

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



*Bells Ferry Road Little River Bridge*

## CY 2024 Annual Report

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BRANTLEY E. DAY, AICP  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY DIRECTOR

Reflecting on 2024, it was truly a pivotal year, with significant accomplishments by the Community Development Agency team, with an eye on 2025 and the years ahead. It was a collaborative year and a year of partnerships with the municipalities as well as state and federal agencies to maximize our collective effectiveness, achieving so much more together than any one of us could accomplish individually. We partnered with the cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Nelson, Waleska, and Woodstock to pursue transportation projects, roadway resurfacing, area planning studies, housing initiatives, and annexation/growth coordination. These initiatives, along with the production and accomplishments of the Community Development Agency team, are detailed in this CY 2024 Annual Report, which I'm pleased to present to the County Manager and Board of Commissioners.

Canton, Georgia  
January 15, 2025

*\*Note: All data included in this report are from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024\**

# ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS



Left to Right: Ken Hardy, Robin Hunt, Tim Ragsdale (Vice-Chair), Marla Doss, Lisa Tressler (Chairwoman)

The Zoning Board of Appeals consists of five members residing within Cherokee County and appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The Board meets the second Thursday of each month. The Board considers variances from the Zoning Ordinance and Development Ordinance. The Board also hears and decides upon appeals of determinations made by the Zoning Administrator.

**Combined Years of Service: 30**

# PLANNING COMMISSION



Left to Right: Lisa Tressler, Chris Van Zant, Scott Barnes, Richard Belote, Bob Whitaker (Chairman), Tom Ware, Marla Doss, Dr. Rick Whiteside (Vice-Chair), and Tom Hill

The Planning Commission consists of nine members residing within Cherokee County. Seven of the members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners and two members are representatives of the City of Waleska and the City of Ball Ground, respectively. The Board meets the first Tuesday of each month. The Board conducts public hearings in connection with its recommendations regarding map amendments, rezonings, special use permits, and concurrent variances.

**Combined Years of Service: 108**

# THURSDAY PLAN REVIEW TEAM



Left to Right: Katie Parker, Margaret Stallings, Thomas Trawick, Catherine Long, Jim Haizlip, Chad Arp, Paul Laney, Michael Priest, Christopher Reed, Ben Morgan, and Shannon Griffith.

The Thursday Plan Review Team Meetings incorporate various disciplines within the county, including Planning and Zoning, Transportation, Building, Fire Marshal, and Engineering. These meetings are held every Thursday. The intent of these meetings is to allow those interested in developing property, constructing a project, or opening a business in Cherokee County, to identify and receive a high level overview of requirements for their proposal. This review can include the need for stormwater detention, zoning buffers, a deceleration lane, and more. This process allows the applicant a view into the process to develop the site, as well as the timeline and potential cost of the proposed project.

# AGENCY LEADERSHIP TEAM



Left to Right: Patrick Bradshaw, Paul Laney, Ben Morgan, Margaret Stallings, Brantley Day, Rhonda Hilliard, Steve Dobson, and Brett Buchanan.

The Community Development Agency Leadership Team includes the Agency Director, Brantley Day, and the leaders of the Agency's eight departments, including Paul Laney, Chief Building Official and DSC Director; Margaret Stallings, Planning & Zoning Director; Brett Buchanan, Department of Transportation Director; Stephen Dobson, Public Works Director; Ben Morgan, County Engineer, and Patrick Bradshaw SPLOST Roadway Program Director; joined by Rhonda Hilliard, Operations Manager of the Operations Division. Together, the leadership team and the staff of the Agency deliver land development plan review, permitting services, stormwater engineering, business and alcohol licenses, building permitting and inspections, comprehensive planning, land use planning and zoning code services – including rezoning, special use permit, and variance requests – signs and zoning enforcement, as well as the planning, programming, and construction of roadway projects and additional public infrastructure projects, traffic signalization and utility permitting, and the maintenance of public rights-of-way, among other community development responsibilities.

