

# COVER SHEET FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING SUBMITTALS

Name(s) of Submitting Government(s): **City of Berkeley Lake**

RC: **ARC**

Submittal Type: **Plan Update (5 Yr)**

Preparer: ☒ RC ☐ Local Government ☐ Consultant: Specify

Transmittal Resolution / Cover Letter Date: **11/3/14**

Date Submittal Initially Received by RC: **11/7/14**

Explain Unusual Time-lags or Other Anomalies, when present:

- **ALL SUBMITTALS MUST BE TRANSMITTED ELECTRONICALLY USING THE DEPARTMENT'S SHAREPOINT SITE.**
- **COMBINE ALL INDIVIDUAL IMAGES, DOCUMENTS AND SPREADSHEETS INTO ONE SINGLE, SEARCHABLE PDF, PUT THIS COMPLETED FORM AS THE FIRST PAGE OF THE PDF AND THEN UPLOAD IT.**
- **EMAILED OR HARDCOPY MATERIALS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.**
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28 October 2014

Atlanta Regional Commission  
40 Courtland Street, NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-2538

**RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal, City of Berkeley Lake**

The City of Berkeley Lake has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Pat Chapman, Deputy City Administrator by telephone at 770.368.9484 or via e-mail at [deputy.admin@berkeley-lake.com](mailto:deputy.admin@berkeley-lake.com).

With kind regards,

Lois D. Salter  
Mayor

Enclosures



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# PLAN BERKELEY LAKE

2014 City of Berkeley Lake's Comprehensive Plan



This document was prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission using funds provided by the State of Georgia

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# Acknowledgements

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Executive Summary of Plan Berkeley Lake

The majority of lands in the city limits (the 700-acre Berkeley Lake Properties) was developed by Frank Coggins in the late 1940s. The dam, constructed in 1948, is one of the largest earthen dams in the state. The city's namesake, Lake Berkeley (88 acres), was named after Mr. Coggins' Berkeley Blue Granite Quarries in Elberton, Georgia. In 1950, the Berkeley Lake Estates "subdivision," which included five reserved Free Pass and Repass tracts (FPR) and the residential and fishing lots around the lake, was laid out. In 1952, Calvin and Kate Parsons, along with John and Dorothy Bagwell, purchased the Berkeley Realty and Investment Company and its 700-acre property.

The City of Berkeley Lake grew rapidly throughout the 1990s but as land availability within the city decreased so has the population growth. Throughout the last 10 years the city's population has grown slowly due to annexations.



The City and planning team designed a number of communication tools and activities to ensure that meaningful community input would form the backbone of this plan. A Steering Committee, convened to oversee the process, was the main instrument for guiding development of the plan. Based upon the input of the steering committee, three goals were established for the city in this plan. They are:

- Deliver Quality Services to Residents and Businesses in cooperation with neighboring governments
- Promote Recreational Opportunities, Guided by an Ethos of Environmental Stewardship
- Provide Opportunities for Residents to Age in Place
- Enhance community visibility through targeted investments in branding, events and infrastructure

These goals provide the basis for Community Work Program and Land Use Map. This plan also considered recommendations from the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District Plans, The Atlanta Regional Transportation Plan, and the Gwinnett County Consolidated Plan.



## Berkeley Lake by the Numbers

**976**  
Jobs

**2.75**  
Average  
Household Size

**95%**  
Homeownership  
rate

**99.1%**  
High School Graduate

**44%**  
of workers  
earning \$3,300  
or more a Month

**94%**  
Residential  
occupancy  
rate

**93%**  
Office  
occupancy  
rate

**18.4%**  
Foreign-born  
persons

**1,947**  
City  
population

**\$131,944**  
Median  
Household  
Income

**1.0%**  
Persons below  
Poverty Level

**81%**  
Retail  
occupancy  
rate

Sources: US Census Berkeley Lake QuickFacts, US Census OnTheMap, CoStar,

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# WHO WE ARE

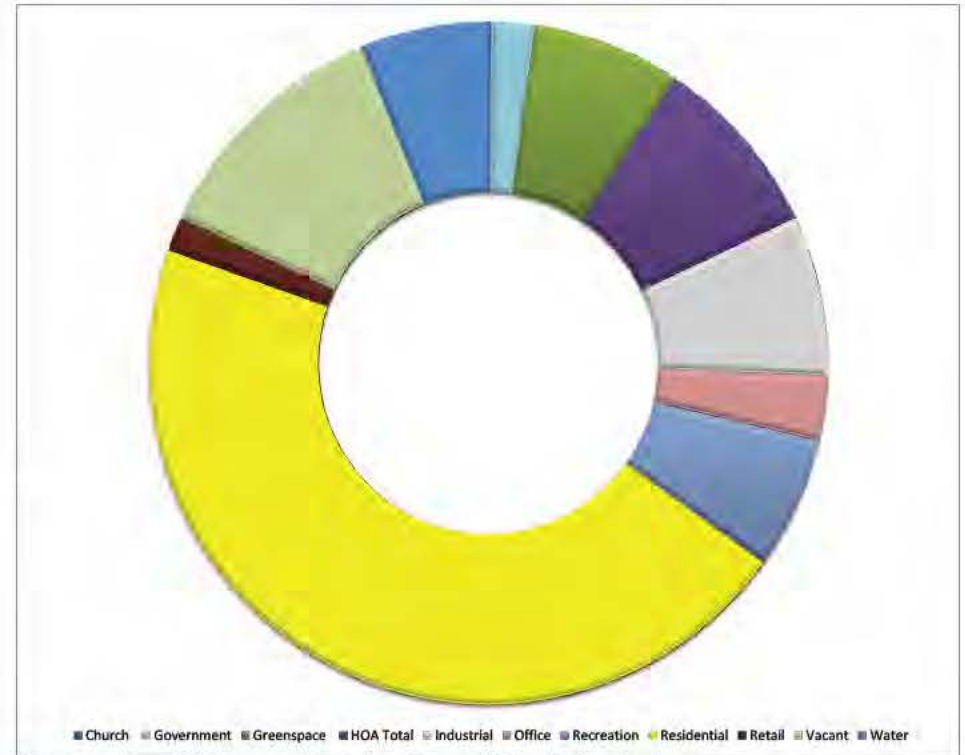


## History of the City of Berkeley Lake

The majority of land in the city limits (the 700-acre Berkeley Lake Properties) was developed by Frank Coggins in the late 1940s. The dam, constructed in 1948, is one of the largest earthen dams in the State of Georgia. The city's namesake, Lake Berkeley (88 acres), was named after Mr. Coggins' Berkeley Blue Granite Quarries in Elberton, Georgia. In 1950, the Berkeley Lake Estates "subdivision," which included five reserved Free Pass and Repass tracts (FPR) and the residential and fishing lots around the lake, was laid out. In 1952, Calvin and Kate Parsons, along with John and Dorothy Bagwell, purchased the Berkeley Realty and Investment Company and its 700-acre property.

