

City of Springfield

The heart of Effingham

Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045

Updated October 2024
Adopted by Resolution of City Council on

10/30/2024

RESOLUTION R2024-10

TO ADOPT THE 2025-2045 CITY OF SPRINGFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD is subject to the State of Georgia Planning Act of 1989 which calls for a certified Comprehensive Plan in order to obtain and maintain the status of Qualified Local Government; and,

WHEREAS, THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, is a member of the Coastal Regional Commission, an agency created to provide regional planning and intergovernmental coordination among certain county and city governments in the coastal area of Georgia; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Springfield 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georigia Planning Act of 1989 and was found compliant in meeting minimum standards by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF SPRINGFIELD HEREBY adopts the City of Springfield 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the resolution herein authorizes adoption as prescribed effective this **30th** day of **October 2024**.

APPROVED FOR ADOPTION

Barton A. Alderman, Mayor

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD GEORGIA INCORPORATED 1907

ATTEST:

Jennifer Y. Smith, City Clerk

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Introduction

The City of Springfield completed a four-part joint comprehensive plan update with Effingham County, the City of Rincon, and the City of Guyton in 2019. This Joint Comprehensive Plan for 2020-2040 was completed in partnership with the Coastal Regional Commission and adopted by all parties. The five-year update to the plan, as required by "The Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs are being submitted individually. Effingham County, along with the three municipalities located within, have prepared their own Comprehensive Plans for 2025-2045. The plan enclosed here will enable the City of Springfield to make specific revisions to the existing plan with a more intentional focus on those challenges and opportunities related to Springfield's unique characteristics and allow the city to maintain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) Status.

Springfield has encountered many changes in the last five years and while the City Vision Statement has not changed, many revisions are needed to the goals and work program to reach this vision. This updated Comprehensive Plan reflects those changes and the new approaches the city feels it needs to move toward attaining these goals. The following plan update will include an explanation as to the nature of these changes as well as the process of community input and planning practices used to determine the items addressed in the plan.

> **Springfield is a city that values its strong roots in tradition, character and heritage while also looking toward the future. Known as the "Heart of Effingham County," Springfield desires to balance its quiet residential nature, rural hometown appeal, connection with natural resources, and high quality of life while promoting economic development with balanced growth.**
>
> \- Springfield Vision Statement

A . Plan Outline:

The plan will address all items required in the Minimum Standards. The following is a brief summary of the sections of this Plan:

A **Community Overview** is given to better understand the nature of the City and the changes that have taken place since the last adopted Comprehensive Plan.

The **Vision and Goals** are described and listed by category with explanations as to why they have been amended from previously adopted plans.

The **Needs and Opportunities** that must be addressed in order to meet these Goals are evaluated and listed.

A review of the **Quality Community Objectives** and ways the city seeks to accomplish them through implementation of this plan.

The **Land Use, Housing, and Transportation** are further explained and discussed individually with implementation measures proposed that will ensure the plan goals are being met and that these closely related items are aligned.

The **Economic Development and Tourism** goals are evaluated together and necessary steps to take advantage of the opportunities available to the city are outlined.

Plans for improvements in **Recreation and Greenspace** within the city are explored in both short-term and long-term goals for existing park spaces as well as preserving new spaces.

Ways that **Coastal Vulnerability and Resiliency** can be addressed in the City of Springfield are discussed.

The importance of **Broadband** accessibility is noted and efforts needed by the City to ensure access to this utility for its citizens is discussed.

The **Community SWOT Analysis, Report of Accomplishments, Community Work Program** and **Documentation of Community Involvement** are included in the Appendices as well as the **Regional Water Plan**.

B. Preparation

This update was prepared by The City of Springfield Planning Staff and involved multiple rounds of public, stakeholder, and steering committee input. The visions and goals were the focus of the public input process, with a public survey made available to evaluate the goals from the previous. Those that participated in the online survey were asked how they felt about each of the goals listed in the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan: Did they feel these goals were achieved? Did they feel these goals were still relevant? Did they feel there were other goals that were being left out? The City also hosted in-person Public Hearings to receive any additional comments.

The Stakeholder Committee and the Steering Committee met multiple times and were tasked with evaluating the 2020-2040 Plan and reviewing the public input. The Stakeholder Committee hosted brainstorming sessions that focused on evaluating the City's strengths and weaknesses, suggesting what goals should remain in the plan update, and what revised or new goals should be be added. The Steering Committee then met to evaluate the input and suggestions to make determinations for what should be included in the plan.

C. Adoption

The draft plan update was posted on the City Website and presented for public comment. Additional surveys and public hearings were held to receive comments on the new draft plan and the new community goals. Both committees then reviewed the public input and decided how best to incorporate the comments received. Once the final draft of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan was completed it was submitted to the Department of Community Affairs for review.

The plan was approved by the Department of Community Affairs and adopted by the Mayor and City Council at a called meeting on October 30, 2024. See Springfield Resolution #2024-10.

D. Maintenance and Implementation

After adoption, both Council and Staff will seek to use this document as a vital tool in helping guide the city in becoming a vibrant and successful place to live and work; a City that can balance the ever changing needs of the future while maintaining respect for the historical culture and values that have made Springfield the Heart of Effingham County. This plan will be a living document, an effective tool to be used in policy making decisions and implementation. The Plan will need regular review and should be updated as needed to maintain relevance and value. As the City of Springfield continues to grow and change, these guidelines will be amended and revised to reflect any new priorities, or to revise existing ones to ensure that the City will maintain an optimal level of flexibility as it navigates the future challenges and changes that will inevitably occur.

Section 1. Acknowledgements

The 2024 update to the Springfield Comprehensive Plan was a collaborative process involving public input, staff participation, expert recommendations, and Elected Official involvement. The City of Springfield has experienced significant growth since the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2019 and this document has been updated to reflect these changes. The City has realized that our focus has shifted from promoting and attracting growth to developing efficient practices for managing growth.

A successful plan involves many components, but the most important is public engagement. The City of Springfield would like to thank all of those that completed our online surveys or attended the public hearings to provide crucial public feedback. We thank our Stakeholders for attending meetings and having engaging discussions and brainstorming sessions about changes and updates that should be included in the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan. We appreciate the efforts of the Steering Committee that was tasked with making decisions on what should be incorporated into the Plan Update documents.

The City would also like to thank the Coastal Regional Commission staff that assisted in reviewing the plan and attending the final meetings to ensure all the requirements were being met and that a completed Comprehensive Plan Update was submitted to the Department of Community Affairs.

Stakeholder Committee

The Stakeholder group consisted of representatives from our Planning and Zoning Board, Downtown Development Board and City Staff. The group also included community leaders, residents and developers. The Stakeholders were tasked with evaluating the previous Comprehensive Plan goals, reviewing any comments received from public hearings and the community survey results, and discussing the changing dynamics of the City of Springfield. They were able to use this information to brainstorm what revisions should be necessary in the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Madisen Hipelius
Ricky Eilerman
Sean Carter
Adrian Webber
Brittany Dasher
Jimmy Moncrief
Terry Cook
Meghan Ortiz
Dana Kirkland
Leah Perkins
Erin Phillips
Regina Clontz
Sgt. James Woodcock
Jacob Lang
Alyssa Schoonover
Alden Strandburg

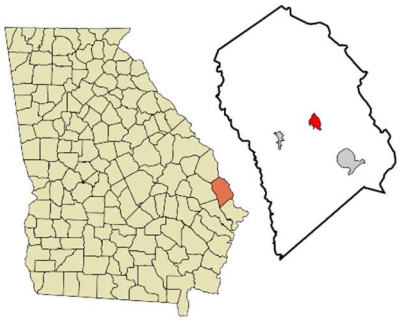
Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was tasked with reviewing the input from the Stakeholder Committee and deciding what updates were needed in the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan. Members consisted of the Mayor and City Council Members, City Department Heads, members of the Stakeholder Committee, and subject matter experts. This Committee was able to evaluate the information provided by public input and the suggestions from the stakeholders to then determine what needed to be included in the final draft versions of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Barty Alderman, Mayor
Steve Shealy, Council Member
Dee Moncrief, Council Member
Justin Cribbs, Council Member
Gary Weitman, Council Member
Grant Triplett, Council Member
Jenney Denney, Council Member
Matt Morris, City Manager
Erin Phillips, Planning Director
Jennifer Smith, City Clerk
Lauren Eargle, Assistant City Manager
Regina Clontz, Mars Theatre Director
Matt Fraizer, Engineer
Daneille Kirkland, Planning & Zoning Board

Section 2. Community Overview

The City of Springfield is located in Effingham County in southeastern Georgia, near the Savannah River that creates the border between Georgia and South Carolina. Springfield is the seat of Effingham County and prides itself on being a cultural and historical asset to the surrounding community.



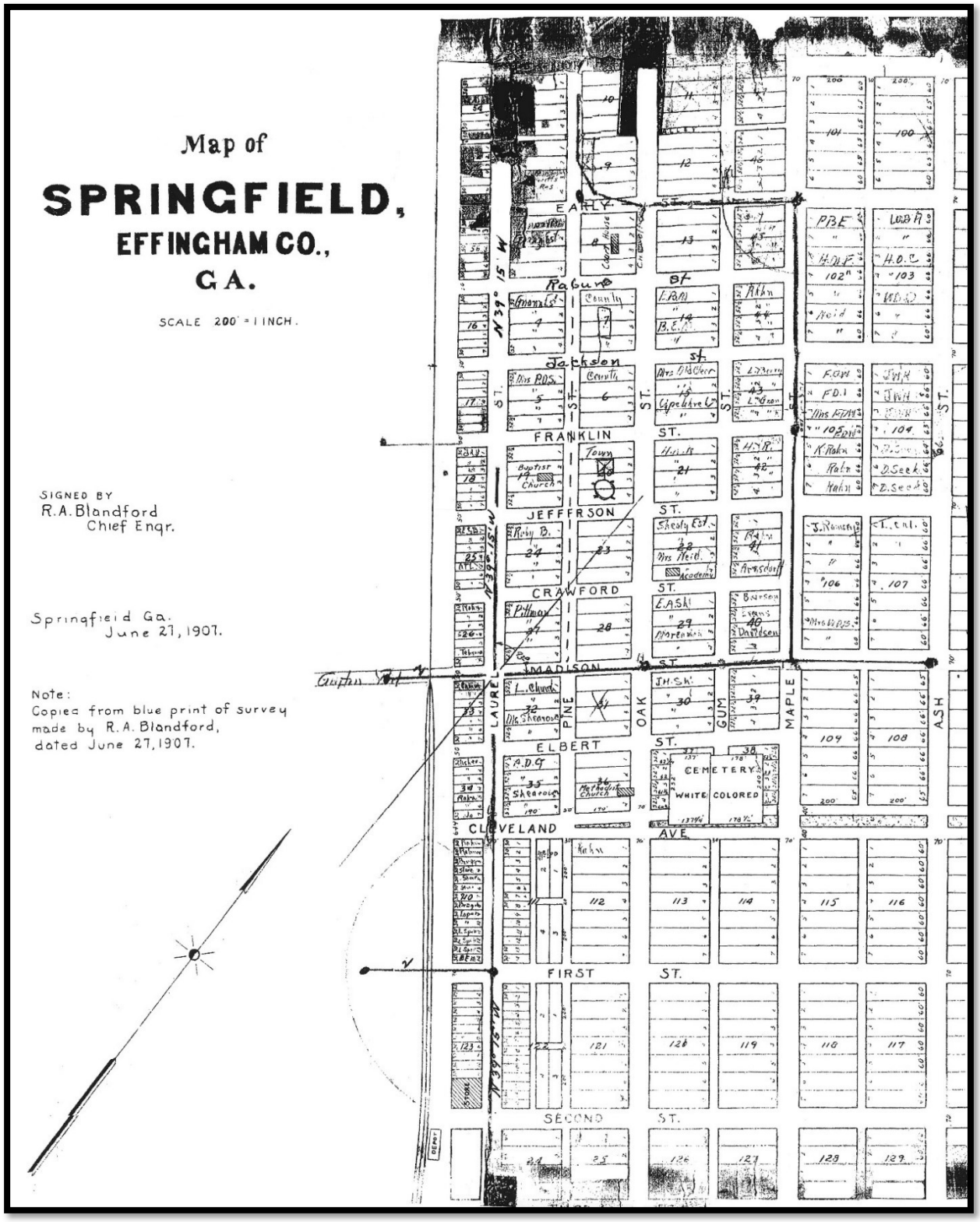
Founded in 1799 Springfield was later incorporated in 1838 and named the county seat. Known as the Heart of Effingham, Springfield is centrally located within the County. The core of the city is the historic district, based on a grid plan adopted in the 19th century. Much of the town center still incorporates this grid and a majority of it is now included in the Springfield Historic District, recognized on the National Register of Historic Places since 2021 with over 300 contributing structures and sites of historic value dating as far back as 1833.

Like many other small cities, Springfield has a commercial main street: Laurel Street. Also now known as GA Hwy 21, Laurel Street runs parallel to the railroad and is the home to the majority of historic commercial buildings within the city. Many of the original wooden structures have been lost due to fire or disrepair, but many masonry buildings constructed between 1900 and 1960 remain. Concentrated on Laurel Street and spanning approximately one mile, this area is known as Springfield's Downtown District, a small, historic, commercial area surrounded by residences.



Ramsey Ford Motor Company on Laurel Street, built c. 1907. Building is current location for Springfield City Hall.

The Downtown District was the bustling heart of Springfield for most of the twentieth century. However, in 1995 an expansion of Hwy 21 was needed, and a four lane highway was proposed. The city officials requested the new wider road bypass the town to save the commercial downtown and the structures within it. City expansion and growth along this bypass has created a second commercial corridor, referred to as the Hwy 21 Corridor. This has given Springfield the unique opportunity of having both a traditional historic downtown and a commercial highway corridor.



Springfield Survey of Lots, 1907



Springfield's focus over the last 20 years has been to preserve and revitalize the historic downtown while still encouraging economic growth and new business development. The downtown area has become a hub of community activity once again. The city can now focus on the gateways into downtown along the highway commercial corridor. Enforcing and maintaining development standards that encourage cohesive design and aesthetically pleasing development paired with thoughtful roadway and access design are crucial in this area. As the highway corridor develops, it cannot be allowed to create congestion, confusion, and chaos in regard to traffic and wayfinding.

As this area develops it will also be important to maintain alternative transportation routes and secondary connections between uses and developments. The city has received multiple requests for annexation in recent years and in the past five years alone the city has grown from 2.7 square miles to 3.9 square miles. The majority of this growth has been along the highway corridor and the City expects that this will be an area where it will continue to grow in coming years. It is extremely important to maintain connectivity, both aesthetically and physically, between our historic commercial core and our modern highway commercial corridors.





Section 3. Vision and Goals

Springfields Vision Statement:

Springfield is a city that values its strong roots in tradition, character and heritage while also looking toward the future. Known as the "Heart of Effingham County," Springfield desires to balance its quiet residential nature, rural hometown appeal, connection with natural resources, and high quality of life while promoting economic development with balanced growth.

The City of Springfield has experienced a tremendous amount of growth in recent years. The past five years have seen a number of downtown buildings renovated and the once struggling Downtown District has become a vibrant destination for events and activity. Renewed interest in commercial development from the private market, along with increasing requests for housing permits and new residential developments has pushed the city to think critically about best practices in handling the new residents, new businesses, and new challenges that have arisen.

Previous goals were focused on encouraging new businesses, new development, revitalization of our downtown corridor, tourism, and economic development efforts. The focus has now shifted to managing growth and maintaining the success of downtown while finding ways to accommodate new growth and retain the values and sense of place that made businesses and residents want to locate and remain in Springfield. City officials and staff strongly believe that maintaining the rural, inviting, and rich quality of life that makes Springfield the Heart of Effingham County is a priority.

The goals in the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan were evaluated by the public, city staff, Stakeholders, and Sterring Committee members. The goals were divided into two groups during the evaluation periods to maximize efficient use of volunteer time and encourage overlapping discussions between related items. Goals were placed in one of the following categories for discussion.

Group A – Goals related to Transportation, Land Use, and Housing.
Group B – Goals related to Recreation, Tourism, and Economic Development.

These community Goals and Policies reflect ways that Springfield can seek to find balance and cohesion between the existing historic aspects of the city and the new growth and development that will continue to come to Springfield. Based on the vision the City has for its future, the following have been selected as areas of focus and designated as goals that will help achieve that vision.

Each section includes a brief description of what has changed since the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan adoption. A comparison chart has also been included to better understand the specific modifications to the previously adopted goals. These new updated goals are more descriptive and reflective of what Springfield's long-range focus should be to attain the City's vision for the future.

Transportation

Goals are modified to more specific and attainable, but have the same focus of promoting connectivity, walkability, alternative transportation, and Ebenezer Creek access and proactive traffic planning.

- Continue to expand multi-use trails, walkable streets, and connectivity between new communities, commercial developments and recreation areas.
- Promote the increased use of golf carts and other alternative modes of transportation.
- Promote and expand Ebenezer Creek Biking and Walking Trails.
- Support Highway 119 Georgia Bike Routes.
- Implement measures identified in master plan for traffic lights, sidewalks and general connectivity.
- Promote ways to provide connections to the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway.

Land Use

New goals to address city growth via annexation, and development locations have been added. Continued focus on limiting sprawl, land preservation, Ebenezer Creek protection, and Hwy 21 Corridor management are maintained.

- Direct growth to areas where adequate infrastructure exists that can accommodate the need.
- Support development of property near existing similar development.
- Support infill of empty lots with similar and comparable uses.
- Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space in new neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Continue to enforce commercial corridor gateway beautification on Hwy 21 Bypass.
- Expanded zoning standards that support integration of mixed uses in areas where density is appropriate.
- Support annexation of lands along Hwy 21 Bypass to Ebenezer Road to ensure cohesive development standards.
- Support beautification and preservation efforts along Ebenezer Greenway.

Housing

Goals are still to promote affordability and variety in housing stock. Previous goals have become more specific to what is attainable in Springfield and new goals regarding interconnectivity and housing locations based on density have been added.

- Support opportunities for affordable housing and promotion of home ownership.
- Support opportunities for higher density developments near commercial corridors, such as Hwy 21 Bypass south of Laurel Street.
- Support development that offers a variety of housing options.
- Support development of higher-end housing with larger than minimum lots sizes, especially in areas near wetlands, to minimize potential environmental disturbances.
- Look for opportunities to promote townhomes and mixed-use development between commercial and residential areas.
- Promote and incentivize roadway, sidewalk, and multiuse trail connections between uses.

Economic Prosperity

Goals continue to focus on promoting the revitalization of downtown, historic preservation, and connectivity. Goals regarding lodging and events have been modified.

- Continue to encourage and support social events, art, music, theater, festivals,and other live entertainment to make downtown a destination.
- Encourage a variety of event types and event locations for our residents and visitors.
- Promote a variety of lodging opportunities within the city that will not result in a loss of community character, or become a detriment to the historic downtown, established residential area, environment, or gateway corridors into the city.
- Balance the preservation of historic properties while allowing conversion of structures into bed and breakfast businesses in residential areas.
- Encourage the use of second floor commercial space downtown as short term rentable space or rooms.
- Improve connectivity between Downtown and Highway 21 Corridor by creating a gateway into the city that will direct people and business into the downtown district.

Resource Management

Goals have been modified to provide more specific guidance. Promotion of historic buildings, cultural landmarks, recreational areas, greenspaces, and environmental assets such as Ebenezer Creek are still priorities.

- Take steps to prevent the loss of community character and heritage by providing protection of historic and cultural resources, specifically structures and landmarks in the historic district.
- Take steps to prevent the loss of cultural heritage by supporting conservation and education about historical and environmental aspects of Ebenezer Creek and intersecting waterways.
- Maintain historic district regulations to ensure cohesive infill development in Downtown District.
- Adopt and implement measures to regulate new construction and renovation of historic residences, especially near the Historic Courthouse.
- Support incentives for preservation and reuse of historic structures.
- Expand and improve greenspace and parkland by requiring areas to be set aside for active and passive recreation when new development occurs.
- Continue to hold high standards for landscaping and buffering to provide additional greenspaces/areas within commercial developments.

Local Preparedness

These goals have not been modified and are still relevant to the city's future planning.

- Look for opportunities and funding to improve stormwater treatment and quality.
- Work to stay ahead of demand for water and sewer needs by being proactive with capacity.

Sense of Place

Goals have been modified slightly to become more descriptive and attainable. Support of downtown, neighborhood enrichment, and maintaining a small-town feel are maintained as the core, especially as the city continues to grow.

- Embrace traditional development patterns that create strong neighborhoods, walkable streets, and efficient delivery of services.
- Continue to support development that provides connectivity between commercial and residential areas with sidewalks and multiuse trails.
- Promote and encourage the central downtown where most of the shops and businesses are occupied and operating without losing high quality of life with small-town feel.
- Support and encourage alternative transportation route connections to downtown to enhance the small-town feel and reduce vehicle traffic and need for parking.

Regional Cooperation

Goals maintain a focus on the Hwy 21 Corridor, Ebenezer Greenway, and providing connections between municipalities and Effingham County. Slight modifications were made.

- Coordinate with the County on Highway 21 Bypass design guidelines for cohesive and convenient development of the commercial corridor.
- Support possible pedestrian and/or alternative transportation extension to Guyton.
- Support efforts to provide access to and preservation of Ebenezer Greenway both in the City of Springfield and unincorporated Effingham County.

