cumberland State Park in Area 13 on the northwest corner which presents opportunities to connect to the Cumberland Trail network.

Access to public recreational facilities, hiking and biking is well connected to Walden's Ridge in Area 13. However, the remainder of Area 13 is lacking public open space, preserve areas, greenways, sidewalks, and other outdoor public recreational amenities.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

In 2024, Tri Star conducted a Fire and Emergency Response Evaluation of the unincorporated areas to identify current levels of fire protection service, geographic coverage, response time, areas of need, etc. Within Area 13, there are six (6) volunteer fire departments (VFD) including Sale Creek VFD 1,2,3,4, and 5 as well as Flat Top VFD. Additionally Soddy-Daisy FD 1,2 and 3 are located within their jurisdictional boundary within Area 13. The stations are distributed throughout the area and the report did not identify any gaps in coverage. Sale Creek VFD 1,2, and 5 are in close geographical distance to one another at the base of Walden's Ridge. The report did however, identify that the Highway 58 VFD's served the 2nd least populous Area in Hamilton County with an estimated population of 21,127 including the incorporated limits of Soddy-Daisy, the service population of the unincorporated area is estimated at 7,997. As growth continues, it will be necessary to continue to evaluate emergency service and response and improve accordingly.

Hamilton County Emergency Management owns and constantly updates evacuation routes and plans for natural disasters.



Fire Station Locations
Source: 2024 Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation Report (Tri-Star)

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY VISION & GOALS

INTRODUCTION
3.1 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
3.2 GOALS
3.3 VISION STATEMENT

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

Shaping a vision for the future of the North End/Soddy-Daisy involves exploring its potential and engaging with residents and business owners to understand their aspirations for the next decade. What qualities do people value? What elements make this Area unique or special? To identify these community values, two surveys were distributed during the planning process. During public meetings, participants were invited to identify issues and prioritize potential solutions. While some concerns were specific to particular sub-Areas, many were relevant to the entire area.

The initial feedback produced four key Community Themes which ultimately outlined the analysis portion of this plan. Those key themes helped shaped the remainder of this plan and are identified in Chapter 2 of this plan.

Survey responses, input from community meetings, feedback from the Advisory Committee, and professional guidance from staff and technical advisors, were used to draft goals, a vision statement, and recommendations to reflect the shared values of the North End County community to establish a direction for the future.

A community's **GOALS** form the foundation of its identity and guide is actions and decisions. They identify the driving forces of the community, by adhering to these core goals, the community fosters a sense of unity and purpose, enabling all members to work together towards a common vision of a prosperous and harmonious future.

A **VISION STATEMENT** outlines the collective aspirations and core values of the community. It serves as a guide, highlighting the community's desired future and setting a clear direction for growth and development. Crafted through collaborative input, the vision statement emphasizes key principles such as preservation, recreation, infrastructure, housing, and overall quality of life.

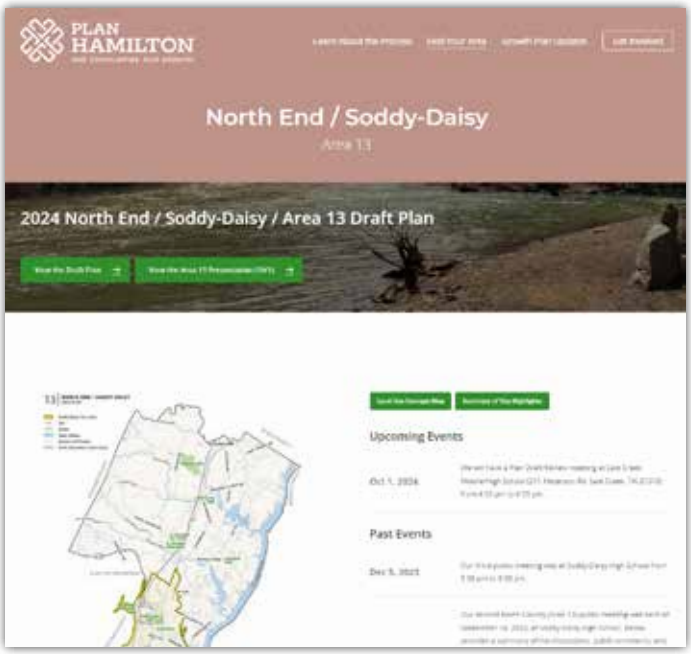
Public Meeting
Source: RPA

3.1 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community feedback is crucial in creating an area plan because it ensures that the voices of those who live, work, and play there are heard and valued. The residents have an intimate understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within their community, providing insights that outside experts might overlook. Engaging the community fosters a sense of ownership and collaboration, making the planning process more inclusive and transparent. By incorporating diverse perspectives, we can create a more comprehensive and effective plan that reflects the true needs and aspirations of the people it serves. Ultimately, community feedback ensures that the final plan promotes sustainable development, enhances quality of life, and preserves the distinctive character of the Middle Valley / Lakesite.

Public input is vital to the success of any planning process and in the area planning process for Hamilton County. Understanding the perspectives of those who live and work in a community every day provides invaluable insights to experts developing concepts and recommendations. Several opportunities were offered for the public to share their thoughts and feedback in various formats with the goal of developing a shared vision. This section outlines the engagement efforts of each event

Plan Hamilton Landing Page
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/



Area 12 Website
Source: RPA Website, https://planhamilton.org/north-end-soddy-daisy/

1600
Aproximate # of people participating in person at various meetings.

505
people participated in the online survey.

35
Community, online, commission meetings, etc.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The following outlines the public meetings held to provide a platform for the community to express concerns, share priorities, and offer feedback on the proposed strategies within the Area Plan. Through an analysis of the themes and perspectives that emerged, this section highlights the key issues raised by participants. Input from these meetings plays a crucial role in shaping the recommendations, ensuring the Area Plan aligns with the community's needs and values.

KICK-OFF

In August 2023, a kick-off meeting took place at the Sale Creek Fire Hall. The goal of the first meeting was to introduce to the purpose of Area planning as well as the process as a whole and gather initial feedback from the community. A summary of the input received at the kick-off meeting is included in Appendix D.

PUBLIC MEETING #2

In September 2023, the second public meeting was held at Soddy-Daisy High School. The goal of this meeting was to not only update the community on the process but to understand the community vision so that was the forefront of the Area planning process before the documents were created.

PUBLIC MEETING #3

In December 2023, the third public meeting was held at Soddy-Daisy High School. The goal of this meeting was to update the community on the progress of the Area planning process before the documents were created.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In addition to in-person engagement, we conducted a comprehensive public opinion survey from August 2023 through October 2023. This survey covered a wide range of topics, including recent and current development, future development, environmental issues, and mobility. The valuable insights gained from the survey are included in Appendix C.

ONLINE INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Two Countywide informational meetings were held online by the RPA in January of 2024 to discuss 4 topics with the public including: Traffic & Transportation, Commercial Centers & Corridors, Housing, and Parks & Greenways.

Draft Plan Meeting

In October 2024, a draft Area Plan meeting was held at Sale Creek Middle / High School. The goal of this meeting was to present the 75% draft version of the Area 13 plan to the community and for the RPA to provide an update of the overall process, how the plan addresses community concerns, and how this plan will guide growth moving forward.

Public Meeting
Source: RPA

Table 6: Community Outreach Timeline for Plan Hamilton

OUTREACH TECHNIQUE	DATE	LOCATION	AREA REACHED
Survey (Online)	08/25 - 10-07/2023	Online	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
1st Round Public Meetings	10/03/2023	Bachman Community Center	7
	09/07/2023	Chester Frost Park Pavilion	8
	08/24/2023	Ooltewah High School	9
	08/29/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	08/21/2023	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
2nd Round Public Meetings	11/28/2023	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	12/05/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	8
	11/16/2023	Ooltewah High School	9 & 12
	09/14/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
	12/05/2023	Soddy Daisy High School	13
Online Informational Meeting 1	01/18/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Online Informational Meeting 2	01/25/2024	Virtual	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Community Meetings	04/19/2023	Collegedale City Hall	12
	06/14/2023	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/15/2023	Veteran's Building, Sequoyah Road	8
	08/16/2023	Lakesite City Hall	8
	09/21/2023	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	9/30/2023	Soddy Lake Park (Booth)	13
	11/09-11/11/2023	Hamilton County Fair	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	1/23/2024	Sale Creek Fire and Rescue	13
	05/16/2024	Tri-Star Beverage	13
	06/20/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	06/25/2024	The Commons	12
	08/01/2024	Century Club Banquet Hall	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	10/24/2024	Century Club	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Draft Plan Review Meeting	09/19/2024	East Hamilton High School	12
	09/25/2024	Walden's Ridge Emergency Services	7
	09/26/2024	Hwy 58 Volunteer Fire Department	9
	10/01/2024	Sale Creek Middle/High School	13
	10/16/2024	Clear Creek Church of Christ	8
Public Hearings	3/28/2023	County Courthouse	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	03/06/2023	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	12/09/2024	Planning Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
	TBD	County Commission	7, 8, 9, 12, & 13
Mass Emails & Social Media	*Additional outreach was conducted through regular email announcements and Facebook updates as well as media releases to local news outlets. The mailing list on average numbered over 2,000 contacts who had registered via the website or at meetings*		

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Commercial uses and services most needed:

1. Food & Beverage
2. Grocery
3. Leisure / Entertainment

34%

Experience mild congestion during peak rush hours

The top 3 infrastructure investments needed:

1. Roads
2. Parks, Greenways & Open Space
3. Schools

Civic uses and services most needed:

1. Trails, Greenways & Sidewalks
2. Parks & Open Space
3. Pool or Recreation Center

Type of Commercial Development the community would support:

67%
Neighborhood Commercial

38%
Mixed-Use Commercial

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

"Maintain rural feel"

"Programs to educate the public, developers, and decision makers about the North Chickamauga Creek and its presence and its value to our community"

"A running / walking / biking trail is needed in the Soddy-Daisy Area"

"Concerned about emergency services and fire protection, dependent on volunteer service"

"Inter-modal or multi-modal services for meeting our transportation needs"

"Preserve family farms and rural land"

"Establish a trail head for the Cumberland Trail at McDonald Farm"

"Develop a public park for McDonald Farm"

3.2 AREA PLAN GOALS

These seven general Area plan goals apply to all five unincorporated Areas and create a blueprint for balanced and sustainable growth in Hamilton County, enhancing its unique character and natural beauty. These goals are based on the four Community Themes established in Chapter 2 including Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Facilities.

By focusing on strategic growth management, we aim to harmonize new development with existing community values and landscapes, fostering economic vitality while preserving the charm of our neighborhoods. Our commitment to conserving natural resources ensures they are protected and enhanced for future generations, promoting sustainable practices. Providing diverse and affordable housing options is essential for an inclusive and thriving community. Ensuring housing meets the needs of all residents supports a diverse population and fosters socioeconomic stability.

By addressing these interconnected goals, Hamilton County is committed to creating a resilient, vibrant, and sustainable future that enhances the quality of life for all residents. Each goal is paired with specific policy recommendations and strategies to ensure successful implementation and long-term benefits for our community.

3.3 VISION STATEMENT

As we look toward the future of the unincorporated areas of Hamilton County, we aim to craft a vision statement that captures our shared aspirations and values. This statement isn't just a list of goals; it's a reflection of our dedication to honoring our rich heritage while embracing sustainable growth. We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents through thoughtful development, preserving our natural resources, and fostering economic opportunities. By engaging in collaborative and transparent planning, we will build resilient, connected, and thriving neighborhoods where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations. This vision statement will serve as our guide, illuminating the path toward a vibrant and inclusive future for Hamilton County's unincorporated areas.

To create vibrant and SUSTAINABLE communities that honor our heritage while embracing growth. We aim to ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE by promoting THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT, preserving NATURAL RESOURCES, and fostering ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES. Through collaborative and transparent planning, we will build RESILIENT, CONNECTED, and THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS where everyone can live, work, and prosper together for generations.

CHAPTER 4
PLANS, POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW
4.2 PLACE TYPES
4.3 POLICIES

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

4.1 PLANNING OVERVIEW

The CHCRPA draws on a wide range of resources to determine the most suitable land uses within Hamilton County. While standard practices such as zoning often guide these decisions, it's crucial to recognize that the rich history of our neighborhoods and the specific desires and needs of the community extend beyond these conventional frameworks.

This chapter outlines the three key steps in the planning process used as part of the comprehensive planning effort. The primary aim of these steps is to prioritize community character, ensuring that each area's unique identity and needs are at the forefront of decision-making. While these steps prioritize the preservation of each area's identity, it's important to note that they operate alongside public input and community programming integrated throughout the process. By leveraging distinct planning models, the RPA has developed Place Types that cater to the specific conditions of each of the unincorporated areas within Hamilton County. The process begins with a thorough understanding of each area's unique characteristics and needs. These Place Types serve as a foundation for developing customized conditions and recommendations. The final step involves formulating specific Policies, which provide best practices for implementing the earlier planning stages.

The RPA's approach is uniquely multi-layered, incorporating best management practices tailored to the needs of each individual Area. This method ensures that land use decisions are not only guided by standard practices but also by a deep understanding of local contexts, resulting in a planning process that is responsive to the diverse needs of Hamilton County's communities.

#1

PLANNING MODELS

The RPA and their consultants have developed Countywide Growth Capacity Modeling to show current trends. This influenced the Centers and Corridors approach to planning which is graphically displayed in the Conceptual Land Use Map. These maps identify Centers, Corridors, and general land use determinations in advance of Place Type mapping that were informed by community feedback, existing policy, existing code, proposed policy and Place Types, as well as general community character.

#2

PLACE TYPES

The RPA has created a palette of 23 Place Types to describe the various uses, forms, and character that development can take throughout the County. and its jurisdictions. The section identifies how they are used and which ones exist in Area 13. The RPA's Place Types Matrix addresses a range of contexts from most urban to most rural based on the transect model. Each Place Type policy includes a general description, real-world examples, recommended land uses, guidance on intensity and form, mobility, and infrastructure.

