

## RESOLUTION 2016-35

### RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE FOR THE CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA AND TO DIRECT THE TRANSMITTAL OF THE UPDATE TO THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the City of Stone Mountain, Georgia has completed the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update;

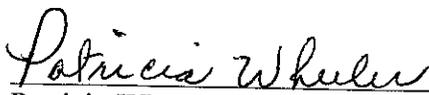
WHEREAS, these documents were prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective March 1, 2014 and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, the City of Stone Mountain's Comprehensive Plan Update has been reviewed by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and found to be in compliance with the minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Stone Mountain, through the Mayor and City Council, does hereby adopt the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update and directs that the availability of the Plan Update for public review and inspection be publicized.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Stone Mountain, through the Mayor and City Council, directs the City Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution and the final 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update to the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Adopted this 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2016.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia Wheeler, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kate Settle, City Clerk

CITY OF  
STONE MOUNTAIN  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
2016 UPDATE

*Stone Mountain Village, Atlanta's Mountain Town, is a diverse, energetic, sustainable community where people **live, visit, create, learn, play** and **prosper** together.*

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

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	5
Stone Mountain Yesterday .....	6
History of the City of Stone Mountain.....	7
Stone Mountain Today .....	9
Location Map .....	10
Data & Demographics.....	11
Population Trends.....	11
Housing Trends .....	14
Economic Trends .....	16
Transportation Trends.....	18
Community Vision .....	20
Community Assets .....	24
Community Needs & Opportunities .....	25
Areas Requiring Attention.....	28
Current Planning Documents .....	29
Stone Mountain Tomorrow .....	35
Future Land Development Map.....	39
Character Area Map .....	39
Report of Accomplishments (2012 – 2017) .....	52
Short Term Work Program (2017-2021) .....	57

## Acknowledgements

### Mayor and City Council:

Patricia Wheeler, Mayor

Susan S. Coletti, City Council Post 4

Steve Higgins, City Council Post 5

Chakira Johnson, City Council Post 3

Richard Mailman, City Council Post 1

Andrea Redmond, City Council Post 6

Steve Wells, City Council Post 2

### Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Committee:

ChaQuias Miller-Thorton, City Manager

Gary Peet, Former Mayor and City Manager of Stone Mountain

Mechel McKinley, DDA Executive Director

Chancey Troutman, Police Chief

Jeff Carey, Resident and Business Owner

Betty Pompey, Resident

Jim Tavenner, Director of Public Works

Dave Moody, Resident and Business Owner

### Atlanta Regional Commission Staff:

Courtney Verdier, Senior Program Specialist

Sidney Douse, Senior Planner

Beth Davis, Intern



STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEMBERS LISTENING TO PRESENTATION BY ARC STAFF

# Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

# Executive Summary

The City of Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan is an update from the original plan development by Robert and Company in 2006. The current plan builds upon the guidelines and work program established in the previous plan and examines current trends to develop a framework and work program for the next 20 year planning period. The desire of the City was to combine information and action items in other various planning documents developed for the City and combine that information into one consolidated work program found here in the Comprehensive Plan Short-Term Work Program. The city wished to consolidate efforts in order to decrease redundancy and to have one document that they are working from. The hope is that this effort will allow the City to be more intentional in the activities being undertaken so that Stone Mountain is moving forward in the direction that is outlined in the City's Vision.

Stone Mountain's Vision was tweaked from the original 2003 Livable Center's Initiative (LCI) and 2006 Comprehensive Plan during the 10-year update of the LCI plan. The vision reads as follows: *Stone Mountain Village, Atlanta's Mountain Town, is a diverse, energetic, sustainable community where people **live, visit, create, learn, play** and **prosper** together.* Therefore, in staying consistent with the Vision, the Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan keeps these six key areas in mind during plan development.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan update contains three main sections: **Stone Mountain Yesterday**, **Stone Mountain Today**, and **Stone Mountain Tomorrow**. Stone Mountain Yesterday takes a look at the history of the City in order to establish background and context to decisions that are made today and in the future. Stone Mountain Today examines current demographic and economic data, as well as current Community Assets and Challenges. The intent was to understand current trends that may have planning implications for the future. Understanding this, as well as opportunities for improvement, then helped guide the work program and future land development map. These items are located in the last section of the plan, Stone Mountain Tomorrow. This section contains the Future Land Use Development Map, examines Character Areas, outlines a Report of Accomplishments from the 2012-2017 short-term work program, and develops a new 2017-2021 5-year work program to organize initiatives to be accomplished over the next five years.

Stone Mountain  
Comprehensive Plan  
Yesterday



# History of the City of Stone Mountain

The City of Stone Mountain is located in DeKalb County, Georgia and has a long history pre-dating the Civil War. The small railroad town situated at the base of a massive granite rock containing the world's largest bas-relief carving became a bustling center of industry. The rock was initially referred to as Rock Mountain, but by the end of the 1830's, Stone Mountain was more widely accepted and remains the name today. The village was later incorporated as New Gibraltar in 1839 and later renamed Stone Mountain in 1847. Early in its history, residents of Stone Mountain understood the importance of the Mountain and the opportunities a railroad line through the village could bring. The Georgia Railroad was constructed to connect Augusta to the Western & Atlantic's terminus in Marthasville (present-day Atlanta). The plan for the rail line by-passed the village, so residents moved the village center to the east side of the railroad, placing it in between the railroad and the Mountain. This foresight paid off and by the end of the 1840's, the village of Stone Mountain contained four hotels and eight stores with a population of 300.



HISTORIC PHOTO OF STONE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.  
SOURCE: [HTTPS://STONEMOUNTAINHISTORICSOCIETY.ORG/ABOUT-2/](https://stonemountainhistoricsociety.org/about-2/)



HISTORIC PHOTO OF STONE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.  
SOURCE: [HTTPS://STONEMOUNTAINHISTORICSOCIETY.ORG/ABOUT-2/](https://stonemountainhistoricsociety.org/about-2/)

During the Atlanta Campaign of the Civil War, the village would experience great loss, as stores, cotton and the granite depot were burned by Union forces. They also destroyed the train tracks so that they were no longer usable. The village of Stone Mountain bounced back from this defeat and concentrated on mining the Mountain's granite as it grew in demand. The Venable Brothers incorporated the Southern Granite Company in the 1880's, and would allow the city to thrive through the early part of the 1900's. A new streetcar line was established linking Stone Mountain to Decatur, and onto Atlanta. Main Street flourished with activity and public schools to serve both the white and black populations were established.

At its height, the quarry industry produced 200,000 paving stones and 2,000 feet of curbing a day. As building techniques and materials changed, cut stone was less in demand and residents of Stone Mountain began to struggle, particularly during the onset of the Depression.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy initiated an idea in the 1910's to carve a monument into the side of Stone Mountain. Financial shortcomings, the Great Depression, and World Wars I and II, stalled the project for decades, but finally in 1958, the state of Georgia purchased the Mountain and surrounding land to establish a park and complete the memorial. The City of Stone Mountain's population continued to climb until 2000 when it unfortunately began to decline. However, since the recovery of the Recession of 2008, the population has begun to correct itself. Stone Mountain Park has brought tremendous tourism opportunities to Stone Mountain village, including a number of Olympic events held in the park in 1996, tennis, archery and rowing. Since the Olympics, Stone Mountain Park has made a number of improvements including the addition of the 1870's-replica town of Crossroads, redeveloped the Olympic archery range and velodrome site into a songbird habitat, SkyHike rope course, Snow Mountain, and a number of annual festivals. In recent years, the City has worked very hard to redevelop its historic downtown and provide an enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors alike. The efforts of revitalizing downtown and capitalizing on visitors to Stone Mountain Park provides the City of Stone Mountain a tremendous opportunity for expansion and growth.

*\*Information taken from the Stone Mountain Historical Society <https://stonemountainhistoricsociety.org/>*

# Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan Today



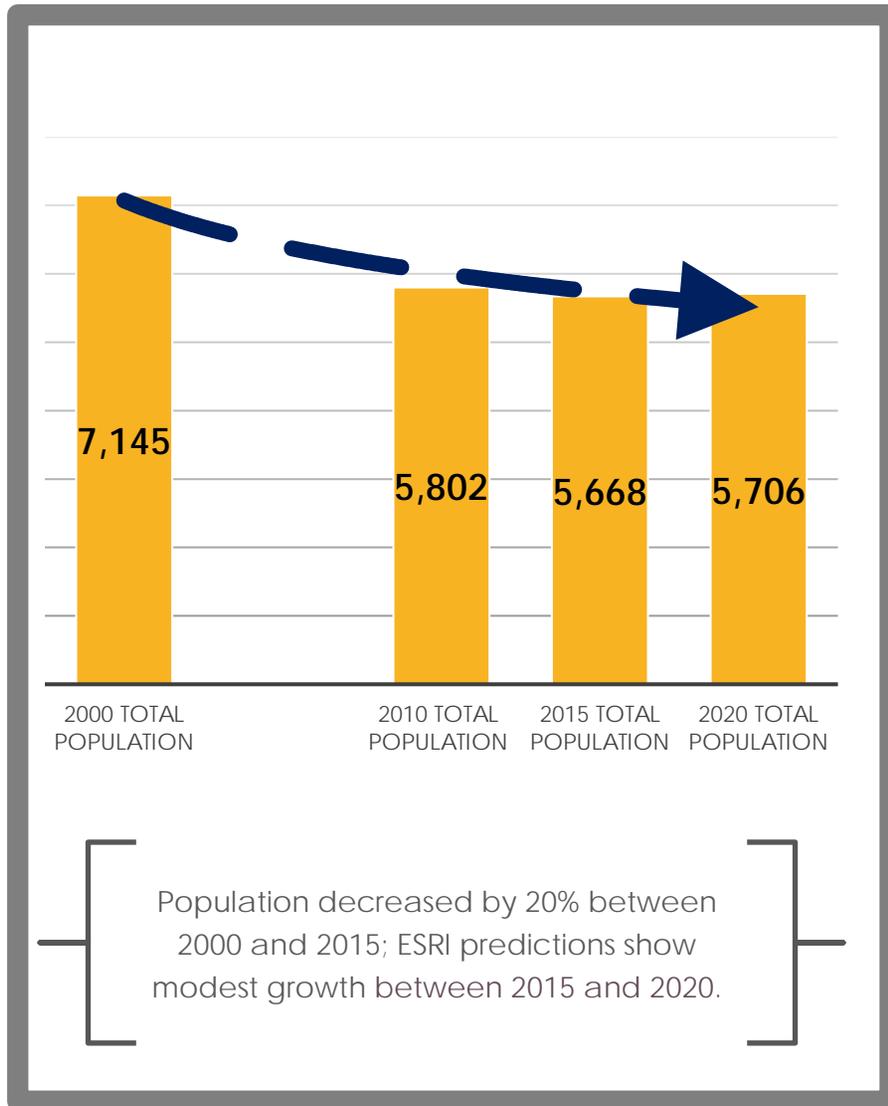
# Location Map

The City of Stone Mountain is located within DeKalb County, Georgia. Stone Mountain is approximately 1.6 square miles and is situated less than 20 miles northeast of downtown Atlanta. A portion of Stone Mountain Park is located within the city limits of Stone Mountain.