Education

The City does not have its own educational system, but can still provide support to businesses. Goal has been modified to be clearer.

- Support Downtown Development Authority efforts to provide access to and awareness of professional and business development education for local businesses.

For a better understanding of the goals listed in this plan as compared to those listed in the previous plan update, see table *3.1 Goals Comparison Chart*.

Table 3.1 Goals Comparison Chart

Current Goals of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan compared to previously adopted Goals in the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan.

2020 Goals	2025 Revised and New Goals
Economic Prosperity	
Make downtown a destination with social events, art, music, theater, festivals and other live entertainment	• Continue to encourage and support social events, art, music, theater, festivals and other live entertainment to make downtown a destination. • Encourage a variety of event types and event locations for our residents and visitors.
Balance preservation of historical sites while promoting growth of lodging opportunities, ...	• Promote a variety of lodging opportunities within the city that will not result in a loss of community character, or become a detriment to the historic downtown, established residential area, environment, or gateway corridors into the city.
... particularly with the conversion of historic Victorian structures into bed and breakfast businesses.	• Balance the preservation of historic properties while allowing conversion of structures into bed and breakfast businesses in residential areas. • Encourage the use of second floor commercial space in downtown as short term rentable space or rooms.
Improve connectivity to Highway 21 by creating a gateway into the city that will drive traffic and business into the downtown district.	• Improve connectivity between Downtown and Highway 21 Corridor by creating a gateway into the city that will drive traffic and business into the downtown district.
Resource Management	
Take steps to prevent the loss of community character and heritage by providing protection of historic and cultural resources, specifically structures in the historic district and Ebenezer Creek.	• Take steps to prevent the loss of community character and heritage by providing protection of historic and cultural resources, specifically structures and landmarks in the historic district. • Take steps to prevent the loss of cultural heritage by supporting conservation and education about historical and environmental aspects of Ebenezer Creek and intersecting waterways.
Expand and improve greenspace and parkland by providing requirements for areas to be set aside for active and passive recreation when new development occurs.	• Expand and improve greenspace and parkland by requiring areas to be set aside for active and passive recreation when new development occurs. • Continue to hold high standards for landscaping and buffering to provide additional greenspaces/areas within commercial developments.
Adopt and implement historic district regulations	• Maintain historic district regulations to ensure cohesive infill development in Commercial Downtown • Adopt and implement measure to regulate new construction and renovation of historic residences, especially near the Historic Courthouse.

Provide incentives for preservation and reuse of historic structures.	• Support incentives for preservation and reuse of historic structures.
Land Use	
Direct growth to areas where adequate infrastructure exists that can accommodate the need.	• Direct growth to areas where adequate infrastructure exists that can accommodate the need. • Support development of property near existing, similar development. • Support infill of empty lots with similar and comparable uses.
Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space when new development occurs.	• Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space when new development and residential subdivisions occur.
Focus on commercial corridor on Highway 21, gateway beautification, green corridors, expanded zoning standards that promote mixed use.	• Continue to enforce commercial corridor gateway beautification on Hwy 21 Bypass. • Expanded zoning standards that support integration of mixed uses in areas where density is appropriate. • Support annexation of lands along Hwy 21 Bypass to Ebenezer Road to ensure cohesive development standards. • Support beautification and preservation efforts along Ebenezer Greenway.
Local Preparedness	
Look for opportunity and funding to improve stormwater treatment and quality	• Look for opportunity and funding to improve stormwater treatment and quality
Work to say ahead of demand for water and sewer needs by being proactive with capacity	• Work to say ahead of demand for water and sewer needs by being proactive with capacity
Sense of Place	
Embrace traditional development patterns that create strong neighborhoods, walkable streets, and efficient delivery of services.	• Embrace traditional development patterns that create strong neighborhoods, walkable streets, and efficient delivery of services. • Continue to support development that provides connectivity between commercial and residential areas with sidewalks and multiuse trails.
Create a "town center" by promoting central downtown where most of the shops and businesses are occupied and operating creating a high quality of life with small-town feel.	• Promote and encourage the central downtown where most of the shops and businesses are occupied and operating without losing high quality of life with small-town feel. Support and encourage alternative transportation route connections to downtown to enhance the small town feel and reduce vehicle traffic and need for parking.

Provide incentives for preservation and reuse of historic structures.	• Support incentives for preservation and reuse of historic structures.
Land Use	
Direct growth to areas where adequate infrastructure exists that can accommodate the need.	• Direct growth to areas where adequate infrastructure exists that can accommodate the need. • Support development of property near existing, similar development. • Support infill of empty lots with similar and comparable uses.
Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space when new development occurs.	• Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space when new development and residential subdivisions occur.
Focus on commercial corridor on Highway 21, gateway beautification, green corridors, expanded zoning standards that promote mixed use.	• Continue to enforce commercial corridor gateway beautification on Hwy 21 Bypass. • Expanded zoning standards that support integration of mixed uses in areas where density is appropriate. • Support annexation of lands along Hwy 21 Bypass to Ebenezer Road to ensure cohesive development standards. • Support beautification and preservation efforts along Ebenezer Greenway.
Local Preparedness	
Look for opportunity and funding to improve stormwater treatment and quality	• Look for opportunity and funding to improve stormwater treatment and quality
Work to say ahead of demand for water and sewer needs by being proactive with capacity	• Work to say ahead of demand for water and sewer needs by being proactive with capacity
Sense of Place	
Embrace traditional development patterns that create strong neighborhoods, walkable streets, and efficient delivery of services.	• Embrace traditional development patterns that create strong neighborhoods, walkable streets, and efficient delivery of services. • Continue to support development that provides connectivity between commercial and residential areas with sidewalks and multiuse trails.
Create a "town center" by promoting central downtown where most of the shops and businesses are occupied and operating creating a high quality of life with small-town feel.	• Promote and encourage the central downtown where most of the shops and businesses are occupied and operating without losing high quality of life with small-town feel. Support and encourage alternative transportation route connections to downtown to enhance the small town feel and reduce vehicle traffic and need for parking.

Promote and expand Ebenezer Bike Trail and Highway 119 Georgia Bike Route.	• Promote and expand Ebenezer Creek Biking and Walking Trails • Support Highway 119 Georgia Bike Route.
Implement measures identified for in master plan for traffic lights, sidewalks and the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway.	• Implement measures identified in master plan for traffic lights, sidewalks and general connectivity. • Promote ways to provide connections to the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway.
Education	
E1. Look for opportunity to provide professional and business development seminars and workshops to grow local business.	• Support Downtown Development Authority efforts to provide access to and awareness of professional and business development education for local businesses.

Section 4. Need and Opportunities

The Goals stated in the previous chapter will be the City of Springfield's long-term focus. The following list of Needs and Opportunities will be the short-term imperatives which will require direct attention in the next five years.

The Needs and Opportunities listed in this section are a product of the SWOT analysis that was conducted by the Comprehensive Plan Committee in 2019. During this process, the stakeholders were able to collaborate and describe the unique situations the City faces. The items identified in this SWOT analysis can be found in the appendix of this document.

These updated Needs and Opportunities were evaluated by the public via digital surveys, the Stakeholder Committee, and the Steering Committee for relevance today. The survey results listed in this section show that the public feels the City has addressed issues related to leisure activity offerings and downtown revitalization, but also feel these are still important areas of focus. Based on this input and the discussions at the committee meetings, the Needs and Opportunities needed little revision. Some new items have been added based on changing dynamics within the city based on suggestions from the public and new goals added to the Comprehensive Plan. *See Table 4.1 Needs & Opportunities Comparison Chart*.

The revised Needs and Opportunities are listed below:

Economic Development:

- Opportunity: Promote traditional downtown core

Development Patterns:

- Opportunity: Renovate and improve downtown
- Opportunity: Incorporate mixed use growth
- Need: Control Sprawl
- Need: Increase regulation on renovation and alteration of existing historic structures.

Conservation:

- Opportunity: Plan growth to prevent development sprawl and protect natural resources
- Opportunity: Invest in Natural areas that provide connections to Ebenezer Greenway
- Need: Protect wetlands from encroaching development
- Need: Preserve natural resources

Community:

- Opportunity: Increase leisure activity offerings
- Need: Preserve historic downtown character

Livability:

- Opportunity: Diversify available housing options in future development
- Need: Provide more connectivity between recreation, housing and commercial areas

Governance:

- Opportunity: Partner with City of Guyton and Effingham for trail and sidewalk connectivity
- Opportunity: Create and strengthen development standards that support connectivity and reduce stress on existing infrastructure.
- Opportunity: Implement progressive development standards that require sustainable, efficient development

See Appendix C for results of 2020 and 2025 Needs and Opportunities surveys.

Table 4.1 Needs & Opportunities Comparison Chart

Current Needs and Opportunities of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan compared to those previously adopted in the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES 2024		What revisions to Opportunities and Needs are needed?
Economic Development		
Opportunity	Need	
Promote traditional downtown core		
Development Patterns		
Opportunity	Need	
Renovate and improve downtown	Control sprawl	
Incorporate mixed use growth	NEW: Increase regulation on renovation and alteration of existing historic structures	
Conservation		
Opportunity	Need	
Plan growth to prevent development sprawl and protect natural resources	Protect wetlands from encroaching development	
~~Invest in natural areas through Ebenezer Trail Development~~	Preserve natural resources	EDIT: Invest in Natural areas that provide connections to Ebenezer Greenway
Community		
Opportunity	Need	
Increase leisure activity offerings	Preserve historic downtown character	
Livability		
Opportunity	Need	
Diversify available housing options in future development		
Increase leisure activity offerings.	NEW: Provide more connectivity between recreation, housing and commercial areas.	
Governance		
Opportunity	Need	
Partner with City of Guyton and Effingham for trail and sidewalk connectivity		
~~Implement progressive development standards.~~		EDIT: Implement progressive development standards that require sustainable, efficient development
NEW: Create and strengthen development standards that support connectivity and reduced stress on existing infrastructure.		

Section 5. Quality Community Objectives

"For Georgians of today and tomorrow to have the opportunity to live and work in thriving communities."

- DCA Vision, 2018

This section is used as a guide to determine which Quality Community Objectives, as identified by the GA Department of Community Affairs, the City of Springfield will seek to accomplish with future planning efforts outlined in this Plan.

The 10 objectives outlined below are adapted from generally accepted community development principles to fit the unique qualities of Georgia's communities. Although only recommendations, DCA maintains that if a community implements these principles, it will result in greater efficiency, cost savings, and a higher quality of life for Georgia citizens. These objectives are intentionally crafted with significant areas of overlap, such that, by addressing one or more of the objectives, a community will also end up addressing aspects of others.

1. **Economic Prosperity: Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community.**

   Springfield seeks to attract and foster growth of suitable businesses that strengthen its tax base. Strategies include growth from annexation of new properties into the city, attracting business that can create jobs, efforts to diversify the local economy by promoting tourism, and adding a variety of consumer options for residents and visitors.

2. **Resource Management: Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identity and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community.**

   Springfield has made efforts to protect the natural environment, particularly with the Ebenezer Greenway Initiative. Preservation of green space is required for new residential developments and current land use planning encourages lesser densities near wetland and natural resource areas.

3. **Efficient Land Use: Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community.**

   Development in Springfield is encouraged near existing infrastructure and similar uses to avoid sprawl, make efficient use of city services, and minimize unnecessary land development- especially near wetland areas. Undisturbed buffers are required of new residential development to minimize land clearing and disturbance.

4. **Local Preparedness: Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve.**

   Springfield seeks to keep its "small town" feel while still incorporating and planning for growth. Infrastructure improvements in roads, water, sewer, and stormwater are underway. Ordinance revisions will continue to further regulate development standards and zoning requirements to ensure growth will align with the City's vision for its future.

5. **Sense of Place: Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities.**

   Springfield's goals consist of embracing traditional development patterns to ensure cohesive new and infill development. The city will support walkable streets and interconnectivity between uses. Preserving and revitalizing the downtown historic district, both commercial and residential, is and will continue to be a priority.

6. **Regional Cooperation: Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs.**

   Springfield has historically worked well with both Effingham County and neighboring cities. Current initiatives include working with the City of Guyton for a multiuse trail to connect the cities and working with Effingham County to provide consistent development standards along commercial corridors. Springfield is willing to collaborate with other jurisdictions on solutions to common problems.

7. **Housing Options: Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive and resource efficient housing in the community**.

   Housing affordability is a challenge with current land and construction prices; however, Springfield encourages a range of housing options within the city to promote variety in type, cost, and size of homes.

8. **Transportation Options: Address the transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities of all residents.**

   Springfield has been diligently working with ordinance revisions and land use planning to ensure adequate transportation infrastructure that seeks to avoid congestion. Alternative transportation is promoted and planned for new development and secondary access routes that can divert traffic away from arterial roads are required in most new developments.

9. **Educational Opportunities: Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions.**

   Springfield owns the Mars Theatre, a renovated historic one screen theatre in the heart of downtown. The Theatre is regularly used for privately hosted training and seminars. The city encourages the use of the Theatre by the Downtown Development Authority for hosting classes and providing education regarding best business practices, available services, and programs for small business.

10. **Community Health: Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods and good working opportunities.**

    The city is actively working towards fostering and maintaining safe healthy environments for its citizens. The ability of Springfield citizens to live active and well-rounded lifestyles is encouraged through incorporation of passive and active recreation options for citizens. Springfield's focus on economic stability encourages general community health and opens opportunities for citizens and job creation.

Section 6. Land use Planning

In order to meet the goals outlined in this plan the City of Springfield proposes the following guide for future land use planning for the different parts of the city.

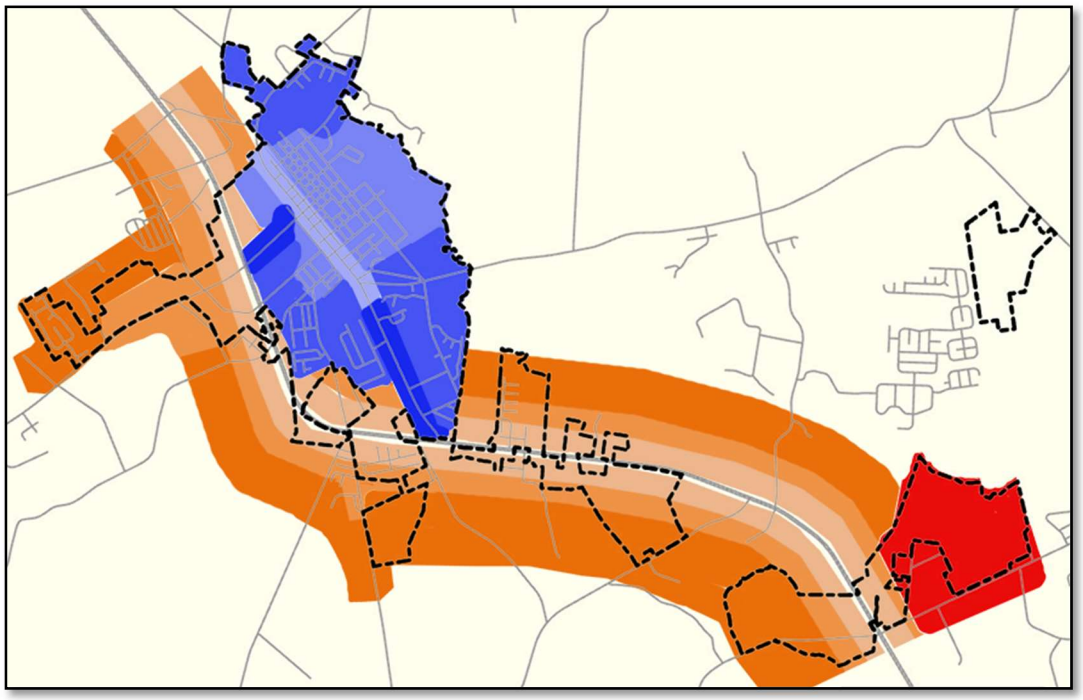
Future Land Use Guiding Principles

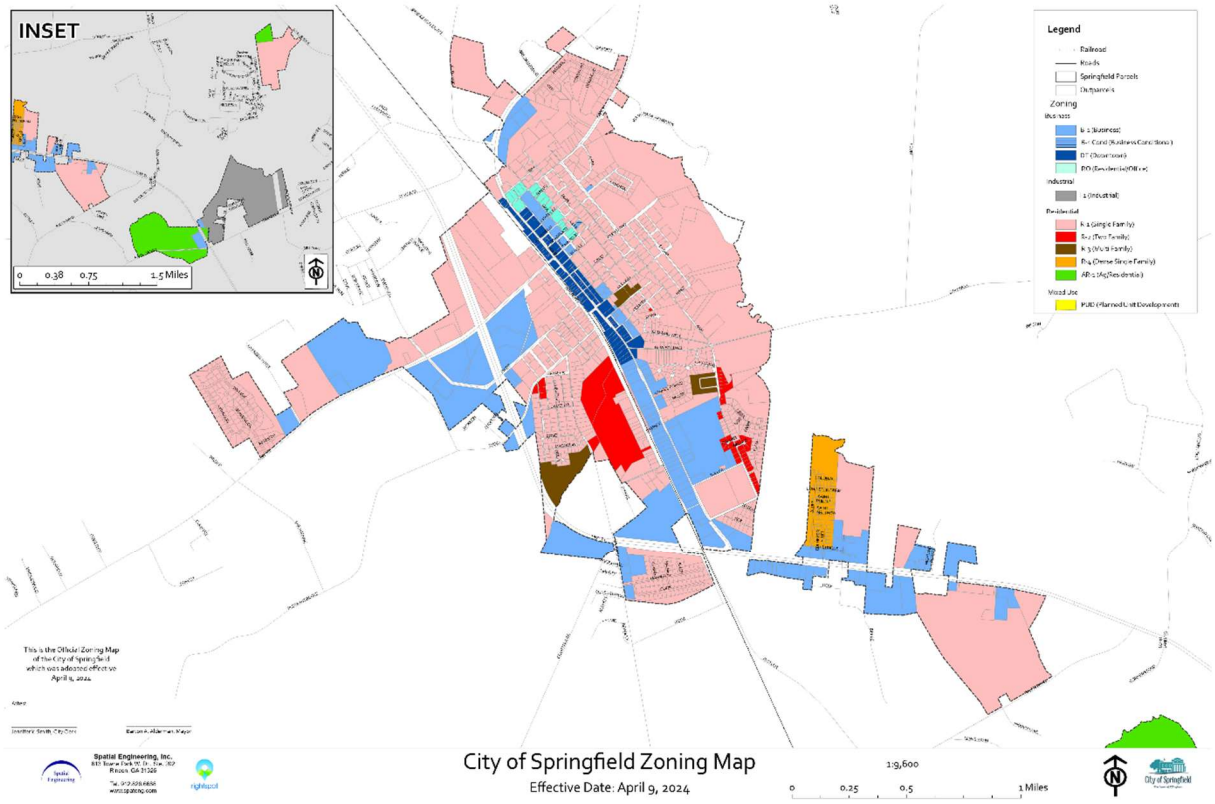
- Strive for consistent development types and characteristics within similar land use areas.
- Require appropriate transitions between different land use areas such that there is a "step down" or "step up" between these different uses.
- Discourage the establishment of intense or heavy industrial or commercial land uses near existing residential areas.
- Not allow more intense development in areas not served by public water and/or sewer

Land Use Maps and Character Area Analysis

Development in different areas of the city should be approached thoughtfully. The City of Springfield proposes using multiple methods to help guide future land use planning. Eight character areas have been identified that each have unique characteristics of building design and use. These designated character areas can be broken into two basic groups.

Each of these areas are described in detail with maps provided to better illustrate the general locations of each area. A copy of the current zoning map is provided to illustrate the current land use for comparison. The provided character area maps are intended only to be an estimate of the boundary of each area and areas may intersect, overlap, or change as the city expands and grows in coming years.





The City of Springfield has the following zoning Districts. The most recent zoning map is shown above.

R-1	Detached Single Family Residential
R-2A	Duplex Residential
R-2B	Townhome Residential
R-3	Multifamily Residential
R-4	High Density Residential
AR-1	Agricultural Residential
DT	Downtown
B-1	General Commercial
RO	Residential Office
I-1	Industrial
PUD	Planned Unit Development

Areas 1 to 4:

These areas are located in the more historic parts of the city that developed prior to the creation of the Hwy 21 Bypass. Development in these areas radiates from the central main street commercial district along Laurel Street. Growth has occurred organically over the past century and has the following traits in terms of land use, architecture, and urban design:

- Building design consists of southern vernacular architecture, many homes are considered historic, and many commercial buildings are small and simple in form with minimal architectural detailing.
- Uses blend into one another as they flow from commercial to residential. There are homes in the commercial corridor and at times commercial buildings within residential areas.
- The road network is originally based on a grid plan. There are access alleys and sidewalks along main streets. Single-entry subdivisions are rare.

