



2018-2028 Comprehensive Plan

Submitted to: Regional Commission & Department of Community Affairs
By: The City of Cornelia in August 2018



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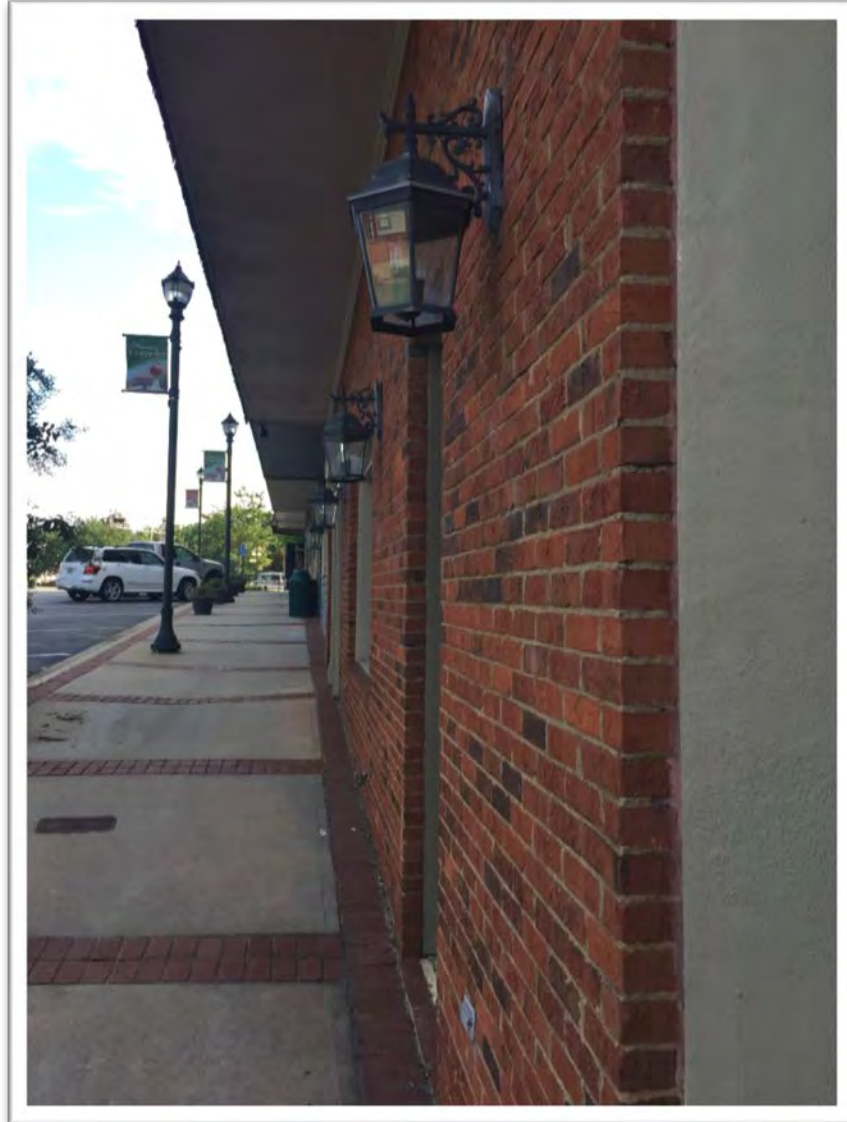
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Background

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers the rules and regulations for Comprehensive Planning in the State of Georgia, effective on March 1, 2014. The purpose of these standards is to provide governmental entities a framework for the development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans because vibrant places are essential to the State of Georgia's overall economic prosperity.

Producing and maintaining a Comprehensive Plan is a way for a local government to understand the relationship between the various issues and opportunities within the community. Understanding these trends gives community leaders a basis for establishing implementation activities and policies. The Comprehensive Plan creates an understanding of the future vision for the community inclusive of businesses, industries, investors, property owners, tax payers, and the general public.

O.C.G.A 50-8-1 established authority for the DCA to define minimum standards and procedures for developing comprehensive plans for local governments in the State of Georgia. These standards and procedures are designed to help the City prepare a plan that identifies immediate needs within community and looks for opportunities to help the City reach its vision for the future. An adopted Comprehensive Plan allows the City to maintain its "qualified local government status," which makes the City eligible for selected state funding and permitting programs.

The City of Cornelia addressed the elements required based on the DCA's minimum standards and procedures and exceeded these requirements by conducting additional analysis on other planning elements. The following required elements are included in the City's 2018 Comprehensive Plan:

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Community Work Program

As a community that has adopted a Zoning Ordinance, the City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan is required to address land use. In addition, the City has also completed an assessment of transportation, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, and intergovernmental coordination throughout this document.

Setting the Stage

History of Cornelia

Much of the growth in Cornelia has occurred slowly over time, being mainly attributed to the geographic proximity to the North Georgia mountains. The small town feel, quality of life, and the sense of place associated with the City make it a unique and desirable place to live and these values will play a significant role in achieving the future vision and goals of this plan.

The Beginning

At the close of the Civil War in 1865, the area where Cornelia is located was a typical mountain forest. The spot was so well secluded that a moonshine still was operated without interference at the site of what is now the center of downtown. Cornelia was first a settlement around 1870. It was situated near the old boundary line between the Cherokee and Creek Indian tribes.

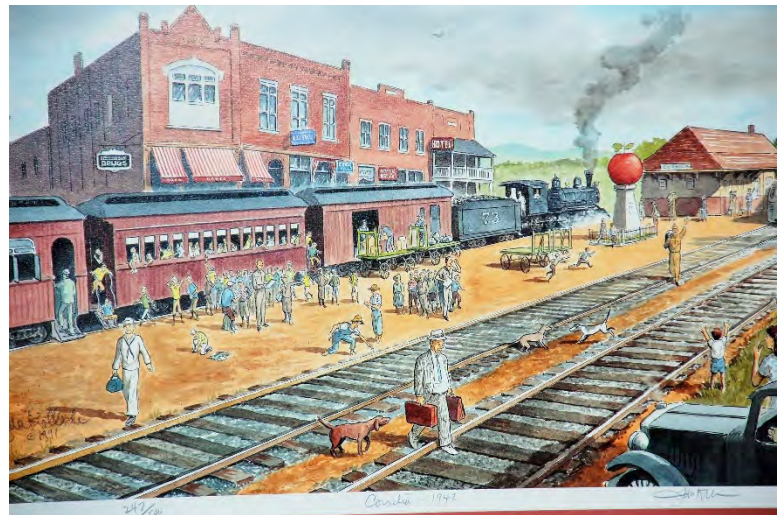
Railroad

In 1872, workers of the Charlotte-Airline Railroad (later Southern Railway) invaded the virgin forest. A roadbed was cleared and graded, and tracks were laid from Gainesville to Toccoa. In 1882, the Blue Ridge and Atlantic Railroad opened a line that extended northward from the Charlotte-Airline to Clarkesville and Tallulah Falls. The Tallulah Railway, as it came to be called, carried passengers and freight from Cornelia to Franklin, North Carolina. Many of the passengers rode to view Tallulah Gorge, which was one of the most scenic spots in northeast Georgia. Later, the railway served a more utilitarian purpose until after World War II when the line was discontinued.

Big Red Apple

The Big Red Apple stands on the railway depot grounds in downtown Cornelia. The replica of the North Georgia apple is 7 feet high and 22 feet in circumference. It weighs 5,200 pounds and is painted in natural colors.

The apple is constructed of steel and concrete and was molded in Winchester, Virginia, in 1925. It is erected on a concrete pedestal 8 feet high and 6 feet square at the base. The monument was donated by Southern Railway, and for many years the City has held a celebration of the apples grown in the area. Cornelia has since been touted as "The Home of the Big Red Apple."





People of Cornelia

In support of the Comprehensive Plan, a demographic study was performed to identify trends in population, housing, employment, transportation, community health, and other data trends. The full demographic study, which is summarized here, can be found in the Data Assessment Addendum included with this Comprehensive Plan.

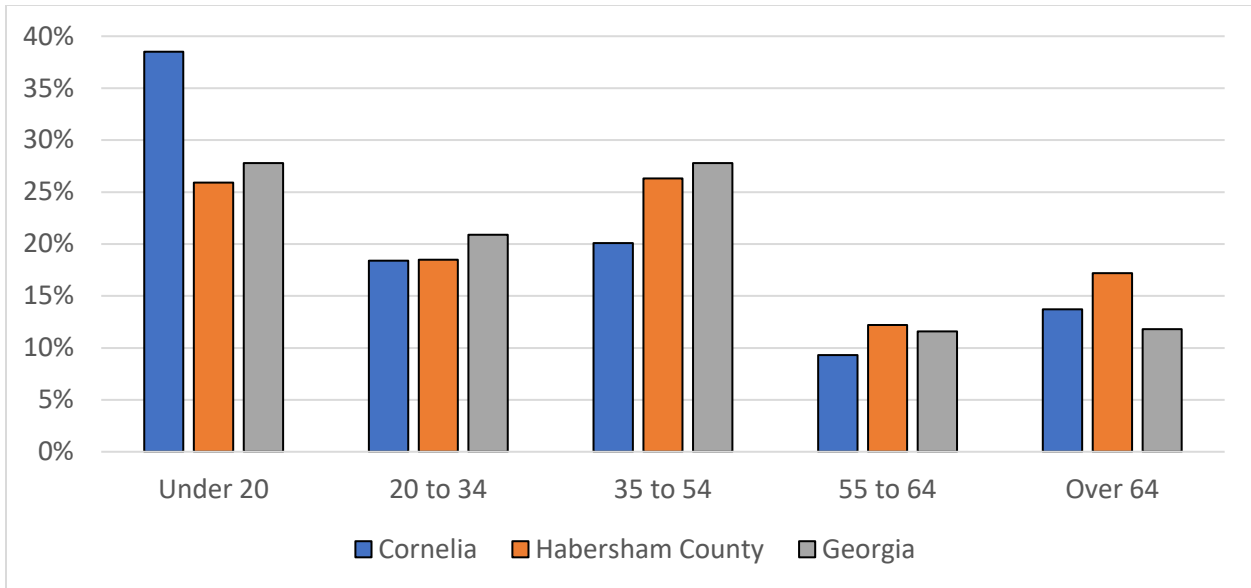
Cornelia experienced a slow rate of population growth since the decennial census in 2000 as the City grew from a population of roughly 3,700 to nearly 4,200 in 2015. The majority of this growth occurred from 2000-2010 when the population increased 13.2%, which was still less than the growth rate in Habersham County and Georgia during the same period. From 2010-2015, the State of Georgia experienced a slower rate of growth, increasing by only 3.3%, which exceeded the rate of growth in Habersham County and Cornelia.

Jurisdiction	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Cornelia	3,674	4,160	4,199	13.2%	0.9%
Habersham County	35,902	43,041	43,527	19.9%	1.1%
Georgia	8,186,453	9,687,653	10,006,693	18.3%	3.3%

While growth in the City of Cornelia has been relatively limited, many of the incorporated areas of the County have experienced tremendous growth since the year 2000. Despite the rapid growth that occurred in other cities in the County, Cornelia remains the largest incorporated area and contains nearly 10% of the total population in Habersham County. Growth rates between 2010-2015 have leveled off county-wide, with the notable exception of Clarksville, which still had a growth rate over 10% during that period.

Jurisdiction	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Cornelia, City	3,674	4,160	4,199	13.2%	0.9%
Alto, Town	876	1,172	1,165	33.8%	-0.6%
Baldwin, City	2,425	3,279	3,467	35.2%	5.7%
Clarkesville, City	1,248	1,733	1,937	38.9%	11.8%
Demorest, City	1,465	1,823	1,842	24.4%	1.0%
Mount Airy, Town	604	1,284	1,233	112.6%	-4.0%
Tallulah Falls, Town	164	168	90	2.4%	-46.4%
Unincorporated County	25,446	29,422	29,594	15.6%	0.6%

The City of Cornelia is experiencing an increase in the average household size and as well as the number of people between the ages of 20-54. The American Community Survey (ACS) published by the Census Bureau estimates the average household size for the State of Georgia to be 2.73 people. The estimate for Cornelia is 3.08, which is consistent with the City’s reputation as a community of younger adults with children. The same data also indicates that the City of Cornelia has seen decreases in people aged over 62 and 65 despite the fact that the State and County estimates show increases in population for these same age cohorts.

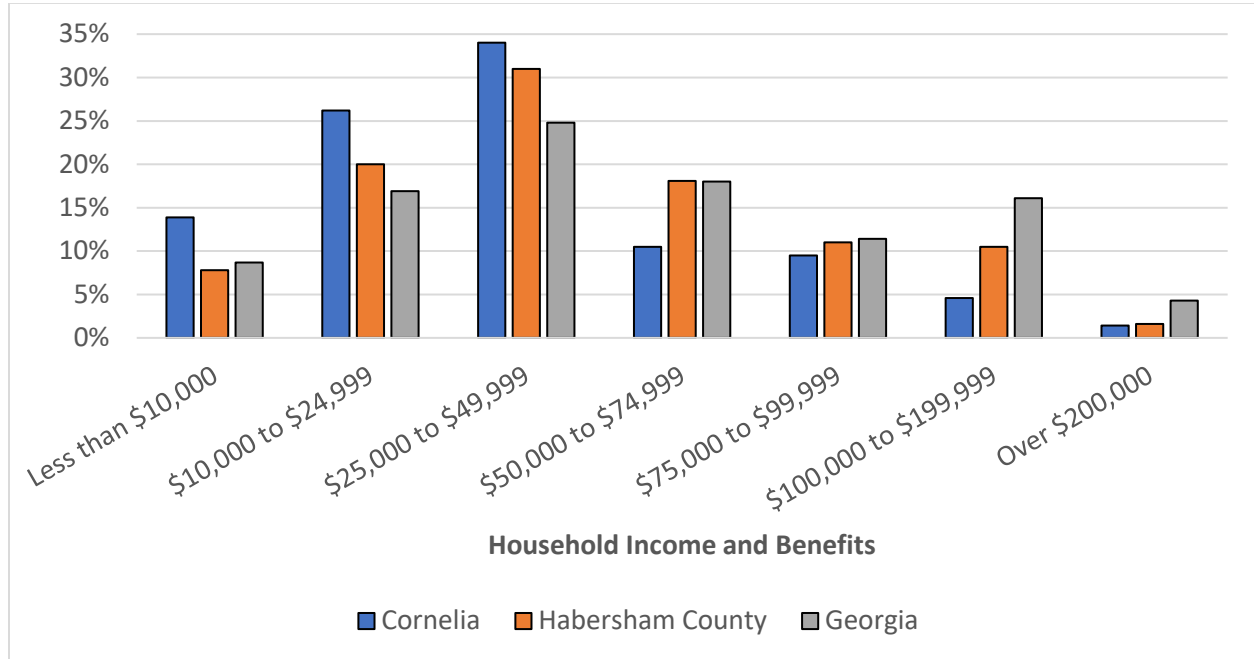


One metric of household income inequality is defined as the ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that at the 20th percentile. This ratio, calculated with data from 2011-2015, is presented on a county level for Habersham County and its neighboring counties. The lower the ratio of the 80th percentile to the 20th percentile of household income, the lower the inequality in household income. The lower the ratio, the higher the County was ranked.

- Habersham County was ranked as one of the better counties in the state at 39th
- Although the County was ranked 39th, two of its neighbors were ranked in the top 20.
- Habersham County’s ratio of 4.3 (\$80,898 / \$18,883) was better than the state average (5.0).
- Overall, Habersham County has less division between the top and bottom ends of the income spectrum compared with the state average and 75% of Georgia’s counties.

County	Household Income Inequality Ratio (80 th /20 th Percentile)	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	4.3	39 th
Banks County	4.2	34 th
Franklin County	5.0	86 th
Hall County	4.3	41 st
Rabun County	6.1	142 nd
Stephens County	4.9	84 th
Towns County	4.1	18 th
White County	4.1	20 th
State Average	5.0	N/A

In looking at household income data specific to Cornelia, the City has a larger percentage of groups with incomes below \$50,000 than the state and County distributions. Cornelia was consistent with Habersham County for income between \$50,000 and \$74,999, and with both County and statewide numbers for the \$75,000 - \$99,999 range. In all other categories, the City fell below County and Statewide numbers.



Characteristics for a variety of health-related topics are available through the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program, and rankings are also presented by county. County Health is categorized into two major headings – Health Outcomes and Health Factors. Health Outcomes are a measure of how long people live (Length of Life) and how healthy people feel while alive (Quality of Life). Health Factors represent what influences the health of a county’s population, and they are an estimate of future health. These ranks are based on four types of measures: Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social and Economic, and Physical Environment factors. Each of these factors have multiple measures used to calculate the county’s health, and a select number of these factors are presented below to show strengths and weaknesses of the health of Habersham County’s population. Results from the two primary categories (Health Outcomes and Health Factors) for Habersham County and neighboring counties displayed in the table below.

County	Health Outcomes Rank in Georgia’s 159 Counties	Health Factors Rank in Georgia’s 159 Counties
Habersham County	19 th	38 th
Banks County	53 rd	37 th
Franklin County	139 th	66 th
Hall County	25 th	21 st
Rabun County	40 th	39 th
Stephens County	93 rd	50 th
Towns County	44 th	16 th
White County	11 st	15 th

As a note, the results presented from this source describe the County as a whole and not necessarily Cornelia individually. However, with about 10% of the County's population, Cornelia has a considerable impact on the Habersham County results.

Employment and economic development data have been reviewed and analyzed for the City of Cornelia, Habersham County, and the State of Georgia. The major employment categories for the civilian labor force are manufacturing (29%), arts, entertainment, recreation, and food services (13%), and retail trade (12%).

According to the Development Authority of Habersham County, the following are the County's major employers (with approximate number of employees in parentheses):

- Fieldale Farms (2,500 employees) – privately owned poultry production facility.
- Habersham County Board of Education (1,100 employees).
- Mount Vernon Mills (700 employees) – diversified and integrated manufacturer of textiles and chemicals for the apparel industry.
- Habersham County Medical Center (600 employees).
- Ethicon (600 employees) – part of Johnson & Johnson supply chain, produces surgical equipment and medical devices.
- Georgia Department of Corrections (550 employees) – Arrendale Correctional Institute.
- Windstream Communications (350 employees) – telecommunications company that operates a regional support center.
- TenCate (230 employees) – manufactures composite textiles for industrial, commercial and government customers.
- Piedmont College (220 employees).
- GlobalTech (200 employees) – contract candle manufacturer.
- Scovill Fasteners (200 employees) – produces metal fasteners such as buttons, snaps, washers, and zippers for the apparel industry.
- Habersham Metal Products (120 employees) – metal fabricator specializing in detention products, bullet resistant assemblies, and hurricane rated products.
- Steel Cell of North America (50 employees) – metal fabricator specializing in the production of prefabricated modular detention cells.
- Piedmont Automotive (50 employees) – produces electronic components for the automotive industry.

It is noteworthy that two of the top five employers are located within the City of Cornelia.

Future economic development and workforce development have been identified as goals for the future of Cornelia. The current demographic trends in terms of population, age distribution, income, and the other intangible factors appear to have set the stage for future growth and economic prosperity.

Plan Coordination

Habersham County Comprehensive Plan

Habersham County as well as the other incorporated areas (Clarksville, Alto, Mt Airy, and Demorest) are also in the process of completing a comprehensive plan. Since many of the goals, needs, and opportunities typically identified during the planning process may not follow municipal boundaries, it is important that coordination between governments occur to achieve the shared vision for the region.

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy & Regional Plan

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission covers a 13-county area with 38 municipalities (including Cornelia) and a population of roughly 675,000 people. Similar to a Comprehensive Plan, the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) looks at demographic trends for the area to understand the baseline conditions and forecasts future projections. The EDS also includes an assessment of major planning elements to identify goals, issues, opportunities, and strategies. While far-reaching in its scope, the City of Cornelia attempts to maintain consistency with the vision of the EDS and Regional Plan.

City of Cornelia Redevelopment Plan for Community Development Area

The City of Cornelia adopted an Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) in 2009 and adopted a resolution in 2016 stating support for the continued implementation of this plan. The Urban Redevelopment Act (OCGA 36-61-1) was adopted in 1955 by the Georgia General Assembly as a tool to support the development of public/private partnerships for community revitalization efforts. The Urban Redevelopment Act (the Act) provides local governments in Georgia with specific powers to rehabilitate, revitalize, conserve, and develop designated “slum areas” as defined within the Act. Cornelia’s URP has identified a target area that includes the downtown area as well as some of the residential areas adjacent to the downtown core. The URP defines the geographic boundaries, the needs, the city’s approach to address blight within this area, and potential funding sources and/or partnerships. The URP is also required to demonstrate consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Plan, which is detailed in Section 8. The goals of the URP and this Comprehensive Plan remain consistent and activities identified in the Workplan herein continue to focus on addressing blight within the City.

City of Cornelia Masterplan: A Plan for Process and Community Design

The City of Cornelia Masterplan was originally completed in 2001 and was updated in 2013 to reflect changes in development patterns, goals, and overall vision for the community. The Masterplan is structured in a manner that allows it to be used as a marketing tool to give perspective developers and/or investors an understanding of the City’s vision. Focusing mainly on downtown Cornelia, the Masterplan identifies a list of projects that include streetscape enhancements, landscaping, sidewalks, multi-use





trails, infill development opportunities, and preservation of historic structures. Potential funding sources have been identified and include the agency as well as a description of the program. Elements from the Masterplan have been closely reviewed and coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan.

Part V Environmental Planning Criteria

The City has adopted the Environmental Planning Standards for Wetlands and Water Supply Watersheds, which are the only planning measures applicable to the City. None of the city falls within the boundaries of groundwater recharge zones, protected river corridors, or protected mountains.

Habersham County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Habersham County and its incorporated cities, including the Cornelia, are in the process of updating the countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of this document is to evaluate various hazards that have the potential to impact the region in order to prevent, prepare, respond, and recover more effectively. The ultimate goal is to take the necessary steps to reduce or eliminate risk to people and property to the greatest extent possible. The Hazard Mitigation Plan includes background information about the County, a profile of hazards, strategies that mitigate the impact of each hazard, and implementation strategies and plan maintenance. The City of Cornelia has coordinated implementation strategies identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan and included appropriate activities in the Community Workplan.

Future Municipal Complex

The City acquired property as a potential municipal complex that would include a new City Hall, fire station, police station, adjacent commercial uses, and a variety of recreational amenities. A concept plan of the proposed complex is shown in below.

Community Engagement

The DCA minimum standards and procedures require two Public Hearings and the identification and implementation of a public participation program that offers various opportunities for community engagement. The following chapter provides a summary of the public involvement opportunities provided throughout this planning process, including public hearings, a Stakeholder Committee, educational handouts, community open house, the web-based Community Opinion Survey, and the interactive mapping applications. Summary materials from public involvement undertaken during this process can be found in Appendix B.

Public Hearings

The Department of Community Affairs minimum planning standards require that two public hearing be held throughout the comprehensive planning process; one at the beginning of the process and one toward the end.

Public Hearing #1. The City of Cornelia held a public hearing on August 1, 2017 at a regularly scheduled City Commission meeting. The City's consultant delivered a presentation that introduced the comprehensive planning process, the purpose of updating the plan, and what the City hopes to gain by going through this process. The presentation discussed the minimum planning requirements as defined by the DCA, the general benefits of planning, and opportunities the City will use to engage and involve residents and other key players in the community. The presentation also highlighted some of the key issues in Cornelia, current development trends, demographics, and how these factors collectively fit into the planning process.

Public Hearing #2. The second public hearing was held on June 5, 2018 at the regularly scheduled City Commission meeting. A presentation was given to the City Commission that summarized the activities undertaken during the planning process. Needs, opportunities, and community goals identified by residents and stakeholders were presented to the commission and discussed. The future land use map and community workplan were also presented to Commission for discussion and comment.

Stakeholder Committee

The City of Cornelia formed a stakeholder committee as a way to facilitate the public involvement process and to provide feedback to the City about various planning topics. The stakeholder committee consisted of a variety of community players and City Staff. The City Commission each appointed one stakeholder to the committee with remaining members being selected based on knowledge of certain topics or areas the City felt important.

Stakeholder Committee Members

- Brent Cody, Commercial Construction (appointed)
- Ken Morris, Business Owner (appointed)
- David Zavala, Real Estate (appointed)
- Audrey Davenport, Graphic Designer (appointed)
- Jessie Owensby, Downtown Development Agency
- Caesar Torres, Banker
- Heath Barrett, Insurance
- Amy McCurdy, Board of Education

- Willy Wong, Business Owner
- Tim Lee, Economic Development Council
- Dee Anderson, City Manager
- Mona Painter, City Staff

The stakeholder committee met 5 times during this process. Meeting topics are summarized below.

Meeting 1: August 2, 2017. The first meeting kicked off the Comprehensive Planning process with a presentation on the Comprehensive Planning requirements, the purpose of completing the plan, the benefits of planning, and the role and expectation of the stakeholders throughout the process. This meeting also included a discussion and development of the strategy and schedule for public involvement. Lastly, the schedule was reviewed to highlight some of the milestone dates to help the stakeholder committee better understand the how the City intends to move through the process.

Meeting 2: September 9, 2017. A project update was provided to the stakeholder committee that discussed the data assessment and the community snapshot. Community involvement activities were also discussed based on feedback and strategies defined at the previous stakeholder meeting. The group reviewed the community survey questions and identified topic areas of interest and the best way to frame questions related to these topics. The second part of this meeting focused on Community Character Areas. The stakeholder committee reviewed the character area map developed during the 2008 comprehensive planning process and determined how this map should be amended. The group also reviewed and revised the descriptions, vision, and future land use strategy for each area.

Meeting 3: November 15, 2017. This meeting consisted of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. The proposed Future Land Use map was generated based on the Community Character Area map and was presented to the group.

Meeting 4: February 7, 2018. A presentation summarizing the results of the Community Survey was given to the stakeholder committee, and Various topics from survey were discussed. The group also identified topic areas where additional analysis of the survey data was needed. The results of the SWOT analysis completed during the second meeting were re-grouped as either a need, and opportunity, or a goal. The stakeholders reviewed these and identified additional items that may have been overlooked. Lastly, a visioning exercise was completed to come up with a new vision for the community.

Meeting 5: May 3, 2018. A final stakeholder meeting was held to review the draft Comprehensive Plan and to provide additional feedback prior to presenting the plan to the City Commission. Comments received from the group at this meeting were incorporated into the document to create the final draft.

Open Houses

November 14, 2017 and May 3, 2018. The City held two (2) public open houses to reach out to the general public as a way to get additional feedback from the community. The Open Houses were widely advertised using signs, social media, email blasts, and other methods typically used by the City to notify the public. The Open Houses were held at the Cornelia Community House and consisted of a series of planning stations to get input on various topics. The following stations were setup at the November Open House:

- Land Use
- Demographic Trends
- Needs and Opportunities
- SWOT

The May Open House provided an opportunity for attendees to comment on the draft Plan and had maps of the Character Areas and Future Land Use for public viewing.

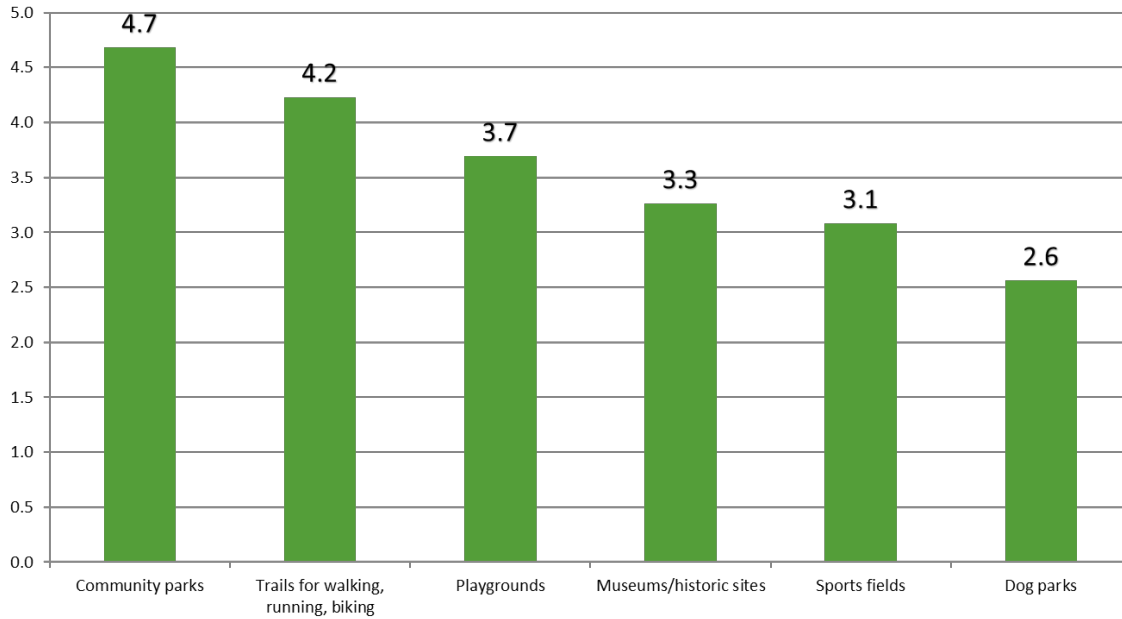


Community Snapshot

The City developed a community snapshot fact sheet to provide citizens with background information on current trends within the City. The snapshot includes a demographic summary of population, gender, age, and racial composition within the City. It summarizes housing and economic trends including the number of households, household size, housing values, ownership characteristics, earnings, and the distribution of income throughout the City. The existing land use composition of the City was also included in the snapshot to provide some insight when considering future needs and goals.

Community Survey

The City developed a community survey to gain feedback from residents, business owners, and other interested parties. The survey provided opportunities for participants to offer opinions on topics such as land use, economic development, city services, community aesthetics, priorities, housing, quality of life, and other planning related topics. The survey was published in English as well as Spanish to try and encourage participation from the Hispanic population that accounts for a significant portion of the City. Nearly 300 people responded to the community survey, which equates to a 95% confidence level +/- 5%. The chart below illustrates how survey participants responded when asked to rank the importance of various recreational facilities in the City.

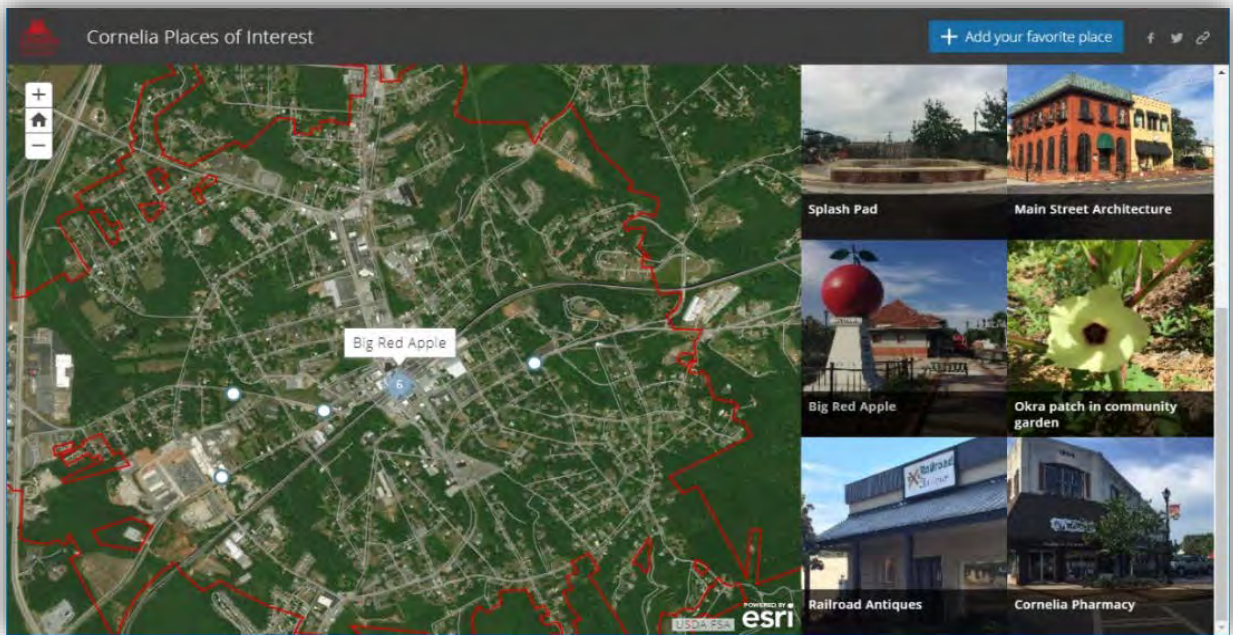
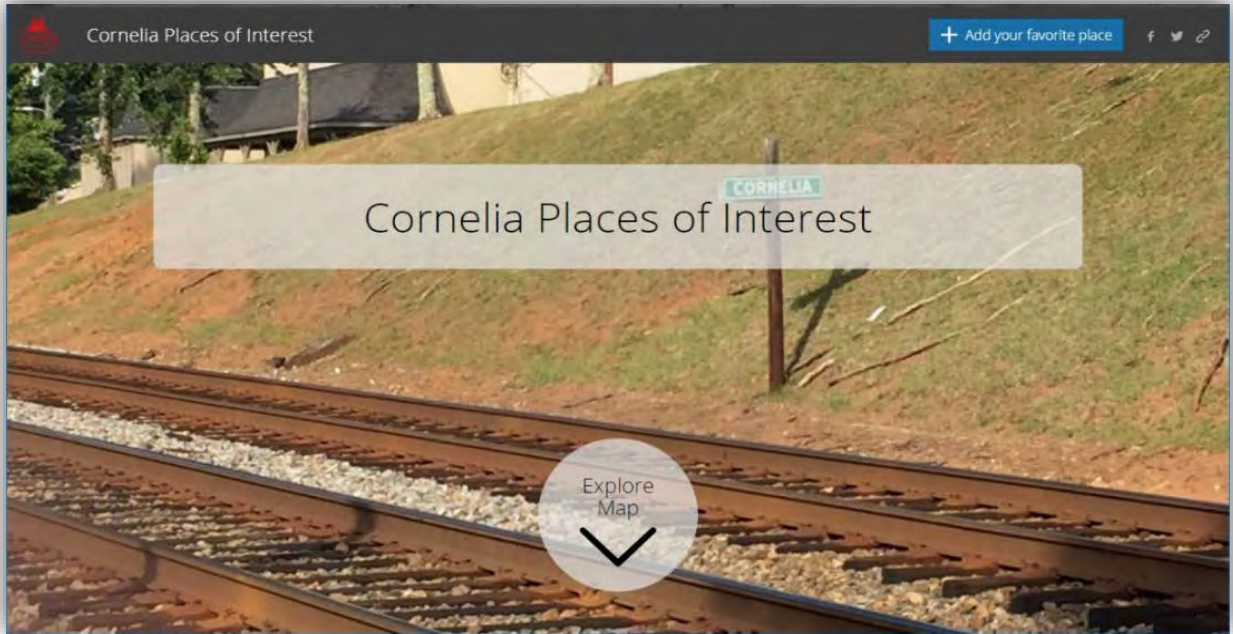


Social Media

The City of Cornelia utilized social media (Facebook, twitter) to advertise meetings, the community survey, and other opportunities for public involvement in the planning process. The response rate on the community survey can be attributed to the social media push made by the City. Public hearings and how the public can review and/or comment on the draft plan were also broadcast using social media outlets.

Interactive Mapping App

The City’s consultant created a mapping application for hand-held devices that allowed people to take pictures of “places of interest” throughout the City of Cornelia. The app included a mapping feature that allowed the user to take a picture, record the location on a map, and to write a short note about what they love about this location or community feature. The points recorded using the points of interest app included historic structures, unique architectural features, parks, landscape scenes, and desirable residential and commercial developments.



Cornelia Strategic Vision

The City of Cornelia developed a community vision through the public involvement process. A group of community stakeholders collectively discussed current trends, community issues, and future needs within the community at a public meeting in February 2018. The group reviewed the vision established during the 2008 comprehensive planning process and crafted a new vision based on changing trends as well as accomplishments within the City.

The City's vision, values, and priorities recognize how future development patterns will impact the existing character of the community. While growth and development pressure are likely to continue, this section communicates the City's commitment to quality of life, the importance of history, and the need to have a plan for the future.

Vision Statement

"The City of Cornelia wishes to promote a clean, safe economically viable community while maintaining its home town heritage, supporting a vibrant downtown, providing access to the outdoors, and maintaining a high quality of life."

OUR VALUES

- Diversity in our community
- Sense of security
- Connectivity
- Protection of natural resources
- Quality city services
- Quality education
- Recreational facilities

OUR PRIORITIES

- Smart and efficient growth
- Optimizing existing infrastructure/infill development
- Varied residential options
- Supporting economic development
- Creating and maintaining a strong workforce
- Revitalizing the historic downtown





Community Goals

The purpose of the community goals section is to layout a road map for the community's future based on the results of the various public involvement activities. The goals are arguably the most important part of the plan because they represent the value the community places on various quality of life issues. The goals are used to determine the direction the City should pursue based on feedback from people that are most invested in the community. The following major goals have been identified and will be the basis of the recommended policies:

- Economic development
- Expand recreational activities and opportunities
- Downtown redevelopment and rehabilitation

Quality Community Objectives

The following 10 objectives were adopted by the DCA from generally accepted community development principles to fit the unique quality of communities in Georgia. The list of items was intentionally crafted with significant areas of overlap to recognize the relationships between the various community objectives and the impact one aspect has on others. The DCA goals associated with each element are summarized in italics. The City of Cornelia completed a self-assessment based on these quality community objectives.

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>DCA Goals</i>	<i>Cornelia Assessment</i>
 <p>Economic Prosperity</p>	<p><i>Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community.</i></p>	<p>In an effort to facilitate economic prosperity, the City of Cornelia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes commercial development along appropriate corridors. • Utilizes zoning overlays to control the aesthetics of development. • Has adopted an opportunity zone and has received a rural zone designation from the DCA to promote redevelopment in the downtown area.
 <p>Resource Management</p>	<p><i>Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community.</i></p>	<p>Cornelia does the following to address resource management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educates residents about water reduction and how to reduce consumption. • Participates in the WaterFirst Program. • Develops trails for recreational use. • Promotes open space and recreational amenities in new subdivisions.

Objectives

DCA Goals

Cornelia Assessment



Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community.

The City of Cornelia ensures that adequate infrastructure is in place to accommodate future growth and has identified areas of the City where growth is likely to occur.



Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve.

The City has done or will do the following to better prepare for future growth:

- Developed a comprehensive plan and future land use map to assist with land use decisions.
- Developed overlays and policies to protect the unique features in the community from unrestricted development.
- Update the Zoning Ordinance to make it more user friendly.



Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities.

Sense of place is achieved by maintaining the family-friendly atmosphere in the City, holding events that have a regional draw, and marketing the city's unique cultural and recreational amenities.

Objectives

DCA Goals

Cornelia Assessment



Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs.

The City works with neighboring jurisdictions on mutual aid agreements for emergency services and participates with the County where appropriate.



Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community.

The City has a well-rounded and diversified housing stock and accommodates the needs of mixed incomes, sizes, and types of housing for residents.



Transportation Options

Address transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities of all community residents.

Multi-use trails and connectivity are currently in place, but expansion of these systems is needed. The City is also working to improve sidewalks and connectivity along roads (Level Grove) and community access points.

Objectives

DCA Goals

Cornelia Assessment



Educational Opportunities

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions.

The City is exploring ways to offer college level courses by developing a relationship with Piedmont College and North Georgia Technical College.



Community Health

Ensure that all community residents have access to critical goods and service, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities.

The City supports health food options and does its part to address community health by creating walkable communities and providing various options for recreation within the City.



Land Use Analysis

The City of Cornelia analyzed development patterns, land use, and zoning districts to develop a baseline for development of the Community Character Areas and the Future Land Use Strategy. The existing land use makeup gives a good indication of likely development within various areas of the City. Existing zoning designations reveal what is currently allowed within various areas of the City by right, meaning that a development project is permitted under the existing zoning ordinance without requiring any special review or public hearing. Analyzing development trends will help the City formulate a future land use strategy that is realistic and consistent with the existing demand and trends within the City. Additionally, the future vision for areas may indicate that a zoning ordinance revision or update may be required to achieve that vision.

Existing Land Use

The City created an existing land use map in the Summer/Fall of 2017 using desktop GIS practices and field verification via a windshield survey. The table below summarizes the current land use breakdown in the City by percent. A land use map has also been created to illustrate the geographic breakdown of land uses within the City.

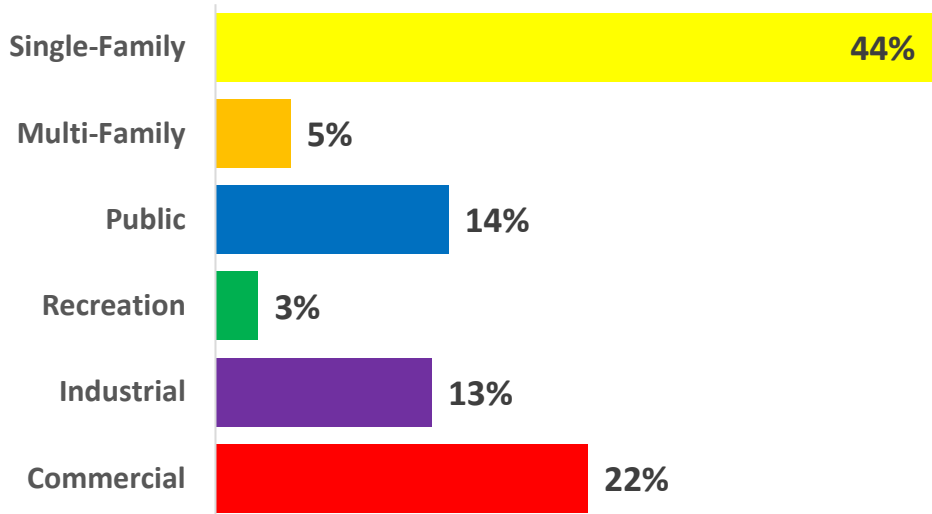
Land Use Category	Percent of City
Commercial	18%
Industrial	10%
Parks / Recreation / Conversation	2%
Public / Institutional	11%
Residential Multi-Family	4%
Residential Single-Family	35%
Transportation / Communication / Utilities	0%
Undeveloped	20%

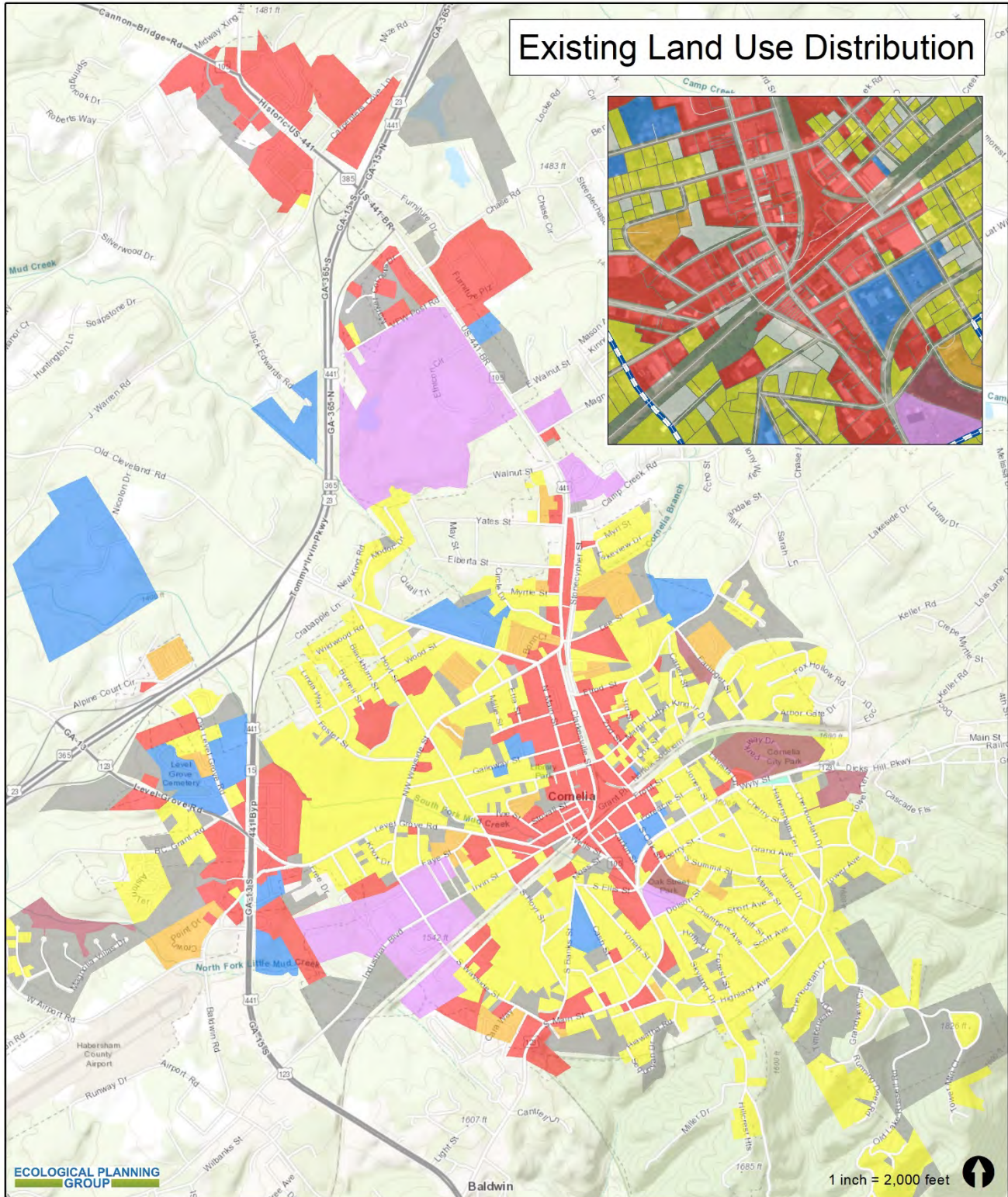
When analyzing land uses as a whole, it is clear that single family residential is the most prominent use within the City. There is also a significant percentage of land area currently undeveloped (20%). To further analyze current trends regarding land use, undeveloped acreage was excluded and only the developed land area evaluated. The percent developed is illustrated on the figure below. Single-family residential accounts for the largest share of developed land area in the City at 44%. Residential growth has mainly taken place in south downtown and east and west of the downtown area. While the opportunity for infill residential development exists in these areas, the availability of land in the northern part of the city is a likely place for future growth to occur.

Commercial and public/institutional uses also make up a significant portion of developed land area within the City, accounting for 22% and 14% respectively. Commercial development has been concentrated in the downtown area and along major road corridors (Hwy 441), with the highest concentration of new commercial development near the intersection of these two arterials. Additional commercial development is occurring on Level Grove Road. The trend for future commercial development is likely to occur along these same corridors. The downtown area offers the greatest opportunity for infill development and revitalization of older buildings.