# HIGHLIGHTS

- √ The Building Department completed over 43,000 inspections, up about 30% over CY 2023.
- √ Total permits issued across all permit categories increased from CY 2023 by nearly 45%, from 1,674 permits to 2,424 permits issued.
- √ The Development Service Center (DSC) issued permits for single family residential construction valued at \$482M, down from \$543M permitted in CY 2023.
- √ Business licenses were up from 533 licenses issued in CY 2023 to 594 licenses issued in CY 2024, with new commercial business licenses issued alone up nearly 71%.
- √ Stormwater Engineering inspected 10,037 stormwater structures, up from 9,128 in CY 2023.
- √ Erosion control inspections completed: 2,284.
- √ Land Disturbance Permits issued: 92. Down from 110 issued in CY 2023.
- √ Planning & Zoning public hearing cases processed: 126. Down from 139 cases in CY 2023, though variances/appeals cases were up in 2024.
- √ The award-winning Highway 20 (Cumming Highway) East Overlay District Project was drafted and produced in-house by the Planning and Zoning Department and adopted by the Board of Commissioners ahead of the completion of the ongoing GDOT widening project.
- √ Received \$9.9M in federal funds from the Atlanta Regional Commission for the SR-140 & Univeter Road Intersection Project (construction) and I-575 & Towne Lake Pkwy. Interchange Project (construction).
- √ Public Works resurfaced 15.57 miles, with contractors completing an additional 25.7 miles for a total of 41.27 miles resurfaced, up from 30.6 miles in CY 2023.
- √ SPLOST-Roadway let 11 roadway and infrastructure projects to construction, valued at \$24,499,504.
- √ Welcomed Patrick Bradshaw, AICP, as the SPLOST Roadway Program Director, filling the position of the retiring Jim Wilgus, P.E.
- √ Re-organized and launched the Operations Division of the Community Development Agency Organization.
- √ Coordinating with the cities of Cherokee County, three Cherokee Regional Housing Forums were hosted in 2024, by Cherokee County (March 27), the City of Canton (May 23), and the City of Woodstock (September 5). The Housing Forum brings together a variety of stakeholders from business, government, non-profit, home building, real estate, and other related sectors, to discuss workforce housing needs, collaborating to achieve solutions.

# HIGHLIGHTS

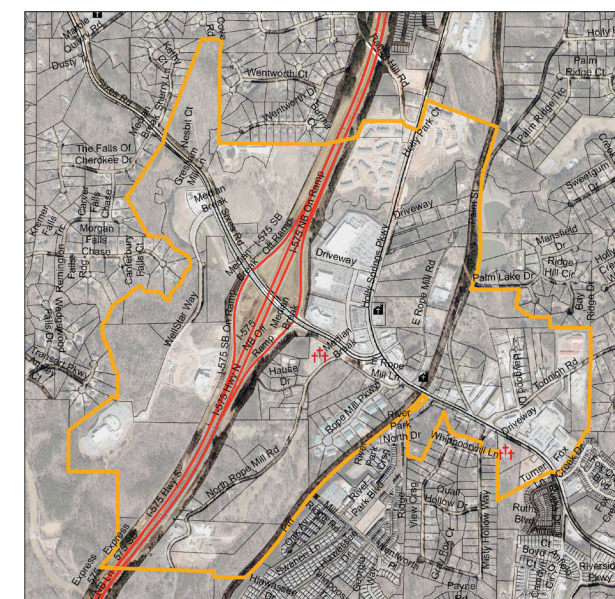


*Technology Ridge Parkway Phase I Ribbon Cutting, June 4, 2024*

The Agency collaborated with the cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock to complete the Safe Streets and Road for All Plan (SS4A), funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), along with a local match, to comprehensively address safety on the countywide roadway network. This plan will be finalized and issued in Q1 2025.

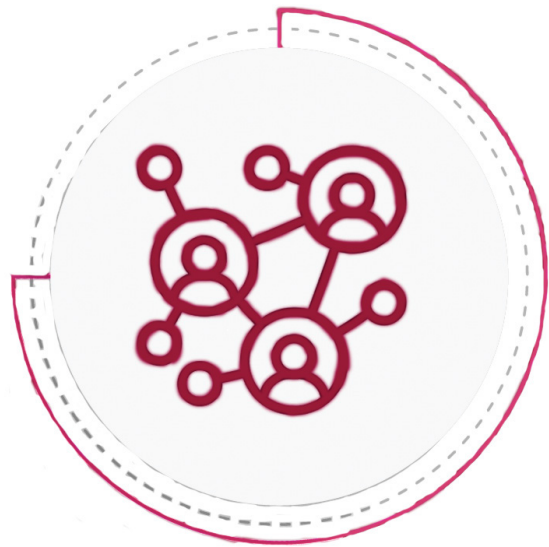


*First SS4A Stakeholder Meeting, June 18, 2024*



*I-575 & Sixes Road "Wildcat" Interchange Area Plan Boundary Map*

The Agency collaborated with the cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock, joined by the Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED), to complete an area plan for the I-575 & Sixes Road Interchange, known as the "Wildcat Plan," which will provide recommended projects to improve mobility and reduce congestion within the critical Exit 11 interchange area. This plan will be finalized and issued in Q2 2025.