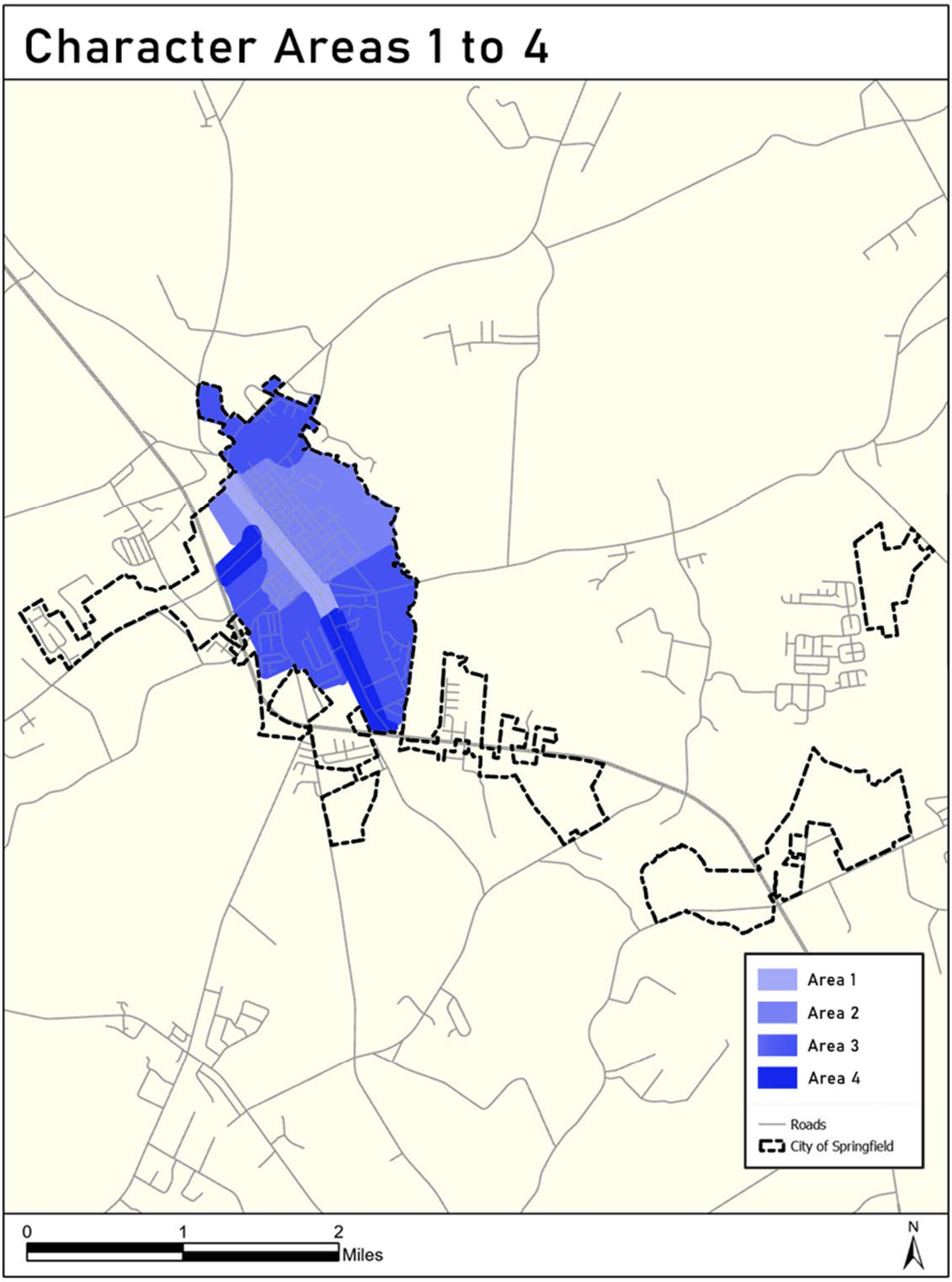
These areas are considered the core of Springfield and large tracts of land or undeveloped areas are limited. Future development and new buildings will be in the form of infill of the few vacant lots left available. These areas are also not likely to change or expand over time and the current land use will likely remain. The city does not propose any land use changes for these areas and instead will use the character areas to help determine the use and design of any future construction.

Area 1 is the commercial downtown consisting of Historic commercial and residential buildings surrounding Laurel Street.

Area 2 is the historic residential area located just outside of the commercial corridor where homes typically range from 1890 to 1990. They are built along historic lot lines based on the original plan of Springfield.

Area 3 is where more recent residential growth has occurred from approximately 1990 to now. Homes are primarily located in subdivision developments located off collector streets and there are some commercial uses and more dense residential uses.

Area 4 is the commercial area along the arterial roads that have been created in recent decades and are not considered part of the historic commercial downtown.


Character Areas 1 to 4
Area 1
Area 2
Area 3
Area 4
Roads
City of Springfield
0
1
2
Miles
N

Areas 5 to 8:

These are highway-adjacent areas that have primarily developed after the creation of the Hwy 21 Bypass. They have developed along the state routes in recent decades and development has followed parallel to the path of GA Highway 21 and GA Highway 119. Growth in these areas has the following traits:

- Building design is more commercialized and not unique to Springfield. Small box stores and metal buildings are prevalent in the commercial areas.
- Residential development is typically in the form of single-entry subdivisions with repetitive "cookie cutter" housing.
- Uses can include heavy commercial, big box stores, and industrial
- Development has been primarily focused on highway-adjacent parcels. Subdivision entrances can be found next to commercial developments; both directly access the highway.
- Few secondary access roads exist, and the highway is the primary entrance/exit for most development.

As tracts of land in these areas have developed over the decades, they have requested annexation into the city. Some highway-adjacent parcels have requested annexation, and some have not. This has led to a somewhat interesting configuration of in-city and out-of-city parcels along the highways. As these highway areas continue to draw the interest of commercial and residential developers, more annexation requests are expected. For this reason, the city believes its future land use planning should include both in-city and out-of-city parcels in Areas 5 to 8.

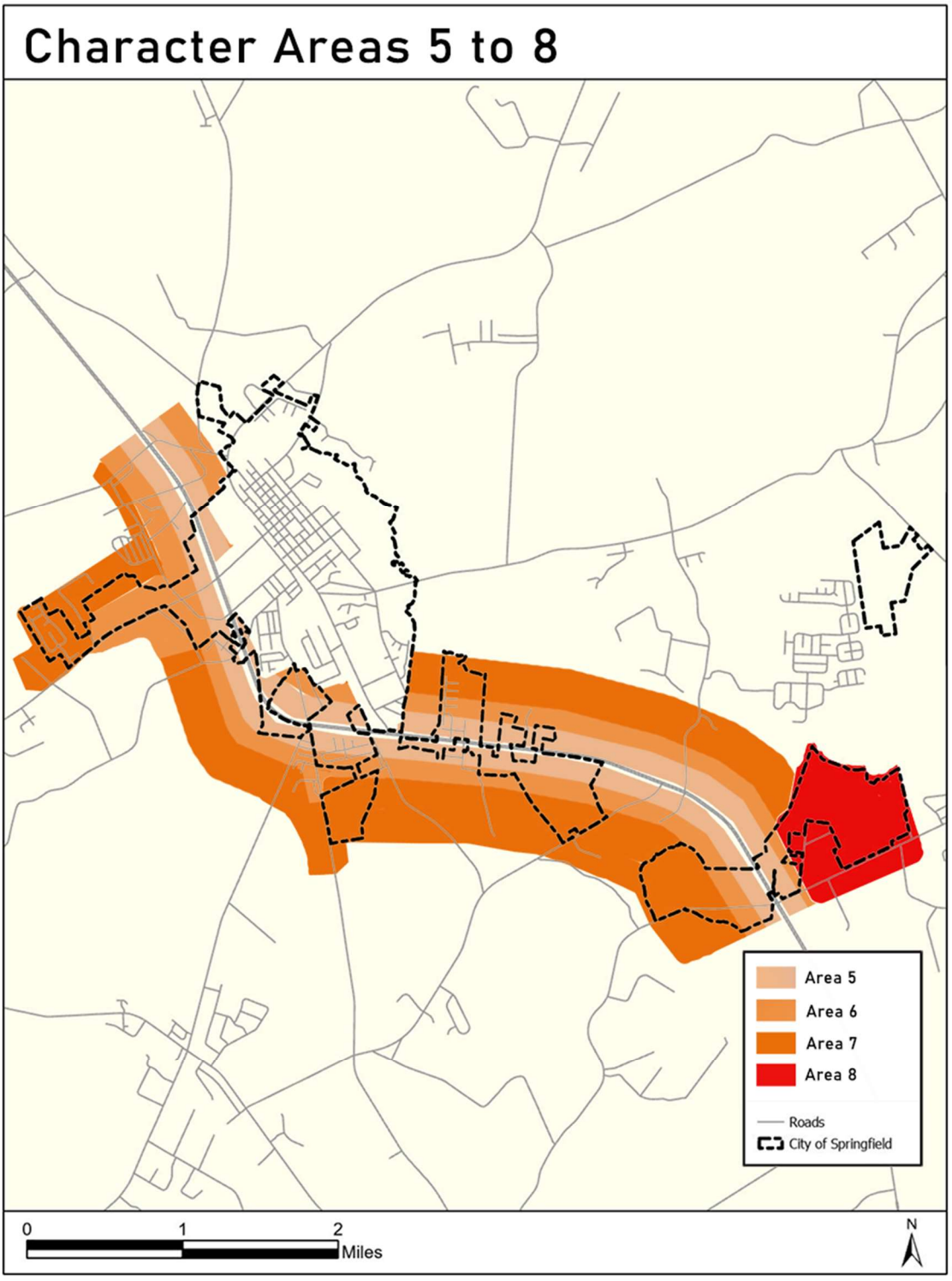
A considerable amount of land in this area is still undeveloped and includes many large tracts of 30 acres or more. The City of Springfield would like to use land planning methods that allow for both control and flexibility in these areas. Transect Zoning is a zoning method that uses a series of zones that transition across path from dense urban development to more open rural uses. Zones 5 – 7 will follow this as a model to provide layers that radiate away from the Highway and provide transition from commercial to single-family residential. Using this as a guide to steer development of the large undeveloped parcels, the City can ensure cohesive development across all parcels and regulate uses in this new Highway corridor.

Area 5 is that area closest to Highway 21 where large buildings are expected and heavier, more dense commercial uses can take advantage of visible road frontage.

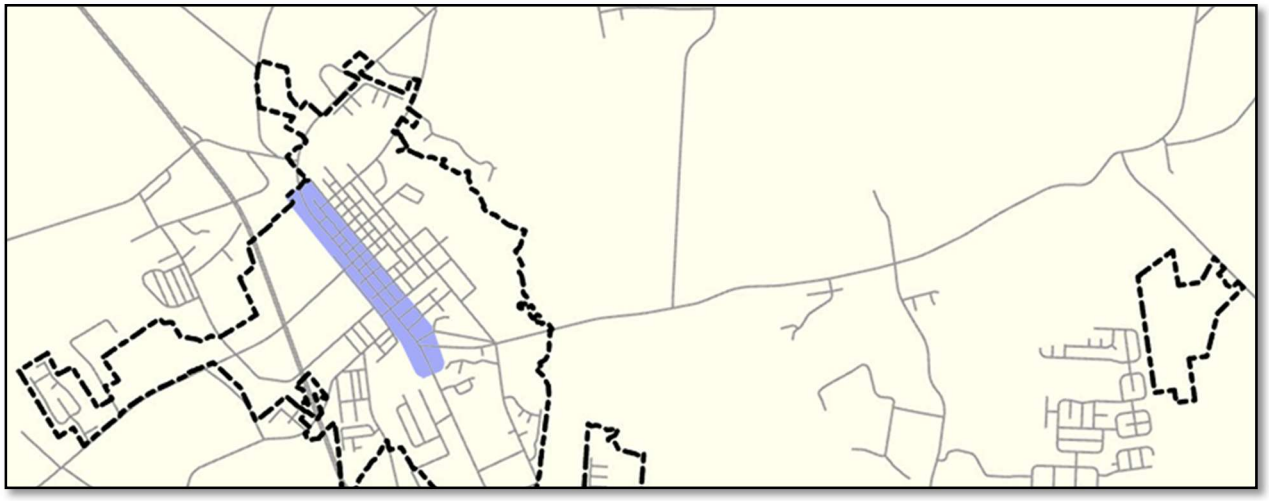
Area 6 is a Highway Mixed Use Transition Area behind area 5 that will be a mix of less dense commercial uses and more dense residential uses.

Area 7 is the third zone set aside for Detached Single Family Residential where density of homes will decrease from Area 6 and lot sizes will increase as you approach more rural and wetland areas furthest from Highway 21.

Area 8 is the already-established industrial area and some growth and infill are expected here.


Character Areas 5 to 8
Area 5
Area 6
Area 7
Area 8
Roads
City of Springfield
0
1
2
Miles
N

Character Area Descriptions



1. Commercial Downtown

Current Land Use: This area consists of historic commercial buildings, residences, and churches along Laurel Street. Second floor residential and single-family homes were common historically but are less prevalent now. Many of the historic homes have been converted to business uses or lost to fire in the past 100 years. The current zoning for the majority of parcels is "DT" Downtown. This zoning allows for residential on the second floor only and commercial uses only on the ground floor. Parks and shared parking are in various locations in this area.

Future Land Use: Encourage mixed use infill development with ground floor commercial and second level residential when possible. Commercial uses could be extended down Laurel Street or outward toward Pine Street. Pocket parks and green spaces are encouraged.

Building/Lot Design: Setbacks encourage small build-to lines to blend new infill with the existing historic structures. Commercial buildings range in date from 1900 to 1990 and concrete block and masonry are common materials. Historic buildings prior to 1960 should be preserved and any new construction should mimic and complement their design to the furthest extent possible. Modern interpretation of historic designs will be considered, but it is important to keep the historic small-town aesthetic with all new developments. Sidewalk connections and pedestrian access are important to maintain. Onsite parking should be limited and, if needed, be on the sides and rear of the lots.

The DT zoning district currently has design guidelines for both site and building design that will guide new infill development in this area.


Aunt Tinkie's
ANTIQUES and THRIFT SHOP




THE LOCAL on LAUREL

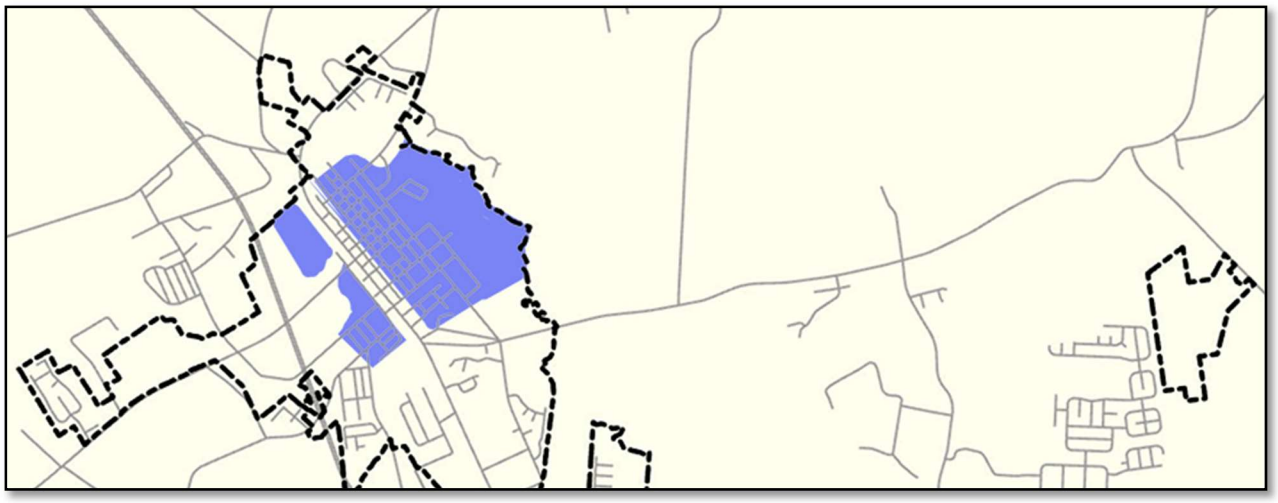







MARS
THEATRE


AHEAD



2. **Historic Residential Area**

Current Land Use: This is the first residential area to develop in Springfield with a majority of the homes being built prior to 1980. The homes closest to Laurel Street, on either side, are the oldest and many are considered contributing structures in the Springfield Historic District with a variety of architectural styles (shotgun homes, cottages, and ranches) scattered throughout. New homes are on the outer edges and are more modern in design, comparatively. There is housing variety, with small Multifamily Dwellings and a few Duplex Dwellings or Limited Multifamily Dwellings mixed within the housing. There are also a few commercial buildings that have been allowed to continue commercial use within this district.

This area is based on the original grid plan of Springfield with many intersecting streets, alleys and sidewalks incorporated into the plan. Lot sizes range from a traditional Springfield Lot of 66' x 120' to some larger parcels of 1 acre or more.

Future Land Use: The area is already developed with few larger tracts left to build upon. Infill development will be the only option for future construction. This area will continue to be primarily single-family homes and may possibly allow low impact commercial uses such as medical or institutional establishments along collector roads. Limited Multifamily Dwellings, Duplex Dwellings, and Townhome Dwellings could be allowed in this area in small quantities, provided the low-density, small-town atmosphere is maintained and adequate buffering is proposed and maintained. Accessory dwellings will be allowed provided they do not subdivide from the main home.

Building/Lot Design: Encouragement of residential infill with lot sizes consistent with historic city grid and recorded plat. Infill residential should match character and design of existing homes within the vicinity. Landscaping and pedestrian access from homes to the downtown commercial district is important.





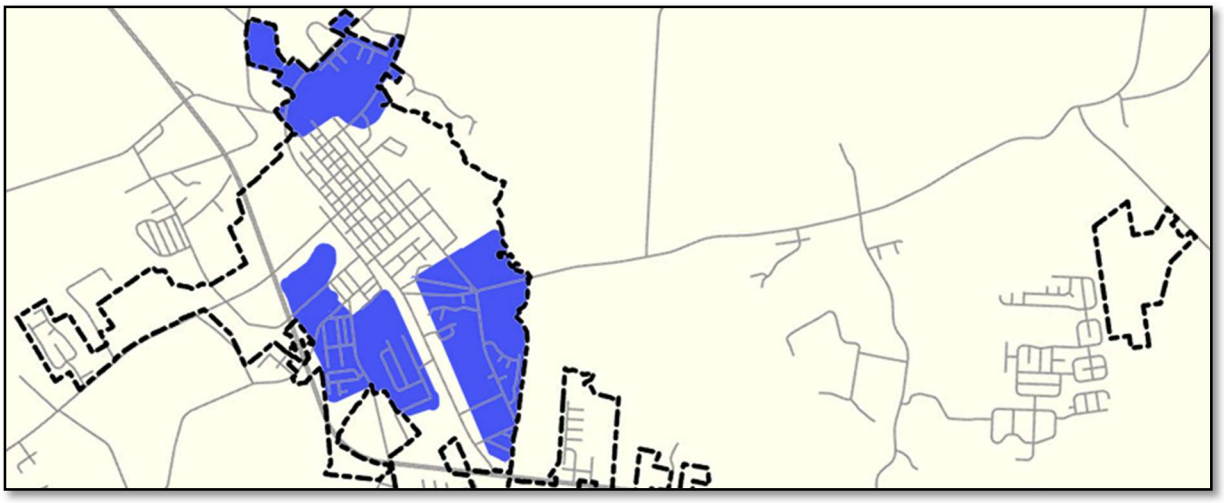

Google








Google



3. Traditional Residential Area

Current Land Use: These areas are outside of the historic residential area where construction has been primarily modern subdivision development after 1990. There are mostly single-family homes and Duplex Dwellings in these zones. Many homes were built as spec homes and designs are repetitive in most areas. Zoning in these areas are predominantly R-1 and R-2.

Future Land Use: Similar to Area 2, residential infill only with possible low impact commercial uses such as medical or institutional establishments should be encouraged. Limited commercial uses should be allowed only near collector streets or arterial roads.

Building/Lot Design: New construction falling under the Highway 21 Overlay District should follow the guidelines set within that ordinance. Infill housing design can be less strict but should still be compatible with its surroundings. Lot sizes are larger than in the historic district and more compatible with current zoning standards.

Some lots for development may abut the denser commercial zones along the Highway and buffers against these uses should be carefully considered. With this proximity to potential commercial uses, pedestrian access and sidewalk extensions should be considered when approving projects.



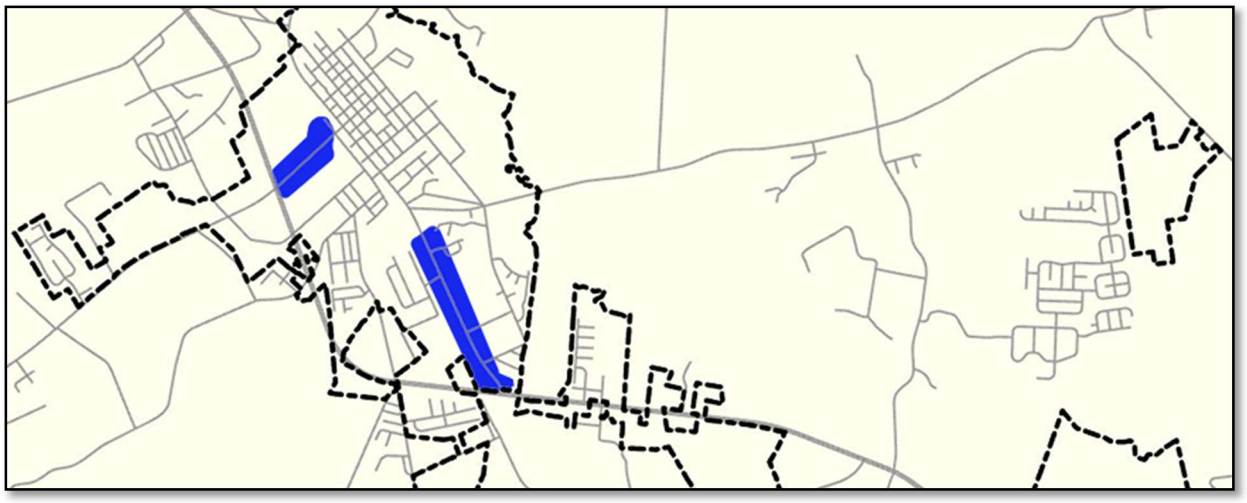












4. **Traditional Commercial Area**

Current Land Use: These are areas that have developed with commercial businesses that are not considered historic buildings. The majority of the parcels in these zones are B-1 "General Commercial" zoning. The existing businesses are lighter commercial uses with buildings less than 5,000 SF in most cases. Lots are smaller in these areas than the Highway commercial parcels in Area 5. Parking lots are a mixture of both hard and permeable surfaces. Many buildings have brick accents, but most are open span metal buildings. There are a few residences along Laurel Street and Madison Street within this area, however, most have begun conversion to commercial uses.

