

# **A Five Year Strategic Blueprint**

## **Cherokee County, Georgia**

2017-2021

### **“Shaping Your Future”**

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#### **Board of Commissioners**

L. B. “Buzz” Ahrens- Chairman

Steve West- District 1

Raymond Gunnin- District 2

Bob Kovacs- District 3

K. Scott Gordon- District 4

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#### **Cherokee County Government**

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# Milestones

2012-2016

- Nationally Accredited Public Safety
- Cherokee County Aquatic Center
- New \$300m Northside Hospital Cherokee
- Two Public Safety Training Facilities
- Cherokee County Regional Airport
- Lowest Tax Spend & 2<sup>nd</sup> Lowest Tax Burden in Atlanta Region
- Cherokee 75 Corporate Park (Adidas, Inalfa Roof Systems, ThyssenKrupp, & Jaipur Living)
- Fire Public Protection Rating 3/3y
- 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest Crime Rate in 20 county Atlanta Region
- \$90m Parks and Greenspace Bond



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# Forward

**To our valued Cherokee County Government employees and Cherokee County residents,**

As many of the readers of this letter will recognize for the past several years we have used the term “Shaping Your Future” as the hallmark message of our commitment to the community.

This term has been used in my annual New Year greeting letter to all employees, as well as, the theme of our annual State of Cherokee address, sponsored by the Council for Quality Growth. So, it is fitting to be the underlying theme of the Strategic Blueprint you are about to read.

This ‘Five Year Strategic Blueprint 2017-2021’ raises the standard Cherokee County continues to strive for and allows my fellow Board Members, County Manager, Executive Leadership Team and Staff the ability to focus on the needs of our community. This document is the outcome of a planning retreat and charge to the organization to define a specific set of tangible, measurable and relevant Guiding Principles, Priority Areas, Goals and Objectives that serve as a roadmap for the future.

This Strategic Blueprint is a working document that remains agile and flexible as new concerns for our community arise.

Stakeholders – as listed on page 4 – are intended to be all-inclusive. Said differently, it is an invitation to join us on this five-year journey and to communicate with us, and among yourselves, regarding ideas, suggestions, concerns and expectations. The Strategic Blueprint is a critical document that will be used continuously to identify existing and emerging issues and to guide the development of solutions. This process is intended to encompass diverse groups of people in providing the very best outcomes possible.

I would like to thank my fellow Board Members, the County Manager and the Executive Leadership Team for all of their hard work and dedication to providing a thoughtful and inclusive document that will propel Cherokee County in the coming years. The Strategic Blueprint takes us to the horizon. Once grounded, we can take a look over the horizon.

Thank you for your support as we collectively strive to fulfill our Mission and Vision.

With great respect,



L. B. Ahrens, Jr (Buzz)

‘Your’ Chairman



# The Charge

A strategic blueprint is a guiding document to allow Cherokee County the ability to identify key areas such as economic prosperity, fiscal responsibility, safety & security and environmental stewardship, and then develop action plans so as to accomplish the goals and objectives set forth. Cherokee County has long wanted to develop a strategic blueprint to enhance operational value and efficiency. The strategic blueprint will have the ability to measure different metrics and track the success.

## Cherokee County is diverse and growing

A strong economy has kept Cherokee County as one of Georgia's fastest growing counties. Cherokee County has five diverse municipalities and the County continues to work closely with each to ensure that Cherokee County remains a great place to work, live and play. But, with growth comes challenges. Shifting economic landscapes and changing community leadership are just two of the many variables that the county will face in the future. Cherokee County's ability to strategically look at the county and make informed decisions is going to be vital for the continued success of this great county.



# The Approach

In response to the charge, a strategic planning retreat was planned and the Board of Commissioners, County Manager, Administrative Services Agency Director, County Clerk and Staff Attorney came together and identified four priority areas that the county would focus on for the next five years. A number of objectives and action plans were developed for each priority area so as to track the progress for the strategic blueprint. This effort has been supported by the Executive Leadership Team.

