

BUFORD 2040

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DECEMBER 2018 DRAFT



CITY OF BUFORD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a result of the community's collaborative efforts to envision the future of Buford, including contributions from community members, the steering committee, elected officials, City staff, and the planning team:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Plan is the City of Buford's overarching policy statement and blueprint for the community's future. It is a high-level, "big picture" look at Buford's direction for the next 20 years. This plan replaces the City's previous plan, the Comprehensive Plan 2034 Update.

There are four key parts to the document:

- 1 An assessment of existing needs and opportunities
- 2 A community-driven vision for the future, with supporting goals and policies
- 3 A series of maps and geography-based recommendations for how each part of the city should develop
- 4 A five-year work program to make that vision a reality

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A city of approximately 14,000 residents, Buford has a well-earned reputation as a community with quality services, well-planned infrastructure, a high quality of life, and a low cost of living. This reputation is in large part a result of City leadership having the foresight to think strategically and make fiscally sustainable decisions. Buford is particularly well known for its school system, which consistently is ranked as one of the top districts in the state of Georgia. The city's quality of life is enhanced by its adjacency to Lake Lanier, one of the Atlanta region's major sources of water and recreation assets.

Key Trends and Developments of Note:

- Median incomes in Buford, while lower than the County as a whole, have made much stronger gains in the past decades
- The Hispanic/Latino population has grown quickly, and now comprises over one-third (34 percent) of Buford residents
- Since the last update to the Comprehensive Plan, over 1,000 acres of the City have seen development; about half of this is industrial/commercial in use
- Also since the last update, the City has annexed about 300 acres of land
- Millions of dollars of transportation projects are planned, primarily by Gwinnett County, and range from intersection improvements, to roadway widenings, to new sidewalks and trails
- Truck traffic is becoming increasingly challenging, both in terms of traffic congestion and pressure on roadway maintenance
- Between 2014 and 2017, the City approved building permits for 573 new single-family homes; the majority of these are near the Interstate 985 (I-985) corridor, and in Hall County

- In the past five years, multiple new distribution and logistics centers have been built, bringing new jobs to the city, but developable land for new industrial uses is becoming increasingly scarce
- Multiple opportunities for development and redevelopment of mixed-use communities exist, particularly near Downtown, Buford Highway, and State Road 20 (SR 20)
- Buford's schools continue to be top ranked in the state for both academics and athletics; the completion of the new high school will only strengthen this performance
- The City's provision of water, wastewater, electrical, and gas utilities lends itself to a healthy stream of revenue, all while keeping prices low for customers
- New parks and recreation facilities, such as the new gymnasium, are coming online with additional green spaces planned for the future

BUFORD TOMORROW

The vision and community goals capture the overall community consensus of where Buford is headed in the long term. Overwhelmingly, City leaders, stakeholders, and other community members expressed that Buford is progressing in the right direction and should continue along its current trajectory. In essence, the City should “keep on keeping on,” and maintain the energy, leadership, and policy direction that has brought Buford where it is today. Therefore, the vision statement from the previous plan has been carried forward in full to this update:

“The 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.”

Priority Strategies

To move the vision forward, the following are seven priority strategies for Buford to focus on in the coming years.

1 **Continue to invest in the charm and small-town feel of Downtown Buford**

Downtown is the heart of the community. The City should continue its investment in Downtown, and work to attract high-quality developers to rehabilitate the Bona Allen Warehouse into loft units, build out Tannery Row, and create more opportunities for housing in and near Downtown. The City should also continue with its plans to build the parking garage and modify ordinances to encourage more outdoor dining and activity.

2 **Maintain excellent City services**

Buford is known for its top-notch schools and services, particularly its affordable utilities. The City should continue its commitment to high quality services, and closely coordinate these services with annexation, population growth, the availability of natural resources, and other community changes.

3 **Encourage a variety of housing types in the community**

In the past five years, a small housing boom of upscale, single-family residential neighborhoods has occurred in Buford. It is now time to focus on encouraging a greater variety of housing types such as those in mixed use projects; infill homes in established neighborhoods; housing options Downtown; live-work units; and smaller units attractive to both younger and senior households.

4 **Targeted growth and redevelopment**

Throughout the community, there are multiple opportunities to accommodate new growth as well as redevelopment. These targeted areas are Downtown sites such as the Bona Allen Warehouse and Tannery Row, as well as opportunities for mixed use near the Buford Park-and-Ride, along Buford Highway, and the older commercial areas near the intersection of Buford Highway and SR 20.

5 **Expand the types of employment and businesses**

Buford has been remarkably successful in attracting industrial development, and should continue to do so. However, there is also a need to diversify the types of jobs and businesses in Buford, particularly in terms of office and professional jobs.

6 **Invest in a stronger, multi-modal transportation network**

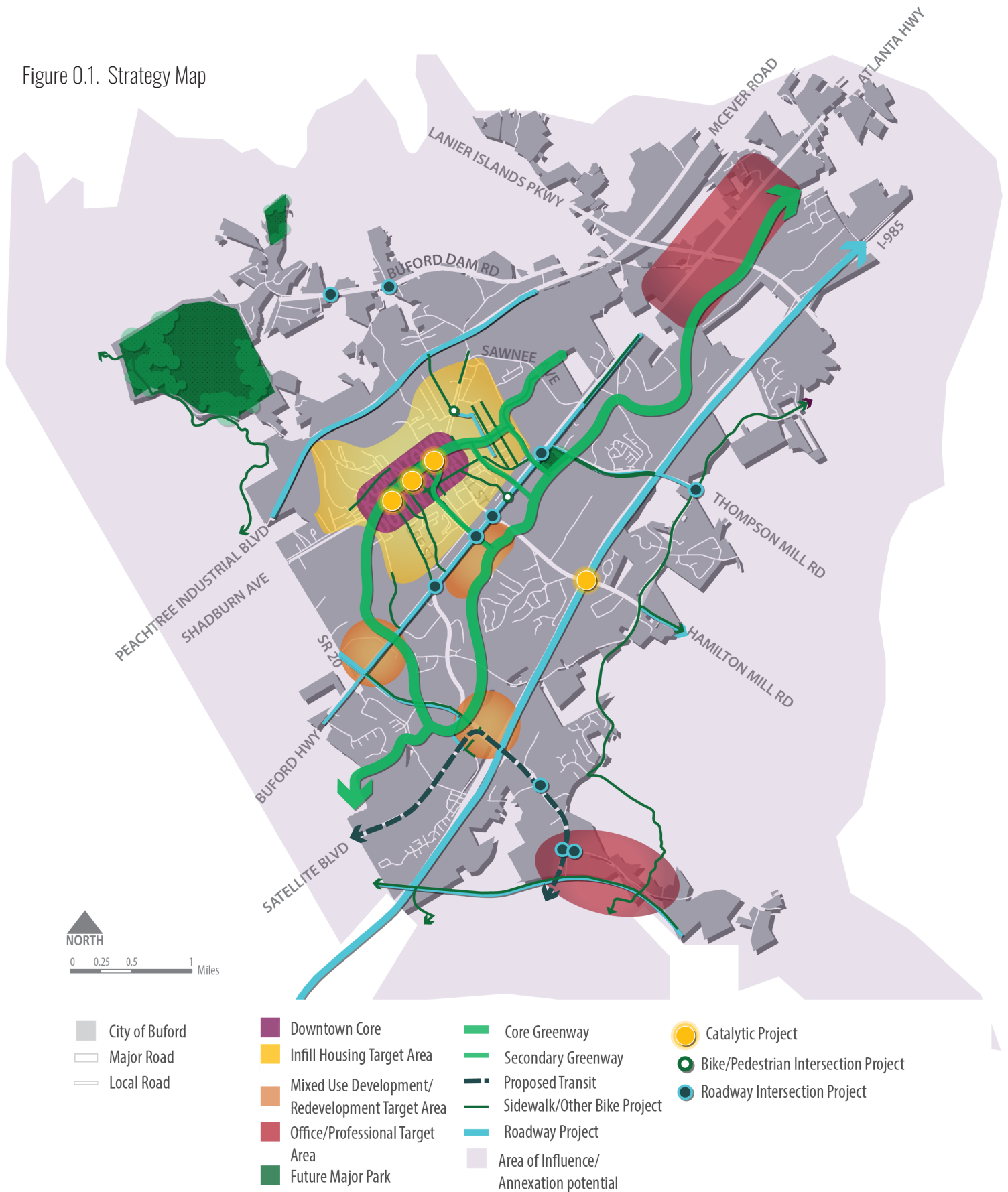
Between the new transit services proposed in the Connect Gwinnett plan, to a large number of new roadway, intersection improvements, and new bicycle/pedestrian projects, Buford's transportation network is primed to improve mobility options.

7 **Lay the foundations of the greenway system**

Trails are one of the best quality of life investments that a community can make. In Buford, there are many opportunities to start building a system of greenways and trails that connect key destinations both within the city and beyond to regional networks of trails.

Figure 0.1 on the following page is an illustration of these seven priority strategies in the City of Buford, and these key areas of change and improvement. These strategies are then supported by various land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and quality of life policies and projects.

Figure 0.1. Strategy Map

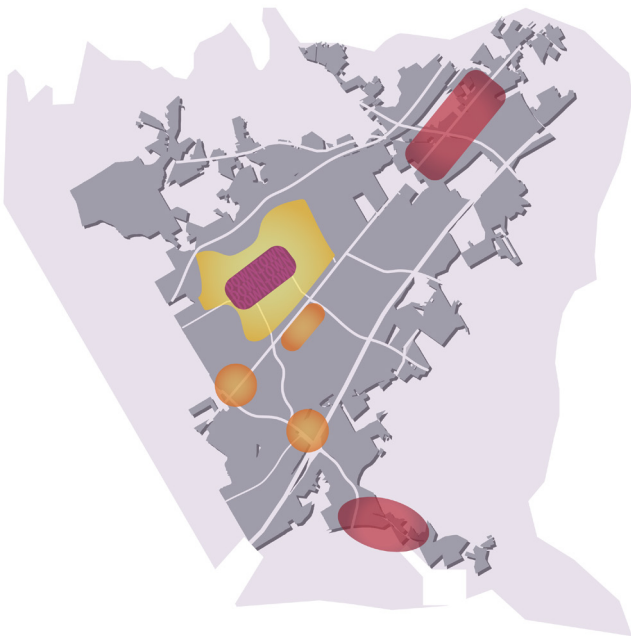


LAND USE

The Comprehensive Plan considers not only how land is being used now, but also how we would like to see it used in the future.

Needs & Opportunities

- **Maintenance of small town character:** the small town character is the reason many residents have chosen to live in Buford and it should continue to be preserved; rapid growth, if not regulated well, has the potential to erode the atmosphere that is treasured by residents.
- **Annexation:** the City should pursue strategic annexations that expand the tax base, but do not place high burdens on City infrastructure and services
- **Mixed use development:** in Buford, mixed use could be implemented by adding more residential units to Downtown, but could also be successful in targeted development areas along Buford Highway and around the Buford Park-and-Ride.



Land use strategy diagram

Goals	Key Work Program Action
LU-1 Maintain the small town character of Buford	Explore establishment of a Downtown Overlay in zoning code
LU-2 Continue to expand the City’s tax base	Pursue opportunities to annex land by the Mall of Georgia
LU-3 Encourage mixed use development	Pursue redevelopment of commercial areas at Buford Highway and SR 20
LU-4 Invest in a high-quality built environment	Pursue Downtown development opportunities

TRANSPORTATION

What are the major barriers to getting around town? And how can we improve transportation options in the future?

Needs & Opportunities

- **Roadway congestion:** community members have identified this as a priority issue in need of attention; one of the mst significant contributors to the congestion problem is truck traffic mitigation.
- **Access to I-985:** the presence of I-985 through Buford is a major opportunity for development and improved access to the rest of the region, particularly if another interchange is considered.
- **Lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities:** residents want to see more sidewalks, bike paths, and walking paths strategically placed and connecting neighborhoods to activity centers.
- **Regional connectivity:** Buford is well connected to the rest of the region by roadways, but connectivity via other modes. of transportation is currently lacking.



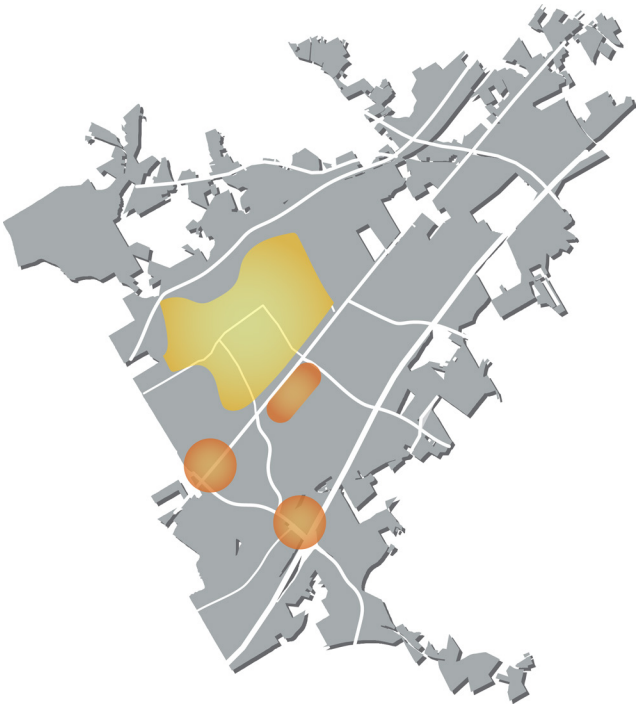
Goals	Key Work Program Action
T1. Address congestion on roadways	Multiple roadway projects throughout the city
T2. Improve access to regional transportation infrastructure	Thompson Mill Road interchange at I-985
T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities	Multiple sidewalk/trail projects throughout the city
T4. Support balanced parking strategies	Conduct Downtown Parking Study/Parallel Parking Reconfiguration

HOUSING

Housing is an essential part of the community. What are the major needs and opportunities? What can we do better going forward?

Needs & Opportunities

- **Affordable housing:** rising housing costs have become a region-wide issue and Buford is no exception; the majority of new housing built recently in the city has been high-end, large single-family residential homes that start in the \$300,000s.
- **Variety of housing types:** there is an opportunity in Buford to encourage a broader mix of housing types such as smaller units on smaller lots, live/work units, accessory dwelling units, loft-like apartments/condos downtown, fee simple townhomes, and modest-sized single-story homes that appeal to seniors.



Housing strategy diagram

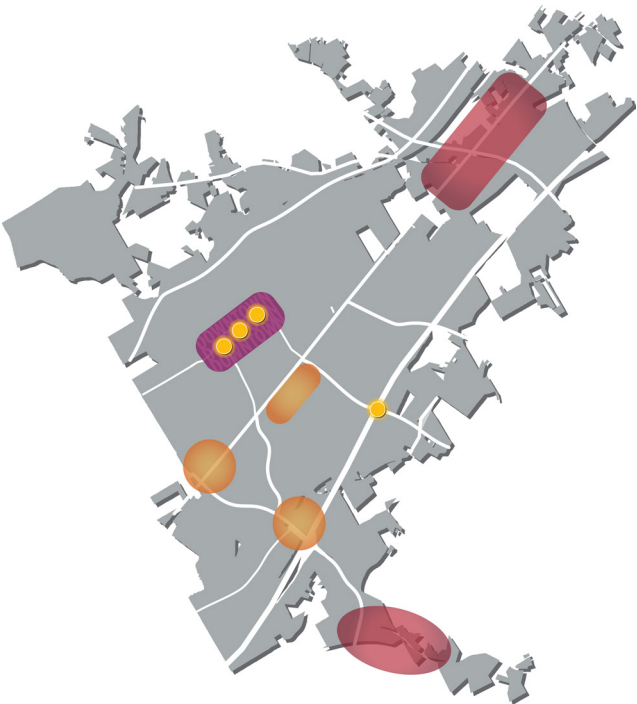
Goals	Key Work Program Action
H1. Promote a variety of housing choices	Attract infill housing to Downtown
H2. Ensure new residential development meets high standards of quality	Develop Housing Design Guidelines
H3. Facilitate the improvement of existing housing stock	Explore homeowner renovation assistance programs

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Buford’s economy has been making strong gains in the past few years. What are the challenges and opportunities now to diversify and improve the community?

Needs & Opportunities

- **Downtown development:** Main Street provides a unique sense of place; this environment attracts visitors from surrounding Gwinnett and Hall Counties and beyond, who spend money and contribute to tax revenues in the city.
- **Desire for a grocery store:** there is a strong desire for attracting a Publix or a Kroger to a more centralized location to serve Buford residents.
- **Balanced industrial development:** as the city continues to grow—both through new development and annexation—there is an opportunity to ensure that new industrial uses are buffered from other uses, and are built in places where the infrastructure can accommodate increased demand.
- **Revitalization/Redevelopment of underused sites:** Although Buford’s economy is thriving by many measures, there are some sites around the city—particularly older commercial strip malls—that are grappling with vacancy challenges.



Economic development strategy diagram

Goals	Key Work Program Action
ED.1 Grow Downtown’s economic base	Recruit specialty retail, food stores, and restaurants
ED.2 Promote redevelopment of under-used, undeveloped, and declining areas	Thompson Mill Road interchange at I-985
ED.3 Attract a variety of businesses and employers	Attract medical facility
ED.4 Balance industrial development with infrastructure and environmental needs	Align ordinances with best practices for industrial development in terms of minimizing impacts on the community and environment

QUALITY OF LIFE

Needs & Opportunities

- **Maintenance of top-notch schools:** the quality of Buford's schools is a major driver for growth; many residents have expressed concern about the growing size of enrollment in the schools, and the need to maintain quality in the face of increased demand.
- **Maintenance of high level of services and utilities:** as the community continues to grow, measures should be taken to ensure that the quality of these services remains, without significant increases in costs to residents and businesses.
- **Preservation of community safety:** the City should continue to work with Gwinnett County to ensure that Buford residents, visitors, and workers feel safe in the community.
- **Additional recreation options:** one of the most desired quality of life amenities in the city is more options for recreation, particularly greenways and trails, parks, recreation programs, access to Lake Lanier, and more special events.
- **Improved access to healthcare:** Buford is without a major health care facility; the growing senior population in particular is in need of close-by medical services, and there is strong support for attracting a medical hub to the area.
- **Preservation of historic resources:** Buford contains a rich cultural heritage including many historic buildings; the loss of the Bona Allen Tannery in 2015 underscores the need for historic buildings to be protected, rehabilitated, and actively used parts of the community.
- **Community engagement:** there is a need to bridge the gap between the long-time residents and newer residents, and build stronger links between the two.



Quality of life strategy diagram

Goals	Key Work Program Action
QL.1 Maintain the high quality of City of Buford schools	Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services
QL.2 Continue to provide affordable utilities and services to residents	Continue studying the long-term sustainability of City's existing utility rates and maintenance needs
QL.4 Serve as a good steward of the environment	Evaluate development regulations in terms of preservation of tree canopy and minimization of soil erosion and sedimentation
QL.5 Celebrate Buford's history and culture	Nomination of the Downtown District to the National Register of Historic Places
QL.6 Invest in a robust system of parks, open space, and trails	Multiple trail and greenway projects

1

INTRODUCTION

1

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is the City of Buford's overarching policy statement and blueprint for the community's future. While capturing Buford's long-term aspirations, the plan is implementation oriented and ensures that targeted goals, needs, and opportunities are realistic, practical and achievable.

Although the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update formed the foundation of this document, several aspects of the plan have been updated and reorganized to account for changes in both Buford and best practices in planning. The City has accomplished a great deal since 2014, notably a number of Downtown projects, the completion of the new City Gymnasium, and starting construction on the new Buford High School. Buford has also grown remarkably in the past five years, with a significant number of new residential neighborhoods and commercial/industrial businesses coming online.

WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING?

The comprehensive plan is Buford's playbook for the future. The plan provides background knowledge, next steps, and ongoing decision-making guidance for elected officials, City staff, and community members. It is a high-level, "big picture" look at Buford's direction for the next 20 years. There are four key parts to the document:

- 1 An assessment of existing needs and opportunities
- 2 A community-driven vision for the future, with supporting goals and policies
- 3 A series of maps and geography-based recommendations for how each part of the city should develop
- 4 A five-year work program to make that vision a reality

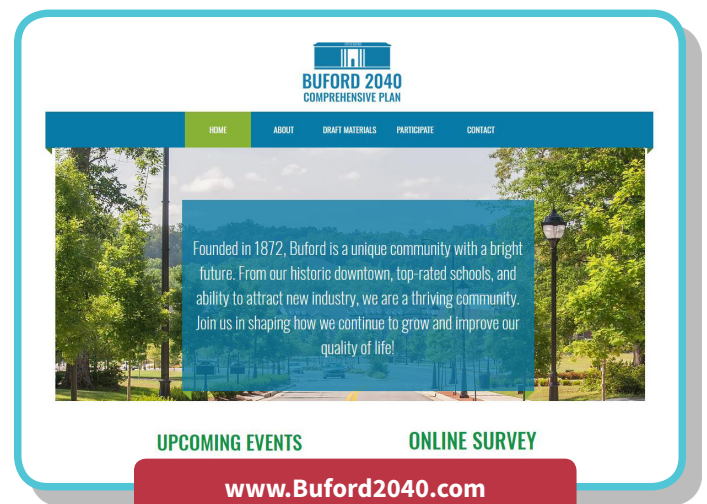
The comprehensive plan not only helps the City of Buford to prioritize and strategize for the future, it also satisfies the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requirement for Qualified Local Government (QLG) status, making the City eligible for state financial resources. Although the State requires the plan to be updated every five years, it should be revisited on a regular basis to ensure it aligns with the community's current realities and goals.

This plan replaces the City's previous comprehensive plan, the *Comprehensive Plan 2034 Update*. Looking at a 20-year planning horizon, this 2039 plan covers land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and quality of life topics. It folds in existing plans and considers the impacts that proposed projects and policies have across disciplines.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The 2039 update process began in May of 2018, and will be submitted to the Board of Commissioners for approval in December of 2018. Key tasks included:

- **Public Hearings:** three public hearings at regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners meetings were conducted. One to introduce the planning process, a second to present the draft plan, and a third to present the plan formally for adoption.
- **Project Website and Online Surveys:** a project website was established to communicate information about the plan. There were also two surveys available to anyone who wished to participate: one asking respondents about needs and opportunities, and a second to gather information on community priorities.



- **Interviews and Steering Committee Meetings:** the project team interviewed a number of community leaders, city staff, and long-time residents. These interviewees also formed the core of a citizen Steering Committee, which provided input at key points during the planning process.

- **On-the-Spot Engagement:** members of the planning team attended a concert at the Community Center in August 2018, and conducted brief interviews with attendees asking for their thoughts on Buford and its major opportunities and challenges.



- **Needs and Opportunities Analysis:** using input gathered from the public engagement tasks and data analysis, the planning team developed the Needs and Opportunities element.
- **Draft Vision:** using the 2034 vision statement as a jumping off point, the steering committee and planning team drafted revisions to the character area map and the future land use map to reflect recent development and updated community goals.
- **Implementation:** once the vision, policies, and goals were established, a five-year Community Work Plan was developed to address the community's priorities and key projects.
- **Submission of Plan for Approval:** in December 2018, the plan will be submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission for review.
- **Plan Adoption:** the Comprehensive Plan was formally adopted by the City of Buford Board of Commissioners on (TBD)

RELATED PLANS

In addition to the *Comprehensive Plan 2034 Update*, a number of other related planning efforts informed this 2039 update.

Forward Buford 2016 LCI 10-Year Plan Update

Focusing on the greater Downtown area, the *Forward Buford* plan created a vision for leveraging the City's history and natural resources; attracting jobs and economic development; encouraging thoughtful development that meets Buford's needs; enhancing transportation systems and improving accessibility; strengthening the core of the city; and maintaining Buford's high quality of life. Policies and projects from *Forward Buford* have been folded into this comprehensive plan update.



Because of *Forward Buford's* in-depth look at Downtown Buford and the surrounding area, new recommendations in the *Comprehensive Plan* focused on areas outside the LCI boundary.

Gwinnett County Unified Plan

In the same timeframe that the City of Buford was developing this update, Gwinnett County was updating its *Unified Plan* (its version of a comprehensive plan). This plan addresses unincorporated Gwinnett County, looking at how infrastructure, economic development, housing, and land use work together. It is oriented around five themes:

1. Maintain Economic Development and Fiscal Health
2. Foster Redevelopment
3. Maintain Mobility and Accessibility
4. Provide More Housing Choices
5. Keep Gwinnett a "Preferred Place"

Although the *Unified Plan* does not cover incorporated areas, it does plan for the areas immediately outside of Buford's city limits. Most of these areas are designated as different types of residential uses in the future land use map, with "Executive" housing areas near Lake Lanier, and suburban estate living/established neighborhoods comprising the rest. The exception is the Mall of Georgia area, which is shown as a Regional Activity Area with high degrees of change possible.

Destination 2040: **Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)**

Recently completed, *Destination 2040* is a multi-modal plan for the county's transportation networks, including roads, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and freight. Overarching plan goals include:

- Improve connectivity
- Leverage the County's transportation system to improve economic vitality and quality of life
- Improve safety and mobility for all people across all modes of travel
- Proactively embrace future transportation opportunities
- Continue to serve as responsible stewards of transportation resources

Projects that are identified in this plan are prioritized and ultimately considered for inclusion in the region's transportation plan, which is the primary way for transportation projects to be funded through state and federal dollars. The CTP identified 21 transportation projects located in or directly adjacent to the City of Buford.

Connect Gwinnett (Transit Plan)

A sister document to *Destination 2040*, *Connect Gwinnett* focuses on transit in the county. It is a countywide vision for transit systems to serve current and future needs, broken into four phases of implementation. Its three focus areas are sustainability, stewardship and service quality. The plan recommends a number of new services that will improve transit accessibility in Buford, all of which are based out of an improved Park-and-Ride facility at I-985.

Gwinnett Trails Countywide Master Plan

Completed in 2018, the ***Trails Master Plan*** incorporates the latest trail planning efforts from all over Gwinnett County, and identified nine signature trails. One of these signature trails is the proposed Ivy Creek Greenway, which would run along the eastern edge of the City of Buford. Other trails included a network of off-road and side path trails, most notably in Buford two along Suwanee Creek tributaries.

Hall County Forward (Comprehensive Plan)

Hall County's comprehensive plan focuses on balancing growth with the preservation of its rural character. Within the City of Buford, the County identified Atlanta Highway as a Revitalization Corridor, and Lake Lanier Parkway as a Lake Supportive Corridor. Land uses surrounding Buford are designated as either Lake Area Residential or Residential. A new Community Crossroads is designated just east of the City of Buford line at Ridge Road and Friendship Road.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE REQUIREMENTS

This 2039 comprehensive plan update was prepared in compliance with DCA Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. The purpose of the minimum standards is "to provide a framework for the development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans at the local, regional and state government level. They reflect an important state interest: healthy and economically vibrant cities and counties are vital to the state's economic prosperity."

As of October 1, 2018, DCA issued an amendment that requires minor additions to the process, including a new element addressing Broadband Services (see Appendix). This update was developed to adhere to the new standards.

2

**NEEDS &
OPPORTUNITIES**

2 NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In planning for the future, it's important to first understand where we are now. The existing conditions analysis is an overview of where Buford is today, with a focus on what has changed since the 2014 update. It is a high-level understanding of the community, looking specifically at the following:

- Who lives in Buford today? What are the population trends?
- Where are different types of land uses concentrated in Buford? What have been the major changes in the past five years?
- How do people get around Buford? What transportation projects are already in the pipeline?
- What is the current state of housing in Buford? How are trends in housing and development changing conditions in the city?
- Who are the major employers in Buford and where do local residents work? What are the most significant developments since 2014?
- What do those who live and work in the community enjoy about Buford?



CITY OF BUFORD

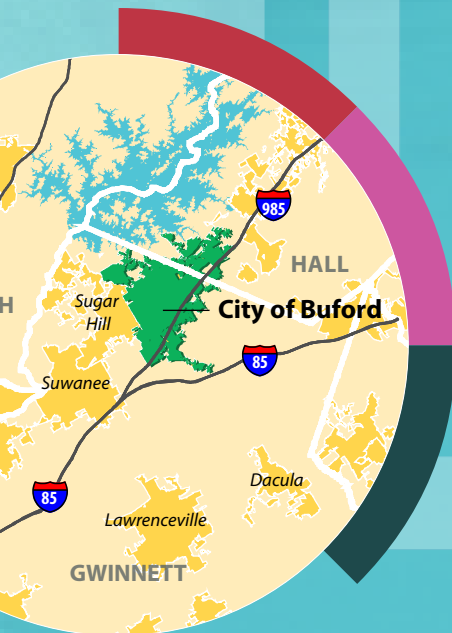
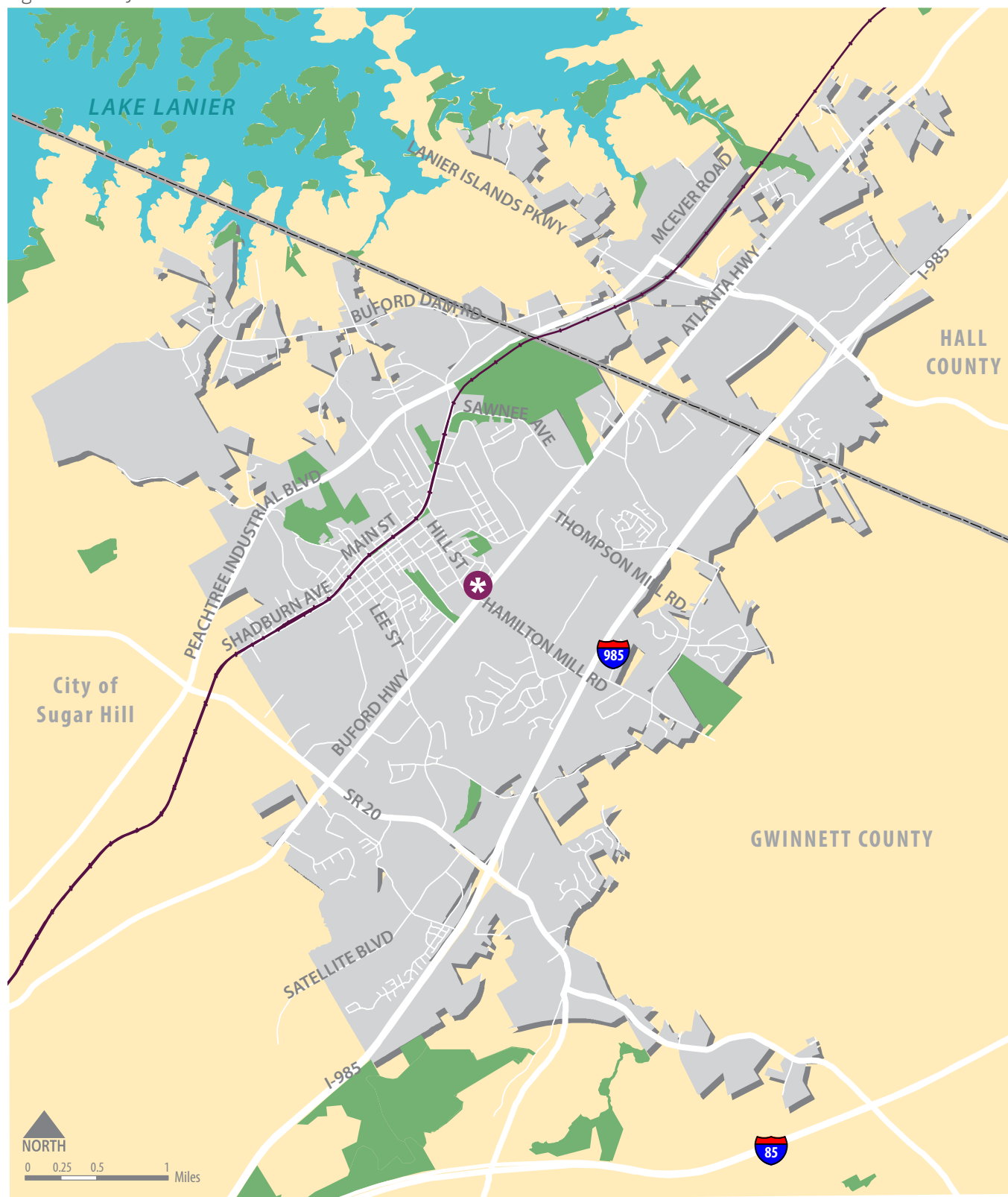


Figure 2.1. City of Buford



OUR COMMUNITY

Snapshot

The population of Buford in 2016 was nearly 14,000 residents, representing an 8.8 percent increase in growth since 2010. Although the city has a similar age and household type distribution to that of Gwinnett County, changes in the racial makeup of Buford residents have differed from those county-wide. Residents identifying themselves as White made up 50.6 percent of the population, whereas as Black/African-Americans were 10.1 percent, Asians were 2.9 percent, and residents identifying with two or more races were 2.0 percent. A large percentage of residents—over 34 percent of the total Buford population—identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, compared to 20.5 percent county-wide.