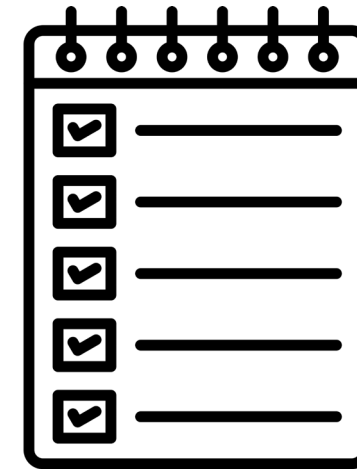
# OPERATIONS



Left to Right: Rhonda Hilliard (Operations Manager) and Madelyn Ray (Administrative Assistant)

The Operations Division provides administrative and organizational support to seven departments within the Agency, including Engineering, Stormwater, SPLOST Roadway, Transportation, Planning and Zoning, Building Inspections, and the Development Service Center. The division is responsible for providing the day-to-day operational needs of the Agency and is responsible for providing excellent professional external and internal customer care. The division coordinates with the operational support for Public Works.

# DIVISION



## Operational Needs Include:

- Processing statements, check requests and invoices.
- Managing the administrative needs for the SPLOST Roadway Team and maintaining files for right-of-way and infrastructure projects.
- Sorting USPS mail daily to county departments.
- Fulfilling open records requests.
- Assisting Agency staff with scheduling and customer service coordination.



Housing Forum - March 27, 2024

## TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. On-boarded six new employees for the agency.
2. Filed 58 property deeds for right-of-way acquisition.
3. Processed 373 Open Records Requests.
4. Compiled and transmitted statements and invoices for processing to Accounts Payable in the Finance Department.
5. Planned and hosted events in support of the Agency's mission (i.e. Housing Forum).
6. Managed and processed payroll for 50 employees and entered seven departments budgets into the accounting software.

## TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING



BRETT BUCHANAN, P.E.  
TRANSPORTATION  
DIRECTOR

## BUILDING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE CENTER

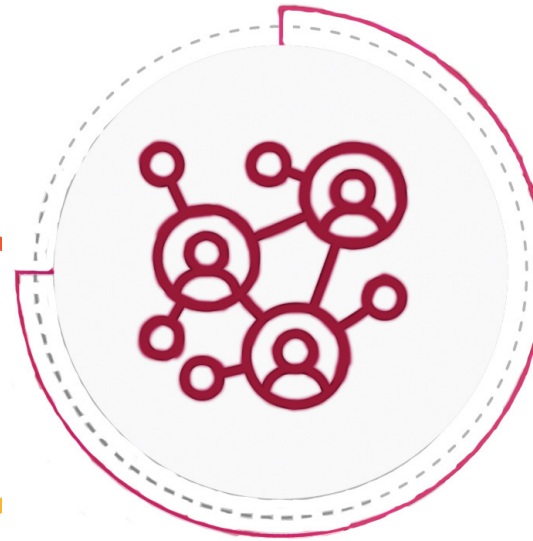


PAUL LANEY  
CHIEF BUILDING  
OFFICIAL &  
DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICE CENTER  
DIRECTOR



SHANNON GRIFFITH  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICE  
CENTER MANAGER

## OPERATIONS DIVISION



## PLANNING & ZONING



STEPHEN DOBSON  
PUBLIC WORKS  
DIRECTOR

## SPLOST/ROADWAY



PATRICK BRADSHAW, AICP  
SPLOST ROADWAY  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

## ENGINEERING/ STORMWATER



BEN MORGAN, P.E.  
COUNTY ENGINEER



MARGARET STALLINGS, AIA,  
AICP  
PLANNING & ZONING  
DIRECTOR

# TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING/ PUBLIC WORKS

## THE TEAM

Carson Jones  
Keith Satterfield  
Amanda Stewart\*  
Kayla Lusk-Gwinn\*  
Michael Benjamin  
Clay Black  
Joseph Blalock  
Samuel Brooks  
John Brooks  
Donal Brooks  
Keegan Bryant  
Michael Buchanan  
Eugene Clayton  
Keith Cornette  
Richard Cornette  
Christopher Cronan  
Domonique Dixon  
Jess Durham  
Stephen Everett  
Gawain Fraley  
Dakota Frye  
Gertrudis Garcia-Servano  
Mickey Glennan  
Roger Godfrey