For many years, Lake Berkeley was primarily a summer retreat, with an assortment of fishing cottages mingling with a slowly growing number of permanent homes. The health of the lake was guarded by a small, but tenacious, core of residents, each lending their expertise and time.

In 1953, some 25 property owners met and formed the Lake Berkeley Civic Association. Besides zoning and developmental control, there were important needs such as electricity, telephones, and "an all-year road" around the lake. This need for benefits that an incorporated city could help secure, brought about the creation of the charter, which was approved by the General Assembly of Georgia on March 6, 1956, creating the City of Berkeley Lake.



Existing Land Uses within the City of Berkeley Lake



## Who We Are

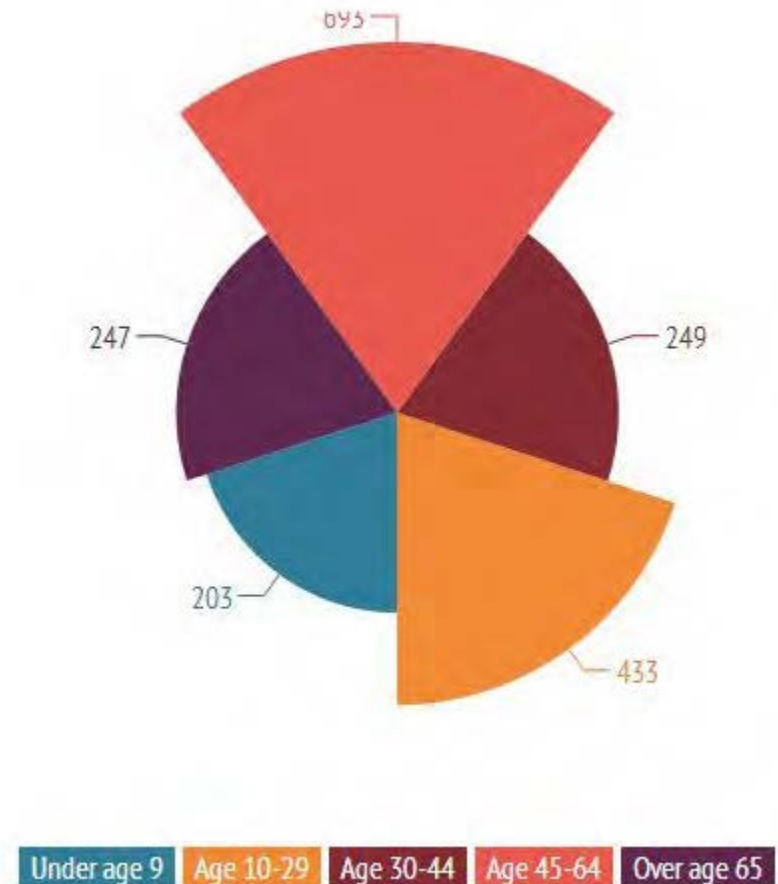
The City of Berkeley Lake grew rapidly throughout the 1990s, but as land availability within the city decreased, so has its population growth. Throughout the last 10 years, the city's population has grown slowly due to annexations.

The majority of Berkeley Lake's population is between the ages of 40 and 65, with very few 20-30 year olds. The city is currently 74 percent White, with Asian being the next largest racial group.

Currently, Berkeley Lake has 1,841 people in 574 households living within the city limits. These residents have a 95 percent homeownership rate and have a median household income of \$131,944. Both are some of the highest in the Atlanta region.

The largest population segment within the city is 45-64 year olds, with a large segment of the population between the ages of 10-29. This population composition aligns closely with previous Censuses of the city.

Residents are employed across a range of employment sectors, but the Scientific and Technical Services sector leads in resident's occupations. Other sectors that are high include Healthcare, Wholesale Trade, Administration, and Retail. Having a large share of residents working in white collar jobs explains the City's high median income of just under \$140,000.



2012 Age Profile of the City of Berkeley Lake (Source: US Census)

## Moving Around the City

The City of Berkeley Lake is located in northern Gwinnett County, in between the cities of Peachtree Corners and Duluth, and across the Chattahoochee River from the City of Johns Creek to the north. Peachtree Industrial Boulevard is the primary roadway through the city, providing connections to the region's interstate highway system. Most of the residential neighborhoods in the city are connected via North or South Berkeley Lake Road, which encircles the lake.

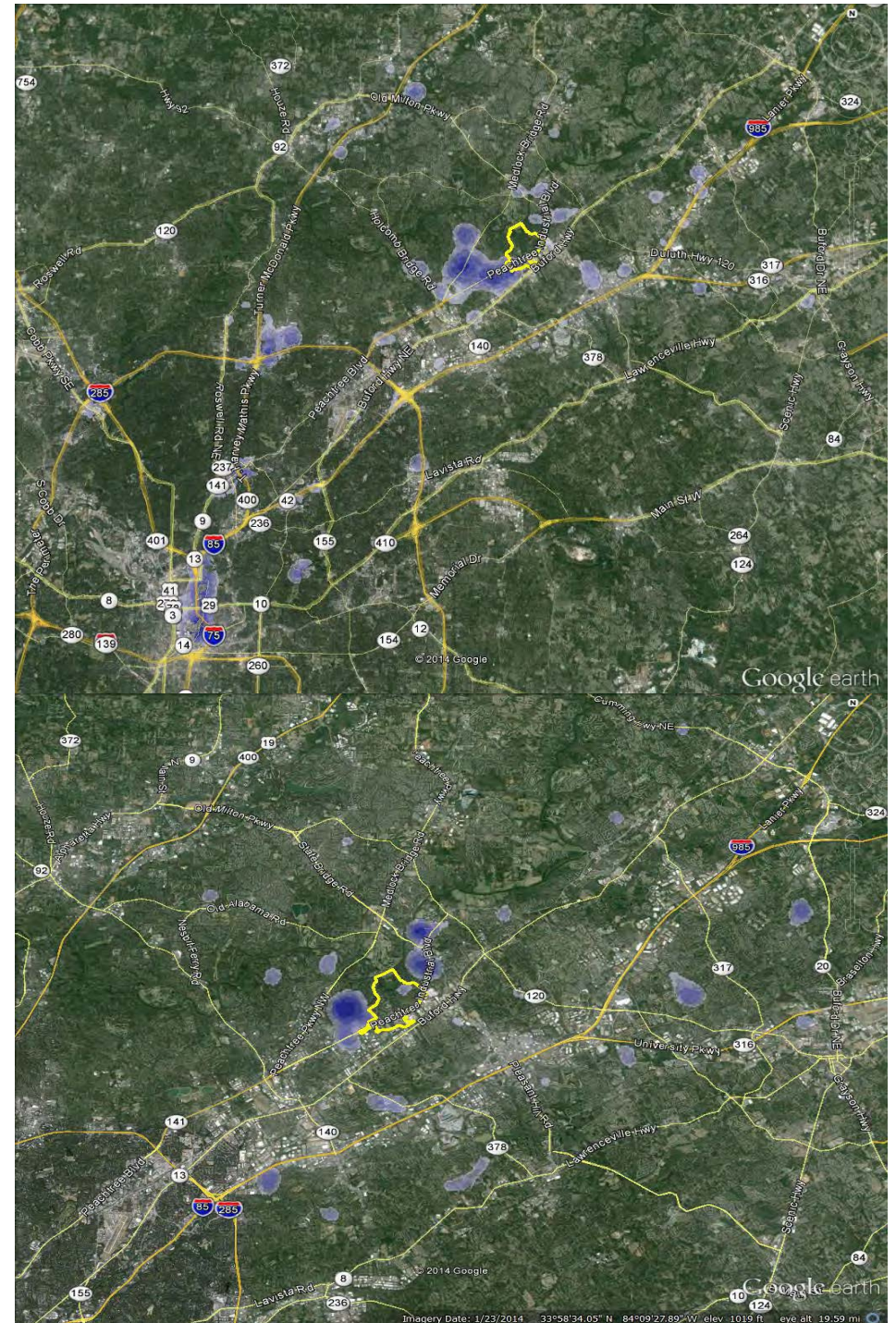
According to the Georgia Department of Transportation, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard carries approximately 36,000 cars per day (2012 counts).

