



# **City of Buford 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update Community Agenda**

**As adopted by the  
Buford City Commission on  
February 2, 2009**



**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE SUBMISSION OF THE COMMUNITY  
AGENDA COMPONENT OF THE 2030 CITY OF BUFORD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
TO THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION AND THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT  
OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

WHEREAS, Buford, Georgia, is required pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1992 pursuant to the coordinated planning process as set forth in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and was prepared to meet the State Planning and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, Buford, Georgia, is required to update its Comprehensive Plan by February 2009; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford is currently engaged in a planning process to prepare a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as effective May 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan will be comprised of three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, which together define major issues, policies, and recommendations that serve as the basis for local government decision making regarding community facilities, future land use and development patterns, housing, economic development and other important resources for Buford, its citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders; and


WHEREAS, the City of Buford City Council has completed and reviewed the third component, the Community Agenda; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford City Council certifies that the public review and public hearing requirements were met during this phase of the planning process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Commission of Buford, Georgia, hereby approves the Community Agenda component of the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan for transmittal to the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review.

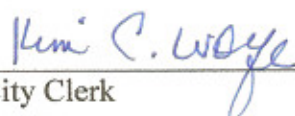
APPROVED by the City Commission of Buford, Georgia, this 2nd day of September 2008.

BUFORD, GEORGIA



\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk



## Community Agenda Executive Summary

- The Community Agenda is the third component of the City of Buford 2030 Comprehensive Plan. It is the product of over a year long planning effort that involved an extensive public outreach effort, numerous public workshops, and coordination with the County Comprehensive Planning Update effort which was undertaken at the time.
- The foundation of the Plan is a vision for the future that is described in Chapter 3 and calls for preservation of City's historic small town character a while still accommodating balanced growth that provides "opportunities for citizens to life, work, shop and play in a safe connected and fiscally responsible community."
- The draft Comprehensive Plan offers two tools to help guide future land use and capital investment decisions:
  - Future Development Map – defines the City and surrounding areas in terms of seven character areas;
  - Future Land Use Plan – a parcel specific map that designates each parcel in terms of a future land use classification.
- Both maps are based on the community's vision for the future developed through public outreach process, and are intended to reflect the built environment in 20 years.
- The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in 2005, and the Future Land Use Plan is a requirement of the City's Zoning Ordinance.
- The plan is based on the assumption that Buford will grow at a rate similar to historic trends. This represents a slow steady rate of growth resulting in 16,765 residents in 2030, an increase of 57% over 2000 levels.
- Each of the seven character areas is identified on the Future Development Map and is described in the text in terms of its existing character, the drivers of change, a vision for its future, and recommended policy themes.
- This plan includes a discussion of the issues and opportunities that the community will face over the next 20 years (see Chapter 5 - Translating the Vision into the Plan), as well as an Implementation Program to address each one. This implementation program is described in Chapter 7 and lists time frames and responsible parties for each action.
- The last chapter of the Plan is a Short-term Work Program that outlines a five-year action plan for the City to realize its vision.





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*Since the previous Comprehensive Plan was written significant developments have occurred that must be properly planned for. These include new annexations, the revitalization of Downtown, the construction of the neighboring Mall of Georgia, the creation of new developments (mixed-use, commercial, residential, and industrial) and the increasing suburbanization of northern Gwinnett and southern Hall County. This plan incorporates these recent developments, as well as changes in the public's vision to create a new blueprint for growth over the next twenty years.*

### ► Chapter 1: Introduction

The City of Buford's previous Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1992 and was intended to guide growth in the city until the year 2012. Since it was written, recent developments have occurred that will have significant impacts on the future of Buford. These include new annexations, the revitalization of Downtown, the construction of the neighboring Mall of Georgia (Georgia's largest mall, with 1,786,000 sq. ft. of retail floor space), the creation of new developments (mixed-use, commercial, residential, and industrial) and the increasing suburbanization of northern Gwinnett and southern Hall County. These changes require the reevaluation of existing strategies, policies, programs, priorities and resources. This Comprehensive Plan Update reflects these recent changes to the city, as well as changes in public sentiment regarding appropriate development in the city. This document brings the previous plan up-to-date by providing a new set of development strategies, policies, land use plans, and action items to be followed by the city. This plan serves as a critical instrument for guiding the community during the upcoming years.



### 1.1 Purpose

The Community Agenda is the most important part of the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan. Based on the findings of the Community Assessment completed earlier in the planning process and input gathered from the public involvement process that was outlined in the Community Participation Program, this document provides a vision for the community's future and a plan to implement that vision. It also identifies key issues and opportunities that the community wishes to address during the next 20 years, a list of policies to be followed in making day-to-day decisions, and a detailed Short-term Work Program that outlines what actions the community will focus on over the next 5 years.



## 1.2 Scope

This document was prepared following the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Chapter 110-12-1-.05, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, "Local Planning Requirements," effective May 1, 2005. It includes the three basic requirements for a Community Agenda:

- (1) A Community Vision that is comprised of a vision statement and Future Development Map;
- (2) A list of the Issues and Opportunities that the community intends to address over the next 20 years (see Chapter V, "Translating the Vision into the Plan"); and
- (3) An implementation program for achieving that vision, the heart of which is a Short-Term Work Program that identifies specific actions the community will take over the next five years.



This document also includes some background information that is not required of a Community Agenda, but does describe the context within which the community is planning for its future. The chapter entitled "Context for Change" provides a high level overview of the demographic trends that will influence the community's future, and the chapter entitled "The Community's Vision for the Future" describes the extensive public involvement effort that was undertaken to craft the community vision statement and the Future Development Map. In some respects, these additional elements are summaries of the other two components of the Comprehensive Plan, the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program*, completed earlier.







### 1.3 Use of the Plan

This Community Agenda, or Comprehensive Plan, will be used by City staff, the Buford City Commission, and local community leaders in a variety of ways. First, the Future Development Map and Future Land Use Map should be referenced in making rezoning and capital investment decisions. They provide a representation of the community’s vision and indicate where various types of land uses should be permitted. It takes into consideration the land use patterns illustrated in the city’s Existing Land Use Map, the current zoning map, topographic characteristics, natural resource sensitivity, the availability of existing and proposed infrastructure, and the needs of anticipated population and employment growth.

Second, the plan provides policies that will help guide day-to-day decisions. These policies are a reflection of community values and are in keeping with the basic goals of the plan. They, too, will be used as guidelines in the analysis of rezoning decisions.

Third, the plan includes an Implementation Plan that will help direct public investment and private initiative. Plan implementation is carried out through the application of regulations such as zoning and development codes and through projects and programs outlined in the Short-term Work Program. This plan outlines recommended changes in land use regulations and codes to be consistent with the community’s vision and, after plan adoption, it will be up to city staff and the Buford City Commission to consider these code changes and revise if necessary. It should be noted that a Comprehensive Plan is a living document. Following the DCA Local Planning Requirements, it should be updated regularly to reflect changing conditions and shifts in public policy.



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*The Context of Change provides an overview of current conditions, trends, and projections for the city. The information presented in this section serves as the background knowledge necessary for making important development decisions that will greatly affect the future of Buford.*

## ► Chapter 2: Context of Change

The City of Buford is a growing and dynamic community. After a quarter century of gradual steady growth, the city is entering another important era of transition. Proper planning for the future requires careful consideration of basic assumptions concerning anticipated population growth, expected employment patterns, and likely housing trends.



The “Context of Change” provides an overview of current conditions, trends, and projections for the city. These circumstances have informed the policies, implementation strategies and land use plans outlined in the following chapters of this document. The information presented in this chapter serves as the background knowledge necessary for making important development decisions that will greatly affect the future of Buford.



### 2.1 Population

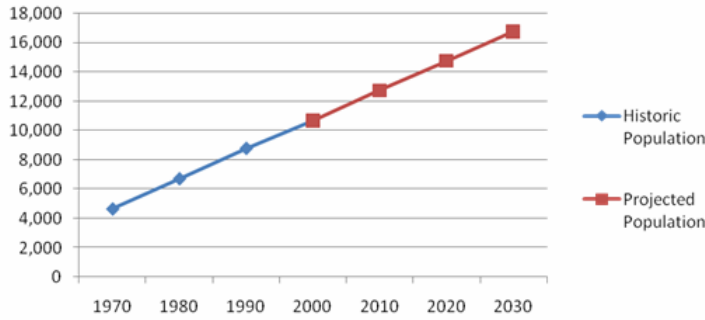
The City of Buford has grown at a steady and relatively slow, but healthy rate over the past quarter century. From 1970 to 2005 its population increased by 137 percent. This growth rate has been well below that of Gwinnett County and slightly below that of the Atlanta region. **Figure 2.1** details how Buford’s population compares to that of the county, region, and state.

**Figure 2.1 Population change from 1970-2005**

	1970 Population	2005 Population (est.)	Population Change 1970-2005	% Change 1970-2005
Buford	4,640	10,972	6,332	136.47%
Gwinnett County	72,349	693,900	621,551	859.10%
Atlanta Regional Commission Metropolitan Region	1,500,823	3,813,700	2,312,877	154.11%
Georgia	4,589,575	8,821,142	4,231,567	92.20%

Source: Gwinnett Unified Plan

Figure 2.2. Buford Population Projections



Buford’s population is projected to grow at a rate similar to historic trends. This represents a slow steady rate of growth resulting in 16,765 residents in 2030, an increase of 57% over 2000 levels.

## 2.2 Age Group Projections

Current population projections by age group indicate that a smaller portion of the city’s population will be comprised of school-aged children (ages 5-17) and senior citizens (individuals 65 and older). It predicts increases in the percentage of 25-54 year olds in 2030. The following figure represents change in age group percentiles between 2000 and 2030.



Figure 2.3. Age Group Projections by Percent of Total

	2000	2010	2020	2030
0 - 4 years old	7.5%	7.3%	7.2%	7.1%
5 - 13 years old	14.7%	14.5%	14.4%	14.5%
14-17 years old	4.3%	3.5%	2.8%	2.4%
18-20 years old	4.0%	3.7%	2.8%	2.4%
21-24 years old	6.7%	6.3%	6.1%	5.9%
25-34 years old	16.6%	16.8%	17.1%	17.3%
35-44 years old	17.1%	18.6%	19.8%	20.6%
45-54 years old	11.5%	12.3%	12.9%	13.4%
55 -64 years old	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
65 and older	10.0%	9.6%	9.3%	9.0%

Source: Georgia Planning Data View

## 2.3 Race and Ethnicity

Buford has witnessed significant increases in racial and ethnic diversity in the recent past. The white population has increased 10.8 percent from 1990-2000, while the non-white population increased 76.7 percent in the same time period. The Hispanic population has also grown significantly from 0.3 percent of the population in 1980 to 17.3 percent of the population in 2000.

## 2.4 Income

Buford has historically had lower median household income than Gwinnett County, the region as a whole, and the State of Georgia. Between 1989 and 1999 median household income increased at a higher rate in Buford than the county, region, or state. This suggests Buford may be closing this gap and in the future will have a median household income in-line with that of the county, region, and state. **Figure 2.4** indicates median household income in 1989 and 1999 in the city, county, region, and state.

**Figure 2.4. Median Household Income, 1989 and 1999**

	1989	1999 (adjusted)	% Change 1989- 1999
Buford	\$25,758	\$29,417	14.2%
Gwinnett	\$43,518	\$45,976	5.65%
Atlanta MSA	\$36,051	\$39,453	9.44%
Georgia	\$29,021	\$32,227	11.05%

Source: US Census Bureau

## 2.5 Economic Development

The City of Buford is fortunate to be part of a very strong regional economy that offers excellent job opportunities for its residents and a strong tax base.

Buford has benefited from the Atlanta region’s remarkable economic growth over the past 20 years. The manufacturing industry is the largest employment sector providing 16.8 percent of the jobs. The other predominant employment sectors are retail trade and construction.



**Figure 2.5. Employment by Industry (2000)**

Industry	Percent of Total
Agriculture	0%
Construction	13.1%
Manufacturing	16.8%
Wholesale Trade	5%
Retail Trade	16.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	4.1%
Information	3.0%
FIRE	5.4%
Professional Services	9.1%
Educational and Health Services	10.1%
Arts and Entertainment	9.4%
Other Services	4.8%
Public Administration	3%

Source: US Census





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Buford is blessed with a diverse jobs base in which no single industry dominates.



The City’s location on or near the major transportation routes of Interstate 85, Interstate 985, Buford Highway, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, and Georgia Highway 20 provide economic development opportunities for the city. With Gwinnett County’s continued growth and increasing traffic congestion transportation access will become even more of a critical issue affecting business relocation decisions. The City of Buford has the opportunity to capitalize on its major transportation routes by marketing these to businesses looking for a locational advantage.

Another advantage the city has is its already diverse job base that is increasingly becoming more diverse. From 1990 to 2000 there have been significant increases in the employment sectors of construction, education and health services, arts and entertainment, professional services. Declines have been seen in the notoriously low-paying sectors of retail trade and other services.



