



# Forward Buford

2016 LCI 10 YEAR PLAN UPDATE

Adopted by the Buford City Commission on 12/05/2016



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS //

### THE PLANNING TEAM WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

#### THE CITY OF BUFORD

Bryan B. Kerlin, City Manager

#### THE FORWARD BUFORD CORE TEAM

Wayne Johnson

Robert Perkins

Sondra Jones

Geraldine Cates

Mary Alice Beard

Phillip Perkins

Bradley Sherwood

Rico Cunningham

Todd Cleveland

Joy Davis

#### THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

#### THE CONSULTANT TEAM LED BY TSW WITH KECK & WOOD AND ARNETT MULDROW & ASSOCIATES

#### CITIZENS WHO ATTENDED AND PARTICIPATED IN THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



**“THREE THINGS I LOVE ABOUT BUFORD ARE THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE YOUR NEIGHBORS ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOU, OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE, AND OUR OUTSTANDING SCHOOL SYSTEM” // Public Comment**

# CONTENTS //

## **CHAPTER 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS 04**

// Project Overview	06
// Progress to Date	08
// Existing Conditions	16
// Transportation	26
// Markets	32

## **CHAPTER 2: WHAT WE HEARD 40**

// Outreach Process	42
// Outreach Meetings	44
// Outreach Tools	45

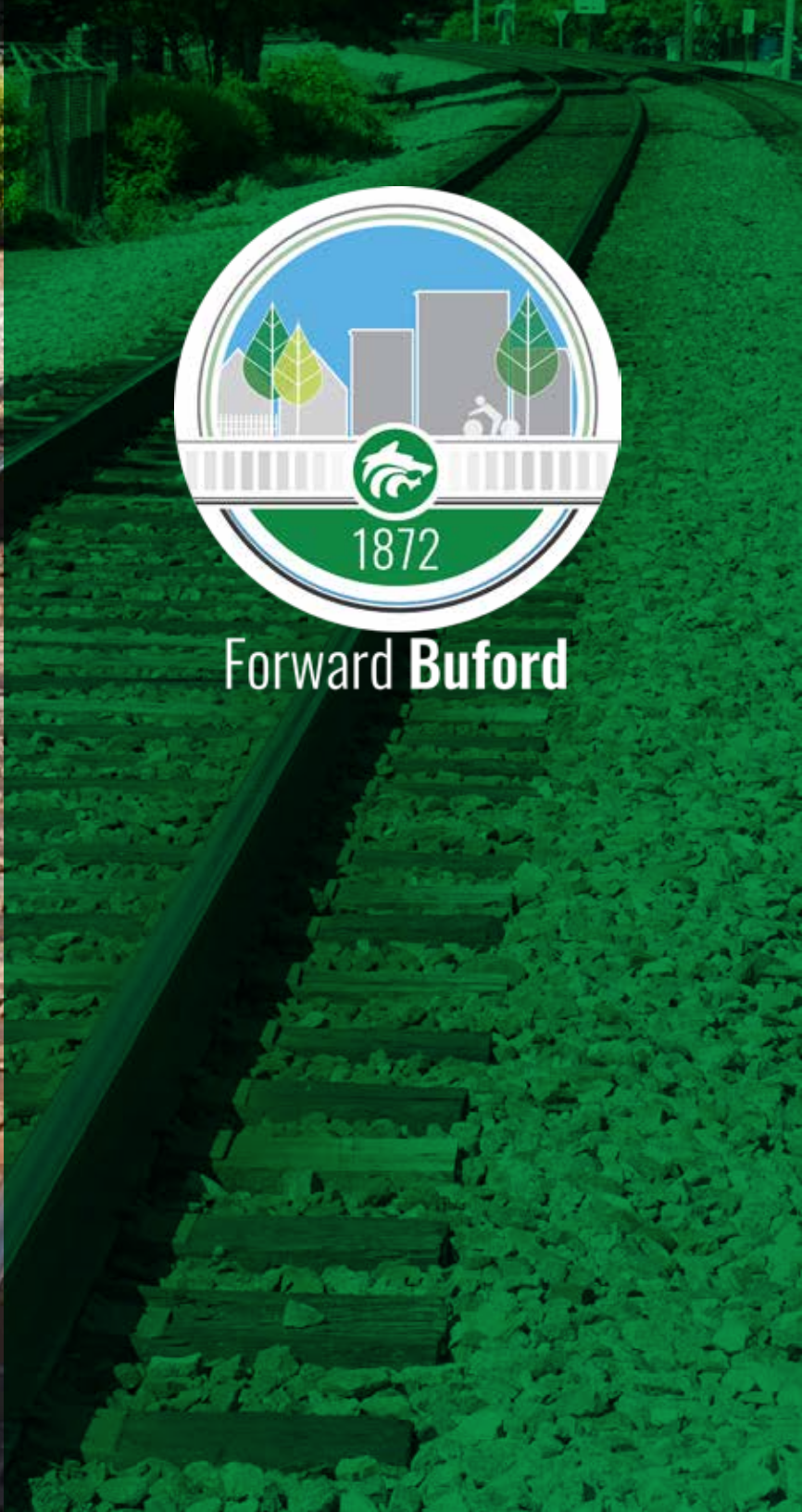
## **CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS 48**

// Methodology	50
// Vision	50
// Concept Plans	52
// Land Use and Design	56
// Transportation	60
// Markets	66

## **CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION 72**

// Overview	74
// Action Matrix	75
// LCI Consistency	86
// 100-Day Action Plan	100





Forward **Buford**





# CHAPTER 1 // EXISTING CONDITIONS

- // Project Overview
- // Progress to Date
- // Existing Conditions
- // Transportation
- // Markets



## PROJECT OVERVIEW //



### HISTORY OF BUFORD

The City of Buford is a historic community located in both northern Gwinnett County and southern Hall County, Georgia. Originally founded as a railroad town in 1872, the city grew as an important center for manufacturing and commerce. Today, Buford finds itself at the fringes of metropolitan Atlanta, and is now closely linked to the region's economy.

### MISSION OF FORWARD BUFORD

Forward Buford is the City of Buford's 2015 LCI 10-Year Plan Update. The plan is about creating a vision for central Buford and nearby areas that will:

- >> Leverage Buford's history and natural resources;
- >> Attract jobs and economic development;
- >> Encourage thoughtful development that meets Buford's needs;
- >> Enhance transportation systems and improve accessibility options;
- >> Strengthen Buford's downtown core; and
- >> Maintain the city's high quality of life.

### PURPOSE OF THE LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE PROGRAM

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program that awards planning grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to develop plans for their communities. It is intended to promote greater livability, mobility, and development alternatives in existing employment and town centers. The rationale is that directing development towards areas with existing infrastructure will benefit the region and minimize sprawling land use patterns. Minimizing sprawl, in turn, will potentially reduce the amount of vehicle miles traveled and the air pollution associated with those miles.

The goals of the LCI program are to:

1. Utilize an inclusive planning process;
2. Access to a full range of transportation modes;
3. Promote a diverse mix of land uses and housing options; and
4. Focus future growth where it makes sense.



## THE PLAN IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR SECTIONS:

### Section 1 // Existing Conditions

>> This section provides an overview of the LCI program, a review of previous planning studies and a summary of existing conditions.

### Section 2 // What We Heard

>> This section includes the community's vision, as expressed through the public outreach process. It also includes an overview of the planning process which details the timeline of events that the consultant team conducted.

### Section 3 // Recommendations

>> This section provides policies and projects that support the plan's vision. It includes recommendations for land use and design, transportation, and marketing. It also includes a concept plan for Buford Highway and site plan recommendations for a proposed parking deck.

### Section 4 // Implementation

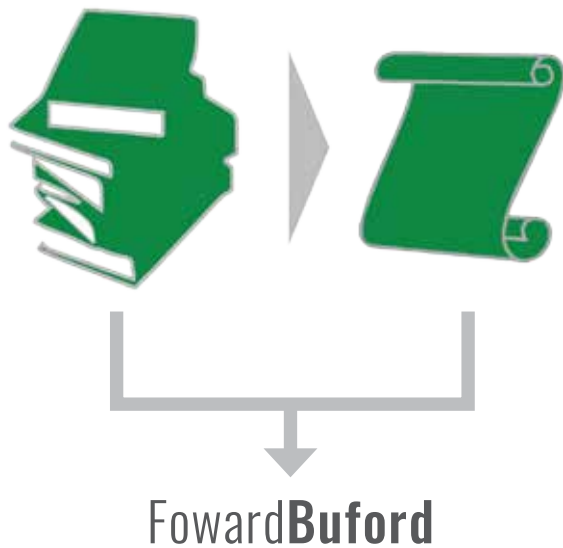
>> This section includes a description of how this plan can be implemented. It includes responsible parties, costs, funding sources, and an implementation timeline.





## PROGRESS TO DATE //

There have been several planning studies completed that affect the study area. These plans have been used as the foundation for this 2016 LCI Plan Update.



This section reviews the 2005 Buford Town Center LCI Master Plan, the 2010 Buford LCI Master Plan Update, and the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan. It summarizes points applicable to Forward Buford, including plan visions, goals, and implementation strategies. A checklist reviewing the status of the previous LCI recommendations is also included and is explained in further detail on the following pages.

## BUFORD, AND ITS SUBSEQUENT TOWN CENTER LCI MASTER PLAN (2005)

This report represents findings based on a review of recent studies and plans, a collection of insights from various stakeholders, a breakdown of existing conditions, an analysis that identifies an area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats or otherwise known as a SWOT analyses, market conditions, and transportation studies.

### Vision //

To develop a long term vision for Buford's historic downtown, its adjacent neighborhoods, and the Buford Highway corridor by promoting visual appeal, establishing a mix of land uses, preserving a sense of place, ensuring multiple transportation options are available, and supporting economic development.

### Goals & Objectives //

- >> Reinforce the role of Main Street as Buford's center;
- >> Provide an interconnected street system supporting a range of route options,

transportation modes, and reduced congestion;

- >> Create a dignified public realm that encourages human interaction and promotes civic identity;
- >> Preserve a sense of place by protecting downtown's historic buildings and ensuring that new buildings provide quality architecture appropriate to Buford;
- >> Provide a mix of land uses within close proximity, while protecting existing residential areas;
- >> Provide well-maintained roads that facilitates the smooth flow of traffic on the community's terms;
- >> Increase the use and convenience of GCT buses and the availability of bicycling in the study area; and
- >> Create a cohesive, pedestrian oriented retail environment along Main Street that functions as a unified whole, rather than a collection of parts.

### >> Priorities



Provide Livable Communities



Balance Economic Growth



Preserve Historic & Natural Resources





## Implementation Plan //

To ensure that the Concept Plan was successful, detailed design guidelines were listed to provide guidance for both private developers and the City of Buford. The implementation plan included guidelines for the following:



1. Buildings and Sites
2. Streets
3. Parking and Parking Lots
4. Sidewalks
5. Supplemental Zones
6. Signs
7. Park and Open Space Surroundings
8. Park and Open Space Design

2005 LCI Concept <sup>▲</sup>  
Plan for Downtown



## 2010 BUFORD TOWN CENTER LCI PROJECTS CHECKLIST.....

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PE YEAR	CONSTR YEAR	STATUS	NOTES
<b>TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS</b>					
S Hill St Streetscape (from Buford Hwy to Main St)	Sidewalks (both sides where missing), street trees, pedestrian lights, buried utilities, and crosswalks (Moreno St, Park St, South St, Cole St, Sudderth St, Church St, and Morningside Dr)	2012	2013		
S Hill St Streetscape (from Buford Hwy to Main St)	Sidewalks (both sides), street trees, pedestrian lights, buried utilities, and crosswalks (Moreno St, New St, Highland Ave, School Dr, and Buford Hwy)	2008	2009		
Shadburn Ave Streetscape (from Poplar St to Fifth St)	Sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian lights, buried utilities, and crosswalks	2013	2014		
Railroad Pedestrian Tunnel Upgrade	Pedestrian improvements	2013	2014		
New St Sidewalks	Pedestrian improvements on the north side (5' clear)	2012	2013		
Moreno St Sidewalks	Pedestrian improvements on the south side (10' planting + 6' clear)	2014	2015		
Garnett St Sidewalks	Pedestrian improvements on the west side where missing (5' clear)	2012	2013		
Bona Rd Sidewalks	Pedestrian improvements on the west where missing (2' planting + 5' clear)	2013	2014		
S Alexander St Sidewalks	Pedestrian improvements on the east side where missing (6' clear)	2013	2014		
Widening of Silas King St	Improved pedestrian crossing and roadway operations	2013	2014		

Project Status Key:



Underway



Completed



Not Started



## 2010 BUFORD TOWN CENTER LCI PROJECTS CHECKLIST.....

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PE YEAR	CONSTR YEAR	STATUS	NOTES
Analysis for installing left turn protected - permissive left turn phasing for S Lee St at Buford Hwy	Improved intersection	2008 n/a	2009 n/a		Analysis has been completed and there is currently a protected permissive left turn phase for S Lee St at Buford Hwy. The city has previously discussed adding an additional left turn lane here for which no work has been completed.
Buford Hwy extension east of Sawnee Ave	Roadway operations and pedestrian right-of-way	2007-09	2010		
State Route 20 Connector	Roadway operations, 83' wide right-of-way, sidewalks (both sides with 7' planting + 6' clear), and street trees	2015	2016		
Buford Hwy Collector System	Roadway operations, 60' wide right-of-way, sidewalks (north side with 7' planting + 6' clear), and street trees	2009	2010		
Forest St / Sawnee Ave Connector	Includes sidewalks, city controls and right-of-way	2008	2009		
Allen Street Extension (from E Main St to Silver St)	Roadway operations, 40' wide right-of-way, sidewalks (east side with 7' plantings + 6' clear), and street trees on east side	2014	2015		
Bus Shelter on Main St	n/a	n/a	n/a		Gwinnett County Transit has stopped operations of Route 50 and no longer has a bus route along Main St.
Public Parking Lot on S Harris St	Land and paving improvements	2010	2011		
Public Parking Lot on east side of Moreno at Harris	Land and paving improvements	2011	2012		
Directional Signage	Parking and gateway improvements	2008	2009		



## 2010 BUFORD TOWN CENTER LCI PROJECTS CHECKLIST.....

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PE YEAR	CONSTR YEAR	STATUS	NOTES
Greenway easement negotiations, as needed	Multi-use facility	ongoing	ongoing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Greenway Trail (north side of Buford Hwy)	Multi-use facility	2011	2012	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Greenway Trail (north side of Suwanee Creek)	Multi-use facility	2011	2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Greenway Trail (New St to Suwanee Creek west of Garnett St)	Multi-use facility	2013	2014	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Greenway Trail (Poplar St to Fifth St via railroad R.O.W)	Multi-use facility	2016	2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Greenway Trail (Fifth Street to Legion Fields)	Multi-use facility	2018	2019	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Greenway Trail (Sawnee Ave to Suwanee Creek)	Multi-use facility	2019	2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Greenway Trail (Bona Allen Tannery to Buford Hwy)	Multi-use facility	2016	2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES</b>					
Conservation Area	Bona Allen Tannery - 30.27 acres of land	2014	n/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Site being developed and includes some conservation space.
Conservation Area	Suwanee Creek	Ongoing	Ongoing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Park and Community Center	Southwest corner of Buford Hwy and S Hill St	2011	n/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Project Status Key:



Underway



Completed



Not Started





# BUFORD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2034 UPDATE)

## Vision //

This City of Buford is a place where great schools, a strong tax base, and an engaged citizenry come together to form a balanced community with a small town feel. Preservation of the city's existing neighborhoods and natural and cultural resources along with visionary economic development will sustain Buford's legacy as a desirable place to live and do business over time.

## Points Applicable to Forward Buford //

- >> Define character areas (Downtown, Regional Activity Center, Quality Development Corridor, Commercial Industrial Area).
- >> Continue to follow recommendations of the 2005 LCI plan, which identified action items the City should pursue to further revitalize and improve the downtown area.
- >> Pursue LCI funding for pedestrian and streetscape improvements at Moreno Street and Church Street.

## Goals //

- >> Preserve Buford's small town character and historic downtown;
- >> Maintain a favorable land use balance with predominance of commercial/industrial over residential uses to continue to support the sustainability of the City's level of services;
- >> Promote reuse of vacant commercial and residential buildings by the private sector over greenspace development;
- >> Continue to provide high quality services to residents and businesses, with quality schools as a top priority;
- >> Increase the capacity of major roadways and reduce congestion;
- >> Implement transportation alternatives to driving alone;
- >> Grow the mix of housing choices, including additional townhomes and senior-oriented options; and
- >> Increase the number of parks and recreational spaces in the city.

## Needs & Opportunities //

Key needs and opportunities for the City of Buford were defined in the Comprehensive Plan. These were divided into six main categories, detailed under the infographics shown to the right. This section describes those applicable to Forward Buford.

## Land Use



- Maintain a small-town character and continue revitalization of Main Street.
- Encourage more commercial and industrial development.

## Facilities & Services



- Preserve small school sizes and provide adequate facilities.
- Provide additional park spaces and improve recreational trail connections

## Housing



- Accommodate diverse population by supporting developments that provide a wide range of housing types, styles, and price ranges.
- Encourage walkability in neighborhoods with accessible public gathering places.

## Transportation



- Connect neighborhoods with activity centers with bike and pedestrian paths.
- Increase capacity of State Route 20 and provide additional access points to I-985.
- Increase downtown parking or implement a shared parking system.

## Natural & Cultural Resources



- Preserve the Tannery building on Main Street.
- Expand and prune existing tree canopy.
- Preservation of historic structures and rich cultural heritage.

## Economic Development



- Promote cultural and community events downtown.
- Target reinvestment in declining, existing neighborhoods.

## Buford Comprehensive Plan Recommendations //

### Short Term Recommendations

Consider establishment of a zoning overlay for downtown to protect the City's historic integrity.

Coordinate annexation strategy with Buford City Schools and population and housing trends.

Attract various retail business including grocers, staple type and other service oriented businesses.

Complete S Lee St streetscape.

Complete GW-341 S Hill St pedestrian improvements from Main St to State Route 13.

School facility improvements.

Pursue LCI implementation funding for additional parking supply downtown.

Build approximately 30 parking spaces along S Lee St in coordination with the LCI project.

Pursue LCI funding for pedestrian and streetscape improvements at Moreno St and Church St.

Explore opportunity to establish trail(s) along creek directly South of City Hall.

Complete Master Plan for 32 acre recreation site along Buford Hwy.

Pursue grant for greenspace project.

Renewal of water and sewer lines in Historic Buford and surrounding areas and upgrades of transmission lines.

Continue studying long-term sustainability of City's existing utility rates and maintenance needs.

Develop 5-year marketing plan for Community Center

Consider establishment of a zoning overlay for downtown to protect the City's historic integrity.

Upgrade wastewater treatment plan and treatment capabilities.

### Long Term Recommendations

Consider sidewalk and road improvements on Bona Rd, Forest St, and New St.

Consider installation of sidewalks on Harris St, along Old Hamilton Mill, and East Maddox.

Pursue opportunity for new access point to I-985 from the City of Buford at Thompson Mill Rd.

Consider Satellite Blvd Extension to Maddox Rd.

Consider traffic operation improvements at Peachtree Industrial Blvd and Little Mill Rd.

Consider possibility of implementing a Tax Allocation District in area of city target for public/private investment.

Complete audit of City's Code of Ordinances and regulations to identify code and regulation improvements that would improve the small business environment.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS // FORWARD BUFORD STUDY AREA

## Regional Context //

The City of Buford, located in Gwinnett County, Georgia, is approximately 35 miles northeast of downtown Atlanta. Buford is near the Mall of Georgia, the largest mall in the state, and borders the southern edge of Lake Lanier, one of the most frequently visited federally operated lakes in the nation. Interstate and highway access to the city includes I-985 and State Routes (SR) 13 and 20.

"The City of Buford seeks to develop a long-term vision for promoting the growth of its historic downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, and Buford highway by promoting visual appeal, establishing a mix of land uses, preserving sense of place, ensuring multiple transportation options, and supporting economic development."