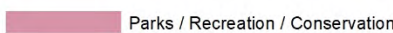
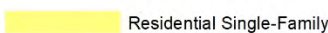

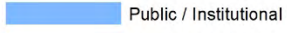
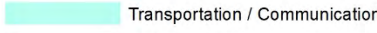

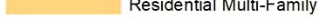

Industrial development has been isolated to limited locations throughout the City, but due to the size of the industrial sites, accounts for a notable percent of the developed land area (13%). Limited industrial growth is anticipated, but expansion of these important employers in the City is possible and would be beneficial to the City in terms of expending future workforce.





ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP

Legend

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
|  | Agriculture / Forest |  | Parks / Recreation / Conservation |  | Residential Single-Family |
|  | Commercial |  | Public / Institutional |  | Transportation / Communication |
|  | Industrial |  | Residential Multi-Family |  | Undeveloped |



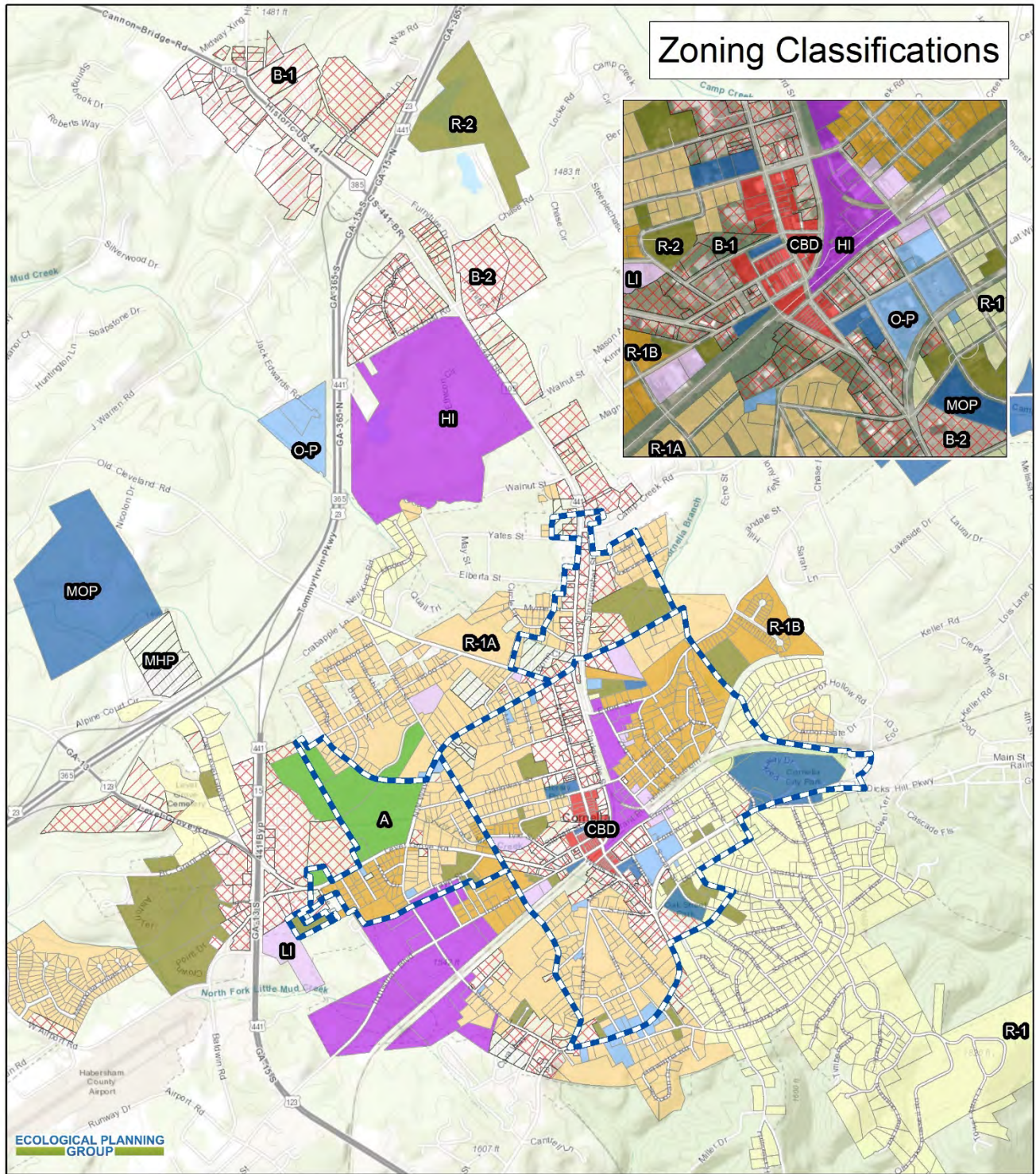


Existing Zoning

The City of Cornelia's Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2005. The purpose of this update was to simplify the development process by making the requirements and uses clearer. The table below summarizes the zoning categories defined in the zoning ordinance based on the percent area they account for within the City. As illustrated in the table, the residential categories account for the largest percentage in the City at nearly 50%.

District	Name	Percent of City	% Developed	% Undeveloped
A	Agriculture	2%	100%	--
B-1	Neighborhood Business	5%	72%	28%
B-2	General Business	13%	85%	15%
CBD	Central Business District	0%	99%	1%
HI	Heavy Industrial	10%	89%	11%
LI	Light Industrial	1%	100%	--
MHP	Mobile Home Park	2%	100%	--
MOP	Municipal Owned Property	17%	99%	1%
O-P	Office Professional	2%	93%	7%
R-1	Single-family Residential	20%	74%	26%
R-1A	Single-family Residential	17%	81%	19%
R-1B	Single-family Residential	5%	72%	28%
R-2	Multi-family Residential	6%	52%	48%

Recognizing the difference between land use and zoning, the City examined the percent of land area within each zoning category currently developed versus undeveloped. This analysis shows the total area currently available for future development within each zoning category and provides a quick snapshot the City can use to measure how existing zoning supports or contradicts the community vision.



ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP

Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| R-1, Single Family Residential | O-P, Office Professional | LI, Light Industrial |
| R-1A, Single Family Residential | B-1, Neighborhood Business | MOP, Municipal Owned Property |
| R-1B, Single Family Residential | B-2, General Business | A, Agriculture |
| R-2, Multi-Family Residential | CBD, Central Business District | Out Parcels |
| MHP, Mobile Home Park | HI, Heavy Industrial | Zoning Overlay Areas |

1 inch = 2,000 feet





Community Character Areas

Through input received from Stakeholder Committee meetings as well as the public, the City of Cornelia has identified “character areas” within the community that illustrate existing conditions and desired development patterns. These areas can contain a mix of different land uses that share similar characteristics or a desired future vision.

The City of Cornelia has chosen to use a Character Area approach to formulate a Future Development Strategy that is consistent with the Community Vision. The Community Character Area map provided the foundation for the Future Land Use map and will provide guidance during future updates to the City’s Zoning Ordinance. Furthermore, the Character Areas will be used by staff and elected officials to make decision regarding new development and redevelopment.

The following Character Areas have been identified by the community, and are shown in the map on the following page:

⇒ Developing Residential	⇒ Gateway Corridor
⇒ Stable Neighborhood	⇒ Downtown
⇒ Revitalization Area	⇒ Education Center
⇒ Historic Area	⇒ Industrial
⇒ Commercial	

Each character area description includes a summary of existing land patterns, current zoning classifications located within the character area, and the future land use strategy for the area.

Developing Residential

These areas are developed with single-family residences and/or are likely to experience suburban style residential development in the future.

Land Use Trends:

Over 50% of land within this character area is currently developed as residential. 40% of existing land area is undeveloped.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Developing Residential character area:

- A, Agriculture
- B-1, Neighborhood business
- B-2, General business
- LI, Light industrial
- R-1A, Single-family residential
- R-1B, Single-family residential
- R-2, Multi-family residential

Most land in this character area is currently zoned for future residential (29% R-2, 24% R-1A, 12.4%, R-1B). Roughly 25% is also zoned agriculture, which could be rezoned for future residential development.

General business (B-2) zoned property accounts for almost 10% of land within this character. A mix of small-scale commercial is in line with the vision for this area, but the B-1 category of neighborhood commercial zoning might be more consistent.



Future Development Strategies

- Consider amending lot size requirements to allow higher density residential development in appropriate areas close to the historic downtown core.
- Promote open space preservation, trails, sidewalks, and connectivity in new residential developments.

Stable Neighborhood

This area represents existing stable residential neighborhoods. Most of the city’s parks are located in these areas.

<p>Land Use Trends:</p> <p>The current distribution of land use in this area is mainly residential (65%) and undeveloped (25%).</p>	<p>Zoning Suitability:</p> <p>The following zoning categories are currently found in the Stable Neighborhood character area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B-2, General business • MOP, Municipal owned • R-1, Single-family residential • R-1A, Single-family residential • R-1B, Single-family residential • R-2, Multi-family residential <p>Over 90% of land area is currently zoned residential. Less than 3% is zoned general business and is already developed with a commercial use.</p>
--	--



Future Development Strategies

- Maintain the character of these areas by ensuring infill development is consistent with the existing neighborhood fabric.

Revitalization Area

These areas represent some of Cornelia’s older neighborhoods. There is a small amount of commercial property in these areas but the majority of the structures are single family residences, which have become rental properties.

Land Use Trends:

This area is generally residential in character with single-family and multi-family uses accounting for a combined 80% of the total land area.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Revitalization Area character area:

- A, Agriculture
- B-2, General business
- HI, Heavy industrial
- LI, Light industrial
- MHP, Mobile home park
- R-1, Single-family residential
- R-1A, Single-family residential
- R-1B, Single-family residential

Over 85% of the land in this character area is currently zoned residential. This area also contains small sections of industrial (5%) and commercial (2%) zoned property. To protect the desired residential makeup of this area, industrial development should be appropriately buffered from the residential areas. Commercial development should be isolated to major road corridors at a neighborhood level scale to serve the surrounding residences.



Future Development Strategies

- Utilize urban redevelopment plan to encourage infill development within the specified target areas.
- Improved and consistent code enforcement regulations.
- Encourage infill development by approving smaller lot sizes.

Historic Area

This area includes the historic residential area located south-east and south-west of the railroad tracks adjacent to the downtown district.

Land Use Trends:

Relatively small in terms of total acreage, the historic area is primarily residential (72%), with a mix of commercial, public uses, and undeveloped.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Historic character area:

- B-2, General business
- LI, Light industrial
- O-P, Office/professional
- R-1, Single-family residential
- R-1A, Single-family residential
- R-1B, Single-family residential
- R-2, Multi-family residential

Most residential property in this area is zoned single-family (R-1A). This area also provides the opportunity for transitional commercial uses along the major downtown access corridors. 10% of property is zoned B-2, general business and 4% O-P, office/professional.



Future Development Strategies

- Preserve the historic residential character of these neighborhoods.
- Consider development of a historic district.
- Develop design guidelines for residents wishing to develop or improved property in these areas.

Commercial

This area abuts Historic 441 and Highway 365; it currently houses large-scale retail such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and Lowes.

Land Use Trends:

This character area is currently developed with slightly over 50% of land classified as commercial. 25% of land within this area is currently undeveloped, which provides a suitable location for future commercial development.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Commercial character area:

- A, Agriculture
- B-1, Neighborhood business
- B-2, General business
- LI, Light industrial
- MHP, Mobile home park
- R-1, Single-family residential
- R-2, Multi-family residential

Two-thirds of land is currently zoned commercial. However, it is almost evenly split between the B-1 and B-2 zoning categories. In evaluating the type of development more suitable for this area, the general commercial category appears to be more appropriate in most cases.



Future Development Strategies

- Review the B-1 & B-2 zoning categories and rezone property to be more consistent with the surrounding land uses and development trends for each category.
- Consider development of a new zoning category, if needed, to better achieve the desired commercial development aesthetics.
- Revise design guidelines for commercial zoning categories.

Gateway Corridor

These areas are the entrances to downtown that currently have a variety of uses, both commercial and residential.

Land Use Trends:

This character area contains a variety of land uses and is envisioned as a transitional stretch that leads from the higher intensity commercial uses into the neighborhood scale uses on the periphery of the downtown area. Currently, almost 50% of land in this area is commercial. Residential and undeveloped account 20% and 17% respectively, with industrial totaling 12%.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Gateway Corridor character area:

- A, Agriculture
- B-1, Neighborhood commercial
- B-2, General commercial
- MHP, Mobile home park
- O-P, Office/professional
- R-1, Single-family residential
- R-1A, Single-family residential
- R-1B, Single-family residential
- R-2, Multi-family residential

The majority of property along this corridor is currently zoned B-2, general commercial (60%). Only 10% is currently zoned neighborhood commercial (B-1), which would make for a more desirable transition of uses as you get closer to the downtown area.



Future Development Strategies

- Improve the aesthetics of community access points to let visitors know they have arrived in Cornelia.
- Explore streetscape projects, façade improvements, and other opportunities to cleanup commercial property along these corridors.
- Examine the commercial zoning along this corridor for consistency with desired development

Downtown

This area is known as the “Central Business District” and is made up of historic buildings dating back to the 1890s. Renovation and redevelopment of the historic structures in this area is needed to rejuvenate the downtown area.

Land Use Trends:

The downtown area consists of a mix of commercial (75%), residential (13%), public/institutional (6%), and undeveloped (7%). The large percent of commercial space in the downtown area can be a catalyst for redevelopment and economic development goals. Currently, there is a significant amount of vacant buildings scattered throughout the downtown area.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Downtown character area:

- B-1, Neighborhood business
- B-2, General business
- CBD, Central business district
- HI, Heavy industrial
- LI, Light industrial
- MOP, Municipal owned
- O-P, Office/professional
- R-1, Single-family residential
- R-1A, Single-family residential
- R-2, Multi-family residential

Nearly 60% of the property in the downtown area is currently zoned commercial or CBD. The general business (B-2) accounts for the largest percent at 39%. CBD and HI account for 11% and 10% of land in the downtown area.



Future Development Strategies

- Expand the downtown overlay district.
- Review and modify the extent of the CBD and B-2 zoned properties in the downtown area
- Utilize the opportunity zone and rural zone designation as a tool for revitalization and economic development downtown.
- Utilize the Blight Tax to encourage redevelopment and/or sale of downtown properties
- Implement beautification and safety measures such as better lighting, streetscape improvements, crosswalks, and landscaping to create a more pedestrian inviting environment



- Renovation and revitalization of existing structures to maintain the historic character of the downtown
 - Promote the adaptive reuse of buildings downtown to create a flexible environment for small businesses growth and entrepreneurs
-

Education Center

This area currently houses the elementary school and the BOE property off Elrod Street.

Land Use Trends:

All land in this area is currently being used for education related activities.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Education Center character area:

- R-1A, Single-family residential

Zoning and use changes are extremely unlikely in this area since there are no known plans for re-siting the school.



Future Development Strategies

- Continue to participate in the Safe Routes to School program.
- Expand and improve sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to schools.

Industrial

This area currently houses the City’s Water/WWTP, Ethicon, Fieldale Farms along with some smaller industries.

Land Use Trends:

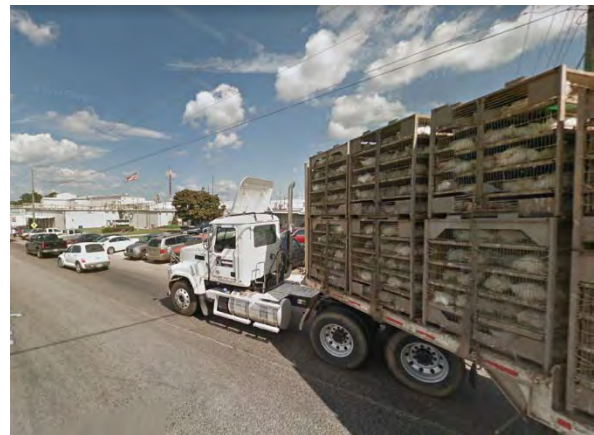
This area contains primarily industrial land, the majority of which is occupied by the City’s two major industrial players; Ethicon and Fieldale Farms. Public/institutional also has a large percentage (33%) of area due to the City’s water/wastewater treatment facilities. Undeveloped (10%), commercial (7%), and a residential (4%) are also found in this area.

Zoning Suitability:

The following zoning categories are currently found in the Industrial character area:

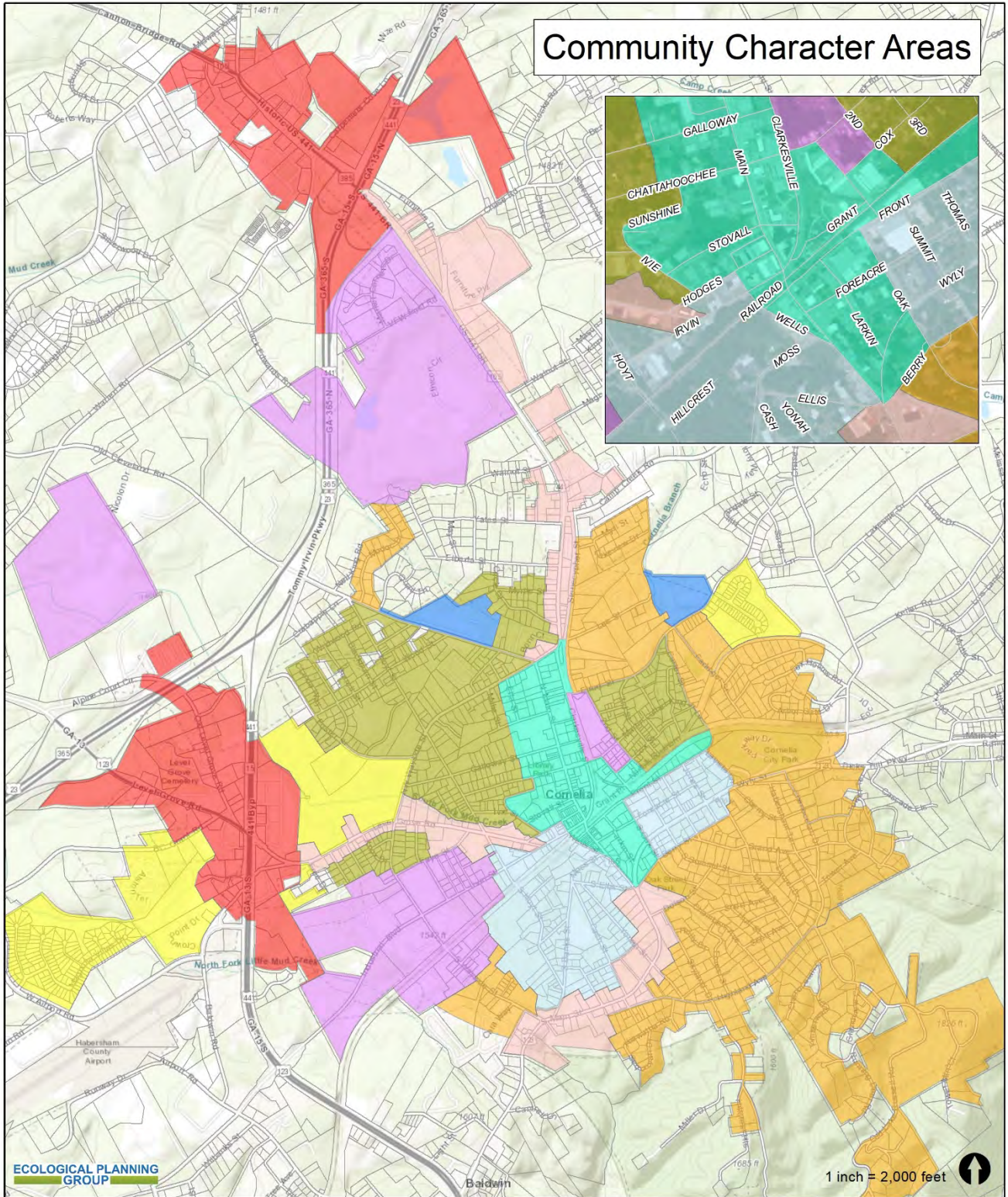
- B-2, General business
- HI, Heavy industrial
- MOP, Municipal owned
- O-P, Office/professional
- R-1A, Single-family residential
- R-1B, Single-family residential

The MOP zoning category accounts for roughly 50% of total land in this character area. Heavy industrial (HI) accounts for another 35%. General commercial, single-family residential, and office/professional collectively makeup less than 10% of the remaining area. Expect this area to continue to house the more intense industrial uses.



Future Development Strategies

- Work with industries on expanding opportunities for workforce training.
- Identify locations for workforce housing near the industrial centers.



ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP

Legend

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Developing Residential | Historic Area | Downtown |
| Stable Neighborhood | Commercial | Education Center |
| Revitalization Area | Gateway Corridor | Industrial |





Future Land Use Strategy

The City of Cornelia utilized the Community Character Area approach to identify the unique land use composition of the City. The Character Areas include a variety of land use in most cases, each of which play an important role in contributing to the uniqueness of the area. The City developed a parcel-based Future Land Use Strategy that includes specific land use categories for each property in the City. The Future Land Use Map us included below and was based on the Community Character Areas defined previously.

Low Density Residential

This category includes most of Cornelia’s single family residential neighborhoods. It also includes areas throughout the City where single family development is likely to occur in the future. Some instances of smaller lots and townhouses may occur within this area, generally closer to the downtown are or as part of a larger planned subdivision with open space being set aside.

Moderate Density Residential

This area was established to provide for a variety housing types at moderate densities to allow infill development in and around the downtown area or to provide a mix of housing in new developments.

Parks and Open Space

This area refers to undeveloped land and environmentally sensitive areas generally not suitable for development. The goal here is to preserve these areas as open space and/or passive recreational amenities.

Public / Institutional

This refers to government properties, schools, and other public property not likely to turn over in the foreseeable future.

Downtown Commercial

This refers to the downtown area and is established to promote a mix of commercial and residential uses with the potential for infill residential and commercial in the future. The goal of this area is to protect and revitalize the traditional, small-town character of Cornelia’s historic downtown core.

Commercial

The commercial area is intended primarily to accommodate a range of retail and service uses serving the broader needs of the community and the motoring public. Contains larger-scale retail, businesses and similar uses and should provide a transition between from the highway commercial areas to the downtown.

Highway Commercial

This commercial area is designed to provide service related uses related to the major arterials roads that intersect the City. Uses in this area will be auto-oriented when compared to the other commercial areas in the City.



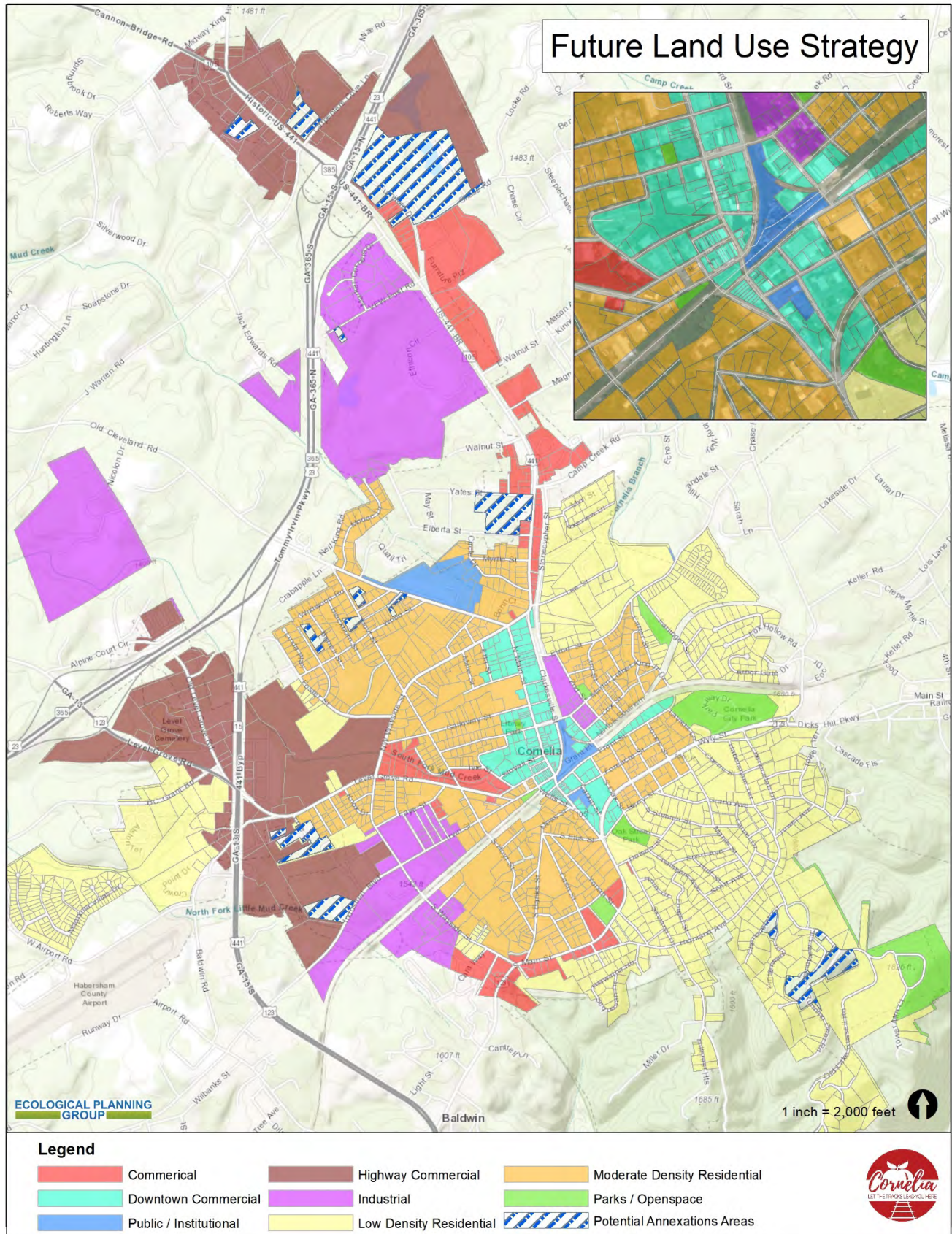
Industrial

This land use category is established to accommodate industrial and related facilities that provide jobs for citizens of the community and surrounding area and create a sustainable tax base to the city.

Annexation Considerations

Annexation is the incorporation of land from an unincorporated county into a City. Georgia State law recognizes the importance of growing cities to the economic health of the state and states that, “municipal corporations are created for the purpose of providing local governmental services and for ensuring health, safety, and welfare of persons and the protection of property. Currently, only about 7% of the State’s land area falls within an incorporated City. However, 40% of the population lives within these cities.

The purpose of the annexation considerations category on the City of Cornelia’s Future Land Use Map is to recognize where unincorporated islands exist within and directly adjacent to the existing City boundary. Annexation is typically driven by property owners that wish to be incorporated to receive the benefits of a heightened level of municipal services provided by the jurisdiction. For this reason, the unincorporated islands have been identified because it makes logical sense for these areas to be part of the City and in many cases, this City already provides many services to these locations.



Transportation

Road Network

The City of Cornelia contains roughly 60 miles of streets and roadways. The majority of the transportation system in the City is local roads. Major arterials and transportation corridors that bisect the City are State US Highway 441, which runs along the City's western boundary. According to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), this segment shows an average daily traffic (AADT) count over 33,000 vehicles with nearly 10% of that being truck traffic. Old Historic 441 is another major transportation corridor that runs north-south through the City with average traffic county at or above about 11,000 trips per day north of the center city and about 6,500 trips per day south of the City. Level Grove Road is another major access point to the center city with AADT of nearly 9,000. Generally speaking, traffic counts are relatively low and congestion is not perceived to be a major issue in the City.

Alternative Modes

The City provides opportunities for alternative modes of transportation by maintaining a vast sidewalk system. This system provides pedestrian movement through neighborhoods and along some of the major roadways. Expansion and better connectivity of this system has been identified as a goal by the City and a preliminary sidewalk inventory is being proposed in the Community Workplan. The City also has a trail system and parks that are well utilized by residents and visitors.

Parking

The availability of public parking is not perceived to be an issue within the City. In 2016, the City released a public opinion survey specifically related to the downtown district, current zoning, and preferred development types for this area. One question asked if parking downtown was an issues and participants overwhelmingly responded no (94%).

Outside of downtown, the majority of commercial development has occurred along the US 441 with ample on-site parking. Parking throughout the City is primarily surface parking lots designed to serve the immediate location only.

Railroads

Much of the history of Cornelia is attributed to the major rail line that bisects the center of the downtown. Currently, the former railroad depot is a museum and office location for the Downtown Development Authority. The rail line remains active today, providing freight connection from Gainesville to Toccoa and beyond.



Needs and Opportunities

This section evaluates needs and opportunities within the City that require consideration in order for Cornelia to achieve the vision and future land use strategy defined within this plan. To begin the process of identifying needs and opportunities, the City conducted a SWOT analysis with community stakeholder and at the Open House. This analysis provided residents and stakeholders a chance to evaluate both positive and negative characteristics within the community.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was completed by the Cornelia Stakeholder Committee. The City also has a SWOT station setup at the community open house. The purpose of this exercise was to engage the stakeholders and community members by facilitating a process where they could provide local knowledge on current issues and trends from the perspective of the community.

The full results of the SWOT analysis have been broken down in to major planning elements and are summarized below based on objectives,

need and opportunities, and policies. Each element was also analyzed to see which of the DCA’s Quality Community Objectives best aligned with the items listed for each element. The information contained within this section will be used to development specific activities for the City’s Community Workplan.

S.W.O.T.

The following general trends were identified during the SWOT Analysis

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtown Geographic location Sense of place Affordability Quality Parks 	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies in downtown buildings Property maintenance Local road conditions Dilapidated housing People living in poverty
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversification of dining options Façade improvements Capitalizing on existing regional tourism More activities, arts, and eateries Additional employment opportunities 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of Community Character Increases in major crimes



Economic Development

Objectives:

- Downtown revitalization
- Increase commercial development
- Redevelopment of vacant buildings
- Attract more tourism
- Expansion of employment options



Needs and Opportunities:

- Diversify the availability of jobs
- Ensure that growth does not occur in a manner that brings unforeseen negative impacts on the City (increased crime, traffic, etc.)
- Change the negative perception associated with blue collar jobs and trades
- Explore programs to incentivize façade improvements and redevelopment of older commercial structures
- Work with private developers and potential investors to renovate and revitalize the underutilized historic structures in the downtown core
- Utilize and update the vacant and historic buildings inventory to identify projects and properties that could be prioritized for redevelopment
- The City has identified 50-100 properties in the downtown area in need of redevelopment
- Develop an economic development program to help draw higher paying jobs to attract a younger skilled workforce
- Expansion of existing commercial corridors
- Explore tax abatement and other programs to assist with economic development initiatives

Policies

- Use incentives to attract and retain businesses and industries
- Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing commercial and industrial space
- Incentivize redevelopment and reuse of buildings in the historic area of downtown
- Undertake the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City and areas that currently receive city services
- Streamline the development process to make Cornelia a desirable and easy place to do business

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of place

Transportation

Objectives:

- Manage traffic along 441 and other major corridors
- Improve local road and sidewalk conditions
- Expand multi-use paths and non-motorized connectivity throughout the City



Needs and Opportunities:

- Better connectivity between commercial areas and adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Improve existing sidewalks
- Expand sidewalk and trail system
- Prioritize areas for street repaving
- Explore opportunities for grants for trail design and construction
- Provide connection of cul-de-sacs through the use of trails

Policies

- Improve and maintain the transportation system
- Promote connectivity within the road, sidewalk, and trail network
- Support investment in alternative modes of transportation
- Explore funding opportunities for transportation projects
- Support programs and projects that address alternative modes of transportation

Quality Community Objectives

- Transportation Options
- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Community Health
- Regional Cooperation

Housing

Objectives:

- Provide a mix of housing types and price points
- Provide housing options for young families, first-time home buyers, and millennials
- Eliminate dilapidated housing



Needs and Opportunities:

- Develop a better understanding of housing needs within the City
- Encourage infill residential development in and around the downtown area
- Factor in tree canopy and open space preservation in new housing developments
- Better understand the condition of the existing housing stock
- Explore ways to address code enforcement issues in different neighborhoods around the City

Policies

- Encourage development of a range of housing options
- Encourage infill housing development in older established areas of the City
- Allow mixed residential / commercial development projects in the downtown area
- Support mixed use housing projects
- Allow for housing on smaller lots
- Support programs that provide assistance to elderly / disabled people in need of property maintenance

Quality Community Objectives

- Housing Options
- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Resource Management
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of place

Land Use

Objectives:

- Diversify land use distribution within the City
- Provide a mix of land uses to support the retail, service, and professional needs of residents of the City
- Protect the existing quality of life within the City



Needs and Opportunities:

- Address property maintenance issues throughout the City
- Identify areas for infill commercial and residential development
- Reserve land for future industrial and commercial growth
- Explore innovative uses for large undeveloped sites in the City
- An inventory of vacant, dilapidated, and under-utilized structures throughout the City
- Revise the B-1 and B-2 zoning categories
- Proximity to 441 provides numerous options for commercial and industrial development
- Allow for smaller lots and increased residential density to support downtown revitalization

Policies

- Revise zoning ordinance to address lot size limitations and the use table
- Refer to the future land use map to ensure land use decisions are consistent with the vision for this plan

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Resource Management
- Sense of place

Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources



Objectives:

- Attract more tourism
- Protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources
- Increase/expand the availability of recreational opportunities within the City

Needs and Opportunities:

- Utilize the Big Apple and railroad history to draw visitors to the City
- Continuing holding festivals and other events that have a regional draw and bring people into the City
- Explore ways to connect the City with Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest
- Utilize the City’s proximity to numerous outdoor recreation options as a draw
- Expand and improve current City parks
- Explore the opportunity for exercise stations throughout the downtown area and with existing parks

Policies

- Use incentives to encourage protection of historic resources
- Promote preservation and protection of open space in new developments
- Support partnerships with private property owners to help protect natural, cultural, and historic resources
- Support eco-tourism and other innovative approaches to drawing visitors

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Sense of place
- Resource Management
- Educational Attainment

Facilities and Services

Objectives:

- Expand and improve water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure
- Provide high quality recreational facilities and activities to residents
- Expand sidewalks and trails



Needs and Opportunities:

- Make improvements to city-maintained infrastructure
- Improve pedestrian crosswalks at busy intersections
- Improve lighting in downtown area
- Provide more youth activities
- Increase public awareness of city facilities and activities
- Improve drainage in flooding hotspot areas
- Improve aesthetics of community gateways

Policies

- Follow the capital improvement program for needed upgrades to various infrastructure components
- Provide and expand sidewalks, trails, parks, and other City services

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of place

Governance / Intergovernmental Coordination

Objectives:

- Transparency
- Coordination with other agencies



Needs and Opportunities:

- Work with other governmental authorities to minimize the duplications of services
- Improve cooperation between the City and County

Policies

- Support the sharing of resources and information between the City and County where appropriate
- Consider an intergovernmental approach to addressing shared concerns and issues
- Leverage the Comprehensive Plan as a guidance document to communicate the community vision with other agencies
- Coordinate with County on Service Delivery Strategy
- Make a commitment to achieving the goals identified in this plan

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Resource Management

Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy demonstrates and defines the action items the City of Cornelia will undertake to achieve the community vision, address the community goals, encourage compliance with the Future Land Use map, and address the needs and opportunities. A proposed schedule, responsible party, and potential funding source are outlined within this plan. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires that cities complete an implementation plan as well as a report of accomplishments, which is a status update summarizing the previous work plan. Included below are the 2018-2022 Community Work Plan and the 2013-2017 Report of Accomplishment:

Community Work Program

The Community Workplan includes the following information for each listed action item:

- Action Item: Brief description of the activity
- Timeframe: The timeframe for initiating and/or completed each action item s broken into four categories: 1) Ongoing (currently in-progress), 2) Immediate (1-2 years), 3) Short-term (2-5 years), and 4) Long-term (5-10 years). Items identified for immediate and/or short-term should be viewed as having a priority status.
- Priority: With an understanding that the City has limited resources to dedicate to implementation of the CWP, the City has assigned a priority status to each action item in an effort to assist with identification of the most urgent, necessary, and/or desired programs. However, it is important to recognize that all action items included herein relate to needs and opportunities identified in the plan. The four priority levels are: 1) Current/in-Process (C), 2) High (H), 3) Medium (M), 4) Low (L).
- Responsible Party: Parties identified as being responsible for implementation of the action items include city departments, agencies, and authorities. The responsible parties identified within the CWP as listed by the following acronyms:
 - PZ – Planning and Zoning
 - CM – City Manager’s Office
 - PW – Public Works
 - PU – Public Utilities
 - FD – Fire Department
 - PD – Police Department
 - DDA – Downtown Development Authority
 - DNR – Department of Natural Resources
 - GDOT – Department of Transportation
- Funding Source: The City has identified the potential or recommended funding source. It may be a specific city fund, grant, loan, or other source.



<i>Cornelia Community Work Plan</i>				
<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Funding Source / Cost</i>
Economic Development				
Rehabilitation of the old Bank building in downtown	Short-term	H	DDA	General Fund, Grants Cost: To be determined
Acquire façade and signage grant for downtown area	Short-term	M	DDA	General Fund, Grants Cost: Staff Time
Implement activities identified in the Urban Redevelopment Plan	Ongoing	M	PZ	General Fund Cost: Variable
Develop an economic development plan to help diversify the availability of jobs at different income ranges	Long-term	L	PZ, DDA	General Fund Cost: \$25,000
Utilize the Opportunity Zone and Rural Zone designation from DCA as a way to encourage downtown development / redevelopment	Ongoing	H	PZ, DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Enforce the Blight Tax to get properties revitalized, redeveloped, and occupied	Ongoing	H	PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Implement the Apple Tree Ally Streetscape and façade improvement project	Short-term	M	DDA	General Fund, Grants Cost: \$650K
Coordinate with the Economic Development Council on activities listed in the Regional Plan	Ongoing	L	DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Develop promotional materials and marketing campaign the bring small businesses to downtown	Ongoing	M	DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized buildings in the downtown area that could be marketed for renovation / redevelopment	Immediate	H	DDA	General Fund Cost: \$20,000
Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized commercial properties throughout the City	Immediate	M	PZ, DDA	General Fund Cost: \$20,000
Implement activities defined in the DDA workplan	Ongoing	M	DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Transportation				
Streetscape project on Main Street from Front Street to Wylly	Ongoing	M	PW	General Fund, SW Utility, LMIG



Cornelia Community Work Plan				
<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Funding Source / Cost</i>
				Cost: \$150K-\$300K
Sidewalk improvements on Level Grove / Wayside	Ongoing	M	PW	General Fund, Stormwater Fund, LMIG Cost: \$2M-\$3M
Improve aesthetics at community access points	Long-term	L	PW	General Fund Cost: \$125K
Complete a sidewalk inventory and condition assessment	Immediate	M	PW	General Fund Cost: \$35,000
Work with GA Power to improve lighting downtown	Long-term	L	DDA, PW	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Improve pedestrian crosswalks to improve safety and encourage walkability downtown	Short-term	M	PW, GDOT	General Fund Cost: \$50,000
Implement Safe Routes to School Program	Ongoing	H	PW	General Fund, Grants Cost: Staff Time
Expand and improved connectivity between existing sidewalk and trail system	Long-term	L	PW, PZ	General Fund Cost: To be determined
Study and prioritize areas where ADA compliant sidewalk improvements can be completed	Short-term	M	PW, DDA	General Fund Cost: To be determined
Develop a brochure and/or online map showing trails and connected roads for runners and walkers	Short-term	L	DDA	General Fund Cost: To be determined
Resurface local roads based on a prioritized list	Ongoing	M	PW, GDOT	LMIG Cost: Variable
Implement streetscape projects and other improvements defined in the Masterplan	Ongoing	M	PW	General Fund, Grants Cost: Variable
Rehabilitation of the Mud Creek Greenway and construction of sidewalks to connect greenway to existing trails, facilities, and businesses	Short-term	M	PW	General Fund, Stormwater Fund, Grants Cost: To be determined
Explore opportunities for more consistent and reliable ride sharing (eg. Uber, Lift, etc.)	Long-term	L	DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Housing				
Develop an Infill Development Plan	Short-term	M	DDA	General Fund Cost: \$40,000



<i>Cornelia Community Work Plan</i>				
<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Funding Source / Cost</i>
Utilize the URP as a way to address abandoned structures in the Target Area	Ongoing	M	PZ, DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Revise zoning ordinance to allow smaller lot residential infill development	Immediate	H	PZ	General Fund Cost: \$30,000
Explore programs to assist people in need with property maintenance	Long-term	L	PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Determine if there is a market for tiny houses and if so, consider amending zoning to accommodate	Long-term	L	PZ/DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Promote mixed use housing in downtown (ie. commercial downstairs, residential upstairs)	Short-term	H	DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Natural & Cultural Resources				
Extend the Trail project from the Depot to Veterans Memorial Drive	Long-term	L	PW	General Fund Cost: To be determined
Establish and nominate members to the Historic Preservation Commission	Immediate	L	CM, PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Create an inventory of historic structures	Short-term	M	PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time / \$15,000
Apply for National Historic District designation	Long-term	L	DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Continue holding festivals to draw in tourism	Ongoing	H	DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Implement rails to trails project to provide connection between Cornelia and Mt. Airy	Long-term	L	PZ, PW	General Fund Cost: To be determined
Implement Multi-use trail projects and greenway identified in the Cornelia Masterplan	Long-term	M	PZ, PW	General Fund Cost: Variable
Complete stream bank restoration and stormwater improvements for the South Fork of Mud Creek	Short-term	M	PW	Stormwater Funds Cost: \$125K-\$175K
Community Facilities and Services				
Design and develop mixed use development at old Bank building	Short-term	H	DDA	General Fund Cost: To be determined
Build new Municipal Complex	Short-term	H	CM	General Fund Cost: \$2M-\$3M



<i>Cornelia Community Work Plan</i>				
<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Funding Source / Cost</i>
Purchase and upgrade fire protection equipment and vehicles	Ongoing	H	FD	General Fund Cost: \$400K-\$600K
Purchase new fleet vehicles	Ongoing	H	FD, PD, PW, PU	Enterprise Funds Cost: Variable
Design and construct composting facility	Long-term	L	PW, PU	Enterprise Funds Cost: \$350K-\$500K
Purchase a new multi-purpose tractor or similar piece of equipment	Long-term	L	PW	Enterprise Fund Cost: \$50,000
Implement a program converting leaves and debris to wood chips	Ongoing	L	PW	Enterprise Fund Cost: Staff Time
New garage to house vehicles	Short-term	M	FD	General Fund Cost: \$50,000
Complete new fire station design and construction on south end of the City	Short-term	M	FD	General Fund Cost: \$750K
New fire suppression engine truck	Short-term	M	FD	General Fund Cost: Variable
SCBA/air packs	Short-term	M	FD	General Fund/SAFER grant Cost: \$75,000
Exhaust system for the engine bays at the north station	Short-term	M	FD	General Fund Cost: \$50,000
Fire suppression engine to replace current one	Short-term	M	FD	General Fund Cost: \$300K-\$400K
New extrication tools	Short-term	M	FD	General Fund/SAFER grant Cost: \$50,000
Complete meter replacement and upgrades	Ongoing	M	PU	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: Variable
Construct new reservoir for water	Ongoing	M	PU	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: \$500K-\$750K
Upgrade hydrants, valves, and other water related infrastructure	Ongoing	M	PU	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: Variable
Complete upgrades to the wastewater treatment plan	Ongoing	H	PU	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: Variable
Complete pump station upgrade and replacements	Ongoing	H	PU	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: Variable
Maintain/replace sewer lines and infrastructure	Ongoing	H	PU	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: Variable
Perform proactive drainage maintenance	Ongoing	H	PW	Stormwater Fund Cost: Variable



<i>Cornelia Community Work Plan</i>				
<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Funding Source / Cost</i>
Implement and update the Stormwater CIP	Ongoing	H	PW	Stormwater Fund Cost: Variable but defined in CIP
Governance / Intergovernmental Coordination				
Review the Community Work Plan annually at a Commission Retreat to facilitate implementation	Ongoing	H	CM	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Coordinate with the County on Service Delivery	Short-term	H	CM	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Make brochures and update webpage to better educate residents and business community on what types of activities require permits	Short-term	M	DDA/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Implement appropriate mitigation action items identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan to make the city more prepared and resilient to potential hazards	Ongoing	H	CM	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Explore opportunities for shared services between Habersham County and neighboring jurisdictions	Long-term	M	CM	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Participate in the NFIP program	Ongoing	H	CM	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Explore benefits of participating in the Community Rating System program for floodplain management	Short-term	L	CM	General Fund Cost: Staff Time / \$20,000
Revise the zoning ordinance to make the use table clearer and more user friendly	Immediate	H	CM, PZ	General Fund Cost: \$30,000
Examine and consider rezoning of B-1 and B-2 properties to better fit the character of the area	Immediate	H	CM, PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time



Report of Accomplishments

The following report of accomplishments summarizes activities completed since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update. Items that are Completed have been finished within the 5-Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update. Items that are Underway/Continuing have been initiated or have had partial progress made and have been carried over into the new Community Workplan. Items that are Postponed are still priorities for the community and have been in the new Community Workplan. Items marked Cancelled are activities no longer prioritized by the City.

Activity	Status	Comment
<i>General Administration</i>		
Main Streetscape (Hodges to Chattahoochee)	Completed 2015	This project was completed in 2015
Streetscape project on Main Street from Front Street to Wily	Underway	Completed to Moss/ Wells St. intersection
Cultural Arts Center	Canceled	This project was canceled, but the City is exploring alternative options for the redevelopment of the site this was originally planned for
Safe Routes to School Travel Plan Implementation	Completed	The City received a grant from GDOT that resulting in the installation of sidewalks as well as some other outreach
Property Acquisition for new Municipal Building	Underway	Most acquisition complete
New Municipal Building	Underway	This project will be replaced with a New City Hall
Telephonics upgrade	Completed	
Computer software upgrade	Completed	
New signs at the entrances to the City	Completed	
South Main Street sidewalk project	Completed	
Level Grove/Wayside Street sidewalk project	Postponed	This project has been postponed until grant funding becomes available. It will be renamed Wayside St. Phase I.
<i>Public Works</i>		
New garage to house vehicles	Postponed	This project has been postponed due to funding concerns.
Composting facility	Postponed	This project has been postponed until grant funding becomes available.



Activity	Status	Comment
Community House Floor	Completed	
Community House Roof	Completed	
Depot Back Room Renovation	Completed	
Street resurfacing priority plan	Completed	Updated 2017
New multi-purpose tractor	Postponed	This project has been postponed until grant funding becomes available.
<i>Sanitation</i>		
New compactor truck	Completed	Purchased 2016
New scooter truck	Not Completed	Changes in sanitation operations eliminated the need for this vehicle.
Implement composting of leaves and wood chips	Postponed	This project has been postponed until grant funding becomes available.
<i>Planning Department/Downtown Development</i>		
New downtown parking lot	Canceled	Parking at New City Hall eliminates need for this project.
Façade and Sign Grants for Downtown	Underway	This is an annual grant program.
Complete Revitalization Plan	Completed	
Develop Infill Development Plan	Postponed	Some work on this has taken place, but will be included in future community workplan
Revitalization Phase I	Completed	Renamed Urban Redevelopment Phase I
Revitalization Phase II	Completed	Renamed Urban Redevelopment Phase II
Revitalization Phase III	Completed	Renamed Urban Redevelopment Phase III
<i>Recreation</i>		
Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan	Completed	<i>This project is currently being completed through a TE Grant from DOT.</i>
New restroom at City Park	Completed	
Gateway Park Project	Not Completed	This project has been eliminated from the City's priorities due to cost.
City Park trail project	Completed	
Trail project from Depot to Veterans Memorial Dr.	Underway	This project is being completed in conjunction with new construction and road improvements. The Wal-Mart segment has been completed. The remainder of the segment to Veterans Memorial Dr. is planned in association with future road improvements by DOT.



