



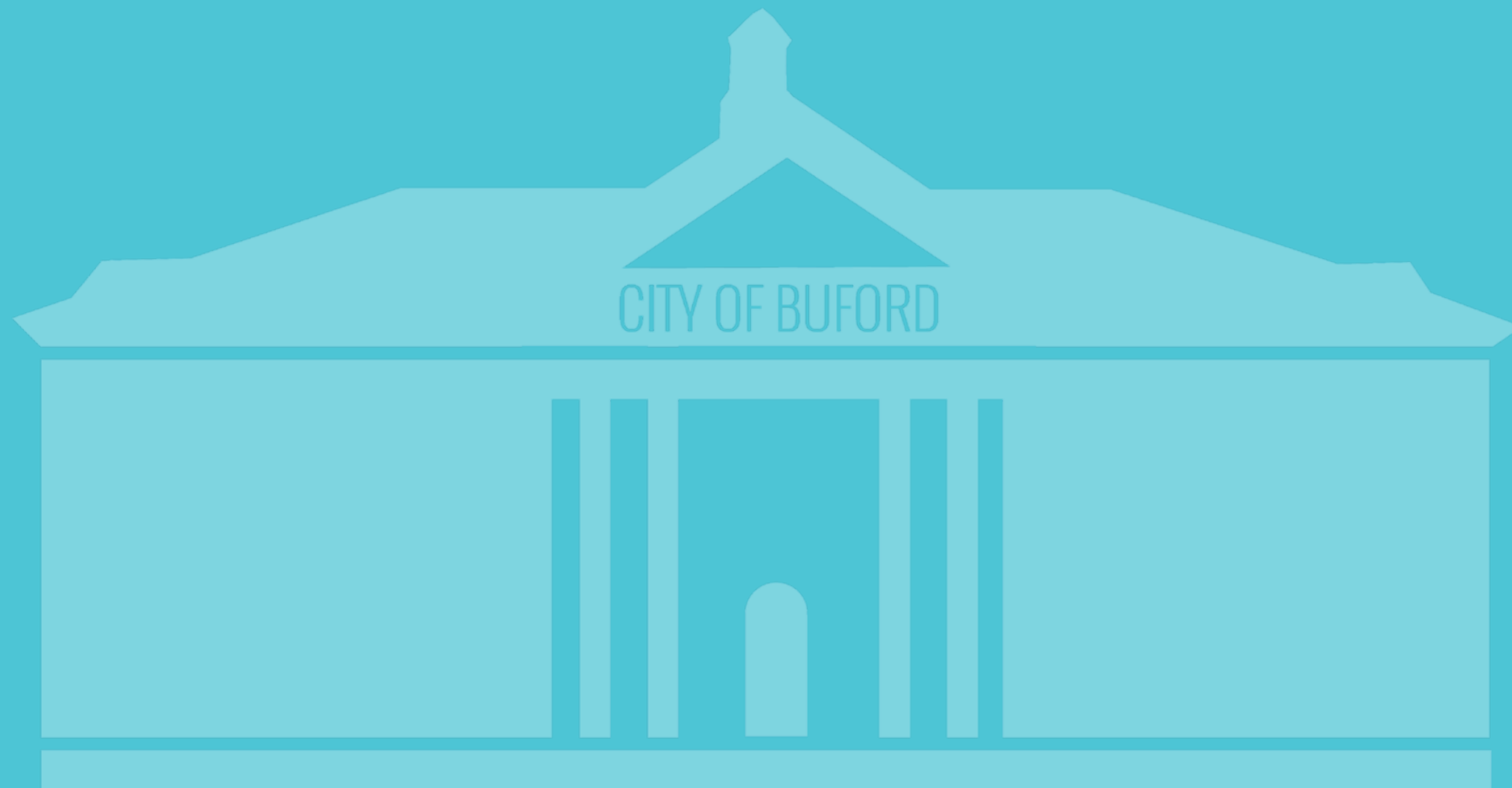
BUFORD 2045

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

UPDATE

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

DRAFT



2019 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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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1 INTRODUCTION



OVERVIEW

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.

The foundation of this plan is the 2014 Comprehensive Plan. That plan was updated in 2019 to account for changes in both Buford and best practices in planning. The City has accomplished a great deal since 2019. One notable change that has emerged is that Buford has shifted from pursuing an accelerated residential growth strategy to a more managed growth strategy in order to allow City services to adapt to new residential and commercial growth and provide the same level of quality services Buford has come to be known for.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

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 geographically-based recommendations for how each part of the city should develop
- 4 A five-year work program to make the vision a reality

The comprehensive plan not only helps the City of Buford 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 frequent 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 2040 Update*. Looking at a 20-year planning horizon, this 2045 plan continues to advance strides made in land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and quality of life. It folds in existing plans and considers the impacts that proposed projects and policies have across disciplines.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The 2045 update process began in June of 2023 and will be submitted to the Board of Commissioners for approval in January of 2024. Key tasks included:

- **Public Hearings.** Two public hearings at the Board of Commissioners meetings, the first was conducted to introduce the planning process and the second to present the plan to the public.
- **Online Survey.** An online survey was made available to anyone who wished to participate, asking respondents about needs and opportunities and to gather information on updated community priorities since 2019.
- **Multi-Day Workshop.** The planning team hosted interested members of the community for three days to give input on the plan as it was being developed, concluding with a Draft Plan Open House event.
- **Interviews and Steering Committee Meetings.** The planning 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.
- **Needs and Opportunities Analysis.** Using input gathered from the public engagement tasks and data analysis, the planning team updated the Needs and Opportunities element.
- **Implementation.** Once the vision, policies, and goals were updated as seen fit by the community, the five-year Community Work Plan was updated to address the community’s new priorities and key projects.
- **Plan Adoption:** The Comprehensive Plan is to be formally adopted by the City of Buford Board of Commissioners in January 2024.

RELATED PLANS

In addition to the *Comprehensive Plan 2040 Update*, a number of other related planning efforts informed this 2045 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* were incorporated into the last comprehensive plan and have been carried over as necessary.



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, transportation, community resources, economic development, housing, and land use work together. This plan shifted to a Daily Community Framework, modeled after the 15-minute city philosophy. Although the *Unified Plan* does not cover incorporated areas, it does plan for the areas immediately outside of Buford’s city limits.



Destination 2050: Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

Building off of *Destination 2040*, *Destination 2050* is an updated multi-modal plan for the county’s transportation networks, including roads, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and freight. The process for developing *Destination 2050* was concurrent to this plan update. Overarching plan goals did not deviate significantly from *Destination 2040*, but were minimally edited to be more concise and clear:

- Promote safe transportation for all people, no matter how they travel.
- Keep the community as a great place to live, respecting current open spaces and transportation projects that benefit health and the environment.
- Be ready for the future of transportation.
- Continue to be responsible with transportation resources.
- Help people get from point A to point B efficiently.
- Ensure that the County’s transportation system supports the local economy and community.

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 previous CTP identified 21 transportation projects located in or directly adjacent to the City of Buford.



Ride Gwinnett: Transit Development Plan (TDP)

A sister document to *Destination 2050*, *Ride Gwinnett* focuses on transit in the county, setting the vision and plan for transit systems to serve current and future needs. The goals of the TDP generally are to improve connectivity and mobility, improve access to transit, enhance the user’s experience, create vibrant multimodal places, minimize environmental impact, and provide robust information about mobility alternatives and their benefits.



Gwinnett Trails County-Wide 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 Ivy Creek Greenway, which runs along the eastern edge of the City of Buford. 5.5 miles have been constructed within the 7 total miles proposed. Other trails included a network of off-road and side path trails, most notably in Buford two along Suwanee Creek tributaries. Since 2019, the plan has not undergone any updates.



Hall County Forward

At the time this update was prepared, Hall County was also updating their comprehensive plan to focus on balancing growth with infrastructure and preserving rural character. In and around Buford, Hall County has experienced this balance acutely as County residents experience the impact of Buford’s residential and industrial growth.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE REQUIREMENTS

This 2045 comprehensive plan update was prepared in compliance with Georgia Department of Community Affairs (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.”

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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 2019 update. It is a high-level understanding of the community, looking specifically at the following:







-  What demographics make up the City of Buford? How is the city growing?
-  Where are different types of land uses concentrated in Buford? Do trends from the past hold true?
-  Are residents able to get around Buford in ways they prefer? What transportation projects are coming soon?
-  What impacts have the housing and development trends identified in the previous had on the current state of housing in Buford?
-  Who are the major employers in Buford and where do local residents work? What are the most significant economic developments since 2019?
-  What community resources do Buford residents have access to that lead to a high quality of life?

Figure 2.1. Buford and the Region

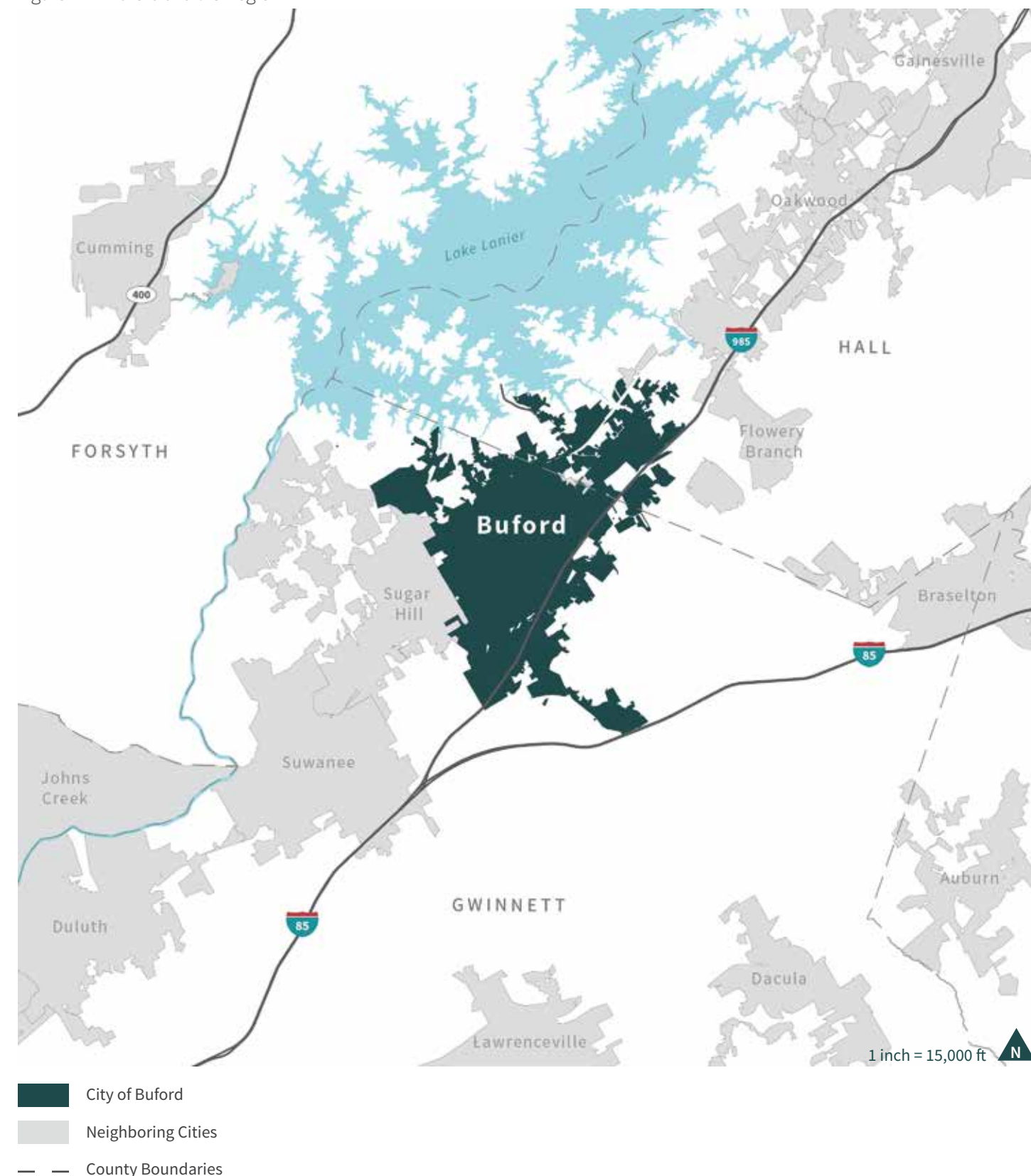


Figure 2.2. City of Buford



- City of Buford
- Neighboring Cities
- Greenspace
- City Hall

OUR COMMUNITY

Snapshot

The most recent American Community Survey data available (2021) estimates Buford’s population at 16,181 residents, placing the rate of population growth over 31% throughout the last decade. Buford continues to experience a different racial makeup of those from Gwinnett and Hall Counties. The majority of the city’s residents identify themselves as White at 58.5 percent, while 13.7 percent identify as Black, 3.4 percent identify as Asian, and 16.3 percent identify as two or more races. Buford’s Hispanic or Latino population retains a steady presence at 35.2 percent, remaining above the 22.2 percent and 29.5 percent of Hispanic or Latino population of Gwinnett and Hall Counties respectively.

Over half of Buford households are married couple family households. The average household size in Buford is 3.33, similar to that of Gwinnett and Hall Counties. The level of educational attainment in Buford continues to grow with more than 27 percent of residents over the age of 25 having a bachelor’s degree or higher. The median income in the city has slightly increased to \$54,321, however this is still notably less than the median incomes of Gwinnett and Hall counties. In the same period, Gwinnett County’s median income increased by 21.5 percent while Buford’s only increased by 5.5 percent. 13 percent of families have an income that is below the poverty level, compared to Gwinnett County’s 11 percent and Hall County’s 12 percent for county-wide figures.



What’s New

Population growth in Buford has accelerated since the previous comprehensive plan. Between 2000 and 2010, the population growth rate was 9 percent; however in the most recent decade, the population growth rate was 40 percent. Year over year since the last plan was conducted, the population growth rate has maintained at 6 percent, a faster paced growth compared to the 3 percent rate before 2019.

The median household income in Buford continues to lack a substantial increase in response to trends such as increasing educational attainment and population growth. Buford’s median income in 2021 was \$54,321 compared to County-wide figures of \$74,662 in Gwinnett County and \$66,719 in Hall County. Though the gains in the city had outpaced the gains in the county in the previous plan, the County has begun to surpass those gains and widen the Median Income gap in the last five years as noted previously.

In addition to changes in local education, racial and ethnic diversity have continued to expand in the Buford community since 2000. Black, Asian, and those identifying with 2 or more races have each expanded its representation within the greater Buford population, especially those who identify with two or more races, which only measured at 2% at the time of the former comprehensive plan but now comprise 13.7 percent of the population. The Black or African American community has rebounded from its previous dip back to the previous 13 percent mark.

LAND USE

Snapshot

Buford continues to strengthen its tax base by uniquely allocating a large portion of land to industrial and commercial uses. Most of the new development permitted has been industrial followed closely by commercial. These have taken place throughout the city, but most heavily in the northern portion in Hall County and the southern portion of recently annexed land along I-85 in Gwinnett County.

There have been 15 new residential developments since the last plan, bringing a total of 463 new housing units to the city. The new residential permits are on the north side of the city and the south side of the city. Older, more established single-family neighborhoods are near Downtown and off of Hamilton Mill Road, Thompson Mill Road, and South Bogan Road.

Downtown Buford has a unique pattern of land use with the city. Though it has industrial origins as a railroad town, it's now focused on retail, restaurants, and other commercial uses. 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

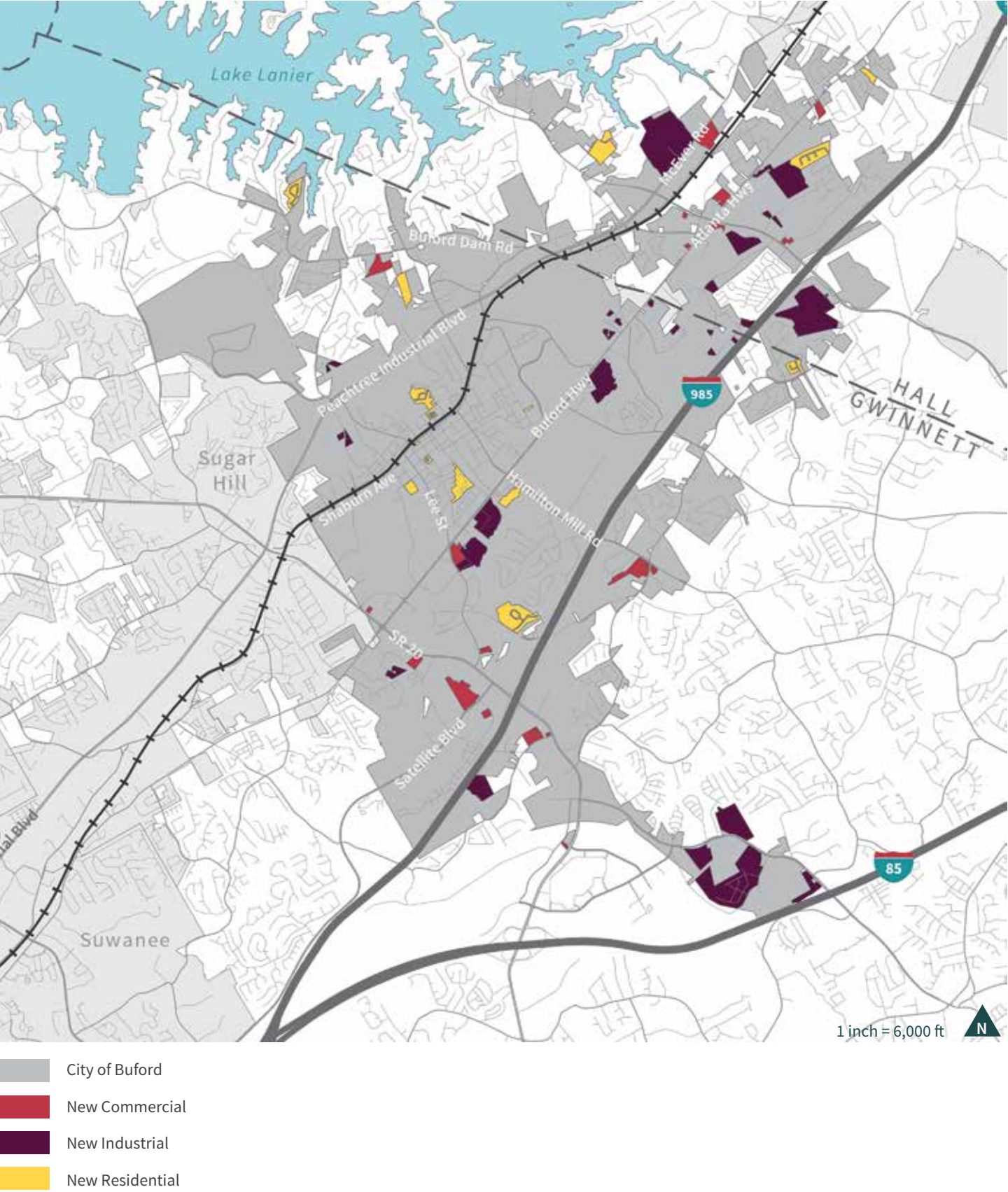
Buford continues to experience a high level of development activity since 2019. New to this update, the city also experienced a notable amount of residential redevelopment in-town, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to zoning changes from the City. Figure 2.3 shows where the permits by type have been issued since 2019. This growth is reflected in a geospatial analysis of the permitted parcels. Within this time frame, approximately 25 acres of land have developed into commercial/mixed use; about 534 acres have developed into industrial uses (primarily warehouses and logistics centers); and about 46 acres have transitioned to residential uses. Previously, new industrial development clustered in the southern third of the city, and new residential development was near the I-985 corridor, and concentrated towards the north in Hall County. In the last five years, these development types have shifted to cover the entire city. Industrial development has taken place in both Hall County and in the city's southern border by I-85. New residential and commercial development are also more evenly spread across the city.



The new Downtown Buford Logistics Center, located off Buford Highway, is an example of recently completed Industrial Development in the city.

Photo Credit: IDI Logistics

Figure 2.3. New Development



TRANSPORTATION

Snapshot

Roadways

Buford is located along I-985, about 40 miles northeast of downtown Atlanta. I-985 runs northeast along the southern boundary of the city. The major arterial roads are Buford Highway and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, which run parallel to I-985 through the center and the northern boundaries of the city respectively. SR 20 and Lanier Islands Parkway provides connectivity between the eastern and western side of the city. Smaller key roads and streets include Bogan Road, Main Street, Shadburn Avenue, South Lee Street, South Hill Street/Hamilton Mill Road, Shadburn Ferry Road, Thompson Mill Road, and Sawnee Avenue. The street network mostly consists of suburban-style arterials and local streets, but it does have a more traditional street grid downtown.

Most residents in Buford continue to rely on cars. 80 percent of commuters drive alone to work each day with an average travel time of 29 minutes to get to their jobs, an increase in both commuters and travel time from the previous plan. According to Level of Service (LOS) data from GDOT, most Buford’s roads are graded Level A, meaning traffic can flow freely. There is a small segment graded Level B along SR 20 right off the I-985 interchange (exit 4). This is likely a consequence of the increasing freight traffic from recent industrial development.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Downtown Buford and the surrounding neighborhoods create a pleasant environment for walking as the city continues to invest in streetscape improvements throughout this area. Other pedestrian improvements include the sidewalks along Heraeus Boulevard, Harris Street, and Horizon Parkway/Satellite Boulevard. Continued efforts for southwest connectivity are ongoing with a focus on commercial corridor connectivity with the City’s new Moreno Street project and segways into residential areas.

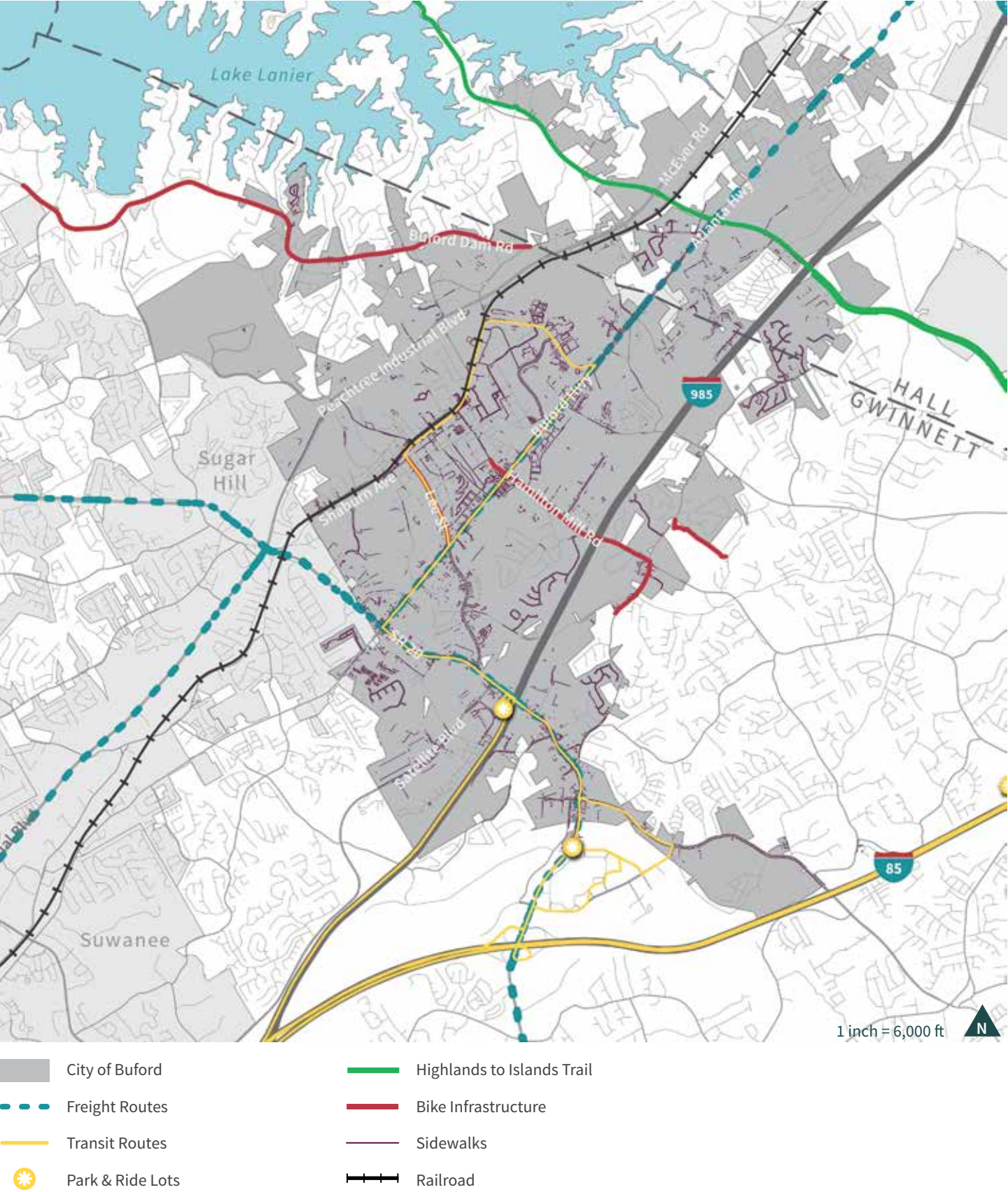
Transit

There remains no Gwinnett County local bus routes in Buford; however, the 101 Express Route continues to 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 continues to be a transportation concern for Buford residents as industrial development increases in the city and the region. Official truck routes in Buford are I-985, Buford Highway, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Hamilton Mill Road, and Thompson Mill Road. As the region has not yet updated its 2010 Truck Route Master Plan (ASTRoMap), only Buford Highway is considered part of the region’s official routes. The Georgia Department of Transportation updated its Freight Master Plan, Georgia Freight, in early 2023 and I-985 continues to serve as a state-wide freight corridor. The plan also addresses concerns for truck safety along the corridor, as it currently experiences higher volumes of truck-involved-crashes than the statewide average. Norfolk Southern has a rail line that runs parallel to Shadburn Avenue, but the bulk of freight movement in Buford continues to be via truck.

Figure 2.4. Existing Transportation System



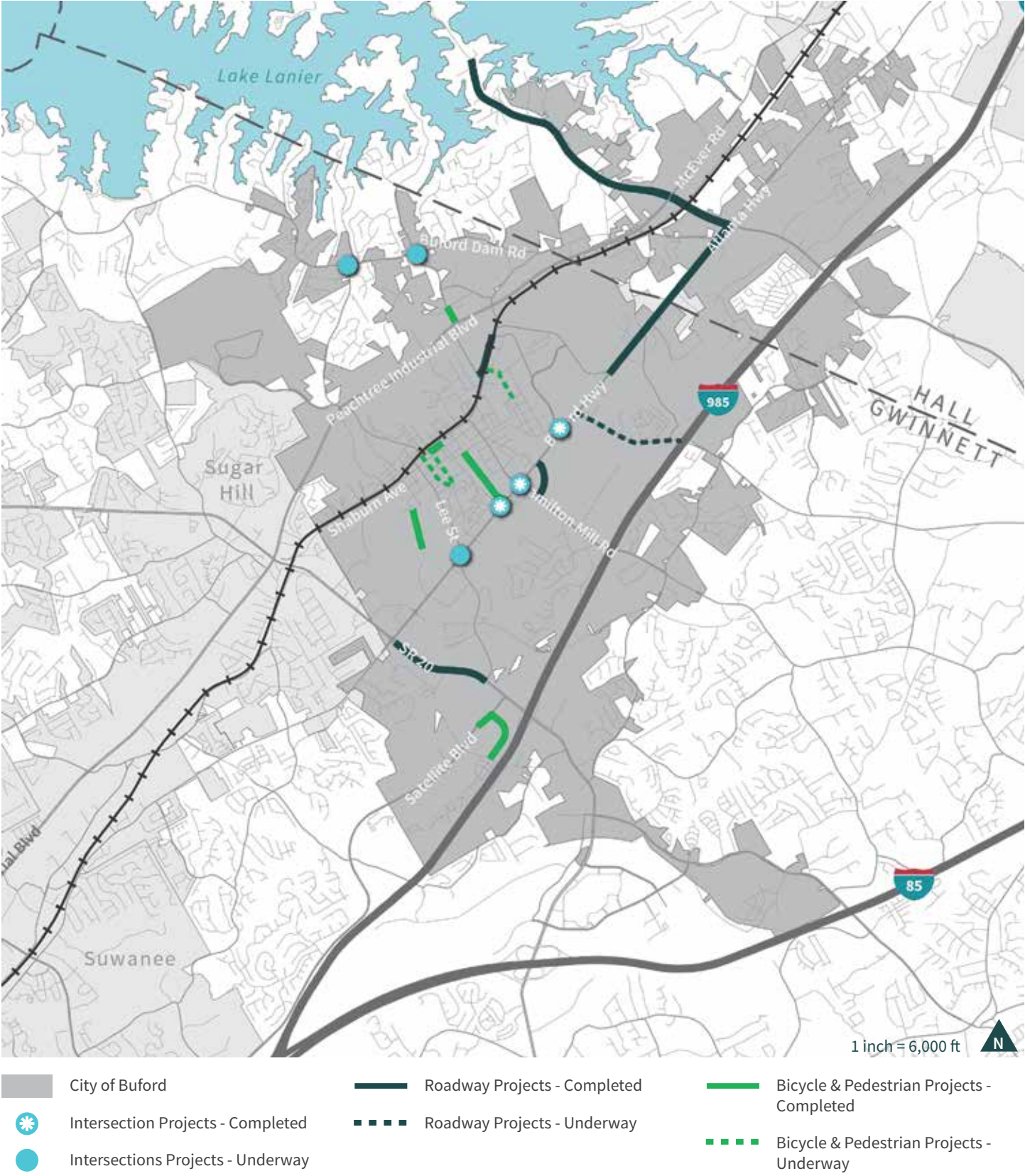
What’s New or Already Planned?

Many transportation projects have been completed or are currently underway since the last Comprehensive Plan update in 2019, such as intersection updates, road widenings, road extensions. The following is a summary of key transportation projects completed or in the works.