// *Town Center LCI Master Plan, 2005*

## Study Area Boundary //

The 2015 Buford LCI study area focuses on a larger study area than the 2005 LCI. The study area is bounded by Buford Business Boulevard to the west, the I-985 interchange to the south, then runs along the Suwanee Creek to City Hall Street to the east up to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and up along West Jackson Street to the north; the boundary is shown on the map to the right with the dark blue line. The roughly 2,750 acre study area is primarily comprised of the downtown core, South Hill Street Historic District, Buford Highway, and Main Street Corridors, and surrounding parcels.

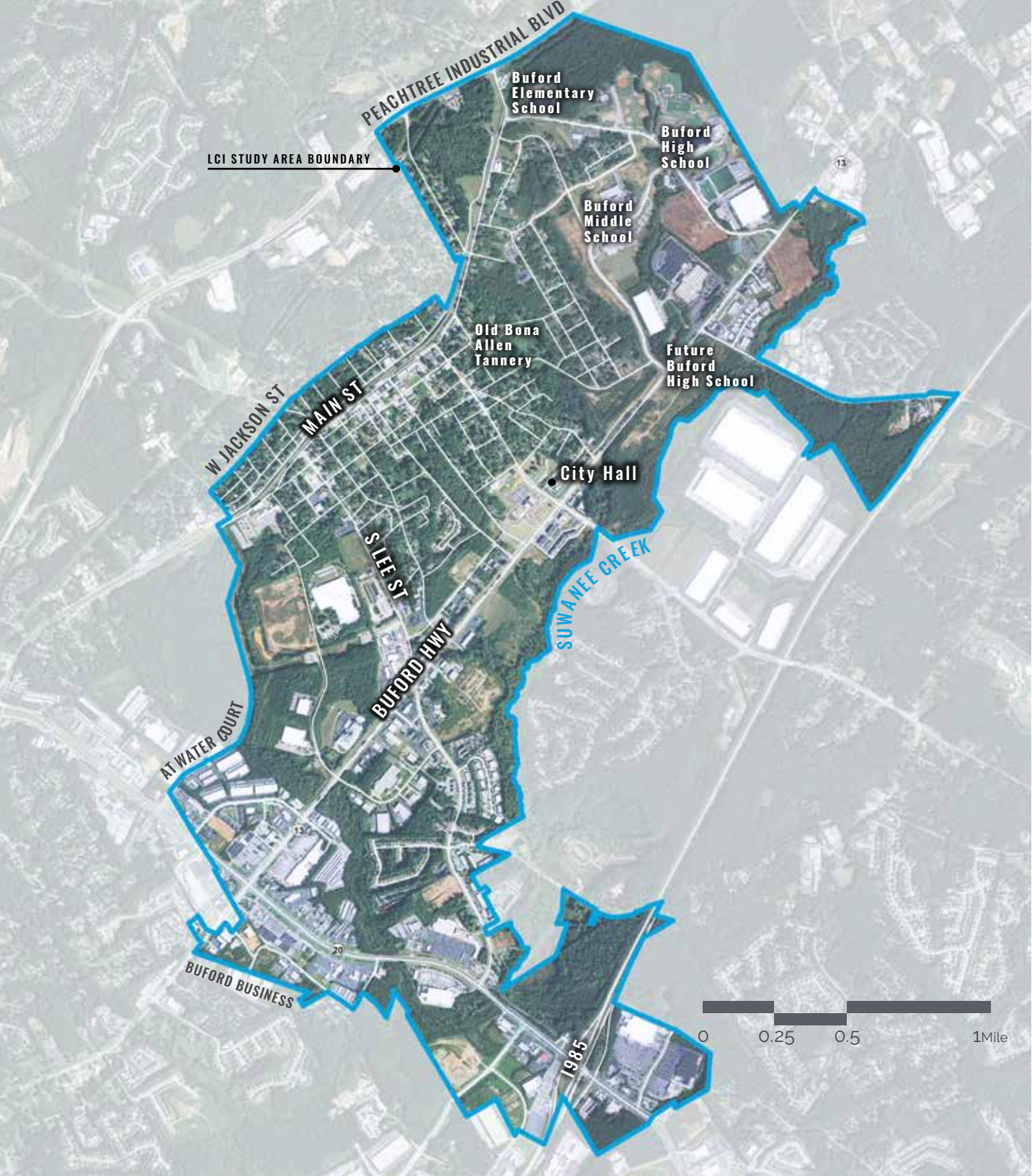




STUDY AREA MAP <<

LEGEND

— LCI Study Area Boundary





## EXISTING CONDITIONS // LAND USE

The map to the right shows the existing on-the-ground land uses in the study area. The predominant land uses are commercial and low density single-family residential uses. Also present is a fairly large amount of light industrial uses, which take up approximately 20% of the study area. These are mainly located in the southwestern portion of the study area along Heraeus Boulevard and in the northeastern portion near Buford High School and Buford Middle School.

### Residential Land //

- >> The study area is comprised of predominantly single-family residential housing. Multi-family housing and mobile homes are also present, but they comprise only a small percentage.
- >> A lack of housing diversity, coupled with the high percentage of residential land available, presents an opportunity to increase the mix of housing offered, particularly in and around the downtown core.
- >> Residential land uses vary from low, medium, to high densities. Approximately 27% of the study area is low density

residential, making it the second-most prevalent land use. Lot sizes in this range from one to three units per acre. Medium density land uses allow between four to six units per acre and up to eight units per acre are found in the high density residential category.

- >> The downtown core has little quality, owner-occupied multifamily residential uses. This has limited the ability of downtown to provide housing options for young and senior residents, both of which are increasing drawn to similar walkable, mixed use areas in peer communities.
- >> Opportunities for live-work units and upper story lofts exist along Main Street.

Low Density Residential development in Study Area

### Commercial Land //

- >> Commercial uses are the predominant land use and account for approximately 29% of the study area's acreage.
- >> Commercial land uses located along Main Street and in the downtown core are more pedestrian-oriented, while on Buford Drive, Buford Highway, and South Lee Street, they are more auto-oriented.

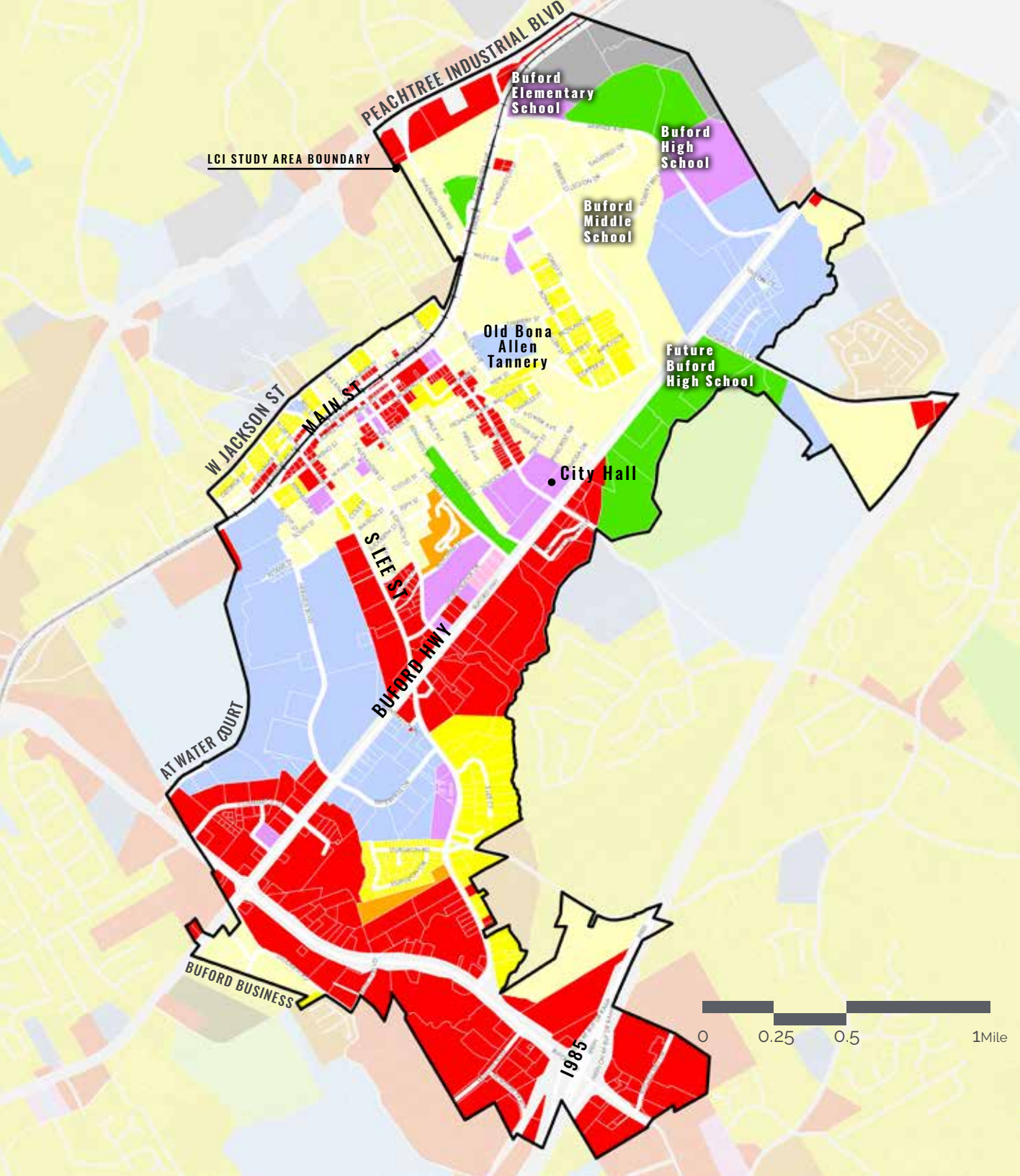
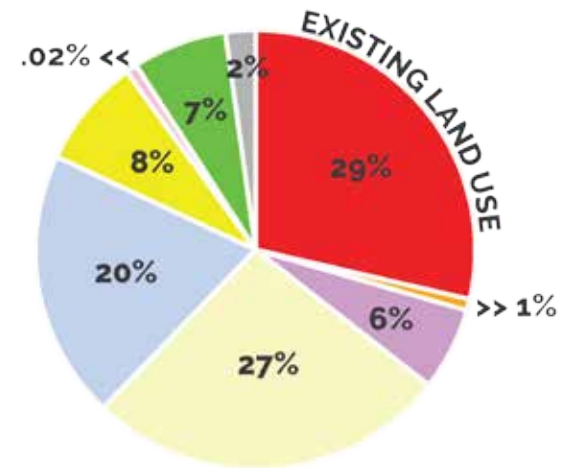




# EXISTING LAND USE MAP <<

## LEGEND

- Commercial/Retail
- High Density Residential
- Institutional/Public
- Low Density Residential
- Light Industrial
- Medium Density Residential
- Office/Professional
- Park/Recreation/ Conservation
- Transportation/Communication /Utility





## EXISTING CONDITIONS // FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The primary tool for guiding land use in Buford is the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan includes two maps that do this: the Future Development Map and the Future Land Use Plan.

Of the two maps, the Future Development Map is the more general. This map focuses on defining character areas and helping foster a better sense of community identity within them. Its scale is large, at the neighborhood or local community level. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

The Future Land Use Plan, on the other hand, is more specific. It defines where different land use types should be allowed to develop on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Each Future Land Use category ties directly to an appropriate zoning category. Under state law, the Future Land Use Plan is required to guide rezoning decisions. As such, it balances both current conditions and constraints on future development, such as the availability of supportive infrastructure like sewer and transportation, with the long term vision.

### Future Development Map //

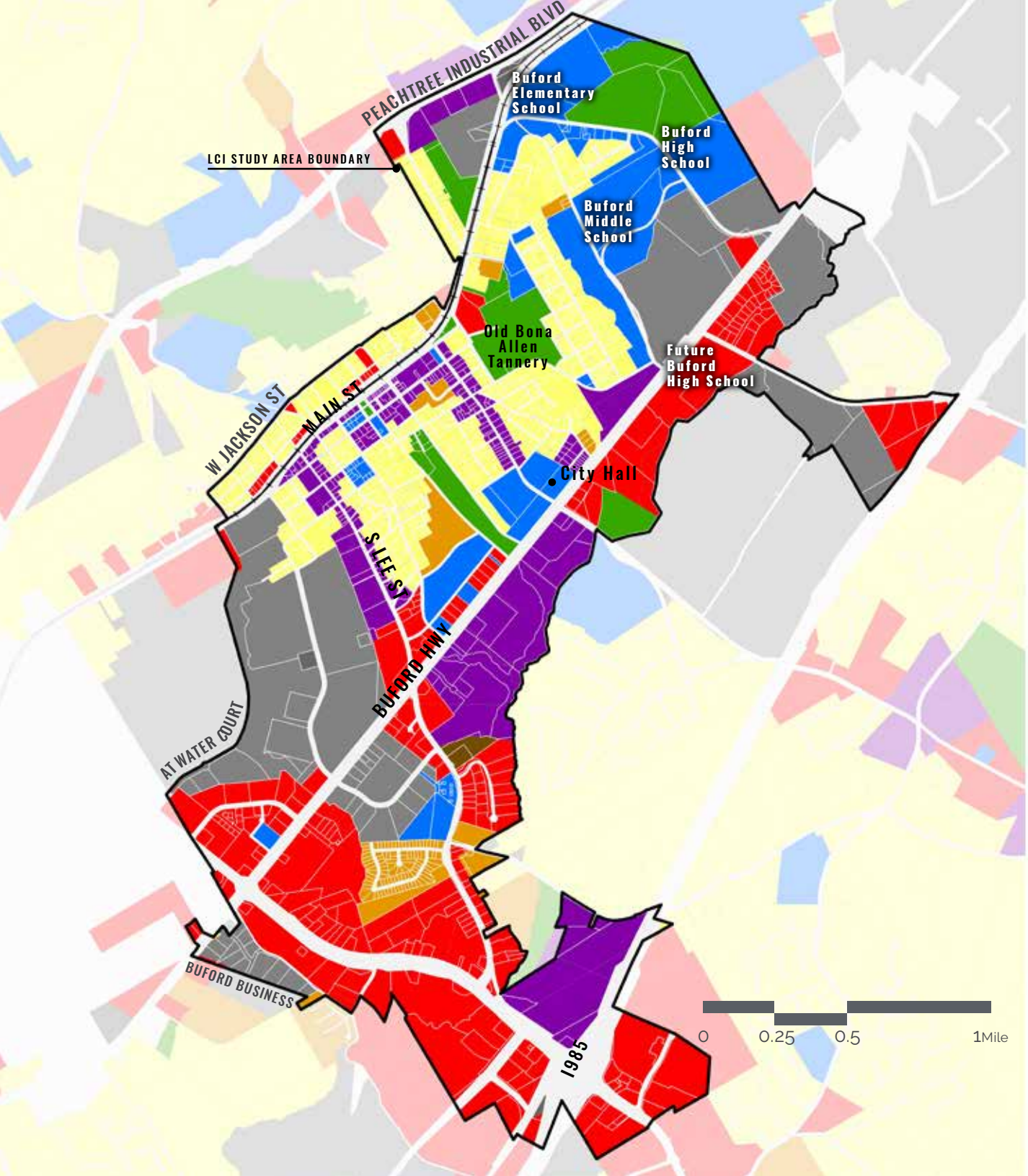
The existing Future Development Map includes four character areas within the Forward Buford study area:

- >> **Downtown** includes the entire historic center of Buford and nearby older residential neighborhoods. It generally aligns to the extent of the 2005 LCI Study.
- >> **Commercial and Industrial** surrounds the Downtown character area on all sides.
- >> **Quality Development Corridor** centers on Buford Drive.
- >> **Regional Activity Center** is found around the I-985 interchange .

### Future Land Use Map //

The existing Future Land Use Map supports a diverse mix of land uses throughout the study area, reflecting historic and recent development trends and previous planning efforts, including the 2005 LCI Study. Highlights include:

- >> **Mixed-Use** along Main Street, South Lee Street, South Hill Street, portions of Buford Highway, portions of Buford Drive, and Portions of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.
- >> **Commercial** along major corridors, especially Buford Highway and Buford Drive.
- >> **Low and Medium Density Residential** in existing neighborhoods or housing sites.
- >> **Industrial** in existing industrial districts.
- >> **Public/Institutional** and **Park/Recreation/Conservation** in those existing uses.



**LEGEND**

- Agriculture
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Office/Professional
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Transportation/Communication /Utilities





# EXISTING CONDITIONS // ZONING

## Downtown //

- >> Downtown Buford is primarily comprised of parcels in the General Business District (C2) and the Single Family District (R100) zoning districts.
- >> Some Multi-family (RM), Public (P), and Office/Institutional (OI) parcels are also located in this area along Main Street.

## Residential //

- >> As shown on the Existing Land Use Map on the previous page, much of the land is dedicated to low density residential use.
- >> A high concentration of single-family districts are located near downtown and in the northeastern portion of the LCI study area, near many of the Buford schools.
- >> The City's Zoning Ordinance provides a range of residential districts that reflect current development patterns well.

## Retail //

- >> Most commercial areas in the LCI Study Area are designated General Business District (C2) and are located along Main Street, Buford Highway, Buford Drive, and South Lee Street.
- >> Commercially zoned properties along South Lee Street and Buford Highway serve a larger catchment than downtown Buford businesses and typically include big box and regional stores.

## Industrial //

- >> Parcels zoned Light Industry District (M1) are scattered throughout the study area boundary but are mostly located along Heraeus Boulevard and near the intersection of Sawnee Avenue and Buford Highway.
- >> The Light Industrial District is zoned for properties intended for warehousing, distribution, trucking, and manufacturing.

Recent Mixed-Use Development on Buford Hwy







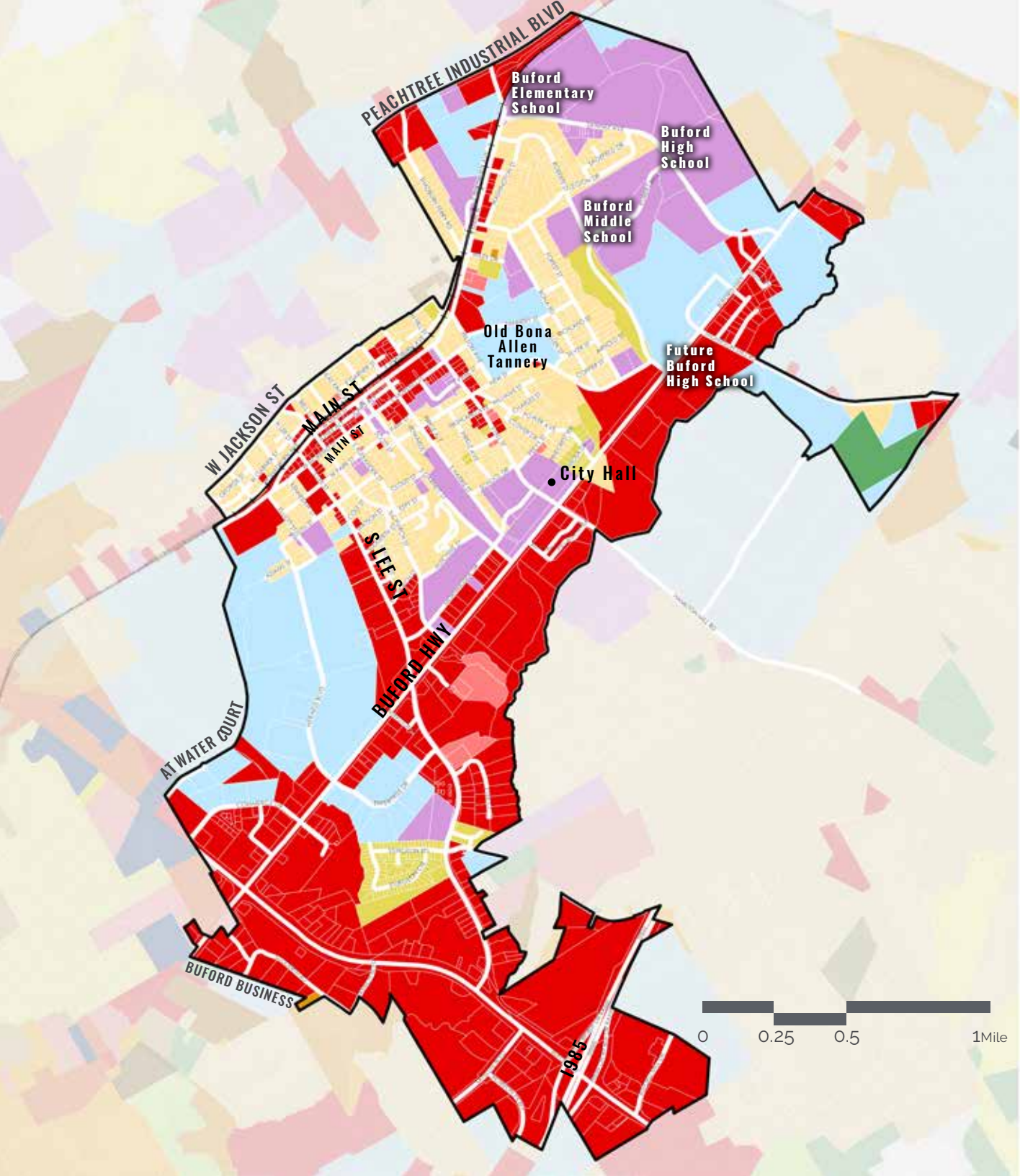
Old Bona Allen Tannery



# EXISTING ZONING MAP <<

## LEGEND

-  C2 General Business District
-  M1 Light Industry District
-  MH Mobile Home Park District
-  OI Office Institutional District
-  P Public
-  R100 Single Family District
-  RA200 Agriculture Residence District
-  RM Multi Family District





## EXISTING CONDITIONS // NATURAL SYSTEMS

### Suwanee Creek //

- >> The study area is bounded to the south by the Suwanee Creek, which also has floodplains that comprise parts of the study area. There is a required undisturbed stream buffer of 50 feet and an impervious setback requirement of 75 feet on both sides of the creek for Gwinnett County. This prevents certain types of development to occur in those areas that are affected.
- >> Various streams branch out from the Suwanee Creek into areas such as the Buford Nature Preserve.
- >> The Suwanee Creek and stream network could be used as an asset for the City with recreation and appropriate development.
- >> The light orange on the map to the right identifies which land is within the 100 year floodplain and the dark orange represents areas within the 500 year floodplain. There is no dramatic change from the 100 year to 500 year floodplains.