#3

POLICIES

The policy recommendations are inspired from the 4 Community Themes which created the 7 Goals for Unincorporated Area Plans. Each Area Plan will have customized Policy Recommendations based on the community's character, needs, land use, zoning, Place Types, planning models,etc. The policy recommendations are intended to be a guide for implementation at the regulatory level and create a standard by which this document is regulated.

CENTERS AND CORRIDOR APPROACH

The Centers and Corridors Approach is a land development strategy that the RPA has developed to address growth and redevelopment throughout Chattanooga and Hamilton County and which will influence this plan's recommendations. It has three essential concepts:

- Walkable, clustered Centers where retail uses are concentrated.
- Corridors comprised of a mix of uses when in suburban areas or with deep setbacks to preserve rural character.
- Medium and higher density housing near Centers and Corridors to support their economic vitality and local transit viability.

*This approach addresses the plan's seven Goals and the **community's preferences**:*

1. Complete Communities

A mix of housing types in close proximity to centers and corridors gives residents convenient access to daily needs, employment, recreation, and transportation options.

2. Connected Communities

Connected communities enable walking, biking, and transit options, all of which depend on a mix of uses in close proximity. Concentrating businesses in Centers and at key locations along transit Corridors makes these alternate transportation modes more feasible, helping to reduce congestion.

3. Healthy Communities

Communities, where active transportation options and public greenways and parks are available, tend to be healthier: Proximity to these amenities allows people to recreate and get around by providing the built environment to do so.

4. Safe Communities

The Centers and Corridors Approach promotes more eyes on the street, by locating buildings up to the sidewalk, animating the street edge with doors and windows, and more frequent pedestrian activity. Corridors with sidewalks, street trees, and bike lanes promote safe and efficient movement for all users of the street, including motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

5. Unique and Attractive Communities

Place Types emphasize form and character which helps preserve and foster distinctive and memorable places. Due to changes in commercial corridors throughout the County having vacancies, new opportunities are presented for multi-family housing providing redevelopment opportunities for more compact site planning, smaller tenant spaces suited to local businesses, and integrated attached single-family and multi-family. This can ; increase profits for businesses, reduce traffic and congestion related impacts, and help to preserve the character of existing single-family neighborhoods consistent with input from local residents.

6. Economically Vibrant Communities

Given finite government resources, the Centers and Corridors approach helps prioritize where City resources are invested. Walkable, compact Centers have significant economic impacts for the County Centers require a certain number of households within a given proximity (depending on their size) in order to sustain businesses. Businesses also tend to be more successful in Centers where retail, services, and housing are all clustered in a compact, walkable environment. Also, compact development yields more tax revenue per acre than dispersed development, thus contributing to the overall wealth and economic vitality of the area.

4.1.2 CONCEPTUAL LAND USE MAP

The conceptual land use map is intended to identify the high-level areas for initial recommendations to inform the place type mapping. The Conceptual Land Use Map is illustrative, whereas the Place Types Map defines development patterns and set policies for future growth. These Concept maps were created early in the process to identify potential major Centers and Corridors, Resort/Recreation, Special Districts and Residential. The purpose of these maps is to provide guidance to residents, development interests, utility providers, planners, and County leadership on what areas should be primarily preserved in their current form with incremental growth and where new growth should be planned for to support economic opportunity and a balance of services across the County. The Conceptual land use maps also identify areas with challenging topographic or hydrologic constraints, existing agricultural use, locations of regional facilities, and recreational assets. While parcel size and density was considered this map is generalized to highlight projected trends and opportunities and to provide guidance on where public and private sector investments are most warranted.

Centers & Corridors

Centers and Corridors are planned considering a variety of factors including utility infrastructure capacity, transportation factors, proximity to schools and emergency services, environmental conditions, recreational access, housing opportunities, and access to commercial services. Centers provide the opportunity to integrate commercial services into our neighborhoods in a predictable manner with accompanying infrastructure investments and site considerations.

Center Example
Source: Continuum

Corridor designations have been applied in rural areas to indicate opportunities to preserve rural landscape, views, and development patterns, consolidate points of access to primary roadways, limit congestion, and to protect rural lifestyles. In suburban settings, corridors are utilized to demonstrate primary transportation corridors that will experience continued development pressure and warrant access management improvements.

Rural Corridor
Source: RPA

Residential

Residential place types are the places (outside of centers and corridors) that make up the neighborhoods we call home. They can be urban or rural, vertical and dense, or secluded retreats and are the building blocks of most traditional neighborhoods and modern suburbs.

Residential Cont.

When a community wants to incorporate space for a school, a corner restaurant or coffee shop, a convenience store, an accountant's office or even a care facility for elderly family members; the residential Place Types may not accommodate these uses. This is the reason for the variety of scale and intensity of Centers which may be used to complement residential areas to provide for daily needs services and a place for mixed residential units. This approach protects single-family residential areas and provides for a more complete community.

Residential Example
Source: Marco Homes

Resort/Recreation

Resort Recreation Centers are introduced in this plan as a specialty district place type. Hamilton County has a wealth of recreational assets from highly programmed parks, to blended park-preserves such as Enterprise Nature Park, to traditional passive use natural areas and preserves. These special use areas have all found a place in the hearts of recreation enthusiasts as varied as league sports athletes, paddlers, fitness walkers, bird watchers, runners, cyclists, nature photographers, and neighborhood residents looking for a safe quiet walk. Not as readily recognized has been the economic potential of these assets and the user groups who love them. Working from community and stakeholder input locations have been identified where commerce can be sustainably integrated with recreation to provide jobs, tax base, and income while enhancing and preserving our community recreational resources.

Resort Recreation Example
Source: City of Rockwood, TN

Specialty Districts

Specialty Districts are used to designate the places that form the fabric of our community. They may not be where we live or shop but they house many of the other essential resources we require to thrive in modern society. These include the campuses where our children attend school, the land and facilities that produce our food, power our utility grids, clean our water, house our medical and emergency response facilities, build our communities, and manufacture the products we utilize every day. In many cases, this means they are also our places of employment.

Specialty District Example
Source: Volkswagen

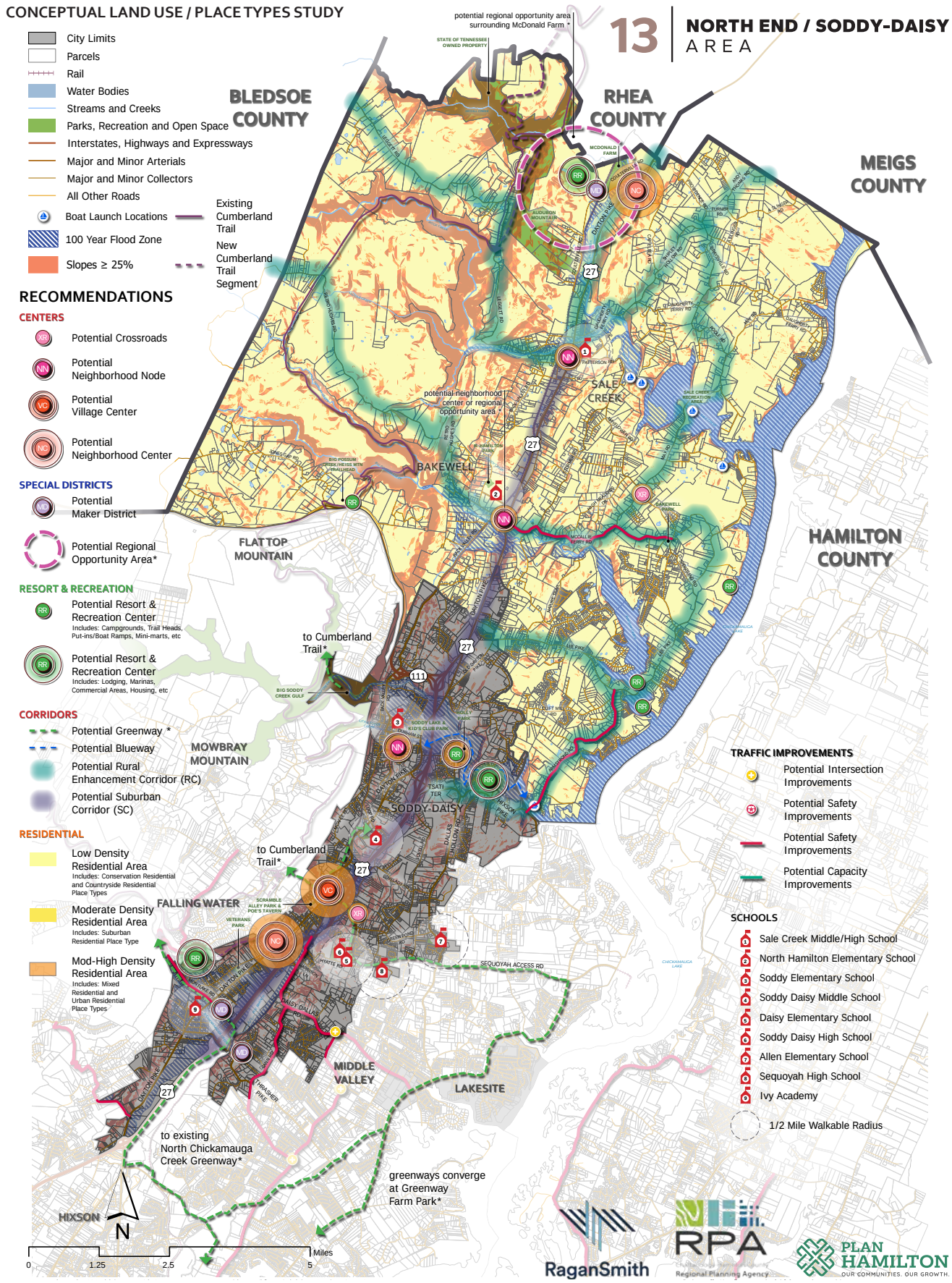


Figure 4.4: Conceptual Land Use Map

4.1.3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A primary growth strategy for Area 13 is to promote sustainable resort and recreational center developments capitalizing on these assets to create jobs, tax revenues, and focus transportation and utility investments. Specific recommendations are as follows:

Source: RPA

Special Districts:

» McDonald Farm has been identified as a Regional Opportunity Area. The vision for short- and long-term use of the property should be driven by a combination of careful market / economic evaluation, analysis of infrastructure costs for various uses and return on investment, and community dialog with taxpayers and residents.

» The County purchase of the McDonald Farm offers potential for property investments to serve a wide range of potential community needs from community event and park space to recreational tourism, agricultural commerce and heritage, lodging, residential growth, and job creation. Featuring the agricultural heritage of the property and creating public access to the natural beauty of the property and surrounding area should be included in future plans.

A study is underway for the McDonald Farm site. Above is an early concept diagram that notes a mix of uses may be possible for the area, with conservation of the agricultural and open space qualities serving as a guiding theme.
Image Source: Ragan Smith

Resort/Recreation:

A Resort Recreation Center should be encouraged near Mowbray Pike / Montlake Road serving as a hub for North Chickamauga Creek State Park, the Cumberland Trail, climbing, hiking, and paddling assets. Support the addition of lodging, cabins, camping, trailhead facilities, and new hiking and biking trails.

Centers:

» The crossroads communities of Sale Creek and Bakewell have been the traditional centers of local commerce, faith, and culture. These communities should continue to be augmented and be the focal point for growth in Area 13 as infrastructure allows. Growth in both areas is currently limited by utility infrastructure. However, the presence of existing businesses, employers, schools, and churches dictate that future growth should be anticipated in these centers.

Additional Opportunities for Growth:

» US-27 bisects Area 13 along its North/South axis and provides short travel times to the communities of Soddy Daisy, Red Bank, and Chattanooga. This will eventually lead to demand for residential growth and associated commercial services for those wanting to enjoy the natural and scenic qualities, rural lifestyle, and solitude of this area with an easy commute to area employers.

» Rural Corridors - many of the primary roadways have been identified as rural corridors where setbacks for new development should be instituted to preserve scenic visual access to surrounding farms and natural features. Access management and connectivity standards should also be required along these corridors to maintain rural experience and maintain efficiency of travel for emergency vehicles, school buses, farm equipment and existing residents.

Resort/Recreation and Crossroad examples here feature small scale lodging and a typical retail node that may provide services to residents and tourists alike.

Source: Rural Design Guide FHWA

4.2 PLACE TYPES

Place Types are carefully designated to guide future development and align with the community's vision and adopted plans. These designations indicate whether an area is slated for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with minimal alterations. Key considerations include existing zoning, proximity to centers, schools, and parks, as well as the presence of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services. Once Area Plans are adopted, these Place Type designations become essential tools for the Regional Planning Agency (RPA) in making informed zoning decisions. Recommendations for zoning changes are made based on how well the proposed zone aligns with the intended characteristics of the Place Type.

Place Types illustrate a desired character to guide development across a range of community types, from the most urban to suburban, to the most rural places. This distinction is prominently noted in the names of most Place Types, such as Suburban Residential, Urban Residential, and Countryside Residential. Some key elements that contribute to Hamilton County's sense of place include important vistas, the river and its setting within the forested ridges, our diversity of trees, and our historic buildings. This sense of place can occur at multiple levels - across an entire city, within individual neighborhoods, or in a specific block. The transect graphic below identifies seven general levels of the natural environment to the built environment. The Place Types were partially based on this transect model to ensure that all aspects of Hamilton County's character were considered.

To promote good placemaking, the RPA uses Place Types to influence the form and character of development. This is done alongside the Centers and Corridors approach, as described in Chapter 4.1, to guide different types of development to the most suitable locations. This is based on factors such as Land Use and Development Character, Resiliency, Mobility and Transportation, and Community Facilities.