Table 2.1. Transportation Projects Completed & Underway

Intersection Projects	Status
Buford Highway at Robert Bell Parkway Intersection Improvement	Complete
Buford Highway at South Garnett Street Intersection Improvement	Complete
Hamilton Mill Road at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement	Complete
South Lee Street at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement	Underway
Buford Dam Road at Little Mill Road Intersection Improvement	Underway
Buford Dam Road at Shadburn Ferry Road Intersection Improvement	Underway
Roadway Projects	
New Buford High School road	Complete
SR 20 widening from South Lee Street to SR 13/Atlanta Highway	Complete
East Shadburn Avenue extension	Complete
SR 13/Atlanta Hwy - From Sawnee Ave to SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway	Complete
SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway - McEver Road to Lake Lanier Islands Turn Lane	Complete
Thompson Mill Road widening	Underway
Thompson Mill Road interchange at I-985	Underway
Bicycle + Pedestrian Projects	
Shadburn Ferry Road major pedestrian facilities	Complete
Heraeus Boulevard sidewalks	Complete
South Harris Street sidewalks	Complete
Horizon Parkway/Satellite Boulevard sidewalks	Complete
Jones Alley Upgrades	Complete
S. Alexander Street/Church Street Sidewalks	Complete
Bona Road sidewalks	Underway

Figure 2.5. Recently Completed Transportation Projects



HOUSING

Snapshot

The most recent census data from 2020 shows that Buford has 6,085 housing units at an occupancy rate of 93.4 percent. Buford has added about 1,000 houses since 2016, and 18 percent of Buford’s housing stock was built after 2010. This is notably higher than both Gwinnett and Hall County’s rates, which are 14%. Those who rent their homes in Buford have grown to represent 34 percent of the community, the same percentage as Gwinnett County but slightly higher than Hall County. This is a small decrease from 2018.

Home values have increased drastically in Buford since the previous plan, a trend that is reflected throughout the Atlanta-metropolitan region. The current median housing value in Buford is \$467,000, compared to \$400,000 in Gwinnett County and \$420,000 in Hall County. This increasing home price trend was just starting during the previous planning process, and the community was beginning to vocalize concerns about prices deterring younger Buford generations from being able to buy homes in the city. Current prices have exceeded expectations, and this concern is becoming increasingly pronounced throughout the community. This has been extended to crucial service providers such as teachers.

11.5 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) is the main agency working to address some of the issues of affordable housing in the area, maintaining 189 affordable housing units in the region and 143 in the city limits. BHA plans to bring 71 units online across three separate multi-family structures within the city limits in the coming years.

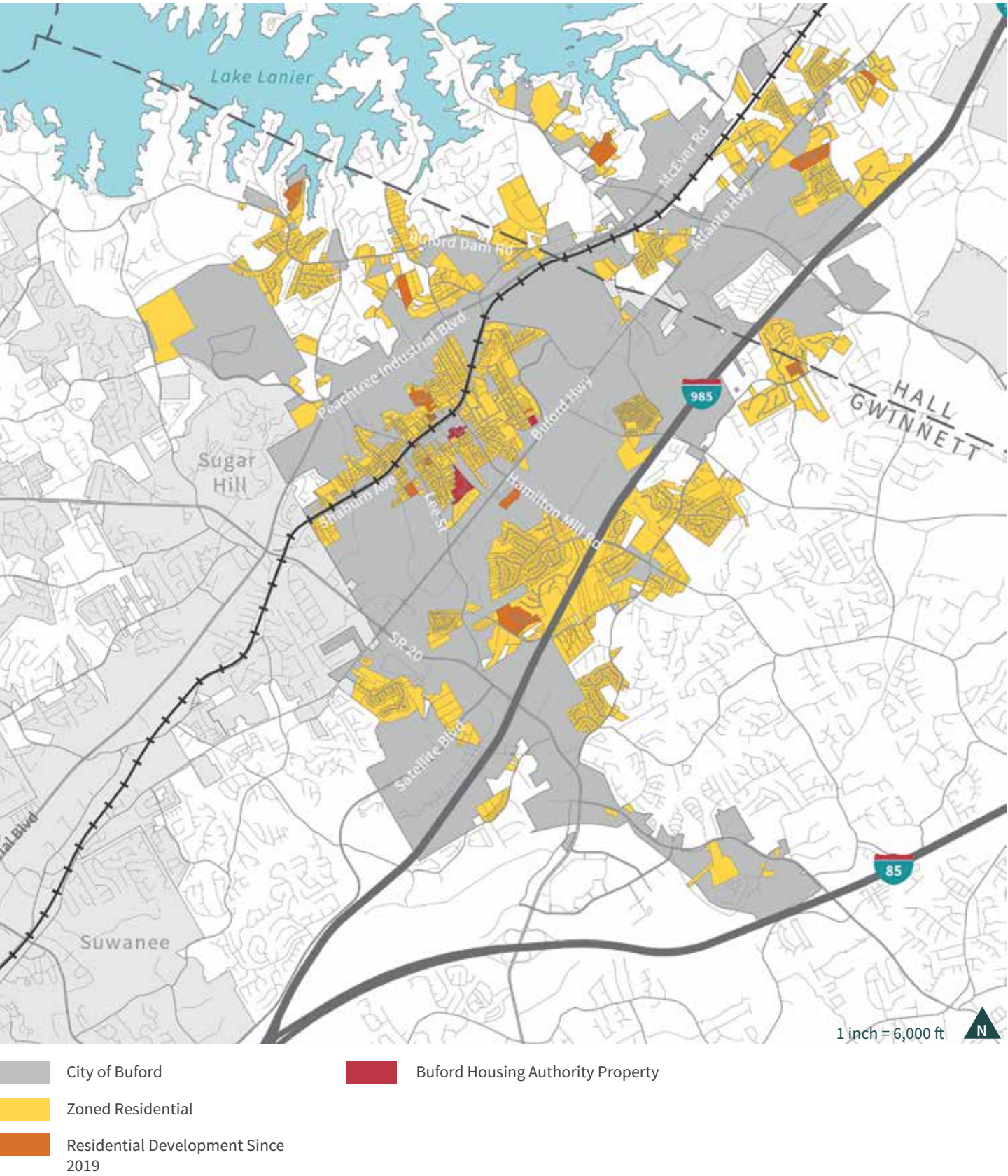
What’s New?

Buford’s residential housing has slowed drastically compared to previous years. This is in large part due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to construction shortages and supply chain issues in both labor and materials across the country. Notably, there has been a recent trend to build townhomes, which has been popular with residents. This has replaced permitting new mobile homes, of which there have been no new permits issued since the previous plan. Since the 2019 update, a number of housing developments have been completed or are currently under construction, including:

- **City Walk** – located off of North Gwinnett Street, a development of 59 3-bedroom townhomes at price points of \$350,000 and above
- **Lanier Harbor** – 113 new townhomes in a lakeside community near City of Buford Lake Park, with home prices starting in the low \$300,000s
- **Chestnut Park** – a medium residential neighborhood with 53 homes, and prices starting in the high \$300s
- **Bogan Parc** – a new high-end subdivision with 16 home sites of 4 to 5 bedrooms each, with prices starting in the \$850,000s
- **Summerlyn** – A high-end subdivision encompassing 45 new homes with 5 bedrooms located off of Frazer Road. Listing prices were in the \$700
- **Alexander Park** – 11 new townhomes with 3-bedrooms located off Alexander Street and priced in the mid-\$400,000s.

Affordability continues to be a concern in the Buford community. Because of the high price points of new homes, many types of households—such as young families, teachers and seniors—are struggling to find housing that they can afford.

Figure 2.6. Housing



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Snapshot

As of 2016, Buford residents constituted a labor force of 6,983 people, representing about 58 percent of the local population eligible to work. Of those in the labor force, 2.5 percent were unemployed and less than one percent were in the military. Since the previous plan, the unemployment rate has dropped by half. In 2020, more than 5,100 Buford residents commuted outside of the city to go to work each day, but over three times that (18,100 people) commuted into Buford daily. 34 percent of the labor force in Buford worked outside of Gwinnett or Hall County in 2021, a drop from 57 percent in the previous plan. This suggests that the mismatch between available jobs in the city and the skill sets of residents is decreasing. However, commuting times have continued to increase despite this, leading to additional congestion on roadways. This may again be attributed to increasing freight traffic and/or increased population in the city.

36 percent of city residents in the workforce are employed in management, business, science, and art occupations, which is the largest portion of the Buford labor force and has surpassed the service sector, which previously held the largest portion of the Buford labor force. In the previous planning cycle, the service sector was a quarter of the population, but it has since dropped to 19 percent of the population. This shift is positive for Buford’s workforce, as management, business, science, and art occupations typically have higher wages than the service industry.

The city is well known for its strong industrial and commercial base and is a Certified Work Ready Community. Major companies continue to have significant facilities located within Buford, as well as smaller local and regional companies. 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 its size.

What’s New

Buford continues to attract jobs across almost all industries, from health care and social assistance, manufacturing, construction, retail, professional and STEM industries, and beyond. 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 18,100 in 2021. Buford continues to see demand for industrial and commercial development. Since 2019, it has permitted 35 new industrial developments and 27 commercial developments. Both categories have seen a large array of sizes from international chains to small, local services. Over 1,120 jobs have been added thanks to these developments.

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. Redevelopment will continue to increase in importance as the city is beginning to reach the borders of annexable land.

Areas of Opportunity/Development

In addition to projects that have been recently built, the following sites were identified as key development and redevelopment opportunities:

- Empty lot on East Moreno Street across from the new public parking deck
- Redevelopment of old BHA Homes at East Hill and East Moreno Streets.

Figure 2.7. Economic Development



QUALITY OF LIFE

Snapshot

The City of Buford provides many community resources that create a high quality of life for its residents. The pride and joy of these are its public schools. However, access to quality and affordable utilities are also noted as high among citizens’ favorite aspects of living in Buford. These utilities also provide revenue opportunities for the city. Though Buford maintains several of its own parks and trails, support from Gwinnett and Hall Counties also expand parks and recreation options, as well as provide crucial public safety services.

Schools

Buford is unique among Gwinnett County municipalities in that it is the only city with its own school system. In Hall County, Gainesville is the only other city with its own school system. Between the brand-new high school, middle school, elementary school, Buford Academy and Buford Senior Academy, the city’s schools have a current enrollment of nearly 5,800 students. That’s an increase of over 1,100 students since the previous plan. Currently the system receives an “A” from the State of Georgia and has maintained its NICHE rankings as the top ranked school in the state for nine years straight. Not only do the schools excel academically, Buford High School is nationally recognized for its athletics and is ranked as the fifth best high school football program in the U.S. and the 40th overall high school in the country for student athletes in general.

Public Facilities & Services

Outside the schools, 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 maintains the gymnasium at the old Bona Allen baseball field site.

Both Gwinnett and Hall County provides several services to the City of Buford, including fire and police protection. Gwinnett County Fire Station Number 14 is located on

Buford Highway, across from the Village Square shopping center. Hall County is building Fire Station Number 17 at the northern end of the city near the intersection of Lanier Islands Parkway and Holiday Road. 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.

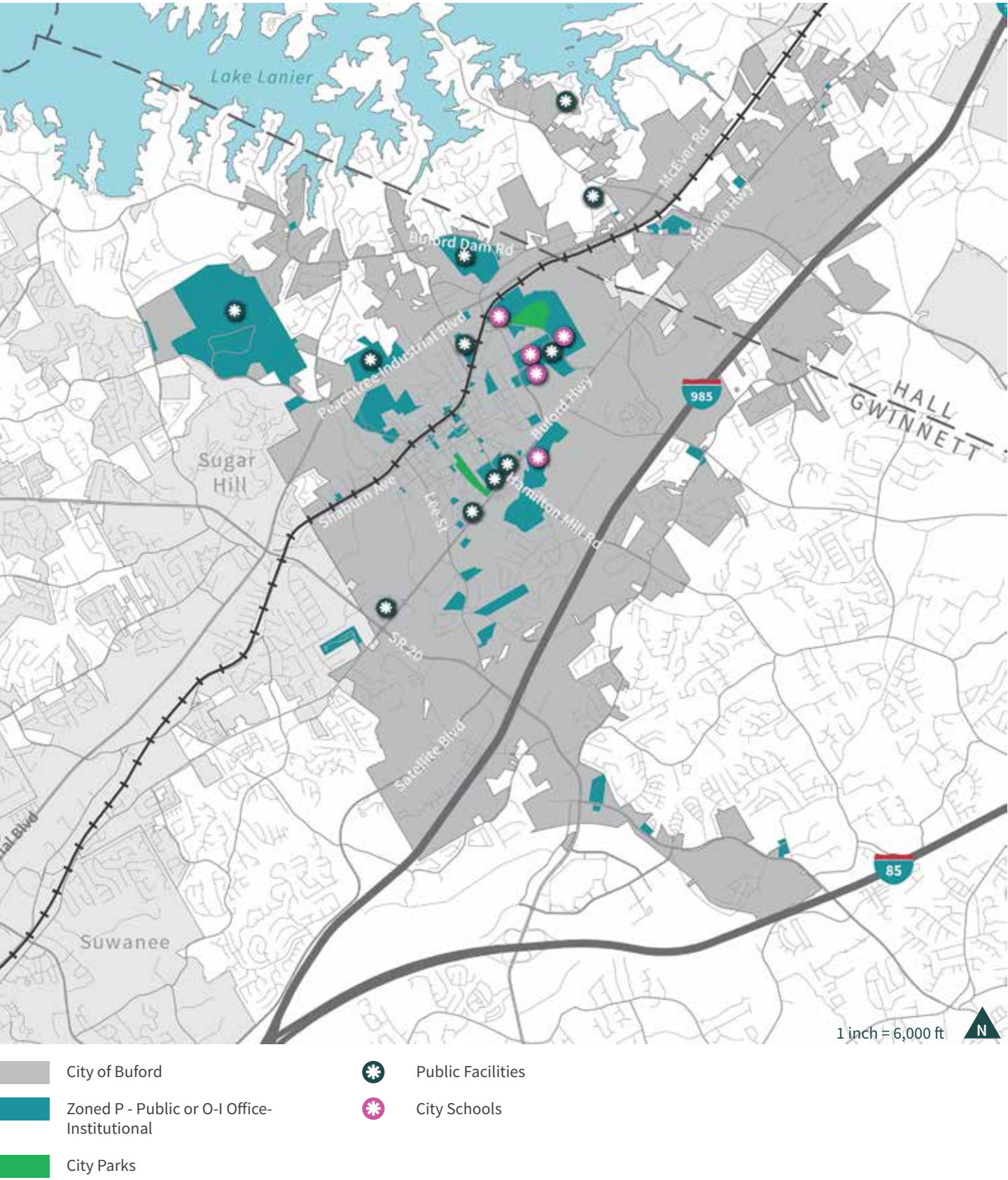
Utilities

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 of Gainesville services businesses in the southern part of Hall County. 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 will complete a new membrane ultrafiltration water treatment plant along the existing plant in 2023. 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 40,000 customers in five counties. The City’s Public Works Department uses the latest technologies to monitor the flow of natural gas through its pipelines and distribution lines.

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 with approximately 634,000 citizens in Georgia. Specific to Buford, MEAG’s delivered energy is 36 percent emissions-free, but MEAG has set the goal of being 90% emissions free for all its participants by 2045. In addition, through a contract with Republic Services, the harvesting of methane gas at Richland Creek landfill is creating green power generation.

Figure 2.8. Quality of Life



Parks and Recreation

Different City of Buford agencies provide numerous recreation amenities. The City’s 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 Buford City Gym; and the Main Street Park and amphitheater. Additionally, 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. Additionally, Hall County’s Lake Lanier Olympic Park also has access to the lake.

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

Lake Lanier is the most dominant natural resource that influences 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. There are several buildings that are likely eligible for the National Register from the Bona Allen era, as well as historic cemeteries, churches, and other structures.

What’s New?

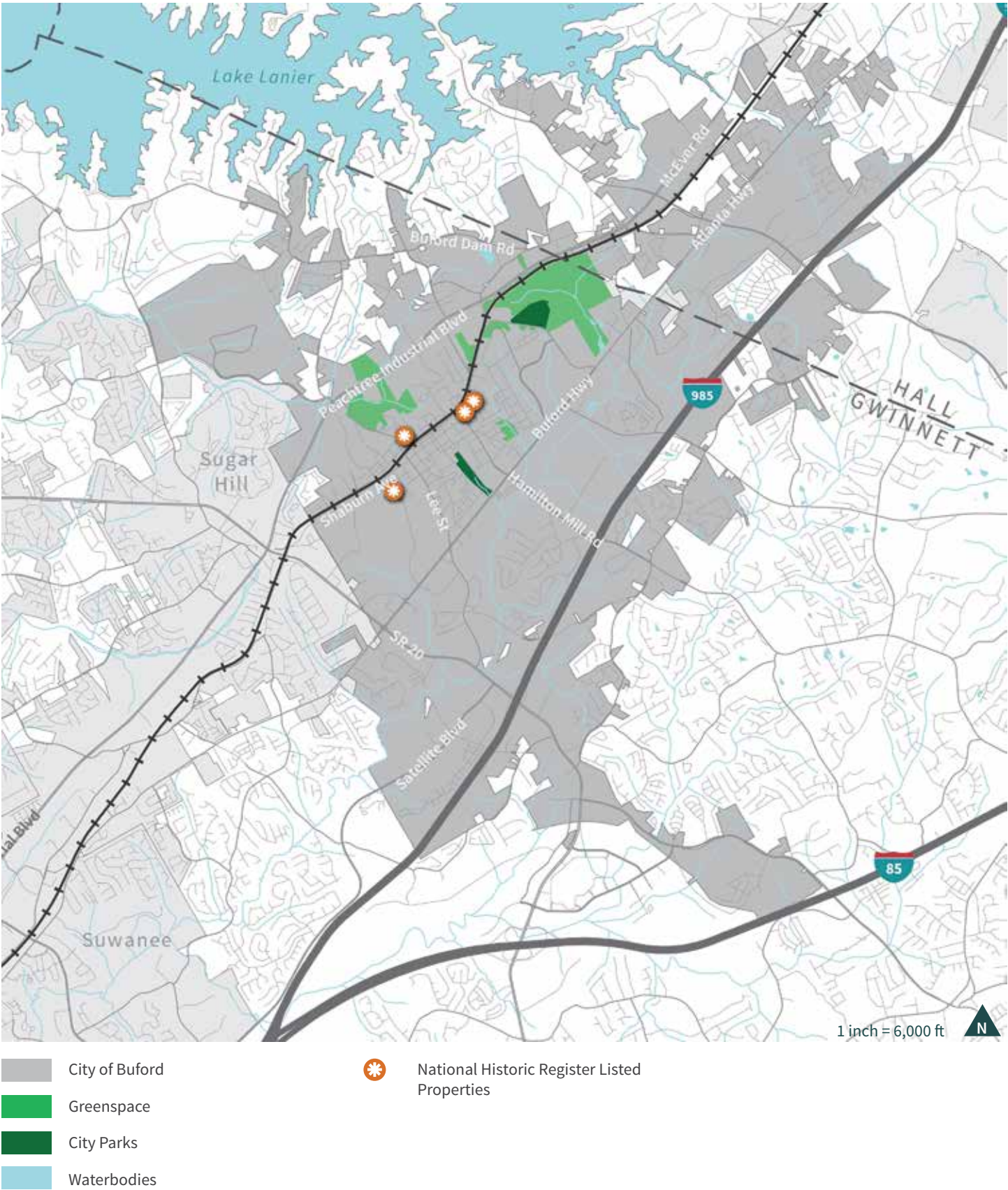
Most noticeable since the previous plan, the High School has been completed. Further new developments include townhomes and a park adjacent to the Lanier Harbor Marina, which is operated by the City of Buford through an intergovernmental agreement with the Army Corps of engineers in order to expand access to the lake for residents. A plaza adjacent to the Downtown Parking Deck is near completion, and the Garnett Street trail was completed, with plans to extend it to SR 20/Buford Drive at S. Lee Street.

After the Bona Allen Mansion was put on the market in April 2023, concerned citizens worked with the City Government to form the Buford Historic Properties Advisory Committee to ensure Buford’s historic resources are protected.

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 has seen some renovations.



Figure 2.9. Natural and Cultural Resources





NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

With the help of the steering committee and input from the public, the planning team updated the previously identified needs and opportunities from the Buford 2040 Comprehensive Plan to reflect changes in the City over the last five years. 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

Maintenance of Small Town Character

In the face of growth, Buford has maintained its small-town character. In recent years, this has become even more important to residents. While improvements have been made Downtown and throughout the rest of the city, Buford should continue to 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.



Annexation

There is wide support for the City to maintain its current development policy of encouraging more commercial and industrial development to maintain a healthy tax base. 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

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 should be strategic and focused in Downtown, but could also be successful in targeted areas that can support it.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: TRANSPORTATION



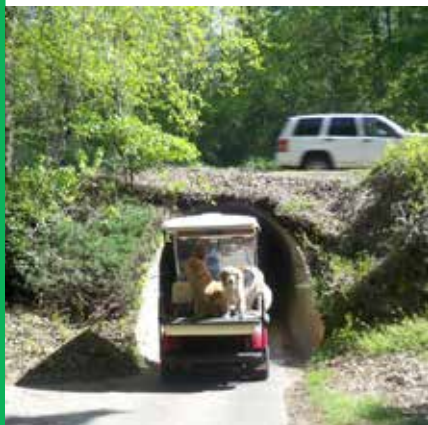
Roadway Congestion

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 continues to be a major opportunity for development and improved access to the rest of the region. Currently there are two exits that serve Buford: exit 4 at 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. The City has an intergovernmental agreement with Gwinnett County to develop a concept plan for a new interchange, which would help address this and potentially move freight traffic off local roads quicker.



Lack of Pedestrian Facilities

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

Golf Carts

Residents have pointed out that a golf cart "epidemic" has taken place in Buford over the last few years, citing that more people are using golf carts to make short distance trips. Legally, a local government can allow golf carts on designated local streets and trails. The City should consider designating streets and trails that are appropriate for golf cart use and converting some public parking spaces for golf carts to increase accessibility.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: HOUSING

Attainable Housing

Rising housing costs have become a region-wide issue, and Buford is no exception. The housing crisis is a multi-faceted issue that doesn't have just one solution. What makes the issue even more challenging is that the notion of "affordability" varies from household to household: what is affordable to one may not be affordable to another. The Buford Housing Authority (BHA) does provide some relief to the problem but is only able to serve those with the greatest need. As new housing is added to the city, the focus should be on attainability: ensuring that all who want to live in Buford, including seniors on fixed incomes, first-time home buyers, and members of the local workforce such as teachers and public employees, are able to access housing that fits their needs at a price point they can afford.



Variety of Housing Types

The current trend toward large, upmarket single-family detached homes is meeting the needs of only a subset of the Buford population. As a challenge that goes hand in hand with affordability and attainability, there is an opportunity in Buford to encourage a broader mix of housing types, especially in the Downtown area. Smaller units on smaller lots can continue to provide more affordable options to middle-income households. There is also a desire for more live/work units, loft-like apartments/condos, and modest-sized single-story homes that appeal to first-time home buyers and downsizers. There is also demand for more housing that caters to seniors (55+ communities, homes that allow aging-in-place assisted living, etc).



NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Source: IDI Logistics

Continued Industrial Development

Buford has a very large supply of industry and has become known internationally as a great place to do business. Over the last decade, this has led to the development of hundreds of thousands of square feet of industrial facilities. The City has seen great financial benefits to having these developments as they provide the funding needed for public projects and school improvement. 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.

Downtown Development

A lot has been accomplished to develop Downtown Buford, and the community is ready for a “Phase 2” strategy to continue the momentum. Beyond the physical revitalization of Downtown, there is a strong desire by many in the community to enliven the area by creating and activating new public spaces, especially on days like Sundays when Downtown isn’t as active.

Desire for a Grocery Store

The new Publix on Hamilton Mill Road and Bogan Road has fulfilled the need for a grocery store for those who live on that side of the city. However, there is a long-term desire for attracting either another grocery store like Publix or a Kroger to a more centralized location to serve more Buford residents, or a more upscale concept like Whole Foods or Sprouts. 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

Entertainment and Events

While the City has the Buford Arena and Community Center that hosts a number of events year-round, residents have expressed a desire for infrastructure to support more entertainment options and events, including a larger amphitheater and activated greenspace that can provide passive entertainment options for families and attract outdoor festivals and concerts. Where possible, public spaces should be activated with placemaking elements like public art, seating, and play areas.



Revitalization/Redevelopment of Underused Sites

Although Buford’s economy is continuing to thrive by many measures, there is desire to revitalize older commercial strip malls beautify the city’s gateways along Buford Highway, Buford Drive, and Friendship Road/Lanier Islands Parkway.



NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: QUALITY OF LIFE



Credit: Casey Sikes/AJC

■ *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, but Buford's schools are also 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 population resulting in over-enrollment in the schools and the need to maintain quality in the face of increased demand. The recently opened Buford High School has helped provide capacity for a growing population of school-aged children, but over time, Buford City Schools will need to continue monitoring both population and enrollment trends to ensure their facilities can keep up with any major increases.



Source: City of Buford website

■ *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.



Source: City of Buford website

■ *Preservation of Community Safety*

The community has 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 in the long term, especially if the amount of calls related to crime within the city limits remains low. The City should continue to work with Gwinnett County to ensure that Buford residents, visitors, and workers feel safe in the community, with initiatives to keep the crime rate low.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES: QUALITY OF LIFE

Additional Recreation Options

One of the most desired quality of life amenities in any city is options for recreation. In Buford, residents and visitors particularly enjoy greenways and trails, parks, recreation programs, access to Lake Lanier, and special events. Several greenways and trail projects have already been identified through multiple planning studies within the City and Gwinnett/Hall Counties, as well as locations for potential parks. 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. In the future, the City should consider expanding its recreational options, particularly around pickleball, which is gaining popularity in the region.



Credit: Seattle Parks & Recreation

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 community has expressed a desire for more and better historic preservation. The City has responded by creating a Historic District Advisory Committee to evaluate putting Downtown Buford and some of its oldest buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.



Maintain Community Safety Net

While the City can provide support to its residents in many ways, the community has other organizations like places of worship and non-profit groups that help “fill in the gaps,” like providing food, shelter, healthcare, and other resources to those struggling. It is important that the City coordinates with these organizations as needed to ensure that the community’s “safety net” can stay in place and provide needed services.



3

VISION, STRATEGIES, & POLICIES

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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, 2014, and 2019 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 seven priority strategies for Buford to focus on in the coming years. Figure 3.1 on page 46 is a illustrative vision of how these strategies can be implemented throughout the City of Buford.

Take Downtown Buford to the next level.

Downtown Buford is a charming place with a variety of local businesses and well-preserved historic buildings. However, it is only active during certain times of the day and week, and there is a lower level of activity than other downtowns in Gwinnett County.

With the completion of the new parking garage, there is an opportunity to revamp the public space of Downtown, allow patio dining, build a focal park, host events, and encourage a larger variety of businesses and restaurants to take root.





Prioritize maintaining excellent City services

The City's school system is one of the highest ranking districts in the state. The maintenance of this quality is a top priority for the community. Not only does this mean ongoing collaboration with school leadership, but continuing to build a healthy tax base that can financially sustain its buildings and facilities and employing the best staff.



Focus residential growth on small, pocket infill opportunities

Large-scaled residential uses are not desired by the community. However, there is a need for a broader range of housing options to accommodate the City's diverse population. The preferred strategy is to allow smaller footprint, single-family housing options near Downtown as infill. Lofts and condos in Downtown itself would also help boost activity levels.



Continue to attract employment opportunities and businesses.

Buford has been very successful in attracting new industry and medical services since 2019. The City should continue to proactively attract these uses, both to provide new job opportunities to residents and to help maintain a balanced tax base.

Establish a vision and plan for historic resources.

In the last year, the community has expressed an increased interest in preserving the major historic buildings in Buford. However, this needs to occur in balance with the rights and interests of property owners. The City needs to determine its role in preserving these structures, and the community needs to clarify its goals.



Enhance the network of sidewalks and trails.

Although Buford has been actively expanding its network of trails and sidewalks, the community input survey revealed that many residents still desire better walkability. There are many sidewalks in the city, but they may not necessarily connect to an integrated network, and/or have the design characteristics that make them feel safe and comfortable. The City should consider a more focused study to dive into this feedback from the community and understand the priority needs as it relates to walkability.