- >> Parks such as the Bona Allen Park, Legion Fields, and the Buford Nature Preserve are located within the study area boundary.
- >> Since the previous LCI was completed in 2005, Buford Town Park has opened and now provides a space for outdoor recreation and events. It is located at the corner of Buford Highway and South Hill Street.

### Potential Brownfield //

- >> According to the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the study area has a potential brownfield site located at the corner of Buford Highway and Buford Drive.
- >> The Crossroads Shopping Center is approximately 7 acres and is located near a prominent gateway to the study area. If the shopping center is determined a brownfield, the redevelopment of the site can provide many benefits to the community.





# NATURAL SYSTEMS MAP <<

## LEGEND

-  Potential Brownfield
-  50ft Stream Buffer
-  100 Year Floodplain
-  500 Year Floodplain
-  Park
-  Tree Canopy
-  Stream





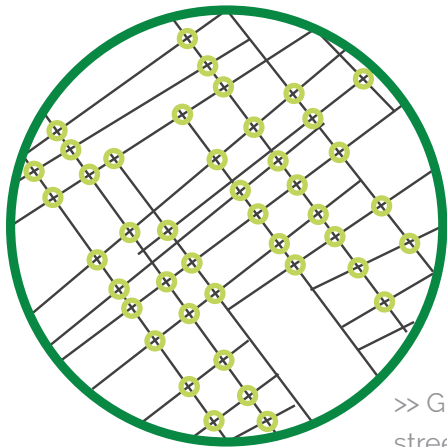
# TRANSPORTATION // VEHICULAR CONDITIONS



>> Around the downtown area, streets have a gridded street pattern, making them easily navigable and providing multiple route options. However, outside of the downtown area, the streets provide less connectivity.

- >> Within the study area, both high-volume, major roads and low-volume, minor roads are present. This variety allows the network to serve multiple purposes, with the higher capacity roads providing access in and out of the study area, while the lower capacity roads provide access to local destinations such as housing and businesses.
- >> The narrow streets throughout the residential area act as a traffic calming measure. Limited space causes drivers to

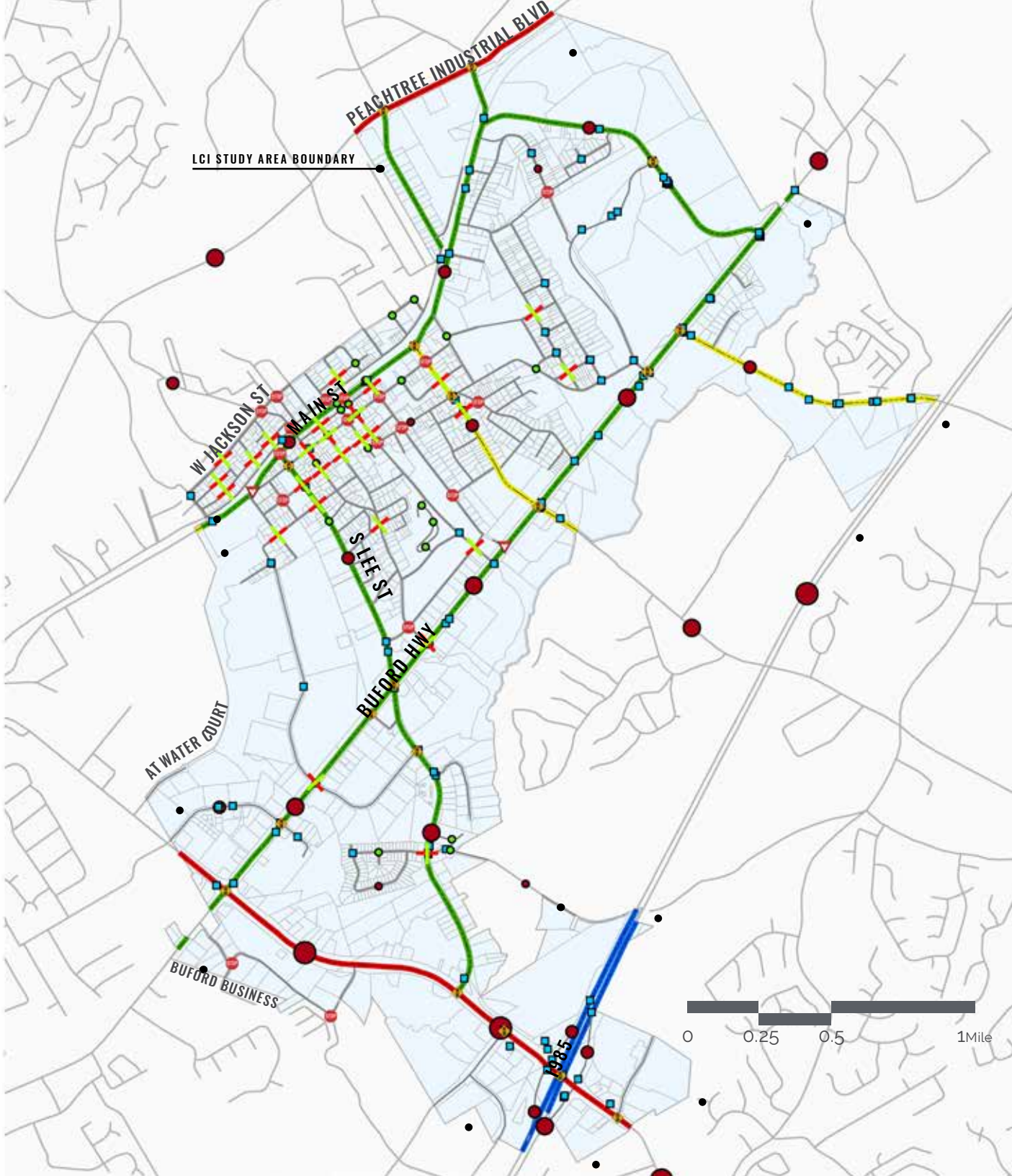
- drive slowly and cautiously, creating a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- >> The connection between I-985 and Buford Drive provides convenient access into and out of the study area.



>> Gridded street pattern exist around the downtown area



# VEHICULAR CONDITIONS MAP <<



## LEGEND

- Accidents: Jan 2011 - Aug 2015
- ROADWAY VOLUMES**
- Average Annual Daily Traffic
  - <1,000
  - 1,000 - 10,000
  - 10,000 - 40,000
  - >40,000
- ROADWAY CENTERLINES**
- Functional Class
  - Urban Collector Street
  - Urban Interstate Principal Arterial
  - Urban Local Road
  - Urban Minor Arterial Street
  - Urban Principal Arterial
- INTERSECTIONS**
- Control Type
  - No Traffic Control
  - Signalized Intersection
  - Yield
  - All Directions Stop
  - Two-Way Stop



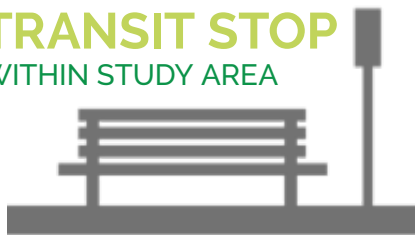


## TRANSPORTATION // TRANSIT CONDITIONS



- >> No local transit service is offered inside the study area boundary. The closest transit stop is located just outside the study area, the park-and-ride lot at the I-985 and SR 20 interchange. It connects commuters within the study area to the City of Atlanta.
- >> Gwinnett County Transit Route 50, which previously connected the study area to Gwinnett Place Mall and the Mall of Georgia, has been discontinued since the last LCI update.
- >> The park-and-ride location has low connectivity for non-motorized users. Pedestrians and cyclists do not have access to a safe bike route when traveling from a residential area to the transit stop. This limits the mobility of those who do not have access to a car and are most likely to need transit options.

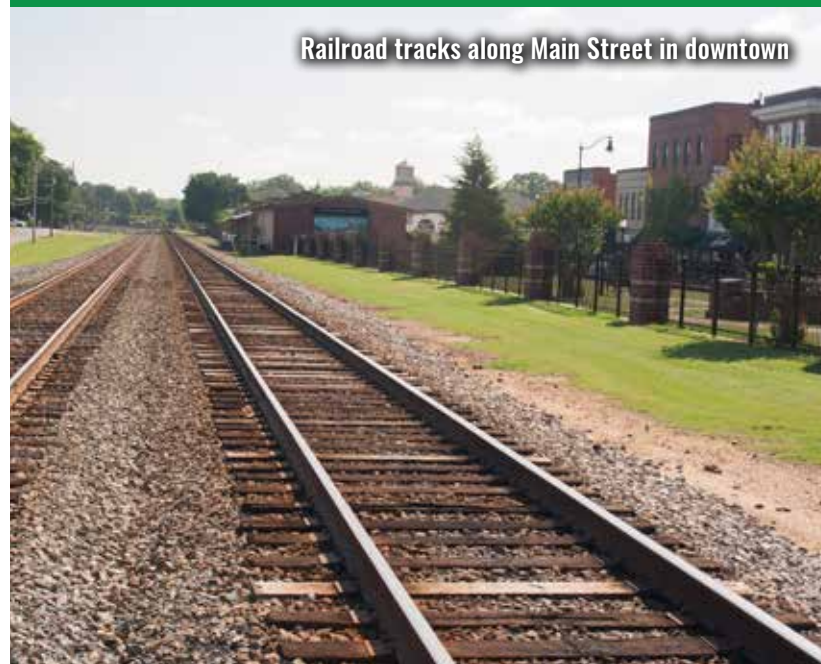
### 1 TRANSIT STOP WITHIN STUDY AREA



## TRANSPORTATION // BIKE CONDITIONS



- >> One short segment of a bicycle lane along Hamilton Mill Road/South Hill Street is available to commuters within the study area.
- >> There is a lack of safe bike routes to and around the schools. This limits the ability for students to bike to school, rather than rely on motorized transportation.
- >> There is no infrastructure connecting cyclists from residential areas to the transit stop, limiting mobility for those without access to a car.
- >> There are no bicycle racks available at or near popular destinations in the study area, eliminating the feasibility of cycling for transportation purposes. The compact size of downtown and its proximity to residential areas make bicycling an attractive travel option for that area.
- >> While designated bike lanes are lacking within the study area, cyclists may feel comfortable traveling within the main right-of-way, due to low-volume, narrow streets.



Railroad tracks along Main Street in downtown

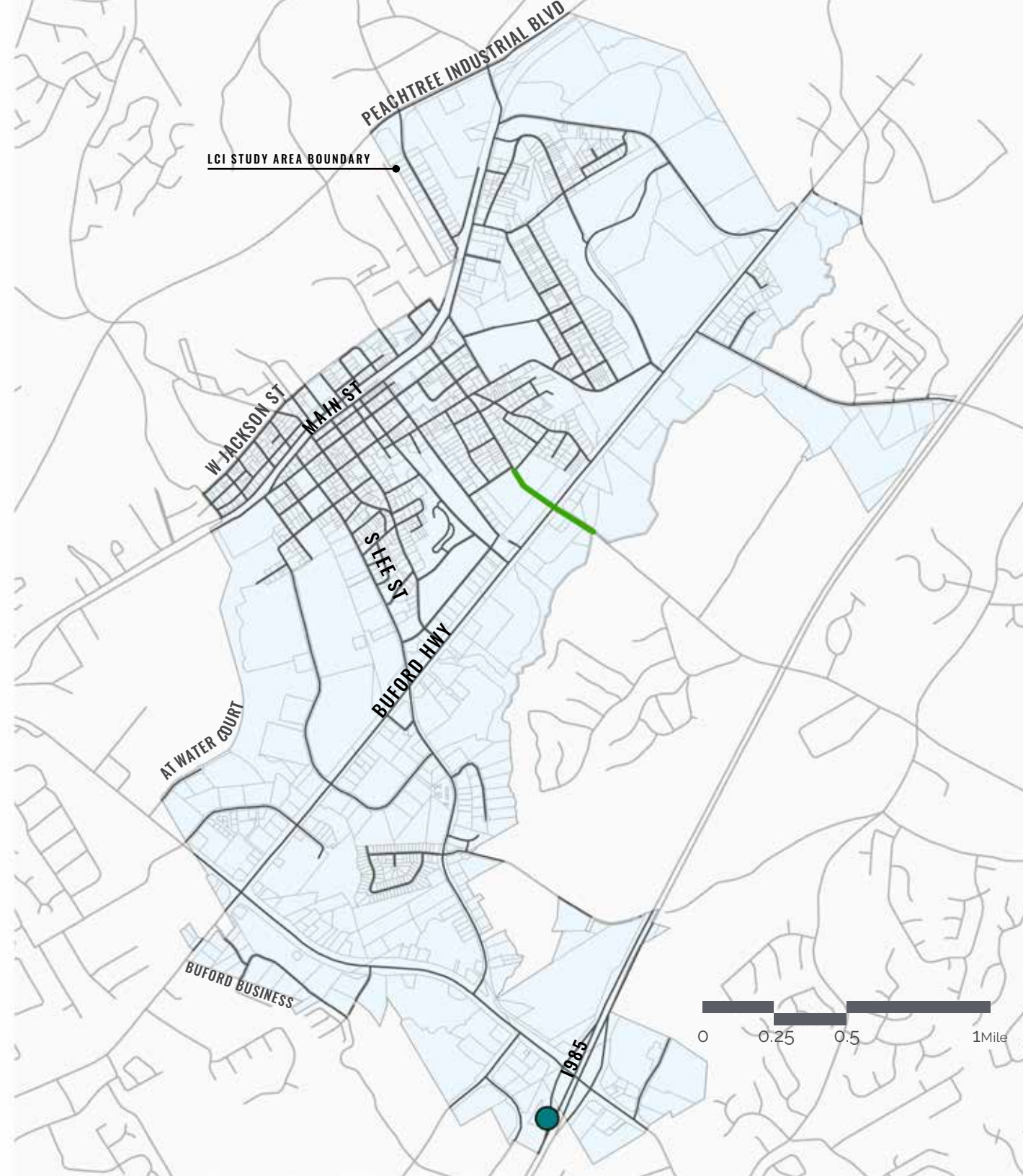


Downtown Buford

# TRANSIT & BIKE CONDITIONS MAP <<

## LEGEND

-  Bike Lanes
-  Transit Stops





## TRANSPORTATION // PEDESTRIAN CONDITIONS



- >> Sidewalks are segmented in residential areas, often only stretching for one or two blocks. This does not provide a connected route from homes to Main Street or to the schools.
- >> Along many of the major roads, including Main Street, Hill Street, Buford Highway, and Sawnee Avenue, there are wide, well-lit sidewalks.
- >> Narrow streets and small block sizes force drivers to slow down and drive more cautiously, providing safety to pedestrians.
- >> Ample crossings along Main Street allow pedestrians to cross from the parking area to storefronts.
- >> There are no connected sidewalks from residential areas to the transit stop, limiting mobility for those without access to a car.



Improved pedestrian streetscape on South Hill Street

## SEGMENTED SIDEWALKS WITH LITTLE CONNECTIVITY TO

SCHOOLS  
AND MAIN ST  
FROM THE  
RESIDENTIAL  
AREA

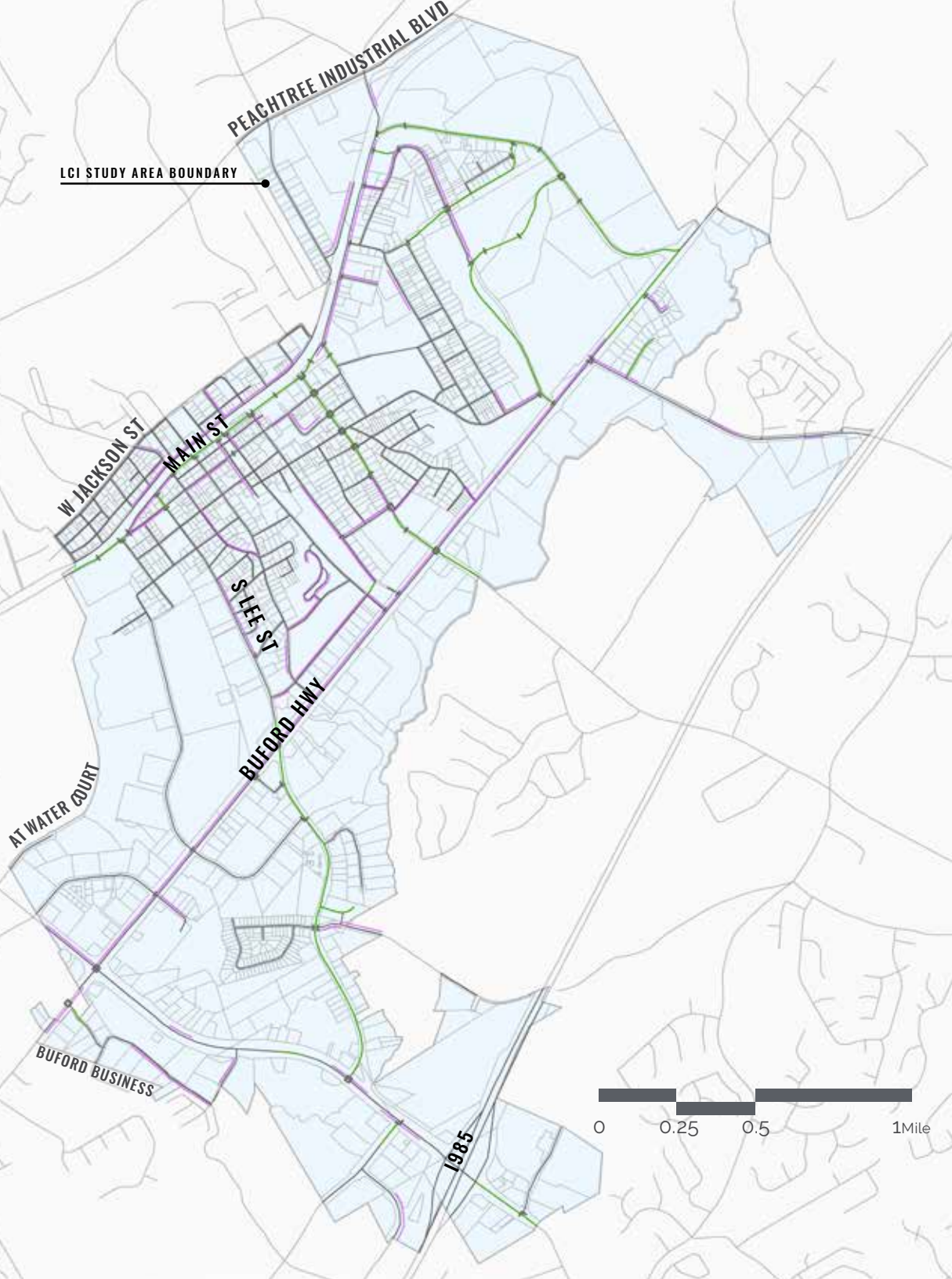


# PEDESTRIAN CONDITIONS MAP <<

LCI STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

## LEGEND

- SIDEWALKS
- One side, as shown
  - Both Sides
  - Crosswalks





# MARKETS // DEMOGRAPHICS

The market study and analysis for the Buford LCI addresses demographics; residential, retail and office/industrial markets; and employment trends for the study area and larger region as identified as the relevant market for Buford. It outlines opportunities for development that can be supported within the Buford study area. Ultimately, it will be important to develop economic development strategies and incentives to direct these market opportunities to the study area and realize the vision outlined in the master plan.