## 2.6 Housing

Buford is comprised of predominantly single-family housing. Multi-family housing and mobile homes also comprise a small percentage of the housing units. The housing stock in Buford is the most established of any city in Gwinnett. The city has the highest percentage of housing built prior to 1969 (over 30 percent in 2000). Buford has also experienced significant housing development in recent decades, in 2000 approximately 20 percent of the housing units were built between 1970 to 1979, approximately 28 percent between 1980 to 1989, and approximately 21 percent between 1990 to 2000. The following figure presents a breakdown of housing unit types.

**Figure 2.6. Housing Types in Buford**

	Housing Units	% of Total
Detached single family	2,480	61.8%
Attached single family	149	3.7%
Multifamily	864	21.6%
Mobile Homes, Boat, etc.	516	12.87%
Total Housing Units	4,009	100%

Source: US Census





## 2.7 Existing Land Use

In June 2007, JJG conducted a windshield survey of Buford to identify existing land uses within the city. Existing land use surveys represent what is on the ground at any given time. It shows the current function of the land, whether it is used for residential, commercial, industrial, or other uses. An accurate assessment of land uses is helpful to a community because it shows how much land is devoted to specific activities and how much land is available for development to accommodate future growth. The following table details the acreages of various land uses in the city. The analysis shows that a considerable portion of Buford remains undeveloped (39.2%) and provides many opportunities for new development. On the following page a reduced copy of the **Existing Land Use Map** can be found.



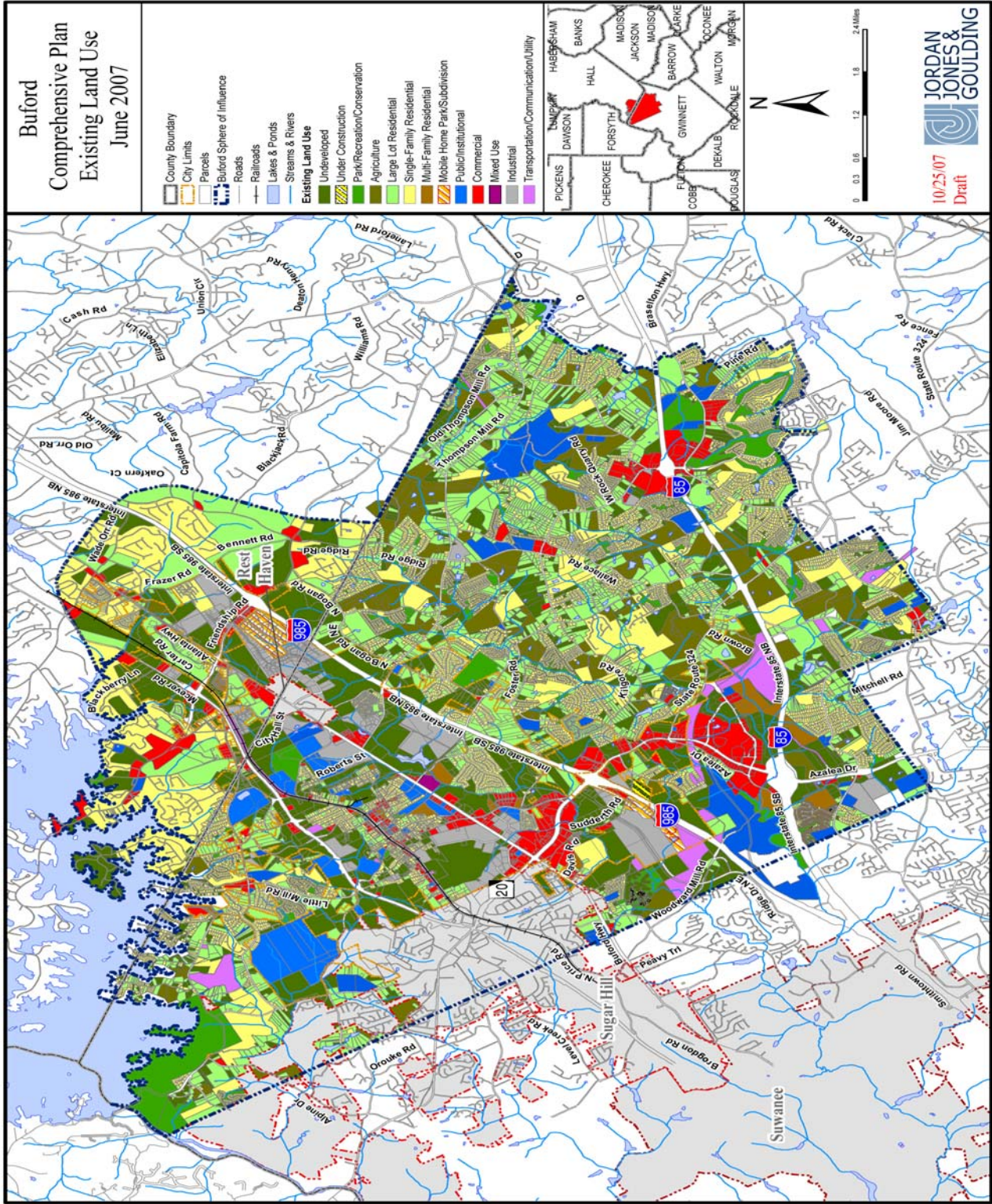
Figure 2.7. Existing Land Use, City of Buford, June 2007

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of City Total
Undeveloped/Vacant	3,455	39.2%
Low Density Residential	1,966	22.3%
Industrial	1,051	11.9%
Commercial/Retail	827	9.4%
Public/Institutional	789	9.0%
Under Construction	316	3.6%
Medium Density Residential	229	2.6%
Park/Recreation/Conservation	79	0.9%
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	36	0.4%
Agriculture	33	0.4%
Mixed-Use (Commercial/Office/Residential)	22	0.3%
High Density Residential	9	0.1%
<b>Total Incorporated area of Snellville</b>	<b>8,811</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Inc



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## **2.8 Summary**

The trends and projections described and presented in this plan provide a framework for successfully planning the future of Buford. By analyzing past and present growth trends, Buford residents can make knowledgeable decisions to ensure the community's high quality of life. Additionally, it must be noted that the trends described here are far from inevitable; Buford's dynamic growth precludes simple, static forecast. Indeed, the actions taken by city leaders over the next few years to implement this plan will impact both the nature and scale of growth greatly.



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*City of Buford's Vision Statement.*

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

► **Chapter 3:  
The Public's Vision for the Future**

**3.1 Introduction**

This Comprehensive Plan is the product of a community process of thinking about and visualizing the future. It is based on a collaborative approach to community engagement that created opportunities for citizens to work on the challenges that shape their community. The Vision Statement above is a key component of this effort. Accomplishing this vision will require political leadership, citizen education, and active involvement.



**3.2 Public Outreach**

An aggressive public outreach effort was undertaken to promote public involvement. The campaign included press releases, flyers, emails, newspaper articles and ads, and a project webpage. In addition, local schools, staff, committees, and Commissioners promoted the public involvement effort.

Coordination and oversight for this outreach effort were very important parts of the overall work effort supporting the City's Comprehensive Plan update. Besides a Project Management Team made up of key City staff and the consultant team, a Citizen's Steering Committee was created to help oversee the outreach effort and to comment on the draft plan during its development. The Committee was composed of approximately eight individuals from throughout the City. The Committee met at key times during the process.



The Community Participation Program, prepared when the effort began in the Summer of 2007, served as a guide outlining the specific steps the City undertook to engage its citizens and business owners, and to gain stakeholder involvement in the planning process. Following is a description of these steps and a summary of their results.

### 3.3 Visioning Workshop

The Buford Visioning Workshop was held on October 25, 2007 at Buford City Hall. Sign-in sheets indicated there were approximately 26 members of the public present. The public's vision gathered at this workshop will inform the development of scenarios presented at the Scenario Workshop to be held in January 2008 and will ultimately be incorporated into the final plan for the City. The workshop consisted of three major segments; an introductory presentation with brainstorming session, a keypad voting exercise, and a small group break-out session with a mapping exercise.



#### Public concerns and opinions

The following section summarizes the overall results of the Visioning Workshop. It incorporates the comments and data received during the introductory presentation, keypad voting exercise, and small group break-out sessions. It is organized by general discussion area.

#### Parks and Greenspace

The need for additional park space was identified by many of the participants at the workshop. Approximately 70.4 percent of the respondents polled reported parks and recreational facilities are inadequate in the city. The need for both passive and active recreation space was mentioned. The public was particularly interested in having more greenways and walking paths.



The most commonly mentioned desire of the group was a large public park that could accommodate community events. The public's vision for this park is something akin to Suwannee's town green. It would serve as a community focal point, being big enough to hold local events. Facilities for performances, such as an amphitheatre would be included. It could also include areas for passive recreation, such as a great lawn.

The incorporation of green space in residential subdivision development was also desired. This could take the form of conservation subdivisions in which a portion of land is left undeveloped in exchange for higher densities on the remainder of the site.



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The need for additional ball fields was also identified by the public, in particular, a public soccer field. An ideal location for this was suggested for the site bounded by Sawnee Avenue, Shadburn Ferry Road., and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. A skate park is another active recreational use residents would like to see added within the city.

### City Appearance

Multiple comments were received at the workshop regarding the aesthetics of the city. To reduce the visual clutter residents would like to see no additional billboards approved. Requiring new development to place all utilities underground was also suggested to improve the appearance of Buford.

### Mixed Use Development

Mixed-use development, which is new to Buford, was viewed favorably by residents. Approximately 75 % of participants agreed with encouraging more mixed-use developments, like Buford Village at the intersection of Hamilton Mill and Buford Highway. The example of how successful Suwannee has been with their mixed-use development should be used as a model. Support for this pedestrian friendly form of development was in keeping with the respondent's strong preference (88.8%) for having the opportunity to walk or bike to neighborhood shops, restaurants, and parks.

Support for this development-type stems from the public's desires to attract younger demographic diversity to the city. It is also supported because it encourages a sense of ownership among residents.

### Annexation

A large majority of respondents (62.9%) are in favor of the city actively pursuing the annexation of commercial and industrial land to expand its tax base. There is support for doing this because it would retain the residential core of the city, while expanding the tax digest.

### Old Town Buford

The overwhelming majority of respondents (84.6%) reported that the redevelopment of Old Town Buford, should be a major focus of the city. Increased code enforcement that would result in the tearing down of condemned houses was viewed as needed. Also more businesses are desired, in particular offices.



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The public would like to see events held in the new park constructed downtown. They would also like to see businesses along Main Street to be held to a higher aesthetic standard.

### Small Town Character

The overwhelming majority of respondents polled (85.7%) indicated that the small town character of Buford should be fostered/retained. Residents mentioned that the small-town character and small high school is what makes Buford attractive. The Downtown area with its dining options was also mentioned as an asset to be preserved.



### Transportation

Numerous transportation improvements were desired by the public including the widening of GA 20 from I-85 to Buford Highway to three lanes. The segment of GA 20 from Buford Highway north to Suwanee Dam Rd. was also desired to be widened to 2-lanes. The intersection of GA 20 and Buford Highway was identified as in need of improved southbound capacity.

Specific sites identified with traffic congestion to be mitigated include Hamilton Mill Rd. and N. Bogan Rd. and also Hill Street with its high degree of cut-through traffic from 5-6 p.m.



When polled on constructing a new exit on I-985 between exits 4 and 8, the majority of respondents (51.8%) were in favor of it, although, a significant number of residents were also undecided (33.3%). More information on current and future traffic patterns was cited as a major reason for being undecided. The general consensus was that this issue should be studied further.

The need for transportation alternatives was also mentioned numerous times by residents. The majority of residents (53.6%) would prefer not to drive to everything, which would require the inclusion of more alternatives to the automobile. Bicycle lanes were identified to be lacking in the city. In particular, bike lanes on N. Bogan Road were noted for not connecting.

Sidewalks were also identified as being lacking. New streetscapes including wide sidewalks and pedestrian lighting are desired on Hill Street and all other streets leading from Main Street to Buford Highway. This would provide a better connection between the City Hall and Buford Village development to Main Street. In addition sidewalks are desired along North Bogan Road from Foster Rd. to Highway 20.

## **Housing**

The majority of residents polled (60.7%) reported that Buford has an adequate mix of housing options. Although, it was identified that in the Downtown area there is a lack of options. The need for additional townhouse and apartment units was mentioned.

Members of the public were mixed on whether Buford had an adequate supply of senior housing. Some members of the public indicated there was no senior housing within the city. The number of senior housing units is expected to increase greatly in the recent future with the completion of the approximately 175-unit senior housing development on South Lee Street.



## **Service Provision**

There was general consensus among workshop attendees that the city does a good job of providing services. A large majority (82.1%) of participants indicated that the services provided by the city meets their needs. An overwhelming majority (78.6%) also feels safe in their neighborhood, indicating public safety services are considered adequate.