# Data & Demographics

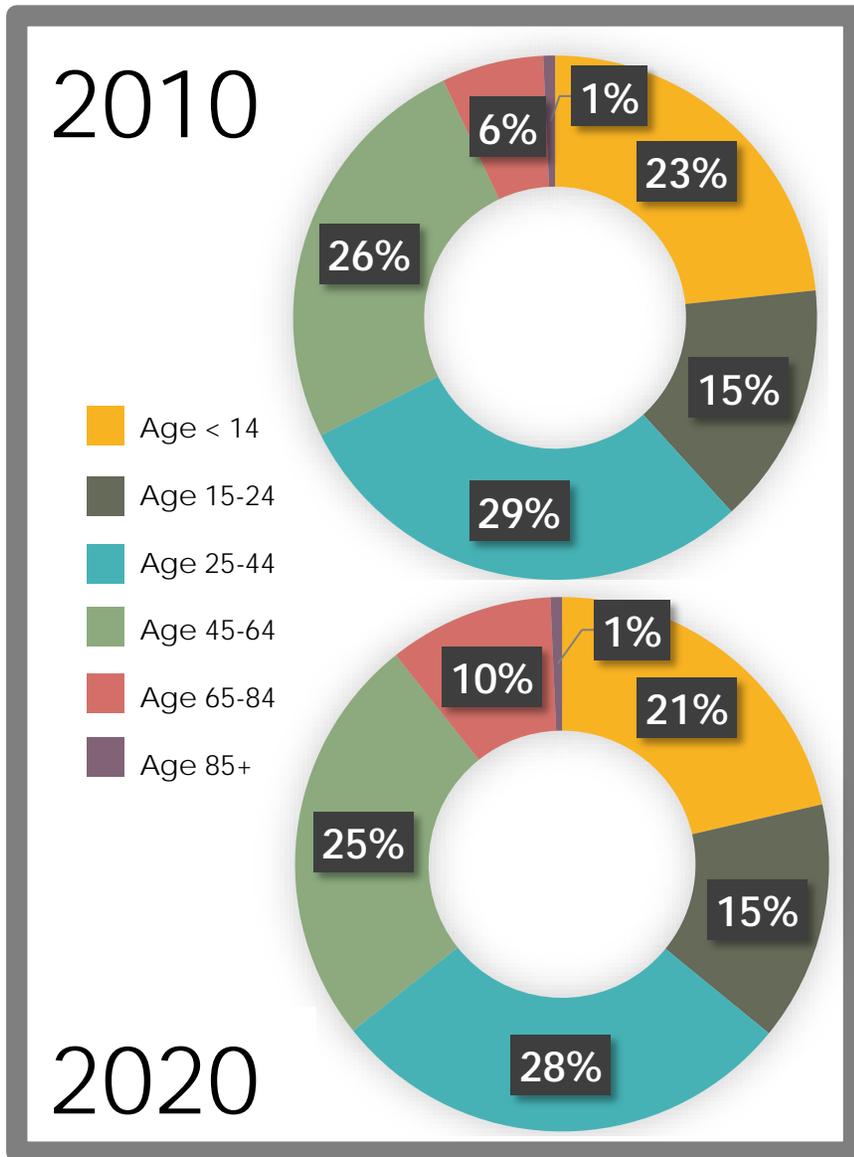
## Population Trends



### Population Change: 2000-2020

The population of the City of Stone Mountain experienced a 20% decrease in population between 2000 and 2010. The population is expected to remain fairly stagnant over the next few years. The city experienced rapid growth early on in its infancy and continued to do so until the 1960's when population growth slowed.

## Age Distribution

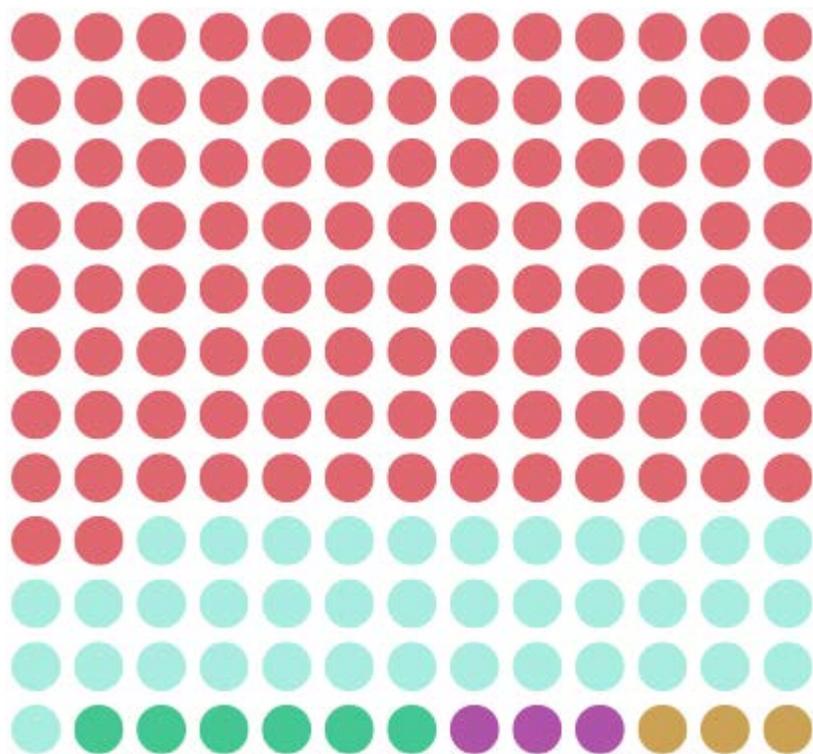


### Age Distribution: 2010-2020

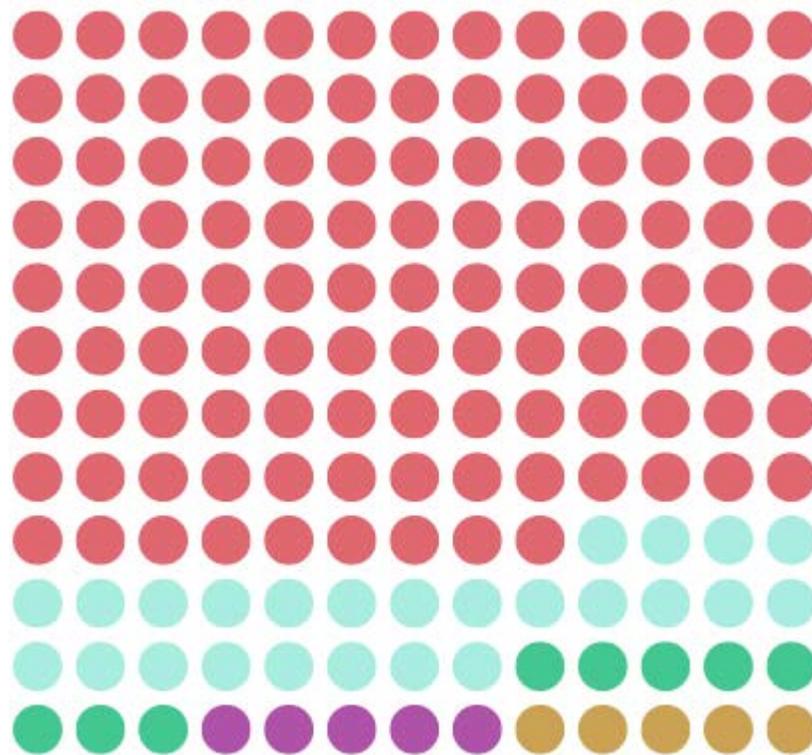
Young and middle age adults (25-64) combine for 55% of the total population. In analyzing the age distribution trends from 2010 to those projected in 2020, in general there is not a significant change. The greatest growth can be found in the 65-84 year category with a 4% increase in older adults. This increase occurs naturally as residents age and the population begins to live longer, but the City of Stone Mountain should also expect a small rise in this age population due to the construction of the new 80-unit senior living facility.

Racial Distribution

2000

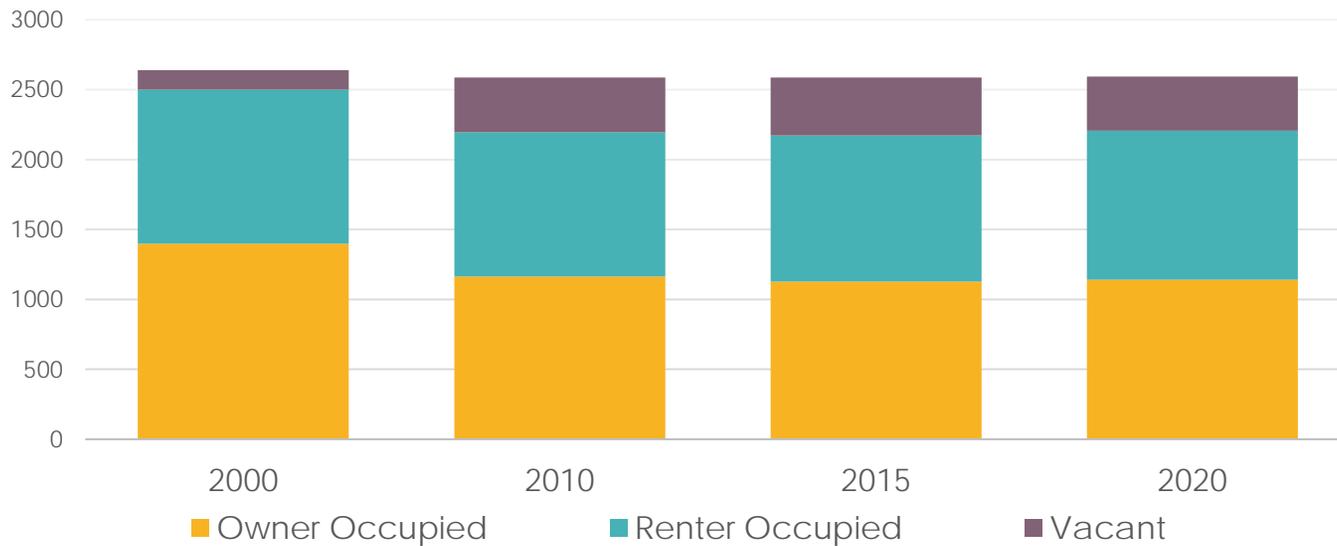


2010



● Black    ● White    ● Hispanic    ● Asian    ● Other

# Housing Trends



There was a decrease in the number of housing units from 2000-2010, and an increase in the proportion of vacancies during the same time.