## Scope & Scale

The 2017 strategic blueprint provides a comprehensive set of objectives and action plans enabling Cherokee County to move forward in leading and supporting the county. This strategic blueprint covers a five-year period (2017- 2021); however, given the complex and fast-changing nature of our civic environment, the Board should regularly review and update this document as needed to adapt agency resources in response to, or in anticipation of, changing social, political, economic, technological and/or civic conditions.

## Guiding Principles

The structure of this strategic blueprint document begins with the Board's review of high-level strategic elements (purpose, mission, vision and values) affecting Cherokee County. The document then addresses the finer elements, such as objectives and action plans. In drafting the strategic blueprint and in focusing on serving the residents and business communities, the Board used the following guiding principles:

- Adopting carefully considered policies
- Building and expanding our competitive advantages
- Delivering superior customer service
- Promoting innovation and continuous improvement
- Operating in a fiscally responsible manner



# Stakeholders

The audience for this strategic blueprint document remains Cherokee County stakeholders. They include, but are not limited to:

- **Cherokee County Board of Commissioners**
- **County Manager and staff**
- **Local municipal governments**
- **Cherokee County state legislative representatives**
- **Appointed boards, commissions, and committees**
- **Cherokee County School District**
- **Cherokee County residents**

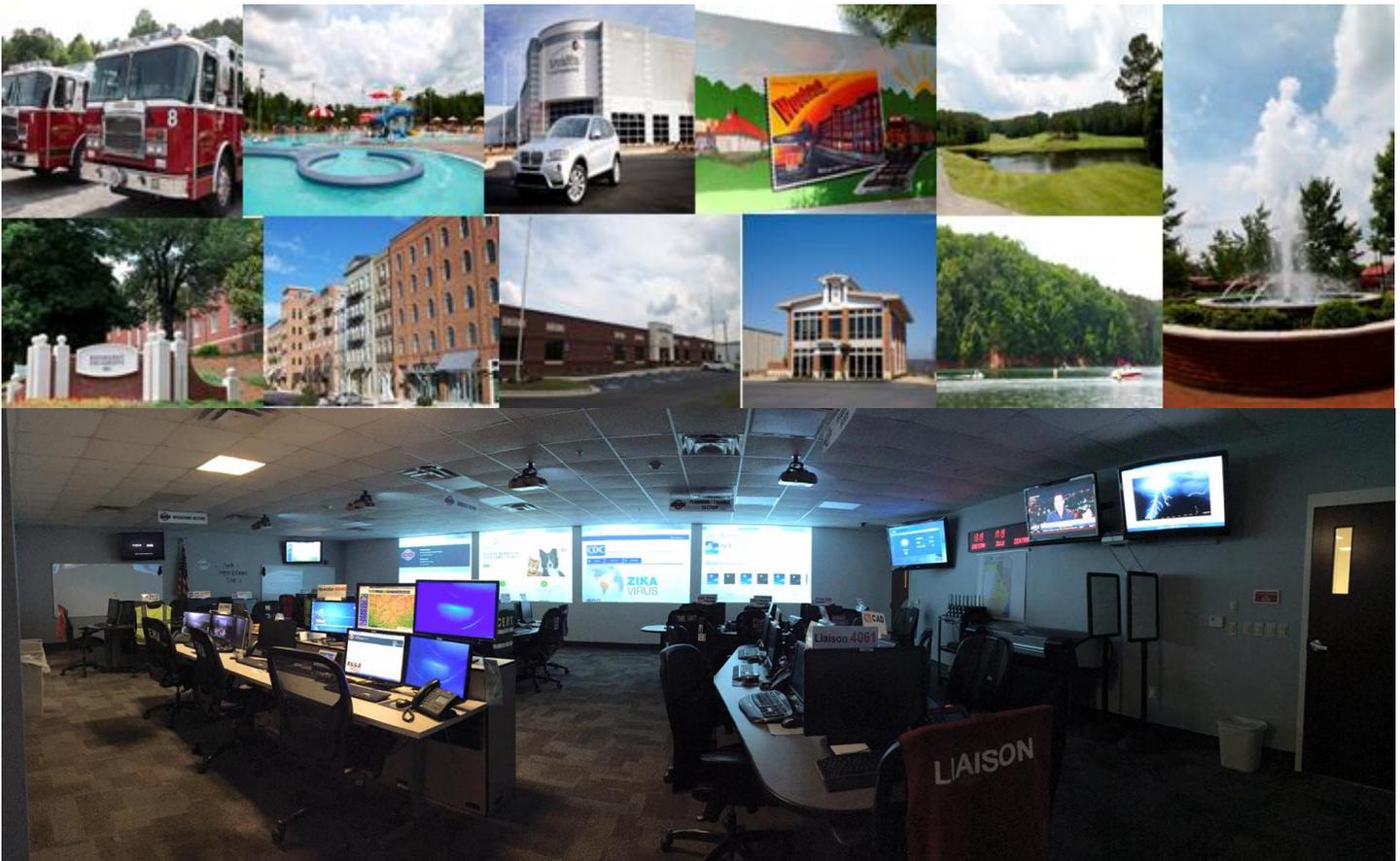


# Mission, Vision & Values

**Mission Statement:** The government of Cherokee County, Georgia exists to promote and sustain a superior quality of life. In partnership with our communities, we pledge to deliver cost-effective services in a personal, responsive, respectful and innovative manner, to our residents and visitors alike.

**Vision Statement:** To provide essential services to support the development of a sustainable and prosperous community to build a better county to live, work and play.

**Values Statement:** Cherokee County is dedicated to providing our citizens with honest and transparent government, characterized by integrity and accountability. We will provide service excellence in a professional manner with sensitivity to the needs of all people and our environment.



# Summary

Priority Theme	Priority Area	Action Plans
<p><b>To build community trust through humility, honesty and transparency</b></p> <p>Deliver exceptional service with an engaged workforce that effectively manages public assets</p>	<p><b>#1- Excellence in Government</b></p> <p>“If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception; it is a prevailing attitude.”</p> <p>Colin Powell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote financial integrity by effectively and efficiently managing public assets</li> <li>Attract, develop and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce with the highest standards of professionalism, ethics and integrity</li> <li>Understand and respond appropriately to customers’ needs with effective, collaborative solutions to maximize positive outcomes and leverage resources</li> <li>Build a safe work environment and minimize risks associated with security and integrity of assets and information</li> </ul>
