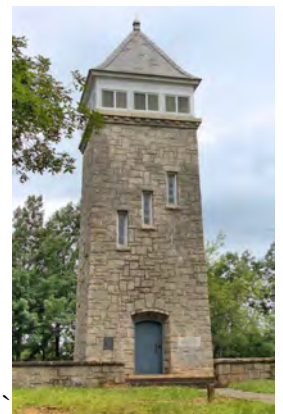
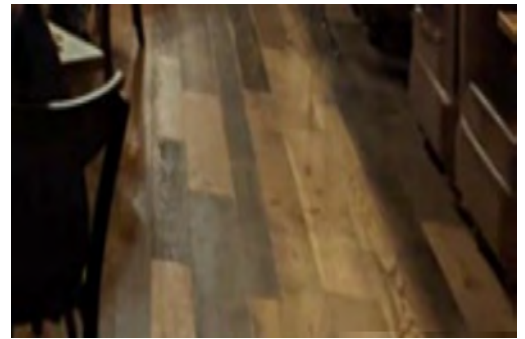


# 2023 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



October, 2023





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**Note:** The 2018 Comprehensive Plan for Cornelia was produced for the city by Ecological Planning Group. Some of that material, particularly in the narratives for the Character Areas, has been carried forward in instances where the City felt no changes were warranted at this time.



# INTRODUCTION

1

## PURPOSE

The purpose of planning and community development is to provide guidance for everyday decision-making by local government officials and other community leaders. Within Georgia, comprehensive plans are seen as both a useful tool for long-term government efficiency and for ensuring sound land use development. Over time, such documents foster a wise use of fiscal and environmental resources, help coordinate community improvements across agencies, and enables citizen input in both fostering a vision for the future and outlining a practical means for achieving that vision. Further, as a measure designed to ensure State programs are being utilized wisely, State regulations require local governments maintain their comprehensive plans in order to have access to various forms of State assistance.

This document, the *City of Cornelia 2023 Comprehensive Plan*, represents the culmination of the efforts to plan for the future well-being for the City. The residents and various stakeholders worked to identify the critical, consensus issues and goals for their communities, and implementing the plan will help the governments address those critical issues and opportunities while moving towards realization of the unique vision for its future. Thus, local planning recognizes that assets can be improved, liabilities can be mitigated, and opportunities can be cultivated.

## Scope

This document addresses the local planning requirements and community development of Cornelia, Ga. Some consideration has been given to those areas and neighboring political entities that influence conditions within the city, however, all the cited issues, objectives, and opportunities discussed herein are solely focused on the City or its partnering agencies.

## Plan Elements

This comprehensive plan serves to meet the requirements and intent of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' *"Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning,"* as amended in 2013, and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. In accordance with those standards, this plan contains at a minimum the following elements:

- *Community Goals/ Vision)*
- *Statement of Needs and Opportunities*
- *Community Work Program*
- *Environmental Compliance Factors*
- *Assessment of Broadband Capacity and Needs*



***"The first step in reaching your destination, is knowing where you want to go."***





## PLANNING PROCESS

Since the comprehensive plan is intended to represent a consensus vision for the community, Georgia's planning standards require opportunities for public participation, including public forums, a means for stakeholders to submit written comments, and an advisory committee involved throughout the process.

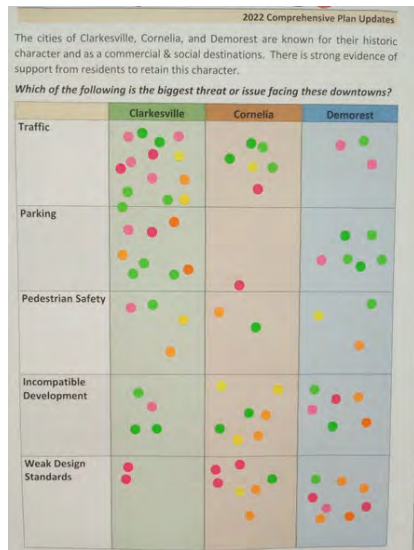
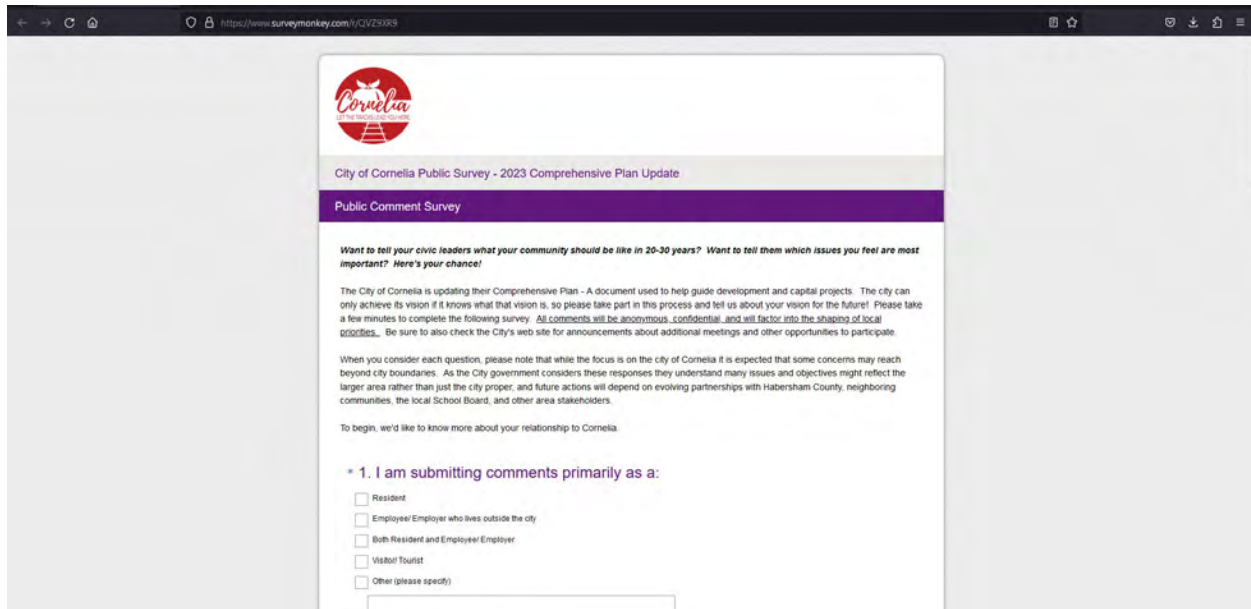
The planning process for Cornelia's Comprehensive Plan began in late 2022 as community leaders considered the scope of work and identified nominees for the Advisory Committee. During this time, the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) worked with local government staff to evaluate needs and performance of local services, utilities, and programs. The GMRC also spoke with neighboring communities and select State agencies to identify any opportunities for collaboration or conflict and assess development forces that might affect the city.

Public hearings were also held in addition to committee meetings. Held across the summer of 2023, the public forums allowed participants to discuss plan elements such as critical needs and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each community. Public comments were also welcome at general City Council meetings, where elected officials would permit suggestions and questions about their respective communities' future.

In addition to public forums, an online survey, available in English and Spanish, was shared via government web sites and promoted across media and online platforms. This survey was available from March through June, ultimately yielding almost 400 unique participants. Participants were asked about such topics as their prospects for growth, primary needs in the areas of economic development and housing, and their overall satisfaction with various public services and facilities. Survey results provided key insight into the perceptions and desires of many residents, giving the Advisory Committee valuable material as they shaped the plan's objectives and priorities according to citizen interests.

*(Evidence of public participation, including copies of sign in sheets and a summary of survey results, are included in the Appendix.)*






**YOUR OPINION MATTERS**


**LAST DAY TO ACCESS SURVEY IS MAY 31ST**

**Cornelia**

**HELP SHAPE CORNELIA'S FUTURE**

**TAKE OUR 10 MIN SURVEY**

ENGLISH  [www.surveymonkey.com/j/1QVZ5X9R9](https://www.surveymonkey.com/j/1QVZ5X9R9)

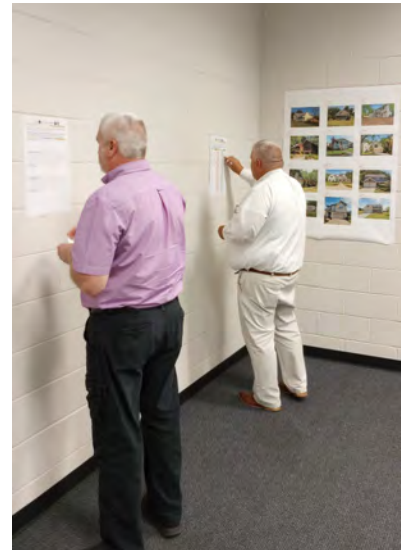
SPANISH  [www.surveymonkey.com/j/6XHE33M6](https://www.surveymonkey.com/j/6XHE33M6)

**UPDATE THE CITY OF CORNELIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This planning process is designed to ensure that MAJOR PROJECTS AND POLICIES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE DEVELOPED WITH PUBLIC INPUT

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

For any questions or comments, please contact Adam Hazel | 770.315.2671 | ahazel@gmrcga.gov



*“Cornelia has such a rich history surrounding the trains and the Big Red Apple...I could see the downtown really coming to life if some of the focus was put back onto that rich history...and celebrated with more small business allowed to move into the downtown square.”*





# COMMUNITY VISION

2

## Identification of Community Ideals in a Simply Expressed and Understood Statement

The *Minimum Standards* defines a community vision as something “... intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.” Visioning helps communities consider the “big picture” while defining their ideal future and the best path to that future. As a process, this requires people to reflect on their current state and consider what elements of their community they wish to preserve, and which elements they wish to improve.

### COMMUNITY PROFILE



Once a small railroad town along the short-line track that served the region, **Cornelia** evolved into a modest hub of commercial and goods production within Habersham County. Cornelia today is a Main Street community with a proactive spirit that’s always working to strengthen their economy and community spirit. The city has leveraged its location at the juncture of key transportation corridors to foster business and population growth, as well as investing in several historic sites and facilities that help define Cornelia’s character. Today, Cornelia is at the center of economic activity in Habersham County, part of the Business 441 corridor that provides the bulk of area commerce.

Total Population Estimates				
	2010	2022	2010 - 2022	
<b>Habersham County</b>	<b>43,058</b>	<b>47,475</b>	<b>4,417</b>	<b>10.3%</b>
Alto (pt.)	680	621	-59	-8.7%
Baldwin (pt.)	2,562	3,166	604	23.6%
Clarksville	1,711	2,112	401	23.4%
<b>Cornelia</b>	<b>4,194</b>	<b>5,004</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
Demorest	1,865	2,056	191	10.2%
Mount Airy	1,235	1,446	211	17.1%
Tallulah Falls (pt.)	97	82	-15	-15.5%
Balance of Habersham	30,714	32,988	2,274	7.4%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

Located in the northeastern Georgia Mountains, Cornelia is a growing city with access to a variety of region amenities. Tourists visit the region throughout the year to experience the Appalachian Mountains, area waterfalls and parks, wineries, and more. Communities like Cornelia capitalize on tourism with festivals and events, and by offering unique downtown settings for area visitors.

The setting has also buoyed opportunities for housing and goods production, as well. Residents and employers seeking a hometown with access to a variety of amenities and outdoor recreation see the appeal in Cornelia’s location and sense of community. Companies like Fieldale and Ethicon now call Cornelia home, providing an economic base beyond tourism that allows the City to prosper.





Now Cornelia is looking toward a future where the region is expecting more growth and development, and the nature of economic development is rapidly evolving. The City is coordinating with neighbors to pursue industrial expansion, while at the same time working to preserve the character of their historic downtown and adjoining neighborhoods.

## VISION AND GOALS

A vision for the community's future must be included in the comprehensive plan. The community vision is intended to provide a complete picture of what the community desires to become. The community vision must be based on public input, the assessment of current and future needs and be supported by the goals, policies and objectives in the comprehensive plan. In addition, there must be consistency between the community vision and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Quality Community Objectives as well as consistency with the community visions of other communities within the region.

The vision statement for Cornelia originated from previous planning cycles derived from the various comments and suggestions raised during public meetings and through the available survey process. The updated statement encapsulates the basic principles and values desired by existing residents and stakeholders, with an emphasis on desires to retain their communities' existing character amidst the potential for projected economic development. Any amendments were derived from the words used by residents to illustrate values they feel describe the city as it is today *AND* that they desire to see embodied a generation from now. The vision statement, then, reflects the general direction of Cornelia favored by area residents and key stakeholders.



### Most Common Values Cited in 2023 Planning Process

*Safe*  
*Charming*  
*Beautiful*  
*Clean*  
*Affordable*  
*Fun*  
*Welcoming*  
*Thriving*  
*Home/ Hometown*  
*Small Town Appeal*  
*Friendly*  
*Vibrant*

*"If we keep Cornelia a great place to live, work, and play, then we will continue to grow and thrive."*







City of Cornelia Vision Statement

*“Cornelia, Georgia, will be a safe, clean, and economically viable city that maintains its heritage, supports a vibrant downtown, provides quality recreation amenities and cultural events, celebrates community spirit, supports a thriving economy, and maintains a high quality of life for all.”*



**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





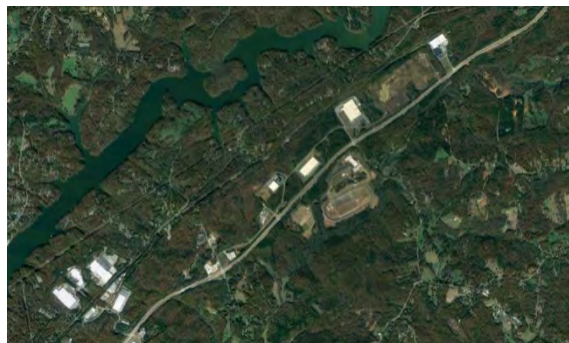
## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3

Land use management policies and capital improvement programs will shape development patterns that affect growth and the management of sensitive social and environmental areas. Communities should assess their current and projected conditions to identify needs regarding the built environment and how to efficiently service the community in the future.

### DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND INFLUENCES

Just south of Habersham and Cornelia, **the I-985/ GA 365 corridor in Hall County is growing rapidly with industry.** Buoyed by amenities like 2 universities, a regional medical center, and Lake Lanier, Hall County is projected to add another 100,000 residents within the next 25 years. To maximize the economy for such potential growth, the City and its partners are actively working to utilize the highway as a harbor for goods production and related industrial activity. Home to large employers such as Kubota, Cottrell, and King’s Hawaiian, this corridor will also become site of the Georgia Port Authority’s next inland port – A rail port just north of Gainesville used to expedite freight transport between northeast Georgia and the port of Savannah. It is presumed the bulk of GA 365 between Gainesville and Lula will continue to see industrial activity, fostering development which may likewise seep into the Cornelia area.



*Industrial development along GA 365, and an inland port comparable to one proposed for Gainesville.*

One trend in regional development is **the growing importance of the shipping and warehousing industry.** As both households and businesses rely more and more heavily on the direct delivery of goods, the facilities needed to store and manage transport of these goods are becoming more common and more dispersed. Though the largest distribution centers remain clustered near key arterial intersections, smaller facilities are locating in more diverse suburban and rural locations. Such developments can impact traffic patterns, exacerbate flood issues in sensitive areas, and attract other comparable uses. They can also provide another non-residential source of property taxes, some employment, and equate to faster delivery of some goods.