Activity	Status	Comment
New park at Hodges & Level Grove	Completed	This project was replaced with the Mud Creek Greenway project- completed 2014.
Recreation Center	Not Completed	This project has been eliminated from the City's priorities due to cost.
Skatepark	Completed	This project was completed in 2013.
<i>Public Safety</i>		
Replace 6 patrol cars	Completed	
Replace 6 patrol cars	Completed	
New snorkel truck (Replaced with the purchase of an aerial fire truck).	Completed	This task will be replaced with the purchase of an aerial fire truck. The aerial fire truck (ladder truck) was purchased in 2016- \$632,000
New Extrication tools	Completed	
New fire suppression engine truck	Postponed	plan for 2019-2020
SCBA/ air packs	Postponed	\$75K- FEMA SAFER grant application in- hopefully, 2019
Exhaust system for the engine bays at the north station.	Postponed	2020 Approx. \$50,000
fire suppression engine to replace aging current one	Postponed	2019/2020 Approx. \$350,000
New fire station for the south end	Postponed	2018/2019- cost not yet established
Second Fire Station on North End of Town	Completed	Purchased 2011, construction completed 2014. Addition/ engine bays completed 2016
New Extrication tools	Postponed	planning to get some more in the 2019-2020
<i>Water</i>		
Plant upgrade and expansion of water treatment plant	Underway	New water plant is in progress.
Reservoir dredging	Underway	This task has been included in the development of the new Reservoir expected to be complete 2019
Water tank rehabilitation	Completed	
New elevated storage tank on North end of City	Canceled	Fire pump made this unnecessary



Activity	Status	Comment
Meter replacement	Underway	At present, AMI upgrades/ meter replacement are in process.
Old Cleveland/Hoyt water line replacement	Completed	CDBG Phase I completed 2012 (AKA Revitalization Phase I/ Renamed Urban Redevelopment Phase I)
Reservoir overflow improvements	Underway	This task is included in new Reservoir project currently under construction and scheduled for completion in 2019.
Booster station at Fieldale	Not Completed	Fieldale plant expansion eliminated need for booster station by city.
<i>Sewer</i>		
Yates Street water & sewer project	Completed	
Install sewer lines/lift station to serve the Camp Creek	Completed	
Stormwater infiltration project	Completed	
Plant expansion	Underway	This project is in the design phase. Completion expected in 2018/2019.
Gravity Line from Habersham Hills to Wally World Drive	Canceled	Determined that there was not an immediate need
Level Grove Lift Station upgrade	Completed	Replaced pumps, which allowed the station to handle more sewer capacity
Tower Mountain sewer upgrade	Underway	The is underway, due to be completed in October 2018
South J. Warren lift station upgrade	Completed	
North J. Warren lift station upgrade- renamed Pump Station Replacement/Upgrades.	Completed	This project will be implemented during the upcoming 2018- 2022 STWP/ CWP. It will be renamed Pump Station Replacement/Upgrades.
Alpine lift station update (Replaced with upsized Force Main).	Completed	This project will be implemented during the upcoming STWP. Replaced with upsized Force Main.

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF CORNELIA, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE CORNELIA 2018 - 2028 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Cornelia has prepared a 2018 Update to the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1), and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Commission of Cornelia selected a committee of Stakeholders composed of a cross-section of the community, and

WHEREAS, the Stakeholders Committee met regularly over a 12-month period to establish goals, objectives, and strategies to guide the future of the community, and

WHEREAS, Cornelia staff met regularly over the same 12-month period with representatives of other agencies to advise them of the findings of the Committee to solicit their input in preparing the goals, objectives, and strategies to guide the future of the community, and

WHEREAS, Cornelia staff assembled the recommendations of community stakeholders and prepared such other documents in the Comprehensive Plan format required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1), and

WHEREAS, Chapter 110-12-1 of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Local Planning Requirements requires that the Mayor and City Commission of Cornelia approve the document entitled Cornelia 2018 – 2028 Comprehensive Plan prior to forwarding it to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and

WHEREAS, the Cornelia 2018 - 2028 Comprehensive Plan was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1) effective March 1, 2014, and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and includes the community's certification that consideration was given to both the Regional Water Plan and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria as provided in Section 110-12-1-.02(3) of the above mentioned Standards and Procedures in preparing the Plan,

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2018, the City transmitted the Plan to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and,

WHEREAS, the Plan has been found by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to be in compliance with the above-mentioned Minimum Standards and Procedures;

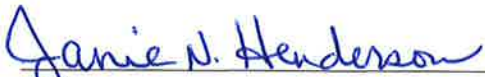
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF CORNELIA, GEORGIA, that the Cornelia 2018 - 2028 Comprehensive Plan is hereby approved and adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City staff be directed to provide a copy of this adoption resolution within seven (7) days of local adoption of the approved Plan to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, and to publicize the availability of the adopted Plan as public information by posting the Plan on the City's website.


ADOPTED this 4th day of September, 2018.

Attest:

Approved:



Janie Henderson, City Clerk



James C. Irby, Jr., Mayor (Seal)



Mayor James C. Irby, Jr.



City Commissioners

Ward 1 Wes Dodd
Ward 2 Janice Griggs
Ward 3 Don Bagwell
Ward 4 Tony Cook

City Manager
Donald Anderson

City Clerk
Janie Henderson

City Attorney
Steve Campbell

June 6, 2018

Ms. Heather Feldman, Executive Director
Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
1310 West Ridge Road
Gainesville, Georgia 30501

RE: 2018 – 2028 Comprehensive Plan
Cornelia, Georgia

Dear Ms. Feldman,


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

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan covering our area (Coosa-North Georgia) and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan. These issues are also addressed in the body of the document.

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

We welcome the opportunity to address any questions regarding the enclosed documents. Please contact the undersigned at (706) 778-2091 or by email at jjflp@windstream.net should you have any questions or if you need additional information.

Sincerely,


James C. Irby, Jr.
Mayor

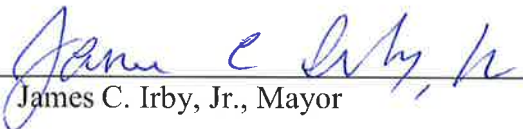


**CITY OF CORNELIA, GEORGIA
RESOLUTION TO TRANSMIT
2018-2028 Comprehensive Plan**

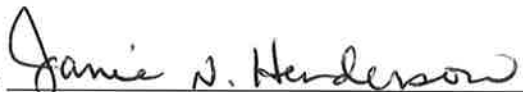
WHEREAS, the City of Cornelia has completed the 2018-2028 Comprehensive Plan.

WHEREAS, this document was prepared according to the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective March 31, 2014 and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and the required public hearings were held August 1, 2017 and June 5, 2018.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the City of Cornelia City Commission does hereby transmit the 2018-2028 Comprehensive Plan to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

BY: 
James C. Irby, Jr., Mayor

DATE: 6-5-18

ATTEST: 
Janie Henderson, City Clerk

DATE: 6-5-18





COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING



City of Cornelia

August 1, 2017

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Provides a road map for the community's future, developed through a public process of involving community leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of the community.
- Provide the community's vision for the future and its implementation program for achieving this vision
- Generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Answers the questions:
 - Where are we? (Mission Statement)
 - Where do we want to go? (Vision Statement)
 - How are we going to get there? (Goals & Strategies)
 - What are we going to do, who is going to do it and when is it going to get done? (Implementation Plan)
 - How are we doing? (Benchmarking and Annual Review)

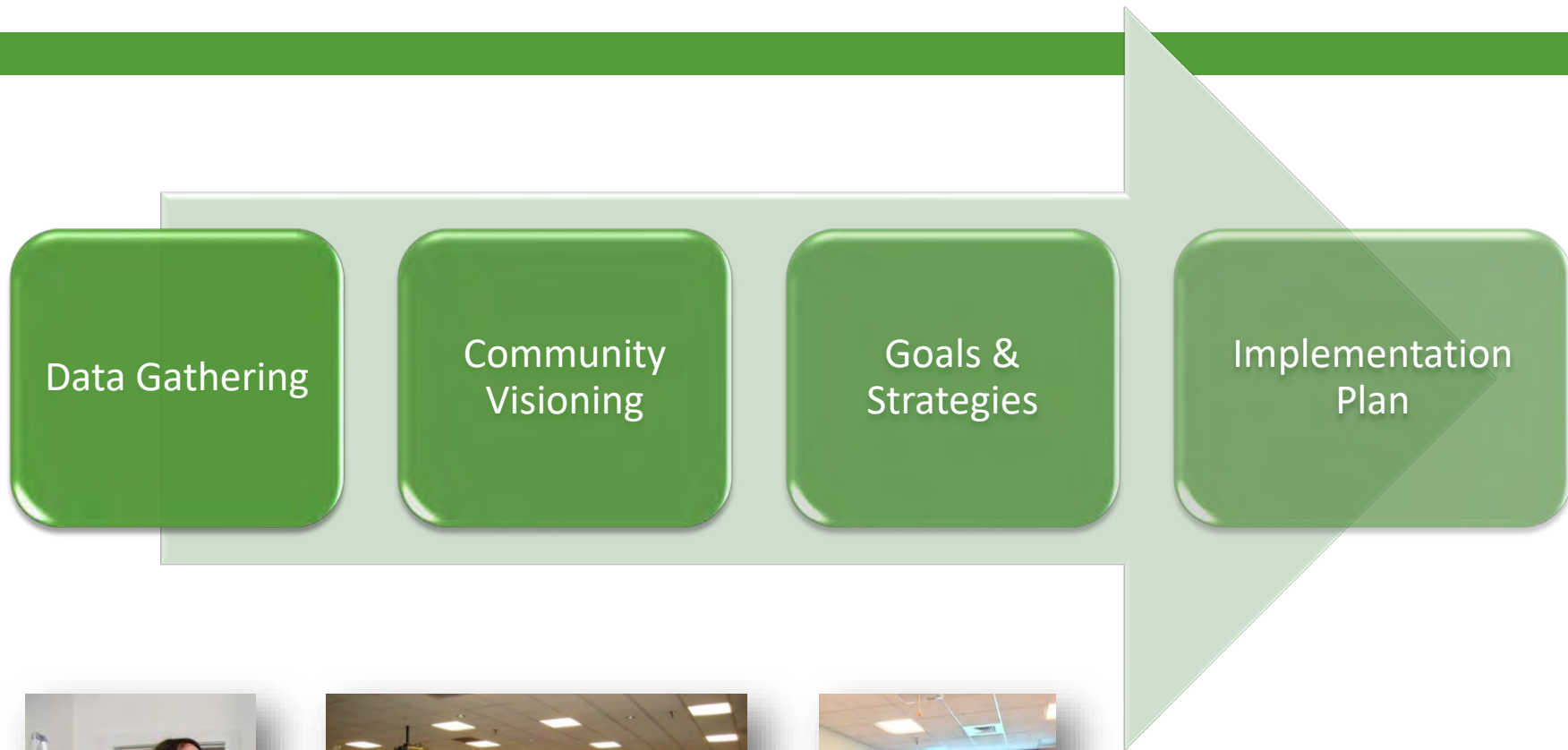
Benefits of Comprehensive Planning

- Efficient use of tax dollars
- More economic development
- Protection of private property rights
- Transparency in government – people can have a voice in the direction our community is headed
- Smarter decisions that are based on both short and long term considerations

Comprehensive Planning Requirements

- Community Goals
 - General vision statement
 - List of community goals
 - Community policies
 - Character Areas & Narrative
- Needs and Opportunities
 - Supplemental planning recommendations
 - Analysis of data and information
 - Analysis of consistency with Quality Community Objectives
- Community Work Program
 - Implementation activities
 - Time frame
 - Responsible party
 - Cost
 - Funding source
- Additional Elements
 - Land Use
 - Transportation
 - Economic Development

Comprehensive Planning Process



Existing Vision Statement

*“The City of Cornelia wishes to promote a **clean, safe, economically** viable community for all of its citizens while maintaining it **“home town” heritage** and appeal during an anticipated period of **regional growth.**”*

Data Gathering

- Data
 - Census demographics
 - Community Indicators
 - Local economic development data
- GIS
 - Land use
 - Community resources
- Existing plans

Tracking Our Progress “Benchmarking”

- Population
 - Growth
 - Age Breakdown
- Economic
 - Per Capita Income
 - Unemployment
 - % Below Poverty
 - Homeownership ratio
 - Average weekly wage
- Education
 - Graduation rates
- Health
 - Mortality rates
 - Doctors per 1,000
 - Obesity
- Social
 - Crime Rate
- Environmental
 - % of floodplain developed
 - Impaired Waters
 - Vulnerable Areas

Community Engagement

- Stakeholder Committee
- Community Survey
- Community Snapshot
- Open House
- Community Workshops
- Youth Involvement



Land Use Analysis

Future Development Strategy (from 2008 Plan)

- 365 Corridor
- Gateway Corridor
- Resource Conservation
- Greenway
- Rural Village
- Developing Residential
- Stable Neighborhood
- Mixed Residential
- Historic Area
- Revitalization Area
- Education Center
- Business Park
- Commercial
- Downtown
- Industrial/Institutional

Needs & Opportunities

- Population
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Land Use
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Transportation
- Infrastructure

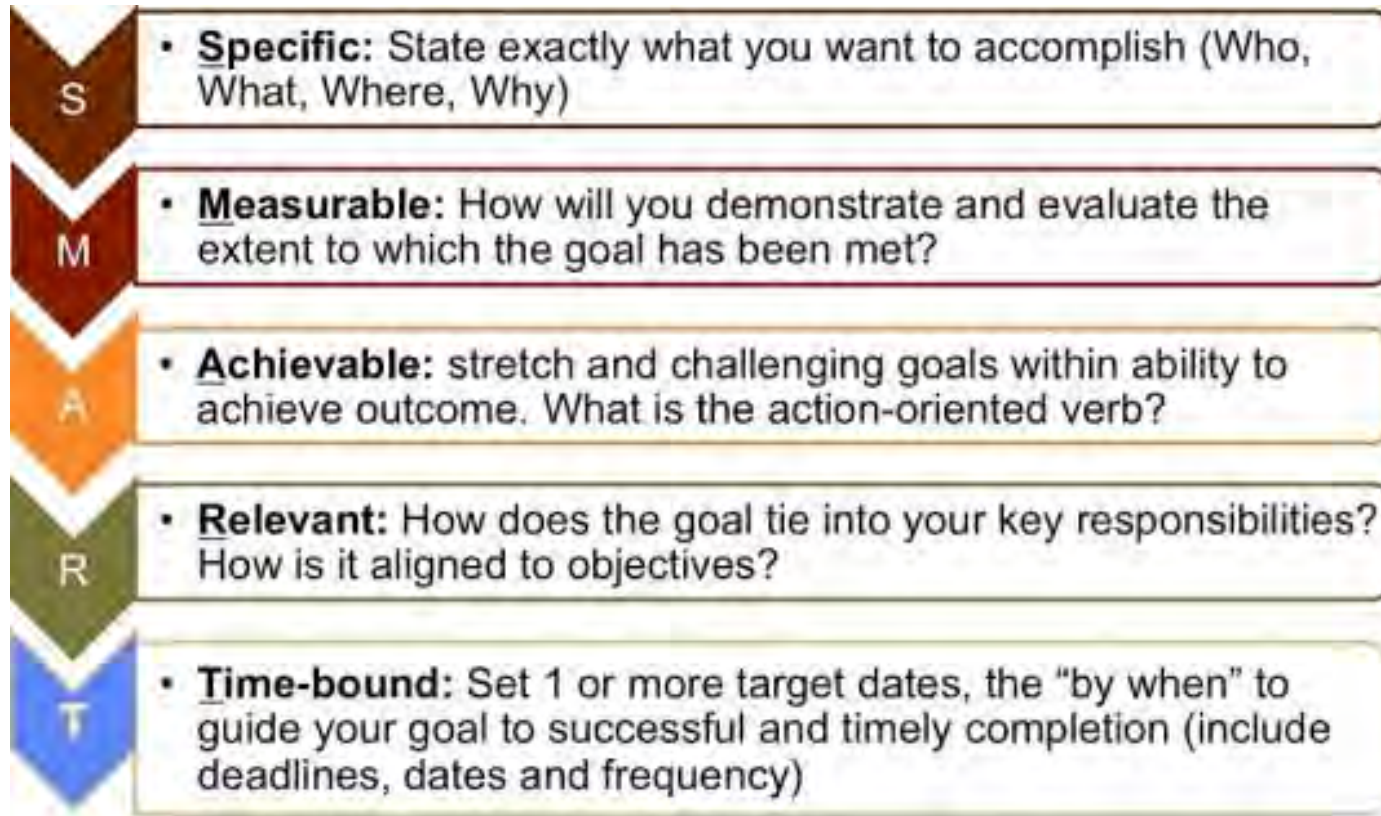


Community Work Program

- Implementation activities
- Time frame
- Responsible party
- Cost
- Funding source

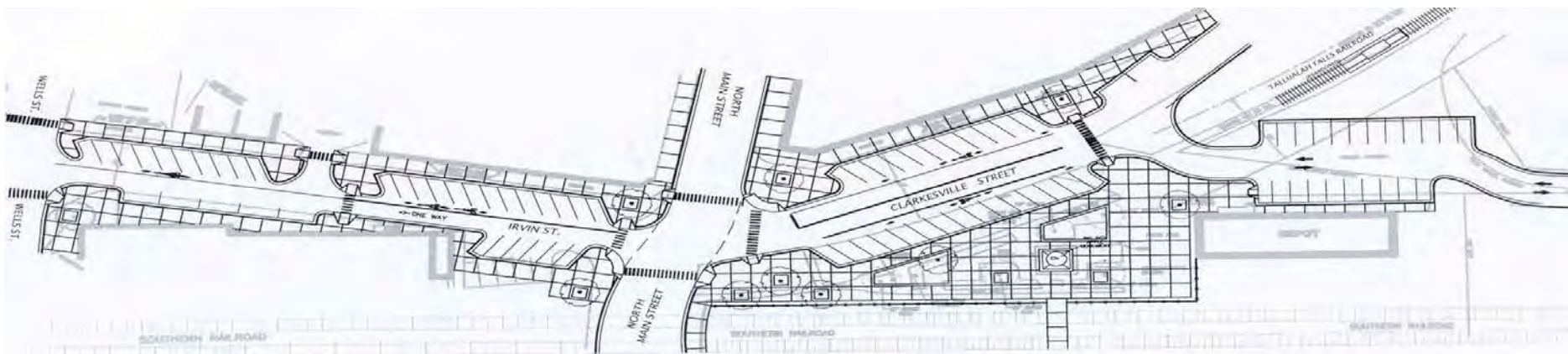


SMART Goal Setting



Next Steps

- Kickoff Stakeholder Committee Meetings
- Formulate Public Participation Strategy
- Review Vision, Set Goals and Policies
- Update Character Areas
- Identify Needs and Opportunities
- Create Work Plan



Contact Us

Ecological Planning Group
35 Abercorn Street, Suite 210
Savannah, GA 31401
www.ecologicalplanning.net



Submit comments to:
ed@ecologicalplanning.net



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

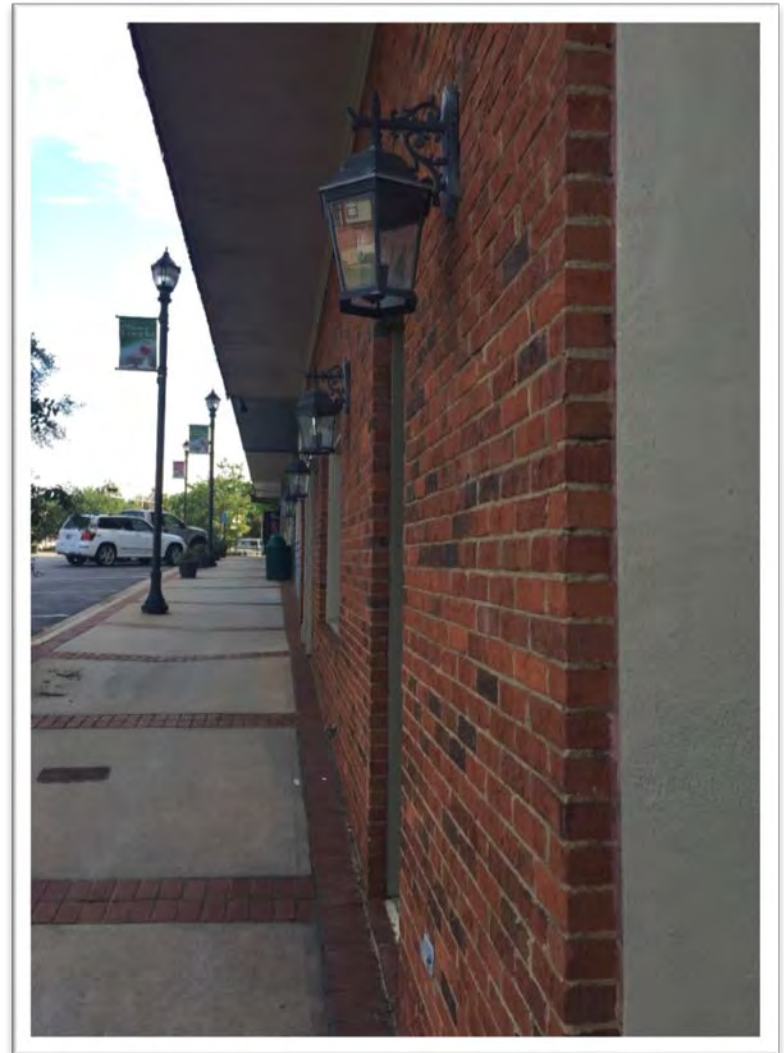


City of Cornelia

June 5, 2018

Comprehensive Planning Requirements

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Community Work Program
- Additional Elements
 - ▣ Land Use
 - ▣ Transportation
 - ▣ Housing

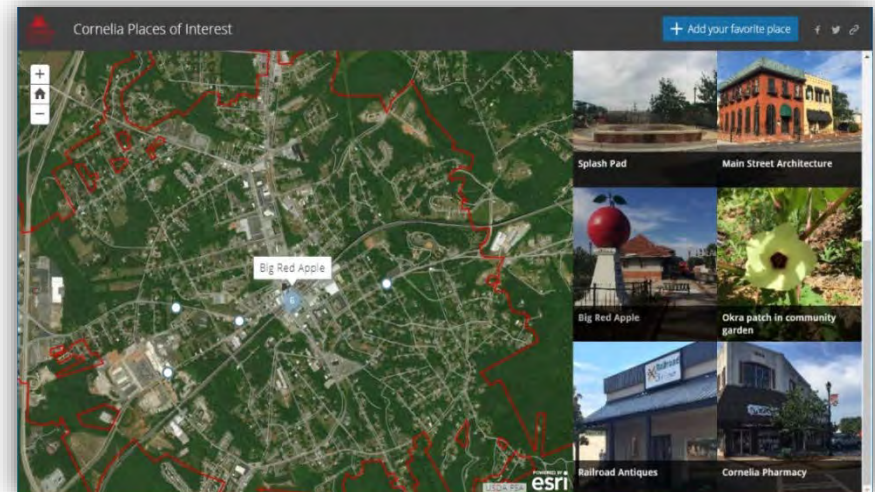
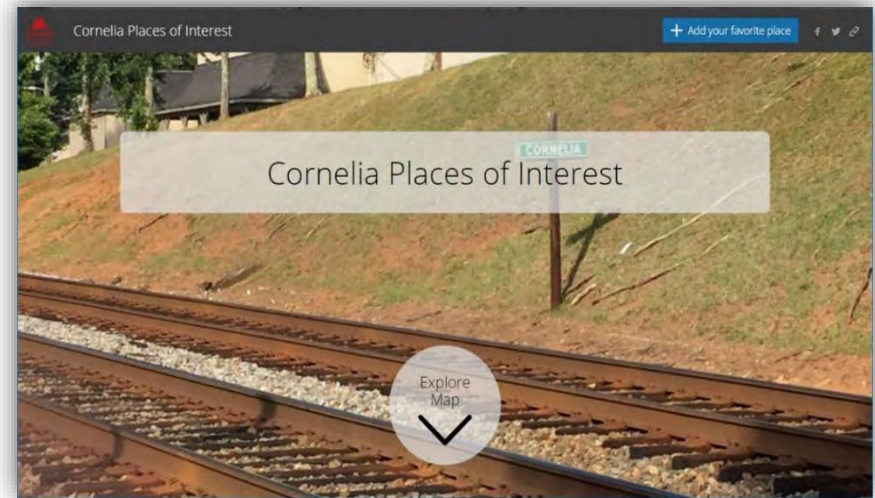


Comprehensive Planning Process

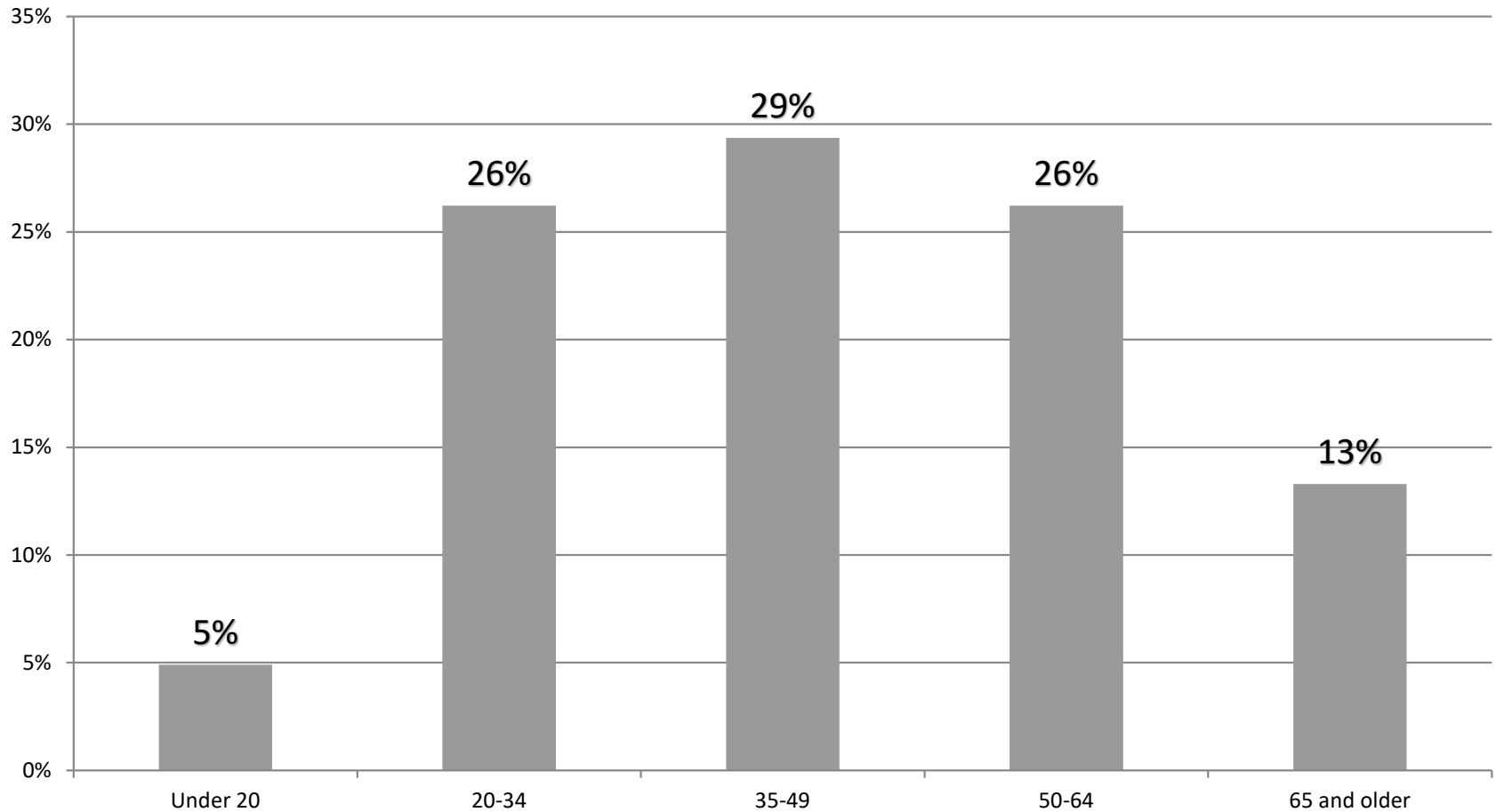


Summary of Public Involvement

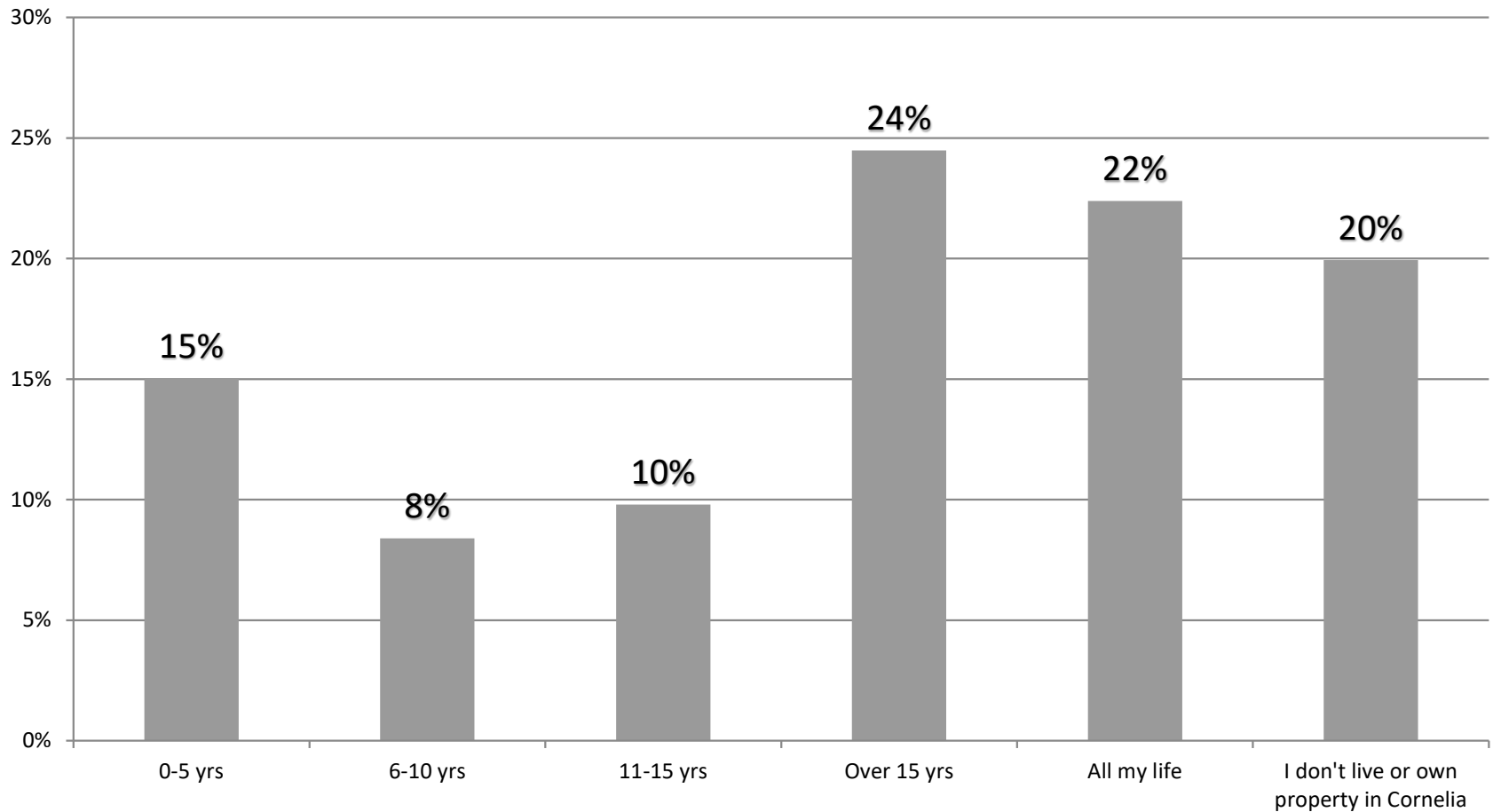
- Public Hearings
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Open Houses
- Community Survey
- Community Snapshot
- Social Media
- Interactive Mapping Application



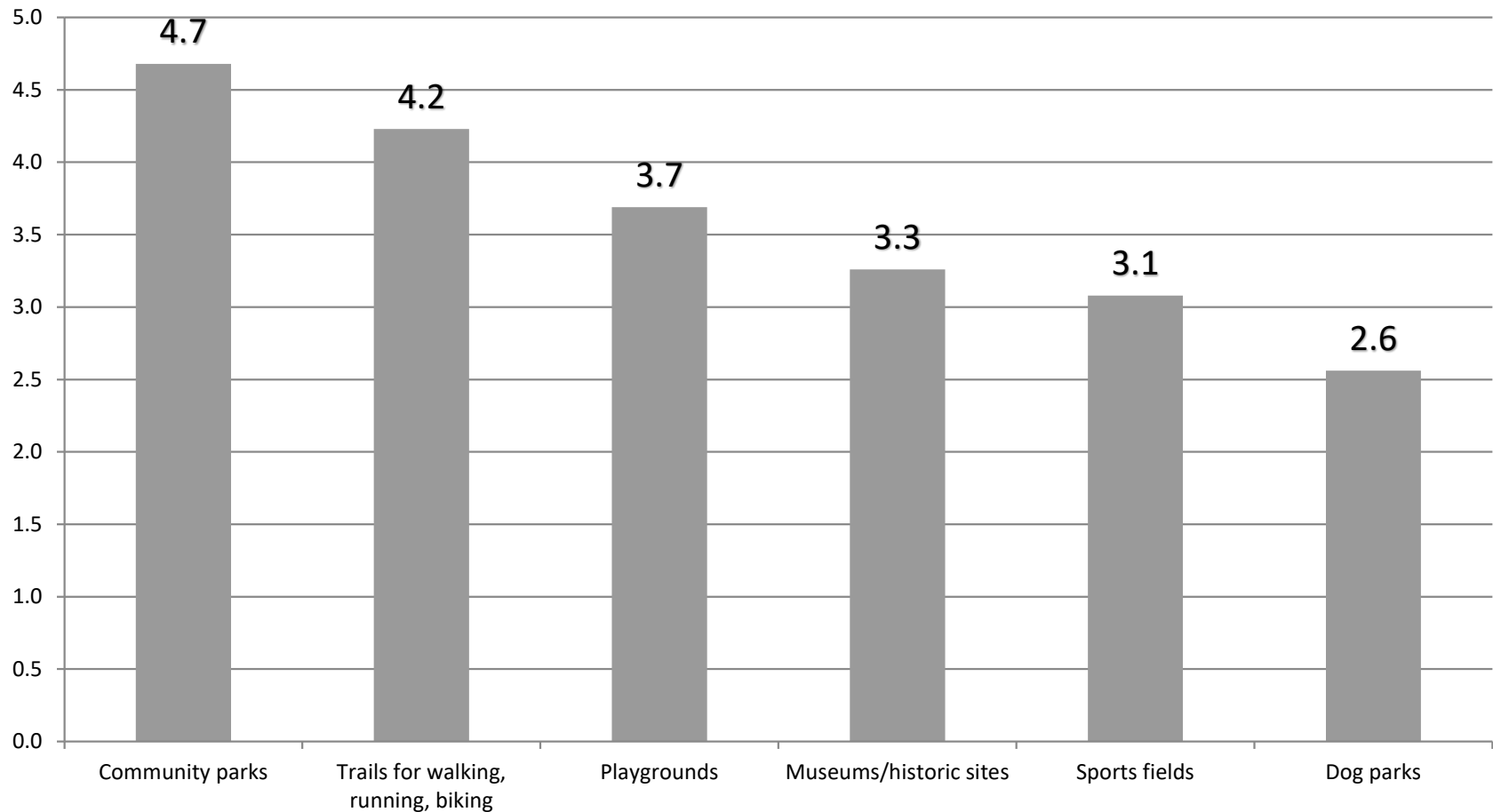
How old are you?



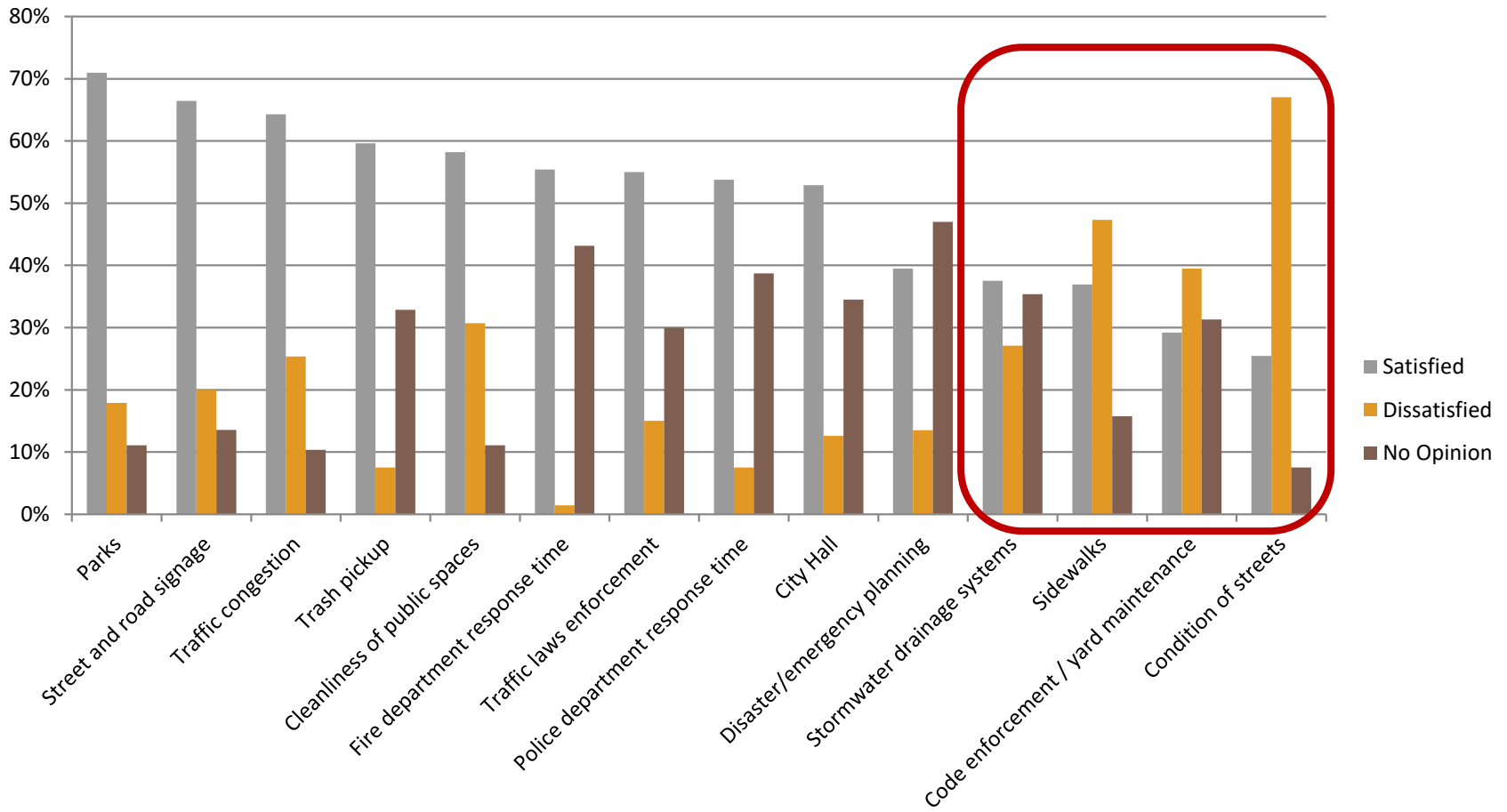
How long have you lived or owned property in Cornelia?



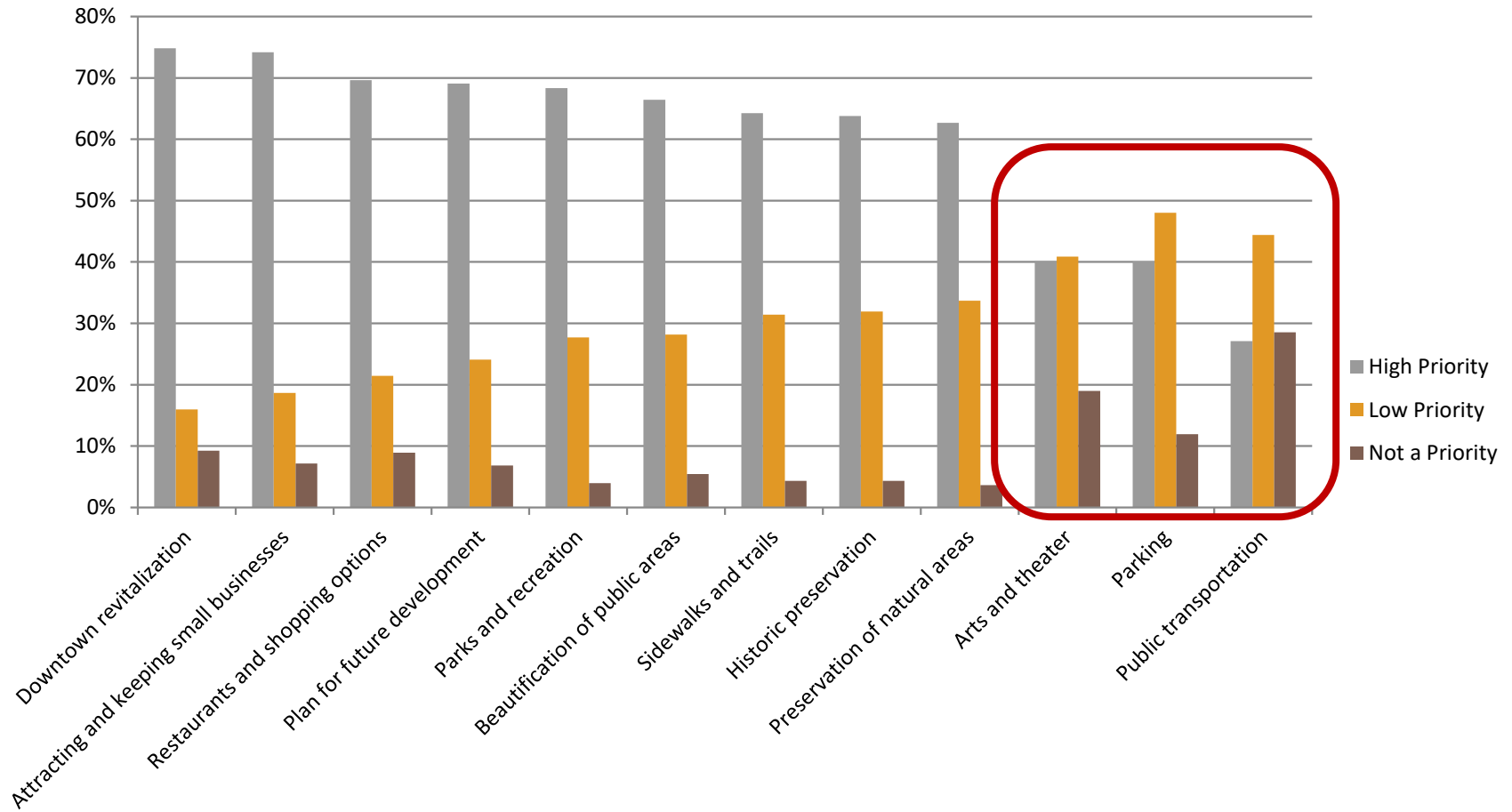
Please rank the following recreational public facilities in accordance with how important you feel they are for the City. (rank 1-6 with 1 being most important)



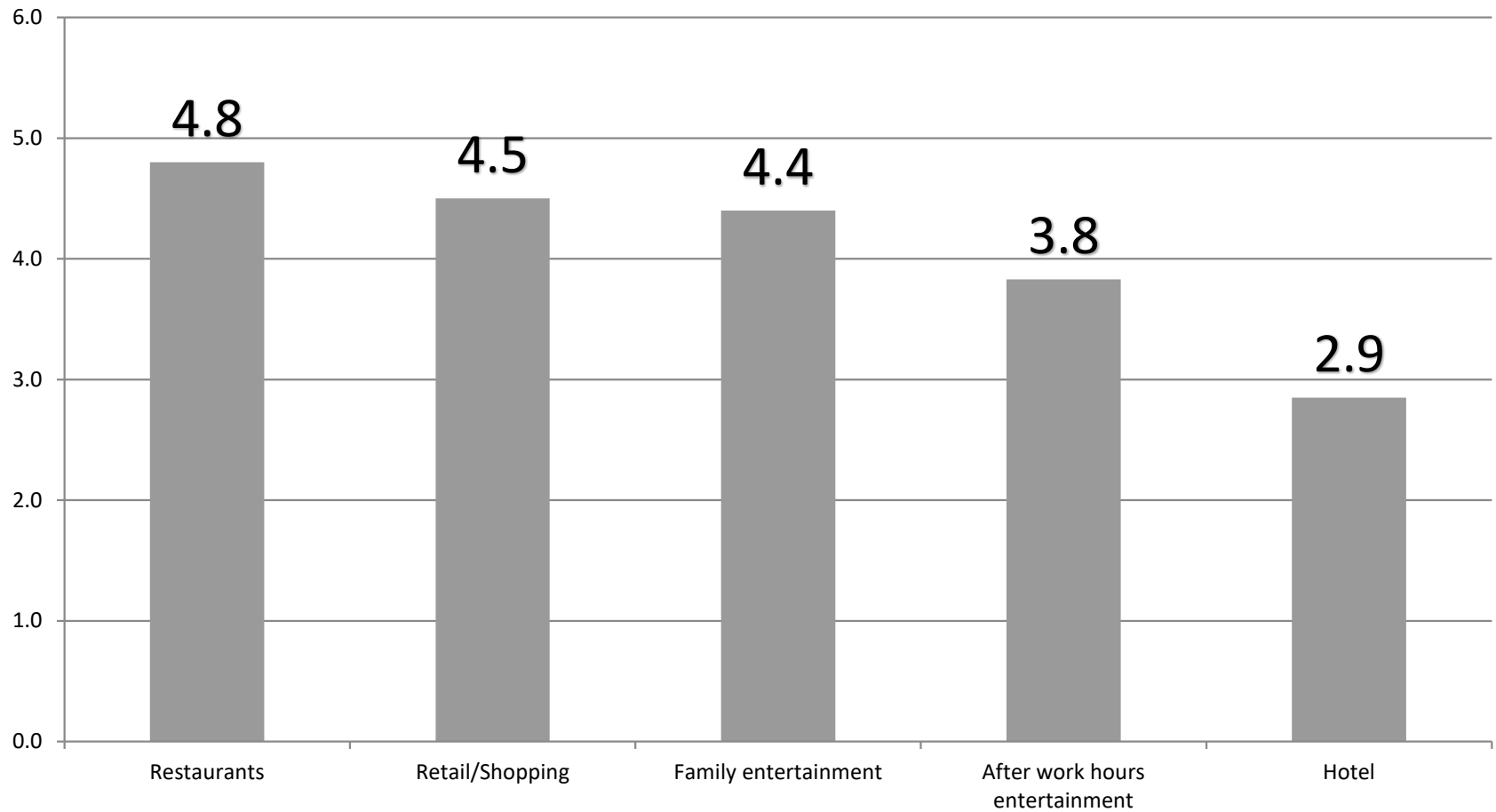
Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following public services or facilities:



How much of a priority do you feel the following issues are for the City of Cornelia?