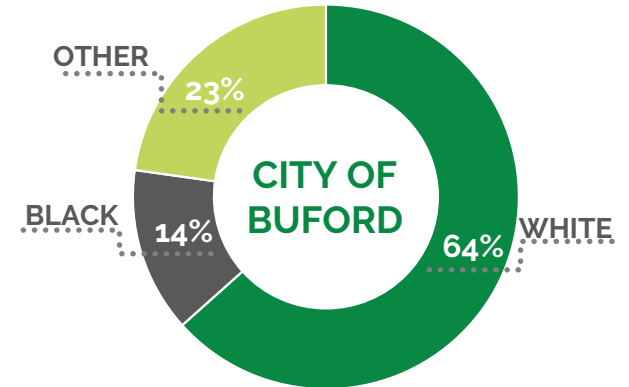


## Population Growth //

- >> The region saw robust growth from 2000 to 2010, however rates slowed significantly during the recession.
- >> In 2015, the population for the City of Buford was 13,210. Of that population, approximately 3,689 people lived in the study area.
- >> The ARC 2040 forecast shows a 74% increase in population in the N Gwinnett super-district between 2010 and 2040.

## Age & Ethnicity //

- >> City residents' median age was 33 in 2015, younger than both the study area (35) and metro Atlanta (36).
- >> Buford's 2015 population is estimated to be 64% white, 14% black, and 23% other races, when categorized by single classification. Of this population, 27% have Hispanic or Latino origin.



## Population Growth between 2000 - 2010 //



Regional population growth rates slowed during the recession

Population in the City of Buford is projected to grow by another 6.8% by the year 2020

Population in the study area is projected to grow by another 2% over the next five years

Generation Xers are the largest segment of Buford's residents. This demographic includes individuals who were born from the early 1960s to the early 1980s (ages 35-54). They are defined as highly educated, active, and family oriented.

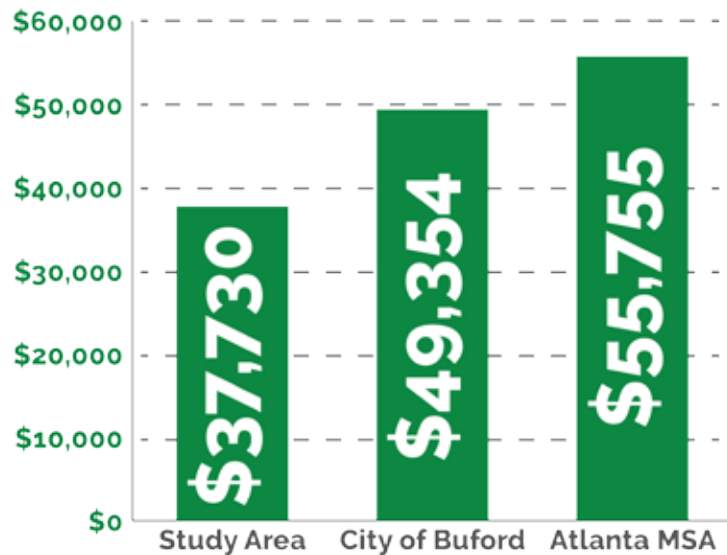


## Income //

- >> The study area's 2015 median household income lagged behind that of both the city and the Atlanta metro.
- >> However, the average income in areas within a 10 minute drive time (\$66,923) and a 20 minute drive time from the study area (\$66,239) lies within the upper third of the region.
- >> The largest share of households in Buford have annual incomes between \$60-\$75,000 (11.8% share).



2015 Median HH Income

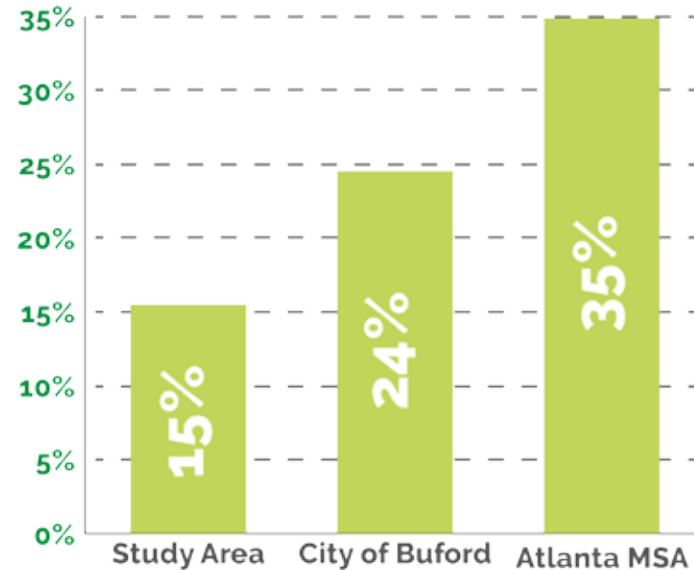


## Commute time, poverty, & education //

- >> Residents within the study area spend about 26.7 minutes commuting to work each morning compared to 30 minutes for Buford, and 33 minutes for metro Atlanta
- >> Approximately 78% of workers within the study area drive alone to work while 16% carpool (only 1.1% use transit).
- >> The study area shows a much higher poverty rate with 23.5% of families below poverty level compared to 16.4% for the city and 12.9% for the region.



% with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

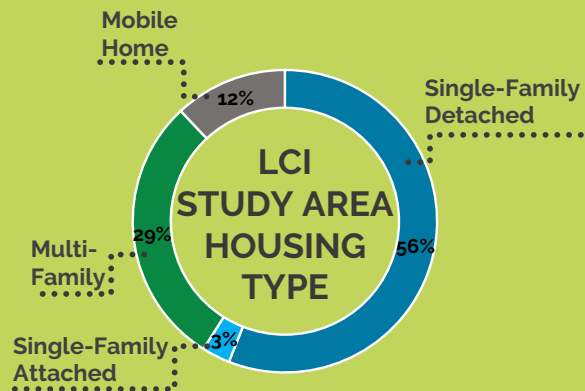




# MARKETS // HOUSING



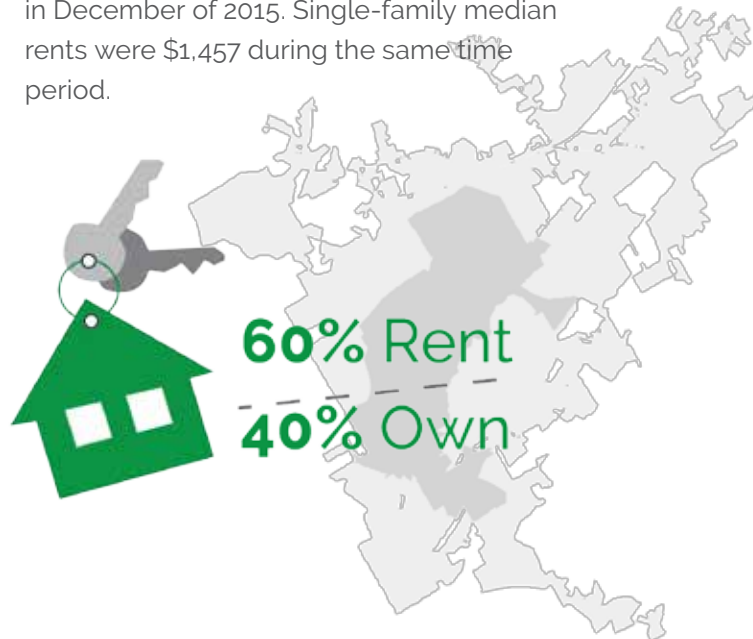
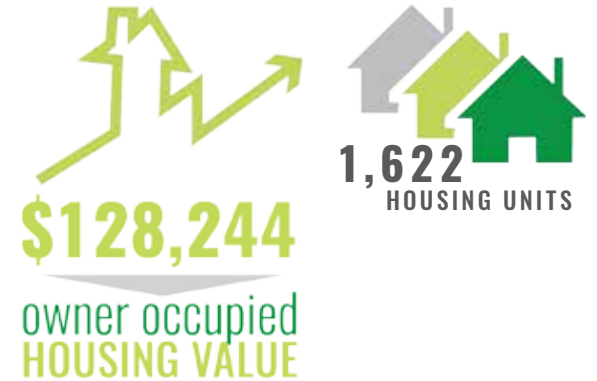
Buford lies in Gwinnett County at the northeastern edge of the Atlanta Metropolitan region. Gwinnett County has seen tremendous growth over the past few decades, but the housing bubble and ensuing recession saw new housing development within the county drop tremendously from 2005 to 2009. Similarly, pricing decreased and days on market increased. However, since 2010, Gwinnett County has seen its housing market stabilize and begin to improve. While the majority of the city of Buford is in Gwinnett County, the city itself is still a small town and may not share the same market trends as the County and region. However, indicators during the past twelve months point to an improving and healthy market in Buford.



## Housing Inventory //

- >> Demand for housing has outpaced supply since 2010 for the Atlanta Region. However, in Gwinnett County there are currently 2,179 single family homes on the market. Of those homes, only 852 were sold by March of 2016 at an average price of \$235,654.
- >> The cost of housing in Gwinnett County has increased since 2011 after a period of decline during the recession from 2005 to 2010.
- >> According to the Georgia MLS, the average sales price in the Buford Market is \$174,324. As a comparison, the average sales in the same month for Dekalb county was \$269,108 and \$375,328 in Fulton county.
- >> According to Zillow, the median rental price for multi-family units in Buford was \$1,258 in December of 2015. Single-family median rents were \$1,457 during the same time period.

### >> LCI Study Area in 2015



Most households in the Buford study area (60%) do not own their own homes. The housing stock is also older than the City of Buford and the remaining 30518 zip code. This is not uncommon considering the study area represents the older core of Buford.





# MARKETS // RETAIL



There are three primary retail areas in the Buford region that relate to the market for the study area.

## Downtown //

Downtown is located primarily along the Main Street corridor from the Tannery Row to the historic Bona Allen warehouse. Downtown is home to a variety of independent shops, restaurants, specialty retail businesses, and services.

## Buford Highway //

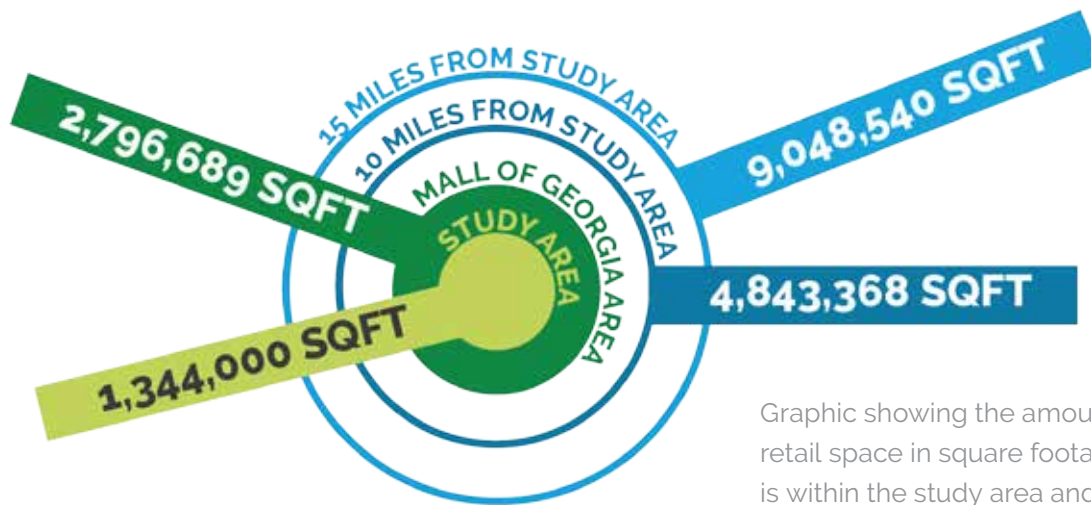
The study area portion of the Buford Highway corridor runs from the SR 20/US 23 intersection up to Sawnee Avenue. Large lot commercial developments such as the Mill Creek Crossing Shopping Center (Walmart, Lowes), Hobby Lobby, and Home Depot make up most of the corridor. Various other retail sites, restaurants, and auto dealerships are also established here.

## Mall of Georgia //

This is one of the most significant retail clusters in the Atlanta Region and serves much of the North Georgia market and beyond. The Mall of Georgia, Mall of Georgia Crossing, and Marketplace at Mill Creek are located here.

## Regional Retail Market //

- >> According to Collier's International, the metro Atlanta retail market is expanding. In 2015, vacancy was down and net absorption was up across the region. Occupancy gained over 2.5 million square feet.
- >> Vacancy across the region stands at 9.8%, continuing a general increase beginning in late 2011. New occupancy comes with increase demand, but limited new construction.
- >> Rental rates have likely hit their lowest point and are beginning a trend upward.
- >> Within the metro area, the most active retailers included grocers, discount stores, fitness companies, and restaurants.
- >> The Gwinnett sub-market was one of the leaders in the region in market demand.



Graphic showing the amount of retail space in square footage that is within the study area and the surrounding region

**VACANCY**  
9.8%



**ABSORPTION**  
2,564,040



**RENT / SQFT**  
\$12.25



**SQFT UNDER CONSTRUCTION**  
1,859,267



Metro Atlanta retail market statistics



## Retail Market //

>> Buford is a retail magnet with approximately \$585 million of inflow (sales over residents' expenditures) in the previous year. The study area itself attracted approximately \$234 million last year (see graphic below).

2015 Retail Inflow



## Retail Demand //

>> This market study seeks to identify opportunities for new or expanded retail and business offerings within Buford and the LCI Study Area. The primary, demand-side study to determine this opportunity is called retail leakage, which refers to the amount of dollars spent, or "leaked" outside of the study area.

>> The leakage and capture study indicates Buford's primary and secondary trade areas could support between 83,165 and 166,329 square feet of new space. This is a marginal amount of demand given the size of the retail market cluster. Opportunities for growth lie in the categories below, as well as any destination retail that may draw consumers from outside of the region.

Buford Retail Demand

GROCERY STORES	\$3,351,243
PHARMACY & DRUG	\$3,238,819
SPECIAL FOOD SERVICES	\$1,904,070
OFFICE SUPPLY	\$1,143,922
GIFTS	\$929,958
CLOTHING	\$258,998



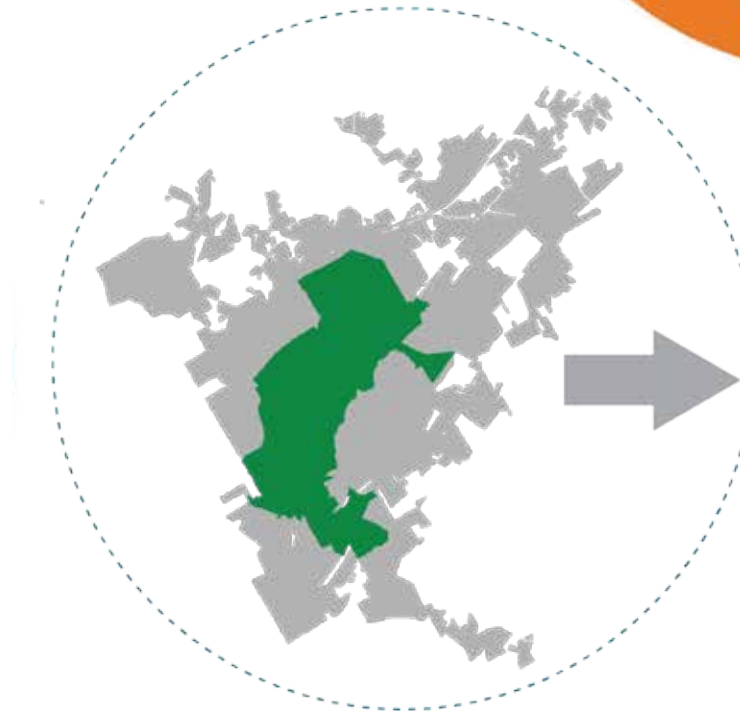
## MARKETS // EMPLOYMENT TRENDS



An assessment of the area's employment base is shown from the US Census Bureau County Business Patterns, the American Community Survey (ACS), and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

### Local Employment //

- >> There were a total of 6,388 jobs in the study area in 2014. Of those jobs, retail trade and accommodations/food jobs made up 33% of the employment in the study area. The pie chart shown to the right details the percentage of all job types in more detail.
- >> As much as 91% of all study area residents commute outside for work. With that said, only 118 people lived and were employed in the study area in 2014.
- >> Retail trade and accommodations/food jobs made up 33% of the employment in the



**~91%**  
of Study Area Residents  
**LEAVE FOR WORK**

## Employment Change //

- >> The jobs market for metro Atlanta has rebounded from its low point in 2010.
- >> Within the 20-County region, Gwinnett County ranked third behind Fulton County and Cobb County. Job growth between 2010 and 2014 in Gwinnett County was 9.68%.
- >> Buford is in the North Gwinnett super-district, which saw a 17.5% increase in jobs from 2005-2012, including the recession years.
- >> The ARC projects a net increase of 155,697 jobs in Gwinnett County between 2015 and 2040.
- >> The largest sectors in 2040 in Gwinnett will be Retail Trade (44,615) and Construction (37,473).



## Office Market Trends //

- >> Colliers International notes that Atlanta's office market had the best year since 2000. This included 4.8 million square feet in net absorption.
- >> Still, the Northeast Atlanta market experienced negative overall absorption in 2015, and is up to 20% vacancy overall, the highest in the region.
- >> Rental rates rose every quarter and are at \$20.15 per square foot for Class A and \$15.25/sf for Class B.
- >> The Northeast Atlanta office market is projected to be soft over the next year.



## Industrial Market Trends //

- >> According to Colliers, Atlanta's industrial market had 15 million square feet in absorption last year. At 8%, vacancy is the lowest since 2000.
- >> The market has seen eight consecutive quarters of positive absorption.
- >> Rental rate increases has slowed slightly as new supply has come on line. Average rent per industrial square foot is \$4.27.
- >> Key industrial clusters in Buford exist at Hamilton Mill Business Center, Bristol Industrial Way, and Lee Street/Hwy.
- >> Makita and Cardinal Glass Industries have operations in the study area.