Currently, more than 1,010 workers commute into Berkeley Lake each day for work, while 877 residents commute out of the city for work. Only three individuals both live and work in the city. Residents commute primarily to the SR 400, I-285 and I-85 corridors, and the Perimeter and Midtown areas.

Top: Where Residents Work who live in the city.

Bottom: Where Workers live who work in the city.

(Source: US Census)





## The City's Natural Beauty

The City of Berkeley Lake features several sites of natural beauty within its borders. The most obvious location is the lake. Berkeley Lake owns and is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the earthen dam. It also owns the adjacent parking lot. The Berkeley Lake Homeowners' Association (BLHA) owns and is responsible for the lake itself, as well as the picnic area, gabion spillway, and beach. The City of Berkeley Lake rents the parking lot adjacent to the dam to the Berkeley Lake Homeowners' Association. As the tenant, the BLHA is responsible for maintenance of the parking lot. Use of Berkeley Lake requires membership in the Berkeley Lake Homeowners' Association, but anyone in the city may join, regardless of the location of his or her residence.

The city operates two recreational areas: the park and playground at city hall, and over 72 acres of greenspace near the intersection of Ridge Road and North Berkeley Lake Road. The greenspace is under a conservation easement that limits what can occur on the property.

Berkeley Lake is also located on the Chattahoochee River, which flows north to south along the city's northwestern edge. In an effort to protect the Chattahoochee River and provide for recreation, the U.S. Congress in 1978 established the Chattahoochee River National Recreational Area. This area serves as a series of parks that dot the river and provides recreation opportunities for metropolitan Atlanta residents. Development in the 2000-foot Chattahoochee River Corridor is regulated per the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan adopted by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).





A scenic photograph of a lake with a wooden fence and a gazebo. The image is overlaid with a large, red, 3D-style 'DRAFT' watermark that is tilted diagonally across the upper left portion of the scene. The background shows a calm lake reflecting the surrounding green trees and a clear sky. A wooden fence runs across the middle ground, and a wooden gazebo with a tiered roof is visible on the right side of the lake.

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# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



# Public Engagement

The City and planning team designed a number of communication tools and activities to ensure that meaningful community input would form the backbone of this plan. A Steering Committee, convened to oversee the process, was the main instrument for guiding development of the plan. The Steering Committee played an essential role in providing input to the comprehensive planning process and represented a diverse cross-section of the City. The members' role was to provide input so that the plan was in line with the City of Berkeley Lake's community values.

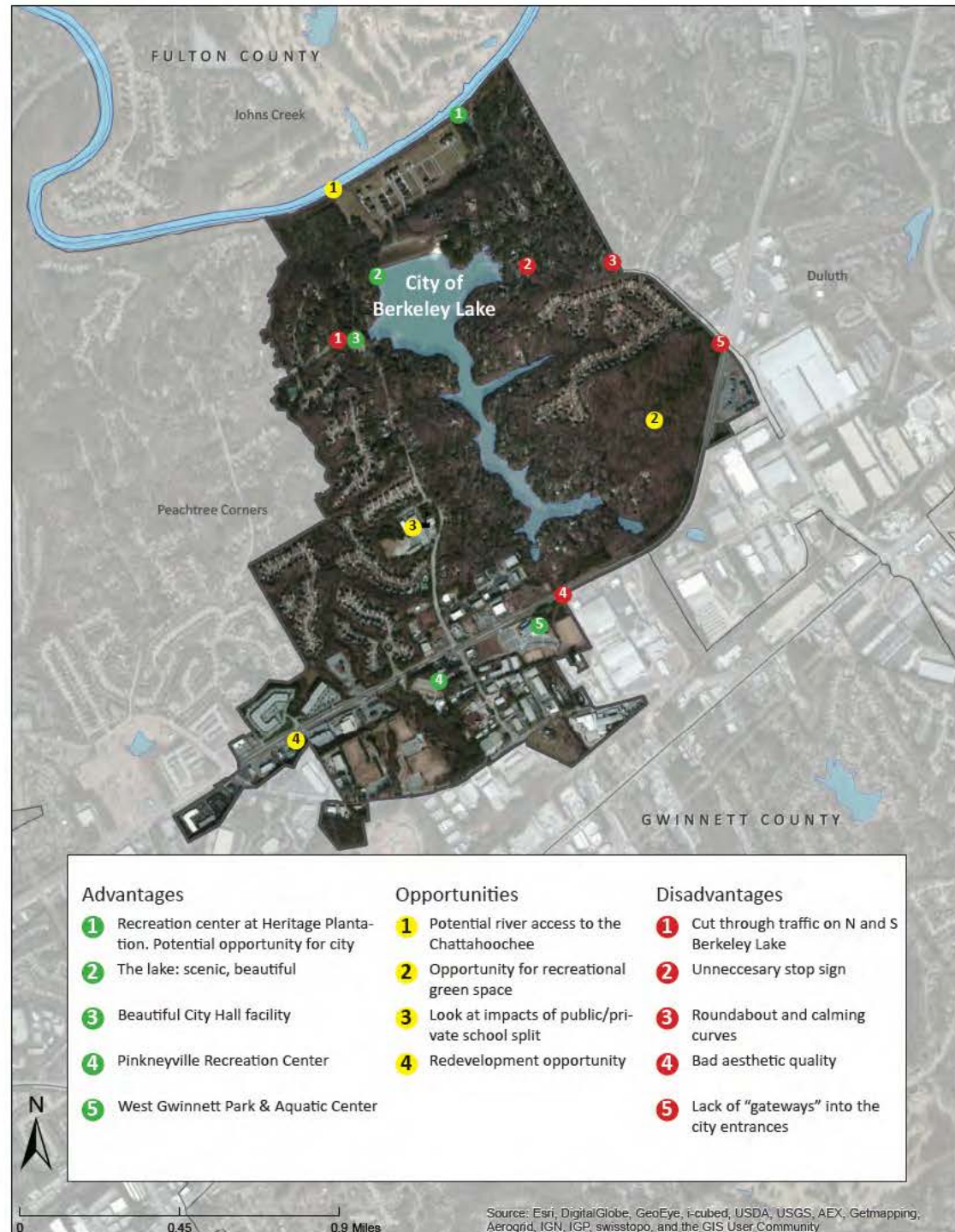
Steering Committee members played a key role in the Comprehensive planning process in that they provided plan oversight and input. At each phase of the planning process, they provided the planning team with a valuable perspective that helped refine the comprehensive planning process.