Please rank which commercial businesses you feel are needed most in the City? (rank 1-5 with 1 being needed most)



What is your favorite place in the City?

Library Water Big Red Apple Department

Tower Mountain Enjoy Depot Square

Cornelia Kids City Park Splash Pad

Downtown Fenders Community House

Restaurants Town Needs Work Chenocetah Tower

Historic Shopping

What is the greatest challenge facing Cornelia that the City should plan for in the next 20 years?

- ❑ Businesses Growth and Retention (local)
- ❑ Downtown Revitalization
- ❑ Growth (balanced)
- ❑ Vacant buildings
 - Roads and infrastructure
 - Maintaining sense of place / identity
 - Diversity of community
 - Enforcement of Codes

Strategic Community Vision

“The City of Cornelia wishes to promote a clean, safe economically viable community while maintaining its home town heritage, supporting a vibrant downtown, providing access to the outdoors, and maintaining a high quality of life.”

OUR VALUES

- ❑ Diversity in our community
- ❑ Sense of Security
- ❑ Connectivity
- ❑ Protection of natural resources
- ❑ Quality city services
- ❑ Quality education
- ❑ Recreational facilities

OUR PRIORITIES

- ❑ Smart and efficient growth
- ❑ Optimizing existing infrastructure/infill development
- ❑ Varied residential options
- ❑ Supporting economic development
- ❑ Creating and maintaining a strong workforce
- ❑ Revitalizing the historic downtown

Community Goals

- Economic development
- Expand recreational activities and opportunities
- Downtown redevelopment and rehabilitation



Land Use Analysis

- Existing Land Use
- Existing Zoning Categories
- Community Character Areas
- Future Land Use Strategy

District	Name	Percent of City	% Developed	% Undeveloped
A	Agriculture	2%	100%	--
B-1	Neighborhood Business	5%	72%	28%
B-2	General Business	13%	85%	15%
CBD	Central Business District	0%	99%	1%
HI	Heavy Industrial	10%	89%	11%
LI	Light Industrial	1%	100%	--
MHP	Mobile Home Park	2%	100%	--
MOP	Municipal Owned Property	17%	99%	1%
O-P	Office Professional	2%	93%	7%
R-1	Single-family Residential	20%	74%	26%
R-1A	Single-family Residential	17%	81%	19%
R-1B	Single-family Residential	5%	72%	28%
R-2	Multi-family Residential	6%	52%	48%

Needs & Opportunities

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Land Use
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Transportation
- Facilities and Services
- Governance / Intergovernmental Coordination

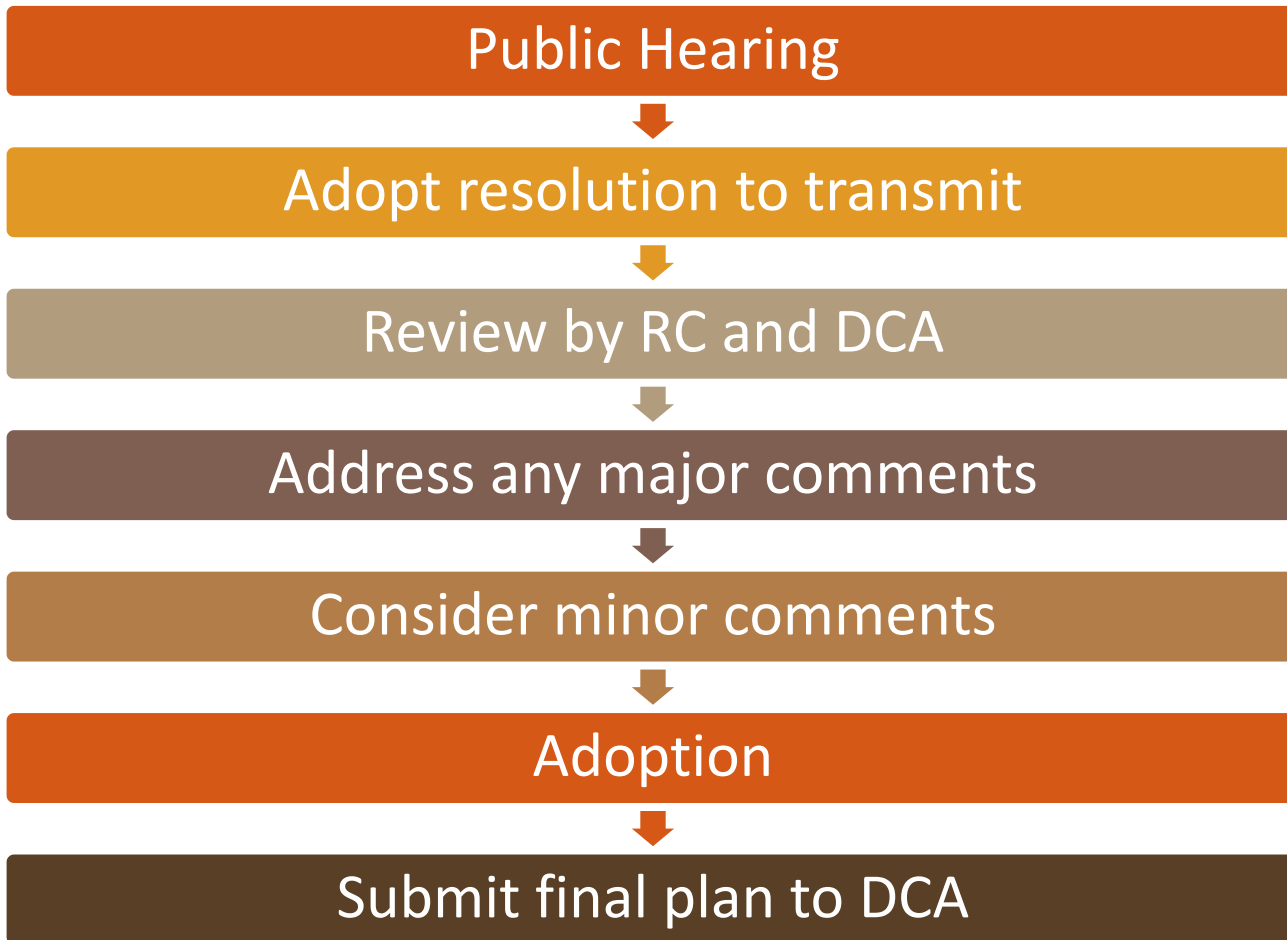


Community Work Program

- Implementation activities
- Time frame
 - ▣ Ongoing
 - ▣ Immediate
 - ▣ Short-term
 - ▣ Long-term
- Priority
 - ▣ Current, High, Medium, Low
- Responsible party
- Funding source



Next Steps





**City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting # 1
August 2, 2017
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**

- I. Introduction
 - a. Why are you here?
 - b. What do you hope to address with this process?
- II. Introduction to Planning Presentation
- III. Program for Public Involvement
 - a. Community Survey
 - b. Open House / Workshops
 - c. Youth Involvement
 - d. Community Snap shot
- IV. Proposed Meeting Schedule
- V. Wrap up and Next Steps



**City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting # 2
September 26, 2017
8:30 AM – 10:30 AM**

- I. Project Update
 - a. Data assessment
 - b. Community Snap shot

- II. Program for Public Involvement
 - a. Comp Plan Website
 - b. Community Survey
 - i. Available in English and Spanish
 - ii. Post survey on website and Facebook
 - c. GIS App
 - d. Big Red Apple Festival (October 7th from 10am to 4pm)
 - e. Open House
 - f. Youth Involvement

- III. Community Character Areas
 - a. Description, vision, implementation measures
 - b. Group work

- IV. Next Steps and Meeting



**City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting # 4
February 7, 2018
8:30 AM – 10:30 AM**

- I. Project Update
- II. Summary of Survey Results
- III. Future Land Use
- IV. Needs and Opportunities
- V. Visioning
- VI. Next Steps



**City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting # 4
February 7, 2018
8:30 AM – 10:30 AM**

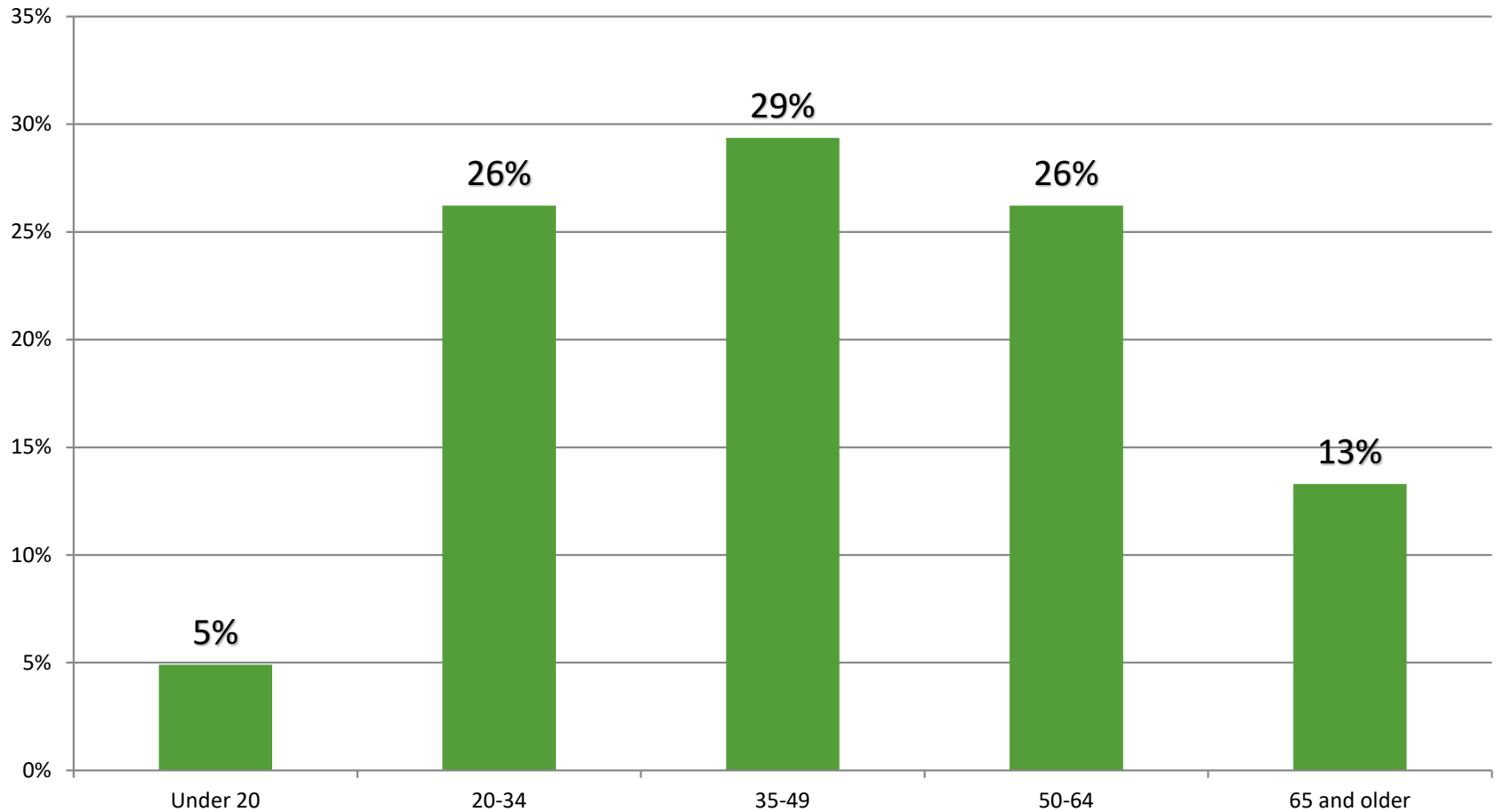
- I. Project Update
- II. Summary of Survey Results
- III. Future Land Use
- IV. Community Goals, Needs and Opportunities
- V. Visioning
- VI. Next Steps



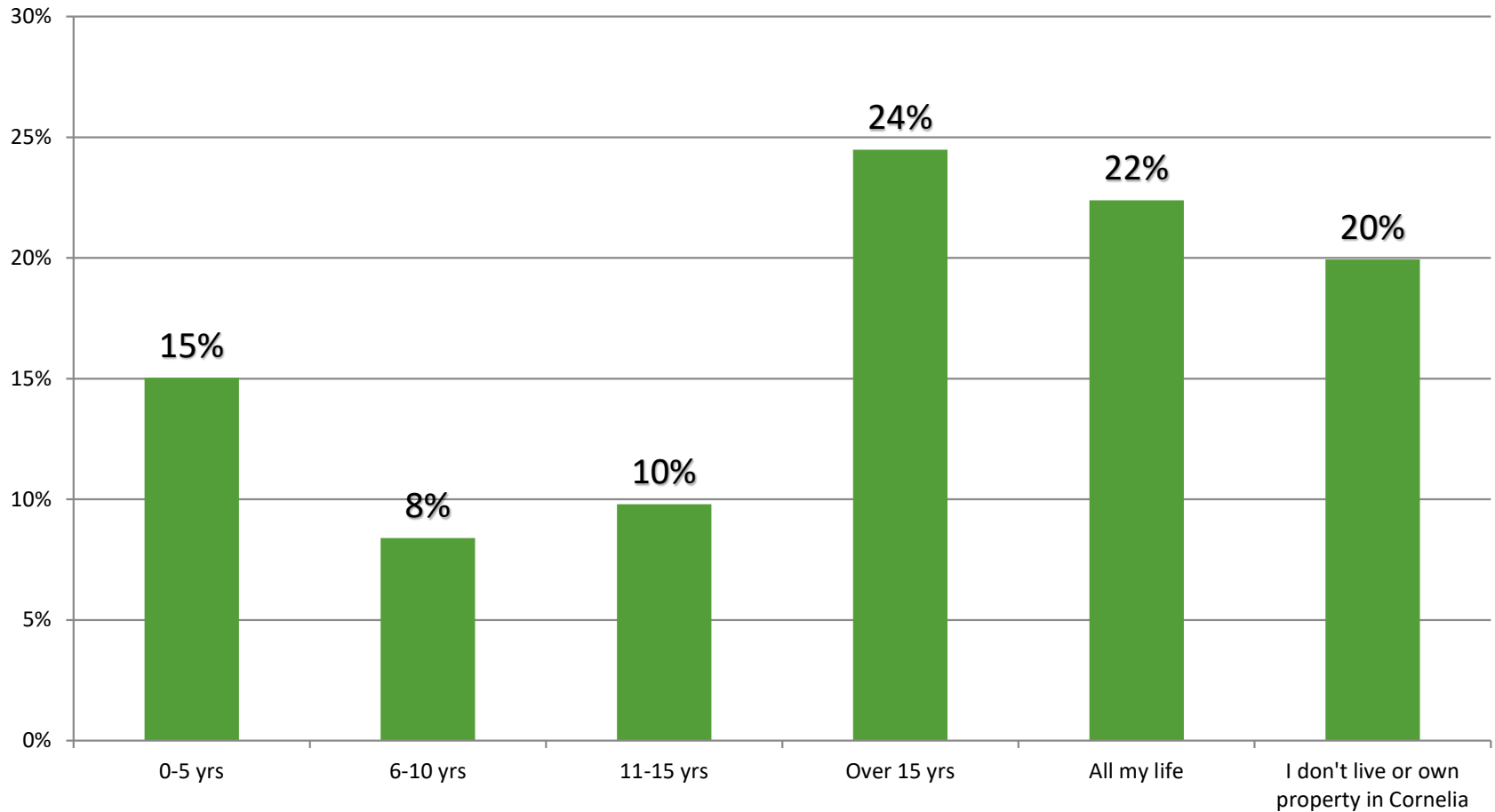
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY SUMMARY



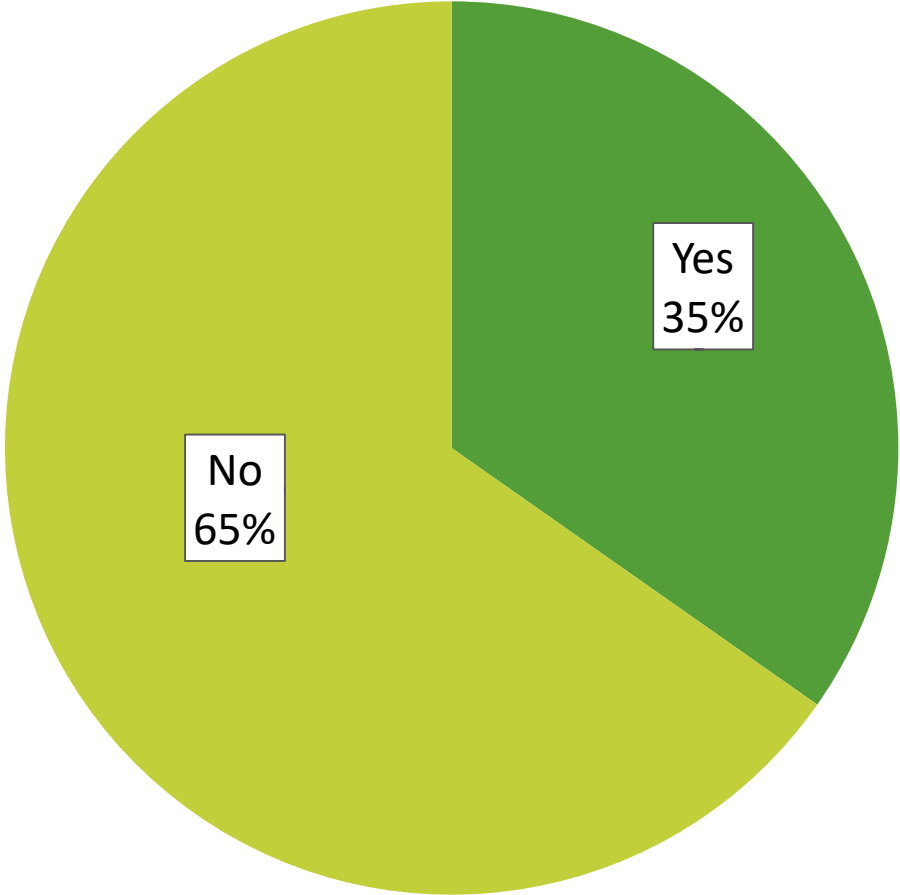
How old are you?



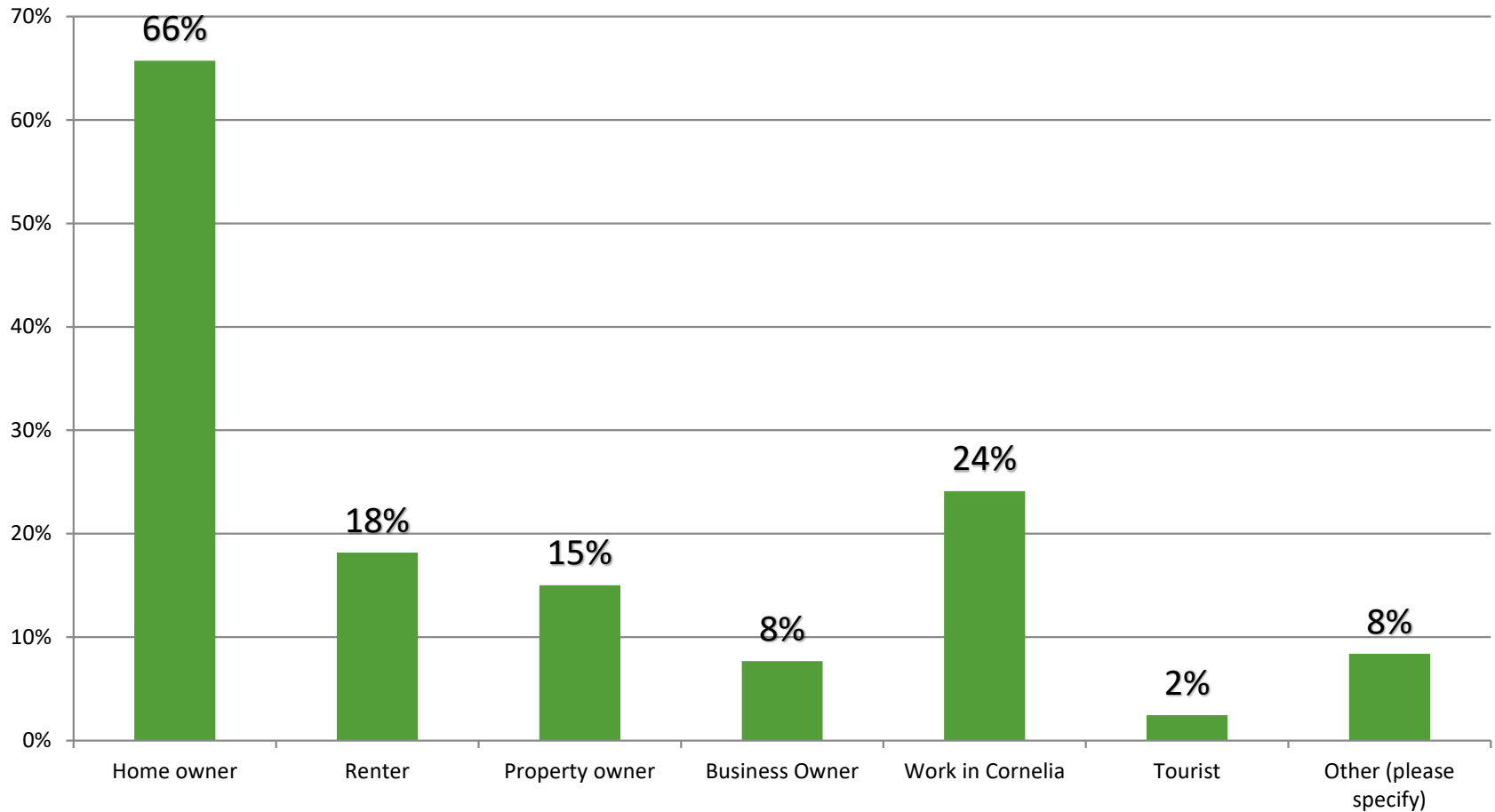
How long have you lived or owned property in Cornelia?



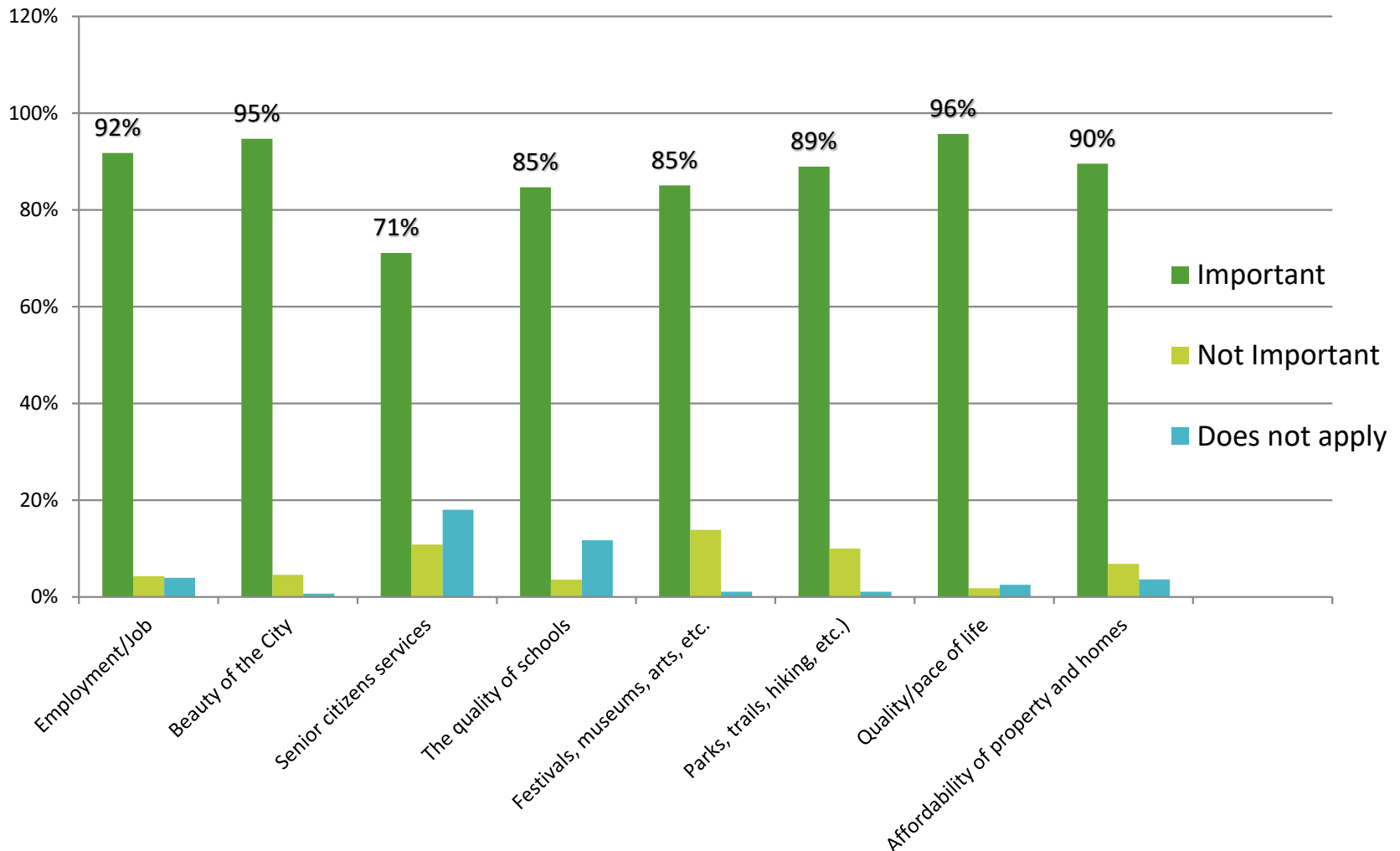
Do you have children under the age of 16?



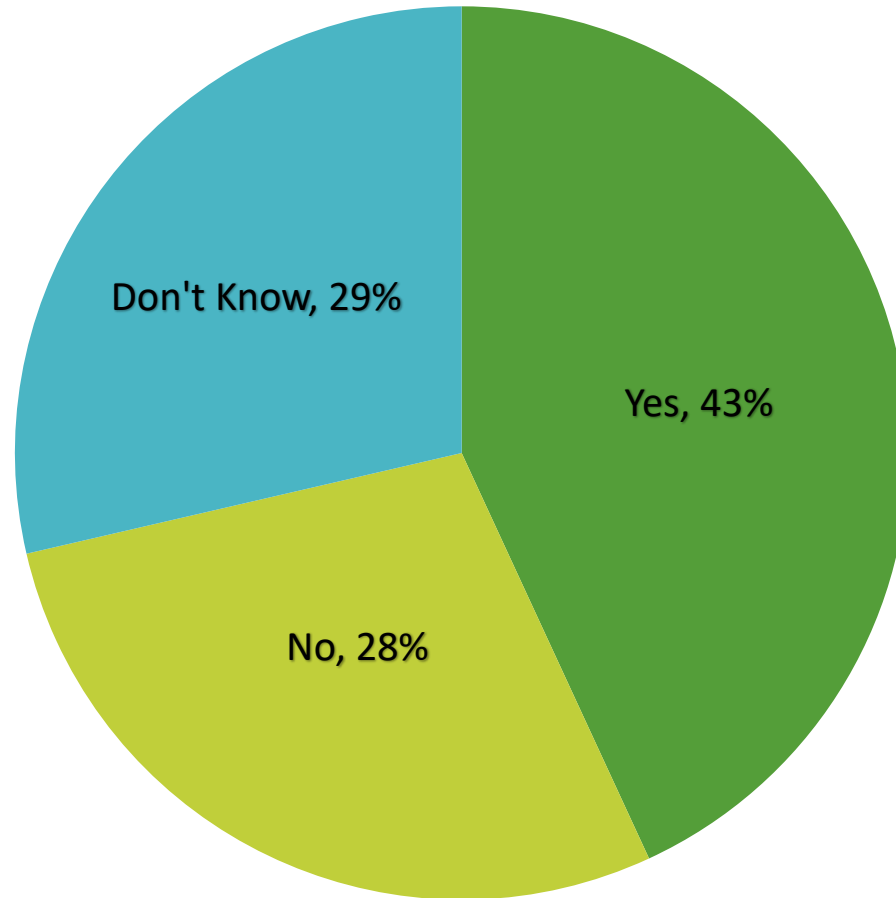
Which of the categories describes you? (Select all that apply)



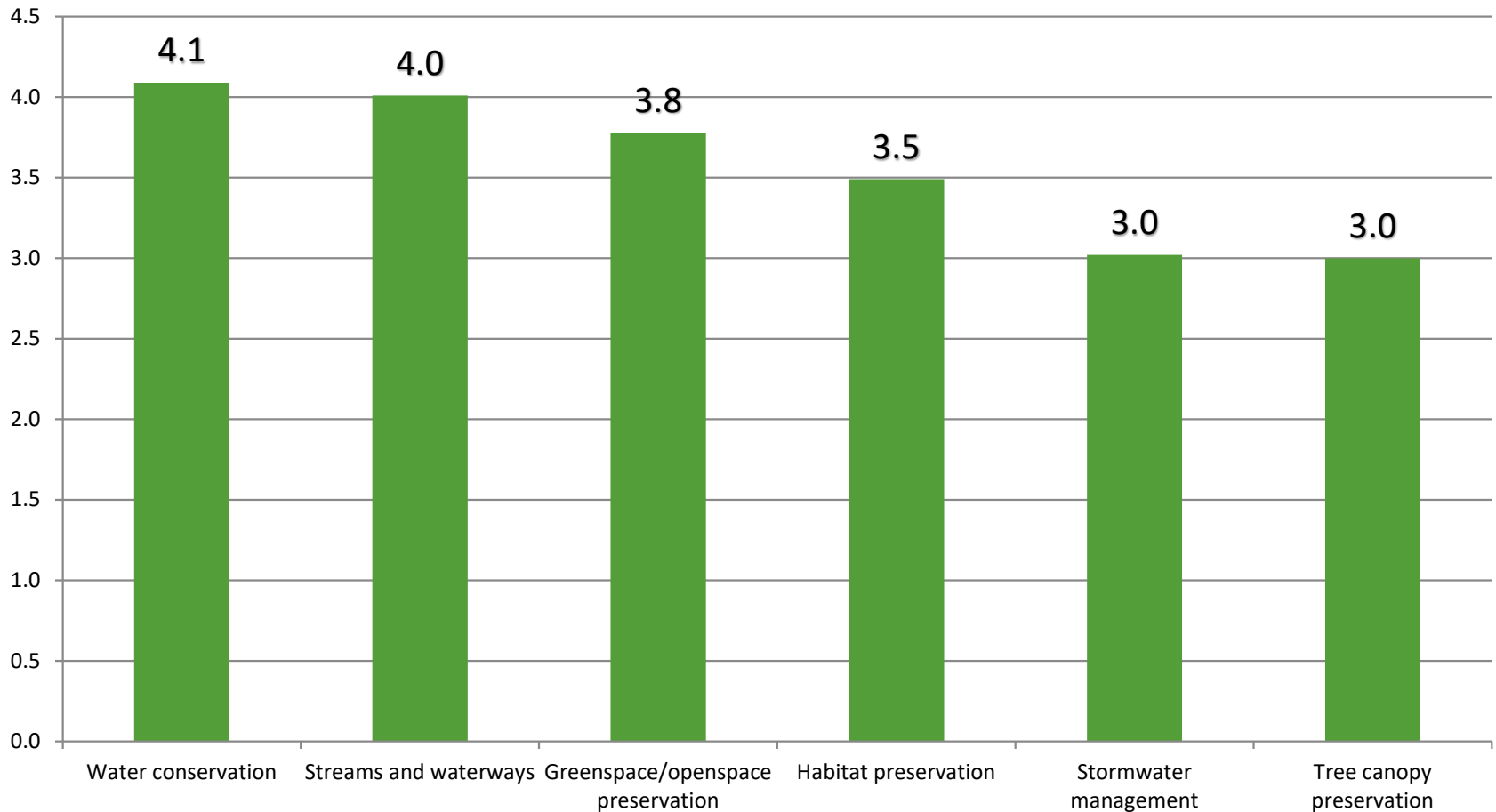
How important are the following for making Cornelia a desirable place to live, work, and visit?



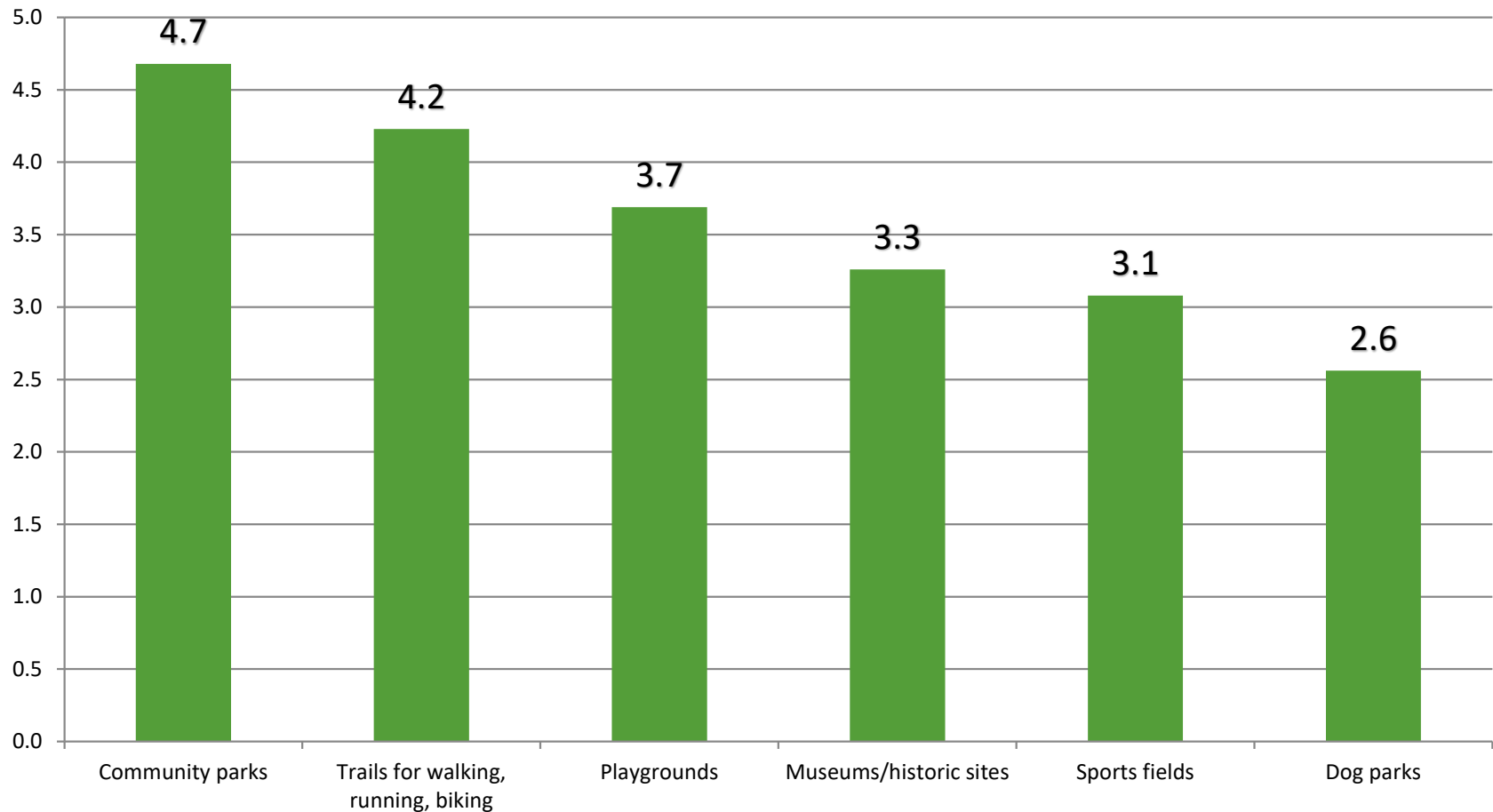
Do you know how your property and neighboring properties are zoned, and what types of development the City allows in your area?



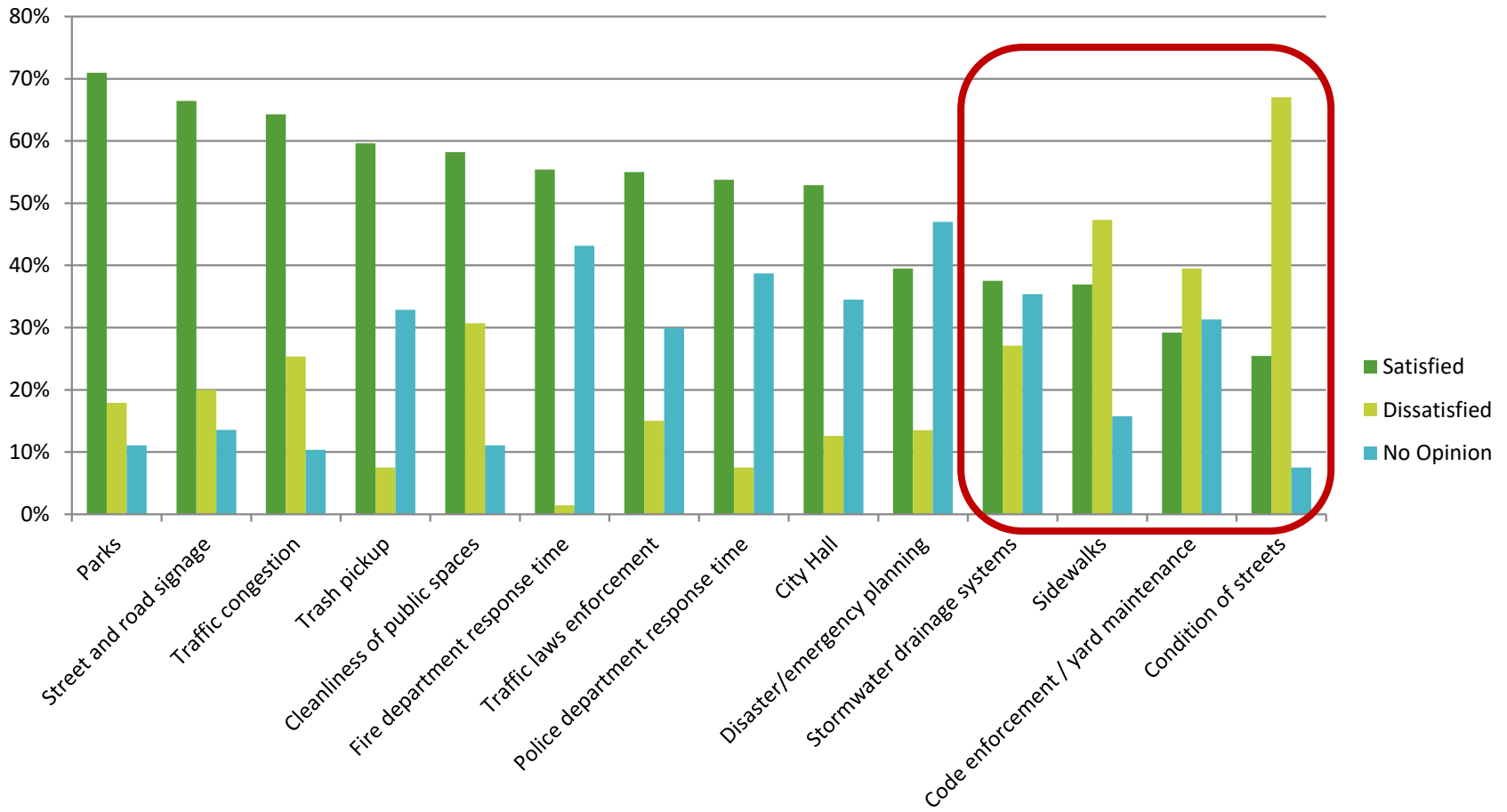
Please rank the following environmental topics based on how important you feel they are.(rank 1-6 with 1 being most important)



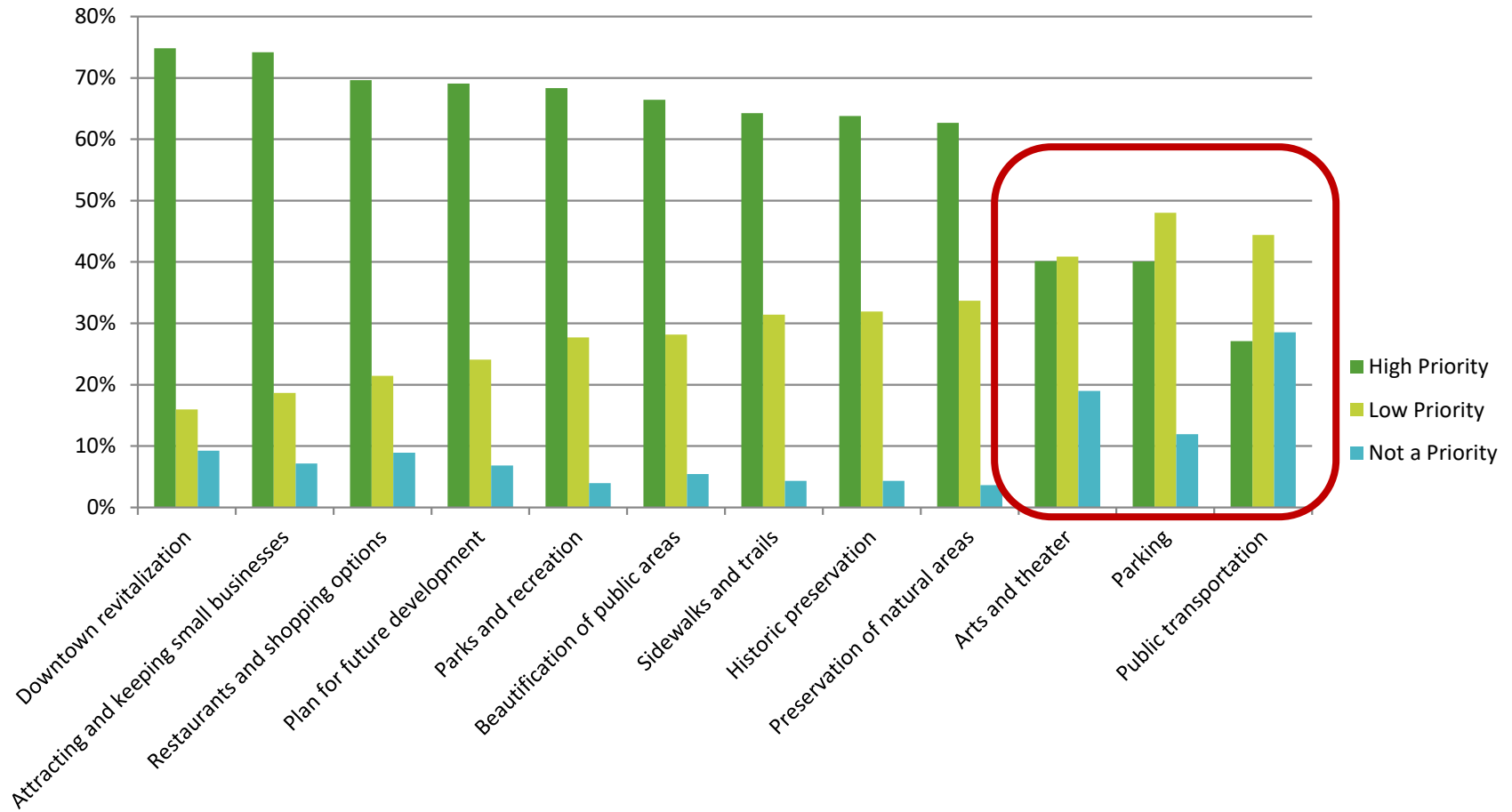
Please rank the following recreational public facilities in accordance with how important you feel they are for the City. (rank 1-6 with 1 being most important)



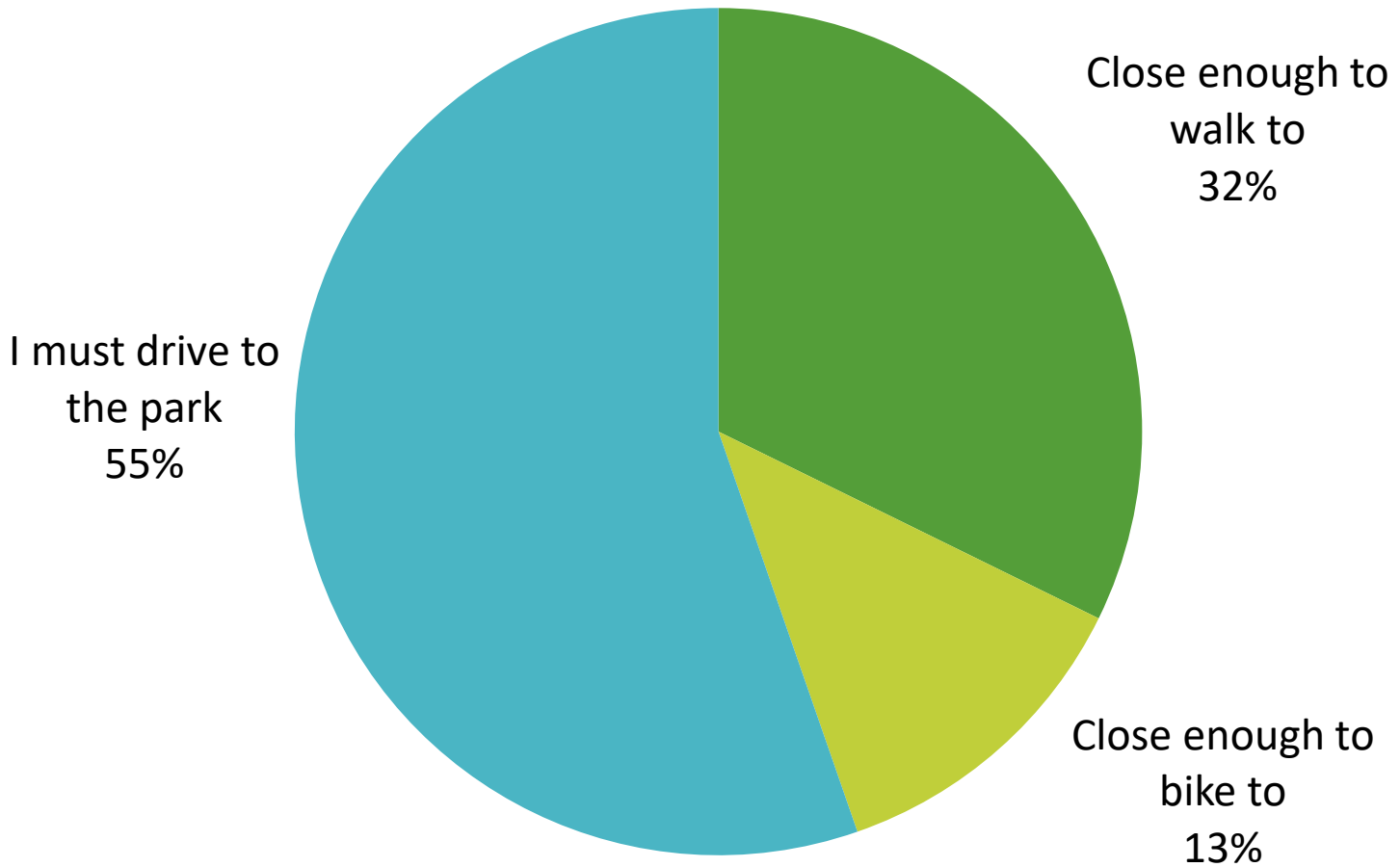
Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following public services or facilities:



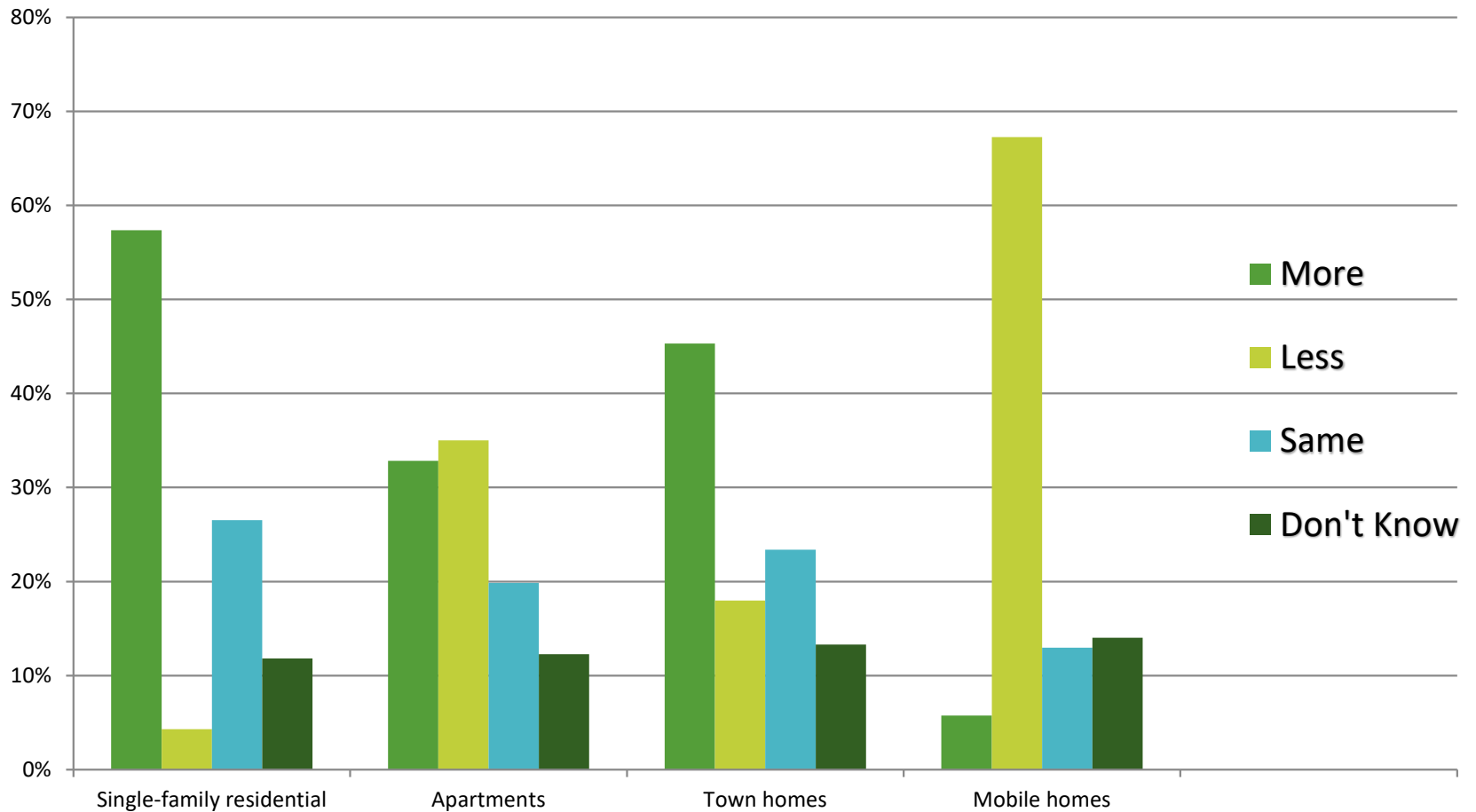
How much of a priority do you feel the following issues are for the City of Cornelia?



