

CY 2023 Annual Report

Cherokee County Community Development Agency

Issued April 3, 2024



Cherokee
County
1831
GEORGIA

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A NOTE FROM THE AGENCY DIRECTOR:

The Community Development Agency had an extremely productive year in 2023; it was a monumental year for planning and execution as detailed in this annual report. We worked to address transportation and stormwater infrastructure challenges, delivering numerous capital projects to construction, while also preparing and initiating design for a wide array of infrastructure projects. We also assisted our customers with a variety of permitting, licensing, and inspections needs in their pursuit of developing subdivisions, building houses, constructing commercial projects, and starting new businesses. It was an exciting year for comprehensive planning and the advancement of county-wide goals and objectives:

- ✓ 2022 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) adopted;
- ✓ 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update adopted;
- ✓ Hosted the first Cherokee Regional Housing Forum, in partnership with the municipalities;
- ✓ Participated with the National Association of Counties (NACo) Housing Task Force and with the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) state level housing task force;
- ✓ Received two statewide planning awards from the Georgia Planning Association;
- ✓ Hosted two training sessions at the Georgia Planning Association Fall Conference;
- ✓ Planning & Zoning launched the Zoning/Code Compliance Division;
- ✓ Received \$450,000 from the U.S. DOT for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program;
- ✓ Completed a Ten-Year Growth Boundary Agreement with the City of Waleska;
- ✓ Conducted input meetings with the builders/developers to amend subdivisions regulations;
- ✓ Completed extensive alcohol code amendments in response to the 2022 referendum;
- ✓ Resurfaced over 30 miles of unincorporated County roadways;
- ✓ Maintained about 15 capital roadway and related infrastructure projects under construction and an additional 35 projects under design over the course of the year;
- ✓ Completed extensive stormwater compliance requirements with multiple state agencies;
- ✓ Conducted over 33,000 building inspections.



Brantley E. Day, AICP
Community Development Agency Director

Community Development Agency Organization

Brantley E. Day,
AICP
*Community
Development
Agency Director*

Rhonda Hilliard
*Operations
Manager*

Wanda Mooney
*Administrative
Assistant*



Pictured Left to Right:
Wanda Mooney and Rhonda Hilliard

Transportation Department

Brett Buchanan,
P.E.
*Transportation
Director*

**Transportation
Engineering**
Carson Jones,
P.E.
Keith Satterfield

Stephen Dobson
*Public Works
Director*

**Administrative
Assistants**
Amanda Stewart
Kayla Gwinn
**Public Works
Operations**
Travis Stewart
Rick Darby
Steve Ralston
Larry Huskins
Drainage (13)
**Grading/Shoulder
(12)**
Roadside (12)
Paving (9)
**Transportation
(15)**

SPLOST/Roadway Department

Jim Wilgus, P.E.
*SPLOST/Roadway
Program Manager*

Pre-Construction
Barry Tarver, P.E.

Lori Jones
*Construction
Inspection
Manager*

**Construction
Inspection**
Josh Hamilton
Jimmy Stokes

Engineering Departments

Ben Morgan, P.E.
County Engineer

**Stormwater
Engineering**
Andrea Yager,
Manager
Jesse Dover
Marcus McCray
Casey Pickett
Russ Swanner

Katie Parker
*Development
Projects Director*

Chris Reed
*Development
Inspection
Manager*

**Development
Inspection**
Brandon Duncan
Todd Kekel
Tyler Dobson

**Shannon
Fitzgerald**
Senior Arborist

Planning & Zoning Department

Margaret Stallings
*Planning & Zoning
Director*

Catherine Long
*Planning
Manager*

Planning
Jillian Willis

Thomas Trawick
*Zoning
Manager*

Zoning
Dana Spayde
Tamala Davis

Beau Smith
*Code
Compliance
Inspector*

Susan Sawtelle
*Planning & Zoning
Technician*

Building & DSC Departments

Paul Laney
*Building Inspections
& Development
Service Center
Director*

Bryan Crosby
*Deputy Chief
Building Official*

**Building
Inspections**
Jim Haizlip, Plans
Examiner
Ted Flowers
Linda Moody
Elliott Robinson
John Cassidy
Steven Fox
Chris Thomas
Cody Hughes
Chris Lee
Eric Nepogoda

