

**DATE:** January 8, 2024

**TO:** Mayor Nancy Harris, City of Duluth  
**ATTN TO:** Forrest Huffman, Special Projects Manager, City of Duluth  
**FROM:** Mike Alexander, COO, Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has received the following proposal and is initiating a regional review to seek comments from potentially impacted jurisdictions and agencies. The ARC requests your comments related to the proposal not addressed by the Commission's regional plans and policies.

**Name of Proposal:** 2023 City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan Update

**Description:** A regional review of the draft 2023 City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Submitting Local Government:** City of Duluth

**Action Under Consideration:** Approval

**Date Opened:** January 8, 2024

**Deadline for Comments:** January 29, 2024

**THE FOLLOWING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES ARE RECEIVING NOTICE OF THIS REVIEW:**

ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY  
CITY OF NORCROSS  
CITY OF LAWRENCEVILLE  
GWINNETT COUNTY  
GWINNETT PLACE CID

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE  
GEORGIA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
CITY OF JOHNS CREEK  
CITY OF LILBURN  
CITY OF BERKELEY LAKE  
FORSYTH COUNTY

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
CITY OF PEACHTREE CORNERS  
CITY OF SUGAR HILL  
CITY OF SUWANEE  
SUGARLOAF CID

**Review information is attached.**

Please submit comments to [dshockey@atlantaregional.org](mailto:dshockey@atlantaregional.org) For questions, please contact ARC Plan Review Manager Donald Shockey at [dshockey@atlantaregional.org](mailto:dshockey@atlantaregional.org) or 470-378-1531. If no comments are received by **Monday January 29, 2024**, ARC will assume your agency has no input on the subject plan. The ARC review website is located at <https://atlantaregional.org/community-development/comprehensive-planning/plan-reviews/>



City of Duluth  
Department of Community Development &  
Engineering

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12/11/2023

Atlanta Regional Commission  
229 Peachtree Street, NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Duluth 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 Forrest Huffman, Special Projects Manager at [fjhuffman@duluthga.net](mailto:fjhuffman@duluthga.net).

Sincerely,

Nancy Harris, Mayor  
City of Duluth

Enclosures





FORWARDuluth

2045 Comprehensive Plan







# Acknowledgments

## **City Council**

Greg Whitlock, Mayor  
Nancy Harris, Mayor (2008-2024)  
Charles Jamin Harkness, Post 1  
Marline Thomas, Post 2  
Kenneth Lamar Doss, Post 3  
Manfred Graeder, Post 4  
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Forrest Huffman, Special Projects Manager





# Contributors to the 2019 Comprehensive Plan Update

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# Table of Contents



## Shaping Our Future City

A Comprehensive Plan is forward looking, carefully crafting not only what the community could be, but *should* be. We examine our past in order see more clearly our way forward.



## Duluth in Context

While Duluth is defined by the experiences of each individual member of the community, statistics, facts, and figures help us get a better picture of who lives and works here and how the City functions. Summary graphs and diagrams paint a contextualized picture of Duluth.



## Our City Today

Like all metropolitan areas, Duluth is composed of a complex web of systems. The built environment, the daily movement of people, and our natural world all work together to forge our City. A description of these systems and characteristics create a snapshot of where we are as a city today.



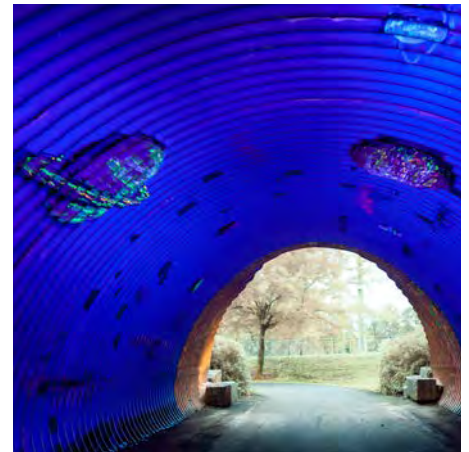
### Formulating Our Strategy

This is not just a plan that was composed behind closed doors by indifferent career professionals. This is a living, breathing plan made by the community *for the community*. We engaged our city residents, business owners, and those passing through in an interactive public process to create our future strategy.



### Vision & Aspirations

Who do we want our city to be? What do we want to be known for? While every section of the Plan is central to implementing our vision and goals, the Character Areas and Future Land Use Maps are the most influential in terms of daily decision-making and land use changes.



### From Strategy to Implementation

This is how we will achieve our overall vision and goals for Duluth. Without a comprehensive, practical, and systematic step-by-step Short Term Work Program, our vision and goals will not become reality. A plan is just a plan until it is translated into policy and implementation measures.



# ONE Shaping Our Future City

## We are moving forward.

This is an exciting time for the City of Duluth. We're a highly desirable place to live, work and play and at the same time, we look forward to a future of continued growth and change.

A Comprehensive Plan is an official statement of the City's vision for its future. It expresses the community's aspirations and goals for the future, while articulating a corresponding set of policies and recommendations to guide future decisions regarding land use, development and capital improvements. Cities are complex places; city staff and officials make decisions about the future every day in response to new opportunities or unexpected problems. A Comprehensive Plan like this one, is one tool for helping to guide these decisions, with three distinctive features:

- It is long-range, looking ahead 5, 10, and 25 years.
- It is comprehensive, looking across many different facets of what a city does.
- It is deliberative, looking within to understand the needs and desires of the city.

Duluth is a dynamic and growing city that has experienced substantial changes since the City's last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2019. Moreover, as required by Georgia state planning rules, local governments must update their Comprehensive Plans every five years. Updating the Comprehensive Plan presents an opportunity to account for these changes and to respond to continued development pressures. It is also an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on Duluth's past journey, while confirming and refining our aspirations for moving Duluth **Forward**.

**ForwardDuluth** affirms the big picture vision, defines goals and lays out a task list for city leaders, staff, and citizens to address issues to position the City of Duluth as a leader within metro Atlanta. This document serves as a guide for elected and public officials by establishing policies, priorities, and provides the framework for evaluating development proposals. It expresses the City's vision for where, how, and what development should occur. The goals and policies contained in this document inform and guide land use decisions, helping to assure citizens and developers that these decisions are informed, predictable and not arbitrary.

Since 1989, Comprehensive Plans have been used in Georgia to prepare communities for growth and economic development. Like a private corporation, which plans strategically for both the short and long term, cities and counties must also plan for the future so that decisions can be based on



RIGHT: Community members gather on the Town Green during Duluth Arts Week.







sound information, principles and agreed upon goals. This approach, required by Georgia Planning Act, helps the City of Duluth be future minded and avoid making decisions based upon short-term changeable concerns.

Most of the work of shaping the City's future will be done by the residents, businesses, and nonprofits. The City of Duluth has a key role to play through these implementation tools:

- Regulations
- Capital Spending
- Programs and Staffing

The success of the goals of this Plan depends on being able to tap into the many voices of the city and weave their ideas, viewpoints, and thoughts into a common vision. Outreach and engagement are critical to reach a broad consensus of the diverse people who live and work in the city. Meeting the goal of an inclusive process means creating multiple opportunities to get involved. The planning team developed several communication tools and forums to ensure meaningful community involvement that would form the backbone of the plan.

A Project Management Team was convened to oversee the process and act as an instrument to guide the development of the plan. Project Team Members were made up of city staff and the Atlanta Regional Commission. During every subsequent update, a Steering Committee was formed with elected officials, community representatives, and economic development professionals that provided feedback and served as ambassadors of the plan. Additionally, an open house, survey, and several public meetings were held to engage community members in a variety of ways throughout the planning process.

The plan focuses on elements to improve the City of Duluth with targeted policies and programs to enhance the assets and address the issues within the City. The plan is divided up into six interrelated sections and an appendix:

- Chapter 1: Shaping Our Future City *(introduction)*
- Chapter 2: Duluth in Context *(facts & figures)*
- Chapter 3: Our City Today *(city characteristics)*
- Chapter 4: Formulating Our Strategy *(community engagement)*
- Chapter 5: Vision & Goals *(character areas & future land use)*
- Chapter 6: From Strategy to Implementation *(policies & short term work program)*
- Appendix *(ARC & DCA requirements & documentation)*

The City of Duluth is a diverse and forward-looking city engaged in shaping its own future. Residents, staff and businesses are working to capitalize on the qualities and values that have made it a successful city. To maintain this success and build upon it, the City of Duluth will:

- Create great public spaces and thoroughfares with well-balanced, fiscally sound infrastructure investments
- Work to ensure existing business and retail vitality while expanding the economy
- Preserve the city's hometown atmosphere while growing the economy and population

# VISION STATEMENTS

The City of Duluth has identified a series of vision statements to clearly and concisely convey the direction of the City. The vision statements, listed below, help to define the City's purpose and values.

## Attractive Destination

Foster a uniquely creative, fun and inviting destination for residents, visitors and businesses.

## Quality Community

Embrace our diversity to enhance and create a welcoming, safe, healthy and sustainable community.

## World Class Government

Provide exceptional service through innovative thinking, balanced growth and ethical effective processes.

## Sustainable Economic Environment

Create a vibrant, inviting and regionally recognized community with policies and procedures that fosters economic growth and investment.



# Our Story So Far

In the early eighteenth century, the Duluth area was a part of the Cherokee Indian territory and was an important crossroads used by Native Americans. In 1818, Gwinnett County was created by an act of the General Assembly of Georgia, and the area was opened to settlers.

In 1821, Evan Howell developed the town of Howell Crossing that later evolved into a major artery for the railroad. At the time that Evan Howell came to the area, there was only one road opened in the section. This was Peachtree Road, an offshoot of a Native American trail that ran along the ridge parallel to the Chattahoochee River. The road was surveyed and constructed during the War of 1812 and connected Fort Daniel with the fort at Standing Peachtree, 30 miles downriver.

Howell realized that more roads were needed in order for the area to develop, so he obtained permission in February 1833 to construct a road from the Chattahoochee River across his land to intersect Peachtree Road. This intersection became known as Howell's Cross Roads and was known by this name for forty years.

Howell ran his own plantation and cotton gin by ferry, and he became the town's first merchant. There are no known descendants with the Howell name currently in Duluth; however, he was the great-grandfather of the late Jack and Calvin Parsons and other descendants who became publishers of the Atlanta Constitution newspaper.

With the visionary acumen of his grandson, Evan P. Howell, changes were on the horizon in the 1870s. The opportunity to build and link a multi-state railway system running north to south was about to unfold. Representative J. Proctor Knott delivered a speech to the United States House of Representatives entitled, "The Glory of Duluth." The pitch of his presentation weighed heavily with Congress, and consequently a bill to finance the building of the railroad from Howell Crossing to the better-known Duluth, Minnesota was enacted. Grateful for the opportunity to build on a vision, Howell deemed it appropriate to rename the town of Howell Crossing "Duluth."

The railroad was an enormous boost to the Duluth economy. A school house was built in 1871 on the site of what is now Coleman Middle School. The first Methodist church was organized in 1871, and the first Baptist congregation formed in 1886. Both churches continue today at new locations along Duluth Highway. The Bank of Duluth was chartered in 1904, followed by the Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1911. In 1922, Duluth elected Georgia's first female mayor, Alice Harrell Strickland.





For much of the 20th century, when Gwinnett County was still rural, Duluth was known in the area as being one of the few small towns with its own hospital, the Joan Glancy Memorial Hospital. Consequently, many older residents of the area who call other towns home were actually born in Duluth. The Joan Glancy Memorial Hospital is now the Glancy Rehabilitation Center and is part of Northside Hospital Duluth.



# Where We Are Now

From a rural small town to a bustling city, Duluth's dedication to creating a place that truly captures the spirit of good living has launched our community to the top of many regional and state award short-lists. Though we are not defined by our awards and accolades, residents are proud to call our award-winning town their home. Below is a list of some of our awards from the past five years.

## 2019-2024

- The Rogers Bridge Reconstruction won the **2022 ASCE Georgia Section Civil Engineering Project of Merit Award**.
- #2 in **Best Downtown Outside the Perimeter** by Urbanize Atlanta
- **3CMA Savvy Award** for the Discover Downtown Duluth Campaign
- #9th **Safest City in Georgia** by the National Council of Home Safety and Security
- Named one of **America's Best Small Cities** by WalletHub
- #23 **Most Diverse Suburb in America** by Niche
- Named in the **Top 10 Atlanta Neighborhoods** by Newcomer Magazine

## 2014-2019

- Received the **Plan First** designation through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.
- #2 in the **Best Atlanta Suburbs** by the Atlanta Journal Constitution
- **Innovation Award** from Partnership Gwinnett for Uber Ride Promotion
- **Best New Event** GOLD Award for Smores' N' Snores
- Urban Land Institute 2017 **Development of Excellence Award** for Parsons Alley
- Ranked in the **TOP 25 Places to Visit in Georgia** by Vacation Idea Magazine
- **Congress for the New Urbanism Charter Award** for the Parsons Alley Development
- #48 in the 500 **Best Cities for Summer Travel with Families** by LendEDU
- Metro Atlanta Redevelopment Summit 2016 **Neighborhood Redevelopment Award** for Parsons Alley
- #4 in the 10 **Best Atlanta Suburbs for Millennials** by Niche
- Ranked in the Top 10 **Most Beautiful Towns in Georgia** by Culture Trip
- #4 in the 10 **Best Atlanta Suburbs** by Movoto
- #12 in the **Best Places to Buy a Home in the Metro Atlanta Suburbs** by Niche
- Artworks Gwinnett Fusion **Community Impact Award for Community Partnership** - Duluth Matters, City of Duluth and Duluth Fine Arts League
- **Community Impact Award for Community Arts Program** – Barefoot in the Park
- **Community Impact Award for Performing Arts Organization** – Red Clay Music Foundry
- **Best Marketing Campaign** Bronze Award for Public Art Project: Ascension
- #7 in the **Safest Cities in Georgia** ranking by Value Penguin









# TWO

## Duluth in Context

**In order to better plan for the future, we need to understand where we are now.**

Who lives in Duluth? What is their income? How old are our residents? Examining and understanding these demographic and socioeconomic trends can help identify possible opportunities and needs. For example, older communities need more medical services while younger cities require more educational services. Similarly, understanding income levels in the city can better identify which areas of the city need certain services more than others. The following pages of graphs and tables provide a snapshot of where Duluth is today with some comparisons and context to better explain the data.

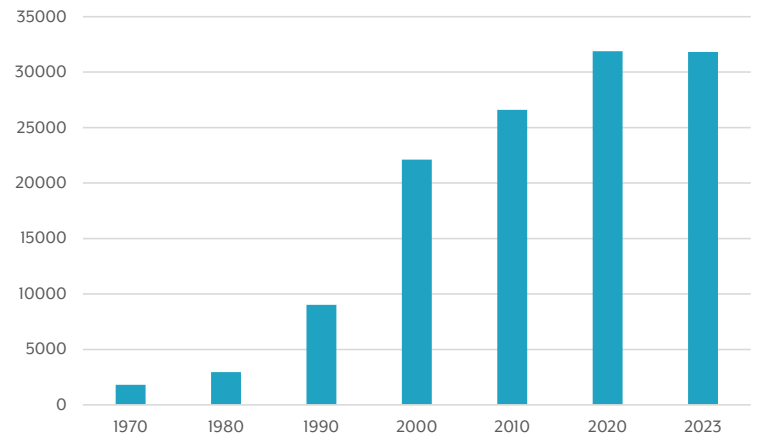
*RIGHT: Iron figure of a girl sings joyful as part of the Dream Keepers art installation on the Town Green.*





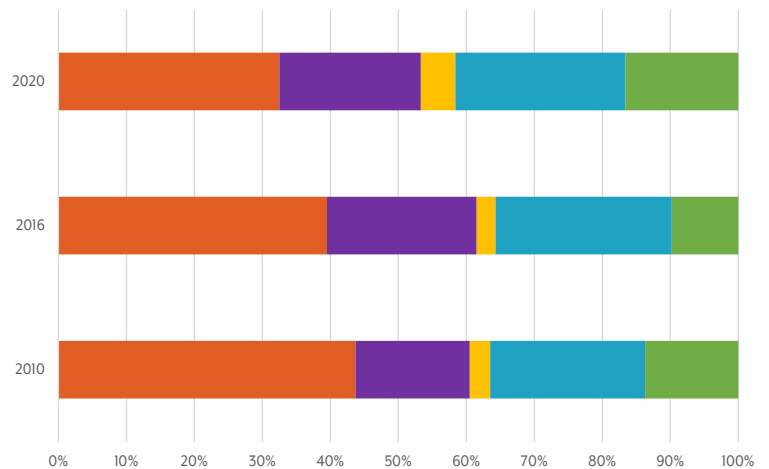
Similar to the metro-Atlanta suburbs as a whole, Duluth grew at a slow and steady rate through the 1970's. The City began to experience rapid population growth during the late 1990's into the mid-2000's. This rapid expanse of the suburbs into Gwinnett County is not unique to the region; many regions all across the nation have experienced this population dispersion from the inner city to the 'burbs at some point in their history. It is argued that "white flight" contributed to our region's suburbanization after the 1996 Atlanta Olympic games and an increase of diverse immigration into Atlanta and the center residential rings. ARC projects that growth in the region and Gwinnett County will continue, with Gwinnett having over 1.3 million residents in 2040, the largest population in Georgia.

Population Growth



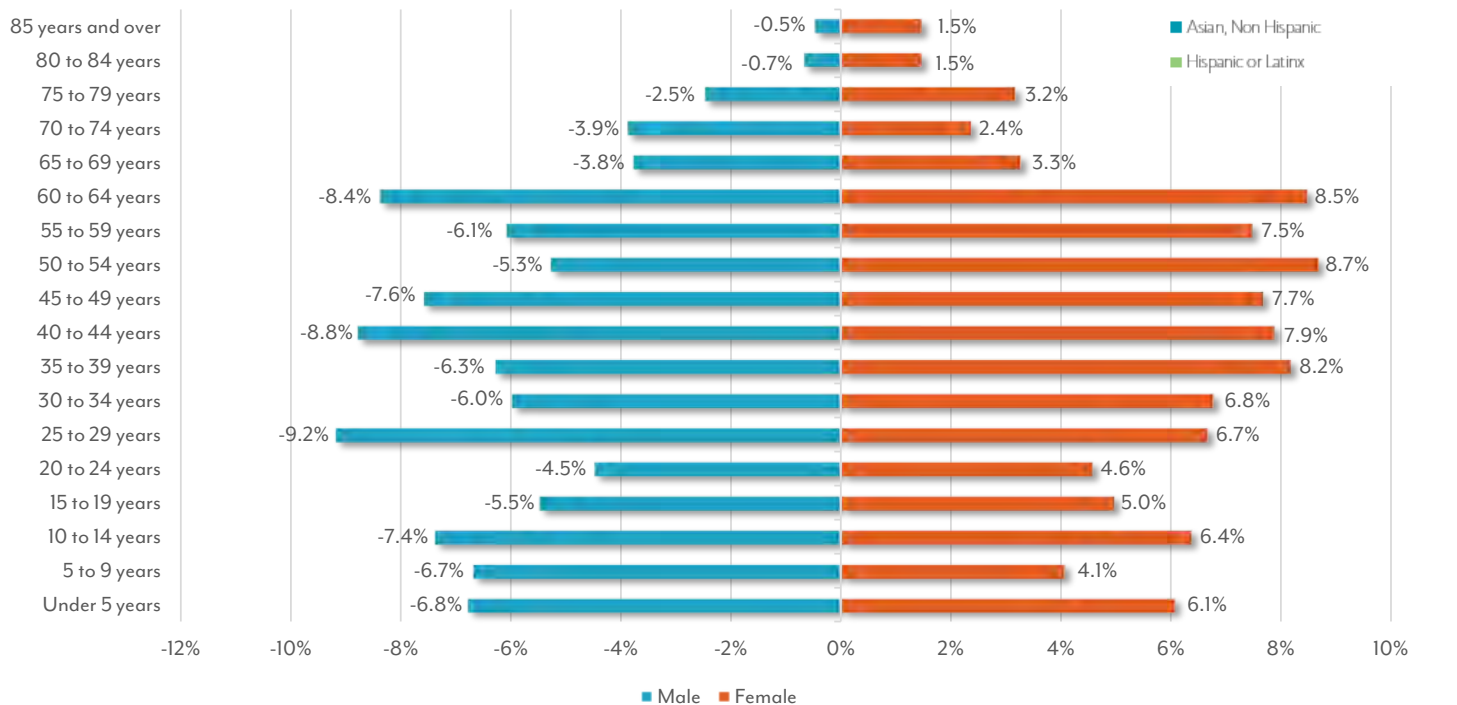
Over the last decade, Duluth has continued to become more and more ethnically diverse. In fact, Duluth is a minority-majority with over 60% of the City's residents being of non-Caucasian descent. Duluth's percentage of Asian population is twice that of Gwinnett County. Conversely, the City's white, Hispanic and African American population percentages are lower than Gwinnett County (2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimate).

Racial Distribution Change



The median age in Duluth (40) is older than metro Atlanta (34.3). However, when compared to nearby cities such as Alpharetta and Berkeley Lake, Duluth is younger. This may be attributed to Duluth being more affordable to younger people and families than these other neighboring cities.

Duluth Population



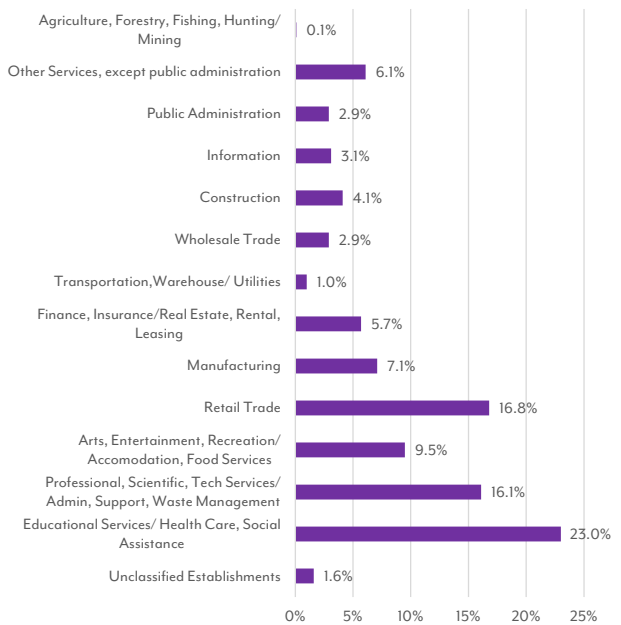


## Industries in Duluth

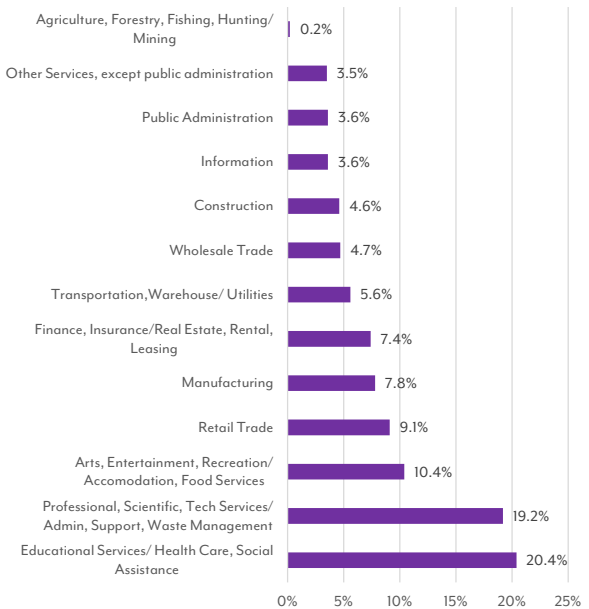
Duluth is home to a vast array of businesses and places of employment. The diversified employment sectors help to sustain and maintain high employment numbers. The majority of the approximately 13,000 people who travel to Duluth for work are in the combined sectors of Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance. Having a major hospital and multiple schools in city limits is sure to be a factor in these numbers. With that being said, the most employees in a single sector travel here to work in the Retail Trade. This is common among most cities as it takes many employees to run retail businesses.

Residents of Duluth work in a multitude of employment sectors with the most common being the combined sectors for Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance. A close second is the combined sectors of Professional, Scientific, Technical Services, Administration and Support, and Waste Management Services. There are quite a few of these positions in the River Green professional park, which is home to many distribution and tech companies, so there is a good chance that a lot of the residents who work in the city are employed here.

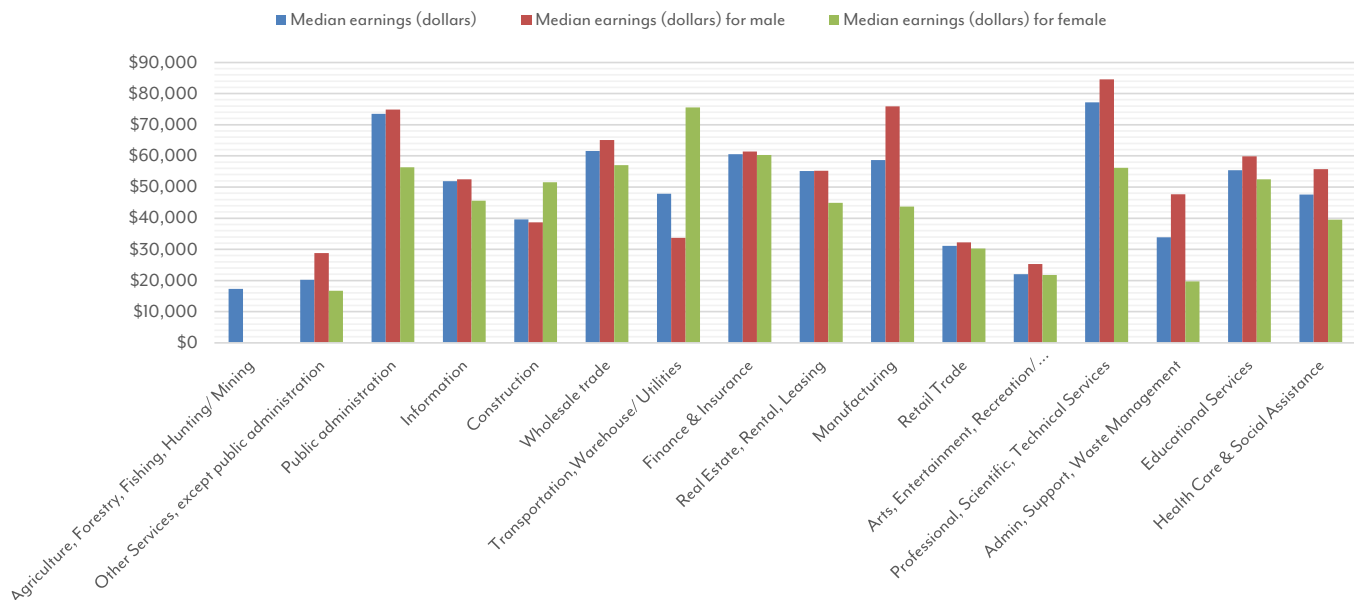
Overall, the industry with the highest median earnings for Duluth residents is Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. Public Administration is the second highest. Third is Wholesale Trade. The industry with the highest earnings for female residents is Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities, which also has the largest gap in pay between male and female residents in the city. The industry with the highest earnings for male residents is Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.



## Employment of Duluth Residents

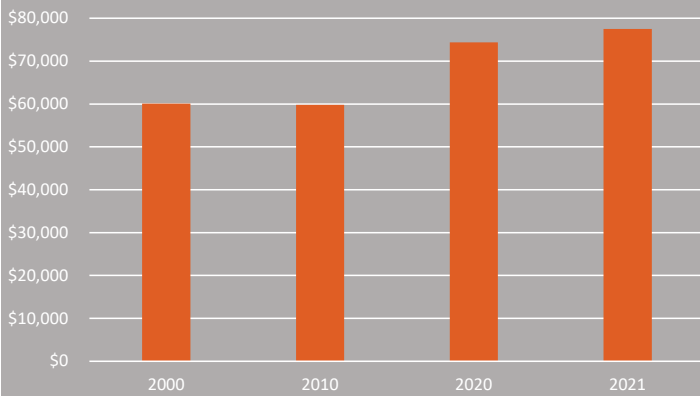


## Median Earnings By Industry

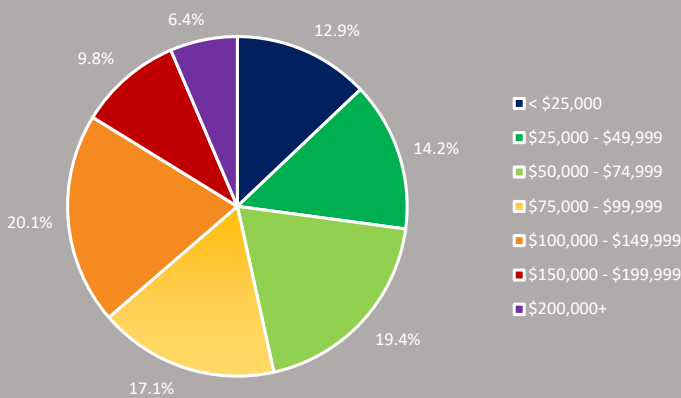


## DULUTH IN CONTEXT

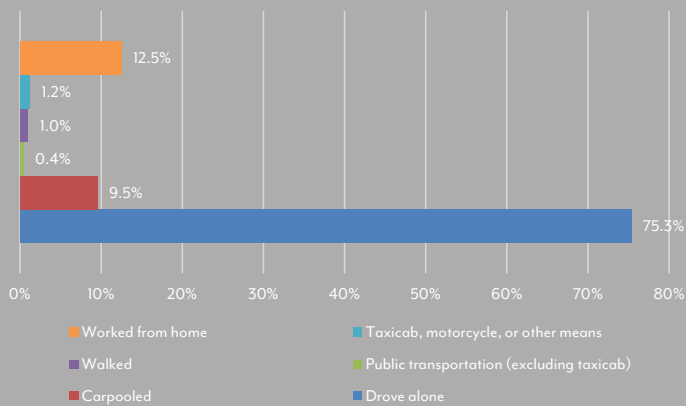
### Median Household Income



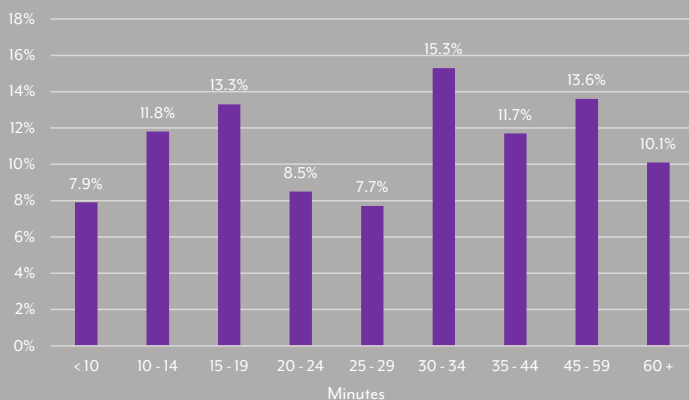
### Household Income: 2021



### Commuting Characteristics



### Commute Time



The median household income in Duluth is over \$77,000 annually and is likely to continue to increase. Duluth's median income is higher than Gwinnett County which has a median income of \$74,622, according to the US Census. While median household income remained consistent in Duluth from 2000 to 2010, it has increased drastically by 29% since 2010.

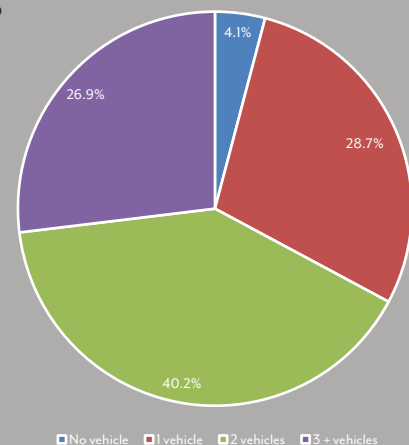
As with any city, incomes in Duluth range widely. When grouped by household incomes, the largest group in Duluth earns between \$100,000-\$149,999. 36.5% of all households in Duluth earn between \$50,000-\$99,999. The smallest group of households, totaling 6.4%, earn over \$200,000 annually.

Approximately 12,700 Duluth residents commute out of Duluth for work daily, while roughly 13,000 non-residents travel into Duluth. This results in a turnover of over 25,000 commuters a day. That leaves roughly 4,000 residents who both live and work in Duluth city limits. Almost 2,100 of those work from home and are considered heavily in our commuting characteristics.

Most Duluth residents drive alone to work, but some take advantage of carpooling. This could be the cause of some of the longer commute times. The average commute to work for Duluth residents was 30.6 minutes. This would align with residents traveling into the perimeter of Atlanta for work.

The average number of cars owned per household in the city was 2 at over 40%. A surprising number of households have 3 or more vehicles in Duluth at over 26%.

### Car Ownership







# THREE Our City Today

## **What makes a city a city?**

All cities must provide some essential services like road maintenance, water and sewer service. These activities, while somewhat uninteresting to the casual resident, are essential to providing a certain quality of life. This chapter looks into some of these aspects of what makes a city a city. How do we move around now and how can that be improved in the future? How do we get clean water and how do we remove waste and stormwater in a safe way?

However, this chapter also delves into what makes a city a place that you're proud to call home. This section includes items that are not necessarily government services like housing and employment but still contribute to making Duluth a unique place within the larger metro Atlanta region. This chapter explores what brings people to Duluth, what kind of medical care our residents have available to them, and what natural amenities are located within a short walk. It is these types of attributes that people mention when asked about their hometown.





# Housing

Housing has become an increasingly vital planning element for Duluth's continued success. This section of **ForwarDuluth** describes the City's historic housing growth, current housing characteristics, discusses current trends and identifies future housing needs and opportunities.

