

Cherokee County



State of the County 2024

January 24, 2024

Chairman Harry B. Johnston

Nurturing Cherokee's Greatness



Cherokee's Board of Commissioners



Harry Johnston
Chairman



Steve West
District 1



Richard Weatherby
District 2



Benny Carter
District 3



Corey Ragsdale
District 4



Geoff Morton
County Manager



Prime Location



Beautiful Geography



Fine People



Value Proposition



Low Taxes



Excellent Services

Public Safety



Sheriff's Office

- Advanced International Accreditation with Excellence
Top 1/10 of 1%
- Crime rate among lowest in the region
- Advanced investigative resources
 - Body cameras
 - Tag readers
 - Intel division
- New Traffic & K-9 Facility
- Efficient and respected



Fire & EMS

- From mostly volunteer to international accreditation in 25 years
- One of just 14 in Georgia, 292 in the U.S. and 312 worldwide
- 24 professionally staffed stations
- EMS repeatedly Best in Region
- In-House Training Facility –
Firefighting and Paramedics
- New station staffed in Buffington
- Replacement stations in Mica & Suttalee



E 9-1-1

- New Energy
 - Full Staffing
- Internationally accredited
- Full backup center
- 400,000+ calls in 2023
- Answered 96% of calls in 10 seconds or less
- Operates fully within 911 tax on phone bills

Only accredited Marshal's Office in Georgia



Community Services

Recreation & Parks

4,300+ total acres | 39 parks & facilities
#1 among large Georgia counties (2021)
Trails Master Plan on the horizon
Almost 50% self funded



Senior Services

11,000+ meals served to homebound seniors
Silver Roamers with wait list
400+ senior residents served in 2023
Mostly federally funded via ARC