Median Home Value (2015)

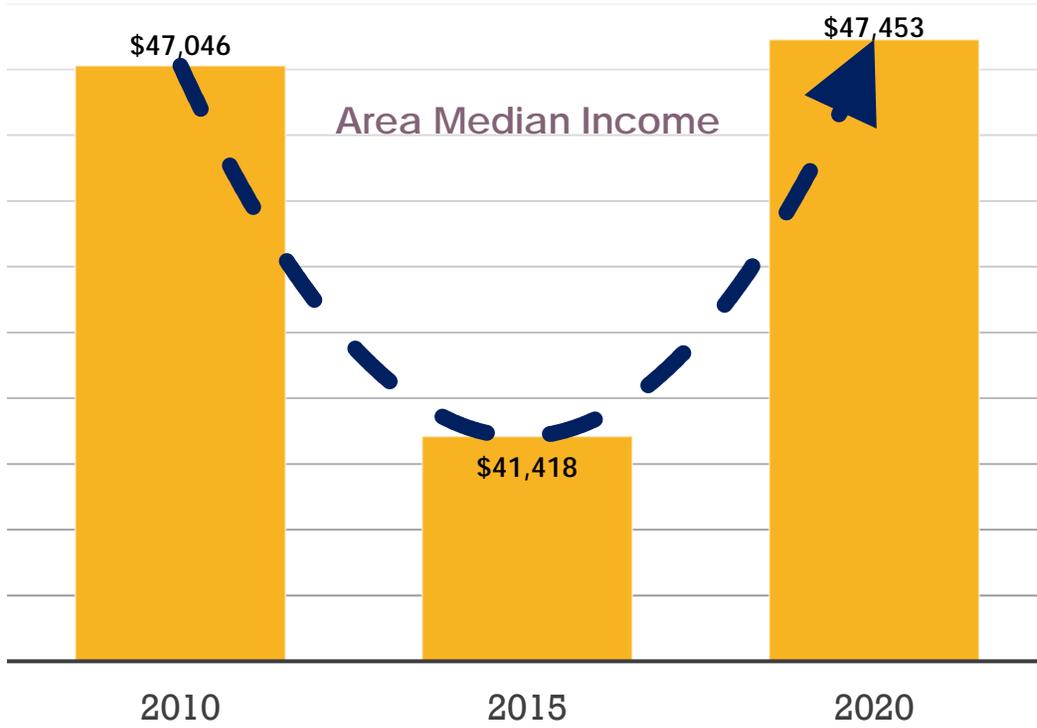


Average Amount Spent - Owned Dwellings (2015)



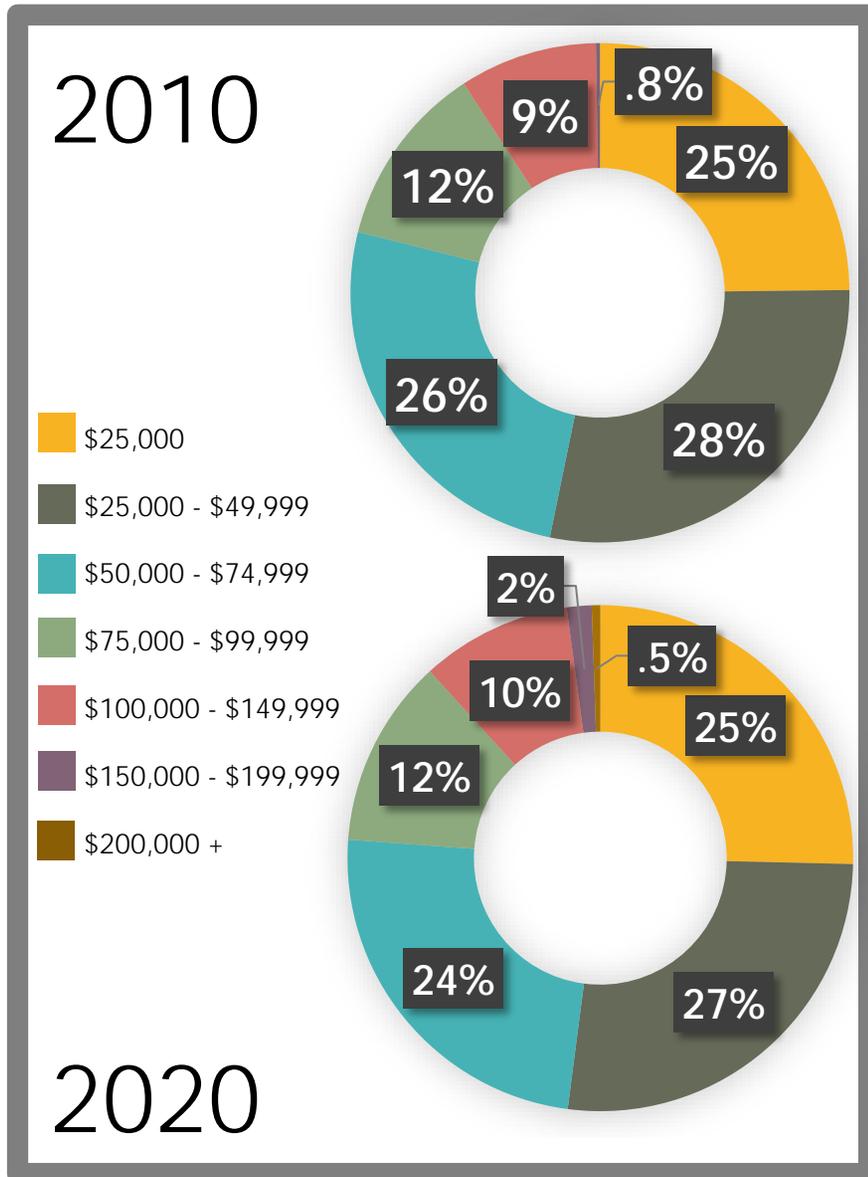
Average Amount Spent - Rented Units (2015)

# Economic Trends



Area median income is expected to increase by 0.8% between 2010 and 2020.  
*Adjusted for inflation*

## Economic Trends

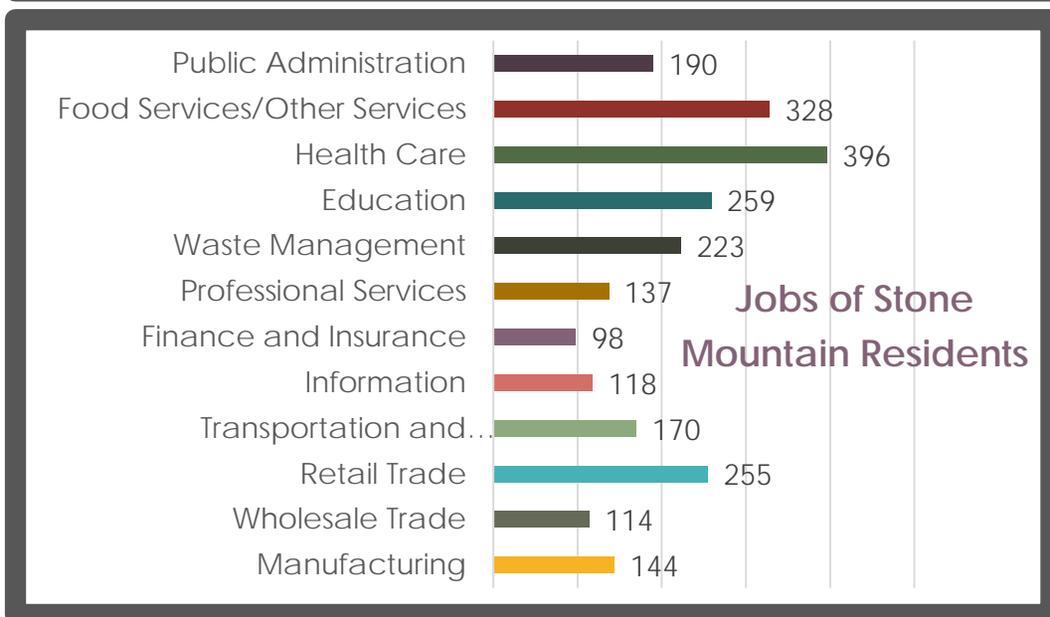
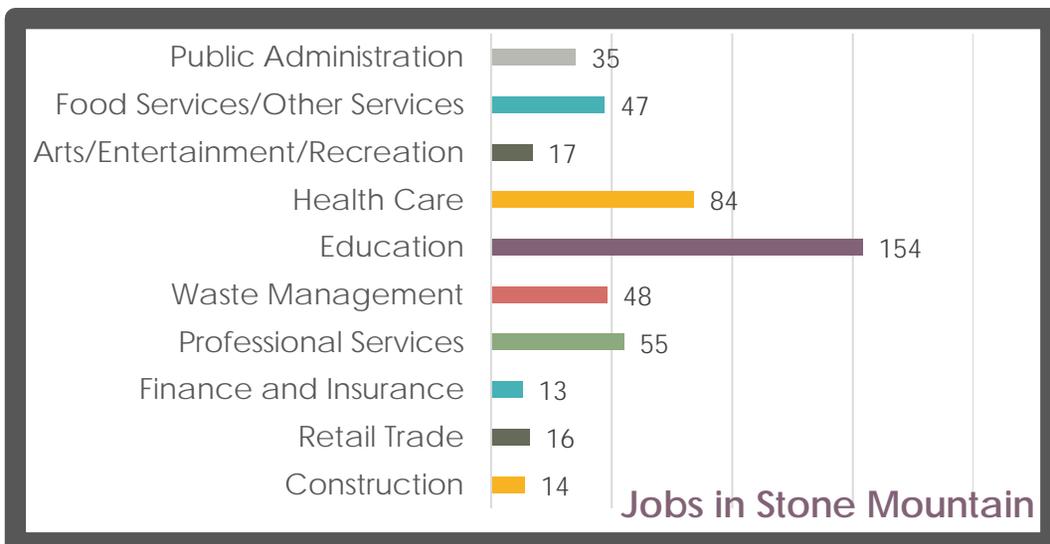


75% of the population makes under \$75,000

Roughly equal distribution of:

- <\$25K
- \$25-50K
- \$50-75K

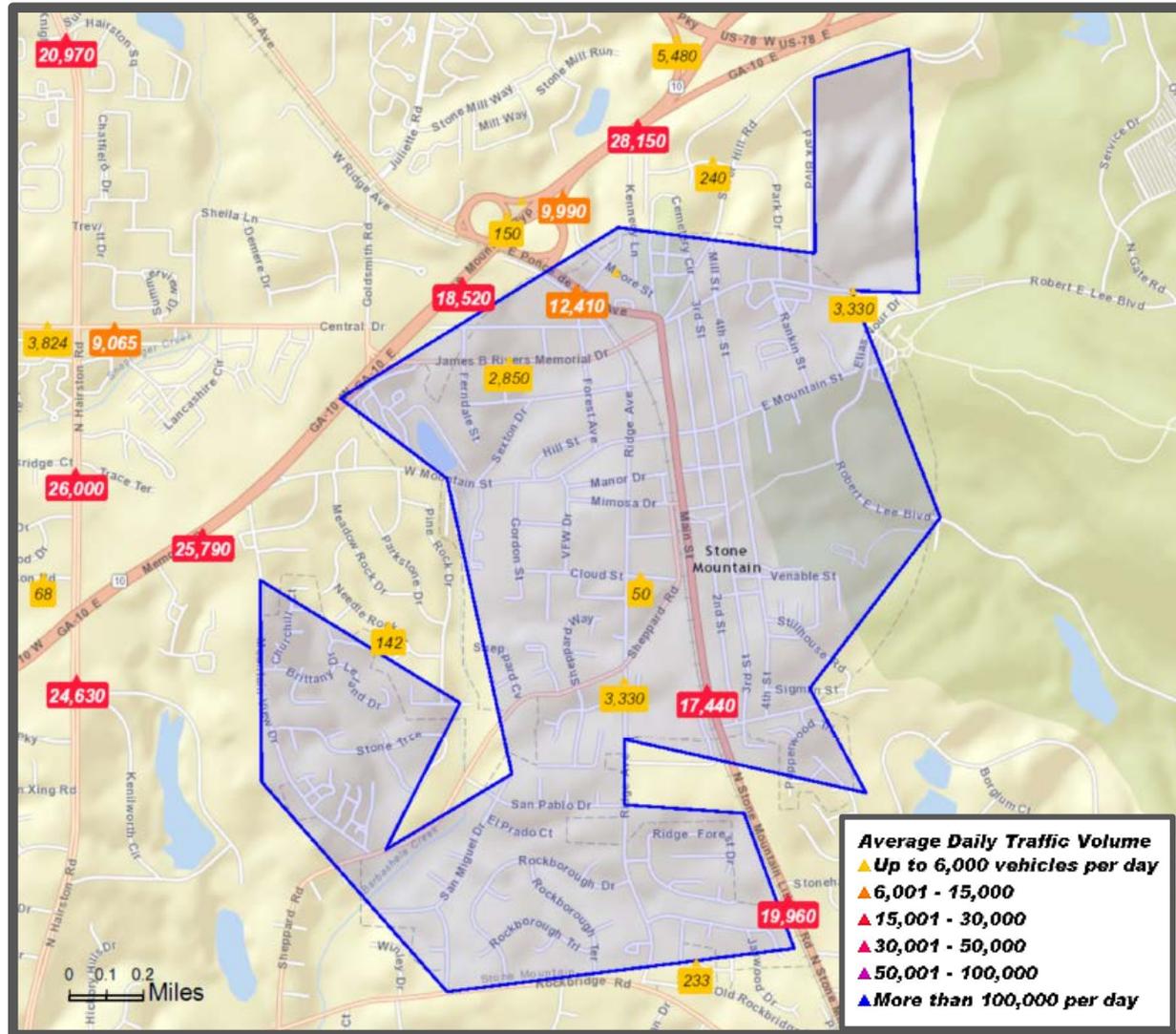
## Economic Trends



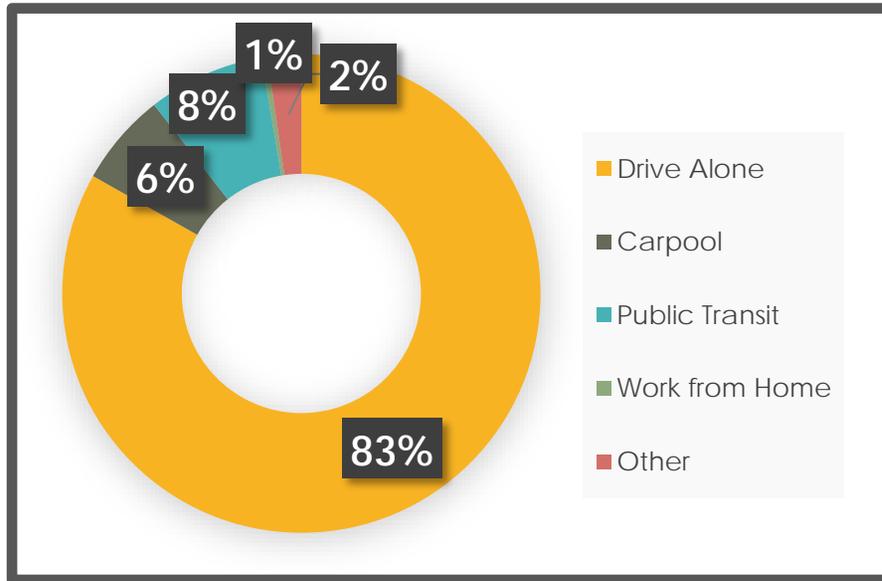
Residents' mix of jobs – regardless of location – is slightly more diverse than the mix of jobs within the City, and have smaller variation between them.

# Transportation Trends

## Traffic Count Map



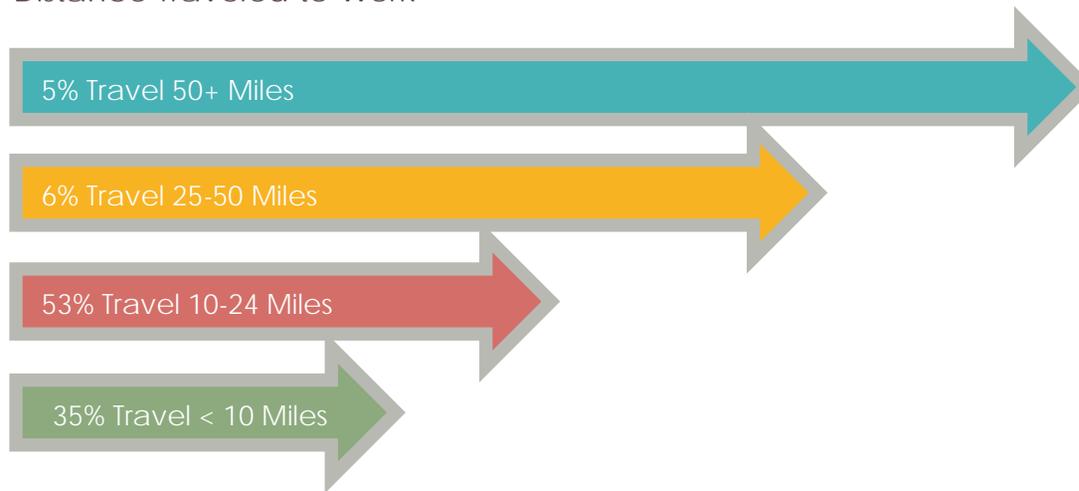
## Transportation Trends



Most residents drive a single occupancy vehicle to and from work each day.

6% carpool, 1% work from home, 8% use public transit, and 2% use an alternate mode such as walking or biking.

## Distance Traveled to Work



# Community Vision

*Stone Mountain Village, Atlanta's Mountain Town, is a diverse, energetic, sustainable community where people **live, visit, create, learn, play** and **prosper** together.*

The Vision was tweaked from the original 2003 Livable Center's Initiative (LCI) and 2006 Comprehensive Plan during the 10-year update of the LCI plan. The Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan seeks to bridge planning efforts and remain consistent thus, carry out the vision of the community through five major goals developed in the LCI plan. These goals were used to develop activities within the five-year short-term work program.

The five goals include:

- Better business environment
- Better reputation/image
- Better community appearance
- More people living here
- Better traffic flow



PUBLIC MEETING AT STONE MOUNTAIN FARMER'S MARKET

# Community Input

The Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan Update process was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of citizens, local business owners, and city staff. The Steering Committee met on multiple occasions, providing direction and feedback at key points in the process. There were additional opportunities for public participation at community meetings, as well as regularly scheduled City Council meetings where the plan was discussed. Meetings were advertised through the city's website, social media, and through posted notices. Steering Committee meetings were held at Stone Mountain City Hall. Both public meetings were open house format with ARC and City Staff on hand to guide the meeting, provide information about the comprehensive plan and process, receive feedback, and to answer any questions the public had. The first public meeting was held at the historic Wells-Brown House, home to the Historical Society, and the second at the Stone Mountain Farmer's Market, held every Tuesday from 4:00pm – 7:00pm along Main Street.

City Council Comp Plan Kick-Off	• May 18, 2015
Steering Committee Meeting	• January 27, 2016
Public Meeting - Wells Brown House	• March 15, 2016
Steering Committee Meeting	• May 25, 2016
Public Meeting - Farmer's Market	• June 21, 2016
Council Work Session	• August 15, 2016
City Council Meeting Approval of Final Draft	• October 4, 2016



PUBLIC MEETING AT WELLS BROWN HOUSE



PUBLIC MEETING AT WELLS BROWN HOUSE

**I would like to see more \_\_\_\_\_**

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Quality Restaurants                       | Grocery Stores           |
| Pedestrians                               | Tiny Houses for Cyclists |
| Sidewalks                                 | School Choices           |
| Awnings on Buildings                      | Improvements             |
| Implementation                            | Businesses               |
| Updated Facades                           | Retail on Main Street    |
| Functional Stores                         | Vendor Space             |
| Nightlife                                 | Variety in Retail        |
| Young Professionals                       | Splash Pad               |
| Movies on the Green                       | Trees on Main Street     |
| Effort by Council to listen to tax payers |                          |

**My Favorite Place:**

- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Gazebo next to Train Depot | Community Garden  |
| Miss Bev's Place           | Farmer's Market   |
| German Restaurant          | Post Office       |
| Art Station                | Antiques          |
| Thirsty Mona Lisa          | Cool Breeze       |
| Stone Mountain Park        | Sweet Potato Cafe |
| Café Jaya                  | German Bakery     |
| Old Post Office Emporium   | My Home           |
| Path to Stone Mtn. Park    |                   |

# Community Survey Responses

**My Least Favorite Place:**

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Roads                      | Art Station Management |
| Main Street                | Lack of Improvements   |
| Non-Profit                 | Low Maintained Houses  |
| Center Streetscape         | Unused Store Fronts    |
| Tacky Little Boutiques     |                        |
| Stone Mountain West Condos |                        |
| 5 Points Intersection      |                        |
| Places that are Never Open |                        |

**In 10 – 20 Years the City will be:**

- |                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| History                         | Fantastic           |
| Historic                        | Vibrant             |
| Booming                         | Economically Viable |
| Wonderful                       | More Fun            |
| Awesome                         | Happening           |
| Ghost Town                      | Charming            |
| Bigger & Better                 | Better than Decatur |
| Thriving                        | Destination         |
| Absorbed by Stone Mountain Park |                     |

# Community Assets

The City of Stone Mountain has many Community Assets that were mentioned in the Stakeholder Committee meetings as well as the Public Meetings. Many believed that the community itself with a rich history evident in the historic core along Main Street is one of the City's greatest assets. Other believe that the people of Stone Mountain are really what make it a great place to live. Other assets mentioned include its close proximity to Atlanta and one of the state's largest tourist attractions, Stone Mountain Park, as well as the affordability of the area and the many downtown events that residents are offered. The City should take advantage of these assets, and build upon them to create an even better place to live, work and play. Below is a "Wordle®" of the assets mentioned during public feedback opportunities. The large the word, the more times it was mentioned.



# Community Needs & Opportunities

The following list provides a set of critical issues and opportunities to be addressed by the City of Stone Mountain during the 20-year planning period. The list of issues and opportunities were developed based on the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, concerns raised in the Stakeholder Committee meetings, and those brought to attention by residents and business owners at the public meetings. These issues and opportunities will be addressed through implementation measures and the work program. Major topics that were mentioned consistently throughout the process included quality business recruitment and retention; need for additional, affordable, housing; coordination with Stone Mountain Park; infrastructure upgrades; and addressing property maintenance and code enforcement issues.

Economic Development Needs and Opportunities
There is a lack of retail to serve the local community.
Business Retention.
There is are no uniform and consistent business hours for city shops and restaurants.
Coordination between Stone Mountain Village and Stone Mountain Park.
Designated parking spaces for visiting Main Street businesses, bicyclists and those walking into Stone Mountain Park.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY

Economic Development Policies
Capitalize on the high traffic volumes passing through the city on Main Street each day and the four million visitors to Stone Mountain Park each year.
Leverage the high number of employees working in the Stone Mountain Industrial Park as potential residents and customers for local businesses.
Welcome new businesses and support existing ones.

### Land Use and Housing Needs & Opportunities

A number of housing units in the city are in need of repair and pose unsafe conditions – better code enforcement is needed.

Greater percentage of renters vs. owners.

Aging housing stock and code enforcement issues.