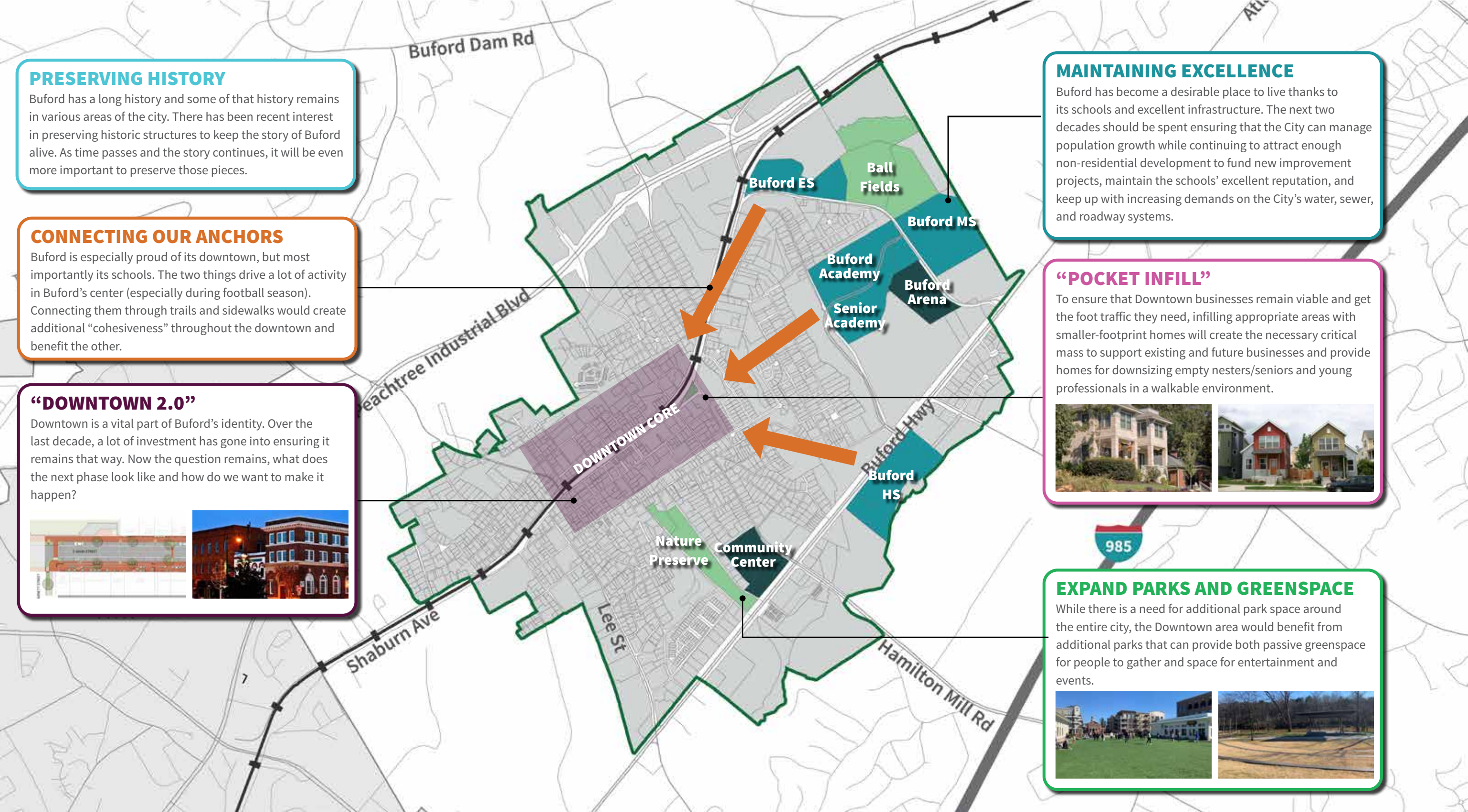


Expand the system of parks and green spaces.

The City has its parks and green spaces, but Gwinnett County and nearby cities like Sugar Hill also have excellent facilities. Rather than invest large new parks, the preferred strategy is to improve access to nearby recreational facilities. New parks and green spaces in Buford should be focused in the Downtown area to support events and enhance the sense of place. The City should also examine the conversion of landfill space to greenspace in the long-term future.



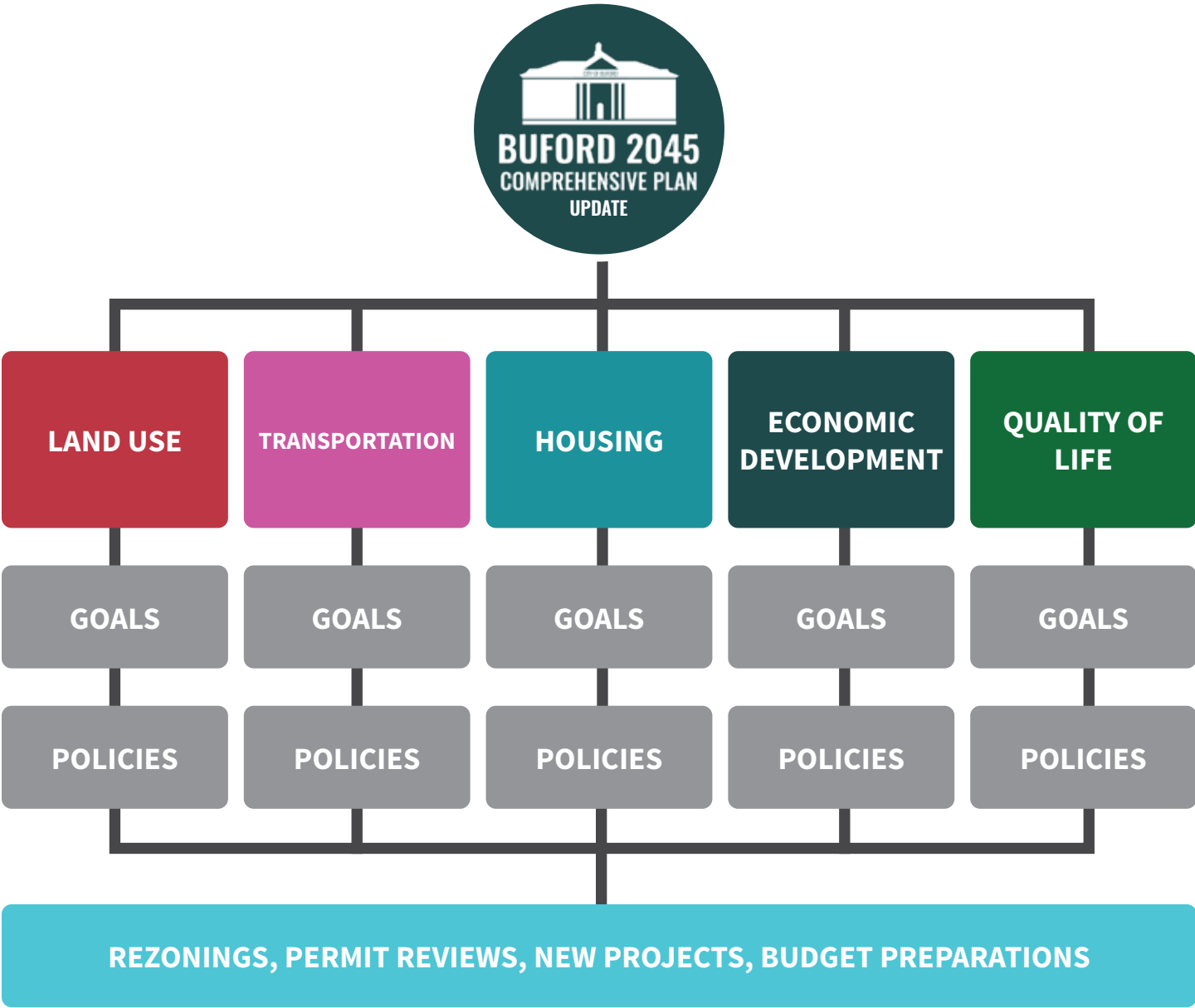
Figure 3.1. Strategy Map



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 city-wide, particularly at the time of rezoning, permit review, formalizing new projects, and budget preparation.



LAND USE

LU1. Maintain the small town character of Buford

- **LU1.1** - Preserve the existing character of Downtown and continue to promote its vitality
- **LU1.2** - Encourage new commercial and residential space in downtown
- **LU1.3** - Encourage the reuse of historic structures
- **LU1.4** - Maintain and enhance the integrity and character of existing residential neighborhoods
- **LU1.5** - Encourage varying types of housing, especially downtown

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 for commercial and industrial uses

LU3. Encourage mixed use development

- **LU3.1** - Foster compact mixed-use development where appropriate
- **LU3.2** - Encourage the reuse 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 the 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 developments
- **LU4.4** - Encourage renovation and revitalization of housing in older neighborhoods
- **LU4.5** - Support a vibrant street life by expanding usable public space in the right-of-way Downtown and encouraging outdoor dining

TRANSPORTATION

T1. Address congestion on roadways

- **T1.1** - Connect streets, sidewalks, open spaces, 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 arrange of route options, transportation modes, and reduced congestion
- **T1.5** - Explore policies that support the expansion of golf cart usage within the city, such as minimum trail widths, specific parking designations, etc.

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
- **T2.4** - Explore the feasibility of accommodating golf carts on streets and trails

T3. Expand the system of pedestrian 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
- **T3.3** - Coordinate with Gwinnett and Hall Counties on implementing sidewalk improvements on county roads
- **T3.4** - Create trail connections that tie to the Suwanee Creek Greenway, the Gwinnett County Greenway Trail Plan, and Hall County’s Highlands to Islands Trail network
- **T3.5** - Strive for a balance between automobiles and other users
- **T3.6** - Ensure that walking 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 and mixed-use developments
- **T4.2** - Incorporate progressive parking management strategies, including shared parking, public decks, and similar facilities
- **T4.3** - Reduce minimum requirements for surface parking where feasible

HOUSING

H1. Promote a variety of housing choices

- **H1.1** - Encourage the development of housing variety, particularly at smaller scales, near and in downtown
- **H1.2** - Accommodate the 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
- **H1.3** - Continue to coordinate with Gwinnett County on the implementation and update of its Consolidated Plan to help preserve safe and affordable housing

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** - Invest in 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** - Actively support existing downtown businesses
- **ED1.5** - Recruit more businesses that activate downtown at a broader variety of days/times

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

- **ED2.1** - Target reinvestment in declining areas 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

- **ED.3.1** - 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

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.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

QL.3 Promote a safe, peaceful community

- **QL3.1** - Work with Gwinnett County and Hall County to maintain 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** - Implement direction from the newly-formed historical commission

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

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4 BUFORD TOMORROW: CHARACTER AREAS & FUTURE LAND USE

CHARACTER AREA PLAN

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:

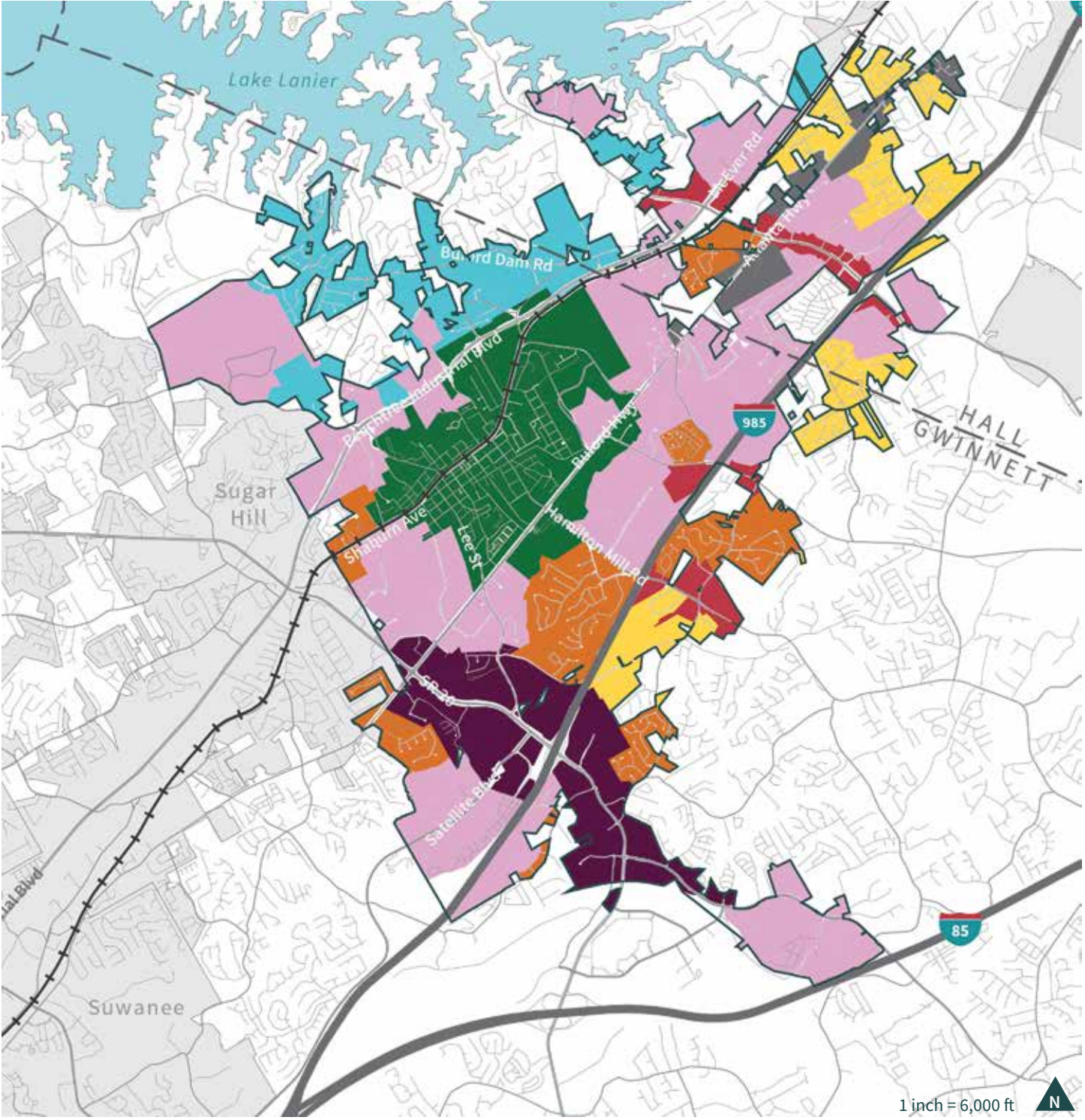
- Siting and configuration of lots
- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, and stormwater facilities
- Street design
- Intensity of development

- 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 Character Area Map was updated as part of the comprehensive plan to:

- Supplement the role of the Future Land Use Map
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool
- Encourage and promote quality development/redevelopment
- Define common themes among regions of the city
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community

Figure 4.1. Character Area Map



- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| City of Buford | Established Neighborhood | Regional Activity Center |
| Commercial/Industrial Area | Lakeside Area | |
| Downtown | Office/Professional Area | |
| Emerging Neighborhood | Quality Development Corridor | |

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.

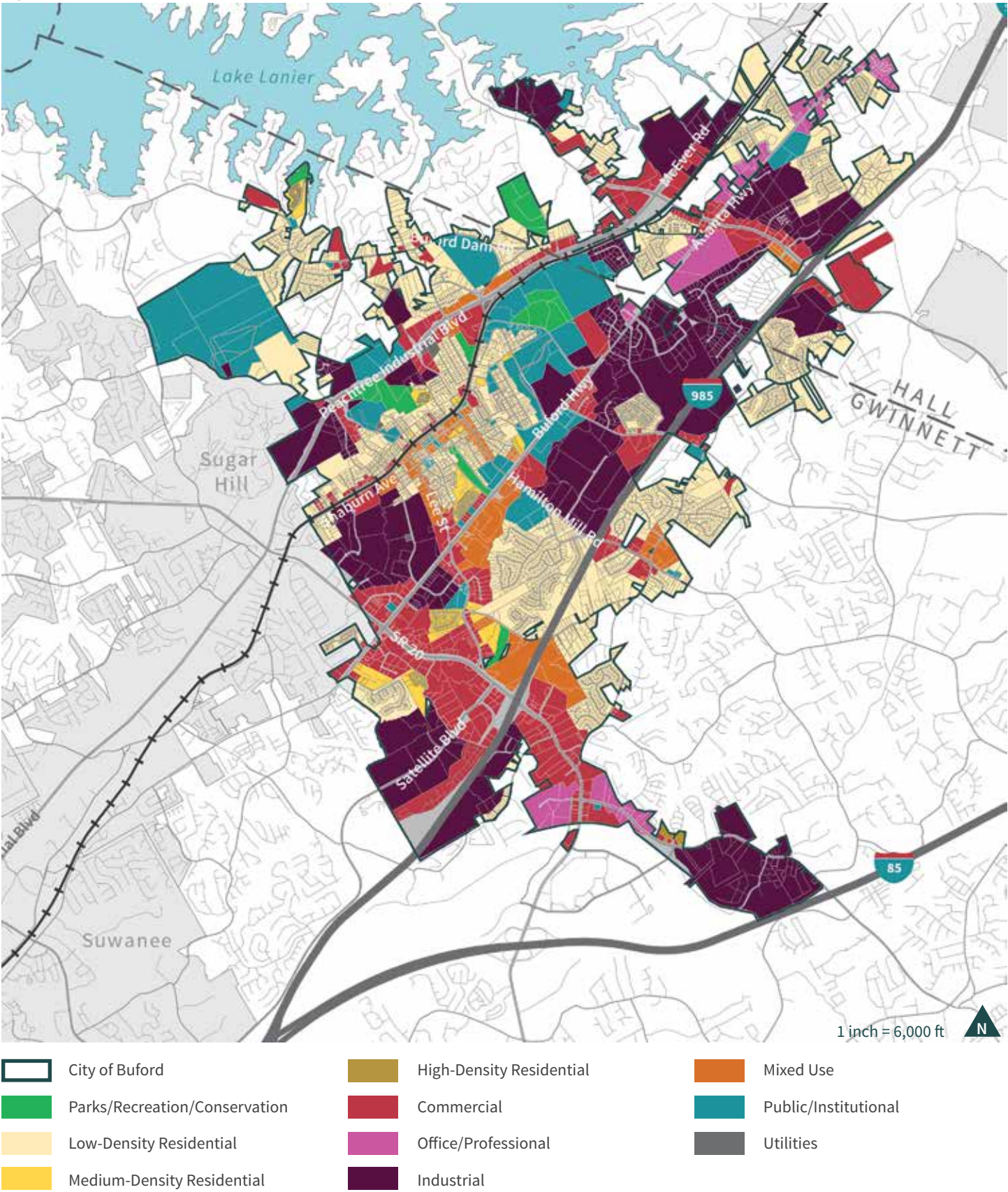
Each future land use category ties directly to an appropriate existing zoning category. In many respects, the Future Land Use Plan is a shorter range tool that the Character Area Map. It is intended to guide current rezoning decisions, and it more directly reflects current conditions and constraints 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

Future Land Use	Description	Recommended Zoning
Low-Density Residential	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	Single-family residential areas including duplexes and townhomes with between 4 and 6 units per acre	RMD
High-Density Residential	Apartments, townhomes or duplexes of up to 8 units per acre	RM, RM-8, RM-6
Commercial	Property where business and trade are conducted, including retail stores, shopping centers, and office buildings	C-2
Office/Professional	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-1
Mixed Use	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
Industrial	Property used for manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and trucking	OBP, M-1, M-2
Public/Institutional	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	Areas used for transportation, communication or utility related activities such as power generation plans, sewage and water treatment facilities, landfills, railroad facilities, radio towers, transit stations, telephone switching stations, or similar	All Zoning Districts
Park/Recreation/Conservation	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



CHARACTER AREA: COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

Existing Character

The Commercial/Industrial 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.

Encouraged Land Uses

Industrial, commercial, public/institutional, mixed use (flex), green space, utilities

Vision for the Future

The highest priority for Commercial/Industrial areas should be to support business and commerce and continue to support a strong tax base. 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.

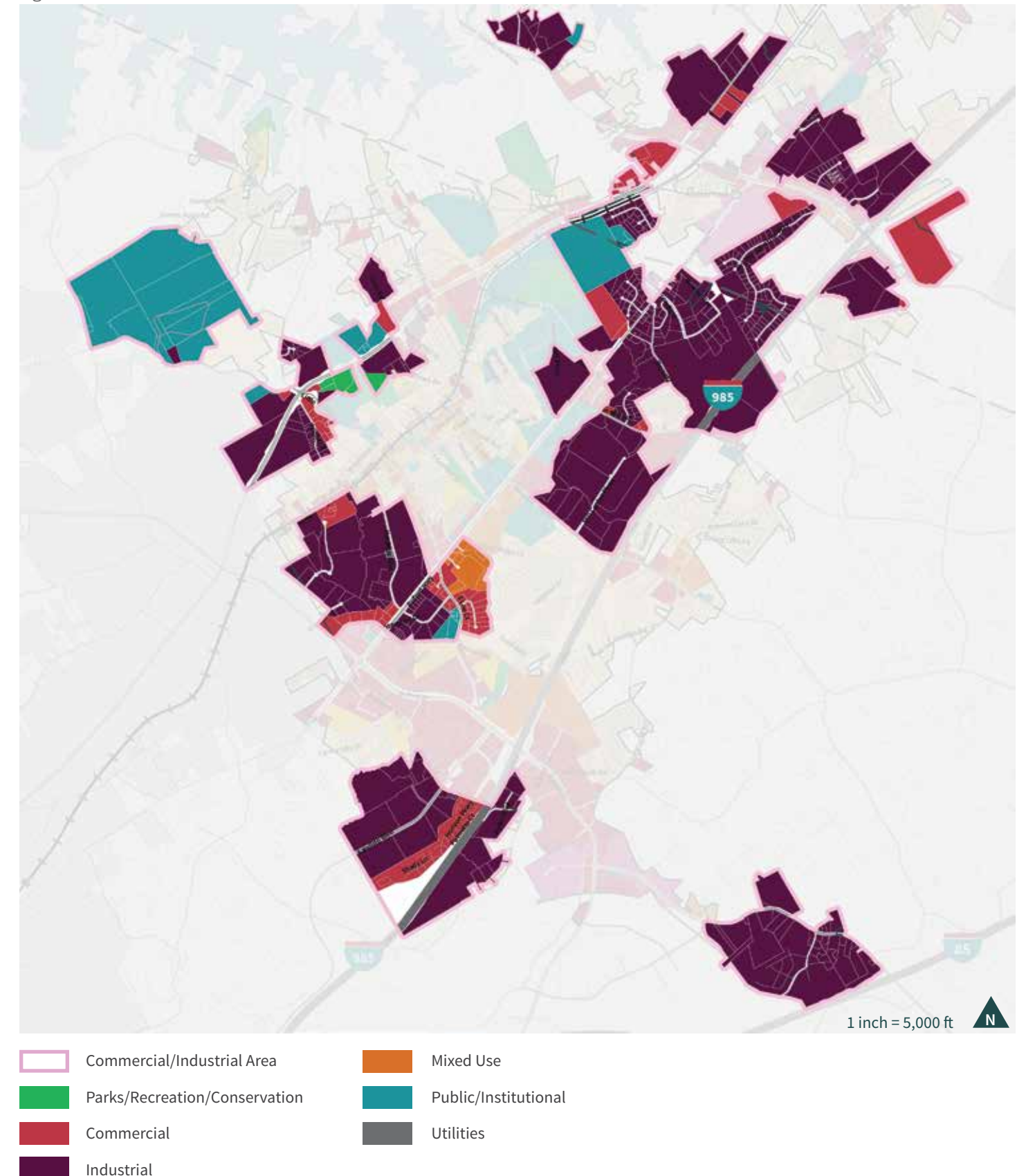
Key Goals

- 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

DRAFT: November 6, 2023



Figure 4.3. Commercial/Industrial Character Area - Future Land Use



CHARACTER AREA: DOWNTOWN

Existing Character

Serving as 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 (lofts, small-scaled infill), mixed use, parks, utilities

Vision for the Future

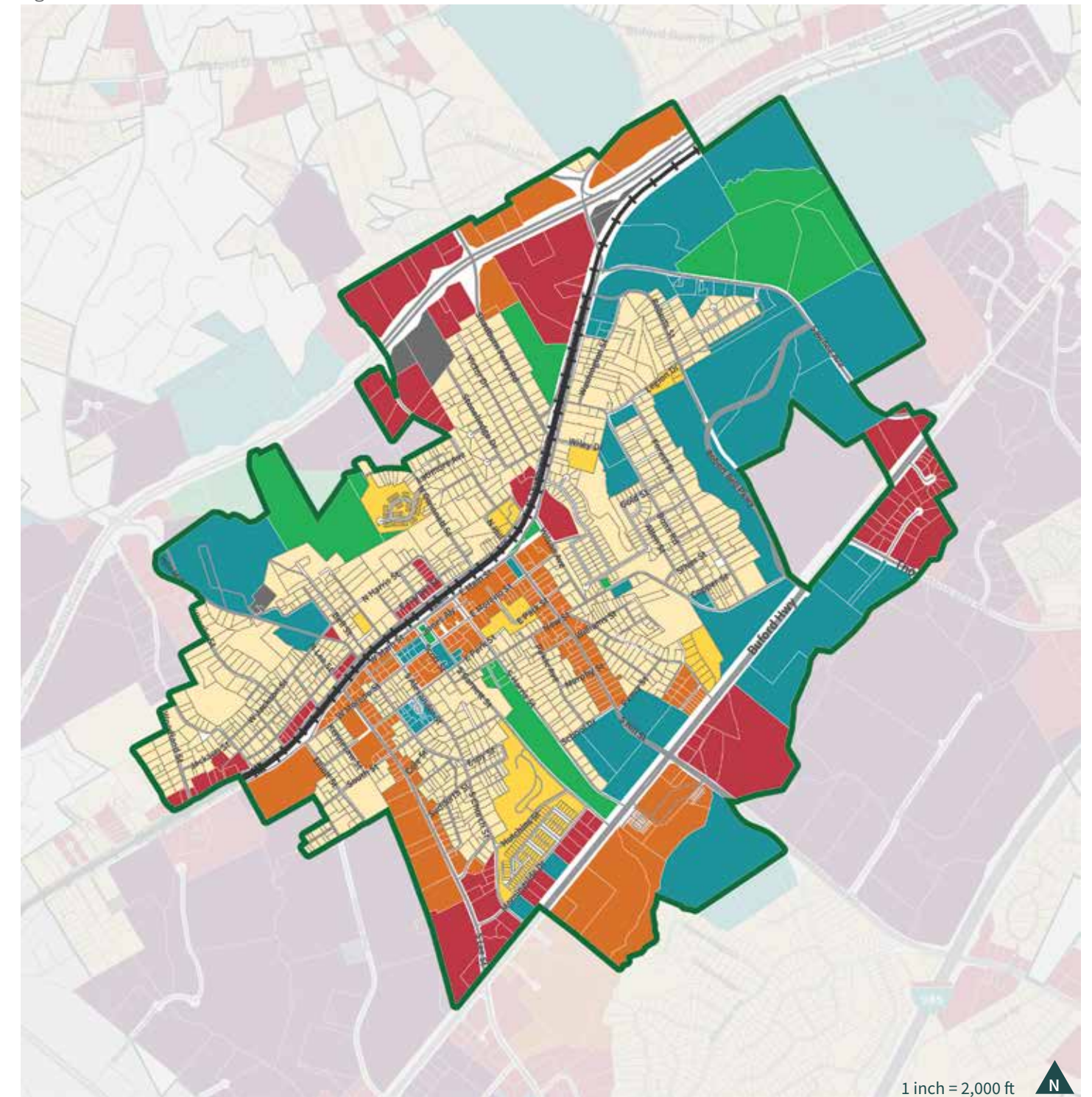
A vibrant Downtown district that includes residential units, offices, restaurants, small-scale shops, cultural facilities, and entertainment venues. Downtown should serve as the focal point of the community and become a destination for dining, shopping, and cultural pursuits, where there is activity both during the day and the evening. Small-scaled housing types, such as cottages or duplexes, are appropriate for pocket infill opportunities, and homes surrounding the main core of town are well-maintained and upgraded.

Key Goals

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



Figure 4.4. Downtown Character Area - Future Land Use



 Downtown	 Commercial
 Parks/Recreation/Conservation	 Mixed Use
 Low-Density Residential	 Public/Institutional
 Medium-Density Residential	 Utilities

CHARACTER AREA: EMERGING NEIGHBORHOOD

Existing Character

This area features newly developing subdivisions, undeveloped land, and large lot residential that may be consolidated into new subdivisions 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.