Shannon Griffith
DSC Manager

**Development
Service Center**
Kristin Richards,
Lead
Irene Mumper
Kristen Roberts
Becky Kerstetter
Jacey Torrence

2023 In Numbers



\$3,987,295 Impact Fees Collected



113 Total New Business Licenses Issued



1,674 Total Permits Issued



139 Public Hearing Cases Processed



\$679.5M New Construction Value

Building Inspections



Paul Laney
Building Inspections
and Development
Service Center Director

**33,033 Total Inspections
Conducted**

**110 International
Code Council
Certifications**



**Welcomed Bryan Crosby, new
Deputy Chief Building Official!**



Pictured Left to Right:
Elliott Robinson, Bryan Crosby, Eric Nepogoda, Chris Thomas, Cody Hughes, Linda Moody, Ted Flowers, John Cassidy, and Paul Laney

Development Service Center



Pictured Left to Right:
Becky Kerstetter, Irene Mumper, Jacey Torrence, Kristin Richards, Kristen Roberts, and Shannon Griffith

Motorized Cart Registrations → 27

Short Term Rental Registrations → 35



New Residential Permits
1,157 Applied For → \$543.7M Valuation

New Commercial Permits
517 Applied For → \$135.8M Valuation



New Home Occupations
462 Applied For → 420 Issued

New Commercial Business Licenses
149 Applied For → 113 Issued

New Alcoholic Beverage Licenses
7 Applied For → 5 Issued

New Distilled Spirits Package Licenses
7 Applied For → 0 Issued



Shannon Griffith
Development