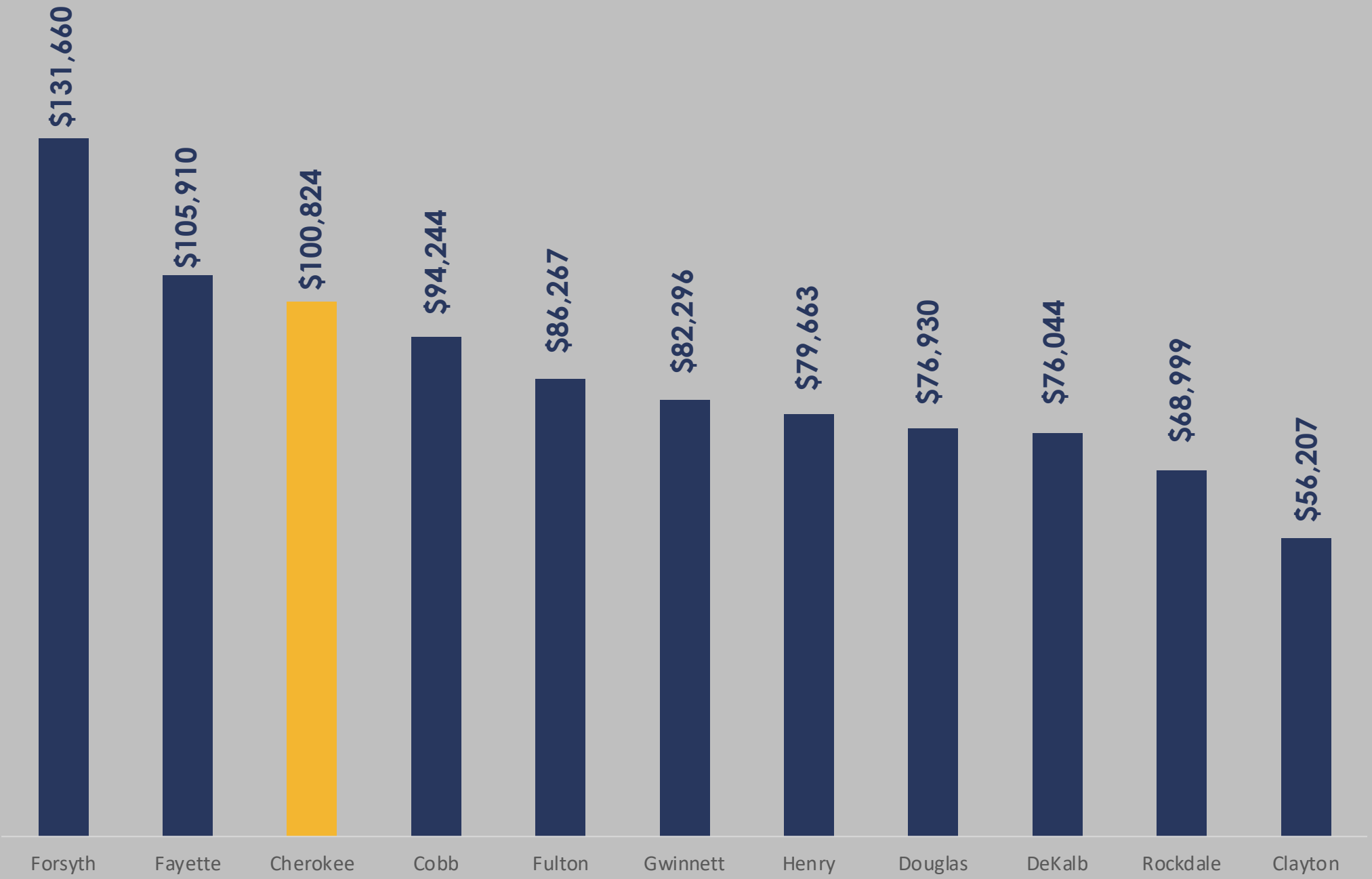


Recycling

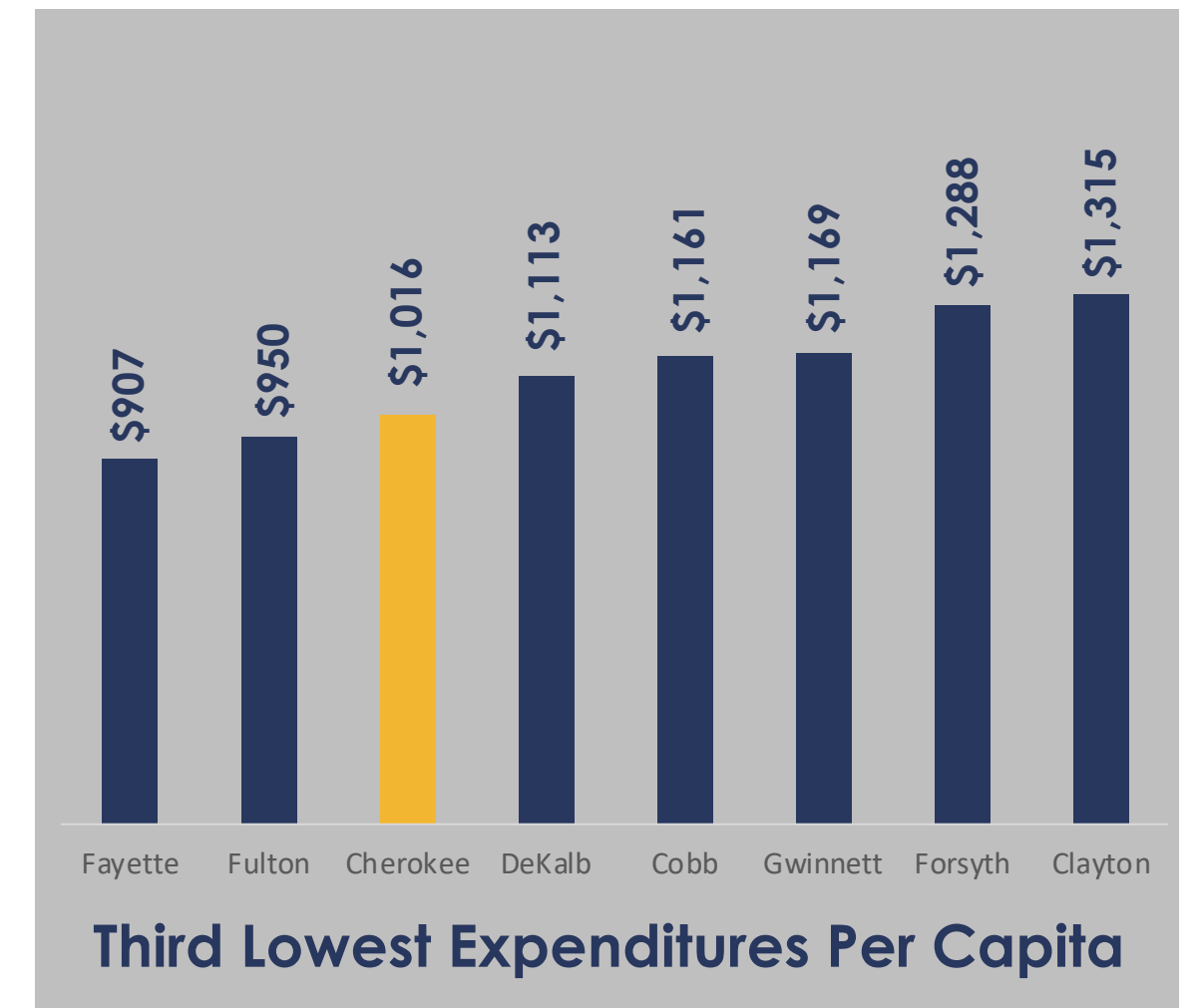