Manuel Guzman  
Steven Hamrick  
Perry Hester  
Josh Hodgins  
Larry Huskins  
Lamar Ingram  
Douglas Jones  
Michael Keisler  
Donald Keneipp  
Mike Kincaid  
Brian LaFollette  
Andrew Lamb  
George Lamb  
Daylon Lathem  
Randy Ledbetter  
James Lord  
Loyd Major  
Nathan Manning  
Thomas Martin  
Samuel Martinez  
Austin McChesney  
Zachary McCoy  
Jimmy McCoy  
Richard McDaniel  
Bryan McDaris

Isaiah McMickens  
Tanner Norris  
Patrick Palmer  
Zachary Peardon  
George Perkins  
John Pitner  
Paul Pritchard  
William Ralston  
Corey Reece  
Jared Reeves  
Jonathan Richards  
Duane Shepardson  
Jack Smith  
Steven Smith  
Paul Steven Smith  
Jonathan Sportsman  
Brody Stephens  
Marshall Stephens  
Mark Terry  
Steven Tinney  
Lloyd Turner  
James White  
Blake Worthington  
Johnny Lee Young

\*Amanda Stewart and Kayla Lusk-Gwinn provide operational support for Public Works\*



Left to Right: Keith Satterfield, Carson Jones, & Brett Buchanan, Director of Transportation



STEPHEN DOBSON  
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR



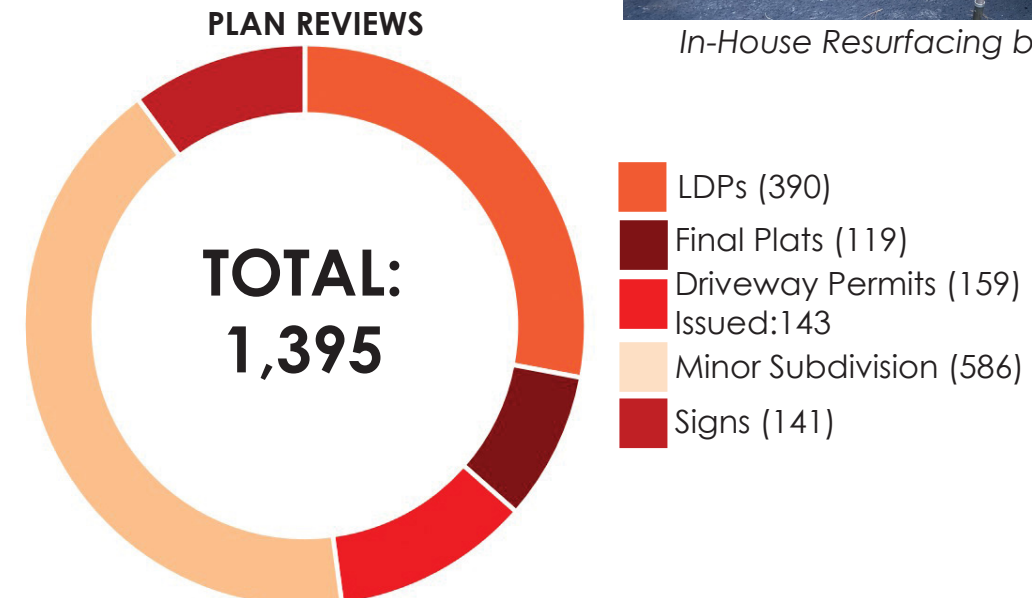
Statistics	Miles	Number of Roads
Cherokee County Maintained Roads Total	1,290	3,504
Gravel Roads	30.6	79
Subdivision Roads	650.1	2,379
In-House Resurfacing	15.57	28 (Includes 3 parking lots)
Contract Resurfacing	25.7	66



Pavement width measurement during a site visit



In-House Resurfacing by Public Works



\*Includes Re-Reviews\*

## TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Issued 369 Utility Permits for Gas, Electric, Water, Sewer, and Telecommunication providers.
2. Completed right-of-way acquisitions for Bells Ferry Widening and a variety of other projects.
3. Completed reconstruction of Huey Barnes Lane and Large Court.
4. Re-organized operation to include SPLOST Roadway Team.
5. Near completion on camera installation project in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office.