## Understanding Our Past

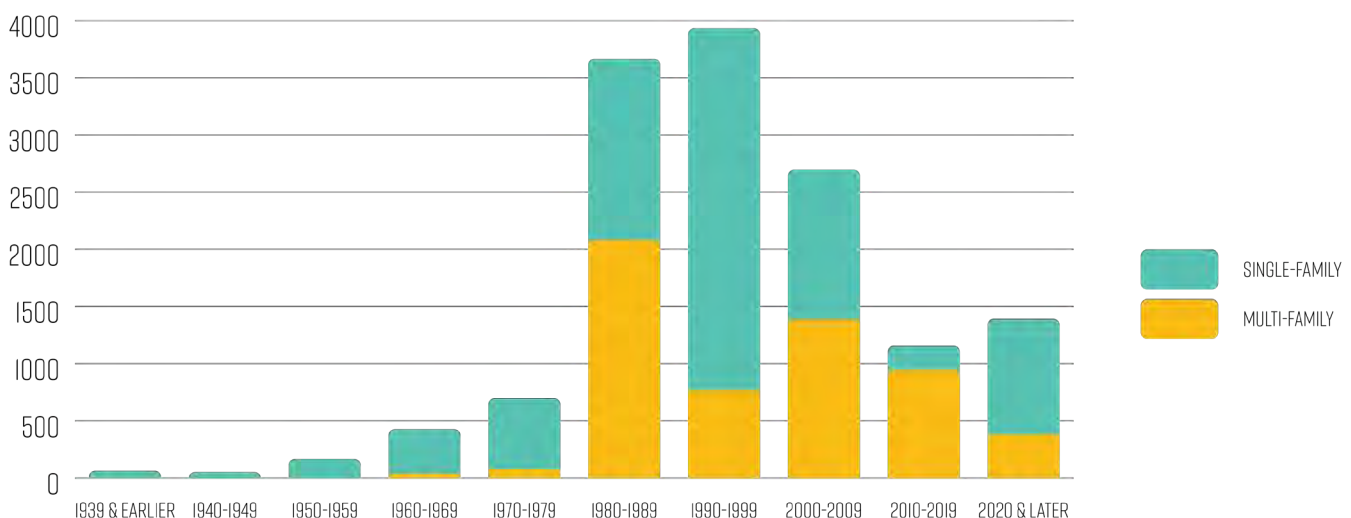
To identify the future housing needs of Duluth, it's important to understand the City's housing history.

Duluth grew at a slow and steady rate through the 1970's. The City experienced its first housing boom during the 1980's. This growth can largely be attributed to the introduction of medium density garden style apartments along the newly constructed Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. In fact, of the 3,667 housing units built in the 1980's, 2,151 units were apartments. Prior to the 1980's, the land that now contains Peachtree Industrial Boulevard was farmland. When Peachtree Industrial Boulevard was constructed through Duluth in the 80's, developers took advantage of the opportunity to entitle and construct large apartments on the affordable farmland.

Duluth experienced the largest growth of new housing units in the 1990's. Nearly 4,000 new housing units were constructed during this decade. This can be largely attributed to the desire of families in the metro-Atlanta area to move to the northern suburbs for affordable new housing opportunities, convenience to major roadways and Gwinnett County Schools. There is also a direct correlation between the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games and the international immigrant population increase in Gwinnett County. As a result of these factors, the housing demand in Duluth provided market support for developers to construct several conventional suburban neighborhoods

*BELOW: The graph identifies the number of new housing units built within the City of Duluth separated by each decade.*

NUMBER OF NEW HOUSING UNITS BY DECADE





characterized by houses setback from streets, transportation dependent on automobile access, front entry garages that are typically visible in the street scene and isolated neighborhoods designed with cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets.

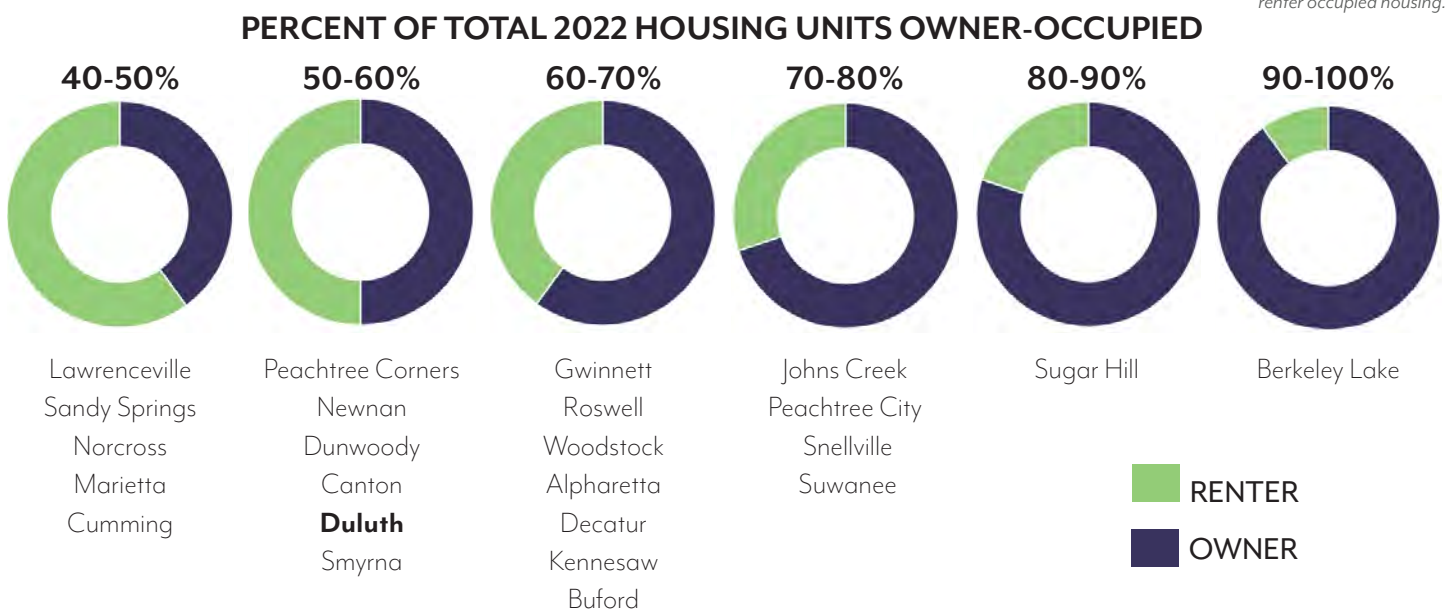
Although housing growth remained strong in the early 2000's, new residential construction came to a halt in 2007. Duluth experienced practically no new housing growth during the recession of 2007 – 2012. During this period, multiple residential projects were abandoned by developers, leaving the City of Duluth to pick up the pieces where developers had started projects, gone bankrupt and walked away. Although this was a difficult time for the City, it gave the staff and Council an opportunity to reassess the housing needs and focus on long-term strategies to develop, redevelop and maintain housing units in the city. By 2014, the housing market started to improve. Duluth has since been able to attract some of the most reputable builders in the industry to focus on smart housing growth within the city.

### Housing Characteristics

The City of Duluth has a mixture of owner and renter occupied housing, including single family detached homes, attached townhomes, condominiums and apartments. Single-family detached housing makes up the single largest housing type and accounts for 42% of Duluth total housing units. For rent apartments combine to account for 37% of total housing units in the City. Townhomes account for 16% of the total housing units and condos account for 1% of the total housing units.

There is an identifiable disparity between the number of housing units that were constructed to be for rent apartments and the actual number of renter occupied housing units in the city. The city has a total of 5,280 apartment units. However, based on the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Census we find that Duluth has 5,657 renter occupied units. The data indicates that approximately 377 units in the city's single-family neighborhoods are renter occupied. Residents of Duluth have expressed many concerns about rental homes in neighborhoods. Generally, the concerns expressed have been related to overcrowding, on-street parking, lack of property maintenance and lack of reinvestment in rental homes.

BELOW: The diagram shows where Duluth stands in the region on owner-occupied vs renter occupied housing.



Over 76% of all housing units in the city have 3 or fewer bedrooms. Only 5% of housing units in the city contain 5 or more bedrooms. This limits the opportunity for families to stay in Duluth as they grow and their economic conditions may allow for them to purchase a larger home. As land availability continues to decrease, the City will need to take special planning consideration on key parcels identified on the Future Land Use Map within certain Character Areas to increase the number of homes containing 5 or more bedrooms.

### Executive Housing

Throughout the update process of this Plan, the community expressed a desire for more executive housing to be built in the City of Duluth. The Steering Committee identified two forms: 1) Urban Executive and 2) Estate Executive.

The City has done well over the last few years to encourage executive level urban housing in Downtown Duluth in the form of luxury townhomes and well appointed smaller lot single-family detached home. These urban executive neighborhoods allow for little, if any, setback from streets by having a compact urban design containing a mixture of compatible uses and housing types. They contain a network of connected streets with sidewalks and street trees to facilitate convenient and safe movement throughout neighborhoods. Transportation within the development is focused on the pedestrian over the automobile and the integration of parks and public spaces into the development to create landmarks and a strong sense of place.

Duluth has a very limited supply of Estate Executive housing. Estate Executive housing is very desirable to the City to attract and retain growing families and professionals well established in their career who may desire to live in this type of housing. Not to be confused with a mansion, this housing type is characterized by larger lots (typically 100'-130' lot width), three car garages (side or rear entry is desirable), home office, basement/theater/entertainment space, neighborhood amenities and more character/uniqueness in custom architecture than today's typically "cookie cutter" subdivision. Participants in this year's Comprehensive Plan update identified opportunities for this type of executive housing to be along the River in the Chattahoochee Residential District and near the Medical District.

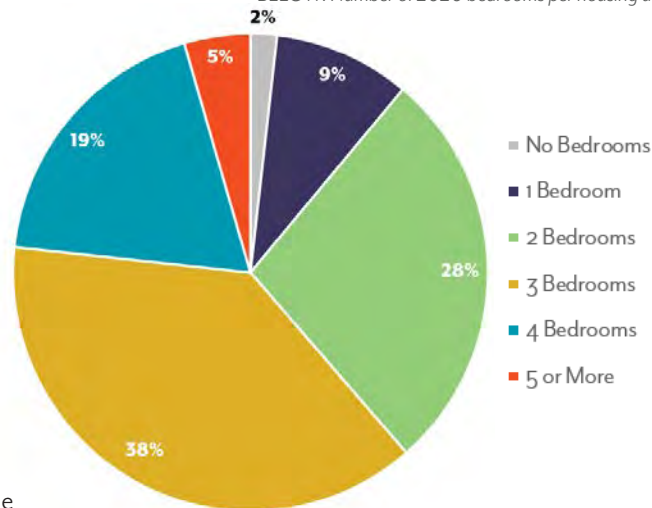
### Downtown

Increased density in Downtown has been identified as desirable to support the growing entertainment district Duluth has created. According to the Congress of New Urbanism, a community should have 2,000 or more housing units within walking distance to support a block of community-oriented Main Street retail. This equates to about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile walk from downtown, which is what the Atlanta Regional Commission identifies as walkable in our region. Due to the lack of available land, this will likely occur through redevelopment of older properties at higher densities.

### Housing Affordability

Housing affordability has been a topic of discussion in Duluth throughout the Comprehensive Plan update. Generally, a home in Duluth is more affordable than many comparable cities in metro-Atlanta.

BELOW: Number of 2020 bedrooms per housing unit.





## 2023 AREA MEDIAN HOME VALUES



ABOVE: The diagram compares the median value of houses throughout metro-Atlanta.

The City of Duluth has a desire to further study housing options and opportunities within our city limits to provide adequate housing for families of all income levels. A distinction should be recognized between executive housing, workforce housing, affordable housing, low-income housing, mixed-income housing and other housing terms that help to create an inclusive city. The Short Term Work Program identifies the need for the City to complete a comprehensive housing study in the near future to help move this topic forward.

Rental options must also be considered in a housing affordability conversation. According to the ARC, metro-Atlanta rental costs have risen at a much faster rate than wages. Since 2010, wages have increased by 10% but rents have increased by 48%. The two newest apartments – District at Duluth and SODO have some of the highest rents in Gwinnett County.

### Lifelong Community

The Atlanta region is experiencing a monumental demographic shift. According to the ARC, the number of metro-Atlanta residents age 65 and over swelled by 88.5 percent between 2000 and 2015, far outpacing the general populace. By 2030, one out of every five residents in metro-Atlanta will be over the age of 60. The City's housing and transportation infrastructure is not ready to support the changing needs and preferences of a growing senior adult population.

The rapid growth in our region's older adult population is demanding new and diverse housing options, transportation alternatives, and community designs that promote active living. Surveys of older adults conducted by the ARC reveal that most want to stay in the communities in which they've lived for years, even when they look to downsize. However, current land use policy and development patterns in Duluth do not provide the housing and transportation choices that older adults need to live healthy, independent lives. The Lifelong Communities Initiative developed by ARC helps communities frame policy to prepare for the needs of an aging population. The core principles for making a lifelong community include: connectivity, pedestrian access and transit, neighborhood retail and services, social interaction, diversity of dwelling types, healthy living, and consideration for existing residents.

The City of Duluth desires to remain a leader in the metro-Atlanta area. As such, the City must adopt the core principals identified above when making policy decisions and land use decisions.

## Traditional Neighborhood Development

The Traditional Neighborhood Development, or TND, is characterized by its emphasis on how individual houses contribute to the street as a whole, and an overall prioritization of the pedestrian over the automobile. The result is a neighborhood designed at a human-scale. Key features of a TND are an emphasis on sustainability, compact development, mixed uses, accessibility and transportation, and maintaining cultural and environmental context to the surrounding area. These features manifest themselves in the following major categories.

### Block Standards

Street layouts should provide for development blocks that are generally in the range of 200-400 feet deep by 400-800 feet long. A variety of lot sizes should be provided that allow diverse housing choices. Lot widths should create a relatively symmetrical street cross section that reinforces the public space of the street as a simple, unified public space.

### Setbacks

The location of homes with regard to the street is incredibly important. The front yard and porch are the meeting grounds between the public and private space within a neighborhood and should be thus designed in a manner to enhance that interaction. Front setbacks should be small, and homes should be built with elevated porches and entryways, front windows, and appropriate landscaping to enhance the pedestrian experience in the neighborhood.

### Building Mass and Scale

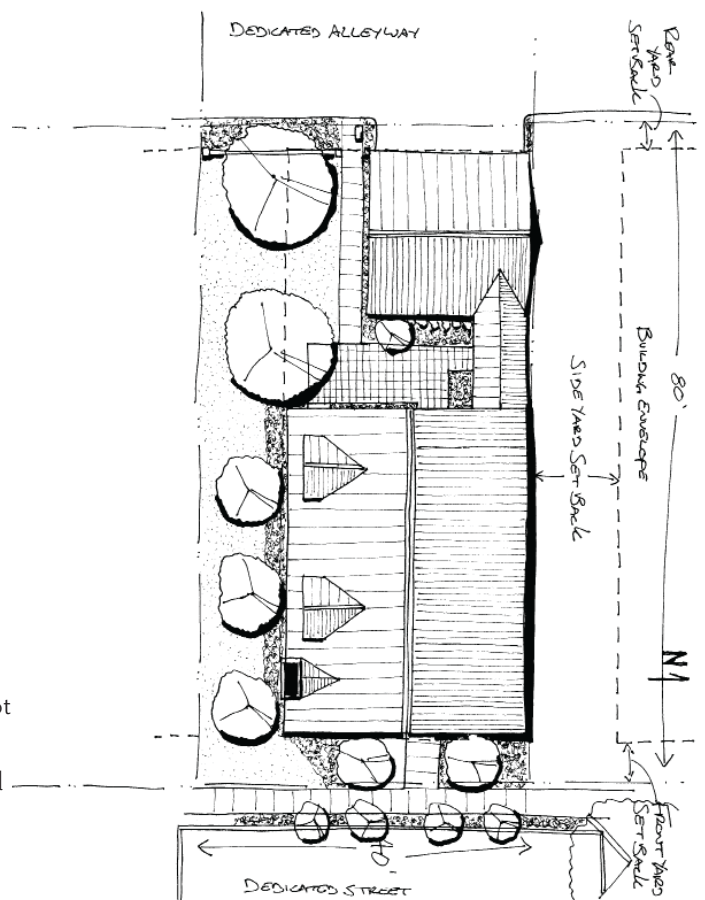
Mass and scale are closely related yet discrete terms when referencing architectural guidelines. Mass can often be identified by a building's footprint. Is a building monolithic with a single geometry, or is it articulated? The exterior of the home should articulate the rooms in the interior. Large single block homes are not appropriate in TNDs as they tend to dominate the streetscape of the neighborhood and fail to provide a variety of form on individual

BELOW: Model housing type for a TND.

Graphic demonstrates narrow front and side yard setbacks, alley-fed parking and adequate sidewalk treatment that prioritizes the pedestrian experience.

BELOW: Rendering of a Traditional Neighborhood Development.

Source: DPZ CoDesign





sites.

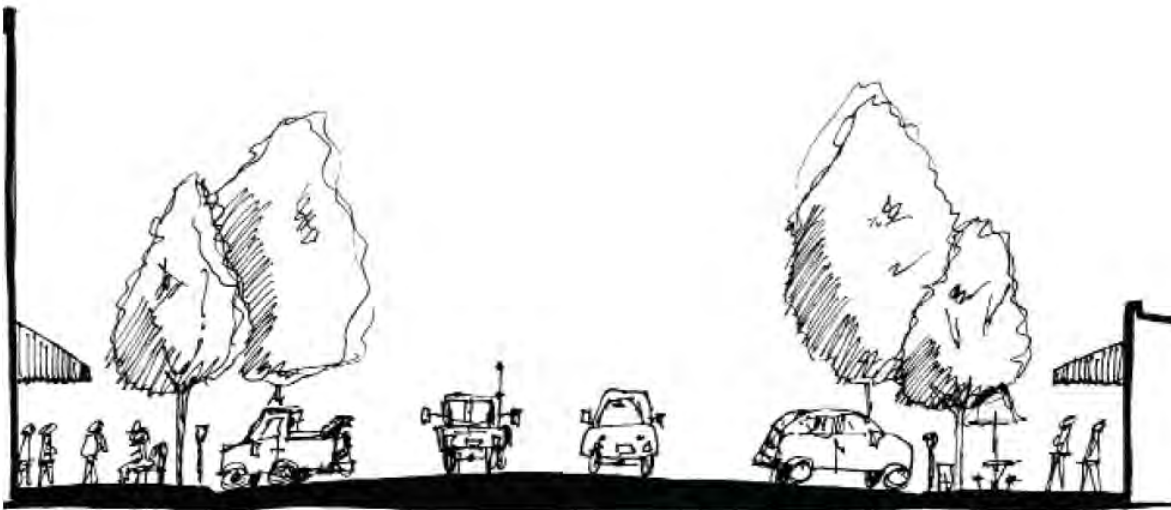
Homes that are particularly massive also tend to be out of scale. Scale can be defined as the apparent size of a home. Does a home dominate a street front or does it cooperate with landscape, streetscape, and other homes in the neighborhood. Specifically, homes must be built to a human scale. A neighborhood developed for human scale will deemphasize elements devoted to the car (driveways, garages, and wide streets.) Instead designers should pay specific attention to elements that enhance a pedestrian's experience (porches, entryways, sidewalks, and landscaping). A home built to a human scale should feel like a piece of a larger neighborhood and not a monument of impressive size.

### *Streets, Sidewalks, and Parking*

Streets within a TND are the primary manifestations of public space. The design of streets should prioritize the experience of the pedestrian throughout the neighborhood. Streets sections should follow best practices defined by the National Association of City Transportation Officials to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all modes of transportation. To decrease the time spent driving through the neighborhood, cul-de-sacs and dead end streets should be avoided.

Parking is an important factor to consider when establishing a TND as these guidelines will directly affect the streetscape and massing of buildings on individual properties. Attached garages tend to increase the size of the home, command attention away from porches and pedestrian entryways, and will often limit the utility of the side yard. Therefore it is encouraged to use detached garages that are accessible from a rear alleyway when possible, or a single-car driveway for front access garages. If the necessity arises for a front-entry garage, it should be recessed from the front of the primary structure. On street parking should also be provided for in an effort to bolster the separation of pedestrian and automotive space.

LEFT: Typical transect of a complete street.  
BELOW: Exemplar housing product for a TND.  
Source: DPZ CoDesign







# Local Landmarks

It has been expressed by the community and elected officials that the City should prioritize preserving historic, or potentially historic, structures as well as other community significant properties. Prior to the adoption of the Unified Development Code in 2015, the City had the Core Preservation District. The District was divided into a residential sub-area along West Lawrenceville Street and a commercial sub-area which contained all of the current Downtown area. In addition to the Core Preservation District, the City had a Historic Structure Registry. The registry contained the following structures:

1. Railroad Depot
2. Strickland House
3. McDaniel House
4. Payne-Corley House
5. Duluth Montessori School buildings
6. Duluth Methodist Church
7. Calaboose

When the City adopted the UDC in 2015, the residential sub-area of the Core Preservation District was changed to Historic Residential District. The commercial sub-area was changed into the Central Business District.

Though Duluth does not have any buildings of historic significance based on the NPS National Register of Historic Places, there are many structures and buildings within the city that the community holds as historic due to their sentimental importance. Saving or re-purposing these and other potentially historic structures should continue to be encouraged.

Planning Staff will research what kinds of development incentives can be given if historic structures are saved. The City should also continue to look for innovative ways to celebrate our past, similar to the purchasing and restoring of the Dutch Mill Motel sign currently displayed in Parsons Alley or posting of commemorative placards around the city. Other successful examples of this include the preservation and restoration of the Duluth Methodist Church which has been re-purposed as a community facility and the adaptive reuse of the Pastorium and the Duluth Baptist Church as restaurants.

ABOVE RIGHT: A cornerstone of African American culture in Duluth, Mt. Ararat M.E. Church stands in the Hill Community. ABOVE LEFT: The historic Dutch Mill Motel sign illuminates Parsons Alley.

# Economic Base

Duluth's economy contains a comprehensive mixture of services, unique and evolving retail, educational institutions, heavy industry, manufacturing, cutting edge technology, office, and outstanding medical facilities. It is also powered by sustained housing starts reflecting single family, mixed-use multi-family, and townhome development. Strong, visionary leadership is rethinking development patterns and reshaping large tracts of underutilized and dilapidated retail into vibrant mixed use developments attractive to younger and older residents.

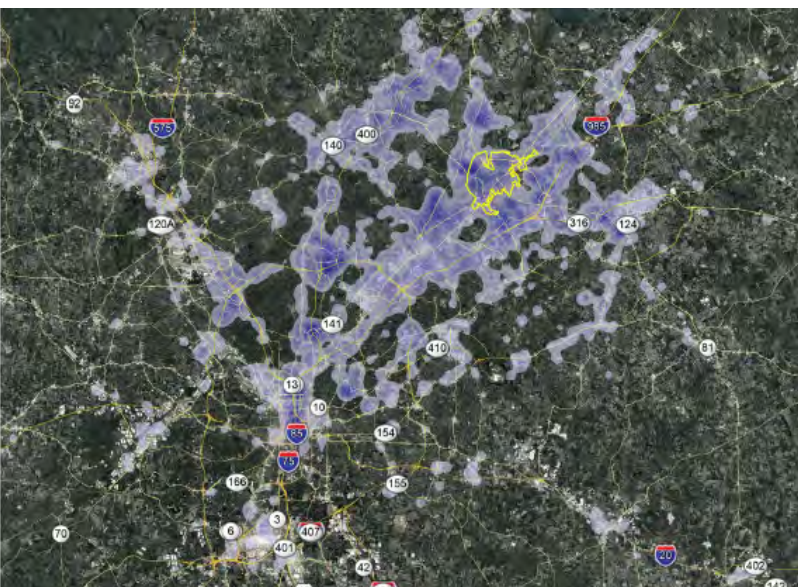
Duluth is supported by robust transportation arteries which contribute to major investments in modern medical facilities, technology parks, manufacturing, and distribution. There is wide availability of international goods and services unique in the southeastern United States.

The proximity of Northside Hospital Duluth and the Medical District to large land tracts will directly impact future land use regarding new development and redevelopment. These trends are evident in adaptive reuse of existing retail outlets to medical uses within the corridor.

The River Green technology park is adapting to advances in communication and work force trends by replacing outdated building interiors with amenities which attract young and motivated employees. Development ready properties within the park are also responding to the trend in online fulfillment by building state of the art distribution facilities.

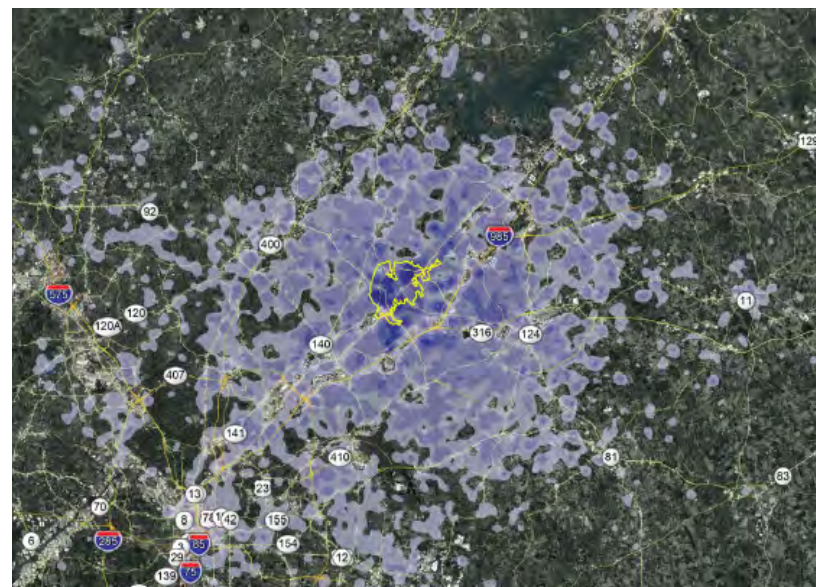
Transportation assets support the continued evolution of very large rail and truck focused distribution and manufacturing centers. These mega facilities have subdivided space under one roof to many different needs of multiple companies rather than relying on one user.

## Where Duluth Residents Work



*Residents of Duluth commute to a wide range of the metro-Atlanta region every work day. Employment hotspots are concentrated around the Perimeter area, Peachtree Corners, Buckhead, Gwinnett Place, and Lawrenceville.*

## Where Duluth Workers Live



*Employees that commute in to Duluth for work originate from a much more dispersed area. This area northeast of Atlanta is primarily concentrated east of route 400 and north of Stone Mountain Parkway. Workers who both live and work in Duluth generally live west of Peachtree Industrial Blvd and the Riverbrooke Neighborhood.*



# Transportation

Creating innovative and comprehensive solutions to solve transportation concerns is a challenge that many communities face. While traffic congestion was not identified as a serious problem in Duluth, the City must continue to make investments in road improvements, wayfinding, beautification, gateways and alternative modes of transportation. As Duluth continues to transform from a sleepy bedroom community to an urban destination, the City must identify new pedestrian and road networks within existing suburban areas to better connect isolated areas and reduce dead end roads.

Gwinnett County has prepared a countywide Master Transportation Plan. The countywide plan fully addresses the major road network serving Duluth and improvements recommended over the short-term and long-term are articulated in that plan. In addition to Gwinnett's Master Transportation Plan, the City of Duluth has a comprehensive transportation program to serve the needs of our residents and businesses.

*BELOW: Many of the transportation improvements being designed or constructed by the City, County and State over the next four (4) years*





Technological infrastructure is expected to improve traffic congestion in the area by enabling adaptive traffic signal timing. This means that traffic signals will respond in real-time to traffic conditions. For example, if Buford Highway traffic is rerouted to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard due to a shutdown, traffic signals will be able to adjust to the sudden increase of vehicles. This technology also gives emergency vehicles priority at intersections to reduce potential conflicts.

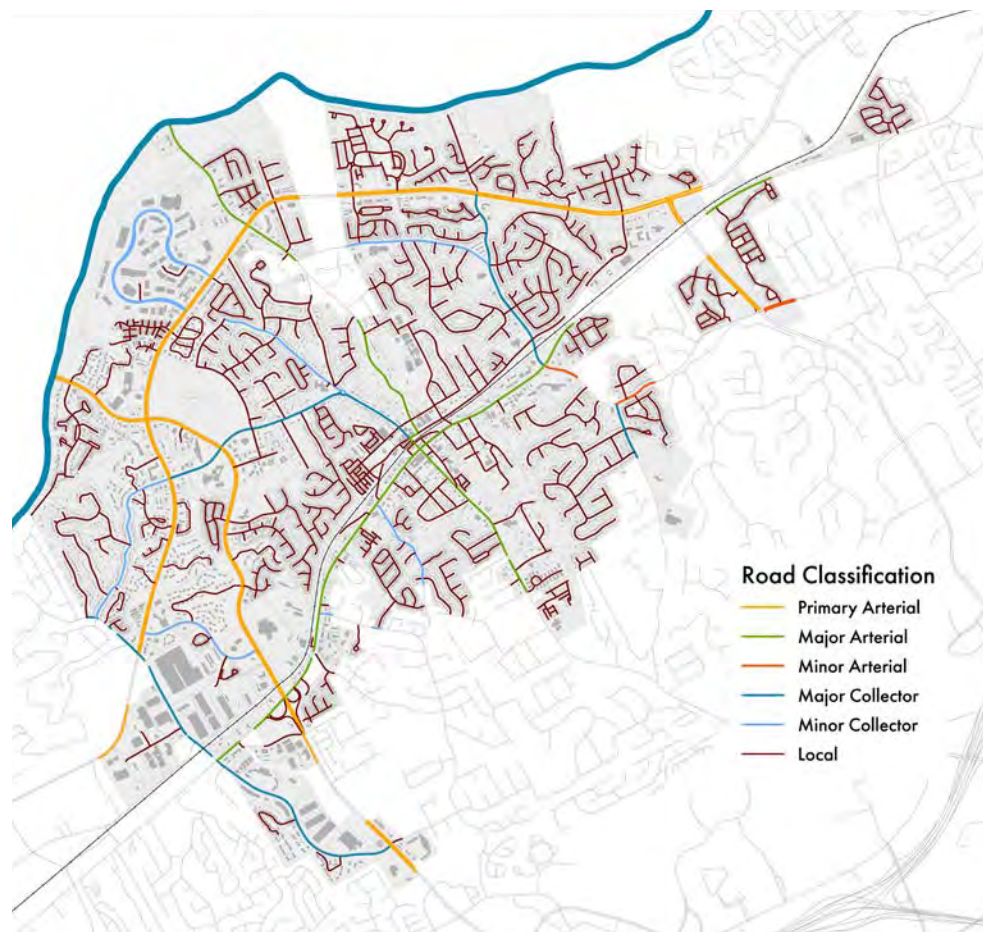
Duluth's transportation program considers sidewalks and bicycle facilities as critical transportation infrastructure elements necessary for providing alternative travel options. The map to the right was created to identify potential sidewalk connections for future funding. Providing connectivity to existing community facilities (such as schools, libraries, and parks) is an important use of the pedestrian and bicycle network. Providing additional connectivity to planned transit facilities/routes and activity centers is another critical focus to reduce the necessity of automobile travel. Improved networks of sidewalks and bikeways can reduce the reliance on automobile travel, such



ABOVE: Duluth's Official Sidewalk Map.

improvements can extend capacity of the road network inexpensively and also improve the quality of life for the City's residents. The Atlanta Regional Commission completed an assessment of Duluth's transportation infrastructure for pedestrians, 'Walk. Bike. Thrive.,' in 2016. Recommendations from that assessment are included in the Short Term Work Program section of this document.

The City utilizes SPLOST (Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax) in concert with County, State and Federal funding to complete a wide variety of transportation projects. In addition to the projects that are currently being designed and constructed, the City is actively investigating creative solutions to better connect isolated areas, reduce dead end roads and improve both transportation efficiency and traffic safety.



RIGHT: Duluth's Official Roadway Classification Map.

## Duluth N.O.W. Program

The Duluth N.O.W. (Neighborhood Outreach Work) program has given the Planning Staff an opportunity to better understand the concerns and needs of many existing neighborhoods in Duluth. Transportation related concerns have been at the forefront of conversations within most neighborhoods in Duluth. Many neighborhoods in the community are concerned with a proliferation of on-street parking, vehicles blocking pedestrian infrastructure (such as sidewalks or crosswalks) and speeding in neighborhoods. As a result, the City is applying resources as available to assist in neighborhoods with educational outreach, increased police presence enforcing parking regulations, increased code compliance presence enforcing unlawful vehicles and the creation of a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program to replace the antiquated Speed Hump Program adopted by the City in the 1990's. Duluth N.O.W. also gives communities the opportunity to partner with the City to organize neighborhood clean-ups that enhance their sense of pride in their neighborhood while improving property value and aesthetics.

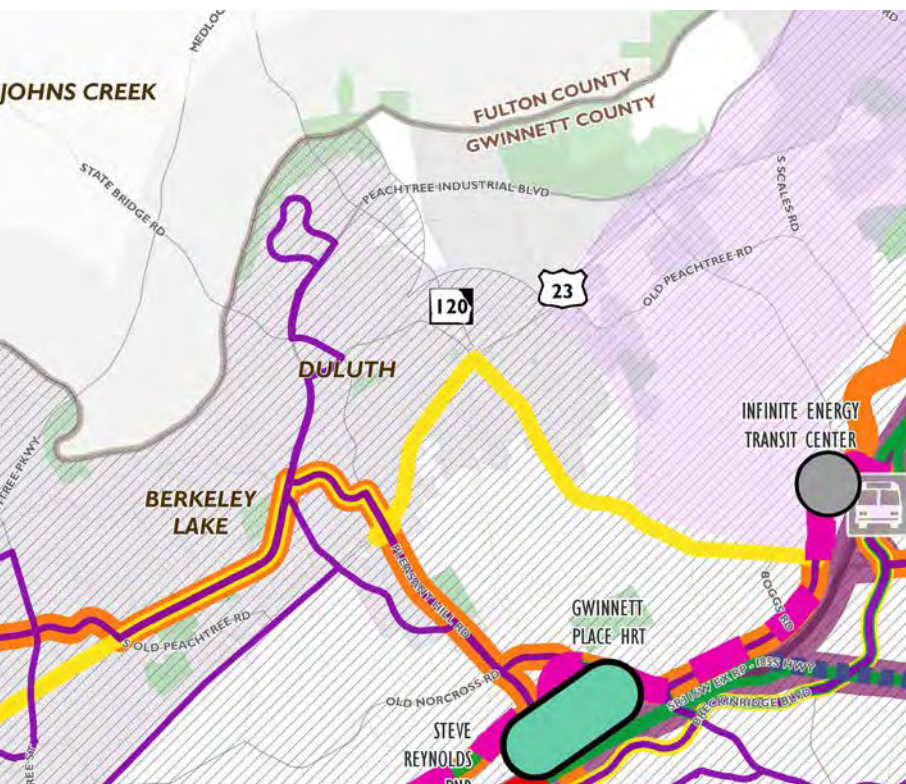
## Potential Connections

The page to the right shows fourteen street or pedestrian connections that Planning Staff and the Steering Committee have identified to improve Duluth's transportation networks.