<p><b>To ensure the safety of our residents in regards to crime, emergencies, and inclement weather</b></p> <p>Partner with residents to provide a safe and secure community through prevention, readiness, and professional response</p>	<p><b>#2- Safety and Security</b></p> <p>“Educate and inform the whole mass of the people... They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.”</p> <p>Thomas Jefferson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance community preparedness</li> <li>Invest in high performing public safety services</li> <li>Reduce incidents that result in injury, death and property damage and that negatively impact county resources</li> <li>Invest in technology and projects that increase public safety</li> </ul>
<p><b>To keep Economic Development a #1 priority</b></p> <p>Promote a business-friendly community to retain and attract businesses, diversify the economic base and create job opportunities for an educated, ready workforce</p>	<p><b>#3- Economic Prosperity</b></p> <p>“Pray a little more, work a little harder, save, wait, be patient and, most of all, live within our means. That's the American way. It's not spending ourselves into prosperity or taxing ourselves into prosperity.”</p> <p>Mike Huckabee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamline requirements for starting and operating a business so as to expand business retention and recruitment activities</li> <li>Support and invest in workforce development Continue with advanced marketing and communication endeavors</li> <li>Grow and cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship</li> <li>Establish a dynamic quality of place</li> </ul>
<p><b>To remain proactive in conserving the environment for our residents</b></p> <p>Enrich quality of life, preserve natural resources and enhance community attractiveness through stewardship of the natural and built environment</p>	<p><b>#4- Environmental Stewardship</b></p> <p>“Our physical health, our social happiness, and our economic well-being will be sustained only by all of us working in partnership as thoughtful, effective stewards of our natural resources.”</p> <p>Ronald Reagan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate quality and well planned communities which respect the natural environment</li> <li>Adopt a collaborative approach to community revitalization</li> <li>Provide an innovative, safe and lasting public infrastructure based on best practices</li> <li>Support solutions to problems that are smart, efficient, fiscally responsible and economically sound</li> </ul>



