

**City of Hoschton, Georgia  
Comprehensive Plan  
2021-2040 Five-Year Update**

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Planning & Government Services Division of the  
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

and

Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.  
Planning & Development Consultants

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **Steering Committee**

Adam Ledbetter, City Council  
Tracy Carswell, City Council  
Michael Bagwell, Resident  
Tracy Jordan, Resident  
Sri Kumar, Planning Commissioner  
Cole Hudgens, Developer

### **Identified Stakeholders**

Dhananjay Barot, Business Owner  
Dianne Blankenship, Historic Preservation Committee  
Janette Carswell, Hoschton Civic Club  
James Lawson, City Council  
Thom Price, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce  
Corinne Valentine, City Engineer, Engineering Management, Inc.  
Hope Weeks, Jackson County Water Authority

### **Northeast Georgia Regional Commission**

Burke Walker, Executive Director  
Eva Kennedy, Planning & Government Services Director  
John Devine, AICP, Principal Planner (project lead)  
Stephen Jaques, Project Specialist  
Jon McBrayer, GIS Specialist

### **Jackson County**

Joel Logan, GISP, Director of Geographic Information Systems

### **Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.**

Jerry Weitz, Ph.D., FAICP, Consulting City Planner

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### PURPOSE

This comprehensive plan serves as a decision-making guide for local government officials and community leaders. Based on input from the public, identified stakeholders, and a steering committee, the plan identifies needs and opportunities, goals and policies, land use practices, transportation priorities, and an implementation framework for key elements.

### PROCESS

The comprehensive plan process follows the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective 10/1/2018.

### PUBLIC INPUT AND STEERING COMMITTEE

The planning process began with an initial public hearing and was followed by a series of community input sessions during which residents, stakeholders, and the steering committee were invited to discuss local trends and aspirations, as well as participate in a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis. Available input opportunities also included two online questionnaires and smaller meetings and focus groups at which city leadership and/or steering committee members could facilitate informal input sessions. Steering committee members were also available to take questions and comments throughout the process (as presented at the first public hearing), and Hoschton's website had a comprehensive plan page added for the process. The City held a final public hearing before transmittal of the plan to the DCA for review.

### NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's (NEGRC) Planning & Government Services Division oversaw the development of this plan, including facilitating input meetings.



## CHAPTER 2 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following list of needs and opportunities results from a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted at the first input meeting with both steering committee and public in attendance, community responses to the online questionnaires, and professional analysis of relevant data. It is also generated based on findings of prior comprehensive plans.<sup>1</sup>

### POPULATION

Hoschton had only 1,070 residents in the year 2000. The current estimate of the city's population in 2020 is 2,828. Hoschton's proximity to Gwinnett County and the outer boundaries of the Atlanta metropolitan area, will continue to put growth pressures on the city. Hoschton will need to be prepared to handle the effects of population growth on its land, housing stock, infrastructure, and community facilities. As indicated in the city's adopted capital improvements element,<sup>2</sup> the city is expected to grow exponentially in the next five years to nearly 7,000 residents (2025) and ultimately to more than 12,000 residents by the year 2040.

### HOUSING

Historically, in comparison with the State of Georgia and the U.S., Hoschton's housing stock has had a higher percentage of detached, single-family homes. The City needs to ensure that an adequate supply of housing will be available in order to attract and retain young professionals and retired individuals for whom ownership is either not feasible or not desirable. Indeed, housing for all types of households should remain an important goal of the city. This will likely mean substantial diversification of the city's housing stock over time to include fee-simple townhouses, additional apartments in specified locations, residential condominiums, group quarters, infill housing, and accessory units.

The city has made significant progress with teardowns of substandard housing units, particularly along Jefferson Street, some of which have been forced by aggressive code enforcement activities. These activities are expected to continue, spawning an increase of infill housing in and around downtown Hoschton.

### NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

There are no designated local historic districts within the city. Prior planning (2010 comprehensive plan) indicates there were a total of 27 commercial and residential properties identified as historic. Further research is needed to inventory historic resources. The city desires to establish a formal historic preservation commission and a local historic preservation ordinance to protect historic resources. It may also consider individual listings on the National Register of Historic Places. Further, there is an opportunity for the city to move some existing historic structures onto a single site that could serve as a historic village of sorts; such a project would preserve historic structures by moving them to a secure

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<sup>1</sup> The City of Hoschton Comprehensive Plan 2010-2030, Community Assessment; City of Hoschton Comprehensive Plan 2015 Update, both prepared by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

<sup>2</sup> City of Hoschton, Georgia Capital Improvements Element (CIE) of the Comprehensive Plan, Adopted August 31, 2020. That document is included here and is considered an element of this comprehensive plan.

location and also create a destination near downtown that would help promote downtown and economic development.

In its subdivision and land development regulations, the city has tree protection regulations which require retention or planting of minimum amounts of tree canopy by land use as development occurs. These regulations may need to evolve further over time.

The most prominent water body in the city is the Mulberry River, which serves as the municipal boundary in the southwest section of the city. There is a need to continue to protect the river and its watershed. Attention should be given to further implementation of watershed protection plans.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Little infrastructure for non-automobile transportation currently exists in the City of Hoschton. Opportunities for incorporating non-automobile modes into the transportation system should be addressed, such as a comprehensive sidewalk network and/or off-road pedestrian network as well as on-street bicycle lanes where appropriate.

One promising opportunity would be to weave together the network of community open space lands within various subdivisions over time (Creekside Village, Wildflower, Village at Hoschton, etc.) with cooperative agreements with homeowner's associations, the city could partner to develop an interconnected system of off-road trails that would have recreational as well as transportation-related benefits. The city supports having golf-cart paths in the city and utilization of community open spaces for golf-cart paths is one promising way to evolve such a system.

The inventory of city streets is expected to rapidly increase, in particular, residential subdivision streets. Single-family subdivisions that were abandoned during the Great Recession (2008-2013), then restarted in the mid- to late 2010s, such as Creekside Village and Brighton Park. These subdivisions have posed substantial challenges for the city, include bringing subdivision streets up to standards, repairing them, and securing future funding for road maintenance. Such challenges will continue, but the city is making progress. One of the community work program items included is to establish individual special service districts for road maintenance.

State Route 53 as the main corridor through the city is expected to need widening, improvement, or an alternative route. State and regional solutions proposed to solve problems of congestion on SR 53 have shifted over time, from widening the existing route, to providing a bypass route, to provide roundabouts. A locally supported solution should be made with Hoschton taking a leadership role (with the Town of Braselton) as opposed to regional and state solutions dictating final design outcomes.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

There is a need, and support, for expanding the commercial base in the city, particularly downtown Hoschton. Adoption of a downtown development authority and establishment of a local downtown historic district with design guidelines are two actions recommended in the community work program. Employment is estimated at approximately 500 in the city in 2020 and projections from the city's adopted capital improvements element (CIE) indicate a future employment level of 1,750 in the year 2040.

Hoschton may be destined to become a bedroom community. However, it has significant vacant land to provide for nonresidential development, as discussed in the land use element. Over time, properties near Town Center Parkway which were reserved for nonresidential development have been rezoned for residential use. The city may need to take more aggressive measures to preserve its nonresidential land supply and prevent conversion to residential that would impede future economic development.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Extensive changes in the city's delivery of services will be needed in rapid fashion during the next five years and beyond. These include building additional city administrative space, securing additional public safety (police, fire, and emergency medical) facilities, parkland expansion, and others. The city's adoption of a development impact fee program is one recent response to these needs. Leading the list of concerns is the need to grow the city's water and sanitary sewer systems, which is under way as evidenced by recent preparation of a ten-year capital improvement program for water and sewer. The city plans two additional water tanks to provide adequate water storage for fire protection and to meet future water demands.



The city is also investigating water supply options, including potential development of additional municipal wells. The city should ultimately plan not to rely on the library in Braselton to meet its needs and should eventually identify opportunities to expand library services in Hoschton. The city's ownership and management of city cemetery land also will pose continued challenges that will need to be addressed.

Without a property tax, the city will be hard pressed to deliver the necessary public facilities and services which also include stormwater management (Municipal Stormwater system mandates). To these ends, the city is expected to need to diversify and expand its municipal revenues to include a movement away from relying on SPLOST, building permit fees, and water/sewer system connection fees to include ad valorem taxes, stormwater utility fees, special assessment districts for roads and street lighting, and municipal development impact fees.

The city has adopted a development impact fee program covering police, fire, and park/recreation land. Consideration may be given to expanding the program over time to include additional eligible facilities including roads and libraries. The city is required to annually update its capital improvements element (CIE) in October of each year.



## **LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT**

The city will experience conversion of much if not all of the remainder of its farmland to suburban uses. The future land use plan map will provide guidance in that regard for the conversion of farmland to suburban and urban uses.

The city's overlay district regulations are in the process of being revised or repealed. Continued amendments to the city's zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations will be needed over time. The need to maintain and increase professional planning assistance beyond part-time staff will grow exponentially over time as the city continues to face more complex planning administration issues. The city has already made progress in that regard with the hiring of its own full-time building official.

The city does not currently provide sufficient guidance to developers and applicants. There is a need to place more administrative forms on the city's web page and provide additional guidance documents.

## CHAPTER 3 VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES

### VISION

Hoschton will retain its small-town feel, friendly neighborhoods, and historic downtown while cultivating an environment where local retail, diverse housing types, and safe streets and trails keep people in the City and bring them together. Smart public investment in new and existing infrastructure, parks, streetscapes, emergency services, and programming for all ages and abilities will ensure continued success and attract newcomers. City leaders will utilize residents' collective sense of investment in the community to build an interactive and forward-thinking government.



### NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

#### 1. Adoption and Application of Natural Resource Maps

The natural resources maps provided in the Jackson County 2010 Community Assessment Technical Appendix (see Natural Resources), as may be amended by the county from time to time, may be consulted by the city with respect to the identification of: wetlands; groundwater recharge areas; water supply watersheds; floodplains; steeply sloping soils; areas of prime farmland; scenic views and corridors, and soils unsuitable for septic tanks absorption fields.

#### 2. Wetland Preservation and Mitigation

Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).

#### 3. Wetland Buffers

When a development proposal is located close to a wetland, it should establish and maintain a minimum 25 foot wide protective buffer around the wetland.

#### 4. Wetlands – Review for Development Impacts

Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):

- Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.

- Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
- Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
- Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
- Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
- Whether the project contains significant State historical and archaeological resources, defined as “Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.”
- Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
- Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.

## **5. Water Supply Watersheds**

Adopt and maintain zoning and land development regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds (391-3-16-.01, “Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds”). For Hoschton, this includes regulations for the Mulberry River large water supply watershed (Winder intake).

## **6. Protected Rivers**

Adopt regulations that meet and exceed the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for River Corridor Protection (391-3-16-.04, “Criteria for River Corridor Protection”) and the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan for the Mulberry River, even though it is not officially classified as a protected river.

## **7. Supplementary Protection Policies for the Mulberry River**

The following policies apply to development proposals on properties fronting the Mulberry River, in addition to protected river requirements:

- No dwelling or building should be constructed within 50 feet of the river bank.
- When a single-family dwelling is proposed in a river corridor, the dwelling should be sited on non-vegetated (open) parts of the required 100 foot buffer.
- For all building uses except for single-family dwellings, when that half of the buffer closest to the river is not fully forested or vegetated, it should be replanted with native vegetation.

## **8. Floodways and Floodplains**

Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters. Consider future conditions floodplain data, where available or can be generated.