Nearly 75 percent of Buford households are family households, most of which are married couple families. Household makeup in Buford is similar to that of Gwinnett County, with both having an average household size of between 3.1 and 3.2 people. Although levels of educational attainment have risen markedly in Buford—more than 20 percent of residents over the age of 25 now have a Bachelor's degree or higher—median income in the city has remained consistent. Currently the median income of households in Buford is \$51,463 (about \$10,000 less than that of Gwinnett County) and 12.9 percent of families have an income that is below the poverty level, compared to 10.6 percent county-wide.

What's New

Population growth in Buford has occurred at an average annual rate of just over 1.4 percent since 2000. This steady growth has been accompanied by a significant increase in educational attainment and an increase in school-aged children in the area. There has not, however, been a substantial increase in median household income in Buford to accompany these changes. Median income in 2016 in Buford was \$51,463, compared to a County-wide figure of \$61,865. Although still lower than the County's median, median incomes in Buford have made much stronger gains comparatively: since 2000, the median income in the city has increased by \$12,730, whereas the County's only increased by \$1,328 in the same period.

In addition to changes in local education, racial and ethnic diversity have shifted in the Buford community since 2000. The Hispanic or Latino community has grown from 17 percent of residents in 2000 to more than 34 percent of residents in 2016. The Black or African American community in Buford, on the other hand, has decreased from about 13 percent to 11 percent of residents. These demographic changes also include a decrease in the local elderly population (over age 75) and an increase in middle-aged residents (aged 45 to 74 years).



LAND USE

Snapshot

The City of Buford is unique in that it has a large amount of land devoted to industrial and commercial uses, which has helped ensure a sustainable, healthy tax base. There is also a substantial amount of undeveloped open space within the city limits, particularly along I-985 and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard/McEver Road. Newer residential neighborhoods are clustered in the far north of the city in Hall County, with older, more established single-family neighborhoods near Downtown and off of Hamilton Mill Road, Thompson Mill Road, and South Bogan Road.

Compared to the rest of the city, Downtown Buford has a different pattern of land use. With its origins as a railroad town, Downtown historically was an important center for manufacturing and commerce. Still a center of activity in the city, Downtown today is much less industrial and more focused on retail, restaurants, and other commercial uses. The blocks immediately surrounding the commercial core of Downtown are primarily low-density and medium-density residential neighborhoods. Because of its traditional development, Downtown is a distinct place within the city with a tight grid of streets, walkable blocks, and historic homes.

What's New?

New Development

Buford has experienced a high level of development activity since the 2014 update. Table 2.1 shows the permits by type issued in the last few years.

This growth is reflected in a study of aerial photography of the city from 2014 to 2018. Within this time frame, approximately 130 acres of land have developed into commercial/mixed use; about 525 acres have developed into industrial uses (primarily warehouses and logistics centers); and about 490 acres have transitioned to residential uses, or were neighborhoods that were partially constructed but have mostly completed their build out. In general, new industrial development has clustered in the southern third of the city, whereas most of the new residential development is near the I-985 corridor, and concentrated towards the north in Hall County.

Annexation

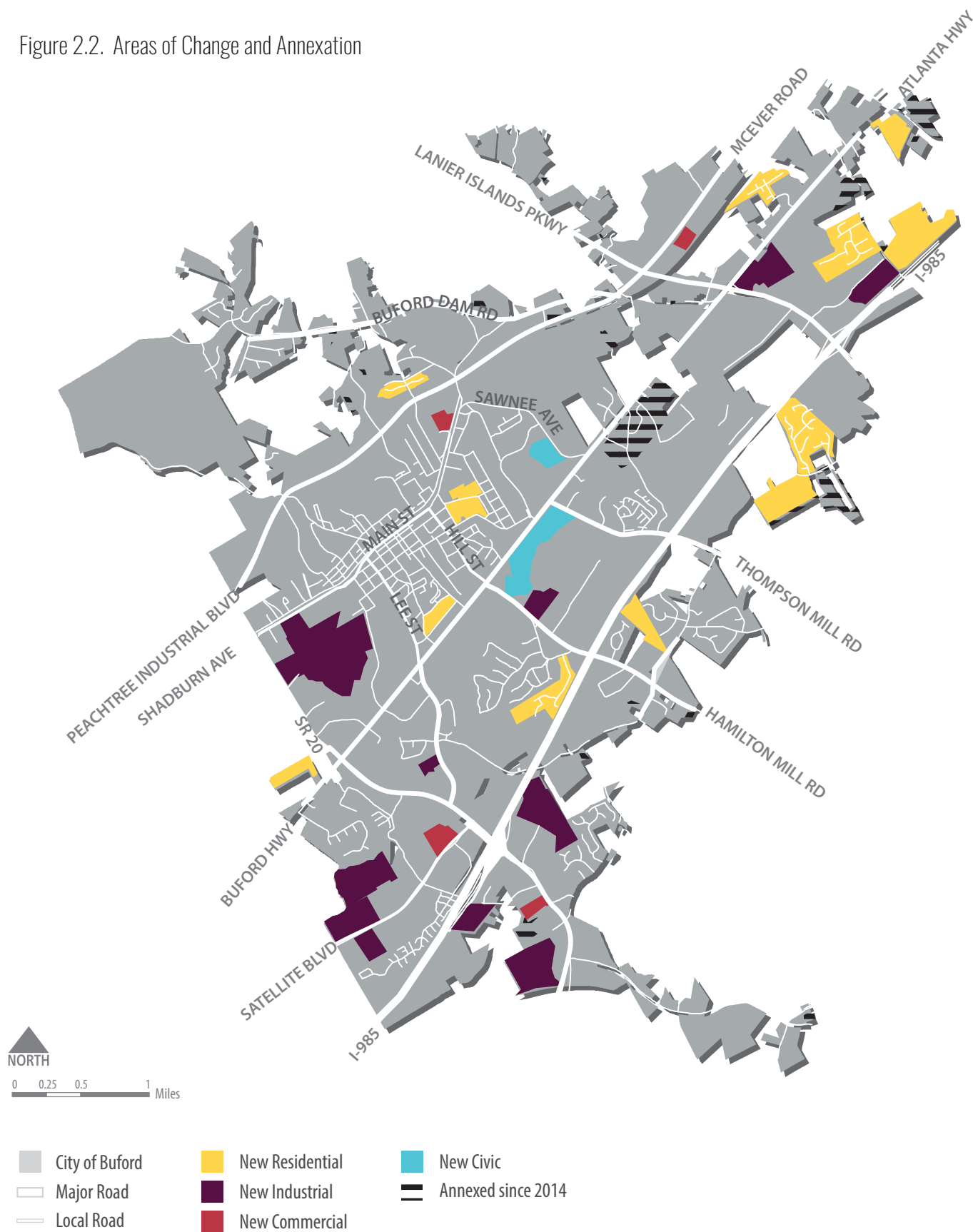
Since the last comprehensive plan update, the City of Buford has also annexed approximately 300 acres of land into its boundaries. Newly annexed land is concentrated primarily in the northern half of the city, with a large collection of parcels from the community of Rest Haven. Over time, it is anticipated that the remainder of Rest Haven will be annexed into Buford.

Other large annexations include the new Laurel Manor neighborhood near the Hall/Gwinnett border, as well as scattered parcels concentrated primarily along the city's northern and eastern edges.

Table 2.1. Permits Issued (2014-2017)

Permit Type	2014	2015	2016	2017
Residential (includes all subdivisions)	94	142	157	180
Commercial Permits (includes interiors)	41	33	33	51
Industrial Permits (includes interiors)	19	40	33	31
Development Permits	19	22	20	28
Grading Permits (includes timber)	48	19	24	42
Totals	221	256	267	332

Figure 2.2. Areas of Change and Annexation



TRANSPORTATION

Snapshot

Roadways

Approximately 40 miles from the economic heart of Atlanta, Buford is located along I-985. Running roughly parallel to the interstate, the city's two main north-south arterials are Buford Highway/Atlanta Highway and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard/McEver Road. Other important north-south roadways include North and South Bogan Roads to the east, and Main Street and Shadburn Avenue near the center of the city. Only two roadways provide complete access across the city east to west: SR 20 and Lanier Islands Parkway. Other important east-west links include South Lee Street, South Hill Street/Hamilton Mill Road, Shadburn Ferry Road, Thompson Mill Road, and Sawnee Avenue. Generally the street network is a mix of suburban-style arterials and local streets, and the more traditional street grid downtown.

The community is reliant on cars for getting around. About 74 percent of the Buford workers drive to work alone with a mean travel time of 27 minutes. Despite the many concerns about increasing traffic in the city, Buford's roads have considerably less congestion than most parts of the county according to level of service (LOS) data.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

With its small blocks and relatively calm streets, Downtown Buford has a pleasant environment for walking. The City has recently made significant investments in its streetscapes along South Lee Street and Hill Street, and also on major sidewalk facilities along busier roadways such as Buford Highway. Despite these recent investments, there is still a lack of sidewalks citywide. Dedicated bike lanes in Buford are also limited; currently the only bike facilities in the city

are along Buford Dam Road, Hamilton Mill Road/Hill Street, and South Lee Street. *Destination 2040*, the 2016 Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), identified the majority of the City of Buford as a "Bike and Pedestrian Target Area" for future infrastructure improvements.

Transit

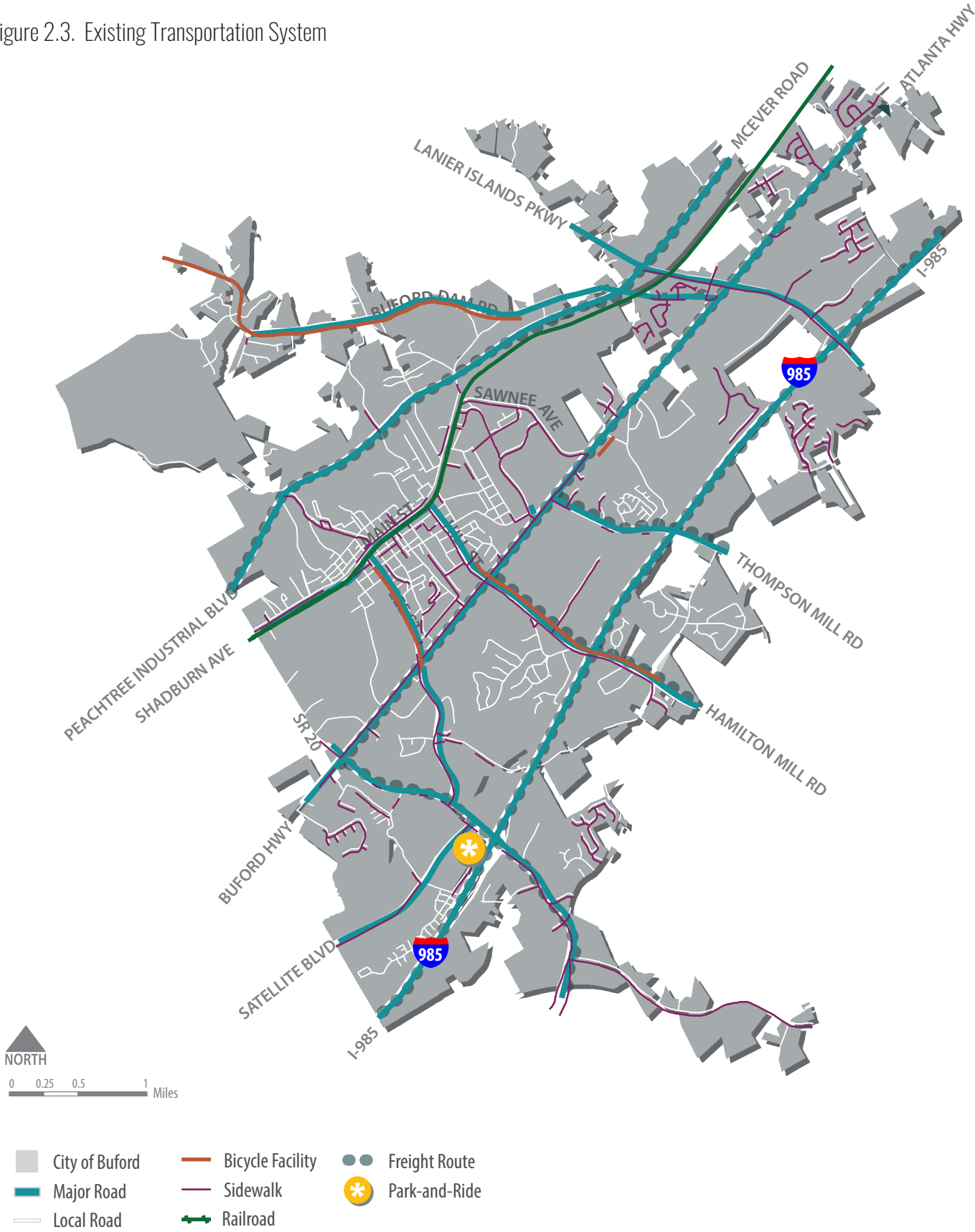
There are currently no Gwinnett County local bus routes in Buford, but the 101 Express Route does provide service to the Park-and-Ride lot at the south side of Buford at I-985 and SR 20. Amtrak has rights to the Norfolk Southern Rail Line that runs through Buford, but there are no stops within the city.

Freight

Freight traffic is a significant transportation issue in the community. With the rapid development of additional warehouses and distribution centers in the city, truck traffic is increasingly common and has become a major concern for some residents. In fact, on SR 20 where it crosses I-985, Buford has one of the top ten highest non-interstate truck count locations in the Atlanta region. Official truck routes in Buford include I-985, Buford Highway, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Hamilton Mill Road, and Thompson Mill Road. Of all of these roadways, only Buford Highway is considered part of the region's *Atlanta Strategic Truck Route Master Plan* (ASTRoMap).

Norfolk Southern has a rail line that runs parallel to Shadburn Avenue, but the bulk of freight movement in Buford is via truck.

Figure 2.3. Existing Transportation System



What's New/ Already Planned?

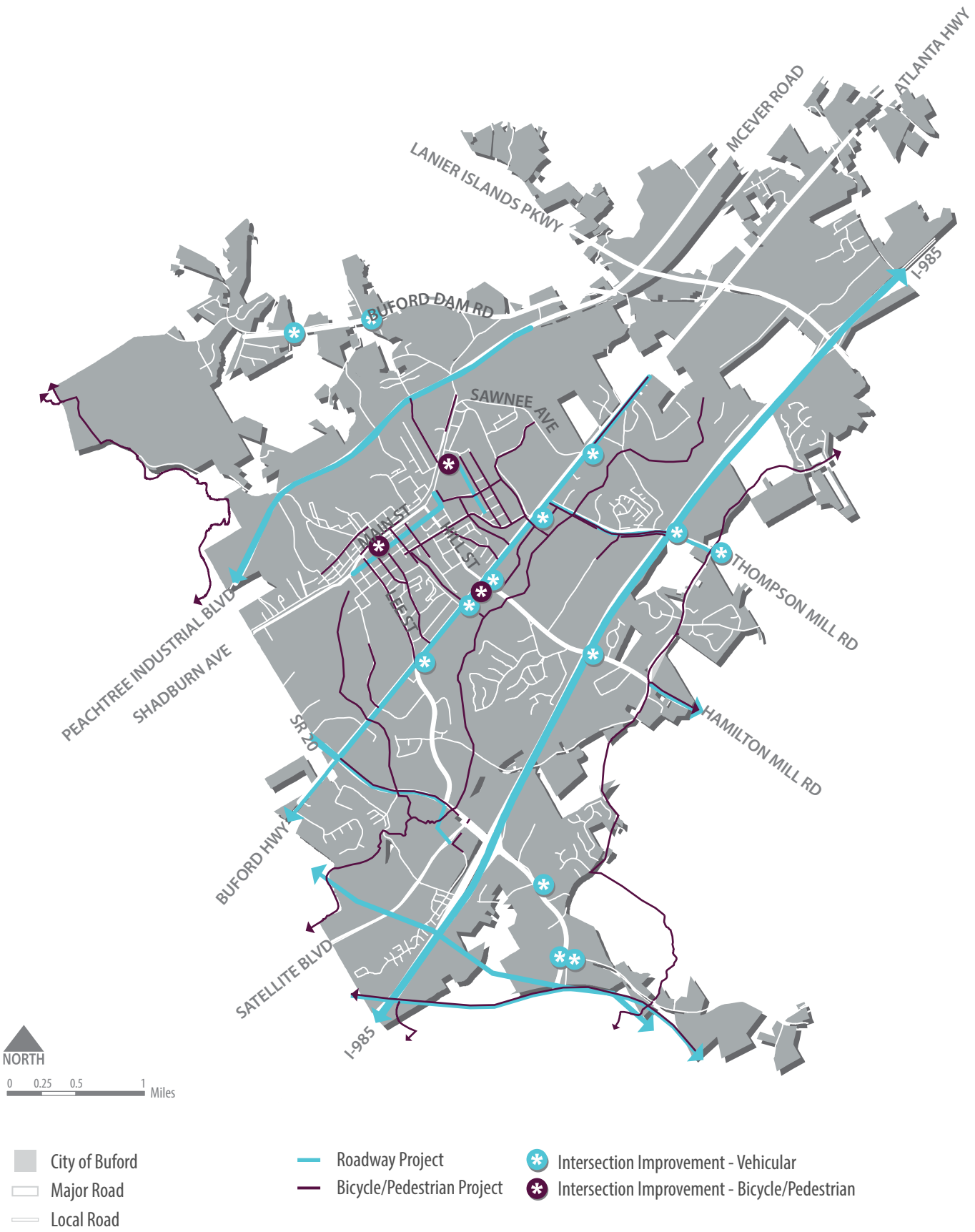
A number of transportation projects have been completed or are currently underway since the last Comprehensive Plan update, including the South Lee and Hill Street streetscapes, and widening projects on Buford Highway.

Many more transportation projects are planned over the coming decades. These projects come from a number of sources, but primarily the Atlanta Region's Plan; *Destination 2040*; *Connect Gwinnett* (the County's transit plan); the *Gwinnett County Trails Plan*; *Gainesville-Hall County Regional Transportation Plan*; and the *Forward Buford* LCI Update.

These projects represent a broad mixture of infrastructure improvements from major investments—such as the addition of a new interchange on I-985 to a new 250-spot parking deck Downtown—to more minor, like sidewalks along local roads. In general, the regional level plans focus on larger roadway projects; *Destination 2040* has a mix of roadway and intersection projects; and the majority of LCI projects address bicycle and pedestrian needs.



Figure 2.4. Future Transportation Projects



HOUSING

Snapshot

In 2016, Buford had 4,900 housing units with an occupancy rate of 89 percent. Of these housing units, many were built in the 1980s (25 percent) or the early 2000s (18 percent). While the distribution of unit types in Buford is fairly similar to that of Gwinnett County, Buford has a much higher proportion of mobile homes, accounting for 13 percent of the local housing stock. The majority of local housing, however, is single-family detached homes (58 percent).

Those who rent their homes in Buford have grown to represent 40 percent of the community, a higher percentage than that of Gwinnett County. While the median housing value in both Buford and Gwinnett County is between \$150,000 and \$170,000, more than 20 percent of homes in Buford are valued at under \$50,000 (the majority of which can likely be attributed to mobile homes). Anecdotally, housing prices have risen rapidly in Buford in the past few years, with many homes starting in the \$300,000s and beyond. There is a general sense in the community that these price increases deter young generations from buying homes in Buford.

This high cost of housing is reflected in rental cost data. Nearly 37 percent of Buford residents are considered “rent burdened,” paying more than 30 percent of their household income on rent each month. The Buford Housing Authority (BHA) works to address some of these issues of housing affordability in the area and now has 189 affordable housing units, 143 of which are within city limits. The majority of Buford Housing Authority occupants are immigrant families and seniors.



Image Source: Zillow

What's New?

With the recovery of the economy, Buford has experienced a building boom—particularly in terms of new, high-end single-family subdivisions. Table 2.2 contains the numbers of building permits by type of residence since 2014.

Since the 2014 update, a number of housing developments have been completed or are currently under construction, including:

- **Enclave at Morningside Drive** – located off of Morningside Drive near downtown Buford, a high-end development of 3- and 4-bedroom homes at price points of \$350,000 and above
- **Laurel Manor** – 104 new homes in a swim/tennis community near the Gwinnett/Hall County border, with home prices starting in the \$400,000s
- **Bogan Meadows** – a smaller residential neighborhood with prices starting in the high \$280s, located just over the Hall County line
- **Mabry Ridge** – also in Hall County, a new development with 67 home sites of 3 to 5 bedrooms each, with prices starting in the \$350s
- **Oaks of Buford** – A small, gated community of high-end homes on ¾-acre plus lots off of North Bogan Road

Table 2.2. Residential Building Permits (2014-2017)

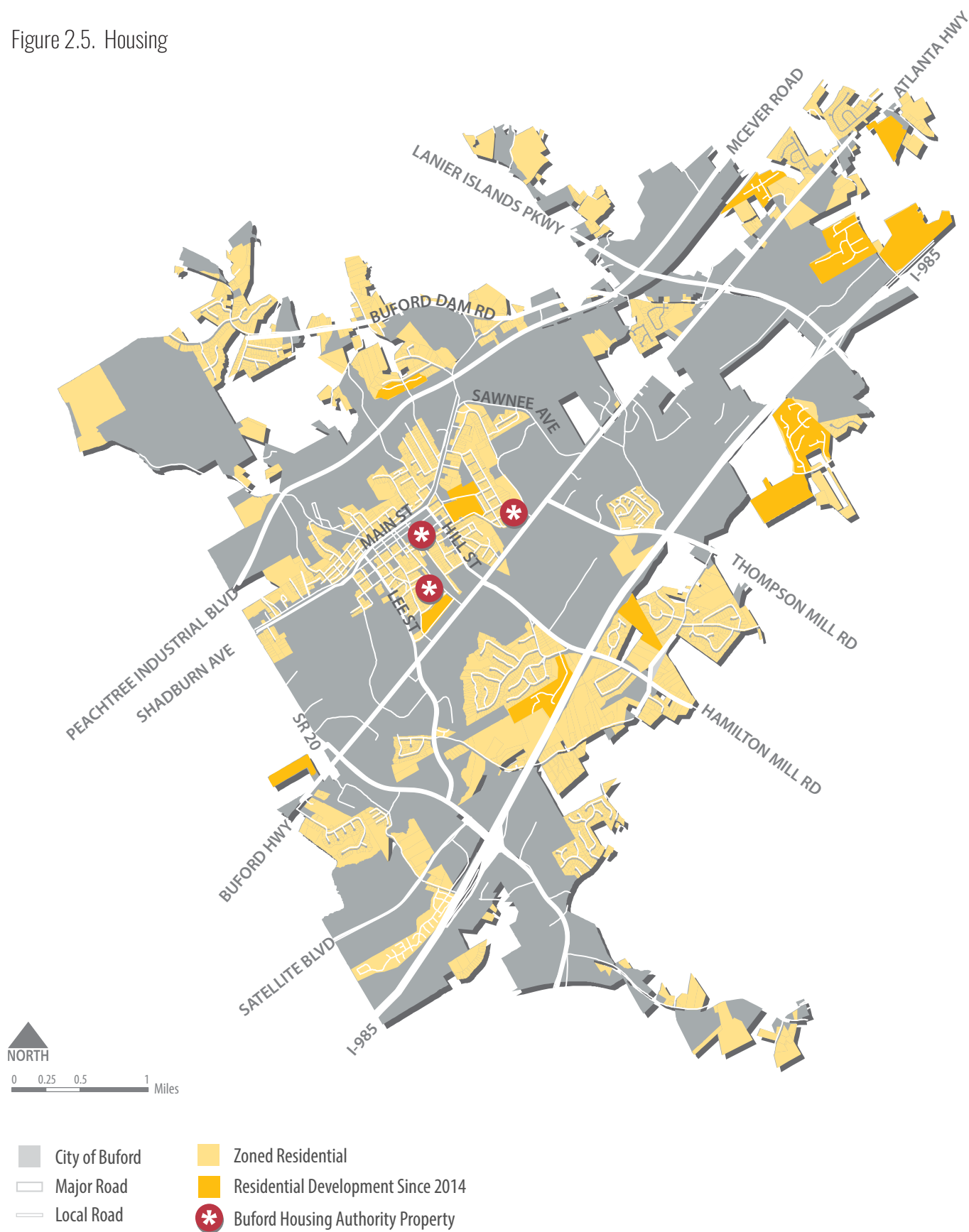
Permit Type	2014	2015	2016	2017
Residential (includes all subdivisions)	94	142	157	180
Mobile homes	7	9	5	6
Multi-family	1	0	0	1
Total	102	151	162	187

- **Whispering Creeks** – upscale single-family residential community with homes that start in the \$370,000s, located just off of Hamilton Mill near I-985
- Completion of Magnolia Village, a retirement community in southern Buford
- A new 72-home residential subdivision at the old Bona Allen Tannery site near Downtown

The major homebuilders in the area are national-level developers like Lennar and D.R. Horton; regional and local developers are less prominent.

Affordability is becoming an increasingly important concern in the Buford community. Because of the high price points of new homes, many types of households—such as young families and seniors—are struggling to find housing that they can afford.

Figure 2.5. Housing



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Snapshot

As of 2016, Buford residents constituted a labor force of 6,750 people, representing about 65 percent of the local population. Of those in the labor force, 5 percent were unemployed and less than one percent were in the military. In 2015, more than 4,600 Buford residents commuted outside of the city to go to work each day, but nearly four times that (16,500 people) commuted into Buford daily. More than 57 percent of the labor force in Buford worked outside of Gwinnett County in 2015. This suggests that there is a mismatch between the types of jobs available in the city and the skill sets of residents. This can have major impacts on quality of life, as commuting times are longer and there is additional congestion on roadways from these lengthier vehicle trips.

More than 25 percent of the city residents in the workforce are employed in the service sector. This is typically a lower-paying sector, but it accounts for the largest portion of the

Buford labor force. The management, business, science, and arts occupations—typically higher paid—employs 22 percent of the Buford community. In contrast, county-wide these sectors employ more than 37 percent of Gwinnett County residents.

The city is well known for its strong industrial and commercial base, and is a Certified Work Ready Community. Major companies have significant facilities located within Buford, such as German technology company Heraeus (Buford is one of only two U.S. locations), Office Depot, Daimler Trucks, FedEx Freight, and multiple smaller-scaled operations distributed among industrial parks such as Bristol Industrial Way and South Lee Business Park. In 2015, three Buford companies made 2015 Inc.'s 5,000 fastest growing businesses in the country list: Red Clay Interactive, Blue1USA, and CablesAndKits. The diversity of products made and services performed in Buford, as well as the range of scales of industry, is notable for a city of just 14,000 residents.

What's New

While the jobs held by Buford residents have remained fairly consistent since 2002, jobs provided in the city of Buford have seen a dramatic shift over the same time period. Jobs in nearly every industry have increased in Buford between 2002 and 2012, with industries such as administrative and support and waste management and remediation services, transportation and warehousing, and wholesale trade

“Record absorption, historically low vacancy rates and rising sales activity in the Atlanta industrial market is creating **unprecedented industrial demand.**”

- Steven McCraney,
developer of 985 Lanier Logistics project (currently underway)

gaining significant traction in the local market. This rise in local jobs resulted in an increase in the number of employees commuting into Buford from outside of the city from just over 8,000 in 2002 to more than 16,500 in 2015.