There are a number of vacant properties scattered throughout the city that could be used for infill development.

Local opposition to new development, innovative development and higher density development.

There is a lack of mix of uses in the city, like offices and lofts over Main Street retail.

### Land Use and Housing Policies

Encourage mixed use development.

Promote redevelopment, image improvements and community branding to reinvigorate home values within the city.

Support programs that facilitate home ownership.

Future development must respect the area's historic and cultural significance.

Emphasize infill and redevelopment as ways to stimulate growth and support planning objectives.

### Natural and Cultural Resources Needs & Opportunities

There are a number of historic structures in the city in need of restoration/rehabilitation.

Opportunity for additional greenspace and parks.

There is opposition to historic preservation in some communities.

### Natural and Cultural Resources Policies

The City will continue to maintain its current recreation offerings, while looking for opportunities to expand recreation by the expansion of programming in existing facilities.

The community plays a key role in identifying and supporting resources worthy of historic designation or historic preservation efforts.

Enforce design guidelines and/or standards for redevelopment of historic buildings or infill within the historic core.

**Community Facilities and Services Needs & Opportunities**

The city needs identifiable, aesthetically pleasing gateways at its borders.
The uneven or damaged sidewalks in some neighborhoods pose safety issues for residents.
There is the potential for development of additional parks, recreation facilities and community gathering spaces.
There are numerous undeveloped/vacant sites in town that could be used to accommodate facility needs.

**Community Facilities and Services Policies**

Enhance the image of the community in the village center, at key gateways and along arterial corridors.
Support the arts community within Stone Mountain.
Create gathering spaces to support the village center as a community focal point.
Redevelop marginal public facilities into more functional spaces that satisfy community needs.

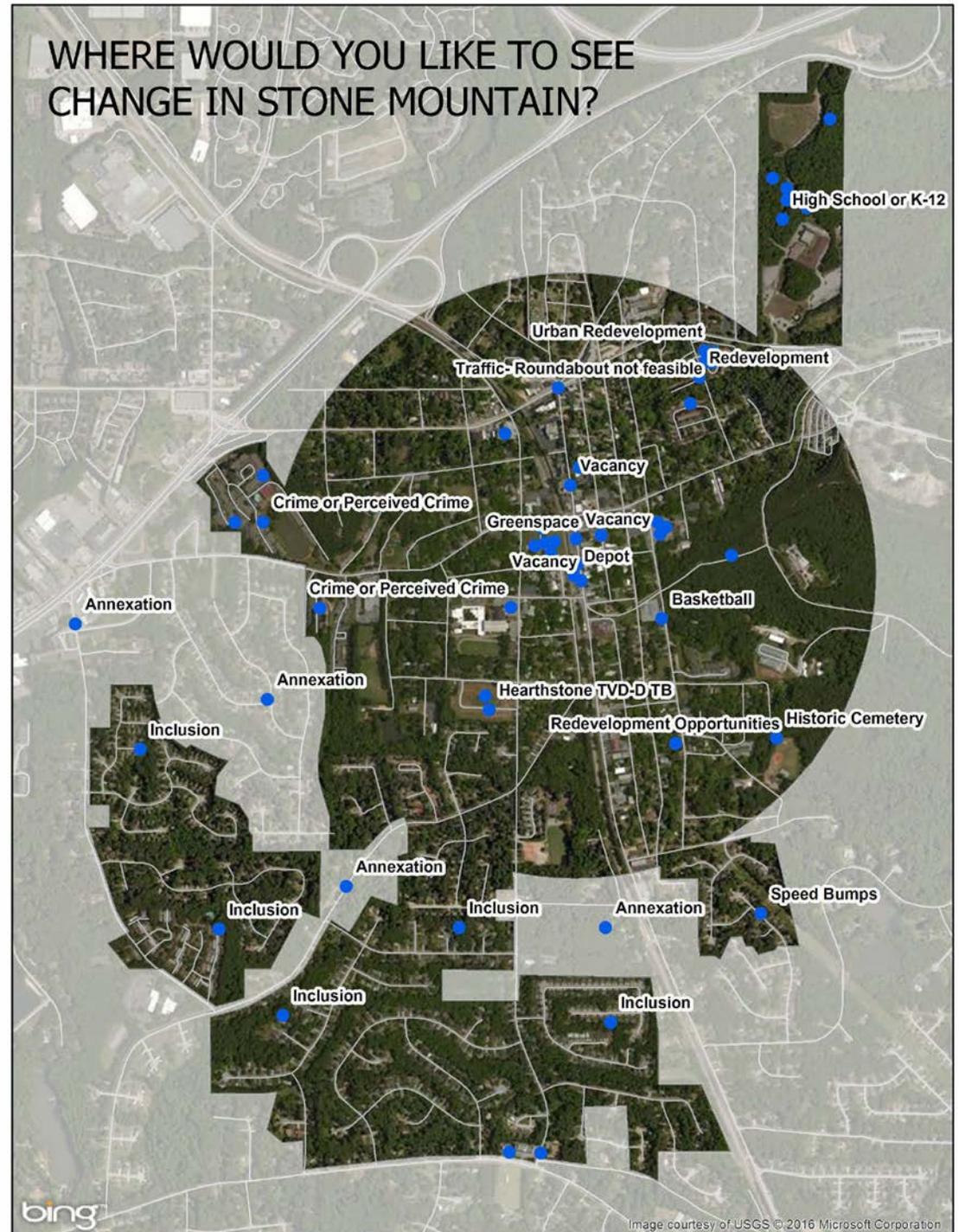
**Transportation and Infrastructure Needs & Opportunities**

Enhancements need to be made to improve traffic operations on Main Street.
Cut through traffic issues in neighborhoods.
The 5-point intersection at Main Street/East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Silver Hill Road and Memorial Drive needs improvement.
Sidewalks in disrepair.
Improvement and expansion needed for sidewalk network.
Pedestrian crossing treatments are needed throughout the city.

**Transportation and Infrastructure Policies**

Improve traffic flow along Main Street.
Actively promote pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the city.
Support appropriate recommendations of existing transportation planning studies.
Enhance transit availability and links to major employment centers and Stone Mountain Park from the city center.
Enforce weight and size limits of vehicles that can utilize Main Street.

# Areas Requiring Attention

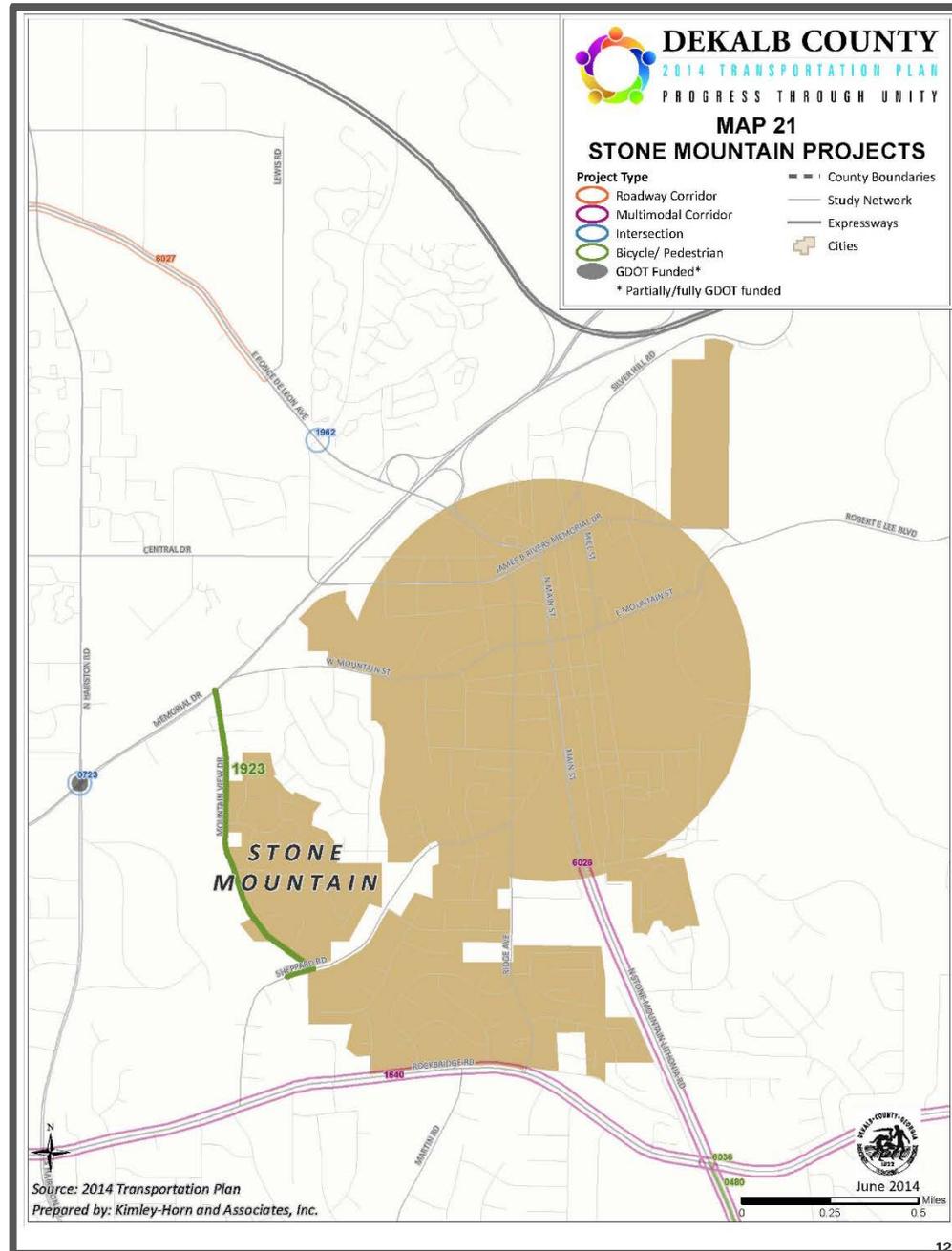


# Current Planning Documents

## DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan

The City of Stone Mountain does not have its own list of projects, as no projects are more than 20% contained by the City. A number of projects fall near the city limits or connect to the City, including the multimodal corridor project along Rockbridge Road (Project 1640); the sidewalk project along Mountain View Road (Project 1923); the Heritage Corridor Study (Project 6026) and associated bicycle and pedestrian improvements (Project 0480); and the intersection projects of Memorial Drive and N. Hairston Road (Project 0723) and Goldsmith Road at East Ponce de Leon Avenue (Project 1962). See figure to the right for map of projects affecting the City of Stone Mountain.

The City of Stone Mountain works with DeKalb County to establish transportation priorities utilizing federal transportation funds.



## DeKalb County

### 2014-2018 Consolidated Plan for HUD Programs and 2016 Annual Action Plan

DeKalb County is a HUD entitlement community and receives Community Development Block Grant funding to perform various community improvement activities. The area surrounding Memorial Drive in the City of Stone Mountain is a target, priority area of the County's. Priority areas help focus targeted investment and allow the County to be more strategic in affecting areas with high concentrations of low-to moderate-income residents. The City of Stone Mountain works with DeKalb County to help establish housing goals and initiatives utilizing federal funds for the City.