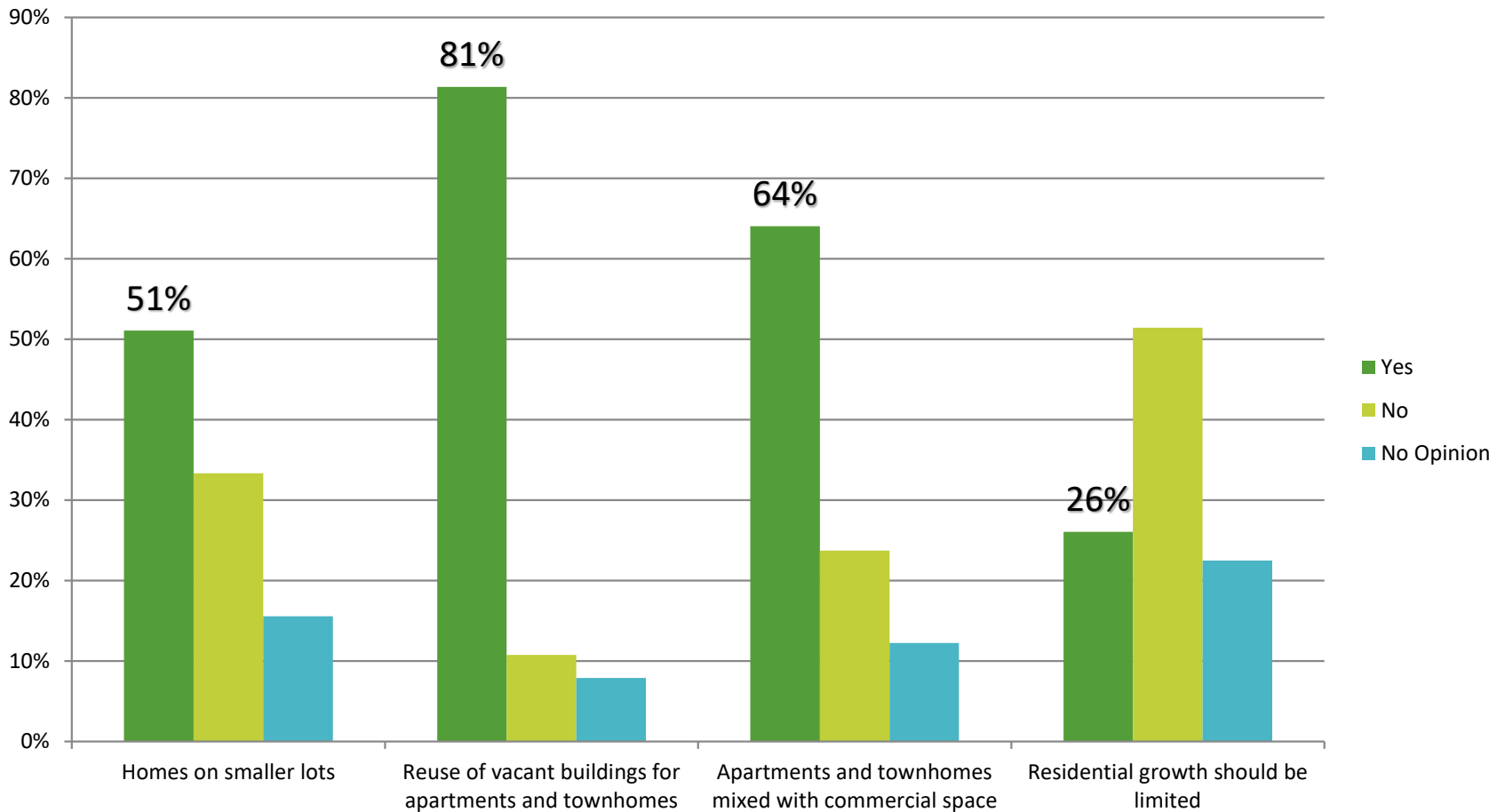
How close is the nearest park to your home?



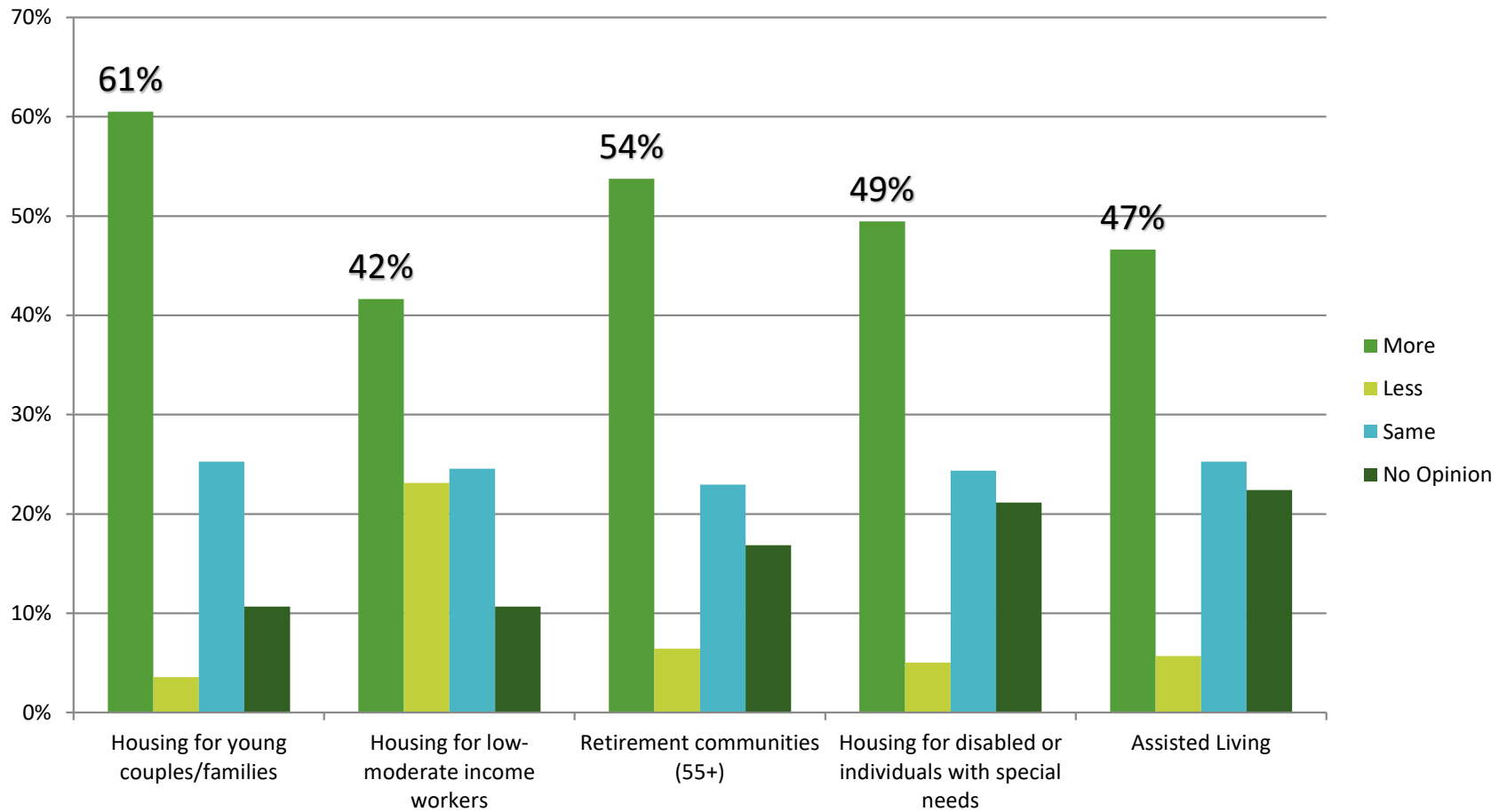
Do you think the City need more, less, or the same amount of the following types of housing?



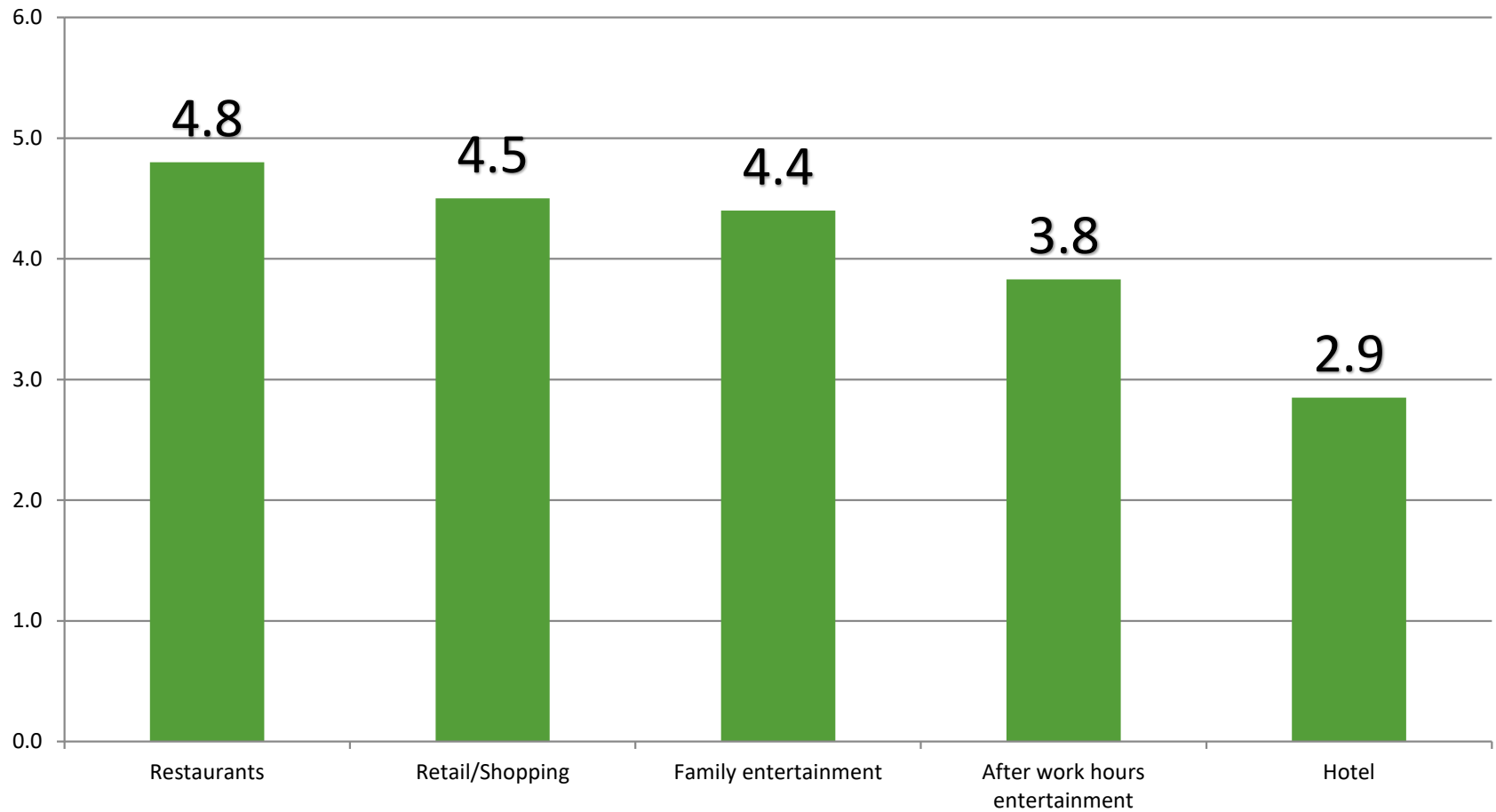
Do you think the City should allow the following types of residential development?



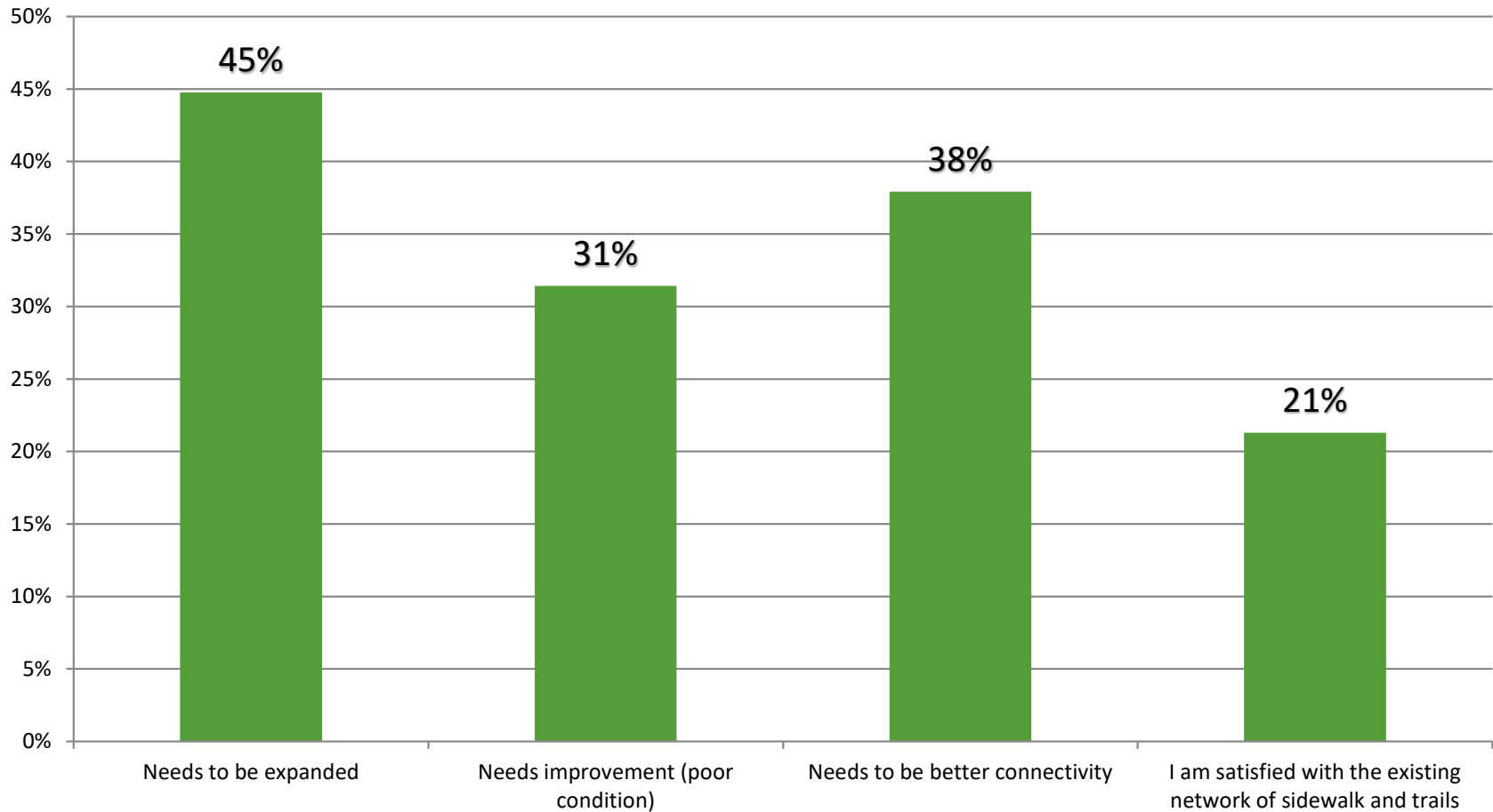
Do you feel there is a need for more of the following special housing in the City?



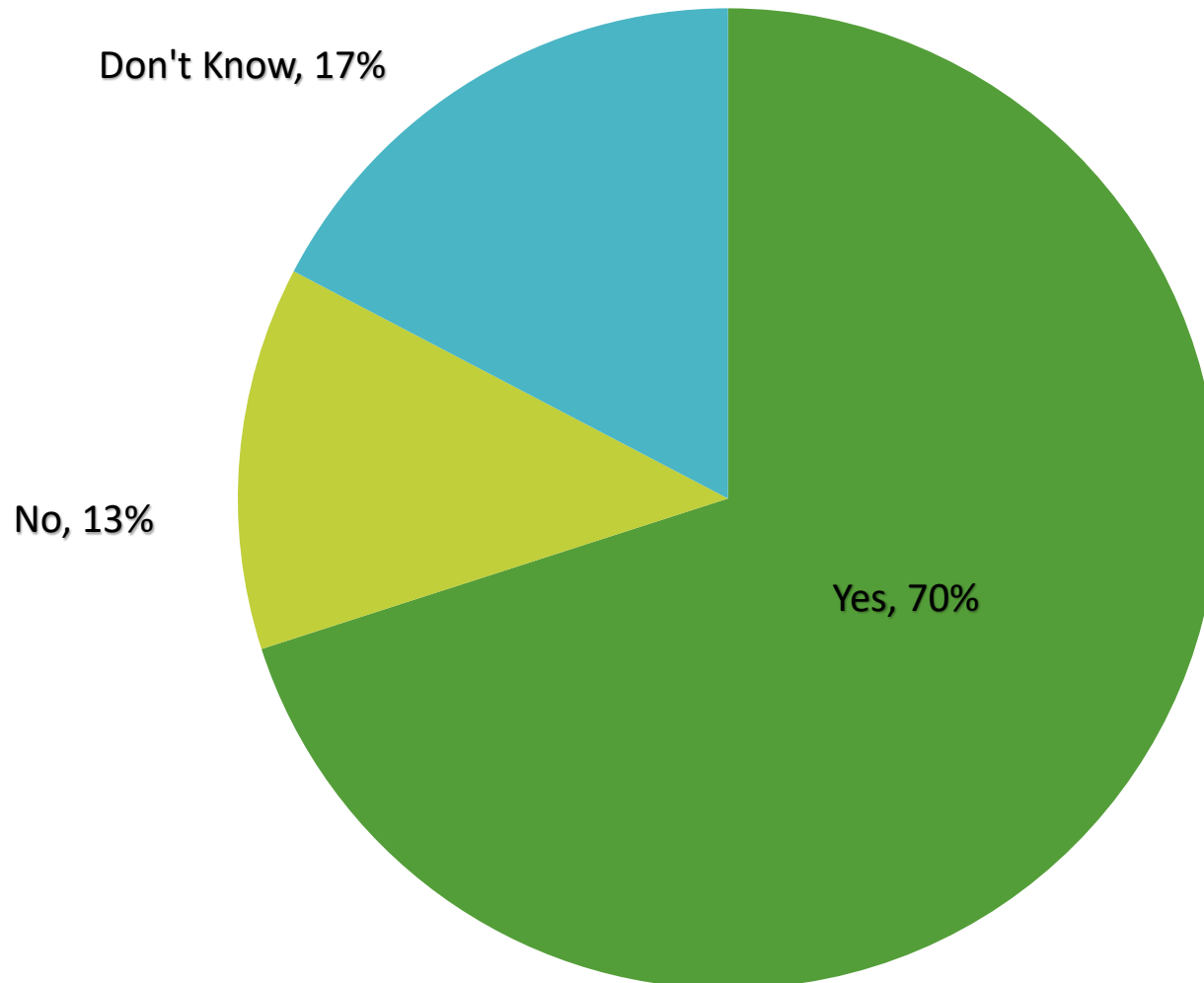
Please rank which commercial businesses you feel are needed most in the City? (rank 1-5 with 1 being needed most)



What do you think about sidewalks and trails in the City?



Would you be in favor of setting aside portions of land as permanently protected open space/parks as part of new developments?



What is your favorite place in the City?

Library Water Big Red Apple Department

Tower Mountain Enjoy Depot Square

Cornelia Kids City Park Splash Pad

Downtown Fenders Community House

Restaurants Needs Town Work Chenocetah Tower

Historic Shopping

What is the greatest challenge facing Cornelia that the City should plan for in the next 20 years?

- ❑ Businesses Growth and Retention (local)
- ❑ Downtown Revitalization
- ❑ Growth (balanced)
- ❑ Vacant buildings
 - Roads and infrastructure
 - Maintaining sense of place / identity
 - Diversity of community
 - Enforcement of Codes



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

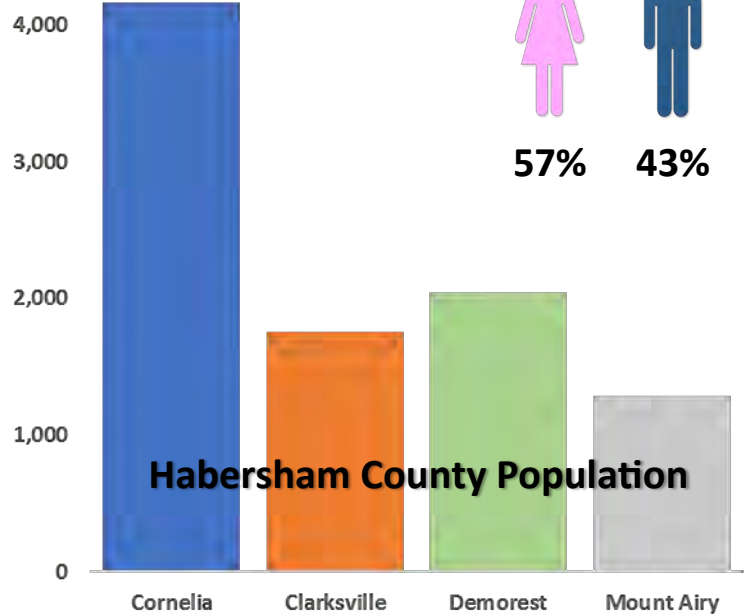
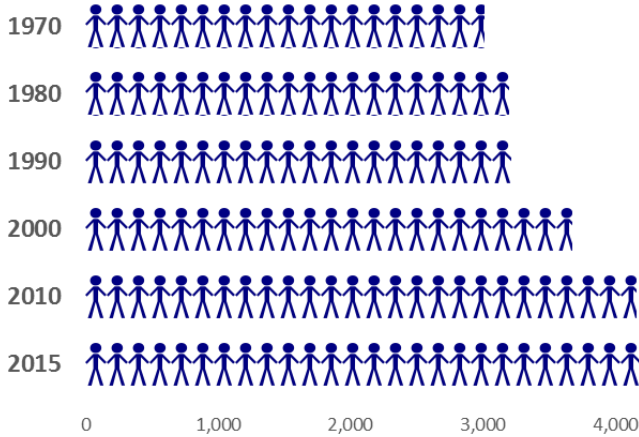
Gender



57%

43%

Population Trends



THE CITY OF CORNELIA is the largest incorporated city in Habersham County housing roughly 10% of the County's residential population. The 2015 American Community Survey published by the Census reports the population in the city to be 4,199 people. The City saw its largest residential growth between the years 1990 and 2010, experiencing a **24% INCREASE** in population. Growth appears to have leveled off since 2010.

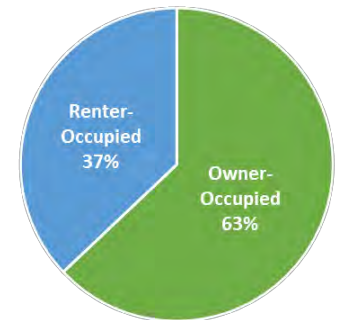
Housing Characteristics

Median House Values

CORNELIA	\$111,600
County	\$131,500
Georgia	\$148,100

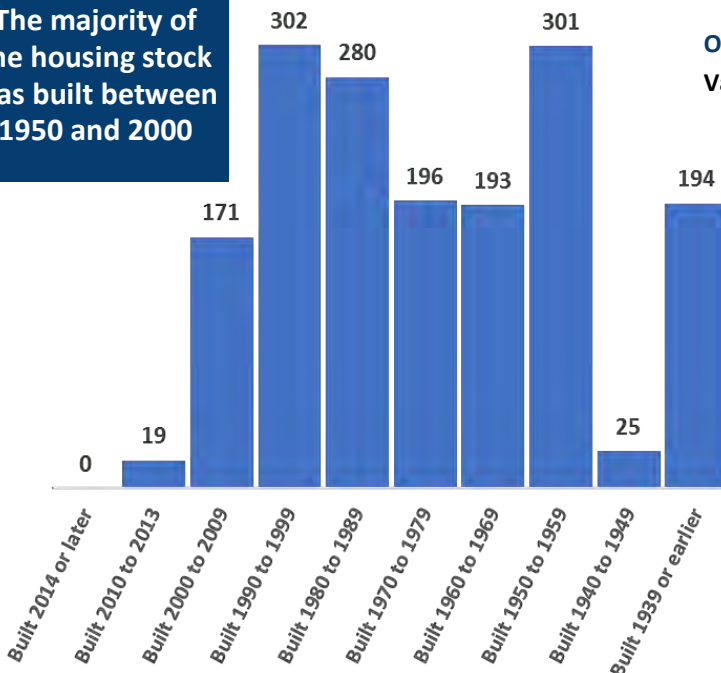
OCCUPIED UNITS 81%

Vacant Units 19%



OCCUPANCY

The majority of the housing stock was built between 1950 and 2000



Number of Housing Units = 1,681

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

OWNER-OCCUPIED 2.98 PEOPLE

RENTER-OCCUPIED 3.24 PEOPLE

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Average Household Income

CORNELIA	\$40,664
Habersham County	\$52,907
Georgia	\$69,010

Per Capita Income

CORNELIA	\$13,529
Habersham County	\$19,026
Georgia	\$25,737

Other Planning Considerations:

Commercial development along major corridors

Investment in historic downtown

Residential Infill Development

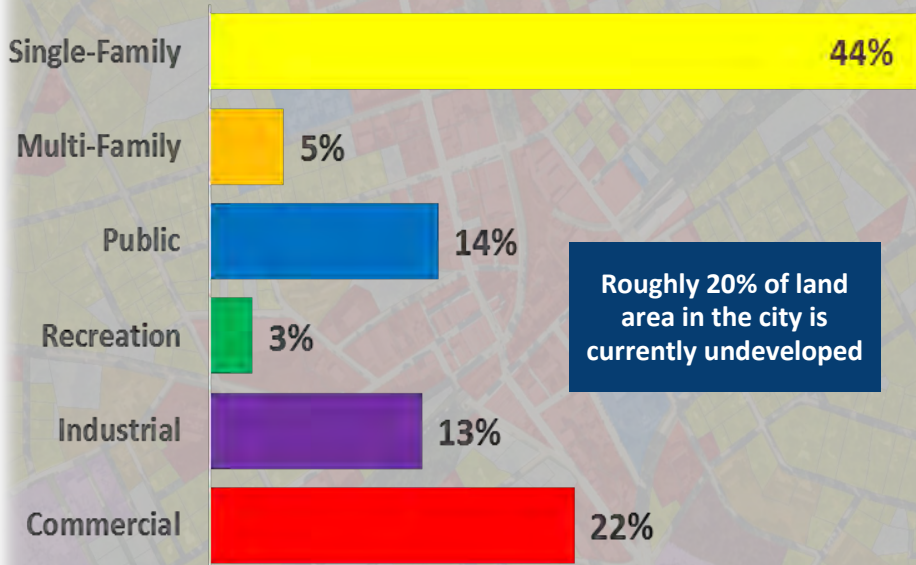
Maximizing tourism opportunities

Small town atmosphere

Land Use and Geography

Latitude 34.51 N
Longitude 83.53 W

THE CITY OF CORNELIA has a well-distributed mix of land uses. The chart below illustrates the land use make up of only developed parcels within the City.



LAND AREA

4.1 Square Miles

2,625 Acres

POPULATION DENSITY

1.6 persons per acre

AVERAGE ELEVATION

1,500 Feet above Sea Level

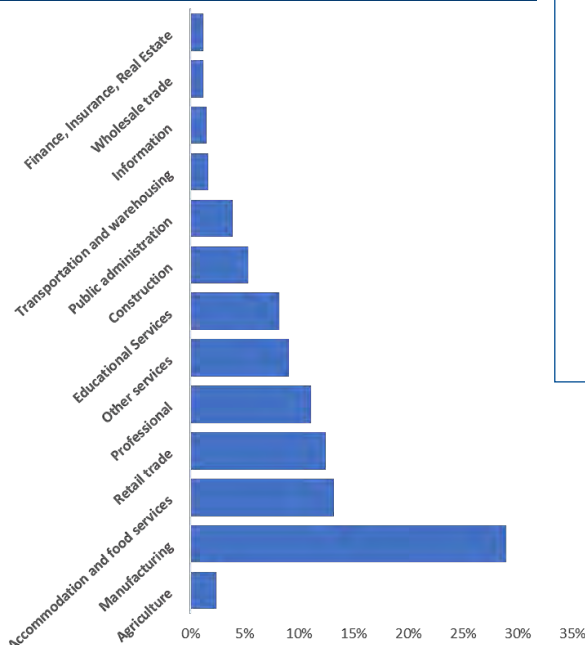
AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME

22 minutes

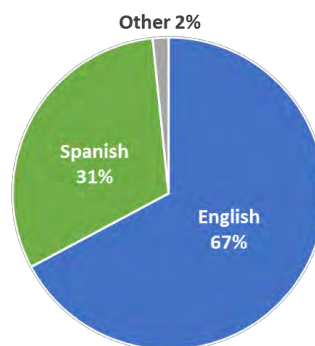
Submit Comments Related to the Comprehensive Plan to:

Cornelia City Hall
181 Larkin Street
Cornelia, Georgia 30531

Other Trends



LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME



Please take a moment to complete the Community Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/corneliaplan>



ADDENDUM

City of Cornelia Data Assessment



October 2017



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City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan

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1. Population

In an effort to provide a solid foundation for this Comprehensive Plan, the results from the two most recent decennial censuses in 2000 and 2010 and the most recent estimates in 2015 were explored. The 2015 estimates were based on data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. The ACS is an ongoing statistical survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the 5-year estimates factor in survey results received during the previous five years (2011-2015). While the ACS also releases 1-year estimates to provide more current data, these are limited to areas with populations greater than 65,000, so Cornelia and Habersham County do not meet this criterion. Additionally, not all the population, employment, and housing characteristics described in the 2000 Census were reported in 2010, so some data from 2010 are reported from the 2006-2010 ACS 5-year estimates. These instances are noted as estimates in the tables and figures herein.

In 2015, the ACS sampled approximately 3.54 million housing unit addresses nationwide and about 94,000 in Georgia, which accounts for about 2.6% of the total housing units in the U.S. and 2.3% in Georgia. Therefore, since the ACS samples a small subset of the population and not the full population, the estimates have a degree of uncertainty associated with them (margin of error). In general, the smaller the sample, the larger the uncertainty, so estimates for Cornelia have a larger margin of error associated with it than Habersham County and a much larger margin of error than Georgia. As a result, caution should be used when interpreting the following: 1) year-by-year comparisons between Census results and estimates for a specific location, 2) comparisons of estimates across locations, as the estimates for cities and towns have a larger margin of error than the county and state estimates, and 3) comparisons of estimates from year to year because there is a larger margin of error associated with how the ACS data is interpolated for this location with a small population.

1.1 Population Comparison

Recent changes in population for Cornelia, Habersham County, and Georgia since 2000 are described in Table 1.

- From 2000 to 2010, Cornelia experienced modest growth, and the population increased by 13.2%. This growth rate was less than that of the county (19.9%) and state (18.3%).
- From 2010 to 2015, growth in Cornelia slowed to 0.9%, which matched the state trend.
- In 2000, Cornelia's population was 10.2% of the county's total, and it decreased its share slightly to 9.6% by 2015.



Table 1: General Population in Cornelia, Habersham County, and Georgia

Jurisdiction	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Cornelia	3,674	4,160	4,199	13.2%	0.9%
Habersham County	35,902	43,041	43,527	19.9%	1.1%
Georgia	8,186,453	9,687,653	10,006,693	18.3%	3.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population comparisons for the cities and towns in Habersham County are described in Table 2.

- Cornelia is the largest incorporated area in Habersham County with 9.6% of the County’s population in 2015.
- From 2000 to 2010, the growth rate in Cornelia was second slowest of the seven municipalities at 13.2%. Growth rate in Cornelia was also slower compared with the Unincorporated County.
- From 2010 to 2015, population change was very minor countywide.

Table 2: Population Comparison for Cities and Towns in Habersham County

Jurisdiction	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Cornelia, City	3,674	4,160	4,199	13.2%	0.9%
Alto, Town	876	1,172	1,165	33.8%	-0.6%
Baldwin, City	2,425	3,279	3,467	35.2%	5.7%
Clarkesville, City	1,248	1,733	1,937	38.9%	11.8%
Demorest, City	1,465	1,823	1,842	24.4%	1.0%
Mount Airy, Town	604	1,284	1,233	112.6%	-4.0%
Tallulah Falls, Town	164	168	90	2.4%	-46.4%
Unincorporated County	25,446	29,422	29,594	15.6%	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1.2 Population Projections

Population projections provide valuable information to assist local governments in planning for and making future decisions. In 2013, the Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) updated its population projections for the years 2013 through 2050. This was the most recent population projection by OPB at the time of preparing this report. Baseline data for these projections include the more recent Census “Vintage” postcensal population estimates. Total population projections are currently only available at the state and county levels. The historical and projected populations through 2050 for Habersham County are described in Table 3.

- From the historical records, the population in Habersham County has increased steadily during the previous half century, and it has increased by 140% during this period (1960-2015).



- The decades of the 1970s, 1990s, and 2000s experienced the largest population growth rates, with the 1990s being the highest (3.0% per year).
- Growth has slowed since 2010, but the projected county populations are expected to grow about 1.1 to 1.2% per year for the next few decades.

Table 3: Historical and Projected Growth Rate from Georgia OPB for Habersham County

Year	Habersham County Population	Growth Rate Per Year Since Previous Data Point	Source
1960	18,116		Census
1970	20,691	1.4%	Census
1980	25,020	2.1%	Census
1990	27,621	1.0%	Census
2000	35,902	3.0%	Census
2010	43,041	2.0%	Census
2015	43,527	0.2%	Census (Estimate)
Projected Growth			
2015	44,193		OPB Estimate
2020	46,535	1.1%	OPB Estimate
2025	49,131	1.1%	OPB Estimate
2030	51,898	1.1%	OPB Estimate
2035	54,783	1.1%	OPB Estimate
2040	57,837	1.1%	OPB Estimate
2045	61,153	1.1%	OPB Estimate
2050	64,860	1.2%	OPB Estimate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (OPB)

Since the finest resolution for population estimates was at the county scale, other methods were used to predict Cornelia’s future population. First, historical population records from City of Cornelia were explored, and these are presented in Table 4.

- Growth in Habersham County has exceeded that of Cornelia over the previous half century. As a result, the percentage of Cornelia’s population in the County has decreased from 16.2% in 1960 to 9.6% in 2015.
- While the County’s population increased by 140% from 1960-2015, the City’s population only increased by 43%.
- Recently, from 2000-2015, the County’s population increased by 21%, and the City’s population increased by 14%.



Table 4: Historical Population for Cornelia and Habersham County

Year	Cornelia Population	Habersham County Population	Percentage of Habersham County
1960	2,936	18,116	16.2%
1970	3,014	20,691	14.6%
1980	3,203	25,020	12.8%
1990	3,219	27,621	11.7%
2000	3,674	35,902	10.2%
2010	4,160	43,041	9.7%
2015	4,199	43,527	9.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The County’s population growth rate has consistently exceeded Cornelia’s. One method explored to estimate projected population change in Cornelia assumed that the population change in Cornelia would be two-thirds of the County’s projected rate. Two-thirds was selected because recently, since 2000, Cornelia’s growth rate was about two-thirds of the County’s rate (14% vs. 21%). Cornelia’s population projections based on this assumption are presented in Table 5.

- Based on the assumed growth rate (two-thirds of the County’s rate), Cornelia’s population would increase by 1,236 residents (29%) to 5,435 in 2050.
- As a reference, the County’s population is projected to increase by 21,333 residents (49%) to 64,860 in 2050.
- This potential growth presents Cornelia with a number of issues related to the natural environment, city services, infrastructure, and the overall quality of life.

Table 5: Cornelia’s Historical and Projected Population

Year	Cornelia Population (U.S. Census)	Projected Population Growth
1960	2,936	–
1970	3,014	–
1980	3,203	–
1990	3,219	–
2000	3,674	–
2010	4,160	–
2015	4,199	–
2020	–	4,347
2025	–	4,509
2030	–	4,678
2035	–	4,852
2040	–	5,032
2045	–	5,224
2050	–	5,435

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



1.3 Population by Age

Age composition trends for children and retirees since 2000 are presented in Table 6.

- Since 2000, Cornelia experienced a rapid rise from 23.4% to 34.9% for children under 18 years and decrease from 20.4% to 16.3% for retiree-age adults 62 years and over.
- Cornelia has had the opposite trend of the county and state in terms of percentage of children and retirees. The trend for the county and state was a slight decrease in the percentage of children under 18 years and increase in retiree-aged adults. The increase in retiree-aged adults was more pronounced for the county than the state.

With the shift in age composition in Cornelia, it is important to consider the needs for a community that has increasing population of children. However, it is still important to consider needs of the retiree-aged adults that are increasing within the County as a whole.

Table 6: Age Composition Trends Since 2000 for Children and Retirees

Age Grouping	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)
City	Cornelia		
Under 18 years	23.4%	29.8%	34.9%
62 years and over	20.4%	17.2%	16.3%
65 years and over	17.5%	14.2%	13.7%
County	Habersham County		
Under 18 years	23.5%	23.9%	23.1%
62 years and over	16.5%	18.9%	21.0%
65 years and over	13.8%	15.3%	17.1%
State	Georgia		
Under 18 years	26.5%	25.7%	24.9%
62 years and over	13.1%	13.6%	15.0%
65 years and over	11.6%	10.7%	11.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A graphical summary of different age groups (under 20, 20-34, 35-54, 55-64, and over 64) in 2015 is presented in Figure 1 to explore the composition of children, young adults, middle-aged adults, near/early retirement-aged, and retiree-aged adults. Based on Figure 1:

- Cornelia had a much larger percentage of children (under 20 years) (38.5%) compared with the county (25.9%) and state (27.8%).
- On the opposite end of the spectrum, Cornelia had a much smaller percentage of middle-aged adults (35 to 54 years) (20.1%) compared with the county (26.3%) and state (27.8%).
- Habersham County had a similar composition of ages compared with the state, except retiree-aged adults (over 64 years) – 17.2% in the county and 11.8% in the state.
- Cornelia also had a higher percentage of retiree-aged adults (over 64 years) than the state, but it was less than the county.



City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan

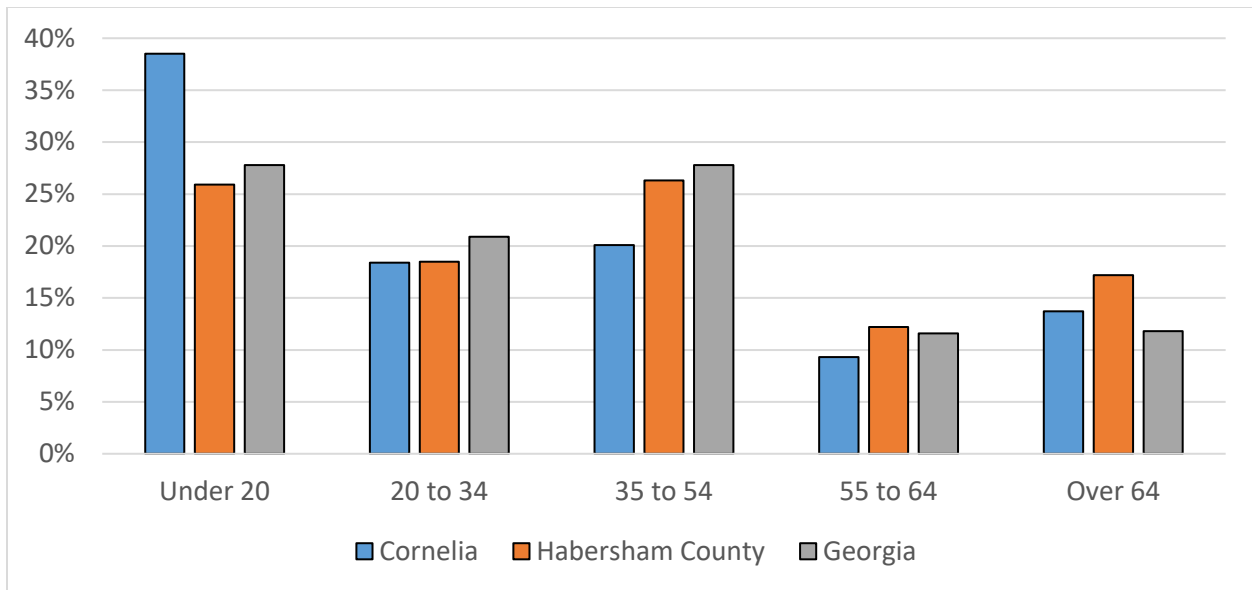


Figure 1: Age Composition in 2015

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A detailed composition of ages in 5-year and 10-year age groups is presented in Table 7 for 2015.

- Cornelia’s population was heavily-weighted on the younger end of the spectrum.
- Habersham County had about 12-13% for each 10-year age group through age 65 years.
- Georgia had about 13-14% for each 10-year age group through age 55 years.
- Cornelia’s population was greater than the state average for age groups under 20 years and 75 years and over.

Table 7: Age Composition in 2015.

Age Grouping	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Under 5 years	9.8%	6.0%	6.6%
5 to 9 years	9.1%	6.6%	7.0%
10 to 14 years	10.6%	6.7%	7.1%
15 to 19 years	9.0%	6.6%	7.1%
20 to 24 years	5.8%	6.6%	7.2%
25 to 34 years	12.6%	11.9%	13.7%
35 to 44 years	10.4%	13.1%	13.8%
45 to 54 years	9.7%	13.2%	14.0%
55 to 59 years	5.1%	6.1%	6.2%
60 to 64 years	4.2%	6.1%	5.4%
65 to 74 years	5.6%	9.9%	7.2%
75 to 84 years	6.4%	5.4%	3.4%
85 years & over	1.7%	1.9%	1.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



1.4 Average Household Size

Average household size trends since 2000 are presented in Table 8.