Of specific concern to some residents is the need for more computers in the library and the provision of Wi-Fi wireless internet. Residents also indicated the need for a recycling center in the city.



## **Redevelopment Areas**

Numerous redevelopment areas were identified by members of the public. Included in these were a significant number of mobile home parks. The locations of these include N. Harris St., Sudderth Rd. and French Rd., Sudderth Rd. and Horizon Parkway, Arnold St., and S. Border St.

A significant number of neighborhoods surrounding Main St. were also identified as redevelopment areas. In particular the neighborhood bounded by Forest St. and Bona Rd. was mentioned. It is noted that these areas have a high share of renters and many out-of-town landlords. There is a need for tighter code enforcement in these areas to keep landlords accountable for keeping up the neighborhood. Increased police visibility is also needed to ensure safety.

## **Conservation Areas**

In the break out groups, multiple areas were identified by members of the public as conservation areas to be preserved. These include the large tracts of undeveloped land abutting Peachtree Industrial Boulevard on the southern side of the thoroughfare. Another area

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identified to be worthy of preservation is the wooded area, in close proximity to City Hall, bounded by Garnett Street, Buford Highway, Harris Street, New Street and Edwards Street. Another location worthy of preservation was identified to be the cemetery on Little Mill Road.

### Areas Appropriate for Future Development

The public felt that the first priority of the city should be to reuse empty residential, commercial and industrial buildings, as opposed to developing new structures. Once vacant sites were used the public identified several areas were as being appropriate for future development. Commercial and industrial development was seen as suitable on undeveloped parcels abutting Satellite Boulevard. It was also seen as appropriate in areas abutting I-985 adjacent to Woodward Mill Road and on undeveloped parcels on the north side of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard from Cole Road to Little Mill Road.



A large percentage of respondents (48.1%) felt that new residential development was appropriate on undeveloped land within the city. Although, the sentiment of the public is that the focus should be on the rehabilitation and revitalization of the existing housing stock and not on the building of new subdivisions. Within the city, residents felt residences should be centrally located around the city center. They also felt that residential subdivision development was more suited to emerging residential areas in unincorporated Gwinnett County. This is in keeping with the higher degree of public support (53.6%) for new residential subdivisions in future annexation areas.



### Land Use Balance

The need to preserve the existing land use balance was mentioned numerous times at the workshop. The city currently has a favorable ratio of residential to commercial/industrial uses. The predominance of commercial/ industrial land uses is beneficial to the city, as these uses take in more tax revenue than is required to serve them through services. The public would like to maintain this balance by limiting new residential development and encouraging more commercial/ industrial development. The current ratio and its resulting revenues were cited as the reason the school system is performing so well.



### 3.4 Scenario Workshop

#### Overview

The Buford Scenario Workshop was held on January 17, 2008 at Buford City Hall from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Approximately 20 to 25 community members participated in the meeting, joining City and project staff to discuss the City's future. These attendees represented a broad range of residents in terms of length of residency in Buford (Figure 1).

The meeting was the second of two public workshops being held in conjunction with the development of the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update (Plan). Both meetings were designed to help formulate the community's vision for the future.

January's Scenario Workshop focused specifically on likely land use scenarios for the future of Buford. The Scenario Workshop took on a comparable format to the Visioning Workshop, with three chief meeting activities:

1. Introductory presentation;
2. Interactive voting; and
3. Small group discussions.

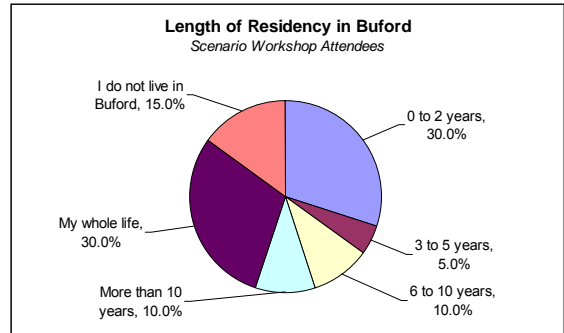
#### Introductory Presentation

The introductory presentation provided essential background information on the comprehensive planning process. A PowerPoint presentation given by project staff answered several community questions about the Plan, including those listed below.

After briefing attendees on these items, project staff reviewed community involvement input thus far. Results from both the Community Visioning Survey (completed December 20, 2007) and the Visioning Workshop (held on October 25, 2007) were reviewed.

Overall results from both activities indicated that the community is generally happy with the services provided by the City, although there is growing concern over issues such as crime, overcrowded housing conditions, congestion, and sustaining the City's high-quality school system. Results from both of these items are available on the project website and from City Hall upon request.

Figure 1



Sixty percent of attendees had lived in the Buford their whole life or for two years or less

#### Questions Answered During Introduction

- What is the Comprehensive Plan, and why is Buford required to complete one?
- What is the process of completing the Plan?
- What is the role of the public?
- What has been completed so far?
- How can I get involved?
- When will the Plan be completed?

### **Voting Exercise**

Following the introductory presentation, meeting attendees participated in an interactive voting exercise. Each participant was given a wireless keypad to register his or her opinion on a series of policy priorities and concerns particular to the City of Buford. Specific attention was given to those topics that were introduced at the Visioning Workshop and required further clarification and discussion by the public. The intention of this activity was to ensure that policies and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan are in-line with the community's beliefs and priorities.



Topic areas included the appropriate type of greenspace, use of Tax Allocation District (TAD) financing, paying for capital investments, and others. A total of 11 questions were voted on by attendees. Voting on each question was followed by a brief discussion of the results, which were displayed instantly on the screen at the front of the workshop room. The complete results are provided in the Appendix to this document.

### **Small Group Land Use Discussion**

At the conclusion of the voting exercise, a project team member introduced the City's draft future land use scenarios. These scenarios were drafted by the project team to help the community visualize how the City of Buford and adjacent areas in the sphere of influence<sup>1</sup> could develop over time. Three potential scenarios were presented:



1. Scenario 1, *Continuation of current trends*
2. Scenario 2, *Redevelopment focus*
3. Scenario 3, *Employment center focus*

Following this overview, attendees separated into two groups to discuss the pros and cons as well as potential impacts of each scenario. The goal of each group was to achieve consensus on a preferred land use scenario – either one of the draft scenarios presented by the project team or some hybrid form of any combination of the three scenarios.

Each small group was equipped with three land use maps that depicted each of the land use scenarios along with a blank base map. The two groups also had a supply of markers to draw on the maps as well as a facilitator and note taker to keep the group on track to meet small group goals.

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<sup>1</sup> Buford's sphere of influence includes areas in both Hall and Gwinnett County that abut the City's border. Decisions in these areas will affect Buford, and therefore require the City's input. Gwinnett County has identified its sphere of influence in formal documents but Hall County has not at this point.



At this point in the planning process, Buford’s future land use map was in rough draft form. Comments and input received from the small group scenario discussions along with insight from the project team played a major role in forming the final draft of the Future Land Use Plan, which was made available for public comment at the May Open House.

## Meeting Results

### *Policy Priorities*

#### *Economic Development*

Public and stakeholder input prior to the Scenario Workshop looked positively upon the city’s healthy economic base. As a result, meeting attendees were asked to gage the most important economic development activity to ensure a positive local economy. The two most important activities identified were the following:

- Attract office professional jobs – 40 percent
- Create strategic economic development plan – 30 percent

These points were built upon in the small group discussions, where community identified the Mall of Georgia/SR 20 area as appropriate for housing new professional employers that locate in Buford. Of options provided, 70 percent of attendees voted in favor of this area developing into “a professional employment center with multi-story office buildings.”

#### *Greenspace*

Approximately 40 percent of attendees believed the primary purpose of a new park in Buford should be to provide passive recreation and greenspace. Attendees expressed the need for a trail that is adaptable to both developed or urban areas as well as conservation areas of the city, connecting both community facilities and neighborhoods. Although a passive park area is most favored, several attendees noted the continued need for a large park for citywide events. The City should look for the potential to connect the City’s parks via a passive park network.

#### *Tax Allocation Districts*

The appropriate use of Tax Allocation District (TAD) financing was discussed. Nearly 50 percent preferred using TAD financing to make



Attendees supported the idea of a trail way that passes through both urban and conservation areas of Buford.

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infrastructure improvements (such as water, sewer, and stormwater). The next most highly supported use for TAD financing was creation and improvement of sidewalks/bicycle paths.

### *Mixed Use*

Attendees highly supported the use of mixed use developments in the city, with 70 percent favoring mixed use in the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and already developed site and for new development. Hill Street is one such area that is suitable for mixed-use buildings.

### *Transportation Concerns*

Voting results and small group discussions depicted mixed opinions on transportation concerns in the city. While 60 percent of voters supported accommodating both residents and visitors on major roads (Peachtree Industrial Boulevard [PIB], Buford Highway, and SR 20), another 45 percent believed rerouting cut-through traffic around the city was the most important step for alleviating traffic congestion. Increasing interconnectivity is a high priority for a notable percent of attendees, particularly in the mall area. A large part of the discussion centered on the idea of improving traffic flow by adjusting the timing of lights and creating a truck route in the city.

### **Preferred Elements to Hybrid Land Use Plan** *Identified by Meeting Attendees*

- The historic downtown extends outward
- A new interchange on 985 added to help traffic flow
- A park across from City Hall adds additional greenspace, connecting to a potential trail system
- Buford Hwy continues to develop with additional mixed-use development
- Areas in Hall County, adjacent to the city, continue to develop as residential subdivisions
- A high concentration of office/professional uses develops around the Mall of Georgia
- If demand for higher density housing arises, it is restricted to this growing employment area
- Mixed-use develops in Main Street area and along Buford Hwy, supporting a walkable Buford

### *Old Town Buford*

Public input received earlier in the comprehensive planning process identified the need to enhance downtown Buford. One voting question asked attendees to identify the top priority for this are:

- 50 percent chose seeking opportunities to expand Main St. character/ development type to adjacent areas
- 40 percent chose revitalizing older residential areas

Small group discussions indicated that some combination of both of these activities is needed.

### *Annexation*

At the Visioning Workshop, meeting attendees showed general support for annexation. Activities at the Scenario Workshop sought to better understand appropriate annexation strategies for the City. Scenario Workshop attendees voiced support for annexation near both large commercial nodes and along major transportation routes. While nearly 60 percent favored annexation of both types, another 35 percent supported annexation in only one or the other area.

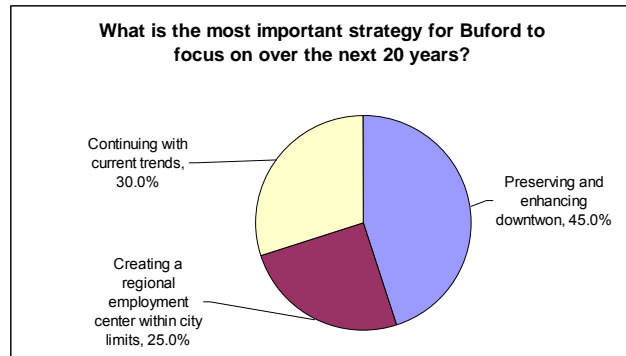
*Long Term Financing*

Economic development was seen by meeting attendees as the primary mechanism needed to finance capital investments (55 percent). Another 25 percent supported the use of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).

**Long Term Land Use Strategy**

The voting exercise prompted attendees to consider the long-term land use plan for their city. Figure 2 demonstrates meeting attendees’ overall view on future development decisions. Both small groups expressed a preference for preserving downtown while expanding the city’s base of professional jobs. The following points reflect the meeting attendees’ perspectives on how this hybrid scenario would ideally play out in terms of land use in the upcoming twenty years.

Figure 2



The highest percentage of attendees favored preserving and enhancing downtown.

*Regulatory Controls*

Meeting attendees also expressed the hope that the City will amend aesthetic and environmental regulations to preserve Buford’s small town feel and environment. Aesthetic standards for industrial buildings, stricter environmental regulations, and progressively improving recycling options were discussed.

Guidelines for Industrial Buildings

Meeting attendees repeatedly voiced the need to maintain Buford’s character. As industrial growth continues, community members prefer that design/aesthetic controls are in place to manage it. The industrial area just east of Buford Hwy on Hamilton Mill is designed in a way that reflects these preferences. Another suggestion is to buffer industrial areas from main corridors by encouraging commercial development on main roads.

Stricter Environmental Regulations

Some meeting attendees noted the importance of strengthening development regulations as to protect the environment. Mandatory conservation set-asides were discussed as favorable regulations by attendees. Green building requirements for builders were also supported by many.

**Overview of the Scenario Workshop**

The Scenario Workshop provided a hands-on environment to discuss Buford’s growth and redevelopment over the planning period. Although the meeting provided important information to

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City staff and project team, it is important to note that a limited portion of the Buford community was able to attend the Workshop. Plan recommendations reflect a combination of the feedback received from the public at this and other workshops and the community survey as well as analysis completed in conjunction with the Community Assessment.