## SPLOST ROADWAY TEAM



PATRICK BRADSHAW  
SPLOST ROADWAY  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Left to Right: Barry Tarver, Brandon Duncan, Lori Jones, Jimmy Stokes, & Josh Hamilton

### SPLOST ROADWAY TEAM

- Josh Hamilton
- Jimmy Stokes
- Brandon Duncan
- Lori Jones
- Barry Tarver



### Project: SR 140 & Univeter Road Intersection Improvements

**Narrative:** Cherokee County partnered with the Atlanta Regional Commission for project funding. This project proposes improvements to the intersection of SR 140 and Univeter Road. Improvements consist of additional left turn lanes and the widening of SR 140 to accommodate two through lanes in both directions through the intersection.

**Estimated Construction Cost:** \$6,922,636

**Status:** Design underway. Right-of-way acquisition underway. Expected construction let - Q2 2026.

### Project: Upper Bethany Road & Damascus Road Intersection Improvements

**Narrative:** Damascus and Upper Bethany are rural roads in northern Cherokee County near the Pickens County line. The approaches to their intersection lack adequate sight distance. This project will remedy issues with this intersection through a combination of cutting and filling the existing vertical profile to achieve proper intersection sight distance

**Construction Cost:** \$1,398,588

**Status:** Construction commencing Q1 2025

### Project: Trickum Road at SR 92 Intersection Improvements

**Narrative:** Cherokee County has partnered with the Atlanta Regional Commission and the City of Woodstock to delivery this project. This project will reduce congestion, accidents, and improve level of service by adding left turn lanes on the northbound and southbound approaches.

**Estimated Construction Cost:** \$5,536,611

**Status:** Construction expected to commence in Q3 2025

### Project: SR 140 & Batesville/Hickory Intersection Improvements

**Narrative:** Cherokee County completed a Corridor Study for SR 140 in July 2019 and this intersection was identified as a priority project. The project includes the construction of additional thru-lanes through the intersection, the addition of dedicated right-turn lanes, and dual left-turn lanes on SR 140.

**Construction Cost:** \$5,857,282

**Status:** Under construction. Expected completion March 2026

### Project: Hickory & Stringer Road Sidewalks

**Narrative:** The project, in partnership with the City of Holly Springs, fills in gaps in the sidewalk network along Hickory Road from SR 140 to New Light Road and along Stringer Road across the frontage of the Middlebrooke Subdivision.

**Construction Cost:** \$3,706,422

**Status:** Under construction. Expected completion August 2025

1

Bells Ferry  
Little River Bridge  
Replacement



GDOT scheduled to let to construction in April 2025

2

Bells Ferry Road  
Widening



GDOT scheduled to let to construction in January 2025

# ENGINEERING/STORMWATER ENGINEERING

## THE TEAM

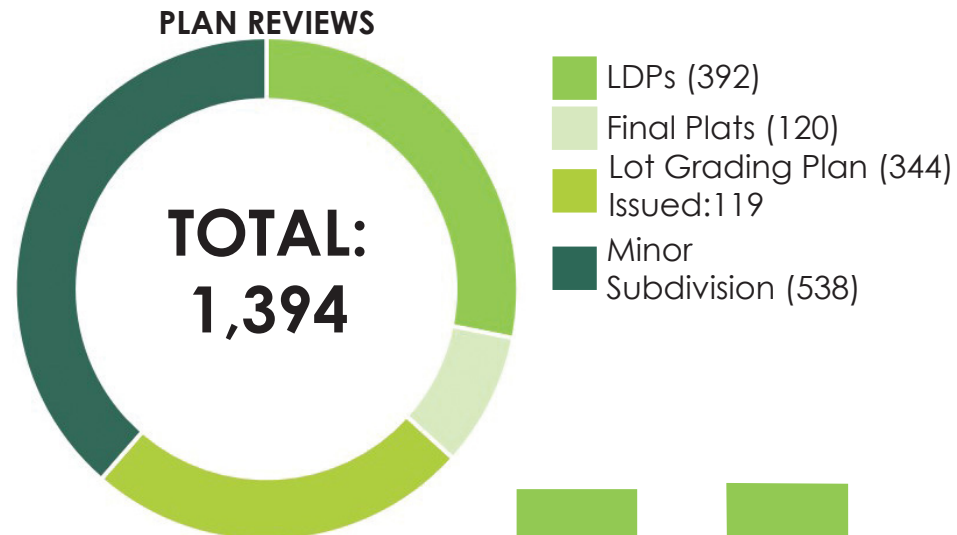
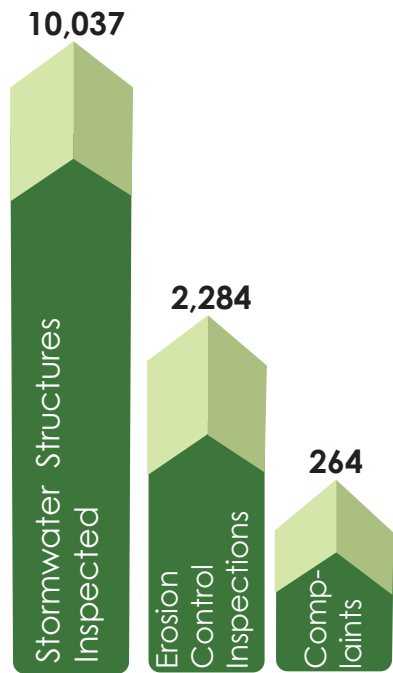
Andrea Yager  
 Jackson Tracy  
 Jesse Dover  
 Casey Pickett  
 Marcus McCrary  
 Katie Parker  
 Chris Reed  
 Shannon Fitzgerald  
 Zach Cochran  
 Todd Kekel  
 Tyler Dobson  
 Jakob Allen