- Average household size for Cornelia increased dramatically from 2.47 in 2000 to 3.08 in 2015. This is likely the result of the corresponding increase in the percentage of children in the City.
- The average household size in Cornelia is now higher than the county and state average by about 0.35 people per household (13%).
- The county and state have had nearly identical average household sizes in 2010 and 2015. In 2000, the county was just below the state average.

Table 8: Average Household Size Trends since 2000

Location	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)
Cornelia	2.47	2.75	3.08
Habersham County	2.57	2.63	2.74
Georgia	2.65	2.63	2.73

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1.5 Number of Households

The number of households (occupied housing units) since 2000 is presented in Table 9.

- From 2000-2010, occupied housing units in Cornelia stayed steady, and then they declined slightly over the next 5 years.
- While there has been a growth in population, it has not been from an increase in the number of occupied units. As shown in the previous section, there are more people per housing unit.
- Habersham County was just below the state level of growth from 2000-2010. From 2010-2015, the county had a slightly larger decline in occupied housing units.

Table 9: Changes in Number of Households since 2000

Location	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Cornelia	1,488	1,495	1,366	0.5%	-8.6%
Habersham County	13,259	15,472	14,864	16.7%	-3.9%
Georgia	3,006,369	3,585,584	3,574,362	19.3%	-0.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



1.6 Racial Distribution

Racial composition trends in Cornelia since 2000 are presented in Table 10.

- From 2000 to 2010, there was a substantial shift of more “Hispanic or Latin (of any race)” – 19.2% to 34.8%. “White” decreased from about two-thirds to about half of the total population. Some minor changes from 2000 to 2010 may be attributed to methods on counting “Hispanic or Latin” population.
- The two largest races/ethnicities stayed constant from 2010 to 2015 – White and Hispanic or Latin (of any race).
- Since 2000, the top three races in order remained as (1) White, (2) Hispanic or Latin (of any race), and (3) Black or African American; however, the gap between these three groups has decreased.

Table 10: Racial Composition Trends in Cornelia since 2000

Race	Cornelia		
	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)
White	65.1%	52.2%	52.9%
Black or African American	9.5% ¹	5.6%	6.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3% ¹	0.2%	0.0%
Asian	4.7% ¹	4.1%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.4% ¹	0.5%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latin (of any race)	19.2%	34.8%	35.1%
Some Other Race	9.6% ¹	0.2%	0.0%
Two or More Races	2.6% ¹	2.4%	4.0%

¹ 2000 Census did not differentiate details on those reporting “Hispanic or Latin,” other than for “White,” so 416 people out of 3,674 people (11.3%) are reporting under one of these categories when their race is actually “Hispanic or Latin.” Most are suspected to be in the “Some Other Race” category.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Racial composition in Cornelia in 2015 are presented in Figure 2 for the top five races in Cornelia, and they are detailed in Table 11.

- Compared with the state composition, Cornelia nearly matched the percentage of “White,” with just over 50%. However, the percentage of “Black/African American” and “Hispanic or Latin (of any race)” were flipped for the two locations. Nearly one-third of the state’s population is “Black/African American,” and just over one-third of Cornelia’s population is “Hispanic or Latin (of any race).” Both of which are the second largest races in their respective locations.
- Habersham County is nearly 80% “White,” and it has less diversity than Cornelia. The county has less of every other race except “Asian” and “Some Other Race,” which are both very minor differences.

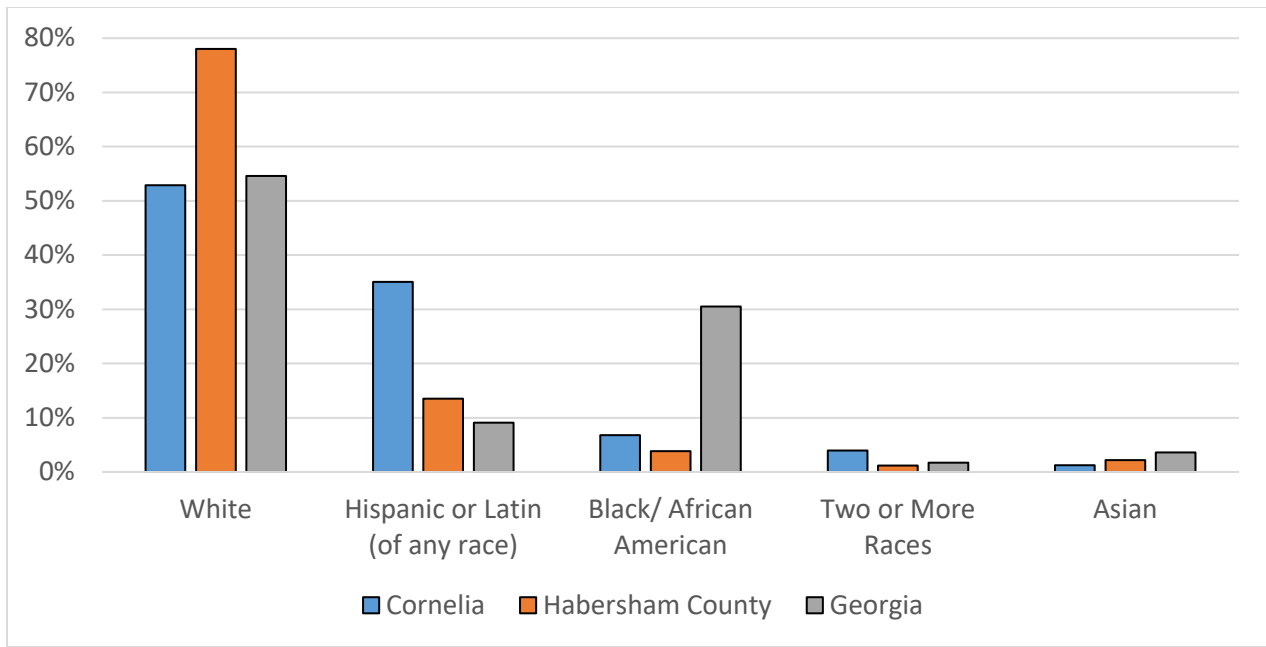


Figure 2: Racial Composition within Cornelia (Top 5) in 2015

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 11: Racial Composition in 2015

Race	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
White	52.9%	78.0%	54.6%
Black/ African American	6.8%	3.8%	30.5%
Am. Indian/ Alaska Native	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	1.3%	2.2%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latin (of any race)	35.1%	13.5%	9.1%
Some Other Race	0.0%	0.9%	0.2%
Two or More Races	4.0%	1.2%	1.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1.7 Primary Language

The primary language spoken at home in 2015 is detailed in Table 12.

- Two-thirds of Cornelia’s population speaks English at home, compared with about 85% in the county and state.
- For those that speak a language other than English, 95.0% speak Spanish in Cornelia, compared with 83.7% in the county and 58.2% in the state. In the previous section, Cornelia had a much higher percentage of the population as “Hispanic or Latin (of any race).”



- For those that speak Spanish, Cornelia (63.0%) has a higher rate of people that speak English less than “very well,” compared with the county (48.3%) and state (45.8%).

Table 12: Primary Language Spoken at Home in 2015

Race	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Population 5 years and over	3,787	40,933	9,341,388
English only	67.2%	84.6%	86.4%
Language other than English	32.8%	15.4%	13.6%
Spanish	95.0%	83.7%	58.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	63.0%	48.3%	45.8%
Other	5.0%	16.3%	41.8%
Speak English less than "very well"	0.0%	39.8%	36.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1.8 Educational Attainment

The significance of education in today’s competitive workplace is very important. Table 13 illustrates the percentage of adult population (over 25 years) in 2015 that has attained each level of education. The percentage of adult population that has attained at least a specific level of education (e.g., high school graduate, bachelor’s degree, and graduate or professional degree) is presented in Figure 3.

- The percentage of adults (over 25 years) that have less than a 9th grade education is twice as large in Cornelia as Habersham County and four times as large in Cornelia as Georgia.
- The percentage of adults in Cornelia that have at least a Bachelor’s Degree is about half of that in Georgia. Habersham County is between the City and state levels, but closer to that of Cornelia.
- Overall, Cornelia is well below the state average for educational attainment, and it is also below the average in Habersham County.

Table 13: Educational Attainment in 2015

Highest Level of Education	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Less than 9 th Grade	20.4%	9.7%	5.4%
9 th to 12 th Grade	9.7%	12.1%	9.2%
High School Graduate (incl. equiv.)	35.8%	34.0%	28.4%
Some College (no degree)	12.8%	20.0%	21.0%
Associate Degree	7.2%	6.7%	7.2%
Bachelor’s Degree	6.5%	10.1%	18.1%
Graduate or Prof. Degree	7.6%	7.4%	10.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

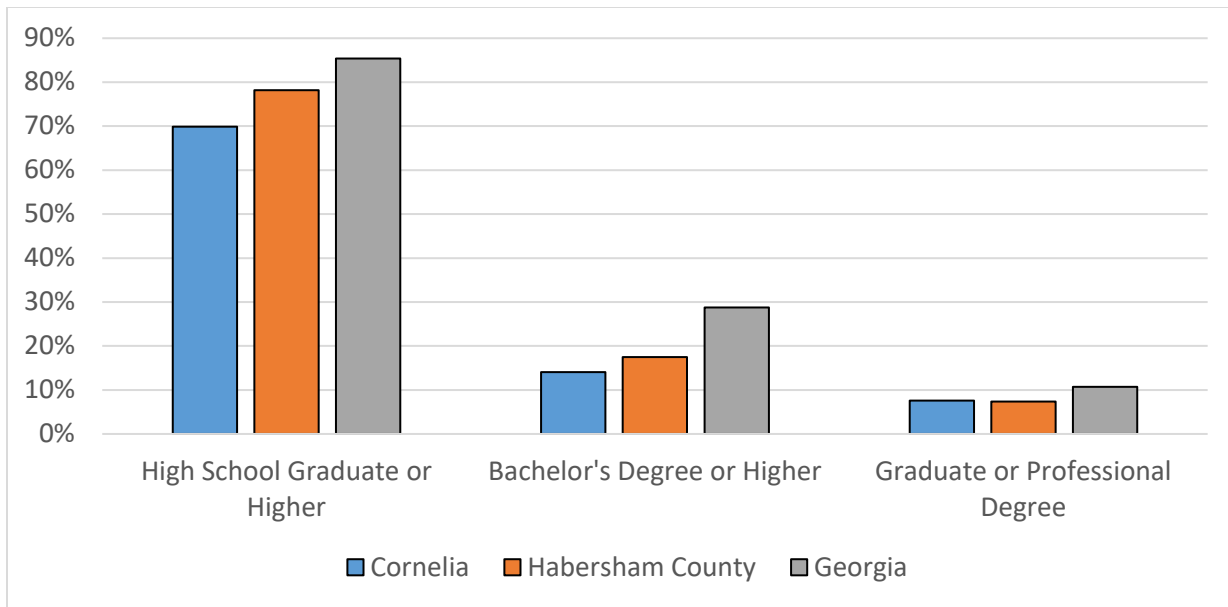


Figure 3: Educational Attainment in 2015

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1.9 Household Income

A summary of median household income trends since is presented in Table 14.

- The median household income in Cornelia is about 60% of the state average and 73% of the county average.
- From 2000 to 2010, median household income decreased in Cornelia by 4.5% (\$1,407); however, it rose by 10.7% (\$3,871) in the county and 16.3% (\$6,914) in the state.
- From 2010 to 2015, the city, county, and state averages all stayed steady, and none increased by more than \$750.

Table 14: Summary of Median Household Income since 2000

Location	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Cornelia	\$31,111	\$29,704	\$29,956	-4.5%	0.8%
Habersham County	\$36,321	\$40,192	\$40,907	10.7%	1.8%
Georgia	\$42,433	\$49,347	\$49,620	16.3%	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



1.9.1 Household Income Distribution

The 2015 household income and benefits distribution is presented in Figure 4.

- The distribution of household income shows Cornelia has more low earners and fewer higher earners compared with the county and state. However, the results are more pronounced when compared with the state.
- Overall, there is about 75% of Cornelia’s households earning less than \$50,000, compared with about 50% for the state. There is also 6% earning more than \$100,000 in Cornelia, compared with about 20% for the state.

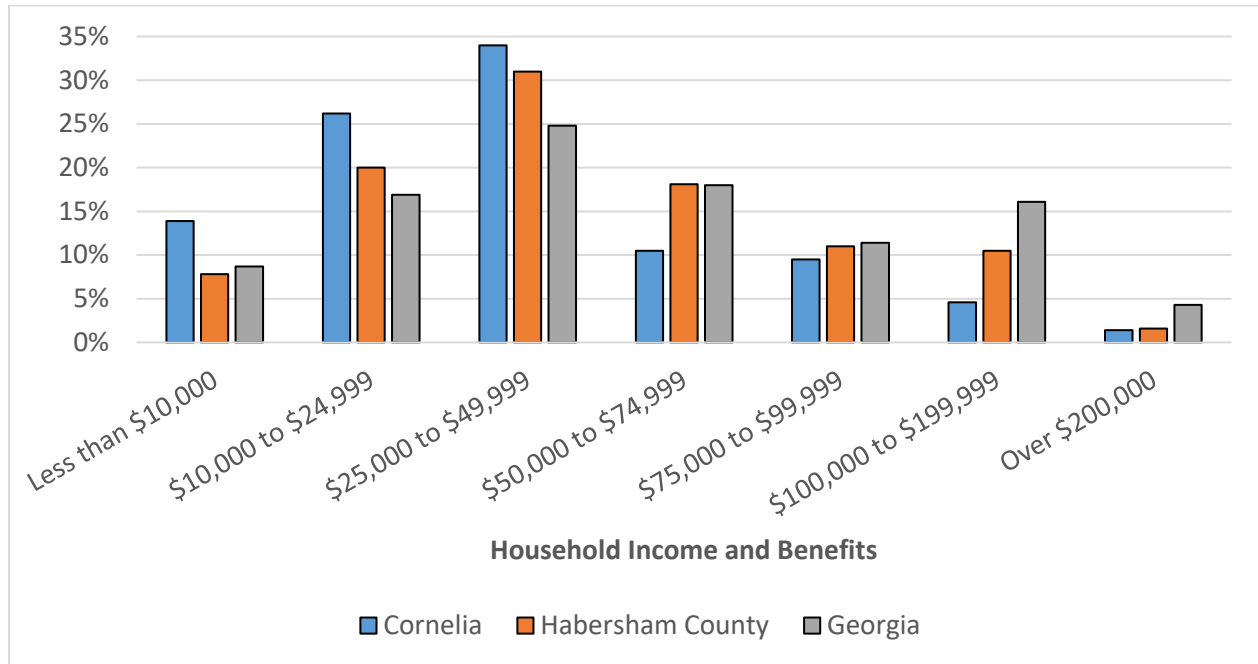


Figure 4: Household Income Distribution

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

1.9.2 Household Income Inequality

One metric of household income inequality is defined as the ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that at the 20th percentile. This ratio, calculated with data from 2011-2015, is presented in Table 15 for Habersham County and its neighboring counties.

- Habersham County was ranked as one of the top counties in the state at 39th.
- Although the County was ranked 39th, three of its neighbors ranked higher, indicating that this is a strength in the region.
- Habersham County’s ratio of 4.3 (\$80,898 / \$18,883) was better than the state average (5.0).
- Overall, Habersham County has less division between the top and bottom ends of the income spectrum compared with the state average and 75% of Georgia’s counties.



Table 15: Household Income Inequality (County Rankings)

County	Household Income Inequality Ratio (80 th /20 th Percentile)	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	4.3	39th
Banks County	4.2	34 th
Franklin County	5.0	86 th
Hall County	4.3	41 st
Rabun County	6.1	142 nd
Stephens County	4.9	84 th
Towns County	4.1	18 th
White County	4.1	20 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/44/data>

1.10 Health

Characteristics for a variety of health-related topics are available through the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program, and rankings are also presented by county. Under the direction of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Burness, the website for this program was developed by Forum One (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>).

Counties Health is categorized into two major headings – Health Outcomes and Health Factors. Health Outcomes are a measure of how long people live (Length of Life) and how healthy people feel while alive (Quality of Life). Health Factors represent what influences the health of a county, and they are an estimate of future health. These ranks are based on four types of measures: Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social and Economic, and Physical Environment factors. Each of these factors have multiple measures used to calculate the county’s health, and a select number of these factors are presented below to show strengths and weaknesses of Habersham County. Results from the two primary categories (Health Outcomes and Health Factors) for Habersham County and neighboring counties are presented in Table 16.

- As a note, Cornelia’s population comprises about 10% of the County’s population, so the results presented from this source are indicative of the county as a whole and not necessarily Cornelia individually.
- Habersham County is in the top 12% for Health Outcomes and top 24% for Health Factors amongst Georgia’s Counties.
- Only White County ranked better for both categories.
- As a comparison to other neighboring counties, Banks, Hall, and Towns were split; Rabun County was slightly worse; and Franklin and Stephens counties were both substantially worse for Health Outcomes.
- Overall, this region has a high health rating compared with most of Georgia, and Habersham County was ranked high.



Table 16: County Health Rankings for Two Primary Categories (Health Outcomes and Health Factors)

County	Health Outcomes Rank in Georgia’s 159 Counties	Health Factors Rank in Georgia’s 159 Counties
Habersham County	19th	38th
Banks County	53 rd	37 th
Franklin County	139 th	66 th
Hall County	25 th	21 st
Rabun County	40 th	39 th
Stephens County	93 rd	50 th
Towns County	44 th	16 th
White County	11 st	15 th

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/overview>

1.10.1 Access to Healthy Foods

One concern for Habersham County is “Limited Access to Healthy Foods,” which is the percentage of the population who are low income and do not live close to a grocery store. Living close to a grocery store is defined as living less than 10 miles from a grocery store in rural areas and less than 1 mile in non-rural areas. Low income is defined as having an annual family income of less than or equal to 200% of the federal poverty threshold for the family size. The most recent data from 2010 is presented in Table 17.

- 11% of households in Habersham County had “Limited Access to Healthy Foods,” which ranked it 130th out of Georgia’s 159 counties.
- Habersham County was in the bottom 20% of all counties in Georgia, and it ranked worse than all of its neighboring counties.

Table 17: Households with Limited Access to Healthy Foods (County Rankings)

County	Percentage of Households with Limited Access to Healthy Foods	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	11%	130th
Banks County	4%	55 th
Franklin County	1%	27 th
Hall County	10%	123 rd
Rabun County	0%	9 th
Stephens County	5%	72 nd
Towns County	0%	4 th
White County	0%	3 rd
<i>State Average</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/83/data>



Another related topic is “Food Insecurity,” which is the percentage of the population who did not have access to a reliable source of food. Data from 2014 is presented in Table 18.

- 12% of Habersham County’s population was labeled as having food insecurity, which ranked it 14th out of 159 counties. This put Habersham County in the top 10%, which was opposite for outcome from “Limited Access to Health Foods.”
- The percentage was better than all of its neighboring counties except Hall County at 4th.

Table 18: Households with Food Insecurity (County Rankings)

County	Percentage of Households with “Food Insecurity”	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	12%	14th
Banks County	12%	17 th
Franklin County	16%	56 th
Hall County	10%	4 th
Rabun County	15%	42 nd
Stephens County	15%	49 th
Towns County	13%	28 th
White County	14%	31 st
<i>State Average</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/139/data>

The previous results provide contrasting information about Habersham County having access to healthy food. Food environment statistics, according to www.city-data.com, are presented in Figure 5 for Habersham County. The number of grocery stores per 10,000 people in Habersham County is 1.66, which is less than the state average (1.91). Based on this fact and the results in Table 17, Habersham County has some characteristics of being a food desert for the low-income population. Studies have shown that areas with a food desert have a higher prevalence of overweight and obese populations and premature death. This is because supermarkets traditionally provide healthier options than convenience stores or smaller grocery stores.

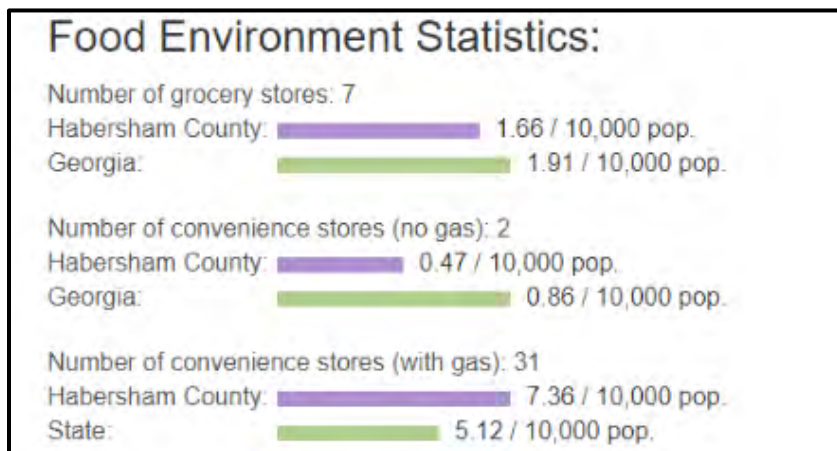


Figure 5: Food Environment Statistics in Habersham County



1.10.2 Obesity

Adult obesity is becoming a larger concern in Habersham County, especially compared with the state and national averages. Obesity is a national epidemic that needs attention. Adult obesity is the percentage of the adult population (age 20 and older) that reports a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kg/m². Trends during the last decade for adult obesity in the county, state, and nation are described in Figure 6.

- In the mid-2000s, Habersham County had a lower percentage of obese adults than the state average and a comparable percentage to the national average.
- Over the most recent decade, county, state, and national averages have all increased. The rate of increase was greatest at the County level, so Habersham County now has a larger percentage of its adult population being obese than the state and national average.
- Based on the most recent data from 2013, 32% of Habersham County’s population and 30% of Georgia’s population were classified as obese.
- Habersham County is ranked 85th out of 159 counties, and it was worse than all of its neighboring counties (Table 19).
- With about one-third of the adult population being considered obese, this is an issue that needs attention.

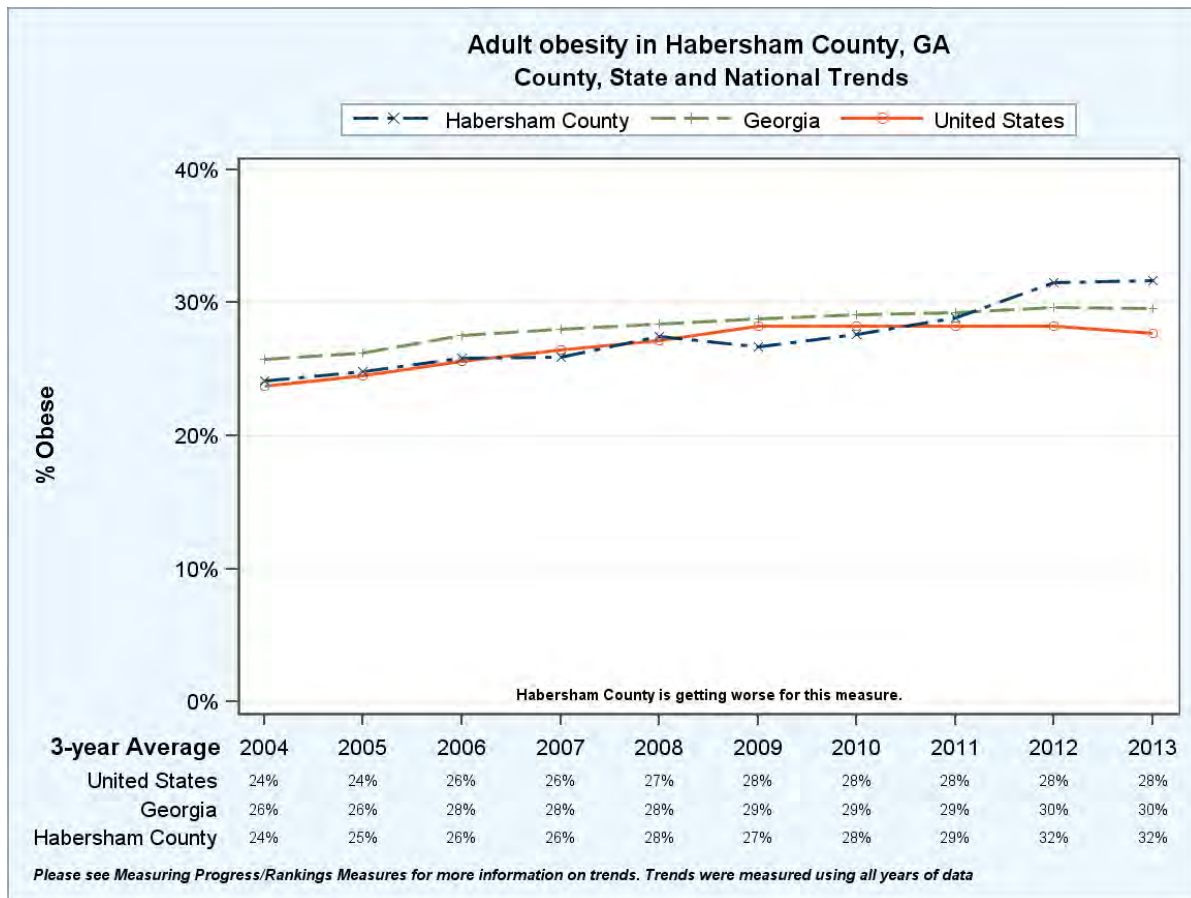


Figure 6: Adult Obesity Trends (www.countyhealthrankings.org)



Table 19: Adult Obesity (County Rankings)

County	Percentage of Adult Obesity	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	32%	85th
Banks County	27%	12 th
Franklin County	30%	40 th
Hall County	26%	4 th
Rabun County	29%	39 th
Stephens County	30%	54 th
Towns County	27%	19 th
White County	29%	28 th
<i>State Average</i>	30%	N/A

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/11/data>

Since adult obesity is an issue in Habersham County, statistics for physical inactivity were explored. The measure of physical inactivity through the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program is defined as the percentage of adults age 20 and over reporting no leisure-time physical activity. Decreased physical activity has been related to several disease conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, cancer, stroke, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and premature mortality, independent of obesity. The most recent data from 2013 is presented in Table 20.

- 27% of adults in Habersham County reported physical inactivity, which is higher than the state average (23%).
- The percentage reporting inactivity (27%) was similar to the percentage classified as obese (32%).
- Compared with neighboring counties, Habersham County had the largest percentage of obese adults, but it ranked in the middle for physical inactivity.

Table 20: Physical Inactivity (County Rankings)

County	Adults over 20 Years Reporting No Leisure-time Physical Activity	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	27%	71st
Banks County	25%	28 th
Franklin County	33%	153 rd
Hall County	22%	13 th
Rabun County	25%	31 st
Stephens County	30%	138 th
Towns County	27%	77 th
White County	25%	26 th
<i>State Average</i>	23%	N/A

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/70/data>



1.10.3 Medical Services

Regular visits to primary care physicians are important to maintain good health. Therefore, it is important for there to be enough options to help make access easier. The ratios of total population compared with numbers of primary care physicians from the most recent data in 2014 are presented in Table 21.

- Habersham County had fewer primary care physicians per person than the state average, however, it still ranked in the top third of Georgia’s counties (46th out of 146).
- Habersham County ranked in the middle of its neighboring counties.
- For dental care, Habersham County had 2,200 people for every dentist, which is slightly worse than the state average of 2,030:1.

Table 21: Ratio of Population to Primary Care Physicians (County Rankings)

County	Ratio of Population to Primary Care Physicians	Rank out of 146 Counties in Georgia ¹
Habersham County	1,820:1	46th
Banks County	6,100:1	129 th
Franklin County	3,710:1	105 th
Hall County	1,630:1	33 rd
Rabun County	1,800:1	45 th
Stephens County	1,420:1	24 th
Towns County	1,110:1	16 th
White County	4,000:1	110 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>1,530:1</i>	<i>N/A</i>

¹ Data not available from 13 counties

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/4/data>

1.10.4 Children’s Health Concerns

One health concern for children is poverty. Poverty can result in an increased risk of poor health due to lack of health care access and healthy foods, and the risks are greater for children than adults. Children in Poverty is the percentage of children under age 18 living in poverty, and poverty status is defined by family. Based on data from 2015, the percentage of children living in poverty is presented in Table 22.

- Habersham County had 24% of children living in poverty, which was slightly better than the state average of 25%.
- Habersham County ranked 34th, which was better than all of its neighboring counties.
- Despite Habersham County being ranked higher than most other counties in the state, this is still an issue that needs attention because about one-quarter of the County’s children are living in poverty.



Table 22: Children in Poverty (County Rankings)

County	Percentage of Children Under Age 18 Living in Poverty	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	24%	34th
Banks County	24%	37 th
Franklin County	31%	72 nd
Hall County	24%	36 th
Rabun County	28%	55 th
Stephens County	31%	68 th
Towns County	27%	47 th
White County	25%	40 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/24/data>

1.10.5 Vices

“Excessive Drinking” was highlighted as an area of concern from the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program for Habersham County. Excessive drinking is defined as the percentage of adults that report either binge drinking [consuming more than four (women) or five (men) alcoholic beverages on a single occasion in the past 30 days] or heavy drinking [drinking more than one (women) or two (men) drinks per day on average]. Excessive drinking is a risk factor for a number of adverse health outcomes, such as alcohol poisoning, hypertension, acute myocardial infarction, sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, fetal alcohol syndrome, sudden infant death syndrome, suicide, interpersonal violence, and motor vehicle crashes. The most recent data from 2015 is presented in Table 23.

- Habersham County (16%) was better than the state average (17%), but it was in the bottom third of the counties in Georgia (101st).
- Habersham County ranked in the middle of neighboring counties (range: 69th – 128th).

Table 23: Excessive Drinking (County Rankings)

County	Adults Reporting Binge or Heavy Drinking	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	16%	101st
Banks County	17%	128 th
Franklin County	15%	79 th
Hall County	16%	115 th
Rabun County	15%	69 th
Stephens County	16%	90 th
Towns County	15%	75 th
White County	16%	110 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/49/data>



Because of the high county ranking for excessive drinking, alcohol-impaired driving deaths were researched. Driving deaths with alcohol involvement from 2011-2015 are presented in Table 24.

- The county rankings for these two measures (excessive drinking [101st] and alcohol-impaired driving deaths [134th]) were comparable.
- Habersham County had 37% of their driving deaths during this period linked to alcohol.
- Habersham County was ranked 134th out of 158 counties in Georgia (1 was missing data), which was worse than all of its neighboring counties and the state average of 23%.

Table 24: Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths (County Rankings)

County	Driving Deaths with Alcohol Involvement	Rank out of 158 Counties in Georgia ¹
Habersham County	37%	134th
Banks County	25%	85 th
Franklin County	17%	37 th
Hall County	25%	91 st
Rabun County	29%	111 th
Stephens County	21%	63 rd
Towns County	7%	9 th
White County	17%	38 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

¹ Data not available from 1 county

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/134/data>



2. Economic Development

2.1 Employment by Industries Comparison

The percentage of Cornelia’s civilian workforce employed in each industry type, as well as trends since 2000, are presented in Table 25.

- There have been a lot of large fluctuations reported in the Census for Cornelia since 2000 for industry type. This may be a result of the methods used to estimate the individual types and that there are only about 1,500 Cornelia residents employed.
- Industries that saw a drastic increase from 2000 to 2010 that was not sustained in 2015 were: “agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining” (4.8% to 11.8% and back to 2.4%) and “educational services, and health care and social assistance” (11.6% to 22.5% and back to 8.2%).
- An industry that saw a drastic decrease from 2000 to 2010 that rebounded in 2015 was “manufacturing” (30.7% to 13.8% and back to 29.0%).
- Industries that saw an increasing trend since 2000 included: “professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services” (2.7% to 11.1%) and “arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services” (7.9% to 13.2%).
- An industry that saw a steady decline since 2000 was “finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing” (7.7% to 1.2%).

Table 25: Summary of Industry Trends for Cornelia since 2000

Industry Type	Cornelia			Georgia		
	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)
Total Employed (Civilian Labor Force)	1,662	1,403	1,371	3,839,756	4,296,760	4,388,274
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4.8%	11.8%	2.4%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%
Construction	4.5%	5.6%	5.3%	7.9%	7.9%	6.3%
Manufacturing	30.7%	13.8%	29.0%	14.8%	11.2%	10.7%
Wholesale trade	1.7%	2.1%	1.2%	3.9%	3.4%	2.9%
Retail trade	14.0%	11.7%	12.4%	12.0%	11.7%	11.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.3%	1.4%	1.7%	6.0%	6.1%	6.0%
Information	1.0%	2.1%	1.5%	3.5%	2.7%	2.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.7%	3.5%	1.2%	6.5%	6.6%	6.3%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2.7%	11.0%	11.1%	9.4%	10.7%	11.6%



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Industry Type	Cornelia			Georgia		
	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	11.6%	22.5%	8.2%	17.6%	19.9%	21.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.9%	8.5%	13.2%	7.1%	8.3%	9.3%
Other services, except public administration	4.6%	2.1%	9.0%	4.7%	4.9%	5.0%
Public administration	4.6%	4.0%	3.9%	5.0%	5.3%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the Development Authority of Habersham County, the following are the county’s major employers (with approximate number of employees in parentheses):

- Fieldale Farms (2,500 employees) – privately owned poultry production facility.
- Habersham County Board of Education (1,100 employees).
- Mount Vernon Mills (700 employees) – diversified and integrated manufacturer of textiles and chemicals for the apparel industry.
- Habersham County Medical Center (600 employees).
- Ethicon (600 employees) – part of Johnson & Johnson supply chain, produces surgical equipment and medical devices.
- Georgia Department of Corrections (550 employees) – Arrendale Correctional Institute.
- Windstream Communications (350 employees) – telecommunications company that operates a regional support center.
- TenCate (230 employees) – manufactures composite textiles for industrial, commercial and government customers.
- Piedmont College (220 employees).
- GlobalTech (200 employees) – contract candle manufacturer.
- Scovill Fasteners (200 employees) – produces metal fasteners such as buttons, snaps, washers, and zippers for the apparel industry.
- Habersham Metal Products (120 employees) – metal fabricator specializing in detention products, bullet resistant assemblies, and hurricane rated products.
- Steel Cell of North America (50 employees) – metal fabricator specializing in the production of prefabricated modular detention cells.
- Piedmont Automotive (50 employees) – produces electronic components for the automotive industry.



2.2 Employment Status

A summary of the employment status trends since 2000 is presented in Table 26.

- Unemployed civilian labor force in Cornelia has increased by 75% in the past 15 years (4.9% in 2000 to 8.6% in 2015). However, unemployment rate in Cornelia continued to remain less than the state average (5.4% in 2000 and 9.6% in 2015).
- None of the labor force population in Cornelia is in the armed forces. The state average, while larger, was only 1.0% in 2015.

Table 26: Employment Status Trends in Cornelia since 2000

Employment Status / Grouping	Cornelia			Georgia		
	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)
Labor Force Population	1,748	1,478	1,500	4,129,666	4,770,546	4,906,258
Employed Civilian Labor Force	95.1%	94.9%	91.4%	93.0%	90.1%	89.4%
Unemployed Civilian Labor Force	4.9%	5.1%	8.6%	5.4%	8.7%	9.6%
Armed Forces	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	1.2%	1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2.3 Occupation

The U.S. Census reports five primary occupation types. The trends since 2000 for each occupation in Cornelia are presented in Table 27.

- One occupation type saw considerable growth. “Service” grew from 12.1% in 2000 to 22.5% in 2015. It shifted from smallest to 2nd largest occupation type.
- The largest occupation type, “production, transportation, and material moving,” dropped considerably in 2010, but rebounded to 2000 levels by 2015 – 31%.
- “Sales and office” and “natural resources, construction, and maintenance” both experienced decline from 24.9% to 20.6% and 12.2% to 5.2%, respectively. These occupation reductions matched the state trend.
- Similar to industry type trends, large fluctuations were reported in the Census for Cornelia since 2000 for occupation type. This is also believed to be a result of the methods used to estimate the individual types and that there are only about 1,500 Cornelia residents employed.



Table 27: Occupation Trends in Cornelia since 2000

Occupation Type	Cornelia			Georgia		
	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)	2000 (Census)	2010 (Estimate)	2015 (Estimate)
Total Employed (Civilian Labor Force)	1,662	1,403	1,371	3,839,756	4,296,760	4,388,274
Management, business, science, and arts	20.1%	31.9%	20.4%	32.7%	34.7%	35.9%
Service	12.1%	14.3%	22.5%	13.4%	15.7%	16.9%
Sales and office	24.9%	22.2%	20.6%	26.8%	25.8%	24.8%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	12.2%	8.1%	5.2%	11.4%	10.5%	9.2%
Production, transportation, and material moving	30.7%	23.5%	31.4%	15.7%	13.3%	13.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2.4 Class of Civilian Labor Force

The 2015 class of workers in the civilian labor force is described in Table 28.

- The 2015 composition of the civilian labor force in Cornelia is about 83.0% private wage and salary workers, 14.4% government workers, and 2.6% self-employed workers.
- The composition of the civilian labor force in Cornelia was very similar to the state average, except there were a few more private wage and salary workers and a few less self-employed workers in Cornelia.
- Habersham County had the highest percentage of self-employed workers out of the three locations presented.

Table 28: Civilian Labor Force Classes in 2015

Class of Worker (Civilian Labor Force)	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Total Employed	1,371	16,970	4,388,274
Private Wage and Salary Workers	83.0%	77.9%	79.1%
Government Workers	14.4%	14.6%	15.2%
Self-Employed Workers	2.6%	7.2%	5.5%
Unpaid Family Workers	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey



2.5 Commuting Patterns

Commuting patterns for workers 16 years and over in 2015 are described in Table 29.

- The most common commuting method was driving alone. Cornelia (74.1%) was less than the county (84.0%), and the state average was in between both (79.6%).
- The percentage carpooling was higher for Cornelia (11.1%) than for the county (8.8%) and the state (10.3%).
- Cornelia reported a higher percentage using Public transportation (excluding taxicab) (3.8%), walked (2.5%), other means (2.1%), and worked at home (6.4%) than both the county and state. However, the number of workers in Cornelia is small, so the differences could be a result of the margin of error.
- The average commuting time for Cornelia is 21.5 minutes, which is less than the 24.8-minute county average and 27.2-minute state average.

Table 29: Commuting Patterns in 2015

Commuting Method	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Workers 16 years and over	1,353	16,588	4,341,894
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	74.1%	84.0%	79.6%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	11.1%	8.8%	10.3%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	3.8%	0.5%	2.1%
Walked	2.5%	2.0%	1.6%
Other means	2.1%	1.7%	1.6%
Worked at home	6.4%	3.0%	4.9%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	21.5	24.8	27.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

One commuting related measure in the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program is “Long Commute, Driving Alone.” This is defined as the percentage of workers that commute in their car alone for more than 30 minutes. The most recent data, from 2011-2015, is presented in Table 30 for Habersham County.

- Habersham County was ranked 60th out of 159 counties, and it was in the middle of its neighboring counties.
- The percentage of workers with a long commute and driving alone was 31%, and this was less than the state average (39%).

Table 30: Long Commute Driving Alone (County Rankings)

County	Long Commute Driving Alone	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	31%	60th
Banks County	49%	133 rd
Franklin County	37%	89 th



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County	Long Commute Driving Alone	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Hall County	32%	70 th
Rabun County	22%	21 st
Stephens County	24%	36 th
Towns County	17%	9 th
White County	41%	109 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/137/data>

Related to commuting, the numbers of motor vehicle crash deaths were also researched. The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program reports the most recent data from 2009-2015 on motor vehicle crash deaths per 100,000 population (Table 31). Motor vehicle crash deaths include traffic accidents involving motorcycles; 3-wheel motor vehicles; cars; vans; trucks; buses; street cars; ATVs; industrial, agricultural, and construction vehicles; and bicyclists or pedestrians when colliding with any of the previously listed motor vehicles.

- Overall, Habersham County had 17 motor vehicle crash deaths per 100,000 population, which was about 30% higher than the state average of 13.
- Habersham County ranked in the middle of Georgia’s counties (65th out of 145), and in the top third of its neighboring counties (two were better and five were worse).
- This seems like a concerning regional issue, as three neighboring counties were in the bottom quarter of Georgia’s counties.

Table 31: Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths (County Rankings)

County	Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths per 100,000 Population	Rank out of 145 Counties in Georgia ¹
Habersham County	17	65th
Banks County	26	123 rd
Franklin County	28	133 rd
Hall County	13	27 th
Rabun County	20	92 nd
Stephens County	23	108 th
Towns County	16	56 th
White County	18	67 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>N/A</i>

¹ Data not available from 14 counties

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/39/data>



2.6 Economic Resources

Economic development in Habersham County is supported by the Habersham Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority of Habersham County. These are detailed below.

Habersham Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce is a member-based organization, with a mission to be vital to existing businesses, promote economic development, and enhance the quality of life in Habersham County. Their vision is to be recognized as the advocate for local businesses in Habersham County, serving as the local support for a business-friendly environment and promoting tourism in Habersham County (<http://www.habershamchamber.com/>).

Development Authority of Habersham County

The Development Authority was developed to create jobs by recruiting new industries and assisting existing industries to stay financially healthy. The Development Authority has the authority to issue Industrial Revenue Bonds and to be a conduit for bond financing. It was established by Georgia Legislation in 1974 (<http://www.habdev.org/>).

2.6.1 Education and Training

Habersham County is home to two post-secondary schools – (1) North Georgia Technical College and (2) Piedmont College. These are described below.

North Georgia Technical College (1500 Hwy 197 N, Clarkesville)

North Georgia Technical College is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia. The college provides access to student-focused occupational programs at the associate degree, diploma, and certificate levels; adult education; and customized business and industry training through traditional and distance education methodologies and college-wide services. The college is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Clarkesville Campus is approximately 40 acres.

Piedmont College (165 Central Ave., Demorest)

Piedmont College was founded in 1897 in Demorest. It is an independent, comprehensive, co-educational liberal arts college with more than 2,000 students. It is a dynamic, small college that resides on approximately 100 acres. Piedmont currently offers undergraduate degree programs, graduate programs in education and business, and a doctoral program in education. The college is accredited by the SACSCOC, the National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC), and the Association of Collegiate Business Schools (ACBSP).



3. Housing

3.1 Types of Housing

The housing types for occupied units in 2015 are described in Table 32.

- The majority of occupied housing units were detached, single units. Cornelia (70.1%) was slightly more than the state average (67.9%) and slightly less than the county average (72.9%).
- Cornelia was similar to the state average for “mobile home or other type of housing” (8.3% versus 8.6%), but both were about half of the county average (19.6%).
- Compared with the county and state, Cornelia had a higher percentage of apartments with fewer units – 11.4% with 3 or 4 apartments, and 5.1% with 2 apartments. This was the second most common housing type in Cornelia.

Table 32: Housing Types for Occupied Units in 2015

Housing Type	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Total Occupied Units	1,366	14,864	3,574,362
Single Units (detached)	70.1%	72.9%	67.9%
Single Units (attached)	1.6%	1.1%	3.8%
2 Apartments	5.1%	1.2%	2.1%
3 or 4 Apartments	11.4%	1.6%	2.9%
5 to 9 Apartments	2.7%	1.8%	4.8%
10 or More Apartments	0.7%	1.8%	9.9%
Mobile Home or Other Type of Housing	8.3%	19.6%	8.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A summary of housing unit construction is described in Figure 7.

- Cornelia has a much older housing stock than the county and state. Nearly one-third of the housing units in Cornelia were built before 1960. This is 2.5 times larger than the fraction in the county and state.
- The age of housing stock in Habersham County is similar to the state.
- As the population growth trends showed that Cornelia had a slower growth rate than the county and state in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, there have not been as many new housing units built in Cornelia during these decades.
- Statewide and locally, the number of housing units built since 2010 is almost stagnant, and it is not even close to the rates during the previous decades.

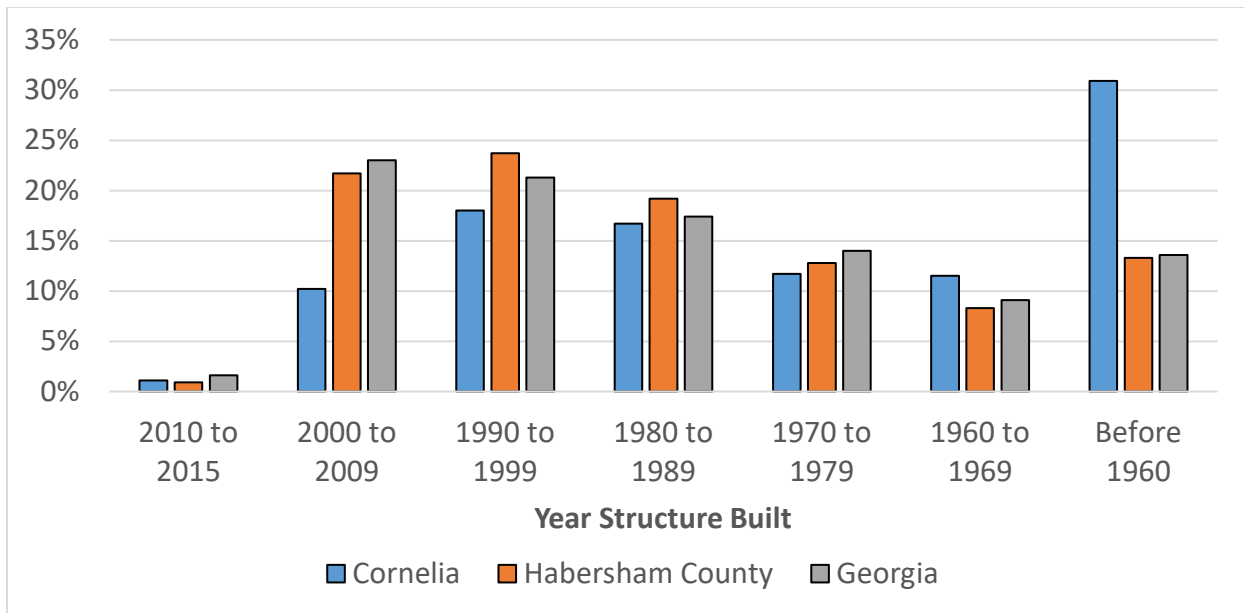


Figure 7: Age of Housing Units in 2015.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Total housing unit trends since 2000 are presented in Table 33.

- From 2000 to 2010, housing units grew by 7.3% in Cornelia. This was about one-third of the growth experienced in the county (24.0%) and state (24.6%).
- With the housing market collapse in 2008, growth from 2010 to 2015 has been almost stagnant statewide (1.1%). Cornelia showed a slight decline (-2.7%), which might be due to margin of error.