This growth can also be seen in a number of large projects around the city that have developed since 2014, including the following examples:

- **Buford Logistics Center expansion** – almost 1 million square feet of industrial/warehouse facilities constructed between Buford Drive NE and Heraeus Boulevard; now partially occupied by an Office Depot distribution center
- **Satellite Logistics Center expansion** – AmerisourceBergen invested more than \$40 million to develop a 350,000-square foot (SF) high-tech “Amazon-like” distribution center off of Satellite Boulevard, tripling the size of its previous facility in Suwanee
- **Hamilton Mill Business Center expansion** – a new warehouse was built and is now occupied by Finnish company Scanfil, an international contract manufacturer and system supplier; Swiss synthetic flooring company Gezolan also opened a new 60,000-square foot facility (the company’s only manufacturing facility outside of Switzerland); and a new headquarters for trade show company Displayit Inc.
- **Blue Ridge Distribution Center** – recently completed, this facility is a 261,105-square foot front-loading building that is currently searching for tenants
- **Buford Mill Distribution Center** – located behind the Mill Creek Crossing shopping center, these two large industrial facilities (approximately 238,200 SF and 183,840 SF) were recently constructed and are seeking tenants
- **Liberty Business Center** – also located behind a shopping area, the Liberty Business Center is a Class A, LEED Silver certified two-building campus that is currently only partially occupied

The City is not just attracting mega-scale businesses, but smaller high-tech businesses as well. For example, Analog Way, Inc—a company that specializes in video signal processing and distribution—moved its headquarters from New York City to Buford in 2016.

And more development is afoot. Earlier in 2018, an out-of-state developer announced the purchase of 44.32 acres at Lanier Islands Parkway and Buford Highway to construct a 615,000-square-foot project titled “985 Lanier Logistics,” which is anticipated to have three Class A industrial buildings.

One of the looming challenges in Buford is that developable land is becoming increasingly scarce, particularly for land-hungry development types of businesses such as distribution centers and warehouses. To accommodate new growth, the City will need to continue to annex additional areas and/or focus on redevelopment of underused parcels.

Areas of Opportunity/Development

In addition to projects that have been recently built, the following sites were identified as key development and redevelopment opportunities as part of *Forward Buford*, the City’s LCI Update:

- Bona Allen Warehouse reuse
- Tannery Row redevelopment (around historic buildings)
- Underused commercial properties near the SR 20 and Buford Highway intersection
- I-985 transit-oriented development near the Park-and-Ride
- East side of Buford Highway between Church Street and Garnett Street
- Site behind the Buford Community Center

Two additional sites—the former Buford General Hospital site and the Bona Allen Tannery—were also identified, and are already under development with single-family housing.

Figure 2.6. Economic Development Figure



QUALITY OF LIFE

Snapshot

Buford enjoys many local amenities which contribute to a high quality of life for the community. These include outstanding public schools, public parks and recreation facilities, and access to utilities which are both affordable and provide revenue opportunities for the City of Buford. Support from both Gwinnett County and Hall County provides Buford residents with expanded parks and recreation service, emergency services, and community facilities.

Schools

Buford is unique among Gwinnett County municipalities in that it is the only city with its own school system. Between the elementary school, middle school, high school, and Buford Academy, the city's schools have a current enrollment of nearly 4,600 students. Currently the system receives an "A" from the State of Georgia in all categories, scoring better than 99 percent of schools state-wide. Not only do the schools excel academically, Buford High School is nationally recognized for its athletics and is ranked within the top 100 high school football programs in the U.S.

Public Facilities and Services

Major City facilities in Buford include Buford City Hall and the Community Center, both located at the intersection of Buford Highway and Hamilton Mill Road. The City also recently completed the new gymnasium at the old Bona Allen baseball field site.

Gwinnett County provides a number of services to the City of Buford, including fire and police protection. Fire Station

Number 14 is located on Buford Highway, across from the Village Square shopping center. There is no police precinct located within Buford, but the City is served by the Gwinnett County Police North Precinct just east of the Mall of Georgia. The Buford-Sugar Hill branch of the Gwinnett County Public Library is located on Buford Highway.

Utilities

The City of Buford draws its water from Lake Lanier, and purchases a small portion from the Gwinnett County Water Plant located within its boundaries. The City's primary water facility is located on North Waterworks Road in unincorporated Hall County. Here, water from Lake Lanier enters the City's reservoir and is then gravity fed into the plant where it is treated. The City also provides sewer and stormwater management services.

The City is a member of the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia, providing natural gas service to its residents and beyond: currently the City of Buford gas system supplies gas to over 38,000 customers in 5 counties. The City's Public Works Department uses the latest technologies to monitor the flow of natural gas through its pipelines and distribution lines.

For electricity, the City of Buford is a member of the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG) Power, which is a public generation/transmission company that provides energy to 49 communities in Georgia. Delivered energy is 64 percent fossil fuels, 36 percent emissions-free. In addition, through a contract with Republic Services, the harvesting of methane gas at Richland Creek landfill is creating green power generation.

Figure 2.7. Future Quality of Life Map



Parks and Recreation

Buford has a number of recreation amenities for its residents, workers, and visitors provided by different agencies. City of Buford facilities include the Buford Youth Sports Complex near the schools; the baseball/softball fields at Legion Fields; Sawnee Avenue tennis courts; the Buford Community Center Town Park; the new City of Buford gymnasium; and the Main Street Park and amphitheater.

The City currently does not have any parks on Lake Lanier. However, the Corps of Engineers has multiple Lake Lanier properties near the city that are easily accessible to residents include Shoal Creek Campground, Big Creek Park, Lazy Days Park and Marina, and Burton Mill Park.

On the other side of town, Gwinnett County's Bogan Park Community Recreation and Aquatic Center is an 83-acre facility that includes a recreation center, classrooms, an indoor pool, two gymnasiums, indoor court facilities, a baseball/softball complex, sand volleyball courts, basketball courts, playgrounds, and two miles of trails. Almost adjacent to the city's southern boundary is the state-of-the-art Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center, which has one of the nation's largest sloped green roofs.

Natural Resources

Although beyond the City limits, Lake Lanier is the most dominant natural resource in Buford in terms of its size and

importance as a source for water and recreation. Beyond the lake, the city has four main stream systems. From east to west, these are Ivy Creek, Suwanee Creek, and Richland Creek in Gwinnett County, and Big Creek in Hall County. All four of these creeks drain to the Chattahoochee River/Lake Lanier.

The City owns a handful of open spaces and natural areas that are currently undeveloped, such as the small preserve between Garnett and Harris Streets.

Historic and Cultural Resources

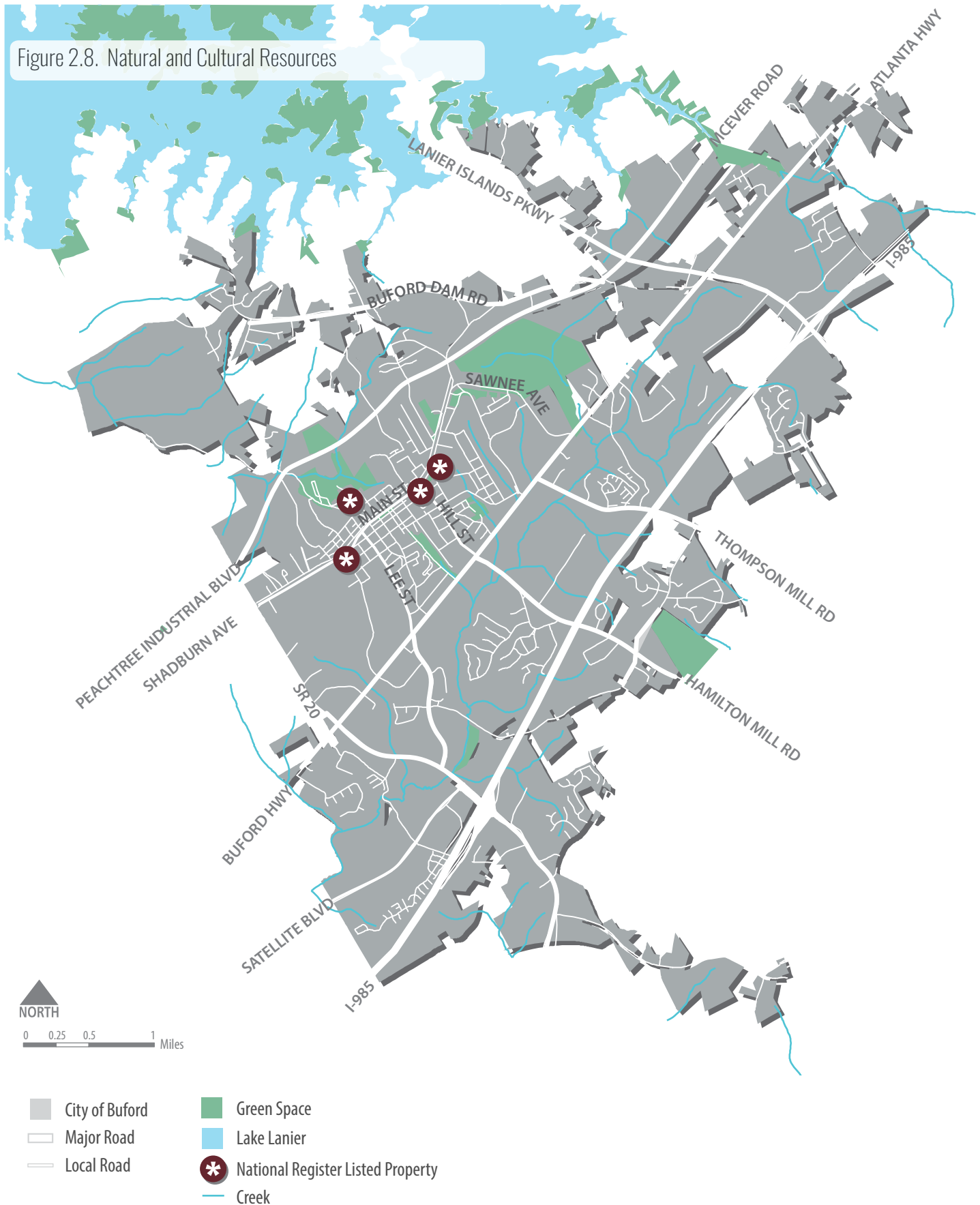
Within the city, there are four buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP): the Bona Allen House, the John Quincy Allen House, the Bona Allen Shoe and Horse Collar Factory, and Buford Public School Auditorium. The Shoe and Horse Collar Factory is an active part of downtown as Tannery Row.

In addition to Tannery Row, Buford's history and culture can be experienced at the Museum of Buford in the Community Center and the Bona Allen Mansion, which is a private facility rented out for events. There are a number of buildings that are likely eligible for the National Register from the Bona Allen era, as well as historic cemeteries, churches, and other structures.

Bona Allen Tannery The Bona Allen Tannery was founded in the late 1800s, and made boots, horse saddles, bridles, and shoes. Famous Hollywood cowboys such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers had their saddles custom made at the tannery. At one point, the company employed almost two-thirds of the town's population, and was one of the largest manufacturers of horse collars in the world. The tannery suffered a terrible fire in the 1980s, and has since only been marginally occupied and used. In February of 2015, a massive fire finished off the structure. The site has since been purchased and is now under construction for a new residential neighborhood.



Figure 2.8. Natural and Cultural Resources

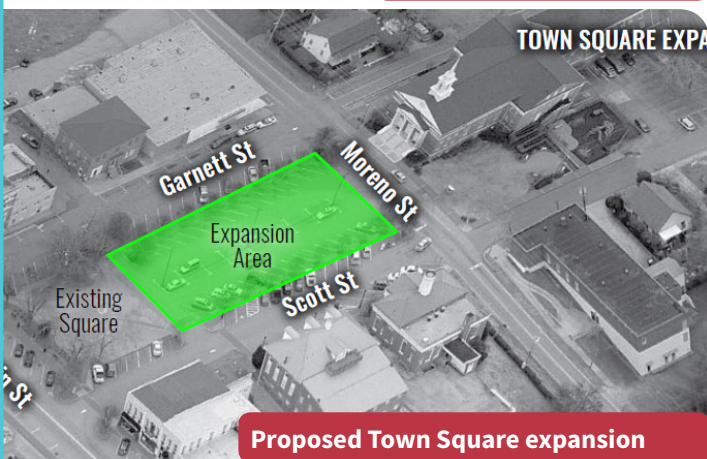




New Buford High School rendering



Lanier Harbor Marina



Proposed Town Square expansion

Image Sources: Breaux & Associates Architects, Lake Lanier Real Estate

What's New?

A new high school is currently being added to the public school system in Buford, allowing for the relocation of the middle school into the previous high school and expansion of some elementary school facilities into the current middle school building. This new facility is anticipated to address the recent increase of students in the local school system, creating up to 2,200 additional seats for students. In addition to new school facilities, a new City gymnasium encompasses about 35,000 square feet of indoor recreation space, including two full court gyms, meeting rooms, exercise rooms, and a parents' lounge.

In 2015, the City signed a lease with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to manage the former Lanier Harbor Marina property on Pine Tree Drive. Currently the property is closed to the public. There are recent plans for a townhome development adjacent to the marina, which would include renovating and reopening the park in the future. This is the only part of Buford city limits that provides direct access to the lake.

Other new parks are also on the horizon, including a park along Buford Highway and expansion of the Town Square in coordination with redevelopment and the addition of the City parking deck (all recommended by the *Forward Buford* LCI Update). Gwinnett County also has identified a "Tier 1" park acquisition goal near northwestern Buford for future park development.

Unfortunately there have also been losses in the past few years. The remainder of the old Bona Allen Tannery complex was lost in 2015 to fire. While once an important landmark and part of the town's heritage, the property had been abandoned and was in disrepair. This loss has a silver lining in that it created an opportunity for revitalization: currently there is an intown subdivision being developed on the site, one of the largest near Downtown Buford in many decades.

CITY OF BUFORD

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the Existing Conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, steering committee guidance, and input from the public, the following needs and opportunities have been identified in the City of Buford. This not an all-inclusive list, but rather those key needs and opportunities that City leadership and the community identified as critical to the City's future.



NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: LAND USE



Historic Buford

■ *Maintenance of Small Town Character*

In the face of growth, Buford has maintained its small-town character. Recent downtown investment has revamped the city's small-town appeal and is restoring its vitality. While improvements have been made, Buford should still recognize the impacts of continued strip commercial and residential subdivision development on the city's character. The small town character is the reason many residents have chosen to live in Buford and it should continue to be preserved; rapid growth, if not regulated well, has the potential to erode this atmosphere that is treasured by residents.

■ *Annexation*

There is wide support for the City to maintain its current development policy of encouraging more commercial and industrial development. The City should pursue strategic annexations that expand the tax base, but do not place high burdens on City infrastructure and services. Potential opportunities exist in Hall County, Rest Haven, and some industrial/commercial properties in unincorporated Gwinnett County, such as those near the Mall of Georgia.



Mixed use in Suwanee

■ *Mixed Use Development*

Region wide, there is a trend towards greater demand for mixed use development. These types of development are usually more compact, walkable, and have a mixture of residential, small-scale commercial uses, and community amenities. In Buford, mixed use could be implemented by adding more residential units to Downtown, but could also be successful in targeted development areas along Buford Highway and around the Buford Park-and-Ride.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: TRANSPORTATION

Roadway Congestion

With the continued growth of Buford, traffic congestion continues to be a concern. Community members have identified this as a priority issue in need of attention. One of the major contributors to the congestion problem is truck traffic mitigation. The high volume of truck traffic contributes to congestion, and erodes pavement quality. The City should continue to investigate opportunities for alternative routes for trucks within the city, including a new potential access point to I-985 in the long term.

Access to I-985

The presence of I-985 through Buford is a major opportunity for development and improved access to the rest of the region. Currently there are two exits that serve Buford: exit 4 SR 20/Buford Drive, and exit 8 at SR 347/Friendship Road. These exits are four miles apart, and neither provide quick access to the heart of Buford. A proposed interchange at Thompson Mill Road would help address this gap, and potentially remove freight traffic bound for the interstate off of local roads more quickly.

Lack of Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

There is an identified need for more bike and pedestrian facilities in the city. Residents want to see more sidewalks, bike paths, and walking paths strategically placed and connecting neighborhoods to activity centers within the city, and to the counties' proposed systems of greenways and trails.

Regional Connectivity

As the Atlanta region continues to grow and prosper, regional connectivity becomes even more important. Buford is well connected to the rest of the region by roadways, but connectivity via other modes of transportation is currently poor. There is an opportunity to increase investment in the Buford Park-and-Ride, and new projects in County transportation plans show increased connectivity with Buford through new transit lines and an extensive network of greenways.



Image Source: Kimley Horn

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: HOUSING



Accessory dwelling unit

Affordable Housing

Rising housing costs have become a region-wide issue, and Buford is no exception. The majority of new housing built recently in the city has been high-end, large single-family residential homes that start in the \$300,000s. These price points are out of reach for many types of households, particularly seniors on fixed incomes and young families. The BHA does provide some relief to the problem, but is only able to serve those with the greatest need; if the BHA were to expend its number of facilities, the trend in public housing is to merge with partners to build a mix of fair market, senior, moderate rent, and public housing units as part of the same development.

Variety of Housing Types

The current trend toward large, upmarket single-family residential homes is meeting the needs of only a subset of the Buford population. As a challenge that goes hand in hand with affordability, there is an opportunity in Buford to encourage a broader mix of housing types. Smaller units on smaller lots can provide more affordable options to middle income households. There is also a desire for more live/work units, accessory dwelling units (such as garage apartments and mother-in-law suites), loft-like apartments/condos/townhomes Downtown, and modest-sized single-story homes that appeal to seniors.



Live-work units

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Development

A critical component of the City's small town character is the continued revitalization of Main Street. Main Street provides a unique sense of place. This environment attracts visitors from surrounding Gwinnett and Hall Counties and beyond, who spend money and contribute to tax revenues in the city. Continuing redevelopment of Main Street and expansion of these successful revitalization efforts in adjacent neighborhoods is important. The rehabilitation of these neighborhoods will strengthen the economic viability of Buford and contribute to increased property values throughout the city. The City should continue to follow recommendations of the *Forward Buford* LCI plan, which identified action items to further revitalize and improve the downtown area.



Downtown

Beyond the physical revitalization of downtown, there is a strong desire by many in the community to enliven the area by allowing dining patios and more options for nightlife. During the public engagement process, one of the most frequent comments was a desire for the City to revise its open container laws to allow restaurants that serve alcohol to have outdoor seating. Currently this is allowable on private property, but not within the public right-of-way (ROW). There is also strong support for attracting more unique restaurants and small-scale retail to downtown Buford, creating a compelling identity that distinguishes it from other small downtowns in the region, and potentially adding housing such as townhomes.



Kroger supermarket

Desire for a Grocery Store

One of the most common requests throughout the planning process was for a grocery store in Buford. Although there are plans for a new Publix on Hamilton Mill Road and Bogan Road, many residents feel that this will only partially meet the need in the city. There is a strong desire for attracting a Publix or a Kroger to a more centralized location to serve Buford residents. While the marketing efforts of the City are ongoing and the desire to attract additional options for shoppers is acknowledged, the market for grocers will likely remain muted given the density of "rooftops" typically required for the private sector to make this large of an investment.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Satellite Boulevard industrial site



Recent construction

Balanced Industrial Development

Buford has a very large supply of industry, and has become known internationally as a great place to do business. In recent years, this has led to the development of hundreds of thousands of square feet of industrial facilities, many of which are currently still seeking tenants.

Although the large amounts of industry in Buford help form an excellent tax base, there are also drawbacks. These uses typically take up a large amount of land, but provide relatively few jobs compared to their size. The development of these facilities often requires extensive grading, loss of tree canopy, and typically do not add to the community aesthetically. Further, these uses tend to add congestion to the roadways with truck traffic, which also puts tremendous pressure on pavement and requires more frequent maintenance.

As the city continues to grow—both through new development and annexation—there is an opportunity to ensure that new industrial uses are buffered from other uses, and are built in places where the infrastructure can accommodate increased demand. The city may also want to consider a strategy for attracting more office-type uses, which tend to have many more jobs per square foot, and would diversify the job opportunities within the city.

Revitalization/Redevelopment of Underused Sites

Although Buford's economy is thriving by many measures, there are some sites around the city—particularly older commercial strip malls—that are grappling with vacancy challenges. These areas, located primarily on or near Buford Highway, are opportunities to redevelop into uses that are more in tune with current market trends such as mixed use development.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: QUALITY OF LIFE

Maintenance of Top-Notch Schools

The independent school system is the pride and heart of the community. Not only is this unique in Gwinnett County, Buford's schools are some of the highest performing in the state. In fact, the quality of schools is a major driver for growth; many residents have expressed concern about the growing size of enrollment in the schools, and the need to maintain quality in the face of increased demand. The construction of the new high school is a major step in ensuring that Buford schools retain their high levels of performance, and is an opportunity to provide "breathing room" for the middle and elementary schools and the academy.



Buford High School sports

Maintenance of High Level of Services/Utilities

Like the schools, many also tout the affordable utilities and public services provided by the City as a key quality of life factor in Buford. As the community continues to grow, measures should be taken to ensure that the quality of these services remains, without significant increases in costs to residents and businesses.



City Of Buford Electric Department

Preservation of Community Safety

Some respondents in the online survey expressed concern over a sense of increasing crime in the city, and a desire for the City to have its own police force. The creation of a City of Buford police force represents an enormous investment of resources that may not be fiscally sustainable; moreover, the average amount of calls related to crime within city limits is very low (approximately 8 per day). The City should continue to work with Gwinnett County to ensure that Buford residents, visitors, and workers feel safe in the community.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: QUALITY OF LIFE



■ *Additional Recreation Options*

One of the most desired quality of life amenities in the city is more options for recreation, particularly greenways and trails, parks, recreation programs, access to Lake Lanier, and more special events. A number of greenways and trail projects have already been identified through multiple planning studies, as have locations for potential parks. The City's new gym is an opportunity to provide recreation programming particularly to under-served populations, such as seniors and teens. The popularity of special events at the Community Center—and the fact that many travel from other counties to attend—attest to the demand for special events in the area.



■ *Improved Access to Healthcare*

One of the few quality of life components that is lacking in Buford is easy access to a hospital. In the early 2000s, the city was considered as a site for a major hospital but ultimately the facility located in Braselton (today's Northeast Georgia Medical Center Braselton). Today, Buford is still without a major health care facility; the senior population in particular is in need of close-by medical services, and there is strong support for attracting a medical hub to the area.

■ *Preservation of Historic Resources*

Buford contains a rich cultural heritage including many historic buildings. These buildings serve as an important link to the past and should be preserved whenever possible. The loss of the Bona Allen Tannery in 2015 underscores the need for remaining buildings to be protected, rehabilitated, and become actively used parts of the community.

■ *Community Engagement*

The Buford community has a reputation for being very close-knit. With the rapid growth in recent years, some residents are concerned that newcomers are not as engaged in the well-being of the city or as interested in contributing to civic life. There is a need to bridge this gap between the long-time residents and newer residents, and build stronger links between the two.

3

**VISION,
STRATEGIES,
& POLICIES**

3 VISION, STRATEGIES, & POLICIES

VISION

The vision and community goals capture the overall community consensus of where Buford is headed in the long term. It includes three parts: the vision statement, priority strategies, and a series of goals and supporting policies.

Overwhelmingly, City leaders, stakeholders, and other community members expressed that Buford is heading in the right direction and should continue along its current trajectory. In essence, the City should “keep on keeping on,” and maintain the energy, leadership, and policy direction that has brought Buford where it is today.

The vision and goals in this section build upon the City’s well-established tradition of planning for the future. The vision statement is a continuation of the vision established originally in 2009 as part of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update. Community goals have also been rolled over since the 2009 and 2014 comprehensive plan updates, but modified slightly to reflect recent changes in the community.

“ The 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. ”

PRIORITY STRATEGIES

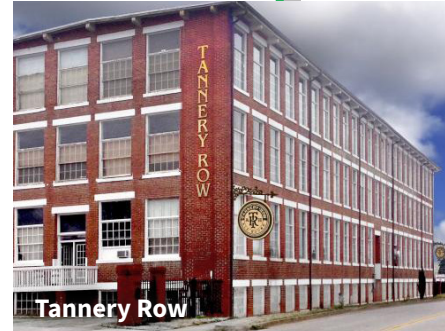
To move the vision forward, the following are five priority strategies for Buford to focus on in the coming years.

Continue to invest in the charm and small-town feel of Downtown Buford

Downtown is the heart of the community. The City should continue its investment in Downtown, and work to attract high-quality developers to rehabilitate the Bona Allen Warehouse into loft units, build out Tannery Row, and create more opportunities for housing in and near Downtown. The City should also continue with its plans to build the parking garage, expand Town Center, and modify ordinances so to encourage more outdoor dining and activity.



Existing character of Downtown Buford



Tannery Row



Buford Village

Maintain excellent City services

Buford is known for its top-notch schools and services, particularly its affordable utilities. The City should continue its commitment to high quality services, and closely coordinate these services with annexation, population growth, the availability of natural resources, and other community changes.



New Buford High School construction



Townhomes in Buford



Single Family Residence in Buford



Avalon in Alpharetta, GA

Encourage a variety of housing types in the community

In the past five years, a small housing boom of upscale, single-family residential neighborhoods has occurred in Buford. It is now time to focus on encouraging a greater variety of housing types such as those in mixed use projects; infill homes in established neighborhoods; housing options Downtown; live-work units; and smaller units attractive to both younger and senior households.



Vickers Mixed Use Development
in Historic Downtown Roswell, GA



Transit Oriented Development
in Chamblee, GA

Targeted growth and redevelopment

Throughout the community, there are multiple opportunities to accommodate new growth as well as redevelopment. These targeted areas are Downtown sites such as the Bona Allen Warehouse and Tannery Row, as well as opportunities for mixed use near the Buford Park-and-Ride, along Buford Highway, and the older commercial areas near the intersection of Buford Highway and SR 20.

Expand the types of employment and businesses

Buford has been remarkably successful in attracting industrial development, and should continue to do so. However, there is also a need to diversify the types of jobs and businesses in the city, particularly in terms of office and professional jobs.



Office Park in Roswell, GA

Invest in a stronger, multi-modal transportation network

Between the new transit services proposed in the *Connect Gwinnett* plan, to a large number of new roadway, intersection improvements, and new bicycle/pedestrian projects, Buford's transportation network is primed to improve mobility options.



Bike Share Parking at Transit Stop on Georgia Tech Campus

Lay the foundations of the greenway system

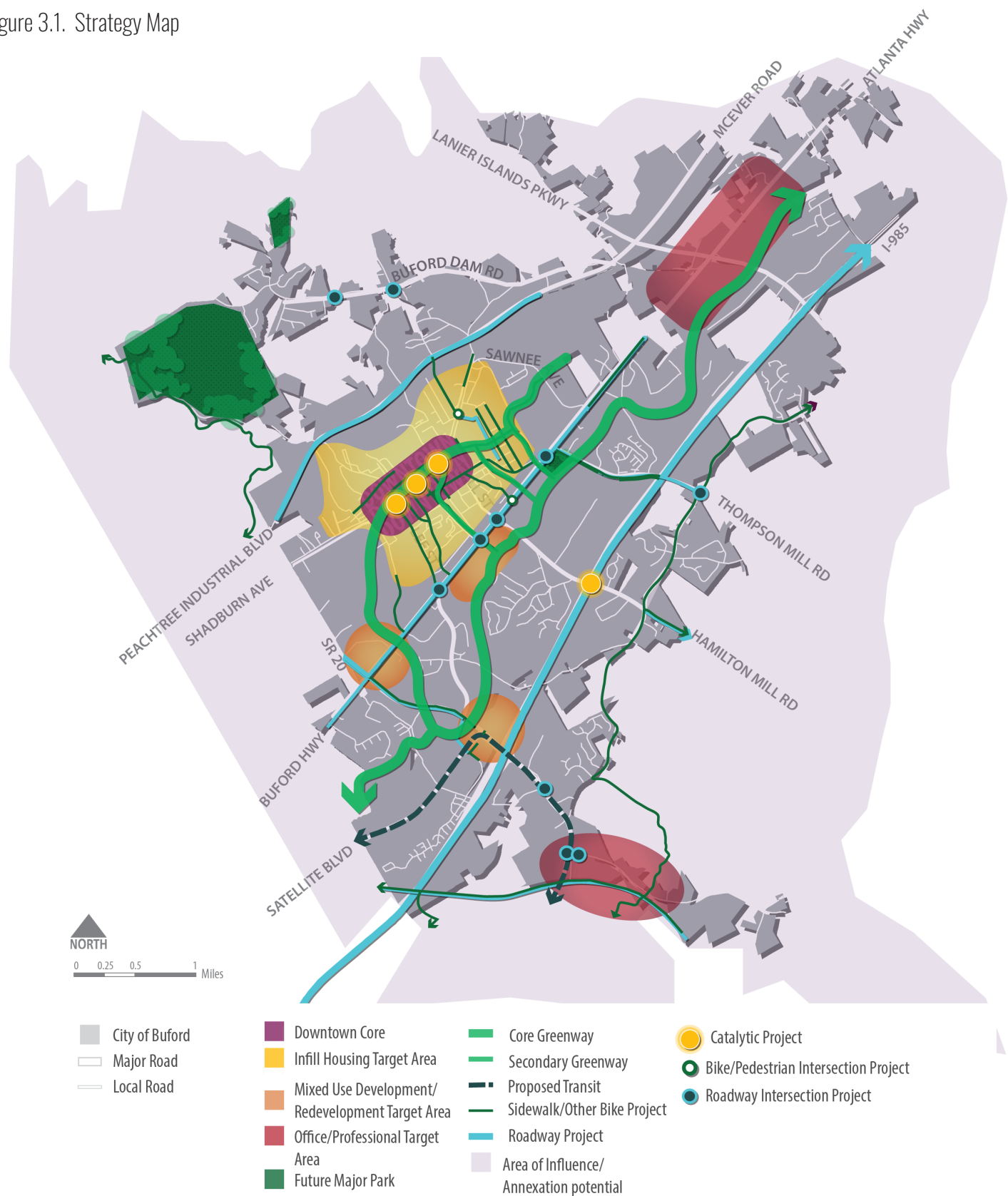
Trails are one of the best quality of life investments that a community can make. In Buford, there are many opportunities to start building a system of greenways and trails that connect key destinations both within the city, and beyond to regional networks of trails.



South Chickamauga Greenway Trail in Chattanooga, TN

Figure 3.1 on the following page is an illustrative vision of how these strategies can be implemented throughout the City of Buford.

Figure 3.1. Strategy Map



GOALS + POLICIES

The guiding policies that follow provide direction for the types of projects and decisions city staff, officials, and partners must make on a daily basis to move the vision forward. Highlights from the associated Community Work Program action items are noted below, and detailed in Chapter 5.

Goals and policies are organized by topic area: land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and quality of life. The purpose of the goals and policies is to bridge the gap between today's priority needs and opportunities and the City's vision for the future. They are intended to be general in nature and applied citywide, particularly at the time of rezoning, permit review, and budget preparation.