Forward **Buford**





## CHAPTER 2 // WHAT WE HEARD

// Outreach Process

// Outreach Meetings

// Outreach Tools



## PROCESS //

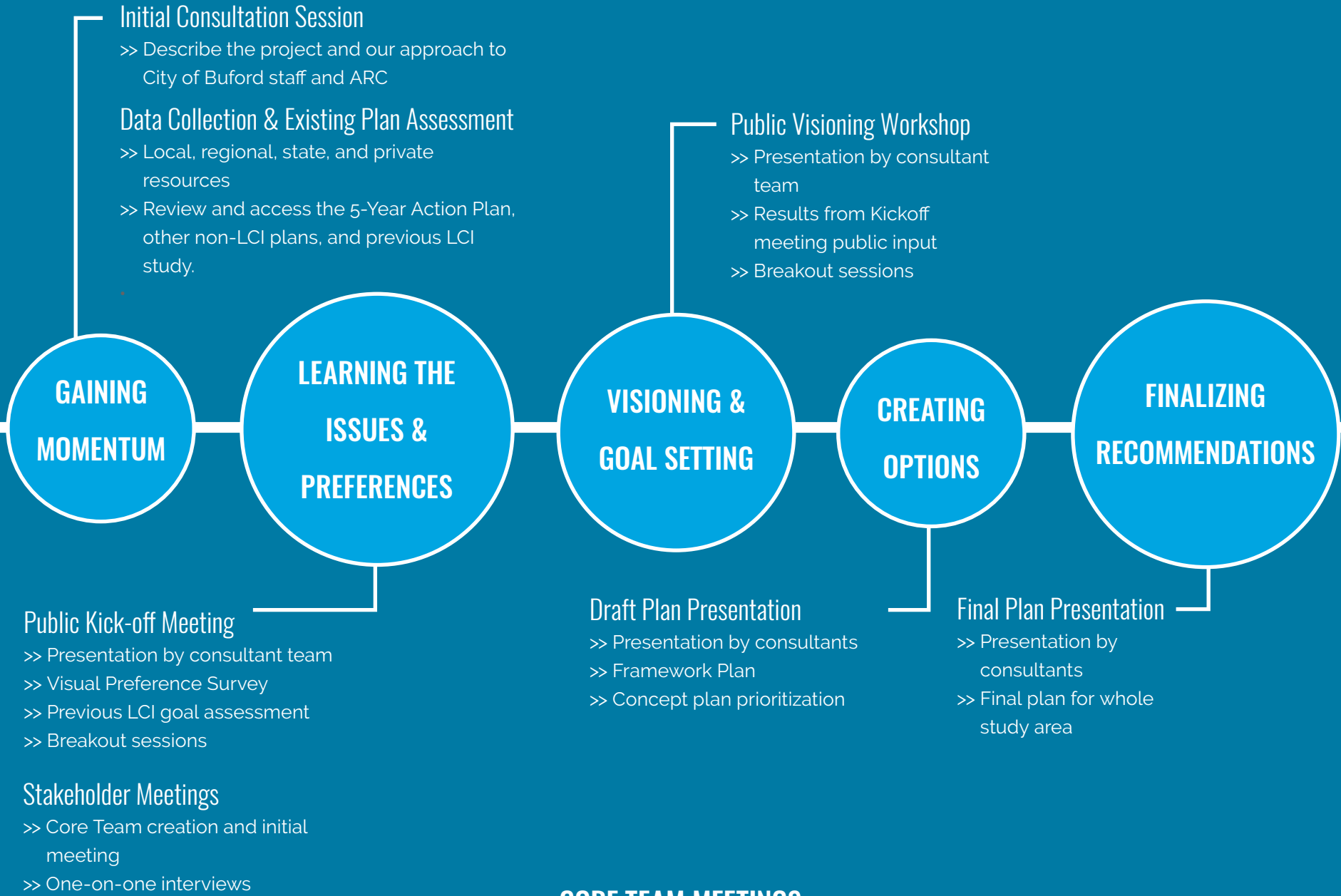
During the public outreach process (outlined at right and described in more detail on the following pages), the consultant team:

- >> Facilitated stakeholder interviews with individuals in December 2015;
- >> Hosted the Public Kick-off Meeting in January 2016;
- >> Held Core Team meetings throughout the process;
- >> Provided a website for the public to access Important project information;
- >> Hosted a Visioning Workshop to establish goals in April 2016;
- >> Created the initial planning recommendations and displayed them for feedback at the Draft Plan Presentation in October 2016; and
- >> Finalized the design recommendations and presented them to the public and the Board of Commissioners in November 2016.

The following public meetings were conducted throughout this LCI process that also included interviews with the public and key stakeholders, a public kickoff meeting,

Right: A discussion table >> set up at the Kickoff Meeting in January 2016





**CORE TEAM MEETINGS**



## MEETINGS //

and a public visioning workshop. Takeaways from those events are detailed in the following pages.

### Stakeholder Interviews //

The consultant team held individual and group interviews with key stakeholders to gain an understanding of the current issues, opportunities, and strengths in the City of Buford and study area.

### Public Kickoff Meeting //

The Public Kickoff Meeting was held following the stakeholder meetings. It began with a presentation by the consultant team, the transportation consultants from Keck & Wood, and the market analysis consultants from Arnett, Muldrow & Associates. To understand the types of development most desired for the study area, a visual preference survey was conducted for the meeting attendees. The public were also asked to review the 2005 Buford Town Center LCI goals to give their input on which ones were still representative of this LCI update for Buford. Participants then broke into focus tables to brainstorm ideas related to land use and design, transportation, and the current market.

### Public Visioning Workshop //

The consultant team held a Public Visioning Workshop at the Buford City Hall. Following

an informative presentation about preliminary survey and outreach results thus far and an introduction on existing conditions, attendees were divided into small working groups to help determine goals for the 2016 LCI update.

### Draft Plan Presentation //

The draft Forward Buford Plan was presented to the public for review, comment, and project prioritization. This included a formal presentation, followed by an open-house where all recommendations were posted on boards for people to comment on. Overall, the responses were extremely positive and only a few minor plan changes were necessary.

### Final Plan Presentation //

A final presentation of highlights of Forward Buford was made the public and Board of Commissioners prior to plan adoption.



Top Right: A discussion table set up at the Workshop Meeting in April 2016

Bottom Right: Attendees at the Workshop Meeting participating at a breakout table.

## TOOLS //

The following is a summary of community feedback received by the following tools:

### Previous LCI Goal Checklist //

Attendees of the Public Kickoff Meeting were asked to first review a list of the previous 2005 LCI goals and then determine where changes were necessary. Most agreed the goals were still representative of Buford today, but added the following recommendations:

- Beautify the gateways of Buford;
- Provide more parking and outdoor park spaces downtown; and
- Delete the previous goal to increase the use and convenience of GCT buses.

### Comment Stations //

Suggestions and comments from the public and core team members were collected at each meeting during the planning process. A summary of the most mentioned comments are described below:

#### Transportation

- Create additional parking downtown
- Design streets with bike lanes
- Improve streetscapes
- Provide additional walking and biking trails with necessary signage

#### Land Use and Economic Development

- Provide additional office spaces and restaurants
- Offer more affordable housing options (i.e. lofts and cottage courts)
- Attract a boutique grocery store
- Improve architectural and design standards along Main Street
- Reuse existing structures, when possible, for redevelopment

#### Parks and Open Spaces

- Rehabilitate recreational fields by Buford High School
- Provide additional parks and open spaces
- Preserve open spaces and use native plants in plantings



Above: A resident participating in the visual preference survey at the kickoff meeting.

#### Common recommended ideas expressed in the Public Visioning Workshop:



∧ Provide affordable senior housing and sustaining the housing market

∨ Re-use historic structures for mixed-use development



∧ Add more walking paths, bike trails and bike signage

∨ Preserve open spaces and plant more native street trees





## TOOLS //

### Visual Preference Surveys //



The Visual Preference Surveys were conducted at the Public Kickoff Meeting. Each board had nine different images and a question asking participants to vote on the two most appropriate images that could act as models for future development in the study area by placing a green dot on the chosen images. Participants were also asked to vote for the images deemed least appropriate for the study area by instead placing a red dot. Each image showed design and style options for different types of development: transportation types, parks and open space, major corridors, the downtown core, and the downtown neighborhood. The top rated images in each category are explained in more detail to the right.



#### >> TRANSPORTATION <<

The preferred images for transportation systems show that respondents want more trails, manicured sidewalks, and buffered pedestrian pathways. They also suggest that respondents want more bike lanes that are buffered from vehicular traffic by landscaped medians and are also adjacent to wide sidewalks with street trees.

#### >> PARKS & OPEN SPACE <<

The preferred images for parks and open spaces show that respondents want more lush green spaces and large lawns for lounging and gathering. The top image indicates that pedestrian walking and biking paths are favored and that safety through adequate lighting is administered. The second rated image shows informal seating arrangements and history in place.





#1



#1



#1

Copyright Place Makers



#2



#2



#2

## >> MAJOR CORRIDORS <<

The preferred images for major corridors show that respondents want more landscaped outdoor lounge spaces. The top image indicates that buildings and design are important aspects for major corridors. The bottom shows more restaurant options with outdoor and rooftop seating, and a corridor that is vibrant, lively, and family oriented.

## >> DOWNTOWN CORE <<

The preferred images for the downtown core show that respondents want more buildings that is pedestrian oriented and connects with the street. Public outdoor spaces for seating and dining coupled with a preference for mixed-use development is also suggested. The bottom image indicates the reuse of the historic mill, and the addition of loft-like housing.

## >> DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD <<

The preferred images for the downtown neighborhood show that respondents want more housing options. The top image shows single family cottage style homes with centralized community green spaces. In both images, parking is discrete with the bottom image showing street-side parking. The bottom also shows three story buildings with tree-lined streets and traditional architectural design.





*S* Forward **Buford**





## CHAPTER 3 // RECOMMENDATIONS

// METHODOLOGY

// VISION

// CONCEPT PLAN

// LAND USE AND DESIGN

// TRANSPORTATION

// MARKETS



## METHODOLOGY //

The methodology behind the LCI 10-Year Update included four phases:

1. Existing conditions assessment
2. Public engagement
3. Recommendations for the future
4. Implementation plan

Recommendations are a synthesis of the existing conditions assessment and public engagement, coupled with sound planning practices. These offer a visionary yet realistic blueprint for sustainable growth that will benefit the future of the City of Buford.

## Policies & Projects //

There are two types of plan recommendations:

- >> Policies are guidelines that provide direction for the implementation of the plan's vision. They often support specific implementation projects and should be the basis for actions by the City of Buford. Policies should also guide the private sector, especially to the extent that they define plan aspirations.
- >> Projects are specific tasks, such as transportation improvements, studies, or signs, with a defined cost and time frame. They are often undertaken by a local agency such as the City of Buford, GDOT, or GRTA.

## VISION //

The vision for the study area calls for strengthening Buford's historic center as a vibrant, pedestrian oriented district, ringed by revitalized historic neighborhoods. Along the corridors ringing downtown, continued economic growth, greater multi-modal transportation options, and aesthetic improvements are envisioned. Tying all of these areas together, is a balanced transportation system that complements the landuse vision.

1

### DOWNTOWN BUFORD

Enhance downtown Buford's historic core with a mix of small scale specialty food and retail shops, office, civic, and live-work spaces. Connect visitors to a downtown that is safe and walkable for all users with greenway connections and improved pedestrian pathways.

2

### BUFORD HIGHWAY

Establish a mixed-use area with City Hall as the focal point. Provide small lot single-family housing options, strong commercial anchors, and pedestrian connections.

3

### I-985

Provide mixed-use, live-work-play development complete with greenway trail connections and access to existing transit opportunities available outside the study area.

4

### BUFORD GATEWAYS

Create gateways that share a unified identity that is distinct to the City of Buford. Revitalize commercial districts such as the Village Square Center and the Buford Mall to become catalysts for more resident-serving businesses to relocate here.

5

### SUWANEE CREEK GREENWAY

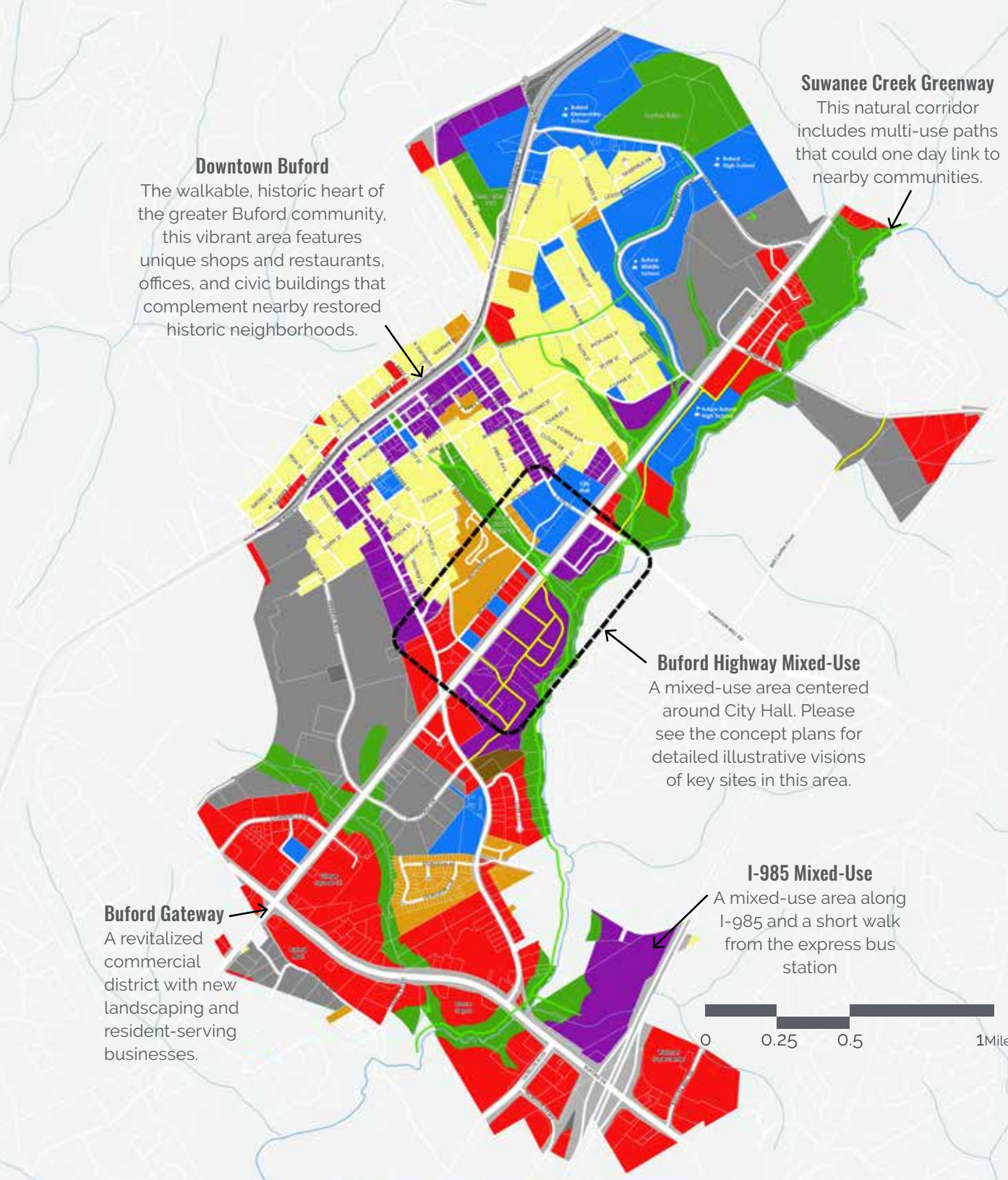
Connect a comprehensive multi-use trail system throughout the study area that connects key destinations such as Buford schools, residential communities, and major commercial and mixed-use corridors.

**LEGEND**

- Greenway (Illustrative Only)
- New Street (Illustrative Only)
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Office/Professional
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

**Framework Plan //**

The framework plan (left) shows how the transportation and land use visions unite into a cohesive plan. It includes land uses, open spaces, major transportation enhancements, and focal points of development activity. The dashed black box shown on the map identifies the area where detailed concept plans were developed. Please refer to pages 52 - 55 for these detailed plans.



**Downtown Buford**

The walkable, historic heart of the greater Buford community, this vibrant area features unique shops and restaurants, offices, and civic buildings that complement nearby restored historic neighborhoods.

**Suwanee Creek Greenway**

This natural corridor includes multi-use paths that could one day link to nearby communities.

**Buford Highway Mixed-Use**

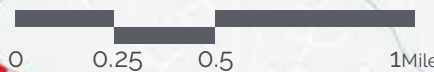
A mixed-use area centered around City Hall. Please see the concept plans for detailed illustrative visions of key sites in this area.

**I-985 Mixed-Use**

A mixed-use area along I-985 and a short walk from the express bus station

**Buford Gateway**

A revitalized commercial district with new landscaping and resident-serving businesses.





## CONCEPT PLAN // BUFORD HIGHWAY

A key part of Buford's future will be shaped by growth along Buford Highway - a major corridor and, in many ways, Buford's "front door." Despite the corridor's prominence and recent growth, a large amount of undeveloped land still exists, especially from South Lee Street to South Hill Street.

The Framework Plan targets Buford Highway for commercial, public/institutional, and mixed-use development. Near the intersection of Buford Highway, South Hill Street, and Thompson Mill Road, it recommends a mix of uses that builds on the momentum of Buford City Hall, Buford Community Center, and Buford Village.

The Buford Highway Concept Plan at right shows one option for how this area might develop into a mix of office, retail, and housing, in a manner consistent with this plan's vision. The following summarizes possible elements.

### Commercial Village //

Along Buford Highway, the Concept Plan includes a commercial village with a required 50,000 square foot anchor grocery store or similar and 12,200 square feet of accessory commercial space. The accessory commercial should be at least 75% contractually occupied (for any approvals by the City).

### Office Park //

Behind and beside the commercial village, the Concept Plan incorporates several office buildings set in a walkable setting along a new street. In total, these buildings contain 120,400 square feet of new office space and an additional 264 additional parking spaces.

### Housing //

The Concept Plan also shows small lot single-family housing at the rear of the site, near Suwanee Creek, at a ratio of 1 square foot of residential per 2 square feet of commercial/office. Here, 44 homes are envisioned along quiet, tree-lined streets, just a short walk from the commercial village or the new offices.

### Open Spaces and Trails //

The Concept Plan includes preserved open space along Suwanee Creek that incorporates a multi-use trail that could one-day connect to other parts of Buford and nearby communities. Pocket parks are also scattered throughout.

### Implementation //

When the concept plan is implemented, its program and layout will likely vary from what is shown here. While this is to be expected, it is also critical that the City ensures conformance with the spirit of the plan during the approval process, including its recommended density limits, non-residential land uses, and the overall Forward Buford plan.



Office park



Grocery store



Mixed-use development



## >> BUFORD HIGHWAY CONCEPT PLAN

\* This graphic is for illustrative purposes only. It is intended to show one possible option for long-term build-out of this area. This assumes that any development will only occur when willing landowners sell sites to willing buyers. Furthermore, all building locations and footprints are the artist's interpretations.

BUFORD HIGHWAY

To Buford Village

Commercial Village

50,000 sf Grocery

Office Park

Single-Family Homes

Office Park

Creek Connection

Creek Connection

SUWANEE CREEK

### LEGEND

- Commercial
- Office
- Single-Family Housing



## CONCEPT PLAN // HILL STREET

Development opportunities also exist along South Hill Street, near the Community Center and City Hall.

The South Hill Street Concept Plan, at right, shows two options for how this area might redevelop as either entirely smaller lot single-family housing, or a combination of small lot housing and City offices. The following summarizes possible elements.

### Cottage Housing //

Both Concept Plans include cottages houses on South Harris Street, while Concept Plan A also shows how the former Buford City Gym, could be redeveloped into cottage housing. Homes could front tree-lined sidewalks and feature rear alley-loaded garages, where feasible.

### Parks //

Both Concept Plans show how the former football field could be redeveloped into the Community Center Park. This would provide an amenity for cottage home residents and Community Center users.

### City Offices //

If the City needs additional office space, Concept Plan B shows how an administrative office building could be built along South Hill Street, on the site of the former Buford City Gym.