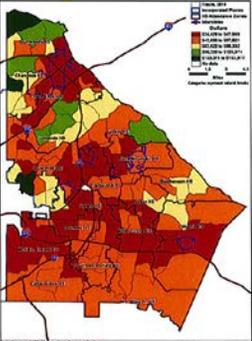
Many goals and projects found within the 2016 Annual Action Plan of DeKalb County's Consolidated Plan are countywide, but two specific activities are called out specifically within the City of Stone Mountain. These include funds directed towards the DeKalb County Housing Authority, which recently opened an 80-unit mixed-income senior housing apartment community within walking distance to Stone Mountain Village, and the City of Stone Mountain Train Depot ADA Improvement Project. The ADA Improvement project involves the construction of a wooden platform system surrounding one of the two buildings that comprise the historic train depot that will become a center for senior services. The other building will be built as a Welcome Center.

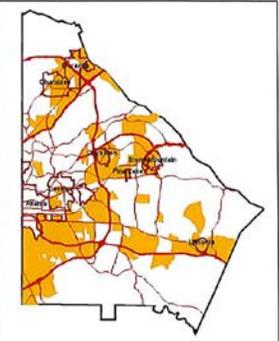
# THE 2014-2018 CONSOLIDATED PLAN FOR HUD PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE 2016 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

DeKalb County, Georgia

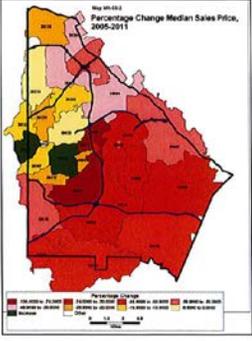


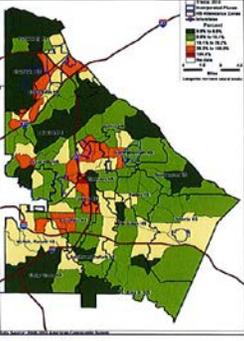
DEKALB-COUNTY-GEORGIA  
1822





Nov 09, 2011  
Percentage Change Median Sales Price, 2005-2011





**RESPONSIBLE AGENCY:**  
**DEKALB COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

330 W. Ponce de Leon Avenue Decatur GA 30030

Phone: 404-371.2467  
Fax: 404-371.2742

## Stone Mountain LCI Plan

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program funded by the Atlanta Regional Commission with the goal to create livable communities across the Metro Atlanta region “linking transportation improvements with land use development strategies”. The Stone Mountain LCI was originally awarded in 2003, with the current plan adopted in 2013 as a 10-year update. LSL Planning, Inc. developed the plan with input from the public, as well as a steering committee of local stakeholders. The plan takes a look at current trends, future demands, and current opportunities to develop a 5-year work program that addresses transportation, housing and other aspects of Stone Mountain.

The plan outlines four “Catalyst Projects” for reuse that could potentially spur growth and redevelopment within the City. The four projects with potential uses include:

1. MARTA Parking Lot

**Accomplished! Demolished to build 80-unit senior housing; opened in Fall 2015.**

2. DeKalb Housing Authority Youth Home – no longer in use
  - Art Camp or Hostel Facility; or

## City of Stone Mountain



adopted april 15, 2013



## Livable Centers Initiative Plan 10 Year Update

- Demolish current facilities and create 40-single family cottages; or
  - Combined senior housing and senior care facility.
3. Ridge Avenue – former residential subdivision with partially developed infrastructure (See photo below)
- 40-unit townhome development; or
  - 20 small lot single family homes; or
  - Active adult housing.
4. Generic Small Mixed Use Commercial Site
- Not site specific; various sites within the downtown area on approximately 1.5 acres; or
  - One story mixed use with 15,000 SF retail and office space; or
  - Two story mixed use with 12,000 SF retail and commercial space and 20 loft units.

The 2013 LCI plan update also contains a Zoning Ordinance Technical Review that analyzed various sections of the zoning code including organization of the document, variances, zoning districts, site plan review, rezonings, and other important elements.



## Stone Mountain Village Neighborhood Improvements Plan

In 2015, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) worked with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Design Studio to develop conceptual designs making recommendations to enhance various entrances and gateways throughout Stone Mountain. Through use of DDA funds and contributions from private individuals, the gateway at the Main Street Gazebo has been completed. The plan looked at five areas. These included:

1. Cemetery Entrance Plaza
2. Ponce de Leon Bike Station
3. Sherman's Neckties
4. Main Street Gazebo
5. Cemetery Side Entrance



City of Stone Mountain Community Assessment – Georgia Power March 2011  
Georgia Power’s Community and Economic Development Department utilized Herron Consulting to conduct a community assessment for the City of Stone Mountain in 2011. The assessment looked at current assets and opportunities, current industry mix, and then made recommendations on recommended target industry and recruitment strategies. The recommended target industries are listed in the box below:

## 2.2 RECOMMENDED TARGET INDUSTRIES AND CLUSTERS

HERRON CONSULTING recommends specific target industry sectors for the City of Stone Mountain to pursue to bring new jobs and investment to the community. The industries are grouped into three clusters, based upon synergies between the target industry sectors. The recommended target industry clusters and sectors are:

- Entrepreneurial Networked Professionals
  - Independent Artists, Writers and Performers, NAICS 71150
  - Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services, NAICS 5416
- Motion Picture Production and Postproduction
  - Motion Picture and Video Production, NAICS 51211
  - Postproduction and Other Related Industries, NAICS 51219
- Computer Gaming
  - Software Publishing, NAICS 51121
  - Custom Computer Programming, NAICS 541511

In addition to these, we recommend Stone Mountain continue its focus on tourism because it is an export industry which increases community wealth and tax revenues; creates a positive image of the community and is beneficial for marketing. Tourism is one of Georgia’s target industries and the entire state benefits from it.

# CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Prepared For:

**Georgia Power Company  
Community and Economic Development**

March 2011

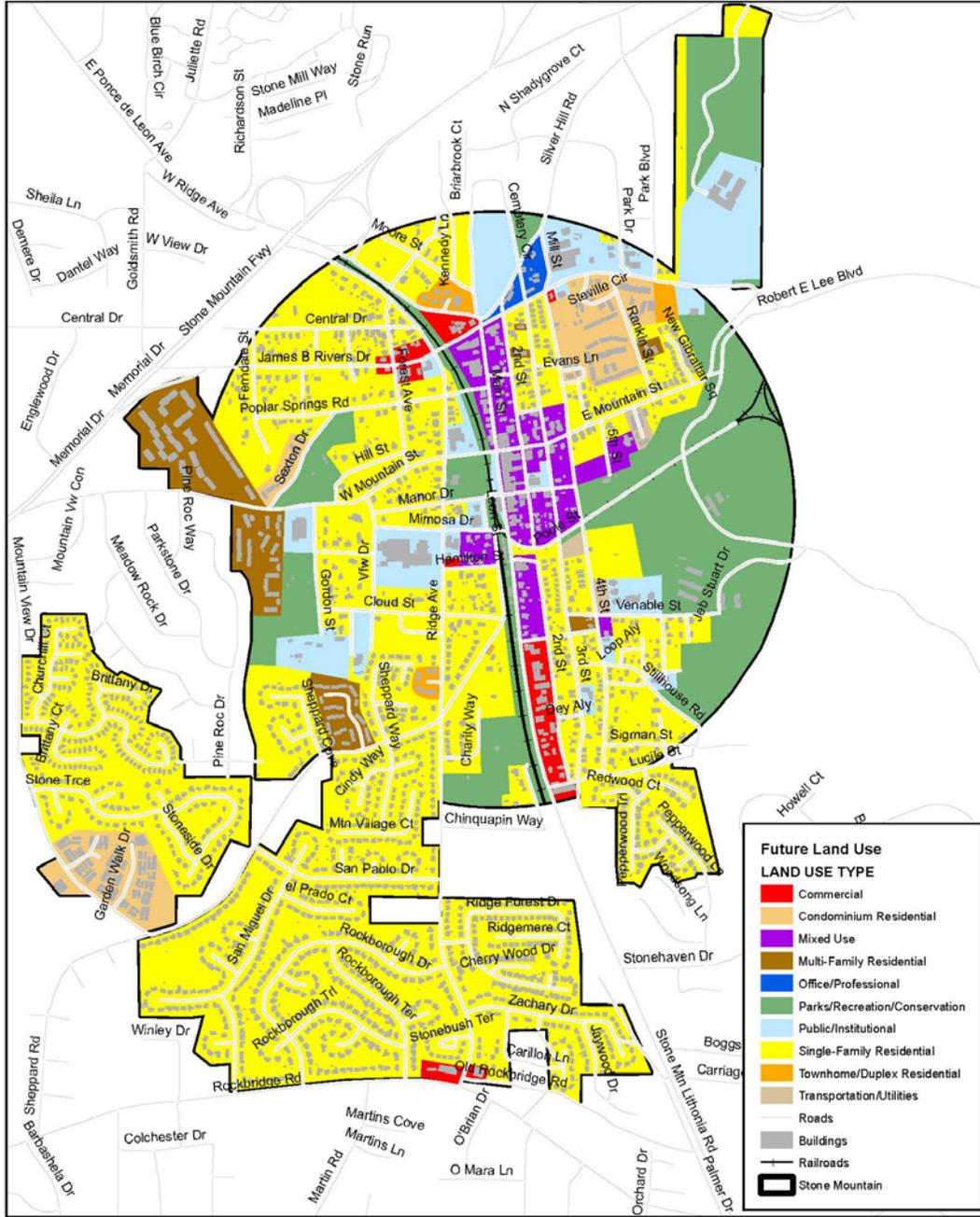


**HERRON CONSULTING LTD**  
1101 Juniper Street, Suite 51  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
[www.HerronConsultingServices.com](http://www.HerronConsultingServices.com)

Stone Mountain  
Comprehensive Plan  
Tomorrow



# Future Land Use Map, City of Stone Mountain



## Future Land Use

The future land use development map was created by utilizing the current land use and zoning map of the City of Stone Mountain. The future development map outlines anticipated land uses over the next twenty (20) years and uses conventional classifications to describe the use of the land. This map will be used as a guide in conjunction with city wide polices and the character area map located on page 37, when making development related decisions. The character area map identifies boundaries of sub-planning areas that have unique or special characteristics that require special attention in regards to development issues. The land use classifications used in the future land use development map are described below and further detailed within the *primary land use* section of each character area listed in the next section. Definitions for the standard land use categories are taken from Chapter 110-12-1 *Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning* of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and outline broad categories including potential land uses.

**Residential:** the predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities. The residential land uses in the Stone Mountain Future Land Use Development Map include Condominium Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Single-Family Residential and Townhome/Duplex Residential.

**Commercial:** This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. The commercial land uses in the Stone Mountain Future Land Use Development Map include Commercial and Office/Professional.