Encouraged Land Uses

Residential (low-density and medium-density), public/institutional, parks/recreation/conservation, utilities

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 Goals

- LU4. Invest in a high quality built environment
- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian 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

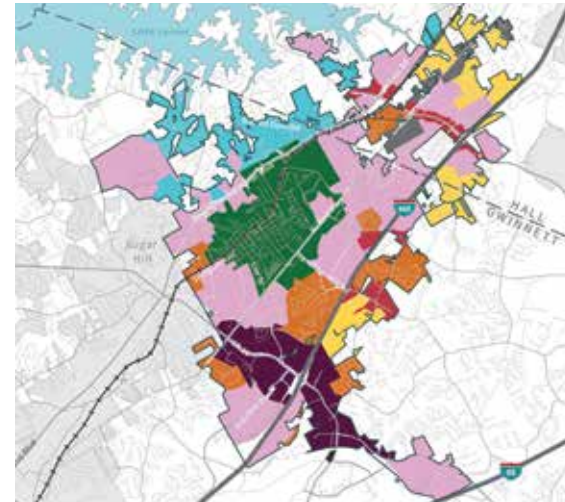
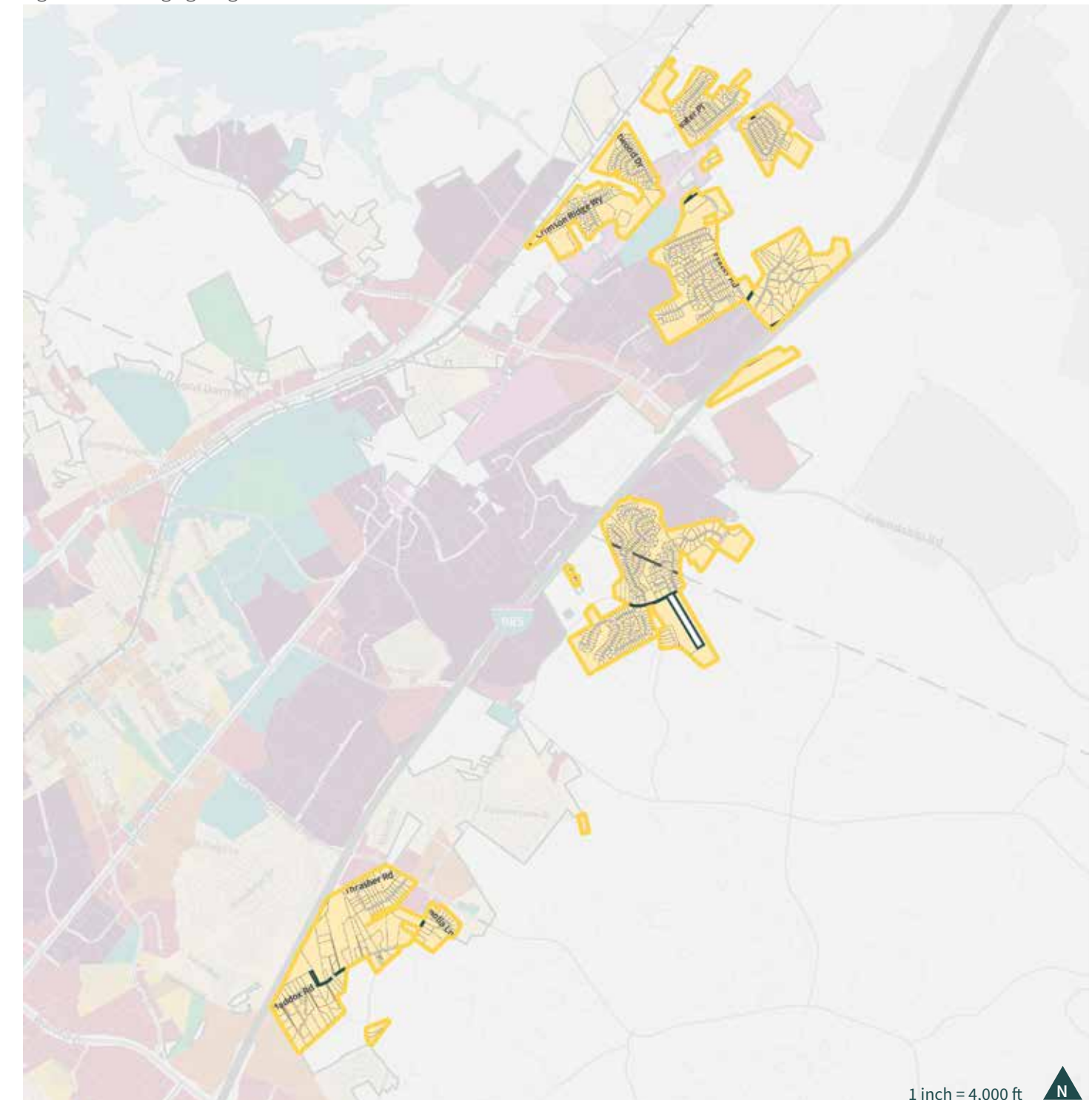


Figure 4.5. Emerging Neighborhood - Future Land Use



- | | |
|--|---|
| Emerging Neighborhood | Utilities |
| Parks/Recreation/Conservation | |
| Low-Density Residential | |
| Public/Institutional | |

CHARACTER AREA: ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD

Existing Character

Established neighborhoods 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 (neighborhood-serving retail), public/institutional, parks/conservation/recreation, utilities

Vision for the Future

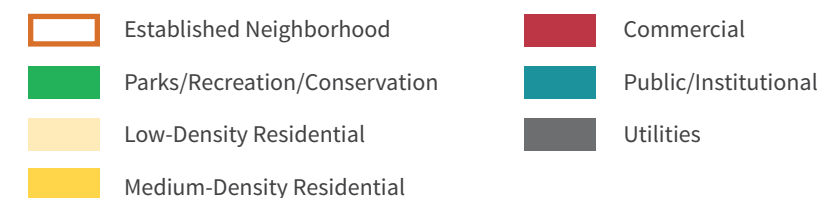
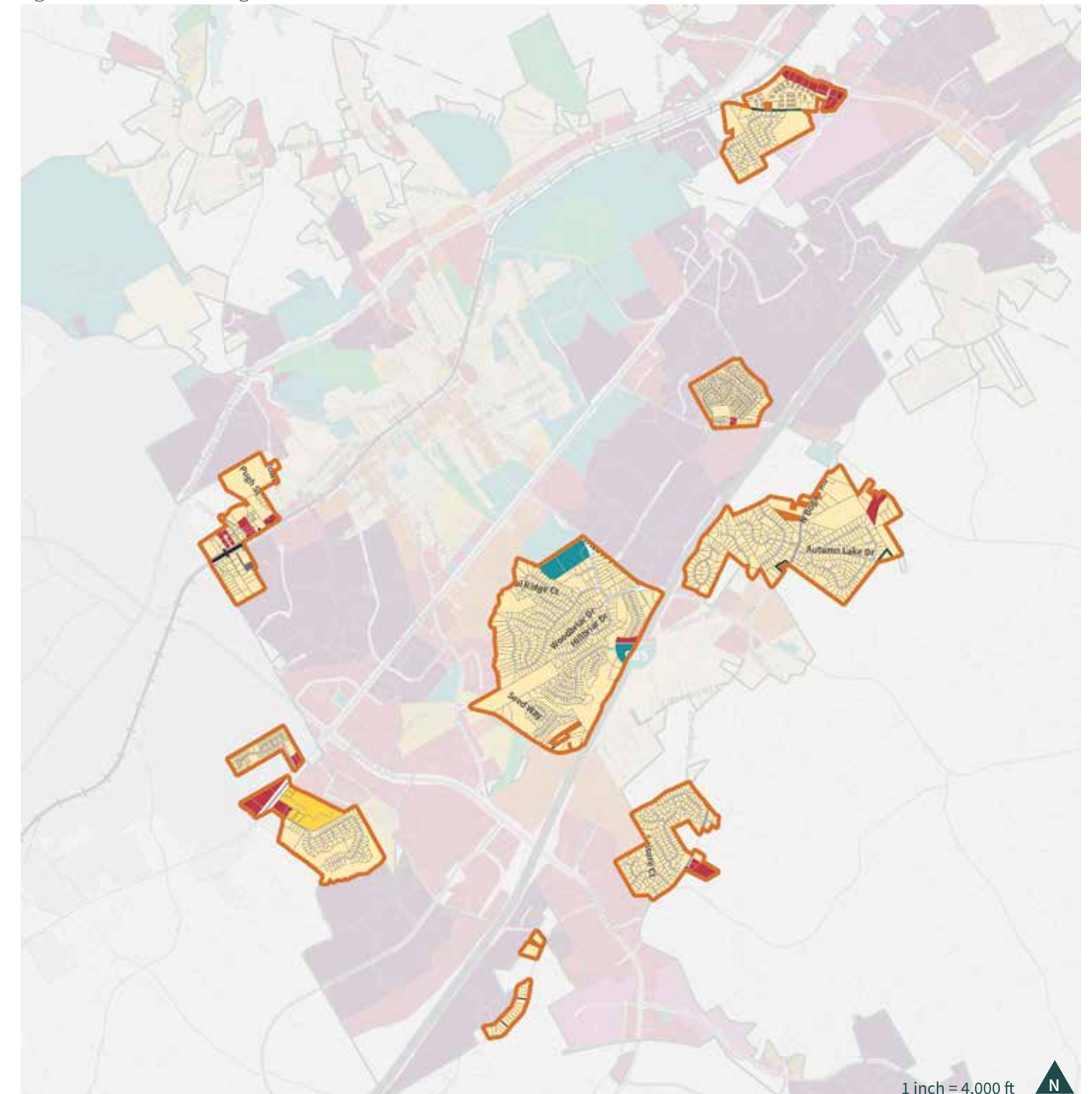
The vision for these established neighborhoods is to maintain their safety and attractiveness. Easy and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and businesses are in place to give residents transportation options for shorter trips. Neighborhoods are adequately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

Key Goals

- LU4. Invest in a high-quality built environment
- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian 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



Figure 4.6. Established Neighborhood - Future Land Use



CHARACTER AREA: LAKESIDE AREA

Existing Character

Lake 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 (neighborhood-serving retail and office), public/institutional, parks/conservation/recreation, utilities

Vision for the Future

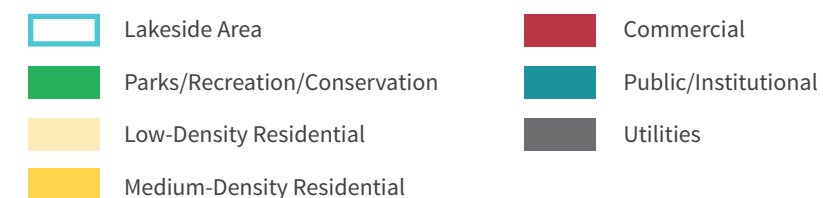
The Lakeside Area will be a resort destination with vibrant neighborhoods and commercial areas that serve both residents and visitors, including the low-density residential neighborhoods surrounding it. New development in the area will be created with a unique lakefront identity, avoiding generic corporate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

Key Goals

- T3. Expand the system of pedestrian 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



Figure 4.7. Lakeside Area - Future Land Use



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, medium-intensity commercial, public/institutional, utilities

Vision for the Future

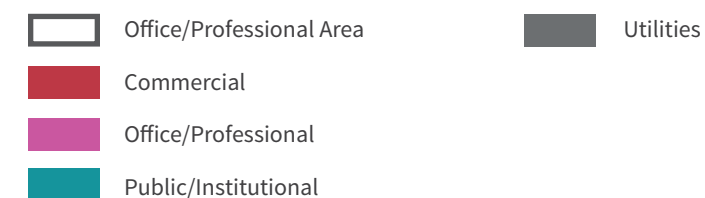
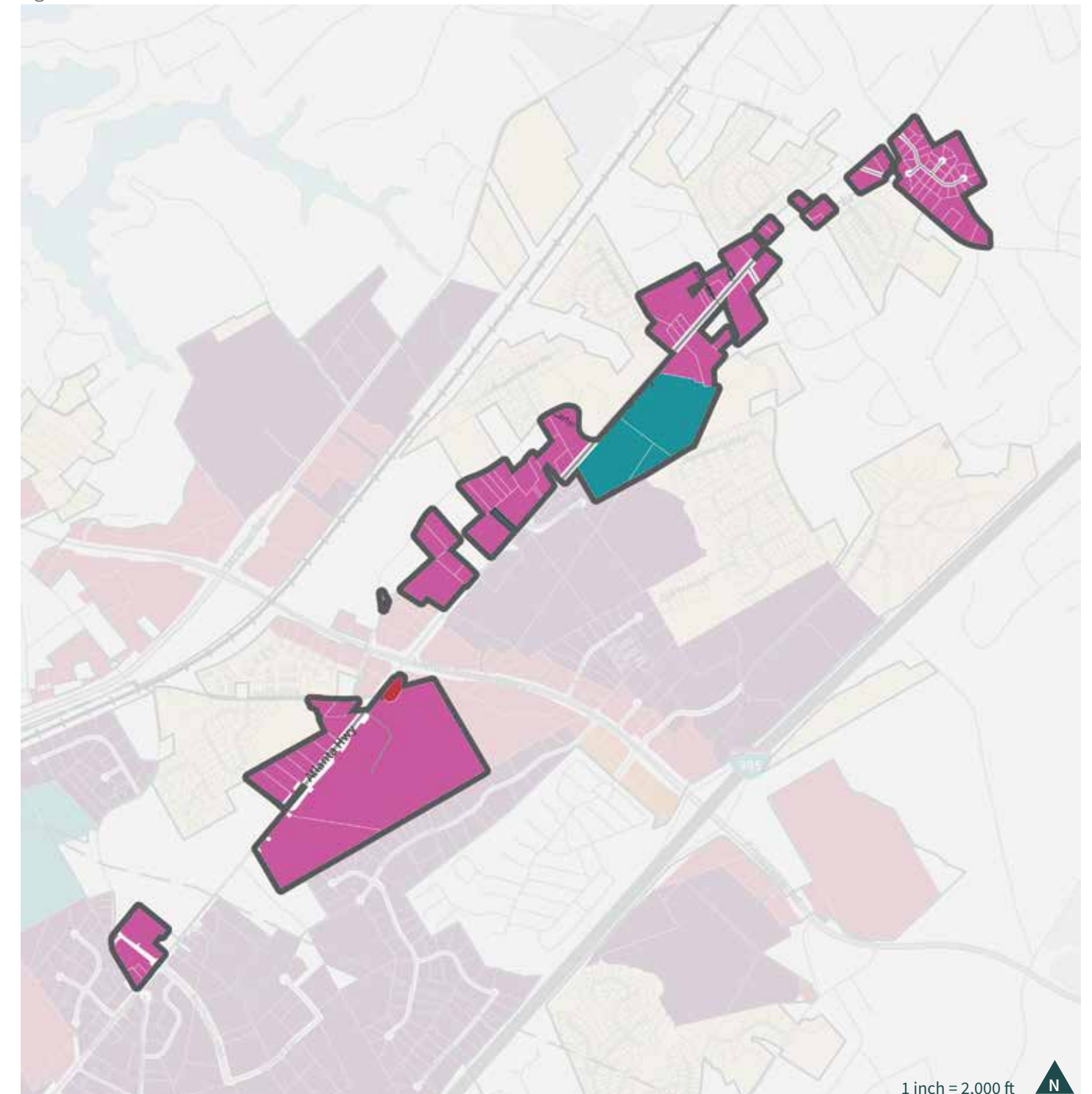
The vision for the Office/Professional Area is a new employment center in Buford that focuses on office and professional opportunities. This includes small-scaled corporate campuses, professional services, and other types of employment that are currently in low supply in Buford. The offices are constructed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

Key Goals

- 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



Figure 4.8. Office/Professional Area - Future Land Use



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), public/institutional, utilities

Vision for the Future

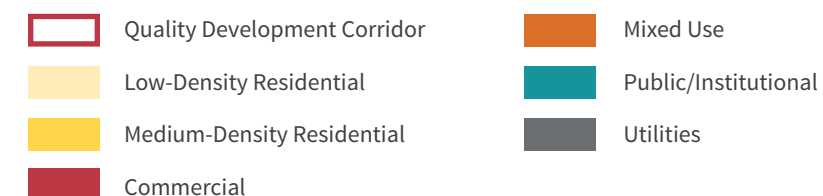
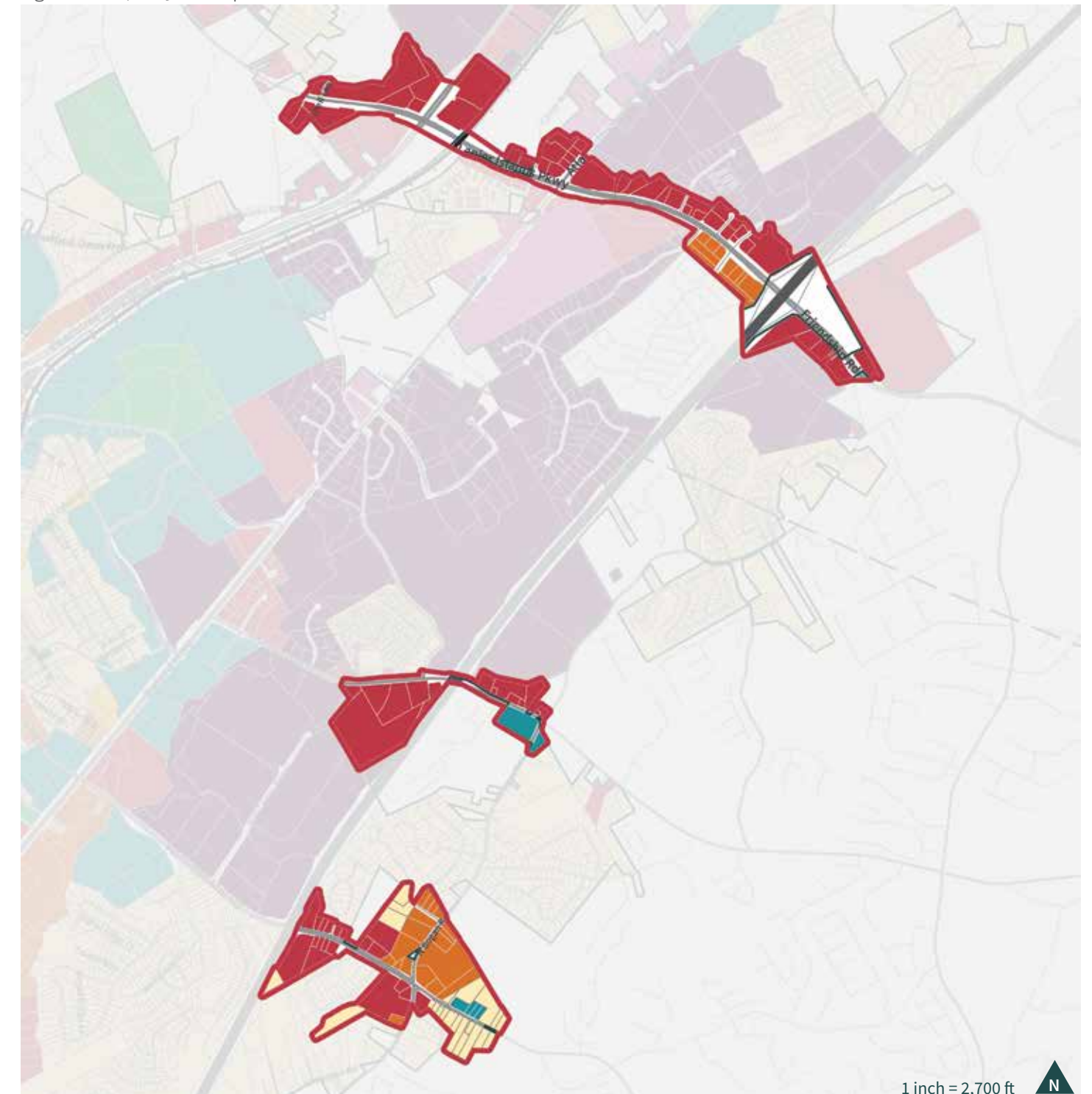
Corridors that develop with high quality commercial and mixed use development at key intersections. Commercial development along these corridors should exhibit superior design features, similar to those seen in the Mall of Georgia area. Multi-modal transportation connections should be in place to ensure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

Key Goals

- 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



Figure 4.9. Quality Development Corridor - Future Land Use



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.

Encouraged Land Uses

Commercial, office/professional, mixed use, residential (medium- and high-density), parks/recreation/conservation, public/institutional, utilities

Vision for the Future

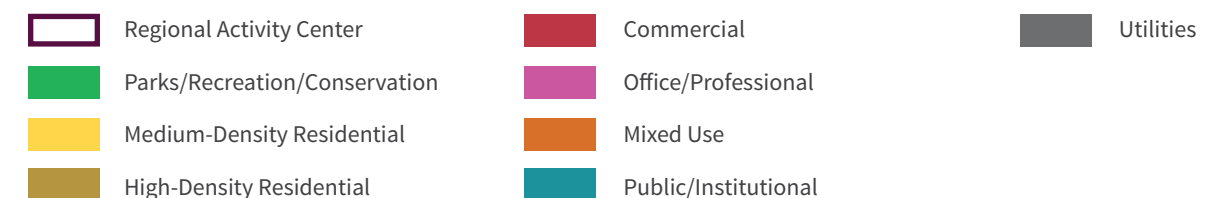
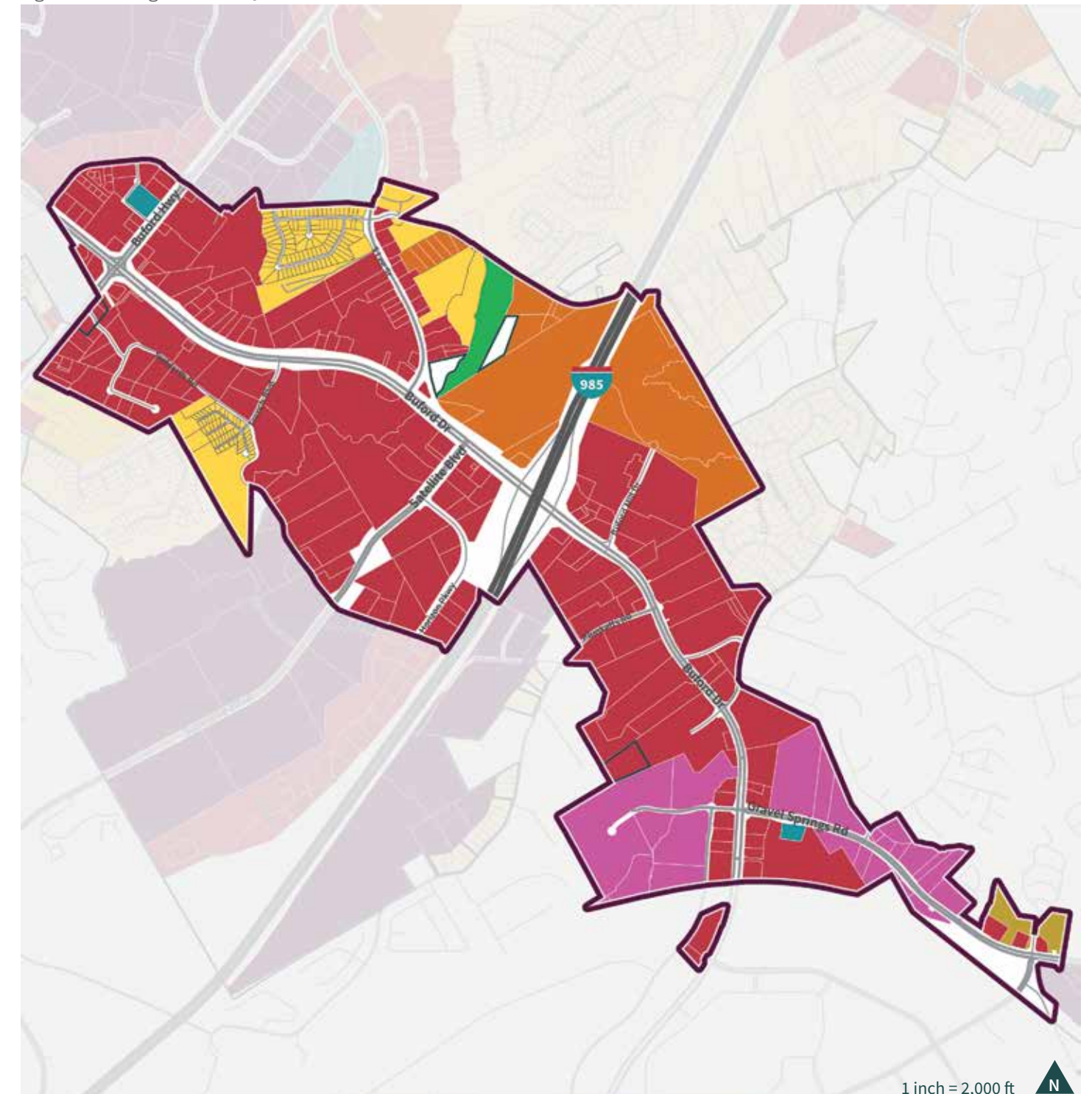
The vision for the Regional Activity Center is for it to develop into a major employment center that provides residents with increased and varied job opportunities beyond retail. A significant amount of multi-story offices will be added to the area around the Gravel Springs Road corridor. Mixed use development 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 facilities
- T4. Support balanced parking strategies
- H2. Ensure new residential development meets high standards of quality
- ED.3 Attract a variety of businesses and employers



Figure 4.10. Regional Activity Center - Future Land Use



5



IMPLEMENTATION78

2024-2028 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM.....79

5 IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation program identifies specific ongoing, short-term (2024-2028), and long-term (2029 and beyond) 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.

2024-2028 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Table 5.1. Community Work Program

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
LAND USE										
Coordinate annexation strategy with Buford City Schools	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Buford City Schools	Staff Time	-	
Zoning Updates from Comprehensive Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Pursue opportunities to annex land by the Mall of Georgia	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Park-and-Ride TOD	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Private Sector	Staff Time	-	
Evaluate annexation opportunities in Hall County	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Continue annexation of Rest Haven	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Pursue Downtown Development Opportunities										
Bona Allen Warehouse Renovation	✖	✖	✖				City; Private Sector	Staff Time	-	
Tannery Row Redevelopment			✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Private Sector	Staff Time	-	
Downtown infill housing	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
LCI Update for Downtown Buford		✖	✖				City; ARC	\$200,000	City; ARC	City to provide 20% match (\$40,000)
Explore establishment of Downtown Overlay in zoning code				✖			City	Staff Time	-	To be coordinated with Downtown Buford LCI Update
Building a new greenspace						✖	City	TBD	TBD	To be coordinated with Downtown Buford LCI Update
Moreno Street / E. Park Street Redevelopment Project		✖	✖	✖			City	TBD	TBD	To be coordinated with Downtown Buford LCI Update

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
Pursue Downtown Development Opportunities (con't)										
Update zoning ordinance for historic preservation			✕	✕	✕		City; Historic District Advisory Committee	Staff Time	-	Specific recommendations could result from LCI with direction from Historic District Advisory Committee
TRANSPORTATION										
Intersection Projects										
South Lee Street at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement	✕	✕					City; Gwinnett County	\$265,000	General Fund; SPLOST	
Buford Dam Road at Little Mill Road Intersection Improvement	✕	✕					City; Gwinnett County	\$2,200,000	Gwinnett County; SPLOST	
Buford Dam Road at Shadburn Ferry Road Intersection Improvement						✕	City; Gwinnett County	\$3,000,000	Gwinnett County; SPLOST	Destination 2050 recommendation (IC-306)
Roadway Projects										
Continue roadway maintenance program	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	City	\$5,000,000	General Fund; SPLOST	
New Street relocation and sidewalks from Robert Bell Parkway to S. Hill St.	✕	✕					City	6,500,000	City	
Thompson Mill Road Widening from US 23/SR 13 Buford to Faith Industrial Blvd/ SR 13 Intersection Improvements	✕						City; Gwinnett County	\$450,000	General Fund; Gwinnett County; SPLOST	
Mill Center Parkway Extension	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	City; Private Sector	TBD	General Fund; Private Sector	In the planning phase
Satellite Boulevard to South Lee Street Connector				✕	✕	✕	City; Gwinnett County	TBD	General Fund; SPLOST; Gwinnett County	Destination 2040 recommendation (BUF_153)

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
Roadway Projects (con't)										
Thompson Mill Road interchange at I-985	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$35,000,000	GDOT; Gwinnett County; SPLOST	GDOT PI: 0019637
North Bogan Road at Thompson Mill Road Intersection Improvements	✕	✕					City; Gwinnett County	\$2,500,000	Gwinnett County; SPLOST	Destination 2040 recommendation
Thompson Mill Road Widening from US 23/ SR 13 Buford to North Bogan Road (Phase 1)	✕						City; Gwinnett County	\$1,700,000	Gwinnett County	Part of I-985 interchange project; intergovernmental agreement with Gwinnett County for survey and to develop concept plan.
Thompson Mill Road Widening from US 23/ SR 13 Buford to North Bogan Road (Phase 2)		✕	✕	✕	✕		City; Gwinnett County	\$4,000,000	Gwinnett County	Part of I-985 interchange project; intergovernmental agreement with Gwinnett County for survey and to develop concept plan.
Hamilton Mill Road widening from North/ South Bogan Road to Pucketts Mill Road						✕	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$40,000,000	GDOT; Gwinnett County	Destination 2040 recommendation (GCmri_13)
SR 20/Buford Drive widening from Buford Highway to Peachtree Industrial Blvd	✕	✕					City; Gwinnett County; ARC; GDOT	\$600,000	GDOT; TIP; Gwinnett County	GDOT PI: 0015439
US 23/SR 13/Buford Highway widening from Suwanee Dam Road to SR 20/Buford Drive						✕	Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$5,000,000	GDOT; Gwinnett County	GDOT PI: 0002393; Destination 2050 recommendation (RS-19)
Sugarloaf Parkway extension - Phase 3 New Alignment from I-85 to Peachtree Industrial Blvd						✕	Gwinnett County; ARC: GDOT	\$136,500,000	GDOT; TIP; Gwinnett County	Destination 2050 recommendation (RC-60)
S Bogan Road Improvements from Sudderth Rd to SR 20/ Buford Drive						✕	Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$1,342,000	GDOT; Gwinnett County	Destination 2050 recommendation (RS-95)

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
Roadway Projects (con't)										
McEver Road widening from SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway to Jim Crow Road						✖	Hall County; GDOT	TBD	GDOT; Hall County	GDOT PI: 0001821
I-985 widening - Gwinnett County						✖	Gwinnett County; GDOT	TBD	GDOT	GDOT PI: 0014130
I-985 widening - Hall County						✖	Hall County; GDOT	TBD	GDOT	GDOT PI: 0014130
I-85SB to 985N Feasibility Study						✖	GDOT	TBD	GDOT	
Bicycle + Pedestrian Projects										
Main Street Streetscape Improvements	✖	✖	✖				City	\$2,000,000	General Fund; SPLOST; DDA	
Shadburn Avenue major pedestrian facilities		✖	✖	✖			City	\$1,650,000	TIP; LCI	
New Street sidewalks				✖	✖		City	\$275,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST;	New Street relocation project underway
Forest Street sidewalks					✖	✖	City	\$160,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST;	
Bona Road sidewalks	✖						City	\$150,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST;	
West Jackson Street sidewalks					✖	✖	City	\$150,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST;	
Thompson Mill Road sidewalks	✖	✖					City	\$200,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST;	Part of road widening project from SR 13 to Faith Industrial; addition of sidewalk at Carcoustic Development.
Powers Avenue sidewalks					✖	✖	City	\$125,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST;	
Shadburn Ferry Road railroad crossing improvements		✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Norfolk Southern	\$50,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST	Ongoing maintenance with Norfolk Southern

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
Bicycle + Pedestrian Projects (con't)										
Little Mill Road railroad crossing improvements		✖	✖				City; Norfolk Southern	\$50,000	General Fund; CDBG; LMIG; SPLOST;	Development improvement plan underway
Moreno Bike/Ped Last Mile Connectivity from S. Lee Street to Wilson Street	✖	✖					City; ARC	\$2,700,000	General Fund; STBG	LCI project
Buford Drive sidewalks from US-23/SR 13/ Buford Highway to S. Lee Street						✖	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$1,058,000	Gwinnett County; GDOT	Destination 2050 recommendation (S-5)
US-23/SR 13/Buford Highway sidewalks from Hamilton Mill Road to Thompson Mill Road						✖	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$913,000	Gwinnett County; GDOT	Destination 2050 recommendation (S-10)
US-23/SR 13/Buford Highway sidewalks from Sawnee Avenue to 3156 Buford Highway						✖	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$890,000	Gwinnett County; GDOT	Destination 2050 recommendation (S-11)
Hamilton Mill Road sidewalks from S. Bogan Road to Ridge Road						✖	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$2,837,000	Gwinnett County; GDOT	Destination 2050 recommendation (S-16)
Other										
Complete Moreno Street streetscape from S. Lee Street to Wilson Street	✖	✖					City	\$200,000	General Fund; SPLOST; Private Sector	
ITS expansion on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (Phase 2)	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Gwinnett County	TBD	Gwinnett County	As necessary.
Downtown parallel parking reconfiguration	✖	✖					City	TBD	General Fund	Study and concepts completed in May 2022; Pending implementation along with sidewalk, pedestrian and landscape improvements.
Connectivity study			✖	✖			City	TBD		City-wide study of sidewalks, park accessibility, pedestrian network and environment