LAND USE

LU1. Maintain the small town character of Buford

- **LU1.1** - Preserve the existing character of Downtown
- **LU1.2** - Encourage new commercial space in Downtown
- **LU1.3** - Encourage the reuse of historic structures
- **LU1.4** - Maintain and enhance the integrity and character of existing residential neighborhoods

LU2. Continue to expand the City's tax base

- **LU2.1** - Support the redevelopment of under-used industrial and commercial sites
- **LU2.2** - Protect future industrial, warehouse/distribution, and office areas from residential encroachment
- **LU2.3** - Pursue annexation of nearby parcels, particularly those with commercial and industrial uses

LU3. Encourage mixed use development

- **LU3.1** - Foster compact mixed-use development
- **LU3.2** - Encourage varying types of housing
- **LU3.3** - Encourage the re-use or redevelopment of aging shopping centers

LU4. Invest in a high quality built environment

- **LU4.1** - Encourage the use of landscaping, lighting, signage, building design standards, and underground utilities to enhance the aesthetics of Buford
- **LU4.2** - Integrate green space throughout our community, including within neighborhoods, along streets, in parking lots, and within commercial and industrial developments
- **LU4.3** - Ensure high quality material and design in new development
- **LU4.4** - Encourage renovation and revitalization of housing in older neighborhoods

TRANSPORTATION

T1. Address congestion on roadways

- **T1.1** - Connect streets, sidewalks, open space and paths in adjacent developments to each other and stub out to adjacent undeveloped land
- **T1.2** - Provide for the routing of truck traffic around congested areas
- **T1.3** - Seek to reduce the number of curb cuts onto arterial streets and roadways to mitigate traffic congestion through the requirement of inter-parcel access where appropriate
- **T1.4** - Provide an interconnected street system supporting arrangement of route options, transportation modes, and reduced congestion

T2. Improve access to regional transportation infrastructure

- **T2.1** - Improve access to I-985
- **T2.2** - Coordinate with Gwinnett County in the expansion of transit opportunities
- **T2.3** - Link to the growing regional system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities

T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities

- **T3.1** - Encourage the construction of traffic calming methods, such as splinter islands, speed humps, and rumble strips to reduce traffic speed in neighborhoods
- **T3.2** - Promote new development that is conducive to walking and biking
- **T3.3** - Coordinate with Gwinnett and Hall Counties on implementing sidewalk and bicycle improvements on county roads
- **T3.4** - Create a trail network that serves the City of Buford and ties to the Suwanee Creek Greenway and the Gwinnett County Greenway Trail Plan
- **T3.5** - Strive for a balance between automobiles and other users
- **T3.6** - Ensure that walking and biking is safe, convenient, and enjoyable by investing in sidewalk and pedestrian improvements

T4. Support balanced parking strategies

- **T4.1** - Support the use of shared parking in commercial development
- **T4.2** - Ensure adequate parking is provided for new uses Downtown through the City's zoning and permitting process
- **T4.3** - Incorporate progressive parking management strategies, including shared parking, public decks, and similar facilities
- **T4.4** - Reduce requirements for surface parking where feasible

HOUSING

H1. Promote a variety of housing choices

- **H1.1** - Accommodate our diverse population by supporting master planned developments that provide a variety of housing types, styles and price ranges toward the goal of creating “life cycle” housing in the community
- **H1.2** - Continue to coordinate with Gwinnett County on the implementation and update of its Consolidated Plan to help preserve safe and affordable housing
- **H1.3** - Encourage the development of housing near and in Downtown

H2. Ensure new residential development meets high standards of quality

- **H2.1** - Encourage the design and construction of walkable, safe neighborhoods with pleasant, accessible public gathering places. Encourage the dedicate of adequate space for recreational use in all neighborhoods.

H3. Facilitate the improvement of existing housing stock

- **H3.1** - Support the elimination of substandard or dilapidated housing in our community through restoration of nuisance abatement to help ensure that quality housing is available for all residents.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ED.1 Grow Downtown’s economic base.

- **ED1.1** - Encourage cultural and community events Downtown
- **ED1.2** - Promote catalytic mixed-use projects as Downtown anchors
- **ED1.3** - Market Downtown Buford as a destination to expand local and visitor customer base, promote economic investment, and recruit new residents
- **ED1.4** - Coordinate efforts among businesses to promote Downtown to expand customer bases

ED.2 Promote redevelopment of under-used, undeveloped, and declining areas

- **ED2.1** - Target reinvestment in declining, existing neighborhoods to further encourage private sector redevelopment and accommodate future growth
- **ED2.2** - Target key sites for development and redevelopment based on market opportunity and needs

ED.3 Attract a variety of businesses and employers

- **ED3.1** - Support, whenever possible, job training programs such as Georgia Quick Start and the Job Training Partnership Act
- **ED3.2** - Actively recruit office and professional jobs to Buford

- **ED3.3** - Continue to pursue additional options for food shopping
- **ED3.4** - Support efforts to create a local Chamber of Commerce

ED.4 Balance industrial development with infrastructure and environmental needs

- **ED4.1** - Support efforts to consider establishing a Community Improvement District for the City's industrial areas.
- **ED4.2** - Evaluate land development regulations and the zoning code to ensure minimal impacts on the environment from industrial development

QL.2 Continue to provide affordable utilities and services to residents

- **QL2.1** - Provide sufficient utility capacity to meet future demand
- **QL2.2** - Provide adequate staffing, training, and equipment to support efficient and effective delivery of services of City Services
- **QL2.3** - Coordinate the timing, location, and capacity of community facilities with desirable patterns of land use and development
- **QL2.4** - Make efficient use of existing infrastructure before making new investments in capital projects that will increase operation and maintenance costs
- **QL2.5** - Support improved access to residential broadband access

QUALITY of LIFE

QL.1 Maintain the high quality of City of Buford schools

- **QL1.1** - Continue to invest in school facilities and staff
- **QL1.2** - Carefully consider annexation of residential areas in balance with school enrollment and capacity

QL.3 Promote a safe, peaceful community

- **QL3.1** - Work with Gwinnett County to maintain sufficient County police presence within the City
- **QL3.2** - Support and maintain professional public safety departments

QL.4 Serve as a good steward of the environment

- **QL4.1** - Encourage the preservation and planting of trees and other vegetation that enhance community livability and appearance. Preserve and restore trees and tree canopy in developed and developing areas

- **QL4.2** - Encourage construction practices that minimize soil erosion and sedimentation. Require erosion control during and appropriate landscaping immediately after development
- **QL4.3** - Promote and pursue the preservation of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas for their ecological and aesthetic value, and for the common enjoyment
- **QL4.4** - Continue to implement the tree ordinance to ensure it adequately addresses the City's tree preservation needs

QL.5 Celebrate Buford's history and culture

- **QL5.1** - Preserve, protect, and promote Buford's unique cultural and historic character and the resources that contribute to this character
- **QL5.2** - Encourage the maintenance of historic structures and, where appropriate, their adaptive reuse
- **QL5.3** - Support community and cultural activities
- **QL5.4** - Support efforts to establish a historical society for the City of Buford

QL.6 Invest in a robust system of parks, open space, and trails

- **QL6.1** - Supply the city's residents with well-designed, functional, and versatile recreational opportunities
- **QL6.2** - Expand the City's trail system to connect to a broader system of regional greenways and trails
- **QL6.3** - Expand recreation access to Lake Lanier

QL.7 Implement the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Water Resource Management Plan.

- **QL7.1** - Adopt the required ordinances for compliance with the plan
- **QL7.2** - Develop and update the required plans for compliance with the plan
- **QL7.3** - Provide sufficient funding and staffing to implement the required water conservation measures
- **QL7.4** - Continue adopting, implementing, and complying with existing state laws related to water conservation and drought response
- **QL7.5** - Comply with the requirements of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act (GESA)
- **QL7.6** - Implement development and land use policies or practices to encourage the protection of greenspace and/or the use of green infrastructure within the community
- **QL7.7** - Identify substantially impacted watersheds and implement WIPS to address impaired waters
- **QL7.8** - Conduct ongoing management of stormwater infrastructure to ensure effective functioning and watershed protection
- **QL7.9** - Develop and implement a local public education program that addresses watershed protection, stormwater issues, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution

4

**BUFORD
TOMORROW**

**FUTURE DEVELOPMENT &
FUTURE LAND USE**

4

BUFORD TOMORROW: FUTURE DEVELOPMENT & FUTURE LAND USE

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP

In addition to the vision statement, goals, and policies, another tool used to communicate a community's vision is character areas. The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the different parts of the City of Buford. They help guide future development through policies and suggested land uses that are tailored to each area of the city.

Character areas can be defined in several ways, but generally are identified by looking at the following components:

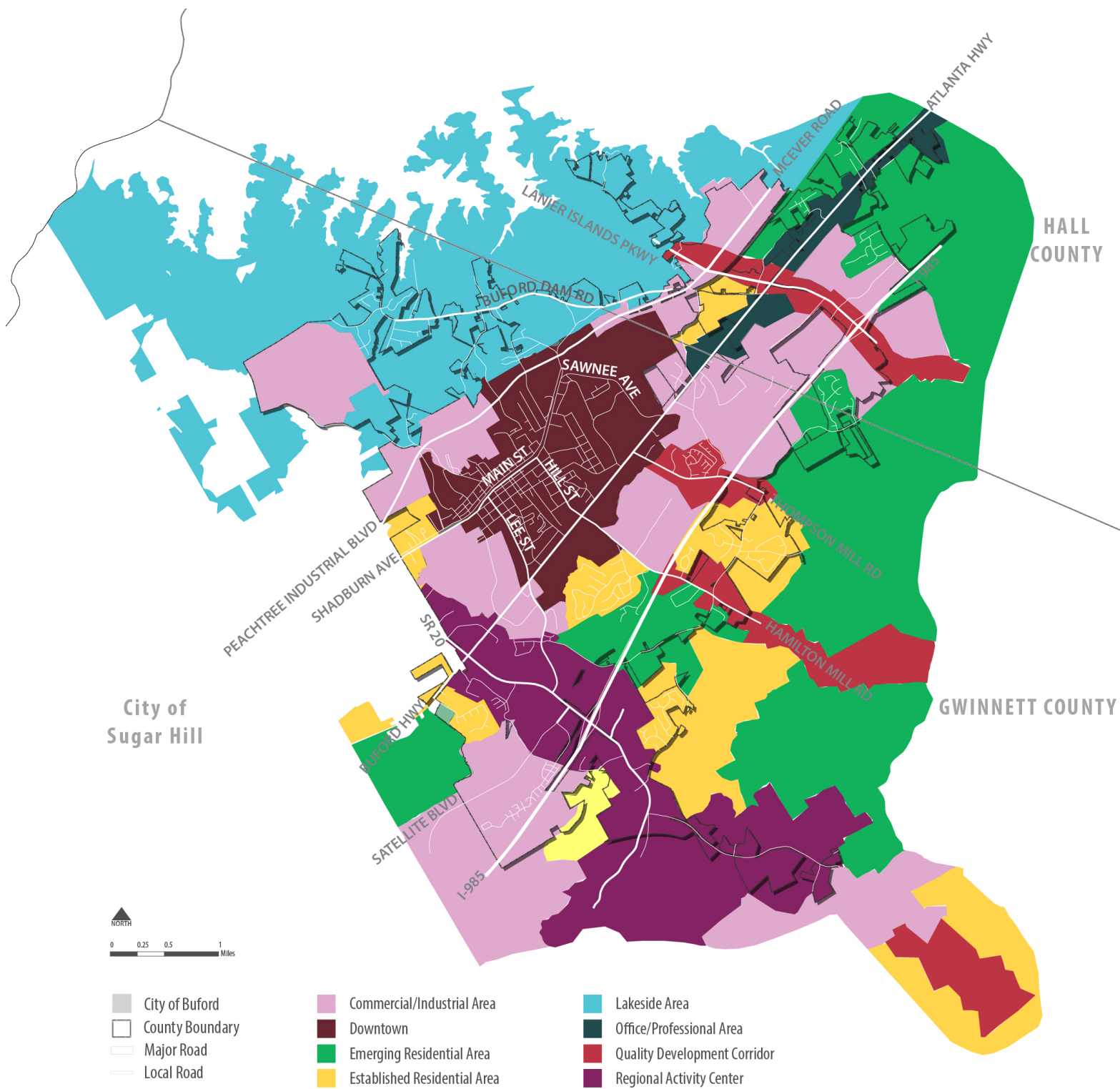
- Siting and configuration of lots
- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, and stormwater facilities
- Street design
- Intensity of development
- Building locations, dimensions, and orientations

- Types and quantities of natural features
- Location and types of civic buildings and public spaces
- Relationship between uses within the area

The future development map and its character areas were updated as part of the comprehensive plan to:

- Supplement the role of the Future Land Use Map
- Guide rezoning, special use, and development applications
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool
- Encourage and promote quality development/redevelopment
- Define common themes among regions of the city
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community
- Lay the framework for urban design guidelines and changes to development regulations

Figure 4.2. Future Development Map



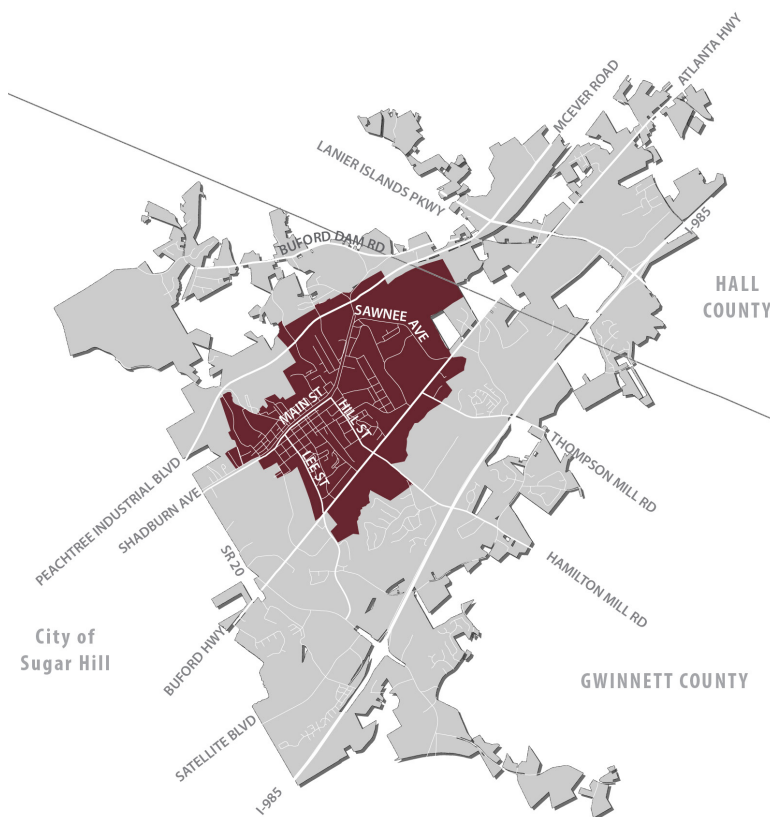
NOTE

The future development map extends past the City’s existing boundaries. This extended area represents a generalized Area of Influence of the City of Buford, and potential opportunities for future annexation.

CHARACTER AREA: DOWNTOWN

Existing character

The traditional central business district and surrounding residential, commercial, and civic areas, this area includes historic Main Street as well as the surrounding residential neighborhoods of Old Town Buford. It also incorporates the civic center on Buford Highway, the schools along Sawnee Avenue, and the Buford Village mixed-use development.



Encouraged Land Uses

Commercial (retail, restaurants), public-institutional, residential (all densities), mixed use, parks

Vision for the Future

A vibrant Downtown district that includes residential units, offices, restaurants, small-scale shops, cultural facilities, and entertainment venues. Downtown should serve as the focal point of the community and become a destination for dining, shopping, and cultural pursuits, where there is activity both during the day and the evening. Townhomes and other medium-density residential uses should be integrated into Downtown, and homes surrounding the main core of town are well-maintained and upgraded.

Key Policies

- LU1. Maintain the small town character of Buford
- LU4. Invest in a high quality built environment
- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- T4. Support balanced parking strategies
- H1. Promote a variety of housing choices
- ED.1 Grow Downtown's economic base
- ED.3 Attract a variety of businesses and employers
- QL.5 Celebrate Buford's history and culture

Major Projects

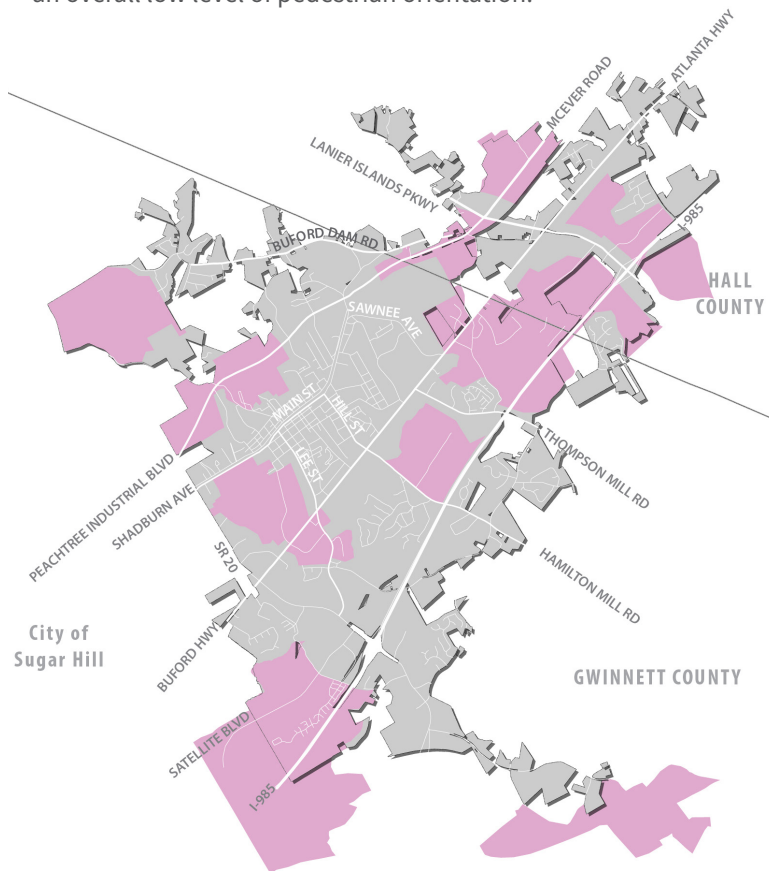
- Pursue Downtown Development Opportunities: Bona Allen Warehouse renovation, Tannery Row redevelopment, and "The Barn" (Old Public Works site)
- Explore establishment of a Downtown Overlay in the zoning code
- Complete the Moreno Street Streetscape
- Complete the South Lee Street Streetscape
- Public Parking Deck
- Conduct Downtown Parking Study/Parallel Parking Reconfiguration
- ROW Ordinance for patio dining
- Attract infill housing to Downtown
- Main Street Trail



CHARACTER AREA: INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL AREA

Existing character

The Industrial/Commercial character area is one of the most common in Buford. These parts of the city are characterized by commercial uses such as strip shopping centers, restaurants, large chain stores, and car dealerships; industrial uses include warehousing, manufacturing, and distribution facilities. Typically industrial/commercial parts of Buford experience significant vehicular and truck traffic, large building setbacks, extensive surface parking lots, and an overall low level of pedestrian orientation.



Existing Character

Encouraged Land Uses

Industrial, commercial

Vision for the Future

The highest priority for industrial/commercial areas should be to support business and commerce. This includes the efficient movement of freight, employees, and customer-related traffic into, out of, and through the character area. These areas should also be aesthetically pleasing with high quality design elements such as superior building materials, landscaping, and buffering from residential and other less intensive land uses. Steps should be taken to ensure that new industrial development within the city is green and does not have negative impacts on Buford's environmental quality.

Key Policies

- LU2. Continue to expand the City's tax base
- T1. Address congestion on roadways
- T2. Improve access to regional transportation infrastructure
- ED.2 Promote redevelopment of under-used, undeveloped, and declining areas
- ED.4 Balance industrial development with infrastructure and environmental needs
- QL.2 Continue to provide affordable utilities and services to residents and businesses

Major Projects

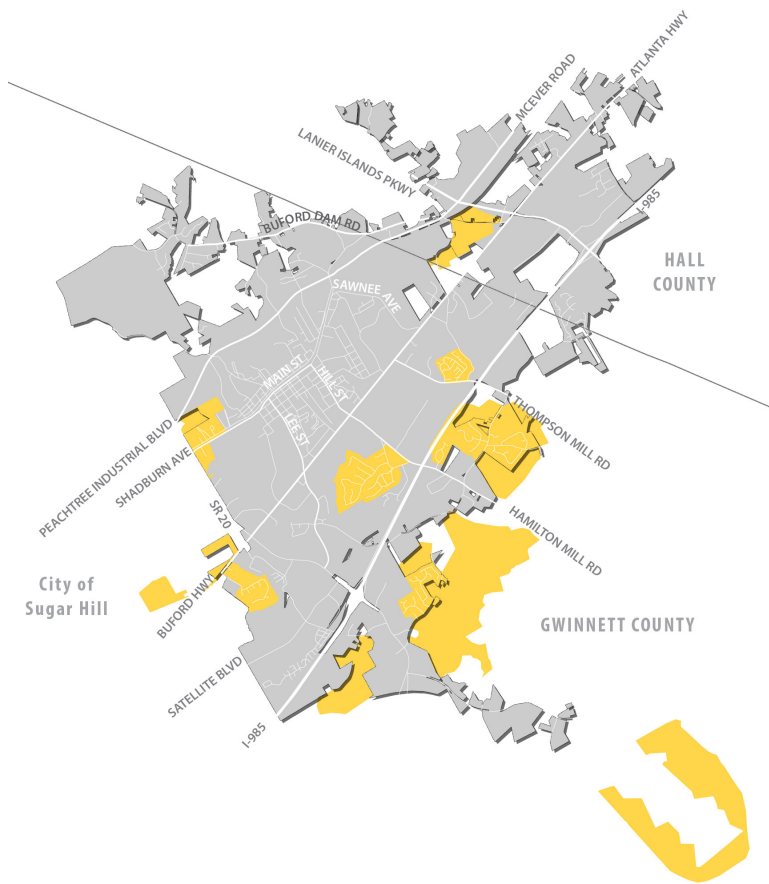
- Evaluate annexation opportunities in Hall County
- Thompson Mill Road interchange at I-985
- Mill Center Parkway Extension
- Freight Study
- Align ordinances with best practices for industrial development in terms of minimizing impacts on the community and environment
- Upper Suwanee Greenway West



CHARACTER AREA: ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL AREA

Existing character

Established residential areas in Buford are characterized by traditional suburban-style residential subdivisions. They are predominantly car oriented with few pedestrian facilities, and feature curving roads and cul-de-sacs. Most of the subdivisions in these areas have been built in recent decades.



Encouraged Land Uses

Residential (low and medium density), commercial (small-scale retail), parks/conservation

Vision for the Future

The vision for these established neighborhoods is to maintain their safety and attractiveness. Easy and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and businesses are in place to give residents transportation options for shorter trips. Neighborhoods are adequately buffered from more intense uses such as adjacent commercial and industrial development.

Key Policies

- LU4. Invest in a high-quality built environment
- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- H3. Facilitate the improvement of existing housing stock
- QL.1 Maintain the high quality of City of Buford schools
- QL.2 Continue to provide affordable utilities and services to residents
- QL.3 Promote a safe, peaceful community
- QL.6 Invest in a robust system of parks, open space, and trails

Major Projects

- North Bogan Multi-Use Trail
- South Bogan Multi-Use Trail
- Explore homeowner renovation assistance programs
- Upper Suwanee Greenway North
- Continue studying the long-term sustainability of City's existing utility rates and maintenance needs
- Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services



Single family residential in Buford



Bogan Park n Gwinnett County



Single family residential in Buford

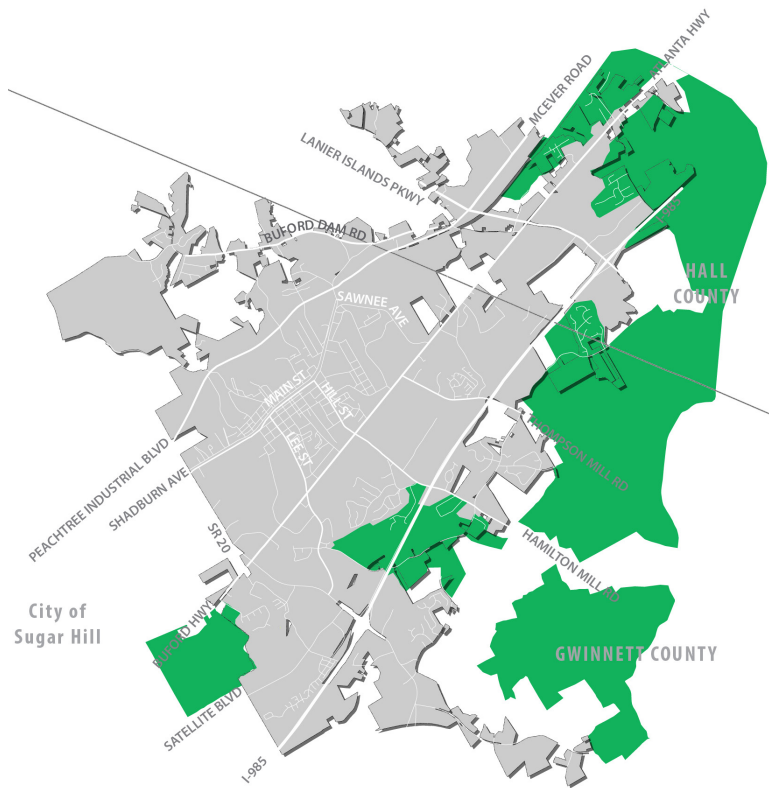
CHARACTER AREA: EMERGING RESIDENTIAL AREA

Existing character

This area features newly developing subdivisions, undeveloped land, and large lot residential that may be consolidated into new subdivision in the future. In general, these areas are expected to experience the greatest residential development pressures over the planning period. Furthermore, the availability of water and sewer service in these areas makes suburban residential development likely.



Existing Character



Encouraged Land Uses

Residential (low density and medium density), parks/conservation, undeveloped

Vision for the Future

High quality neighborhoods that are developed in an orderly, well-planned fashion with strong connectivity to the areas around them. As part of new development, parts of these areas are conserved in perpetuity as open green space.

Key Policies

- LU4. Invest in a high quality built environment
- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- H1. Promote a variety of housing choices
- H2. Ensure new residential development meets high standards of quality
- QL.1 Maintain the high quality of City of Buford schools
- QL.2 Continue to provide affordable utilities and services to residents
- QL.3 Promote a safe, peaceful community
- QL.4 Serve as a good steward of the environment
- QL.6 Invest in a robust system of parks, open space, and trails

Major Projects

- Coordinate annexation strategy with Buford City Schools
- Evaluate need for senior housing
- Develop housing design guidelines
- North Bogan Road Multi-Use Trail
- South Bogan Road Multi-Use Path
- Upper Suwanee Greenway South
- Evaluate development regulations in terms of the preservation of tree canopy and minimization of soil erosion and sedimentation



Atlanta Beltline Trail Connecting Abutting Neighborhoods



Single family residential in Buford



Agricultural residential in Buford

CHARACTER AREA: OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL AREA

Existing character

Focused along Atlanta Highway primarily in Hall County, this area currently is a mix of small-scaled commercial services and light industrial uses, interspersed with tracts of undeveloped land. This segment of the roadway is also currently being widened. There are no facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, and the overall character is utilitarian and almost rural feeling.



Encouraged Land Uses

Office/professional, commercial

Vision for the Future

The vision for the Office/Professional Area is a new employment center in Buford that focuses on office and professional opportunities. This includes small-scaled corporate campuses, professional services, and other types of employment that are currently in low supply in Buford. The offices are constructed of high quality materials with attractive landscaping, and connected through a system of pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Key Policies

- LU2. Continue to expand the City's tax base
- LU4. Invest in a high quality built environment
- T1. Address congestion on roadways
- T2. Improve access to regional transportation infrastructure
- ED.2 Promote redevelopment of under-used, undeveloped, and declining areas
- ED.3 Attract a variety of businesses and employers

Major Projects

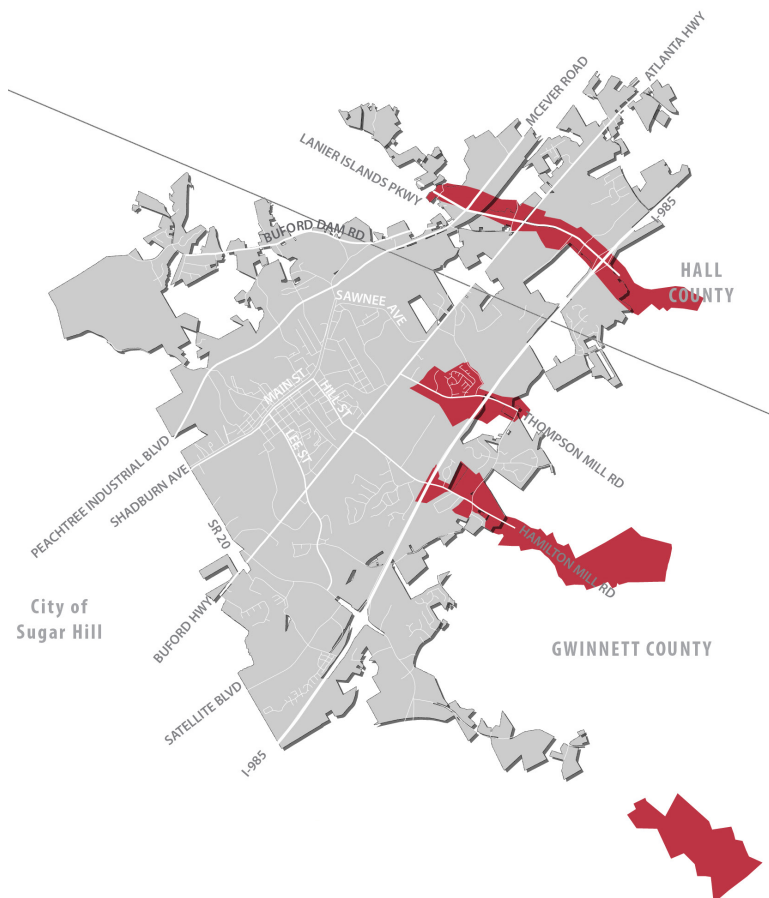
- Evaluate annexation opportunities in Hall County
- Continue annexation of Rest Haven
- I-985 Widening – Hall County
- Buford Development and Market Study
- Attract a medical facility
- Upper Suwanee Greenway North



CHARACTER AREA: QUALITY DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR

Existing character

These are heavily traveled local arterial roadway corridors that serve as connections between major activity hubs in Buford. Commercial and industrial uses constitute a growing percentage of the road frontages as new development occurs, and older residential uses are under pressure to transition to non-residential uses.