### **3.6 Summary**

The goal of the Citizen Participation Program was to establish two-way communication between local citizens and their government officials, with the overall goal of better decisions supported by the public. Through the extensive cooperation of the County, stakeholders, the Citizens Steering Committee, and citizens; a wealth of input was gathered through the Visioning Workshops, work sessions, and committee meetings. This plan is the result of an analysis of the information gathered from this extensive public involvement effort and is reflective of the public's vision for the future.

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*Two tools are presented here that will be used to guide future land use and capital investment decisions in Buford: the Future Development Map, and the Future Land Use Plan. The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local community character and will be used to foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The focus of the Future Land Use Plan is on defining where different land use types should be allowed to develop.*

### ► Chapter 4: Future Land Use

#### 4.1 Introduction

Following are two tools that will be used in guiding future land use and capital investment decisions in the City of Buford: (1) the Future Development Map, and (2) the Future Land Use Plan. Both maps are based on the community's vision for the future and were developed through the public outreach process. The Future Development Map is a required component of all comprehensive plans under the new "Local Planning Requirements" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2005, and the Future Land Use Plan is a requirement of the City Zoning Ordinance.

The focus of the Future Development Map is on defining local character and helping foster a better sense of community identity and sense of place. The scale of this map is at the neighborhood or local community level and includes the entire area within and surrounding the City. Some of these character areas also cross over into unincorporated Gwinnett County, and are a part of the City's sphere of influence. Each character area has its own vision, description, policies, and implementation strategies.

The focus of the Future Land Use Plan, on the other hand, is on defining where different land use types should be allowed to develop. The policies associated with this map refer to which land uses should be allowed in each future land use designation. The scale of this map is at the parcel level. Each Future Land Use category ties directly to an appropriate existing or proposed zoning category. In many respects the Future Land Use Plan is a shorter range tool than the Future Development Map. It is intended to guide current rezoning decisions, and as such it more directly reflects current conditions and constraints on future development, such as the availability of supportive infrastructure like sewer and transportation.





## 4.2 Future Development Map

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts and regions of the City of Buford. They help guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each area of the county. These character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined by existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves. The city's character areas are described and defined individually in the following fact sheets and are mapped in **Figure 4-1**.



The character of developed areas can be explained by looking at several typical characteristics, such as the following:

- Siting and configuration of lots.
- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, stormwater facilities, and other features.
- Street design.
- Intensity of development.
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation.
- Types and quantities of natural features.
- Location and type of civic buildings and public spaces.
- Relationship between uses within the area.
- Sensitive or unique environmental resources.

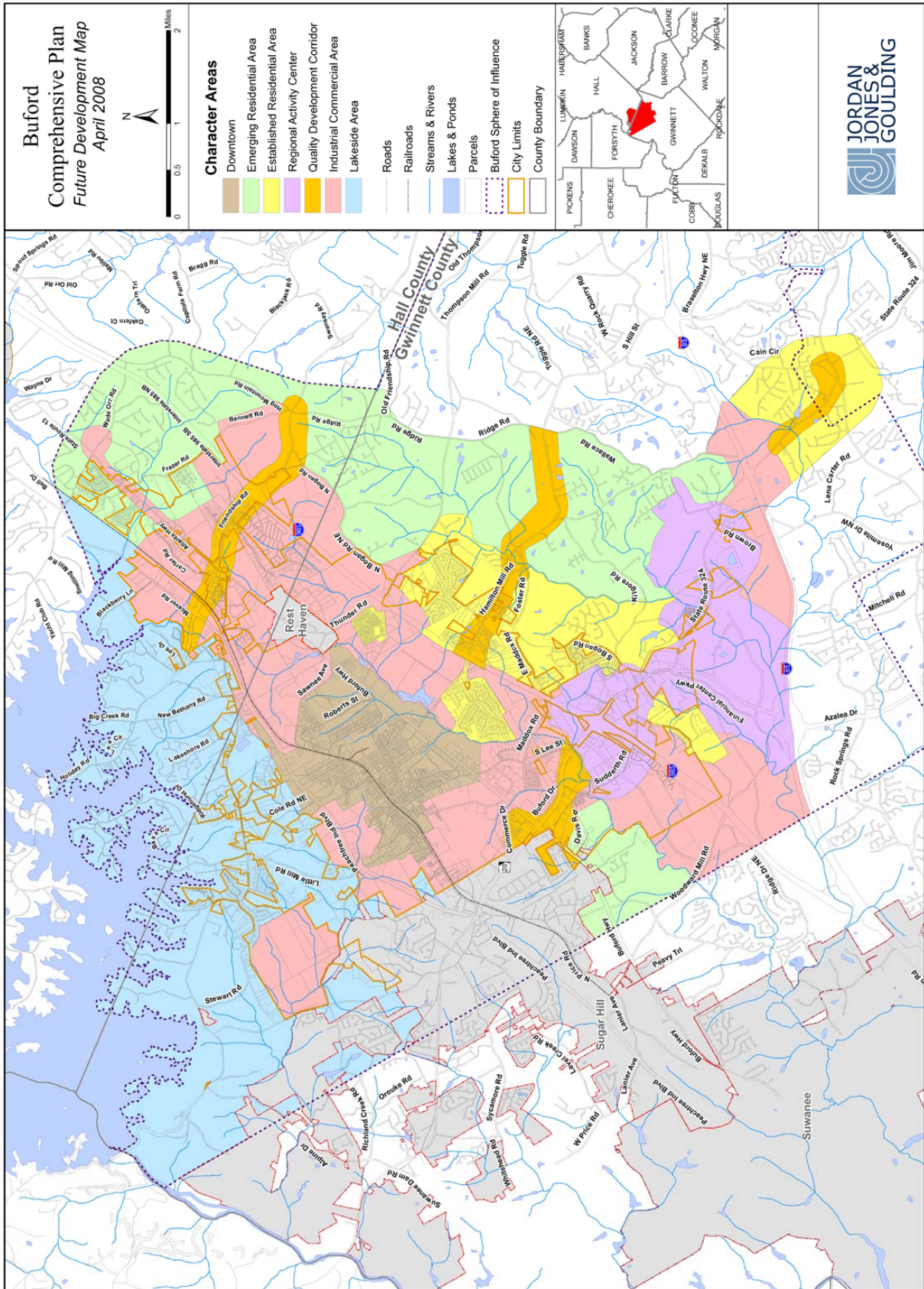


The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Supplement the role of the Future Land Use Map.
- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
- Provide a strong link between the community's vision, goals, and land use policy.
- Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.
- Lay the framework for urban design guidelines and changes to development regulations.



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## Downtown

**Existing Character Description:** The traditional central business district and surrounding residential, commercial, and civic areas. This area includes historic Main Street, as well as the surrounding residential neighborhoods of Old Town Buford. It also incorporates the newly developing area on Buford Highway containing the new City Hall and Buford Village mixed-use development which serves as an extension of the historic downtown area.

**Predominant Land Uses to be Encouraged:** retail, restaurants, public-institutional, single-family homes, apartments, and parks.

**Vision for the Future:** A vibrant downtown district that includes residential units, offices, restaurants, small-scale shops, cultural facilities and entertainment venues. Downtown should serve as the focal point of the community and become a destination for dining, shopping and cultural pursuits. There should be reinvestment in the housing stock in neighborhoods surrounding Main Street making them more attractive places to live.

**Implementation Strategies:**

Follow strategies, recommendations, and action items laid forth in the 2005 Buford Town Center Livable Centers Initiative Plan including:

- Improved streetscapes along Hill Street and South Lee Drive from Main Street to Buford Highway and on Shadburn Avenue from Fifth Street to Poplar Street.
- Promote mixed use development through the creation of a new mixed use future land use designation for the area.
- Follow the Concept Plan calling for additional park spaces, new roadways, and an expanded sidewalk network.
- Adhere to design guidelines established for buildings, sites, streets, parking facilities, sidewalks, signage, and parks.



- Explore opportunities to use Tax Allocation District (TAD) financing to fund public improvements that could spur new development, redevelopment, and neighborhood revitalization.
- Improve way-finding directional signage to the downtown area from major roadways in the city.

**Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:**

- Sense of Place. Downtown Buford offers a unique sense of place that is unavailable in most parts of Gwinnett County. Redevelopment within this area should respect and contribute to the unique character of the area.
- Infill Development. Infill development should be encouraged on vacant lots throughout this area.
- Housing Choices. Expanded housing options should be pursued in the downtown area including warehouse to loft conversion, mixed-use residential, fee simple townhomes, and senior living units.
- Heritage Preservation. Efforts to protect and expand the historic attributes of downtown Buford should be pursued.
- Regional Identity. The preservation and expansion of Buford's historic downtown core will contribute to the regional draw of quaint, downtown centers.



## Commercial and Industrial Area

**Existing Character Description:** This area is characterized by commercial uses, including strip shopping centers, restaurants, large chain stores and car dealerships. It also includes industrial uses in the form of manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution facilities. It is typified by significant vehicular traffic, large building set-backs, parking lots and an overall low pedestrian orientation.

**Predominant Land Uses to be Encouraged:** retail, restaurants, industrial and warehousing.

**Vision for the Future:** The highest priority of these corridors should be the free movement of vehicular traffic through the city. They should move residents and business traffic quickly and efficiently. To ensure the unimpeded flow of automobiles and trucks, access management techniques should be employed. While these areas are not the most conducive to pedestrian travel, steps should be taken to ensure they are not hostile to residents on foot. Pedestrians should be accommodated to a limited degree through sidewalks, cross-walks, and pedestrian signalization. In spite of being merely functional these corridors should also be aesthetically pleasing featuring high quality design elements including superior building materials and landscaping. Visual clutter in the form of billboards should be controlled. Steps should be taken to ensure new industrial development within city is 'green' and does not have negative impacts on Buford's environmental quality.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- To preserve traffic speeds along major corridors access management techniques should be employed. These include limiting curb cuts and encouraging inter-parcel connections between



developments. Rear access roads that serve multiple businesses should also be encouraged.

- Future developments in these areas should continue to exhibit superior design features found in recent construction in the city. Emulating industrial development at I-985 and Hamilton Mill Road and commercial development in the new "The Plaza" development on GA 20.
- Support the creation of a new interchange on I-985 at Hamilton Mill Road to improve traffic flow, in particular truck traffic.

**Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:**

- Employment Options. These areas provide a variety of employment options for city residents. Options include service-sector positions as well as professional and managerial jobs, supporting both unskilled and skilled sectors of the labor force. Continued job creation in these areas should be pursued to further expand job opportunities to residents.
- Transportation Alternatives. There is an excellent network of sidewalks on some major corridors throughout Buford, while on others no such network exists. Steps should be taken to ensure residents have a variety of transportation options in these areas through the addition of sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

## Established Residential Area

**Existing Character Description:** This area is characterized by standard forms of suburban residential subdivisions. They typically have low pedestrian orientation and feature curving roads and cul-de-sacs. Most of these subdivisions have been built in recent decades.

**Predominant Land Uses to be Encouraged:** low-density residential, small-scale commercial and some public/institutional uses.

**Vision for the Future:** Stable residential areas that maintain their value over time. Increased pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between neighborhoods and schools, parks, library, and businesses. Neighborhoods that are adequately buffered from the negative impacts of adjacent commercial and industrial development.

### Implementation Strategies:

- Reduce cut-through traffic and slow vehicular speeds with the use of traffic calming devices where appropriate including speed bumps, speed tables, and landscaped medians.
- Enhance pedestrian connections between commercial uses and adjacent residential areas.
- Work with Gwinnett County to ensure the construction of a proposed multi-use trail along Suwanee and Ivey Creeks. Connections from the surrounding neighborhoods to the trail should be encouraged.
- Ensure adequate code-enforcement is conducted to maintain the existing upkeep of neighborhoods.



- Encourage small-scale neighborhood commercial uses at major intersections to reduce auto-dependence.
- Work with Buford Public schools to sustain safe routes to schools.

### Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued in this Character Area:

- Transportation Alternatives. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area. These include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and multi-use greenway trails.
- Housing Choices. These areas of the city provide numerous housing choices to residents including single-family homes at a variety of price points.
- Employment Options. Neighborhood-scale commercial should be pursued in these areas to serve residents retail needs as well as provide them with increased employment options.
- Infill Development. While infill redevelopment is currently not a major concern, it may become an issue over the planning period.

## Emerging Residential Area



**Existing Character Description:** This area features newly developing subdivisions, undeveloped land, and large lot residential that may be consolidated into new subdivisions. This area is likely to experience the greatest development pressures over the planning period. The availability of water and sewer service in these areas makes suburban residential development very likely.