## Collaborative Map

A large-format map of the City and surrounding areas was used to gather responses to two questions from the Stakeholder Committee- 1) Besides your home, what is your favorite location in Berkeley Lake? 2) If you had money to spend to improve one location in the City, where and what would you spend it on? The stickers used for responses were color coded by question.



# THE COLLABRATIVE MAP





# Plan Open House

The City of Berkeley Lake's Comprehensive Plan Open house on June 30th, 2014 hosted 16 residents and stakeholders who shared feedback on what they imagine for the future of their city. Having already collected feedback from stakeholders and city council members during previous meetings, the open house provided an opportunity for the public-at-large to participate in interactive planning activities that speak to the values and needs of Berkeley Lake.

## DIY (Do-It-Yourself) City Budgeting

Residents prioritized where they would like to see Berkeley Lake make investments in the future. Each resident was given a pack of "planning money" to spend on 10 different priorities, ranging from public safety to senior services to community aesthetics. Each money packet included one bill each in six different denominations: \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100, which totals to \$186. All priorities are listed on the graphs below. Three planning areas emerged as attendees' favorites: Public Safety, Parks, and Events. These three areas received the most total "funding." Public Safety received the largest share of \$100 bill allocations from 50 percent of attendees, followed by events, which received \$100 bills from 20percent of attendees. Surprisingly Arts and Culture received the least amount of funding.

## Commuting: Now and Later

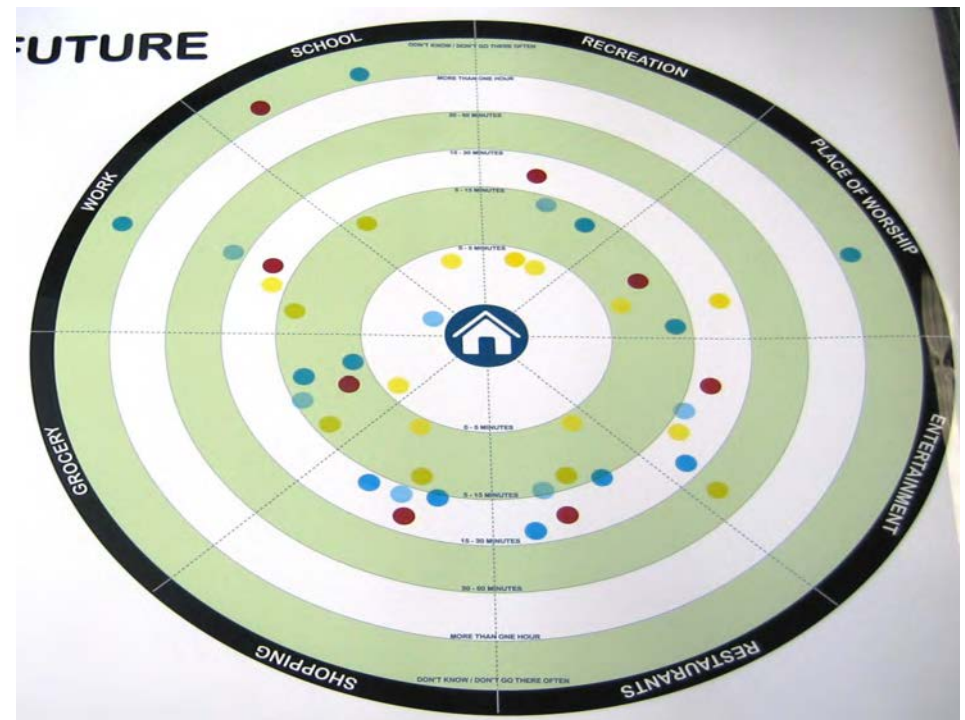
Many residents in the Berkeley Lake area are used to driving to get where they need to go. Many residents seemed satisfied with their current commute times, and most were within 30 minutes of basic amenities such as recreation and grocery stores. The commute to School or Place of Worship was reported to represent the longest driving time, followed by drive times to entertainment or recreation offerings. The image below shows what residents had to say about their commuting situation. The dots are color-coded by which portion of the city participants reside in.

When residents were asked to complete the same exercise but instead use their stickers to mark how long they would like their drive times to these locations to be in the future, almost all participants placed all of their stickers within 30 minutes, and most stickers were within the 5-10 minute ring. This corresponds well with residents desire to keep Berkeley Lake's neighborhoods residential.

