Introduction to Comprehensive Planning

Georgia’s Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires that each local government create and maintain a Comprehensive Plan, which defines how that city or town plans to move forward with all aspects of city management from parks to economic development and from housing to transportation. These plans typically create guidance for the following twenty years of City activities. The DCA also requires that these plans are kept up-to-date, with updates at least every five years. This key findings report is part of a five year update to Roswell’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan, “Imagine Roswell”, adopted in 2011. This update will provide information on any changes that have occurred since the current plan was created, modify action items as appropriate in response to these changes, and extend the planning horizon to 2035.

Purpose of Key Findings Report

This Key Findings Report serves as a survey of existing conditions in the City or Roswell. It attempts to summarize what is happening in the city, as well as the most significant trends, and the City’s plans for the future. This summary will serve as a guide for planners as they get a sense of the state of the city, which will further inform future work on this update to Roswell’s comprehensive plan.

How to Use the Key Findings Report

This report is divided into eight sections, each detailing the current state and plans for a different section of the city’s interests. The eight sections presented in this report are:

1. Population
2. Economic Development
3. Housing
4. Land Use and Urban Design
5. Transportation
6. Public Safety
7. Natural and Cultural Resources
8. Recreation and Green Space
Introduction

The City of Roswell is home to over 90,000 people (ACS 2013), a notable growth from just under 80,000 in 2000 (Census 2000). This growth has been similar to growth experienced in neighboring cities in the northern Atlanta suburbs. Historic population over time for Roswell and nearby cities in northern Fulton County is shown in Figure 1. In the future, Roswell is expected to continue to grow rapidly, and to become home to over 100,000 people sometime between 2020 and 2025. Historic population and projections for Roswell are shown in Figure 2.

Age

A graphic showing the relative portions of men and women in different age groups is shown in Figure 3. Over half (57%) of Roswell residents are between 25 and 65 years old, making the city a solidly "workforce-aged" community. However, this is positioned to change dramatically. Currently about 12% of the city is over the age of 65, 29% of the city, or over 26,000 people, are between 45 and 65, and as such, are expected to begin retiring in the next twenty years. This has the potential to fundamentally change the face of Roswell, redefining the way residents live their lives, the amenities they desire, the services they need, and the way they interact with their city. In addition, Roswell is home to relatively few young people. There are 40% more residents in their 50s than residents in their 20s.

Diversity

Roswell is an increasingly diverse place. Racial minority residents increased from 18.5% of the city in 2000 to 22.1% in 2013. At the same time, the Hispanic and Latino population increased by almost 4,000 people, from 11% of the city to 14%. The City’s racial composition in 2013 is shown in Figure 4.
### Figure 2 Population of Roswell

|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

### Figure 3 Age and Sex (2013)

### Figure 4 Racial and Ethnic Composition (2013)

- **78%**: White
- **12%**: Hispanic Population (14% of total population)
- **5%**: Black or African American
- **3%**: Asian
- **3%**: Other
- **1%**: Two or More

Hispanic Population (14% of total population)
Income and Poverty

Residents in Roswell typically have higher household incomes than other members of the greater Atlanta region and the US as a whole. In 2013, the median annual Roswell household income was just under $80,000, while the median metropolitan Atlanta household earned just over $56,000 and the median household in the country earned about $52,000.

While Roswell residents tend to earn more than the country as a whole, this isn’t true for all who live in the city. Figure 5 shows the income distribution in Roswell over time. There has been a notable growth in households making over $100,000 each year, as well as an increase in those making less than $35,000 per year. From 2000 to 2013, the number of households earning more than $100,000 each year rose from about 10,300 to 14,100, and grew from making up only 34% of the city, to 41%. Over that same time period, the number making less than $35,000 grew by approximately 1,800 households, which is an increase from 19% to 22% of households in the city.

Poverty has grown steadily over this time period as well. In 2000, 5%, or approximately 4,000 individuals were below the poverty level, but in 2013, 9% or approximately 8,000 people were earning less than the poverty level. Poverty is not evenly distributed across the city, but it exists primarily in dedicated pockets. Figure 6 shows the geographic makeup of median incomes and poverty levels in Roswell.

Figure 5 Income Distribution over Time

Median annual household income in Roswell is 1.4 times higher than that of the metropolitan Atlanta region.

There were fewer households earning between $35,000 and $100,000 in 2013 than in 2000, even though the city has grown.
Figure 6 Income and Poverty

Legend
Median Annual Household Income (thousands)  Percentage Under Poverty Line
$<60  <10%
$60-$90  10%-20%
$90-$120  20%-30%
$120-$150  >30%
$>150  

Freeway
Major Road
Other Streets

0 ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Miles
Introduction

Roswell is an increasingly constrained and competitive region. As such, the City must continue to be strategic about investments used to attract workers and businesses to the city. As part of the broader metropolitan Atlanta region, Roswell has many opportunities to learn from the successes and failures of its neighbors.

Strategic Economic Development Plan

In 2012, the City of Roswell adopted a Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP) in order to develop a strategic approach to the city’s economic goals. This report examines the current state of Roswell’s various markets, develops goals for the City to work towards, analyzes the city to find the best opportunities and markets for expansion, and creates sets of tools that can be used to implement the plan.

The SEDP highlights the City’s economically constricted state. Most of the land within the city has been developed at a suburban scale, and adjacent land has been incorporated into Roswell’s new neighbor cities, severely limiting the possibility of outward expansion. The plan also noted that Roswell’s neighbors have put substantial efforts into creating business-friendly reputations, putting Roswell at a relative disadvantage when attracting all types of development. Further, it noted Roswell’s restrictive regulations that reduced opportunities for redevelopment and higher densities. These constraints were relaxed with the adoption of Roswell’s Unified Development Code (UDC) which sought to simplify and open all aspects of development in the city.

A number of needs and opportunities within the city are also discussed. Rental markets in Roswell are strong, but code restrictions have made new rental properties rare and insufficient to meet growing demand. While many retail locations are operating well, there are areas with significant vacancy rates. In these areas, larger sites in strategic locations may be viable locations for redevelopment.