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT										
Continue to work with Buford Business Alliance	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; BBA	Staff Time	-	
Continue to work with the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce	Staff Time	-	
Recruit independent restaurants	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce	Staff Time	-	
Recruit specialty retail	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce	Staff Time	-	
Recruit specialty food stores	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce	Staff Time	-	
Establish a dedicated funding mechanism to support infrastructure and other improvements	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	TBD	SPLOST	
Community Center marketing	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Nomination of downtown district to the National Register of Historic Places	✖	✖					City; Historic District Advisory Committee	\$15,000	General Fund	
ROW ordinance update for patio dining			✖	✖			City	Staff Time	-	To be considered once downtown sidewalk/ parking renovations begin; could also be coordinated with Downtown Buford LCI Update
Explore historic façade program for Downtown	✖	✖					City; Historic District Advisory Committee	TBD	General Fund	

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
HOUSING										
Implement Buford Housing Authority Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Buford Housing Authority	Staff Time	-	
Evaluate need for senior housing	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Buford Housing Authority	Staff Time	-	
Develop Housing Design Guidelines	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	\$50,000	General Fund	Ongoing with evaluation by Planning & Zoning during zoning and special use cases.
Attract infill housing to Downtown	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	8 units completed; 10 pending on Main Street; 16 pending on Moreno Street
Buford Housing Authority Redevelopment Project	✖	✖					City; Buford Housing Authority	\$32,000,000	Buford Housing Authority	
QUALITY OF LIFE										
Trail Projects										
Assist in implementation of Gwinnett County's County-Wide Parks, Greenways, and Trails Master Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Gwinnett County	Staff Time	-	Ongoing item updated to reflect the latest county efforts
Greenway Trail (north side of Suwanee Creek; Garnett St. to SR 20/S. Lee along Suwanee Creek)	✖	✖					City; ARC	\$3,500,000	SPLOST: LCI; TIP; Grants	Flyover bridge
Greenway Trail (Sawnee Ave to Suwanee Creek)			✖	✖			City; ARC	\$90,000	SPLOST: LCI; TIP; Grants	
Buford Multi-Use Trail Extension from SR 13 to SR 20	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖		City; Gwinnett County	\$10,235,000	General Fund; SPLOST; Gwinnett County	Destination 2050 recommendation (M-318)
North Bogan Road Multi-Use Trail						✖	City; Gwinnett County	\$1,528,000	Gwinnett County	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan; Destination 2050 recommendation (S-35)

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
Trail Projects										
Hamilton Mill Road Multi-Use Trail						✖	City; Gwinnett County	\$15,000,000	SPLOST; Gwinnett County	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan; Part of Destination 2050 recommendation (RC-22)
South Bogan Multi-Use Path						✖	City; Gwinnett County	\$8,000,000	SPLOST; Gwinnett County	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan
Sugarloaf Extension Community Trail Phase 3						✖	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$24,000,000	SPLOST; Gwinnett County; GDOT	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan
Upper Suwanee Greenway North						✖	City; Gwinnett County	\$6,300,000	SPLOST; Gwinnett County	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan
Upper Suwanee Greenway West						✖	City; Gwinnett County	\$2,850,000	SPLOST; Gwinnett County	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan
Upper Suwanee Greenway South						✖	City; Gwinnett County	\$3,900,000	SPLOST; Gwinnett County	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan
Sugar Loop to Buford Dam Trail Connection						✖	City; City of Sugar Hill; Gwinnett County	\$1,425,000	General Fund; City of Sugar Hill; Gwinnett County	Part of Gwinnett Trails County-Wide Master Plan
Thompson Mill Multi-Use Trail from US-23/SR 13/ Buford Highway to N Bogan Road						✖	City; Gwinnett County; GDOT	\$1,565,000	Gwinnett County; GDOT	Destination 2050 recommendation (S-56)
Future Regional Park						✖	City	TBD	TBD	

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
Utility Projects										
Continue studying longterm sustainability of City's existing utility rates and maintenance needs	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Wastewater utility expansion	✖	✖					City	\$75,000	Enterprise Fund	
Reconstruction/renewal of wastewater utilities	✖	✖					City	\$2,000,000	Enterprise Fund	
Reconstruction/renewal of water utilities	✖	✖					City	\$75,000	Enterprise Fund	
Jackson Street Stormwater Improvements	✖	✖					City	\$350,000	Enterprise Fund	
Electrical utility expansion	✖	✖	✖				City	\$500,000	Enterprise Fund	
Gas utility expansion	✖						City	\$1,200,000	Enterprise Fund	
Reconstruction/renewal of gas utilities	✖						City	\$500,000	Enterprise Fund	
Update ordinances/City code to fully comply with Regional Water Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Develop/update required planning efforts from Regional Water Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	\$125,000	Enterprise Fund	
Develop and implement water resources public education programs	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Manage/monitor stormwater infrastructure	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Establish permanent monitoring at Suwanee Creek	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	Gwinnett County	-	-	As part of permitting of sewerage facilities
Feasibility study for landfill expansion						✖	City	TBD	TBD	To be examined further in next comprehensive plan update

Project	Timeframe						Responsible Parties	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)	Notes
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029+				
Schools										
New building for CTAE program					✖	✖	City; Buford City Schools	TBD	General Fund; ESPLOST	
Bus storage / storage lot for school buses					✖	✖	City; Buford City Schools	TBD	General Fund	
New classrooms for Buford Senior Academy	✖						City; Buford City Schools	TBD	General Fund	
Buford City Stadium	✖	✖					City; Buford City Schools	\$62,000,000	General Fund	
Other Projects										
Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	
Continue working with Gwinnett County to maintain sufficient County police presence	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City; Gwinnett County	Staff Time	-	
Evaluate development regulations in terms of preservation of tree canopy and minimization of soil erosion and sedimentation	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	City	Staff Time	-	Update GA EPD stormwater regulation adopted; could impact landscaping requirements.

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APPENDIX

A

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

APPENDIX A

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Table A.1. Report of Accomplishments

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
LAND USE								
Coordinate annexation strategy with Buford City Schools	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	
Zoning Updates from Comprehensive Plan	✕						U	
Explore establishment of Downtown Overlay in zoning code	✕						P	City developing Main Street renovation plan
Pursue opportunities to annex land by the Mall of Georgia	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	
Park-and-Ride TOD					✕	✕	P	Gwinnett County: I-985 expansion completed
Pursue redevelopment of commercial areas at Buford Highway and SR 20	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	X	Property has since been rezoned to M-1 and office/warehouse constructed
Pursue Buford Highway Mixed Use Development	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	X	Property rezoned to M-1
Evaluate annexation opportunities in Hall County	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	
Continue annexation of Rest Haven	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	P	Buford zoning code adopted by Rest Haven. Buford issuing development permits and providing code enforcement
Lanier Harbor Redevelopment	✕	✕	✕				C	
Post zoning code, ordinances on Municode	✕						C	
Pursue Downtown Development Opportunities								
Bona Allen Warehouse Renovation			✕	✕	✕	✕	U	Ongoing. To-date, 2 new restaurants, 1 pending
Tannery Row Redevelopment			✕	✕	✕	✕	P	Awaiting concepts to review
Downtown Infill Housing		✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	8 unit on Main St; Main Street 10 units pending; 16+-Moreno Street pending
"The Barn" (Old Public Works site)	✕	✕					C	

C = Complete | U = Underway | P = Postponed | X = Removed / Dropped

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
TRANSPORTATION								
Intersection Projects								
Buford Highway at Robert Bell Parkway Intersection Improvement	✖	✖					C	
South Lee Street at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement	✖	✖					U	GDOT planned improvements underway
Buford Highway at South Garnett Street Intersection Improvement		✖	✖				C	
Hamilton Mill Road at Buford Highway Intersection Improvement		✖	✖				C	
Buford Dam Road at Little Mill Road Intersection Improvement						✖	U	
Buford Dam Road at Shadburn Ferry Road Intersection Improvement						✖	P	
SR 20/Buford Dr at Plunketts Road Intersection Improvements						✖	X	Dropped during Gwinnett County’s Destination 2050 CTP update
SR 20/Buford Dr at Gravel Springs Road Extension Intersection Improvements						✖	X	Dropped during Gwinnett County’s Destination 2050 CTP update
SR 20/Buford Drive Intersection Improvement at Financial Center Way						✖	X	Dropped during Gwinnett County’s Destination 2050 CTP update
Roadway Projects								
Thompson Mill Road Widening from US 23/ SR 13/Buford Highway to Faith Industrial Boulevard					✖		U	Slated for completion in early 2024, amended to include improvements to intersection at SR 13
Continue roadway maintenance program	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	
New Buford High School Road	✖						C	
Thompson Mill Road widening	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖		X	Redundant
SR 20 widening from South Lee Street to SR 13	✖						C	
Mill Center Parkway Extension	✖	✖	✖	✖			P	In the planning phase
East Shadburn Avenue Extension	✖	✖	✖				U	
Satellite Boulevard to South Lee Street Connector						✖	P	Postponed for financial reasons

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
Roadway Projects (con't)								
Thompson Mill Road interchange at I-985						✖	U	Gwinnett County and the City entered an intergovernmental agreement in December 2022
I-985 Widening - Gwinnett Co	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	P	GDOT project
North Bogan Road at Thompson Mill Road				✖			P	Upcoming Gwinnett County project
Thompson Mill Road widening from US 23/ SR 13 Buford to North Bogan Road					✖		P	Part of I-985 interchange project; intergovernmental agreement with Gwinnett County for survey and to develop concept plan.
I-985 Interchange at Hamilton Mill						✖	X	Moved in favor of I-985 and Thompson Mill Road
Hamilton Mill Road widening from North/ South Bogan Road to Pucketts Mill Road						✖	P	Postponed, need to coordinate with Gwinnett County
SR 20/Buford Dr widening from Buford Highway to Peachtree Industrial Blvd	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	P	GDOT project, in the planning phase
SR 20/Buford Drive Widening from South Lee Street to Buford Hwy	✖						C	
US 23/SR 13/Buford Hwy/Suwanee Dam Road to SR 20/Buford Dr						✖	P	Exact reasons unknown
Cross Road from Kilgore Road to Gravel Springs Road						✖	X	Dropped during Gwinnett County's Destination 2050 CTP update
Sugarloaf Parkway Extension - Phase 3 New Alignment from I-85 to Peachtree Industrial Blvd						✖	P	Postponed, need to coordinate with Gwinnett County
SR 13/Atlanta Hwy - From Sawnee Ave to SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway		✖	✖	✖	✖		C	
SR 347/Lanier Islands Parkway - McEver Road to Lake Lanier Islands Turn Lane		✖	✖				C	
McEver Road from 347 Lanier Islands Parkway to Jim Crow Road Widening		✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	P	Hall County maintained road
I-985 widening - Hall County	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	P	Part of GDOT project
I-85SB to 985N Feasibility Study						✖	P	Part of GDOT project

C = Complete | U = Underway | P = Postponed | X = Removed / Dropped

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
Bicycle + Pedestrian Projects								
Shadburn Avenue major pedestrian facilities	✖	✖	✖				P	Future LCI project
Shadburn Ferry Road major pedestrian facilities	✖	✖	✖	✖			C	
New Street sidewalks/relocation	✖						U	New Street relocation underway, scope also now includes sidewalks along Robert Bell Parkway which is part of Buford City Stadium project.
Forest Street sidewalks	✖						P	Impacted by Buford City Stadium project.
Bona Road sidewalks	✖	✖					U	Phase 1 complete; Phase II underway
West Jackson Street sidewalks	✖	✖					P	Exact reasons unknown
Heraeus Boulevard sidewalks	✖	✖					C	
Thompson Mill Road sidewalks	✖	✖	✖				U	Part of road widening project from SR 13 to Faith Industrial; addition of sidewalk at Carcoustic Development.
South Harris Street sidewalks	✖	✖	✖				C	
Powers Avenue sidewalks	✖	✖	✖				P	Exact reasons unknown
Horizon Parkway/Satellite Boulevard sidewalks		✖	✖	✖			C	
Shadburn Ferry Road railroad crossing improvements		✖	✖	✖			P	Ongoing maintenance with Norfolk Southern; future project
Little Mill Road railroad crossing improvements		✖	✖	✖			P	Met with Norfolk Southern in June 2023; Development improvement plan underway
S. Alexander Street/Church Street sidewalks		✖	✖	✖			C	
Pedestrian connector from parking deck to Main Street	✖	✖					C	
Buford Hwy at Buford Community Center HAWK signal				✖			X	No longer relevant
Jones Alley Upgrades	✖	✖					C	
North Bogan Road Multi-Use Trail						✖	P	Part of Gwinnett Master Trail Plan
Hamilton Mill Road side path						✖	P	Changed to multi-use trail; part of Garnett Street extension from SR 13 to SR 20/S. Lee Street

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
Bicycle + Pedestrian Projects (con't)								
South Bogan Multi-Use Path						✖	P	Part of Gwinnett Master Trail Plan
Sugarloaf Extension Community Trail Phase 3						✖	P	Part of Gwinnett Master Trail Plan
Moreno Bike/Ped Last Mile Connectivity	✖	✖	✖				P	Moved to 2024-2025
Other								
Public Parking Deck	✖	✖					C	
Complete Moreno Street Streetscape from S. Lee Street to Wilson Street	✖						P	Moved to 2024-2025
Complete S Lee Street Streetscape	✖						C	
ITS Expansion on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (Phase 2)		✖	✖				P	Will complete as necessary
ITS Expansion on SR 13/Buford Highway			✖	✖			C	
I-985 ITS	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	X	GDOT project
Conduct Downtown Parking Study/Parallel Parking Reconfiguration			✖				P	Study and concepts completed in May 2022; Pending implementation along with sidewalk, pedestrian and landscape improvements.
Freight Study	✖						X	No longer programmed
Evaluate land development regulations for interparcel connectivity, connections between new neighborhoods, limitation of curb cuts, and reduced parking requirements	✖						C	
Route 50 New Local Bus Service	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	X	Part of Gwinnett Transit Plan, under jurisdiction of Gwinnett County DOT
Direct Connect 401 Route				✖	✖	✖	X	Part of Gwinnett Transit Plan, under jurisdiction of Gwinnett County DOT
Flex Route 500	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	X	Part of Gwinnett Transit Plan, under jurisdiction of Gwinnett County DOT

C = Complete | U = Underway | P = Postponed | X = Removed / Dropped

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Buford Development and Market Study		✖					X	Pandemic and substantial economic growth last 3-5 years
Continue to work with Buford Business Alliance	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	
Continue to work with the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	
Recruit independent restaurants	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	Several located on Main Street in the last 5 years; Publix Shopping Center and restaurants.
Recruit specialty retail	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	
Recruit specialty food stores	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	
Establish a dedicated funding mechanism to support infrastructure and other improvements		✖					U	Part of SPLOST
Community Center Marketing	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	
Nomination of Downtown District to the National Register of Historic Places						✖	P	Historic District Advisory Committee was formed and is currently evaluating.
Attract medical facility	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	C	
ROW Ordinance update for patio dining		✖					P	To be considered once downtown sidewalk/parking renovations begin.
Explore historic façade program for Downtown			✖				P	Under consideration
Align ordinances with best practices for industrial development in terms of minimizing impacts on the community and environment	✖						C	Stormwater requirements updated in December 2021
HOUSING								
Implement Buford Housing Authority Plan	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	U	
Evaluate need for senior housing	✖						P	Under evaluation
Consider participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing	✖						X	Found to be unnecessary
Develop Housing Design Guidelines				✖			U	Has since become an ongoing effort with evaluation by City Planning during zoning and special use cases

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
HOUSING (CON'T)								
Explore homeowner renovation assistance programs		✕					X	No longer pursuing
Attract infill housing to Downtown		✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	8 units completed; 10 pending on Main Street; 16 pending on Moreno Street
QUALITY OF LIFE								
Trail Projects								
Parks, Greenways, and Trails Plan			✕				U	Garnett Street Multi-Use Trail extension; LCI grant for design/engineering
Greenway Trail (north side of Suwanee Creek)						✕	U	
Greenway Trail (New Street to Suwanee Creek west of Garnett Street)						✕	C	Garnett Street Greenway Trail Completed
Greenway Trail (Fifth Street to Legion Fields)						✕	X	No longer pursuing
Greenway Trail (Sawnee Ave to Suwanee Creek)						✕	P	Portion of property being developed by schools.
Greenway Trail (Bona Allen Tannery to Buford Highway)						✕	X	Property redeveloped as subdivision.
Main Street Trail						✕	X	No longer a trail project, now a streetscape project.
Upper Suwanee Greenway North						✕	P	Gwinnett County Trail system along Bogan Road being developed.
Upper Suwanee Greenway West						✕	P	Garnett Street Multi-Use Trail extension; LCI grant for design/engineering; then evaluate extension.
Upper Suwanee Greenway South						✕	U	
Sugar Loop to Buford Dam Trail Connection						✕	P	Under evaluation
Garnett Street Greenway		✕	✕				X	Redundant
Complete Youth Baseball Park	✕	✕	✕				C	
Future Regional Park						✕	P	Accomplishments: Main Street passive park; Legion Fields redevelopment; Working with Gwinnett County on future opportunities

C = Complete | U = Underway | P = Postponed | X = Removed / Dropped

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
Utility Projects								
Continue studying long-term sustainability of City's existing utility rates and maintenance needs	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	
Wastewater utility expansion	✕						U	
Reconstruction/renewal of wastewater utilities	✕						U	
Water treatment plant expansion	✕						C	New 4 mg/d waterworks facility is 90% complete
Reconstruction/renewal of water utilities	✕						U	
Jackson Street Stormwater Improvements	✕						C	
Electrical utility expansion	✕						U	
Gas utility expansion	✕						U	
Reconstruction/renewal of gas utilities	✕						U	
Lee Street Gas Utility Relocation	✕						C	
Assess wastewater treatment capacity expansion options	✕	✕					C	Capacity agreement with Gwinnett County
Update ordinances/City code to fully comply with Regional Water Plan	✕						U	
Develop/update required planning efforts from Regional Water Plan	✕	✕	✕				U	
Develop and implement water resources public education programs	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	
Manage/monitor stormwater infrastructure	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	
Establish permanent monitoring at Suwanee Creek		✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	U	As part of permitting of sewer facilities

Project	Estimated Timeframe						Status	Note
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024+		
Other Projects								
Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services	X	X	X	X	X	X	U	
Lanier Harbor Lake Park/Access			X				C	
Continue working with Gwinnett County to maintain sufficient County police presence	X	X	X	X	X	X	U	
Evaluate development regulations in terms of preservation of tree canopy and minimization of soil erosion and sedimentation	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	Updated GA EPD stormwater regulation adopted; Could impact landscaping requirements.

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APPENDIX
B
**PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT**

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APPENDIX B

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The consultants collaborated with City staff to complete a series of public engagement events to refine the vision and implementation strategies of the Buford 2045 Comprehensive Plan. Each event was organized to capture thoughts and ideas from the community. These included stakeholder interviews, an online survey, two Steering Committee meetings, and a multi-day workshop. The planning team also was present at two public meetings with the City Commission.

Stakeholder Interviews

The Comprehensive Plan team spent two days meeting with stakeholders one-on-one. These individuals included community leaders, Buford City Schools leadership, local business owners, 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

The online survey was launched on August 7, 2023 on TypeForm and ran until September 9, 2023, receiving almost 200 responses. The survey recycled many of the questions from the 2018 survey through the previous plan’s public input process. This was to ascertain how public opinion may have changed or stayed the same in the last five years. Many sentiments stayed the same, but key changes included an increase in those who think there is too much growth in Buford and shifting priorities around transportation.

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. The individuals chosen for this committee were the same people who served on the Steering Committee during the previous comprehensive planning process. At the first meeting, the committee was briefed on the scope of work, and schedule, as well as what has been accomplished by the City over the last five years. Then, the consultants facilitated a series of discussions to gather input on the committee’s “big ideas,” the things they least want to see happen in the next five years, and revisited the needs and opportunities from the previous plan to see which of them were still relevant, no longer relevant, needed to be revised, and if there were new ones that needed to be reflected in the updated plan.

Steering Committee Meeting #2

At the second Steering Committee meeting, the consultant team reviewed the results from the Online Survey and reviewed the updates to the Needs and Opportunities following the previous meeting. Then, the conversation focused on reviewing and refining proposed changes to the Priority Strategies and how they apply to Downtown Buford as a potential focal area for plan recommendations.

Multi-Day Workshop

This workshop took place at the Buford Community Center on September 26 and 27, culminating in a Public Open House on September 28. Members of the public were invited to stop by and meet with the planning team to discuss their views of the previous plan’s recommendations and their hopes for outcomes of this plan.

Public Meetings

The planning team attended two City Commission meetings: the first to introduce the project and to give an overview on August 7, 2023, and the second to present a draft Comprehensive Plan and transmit to ARC and DCA on November 7, 2023.

APPENDIX B-1

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW NOTES

In-Person | September 26-27, 2023

The planning team conducted five stakeholder interviews of representatives from the community, business owners, and the City’s school district to learn more about changes in Buford over the last five years, its opportunities and challenges, what they’d like to see from this process, and anything else they believed should inform the plan. The following is a summary of those questions across the interviewees, whose names are not included to preserve anonymity.

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS

- The secret of Buford is out.
- The school system especially is a massive drawing. New residents are looking for smaller schools with a “hometown” feel.
- The new high school is huge and good for the community.
- The continuation of downtown development – it’s been revitalized, and they’re still adding on to it, which is good.
- Huge growth in home development.
- There is some converting of older homes downtown.
- Main Street is livelier. Seeing a shift in mindset toward a desire for more modern amenities.
- Grown a lot, annexation of subdivisions (impact school districts growth).
- Growth has leveled out the last year or two, beginning of last five years it was skyrocketing.
- Hasn’t lost that community feeling though
- New development of industrial – rapid growth.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Great schools with strong, transparent leadership. Meetings are open to the public and residents have direct access to school leadership. Students also feel prepared for university. Schools are well prioritized.
- City leadership is also accessible, open to the public. The city is well set up.
- Utilities are cheaper because they are well set up and well run.
- Development has brought most amenities into the community. Continue the momentum of development along Main Street with entertainment.
- The schools are bringing people in, especially younger families from vibrant areas, would be good to capitalize on that.
- New folks coming to town creates momentum to continue development of Main Street and vibrancy for the city. Keep the tax dollars here.
- Leadership overlap between the School Board and the City Commission really helps school district.
- Schools get the best resources; the City Commission controls growth so schools can accommodate new students without using temporary structures.
- Schools can talk about issues with the City Commission in advance to get additions put in as soon as possible.
- Keeping the downtown charm by balancing investments in old and new.
- 2023 NICHE Reports named Buford City Schools the number one school district in Georgia for the ninth year.
- Schools are well connected to each other through sidewalks and proximity.

- Cooperative agreement with Gwinnett County Public Schools helps student with particular needs.
- Boys and girls club partnerships – starting off great this summer, helps lower income students with after school at an affordable price.
- Buford has enjoyed good governance for long period of time, not a lot of turnover.
- Schools also have stability and consistency.

CHALLENGES

- Missing engagement with folks not attached to the schools, leaves out 50% of the city.
- Programming and offerings for that group are not as sophisticated as other cities, need to create economic drivers.
- Buford needs to push its standards in terms of placemaking and citizens engagement – Todd does a great job but needs more.
- Need staff level engagement to continue revitalizing downtown. Todd does physical work, but someone should focus on programming.
- Growth came fast, now you have the traffic, but I’m not sure how to fix it.
- Road solutions take so long. How do you fix the road appropriately because once the construction is done, the traffic is worse than the original solution is able to fix.
- Traffic is not a huge issue compared to other places. It’s mostly bad around 5pm.
- Increase in housing prices within Buford City Limits due to growth.
- Affordable housing for young people that grew up in Buford and want to stay - hard for starter couples because a lack of starter homes.

- People who grew up in Buford have to leave, then make enough salary to afford to come back.
- When considering different housing sizes, affordability issues come from material and size requirements. Would like to see the easing of those restrictions (within reason) to allow for more starter homes to be built.
- Ensuring the small-town feel in the face of expanding North Metro-Atlanta area
- Running out of land to annex, Lake Lanier and Sugar Hill are barriers, also land locked by the Mall of Georgia.
- When the city can’t grow, the concern is that everything will get more expensive while limiting the tax digest, a major concern for the future.
- Once all the new industrial areas are online, truck traffic will get worse over time.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE FROM THIS PLAN OR PROCESS?

- Where some places have one gathering spot, Buford has three that are disconnected. Want to see uses and activities not mixing across the three main locations.
- There is no main gathering point with walkability and activity – people need a place to dwell.
- Would love to see some color across the city.
- Continue to control growth well
- Keep good leadership
- Future desired amenities: an amphitheater and a brewery
- Livelier downtown and Main Street than exists, though progress has been made

- More entertainment outside of the Community Center, which has its own strategic plan. Highlights include a built stage.
- Would like to see the possibility of using the new football stadium for ticketed concerts.
- Development ideas for empty lot near parking garage/Dollar General.
- Updating sidewalks to allow for bistro seating downtown.
- Not a lot of change, things are good
- More activity-based things would be a good change, pickleball.
- “If you can’t keep going out, start looking in.” Look at what can be redeveloped and where infill is possible.
- More open space in areas for kids, example: Woodstock’s downtown turf area.
- Consideration of golf carts.

ANYTHING ELSE?

- Infrastructure is good, but safety is needed for good activation and economic development.
- In terms of placemaking, it doesn’t have to be expensive or massive, small strategic ways to activate without break bank. In downtown, there’s a strip of land that’s risen, would like to see that activated.
- Recommendation for improving walkability downtown: pedestrian bridge from Buford downtown to Buford Village.
- Leadership works hard.
- One interviewee said they did not feel like they had seen anything that’s bad for the community, only seeing good things.
- In Buford, you have an opportunity to talk about your opinions and values, and that’s great.

What are some examples of development or projects that you like?

- Suwanee Town Center has places to dwell, it doesn’t need programming for activation, the built environment facilitates activation on its own. Assisted by good connectivity.
- Walking trails around the city to be connected, increase connectivity – Wolf Path?
- Bringing all the trails in those three places together in a visual methodology so it’s all connected that makes it contribute to the placemaking would be great.
- Every city has its own personality, which is important (Duluth, Suwanee, Marietta).
- Placemaking doesn’t have to be expensive, just small changes.

What is Buford’s personality?

- Buford has a Mayberry feel, but let’s people embrace who they are.
- Buford keeps to itself – it would be good for the Chamber to be involved outside the city more.

What’s coming in the next 5 years?

- Senior Academy getting 30 new classrooms, new football stadium in Fall 2024.
- Potentially adding new labs to the high school to expand tech options and possible new bus barn.

The Planning Team would like to thank the stakeholders who took the time to speak with us and share their views on the City of Buford. Each stakeholder shared keen insights that helped shape the team’s understanding of the City and informed plan recommendations.

APPENDIX B-2

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1

August 24, 2023

Big Ideas

- Active facilities (pickleball, golf course, etc.)
- Pickleball courts
- Amphitheater
- Connect old and new historic Buford footprint
- Walkable green space
- Police department
- Downtown revitalization
- Improved roads
- Activated areas for those without kids
- Controlled residential growth
- Infrastructure for a concert venue
- Pedestrian bridge at high school

Needs & Opportunities

Still Relevant

- Maintenance of small town character
- Annexation (prioritize commercial and industrial)
- Roadway congestion
- Access to I-985
- Affordable housing
- Variety of housing types
- Downtown development
- Maintenance of top-notch schools

- Maintenance of high level of services and utilities
- Preservation of community safety
- Additional recreational options
- Preservation of historic resources

No Longer Relevant

- Regional connectivity
- Improved access to healthcare
- Community engagement

Needs Revisiting

- Mixed-use development
- Lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Revitalization/redevelopment of underused site
- Balanced industrial development

New Needs & Opportunities

- Redevelopment
- Support golf cart users
- Large, kid-friendly space(s) downtown
- Event support (public safety, etc)
- Maintain community safety nets

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2

September 27, 2023

The consultant team and City Staff meet with the Steering Committee to give an update on the plan’s progress, get their input on the updated needs and opportunities as well as the updated priority strategies, and then preview next steps

Progress Update

- The consultant team shared where they were in the planning process, as well as what public input work had been done thus far and what was scheduled.
- The team also shared major changes from the 2018 survey and the 2023 survey. The Steering Committee was surprised to learn that residents felt one of the largest transportation issues was now a lack of sidewalks, prompting the consulting team to do further analysis on Buford’s Sidewalks.

Priority Strategies

Accepted

- Take Downtown Buford to the next level.
- Prioritize maintaining excellent City services.
- Continue to attract new employment opportunities and businesses.
- Invest in a stronger system of sidewalks and trails.
- Expand system of parks and greenways.
- Establish a vision and plan for historic resources.

Needs Revisiting

- Encourage a variety of housing types in the community, particularly around downtown

Next Steps

Use Downtown as a Focus for the Priority Strategies

- More connectivity needed between downtown, the schools, and the Buford Community Center
- Area near South Hill and Moreno Streets for more Senior Housing
- Possible passive park near Downtown Parking Deck

APPENDIX B-3 PUBLIC MEETINGS

The planning team attended two City Commission meetings: the first on August 7, 2023 to introduce the project and to give an overview, the second on November 6, 2023 to present a draft Comprehensive Plan and to transmit to ARC and DCA. This appendix contains official minutes from those public meetings.

The planning team also conducted an in-person, Multi-Day Workshop from September 27 through September 29, 2023. Members of the community had an opportunity to give their input on plan recommendations as they were being created and talk to the planning team about their ideas for the future of Buford. The workshop ended with a Draft Plan Open House where the community had an opportunity to see the plan recommendations and provide feedback. The result of the Multi-Day Workshop was a stronger sense of direction of where Buford wants to be in the next twenty years, particularly as it related to Downtown, housing, and quality of life.