## >> HILL STREET CONCEPT PLAN A



**These graphics are for illustrative purposes only. They are intended to show possible options for long-term build-out of this area.**

**They assumes that any development will only occur when willing landowners sell sites to swilling buyers. Furthermore, all building locations and footprints are the artist's interpretations.**

### LEGEND

Single-Family Housing

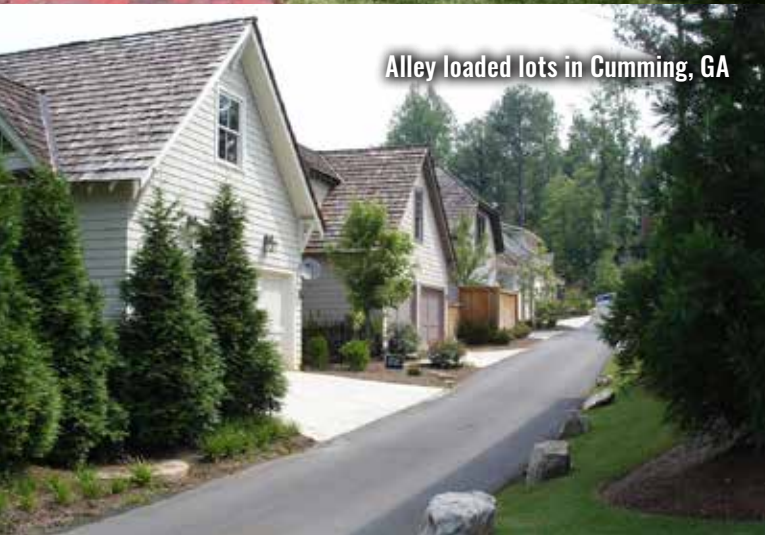




Cottage courts in Covington, GA



Community park in Charlotte, NC



Alley loaded lots in Cumming, GA

## >> HILL STREET CONCEPT PLAN B

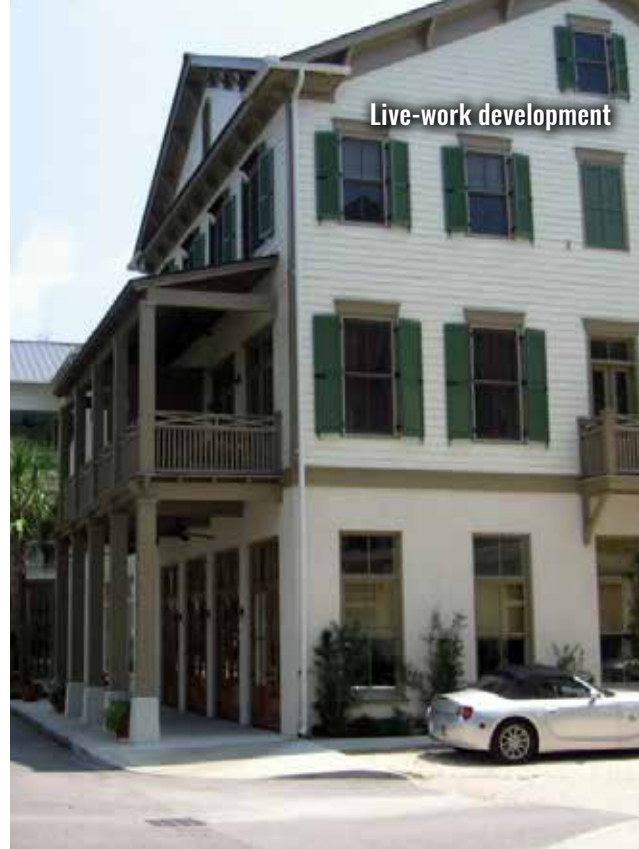




## LAND USE & DESIGN // RECOMMENDATIONS

As a historic city, Buford already has many of the land use elements of a livable community. Land use and design recommendations seek to enhance the city's existing mix of uses and improve the quality of new development. Central to this, is making sure that the city offers diverse housing, commercial, civic, and open space options that are balanced with the transportation recommendations.

The recommended policies and projects for land use and design in the study area as decided on by the consultant team are detailed on the following pages.



### Encouraged Housing Types //

The study area currently has few residential options other than single-family homes. To the right is a list of five residential types that are recommended for future residential developments:

1. Housing as part of mixed-use projects
2. Mixed-income housing options
3. Single-family houses in older neighborhoods
4. Live-work units
5. Housing that is attractive to young singles

# POLICIES

1 IMPLEMENT THE VISION OF THE FRAMEWORK PLAN



2 PRESERVE THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN



3 ENSURE HIGH QUALITY MATERIAL AND DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS



4 ENCOURAGE RENOVATION AND REVITALIZATION OF HOUSING IN OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS



5 ENCOURAGE VARYING TYPES OF HOUSING



6 ENCOURAGE NEW COMMERCIAL SPACE IN DOWNTOWN



7 INCLUDE LARGE AND SMALL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES AS NEW PROJECTS ARE DEVELOPED





# LAND USE & DESIGN // RECOMMENDATIONS

## POLICIES CONTINUED.....

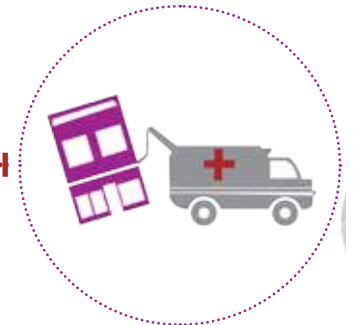
**8** ENCOURAGE THE RE-USE OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES



**9** PRESERVE AND ENHANCE EXISTING OPEN SPACES



**10** ENCOURAGE THE RE-USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF AGING SHOPPING CENTERS



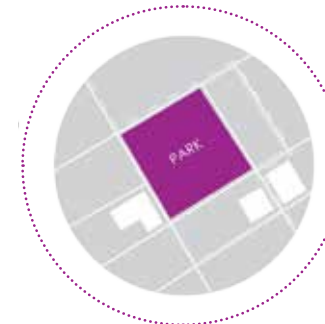
**11** SEEK TO ATTRACT A FULL SERVICE GROCERY STORE TO THE STUDY AREA



**12** PARTICIPATE IN THE FORTHCOMING GWINNETT COUNTY GREENWAY TRAIL PLANNING EFFORT



**13** INCLUDE LARGE AND SMALL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES AS NEW PROJECTS ARE DEVELOPED



## PROJECTS.....

### BUFORD PARK AND RECREATIONAL FIELD UPGRADES (O-25)

Current facilities need repair or replacement.

### TOWN SQUARE EXPANSION (O-26)

A new parking deck will allow the existing parking lot to become park space.

### NEW BUFORD CITY GYMNASIUM (O-27)

### PRIVATE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES (O-28)

As private development occurs, it should incorporate open spaces .

### BUFORD HIGHWAY PARK (O-29)

North of the new Buford High School, an opportunity exists to create a new park.

### NEW BUFORD HIGH SCHOOL (O-30)

### NEW GYMNASIUM PLAYGROUND (O-31)

### COMMUNITY CENTER PARK (O-32)

The former football field near the Community Center could become a park.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING MAP UPDATES (O-9)

Comp plan changes should be made as soon as possible. Zoning changes should occur as developments are proposed.

## Key Development Sites //

Much of Buford is built-up with little room left available for development. With that said, vacant structures, historic sites, and commercial centers in decline are great opportunities for new growth. Sites like the former Buford City Gym and the historic Bona Allen Warehouse are among the key sites where development should be targeted.

- >> The Bona Allen Warehouse (O-1)  
The reuse of the Bona Allen warehouse is integral to the future of Buford. A concerted effort should be made to encourage and support its reuse. Various state and federal incentives exist for such large projects; the building could be eligible for the state's new increased tax credits for rehabilitated historic properties.
- >> The former hospital site (O-2)
- >> The Tannery Row redevelopment (around preserved existing buildings) (O-3)
- >> The SR 20 and Buford Highway intersection (especially the former Kroger shopping center) (O-4)
- >> The Public Works building (i.e. "the barn" (O-5)
- >> Buford Hwy Concept Plan (pgs 52-53) (O-6)
- >> Hill Street Concept Plan (pgs 54-55) (O-7)
- >> Bona Allen tannery (O-8)







## POLICIES.....

**1** CREATE A TRAIL NETWORK THAT SERVES THE CITY OF BUFORD AND TIES TO THE SUWANEE CREEK GREENWAY AND THE FORTHCOMING GWINNETT COUNTY GREENWAY TRAIL PLANNING EFFORT



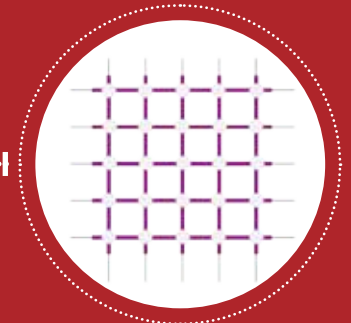
**2** ENSURE THERE IS A BALANCE BETWEEN AUTOMOBILES AND OTHER USERS



**3** ENSURE THAT WALKING AND BIKING IS SAFE, CONVENIENT AND ENJOYABLE BY PUTTING SIDEWALK AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS IN PLACE



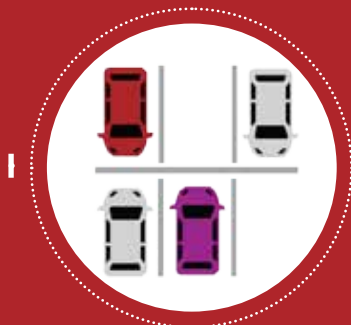
**4** PROVIDE AN INTERCONNECTED STREET SYSTEM SUPPORTING A RANGE OF ROUTE OPTIONS, TRANSPORTATION MODES, AND REDUCED CONGESTION



**5** INCREASE THE VIABILITY OF BICYCLING IN THE STUDY AREA



**6** INCORPORATE PROGRESSIVE PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, INCLUDING SHARED PARKING, PUBLIC DECKS, AND SIMILAR FACILITIES





# TRANSPORTATION // RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROJECTS.....

### INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

The following intersections are targeted for upgrades that serve drivers and pedestrians:

- >> Buford Highway @ Sawnee Avenue signalization (T-1)
- >> Buford Highway @ Robert Bell Parkway intersection (T-3)
- >> South Lee Street @ Buford Highway dual left turn lanes (T-5)
- >> Buford Highway @ South Garnett Street signalization (T-9)
- >> Hamilton Mill Road @ Buford Highway dual left turn lanes (T-10)

### STREET WIDENING

Some area streets require widening to meet current or future needs. These include:

- >> Buford Highway east of Sawnee Ave (T-2)
- >> Thompson Mill Road (T-7)
- >> SR 20 from South Lee Street to SR 13 (T-13)

### EXPANDED STREET NETWORK

Creating more street connections is one of the best ways to improve access for all users. The following new streets are recommended:

- >> Buford High School Access Road to Hamilton Mill Road (T-4)
- >> Mill Center Parkway Extension (T-6)
- >> East Shadburn Avenue Extension (Shadburn Ferry Road to S Waterworks Road) (T-8)
- >> Satellite Boulevard to South Lee Street Connector (T-11)

In addition, private development should incorporate streets that expand Buford's network, as conceptually shown in the Framework Plan.

### THOMPSON MILL ROAD INTERCHANGE (T-12)

Long-term, the creation of a new 1-985 interchange at Thompson Mill Road could greatly improve access to Buford.

- >> Justification Study for Interchange (T-12a)
- >> Thompson Mill Road @ I-985 (T-12b)

### MAJOR PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES (T-14).

Some streets warrant major pedestrian upgrades, including sidewalks, lighting, street trees, crosswalks, etc. These include South Lee Street, Moreno Street, Shadburn Avenue, and Shadburn Ferry Road.

### MINOR PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES (T-15)

Not all streets need major upgrades to serve users. The following minor improvements are recommended: Garnett Street bicycle and pedestrian enhancements; Buford Drive sidewalk gaps; New Street sidewalks; Forest Street sidewalks; Bona Road sidewalks; West Jackson Street sidewalks; Heraeus Boulevard sidewalks; Thompson Mill Road sidewalks; South Harris Street sidewalks; Powers Avenue sidewalks; Horizon Parkway/ Satellite Boulevard sidewalks; Shadburn Ferry Road railroad crossing improvements;

and Little Mill Road railroad crossing improvements.

### MULTI-USE PATH SYSTEM (T-16)

This system will provide non-motorized access between various parts of the study area and future regional connections. Segments could include: along the north side of Suwanee Creek; from New Street to Suwanee Creek; from Fifth Street to Legion Fields Park; from Sawnee Avenue to Suwanee Creek; and from the Bona Allen Tannery to Buford Highway.

### PUBLIC PARKING DECK (T-17)

See pages 64 and 65 for details on a potential public parking deck on East Moreno Street.

### PEDESTRIAN PASSAGE FROM THE PARKING DECK TO MAIN STREET (T-18)

Creating a passage to Main Street would make the proposed deck more accessible.

### STUDY AREA DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE (T-19)

Directional signs at key entries into Buford would benefit drivers and area businesses.

### JONES ALLEY UPGRADES (T-20)

Jones Alley could be improved for pedestrians, drivers, and building assess.

*Notes:*

*Refer to the Action Matrix on pages 75 - 81 for more detailed information on each project.*

Directional signage in Dallas, Texas



Pedestrian and roadway improvements were made as the Buford Community Center was developed along South Hill Street



Directional kiosk in downtown Holland, Michigan





# PARKING DECK // OPTIONS

## Recommendation //

### >> PUBLIC PARKING DECK (T-17)

The block bounded by Garnett Street, Jones Alley, South Harris Street, and East Moreno Street is an ideal location for a public parking deck due to proximity to existing businesses, access, and topography that eliminates the need for internal ramps.

Various options exist for how a public parking deck could fit on the site. Five of these are shown here. Determination of the final option will require further detailed study.

Regardless of the final option that is actually implemented, all design specifics will also need to be coordinated with the creation of a mid-block pedestrian passage to access Main Street businesses and the proposed Jones Alley upgrades.



## Option 1 //



Two levels, 252 spaces. Live-work units, townhouse units, or office suites could be developed along East Moreno Street to screen the deck.

## Option 2 //



Three levels, 300 spaces. This option creates a large mid-block deck without liner uses. However, existing buildings along Garnett Street remain and provide some screening.

## Option 3 //



Two levels, 264 spaces plus a 17 space surface lot. Live-work units, townhouse units, or office suites could be developed along East Moreno Street to screen the deck. Office suites or commercial space could line Garnett Street.

## Option 4 //



Two levels, 250 spaces.  
This option creates a large mid-block deck without liner uses.



Option 4 Rendering

## Option 5 //



Two levels, 220 spaces. This option is similar to Option 4, except that it incorporates an office or commercial uses along Garnett Street.





# MARKETS // RECOMMENDATIONS

## City-Wide //

Buford is still a small town, but its citizens enjoy a quality of life and amenities more common to larger places. By the same token, the City is a desirable place for new investment and development, and needs dedicated economic development personnel and programming to recruit and direct development that increases tax base while preserving the small town character.

With that said, there is a capture potential for up to 166,000 square feet of new retail space within a ten and twenty minute drive time trade area. Based on the market research detailed on pages 36 - 37 of this document, there is a local demand for more establishments that sell hardware supplies, jewelry, sporting goods, hobby and gift items.

## Downtown //

Downtown Buford already has a cluster of specialty shopping and restaurant locations available in a quaint and inviting environment. However, downtown has the potential for at least two existing locations to develop into mixed-use anchors. In order to expand local and visitor customer base, Buford and its partners should actively market downtown Buford as an experience-based destination with specialty shops and entertainment venues.

The recommended policies and projects for markets in the study area as decided on by the consultant team are detailed on the following pages.



# POLICIES

**1** RECRUIT BUSINESSES TO BUFORD AND THE STUDY AREA



**2** MARKET DOWNTOWN BUFORD AND THE STUDY AREA AS A DESTINATION TO EXPAND LOCAL AND VISITOR CUSTOMER BASE, PROMOTE ECONOMIC INVESTMENT, AND RECRUIT NEW RESIDENTS



**3** TARGET KEY SITES IN THE STUDY AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT BASED ON MARKET OPPORTUNITY AND NEEDS



**4** PURSUE CATALYST MIXED-USE PROJECTS AS DOWNTOWN ANCHORS



**5** COORDINATE EFFORTS AMONG BUSINESSES TO PROMOTE DOWNTOWN TO EXPAND CUSTOMER BASE



**6** ESTABLISH ACTIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING FOR THE CITY



**7** CREATE A DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT MECHANISM TO PROGRAM ACTIVITY AND RECRUIT NEW INVESTMENT





# MARKETS // RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROJECTS.....

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (O-10)**

This should include the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to support revitalization and redevelopment of the downtown and study area. Like other DDAs in Georgia, it can guide the development of key sites and lead the implementation of this plan.

Ultimately, the city should consider dedicating staff resources for leading small business recruitment and development, working with property owners and regional economic development partners, etc. with the ultimate goal of having an economic development director.

### **BUSINESS RECRUITMENT (O-11)**

As identified in the market research, many opportunities exist for businesses in Buford.

**Restaurants** – Recruit independent restaurant products similar to Tannery Row Ale House or Rico's World Kitchen that appeal to both local residents and regional diners.

**Specialty retail** – Recruit new or expand destination type businesses like those that are located in downtown Buford (and unique to Mall of Georgia offerings) such as jewelry, gifts, sporting goods, specialty luggage & leather, and hardware – all of which showed demand in the market study.

**Specialty food stores** – Target specialty food retailers specializing in items such as fresh vegetables and meat, health foods, and wine.

### **DEDICATED FUNDING MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS (O-12, O-13, O-14)**

Sources of funding could potentially come from the establishment of a Tax Allocation District (TAD), a Community Improvement District (CID), or an Opportunity Zone.

### **BUSINESS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES (O-15)**

Partner with regional agencies including the Gwinnett County Economic Development, Chamber, and Gwinnett SBDC to build and promote business support tools and incentives for Buford businesses, potentially including grants, micro-loans, business planning, marketing assistance, etc.

### **COMMUNITY CENTER MARKETING (O-16)**

The Buford Community Center plays a major role in attracting people to Buford. The City should continue to support center marketing efforts, as well as events like the Buford Business Expo.

## Branding //

### **BUFORD BRAND IDENTITY PROGRAM (O-18)**

The brand would be a unique graphic identity to represent Buford as a place as opposed to simply representing the functions of the city government. A comprehensive marketing brand contains several elements including color palette, typography, iconography and marketing positions for economic development, business and retail recruitment, and local loyalty and pride.

### **BRANDED MARKETING TOOLS (O-19)**

Using this unified brand, apply to various marketing tools such as event logos, banners, wayfinding, destination website for downtown, shopping and dining guide, etc. The goal is a seamless marketing program to bring new customers and investment into the study area. Tools would be identified through a community driven process to create marketing strategy.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING MATERIALS (O-20)**

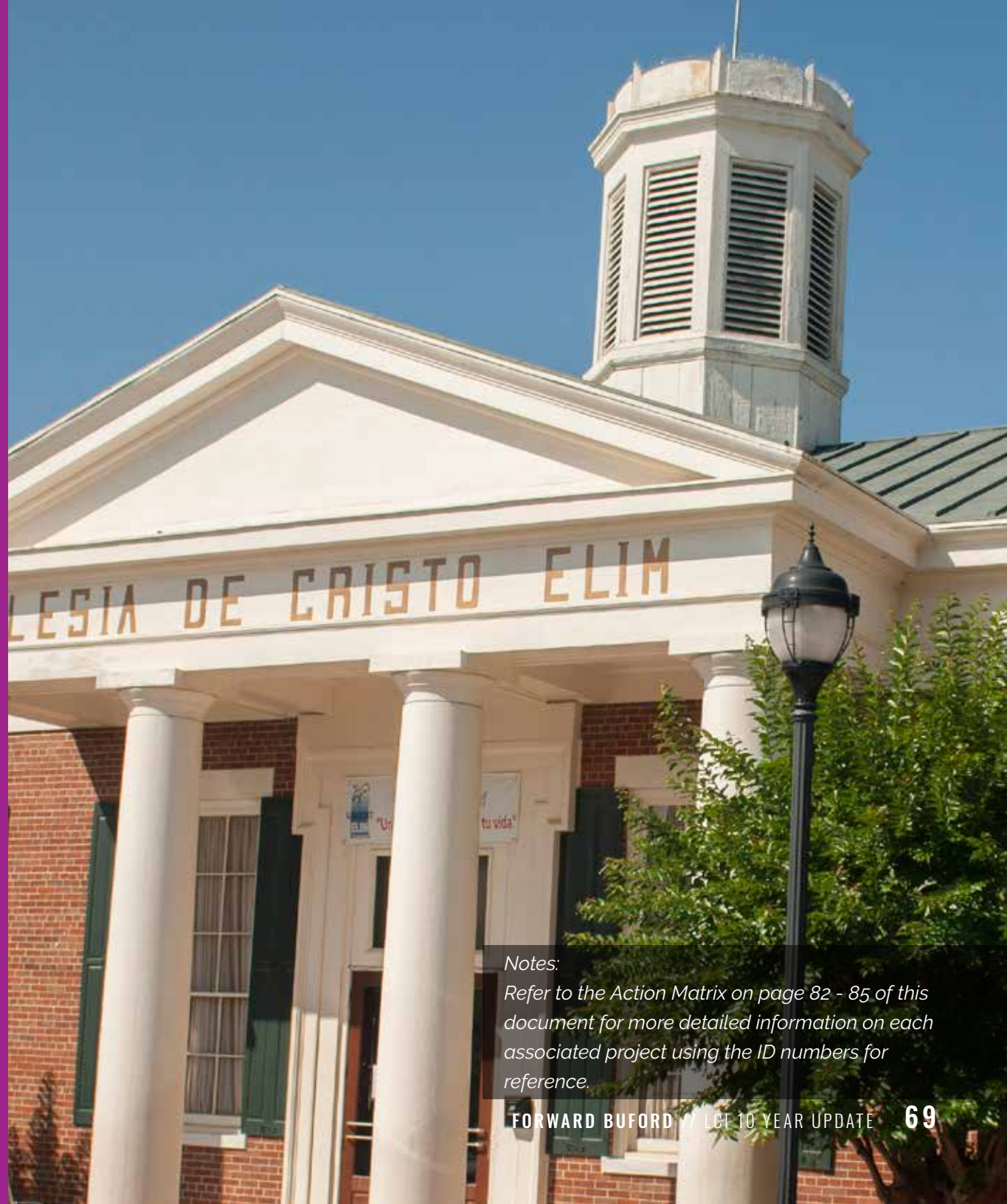
Materials could include an Interactive database of available properties, testimonial ads of area industries and small businesses, business recruitment marketing packages, and an LCI Plan brochure.