## Public Transportation

The participants that helped shape this Comprehensive Plan were very vocal about the need for public transit in Duluth. Currently, Duluth is served by one Gwinnett Transit bus route that has two stops along North Berkeley Lake Road between Pleasant Hill and Buford Highway.

The City desires additional public transit options to better serve those who live, work and play in Duluth. The Connect Gwinnett Plan is a Comprehensive Transit Development Plan for the County. This Plan provides multiple opportunities for public transit to extend into Duluth over the next several years. The City should incorporate opportunities for public transit stops when redevelopment occurs in areas identified by Gwinnett's Plan, especially along River Green Parkway and in Downtown Duluth.



LEFT: Connect Gwinnett, Gwinnett County's comprehensive short and long term transit plan, identifies a local bus route and a bus rapid transit route that will impact future development of Duluth's corridors.



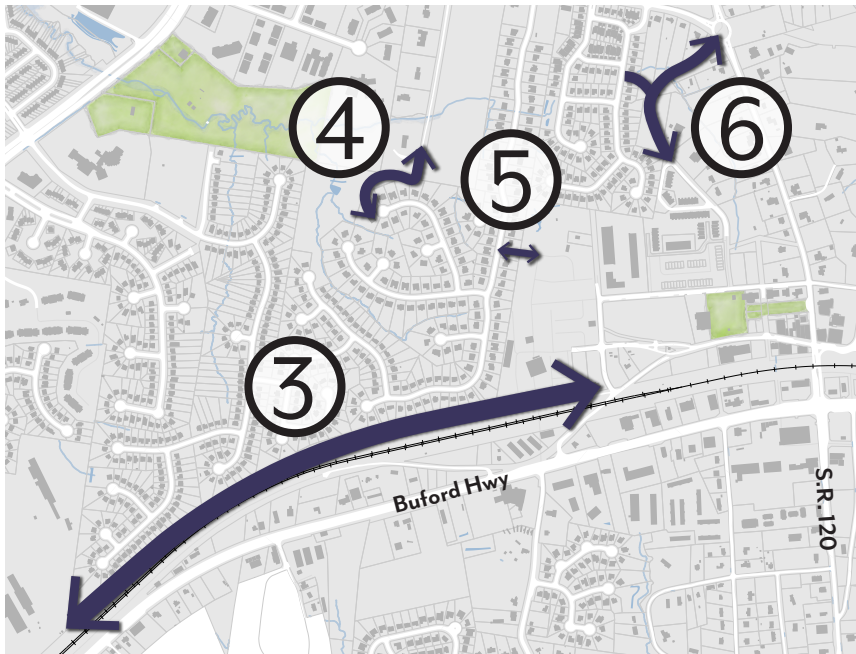




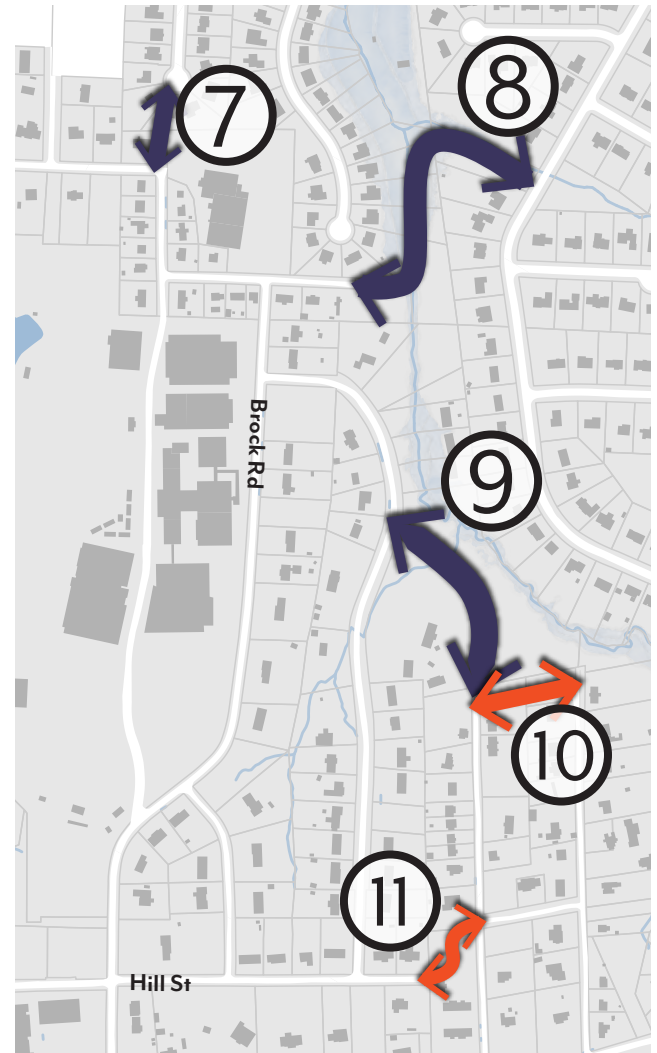
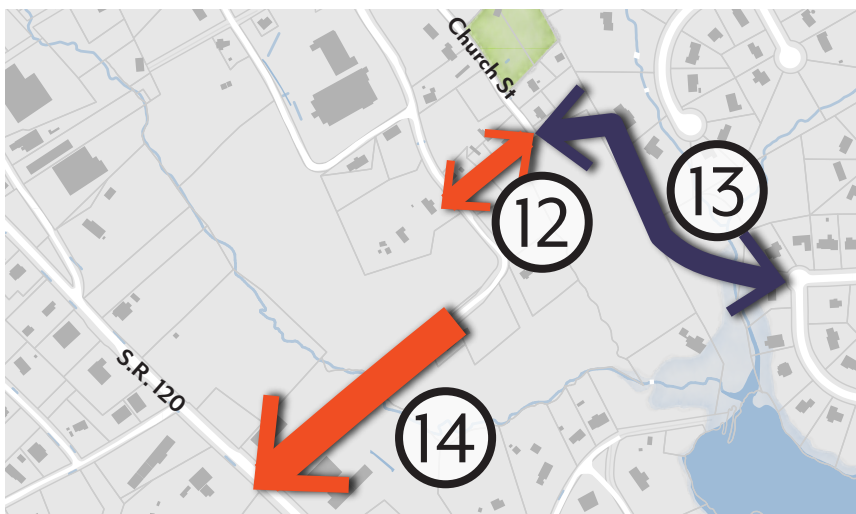
#1 Potential street connection between Peachtree Industrial Blvd and Howell Mead Dr.



#2 Potential street connection between River Green Pkwy and Abbotts Bridge Rd



#3 Proposed Buford Highway Greenway. #4 Potential pedestrian connection between South Whippoorwill Dr and Willbrooke Run. #5 Willbrooke Trail. #6 Potential pedestrian connection for neighborhoods north of Downtown towards Downtown.



#7 Potential pedestrian connection between Mason Dr and Gallant Fox Ct. #8 Potential pedestrian connection between 1st St and Carriage Gate Dr. #9 Potential pedestrian connection in existing ROW between South St and Oak Street. #10 Potential street connection between North and South St. #11 Potential street connection between Hill St and Lee St. #12 Potential street connection between Washington and Church St. #13 Potential pedestrian connection between Church St and Leeds Way. #14 Potential street connection between Washington St and Duluth Hwy.



# Municipal Boundary

Solidifying the municipal boundary for the City of Duluth has been an aspiration of the community for a long time. To accomplish this task, the City must adopt a strategy for logically reshaping the city limits of Duluth and continue to utilize public art, landscaping and wayfinding to create attractive gateways and community boundaries. Action items have been included in the Short Term Work Program to accomplish this task.

Growing and prosperous Georgia cities create a growing and prosperous Georgia. Although cities comprise only 6.5% of Georgia's land area, approximately 40% of the state's population lives in cities and that number is growing. Georgia's cities provide value and responsive local government to residents and businesses making them an attractive place to live in comparison to un-incorporated areas.

Annexation provides a method to solidify Duluth's municipal boundary and provide for the orderly provision of services to areas located on the fringe of the City. There are three primary methods of annexation in Georgia:

- 100% Method: Property owners of all the land in an area may seek to have their property annexed into an adjacent city by signing a petition.
- 60% Method: Petitioners owning at least 60% of the property in the area to be annexed, and at least 60% of the voters in an area, may seek to have their property annexed into an adjacent city.
- Resolution and Referendum Method: An election may be held in the area proposed for annexation to determine if the area should be annexed. This method requires that an agreement between all the local governments providing services in that area be reached and that a majority of voters in the area to be annexed vote in favor of the annexation.

There are numerous reasons why property owners and citizens choose to have their property incorporated into the city limits of Duluth. Many residents are interested in obtaining higher levels of government services than what is provided in the unincorporated area. Many residents wish to take advantage of the efforts that Duluth has made to create more livable and prosperous communities. Many residents enjoy having access to a smaller and more responsive local government. Many businesses wish to take advantage of lower fees, such as stormwater and occupational taxes, than in the unincorporated areas.

The zip code for Duluth is much larger than the actual City limits, which makes it difficult to differentiate the City from some negative associations of the surrounding area. As the municipal boundaries of Duluth change, the City must continue to foster a sense of place and a stronger community identity through public art, landscaping and wayfinding at gateways to establish community boundaries. It is a desire of the community to improve gateways and entrances into the City as well as develop higher expectations for property maintenance to let people know they have arrived in the City of Duluth.



RIGHT: Example of a wayfinding sign on Pleasant Hill Road being used to delineate community boundaries.

# Medical Services

Northside Hospital Duluth is located in the City. Completed in 2006, this hospital has 81 beds and emergency care service. In addition to traditional hospital services, Northside Hospital Duluth has outpatient services including Sports Medicine. Northside Hospital Duluth has plans for a large expansion onto the old Ingles site, which they acquired in 2013. Northside Hospital Duluth anchors the Medical District, which is home to a variety of medical offices and healthcare specialists.

A number of other medical service providers are located in Duluth. Clinics, pharmacies and specialists are spread out all over the city. There is a large concentration of medical service providers around Northside Hospital Duluth located within a quarter mile around the hospital on roads such as Duluth Park Lane, Howell Ferry Road and McClure Bridge Road. This concentration of medical uses has created an unofficial medical district in the city.

By 2040, ARC projects that the second largest job sector within Gwinnett County will be Medical Services just below Professional Services. By having the largest concentration of Medical Service jobs within the County, the City of Duluth should be well positioned to attract future medical growth.

# Infrastructure

**Telecommunications:** According to the Federal Communications Commission, the City of Duluth has three providers of Broadband access with speeds over 50Mbps. This includes both Cable-DOCSIS 3.0 and Fiber to the end user. These speeds allow the City of Duluth to be competitive for high-tech companies. As the industry moves towards 5G the need for more small cell will be critical. 5G relies on small cell more than widely spaced out towers. The City should create a “connectivity vision” or telecommunication master plan in order to meet the needs of a changing industry while protecting property values and our resident’s quality of life. Per the Department of Community Affairs’ 2023 Georgia Broadband Availability Map, Duluth has zero unserved census blocks and only nine unserved locations. All of these locations are either undeveloped lots or city owned parks or property.

**Water System.** A Water System Purchase Agreement was entered into between Gwinnett County and the city of Duluth on December 30, 1991. Gwinnett County purchased Duluth’s water system for \$3.7 million. System assets included approximately 56 linear miles of water mains, a booster station, and approximately 3,200 water meters.

**Stormwater Management:** The City established a Stormwater Utility Fund in 2011 to provide funding for improvement of the City’s overall public stormwater system.

**Sewer:** Much of Duluth is connected to the Gwinnett County Sewer System. The City is working to expand these connections by implementing the Sanitary Sewer Master Plan.

# Tourism

Downtown Duluth contains the Eddie Owen Presents at the Red Clay Theatre which hosts emerging and established musical acts in a 260-seat theater. Downtown is also a busy festival and event location. The City puts on over 40 events annually. Some of the larger events like the Fall Festival, Howl on the Green and the July 3rd event draw thousands of people from around the city and outside. With almost 15 restaurants within two blocks, the city is also becoming a dining destination for those looking for chef-driven and non-chain restaurants. The Downtown Duluth Marriott Hotel has also become a popular destination for those in town for weddings, professional associations and conferences, and events at Infinite Energy Arena.

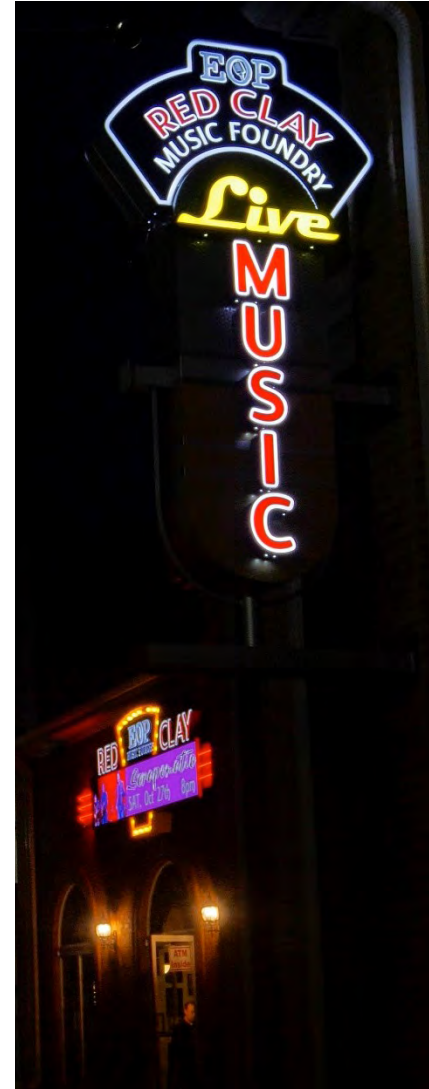
Duluth is fortunate to have the Southeastern Railway Museum, Georgia's State Transportation Museum, occupying a 35-acre site off of Buford Highway and the railroad. In operation since 1970, the Southeastern Railway Museum features about 90 items of rolling stock including historic Pullman cars and classic steam locomotives. Due to its proximity to the railroad, train enthusiasts gather at the museum and various points along the railroad to view and photograph common and rare trains as they make their way through the city.

The growing variety of recreational opportunities in Duluth is driving tourism more and more. \$10 Tubing offers an affordable tubing experience down the Chattahoochee River. Sports complexes like Scott Hudgens Park attract thousands of people to the area during the weekends.

As more public art installations appear in Downtown and throughout the city, Duluth's unique artistic culture is growing in recognition. Visitors and community members come to these locations to appreciate the creativity and capture the perfect social media snapshot. Duluth Public Arts Commission (DPAC) funds performing art concerts and performances that also aim to bring people into the City.

The Duluth Fall Festival has occurred each year for the last several decades. The Fall Festival, organized by the Fall Festival Committee, attracts tens of thousands of visitors to Downtown during the last weekend of September. Visitors explore Downtown streets while shopping at hundreds of booths, viewing live entertainment, eating a delicious assortment of food, and riding carnival rides. As a philanthropic organization, the Fall Festival Committee donates and funds substantial projects ,in partnership with the City, in order to beautify and support the Duluth community.

BELOW: The neon sight of Eddie Owen Presents on Main Street.



BELOW: Cafe lights illuminate Parsons Alley. LEFT: Carnival rides thrill guests of the Fall Festival.







## Public Art

Cities all over the world gain value by weaving arts and culture into their physical, social and economic fabric. One way to express Duluth's unique arts and culture is through public art. Public art can share distinctive parts of the city's history and ever-changing culture. Public art is valuable to Duluth because it enhances place-making and the local economy. It also celebrates the community's rich history, points to collective aspirations, and reflects the city's identity and how we want the world to see our community.

The City supports public art through the Duluth Public Art Commission (DPAC). DPAC was organized to create and cultivate a more substantial art presence in the city. In 2015, the City Council adopted the Public Art Master Plan. The Public Art Master Plan details the vision and goals of the City and DPAC.

One way to help expand public art installations throughout the City is to encourage new development to include art pieces as part of their new building or site. Prior to obtaining a building permit, developers must meet with staff and a member of DPAC to discuss the benefits of public art. DPAC requests that 1% of development cost go to public art. The program is voluntary; however, numerous developers have embraced the program and installed art pieces in their developments or donated to the Public Art Fund. DPAC has used these donations to fund murals, sculptures and performances. The City has also committed to budget public art as a component of its own capital projects.

*LEFT: Community members participate in an interactive art board. TOP: A group of percussionists perform during Duluth Art Week. BOTTOM: The "Ascension" sculpture serves as a gateway art piece into Downtown.*



# Parks & Natural Resources

The City of Duluth has seven city parks in addition to the Town Green and Chattahoochee National Recreational Area Units. Park sizes vary from as large as 47 acres to small 1.7 acre neighborhood-scaled parks. The largest park within the City of Duluth is Scott Hudgens Park which is heavily used on weekends averaging over 3,000 people a day during peak soccer weekends. Rogers Bridge Park and the Chattahoochee Dog Park, located along the Chattahoochee River, are other prominent parks in the city.

City parks are increasingly becoming a regional attraction and a central focus of Duluth. Various recreational events take place during the year at the parks for the community, the “Smores N’ Snores” at Rogers Bridge Park being one of the most popular. The reconstruction of the Rogers Bridge into a state-of-the-art multi-use bridge has restored an important connection between Johns Creek and Duluth, creating a new network of parks and trails. Through a partnership with Encore by Ashton Woods, 7 acres of land along the Chattahoochee River have already been dedicated to the City of Duluth for the expansion of Rogers Bridge Park. Future connections will increase Rogers Bridge Park’s function as a gateway into Duluth, in addition to providing greater recreational opportunities.

The Chattahoochee River is the main natural resource within the City of Duluth. A majority of Duluth’s border with the Chattahoochee is dedicated parkland, either through City parks or the Chattahoochee River National Recreational Area. The city’s proximity to the Chattahoochee provides opportunities for the community to enjoy recreation on the River; river tubing from Rogers Bridge Park is a long-time favorite.

BELOW: Reconstructed Rogers Bridge  
RIGHT: A local artist participates in the “Paint-A- Drain”  
campaign.

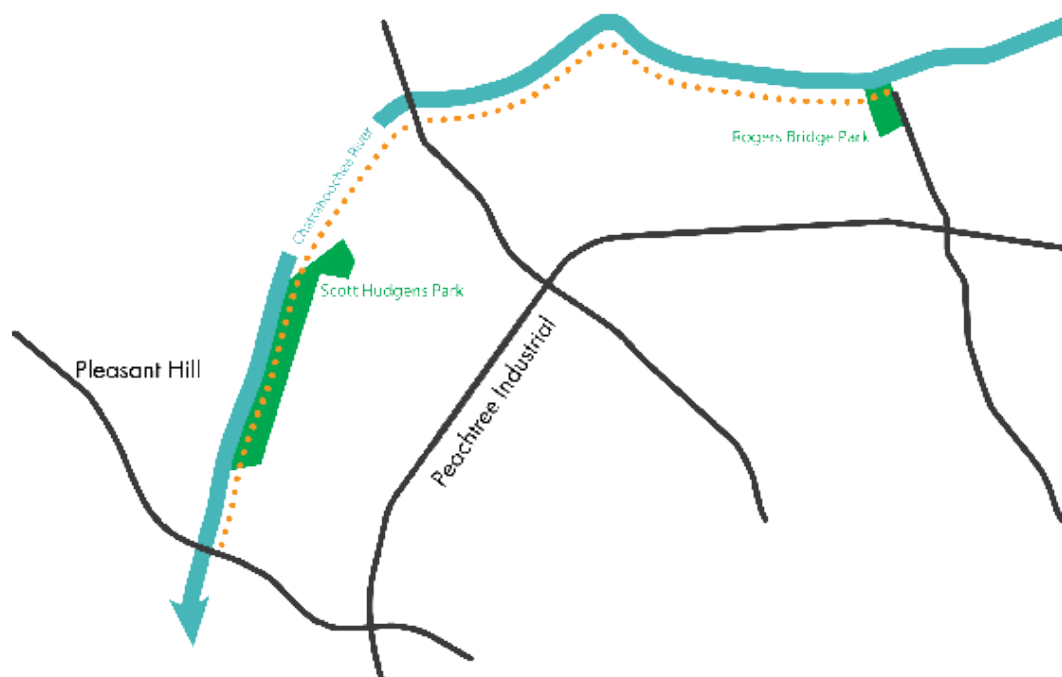


Duluth is committed to protecting water resources so that they can be used and enjoyed for generations to come. City staff work diligently to keep stormwater drains free of debris, eliminate illicit discharges, and ensure that appropriate erosion controls are in place during land disturbance. The city participates in or leads several public education initiatives that highlight the damaging impacts of stormwater pollution, and encourages residents to get involved in spreading stormwater awareness. In 2020, the city launched a “Paint-A-Drain” Campaign where local artists permanently display artwork and messages to “keep the water clean” on public infrastructure. The city is also creating an animated series that will follow the stormwater mascot, “Stormy”, on adventures to learn about how stormwater is managed and why it should be protected. These short videos will appeal to a large audience, including students, homeowners and business owners, and will be available in multiple languages.

As storms become more frequent and intense, managing stormwater to protect public safety and property becomes even more critical. The City should consider ways to encourage, promote and incentivize the use of green infrastructure in new development and redevelopment. Green infrastructure provides for stormwater management and treatment on site, and can provide a variety of environmental, social and economic benefits.

The Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) designates a corridor of land that extends 2,000 feet from the banks of the Chattahoochee River, from Buford Dam to the downstream limits of Fulton and Douglas counties, as an area requiring special protection. Development in the 2000-foot Chattahoochee River Corridor is regulated per MRPA as well as the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan adopted by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

*BELOW: A conceptual plan for a greenway trail along the Chattahoochee River.*





# Education

The City of Duluth is served by Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) which is Georgia's largest school district and the 13th largest in the United States with 182,000 students. GCPS has won the Broad Prize for Urban Education given to the top urban school district in the United States twice since 2010. Residents belong to either the Duluth High School Cluster or the Peachtree Ridge High School Cluster.

There are six elementary schools (Berkeley Lake, Burnette, Chattahoochee, Harris, Mason and Parsons) and three middle schools (Coleman, Duluth and Hull) that students of the City of Duluth attend. Coleman Middle School, located a block away from Downtown, was the first STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) school in Georgia. All of these schools have exceeded the Gwinnett County School System average on the Georgia College and Career Ready Performance Index and similar standardized tests.



ABOVE: Duluth High School

## Private Schools

The students of Duluth are also served by private and charter schools in addition to GCPS. Notre Dame Academy, located on River Green Parkway serves over 500 students from grades 1-12. Notre Dame Academy recently constructed a turf football field and plans for an additional baseball field. Also located on River Green Parkway, the New Life Academy of Excellence, a Gwinnett County Public Schools charter school, opened in 2006 and serves almost 700 students from grades K-8. Finally, and YHALE a state charter public school opened in 2021.

## Post-Secondary Education

While there are no public colleges or universities within the City of Duluth, there a number of them within a short distance of city limits. Gwinnett Technical College is located on Sugarloaf Parkway less than five miles from Duluth. Gwinnett Tech offers more than 140 associate degree, diploma and certificate programs that specialize in real-world job skills. Over 10,000 students are enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year.

Another opportunity for post high school education just outside of the city is the University of Georgia Gwinnett Campus. Located just three miles outside of Duluth, UGA Gwinnett offers classes for both undergraduate and graduate level students.

Georgia Gwinnett College is located in Lawrenceville and provides four year undergraduate and graduate level programs. The quickly growing college was founded in 1994 and currently has over 12,000 students. GGC is easily accessed from Duluth being less than 7 miles away from the city limits.



# FOUR Formulating the Strategy

Plans need to reflect the values of those who live and work in a place. For this reason, an extensive public process was designed to put together **ForwarDuluth**. This was an iterative planning process that included identification of citywide policies for the Comprehensive Plan, in addition to examination of site-specific opportunities at a smaller scale. The process tapped the knowledge of a local expert Steering Committee, but also encouraged new voices to participate. At the same time, it's not enough to simply listen to the voices of the public without caution. These comments, opinions, and concerns must be viewed in light of facts and research and the constraints that shape the City. A balance between listening to the community, consideration of planning theory, and a knowledge of the facts on the ground creates implementation actions that are grounded and achievable, but also inspirational.

In 2019, City of Duluth staff and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) designed a number of communication tools and activities to ensure that meaningful community input would form the backbone of this plan. The Steering Committee played an essential role in providing input to the Comprehensive Planning process and represented a diverse cross-section of the town. The members' role was to provide input so that the plan was in line with Duluth's community values.

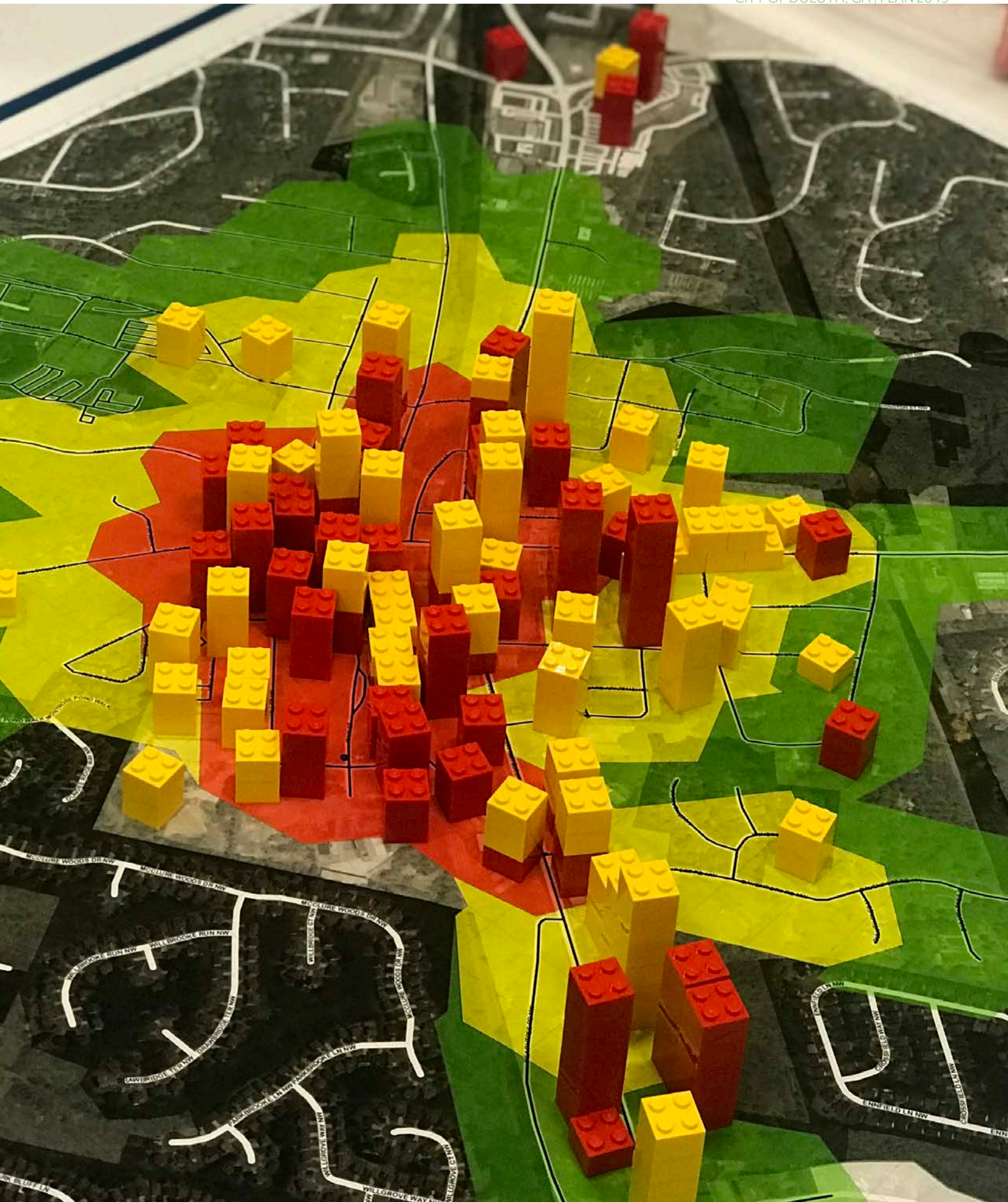
Likewise, City staff reengaged the community for the 2024 update by forming a new steering committee comprised of elected and appointed officials, local leaders, and residents. This group engaged in a number of public outreach opportunities including: a public open house, work sessions with the Planning Commission, and an online public survey.

These ideas were then woven into the list of Assets and Challenges in the following chapters, and those Assets and Challenges form the framework for The Short Term Work Program.

This process of engagement is summarized on the following pages.











ABOVE: Community Open House participants envision the future of Downtown Duluth by imagining the proper density that should be found within a walking distance of Downtown. Participants were asked to place LEGO bricks at locations within the city where they think higher density development would be appropriate. Most results were 4-5 stories of residential and/or commercial within the downtown area.

## Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed with members of the Planning Staff, Planning Commission, economic development staff and City Council members. This committee evaluated the existing plan, updated data and information, provided topics for consideration and helped facilitate public engagement during the Open House. At each phase of the planning process, the Committee provided a valuable perspective that helped refine the Comprehensive Planning process.

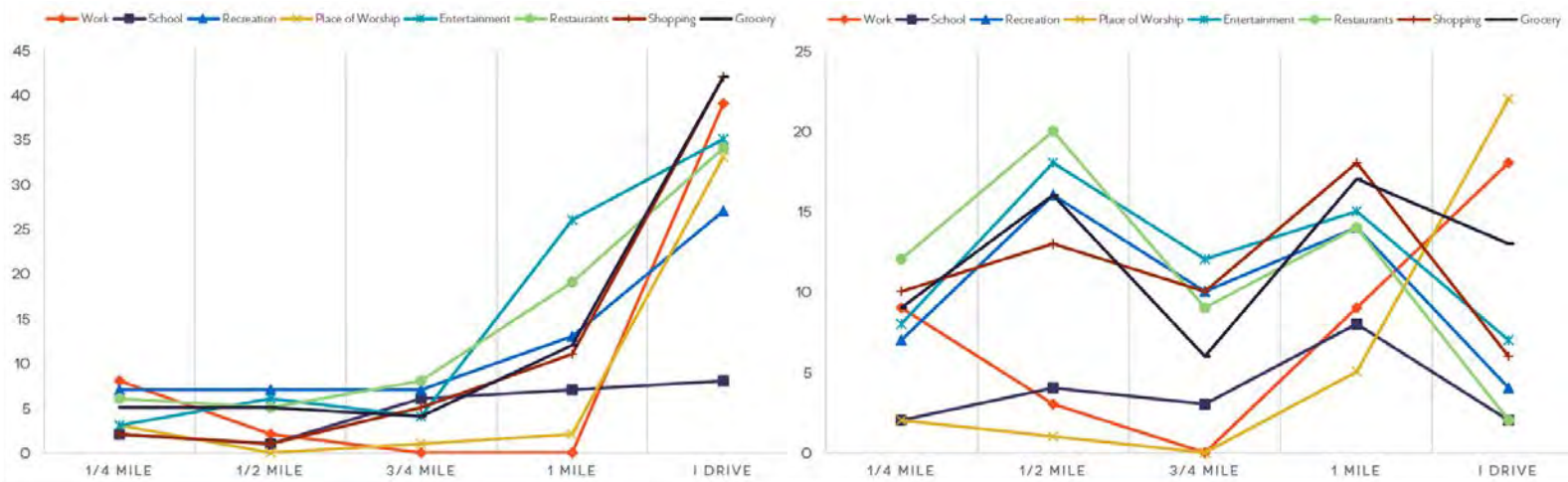
## Public Open House

An open house was held in 2018 to get feedback on issues and provide direction to the plan. 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. A number of communication tools and activities were designed to ensure that meaningful community input would form the backbone of this plan. Another Public Open House was performed in 2023. In this Open House, community members were encouraged to identify areas in town to celebrate and those in need of attention. The results are summarized on the following pages.



RIGHT: The Public Open House advertisement sits at the corner of West Lawrenceville Street and Main Street during rush hour.





ABOVE: Summary graphs describe an activity where Open House participants indicated where and how far they would walk today vs where and how far they would walk in an ideal future with ideal pedestrian infrastructure.

### ‘Walk There’ Activity

Participants were asked to describe how far they walk to different destinations today, given the City’s current pedestrian infrastructure and connectivity, and how far they would ideally want to walk in the future. Unsurprisingly, most residents indicated that they drive to those destinations today, yet there was wide enthusiasm for walking if pedestrian connections were expanded and improved. Participants indicated that they would be willing to walk a half mile or a mile in the future if possible. This outcome is very encouraging and shows public support for the City’s goal to increase pedestrian connections throughout Duluth.



Preferred style of single family detached executive housing near downtown.



Preferred style of single family attached executive housing near downtown.



Preferred style of single family detached executive housing in a subdivision.

### Residential Visual Preference Survey

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process, both the wider community and the Steering Committee expressed a concern in the lack of ‘executive style’ housing within the city limits. The term ‘executive style’ housing means many things to many different people. In order to better understand what housing type the community envisioned as fulfilling the Executive Housing deficit, Planning Staff and the Steering Committee conducted a residential visual preference survey.