As Roswell’s office market improves, the SEDP predicts a need for increased Class A office space, with large developments near the Holcomb Bridge Road/SR 400 interchange and smaller developments south of Holcomb Bridge Road along SR 9.

Healthcare is cited as a major area for growth, with the expansion at North Fulton Hospital shown as an indicator that this industry is growing without substantial encouragement from the City. Both primary and specialized cares are indicated, but special emphasis is placed on senior care, which could by complemented by an increase in higher-density and age-restricted housing.
Additionally, professional services, including technical, research, consulting and corporate services are seen as a potential growth area. Future growth in this field could be restricted by a lack of existing Class A office space, but could be maintained with either smaller to mid-sized firms in smaller, existing office spaces, or with redevelopment efforts to create more Class A space.

The city’s strong supply of athletic and recreational facilities could be capitalized on with expansions in the entertainment and recreation industry cluster. Continued maintenance and expansion of high-quality recreation facilities could be enhanced with the creation of additional dining (growing from Canton Street) and destination athletic facilities.

Roswell is well suited for logistics companies, with strong access to the metropolitan Atlanta region and beyond. Logistics operations could provide employment without substantial education or training, but would likely return less of an economic return compared to other industries.

The SEDP identifies four key areas which the City could leverage to create these changes. Workforce and entrepreneurial tools could be used to encourage small business operations which keep commercial vacancy rates low while keeping jobs and incomes in Roswell. Regulatory and toolbox programs could be enacted such as tax allocation districts, to create extra incentives for businesses to locate within Roswell. Market and asset tools could capitalize on Roswell’s inherent advantages to focus growth on a diverse selection of company types and sizes. Marketing and outreach programs could be used to promote Roswell as a business-friendly city and better communicate with existing and potential business residents.

The SEDP is currently in the process of being updated and as such, new challenges and strategies for Roswell may be identified in the future.

**Commuting Patterns**

In 2012, the city of Roswell was home to just over 36,000 employees, but hosted over 41,000 jobs according to the American Community Survey (ACS). As part of the metropolitan Atlanta region and economy, many Roswell residents travel out of the city each day for work and many residents of other parts of the region commute into the city. Only 4,475 people both live and work in the city limits. 37,045 people commute into the city to work at Roswell’s businesses while 31,568 Roswell residents leave the city to work elsewhere. This creates a population increase of around 5,400 people every workday.
**Roswell’s Workforce**

**Industry Mix**

Companies and jobs are frequently divided into industry sectors as defined by the Census’s North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). As shown in **Figure 7**, the largest share of Roswell residents work in “Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services” which makes up 13% of the city’s workforce. This is a remarkably higher proportion of workers than in the 10-county ARC region, in which approximately 9% work in these fields. It is typical for workforces of North Fulton communities, where between 13% and 16% work in these fields. Roswell’s workforce also includes a higher share of workers in “Finance and Insurance” and “Information” than the region as a whole.

**Figure 7 Workforce Industry Mix (Selected Industries)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Roswell</th>
<th>North Fulton Neighbors*</th>
<th>ARC Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Support, Waste Management and Remediation</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Aggregate for Johns Creek, Alpharetta, and Sandy Springs

**Unemployment Rate**

Unemployment rates for Roswell, nearby cities, and regional entities are shown in **Figure 8**. Recent reports of Roswell’s unemployment rate indicate that unemployment in the city is approximately the same as neighboring north Fulton county cities, all of which have lower unemployment rates than the 10-county ARC region and the state of Georgia as a whole.

**Figure 8 Unemployment Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Roswell</th>
<th>Alpharetta</th>
<th>Sandy Springs</th>
<th>Johns Creek</th>
<th>Fulton County</th>
<th>ARC Region</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education

The city of Roswell is home to an exceptionally well educated population. A breakdown of residents by educational achievement in and near Roswell is shown in Figure 9. Over 60% of residents over 25 years old have a college degree, and 20% have a graduate of professional degree. Only 42% of residents in the (census-designated) metropolitan Atlanta region have a college degree and only 12% have a graduate or professional degree. The rate of college degrees is slightly less than neighbors Johns Creek and Alpharetta, but is comparable to Sandy Springs and is notably higher than both Fulton County and the metropolitan Atlanta region.

Figure 9 Educational Composition

Roswell has a competitively educated population when compared to the region.
Employment in Roswell

Employment Mix

In contrast to the city’s workforce composition, the most significant industry sector for employment in Roswell is “Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation” which hosts 16% of all Roswell-based jobs, as compared to only 8% of jobs across the region, as shown in Figure 10. While 16% of Roswell’s workforce works in “Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services” industries, only 9% of Roswell’s businesses are in these industries. This is only one example of the disconnect between the city’s workforce and its employment.

![Figure 10 Employment Industry Mix (Selected Industries)](image)

**Table 10 Employment Industry Mix (Selected Industries)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Roswell</th>
<th>North Fulton Neighbors*</th>
<th>ARC Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Support, Waste</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Remediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Aggregate for Johns Creek, Alpharetta, and Sandy Springs

Employment Projections

Based on data from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the city of Roswell’s employment offering are estimated to grow from approximately 51,700 in 2015 to 68,500 in 2035. The ARC also predicts significant growth in the Healthcare and Social Assistance industries, while the share of jobs in fields like retail and finance are expected to shrink. Projections by industry are shown in Figure 11, with the current top industries labeled.

![Figure 11 Employment Industry Mix Projections](image)

**Figure 11 Employment Industry Mix Projections**

**Top Industry Clusters**

- Accommodations and Food Service
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Retail Trade

**Industry Clusters with Largest Projected Growth:**

Healthcare and Social Assistance
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services
Employment Settings

The preferred location for many employers is also changing in Roswell and nearby communities, especially for professional firms and those relying on a young, educated workforce. The single-use office park is increasingly falling out of favor among certain industry segments and the region is beginning to see employers drawn to locations in walkable, mixed-use settings.

Research recently conducted by the George Washington School of Business, with support from the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Tech College of Architecture, found that Metro Atlanta’s walkable, mixed-use settings are attracting an increasing share of new development and have seen a rise in rent premiums over drivable areas. The report notes that from 1992-2000, roughly 13% of real estate investment in the region went into walkable areas. From 2001-2008, that number doubled to 26%. Since 2009, it more than doubled again, reaching 60%.