Similar to GA 365, **US 441 in Banks County has similar potential for economic development.** While much less developed at the moment, and with Banks County actively searching for ways to preserve its rural character, US 441 may not see as much industrial activity introduced in the next generation, but it will grow increasingly vital as a freight corridor and is expected to absorb some development in Baldwin/





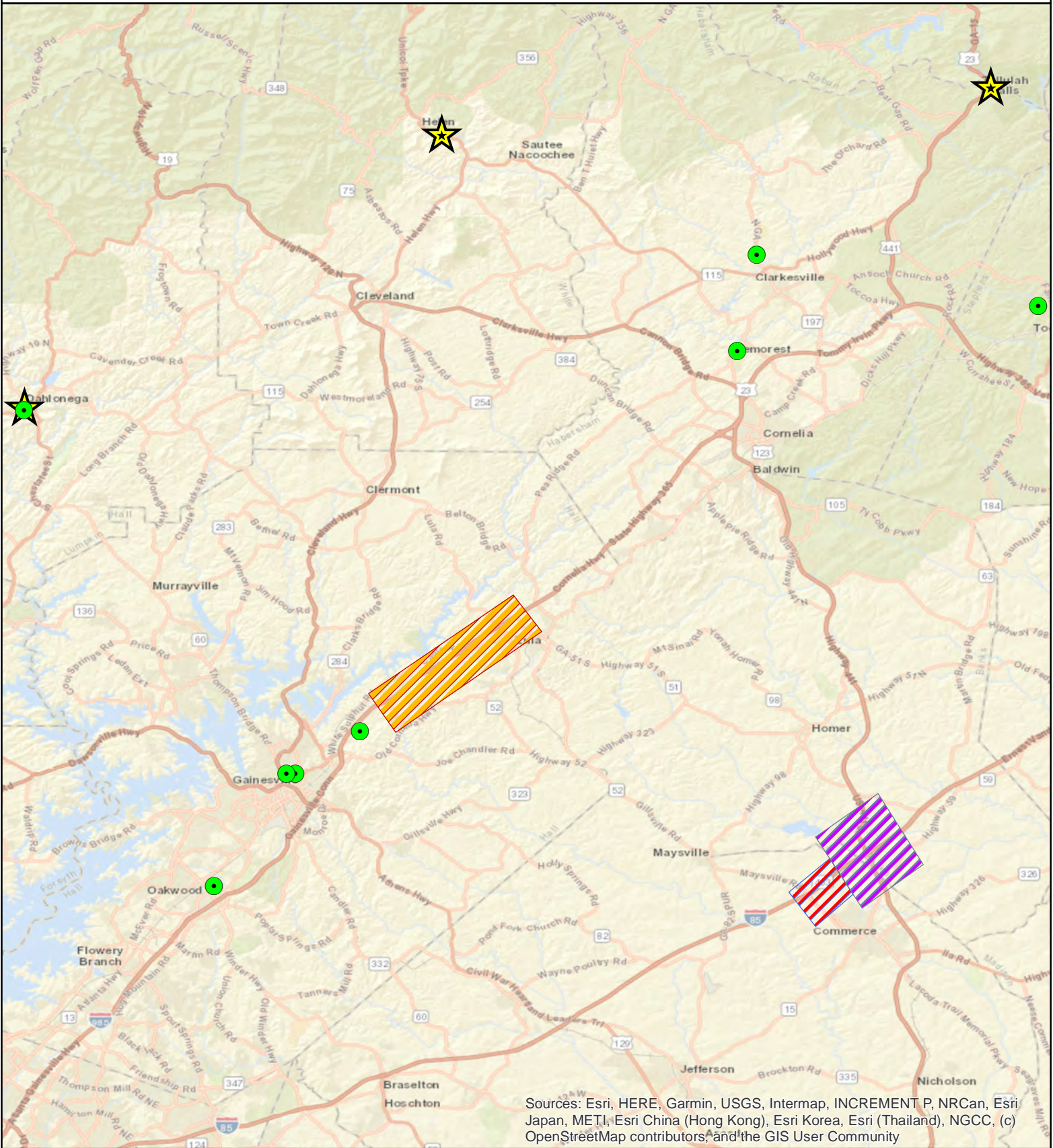
Cornelia area and further south in Banks Crossing. Though 15 miles away, it is that access to I-85 and the regional retail centers at Banks Crossing that may signal a future wave of growth coming toward Cornelia from the southeast. The I-85 corridor is rapidly developing and will need to be widened all the way out to the State line. Pending forces in Banks County and their plans to manage growth, some of this activity may drive development into Cornelia and the surrounding area.

Though Cornelia is credibly served for communications access, ***there remains an ever-increasing demand for broadband capacity across all sectors of the community.*** Similar to how water and sewer lines were once the anchor draws for economic development, today most businesses and residents seek access to the highest speed and capacity of broadband service due to the increasing importance of the internet in all aspects of our lives. Schools, medical offices, retail outlets, governments, and even religious institutions rely on their online activities to facilitate operation. Residents use the internet for entertainment, to pay bills, to communicate with others, work from home, and for varieties of shopping. This means local governments are all the more dependent on supporting a service that not only provides high capacity but also can reach as much of their community as possible.

An assessment of the region's economy finds ***tourism remains strong despite the pandemic.*** The presence of the mountains, waterfalls, and lakes within the area's many parks, National Forests, and wildlife management areas means there will always be high demand for and from visitors to the area. Several communities remain heavily tourist-oriented, including nearby Helen, while many others still count on visitors for a significant part of their economies. As a result, there are abundant opportunities for retail and hospitality services, including short-term rentals, in select areas.







# Area Development Forces



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

### Legend

-  Banks Crossing/Commerce Industrial Corridor
-  Inland Port Industrial Corridor
-  Pendergrass Industrial Area
-  Medical Institutions/Colleges and Universities



Tourist Destination





**PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Public facilities and services are those elements vital to a population’s health, safety, and welfare that are most effectively provided by the public sector, such as sewerage, law enforcement and school services. This element examines the community’s ability to adequately serve the present and projected demands for such services, identifying concerns with the spatial distribution and conditions affecting service delivery. These assessments can then assist in projecting future demands and in planning future capital improvement projects.



The Department Heads for Cornelia were surveyed for their thoughts on the existing levels of performance and needs for their department in order to sustain levels of service as the city grows and changes. Based on responses received, only a few departments have a need for long-range plans and budgets for capital projects: Public Works, Public Utilities, the Fire Department, and the Police Department. Of these there is minimal need for any particular improvements in the near term. Cornelia has done well to complete recent utility upgrades during a recent down cycle, and the completed City Hall and new fire station alleviate other major concerns while providing room for future expansion.

Department	Long-range plan and budget?	How long until levels of service demand capital improvements?
Public Works	Yes	1-5 years
Cornelia Fire Department	Yes	1-5 years
Public Utilities	Yes	6-10 years
Police	Yes	1-5 years

**What new capital investments or increases in personnel would be required if the City grew?**

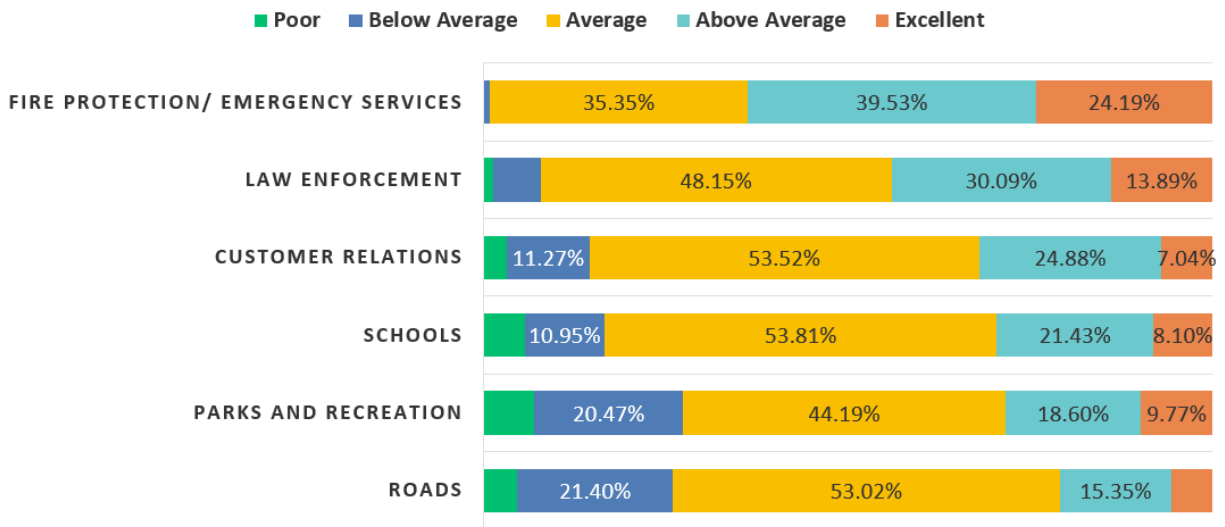
<b>Public Works</b>	“Depends on growth”
<b>Fire Department</b>	“Fire Department Training Center, 100' Aerial Apparatus, Proper and adequate staffing”
<b>Economic Dev.</b>	“Rails to Trails completion FINALLY, new parking lot in downtown, sidewalk improvements, more messaging and signage, parks upgrades”
<b>Public Utilities</b>	“Additional 100 MG of raw water storage. Add another 3-person crew for the Water/Sewer/Stormwater Maintenance. Add 2 positions for the WPCP. Add another position to the Drinking Water Treatment Plant.”
<b>Police</b>	“With the addition of personnel, equipment for the officer as well as vehicles and equipment for the vehicle.”





Participants in the public survey scored most public services average or above average. Roads and Parks and Recreation drew the lowest overall scores, with the former being cited for both traffic congestion and safety at key points. The biggest concerns for parks revolve around both a desire for more facilities around the city and a variety of new recreation options, particularly passive use options like trails

**Q9: On a scale of 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Excellent), please rate your current level of satisfaction with the City's following public services:**



*“It is very difficult to balance growth against maintaining a small town feel and pleasing both the long-established residents and new residents demands. With growth comes other problems. Cornelia needs to find that balance.”*

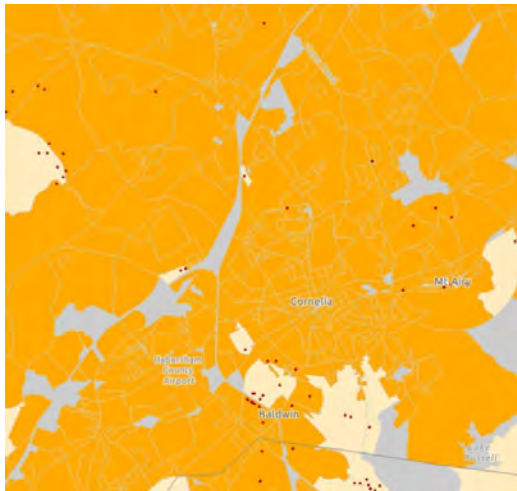




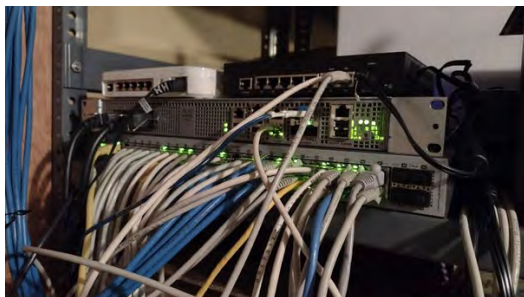
## Broadband Assessment

The growing importance of access to reliable and high-speed, high-capacity internet connections cannot be overestimated. Unserved and underserved areas of Georgia will not remain economically competitive without sufficient internet infrastructure, as this technology becomes the default utility for all manners of communication. To address this issue the Georgia General Assembly amended the provisions of local planning in Georgia by passing the "Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act" to facilitate the enhancement and extension of internet access in communities. The ACE Act requires all local governments to incorporate the "promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services" into their local plan. Once these are in place the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Economic Development will identify and promote facilities and developments that offer broadband services at a rate of not less than 1 gigabit per second in the downstream to end users that can be accessed for business, education, health care, government.

One of the first products to come out of the Georgia Broadband Initiative was an inventory of general conditions across the State regarding access to high speed/ high-capacity broadband technology. Utilizing demographic data from the US Census Bureau and cross-referencing that information with knowledge of broadband infrastructure, the Department of Community Affairs produced a series of maps depicting the state of broadband accessibility in rural areas.



According to the Georgia Broadband ready information, as of 2023, about 3% of Habersham households still remain without access to sufficient broadband service. The bulk of these properties lie in rural blocks to the north end of the county, however, with only select blocks in Cornelia showing gaps. Overall, Cornelia is among the well served communities in the Georgia Mountain region when it comes to broadband accessibility. In the near term, Cornelia is well-equipped to handle future broadband needs. Downtown Cornelia now hosts both the North Georgia Network (NGN) and a national broadband residential leader "Point Broadband" (who acquired the for-profit corporate subsidiary previously owned by NGN). Point broadband now owns many of the fiber lines in our region, and their offices are in Cornelia.



### Priorities for Future Network Enhancements

- Ability to increase "last mile" connections
- Assistance with last-mile connections along Hwy 365 corridor in projected industrial areas





## PUBLIC COMMENT AND COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The Cornelia online surveys yielded more than 350 unique responses, while the public meetings allowed additional opportunities for input. Combined, their comments and ideas provided insight into the prevailing interests and concerns of the general populace of Cornelia and the various municipalities. This information was collected and presented to the Advisory Committee, contributing to the basis for selecting Plan priorities and objectives.

The bulk of public comments received were in consensus with their preference for maintaining safety and a rural lifestyle in the face of oncoming growth, and that while some change was desired, the form of that change and growth should be managed to preserve existing neighborhoods without disrupting the sense of community already in place. Many respondents expressed concern regarding the prospects for increased crime accompanying growth in the area, especially in the short-term if law enforcement departments were understaffed to meet growing need. There was also concern about the nature of criminal activity evolving as the community became more suburban.

There was some concern that Cornelia still has vacant, dilapidated, or underutilized land that could be used by new businesses and residents. Participants felt efforts should be directed at making these properties viable and active before concentrating too greatly on developing new land. This was especially true for housing where participants want to see established neighborhoods full and thriving and see older and distressed properties revitalized. It is an active goal for the City of Cornelia to focus on infill development, particularly regarding housing, in an effort to strengthen neighborhoods and better sustain the local economy by working with landowners to revitalize vacant and dilapidated properties.

Additional areas of focus included quality of life amenities, such as parks, roads and entertainment options. Roads and parks both scored passing grades among survey participants, but they also scored the lowest among public facilities and services in Cornelia. Much of the road issue was attributed to traffic and safety issues along main arterials. The parks issue, meanwhile, could be paired with a lot of calls for additional entertainment options and retail in the area. Residents appreciate existing park facilities while acknowledging there is room to add amenities, redevelop some spaces, and strengthen the parks for more users in the future.







## SWOT Analysis



One facet of the public input process asks residents and stakeholders to assess their community’s respective Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. In doing this analysis, communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions to better achieve the desired vision.

Via both the online surveys and during public forums, participants were asked to identify those things they considered key assets about their community as things they didn’t want to change or were critical to achieving positive growth. For weaknesses, residents offered those elements of Cornelia that needed improvement or were seen as a liability in achieving desired progress. For Opportunities, participants were invited to nominate unique ideas or possible projects and policies that might advance the community in a positive way. Lastly, residents were asked about outside forces or trends that posed a risk or negative impacts to the area.

STRENGTHS/ KEY ASSETS	WEAKNESSES/ LIABILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown (Historic buildings)</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Small-town charm</li> <li>• Location (Accessible but remote)</li> <li>• Parks/ Community House/ Depot</li> <li>• Festival/ Community events</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• Commercial options (Retail, dining, etc)</li> <li>• Sense of safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need affordable housing options</li> <li>• Vacant/ Dilapidated properties</li> <li>• “Lack of” commercial/ entertainment options</li> <li>• Road conditions &amp; traffic</li> <li>• Coordination with neighboring communities</li> <li>• Homelessness &amp; panhandling</li> <li>• Limited funding resources</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES/ UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES	THREATS/ OUTSIDE RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential of downtown</li> <li>• More parks &amp; trails</li> <li>• Growth can mean more commercial options</li> <li>• Jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth can be unmanaged and have negative impacts</li> <li>• Possible increase in cost of living</li> <li>• Possible increase in crime, vagrancy, etc.</li> <li>• Failure to bridge social divides</li> <li>• Traffic congestion</li> <li>• Lack of coordination with other communities &amp; agencies</li> </ul>





*“It makes my heart happy to go to Cornelia...it reminds me of my town when I was little. I feel like neighbors seem more like family and everyone is super friendly. I love that the residents on Tower Mountain host Halloween each year!”*

The following issues and opportunities were the most commonly raised themes during the public input process. As best as possible, and with acceptance of the limitations of local government finances and abilities, the City of Cornelia should strive to act on the priorities listed below.