## Historic Preservation // NATIONAL REGISTER DESIGNATION OF DOWNTOWN DISTRICT. (O-21)

Downtown Buford has the historic building stock to qualify for designation on the National Register of Historic District. Buford should contact the Georgia Historic Preservation Office to initiate the designation process. Designation is honorary, but comes with significant incentives for preservation and redevelopment including:

- >> Federal Tax Credit of 20% of the total rehabilitation cost for income producing properties such as commercial, rental residential, etc.
- >> State Income Tax Credits (varying) for qualified rehabilitation costs. Special Tax Assessment for rehabilitated property.

Each of these incentives can affect the pro forma for redevelopment and reuse of historic properties in downtown, ranging from above retail residential units to adaptive reuse of properties. National Register designation is required for property owners to use these incentives. Additional funding for preservation planning and bricks and mortar projects would be available if the city ultimately becomes a Certified Local Government with an active preservation program.



### Notes:

Refer to the Action Matrix on page 82 - 85 of this document for more detailed information on each associated project using the ID numbers for reference.



# MARKETS // RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROJECTS CONTINUED.....

### DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT (O-17)

The City could establish a downtown development board, which could be in conjunction with DDA as in other communities. This board could have committees and a work plan focusing on economic vitality, promotion, organization, and design. Ultimately, the City could also pursue designation/accreditation from Georgia Main Streets or its Better Home Town's program.

### WEEKLY FARMERS MARKET (O-22)

The market assessment shows current local demand for specialty foods products. A Farmers Market at the Buford Community Center can not only fulfill this need, but also create an active destination downtown for residents and families to enjoy, and for local growers and entrepreneurs to sell their products. The City can begin by approaching the Georgia Department of Agriculture or an area manager of an existing market.

### BONA ALLEN WAREHOUSE REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS (O-23)

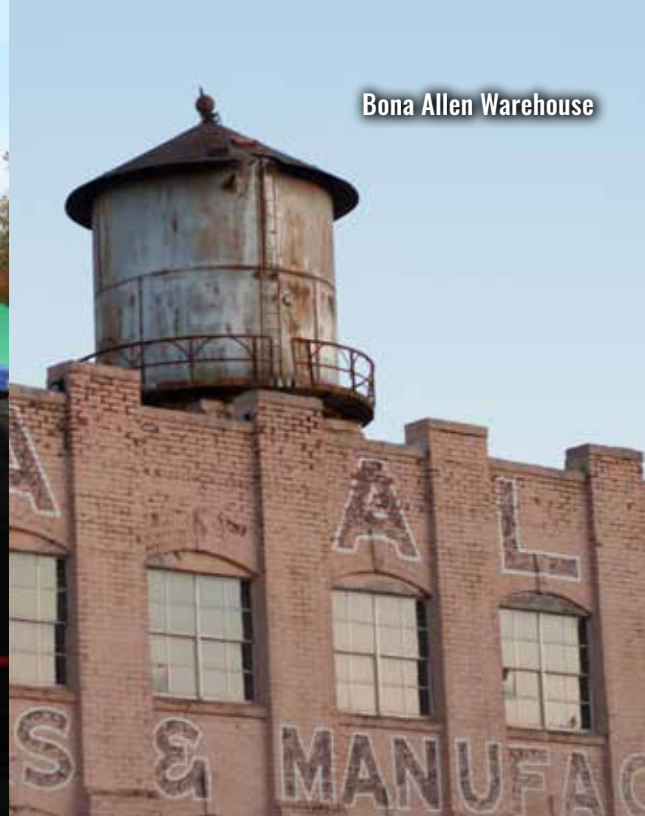
The reuse of the Bona Allen warehouse (O-1) is considered key to the expansion and growth of Main Street and the downtown Buford corridor. Effort should be made to encourage and support its reuse. Various state and federal historic tax incentives exist for renovating such large historic buildings; the building could be eligible for the state's new increased tax credits for rehabilitated historic properties.

### VILLAGE SQUARE CENTER REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS (O-24)

This shopping center has declined in part due to the rapid growth of Buford Drive and the Mall of Georgia. However, the site is currently underutilized and/or vacant. Buford should consider recruiting a developer to reinvest in the site to make it a commercial destination.



Outdoor farmers market in Seattle, Washington



Bona Allen Warehouse



Specialty retail shopping in downtown Vicery, Georgia

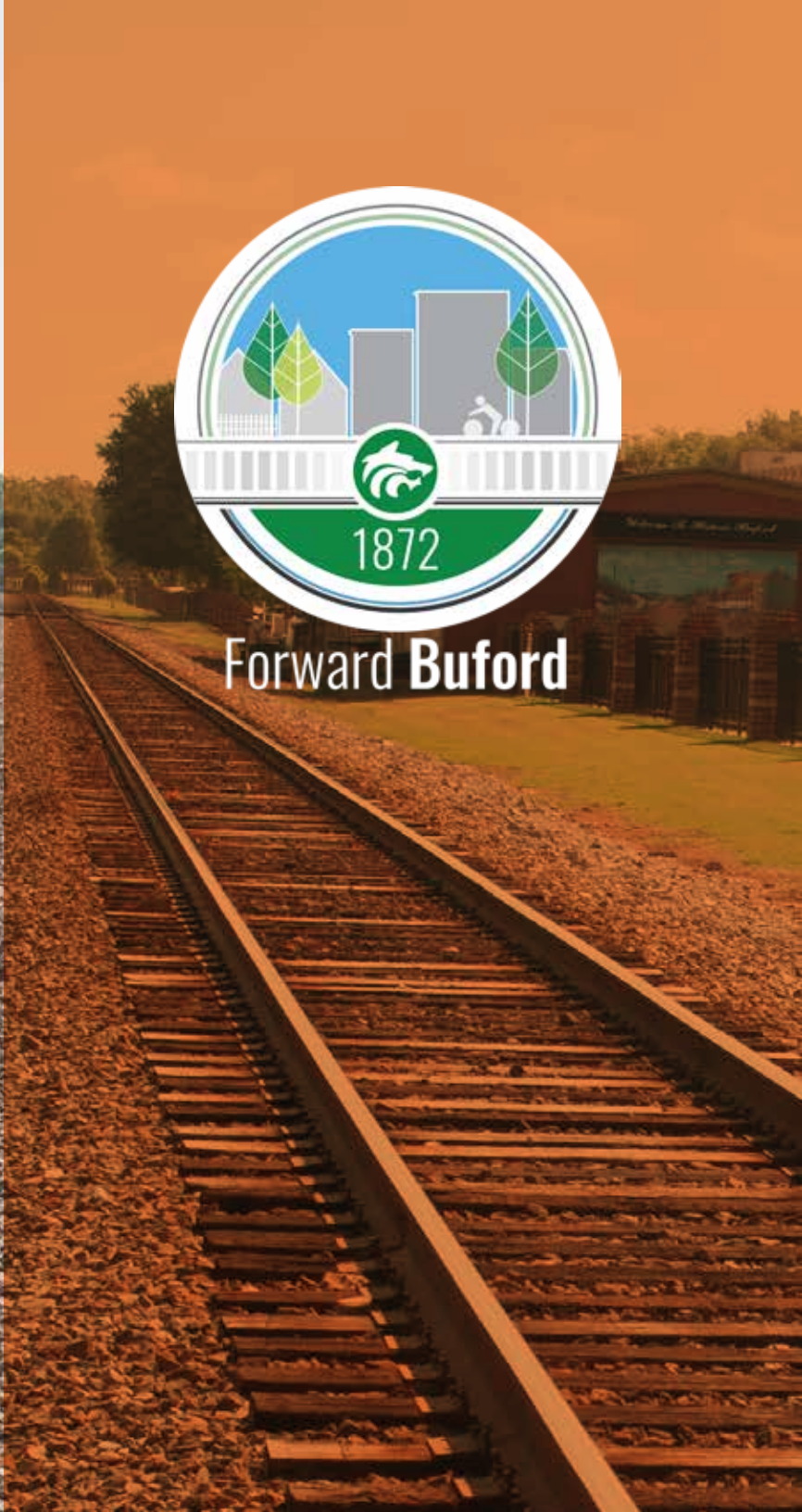


Downtown restaurant space in Decatur, Georgia



Notes:  
Refer to the Action Matrix on page 82 - 85 of this document for more detailed information on each associated project using the ID numbers for reference.





**Forward Buford**





# CHAPTER 4 // IMPLEMENTATION

// OVERVIEW

// ACTION MATRIX

// LCI CONSISTENCY



## OVERVIEW //

### HOW WILL THIS PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

Long term cooperation between private and public partners is required for this plan to come to fruition. The Action Matrix on the following pages lists every project described in this plan, along with estimated costs, responsible parties, and the sources of required funding. Some guiding policies for land use and design, transportation, and markets listed in the plan above do not appear in the Action Matrix because they are more general in nature.

### WHEN WILL IT HAPPEN?

Some projects can be implemented in relatively short time periods when others are more long term in their efforts. The Action Matrix gives an approximate start date and construction date for each project. Given the longer timeline for parts of the plan, some with construction starts as far back as 2024, it is important the citizens continue to be involved and that the City of Buford regularly review and update the plan as necessary.

### WHO WILL PAY FOR EVERYTHING?

In order for the vision of Forward Buford to advance from plan to reality, the public and private sectors must work together. The City of Buford will be involved in most aspects of implementation, but will need to work with entities such as Gwinnett County, the ARC, local nonprofit organizations and businesses, and developers.

### Economic Strategies //

Below are three recommendations to consider and investigate for redevelopment and revitalization of this study area:

- 1. Establish a TAD (Tax Allocation District)** for the study area or key subareas, including downtown and Buford Highway, in order to fund infrastructure and spur private investments.
- 2. Establish a CID (Community Improvement District)** particularly around the Buford Drive/Buford Highway/South Lee Street area. This is a private sector initiative to bond and pay for infrastructure improvements and other projects.
- 3. Establish an 'Opportunity Zone'** in an effort to incentivize new private investment and to provide state job credits to new or expanding businesses in the study area.
- 4. Pursue National Register designation** of the downtown district. This would help an incentive for preserving the history and character of downtown Buford by opening up voluntary grants and funding opportunities. National Register designation is only recognition and does not prevent property owners from doing as they wish with their property.

# ACTION MATRIX // PROJECT MAP

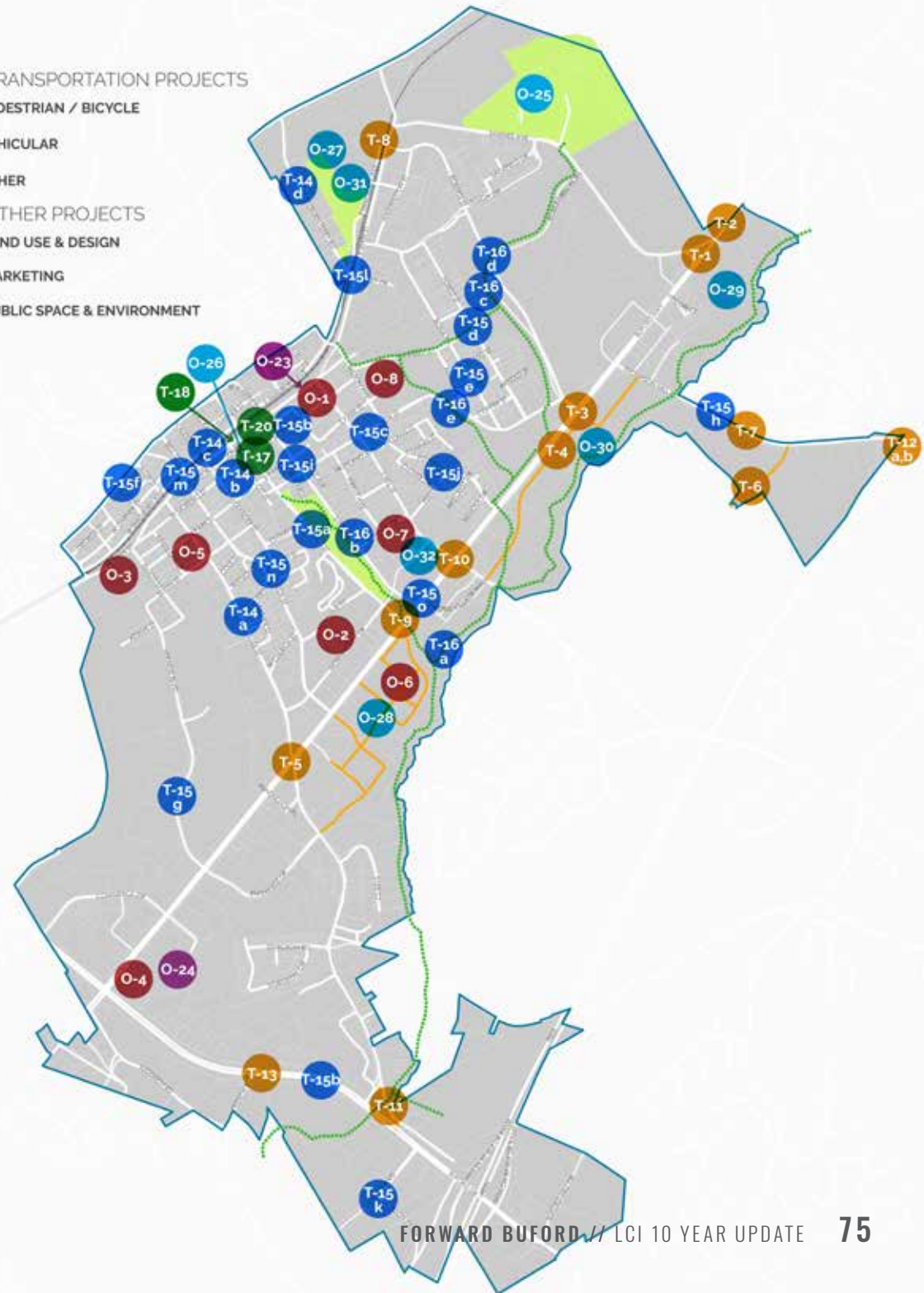
The action matrix details a clear list of projects recommended for implementation following the adoption of this plan by the City of Buford. Many of these projects are described in more detail earlier in this report, but cost and phasing details are provided in the following pages. All transportation projects are detailed on the map to the right for reference. Each circle shown corresponds to each project's ID number.

## KEY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

- T PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE
- T VEHICULAR
- T OTHER

## KEY OTHER PROJECTS

- O LAND USE & DESIGN
- O MARKETING
- O PUBLIC SPACE & ENVIRONMENT





# ACTION MATRIX // TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

*Notes:*

\* Project partially or completely outside the study area

All cost estimates are in 2016 dollars

CDBG: Federal Community Development Block Grant

DDA: Downtown Development Authority

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

LCI: Livable Centers Initiative

SPLOST: Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

SRTS: Safe Route to School

TE: Federal Transportation Enhancement

ID	PROJECT	TYPE	ENGINEER. YEAR	EST. COST	ROW YEAR	ROW COSTS
<b>TRANSPORTATION // VEHICULAR</b>						
T-1	Buford Highway @ Sawnee Avenue Signalization	Vehicular	2016	\$20,000	N/A	\$0
T-2*	Buford Hwy Widening east of Sawnee Avenue	Vehicular	2010	\$517,000	2014	\$11,770,000
T-3	Buford Highway @ Robert Bell Parkway Intersection Improvements	Vehicular/ Pedestrian	2016	\$20,000	2017	\$10,000
T-4	Buford High School Access Road to Hamilton Mill Road	Vehicular/ Pedestrian	2017	\$50,000	2018	\$100,000
T-5	Dual Left Turn Lanes for Southbound Buford Highway onto S Lee Street	Vehicular	2017	\$40,000	N/A	\$0
T-6*	Mill Center Parkway Extension	Vehicular	2018	\$50,000	2020	\$100,000
T-7	Thompson Mill Road Widening	Vehicular	2019	\$100,000	2021	\$50,000
T-8	E Shadburn Avenue Extension (Shadburn Ferry Road to S Waterworks Road)	Vehicular	2019	\$20,000	2020	\$50,000
T-9	Buford Highway @ S Garnett Street Signalization	Vehicular	2020	\$40,000	N/A	\$0
T-10	Dual Left Turn Lanes for Southbound Buford Highway onto Hamilton Mill Road	Vehicular	2020	\$40,000	N/A	\$0
T-11	Satellite Boulevard to South Lee Street Connector	Vehicular	TBD	\$100,000	TBD	\$50,000
T-12a*	Thompson Mill Road @ I-985 Interchange Justification Study	Vehicular	TBD	\$350,000	N/A	\$0
T-12b*	Thompson Mill Road @ I-985 Interchange	Vehicular	TBD	\$1,000,000	TBD	\$1,000,000

LENGTH OF PROJECT (FT)	COST PER LINEAR FOOT	CONST. YEAR	CONST. COSTS	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCES	LOCAL SOURCE	MATCH AMOUNT
500	N/A	2016	\$240,000	\$260,000	City	SPLOST, Local	City	\$220,000
8,700	\$2,375	2016	\$20,645,443	\$32,932,443	GDOT	State, Federal	City	TBD
500	N/A	2018	\$100,000	\$130,000	City, Private	SPLOST, Local	City	\$130,000
1,600	\$1,200	2019	\$1,920,000	\$2,070,000	City, Private	SPLOST	SPLOST	TBD
500	\$100	2018	\$200,000	\$240,000	GDOT	City, SPLOST	SPLOST	TBD
1,225	\$1,200	2022	\$1,470,000	\$1,620,000	City, Private	City, SPLOST	City	TBD
4,850	\$200	2023	\$970,000	\$1,120,000	County, City	County, City, SPLOST	City	\$1,120,000
1,275	\$400	2021	\$510,000	\$580,000	City	City, SPLOST	City	\$580,000
500	N/A	2021	\$200,000	\$240,000	GDOT, City	Private, City	City	\$240,000
500	\$100	2021	\$200,000	\$240,000	GDOT	City, SPLOST	SPLOST	TBD
1,325	\$1,000	TBD	\$1,325,000	\$1,475,000	GDOT, County, City	GDOT, County, SPLOST, City, Private	SPLOST	TBD
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$350,000	GDOT	Federal	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	TBD	\$50,000,000	\$52,000,000	GDOT	Federal	SPLOST	TBD



# ACTION MATRIX // TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

ID	PROJECT	TYPE	ENGINEER. YEAR	EST. COST	ROW YEAR	ROW COSTS
T-13	SR 20 from South Lee Street to SR 13 Widening	Vehicular	2015	\$1,000,000	2017	\$500,000