Avalon, in nearby Alpharetta, is an example of the type of development that is increasingly attractive to employers. The project features retail, restaurants, and housing in a walkable setting. Plans are underway to develop additional housing, a hotel/conference center, and 550,000 square feet of new Class A office space. Another such project closer to Roswell is “Peridot,” which would sit on a 47-acre tract at the corner of Morrison Parkway and Haynes Bridge Road, abutting Ga. 400 on the south. It would contain restaurants, retail, a hotel, almost half a million square feet of office space, and 470 townhomes and condos. If built, nearly 2,000 jobs are expected to come from it. The proposed mixed-use Riverwalk Village development seeks to bring this type of employment setting to Roswell.

Economic Activity

Building Permits

Building permits of all types over time are shown in Figure 12. Lower rates in 2010 are likely due to the gradual recovery from the economic slowdown. 2013 saw a notable dip, but permit rates have been relatively stable since 2011.

Figure 12 Building Permits by Type over Time
Introduction

The 2013 housing mix of Roswell and neighboring jurisdictions is shown in Figure 13. Even though Roswell has more than one and a half times the housing units of Alpharetta, the two have the most similar housing mix. Roswell hosts over 22,000 single-family homes throughout its traditional suburban-style layout out of a total of approximately 37,000 housing units. With respect to total number of housing units, Roswell sits evenly between Johns Creek and Sandy Springs, which have approximately 27,000 and 47,000 housing units, respectively. However, the compositions of the two are dramatically different, both from each other and from Roswell.

The composition of Roswell’s housing stock has changed notably since 2000. The city added over 5,000 housing units between 2000 and 2013 (Census 2000, ACS 2013). Of these, over 3,000 were single family homes, however, this growth was slower than other types of housing, and single unit detached homes now make up 59% of housing units in the city, down from 61% in 2000. Faster growth occurred in the multi-family market (ten or more units per structure), which added almost 1,500 units, now comprising almost 20% of all housing units in Roswell (Census 2000, ACS 2013). An additional 1,400 units of single-unit attached units (i.e. townhouses) were also added, growing to almost 10% of all housing. A map of the locations of single family and townhome building permits issued between 2010 and 2012 is shown in Figure 14.

The overwhelming majority of housing units were built in the 1980s and 1990s. Approximately 65% of all housing units were built during these two decades, while less than 10% of current housing units were built since
Figure 14 Residential Building Permits (2010-2015)
As a larger, more urban city, the City of Roswell is designated as an entitlement community by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In the City’s 2013-2017 Consolidated Housing Plan, the City identifies goals for the housing stock of Roswell and problems experienced by residents including potential issues with the city’s built environment.

In its consolidated housing plan, the City indicated the following four goals:

1. Increase and improve affordable housing options
2. Reduce homeless needs
3. Enrich community services
4. Support special needs

Housing Mix

A key factor influencing the housing mix in Roswell continues to be changing demographics. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan noted that, “the over-60 years old population and the ‘millennials’ will generate very different demands for housing and amenities through the 20-year planning horizon.” The plan went on to describe strategies for expanding the housing mix in Roswell to accommodate these changes markets.

The aforementioned housing data suggest that this is occurring with the community seeing a marked increase in multifamily units and townhouses. Both such housing types are well suited to both over 60 years old and “millennial” residents.
While the percentage of multifamily and townhouse units have grown since 2000, it is of note that cottage housing has been slower to arrive in Roswell. Cottage housing, which provides small lot single-family living options around a common greenspace, was recommended in several parts of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan as a desirable housing type that could provide a single-family house without the upkeep required of a larger lot.

Zoning regulations are partially responsible for the slow realization of cottage housing in Roswell. Until the 2014 adoption of the Unified Development Code (UDC), the city lacked zoning regulations that supported this housing type. In recognition of this, the UDC created specific design standards for “cottage courts” and allowed them in several zoning districts. Recently, the city approved its first cottage court as part of a mixed-use development on Fouts Road. As the population continues to age and existing residents down-size, cottage housing is likely to increase more quickly.

**Affordability**

Within Roswell, the median home or apartment for rent costs about $978 per month (ACS 2013). In order to afford this rent, a household must earn over $39,000 per year (assuming the household cannot spend over 30% of their income on housing) (NLIHC). Over 22% of households in the city make less than $35,000 per year (ACS 2013) and thus cannot afford this median rent.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) monitors the four following housing problems: incomplete kitchen, incomplete plumbing, cost burden (spending over 30% of household income on housing costs), and crowding (more than 1.01 people per room). 34% of households in Roswell suffer from at least one of these four problems. Households earning less than half of the HUD-designated Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) are disproportionately affected, with 84% suffering from at least one of these problems. 64% of these low income residents spend more than half of their income on housing.

However, these problems are not limited to the poorest citizens of the city. Approximately 32% of all households spend over 30% of their monthly income on housing costs, and 15% spend over half of their income on housing (CHAS 2012). Even amongst households which earn more than the HAMFI, 13% spend more than 30% of their income on housing. This cost burden has increased since 2000, when only 23% were cost burdened (spending 30% or more of their household income on housing), and only 9% were severely cost burdened (spending 50% or more of their household income on housing).

Cost burdens weigh heavier on renters than homeowners. Almost half of all renters spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs, while only a quarter of homeowners pay such a high portion of their income.

In order to buy a home rather than rent, a typical buyer in Roswell would need to make at least the regional median income of $68,300 (based on current FHA lending practices). This makes home ownership unaffordable for over 65% of all current renters.
Other Housing Problems

Large numbers of low and moderate income Hispanic families are likely not taking full advantage of existing affordable housing options. This may be due to communication problems or the relative unavailability of multi-bedroom housing in Roswell.

The Roswell Housing Authority had a waiting list for public housing in January and February 2011 and received 554 pre-applications for the all bedroom sizes, indicating a much higher demand for public housing than what is currently available.