- **Maintain Public Safety**
- **Maintain Small-town Character**
- **Continue to Invest in Historic Town Center**
- **Minimizing Impacts of Growth**
- **Target Low Property Taxes\* & Budget Efficiency**
- **Support Local Labor Force**
- **Continue to Invest in “Community”**
- **Prioritize Intergovernmental Coordination**
- **Seek to Repair/ Upgrade Housing Stock**
- **Focus on Sustaining/ Improving Neighborhoods**
- **Emphasize Efficiency of utilities**
- **Invest in Parks**





## AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

Analysis of prevailing development trends assists in the identification of preferred patterns for future growth. More specifically such analyses can identify those areas requiring special attention regarding management policies, such as natural or cultural resources likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development. As part of this process, stakeholders and local governments are encouraged to evaluate the presence of subsets of their communities subject to special circumstances such as:

- ✓ *Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur*
- ✓ *Areas where the pace of development has/ may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation*
- ✓ *Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness*
- ✓ *Large, abandoned structures or sites, including possible environmental contamination.*
- ✓ *Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites).*
- ✓ *Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole*

Upon consideration of development trends and land use issues in Cornelia, the following priorities stand out for the 2023 planning period:

The Industrial Boulevard corridor stretches westward from downtown, providing access to the Fieldale Farms industrial site and to US 441. It marks the transition between the urban neighborhoods around downtown to the more suburban scale outside city limits, and the corridor has vacant land that could be developed for either form. The City sees the land as having potential for additional industrial activity that could strengthen the tax base and employment options in the area, but there may also be opportunities for a park on the southeast side of town or some other development.

Just outside of city limits is a **Potential Industrial Service Area** that has been promoted by the City and other stakeholders as a site for future goods production or some other job creation activity. The site lies adjacent to the City's wastewater treatment facility and is readily served by utilities, while also being removed from urban scale residential activity and having access to GA 365.

Natural resources, particularly water resources, are of special concern as Cornelia and the whole region experiences population growth and associated housing and commercial development. Greenspace planning and preservation will also be important to achieve preservation of natural resources and provision of recreation facilities and transportation alternatives for residents. It is important to encourage development in the areas planned for infrastructure expansion. Additionally, planning for future infrastructure expansions should be coordinated with and guided by land use planning that is consistent with a comprehensive vision for growth and development.

The **Historic 441 Gateway corridor** leads from downtown out toward the regional commercial activity along Business 441 at the intersection with GA 365. This stretch marks the transition from traditional urban scale blocks and structures into the larger, auto-oriented uses seen between Cornelia and Demorest. This corridor is prime for infill, has been proposed for a pedestrian path, and could be developed in a way to enhance the downtown district for entertainment and retail.





Cornelia has identified a few properties in/ adjacent to downtown as **Revitalization Areas**, with prime opportunities to take underutilized or vacant properties and foster adaptive reuse that would enhance the appeal of downtown as a tourism and entertainment district. There are opportunities for potential public uses, such as parks or amphitheater spaces, or for infill development with more commercial functions.

**Environmental Assessment**

Local governments in Georgia must demonstrate compliance with applicable State and federal environmental resource protection measures, and local water withdrawal and discharge permit holders must illustrate any measures required to restore or maintain local water quality. There are several listed stream segments within Cornelia, predominantly for fecal coliform and Biota impairment. As the area grows the city must work to ensure stream banks and buffer areas are protected. The following summarizes the policy requirements applicable to Cornelia, which is currently in compliance with their respective State water management plan (Coosa-North Georgia) and with the Department of Natural Resource Part V development criteria.

State Environmental Planning Criteria	Cornelia	
	Applicable	Stds. in place?
Water Supply Watersheds	Y	Y
Wetlands	Y	Y
Groundwater Recharge Areas	Y	Y
Protected River Corridors	N	NA
Steep Slopes	N	NA
Protected Mountains	N	NA
Coastal Areas	N	NA
<b>Clean Water Act Compliance</b>		
		<b>Actions Needed?</b>
303(d) listed waterbodies	Y	N
305(b) listed waterbodies	Y	N

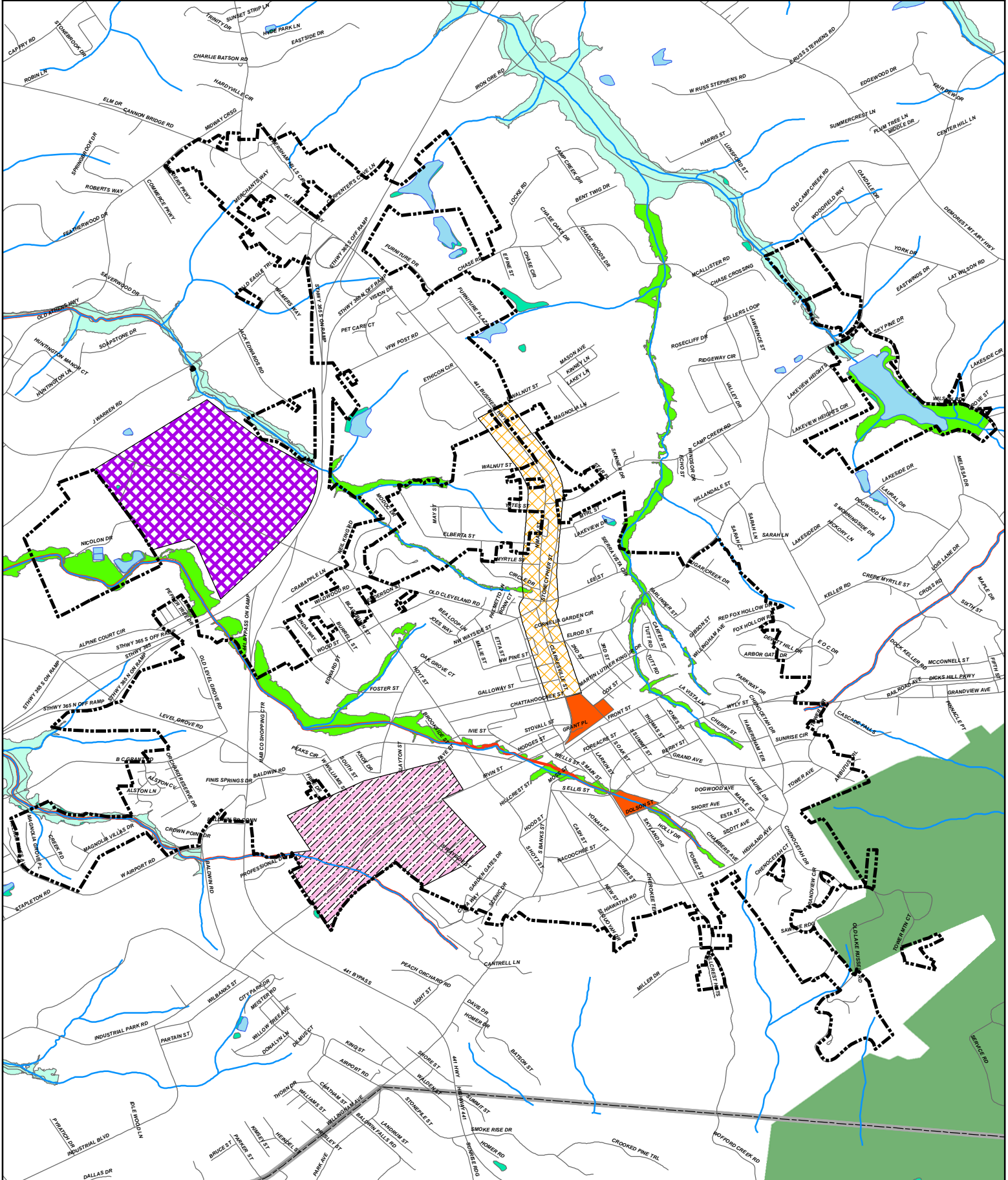


**State Listed Water Bodies in Habersham County (2020)**

NAME	LOCATION	SIZE (miles)	CAUSE	SOURCE
<b>Supporting or Assessment Pending</b>				
Camp Creek	North Tributary to Wells Pond Tributary	1.0	Trichloroethane	I2
North Fork Little Mud Creek	Headwaters to Little Mud Creek	3.0		
South Fork Mud Creek	Headwaters to Mud Creek (Cornelia)	2.0		
<b>Non-Supporting</b>				
Little Mud Creek	Confluence of N. and S. Forks to Mud Creek	9.0	Bio F, FC	NP
Mud Creek	Headwaters to Little Mud Creek	13.0	FC, Bio F	NP
<b>Legend</b>				
*	Assessment Pending	<b>FC</b>	Fecal Coliform	
<b>NS</b>	Not Supporting	<b>NP</b>	Nonpoint source pollution	
<b>Bio F</b>	Biota – Fish Impairment			



# City of Cornelia Areas Requiring Special Attention



## Legend

- |                   |                               |                             |                                   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Municipalities    | Habersham County DFIRM - 2018 | National Wetlands Inventory | Historic 441 Gateway              |
| Roads             | A                             | Protected Mountain          | Industrial Boulevard Corridor     |
| 305b 303d Streams | AE                            | Ground Water Recharge Areas | Potential Industrial Service Area |
| Protected Rivers  | GMRC Conservation Lands       | Revitalization Area         |                                   |





## RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS

Character area planning is designed to focus on the physical appearance (aesthetics) and function of a particular area. Development strategies are tailored and applied to each individual area. The goal is to enhance the existing character/function or promote a new, more desirable character for the future. Character areas identify portions of the community that have a unique or special character that needs to be preserved or require special attention because of unique development issues.

A key component of the comprehensive planning process is the development of a Character Area Map that reflects the communities' vision for future growth and development during the course of the planning period. This vision was developed through an extensive public visioning process and expresses the unique character of various portions of the county. The various character areas, when combined, form a single map that is intended to supplement the Future Development Map by organizing common themes of development patterns throughout the county. They promote the desired development patterns guiding the design of structures and physical development. They also provide a framework for changes to development regulation and policies. Finally, they help to guide future zoning decisions.

### 2023 Character Areas for Cornelia

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





## STABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

This area represents existing stable residential neighborhoods. Most of the city's parks are located in these areas. The current distribution of land use in this area is mainly residential (65%) and undeveloped (25%).

### Zoning Suitability:

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

- 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

Over 90% of land area is currently zoned residential. Less than 3% is zoned general business and is already developed with a commercial use.



### 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. 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 specified areas.
- Improved and consistent code enforcement regulations.
- Encourage infill development by approving smaller lot sizes.







## HISTORIC AREAS

This area includes the historic residential areas located south-east and south-west of the railroad tracks adjacent to the downtown district. 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 designations as historic districts.
- 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, Planet Fitness, TJ Maxx, and Lowes. 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

Much of this land is currently zoned as a Highway Business District. In evaluating the type of developments more suitable for this area, the general commercial category appears to be more appropriate in most cases.



### Future Development Strategies

- 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. 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

Downtown Cornelia consists of several blocks reaching outward from the intersection of Main Street and Clarkesville St./ Irwin St. It is the traditional downtown setting of the city, including historic buildings dating back to the 1890s, sidewalks, parks, and more. Renovation and redevelopment of the historic structures in this area is needed to rejuvenate the downtown area. The downtown area consists of a mix of commercial (75%), residential (13%), public/institutional (6%), and undeveloped (7%). The share of commercial space in the downtown area can be a catalyst for redevelopment and economic development goals. A significant number of vacant buildings remain 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 this area is 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

- Review and modify the extent of CBD and B-2 zoned properties in the downtown area
- Use opportunity zone designation for revitalization and economic development
- 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
- Renovate/ revitalize 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 entrepreneurship





**EDUCATION CENTER**

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

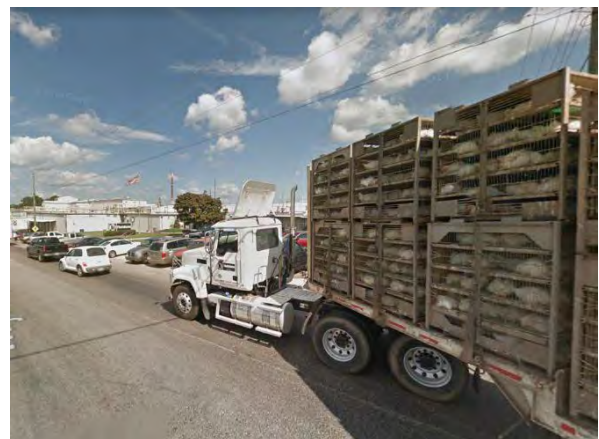
This area currently houses the City's Water/WWTP, Ethicon, Fieldale Farms along with some smaller industries. This area contains primarily industrial land, the majority of which is occupied by the City's two major industrial players - Ethicon and Fieldale Farms. Public/institutional also has a large percentage (33%) of area due to the City's water/wastewater treatment facilities. Undeveloped (10%), commercial (7%), and 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 make up less than 10% of the remaining area. Expect this area to continue to house more intense industrial uses.

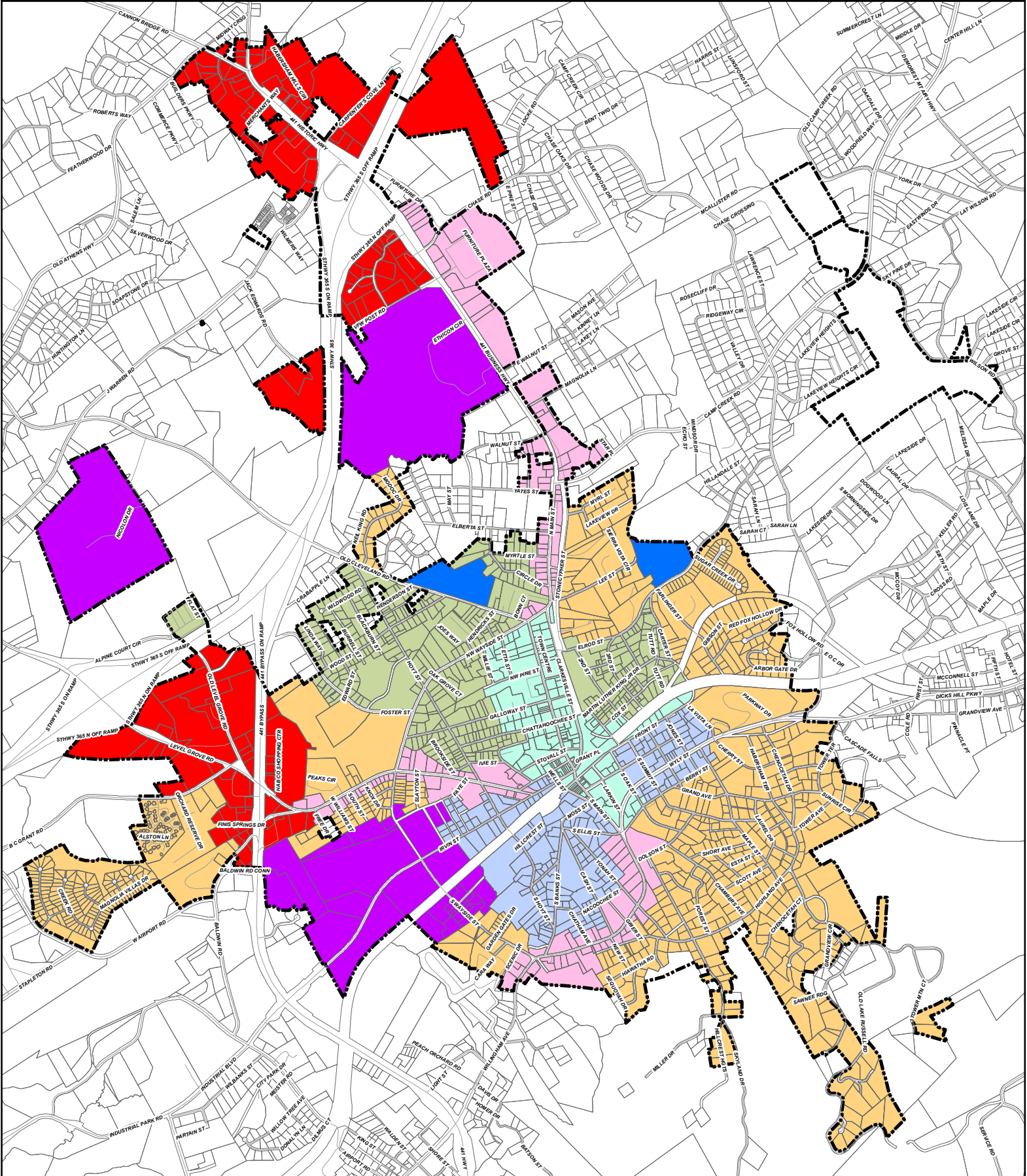


### Future Development Strategies

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



# City of Cornelia Character Areas - 2023



## Legend

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Stable Neighborhood
-  Commercial
-  Historic Area
-  Downtown
-  Revitalization Area
-  Gateway Corridor
-  Industrial
-  Education Center





## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

4

### *Achieving the Vision and our goals for the community*

While the Future Development Strategy illustrates the physical conditions expressed within the Vision, the Implementation Program is the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision and for addressing each of the Community Needs and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures, both short and long-term, that must be undertaken by the community in order realize the community's goals. The Implementation Program features four main components.