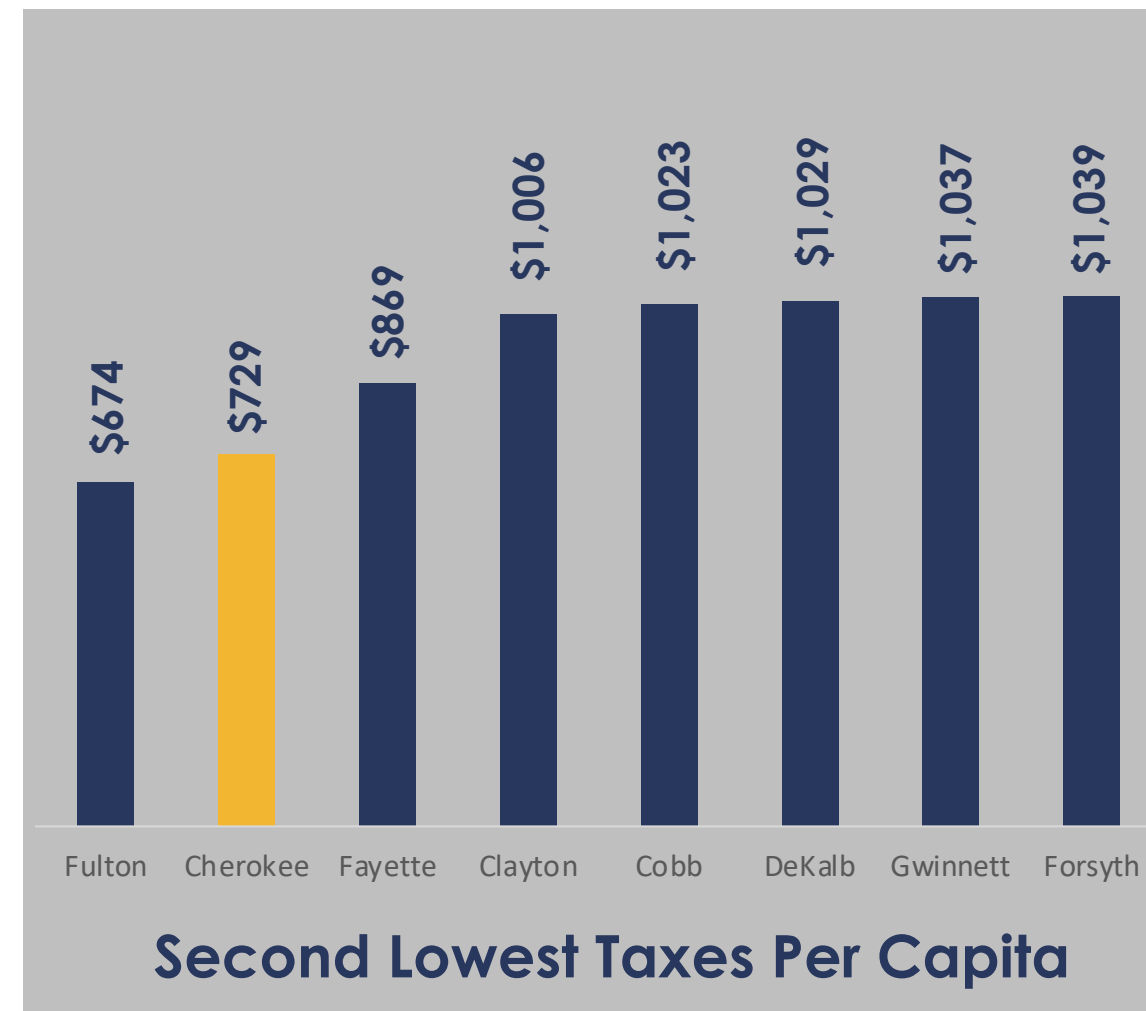
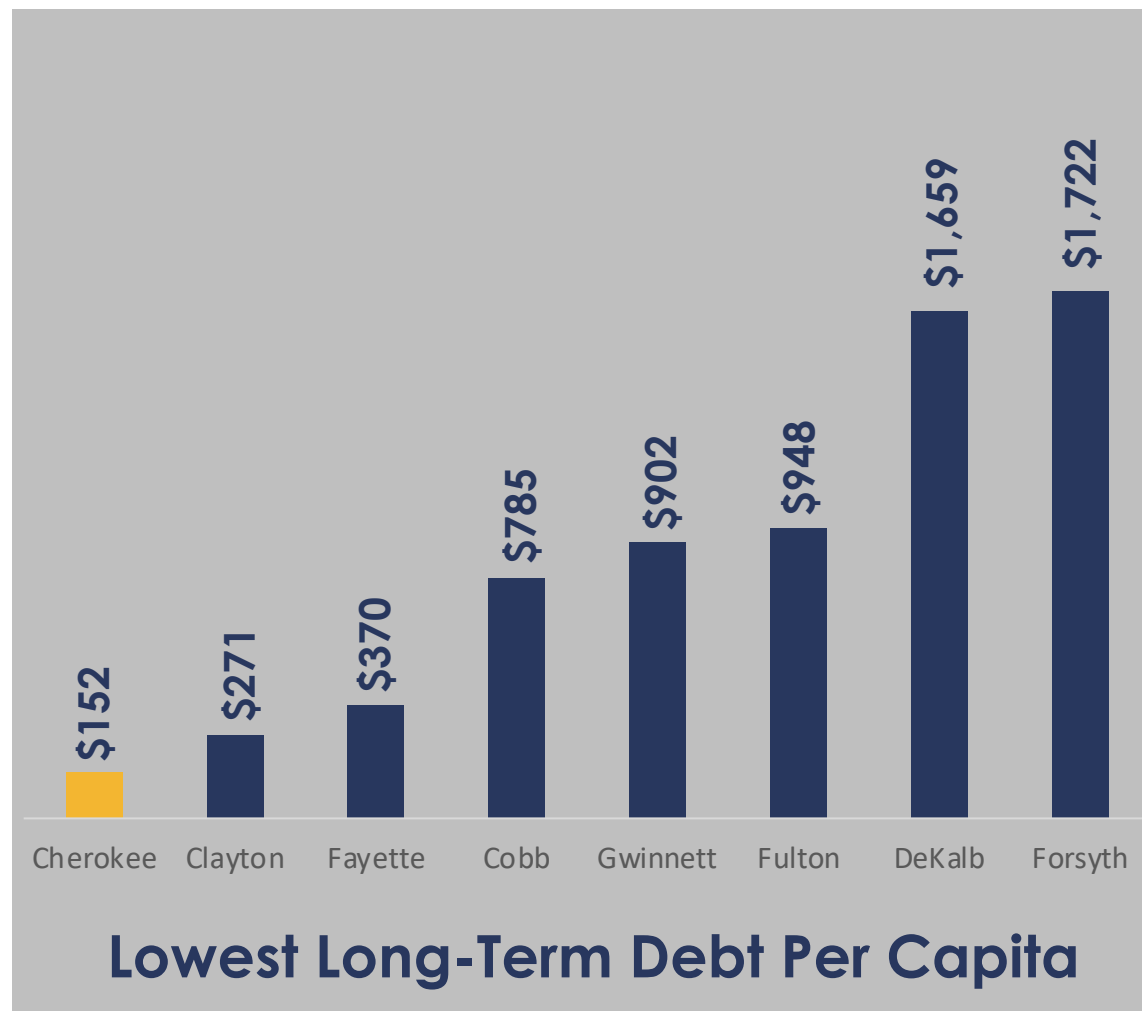
Strong facility use countywide
About 300 users per day at Blalock Road facility alone
More than 1,500 tons of recycled materials in 2023
Expansion plan coming