Future Land Use: Encourage commercial infill on undeveloped lots. These areas are adjacent to residential uses in most cases and pedestrian access should be encouraged with all new projects. Residential, especially single-family homes, should be limited.

Building/Lot Design: These areas serve as gateways into downtown and building design should reflect that in any new buildings. Architectural detailing and landscaping should be considered. Pedestrian access and landscaping have not been priorities in this area but should be with all future development. Storage yards should be located in the rear and shielded from view from the right-of-way.




JACKS YARD

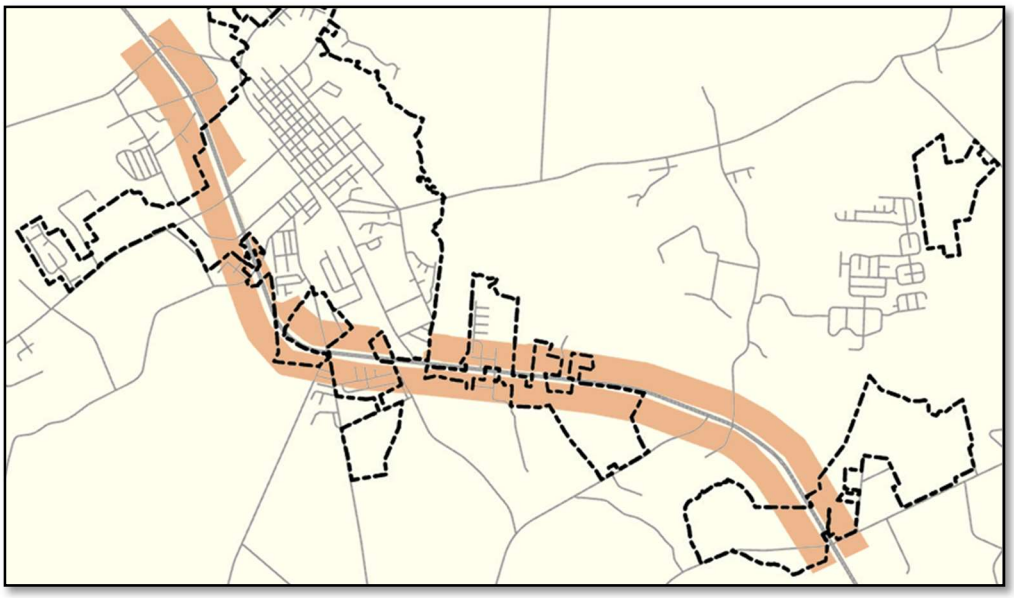

US POST OFFICE


GNANN'S FIX-IT SHOP INC.




RENASANT
BANK





5. **Highway Commercial Road Frontage**

Current Land Use: Areas directly adjacent to Highway frontage along arterial routes with primarily commercial development. Residential housing existed in this area prior to the construction of the Hwy 21 Bypass and there is a mixture of R-1 and B-1 zoning. Many residential lots that are within the City of Springfield have been redeveloped as commercial, by either demolishing the homes or converting them to office use. Commercial uses include restaurants, retail, gas stations, and automotive-related business. National retail chains have located in this area, and much of the construction is generic and not unique to Springfield.

Due to recent interest in commercial development along this corridor, and Highway 21 being the main arterial route of Effingham County, there has been an increase in traffic counts. This increase has made the properties in this area more desirable for development.

Future Land Use: This area is the first layer of development along Hwy 21. It should be reserved for commercial uses only. Residential uses other than multi-family should not be allowed.

Building/Lot Design: The Hwy 21 Overlay district was created with this area in mind, Design guidelines should determine building and site design standards with adequate landscaping to promote a welcoming gateway entrance into the city core. Secondary access roads should be required to alleviate traffic along highways. Alternative transportation should be provided for all new roads to better connect the commercial corridor to housing locations.






FOOD LION
FOOD LION






PET GROOMING
COIN LAUNDRY
Google



6. Highway Mixed Use Transition Area

Current Land Use: These are areas that will be directly behind the frontage parcels and will help to transition away from higher-impact commercial uses. This area is designated as a part of the new plan for development of Highway 21 and is largely undeveloped, containing single-family homesteads. Due to recent interest in commercial development and requests for rezoning in this area, the City has determined that it will likely develop in the near future.

Future Land Use: When this area does develop, the City will encourage lower-impact commercial business, mixed-use buildings, high density residential, and institutional uses. This area will provide a buffer between the Highway commercial of Area 5 and the residential of Area 7. This transitional zone will be an opportunity to provide missing middle housing with direct access to commercial areas. Townhome Dwellings and Limited Multifamily Dwellings would be appropriate in this area.

As with Area 5, many of the parcels in this zone may not yet be located in the City of Springfield. However, annexation is expected as development continues down Highway 21 toward the south and the future land use of these potential new areas of the city should be addressed.

Building/Lot Design: Site and landscaping design should accommodate pedestrians and alternative transportation. Site design should tie into and incorporate pedestrian and alternative transportation access to the new roadways and access points required of Area 5 by the Highway 21 Overlay District. Building design for parcels included in the Overlay District must follow those guidelines and any parcels not included should present compatible designs for approval. Commercial designs that incorporate residential features (like those shown) are encouraged. Provided are images of existing commercial buildings in Springfield that have some residential architectural features that would be suitable for this area. Also pictured are images of suitable housing types for this zone.



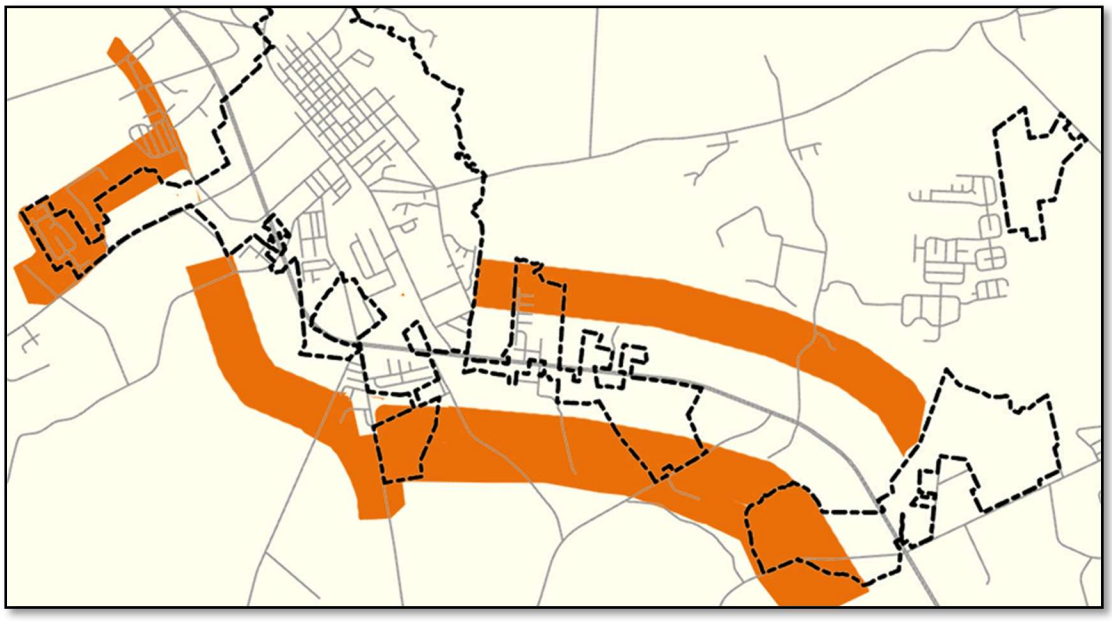












7. **Highway Residential**

Current Land Use: Many of these parcels are not yet developed and those with existing uses are primarily single-family homes or large homesteads. Larger tracts in this area are beginning to list for sale and the City anticipates the development of them soon. Annexation requests are expected to continue in this area and the City feels it is best to include it in future planning.

Future Land Use: This area behind the Highway Mixed Use Transition Area is furthest away from the highway frontage parcels. These areas are approaching wetlands or woodlands in most cases as they get further away from the highway corridors. As land develops the City will encourage Detached Single Family Residential, greenspace, and parks.

Building/Lot Design: Lot sizes should increase in size or retain additional green space as they approach wetland and rural areas to minimize environmental impacts. Sidewalks leading into the Transition Area should be required to allow access for pedestrians and alternative transportation. Home design will vary, but preservation of greenspace and woodland areas is important to help further shield this area from the commercial development and higher-density uses of Area 6 located adjacent to it. There are currently no design guidelines for this area, but diversity in styles is preferred to encourage variety. Provided are examples of housing that should be encouraged.





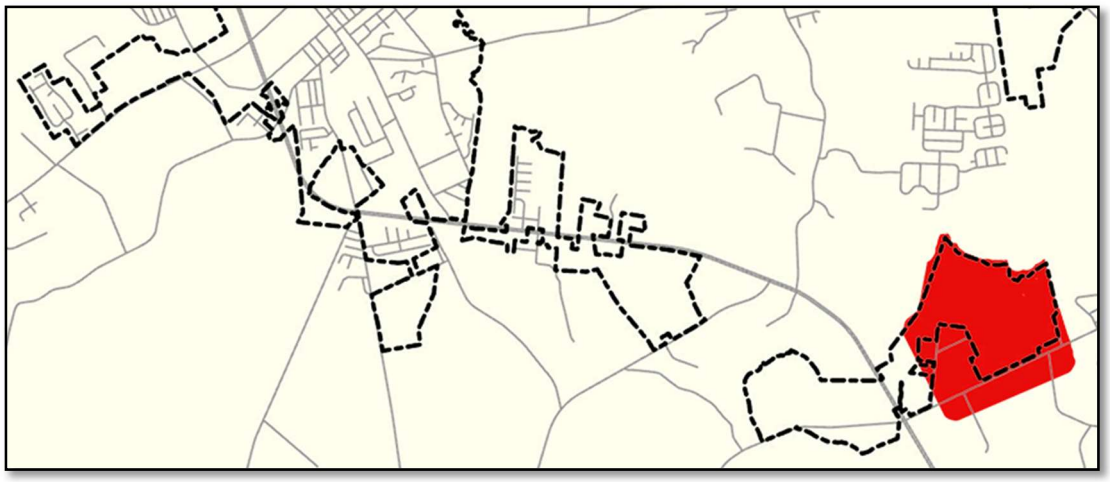












8. **Industrial**

Current Land Use: Industrial uses have a history in Springfield. Historical records indicate that there were lumber mills, cola bottling factories, and concrete block plants located in Springfield. However, these heavier uses are no longer near downtown. Due to recent Annexations manufacturing and warehousing have been brought into the City and a majority of the Effingham Industrial Park is now located within its jurisdiction. This area is Zone 8 and the zoning is I-1 for Industrial and heavy commercial uses.

Future Land Use: There are some vacant parcels in this area and their uses if developed will be commercial or industrial in nature.

Building/Lot Design: Existing buildings are large, clear span structures and are primarily metal buildings with brick veneer and accents. New construction will likely also be large buildings and those visible from Hwy 21 will fall under the Highway 21 Overlay District and must follow the design guidelines. Lots will have larger setbacks and must allot space for buffering as required by the Buffer Ordinance. Landscaping and street trees on new roads have been required for previous development in this area and will continue to be important with further infill development.


Industrial Blvd
Google


COSENTINO





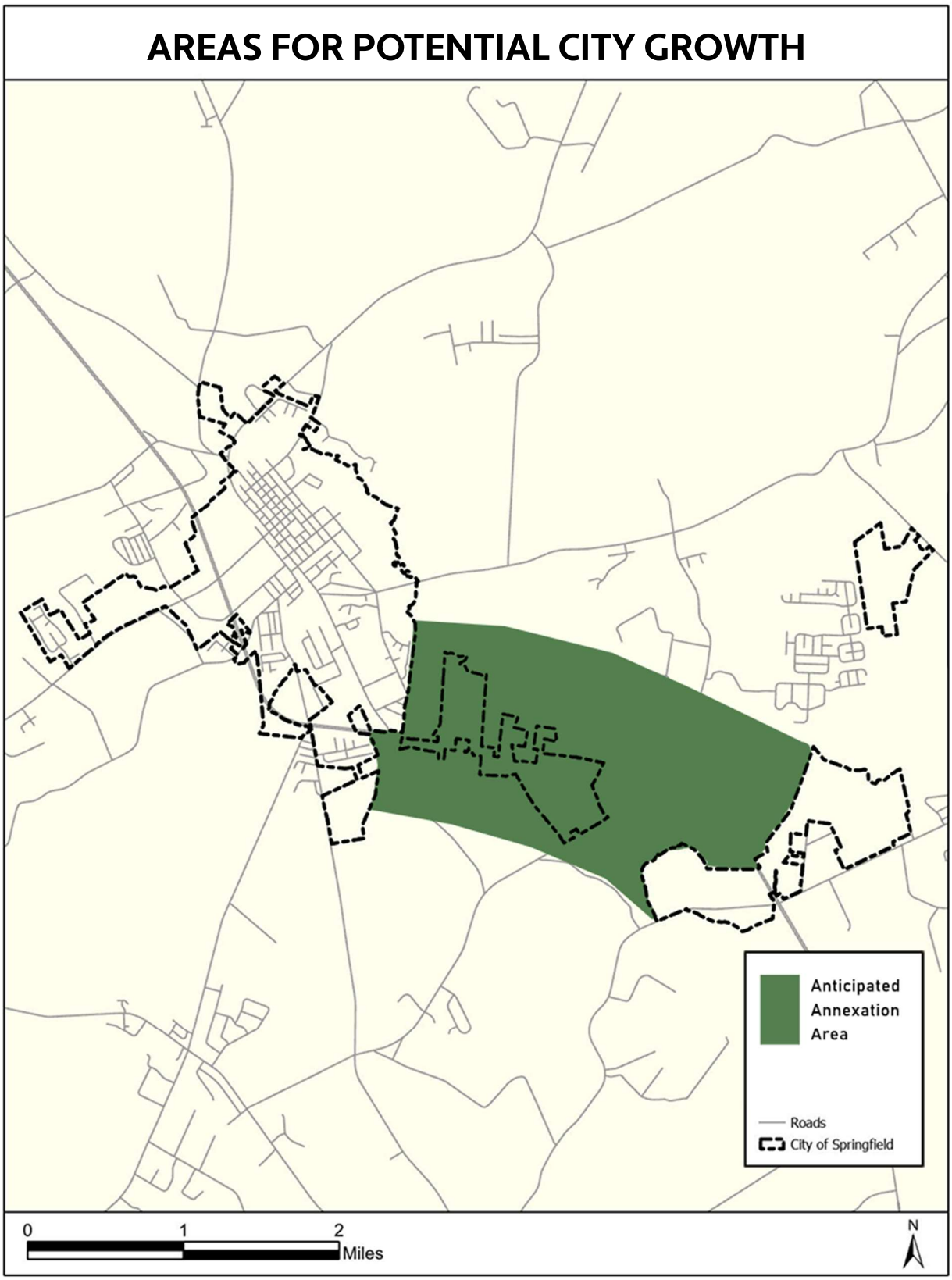



HALSTEAD

City Growth

It is the nature of cities to grow over time with the process of Annexation. Annexation can occur for many reasons, such as desire to develop in-city or have city services. Springfield is in support of annexation of lands along the Highway 21 corridor. The City considers this area as a gateway into Springfield's historic core and the way in which this area develops should be carefully considered. Consistent development standards along Highway 21 are critical to the City's vision of creating an inviting and well-designed gateway corridor that carefully considers traffic patterns, building design, site planning, buffers, landscaping, and signage.

The City anticipates that the Highway 21 corridor from GA Hwy 119 to GA Hwy 275 will be marketed for development. The City generally supports annexation in this area and is preparing for growth of the city boundaries in this direction.


AREAS FOR POTENTIAL CITY GROWTH
Anticipated Annexation Area
Roads
City of Springfield
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Miles
N

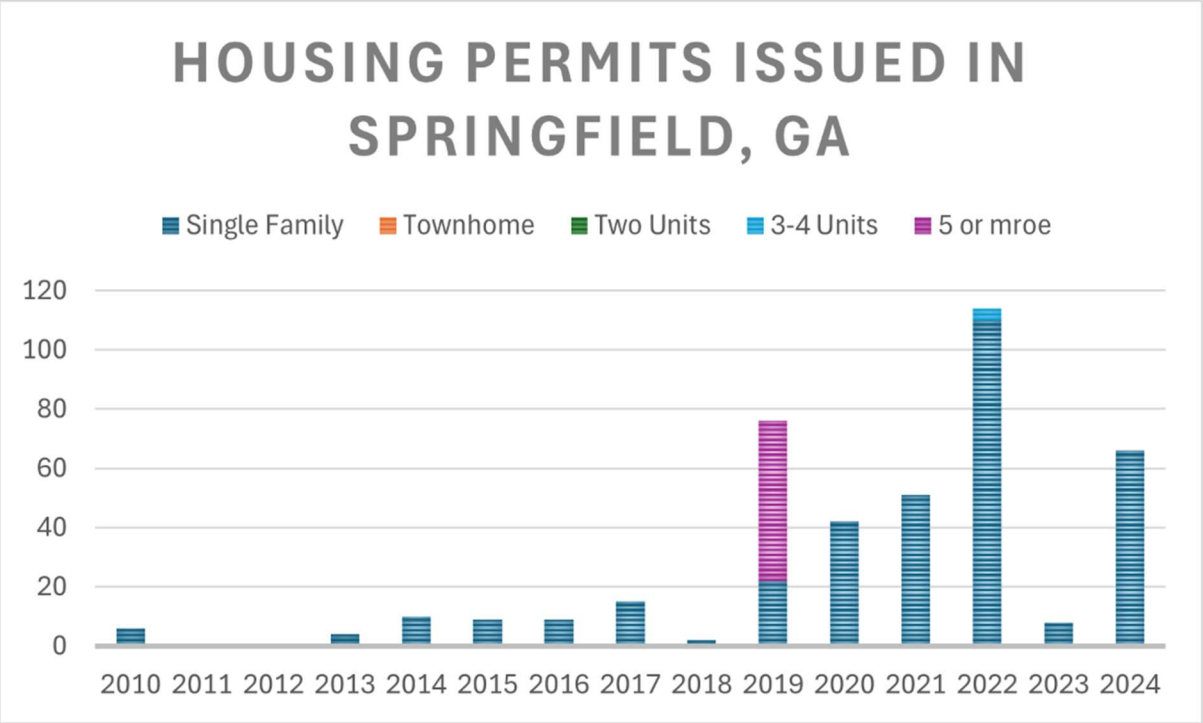
Section 7. Housing

A thorough understanding of the current housing availability and how it compares to demand is important to evaluate a community's acceptable and affordable housing options. New housing should seek to fill any gaps in the housing demand rather than provide housing in market sectors that are already sufficient. Springfield has determined that there is a lack of diversity in housing and will encourage developments and standards that can provide solutions to this.

Housing Overview

Springfield has historically been a rural, suburban community with residents living primarily in detached single-family homes. Based on building permit issuance over the last 15 years, the detached single-family home is still the primary housing type being constructed and requested. Of the 412 new residential units constructed since 2010, 86% have been Single Family Detached dwellings.

Rezoning and development requests during this time have been primarily for single-family zoning districts. The City expects that zoning requests for higher density, such as townhomes and apartments, will increase given the current market. Ordinance revisions for these districts will be needed to ensure development that is compatible with Springfield's vision for its future.



Housing Affordability

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development generally defines affordable housing as "housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities." According to current estimates the Median Household Income in Effingham County is $89,885.[1] Assuming a 70/30% split between housing/utilities, the affordable monthly payment toward housing should be approximately $1500 per month. Based on current home sale data, the average price of a new single-family home exceeds that budget. The estimated median home price in Effingham County is currently $335,700.

Increases in prices of land, construction costs, and labor have made affordable housing challenging. This is true not only in Springfield, but also across the state of Georgia and many parts of the United States. In addition, as outlined in the "Georgia Housing Needs Assessment" provided by Department of Community Affairs, household growth has outpaced housing growth in Georgia since 2013. Housing availability is not meeting demand, and this has led to an increased hardship for low-income populations and a rise in rental units.

Identified Housing Needs

Based on the permit data above, the housing trends in Springfield indicate more variety is needed. Developers have predominantly built single-family homes and there is a lack of alternative options such as apartments, townhomes, and accessory dwellings.

Townhomes and apartments are typically found in urban settings, but Springfield is still predominantly a rural area. The lower-density development is more traditional in Springfield and has become a part of its charm and personality. The City would like to encourage higher-density housing, but in ways that they feel fit into the fabric of Springfield without changing the character of the community.