**Predominant Land Uses to be Encouraged:** single-family homes, large lot rural residential, and undeveloped land.

**Vision for the Future:** A residential area that develops in an orderly and well-planned fashion. An area where contiguous and connected development occurs and not 'leapfrog' development. In the face of new development portions of the land are conserved in perpetuity as open greenspace.

### Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage the use of the city's Conservation Subdivision Overlay District for new subdivisions so a portion of land is set aside as public greenspace.
- To increase connectivity, require a minimum number of entrances and street connections and limit the length and number of cul-de-sacs.
- Enact a tree preservation ordinance that applies to new residential developments to prevent clear-cutting.
- Ensure the site design of new residential developments result in a compact, walkable pattern that integrates them with open space, schools, parks, recreation, retail services and other amenities.

- Work with Buford School System to coordinate new housing development with related school system needs.
- Regularly review and amend subdivision regulations as appropriate to ensure new housing reflects the community's preferences.
- Continue to ensure that roads have the ability to handle increased travel prior to permitting new housing construction.

### Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- Open Space Preservation. Utilize the Conservation Subdivision Overlay District in this area. This would set aside land in new developments to be preserved as protected greenspace.
- Transportation Alternatives. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area. These include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and multi-use greenway trails.
- Traditional Neighborhoods. Development in this area should emulate the principles of traditional neighborhoods including street grids, sidewalks, street trees and the ability for children to walk to parks.
- Growth Preparedness. By delaying permitting until adequate road and school capacity is available, Buford will ensure that new growth contributes to, rather than takes away from City's quality of life.



## Quality Development Corridor

**Existing Character Description:** The Hamilton Mill Road corridor is a heavily traveled local artery that serves as a major connection from I-85 to the city of Buford. Commercial uses constitute a growing percentage of the frontage. Residential land uses are under pressure to transition in this area.

**Predominant Land Uses to be Encouraged:** single-family homes, commercial, and mixed-use.

**Vision for the Future:** A corridor that develops with high-quality commercial and mixed-use development. Commercial development along this corridor should exhibit superior design features, similar to those exhibited in the Mall of Georgia area. At major intersections mixed-use development is appropriate. Adequate connections should be made to ensure residents of nearby subdivisions can access commercial areas by foot.

### Implementation Strategies:

- Utilize Mall of Georgia Overlay District to ensure high quality design features including building materials, lighting, landscaping, and façade design.
- Develop pedestrian friendly mixed-use nodes at major intersections. Limiting the scale of mixed-use development to 2-3 stories would be in keeping with the character of neighboring residential areas.
- Encourage shared driveways and inter-parcel access for adjacent commercial uses.
- Create, safe convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the neighborhoods and subdivisions that are adjacent to the commercial corridor.



- Building siting, building materials, architecture, signage, parking and lighting should reinforce a residential scale.
- When a residential conversion to a commercial or office use is permitted next to other residences the scale and appearance of the residence should be maintained.

### Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:

- Transportation Alternatives. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be pursued in this area including sidewalks, bicycle trails, and multi-use trails. By providing these connections between residential and commercial areas residents can access these uses by foot.
- Traditional Neighborhoods. The development of this area as a mixed use corridor is in keeping with the principles of traditional neighborhoods in that residents can run errands and meet needs without being reliant on an automobile.
- Sense of Place. The development of this corridor with quality commercial uses and mixed-use nodes will help establish a unique sense of place and set it apart from other commercial corridors in Gwinnett County.

## Regional Activity Center

**Existing Character Description:** This area serves as a regional activity center attracting visitors from around the region to the Mall of Georgia and ancillary commercial uses. It is comprised of predominately commercial uses and numerous apartment and townhome communities. This area has a high degree of access by vehicular traffic, large parking lots and large land parcels.

**Predominant Land Uses to be Encouraged:** office, mixed use, commercial, higher density residential, and medium density residential.

**Vision for the Future:** The vision for this area is for it to develop into a major employment center that provides residents with increased and varied employment options. A significant amount of multi-story offices will be added to the area around the Gravel Springs Road corridor. Mixed-use development and the redevelopment of commercial properties should contribute to making the area more pedestrian friendly.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear to promote pedestrian convenience.
- Incentives should be offered for employers to locate in this area to help establish it as an office/professional center.
- Require pedestrian and bicycle connections between developments to reduce reliance on the automobile.
- Work with Gwinnett County to ensure that new, adjacent developments in both jurisdictions are complementary.



**Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:**

- Transportation Alternatives. Transportation alternatives should be pursued or maintained in this major activity center including local transit service, commuter bus service to Atlanta and pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- Housing Choices. A multitude of housing choices should be provided in this area including multi-family apartments and condominiums, townhomes, and single-family homes.
- Traditional Neighborhoods. The continued development and redevelopment of this area should emulate the features of traditional neighborhoods including compact development, the mixing of uses within easy walking distance, and human-scale development.
- Sense of Place. This area should offer a unique sense of place and serve as a community focal point. It should be an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly area where people choose to gather for business, shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.
- Employment Options. The development of this area as a regional employment center will greatly improve the career options available for Buford residents. It would provide numerous office/professional jobs which are currently lacking in the city.

## Lakeside Area

**Existing Character Description:** Lake Sydney Lanier is the major focal point of this area. The area is comprised of single-family year-round and vacation homes. Commercial uses in this area are almost exclusively boat-related, including boat sales, storage, and equipment sales. The defining feature of this area is its orientation towards the lake.

**Predominant Land Uses to be Encouraged:** Single-Family residential, commercial, with limited fee-simple townhomes and public uses.

**Vision for the Future:** A resort destination with vibrant neighborhoods and commercial areas that serve both residents and visitors. An area that develops with a unique identity and avoids generic “corporate architecture.” A continuation of the low-density single-family neighborhood character. Development that respects the proximity to a major water supply and does not impact water quality negatively.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Assure adequate erosion and sedimentation control measures are taken in the watershed to protect the drinking water reservoir.
- Limit the amount of multi-family vacation rental units to preserve the single-family character of the area.
- To improve the aesthetics of commercial areas limit the amount of outdoor storage.
- Prohibit incompatible uses such as new sanitary landfills, junkyards, heavy industry and the use of toxic substances to protect water quality.



**Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in this Character Area:**

- Sense of Place. The lake-focus of this area provides a unique sense place. This should be encouraged through the use of vernacular architecture.
- Transportation Alternatives. Transportation alternatives to the automobile should be encouraged in this area including sidewalks along major streets.
- Housing Choices. Housing choices should be provided in this area including multi-family and single-family rental units and vacation condominiums. These should be limited however to preserve the low-density owner occupied character of the area.

### 4.3 Future Land Use Plan

The recommended future land use plan for the City of Buford is a parcel-specific map that is intended to serve as a guide in making rezoning and capital investment decisions. The map assigns a future land use designation to every parcel in the City and within the unincorporated area of Gwinnett County that lies within the City’s Sphere of Influence. The future land use categories shown on the map are listed and defined in the following table. The definitions also describe what zoning districts are appropriated for each future land use category.

**Future Land Use Categories and Definitions**

Future Land Use Category	Definition
Agriculture/Forestry (AF)	These are lands which will retain their rural character during the planning period. This includes all land used for agricultural purposes, such as cropland, livestock production, and commercial timber. This category may also include farm houses or single-family homes on 10 acres or more. <b>Corresponding Zoning District: RA-200, P</b>
Rural Residential (RR)	A single-family house on 2 or more acres of land. Some hobby farming may be taking place on the property. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: RA-200, P</b>
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Conventional residential subdivisions as well as conservation subdivision, with supportive recreational amenities and small-scale public institutional uses. Lots sizes are less than 3 units per acre. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: R-140, R-100, MHS, MH, P, RL.</b>
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Single-family residential areas including duplexes with between 4 to 6 units per acre. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: RMD</b>
High Density Residential (HDR)	Apartments, town homes, or duplexes on lots of 15,000 to 80,000 sf (up to 8 units per acre). <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: RM, RM-6, RM-8</b>
Commercial (COM)	Property where business and trade are conducted; includes retail stores, shopping centers, and office buildings. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: C-2.</b>
Mixed Use (MX)	Allows a variety of commercial, residential, and civic uses typically found in a village, tied together with good street and pedestrian connectivity. Could be the core of a future development node. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: Special use permit.</b>
Office/Professional (O/P)	Properties that accommodate business concerns that do not provide a product directly to customers on the premises, or do not as a primary activity involve the manufacture, storage or distribution. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: O-I</b>
Industrial (IND)	Property used for warehousing, distribution, trucking and manufacturing. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: OBP, M-1 and M-2.</b>
Public/ Institutional (PI)	Areas used for local government's community facilities, general government, and institutional land uses. Examples include schools, city hall, health facilities, churches, libraries and police and fire stations. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts</b>

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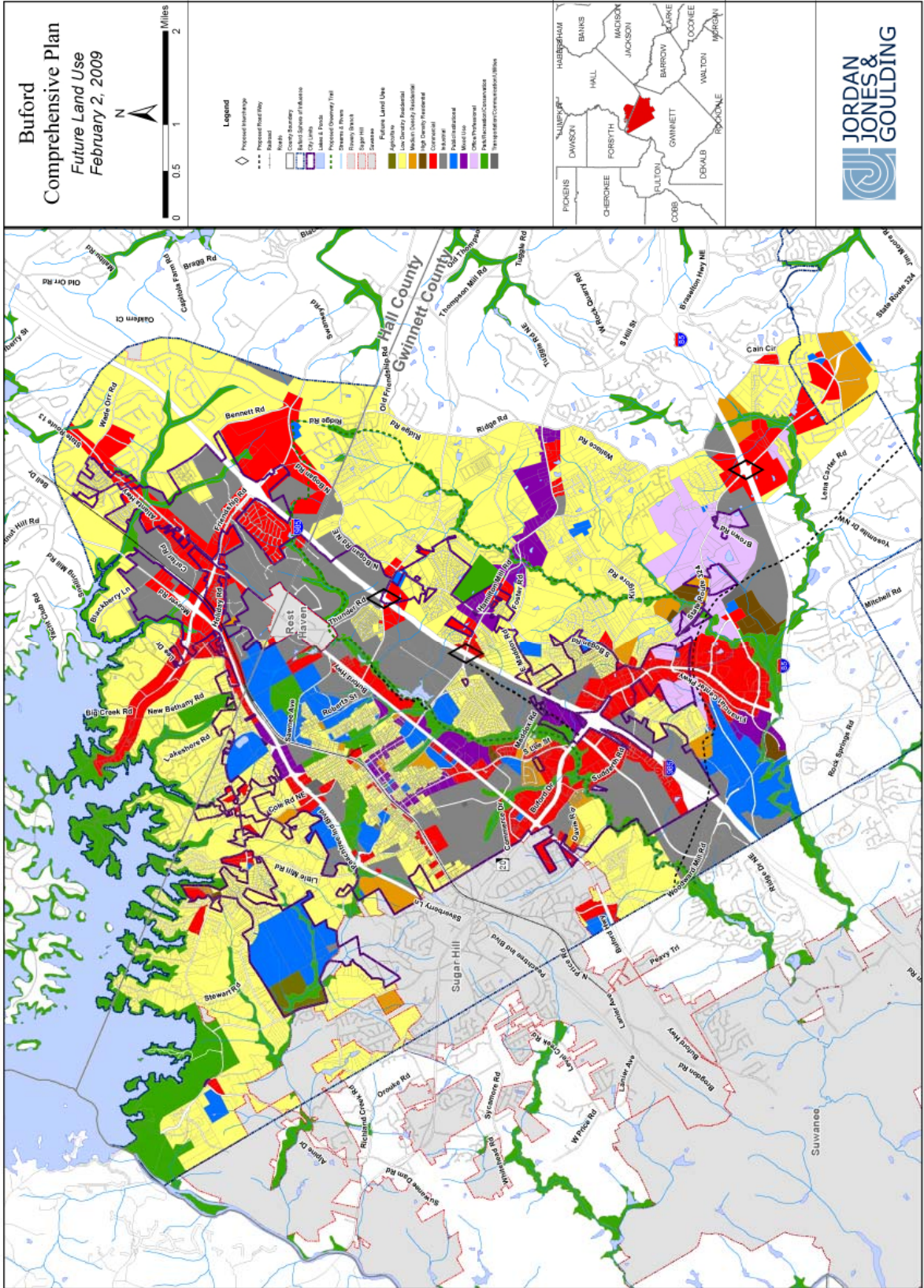
### Future Land Use Categories and Definitions

Future Land Use Category	Definition
Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities (TCU)	Areas used for transportation, communication or utility related activities, such as power generation plants, sewage and water treatment facilities, landfills, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities, or similar uses. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts</b>
Park/Recreation/Conservation (PRC)	Areas developed or proposed to be developed for park or recreation use or are designated as open space. Includes Public Parks, Private Recreation areas, lands held for Conservation, and Floodplain. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts</b>
Road Right-of-Way (ROW)	Land dedicated to road right-of-way, a form of TCU. <b>Corresponding Zoning Districts: All Districts.</b>

On the following page is a reduced copy of the Future Land Use Plan, **Figure 4-2**. A PDF of a larger 30” x 40” sized version of the map is available from the City of Buford Planning Department.