Participants were asked to identify their preferred style of Executive Housing and identify if it is more appropriate for the downtown areas versus a subdivision. The community was presented with a wide variety of housing types and architectural styles ranging from a more traditional, classical architecture mansion to a modern apartment building. The three above images were chosen as the preferred executive housing type and style. Conversely, luxury apartments and massive mansions were identified as not the appropriate type or style of Executive Housing preferred in Duluth.



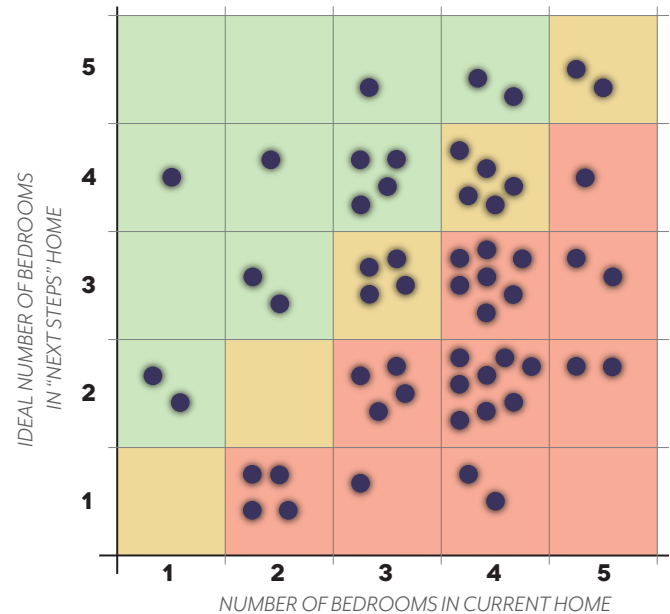
## Next Steps Matrix

Participants were asked about their future housing plans. Open House participants were asked to indicate the number of bedrooms they have in their current home and the ideal number of bedrooms in their “next step” home. For example, a participant would put a purple dot in (2,1) if they would say, “My home has two bedrooms, but I’d like to move to a house that has only one bedroom.” This data is summarized in the matrix to the right.

The green blocks indicate that the participant would like to move up, the yellow indicates that the participant is satisfied with the number of bedrooms in their current home, and the red means that the participant wants to down-size. Based on this exercise, around 24% of participants want to “move up” and 20% are satisfied with their bedroom number. Over half of participants want to downsize.

These percentages could be explained by many factors, including the age and life-stage of the participants of the Open House. While, it could be tempting to apply these fascinating findings to the wider Duluth population, a more thorough housing survey should be conducted to fulfill the needs of our community.

BELOW: Results of the “What is Your Next Step” Activity





ABOVE: The former Ingles building at the corner of Pleasant Hill Rd and Howell Ferry Rd sits empty.



ABOVE: South Buford Highway. There are a number of vacant or under-used properties along this stretch of road, serving as eye-sores within the community.

## Key Areas Needing Attention

In 2023 the Steering Committee directed staff to focus on the following:

1. Improving the City's long-range plans for alternative modes of transportation, including public transit, micro-modal transit, and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. Additionally, the committee identifies the need for existing transportation corridors to feel safe for multiple types of users.
  2. Improving the City's focus on environmental sustainability and energy efficiency. Specifically the committee identified the following goals: identify opportunities to increase energy efficiency standards in government buildings, utilize native plantings and sustainable landscaping in development or redevelopment opportunities, and amenitize stormwater management facilities and enumerate stormwater management goals.
  3. Identifying opportunities to expand the City's housing supply and housing type, including housing affordability and housing attainability. The committee identified the need to partner with local organizations to expand low-income housing and discussed the feasibility of participating with the development community to expand the City's housing type and affordability.
  4. Examining the ways in which the City takes all types of people into consideration during the planning process. Specifically, the committee identified the importance of planning for the City's youth and its aging communities. The committee emphasized a desire to design spaces that are welcoming to all ages, especially through our parks and recreation department.
- The Steering Committee and the community were asked what areas of the City needed attention. This question wasn't asking necessarily which areas needed improvement, just attention. The responses ranged from areas that are currently undeveloped or underdeveloped to areas that have perhaps reached the economic life and needed redevelopment.



ABOVE: Public Open House participants were asked to identify areas within the City that need attention (red) and their favorite places (green).

The committee then discussed areas within the community that are in need of attention or pose an opportunity for redevelopment. These areas were:

1. Commercial properties north and south of Downtown Duluth along Buford Highway,
2. The Duluth Station shopping center,
3. Rivergreen Industrial Park
4. The Milam Property along the Chattahoochee River,
5. The Hudgens Property at the intersection of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road,
6. Large residential properties along Duluth Highway





ABOVE: The community gathers at Parsons Alley in Downtown during an Art Week event.



ABOVE: A popular pedestrian path at Bunten Road Park.

## Favorite Places

The Steering Committee and community's favorite places were much more concise. Downtown and city parks were by far the most common favorite places. This confirms the City's continued efforts in helping to provide a high quality of life. Downtown with its unique dining and retail options along with family friendly entertainment options were noted as the reasons for being a favorite place. The city parks, most notably Bunten Road Park and Scott Hudgens, were also selected due to their high quality facilities and fields. The City continues to invest in both of these areas and should continue to be city assets for years to come.

## Community Policy Preference

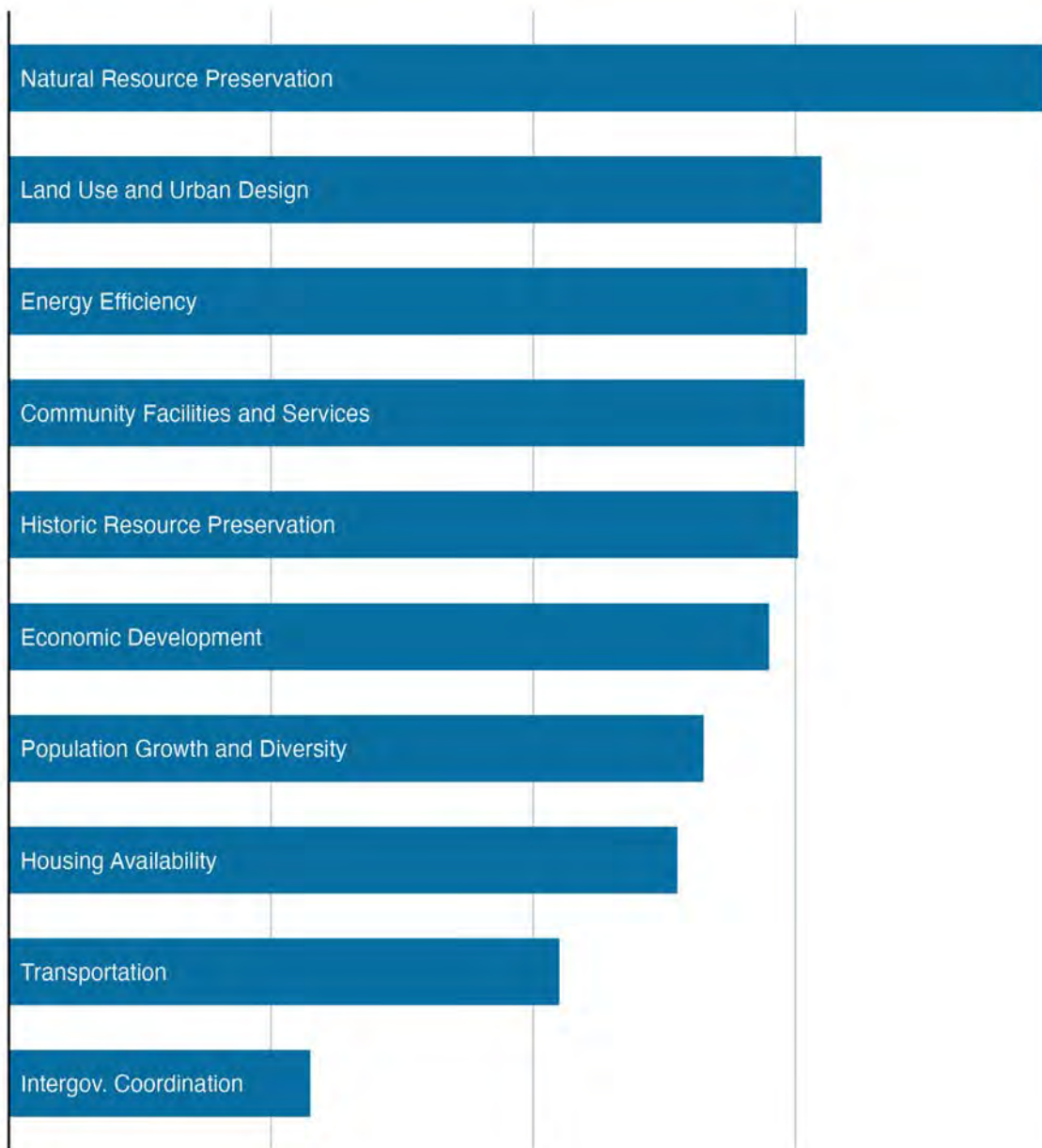
In 2023 staff engaged the community in a public survey to see if the city's current policies, goals, and objectives still aligned with those of its community members. Of the many goals, objectives, and policies the city has the survey asks the community to identify how important a cross section of these policies are to them. On average, survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all thirty-two policies provided in the survey. The most highly rated policy preference of all respondents was the city's focus on the improvement of air and water quality, and the protection of its natural resources. Other policies of particular interest were the city's focus on the adaptive reuse of underperforming properties, and the continued improvement of the city's sidewalks, roads, and bridges. While respondents overall agreed with every policy, two policies with the least favorable rating were the goals to increase the downtown population to support local stores and restaurants, and the city's goal to logically reshape its municipal boundary through annexation.



## City Policy Category Ranking

The steering committee, participants of the public open house, and participants of the public survey were asked to rank ten city wide policy categories from most to least important. Far and away the most highly ranked city policy category was the preservation of natural resources. Within this category preference, the community cited a variety of reasons including a focus on policies to combat the effects of climate change, the stewardship of natural resources in and adjacent to the city, and the preservation of greenspace from future development. Staff has incorporated these preferences into a variety of policy goals and short-term work program items including focusing new development efforts on the redevelopment of aging or underutilized properties and identifying strategies for public stormwater infrastructure to be retrofitted to accommodate increased hazard and storm events.

Additionally, the community time and again recognized the downtown area as vibrant, engaging, and welcoming to the whole community. Respondents encouraged staff to continue utilizing land use and urban design best practices to maintain the areas vibrancy and activity.







ABOVE: The community gathers on the Town Green for a concert series.

## Where Do We Go From Here?

Throughout the process of writing this Comprehensive Plan, the residents, business owners and stakeholders of the community have been passionately engaged and have demonstrated a high level of excitement about the many ideas that have emerged to move Duluth forward. While many different voices and opinions have been raised, one thing that is abundantly clear is that the people of Duluth are enthusiastic about the future of their city.

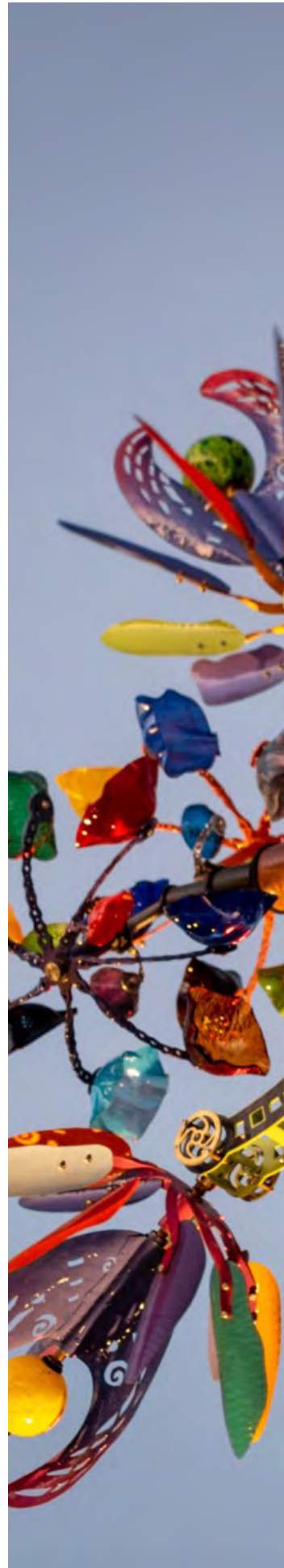
Ultimately, comprehensive plans such as this one are made up of two parts: the *community* and the *plan*. While the plan component of comprehensive planning is in fact the necessary strategic tool for future positioning and prosperity, a plan will never realize its full potential if it does not incorporate the desires of the community. Because of this, it is absolutely critical that the community comes *before* the plan. A community needs help, assistance, expertise, and an outside perspective to know how to know how to craft their way forward, and this is surely what a good comprehensive planning process must do. Ultimately, a community must “own” its future and this is why it is important for future plans to be reflective of a community.

**ForwarDuluth** has largely been developed based on participation, demonstrating that the Planning Staff and Steering Committee have done at their job well. Great care was taken to listen to and incorporate the input and feedback received during the community engagement process into the core **ForwarDuluth**.

# FIVE Vision & Aspirations

## Who do we want our city to be? What do we want to be known for?

Informed by public input and findings from other planning efforts, Staff has worked collaboratively with the community, the Steering Committee, and City Council to develop an inspirational vision and achievable goals for Duluth. While every section of **ForwardDuluth** is central to implementing our vision and goals, the Character Areas and Future Land Use Maps are the most influential in terms of daily decision-making and land use changes.



RIGHT: A kinetic art piece, "Phoenix" by artist Andrew Carson, in Parsons Alley.



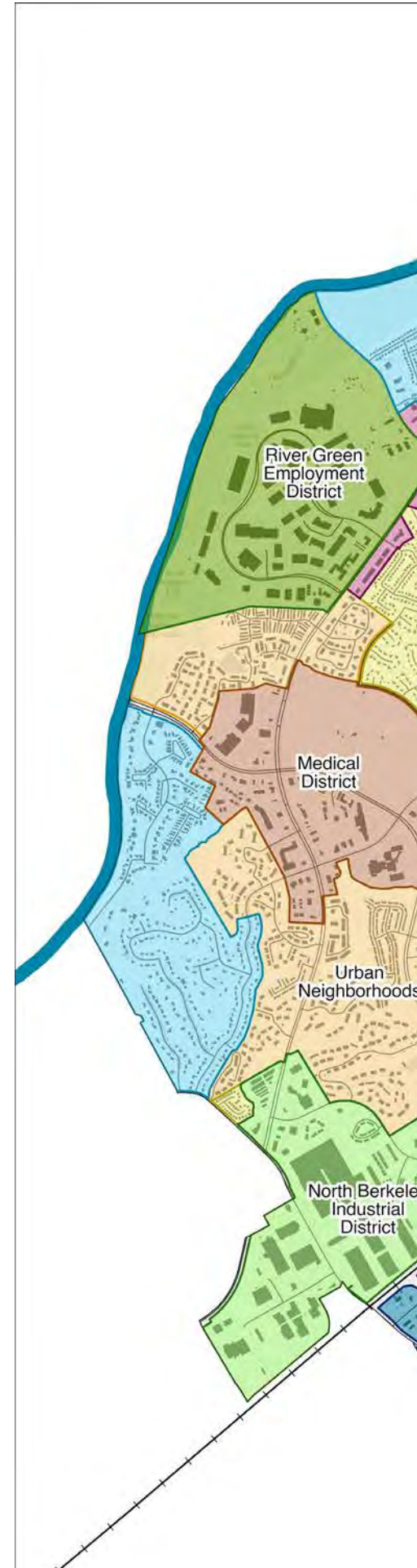


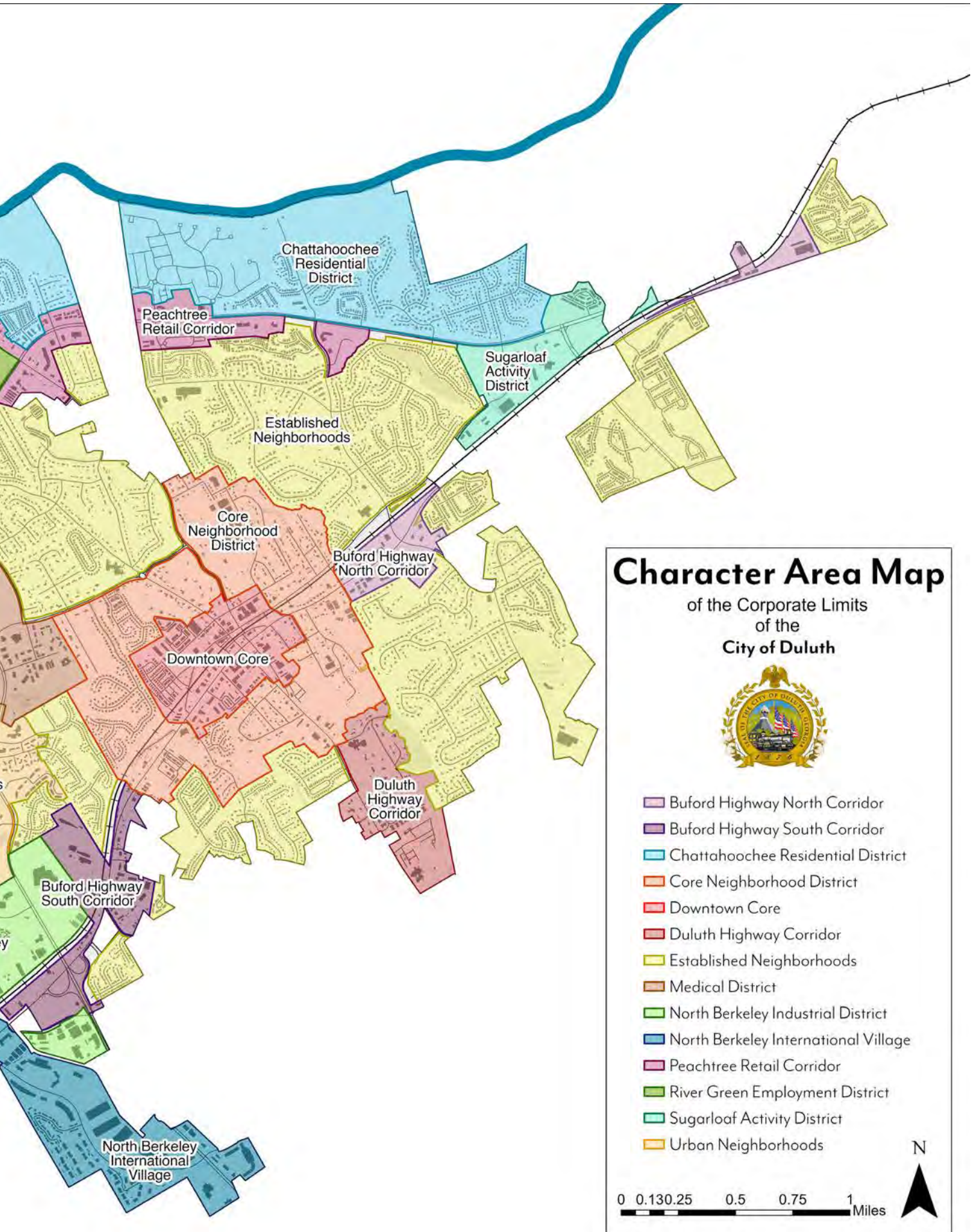


# CHARACTER AREAS

Perhaps the most significant change in this Comprehensive Plan from the previous editions is how the City classifies our Character Areas. **ForwardDuluth** focuses more on geography and land use potential than in past Comprehensive Plans. The City is divided into 14 different Character Areas each with its own specific list of goals, policies and vision. Some Character Areas such as the Medical District and Downtown Core anticipate substantial change and therefore include goals and policies to best plan for quality developments. In other Character Areas, preservation and maintenance are the main goals like in the North Berkeley International Village and Urban Neighborhood Character Areas.

The Character Area Map is intended to work hand-in-hand with the Future Land Use Map when considering city-wide policies and when land use applications are presented to City Council. The Character Area Map and related text will set the overarching goals for specific areas within the City. The Future Land Use Map gives parcel by parcel recommendations for future development. When reviewing land use applications staff, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and City Council will consider what the Character Area and Future Land Use Map have determined appropriate. City Council will ultimately decide if a potential development meets the goals and vision or does not. Of course technology, demographics and development climate can change rapidly and final land use decisions may not always align with the maps in **ForwardDuluth**. The following maps and elaborative text serve as a guide and not as legal policy.







# Downtown Core

**Our Downtown will be the cultural and entertainment heart of the City and region, celebrating the hometown, historic character while utilizing big city aesthetic and amenities.**

Historic Downtown Duluth has experienced a revitalization that is perhaps unrivaled in metro-Atlanta. Through careful planning and strategic land deals, the City has seen a number of properties that were industrial, under-utilized or undesirable land uses redeveloped into high quality commercial and residential property. Including:

1. The Parsons Alley Redevelopment (2017). A public/private redevelopment partnership of old commercial and warehouse buildings and recipient of the 2017 Charter Award from the Congress for New Urbanism and ARC's 2017 Development of Excellence Award.
2. The South on Main Redevelopment (2020). A redevelopment of a former concrete plant into a single-family attached and detached neighborhood located within the historic downtown street grid.
3. The Marriott Hotel Redevelopment (2020). A public/private partnership to redevelop a surface parking lot into a 101-room hotel and public parking deck through a condominium agreement with the City and hospitality group.
4. The Downtown Duluth Gwinnett Library Redevelopment (2021). A redevelopment of a landscaping business into a state-of-the-art downtown library.
5. The Jewell Box Redevelopment (2023). A public /private partnership to redevelop the former "paver lot" into a modern burger restaurant and public green space which has become the focal point of evening activity on the Town Green.
6. The Thrive Redevelopment (Ongoing). A public/private partnership to construct a shared workspace and provide additional public parking in the downtown block.
7. The CoHatch Redevelopment (Ongoing). A private redevelopment effort to use the old United Tool building as a shared workspace and small business incubator through adaptive reuse of the existing building.

As these industrial properties are redeveloped, the available land in the area around the Town Green is quickly disappearing. Most of the future downtown development will take place along Buford Highway and Duluth Highway to a lesser degree. Multi-family developments should be concentrated along Buford Highway to create more of a downtown feel on Buford Highway. Old and under-utilized properties in Downtown should be redeveloped into dense residential and mixed-use developments. Building heights of 2-5 stories are appropriate for the Downtown Character area. For residential developments, densities up to 40 units/acre are appropriate. Buildings over 5 stories may be appropriate on parcels that are below the grade of Buford Highway and Duluth Highway particularly on Howell Street. Downtown should have a high concentration of restaurant, retail and office establishments. Therefore, auto-centric businesses should be phased out from Downtown.





RIGHT: Potential redevelopment site of City owned property (2023)

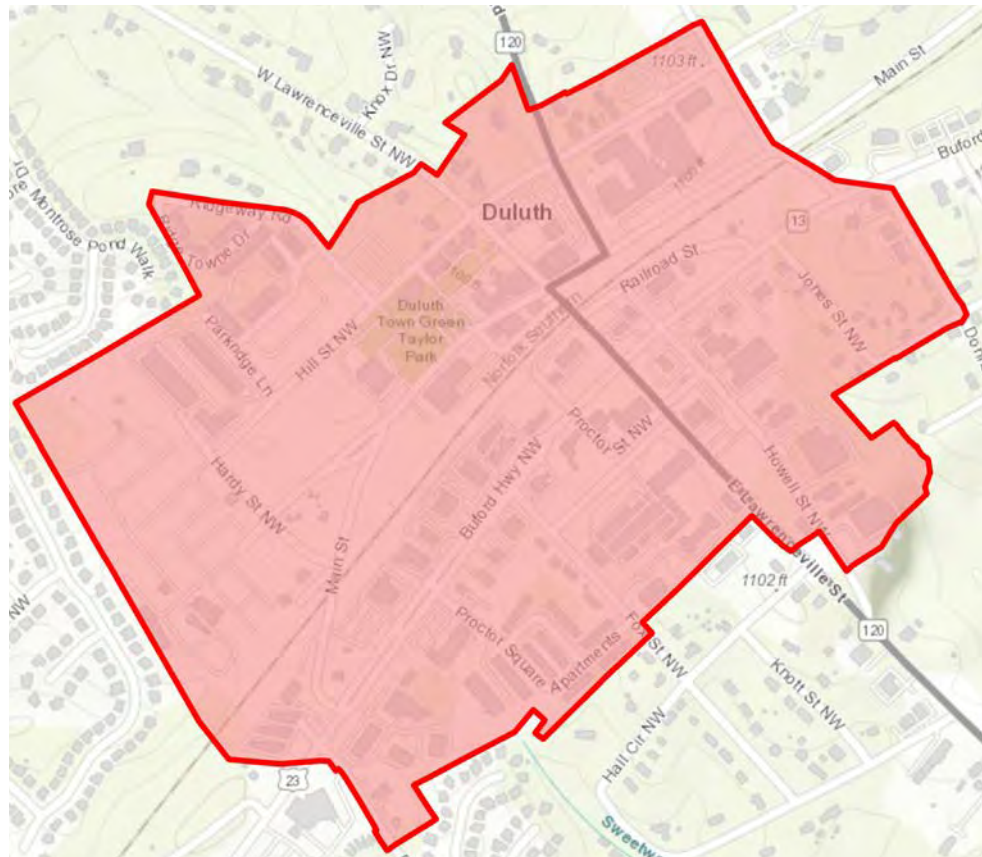
BELOW: The Jewell Box Redevelopment (2023)



### Aspirations

- Encourage redevelopment of older and underutilized buildings particularly into dense residential and mixed use developments.
- Continue to recruit high quality retail tenants and locally owned/chef driven restaurants to Downtown.
- Reduce/eliminate automotive uses in Downtown. This includes gas stations, auto accessory establishments, tire stores, mechanics, etc.
- Work with Norfolk Southern to have Duluth be a “quiet zone”.
- Improve pedestrian at grade crossings along and over state highways and railroad.
- Encourage improved pedestrian mobility options within the character area.
- Reduce/eliminate drive-thru establishments in this District.
- Encourage shared parking strategies between businesses and the City.
- Encourage Public/Private partnerships through Tax Allocation District (TAD) funding.

BELOW: Downtown Core is distinguished in red. The Downtown Core is surrounded by the supporting residential developments in the Core Neighborhood District.





## Downtown Duluth 2016





## Downtown Duluth TODAY





## PARSONS ALLEY TODAY



BELOW: The Town Green and Fountain are popular places of gathering.



## PARSONS ALLEY 2011





## W LAWRENCEVILLE TODAY



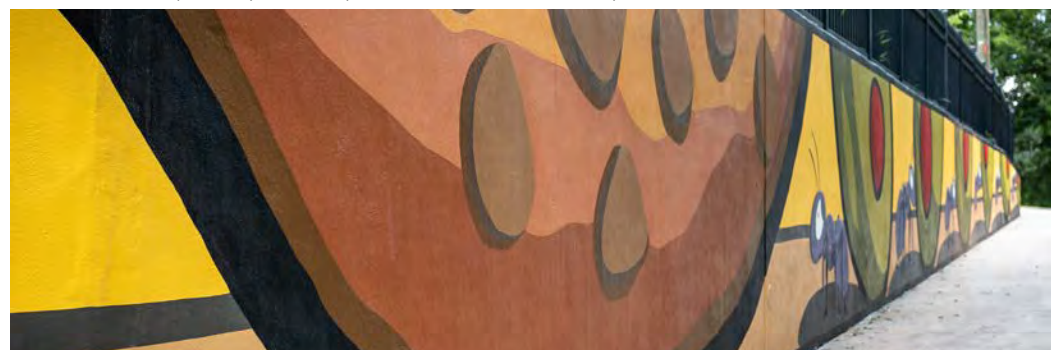
## W LAWRENCEVILLE 2006



BELOW: SODO Apartments (2023) at the corner of the soon to be Davenport Road and Buford Highway Intersection



ABOVE: The community gathers at a local public house during the evening. BELOW: Dream Big, a DPAC commissioned mural painted by Brenda Ehly, on Hill Street next to Parsons Alley.





# Core Neighborhood District

**Core Neighborhoods will be denser, connected neighborhoods, easily accessible to Downtown through a system of trails, sidewalks and road connections, while capitalizing on existing traditional street fabric and opportunities for redevelopment and infill.**

This is not a homogeneous collection of neighborhoods. The age of the neighborhoods within this Character Area spans a large range, from early 20th century (W. Lawrenceville Street) to the 1990s (McClure Place and Willbrooke). Buford Highway and Duluth Highway/Abbotts Bridge Road divide this Character Area into quadrants. The northwest quadrant contains the Pinecrest Neighborhood. The northeast quadrant is the Hill Community. The southeast is the Hall Circle area. Finally, the southwest quadrant contains the newest homes with McClure Place and Willbrooke. Each quadrant has characteristics that bring different sets of assets and challenges. For example, the southeast and southwest quadrants have sewer whereas the northern quadrants do not. The lack of sewer greatly inhibits redevelopment or infill efforts due to a need for large lots for septic fields. Buford Highway and Duluth Highway act as major barriers, bisecting the District into disjointed portions. Commercial and retail along Buford Highway is characterized by a wide range of mid-size businesses and office locations. These commercial properties have been targeted for redevelopment and reinvestment in recent years. This is expected to continue, possibly at a faster pace than in recent years. Recent streetscape improvements along a portion of Buford Highway have improved aesthetics and safety.

Core Neighborhoods will continue to play an important role in anchoring adjoining Downtown within the city, while providing the community with a wide variety of housing types within walking distance of unique retail, recreation, and entertainment. Many different existing neighborhoods make up this District; each neighborhood has distinctive characteristics that should be celebrated through improved placemaking. There is great potential for infill and reinvestment within many of the maturing neighborhoods, but redevelopment should be balanced with preserving the qualities of the neighborhoods that have made them foundational to the prosperity of Duluth. Innovative residential infill can include accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and village townhome clusters on small lots. The preservation of historic or important buildings and landmarks should be a goal of the city. Offering density bonuses or some other incentive to save or rehabilitate these buildings should be a tool the city uses for historic preservation purposes. Future development will build off of the existing strong community culture and connected neighborhood fabric. Redevelopment and new residential should be developed using traditional neighborhood design principles, encouraging smaller lots and cottage-style homes with pedestrian-oriented street frontage.

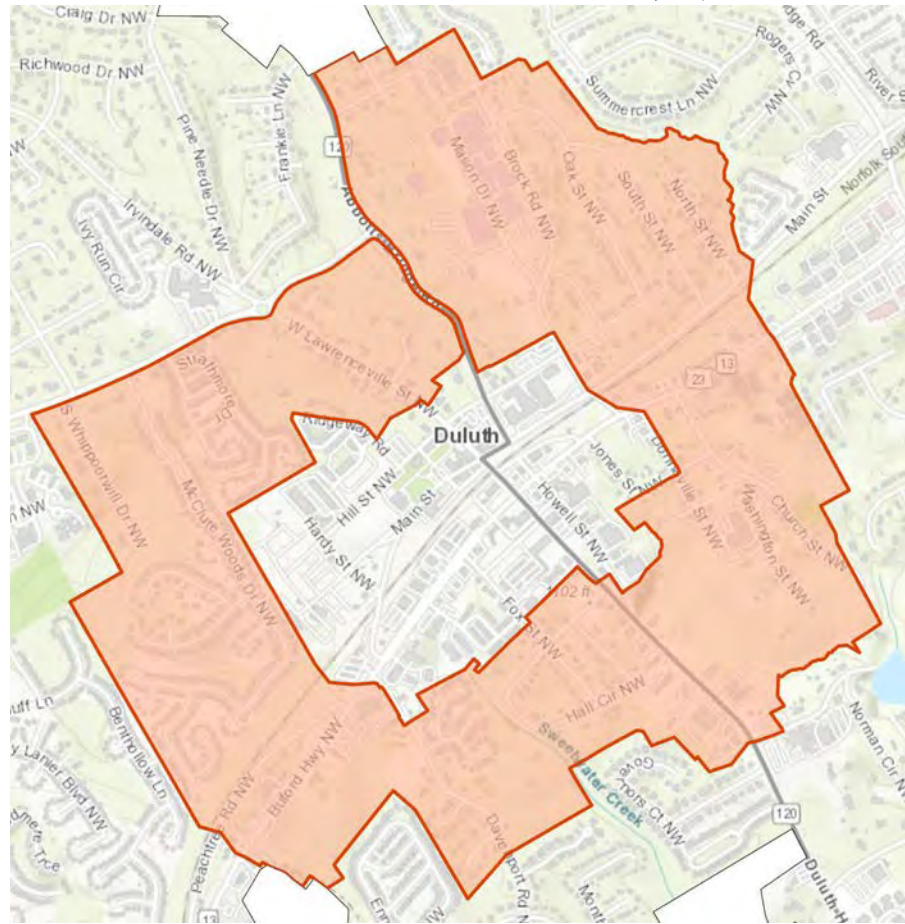


ABOVE: Willbrooke Trail Installation.  
RIGHT TOP: Representative housing type character of the Pinecrest Neighborhood.  
RIGHT BOTTOM: Representative housing type character of the Willbrooke Neighborhood.

RIGHT: The Core Neighborhood District is distinguished in orange/peach. The District surrounds the Downtown Core and is bordered by various other character areas.

### Aspirations

- Continue to explore possible street and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and towards Downtown through land acquisition.
- Encourage development to increase housing units within walking distance (.75 miles) of Downtown.
- Update and adopt the Pinecrest Neighborhood Plan.
- Update and adopt the Hill Community Neighborhood Plan.
- Create and adopt Hall Circle Neighborhood Plan.
- Identify redevelopment grants and incentives that would help reduce barriers in order to improve or to spur redevelopment in targeted neighborhoods.
- Investigate policy changes that are aligned with the ARC's Lifelong Communities Initiative that would allow accessory dwelling units, promote infill housing, and reduce the minimum square footage requirements.
- Begin streetscape and infrastructure improvements in preparation for neighborhood redevelopment. Specifically extending sewer along Hill Street to South Street. Extend Hill Street to South Street.
- Discourage dead end streets, when appropriate.
- Create an Infill Development Ordinance.
- Explore climate resiliency measures to retrofit existing neighborhoods with open space, pocket parks, and green infrastructure.