[1] 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Possible Solutions

Springfield has determined that the most efficient way to address housing concerns is to focus on supporting a variety of housing options for a variety of income levels.

- Springfield will support housing development in areas where there is adequate infrastructure to accommodate the need and support infill and development of property near existing and similar development. Keeping similar uses close together will ensure infrastructure extension costs will be reduced, thereby lowering development costs that will hopefully translate to lower housing costs for the end user.

- The City still wishes to support new development that is compatible with existing development to preserve the sense of place and small-town feel Springfield is known for. Smaller lot sizes for Detached Single Family homes are regularly requested as land prices continue to climb. Reduction in lot sizes can be allowed when paired with preservation of land in order to concentrate development to a portion of a site, while leaving the remainder as public open space. This can reduce infrastructure costs by shortening the length of roads and length of utility line extensions. This is the concept behind Conservation Subdivisions.

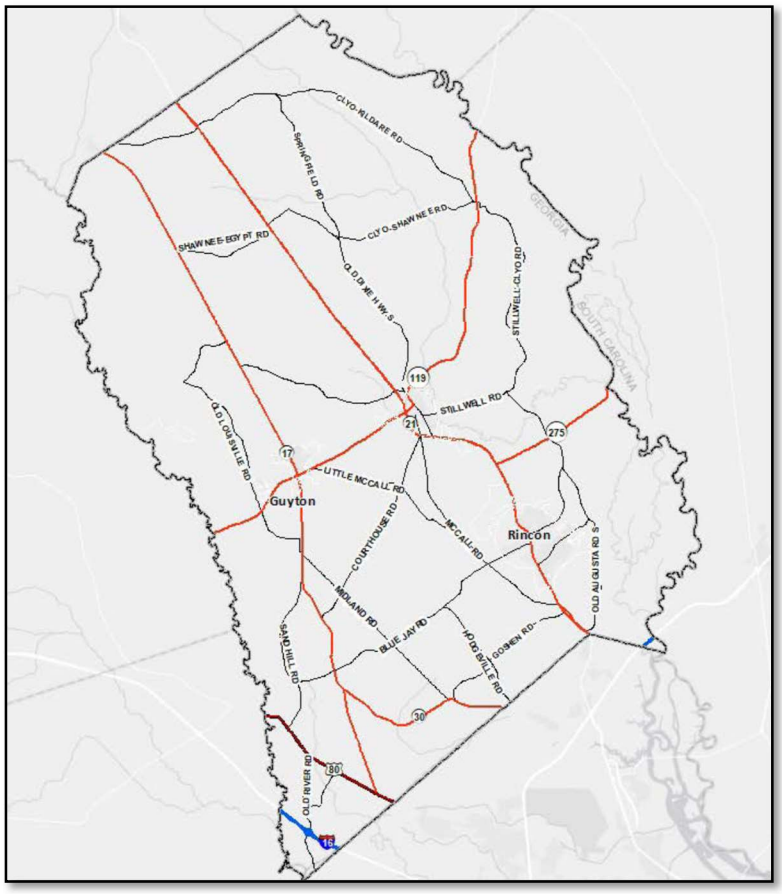
- The City will support mixed use and higher density development near commercial areas where such uses can be considered transitional zones between traditional single-family homes and commercial uses. Mixed-use buildings should be supported and allowable in the Downtown District; Higher-density development is encouraged along the Highway 21 Commercial Corridor. However, the city must acknowledge that large-scale, high-density development can potentially have negative impacts on traffic congestion and circulation. The number of units and location of proposed high-density development, such as townhomes and apartments, must be carefully considered.

- While Springfield will encourage a variety of housing types with new development, it is also important to support variety within developments. The City does not feel that large tracts should develop with a single use, but that development should include varied housing types when possible.

Section 8. Transportation

Transportation is a critical element to any municipal planning document. How people move from one place to another within the roadway network can easily become an asset or a detriment to a City. Thoughtful design, long-range planning, and consistent enforcement of standards are the methods that Springfield plans to use to ensure that traffic congestion does not become a hindrance to the convenience and accessibility of the city.

Transportation Overview

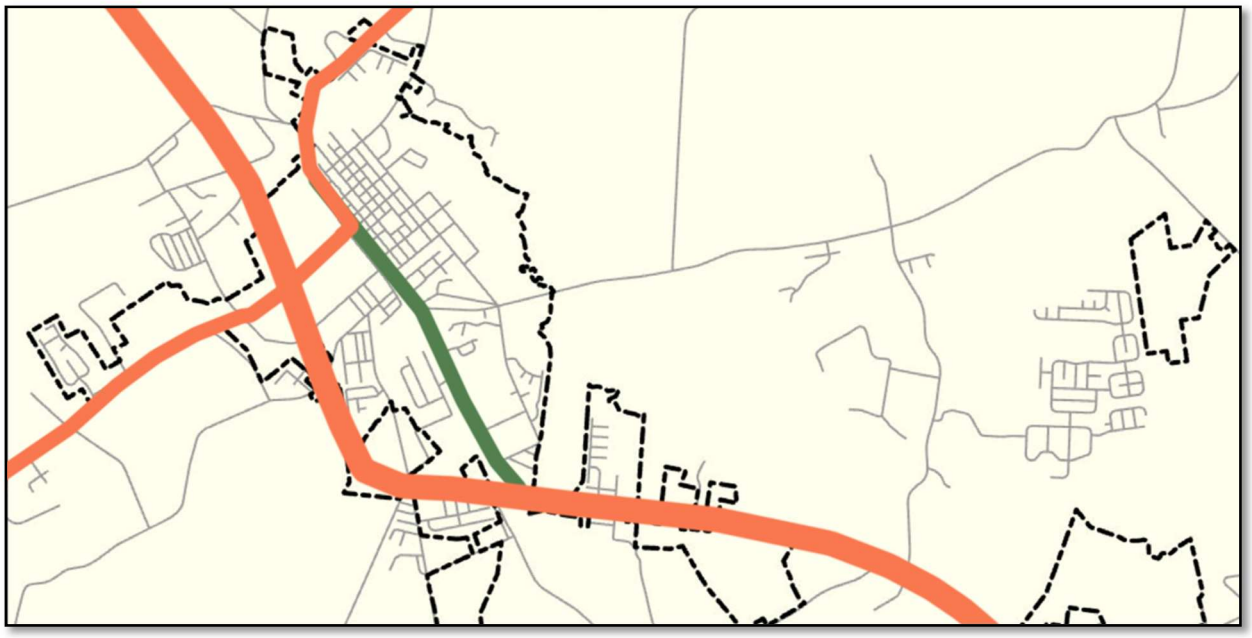


The City of Springfield is located within Effingham County.

Georgia State Highway Routes 119 and 21 intersect within the city. Historically, Georgia Hwy 21 has been the main north-to-south connector of Effingham County with the largest traffic counts, while Georgia Hwy 119 is the-east to-west connector.

GA Hwy 21 runs through the middle of the City of Springfield, bypassing our downtown commercial district with a limited-access, four-lane grassed median roadway. Hwy 119 remains a two-lane roadway and passes through downtown. Both are commonly used routes for both passenger vehicles and truck freight.

While the number of vehicles per day gives the businesses located along these routes desired visibility, the volume of traffic during peak hours can create delays and congestion. Some intersections and highway crossings are considered hazardous with recurring accidents, especially along the four-lane Hwy 21.



Laurel Steet outlined in Green in considered the downtown main street. State Highways 119 and 21 are outlines in Red.

The main roadway through the Downtown Historic District is Laurel Street. The designated "main street" of the original city plan, it is part of GA Hwy 21 and considered a state route. In 1995, the Hwy 21 expansion project called for a four-lane highway through or around Springfield. The decision to bypass the City was made and the existing two-lane Laurel Street was not altered. Both Laurel Street and the four-lane bypass around the town are considered part of GA Hwy 21. The state ownership of this main city road has presented both challenges and benefits over the years.

The road network within the residential area of the city is based on a classic grid layout and was established during the founding of Springfield in the 19th century. The grid runs parallel to Laurel Street which runs parallel to the rail line that intersects the City. Residential development has grown outward from the historic portion of the city and has been consistent with development trends in the Southeast over the past 50 years. Most of the outward growth is single-entry residential neighborhoods with access from main collector roads.

Sidewalks are available along some North/South collectors running through the historic residential area, such as N. Railroad Ave, Laurel Street, and Ash Street. There are East/West connecting sidewalks along Early Street, E. Madison Street, E. Second Street, portions of W. Third Street, and Old Stillwell Road. Sidewalks were added to some new residential subdivision developments in the past, but many do not have sidewalks.

Springfield Roadway Network:

Arterial Roads:
Major through roads that are expected to carry large amounts of traffic into and out of the City.

GA Hwy 21 (Four lane)
Ga Hwy 119
McCall Rd/Effingham Parkway

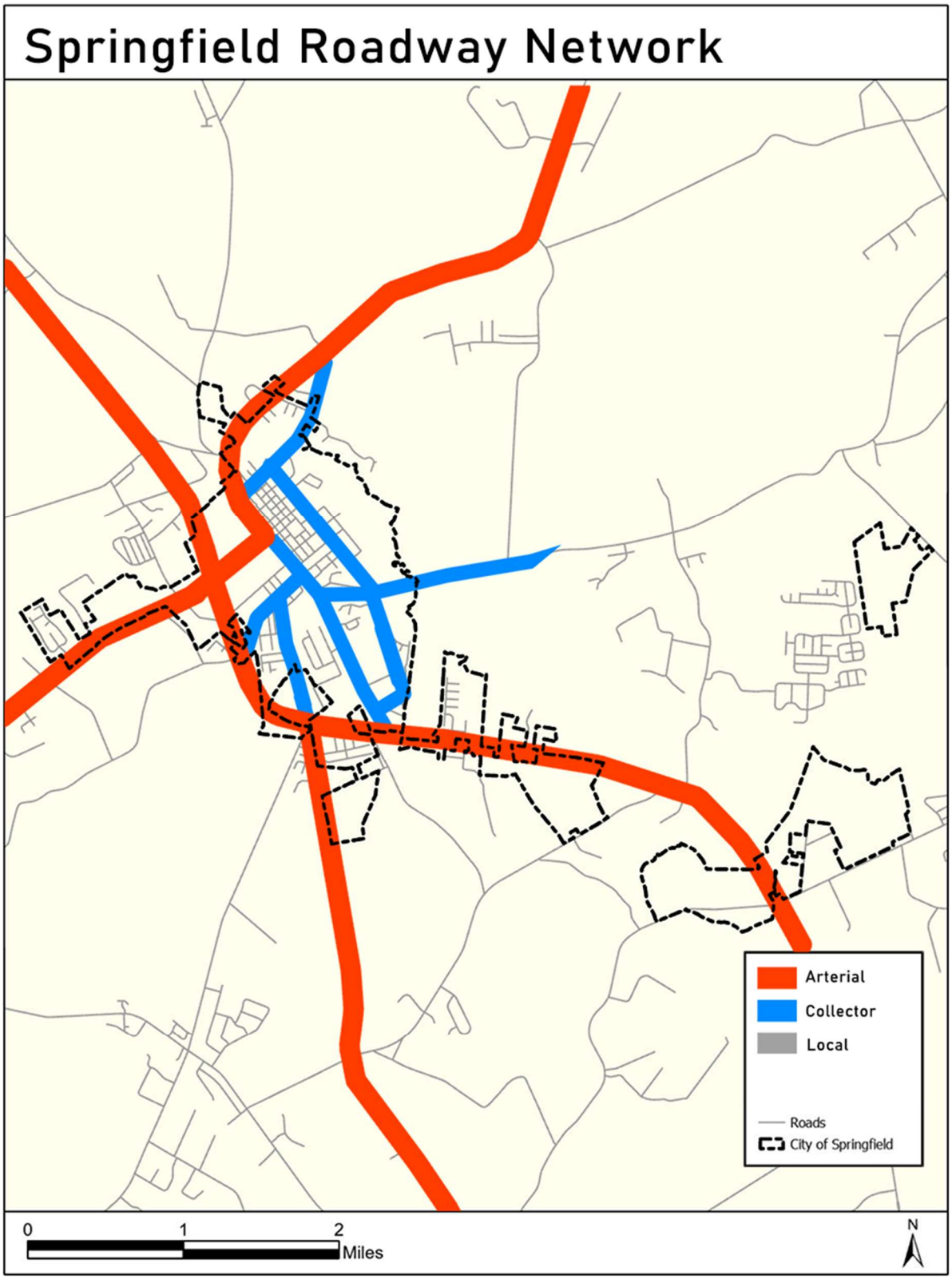
Collector Roads:
Secondary roadways that collect traffic from the arterial roads and distribute to local roads.

Laurel Street
New Stillwell Road
McCall Road
Early Street
W. Third Street
Ash Street

Local Roads:

Low volume roadways with lower speed limits.

Historic roadways named for trees or with numbers
Roads within residential subdivision developments
Commercial Frontage Roads
Entrance roads to residential or commercial developments


Springfield Roadway Network
Arterial
Collector
Local
Roads
City of Springfield
0
1
2
Miles
N

Roadway Planning

The City of Springfield is bisected by state highways, rail lines, and waterways. Combined with wetlands and single access developments, the interconnectivity between the secondary road network of collector roads and local streets is limited. Main focal points for recreation, housing, and commercial development are only accessible by using the primary arterial roads.

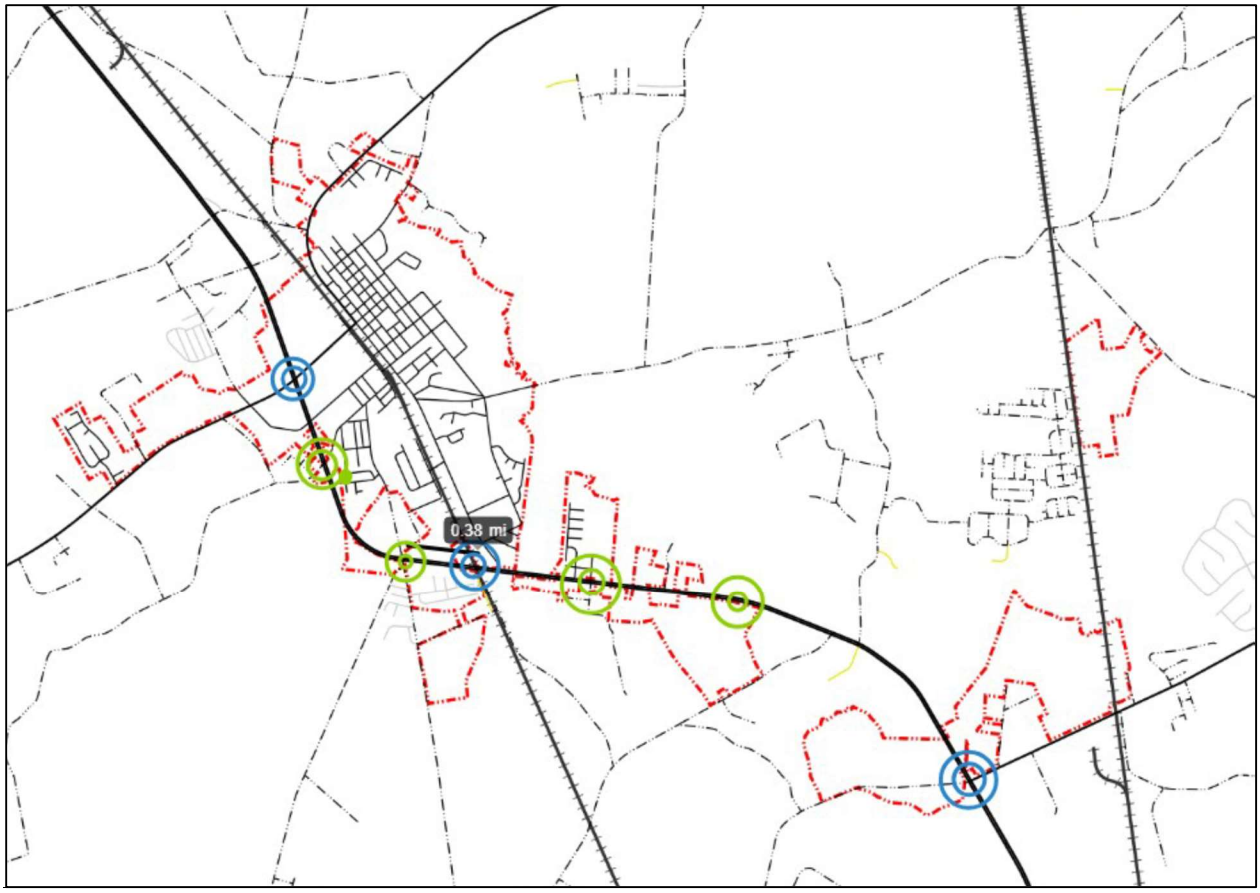
To avoid traffic congestion in the highway commercial areas, the City has recently implemented a Highway 21 Bypass Overlay District that enforces secondary access across developed parcels within 500 feet of the highway. Past development has depended on each parcel or development having primary access directly to Ga Highway 21 or other Arterial. The intent of the Overlay District is to limit access to Hwy 21 to pre-existing access points only. Development will require inter-parcel connectivity and construction of secondary access roads in the form of highway frontage roads, or rear access roads. The goal of these access requirements is to expand the network of collector roads to alleviate congestion by reducing the amount of traffic on Ga Highway 21. Patrons and residents will be able to navigate the city while avoiding the high traffic arterial routes as much as possible.

In addition to the highway corridor, the City of Springfield is planning to further connectivity by providing alternative secondary routes to recreational nodes, highway commercial areas, downtown, and neighborhoods. The City of Springfield is expecting commercial and residential growth to continue and plans to use this as an opportunity to create more connectivity in both vehicular and alternative transportation routes. Expansion of multi-use trails, walkable streets, and connectivity between new communities, commercial developments, and recreation areas is listed as a primary transportation goal for the City of Springfield.

Traffic Management

In addition to diverting local traffic away from the Arterial roadways, the City of Springfield will support and promote the use of appropriately placed traffic signals and speed limits. For new development along highways to avoid additional congestion, careful consideration of traffic signal locations is required. The following shows intersections that currently have traffic signals and those intersections the city feels will need a traffic signal in the near future.

Hwy 21 is a limited-access roadway with grassed median and minimal median breaks for lane crossing. The City desires that this roadway remain limited access and have low speeds. Traffic signals should be evenly spaced at approximately 0.5 miles apart or further and new developments will be considered based on their ability to work within this future network. Right-in/Right-out access points may be supported where allowed by GDOT, but additional highway crossings for GA Hwy 21 should be limited. Traffic should be diverted to existing crossings and signalized locations.



Current signalized Intersections marked in Blue. Future proposed signals are marked in Green.

Alternative Transportation Planning

As stated in previous sections, the importance of interconnectivity and secondary access is critical as Springfield continues to expand and grow. The new roadways that will be required to achieve this goal must also accommodate alternative transportation. As density and traffic increases, pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorized cart paths should be accommodated with all new roads whenever possible.

The current network of sidewalks within the historic town center should also be expanded. Promoting walkability and accessibility will enhance in the vitality of downtown Springfield. Extending the sidewalk network out of downtown into existing residential areas is planned and considered a short-term goal. Furthermore, extending a multiuse trail system that reaches the commercial, recreational, and housing areas on the outer edges of town is a priority.

Requiring new development to assist in these alternative transportation improvements will promote these concepts of reduced traffic congestion and increased variety in traffic routes and transportation methods.

Parking

Parking can be considered both an asset or a disadvantage in planning and development. Too much parking can lead to excess impervious surfaces and reduced green space. Lack of connectivity between parking lots can increase traffic congestion on roadways. Too little parking can lead to congestion, unsafe overflow of parked vehicles, and decline in business.

New trends in parking design across the country have begun to focus on maximum parking standards as opposed to minimums. Traditionally large parking lots were required for each development or business. This has aided overall sprawl and led to oversized parking lots only fully used during peak hours. The City of Springfield believes that parking lots should be of adequate size, but negative impacts of parking lots can be reduced by integrating the following ideas:

1. Adjacent parking lots should connect with pedestrian access when possible. This can alleviate the need to drive from one parking lot to another and adjacent lots can be used as overflow during peak times.
2. Parking lots should provide safe connections to nearby multiuse trails and sidewalks. This will help encourage alternative transportation use to and from places traditionally only safely accessible by vehicle.
3. Landscaping islands must be required at regular intervals. Landscaping will help to increase pervious surfaces, provide shade, increase curb appeal of new development, manage stormwater, and create a generally more inviting environment.

By enforcing these methods and editing development regulations to specify these as requirements, the City hopes to create a better commercial development environment that will benefit both the businesses and their patrons.

Parking in the historic district and around park spaces is critical to a healthy downtown. However, the City of Springfield desires to see commercial infill development on vacant lots in downtown as opposed to large parking lots. In accordance with the Downtown (DT) District design guidelines, onsite downtown parking should be directed to the side or rear of a property to allow buildings and courtyards to remain in the forefront, adjacent to and accessible by sidewalks. In some cases historic buildings have full lot coverage and no room onsite for parking. Therefore, public parallel parking is their primary parking for both employees and patrons.