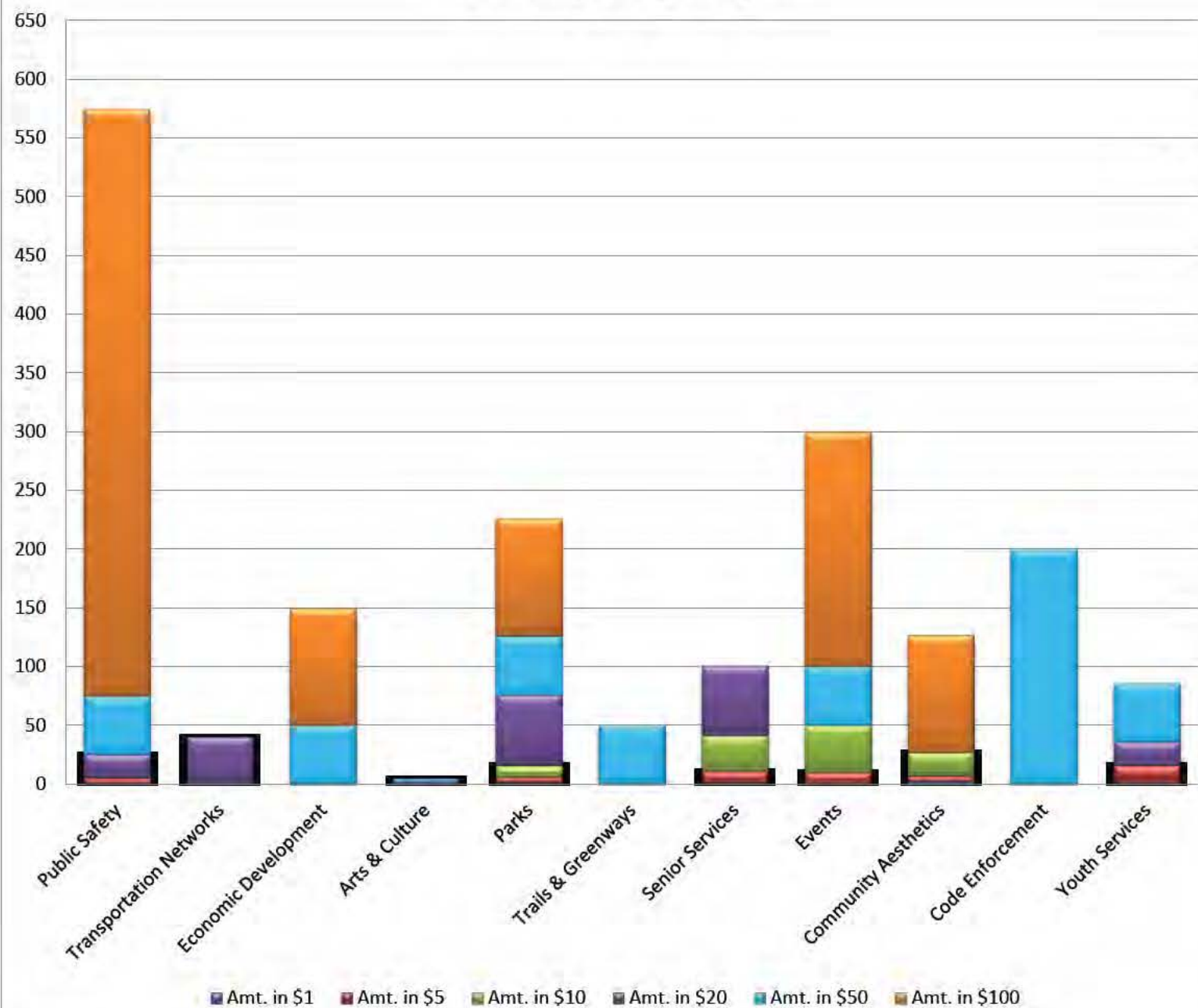


Top: Existing Commuting Patterns

Below: Desired Future Patterns



## DIY City Budgeting

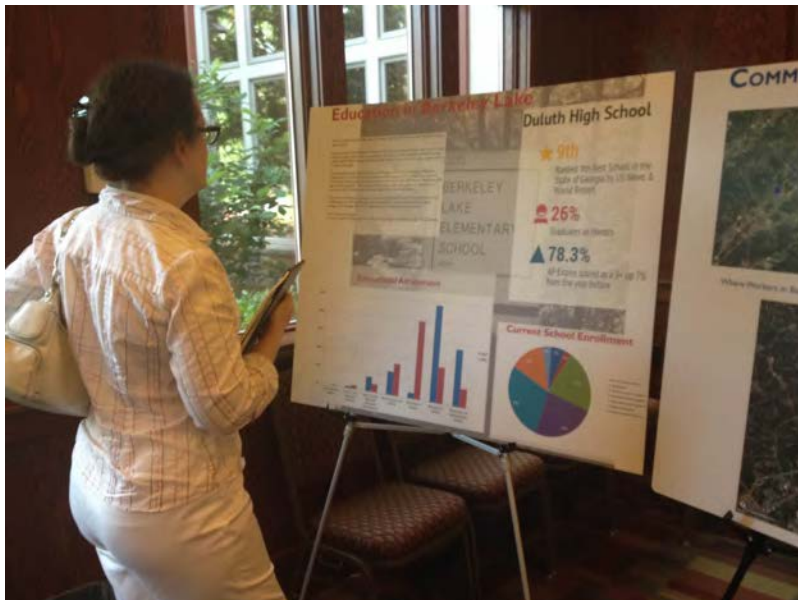


## Open ended Responses

The planning team asked the participants three questions about their thoughts on the city. Some responses deal with matters outside the city's control such as lake operations.

### What do you love about Berkeley Lake?

- Sense of community
- The lake
- Amount of green space
- Unique character
- The people
- Respect for nature
- Nature
- Wildlife
- The quiet
- The trees



### What would you change about Berkeley Lake?

- If there were more programs for young people, maybe they wouldn't just hang out by the lake.
- More equitable system for financing maintenance of lake.
- It would be great if those who do not live on the lake could have a location to moor a larger boat like a pontoon or similar sized vessel.
- Frantic drivers need to calm down.
- Tree ordinance is not strong enough.
- Noisy parties and mischievous partiers.
- General lack of consideration (especially with littering IN the lake).
- I would like to see an updated design to the beach and dock area (example: City Hall is done so well, I would like to see similar reconstruction to the other common areas).

### Is there anything else that you want us to know?

- Slow traffic on Bush Rd
- There is a growing problem with dangerous animals such as coyotes and foxes.



# Resident Survey

To the further engage the residents and ensure that if residents wanted to share their input but could not attend the Plan Open House, an online survey was used to gather input. Twenty-six residents responded to the survey, and a summary of the responses are on the next few pages.