Needs of an Aging Population

Roswell’s population is aging, but the City does not currently have sufficient affordable housing stock or a unit mix to accommodate projected needs. As noted earlier, the City has seen an increase in some types of housing that serve aging residents, most notably cottages and townhouses, but for those residents who need both housing and support services, options are fewer. Meeting the needs of aging residents also means locating housing in a walkable setting which supports physical activity, provides access to services, and offers a greater sense of independence. The City is undertaking a number of developments which will help provide for this segment of the city’s population, but should continue to find ways to accommodate an aging population.

The Roswell Housing Authority has moved to create a mixed-income senior housing development in the walkable Groveway neighborhood. The Groveway Community is a potential mixed-use redevelopment area near historic downtown Roswell and Roswell City Hall that has been extensively examined and planned by the City since 2007.

The proposed development “Riverwalk Village,” planned for the southeast quadrant of State Route 400 and Holcomb Bridge Road is planned to include 270 “Senior Independent Living Units” out of 1,556 total units in a mixed-use development per the DRI application.

Roswell’s UDC places limitations on where senior care centers can be built in the city. The UDC provides for two categories which contain most specialized housing for an aging population. The first, “Continuing Care Retirement Communities,” is allowed, with some limitations, on approximately 6% of land in the city. The second, “Institutional Residential,” which includes “assisted living..., independent living, intermediate care home, nursing home, personal care home, and skilled nursing care” is completely or conditionally allowed on approx. 10% of land area. Due to the overlap between the two, only 10% of land in Roswell is eligible to be used for senior care centers, while nearly a third of the city’s population is already over 50. In addition, these zoning areas are not set aside for senior housing, but will be in demand for a wide array of uses.
Non-Housing Related Community Development Needs

As the population of Roswell ages, additional facilities that serve senior citizens will be needed. Most adults would prefer to “age in place,” or to stay in their home regardless of age. In order to allow people to do this, new and different resources and amenities must be provided to residents. The Adult Recreation Center currently serves senior citizens and has been expanded using HUD funds, including facilities such as increased parking, access to nearby trails, an elevator, and a therapeutic pool. If approved, additional facilities for seniors are expected to accompany the Groveway Development Project.
4 Land Use and Urban Design

Introduction

Roswell contains a diverse selection of urban environments. In Downtown Roswell, a walkable center is bustling with shops and restaurants tucked into historic buildings. Elsewhere, neighborhoods of single family homes peacefully house families of various ages and makeups. Urban form is constantly changing in this area, with historic preservation efforts, new mixed-use developments, and ongoing efforts to maintain and improve on Roswell’s existing layout.

Land Use Trends

For many decades Roswell has grown through the conversion of vacant or undeveloped land to housing, commercial, and civic uses, but this is now changing. Open land available for new development has largely run out, and redevelopment has become an increasingly important way to accommodate future growth. The nature of this growth is also changing.

Currently, key land use trends in Roswell include:

- The buildout of single-family houses in unfinished subdivisions.
- The construction of small, infill single-family and townhouse subdivisions on the remaining open sites, which often present size, shape, and topography challenges.
- Continued redevelopment in Downtown Roswell, especially townhouses, small lot single-family houses, multifamily, and mixed-use projects.
- The creation of mixed-use developments along major transportation corridors.

Fueling these trends is also the fact that some areas in Roswell are also nearing the end of their intended functional lives. Some older shopping centers, apartment complexes, and even whole neighborhoods are approaching a point where significant investment is required to maintain them in good condition. Market forces may not justify such investment, making redevelopment the only advantageous long-term option. Fortunately, due to their age, many such sites are well located with regard to Downtown Roswell, Georgia 400, and other major transportation corridors, making them ideal redevelopment candidates.

There is increasing pressure to convert some single-family land uses to commercial or higher-density residential uses. Since adoption of the UDC in 2014, the city has seen several such rezoning requests. Of these, requests that were approved by City Council have typically involved the development of slightly higher intensity residential land uses featuring small lot single-family homes, townhouses, or mixed-use settings. Rezoning requests to
support the conversion of single-family areas to higher density multifamily or commercial uses have consistently been denied or withdrawn.

Generally speaking, all of the above land use trends are consistent with the framework established by the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Said plan provides a sufficiently broad guide for accommodating future redevelopment in a manner that concentrates the most intense land uses in areas well-served by existing infrastructure, while allowing contextual redevelopment in the “Suburban Residential” character areas that makes up most of Roswell.

Urban Redevelopment Plan

The City of Roswell adopted an Urban Redevelopment Plan in 2010 which was amended in 2013. This plan examines an area primarily west of SR 400 which it describes as “an older suburban retail, office, and light industrial district with an historic downtown.” These areas are noted for having more retail space than demand, leading to vacancy and blight. Residential spaces in this area are typically multifamily and are frequently older, with poor maintenance practices and high crime rates. The Urban Redevelopment Area includes areas with the highest poverty rates in Fulton County north of the Chattahoochee River.

In response to these stated problems, the plan attempts to provide a way to accomplish the following:

• “Incentivize redevelopment in commercial areas,
• Improve workforce housing,
• Redevelop properties to their highest and best economic uses, and
• Build upon the existing transportation network...with better connections and multiple modes of transportation”

The plan proposes ways to do this including rezoning and the establishment of Opportunity Zones in which lower taxes and other incentives could encourage redevelopments and new businesses. It also cites other successful plans including some from the ARC’s Livable Centers Initiative and Roswell’s Midtown redevelopment plan from 2003, which resulted in a streetscape project on Alpharetta Street where redevelopment can now be seen.
Riverwalk Village

Riverwalk Village is a proposed mixed-use development planned for the southeast quadrant of the Holcomb Bridge Road/SR 400 interchange along Old Alabama Road from Riverside Drive north through the existing Marquis Trace development. This 104 acre development would include space for new residences, offices, retail, and a private school in a mixed-use format. In addition, 13 of these acres would be left in a natural state as part of 51 acres used as open space. While still in the planning and design stages, early concepts of the development indicate a strong connection to large central water features, walkable retail and low- to mid-rise buildings. In all, the development is currently proposed to include:

- 1,156 apartments,
- 125 townhomes,
- 270 senior living units,
- A 200 room hotel,
- A 700 student private school,
- 971,000 square feet of office space, and
- 269,000 square feet of retail

