

CITY OF WINDER URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



Updated February 2017 by the City of Winder

A collaborative effort of:



Introduction

The City of Winder, Georgia is located in Barrow County and serves as the county seat. Its first settlers were Creek Indian who called the town Snodon. Homes and farms were later established by another group of settlers in 1793 who renamed the town Jug, later to become Jug Tavern. During that time local activities were centralized around Athens and Church streets, including the construction of the first school. Jug Tavern became incorporated in 1884 by the Georgia General Assembly. N.J. Kelly took office January 8, 1885, as the first mayor. During the Civil War Jug Tavern was noted as the site of two conflicts, the Battle of Jug Tavern and the Battle of King's Tanyard occurring in 1864, July and August respectively.

Winder grew as a railroad town in 1883 Gainesville Midland Railroad established tracked what was then Jug Tavern. In 1892, Jug Tavern became a station on Seaboard Air Line Railroad's Atlanta and Athens route. The downtown area became outlined by the two railroads and the focal point of commercial activity.

On December 24, 1894 Jug Tavern officially became the City of Winder, named in honor of John H. Winder, general manager of Seaboard Railway. H.S. Segars former mayor of Jug Tavern became the first mayor of Winder. The city grew tremendously in population and occupations during the early 20th Century. Similar to other cities in the area Winder grew in the manufacturing industry as well. Many residents began working in the Winder Cotton Mill, Foundry and Machinery and Telephone Company. Winder became a trade center in eastern Georgia. In 1931 resident Richard B. Russell, Jr. became governor of Georgia and in 1943 construction of a local airport began.

Following World War II numerous improvements were made to the city for modernization. Fort Yargo became a State Park, the Winder-Barrow County Hospital, and a new Federal Building was constructed. Downtown sought improvements as well to City Hall, sidewalks, and the restoration of the depot. These improvements helped spur the growth of the population as well.

In 2010, the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) completed the City of Winder Housing Inventory & Assessment Report (see Appendix B). The study included a physical housing survey of 850 residential units. Also in 2010, a Livable Centers Initiative Study of Winder was conducted by the Atlanta Regional Commission and Tunnell, Spangler, Walsh & Associates (see Appendix C). With the adoption of an Urban Redevelopment Plan, Winder will continue to make improvements in an effort to provide better resources, services and infrastructure for its citizens. The City of Winder has already set forth a Winder Vision 2020 initiative that will improve the downtown area and current underdeveloped areas. Such plans will work in support of the implementation of the Urban Redevelopment Plan. The Urban Redevelopment Plan of 2012 was updated in 2017 to reflect changing aspects of development and needs of the community.

Legislative Authority

The Urban Redevelopment Act was adopted in 1955 and has been amended several times since its establishment. The “Urban Redevelopment Act” may be found at O.C.G.A. §36-61-1.

The legislative findings and declaration of necessity for urban redevelopment powers are found in O.C.G.A. §36-61-3 and state:

“It is found and declared that there exist in municipalities and counties of this state slum areas, as defined in paragraph (18) of Code Section 36-61-2, which constitute a serious and growing menace, injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of this state; that the existence of such areas contributes substantially and increasingly to the spread of disease and crime, constitutes an economic and social liability, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of municipalities and counties, retards the provision of housing accommodations, aggravates traffic problems, and substantially impairs or arrests the elimination of traffic hazards and the improvement of traffic facilities; and that the prevention and elimination of slums is a matter of state policy and state concern, in order that the state and its municipalities and counties shall not continue to be endangered by areas which are local centers of disease, promote juvenile delinquency, and, while contributing little to the tax income of the state and its municipalities and counties, consume an excessive proportion of its revenues because of the extra services required for police, fire, accident, hospitalization, and other forms of public protection, services, and facilities.

(b) It is further found and declared that certain slum areas or portions thereof may require acquisition, clearance, and disposition, subject to use restrictions, as provided in this chapter, since the prevailing condition of decay may make impracticable the reclamation of the area by conservation or rehabilitation; that the other areas or portions thereof, through the means provided in this chapter, may be susceptible of conservation or rehabilitation in such a manner that the conditions and evils enumerated in subsection (a) of this Code section may be eliminated, remedied, or prevented and that, to the extent that is feasible, salvable slum areas should be conserved and rehabilitated through voluntary action and the regulatory process.