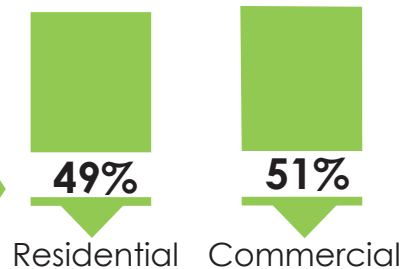
Left to Right (top row): Tyler Dobson, Jakob Allen, Ben Morgan, & Chris Reed  
 Left to Right (bottom row): Katie Parker, Todd Kekel, & Zach Cochran



Left to Right: Jesse Dover, Casey Pickett, Ben Morgan, Marcus McCrary, & Jackson Tracy



\*Includes Re-Reviews\*



Final Plats Approved: 19  
 Final Plats Recorded: 15  
 Total Number of new lots: 378



Underground Detention Inspection



Road Installation Inspection



Etowah River Cleanup



Earthwork for a Subdivision

## TOP 6 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Completed Metro District Audit 5-year submittal.
2. Completed FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) Recertification Report, which allows county property owners to request a discount on flood insurance.
3. Completed Municipal Separate Stormwater System (MS4) Permit Renewal.
4. Completed Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) Semi-annual renewal reports.
5. Completed four in-house design projects.
6. Hosted Upper Etowah River Clean Up and Stormfest 2024.

# PLANNING AND ZONING

## THE TEAM

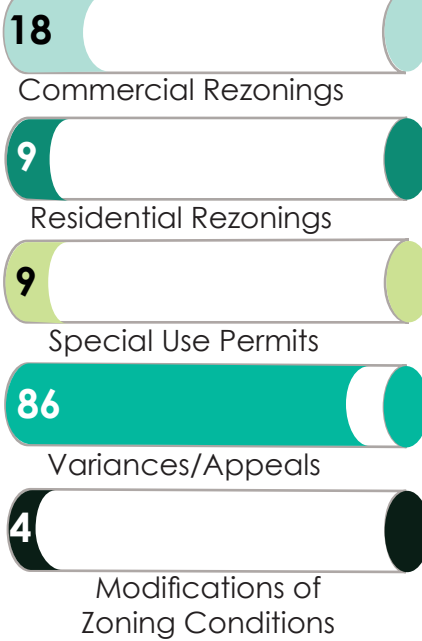
Catherine Long  
 Thomas Trawick  
 Dana Spayde  
 Tamala Davis  
 Breonna Scott  
 Beau Smith  
 Kristen Roberts