By designating Place Types, we are not just planning for the present but also safeguarding the unique essence of Hamilton County for future generations. Whether it's the urban vibrancy, suburban charm, or rural tranquility, each Place Type plays a crucial role in maintaining the region's distinct identity and ensuring thoughtful, cohesive development.

Figure 4.5: Transect Zones from Natural (left) to Special District (right) Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, DPZ

4.2.1 HOW ARE THEY USED?

Place Types reflect whether the community vision and adopted plan identifies an area for significant change, gradual transformation, or preservation with little change. Other factors, such as the surrounding or existing zoning, proximity to Centers, schools or parks, the location of natural resources, necessary infrastructure, and public services are considered. Once Area Plans are adopted, the Place Type designations within those Plans are used by the RPA to inform zoning decisions. A recommendation for a zoning change is based on whether the requested zone will result in the Place Type characteristics described in this chapter.

The following Place Types represent the full palette of Place Types available throughout the County but not all Place Types are used in all areas.

The Area Plan recommendation and Place Types are not intended to limit development during the subdivision platting process for properties zoned R-1 Residential District or other residential zoning district or having a Special Exceptions Permit for a Planned Unit Development prior to plan adoption. Existing zoning density and conditions should not be overridden by Plan Hamilton for platting purposes in residential or commercial zones, but all setback and buffering language should apply to new preliminary plats (those not already accepted by RPA at the time of plan adoption). The subdivision of such land shall follow the Hamilton County Subdivision Regulations standard procedures.

Place Types layout out a vision for future land uses and they are intended to guide development choices. Once a plan and its associated Place Type map is adopted, then a request to study new zoning designations and assess what tools are needed to achieve the adopted vision may occur. A zoning study typically follows within 6 months to a year of plan adoption depending on the level of change desired or other influences.

- Place Types are not zoning.
- Place Types are recommended future development patterns.
- Place Types are policy.
- Place Types are used to inform zoning decisions.
- Zoning is a regulation.
- One or more zoning districts may be used to develop a Place Type.

PREDOMINANT USES, LIMITED USES, AND DENSITY

Place Types intentionally promote a mix of uses as a means of providing residents with more housing choices and more access to daily needs and jobs. Each Place Type listed in this subchapter provides examples of potential uses, along with other elements that generally define its character and are divided into:

1. **Predominant Uses** – The most prevalent, most frequently
2. **Limited Uses** – Less common, but can still be compatible with the predominant use if limited to certain locations, limited in size, buffered from adjacent uses, etc.

> *"Place Types do not necessarily describe what exists today, but rather the desired vision of what a place may become."*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (CHRPA)*

While limited uses are less prevalent in a Place Type, they can provide additional services and housing options, while maintaining compatibility with the predominant use. However, a proliferation of limited uses will change the character of an area, and the original intent of the Place Type can be lost. Often, rezoning requests are for these limited uses, and where Limited Uses are listed additional guidance has been provided regarding the appropriateness of integrating the use into the Place Type.

Each of the following Place Types includes:

- A two or three letter abbreviation, and the color, used to identify each on the Place Types map.
- A general description of the typical, or ideal, situation.
- A list of characteristics that are generally needed to support the intended development form of the Place Type.
- Examples of the predominant uses.
- Examples of the limited uses.
- Illustrative photos, presented as examples only.

4.2.2 CATEGORIES & PLACE TYPES IN AREA 13

There are 23 Place Types in total as provided and amended from time to time by the RPA on their website. The four categories with listing of Place Types are below. On the pages following in this section are the individual Place Types that appear in Hamilton County and as shown on the Place Type Map (Figure 4.6).

RESIDENTIAL

- *Countryside Residential (CR)*
- *Suburban Residential (SR)*
- *Urban Residential (UR)*
- *Mixed Residential (MR)*

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

- *Preserve (PR)*
- *Agricultural (AG)*
- *Resort & Recreation (RR)*
- *Industrial (IN)*
- *Maker District (MD)*
- *Campus (CA)*
- *Regional Facility (RF)*

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

- *Crossroads (XR)*
- *Neighborhood Node (NN)*
- *Neighborhood Center (NC)*
- *Village Center (VC)*
- *Town Center (TC)*
- *Downtown Core (DC)*
- *Suburban Corridor (SC)*
- *Mixed-use Corridor (MC)*
- *Transit Corridor (TRC)*

OVERLAYS

- *Natural Resources (NR)*
- *Urban Residential Single-Family (UR-SF)*
- *Rural Corridor (RC)*

Table 7: Density

PLACE TYPE	MAXIMUM DENSITY	GENERAL INTENSITY
CR Countryside Residential	*See Place Type*	Low Density
SR Suburban Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Low to Medium Density
SR Suburban Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 5 dwelling units/acre	Medium Density
MD Maker District	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
NN Neighborhood Node	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Principal)	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
MR Mixed Residential (Limited)	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
NC Neighborhood Center	Maximum of 8 dwelling units/acre	Medium to High Density
UR Urban Residential	Maximum of 15 dwelling units/acre	High Density
SC Suburban Corridor	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre	High Density
VC Village Center	Maximum of 12 dwelling units/acre	High Density
RR Resort & Recreation	N/A	Varies if Type A or B *See Place Type Description*

CENTERS

XR Crossroads

Generally four acres or less, Crossroads are smaller than Village Centers or Town Centers and are most often located in rural Areas. They may serve as gateways to adjacent neighborhoods. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection of two arterial or collector streets, or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses meets some of the daily needs of the immediate residents with stores, restaurants and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Over time when the infrastructure needed to support more intense development is in place, Crossroads may grow into the larger Village Center.

Uses

Retail, restaurants, garden centers, personal services, offices, gas stations, small markets, auto repair, landscape businesses, and small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops).

NN Neighborhood Node

Located in urban or suburban Areas, and generally a total of only two acres or less, Neighborhood Nodes are much smaller than Village or Town Centers. Smaller footprint buildings frame a single intersection or extend a short distance from the intersection. This small cluster of businesses provides goods and services, such as laundromats, restaurants, small grocers, and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses, to the immediate surrounding community. Residential uses over retail or office are common.

Uses

Small retail and restaurants, convenience stores, personal services, offices, farmers' markets, small industries/workshops (such as breweries, bakeries and woodworking shops), live/work, short-term vacation rental, and two, three and four-unit dwellings

When a Neighborhood Node is located along a Mixed-use Corridor or Transit Corridor, the building size in the Neighborhood Node should be consistent with its surrounding corridor type (typically larger than described above), but the uses at that location should include ground-floor commercial or services.

NC Neighborhood Center

Usually found in suburban locations, Neighborhood Centers are shopping centers of 5–15 acres that provide goods and services primarily to the surrounding neighborhoods. They are not part of a continuous "strip" of commercial uses along a corridor, but rather are limited to a single quadrant of an intersection and surrounded by residential development. They usually have large, shared parking lots with a few outparcel buildings that face the street. Some include smaller commercial properties on the other corners of the intersection. Neighborhood Centers often have one large building that houses multiple stores, deeper building setbacks, an emphasis on vehicle access, and limited civic services. Neighborhood Centers may be redeveloped as Village or Town Centers with a more walkable and urban form, over time.

Uses

Grocery stores, retail and restaurants, offices, personal services, small workshop/industries (such as studios, work spaces, bakeries, breweries, woodworking shops or other low impact production), townhomes, and minor auto service/repair

VC Village Center

Larger than Neighborhood Nodes, but smaller than Town Centers, the Village Center (generally 2–10 acres) is a pedestrian-oriented cluster of medium footprint buildings, with a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Multi-story buildings with residential uses over retail or offices are common. Due to their intensity, Village Centers are typically located along transit routes, but primarily serve local residents. Walking, biking and transit are prioritized over auto use in Village Centers, with shared parking lots providing a park-once environment. Pedestrian entrances front directly onto the sidewalks, with window displays at the ground floor to provide interest for pedestrians. Village Centers are often organized around a central public square or park. Village Centers may, over time, grow into Town Centers.

Uses

Civic institutions, public square or park, retail, restaurants, offices, personal services, lodging, live/work, small industries/workshops (such as studios, bakeries, breweries, or woodworking, or other low impact production), townhomes, short-term vacation rentals and two, three and four-unit dwellings.

CORRIDORS

SC

Suburban Corridor

Suburban Corridors have a linear configuration because they are located along major commercial streets, however they differ from Mixed-use and Transit Corridors in that the development along them tends to be more spread out. They are not typically served by frequent transit. Businesses along Suburban Corridors serve a large geographic Area and are primarily accessed by car. Buildings tend to be single-story and house a single use with deep setbacks from the street. Some developments have a horizontal mix of uses within a larger site. The types of businesses found along Suburban Corridors range from stand-alone restaurants and stores, to "strip" shopping centers, to regional malls, medical centers, multi-story office buildings, and hotels. Multi-unit residential is also a growing use along suburban corridors, either as new construction or as retrofits of older retail centers or hotels.

Predominant Uses

Retail, multi-unit housing, offices, restaurants, personal services, medical facilities, lodging, small workshops and artist studios, recreation and entertainment (such as bowling, mini golf, conference centers, theaters) and assisted living facilities.

Limited Uses

Auto-oriented services when located along a major corridor or at the corner of a major intersection.

RESIDENTIAL

CR

Countryside Residential

Countryside Residential Place Types have a very rural character and consist primarily of single-family homes on large lots. Countryside Residential may include open fields, woodlands, and streams or lakes, as well as accessory buildings, such as barns and greenhouses. This Place Type also includes the County's agricultural uses related to the production of crops, livestock, forestry uses and agricultural service businesses ranging from roadside vegetable stands or feed & seed stores to larger production facilities.

Residences and development centered around farming are typically on septic systems. Residences are generally further from key destinations than in other residential Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs. Fixed-route transit is not feasible, and sidewalks are not likely, due to the low density of these Areas.

Countryside Residential maximum densities are as follows:

- 1.5 dwelling units per acre (development on septic),
- 3 dwelling units per acre (developed on sewer), and
- 2.75 dwelling units per acre (developed on decentralized sewer systems or where new approved technology allows*)

** When new information or technological improvements to the decentralized systems becomes available, staff will present information to the County Commission for direction.*

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached, farming activities, accessory buildings (barns, greenhouses, etc.), manufactured homes

Limited Uses

Event facilities, golf courses, and campgrounds where appropriate infrastructure exists and development impacts such as noise, traffic, and activity are directed away from existing residential uses.

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- Buffer and setback from right-of-way:
  - Require a 30' wide planted landscape buffer from existing ROW.
  - For exterior street facing garages, garage doors must be set back 20' from the right-of-way.
- Perimeter buffer:
  - Plant 2 inch caliper trees around entire perimeter of development; minimum of 30' on center. If existing vegetation is equivalent to or greater along the perimeter, the existing vegetation would count towards this requirement.
  - Behind said buffer- require a 25' rear setback and a 10' side setback if the side of the house is adjacent to the buffer.
- Floodplains
  - Floodplains may be filled up to three fifths the distance of the length of the floodplain on the property. For instance if a floodplain is 100' in length from a water body – one can fill up to 60 feet in length of that floodplain length.
- Steep Slopes
  - Adopt a steep slope vegetation policy and planting requirements *(Reference: City of Chattanooga Code Sec. 31-324.4)*

SR Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential Place Type has a predominantly low intensity, single-family detached, residential development pattern, especially within the same block. Some moderate density residential development, such as small lot houses or attached townhomes, may exist, but are located on a major street or near a transit route or school. When next to lower density residential development, this moderate intensity infill development maintains the existing rhythm and feel of the street. Factors that play into this rhythm and feel include lot width, setbacks, building massing, and height. Open spaces are typically private (back yards), but greenways may provide connectivity. Residences in this Place Type are generally further from key destinations than those in other Place Types therefore, a personal vehicle is needed to reach daily needs.

Predominant Uses

Single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units/acre, accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

Limited Uses

The following uses when located within a 1/4 mile of a public school or park or center where appropriate infrastructure exists: single-unit detached residences up to 5 dwelling units an acre; townhomes (up to 4 massed units per building); and two, three, and four unit housing

Development Standards

The following development standards will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- *Require ADA compliant sidewalks in Suburban Residential Development Standards unless the average lot size is 1 acre or above, in all plans, to ensure pedestrian infrastructure in denser subdivisions.*

MR Mixed Residential

The Mixed Residential Place Type is intended to provide a wide range of housing options for residents at various stages of life, and walkable destinations in close proximity. Due to their intensity, Mixed Residential developments are located along major streets, or within walking distance (1/4-mile) of a transit route. The Mixed Residential Place Type includes moderate to higher intensity housing. Taller multi-family buildings are located along streets, with shorter buildings on local streets to provide a transition to any less intense residential uses.

Predominant Uses

Two, three and four unit residences, multi-family residential with 5–12 units per building, cottage courts, townhomes, manufactured home parks, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Limited Uses

Multi-family of over 12 units per buildings should directed towards major streets/corridor or adjacent to a center.

SPECIALTY DISTRICTS

PR Preserve

Preserves are large expanses of forest, floodplains and other natural resources, as well as public parks and recreation Areas that have been set aside as places where general development is not allowed. They may also include privately-owned land that is permanently protected by conservation easements and remains in a largely undeveloped state. Some may be used for passive recreation, while others are largely off limits to human use due to sensitive natural resources or their remote location. Development within the Preserve is minimized, and is limited to cultural, educational or recreational uses.

Uses

Undisturbed open space, visitors' centers, nature centers, public parks, active and passive recreation, trails, cemeteries, and accessory structures such as concessions, storage and parking.

RR Resort and Recreation

The Resort and Recreation Place Type supports outdoor activities such as camping, boating, golfing, bouldering, mountain biking, as well as corporate nature retreats, and eco-tourism activities. These places are focused on enjoying nature, exceptional views, or historic landmarks. However, unlike Preserves, which are primarily government-owned properties with very limited development, such as a state or County park, the Resort and Recreation Place Type can include multiple private businesses with more development, such as marinas, hotels, restaurants and even housing. Properties may range in size from a 20-acre campground to 100+ acre resorts

Resort Type A accommodates a more intense outdoor recreation and park experience and could include hotels, conferences centers, large campgrounds/RV parks and related uses or even a full resort. Oftentimes these are located in or adjacent to state or county parks or may develop from a golf course or event facility such as a fairground or agritourism site. The development size and location should be designed so that the impact of this larger-scale format lessens potential negative aspects.