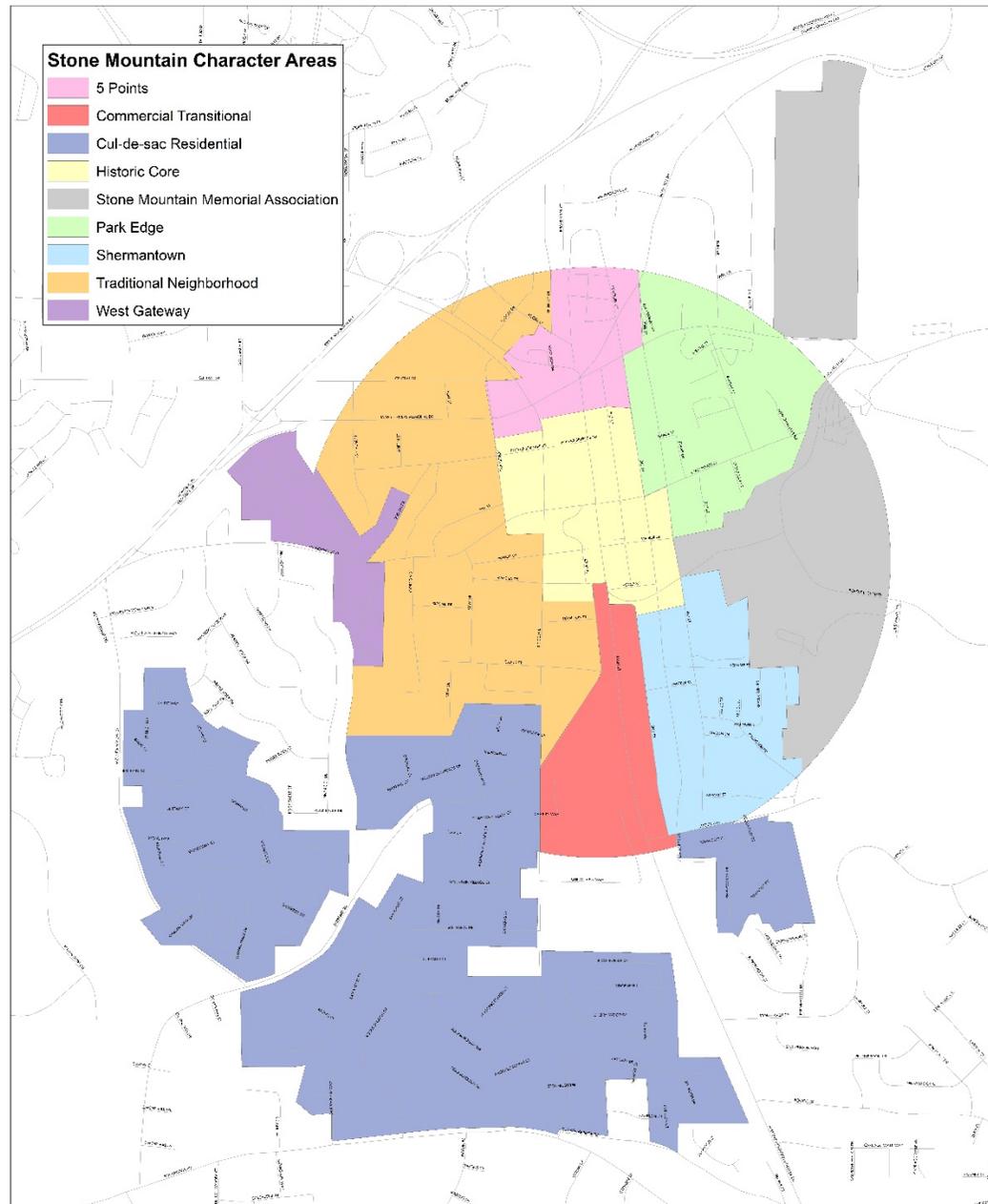
**Public/Institutional:** This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complex, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc.

**Transportation/Communication/Utilities:** This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses. The transportation/communication/utilities land uses in the Stone Mountain Future Land Use Development Map include Transportation/Utilities category.

**Park/Recreation/Conservation:** This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses.

**Mixed Use:** These areas combine land use types that are often physically and purposefully integrated.

# Character Areas, City of Stone Mountain



# Character Areas

The following list of character areas corresponds to the Character Area map listed on page 37. As previously mentioned character areas are sub-planning areas that have unique or special characteristics that require special attention in regards to future development. The character areas are listed below and include both a brief description of the area as well as current picture from those areas. The description also includes an explanation of desired development patterns, implementation strategies, and primary land uses.

## Historic Core



The Historic Core is the focal point of the city of Stone Mountain. The future of the historic core will encompass physical and economic redevelopment and revitalization in a manner that is sensitive to the area's historic context. New development and redevelopment will increase the burgeoning mix of uses, which includes higher-density residential, retail, and office professional activities. The area is, and will continue to be, the hub of city offices, greenspaces, and links to regional transportation routes. The area will be pedestrian friendly and linked to other city neighborhoods through sidewalk and bicycle routes.

Desired Development Patterns and Implementation Strategies:

- Traditional "downtown" with large blocks lined with buildings that meet the street.
- Parking located in civic lots, lots located behind structures or on the street.

- Sidewalks are wide and include amenity areas for street trees, benches, and plantings.
- Roadways should have well marked and signalized crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Support implementation of 2013 10-Year LCI Update.
- Enforce historic district design guidelines and zoning regulations.

Stone Mountain's connection to the PATH network is another unique characteristic of the Town Center and should be expanded in the future, including more direct connections to greenspace and trail networks as well as linking parks to one another. All of these efforts, accompanied by the addition of sidewalks and creation of other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes will link neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, and schools. Public restrooms should also be constructed as part of the Main Street redevelopment.

New construction in this area should be compatible with existing buildings; heights should be limited to 2 to 3 stories for buildings facing Main Street and James B. Rivers Memorial Drive and 1 and ½ to two stories for structures fronting other streets in the area.

#### Primary Land Uses:

- Mixed use to include homes, offices, shops, greenspace, institutions and civic offices.
- Residential development reinforcing the traditional town center through a combination of historic home rehabilitation, compatible new infill development and lofts located over retail spaces.
- Housing density up to 12 units per acre is appropriate.
- Office development is appropriate, especially as a second story use in historic buildings with ground floor retail.

## Commercial Transitional



Stone Mountain has several commercial areas that are declining and in need of redevelopment to be vital in the future. Comprised primarily of unattractive, vacant, or under-utilized strip shopping centers, these areas are characterized by auto-oriented design that creates a high degree of access for vehicular traffic. An excess of on-site parking and a lack of preserved open space characterize this area.

The designated commercial redevelopment areas are largely located in heavily traveled portions of the city. In order to increase activity in these areas, commercial redevelopment should focus on upgrades to the building and site aesthetics as well as the surrounding transportation network. In the future these areas will be hubs for commercial and professional activity. Due to their locations they will be more auto-oriented than the town center commercial areas, yet they will still maintain a high level of pedestrian accessibility.

Desired Development Patterns and Implementation Strategies:

- Well connected to the major transportation routes they front as well as the residential areas to which they are adjacent.
- In the south Main Street corridor, future commercial development may remain auto-oriented, but there should be greater control on access points and overall aesthetics.
- Manufactured or “Butler” buildings are not appropriate in this area.

- The Memorial Drive area should create a more cohesive fabric for pedestrians, bicycles, and cars.
  - Connection of the PATH Trail with Stone Mountain's internal bicycle and pedestrian trails, and coordination with nearby greenspace and the gateway(s) to the City.
- Green spaces should be provided in the redeveloped commercial areas.
  - Pedestrian seating, plantings, and trees should be incorporated into the site designs for all redevelopment projects, along with landscaping plans for the entrances, facades and service areas of each building.
  - A minimum of 20% open space should be retained on all developed lots.
- Signage in these areas should be "monumental" in style and include architectural elements and surface treatments that are attractive and cohesive with the architecture of the surrounding structures.

Primary Land Uses:

- Commercial uses will dominate in these areas.
- Limited professional (office) and second story residential uses are also appropriate.
- Buildings should vary in height between one and two stories.
- Commercial development intensities should range between 10,000 and 25,000 square feet per acre.
- Pocket Parks.

## Cul-de-sac Residential



The Cul-de-sac Residential, or Suburban Residential, character area encompasses much of the southern portion of the City of Stone Mountain. This area is currently, and will continue to be, characterized by larger lot (1/3 to 1/2 acre) residential development. These neighborhoods are comprised of typical suburban development from the 1970's through 1990's that exemplify the curvilinear street pattern and proliferation of cul-de-sacs and large lot sizes. Houses have large setbacks from the street and development is auto oriented and does not promote pedestrian activity.

In recent years some of the subdivisions in this area have experienced decline. Low rates of homeownership and lack of proper maintenance on the existing housing stock are factors contributing to the decline. In the future the area will remain suburban in feel but redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts should seek to better integrate the area with the rest of Stone Mountain. Small-scale, nodal commercial development will support the residential nature of the area as will the integration of parks and pedestrian facilities. Internal and external connectivity will be promoted (versus current cul-de-sac roadway design) to create alternative transportation routes.

Desired Development Patterns and Implementation Strategies:

- Revitalize existing housing stock
- Target homeowners at varied price points.

- New single-family detached and attached houses.
- Limit cul-de-sacs streets and promote street connectivity when feasible.
- Employ conservation style design to create common open space and recreation amenities
- Rehabilitation efforts should include streetscape improvements, such as sidewalks.

Primary Land Uses:

- Detached single-family residences
- Limited areas of multi-family housing (apartments) that may be rehabilitated but should not be expanded in the future.
- Town houses, where appropriate.
- Overall density should stay within a 2 to 4 unit per acre range.
- Pocket Parks.

## Park Edge



The City of Stone Mountain's location adjacent to Stone Mountain Park sets the precedent for open space and recreation amenities within the City. The Park Edge Character Area includes greenspace, recreation and conservation uses, as well as the Stone Mountain Memorial Association properties (Stone Mountain Park). The current development of the city reflects a strong commitment to providing active and passive greenspaces for the benefit of citizens and visitors. The vision for the future of greenspace in the city is the continued enhancement of existing parks and a steady increase in the amount of available active and passive green space. The city will also increase programming in existing greenspaces and seek opportunities to expand programming into new areas.

### Desired Development Patterns and Implementation Strategies:

- Expansion, support and maintenance of PATH (Bike trail connecting Stone Mountain Park with Atlanta) trails.
- Opportunities for new parks are located in Shermantown.
- Preserve and program current greenspace.
- Require new development to include greenspaces and/or small pocket parks for residents or development users.
  - Adopt conservation subdivision regulations or greenspace set aside requirements.

### Primary Land Uses:

- Park and Recreation Space
- Civic Use
- Walking and Biking Trail Connections

## Shermantown



Shermantown is the center of African-American community and culture in the City of Stone Mountain. The condition of properties varies widely. Dilapidated or declining structure may adversely affect future development. Turning the tide of decline and re-establishing this area as a thriving, more self-sustaining community is the goal of future development and improvement initiatives in this character area. The vision for the future of Shermantown is a vibrant neighborhood where older structures are seamlessly interwoven with context sensitive infill development in safe, pedestrian friendly arrangements. A healthy mix of residences, small commercial establishments and institutions such as churches will characterize the area. A new square will create a community gathering space that pays homage to the historic commercial node of the neighborhood.

Desired Development Patterns and Implementation Strategies:

- Traditional neighborhood development patterns
  - Currently, streets are narrow and laid out in a somewhat irregular grid pattern.
  - Houses and lots are small and have narrow setbacks
- Ensure maintenance of existing sidewalks and install new ones.
- Ensure connectivity of sidewalk network to community amenities.
- Preserve existing single family homes.
- Encourage restoration of aging homes with historic character.

- Promote new single family residential development.
- Develop new multi-family homes with high quality design elements compatible with existing single-family homes.
- Establish Pocket Parks.

Primary Land Uses:

- Detached single family homes.
- Compatible two-story townhome development.
- Compatible small multi-family residential development.
- Neighborhood serving retail establishments (2,000 sq. ft. or less).
- Parks and open space.

## Stone Mountain Memorial Association

The Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA) is an authority created in 1958 by the State of Georgia to manage Stone Mountain Park (Official Code of Georgia Annotated §12-3-190, "Stone Mountain Memorial Association Act"). A portion of the park's land is located within the city limits of Stone Mountain; however, the SMMA has land use control over this portion. Therefore, this Character Area is not detailed in regards to land use, desired development patterns and implementation strategies, as are the other Stone Mountain Character Areas. This area is highlighted in gray on the "Character Area Map" found on page 38 of this plan.

## Traditional Residential



In Stone Mountain, the stable, traditional neighborhoods are adjacent to the Historic Core in the northern half of the city. These neighborhoods are typically a mixture of older and newer housing. Some of the traditional neighborhoods are located in close proximity to neighborhoods in need of improvement, which could impact them over time if action is not taken to protect the stable areas from encroaching decline. Such actions include reinforcing stability by encouraging homeownership and an emphasis on maintaining or upgrading existing properties. The traditional neighborhood in Stone Mountain is able to seamlessly integrate various institutional uses including Champion Theme Charter School, McCurdy Park, the city Post Office and churches into the residential fabric through use of sidewalk connectivity and appropriately placed parking.

Most of the city's traditional neighborhoods fall within Stone Mountain's designated National Historic Register District, which represents the city's unique history and includes numerous significant architectural resources. The city's historic character will continue to be promoted and preserved through the sensitive treatment of renovations and new development in these neighborhoods.

Desired Development Patterns and Implementation Strategies:

- Preserve existing single family homes.
- Encourage restoration of aging homes with historic character.

- Promote new single-family residential development with historic character.
- Develop new single family homes on ¼ acre lots or less.
- Develop new multi-family homes with high quality design elements compatible with existing single-family homes.
- Ensure installation of sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian activity.
- Ensure connectivity of sidewalk network to community amenities.
- Establish pocket parks.
- Incorporate traffic calming measures.
- Strict Code Enforcement.

Primary Land Uses:

- Single-family dwelling units.
- Compatible two-story townhome development.
- The addition of commercial uses into these areas is not appropriate due to the “skinny” street pattern and proximity to other commercial areas of the city.
- Institutional (schools, churches, etc.) and park uses that support a strong sense of community are appropriate.

## Gateways



Gateways consist of developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of a major thoroughfare that serves as an important entrance or means of access to the community. In Stone Mountain, this describes two character areas: West Gateway and 5 Points. Future efforts to improve Main Street's appearance through new streetscapes, landscaping, and other beautification measures should originate or connect through the gateway areas. Other focused efforts should utilize these areas as hubs for directory signage to areas of interest within the city.

There are six areas designated as existing "Town Center" gateways that should be the focus of future aesthetic upgrades:

- South: Main Street at Mimosa Drive
- Southwest: Sheppard Road at Ridge Ave.
- West: West Mountain Street and Ridge Ave.
- Northwest: Memorial Drive at Ridge
- East: East Mountain Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- North: Five Points intersection and Memorial Drive at Ridge Avenue

There are seven locations designated as potential “City” gateways that should provide aesthetic upgrades to create recognition that you are entering the City of Stone Mountain:

- South: South Main Street at Lucille
- Southwest: Sheppard Road at Mountain View Drive
- West: West Mountain Street and Memorial Drive
- Northwest: Memorial Drive and Memorial Drive/Stone Mountain Freeway Connector
- North: East Ponce de Leon Avenue at the City Limits
- Northeast: East Memorial Drive and Park Blvd.
- East: East Mountain Street at the Gate to Stone Mountain Memorial Park

The improvement of these gateway areas can provide the city the opportunity to announce and celebrate its historic Main Street. The gateways will provide a positive first impression and facilitate access into the Historic Core.

Desired Development Patterns and Implementation Strategies:

- Should include monumental signage made of durable high quality materials which is attractively designed.
  - Design should support the character of the city through incorporation of elements referencing the city’s unique natural features and railway history.
- Gateway signage should be surrounded by special landscaping treatments that create a formal entry into the Historic Core and are clearly distinguishable from the surroundings.
- Special sidewalk and/or pavement treatments can be implemented to help establish gateways.

Primary Land Uses:

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Condominium and Townhome Residential
- Commercial
- Office/Professional Space
- Institutional
- Pocket Parks

# Report of Accomplishments

2012 – 2017 City of Stone Mountain Report of Accomplishments

Project	Status	Notes
<b>Housing</b>		
Coordinate with MARTA to redevelop current park/ride property with mixed-use/live-work development.	Underway	Proposal for acquisition by City or DDA under discussion with MARTA
<b>Economic Development</b>		
Coordinate with Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA) to improve and maintain long term linkages between Village and Park including facilities and promotion to tourists.	Completed	Coordination with SMMA and Park Management is an ongoing activity; SMMA provides \$9000 in funding for the Visitors Center; SMMA interested in connecting E. Mtn. St. sidewalks to park entrance
Coordinate with DeKalb County Development Authority to promote redevelopment initiatives.	Completed	DDA Executive Director meets regularly with staff members from Decide DeKalb, attends economic development roundtable meetings and served on a committee for the Decide DeKalb Strategic Plan. In addition, she serves on the Economic Development Committee for the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce along with several subcommittees.

Main Street/Downtown Business coordination, recruitment, marketing, promotion.	Completed	The DDA has re-established an active Façade Grant program and created a community investor group, BOOST, which makes grants 4 times a year to local businesses. The DDA is in the final stages of establishing a Downtown Revolving Loan Fund which will make small loans to local businesses at low interest.
Art Micro-enterprise Program to support local artists.	Completed	Mid-town gallery on Main Street established by the Art Micro-Enterprise Program
Install history boards throughout city.	Cancelled	Budgetary constraints
Certify TAD and issue bond.	Postponed	Current value of the TAD is \$7.4 million which is far less than the base value of \$9.6 million. The City Manager and DDA Executive Director review the TAD value each year.
Recruit a major grocery store chain.	Postponed	Momentum stalled. Needs a champion to recruit grocery store.
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>		
Conversion of blighted property on CSX railroad right of way to greenspace.	Cancelled	Budgetary constraints
Re-establish financing/grant program for Main Street façade improvements if/when funding is available.	Completed	The DDA has re-established an active Façade Grant program in 2014 and has granted out \$8500 to date.

<b>Community Facilities</b>		
Purchase or lease property at 3rd and Venable for Park/Greenspace ("Shermantown Square")	Cancelled	Budgetary constraints
Creating entryway markers.	Underway	Entryway marker placed in 2012 on E. Ponce de Leon Ave. In 2015, the DDA worked with the Design Studio from the Office of Downtown Development to develop conceptual drawings for five gateways in the City. The DDA is actively seeking funding for these. In 2017 STWP this activity is renamed "Complete Gateway Program."
Relocate City Hall.	Completed	Construction completed on new City Hall 2012 at a cost of \$2,062,535.
Renovations of City Hall building for visitors center, museum, Main Street and DDA offices and community room.	Underway	\$299,000 exterior renovations completed 2015. The City has received \$149,000 for some interior improvements that was included in DeKalb County's CDBG Action Plan. Public Works has completed demo of the lobby and is scheduled to begin removal of the carpet this Summer. In 2017 STWP "City Hall" has been changed to read "Historic Train Depot" due to the relocation of City Hall in 2012.

Intergovernmental Coordination		
Coordinate with DeKalb County during Countywide Transportation Plan to address cut-through and congestion issues.	Completed	No projects included in the current plan.
Transportation		
Restoration of granite curbing.	Postponed	Budgetary constraints; some curbing has been completed
Main Street Streetscape Project, Phase I	Completed	Project completed in 2011 at a cost of \$1,967,870
Right of way acquisition for Five Points intersection reconstruction.	Cancelled	Budgetary constraints; Project moved from TIP to long range plan.
Reconstruct the Five Points intersection and coordinate signals downstream to improve traffic flow and pedestrian access.	Cancelled	Budgetary constraints; Project moved from TIP to long range plan.
Upgrade signalized pedestrian crossing at two signals.	Completed	Included in Streetscape Phase I
PATH expansions and connections within Village.	Postponed	ROW agreements needed
PATH connection from 5 way to Visitors Center.	Cancelled	ROW agreements needed
Connect Mackin Street through to Main Street.	Cancelled	ROW too narrow

Main Street Streetscape Phase 2, DK-363, including sidewalk extensions to Memorial Dr., Mimosa St., E. Mountain St., W. Mountain St., 2nd St., and 3rd St.	Cancelled	Preliminary engineering completed for Streetscape Phase 2; Utility relocation costs beyond financial means to complete; project moved from TIP to long range plan.
Improve road and drainage on Memorial Drive at railroad bridge.	Underway	Preliminary engineering completed; awaiting funding
Main Street/Downtown Streetscape Phase 3.	Underway	Streetscape Phase 3 merged with East Mountain Street sidewalk project; notice to proceed to construction issued May 4, 2016. In 2017 STWP Phase 3 and 4 are combined into one project titled "East Mountain Street Sidewalk Project."
Main Street/Downtown Streetscape Phase 4.	Underway	Streetscape Phase 4 merged with East Mountain Street sidewalk project; notice to proceed to construction issued May 4, 2016. In 2017 STWP Phase 3 and 4 are combined into one project titled "East Mountain Street Sidewalk Project."

# Short Term Work Program (2017-2021)

Project	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsibility	Funding & Cost
<b>Housing</b>							
Coordinate with MARTA to redevelop current park/ride property with mixed-use/live-work development.	X					City/MARTA/DDA	Staff Time
Recruit builder or builders for the vacant subdivision lots at Cloud Street and Ridge Avenue.	X	X				City/Private/DDA	Staff Time
<b>Economic Development</b>							
Certify TAD and issue bond.				X	X	City	\$25,000
Pursue designation as a State of Georgia Opportunity Zone for Westgate.		X	X			DDA/GA DCA	Staff Time
Conduct annexation study.	X					City/Annexation Task Force	Staff and Volunteer Time
Recruit a major grocery store chain.	X	X	X			City/Private/DDA	Staff Time

Natural and Cultural Resources							
Provide greenway trails along existing streams, like Barbashela Creek, in existing neighborhoods to provide walking and biking connections between neighborhoods, parks, schools and the village center.			X	X	X	City	
Community Facilities							
Provide additional and brighter lighting on North and South Main Street.		X				City	
Complete Gateway Program	X	X				City/DDA/GDOT	
Develop plan to utilize the Pavilion property and make it available as a community gathering place.	X	X				City/DDA	
Acquire historic rock gym from DeKalb County School District for community activities.		X				City/DeKalb County Schools	
Renovate Historic Train Depot as a welcome center, city museum, and community meeting space with public restroom facilities for downtown.	X	X				City/DDA	\$300,000
Transportation							
Continue restoration of granite curbing.				X	X	Private	
PATH expansions and connections within Village.			X	X		City/PATH	\$80,000
Improve road and drainage on Memorial Drive at railroad bridge.				X	X	City/CSX	\$158,000
East Mountain Street Sidewalk Project			X	X		City/GDOT	\$510,000

This page was intentionally left blank.