#### **NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

These reflect an assessment of the conditions and factors influencing the area and people, stakeholder knowledge of the community and comments received throughout the planning process. To effectively realize their vision for the future a community must develop a well-defined implementation plan. By identifying the core issues and priorities of the community, the government and its partners can develop specific strategies that must be accomplished to fulfill the desired goals and objectives of the vision. It is critical that these issues and opportunities be clearly defined and understood by the stakeholders because they form the basis for the development of the community's long and short-term action plans.

#### **POLICIES AND LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES**

One type of action a community can establish to achieve its vision is the establishment of policy. These are those ongoing principles and practices that the community will observe in order to realize specific objectives. Some policies may complement single action-items while others may provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Vision or addressing Community Issues and Opportunities.

#### **REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

This is a review of the Community Work Program (CWP) from the previous five years. As a new CWP is produced every five years, the items within the previous CWP must be identified for their status as complete, in progress, either postponed or cancelled. Those items that have been postponed or are in progress must be shown in the next CWP where appropriate, while those items that have been postponed or cancelled must also include a reason for their status.

#### **COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMS**

The third forward-thinking element of the Implementation Program is the CWP. This identifies specific implementation actions the local government or other entities intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This can include any ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, financing arrangements, or other programs or initiatives to be put in place to realize the plan goals.







NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
<b>Maintain Public Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain regular police incident reports to Council and public; Maintain coordination with Sheriff, other agencies</li> <li>• Review/ Update citizen engagement policies</li> <li>• Maintain new enforcement policies regarding vacant lots &amp; vagrancy</li> <li>• Maintain long-term plan &amp; budget for growth (w/ performance metrics) in each department</li> </ul>
<b>Maintain Small-town Character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain architectural and historic guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>Continue to Invest in Historic Town Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update/ Maintain Downtown Master Plan</li> <li>• Develop/ Update Parks and Trails Master Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Minimizing Impacts of Growth</b>  <b>Emphasize Efficiency of Utilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop County-wide freight mgmt. study (joint)</li> <li>• Commission report outlining metrics for any annexation of adjoining properties</li> <li>• Maintain long-term plan &amp; budget for growth (w/ performance metrics) in each department</li> <li>• Develop expansion strategy for utilities &amp; infrastructure</li> <li>• Routinely review and update IGAs and SDS</li> </ul>
<b>Target Low Property Taxes* and Budget Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop expansion strategy for utilities &amp; infrastructure</li> <li>• Maintain long-term plan &amp; budget for growth (w/ performance metrics) in each department</li> <li>• Maintain performance goals for annual budgeting</li> <li>• Develop housing cost study; Amend regulations as needed</li> </ul>
<b>Support Local Labor Force</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain partnerships with School Board, NGTC, and other agencies</li> <li>• Maintain economic development resource information available for employers</li> <li>• Annually review economic development efforts (w/ County and others)</li> <li>• Participate in GICH program</li> </ul>





NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
<p><b>Continue to Invest in “Community”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish infrastructure and amenity goals for each neighborhood</li> <li>• Maintain new enforcement policies regarding vacant lots &amp; vagrancy</li> <li>• Develop/ Update Parks and Connectivity Master Plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prioritize Intergovernmental Coordination</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain regular meetings among County and municipal officials; Provide public reports</li> <li>• Routinely review and update IGAs and SDS</li> <li>• Establish Habersham Land Use Committee to explore long-term development &amp; service delivery (joint)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seek to Repair/ Upgrade Housing Stock</b></p> <p><b>Focus on Sustaining/ Improving Neighborhoods</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain new enforcement policies regarding vacant lots &amp; vagrancy</li> <li>• Develop housing cost study; Amend regulations as needed</li> <li>• Establish infrastructure and amenity goals for each neighborhood</li> <li>• Produce brief annual report tracking home sales</li> <li>• Develop/ Update Parks and Trails Master Plan</li> <li>• Participate in GICH program</li> <li>• Research and implement revitalization assistance programs for housing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continue to Invest in Parks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop/ Update Parks and Trails Master Plan</li> </ul>





## POLICIES, LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

One type of action a community can establish to achieve its vision is the establishment of policy. These are those ongoing principles and practices that the community will observe in order to realize specific objectives. Some policies may complement single action-items while others may provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Vision or addressing Community Issues and Opportunities.

In addition to establishing policy, communities may also establish long-term or ongoing programs and activities that support identified objectives. These measures may complement policies or may simply be action items that must be employed more than once. These are recognized here to distinguish their need and conditions apart from the single-action items and to identify any required special terms or context.

- Maintain façade and signage grant for downtown area
- Continue Safe Routes to School Program
- Develop an economic development plan to help diversify the availability of jobs at different income ranges
- Coordinate with the Economic Development Council on activities listed in the Regional Plan
- Develop promotional materials and marketing campaign the bring small businesses to downtown
- Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized buildings in the downtown area that could be marketed for renovation / redevelopment
- Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized commercial properties throughout the City
- Implement activities defined in the DDA workplan
- Resurface local roads based on a prioritized list
- Implement streetscape projects and other improvements defined in the Masterplan
- Utilize the URP as a way to address abandoned structures in the Target Area
- Promote mixed use housing downtown (ie. commercial downstairs, residential upstairs)
- Continue holding festivals to draw in tourism
- Review the Community Work Plan annually at a Commission Retreat to facilitate implementation
- Maintain/replace sewer lines and infrastructure
- Perform proactive drainage maintenance
- Explore opportunities for shared services between Habersham County and neighboring jurisdictions
- Participate in the NFIP program
- Participate in GICH program





**REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Rehabilitation of the old Bank building in downtown	Complete	
Acquire façade and signage grant for downtown area	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Implement activities identified in the Urban Redevelopment Plan	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Develop an economic development plan to help diversify the availability of jobs at different income ranges	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Utilize the Opportunity Zone and Rural Zone designation from DCA to encourage downtown development / redevelopment	Complete	
Enforce the Blight Tax to get properties revitalized, redeveloped, and occupied	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Implement the Apple Tree Ally Streetscape and façade improvement project	Complete	
Coordinate with the Economic Development Council on activities listed in the Regional Plan	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Develop promotional materials and marketing campaign the bring small businesses to downtown	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized buildings in the downtown area that could be marketed for renovation / redevelopment	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized commercial properties throughout the City	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Implement activities defined in the DDA workplan	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Rehabilitation of the old Bank building in downtown	Complete	
Streetscape project on Main Street from Front Street to Wylly	Complete	
Sidewalk improvements on Level Grove / Wayside	Complete	
Improve aesthetics at community access points	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Complete a sidewalk inventory and condition assessment	Complete	
Work with GA Power to improve lighting downtown	Complete	
Improve pedestrian crosswalks to improve safety and encourage walkability downtown	Complete	
Implement Safe Routes to School Program	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice





Action	Status	Comment
Expand and improved connectivity between existing sidewalk and trail system	In Progress	
Study and prioritize areas where ADA compliant sidewalk improvements can be completed	Complete	
Develop a brochure and/or online map showing trails and connected roads for runners and walkers	Postponed	Deferred as a priority
Resurface local roads based on a prioritized list	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Implement streetscape projects and other improvements defined in the Masterplan	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Rehabilitation of the Mud Creek Greenway and construction of sidewalks to connect greenway to existing trails, facilities, and businesses	Complete	
Explore opportunities for more consistent and reliable ride sharing (eg. Uber, Lift, etc.)	Postponed	Deferred as a priority
Develop an Infill Development Plan	Complete	
Utilize the URP as a way to address abandoned structures in the Target Area	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Revise zoning ordinance to allow smaller lot residential infill development	Complete	
Explore programs to assist people in need with property maintenance	In Progress	
Determine if there is a market for tiny houses and if so, consider amending zoning to accommodate	Complete	
Promote mixed use housing downtown (ie. commercial downstairs, residential upstairs)	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Extend the Trail project from the Depot to Veterans Memorial Drive	In Progress	
Establish and nominate members to the Historic Preservation Commission	Complete	
Create an inventory of historic structures	Complete	
Apply for National Historic District designation	Complete	
Continue holding festivals to draw in tourism	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Implement rails to trails project to provide connection between Cornelia and Mt. Airy	In Progress	
Implement Multi-use trail projects and greenway identified in the Cornelia Masterplan	In Progress	
Complete stream bank restoration and stormwater improvements for the South Fork of Mud Creek	Complete	





Action	Status	Comment
Design and develop mixed use development at old Bank building	Complete	
Build new Municipal Complex	Complete	
Purchase and upgrade fire protection equipment and vehicles	Complete	
Purchase new fleet vehicles	Complete	
Design and construct composting facility	Postponed	Deferred as a priority
Purchase a new multi-purpose tractor or similar piece of equipment	Complete	
Implement a program converting leaves and debris to wood chips	Complete	
New garage to house vehicles	Cancelled	Deferred as a priority
Complete new fire station design and construction on south end of the City	Complete	
New fire suppression engine truck	Complete	
SCBA/air packs	Complete	
Exhaust system for the engine bays at the north station	Complete	
Fire suppression engine to replace current one	Complete	
New extrication tools	Complete	
Complete meter replacement and upgrades	Complete	
Construct new reservoir for water	Complete	
Upgrade hydrants, valves, and other water related infrastructure	Complete	
Complete upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant	In Progress	
Complete pump station upgrade and replacements	Complete	
Maintain/replace sewer lines and infrastructure	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Perform proactive drainage maintenance	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Implement and update the Stormwater CIP	Postponed	
Review the Community Work Plan annually at a Commission Retreat to facilitate implementation	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Coordinate with the County on Service Delivery	Complete	
Make brochures and update webpage to better educate residents and business community on what types of activities require permits	Complete	





Action	Status	Comment
Implement appropriate mitigation action items identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan to make the city more prepared and resilient to potential hazards	Postponed	Deferred as a priority
Explore opportunities for shared services between Habersham County and neighboring jurisdictions	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Participate in the NFIP program	Complete	Policy/ Ongoing Practice
Explore benefits of participating in the Community Rating System program for floodplain management	Postponed	Deferred as a priority
Revise the zoning ordinance to make the use table clearer and more user friendly	Complete	
Examine and consider rezoning of B-1 and B-2 properties to better fit the character of the area	Complete	





**COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM**

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2024	CDBG Wood St. Sewer and Stormwater	\$1,637,000	Grant, Stormwater Funds	Public Utilities
2024	Old Level Grove Sewer, Force Main, & Water Main	\$2,261,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2024	Rehab Chenocetah 1.5 MG Tank	\$1,579,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2024	2024 Paving	\$209,000	Grant, General Fund	Public Works
2024	Wastewater Treatment Plant	\$30,000,000	Grant, Loans, Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2024	Explore programs to assist people in need with property maintenance	NA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2024	Implement and update the Stormwater CIP	TBD	Stormwater Fund Cost: Variable but defined in CIP	Public Works
2024	Explore Community Rating System program for floodplain management	NA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2024	Commission annexation plan	TBD	DCA; General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2024	2nd Street Sewer Improvements	\$994,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2024	Participate in GICH program for housing	\$7,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Planning & Zoning
2024	Reservoir intake and dam improvements	\$1,100,000	GEFA	Public Utilities
2024	Hazel Creek Intake	\$431,700	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2024	Front Street parking lot	\$215,000	General Fund	Public Works
2024	Rewrite Zoning Ordinance	\$50,000	Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2024	Sidewalk on Wells Street	TBD	TBD	Public Works
2025	Goodwill LS Rehab	\$479,800	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Works
2025	Rail to Trail	\$1,924,000	SPLOST	Public Works
2025	Chase Rd 8" line from Sara Ln. to Chenocetah Tank	\$911,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2025	Little Kway Tank Inspection	\$6,300	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2025	Sewer - J. Warren North to Big Lots - Abandon LSs	\$1,575,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2025	Myrl, Lakeside Dr water/sewer	\$857,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2025	Garden Gate Lift station Rehabilitation	\$435,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2025	CDBG Walnut St. Area Water & Sewer Improvements	\$1,637,000	Grant	Public Works
2025	2025 Paving	\$209,000	Grant, General Fund	Public Works
2025	Implement appropriate mitigation action items identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan	TBD	General Fund; Grants & Loans	Fire Dept.; Police Dept.







Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2025	Develop housing cost study; Amend regulations as needed	\$5,000	DCA; General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2025	Establish infrastructure and amenity goals for each neighborhood	\$3,000	DCA; General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2025	Establish Habersham Land Use Committee to explore long-term development & service delivery (joint)	NA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2025	Develop/ Update Parks and Trails Master Plan	\$10,000	DCA; General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2025	Develop County-wide freight mgmt. study (joint)	\$5,000	DOT; General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2025	Insertion Valves on Old Lake Russell	\$137,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2025	Participate in GICH program for housing	\$7,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Planning & Zoning
2025	Farlinger Street sidewalk	\$250,000	Grant & Stormwater	Public Works
2025	City Amphitheater	\$3,515,000	Grant & General Fund	Public Works
2026	Moss St. Detention Pond Wall & Stream Bed Restoration	\$325,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2026	Wyly St. Sidewalk & Drainage	\$395,500	General Fund, Stormwater Funds, SPLOST	Public Works
2026	S. Main Myrtle, Circle Dr. Water/Sewer/Storm	\$1,691,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2026	Stoneypher St. Water/Storm Sys. Impr.	\$2,426,000	Stormwater Funds	Public Utilities
2026	2026 Paving CDBG E. Forest/Chambers St.	\$209,000	Grant, General Fund	Public Works
2026	Area Water & Sewer Improvements	\$2,557,400	Grant, Stormwater Funds	Public Works
2026	Implement Multi-use trail projects and greenway identified in the Cornelia Masterplan	TBD	General Fund; Grants	Public Works
2026	Develop expansion strategy for utilities & infrastructure	\$10,000	DCA; General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2026	Raw water line from Tallulah Falls	\$27,667,000	GEFA	Public Utilities
2026	Garden Gate Lift Station	\$447,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2027	Scott/Etta/Maple/Short etc. Water/Sewer/Storm	\$1,199,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2027	New Downtown Parking Lot, off Wells St. Demo Building	\$710,500	SPLOST	Public Works





Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2027	Grandview, Chenocetah, & Big Kway Tank Inspection	\$24,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2027	CDBG Forest/ Chambers St. area water & sewer improvements	\$,2627,000	Grant, Stormwater, Water & Sewer Funds	Public Works
2027	2027 Paving	\$209,000	Grant, General Fund	Public Works
2027	Produce brief annual report tracking home sales	NA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning
2028	Midway Lift station Rehabilitation	\$435,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2028	Chase Rd, Lake View Heights Sewer	\$2,313,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2028	Camp Creek Rd. 12" water main to Hwy 365	\$2,588,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2028	Chambers Area Sanitary Sewer	\$2,564,000	General Fund	Public Works
2028	Hoyt to Wayside Stream Restoration	\$1,215,000	Water & Sewer Fund	Public Utilities
2028	Update Comprehensive Plan	\$30,000	DCA; General Fund Cost: Staff Time	Planning & Zoning





## APPENDIX

5

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA**

**AREA LABOR PROFILE (HABERSHAM COUNTY)**

**DCA QUALITY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

**SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS**

**SAMPLE EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC FORUMS**



**CITY FACT SHEET**



# Demographic and Income Profile

Cornelia City, GA  
 Cornelia City, GA (1319728)  
 Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Summary	Census 2010	Census 2020	2022	2027
Population	4,231	4,503	4,553	4,683
Households	1,527	1,625	1,654	1,698
Families	995	-	1,042	1,067
Average Household Size	2.69	2.77	2.72	2.73
Owner Occupied Housing Units	838	-	1,023	1,060
Renter Occupied Housing Units	688	-	631	639
Median Age	32.9	-	33.5	34.5