Encouraged Land Uses

Mixed use, commercial, residential (low and medium density)

Vision for the Future

Corridors that develop with high quality commercial and mixed use development at key intersections. Commercial development along these corridors should exhibit superior design features, similar to those seen in the Mall of Georgia area. Multi-modal transportation connections should be in place to ensure that residents of nearby neighborhoods can access commercial and mixed use areas easily.

Key Policies

- LU3. Encourage mixed use development
- LU4. Invest in a high quality built environment
- T1. Address congestion on roadways
- T2. Improve access to regional transportation infrastructure
- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- T4. Support balanced parking strategies
- ED.2 Promote redevelopment of under-used, undeveloped, and declining areas
- ED.3 Attract a variety of businesses and employers

Major Projects

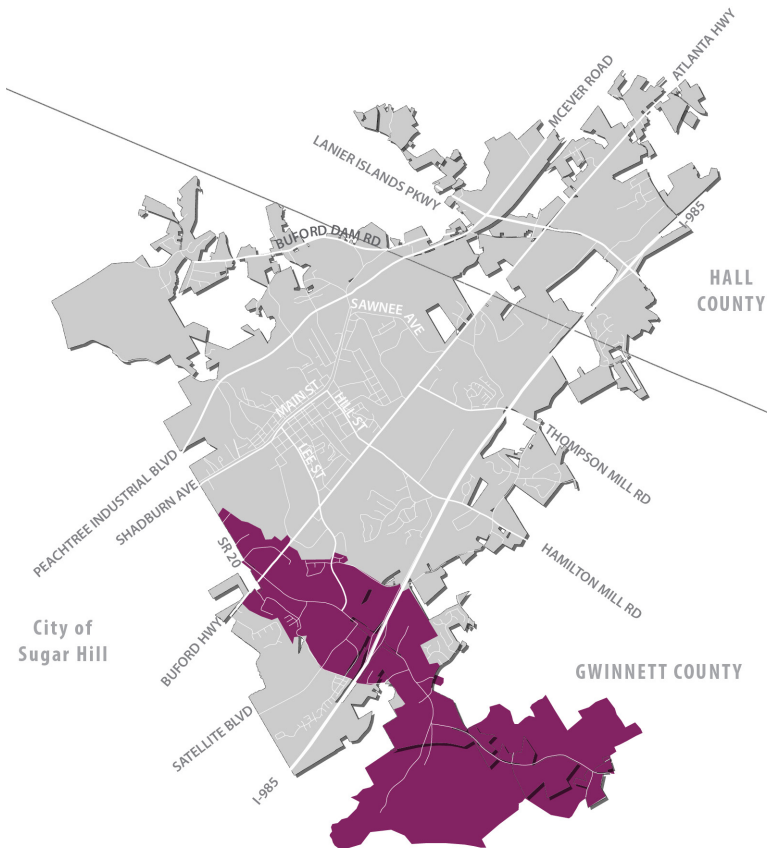
- Hamilton Mill Road at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement
- Thompson Mill Road Interchange at I-985
- I-985 Interchange at Hamilton Mill
- Thompson Mill Road Sidewalks
- Hamilton Mill Road side path
- Buford Development and Market Study
- North Bogan Road Multi-Use Trail
- Evaluate development regulations in terms of preservation of tree canopy and minimization of soil erosion and sedimentation



CHARACTER AREA: REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

Existing character

This area is a regional draw that attracts visitors to the Mall of Georgia and its ancillary commercial uses. It is comprised of mostly commercial uses and a number of apartment and townhome communities. This area is largely dominated by transportation infrastructure oriented towards cars, with multi-lane arterials and large surface parking lots.



Existing Character

Encouraged Land Uses

Commercial, Office/Professional, Mixed Use, Residential (medium and high density)

Vision for the Future

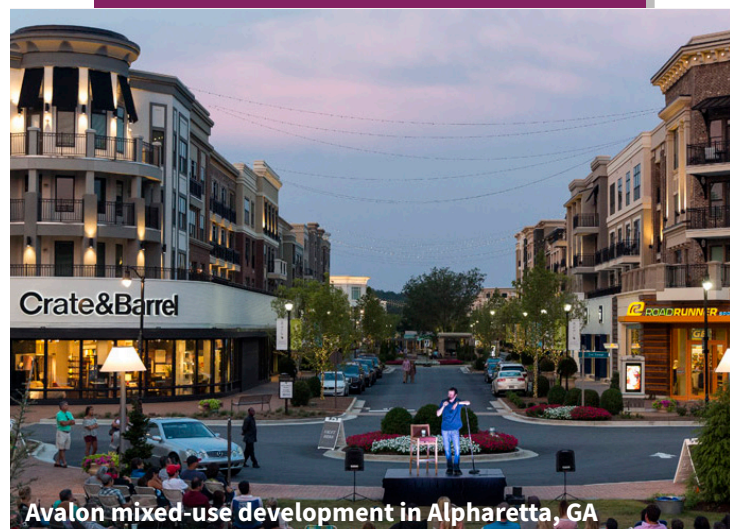
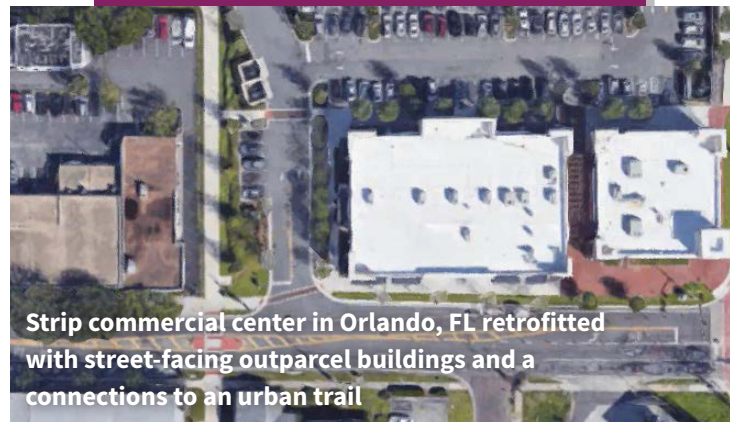
The vision for the Regional Activity Center is for it to develop into a major employment center that provides residents with increased and varied job opportunities beyond retail. A significant amount of multi-story offices will be added to the area around the Gravel Springs Road corridor. Mixed use development and the redevelopment of commercial properties should contribute to its unique sense of place and make the area more pedestrian friendly.

Key Policies

- LU2. Continue to expand the City's tax base
- LU3. Encourage mixed use development
- LU4. Invest in a high quality built environment
- T1. Address congestion on roadways
- T2. Improve access to regional transportation infrastructure
- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- T4. Support balanced parking strategies
- H2. Ensure new residential development meets high standards of quality
- ED.2 Promote redevelopment of under-used, undeveloped, and declining areas
- ED.3 Attract a variety of businesses and employers

Major Projects

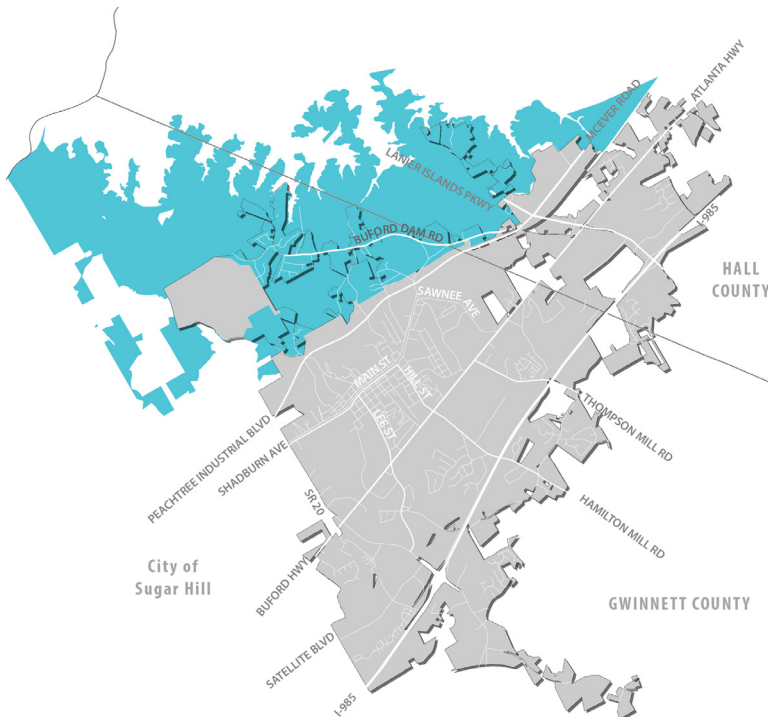
- Buford Development and Market Study
- Pursue redevelopment of commercial areas at Buford Highway and SR 20
- Pursue opportunities to annex land by the Mall of Georgia
- Park-and-Ride transit-oriented development (TOD)
- SR 20 intersection improvements (multiple)
- New Gwinnett County transit routes
- Upper Suwanee Creek Greenway North and West



CHARACTER AREA: LAKESIDE AREA

Existing character

Lake Sydney Lanier is the major focal point of this area. Lakeside neighborhoods are mostly comprised of single-family residential areas, with a mix of both year-round and vacation homes. Commercial uses in this area are almost exclusively boating related, including boat sales, storage, and equipment sales. The defining feature of this area is its orientation towards the lake.



Encouraged Land Uses

Residential (low density), commercial (small scale), parks/conservation

Vision for the Future

The Lakeside Area will be a resort destination with vibrant neighborhoods and commercial areas that serve both residents and visitors, including the low-density residential neighborhoods surrounding it. New development in the area will be created with a unique lakefront identity, avoiding generic corporate architecture. It will also be green in nature, and respect sensitive water supplies and water quality issues.

Key Policies

- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- H3. Facilitate the improvement of existing housing stock
- QL.2 Continue to provide affordable utilities and services to residents
- QL.4 Serve as a good steward of the environment
- QL.6 Invest in a robust system of parks, open space, and trails
- QL.7 Implement the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Water Resource Management Plan.

Major Projects

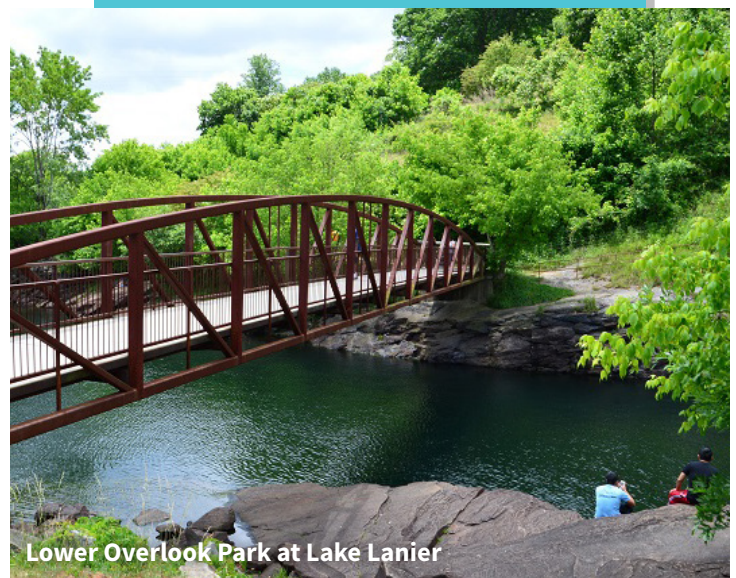
- Lanier Harbor Redevelopment
- Buford Dam Road intersection improvements
- Explore homeowner renovation assistance programs
- Future Regional Park (Gwinnett County)
- Sugar Loop to Buford Dam connection trail



Low density Residential in Buford



Neighborhood Retail in Rochester, NY



Lower Overlook Park at Lake Lanier

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

In contrast to character areas, the Future Land Use Plan is more specific on defining where different land use type should occur. Rather than being at a neighborhood or a community-wide level, this map is more detailed and operates at the parcel level.

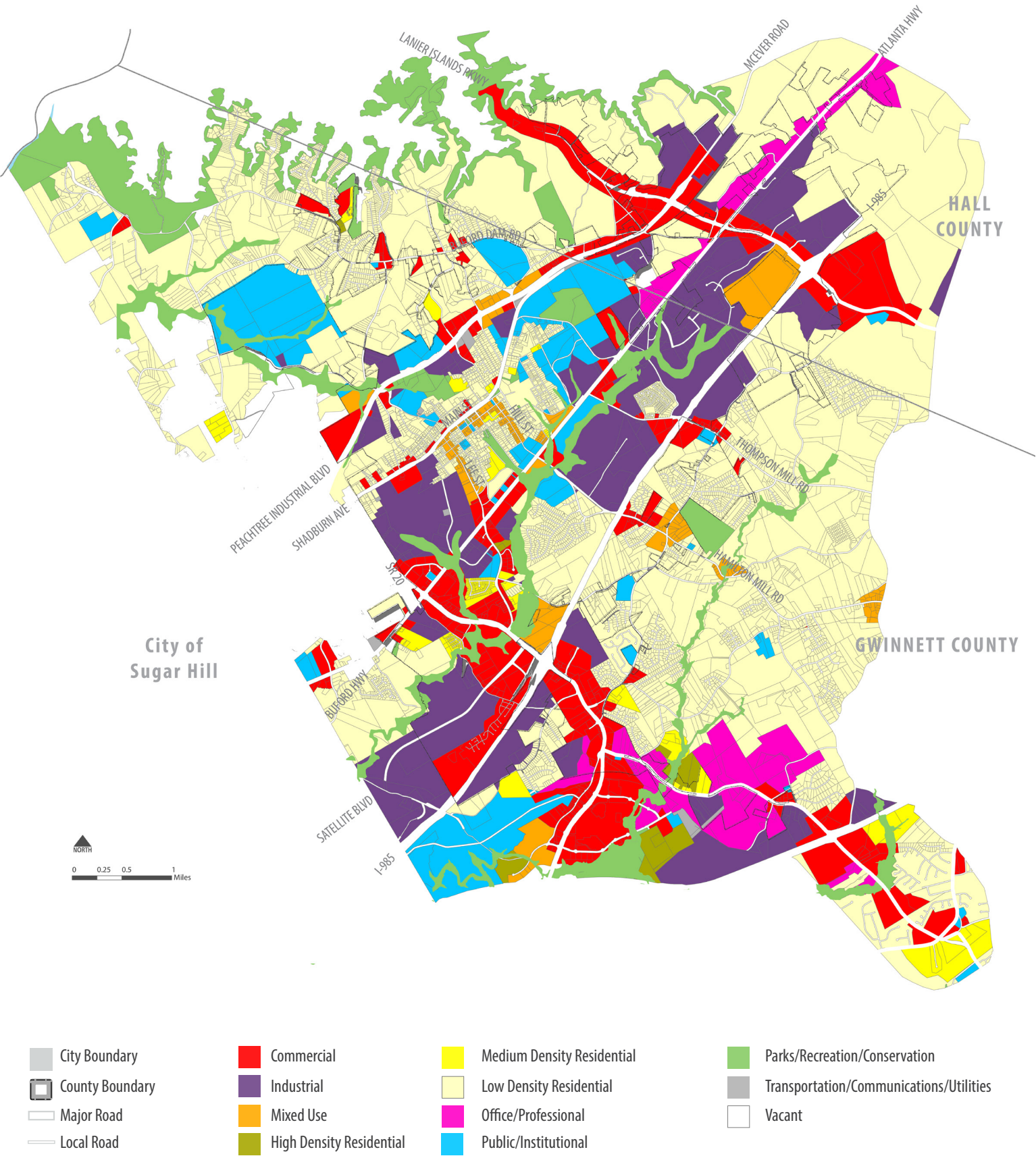
Each future land use category ties directly to an appropriate existing zoning category. In many respects, the Future Land Use Plan is a shorter range tool than the Character Area Map. It is intended to guide current rezoning decisions, and it more directly reflects current conditions and constraints on future development, such as the availability of supportive infrastructure like sewer and transportation.

Future land uses shown in the map are listed and defined in Table 4.1. The definitions also describe which zoning districts are appropriate for each future land use category.

Table 4.1. Future Land Use Categories

<i>Future Land Use</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Recommended Zoning</i>
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Conventional residential subdivisions as well as conservation subdivisions, with supportive recreational amenities and small-scale public institutional uses. Lot sizes are less than 3 units per acre	RA-200, R-140, R-100, RL, MH, MHS
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Single-family residential areas including duplexes and townhomes with between 4 and 6 units per acre	RMD
High Density Residential (HDR)	Apartments, townhomes or duplexes of up to 8 units per acre	RM, RM-8, RM-6
Commercial (COM)	Property where business and trade are conducted, including retail stores, shopping centers, and office buildings	C-2
Mixed Use (MX)	A variety of commercial, residential and civic uses typically found in a village, tied together with strong street and pedestrian connectivity	Requires a Special Use Permit
Office/Professional (O/P)	Properties that accommodate businesses that do not provide a product directly to customers on the premises, or do not as a primary activity involve manufacturing, storage, or distribution	O-I
Industrial (IND)	Property used for manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and trucking	OBP, M-1, M-2
Public/Institutional (PI)	Areas used for government or institution's general facilities, such as schools, health facilities, churches, libraries, and police and fire stations.	P
Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities (TCU)	Areas used for transportation, communication or utility related activities such as power generation plants, sewage and water treatment facilities, landfills, railroad facilities, radio towers, transit stations, telephone switching stations, or similar.	All Zoning Districts
Park/Recreation/ Conservation (PRC)	Areas developed or proposed to be developed for park and recreation use, or are designated as open space. Includes public parks, private recreation areas, lands held for conservation, and floodplains.	All Zoning Districts

Figure 4.2. Future Land Use Map



5

IMPLEMENTATION

5 IMPLEMENTATION



New development in Buford

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation program identifies specific ongoing, short-term (2019-2024), and long-term (beyond 2024) action items to address Buford's needs and opportunities. Action items are organized by their category: land use, transportation, economic development, housing, and quality of life, and link directly back to the city's goals and policies.

2019-2024 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Table 5.1. Community Work Program

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
LAND USE										
Coordinate annexation strategy with Buford City Schools	Prev Comp Plan	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City	N/A
Zoning Updates from Comprehensive Plan	LCI/Jacobs	✕						Staff Time	City	N/A
Explore establishment of Downtown Overlay in zoning code	Previous Comp. Plan	✕						Staff Time	City	N/A
Pursue opportunities to annex land by the Mall of Georgia	Steering Committee	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City	N/A
Park-and-Ride TOD	LCI							Staff Time	City/Developer	N/A
Pursue redevelopment of commercial areas at Buford Highway and SR 20	City							Staff Time	City/Developer	N/A
Pursue Buford Highway Mixed Use Development	LCI/City							Staff Time	City/Developer	N/A
Evaluate annexation opportunities in Hall County	Steering Committee	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City	N/A
Continue annexation of Rest Haven	City	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City	N/A
Lanier Harbor Redevelopment	City							Staff Time	City/Developer	N/A
Post zoning code, ordinances on Municode	Previous Comp. Plan	✕						Staff Time	City	N/A
Pursue Downtown Development Opportunities:										
Bona Allen Warehouse Renovation	LCI			✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City/Developer	N/A
Tannery Row Redevelopment	LCI			✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City/Developer	N/A
Downtown Infill Housing	City		✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City/Developer	N/A
"The Barn" (Old Public Works site)	LCI	✕	✕					Staff Time	City/Developer/DDA	N/A

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
TRANSPORTATION										
Intersection Projects										
Buford Highway at Robert Bell Parkway Intersection Improvement	LCI	✖	✖					\$130,000	City	SPLOST, City
South Lee Street at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement	LCI	✖	✖					\$240,000	GDOT	SPLOST, City
Buford Highway at South Garnett Street Intersection Improvement	LCI		✖	✖				\$240,000	GDOT, City	City
Hamilton Mill Road at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement	LCI		✖	✖				\$240,000	GDOT	City, SPLOST
Buford Dam Road at Little Mill Road Intersection Improvement	Gwinnett CTP						✖	\$2,000,000	City	TBD
Buford Dam Road at Shadburn Ferry Road Intersection Improvement	Gwinnett CTP						✖	\$1,750,000	City	TBD
SR 20 /Buford Dr at Plunketts Rd Intersection Improvements	Gwinnett CTP						✖	\$3,000,000	GDOT, Gwinnett CO	TBD
SR 20/Buford Dr at Gravel Springs Rd Extension Intersection Improvements	Gwinnett CTP							TBD	GDOT, Gwinnett CO	TBD
SR 20/Buford Drive Intersection Improvement at Financial Center Way	Gwinnett CTP							TBD	GDOT, Gwinnett CO	TBD
Thompson Mill Road Widening from US 23/SR 13 Buford to Faith Industrial Blvd	Gwinnett CTP					✖		TBD	Gwinnett County	TBD

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Roadway Projects										
Continue roadway maintenance program	Prev Comp Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	\$1.5M-\$2M	City	General Fund/ SPLOST
New Buford High School Road	CIP	✖						\$350,000	City	General Fund
Thompson Mill Road widening	LCI	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖		\$1,120,000	Gwinnett County, City	City
SR 20 widening from South Lee Street to SR 13	LCI	✖						TBD	GDOT	State, County, SPLOST, City
Mill Center Parkway Extension	LCI	✖	✖	✖	✖			TBD	City, Private	City, Private
East Shadburn Avenue Extension	LCI	✖	✖	✖				\$580,000	City	SPLOST, City
Satellite Boulevard to South Lee Street Connector	LCI						✖	TBD	GDOT, Gwinnett County, City	SPLOST
Thompson Mill Road interchange at I-985	LCI						✖	TBD	GDOT	SPLOST
I-985 Widening - Gwinnett Co	Gwinnett CTP	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	\$0	GDOT	n/a
North Bogan Road at Thompson Mill Road	Gwinnett CTP				✖			\$2,250,000	Gwinnett County	TBD
Thompson Mill Road Widening from US 23/SR 13 Buford to North Bogan Road	Gwinnett CTP					✖		\$2,056,811	Gwinnett County	TBD
I-985 Interchange at Hamilton Mill	Gwinnett CTP						✖	\$35,000,000	GDOT	TBD

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Transportation - Roadway Projects (Continued)										
Hamilton Mill Road Widening from North/South Bogan Road east	Gwinnett CTP							\$40,000,000	Gwinnett County	TBD
SR 20/Buford Dr widening from Buford Highway to Peachtree Industrial Blvd	Gwinnett CTP/ARC	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	TBD	GDOT, Gwinnett CO	TBD
SR 20/Buford Drive Widening from South Lee Street to Buford Hwy	Gwinnett CTP/ARC	✖						\$6,368,192	GDOT, Gwinnett CO	TBD
US 23/SR 13/Buford Hwy/ Suwanee Dam Rd to SR 20/ Buford Dr	Gwinnett CTP							TBD	GDOT, Gwinnett CO	TBD
Cross Road from Kilgore Road to Gravel Springs Road	Gwinnett CTP							TBD	City	TBD
Sugarloaf Parkway Extension - Phase 3 New Alignment from I-85 to Peachtree Industrial Blvd	Gwinnett CTP/ARC						✖	TBD	Gwinnett Co	TBD
SR 13/Atlanta Hwy - From Sawnee Ave to SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway	Gainesville-Hall MPO		✖	✖	✖	✖		TBD	GDOT, Hall Co	TBD
SR 347/Lanier Islands Pkwy - McEver Rd to Lake Lanier Islands Turn Lane	Gainesville-Hall MPO		✖	✖				TBD	Hall Co, City	TBD
McEver Road from 347 Lanier Islands Pkwy to Jim Crow Rd Widening	Gainesville-Hall MPO		✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	TBD	Hall Co, City	TBD
I-985 widening - Hall Co	Gainesville-Hall MPO	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	\$0	GDOT	N/A
I-85SB to 985N Feasibility Study	City						✖	\$0	GDOT	N/A

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Transportation - Bicycle + Pedestrian Projects										
Shadburn Avenue major pedestrian faicilities	LCI	✖	✖	✖				\$1,476,600	City	TIP, LCI
Shadburn Ferry Road major pedestrian facilities	LCI	✖	✖	✖	✖			\$745,200	City	TIP, LCI
New Street sidewalks	LCI	✖						\$247,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Forest Street sidewalks	LCI	✖						\$144,300	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Bona Road sidewalks	LCI	✖	✖					\$130,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
West Jackson Street sidewalks	LCI	✖	✖					\$136,500	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Heraeus Boulevard sidewalks	LCI	✖	✖					\$132,600	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Thompson Mill Road sidewalks	LCI	✖	✖	✖				\$176,800	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
South Harris Street sidewalks	LCI	✖	✖	✖				\$61,100	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Powers Avenue sidewalks	LCI	✖	✖	✖				\$113,100	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Transportation - Bicycle + Pedestrian Projects (Continued)										
Horizon Parkway/Satellite Boulevard sidewalks	LCI		✖	✖	✖			\$55,900	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST, Private
Shadburn Ferry Road railroad crossing improvements	LCI		✖	✖	✖			\$45,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Little Mill Road railroading crossing improvements	LCI		✖	✖	✖			\$45,000	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
S Alexander Street/Church Street Sidewalks	LCI		✖	✖	✖			\$285,600	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Pedestrian connector from Parking Deck to Main Street	LCI	✖	✖					\$1,000,000	City	SPLOST
Buford Hwy at Buford Community Center HAWK signal	CLI				✖			\$285,600	City	CDBG, LMIG, City, SPLOST
Jones Alley Upgrades	LCI	✖	✖					TBD	City, Private	SPLOST, City
North Bogan Road Multi-Use Trail	County Trails						X	\$6,849,000	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
Hamilton Mill Road side path	County Trails						X	\$13,714,000	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
South Bogan Multi-Use Path	County Trails						X	\$7,039,000	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
Sugarloaf Extension Community Trail Phase 3	County Trails						X	\$23,956,000	GDOT, County, City	TBD
Moreno Bike/Ped Last Mile Connectivity	Gwinnett CTP/ARC	✖	✖	✖				\$2,993,152	City	TBD

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Transportation - Other										
Public Parking Deck	LCI	✖	✖					\$6,000,000	City	SPLOST, City, Private
Complete Moreno Street Streetscape	CIP	✖						\$175,000	City	General Fund
Complete S Lee Street Streetscape	CIP	✖						\$1,400,000	City	General Fund
ITS Expansion on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (Phase 2)	Gwinnett CTP		✖	✖				TBD	Gwinnett County	TBD
ITS Expansion on SR 13/Buford Highway	Gwinnett CTP			✖	✖			TBD	GDOT, Gwinnett Co	TBD
I-985 ITS	Gainesville-Hall MPO	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	X	\$0	GDOT	n/a
Conduct Downtown Parking Study/Parallel Parking Reconfiguration	Jacobs			✖				\$35,000	City	General Fund
Freight Study	Jacobs	✖						\$50,000	City	General Fund
Evaluate land development regulations for interparcel connectivity, connections between new neighborhoods, limitation of curb cuts, and reduced parking requirements	Jacobs	✖						Staff Time	City	N/a
Route 50 New Local Bus Service	Connect Gwinnett	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	X	N/A	Gwinnett County	N/A
Direct Connect 401 Route	Connect Gwinnett				✖	✖	X	N/A	Gwinnett County	N/A
Flex Route 500	Connect Gwinnett	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	X	N/A	Gwinnett County	N/A

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT										
Buford Development and Market Study	Jacobs		✖					\$120,000	City	General Fund
Continue to work with Buford Business Alliance	Prev Comp Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
Continue to work with the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce	Prev Comp Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
Recruit independent restaurants	LCI	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
Recruit specialty retail	LCI	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
Recruit specialty food stores	LCI	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
Establish a dedicated funding mechanism to support infrastructure and other improvements	LCI		✖					Staff time	City	N/A
Community Center Marketing	LCI	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
Nomination of Downtown District to the National Register of Historic Places	LCI						✖	\$15,000	City	General Fund
Attract medical facility	Steering Comm.	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
ROW Ordinance update for patio dining	Jacobs		✖					Staff time	City	N/A
Explore historic façade program for Downtown	Jacobs			✖				Staff time	City	N/A
Align ordinances with best practices for industrial development in terms of minimizing impacts on the community and environment	Jacobs	✖						Staff time	City	N/A

Table 5.1. Community Work Program (Continued)

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
HOUSING										
Implement Buford Housing Authority Plan	City	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	Housing Authority	N/A
Evaluate need for senior housing	Steering Com.	✖						Staff time	City	N/A
Consider participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing	Jacobs	✖						Staff time	City	N/A
Develop Housing Design Guidelines	Jacobs				✖			\$35,000	City	General Fund
Explore homeowner renovation assistance programs	Jacobs		✖					Staff time	City	N/A
Attract infill housing to Downtown	City		✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City/Private	N/A
QUALITY OF LIFE										
Trail Projects										
Parks, Greenways, and Trails Plan	Jacobs			✖				\$70,000	City	General Fund
Greenway Trail (north side of Suwanee Creek)	LCI						✖	\$3,362,000	City, Private	SPLOST
Greenway Trail (New Street to Suwanee Creek west of Garnett St)	LCI						✖	\$626,000	City, Private	SPLOST
Greenway Trail (Fifth Street to Legion Fields)	LCI						✖	\$1,058,000	City, Private	SPLOST
Greenway Trail (Sawnee Ave to Suwanee Creek)	LCI						✖	\$784,400	City, Private	SPLOST
Greenway Trail (Bona Allen Tannery to Buford Hwy)	LCI						✖	\$460,400	City, Private	SPLOST
Main Street Trail	Jacobs						✖	TBD	City	TBD