## **9. National Flood Insurance Program**

Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Periodically amend the flood damage prevention/floodplain management ordinance to comply with changes to ordinances specified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## **10. Minimize Water Quality Impacts**

The location and intensity of development should be arranged so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality, both during and after construction. Major considerations concerning water quality should include: organic pollution from infiltration and surface runoff; erosion and sedimentation; water temperature elevation; nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous; and toxic materials.

## **11. Stormwater Best Management Practices**

Implement best practices for water pollution control and stormwater management, including but not limited to “low impact development” techniques such as biofilters (vegetated swales/strips), wet ponds, and constructed wetlands.

## **12. Steep Slopes**

Steep slopes (25% or more) should be set aside as conservation areas. No lot should be created with more than 50 percent of its area containing steep slopes, and lot subdividers should demonstrate that each lot has a suitable building envelope outside steeply sloping areas. If a building site must be created with steep slopes, all buildings and structures on such building sites should have foundations which have been designed by a civil engineer or other qualified professional. When development must occur within steeply sloping areas, site designers are also encouraged to propose and apply innovative concepts for slope and soil stabilization, and limitations on grading.

## **13. Landscape Ecology and Habitat Protection**

Consider habitat information in the review of land developments, including but not limited to the database of the DNR Natural Heritage Program, USFWS County Listing of Threatened and Endangered Species, and the DNR Listing of Locations of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities. Promote and pursue principles of landscape ecology when reviewing large developments and major subdivisions.

## **14. Tree Protection**

Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments. Restrict the cutting of trees, and require the replacement of trees with trees of like species and value, or apply a canopy replacement strategy in lieu of applying conventional tree replacement regulations.

## **15. Water Conservation**

Promote the conservation of water by residents, businesses, industries, and institutions, to meet local, regional, and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.

## **16. Stormwater Management**

Design man-made lakes and stormwater ponds for maximum habitat value and which will serve as amenities for the development. Sites should be designed where possible to drain to the rear or side, where detention ponds are more appropriately located. Fenced detention ponds in front yards are strongly discouraged if not prohibited altogether. When stormwater detention or drainage is placed adjacent to the right-of-way, slopes should be gentle enough to avoid fencing requirements, and the area should be attractively landscaped. New, major residential subdivisions should be required to ensure that adequate funding is available for maintenance of any non-public on-site stormwater detention facilities.

## **17. Energy Efficiency**

Reduce energy consumption through comprehensive planning and urban design, and promote energy-efficient development. Support programs to increase energy efficiency and reduce life-cycle costs of all construction projects, including public and institutional projects. Develop and encourage appropriate applications of renewable energy.

## **18. Historic and Cultural Resources**

The traditional character of the city should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the city's character.

## **19. Land Conservation Methods**

Preferred methods for the permanent protection of conservation lands as open space include dedication to a public entity (if dedication is acceptable locally) and/or a conservation easement with management by an approved land trust.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

### **1. Generally**

Expand the city's economic base and increase employment opportunities while protecting environmental, historic, and community character.

### **2. Comprehensiveness**

Prepare economic development strategies and plans that are comprehensive in nature, such that all economic activities are addressed, including but not limited to agriculture and agribusiness, tourism,

heritage tourism, health care, retail, services, material moving and warehousing, biotechnology, industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and small business/home occupations.

### **3. Infrastructure Readiness**

Provide and maintain sanitary sewer capacity and road capacity in order to attract new industry and manufacturing and commercial activities. Reserve such capacity for the types of industries and businesses that need the infrastructure.

### **4. Business Climate**

Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the city.

### **5. Balance of Interests**

Balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of commercial and other properties with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.

## **HOUSING POLICIES**

### **1. Housing Opportunities**

Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in the city.

### **2. Life Cycle and Mixed Generation Communities**

Encourage “life cycle” or “mixed generation” communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.

### **3. Housing for Persons with Disabilities**

Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.

### **4. Design and Location of Senior and Disabled Housing**

Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways. Senior housing should be located in close proximity or with appropriate access to health care services.

### **5. Substandard Housing**

Require that substandard or dilapidated housing be brought up to applicable codes or demolished if code compliance is not feasible.

## **6. Housing and Property Standards Codes**

Allocate appropriate resources to enforce housing and property maintenance codes.

## **7. State and Federal Housing and Community Development Programs**

Pursue federal and state financial assistance programs to improve areas of substandard housing and improve low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES POLICIES**

### **1. Level of Service Standards**

Establish and maintain level-of-service and/or performance standards for the major community facilities and services provided by the county. Unless specified by facility-specific master plans and adopted as superseding policy, such as a capital improvements element for impact fees, the city should strive to maintain the minimum level of service standards adopted by Jackson County in its 2015 Comprehensive Plan, adopted and as may be amended.

### **2. Long-term Water Supply**

Continue to investigate the feasibility of additional long-term sources of water supplies, including opportunities during the development review process.

### **3. Contingency Plans for Water System**

Contingency plans should be prepared for dealing with major water line breaks, loss of water sources during drought, and other possible damages to the water system such as flooding.

### **4. Sanitary Sewer**

Manage water-borne waste by operating, maintaining, expanding, and replacing components of the wastewater system to ensure uninterrupted collection, transport, processing, and treatment.

Convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the treatment plant or site without bypassing flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private properties.

### **5. Water and Sewer Service Areas**

Delineate and adopt, and revise periodically as appropriate as a part of the county's service delivery strategy, water and sewer service areas for the city as a municipal service provider. Revise service area boundaries when necessary to account for municipal annexations.

### **6. Standard Construction Details and Specifications**

Maintain and periodically update standard construction specifications and standard drawings for water and sewer systems.

## **7. Emergency Preparedness**

Periodically conduct, or participate in countywide efforts to complete, community hazard vulnerability analyses to identify the types of environmental extremes (e.g., floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes), technological accidents (e.g., toxic chemical releases,), and deliberate incidents (e.g., sabotage or terrorist attack involving chemical, biological, radiological/ nuclear, or explosive/flammable materials) to which the city may be exposed. Periodically review and revise the disaster preparedness and emergency management plans based on such vulnerability analyses and update them as appropriate.

## **8. Schools**

Evaluate impacts of residential development on the public school systems. Where impacts are evident, seek a development agreement to provide school site(s) or otherwise mitigate the impact of residential development on the public school system.

## **BROADBAND SERVICES**

1. Promote the deployment of broadband services by broadband service providers into unserved areas within the city.
2. Consider completing assessments and studies, and adoption of ordinances needed to achieve certification as a “Broadband Ready Community” and/or designation of facilities and developments as “Georgia Broadband Ready Community Sites.”

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

### **1. Modes**

Promote development that serves the long-term cycling and walking needs of residents of the city and that provides an appropriate amount of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Strong consideration will be given to proposals that provide integrated and connected multi-modal transportation facilities, including paths for golf carts and other multi-use or mode-shared facilities.

### **2. Funding**

Secure federal and state funding for transportation, where available, and maximize the use of available financial resources to fund needed transportation improvements.

### **3. Connectivity**

Promote regional and countywide connectivity in the local road network, including intercity travel. All new roadways except low volume, local residential subdivision streets, should connect at both termini with the existing road network. Local streets should be planned where possible with more than one connection to the existing public road network. Street stubs should be provided to ensure connectivity with future subdivisions on abutting lands.



#### **4. Context Sensitivity**

Design planned roadway improvements in a way that is context sensitive, preserves, or creates a sense of place for the areas in vicinity of the improvements, and that enhances community aesthetics.

#### **5. Traffic Routing**

Ensure that vehicular traffic, especially truck traffic, will not be routed into residential neighborhoods, so as to preserve the peace and quiet of residential neighborhoods.

#### **6. Access Management**

Adopt and apply access management standards to control the connections and access points of driveways and roads to public roadways.

#### **7. Encroachment Prevention**

Protect existing and future rights-of-way from building encroachment.

#### **8. Speed Limits**

Establish posted speed limits for all city roadways and periodically reevaluate and revise speed limits as may be needed based on existing road conditions, such as functional classification, shoulder condition, road grade, adjacent land uses, frequency of driveway accesses, building setbacks, sight distances, geometric features of the roadway, pedestrian activity, and historical crash data.

#### **9. Land Development and Transportation**

When development occurs it should be the responsibility of developer to improve facilities along the public street frontages and internal to the development.

#### **10. Sidewalk Installation**

New subdivisions need be required to provide sidewalks along streets internal to the subdivision and all subdivisions and land developments should provide sidewalks within the right-of-way of public roadways abutting or fronting the subdivision or land development.

#### **11. On-site Circulation**

Adopt and apply standards that ensure the safe and convenient flow of vehicles, pedestrians, and where appropriate bicyclists, on development sites.

#### **12. Commercial Development**

New commercial areas need to have public road access at the proper functional classification. Big box businesses should be required to study traffic impacts and prior to land development approval propose mitigation measures that will minimize capacity and safety issues and to reduce conflicts among

pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and trucks. Encourage the installation of grid street patterns in commercial nodes. Require parcel-to-parcel connectivity in non-residential areas (where compatible) using cross-access easements, to ensure that drivers can directly access abutting non-residential uses without having to use the road or street.

## **LAND USE POLICIES GENERALLY**

### **1. Residential Neighborhoods**

Maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of residences at low (or current) densities. Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods. Protect residential areas (whether rural, suburban, or urban) from nuisances (e.g., excessive noise, odor, traffic and lighting) and from encroachment by incompatible land uses. The consideration of the preservation of the integrity of residential neighborhoods shall be considered to carry great weight in all rezoning decisions.

### **2. Compatibility and Transitions in Land Use**

Rezoning and planned unit developments, if approved, should result in land development that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property. Development should not adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property. Avoid harsh or abrupt changes of land use, by encouraging a logical and compatible relationship of land use, transitioning from one property development to another. The ideal progression of land use compatibility is from residential to public-institutional (including private office), to commercial, to industrial. If harsh or abrupt changes in land use cannot be avoided, the transition should be better facilitated with special design techniques, step downs in intensity or density, and/or conditions of approval relating to building height, building setbacks, buffers, and limitations on incompatible operating characteristics.

### **3. Access to Conservation Lands**

Subdivisions are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide pedestrian easements or fee-simple land dedications to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties.

### **4. Conservation Subdivisions**

Subdivisions are encouraged but not required, where opportunities exist, to follow principles of conservation subdivision and design.

### **5. Adequate Public Facilities**

Development should not occur or be approved which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, public safety facilities, parks and recreation facilities, libraries, schools, or other publicly-provided facilities and services. As a condition of approval, major subdivisions (6 or more lots) and major land developments should be required to demonstrate availability of public water, fire protection, law enforcement, roads, stormwater management, parks and recreation, and public school facilities. Major subdivisions and major land developments that cannot demonstrate all such facilities are available or planned at the time of development or within a reasonable period of time thereafter may gain approval only if they mitigate the lack of such facilities,

through the dedication of land in the subdivision or off-site, on-site and/or off-site improvements, payment of impact fees if imposed by the city, or payment of in-lieu fees or other acceptable arrangements via development agreements.

## **6. Manufactured Housing**

Except in rural and agricultural areas or zoning districts, manufactured home parks, manufactured home subdivisions, and manufactured homes on individual lots are strongly discouraged if not prohibited by city regulation.

## **7. Sewer**

Land development and land subdivisions in urban and suburban parts of the city should be connected to public sanitary sewer as a condition or prerequisite of development approval.