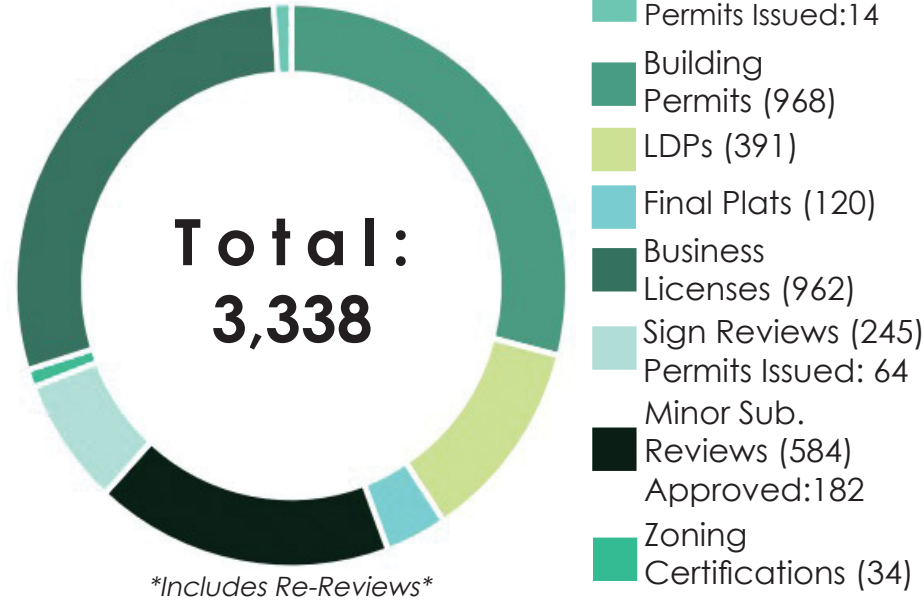
Left to Right (top row): Thomas Trawick, Breonna Scott, Beau Smith & Tamala Davis  
 Left to Right (bottom row): Kristen Roberts, Catherine Long, Margaret Stallings, & Dana Spayde

## PUBLIC HEARING

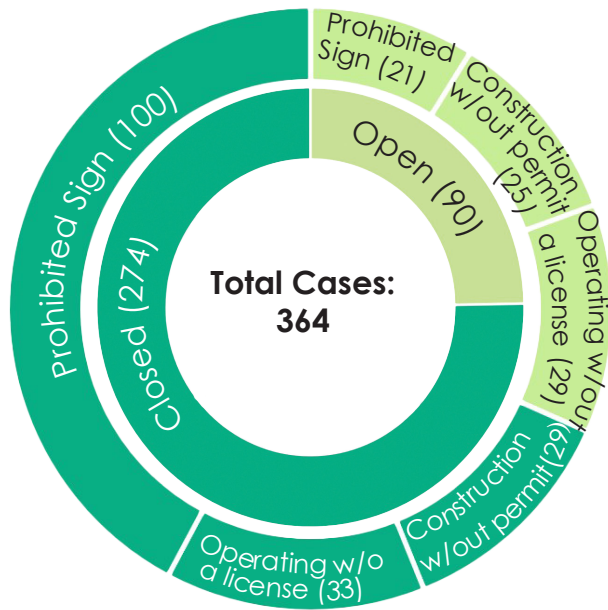
### APPLICATIONS ADVERTISED



## PLAN REVIEWS

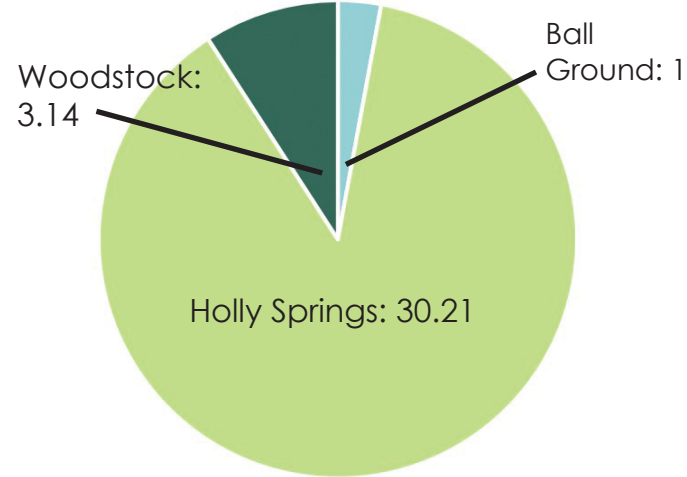


## ZONING VIOLATIONS



\*Top 3 Violations of Each\*

## ANNEXATIONS



### TOTAL ANNEXATION ACREAGE: 34.35

17 applications received (3 withdrawn, 4 denied, 1 delayed, 4 pending)