Table 33: Total Housing Unit Trends Since 2000

Location	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Cornelia	1,611	1,728	1,681	7.3%	-2.7%
Habersham County	14,634	18,146	18,124	24.0%	-0.1%
Georgia	3,281,737	4,088,801	4,133,065	24.6%	1.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.2 Occupancy

A summary of housing occupancy characteristics in 2015 is presented in Table 34.

- Cornelia had a similar vacancy rate as the county (18.7% versus 18.0%), but both were larger than the state rate (13.5%).
- The breakdown of owner-occupied and renter-occupied in Cornelia (51.2% and 30.1%) nearly matched the state rates (54.8% and 31.7%); however, Habersham County had more owner-occupied units (61.4%) and fewer renter-occupied units (20.6%).



Table 34: Occupancy Characteristics in 2015

Occupancy Type	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Total Housing Units	1,681	18,124	4,133,065
Owner-Occupied	51.2%	61.4%	54.8%
Renter-Occupied	30.1%	20.6%	31.7%
Vacant	18.7%	18.0%	13.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.3 Housing Costs

Median monthly gross rent, monthly costs for homeowners with a mortgage, and property values are presented for 2000, 2010, and 2015 in Table 35.

- Median rent in Cornelia has been 3-8% less than the countywide median and 26-30% less than the statewide median.
- From 2000 to 2010, median rent increased less for Cornelia (25.3%) compared with the county (31.9%) and state (31.8%). From 2010 to 2015, median rent increased more rapidly in Cornelia (14.2%) than the county (11.5%) and state (8.8%).
- Since 2000, the gap between median homeowner cost (with a mortgage) in Cornelia has grown smaller compared with the county (17% to less than 1%) and state (43% to 22%).
- From 2000 to 2010, median property value had a similar growth rate of about 45-47% for Cornelia, Habersham County, and Georgia. However, after the housing market crash, median property value decreased more rapidly from 2010 to 2015 in Cornelia (-14.0%) than the county (-9.1%) and state (-8.2%).
- In 2015, median property value in Cornelia is about 15% less than the countywide median and 25% less than the statewide median.

Table 35: Median Rental and Housing Cost Trends since 2000

Year	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Median Monthly Gross Rent			
2000	\$455	\$467	\$613
2010	\$570	\$616	\$808
2015	\$651	\$687	\$879
% Change 2000-2010	25.3%	31.9%	31.8%
% Change 2010- 2015	14.2%	11.5%	8.8%
Median Monthly Owner Costs (w/ Mortgage)			
2000	\$727	\$851	\$1,039
2010	\$1,078	\$1,116	\$1,398
2015	\$1,106	\$1,108	\$1,346
% Change 2000-2010	48.3%	31.1%	34.6%
% Change 2010- 2015	2.6%	-0.7%	-3.7%



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Year	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Median Property Value			
2000	\$88,300	\$99,700	\$111,200
2010	\$129,700	\$144,600	\$161,400
2015	\$111,600	\$131,500	\$148,100
% Change 2000-2010	46.9%	45.0%	45.1%
% Change 2010- 2015	-14.0%	-9.1%	-8.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The 2015 distribution of monthly gross rental costs is presented in Figure 8.

- The most common rent in Cornelia (72.4%) was \$500-\$999, which was consistent with the countywide and statewide distributions, but it was slightly more common than the county (69.5%) and substantially more common than the state (52.6%).
- Cornelia (22.8%) had about 40% more rentals less than \$500 than the county (16.2%) and twice as many as the state (11.3%).
- Cornelia had no rentals more than \$1,500, where the county had 2.2% and the state had 7.9%.

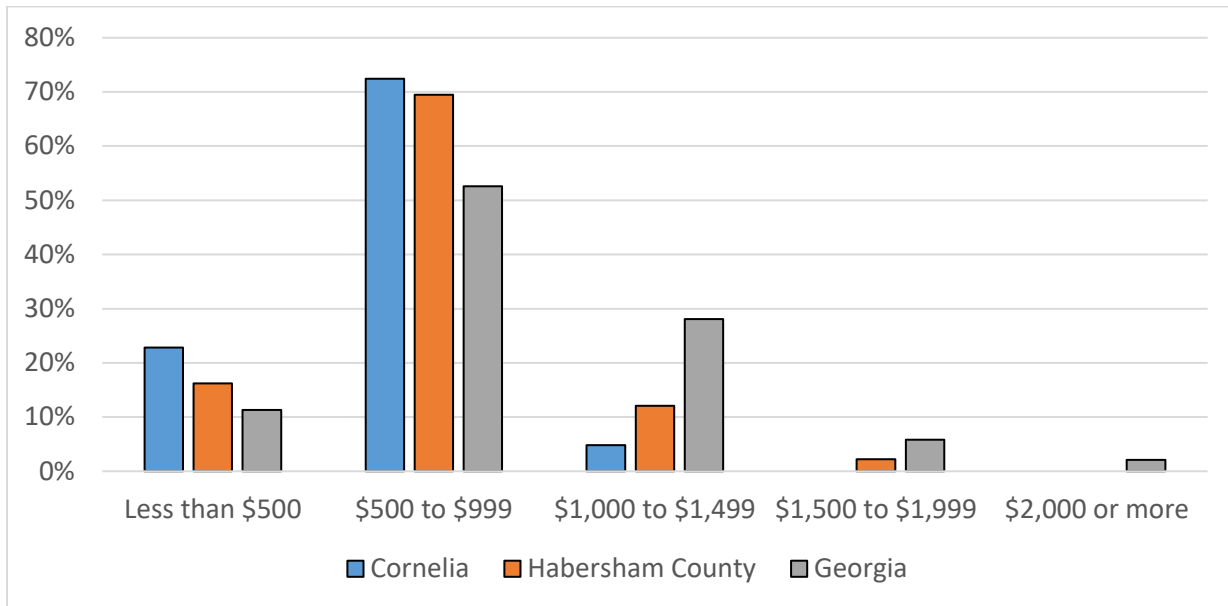


Figure 8: Distribution of Monthly Gross Rental Costs in 2015

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

The 2015 distribution of monthly homeowner costs (with a mortgage) is presented in Figure 9.

- Cornelia had a higher percentage of housing units with a smaller monthly homeowner cost than the state average – 37.4% at \$500-\$999 and 43.0% at \$1,000-\$1,499.



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- There was about half as many housing units with monthly homeowner costs more than \$2,000 in Cornelia (9.0%) and the county (9.5%) than the state (20.1%).
- While Cornelia and Habersham County had similar percentages of housing units with monthly homeowner costs between \$500 and \$999 and more than \$2,000, Cornelia had more in the \$1,000 to \$1,499 range and Habersham County had more in the less than \$500 group and the \$1,500 to \$1,999 range.

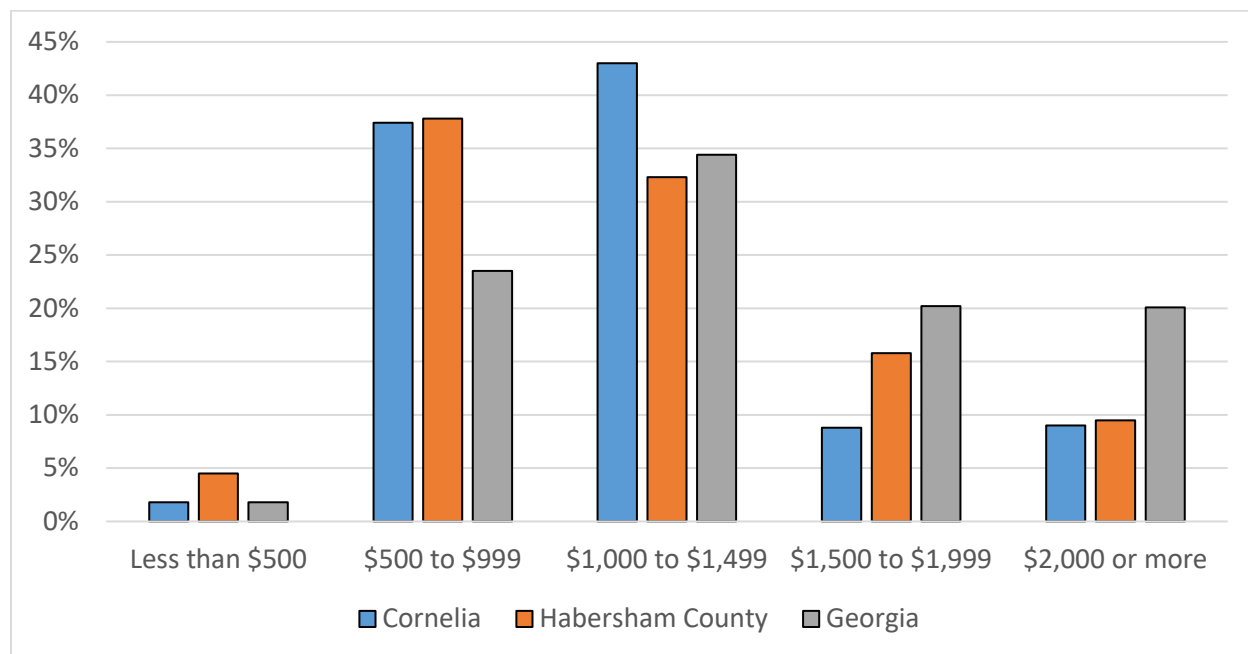


Figure 9: Distribution of Monthly Homeowner Costs (with a Mortgage) in 2015

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

The 2015 distribution of property values for owner-occupied housing units is presented in Figure 10.

- The most common property value range in Cornelia (28.4%) was \$100,000-\$149,999, which was consistent but slightly less than the countywide distribution (23.4%).
- The second most common property value range in Cornelia (24.9%) was less than \$50,000, and the percentage was 1.8 times greater than the county (13.5%) and 2.3 times greater than the state (10.9%) distributions.
- Of the ranges presented in the figure below, the state distribution was most uniform, and the county distribution more closely matched the state distribution. The distribution of property values in Cornelia were weighted more heavily on the lower end of the spectrum.
- Cornelia had about two-thirds the fraction of housing units in the \$200,000 to \$299,999 range compared with the county and state. In the \$300,000 or more range, Cornelia had about one-half the fraction of housing units in the county and one-quarter in the state.

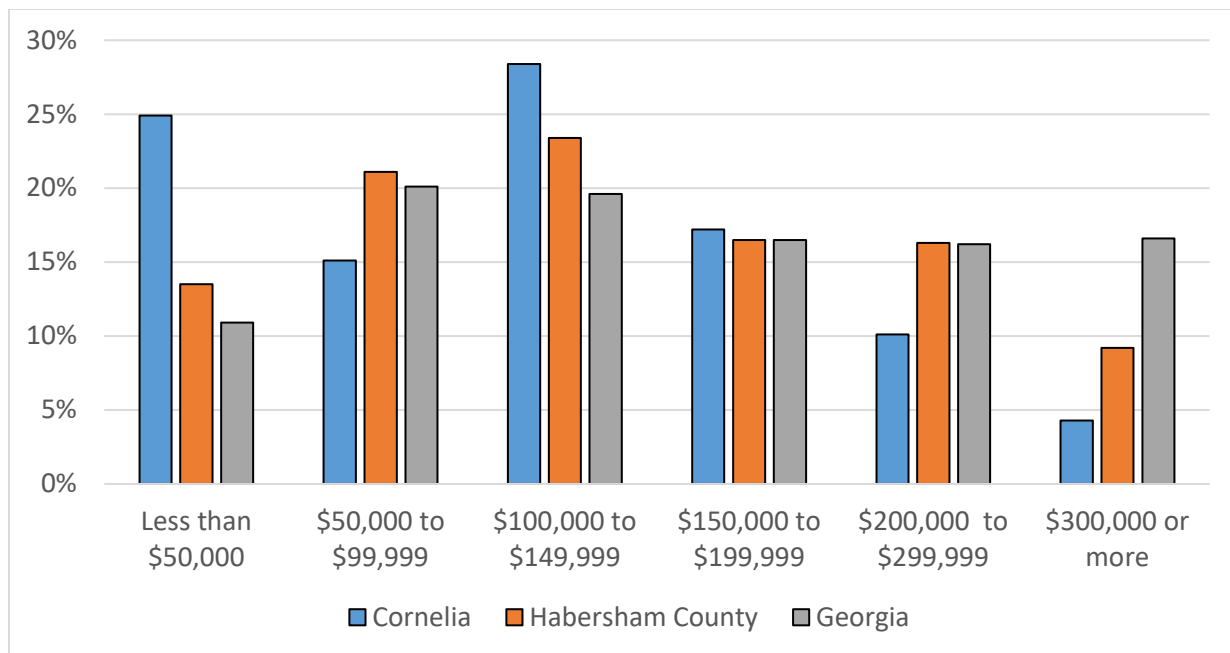


Figure 10: Distribution of Property Values for Owner Occupied Housing Units in 2015

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

3.4 Cost Burdened Housing

Cost-burdened households are those households paying 30% or more of their net income on housing costs. The results are presented separately for those renting (Figure 11), owning with a mortgage, and owning without a mortgage. Table 36 details the percentage of total households that are cost burdened in 2015.

- Based on the housing costs rising at a faster rate than household income, as presented in Section 1.9, it was expected that the percentage of cost burdened housing would increase.
- The 2000 Census did not break down the classification of cost burdened households to those with and without a mortgage, so the results for 2000 are not presented.
- Overall, renters were more frequently cost-burdened than homeowners with a mortgage. Homeowners without a mortgage were cost-burdened least because their monthly costs no longer included a mortgage.

Specifically, for renters:

- The state average jumped from 38.7% in 2000 to 51.4% in 2010, and then marginally to 52.4% in 2015.
- Cost-burdened renters were fewer in Cornelia than statewide, but it still saw a similar jump in percentage since 2000. Cornelia’s average jumped from 32.1% in 2000 to 48.9% in 2010, and then marginally decreased to 47.5% in 2015.



- Cost-burdened renters in Cornelia were slightly less than in the county in 2000 and 2015, but they were slightly more in 2010.

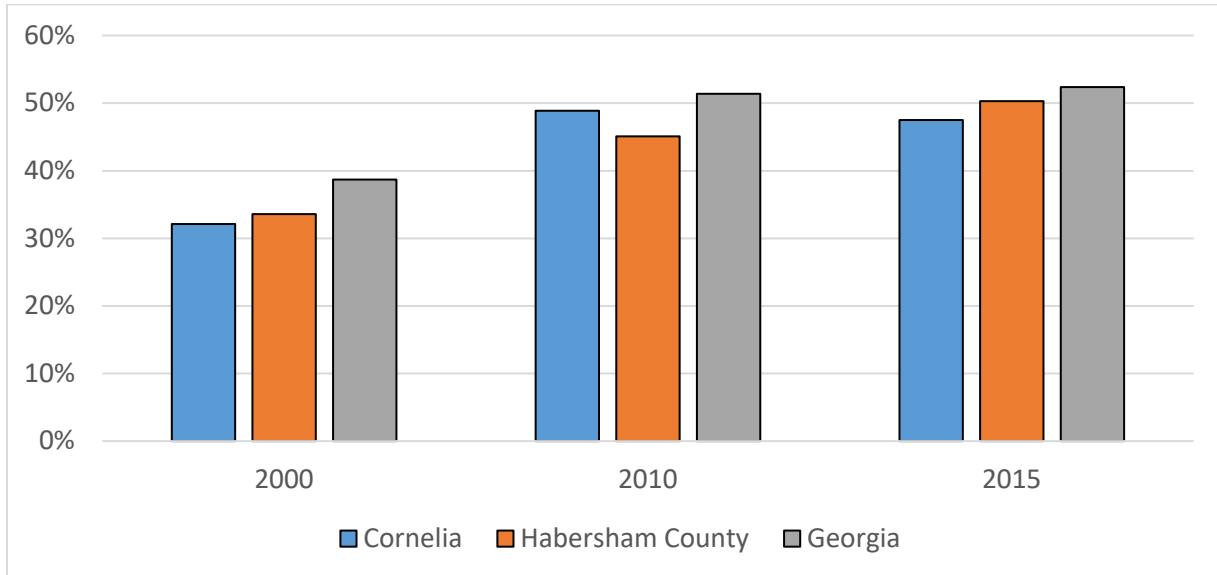


Figure 11: Percentage of Cost Burdened Housing Units for Renters

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 36: Cost Burdened Housing Units in 2015

Cost Burdened Housing Types	Cornelia	Habersham County	Georgia
Occupied Units Paying Rent^a	347	3,201	1,190,334
Gross Rent Exceeds 30% of Household Income	47.5%	50.3%	52.4%
Housing Units with a Mortgage^a	435	6,191	1,526,935
Selected Monthly Owner Costs Exceed 30% of Household Income	32.9%	35.3%	31.7%
Housing Units without a Mortgage^a	416	4,870	711,202
Selected Monthly Owner Costs Exceed 30% of Household Income	15.9%	13.5%	13.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3.5 Condition of Housing

“Severe Housing Problems” is a measure from the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program that could use some attention in Habersham County. This measure is defined as the percentage of households with at least one or more of the following housing problems: 1) housing unit lacks complete kitchen facilities, 2) housing unit lacks complete plumbing facilities, 3) household is severely overcrowded, and 4) household is severely cost burdened. Severe overcrowding is defined as more than 1.5 persons per room, and severe cost burden is defined



as monthly housing costs (including utilities) that exceed 50% of monthly income. The most recent data from 2009-2013 is presented in Table 37.

- 17% of housing units in Habersham County had “Severe Housing Problems,” which was within 1% of the state average (18%)
- Habersham County was ranked in the middle of all counties in Georgia (79th out of 159), and it was ranked in the top third of its neighboring counties.

Table 37: Households with Severe Housing Problems (County Rankings)

County	Households with Severe Housing Problems	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Habersham County	17%	79th
Banks County	18%	97 th
Franklin County	14%	39 th
Hall County	19%	120 th
Rabun County	19%	116 th
Stephens County	16%	57 th
Towns County	18%	92 nd
White County	19%	115 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/136/data>

3.6 Special Needs Housing

Habersham County offers a variety of facilities for special needs housing and services.

There is 1 hospital services facility in the County:

- Habersham Medical Center, 541 Historic Hwy 441-N, Demorest, 706-754-2161

There are 4 emergency medical services facilities in the County:

- Headquarters at 111 Habersham Terrace Gardens, Demorest
- Three Substations at: Fire Station 9 in Hollywood, Fire Station 16 on Hwy 17, and Baldwin Fire Station in Baldwin.

There are 2 mental health service facilities in the County:

- Behavior Health Services, 196 Scroggins Drive, Demorest, 706-894-3700
- Development Disability Services, 196 Scroggins Drive, Demorest, 706-894-3750

There is 1 long-term care facility in the County:

- Habersham Home, located on the Habersham Medical Center Campus, 706-754-2134



3.7 Job/Housing Balance

The balance between housing and jobs is presented in Table 38 since 2000. A balanced community generally has a jobs-housing ratio of 1.25 to 1.75.

- Cornelia has a jobs-housing ratio much less than the ideal range, and it has declined from 1.09 in 2000 to 0.89 in 2015. This outcome is attributed to a decrease in the labor force despite an increase in population. However, it should be noted that most of the population growth has been in the age group of children. As a result, the average household sizes have increased and the total housing units have stayed steady.
- The state average was at the lower end of the ideal range in 2000 (1.26). By 2015, it slipped to just below the ideal range (1.19) as housing grew faster than jobs.
- The jobs-housing ratio in Habersham County has been right between Cornelia and the state, and it has declined from 1.20 in 2000 to 1.01 in 2015.

Table 38: Jobs/Housing Balance Trends in Cornelia since 2000

Characteristic	Cornelia			Habersham County		
	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)
Population	3,674	4,160	4,199	35,902	43,041	43,527
Average Household Size	2.47	2.75	3.08	2.57	2.63	2.74
Number of Households	1,488	1,495	1,366	13,259	15,472	14,864
Housing Units	1,611	1,728	1,681	14,634	18,146	18,124
Employment	1,748	1,478	1,500	17,544	18,721	18,388
Employment/Population Ratio	0.48	0.36	0.36	0.49	0.43	0.42
Employment/Housing Unit Ratio	1.09	0.86	0.89	1.20	1.03	1.01
Georgia						
Characteristic	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)			
Population	8,186,453	9,687,653	10,006,693			
Average Household Size	2.65	2.63	2.73			
Number of Households	3,006,369	3,585,584	3,574,362			
Housing Units	3,281,737	4,088,801	4,133,065			
Employment	4,129,666	4,770,546	4,906,258			
Employment/Population Ratio	0.50	0.49	0.49			
Employment/Housing Unit Ratio	1.26	1.17	1.19			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



4. Public Facilities

4.1 Water System

The City obtains raw water for its drinking water supply from Hazel Creek and the Camp Creek Reservoir. A map of the City’s water system including hydrants, valves, and water lines is presented in Figure 12.

4.2 Sanitary Sewer

Wastewater treatment is performed at the Cornelia Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP). The WPCP has a permitted capacity of 3.0 MGD. Details of the WPCP NPDES Permit are provided in Table 39. A map of the City’s sanitary sewer system is presented in Figure 13.

Table 39: NPDES Permit Details

Facility Name	NPDES Permit No.	Receiving Stream	NPDES Permit Limit			
			Average Monthly Flow (MGD)	Average Monthly BOD ₅ (mg/L)	Average Monthly NH ₃ (mg/L)	Minimum DO (mg/L)
Cornelia WPCP	GA0021504	South Fort Mud Creek	3.0	25	1.5	6.0

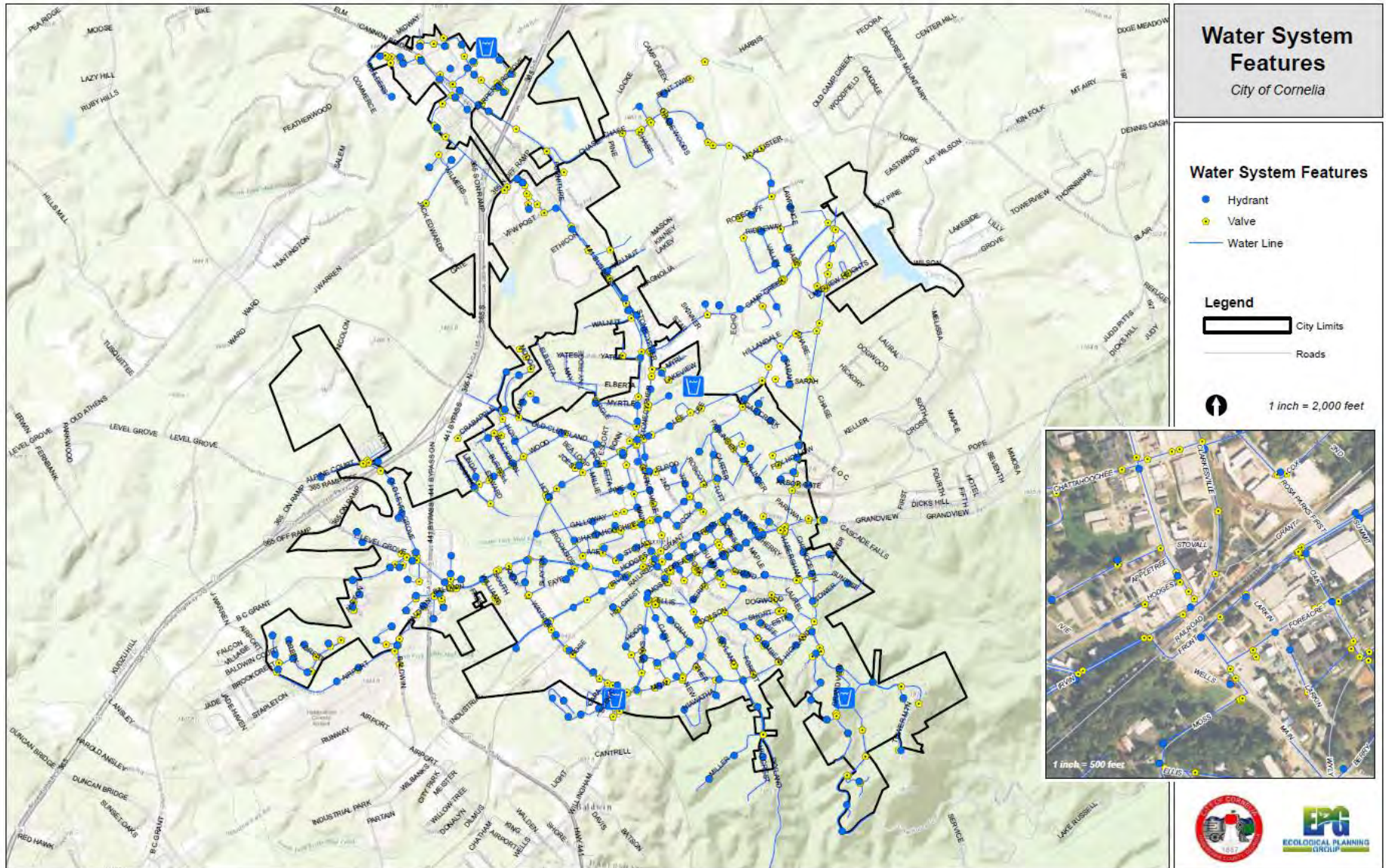


Figure 12: Water System Map

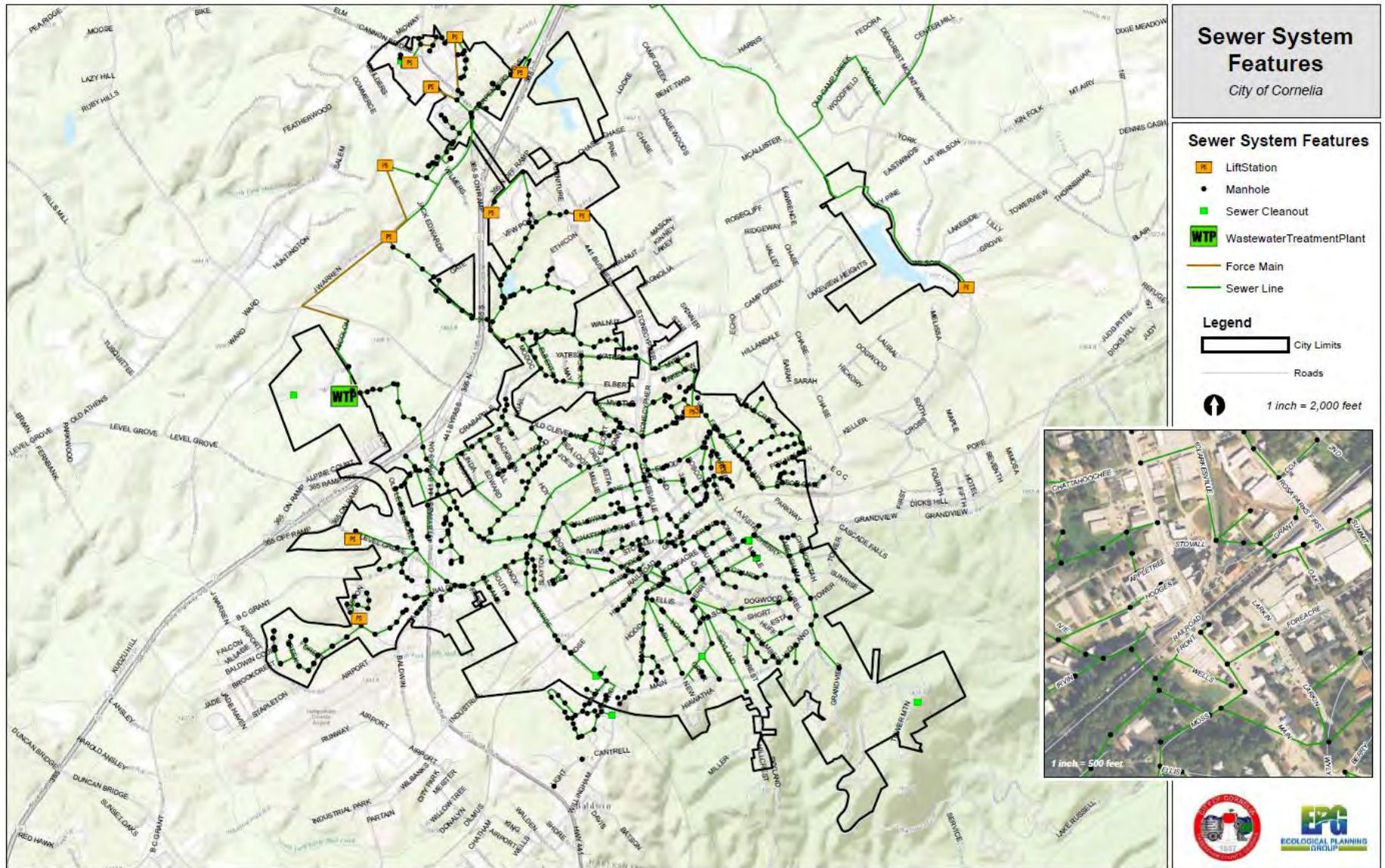


Figure 13: Wastewater System Map



4.3 Storm Sewer System

The stormwater system in the City of Cornelia is mostly open drainage, with approximately 27 miles of ditches throughout the City. Closed system drainage includes about 18 miles of City maintained stormwater conveyance system. Table 40 summarizes the types of features and structures in Cornelia’s stormwater system, and a map of the stormwater infrastructure is presented in Figure 14.

Table 40: Summary of Stormwater System Features

Structures/Features			Conveyances	
Type	Total Count		Type	Length (Miles)
Outfalls ¹	508		Pipe	17.59
End of System Outfalls	185		Ditch	27.15
Inlets ²	1,052		Disperse Flow	1.45
Junctions, Manholes, Others	39		Stream / Creek	14.91
Box Culverts	12		Total	61.10

¹ Includes box culverts, end of pipes, flared end sections, headwalls, and others.

² Includes box culverts, catch basins, curb inlets, drop inlets, and yard inlets.

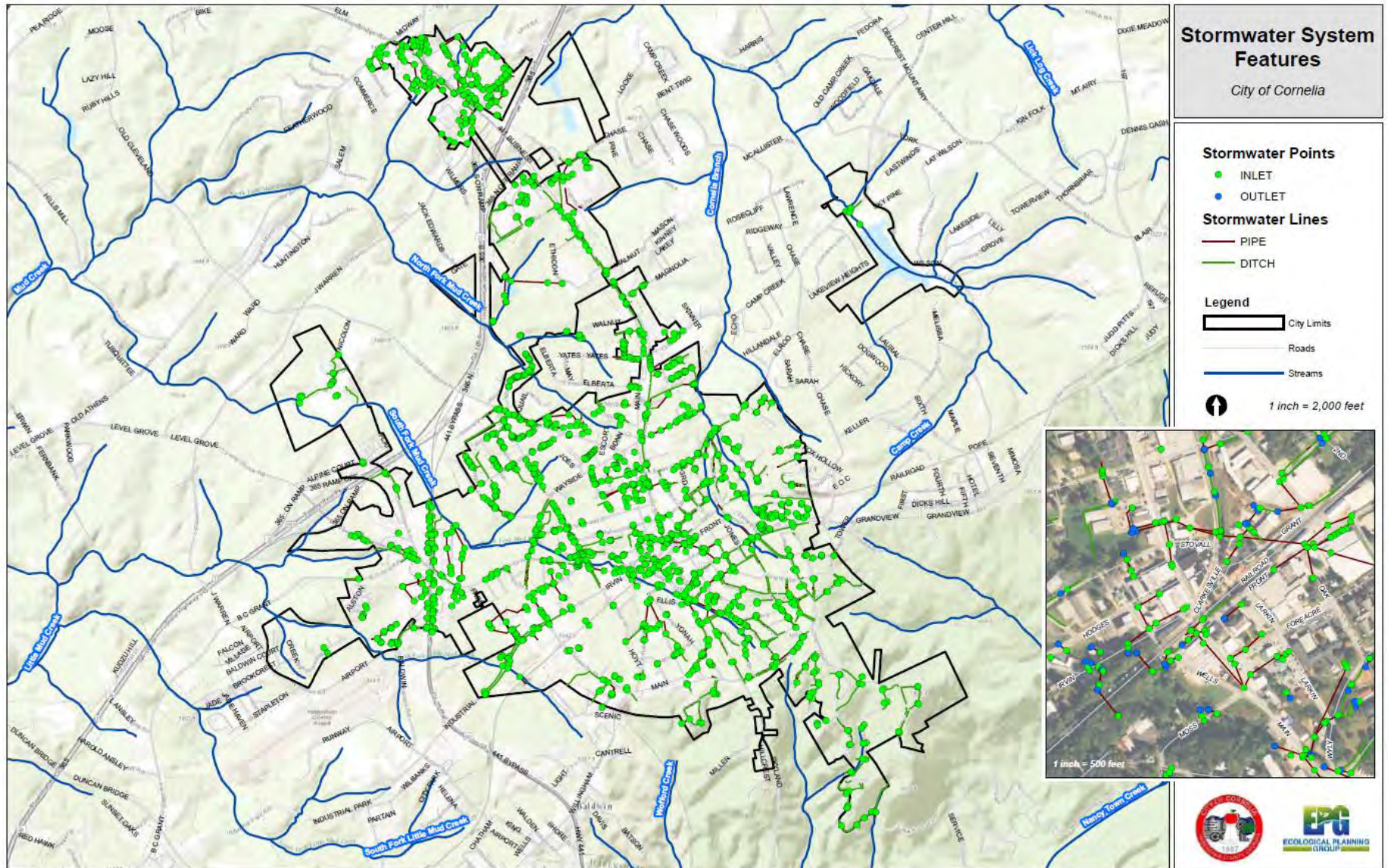


Figure 14: Stormwater System Map



4.4 Fire Department

The City of Cornelia operates two fire stations: one located downtown and the other off of Hwy. 441 in the Kmart shopping center (see Figure 17: Map of Community Facilities and Public Places). The City's fire department staff includes a total of 26 members including both full-time and volunteer firefighters. The department includes 11 full-time staff as summarized below:

- 1, Chief/Arson Investigator/Firefighter/EMT-I1
- 1, Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal/Chaplain/Firefighter/First Responder
- 1, Captain/Firefighter/EMT-I
- 2, Lieutenant/Firefighter/Paramedic
- 1, Lieutenant/Training Officer/Firefighter/EMT-I
- 1, Firefighter/EMT-I
- 1, Fire Life Safety Educator/Firefighter/First Responder
- 2, Firefighter/First Responder
- 1, Firefighter

Services provided by the fire department include first response for:

- Emergency medical services
- Fire suppression
- Fire prevention and education
- Extraction
- Hazardous materials response
- Technical rescue

Equipment utilized by the fire department include:

- Snorkel
- Ladder
- Brush truck
- Service truck
- Fire safety house
- Four engines

4.5 Public Safety

The Cornelia Police Department is located at 163 Larkin Street (see Figure 17: Map of Community Facilities and Public Places).

Information on crime rate in Cornelia and neighboring cities is listed at www.city-data.com. This website lists a crime index in which it counts serious crimes and violent crimes more heavily, and it adjusts for the number of visitors and daily workers commuting into cities. A larger index



means more crime. The data in Figure 15 is for Cornelia and neighboring cities in 2015. Cornelia’s crime index was 268.8, which was slightly higher (less safe) than adjacent cities. However, it was lower (safer) than the national average of 278.3, as well as Cleveland (White County) and Toccoa (Stephens County).

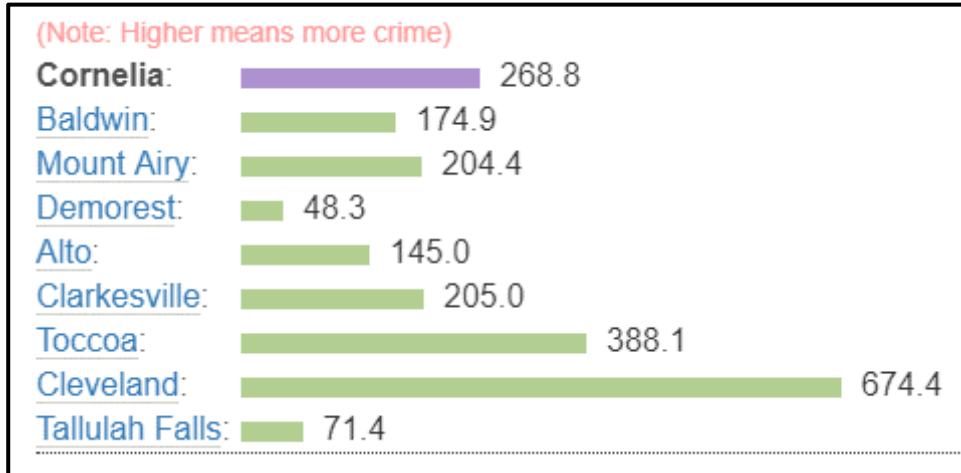


Figure 15: Crime Index of Cornelia and Neighboring Cities (www.city-data.com)

The three-year average of violent crime offenses per 100,000 population, as reported by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, is presented in Figure 16 for Habersham County and for the state and national averages. Violent Crimes are defined as offenses that involve face-to-face confrontation between the victim and the perpetrator, including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

- From these data, there is no significant trend for violent crimes in the county, but there appears to be a slight decline recently.
- Over the last decade, violent crime rate in Habersham County has been about 60% less than the statewide and national averages.

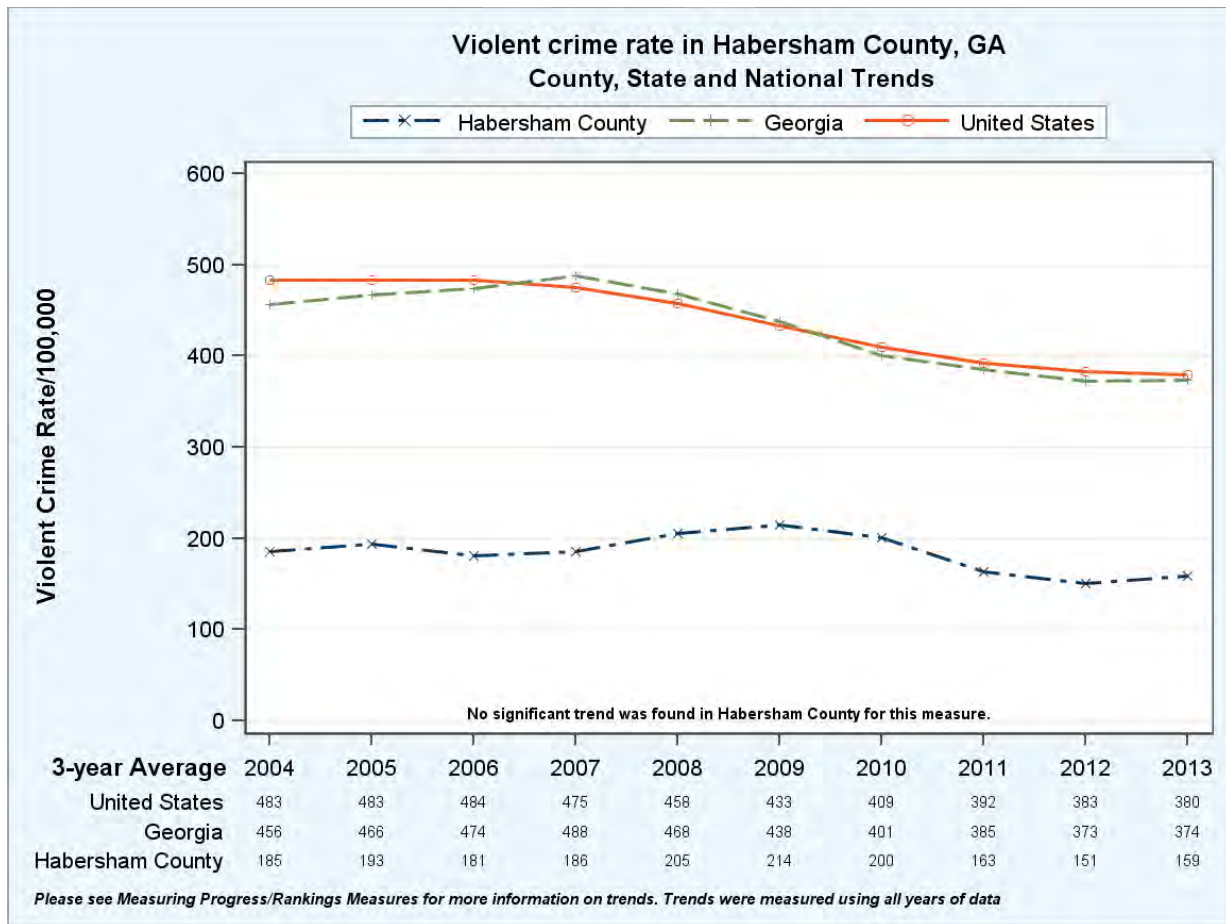


Figure 16: Frequency of Violent Crimes in Habersham County

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/43/data>

Based on the same data source as Figure 16, Table 41 presents a snapshot of the number of violent crimes for the 3-year average from 2012-2014 in Habersham County and its neighboring counties.

- Habersham County’s rate of violent crimes per 100,000 population is 43% of the state average
- Habersham County is ranked in the top quarter of safest counties in Georgia (34th out of 154).
- Most of this region is safe because six neighboring counties ranked from 28th to 53rd. One exception was Stephens County as 95th, which had a violent crime rate close to the state average. Stephens County contains the City of Toccoa, which had a higher crime index than the national average (Figure 15).



Table 41: Violent Crime Rates (County Rankings)

County	Violent Crime Rate (per 100,000 population)	Rank out of 154 Counties in Georgia ¹
Habersham County	159	34th
Banks County	156	33 rd
Franklin County	142	28 th
Hall County	169	42 nd
Rabun County	153	32 nd
Stephens County	330	95 th
Towns County	203	53 rd
White County	165	40 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>374</i>	<i>N/A</i>

¹ Data not available from 5 counties

Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/43/data>

4.6 Parks and Recreation

The City of Cornelia operates nine parks within the City as well as one additional planned park as summarized below.

Cornelia City Park – Located on Wylly Street, this 20-acre park is the largest in the City and is often referred to Big City Park. The park offers tennis, basketball, baseball, picnic tables, playgrounds, a walking trail, and pavilion.

Farlinger Park – Located on Farlinger Street, this park includes basketball courts, tennis courts, and a playground.

Irvin Street Park – Irvin Street Park is a small, downtown park with a swing, picnic table, grill as well as a pathway to an adjacent creek.

Jim Smith Park – This park offers basketball, playground, and a pavilion for parties and events. Park benches were donated by the Cornelia Lions Club.

Library Park / Skate Park – Located on Chattahoochee Street, this park features a playground, sand volleyball court, picnic tables, and a skate park.

Oak Street Park – Located downtown, the park offers tennis courts, playground, and picnic tables.

Splash Pad – Located in the Historic Depot parking lot at 102 Grant Place off Clarkesville Street, is a water fountain with jets of water that shoot up from the ground for children to play in.

Bark Park / Club Canine – Located on Lavista Street near the Community House, is a dog park including an area for small dogs, an area for large dogs, a watering station, and two wash stations.



Wells Street Park – Located downtown off of Wells Street.

Gateway Park / Preservation Project – This is a future park / preservation project that is planned on a property located on the south side of town along South Main Street.

4.7 Other Facilities

Other facilities located in Cornelia are discussed below, and their locations are presented later in a map in Figure 17.

Captain Hilliard A. Wilbanks Memorial Marker - Memorial to Captain Wilbanks who left his family to fight in Vietnam in support of the 23rd Ranger Battalion and died saving the battalion from an ambush on February 24, 1967.

Chenocetah Fire Tower – Built by Works Progress Administration and dedicated on June 7, 1938.

Loudermilk Boarding House & Elvis Museum – Contains over 30,000 items related to Elvis Presley.

Cornelia Community House – A stone and log structure built by the CCC in 1936 and listed in the National Register.

The Cornelia – Habersham County Library – Located at 301 North Main Street, the library has over 43,000 items for check-out and over 8,300 registered users.

The Depot – A historic train museum located at 102 Grant Place. The depot was originally built soon after the town was founded but burned in 1920. The depot was rebuilt in 1914 by Southern Railway and was closed in the late 1960s. The museum contains relics from the days when railways thrived, two restored cabooses, and The Big Apple Monument.

Big Red Apple Monument – Located at the Depot, the monument is a memorial to the importance the apple industry once was to Cornelia and Habersham County.

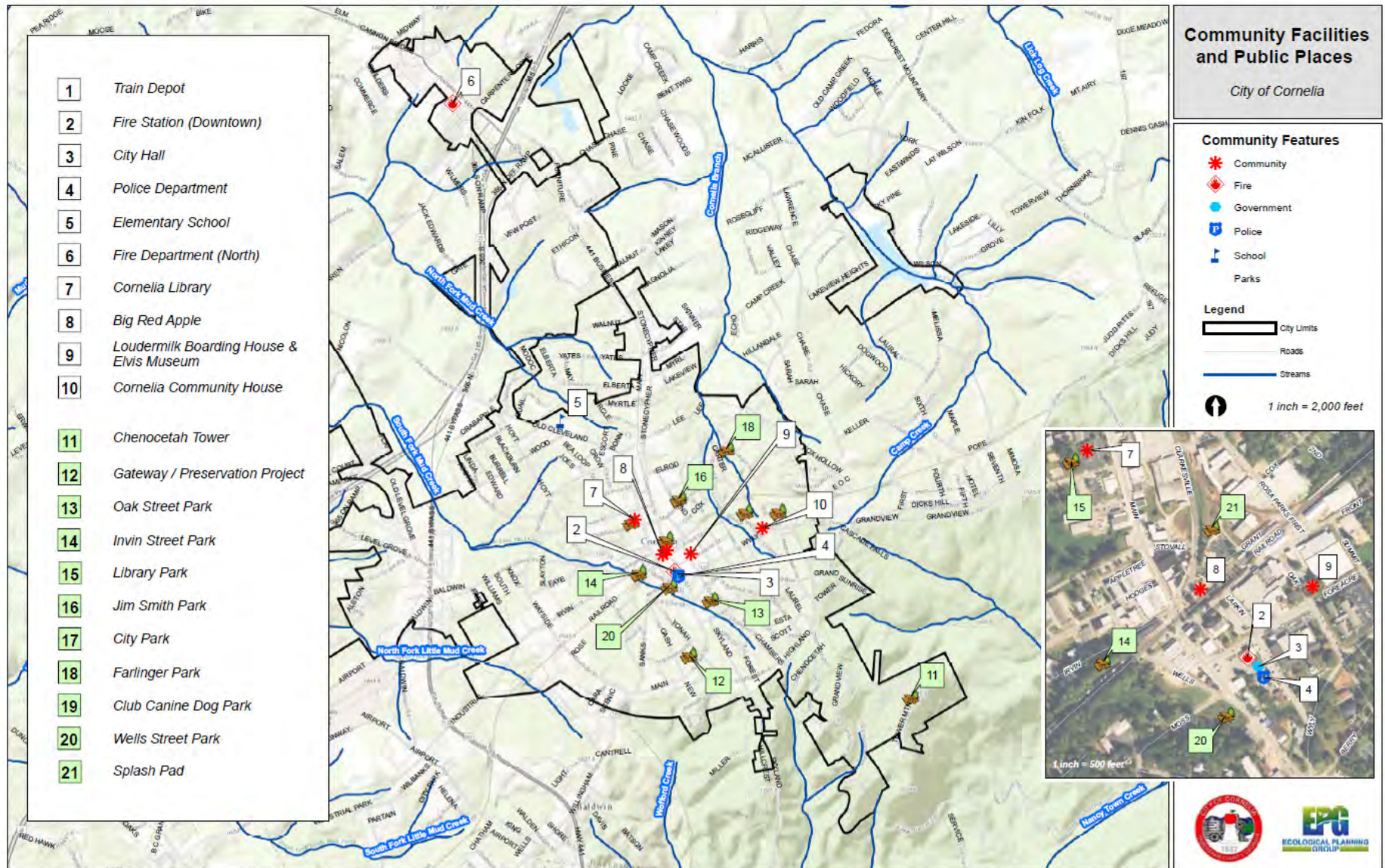


Figure 17: Map of Community Features and Public Places



5. Intergovernmental Coordination

5.1 Adjacent Local Governments

Cornelia is the most populated incorporated area in Habersham County. Habersham County contains six other incorporated areas – Town of Alto, City of Baldwin, City of Clarkesville, City of Demorest, Town of Mount Airy, and Town of Tallulah Falls. The City of Clarkesville is the county seat. About two-thirds of the county’s population lives in the unincorporated portion of the county. Habersham County is bordered by Rabun County and Towns County to the north, White County to the west, Hall County and Banks County to the south, Stephens County and South Carolina to the east. The Chattahoochee National Forest includes a portion of Habersham County and the City of Cornelia.