ABOVE: An aerial of the Buford Housing Authority on Main St. BELOW: Rendering of redevelopment possibilities. There is potential to redevelop underutilized properties with creative urban design and with higher density through an Infill Development Ordinance.





# Urban Neighborhoods

**The Urban Neighborhoods will be a high quality multi-family corridor with connection through multi-modal transportation to regional employment opportunities.**

Concentrated along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, an important regional artery, the multi-family attached dwellings that largely characterize the Urban Neighborhoods are an important component of the City's housing stock. Mainly developed during the late 1980s and 1990s, the garden style apartments are a result of a construction boom that had an extensive regional impact in terms of multi-family housing. The existing garden style of the apartment complexes results in a lower density than newer apartment developments found within Duluth, like District at Duluth or the Heights at Sugarloaf.

The Urban Neighborhoods will play an important role in supporting Duluth's regional employment centers, particularly those adjacent to the neighborhoods, by housing a large workforce in close proximity to the employment opportunities. These neighborhoods will be anchored by mixed-use neighborhood marketplaces, located at key intersections. As redevelopment of the residential complexes occurs, it is expected that density will increase. In order for the financing to work on these 30 year old complexes, a development will need to have at least as many units as it currently has on less acreage, to provide an opportunity for mixed-use with some number of townhomes, single family homes or non residential uses.

This district has the potential to be an interconnected, multi-modal residential hub within the City. The Western Gwinnett Pathway, a 10 foot wide multi-use trail along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, already extends throughout the district. The Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) Smart Corridor Project will be a key factor in improving vehicular traffic through the district. In addition, the



## Aspirations

- Encourage redevelopment of older apartment complexes into mixed-use or mixed-residential developments with more units on less acreage to make it financially feasible.
- Maintain a high quality multi-family housing stock through code enforcement and the Multi-Family Inspection Program.
- Explore future connectivity through transit options and improved pedestrian infrastructure.
- Continue to support the completion of the Western Gwinnett Pathway.
- Explore opportunities to create pedestrian connections to future greenway trail along the river.
- Encourage the county to connect existing multi-family units to future transit stops.
- Explore climate resiliency measures to retrofit existing neighborhoods with open space, pocket parks, and green infrastructure.

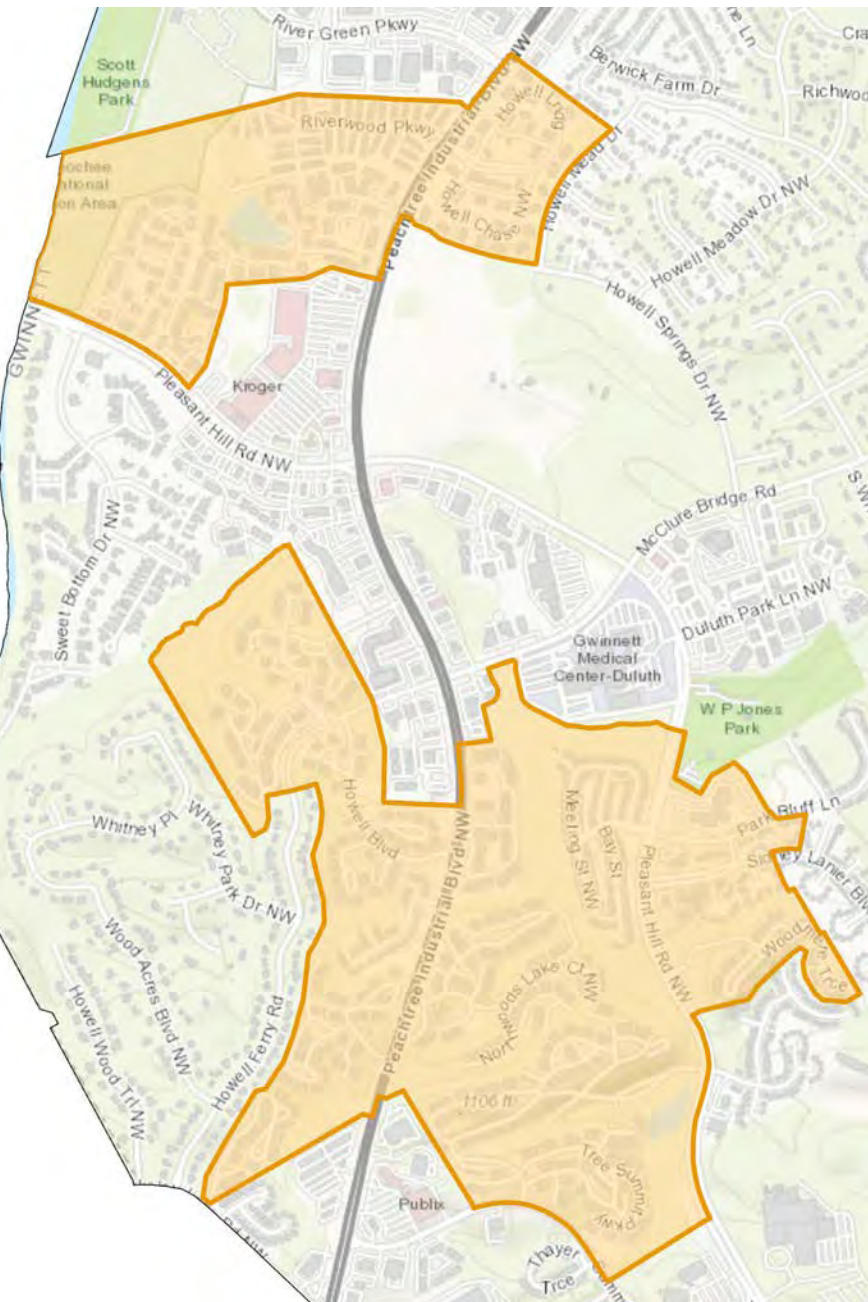
Gwinnett County Transit Plan recommends several bus routes to traverse this area of the City, further increasing multi-modal connectivity. In light of this unique potential, transit-oriented development should be promoted during property redevelopment. When redeveloped, special emphasis on inter-parcel connectivity via streets and sidewalks should be promoted instead of having singular, disjointed developments.



ABOVE: A rendering of the Broadview Place Manor Neighborhood at Lindbergh City Center, part of the redevelopment of low density apartments.



ABOVE: A typical site plan for a garden style apartment complex in Duluth. Each apartment building is detached and isolated in the landscape from the other buildings. This site design is associated with a lack of community and safety. Many of the complexes in the Urban Neighborhoods District are in this form.



LEFT: The Urban Neighborhoods, shown in orange, surround the Medical District. Urban Neighborhoods also share a substantial border with the River Green and North Berkeley Industrial. Both Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road form important spines throughout the district.



# Chattahoochee Residential District

**The Chattahoochee Residential District will be the City's premier residential district for large lot, executive style homes.**

The Chattahoochee Residential District is made up of existing neighborhoods and large tracts of land that have large lot residential potential. Located between Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and the Chattahoochee River, this area provides great vehicular accessibility as well as great natural amenities. Rogers Bridge Park and the Chattahoochee Dog Park are located in this character area in addition to the Chattahoochee River. This district also benefits from the Western Gwinnett Pathway that follows Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. The existing neighborhoods range in housing styles and price points.



The large property located on Rogers Bridge Road, known as the “Milam Property” was rezoned in 2015 to allow for 77 executive homes. For years, city staff and officials have heard from the community that there is a lack of executive style homes in Duluth. The Encore subdivision, which occupies the former golf course has been under construction since the beginning of 2020. This project has added an over 400 single-family attached or detached homes to Duluth's housing stock. Throughout Encore's rezoning process, City staff encouraged the developer to incorporate principles of the urban transect, by which high density units are located closer to major thoroughfares, and density decreases towards environmental features. As such, the Encore Subdivision consolidates its townhome units near Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and provides large single family homes along the Chattahoochee River. As this character area is further developed, staff should help maintain the desirability of these neighborhoods through active code enforcement, and consistent improvements to City owned infrastructure i.e. roads, sidewalks, and stormwater.

As a policy, apartments should be located closer to activity nodes where the City desires to increase density, such as Downtown. This Character Area should prohibit apartments and remain single family in nature with single family detached homes and townhomes.

## Aspirations

- Provide much needed estate style executive housing .
- Utilize the 9 acre tract of land behind the Encore Subdivision, and similar greenspaces along the river, as part of a larger greenway network connecting Rogers Bridge Park and Scott Hudgens Park.
- Explore climate resiliency measures to retrofit existing neighborhoods with open space, pocket parks, and green infrastructure.

RIGHT: The Encore Subdivision demonstrating the urban transect in neighborhood design.



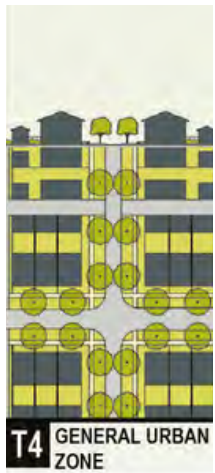




ABOVE: Reconstructed Rogers Bridge across the Chattahoochee River to Johns Creek.

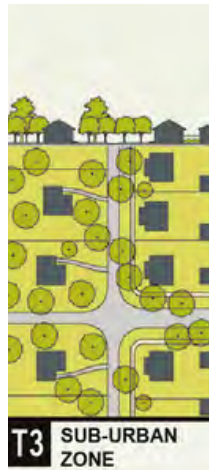


ABOVE: Castlemaine Neighborhood, north of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, is an example of executive style housing appropriate in this district.



New development closest to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard should be of greater density. Both commercial and residential, or mixed use, development is appropriate. Streets should be well connected.

**T4 GENERAL URBAN ZONE**



Residential density begins to increase the closer development gets to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Streets may transition into becoming more gridded and connected. A range of medium to small lots is appropriate.

**T3 SUB-URBAN ZONE**



Stepping back from the River, development closest to the natural zone should be more rural in nature. Large lot residential development is appropriate to protect the natural functions of this low lying land.

**T2 RURAL ZONE**



New development should transition into a riparian buffer as it approaches the Chattahoochee River. Passive recreational uses are allowed. Care should be given to preserve and protect these areas.

**T1 NATURAL ZONE**





# Established Neighborhoods

**Established Neighborhoods will continue to be the backbone of Duluth's residential community.**

Established Neighborhoods, where a large portion of our community lives, present residents a wide range of housing options. Established Neighborhoods offer residents a high standard of family living near all of the amenities and employment that Duluth has to offer and with close proximity to regional connectors like Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Buford Highway and Pleasant Hill Road. Ranging from traditional suburban neighborhoods to more walkable and community centered town-home developments, a variety of housing types and price ranges gives a wide variety of people across income levels, age groups and other social strata the opportunity to live in Duluth. The longevity of these neighborhoods is supported by high quality schools and world class parks.

Conventional suburban neighborhoods, like Riverbrooke and Norman Downes, are characterized by single family, detached housing with large setbacks, curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. Transportation is dependent on automobile access and most homes have front entry garages that are typically visible from the street. Residents who value privacy, private yards, and proximity to schools and parks may be drawn to these neighborhoods. Traditional neighborhoods developments, like Crestwell and River's Edge, are characterized by a compact urban design that prioritizes walkability and greenspace. They contain a network of connected streets with sidewalks and street trees to facilitate pleasant, convenient and safe movement throughout neighborhoods. Transportation within the development is focused on the pedestrian over the automobile and the integration of parks and public spaces into the development create landmarks and a strong sense of place.

It is not anticipated that there will be much redevelopment or new development within these neighborhoods due to their "built-out" nature. Policy and vision implementation measures for Established Neighborhoods should be focused on maintaining and preserving the stability and quality of the neighborhoods.

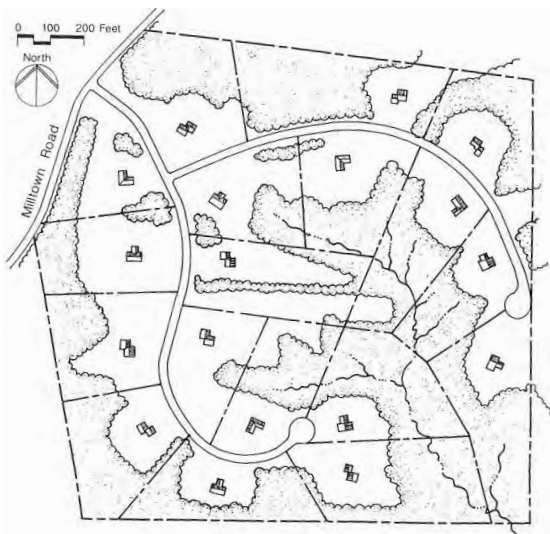
## **Aspirations**

- **Identify opportunities to increase walkability and connectivity through possible street and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods.**
- **Promote property upkeep and maintenance through effective code compliance and the Duluth N.O.W. program.**
- **Maintain a high level of owner occupancy.**
- **Explore policy changes that are aligned with the ARC's Lifelong Communities Initiative that would support "aging in place" and improved pedestrian connectivity.**
- **Continue streetscape and infrastructure improvements in aging developments. Prioritize the expansion of sewer lines into under-served neighborhoods.**
- **Explore climate resiliency measures to retrofit existing neighborhoods with open space, pocket parks, and green infrastructure.**

## Conventional Suburban Development



ABOVE: Street view of Norman Downes Neighborhood

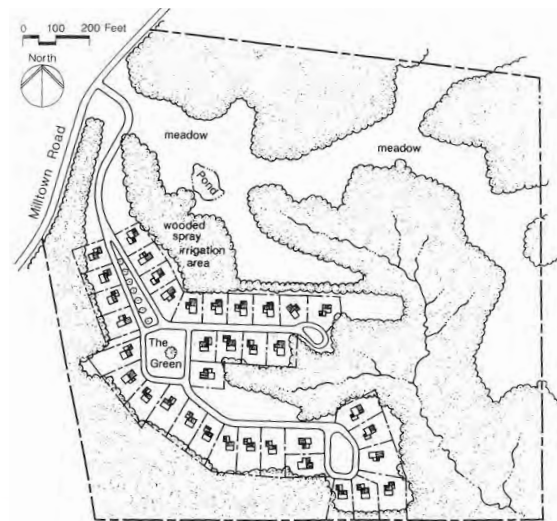


LEFT: The graphic illustrates the urban form of a conventional suburban neighborhood. Curvilinear streets terminate at a cul-de-sac. Greenspace is primarily privatized and conserved through large lots.

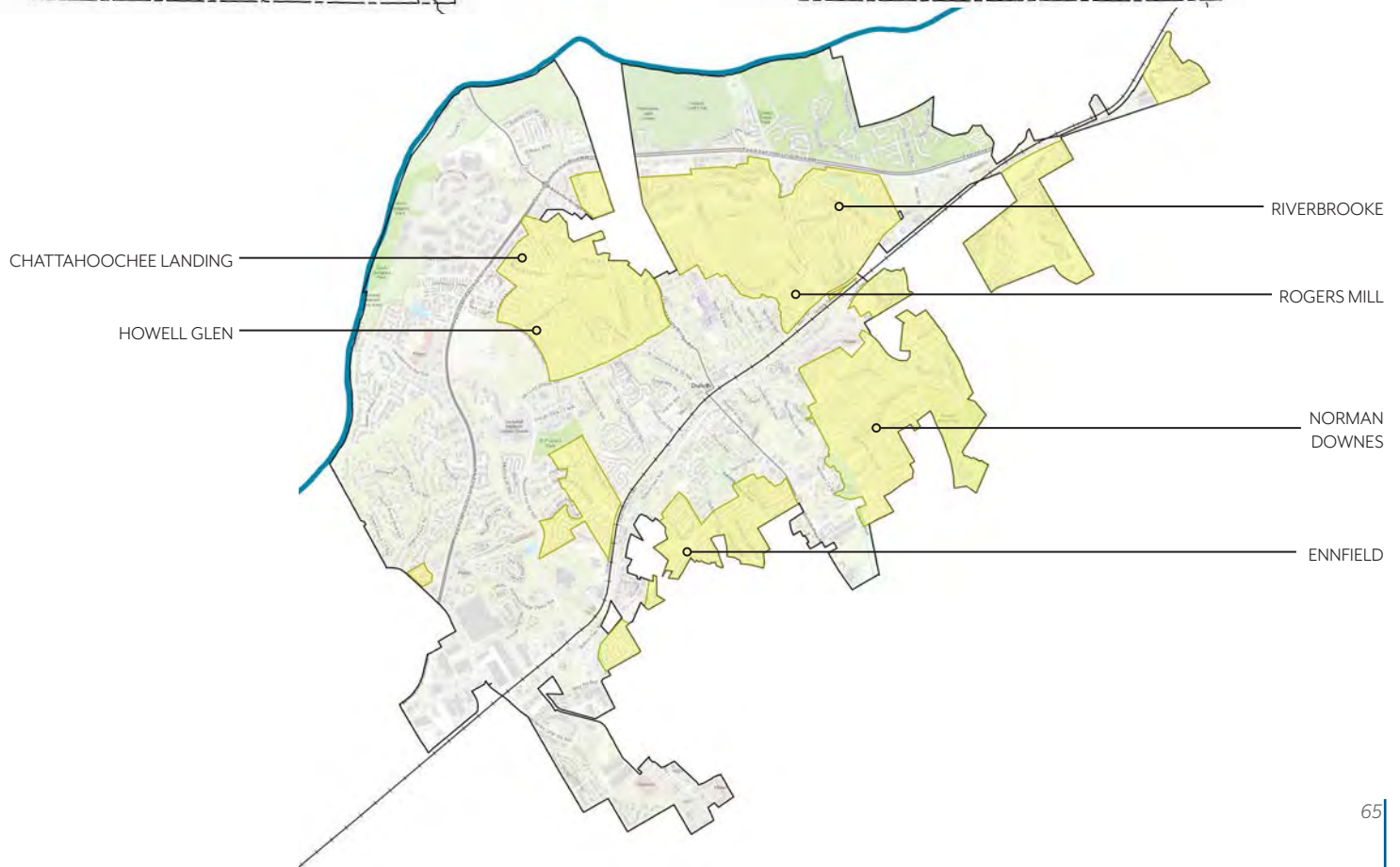
## Traditional Neighborhood Development



ABOVE: Cresswell Neighborhood



LEFT: The graphic illustrates the urban form of a traditional neighborhood within the same landscape as the previous graphic. Streets are connected or terminate at a common greenspace. Property lots are small to promote community and conservation.





# Sugarloaf Activity District

**The Sugarloaf Activity District will be a connected, yet self-sufficient, activity center consisting of retail, office and a variety of residential types serving as the northern gateway into the City.**

The Sugarloaf Activity District functions as a mixed-use node of commercial and residential uses with strong connections to the Downtown Core and the wider region. This District has experienced great success since the completion of the Sugarloaf Market mixed-use development in 2016. The large 15 acre parcel at the corner of Main Street (formerly Chattahoochee Drive) and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard has become a mixed-use development with retail, office, and age-restricted apartments. A 4.5 acre tract of wooded land at the bend on Main Street has developed into a townhome community.

As an important gateway into the city, future development should be held to high architectural and design standards. While not developed as one large Planned Unit Development, the architecture of the area compliments each other through common combination of landscaping, materials, color or architectural style. As the Sugarloaf Activity District continues to develop, traditional town center standards should be prioritized. Buildings fronting tree-lined streets with parking-in-the-back are design standards that are essential for future development to fit within the character of the District. Though the Sugarloaf Activity District is a node of urbanity within the wider suburban context of Duluth, this District should not be seen as in conflict or competition with the Downtown Core. The District should continue to be developed in a way that gives it a unique sense of place, separate from other centers of activities within Duluth.



## Aspirations

- Promote office or residential development on the undeveloped, triangular-shaped property on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.
- Encourage the transition from light industrial uses to commercial/retail/office uses along Main Street.
- Continue the construction of the Main Street Trail.
- Enhance crosswalk on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to better connect neighborhoods on the north side of PIB to commercial developments and Main Street trail across the street.
- Explore creating a common theme or brand for the area through signage, markers and public art.
- Encourage city-wide community standards for residential and commercial properties within this “gateway” district.
- Identify a quality tenant for the previous Sprouts grocery store.

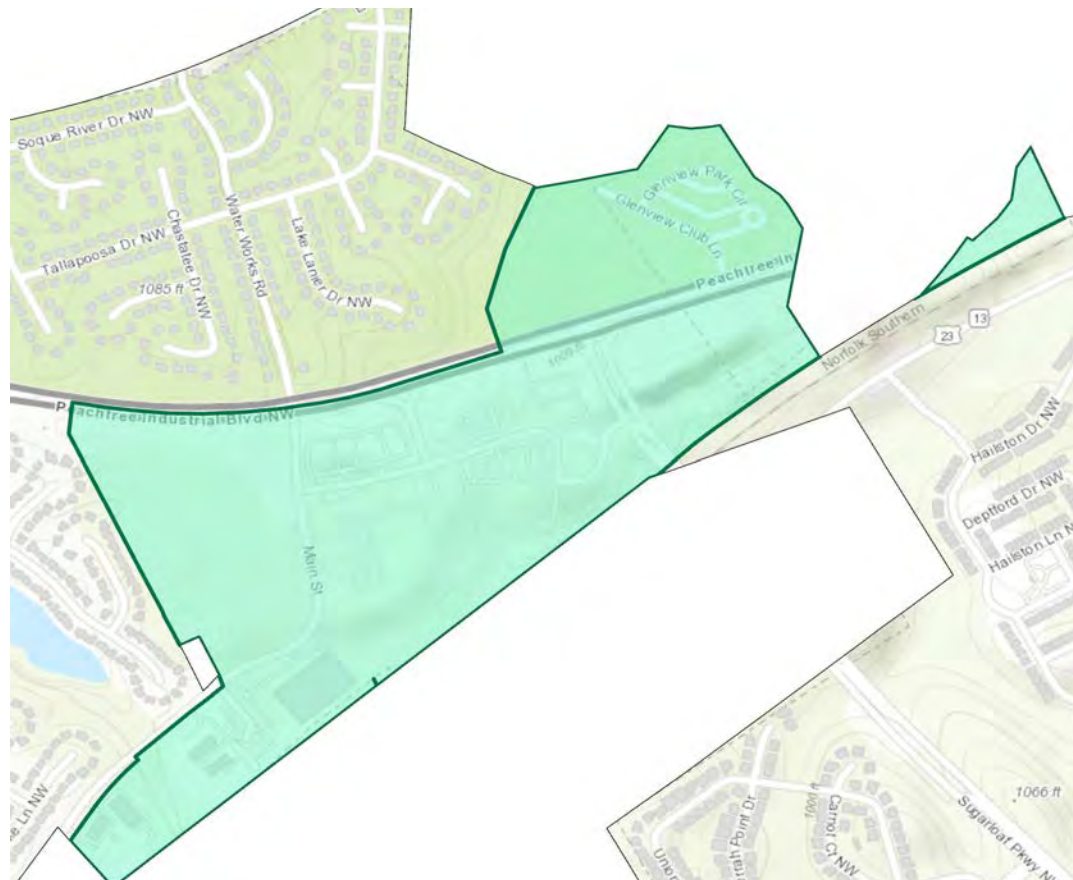


LEFT: From left to right, Greysolon Townhomes, Annabelle Senior Living Apartments, Lidl grocery store.

BELOW: Heights at Sugarloaf luxury apartment development



RIGHT: Located at and around the P.I.B. and Sugarloaf intersection, the Sugarloaf Activity District is shown in teal. The Chattahoochee Residential District (blue) shares a northern border with the District, while the southern border is formed by the Norfolk Southern Railroad.





# River Green Employment District

**River Green will continue to be an economic engine for the city, serving as a major regional distribution and office hub.**

River Green is the City's major employment district. The business park is filled with large office warehouse buildings. With the recent construction of a 155,000 square foot office warehouse located near the entrance to Scott Hudgens Park, the business park is essentially built out. It is not anticipated that there will be much new development or redevelopment within the business park.

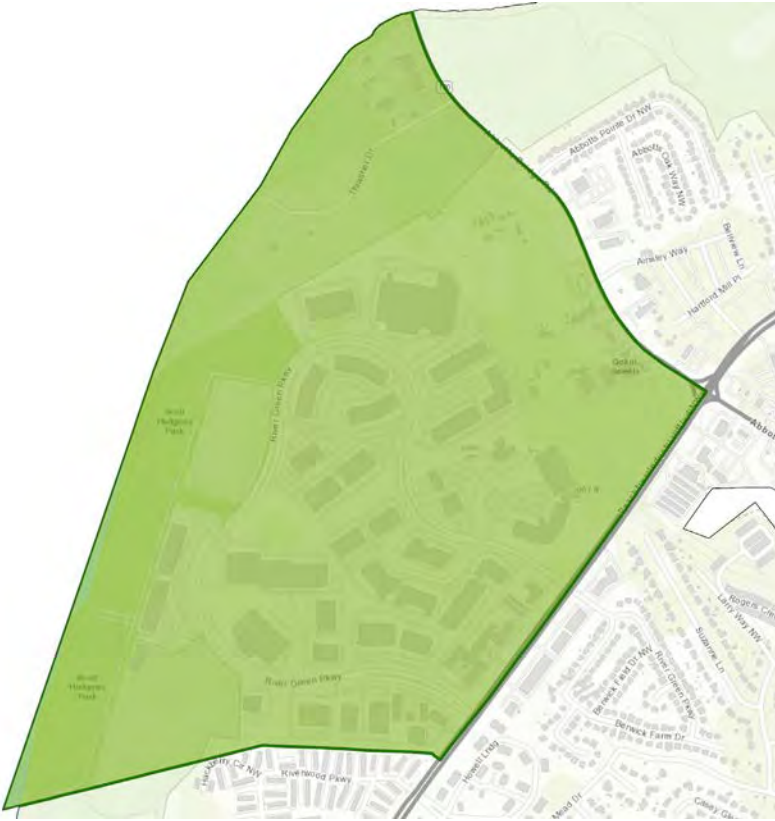
The area with the most redevelopment opportunity is along Abbotts Bridge Road between Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) and the Chattahoochee River. This area currently contains some small warehouses, a used car dealership and some other relatively small buildings. Potential future redevelopment is constrained by environmental regulations. There is a stream and floodplain that parallels Abbotts Bridge Road and a large tract of protected land owned by the Federal government adjacent to the Abbotts Bridge Recreation Area. Due to these restrictions, not all of the undeveloped land in this area is developable. The high intensity industrial uses located on Abbotts Bridge Rd at the city limits are undesirable in terms of environmental protection and community aesthetics. Redevelopment of these properties into one larger property with a single user would be beneficial to the city. A third entrance to the River Green business park from S.R 120 could be constructed within this area and would relieve congestion at the PIB entrances during rush hour. Another potential solution to improve the congestion in the area may be to continue River Green Parkway across PIB to Howell Mead Drive and signalize the intersection on PIB.

During the previous economic downturn, institutional and public assembly uses were located in this district. As units turnover, staff will promote office and light industrial uses.



## Aspirations

- Continue to work with property owners and brokers to keep occupancy rates high within the River Green business park.
- Explore feasibility of adding an entrance to the business park directly accessing Abbotts Bridge Road.
- Encourage land combination of smaller older properties on Abbotts Bridge Road to facilitate redevelopment of commercial and residential properties.
- Continue upgrading and improving City owned and City leased park land.
- Extend the future greenway trail along the river through this district.
- Improve city owned infrastructure within the office park, including roads, sidewalks, and drainage.
- Improve signage and wayfinding for Scott Hudgens Park.
- Perform an economic needs assessment to determine the areas capacity for, among other things, light industrial, professional office, institutional and residential land uses.



LEFT: Located at the corner of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Abbotts Bridge Road, the River Green District (green) is adjacent to the Peachtree Retail Corridor, Urban Neighborhoods, and the Chattahoochee Residential District.

BELOW: Scott Hudgens Park, an asset to the River Green Employment District and the City as a whole.



ABOVE: The AGCO building within the River Green Employment District.

LEFT: Proposed street connection within the River Green Employment District. This street connection, linking River Green Parkway and Abbotts Bridge Road, creates a much needed safer option for River Green employees to exit at a street signal intersection onto Abbotts Bridge.



# Medical District

**The Medical will serve as a large medical and office center for Gwinnett County and the City with multiple new Class-A medical and office buildings. It will be a regional center of activity, but supported locally by nearby mixed-use developments on redeveloped commercial properties.**

The Medical District, anchored by Northside Hospital Duluth, is located on the corner of the Howell Ferry Road and Pleasant Hill Road intersection. The former Ingles shopping center is owned by Northside Hospital Duluth, and when redeveloped, will be a catalyst for the area. There are also a large number of medical offices on Duluth Park Lane and McClure Bridge Road. These offices are generally one or two story buildings in an office park setting. The Post Office is located within this district occupying a roughly 6.5 acre parcel on the corner of McClure Bridge Road and Postal Drive. This District contained the previous Duluth branch of the Gwinnett County Library. Due to the relocation of the Library to the Downtown Core, this building will likely be adaptively reused into a medical facility. The large, 110 acre property, locally known as the “Hudgens’ Property,” is located within this District.



The redevelopment of the Ingles shopping center is extremely important in cementing this area as a regional medical district. The property is large enough to house a large medical building or a number of small buildings in a campus setting. The addition of a large quantity of medical office spaces can spur other office redevelopment on neighboring properties. As development, and redevelopment occur, automobile related uses including mechanics, tire shops, used-car dealerships, and oil change locations are inappropriate for the character of this area. The current automotive uses in this character area should be encouraged to redevelop into office or retail uses, and any future automobile related uses should be prohibited.

The Hudgens property is currently zoned C-2 (General Business District) which allows most commercial uses. Council and staff have expressed that the site should not be developed in a way most commonly associated with large commercial developments - large building footprints with large expanses of parking areas. The site is over 100 acres, large enough to develop it as a mixed use development with housing, office and limited retail uses. There is a stream on the site that could be the natural boundary of the non-residential and residential uses.

The Kroger/LA Fitness shopping center could be redeveloped as a mixed use development with office, retail, and/or residential uses. There is currently a large amount of unused parking that could be better utilized as smaller retail buildings, or possibly residential, through the development of outparcels.

FEMA published updated floodplain maps in 2013. These maps included changes to the 100-year floodplain. In some cases the floodplain was reduced and in other instances it was enlarged. One of the areas where the floodplain grew was near the Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Pleasant Hill



Road intersection. As a result of this change, buildings that were constructed outside the floodplain are now located within it. The City should explore using FEMA funds to purchase some of the affected parcels for conservation purposes or for a potential regional detention pond.

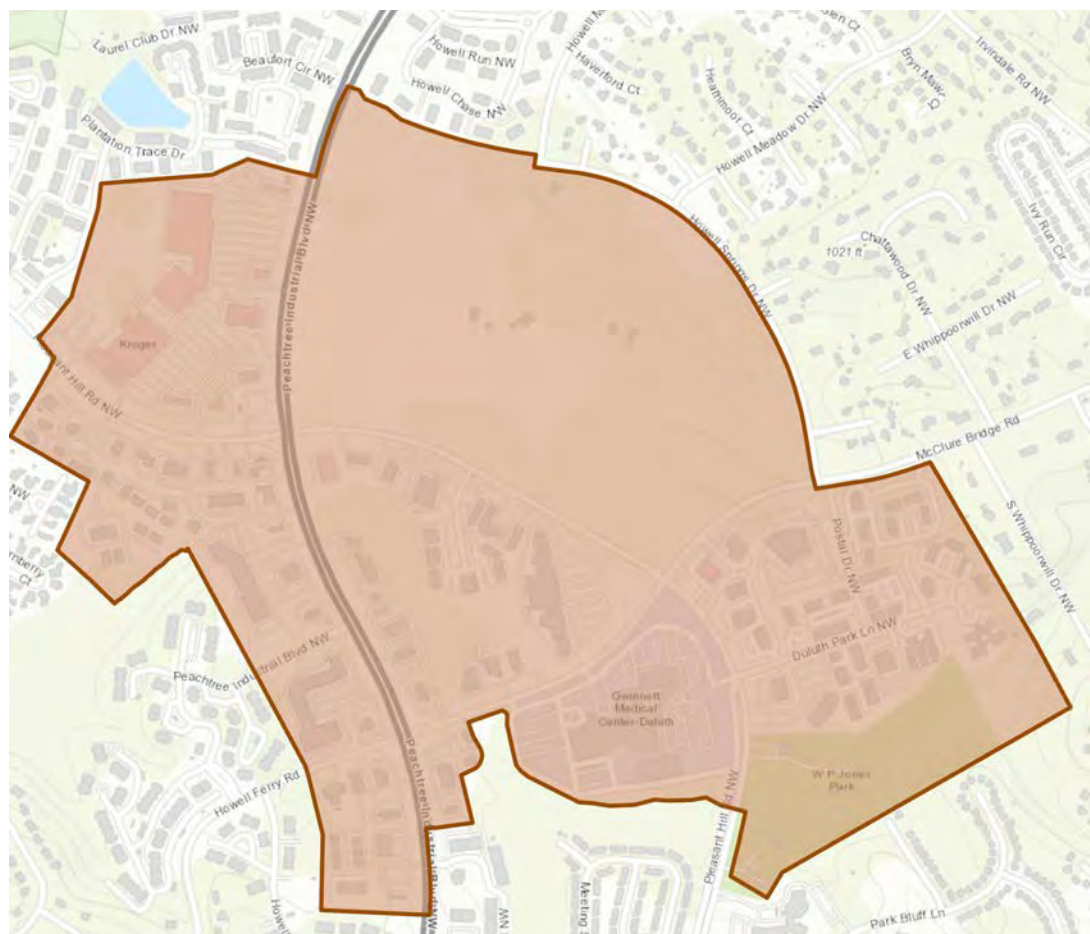
LEFT: Northside Hospital Duluth

BELOW: The old Ingles property has been acquired by Northside Hospital Duluth to expand the services the hospital provides to the community and to the county.