Resort Type B accommodates smaller-scale or less intense recreational activities such as golf courses, ballfields, cultural facilities, marinas, and related accessory use such as parking areas, small campgrounds or cabins, and related retail goods such as camp stores, farm stands, and equipment rental (kayaks/canoes, bicycles, etc.)

Predominant Uses

Campgrounds/RV parks, hotels, cabins, restaurants, marinas, camp stores, golf courses, agriculture-related businesses (e.g. boarding stables, riding academies), farming activities

Limited Uses

Single-unit housing (detached and attached) and reception facilities as a secondary use integrated into a resort.

CA Campus

Campus Place Types are characterized by one major activity such as educational, office, industrial, medical, or religious. Campuses are typically based on a master plan that incorporates buildings, open spaces, streets, pedestrian networks, and parking in a unified manner. Campuses have clearly defined edges—often delineated with gateway structures and landscape—that distinguish them from adjacent Place Types. Residential buildings and small convenience services often support the predominant use. Campuses function as major employment and activity centers and are often served by public or private transit.

Uses

Institutions (such as academic, medical, religious or research facilities), offices, clubhouses/ meeting halls, athletic facilities, non-noxious/non-nuisance manufacturing and industrial, open space, multi-family residences (residence halls and dormitories), onsite retail and food services, and staff housing.

Existing schools, large medical and church campuses, government facilities, and corporate headquarters are identified as the Campus Place Type. However, as land use and property owners change over time, the Campus designation may no longer be applicable. In that case, the plan goals, surrounding Place Types, and context should all be considered in identifying future use/reuse of the former Campus site.

IN Industrial

The Industrial Place Type supports a variety of manufacturing uses. Unlike the Maker District Place Type, the Industrial Place Type includes both non-noxious operations (no hazardous materials or pollution) and noxious industries (heavy industrial production). The latter are not located adjacent to residential Areas, but are not so far away as to be a commute burden. The size of lots (2+ acres) and buildings are often larger than those in the Maker District Place Type.

Uses

Light manufacturing and industrial facilities, including assembly facilities, offices, distribution, warehousing, wholesaling, retail specifically related to the primary use and self storage facilities.

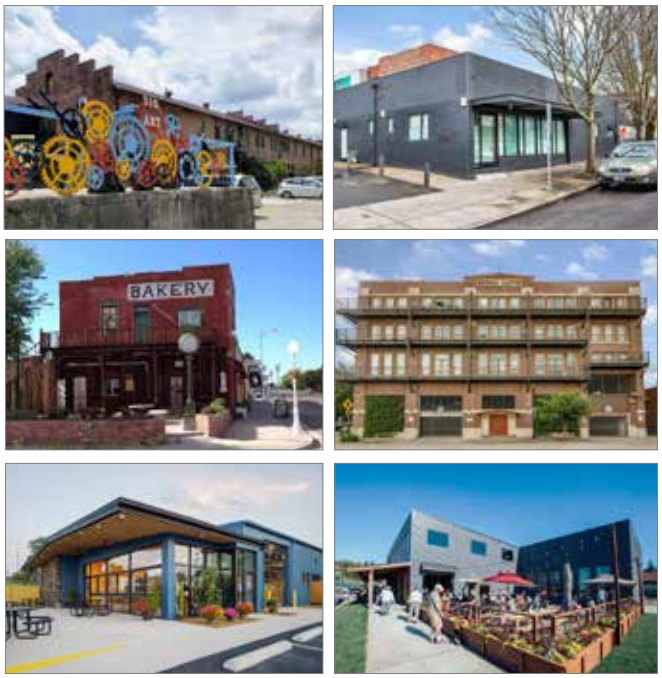
Limited Uses

Heavy manufacturing should be located along major transportation infrastructure and directed away from existing development.

There are limited areas of industrial uses in the County today. Some smaller scale industrial areas may appropriately transition to Maker Districts supporting a combinations of contractors, skilled trades, repair specialists, artists and artisans, food production, and service centers.

Maker District

Maker District Place Types are live-work districts where housing and workplaces are located in close proximity to each other, providing residents with convenient access to employment. They include a mix of light manufacturing, assembly, and contractor businesses, along with multi-family residential and commercial uses. Older smaller industrial structures that have been adapted for new purposes are frequently found here. Industrial facilities are non-noxious (no hazardous materials or pollution), and non-nuisance (no odors, excessive light, or heavy truck traffic). Due to these smaller buildings, short block lengths, and the mix of other uses, these Areas are generally walkable. Parks, plazas, and neighborhood-serving retail enhance the character and livability of the Area.



Uses

Non-noxious/non-nuisance light manufacturing, assembly, distribution, small workshop/industries (such as woodworking shops, bakeries, or other low impact production), studios, breweries, contractor's offices, live/work, multi-unit residential, retail, offices, restaurants, vehicle repair, gas stations, outdoor storage yard, and self storage facilities

OVERLAYS

Natural Resources Overlay

The Natural Resources Overlay is not a Place Type in and of itself. It is an Overlay on top of the underlying Place Type that identifies Areas considered sensitive due to the presence of steep slopes, floodplains or wetlands. Sites within this overlay are not protected by law from development. The purpose, therefore, is to identify these sensitive Areas so that they are given consideration for protection, or incorporated as amenities within new developments. Some sites are already developed and the overlay designation does not mean development cannot expand in these Areas; it merely identifies the location of floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.

Predominant Uses

Uses are defined by the underlying Place Type.

RC Rural Corridor

Primarily located in rural parts of the County, and are characterized by lots of open fields and woodlands. Development along Rural Corridors is sparse with farms or single unit homes on large estate lots. A few scattered subdivisions with smaller lots may have entries along these corridors, but the homes are separated from the corridor by distance (50 - 100 feet), and by dense vegetated buffers, in order to preserve the rural character of the corridor. Rural Corridors do not have the more dense, connecting street networks. They are typically two-lane roads. Rural Corridors may however, also take the form of a major thoroughfare, such as a state designated scenic parkway, with mountainside or lakefront views. A few commercial uses, often located at a Crossroads intersection, or as a stand-alone business, may be found along Rural Corridors, but no long stretches of commercial businesses.

The purpose of the rural corridor overlay is primarily to address new subdivision development. A rural corridor setback for a subdivision for the purposes of the plan refers to a required distance that new development must maintain from a designated corridor, as detailed on the Place Type map. The intent of the setback is to protect the character and environmental integrity of the rural landscape. The setback does not apply to individual homes outside a major subdivision.

Development Standard

The following development standard will guide future development and will be codified in the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations and/or inform zoning conditions:

- A 50-foot setback from right of way of existing roadway for any structure including water quality features;
- a 30-foot type A landscape buffer is required along the entire frontage;
- adequate right of way as determined by the County Engineer should also be required as a condition to be given to accommodate an additional lane if a rezoning case is requested along the Rural Corridor overlay.

4.2.3 PLACE TYPES MAP

See separate Place Type Map. Not included due to size.

4.2.4 CENTERS & CORRIDORS VIGNETTES

The Centers and Corridors Vignettes bring to life a vision for thoughtfully guided growth in key locations across our communities. By focusing on high-potential centers and strategically important corridors, these vignettes illustrate how balanced land use—combining residential, commercial, and recreational spaces—can shape places that are both dynamic and resilient. Each vignette reveals how carefully aligned planning can elevate connectivity, support walkable neighborhoods, and foster economic growth while preserving Hamilton County's distinctive character, natural beauty, and cultural heritage. Through these targeted narratives, we explore how well-designed centers and corridors not only strengthen community identity but also enhance access to essential services, encourage diverse transportation options, and bolster the area's long-term sustainability. This vision aligns with the unique needs and values of Hamilton County residents, building a legacy of vibrant, and adaptable communities.

The following depictions are intended to represent one idea of potential future development at these locations. Any future development or redevelopment at these locations would need to be initiated by the private property owner. Where there is a mismatch between a vignette and the Place Type map, the Place Type map reflects the official policy.

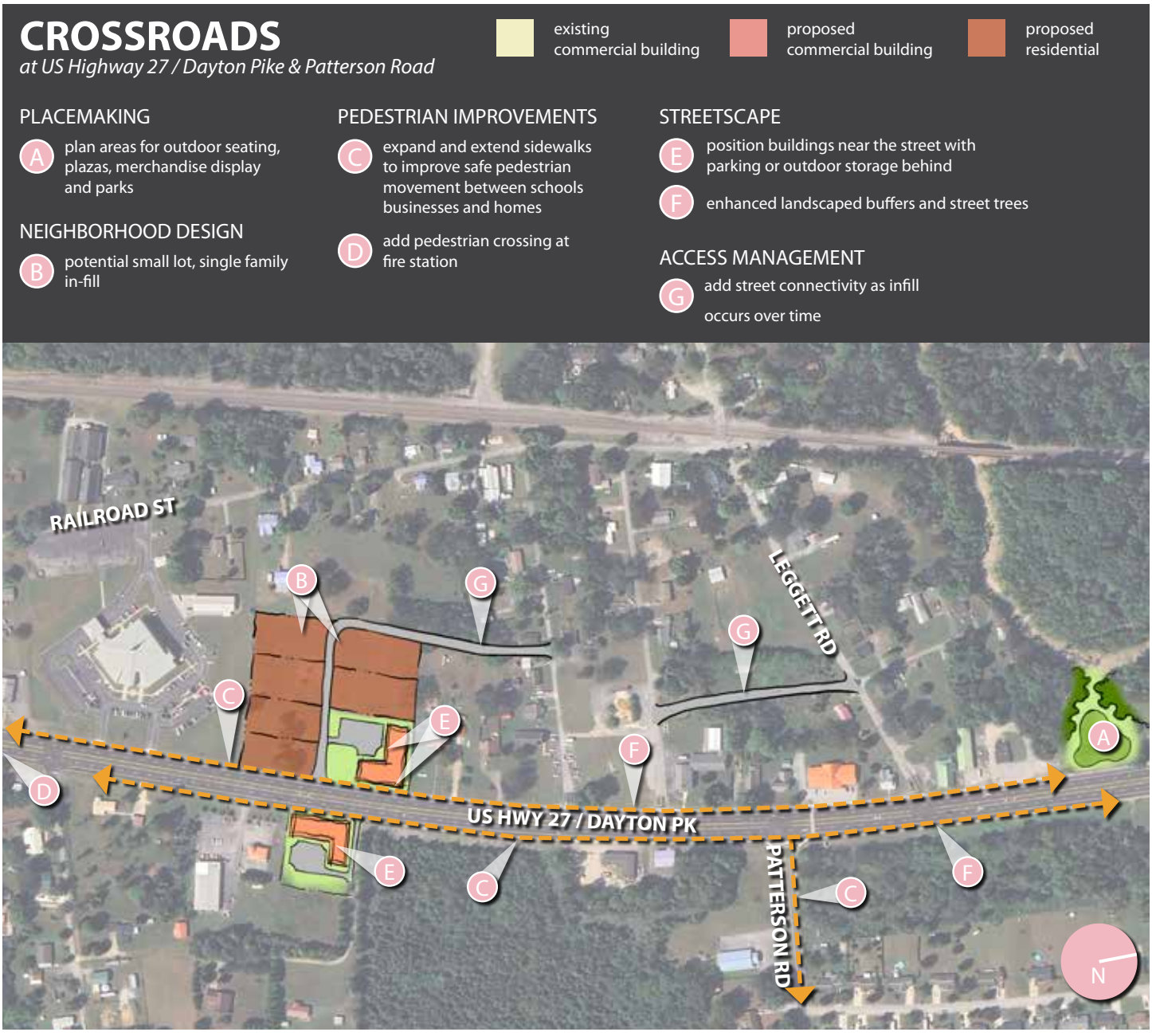


Figure 4.7: Vignette Recommendation, Crossroads at Dayton Pike and Patterson Road

4.3 POLICIES

The goals and policy recommendations outlined in Area plans represent a comprehensive framework designed to guide sustainable development and enhance community well-being. These initiatives are crafted to ensure that future growth respects and enhances the County's and Area 13's distinct community character while preserving its abundant natural resources.

Emphasizing the importance of balanced growth, the plans prioritize the development of accessible parks and recreation Areas that promote active lifestyles and environmental stewardship. Infrastructure improvements are a cornerstone, aimed at improving the connectivity of transportation networks, enhancing water and wastewater management systems, and integrating sustainable solutions.

The plans emphasize the need for diverse and affordable housing options to support a growing and inclusive population. By aligning these goals with thoughtful policy recommendations, Hamilton County seeks to foster a resilient and cohesive community. This approach not only prepares the county for future challenges but also enhances its livability and ensures that development is carried out in a manner that respects and preserves its unique character and natural beauty.

The following reinforces the four Community Themes and the seven unincorporated Area plan goals and how they inform the policies for each individual Area. In this chapter, each goal is connected to one of the four Community Themes and following each goal, are policy recommendations to implement that goal.

> *"Comprehensive Plans offer a strategic approach to where and how we grow. They address areas for change and areas to preserve."*
>
> *Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA)*

4.3.1 GOAL 1 & POLICIES

GOAL 1
BALANCE GROWTH, ECONOMY & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Policy 1.13.1 Area 13 is still sparsely populated, with a focus on agriculture and rural lifestyles. Develop a mechanism for farmland preservation.

Policy 1.13.2 Focus economic development on growing local businesses in Sale Creek and Bakewell.

Policy 1.13.3 Farmland preservation, protection of recreation areas and natural resources, and targeted housing affordability strategies should be the primary focus of policies shaping future growth and development.