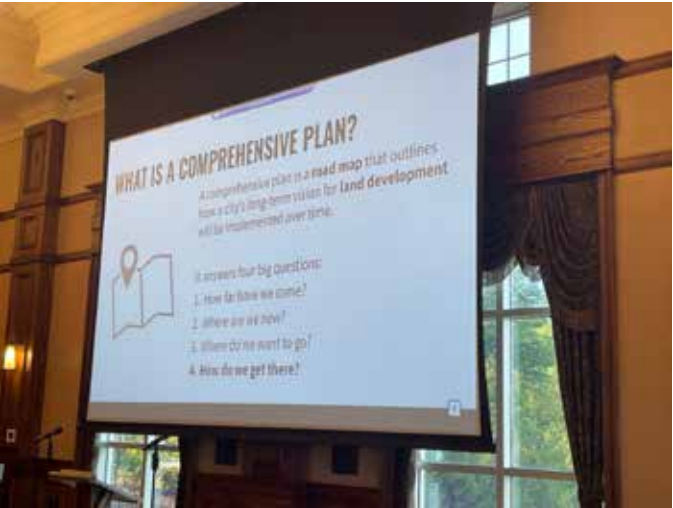


Figure B.1. Agenda from August 7, 2023 (Public Hearing #1)

BUFORD CITY COMMISSION MEETING

August 7, 2023
Buford City Hall
7:00 p.m.

1. Pledge to the Flag.
2. Approve the agenda as presented.
3. Approve the minutes from the July 17, 2023 meeting.
4. Change September meeting to September 5, 2023.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

5. Rezoning:

I. #Z-23-18:

Meridith Simes
6157 Gaines Ferry Road
Acres: 4.52
Parcel: 08-139-003008A

Requesting rezoning from agricultural-residential (RA-200) to Single family residential (R-100)

P & Z Recommendation:

#Z-23-18: Meridith Simes requested rezoning for the property located at 6157 Gaines Ferry Road, being parcel 08-139-003008A, containing 4.52 acres from RA-200 to R-100. Jeff Pruitt spoke on behalf of the applicant. He stated they are proposing to divide this tract into three (3) lots for residential homes. The existing home will remain on Lot #1. The two new homes will have a shared common driveway. One lady that lives on Gaines Ferry Road had concerns about increased traffic and drainage issues. She stated this area is already overdeveloped and the proposed property was a previous dumping area with toxic waste. Gail Chapman, Stillwater Subdivision, had concerns with decreased property values. After a brief

discussion, motion by Wayne Johnson and seconded by Jeff Pirkle to recommend approval of the rezoning to R-100 with the following conditions:

1. The proposed lots shall meet the standards of R-100 zoning for lot area. Lot #1 shall have the road frontage width reduced from 100 feet to 50.07 feet. Lot #2 and Lot #3 shall have the road frontage reduced from 40 feet to 0.
2. Prior to the issuance of any subsequent permits the applicant shall provide an exemption plat for review and approval. The exemption plat shall include a 30' access/utility easement as shown on the site plan provided with the application. Lot #2 and Lot #3 shall have a 20' wide shared driveway and shall be recorded with access maintenance agreements with said driveway and submitted to the City.
3. The existing home shall remain on Lot #1 and shall be remodeled as approved by the Planning Director.
4. Only one (1) residential home is allowed for single-family dwelling, per lot, within R-100 district.
5. The applicant shall provide a house location plan (HLP) with the building permit to be approved by the Planning Director.
6. The homes shall be constructed with four (4) sides brick or stone with accents not to exceed 20% on each elevation. Accents shall include brick, stucco, rock, shakes, hardiplank and concrete siding as approved by the Planning Director.
7. The proposed home shall have a minimum gross heated floor area of 3400 square feet exclusive of garages or basements and shall have a minimum of two (2) car garages.
8. The driveway shall be a minimum width of 18 feet.
9. All front and side yards shall be sodded and shall have two (2) 3-inch ornamental trees planted in the front yard.
10. Road improvements including curb and gutter and 5-foot sidewalk is required along Gaines Ferry Road. All improvements shall meet the standard of City of Buford code and ordinances.

Ayes – 4
Nays – 0

6. **Zoning Modifications:**

**I. #ZM-23-05: Clair Investment Properties & Interior Designs, LLC
467 Thunder Road**

Request to modify condition #5 of the zoning conditions approved on May 1, 2023 requiring four sides brick with accents not to exceed 20% on each elevation; requesting brick, stone, stucco with accents not to exceed 40% on each elevation and side setbacks to 5ft./15ft.

**II. #ZM-23-06: Clair Investment Properties & Interior Designs, LLC
2251, 2253, 2255 and 2257 Buford Dam Road**

Request to modify condition #2 of the zoning conditions approved on September 6, 2016 requiring accents not to exceed 35% on front elevation and 20% side and rear elevations; requesting brick, stone, stucco with accents not to exceed 40% each elevation and side setbacks to 5ft./15ft.

7. Conduct public hearing for 2023 property tax millage rate rollback and proposed tax increase for Gwinnett and Hall Counties.
8. Conduct public hearing for Fiscal Year 2024 operating budget.

9. Conduct public hearing for City of Buford 2040 Comprehensive Plan Short-Term Work Program Five Year update.

END OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

10. Approve 2023 property tax millage rate for Buford City Schools and Gwinnett County of 12.50 mills and 13.45 mills in Hall County including a Local Option Sales Tax rollback of 0.95 mills in Hall County. The 2023 net millage rate for property taxes in both Gwinnett and Hall Counties is 12.50 mills. Property tax bills are due December 20, 2023.
11. Adopt Fiscal Year 2024 operating budget and budget resolution and approve employee pay raises.
12. Approve bids for construction of Buford City Stadium.
13. Authorize City Manager and City Attorney to negotiate purchase of property located on Bona Road for Buford City Stadium project.

14. Consider renewal of 2023-2024 health insurance policy with Anthem/Blue Cross and authorize City Manager to continue negotiating up to the approval date of September 1, 2023.
15. Consider amendment to moratorium to provide for the study and potential designation of certain properties and structures as “historic properties” and to study and make possible revisions to the City’s zoning ordinance and development code in furtherance of protecting and preserving certain historical places and buildings; and other purposes, subject to the approval of the City Attorney.
16. Approve amendment to lease agreement for city owned property at 680 Forest St., parcel no. 7296 006, to provide for early termination of lease.
17. Approve surplus items as presented and authorize City Manager to list items on Govdeals.com and other markets.
18. Authorize Chairman to sign an amendment to the Hall County Countywide Safety Plan allowing Buford to serve an additional fourteen (14) lots in a subdivision on Spouts Springs Road and addition of territory.
19. Consider renewal of annual contract for construction and renewal of natural gas services with Southern Pipeline, Inc. with an additional one (1) year option for renewal.
20. Consider amendment to City of Buford Massage Establishment Ordinance adding a provision that prohibits the issuance of a license having a revocation in the past twelve (12) months.
21. Authorize release of pledged funds with Peoples Bank & Trust.
22. Authorize transfer of parcel 7270 044, portion thereof 5.92 acres +/-, to the Buford Downtown Development Authority.
23. Authorize the transfer of a portion of parcel 7302 109, as determined by the City Manager, to the Buford Downtown Development Authority.

24. Approve conveyance of permanent easement from the City of Buford to Mary Alice Circle 2021, LP (Buford Housing Authority Arnold Street and City New Street projects).
25. Authorize payment #5 in the amount of \$86,539.21 to John D. Stephens, Inc. for new Buford High School stadium sewer project.
26. Authorize change order #1 and payment #2 in the amount of \$81,000.00 to F. S. Scarbrough for Southside WPCP filter replacement project.
27. Authorize payment #3 in the amount of \$95,684.85 to Backbone Infrastructure, LLC for West Moreno Street improvements project.
28. Authorize payment #25 in the amount of \$811,108.77 and payment #26 in the amount of \$81,500.09 to Ruby Collins, Inc. for water plant expansion project and payment of Invoice #2438-23 in the amount of \$1,980.00 to Global Control Systems, Inc. for specialized controls and instrumentation.
29. Authorize payment of Invoice #12 in the amount of \$48,229.32 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for passive park at Harris Street project.
30. Authorize payment #5 in the amount of \$54,463.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Southside Water Treatment Plant Office Building project.
31. Authorize payment #1 in the amount of \$71,869.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford bus parking lot project.
32. Authorize payment #6 in the amount of \$1,176,162.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford Senior Academy addition project.
33. Authorize payment #10 in the amount of \$1,341,249.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford Middle School addition and renovations project.
34. Authorize payment of Invoice #1 in the amount of \$1,469,984.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford High School stadium project.

Figure B.2. Agenda from November 6, 2023 (Public Hearing #2)

35. City Manager's Report.

36. City Attorney's Report

NOTE: The City of Buford does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities per the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. Bryan Kerlin, City Manager, 770-945-6761, has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice Regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the ADA coordinator. The City of Buford will assist citizens with special needs given proper advance notice. Any requests for reasonable accommodations required by individuals to fully participate in any open meeting, program, or activity of the city should be directed to the ADA Coordinator, Bryan Kerlin, 2300 Buford Highway, Buford, Georgia, 770-945-6761.

BUFORD CITY COMMISSION MEETING

November 6, 2023
Buford City Hall
7:00 p.m.

1. Pledge to the Flag.
2. Approve the agenda as presented.
3. Approve the minutes from the October 9, 2023 meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. Special Use Permits:

I. #SUP-23-22

US Auto Moto, LLC
1640 Buford Highway
7-259-197
Zoning: Commercial (C-2)

Requesting to allow retail use to allow motorcycle sales and service.

P&Z Recommendation

#SUP-23-22: US Auto Moto, LLC requested a special use permit for the property located at 1640 Buford Highway. The special use permit requested is to allow for motorcycle sales and service. David Williams spoke on behalf of the applicant and explained the request to the Board. He stated this would be for motorcycle sales and service and they would like to provide a display area out front during business hours and then they would be stored inside the building overnight. The Board discussed the building elevations and signage for the building. There were no objections from the audience. Motion by Wayne Johnson and seconded by Amy

Reed to recommend approval of the special use permit as requested with the following conditions:

1. Approval of this special use permit is for Triumph, BMW and Can-Am motorcycle sales and will expire should the current use vacate the site.
2. The approval of a special use permit does not provide approval of variances or alterations to any local, state, or federal regulations.
3. No accumulation of junk vehicles and mechanical repairs shall be done inside.
4. All outdoor parking motorcycle inventory shall be on asphalt or concrete in designated parking areas. Display area in the front shall be 10 feet in depth and the width of the parking lot and shall be approved by the Planning Director. The motorcycles shall be on display during business hours only.
5. To allow up to three (3) signs on the front elevation and the cumulative total shall not exceed 5% of the elevation. To allow up to two (2) signs on the side elevation facing Commerce Drive and the cumulative total shall not exceed 5% of the elevation.

Ayes – 4

Nays – 0

II. #SUP-23-23

Leather City Partners, LLC
Highway 20
7-219-023 – 2.135 acres
Zoning: Commercial (C-2)

Requesting to allow the construction of a new retail facility for the sales of packaged distilled spirits with four (4) variances.

P&Z Recommendation

#SUP-23-23: Leather City Partners, LLC requested a special use permit for the property located on Highway 20, out of parcel 7-219-023, containing 2.135 acres. The special use permit requested is to allow the construction of a new retail facility for the sales of packaged distilled spirits. Mitch Peevy spoke on behalf of the applicant and explained the request to the Board. Mr. Peevy stated this was a 9 acre tract, but would only be using 2.135 acres for the package store and would provide inter-parcel access to the back portion of the property for another commercial use. He also stated they would need to encroach into the sanitary

sewer easement, the retaining wall would have a decorative stone and they needed to reduce the parking from 60 spaces to 50 spaces. There were no objections from the audience. Motion by Harley Bennett and seconded by Robert Perkins to recommend approval of the special use permit as requested with the following conditions. Wayne Johnson and Amy Reed abstained.

1. The special use permit shall not be terminated by the subsequent sale of the owner/applicant LLC, provided, however, such transferee shall comply with all initial requirements established by the City including financial solvency and operational expertise. No license for alcoholic beverages by package shall be transferrable, except as provided in the City's Alcohol Beverage Code.
2. The applicant shall provide a location Georgia sealed survey to confirm the minimum distance requirements per code: "Package stores must meet setback requirements from certain uses. There are measured as a straight line connecting the closest points between the buildings. A package store must be setback a minimum of 300 feet from a church, a minimum of 600 feet from a school (daycares are not considered a school), a minimum of 200 feet from any residence, and a minimum of 1500 feet from any other package store."
3. The approval of a special use permit does not provide approval of variances or alternations to any local, state or federal regulations.
4. All parking and driveway surfaces to be asphalt or concrete with curb and gutter meeting the standards of the City of Buford Development Regulations.
5. The final permitting plan shall be substantially similar to the site plan provided with this application.
6. The requested variance to reduce the parking spaces from 60 spaces to 50 spaces is approved.
7. The requested variance to allow the retaining walls in the front yard adjacent to Highway 20 is recommended for approval. No portion of the retaining wall or footers shall encroach into the right-of-way. The retaining wall shall be constructed with decorative stone. The final design and material shall be approved by the Planning Director.
8. A 30-foot sanitary sewer easement indicates the depth of the pipe is enough to warrant the additional width needed for construction repairs or maintenance. The requested variance to allow the encroachment into the existing 30-foot sanitary sewer easement along Highway 20, to a maximum of 10-feet is conditioned for approval with the written approval of the City's engineering review.

9. In the event the sanitary sewer utility needs repairs that damages the retaining wall the full responsibility for the repair of the retaining wall falls on the owner.
10. The inter-parcel access requirement shall be eliminated adjacent to the Academy Sports development due to topography constraints.
11. The final building elevations and materials shall be approved by the City Manager.

Ayes – 2
Nays – 0
Abstain – 2

Alcohol Committee Recommendation

The City of Buford Alcohol Committee met on October 25, 2023 to consider the application of Leather City Partners, LLC for a package store.

Mitch Peevy spoke on behalf of the applicant and stated they have met all the requirements of the ordinance. He stated the special use permit application #SUP-23-23 was recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Board on October 10, 2023 and they will comply with all conditions. He stated the majority owners are Ralph Black and David Cheeley with Ken Seo as a minority owner. Ownership will be under Leather City Partners, LLC dba Champs Super Beverage. Motion by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Perkins to recommend approval of #SUP-23-23, Leather City Partners, LLC, for a package store to be located on SR 20, parcel 7-219-023.

Ayes – 3
Nays – 0

5. Annexations:

I. Plat #680/#Z-23-21:

**Applicant: GA Development Acquisition, LLC
c/o Mahaffey Pickens Tucker, LLP
1550 North Brown Road, Suite 125
Lawrenceville, GA 30043**

**Owner: William C. Haney, Sr., et al, Trustees
Property: 1672 Plunketts Road, Gwinnett County
Parcel: 7-218-001
Acres: 16.261 +/-
Zoned From: R-100
Zoned To: M-1**

P & Z Recommendation:

Plat #680/#Z-23-21: GA Development Acquisition, LLC requests annexation and rezoning for the property located at 1672 Plunkett Road from R-100 to M-1. Shane Lanham spoke on behalf of the applicant and explained the request to the Board. He stated they are proposing a 200,880 square foot office/warehouse building. They do not have a user and will be a spec building. He stated they are asking for a retaining wall in the front yard, a graded and replanted buffer and to allow concrete tilt-up construction for the building. He stated they are working on an agreement with the adjacent property owner to allow the trucks to use Blue Ridge Drive and the employees will use Plunkett Road. There were no objections from the audience. Motion by Wayne Johnson and seconded by Amy Reed to recommend approval of the special use permit as requested with the following conditions:

1. The final civil site plan shall be substantially similar to the concept plan provided with the rezoning application.
2. The final architectural and site plans shall meet the requirements of Article XIII, Section 1315 Mall of Georgia Overlay District.
3. Road improvements including curb and gutter and 5-foot sidewalk are required along the subject property's frontage along Plunkett Road. All improvements shall meet the standard of the City of Buford code and

ordinances. Right-of-way dedication is required as necessary to construct the required improvements.

4. The proposed retaining wall shall be placed as shown on the concept plan provided with the application. The wall material shall be a stone/masonry product as depicted on Exhibit “A”. Final wall design, including material and elevations, shall be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Director.
5. The retaining wall shall not encroach into the right-of-way of Plunkett Road.
6. The building shall be a tilt-up type wall construction. Final building elevations shall be approved by the Planning Director.
7. The 50-foot undisturbed buffer shall be allowed to be graded and replanted for year-round screening with a mixture of evergreen trees and shrubs. The final landscape plan to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Director.
8. Approval of the annexation, rezoning or concurrent variances does not provide relief of other areas of the City of Buford’s Zoning Ordinance or Development Regulations.
9. All trucks shall enter/exit on Blue Ridge Drive and all employee vehicles shall enter/exit on Plunkett Road.

Ayes – 4
Nays – 0

6. **Zoning Modification:**

I. #ZM-23-06: Clair Investment Properties & Interior Designs, LLC 2251, 2253, 2255 and 2257 Buford Dam Road

Request to modify condition #2 of the zoning conditions approved on September 6, 2016 requiring accents not to exceed 35% on front elevation and 20% side and rear elevations; requesting brick, stone, stucco with accents not to exceed 40% each elevation and side setbacks to 5ft./15ft.

7. Conduct public hearing for City of Buford 2045 Comprehensive Plan Short-Term Work Program Five Year update.

END OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

8. Authorize transmittal of City of Buford Comprehensive Plan 2045 updates to the Atlanta Regional Commission.

9. Consider approval of combination plat for IDI Gravel Springs.

10. Consider exemption plat for 29 East Park Street being parcel 7-295A-054.

11. Authorize City Manager and City Attorney to accept electrical easement on parcel no. 7-259-270 (Buford Oil Change, 4445 Nelson Brogdon Blvd.).

12. Authorize City Manager and City Attorney to purchase property located on James Street being parcel no. 7-295C-034.

13. Approve purchase of property located on North Waterworks Road from Heritage South Partners, L.P. in the amount of \$232,620.00.

14. Consider acceptance of donation of 1.649 acres of property located on Bryant Road being parcel no. 7-297-116 and authorize City Manager to issue donation letter.

15. Consider acceptance of donation of 5.53 acres of property located on Thompson Mill Road being parcel no. 7-267-029 and authorize City Manager to issue donation letter.

16. Consider extension of SUP-15-14 at Atwater Court, Suites 101-102 to allow church operations to continue for an additional one (1) year.

17. Authorize release of pledged funds with Peoples Bank & Trust.

18. Authorize City Manager to apply for a Georgia Department of Transportation Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council (REBC) grant. (I-985 Northbound quadrant off-ramp landscaping)

19. Approve surplus items as presented and authorize City Manager to list items on Govdeals.com and other markets.

20. Approve recommendation of city engineer for renewal of water and sewer annual contracts for an additional year with JDS, Inc with a contract price increase of 7.5%.

21. Consider request by the Boys and Girls Club of Buford to close Main Street South Harris Street to Garnett Street on Tuesday, November 28, 2023 from 6 – 9 p.m.

22. Authorize payment of invoice #18137-20 in the amount of \$179,084.33 to Breaux & Associates for Buford City stadium project.
23. Authorize payments #6, #7 and #8 totaling \$40,780.94 to H. Lloyd Hill Architects & Associates, Inc. for Buford Senior Academy Renovations project.
24. Authorize payment #12 in the amount of \$49,899.29 to H. Lloyd Hill Architects & Associates, Inc. for Buford Middle School Addition project.
25. Authorize change payment #5 in the amount of \$126,635.76 to F. S. Scarbrough for Southside WPCP filter replacement project.
26. Authorize change order #1 and payment #2 in the amount of \$83,796.59 to Backbone Infrastructure, LLC for Bona Road Sidewalk project.
27. Authorize payment #5 in the amount of \$4,560.00 to Glosson Enterprises, LLC for Shadburn Ferry Road sidewalk improvements.
28. Authorize payment #2 in the amount of \$291,033.42 to Allied Paving Contractors, Inc. for 2023 LMIG paving project.
29. Authorize payment #29 in the amount of \$484,355.77 (reduce retainage to 1.0%) to Ruby Collins, Inc. for water plant expansion project.
30. Authorize payment #6 in the amount of \$45,581.29 to Backbone Infrastructure, LLC for West Moreno Street improvements project.
31. Authorize change order #1 (final quantity adjusting) and payment #6 in the amount of \$402,250.20 to CEDS Construction Company, Inc. for Hamilton Mill Road gas relocation project.
32. Authorize payment of Invoice #15 in the amount of \$60,432.05 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for passive park at Harris Street project.
33. Authorize payment #11 in the amount of \$1,958,820.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford City Stadium project.
34. Authorize Invoice #12 in the amount of \$527,045.00 to Charles Black

Construction Company, Inc. for New Street relocation project and utilize SPLOST funds and general funds.

35. Authorize Invoice #3 in the amount of \$78,467.98 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford High School bleachers and concessions – Phase II project.
36. Authorize payment #9 in the amount of \$1,055,176.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford Senior Academy addition project.
37. Authorize payment #13 in the amount of \$114,672.00 to Charles Black Construction Company, Inc. for Buford Middle School addition and renovations project.
38. City Manager's Report.
39. City Attorney's Report.

NOTE: The City of Buford does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities per the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. Bryan Kerlin, City Manager, 770-945-6761, has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice Regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the ADA coordinator. The City of Buford will assist citizens with special needs given proper advance notice. Any requests for reasonable accommodations required by individuals to fully participate in any open meeting, program, or activity of the city should be directed to the ADA Coordinator, Bryan Kerlin, 2300 Buford Highway, Buford, Georgia, 770-945-6761.

APPENDIX B-2

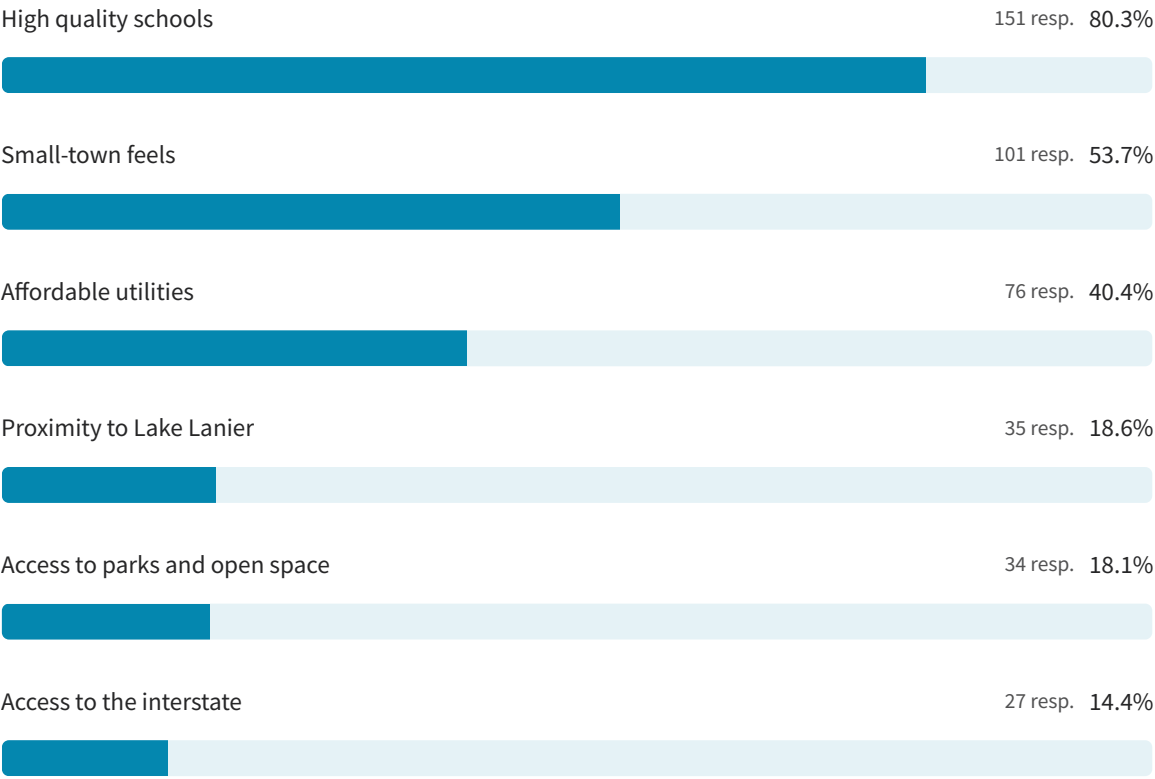
ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Figure B.3. Summary Report of Results

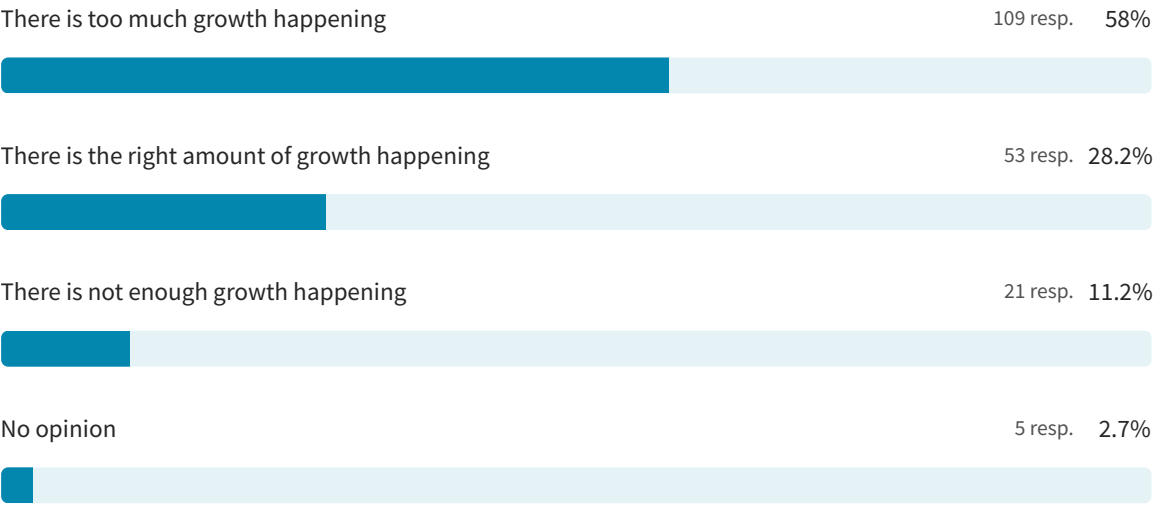
City of Buford 2045 Comprehensive Plan Public Input Survy

191 responses

What do you like best about Buford?
188 out of 191 answered

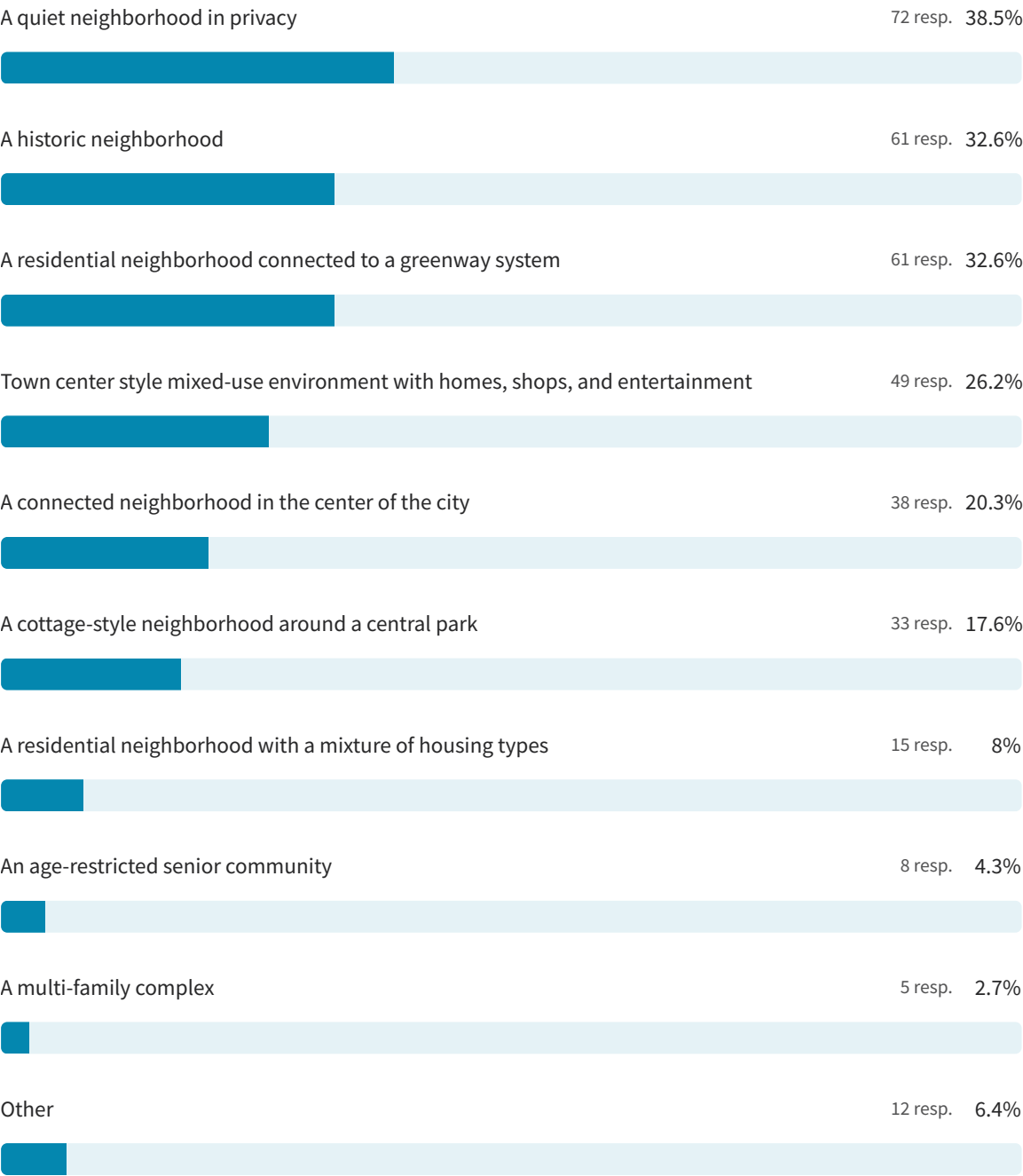


What is your opinion of the amount of growth and development that is occurring in Buford?
188 out of 191 answered



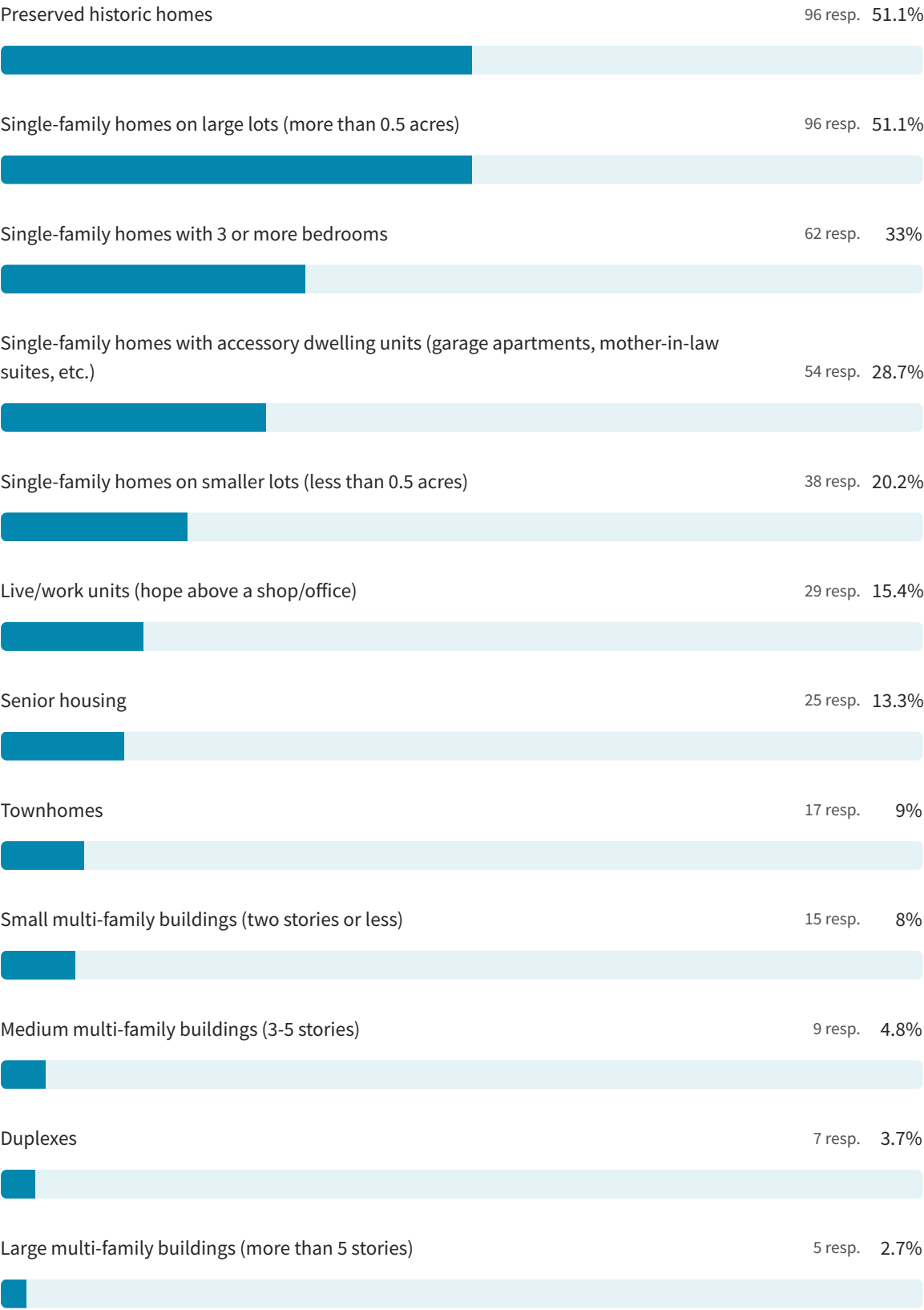
What kind of neighborhood do you imagine you'll want to live in 5 years from now?