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*The issues and opportunities identified in this chapter correspond to implementation strategies, policies and action items found in later chapters of this document.*

### ► Chapter 5: Translating the Vision into the Plan

The following section details key issues and opportunities the city should address over the planning period. These do not include all the issues and opportunities presented to the public as part of the public involvement process of this plan, but rather those key issues and opportunities that the community identified as critical to the implementing the City's future vision and that can best be addressed by the City rather than at the County, Regional or State level. These were determined through discussions with members of the public at the Visioning and Scenario Workshops. In addition, concerns were identified from city staff and members of the Steering Committee. Another source included the Community Visioning Questionnaire, which was available to residents at the Visioning Workshop and on-line on the project website.



The issues and opportunities identified in this section correspond to implementation strategies, policies and action items found in later chapters of this document. They are divided into seven separate categories:

1. Land Use
2. Transportation
3. Economic Development
4. Community Facilities and Services
5. Natural and Cultural Resources
6. Housing
7. Intergovernmental Coordination



## 5.1 Land Use

### 5.1.1 Small-Town Character and Main Street Revitalization.

In the face of growth Buford has maintained its small-town character, but in recent years this character has diminished. With continued strip commercial and residential subdivision development, the city is losing its "community feel." This has also been the result of the large regional shopping mall that has located right outside of the city's boundaries. The small-town character is the reason many



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residents have chosen to live in Buford and it should be preserved.



A critical component of the City's small town character is the revitalization of Main Street. This is a major opportunity for the city. Main Street provides a unique sense of place, unlike many other areas in Gwinnett County. This environment attracts visitors from surrounding Gwinnett and Hall Counties who spend money and contribute to tax revenues in the city.

**5.1.2 Community Gathering Places.** Members of the public have indicated the need for more community gathering places in the city. These could include more coffee shops, neighborhood parks, and civic buildings. These types of places encourage social connections and foster a sense of community.

**5.1.3 Land Use Balance and Fiscal Health.** There is wide support for the city to maintain its current development policy of encouraging more commercial and industrial development. Limitations placed on residential development have maintained the city's fiscal health and resulted in keeping the school system small. As part of this, the City should seek opportunities to expand the tax base through annexation of commercial and industrial land. The annexation of residential land will result in more residents to provide with services, including public education.



**5.1.4 City Appearance.** The current development ordinances the city has in place are resulting in high-quality development (brick/stone facades, small signage, buffers etc.) Residents would like to see these ordinances stay in place. In addition, there was concern of the property maintenance. Many residents complain of substandard dwelling units, yards full of junked vehicles, and dilapidated rental properties not maintained by landlords.

**5.1.5 Mixed-Use Development.** Large scale mixed-use developments, like Buford Village are new to Buford. There is general support for more development of this type in the city. This type of development provides opportunities to create vibrant, sustainable, pedestrian-friendly environments that are lacking in Buford. There is a desire for this type of live/work/play development on Main Street.

## 5.2 Transportation

**5.2.1 Lack of Transportation Alternatives.** There is an identified need for more transportation options in the city. Residents have indicated a need for more sidewalks, bike paths, and walking paths within the city. The overwhelming majority of respondents at the Visioning Workshop have indicated a desire to have the option to walk to neighborhood restaurants, shops, and parks. Commuter rail is also viewed as a potential alternative, though it would likely be implemented in the long-term.



**5.2.2 Traffic Congestion.** With the continued growth of residential and commercial development in Buford there have been marked increases in traffic congestion. Residents have identified this as a major issue in need of attention. Two of the major contributors to the congestion problem are the need for intersection improvements and truck traffic.

*Intersection improvements* - It has been noted that numerous intersection improvements are needed in the city. These include additional turn lanes and lights at the intersection of Hamilton Mill and Buford Highway. In addition, improvements were identified for southbound travel at the intersection of Buford Highway and Georgia Highway 20.



*Truck Traffic* - With the significant amount of commercial and industrial development in the city truck traffic is an issue. The high volume of truck traffic contributes to congestion, as well as noise issues in some residential areas. The city should investigate designated truck routes through the city to lessen these impacts.

**5.2.3 Downtown Parking.** The need for additional parking spaces downtown has been mentioned as an issue by many residents and was identified as part of the LCI Study in 2004. To further enhance and expand the business community on Main Street the city should pursue adding additional parking spaces.



**5.2.4 Cut-through Traffic.** Many residents have indicated a problem with cut-through traffic in neighborhoods. This is particularly evident on Hill Street in downtown. The city



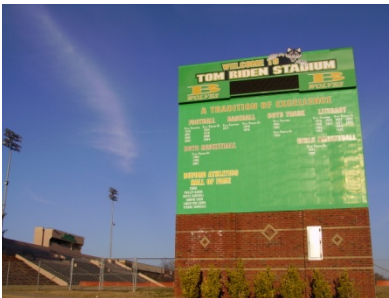
should investigate ways to calm and reduce cut-through traffic with the potential use of speed humps, speed bumps, speed tables, on-street parking, chicanes, raised pedestrian crossings, and bulb-outs.



## 5.3 Economic Development

**5.3.1 Rehabilitation of Old Town Buford.** Main Street and several neighborhoods adjacent to Main Street are in need of significant revitalization. The rehabilitation of these neighborhoods will strengthen the economic viability of Buford and contribute to increased property values throughout the city. A major part of this effort should be to follow recommendations of the LCI plan done in 2004. This study identified action items the city should pursue to further revitalize and improve the downtown area. .

**5.3.2 Implementation of creative financing tools to promote revitalization and attract new employers.** The city has recently attained the legal rights to administer Tax Allocation Districts (TAD's). TADs are special taxing districts put in place in economically disadvantaged areas to help pay for redevelopment costs. As new development occurs in a TAD area the additional tax revenues collected from it are used to fund further redevelopment efforts. Funds can be used for infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, roads, lighting, stormwater facilities), environmental clean-up, or developer incentives. TADs along with other creative financing tools represent a significant opportunity for the Buford to revitalize and redevelop blighted areas of the city.



**5.3.3 Attract more office professional jobs.** Participants in the public effort of this plan identified attracting more office-professional jobs as one of most important economic development activities the community could pursue. The public also identified the need for a strategic economic development plan to help target appropriate employers and incentives.

## 5.4 Community Facilities and Services

**5.4.1 Maintain Independent School System.** The independent school system is the pride and heart of the community. This is unique in Gwinnett County and should be preserved in the future. It results in a greater sense of community and enhanced civic-mindedness. It helps the city set itself apart from the rest of Gwinnett County and in turn attract quality employers and businesses. The administrative offices of the school system are currently housed in a substandard building. The city should work with a school system to ensure adequate facilities are provided for proper functioning of the school system over the planning period. Many residents also expressed concern about the growing size of schools in the community, as this is the reason why many residents have chosen to live in Buford. Steps should be taken to preserve the small school size.



**5.4.2 Additional Public Recreational Opportunities.** Numerous members of the public have identified the need for additional park space in the city and improved recreational trail connections. In particular, a large city park that can be used for community events. There is a desire for it to emulate Suwannee's Town Green, with an amphitheater for performances, large lawn area and adjacent shops and residential units. Several residents also noted that the old semi-professional ball field and associated marble building are not currently being used. This represents an opportunity to expand the recreational facilities offered to residents, which have been identified as lacking by many residents.



**5.4.3 Maintain high quality of City Services -** City services within Buford are considered by many to be affordable and well-run. This presents the opportunity to attract high-quality employers to the city and should be continued. Several participants in the planning workshops also identified the desire to have a city-run recycling program. Residents would like the ability to dispose of their wastes curb-side in an environmentally-friendly manner. Currently, members of the public must drive out of the city to recycle their wastes.

## 5.5 Natural and Cultural Resources



**5.5.1 Preservation of Historic Buildings.** Buford contains a rich cultural heritage including many historic buildings. These buildings serve as an important link to the past and should be preserved whenever possible. A prime example of a historic building worthy of preservation is the Tannery on Main Street.

**5.5.2 Preservation of Tree Canopy.** Many Buford residents are concerned about the loss of vegetation and tree canopy in the community. Clear-cutting for new developments is of prime concern. The city should pursue mechanisms, such as tree ordinances that would require the preservation of existing tree canopy within new developments.

## 5.6 Housing

**5.6.1 Affordable Housing.** With the increasing suburbanization of Gwinnett County homes prices have been steadily rising in the city. Some residents feel there is no longer any affordable housing in the city. A particular need has been identified for more affordable housing choices.



**5.6.2 Executive Housing.** It has been noted that the city lacks a significant amount of high-end executive housing. There is a need for this type of housing to attract business owners looking to locate their businesses in Buford.

**5.6.3 Overcrowded Housing.** With the increasing population in the city, the issue of overcrowded housing has become more evident. Current ordinances that limit occupancies, designed to ensure public safety, are not being properly enforced by the County. Landlords should be held accountable for permitting more occupants in their properties than are legally allowed

**5.6.4 Aging Housing Units.** A significant number of housing units in the city are older and aging. Of all cities in Gwinnett County, Buford had the highest percentage of housing units built before 1969 (30%) in 2000. Older housing units can present both issues and opportunities. Issues could include a lack of running water, lead paint, and structural safety concerns. Opportunities include the inherent value in rehabilitated historic homes. Within Gwinnett County historic properties are relatively scarce.

Having an architectural heritage sets the community apart from others in the County and can help attract residents and employers to the city.

## 5.7 Intergovernmental Coordination

**5.7.1 State and Regional Coordination.** Many of the pressing issues facing the citizens of Buford are really best addressed at the State and Regional level. These issues include improving air quality, ensuring adequate water supply, and major transportation improvements. Buford should make regular efforts to ensure that its concerns are being properly addressed at these levels.

**5.7.2 City and County Coordination.** Primarily due to issues of service delivery and the fact that Buford straddles two counties, Hall and Gwinnett, and the fact that it borders two cities, Rest Haven and Sugar Hill, regular coordination at the city and county levels is required. In particular, new efforts are needed to coordinate parks and recreational planning and in addressing housing deficiencies.

*Parks and Recreation Coordination.* Coordination with Gwinnett County and Hall County regarding multi-use paths and greenways should be pursued. Efforts should be made to plan these facilities in conjunction with the greenspace plans of Gwinnett County and Hall County. Having an interconnected system of greenways and trails that connect to trails outside of the city would greatly expand the recreation opportunities to city residents.

*Housing Needs.* Intergovernmental coordination is needed between the city and Gwinnett County regarding housing needs including public housing, affordable housing, eliminating substandard housing, providing shelter for the homeless, and providing housing for those with special needs. Gwinnett County has made steps to address these concerns through its Consolidated Plan which identifies housing needs and appropriate programs to address them county-wide. Buford and its housing authority should work with the county to ensure its efforts to solve housing problems work synergistically with that of the entire county.



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*General policies are intended to be applied citywide and offer on-going guidance and direction to local officials in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.*

### ► Chapter 6: General Policies

Policies are adopted to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local officials. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including achieving the Community Vision and appropriately addressing the Community Issues and Opportunities. The policies listed below are intended to be general in nature and applied citywide, particularly at the time of rezoning, permit review and budget preparation. Many of these policies will be referenced in staff reports for future rezonings and may influence conditions of zoning that maybe placed on future development. Geographic based policies are listed in Chapter 4 as a part of the description of the Future Land Use.



The following policies are organized around the seven major elements of the plan:

1. Land Use
2. Transportation
3. Economic Development
4. Housing
5. Natural and Cultural Resources
6. Community Facilities and Services
7. Intergovernmental Coordination



#### 6.1 Land Use

- 6.1.1 Integrate greenspace throughout our community: within neighborhoods, along streets, in parking lots, and within commercial and industrial developments.
- 6.1.2 Encourage the use of landscaping, lighting, signage, building design standards, and underground utilities to enhance the aesthetics of our community.
- 6.1.3 Support the redevelopment of abandoned industrial and commercial sites located within our community.



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- 6.1.4 Protect future industrial, warehouse-distribution, and office areas from encroachment by residential development.
- 6.1.5 Regularly review and update the Comprehensive Plan to keep it current with changing demographics, development trends and public initiatives.

### **6.2 Transportation**

- 6.2.1 Connect streets, sidewalks, open space and paths in adjacent developments to each other and stub out to adjacent undeveloped land.
- 6.2.2 Encourage the construction of traffic calming methods, such as splinter islands, speed humps, and rumble strips, to reduce traffic speed in neighborhoods.
- 6.2.3 Promote new development that is conducive to walking and biking.
- 6.2.4 Provide for the routing of truck traffic around congested areas.
- 6.2.5 Seek to reduce the number of curb cuts onto arterial streets and roadways to mitigate traffic congestion, through the requirement of inter-parcel access where appropriate.
- 6.2.6 Support the use of shared parking in commercial development.