## **8. Buffers and Screening**

Screen negative views through site planning, architectural, and landscape devices. Utilize buffers to separate potentially conflicting or incompatible land uses.

## **9. Non-residential and Multi-Family Residential Site Plan Review**

All non-residential and multi-family residential developments should be reviewed with respect to the following which should not be considered limiting: access, site design, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, lighting, architectural characteristics of buildings, and signage.

## **10. Industrial Land Use**

Industrial developments serving more than one industry are strongly encouraged to be developed within planned industrial parks which are designed with campus-style layouts including generous building setbacks from exterior roads and landscaping. New industrial operations should be limited to those that are not objectionable by reason of the emission of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, or radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable conditions. However, in areas designated for industry which are clearly removed from residential areas, heavy manufacturing and heavy industrial uses, including those creating objectionable conditions, may be considered appropriate depending on specific conditions.

## **11. Mixed Use**

Within planned unit developments, the vertical mixing of residential with office and commercial land uses is desirable. Horizontal mixed use is also encouraged.

## **FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP INTERPRETATIVE AND SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES**

The following land use policies apply to interpretation and use of the future land use plan map. These supplement other goals, objectives and policies of the comprehensive plan.

1. **Downtown.** Future commercial within the Hoschton Downtown (defined generally as both sides of SR 53 south of West Jefferson Street and north of SR 332 should be relatively small-scale buildings (generally less than 5,000 square feet each), oriented to pedestrians, and should not include highway oriented uses.
2. **Corridor commercial.** Development, with some exceptions, along SR 53 is subject to design review as part of the SR 53 corridor overlay district. Corridor commercial development should provide pedestrian access to/from adjacent or nearby residential areas. Inter-parcel access is highly recommended between/among corridor commercial tracts.
3. **Light industrial.** Industry should be limited to existing areas shown on the future land use plan map for light industrial. Heavy industrial development (i.e., with externalities such as smoke, dust, odor, vibration, noise, etc.) is discouraged if not prohibited in Hoschton.
4. **Transitional- mixed use.** Parcels designated as transitional-mixed use may (depending on specific location and context) be appropriately utilized for a range of uses, from detached, single-family residential, multi-family residential, office, institutional, and in some cases neighborhood (C-1) commercial. If rezoned, conditions should be placed on properties to ensure compatibility with and appropriate transition to abutting single-family residential neighborhoods.
5. **Public-institutional.** Larger scale (i.e., 40,000 square feet or more) institutional development should provide multiple entrances/exits to disperse traffic. Buildings at the edge of neighborhoods should be scaled to fit and be compatible with abutting land uses. Pedestrian connection to the downtown should be provided.
6. **Single-family residential.** Existing single-family residential subdivisions must be protected from encroachment by higher density residential and nonresidential land uses. When a rezoning is proposed for an area designated as low-density or medium-density residential, lots that abut existing low-density residential subdivisions should be similar or compatible in lot size, lot width, and building orientation. When a rezoning is proposed for an area designated as medium-density residential, conservation and/or open space area should be set-aside to offset smaller lots/higher density.
7. **Multi-family residential.** Densities of more than 12 units per acre are not permitted in Hoschton per the zoning ordinance. Lower-than-maximum (less than 12 units per acre) densities may be established as conditions of zoning approval depending on context and location. While apartments and condominiums are not excluded, the city's preference for multi-family residential development is fee-simple townhouses.
8. **Pirkle Farm Tract.** Though not entirely within the city limits, the Pirkle Farm Tract (south of Josh Pirkle Road) if annexed must be developed with high sensitivity to the Deer Creek Farms subdivision to its south. Warehouses are not appropriate within 600 feet of the boundary of the Deer Creek Farms subdivision, and if approved, must be oriented toward Josh Pirkle Road. Extensive open space and buffering should be proposed between any development on the Pirkle Farm tract and the Deer Creek Farms subdivision. Special watershed protection measures must be implemented to ensure the protection of the downstream watershed.

## CHAPTER 4 LAND USE ELEMENT

### EXISTING LAND USE SUMMARY

State Route 53 is the principal thoroughfare that runs north-south and bisects Hoschton. Almost all existing commercial uses in the city are located within the SR 53 corridor south of East and West Jefferson Streets. Downtown Hoschton, which is centered on the historic train depot, and stretches along SR 53 from East and West Jefferson Street to SR 332, consists mostly of small-scale retail, service, and office uses, some of which are adaptively reused single-family dwellings. South of the downtown (at SR 53 and SR 332), highway-oriented commercial uses exist along both sides of SR 53, including those along Towne Center Parkway, Jopena Boulevard, and Jackson Trail Road.

Industrial uses are concentrated almost exclusively in the southern part of the city on the north-northeast side of SR 53 and along Nancy Industrial Drive, Amy Industrial Lane, and Jackson Trail Road. Existing public-institutional uses include, in addition to various churches, a post office, a fire station, a county school campus, the city's wastewater treatment plant, and a cemetery. Existing active park facilities include Hoschton Park at the north end of the city and the ballfield complex west of Cabin Drive. Open space tracts owned by residential neighborhood homeowner's associations also exist in neighborhoods on the west side of the city.

Residential development consists of a range of single-family subdivisions and some limited multi-family uses. Hoschton's original neighborhoods (i.e., within the central part of the circular city limits) exist in a more-or-less grid pattern east and west of downtown along East and West Broad Street, Bell Avenue, White Street and New Street; several of the homes in these original neighborhoods are historic. Outside the original circular city limits, low-density residential subdivisions were constructed in the early to mid-1990s along the north side of Peachtree Road, including Deer Creek Farms (in five phases), and Quail Run. Panther Creek Estates, on the south side of West Jefferson Street, was also developed in the mid-1990s. Low-density residential subdivisions were also developed in the early 2000s along SR 332 in the eastern part of the city, including Century Oaks and Town Park II.

Suburban tract subdivision activity started west and southwest of downtown prior to the great recession in the mid-2000s and then accelerated in Hoschton after the great recession. Subdivisions in this area include The Village at Hoschton, Brook Glen subdivision, and Wildflower. Some of these homes were initially developed in the early to mid-2000s, but the bulk of housing starts in these subdivisions were not completed until the mid- to late-2010s.

In the mid-2000s the city annexed what is now known as Brighton Park along the south side of Maddox Road, which was dormant throughout the great recession and did not build out until 2020. Another subdivision, Creekside Village (located in the northwest part of the city), also was originally developed in the mid-2000s but did not build out until the late 2010s. The Winterset subdivision north of West Jefferson Street was developed and constructed in the late 2010s. In 2019, the city annexed the 1500-acre Twin Lakes Planned Unit Development along the south-southwest side of SR 53 east of Peachtree Road, which will consist of 2,600 homes and commercial development.

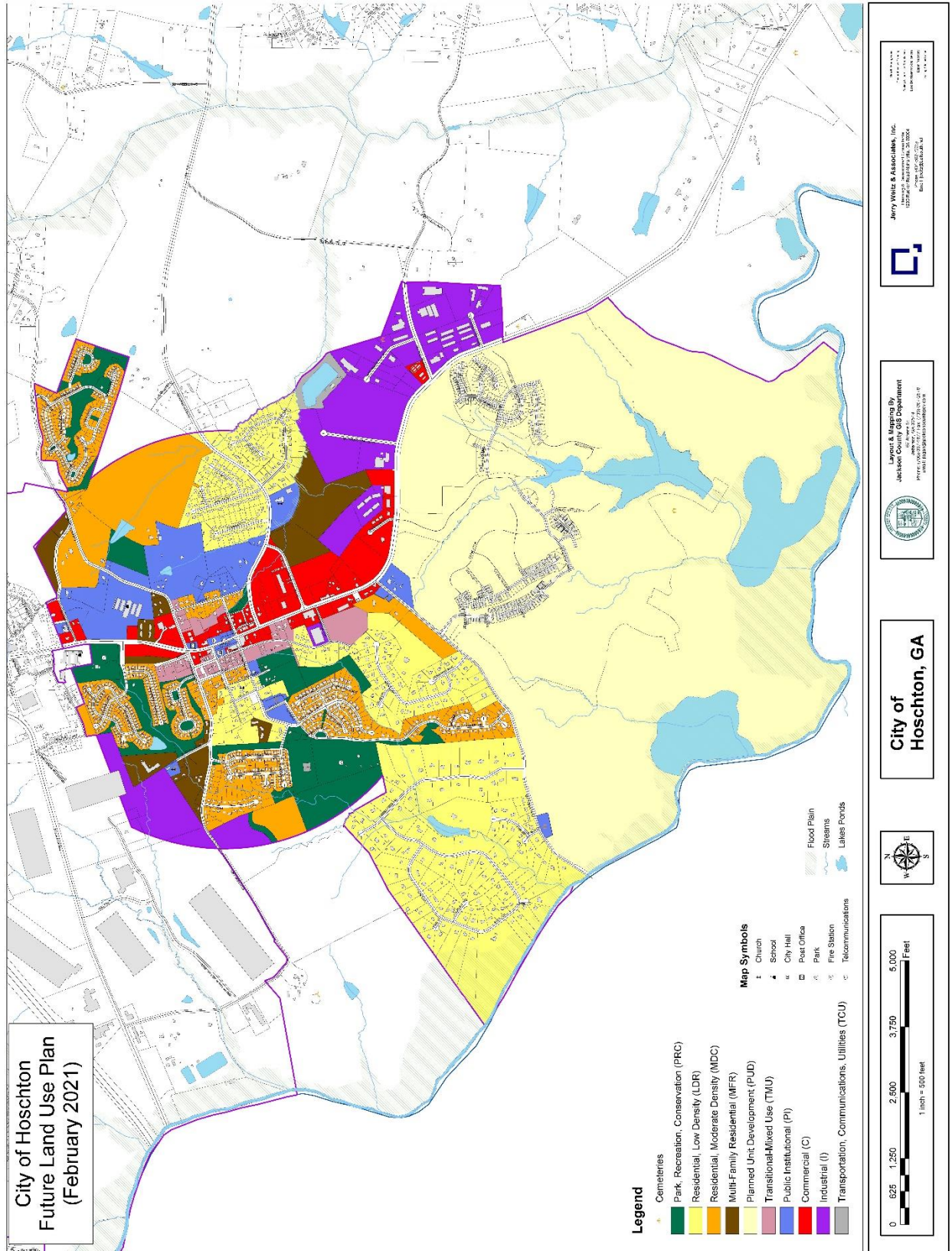
Existing multi-family residential development is small-scale and limited to scattered locations: an apartment complex was constructed at the end of West Broad Street in 1985, a small apartment complex was constructed in 1987 on the east side of SR 53, and two duplex buildings were constructed

along the north side of West Jackson Road in 1988. There are also a few duplexes and apartments along the north side of West Jefferson Street. An apartment building for seniors was constructed at the end of Jefferson Avenue in the northwest part of the city and became ready for occupancy in 2020.