Policy 1.13.4 Setback and buffering requirements as detailed in Place Types should also apply to residential plats in agricultural zones.

Policy 1.13.5 Amend the A-1 Agricultural District to change to the Maximum Density to 1.5 dwelling unit per acre on traditional septic.

4.3.2 GOAL 2 & POLICIES

GOAL 2
PROTECT & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES

Policy 2.13.1 Convene a coalition of conservation organizations and land owners to develop a coordinated strategy for preserving landscapes in a manner consistent with local culture, and that increases recreational access.

Policy 2.13.2 The recreational assets of along the Cumberland Plateau in northern Hamilton County are largely hidden gems known to locals and recreational specialists. They should be the centerpiece of ongoing preservation and stewardship strategies but also an asset to support local businesses and visitation.

Policy 2.13.3 McDonald Farm should be a model for how to generate the collective value of preservation, agriculture, recreation, and economic opportunity. Follow up the market analysis of this property with a phased master plan that begins with input of local stakeholders and shapes them into actionable improvement phases that realize the synergies outlined above while respecting the history and culture of the McDonald Family and the Sale Creek Community.

4.3.3 GOAL 3 & POLICIES

GOAL 3
PRESERVE & ENHANCE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Policy 3.13.1 Northern Hamilton County is rich in state, county, and municipally managed recreational lands, creeks, trails, parks, and the Tennessee River. Hamilton County should partner with TDEC and their newly organized Office of Outdoor Recreation to highlight all that northern Hamilton County has to offer visitors to our area and steward these assets to increase recreational opportunities and opportunities for commerce.

Policy 3.13.2 Possum Creek and Sale Creek should be planned as official blueways. The County should work with public and private partners to add points of access, highlight and augment permanent and seasonal attractions, recreation base businesses, and places to stay. Make an effort to have these routes recognized in the State of Tennessee Blueways Plan and seek related investments in recreational infrastructure.

Policy 3.13.3 Work with the State Department of Tourism, Pick Tennessee, Chattanooga Tourism Co. and others to recognize agricultural heritage and agritourism as part of the recreational landscape in Hamilton County. In this way agriculture and recreation can partner to develop marketing and promotions that highlight Hamilton County's best qualities and create economic opportunities from our most valued landscapes. McDonald Farm is positioned to be a focal point for this strategy where recreation, agricultural, and heritage based tourism enthusiasts can convene. Investments should first benefit Sale Creek Area residents and then build a regional market.

4.3.4 GOAL 4 & POLICIES

GOAL 4
PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Policy 4.13.1 The rural nature of Area 13 does not lend itself to area wide pedestrian connectivity or comprehensive transit service. Instead the focus should be on targeted sidewalk pedestrian infrastructure enhancements near schools, churches, and community gathering places.

Policy 4.13.2 Sidewalk connections along US-27 should be phased in as the villages of Bakewell and Sale Creek redevelop or uses incrementally intensify and well designed crossings should be added at key intersections. Legget Road, Patterson Road, Reavley Road, and at Retro Hughes and McCallie Ferry. These improvements should be planned in phases and either required of developers as properties are converted or installed by the County.

Policy 4.13.3 Curb, gutters, and sidewalks may not be necessary in rural subdivisions at base density. However soft surface paths to provide a safe space for fitness activities and kids to get to a school bus stop should be a standard requirement.

Policy 4.13.4 Recreational trail connectivity should also be a priority, starting with closing gaps in the regional Cumberland Trail system. Utilizing the Cumberland Trail as a spine, TDEC, Hamilton County Parks, and others should work to extend spurs along the area creek corridors and into other prime recreational lands like the McDonald Farm.

4.3.5 GOAL 5 & POLICIES

GOAL 5
PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy 5.13.1 The lowlying nature of much of the terrain makes flooding a problem during storm events. New development should be required to provide engineered stormwater plans proving adequate detention area on property.

4.3.6 GOAL 6 & POLICIES

GOAL 6
PROVIDE SUITABLE COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE CENTERS

Policy 6.13.1 Area 13 is not heavily populated and housing is dispersed across the 82 square mile area. Most residents seek goods and services in Soddy-Daisy or Dayton. As the communities of Sale Creek and Bakewell grow, these existing villages should be the focal point for additional commercial growth and residential density.

4.3.7 GOAL & POLICIES

GOAL 7
PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Policy 7.13.1 The lack of sewer and water infrastructure, constraints on emergency services, undulating terrain, and floodprone low lands in Area 13 make it important to ensure that developments are appropriately engineered and serviced. Additional housing density and diversity of form, including options for older area residents, should occur in Sale Creek and Bakewell before extending outward. Infrastructure investments should also benefit these communities prior to extending further outward.

Policy 7.13.2 The McDonald Farm property has primary uses and community functions that should take precedence. However, the farm is a location that could accommodate a traditional neighborhood design or agriculture based cluster subdivision as a complementary use to the primary community and recreation functions as a later phase.

AREA 13 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Area 13 encompasses the rolling valley and hillsides nestled between Flat Top Mountain to the west and Chickamauga Lake and the Tennessee River to the east. At its heart lie the communities of Sale Creek and Bakewell, which are well-connected via the US 27 corridor to Rhea County and Dayton, TN, to the north, and Soddy-Daisy, Chattanooga, and the broader Hamilton County to the south. This area retains its deep agricultural heritage, with residents protective of its rural character and way of life. Many express a strong desire to preserve agricultural operations and ensure development is slow and intentional.

Concerns about infrastructure limitations—particularly emergency response and water systems—further reinforce the community's preference for gradual growth. While large tracts of farm land remain, fragmentation is increasing, threatening the continuity of productive farmland. Immediate collaboration with farmers, landowners, and preservation advocates is essential to protect these tracts before opportunities are lost.

The area's topography transitions from the steep slopes of Flat Top Mountain to the wetlands and floodplains near the Tennessee River. Watersheds like Possum Creek, Rock Creek, and Sale Creek originate as steep-sided gorges before spreading into broader valleys with associated wetlands. Future development must prioritize wide buffers around steep slopes, creeks, wetlands, and floodplains to safeguard both natural resources and future structures.

Nearly all of Area 13 is designated as Conservation or Countryside Residential, maintaining the A-1 base zoning density. However, many residents voiced a desire to preserve the land primarily for agriculture, with allowances for family growth. Higher-density residential or commercial development is limited to small-scale Neighborhood Nodes at the State route 27 intersections with McCallie Ferry Road and Patterson Road. Larger-scale Village or Town Center development, anticipated only in the incorporated area of Soddy-Daisy, should be coordinated with County plans to address regional infrastructure needs.

Recreational uses are already well-established around the Possum Creek and Sale Creek areas as well as east to Lakesite via Sequoyah Access Road. Expanding these operations, along with Resort Recreation uses like Big Soddy Gulf, could generate economic benefits if environmental suitability and infrastructure capacity are confirmed. Collaboration with Soddy-Daisy planners is essential for any developments within its municipal boundaries.

At the northern edge of Area 13 lies the McDonald Farm—a legacy property sold to the County by the namesake family. This farm holds unique terrain and historic significance, serving as a community hub and hosting the last two Hamilton County Fairs. While an economic analysis has been completed, further study is needed to refine land use plans. Potential uses include agriculture, resort recreation, and conservation, which would preserve its heritage and ensure sustainable economic returns. The acquisition of the McDonald Farm offers a generational opportunity to protect historic structures and honor the community's agricultural roots while exploring innovative uses for future generations.

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

Conservation Subdivisions:

- Development in sensitive areas is designed to lessen impacts on natural resources, not only to serve environmental needs, but also to create amenities for residents. A Conservation Subdivision typically has at least half of its potentially buildable land area devoted to undivided, permanently protected open space.
- Leasing preserved land back to the original owner or a neighboring farmer is an effective way to maintain agricultural use, provided the site can support adequate infrastructure.

Farmland & Riparian Corridor Protection:

- Farming and sustainable forms of recreational development should be the primary economic drivers for Area 13 for the planning horizon of this document. (5-10 years)
- Farming, Agricultural Businesses, and Agritourism should be prioritized over other forms of economic development in Area 13. Landowners wishing to continue farming should be supported with development setbacks on adjacent properties and efforts to create additional support programs as outlined in the implementation toolbox.

Centers:

» Very small footprint commercial infill and limited smaller lot single family may be appropriate in designated Neighborhood Nodes in Bakewell and Sale Creek.

» These Neighborhood Nodes recognize existing commercial businesses and services and the opportunity for limited adjacent infill development as the area grows. Any rezoning should be contingent upon the availability of adequate water and sewage disposal infrastructure.

Corridors:

» The Rural Corridor designation is broadly recommended along the arterial and major collector roads in the Area. This designation will require development setbacks allowing for placement of access improvements, pedestrian and school bus facilities, storm water facilities, and maintenance of the rural character of the area where new residential subdivisions are approved.

» A Suburban Corridor designation is recommended along US-27 from the edge of Soddy Daisy to Bakewell and Sale Creek. This designation is in recognition of the number of existing businesses populating this segment of road. It also recognizes the potential need to slow or manage traffic at the Neighborhood Nodes in Bakewell and Sale Creek as they add more activity and pedestrian movements. The Suburban Corridor designation indicates that smaller setbacks of buildings may be appropriate and that access management strategies need to be employed to prevent future safety and congestion issues. The Suburban Corridor Definition is not meant to reflect any encouragement of infill commercial outside of designated Neighborhood Nodes.

Transportation Infrastructure:

» Transportation Infrastructure must be improved in the areas identified for priority investments in the Transportation Project Priorities List. The County should immediately create requirements limiting the size/density of developments with a single point of access, providing for safe pedestrian infrastructure within developments, and governing intersection spacing and access design for new subdivisions.

General:

» The RPA should extend the offer for joint planning efforts with Soddy-Daisy to encourage future growth and economic vitality in municipal areas and coordinate delivery of required infrastructure and services between jurisdictions.

CHAPTER 5

NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION
5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX
5.3 PLAN SUMMARY

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the essential bridge between each community's vision and the actions needed to make it a reality, translating broad goals and strategies into specific, actionable steps. By outlining processes for tracking progress, identifying funding opportunities, and fostering ongoing community involvement, this chapter offers a clear roadmap to bring these plans to life—guiding Hamilton County's growth in ways that honor its unique character, address residents' needs, and protect the qualities that define each community.

Hamilton County's growth has varied significantly across the five Areas examined in this plan, reflecting a wide range of factors. Rapid development has shaped East Brainerd, Ooltewah, and incorporated Collegedale in Area 12, along with parts of Harrison in Area 9 and Middle Valley in Area 8. Similarly, steady interest surrounds Signal Mountain and Walden in Area 7. In contrast, most of Area 13 and the northern sections of Area 9 have largely preserved their rural landscapes and agricultural heritage.

Key infrastructure corridors, particularly US-27, have been instrumental in fostering growth over the past two decades, fueling employment hubs, retail centers, and other commercial services. Interstate access and centralized sewer services has created favorable conditions for development and infrastructure investments in these corridors. Major employers like TriStar Beverage and the Soddy-Daisy Industrial Park, along with their networks of suppliers, have driven demand for nearby housing and led to increased commercial activity. High-performing schools in the Soddy-Daisy and Sales Creek areas have contributed to further residential demand.

Infrastructure

The presence of sewer trunk lines and available capacity remains one of the single biggest predictors for residential growth. However, the overall availability of sewer capacity is a significant constraint, presenting Hamilton County planners and leadership with critical decisions on where to allocate resources for sewage treatment and collection expansion. Currently, most funding is dedicated to increasing storage for combined sewer flows, aimed at preserving treatment capacity and avoiding regulatory actions tied to water quality.

An integrated approach is essential to addressing challenges facing the sewer facilities that serve Chattanooga and Hamilton County. This includes an intensified focus on reducing stormwater impacts through both engineered and low-impact development practices. Investing in more comprehensive stormwater infrastructure reviews across both commercial and residential projects could provide significant returns, mitigating maintenance costs tied to sewer capacity. Incentives for low-impact development, as implemented in other communities, could help retain stormwater on-site, reduce flow rates into combined systems, and enhance water quality within critical watersheds. Better mapping of sewer and water infrastructure is also needed to provide planners with the tools they need to identify infrastructure gaps, investment targets, and areas of the county that can be planned as future growth centers.

Transportation

The County's economic and population growth has created new challeges such as driving demand for efficient and safe transportation alternatives. This need is especially evident in areas experiencing the most rapid expansion. Keeping pace with these demands through infrastructure maintenance, improvement, and expansion is a significant challenge faced at every level of government, and Hamilton County is no exception. As growth continues in the County and the greater Chattanooga and northwest Georgia region, strategic investments in the transportation system will be essential to support future mobility and enhance residents' quality of life.

Hamilton County's role as a regional transportation hub underscores its significance. Interstates 24, 59, and 75 provide critical connectivity for freight, recreation, and commuter traffic across the Southeast and key corridors to the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Florida. Additionally, the county is served by Class I railroads, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railway, offering freight movement alternatives nationwide. The Tennessee River further enhances freight transport options as a navigable waterway.

As Hamilton County grows, a more focused approach to transportation planning will be essential. Key strategies include corridor management plans, access management strategies, and road safety audits. Corridor management plans for routes such as Ooltewah Ringgold Road, Highway 58, Hixson Pike, and Middle Valley Road can reduce traffic friction and improve access efficiency for businesses and residential areas. Access management strategies, including regulating driveway placement, optimizing intersection design, and promoting shared access points, offer a more detailed approach to improving traffic flow and safety. Regular road safety audits for high-crash routes will proactively identify and address safety concerns.

Many of Hamilton County's critical routes are under TDOT jurisdiction. Leveraging funding for improvements to those routes would begin with adding the desired route or improvement to the long range transportation plan (RTP) so that state and/or federal funding can be allocated based on the prioritization of needs by the MPO. Ongoing monthly or quarterly coordination meetings are recommended between the Hamilton County Roads Committee, RPA-MPO planners and the staff at TDOT Region 2 to advocate for future projects. This will also allow County leadership to stay informed of changes or opportunities for funding new projects or spot improvements.