Service Center
Manager

2023 Engineering and Stormwater Management Year in Review

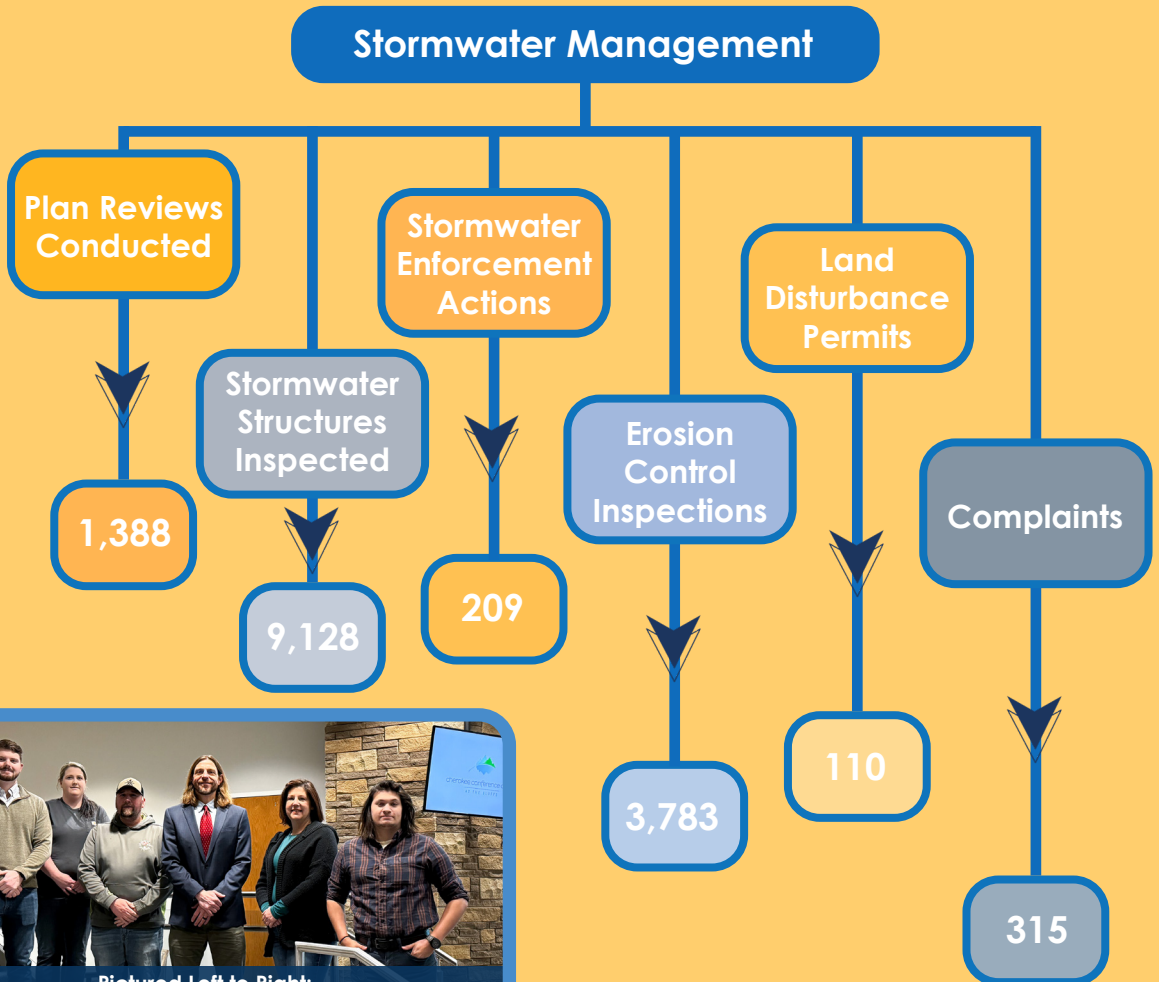
- ✓ Maintained Environmental Protection Division, Metro North Georgia Water Planning District, and Federal Emergency Management Agency Community Rating System compliance.
- ✓ Completed Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4 permit) 5-year Stormwater Management Plan, MS4 Annual Report, and GSWCC Semi-Annual Report.
- ✓ Completed 6 in-house design projects.
- ✓ Russ Swanner, Marcus McCrary, and Jesse Dover earned Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) Level II Plan Reviewer Certification.
- ✓ Ben Morgan renewed Georgia Professional Engineering License, Certified Floodplain Manager License, and GSWCC Level II Design Professional License.
- ✓ Andrea Yager earned her Certified Floodplain Manager License.
- ✓ In 2023, Tyler Dobson, Casey Pickett, and Russ Swanner joined the Engineering and Stormwater Management team.



Pictured Left to Right:
Katie Parker, Brandon Duncan, Ben Morgan, Todd Kekel, Tyler Dobson, and Chris Reed



Ben Morgan, P.E.
County Engineer



Pictured Left to Right:
Russ Swanner, Casey Pickett, Jesse Dover, Ben Morgan, Andrea Yager, and Marcus McCrary

Planning & Zoning



Pictured Left to Right:

Thomas Trawick, Susan Sawtelle, Beau Smith, Jillian Willis, Margaret Stallings, Catherine Long, and Dana Spayde