East West Alley Master Plan

Downtown Roswell is a thriving historic center anchored by natural and historic resources. The area centered on Canton Street is home to many local restaurants and boutique retailers in historic buildings. As the downtown has become more active and busy, attention has turned to the area’s alleyways which were used irregularly and haphazardly for parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and garbage dumpsters. Businesses increasingly saw these typically unused spaces as useful assets that should be capitalized upon, which motivated the city to create a master plan for these irregular and precious spaces. Based on public and city inputs, the plan created a unique and context-sensitive vision for each of the seven corridors identified. These recommendations included widened sidewalks with space for outdoor dining, branded gateways, infrastructure to support temporary road closures, use of consistent materials and textures, and various parking and circulation modifications all aimed at creating a friendlier, accessible Downtown Roswell. The master plan was adopted by the City in May 2015, along with a first phase implementation plan for improvements to East Alley including permeable pavers for the roadway, brick pavers for expanded sidewalks, removable bollards, tree plantings on Canton Street, and a trash compactor enclosure, among other improvements.
Historic Preservation

Roswell’s historic resources are a key contributor to the city’s identity and high quality of life. Most of these are concentrated within the 640-acre Roswell Historic District, which encompasses the community’s 19th and early 20th century downtown core and nearby residential areas. The District provides protection for historic resources and ensures compatible new development through review by the Roswell Historic Preservation Commission. Commission review of development activities is guided by the Unified Development Code Design Guidelines, which were updated in 2014. The oversight provided by the City’s historic preservation regulation is credited with preserving the character for which Downtown Roswell is known.

The current limits of the Downtown Historic District have been in place for several decades. During this time, most of the district has retained its historic character, as noted above. However, at the southern end of SR 9/Atlanta Road, the gradual loss of historic buildings and the arrival of new development has caused some in Roswell to question whether or not this area should continue to be included in the Historic District. At the same time, others wonder if historic protection should expand to residential areas from the 1950s and 1960s, which are now eligible for protection.

Today, historic preservation in Roswell is also being impacted by the very success of the city’s historic preservation efforts. Downtown Roswell has become an increasingly popular place to live, work, and play because of its historic charm. Invariably, this places pressure on historic resources to accommodate new businesses and homes. This is especially true for older houses on large parcels. The community has seen several large house lots subdivided in recent years, with new houses usually placed behind or beside the historic house. Community sentiment varies about these type of projects, with some happy to see new vitality and the preservation of historic houses and others lamenting the loss of the house’s historic context.
Introduction

In order to best serve its population, the City of Roswell listed the following goals and strategies in their Transportation Master Plan (adopted 2006, updated 2014):

Goals

1. Enhance Safety – not just for vehicles, but for all users: private and commercial vehicle operators, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
2. Manage Congestion – focusing on providing innovative yet realistic options for local traffic including key intersections, as well as creating new connections.
3. Increase Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Mobility – assuring that all City residents have safe bicycle and pedestrian mobility options and that transit service is as accessible to residents and visitors as possible.
4. Support Redevelopment – provide transportation systems that support redevelopment while preserving Roswell’s character. This will allow the City to plan for a prosperous future.

Strategies

1. Find New Capacity – this is focused on building new local street network and improving connectivity, and in some cases, accepting a higher level of congestion to protect the City’s neighborhoods and local character.
2. Link Redevelopment and Transportation – support the goal of redeveloping identified areas in the City by planning and requiring a robust network of streets and blocks to organize this development into a walkable and livable pattern.
3. Focus on Intersections – much of the congestion is located at key intersections and some corridors, simple solutions could include adding needed turn lanes, improved signalization, installation of roundabouts, and other connectivity options near major intersections.
4. Complete the Multimodal Function of Key Streets – this means adding sidewalks and bicycle facilities on the important streets that connect neighborhoods, schools, parks and other destinations. In March 2009, the City Council passed a “Complete Streets” policy that instructed staff to consider all users when roadway facilities were built or significantly upgraded where feasible.

The City has several challenges that it must overcome to achieve these goals. The Chattahoochee River limits access to areas south of the city, a disconnected roadway network forces traffic onto a few roads, and alternative options are limited. However, the City has a number of projects planned to improve the quality of Roswell’s transportation options.
Roadway
The city of Roswell is home to a public road network of over 800 publically maintained lane-miles including State Routes 9 (Alpharetta Highway), 92 (Crossville Road, Holcomb Bridge Road), 120 (Marietta Highway, Alpharetta Highway), 140 (Holcomb Bridge Road, Houze Road), and 400 (US 19). These State Routes along with other primary local roads form the backbone of a primarily suburban roadway network in which approximately 60% of all roadways end in cul-de-sacs. This layout forces travelers onto a few primary roadways, creating significant traffic congestion. A survey by city staff found at least 47 signalized intersections (out of 102 signalized intersections in the city) experience significant delays (as measured by a control delay of 55 seconds or greater; LOS E or F) during both morning and evening peak periods, shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16 Selected Intersections with Failing Level of Service

In order to address these issues, the City is undertaking a series of improvement processes. Some notable projects include the following:

Big Creek Parkway will be a new roadway between Holcomb Bridge Road and Mansell Road, crossing SR 400. This road will begin at Warsaw Road north of SR 140/Holcomb Bridge Road, crossing SR 400 and connecting to the existing intersection of Old Alabama Road at Holcomb Woods Parkway before ending at Holcomb Bridge Road. There would also be a spur just west of SR 400, connecting southward to Old Holcomb Bridge Road. This project will include a sidewalk and a bicycle path. This will provide a bypass of the SR 400/Holcomb Bridge Road interchange for local traffic and provide a lower-traffic option for cyclists and pedestrians. Big Creek Parkway is currently in design (as of March 2015).
Holcomb Bridge Road has been examined in detail with recommendations made to improve the capacity of the interchange with SR 400 by improving existing ramps and adding new access points from SR 400 directly to other local streets. The recommendations of the study also include aesthetic improvements to the Holcomb Bridge Road corridor and SR 400 interchange along with an adjacent multi-use path which would provide another way for cyclists and pedestrians to cross SR 400 and improve the connectivity of the planned Big Creek Trail, north of Holcomb Bridge Road. The city has begun some of these improvements, including streetscaping, ramp modifications, and the construction of the parallel multi-use path.