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Quality of Life - Trail Projects (Continued)										
Upper Suwanee Greenway North	County Trails						✖	TBD	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
Upper Suwanee Greenway West	County Trails						✖	TBD	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
Upper Suwanee Greenway South	County Trails						✖	TBD	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
Sugar Loop to Buford Dam Trail Connection	County Trails						✖	TBD	Gwinnett County, Sugar Hill, City	TBD
Garnett Street Greenway	City		✖	✖				\$1,000,000	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
Complete Youth Baseball Park	LCI	✖	✖	✖				\$6,932,788	City	General Fund, SPLOST
Future Regional Park	Gwinnett County						✖	TBD	Gwinnett County, City	TBD
Utility Projects										
Continue studying long-term sustainability of City's existing utility rates and maintenance needs	Prev Comp Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff time	City	N/A
Wastewater utility expansion	CIP	✖						\$50,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Reconstruction/Renewal of wastewater utilities	CIP	✖						\$1,500,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Water treatment plant expansion	CIP	✖						\$100,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Reconstruction/Renewal of water utilities	CIP	✖						\$50,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Jackson Street Stormwater Improvements	CIP	✖						\$300,000	City	General Fund

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Quality of Life - Utility Projects (Continued)										
Electrical utility expansion	CIP	✖						\$450,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Gas utility expansion	CIP	✖						\$1,100,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Reconstruction/Renewal of gas utilities	CIP	✖						\$400,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Lee Street Gas Utility Relocation	CIP	✖						\$100,000	City	Enterprise Fund
Assess wastewater treatment capacity expansion options	City	✖	✖					Staff Time	City	N/A
Update ordinances/City code to fully comply with Regional Water Plan	Regional Water Plan	✖						Staff Time	City	N/A
Develop/update required planning efforts from Regional Water Plan	Regional Water Plan	✖	✖	✖				\$100,000	City	General Fund
Develop and implement water resources public education programs	Regional Water Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff Time	City	N/A
Manage/Monitor stormwater infrastructure	City	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Staff Time	City	N/A
Establish permanent monitoring at Suwanee Creek	Regional Water Plan		✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	N/A	Gwinnett County	TBD

Project	Source	Timeframe						Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+			
Quality of Life - Other (Continued)										
Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services	Prev Comp Plan	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City	N/A
Lanier Harbor Lake Park/ Access	City			✕				Staff Time	City/Private	N/A
Continue working with Gwinnett County to maintain sufficient County police presence	Jacobs	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City	N/A
Evaluate development regulations in terms of preservation of tree canopy and minimization of soil erosion and sedimentation	Jacobs	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff Time	City	N/A

APPENDIX

A

**RECORD OF
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

APPENDIX A:

RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Table A.1. Record of Accomplishments

Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Status	Note
Land Use										
1. Revise zoning ordinance and other regulations as necessary	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City Commission	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
2. Consider establishment of a zoning overlay for downtown to protect the City's historic integrity.		✕				\$15,000	City Commission	General Fund, LCI	P	Have not determined need for overlay yet
3. Work with the Atlanta Regional Commission to identify opportunities for pursuit of its Lifelong Communities Initiative within Buford	✕		✕		✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
4. Coordinate annexation strategy with Buford City Schools and population and housing trends	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
5. Attract various retail businesses including grocers, staple type and other service-oriented business such as health care.	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
6. Move City ordinances to Municode to facilitate access by community members.	✕					\$10,000	Planning Department	N/A	P	Low priority item, but will carry over to Comprehensive Plan update
7. Pursue opportunities to annex land by the Mall of Georgia	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City Commission	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort

Y = Yes, U = Underway, P = Postponed, C = Canceled

Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Status	Note
Transportation										
1. Complete LCI South Lee Street streetscape, including sharrows		✕				\$3.2 million (construction)	City	SPLOST, local	Y	
2. Complete GW-341 (PI 0008906) LCI South Hill Street Pedestrian Improvements from Main Street to SR 13 (Buford Hwy)	✕					\$1.2 million (construction)	City	Local, LCI	Y	
3. School Drive pedestrian safety and facility improvements	✕					\$200,000	City		Y	
4. GW-099C (PI 132950) Buford Highway Widening from Sawnee Ave to Friendship Road (SR 347)	✕	✕	✕			\$18 million City funding; \$1.25 million (Design); \$3.25 million total	GDOT/City (design)	State/ SPLOST	U	Ongoing effort
5. GW-308C (PI 0006925) Sugarloaf Parkway EXtension - Phase 3 from SR 20 (Buford Hwy/Mall of GA Pkwy) to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard		✕				\$2 million (ROW)	GDOT/ Gwinnett County	Federal/ local/other	?	Unknown status
6. Continue road maintenance program	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	\$1-\$1.5 million	City	City General Fund/ SPLOST	Y	Ongoing effort
7. Pursue LCI implementation funding or other sources to provide for additional parking supply in Historic Downtown	✕	✕	✕			Staff time	City	N/A	Y	
8. Build approximately 30 parking spaces along South Leet Street in coordination with LCI project if funding and property can be acquired			✕	✕	✕	\$150,000 (excluding land acquisition)	City	SPLOST/City General Fund	Y	

Y = Yes, U = Underway, P = Postponed, C = Canceled

Table A.1. Record of Accomplishments (Continued)

Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Status	Note
Transportation (Continued)										
9. Pursue LCI funding for pedestrian and streetscape improvements at Moreno Street and Church Street	✕	✕				Staff time	City	N/A	Y	
10. GH-007 (PI 162430)-SR 347/ Friendship Road from I-985 to SR 211	✕					\$48 million (construction)	GDOT	L200	Y	
11. GH-014 (PI 170735)- SR 347 Lanier Islands Parkway - I-985 to McEver Road Phase I	✕					\$17 million (construction)	GDOT	L200	Y	
12. GH-021 GW-099C (PI 132950) Widening of SR 13/Atlanta Hwy from Sawnee Avenue in Gwinnett County to SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway in Hall County (ROW 2014, CONST 2015)	✕	✕				\$11 million	GDOT	Local and L240	Y	
13. GH-078 (PI 0007319) Widening of SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway - McEver Road to Lake Lanier Islands	✕	✕	✕	✕		\$13.9 million	GDOT	Local and L200	U	GDOT project, unknown completion date
14. GH-084 (PI 0001821) Widening of McEver Road from SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway to Jim Crow Road					✕	\$57.7 million	GDOT	Local and L200	?	Unknown status

Y = Yes, U = Underway, P = Postponed, C = Canceled

Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Complete?*	Status Update
Economic Development										
1. Revisit possibility of pursuing designation of an opportunity zone within the city			✕			Staff time	City	N/A	C	Determined to not be relevant at this time
2. Consider a Redevelopment Plan in support of an application of the Opportunity Zone			✕			TBD	City	City General Fund	C	Determined to not be relevant at this time
3. Complete audit of City's Code of Ordinances and regulations to identify code and regulation improvements that would improve the small business environment		✕				\$10,000	Planning Department	City General Fund	Y	
4. Continue to work with Buford Business Alliance	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
5. Continue to work with the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce to recruit business and industry to Buford	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
Community										
1. EXplore opportunity to establish trail(s) along creek directly south of City Hall	✕	✕	✕			\$1 million	City		Y	
2. Complete Master Plan for 32 acre recreatin site on easterly side of Buford Highway across from the intersection of Buford Highway and Sawnee Avenue	✕					\$20,000	City	N/a	Y	

Y = Yes, U = Underway, P = Postponed, C = Canceled

Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Complete?*	Status Update
Community (Continued)										
3. Pursue grant for greenspace project	✕	✕				Staff time	City	N/a	C	Did not pursue
4. Continue to maintain, eXpand, and support needs of natural gas and electric infrastructure; provide funding for capital improvements	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	\$5 million	City	Enterprise Funds	Y	Ongoing effort
5. Upgrade Southside Wastewater Treatment Plant and treatment capabilities				✕	✕	\$20 million	City	Bonds/ SPLOST/ General and Enterprise Funds	Y	
6. Upgrade water treatment plant				✕	✕	\$16-20 million	City	Enterprise Fund/ SPLOST/ General Fund/Grants, Bonds	Y	
7. Renewal of water and sewer lines in historic Buford and surrounding areas and upgrade of transmission mains	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	\$3 million	City	Enterprise Fund/ SPLOST/ General Fund/ Grants	Y	Ongoing effort
8. Continue studying long-term sustainability of City's existing utility rates and maintenance needs	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
9. Develop five year marketing plan for the Community Center		✕				TBD	Buford Community Center	General Fund	C	No longer seen as a need
10. Consider feasibility study of curbside recycling program		✕				\$10,000	Staff Time	General Fund/ Enterprise Fund	Y	
11. Maintain City staff involvement in planning processes for Buford City Schools	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort

Y = Yes, U = Underway, P = Postponed, C = Canceled

Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Complete?*	Status Update
Community (Continued)										
12. Consider opportunities for adding new parks and recreation facilities	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	City	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort
13. Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	Staff time	Planning Department	N/A	Y	Ongoing effort

Y = Yes, U = Underway, P = Postponed, C = Canceled

A large green circle with a white border is centered on a dark teal background. The circle contains the text 'APPENDIX B' in large white letters and 'PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT' in smaller white letters below it. A diagonal line of a lighter teal color runs from the bottom left towards the top right, passing behind the circle.

APPENDIX

B

**PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT**

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Jacobs team collaborated with City Staff to complete a series of public engagement events to effectively prepare the needs and opportunities Element and to refine the vision and implementation strategies of the Buford 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Each event was organized to collect an array of thoughts and ideas from the community. These included Stakeholder Interviews, an online survey, 2 Steering Committee Meetings, and an On-the-Spot Engagement Event.

Stakeholder Interviews

The Comprehensive Plan team spent a day to meet with stakeholders one-on-one. These individuals included community leaders, City Staff members, elected and appointed officials, and other residents. We asked them questions regarding significant changes within the last 5 years, opportunities, challenges, and aspirations for the City to be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan.

Online Survey #1

The first of two online surveys was launched on Survey Monkey in July 2018. Approximately 100 responses were collected regarding the City of Buford's strengths, key issues, and opportunities.

Steering Committee Meeting #1

The City identified members of the community to serve on the Steering Committee, which provided input and guidance to the Comprehensive Plan Update throughout the process. At the first meeting, the committee was introduced to the project goals, scope of work, and the project schedule. A conversation was facilitated to gather input on existing conditions, needs and opportunities through a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis, and revisions to the Community Vision.

Steering Committee Meeting #2

The second Steering Committee Meeting focused on reviewing and refining the draft Community Vision and Goals, and gathering input on the Draft Character Areas and narrative. The group's comments were translated into the Future Development Map revisions.

On-the-Spot Engagement

The project team collected input from concert attendees on August 11, 2018 to engage people in their own context rather than a formal meeting. Some needs and opportunities acquired from previous engagement events were validated, and participants identified what they saw as major issues and what they would like to see moving forward.

APPENDIX B.1: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW MINUTES

July 5, 2018 (In-person)

10:00 AM - Mary Beard

- “2040? Shoot! Buford will be up in Gainesville by then.”
- People who want to move back can’t afford homes that are being built here. Very limited housing supply, riding on a bubble now.
- Grew up in Buford; joined Air Force for 20 years; came back, worked with churches and other groups
- Used to work for Buford Housing Authority; the Authority has facilities in five towns; She retired in 2010; came back as the director.
- Got a superior rating from HUD this year; 35% of housing is for international residents. Some Iraqis, Koreans, Romanians, Russians—mostly seniors. Iraqis have children. Trying to keep diversity
- Have 4-10 calls a day asking if there are openings in housing. People want the Buford schools.
- The Authority does not do Section 8.
- Total 189 units in several jurisdictions; Buford has 143 of those.
- Look at what has happened in the past 15 years – no one could have imagined it. What’s next?
- Utility Maintenance Department is stellar; \$5 water, \$2 garbage. Crazy affordable utilities!!
- Gwinnett Transit Park-n-Ride is very popular, though when GCT tried to run a route through town it failed for lack of ridership.
- People feel safe, including the immigrants in the public housing.
- More senior living facilities are needed: new 55+ community going in on Ridge Road (not Buford but near the middle school) “daisy-chained” 4 to a building;
- Most seniors want big houses; no yards.
- County Fire service is good. There is a fire station down the street.
- Housing has about \$200-300k/year for capital expenses; want to bring up the 1950 buildings; might tear one down eventually; are modernizing insides. Outside is institutional brick look, but making a difference.
- Mary will send us their 5-year Housing Plan
- Big trend in public housing is to merge with partners to have mix of fair market, senior, moderate rent/public housing
- City sells gas all the way past Winder
- City has own water line from the lake, part of the Buford dam deal; don’t have to buy from County

Major changes in past 15 years:

- Mall of Georgia
- New schools
- Built another school, and now the high school
- Widened 20 brought it all the way through

Major changes in the past 5 years:

- New high school getting built
- Lots of building and roads; keeping up widenings (Buford Hwy, 20), but people are cutting through neighborhoods, but roads are narrow.
- The City needs a grocery store. Have lost a grocery store; lost Kmart, lost Quality Food, lost Kroger; have to go to Ridge Road/Hamilton Mill. Publix is putting in a store on Hamilton Mill and Bogan
- What’s happening now?
- Lennar is building 65 or so homes near Lee Street.

(DR Horton also has built homes)

- Interchange at Thompson Mill (raising bridge now)
- Swiss, German companies building new industrial facilities. Attracted by low utility costs

Opportunities:

- Getting sort of landlocked, maybe an opportunity to densify? Senior towers?
- Transit, but people are split on if it's a good thing or not; tried a bus circulator but very few people used it; need to solve transportation
- Maybe some sort of mixed use community, especially for the seniors
- Would love to have a hospital
- Would love to have own police force

Challenges:

- With the growth, will the utilities stay the same (cheap)?
- City sold the landfill, but kept the mineral rights (get the gas)
- Housing availability/affordability—getting very expensive
- Lack of grocery store; the new Publix will help, but doesn't solve everything
- Traffic
- Historic preservation
- Senior living (Deaton Creek or public housing)

What makes Buford unique?

- Schools; great academics, great sports, arts
- Cheap utilities

Recommendations for Steering Committee:

- Bobby Davis – 770.945.9656
- Bob Murphy – 770.945.3717

1:00 PM - Todd Cleveland

Director at the Community Center; basically an entertainment venue; 60 weddings/year, corporate meetings, theatre (rent to local groups); outdoor events

- CC is in a good spot. Has lots of business, can sign good artists and can fill up the theater, but only has 278 seats. Could easily sell triple that if had the seats for some shows. Could use a bigger ballroom (can't accommodate weddings past 300 people); could use a chapel space for ceremonies, receptions
- See CC as an economic engine, sense of pride
- Weddings, cast a wide net—beautiful facility for a more modest price. At least 70% of brides are from outside of Buford. Theater is close knit community, mostly Buford but some Sugar Hill, Gainesville, Suwanee.

Changes:

- Continued development of the town; used to live in Sugar Hill; streetscape; continued improvements from rec/football area, to schools, the arena, the Community Center; good, “really clean type of town”; more restaurants and nightlife
- Streetscape on S Hill, Main St, S Lee right now; even the sidewalk along Buford Highway; warm and developed feel
- Housing has boomed; higher volume of students, more neighborhoods

Opportunities:

- Big opportunity for various programs that can include all demographics of the community
- Community Center gets asked about programs for the elderly, kids; doesn't really do that. Gwinnett

County, City of Sugar Hill...they have ongoing programs. Lots of ways to stay involved

- Buford has a new gym built, but no policies in place for open gym nights.
- Biggest need: teens, and elderly.
- Several theater patrons go down to George Pierce park to their senior center; Bogan Park (Gwinnett County)
- Continue to open up Main Street to make it more (parking deck going) a more unified area. For example, Suwanee (alcohol policy allows people to take a drink and go outside); right now policies are very restrictive. Community is very conservative and concern about liability; some more leniency would be good. At least sit outside on a patio and have a beer. Main Street has a difficult time with this, restaurant owners are interested.
- Another opportunity is redevelopment in/near downtown, redevelopment of housing in that area; continued revitalization of the downtown area.

Challenges:

- Continued population growth, largely because of the school system and how well it performs. Huge challenge to keeping up with infrastructure, but also keeping costs down. To maintain the quality with the influx of kids. (talk to superintendent)
- Staffing. Being able to maintain level of service while also maintaining the budget to take care of everything.
- Every community has started doing concerts; market is flooded with opportunities for people to have entertainment; Sugar Hill is building a theater just down the road that's a little bigger and a little better...getting to a market saturation.

What makes Buford unique?

- Really keeps to itself. An island within Gwinnett. Other cities in the County are very involved, but not Buford. Have done things our own way has largely worked.

- Schools. Very rigorous educational standard; there's a reason why they are ranked the way they are.

What would you most like to see come out of the Comprehensive Plan update process?

Most important thing is the continued development of the city, enhancement of services in balance with the small town feel. Right now (Buford) hasn't been swallowed up by the big city sprawl, and has maintained the small town feel. Still want that maintained.

2:00 PM - Wayne Johnson

Background

- Been here for 26 years, lots of teachers in the school system; on planning and zoning board; statistician for the football team, volunteer with arts programs at school
- Associate pastor at the First Baptist Church

Changes:

- "Oh. My. Stars."
- The residential growth has exploded, "almost gotten out of hand."
- Cost of housing has gotten so high, people moving can afford half million dollar houses; brought in a new population
- Community is exploding; Bogan Road is just exploding; Old Hospital property, the Tannery is growing; everybody is trying to get into the City, lots of annexation requests. Schools are such an important part of the City—great working relationship between the two, City pumps in a lot of money.
- Buford has always had a small town mindset, everyone knows everyone. Everything we do is done with excellence. New people coming into town are "consumers", not contributors
- (Once HS is done, existing HS will become MS, MS will get absorbed into the K-5, redistributed)

Opportunities:

- Look at ways to expand commercial/industrial land uses
- 1 Million square feet in Rest Haven of potential industrial; partially under construction now
- Impact fee/tax on developers; they're coming in and making money, then leaving—City is left holding the bag

Challenges:

- How do we keep small town atmosphere with all the growth?
- Transportation – traffic on 20 is bad, Buford Hwy can be bad; desperately need another exit off of 985 to accommodate freight coming/going from City's industrial (want exit off of Thompson's Mill)
- Truck traffic tearing up roads, clogging up roads
- Have used up most of commercial property
- Utilities and infrastructure keeping up
- More affordable housing is needed

What's unique?

- Small town feel
- Utilities
- Schools

What would you most like to see come out of the Comprehensive Plan update process?

- Exit off of Thompson Mill
- Slowing down the growth a bit; "it's been on warp drive." Need to let infrastructure catch up so that it's not so crazy; when the mall came in, it was just a sleepy community. Buford has just exploded.
- Address affordability in housing

Survey

- Transportation and traffic
- Rate of growth

4:00 PM - Commissioner Bradley Weeks

Weeks is the newest member of the City Board of Commissioners. Was on the Planning Commission

Changes:

- Growth. Population growth. Traffic growth, people coming through

Opportunities:

- Quality growth. Regulations to manage it. All types.
- Redevelopment
- Would like to see Shadburn Ferry Road to get a nicer streetscape; already plans to do Marino Street
- Making more connections to the county trail system.
- Thompson Mill Road interchange
- Annexation opportunities in Hall County
- Clean up Rest Haven
- There is a large 16-acre tract across from the High School, that he would like to see the city consider using for a park.

Challenges:

- Regulating growth. Housing is getting very expensive, people can't afford to live here anymore; don't like people who grew up can't get a house here. Want to be close but can't afford a house in town
- Keeping the tax digest strong and heavily weighted toward commercial property
- Parking downtown, new deck planned, but will it be enough?
- Future need for transit, GCT attempt earlier with a route through the city was a failure, but better connections to the park and ride lot might be a good.

- Growing senior population and their housing needs.

Recommendations for Steering Committee:

Recommends adding Matt Peevy who is on the County Planning Commission, and son of Mitch Peevy, prominent local planning consultant with Precision Planning. Matt can be reached at 404.376.4690.

July 5, 2018 (Phone Interviews)

Rev. Joey Grizzle

Background:

- Chaplain of City Commission, friend of many city staff and elected officials
- Church; City gave us the road to separate it from adjacent property; Church owns 40 acres on 985

Changes:

- School is the number one change; building of the high school and aquatic center
- Beautification of Hill Street, Main Street, and now Lee Street
- New complex going in on Friendship Road (industrial complex)
- Some progress on Hamilton Mill and Bogan Mill with new developments
- Buford wanted the hospital (went to Braselton) – that was a disappointment
- Lake Lanier Islands has stepped up their game with some of their plans, but went in a good direction

Opportunities:

- Experience the kind of economic possibilities of living in an area with the best school system in the state; handle demographic shifts well

- Have the best shopping in the state nearby
- Have the best recreation (Lake Lanier, north Georgia mountains)
- Don't see us becoming Doraville Industrial Complex; see it more as a bedroom community, remain residential
- Do have competing ideas on what should be zoned where; need a more consistent theme – a more unified conversation
- Industrial complex, Lake Lanier Islands, vacation destination and capitalizing on people wanting to live here in the location
- Lake Lanier Islands – Margaritaville bought them. Franchising. Bigger deal than a new owner, have a marketing plan and coming in and improving the restaurant and facilities. Right now just sort of split up and compete with each other; if they “get their act together” and get it in one plan, could be one of the top vacation destinations in Georgia.
- Plus expanding road to Lake Lanier Islands. Marina is doing great, new management, boat complexes. Have never really come to be the place where you buy your boat stuff, but could be an opportunity.

What would you most like to see come out of the Comprehensive Plan update process?

- Some sort of collegiate ambition. Could be a college town; no conversation about having a university campus; UGA could satellite; GA State could do well too. This town is in a perfect spot to pull in college kids.
- Want to tie in with a hospital; to get to the next level, need some sort of connection to NE GA medical center, some sort of hub.
- Historic Buford has not pulled in enough business; Monroe and Ellijay went antiques; Dahlonega went arts. Our downtown is becoming a restaurant row, but would like to become known downtown for something in particular. Could movies be a possibility?

- There's no grocery stores. None on 20, the Kroger behind At Home...just empty. Peachtree Industrial is a gold mine, but have to drive somewhere else to get groceries. Just not a shopping destination in the historic area.
- As zoning rules and regulations are getting developed, it's tough. Would like to develop a separate track for churches so that they have a clear understanding of where they fit. Seem like an afterthought since we don't pay taxes. "Here's what we'd like to say to churches in the area"
 - Churches attract big numbers every Sunday

Bobby Davis

Been here all his life; on Buford Housing Authority board and planning authority

Changes in past 5 years:

- Population growth
- More traffic
- Less affordable housing – this is a major concern, especially for the 55+ year-old set.

Opportunities:

- City is making a lot of progress already, addressing the situations already

Challenge:

- Affordable housing. Housing Authority can only do so much; new housing is \$300k plus, people on fixed income can't afford
- Trying to address the road situation, lots of improvements on the roads—need to continue with that
- Outstanding school system is attracting a lot of people, which attracts more traffic
- Unique Aspects of Buford:
- Outstanding leadership and strong financial situation

- Natural gas; huge natural gas system that serves seven different counties—it's our money maker

What would you most like to see come out of the Comprehensive Plan update process?

- Affordable housing to be addressed; the quality of housing has been improving, but at a cost

Bob Murphy

Born and raised in Buford, been here since early 1940s; been active with sports, no children in school anymore; worked at Scientific Atlanta; retired.

Biggest Changes in past five years:

- Most impactful is the education facilities; keep getting high scores/ratings. Huge impact on bringing in other people who want to live here; draws a lot of outside people (sports too)
- The Mall has really drawn a lot of people in
- Downtown changes (streetscape); a lot of people are looking to keep that small town personality, where you can walk to a lot of things, maintain that small town quality of life

Opportunities & Challenges in next 5 years:

- Have to be smart about how deal with the overall traffic plans; we're going to draw the traffic, and the main thoroughfares need to be open to the point where they can handle the flows; South Lee Street; Hamilton Mill and Bogan Road is "a nightmare"; any of the major intersections really, there are just so many cars on the road at peak times of day. Difficult to get around, people are traveling through from Forsyth to Hall
- Needs to be more retirement-level housing—needs to be affordable; just doesn't seem to be available options. Everything is too expensive for fixed income households. And people want to come back and retire here (after living somewhere else for a while) Like a golf cart community.

- Need grocery stores in the immediate area of downtown; now have to go out to Highway 20, out to Friendship Road to get to a nice grocery store; seem to have lost grocery shopping options. Like a Kroger or a Publix.

What makes Buford unique?

- The managers of our funds and the City, School Board. Have done a great job managing things; don't outspend earnings, and have a really great track record. Very well managed and keeps us "head and shoulders" ahead of others. In a surplus situation all the time; always have the money to do what needs to be done.
- Very well-kept appearance. No trash on the streets, etc. "Get a good feeling when you drive through" and it trickles out through to newly annexed areas. "Need to look good while you're doing it."

What would you most like to see come out of the Comprehensive Plan update process?

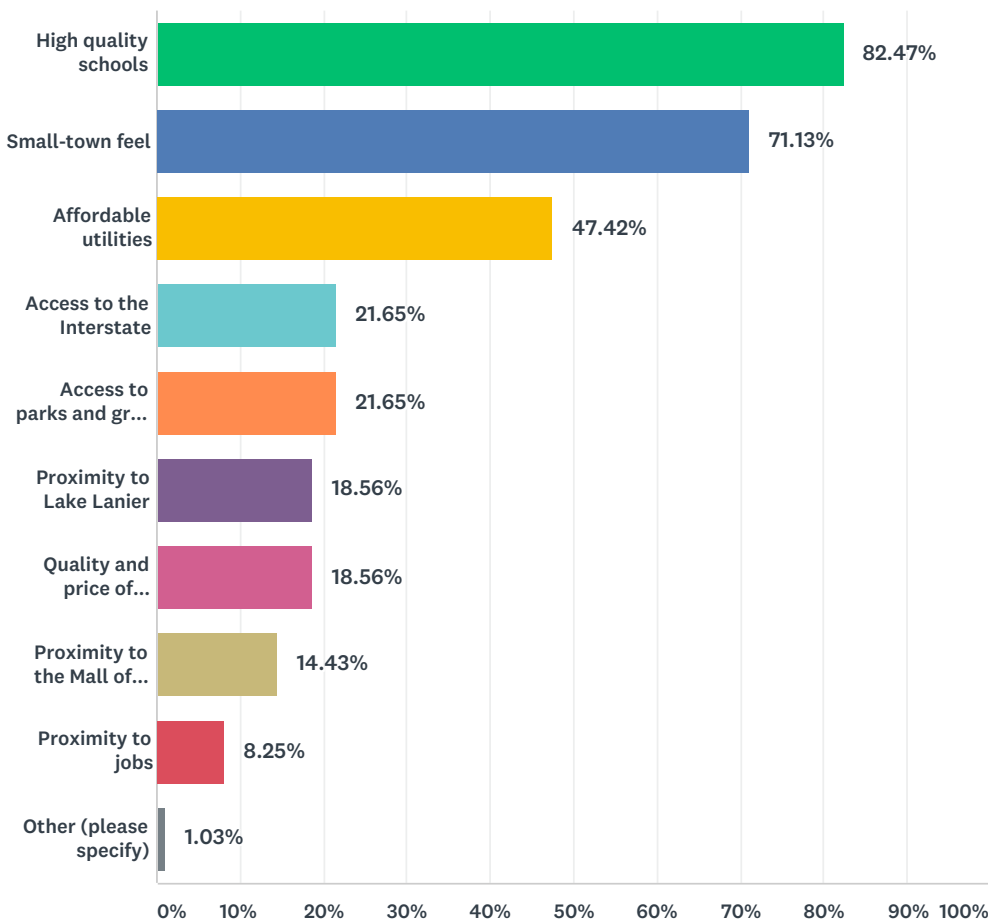
- Need to think ahead of the curve a little bit.
- Quality of Life: you want to keep people who have been here all along, and you want to continue to create an atmosphere where 5, 10, 15 years down the road you have a draw for people to come and live in your community. Need to maintain this high quality
- Keep elected officials in there with these goals in mind; keep electing people with Buford's interest at heart
- Will keep expanding toward to Hall County
- Let's keep maintaining what we're doing now. Keep good people working with us and for us.
- Awhile back decided we wanted commercial/ industrial, downplayed residential; Hamilton Road is full of tractor trailers tearing up the roads; would like to point more towards residential growth and atmosphere. Ugly warehouses, traffic issues— industrial growth has been a double-edged sword. Certainly lost some pretty good land.

APPENDIX B.2: ONLINE SURVEY #1

The survey received input regarding the City of Buford's strengths, key issues, and opportunities. The following data was collected:

Q1 What do you like best about Buford? Choose up to three.

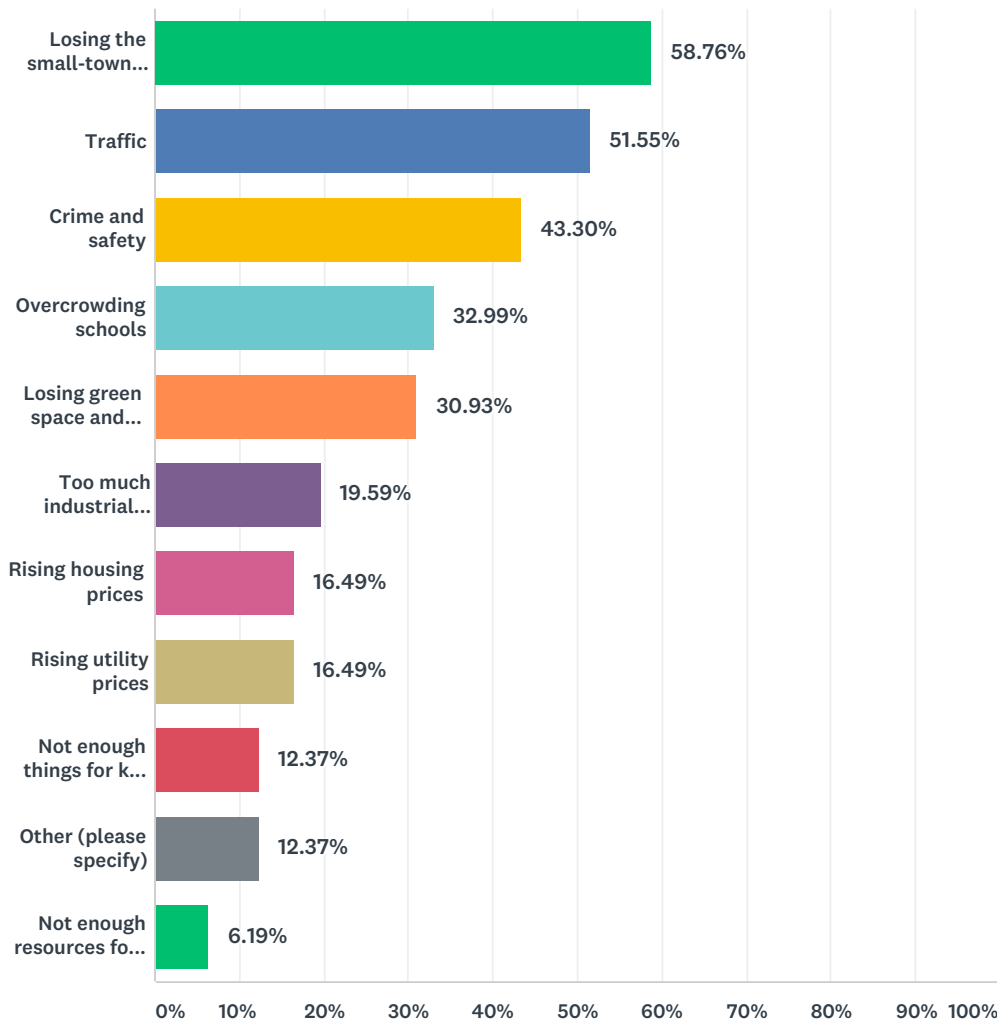
Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High quality schools	82.47%	80
Small-town feel	71.13%	69
Affordable utilities	47.42%	46
Access to the Interstate	21.65%	21
Access to parks and green spaces	21.65%	21
Proximity to Lake Lanier	18.56%	18
Quality and price of housing	18.56%	18
Proximity to the Mall of Georgia	14.43%	14
Proximity to jobs	8.25%	8
Other (please specify)	1.03%	1
Total Respondents: 97		

Q2 What are your top three concerns about Buford and its future?