## **Question 1: What are some of Berkeley Lake's community assets that the city can build upon in the future?**

Residents love:

- The lake
- Strong community
- Landscaping/trees/forests
- City Hall/strong government
- Proximity to Chattahoochee
- High quality of life

Residents want to build on:

- Increasing walkability/bike-ability
- Increasing accessibility of green spaces
- Building more community facilities/gathering places (athletic facilities,

coffee shops, park-like amenities)

**Question 2: What are some of Berkeley Lake's Challenges that the City needs to address to continue to be a great place?**

Residents want to have the following challenges addressed:

- Road safety (stop sign runners, speeding, poorly designed traffic circles)
- Growing crime (robberies, vandalism)
- Keeping cyclists off of the streets
- Lack of security along the lake
- Making the lake accessible to everyone
- Increasing fox and deer population

## **Question 3: If I could fix one thing in the City of Berkeley Lake it would be...**

Residents would fix:

- Growing traffic problems
- Public safety issues
- The quality of education at Berkeley Lake Elementary School

Residents want to see:

- Giving all City taxpayers access to the lake and its amenities
- A more family-friendly atmosphere
- More facilities for cyclists to utilize instead of the roads
- Improving the City's sewer system

**Question 4: If someone was thinking about moving to Berkeley Lake and you could tell them **ONLY ONE** thing to convince them to move here, what would it be?**

Residents would convince people to move to their city because:

- The lake and the City's beauty
- Quality of life and peaceful atmosphere
- The people and strong sense of community
- Convenient location





*In the Future the City of Berkeley Lake will:*

- Deliver Quality Services to Residents and Businesses in cooperation with neighboring governments
- Promote Recreational Opportunities, Guided by an Ethos of Environmental Stewardship
- Provide Opportunities for Residents to Age in Place
- Enhance Community Visibility through Targeted Investments in Branding, Events and Infrastructure

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# COMMUNITY GOALS

# Challenges for the Future

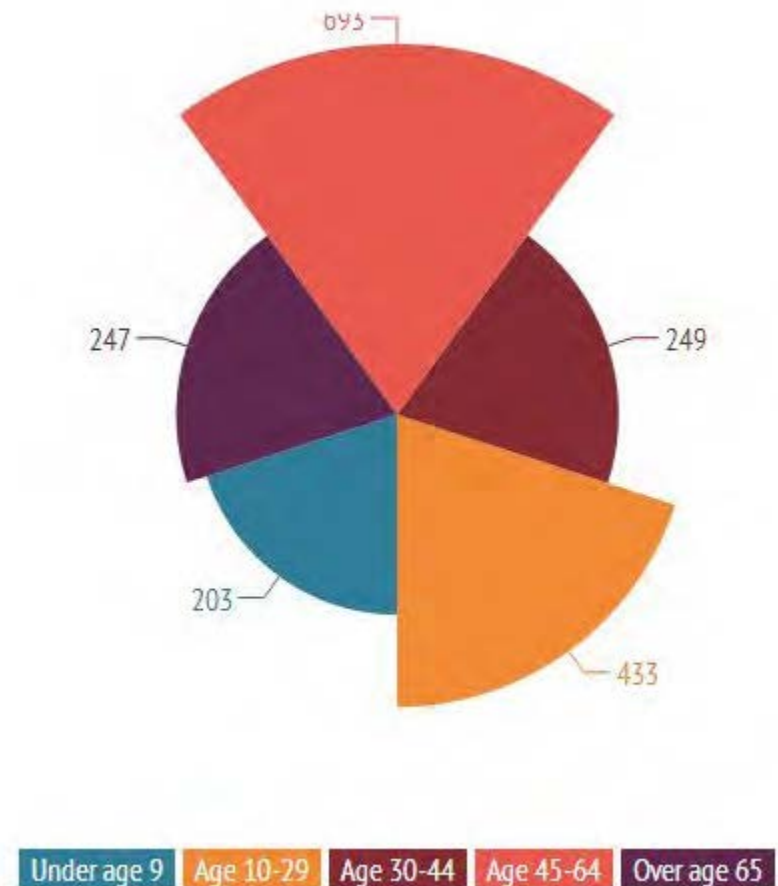
These challenges of the City of Berkeley Lake are items to be addressed and monitored on over time, to ensure the continued long term success of the City

## Redevelopment and Attracting Businesses

There are no large vacant parcels for redevelopment within the city, nor is there any imminent opportunity for annexation. Parcels fronting on or south of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard have been a strong contributor to the city's tax base since annexation, and many of these properties represent the city's best opportunities for redevelopment. The city should continue to invest in planning to maximize the potential of these areas and make them as attractive as possible for investment and reinvestment.

## Safety

Gwinnett County provides police services in Berkeley Lake. Berkeley Lake does provide a separate security patrol within the city, via a private contractor arrangement. According to crime reports for the first half of 2014, Larceny/Theft is the most prevalent crime, with only seven reports in the residential areas of Berkeley Lake. The properties along Peachtree Industrial corridor has more thefts than the rest of the city combined.







Top: The roundabout project recieved many comments about removing the roudabout.

## Aging Population

If current population trends in the Berkeley Lake continue, the city will see large increases in the over 55 population. This may produce impacts on city services and how residents meet their needs in the future. ARC's Lifelong Community Program encourages communities to plan solutions around:

1. Providing housing and transportation options,
2. Encouraging healthy lifestyles, and
3. Expanding access to services.

Berkeley Lake and, more broadly, Gwinnett County, will need to develop strategies in the future to accommodate an aging population.

## Transportation/Traffic

Stakeholders and attendees to the open house all agreed that traffic, speeding, and bicyclists are issues that the city needs to address. Residents and city leaders want to maintain safe roadways for the full range of users, while providing a quiet, peaceful environment for area homeowners. City leadership should continue to study cut-through traffic volumes from Bush Road, which connects the residential section of the city to Medlock Bridge Road and Peachtree Parkway to the west. The city has conducted a speed monitoring study and should continue to focus on speed control as a priority. Efforts along these lines will create safer conditions for not only drivers but also pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists. The city currently has a sidewalk plan and is evaluating how to move forward with the plan recommendations that have broad resident support and are the most cost-effective. Finally, the city should work cooperatively with neighboring jurisdictions on projects that impact Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, as that corridor helps connect Berkeley Lake to many neighboring areas and the wider region.

The city should also work cooperatively with their neighbors on projects that impact Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.

# Assets to Build Upon

These assets of the City of Berkeley Lake are items to be accentuated and improved on over time, to ensure the continued long term success of the city.