Downtown Roswell is also planned to receive a number of transportation improvements. The city is designing (as of March 2015) various pieces of the “Gateway Project” which are designed to improve the experience of traveling on SR 9 between SR 120/Marietta Highway and the Chattahoochee River. Plans include two roundabouts along SR 9 at the intersections with Chattahoochee Street and Jones Circle as well as grade separation of the intersection with Riverside Road/Azalea Drive. The existing reversible lane will be removed, with a fourth travel lane added. The project also includes streetscaping elements to better welcome travelers into downtown Roswell.

These projects and other improvements the City is undertaken are shown in Figure 17, which includes all roadway projects from the City’s Transportation Master Plan.

The recently-adopted UDC also includes several tools that support the City’s Transportation Master Plan. On the larger scale, the Code requires developments to incorporate specific transportation facilities identified in
Figure 17 Transportation Master Plan

Legend - Projects
- Intersection Projects
- Bridge Projects
- Roadway Projects
- Other Projects (Transit and Parking)
- ATMS Projects
- Roadway Projects
- Other Projects

Legend - Features
- Elementary Schools
- Middle Schools
- High Schools
- National Park Service
- Roswell City Parks
- Chattahoochee River
- City Limits

City Hall Area - Inset

GA 400 Area - Inset
the Plan. It also includes maximum block size and stub-street requirements that are intended to gradually create an interconnected street system as development and redevelopment occurs. On the smaller scale, the Code requires new streets to be designed in relation to land use context and according to “Complete Street” principles.

**Bike and Pedestrian**

As of June 2013, Roswell had approximately 184 miles of pedestrian facilities, made up of multi-use paths, sidepaths, sidewalks and trails. Roswell’s Community Development, Transportation, and Recreation and Parks Departments work to fill gaps in sidewalk coverage; connect pedestrians to transit, downtown Roswell, and the Chattahoochee River Recreation Area; and to provide sidewalks within one-half mile of every school and park in the city.

The League of American Bicyclists designated Roswell as the first Bicycle Friendly Community in Georgia in 2006. The city has been very progressive with cycling infrastructure and is now home to bike boxes and sharrows at various locations through the city in addition to almost 12 miles of bike lanes, 33 miles of bicycle-friendly shoulders, and 15 miles of paved shoulders.

In order to improve connectivity for the users of active transportation, Roswell has many streetscaping projects planned as well as additional sidewalks and bike lanes. The city is currently designing multiple improvements to Riverside Road, including a multi-use path and bike lanes (as of March 2015). The city has also planned bike lanes on Oxbo Road, Old Alabama Road, and Hembree Road, among others. Planned sidewalk projects are also numerous, concentrating around downtown Roswell, as well as large roads including Pine Grove Road, Riverside Road, and Old Roswell Road.

Roswell is also working on the “Roswell Loop”: a series of complete streets which, when completed, will create a set of five overlapping loops around and throughout the city. These loops have been laid out to connect parks and schools with each other and adjacent neighborhoods.

Finally, the UDC requires new developments to include new bicycle and pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks, street trees, and bike lanes. These requirements apply to both new streets internal to the development and existing streets abutting it. The intent of these regulations is to gradually create a comprehensive system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**Transit**

Roswell is currently served by two traditional bus routes, provided by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). Route 85 begins at the North Springs rail station and, within Roswell, operates primarily along SR 9, connecting the Chattahoochee River, City Hall, and SR 140/Holcomb Bridge Road, before ending at the park and ride lot at Mansell Road and SR 400 immediately north of the city. Route 185 also begins at the North Springs rail station, entering Roswell on SR 400, and traveling along SR 9 north of SR140/Holcomb Bridge Road, eventually connecting to Alpharetta, and the park and ride lot at Windward Parkway and SR 400. Both routes operate every thirty minutes during the week and every hour...
on weekends. Despite this infrequent service, both routes see substantial use, with between two thousand and three thousand weekday boardings and deboardings in Roswell alone.

For citizens who may not be able to access the transit system due to disabilities, MARTA provides a service known as MARTA Mobility. MARTA Mobility is a reservation service which serves all areas within 3/4 mile of a bus line. Within Roswell, this area is a relatively small portion of the city, and many transit dependent residents live outside of it, creating latent demand for increased access to paratransit.

MARTA has begun the planning process for an expansion of mainline transit up SR 400 north from the existing North Springs rail station, running parallel to SR 400 through Roswell before terminating at Windward Parkway in Alpharetta as shown in Figure 18. MARTA’s Locally Preferred Alternative for this service is heavy rail, which would effectively be a twelve mile extension of the existing Red Line. Also under consideration are Light Rail Transit which typically operates smaller rail vehicles at similar frequencies to heavy rail and Bus Rapid Transit, a premium bus service in which buses are operated at a high frequency and given priority treatment with preferred lanes and improved stations, effectively providing service more similar to heavy rail than what is typically seen in bus systems. Regardless of how the service is provided, preliminary plans call for a station at Holcomb Bridge Road, providing increased transit service in the city, and improved access to the complete MARTA service area. The City of Roswell favors a site in the northwest corner of the Holcomb Bridge Road/SR 400 interchange, while MARTA has focused primarily on the east. The station would be designed with a focus on supporting local economic development plans while encouraging transit oriented development.

**Figure 18 Connect 400 Plan Map**

MARTA’s proposed Connect 400 map
Introduction

Roswell’s safety is largely secured by two departments: police and fire. These two organizations work effectively to protect the citizens of Roswell from both crime and fire.

Police Department

The Roswell Police Department provides services to all those who live, work, play, and travel within the City of Roswell. The Department has 208 employees working in three main divisions:

- Uniform Patrol: Represents the uniform presence and backbone of the Department
- Criminal Investigations: Handles all types of investigations and crime scene processing
- Support Services: Handles day to day operations of the Department and is home to the Training Unit, Community Relations Unit, and Roswell 911 Center

The Roswell Police Department cites a crime rate of only 2 persons crimes and 25 property crimes per 1,000 persons. Additionally, the Roswell Police Department is one of the less than 400 law enforcement agencies that has received national accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

Uniform Patrol Division

The Uniform Patrol Division patrols all areas of the city, which are divided into five zones, each divided into two beats. Officers work 12-hour shifts and are responsible for all call of service.