The City of Springfield will support public parking lots and strive to design and construct them thoughtfully with regards to access from sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting. Recent parking lot improvements initiated by the city include the Second Street Parking Lot and the Ulmer Park Parking Lots. Additionally, to help accommodate the parking needs downtown, parallel parking and angled parking along side streets has been implemented and additional parking can be added where appropriate in this manner as the need arises. The charm of a historic downtown is the ability to walk from one business to another, and therefore smaller parking areas dispersed more evenly throughout the downtown are preferred.

Greenway Connectivity

The City of Springfield has taken the initiative of working towards the establishment of the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway, connecting downtown Springfield to the Savannah River via Ebenezer Creek. The City hopes to increase awareness and help promote recreational tourism that will positively affect the community and the surrounding area.

Providing connectivity to Ebenezer Creek is a two-part objective. Part one is to create trail systems that allow the public access to the Creek. The city will encourage recreational spaces and multiuse trails that allow people to casually explore this important national landmark and bring awareness to the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway. The City of Springfield currently owns property that borders the creek in various areas and intends to create parks or trail systems that allow the public to gain access to these properties and to Ebenezer Creek.

Part two is the creation of walking and biking trials along the creek. The City acknowledges the challenge in this, given the elevation changes along the creek frontage and expanse of wetlands that border the creek in many areas. However, providing a trail system in various segments along the Creek would be an asset to the city and an excellent recreation opportunity for our residents.

Further explanation of the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway and its potential impact on Recreation and Tourism is explored in the next sections of this Plan.

Section 9. Economic Development and Tourism

Economic Development is a vital part of creating and maintaining flourishing communities. Industry and jobs bring in money through tax revenue and exports, without which communities struggle to provide services and public goods to meet residents' needs. A strong economy also allows governments to go beyond providing basic services into improving the quality of life of its residents.

Effingham County Industrial Development Authority takes the lead in recruiting and supporting the industries located within Effingham County. The Effingham Industrial Park is located within city limits due to recent annexation and Springfield is willing to support these industries as needed, while also maintaining a healthy quality of life for those residents that live in the area.

Events

While thriving industry and low unemployment are critical to a healthy local economy, Springfield's focus on Economic Development has and will continue to be at a smaller scale. The City budgets money each year for economic development that is primarily used for promotion of downtown events. The City realizes the positive impact that events can have when executed well and regularly. They provide opportunities for businesses to showcase themselves to residents and bring in visitors and tourists. Businesses that are supported by their residents and a steady stream of visitors bringing in outside dollars to the community will be more likely to thrive and maintain, or even increase, the employee base.

Springfield feels this method of supporting the local economy has been successful in recent years and plans to continue creating and supporting events in this manner. Encouragement of social events, arts, music, theatre, and festivals make downtown a destination. The city plans to promote additional events with more variety in coming years, both privately and city hosted.

Downtown Development Authority

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was established in 2016 and has been an asset to downtown revitalization. They have provided funding for façade improvements, supported businesses by encouraging them to locate in Springfield, and assisted property owners with building renovations. The DDA has also renovated multiple downtown buildings and secured tenants, helping to decrease the vacancy rate and increase employment. The City plans to continue support of the DDA in their efforts to revitalize downtown, host events, renovate buildings, and provide continuing education to local businesses and property owners.

Tourism & Lodging

Downtowns can be an asset to any city and offer a unique opportunity for tourism. Springfield seeks to find balance in promoting tourism opportunities while also preserving the quaint, small-town feel that downtown has become known for.

One significant investment the city has made has been to renovate the historic Mars Theatre, a one-screen movie theatre built c. 1950. The purpose of the theatre renovation project was to catalyze afterhours activity downtown, and the theatre has been successful in providing vitality to downtown on the weekends and evenings. The theatre hosts both movies targeted toward locals and live shows and concerts that can bring in out-of-town visitors.

Springfield recognizes that one aspect that warrants continued focus in coming years is lodging. The population in Springfield and Effingham County cannot support the needs of a typical hotel, but lodging is a critical part of attracting tourists. The City proposes to encourage renovation of existing residential homes downtown to Bed and Breakfasts as one solution. Bed and Breakfast conversions must be balanced with historic preservation efforts and care taken to ensure these renovations do not result in a loss of community character or become a detriment to the historic downtown or established residential areas.

Short Term rentals are another possible solution to the lack of lodging. They differ from a Bed and Breakfast as they do not require owner occupancy and do not provide meals. The City prefers that short-term rentals avoid becoming a nuisance as they have in other communities and blend seamlessly within both commercial and residential areas, which can be achieved with proper management and regulations. Springfield proposes to encourage this method of lodging while also creating regulations that will govern operations and registration of short-term rentals.





Section 10. Recreation and Greenspace

Parks and Recreation

Planners have advocated for Parks and Greenspaces in urban settings for centuries. Most notably, during the Parks Movement of the Victorian area, parks were considered an asset to a modern city and capable of not only physically transforming the city into something more beautiful, but a key element of creating common ground among social classes and promoting better citizenship. As Springfield was preparing this plan, park spaces and recreation opportunities were continually discussed in the review committees. The consensus from the stakeholders and steering committees was that the city park spaces need more of the following: Shade, Water, and Trails.

The City of Springfield understands the importance of both passive park spaces and active recreation in maintaining quality of life for its residents. ,Traditionally Springfield's park spaces were primarily ball fields and playgrounds. As funding is available, the City plans to strive toward more versatile passive green spaces that will still include playgrounds but also incorporate multiuse lawns, walking trails, shaded areas, and water features where appropriate. The Ulmer Ball Park is currently under renovation with much needed upgrades and the city has identified a second park space at Stillwell Road. Walking trails, updated playgrounds, and accessible green spaces are the key features of each but are approached differently to provide variety. Ulmer Park will contain an ADA-compliant walking surface and grassed lawn, while Stillwell Park is planned to have a pond and nature trails.

Pocket parks, small spaces of green and shade with water fountains and/or seating, are also excellent additions to commercial areas. Cleveland Street is a divided street in the heart of downtown with large oak trees and oversized unpaved median. With the help of non-profits, the city has converted this street into a pocket park by eliminating parking within the median and providing landscaping and seating. This area adds to the aesthetic appeal and charm of downtown, as well as offering a comfortable place to pause for pedestrians. Similar spaces in downtown and commercial areas are encouraged.

Active recreation options are also helpful They offer citizens an opportunity to come together and promote overall health and wellbeing. The City of Springfield does not have a recreation department and relies on Effingham County to provide opportunities for organized sports for children and adults. The Downtown Development Authority of Springfield hosts four active running and biking events downtown each year with the support of the city. Other local organizations also host similar events. These events not only provide an outlet for residents but also help to bring awareness to downtown and attract visitors and tourists.

Trials and Pathways

Sidewalks, trails, and multiuse paths provide a method of alternative transportation, but can also add recreational opportunities and greenspaces in the form of greenways if designed correctly. As stated in the Transportation section of this plan, additional sidewalks are to be encouraged for the existing residential areas. Offering connectivity to downtown and key services provides options for leisurely walks or active running/jogging. New developments will be required to tie into existing sidewalk networks and should provide sidewalks along all new streets. The addition of street trees along these sidewalks provides shade; required landscaping strips between roadways and sidewalks provide separation from vehicular traffic.

Long range plans for the City also include longer multiuse trails that can unite different parts of the city and county. Some future trail goals include:

- Providing trail connections from the Downtown District to the Highway 21 Commercial area.
- Connecting Clarence E. Morgan Recreational Complex to nearby residential and commercial areas.
- Facilitating a multiuse path/greenway along Hwy 119 to connect Springfield and Guyton.

Green space and Buffers

Landscaping buffers and existing woodlands are another way the City plans to maintain greenspace and preserve land in the face of new development. New residential development and commercial construction should be required to conserve greenspace when possible. Recent ordinance amendments have required residential subdivisions developments to leave undisturbed buffers around their property, and most districts require preservation of property for activated green spaces. These are important requirements that should be upheld with all new developments.

Commercial development and high-density housing, such as apartments or townhomes, should be given strict landscaping requirements, especially in dense areas such as the Highway 21 Overlay District. Trees and landscape islands are currently required in parking lots and should be enforced. Landscaping within parking lots and around buildings and buffers being required to accomplish the following:

- Add to the aesthetic value of the commercial districts, creating more inviting gateway corridors into the city.
- Soften the harshness typical of commercial development and ensure that new development is compatible with existing spaces.
- Create visual separation between uses to limit potential negative impacts, especially as it pertains to residential versus commercial uses.
- Add to the preservation of green space and vegetation and provide opportunity for pocket parks and trail systems.
- Promote preservation of large-growth trees on properties and limit clearcutting entire properties when possible.

The City of Springfield also recognizes that the preservation of old-growth forest and larger trees is necessary for preserving the character of Springfield as a rural suburban area. Implementation of a tree ordinance should be a priority.

Ebenezer Greenway

As a Georgia Scenic River and National Natural Landmark, Ebenezer Creek is a valuable natural and cultural asset, not only locally but both regionally and state-wide. The City of Springfield has taken the initiative of working towards the establishment of the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway which connects downtown Springfield to the Savannah River and Historic Ebenezer. The City will use the Greenway projects and initiatives to promote nature, culture, and heritage tourism along Ebenezer Creek and to promote conservation efforts for this resource. We hope to increase awareness and help promote recreation and tourism that will positively affect our community and the surrounding area.

The City of Springfield is dedicated to preserving the connection between the historic settlement at Ebenezer and the county seat in Springfield. Ebenezer Creek provides a physical connection between the two and promoting the Greenway strives to preserve that connection. Part of creating this connection is developing public access areas along the creek. The city has made significant investments on Jack's Branch where the Effingham Historical Society's Living History Site and Museum are located. In addition, the city has developed a plan for property that it currently owns that borders Ebenezer Creek at the corner of Stillwell Road and Ash Street and can serve as another public park space along the Greenway. The city-owned Thompson Island Conservation Property and the Ebeneezer Crossing Property also offer potential for building the Greenway.

While conservation of these properties is a priority, accessing them offers a unique opportunity for recreation and education. The Ebenezer Crossing Property, in particular, should be made accessible to the public with signage to bring awareness to its cultural and historical significance. Acquiring properties such as these along Ebenezer Creek and allowing them to be used for passive recreation with cultural, historical, and ecological preservation in mind will be a benefit to both this resource and our community.

Section 11. Coastal Vulnerability and Resilience

Resilient communities minimize any disaster's disruption to everyday life and their local economies. Resilient communities are not only prepared to help prevent or minimize the loss or damage to life, property, and the environment, but they also have the ability to quickly return citizens to work, reopen businesses, and restore other essential services needed for a full and timely economic recovery.

Natural Hazards and Vulnerable Populations

Portions of Effingham County are located within low-lying coastal plains and are susceptible to flooding from rivers and connected waterways. The City of Springfield's northeastern boundary is bordered by the Ebenezer Creek, a natural tributary that feeds into the Savannah River. The historic core of Springfield is located on high ground with adequate storm drainage and a network of canals and infrastructure to divert excess stormwater away from homes and structures. Drainage is maintained regularly and, as stated in the Goals, the City is dedicated to improving stormwater treatment and quality.

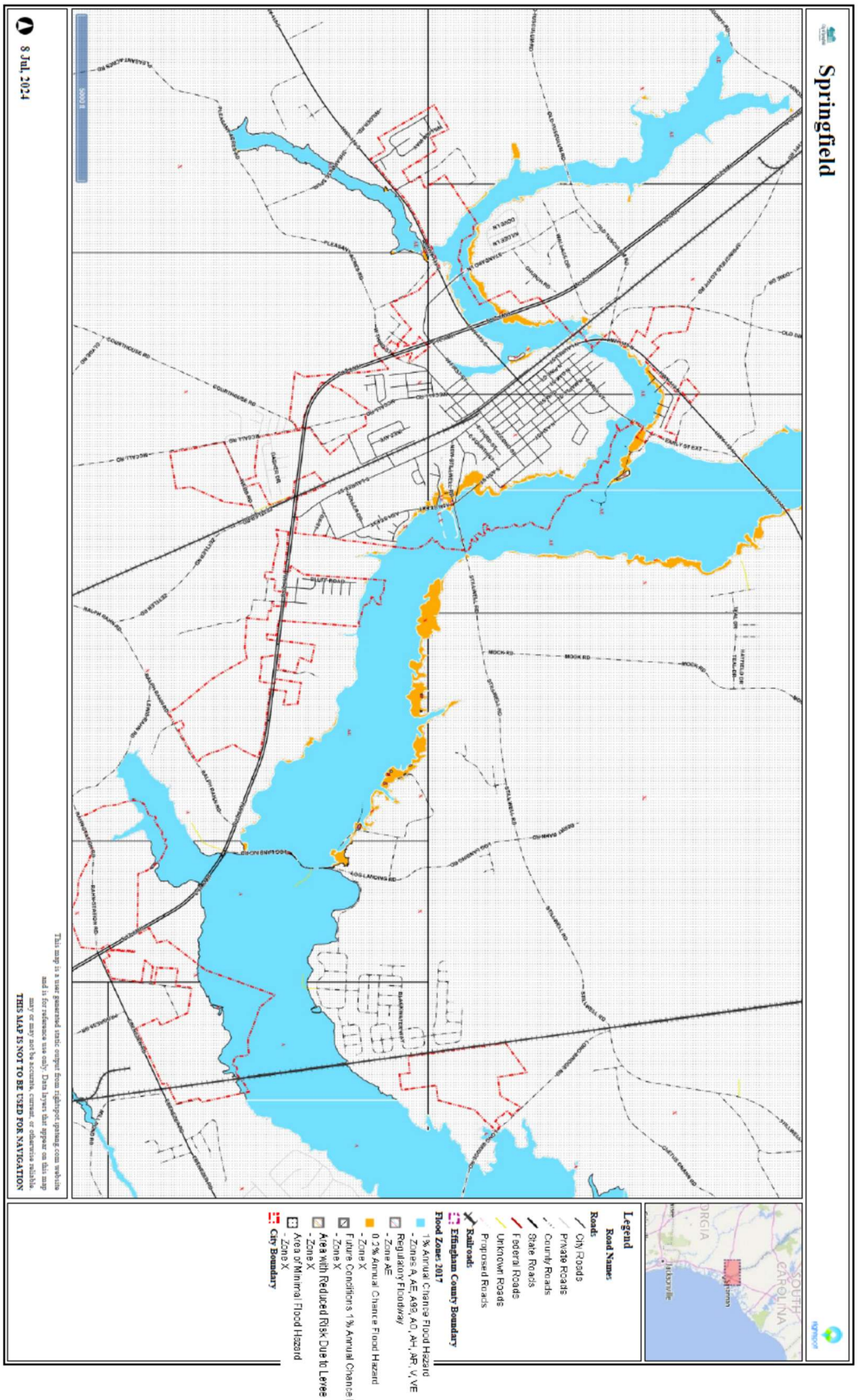
There is risk of flooding from hurricanes or large rain events in low-lying areas near wetlands and waterways, but there is currently no development within a storm surge area. There are a minimal number of private residences located within the 100-year Flood Plain within the City of Springfield. These areas have a 1% chance of flooding per year.

A key factor in examining resiliency is quantifying vulnerable populations. These populations include those residents who live in vulnerable areas, the 100-year and 500-year flood plains, but also those who may have difficulty in heeding evacuation orders due to age, income, and mobility.

The most vulnerable populations include children less than five years old, the elderly and frail elderly, persons living in poverty, and persons without reliable transportation that live in communities with limited public transportation.



The Springfield Police Department is aware of our local vulnerable citizens and areas of high concern. The City works diligently with the Effingham Emergency Management Association on hazard mitigation planning and Hurricane preparedness. Investments in heavy equipment, vehicles, generators, and other emergency supplies and equipment ensure that the City can quickly react to clearing roads, maintaining storm drainage, and maintaining reliable city services in the event of coastal weather occurrences and flooding.


Springfield
Legend
Road Names
Roads
City Roads
Private Roads
County Roads
State Roads
Federal Roads
Unknown Roads
Proposed Roads
Railroads
Effingham County Boundary
Flood Zones 2017
1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Zones A, AE, A99, AO, AH, AR, V, VE
Regulatory Floodway
- Zone AE
0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Zone X
Future Conditions 1% Annual Chance F
- Zone X
Area with Reduced Risk Due to Levee
- Zone X
Area of Minimal Flood Hazard
- Zone X
City Boundary
8 Jul 2024
This map is a user generated static output from rightpoint.springfieldgis.com website and is for reference use only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.
THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

Section 12. Broadband

The Broadband Services Element is a descriptive snapshot of the areas of the community served by broadband technology. The City of Springfield includes this element to outline a strategy for attracting an increased level of broadband deployment by the private sector and to preemptively meet anticipated changes to the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning.

The Georgia ACE Act, adopted in 2018, requires the incorporation of a Broadband Services Element in the local comprehensive plan of each local government in the state. Specifically, each local government must include in its local comprehensive plan an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services by broadband service providers into underserved areas within its jurisdiction.

Expanding broadband statewide is considered vital for attracting and retaining people in rural parts of Georgia, especially for communities that are losing population. Broadband infrastructure build-out is also important to education, health care, and general business growth. It has become a key policy initiative for the State of Georgia.

Assessment of Underserved Areas in The City of Springfield

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband as "data transmission technologies that are always on and capable of simultaneously transporting multiple signals and traffic types between the Internet and users." On March 14, 2024, the FCC upgraded the benchmark for highspeed fixed broadband to download speeds of 100 megabits per second and upload speeds of 20 megabits per second – a four-fold increase from the 25/3 Mbps benchmark set by the Commission in 2015.

It is important to note that there are no known formal public studies performed specifically for the City of Springfield on broadband services. However, according to data obtained from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the statistics for Effingham County are as follows:

Unserved Locations: 548
Served Locations: 26,142
Percent Unserved Locations: 2

Effingham County and those municipalities within have decreased their underserved location percentage from 6% in 2019 to 2% now in 2023.

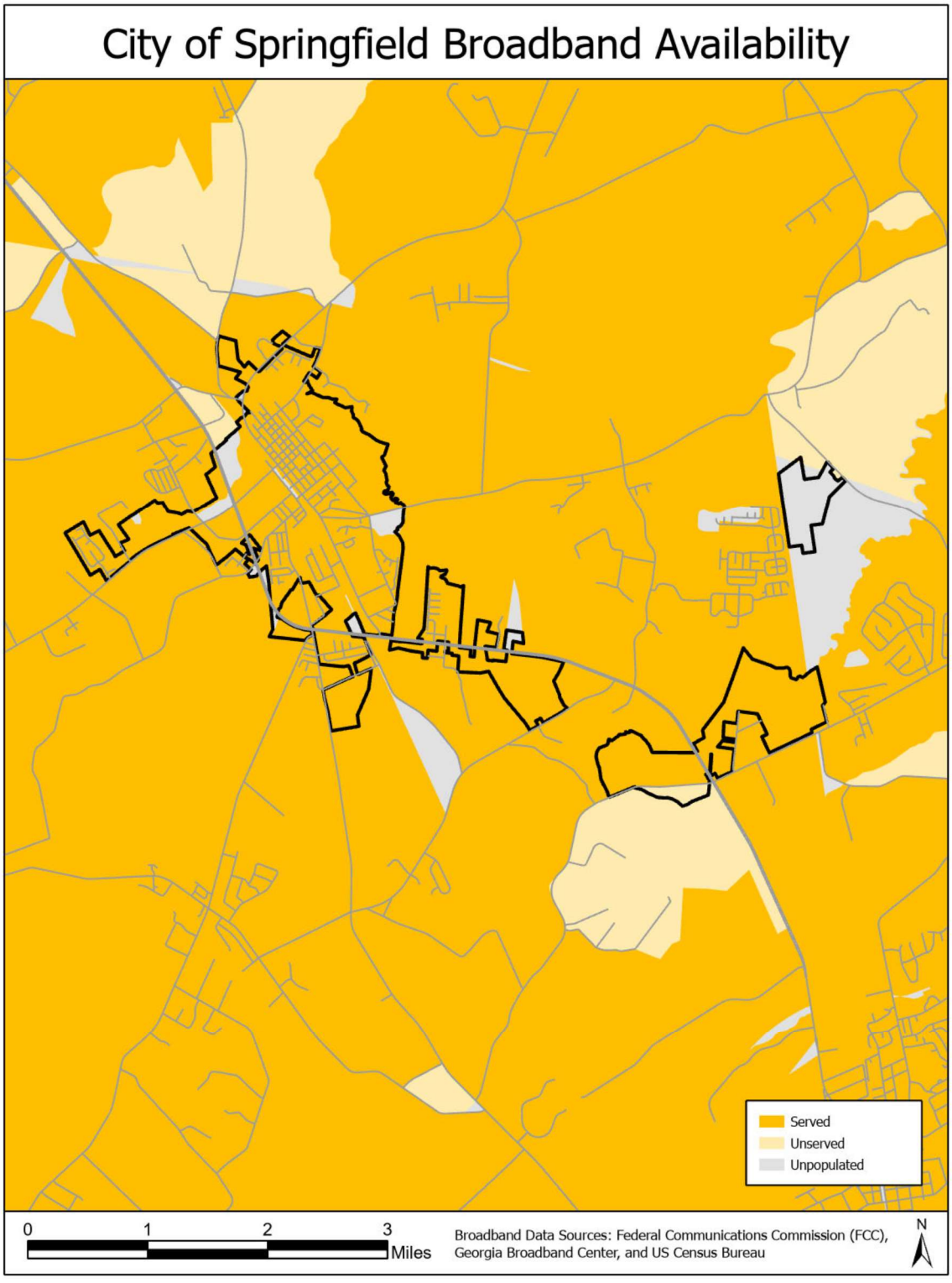
Based on the most recent data on broadband availability provided by the state of Georgia, the City of Springfield has no underserved areas. There are only a few undeveloped areas without access, and

the City will implement whatever measures necessary and at its disposal to ensure adequate connectivity is maintained if and when these parcels are developed.