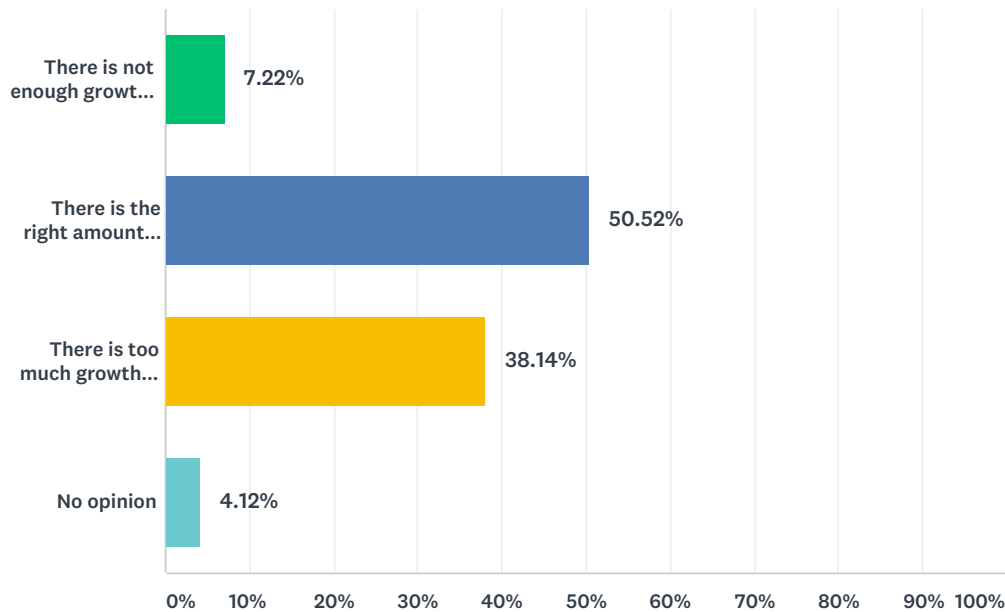
Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Losing the small-town feeling	58.76%	57
Traffic	51.55%	50
Crime and safety	43.30%	42
Overcrowding schools	32.99%	32
Losing green space and natural areas	30.93%	30
Too much industrial growth	19.59%	19
Rising housing prices	16.49%	16
Rising utility prices	16.49%	16
Not enough things for kids to do	12.37%	12
Other (please specify)	12.37%	12
Not enough resources for seniors	6.19%	6
Total Respondents: 97		

Q3 What is your opinion of the amount of growth and development that is occurring in Buford?

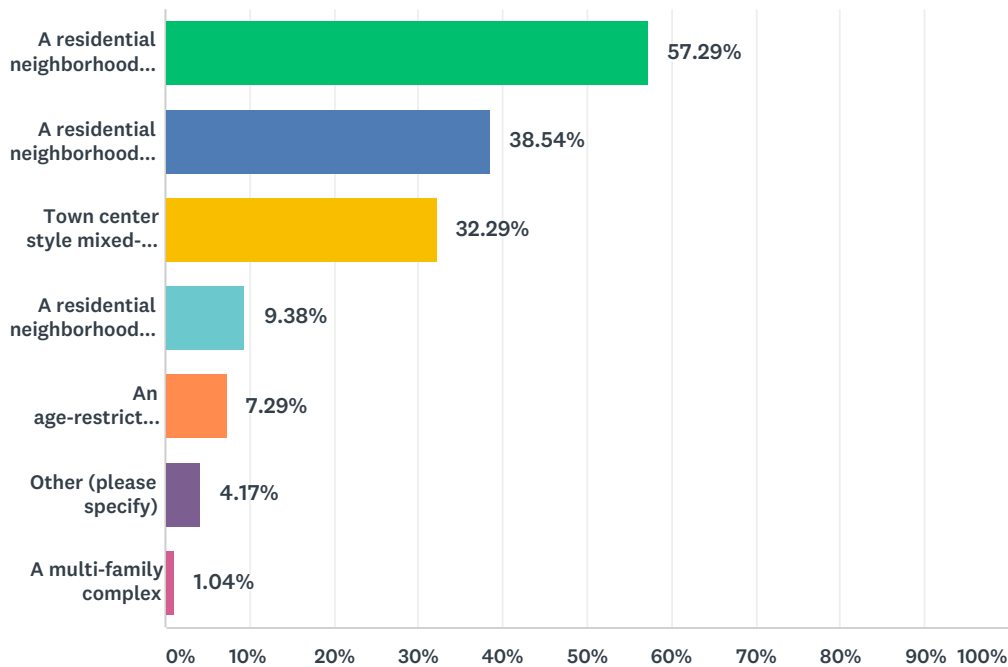
Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
There is not enough growth happening	7.22%	7
There is the right amount of growth happening	50.52%	49
There is too much growth happening	38.14%	37
No opinion	4.12%	4
TOTAL		97

Q4 What kind of neighborhood do you imagine you'll want to live in 5 years from now? Check all that apply.

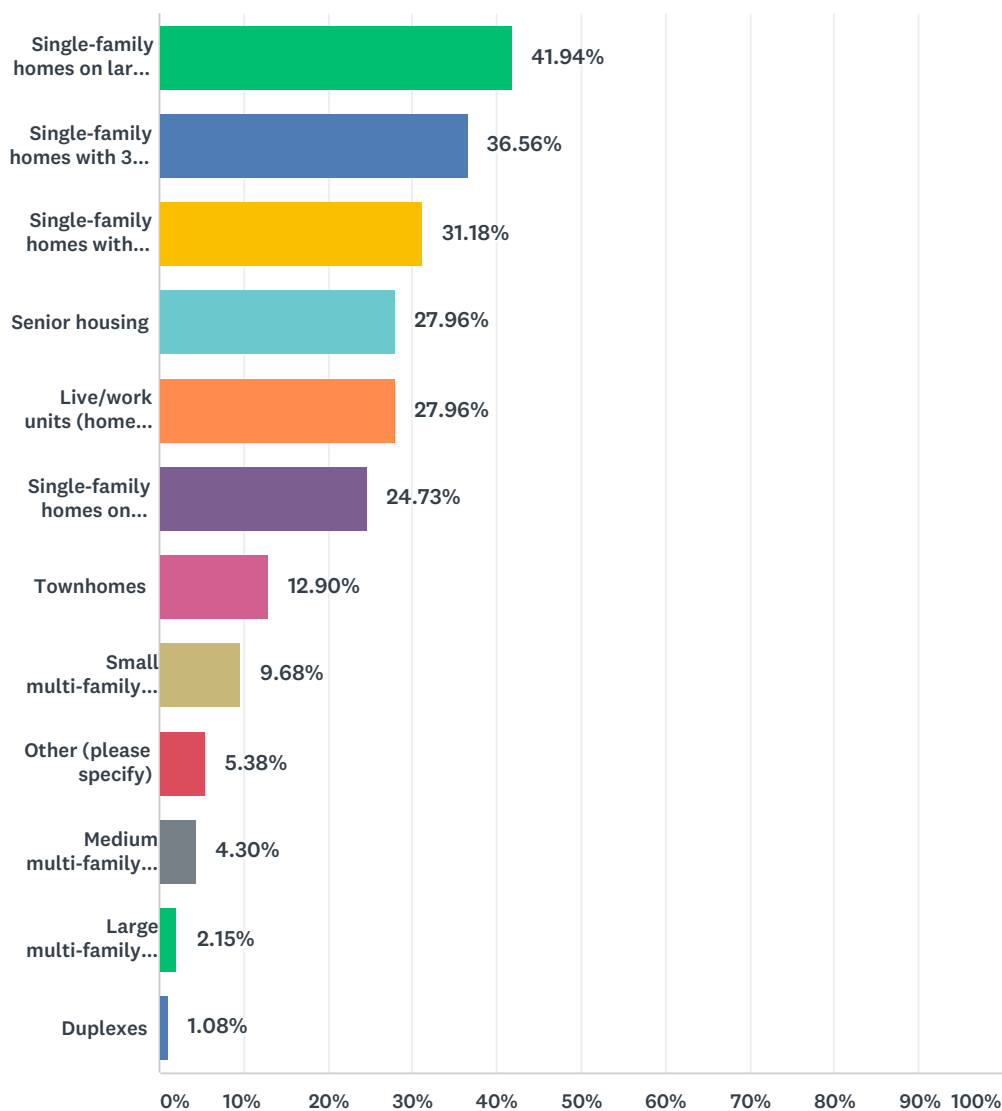
Answered: 96 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A residential neighborhood of entirely single-family houses	57.29%	55
A residential neighborhood connected to a greenway system	38.54%	37
Town center style mixed-use environment with homes, shops, and entertainment	32.29%	31
A residential neighborhood with a mixture of housing types	9.38%	9
An age-restricted senior community	7.29%	7
Other (please specify)	4.17%	4
A multi-family complex	1.04%	1
Total Respondents: 96		

Q5 What kind of housing do you think is needed in Buford? Check all that apply.

Answered: 93 Skipped: 4

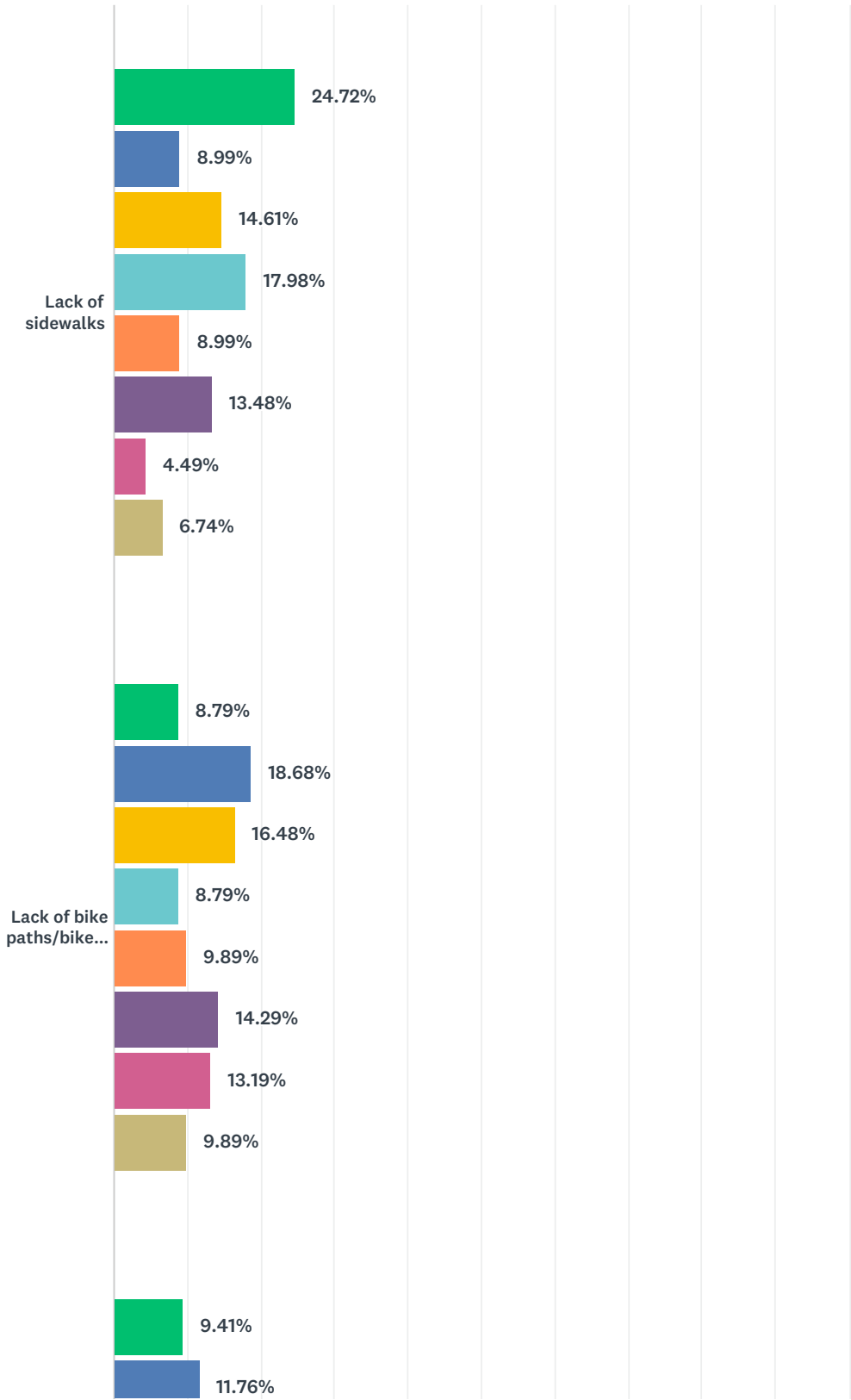


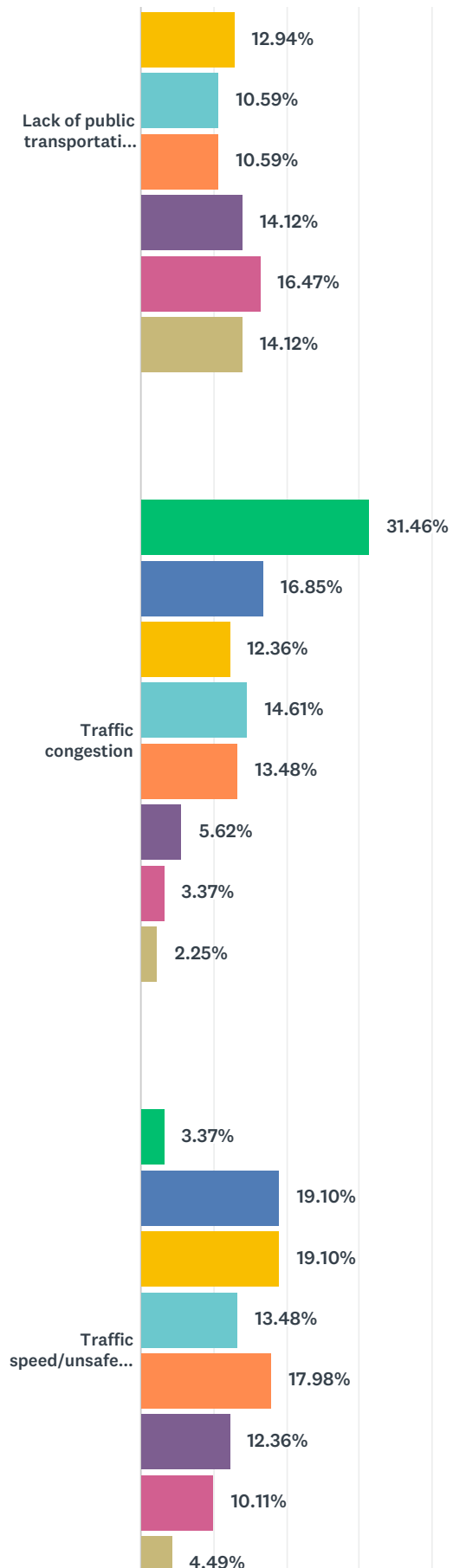
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single-family homes on large lots (more than 0.5 acre)	41.94%	39
Single-family homes with 3 or more bedrooms	36.56%	34
Single-family homes with accessory dwelling units (garage apartment, mother-in-law suite, etc.)	31.18%	29
Senior housing	27.96%	26
Live/work units (home above a shop/office)	27.96%	26
Single-family homes on smaller lots (less than 0.5 acre)	24.73%	23
Townhomes	12.90%	12

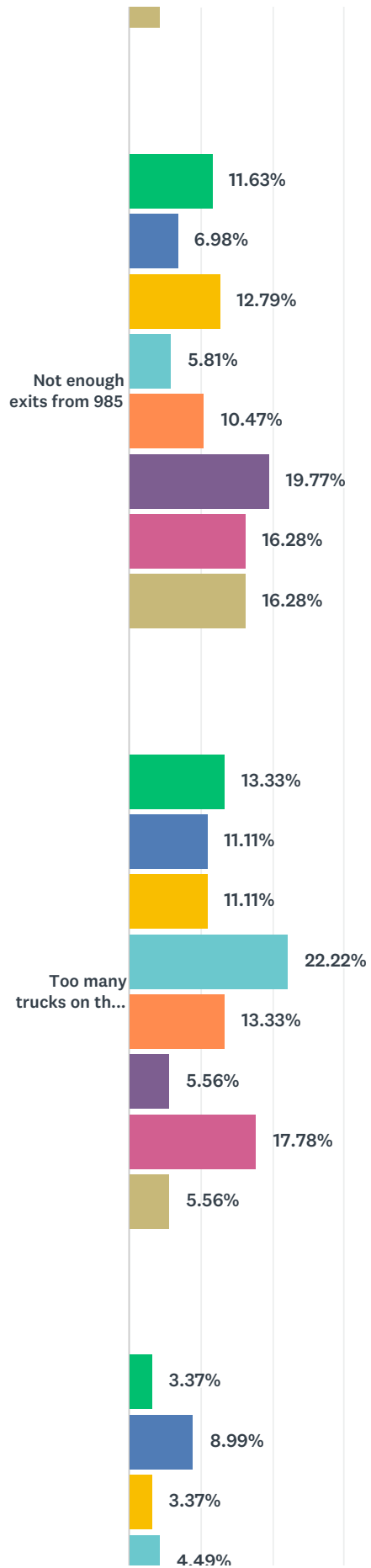
Small multi-family buildings (two stories or less)	9.68%	9
Other (please specify)	5.38%	5
Medium multi-family buildings (3-5 stories)	4.30%	4
Large multi-family buildings (more than 5 stories)	2.15%	2
Duplexes	1.08%	1
Total Respondents: 93		

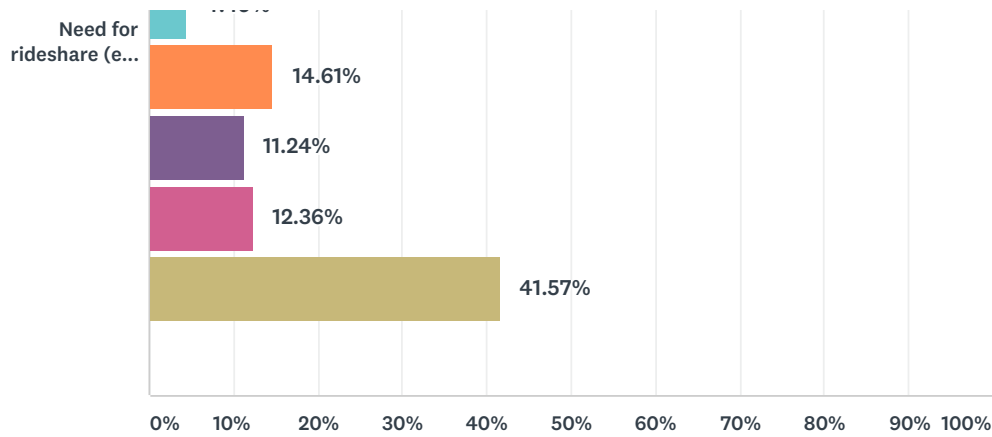
Q6 What do you see as Buford's biggest transportation issues? Rank these in order from biggest issue (1) to smallest issue (8).

Answered: 96 Skipped: 1







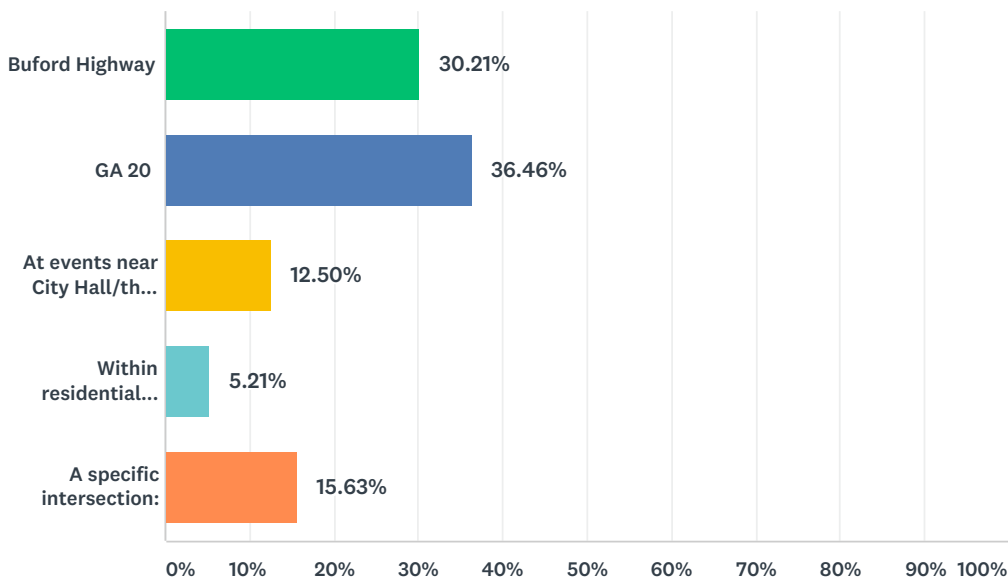


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL	SCORE
Lack of sidewalks	24.72% 22	8.99% 8	14.61% 13	17.98% 16	8.99% 8	13.48% 12	4.49% 4	6.74% 6	89	5.30
Lack of bike paths/bike lanes	8.79% 8	18.68% 17	16.48% 15	8.79% 8	9.89% 9	14.29% 13	13.19% 12	9.89% 9	91	4.63
Lack of public transportation options	9.41% 8	11.76% 10	12.94% 11	10.59% 9	10.59% 9	14.12% 12	16.47% 14	14.12% 12	85	4.20
Traffic congestion	31.46% 28	16.85% 15	12.36% 11	14.61% 13	13.48% 12	5.62% 5	3.37% 3	2.25% 2	89	5.97
Traffic speed/unsafe drivers	3.37% 3	19.10% 17	19.10% 17	13.48% 12	17.98% 16	12.36% 11	10.11% 9	4.49% 4	89	4.76
Not enough exits from 985	11.63% 10	6.98% 6	12.79% 11	5.81% 5	10.47% 9	19.77% 17	16.28% 14	16.28% 14	86	3.98
Too many trucks on the roads	13.33% 12	11.11% 10	11.11% 10	22.22% 20	13.33% 12	5.56% 5	17.78% 16	5.56% 5	90	4.73
Need for rideshare (e.g. Uber or Lyft) drop-off spots	3.37% 3	8.99% 8	3.37% 3	4.49% 4	14.61% 13	11.24% 10	12.36% 11	41.57% 37	89	2.91

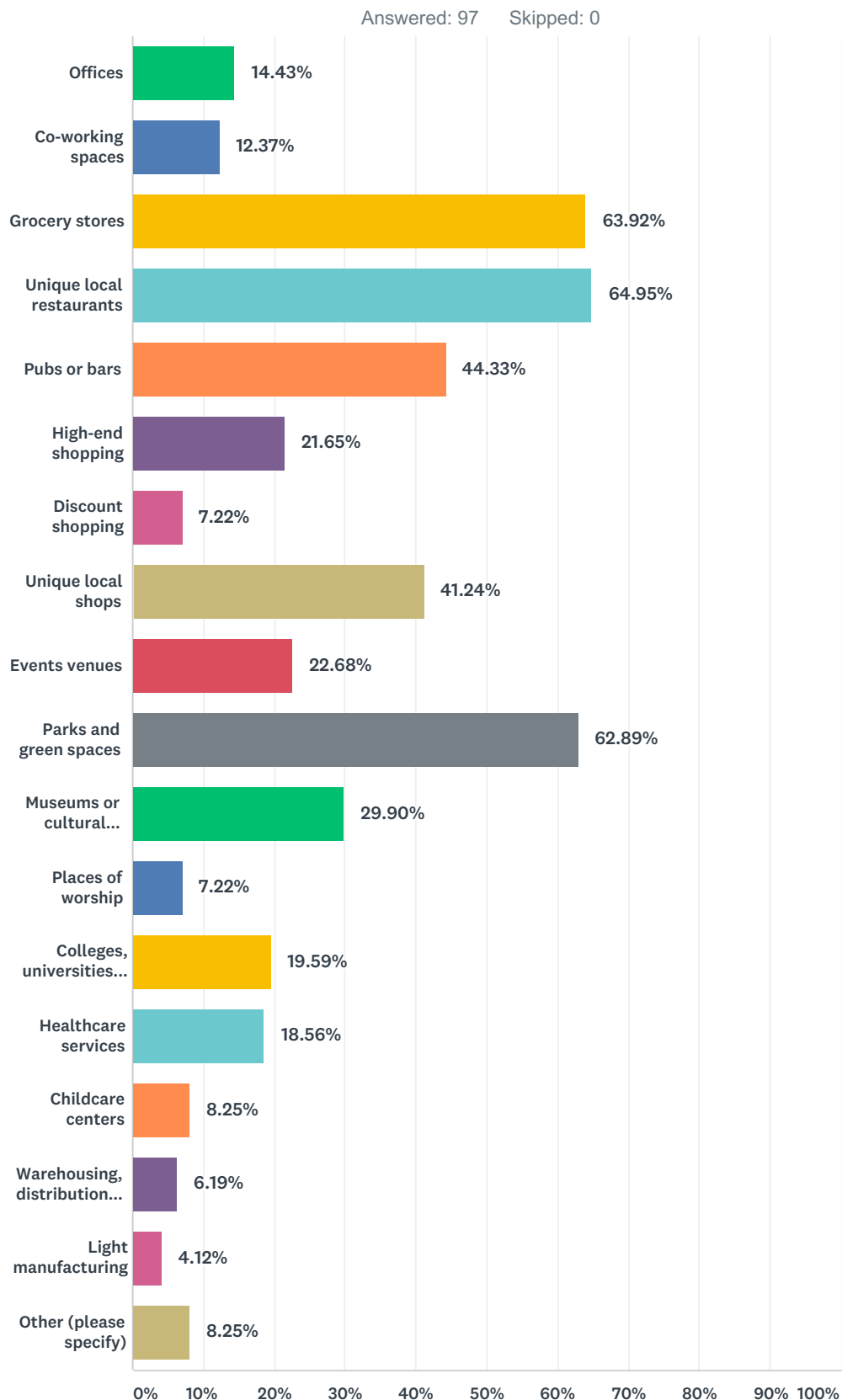
Q7 Where would you most like to see improvements to traffic flow? Rank the following from biggest issue to smallest issue.

Answered: 96 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Buford Highway	30.21%	29
GA 20	36.46%	35
At events near City Hall/the schools	12.50%	12
Within residential neighborhoods	5.21%	5
A specific intersection:	15.63%	15
TOTAL		96

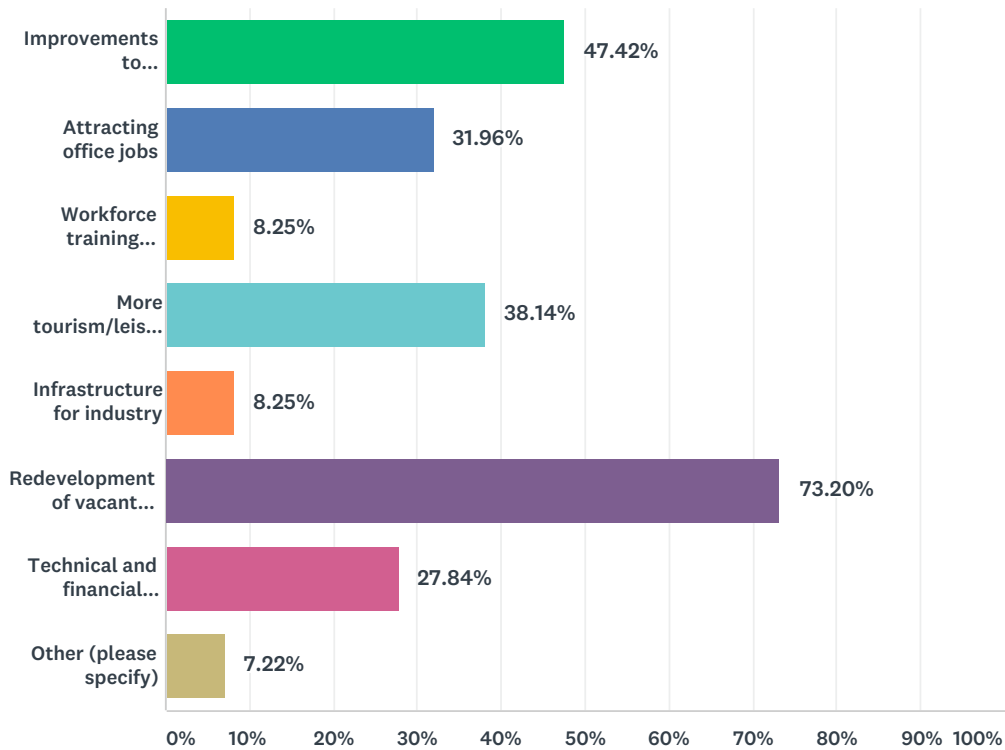
Q8 What businesses or services would you like to see more of in Buford? Check all that apply.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Offices	14.43%	14
Co-working spaces	12.37%	12
Grocery stores	63.92%	62
Unique local restaurants	64.95%	63
Pubs or bars	44.33%	43
High-end shopping	21.65%	21
Discount shopping	7.22%	7
Unique local shops	41.24%	40
Events venues	22.68%	22
Parks and green spaces	62.89%	61
Museums or cultural centers	29.90%	29
Places of worship	7.22%	7
Colleges, universities, and technical schools	19.59%	19
Healthcare services	18.56%	18
Childcare centers	8.25%	8
Warehousing, distribution, and logistics	6.19%	6
Light manufacturing	4.12%	4
Other (please specify)	8.25%	8
Total Respondents: 97		

Q9 What do you think are some of the top needs for economic development in Buford? Choose up to three.