### **6.3 Economic Development**

- 6.3.1 Target reinvestment in declining, existing neighborhoods to further encourage private sector redevelopment and accommodate future growth.
- 6.3.2 Promote local tourism, including historic and sports tourism.
- 6.3.3 Support, whenever possible, job training programs such as Georgia Quick-Start and the Job Training Partnership Act.

## **6.4 Housing**

- 6.4.1 Accommodate our diverse population by supporting master planned developments that provide a variety of housing types, styles, and price ranges toward the goal of creating “lifecyle” housing in the community.
- 6.4.2 Maintain and enhance the integrity and character of existing residential neighborhoods.
- 6.4.3 Support the elimination of substandard or dilapidated housing in our community through restoration of nuisance abatement to help ensure that quality housing is available for all residents.
- 6.4.4 Encourage the design and construction of walkable, safe neighborhoods with pleasant, accessible public gathering places. Encourage the dedication of adequate space for recreational use in all neighborhoods.



## **6.5 Natural and Cultural Resources**

- 6.5.1 Preserve, protect, and promote Buford’s unique cultural and historic character and the resources that contribute to this character. Encourage the maintenance of historic structures and, when appropriate, their adaptive reuse.
- 6.5.2 Encourage the preservation and planting of trees and other vegetation that enhance community livability and appearance. Preserve and restore trees and tree canopy in developed and developing areas.
- 6.5.3 Encourage construction practices that minimize soil erosion and sedimentation. Require erosion control during and appropriate landscaping immediately after development.
- 6.5.4 Promote and pursue the preservation of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas for their ecological and aesthetic value, and for the common enjoyment.



## 6.6 Community Facilities and Services



6.6.1 Provide adequate staffing, training, and equipment to support efficient and effective delivery of services of City Services.

6.6.2 Coordinate the timing, location, and capacity of community facilities with desirable patterns of land use and development.

6.6.3 Make efficient use of existing infrastructure before making new investments in capital projects that will increase operating and maintenance costs.

6.6.4 Supply the City's residents with well-designed, functional, and versatile recreational opportunities.

6.6.5 Support and maintain professional public safety departments.

6.6.6 Encourage the availability of health care services to all local residents.

6.6.7 In September 2003, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Board adopted three comprehensive plans to ensure adequate supplies of drinking water, to protect water quality and to minimize the impacts of development on the District's watersheds and downstream water quality. The City of Buford will coordinate with other Gwinnett County and other local governments in the County in implementing the District plans.





## **6.7 Intergovernmental Coordination**

- 6.7.1 Continue and improve the coordination between City and County land use, zoning, capital improvement and service delivery decisions and planning.
- 6.7.2 Support the creation and maintenance of formal mechanisms for intergovernmental cooperation and coordination at the local, regional and state levels.
- 6.7.3 Increase the level and quality of citizen participation in the planning process.
  - 6.7.3.1 Work with the press to disseminate planning and development information on a consistent basis.
  - 6.7.3.2 Identify and implement improvements in digital technology and communications that increase citizen access to City information and that save time for customers and staff.
  - 6.7.3.3 Support the holding of local public informational meetings on a variety of community issues.



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## ► Chapter 7: Implementation Program

The following Implementation Program establishes strategies that correlate with the issues and opportunities identified in Chapter 5: Translating the Vision into the Plan. This chapter describes actions the city should take to build on existing opportunities and address important issues. Action items are identified, along with responsible parties and a projected timeframe for implementation. The timeframe is expressed either as On-going, Short Range (1 to 5 years), or Long-Range (5+ years). Below is a list of responsible parties and partners in this plan.

### 7.1 Parties and Partners

Acronym or Abbreviation	Responsible Party or Partner
ARC	Atlanta Regional Commission
BCC	Buford City Commission
BPC	Buford Planning Commission
BFD	Buford Finance Department
BHA	Buford Housing Authority
BID	Buford Inspection Department
BPZD	Buford Planning and Zoning Department
BCD	Buford City Marshal (litter)
BRD	Buford Recreation Department
BSAD	Buford Sanitation Department
BSED	Buford Sewer Department
BSTD	Buford Street Department
BWD	Buford Water Department
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
BCM	Buford City Manager
BCS	Buford City Staff
GCBOC	Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners
GCPRD	Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Department
GCPDD	Gwinnett County Planning and Development Department
GCTD	Gwinnett County Transportation Department
GRPA	Georgia Rail Passenger Authority
GRTA	Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GEPD	Georgia Environmental Protection Division
HCBOC	Hall County Board of Commissioners
HCPRD	Hall County Parks and Recreation Department
HCPDD	Hall County Planning and Development Department
HCTD	Hall County Transportation Department
PATH	Path Foundation

## 7.2 Implementation Strategies

### 7.2.1 Land Use Strategies

#### How do we maintain a small town character and support main street revitalization?

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
LU-1	Continue to implement the recommendations of the Livable Centers Initiative.	BCC	ARC	On-going
LU-2	Support traditional mixed-use development in and around the downtown area and along quality development corridors as shown on the Future Development Map.	BCC	BPZD	On-going
LU-3	Continue to support the Main Street revitalization efforts by supporting the historic architectural character of the downtown.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going
LU-4	Adopt typical street cross sections for urban and suburban street types that require all new streets to draw from traditional street design patterns and widths found in Buford. Typical street cross sections would include all street types from alleys to arterials.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
LU-5	Enact and support community design standards or guidelines to ensure that the physical appearance of new development (or improvements to existing properties) is compatible with the character of Buford, is built to a high standard, and has a pleasant appearance, such as that already in place around the Mall of Georgia.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range

#### How do we create and maintain community gathering places?

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
LU-6	Create a Sidewalk and Bicycle Connectivity Program to design and construct a designated loop of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility and to connect and better support the viability of local gathering places. These facilities should include sidewalks, bike lanes, bikeable shoulders, and multi-use paths.	BCC	BPZD	Short Range



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<b>Ref. #</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
LU-7	Undertake a Recreation Master Plan to identify appropriate sites for new parks and facilities	BCC	BPZD	Short Range
LU-8	Amend the Development Regulations to require new large scale developments to set aside a portion of their property as public space in proportion to their development.	BCC	BFD, BPC, BPZD	Short Range

**How do we maintain a balanced property tax base?**

<b>Ref. #</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
LU-9	Preserve areas with good highway and railroad access for commercial and industrial development by following the recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan	BCC	BPCZD	On-going
LU-10	Consider the impact to the local tax digest at the time of annexation, supporting the annexation of commercial and industrial uses over residential.	BCC	BCM	On-going

**How do we maintain and improve the City’s appearance?**

<b>Ref. #</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
LU-11	Undertake streetscape programs along identified Quality Development Corridors on the Future Development Map.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range

**How can we encourage more mixed-use development?**

<b>Ref. #</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
LU-12	Amend the City Zoning Ordinance to include a mixed-use zoning classification that allows density incentives for quality mixed-use development.	BPCZD	BCPC	Short Range

**7.2.2 Transportation Strategies**

**What can the community do to provide more transportation alternatives?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
TR-1	Add bicycle lanes, bicycle-friendly shoulders, or parallel multi-use paths to roadways consistent with the Gwinnett County Transportation Plan and during all widening and new construction projects for all collector and arterial streets.	BCC, GDOT	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
TR-2	Require sidewalks along public right-of-way in all new commercial developments.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Long Range
TR-3	Create and maintain a GIS based inventory of all city sidewalks, bicycle routes and multi-use paths.	BCRD	GCTD	Long Range
TR-4	Support the construction of a commuter rail route between Atlanta and Gainesville	BCC	GRPA, GDOT, GCTD	Long Range

**How can we mitigate the negative impacts of traffic congestion?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
TR-5	Make improvements at the intersection of Hamilton Mill Road and Buford Highway intersection improvements	BCC	ARC, GDOT, GCTD	Short Range
TR-6	Widen GA Hwy 20 north of I-985	BCC	ARC, GDOT, GCTD	Long Range
TR-7	Implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology along all state routes in the City. ITS includes a broad range of traffic management technologies, such as traffic cameras, remote signal adjustments, and variable message boards.	GDOT, GCTD, BRD	BCC	Long Range
TR-8	Build a truck by-pass around the city, and creation of a new interchange on I-985.	BCC	ARC, GDOT, GCTD	Long Range
TR-9	Extend Satellite Boulevard from GA 20 to Hamilton Mill Road	BCC	ARC, GDOT, GCTD	Long Range

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### How can we provide adequate downtown parking?

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
TR-10	Adopt standards allowing for shared parking in other special situations by way of administrative exception.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
TR-11	Conduct a local parking study to analyze where parking is adequate or lacking, to project future parking supply/demand, and to review local policies and programs affecting parking.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range

### What can be done about cut-through traffic?

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
TR-12	Amend the Development Regulations to require new residential developments to implement traffic calming design measures such as traffic circles, narrow lanes, and street trees.	BPZD	BPC, GDOT	Short Range

### 7.2.3 Economic Development Strategies

#### How can we revitalize Old Town Buford?

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
ED-1	Implement the recommendations of the LCI Study	BCC		On-going
ED-2	Utilize Georgia’s legal redevelopment tools to revitalize central business districts (DCA Model Code 5-5).	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range

#### What creative financing tools can the community use to revitalize declining areas?

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
ED-3	Pending potential changes in the pertinent state enabling legislations, explore the use of Tax Allocation Districts to improve target areas in need of specific attention or revitalization, such as the downtown. Make improvements through the issuance of bonds, which will in turn be paid off by increased tax revenue that the project generates once improvements attract developers.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range

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Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
ED-4	Utilize Georgia’s legal redevelopment tools to revitalize central business districts (DCA Model Code 5-5).	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range

**How can we attract more local office-professional jobs?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
ED-6	Support the construction of executive housing in the community	BCC	GCBOC	On-going
ED-7	Work with local economic development network to market Buford as a prime location of future office development	BCM	Local Chambers of Commerce	On-going
ED-8	Maintain a partnership with the Gwinnett County Development Authority to promote joint economic development endeavors that help promote Buford’s excellent city services.	BCC	GCDA	On-going

**7.2.4 Community Facilities and Services Strategies**

**How can the City government best support the City school system?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
CF-1	Coordinate planning process between School officials and City Council staff and officials that will facilitate review of rezoning applications for their impacts on schools and to coordinate school siting with the Future Development Map.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going
CF-2	Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
CF-3	Construct a new School Administration Building	BCSS	BCC	Short Range
CF-4	Support the maintenance of small school size	BCSS	BCC	On-going



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**What improvements should be made to the Parks and Recreation system?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
CF-5	Prepare a future parks and conservation plan. It should include an Official Greenspace Map that links open spaces together into a publicly accessible open space network and create incentives for developers to follow it.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
CF-6	Create pocket or neighborhood parks consisting of small open spaces throughout a community that may be publicly owned or owned/managed by nearby residents and property owners.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Long Range

**How can we maintain and improve our high quality of city services?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
CF-7	Develop long-range functional plans for key infrastructure and community facilities that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan	BCC	BCM	On-going
CF-8	As part of regularly updating the Comprehensive Plan, monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going
CF-9	Study the possibility of providing a citywide recycling program	BCM	DCA, DNR	Short Range
CF-10	Develop a capital improvement program (CIP) that regularly synchronizes land use plans with city owned capital assets as part of the annual budget cycle. The CIP is a short-term program for developing or improving public facilities (roads, water/sewer systems, sidewalks, recreational facilities, etc.) that brings predictability to the location and extent of future public facility expansions.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Long Range
CF-11	Carry out a study of alternative financing for infrastructure and community facilities, and develop and apply evaluation criteria and identify a priority list of alternative funding sources to consider implementing in Buford.	BCC	BCM	Short Range

**7.2.5 Natural and Cultural Resources Strategies**

**What steps should be taken to preserve and enhance our historic resources?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
NC-1	Prepare and maintain an inventory of local historic resources, including graveyards, historic structures, and historic sites.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Long Range
NC-2	Adopt architectural and design guidelines to apply within the historic areas.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Long Range

**What can be done to preserve our Tree Canopy?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
NC-3	Contract with an arborist on an as need basis	BCC	BPC	On-going
NC-4	Adopt typical street cross sections for all urban and suburban street types that include street trees.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
NC-5	Partner with utility companies to create standards for conducting utility work around trees.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Long Range
NC-6	Provide information on the city website about planting, growing, and preserving trees.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
NC-7	Protect open space and greenspace through conservation easements, subdivision exactions, and streetscape initiatives.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going

**7.2.6 Housing Strategies**

**How do we provide quality affordable housing choices in our community?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
H-1	Provide financial assistance programs for first-time homebuyers and low to moderate-income homebuyers.	BHA	IMPACT! Group	Long Range
H-2	Complete a housing needs study to determine the projected share of affordable units that will be necessary in the next 10-15 years.	BHA	IMPACT! Group	Short Range