To effectively address the unique needs of each Area, strategies must be tailored to specific locations and projects. These approaches should be further refined through detailed, site-specific safety and design studies. Potential tools include:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)– This would be particularly useful in areas where growth is expected to increase traffic demand. The McDonald Farm is a good example of somewhere in Hamilton County that TIF could be applied.
- Business Improvement Districts (BID)– This would be a similar approach as the TIF but would be more applicable to developed commercial areas to complete smaller road, multimodal, or streetscape projects.
- Alternative Transportation Funding – Projects involving electric vehicle infrastructure (charging stations) or other solutions such as bike-share or ride-share services often qualify for different funding programs. Given the rural character in part of the County, these types of projects would need to be located in places with the highest probability of success.
- Public-Private Partnerships – This can be an important tool for funding large infrastructure projects with private companies when the opportunity for an industrial, commercial, or residential projects arise with benefits to the County. The costs, financing, and effort of project delivery can be shared when working with private companies.

The transportation analysis for these Area Plans aimed to identify impactful projects that might otherwise be overlooked in the TIP process but are critical to Hamilton County residents. Potential projects addressing roadway safety and traffic congestion were identified across all five Areas and prioritized based on their impact and cost. This list serves as a valuable tool for County transportation planners and engineers, helping to advocate for major projects within the MPO–TIP planning process while also providing a strategic roadmap for efficient local investments that can deliver meaningful results in the near term.

The recommended projects include both design and construction initiatives, as well as engineering studies to refine potential solutions and anticipate future transportation needs. These recommendations are designed to address existing traffic and roadway safety challenges and can be seen as deferred investments needed to support growth that has already occurred. If fully funded and implemented, the Transportation Project Priorities List (Appendix E) would create synergistic improvements, significantly enhancing the county's transportation network. However, as new growth unfolds, additional evaluations and investments will be essential to meet evolving demands.

Emergency Services

To support the analysis of current conditions, the County and RPA also commissioned a Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation. Unincorporated Hamilton County is primarily served by a patchwork of dedicated and resourceful volunteer fire departments. With findings that reveal life safety implications tied to new growth, the report underscores the need for careful planning on where and how future developments occur, taking into account building types, heights, and roadway connectivity in order to adequately protect residents, business owners, and their structures.

Addressing Future Challenges

The benefit of planning for growth within the centers and corridors framework is that it greatly increases the odds of predicting where future sewer, transportation, emergency services, stormwater, water, communications, education, and recreational infrastructure investments will be required. However, realizing these goals will require significant financial and human resources. Outside projections estimate the combined need for infrastructure investments across Hamilton County at around $3.8 billion—a figure that poses challenges for per capita affordability.

Individual views of elected leaders on where and how much infrastructure investment is needed will undoubtedly vary, but it is clear that higher levels of funding and planning are essential to address existing backlogs across various infrastructure categories. Without an approved Comprehensive Plan, County leadership and staff have had difficulty focusing growth and predicting where infrastructure improvements will be needed next.

While certain areas have already developed strong market dynamics due to key employers, shopping centers, and transportation infrastructure, balanced investments in both traditional and social infrastructure could promote more equitable growth across Hamilton County. However, without adequate sewer capacity, education facilities, and emergency services, further growth-oriented policies may have limited impact.

Hamilton County stands at a critical crossroads where leaders are grappling with past deficiencies in infrastructure investments driven by sustained growth associated with national and regional migration and natural or endemic growth. The county continues to attract residents drawn by job opportunities, climate, quality of life, and comparatively affordable living. Meanwhile, existing residents often express a strong desire to preserve the rural character, safety, and quality education opportunities for their families.

The implementation strategies within this plan aim to directly address these priorities and lay the groundwork for a sustainable future:

1. A multifaceted approach to increasing the quality and capacity of existing infrastructure.
2. Seeking synergies between land use and infrastructure planning and improved standards for new development that maximize the efficiency, capacity, and return on investment for both private and public infrastructure construction and spending.
3. Planning and design strategies that reduce development impacts and maximize existing education, transportation, recreation, and natural resource assets.
4. Initiate new strategies to preserve rural lifestyles, agricultural production, and associated land.
5. To identify new potential revenue streams, financial vehicles, and public-private partnerships for addressing the needs identified by Hamilton County residents.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The implementation process for the Area plans is built on strong partnerships, strategic tools, and targeted funding, all aimed at bringing each community's vision to life (see Community Themes). Collaboration between local governments, stakeholders, and residents is at the heart of this process, ensuring that efforts are aligned and resources are effectively utilized. Key projects are prioritized, with clear timelines and responsibilities, while a range of tools and funding mechanisms are deployed to support these initiatives. This comprehensive approach ensures that the plans are not only actionable but also adaptable, allowing for continued progress as community needs and opportunities evolve.

POLICY SUBCATEGORY (TOOLS & STRATEGIES)

The Implementation Matrix organizes recommendations into specific focus areas, providing a clear structure, by breaking down broader policy goals into targeted subcategories. This section enables a more detailed approach to land use, infrastructure, environmental conservation, and community services allowing Hamilton County to meet the unique needs of each planning area while advancing cohesive, Countywide objectives. These categories are were tailored based on the overall policy objectives in the introduction chapter and the input received throughout the community feedback process. Within the matrix, here are 5 topics with each covering various community aspects of Plan Implementation:

1. **Community Character & Land Use Patterns**
2. **Natural Resources**
3. **Infrastructure & Transportation Network**
4. **Economic Health & Community Opportunity**
5. **Funding Mechanisms**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations outline targeted actions to support Hamilton County's vision for balanced, sustainable growth. Each recommendation offers guidance for decision-makers, addressing key areas such as land use, infrastructure, resiliency, and community development. These recommendations are crafted to reflect the unique needs of each planning area, ensuring that policies not only guide growth but also strengthen community character, enhance infrastructure, protect natural resources, and improve residents' quality of life.

These implementation recommendations, as part of an adopted plan, are intended in themselves to act as policies guiding future action, including work program activities, coordination, and as an additional reference for future rezoning applications and zoning, subdivision and other development regulation amendments.

APPLICABILITY

Identifies where each recommended action is most relevant across Hamilton County's planning Areas. By specifying how and where the policies can be applied, this category ensures that recommendations are tailored to the unique conditions, needs, and priorities of each community. This targeted approach allows for flexible, area-specific strategies that respect local character while addressing shared Countywide goals.

This helps guide effective implementation, making sure that resources and efforts are directed where they will have the greatest impact.

Case Study/ Example Ordinance

Provides practical insights and proven strategies from other communities that have successfully addressed similar challenges. By examining these real-world examples and ordinances, Hamilton County can draw valuable lessons to inform its own policies and practices. This section highlights adaptable approaches for land use, infrastructure planning, environmental conservation, incentives, economic development, and impact fees offering a foundation for local initiatives that align with the unique needs and goals of each Area.

Timing

Establishes a strategic timeline for each recommended action, guiding when and how these initiatives should be undertaken. By setting immediate (0-1 Years), medium (1-5 Years), and long-term priorities (5+ Years), this category helps coordinate efforts, align resources, and build momentum toward the community's goals and policy implementation.

Area Specific Recommendations

As outlined in Chapter 4, the Area Specific Recommendations are highlighted as tailored actions designed to address the overarching recommendations within each Area. By focusing on area-specific solutions, this category provides a roadmap for targeted investments and initiatives that support sustainable growth, protect local assets, and enhance quality of life in each community.

PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS & UPDATES

In order to ensure that Plan Hamilton best reflects the existing conditions and future vision of Hamilton County, the Plan Hamilton update cycle shall be as follows:

- Full plan review - every five years
- Annual review of policy and map changes - annual review by staff
- Applicant Requested Plan Amendments - as necessary and when requested by rezoning applicant
  - Zoning decisions are based primarily on area plans, which are components of the adopted general plan, in this case Plan Hamilton. The County's five different Area Plans were developed to include Place Type (land use) and capital improvement recommendations to inform rezoning requests.
  - Requested plan changes will alternate for one side of the Tennessee River every other month to the other side to permit changes six times per year, per side of the river.
  - An Area Plan amendment and its companion rezoning case may be heard on the same agenda.

Table 7: Implementation Matrix

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.1 Community Character & Land Use Patterns			
5.1.1 Access Management	Utilize TDOT's Highway System Access Manual for driveway spacing, median openings, and separation distances from signalized intersections.	Start with all State Routes where the existing TDOT Highway System Access Manual has standing. Expand to other principal arterials, minor arterials, and major collectors. Create manual, access management requirements, and corridor management plans before new development impacts are felt. Work with land owners to voluntarily contribute in-kind contributions (ROW, Design, Etc) or require development fees for a proportionate fair share of improvement costs as development applications are approved.	0-1 Years
	Target segments of suburban corridor with high rates of traffic congestion, safety incident history, or new development permit approvals. Improve traffic safety, congestion, pedestrian infrastructure and aesthetics by creating corridor management plans and agreements with state and local partners for high priority suburban corridors		1-5 Years
5.1.2 Rural Corridors	Maintain rural corridor character including setbacks and vegetative buffers for new subdivisions.	All mapped Rural Corridor segments in the Conceptual Land Use and Place Type Maps and those designated in future map updates.	0-1 Years
5.1.3 Centers	Work with land owners at Center locations to facilitate development, including district/center specific plan, according to center principles and preferred uses.	All designated center Place Types designated on current and future place type maps.	0-1 Years
	Once approved, partner with developers to install and construct streets and streetscape elements in the form of direct participation or financing vehicles like business improvement districts.	Focus joint development efforts on Village and Town Center areas with regional impacts. Expand to smaller centers where local governance and residents request implementation help and have previously participated in a small area plan.	5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
	Create an Overlay Commercial Zone or District to provide site and building design standards or other guidelines so new commercial development adds value to the community and is compatible with the rural character sought.		0-2 Years
5.1.4 Conservation Subdivisions	Create a conservation subdivision option to cluster housing that features at least half of its potentially buildable land area devoted to undivided, permanently protected open space.	Conservation Subdivisions should be an opt in tool available to land owners who want to balance financial returns with conservation legacy. Creation of conservation subdivision provision in the county subdivision regulations will provide a tool to augment land purchase, and voluntary conservation efforts.	1-5 Years
	The use of an Overlay District, P.U.D. or Zone is recommended for implementation of more specific development criteria associated with each of the above Place Types.		1-5 Years
	Establish Conservation Subdivision provisions and evaluation criteria in the subdivision ordinance.	All of these tools are necessary to preserve the continuity of productive agricultural land, riparian corridors, and recreational assets at a regional or landscape scale. This tool should be selectively applied in A-1 zoned areas adjacent to existing public land or with high conservation value.	1-5 Years
5.1.5 Medium Density Residential	Co-locate future Medium Density Residential adjacent to Suburban Corridor and Center Place Types. Where future Medium Density Residential abuts a Suburban Corridor or Center allow zero lot line single-family and townhomes on a percentage of the overall property. Consider allowing small-scale multifamily in these same areas (6-12 units 3 story maximum).		5 + Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2 Natural Resources			
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection	Build a stakeholder coalition including: NRCS, Trust for Public Land, Land Trust for Tennessee, North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, Chattanooga Audubon Society, Land Conservation Assistance Network, Soil & Water Conservation District, Thrive Regional Partnership, Tennessee State and others to coordinate farmland and open space preservation efforts in Hamilton County.	Resident input from Areas 7, 9, 12, an 13 all emphasized a strong preference to preserve agricultural land uses, property, and rural character. All five planning areas include riparian corridors that if preserved would help to mitigate flood risks, provide opportunities for contiguous recreational and alternative transportation corridors, storm water quality, and habitat benefits. Development pressures are increasing across the county and in some areas the window for conservation efforts is limited. The time to begin building a coalition of landowners, conservation entities, and funding sources is now.	0-1 Years
	Identify riparian corridors for preservation that have the potential to contribute multiple community benefits including farmland preservation, stormwater filtration, flood resilience, recreation, and habitat. Pursue strategies at landscape scale and on a property by property basis as development is proposed.	Prioritize: North Chickamauga Creek - (Area 8), Wolftever Creek, Johnson Branch - (Area 12), Long Savannah Creek - (Area 9) Falling Water Creek - (Area 7), Possum Creek, and Sale Creek - (Area 13).	0-1 Years