GAZA Award Acceptance



Safe Streets and Roads For All Community Outreach at Canton First Friday



Greenways & Trails Master Plan Community Outreach at Canton First Friday



Wildcat Public Input Meeting

## TOP 6 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. The Highway 20 East Overlay District was adopted and received a Georgia Association of Zoning Administrators award for Outstanding Planning Document.
2. Hired three new staff members: Catherine Long (Planning Manager), Breonna Scott (Planner), and Kristen Roberts (Planning and Zoning Tech).
3. Kickoff of the Unified Development Code process.
4. Extensive public engagement with long-range planning projects (including Greenways & Trails Master Plan, Wildcat Interchange Plan & Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan, etc.)
5. CityView Implementation of a Code Enforcement Module and other process updates.
6. Continued communication with the cities to collaborate on comprehensive planning and growth boundaries.

# BUILDING/DEVELOPMENT SERVICE CENTER

## BUILDING INSPECTIONS TEAM:

Bryan Crosby  
 Jim Haizlip  
 Eric Nepogoda  
 Ted Flowers  
 Chris Thomas  
 Linda Moody  
 Steve Fox  
 John Cassidy  
 Cody Hughes  
 Elliott Robinson



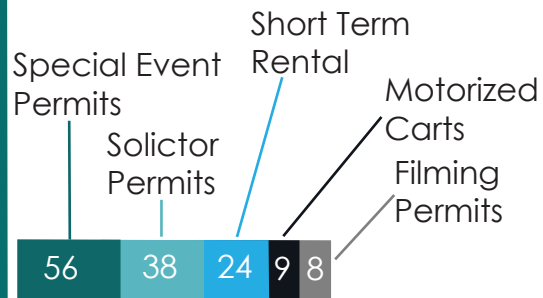
Left to Right (top row): Eric Nepogoda, Bryan Crosby, Cody Hughes, Chris Thomas, & John Cassidy  
 Left to Right (bottom row): Ted Flowers, Linda Moody, Steve Fox, & Elliott Robinson

## DEVELOPMENT SERVICE CENTER TEAM:

Becky Kerstetter  
 Irene Mumper  
 Jacey Torrence  
 Kristin Richards  
 Tailor Crader



Left to Right (top row): Irene Mumper, Shannon Griffith & Tailor Crader  
 Left to Right (bottom row): Becky Kerstetter, Kristin Richards, & Jacey Torrence



**401 Home Occupation**

**193 Commercial**

= 594 Business Licenses Issued

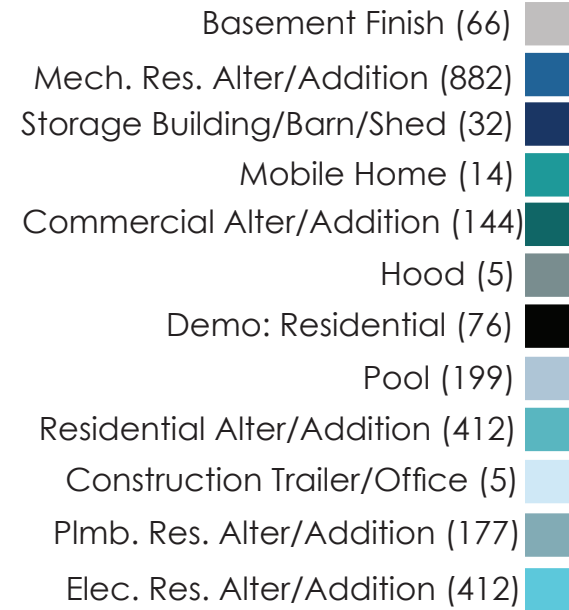
**39,762 Residential**

**3,258 Commercial**

= 43,020 Inspections Conducted



## OTHER PERMITS



**Total Plan Reviews: 1,134**



*Pictured: Jacey Torrence & Tailor Crader*



*Bracing Inspection*

## TOP 5 HIGHLIGHTS

1. Hired two new staff members: Eric Nepogoda (Commercial Building Inspector) and Tailor Crader (DSC Customer Liaison).
2. Promotion of Bryan Crosby to Deputy Building Official.
3. Facilitated 2nd Annual Conference for Northwest Georgia Inspectors Association.
4. Continue to focus on Customer Service and to provide code training to builders and subcontractors.
5. January 2025 change to the 2023 National Electric Code.

# Cherokee County

1831

GEORGIA

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

**WHERE METRO MEETS THE MOUNTAINS**

Created by: Dana Spayde, Principal Planner, AICP