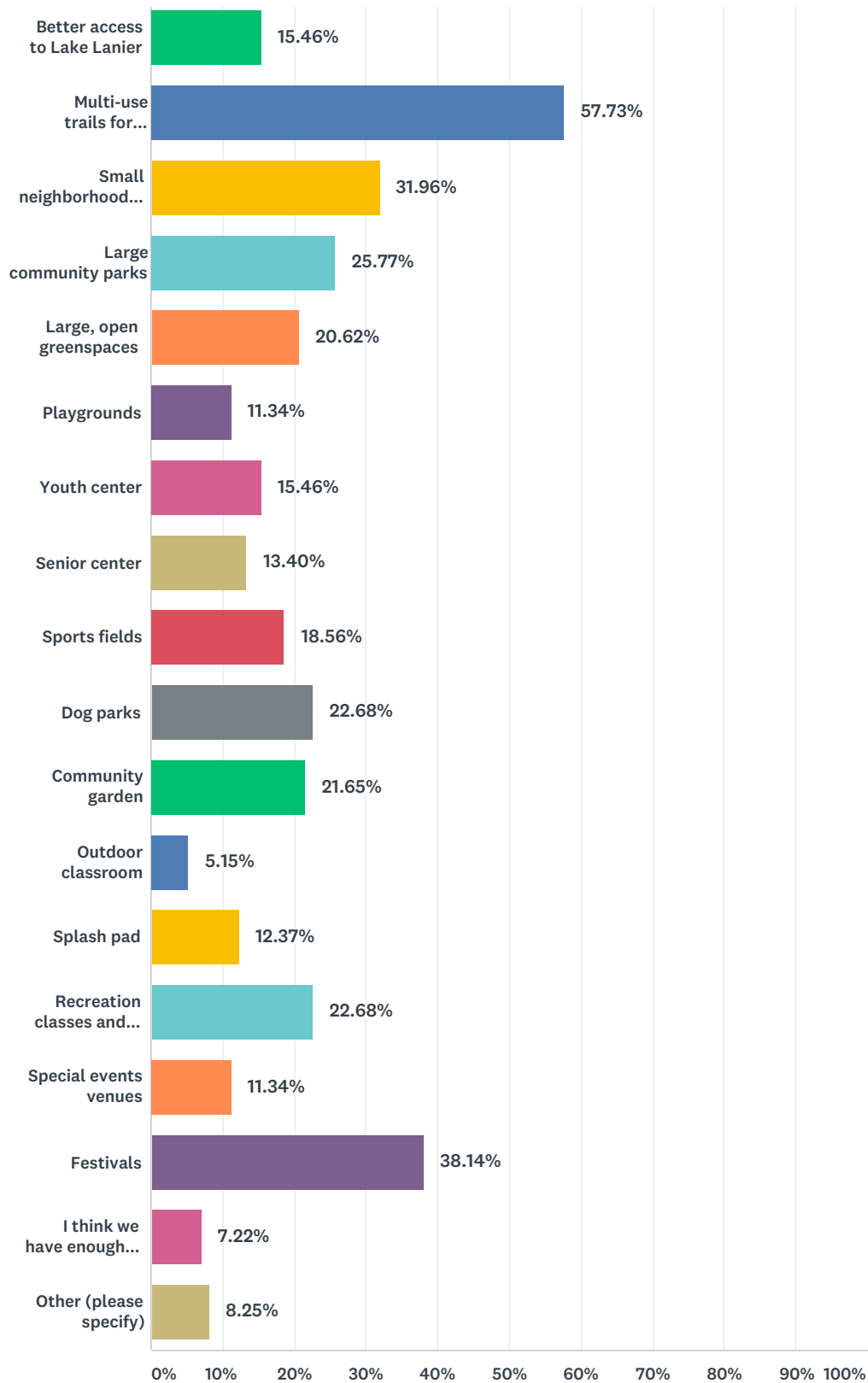
Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improvements to storefronts/commercial facades	47.42%	46
Attracting office jobs	31.96%	31
Workforce training opportunities	8.25%	8
More tourism/leisure activities/special events	38.14%	37
Infrastructure for industry	8.25%	8
Redevelopment of vacant properties	73.20%	71
Technical and financial assistance for entrepreneurs and small businesses	27.84%	27
Other (please specify)	7.22%	7
Total Respondents: 97		

Q10 Which amenities do you think are most needed in Buford? Choose up to three.

Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Better access to Lake Lanier	15.46%	15
Multi-use trails for pedestrians and cyclists	57.73%	56
Small neighborhood parks	31.96%	31
Large community parks	25.77%	25
Large, open greenspaces	20.62%	20
Playgrounds	11.34%	11
Youth center	15.46%	15
Senior center	13.40%	13
Sports fields	18.56%	18
Dog parks	22.68%	22
Community garden	21.65%	21
Outdoor classroom	5.15%	5
Splash pad	12.37%	12
Recreation classes and programs	22.68%	22
Special events venues	11.34%	11
Festivals	38.14%	37
I think we have enough amenities already	7.22%	7
Other (please specify)	8.25%	8
Total Respondents: 97		

Q11 Are there any other foreseeable issues that may impact the Buford community that you'd like us to keep in mind in preparing the Comprehensive Plan?

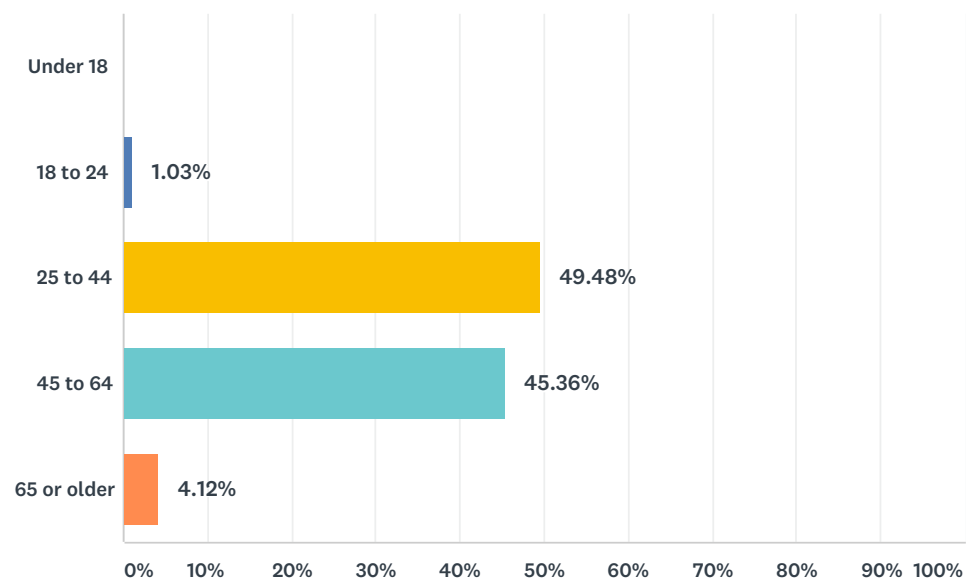
Answered: 49 Skipped: 48

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	You're surrounding high end neighborhoods with loud and disruptive industrial parks with heavy truck traffic and no roads or traffic lights to support them. You've made Atlanta Highway completely unsafe to walk above Lanier Islands due to truck traffic and a lack of sidewalks.	10/15/2018 10:02 PM
2	all Drug and run down houses need to go. There needs to be restrictions on renting properties. There should be tax incentives for buying and older home and fixing it up	10/7/2018 11:04 AM
3	To address the issues of racial tension.	10/4/2018 10:10 PM
4	Adding our own police department for city limits, adding recycling to the trash pick up	10/3/2018 6:36 PM
5	no	10/2/2018 9:19 PM
6	Cultural diversity	10/2/2018 12:28 PM
7	major concern is losing affordable housing for middle class families [quality single family detached homes priced 200k - 300k]	10/2/2018 7:49 AM
8	Revitalization of the neighborhoods and store fronts around historic downtown	10/1/2018 4:14 PM
9	Politics	9/15/2018 2:39 PM
10	Pedestrians walking (dogs) in danger due to speeding on the city streets. Need elevated speed bumps on South Hill Street	9/12/2018 12:57 PM
11	No Marta buses nor train!	9/9/2018 9:09 PM
12	Yea, stop expanding the roads ans destroying all our Woodlands. Wildfire have no place to go	9/5/2018 8:20 PM
13	Don't overbuild	9/2/2018 11:55 AM
14	when approving new sub divisions, keep in mind the roads. Can they support the traffic getting to these locations? adding 200 homes means 200 more cars.	8/31/2018 3:02 PM
15	recycling	8/30/2018 9:01 PM
16	More local police protection.	8/29/2018 1:56 PM
17	no	8/29/2018 9:11 AM
18	Need more security patrols	8/29/2018 7:13 AM
19	Safety and crime!!!	8/28/2018 9:04 PM
20	Make use of the commercial spaces that are already built! Stop allowing more vacant commercial strip malls and vacant office space to be erected! It's taking away from our greens pace. We need a Kroger in this zipcode- fix 20 and Buford Hwy shopping centers we need roads paved potholes fixed and sidewalks it would be great to have golf cart access like peachtree city or Braaselon does..	8/28/2018 6:53 PM
21	Concerned about traffic specifically at the intersection of Hamilton Mill and Bogan Rd where the new Publix is going in. Also, with the recent events within the Buford school system I am concerned about racism. That is not an acceptable culture to have in our wonderful city.	8/28/2018 5:59 PM
22	Current racial tensions and inequalities at Buford City Schools.	8/28/2018 5:09 PM
23	Need to lower crime - provide more patrols	8/28/2018 4:21 PM
24	Honor all races in the community. Diversity is much needed. Also more special needs services	8/28/2018 3:42 PM
25	We moved here for the small town feel, and I just want to ensure that we keep that, and don't over-grow our town.	8/28/2018 3:23 PM

26	TRAFFIC and increase of residents. Not enough affordable housing. Schools need to be renovated.	8/28/2018 3:21 PM
27	Phil Beard, Chris Burke and some members of the school board needs to be fired.	8/28/2018 3:04 PM
28	Addition of the Gravel Springs I-85 exit. Consider pushing for designated truck routes to keep large vehicular traffic off smaller roads (like Hamilton Mill) and have them utilize existing upgraded roads like Gravel Springs. Consider utilizing round-abouts to preserve the small town feel and control traffic compared to just having additional roads or widening existing roads.	8/28/2018 1:07 PM
29	Oddness of school districting. Its difficult for children who live across the street from each other to be separated by jagged district lines. Of course there will always be separations, but a bit of common sense applied on this front to smooth out boundaries would impact a lot of young lives for the better.	8/28/2018 12:32 PM
30	More soccer facilities	8/27/2018 10:27 AM
31	NO	8/23/2018 7:48 AM
32	Staying ahead of traffic congestion issues and revitalizing Main Street with local unique restaurants and shops.	8/22/2018 11:26 AM
33	Buford does a great job centering its attention around the schools but I think there is room for growth within the larger Gwinnett County community. Buford should be a better partner with its neighbors. Together we are better together.	8/21/2018 2:40 PM
34	Roads that need resurfacing	8/21/2018 11:40 AM
35	I have noticed that when a community is over developed, it loses it's appeal to people. I am concerned the community is being over-developed and will lose quality of life.	8/19/2018 1:40 PM
36	Development of multi family housing..... Creating lower income starter houses.... Losing a small town feel with..... by creating Neighbor hoods with very small lots...like the subdivision on Morningsude drive.	8/16/2018 10:54 PM
37	Maintaining the small town feel with so many new residential developments and the shrinking green space	8/16/2018 10:11 PM
38	Keeping growth slow and sustainable.	8/16/2018 10:21 AM
39	Investors taking over neighborhoods	8/15/2018 11:29 AM
40	Bogan Park should have an outside pool	8/15/2018 11:18 AM
41	Buford has always planned well in my opinion. The industrial properties help the tax base, but are unsightly. The high end homes bring sophisticated families into the school system. But, if Buford wants to grow to a 7A school system there will need to be a larger mix of residential development which will need to be supported with live/work/play environments (I can't believe the development across from City Hall and Community Center has struggled)	8/6/2018 9:00 AM
42	Please don't let the schools get overcrowded. With all of the neighborhoods being built on North Bogan it looks like the schools will be getting very crowded. The only reason we moved to Buford was because of the schools	7/31/2018 1:27 PM
43	Many of us do not understand why Buford doesn't have a police department. We would like to see our own police force to take care of our citizens and and our children in the city schools.	7/30/2018 9:20 AM
44	Kudzu is overtaking large swaths of greenspace and I would like to see the city mandate that owners of property with Kudzu take measurable steps in eradicating it. It is visible at every turn and is destroying our tree canopy.	7/28/2018 11:59 AM
45	Carter road has become unsafe at times to drive on as a new neighborhood was built. Making it more visible & wider would possibly help this	7/27/2018 9:08 PM
46	Adding a stop for Amtrak for passenger trail.	7/27/2018 11:39 AM
47	Please add public transportation. That will help with traffic. Its a win win for everyone.	7/26/2018 11:55 AM
48	985 exit on Thompson mill	7/25/2018 10:22 PM
49	Infrastructure growth to include grocery/restaurant/etc. as well as traffic management to match the growth in housing is crucial.	7/24/2018 12:37 PM

Q12 I am...

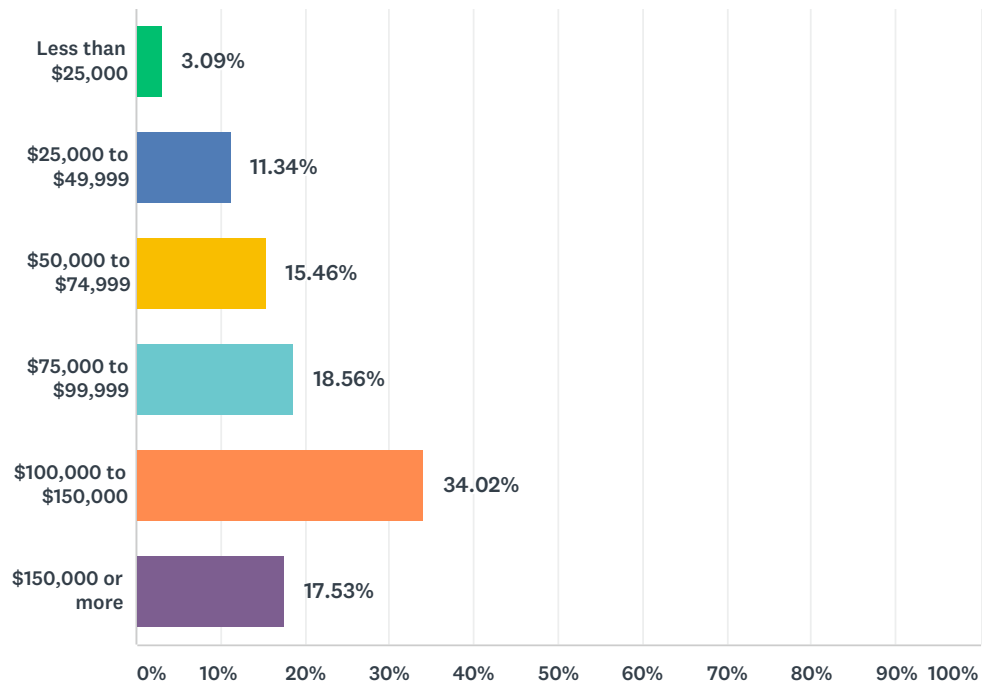
Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18 to 24	1.03%	1
25 to 44	49.48%	48
45 to 64	45.36%	44
65 or older	4.12%	4
TOTAL		97

Q13 Annually I earn...

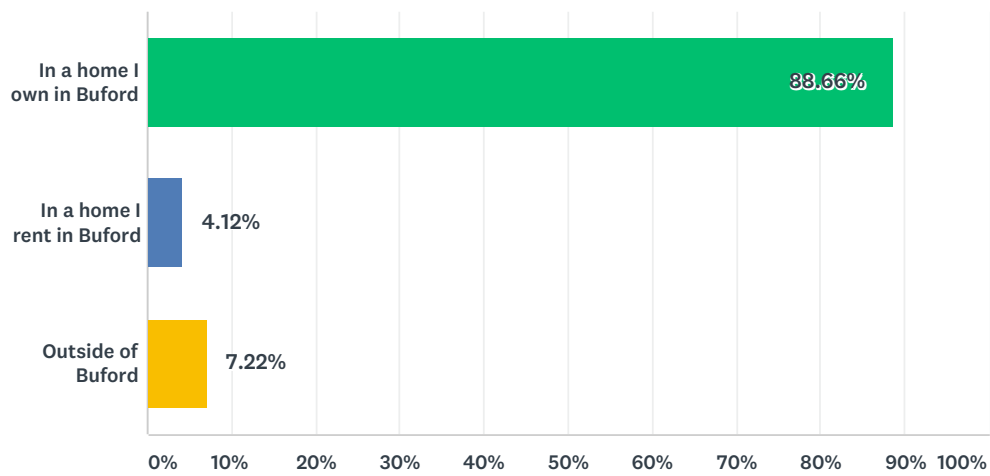
Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than \$25,000	3.09%	3
\$25,000 to \$49,999	11.34%	11
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15.46%	15
\$75,000 to \$99,999	18.56%	18
\$100,000 to \$150,000	34.02%	33
\$150,000 or more	17.53%	17
TOTAL		97

Q14 I live...

Answered: 97 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
In a home I own in Buford	88.66%	86
In a home I rent in Buford	4.12%	4
Outside of Buford	7.22%	7
TOTAL		97

APPENDIX B.3:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1

July 26, 2018

Strengths

- Diverse community
- Housing for international residents
- Affordable utilities
- Public safety
- Schools & arts
- Rigorous Education Standard
- Small town
- Quality of life
- Well-kept appearance

Weaknesses

- Lack of grocery stores near downtown
- Historic Preservation
- Traffic
- Expensive housing
- Downtown parking
- Unattractive warehouses
- Lack of a hospital
- Lack of office jobs
- Unbalances contributor/consumer
- Downtown building footprint (Configuration /size)
- Lack of vocational training/education in trades

Opportunities

- Senior housing
- Public Transit
- Mixed-Use Communities
- Healthcare
- Police force
- Main Street Restaurants
- Revitalization of downtown
- Expansion of commercial & industrial land

- Impact fees
- Regulations to manage quality growth
- More connections to county trail system
- Annexation opportunities in Hall County
- Parks
- Vacation destination
- Annex Mall of Georgia
- Hotels (i.e. sports tournaments)
- Commercial Node

Threats

- Increasing utility costs with growth
- Competition in entertainment industry with abutting cities
- Congestion
- Truck traffic
- Most commercial property in Buford has been used
- Aging utilities & infrastructure
- Growth interfering with small town atmosphere
- Lack of affordable housing

Needs

- Address Traffic
- Maintain the high level of services/utilities
- Housing

Opportunities

- Senior Housing
- Downtown Development ("The Strip")
- Annexation
- Access to I-85

APPENDIX B.4:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2

September 13, 2018

This Steering Committee Meeting focused on reviewing and refining the draft Community Vision and Goals, and gathering input on the Draft Character Areas and narrative. The group's comments were translated into the Future Development Map revisions.

- Areas of Change – there has been a lot of change since 2014. This exercise is intended to capture what's here now and Buford's vision for the future. The project team presented areas of change in each Character Area to give the committee a better idea of what is in place now.
- The project team described character areas by the following:
- In broad strokes, defines local character
- Acknowledges that there are distinct parts of the city different from each other
- Scale is the neighborhood or community level
- Include parts of unincorporated counties
- Each area has its own vision, description, and policies
- The committee was prompted to provide input on the following:
- The boundaries of the existing Character areas
- The Description of the areas

Downtown

- Opportunities on Moreno St. Development. (Already within boundaries)
- Opportunity Zone investments – can renovate the Potts building, no tax for 10 years on any income for that investment.

- Boundaries: Include schools to the Northeast in Downtown
- Description: The committee was okay with the key words - Central business district, traditional, civic, historic, mixed use

Quality Development Corridor

- Review overlay on Hwy 20 for development standards
- Boundaries: Change Hwy 20 Portion to Regional Activity Center Character
- Should be expanded north along Thompson Mill Rd.
- Address implementation strategies along Friendship Rd.
- Committee members do not see the entrance to the city at Peachtree Industrial Blvd from the west being having the characteristics of a Quality Development Corridor. It should be changed to Commercial/Industrial

Regional Activity Center

- Boundaries: Move Northwest to include what is currently classified as Quality Development Corridor

Emerging Residential

- Boundaries: Move eastern part of west portion to Comm/Ind
- Area south of Buford Hwy as you enter the City from the west should be establish residential
- Neighborhoods off of I-985 coming from the Northeast should be established residential

Established Residential

- Some Emerging Residential areas should be changed to Established Residential (See changes from Emerging Residential)
- Neighborhood in between I-985 and Buford Highway along Thompson Mill should be established residential.

Commercial Industrial

- Boundary – The corridor along Buford Highway at the Hall County Line and northeast should be a new Character Area. This is not envisioned as commercial but as office use.
- Entrance to City from the west along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard should be commercial

Add – New Character area along 13 in the NE. (Office/Professional)

- Uses – jobs quarter: office, small businesses

Lakeside

- This area is okay the way it is

Overall, the committee says that the City would like to see more of a commercial and industrial tax base and strategically annexing property for those uses would be beneficial.

APPENDIX B.5: ON-THE-SPOT ENGAGEMENT

August 11, 2018

Jacobs team members attended concert at Buford Community Center on August 11, 2018. Prior to the start of the concert, team members spoke with an estimated 50+ attendees, who were a range of residents and visitors. Conversations were casual, and focused on what people like and do not like about Buford, what they see as the biggest issues, and what they would like to see in Buford in the future.

What do you like about the community?

- Like that Buford is almost rural in flavor, but you can step and be part of a lot of activity easily
- Buford is great; can't believe these concerts (at the community center) are free!
- Like the Community Center events, good set up, it's

easy.

- Like the downtown, new streetscape; like the family-friendly feeling.
- Like the growth, seems to be very manicured. Have noticed a lot of trucks; "City seems to run a tight ship"
- Like the Community Center a lot, lots of parking. Buford is cute, not dirty; like to go to downtown restaurants. Buildings are new but classic looking, would like more stuff going on around downtown... and ice cream! Cold Stone please.
- BUFORD SCHOOLS – they make people want to live here. They're reputable and our community get a sense of pride from Buford High School football.
- Hill Street and all around town has great new housing.

What are some major issues about Buford that stick out to you?

- It's growing too fast; the "small-town feel" is fading away
- Traffic around the schools (i.e. Buford High School and Braselton Rd)
- Major issue is traffic; the expansion of Hamilton Mill is going to be a good thing
- It's expensive to live here
- While GRTA, is a good resource to get to work in Atlanta, it is inefficient
- With quick growth, we need more green space and more walkable communities
- Too much traffic! There will be no way to get out of the new Publix and high school. Concern about drugs, crime, but love the lower utilities and that they are staying low. Love the free concerts and the beautiful buildings. Keep schools number one!
- Downtown parking.

How do you envision Buford's future?

- What is Buford doing to keep up with other cities in the area like Suwannee? Want more restaurants and bars, particularly downtown. Want there to be patio dining and a more fun atmosphere; get rid of parking. Buford could be cooler and less stale.
- “Make it a good place to live and the traffic won’t be seen as such a big problem”
- Want a bridge across Buford Highway from the Community Center to connect to restaurants
- Roswell and Gainesville have great downtowns where you can sit on patios – want that there.
- Like the city is small but fun to see it grow and improve. Love the concerts, but hate the traffic! Want some roundabouts. In the future, want to be seen as “Elite—Buford has the best of everything.”
- Growth is fine, but we just want a smooth transition.
- We want the city to expand.
- We want to see more of what they did with the S. Lee project. (South Lee Street from Buford Highway to W Moreno Street streetscape and pedestrian facility improvements) There’s got to be room in the City’s budget.
- Want more quaint restaurants
- I’m okay with growth from the City. Just let it happen.
- More and more young families.

APPENDIX

C

**COMPLIANCE WITH
ENVIRONMENTAL RULES AND
REGIONAL WATER PLAN**

APPENDIX C:

COMPLIANCE WITH REGIONAL WATER PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Effective March 1, 2014, the State of Georgia established Rule 110-12-1 Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning Local Planning Requirements. In addition to outlining required elements, the rules also state the following:

“During the process of preparing its comprehensive plan, each community must review the Regional Water Plan(s) covering its area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (established and administered by the Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) to determine if there is need to adapt local implementation practices or development regulations to address protection of these important natural resources. The community must certify that it has considered both the Regional Water Plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria when it transmits the plan to the Regional Commission for review.”

Regional Water Plan

The Water Resource Management Plan combines planning for water supply and conservation, wastewater management, and watershed management for the 15-county Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (the District) into a single integrated planning approach. Local jurisdictions are required to comply with the plan, both in terms of eligibility for funding and obtaining certain permits; they are also audited regularly by the District to ensure compliance.

- The Plan has seven overarching policy goals:
- Protect Water Quality and Public Water Supplies
- Support Conservation and/or Demand Management
- Support Economic Growth and Development
- Equitably Distribute Benefits and Costs
- Promote Public Education and Awareness
- Facilitate Implementation
- Improve Resiliency

Planning principles include:

- Maximize the use of existing sources and facilities
- Increase water conservation and efficiency
- Best practices for non-potable reuse
- Consider return flows
- Make appropriate use of reclaimed water
- Continue to protect water quality
- Support adoption of advanced treatment technologies
- Promote maintenance of decentralized wastewater systems
- Reduce wastewater treatment facility influent variability
- Enhance reliability of wastewater pumping stations
- Promote green infrastructure approaches
- Ensure consistency with existing regulatory programs

The City of Buford must comply with the Regional Water Plan not only as a jurisdiction within the water planning district, but also as a provider of water and wastewater services. It is especially critical that the City follow best practices in land use and water resources because Buford sits wholly upon a Large Water Supply Watershed (the Chattahoochee).

With these considerations in mind, the Regional Water Plan's action items were reviewed in detail as part of this Comprehensive Planning process. Because of Buford's geographic location and role as a water utility provider, an entire goal and sub-set of policies has been devoted to ensuring compliance with the plan:

QL.7 Implement the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Water Resource Management Plan.

QL7.1 – Adopt the required ordinances for compliance with the plan

QL7.2 – Develop and update the required plans for compliance with the plan

QL7.3 - Provide sufficient funding and staffing to implement the required water conservation measures

QL7.4 - Continue adopting, implementing, and complying with existing state laws related to water conservation and drought response.

QL7.5 - Comply with the requirements of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act (GESA).

QL7.6 - Implement development and land use policies or practices to encourage the protection of greenspace and/or the use of green infrastructure within the community.

QL7.7 - Identify substantially impacted watersheds and implement WIPS to address impaired waters.

QL7.8 - Conduct ongoing management of stormwater infrastructure to ensure effective functioning and watershed protection.

QL7.9 - Develop and implement a local public education program that addresses watershed protection, stormwater issues, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution

These items are further supported by specific projects within the Community Work Program.

Environmental Planning Criteria

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division established Chapter 391-3-16 Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria. These criteria address five specific types of resources: water supply watersheds, protection of groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors, and mountains.

Water Supply Watershed

The City of Buford lies on a Large Water Supply Watershed (the Chattahoochee). As such, the corridors of its perennial streams within a 7-mile radius of a reservoir boundary (such as Lake Lanier) are protected by buffers of 100 feet on both sides, as well as 150 feet of setback for impervious surface. This Comprehensive Plan has identified these corridors as future greenways for protection and appropriate recreation use.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

The very tip of the southeastern corner of City limits has been identified as a “probable area of thick soil;” in the Piedmont, where rocks have very little porosity, these areas are considered significant recharge areas. Pursuant to the criteria established in O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, the Comprehensive Plan does not propose any new landfills, facilities for the disposal of hazardous wastes, chemical/petroleum storage tanks, or agricultural waste impound sites within this area of the city. It also does not propose new residential to be served by septic tanks, and complies with all other regulations associated with groundwater recharge areas.

Wetlands

Most wetlands in Buford are associated with the Suwanee Creek tributaries. The Comprehensive Plan does not propose any unacceptable uses in areas with wetlands, such as receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste, or landfills. Most of the wetlands within Buford are shown on the Future Land Use map as greenways for conservation and/or recreation, or other low-impact uses.

River Corridors

There are no protected rivers within the City of Buford.

Mountains

There are no protected mountains within the City of Buford.

A large green circle with a white border is centered on a dark teal background. The circle contains the text 'APPENDIX D' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the circle, the text 'BROADBAND SERVICES ELEMENT' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. A diagonal line of a lighter teal color runs from the bottom left towards the center.

APPENDIX

D

**BROADBAND SERVICES
ELEMENT**

APPENDIX D:

BROADBAND SERVICES ELEMENT

As of October 1, 2018, Georgia cities are now required to include a Broadband Services Element in their comprehensive plans.

Broadband can be defined as “transmitting at least 25 megabits per second downstream and at least 3 megabits per second upstream) throughout the state.” Typically, a lack of access to broadband service is more of a challenge in rural areas where infrastructure does not yet exist for its support. According to the Federal Communication Commission’s (FCC) 2016 Broadband Progress Report, about 91 percent of Georgia residents have access to broadband. Mapping of broadband service providers shows that the majority of the City of Buford has a least one residential provider at speeds of at least 25 Mbps/3 Mbps.

Although the City is generally well covered by broadband service, the City will continue to support the extension and strengthening of broadband infrastructure. A policy has been included in this Comprehensive Plan to support broadband access:

QL2.5 – Support improved access to residential broadband access



BUFORD 2040

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by
JACOBS