(c) It is further found and declared that the powers conferred by this chapter are for public uses and purposes for which public money may be expended and the power of eminent domain may be exercised. The necessity, in the public interest, for the provisions enacted in this chapter is declared as a matter of legislative determination.”

(Any exercise of eminent domain would be subject to Georgia’s revised standards adopted in 2006, limiting the property to public use only.)

The Urban Redevelopment Act provides local governments with the ability to:

- purchase blighted property and resell it to private developers for redevelopment purposes deemed in the best interest of the community,

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- execute long term contracts with housing authorities, downtown development authorities, urban redevelopment agencies or private entities,
- issue revenue bonds or general obligation bonds to accomplish the purposes of the Act, and
- waive building codes and other fees within the redevelopment area to achieve the goals established in the Plan.

The Act also strengthens the local government's ability to enforce development and building codes and allows for the establishment of design standards that may be more stringent or specific in terms of aesthetics than typical zoning ordinances.

To access the redevelopment powers allowable under the act, a local government must, under O.C.G.A. § 36-61-5,

“adopt a resolution finding that one or more slum areas exist in such municipality or county; and the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of such area or areas is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the municipality or county.”

The Urban Redevelopment Act, under O.C.G.A. § 36-61-2 defines "Slum area" as:

“an area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential, which by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age, or obsolescence; inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces; high density of population and overcrowding; existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or any combination of such factors is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, or crime and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare. "Slum area" also means an area which by reason of the presence of a substantial number of slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures; predominance of defective or inadequate street layout; faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness; unsanitary or unsafe conditions; deterioration of site or other improvements; tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land; the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; by having development impaired by airport or transportation noise or by other environmental hazards; or any combination of such factors substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of a municipality or county, retards the provisions of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use.”

Demographics

The City of Winder is a rural community located in northeast Georgia. Tables 1 through 7 show statistics for Winder and Barrow County compared to other counties in the northeast Georgia region and the State of Georgia.

Table 1: Population – History and Projections

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Winder	12,451	18,048	23,012	28,059	38,239	39,199
Barrow County	59,954	80,000	102,000	124,370	169,493	173,750
Region	(x)	585,627	(x)	767,691	(x)	(x)
Georgia	(x)	9,687,653	10,214,860	11,049,327	(x)	(x)

Source: Barrow County Comprehensive Plan, 2007-2027; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Table 2: Per Capita Income – History and Projections

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Winder	(x)	\$11,878	\$17,108	\$17,804	(x)
Barrow County	\$9,051	\$11,156	\$18,350	\$20,535	(x)
Georgia	\$6,402	\$13,631	\$21,154	\$25,134	\$32,510

Source: City of Winder Comprehensive Plan, 2010; 2000 U.S. Census; DCA Data Views; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Table 3: Age of Housing

	Winder	Barrow County	Georgia
Units Built pre-1950	6.10%	4.10%	7.50%
Median Year Structure Built	1990	1995	1988

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Table 4: Telephone Service Available by Household, Winder

Total Occupied	4,693
No Telephone Service Available	160
Percentage of Total	3.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

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Table 5: City of Winder, Housing Vacancy

	2000	2010	2010-2014 Estimate
Total Housing Units	4,098	5,808	5,486
Vacant Housing Units	221	628	793
Vacancy Rate	5.39%	10.81%	14.5%

Source: US Census, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Table 6: Minority Population & Poverty Rate

	Winder	Barrow County	Georgia
% Minority	25.6%	19.5%	39.6%
% Families Below Poverty Level	14.4%	14.2%	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey;

Table 7: Unemployment Rate (month of May)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Barrow County	10.2%	9.9%	9.1%	8.1%	7.4%	6.4%	5.5%	4.1%
Georgia	9.6%	10.0%	9.6%	8.8%	8.2%	7.2%	5.9%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