#### Aspirations

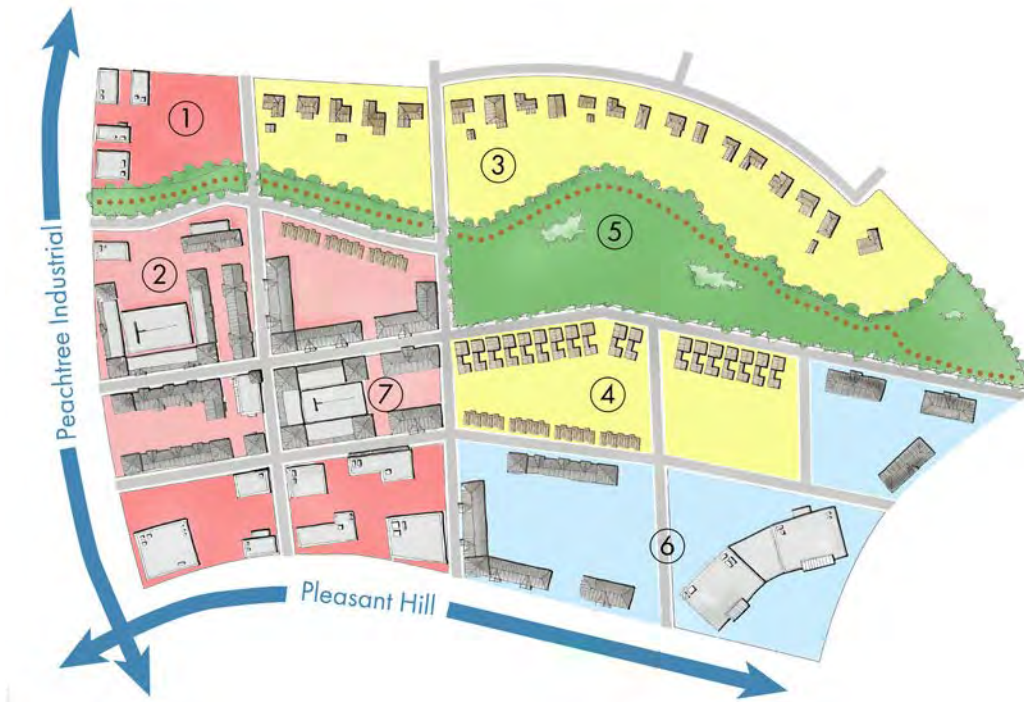
- Continue code compliance efforts on the old Ingles shopping center until Northside Hospital Duluth builds medical facility.
- Redevelop the Krogers shopping center into a mixed-use center with office, retail and/or residential uses.
- Encourage the transition of auto related commercial buildings into office buildings through redevelopment.
- Investigate using FEMA funding to acquire property located within the 100 year floodplain for the construction of a regional detention pond or for conservation.
- Locate potential transit stops for the county's proposed transit system.



RIGHT: The Medical District.



# Hudgens Property Area Plan



LEFT: Graphic demonstrating an effective and efficient variety of uses on the Hudgens Property.

Uses range from single-family residential (yellow), medical (blue), to mixed-use (pink).

BELOW: Various examples of building typology and street morphology typical of a TND/Mixed-use project. Source: DPZ CoDesign



The 110 acre tract of land known locally as the Hudgens Property remains one of the largest undeveloped properties in western Gwinnett situated at the corner of one of the county's busiest intersections. As such, the City recognizes the importance of creating a small area plan for this property in an effort to encourage development that aligns with the goals and aspirations of Duluth's residents, elected officials, and planning staff.

The Hudgens Property's proximity to Northside Hospital provides a unique opportunity to expand the intersection's capacity for retail, office space, and diverse housing opportunities for the doctors, nurses, and staff of the hospital. The proposed plan demonstrates the capability of the subject property to fulfill an increasing demand for quality housing, accessible entertainment, and regional interconnectedness within the City of Duluth.

A variety of land uses should be allocated across the property through the means of a grid system. Nonresidential blocks should not exceed dimensions of 300' by 600' to provide pedestrians with a variety of routes to travel throughout retail and office centers. Residential blocks should not exceed dimensions of 200' by 400' to break up monotonous rows of homes and reduce vehicular travel times. Streets throughout the developed property should always prioritize the travel of the pedestrian over the vehicle through

the use of street trees, wide sidewalks, and traffic calming measures, including roundabouts, medians, on-street parking, etc.

1. When it is necessary, conventional commercial blocks are appropriate in this plan. However, these blocks should be designed in a way to reduce the impact of surface parking and oversized box stores. Building footprints should remain small and surface parking should be positioned in the rear of commercial buildings to maintain a predominantly residential feel throughout the plan.
2. A component of dense mixed-use retail, office, and housing is crucial to the activation of a community. As such “vertical mixed-use” is strongly encouraged on this property. Buildings with on-street parking and street frontage should provide retail and convenience on the ground floor, and office or residential on upper stories. The height of these buildings should be limited to fit the character of a predominately residential community.
3. The northern end of the property is most suitable for larger lot executive single-family homes. Positioning these larger lots in this location creates a natural transition from the single family neighborhood north of the property to the higher intensities positioned at the southern end. These homes would provide a needed housing option for doctors and medical professionals who desire larger homes within the City of Duluth.
4. Small lot single family detached homes are strongly encouraged as a housing option on this property. Small cottages or bungalow style homes devoted to Traditional Neighborhood Design (as defined elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan) are an appropriate transition between retail/office centers and the residential character of the surrounding community.
5. The natural topography and hydrology of this property allow for the provision of unprogrammed park space. Passive or low impact recreation such as walking trails, disc golf courses,

- and open fields provide for the greatest amount of accessibility to public open spaces. The stream and its buffer allow for the preservation of open space and a pedestrian trail system for the residents of this community and for the city at large to enjoy.
6. The property’s relationship to Northside Hospital should be considered carefully. The intersection of Pleasant Hill and McClure Bridge carries a distinct character related to the hospital and its corresponding medical services. This corner of the property can, and should, engage with the hospital in a creative way. There is potential to expand the doctors’ and medical offices into the Hudgens Property, but there is also an opportunity to expand Northside’s role as a regional medical center. With such a large tract of developable land, a medical conference center would be an appropriate land use at this intersection.
  7. As a potential regional center it is appropriate for this property to contain small, architecturally appropriate, hotel to service guests of a regional conference center and to the City of Duluth as a whole. A potential hotel could serve not only as a catalyst for professional conferences, it could encourage increased tourism for Duluth and its nearby downtown area.

*BELOW: Various examples of building typology and street morphology typical of a TND/Mixed-use project. Source: DPZ CoDesign*





# North Berkeley Industrial District

**The North Berkeley Industrial District will continue to be an industrial employment center with the capacity for large industrial endeavors.**

The North Berkeley Industrial District is the City's main industrial district. Several large companies, which employ many people, are located within this Character Area. This District is characterized by large industrial and distribution buildings situated on large parcels. This is the only area in the city where the M-2 (Heavy Industrial District) zoning district is present and therefore contains some of the most intensive industrial uses. The District is bound to the east by Buford Highway and to the west by Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. These major corridors connect the area to metro-Atlanta as well as to I-285 for shipping and distribution needs. Pleasant Hill Road and North Berkeley Lake Road provide quick and easy access to I-85. Some of the properties in this area also have rail spurs that feed directly onto the Norfolk Southern railroad giving another option for shipping and receiving.

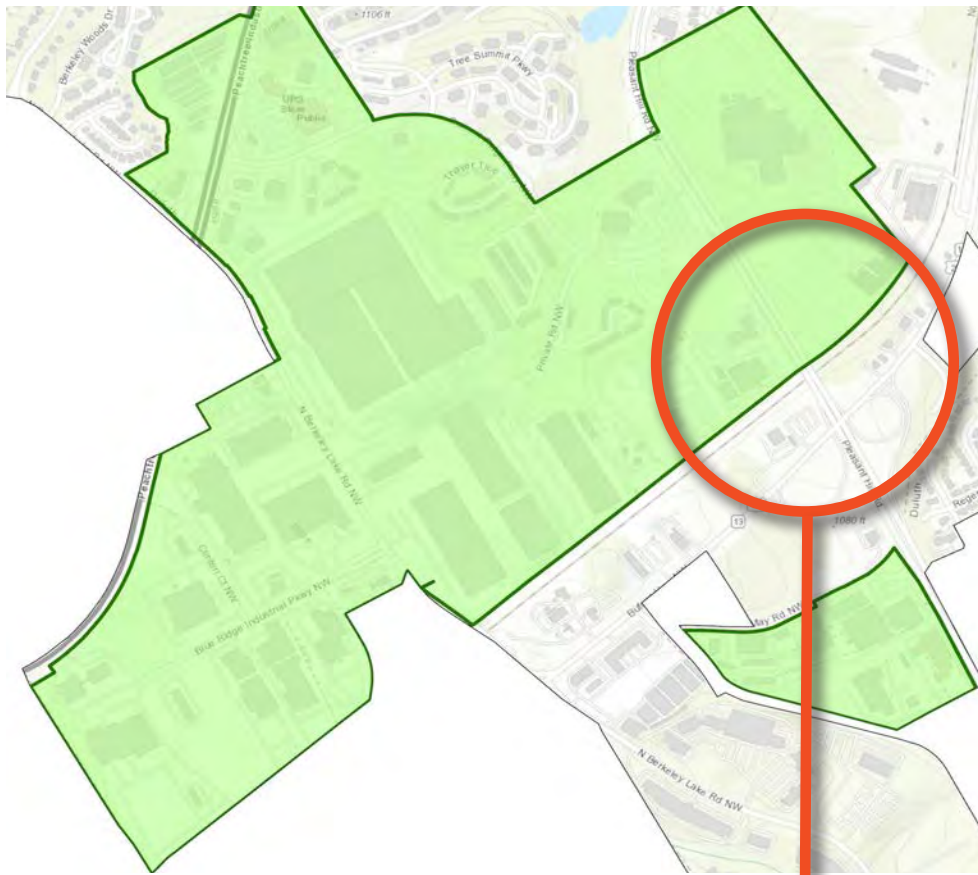


There is little change anticipated in this area in terms of new industrial developments as most of the developable land is currently occupied. However, the Gwinnett County Transit Plan recommends several bus routes traverse through this area of the City. Local route 25 could run directly through this area connecting River Green to the Gwinnett Place Transit Center. Rapid route 200 could also run through this area connecting Downtown Duluth to the Doraville MARTA station. Finally, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route 203 could run along Pleasant Hill Road to Summit Ridge Parkway connecting the Gwinnett Place Transit Center to the Peachtree Corners Transit Center. These BRT routes have the potential to spur development near and around stops and transfer points. The properties along Summit Ridge Parkway may become targeted for reinvestment and redevelopment due to the availability of transit.

The Pleasant Hill and Buford Highway interchange would become significantly more important with the implementation of the Gwinnett Transit Plan. The bus lines that would run along Pleasant Hill Road in this location could take residents to the Doraville MARTA and to the Gwinnett Place Transit Center which may also have a MARTA rail stop. There is a great opportunity to redevelop the currently undeveloped interchange area into a park-and-ride parking garage or into a transit oriented development (TOD).

## Aspirations

- Work with property owners and brokers to maintain high levels of occupancy in the existing industrial and distribution facilities.
- Encourage redevelopment of the large apartment complex and other properties on Summit Ridge Parkway into dense, mixed-use developments with office and both owner and renter occupied residential.
- Encourage the development of a Duluth transit hub around the Buford Highway and Pleasant Hill Road interchange.



LEFT: The North Berkeley Industrial District (green) primarily shares a border with Buford Highway South District (purple) and Existing Urban Neighborhoods (orange). The North Berkeley International Village (blue) is to the south east. To the west of the North Berkeley Industrial District is Peachtree Corners corporate limits and Gwinnett County.

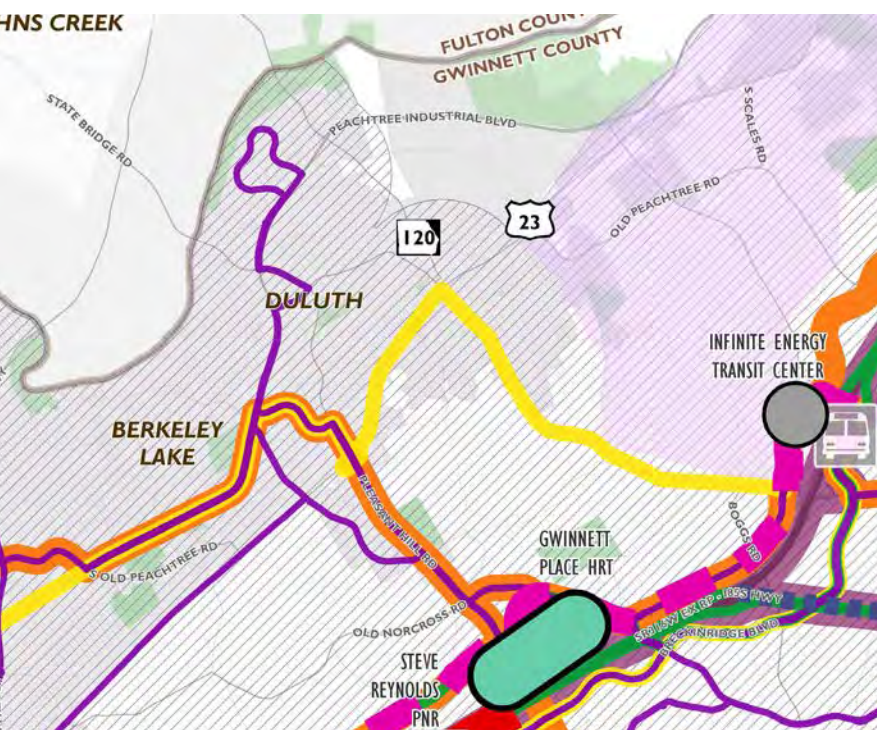


ABOVE: Typical industrial development along North Berkeley Lake Road and Blue Ridge Industrial Parkway.



ABOVE: A Gwinnett Xpress park-and-ride stop.

RIGHT: A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station in Atlanta. There is opportunity to capitalize on the Gwinnett County Transit Plan at the Pleasant Hill-Buford Highway interchange by promoting transit-oriented development and innovative public transit solutions.



LEFT: Connect Gwinnett, Gwinnett County's comprehensive short and long term transit plan, identifies a local bus route and a bus rapid transit route that will impact future development of the North Berkeley Industrial District. Transit routes run along Pleasant Hill Rd, Summit Ridge Pkwy, and P.I.B. The location of these routes suggests that future development in the vicinity take advantage of the strategic interchange and potential connections.

### OVERALL SYSTEM: LONG-RANGE PHASE II

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| HEAVY RAIL TRANSIT                      | HEAVY RAIL TRANSIT OPTION* |
| BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)                 | LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT OPTION* |
| RAPID BUS CORRIDOR                      | EXISTING PARK-AND-RIDE     |
| RAPID-LIKE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS        | FUTURE PARK-AND-RIDE       |
| 316 MANAGED LANES                       | PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREAS  |
| EXPRESS COMMUTER BUS                    | FLEX SERVICE ZONES         |
| DIRECT CONNECT                          | MULTIMODAL HUB             |
| LOCAL ROUTE                             | HEAVY RAIL STATION         |
| EXISTING RAIL SERVICE                   | TRANSIT CENTERS            |
| EXISTING BUS SERVICE (OUTSIDE GWINNETT) | DORAVILLE STATION          |
| EXISTING RAIL STATION                   |                            |

\*FUTURE HIGH-CAPACITY OPTIONS ASSUME EITHER AN EXTENSION OF HEAVY RAIL TRANSIT OR A CONVERSION OF BUS RAPID TRANSIT TO LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT



# North Berkeley International Village

**North Berkeley International Village will continue to be a magnet for small and medium sized minority and internationally owned businesses targeting Duluth's diverse community.**

The North Berkeley International Village is the most diverse character area in terms of land uses. There are large shopping centers, smaller strip centers, residential - both rental and owner-occupied, industrial uses and offices uses. Most of the commercial businesses in the character area are owned by international and minority residents giving the area a unique feel. The Duluth International Village shopping center is almost exclusively Asian-owned businesses, as is the Park Village shopping center on Pleasant Hill Road. These shopping centers both have high occupancies rates.

The biggest opportunity for development and redevelopment is located on the property that is currently occupied with a vacant seven story office building. The property is zoned PUD and has an approved site plan. The tower has never been occupied since it was constructed. The property could see its value increase with improvements being made to nearby Gwinnett Place in addition to the development of the Gwinnett Place Transit Center. Any development that is inconsistent with the approved PUD would have to go through the rezoning process. A mixed-use development with office, retail and distribution could be successful in this location.

The Walmart shopping center also has redevelopment potential. Walmart has announced that it is beginning to redevelop sites into mixed-use villages with other retailers and residential uses. The site currently contains a large amount of parking that is either unused or undesirably used for tractor trailer parking.

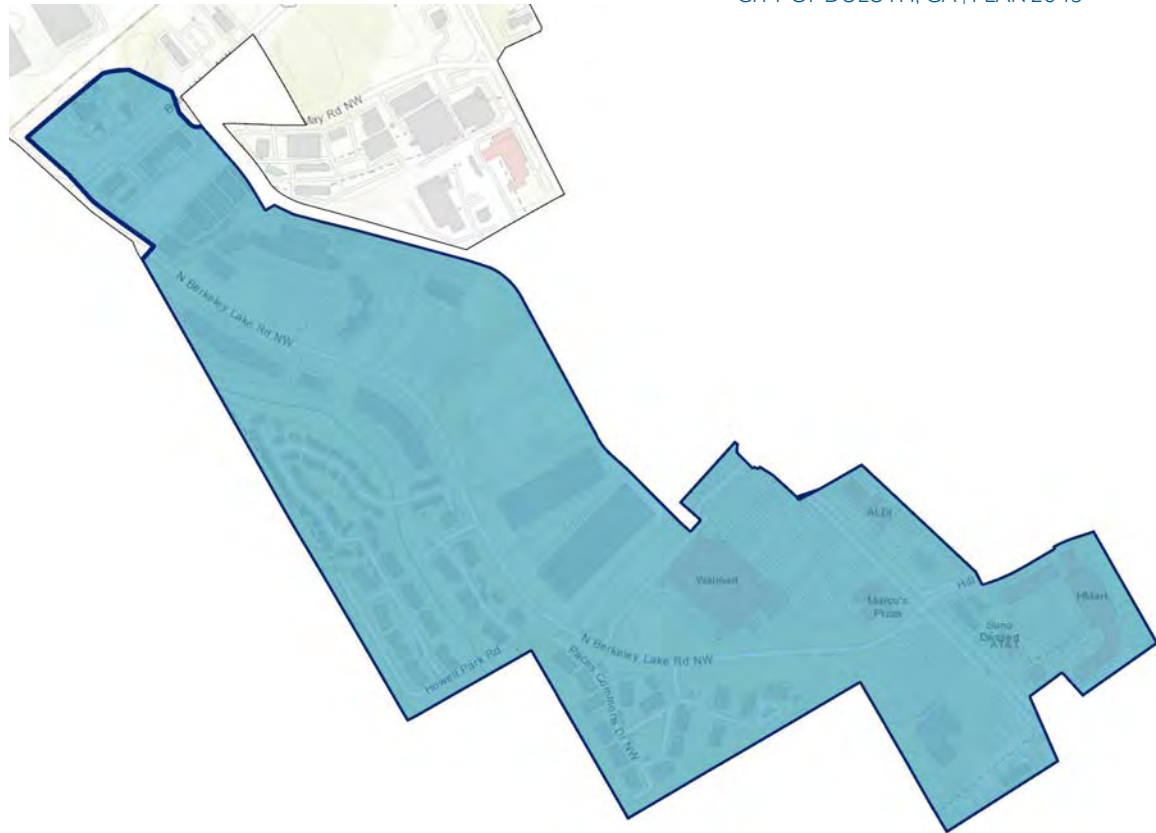


## Aspirations

- Work with the owner of the 7 story tower to rezone and redevelop the property into an economic activity center including office space, warehousing, distribution, and data centers.
- Explore opportunities to amend the municipal boundary as appropriate.
- Encourage the Walmart shopping center to redevelop by reducing large areas of unused parking lots into out-parcels suitable for a mixture of uses.
- Continue working with the Southeast U.S. Korean Chamber of Commerce and other international organizations to market the area and to keep occupancy levels high in the multi-tenant commercial buildings.

*RIGHT ABOVE: H-Mart, a national grocery store that caters to the Asian community, is located at the Pleasant Hill-N Berkeley Lake intersection.*

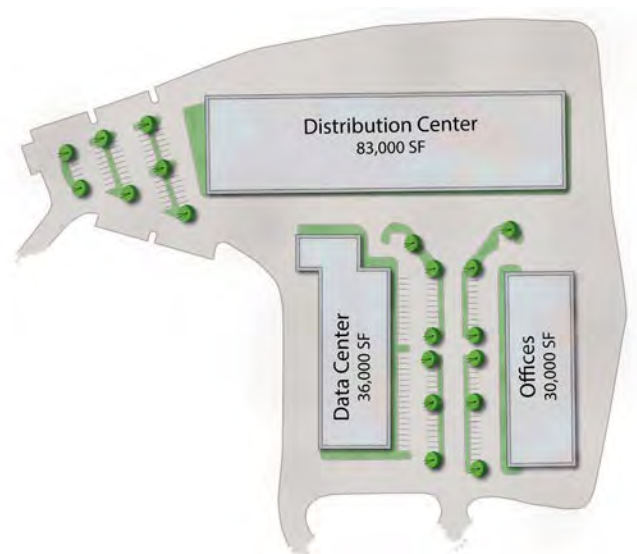
*RIGHT BELOW: The vacant seven story office building and undeveloped site.*



RIGHT: The North Berkeley International Village (blue) shares a border with Buford Highway South District (purple) and the North Berkeley Industrial District (green), both located to the north of the Village.

Located at the most southern spur of the Duluth city limits, the North Berkeley International Village primarily shares a border with unincorporated Gwinnett County.

BELOW: The Duluth Walmart on Pleasant Hill Rd. This building is over-parked, resulting in 18-wheelers using the empty lot for overnight parking.





# Buford Highway South Corridor

**Buford Highway South Corridor will be an attractive gateway that serves the automotive and home repair needs of the community.**

The Buford Highway South Corridor is currently a collection of older, small buildings that have converted into automotive sales and service establishments. These uses, while sometimes not aesthetically pleasing, are necessary for Duluth to be a full service city. In addition to the automotive uses along Buford Highway there are some industrial uses located in the industrial park known as Four Wheel Drive. As identified in the Buford Highway Corridor Redevelopment Plan, large scale redevelopment in this corridor is difficult due to multiple constraints. For instance, the Norfolk Southern right-of-way and Buford Highway right-of-way are both very wide, and because of that, the parcels on the west side of Buford Highway are much smaller than they may appear thus making it very difficult for anything besides small buildings to be constructed. For a long stretch along Buford Highway the rights-of-way converge, leaving no room for developable land. The availability of sewer is very limited in this area, making it very difficult for any substantial building to be constructed. There is a substantial power line easement running along the east side of Buford Highway in this area. On the east side of Buford Highway the parcels are also small, the natural topography and the city limits limit redevelopment instead of the railroad. Along some stretches of Buford Highway, the city limit is only 200 feet from the road.



With continued efforts from the Code Compliance Division, the aesthetics in the Buford Highway South Corridor will continue to improve. Any sort of desired redevelopment in the Buford Highway South Corridor will likely take a land consolidation of multiple properties. The parcels as subdivided today are too small for any sort of major redevelopment. The largest parcels with the best possibility of redevelopment in this Character Area are those surrounding the Pleasant Hill Road interchange. With forward-looking consideration of the Gwinnett County Transit Plan, these parcels could be redeveloped or developed into park-and-rides with the transit routes passing through or near transit oriented developments that capitalize on the nearby transit options.

## Aspirations

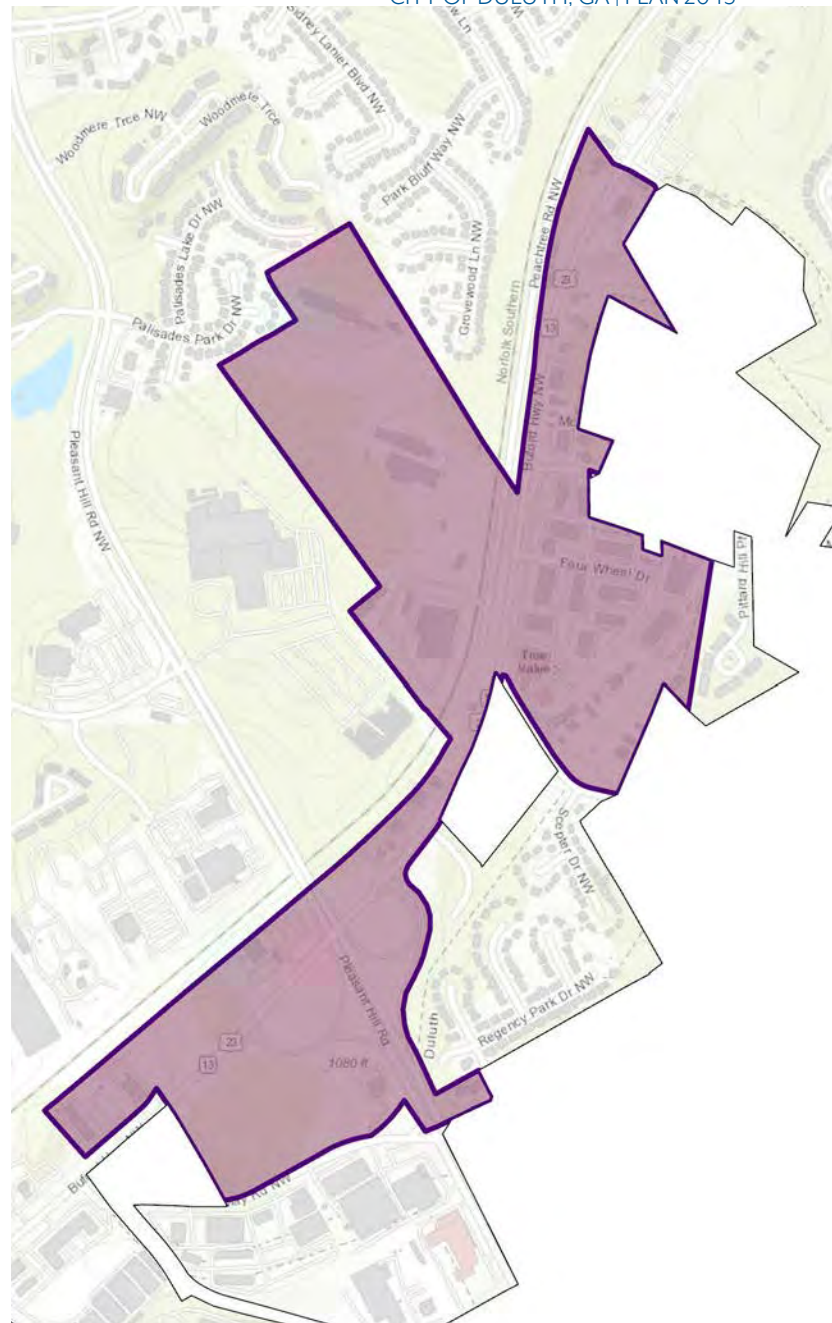
- Continue code compliance efforts in the area to improve area aesthetics.
- Work with property owners and brokers in order to encourage land assemblies to make redevelopment possible.
- Explore feasibility of a linear park or multi-use path on western side of Buford Highway where redevelopment is unlikely due to site constraints.
- Analyze annexation opportunities near Pleasant Hill Road interchange.



BELOW: A typical street view driving south down Buford Hwy.



ABOVE: Auto-centric services dominate the land use in the Buford Highway South Corridor.  
RIGHT: Extending along State Route 13, the South Buford Highway Corridor is represented in purple. South Buford Highway bisects the North Berkeley Industrial District, Urban Neighborhoods, and the Core Neighborhoods District. The eastern side of the District follows the city limits.



RIGHT: Rendering of potential streetscape improvements along Buford Highway from the Buford Highway Corridor Study (2010). Streetscape improvements in this district should be focused on improving aesthetics and pedestrian safety through landscaping.





# Buford Highway North Corridor

**The Buford Highway North Corridor will be the commercial and office gateway into Downtown Duluth lined with office and mixed-use developments that generally get more dense closer to Downtown.**

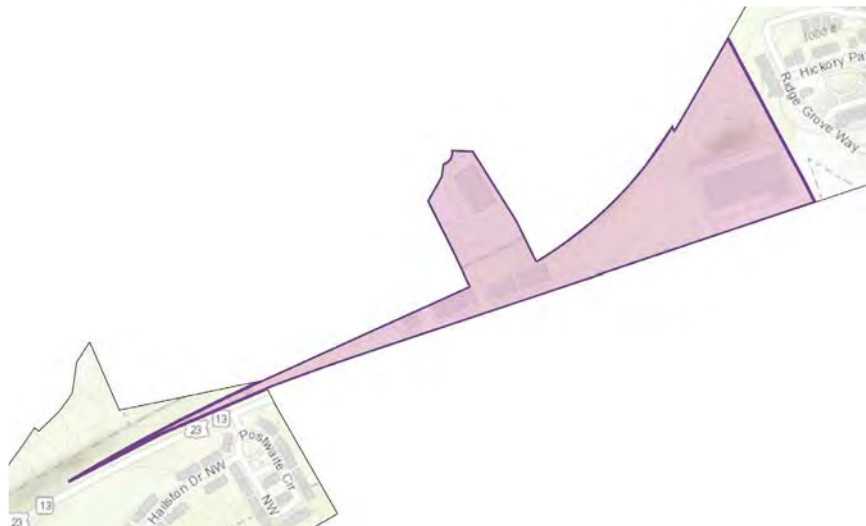
The Buford Highway North Corridor is currently developed in a typical suburban pattern. There are individual stand-alone commercial establishments as well as strip commercial centers and a large grocery store anchored shopping center. There are, however, a number of establishments that may be better suited for a more industrial setting such as warehouses, rock yards, towing companies, etc. Many of these establishments were developed in the 1980's long before Duluth was a bustling city. These establishments are also located between Downtown and the Buford Highway and Rogers Bridge/Old Peachtree intersection where retail and commercial use resume, creating a disjointed commercial corridor.

The properties that currently contain warehouses are large enough to contain medium sized office and retail buildings. Potential future development can utilize the naturally occurring slope as a way to screen parking by placing the parking behind and below the buildings fronting the street. As the retail industry moves away from large grocery store anchored shopping centers, there is tremendous redevelopment opportunity at the Duluth Station shopping center. Duluth Station and the surrounding commercial properties have experienced high levels of vacancies for an extended period of time. This can be attributed to a lack of visibility as well as difficult ingress and egress from the properties. A mixed-use center with retail and residential uses could be a great improvement in the area using the under-used parking as commercial out parcels.

There is a large amount of land along Buford Highway, north of the Cresswell neighborhood that is currently located in unincorporated Gwinnett County. This area is mostly large lot residential but there are also non-residential uses as well. As development pressure continues to rise, it is expected that this area will be targeted by developers due to its location between two quality cities and its easy access to I-85. In order to have influence on the development of this area, the City should analyze annexing the area into the city.

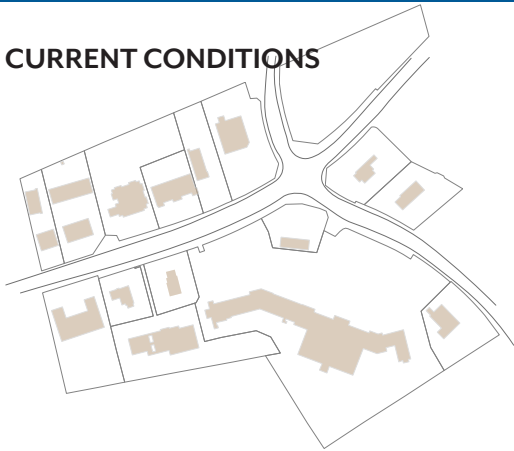


*BELOW: The eastern most spur of the North Buford Highway Corridor is shown in purple. This portion of the Corridor is dominated by industrial uses.*

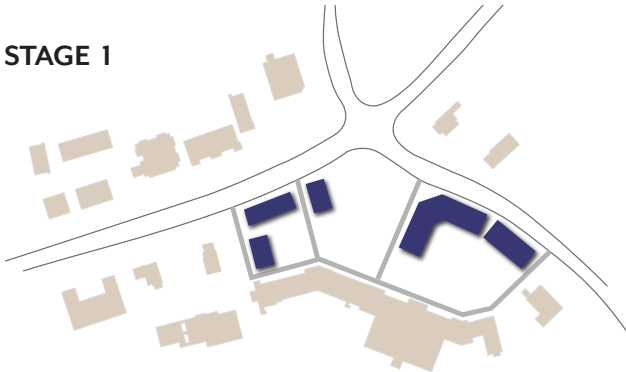


## Potential Redevelopment Strategy

### CURRENT CONDITIONS



### STAGE 1



Pad sites redeveloped into 2-3 story mixed retail and office uses with podium parking along Buford Hwy and Old Peachtree Road



ABOVE: Current site conditions of the Duluth Station Shopping Center.

### Aspirations

- Encourage the redevelopment of warehouse and non-retail properties into office, retail and residential property.
- Encourage mixed-use developments on the major Buford Highway and Rogers Bridge/ Old Peachtree intersection - especially on the undeveloped property and the Duluth Station property.
- Develop design guidelines for the Character Area focusing on ideas such as being pedestrian friendly, buildings close to the right-of-way, screened parking, etc.
- Analyze annexing the properties along Buford Highway and Sugarloaf Parkway.