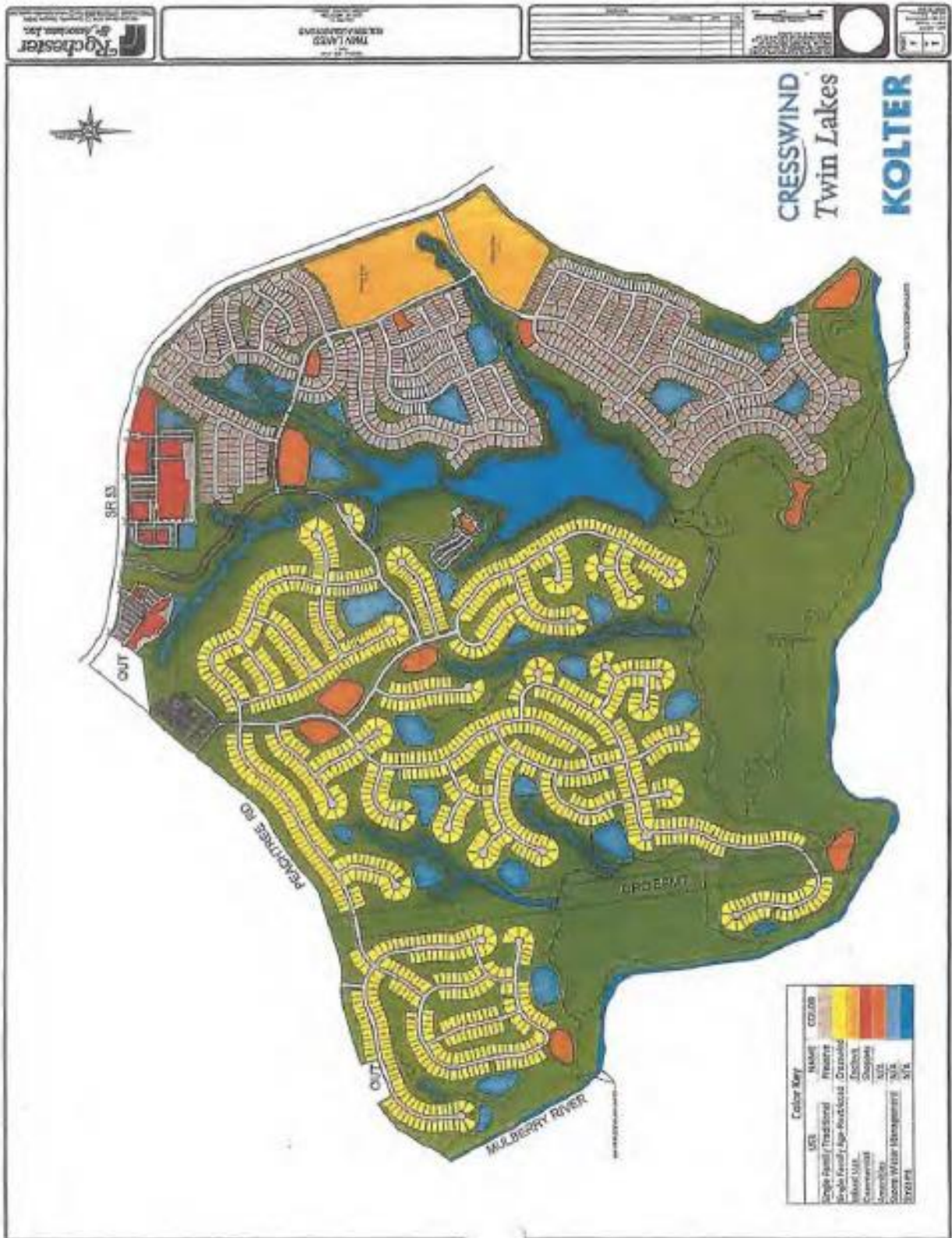
**FUTURE LAND USE MAP CATEGORIES**

The future land use plan 2040 utilizes the following categories:

Category	Description
Park/ Recreation/ Conservation (PRC)	Land dedicated to active uses or set aside as passive recreational uses and open space. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, conservation areas, and other areas set aside for public or private open space.
Residential, low density (LDR)	Single-family dwelling units, detached, site-built on individual lots at densities of less than 2 units per acre
Residential, medium density (MDR)	Single-family dwelling units, detached, site-built on individual lots at gross densities ranging from approximately 2 to 5 units per acre (depending on context and location).
Multiple-family Residential (MFR)	Two-family dwellings, fee-simple townhouses, apartments, and condominiums. Densities range from approximately 5 to 12 dwelling units per acre.
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	This future land use category applies to the Twin Lakes planned unit development. Land uses are as shown on the approved master plan for the PUD and include extensive open space, detached single-family residential, commercial, recreational, and townhouses.
Transitional-Mixed Use	Properties in between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods that may be appropriately used for different land uses depending on context and location, including detached, single-family residential, multi-family residential, office, institutional, and in some cases neighborhood commercial uses.
Public-Institutional	State, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses, including police and fire stations, libraries, post offices, schools, churches, and cemeteries. This category may also be appropriate for office parks and individual office buildings.
Commercial	Retail trade, services, restaurants and entertainment facilities.
Industrial	Manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehouses and wholesale trade facilities.
Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities	Electric power substations, utility company installations, utility easements, communication towers, and other similar uses.



Note: For detail of the PUD category, see the adopted master plan for Twin Lakes PUD, next page.





## **FUTURE LAND USE NARRATIVE**

At present, Hoschton is viewed largely as a “bedroom” community because of the current dominance of single-family homes. However, the future land use plan shows there is likely to be some substantial additions to land use during the upcoming 20-year planning horizon. Although the city has zoned large vacant tracts agricultural, no agricultural category is included in the land use plan, because all such vacant tracts are anticipated to develop during the planning horizon.

### **Downtown and Corridor Commercial**

Hoschton’s downtown is generally defined as the SR 53 corridor between SR 332 (the southern end) and West and East Jefferson Streets (the northern end). There is opportunity to expand the footprint of downtown Hoschton, basically one block to the east and west. There are significant numbers of tracts and sizable acreages that are vacant but are zoned for commercial development along the SR 53 corridor. These include, from north to south, a tract at the southeast corner of West Jackson Road and SR 53, a future shopping center site at Eagles Bluff Way and SR 53, undeveloped parcels along SR 332, Towne Center Parkway, and SR 53 south of SR 332, and the commercial development component of the Twin Lakes Planned Unit Development.

There are three commercial zoning districts that implement the commercial future land use category: C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial), C-2 (General Commercial – Highway Oriented), and C-3 (Commercial Motor Vehicle Service and Repair).

### **Industry**

Future light industrial development will occur mostly within existing industrially zoned areas. There are vacant industrially zoned tracts along Nancy Industrial Drive and north of Jopena Boulevard. Also, there is light industrial zoning north of West Jefferson Street which is accessible via Braselton town limits and is expected to be developed as warehouses. Further, land along the south side of Josh Pirkle Road is partially slated for limited light industrial development. The light industrial future land use plan category is implemented with the M-1, Light Industrial zoning district.

### **Public-Institutional**

Future public-institutional development is rarely planned for in local land use plans. However, as urban and suburban areas develop, there is a need for additional institutional land uses such as churches, schools, and institutionalized residential living facilities, which often follow residential and commercial development but with little forethought. Hoschton’s future land use plan provides for expansion of public-institutional land uses in the north and east part of the city, south of West Jackson Road, east and west of East Jefferson Street, and east of New Street/north of SR 332 at Town Center Parkway. The land use plan shows a contiguous block of institutional land which is large enough (if multiple tracts are assembled) for a public or private school, small college campus, large church, institutional residential living (such as a continuing care retirement facility or nursing home) and/or other larger institution(s) requiring significant acreage. If land is assembled for large-scale institutional development, there is an opportunity for it to be connected and integrated into the city via East Jefferson Street, New Street, and SR 332. Office park development is also considered a viable alternative for public-institutional future

land use. The public-institutional land use category is implemented with the INST, institutional zoning district.

### **Low and Medium Density Residential**

The city has areas remaining for additional single-family residential development at low and medium densities: The vast area within Twin Lakes PUD in the southern part of the city, under construction now, will add at least 2,300 single-family homes (including 1,300 restricted to ages 55+ in a gated community). Vacant tracts in the northeast quadrant of the city (including the Sell farm) are shown as developing for low- and medium-density residential development (as well as public-institutional development) during the 20-year planning horizon. There is also low- and medium-density residential development shown as infilling along the northwest side of Peachtree Road near its intersection with SR 53, as well as medium-density residential development at the western edge of the city south of Josh Pirkle Road.

Low and medium density residential future land use categories are implemented with three residential zoning districts, depending on context and location. The R-1 zone implements the lowest density range of single-family residential subdivisions; R-2 zoning is also applicable in some instances. The medium density residential areas are implemented with the R-3 zoning district (and for existing subdivisions, the R-4 zoning district; rezoning to the R-4 category has been discontinued).

### **Multi-Family Residential**

With regard to multi-family residential development, the overall mix of housing will diversify substantially during the planning horizon. Zoning is in place for a second phase of senior apartments at West Jefferson Street and Jefferson Avenue. Further, the land use plan calls for a continuation of that trend with additional multi-family residential development north of West Jefferson Street. Multi-family residential zoning exists south of Towne Center Parkway and south of SR 332, where up to 300 fee-simple townhouses are expected to be constructed. Fee simple townhouses are approved (up to 300 total residential units) as a part of the mixed-use component of the Twin Lakes Planned Unit Development. The land use plan also supports small site expansion of multi-family development along East Jefferson Street north of New Street and along the north side of West Jackson Road. The multi-family residential future land use plan category is implemented with the Multiple-Family Residential (MFR) zoning district.

### **Transitional—Mixed Use**

Hoschton has some areas that are transitional in terms of future land use. These areas mostly flank the downtown and include residential parcels west of Main Street north of West Jefferson Street, residential blocks west of White Street, parcels between East Jefferson Street west of New Street and north of East Broad Street, and a large tract on the south side of Industrial Boulevard. Currently, the city's Office-Residential (OR) and Mixed Use (MU) zoning districts implement this future land use plan category. However, since these tracts may be developed for single-family, multi-family, offices, or neighborhood commercial, depending on specific location and context, other zoning categories such as conditional MFR and conditional C-1 zoning or R-3 zoning may also be appropriate depending on location and context.

### **Park/Recreation/Conservation**

Hoschton has an opportunity to build a citywide park/recreation/conservation network. At the base of that network are active park lands which include Hoschton Park (west of SR 53 at the north end of the city) and the active ballfields west of Cabin Drive. The city also owns tracts of land on the east side of Oak Street between East Broad Street and SR 332 which provide a small linear open space. Further, several subdivisions including Creekside Village, Winterset, Village at Hoschton, and Wildflower and the entire Twin Lakes Planned Unit Development include private open spaces controlled and managed by homeowner associations that contribute to a citywide park and open space network. Several of these areas are also occupied by overhead electric power lines.

Hoschton can add to the park, recreation and open space network, now that it is collecting park and open space land impact fees from residential development. The future land use plan provides some recommended areas for recreation and open space land acquisition; purchases by the city are not necessarily limited to the tracts so identified and may not necessarily include these identified tracts. There are opportunities to expand the ballfield complex north and northwest. And there are open spaces between the Village at Hoschton subdivision and White Street south of West Broad Street that may be ideal for park and open space land acquisition. If pedestrian access easements from abutting neighborhoods are secured, this strategic acquisition could connect multiple existing residential subdivisions to the downtown. So as to avoid the concentration of all such land in the western portion of the city, the future land use plan shows a park/open space site east of East Jefferson Street.

## CHAPTER 5 BROADBAND SERVICES

### OVERVIEW

Senate Bill 402, the Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act, passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 2018, requires that comprehensive plans of local governments include a broadband services element to promote the deployment of broadband services: “The governing bodies of municipalities and counties shall provide in any comprehensive plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services by broadband services providers” (O.C.G.A. 36-70-6). Minimum elements of local comprehensive plans “shall include the promotion of the deployment of reasonable and cost-effective access to broadband services by broadband services providers” (O.C.G.A. 50-8-7.1).

Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for local planning have been revised and readopted (effective October 1, 2018) to incorporate this mandate (Chapter 110-12-1-.03 Plan Elements). The revised rules require “an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services by broadband service providers into unserved areas within its jurisdiction. The action plan must describe steps for the promotion of reasonable and cost-effective access to broadband to parts of the local government's jurisdiction designated by the Department as unserved areas.”

Expansion of broadband is a top priority region-wide. The Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2017-2021 update, crafted through key stakeholder input from the entire Northeast Georgia Region (including economic development professionals, educators, business leaders, and elected officials), prioritizes broadband expansion through specific tasks in its Action Plan (Strategy 2.a).

### FINDINGS

Access to broadband services in today’s society is essential to everyday life. Access to broadband services is a necessary service as fundamental as electricity, gas, or phone service. There is a growing need to provide the much needed infrastructure to the homes and businesses without access to broadband services due to their location in rural and other unserved areas. Ensuring broadband services deployment will have a positive effect on education, health care, public safety, business and industry, government services, and leisure activities. Promoting an equitable deployment of broadband services throughout the city is a public necessity, one of the basic functions of government, and a benefit to the entire city. (based on O.C.G.A. 50-39-80)

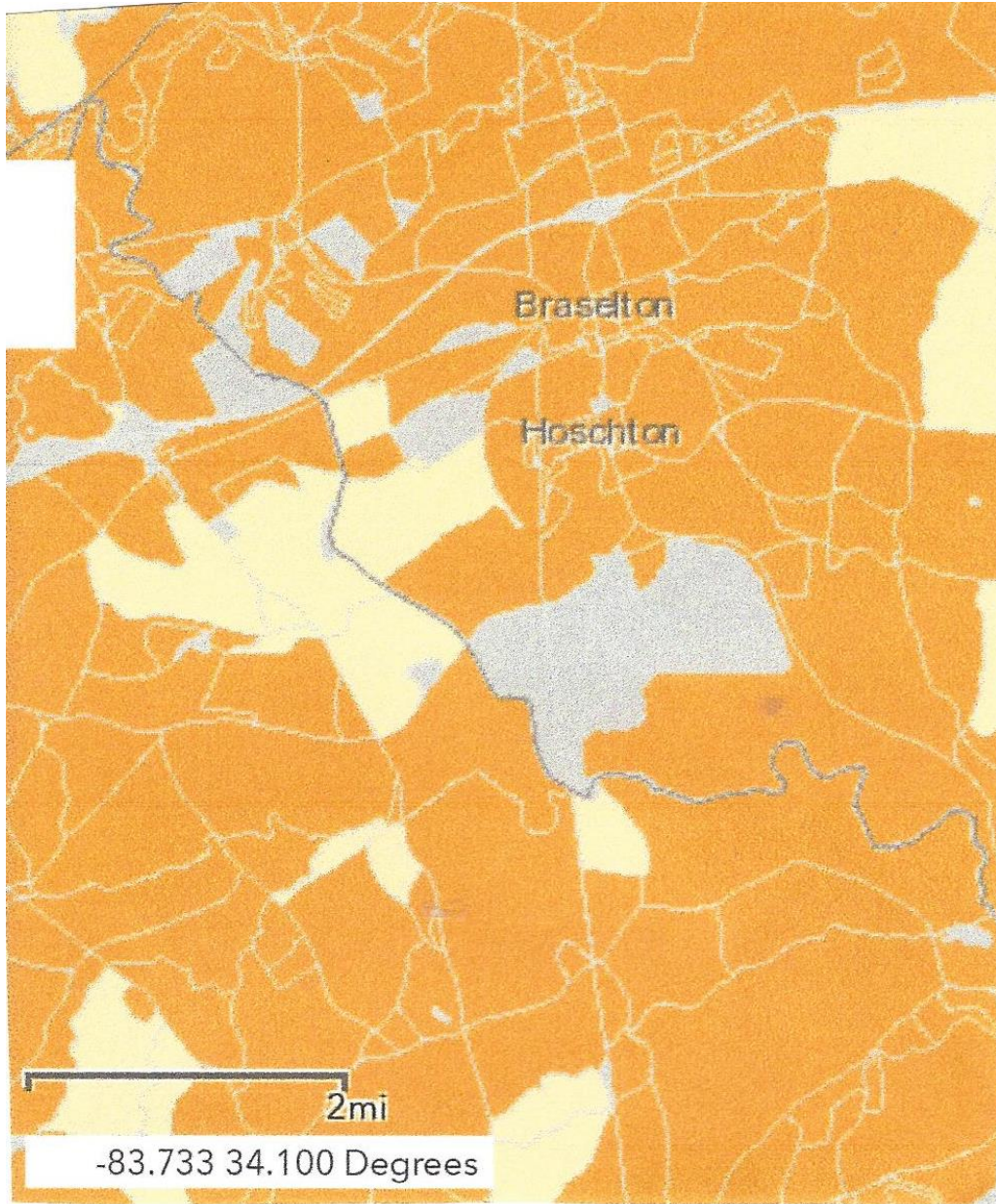
### EXISTING SERVICES

The Northeast Georgia Digital Economy Plan (2015) examines local and regional abilities to participate in the “Digital Economy” (business conducted through computers and computer networks). The Plan envisions the City with adequate wireless broadband service for residential and business applications.

Residential internet availability is exclusively served by Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), offered by one provider. The City is open to exploring wireless broadband infrastructure through other local providers to provide options and further improve the connection speeds throughout the area. Status as a

Broadband Ready Community may be pursued through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs after adopting a model broadband ordinance provided by the state.

**BROADBAND SERVICE MAP**



Orange shading identifies areas served

Source: <https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps/gbdi-unserved-county>

## **GOALS AND POLICIES**

Like all other elements of this comprehensive plan, goals and policies for broadband services are integrated into Chapter 3, Vision and Policies.

## **ACTION PLAN**

Like all other elements of this comprehensive plan, proposed actions and work program items are integrated into Chapter 7, Community Work Program. The work program includes a task to revise utility right of way encroachment rules of the city to accommodate small cell sites as required by Senate Bill 66 (2019), the "Streamlining Wireless Facilities and Antennas Act."

## CHAPTER 6 TRANSPORTATION

Since Hoschton is located within the planning boundary of the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the State of Georgia requires its comprehensive plan to include this transportation element. MPOs are federally-mandated organizations that provide regional context to transportation planning in urbanized areas. This section and the MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) should be used together when considering local transportation decisions.

### LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Transportation discussions are found throughout this comprehensive plan. Additionally, the community has identified the following Goals and Objectives from the MPO's RTP (2020, p12) as desirable in Hoschton (see also Chapter 3, transportation policies):

**Multimodal Connectivity** – Provide a more integrated multimodal and intermodal transportation system that includes increased travel options by prioritizing transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel throughout the region

**Safety and Security** – Maintain and improve transportation system safety and security for motorists, transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists

**Environment** – Develop a transportation system that conserves energy, promotes the attainment of air quality standards, protects the natural environment, and minimizes adverse impacts

**Mobility and Economic Vitality** – Provide a transportation system that provides for the movement of people and goods safely and efficiently and advances the region's economic competitiveness

**Land Use Integration** – Develop a transportation system that is efficient by integrating transportation planning with land use decisions and other comprehensive planning tools

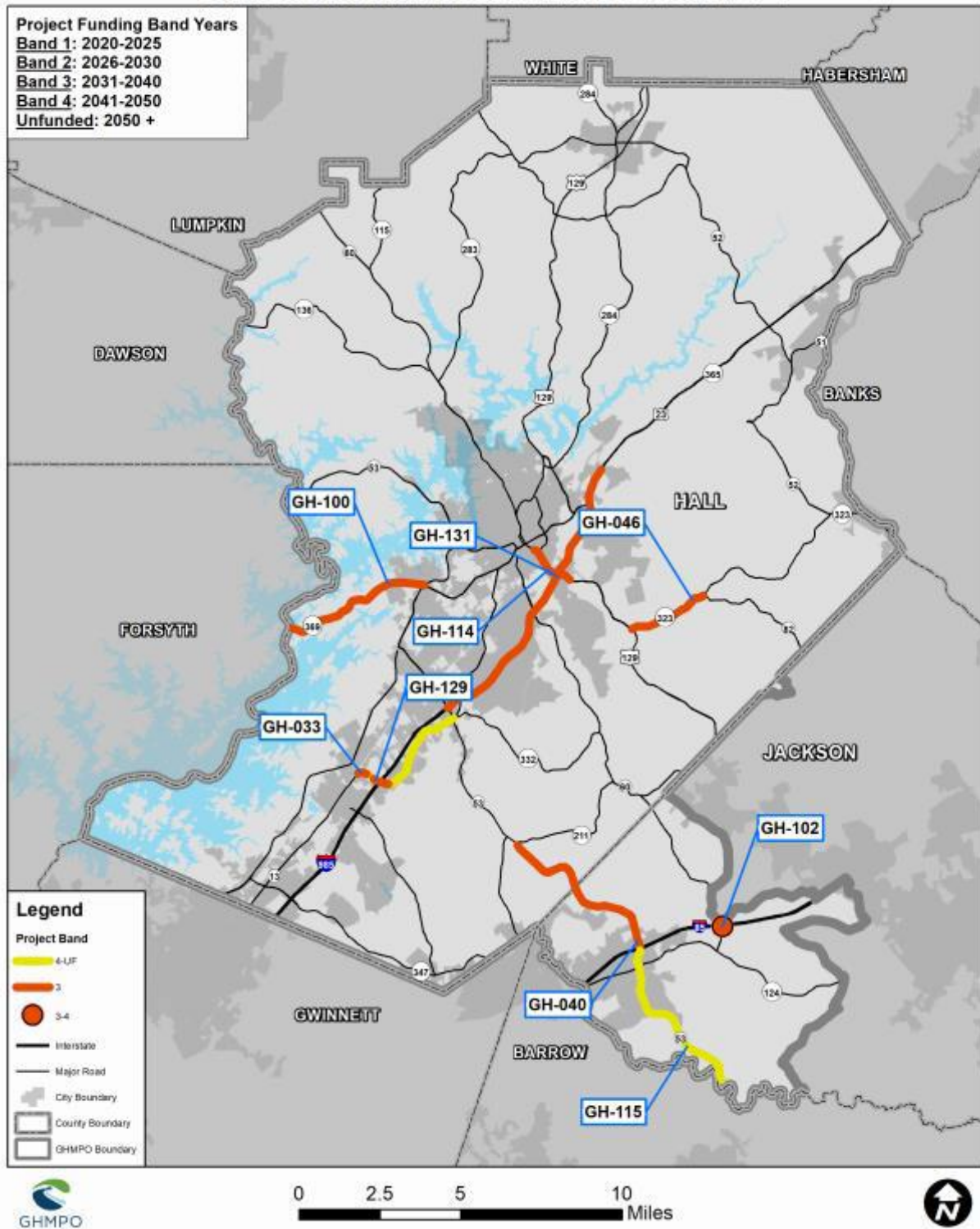
### GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The MPO RTP's Land Use section, which generally refers to Hoschton as an urbanized area within the more rural Jackson County, defers to local government land use planning documents for more specific information. Hoschton and the MPO should refer to the growth vision and future land use content found in this comprehensive plan whenever transportation decisions are considered.