Trends: 2022-2027 Annual Rate	Area	State	National
Population	0.56%	0.51%	0.25%
Households	0.53%	0.56%	0.31%
Families	0.48%	0.51%	0.28%
Owner HHs	0.71%	0.77%	0.53%
Median Household Income	-0.15%	3.59%	3.12%

Households by Income	2022		2027	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	287	17.4%	262	15.4%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	342	20.7%	347	20.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	119	7.2%	147	8.7%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	187	11.3%	229	13.5%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	255	15.4%	267	15.7%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	166	10.0%	170	10.0%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	242	14.6%	224	13.2%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	20	1.2%	18	1.1%
\$200,000+	36	2.2%	34	2.0%

Median Household Income	\$40,290	\$39,983
Average Household Income	\$60,329	\$61,454
Per Capita Income	\$21,162	\$21,595

Population by Age	Census 2010		2022		2027	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	413	9.8%	407	8.9%	420	9.0%
5 - 9	350	8.3%	407	8.9%	401	8.6%
10 - 14	298	7.0%	384	8.4%	397	8.5%
15 - 19	275	6.5%	309	6.8%	360	7.7%
20 - 24	294	7.0%	253	5.6%	266	5.7%
25 - 34	596	14.1%	618	13.6%	525	11.2%
35 - 44	504	11.9%	575	12.6%	638	13.6%
45 - 54	457	10.8%	475	10.4%	493	10.5%
55 - 64	420	9.9%	420	9.2%	431	9.2%
65 - 74	300	7.1%	379	8.3%	386	8.2%
75 - 84	210	5.0%	226	5.0%	263	5.6%
85+	113	2.7%	102	2.2%	104	2.2%

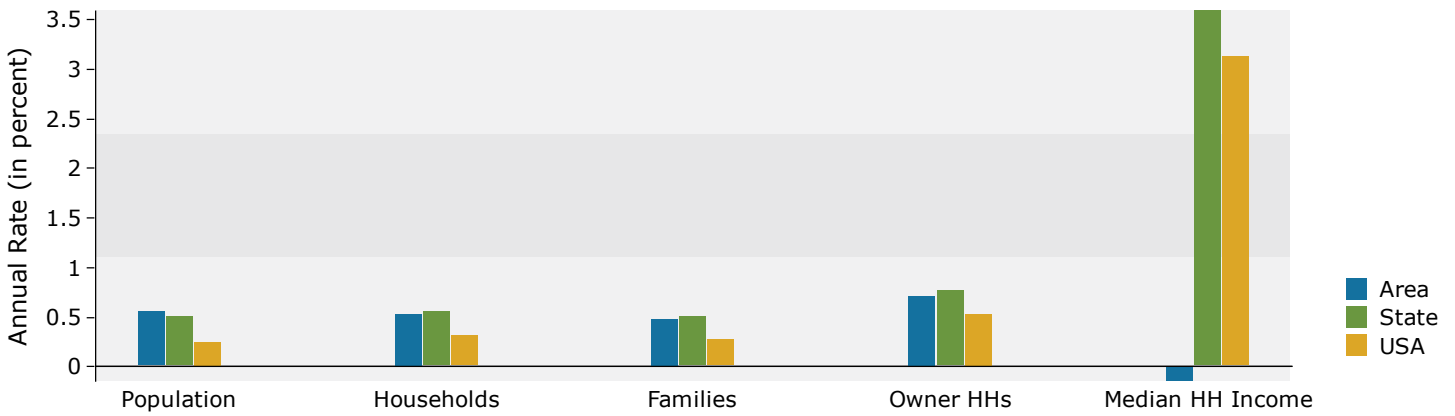
Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010		Census 2020		2022		2027	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	2,908	68.7%	2,370	52.6%	2,525	55.5%	2,500	53.4%
Black Alone	236	5.6%	304	6.8%	278	6.1%	291	6.2%
American Indian Alone	40	0.9%	36	0.8%	55	1.2%	57	1.2%
Asian Alone	171	4.0%	207	4.6%	214	4.7%	219	4.7%
Pacific Islander Alone	44	1.0%	2	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	671	15.9%	771	17.1%	708	15.6%	733	15.7%
Two or More Races	161	3.8%	813	18.1%	769	16.9%	880	18.8%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,395	33.0%	1,799	40.0%	1,747	38.4%	1,849	39.5%

**Data Note:** Income is expressed in current dollars.

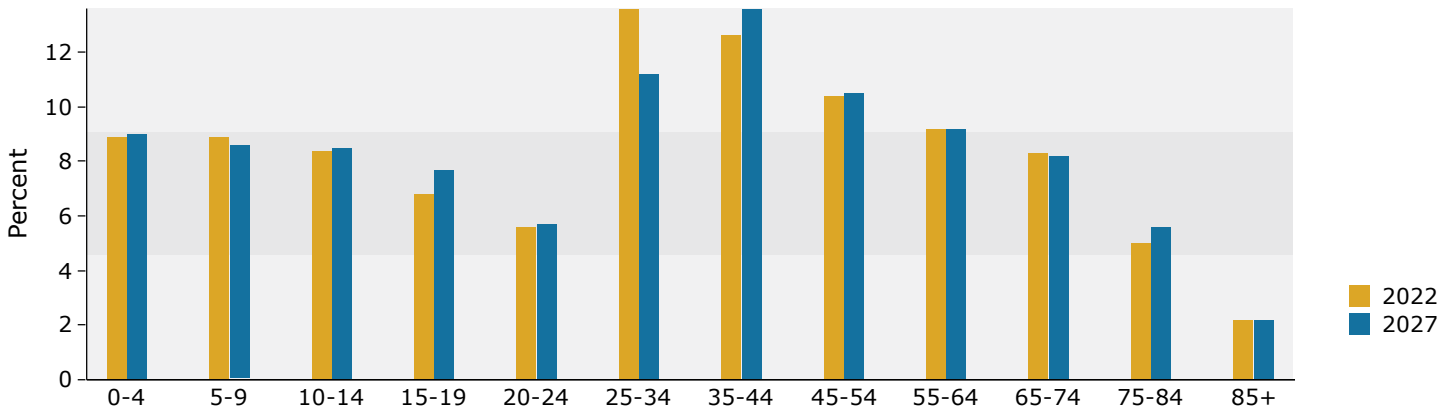
**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027. U.S. Census Bureau 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

March 01, 2023

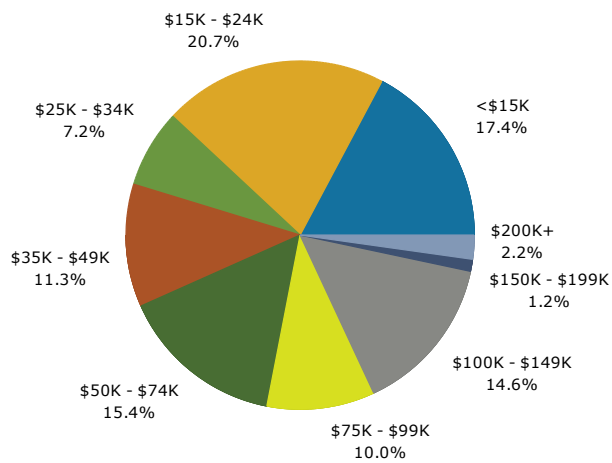
## Trends 2022-2027



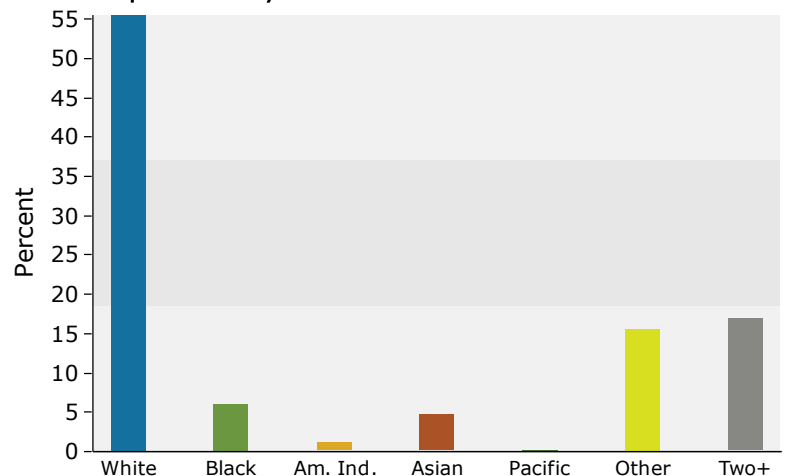
## Population by Age



## 2022 Household Income



## 2022 Population by Race



2022 Percent Hispanic Origin: 38.4%

Source: Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027. U.S. Census Bureau 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

**AREA LABOR PROFILE (Hampshire County)**



Georgia

Area Labor Profile

Habersham

County



Updated: Aug 2023

Labor Force Activity

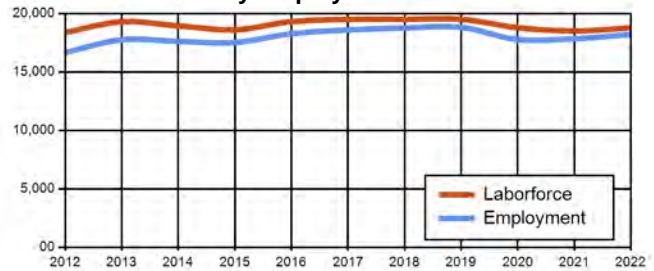
July 2023

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Habersham	18,968	18,375	593	3.1%
Banks	10,883	10,635	248	2.3%
Hall	108,616	105,894	2,722	2.5%
Rabun	8,274	8,059	215	2.6%
Stephens	10,575	10,219	356	3.4%
Towns	4,391	4,215	176	4.0%
White	17,314	16,910	404	2.3%
<b>Habersham Area</b>	<b>179,021</b>	<b>174,307</b>	<b>4,714</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
Georgia	5,318,955	5,145,351	173,604	3.3%
United States	168,354,000	161,982,000	6,372,000	3.8%

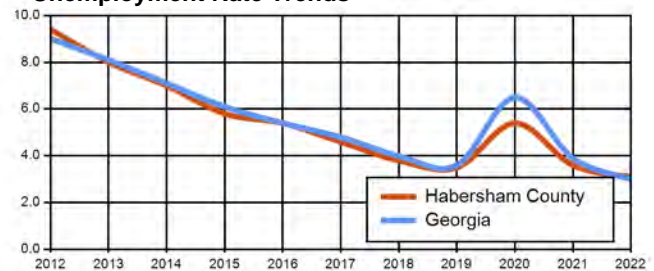
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Habersham County Employment Trends



Unemployment Rate Trends



Initial Claims Activity

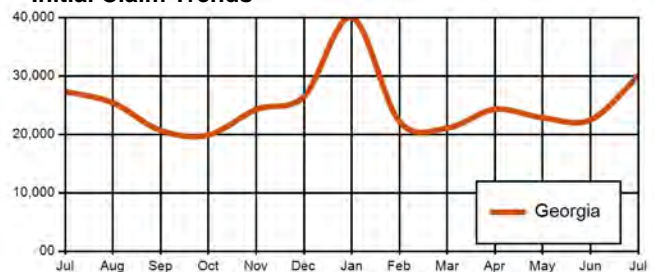
	July 2023	June 2023	May 2023	Total
Habersham	64	46	82	192
Banks	30	24	19	73
Hall	379	268	264	911
Rabun	16	7	9	32
Stephens	33	28	44	105
Towns	13	6	8	27
White	36	34	31	101
<b>Habersham Area</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>1,441</b>

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Initial Claim Trends



Initial Claim Trends

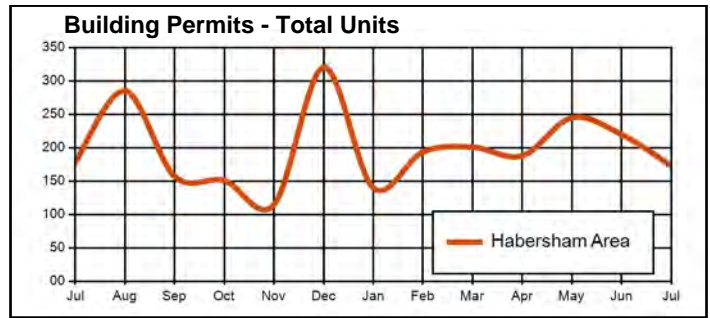




# Building Permit Construction Activity

Habersham Area				
	July 2023	June 2023	May 2023	Total
Totals	173	220	245	638
Family residential	156	210	204	570
Multi family resident	17	10	41	68

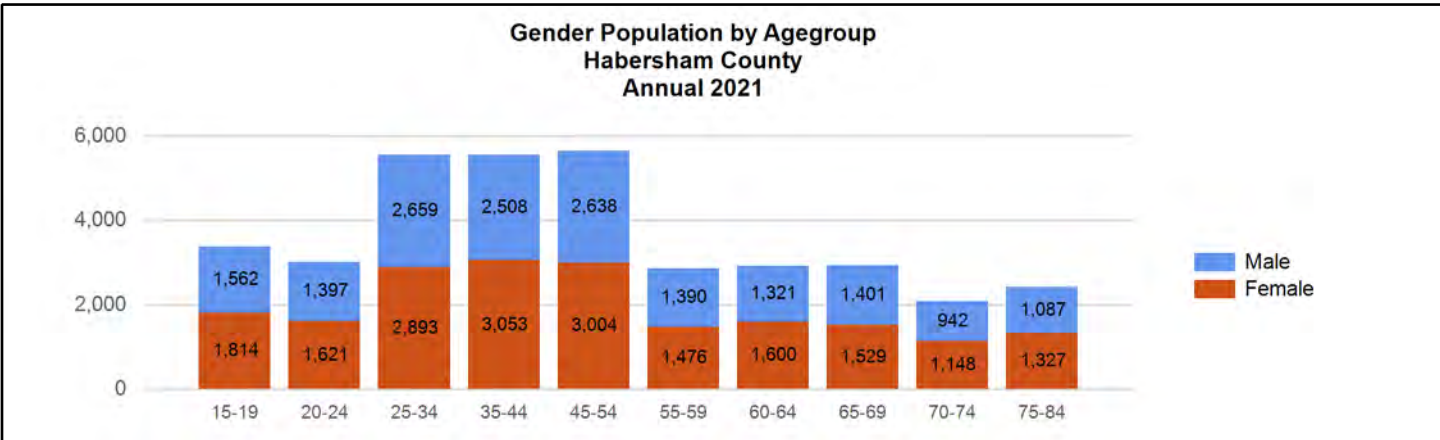
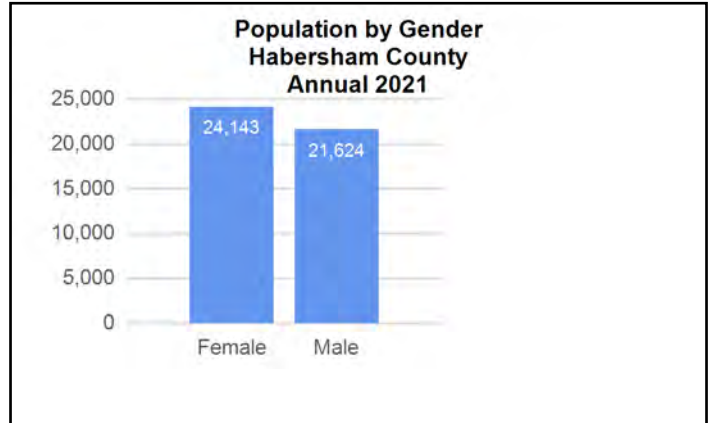
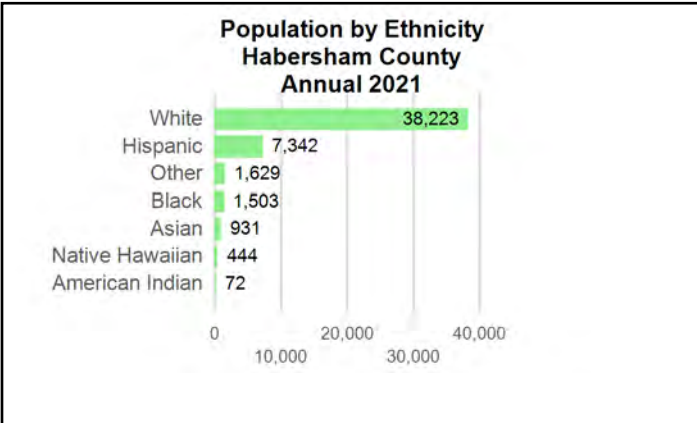
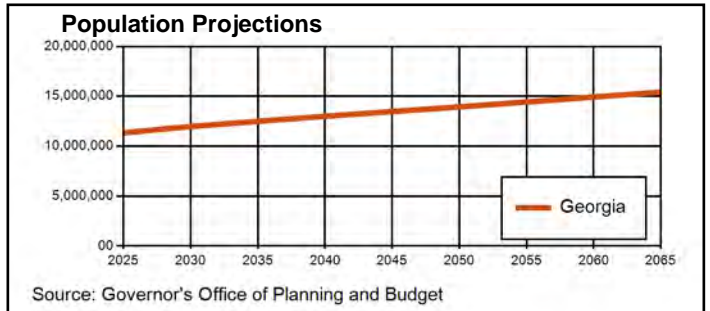
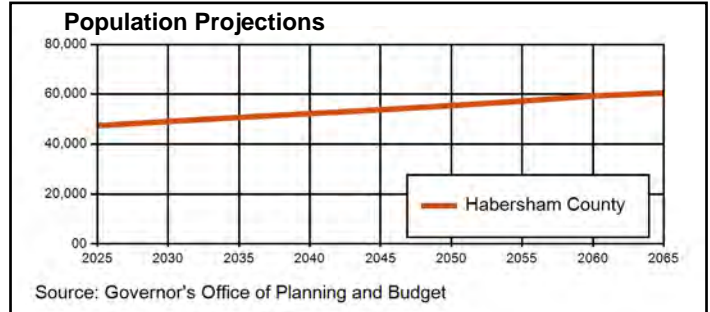
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



# Population Activity

	Annual 2022	Annual 2021	Difference
Habersham	47,475	46,774	701
Banks	19,328	18,562	766
Hall	212,692	207,369	5,323
Rabun	17,206	17,119	87
Stephens	26,767	26,865	-98
Towns	12,972	12,875	97
White	28,806	28,442	364
Oconee	80,180	79,203	977
<b>Habersham Area</b>	<b>445,426</b>	<b>437,209</b>	<b>8,217</b>
Georgia	10,912,876	10,799,566	113,310
United States	333,287,557	331,893,745	1,393,812
Oconee	80,180	79,203	977

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Census Bureau.



