

Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan



A Redevelopment Plan for
the benefit of Veterans in
Augusta-Richmond County.

Augusta
G E O R G I A

Prepared by





Acknowledgements

This plan is the result of a collaborative and proactive effort to assist low income and homeless Veterans in Augusta. Residents of Freedom's Path, area residents, and representatives from the following agencies provided input into the plan:

Annie's Legacy

Central Savannah River Area EOA

Charlie Norwood Veterans Medical Center

Cushman and Wakefield

Goodwill

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

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Augusta Commission

Garnett Johnson, Mayor

Jordan Johnson, District 1

Stacy Pulliam, District 2

Catherine Smith Mcknight, District 3

Alvin Mason, District 4

Bobby Williams, District 5

Tony Lewis, District 6

Sean Frantom, District 7

Brandon Garrett, District 8

Francine Scott, District 9

Wayne Guilfoyle, District 10

Introduction

A Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP) is a strategy developed by local governments, organizations, and community members to revitalize and improve a specific area or neighborhood. The plan involves identifying the needs and challenges of the community, setting goals and objectives, and outlining specific actions to achieve them. A CRP typically involves a collaborative effort between local government officials, community stakeholders, and residents. It may also involve the input of businesses, non-profits, and other organizations with a vested interest in the community.

Some common elements of a CRP may include physical improvements to the area such as infrastructure upgrades, housing rehabilitation, and public space enhancements. The plan may also include economic development initiatives, such as attracting new businesses and promoting entrepreneurship. The *Augusta Veterans Community Redevelopment Plan* is a collaboration between the Augusta Housing and Community Development Department, The Charlie Norwood Veterans Administration Campus, Garrison for Veterans, and other community stakeholders.

The provision of quality, affordable rental housing for Veterans is a key objective of the City of Augusta. The Goals and Objectives of this plan are to support the VA's efforts to combat Veteran homelessness. The VA utilizes the "Housing First" approach, which prioritizes getting a Veteran into housing, then provides the Veteran with the wraparound support they need to stay housed — including health care, job training, legal and education assistance, and more¹. This plan supports these goals as follows:

- It increases the production of affordable rental housing for Veterans in the community.
- It supports the VA's development of a housing model geared towards reducing the number of homeless Veterans in the City of Augusta to functionally zero.
- It supports the VA's reuse of underutilized VA property to create safe, affordable, permanent supportive housing for Veteran priority placement housing.
- It supports the VA's development of a housing model geared towards enabling Veterans to achieve self-sufficiency and live independently.
- It supports the VA's plan to provide Veterans within the Redevelopment Area with housing and on-site supportive/resident services.

Additional housing and economic development goals for the City of Augusta are detailed in the City's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan and the Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan (2018). Goals

¹ US Department of Veterans Affairs, *VA announces goal to house 38,000+ Veterans experiencing homelessness in 2023*, Press Release March 15, 2023.

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5866> accessed 3/24/2023

for the Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan combine the goals of these previous plans with a statistical analysis and the vision articulated by stakeholders during the public engagement process. Implementation measures for each goal provide additional detail regarding specific actions for achieving goals with a specific focus on increasing opportunities for Veterans.

Additionally, a specific project that addresses the goals and vision is proposed on the campus of the Charlie Norwood VAMC Uptown Campus. The project restores the original historic character of two historic VA structures buildings 19 and 20, converting 79,000 square foot space into 76 units of new affordable Veterans housing. The Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan focuses efforts to serve homeless and disabled Veterans and their families. Permanent supportive housing is a proven method to reduce the number of homeless Veterans. The proposed project increases the supply of permanent-supportive housing to serve homeless Veterans, Veterans who are at risk of homelessness, and their families who may be located within Augusta, Georgia, or are receiving services from the Charlie Norwood VAMC or surrounding network VA medical center facilities.

About the Study Area

The proposed Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Area is situated north of downtown in the uptown area of Augusta. It is located in the northern area of the Highland Park and includes a small part of the southern area of the Summerville neighborhood.



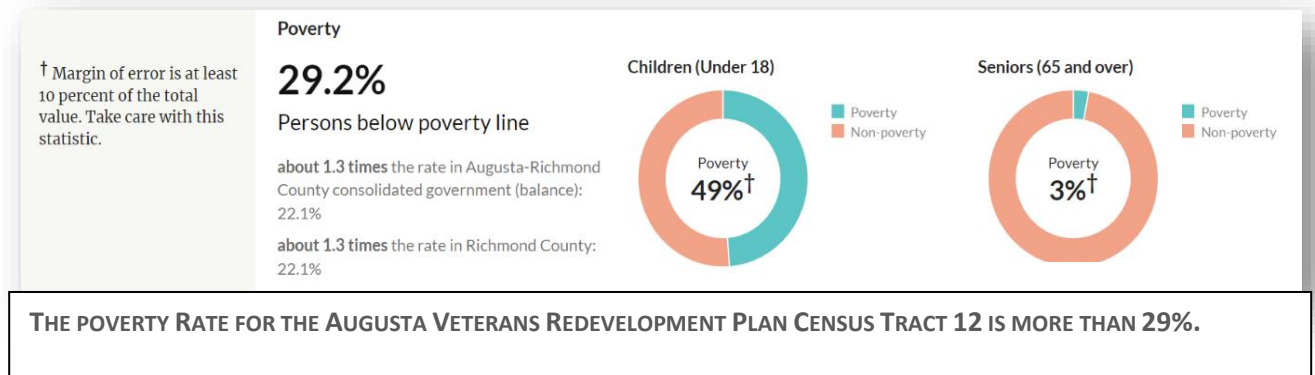
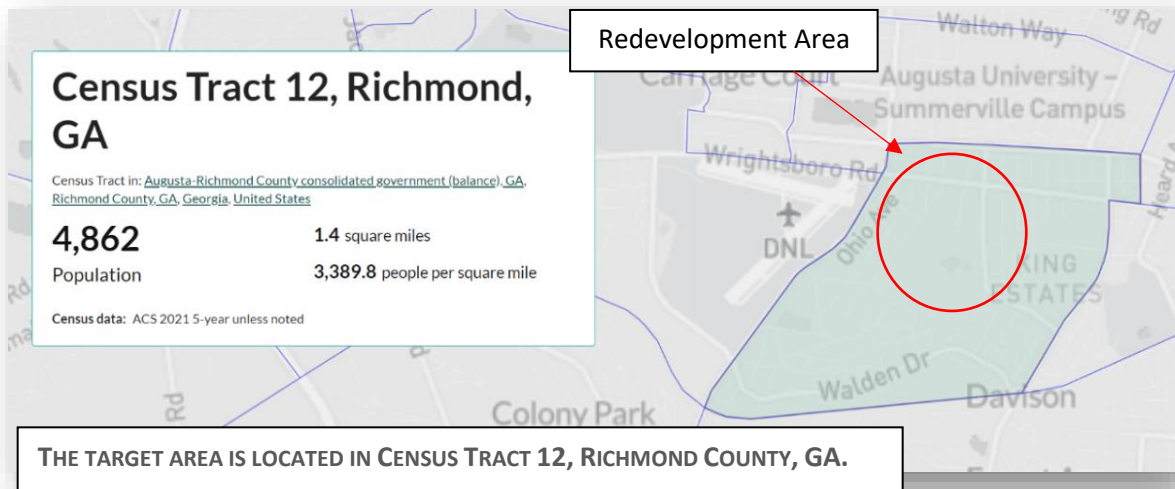
Target Area Tract

The proposed Redevelopment Area includes Census Tract 12, Richmond, GA, a Qualified Census Tract (2023).² A Qualified Census Tract (QCT) is a geographic area designated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that meets certain criteria related to income levels and poverty rates. QCTs are used to determine eligibility for certain affordable housing programs, such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program.

To qualify as a QCT, a census tract must meet one of two criteria: either 50% or more of the households have incomes below 60% of the area median income, or the poverty rate is at least 25%. The poverty rate for Census Tract 12 is 29.2%.³ In addition to the high poverty rate in the Census Tract, there are more veterans in Augusta than in other areas of the state, indicating a need for services and facilities that serve Veterans.

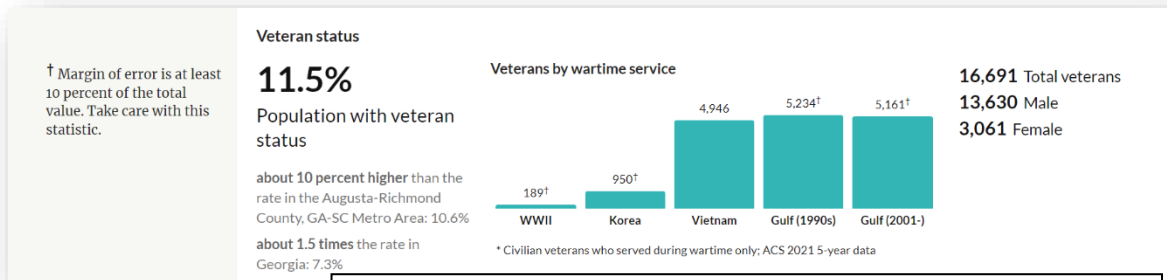
² Source: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html?locate=13245000200, accessed 4/14/2023

³ U.S. Census Bureau (2021). American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Augusta-Richmond County consolidated government (balance), GA <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/14000US13245001200-census-tract-12-richmond-ga/> and U.S. Census Bureau (2021). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Augusta-Richmond County consolidated government (balance), GA <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1304204-augusta-richmond-county-consolidated-government-balance-ga/>

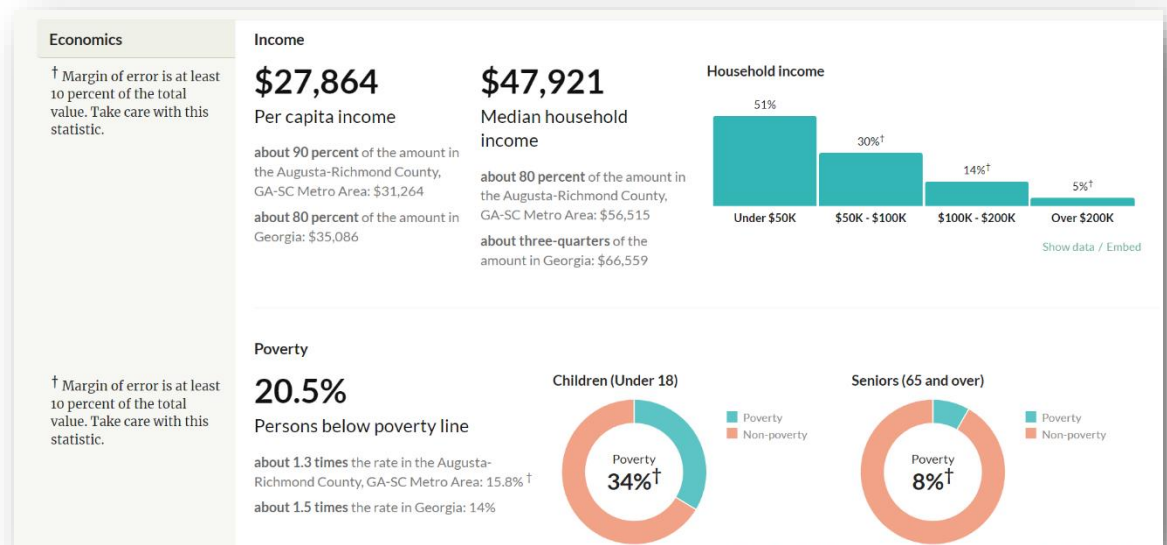


Augusta Veterans Community Redevelopment Plan

The graphics below are for Augusta-Richmond County Consolidated Government. Of the 200,000+ people in August-Richmond County, more than 11% are veterans. This is 10 percent more than in the Metropolitan Area and more than one and a half time the percent for the State of Georgia.⁴ Poverty and low income status affects the entire city, not just the census tract. This indicates that services and facilities for low income and homeless Veterans may serve the entire city.



AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY IS HOME TO PROPORTIONATELY MORE VETERANS THAN THE REST OF THE STATE.

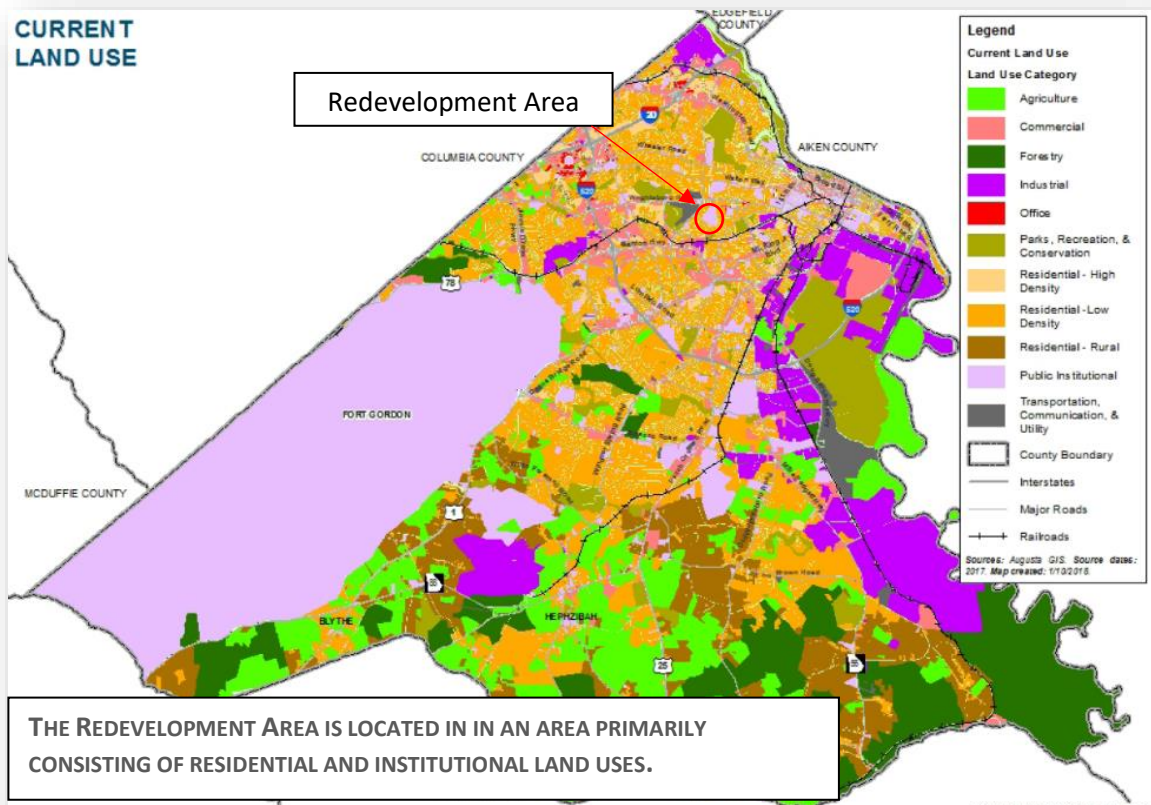


AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY HAS A HIGHER POVERTY RATE AND LOWER INCOME THAN THE METRO AREA AND REST OF THE STATE

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau (2021). American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Augusta-Richmond County consolidated government (balance), GA <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1304204-augusta-richmond-county-consolidated-government-balance-ga/>

Land Use

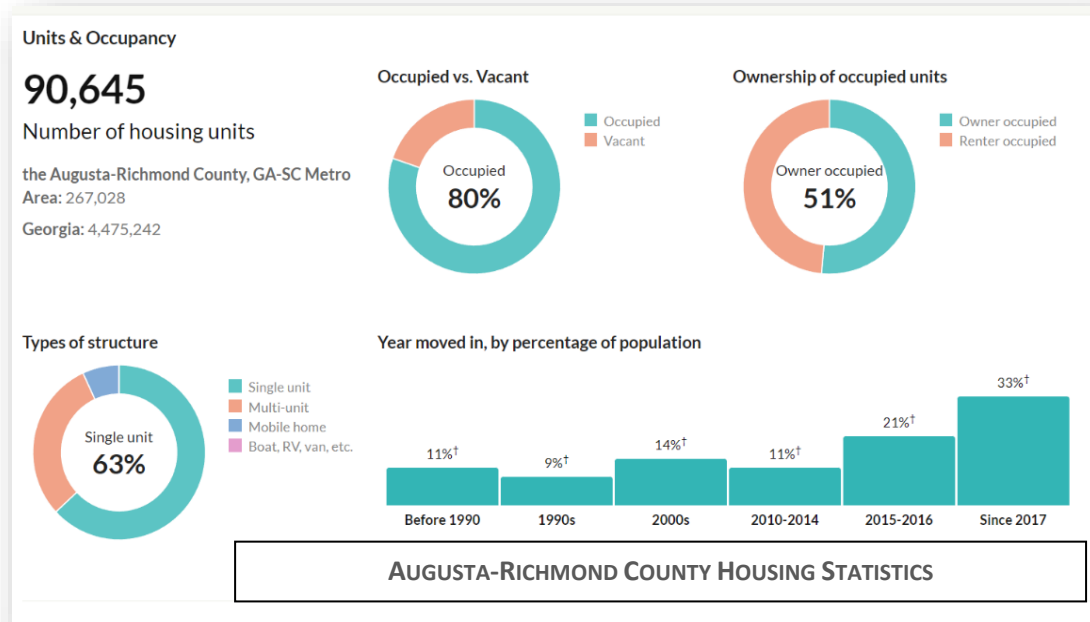
The land use near the Redevelopment Area is primarily public institutional surrounded by residential low density. The Study Area lies within the Old Augusta Character Area⁵ in the Highland Park neighborhood. The area consists predominantly of single- family detached units on lots of similar size, residential uses separated from other uses, a varied street pattern with curvilinear patterns predominating, few, if any, sidewalks, off-street parking with driveways and commercial uses at the edge of the neighborhood.



⁵ Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan (2018)

Housing

While housing is generally less expensive than in the metropolitan area and the rest of the state, homelessness is still a big problem in Augusta.



† Margin of error is at least 10 percent of the total value. Take care with this statistic.

Value

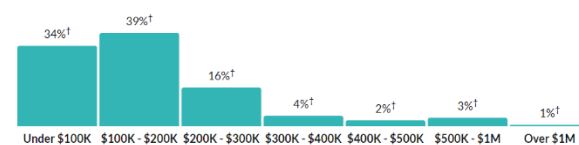
\$131,900

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about three-quarters of the amount in the Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC Metro Area: \$182,000

about half the amount in Georgia: \$249,700

Value of owner-occupied housing units



HOUSING VALUE IN AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY IS LOWER THAN THE METRO AREA AND REST OF THE STATE.

Homelessness in Augusta

In 2022, The Augusta-Richmond County Homeless Task Force Strategic Plan was developed. The plan indicates that homelessness is an increasing problem in Augusta. The Homeless Task Force Strategic Plan lays out several objectives to address the housing and homelessness crisis in Augusta. The Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan addresses several of the objectives, including:

- Develop continuum of housing options to meet immediate and long-term needs, reducing unsheltered homelessness and decreasing duration of homelessness by increasing quantity and quality of all related housing types.

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- Collaborate with Housing, Health, Employment/Labor and Service Agencies to effectively coordinate housing opportunities and holistic wrap-around services.

Homeless Veterans

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report provided to Congress each year states that there are almost 37,000 homeless Veterans across the country. There is also a large number of disabled, senior and low income Veterans who are poorly housed or grossly rent-burdened.

Target Population

The Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan focuses efforts to serve homeless and disabled Veterans and their families. Targeted Veterans in the Redevelopment Area are homeless and disabled Veterans who receive at or below 60% of Area Median Income. Permanent supportive housing is a proven method to reduce the number of homeless Veterans. The overarching goal of the plan is to increase the supply of permanent-supportive housing serving homeless Veterans, Veterans who are at risk of homelessness, and their families who may be located within Augusta, Georgia, or are receiving services from the Charlie Norwood VAMC or surrounding network VA medical center facilities.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities

The study area is located in the northern area of the Highland Park neighborhood of Augusta, Georgia. Highland Park is a historic residential neighborhood in Augusta, Georgia, known for its tree-lined streets, charming homes, and proximity to local amenities like Augusta University and the Augusta Canal. The study area is on the southern border of the Summerville neighborhood. Summerville is an affluent residential area that is known for its historic homes, tree-lined streets, and beautiful parks. The Uptown campus of the Charlie Norwood VA Hospital is located on Wrightsboro Road, which is a major thoroughfare that runs through Summerville and connects it to other parts of Augusta. Landmarks and institutions located near the study area include Augusta University, Paine College, the Augusta National Golf Club, and the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area.

Employment Resources

There are many businesses that provide services and job opportunities near the study area. These include national chains such as Subway, Dunkin Donuts, McDonald's, Hilton, Marriott, and Holiday Inn, as well as local options such as the Partridge Inn, Nacho Mama's, and The Hive. There are also several coffee shops and cafes in the area, including Buona Caffè Artisan Roasted Coffee, New Moon Cafe, and Inner Bean Cafe. The Augusta Mall, which is a large indoor shopping center featuring a variety of stores, as well as the Augusta Exchange, which is an outdoor shopping center with a mix of national chains and local businesses are also nearby.

Parks and Recreation

Healthy, accessible, and attractive parks and open spaces are essential for vibrant communities. There are several parks and recreational areas located near the study area. The largest include Pendleton King Park, which features walking trails, a rose garden, and a dog park, as well as the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area, which offers hiking, biking, and kayaking opportunities. Lake Olmstead Park is also nearby. It has several community gathering places, including the Julian Smith Barbecue Pit which served as the location for the public workshop for this plan. Several smaller parks are close by as well, including Wood Park and Minnick Park. These offer amenities such as playgrounds, recreational facilities, and picnic areas.



PENDLETON KING PARK PROVIDES A LOVELY RESPITE FROM CITY LIFE.



MINNICK PARK IS LOCATED ABOUT A MILE AND A HALF FROM THE TARGET AREA.

Medical Services

The Uptown campus of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center is part of the Redevelopment area of this plan. It offers a range of medical services to eligible veterans, including primary care, mental health care, specialty care, emergency care, rehabilitation services, surgery, and pharmacy services.

- **Primary Care:** The Uptown campus offers primary care services, including routine check-ups, preventive care, and treatment for chronic conditions.
- **Mental Health Care:** Mental health services, including counseling, therapy, and medication management, are available at the Uptown campus for veterans struggling with mental health issues.
- **Specialty Care:** The Uptown campus provides specialty care services, including cardiology, oncology, orthopedics, neurology, and women's health.
- **Emergency Care:** The Uptown campus offers emergency medical services to eligible veterans 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Rehabilitation Services:** Rehabilitation services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy, are available at the Uptown campus for veterans recovering from injuries or illnesses.
- **Surgery:** The Uptown campus has an on-site surgical center, which offers a range of surgical procedures, including general surgery, urology, and ophthalmology.
- **Pharmacy:** A pharmacy is located on-site at the Uptown campus, providing prescription medication services to eligible veterans.



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In addition to the medical services offered at the Charlie Norwood VA Hospital, there are several medical services located near the study area, including the Augusta University Medical Center and the Doctors Hospital of Augusta.

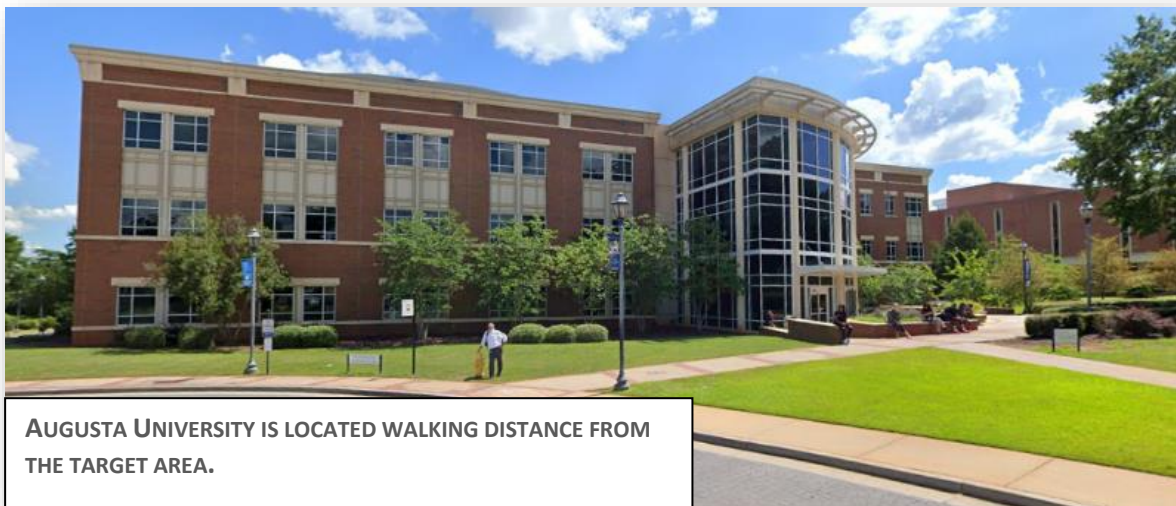
Educational facilities

Many educational opportunities are located very close to the study area.

Augusta University: Augusta University is a public research university located less than 3 miles from the study area. It is the state of Georgia's designated center of health sciences excellence and a comprehensive research university with 9,500 students. Augusta University offers a range of undergraduate and graduate programs, including programs in health sciences, business, education, and the arts.

Paine College: Paine College is a private, historically black college located less than 2 miles from the study area. Paine College offers undergraduate programs in a variety of fields, including biology, business, education, and humanities.

Georgia Military College: Georgia Military College is a public, two-year college located less than 5 miles from the study area. Georgia Military College offers associate degree programs in criminal justice, education, business, and others.



Augusta Technical College: Augusta Technical College is a public, two-year college located less than 7 miles from the Target Area. Augusta Technical College offers certificate and degree programs in a variety of fields, including health sciences, business, and engineering technology.

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East Georgia State College: This college has the lowest tuition cost in the University System of Georgia and offers Associate, online bachelors, and pathways to a 4-year degree. Programs include Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Elementary Education, Financial Technology, Liberal Arts, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences.

Public safety and Emergency Management

There are many public safety and emergency management facilities located near the Target Area, including law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and emergency medical services providers.



Augusta Police Department: The Augusta Police Department is located less than a mile from the study area. The department provides law enforcement services to the city of Augusta and has a number of specialized units, including a SWAT team and a bomb squad.

Richmond County Sheriff's Office: The Richmond County Sheriff's Office is located less than 2 miles from the study area. The office provides law enforcement services to Richmond County and has several specialized units, including a K-9 unit and a SWAT team.

Augusta Fire Department: The Augusta Fire Department is located about 2 miles away from the study area. The department provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the city of Augusta and has several fire stations located throughout the area. Less than a mile away, Station 8 is the closest to the study area.

Augusta Emergency Management Agency: The Augusta Emergency Management Agency is located less than 2 miles from the Uptown campus. The agency is responsible for coordinating emergency response and recovery efforts in Augusta and has plans in place for a variety of potential emergencies, including severe weather and hazardous materials incidents.

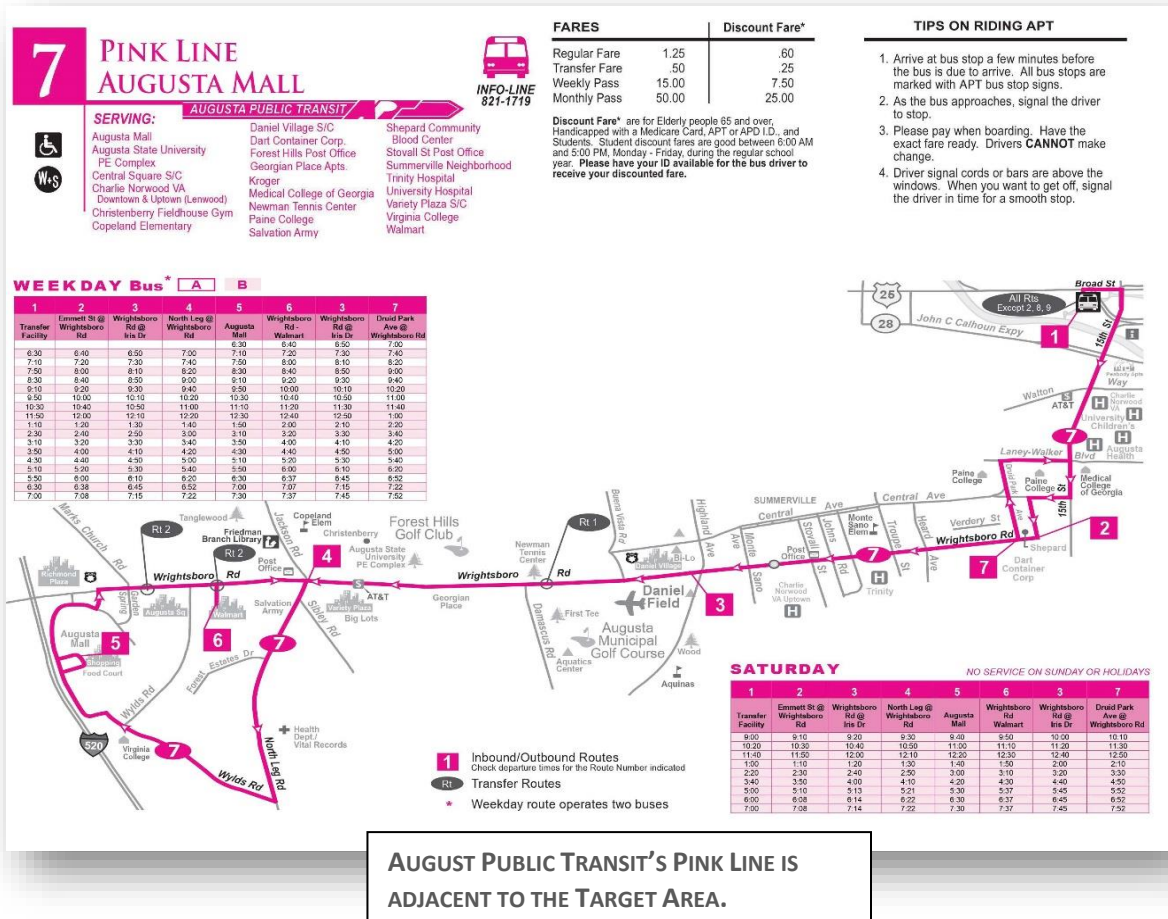
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University Hospital: University Hospital is located less than 2 miles from the Uptown campus. The hospital is a Level I trauma center and provides emergency medical services to the Augusta area.

Transportation facilities

The Target Area is easily accessible by several modes of transportation. It is located near the intersection of Wrightsboro Road and Freedom Way, which is easily accessible from several major highways, including I-20 and I-520. The Augusta Public Transit system, "Augusta Transit," operates several bus routes that serve the area. Augusta also has several bike lanes and sidewalks that make it easy to get around on foot or by bicycle.

Bus stop number 1343 on Route 7, the Pink Line serves the redevelopment area. It runs along Wrightsboro Road and provides direct access to Augusta Utilities, Augusta Mall, Augusta Square Shopping Center, Walmart, Paine College, Augusta University, the Downtown Campus of the VA Hospital, and the transfer facility providing access to all of Augusta's transit stops.





**STOP 1343 ON THE PINK LINE
PROVIDE EASY ACCESS TO
AMENITIES THROUGHOUT THE CITY.**

Cultural facilities

There are many cultural facilities located near the study area, including museums, theaters, and music venues.

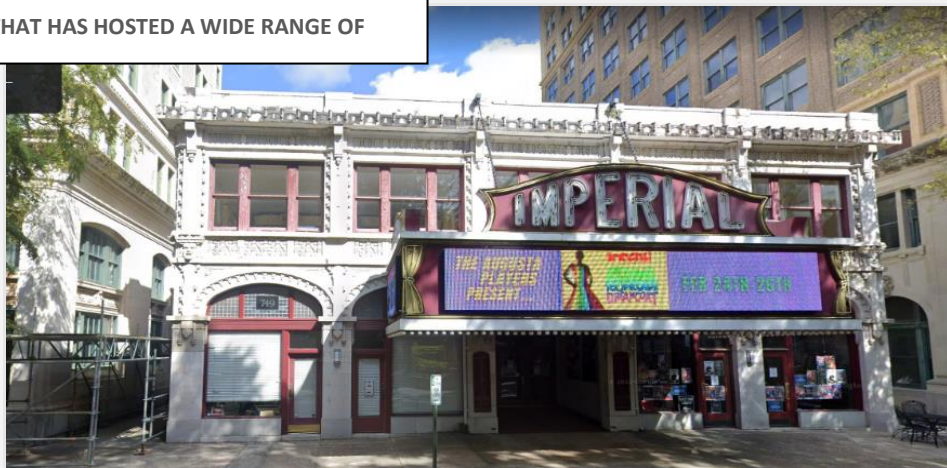
Museums: The Augusta Museum of History and the Morris Museum of Art are about 2 miles from the study area. The museum showcases the history of Augusta and the surrounding area, with exhibits on topics ranging from golf to the Civil War.

Imperial Theatre: The Imperial Theatre is about 2 miles from the study area. The historic theater hosts a variety of live performances, including plays, concerts, and comedy shows.

Augusta Symphony: The Augusta Symphony is located less than 2 miles from the study area. The symphony performs a variety of classical and contemporary music and hosts several concerts throughout the year.

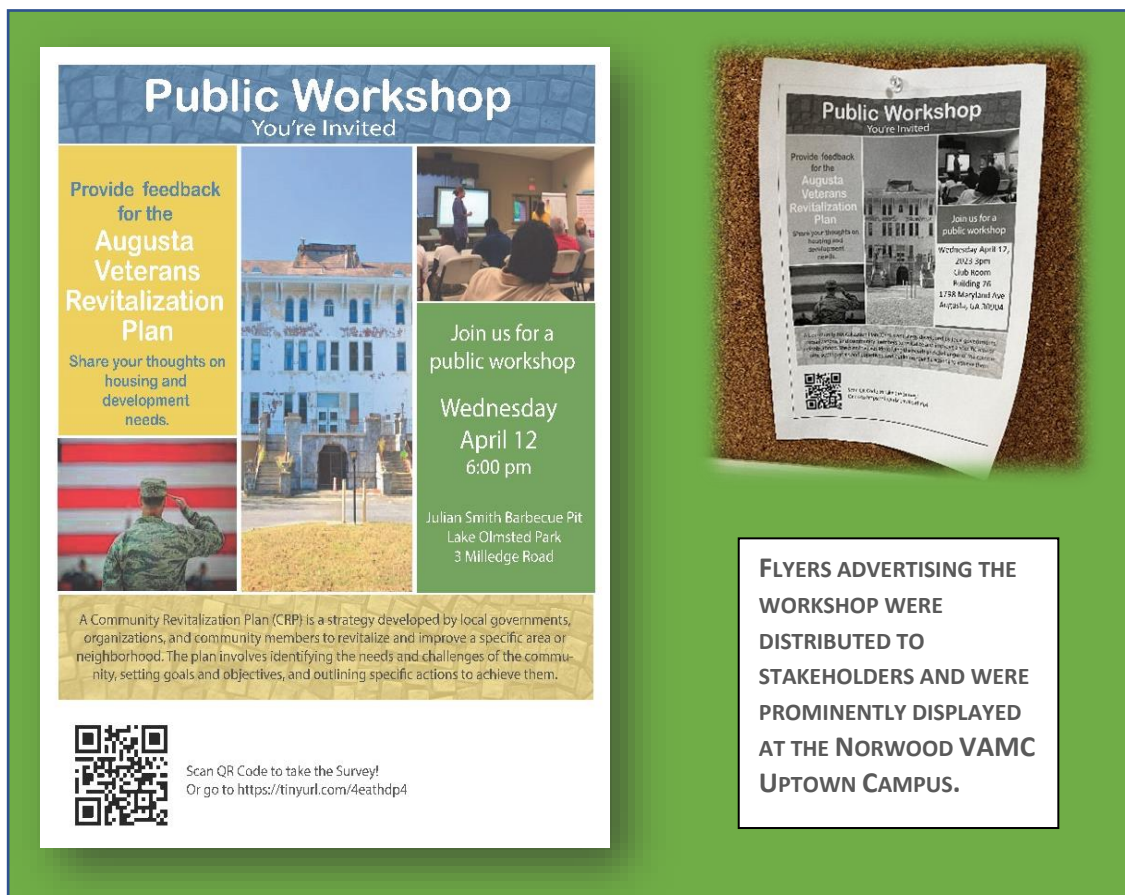
Culture and the Arts: The Sacred Heart Cultural Center and Augusta Arts Council are located less than 3 miles from the study area. The center is housed in a historic church building and hosts a variety of cultural events, including concerts, art exhibits, and theater performances.

**THE IMPERIAL THEATRE IN AUGUSTA IS
A HISTORIC PERFORMING ARTS VENUE
THAT HAS HOSTED A WIDE RANGE OF**



Public Engagement

Public input was important to developing this plan. Two public workshops were held on April 12, 2023. The first was held at Freedom's Path on the Charlie Norwood VAMC Uptown Campus. This workshop was targeted toward Veterans who currently reside in Freedom's Path, care providers, non-profits, and other stakeholders. The second workshop was at the Julian Smith Barbecue Pit at Lake Olmstead Park. This evening public workshop was well attended by Charlie Norwood VA Administration and focused on the needs of low income Veterans and how partnerships between the VA and other stakeholders can better serve their needs. Additionally, a QR code to an online survey was linked off of a widely distributed flyer to solicit additional feedback.



FLYERS ADVERTISING THE WORKSHOP WERE DISTRIBUTED TO STAKEHOLDERS AND WERE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED AT THE NORWOOD VAMC UPTOWN CAMPUS.

Public Workshop #1

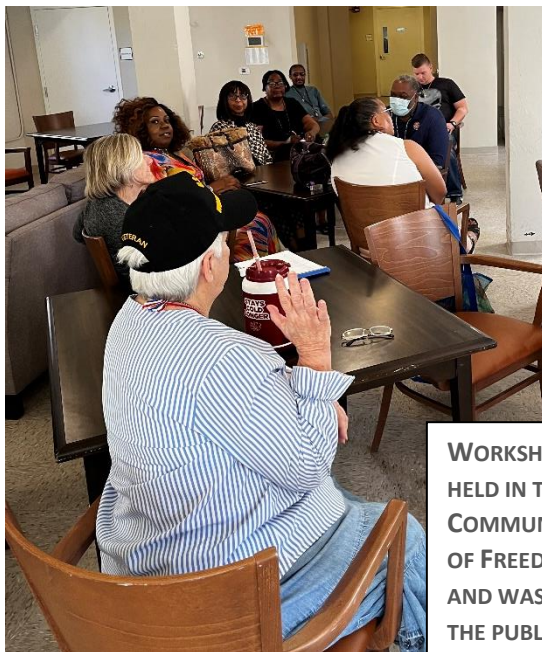
The afternoon workshop on April 12 was attended by Veterans who reside in Freedom's Path Apartments, service providers, representatives from local non-profits and the VA, as well as other Veterans. The following information was garnered from this meeting with community stakeholders.

What is currently working well at Freedom's Path?

- Can walk to the appointments at the uptown campus of the VA
- Shuttle to the downtown campus of the VA Cameras are 80% effective for security, but there are issues with a few blind spots that need to be resolved.
- Facility is clean and maintained well.
- Residents enjoy the small outdoor gazebo
- Management posts important information directly on residents doors

Are there issues or disadvantages of living here?

- Lack of transportation to get to stores for groceries and other supplies. There is a covered bus stop on the VA side of the road at the front of the property.
- 100% disabled (service connected) veterans are not able to qualify for the housing due to their income level exceeding the threshold.
- Many programs and activities that existed before COVID have not returned, the residents really want to have a variety of activities and opportunities to socialize.
- The laundry machines are limited and not commercial grade.
- The barber shop at the VA closed and has not reopened.



**WORKSHOP #1 WAS
HELD IN THE
COMMUNITY ROOM
OF FREEDOM'S PATH
AND WAS OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC.**

April 12, 2023 Freedom's Path 3pm		
Name	Affiliation	email (optional)
TYRONC	Res d	
JOE	Res d	
DANIEL	Res d	
LEWIS	Res d	
Vstroke	"	
Lewis	Resident	
DUBBIES	Res d	
PICARELL LARRY	RESIDENT	
GANT	RESIDENT	
James DeLotto	Resident	
Christine Jones	Amnie's Legacy	
Gale LeVan Bell	SSVF (OSRA-ED)	
Orville Sullivan	SSVF (OSRA-ED)	
JOLCE ALEXANDER	SSVF (Goodwill)	
Ricky Sawyer	Dept of VA	nick
MARY KUSCH	mg	
ALICE BROWN	Just In	

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- Everyone wants fresh air. The windows are painted/screwed shut and they would love to be able to open them.
- The ventilation in the building is inadequate. Everyone knows when someone is cooking, and unpleasant smells spread across units quickly.
- The upper cabinets in units can be opened by someone in a wheelchair, but they can't actually store things or use the cabinets in any meaningful way.
- Security can be an issue, sometimes "working ladies" "peddlers of illicit substances" and general strangers off the street have been issues in some buildings.
- Feelings of isolation are an issue; the residents want more things to do and reasons to leave their rooms and be more active.
- The existing workout equipment needs to be supplemented with low impact machines and easy to use strength building machines.
- Communication channels are still predominantly word of mouth and a stronger or more formal means of communication with residents would be appreciated.
- There are currently no vending machines and residents would be very supportive of having some installed.
- The smoke detectors are highly sensitive and very small things like heating a skillet can set them off.

What additional services and facilities would help residents?

- Access to fresh produce
- Purchase a shuttle bus that has pre-scheduled days for necessary destinations. People would sign up ahead of time for the days/destinations they needed.
 - The Augusta Women's Club offered to help fundraise for the bus.
 - Ensure that the shuttle has a wheelchair ramp/lift.
- On-site social events and activities
- Pre-Covid opportunities like bingo, access to VA Hospital library/computer lab, barber, etc.
- Create a policy or program for "gap housing" that meets the needs of those who make too much to qualify, but also not enough to afford more traditional housing.
- Laundry facilities need commercial grade, larger washer/dryers
- Fresh air and ventilation - windows in the building don't open
- Shuttle bus to and from shopping, services, and activities
- Create nice outdoor spaces to gather and have fun – pavilions, grills, outdoor games, fenced dog park, etc.
- Better security
- Better system of communication
- Maintenance of gym equipment and more low impact equipment
- Vending machines
- Better kitchen vents

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What opportunities are available to address additional wants and needs?

- Resident liaison from each building to aid in communications with property manager.
- Interfaith Community organization can help provide religious services
- Augusta Womans Club can help with gardening
- Explore partnerships with local businesses and non-profits to add more services and bring quality of life improvements.
- There is still need for affordable housing for Veterans.

Workshop #2

The evening workshop was well attended by Charlie Norwood VAMC leadership. Results of the previous meeting were shared with the attendees of the evening session. The representative of the developer was present to assist with addressing comments from the previous session and answering questions.



Spaces for activities and gatherings:

The building for Freedom's Path III has pre-existing spaces that are large and do not lend themselves to conversion to apartment type units. These spaces can be utilized for the desired community building and activity space.

Barriers to housing for 100% disabled veterans

The proposed model for resident makeup for the next Freedom's Path development is 25% of units that will follow the housing first model, 30% unrestricted which will allow veterans making above the income threshold to qualify, and the remainder would follow the low-income housing guidelines. The entire development would be reserved for Veterans.

April 12, 2023 Freedom's Path Gpm		
Name	Affiliation	email (optional)
Robert Jackson	VAAHCS	
Kerobla Byrd	VAAHCS	
Brian Rothwell	UVAHCS	
Robert Rouse	VAAHCS	
S. GINSBURGH	VAAHCS	
Richy Gaudier	VAAHCS	
Jon Bosil	VAAHCS	
Victoria Wilson	VAAHCS	

**BRAINSTORMING
SOLUTIONS TO
ISSUES IDENTIFIED
IN THE FIRST
WORKSHOP WAS
THE HIGHLIGHT OF
WORKSHOP #2.**

Aging and Disabled Veteran Population

The median age of veterans that occupy other similar units is 62 and many have significant health issues. The developer plans to exceed the required minimum number of accessible units. Also, modular units than can more easily accommodate the needs of individuals are planned to be incorporated into the building. There will also be features for people with vision and hearing impairments and emergency pull cords.

Security

The developer has traditionally used a security camera company based out of Marietta, Georgia for the camera systems. He would like to engage with a company from Augusta if they can meet his standards:

- Review plans with management, camera contractor, and public safety representatives to ensure optimum camera placement.
- Provide a simple method of remote access using a smart phone.

Solutions at other properties/best practice recommendations

- The Dublin development has golf carts for residents to get to the VA hospital from the housing unit.
- A VA based shuttle service to local stores and services is available based out of a partnership with UBER that uses a voucher system. Each resident gets one voucher (per week or month?)
- A dedicated outdoor smoking area keeps residents from smoking inside their units.
- The developer plans to pursue an alcohol waiver that allows residents to consume alcohol in their unit, but not in any common or public spaces. ONLY in their unit.
- No public intoxication is allowed. The property manager will evict based on a strikes system, three strikes and a resident will be out. Residents tend to be self-police on these matters.

Online Survey

The online survey was taken by a small sample Veterans and their family members. Responses mirrored the input provided in workshop #1. Most were satisfied with their current housing and utilize services provided by the VA. Responses can be summarized by one respondent's answer

“ *All Veterans deserve decent housing.* ”
-survey respondent

to an open ended question about suggestions for improvement. They said, “transportation, game night, workout class, opportunity to worship” were important. Additionally, one respondent cited the need for better accommodations for women and children.

Summary of Public Engagement

Many of the services that were available to Veterans were discontinued due to the Covid pandemic. Resuming these activities is a high priority for current residents and administrators at the VA hospital. The VA would like to provide services in any new residential buildings to serve residents and to work with the developer and other partners.

Goals and Objectives

There are two sets of goals and objectives in this plan. The first are city-wide and neighborhood focused. The second are goals that specifically target the needs of Veterans. Each set of goals is summarized below.

Neighborhood Goals and Objections

The Redevelopment Area is in an “Old Augusta Neighborhood” according to the Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan. The vision for the Old Augusta Neighborhoods, as described in the Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan, focus on the continued redevelopment in some neighborhoods and maintaining the stability in other neighborhoods. The vision for redevelopment includes the removal of deteriorated and dilapidated structures, the construction and/or rehabilitation of single-family housing, new commercial establishments and offices, more shopping and entertainment facilities, more community facilities and services, more job opportunities and improvements in the appearance of the neighborhoods. Physical redevelopment should be done in a manner consistent with existing development patterns and the historic character and architecture of these neighborhoods. Residential land uses should continue to predominate in these neighborhoods as redevelopment progresses. Any public actions will be designed to reinforce stability in the more stable areas of the Old Augusta neighborhoods.

Recommended Development Patterns in the Old Augusta Character Area

- Maintain low-density single-family residential development in areas where it is already the predominant land use. Protect from encroachment by conflicting land uses.
- Infill residential development at densities compatible with the surrounding area. Site design reflects traditional neighborhood patterns and existing architectural styles.
- Redevelopment projects (housing and economic development) in neighborhoods targeted for such activities.
- Additional commercial and retail development in underserved neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood activity centers that provide a focal point for community services and a location for appropriately-scaled retail establishments.
- Expanded regional activity center encompassing the medical complex and Paine College. More direct connections between the activity center and downtown.
- Expanded academic facilities at Augusta State University campus on Wrightsboro Road

- Attractive gateways supplemented by a coordinated wayfinding signage

In addition to the vision and recommended development patterns, the Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan lists Heritage Preservation and Housing Opportunities as key objectives.

Economic Development Goals

Economic development goals for the City of Augusta are detailed in the City's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan and the Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan (2018). Implementation strategies for selected goals provide additional detail regarding specific actions for achieving the goals with a specific focus on increasing opportunities for Veterans.

Plan	Economic Development Goals
City of Augusta Consolidated Plan (2020-2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage citizen participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the community development program.• Increase the number of jobs and amount of private capital invested in the city, particularly in the Central Business District and neighborhood commercial areas.• Support public facilities and services that contribute to Redevelopment and provide public facility improvements that support physical development and Redevelopment.• Promote the preservation and restoration of historically significant structures and landmarks in the city.
Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage higher density, mixed-use developments along vacant commercial corridors/nodes in/and around South Augusta neighborhoods• Encourage better land use practices for brown field/vacant land redevelopment• Initiate development policies that promote a variety of transportation options• Encourage a county-wide network of alternative transportation strategies; implement complete streets• Better integrate future development with existing and proposed parks and trail system• Refocus efforts on overall maintenance and upkeep of public right-of-ways and spaces• Better consider the "Garden City" and its realization by utilizing the implementation tools recommended in past plans

Housing Goals

Housing goals for the City of Augusta are detailed in the City's Consolidated Plan and the Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan (2018). The August Consolidated Plan states that Augusta is particularly challenged to address populations / households of extremely low- to low-income families, with focused efforts for homeless veterans.

Plan	Housing Goal
City of Augusta Consolidated Plan (2020-2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support public facilities and services that contribute to Redevelopment and provide public facility improvements that support physical development and Redevelopment • Promote the preservation and restoration of historically significant structures and landmarks in the city • Support the development of multi-family housing with low income housing tax credits that improve the quality of aging urban communities • Support owner occupied repair/rehab through loans to person earning less than 80 percent HAMFI • Provide tenant based rental assistance to persons and fund supportive services to persons living with HIV/AIDS • Assist in the creation and preservation of affordable housing for lower income and special needs households, including Veterans • Support activities to end homelessness • Support activities that assist with basic needs, eliminate blight, and/or strengthen neighborhoods
Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage higher density, mixed-use developments along vacant commercial corridors/nodes in/and around South Augusta neighborhoods • Make existing housing stock more marketable, especially in higher density Neighborhoods • Encourage better land use practices for brown field/vacant land redevelopment • Better consider the “Garden City” and its realization by utilizing the implementation tools recommended in past plans

Implementation Plan

There is considerable overlap in citywide and neighborhood goals and goals that target Veterans. This section combines the goals from other planning efforts with the previous analysis and community input to develop goals specific to this Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan. The plan’s implementation section further details strategies, timelines, and responsible parties and partners for the goals identified in this section.

- Encourage better land use practices for brown field/vacant land redevelopment
- Encourage mobility and transportation options for persons within the Redevelopment Area.
- Promote the preservation and restoration of historically significant structures and landmarks in the city.
- Support the development of new high-quality affordable housing for both rental and homeownership.

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- Assist in the creation and preservation of affordable housing for lower income and special needs households, including Veterans
- Develop continuum of housing options to meet immediate and long-term needs, reducing unsheltered homelessness and decreasing duration of homelessness by increasing quantity and quality of all related housing types.
- Collaborate with Housing, Health, Employment/Labor and Service Agencies to effectively coordinate housing opportunities and holistic wrap-around services.

Implementation Plan

Key actions for implementation of these goals are detailed in the implementation section below. Each goal contains a list of recommended activities and timeframes, and responsible parties and partners.

Goal	Recommended Activities and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage better land use practices for brown field/vacant land redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement plan for redevelopment of former Regency Mall site, this strategy from the Envision Augusta Comp Plan (2023 timeframe) • Revitalize unused properties on the Charlie Norwood Uptown Campus.(2023-2024 timeframe) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Augusta • Non-profit • Private Developers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage mobility and transportation options for persons within the Redevelopment Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Wrightboro road in the study area to rehabilitate pavement, drainage, lighting, and sidewalks.(2024-2026) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Augusta
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the preservation and restoration of historically significant structures and landmarks in the city. (from Consolidated Plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalize and restore unused Lenwood Hospital buildings on the Charlie Norwood Uptown Campus. (2023-2024 timeframe) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Augusta • Non-profit • Private Developers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of new high-quality affordable housing for both rental and homeownership. • Assist in the creation and preservation of affordable housing for lower income and special needs households, including Veterans • Support activities to end homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with nonprofit affordable housing developers to understand needs and provide funding and incentives to develop housing with a focus on infill development and rehabilitation of vacant, obsolete, or abandoned properties. (ongoing timeframe) • Work with developers to support utilization of available incentives, such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits and the Georgia State Income Tax Credit Program for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties, to support the development of new affordable housing for both rental and homeownership. (ongoing timeframe) • Support and coordinate with the State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs to utilize State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Augusta • Nonprofit organizations • Affordable housing developers • Neighborhood organizations and residents

Goal	Recommended Activities and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
	and Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to ensure access to subsidized rental housing for homeless and disabled Veterans. (ongoing timeframe)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Housing, Health, Employment/Labor and Service Agencies to effectively coordinate housing opportunities and holistic wrap-around services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the Community to address the pressing need to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for homeless and disabled Veterans. (2023-2024) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Augusta • Nonprofit organizations • Affordable housing developers • VAMC

Proposed Target Area Project

The Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan Target Area Project is located on Freedom Way on the campus of the Uptown Campus of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center. This project will restore the original historic character of two historic VA structures buildings 19 and 20, converting 79,000 square foot space into 76 units of new affordable Veterans housing. Originally constructed by the Sisters of St. Joseph as a Catholic boarding school, the Lenwood Hospital is a 1914 historic building with three connected wings, referred to as Buildings 18, 19, and 20. The buildings were leased to the Public Health Service (PHS) in 1920, to be upfitted into a hospital to serve servicemen with nervous and psychiatric disorders. The PHS, later the Veterans Administration, chose the building as it would be easily converted for their needs and included 20 acres of land they could expand on.

Lenwood Hospital is one of only a few surviving examples of early VA hospitals. It falls under First-Generation Veterans Hospitals (1866-1930) and is one of few examples of existing buildings being upfitted for this use. The building was partly chosen for its easy conversion to a hospital as well as the 20 acres of land that was leased with it. Theories around medical care, especially for those with mental traumas from war, were rapidly changing around this time. Open air and a tranquil setting were becoming important aspects of Veterans' care. Lenwood Hospital was also updated with the newest medical treatment rooms. As medical treatments changed, and the Norwood VA Medical Center expanded, the Lenwood Hospital building underwent different renovation campaigns to meet current needs and provide the best care.

The VA continued to expand the Norwood VA Medical Center until 1981, when the campus had 55 buildings. An extensive survey was done in 1981 of all the existing buildings on the site. It was determined that most were too damaged to repair, as the cost outweighed the benefit. Medical treatments and VA hospitals had also changed how they operated, and fewer employees were housed on the campus, and open land was not as much of a priority. A large new facility was built, and the existing buildings were either torn down, repurposed if the cost was not too great,

or left empty. The Lenwood Hospital sat empty until 2008, when Building 18 was rehabilitated for Veterans housing which was a part of Freedom's Path Augusta I and II.

Conclusion

The needs assessment and planning process for the Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan demonstrated a variety of assets, needs, and opportunities for Veterans and others in the Target Area. The goals and implementation strategies included in this plan provide a strategic approach to addressing community needs by building upon existing community assets through key opportunities. Targeting of City and other resources to the Augusta Veterans Redevelopment Plan Target Area will address the pressing need to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for homeless and disabled Veterans and provide for improved quality of life for Veterans and other residents in the redevelopment area.