Rezoning
Cases

49

Variances/
Appeals

82

Minor
Subdivisions

250

Sign
Permits

83

Special Use
Permits

8

Administrative
Variances

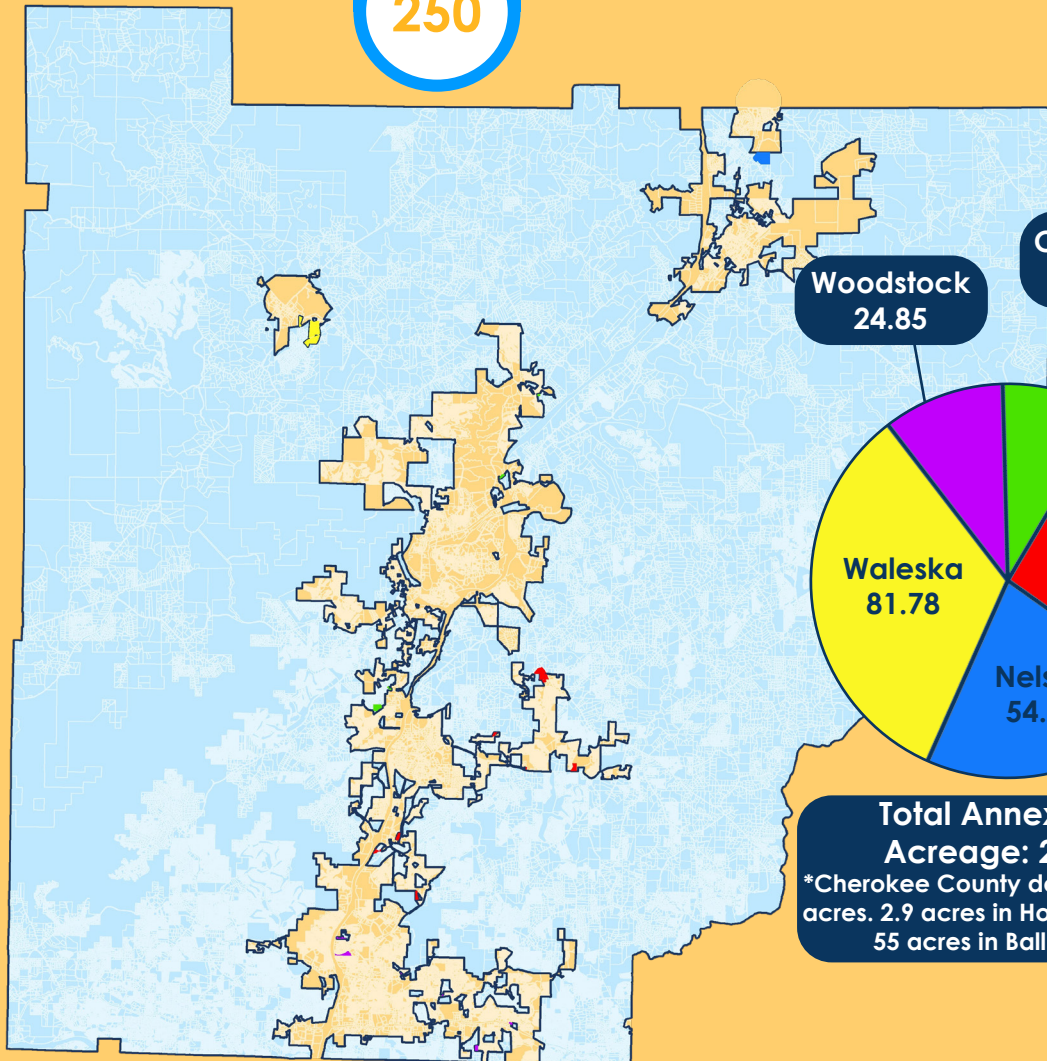
20

Zoning
Certifications


38



Margaret Stallings
Planning and Zoning
Director



Total Annexation Acreage: 248.44
*Cherokee County deannexed 57.9 acres. 2.9 acres in Holly Springs and 55 acres in Ball Ground.



COURTESY NOTICE
Code Compliance Division

See reverse for Spanish | Ver reverso para español

A County Code Compliance Inspector was at your property on _____

In regard to one or more of the following violations.

Prohibited Signs (Feather, Snake, A Frame, Sign of Way, etc.)