Broadband delivery methods include, but are not limited to, digital subscriber lines, cable modems, fiber, wireless, broadband over power lines, and satellites. Understanding the importance of broadband service and the potential negative impacts a lack of connectivity can have on both economic development and resident wellbeing, the City of Springfield will strive to take measures to maintain service for those within the city.

The following strategies will be enforced and supported by the City of Springfield

- *Support community efforts by Effingham County to develop and maintain and inventory of Community Anchor Institutions (school, libraries, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, and higher education facilities) within the community.*
- *Apply to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for certification as a "Broadband Ready Community" or similar certification by the State of Georgia.*
- *Partner with state agencies (Georgia Technology Authority, Department of Community Affairs, and Department of Economic Development) and local area governments to promote broadband deployment in the community, region, and state.*



Data pulled from: www.broadband.georigal.gov/2023-georgia-broadband-availability-map.com

Appendix A: SWOT Analysis

Results of 2019 Comp Plan Committee Springfield SWOT Analysis:

Strengths

- Area affordability
- Sense of community
- Safe, small town
- Pedestrian scale/walkability
- Greenspace/streetscape
- Development standards
- Water/sewer/infrastructure
- Fiscally sound
- Focused board
- Excellent staff
- Progressive council
- Out of the box mentality
- Daytime population
- Recreation complex

Weaknesses

- Connectivity/pedestrian connections (downtown, commercial corridor, hospital & recreation)
- Regulations outside of downtown
- Lack of residential housing mix
- Lack of activity and businesses open after 5pm
- Apathetic/absentee landowners
- No overnight lodging

Opportunities

- Bypass (preserves downtown character)
- Ebenezer trail development
- Desire to create a destination
- Downtown retail
- Commercial development plan/design guidelines
- Incentives for planned growth
- Space for growth downtown and out of downtown

Threats

- Overrun by potential developments
- Development sprawl
- Non-retail use in storefront buildings
- Deterioration of buildings downtown

Appendix B: Report of Accomplishments

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Current Status	Notes
Education						
Keep the public informed with current events, civic meetings, and cultural opportunities through routine website updates and water bill fliers	2020-2024	Rincon, Chamber of Commerce	TBD	General Fund	NA	Springfield not responsible
Continue to financially support the local library	2020-2024	Rincon, Effingham County, Library Board	$10,000	TBD, Grants	NA	Springfield not responsible
Research the opportunity to place an incubator campus of Georgia Southern or other higher education institution within the city	2020-2024	Rincon, Effingham County	TBD	TBD	NA	Springfield not responsible
Community Facilities and Services						
Continue discussions with Guyton on joint parks project that will connect various community attractions and promote preservation of open space.	2020-2024	City/County	$8,000 total	TBD	Cancelled	Lack of Interest
Complete construction of the walking trail at the Recreation Department	2020	County	$25,000	General Fund, Grants, SPLOST	NA	Springfield not responsible
Seek grant funding for the acquisition of permanently protected for passive recreational use	2020	City	TBD	General Fund, Grants, SPLOST	Cancelled	Item unclear and not necessary

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Current Status	Notes
Public Safety-Fire						
Construct New Fire Station	2019-2020	City	$1,180,000	General Funds/ SPLOST Funds	Completed	Springfield Fire Station is complete
Public Works						
Formalize and maintain programs to keep city roads, bridges, and right-of-ways free of litter and debris	2019-2024	County	TBD	General Funds	NA	Not relevant to Springfield - County Only, Duplicate item in Transportation
Housing						
Assess need for senior housing	2020	City	$2,000	General Funds	Cancelled	Item not needed
Development Patterns (Land Use)						
Explore adopting a conservation subdivision ordinance to promote or require the preservation of open space.	2020-2023	City	$3,000	General Fund	Completed	New residential subdivision ordinances have been adopted.
Create new zoning districts/Amend existing to better fit comprehensive plan and city development goals	2020-2021	City	$2,000	General Fund	Completed	Hwy 21 Overlay District was created. All Existing Districts have been amended.
Explore Adopting a conservation Subdivision Ordinance	2020	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Cancelled	Duplicate Item

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Current Status	Notes
Transportation						
Connect Ebenezer Bike Trail to downtown to promote Ebenezer Greenway	2023	City	$2,000	General Fund	Cancelled	Project Not Feasible
Develop a pedestrian and bike plan for the city to promote alternative transportation connectivity.	2014-2019	County/CRC	$40,000	GDOT Planning, Grant	Completed	Although not listed as a city responsibility, new sidewalks were added to Old Stillwell Rd and all development requires sidewalk connectivity.
Explore options for reducing congestion on commercial corridors.	2018-2024	City	$20,000	General Funds	Completed	Highway 21 Overlay Ordinance has been adopted.
Continue to develop options for transportation connectivity and enforce transportation guidelines in new developments	2018-2024	City	TBD	Formal General Fund/ Grants	Completed	New regulations are in place and have been enforced in all project. This is now policy.
Formalize and maintain programs to keep city roads, bridges, and right-of-ways free of litter and debris	2020	City	$40,000 total	General Fund	Completed	Litter management and code enforcement efforts have been increased.
Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources						
Conduct Assessment of Heritage and EcoTourism Opportunities	2019-2024	County/City / Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund	Ongoing	
Determine Fate of Train Depot Building	2019-2024	County	Staff Time	General Fund SPLOST/ Grant Funds	NA	Springfield not responsible

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Current Status	Notes
Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources						
Update Local Historic Preservation Ordinance	2019-2024	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Postponed	Historic Preservation Ordinance is not a priority at this time.
Review Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for Compatibility with Historic Preservation Goals	2020	City	$3,000	General Fund	Ongoing	
Nominate Historic Resources to National Register	2021	City	$5,000	General Fund	Completed	Downtown is on the National Registry of Historic Places
Establish a historic preservation commission	2020	City/CRC	Staff Time	General Fund	Postponed	Historic Preservation Commission is not a priority at this time.
Develop Design Guidelines for Historic Districts	2020	City	$5,000	General Fund	Completed	Historic Downtown District Guidelines have been adopted.
Adopt a tree preservation ordinance	2021	City	$5,000	General Fund	Ongoing	
Continue to Develop Springfield Ebenezer Greenway initiative for land acquisition and conservation	2019-2024	City	$5,000,000	General / Grants	Ongoing	
Broadband						
Improve/Expand on Broadband in the City and the County	2019-2024	City/County	Staff Time	General Fund/ Grants	Cancelled	City has no underserved broadband areas.

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Current Status	Notes
Intergovernmental Coordination						
Establish an informal forum with local governments and law enforcement in order to provide for the exchange of information	2015-2024	County/City	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete	Meetings have taken place and should continue.
Social and Economic Development						
Rehabilitate downtown areas through coordinated main street and improvement programs	2020	City	Staff Time/TBD	General Fund/ CDBG	Complete	Downtown vacancy rate is below 5%.
Enhance existing/create new downtown events to draw citizens and activate downtown	2020	City	$30,000 total	General Fund	Complete	Events have continued and new have been added: First Fridays, Fall Festival, Trunk or Treat
Acquire properties to improve downtown parking	2020	City	$160,000	General Fund	Completed	New parking lots have been created.
Encourage specialty and retail businesses to locate in City's commercial and downtown district.	2020-2024	City / Chamber	$2,000/ annual	General Fund	Ongoing	
Support Chamber and Development Authorities to actively recruit retail commercial and light industrial to city.	2020/2024	City	$5,000 / annual	General Fund	Ongoing	

Appendix C: Community Work Program

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	*Notes*
Education					
Keep public informed on City business, programs, meetings, and events with quarterly digital newsletters.	2025-2029	City	Staff Time	General Fund	*New Item*
Community Facilities and Services					
Determine feasibility of multi-purpose trail along Hwy 119 between Guyton and Springfield	2025-2029	City	$5,000	General Fund	*New Item*
Continue renovations of Ulmer Park by adding new facilities.	2025-2029	City	$1,500,000	SPLOST	*New Item*
Design second Community Park Space along Ebenezer Creek at Still well Rd.	2025-2029	City	$20,000	General Fund	*New Item*
Public Safety-Fire					
Public Works					
Housing					
Revise Ordinances to allow for housing variety with cohesive and well planned neighborhood design.	2025-2029	City	$5,000	General fund	*New Item*
Development Patterns (Land Use)					
Review Comprehensive Plan Annually for Updates or Revisions	2025-2029	City	Staff Time	General Fund	*New Item*
Revise ordinances to allow for development that includes conservation of wetlands and greenspace	2025-2029	City	$5,000	General Fund	*New Item*

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	*Notes*
Transportation					
Add to the existing sidewalk network to promote alternative transportation connectivity.	2025-2029	City/GDOT	Staff Time	General Funds, Grant	*New Item*
Create secondary access roads in commercial growth areas to reduce congestions on commercial corridors	2025-2045	City	TBD	General Funds	*New Item and Longterm goal*
Explore options for transportation connectivity between downtown and highway commercial areas	2025-2029	City	TBD	General Fund/ Grants	*New Item*
Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources					
Conduct Assessment of Heritage and EcoTourism Opportunities	2025-2029	County/City/ Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund	*Ongoing Project*
Update Local Historic Preservation Ordinance	2030	City	$2,000	General Fund	*Postponed Item*
Review Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for Compatibility with Historic Preservation Goals	2025-2029	City	Staff Time	General	*Ongoing Project*
Adopt a tree preservation ordinance	2025	City	$5,000	General	*Ongoing Project*
Establish a historic preservation commission	2030	City/CRC	Staff Time	General Fund	*Postponed Item*
Continue to Develop Springfield Ebenezer Greenway initiative for land acquisition and conservation	2025-2029	City	$5,000,000	General/ Grants	*Ongoing Project*
Create public access points along Ebenezer Creek to promote recreation and tourism	2025-2029	City	TBD	General	*New Item*
Broadband					

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	*Notes*
Intergovernmental Coordination					
Coordinate with other local governments and Emergency Management to provide for the open exchange of information and assistance during emergency situations	2025-2029	County/City	Staff Time	General Funds	*New Item and Longterm goal*
Social and Economic Development					
Encourage specialty and retail businesses to locate in City's commercial and downtown district.	2025-2029	City / DDA	$30,000	General	*Ongoing and Longterm Project*
Support Chamber and Development Authorities to actively recruit retail commercial and light industrial to city.	2025-2029	City	$5,000	General	*Ongoing and Longterm Project*
Host events and activities in downtown areas.	2025-2029	City/DDA	$50,000/year	General	*New Item*
Implement additional improvement incentive programs for downtown revitalization	2025-2029	DDA/City	$10,000/year	General	*New Item*
Improve abandoned railroad Right of Way for downtown parking	2025-2029	City	TBD	SPLOST	*New Item*

Appendix D: Documentation of Community Involvement Activities

Community Involvement Activities are crucial to a Comprehensive Planning Process. Below is an outline of all that is included in this section. A listing of all those involved in the planning process, all public hearings, all meetings and the various surveys conducted in preparation of this Comprehensive Planning update.

I. Listing of all Stakeholder and Steering Committee Members.
II. Comprehensive Planning Schedule and Website
III. Public Hearing on Current Plan and Process for Update – May 16, 2024
IV. Public Hearing on Current Plan and Process for Update - May 21, 2024
V. Initial Feedback Survey on Existing Comprehensive Plan
VI. Stakeholder Meeting– May 23, 2024
VII. Steering Committee– May 30, 2024
VIII. Stakeholder Meeting– June 6, 2024
IX. Steering Committee Meeting – June 18, 2024
X. Public Hearing – July 11, 2024
XI. Public Hearing – July 18, 2024
XII. Feedback surveys on Draft Comp Plan
XIII. Stakeholder Meeting – July 25, 2024
XIV. Council/Steering Committee – August 6, 2024
XV. Supplemental Meeting Materials

1.1 Section I: Stakeholder and Committee Members

Stakeholder Committee Members:

Madisen Hipelius, DDA Board Member
Ricky Eilerman, DDA Board Member
Sean Carter, DDA Board Member
Adrian Webber, DDA Board Member
Brittany Dasher, DDA Board Member
Jimmy Moncrief, DDA Board Member
Terry Cook, Planning Board Member
Meghan Ortiz, Planning Board Member
Dana Kirkland, Planning Board Member
Leah Perkins, Planning Board Member
*Erin Phillips, Planning & Development Director
*Regina Clontz, Mars Theatre Director
Jacob Lang, Effingham Resident, and Developer
Alyssa Schoonover, Downtown Business representative
Alden Strandburg, Community Representative
Sgt. James Woodcock, Springfield Police Department

Steering Committee Members:

Barty Alderman, Mayor
Steve Shealy, Council Member
Dee Moncrief, Council Member
Justin Cribbs, Council Member
Gary Weitman, Council Member
Grant Triplett, Council Member
Jenney Denney, Council Member
Matt Morris, City Manager
*Erin Phillips, Planning & Development Director
Jennifer Smith, City Clerk
Lauren Eargle, Assistant City Manager
Matt Fraizer, Engineer, Thomas & Hutton
*Daneille Kirkland, Planning & Zoning Board
*Regina Clontz, Mars Theatre Director

*Members serving on Both Committees

1.2 Section II. Comprehensive Planning Schedule and Website

- A page on the City Website (See Image 2 Below) was dedicated to hosting information regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update Process and also displayed a full list of meeting dates. Links to documents and surveys were located here. The web page was made accessible from May 2024 to October 2024.

- An overview of the Planning Process Timeline was made available to the public in the form of a handout that can be found in Section XV of this Appendix.

- The schedule of meeting dates was reviewed with City Council at the May 14, 2024 Council Meeting and reviewed with the public prior to both public hearings hosted in May.

- Public Notice of all scheduled Meeting Dates (See Image 1 Below) was posted at City Hall on May 16, 2024 and remained posted until the Comprehensive Plan was adopted. This listing of meeting dates was also posted on the city Facebook page, and all dates were listed in the City Calendar on the City Website.

Image 1: Notice of all public meeting dates related to Comprehensive Plan Update.

Public Notice

The **City of Springfield** will be holding the following public hearings, meetings, and workshops in the process of updating the Springfield Comprehensive Plan. All are scheduled to **begin at 6:00pm.**

May 16 2024	**Public Hearing** regarding planning process and previous Comprehensive Plan
May 21, 2024	**Public Hearing** regarding planning process and previous Comprehensive Plan
May 23, 2024	**Stakeholder Committee** meeting to discuss Transportation, Housing and Land Use.
May 30, 2024	**Steering Committee/City Council Workshop** to discuss Transportation, Housing and Land Use.
June 6, 2024	**Stakeholder Committee** meeting to discuss Tourism, Economic Development, and Recreation.
June 18, 2024	**Steering Committee/City Council Workshop** to discuss Tourism, Economic Development, and Recreation.
July 11, 2024	**Public Hearing** regarding Draft Comprehensive Plan Update
July 18, 2024	**Public Hearing** regarding Draft Comprehensive Plan Update
July 25, 2024	**Stakeholder Committee** meeting to discuss the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update.
August 6, 2024	**Steering Committee/City Council Workshop** to discuss the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update.

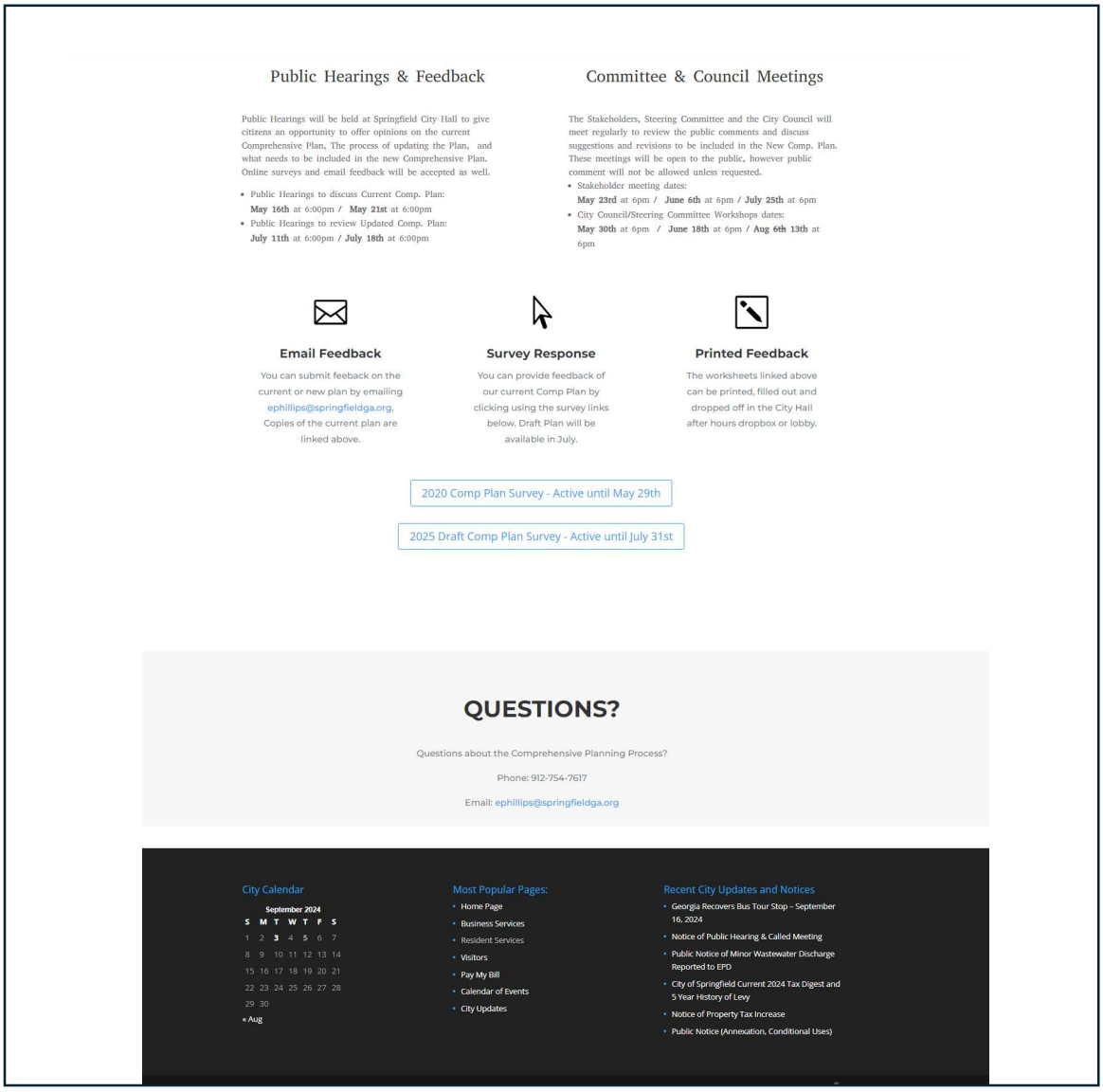
All public hearings and meetings will be held in the Springfield Council Room located at 130 S. Laurel Street. **A quorum of City Council may be present at any of the above.**

Any interested parties are encouraged to attend. Questions can be directed to the Planning Office at Springfield City Hall by calling (912) 754-7617.

Copies of the current Comprehensive Plan and full meeting schedule are available online at: **www.SpringfieldGA.org/comp-plan/**

Image 2: Webpage dedicated to Comprehensive Plan Update.





Public Hearings & Feedback

Public Hearings will be held at Springfield City Hall to give citizens an opportunity to offer opinions on the current Comprehensive Plan, The process of updating the Plan, and what needs to be included in the new Comprehensive Plan. Online surveys and email feedback will be accepted as well.

- Public Hearings to discuss Current Comp. Plan: **May 16th** at 6:00pm / **May 21st** at 6:00pm
- Public Hearings to review Updated Comp. Plan: **July 11th** at 6:00pm / **July 18th** at 6:00pm

Committee & Council Meetings

The Stakeholders, Steering Committee and the City Council will meet regularly to review the public comments and discuss suggestions and revisions to be included in the New Comp. Plan. These meetings will be open to the public, however public comment will not be allowed unless requested.

- Stakeholder meeting dates: **May 23rd** at 6pm / **June 6th** at 6pm / **July 25th** at 6pm
- City Council/Steering Committee Workshops dates: **May 30th** at 6pm / **June 18th** at 6pm / **Aug 6th 13th** at 6pm

Email Feedback

You can submit feeback on the current or new plan by emailing ephillips@springfieldga.org. Copies of the current plan are linked above.

Survey Response

You can provide feedback of our current Comp Plan by clicking using the survey links below. Draft Plan will be available in July.

Printed Feedback

The worksheets linked above can be printed, filled out and dropped off in the City Hall after hours dropbox or lobby.

2020 Comp Plan Survey - Active until May 29th

2025 Draft Comp Plan Survey - Active until July 31st

QUESTIONS?

Questions about the Comprehensive Planning Process?