### STAGE 2

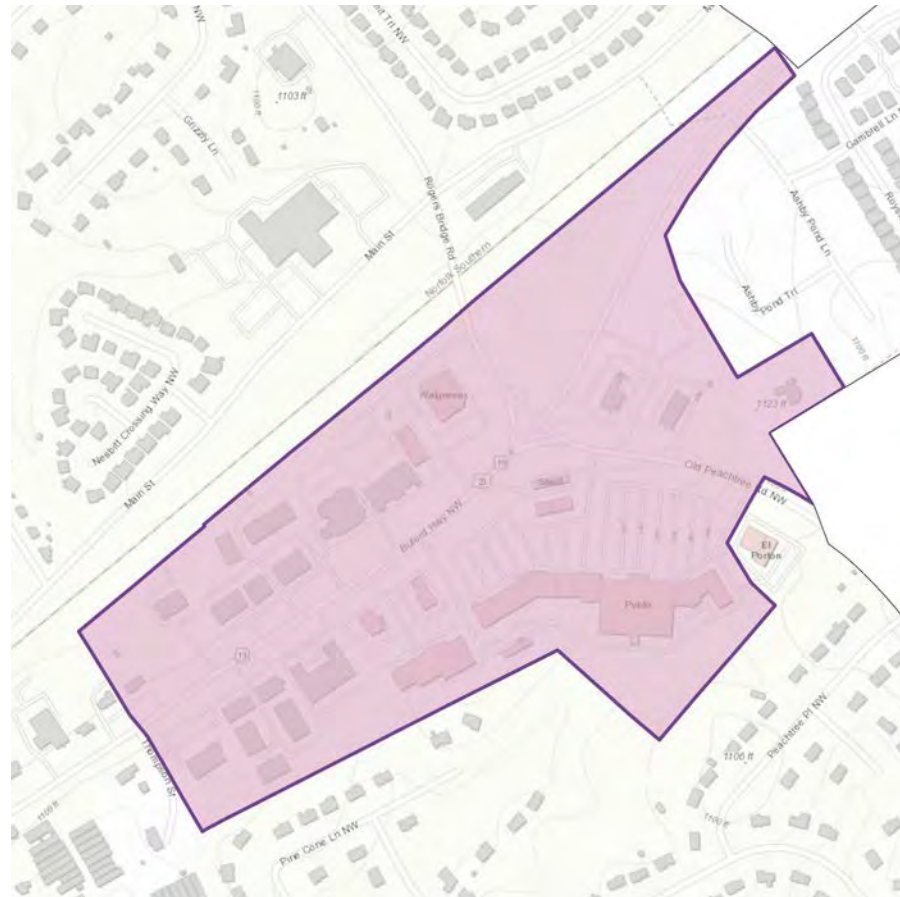


Internal parking lots developed with mid-rise office and residential buildings. Internal street network is extended. Structured parking and lots serve existing strip retail buildings.

### STAGE 3



Existing strip retail is redeveloped into townhomes and condos. Amenities and green infrastructure are completed.



ABOVE: The westernmost spur of the North Buford Highway Corridor is centered on the Buford Highway-Old Peachtree intersection. The Corridor, primarily surrounded by Established Neighborhoods, shares a border with the Core Neighborhoods District.



# Duluth Highway Corridor

**The Duluth Highway corridor will be an attractive gateway into the City while anticipating the potential for higher density in the future.**

The Duluth Highway Corridor is characterized by existing large, semi-rural residential and institutional uses such as churches. These communities and residents have long been important institutions, contributing to the fabric of Duluth. Duluth Highway serves as an important thoroughfare, connecting the city to I-85 and employment centers, while also channeling the community toward Downtown Duluth.

These beautiful and well maintained properties are an asset to the community. However, if the time when the needs of these residents and institutions change and redevelopment begins, the City should prioritize low and medium residential over multi-family. As an important entrance into the city, new development should prioritize quality urban form and architectural style through the use of traditional neighborhood design. Features of traditional neighborhood design include high quality streetscapes, rear loaded garages, sidewalks and a grid street pattern. Denser housing, such as townhomes and cottage style homes, should be located closer to Duluth Highway. Moving further away from Duluth Highway, the lots and houses should get larger in size, especially near Lake Norman.

## Aspirations

- Develop design guideline for residential developments in the Character Area. Guidelines should include architectural, site layout, density and streetscape standards.
- Encourage single-family detached homes on small or medium sized lots.
- Explore climate resiliency measures to retrofit existing neighborhoods with open space, pocket parks, and green infrastructure.



*BOTTOM RIGHT: Located at the southeastern spur of the city limits, the Duluth Highway Corridor is shown in red. The northern section of the Corridor shares a border with the Core Neighborhoods District. Established Neighborhoods are also in close proximity.  
BOTTOM LEFT: Entrance to the Evanshire neighborhood*



# Peachtree Retail Corridor

**The Peachtree Retail Corridor will be an attractive and energized retail corridor easily accessed by Duluth residents and non-city residents alike.**

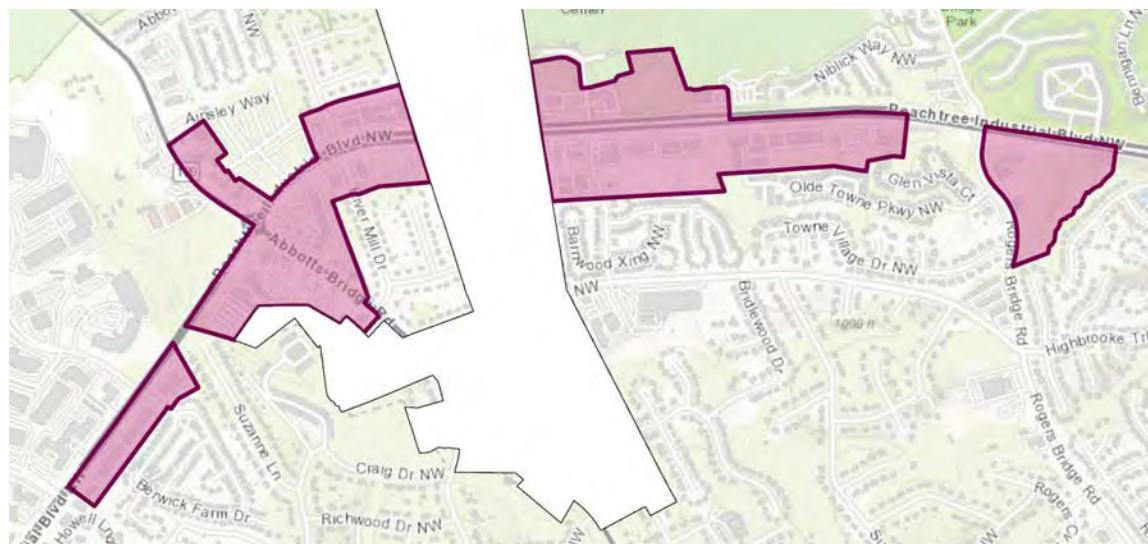
The Peachtree Retail Corridor is characterized by strip retail centers and stand alone commercial buildings. The corridor is easily accessible to city residents by car as well as non-city residents traveling through Duluth. Vacancy in the corridor is generally low, however as brick and mortar retail continues to compete with online retailers such as Amazon, the City must be prepared to manage higher vacancy rates in the future. Due to possible higher levels of vacancy, the City should encourage redeveloping larger shopping centers into mixed-use developments with residential uses and the same or comparable amounts of commercial space. Larger tracts of undeveloped land are appropriate for development of low to medium density residential with traditional neighborhood design to support retail in the district.



## Aspirations

- Work with building owners to help maintain high occupancy rates through business retention and recruitment.
- Continue code compliance efforts to maintain an attractive appearance of shopping centers and buildings.
- Encourage more redevelopment and reinvestment in older commercial buildings.
- Investigate zoning amendments to allow new types of uses into C-2 zoning district, such as micro breweries and distilleries, in order to keep occupancy levels high.
- Investigate zoning amendments to parking requirements when applicable for fast food or other restaurant uses whose business model depends primarily on drive-thru sales.
- Encourage large shopping centers to redevelop by reducing large areas of unused parking lots into out-parcels suitable for a mixture of uses.

BELOW: The Peachtree Retail District (purple) is bordered by the River Green Employment District and the River Residential District. The south side of Peachtree Retail adjacent to established suburban neighborhoods.

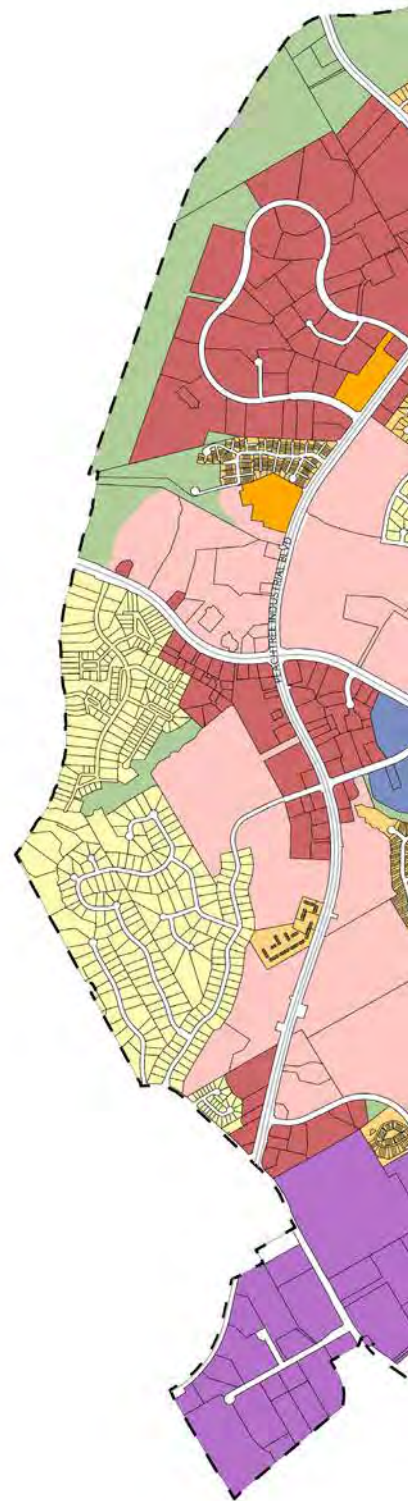


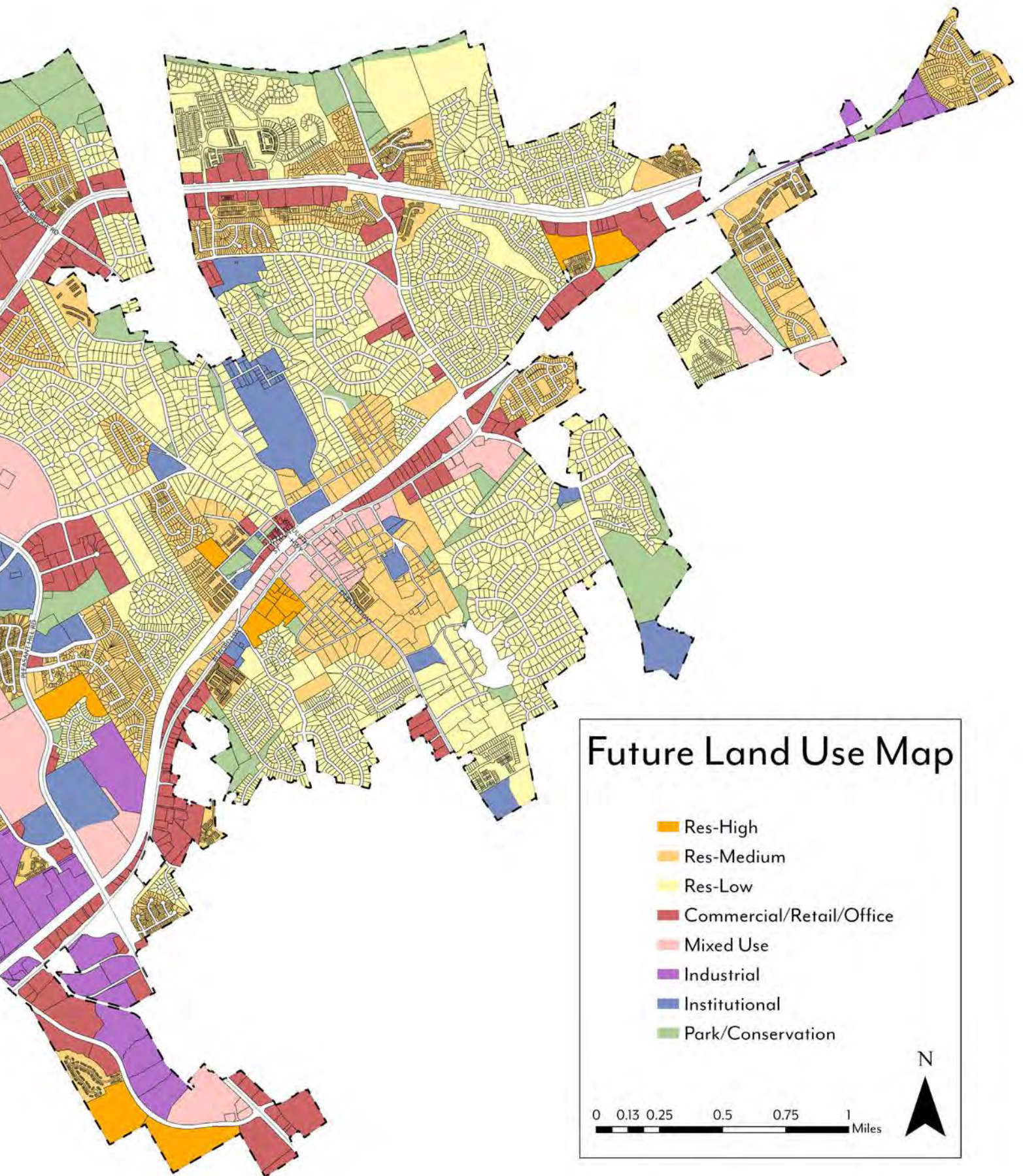


# FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use map provides a more detailed vision for the future development of the city. This map provides a vision of what the city wishes to look like in the future. Staff compiled input from residents at the open house, the Steering Committee at the numerous meetings, and elected officials at strategic work sessions to create this map. To provide better context, this section also includes descriptions of the future land use categories that are shown on the map.

This map will guide future land use decisions made by City Council. A major factor of whether a rezoning application is deemed appropriate or not, is whether it conforms to the Future Land Use Map. The map is also important to the City as it helps grant and funding applications for plans and improvements. Many times the Atlanta Regional Commission will look to see if certain improvements are indicated in the Future Land Use Map.







# Future Land Use Definitions

## Low Density Residential

Residentially and planned unit development zoned properties consisting of detached single family houses. The density of this classification is generally 1-6 units per acre. This includes semi-rural properties such as those on Duluth Highway to homes located in subdivisions such as Riverbrooke or Norman Downes. Most of the single family neighborhoods in Duluth are classified as Low Density Residential and were constructed from the 1970s through the 1990s. These neighborhoods typically have larger yards, have houses that are set further back from the street and have more distance between houses. Due the lack of large, undeveloped land and a change in development styles, it is not anticipated that there will be many more low density neighborhoods developed outside of the Chattahoochee Residential District.

## Medium Density Residential

Residential and planned unit development zoned properties consisting of detached single family homes and townhomes. The density of this classification is generally 6-12 units per acre. This residential classification has more variation in development style. Some mid density neighborhoods are strictly single family detached neighborhoods such as Ivy Circle and Albion Farm Village and some are strictly townhome neighborhoods such as Chattahoochee Cove and Glens at Sugarloaf. Newer mid density neighborhoods, generally those built after 2005, are a mixture of single family detached and townhomes. Lakes at Sugarloaf and Rivers Edge are good examples of mixed residential neighborhoods. It is anticipated that much of the future residential developments will be developed as mid density due to smaller tracts of available land and a change in development styles.

## High Density Residential

Multi-family and planned unit development zoned properties consisting of apartments and condominiums. The density of this classification is 12+ units per acre. Any new apartment complex will likely be development as part of a mixed-use development.

## Commercial/Retail/Office

This classification is intentionally broad as to include all non-residential uses except for institutional and industrial uses. Located almost exclusively on primary, major and minor arterials, these types of uses rely on vehicle traffic for maximum visibility and access. Most of the parcels that are included in this classification are relatively small and contain a single building with the exception of Rivergreen Parkway. The larger parcels that currently contain commercial uses such as grocery store-anchored shopping centers are marked as mixed-use for redevelopment opportunities.

## Industrial

The City currently has two industrial zoning districts – Heavy and Light Industry. In the future the

City's industrial properties will be exclusively located in the North Berkeley Lake Industrial District. The few small industrial zoned properties that remain outside the North Berkeley Lake Industrial District will likely be redeveloped into another use.

## Institutional

The institutional classification includes local government uses, schools and large institutional land uses. The local government uses include City Hall, Public Safety Building, Public Works, library, fire stations, etc. The non-government institutional uses are exclusively religious institutions.

## Park/Conservation

This future land use plan map classification corresponds with the flood plains located along the streams throughout the city as well as land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, neighborhood amenities or lakes.

## Mixed Use

This classification includes properties zoned PUD and contains mixed-use developments. The properties with this classification tend to be large enough to contain large PUDs and redevelopments. Located in the Downtown Core, along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and at major intersections, the PUD classification is intended to allow for creative land planning and design that cannot be achieved under standard zoning districts. Due to their size and locations, these developments and redevelopments will be catalytic for the area and extremely important to the City. Buildings heights may be taller and setbacks reduced to allow for developments that are unique to Duluth.



RIGHT: Redevelopment of the former United Tool site (2023).



# SIX

## From Strategy to Implementation

**This is how we will achieve our overall vision and goals for Duluth.**

While our vision and goals help guide how development should occur within the community, they do not have the weight of legal policy. Without a comprehensive, practical, and systematic step-by-step Short Term Work Program (STWP) and a citywide policy framework, our vision and goals will not become reality. A plan is just a plan until it is translated into policy and implementation measures. In addition to laying out the STWP and the citywide policies, this section will review how successful the City and its community partners were in achieving the policies and programs set forth in the 2040 STWP in the Report of Accomplishments.

The Duluth Department of Community Development & Engineering is the primary administrative agency responsible for implementation of **ForwardDuluth**, our Comprehensive Plan. However, other municipal departments have important responsibilities in their respective service areas, and the City Manager must propose and recommend approval of funding levels appropriate to carry out the many programs suggested here. Finally, City Council approves funding for projects on an annual basis.

The Duluth Planning Commission provides overall support for plan implementation and should periodically review the progress of plan implementation. Other agencies also have roles in plan implementation. Ad-hoc committees can be formed as needed to help guide the process of implementation. If at any time a particular program rises in its level of importance, City Council or a specified committee shall address the particulars directly.

*RIGHT: Public art at Buntin Road Park  
commissioned by the Duluth Public Arts  
Commission.*





# Citywide Policies

The Citywide policies are the cumulative effort of many stakeholders whose shared expertise identified planning practices and strategies that will help move Duluth forward. While this section is specific to the City of Duluth, many of the policies also support regional goals. As Metro-Atlanta continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly important that local goals and policies align throughout the region to improve the environment, identity, housing, economy, transportation and other critical elements that make Metro-Atlanta a great place to be.

## Natural Resources

- **Preservation Generally.** The natural environment should be preserved as much as possible. Preserving natural features helps maintain air and water quality, as well as provide visual and recreational amenities for local citizens.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Areas.** Prevent development from occurring in, or significantly encroaching upon environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas, by preparing and adopting additional regulations as necessary to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Innovative Land Practices that Preserve the Environment.** Encourage innovative land development practices that focus on preserving environmentally sensitive land areas and open space.
- **Minimize Water Quality Impacts.** The location and intensity of development should be designed so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality, both during and after construction. Appropriate and adequate mitigation measures should be implemented where development is likely to have a negative effect on water quality. Major considerations concerning water quality should include: organic pollution from infiltration and surface runoff; erosion and sedimentation; water temperature elevation; nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous; and toxic materials.
- **Wetlands.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking). Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):
  1. Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others;
  2. Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species;
  3. Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation;
  4. Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands;
  5. Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature;
  6. Whether the project contains significant State historical and archaeological resources, defined as “Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;”
  7. Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas; or
  8. Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.
- **Floodways and Floodplains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters.
- **National Flood Insurance Program.** Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Periodically amend the Unified Development Code to comply with changes to ordinances specified by the Federal

Emergency Management Agency.

- **Best Management Practices.** Implement best practices for water pollution control and stormwater management, including but not limited to: biofilters (vegetated swales/strips), wet ponds, and constructed wetlands.
- **Municipal Practices.** Ensure that the City, in its own activities, follows the same environmental policies as required of private developers.
- **Encourage Conservation Subdivisions.** Encourage conservation subdivision development, where opportunities exist. (Conservation developments cluster structures on developable land in order to conserve land and/or provide public open space).
- **Acquire Conservation Lands.** Seek out opportunities to acquire conservation lands and park spaces.
- **Connectivity of Open Spaces.** Creation of new open space and connection to existing or planned open spaces are priorities for Duluth and will be sought in the review of development proposals, as appropriate. The requirement for and design of open spaces will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the City's objectives of creating pedestrian-friendly destinations and accessible linkages to them. Improving accessibility to parks and creating pedestrian links between open spaces, public parks and Downtown will greatly strengthen the urban core of the City and will therefore be a key guiding principle when reviewing open space proposals.
- **Permeable Surfaces.** Use permeable surfaces for parking lots in non-residential developments, if appropriate.
- **Street Trees.** Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments.
- **Water Conservation.** Promote the conservation of water by residents and businesses to meet regional and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.

## Energy

- **Sustainability and Energy Efficiency.** Promote sustainable and energy-efficient development.
- **Reduce Energy Consumption.** Reduce energy consumption through comprehensive planning and urban design.
- **Support Programs to Increase Energy Efficiency.** Support programs to increase energy efficiency and reduce life-cycle costs of all construction projects, including public and institutional projects.
- **Recognize the Relationship between Energy Efficiency and Mobility.** Recognize that providing transportation options and good urban form design is the first step to

changing pollution intensive choices for mobility. Actively promote alternative transportation modes through the planning and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian pathways and future transit systems.

- **Efficient Lighting Practices.** Continue to enforce lighting design guidelines that promote energy efficiency and safety while reducing light pollution or "sky-glow," light trespass on adjacent properties, and glare.

## Historic Resources

- **Compatible Character.** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing local landmarks within the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- **Increase Community Support.** Strive to increase community support for historic preservation through the protection and retention of Duluth's local landmarks. Continue to expand upon programs and activities that will instill an appreciation and pride in Duluth's past.
- **Historic Districts and Landmarks.** Add to locally designated historic districts and local landmarks or create new ones, as appropriate.
- **Incentives.** Provide incentives, such as density bonuses, to developers that protect and preserve historic resources such as local landmarks.
- **Reuse of Buildings.** Encourage reuse of buildings, especially local landmarks, provided the architectural character of the building is retained and the market allows for economic success.

## Population

- **Annexation.** Consider municipal boundary expansion opportunities as appropriate, including properties identified as potential annexation areas and when unincorporated property owners petition for annexation. The strategy should incorporate a logical reshaping of the municipal boundary that takes into account effective service delivery, proper land-use control and balanced digest.
- **Diversity in Boards and Commissions.** As the City's ethnic population continues to increase, it should make efforts to attract culturally diverse and multi-lingual members on the City's boards and commissions that reflect this growing diversity within the community.

## Housing

- **Housing Opportunities.** Quality housing in a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in the



City.

- **Housing Variety.** Encourage a variety of home styles, densities and price ranges in locations that are accessible to jobs and services to ensure housing for individuals and families of all incomes and age groups.
- **Executive Housing.** Work in cooperation with real estate developers on key parcels within or near the City to provide more executive level housing in the City.
- **Housing Strategy.** Adopt a comprehensive housing strategy.
- **Lifelong Communities.** Adopt the Lifelong Community Core Principals identified by the Atlanta Regional Commission to plan for housing and transportation infrastructure that allows residents to age in place.
- **Senior and Disabled Housing.** Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways. Senior housing should be located in close proximity to public transit, activity centers, recreation, and health care facilities.
- **Housing and Property Standards Codes.** Allocate appropriate resources to expand the enforcement function of housing and property standards codes (housing maintenance, yards, etc.), including the addition of code compliance staff.
- **State and Federal Housing Programs.** Pursue federal and state financial assistance programs as appropriate to improve areas of substandard housing.
- **Multifamily Housing.** New multifamily housing developments should be located within or part of a larger activity center, such as the Downtown Core. This helps promote walkability, connectivity and effective delivery of services while alleviating congestion and helping local businesses thrive.

## Economic Development

- **Appropriate Businesses.** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in Duluth should be suitable for the City in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the City or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
- **Range of Jobs Available.** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
- **Relation to Land Use Plan.** Avoid rezoning from commercial zoning categories to residential zoning districts, in order to prevent the reduction of land designated in the future land use plan for economic development; where such changes are justified, recognize that such changes may affect the future economic base of the City.

- **Emphasis on Redevelopment.** Future economic development strategies should place the highest priority on redevelopment over new development.
- **Expedite Redevelopment Projects.** Consider, and if appropriate implement, ways to expedite the process of reviewing and approving redevelopment projects that are consistent with adopted redevelopment policies, objectives, and plans.
- **Heritage Tourism.** Promote heritage tourism in Duluth as a way to educate citizens and visitors of Duluth's history and cultural identity and to enhance the local economic base.
- **Small Businesses.** Promote the development of small businesses and entrepreneurship in the City.
- **Home Occupations.** Home occupations, when compatible with the neighborhood, are recognized as part of the overall City economic development strategy, subject to compliance with applicable zoning laws. Consider distinguishing between "major" and "minor" home occupations and regulate appropriately.
- **Positive Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the City.
- **Balanced Regulation.** Balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of commercial and other properties with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.
- **Education and Training.** Explore potential partnerships with local post-secondary educational organizations for training opportunities that allow City residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.
- **Business Marketing and Retention.** The City should work with business owners to assist them with marketing and to ensure that business retention objectives are met.
- **Partnerships.** Partner with private industry and/or other agencies to promote economic development opportunities that will benefit the City of Duluth, Gwinnett County, the region, and the State of Georgia.
- **Promotion and Recruitment.** The City of Duluth should work through Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce to actively and deliberately promote the City to business interests' worldwide, recruiting industry and commerce.
- **Downtown Residential Population.** Continue to grow the residential population within the Downtown Core and Core Neighborhood District to increase the massing of people that frequent downtown.

## Land Use and Urban Design

- **Plans.** Use the Future Land Use Map and Character Area Map as a guide for decision-making.
- **Mixed Use Development.** Promote mixed-use

developments in appropriate areas, especially in activity centers like the Downtown Core.

- **Protect Neighborhoods.** Protect the City's established residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses and from degradation.
- **Neighborhood Input in the Decision-making Process.** Applicants for rezoning and special uses are strongly encouraged to meet with adjacent property owners or homeowners associations prior to public hearings on such petitions.
- **Architectural Requirements.** Promote the highest quality of development. Reevaluate and reconsider architectural and site design standards as appropriate to encourage increased quality of site development, architectural detailing and materials.
- **Compatibility and Hometown Character.** Require new development to respect the scale and character of nearby structures and minimize or mitigate abrupt and excessive differences.
- **Streetscape Improvements.** Aesthetically appealing active transportation routes are desired and will be created or enhanced throughout Duluth. Street trees should be installed to create shaded sidewalks for pedestrians and improve the visual quality. Street furniture zones and landscape strips will be established along sidewalks within appropriate character areas. All streetscape improvements will be coordinated with the appropriate Department of Transportation when working along county and state routes.
- **Focusing of Efforts.** Continue to focus community improvement initiatives as directed by Council.
- **Gateways.** Improve community identity. Create civic gateways to the City that produce a sense of arrival. These entryways may incorporate streetscape elements, signage, landscaping, architectural features, and combinations of land uses that enhance the image and function of the City. Encourage the provision of public green spaces in gateway areas as private development occurs.
- **Signage and Wayfinding.** Continue to implement the community-wide signage system to contribute to the City's urban design and economic development objectives. Signage should be installed at gateway locations and along major corridors that directs visitors to key destinations, such as the Downtown and local attractions, as well as to public parking and municipal buildings.
- **Public Art.** Increase the presence of public art in the community and encourage new developments to display public art and/or contribute financially to a public art fund.
- **Screening.** Screen negative views through site planning, architectural, and landscape devices.
- **Parking.** Adequate parking will be provided within the City.

Parking should be situated so that the parking is located at the rear or side of the building. If circumstances require front parking areas, proper screening from the roadway will be provided.

- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.** Encourage, where appropriate, developments that follow principles of crime prevention through environmental design.

## Community Facilities and Services

- **Level of Service Standards.** Establish and maintain level-of-service and/or performance standards for all community facilities and services provided by the City.
- **Police Protection.** Ensure that the police department has adequate personnel, equipment, and training. Maintain a target officer to population ratio as may be established by national professional organizations.
- **Sewerage.** Coordinate with Gwinnett County to expand sewerage services, promoting increased opportunities for all types of development.
- **Municipal Parks and Recreation Department.** Maintain a Parks and Recreation Department to serve residents with parks and recreational facilities. Where adequate resources exist, the parks and recreational facilities may serve non-residential areas or allow non-residents access.
- **Parkland Designation.** Designate lands for future parks, recreation, open space, and conservation.
- **Location Policy.** While abiding by principles of efficiency in terms of optimal geographic locations for City facilities and services, the City should use its investment in civic buildings to strategically leverage and enhance private reinvestment in redevelopment areas.
- **Public-Private Co-Delivery.** Identify, and capitalize on, opportunities for innovative public-private ventures in the arrangement, provision, and delivery of various City facilities and services.

## Transportation

- **Local Street Improvements.** Improve geometrics of local street intersections where they pose traffic safety problems.
- **Downtown Public Parking.** Ensure adequate off-street parking facilities downtown, including public parking.
- **Context-Sensitive Design.** Provide for street designs that pay appropriate attention to concepts of compatibility, livability, sense of place, and urban design, in addition to conventional traffic engineering considerations. Utilize context-sensitive roadway design to promote streets that are built appropriately to fit the land uses surrounding them. For example, a downtown main street should be built with narrower lanes, wider sidewalks, and streetscape elements



in its design, in order to encourage lower speeds and accommodate pedestrians.

- **Pedestrian/Sidewalk System.** Improve the network of pedestrian facilities (sidewalks) by creating a safe and accessible network throughout the City. Sidewalks of required widths, well-marked crosswalks and approved pedestrian-scaled lighting should be installed to create an inviting and well used pedestrian system. All new construction and redevelopment within the City should install infrastructure as appropriate to support pedestrian connectivity and enhance the sidewalk system. All new facilities must meet current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Additional funding will be sought to create and improve pedestrian facilities within developed areas of the City, but when redevelopment occurs it will be the responsibility of developers to improve facilities along their public street frontages and internal to the development. The City should identify ways to retrofit older suburban subdivisions with pedestrian facilities.
- **Bike Paths and Bikeways.** Provide bike paths and bikeways in appropriate locations in the City. Direct bicycle and pedestrian investments toward those corridors and areas best suited for foot and bicycle traffic and which have the greatest potential to provide convenient and safe mobility alternatives.
- **Multi-use Trails.** Continue pursuing opportunities to construct multi-use trails or greenways throughout the City.
- **Traffic Calming.** Consider future needs for traffic calming to slow speeding and/or discourage cut-through traffic.
- **No Truck Routes.** Designate routes for truck prohibition where needed.
- **Public Transportation.** Efforts should be made to tie into county and regional public transportation programs, where and when they are available. Work with county and regional transportation agencies to designate locations for public transit stops within the City. Support efforts to implement commuter rail if determined feasible and in the best interests of Duluth's residents and the state.
- **Connectivity.** During site plan and development permit review, steps should be taken to connect streets to provide a local street network that serves as an alternative to the arterial and collector street system. This includes consideration of a grid-street pattern in all places where such design is feasible and practical. It also means discouraging, limiting, or prohibiting cul-de-sacs in some cases, and providing for stub connections at property lines to tie into future compatible development on adjoining properties.
- **Interparcel Access.** Encourage or require interparcel vehicle access points between contiguous and compatible commercial and office developments.
- **Access Management.** Apply state and local standards for access management along arterial and collector streets, including but not limited to specifications for curb cut location and separation, traffic signal spacing, and deceleration lanes.
- **Railroad and Road Grade Separation.** Maintain safe railroad crossings for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and identify opportunities to implement projects that separate at-grade road and railroad intersections.
- **Traffic Impact Studies.** When a development proposal would be expected to generate 1,000 daily vehicle trips or more, or 100 or more vehicle trips during any a.m. or p.m. peak hour, a traffic study should be required. In other cases at the discretion of the City Engineer a traffic impact study may be required. The results of the study should be used to develop conditions of approval for the developer to implement during construction.
- **Neighborhood Parking.** In order to promote public safety, ensure that there is adequate parking for a neighborhood during the plan review process. Ensure that there is adequate enforcement of parking regulations to meet the needs of our existing neighborhoods.

### Intergovernmental Coordination

- **Regional Cooperation.** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources (Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation).
- **Regional Solutions.** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer (Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions).
- **Support for Regional Policies.** Support regional policies when they align with Duluth's local policies.
- **Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.** Strive for consistency with the Atlanta Regional Commission's Atlanta Region Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan, which includes recommended policies for local governments that, when implemented, can increase mobility, safety, accessibility, and connectivity region wide for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Intergovernmental Agreements.** Periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate.
- **Information Sharing.** Share resources and information with all government entities.
- **Cooperative Land Use Planning.** Participate in

cooperative efforts between Gwinnett County and its cities to jointly plan land uses, which contribute to the overall future development and quality of life throughout the county, region, and state.

- **Conflict Resolution.** Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.
- **Interagency Economic Development.** Promote intergovernmental and interagency coordination in economic development activities.
- **Water District.** Adopt, and amend as necessary, plans and regulations to be consistent with the mandates and requirements of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.
- **Water and Sewer.** Work with Gwinnett County to plan and implement extension of water service, and sanitary sewer service to areas that have failing septic tanks, where cost effective to do so or where redevelopment to higher densities is desirable.
- **Water Conservation.** Participate in water conservation planning by the county and region.
- **Emergency Preparedness.** Periodically review and revise the disaster preparedness and emergency management plans in conjunction with Gwinnett County.