# Industry Mix - 1st Quarter of 2023

INDUSTRY	Habersham				Habersham Area			
	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT		WEEKLY WAGE	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT		WEEKLY WAGE
		NUMBER	PERCENT			NUMBER	PERCENT	
<b>Goods-Producing</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>3,676</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>1,184</b>	<b>1,520</b>	<b>38,435</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>1,173</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	12	216	1.5	1,014	84	993	0.7	1,031
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	*	*	*	8	103	0.1	1,322
Construction	93	455	3.3	932	934	6,817	4.7	1,276
Manufacturing	55	2,980	21.3	1,233	494	30,522	21.1	1,154
Food	9	*	*	*	67	12,598	8.7	1,044
Textile Mills	1	*	*	*	13	979	0.7	956
Textile Product Mills	2	*	*	*	7	53	0.0	563
Apparel	2	*	*	*	4	19	0.0	709
Wood Product	3	49	0.4	1,014	28	435	0.3	921
Printing and Related Support Activities	4	38	0.3	685	26	405	0.3	1,495
Chemical	2	*	*	*	31	1,183	0.8	1,429
Plastics and Rubber Products	2	*	*	*	22	1,253	0.9	1,195
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	3	23	0.2	732	27	295	0.2	1,073
Fabricated Metal Product	13	173	1.2	1,170	78	1,842	1.3	1,303
Machinery	2	*	*	*	39	3,255	2.3	1,405
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	1	*	*	*	13	562	0.4	1,266
Furniture and Related Product	4	12	0.1	831	31	865	0.6	1,136
Miscellaneous	7	916	6.5	1,685	44	1,406	1.0	1,481
Leather and Allied Product	0	0	0.0	0	1	*	*	*
Petroleum and Coal Products	0	0	0.0	0	2	*	*	*
Paper	0	0	0.0	0	4	*	*	*
Primary Metal	0	0	0.0	0	6	594	0.4	1,361
Computer and Electronic Product	0	0	0.0	0	13	*	*	*
Transportation Equipment	0	0	0.0	0	14	3,971	2.8	1,051
Beverage and Tobacco Product	0	0	0.0	0	24	545	0.4	1,098
<b>Service-Providing</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>7,429</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>86,382</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>1,073</b>
Utilities	5	188	1.3	2,051	19	630	0.4	1,974
Wholesale Trade	44	381	2.7	998	434	6,024	4.2	1,441
Retail Trade	172	2,127	15.2	568	1,257	16,384	11.3	687
Transportation and Warehousing	17	91	0.7	1,113	240	4,551	3.2	1,204
Information	13	222	1.6	1,041	97	1,250	0.9	1,940
Finance and Insurance	57	309	2.2	1,404	471	3,042	2.1	1,593
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32	113	0.8	855	359	1,081	0.7	943
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	81	353	2.5	1,073	702	3,757	2.6	1,304
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2	*	*	*	30	2,018	1.4	1,861
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	70	437	3.1	620	550	8,486	5.9	728
Educational Services	9	642	4.6	763	71	3,832	2.7	606
Health Care and Social Assistance	96	828	5.9	951	907	17,694	12.3	1,398
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	*	*	*	126	1,469	1.0	5,290
Accommodation and Food Services	97	1,448	10.3	409	817	13,582	9.4	454
Other Services (except Public Administration)	58	193	1.4	768	550	2,582	1.8	745
<b>Unclassified - industry not assigned</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>1,255</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1,107</b>
<b>Total - Private Sector</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>11,166</b>	<b>79.8</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>9,405</b>	<b>125,605</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>1,104</b>
<b>Total - Government</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>2,831</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>18,754</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>941</b>
Federal Government	9	88	0.6	1,349	54	789	0.5	1,563
State Government	23	505	3.6	837	104	3,555	2.5	898
Local Government	26	2,238	16.0	892	149	14,410	10.0	917
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>1,084</b>	<b>13,996</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>9,712</b>	<b>144,360</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,083</b>
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia</b>					<b>376,446</b>	<b>4,757,073</b>		<b>1,363</b>

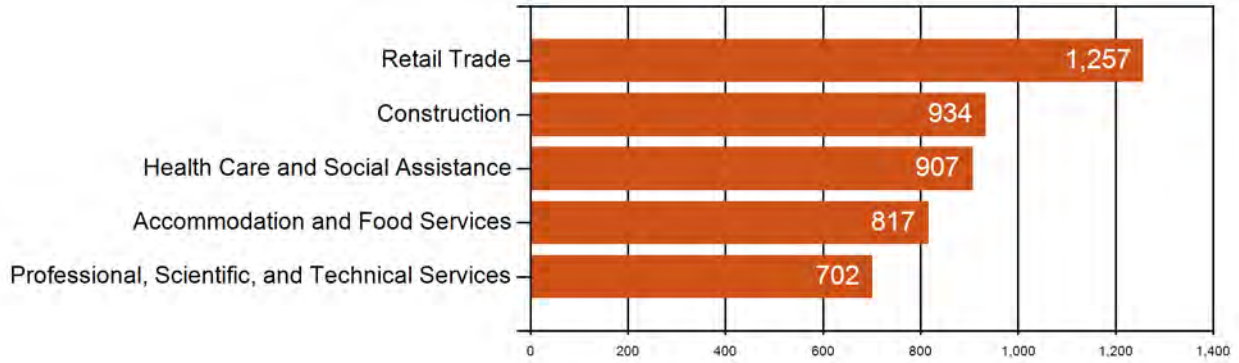
Note: \*Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cannot be released. These data use the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categories. Average weekly wage is derived by dividing gross payroll dollars paid to all employees - both hourly and salaried - by the average number of employees who had earnings; average earnings are then divided by the number of weeks in a reporting period to obtain weekly figures. Figures in other columns may not sum accurately due to rounding. All figures are 1st Quarter of 2023.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. These data represent jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

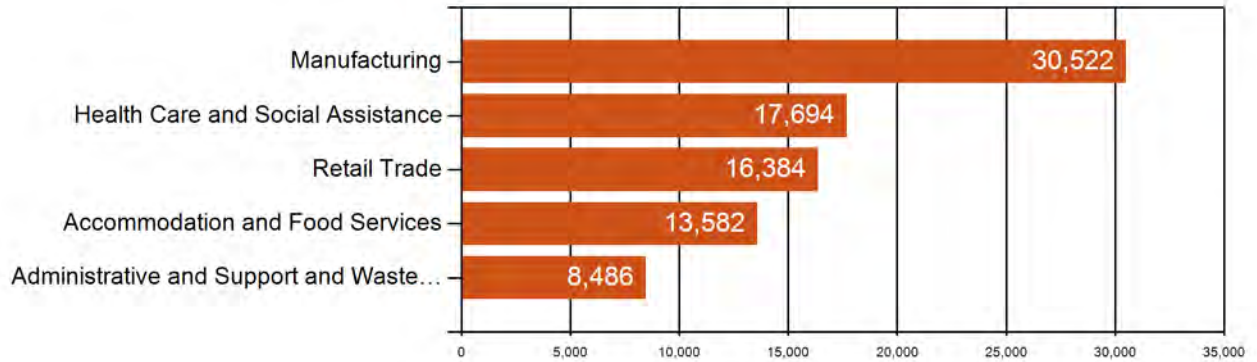
# Top Industries - 1st Quarter of 2023

## Habersham Area

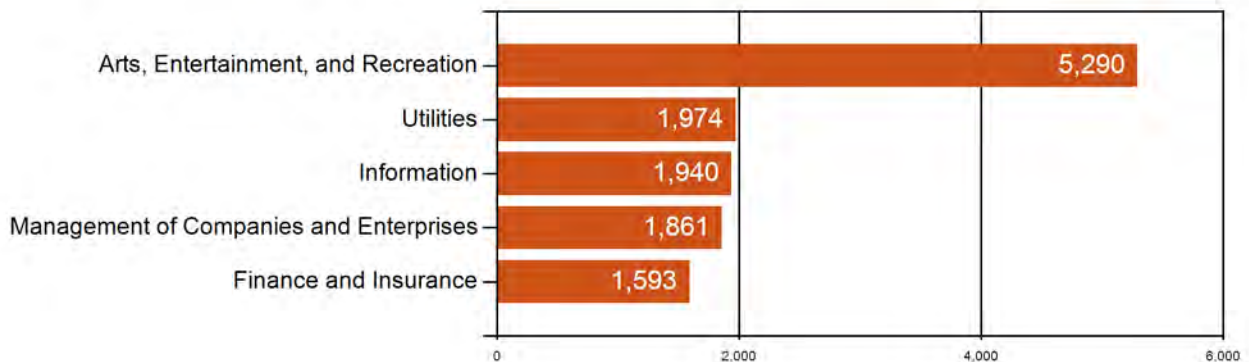
### Top Industries by Firms



### Top Industries by Employment



### Top Industries by Weekly Wages



Source: Georgia Department of Labor. These data represent jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

## Technical College Certificate Graduates - 2022

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2020	2021	2022	2020-2021	2021-2022
Child Care Provider/Assistant	134	209	170	56.0	-18.7
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	218	129	161	-40.8	24.8
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General	165	146	160	-11.5	9.6
Welding Technology/Welder	229	317	155	38.4	-51.1
Business Administration and Management, General	109	155	145	42.2	-6.5
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology	155	109	124	-29.7	13.8
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide	82	110	107	34.1	-2.7
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/	79	81	88	2.5	8.6
Lineworker	61	81	76	32.8	-6.2
Electrician	47	58	69	23.4	19.0

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.

## Technical College Diploma Graduates - 2022

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2020	2021	2022	2020-2021	2021-2022
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General	102	57	72	-44.1	26.3
Medical/Clinical Assistant	90	61	67	-32.2	9.8
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	66	63	63	-4.5	0.0
Welding Technology/Welder	60	55	43	-8.3	-21.8
Business Administration and Management, General	26	41	39	57.7	-4.9
Electrician	25	34	29	36.0	-14.7
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/	39	23	28	-41.0	21.7
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping	32	21	25	-34.4	19.0
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)	49	21	24	-57.1	14.3
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology	58	59	23	1.7	-61.0

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.

## Technical College Degree Graduates - 2022

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2020	2021	2022	2020-2021	2021-2022
Business Administration and Management, General	42	52	47	23.8	-9.6
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology	34	28	36	-17.6	28.6
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping	45	56	35	24.4	-37.5
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	37	35	26	-5.4	-25.7
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General	29	21	18	-27.6	-14.3
Network and System Administration/Administrator	20	17	17	-15.0	0.0
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	17	19	17	11.8	-10.5
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	14	28	15	100.0	-46.4
Interior Design	9	13	14	44.4	7.7
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician	15	10	13	-33.3	30.0

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.

# Top Ten Largest Employers - 2022\*

## Habersham

Ethicon, Inc.  
 Fieldale Farms Corporation  
 Ingles Markets, Inc.  
 Lindsay Windows South  
 Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.  
 Piedmont College  
 Tallulah Falls School, Inc.  
 TC Baycor  
 Walmart  
 Windstream Georgia, LLC

\*Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state colleges and universities. Data shown for the First Quarter of 2022. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

## Habersham Area

	<u>COUNTY</u>
Cottrell, Inc.	Hall
Fieldale Farms Corporation	Hall
Fieldale Farms Corporation	Habersham
Fox Racing Shox	Hall
Gold Creek Processing, LLC	Hall
Kubota Manufacturing of America Corporation	Hall
Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Inc.	Hall
Northeast Georgia Physicians Group	Hall
Pilgrim's Pride Corporation	Hall
Soulshine Farms, LLC	Hall

# Education of the Labor Force

## Habersham Area

### PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

	PERCENT					
	OF TOTAL	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	8.4%	4.1%	6.3%	13.3%	9.2%	7.5%
Some High School	9.6%	12.3%	9.9%	11.4%	7.3%	10.3%
High School Grad/GED	31.5%	38.8%	32.5%	28.1%	31.2%	29.9%
Some College	22.1%	33.3%	22.9%	18.3%	22.0%	18.5%
College Grad 2 Yr	6.7%	5.3%	8.4%	6.9%	7.0%	5.9%
College Grad 4 Yr	13.3%	5.6%	14.9%	13.0%	13.9%	15.4%
Post Graduate Studies	8.4%	0.6%	5.2%	9.1%	9.4%	12.6%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 - 65+. Some College category represents workers with some

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates.

# Georgia Department of Labor Location(s)

## Career Center(s)

37 Foreacre Street  
 Toccoa, GA 30577-3582

Phone: (706) 282 - 4514

Fax: (706) 282 - 4513

For copies of Area Labor Profiles, please visit our website at: <http://dol.georgia.gov> or contact Workforce Statistics Division, Georgia Department of Labor, 148 Andrew Young International Blvd N.E. Atlanta, GA. 30303-1751. Phone: 404-232-3875; Fax: 404-232-3888 or Email us at [workforce\\_info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:workforce_info@gdol.ga.gov)

**BRUCE THOMPSON - COMMISSIONER, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
**Equal Opportunity Employer/Program**  
**Auxillary Aids and Services Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities**

**Workforce Statistics Division; E-mail: [Workforce\\_Info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:Workforce_Info@gdol.ga.gov) Phone: (404) 232-3875**

## DCA QUALITY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

*“Every Georgia community offers a quality of life where people and businesses can grow and prosper.”*

Vision Statement, Georgia Department of Community Affairs

To encourage comparable levels of sound community planning, and in the absence of a defined State plan, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) includes among the Minimum Standards a guide for analyzing each community’s consistency with 10 Quality Community Objectives (QCO’s) adapted from various community development principles to fit idealized qualities of Georgia’s communities.