### HOSCHTON AND THE GAINESVILLE-HALL MPO

Hoschton was represented in the development of the RTP through the plan's Technical Subcommittee. The RTP shows a proposed road widening of SR53 from I-85 to Tapp Wood Road; this project runs through the heart of Hoschton, so local and regional planners and decision-makers should coordinate closely on the project's development to ensure that it accomplishes local transportation and land use goals. (See below, project GH-115):

### Gainesville-Hall MPO 2020 RTP: Band 3-4





## JACKSON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In collaboration with the Gainesville-Hall MPO, Jackson County recently developed a comprehensive countywide transportation plan that includes its municipalities.

According to the plan, all examined roadway segments in Hoschton function at a level of service (LOS) “C” or better (characterized by free flow, reasonably free flow, or stable operation), any local “bottlenecks” feature the County’s lowest congestion levels, and crash rates are scored at Tier 5 (scale of 1-6 with 1 being worst and 6 best).

However, anticipated residential and employment growth in and around Hoschton is expected to reduce the area’s LOS to “D” (borderline unstable). Considering existing and projected conditions, the study recommends the following projects:

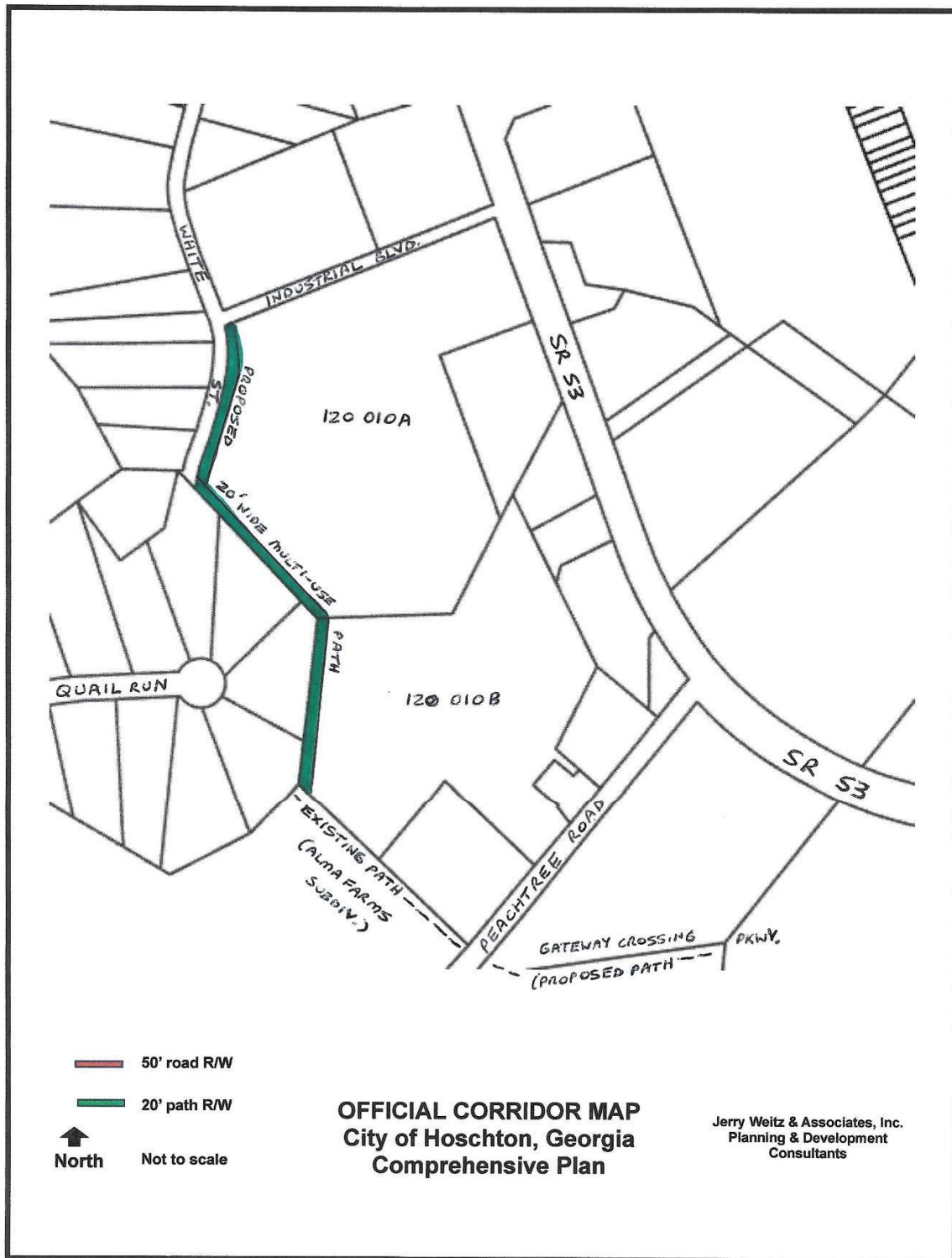
- Feasibility Study for Braselton/Hoschton Bypass
- “Braselton And Hoschton To Arcade Connection Improvement” (Pendergrass Rd/SR332 to SR124, to Doster Road to Jackson Trail Road) – widening
- SR53 at SR332/Pendergrass Road – intersection improvement
- “Braselton To Talmo Connection Improvement” – new construction/widening

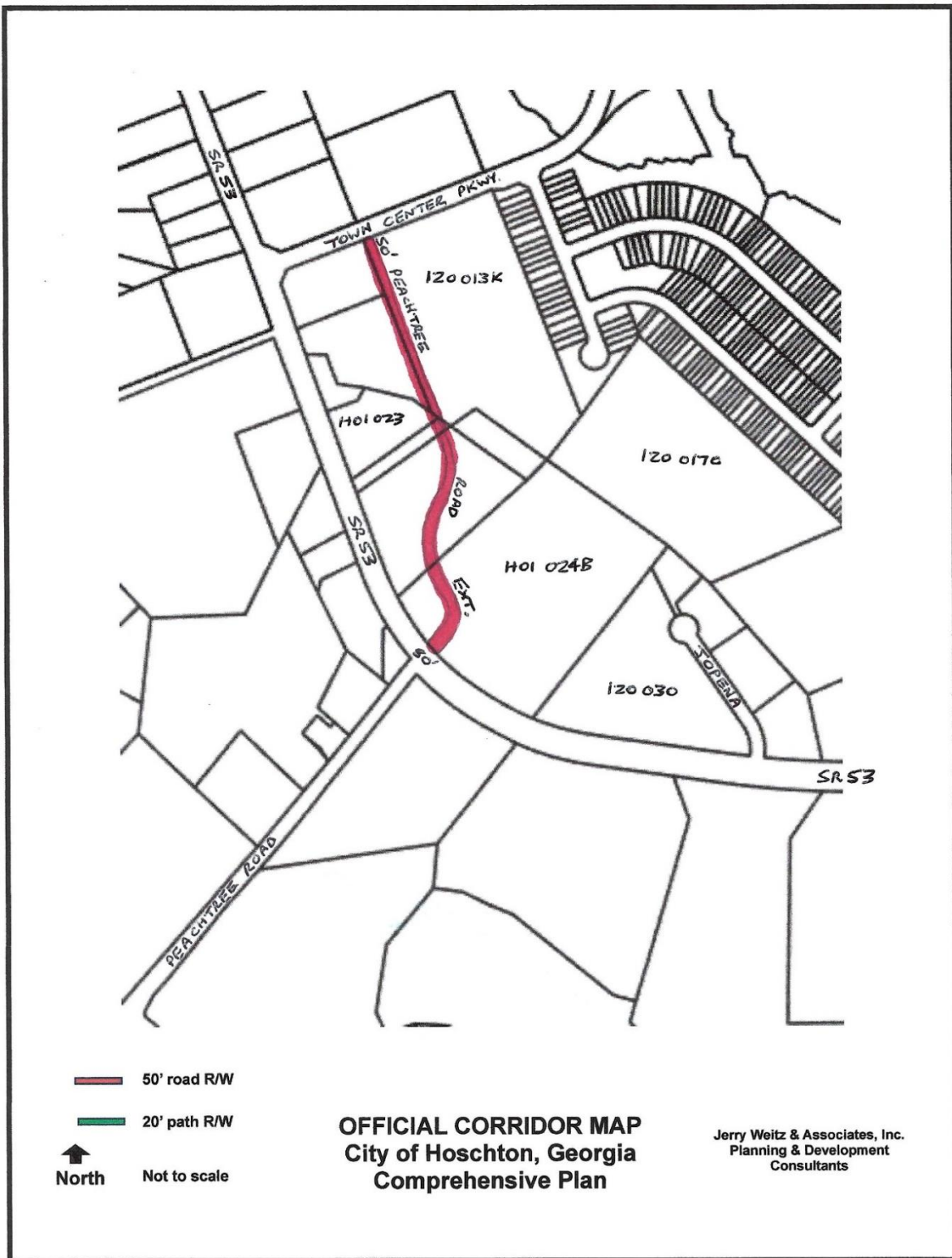
### **OFFICIAL CORRIDOR MAP** *[added via amendment R-23-14 adopted 12/18/23]*

An official corridor map is a growth management technique that seeks to reserve ways for future road connections and multi-use paths needed as development occurs. The technique has its origins in Georgia going back to the planning and zoning enabling act of 1957, and the technique has been utilized since at least the 1920s, though it is not that well known. Modern, model enabling statutes were developed by the American Planning Association in its legislative guidebook in the 2000s to utilize this tool.

A corridor map establishes point-to-point pathways through certain undeveloped lands where road connectivity is needed. In this sense, it is a precursor to a road or thoroughfare plan. A set of regulations is needed to implement the corridor map including, most importantly, the requirement for private development to “reserve” a road corridor of specified width and preventing issuance of a development permit for development in the reserved corridor until the property owner negotiates with the city for the donation, purchase, or acquisition of the road right of way. Also, the general intent is to explore potential at the time of rezoning, preliminary subdivision or development for the developer to participate in constructing the road. It is not an outright mandate to construct the road at owner/developer cost, but that may be negotiated. The city may participate in funding road (system) improvements called for in the corridor map, as may be negotiated, which would be appropriate in the case of so-called “system” improvements.

The need for this tool in Hoschton is imminent. It is beneficial that this corridor map and implementing regulations follow immediately, given rezoning proposals pending and in the pre-application stage east of SR 53 and elsewhere. The corridor map can be amended as needed to include other road corridor proposals. The regulations are proposed to be included in the subdivision and land development regulations of the city. The official corridor map, which consists of two maps shown on the following pages.





**CHAPTER 7  
COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM (2024 ANNUAL UPDATE)**

The community work program is amended to add a new year (2024), to drop year 2023, to remove projects that have been completed, and to add additional projects proposed by the city. The Community Work Program (2024-2028) provides a list of specific activities that the community plans to address as immediate priorities. This work program is updated annually because the city has adopted a capital improvements element (CIE) for development impact fees.