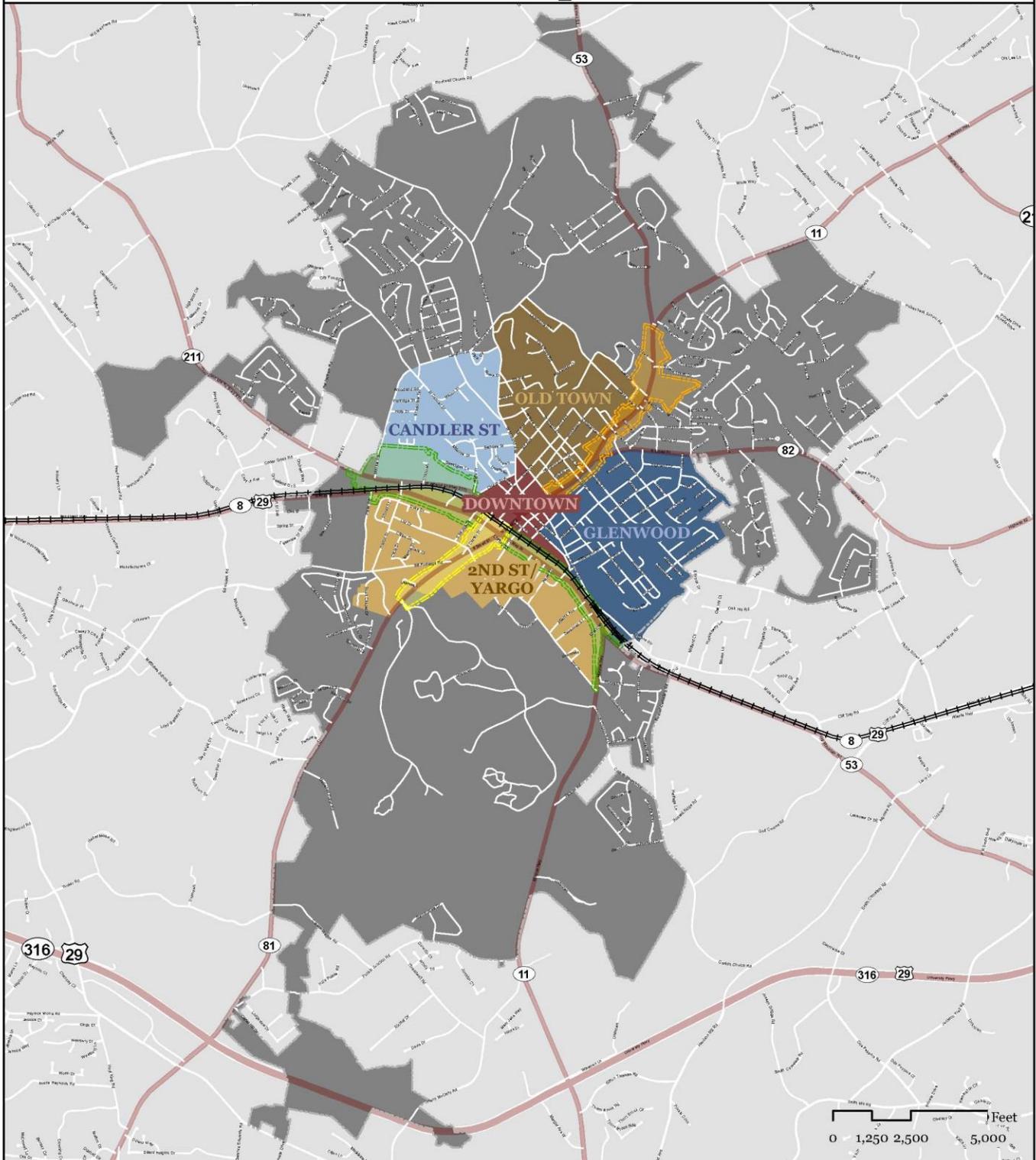
Redevelopment Needs

Boundaries of the Redevelopment Area

In accordance with regulations issued by the State of Georgia for the development of an Urban Redevelopment Plan under the Urban Redevelopment Act (O.C.G.A. §36-61 et seq.), the City of Winder has established its Urban Redevelopment Area by resolution making a determination of need and identifying the boundaries. This area is represented in the Urban Redevelopment Area Map, which appears on the following page as well as in Appendix A.



Winder Urban Redevelopment Plan Area



MAP LEGEND:

- State Highway
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Winder City Limits

Corridors

- 53/Gainesville Highway
- 8/May Street
- S. Broad Street

Neighborhoods

- 2nd St/Yargo
- Candler St
- Downtown
- Glenwood
- Old Town

Negative Conditions within Redevelopment Area

The Redevelopment Plan Team identified several neighborhoods within the redevelopment area that are negatively contributing to the economic and social well-being of the City of Winder. The most significant issues are the overwhelming occurrence of vacant, substandard or underutilized structures – mostly residential, but also commercial.

For the purposes of this plan, the following definitions are used.