### 1. Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

*In an effort to facilitate economic prosperity, the City of Cornelia:*

- *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.*

### 2. Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

*Cornelia does the following to address resource management:*

- *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.*

### 3. Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

*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.*

#### **4. Local Preparedness**

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

*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.*

#### **5. Sense of Place**

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

*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.*

#### **6. Regional Cooperation**

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

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

#### **7. Housing Options**

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce 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.*

## **8. Transportation Options**

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

*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.*

## **9. Educational Opportunities**

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

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

## **10. Community Health**

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

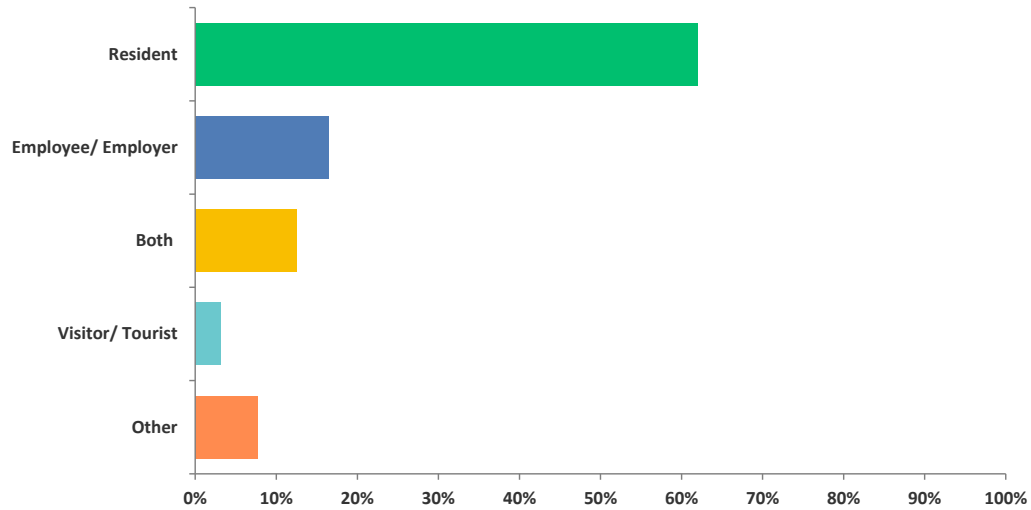
*The City supports health food options and does its part to address community health by creating walkable communities and providing various options for recreation within the City.*



**SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS**

**Q1: I am submitting comments primarily as a:**

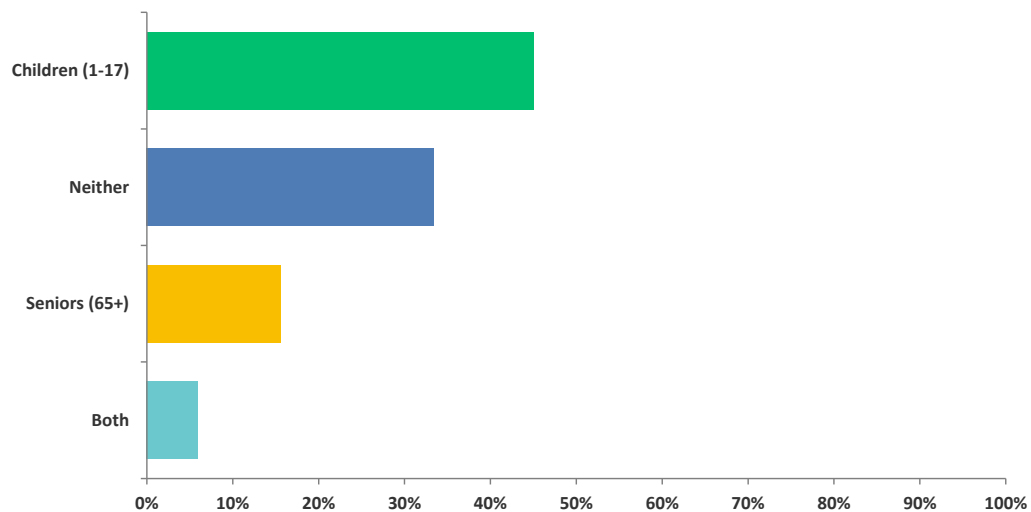
Answered: 353 Skipped: 0

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1

**Q2: Do you have any seniors or children in your household?**

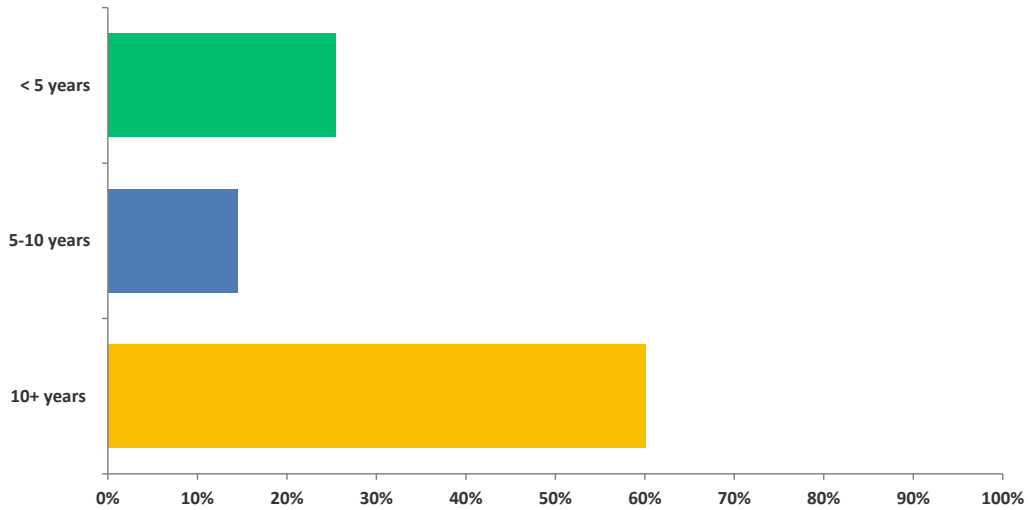
Answered: 353 Skipped: 0

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2

### Q3: If applicable, how long have you been living/ working in the area?

Answered: 346 Skipped: 7

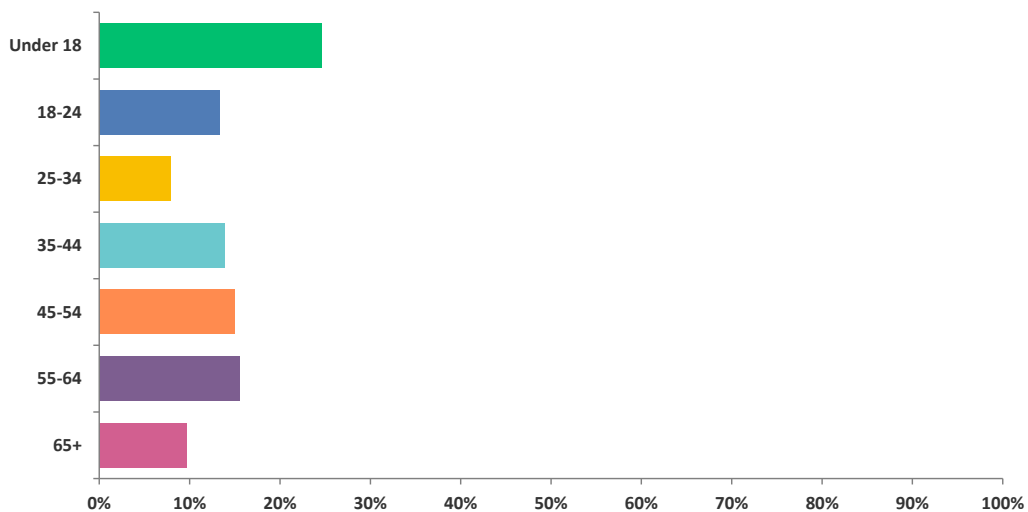


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3

### Q4: What is your age range?

Answered: 353 Skipped: 0

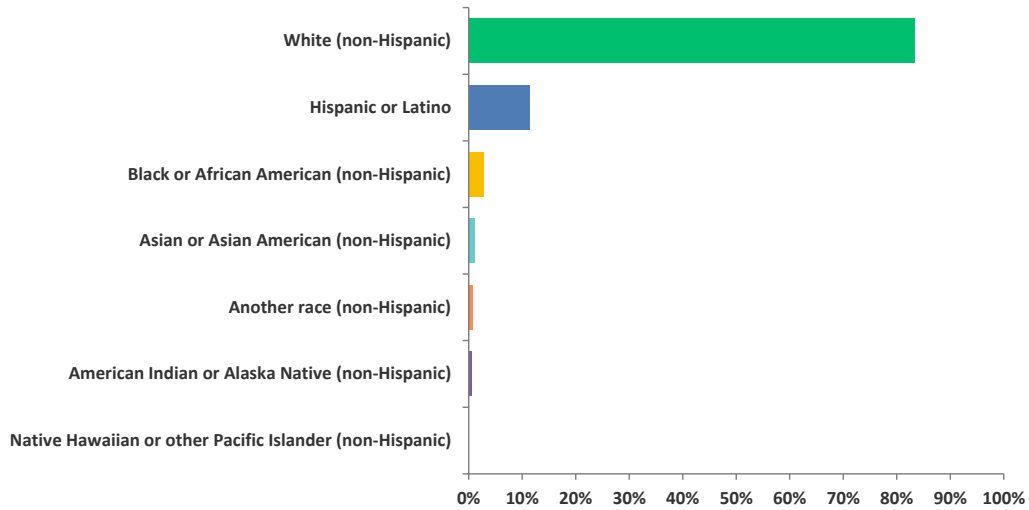


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4

**Q5: Please indicate the race/ethnicity that best describes you.**

Answered: 353 Skipped: 0

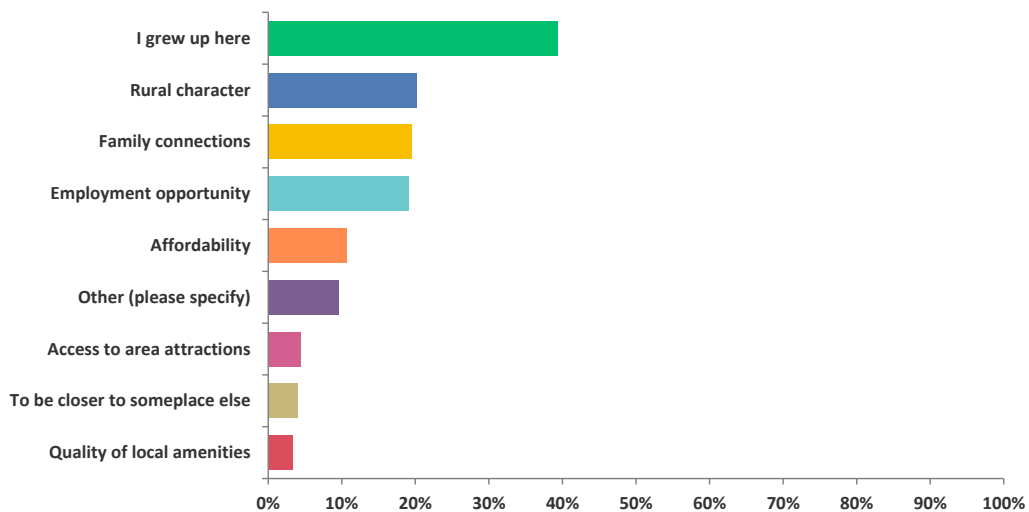


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**Q6: If you moved to Cornelia from somewhere outside of Habersham County, what was the main reason for your move.**

Answered: 272 Skipped: 81

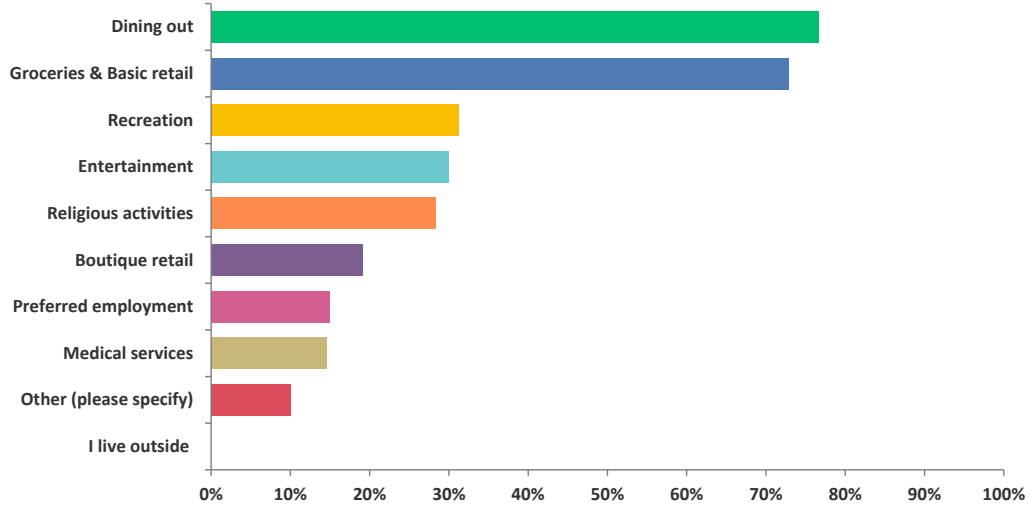


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6

**Q7: If you live within Cornelia, please indicate which of the following activities you do mostly in the city. (Choose all that apply)**

Answered: 240 Skipped: 113

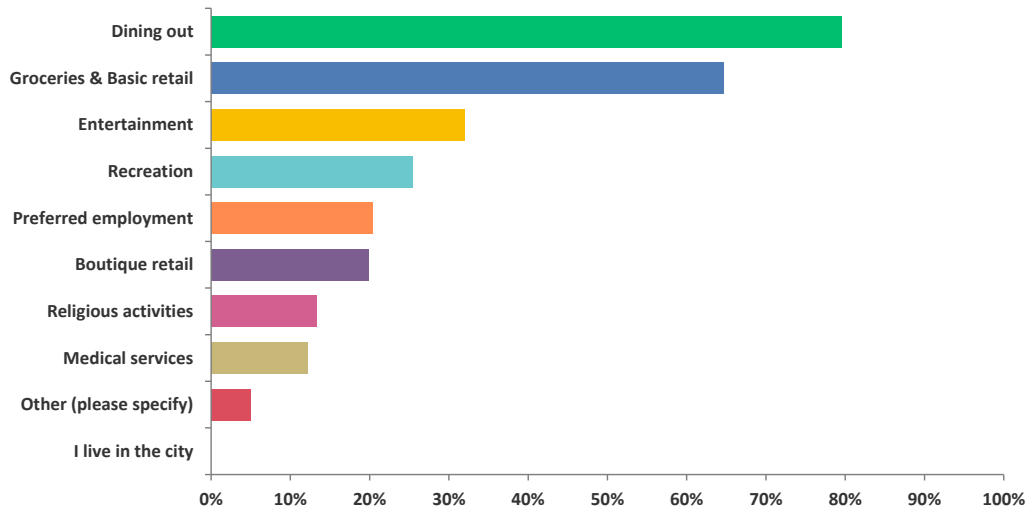


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7

**Q8: If you live outside of Cornelia, please indicate which of the following activities you do mostly in the city. (Choose all that apply)**

Answered: 181 Skipped: 172

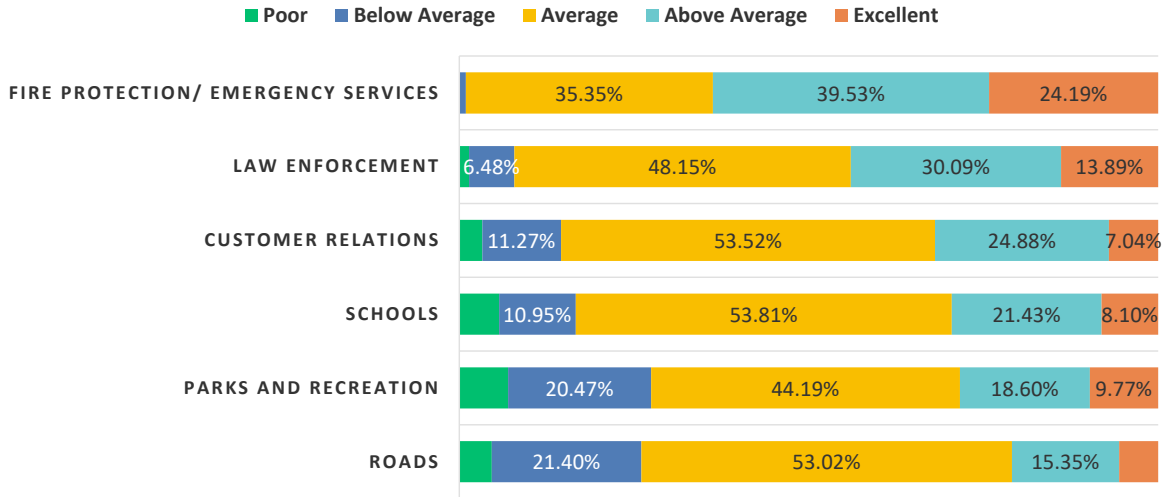


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**Q9: On a scale of 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Excellent), please rate your current level of satisfaction with the City's following public services:**