187 out of 191 answered



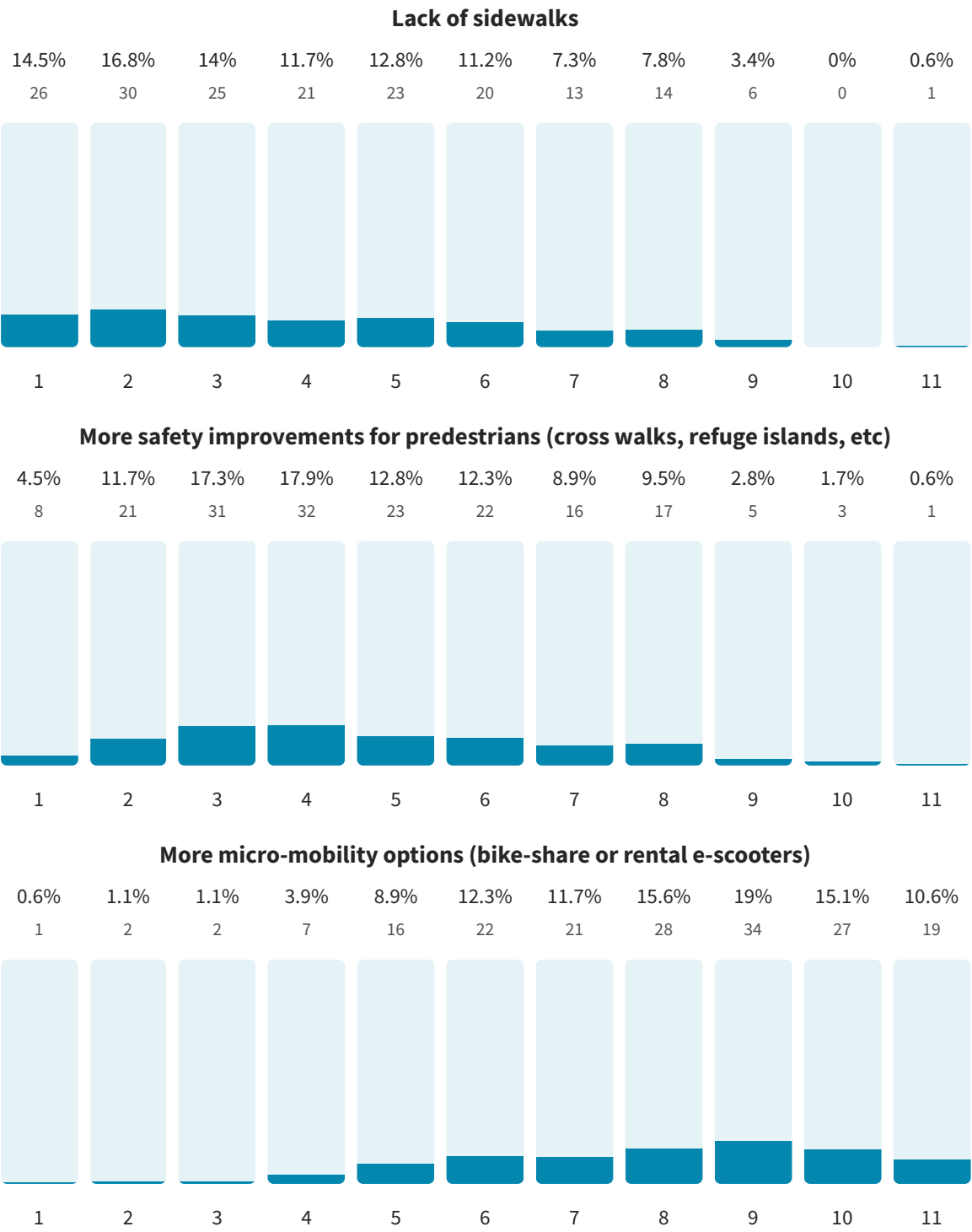
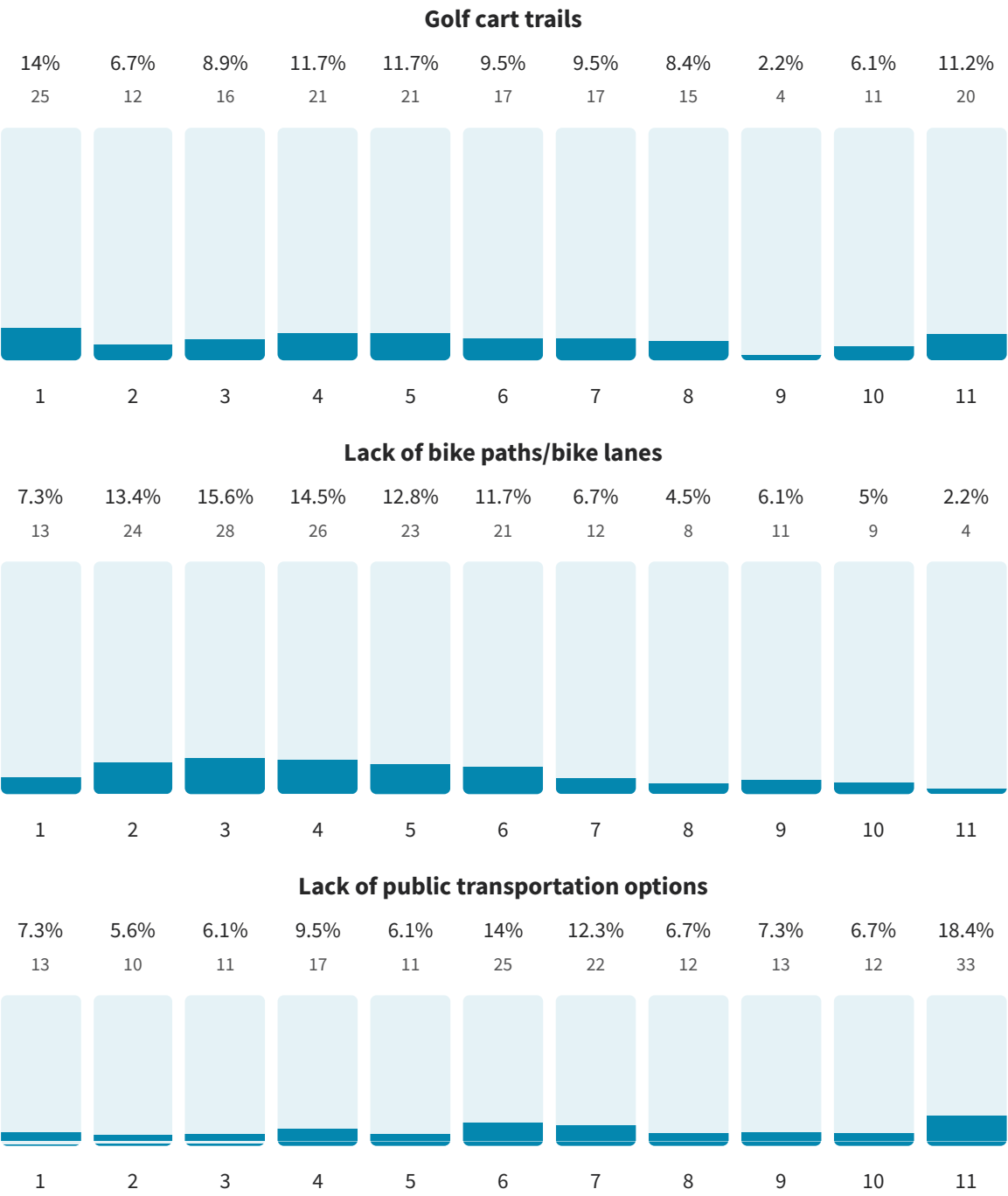
What kind of housing do you think is needed in Buford?

188 out of 191 answered

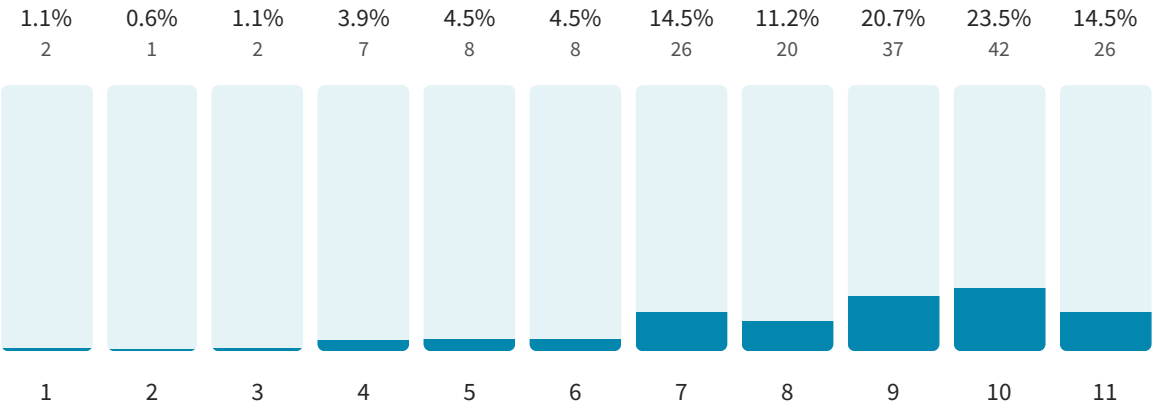


What do you see as Buford's biggest transportation issues? Rank these in order from biggest issue (1) to smallest issue (11).

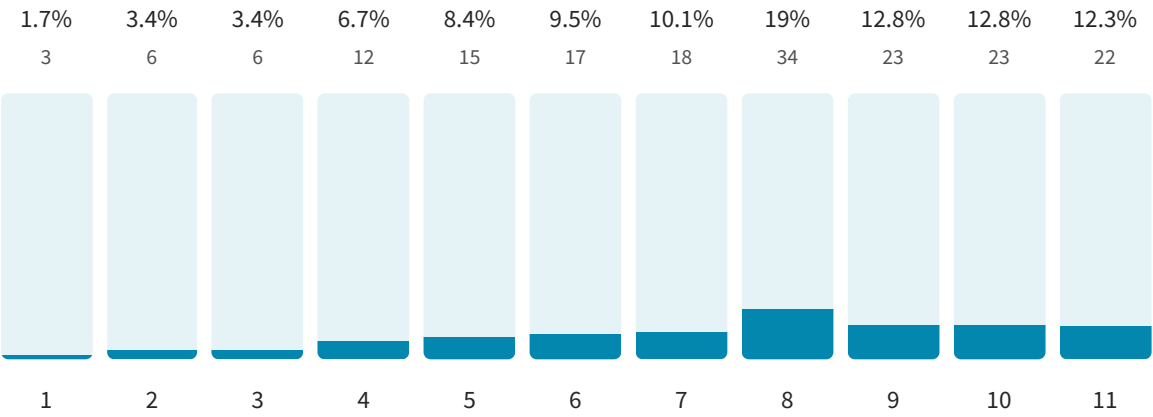
179 out of 191 answered



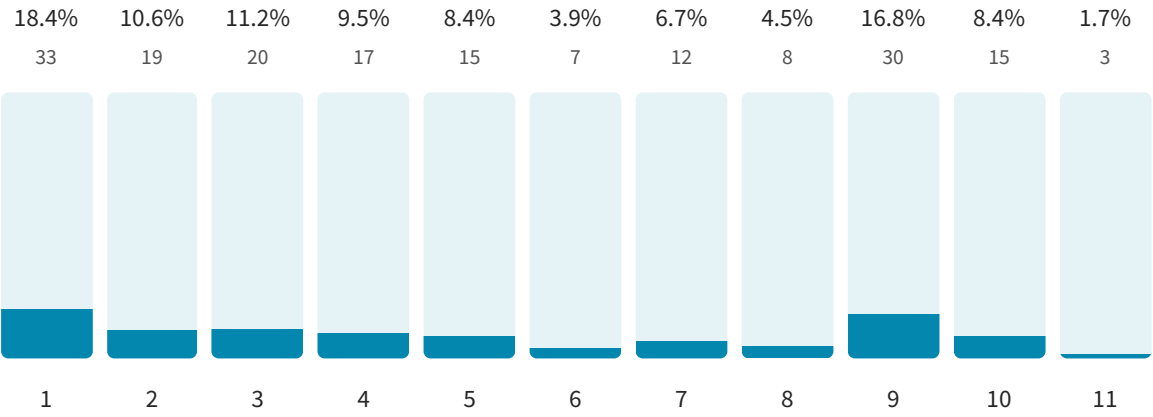
New for more rideshare (e.g. Uber or Lyft) drop-off spots



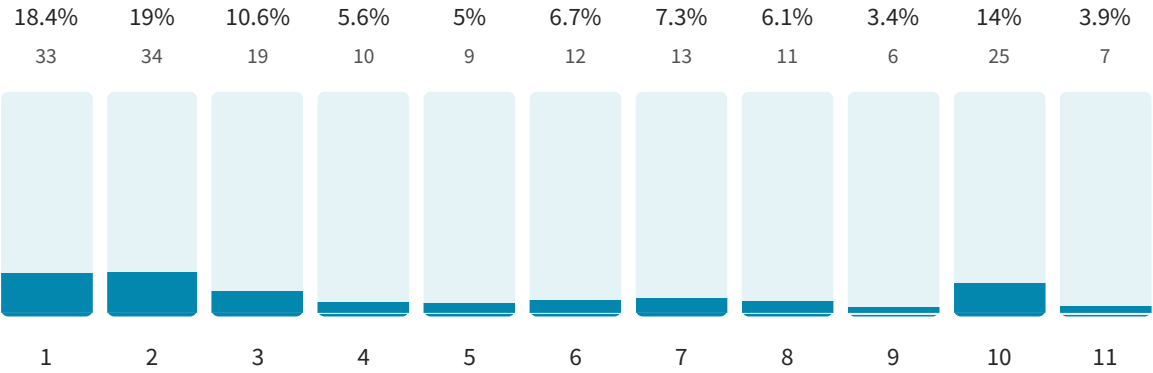
Not enough exits from 985



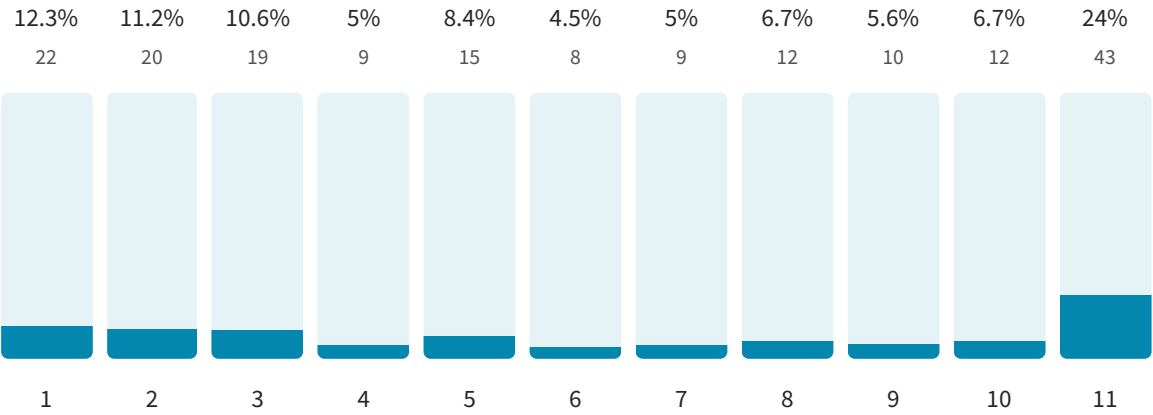
Too many trucks on the roads



Traffic congestion

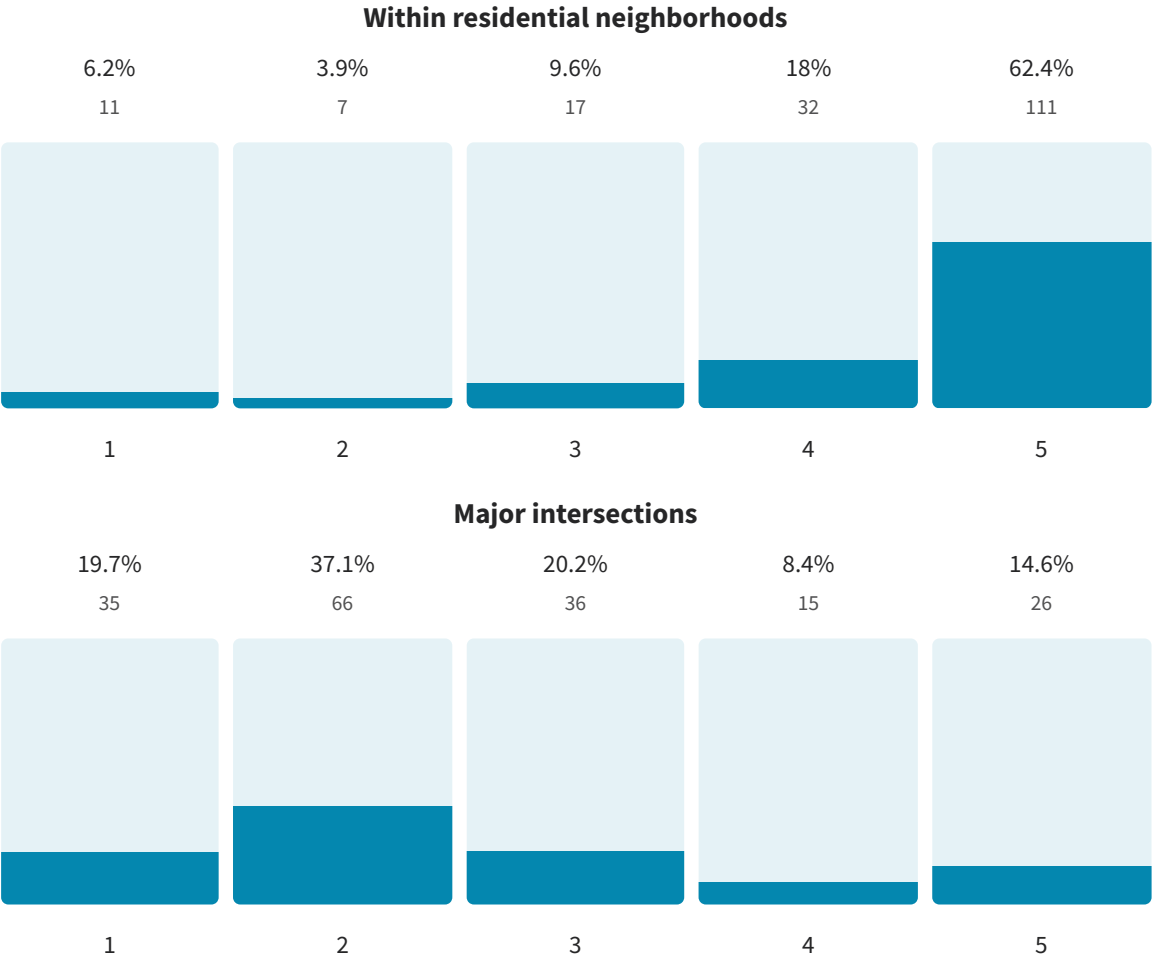
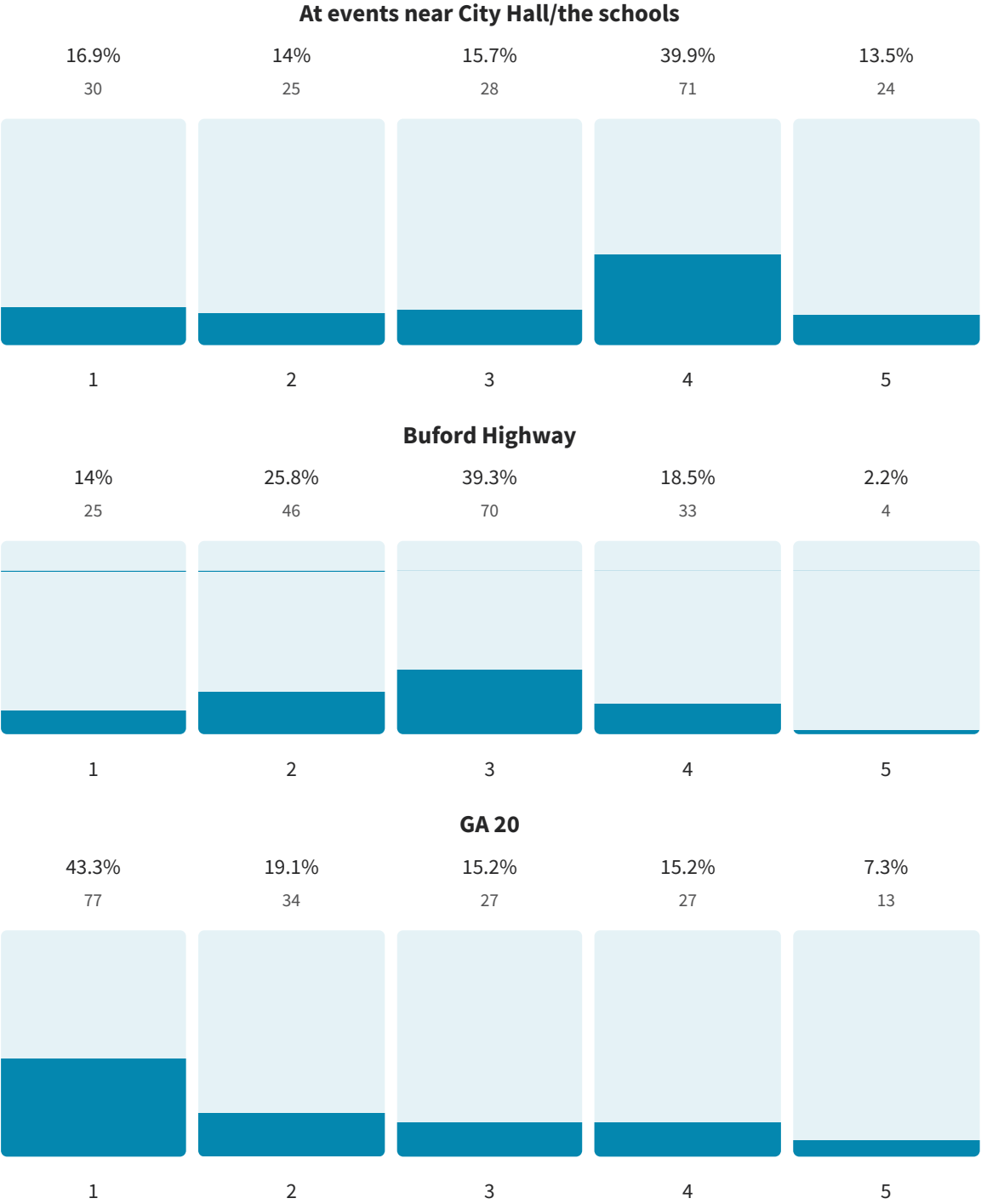


Traffic speed/unsafe drivers



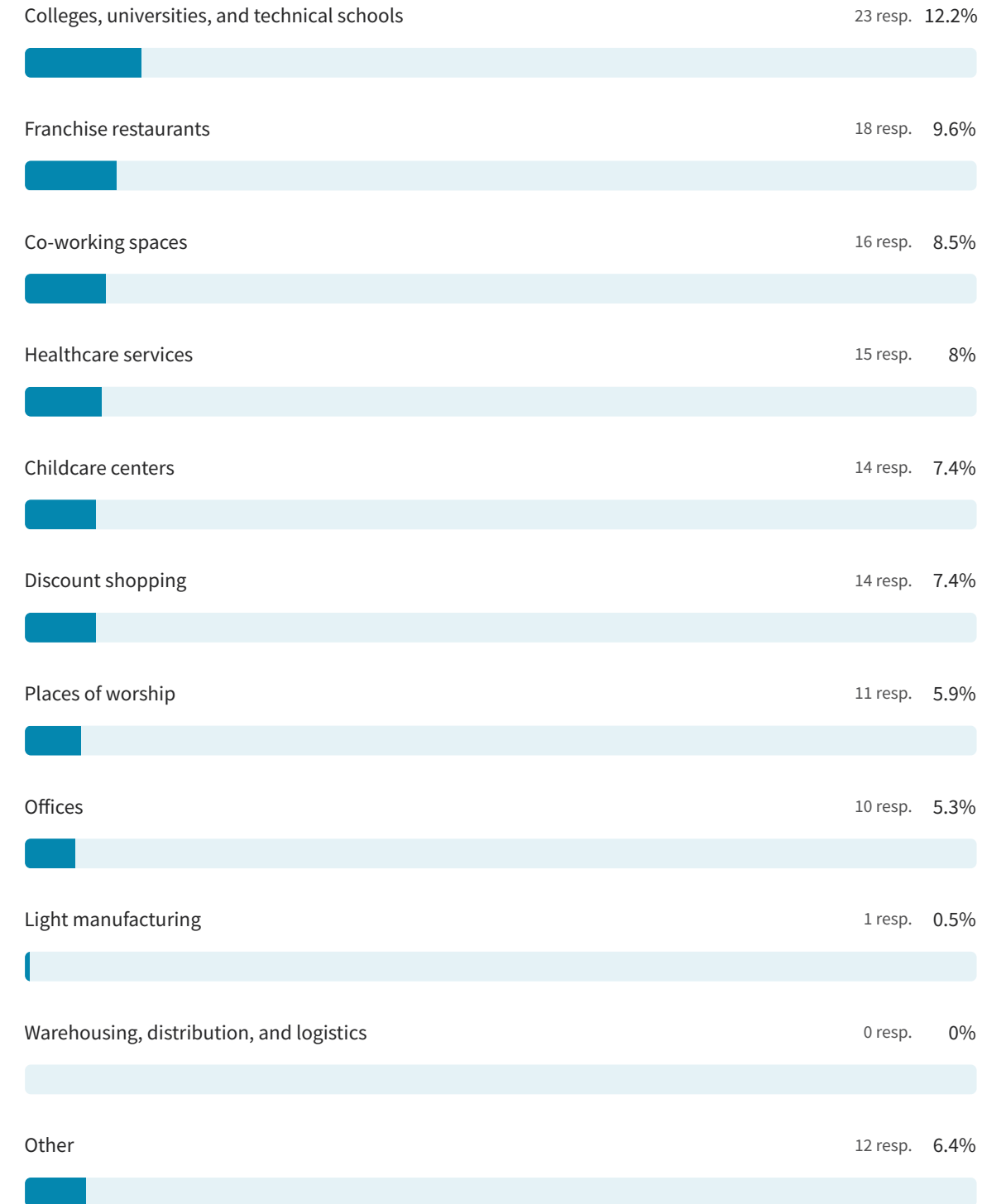
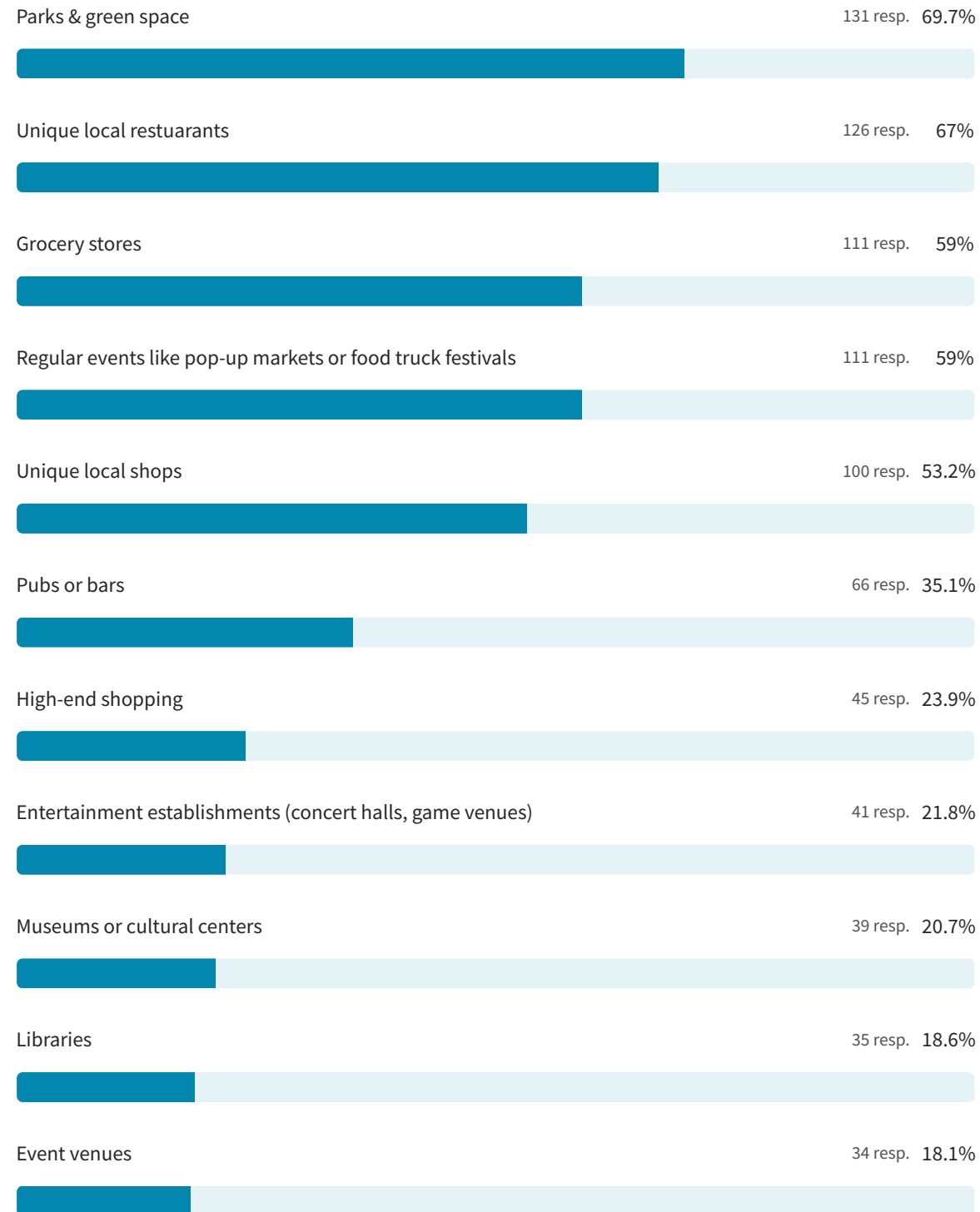
Where would you most like to see improvements to traffic flow? Rank the following from biggest issue (1) to smallest issue (5).