Sign Violation (Unpermitted, Requirements not met)

Buffer/Disbursement/Encroachment

Operating Without a Business License

Zoning Violation

Other: _____

Ways to Correct Violation(s): _____

Within _____ Days

For questions regarding this notice, please use the contact information listed below.
Hours: Monday - Friday 8AM-5PM

Cherokee County
Beau Smith
Code Compliance Inspector
Phone: 678-622-1111
Email: bsmith@cherokee.org
www.cherokee.org

1-32 South Forsyth
Canton, GA 30114
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
678-622-1111
www.cherokee.org

Where Metro Meets the Mountains™

219
Courtesy Notices

21
Notice of Violations Issued Due to Courtesy Notices

3
Citations Issued Due to Notice of Violations

Code Compliance
*The numbers provided are from April 2023 to December 2023.

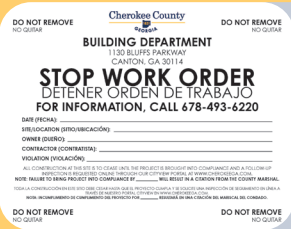
2
Cease and Desist Letters



Beau Smith
Code Compliance Inspector



11
Pickup Truck Loads of Illegal Signs



Cherokee County
BUILDING DEPARTMENT
1330 BLUFFS PARKWAY
CANTON, GA 30114

STOP WORK ORDER
DETERENER ORDEN DE TRABAJO
FOR INFORMATION, CALL 678-493-6220

DATE (FECHA) _____
REGISTRATION (REGISTRACION) _____
OWNER (DUEÑO) _____
CONTRACTOR (CONTRATISTA) _____
VIOLATION (VIOLACION) _____

ALL CONTRACTORS OF THIS CITY ARE TO CEASE ALL THE PROJECTS WITHOUT COMPLIANCE AND A FOLLOW UP INSPECTION REGISTERED UNDER VIOLATION NUMBER AT THIS CONTRACTOR'S CODE.

NOTE: FAILURE TO STOP PROJECT AND COMPLY WITH _____ WILL RESULT IN A CITATION FROM THE COUNTY MARSHAL.

NOTA: EL CONSTRUCTOR DE ESTE PROYECTO DEBE DETENER TODAS LAS OBRAS DE CONSTRUCCIÓN DE INMEDIATO Y REGISTRAR LA VIOLACION EN EL SISTEMA DE CONTROL DE CONSTRUCCIÓN DEL PROYECTO PARA EVITAR RECIBIR UNA CITACION DEL MARSHAL DEL CONDADO.

DO NOT REMOVE NO QUITAR

39
Stop Work Orders Issued

2023 Planning & Zoning and Code Compliance Year in Review

- ✓ Planning and Zoning hired two new employees, Susan Sawtelle and Beau Smith. Beau Smith's arrival launched the Code Compliance Division.
- ✓ Beau Smith received the Georgia Association of Code Enforcement Level II Certification (Code Enforcement Officer Masters Certificate Program).
- ✓ Dana Spayde received the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification.
- ✓ Thomas Trawick received the Top 10 in 10 'Young Professionals to Watch' Award from the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce.
- ✓ Cherokee County received Silver Level in the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Community Program. The application submitted by Cherokee County Planning and Zoning.
- ✓ The Planning and Zoning Team received the first ever Georgia Planning Association (GPA) award for Outstanding Planning Document - Small Community for Waleska's 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update.
- ✓ Cherokee County, in collaboration with Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, and Woodstock, received the GPA award for Innovation in Planning for the establishment of the Growth Boundary Agreements. The application was submitted by Cherokee County Planning and Zoning.
- ✓ The Planning and Zoning Team accomplished the adoption of the 2023 Our Cherokee Comprehensive Plan in record time with a record amount of community engagement.



Transportation



Brett Buchanan
Transportation
Director

The Transportation Engineering Department continues to provide connectivity to increase the ability to respond to and monitor traffic signals in real-time. While communicating with all traffic signal controllers, the department began implementing CCTV Cameras at many intersections to view live footage that assists in monitoring and adjusting signals when necessary. The department expects cameras at 100% of the County's intersections by mid-2024. Additional connections to various devices inside the signal cabinet provide valuable information before responding to any traffic signals in flash mode. These technological upgrades will continue to strengthen traffic signal operations.