Dept.	Description	Year to be Implemented					Estimated Cost (\$)	Funding Source
		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028		
Water/Sewer	Complete Panther Creek sewer project	X					\$2,000,000	Grant and General Fund
Administration	Complete recodification project and update of city code of ordinances	X					\$22,000 or as budgeted	General Fund
Planning	Prepare a multi-modal plan for city streets and off-site trail networks (including golf cart paths) in consultation with homeowner's associations			X			\$20,000	General Fund
Roads/Grounds	Expand parking lot, correct drainage, repave at Depot			X			\$60,000	General Fund
Recreation	Construct kid's park at ballfields	X					\$125,000	Jackson County
Inspections	Update city codes to adopt standard state codes when revised and adopted by state		X		X		Staff function	General Fund
Planning	Update future land use plan map to incorporate annexations and changes in zoning	X				X	Staff function or Consultant	General Fund
Econ. Dev.	Renovate Larry's Garage building and property for business leases		X				TBD	General Fund
Recreation	Oak Street pavilion and community garden		X				TBD	General Fund
Water/Sewer	Phase 1 water main upgrade	X					\$2,900,000	Water/sewer fund
Planning	Place additional administrative forms and procedures on website; develop procedures guidance documents	X	X				\$3,500	General Fund
Econ., Dev.	Construct building addition on Depot property		X				\$800,000	General Fund
Administration	Prepare and implement community signage/wayfinding program for downtown and surrounding neighborhoods		X				\$10,000	General Fund
Administration	Update city safety plan and procedures at regular intervals or as mandated		X		X		Staff function	General Fund
Water/Sewer	Groundwater well study (complete) and develop multiple wells	X \$75,000	X	X		X	\$2,000,000	Water/sewer fund
Water/Sewer	Sewage treatment plant upgrade Phase 1	X	X				\$14,000,000	Water/sewer fund
Water/Sewer	Sewage treatment plant upgrade Phase 2		X	X			\$15,000,000	Water/sewer fund
Planning	Update capital improvements element and this community work program annually	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,000	General Fund
Planning	Implement schedule of improvements of capital improvements element as appropriate	X	X	X	X	X	See CIE	Impact fees; other

**City of Hoschton Comprehensive Plan, As Amended, Adopted September 17, 2024**

Dept.	Description	Year to be Implemented					Estimated Cost (\$)	Funding Source
		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028		
Code Enforcement	Continue to pursue teardowns of substandard housing units through code enforcement	X	X	X	X	X	Included in General Fund	General Fund
Planning	Re-evaluate and amend land use regulations as needed	X	X	X	X	X	Staff function	General Fund
Administration	Actively participate in meetings of the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization to monitor transportation planning proposals	X	X	X	X	X	Staff function	General Fund
Administration/Engineering	Complete water/sewer projects programmed in 10-year capital improvement plan (2 new water tanks, sewer plant upgrade, additional water supplies, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	See water/sewer capital program for estimates	Water/ Sewer Fund
Engineering/Building	Continue to implement Municipal Stormwater Program (MS4) federal mandates	X	X	X	X	X	Consultant (\$25,000 annually)	General Fund
Administration	Re-evaluate personnel needs and propose and budget for new positions as appropriate	X	X	X	X	X	City Manager (cost TBD)	General Fund
Econ. Dev.	Design and construct parking deck downtown			X	X		\$10,000,000	Grant; SPLOST, General Fund
Engineering	Periodically update 10-year capital improvement program for water and sewer		X		X		\$10,000	Water and Sewer Fund
Administration	Participate in five-year update of disaster preparedness/mitigation plan with county				X		Staff function	General Fund
Administration	Interview senior stakeholders and develop a senior service delivery plan, including focus on housing, recreation, and transportation				X		\$10,000 or staff function	General Fund
Administration	Develop benchmarking study to evaluate how Hoschton compares to peer/ aspirational communities					X	\$6,000 (consultant)	General Fund
Engineering	Revise standard drawings for water and sewer					X	\$15,000	General Fund

SPLOST = Special Local Option Sales Tax.

## CHAPTER 8 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT (CIE)

### SUMMARY

This document is an element of the City of Hoschton’s comprehensive plan. It specifies capital improvements for which development impact fees are charged in Hoschton. This capital improvements element (CIE) includes information for parks and open space and public safety (police). This annual update has extensive changes due to the city’s annexation of additional land and because of major rezoning actions that change the land use assumptions and the projections for facility needs. In addition, changes to the level of service standards are proposed.

### REQUIREMENTS

To support a development impact fee program, the city’s comprehensive plan must meet state administrative rules for Capital Improvements Elements (CIEs).<sup>1</sup> The rules, among other things, require that, for each facility included in the development impact fee program, the following must be included: a service area must be established; a quantifiable level of service (LOS) standard must be specified; long-term needs (demands) shall be assessed; and a schedule of improvements identifying projects to be funded with impact fees during the next five years must be submitted and then annually updated after its adoption.

### PROJECTIONS, FORECASTS, AND LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS

Total population is the sum of household population (i.e., persons living in households) and group quarters population (i.e., persons residing in nursing homes, jails, dormitories, etc.). Hoschton does not currently have any group quarters population. Occupied housing units are the same thing as households.

The city’s estimated population (100% decennial census population count) as of April 2020 was 2,666 persons living in 1,038 housing units (977 occupied), for an average household size of 2.73 persons per occupied dwelling unit (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, PL 94-171 data accessible at [www.data.census.gov](http://www.data.census.gov)). All but about 40 of the 1,038 housing units were detached, single-family dwelling units. As of the decennial census, Hoschton did not have any fee simple townhouses or senior apartments. As of April 2020, only an estimated 31 dwelling units had been constructed within the Twin Lakes Planned Unit Development (PUD), which was annexed and zoned in 2018.

Based on review of building permit activity reports, the housing stock in Hoschton has more than doubled since 2020 to an estimated 2,472 units as of April 1, 2024. The increase in housing units has included detached, single-family dwelling units, fee-simple townhouses and age-restricted (senior) attached and non-attached units. Because of the diversification of types of units in Hoschton, the average household size of 2.73 persons per household in 2020 has been reduced slightly to an estimated 2.68 persons per unit as of April 1, 2024. Table 1 provides projections and forecasts for the city, which were updated in May 2024. Table 2 shows increases for the next five years and twenty years.

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<sup>1</sup> Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-2, Development Impact Fee Compliance Requirements

**Table 1  
Projections and Forecasts, 2020-2044  
City of Hoschton**

<b>PROJECTION/FORECAST</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2044</b>
Total Housing Units	1,123	2,472	5,794	7,284
Households	1,066	2,472	5,794	7,284
Persons Per Unit	2.70	2.68	2.51	2.54
Household Population	2,878	6,645	14,573	18,543
Group Quarters Population	0	0	0	280
Total Population	2,878	6,645	14,573	18,823
Employment	532	1,000	3,555	4,366
Functional Population (Total Population + Employment)	3,410	7,645	18,128	23,189

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. May 2024.

**Table 2  
5-year and 20-year Increases in Population and Functional Population  
2024-2029 and 2024-2044  
City of Hoschton**

<b>PROJECTION/FORECAST</b>	<b>2024 Existing</b>	<b>Net Increase 2024-2029</b>	<b>Net Increase 2024-2044</b>
Housing Units	2,472	3,322	4,812
Population	6,645	7,928	12,178
Employment	1,000	2,555	3,366
Functional Population	7,645	10,483	15,544

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. May 2024.

Hoschton’s functional population in 2044 is projected to be 23,189 persons, and the residential population in 2044 is projected to be 18,823 persons. Population growth in Hoschton is definitely not expected to be spread uniformly across the 20-year planning period (horizon). Rather, the vast majority of the new housing units in Hoschton will be constructed by 2029, with housing starts weighted proportionally much heavier in the next five years. The projections of housing units and population in Table 1 are based on the assumption that the city will buildout (almost entirely, if not entirely) its residential lands within the city limits during the twenty-year planning horizon (2044). As noted above, the city does not have any nursing homes or other “group quarters” population. The projections of population include the forecast that, later in the planning horizon, Hoschton will become home to one or more institutionalized residential living arrangements such as nursing or congregate care homes, adding 280 persons in group quarters.

Hoschton has a relatively modest economic base, consisting of restaurants, retail trade establishments, services, and institutions and industries. Employment data for transportation analysis zones (TAZs), prepared as a part of the Jackson County Transportation Plan in 2019, were used to prepare initial employment estimates for this CIE. For the 2024 update, the city’s consulting planner utilized a buildout

analysis of nonresidential lands and estimated employment on the basis of 1 employee per 1,000 square feet of nonresidential space of new nonresidential development. Employment increases are forecasted to also be more heavily weighted during the next five years, rather than being spread evenly over the 20-year planning horizon.

Hoschton’s impact fee program includes public safety facilities and services (police). The service population for police is the population plus employment, or in other words, the “functional” population. As indicated in Table 1, the population is added together with employment to determine the functional population.

**PARK AND OPEN SPACE LAND**

**Service Area**

The service area for park and open space land is the city limits.

**Inventory**

Table 3 shows the inventory of park and open space lands within the City of Hoschton as of May 2024. The inventory does not include part of a ballfield that is owned by the Jackson County Board of Education, since the city does not own that portion of the ballfield.

**Table 3  
Park and Open Space Land Inventory, May 2024  
City of Hoschton**

<b>Parcel No.</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Description</b>
120 003R	374 Cabin Drive	8.73	4 ball fields, 2 tennis courts
119 0022	4727 Hwy 53	4.20	Ball field (part)
H02 056	E. Broad St	0.23	Building and open space
H02 082 (pt.)	79 City Square	0.25	Pavilion and open space
H02 058 (pt.)	Highway 53	0.15	Playground beside Depot
H01 003A	New Street	0.32	Undeveloped/open space
H01 003B	Pendergrass Rd	0.18	Undeveloped/open space
H01 004	Pendergrass Rd	0.22	Undeveloped/open space
H01 005	Oak Street	0.22	Undeveloped/open space
H01 006	67 Oak Street	0.20	Undeveloped/open space
H01 007	Oak Street	0.17	Undeveloped/open space
H01 008	Oak Street	0.09	Undeveloped/open space
H01 009	29 Oak Street	0.22	Undeveloped/open space
H01 00	15 Oak Street	0.16	Undeveloped/open space
H01 048	153 Mulberry Street	4.78*	Undeveloped/open space
H01 050A	Hall Street	1.65	Undeveloped/open space
H01 049	140 Mulberry Street	7.17	Home and lot
120 009A	Mulberry Street	8.16	Undeveloped/open space
		37.10	TOTAL



\* total tract is 6.78 acres but 2 acres are subtracted for other uses.

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., July 2023, updated May 2024.

**Existing Level of Service (LOS) and Level of Service Standard**

Since residents are the users of park and open space lands, the level of service measure and standard for park and open space land is based on the residential population. The city established the following level of service measure in the first CIE in 2020: acres of park and open space land per 1,000 residents.

In the initial CIE, adopted in September 2020, the city adopted a level of service standard for park and open space land of 5.33 acres per 1,000 residents, the same as the existing level of service in 2020.

Since 2020 and the adoption of park and open space impact fees, the city has added significantly to its park land but has also added thousands of new residents. The existing level of service for park and open space land in Hoschton as of May 2024 is 37.10 acres of park and open space land for 6,645 residents, or 5.58 acres per 1,000 resident population. With the city’s purchase of additional park and open space land via from the Blankenship family, the city has kept up with rapidly increasing demands attributed to the increased population. As a result, the city has a slight surplus of land as of May 2024, because the existing level of service of 5.58 acre per 1,000 exceeds the adopted level of service standard of 5.33 acres per 1,000. However, the current surplus will be short lived, because of even more intensive population growth projected during the next five years as described further in the next section.

**Assessment and Projection of Demands**

Table 4 provides a projection of park and open space land demands based on the projected residential population. The city has a current park and open space land inventory of 37.10 acres as of 2024 (see Table 4 above).