Answered: 217 Skipped: 136

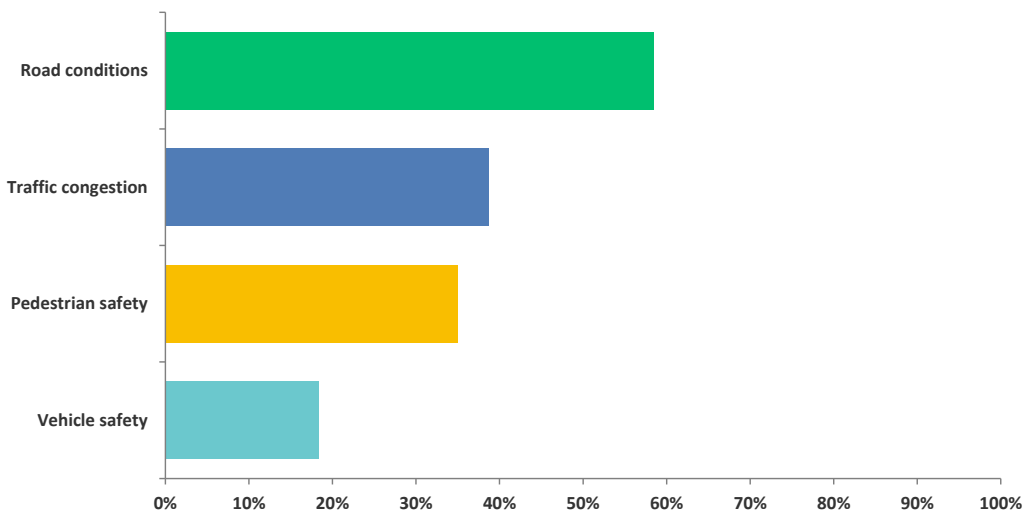


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9

**Q10: What do you consider the foremost problem for roadways in Cornelia? Please check all that apply.**

Answered: 217 Skipped: 136

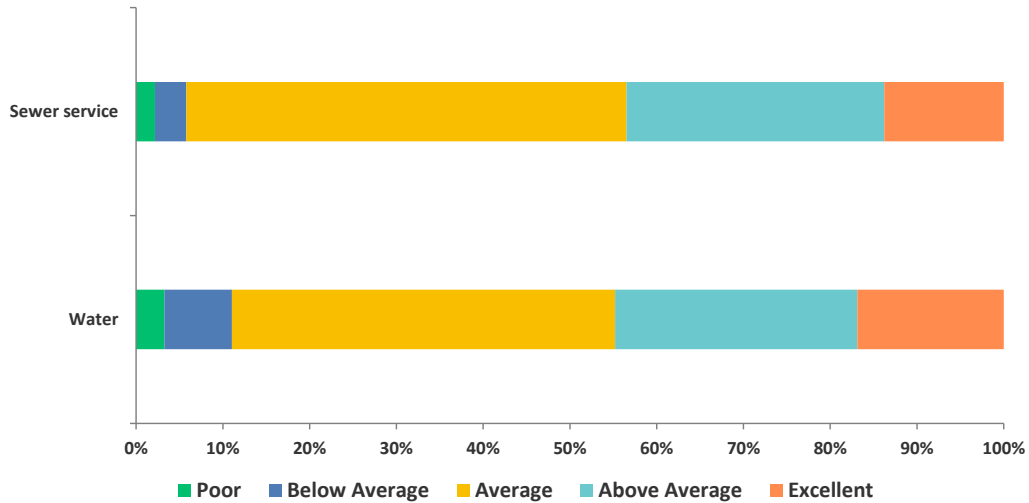


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**Q12: If you have public water and/or sewer service, please rate your current level of satisfaction with the service:**

Answered: 154 Skipped: 199

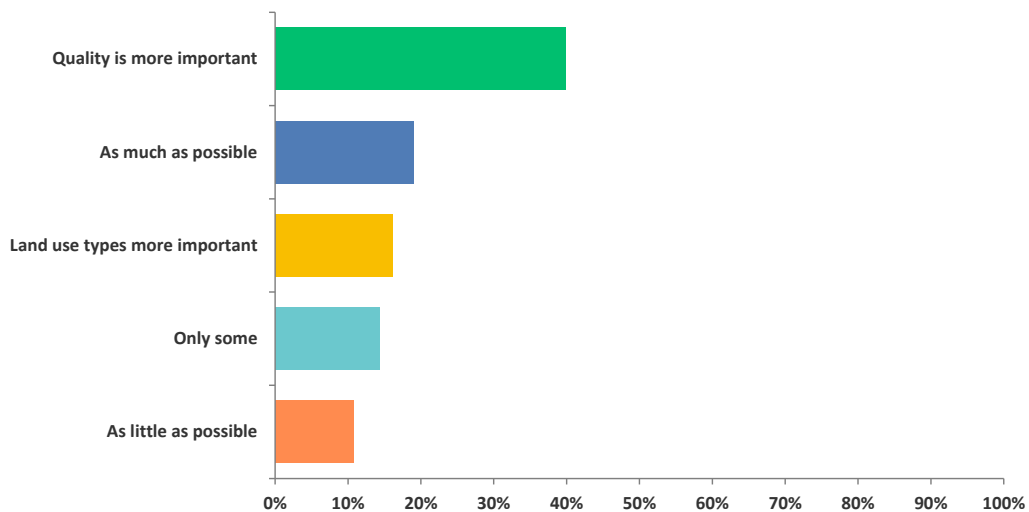


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11

**Q18: Given your preference, how much new growth and development should be directed inside, or immediately around, the city limits of Cornelia? (Choose one)**

Answered: 168 Skipped: 185

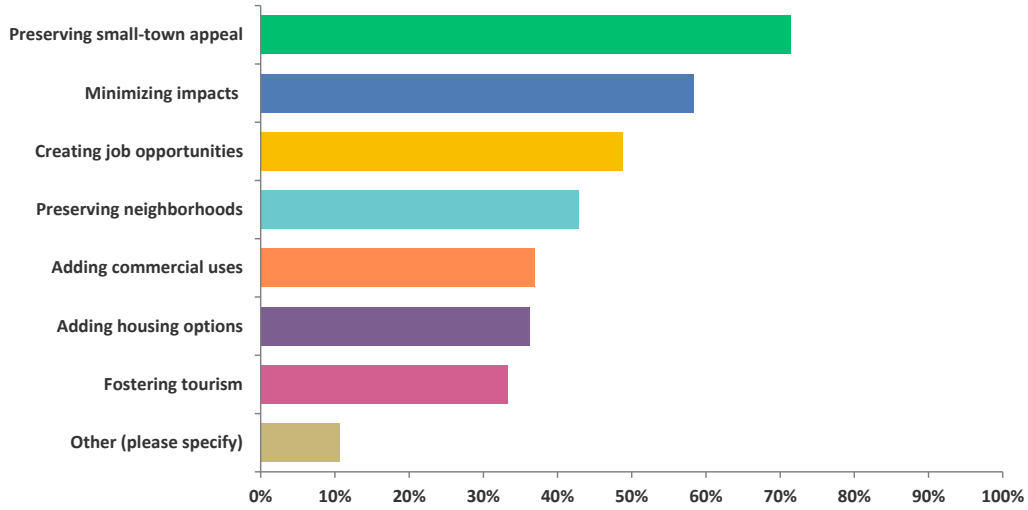


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12

**Q19: My priorities regarding any growth and development would be \_\_\_\_\_ . (Choose all that apply)**

Answered: 168 Skipped: 185

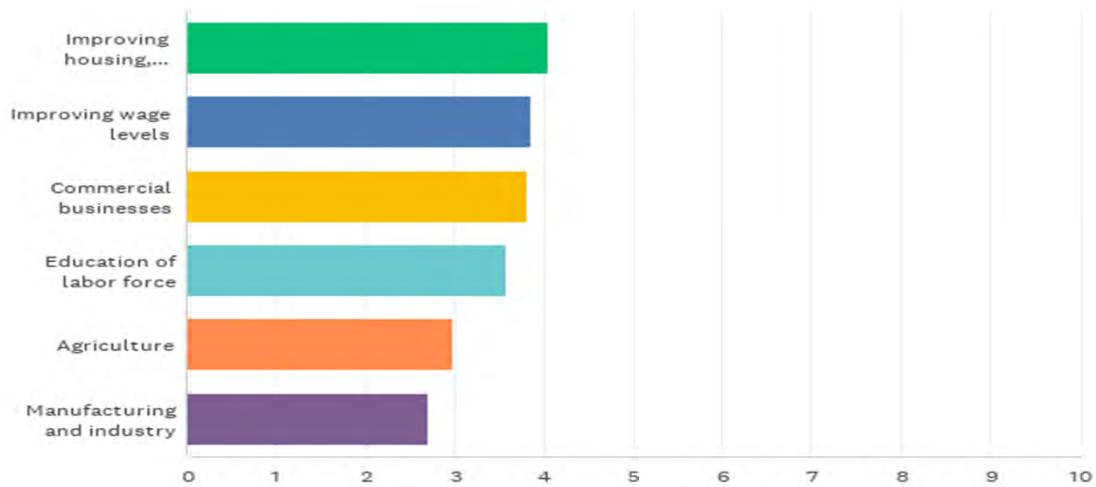


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**Q20: Please rank the following economic development priorities for Cornelia, with #1 being the most important.**

Answered: 168 Skipped: 185



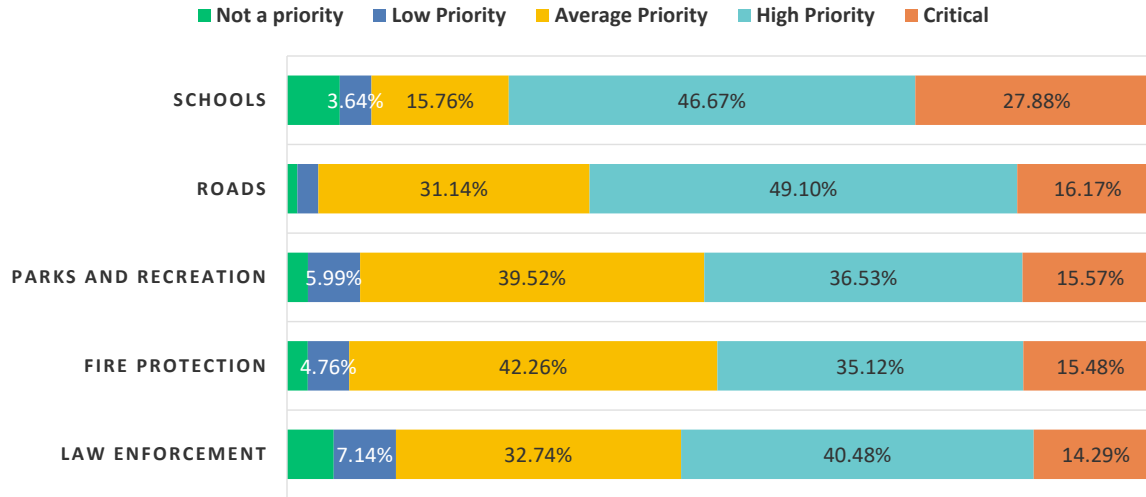
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14



### Q22: How would you rank the following services in terms of priority of need for such capital investment?

Answered: 168 Skipped: 185

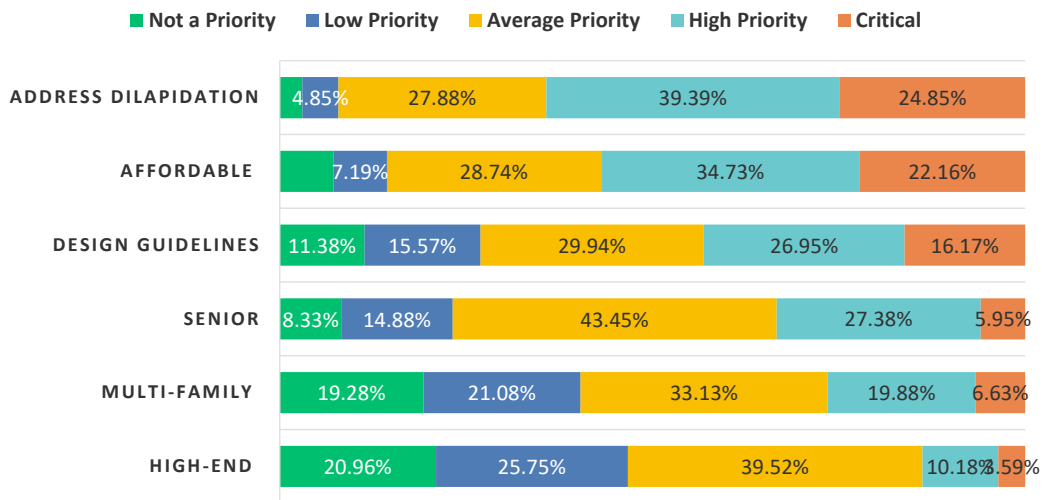


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### Q23: Please indicate how strongly you feel any of the following housing issues is a priority for Cornelia

Answered: 168 Skipped: 185



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## **SAMPLE EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC FORUMS**

**CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MTG.**

City Hall ~ 11:00 AM ~ 1/10/23

*Please Sign In*

**Name**

Carole Church

John Borrow

Noah Hamil

Ellie Van Doornum

Dee Anderson

Haven Beavers

Suzanne Dow

Charlie Fiveash

Jay Freder

Jessie Owensby

**Name**

CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MTG.

City Hall ~ 11:00 AM ~ 2/14/23

Please Sign In

Name

Name

~~Bob Smith~~

Tammy Caudell  
KATHY PAPA

BRENT COAT

Dee Anderson

Noah Humil

Gayle Church

ELM VAN DOORNIN

Jay Reeder

Charlie Fireash

Haven Beavers

Ayanna Dea

Jessie Owensby

CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MTG.

City Hall ~ 11:00 AM ~ 3/14/23

*Please Sign In*

Name

Ellie VanDoornum

Charlie Fivcash

Suzanne Dow

Jessie Owensby

Haven Beavers

Noah Hamil

BRENT R. COOY

Jay Keele

Dee Anderson

JASON SMITH

John Borrow

Name

CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MTG.

City Hall ~ 11:00 AM ~ 4/9/23

*Please Sign In*

Name

Name

Jessie Doyensky

Haven Beavers

Charlie Fivash

Ellie VanDoorneem

John Borrow

Dee Anderson

Jason Smith

Suzanne Dow

Adam Hazell

CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – PUBLIC FORUM

City Hall ~ 7:00 PM ~ 4/13/23

*Please Sign In*

Name

MARK REED

Jenise Lindemann

Doe Anderson

Jessie Owensby

Reah Hamil

Scott Fontaine

Randy & Carole Church

Lynn Rambo

Tory Bibbo

Ellie Van Doornun

Olga Vyriikovskaia

Name

**CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MTG.**

City Hall ~ 11:00 AM ~ 6/13/23

*Please Sign In*

**Name**

Dee Anderson

BRENT R Cody

Jessie Owensby

Chad Smith

John Borrow

**Name**



CITY OF CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – PUBLIC FORUM

City Hall ~ 6:00 PM – 6/22/23

*Please Sign In*

Name

Jessie Owensbey  
Noah Hamill

Richard WozB

Alice Dover

Dee Anderson

Betty Gaber

Greg Gaber

Jamie Keller

John Borrow

Christina Simmons

Tracy Simmons

Kelly o Mary

Name

**CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MTG.**

---

City Hall ~ 11:00 AM ~ 7/11/23

*Please Sign In*

**Name**

Noah Hamil

John Borrow

Dee Anderson

Suzanne Dow

**Name**

CORNELIA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FORUM

City Hall ~ 7:00 PM ~ 7/31/23

*Please Sign In*

Name

Name

Donald Anderson

MARK REED

John Borrow

Judah Borrow

Audrey Deleupart

Jessie Owens

Lindsey Holt

Judah Borrow