Pictured Left to Right:
Carson Jones, Keith Satterfield, and Brett Buchanan

Public Works



County Resurfacing Program	Miles
In-house Resurfacing	16.9
Contract Resurfacing	13.7
Total Resurfacing	30.6



Steve Dobson
Public Works
Director

County Maintained Inventory Statistics	Miles	Number of Roads
Cherokee County Maintained Roads Total	1,282.79	3,475
Gravel Road Miles	29.824	80
Roads Located in Subdivisions Miles	644.879	529

SPLOST: Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax 2023 Projects Completed/Started
Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) is a one-cent, voter-approved sales tax. Money generated from the tax funds projects identified in the referendum approved by voters. It is put on the ballot every six years for renewal. The SPLOST/Roadway Department is led by Program Manager Jim Wilgus.



Pictured Left to Right:
Jim Wilgus, Josh Hamilton, Jimmy Stokes, Lori Jones, and Barry Tarver



Jim Wilgus
SPLOST/Roadway
Program Manager



Rhine Road

The Rhine Road Improvement Project from Knox Bridge Highway (SR-20) to Upper Sweetwater Trail, just over one mile, included the reconstruction of the roadway, realignment of the vertical and horizontal curves, grading ditches for storm drainage, installing driveway aprons and driveway storm drain pipes.

Construction Cost: \$2,747,863
Status: Completed December 15, 2023



Union Hill Road at Lower Union Hill Road

Construction of a single-lane roundabout and drainage improvements.

Construction Cost: \$2,102,636
Status: Completed January 15, 2024



Hames Road

Roadway reconstruction between SR 92 and Jamerson Road. Project includes the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Hames Road and South Jett Road. Vertical and horizontal modifications will be made along Hames Road to improve safety. Curb and gutter, drainage improvements and sidewalks were added to Hames Road.

Construction Cost: \$5,035,160
Status: Under construction. Expected completion-April 2024



Technology Ridge Parkway, Phase 1

New alignment roadway between Bluffs Parkway and the intersection of Heard Road and Fate Conn Road. Project includes roundabouts and the intersection with Bluffs Parkway and the intersection of Heard Road and Fate Conn Road. Roadway consists of 12-foot travel lanes and a 14-foot center turn lane. A 10-foot side path and 6-foot sidewalk are also included as part of the project. The project is part of a multi-phase new alignment roadway that will extend to the airport.

Project Cost: \$9,074,620
Status: Under construction. Expected completion-May 2024

- ❑ The Safe Street and Roads for All (SS4A) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan is underway, in partnership with Canton, Woodstock, Holly Springs, and Ball Ground, led by Pond & Company;
- ❑ The I-575 & Sixes Road Area Plan and Transportation Study is underway in partnership with the Cities of Woodstock, Holly Springs, and the Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED), led by Kimley-Horn;
- ❑ The zoning overlay study and plan for the Cumming Highway (SR-20) Corridor, from the Forsyth County line to the City of Canton (near Scott Rd.) is underway;
- ❑ Coordinating with the cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Nelson, Waleska and Woodstock to form the Cherokee Regional Land Bank;
- ❑ Working to resurface greater than 30 miles of roadways in the unincorporated County;
- ❑ Coordinating to finalize the Bells Ferry Roadway Widening Project and the Bells Ferry Bridge Project for bidding to construction by GDOT;
- ❑ Preparing the Ball Ground Highway and Howell Bridge Road Roundabout Project to proceed to construction;
- ❑ Conducting the Cherokee Regional Housing Forum each quarter in partnership with the cities of Cherokee County;
- ❑ Commencing engineering for the Ball Ground Bypass in partnership with the City of Ball Ground and GDOT.



The picture above is from the March 27, 2024 Cherokee County Housing Forum held at the Bluffs Conference Center.



The picture above is from the second Highway 20/Cumming Highway Overlay Study community meeting held on February 7, 2024.



Cherokee County

1831

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1130 Bluffs Parkway,
Canton, GA 30114
(678) 493-6077