Third Most Affluent County in the Metro



Responsible Fiscal Management



*Audited financials for Rockdale, Douglas and Henry Counties were not available.

Thriving Small Cities

Woodstock

Ideal compact city

Canton

Great in a softer, gentler way

Holly Springs

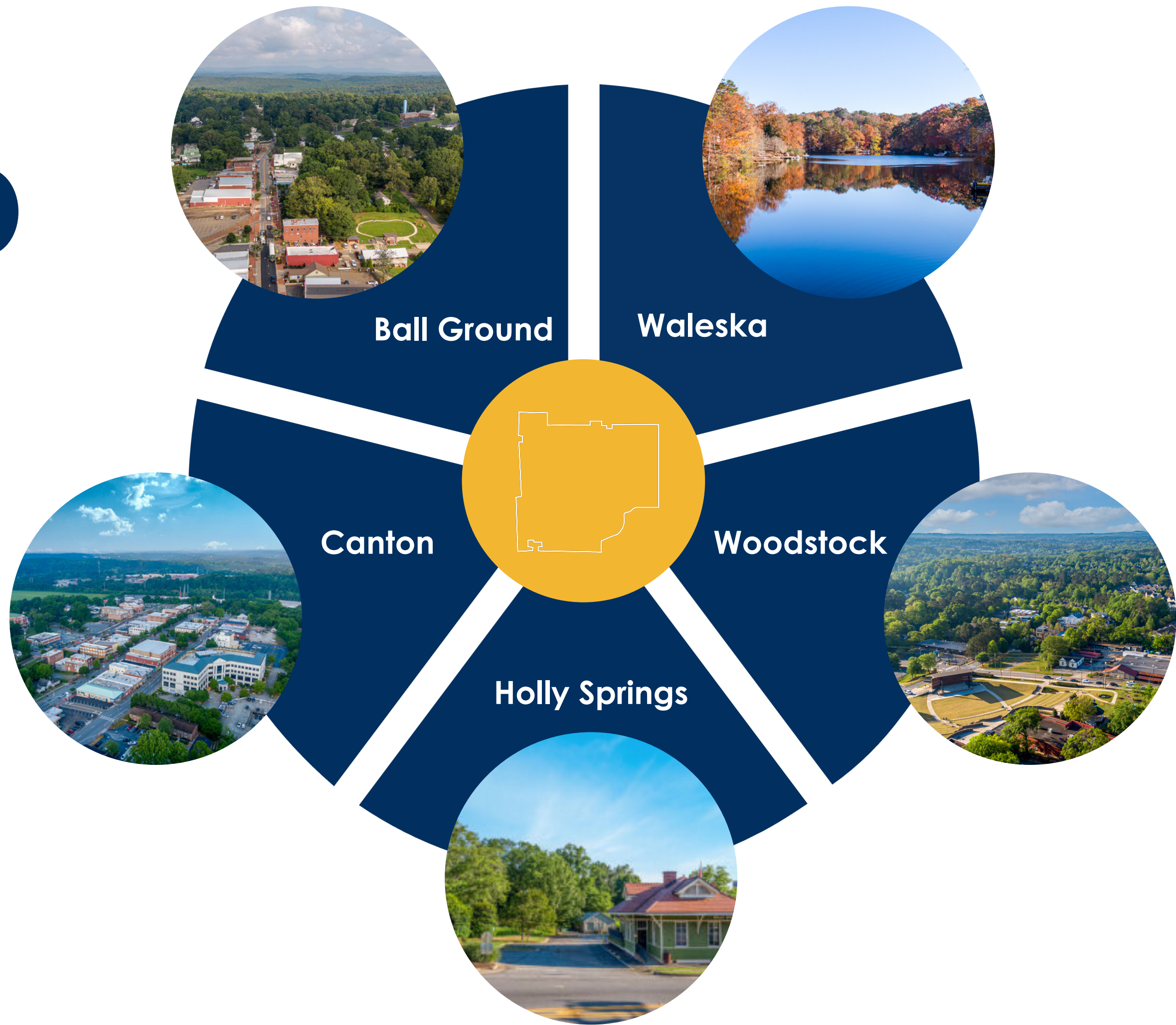
Building a new and great downtown

Ball Ground

"It Rocks"