**Table 4**  
**Projection of Park and Open Space Land Demands, 2024-2044**  
**(@ Current Level of Service Standard of 5.33 acres per 1,000 Residents)**  
**City of Hoschton**

<b>Type of Land</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2044</b>
Total Population	6,645	14,573	18,823
Cumulative demand for new park and open space acres (@ LOS standard of 5.33 acres per 1,000 residents)	35.10	77.67	100.32

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, May 2024.

Looking at the population growth projected during the upcoming five years, at the adopted level of service standard of 5.33 acres of park and open space land per 1,000 residents, the city would have to add another 42.57 acres of park and open space land in just five years, meaning the current inventory would have to more than double in size. That substantial additional demand is based on expected residential development of the “Tribute” planned unit development (annexed and zoned in 2023) and anticipated development of other PUD rezonings for additional dwelling units in 2023. Looking at the entire 20-year planning horizon, Hoschton’s park/open space land inventory would have to increase to

more than 100 acres (a 200% increase) to meet the currently adopted level of service standard (see Table 3).

There are several reasons why maintaining the adopted level of service standard of 5.33 acres per 1,000 residents is problematic in the future. First, the accelerated pace of development in Hoschton means that the supply of tracts of land inside the city limits that are vacant and available for purchase by the city for park and open space land is dwindling substantially. It appears increasingly unrealistic that the city will be able to purchase land within the city limits to meet the adopted park and open space land standard of 5.33 acres per 1,000 population.<sup>2</sup> The city must spend its park and open space impact fees within the service area which is the city limits, so purchasing land outside the city with impact fees is not an option.

Secondly, the vast majority of the population growth that is anticipated in Hoschton will occur within planned unit developments, which by definition provide 20 percent or more of the land area as open space. This means that some of the demands for park and open space land are anticipated to be met with open spaces and parks within these new planned unit developments. This is another reason to consider and adopt a reduced level of service standard for park and open space land.

Another factor that positively supports a reduction of level of service standard is that the city currently meets and exceeds the adopted level of service standard for park and open space land. This means it is a most opportune time to change the level of service standard, if necessary, because there is no current “deficiency” of park and open space land that would have to be funded with monies other than impact fees.

### **Revised Level of Service Standard**

For the reasons provided in the foregoing paragraphs, this Capital Improvements Element includes a formal change in the level of service standard from 5.33 acres per 1,000 population to a lower standard of 4.00 acres per 1,000 population. The city hereby adopts the level of service standard of 4.00 acres per 1,000 for the city’s impact fee program. Even at this newly adopted level of service standard, the city will still have its work cut out for itself, because it is still an extensive amount of land to acquire.

Table 5 shows the demands for park and recreation land and the revised level of service standard of 4.00 acres per 1,000 residential population. Even at this proposed (lower) standard, the city will still have to acquire extensive park and open space lands to maintain the newly adopted standard of 4.00 acres of park and open space land per 1,000 residents. During the next five years, the city will need to add 21.19 additional acres to its current (2024) supply of park and open space land. And during the 20-year planning period (2044), the city will need to add 38.19 acres to its park and open space inventory. See Table 5.

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<sup>2</sup> The city’s rezoning of the Pirkle tract included conditions of approval that require the extensive dedication of open space land at or about the time that property develops. However, due to the change in ownership of the Pirkle tract, future development is expected to change, and development of that tract is not imminent. Because it may be years before that tract develops, the city is unable to count on the dedication of additional open space land from the Pirkle tract that would count toward meeting the currently adopted level of service standard for park and open space land.

**Table 5**  
**Projection of Park and Open Space Land Demands, 2024-2044**  
**(@ Newly Adopted Level of Service Standard of 4.00 acres per 1,000 Residents)**  
**City of Hoschton**

<b>Type of Land</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2044</b>
Total Population (persons)	6,645	14,573	18,823
Existing park and open space land (see inventory, Table 3) (acres)	37.10	--	--
Total park and open space acres (@ LOS standard of 4.00 acres per 1,000 residents) (acres)	26.58	58.29	75.29
Additional park and open space required (@ LOS standard of 4.00 acres per 1,000 residents) (acres)	--	21.19	38.19

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, May 2024, Revised July 16, 2024.

**Schedule of Improvements**

The schedule of improvements for park and open space land is shown in Table 6. It provides for the purchase of 21.19 acres of park and open space land during the next five years to meet the level of service standard of 4.00 acres per 1,000 residents.

**Table 6**  
**Schedule of Improvements, 2024-2029**  
**Park and Open Space Land Impact Fee Program (Dollars)**  
**City of Hoschton**

<b>Capital Improvement/ Authorized expenditure</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>Total 2024- 2029</b>	<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>% Eligible for Funding with Impact Fees</b>
Blankenship property acquisition (payments of impact fee funds committed) <sup>3</sup>	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Impact Fees	100%
Acquire 21.19 acres of park and open space land (@ \$75,000 per acre)					794,625	794,625	1,589,250	Impact Fees	100%
Total	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD		TBD	Impact Fees	100%

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, May 2024.

<sup>3</sup> The city has a “life estate” arrangement to pay the Blankenship family over time for park and recreation land purchased.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT (POLICE AND MUNICIPAL COURT)**

Hoschton was served exclusively by the Jackson County Sheriff for sworn officer law enforcement functions, but as of August 2021 the city hired a police chief and established its own police force. Jackson County Sheriff’s Department still serves backup functions and covers time periods when city police are not working. Since establishment of the police department, the city has added additional personnel.

**Service Area**

The service area for law enforcement (police and municipal court) is the city limits of Hoschton.

**Inventory**

In 2023, Hoschton opened its new city hall and community center at City Square. The building that used to be city hall (3,188 square feet at 79 City Square) was then devoted exclusively to police and municipal court space. The inventory is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7  
Inventory of Law Enforcement Building Space, City of Hoschton, 2024**

Location of Building Space	Total Building Space (Square Feet)
79 City Square (old city hall)	3,188

Source: City of Hoschton, July 2023.

**Level of Service (LOS) Measures and Standards**

Since both residential and nonresidential development are served by law enforcement facilities and services, the level of service measure and standard for police facilities are based on the functional population.

In September 2020, the city adopted a level of service measure for law enforcement (police and courts) of square feet of police building space per functional population. Police vehicles are not included in the impact fee program, because they do not qualify as “capital improvements” (i.e., they do not have a useful life of 10 years or more). In September 2020, the city adopted a level of service standard for law enforcement (police and court) facilities of 0.95 square feet of public safety (police and court) building space per functional population. A change is proposed to the adopted level of service standard, as described later in this plan element. The city hereby adopts a level of service standard of 0.60 square feet of public safety (police and court) building space per functional population.

**Assessment and Projection of Demands**

Table 8 provides a projection of police and court (law enforcement) space needed at the currently adopted level of service standard of 0.95 square feet of police and court space per 1,000 functional population.

**Table 8**  
**Projection of Police and Court Building Space Demands, 2024-2044**  
**(@ Current Level of Service Standard of 0.95 square foot per functional population)**  
**City of Hoschton**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2044</b>
Functional population of Hoschton	7,645	18,128	23,189
Total police and court building space (square feet) needed (@ LOS standard of 0.95 square feet per functional population)	7,262	17,221	22,029

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, May 2024.

With a current inventory of 3,188 square feet, the city is currently far short of meeting the current demand for police facility space. There is a current deficiency of 4,074 square feet of law enforcement space that must be reconciled (paid for and provided) by the city within a reasonable period of time without using impact fees (except for those fees that have already been collected and have not been expended). In other words, except for current police facility impact fee balance of funds, the 4,074 square feet of additional space needed is attributed to the existing functional population and cannot be funded with impact fees from new development. That point is factored into the schedule of improvements below.

By 2029, at the adopted level of service standard, the city would need 17,221 square feet of police and court space to serve the projected functional population, plus it would ultimately want to plan for the replacement of existing space (3,188 square feet) as a result of relocation of police facilities to a new building. That would mean the city would need to plan for 20,409 square feet of facility space by 2029 25,217 square feet of police/court space by the year 2044.

As of July 2024, the city is engaged in a 10-year study projecting various city government needs. As a part of that effort, additional information has been acquired and reviewed by city administration and the police chief. As a result of discussions, it was recommended to City Council that the level of service standard for police (law enforcement, including court space) be reduced from 0.95 square feet per functional population to 0.60 square feet. That change is recommended based on the following rationale.

When the level of service standard of 0.95 per functional population was established, the city did not have an operational police force. The standard adopted was significantly higher than a standard of 0.60 that was initially recommended by the consulting planner (impact fee consultant). With establishment of a police force and the hiring of a police chief, better information is available on the necessary scope of the city's police department. Further, the 10-year study (in progress) has helped administration determine the number of future police officers needed and, hence, a better estimate of building space needs. The city does not need as much space as called for in the level of service standard based on this new information.

Table 9 provides a projection of police and court (law enforcement) space needed at the revised level of service standard of 0.60 square feet of police and court space per 1,000 functional population.

**Table 9**  
**Projection of Police and Court Building Space Demands, 2024-2044**  
**(@Level of Service Standard of 0.60 square foot per functional population)**  
**City of Hoschton**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2044</b>
Functional population of Hoschton	7,645	18,128	23,189
Total police and court building space (square feet) needed (@ LOS standard of 0.60 square feet per functional population)	4,587	10,877	13,913

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, July 16, 2024.

**Schedule of Improvements**

The schedule of improvements for police and court facility space is provided in Table 10. Increases in residential population and employment (i.e., the “functional” population) will create the need for a substantial capital improvement (building space) for police and municipal court. The city wants to move all of its current police facility space and municipal court (3,188 square feet) into a new facility and free up the current space at 79 City Square for commercial uses, the city must factor in the replacement of the 3,188 square feet of space now used for police and court but which will no longer be utilized. Hence, the future building improvement must take into account the current deficiency of 1,399 square feet, plus the total existing inventory that will be discontinued (3,188 square feet), for a total of 4,587 square feet. The city is able to utilize all law enforcement impact fees currently held, for the purpose of building new facilities.

**Table 10**  
**Schedule of Improvements, 2024-2029**  
**Police and Municipal Court (Dollars)**  
**City of Hoschton**

Capital Improvement/ Authorized expenditure	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total 2024- 2029	Source of Funds	% Eligible for Funding with Impact Fees
Acquire and prepare site for new police and court space (3 acres @ \$150,000 per acre (may be share of larger land assemblage to include city hall))	450,000						450,000	IF; capital funds, SPLOST	Current impact fees held (100%); plus future impact fees (67.03%)
Architecture and engineering @ 15% of cost of building space for 13,913 square feet			626,085				626,085	IF; capital funds, SPLOST	Current impact fees held (100%); plus future impact fees (67.03%)
Construct 13,913 square feet of police and court space (@ \$300 per square feet)						4,173,900	4,173,900	IF; capital budget; SPLOST	Current impact fees held (100%); plus future impact fees (67.03%)
<b>TOTAL SHOWN</b>	<b>450,000</b>		<b>626,085</b>			<b>4,173,900</b>	<b>5,249,985</b>		

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Revised July 10, 2024.

IF = Impact fees; SPLOST = special local option sales tax

More than two-thirds of the total cost of the police facility space can be paid for with impact fees, including current impact fee fund balance and future impact fee collections.

**APPENDIX A  
SERVICE AREA MAP (CITY LIMITS)**



**City Limits of Hoschton (Service Area)**  
Source: Jackson County Q Public