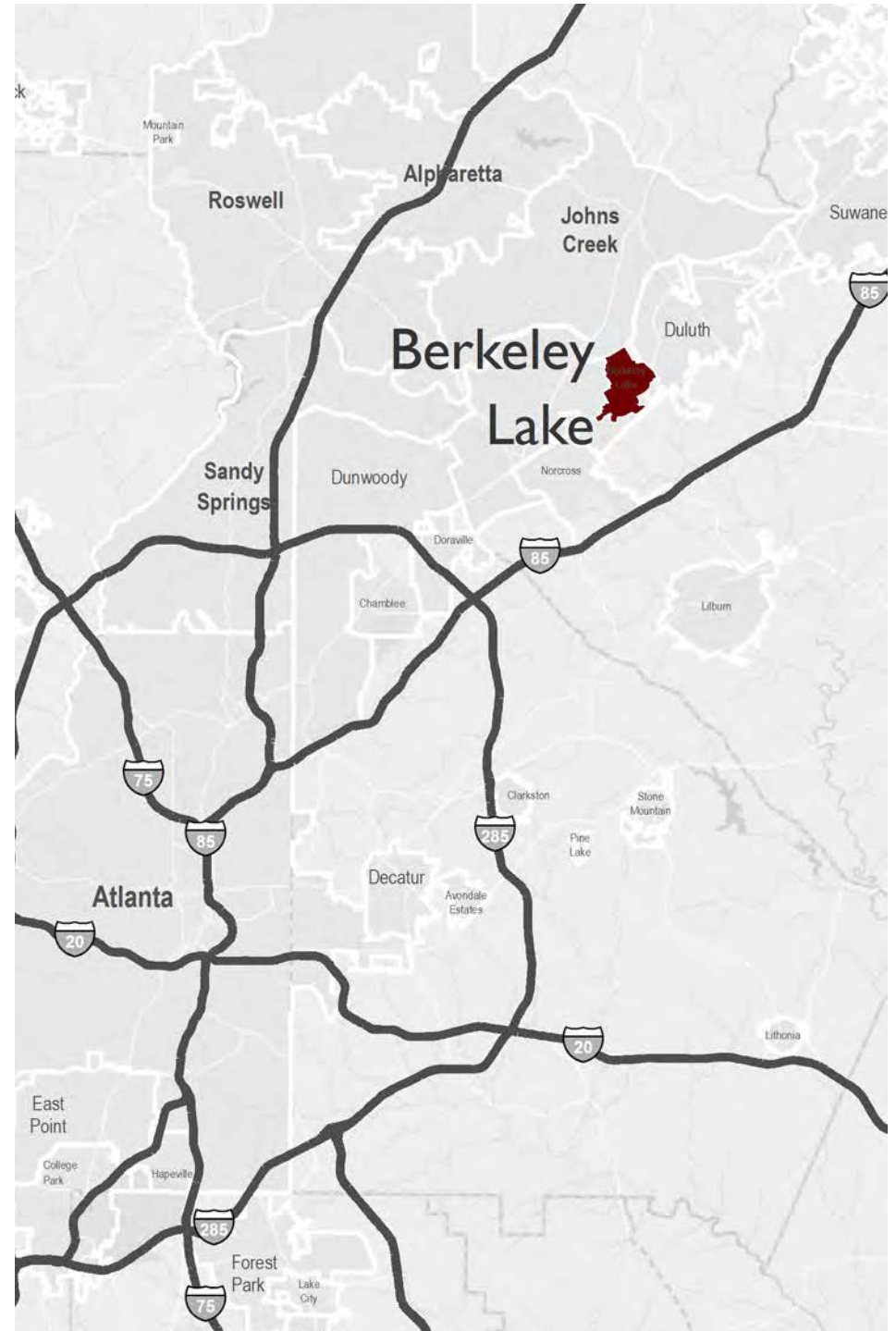
## Location and the Lake

The City of Berkeley Lake is located in northern Gwinnett County, in between the cities of Peachtree Corners and Duluth, and across the Chattahoochee River from the City of Johns Creek to the north. The city contains an 88-acre lake that is managed by the Berkeley Lake Homeowners Association.

Having a large lake available to residents is a unique benefit for the city. The lake is also an attraction for prospective new residents.

## Local Pride

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders and participants described the close-knit community that is Berkeley Lake. Feedback reflected an appreciation for the events that create interaction between community members. The city should place a strong emphasis on continued programs and events that bring the community together.





## Recreation

In addition to its namesake lake, Berkeley Lake has other areas of recreation including the Berkley Lake Greenspace along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Gwinnett Recreation Centers, and the Chattahoochee River. Participants in the planning process expressed a desire to have better connections to the Chattahoochee River and promote it more strongly within the city. Similarly, the city could better promote the greenspace off of Ridge Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. The property is under a conservation easement and cannot support extensive improvements, but it is usable by the public for certain activities that produce minimal impacts on the land.



Top: Business along Peachtree Industrial  
Left: The West Gwinnett Aquatic Center



## Peachtree Industrial Boulevard Corridor

Parcels along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard were recently annexed into the city. As the main commercial artery through the city this provides the city with a non-residential tax base. However it increases the need for code enforcement and capital investment. As these properties age redevelopment opportunities will become necessary. This is also an opportunity to develop a gateway for the City of Berkeley Lake to ensure that commuters understand that they are within the city.



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# IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

# Implementing the Plan

## Land Use Vision

The Future Development Map is a tool to implement the City of Berkeley Lake's goals and to address the challenges and improve the assets of the city as laid out in the comprehensive plan.

### Stable Residential

This category is for established residential areas, with a focus on protecting and promoting a suitable environment for family life, and discouraging uses which generate higher-than-normal residential area traffic, especially on minor streets.

*Uses:*

Predominantly detached, single-family dwellings and supportive civic, institutional, and recreational uses.

*Challenges for the Future*

How to implement Accessory Units while ensuring that they do not comprise existing structures and neighborhoods.

### Conservation

This category describes areas under a conservation easement. Improvements should be limited and preservation should be the primary goal.

*Uses:*

Light Recreation, and no development

*Challenges for the Future*

Promotion of the area as a vital part of the city while maintaining limited or no improvements.

### Recreation and Schools

Properties owned by Gwinnett County, or Gwinnett County School System. These areas attract visitors and residents throughout the day.

*Uses:*

Schools and Parks

*Challenges for the Future*

To ensure safe access to and from these areas and ensuring that capital investments occur overtime.

### Industrial Employment

This area corresponds with existing industrial properties and manufacturing uses. Within these areas, truck traffic is frequent, and individual institutional or light industrial establishments are not necessarily connected with one another. Truck traffic makes pedestrian compatibility difficult, but safe pedestrian passage is necessary. It is also desirable to improve the aesthetics of this area, which contribute to the city's economic base.

*Uses:*

Light Industrial, Small Office and Retail and possible movie related business.

*Challenges for the Future*

Maintaining and improving the aesthetic of the area and maintain occupancy of the area.