Criminal Investigations Division

The Criminal Investigations Division specialize in investigating either persons crimes, property crimes, crimes against children, or crime scene processing. The Division include two specialized units as well:

- Crime Suppression Unit which is responsible for identifying and addressing specific crime problems and trends within the City.
- Narcotics Unit which specializes in detecting, investigating, and prosecuting persons who violate laws in reference to illegal narcotics

Support Services Division

Support Services includes a number of sections which provide outreach and internal support for the Police Department as a whole. These include
the Community Relations Unit, Records and Permitting, the Property and Evidence Unit and Training Unit. Community Relations handles all requests for reports, from open records to vehicular crashes, as well as licenses such as massage therapy and liquor, in addition to managing reports for the Criminal Investigations Division. The Property and Evidence Unit handles all incoming and outgoing evidence for the department, accounting for over 3,700 items in 2014. The Training Unit ensures that all officers have the most progressive training needed to perform their duties across a wide range of duties and specialties.

**Fire Department**

Roswell is currently served by seven fire stations distributed throughout the city. The city is in the process of replacing and relocating Fire Station 4, which currently serves the area around the Holcomb Bridge Road/SR 400 interchange and the area between SR 400 and Eves Road, Nesbit Ferry Road, and Old Alabama Road. The new structure is planned to include larger service areas, designed for modern fire-fighting equipment, as well as an improved structure with energy efficient fixtures and appliances. The three-bay, drive-through structure will completely replace the existing fire station without modifying the way in which the service areas are defined.

The Roswell Fire Department is organized into three divisions; Logistics, Operations, and Administration.

**Logistics Division**

The logistics division maintains physical assets of the fire department. Including a total of twenty-two trucks of various types, the seven fire stations, a hazardous materials response trailer, and all equipment carried on or held within the trucks and stations.

**Operations Division**

Operations is responsible for replying to emergency calls in the city. This portion of the fire department is made up of trained, part-time personnel who respond to structural fires, vehicle crashes, hazardous materials emergencies and other emergencies. These compose over 6,500 calls the department responds to each year.

**Administration Division**

The administration division oversees the department as a whole, and includes department policies, human resources, office management and financial planning.
Key Findings Report

7 Natural and Cultural Resources

Introduction

Roswell was originally founded along Vickery Creek (now known as Big Creek) and has grown to the banks of the Chattahoochee River. The city is home to many natural resources, especially waterways, and the city works to maintain and enhance these resources. Additionally, the area has been inhabited for nearly two hundred years, and has preserved many buildings and other significant sites that now have significant historical value.

Roswell Green

Roswell Green is an initiative that promotes sustainable practices. It is predicated on a vision of Roswell that protects natural resources, practices clean and efficient water and energy practices, promotes green industries and businesses, and increases quality of life for future generations. The city has adopted a number of policies and programs in order to work towards this goal, including policies for complete streets, flex work arrangements, tree canopy preservation, and green building incentives. Some government buildings have had light bulbs replaced in favor of LED lighting and has begun converting their fleet to propane, among other internal initiatives. The City also works with Keep Roswell Beautiful to sponsor various recycling, exchange, and clean-up events around the city.

Water

The City of Roswell is part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, which includes fifteen counties and over ninety cities. This entity was created by the Georgia General Assembly to protect water resources in the six river basins contained in those counties. In order to do this, the District creates and updates three comprehensive water plans: the District-Wide Watershed Management Plan, the Long-Term Wastewater Management Plan and the Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan. The latest version of each of these was created in 2003 and updated in 2009. The District-Wide Watershed Management Plan is focused on preservation of the region’s waterways. This plan cited the following as just some reasons for the need for watershed management:

- Mitigating impacts from increased stormwater runoff due to land use changes
- Protecting drinking water sources
- Ensuring sufficient capacity for wastewater discharge for future growth
- Protecting aquatic health and habitat

This plan sets forth “local management measures” to be performed by local governments as well as state and regional policy recommendations.
The management measures are presented as individual action items with regulations, responsible parties, objectives, and implementation guidance provided for each.

**Historic District**

Roswell’s Historic District encompasses a portion of Roswell near the original settlement site and earliest development. This area is centered on Big Creek (formerly Vickery Creek), the site of an early cotton mill. From Big Creek, the Historic District stretches to the north, along SR 9 and includes the city’s three historic plantation homes: Bulloch Hall, Smith Plantation, and Barrington Hall. This area is rich in properties and structures stretching from the antebellum era through the early 1900s. In order to maintain these valuable assets and the overall character of the area, the city created an official historic district in 2003. The city requires a special review of any major construction or architectural changes within this district, regardless of whether the specific property is considered historic, in order to ensure than no changes are made which will damage the integrity or quality of the area.

The aforementioned plantation homes are some of the most popular sights in Roswell. They host candlelit tours and summer camps, as well as regular visitors throughout the year. Collectively, they host over 27,000 visitors each year. Barrington Hall and Bulloch Halls were built in the 1830s and are some of the best examples of Greek Revival architecture in the country. Smith Plantation was built in 1845 with slave labor and continued to be the home of the Smith family for generations. Today it is a well preserved piece of vernacular architecture and boasts a complete set of working and living spaces throughout the structure and its outbuildings.
Introduction
One of Roswell’s strongest resources is its parks. Across 42 locations, the city features over 900 acres of different types of park space. These parks include historic sites, athletic facilities, riverside green space, and splashgrounds. They allow Roswell residents to stay active, keep in touch with nature, and get engaged within their community. These parks and other facilities also host a wide selection of programs, from babysitting classes and swimming lessons to farmers markets and outdoor concerts. Roswell’s parks are continuously being upgraded and improved, with developments in progress at multiple locations.

Existing Facilities and Programs
The City of Roswell maintains and operates a wide array of recreation facilities of different scales and purposes. These include small urban parks, linear parks, district parks, special use areas, indoor facilities, historic sites, school recreation areas, and other recreation sites. A map of all parkland in the city is shown in Figure 19.