5.2 School Boards

There is one public school district in the county – Habersham County School District. The district contains eight elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high schools (with a separate 9th grade school) that serve the County and City of Cornelia. The names and whether they serve City of Cornelia are listed below:

- Elementary Schools (PK – 5th)
 - Baldwin Elementary (partial)
 - Clarkesville Elementary (does not serve City)
 - **Cornelia Elementary (primary)**
 - Demorest Elementary (partial)
 - Fairview Elementary (does not serve City)
 - Hazel Grove Elementary (does not serve City)
 - Level Grove Elementary (partial)
 - Woodville Elementary (does not serve City)
- Middle Schools (6th – 8th)
 - North Habersham Middle (does not serve City)
 - South Habersham Middle (partial)
 - **Wilbanks Middle (primary)**
- High Schools (9th – 12th)
 - **9th Grade Academy (9th)**

Schools located within the county are presented in the map on Figure 17. The Habersham County School Board of Education is a governing body of the Habersham County School District. The primary role of the Board is the development and enforcement of school system policies that are then executed by the superintendent and staff.



5.2.1 Education Performance Metrics

A comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that promotes college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students is the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). The weights of the CCRPI components incentivize and reward student growth and progress towards student proficiency (and readiness for college and careers) based on the state's higher expectations associated with the Georgia Milestones Assessment System. Increasing the contribution of progress recognizes the work districts and schools are making toward the increased expectation for student achievement. The index is based on 100 points. Overall scores are comprised of three main components: (1) Achievement 50% (includes: Content Mastery 40%, Post Readiness 30%, and Graduation Rate 30%), (2) Progress 40%, and (3) Achievement Gap 10%. Challenge points are 10 additional points awarded to schools meeting the requirements.

Results from the 2016 CCRPI for Habersham County, Georgia, and neighboring counties are presented in Table 42.

- Overall, the CCRPI for Habersham County schools exceeded the state average at all levels.
- Compared with neighboring counties, Habersham County’s CCRPI was in the middle of the group.
- The district had a higher CCRPI than Hall and Stephens counties, a comparable CCRPI as Banks, Franklin, Rabun, and Towns counties, and a lower CCRPI than White County.
- The CCRPI for Habersham County was highest for elementary and high schools and lowest for middle school.

Table 42: Comparison of 2016 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) in Neighboring Counties

Level	2016 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)								
	Haber-sham County	Georgia	Banks County	Franklin County	Hall County	Rabun County	Stephens County	Towns County	White County
District	79.1	73.6	79.4	78.3	73.1	80.2	73.7	80.8	83.7
Elementary	80.7	72.8	78.6	75.7	68.8	80.3	72.2	81.4	87.8
Middle	74.3	72.1	77.5	75.7	75.1	79.9	81.6	89.5	66.9
High	80.1	76.1	81.9	84.4	78.1	80.3	70.0	73.2	90.5

Source: <http://ccrpi.gadoe.org/2016/>

The CCRPIs for individual schools in the school district are presented in Table 43.

- These indices show a large discrepancy between elementary schools and middle schools.
- The four elementary schools that do not serve Cornelia were ranked in the top five in the county, with a range of 85.6 to 92.2. The elementary school that serves most of Cornelia was ranked 6th with a CCRPI of 71.9.



City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan

- Similarly, the middle school that does not serve Cornelia was ranked the highest (87.9), and the ones that served most or part of Cornelia were ranked as the lowest with CCRPIs of 67.7 and 68.0, respectively.
- In general, elementary and middle schools that served most of Cornelia’s residents had CCRPIs that were about 20 points lower than other portions of the county, and they were also less than the state averages.
- With only one primary high school, the CCRPI was better than the state average at this level.

Table 43: 2016 CCRPI for Individual Schools in Habersham County School District

School	2016 CCRPI	Service Area Notes
Cornelia Elementary	71.9	Serves most of Cornelia
Baldwin Elementary	57.3	Serves part of Cornelia
Demorest Elementary	90.1	Serves part of Cornelia
Level Grove Elementary	70.1	Serves part of Cornelia
Clarkesville Elementary	92.2	Does not serve Cornelia
Fairview Elementary	85.6	Does not serve Cornelia
Hazel Grove Elementary	89.8	Does not serve Cornelia
Woodville Elementary	86.1	Does not serve Cornelia
Wilbanks Middle	67.7	Serves most of Cornelia
South Habersham Middle	68.0	Serves part of Cornelia
North Habersham Middle	87.9	Does not serve Cornelia
9th Grade Academy	85.3	Serves all of Cornelia
Habersham Central High	78.4	Serves all of Cornelia

Note: Red text denotes schools that do not serve Cornelia residents.

Source: <http://ccrpi.gadoe.org/2016/>

Another metric to compare the performance of the Habersham County School District to the state average is through 2016 End of Course (EOC) Assessment Scores from state testing. The EOC assessments are conducted for two categories in each of the following four major subject areas: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science. For each subject, knowledge skills specified in Georgia’s content standards (Georgia Milestones Achievement Levels) were used to classify students into four categories of learner types – Beginning, Developing, Proficient, and Distinguished. Beginning learners were not yet demonstrating proficiency, developing learners demonstrated partial proficiency, proficient learners demonstrated proficiency, and distinguished learners demonstrated advanced proficiency. The percentages of students in Habersham County and in Georgia that are classified into these learning types are summarized in Table 44 for the eight subjects.

- For all subjects except Economics, Habersham County had a higher percentage of students demonstrating at least Developing learner status and at least Proficient learner status compared with the state average.



City of Cornelia Comprehensive Plan

- Habersham County had additional 11-13% of students with at least Proficient learner status in English Language Arts subjects, 30-32% in Mathematics subjects, 12-19% in Science subjects, and 7.4% in U.S. History.
- Economics is the only subject that could use some improvement, but there were only 0.9% fewer students that were at least Proficient learners compared with the state average and only 2.3% fewer students that were at least Developing learners.
- Based on the state testing results, Habersham County is greatly exceeding the state average for all subjects except one (Economics).

Table 44: Comparison of 2016 End of Course (EOC) Assessment Scores

GA Milestones Achievement Levels (Learner Type)	English Language Arts				Social Studies			
	American Literature		Ninth Grade Literature		U.S. History		Economics	
	Habersham County	Georgia	Habersham County	Georgia	Habersham County	Georgia	Habersham County	Georgia
Beginning	23.4%	27.3%	14.3%	23.5%	23.5%	28.7%	32.2%	29.9%
Developing	31.2%	38.4%	35.7%	39.0%	30.2%	32.4%	26.0%	27.3%
Proficient	36.1%	28.6%	44.6%	32.5%	32.1%	29.3%	33.5%	33.1%
Distinguished	9.3%	5.7%	5.4%	5.1%	14.2%	9.6%	8.4%	9.6%
At least Proficient	45.4%	34.3%	50.0%	37.5%	46.3%	38.9%	41.9%	42.8%

GA Milestones Achievement Levels (Learner Type)	Mathematics				Science			
	Analytic Geometry		Algebra I		Biology		Physical Science	
	Habersham County	Georgia	Habersham County	Georgia	Habersham County	Georgia	Habersham County	Georgia
Beginning	12.3%	36.8%	12.7%	32.3%	22.6%	34.0%	29.1%	42.9%
Developing	27.7%	32.1%	23.8%	36.0%	23.0%	23.7%	27.5%	32.9%
Proficient	42.3%	23.4%	61.9%	26.1%	33.3%	33.5%	30.3%	19.6%
Distinguished	17.7%	7.6%	1.6%	5.6%	21.0%	8.8%	13.1%	4.5%
At least Proficient	60.0%	31.1%	63.5%	31.7%	54.4%	42.3%	43.4%	24.2%

Note: Red text indicates less than the state average.

Source: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Georgia-Milestones-2016-2017-Statewide-Scores.aspx>

High school graduation rate for students taking four years is presented in Table 45.

- Habersham County’s four-year high school graduation rate (83%) is ranked in the middle of Georgia’s counties (82nd out of 149), but it is better than the state average (80%).



- Habersham County’s four-year graduate rate was worse than all of its neighboring counties except Rabun County (87th).
- Six of the neighboring counties were ranked in the top 30, so this metric indicates a strength in the region.

Table 45: High School Graduation Rates in Four Years (County Rankings)

County	High School Graduates in Four Years	Rank out of 149 Counties in Georgia ¹
Habersham County	83%	82nd
Banks County	93%	7 th
Franklin County	92%	22 nd
Hall County	83%	87 th
Rabun County	93%	15 th
Stephens County	91%	28 th
Towns County	93%	19 th
White County	93%	8 th
<i>State Average</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>N/A</i>

¹ Data not available from 10 counties





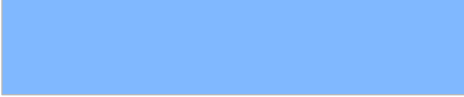

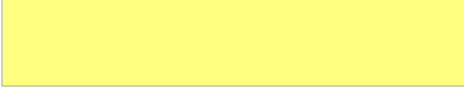


Source: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/measure/factors/21/data>

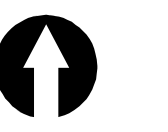
As a note, Table 13, showed that 30.1% of adults (over 25 years) in Cornelia and 21.8% in Habersham County do not have a high school diploma. With the large percentage of children in Cornelia (34.9% under 18 years), it is important to educate these individuals.

Existing Land Use Distribution

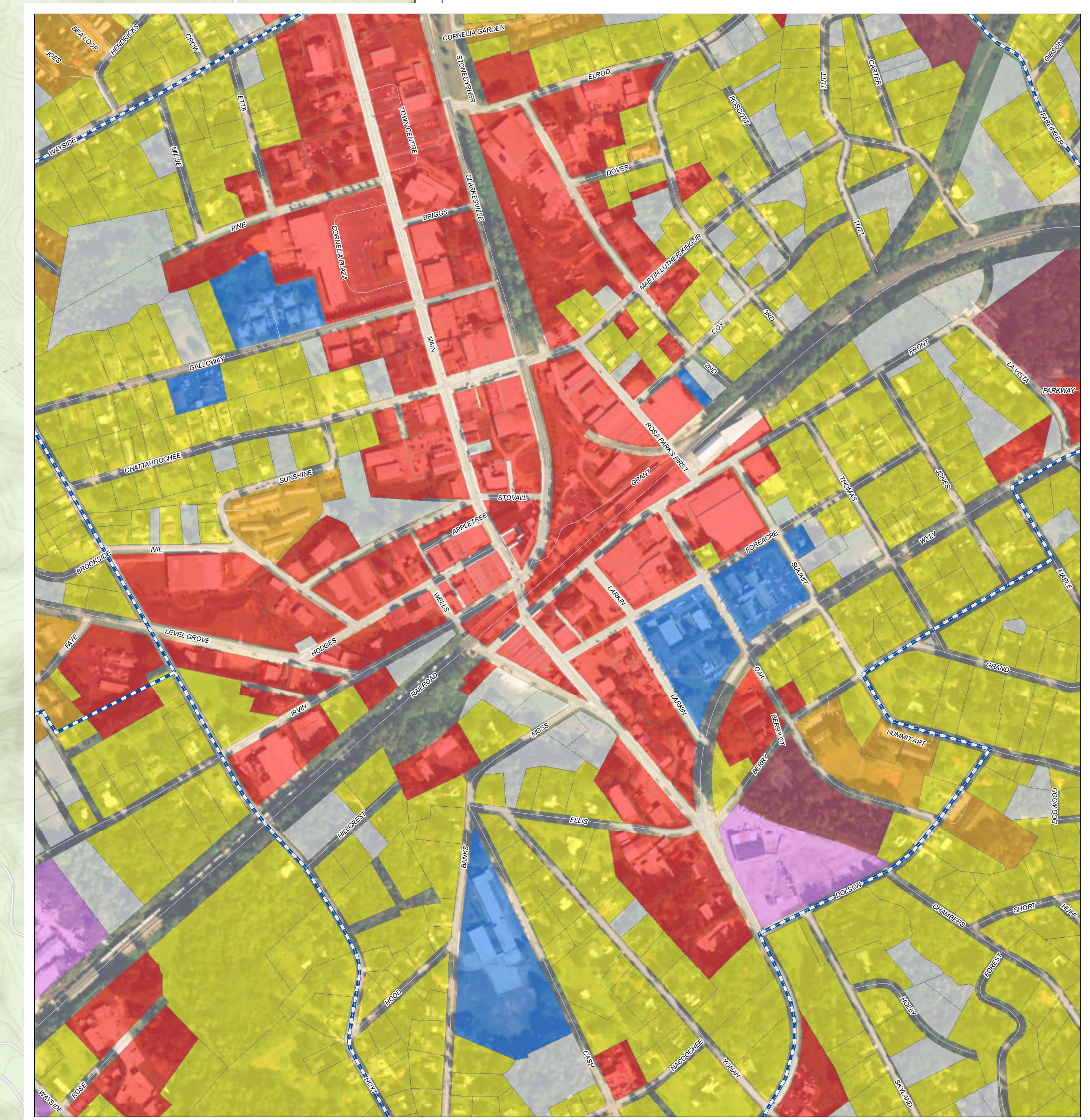
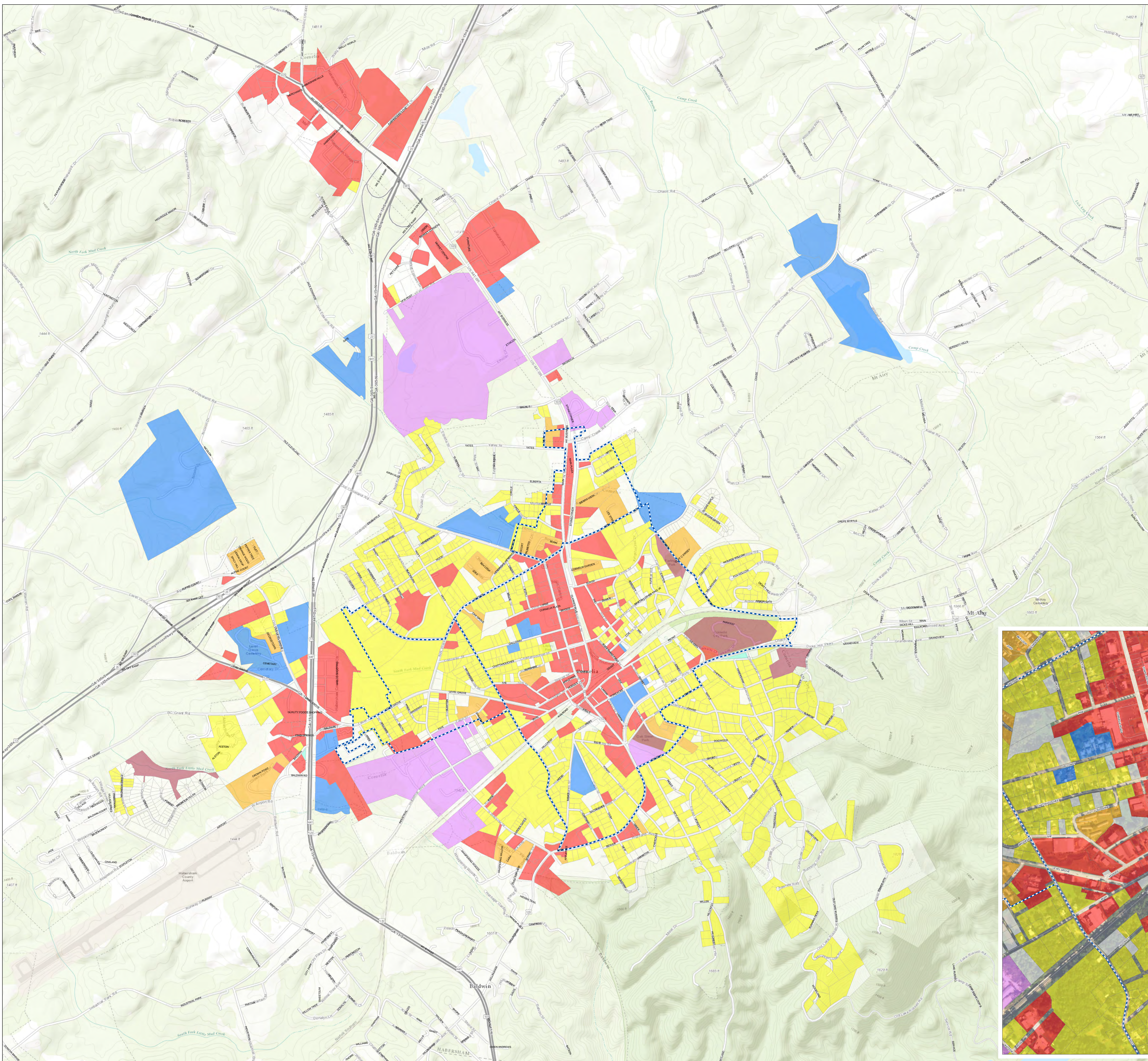
City of Cornelia

Legend

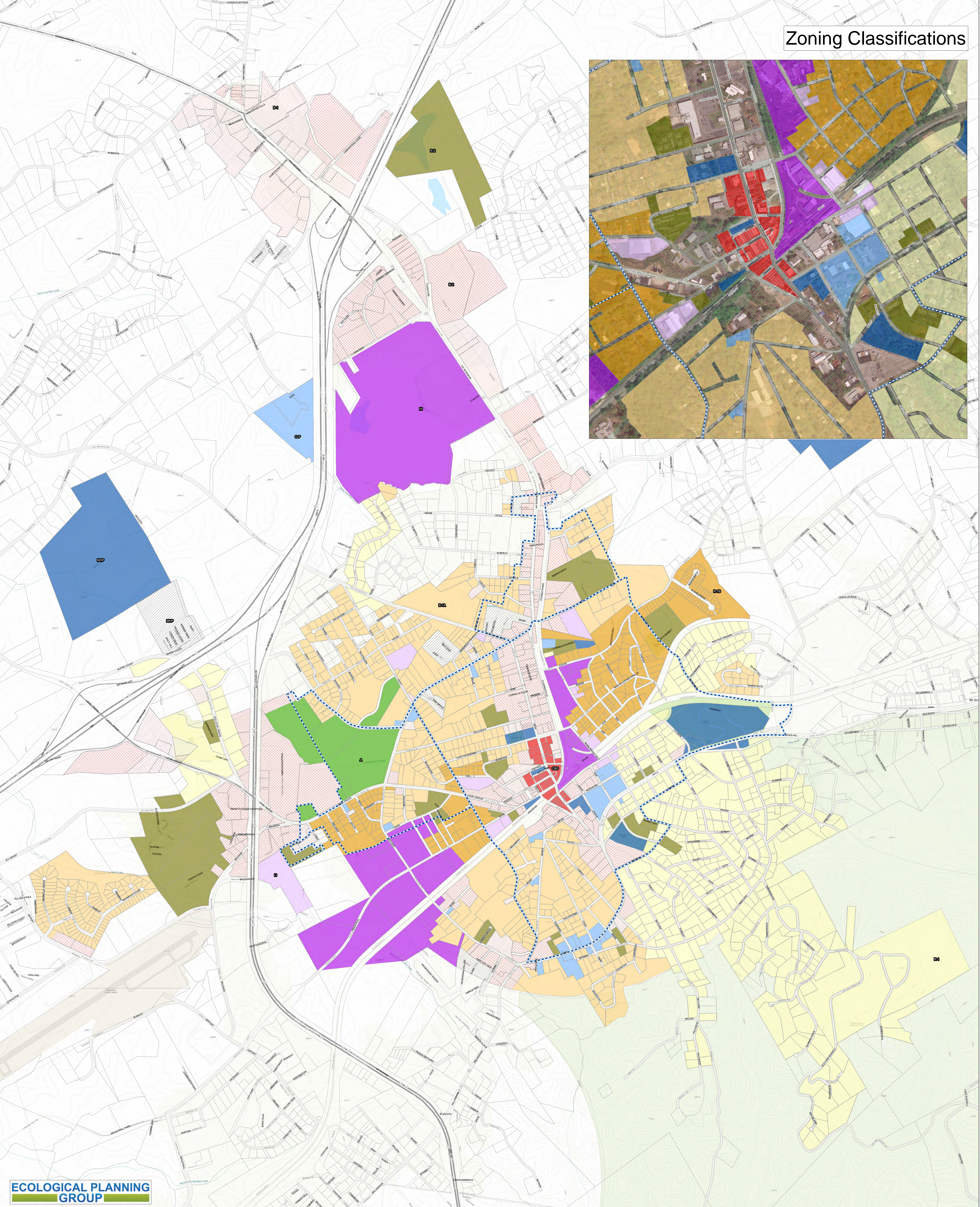
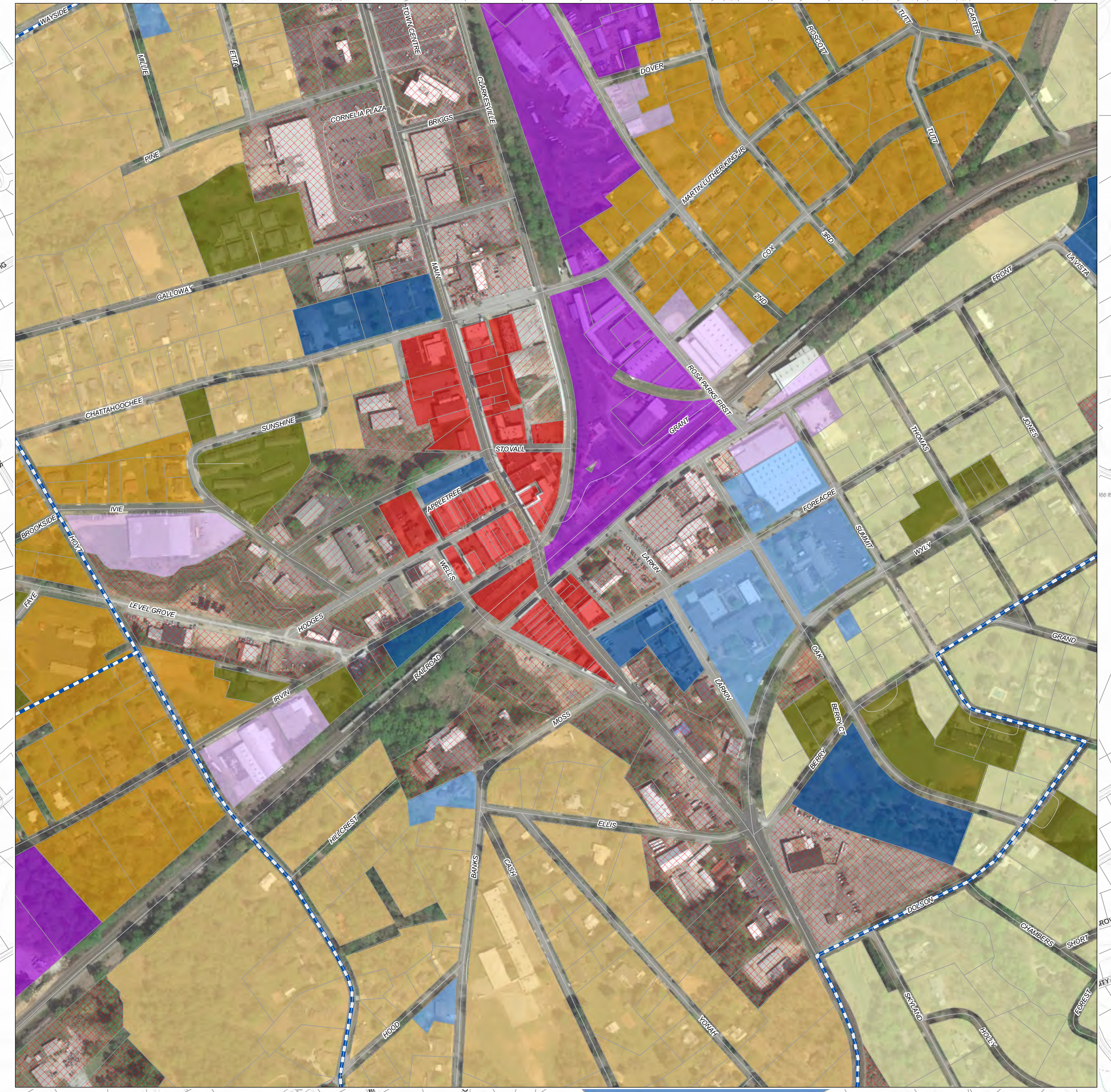
-  Agriculture / Forest
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Parks / Recreation / Conservation
-  Public / Institutional
-  Residential Multi-Family
-  Residential Single-Family
-  Transportation / Communication
-  Undeveloped



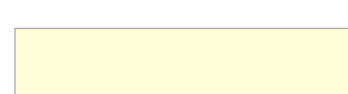
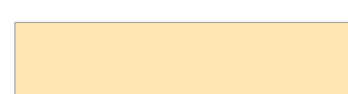



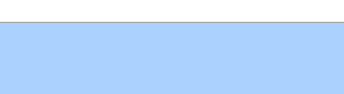
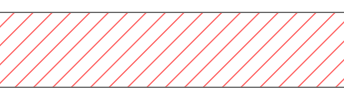
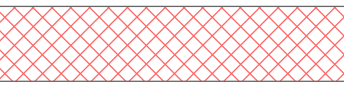







1 inch = 600 feet



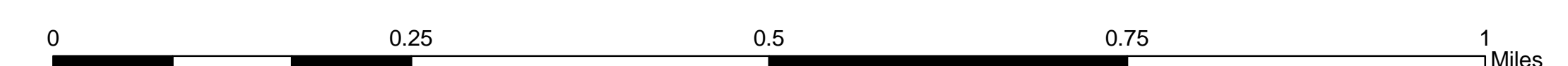
Zoning Classifications



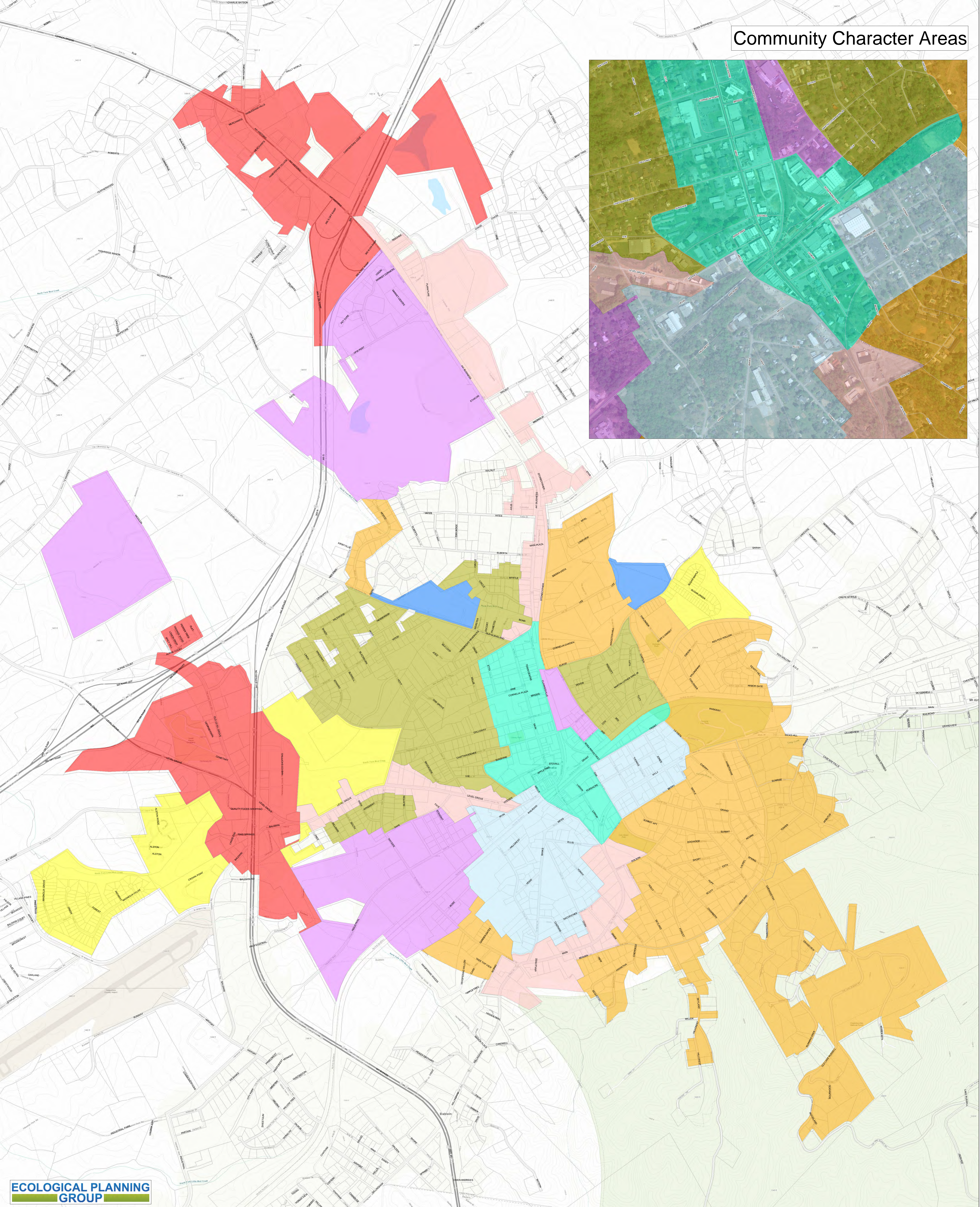
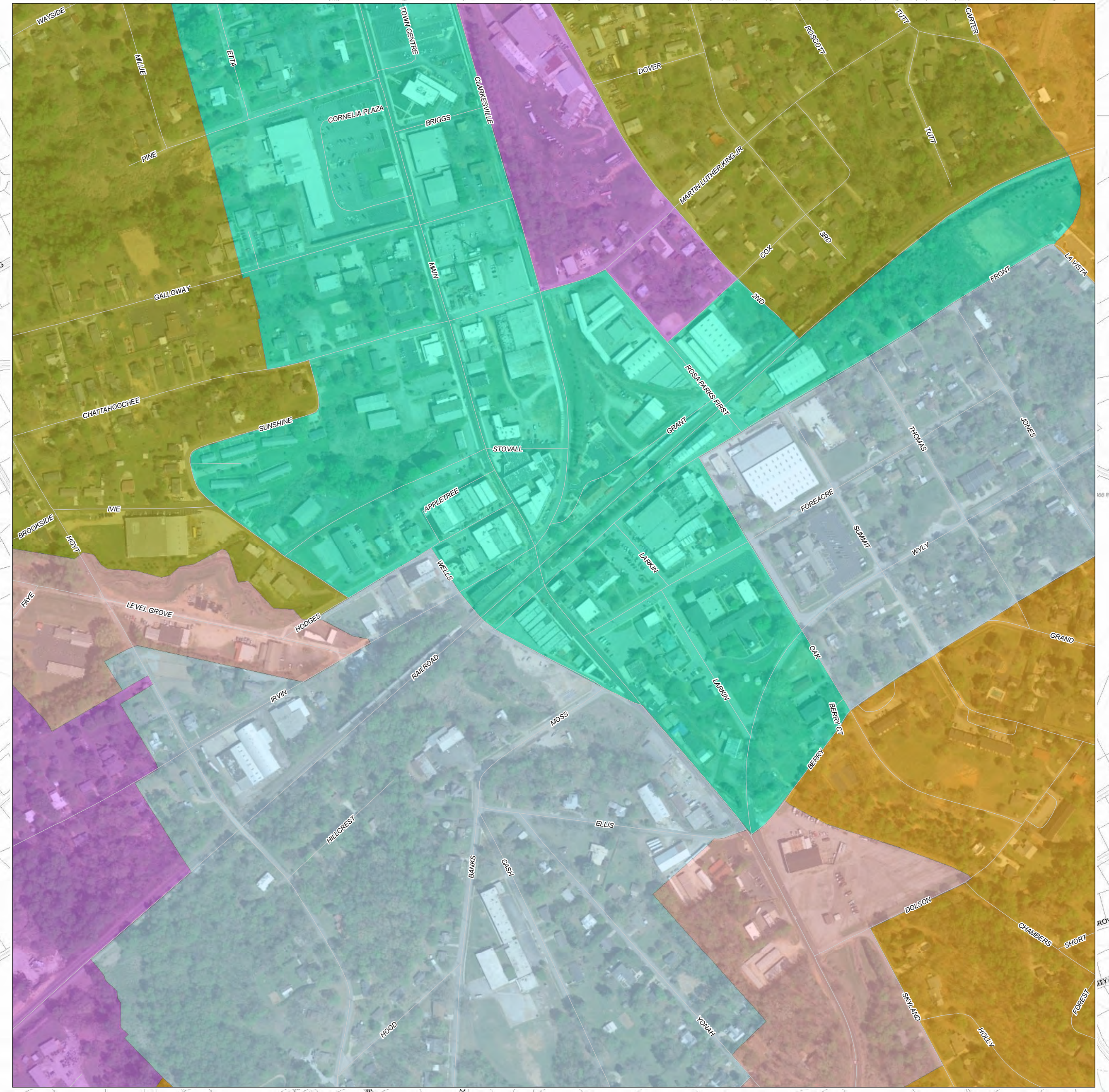
ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP

- Legend**
-  R-1, Single Family Residential
 -  R-1A, Single Family Residential
 -  R-1B, Single Family Residential
 -  R-2, Multi-Family Residential
 -  MHP, Mobile Home Park
 -  O-P, Office Professional
 -  B-1, Neighborhood Business
 -  B-2, General Business
 -  CBD, Central Business District
 -  HI, Heavy Industrial
 -  LI, Light Industrial
 -  MOP, Municipal Owned Property
 -  A, Agriculture
 -  Out Parcels
 -  Zoning Overlay Areas

1 inch = 500 feet



Community Character Areas

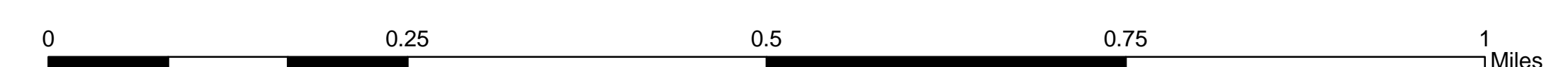


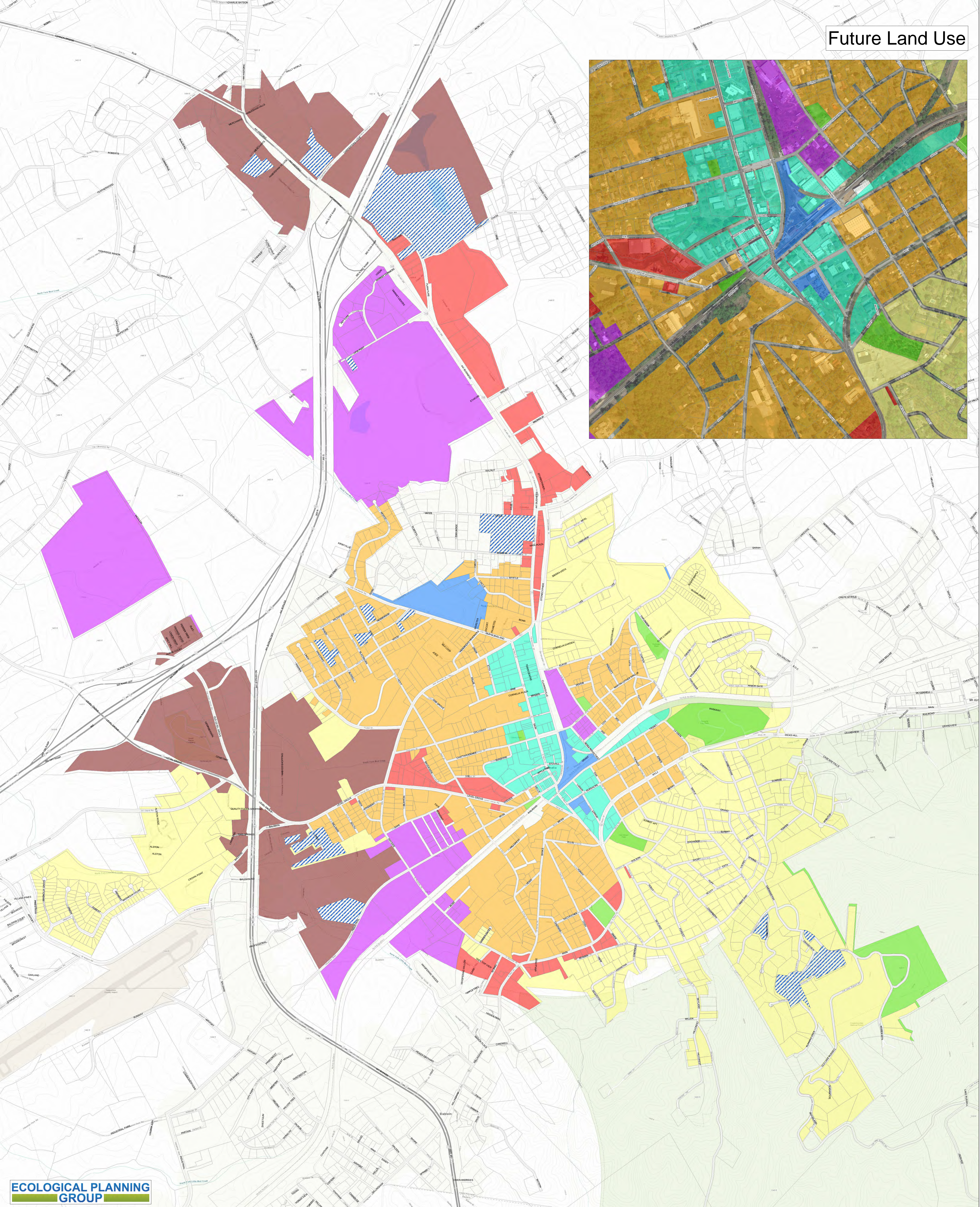
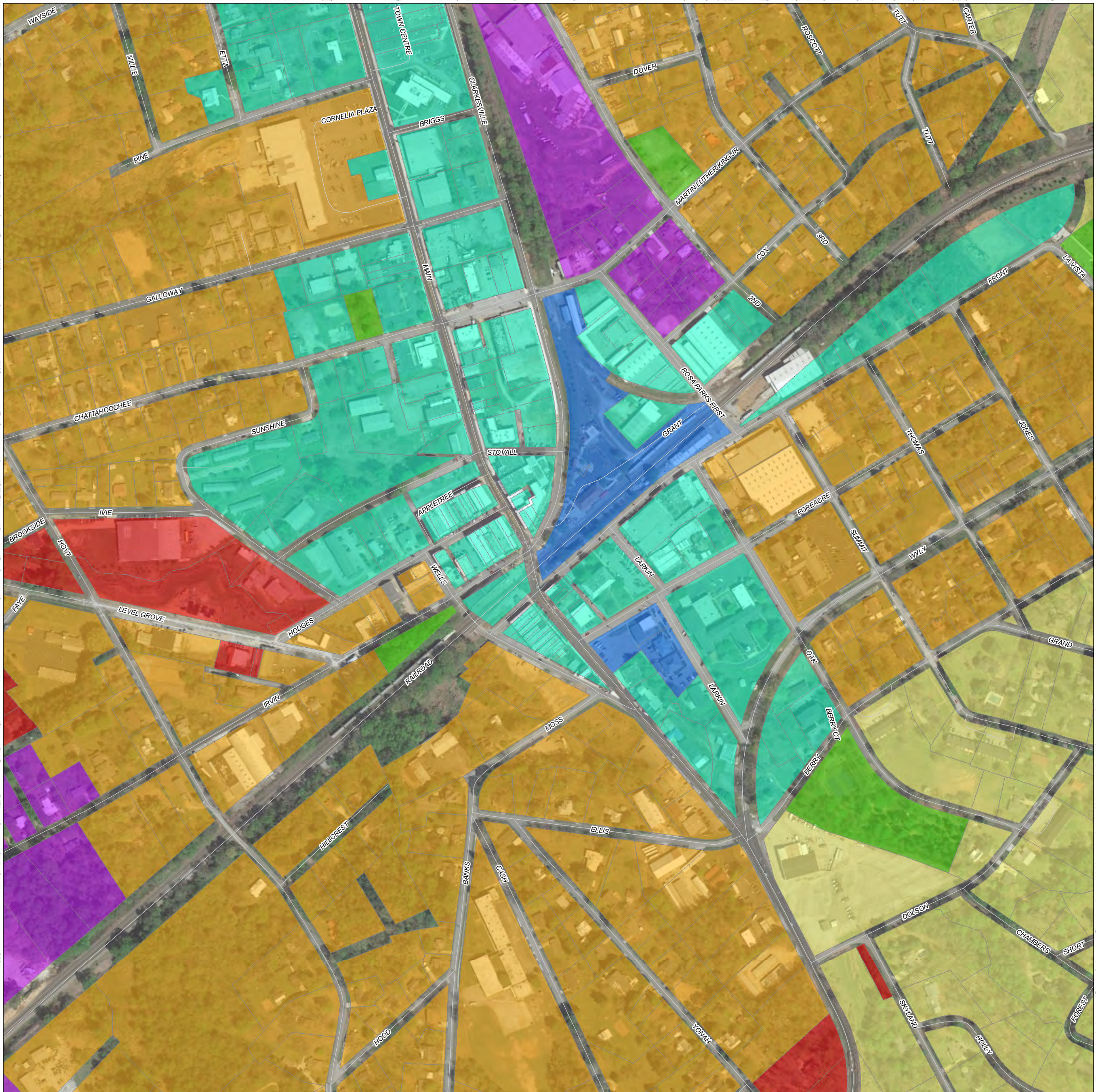
ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP

- Legend**
- Developing Residential
 - Historic Area
 - Downtown
 - Stable Neighborhood
 - Commercial
 - Education Center
 - Revitalization Area
 - Gateway Corridor
 - Industrial



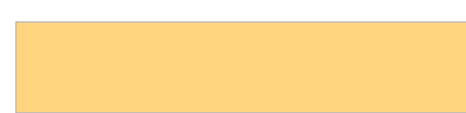

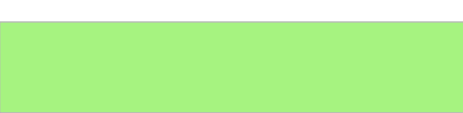
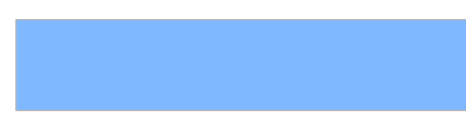

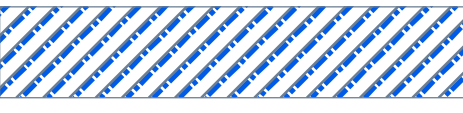


1 inch = 500 feet

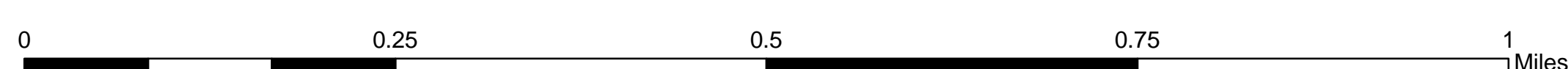




ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP

- Legend**
-  Low Density Residential
 -  Downtown Commercial
 -  Industrial
 -  Moderate Density Residential
 -  Commerical
 -  Parks / Openspace
 -  Public / Institutional
 -  Highway Commercial
 -  Potential Annexations Areas

1 inch = 500 feet



RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF CORNELIA, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE CORNELIA 2018 - 2028 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Cornelia has prepared a 2018 Update to the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1), and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Commission of Cornelia selected a committee of Stakeholders composed of a cross-section of the community, and

WHEREAS, the Stakeholders Committee met regularly over a 12-month period to establish goals, objectives, and strategies to guide the future of the community, and

WHEREAS, Cornelia staff met regularly over the same 12-month period with representatives of other agencies to advise them of the findings of the Committee to solicit their input in preparing the goals, objectives, and strategies to guide the future of the community, and

WHEREAS, Cornelia staff assembled the recommendations of community stakeholders and prepared such other documents in the Comprehensive Plan format required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1), and

WHEREAS, Chapter 110-12-1 of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Local Planning Requirements requires that the Mayor and City Commission of Cornelia approve the document entitled Cornelia 2018 – 2028 Comprehensive Plan prior to forwarding it to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and

WHEREAS, the Cornelia 2018 - 2028 Comprehensive Plan was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1) effective March 1, 2014, and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and includes the community's certification that consideration was given to both the Regional Water Plan and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria as provided in Section 110-12-1-.02(3) of the above mentioned Standards and Procedures in preparing the Plan,

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2018, the City transmitted the Plan to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and,

WHEREAS, the Plan has been found by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to be in compliance with the above-mentioned Minimum Standards and Procedures;

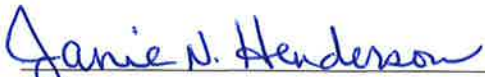
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF CORNELIA, GEORGIA, that the Cornelia 2018 - 2028 Comprehensive Plan is hereby approved and adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City staff be directed to provide a copy of this adoption resolution within seven (7) days of local adoption of the approved Plan to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, and to publicize the availability of the adopted Plan as public information by posting the Plan on the City's website.

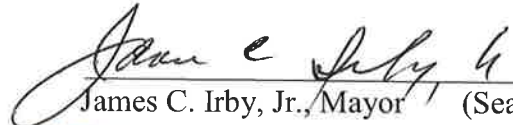
ADOPTED this 4th day of September, 2018.

Attest:

Approved:



Janie Henderson, City Clerk



James C. Irby, Jr., Mayor (Seal)