1. Substandard: Any housing unit showing clear violations of the housing code, adopted by reference (International Residential Code) of the City of Winder, Georgia. Examples of violations would be:

- Structures that need new roofs or roofing repairs
- Rotten siding
- Broken and/or unsafe railings, steps, ramps, and any other structure related to ingress and egress
- Cracked, split, or broken foundation walls
- Broken or visibly deteriorating chimneys
- Broken windows

2. Standard: Any housing unit which exhibits no deficiencies as noted above. Houses in need of general maintenance, such as painting or minor aesthetic repairs are not considered substandard.

3. Dilapidated: Any house unsafe for human habitation with violations of the International Residential Code rising to the level of the endangerment of occupants.

The negative conditions present within the redevelopment plan area have been a contributing factor to the higher rates of criminal activity, lack of private investment, business closures, decreasing number of building permits, increased unemployment and substandard or inadequate public infrastructure. More specifically, the following neighborhood descriptions illustrate the negative conditions present in both the residential areas and the mixed-use downtown.

Residential

Within the City of Winder's Urban Redevelopment Area there are several examples of substandard residential structures, both occupied and unoccupied, in need of redevelopment. In particular, the following residential areas have been identified as areas of focus.

Glenwood

The Glenwood Neighborhood is adjacent to the downtown district between E. Midland Avenue and E. Broad Street. It is bordered by E. Midland Avenue to the west and south, E. Broad Street to the north and Winder city limits to the east. The city comprehensive plan identifies the local character area as Traditional Neighborhood.



Glenwood includes the mill village, composed of many small, historic homes. Public housing and rental units are also major components of the neighborhood. Winder-Barrow Middle School has been readapted into the Wimberly Center. Challenges facing the neighborhood involve crime, more dilapidated homes than any other part of Winder, code violations and foreclosures on many homes. Additionally, the stormwater sewer system needs to be upgraded.

2nd Street/Yargo

The southwestern quadrant of Winder, known as the 2nd Street/Yargo Neighborhood, is a primarily residential area that includes some government offices. It is bordered by E. and W. May St. to the north and east, Polite Rd. to the west and Fort Yargo State Park to the south. The city comprehensive plan identifies character areas Commercial Corridor along E. and W. May St. and S. Broad St., Suburban Residential among established homes and Preserve around Fort Yargo State Park.

Much of the housing is renter-occupied, including some public housing. Crime and code violations are major issues, as is dilapidated housing. The stormwater system also will require regular maintenance and updates. Additionally, 2nd Street is often used by motorists as a bypass for May Street. To adequately handle traffic, 2nd Street should be widened. Also, sidewalks are needed increase pedestrian accessibility to Victor Lord Park.



Candler Street

The Candler Street Neighborhood, found northwest of downtown, is bordered by McNeal St. to the west, W. Athens St. to the south, W. Midland Ave. to the east and Langford St. to the north. The city's comprehensive plan identifies the character area as a Commercial Corridor near W. Athens St., Suburban Residential around existing houses and also Preserve.



Candler Street is a primarily residential area, with three large apartment complexes. And the two schools in the neighborhood needs to maintain complete sidewalk connectivity. Candler Street could benefit from large scale neighborhood revitalization. Additionally, the housing stock is older and includes many historic homes in need of preservation. The worst housing issues are found on side streets off of Candler Street.

Old Town

Located north of downtown, Old Town is a transitional neighborhood bordered by W. Midland Ave. to the west, downtown to the south, N. Broad St. to the east and Buena Vista St. to the north. The comprehensive plan identifies Old Town's character area as a Traditional Neighborhood.

This neighborhood is composed of many historic homes, including narrow shotgun houses. The rehabilitation of many older homes has begun in Old Town, but more housing improvements are still needed. Homes in need of repair have been identified in the neighborhood and it is feared they could deteriorate in the absence of a regular maintenance plan.



Commercial/Mixed Use

According to the City’s comprehensive plan, “Goals of the (Downtown) character area include encouraging a mix of uses to create vitality, reinforcing the area as the central business district of Winder, and respecting and promoting the established development pattern of the downtown core. New development or redevelopment can serve to extend the boundaries and function of downtown by orienting buildings to the street rather than to an on-site parking lot, allowing a mix of uses accessible to the pedestrian, and connecting to the rest of the character area with sidewalks. Maintaining the historic integrity of the downtown is paramount; signage, exterior changes to existing building facades, and new construction in the designated Downtown Winder Historic District (inside the boundaries of the character area) are subject to review by the Winder Historic Preservation Commission.”