There are six small urban parks in the city, all of which are between two and three acres. These include City Hall and Historic Roswell Town Square among others. These parks are typically intended for passive use and some include memorials, plazas, landscaping, and fountains.

Roswell’s linear parks are located along or near waterways, largely along the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries. These include walking trails, mountain biking trails, and other facilities in Big Creek Park, many of which connect to the Alpharetta Greenway system to the north. Other linear parks include Riverside Park and Old Mill Park.

District parks are intended to provide a wide range of recreational options to all geographic portions of the city. Each of these six parks features a varied array of facilities, including athletic fields, multi-purpose buildings, campgrounds, playgrounds, and water features. While the intent of this category of parks was to provide access to recreation across the entire city, there is only one – East Roswell Park – which is east of SR 400.

Special use areas include historic sites, single purpose athletic areas and other small facilities. Founder’s Cemetery in the Roswell Historic District, Lake Charles, the Roswell River Landing, Sweetapple Park (adjacent to Sweetapple Elementary School), the Woodstock Soccer Complex, the Leita Thompson Memorial Gardens (within Leita Thompson Memorial Park), and Liberty Square make up this category.

Ten indoor facilities exist within Roswell. These are universally located within other parks. They include arts centers, multi-purpose activity buildings, and recreation centers.
RECREATION AND GREEN SPACE

Figure 19 City of Roswell Parks

Legend

- Parks
- Freeway
- Major Road
- Other Streets

0 ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Miles
The Roswell Recreation, Parks, Historic, and Cultural Affairs Department also operates the three aforementioned historic sites: the Archibald Smith Plantation, Barrington Hall, and Bulloch Hall. All of these buildings date from the early 19th century and are in or near downtown Roswell.

The City of Roswell has a joint-use agreement with the Fulton County Board of Education which provides access to portions of school recreation facilities. These facilities are usually athletic and are hosted by elementary, middle, and high schools across the city.

On the northern banks of the Chattahoochee River sits a portion of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, built for passive recreational use with trail systems. Adjacent to this national facility is the Chattahoochee Nature Center, a non-profit educational facility striving to “connect people with nature.”

Within these parks and facilities, the City provides a wide array of programs for both youth and adults. These programs include various athletics and arts for children and adults, as well as health programs for adults. Special programs for mature adults such as tai chi, retirement planning, and badminton are provided, as well as historic and cultural programs. The parks also play host to a number of special events each year ranging from art festivals and holiday celebrations to concerts and parades. From June 2011 to May 2012, over 34,000 participants registered for or were waitlisted for one of the City’s over 3,000 offered programs. Unfortunately, almost 25% of these programs were eventually cancelled due to being under capacity. These programs are regularly assessed to determine if they should continue to be offered.

Roswell also includes a number of small, privately owned open spaces located within residential or commercial developments. The UDC also includes requirements to create new such spaces as development occurs. The Code includes standards for both Landscaped Open Space and Outdoor Amenity Space that can be used to create small park parks or plazas. While such spaces are certainly not of the scale or character of true City of Roswell Parks, they nevertheless provide useable facilities near homes and businesses.

**Goals**

In order to continue to serve the citizens of Roswell, the City’s Recreation, Parks, Historic, and Cultural Affairs Department has set goals as part of its five year strategic plan. These goals include:

- Maintain the standard of nine acres per one thousand persons through the year 2016.
- Continue to provide parks in strategic locations to achieve a higher level of geographic coverage throughout the community.
- Expand the number and type of recreation facilities in order to meet the demand of all age groups.
- Provide a wide range of programs throughout the year designed to meet the needs of residents and non-residents.
- Expand and improve current maintenance practices as necessary to retain the highest quality of parks, equipment, and support facilities.
• Expand the present Park Police and supervisory Department staff complement as necessary to provide continued high levels of safety and security at both existing and new parks and facilities.

• Develop and implement a structured mechanism that will facilitate the continued involvement of community residents in the recreation planning process.

In the Department’s five year strategic plan, more specific objectives are listed for each goal to motivate and facilitate progress on each of these goals. These include increasing the amount of parkland, continuously evaluating program offerings, constructing additional recreation and support facilities, enhancing safety, and informing the public. From these objectives, the plan also includes a selection of specific recommendations for expansions and improvements, some of which are being implemented in the near future.

**Upcoming Developments**

The City Green project aims to “create an active community space and strong pedestrian connectivity between the City’s municipal complex, the Heart of Roswell Park, Canton Street and adjacent residential and commercial areas in Roswell’s historic district.” It would create a public space connecting SR 9/Alpharetta Street to Roswell’s City Hall as well as additional streetscaping, improved pedestrian areas, and other possible amenities, including a plaza, an amphitheater, open green space, and public art, among others. In January 2015, Roswell’s City Council and Mayor approved a contract to begin design of the City Green Master Plan and Design Project.

Waller Park is an exceptionally well-used park along the north side of Oxbo Road, between Downtown Roswell and SR 400. Because of its heavy use, and the need for a new water treatment plant on the west side of the park, the City is undertaking a series of improvements to the park. Many of these improvements include rehabilitating, reconstructing, and improving existing facilities and amenities, including picnic areas and trails. In addition to these, additional features have been proposed. These include information kiosks, new trails, a canoe launch, new access points, new restrooms, shade structures, wayfinding, landscaping, and a dog park, among a list of forty nine separate improvements.

Improvements are also being planned for the city’s Don White Memorial Park, which provides access both to the Chattahoochee River and to the River Walk trail. While still in the planning stages, potential additions to this park could include athletic fields, additional walking and bicycling trails, boardwalks, an open-air pavilion, a playground, a small restaurant or café, a bike share program, and fitness equipment.

The former property of the ACE Sand Company on Riverside Road, just northeast of Riverside Park, has become city property. In order to best utilize this parcel and all park space along the Chattahoochee, the City has undertaken a master planning process. Currently in the public input process, the River Parks Master Plan will define this site, which may include recreation facilities, shops, restaurants, or other facilities, as well as other sites along the river.