REMAINDER OF PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.1 Farmland and Riparian Corridor Protection *Continued*	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of active farms and prime agricultural land.	Farmland preservation is often a unifying place to begin conservation efforts. The first step is identifying the soils and parcels that characterize productive agricultural land. Local Soil and Water Conservation Office personnel and academic partners should be engaged in this process. Making tangible progress on the ground requires partnership between federal programs such as NRCS and local conservation groups who can bridge funding gaps and provide stewardship and monitoring support. Developing relationships with Agricultural land owners and the farming community in Area 13, the northern half of Area 9, and the eastern portions of Area 12 is a critical first step.	0-1 Years
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies	Engage UTC - School of Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Build on existing successes like South Chickamauga Creek and Wolftever Creek. Invest or seek funding for agricultural demonstration projects, educational, and recreation assets.		1-5 Years
	Pursue partnerships to preserve forested land with an emphasis on areas that further regional trail connections, enhance access to unique recreational, historical, or cultural assets.	Cumberland Plateau in Area 7 and Area 13, Big Ridge Area 9, and White Oak Mountain Area 12.	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.2.2 Recreation, Economy and Conservation Synergies *Continued*	Pursue multiple creative mechanisms and funding for preserving critical recreation and natural resource assets. Look for opportunities to create value in these areas through recreational tourism, wetland or stream bank creation, and consider the value of reduced flood risks and other socio-environmental factors in assessing return on investments.		
5.2.3 Resiliency, Natural Resource Protections, and Development Impact Mitigation	Establish natural resources protection standards for wooded areas, drainages, steep slopes, as well as currently regulated wetlands and streams.	Countywide	1-5 Years
5.3 Infrastructure & Transportation Network			
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management	Review fire code regarding the number of lots allowed in new subdivision triggering a secondary point of access.	Countywide	0-1 Years
	Require walking path or sidewalk for new residential subdivisions with connections to a safe harbor school bus waiting area.		0-1 Years
	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management implement spacing requirements for both full and partial (restricted turn movement) intersections on arterial and major collector roadways. (1/4 mile for full access)	Countywide on Arterials and Major Collectors	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.1 Connectivity & Congestion Management *Continued*	In support of improved traffic safety and congestion management consider modifications to the subdivision ordinance implementing internal connectivity index standards for developments of more than 500 lots.		1-5 Years
5.3.2 Improvements to Local Roads, Intersections, and Safety Design Features	Follow the Hamilton County Transportation Project Priorities List in this document. Continue to invest County funds and leverage with State and Federal funds to make continuous progress on deferred transportation improvements.	Countywide	0-1 Years On - going
	Explore the use of alternative financing vehicles such as Tennessee's State Infrastructure Bank to amplify County investments.		0-1 Years
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System	Continue to build system storage capacity, resilience for storm events, and greater predictability / flexibility to plan collection system expansion or new treatment capacity. Continue to pursue WIFIA and other capital funding specific to water and wastewater.		On - Going
	Target financing solutions and infrastructure investment to areas that have been identified as suitable for future growth. Proactively plan to shore up capacity or extend collection systems to these areas as necessary to better balance growth impacts.	See Funding Mechanisms	On - Going
	Add further specificity and criteria for utilization of decentralized sewage treatment systems.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate whether tap fees are keeping pace with infrastructure		0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.3 Sewage Treatment Capacity and Collection System *Continued*	Evaluate decentralized systems and track projects using the systems to determine rules for use.		1-5 Years
	Evaluate the use of trilateral agreements to add flexibility, predictability, and fairness for developers who choose to collaborate with WWTA in design and construction modifications for future capacity to recoup costs of infrastructure developed beyond project needs.		1-5 Years
5.3.4 Stormwater Infrastructure, LID Features, and Resiliency	Provide resources for complete and expeditious review of stormwater plans including pre-constuction site review and post construction inspections.		0-1 Years
	Begin codifying more of Hamilton Co Stormwater quality BMP's.		1-5 Years
	Phase in additional resources for review and enforcement.		1-5 Years
	Develop a more comprehensive approach to stormwater site assessment, design, incentives, and regulations.		1-5 Years
	Implement stormwater fee structures that incentivize BMP's.		1-5 Years
	Evaluate establishing a program for neighborhood or watershed based storm water infrastructure to capture storm water closer to where it falls and reduce combined sewer flows.		0-1 Years
	Develop policy with WWTA on decentralized sewer systems with robust criteria and design standards	Countywide	0-1 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.3.5 Fire & EMS	Consider the findings of the Fire and Rescue Services Evaluation March 2024 to identify future service improvements.		0-1 Years
	Evaluate sources of funding to increase full-time personnel and standardize equipment purchases and training to simplify inter-local agreements.		
5.4 Economic Health & Community Opportunity			
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers	Engage land owners where resort recreation centers have been identified to participate in small area plans or joint planning sessions. Work to provide examples that would establish the scale and scope of future projects. Help landowners or potential developers understand infrastructure requirements, neighborhood concerns, and connect them with resources to create plans compatible with goals for this place type.	Prioritize land near designated Resort Recreation Centers and with close proximity to existing state and regional recreational facilities and natural areas.	0-1 Years
	Require that resort recreational development on lands adjacent to public land or waterways be a catalyst for securing and enhancing public access to recreational assets in addition to creating private recreational development.	Countywide in designated centers	0-1 Years
	Look for partners to start a recreation and tourism based business incubator/accelerator program.		1-5 Years

Policy Subcategory	Recommendation	Applicability	Timing
5.4.1 Resort Recreation Centers *Continued*	Engage UTC School of Sport, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management in a study of potential economic impacts from resort recreation centers, greenway/recreational infrastructure investments, and corresponding riparian corridor preservation.		1-5 Years
	Engage Tennessee Department of Tourism, Chattanooga Tourism Co, SETDD, and SETTA in creating a small recreational resort promotional plan and programming assistance.		0-1 Years
	Explore potential for agriculture based resort or event centers to contribute to agricultural revenue streams. Consider McDonald Farm as a potential case study for synergies between rural resort economic development, traditional agriculture, and recreation.	Sale Creek - McDonald Farm; Birchwood	0-1 Years
	Evaluate outcomes from existing case studies - including preservation goals, impacts on existing farms, housing costs, property taxes, etc.		
	Study Industrial opportunities - both as larger industrial/corporate scaler and smaller Maker District		
5.4.2 Growing the job Base	Pursue development study of future employment centers including emerging industries and manufacturing districts		

Policy Subcategory	Recommendations	Applicability	Timing
5.5 Funding Mechanisms			
5.5.1	Consider use of RIDA as an incentive for developers who voluntarily meet specific infrastructure standards such as: improved street and pedestrian connectivity, LID stormwater improvements, provide easements for regional greenways, trails, or watershed protection.		0-1 Years
	Explore use of alternate funding mechanisms such as TDOT's State Industrial Access (SIA) Program	Hilltop Drive Extension; matching funds for other prioritized projects	0-1 Years
	Consider strategic utilization of Business Improvement Districts, Tax Increment Financing, Trilateral Agreements, or Infrastructure Trust Funds to set the table for desired development patterns (sidewalks/ connectivity, roads and utility infrastructure, landscape buffers, LID enhancements) in identified current and future centers. (Village Centers, Neighborhood Centers, Neighborhood Nodes, Maker Districts, etc.) i.e. Joint Development		1-5 Years
	Use the Capital Funding for Mid-Sized Cities & Counties study as a guide to identifying innovative funding and financing approaches for capital improvements.		

REMAINDER OF PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

APPENDIX

Scrivener's Note: with the exception of the Chamber Memo, all other Appendices were removed per the Regional Planning Commission's vote on September 8, 2025 for the adoption of Resolution 825-18

A. CHATTANOOGA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMO

PLAN HAMILTON

RPA Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce Memo

The Urgent Need for New Manufacturing Locations in Hamilton County, Tennessee
Hamilton County has been known as a manufacturing magnet for much of its history and it's county seat, Chattanooga was called the "Dynamo of Dixie" in the late 19th century. This legacy continues to ring true today due to the County's logistic assets including three interstate highways, two class-1 rail lines and the navigable Tennessee River. However, the county now faces an imperative challenge: identifying new locations for manufacturing operations. The necessity for this strategic move stems from several factors, including economic growth, technological advancements, environmental considerations, and community development. This summary explores the multifaceted reasons behind this need and the potential benefits it could bring to the county. The current Plan Hamilton growth plan has not identified additional areas for manufacturing uses however, the County should be working to identify areas for this use in order to continue to create new jobs and drive economic prosperity and diversification.

Economic Growth and Diversification

In recent years, Hamilton County has experienced significant economic growth. As industries expand and new businesses emerge, the demand for manufacturing space has increased but the number of acres zoned for manufacturing has declined. From 2014 to 2024 acreage with M-1 zoning designation in Hamilton County declined by 1,684 acres. During this timeframe, the county's Centre South Industrial park reached full capacity and all available parcels in Enterprise South have been sold or have been optioned by companies for future expansion. Furthermore, current facilities for several existing businesses across the county are at capacity and cannot accommodate additional growth, putting continued investment by those companies at risk. Without new locations, the county risks stifling its economic potential. Diversifying the manufacturing base is essential to sustain growth, attract investorment, and create job opportunities, thereby ensuring long-term economic stability for the county and its residents.

Demographic Alignment

The manufacturing sector is one of the few industries that provides high-wage, full-time jobs for individuals with various education attainment levels. Approximately 30% of manufacturing jobs are white collar jobs requiring mostly 4-year college degrees. The remaining 70% of jobs in manufacturing require less than a four-year degree and, in some instances, do not require a high school degree. This aligns well with Hamilton County's demographics where just over 30% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a high school diploma or less and only 37% of Hamilton County citizens over the age of 25 have a 4-year degree. Jobs in the manufacturing sector are typically high-wage and include benefits as demonstrated by Hamilton County's average manufacturing wage of $74,256.

Technological Advancements

The manufacturing industry is evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancements such as automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. These innovations require modern facilities equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure. As technological advances in the manufacturing sector continue to grow, manufacturing wages will increase as well, assuring living wage jobs for county residents in advanced manufacturing sectors. Hamilton County is home to dozens of established companies that produce pharmaceuticals, heavy equipment and automobiles and the county has a growing cadre of tech-based manufacturing startups that have been supported by Hamilton County's Business Development Center. These early stage companies leverage 3-D printing, provide research and development services in the battery space and produce sensor and robotic equipment. Making sure that Hamilton County has shovel-ready sites, zoned for manufacturing will help the county both legacy companies as well as early-stage high tech manufacturers as they continue to grow.

Multiplier Effect of Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector is considered a "traded industry sector" which means it produces goods that are sold outside of the local region. Traded industry sectors are critical because they bring in revenue from outside of the local economy, increasing the county's gross domestic product (GDP). This new revenue then circulates in the economy, creating additional jobs. Research by firms such as EMSI shows that manufacturing jobs have a significant multiplier effect with one manufacturing job creating an additional nine jobs in the community. With more than 29,000 people working in manufacturing in Hamilton County, the sector drives significantly economic activity and job creation in the community across retail, healthcare, construction and several other industries.

Site considerations and conclusions

The need for Hamilton County to identify new locations for manufacturing will require future amendments to the Plan Hamilton growth plan. Due to increasing land prices inside Chattanooga city limits, it is likely that any new locations for manufacturing uses will be in unincorporated Hamilton County. Proximity to infrastructure will also be critical with consideration given to properties that have 4-lane highway access, rail infrastructure and proximity to sewer infrastructure. The county's recent utilization of tax increment financing (TIF) should serve as a model for financing infrastructure improvements for sites with limited infrastructure.

The manufacturing sector has been a critical economic driver for Hamilton County. Much of the recent job growth the county has experienced can be tied to the development of Enterprise South Industrial Park by the City and County and the location of Volkswagen in the park. With the county's industrial parks now at capacity and multiple manufacturers reaching full build out on their sites, it is critical that Hamilton County identify new locations for the county's second largest industry sector.
grow, manufacturing wages will increase as well, assuring living wage jobs for county residents in

advanced manufacturing sectors. Hamilton County is home to dozens of established companies that produce pharmaceuticals, heavy equipment and automobiles and the county has a growing cadre of tech-based manufacturing startups that have been supported by Hamilton County's Business Development Center. These early stage companies leverage 3-D printing, provide research and development services in the battery space and produce sensor and robotic equipment. Making sure that Hamilton County has shovel-ready sites, zoned for manufacturing will help the county both legacy companies as well as early-stage high tech manufacturers as they continue to grow.

Multiplier Effect of Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector is considered a "traded industry sector" which means it produces goods that are sold outside of the local region. Traded industry sectors are critical because they bring in revenue from outside of the local economy, increasing the county's gross domestic product (GDP). This new revenue then circulates in the economy, creating additional jobs. Research by firms such as EMSI shows that manufacturing jobs have a significant multiplier effect with one manufacturing job creating an additional nine jobs in the community. With more than 29,000 people working in manufacturing in Hamilton County, the sector drives significantly economic activity and job creation in the community across retail, healthcare, construction and several other industries.

Site considerations and conclusions

The need for Hamilton County to identify new locations for manufacturing will require future amendments to the Plan Hamilton growth plan. Due to increasing land prices inside Chattanooga city limits, it is likely that any new locations for manufacturing uses will be in unincorporated Hamilton County. Proximity to infrastructure will also be critical with consideration given to properties that have 4-lane highway access, rail infrastructure and proximity to sewer infrastructure. The county's recent utilization of tax increment financing (TIF) should serve as a model for financing infrastructure improvements for sites with limited infrastructure.

The manufacturing sector has been a critical economic driver for Hamilton County. Much of the recent job growth the county has experienced can be tied to the development of Enterprise South Industrial Park by the City and County and the location of Volkswagen in the park. With the county's industrial parks now at capacity and multiple manufacturers reaching full build out on their sites, it is critical that Hamilton County identify new locations for the county's second largest industry sector.