## TRANSPORTATION // PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE

T-14	Major pedestrian facilities	Pedestrian / Bicycle	Varies	\$1,617,600	Varies	\$337,000
T-14a	South Lee Street Bicycle/ Pedestrian Enhancements (from Buford Hwy to Moreno St)	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2015	\$441,600	2016	\$92,000
T-14b	Moreno Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Enhancements	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2016	\$403,200	2018	\$84,000
T-14c	Shadburn Avenue Bicycle/ Pedestrian Enhancements (from Poplar St to Fifth St)	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2017	\$513,600	2019	\$107,000
T-14d	Shadburn Ferry Road Bicycle/ Pedestrian Enhancements	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2018	\$259,200	2020	\$54,000
T-15	Minor pedestrian facilities	Sidewalk	Varies	\$439,200	Varies	\$694,500
T-15a	Garnett Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Enhancements	Sidewalk	2016	\$7,500	2016	\$30,000
T-15b	Buford Drive Sidewalk Gaps	Sidewalk	2016	\$60,000	2017	\$100,000
T-15c	New Street Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2017	\$57,000	2018	\$95,000
T-15d	Forest Street Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2017	\$33,300	2018	\$55,500
T-15e	Bona Road Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2018	\$30,000	2019	\$50,000
T-15f	West Jackson Street Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2018	\$31,500	2019	\$52,500
T-15g	Heraeus Boulevard Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2018	\$30,600	2019	\$51,000
T-15h	Thompson Mill Road Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2019	\$40,800	2020	\$68,000
T-15i	South Harris Street Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2019	\$14,100	2020	\$23,500
T-15j	Powers Avenue Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2019	\$26,100	2020	\$43,500

### Notes:

\* Project partially or completely outside the study area

All cost estimates are in 2016 dollars

CPDBG: Federal Community Development Block Grant

DDA: Downtown Development Authority

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

LCI: Livable Centers Initiative

SPLOST: Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

SRTS: Safe Route to School

TE: Federal Transportation Enhancement

LENGTH OF PROJECT (FT)	COST PER LINEAR FOOT	CONST. YEAR	CONST. COSTS	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCES	LOCAL SOURCE	MATCH AMOUNT
4,650	\$1,200	2019	\$5,580,000	\$7,080,000	GDOT	GDOT, County	State, County, SPLOST, City	TBD
16,850	\$800	Varies	\$13,480,000	\$15,434,600	City	TIP, LCI	City	\$4,650,600
4,600	\$800	2017	\$3,680,000	\$4,213,600	City	TIP, LCI	City	\$1,269,600
4,200	\$800	2020	\$3,360,000	\$3,847,200	City	TIP, LCI	City	\$1,159,200
5,350	\$800	2021	\$4,280,000	\$4,900,600	City	TIP, LCI	City	\$1,476,600
2,700	\$800	2022	\$2,160,000	\$2,473,200	City	TIP, LCI	City	\$745,200
33,925	Varies	Varies	\$3,672,500	\$4,806,200	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$1,868,200
1,500	\$100	2016	\$150,000	\$187,500	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$67,500
5,000	\$100	2018	\$500,000	\$660,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$260,000
4,750	\$100	2019	\$475,000	\$627,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$247,000
2,775	\$100	2019	\$277,500	\$366,300	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$144,300
2,500	\$100	2020	\$250,000	\$330,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$130,000
2,625	\$100	2020	\$262,500	\$346,500	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$136,500
2,550	\$100	2020	\$255,000	\$336,600	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$132,600
3,400	\$100	2021	\$340,000	\$448,800	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$176,800
1,175	\$100	2021	\$117,500	\$155,100	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$61,100
2,175	\$100	2021	\$217,500	\$287,100	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$113,100



# ACTION MATRIX // TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

*Notes:*

\* Project partially or completely outside the study area

All cost estimates are in 2016 dollars

CDBG: Federal Community Development Block Grant

DDA: Downtown Development Authority

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

LCI: Livable Centers Initiative

SPLOST: Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

SRTS: Safe Route to School

TE: Federal Transportation Enhancement

ID	PROJECT	TYPE	ENGINEER. YEAR	EST. COST	ROW YEAR	ROW COSTS
T-15k	Horizon Parkway / Satellite Boulevard Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2020	\$12,900	2021	\$21,500
T-15l	Shadburn Ferry Road Railroad Crossing Pedestrian Improvements	Sidewalk	2020	\$15,000	2021	\$10,000
T-15m	Little Mill Road Railroad Crossing Pedestrian Improvements	Sidewalk	2020	\$15,000	2021	\$10,000
T-15n	S Alexander Street/ Church Street Sidewalks	Sidewalk	2020	\$75,600	2021	\$84,000
T-15o	Buford Highway @ Buford Community Center HAWK Signal	Pedestrian	TBD	\$15,000	TBD	\$0
T-16	Multi-Use Path System	Shared-Use Path	Varies	\$2,265,300	Varies	\$250,000
T-16a	Suwanee Creek (north side)	Shared-Use Path	2016	\$1,242,000	2018	\$50,000
T-16b	New Street to Suwanee Creek	Shared-Use Path	2017	\$216,000	2019	\$50,000
T-16c	Fifth St to Legion Fields Park	Shared-Use Path	2018	\$378,000	2020	\$50,000
T-16d	Sawnee Ave to Suwanee Creek	Shared-Use Path	2019	\$275,400	2021	\$50,000
T-16e	Bona Allen tannery to Buford Hwy	Shared-Use Path	2020	\$153,900	2022	\$50,000

## TRANSPORTATION // OTHER

T-17	Public Parking Deck	Parking	2017	\$200,000	2018	\$100,000
T-18	Pedestrian Connector from Parking Deck to Main Street	Pedestrian/ Parking	2017	\$100,000	2018	\$300,000
T-19	Directional Signage - Parking and Gateway	Parking/ Pedestrian	2018	\$10,000	2019	\$10,000
T-20	Jones Alley Parking and Pedestrian Improvements	Parking/ Lighting	2019	\$50,000	2020	\$50,000

LENGTH OF PROJECT (FT)	COST PER LINEAR FOOT	CONST. YEAR	CONST. COSTS	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCES	LOCAL SOURCE	MATCH AMOUNT
1,075	\$100	2022	\$107,500	\$141,900	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST, Private	City	\$55,900
100	\$1,000	2022	\$100,000	\$125,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$45,000
100	\$1,000	2022	\$100,000	\$125,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$45,000
4,200	\$150	2022	\$630,000	\$789,600	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$285,600
N/A	N/A	TBD	\$100,000	\$115,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, Local, SPLOST	City	\$35,000
41,950	\$450	Varies	\$18,877,500	\$21,392,800	Varies	Varies	SPLOST	\$6,290,800
23,000	\$450	2020	\$10,350,000	\$11,642,000	City, Private	Tip, LCI, Private	SPLOST	\$3,362,000
4,000	\$450	2021	\$1,800,000	\$2,066,000	City, Private	Tip, LCI, Private	SPLOST	\$626,000
7,000	\$450	2022	\$3,150,000	\$3,578,000	City, Private	Tip, LCI, Private	SPLOST	\$1,058,000
5,100	\$450	2023	\$2,295,000	\$2,620,400	City, Private	Tip, LCI, Private	SPLOST	\$784,400
2,850	\$450	2024	\$1,282,500	\$1,486,400	City, Private	Tip, LCI, Private	SPLOST	\$460,400
N/A	N/A	2020	\$4,000,000	\$4,300,000	City	SPLOST, City, Private	SPLOST	\$4,300,000
N/A	N/A	2020	\$600,000	\$1,000,000	City	SPLOST, City, Private	SPLOST	\$1,000,000
N/A	N/A	2020	\$100,000	\$120,000	City, Private	SPLOST, City	SPLOST, City	\$120,000
1,600	\$400	2020	\$640,000	\$740,000	City, Private	City, Private	SPLOST, City	TBD



# ACTION MATRIX //

## OTHER PROJECTS

ID	DESCRIPTION	COST	STARTING YEAR	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	NOTES
<b>LAND USE &amp; DESIGN</b>						
O-1	Bona Allen warehouse renovation	TBD	TBD	City, Private	Private	
O-2	Former hospital site redevelopment	\$20 - \$30 million	2017	City, Private	Private	
O-3	Tannery Row redevelopment	TBD	TBD	City, Private	Private	
O-4	SR 20 and Buford Highway redevelopment	TBD	TBD	City, Private	City, Private	
O-5	Public works site redevelopment	TBD	TBD	City, Private	City, Private	
O-6	Buford Highway Concept Plan redevelopment	TBD	TBD	Private	Private	
O-7	Hill Street Concept Plan (Buford City Gym) redevelopment	TBD	2017	City, Private	City, Private	
O-8	Bona Allen Tannery Redevelopment	\$20 - \$30 million	2017	Private	Private	
O-9	Comp Plan and zoning map update	Staff time	2016	City	City	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &amp; MARKETING</b>						
O-10	Economic development program	Staff time	"2017, Ongoing"	City, DDA	City, DDA	Additional staffing costs if City create Economic Development position.

ID	DESCRIPTION	COST	STARTING YEAR	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	NOTES
O-11	Business recruitment	Staff time	Begin 2016, Ongoing	City, County Economic Development, Partnership Gwinnett Private sector	City, County, Partnership, Private	Ongoing business recruitment efforts among all economic development partners
O-12	TAD District	\$20,000 - \$30,000	2017	City, DDA, County, Schools	City	Engage consultant for Redevelopment Plan
O-13	CID	Staff time	2017	Private Sector, BBA, DDA	Private, City Support	
O-14	Opportunity Zone	Staff time	2017	City	City	
O-15	Business support activities	TBD	Begin 2018, Ongoing	City, BBA, Partnership Gwinnett	City, BBA, Partnership, Grants	
O-16	Community Center marketing efforts	Staff time	Ongoing	City	City	
O-17	Downtown development and management	Staff time	2018	City, DDA, private sector	City	
O-18	Buford brand identity program	\$15,000 - \$20,000	2017	City	City, BBA	Engage community branding consultant to create branding & marketing plan



# ACTION MATRIX //

## OTHER PROJECTS

ID	DESCRIPTION	COST	STARTING YEAR	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	NOTES
O-19	Branded marketing tools	Design/ planning in above. Implementation cost varies"	2017	City	City, BBA	Implementation cost depends on various marketing collateral identified in marketing plan"
O-20	Economic development marketing materials	\$5,000- \$10,000, Staff Time	2018	City, DDA	City, DDA	Costs vary depending on collateral
O-21	National Register District creation	\$60,000-75,000	2016	City	ARC Community Choices	Engage preservation consultant or school (e.g. GSU) to prepare nomination
O-22	Farmers Market	N/A	2016	BBA, City	City, BBA, USDA Grants	
O-23	Bona Allen warehouse redevelopment efforts	Staff time	2016	Private Sector	Private Sector	Led by private sector property owners/ developers
O-24	Village Square Center redevelopment efforts	Staff time	2017	Private Sector	City Support	Led by private sector property owners/ developers

ID	DESCRIPTION	COST	STARTING YEAR	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	NOTES
<b>PUBLIC SPACE &amp; ENVIRONMENT</b>						
O-25	Buford Park recreational fields upgrades	TBD	TBD	Private, City, School	Private, City, School	
O-26	Town Square expansion	\$560,000	TBD	City	City	
	<i>Land acquisition</i>	<i>\$0</i>				
	<i>Demolition</i>	<i>\$60,000</i>				
	<i>Park Improvements</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>				
O-27	Buford City Gymnasium	\$5,000,000,000	2017	City	City	
O-28	Private parks with development	TBD	TBD	City, Private	Private	
O-29	Buford Highway Park	\$8,000,000.00	2019	City	SPLOST, City	
O-30	New Buford High School	\$60,000,000.00	2016	City	SPLOST, City	
O-31	Playground by new gymnasium	\$150,000	TBD	Private	City	
O-32	Community Center Park	\$250,000	TBD	Private	City, Private	



## LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE CONSISTENCY //

Forward Buford and the recommendations contained herein are consistent with the ten components of the Livable Centers Initiative Program as identified below:

### **1. Efficiency/feasibility of land uses and mix appropriate for future growth including new and/or revised land use regulations needed to complete the development program //**

The plan puts forth a vision for a more mixed-use land use pattern that would increase efficiency by providing more open spaces, centers for employment, services, and housing options, including above-shop housing in new mixed-use buildings, live/work units, small lot single-family homes, loft spaces and cottages. These changes in land use are feasible given market constraints and local conditions, but would require rezoning, particularly along Buford Highway. In the past, the city has looked favorable upon applicant initiated rezoning requests for mixed-use development.

### **2. Transportation demand reduction measures //**

Forward Buford proposes reducing auto-demand by shifting some auto trips to pedestrian and bicycle trips via a multifaceted effort to: locate different land uses within walking distance; improve pedestrian facilities; installation of new sidewalks; more compact development shown in the Buford Highway Concept Plan; and provided connections to the Suwanee Greenway Trail.

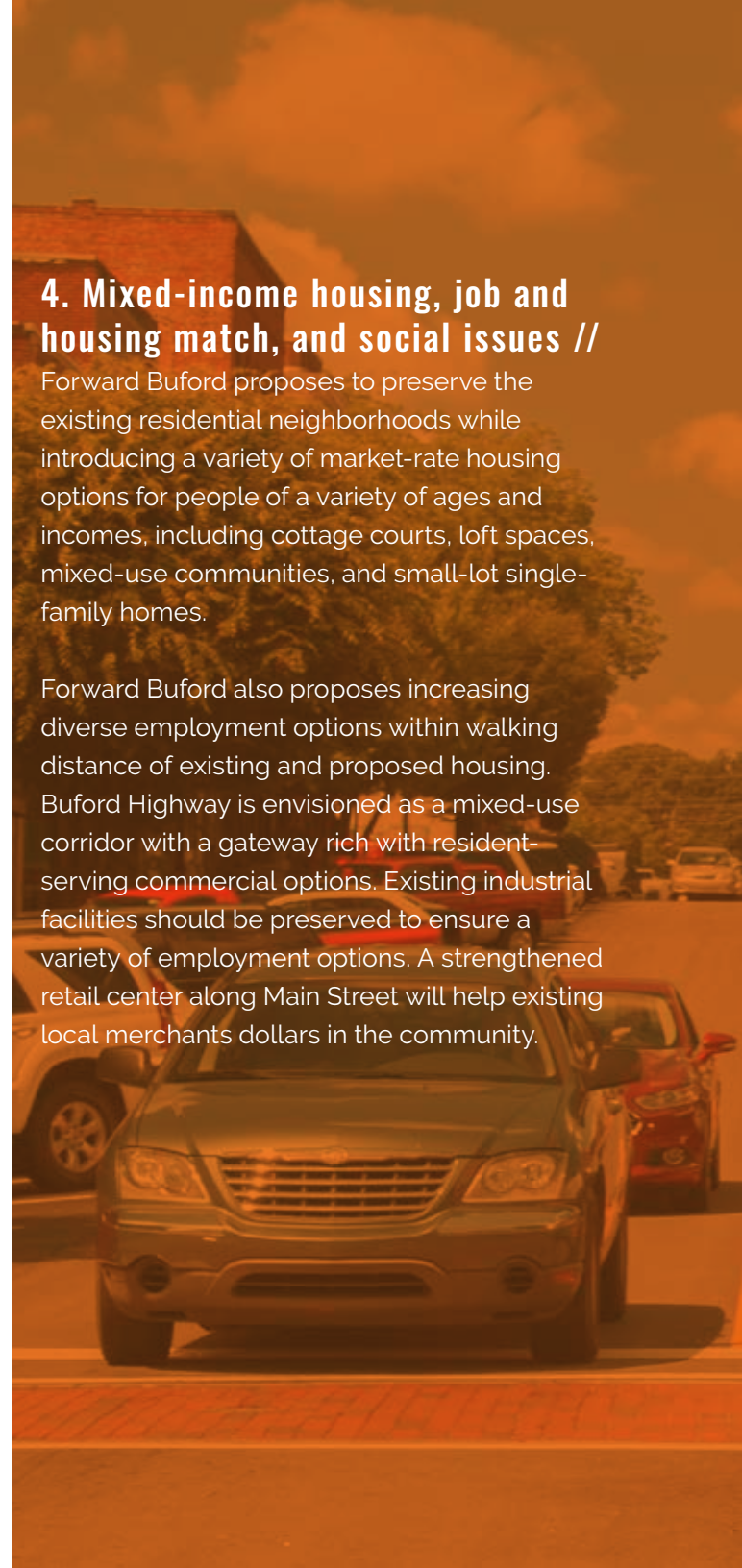
### **3. Internal mobility requirements - traffic calming, pedestrian, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation //**

Forward Buford calls for improving bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular facilities by: building new tree-lined sidewalks along key streets; creating a new multi-use greenway trail network; adding new connecting streets for improved circulation; and improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

### **4. Mixed-income housing, job and housing match, and social issues //**

Forward Buford proposes to preserve the existing residential neighborhoods while introducing a variety of market-rate housing options for people of a variety of ages and incomes, including cottage courts, loft spaces, mixed-use communities, and small-lot single-family homes.

Forward Buford also proposes increasing diverse employment options within walking distance of existing and proposed housing. Buford Highway is envisioned as a mixed-use corridor with a gateway rich with resident-serving commercial options. Existing industrial facilities should be preserved to ensure a variety of employment options. A strengthened retail center along Main Street will help existing local merchants dollars in the community.





## **5. Continuity of local streets in study area and development of a network of minor roads //**

The study area has a good network of local streets and minor roads especially downtown, but Forward Buford identifies several opportunities to improve it. Most notably of these are the extension of Mill Center Parkway which eliminates a super-block, the Buford Highway extension east of Sawnee Avenue, and the widening of South Lee Street from SR 20 to SR 13. Opportunities for new private streets with development are also identified.

## **6. Need identification of future transit circulation systems //**

There is no local transit service available to those living or commuting through most of the study area, however mixed-use development is proposed near the I-985 interchange. This development would only be a short walk from the Georgia Regional Transit Authority Express bus stop.

## **7. Connectivity of transportation systems to other centers //**

The closest centers to Buford are the Mall of Georgia and downtown Gainesville. Forward Buford includes recommendations that would improve connectivity to these centers via a new road extending Mill Center Parkway to South Lee Street, a new road connecting Satellite Boulevard to South Lee Street and various proposed greenway trail connections.

## **8. Center development organization and management, promotion, and economic restructuring //**

Downtown Buford is marked by a strong merchants association. Forward Buford supports existing efforts to market Buford as a unique destination. More effective organization, management, and promotion of existing and proposed assets in the study area are needed. Recommendations in the areas of marketing and economic development begin to address these needs and move toward a more vibrant future Buford.

## **9. Stakeholder participation and support //**

The planning process included extensive public involvement in the form of an image preference survey, community meetings, stakeholder meetings, and interviews. In addition, the consultants met one-on-one with a variety of groups, including merchants and developers. More information on outreach can be found in Chapter 2 of the document.

## **10. Public and private investment policy //**

Forward Buford calls for the City of Buford to continue its efforts to direct investment into the downtown and surrounding areas via public improvements. The City has a long history of using public infrastructure to spur private development that will continue into the future.

Successful implementation of the plan depends on both private and public investments. Projects may draw from a variety of finding sources, including city, state, and federal dollars; nonprofit investment; and private sources.



## 100-DAY ACTION PLAN //

Upon adoption by the Board of Commissioners, Forward Buford will provide the City of Buford with a long-term road map for achieving the plan's vision. The complex nature of funding, designing, and building even the simplest transportation projects means that, at best, many will not be implemented immediately. Land use changes can take even long. Fortunately, there are things that the City of Buford can do in the first 100 days after plan adoption that will continue the momentum started by the Forward Buford process and lay the foundation for advancing some of its recommendations. This 100-Day Action plan includes:

### 1. South Lee Street Pedestrian Facility Bids and Construction Release //

Reviewing contractor bids for the South Lee Street pedestrian facilities and then releasing them for construction will advance one of Forward Buford's most critical transportation projects.

### 2. City Gym Design Completion and Bids //

Completing the construction drawings for the new City Gym and bidding the project for construction will advance this important recreation project.

### 3. Parking Deck Concept Design //

Developing more formal concept design and preliminary pricing will advance this project. As noted in this document, there are many options for how the proposed downtown parking deck could be laid out.

### 4. Garnett Street Sidewalks Bids and Construction Release //

Requesting contractor bids for the Garnett Street sidewalks, selecting a contractor, and then releasing them for construction will advance a project that has a critical role in connecting Buford's existing neighborhoods to nearby amenities.

### 5. East Moreno Street RFQ Bids //

Issuing a request for proposals for preliminary engineering services along East Moreno Street will advance this project.

### 6. Plan Display //

Providing a printed copy of Forward Buford and its key recommendations in City Hall for public review will increase awareness of the process.





BUFORD COMMUNITY CENTER AND THEATER





Forward**Buford**