Downtown

Winder’s Downtown district is centered on the intersection of W. Athens St. and N. Broad St. For the purpose of the Winder Urban Redevelopment Plan, the boundaries of the Downtown district follow those of the Winder Downtown Development Authority. The City’s comprehensive plan identifies this neighborhood as Downtown/Town Center.



As the central business district, Downtown is primarily a commercial area. Vacant storefronts are found throughout the district. Traffic congestion is a major concern, as traffic levels on Athens St. and Broad St. routinely exceed capacity. Active railroad tracks that cross Broad St. exacerbate traffic issues further.

Although off street parking is available, signage is needed to help motorists locate lots. Additionally, the stormwater collection system downtown is inadequate and needs to be upgraded.

Commercial Corridors

Within the Commercial Corridor character areas, the City’s comprehensive plan describes, “Strip center development is common, represented by a grocery store surrounded by complimentary commercial uses or smaller shopping centers that have a few businesses catering to the surrounding community. In addition to meeting area residents’ shopping needs, the corridor acts as a gateway to the City. As such, the community recognizes that these corridors should provide a more pleasant appearance to those entering the city than currently presented.”

Three Commercial Corridors are located within the URP boundaries:

- S. Broad St. Corridor
- Route 8/May St. Corridor
- Route 53/Gainesville Highway Corridor

The major concern among such corridors is vacant property, including strip retail and office spaces. Also, many non-conforming industrial uses, non-conforming signs and derelict signs front the corridors. Furthermore, traffic congestion poses a problem to the Commercial Corridors.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

The City of Winder completed a joint update of their comprehensive plan with Barrow County and other municipalities in 2007. The initiatives, goals and objectives described in this Urban Redevelopment Plan are consistent with the planning goals of the comprehensive plan. More specifically, the Urban Redevelopment Plan substantiates and confirms the following items identified in the Comprehensive Plan and Partial Plan Update as Areas Requiring Special Attention:

- Gateways (corridors)
- Strip commercial corridors
- Historic areas
- Water and sewer infrastructure

The planning process surrounding the creation and adoption of the Urban Redevelopment Plan has highlighted several areas within the original city limits in need of redevelopment. While not itemized within the Comprehensive Plan, the additional URP target areas and the included suggestions for improvement do not deviate from locally adopted planning documents.

Consistency with Land Use Objectives

This Urban Redevelopment Plan proposes no changes to the City of Winder’s land use objectives or zoning districts. In accordance with the Georgia Planning Act, the City of Winder has an Existing Land Use map as part of its comprehensive plan. According to the 2007 Existing Land Use Map, acreage within the Urban Redevelopment Area falls into the following categories.

Table 12: City of Winder, Land Use in Urban Redevelopment Area

Land Use Type	Acres	Percentage
Agriculture/Forestry	1,248.70	16.6%
Commercial	372	5.0%
Industrial	27.5	0.4%
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	2,249.30	29.9%
Public/Institutional	807.6	10.7%
Residential - Multifamily	134.9	1.8%
Residential - Single- and Two-family	2,275.50	30.3%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	1.3	0.0%
Vacant/Undeveloped	392.3	5.2%
No Data	5.2	0.1%
Total	7,514.30	100.0%

Source: Barrow County Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027

Description of Parcels to be Acquired

The City of Winder does not anticipate acquiring parcels as part of the redevelopment process at this time. However, if necessary, proper laws, regulations, and protocols will be followed.

Structures to be Demolished or Rehabilitated

The City of Winder does not have plans to demolish any buildings at this time. Additional funding sources will be pursued for the rehabilitation of structures.

Plan to Leverage Private Resources for Redevelopment

The City of Winder has identified multiple measures for the encouragement of private resources to redevelop the Urban Redevelopment Area. The City of Winder was designated as an Opportunity Zone (OZ) in 2015.

The City will apply for Revitalization Area Strategy (RAS) designation for neighborhoods which, according to the 2010 U.S. Census and most recent American Community Survey data, contain at least 20 percent poverty. RAS designation by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will enable the City of Winder to receive bonus points on forthcoming Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) proposals and other potential applications for funding to address neighborhood blight and unsafe housing conditions.