178 out of 191 answered



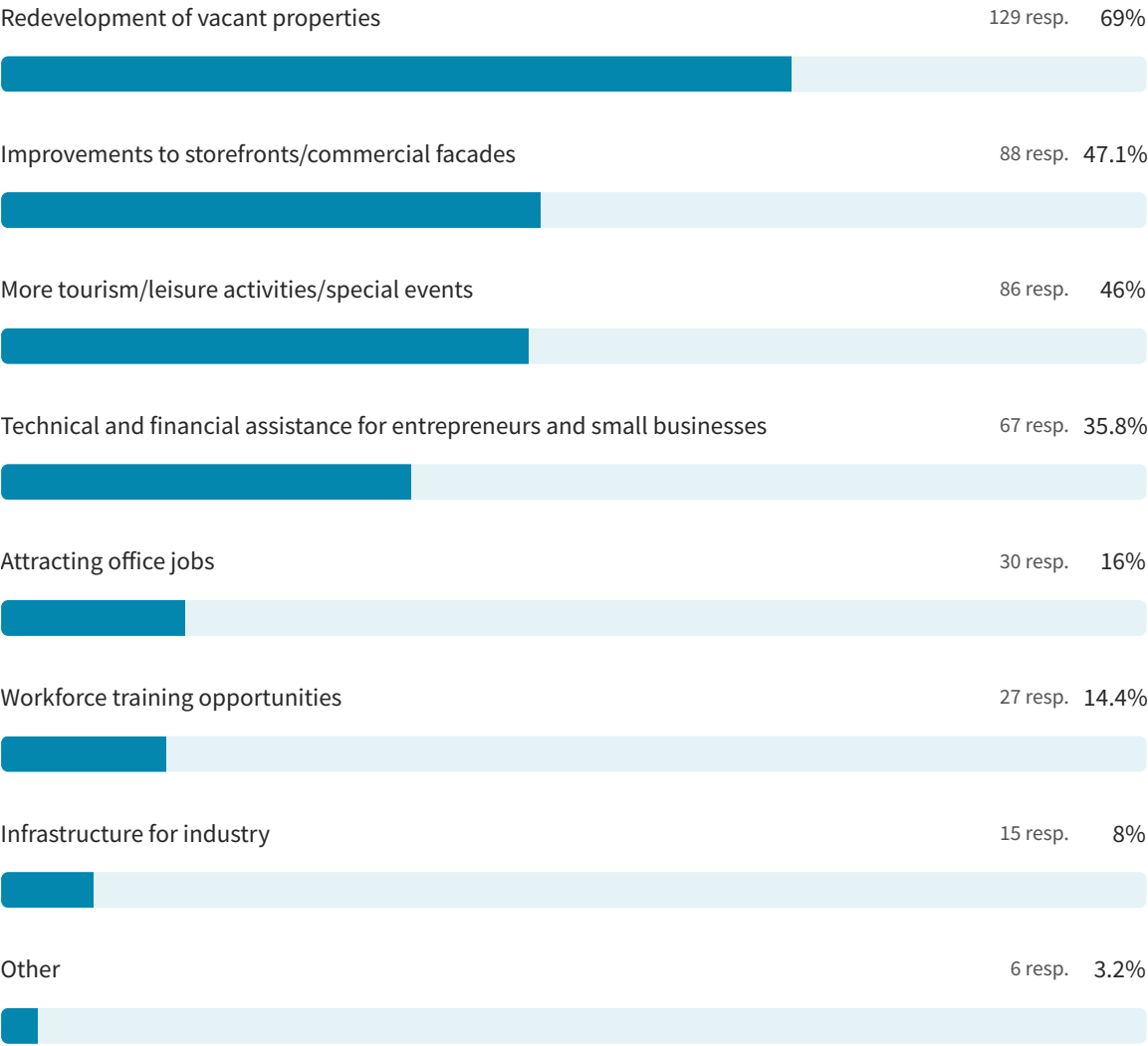
What business or services would you like to see more of in Buford?

188 out of 191 answered



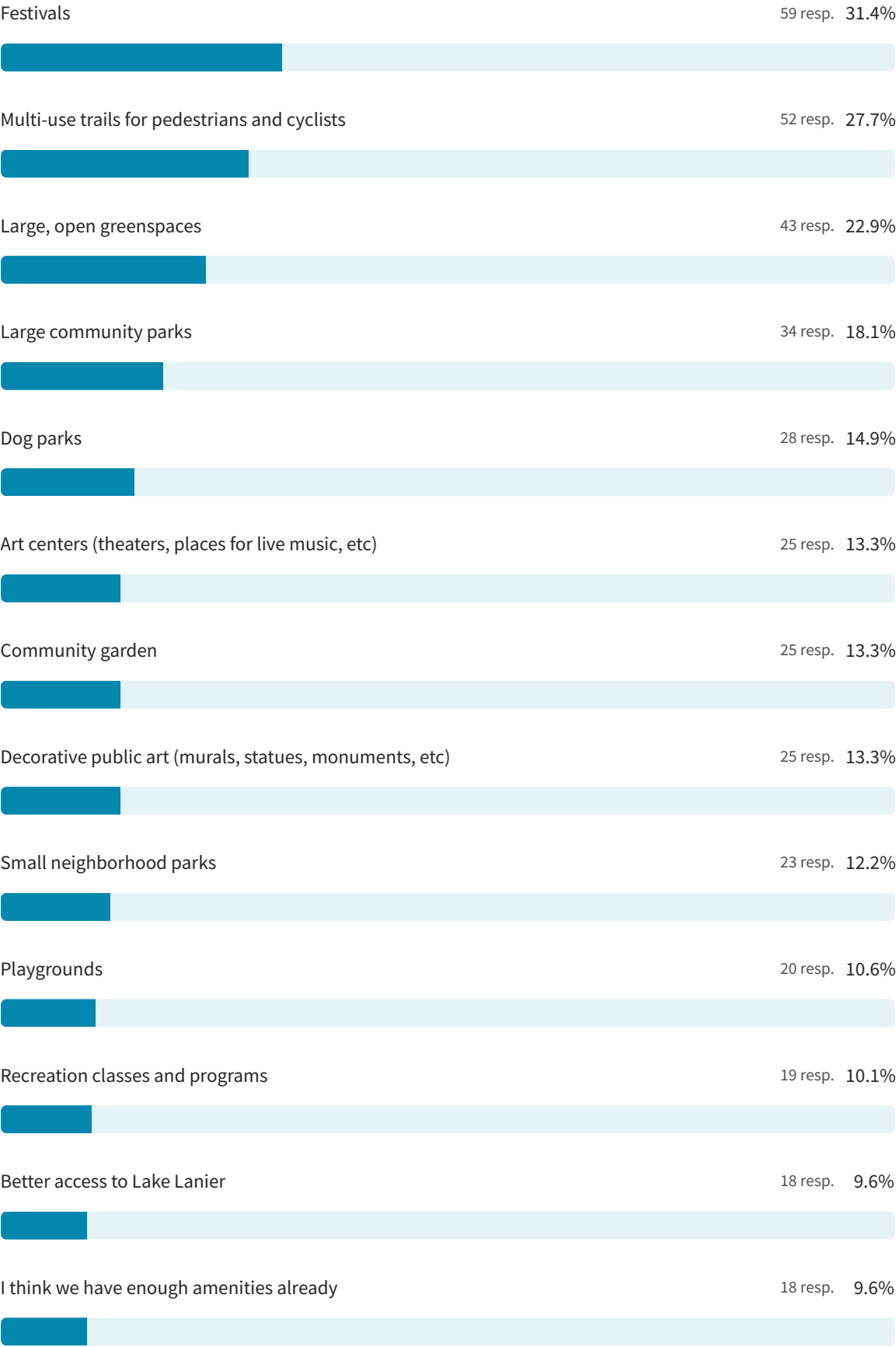
What do you think are some of the top needs for economic development in Buford?

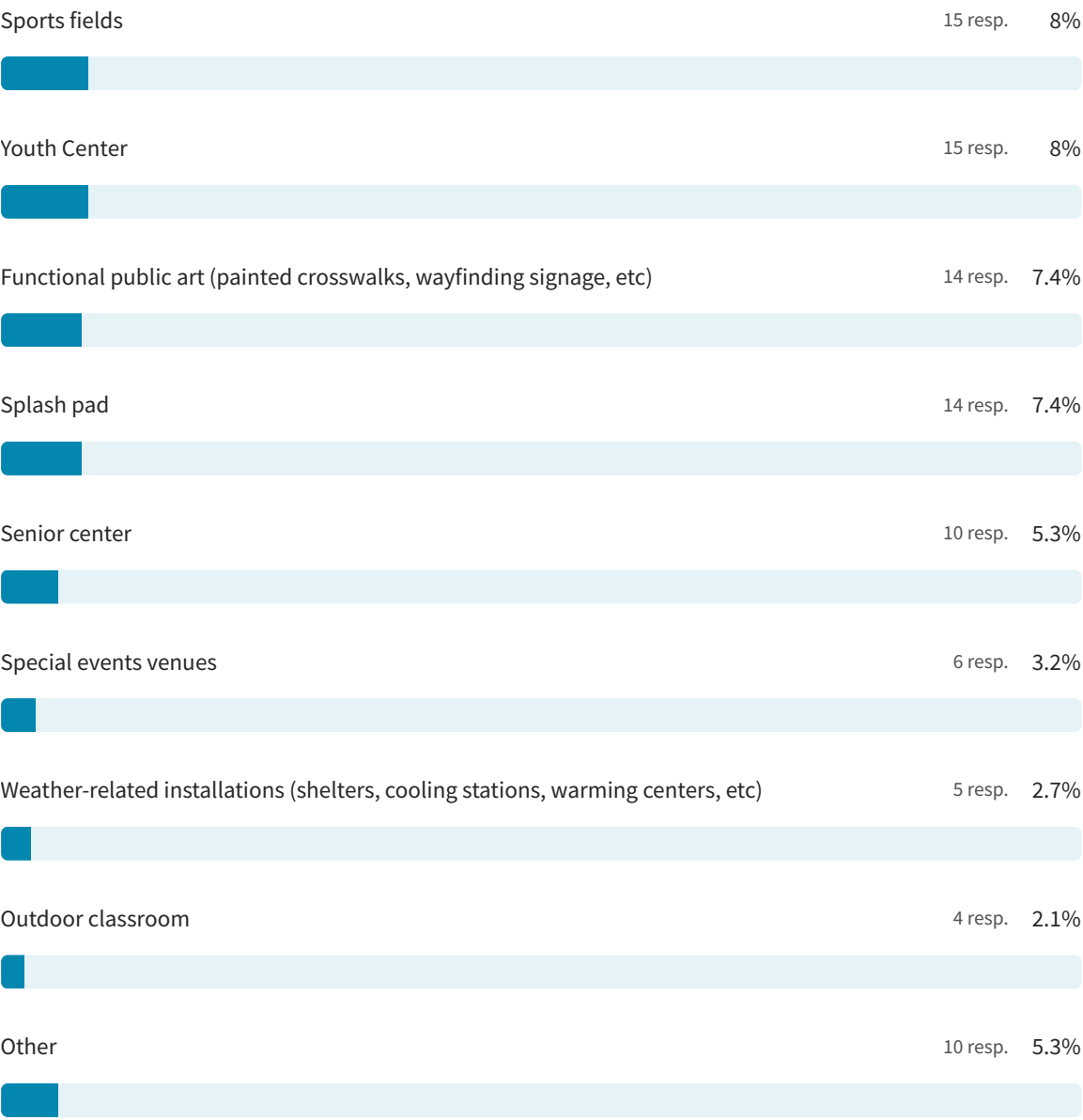
187 out of 191 answered



Which amenities do you think are most needed in Buford?

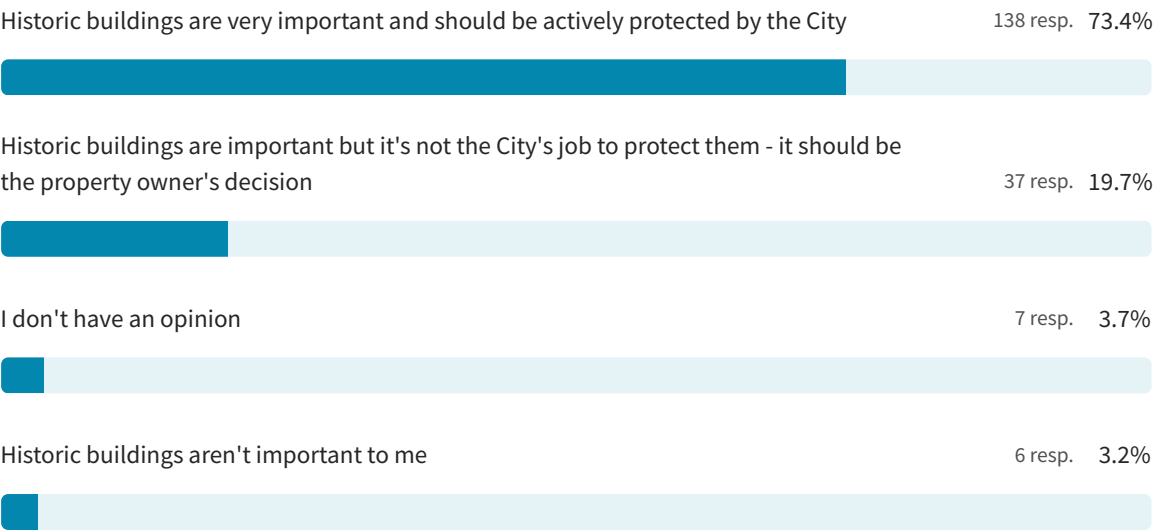
188 out of 191 answered





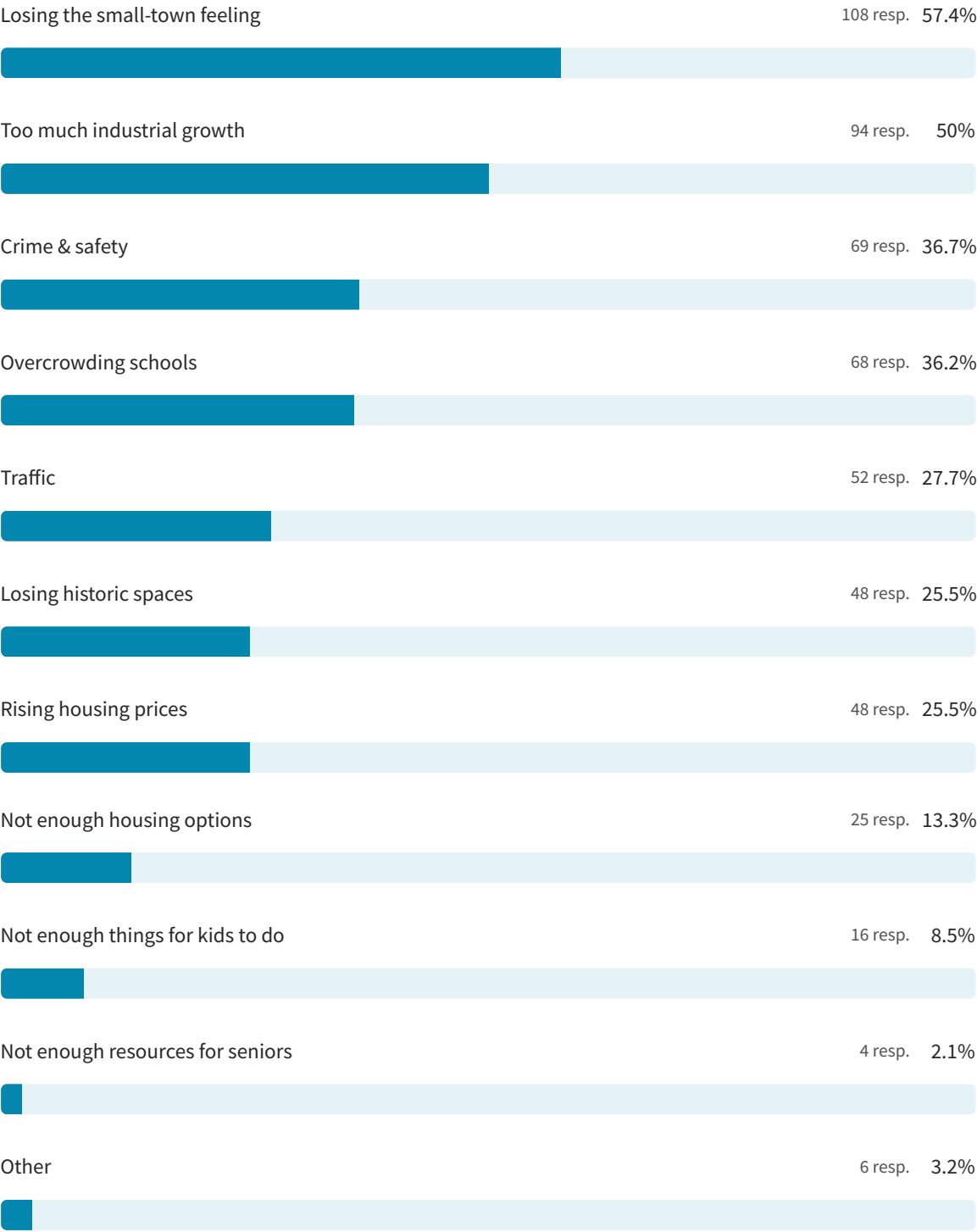
Which of the statements below best represents your opinion about historic buildings in Buford?

188 out of 191 answered



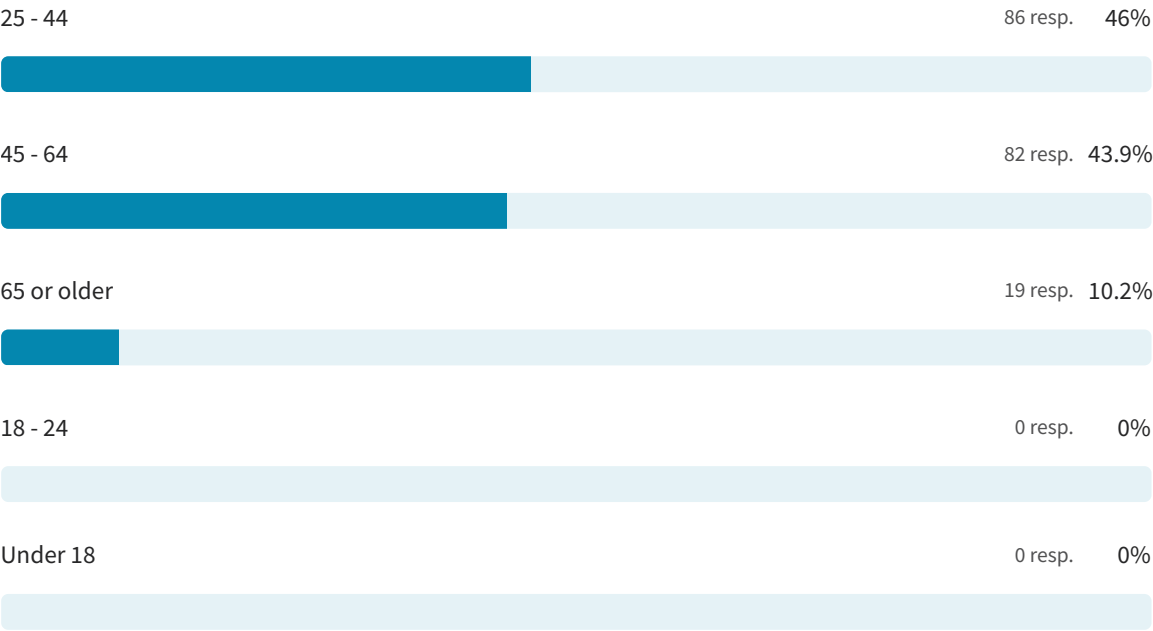
What are your top 3 concerns about Buford and its future?

188 out of 191 answered



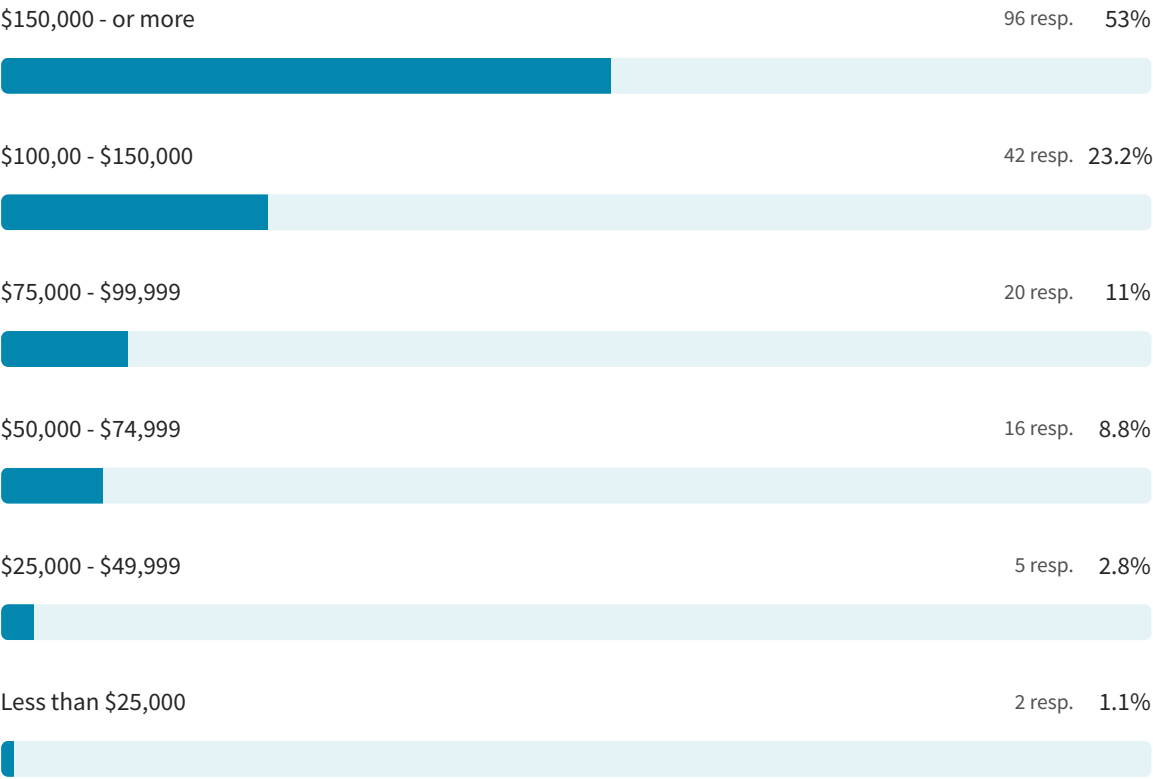
I am ...

187 out of 191 answered



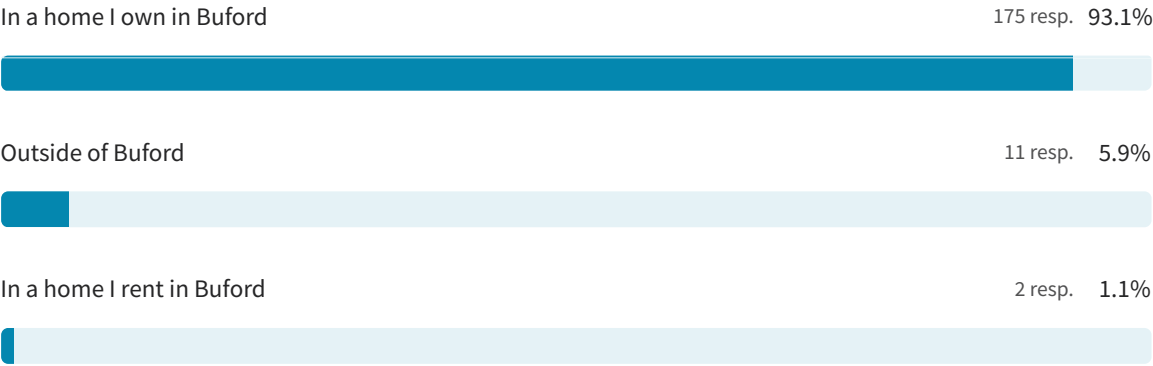
Annually, my household earns...

181 out of 191 answered



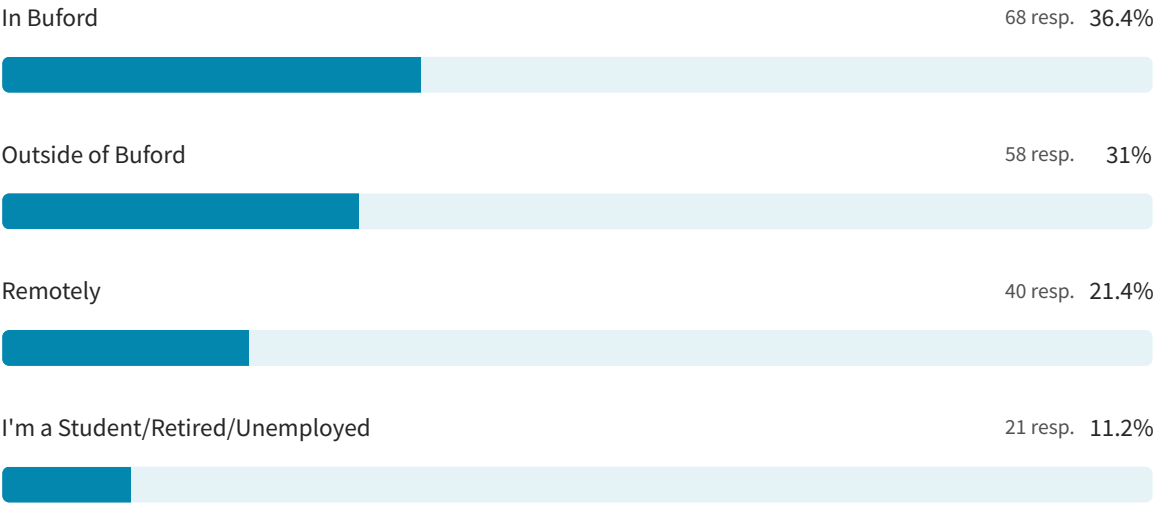
I live ...

188 out of 191 answered



I work...

187 out of 191 answered



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.

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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

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