# Excellence in Government

## To build community trust through humility, honesty and transparency

Goal - Deliver exceptional service with an engaged workforce that effectively manages public assets

### Metrics of Success (Key Performance Indicators)

Average employee turnover below 9%

Achieve Triple A investment rating

Top 3 lowest tax burden, tax spend, debt and employees per capita in ARC Region

Reduce Workers Compensation Mod Factor from 0.84 to 0.78

50% or greater participation in the voluntary International Pharmacy Program (ScriptSourcing)

Cash reserves for Major Operating Funds equal to or greater than 15% of expenditures

### Objectives

1.1 Promote financial integrity by effectively and efficiently managing public assets

1.2 Attract, develop and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce with the highest standards of professionalism, ethics and integrity

1.3 Understand and respond appropriately to customers' needs with effective, collaborative solutions to maximize positive outcomes and leverage resources

1.4 Build a safe work environment and minimize risks associated with security and integrity of assets and information



# Safety & Security

**To ensure the safety of our residents in regards to crime, emergencies, and inclement weather.**

**Goal** - Partner with residents to provide a safe and secure community through prevention, readiness, and professional Response

## **Metrics of Success (Key Performance Indicators)**

Improve Public Protection Class (PPC) Rating to Class 2

National Fire Protection Association Standards for Fire Response times (NFPA 1710)

National Fire Protection Association Standards for EMS Response times (NFPA 1710)

Top 3 lowest FBI Crime Indexes in ARC Region

Reduce incidents of fatal vehicle accidents

Reduce incidents of deaths and crime as a result of drugs

Law enforcement Emergency Response Times average below 7 minutes

## **Objectives**

2.1 Enhance community preparedness

2.2 Invest in high performing public safety services

2.3 Reduce incidents that result in injury, death and property damage and that negatively impact county resources

2.4 Invest in technology and projects that increase public safety



# Economic Prosperity

**To keep Economic Development a #1 priority as it has been since January 1, 2007.**

**Goal** - Promote a business-friendly community to retain and attract businesses, diversify the economic base and create job opportunities for an educated, ready workforce

## **Metrics of Success (Key Performance Indicators)**

Development plans approved within 10-14 days

Grow commercial/industrial tax base

Top 3 lowest unemployment rates in ARC Region

Top 3 lowest crime rates in ARC Region

Reduce the number of residents leaving Cherokee to work by creating more quality jobs

## **Objectives**

3.1 Streamline requirements for starting and operating a business so as to expand business retention and recruitment activities

3.2 Support and invest in workforce development with advanced marketing and communication endeavors

3.3 Grow and cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship

3.4 Establish a dynamic quality of place



# Environmental Stewardship

## To remain proactive in conserving the environment for our residents

**Goal** - Enrich quality of life, preserve natural resources and enhance community attractiveness through stewardship of the natural and built environment

### Metrics of Success (Key Performance Indicators)

Quality development locates in the Bells Ferry Livable Centers area

Top 3 or park land (parks, open space and green space) in ARC Region

Increase conservation area to reduce costs to citizens and HOA's

### Objectives

- 4.1 Facilitate quality and well planned communities which respect the natural environment
- 4.2 Adopt a collaborative approach to community revitalization
- 4.3 Provide an innovative, safe and lasting public infrastructure based on best practices
- 4.4 Support solutions to problems that are smart, efficient, fiscally responsible and economically