### Peachtree Industrial Corridor

This area denotes accessible centers of businesses, services, and complementary uses, which may include mixed-use developments, along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard that contribute extensively to the economic base of the city. Exclusively commercial shopping centers that already exist are at present stable and desirable, but may be redeveloped as mixed-use activity centers during the planning horizon. Such areas should be transformed into less automobile-reliant and more pedestrian-friendly places.

*Uses:*

Shopping centers, retail, restaurants offices and some light industrial uses.

*Challenges for the Future*

Maintaining and improving the aesthetic of the corridor and maintain occupancy of the area.

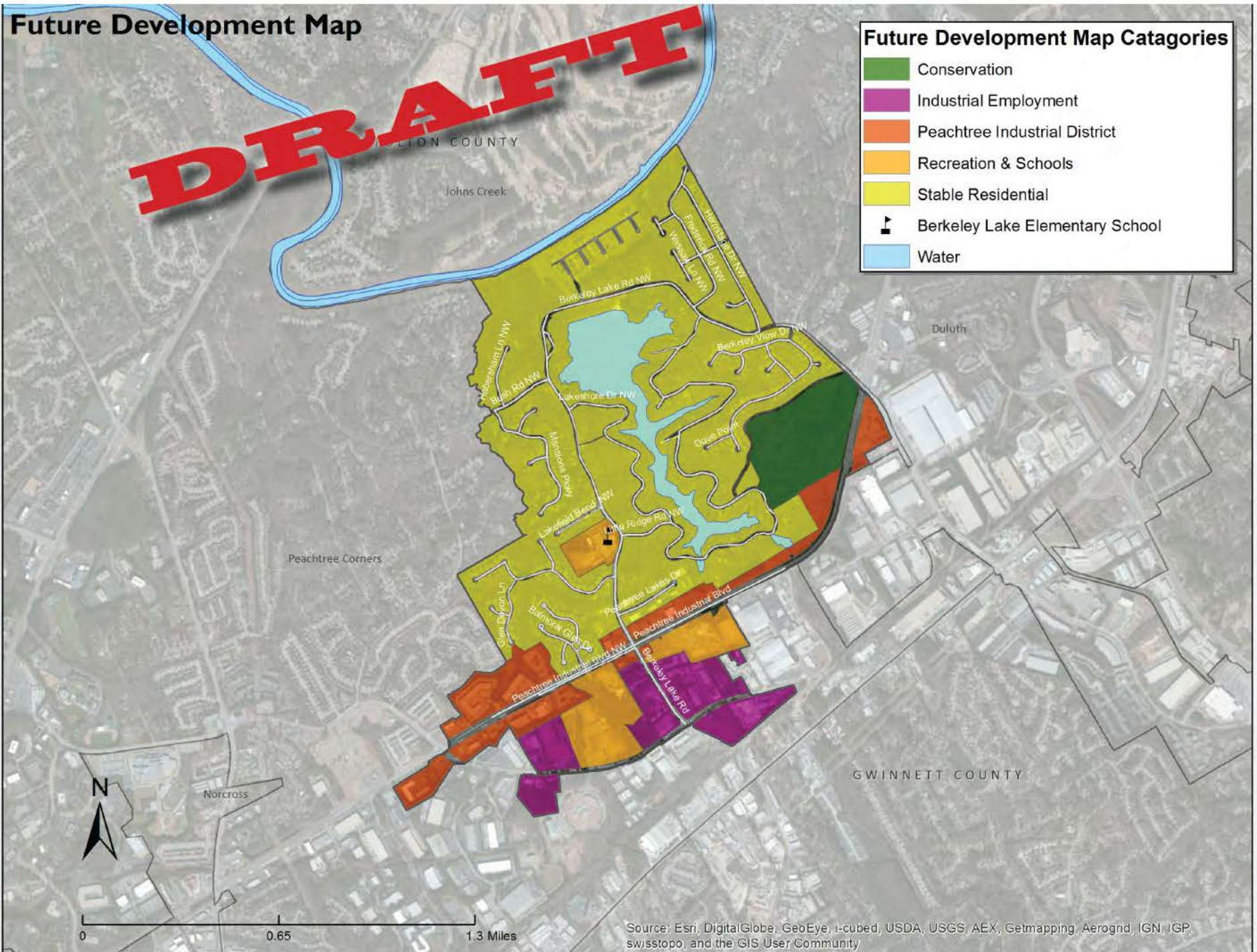


# Future Development Map

# DRAFT

## Future Development Map Categories

- Conservation
- Industrial Employment
- Peachtree Industrial District
- Recreation & Schools
- Stable Residential
- Berkeley Lake Elementary School
- Water



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

## Report of Accomplishments for the 2009-2013 Work Program

Project	Status	Notes
Consider studying options for the Zoning Code to allow for accessory housing and superior standards which ensure accessory housing does not compromise existing structures or neighborhoods	Completed	Will be reevaluated
Consider amending the City Tree ordinance to better protect existing trees and use the results of the Georgia Forestry Commission pilot project study as well as the Gwinnett County ordinance as reference	Completed	
Evaluate and consider annexation of residential subdivisions having an average value of approximately \$280,000 or more	Completed	
Evaluate and consider annexation of non-residential property for rezoning or redevelopment.	Completed	
Evaluate and consider annexation of properties important to environmental quality	Completed	
Implement the recommendations of the Street Smart traffic study	Completed	Will be reevaluated
Continue to enforce the septic system inspection regulations	Completed (On-going)	
Consider amending the zoning ordinance to require replacement of septic systems as a condition of issuing building permits	No Longer a Priority	Responsibility of Gwinnett Public Health
Investigate the contract work of private security or neighboring jurisdictions for police protection.	Completed	Will be reevaluated

## Community Work Program for 2015-2020

Project	2015	2016	2017	2018	Responsibility	Funding and Cost
Consider studying options for the Zoning Code to allow for accessory housing existing structures or neighborhoods	X	X			City Staff	Staff Time
Consider amending the City Tree ordinance	X				City Staff	Staff Time
Develop programs for newly annexed businesses areas		X	X	X	City Staff	Staff Time
Explore Options for City Hall vacant Space	X	X	X		Staff	Staff Time
Implement the recommendations of the Street Smart traffic study and 2014 Pedestrian Study	X	X	X	X	City Staff	To be determined based upon projects and needs- City Funds
Continue to enforce the septic system inspection regulations					Completed (On-going)	
Explore Options for Branding and Marketing Oppertunities	X	X			City Staff	Staff Time
Expand Sewer in Peachtree Industrial Areas	X				Gwinnett County	Gwinnett County Water Resources
Expand Contract Security Work Hours to nights and weekends for the business areas	X	X	X	X	Staff	To be determined based upon hours- City Funds