The city will also consider the sources available through the State and Federal Tax Credit Program- Historic Preservation Division, The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Community Development Block Grant program for Housing, Infrastructure and Economic Development, The Georgia Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancement and Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant, Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund and The Georgia Municipal Association's Georgia Cities Foundation through the Winder Downtown Development Authority.

Strategy for Relocating Displaced Residents

The City of Winder does not anticipate engaging in any relocation activities, as initial projects are expected to involve only public infrastructure improvements and commercial revitalization. If relocation becomes necessary for rehabilitation of dilapidated homes, the City of Winder will comply with all applicable requirements as outlined in the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970.

Covenants and Restrictions to be Placed on Properties

The city does not currently have any plans to enter into any covenants on any properties; however they do not want to negate the possibility of any future plans to partake in such activities. The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance requires a review before the Historic Preservation Commission for the material change in appearance of applicable buildings.

Public Infrastructure to be Provided

The City of Winder intends on continually assessing the state of their public infrastructure and making improvements as necessary. The City of Winder anticipates using grant funds to make any and all infrastructure improvements needed to facilitate the successful redevelopment of all target areas.

Implementing Authority

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Winder will serve as the implementing agency for the redevelopment plan. The Winder Downtown Development Authority will serve an advisory role in plan implementation.

Strategy for Implementing Plan – Goals & Objectives

Goal #1: Encourage Citizen Participation

Objectives:

1. Adopt Urban Redevelop Plan: **March 2017**
2. Publicize and make URP information available to local citizenry: **March 2017–Ongoing**

Goal #2: Accelerate Economic Development

Objectives:

1. Pursue and maintain active Opportunity Zone status: **Ongoing**
2. Utilize and market Enterprise Zone and Opportunity Zone through the City of Winder: **Ongoing**
3. Investigate and Achieve Revitalization Area Strategy designation: **March 2017 – April 2017 (Deadline for RAS is April, 2017)**
4. Explore eligible grant sources: **Ongoing**
5. Foster small business development through the Wimberly Center: **Ongoing**
6. Make economic development a central focus of the Wimberly Center: **Ongoing**

Goal #3: Promote Community Development

Objectives:

1. Investigate and Achieve Revitalization Area Strategy designation: **February 2017 – April 2017**
2. Apply for CDBG Multiactivity Grant: **April 2017**
3. Explore eligible grant sources: **Ongoing**
4. Pursue funding sources annually: **Ongoing**

Goal #4: Improve Housing Conditions

Objectives:

1. Apply for CDBG Multiactivity and CHIP funds: **April 2017**
2. Enforce Municipal and Property Maintenance codes: **Ongoing**
3. Continue partnership with local groups (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, Winder Housing Authority, historic preservation groups, etc.): **Ongoing**

Goal #5: Develop Affordable Housing

Objectives:

1. Encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing to create sensitive affordable housing: **Ongoing**
2. Construct new sensitive affordable housing and infill housing: **Ongoing**
3. Encourage local policies that promote affordable housing: **Ongoing**

4. Encourage the development of rental properties: **Ongoing**

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5. Encourage responsible landlords through policy and code enforcement: **Ongoing**
6. Develop veteran specific housing: **Ongoing**
7. Encourage the development of mixed-income communities: **Ongoing**
8. Encourage the utilization of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) : **Ongoing**
9. Enforce Municipal and Property Maintenance codes: **Ongoing**
10. Continue partnership with local groups (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, Winder Housing Authority, historic preservation groups etc.): **Ongoing**

Goal #6: Fully Develop and Engage the Wimberly Center

Objectives:

1. Complete the rehabilitation of the Wimberly Center: **December 2016-Ongoing**
2. Continue to pursue funding for the rehabilitation and programming of the Wimberly Center: **Ongoing**
3. Install and maintain the community garden, kitchen, and related programming: **2017**
4. Promote and evolve the Wimberly Center as community needs change and grow: **Ongoing**
5. Continue support, promotion, and growth of the Boys & Girls Club through pursuing funding, partnerships, and opportunities: **Ongoing**
6. Continue the site improvement efforts: **Ongoing**
7. Foster small business development through the Wimberly Center: **Ongoing**
8. Make economic development a central focus of the Wimberly Center: **Ongoing**
9. Create a walkability plan and implementation strategy: **Ongoing**
10. Explore adding child care options to the Wimberly Center's programming : **Ongoing**
11. Complete and implement the Local Foods, Local Places plan: **Ongoing**