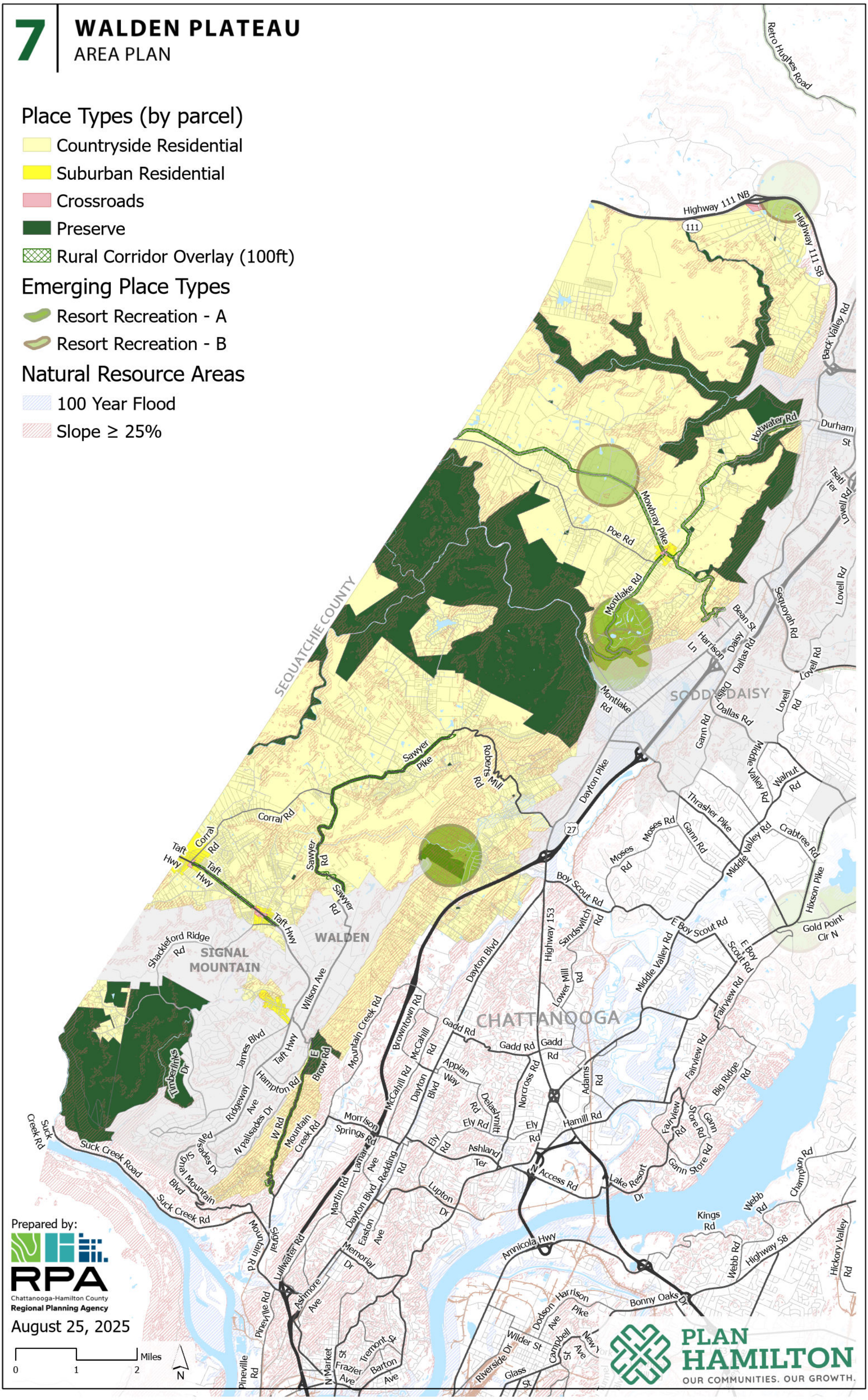
THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

7 WALDEN PLATEAU
AREA PLAN

Place Types (by parcel)
- Countryside Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Crossroads
- Preserve
- Rural Corridor Overlay (100ft)

Emerging Place Types
- Resort Recreation - A
- Resort Recreation - B

Natural Resource Areas
- 100 Year Flood
- Slope ≥ 25%



Prepared by:
RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

August 25, 2025

0 1 2 Miles

N

PLAN HAMILTON
OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

8 MIDDLE VALLEY / LAKESITE
AREA PLAN

Prepared by:
RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency
August 25, 2025

Place Types (by parcel)
- Countryside Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Neighborhood Node
- Maker District
- Industrial
- Campus
- Resort Recreation - B
- Preserve
- Rural Corridor Overlay (100ft)

Emerging Place Types
- Resort Recreation - A
- Resort Recreation - B

Natural Resource Areas
- 100 Year Flood
- Slope ≥ 25%

SODDY-DAISY
LAKESITE
CHATTANOOGA
Tennessee River

Poe Rd
Mowbray Pike
Holwater Rd
Montlake Rd
Mountain Rd
Bean St
Harrison Ln
Daisy Dallas Rd
Montlake Road
Montlake Rd
Lovell Rd
Dallas Hollow Rd
Sequoyah Rd
Sequoyah Access Rd
Hixson Pike
Igou Ferry Rd
Hamby Rd
Gann Rd
Daisy Dallas Rd
Middle Valley Rd
Walnut Rd
Bowman Rd
Crabtree Rd
Thrasher Pike
Moses Rd
Daisy Dallas Rd
Gann Road
Dayton Pike
27
Boy Scout Rd
Middle Valley Rd
Gold Point Cir N
Gold Point Cir S
E Boy Scout Rd
Fairview Rd
Harrison Bay Rd
Sawyer Rd
Wilson Ave
Sandswitch Rd
Highway 153
Dayton Blvd
Lower Mill Rd
Grubb Road
Grubb Rd
McCahill Road
Mountain Creek Rd
Gadd Road
Gadd Rd
School Dr
Longview Dr
Big Ridge Rd
Fairview Rd
Glover Rd
Hunter Rd
Highway 58
Snow Hill Rd

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N

PLAN HAMILTON
OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

9 NORTHEAST COUNTY AREA PLAN

Prepared by:

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

August 25, 2025

Place Types (by parcel)

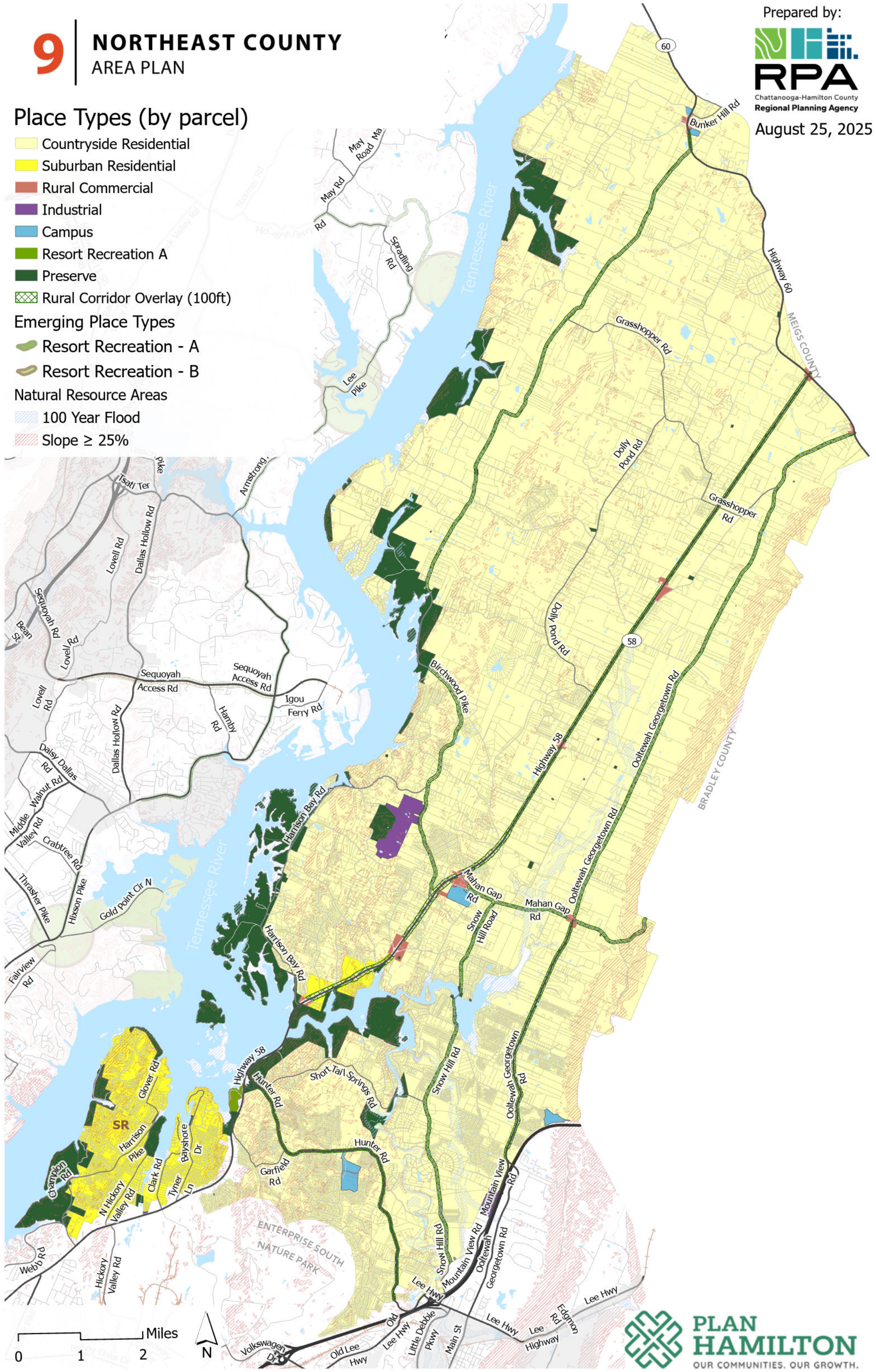
- Countryside Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Rural Commercial
- Industrial
- Campus
- Resort Recreation A
- Preserve
- Rural Corridor Overlay (100ft)

Emerging Place Types

- Resort Recreation - A
- Resort Recreation - B

Natural Resource Areas

- 100 Year Flood
- Slope ≥ 25%



PLAN HAMILTON
OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

Prepared by:

RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

August 25, 2025

12 WHITE OAK MOUNTAIN AREA PLAN

Place Types (by parcel)

- Countryside Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Urban Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Crossroads
- Neighborhood Node
- Neighborhood Center
- Village Center
- Industrial
- Campus
- Resort Recreation A
- Preserve
- Rural Corridor Overlay (100ft)

Emerging Place Types

- Resort Recreation - A
- Resort Recreation - B

Natural Resource Areas

- 100 Year Flood
- Slope ≥ 25%

CHATTANOOGA
COLLEGEDALE
BRADLEY COUNTY
GEORGIA

Miles
0 0.25 0.5 1
N

PLAN HAMILTON
OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

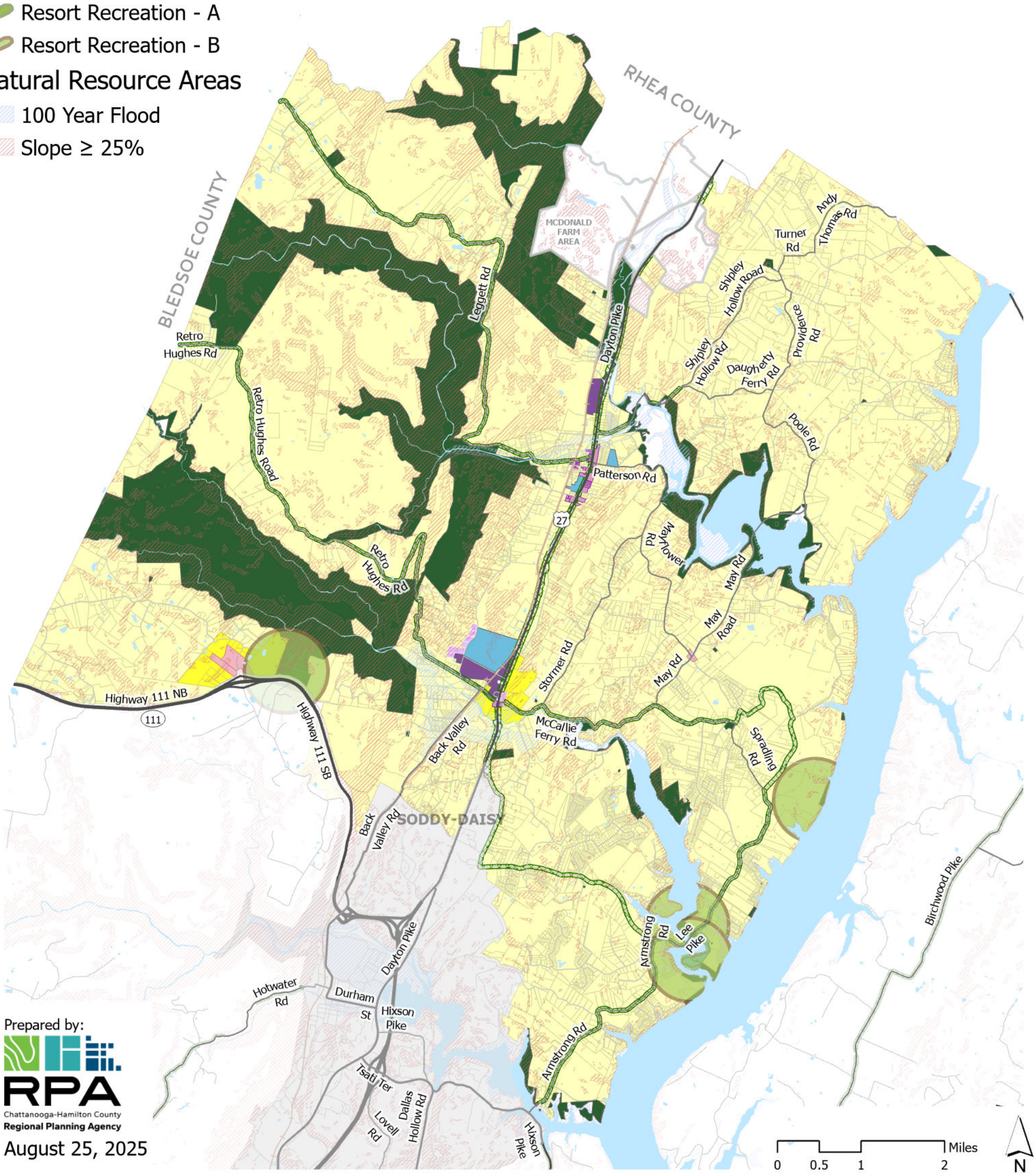
13 | NORTH END / SODDY-DAISY
AREA PLAN

PLAN HAMILTON
OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR GROWTH.

Place Types (by parcel)
- Countryside Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Mixed Residential
- Neighborhood Node
- Maker District
- Industrial
- Campus
- Crossroads
- Preserve
- Rural Corridor Overlay (100ft)

Emerging Place Types
- Resort Recreation - A
- Resort Recreation - B

Natural Resource Areas
- 100 Year Flood
- Slope ≥ 25%



Prepared by:
RPA
Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Regional Planning Agency

August 25, 2025