Waleska

Classic country crossroads town
Home to Reinhardt University



K-12 Education

Top 10% in the state for ACT and SAT Scores
Top 10% in the state for HOPE Eligibility
Top 10% for AP pass rate in Georgia



Post-Secondary Education

Reinhardt University – 4-year liberal arts university with 43 undergraduate programs and 6 graduate programs
Chattahoochee Tech – Two Cherokee County campuses and more than 50 programs of study



Economic Development

Respected as one of the best teams in Georgia
More than \$50 million in capital investments
Brought in more than 450 new jobs



Water Management

Current average daily demand: 20.172 MGD
Current treatment capacity: 38 MGD
Permitted withdrawal capacity: 40.5 MGD



Wastewater Management

Current average daily demand: 8.197 MGD
Current treatment capacity: 13 MGD
Permitted capacity: 42.35 MGD
*5.75 MGD being added at the Fitzgerald Creek Plant



Quality of Life

280,000+ Population



Small town/Rural living



Atlanta is an hour away



**Safe place to live &
a caring community**

The opportunity to keep it.

How do we nurture this greatness?

Nurturing our Greatness

Value Proposition
Keep services great
and taxes low

Roads
Pick up the pace
and keep up

Managing Growth
Don't let our growth
overwhelm us.

Attainable Housing
People who work here should
be able to live here.



Maintaining the Value

Low-tax heritage in Cherokee County

Keep growth in expenses below population growth + inflation

Challenging, with needs for:

- Public Safety (Sheriff, Fire)
- Alternatives to incarceration
- Social services
- Public transportation

Leadership & Cooperation

Five-year planning model

Resist becoming everything to everyone





Growth Management

- Better than most**
- Conservative plan since early 2000s**
Consistent adherence since 2007
- 5% growth prior to 2007, 2% since then**
Goal – Gradually reduce to 0.75% over the next 30 years
- 400,000 vs. 550,000**
- Comprehensive Plan built around that target**
- City/County Cooperation – Growth Boundary Agreements**

Roads

- **317 projects in 20-Year Comprehensive Transportation Plan**
- **141 County-led projects totaling \$766 million**
- **Resurfacing**
 - Currently \$6 million per year (35 miles)**
 - 34-year cycle for 1,200 miles of county road**
 - Goal: 25-year cycle = 48 miles per year at \$8.25 million**
- **Current road project + paving budget = Approx. \$35 million**
- **Need at least 25% increase**
- **0.1%-1% T-SPLOST could generate 12.5% to 125% increase**
- **HOST could generate 25% increase**
- **Need a Road “Czar”**

Attainable Housing

National crisis

Many levels – Homeless to housing burdened

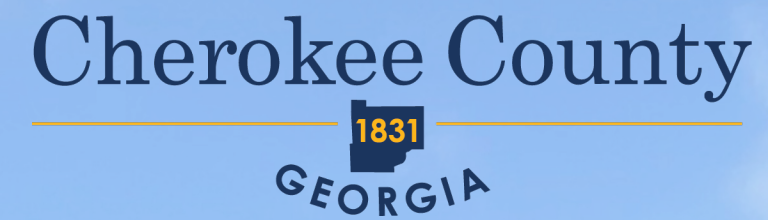
Slow-growth efforts intensify the problem

Solutions are:

- Costly
- Unpopular with many
- Potentially de-stabilizing to quality of life

No single answer – maybe many partial answers





**It takes ongoing diligence & vigilance
to protect and nurture the great treasure we have in Cherokee County.**

It's far too precious to lose.

**We must and we can succeed
with God's help and all of yours, we will.**