# Short Term Work Program

Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
<b>Historic Preservation</b>				
Create a citywide local landmark program. Preservation of local landmarks should be incentivized by the City.	2025	Staff Function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
<b>Housing</b>				
Work with developers on key parcels within or near the City to provide more executive level housing in the City.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Review annexation, rezoning, and master plan proposals for consistency with housing policies.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Develop desired parameters for mixed-income housing in appropriate locations.	Ongoing	Include in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Explore prospects with developers for converting aging apartment complexes into vibrant mixed-use centers.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Complete a comprehensive housing study for the City.	2025	\$30,000	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
<b>Economic Development and Redevelopment</b>				
Reduce commercial, industrial & retail property vacancy rates in the City of Duluth.	Ongoing	Staff function	Economic Development	Operating Budget
Recruit special interest groups into established business associations	Ongoing	Staff function	Economic Development	Operating Budget
Unite property owners, business owners, and residents to create better business and living environment.	Ongoing	Staff function	Economic Development	Operating Budget
Work with Gwinnett County to extend sanitary sewer along Buford Highway and the surrounding Core Neighborhood District.	2019-2026	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	ARPA, TAD, Sewer Fund

Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Encourage sustainability model for shopping centers utilizing techniques learned from downtown redevelopment activities to promote shopping centers as village centers.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Aggressively market opportunities for redevelopment of properties in the Urban Core Character Area and Point Berkeley.	Ongoing	Staff function	Economic Development	Operating Budget
Work with Town Center merchants to identify and conduct promotional and branding activities that would market Duluth as a true destination.	Ongoing	Staff function	Economic Development	Operating Budget
Engage the international community to coordinate investment objectives and opportunities.	Ongoing	Staff function	Economic Development	Operating Budget
Perform an Economic Needs Assessment for the Rivergreen Business Park	2025	\$30,000	Economic Development	Operating Budget
Land Use and Character Areas				
Update the Pinecrest and Hill Community neighborhood plans with community input.	2025	Staff function/ Consultant	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Write and adopt a neighborhood plan for the Hall Circle Neighborhood with community input.	2025	Staff function/ Consultant	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Amend the Comprehensive Plan as appropriate any time the City annexes an accumulated area of 100 acres or more.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Revise and resubmit for state and regional review this Short Term Work Program.	Annually	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Amend the UDC as necessary to incorporate zoning provisions allowing infill residential development, specifically within the Core Neighborhood District character area.	2024	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Amend the UDC as necessary to allow for accessory dwelling units consistent with Life Long Communities initiatives and “missing middle” housing.	2024	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Perform a feasibility study for the Hudgens’ Property Small Area Plan.	2026	\$20,000	Community Development & Engineering	General Fund
Urban Design				



Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Plan and implement gateway enhancements at entrances into the City and into Downtown.	Ongoing	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Review the Downtown Overlay District to allow for creative design elements in commercial and residential development and redevelopment	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Amend the UDC's Tree Protection Ordinance to better address the constraints of redevelopment projects.	2025	Staff Function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Amend the UDC as necessary to insure development standards are in line with development patterns this plan promotes.	Ongoing	Staff Function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
<b>Community Facilities: Solid Waste Management</b>				
Continue to develop strategies for reducing solid waste in accordance with the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act.	Ongoing	Unknown	Public Works	Operating Budget
<b>Community Facilities: Water and Sewer</b>				
Installation of sanitary sewer in areas as determined from Sanitary Sewer Master Plan.	2019-2026	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget*
<b>Stormwater Management</b>				
Continue supporting Gwinnett County's Storm Water Stenciling Program.	Ongoing	Staff function; volunteers	Community Development & Engineering (Stormwater Division)	Operating Budget
Work with Gwinnett County to fulfill requirements of Georgia Environmental Protection Department's regulations in developing a plan for non-point source pollution.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering (Stormwater Division)	Operating Budget

\* The Capital Budget is primarily funded through Special Purpose Local Optional Sales Tax (SPLOT) in combination with grant funding.

Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Revise City's Stormwater Management Plan based on the Large Phase I MS4 Permit Revisions.	As Required	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering (Stormwater Division)	Operating Budget
Operate City's Stormwater Utility.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering (Stormwater Division)	Operating Budget
Work with existing residential subdivisions to bring neighborhood detention ponds into code compliance with the Stormwater Special Assessment District Program.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering (Stormwater Division)	Operating Budget; Special Assessment
<b>Community Facilities: Parks and Recreation</b>				
Acquire lands within designated greenways for recreation.	Ongoing	Unknown	Parks and Recreation; Mayor and City Council	Capital Budget
Improve functionality of Scott Hudgens Park with pedestrian circulation, stormwater drainage and restroom facility.	Ongoing	Unknown	Parks and Recreation; Community Development & Engineering (Stormwater Division)	Capital Budget
Design and construct restroom/trail head facility at Rogers Bridge Park.	2019-2024	Unknown	Parks and Recreation; Consultants	Capital Budget
Technology upgrades for fountains at the Chattahoochee Dog Park.	Ongoing	Unknown	Parks and Recreation; Consultants	Capital Budget
Improve functionality of Rogers Bridge Park with pedestrian circulation and improved parking.	2024	Unknown	Parks and Recreation; Consultants	Capital Budget



Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Investigate developing the 11 acre city-owned parcel on Craig Drive into a passive recreational destination.	2021-2026	Staff function	Parks and Recreation; Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Create a Chattahoochee River Trail Master Concept Plan .	2024	Staff Funtction	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Update the Comprehensive Park Master Plan	2028	Unknown	Parks and Recreation; Community Development & Engineering	Capital budget
Improve the walking trails at Bunten Road Park.	2024	Unknown	Parks and Recreation	Capital Budget
Improve the tennis courts and infrastructure at W.P. Jones Park.	2024	Unknown	Parks and Recreation	Capital Budget
<b>Community Facilities: Public Safety</b>				
Ensure that the police department has an adequate number of high-quality personnel	Ongoing	Unknown	Police Department	Operating Budget
Ensure that all officers attend Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) so that they may best deal with mental health issues they are faced with on a daily basis.	Ongoing	No Cost	Police Department	No Cost
Ensure that our agency abides by the standards and guidelines set forth by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police in order to become re-certified every 3 years.	Ongoing, with certification audits every 3 years	Unknown	Police Department	Operating Budget
Implement a Public Safety Ambassador Program where civilians are used to answer non-dangerous calls not requiring police.	2024	\$41,600 annually plus benefits	Police Department	Operating Budget
<b>Community Facilities: Other</b>				
Inventory existing facilities and services provided by nongovernmental organizations in social service delivery.	2020-2025	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
<b>Transportation: Roads</b>				
Pine Needle Drive intersection realignment at Abbotts Bridge.	2019-2024	\$1,000,000	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget

Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Improve the average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) for all streets in the City of Duluth from a score of 46 (2012 average rating) to 70.	2023-2029	\$1,500,000 annually	Public Works	Capital Budget; Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG)
Implement transportation policies at the time of site plan and preliminary plat review.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Development Review Process
Replace the antiquated Speed Hump Program with a modernized Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Study the need for traffic calming measures and install traffic calming devices as appropriate throughout the City.	Ongoing	\$50,000 annually	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget
Complete Davenport Road Extension connecting Buford Highway with Main Street and Hill Street and close the existing skewed railroad crossing.	2019-2024	\$4,000,000	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget
<b>Transportation: Transit</b>				
Work with and encourage Gwinnett Transit to bring additional bus service to Duluth.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering; Gwinnett Transit	Operating Budget
Explore LCI funds to complete a study investigating potential design for transit oriented development within the City.	2024	\$50,000	Community Development & Engineering; ARC	Operating Budget. LCI Match (20% City, 80% ARC)
<b>Transportation: Sidewalks and Bikeway Projects</b>				
Main Street Multi-Use Trail from Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to Brock Road.	2019-2025	\$6,500,000	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget
Investigate improved pedestrian crossing of Buford Highway between Brock Road and Davenport Road.	2019-2024	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering	Georgia Department of Transportation; private funds
Create a conceptual design for the Chattahoochee River recreation trail adjacent to Rogers Bridge Road connecting Scott Hudgens Park and Rogers Bridge Park.	2019-2024	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget
Review possibility of City-owned passive park along the Chattahoochee River made up of City-owned and CRNRA parcels owned by the National Park Service.	Ongoing	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget



Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Complete Western Gwinnett Pathway Phase III, from Rogers Bridge Road to the City of Duluth line.	2021-2024	\$4,400,000 (\$4,269,000 County/\$131,000 local)	Gwinnett County DOT; Community Development & Engineering; Developers	Capital Budget; County SPLOST
Investigate measures to retrofit existing neighborhoods with sidewalks.	Ongoing	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering; Consultants	Capital Budget
Construct the Pine Needle Pedestrian Trail.	2024-2028	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget
Create a sidewalk concept plan from Duluth High School to Albion Farm and Pine Needle.	2024-2028	Unknown	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget
Create a sidewalk concept plan connecting the Hill Community to Duluth Highway	2024	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Intergovernmental Coordination				
Monitor annexations and zonings in surrounding jurisdictions and comment on consistency of proposals with City plans.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Seek to implement coordination strategies with the Gwinnett County Board of Education.	Ongoing	Staff function	City Manager	Operating Budget
Participate regularly in LUCC and TCC meetings of the Atlanta Regional Commission.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Initiate dialogue with the U.S. National Park Service regarding joint-management and policing arrangements.	Ongoing	Staff function	City Manager	Operating Budget

Short Term Work Program				
Description	Years to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Participate in efforts to update master plans of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering; Public Works	Operating Budget
Reconsider, and revise as appropriate, existing intergovernmental agreements.	Ongoing	Staff function	City Manager	Operating Budget
<b>Other</b>				
Obtain Green Communities Program certification offered by the Atlanta Regional Commission.	2024	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget
Each Department within the City of Duluth is to complete and present a report of accomplishment based on this Community Work Program to the City Council at the annual Strategic Conference or at another time specified by Council.	Annually	Staff function	All department heads	Operating Budget
Convert rail crossings in Downtown to quiet zones.	2020-2024	\$2,000,000	Community Development & Engineering	Capital Budget
Adopt a strategy for logically reshaping the municipal boundary of Duluth and continue to utilize public art, landscaping and wayfinding to create attractive gateways and community boundaries.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering; City Manager; City Council	Operating Budget
Expand and improve the Duluth N.O.W. program by partnering with neighborhoods on clean up events, public outreach and education, enforcing property maintenance and zoning regulations within neighborhoods.	Ongoing	Staff function	Community Development & Engineering	Operating Budget



# Report of Accomplishments

Cities should effectively use the Short Term Work Program element of the Comprehensive Plan as a guideline for the development, management and implementation of local Comprehensive Plans. The Report of Accomplishments details how many action items have been completed, are currently underway, have been postponed or have not been accomplished and are no longer activities the local government intends to undertake. The following key terminology is used throughout this section:

- Items that are Completed have been finished within the 5-Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Items that are Underway have been initiated or have had partial progress made as of the end of the 5- Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update. They have been carried over into the new 5-year reporting period for the Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Items that are Postponed are still priorities for the community, and have been carried over into the new 5-Year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Items that are Cancelled will not be carried over into the new 5-Year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plane Update. Generally, these are items that are broad policy statements or routine city operations, and they have been identified appropriately as such.

Report of Accomplishments		
Description	Status	Notes
<b>Historic Preservation</b>		
Create a citywide local landmark program. Preservation of local landmarks should be incentivized by the City.	Postponed	
<b>Housing</b>		
Work with developers on key parcels within or near the City to provide more executive level housing in the City.	Underway	
Review annexation, rezoning, and master plan proposals for consistency with housing policies.	Underway	
Increase enforcement of housing and property appearance standards, including the hiring of one additional code enforcement officers.	Complete	Additional officer was hired in 2021
Create a code compliance manager position.	Complete	Manager position was created in 2021
Use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for sewer installation in the Hill Community.	Underway	The City utilized ARPA funds to complete this project. the City is currently acquiring right-of-way.

Report of Accomplishments		
Description	Status	Notes
Develop desired parameters for mixed-income housing in appropriate locations.	Underway	
Explore prospects with developers for converting aging apartment complexes into vibrant mixed-use centers.	Underway	
Complete a comprehensive housing study for the City.	Postponed	
Adopt a one and two family residential rental property registration	Cancelled	This is no longer a priority of the City.
<b>Economic Development and Redevelopment</b>		
Reduce commercial, industrial & retail property vacancy rates in the City of Duluth.	Underway	
Recruit special interest groups into established business associations	Underway	
Unite property owners, business owners, and residents to create better business and living environment.	Underway	
Work with Gwinnett County to extend sanitary sewer along Buford Highway and the surrounding Core Neighborhood District.	Underway	The City is currently in negotiations for right-of-way for this project.
Encourage sustainability model for shopping centers utilizing techniques learned from downtown redevelopment activities to promote shopping centers as village centers.	Underway	
Aggressively market opportunities for redevelopment of properties in the Urban Core Character Area and Point Berkeley.	Underway	
Work with Town Center merchants to identify and conduct promotional and branding activities that would market Duluth as a true destination.	Underway	
Adopt a formal Economic Development Plan that includes identifiable incentives to encourage development, redevelopment, and business location into the City.	Cancelled	This is no longer a priority of the City.
Engage the international community to coordinate investment objectives and opportunities.	Underway	
<b>Land Use and Character Areas</b>		
Update the Pinecrest and Hill Community neighborhood plans with community input.	Underway	City staff has engaged the community on several occasions to determine how they want to see improvements occur.



Report of Accomplishments		
Description	Status	Notes
Write and adopt a neighborhood plan for the Hall Circle Neighborhood with community input.	Postponed	
Amend the Comprehensive Plan as appropriate any time the City annexes an accumulated area of 100 acres or more.	Underway	
Revise and resubmit for state and regional review this Short Term Work Program.	Underway	
Amend the UDC as necessary to incorporate zoning provisions allowing infill residential development, specifically within the Core Neighborhood District character area.	Underway	Staff has begun initial research for how to best implement infill residential development in these areas.
Amend the UDC as necessary to allow for accessory dwelling units consistent with Life Long Communities initiatives and “missing middle” housing.	Underway	Staff has begun a review of the UDC for opportunities to incorporate this development pattern.
Perform a feasibility study for the Hudgens’ Property Small Area Plan.	Cancelled	This is no longer a priority of the City.
<b>Urban Design</b>		
Plan and implement gateway enhancements at entrances into the City and into Downtown.	Underway	The City installed improved signage at the entrances of the community in 2022.
<b>Community Facilities: Solid Waste Management</b>		
Continue to develop strategies for reducing solid waste in accordance with the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act.	Underway	
<b>Community Facilities: Water and Sewer</b>		
Installation of sanitary sewer in areas as determined from Sanitary Sewer Master Plan.	Underway	The City is currently in negotiations for right-of-way for this project.
<b>Stormwater Management</b>		
Continue supporting Gwinnett County’s Storm Water Stenciling Program.	Underway	

\* The Capital Budget is primarily funded through Special Purpose Local Optional Sales Tax (SPLOT) in combination with grant funding.

Report of Accomplishments		
Description	Status	Notes
Work with Gwinnett County to fulfill requirements of Georgia Environmental Protection Department's regulations in developing a plan for non-point source pollution.	Underway	
Revise City's Stormwater Management Plan based on the Large Phase I MS4 Permit Revisions.	Underway	
Operate City's Stormwater Utility.	Underway	
<b>Community Facilities: Parks and Recreation</b>		
Acquire lands within designated greenways for recreation.	Underway	The City acquired 9 acres of undeveloped land along the Chattahoochee River from the Encore Subdivision in 2023.
Improve functionality of Scott Hudgens Park with pedestrian circulation, stormwater drainage and restroom facility.	Complete	The City completed this project in 2021.
Determine Security / technology measures for the Bunten Activity Building.	Complete	The City completed this project in 2021.
Design and construct restroom/trail head facility at Rogers Bridge Park.	Complete	The City completed this project in 2023.
Technology upgrades for fountains at the Chattahoochee Dog Park.	Underway	
Improve functionality of Rogers Bridge Park with pedestrian circulation and improved parking.	Complete	The City completed this project in 2023.
Investigate developing the 11 acre city-owned parcel on Craig Drive into a passive recreational destination.	Underway	
Coordinate local, state and federal government agencies to fund and restore the park bridge at Rogers Bridge Park connecting Duluth to Johns Creek.	Complete	The City completed this project in 2023.
Create a Chattahoochee River Trail Master Concept Plan .	Postponed	
<b>Community Facilities: Other</b>		
Inventory existing facilities and services provided by nongovernmental organizations in social service delivery.	Postponed	
<b>Transportation: Roads</b>		



Report of Accomplishments		
Description	Status	Notes
Pine Needle Drive intersection realignment at Abbotts Bridge.	Underway	This project is to be completed in 2024.
Improve the average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) for all streets in the City of Duluth from a score of 46 (2012 average rating) to 70.	Underway	
Implement transportation policies at the time of site plan and preliminary plat review.	Underway	
Replace the antiquated Speed Hump Program with a modernized Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.	Postponed	
Study the need for traffic calming measures and install traffic calming devices as appropriate throughout the City.	Underway	
Complete Davenport Road Extension connecting Buford Highway with Main Street and Hill Street and close the existing skewed railroad crossing.	Underway	This project is to be completed in 2024.
Redesign streetscapes along Pleasant Hill Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard by incorporating a variety of improved landscape within the rights of way and the medians.	Complete	The City completed this project in 2022.
<b>Transportation: Transit</b>		
Work with and encourage Gwinnett Transit to bring additional bus service to Duluth.	Underway	
Explore LCI funds to complete a study investigating potential design for transit oriented development within the City.	Postponed	Staff to explore this item in 2024
<b>Transportation: Sidewalks and Bikeway Projects</b>		
Bunten Road Sidewalks from Old Peachtree to Bunten Road Park.	Postponed	
Main Street Multi-Use Trail from Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to Brock Road.	Underway	Phase I of this project was completed in 2023. Phase II of this project is to be completed in 2025.
Investigate improved pedestrian crossing of Buford Highway between Brock Road and Davenport Road.	Underway	
Create a conceptual design for the Chattahoochee River recreation trail adjacent to Rogers Bridge Road connecting Scott Hudgens Park and Rogers Bridge Park.	Postponed	

Report of Accomplishments		
Description	Status	Notes
Review possibility of City-owned passive park along the Chattahoochee River made up of City-owned and CRNRA parcels owned by the National Park Service.	Underway	
Install Abbotts Bridge Road Sidewalks from Main Street to Duluth High School.	Cancelled	
Complete Western Gwinnett Bikeway Phase III, from Rogers Bridge Road to the City of Duluth line.	Underway	
Investigate measures to retrofit existing neighborhoods with sidewalks.	Underway	
Intergovernmental Coordination		
Monitor annexations and zonings in surrounding jurisdictions and comment on consistency of proposals with City plans.	Underway	
Seek to implement coordination strategies with the Gwinnett County Board of Education.	Underway	
Participate regularly in LUCC and TCC meetings of the Atlanta Regional Commission.	Underway	
Initiate dialogue with the U.S. National Park Service regarding joint-management and policing arrangements.	Underway	Staff function
Participate in efforts to update master plans of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.	Underway	Staff function
Reconsider, and revise as appropriate, existing intergovernmental agreements.	Underway	Staff function
Other		
Obtain Green Communities Program certification offered by the Atlanta Regional Commission.	Postponed	
Each Department within the City of Duluth is to complete and present a report of accomplishment based on this Community Work Program to the City Council at the annual Strategic Conference or at another time specified by Council.	Underway	
Convert rail crossings in Downtown to quiet zones.	Underway	



Report of Accomplishments		
Description	Status	Notes
Adopt a strategy for logically reshaping the municipal boundary of Duluth and continue to utilize public art, landscaping and wayfinding to create attractive gateways and community boundaries.	Underway	
Expand and improve the Duluth N.O.W. program by partnering with neighborhoods on clean up events, public outreach and education, enforcing property maintenance and zoning regulations within neighborhoods.	Underway	







# Appendix

**The Atlanta Regional Commission and The Georgia Department of Community Affairs require specific elements within a Community Agenda. Additionally, the ARC and DCA require the City’s needs and opportunities, short-term work program, report of accomplishments, broadband element, and land use element to be updated every five years. For ease of review these are called out in the Appendix..**

## **Housing Element**

As a Municipality within a “HUD Entitlement Community”, the City of Duluth is required to have a housing element. The Gwinnett County Consolidated Plan fulfills this requirement, and the Community Work Program has housing elements to address future needs.

## **Transportation Element**

The City of Duluth is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization of metro Atlanta. The PLAN 2045 Regional Transportation Plan meets this requirement.

## **Regional Important Resources Map**

The City of Duluth is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization of metro Atlanta. The ARC Regional Important Resource Map satisfies this requirement.

## **Community Participation Element**

### **Steering Committee Members (2024 Update)**

Manfred Graeder – City Councilmember  
Niti Gajjar– Planning Commissioner  
Shenee Holloway– Planning Commissioner  
Bob Pennington – ZBA Member  
Verdi Avila– ZBA Member  
Stella Chen– Duluth L.E.A.D. Participant  
Michael Johnson– Duluth L.E.A.D. Participant  
Chris McGahee – Economic Development Director

### **Public Meetings, Open House, and Survey**

March 13, 2023 -City Council Meeting  
March 30, 2023 -Steering Committee Meeting  
April 13, 2023 -Steering Committee Meeting  
May 11, 2023 -Steering Committee Meeting  
July 7, 2023 -Public Open House  
August 2023-November 2023 -Online Survey  
October 16, 2023 -Planning Commission Meeting  
November 6, 2023 -Planning Commission Meeting  
December 11, 2023 -City Council Meeting  
February 12, 2024 -City Council Meeting

## Needs and Opportunities

The City of Duluth's needs and opportunities are broadly identified in chapters two through four. However, each character area within the City has a unique set of needs and opportunities. As such, the staff has identified specific needs and opportunities within each Character Area section.

## Short-term Work Program

The City has undertaken an extensive review of its short-term work program (STWP). The following are just a few of the updates or additions to the STWP in 2024:

1. Perform an Economic Needs Assessment for the Rivergreen Business Park
2. Amend the UDC's Tree Protection Ordinance to better address the constraints of redevelopment projects
3. Update the Comprehensive Park Master Plan
4. Create a conceptual design for the Chattahoochee River recreation trail adjacent to Rogers Bridge Road connecting Scott Hudgens Park and Rogers Bridge Park
5. Implement a Public Safety Ambassador Program where civilians are used to answer non-dangerous calls not requiring police

## Report of Accomplishments

The City has undertaken an extensive review of its report of accomplishments (ROA). The following are just a few of the updates or additions to the ROA in 2024:

1. Coordinate local, state and federal government agencies to fund and restore the park bridge at Rogers Bridge Park connecting Duluth to Johns Creek. (Completed in 2023)
2. Acquire lands within designated greenways for recreation. The City acquired 9 acres of undeveloped land along the Chattahoochee River from the Encore Subdivision. (Completed in 2023)
3. Redesign Streetscapes along Pleasant Hill Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard by incorporating a variety of improved landscape within the rights of way and the medians. Amend the UDC's Tree Protection Ordinance to better address the constraints of redevelopment projects. (Completed in 2022)
4. Main Street Multi-Use Trail from Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to Brock Road. (Phase I nearly complete in 2023)
5. Complete Davenport Road Extension connecting Buford Highway with Main Street and Hill Street and close the existing skewed railroad crossing. The City has constructed the Davenport Road Extension up to the right-of-way on both sides of the railroad. (The City is awaiting the railroad to perform work within its right-of-way in 2023)

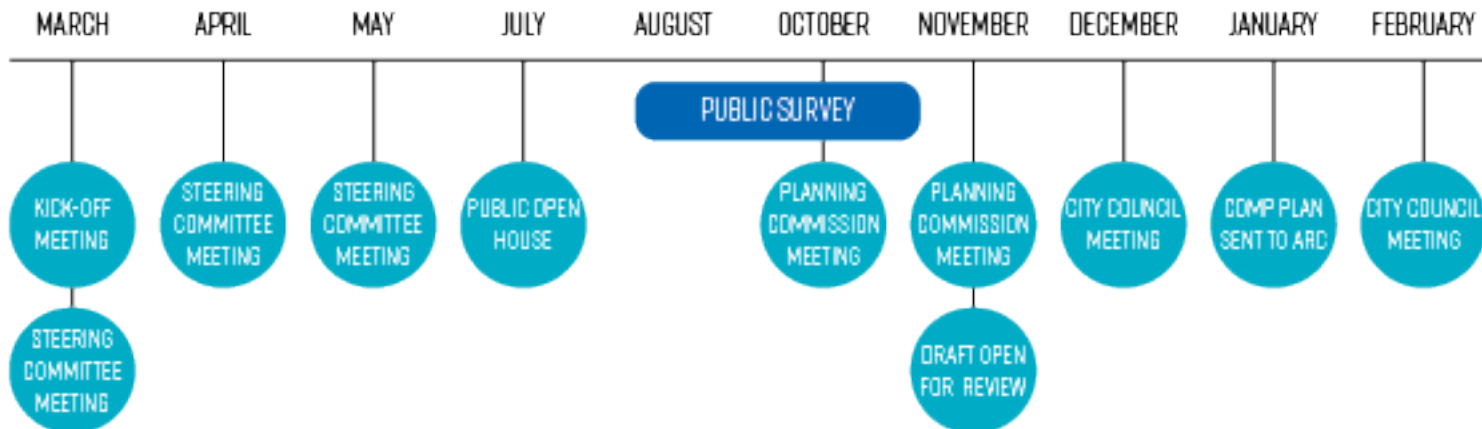
## Broadband

Per the Department of Community Affairs' 2023 Georgia Broadband Availability Map, Duluth has zero unserved census blocks and only nine unserved locations. All of these locations are either undeveloped lots or city owned parks or property.

## Land Use

The City has undertaken an extensive review of the Character Area and Future Land Use maps. Updates to character area goals and aspirations can be found within each character area section. Future land use classification, and geographical and boundary updates can be found within the maps themselves.





## Community Participation Documentation

City Website

The screenshot displays the Duluth Georgia City Website. The header includes the city logo, navigation links (Home, Government, Services, Business, Community, How Do I, Feedback), and social media icons. The main content area is titled "2024 Comprehensive Plan Update" and features a sidebar with various city services. The main text area contains a link to the "FORWARD Duluth 2020 Comprehensive Plan" and a section for the "COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE SURVEY". A large graphic of the Duluth Georgia logo is shown, along with a thank you message and a paragraph explaining the purpose of the survey.

**2024 Comprehensive Plan Update**

[FORWARD Duluth 2020 Comprehensive Plan](#) (Current edition)

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE SURVEY**

Click [HERE](#) or fill out below to complete the survey.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.**

This year we are in the process of updating our 2040 Comprehensive Plan. City officials and staff have been utilizing this document for the past five years to assist in land-use policy decisions and to help guide development. Please take a moment to complete the following survey comprised of community goals and aspirations and let us know if we are still on the right track. Your input helps guide the decision making of policy makers in our community. Thank you.

# 2040

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

### IF YOU LIVE, WORK, OR PLAY IN DULUTH WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

The City of Duluth planning staff is working closely with our elected officials to update the city's comprehensive plan, but we need your help. Your opinion matters.

Please help guide the future of development in our fabulous city by taking the survey located on our website.



If you are unfamiliar with what a comprehensive plan is or does, here are few frequently asked questions to help direct your input.

### WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range planning document that assists local elected officials in making land-use policy decisions that align with professional best practices and, critically, local preference and context. Whether it is transportation projects, new neighborhoods, or attracting members of the business community, our comprehensive plan helps us create a shared vision for what it means to live, work, or play in the City of Duluth.

### WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The key elements of the City of Duluth's comprehensive plan are the Character Area Map and the Future Land Use Map. The Character Area Map divides the city into districts with distinct goals, weaknesses, and opportunities. The Future Land Use Map examines each property for its best potential use.

### WHY DOES THE CITY NEED TO UPDATE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

While comprehensive plans maintain a 40-year horizon, it is important to acknowledge that cities grow, preferences change, and new issues present themselves every year. Therefore, it is local and state policy that cities update their comprehensive plans every 5 years to account for national, regional, and local trends and conditions.

### HOW DOES THIS UPDATE AFFECT ME?

For some communities a comprehensive plan is little more than a paperweight collecting dust in a planning department. This could not be further from the truth for Duluth. Our city council weighs every land-use decision or local policy against the goals and aspirations contained within our comprehensive plan. Our comprehensive plan is one of, if not the most important document for local policy makers.





## If you **live**, **work** & **play** in Duluth:

Your input is needed! We will be hosting a public open house to help us update the **FORWARDduluth 2040 Comprehensive Plan**. We will be displaying and discussing key areas of interest within Duluth and identifying opportunities to make improvements to:

- Road & Sidewalks
- Neighborhood Planning
- Sustainability
- Economic Development

Your opinion **matters**. Please help guide the future of development in our fabulous city. Questions, comments and feedback can be emailed to **[comprehensiveplan@duluthga.net](mailto:comprehensiveplan@duluthga.net)**.



Visit the  
comprehensive  
plan webpage.



## Public Meetings:

Over the course of the planning process, there were numerous public meetings. These meetings were advertised and open to the public. The agendas for the meetings were advertised on the City's website, in the Gwinnett Daily Post, and on the public notice board at City Hall.

### CITY OF DULUTH NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the City of Duluth City Council to discuss the process by which the City of Duluth will update the *2040 Comprehensive Plan (ForwardDuluth)*. Along with potentially other items, the Planning Staff will update City Council on a tentative schedule, areas of focus, and update requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

The public is invited to attend this hearing before the City Council. The meeting date, place and time regarding this matter are as follows:

WHEN: March 13, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.  
WHERE: City Hall  
3167 Main Street  
Duluth, GA 30096

**PERSONS INTERESTED IN THIS MATTER** are invited to review the comprehensive plan, which is on file with the Department of Planning and Development of the City of Duluth and to attend the public hearing at the date, time and place provided in this notice.

For more information, contact Forrest Huffman, Planning and Development, at (770)476-1790.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Duluth is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for a person with a disability. Please contact Teresa Lynn at (770) 476-3434 if special program accommodations are necessary and/or if program information is needed in an alternative format. Special requests must be made in a reasonable amount of time in order that accommodations can be arranged.



#### 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

CITY OF DULUTH  
COMMUNITY ROOM  
3167 MAIN ST  
DULUTH, GA 30096

**APRIL 13, 2023 at 5:30PM**

##### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Manfred Graeder	Verdi Avila
Niti Gajjar	Stella Chen
Shenee Holloway	Michael Johnson
Robert Pennington	Chris McGahee

##### STAFF MEMBERS:

Forrest Huffman, Director of Planning & Development  
Amy Bingham, Planning Manager  
Margie Pozin, City Engineer

##### AGENDA:

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- III. REVIEW OF HOW CURRENT PLAN ADDRESSES ISSUES OF DEMOGRAPHICS, TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING
- IV. IDENTIFYING GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF KEY CHARACTER AREAS
- VII. ADJOURNMENT



#### 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE KICK-OFF MEETING AGENDA

CITY OF DULUTH  
COMMUNITY ROOM  
3167 MAIN ST  
DULUTH, GA 30096

**MARCH 30, 2023 at 5:30PM**

##### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Manfred Graeder	Verdi Avila
Niti Gajjar	Stella Chen
Shenee Holloway	Michael Johnson
Robert Pennington	

##### STAFF MEMBERS:

Forrest Huffman, Director of Planning & Development  
Amy Bingham, Planning Manager

##### AGENDA:

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. INTRODUCTION OF STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
- III. STAFF PRESENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- IV. SWOT AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT EXERCISE
- VII. ADJOURNMENT



#### 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

CITY OF DULUTH  
COMMUNITY ROOM  
3167 MAIN ST  
DULUTH, GA 30096

**MAY 11, 2023 at 5:30PM**

##### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Manfred Graeder	Verdi Avila
Niti Gajjar	Stella Chen
Shenee Holloway	Michael Johnson
Robert Pennington	Chris McGahee

##### STAFF MEMBERS:

Forrest Huffman, Director of Planning & Development  
Amy Bingham, Planning Manager  
Margie Pozin, City Engineer

##### AGENDA:

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- IV. IDENTIFYING GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF KEY CHARACTER AREAS
- VII. ADJOURNMENT

**CITY OF DULUTH  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a public meeting will be held before the Planning Commission to review elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan as part of a major plan update.

The public is invited to attend this meeting before the Planning Commission. The meeting date, place and time regarding this matter are as follows:

WHEN: October 16th, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.  
WHERE: City Hall Community Room  
3167 Main Street  
Duluth, GA 30096

**PERSONS INTERESTED IN THIS MATTER** are invited to review the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is on file with the Department of Planning & Development of the City of Duluth and to attend the public meeting at the date, time and place provided in this notice, to express their opinion on this matter. Written comments may also be received in lieu of testimony during the public meeting. Written comments may be sent to the following address:

City of Duluth  
ATTN: Planning Department  
3167 Main Street  
Duluth, GA 30096  
OR  
Email: [Planning@duluthga.net](mailto:Planning@duluthga.net)

For more information, contact Planning & Development, at (770)476-1790.

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Duluth is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for a person with a disability. Please contact Teresa Lynn at (770) 476-3434 if special program accommodations are necessary and/or if program information is needed in an alternative format. Special requests must be made in a reasonable amount of time in order that accommodations can be arranged.

**CITY OF DULUTH  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a public meeting will be held before the Planning Commission to review a draft of the City's Comprehensive Plan as part of a major plan update.

The public is invited to attend this meeting before the Planning Commission. The meeting date, place and time regarding this matter are as follows:

WHEN: November 6th, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.  
WHERE: City Hall Council Chambers  
3167 Main Street  
Duluth, GA 30096

**PERSONS INTERESTED IN THIS MATTER** are invited to review the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is on file with the Department of Planning & Development of the City of Duluth and to attend the public meeting at the date, time and place provided in this notice, to express their opinion on this matter. Written comments may also be received in lieu of testimony during the public meeting. Written comments may be sent to the following address:

City of Duluth  
ATTN: Planning Department  
3167 Main Street  
Duluth, GA 30096  
OR  
Email: [Planning@duluthga.net](mailto:Planning@duluthga.net)

For more information, contact Planning & Development, at (770)476-1790.

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Adopted 2024