*Community Agenda – February 2, 2009*

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
H-3	Grant zoning density increases to private developers in exchange for the provision of specific amenities, such as public improvements, setting aside open space, or providing affordable housing.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going

**How do we encourage the development of executive housing?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
H-6	Create regulations supporting high-quality design elements, including construction materials, landscaping, and recreational amenities.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going
H-7	Provide for large minimum housing sizes in appropriate designated areas.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going
H-8	Encourage development of higher-end retail, restaurants, and other support facilities.	BPC, BPZD	BCC	On-going

**What can we do to address overcrowded housing conditions and to support the maintenance of our aging housing stock?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
H-9	Increase code enforcement efforts by following up on complaints from community members.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Ongoing
H-10	Remind property owners on the City website of the City code requirements, and periodically send notices of where to find this information in city utility bills.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	Short Range
H-11	Identify ways to involve the public in a constructive way for better code compliance.	BCC	BPC, BPZD	On-going

*Community Agenda – February 2, 2009*

**7.2.6 Intergovernmental Coordination Strategies**

**What steps should we take to ensure that our interests are being properly pursued at the state and regional level?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
IC-1	Actively participate in the regular scheduled meetings at ARC and GDOT on regional transportation and land use issues.	BCM	ARC, GDOT	On-going
IC-2	Work closely with our local State Representatives to promote State legislation of local interest and monitor the progress of proposed legislation.	BCC	GCBOC	On-going

**How do we better coordinate Municipal-County Coordination efforts?**

Ref. #	Strategy	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
IC-3	Work closely with local jurisdictions to support the maintenance of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax program.	BCC	GCBOC	On-going
IC-4	Actively participate in efforts to plan and coordinate inter-county multi-use paths and greenspace between the City, Hall County and Gwinnett County.	BRD	BCM	On-going
IC-5	Actively participate in preparation of regular updates of the County Comprehensive Plan.	BPZD	BCM	On-going



## ▶ Chapter 8: Short Term Work Program 2008-2013

The short term work program identifies actions the City of Buford, or other entities, intends to take during the first five years of the planning period. This includes a brief description of the activity, the timeframe for undertaking the activity, responsible party for implementing the activity, estimated cost (if any), and funding source (if applicable).

Planning Activity	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b>Economic Development</b>								
1. Continue working with the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce regarding the recruitment of business and industry.	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
2. Work with the City's Downtown Development Authority in business relocation and downtown development	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
3. Continue providing sufficient utility capacity to meet future demand.	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
4. Promote Cultural and Community Events Downtown	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
5. Utilize Georgia's legal redevelopment tools to revitalize central business districts (DCA Model Code 5-5).		X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
6. Pending potential changes in the pertinent state enabling legislations, explore the use of Tax Allocation Districts to improve target areas in need of specific attention or revitalization, such as the downtown. Make improvements through the issuance of bonds, which will in turn be paid off by increased tax revenue that the project generates once improvements attract developers.		X				NA	City	NA

Community Agenda – February 2, 2009

Planning Activity	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>								
1. Continue supporting community and cultural activities.	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
2. Continue support of and participation in Georgia's Greenspace Program by identifying and acquiring properties for greenspace.	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
3. Provide information on the city website about planting, growing, and preserving trees.		X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA
<b>Community Facilities</b>								
1. Upgrade Southside Wastewater Treatment Plant	X	X	X			\$15 M	City	Bond/Local
2. Upgrade water treatment plant	X	X	X			\$100,000	City	Bond/Local
3. Continue to expand, upgrade, and improve gas system	X	X	X	X	X	\$1 M/YR	City	Local
4. Continue to expand, upgrade, and improve sewer system.	X	X	X	X	X	\$200,000/YR	City	Local
5. Continue to expand, upgrade, and improve electrical system.	X	X	X	X	X	\$250,000/YR	City	Local
6. Continue resurfacing City streets	X	X	X	X	X	\$250,000/YR	City	Local/LARP
7. Undertake a Recreation Master Plan to identify appropriate sites for new parks and facilities								
8. Continue to coordinate the planning process between School officials and City Council staff and officials that will facilitate review of rezoning applications for their impacts on schools and to coordinate school siting with the Future Development Map.				X	X	\$50,000	City	Local
9. Regularly monitor and project local demographic trends to determine the future need for public services.	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	NA

Community Agenda – February 2, 2009

Planning Activity	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
10. Study the possibility of providing a citywide recycling program			X	X		NA	City	NA
11. Carry out a study of alternative financing for infrastructure and community facilities, and develop and apply evaluation criteria and identify a priority list of alternative funding sources to consider implementing in Buford.			X			\$25,000	City	Local
<b>Housing</b>								
Continue encouraging the provision of affordable housing.	X	X	X	X	X	NA	Housing Authority	N/A
Remind property owners on the City website of the City code requirements, and periodically send notices of where to find this information in city utility bills.		X	X	X	X	NA	City	N/A
<b>Land Use</b>								
Update the Comprehensive Plan, including revising the Future Land Use Map as necessary.	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	N/A
Revise zoning ordinance and other regulations as necessary (see list of potential revisions in the end notes)	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	N/A
Continue to implement the recommendations of the Livable Centers Initiative	X	X	X	X	X	NA	City	N/A
<b>Transportation</b>								
Add bicycle lanes, bicycle-friendly shoulders, or parallel multi-use paths to roadways consistent with the Gwinnett County Transportation Plan and during all widening and new construction projects for all collector and arterial streets.		X	X	X	X	NA	City	N/A

Community Agenda – February 2, 2009

Planning Activity	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Conduct a local parking study to analyze where parking is adequate or lacking, to project future parking supply/demand, and to review local policies and programs affecting parking			X			\$30,000	City	N/A
Main Street Improvements		X	X			\$600,000	City	TE Grant, Local
Main Street Additional Parking	X					\$225,000	City	SPLOST, Local
Little Mill Road improvements and streetscape	X					\$600,000	City	SPLOST, Local
South Lee Street Improvements	X					\$225,000	City	SPLOST, Local
GW-341 (PI 0008906) South Hill Street Pedestrian Improvements from Main Street to SR 13 (Buford Highway)		X	X	X		\$5.5 M	City	Local, LCI
GW-099C (PI 132950) Buford Highway Widening from Sawnee Ave to Friendship Road (SR 347) (Design in 2009, Construction Long Range)		X	X	X	X	\$800,000 (Design)	GDOT	SPLOST, Local
GW-301 (PI0006826) SR 20 (Nelson Brogdon Blvd/Buford Drive) ATMS from SR 13A (Peachtree Industrial Blvd) to Satellite Blvd		X	X			NA	GDOT	NA
GW-308C (PI 0006925) Sugarloaf Parkway Extension – Phase 3 from SR 20 (Buford Hwy/Mall of GA Pkwy) to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (ROW in 2009, CST Long Range)		X	X	X	X	NA	GDOT	NA
AR-941 (PI 0008738) Metro Arterial Connector (MAC) Corridor Development Study		X	X			NA	ARC	NA

**End Notes:**

Recommended revisions to the City Zoning Regulations to address in short-term:

1. Amend the Development Regulations to require new large scale developments to set aside a portion of their property as public space in proportion to their development.
2. Update existing community design standards or guidelines as needed to ensure that the physical appearance of new development (or improvements to existing properties) is compatible with the character of Buford, is built to a high standard, and has a pleasant appearance, such as that already in place around the Mall of Georgia.
3. Adopt typical street cross sections for urban and suburban street types that require all new streets to draw from traditional street design patterns and widths found in Buford. Typical street cross sections would include all street types from alleys to arterials.
4. Amend the City Zoning Ordinance to include a mixed-use zoning classification that allows density incentives for quality mixed-use development.
5. Amend the Development Regulations to require new residential developments to implement traffic calming design measures such as traffic circles, narrow lanes, and street trees.
6. Adopt standards in the Development Regulations allowing for shared parking in other special situations by way of administrative exception.





► Appendix A: Record of Accomplishments

City of Buford, Short Term Work Program, 2003-2007

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Responsibility	Status	Explanation for Postponed or Not Accomplished Activity or Project
	<b>Economic Development</b>								
	Continue working with the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce regarding the recruitment of business and industry.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
1	Work with the City's Downtown Development Authority in business relocation and downtown development	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
2	Continue providing sufficient utility capacity to meet future demand.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
3									
	<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>								
	Continue supporting community and cultural activities.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
1	Continue support of and participation in Georgia's Greenspace Program.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
2									
	<b>Community Facilities</b>								
	Construct new Public Works facility	X	X				City	Complete	
1	Construct new City Hall	X	X	X			City	Complete	
2	Upgrade Roberts Street from 2 to 4 lanes	X	X				City	Complete	
3	Relocate Main Street (.2 mile)	X	X				City	Complete	
4	Upgrade Southside Wastewater Treatment Plant	X		X		X	City	Complete	
5									

Community Agenda – February 2, 2009

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Responsibility	Status	Explanation for Postponed or Not Accomplished Activity or Project
6	Upgrade water treatment plant	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
7	Continue to expand, upgrade, and improve gas system	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
8	Continue to expand, upgrade, and improve sewer system.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
9	Continue to expand, upgrade, and improve electrical system.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
10	Continue Main Street streetscape improvements	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
11	Construct City Park on Main Street	X	X	X	X		City	Complete	
12	Continue resurfacing City streets	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
	<b>Housing</b>								
1	Continue encouraging the provision of affordable housing.	X	X	X	X	X	Housing Authority	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
	<b>Land Use</b>								
1	Revise Future Land Use Map as necessary.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
2	Revise zoning ordinance and other regulations as necessary	X	X	X	X	X	City	Currently Underway/Ongoing	
	<b>General</b>								
1	Prepare new Comprehensive Plan					X	City	Currently Underway	

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE SUBMISSION OF THE COMMUNITY  
AGENDA COMPONENT OF THE 2030 CITY OF BUFORD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
TO THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION AND THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT  
OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

WHEREAS, Buford, Georgia, is required pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1992 pursuant to the coordinated planning process as set forth in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and was prepared to meet the State Planning and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, Buford, Georgia, is required to update its Comprehensive Plan by February 2009; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford is currently engaged in a planning process to prepare a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as effective May 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan will be comprised of three components, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda, which together define major issues, policies, and recommendations that serve as the basis for local government decision making regarding community facilities, future land use and development patterns, housing, economic development and other important resources for Buford, its citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders; and


WHEREAS, the City of Buford City Council has completed and reviewed the third component, the Community Agenda; and

WHEREAS, the City of Buford City Council certifies that the public review and public hearing requirements were met during this phase of the planning process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Commission of Buford, Georgia, hereby approves the Community Agenda component of the City of Buford Comprehensive Plan for transmittal to the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review.

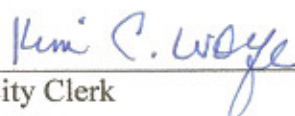
APPROVED by the City Commission of Buford, Georgia, this 2nd day of September 2008.

BUFORD, GEORGIA



\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**City of Buford**

**RESOLUTION**

**CITY OF BUFORD 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS** the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorizes local governments throughout the State to prepare Comprehensive Plans to be used in guiding their future growth and development and

**WHEREAS** the City of Buford has prepared an updated to its existing Comprehensive Plan that covers the period through 2030;

**WHEREAS** the City Commission established a Citizen's Steering Committee to champion the project within the community;

**WHEREAS** the City of Buford held a visioning workshop on October 25, 2007 at the Buford City Hall;

**WHEREAS** the City of Buford held a visioning workshop on January 27, 2008 at the Buford City Hall;

**WHEREAS** the City of Buford held an Open House on the draft Comprehensive Plan on May 8, 2008 at the Buford City Hall;

**WHEREAS** the City of Buford Planning Commission held Public Hearing for Transmittal of the Community Agenda document on August 12, 2008;

**WHEREAS** the City Commission held a Public Hearing for Transmittal of the Community Agenda document on September 2, 2008;

**WHEREAS** the City Commission on February 2, 2009 held a public meeting to consider adoption of the Community Agenda document;

**WHEREAS** the City Commission gratefully acknowledges the extensive community input that has been incorporated into the stakeholders residents, business owners and others that have been involved in the plan preparation process;

**WHEREAS** the third and defining element of the Comprehensive Plan entitled the Community Agenda was prepared in accordance with the State Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective May 1, 2005;





WHEREAS the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has reviewed and approved the Community Agenda of the City of Buford 2030 Comprehensive Plan dated September 2, 2008

NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED that the City Commission of the City of Buford Georgia hereby approves and adopts the Community Agenda of the City of Buford 2030 Comprehensive Plan dated February 2, 2009.

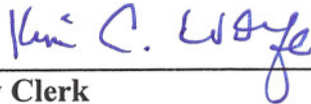
RESOLVED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2009.

CITY OF BUFORD, GEORGIA



\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Chairman

ATTEST:



\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk