



City of Stone Mountain DRAFT Comprehensive Plan Update 2026



ADOPTED
XX XX, XXXX
prepared by the
ARC
Atlanta Regional Commission

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This document was prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission. Unless otherwise noted, all photos were taken by ARC staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026 City of Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan is an update to the City's 2021 plan. This plan and the 2021 version still draw substantially from previous Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Plans and other studies.

The current plan builds on the vision, goals, and policies established in the 2021 plan. It incorporates recent planning efforts from the last five years, current trends and data, new community input, and a new work program to define the City's path for the future.

Analysis and engagement supporting this plan document focused largely on core elements that DCA's rules require to be updated every five years. Those include Needs and Opportunities, Land Use, Broadband (which was not required for Comprehensive Plans until 2018), the Report of Accomplishments (ROA), and the Community Work Program (CWP). Feedback in those key areas also informed updates to the rest of the plan's elements.

This document is organized into chapters but is divided into three sections:

Stone Mountain Yesterday, Stone Mountain Today, and Stone Mountain Tomorrow. Stone Mountain Yesterday looks at the history of the city to establish background and context for decisions today and in the future. Stone Mountain Today examines current trends in population, housing, labor, and transportation – as well as current Community Needs (challenges to address) and Opportunities (assets to build upon). The intent is to understand trends that may have planning implications for the future, along with opportunities for improvement. This guides and informs the final section of the plan, Stone Mountain Tomorrow. This section contains the Future Land Use and Character Area elements and maps, outlines a Report of Accomplishments from the 2021-2026 Community Work Program, and documents a new 2026-2031 Work Program to organize initiatives for the near future.

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PLAN PURPOSE

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

One of the fundamental responsibilities of local government is planning – a word used to describe how a community shapes and guides growth and development. A state required planning process for every local government is a Comprehensive Plan. This plan is the keeper and driver of future growth and development needs through extensive community profiles on natural resources, historic assets, transportation infrastructure, socio-economic information, and the overall vision for the future. Local governments are required to update their comprehensive plans every five years by undergoing extensive data collection and community engagement. The information collected should then inform an implementable work program that the city and its respective stakeholders will work on over the next five years.



What does the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update mean for Stone Mountain community?

The City of Stone Mountain's 2026 Comprehensive Plan update includes new data. For instance, there are updates on socio-economic and housing, as well as profiles on natural resources and transportation. The plan not only takes concrete data into consideration, but also community sentiments on the vision and desires for future improvements and initiatives. To help create this plan, there were opportunities for residents and stakeholders to engage in the planning process and provide their input on priorities through an online survey, community open house, and two steering committee meetings.

More information regarding the engagement process is in Chapter Two: Community's Vision for Stone Mountain and Appendix B. The data and engagement outcomes informed the Community Work Program in Chapter 12. The Community Work Program is what the city will focus on over the next five years. This list is not comprehensive of everything that will be on the city's docket, but reflects what should be prioritized.

CHAPTER 1: STONE MOUNTAIN YESTERDAY

The City of Stone Mountain is 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. 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.



Source: Stone Mountain Historical Society

During the Atlanta Campaign of the Civil War, the village experienced great loss, as stores, cotton and the granite depot were burned by Union forces. The train tracks were also destroyed. The village of Stone Mountain regained its footing 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 on to 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 Great Depression.



Source: Stone Mountain Historical Society

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 Depression, and World Wars I and II stalled the project for decades. 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 began to decline, dropping by almost 20 percent from 2000 to 2010. However, since the recovery from the real estate crisis and Great Recession, the population has begun to correct itself, growing in 2010 to 2020 by 6.41 percent. However, population growth has slowed down to 3.87 percent between 2020 and 2026.

Stone Mountain Park has brought tremendous tourism opportunities to Stone Mountain village, including a number of Olympic events held in the park in 1996, such as tennis, archery and rowing. Since the Olympics, Stone Mountain Park has made several improvements including the addition of the 1870's-replica town of Crossroads, a redeveloped Olympic archery range and velodrome which is now a bird habitat, the SkyHike rope course, Snow Mountain, and a number of annual festivals. Since 2020, the City has invested in two studies – a downtown master plan update and a Livable Centers Initiative study – to identify numerous recommendations that would give its historic downtown new life. The opportunity to fully revitalize downtown and capitalize on visitors to Stone Mountain Park provides the City of Stone Mountain a tremendous chance for expansion and growth.



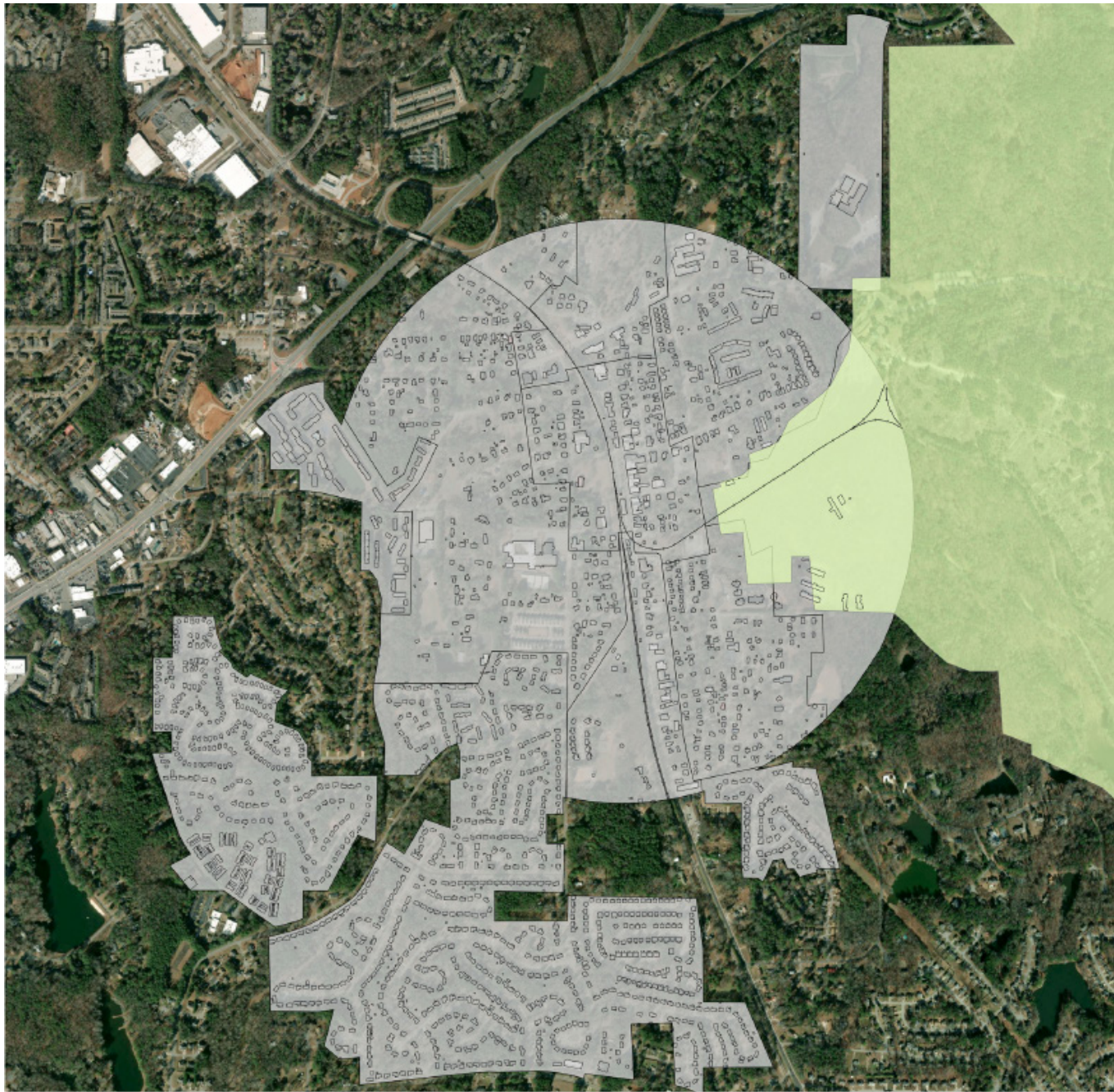
Source: Stone Mountain Historical Society

*Much of the above information is from the Stone Mountain Historical Society
<https://stonemountainhistoricsociety.org>.

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CHAPTER 2: STONE MOUNTAIN TODAY

The City of Stone Mountain is in DeKalb County, Georgia. The city is approximately 1.6 square miles and is less than 20 miles northeast of downtown Atlanta. A portion of Stone Mountain Park (in green, below) is within the city limits. The map below shows the city's location south of Stone Mountain Freeway (US 78) and Memorial Drive (SR 10).



Community Vision

Given the input received from the community, the steering committee drafted the following statement for this plan:

“The City of Stone Mountain will be a unique, vibrant, and sustainable community where residents, visitors, and businesses grow and prosper together.”

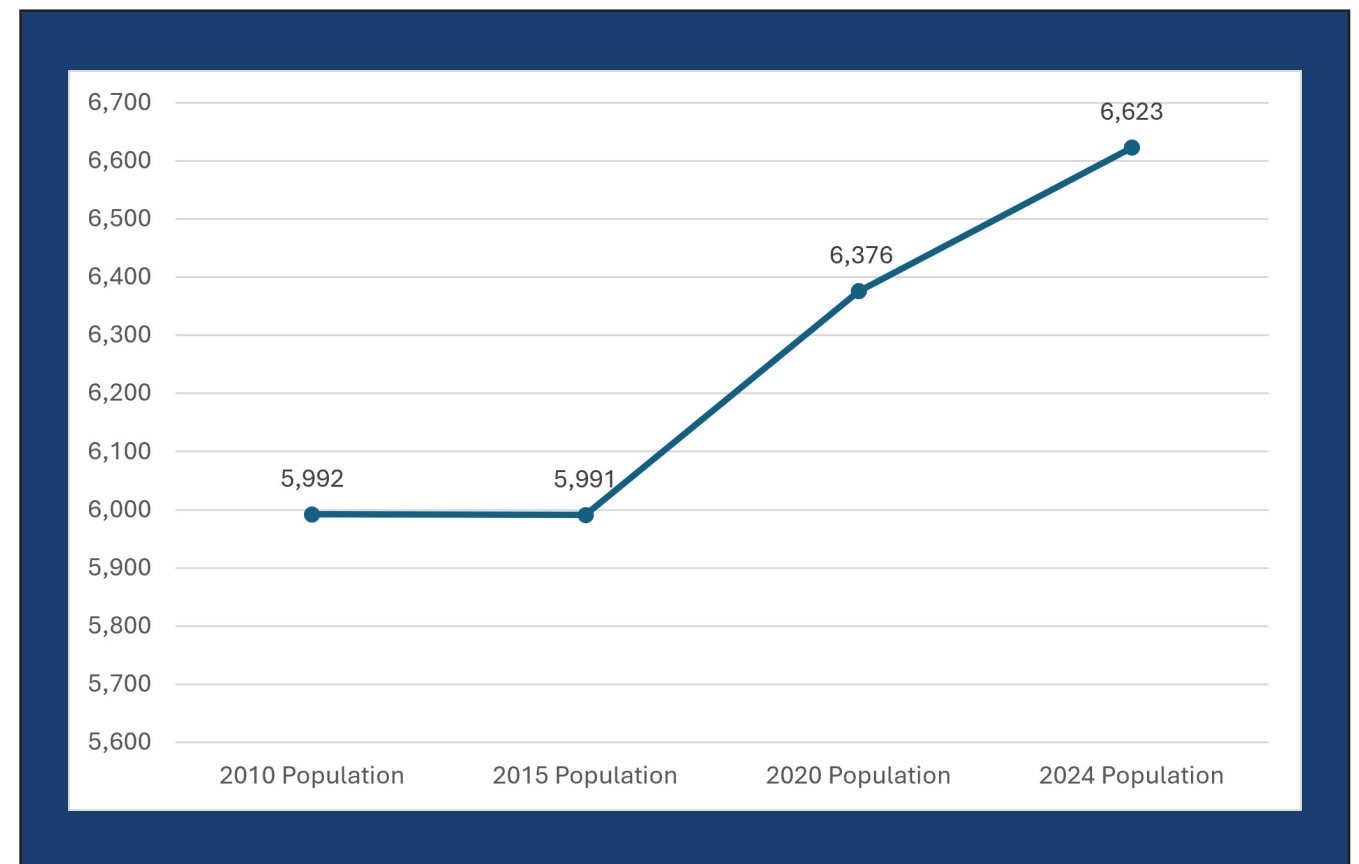
Goals:

1. A vibrant downtown that supports small neighborhood businesses, attracts tourists, and serves Stone Mountain residents' daily needs.
2. A growing city, both in size and population, through annexation strategies and improving housing options, including in-fill housing, ADUs, multifamily, and mixed-use housing options
3. Improved multimodal mobility and connectivity: redesigning streets for better car flow, and improving walking and biking connections to trails and paths in and outside of the City of Stone Mountain.
4. Preserving and increasing greenspace within the city.

DATA UPDATES

POPULATION

Stone Mountain's Population Trends 2010 - 2024
ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 - 2024



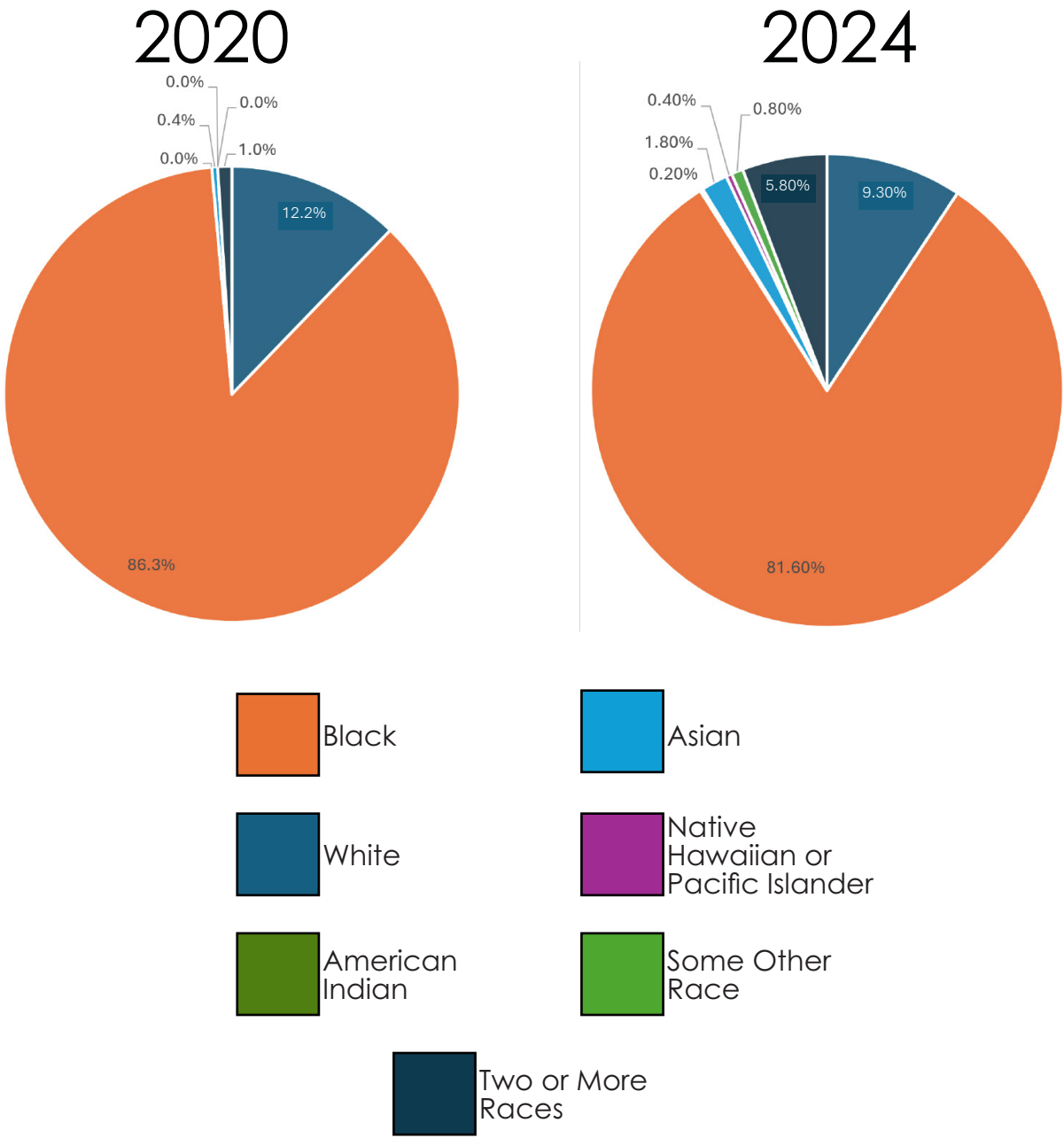
Stone Mountain's population steadily increased between 2014 - 2024, the most recent year population estimates are available. From 2020 - 2024, the population grew by 3.8%.

RACE

Stone Mountain's population remains predominately Black or African American. However, this population decreased between 2020 - 2024 by 5.5%. The White population also decreased by nearly 24%. Two or More Races saw the largest growth in this period, from 1% to 5.8%.

Stone Mountain's Racial Composition, 2020 & 2024

ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 & 2024

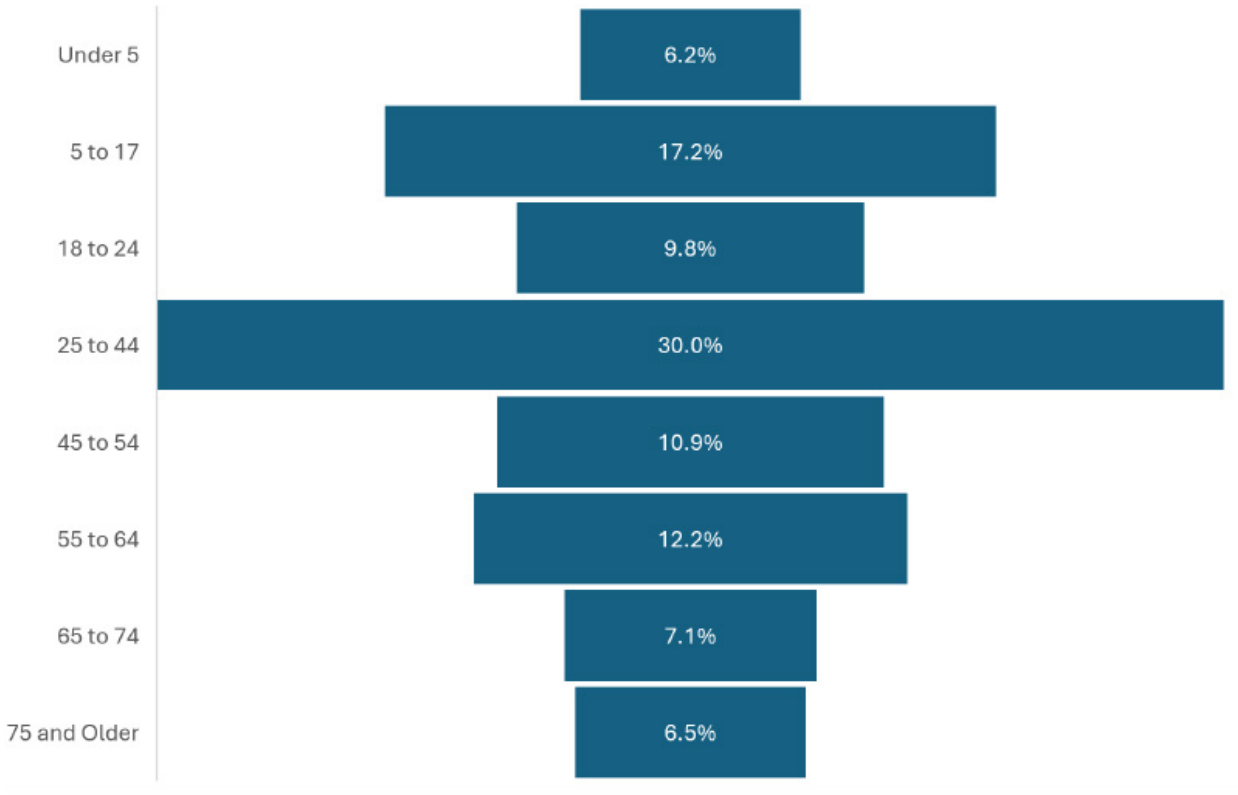


AGE

Stone Mountain's Age Population Pyramid suggests a young city, with over 50% of the population under the age of 44. The median age in the city is also nearly two years younger than the median age for unincorporated DeKalb County residents. Given that the next largest population is individuals in the 5 to 17 year old cohort, this indicates that the city is home to many families with school age children.

Age Pyramid

ACS 5-Year Estimates 2024



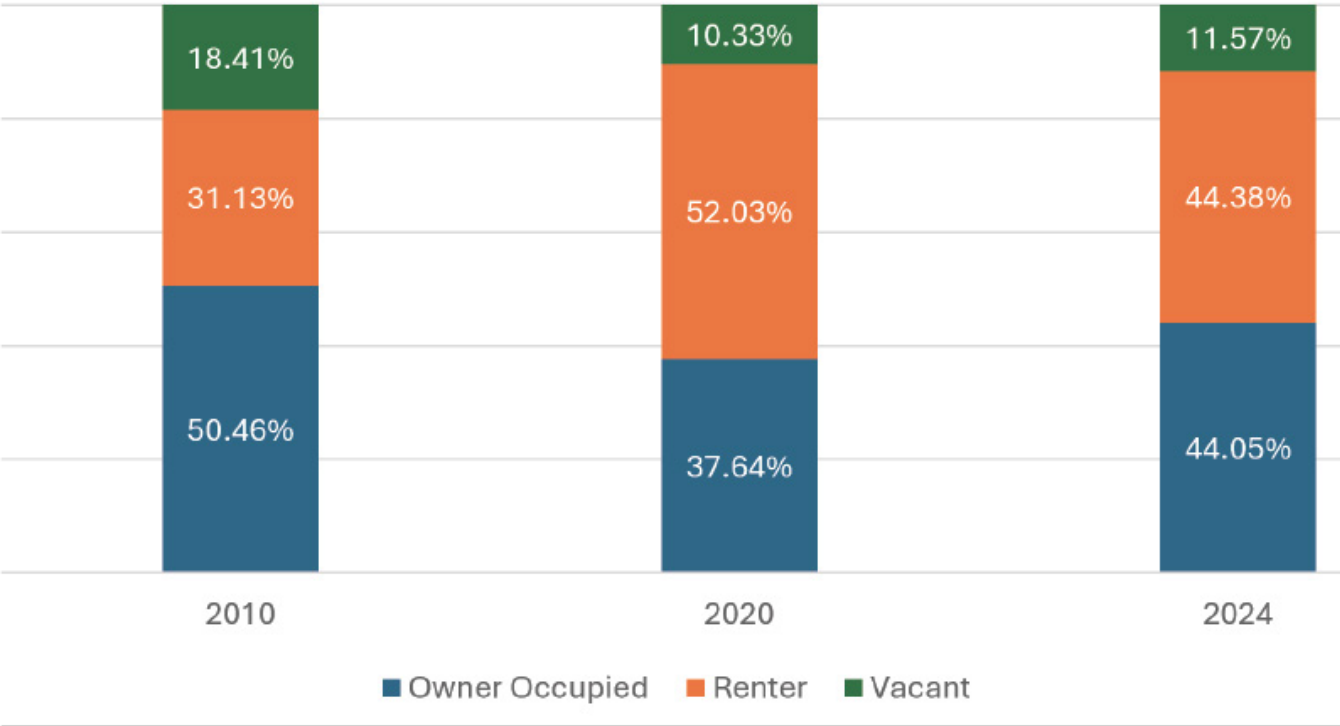
Median Age	2020	2024
Stone Mountain	34.3	34.9
DeKalb County	36.5	36.8

HOMEOWNERSHIP

Homeownership in Stone Mountain has fluctuated since 2010. Vacant properties decreased considerably from 2010 to 2020, from 18.4% to 10.3%. The percentage of renters increased across the same period, outnumbering owner-occupied housing in 2020. However, that trend reversed course in 2024, with owner occupied and rental occupied housing levelling out to nearly equal, and the vacancy rate increasing slightly. Stone Mountain's median rent and home values are less than DeKalb's median rent of \$1,692 and median home value of \$357,800.



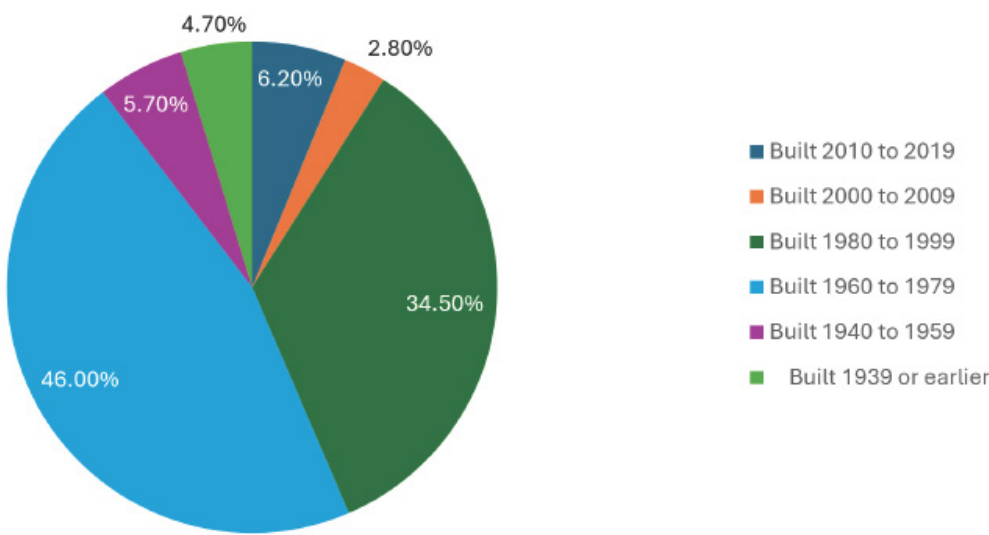
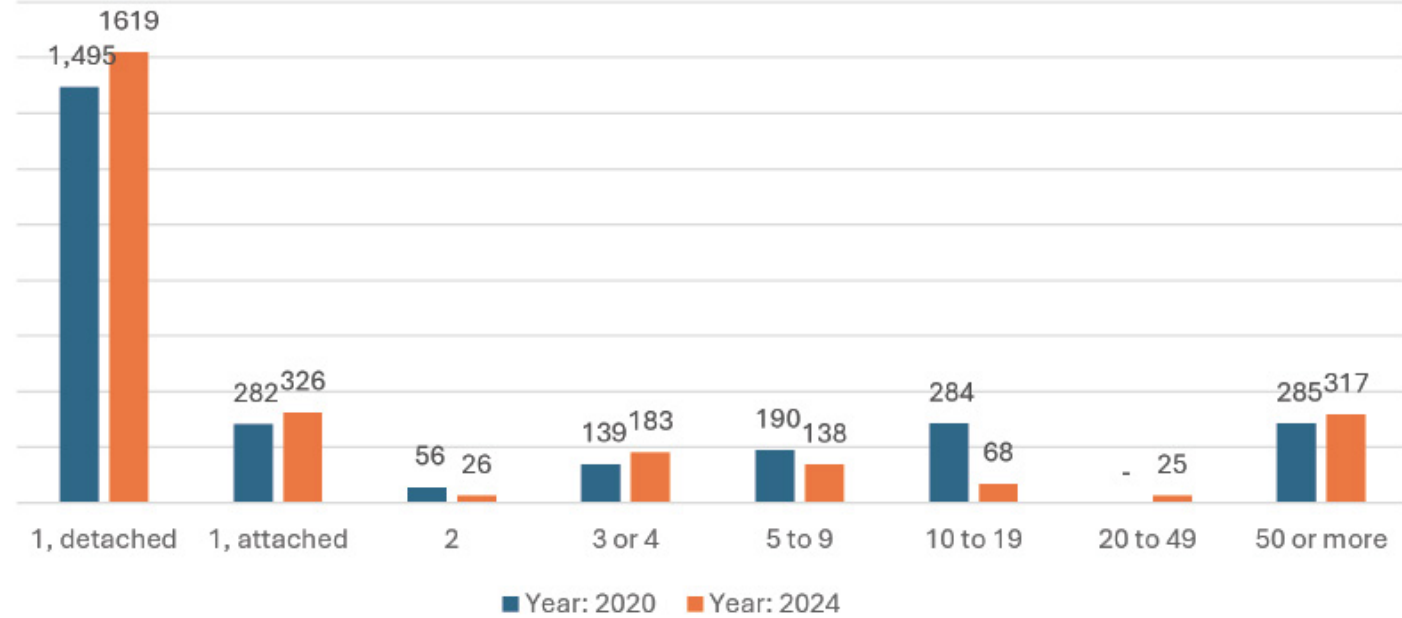
Homeownership Breakdown 2010 - 2024
ACS 5-Year Estimates 2024



HOUSING DEMAND & VALUES

Single-family homes remain the primary housing type in the city. Multifamily housing developments of 3 – 4, 20 – 49, and 50+ units increased between 2020 and 2024 while the number of buildings with 5 to 19 units shrank. For multifamily development, this trend suggests that there is a preference for larger multifamily developments or tri-/quadplexes. The age of housing units in Stone Mountain shows that most homes were built between 1960 to 1999. No data is found for buildings built after 2020.

Housing Units & Housing Age
ACS 5-Year Estimates 2024

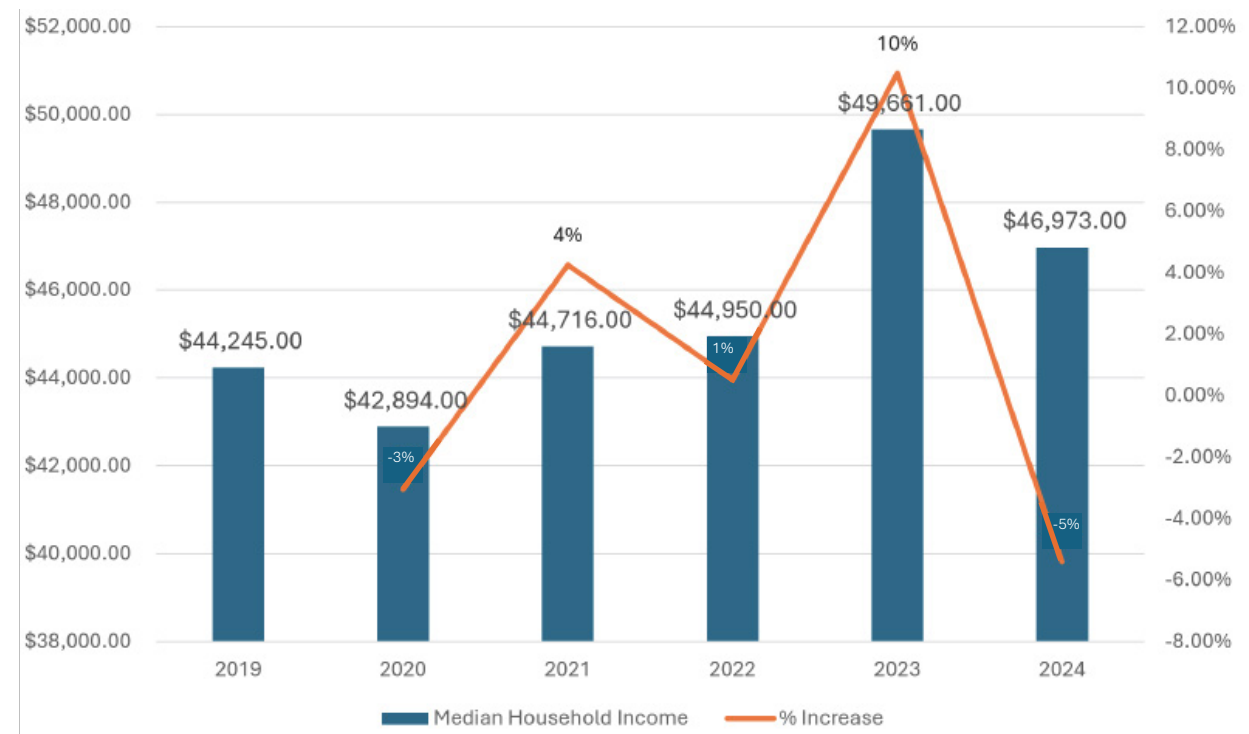


INCOME

The median income for Stone Mountain Residents hovers between \$40,000 - \$50,000, with incomes decreasing by 5% between 2023 and 2024 after experiencing a 10% increase from 2022 – 2023.

Income Changes 2019 - 2024

ACS 5-Year Estimates 2024

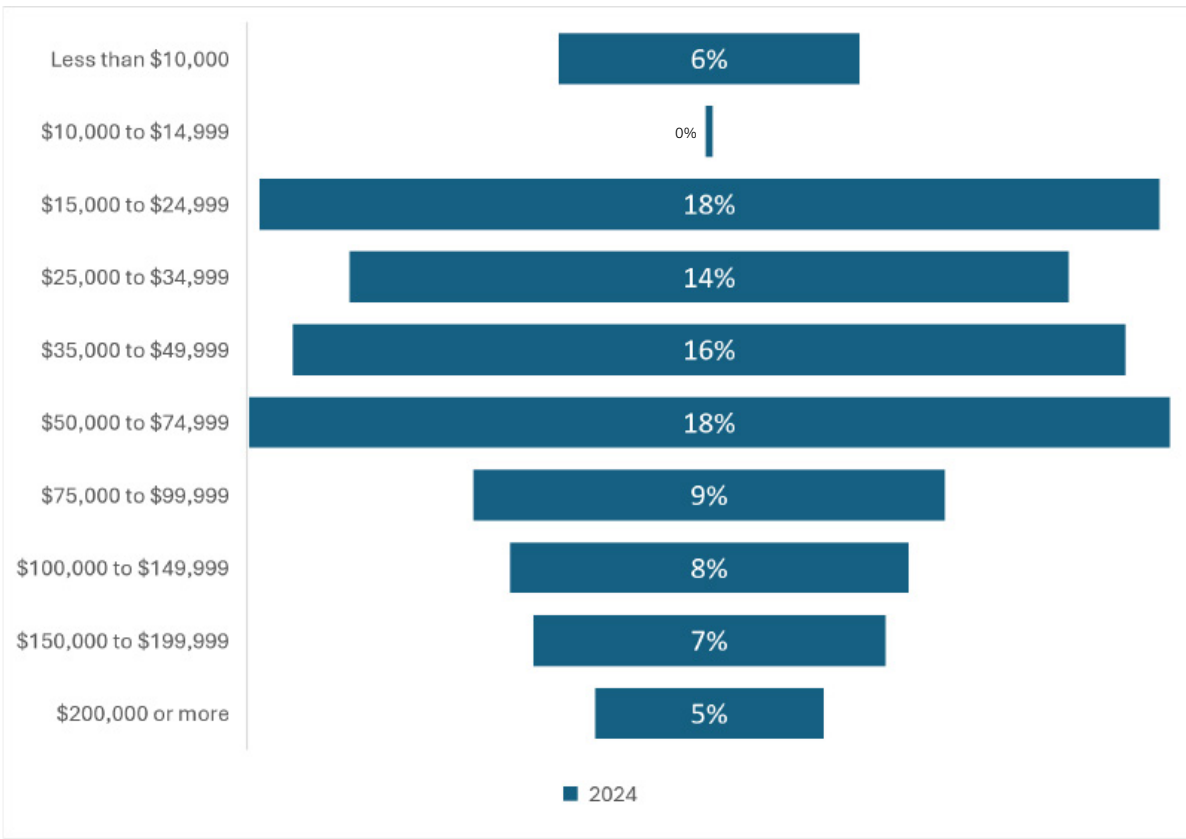


INCOME DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of income shows that roughly 32% of Stone Mountain's population earn between \$15,000 - \$34,999 while 34% earn between \$35,000 - \$74,999. The income range of \$15,000 - \$74,999 represents over two thirds of the income distribution. In comparison, the median income for DeKalb County is \$80,644.

Income Pyramid

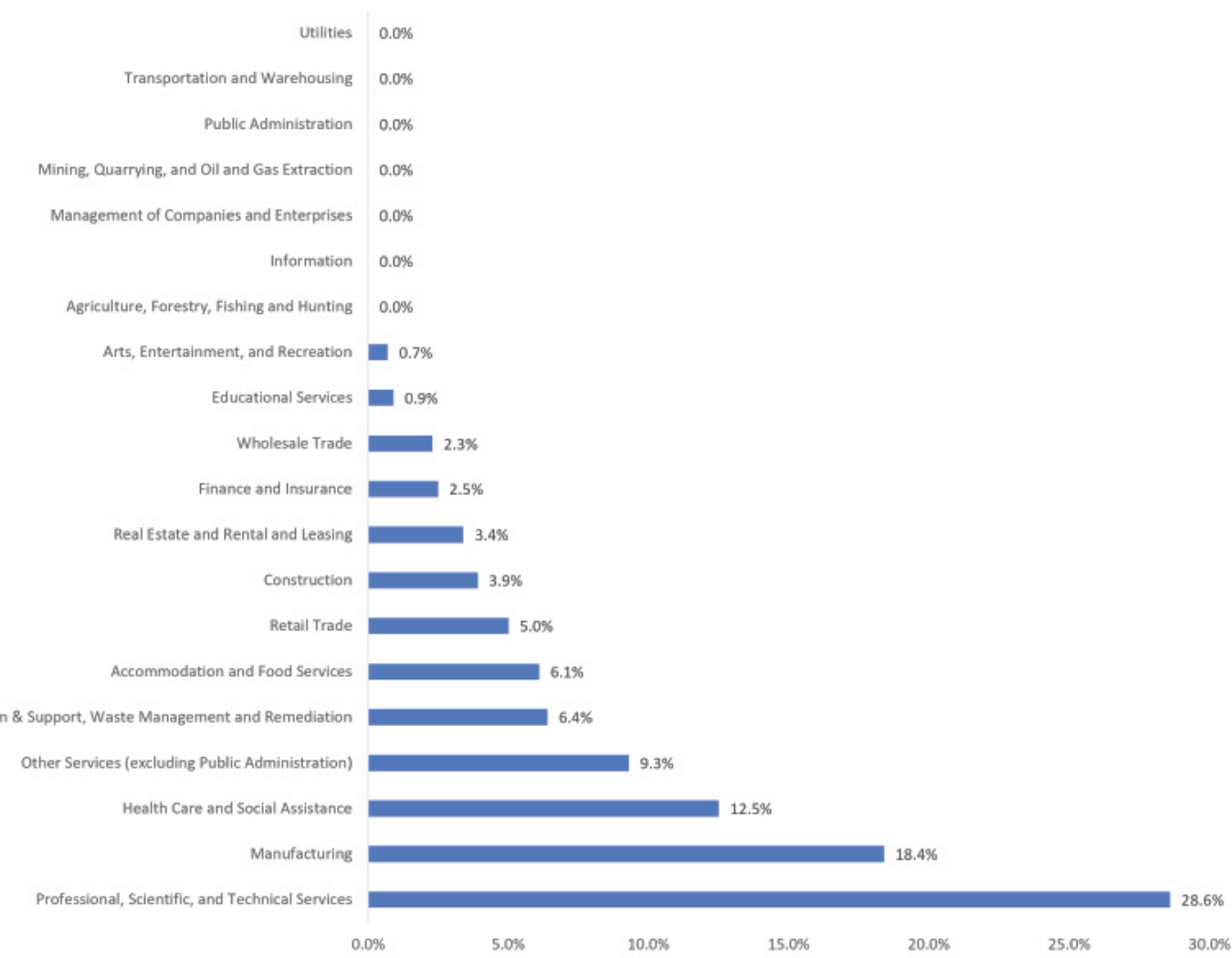
ACS 5-Year Estimates 2024



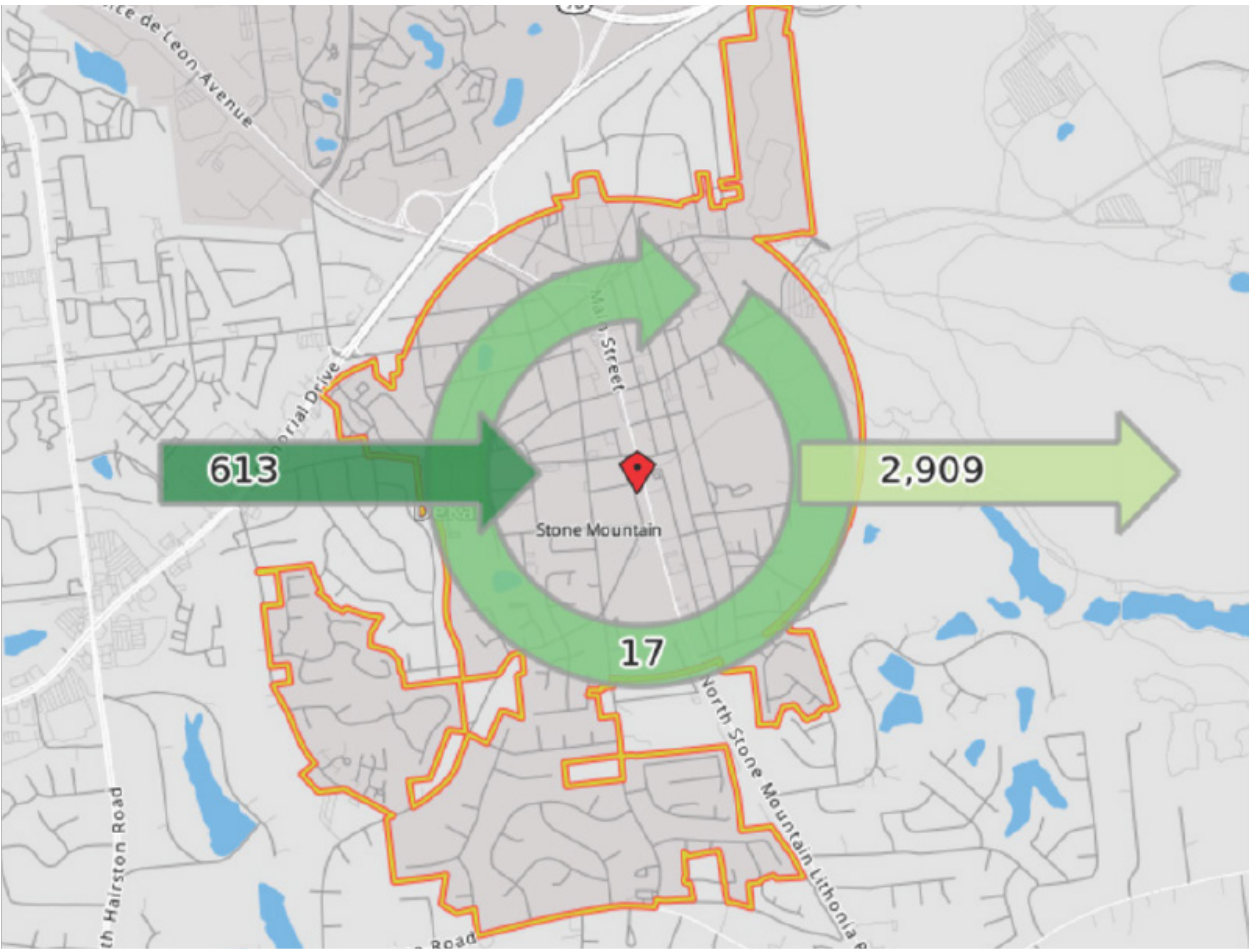
JOB SECTORS

The top three industries in which Stone Mountain residents work are Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, which employs 21% of the population, followed closely by Educational Services at 20.5%, and finally Accommodation and Food Services at 14%.

Job Sectors
ACS 5-Year Estimates 2024



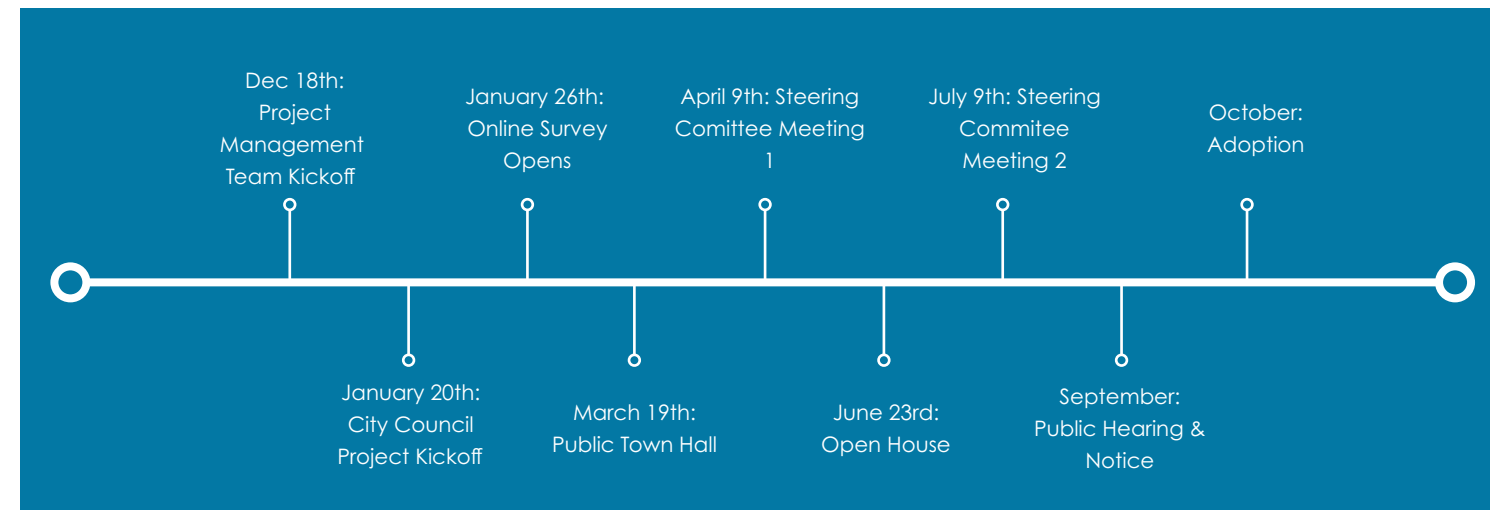
COMMUTING PATTERNS



The above data comes from the Census *On the Map* tool and illustrates work commute patterns. 613 people travel into Stone Mountain for their work, 17 residents are employed inside the city boundaries, and 2,909 residents travel outside of the city for work. The large number of residents who have to travel outside the city for work indicates a mismatch between the jobs available within the city limits and the skills of its residents. The more people who have to travel outside of the city to their jobs, the more congestion this causes on city streets, surrounding arterial roadways, and interstates.

COMMUNITY INPUT

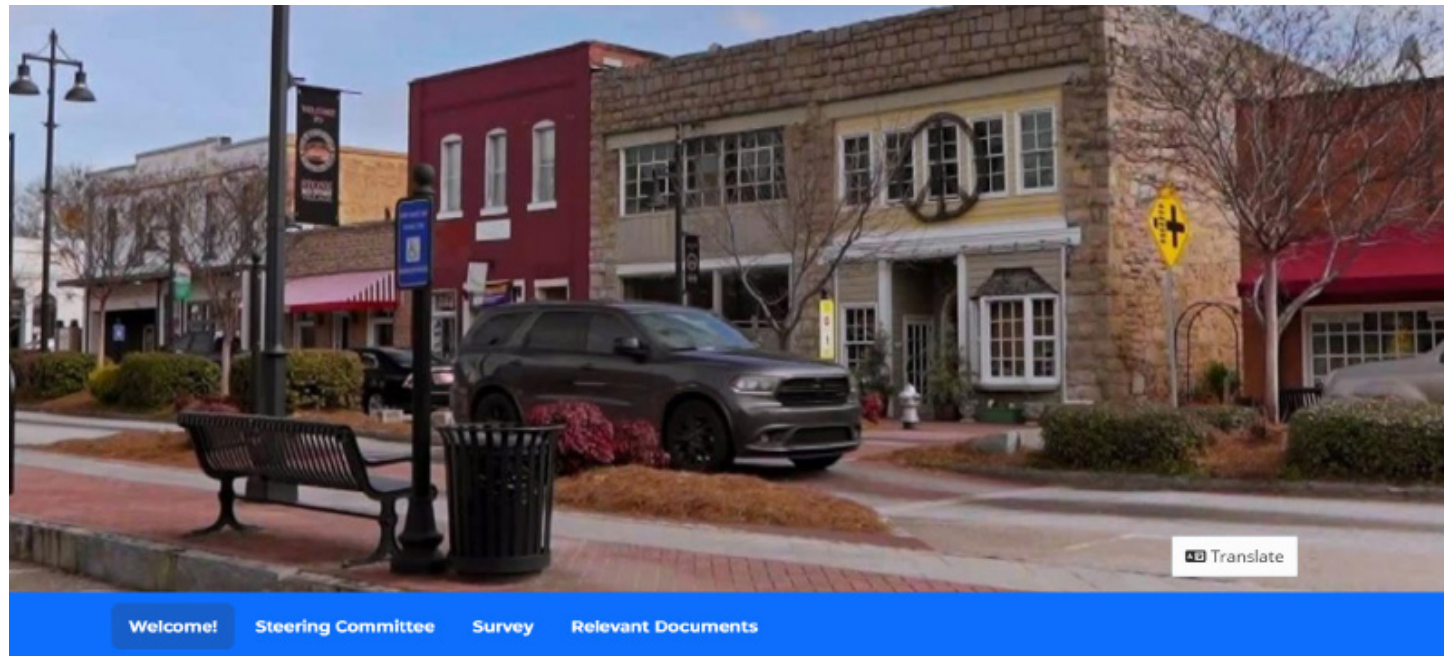
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



COMMUNITY INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

A steering committee comprised of citizens, local business owners, elected and appointed officials, and city staff guided the creation of the 2026 comprehensive plan update. The steering committee met on multiple occasions, providing direction and feedback at key points in the process. In addition to emails sent directly to committee members, the city advertised committee meetings through the city's website and social media.

ARC and the city also hosted an open house on Tuesday, June 23rd at 5380 Studio located in Downtown Stone Mountain. Stakeholders also provided their input on priorities and goals via an online survey on the dedicated comprehensive plan website.



Public Input Website

SWOT Analysis

During the first steering committee meeting that ARC hosted in April, ARC staff led committee members through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. Following is the feedback received:

Strengths

Strengths focused on Stone Mountain's culture and renewed energy in its civic institutions.

1. Stone Mountain Park as a major attraction with new ownership bringing fresh energy
2. Active City Council and new elected officials bringing renewed momentum
3. Strong culture, history, and well-preserved character — recognized as one of the best preserved towns in the region; home to two of five historically Black communities in DeKalb County
4. Walkable core with good housing stock and four large parks, plus new playgrounds and updated facilities
5. Vibrant community identity: active arts scene, strong library, robust volunteer base, and civic organizations (Women's Club, Freemasons, community garden)
6. Improving relationships with CSX and DeKalb County; strong inter-city relationships
7. Unique assets no other city has: historic caboose, walking tours, 100+ year-old tree, outdoor gym, wind phone art installation, historic graveyard
8. Highway 78 access; active community communication networks

SWOT Analysis

Weakness

Weakness focused on infrastructure and process improvements the city needs to implement.

1. Limited draw to the city itself beyond the Park; 42 MARTA stops to get to downtown Atlanta
2. High Main Street vacancy rates; building renovation costs are prohibitive for most owners
3. Event space underutilized due to logistics and cost (rental fee)
4. 75% of tax revenue comes from residential; high millage rate with little room to increase
5. High turnover in city hall — 4 to 6 city managers in the last 5 years — undermining operational stability
6. Outdated technology: lagging city website, limited digital services, weak public communications and outreach
7. Antiquated ordinances slowing permitting; described as a nightmare for businesses
8. CSX easements complicating building ownership and redevelopment along the rail corridor
9. Placemaking momentum lost post-COVID; schools underperforming; difficulty attracting families
10. Lack of infill development and no clear strategy for MARTA brownfield

Opportunities

Opportunities focus on partnerships and tools to provide residents with updated services and innovative programming

1. Stone Mountain Park's new ownership — potential for a stronger, more intentional city partnership
2. MARTA Reach candidate status and rail corridor activation
3. Mayor's emphasis on tourism; new general administration bringing fresh direction
4. Rebranding opportunity: defining a distinct city identity, gateway signage, and consistent marketing
5. Museum concept to reframe the Stone Mountain narrative and draw new visitors
6. Targeted annexation along Memorial Drive to grow commercial tax base (goal: +5% revenue per year)
7. Infill development and MARTA brownfield redevelopment
8. Digitizing city services, modernizing the website, and publishing available facilities online
9. Stronger community partnerships; leveraging the 10,000+ member Facebook group; restoring live music programming
10. Faster and smoother permitting as a small city; food and business incubator opportunities
11. Educational opportunities — potential for magnet, charter, or mixed public/charter school

SWOT Anlaysis

Threats

Threats focus on changing conditions around and within Stone Mountain

- 1. Uncertainty about how the new Park ownership views its relationship with the city
- 2. Historical designation limiting building flexibility and creating ongoing financial upkeep burden
- 3. Risk of becoming an island city as Tucker and Clarkston expand and close off annexation corridors
- 4. City's history and current conditions are stigmatized, deterring investment and families
- 5. Aging underground infrastructure — clay piping and sinkholes already appearing
- 6. Sales tax reductions and lack of industrial zoning limiting revenue diversification
- 7. Too many short-term rentals (Airbnbs) crowding out permanent housing options
- 8. Stone Mountain Park closing its education center, removing a community anchor
- 9. CSX expanding paid parking lots — unclear what other city-impacting moves may follow

NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

From the public input and SWOT analysis with the steering committee, the following needs and opportunities emerged. They have been categorized to fit the elements within this comprehensive plan document.

LAND USE

- 1. Encourage mixed-use development
- 2. Explore redevelopment of the MARTA brownfields site
- 3. Seek easements from CSX to utilize land adjacent to the tracks

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Address high Main Street vacancy rates
- 2. Create an inviting downtown area
- 3. Recruit more restaurants, a small grocery store, and other shops to bring in business
- 4. Encourage sustainable growth
- 5. Increase access to retail and commercial options
- 6. Support tourism development
- 7. Expedite and modernize the city's permitting process

TRANSPORTATION

1. Explore options for redesign of the 5-Way intersection at James B. Rivers Memorial Drive
2. Fund infrastructure improvements across residential communities
3. Increase MARTA connectivity through the MARTA Reach Program

HOUSING

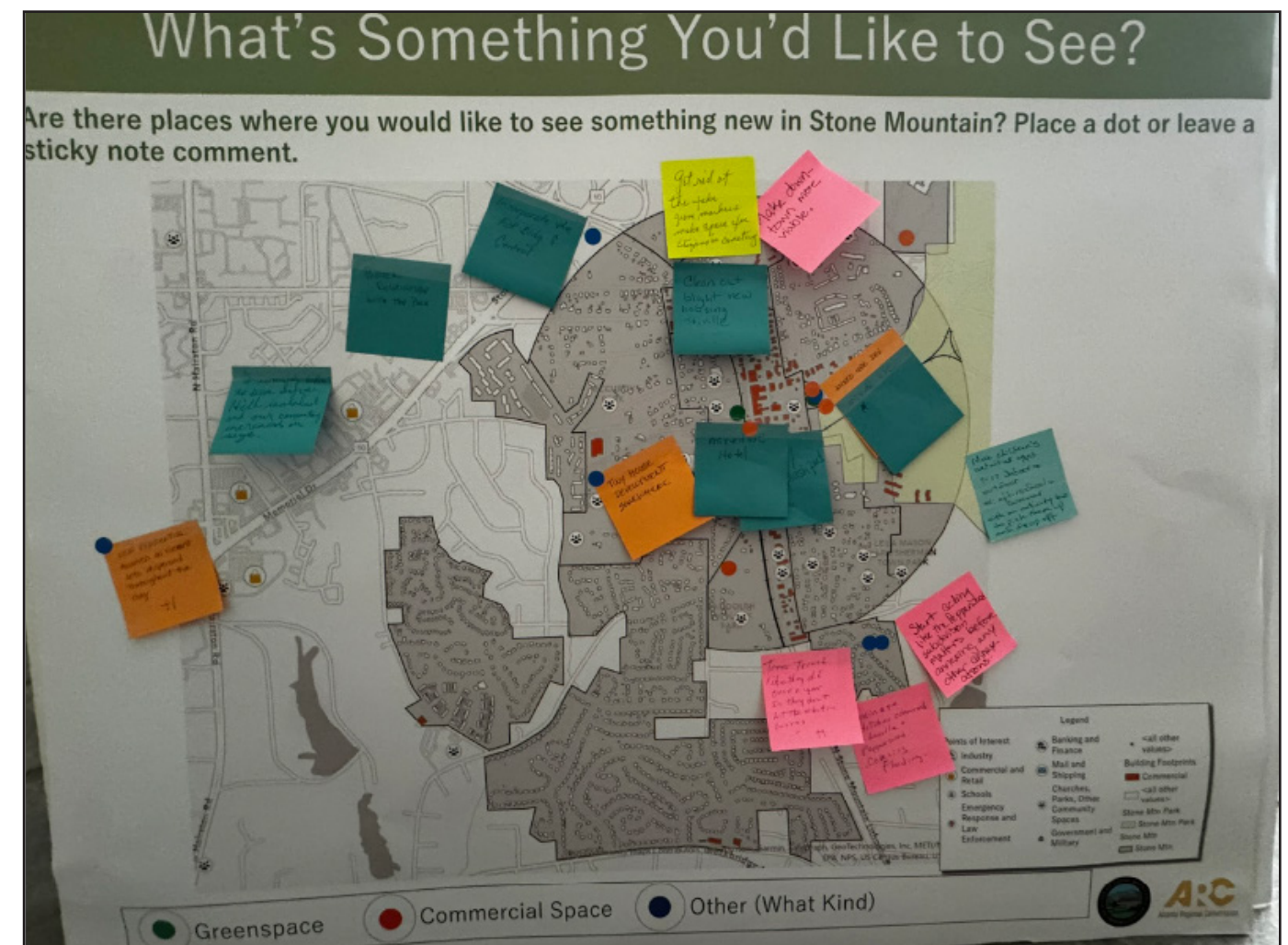
1. Allow alternative housing options like ADUs
2. Address Airbnb housing crowding the market
3. Allow/encourage infill development to increase housing stock and diversity types
4. Implement blight fees

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. Improve relationship with Stone Mountain Park
2. Host festivals on the Lawn
3. Recapture placemaking momentum lost during and after COVID
4. Reopen the Stone Mountain Museum
5. Complete and Conduct a Historical Survey to align preservation policies with identified areas.

NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

1. Preserve and expand greenspaces
2. Incorporate children's outdoor activities in greenspaces and downtown
3. Explore adding a splash pad in downtown



STONE MOUNTAIN TOMORROW

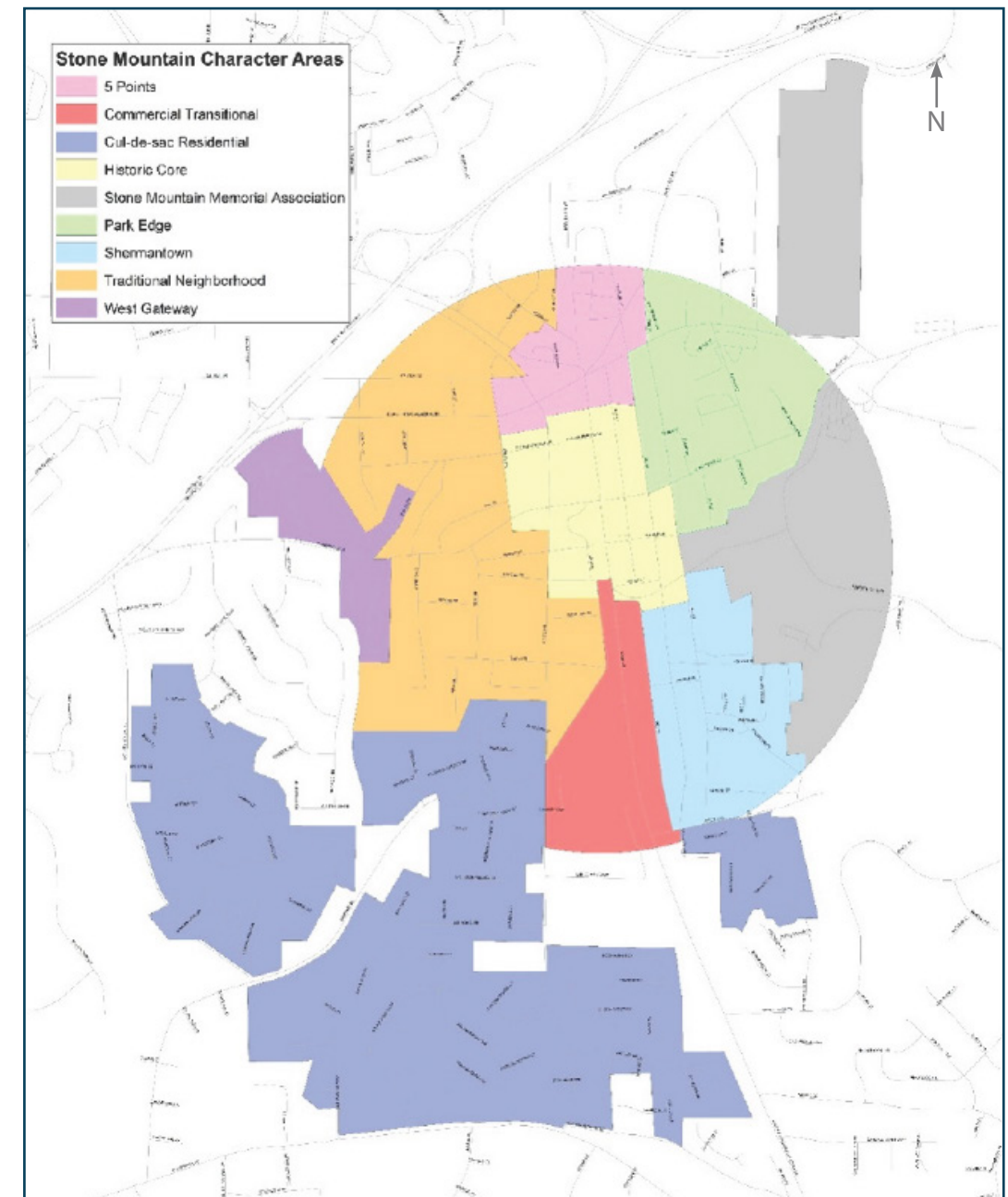
PREVIOUS PLANS

Goals and recommendations found in this section of the plan are influenced by current and previous studies. Below is the list of plans referenced.

1. **2026:** DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan (Ongoing) ³⁵
2. **2025:** ULI mTap Plan: Downtown Revitalization Strategy
3. **2024 – 2028:** DeKalb County Consolidated Plan
4. **2023:** LCI - Connecting Parks, PATHs, Public Spaces
5. **2022:** DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan
6. **2021:** Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan
7. **2020:** Stone Mountain Village Forward Plan (2020)
8. **2019 – 2023:** Consolidated Plan for HUD: Programs and Annual Action Plan
9. **2015:** Stone Mountain Village Neighborhood Improvements Plan

LAND USE & CHARACTER AREAS

CHARACTER AREA MAP



The Character Area Map is a representation of the community's vision for future development and redevelopment within the city. Each Character Area includes a narrative describing the land uses, desired development patterns, and implementation strategies as well as representative pictures of the type and style of development. It is important to note that the Character Area Map does not change the current zoning of any property but reflects policies that are intended to guide the city's land use decisions for the next five years.

CHARACTER AREAS

The following list of character areas corresponds to the Character Area Map on page 39. Character areas are sub-planning areas that have unique or special characteristics that require special attention in terms of 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. The City has retained a residential village atmosphere and many homes have been renovated in recent years. According to 2019 ACS estimates, the City is comprised of 2,714 housing units, with almost 50% owner-occupied and about 50% renter occupied. Most of the city is zoned for residential use. During the comprehensive plan process, the character of the residential community was identified as one of the leading reasons that Stone Mountain remains a desirable place to live. The legacy of its early 20th century “rural” resort roots has created a character that is unique among neighboring communities in central DeKalb.

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.



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 revitalization.

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.

DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- 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 2020 Village Forward Plan and 2023 LCI Plan
- Enforce historic district design guidelines and zoning regulations.

COMMERCIAL

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.



Source: City of Stone Mountain

DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- 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 USE

- 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 1970s through 1990s 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. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are appropriate due to the lot sizes and character of the neighborhoods. 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

- Revitalize existing housing stock
- Target homeowners at varied price points.
- New single-family detached and attached houses.
- Limit cul-de-sac 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 with ADUs allowed
- Limited areas of multifamily 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.



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.



PRIMARY LAND USES

- Detached single-family residences
- Town houses, where appropriate.
- Park and Recreation Space, Civic Uses, Walking and Biking Trail Connections

DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- Expansion, support and maintenance of PATH (Bike trail connecting Stone Mountain Park with Atlanta) trails.
- Opportunities for new parks.
- 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.



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 structures 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.



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.

DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- 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.

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 39** 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

- 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.
- Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Develop new multifamily 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 Five 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 Avenue**
- **West: West Mountain Street and Ridge Avenue**
- **Northwest: Memorial Drive at Ridge Avenue**
- **East: East Mountain Street and 4th Street**
- **North: Five Points intersection and Memorial Drive at Ridge Avenue**

GATEWAYS

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 James B. Rivers 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

- Should include monumental signage made of durable high quality materials which is attractively designed. Potential design concepts are included in the 2020 Village Forward Plan.

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 dwelling units.
- Compatible two-story townhome development.
- Additional commercial uses in 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

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

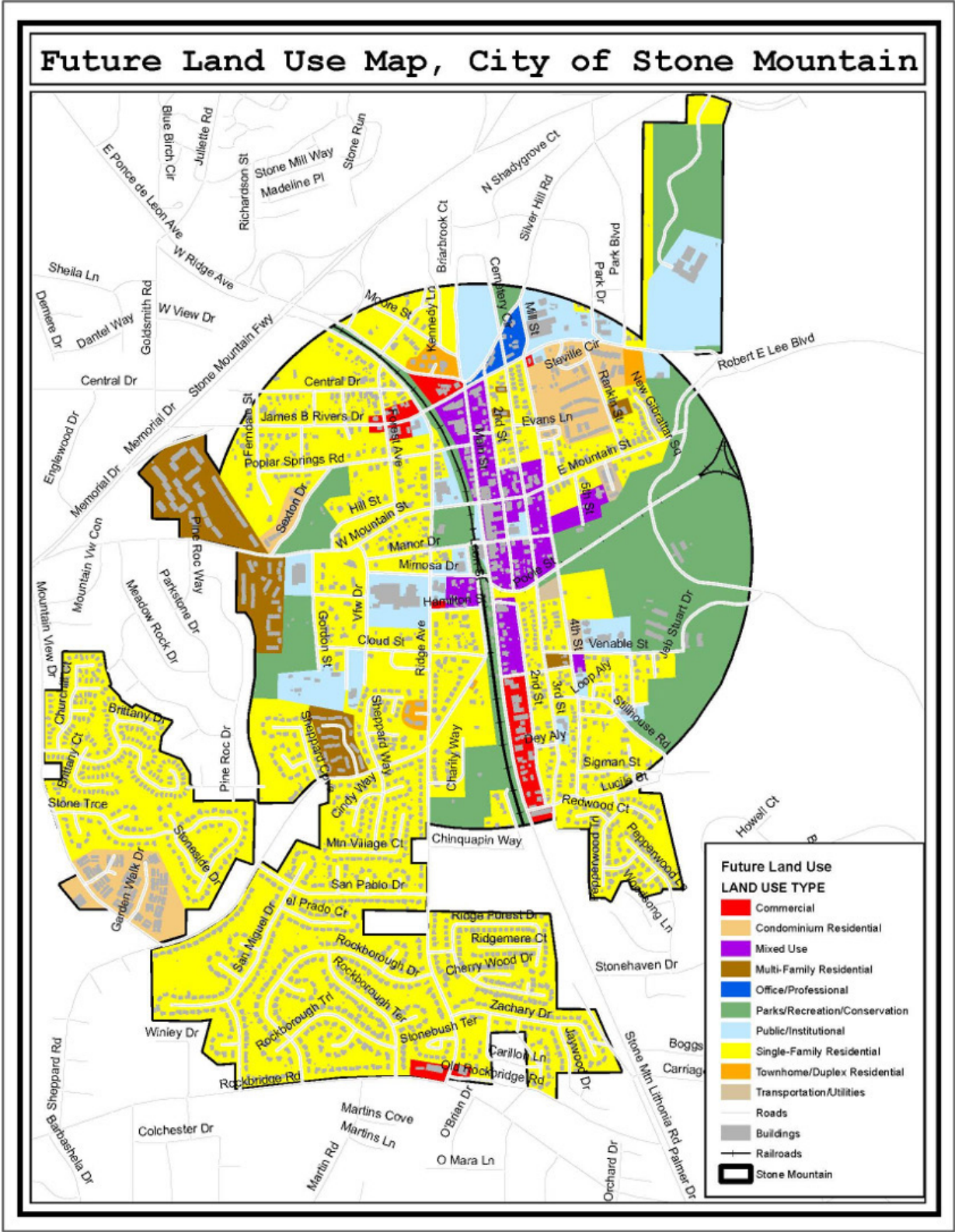
LCI 2023 Recommendations:

- **Catalytic Activation Focus:** Future land uses to shift from purely structural mapping to a layered focus on activating four specific catalyst sites situated as key gateways along the Main Street corridor.
- **Mixed-Use Frontage Extensions:** Promote expanding the active, pedestrian-oriented footprint of the historic downtown core outward along Main Street toward James B. Rivers Memorial Drive to the north and Lucile Avenue to the south to support business growth.
- **Preserving Residential Fabric:** Reaffirm a commitment to maintaining existing stable single-family residential zoning while ensuring that any incoming multi-family housing or infill matches traditional neighborhood scale, setbacks, and local character.

2021 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

- **Future Framework:** Make development decisions over the next 20 years that are systematically guided by a Future Land Use Map paired alongside a specialized Character Area Map.
- **Mixed-Use Integration:** Emphasized traditional downtown arrangements featuring multi-story structures (up to 2–3 stories) that support ground-floor commercial shops with residential lofts or office space located directly above.
- **Core Densities:** Land use inside the historic town center should allow for compact residential infill and rehabilitation up to a density of 12 units per acre.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use 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 20 years and uses conventional classifications to describe the use of the land. This map will be used as a guide in conjunction with citywide policies and the Character Area Map located on page 29, 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.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Residents' main concern for the city is economic development. Throughout engagement, the priority focused on actions that work to lower the barriers for small business ownership and revitalize the main street commercial corridor. The permitting and renovation process for Main Street buildings consistently came up as a barrier to rehabilitation. Current feedback and previous documents stress a need to balance the type of commercial wanted: one that serves neighborhood needs along with its proximity to a popular tourist attraction.

Previous studies provide economic development strategies that the city can build upon. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan recommendations are still relevant to what Stone Mountain residents want to see.



Source: City of Stone Mountain

CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on previous recommendations and current stakeholder feedback, the following goals outline the City of Stone Mountain's Economic Development goals:

- 1. **Streamline Permitting & Business Onboarding:** Overhaul and digitize the city's antiquated permitting and zoning processes. Establish a clear, expedited "one-stop-shop" intake process for small businesses and building renovations along Main Street to lower entry barriers.
- 2. **Implement Blight Ordinances & Code Enforcement:** Enforce vacant property fees, blight taxes, and proactive code enforcement on dark or abandoned commercial storefronts on Main Street to compel property owners to rehabilitate, sell, or lease underutilized structures.
- 3. **Pursue Targeted Annexation along Memorial Drive:** Execute a commercial annexation strategy targeting property toward the Memorial Drive commercial corridor (nearing Clarkston and Tucker). This will capture new commercial tax revenue and expand the commercial tax base beyond the current 75% residential burden.
- 4. **Incentivize Downtown Commercial Catalyst Sites:** Partner with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to acquire and redevelop key catalyst parcels through adaptive reuse, density credits, and public-private partnerships to attract locally owned restaurants, a revenue generator, and a community grocer.
- 5. **Capture Stone Mountain Park Tourism:** Modernize downtown marketing, gateway directional signage, and cross-promotions to capture spending from the estimated 4 million annual visitors entering neighboring Stone Mountain Park.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

2021 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

- 1. Local Retail Recruitment: Prioritizes filling empty downtown storefronts by recruiting locally owned, community-serving retail businesses and establishing standardized, consistent business operating hours.
- 2. Target Clusters: Focuses external recruitment on designated high-wage industry clusters: Entrepreneurial Networked Professionals, Independent Artists/Performers, Technical Consulting, Motion Picture Production, and Computer Gaming.
- 3. Park & Commuter Synergy: Promotes strategies to capture revenue from the 4 million annual visitors traveling to adjacent Stone Mountain Park, alongside attracting employees from the nearby Stone Mountain Industrial Park.
- 4. Financial Incentives: Outlines near-term work goals to fully certify a Tax Allocation District (TAD), issue civic development bonds, and secure a state Opportunity Zone designation to foster business growth.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

ULI Mini Technical Assistance Panel (mTAP)

The Urban Land Institute's Center for Leadership Class of 2025 created a downtown revitalization strategy as one of its capstone projects.

This report was done as a mini technical assistance panel exploring three main goals for Stone Mountain:

1. Developing a property acquisition strategy, including identifying potential funding sources, guidance for investor/developer attraction, and incentive structuring.
2. Assistance in identifying potential highest and best uses for key catalyst parcels within Stone Mountain's downtown corridor.
3. Developing a strategy to partner with investors and developers to revitalize these buildings so that we can bring new businesses and additional tax revenue to our city.

Recommendations assume that the City of Stone Mountain and the DDA would acquire and redevelop properties to lease or sell. The study examined economic scenarios, created pro formas, and conducted site analysis for three properties.

Additional Strategies include:

- Up Zoning – the process of allowing for higher density development by changing the zoning pattern
- Adaptive Reuse – repurpose vacant and outdated existing structures for other, more desirable uses
- Offset strategies – allow for more intense development through density credits or land swap.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

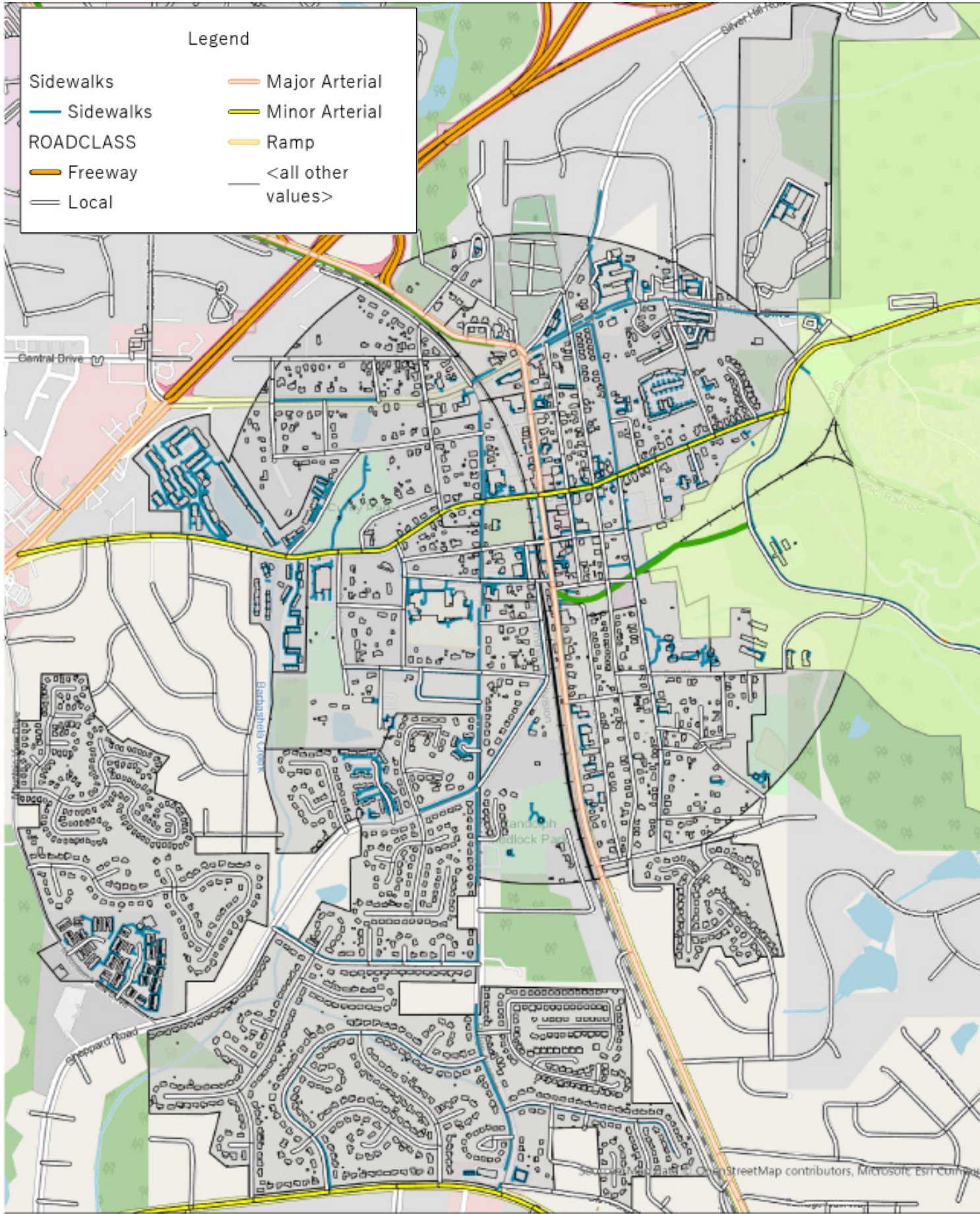
LCI 2023 – Connecting Parks, Paths, and Public Spaces Leveraging Regional Tourism:

Capitalizes directly on the 4 million annual regional visitors traveling to neighboring Stone Mountain Park by building physical trail links and placing inviting downtown entries to systematically channel visitor foot traffic and bike spending into local commercial districts.

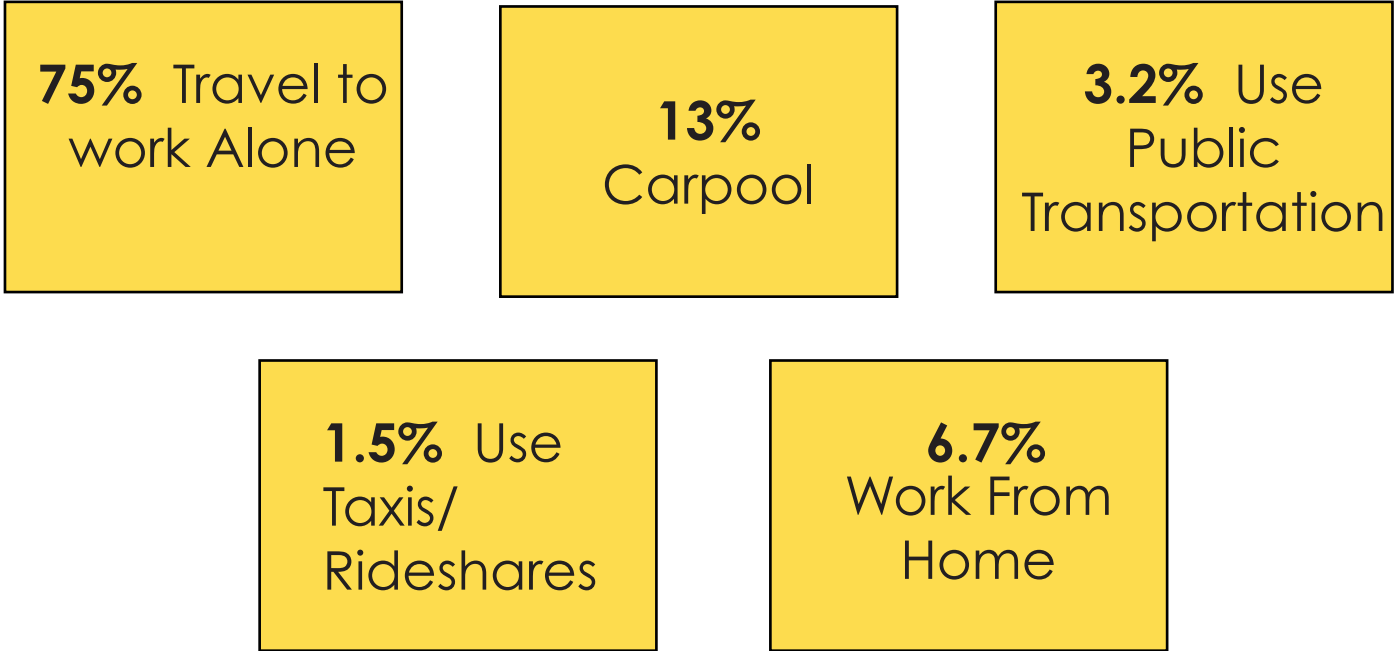
Activity-Based Revenue Generation: Outlines localized financing models using public art markets, pop-up events at the Baptist Lawn, corporate sponsorships, and a specialized Placemaking Reserve Fund to support small businesses.

Zoning Incentives for Placemaking: Proposes commercial overlay zoning incentives that allow private real estate developers to fulfill open space rules by directly funding public streetscape amenities, seating, and local artwork.

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Transportation Statistics
ACS 2024



The Census data above shows the breakdown of how residents get to work. The online survey and open house asked a few key questions about known transportation issues. Residents focused on redesigning the five-point intersection at James B. Rivers Memorial Drive and generally asked for infrastructure improvements throughout the city. Few mentioned how MARTA buses are inaccessible. Many respondents in the survey and open house asked for increased walkability and expanded multimodal transportation options to make the downtown area more viable. However, residents de-prioritized the 2021 comprehensive plan's goal of "Safe, Convenient Transportation System for All Modes."

At the open hose, residents were also asked where they live and where they work (if applicable) in Stone Mountain. Census data shows a majority of residents work outside of the city, with most earning less than the median income of DeKalb County.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on previous recommendations and current stakeholder feedback, the following goals outline the City of Stone Mountain's Transportation goals:

1. **Redesign the “Five Points” Intersection:** Prioritize the redesign and signalization/intersection overhaul of the “Five Points” choke point at James B. Rivers Memorial Drive to reduce bottlenecks and improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians.
2. **Close the Regional PATH Trail Gap:** Complete the missing half-mile gap of the PATH Foundation trail through downtown, utilizing the recommended 2nd Street alignment (converting it to a single-lane road with a protected 10-foot multi-use path).
3. **Resolve the Southern Rail Corridor Divide:** Apply for federal grants (such as Reconnecting Communities) to construct a dedicated pedestrian/cycling overpass over the CSX tracks, while converting existing crossings (e.g., Lucile Avenue) into safe public crossings with pedestrian beacons.
4. **Implement Neighborhood Traffic Calming:** Install context-sensitive traffic calming (speed humps, curb extensions, signalized crosswalks) along residential cut-through corridors such as Ridge Avenue and 4th Street to curb commuter bypass traffic.
5. **Enhance Multimodal & Transit Connections:** Redesign West Mountain Street and James B. Rivers Drive into Complete Streets featuring minimum 6-foot sidewalks and bike lanes. Collaborate with MARTA to improve stop accessibility and explore MARTA Reach micro-transit options. Enhance multimodal accessibility and parking for golf carts, bicycles, and EV's.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

2021 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

1. Main Street Operations: Deploy a dedicated traffic infrastructure study to improve vehicular operations, balance traffic flow, and systematically lower congestion bottlenecks during standard commuter peak hours on Main Street.
2. Cut-Through Mitigation: Implement context-sensitive traffic calming measures directly within historic neighborhoods to block heavy commuter cut-through traffic bypasses.
3. Pedestrian Signalization: Tackles citywide multi-modal safety by installing updated pedestrian crosswalk warning light systems and wide sidewalk infrastructure. Active Trail Extensions: Accelerates continuous expansions and community path connectors into the regional PATH bicycle trail network.
4. Regional Transit Articulation: Coordinate with the DeKalb County Transit Master Plan to champion an aspirational Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) bus service line extending along Memorial Drive.
5. The City of Stone Mountain recently finished an LCI study in 2025 titled: Connecting Parks, Paths, and Public Spaces. Its goals were to:
 1. Create a connected bicycle and pedestrian friendly green network that connects neighborhoods to the city's park and public spaces
 2. Study Connectivity options to the current half-mile gap in the PATH trail through the center of the city
 3. Assess Existing Infrastructure and Identify needs (bike, parking, sidewalks, crossings, and park amenities)

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

LCI 2023 – Connecting Parks, Paths, and Public Spaces

Closing the Regional PATH Trail Gap: Establish the completion of the final, missing half-mile gap in the regional trail network as the city's highest priority. It selects a 2nd Street alignment over other alternatives, converting the current two-way road into a single-lane, one-way street with a dedicated 10-foot multi-use path separated from vehicles by a rollover curb and planting buffer.

The Southern Railroad Crossing Divide: Addresses a major physical barrier where an active CSX railroad bisection leaves southern neighborhoods with over a one-mile gap without public crossings. It proposes a phased local connection strategy:

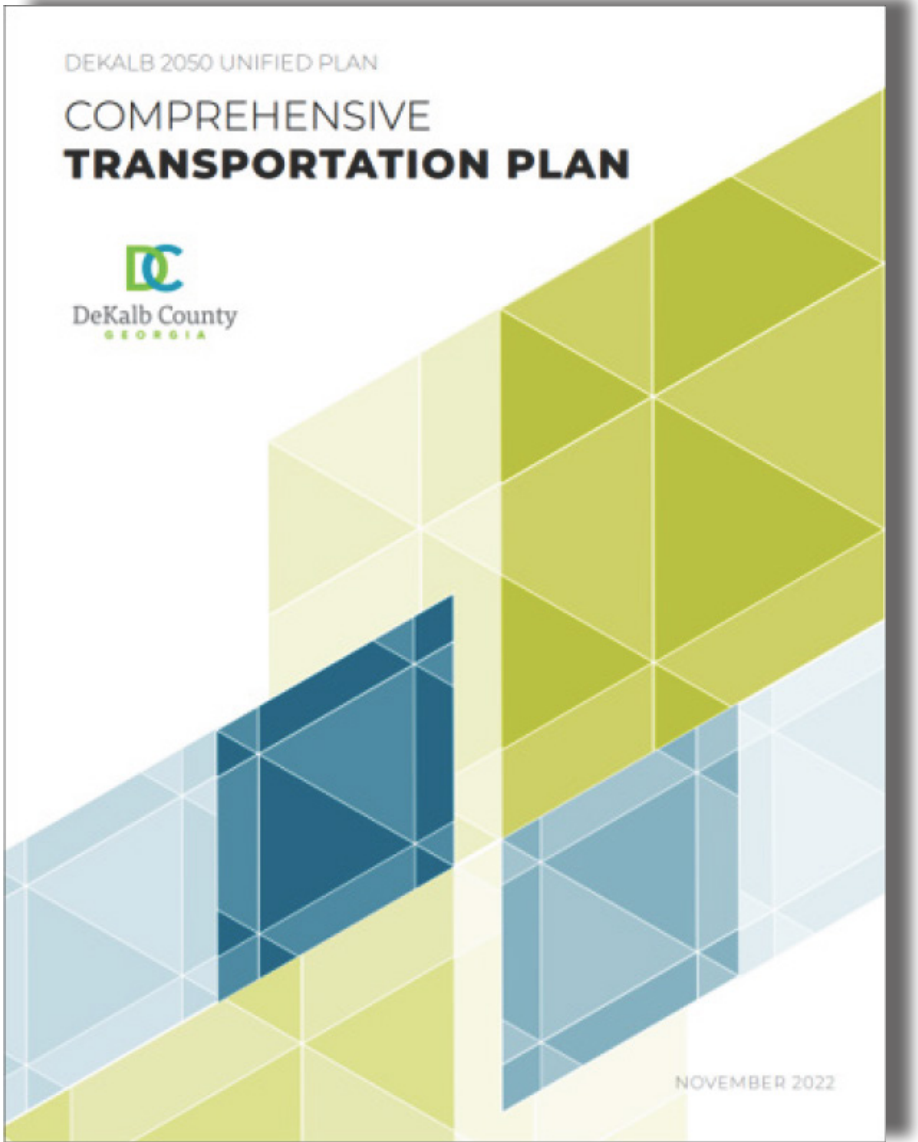
- Phase 1 (Immediate): Convert an existing private rail crossing at Lucile Avenue into a public crossing paired with a mid-block crossing and pedestrian warning beacons.
- Phase 2 (Long-Term): Securing a federal Reconnecting Communities grant to construct a dedicated pedestrian and cycling bridge directly over the tracks.

Complete Streets Access: Prepare multi-modal streetscape redesigns for James B. Rivers Memorial Drive and West Mountain Street, incorporating 6-foot minimum sidewalks, dedicated bicycle lanes, and advanced bus shelters with built-in public art.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

DeKalb Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

As part of DeKalb's unified 2050 plan, a comprehensive transportation plan was conducted in 2022. This plan's strategy specifically incorporates a "Universe of Projects" to assist with the development of a recommended project list. Because of this, there's an overlap in many of the plan's goals and identified projects with Stone Mountain's LCI study areas and Comprehensive Plan goals.



Source: DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

HOUSING

Housing was a moderate priority for residents throughout engagement. Most residents want to see modern, affordable housing options such as ADUs. They would also like to see housing as part of traditional mixed-use development in downtown to address vacant and blighted property in the form of residential units above ground level retail, restaurants, and services. Along with affordable housing development, residents would like the city to implement an expedited permitting process for all development and building, but especially for building renovation and rehabilitation projects.



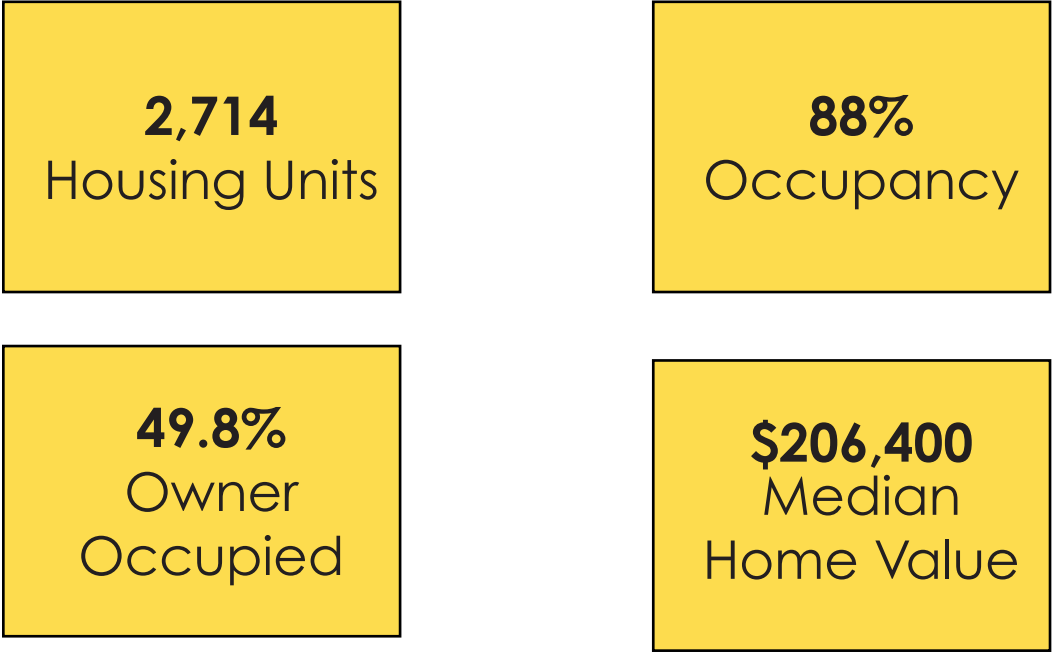
CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on previous recommendations and current stakeholder feedback, the following goals outline the City of Stone Mountain’s Housing goals:

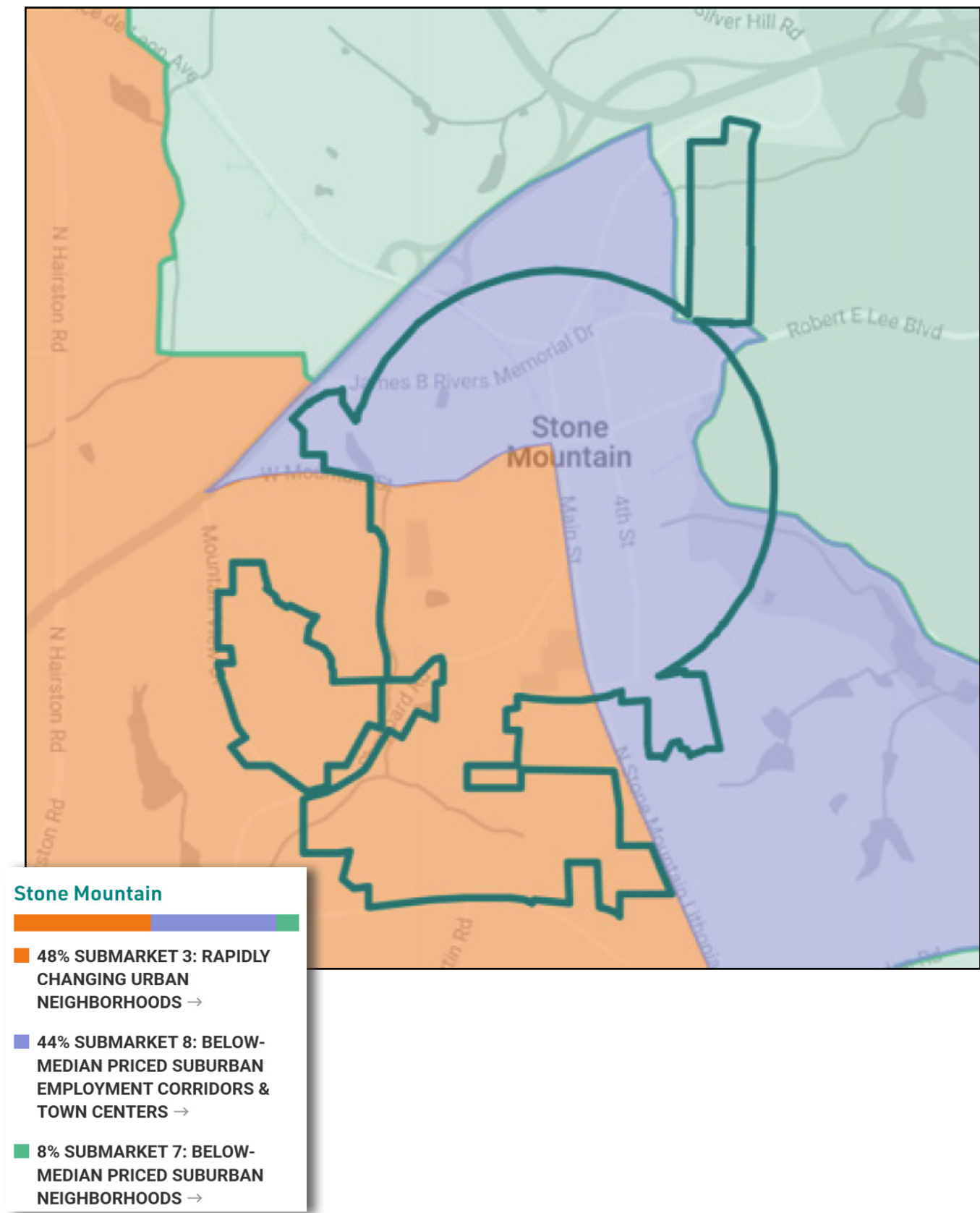
- 1. **Legalize Alternative & Missing Middle Housing:** Update zoning codes to remove minimum lot sizes and permit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), triplexes/quadplexes, townhomes, and tiny home infill developments to increase overall housing diversity.
- 2. **Encourage Mixed-Use Upper-Story Residential:** Promote zoning that allows residential lofts and apartments located above ground-floor retail and dining spaces along Main Street and surrounding downtown character areas.
- 3. **Neighborhood Stabilization:** Focus code abatement and infill revitalization on vulnerable pockets in the Cul-de-sac and Traditional Residential zones, ensuring new infill matches existing architectural scale and setbacks.
- 4. **Strengthen Homeownership & Anti-Displacement Measures:** Leverage DeKalb County housing programs and Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) grants to help fixed-income homeowners restore aging homes while establishing owner-occupancy assistance to reduce cost burdens.

HOUSING SNAPSHOT

Census data shows that 75% of renters are cost-burdened and 42% of homeowners are cost-burdened. This is backed further by the ARC’s Metro Atlanta Housing Toolkit, found on the next page. The City of Stone Mountain is considered at risk of becoming a rapidly changing neighborhood due to its mostly at-risk residents. The focus on smaller and denser housing types offers opportunities to increase affordability and make the city more resilient to rapid change.



HOUSING SNAPSHOT



PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

2021 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

1. Addressing Blight: Establishes targeted local ordinances, strict code enforcement, and code abatement options to clean up unsafe vacant properties, buildings, and lots.
2. Rehabilitation Funding: Mandates creating housing redevelopment plans utilizing the state's Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) to assist fixed-income or aging residents with home renovations.
3. Tenure Stabilization: Seeks to balance renter-to-owner ratios by actively creating programs that facilitate long-term homeownership, particularly targeting young incoming families.
4. Preserving Affordability: Commits to equitable housing expansion that protects organic affordability while safely boosting home values via proactive neighborhood branding.

DeKalb County's Comprehensive Housing Plan

DeKalb County's first ever comprehensive housing plan is underway. The County has identified five top priorities from stakeholder engagement including:

1. Reducing housing cost burdens, followed by preserving existing affordable housing.
2. Desired housing types are not available
3. Preference for single-family housing but open to small-scale multifamily options
4. School quality is influential to where people want to live
5. Develop homes affordable to buy on less than \$100,000 a year

Although a moderate priority, many of the identified goals in DeKalb's Comprehensive Housing Plan align with feedback heard during the city's comprehensive planning process. Stone Mountain should look to leverage alignment between county and city officials to preserve and expand housing affordability within its boundaries.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

LCI 2023 – Connecting Parks, Paths, and Public Spaces

- 1. Affordable Housing Protection: Integrates specialized affordable housing and inclusive economic analyses explicitly to mitigate resident displacement and protect long-term affordability as new infrastructure investments arrive.
- 2. Neighborhood Equity Links: Focuses urban reinvestment toward the city's southern neighborhoods to ensure vulnerable or lower-income residents gain reliable, non-vehicular access to municipal assets.



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HISTORIC, ARTS & CULTURAL RESOURCES

CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic and cultural art resources were a moderate policy priority for residents. Many of the recommendations from the 2021 Comprehensive plan are still relevant. Historic preservation should be emphasized along Main Street and in Shermantown.

Based on previous recommendations and current stakeholder feedback, the following goals outline the City of Stone Mountain's Historic and Arts/Cultural Resources goals:

- 1. Restore and Reactivate the Historic Train Depot:** Complete structural capital improvements on the historic train depot to fully transform it into an active visitor welcome center, transit hub, and local history museum.
- 2. Preserve and Elevate Shermantown:** Protect the cultural heritage and physical structures of Historic Shermantown. Develop a designated "Shermantown Square" to serve as a community gathering space, local marketplace, and historical focal point.
- 3. Enforce Local Historic District Guidelines:** Maintain strict architectural design guidelines via the Historic Preservation Commission to restrict non-contextual exterior modifications or modern structural materials (such as metal "Butler" buildings) in the core historic district.
- 4. Expand Public Arts & Civic Events:** Partner with ART Station and local artists to fund interactive public art installations, murals, dynamic crosswalk art, and seasonal event programming on Lawn on the Main and Main Street.
- 5. Conduct a Historical Resource Survey:** Conduct a Historical resource survey that identifies, records, and evaluates buildings, structures, sites, and landscapes within the City of Stone Mountain. This will update and develop historic preservation codes that will inform goals listed above.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

2021 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

- 1. Preservation Enforcement: Restricts modern, uncharacteristic building materials in the historic center (such as manufactured or “Butler” metal buildings) by strictly enforcing local Historic Preservation Commission design guidelines.
- 2. Train Depot Renovation: Allocates capital funds to continue a multi-stage structural restoration of the Historic Train Depot, cementing its adaptive reuse as a community museum, meeting space, and public welcome center.
- 3. Arts Partnerships: Directly funds structural upgrades to the prominent downtown multi-disciplinary arts facility, ART Station, while executing public art programming to support local creators.
- 4. Honoring Cultural Significance: Explicitly requires that all future infill construction and development projects respect and pay homage to the city's unique history, including the African-American community and culture centered in historic Shermantown.



Source: City of Stone Mountain

LCI 2023 – Connecting Parks, Paths, and Public Spaces

- 1. Thematic Public Realm Art: Collaborate with local groups like ART Station to deploy an annual, funded public art stream featuring murals, sculptures, dynamic asphalt art, and interactive storytelling walls reflecting the city’s unique railroad and cultural history.
- 2. Train Depot Integration: Continue to advance the ongoing gateway program and complete structural renovations to the Historic Train Depot, locking it in as an active visitor center and core trailhead hub.
- 3. Celebrating Diverse Neighborhoods: Mandate that new public spaces, gateway kiosks, and art panels permanently celebrate and elevate the local voices and historic narratives of the community.

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CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural resources were a top priority for residents. According to the survey, preserving greenspace was the second highest priority. Feedback also called for more greenspace activation, with residents asking for outdoor recreation and programs for children. From the 2021 Comprehensive plan, many of the policy recommendations are carried over and are built upon by the 2023 LCI study.

Based on previous recommendations and current stakeholder feedback, the following goals outline the City of Stone Mountain's Natural Resources and Sustainability goals:

1. Establish the Downtown “Green Loop”: Implement a continuous multi-use Green Loop trail featuring marked 8-foot-wide paths to seamlessly connect downtown, local neighborhood parks (VFW, McCurdy), and Stone Mountain Park.
2. Develop Active Outdoor Amenities for Youth: Expand children's recreational infrastructure across existing greenspaces, including the addition of a downtown public splash pad/water feature and interactive outdoor play equipment.
3. Incorporate Green Infrastructure & Open Space Mandates: Require an appropriate dedication of open space/greenspace for all commercial redevelopments (20 - 30%). Encourage pervious paving, bioswales, and rain gardens to manage stormwater runoff and mitigate urban heat.
4. Protect Tree Canopy and Environmental Buffers: Adopt conservation-style subdivision regulations that enforce tree canopy retention and safeguard local stream corridors (such as Barbashela Creek) from impervious surface runoff.



Source: City of Stone Mountain

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

2021 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations:

- 1. Green Open Spaces: Enforces strict environmental zoning policies, including an automated requirement that a minimum of 20% open space be completely retained on all newly developed transitional commercial lots.
- 2. Park & Trail Connectivity: Replaces large-scale environmental trail plans with hyper-focused, viable path linkages that naturally connect local community parks (like linking VFW Park and McCurdy Park).
- 3. Conservation Design: Mandates the implementation of conservation style subdivision regulations or green space set-asides to seamlessly protect urban tree canopies.
- 4. Stream & Resource Restoration: Identifies the widespread threat of impervious concrete surfaces on natural streams (such as Barbashela Creek) and outlines long-term policies for direct stream restoration.

LCI 2023 – Connecting Parks, Paths, and Public Spaces

- 1. **The Green Loop:** Replace previously canceled environmental stream trail concepts with a continuous, citywide Green Loop. A minimum 8-foot-wide multi-use pedestrian and bicycle trail network designed with an identifiable green sidewalk band to seamlessly connect local parks.
- 2. **The Baptist Lawn Facility:** Dedicate a key vacant downtown property for transformation into a green, special-use public space equipped with native vegetation, planting beds, and water feature access to filter local runoff while minimizing urban heat.

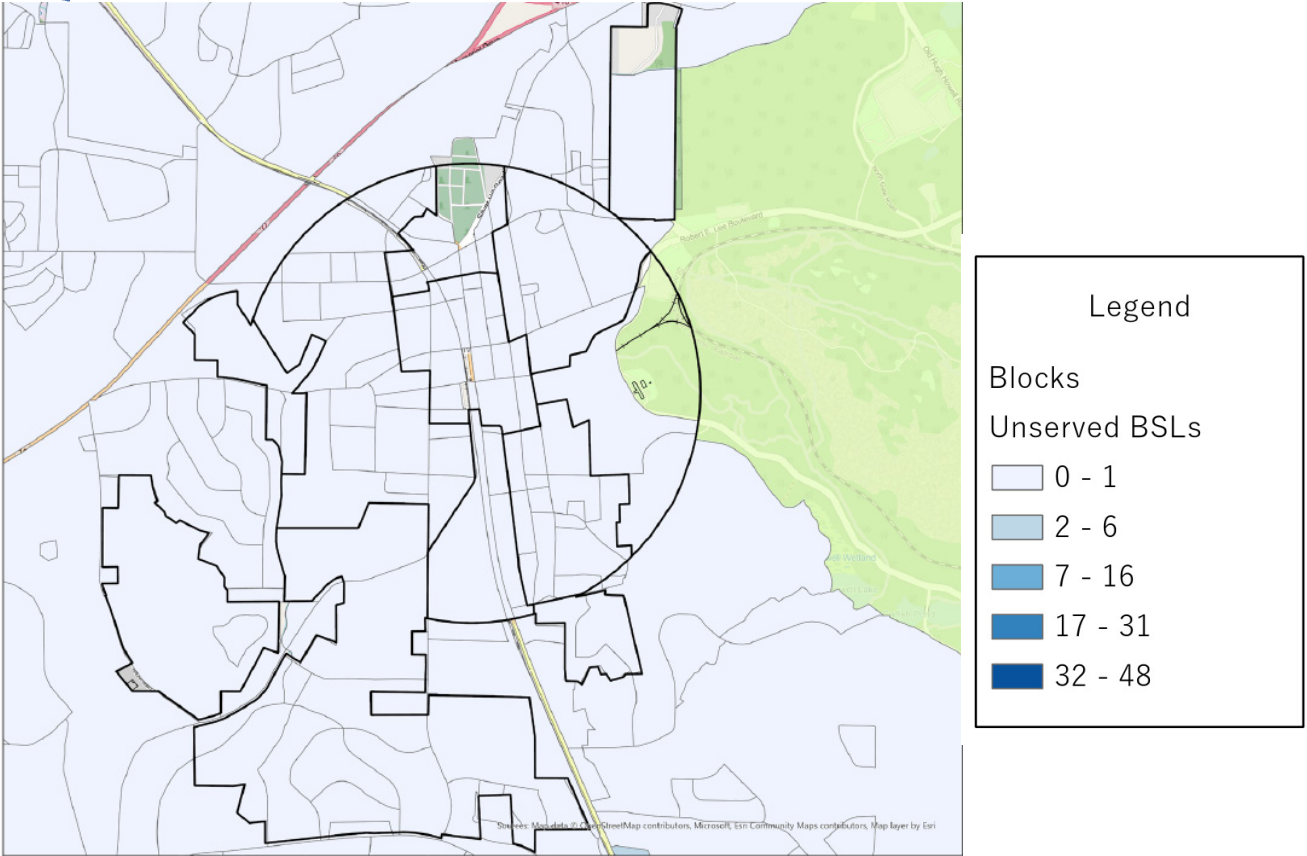


Source: City of Stone Mountain

CHAPTER 10

BROADBAND

STATUS



According to the most recent available data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Georgia Broadband Center, <1% of households and businesses in DeKalb County were unserved by broadband as of 2025. The visual above illustrates that all of Stone Mountain is served by broadband. To further attract people and businesses to Stone Mountain's commercial corridors, the city should consider offering municipally provided WI-FI service.

The City should also consider pursuing state certification as a Broadband Ready Community or designation of facilities and developments as Georgia Broadband Ready Community Sites. Any facility or development in Georgia that offers broadband services at a rate of not less than 1 gigabit per second in the download stream to end users is eligible for the Broadband Ready Site Designation.

CHAPTER 10

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Report of Accomplishments for 2016-2020			
Goal	Project	Status	Notes
Maintain and expand the range of housing options in appropriate areas to accommodate a diverse population and workforce	Continue to invest in, implement and monitor the Downtown Master Plan (Transportation, Land Use & Development, Economic Development and Programs, Urban Design, Environment & Open Space, Infrastructure)	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Promote Infill Housing in the Rail Arts District Area	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Study options for the Zoning Code to allow for accessory housing units in existing structures	Complete	Proposed new code loosens restrictions on ADUs to allow for them to be owner-occupied or leased. Commission considering program to provide tax rebate or reduction to property owners leasing to low-income lessees.
Promote an active, healthy community with opportunities for recreation and the enjoyment of the outdoors	Linear park between Potter and Parry Street	Canceled	Adjacent parking currently needed.
	Focus on park redevelopment and development	Complete	Town Green under construction.
	Continue to monitor Avondale High School and identify opportunities with other school properties for purchase and potential annexation.	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Continue to monitor Lanier Park for purchase	Underway	DeKalb County has agreed to sell Lanier Park to the City. See Community Work Program (redefined).
	Explore developing an Amphitheater site	Complete	Performance space to be constructed in Town Green.
	Explore a Skate park	Canceled	Land used for Town Green.
	Explore a Dog park	Postponed	Land used for Town Green.
	Passive park on MARTA/PATH site	Canceled	Land owned by private developer.
	Explore a Town green	Complete	Town Green under construction.
	Upgrade Willis Park	Complete	
	Public Space: deed back required open space to the City as part of the town green	Complete	Town Green under construction.
	Continue to support the greenspace committee to pursue and oversee implementation of new open space	Complete	Town Green under construction.
	Update Short-Term Work Program on an annual basis	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Perform a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to determine amount and types of city-wide open space needs	Canceled	Surveys indicate the need for a dog park, tennis courts, and pickle ball courts.
	Pursue a low-impact development ordinance to encourage practices such as natural landscaping and rainwater harvesting	Underway	Stormwater Master Plan identified need for green infrastructure. GI being implemented in Northwoods and promoted in residential areas. Educational components being developed. See Community Work Program.
	Amend golf cart ordinance to permit crossing US 278	Underway	Construction of US 278 improvements scheduled for 2022. Golf cart crossing(s) to be identified. See Community Work Program.

Report of Accomplishments for 2016-2020

Goal	Project	Status	Notes
Leverage the City's unique identity and location in the region to strengthen existing businesses and drive new economic development	Develop an Intergovernmental Agreement between BOMC and DDA.	Complete	1.5 full-time staff hired for business retention and attraction, placemaking, and new development.
	Evaluate and consider annexation of properties.	Underway	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Work with neighboring jurisdictions on infrastructure needs	Postponed	See Community Work Program.
	Work with MARTA on safety and access improvements at Avondale and Kensington Stations	Postponed	See Community Work Program.
	Continue to monitor the Clifton Corridor programs	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Continue to monitor development around Avondale Estates	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Work with DDA and merchants to form a new business association	Complete	First meeting held in 2021.
	Educate local businesses on city/state economic incentives	Complete	Presentation explaining Rural Opportunity Zone created and made available to local businesses.
	Develop façade grants to improve the appearance of existing structures	Canceled	Existing building facades have been recently rehabilitated.
	Implement branding and marketing strategies	Underway	New logo developed. Branding and marketing plan budgeted for 2021. See Community Work Program.
	Conduct events within the downtown area	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Develop a targeted marketing program to attract retail shopping and dining businesses	Underway	Ongoing policy or marketing materials or routine operation.
	Conduct small business outreach and education	Complete	Hosting quarterly meet-and-greet and education series. Links to small business resources included in monthly newsletter.
	Market opportunities and vision to study area businesses and property owners	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Create a business assistance team	Complete	1.5 full-time staff hired for business retention and attraction, placemaking, and new development.
	Implement business recognition program	Canceled	
	Create residential and commercial property "sales package"	Postponed	See Community Work Program.
	Develop a program/policy/regulations for outdoor dining and merchandising	Complete	Previous limitations reduced in new zoning regulations. Entertainment District established for CBD allowing open containers.
	Implement a public art program	Underway	Local, non-profit arts organization engaged. See Community Work Program (redefined).
	Obtain Preserve America Designation	Canceled	Preserve America defunded.
	Review sign ordinance	Underway	New sign ordinance drafted. Adoption scheduled for 2021. See Community Work Program (redefined).
	Conduct a Parking Study of exiting public parking spaces including on-street options.	Complete	Parking study of CBD included in Avondale Estates Downtown Study.
	Implement Short Term Parking Recommendations for the Parking Study-Parking Management Program	Complete	New parking constructed adjacent to future Town Green in 2021. Includes trees, landscaping, solar lighting, and access to US 278.

Report of Accomplishments for 2016-2020

Goal	Project	Status	Notes
Protect and enhance the city's historic character and small town atmosphere while facilitating smart growth and development	Pursue funding for Carl's Corner, interpretive signage, and parks	Complete	
	Update historic district guidelines	Complete	
	Review areas outside the historic district for possible inclusion in the Historic District	Complete	
	Review the tier designation of properties in the historic district	Complete	
	Update architectural design guidelines	Complete	
	Support local schools through City policies, infrastructure investment and public safety.	Canceled	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Define short term and long term capital expenditure needs, clarify budget constraints, partnering, and funding opportunities for stormwater management in the city .	Complete	Stormwater Master Plan completed. Stormwater funds being used to address most pressing issues identified. Stormwater fee increased to cover cost of updating city-wide system.
	Define short term and long term capital expenditure needs, clarify budget constraints, partnering, and funding opportunities for street paving management in the city.	Underway	Sumitted recalculated figures to GDOT for additional LMEG funding. CBD thoroughfares (US 278) provide opportunity for multi-use and shared corridors. See Community Work Program.
	Define short term and long term capital expenditure needs, clarify budget constraints, partnering, and funding opportunities for the public works building.	Complete	Public works building under renovation.
	Define short term and long term capital expenditure needs, clarify budget constraints, partnering, and funding opportunities for the sidewalks.	Underway	Updated zoning regulations require new developments to add sidewalks in CBD. Need for city-wide sidewalk assessment currently under consideration. See Community Work Program.
	Define short term and long term expenditure needs, clarify budget constraints, partnering, and funding opportunities for greenspace's in the city (specific projects have been developed and are listed).	Complete	Town Green under construction. New park created at Sam's Crossing in partnership with private developer. New landscape management plan developed and currently being operationalized.
	Street network development: perform study and explore policies for City to participate in the creation of the new street grid network with redevelopment sites	Complete	Study to identify location for new street network in CBDG adopted in 2020 and maps incorporated into zoning code. Bonus system developed to incentivize completion. Parts of the network will be completed in conjunction with the construction of Town Green.
	Create access management guidelines for the North Avondale Road corridor (US 278)	Underway	US 278 complete street improvements to include a reduction in travel lands (5 to 3) and curb cuts and the addition of a 10-foot landscaped, multi-modal path with adjacent parallel parking. See Community Work Program.
	Continue coordination with surrounding jurisdictions on enhancements to Sams Crossing	Postponed	Ongoing policy or program or routine operation.
	Investigate an institutional building (senior housing)	Postponed	Currently seeking appropriate location. See Community Work Program (redefined).
	Support the adaptive reuse of the Post Office into classrooms, studios, and gallery space if it becomes available	Postponed	The building is privately owned.
	Promote the development of the Mill District, Western Gateway, North Avondale Road, and E. College Ave.	Underway	City currently in conversations with owner of property. See Community Work Program (redefined).
	Modify the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan to align with the recommendations in the Downtown Master Plan	Complete	Adopted 7/28/21.
	Continue coordination with MARTA on the redevelopment of the Avondale/Kensington MARTA stations	Underway	See Community Work Program.
	Re-name Ingleside to Rail Arts District	Canceled	
	Promote the redevelopment of the area behind the Tudor Village/Tudor Square-possible plaza	Postponed	
	Implement transportation projects in the Downtown Master Plan-Short Term	Underway	
	Implement transportation projects in the Downtown Master Plan-Long Term	Underway	

CHAPTER 9

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Community Work Program for 2027-2031								
Project	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	Responsibility	Funding and Cost	Funding Partners
Environment and Natural Resources								
Update City Code – Establish commercial greenspace requirements and implement commercial open space and green infrastructure standards	X	X				City	Existing Staff Resources	EPA Grants, GEFA State Revolving Fund
Construct Downtown Splash Pad & Outdoor Youth Amenities	X	X	X			City	SPLOST	LWCF Grants, Local Sponsorships, DDA
CONNECTING PARKS, PATHS, AND PUBLIC SPACES LCI STUDY	X	X	X	X		City	SPLOST	PATH Foundation, Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
Transportation								
Redesign "Five Points" Intersection, the intersection of James B. Rivers Drive and Main Street	X	X	X	X	X	City	SPLOST	GDOT, DeKalb County, ARC, SPLOST
Close PATH Trail Gap via 2nd Street Alignment	X	X	X	X	X	City + PATH Foundation	PATH Foundation, ARC, DeKalb County, TAP, SS4A, County SPLOST	PATH Foundation, ARC LCI Implementation, TAP Grants
Establish Downtown "Green Loop", continuous, a citywide multiuse path that links key public spaces.	X	X	X	X		City + PATH Foundation	PATH Foundation, ARC, DeKalb County, TAP, SS4A, County SPLOST	PATH Foundation, Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), DNR
The Southern Railroad Crossing Divide: Addresses a major physical barrier where an active CSX railroad bisection leaves southern neighborhoods with over a one-mile gap without public crossings	X	X	X	X	X	City,CSX	Further Estimate is Needed	CSX, Reconnecting Communities Grant, USDOT, SS4A
PATH expansions and connections within Village.	X	X	X	X	X	City, PATH Foundation	SPLOST	City, PATH Foundation
Improve road and drainage on Memorial Drive at railroad bridge.	X	X	X			City, CSX	SPLOST/CSX	City, CSX, Grants
Address pedestrian safety citywide (crosswalks, sidewalks, intersections), including crosswalk warning light systems in appropriate downtown areas.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time, SPLOST	
Implement parking plan using recent Parking Study as guide.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time, Existing Staff Resources	

Community Work Program for 2027-2031								
Project	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	Responsibility	Funding and Cost	Funding Partners
Housing/Community Development								
Update Zoning for ADUs & Missing Middle Housing	X	X	X			City	Existing Staff Resources	City Council, ARC Housing Initiatives
Complete Gateway Program in collaboration with DDA and using Village Forward Downtown Master Plan	X	X	X	X	X	City, DDA, GDOT	Existing Staff Resources, DDA	
Renovate Historic Train Depot as a welcome center, city museum, and community meeting space with public restroom facilities for downtown.	X	X	X			City, Grants	SPLOST	
Economic Development								
Streamline Permitting & Business Onboarding	X	X				City	General Fund	
Enforce Blight Ordinances & Code Enforcement	X	X				City	Existing Staff Resources	
Target Commercial Annexation	X	X	X	X	X	City/County	Existing Staff Resources	
Maintain Certified TAD	X	X	X	X	X	City/County	Existing Staff Resources	
Develop Lawn on Main as a mixed-use destination incorporating a public gathering space, commercial uses and accommodations.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	
Attract a quality grocery store operator to establish a location within the City	X	X	X	X	X	City,DDA	Staff Time	
Historic Resources/Placemaking								
Develop "Shermantown Square" & Cultural Preservation	X	X	X	X	X	City	Existing Staff Resources	Historic Preservation Commission, Community Groups

APPENDIX

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