Phone: 912-754-7617

Email: ephillips@springfieldga.org

City Calendar

September 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

« Aug

Most Popular Pages:

- Home Page
- Business Services
- Resident Services
- Visitors
- Pay My Bill
- Calendar of Events
- City Updates

Recent City Updates and Notices

- Georgia Recovers Bus Tour Stop - September 16, 2024
- Notice of Public Hearing & Called Meeting
- Public Notice of Minor Wastewater Discharge Reported to EPD
- City of Springfield Current 2024 Tax Digest and 5 Year History of Levy
- Notice of Property Tax Increase
- Public Notice (Annexation, Conditional Uses)

1.3 Section III. Public Hearing – May 16, 2024

The Public Hearing on Thursday, May 16, 2024 was held to receive feedback on the Comprehensive Planning Process and to receive public comment on the existing Comprehensive Plan. The following notice was posted in the local paper, on social media, listed in the City Calendar, and posted at City Hall. This public hearing was also listed on the full schedule of public meetings and posted on the Comprehensive Plan Update Page of the website referenced in Section II of this Appendix.

Public Notice Posting:

Public Notice

The **City of Springfield** will be holding public hearings to discuss the process for updating the Springfield Comprehensive Plan and to receive feedback on the existing Comprehensive Plan.

Public Hearing Dates will be

May 16th at 6:00pm and **May 21st at 6:00pm.**

Copies of the current Comprehensive Plan and full meeting schedule are available online at:

www.SpringfieldGA.org/comp-plan/

All public hearings and meetings will be held in the Springfield Council Room located at 130 S. Laurel Street (located between Springfield City Hall and Springfield Police Department). A quorum of Council may be present.

Any interested parties are encouraged to attend the public hearings. Questions can be directed to the Planning Office at Springfield City Hall by calling (912) 754-7617.

Facebook Posting:



Public Hearing Minutes

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director

Attendance: Linda Mock
Susan McGinness

The public hearing was opened for public comment at 6:00pm. The Moderator stated that the purpose of this Public Hearing was to receive comments on the Comprehensive Plan Update Process and would also be open to hearing comments regarding the existing Comprehensive Plan. Copies of the Planning Process Timeline, Vision & Goals Worksheet, Needs & Opportunities Worksheet, and existing Comprehensive Plan were made available to those attending (see Section XV for copies of referenced Supplemental Documents).

The planning process was explained to those attending. Initial feedback on the planning process and existing Comprehensive Plan will be heard in the May public hearings. An online survey was also in place to evaluate the Visions, Goals, Needs, and Opportunities from the existing Plan. A series of Stakeholder meetings scheduled in May and June would be held to evaluate feedback, discuss the existing Plan, and brainstorm potential revisions to be included in the Draft Plan Update. These Stakeholder Meetings would then be followed by Steering Committee meetings where those attending would determine what should be included in the Plan Update.

The Draft Comprehensive Plan Update would be prepared and made available to the public, with additional Public Hearings and online surveys being available in July to evaluate the Draft Plan Update. The Stakeholders and Steering Committees would meet again in July and August to make final revisions to the Draft Plan Update before submitting the Final Plan Update to the Department of Community Affairs.

No concerns were expressed regarding the Comprehensive Planning process by those attending the meeting. There were only questions regarding clarification on methods of providing public feedback.

The Moderator then opened the floor for comments regarding the existing Plan:

Susan McGinness: Stated that she lived in a home adjacent to Ulmer Park and would like to see more shops and restaurants surrounding the park and would like to see the city encourage development along Pine Street to be like that of Laurel Street.

There were no additional comments regarding the existing Plan.

The public hearing was closed at 6:23pm.

Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: MAY, 16, 2024

LINDA MOCK

Susan McGinness

1.4 Section IV. Public Hearing - May 21, 2024

The Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 was the second public hearing held to receive feedback on the Comprehensive Planning Process and to receive public comment on the existing Comprehensive Plan. The notices for this hearing were run in conjunction with the previous May 16th hearing and referenced in the same manner on social media and the city website.

Public Hearing Minutes

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director

Attendance: Barty Alderman, Mayor
Gary Weitman, Council
Joyce Alderman

The public hearing was opened for public comment at 6:00pm. The Moderator stated that the purpose of this Public Hearing was to receive comments on the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Copies of the Planning Process Timeline, Vision & Goals Worksheet, Needs & Opportunities Worksheet, and existing Comprehensive Plan were made available to those attendingsee Section XV for copies of referenced Supplemental Documents).

The Planning Process was reviewed in full with those present. There were no comments regarding the process or suggestions for changes.

The floor was then opened for discussions of the current comprehensive plan. There were no comments from the public present. Mayor Alderman noted that the past five years have seen a lot of growth in the City of Springfield, most especially in the last two years. It is a level of growth that was unanticipated and is hard to prepare for. There was some discussion among those present regarding best practices for planning for growth without overextending resources if the growth slows down. These will be subjects to address in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:30pm.

Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: MAY 21, 2024

Barby Alderman
GARY WERTMAN
Joyce Alderman

1.5 Section V. Initial Feedback Survey on Existing Comprehensive Plan

The City of Springfield wanted to offer ways for the general public to give feedback about the existing Comprehensive Plan goals. A variety of options were offered. Copies of the Visions/Goals and Needs/Opportunities worksheet (see Section XV) were available for download on the website or pickup during the public hearings. These feedback sheets were posted online and on social media for those not in attendance at public meetings. A brief survey was created that addressed each of the items listed in the Visions & Goals and Needs & Opportunities stated in the Existing Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this survey was to ask the public the following questions regarding each entry:

Do you feel Springfield has achieved these goals in the last 5 years?

What goals are still relevant in Springfield today?

Are there any other goals that should be added to these?

Which of the Needs and Opportunities listed in the 2020 Comp Plan has the City addressed in the last 5 years?

Are there other items the City has achieved in the last 5 years that are not mentioned?

Which of the Needs and Opportunities listed in the 2020 Comp Plan are still relevant today?

Are there any missing items that the City needs to address?

Responses were collected over a three-week period. Paper versions of this assessment were made available at City Hall and provided to those that attended the Public Hearings. The same feedback was also collected from the Stakeholders, Steering Committee Members, City Staff, Mayor, and City Council. It was interesting to see the differences in what the public felt was important as compared to those that are more familiar with government procedures and planning principles.

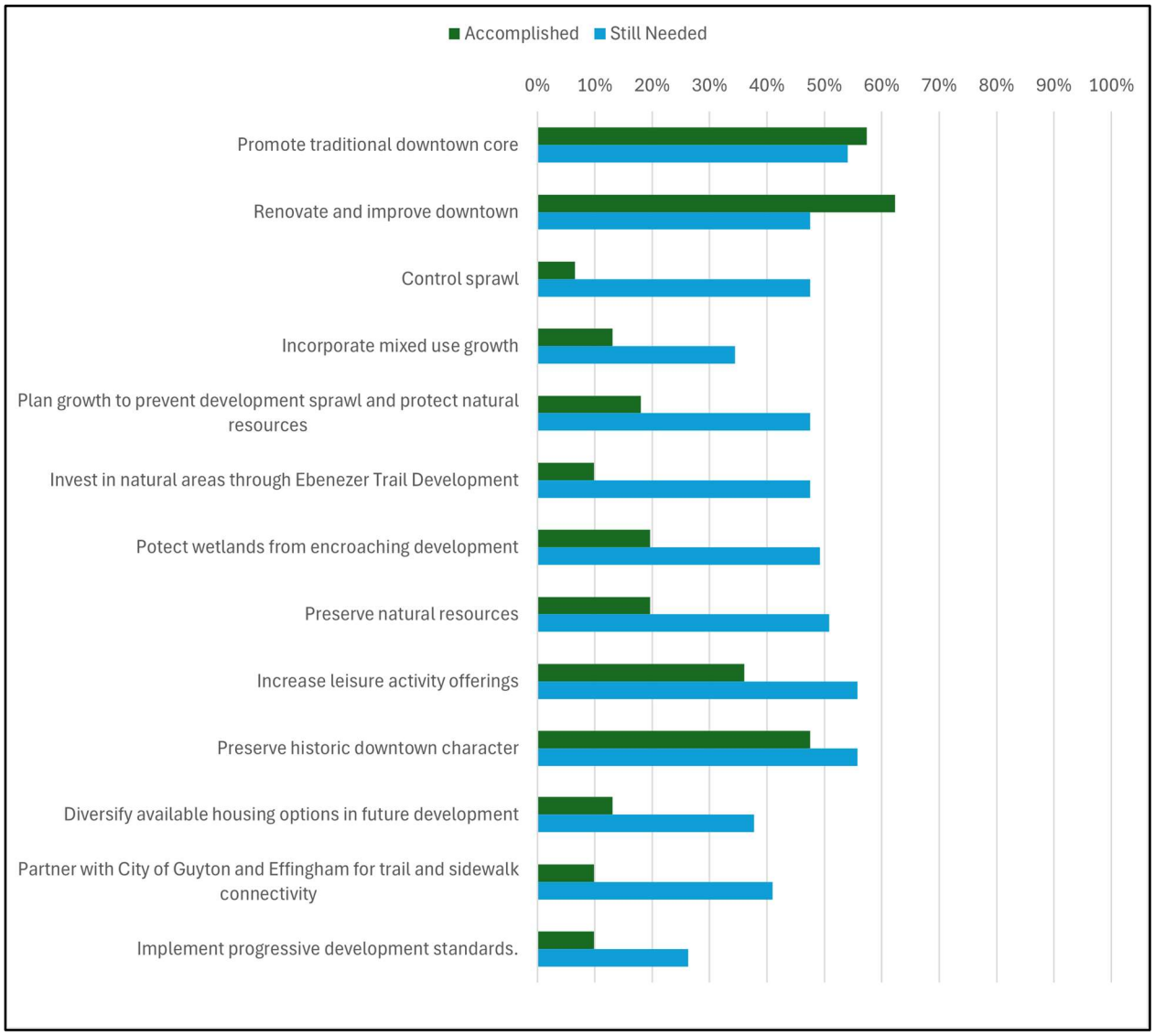
Some observations from the results:

- Respondentsfelt that goals involving bettering downtown were being achieved, but they also felt that they were still needed as goals.
- Goals that involved Ebenezer Greenway and recration were still selected as being relevant.
- There was a discrepancy between what the public thought the City had accomplished as compared to what committee and staff members thought had been accomplished.
- Promotion of lodging by converting historic homes to Bed and Breakfasts was the least popular as an accomplished and relevant goal.
- Many of the write-in answers suggest the public is generally against additional develoment, especially in terms of housing and population.

Public feedback from online survey evaluating Goals listed in the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan:



Public feedback from online survey evaluating Need and Opportunities listed in the 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan:



1.6 Section VI. Stakeholder Meeting – May 23, 2024

The initial stakeholder meeting was held on May 23, 2024 at 6pm. It was advertised as an open meeting available for public access. The goals of the first stakeholder meeting were to discuss the current Comprehensive Plan goals regarding Transportation, Housing, and Land Use. The group discussed the changes the city has undergone since the last Comprehensive Plan update, reviewed the public comments and survey results received up to this point, and discussed ways these goals and objectives should be amended in the current Comprehensive Plan Update. A summary of the meeting is below.

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director

Attendance: Sgt. James Woodcock, Springfield Police Department
Jimmy Moncrief, Downtown Development Authority Board Member
Alyssa Schoonover, Downtown Business Manager
Brittany Dasher, Downtown Development Authority Board Member
Danielle Kirkland, Planning Board Member, City Business Owner
Regina Clontz, Mars Theatre Director
Alden Stranberg, Georgia HiLo Trail
Jacob Lang, County Resident, Developer

Danielle Kirkland, Planning & Zoning Board, Springfield Business Owner
Brittany Dasher, Downtown Development Authority, Springfield Business Owner
Sean Carter, Downtown Development Authority, Springfield Resident and business Owner
Jimmy Moncrief, Downtown Development Authority, Springfield Resident and Business Owner
Alyssa Schoonover, Springfield Business Manager, Effingham County Resident
Sgt. James Woodcock, Springfield Police Department
Jacob Lang, Property Developer, Effingham County Resident
Alden Strandberg, Georgia Hi-Lo Trail, Effingham County Resident
Regina Clontz, Mars Theatre Director

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm

The moderator provided everyone with an agenda listing the following items and reviewed the intent and purpose of the meeting.

- Review of Existing Comprehensive Plan Goals on Transportation, Land Use, and Housing
- Review of Survey results to date
- Evaluation of Existing Comprehensive Plan Goals
- Brainstorm Updates to be included in Comprehensive Plan Update

The committee reviewed a handout of all of the items listed in the current Comprehensive Plans Visions and Goals that related to Transportation, Land Use, and Housing. When everyone was familiar with the existing plan goals, the results from the online surveys and feedback were reviewed and discussed.

The committee then used the provided worksheet listing the goals, needs, and opportunities. They then reviewed each one and discussed. The following were significant talking points and suggestions from the group.

Transportation:

- Adopting the Highway 21 Overlay Zoning District with the enforcement of pedestrian and vehicular connections between developments was a move in the right direction for reducing traffic congestion. The City should continue to strive to make more alternative transportation connections between commercial and residential areas to reduce vehicular traffic.
- The City should continue to support existing bike infrastructure and continue to expand the sidewalk network in already-developed areas such as the downtown core and historic residential district.
- A multi-use trail connection to the City of Guyton could become an asset in connecting new residential development along Hwy 119 to both the Ga Hi-Lo Trail and Downtown Springfield.
- The Springfield Ebenezer Greenway has not been a priority in recent years but should still be a long-term goal.

Housing:

- Expanding Accessory Dwelling standards in recent years was a good way to offer variety in housing.
- Promoting Mixed use and higher end housing has been done well downtown; however, the -ity has been unsure how to allow higher density housing along the commercial corridor without adversely affecting traffic and general quality of life.
- What is affordable housing in this market in Springfield? Single-family development (Attached or Detached) is not affordable since the gap between average income and land/construction costs is too far. We cannot legislate our way out of this.
- High Density Multifamily will produce the most affordable option. Note that from a development perspective, the low-to-middle density can force builders to use cheaper methods and materials. When you offer high density units in higher-rise buildings, you could start to see lower tenant costs and quality constructed buildings.
- Adopting the International Building Code (IBC) and ensuring that high density structures are required to follow it will produce a better, longer-lasting product that will elevate the structure's aesthetic appeal, safety, and longevity.
- Understand that outdated inferences exist. Renters are not inherently "bad" citizens and apartments do not have to be substandard.

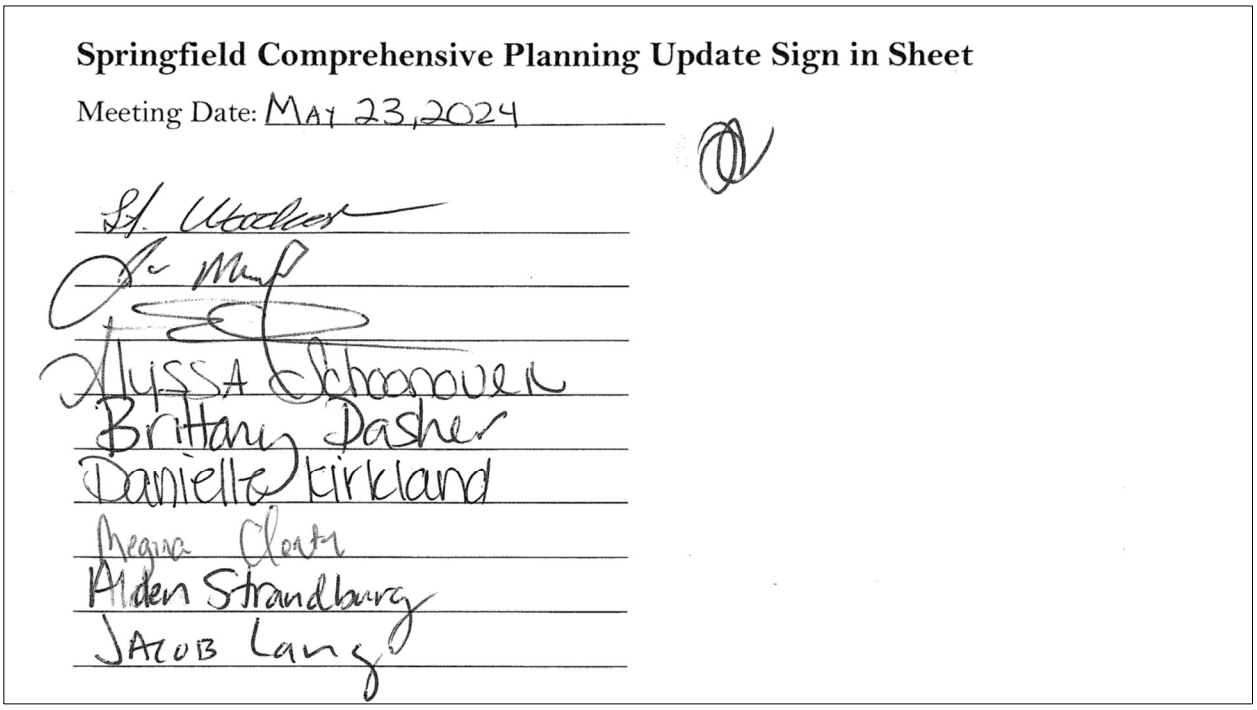
Land Use:

- We should allow growth where existing infrastructure is currently and avoid extending services out to larger developments outside of the city to avoid sprawl and conserve resources. This will also make connectivity between developments more feasible.

- Currently some residential zoning requires conserved green space. This should be required for all new residential developments. Street trees, lamp posts, and sidewalks should be required of all new development.
- Low density development should be directed north of Laurel Street on Hwy 21, while high density commercial and housing be directed to south of Laurel Street on Hwy 21 adjacent to existing infrastructure and commercial property

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

Meeting Sign in Sheet:



Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: MAY 23, 2024

Alyssa Schoonover
Brittany Dasher
Danielle Kirkland
Megan Clark
Alden Strandburg
Jacob Lang

1.7 Section VII. Steering Committee Workshop – May 30, 2024

The Steering committee met the week after the Stakeholder Committee to review the existing plan regarding Transportation, Housing, and Land Use. They reviewed the survey results and the suggestions and notes provided by the Stakeholder Committee and discussed what changes should be incorporated into the Updated Comprehensive Plan. As there was a quorum of Council present, this was a public meeting, and the minutes of the meeting are below.

Meeting Minutes

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director
Matt Morriss, City Manager

Attendance: Mathew Fraizer, PE
Dee Moncrief, Council Member
Justin Cribbs, Council Member
Barty Alderman, Mayor
Gary Weitman, Council Member
Grant Triplett, Council Member
Jenny Denney, Council Member
Lauren Eargle, Assistant City Manager
Danielle Kirkland, Planning Board Member, City Business Owner

The meeting of the Steering Committee was called to order by the Mayor at 6:00pm. The committee was provided a copy of the previous Comprehensive Plan Goals that related to Transportation, Land Use and Housing. This information was paired with Stakeholder committee suggestions and public survey comments regarding the accomplishment of those goals and if they should still be included in the new comprehensive plan.

After review of the materials, the group began their discussions of the existing goals and ways they should be amended the Comprehensive Plan Update. A summary of significant talking points is below.

Transportation:

- All agreed that the Highway 21 Overlay District met the goals of the existing Comprehensive Plan and should continue to be enforced. Parcel connectivity with secondary access roads and sidewalks will provide much needed traffic improvements.
- Elevated design and landscaping will reduce traffic burdens will help create a more inviting entrance corridor into Springfield and the Historic Downtown.
- Multiuse pathway to Guyton should be encouraged and supported.
- Connections between new developments and existing commercial, recreation and residential areas should be encouraged and promoted. Additional bike, walking and cart trails should be promoted and expanded.

- Traffic signal locations along Hwy 21 will be important and should be implemented intentionally and carefully. The speed limit in this area should be considered and requested to be lowered if needed.

Land Use

- Growth should be directed towards areas where infrastructure is already available. Infill of similar uses and new development adjacent to compatible existing uses should be encouraged.
- Hwy 21 Commercial Corridor is going to continue to develop. The City needs to uphold the Overlay District guidelines and encourage Effingham County to adopt them as well.
- Annexation should be encouraged on the Hwy 21 Corridor between Ebenezer Road and Laurel Street as there is already infrastructure in the ROW and cohesive development standards will ensure the gateway to Springfield is enhanced.
- Higher density residential should be focused near commercial corridors to take advantage of walkability and access to services for the residents and infrastructure for the developers.
- Lower density residential should be encouraged in areas adjacent to wetlands and waterways to minimize potential environmental impacts from development.
- Mixed uses, townhomes, rentals and apartments should be used to create transitional buffer areas between Detached Single Family residential and commercial zones, especially in the Hwy 21 Corridor area.
- Preservation of green space within new developments should be encouraged.

Housing

- Affordable Housing is difficult to build given the current land and construction costs. Higher density may be the only options available to accommodate affordability based on the county's median income.
- Supporting affordability can be done by encouraging variety in the housing market and variety of housing types within new developments. The city should encourage both higher densities as well as larger than minimum lot sizes.
- Supporting home ownership and development that encourages such is important in creating a sense of community with long term residents.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: MAY 30, 2024

Erin Phillips

MATTHEW FRAZIER

Justin Wills

Barry Alderman

Gary Weitman

Danny Triplett

James Denney

Lauren Cooper

Danielle Kirkland

MATT MORRIS

1.8 Section VIII. Stakeholder Meeting – June 6, 2024

The second stakeholder meeting was held on June 6, 2024 at 6pm. It was advertised as an open meeting available for public access. The goals of the second stakeholder meeting were to discuss the current Comprehensive Plan goals regarding Economic Development, Tourism, and Recreation. The group reviewed the public comments and survey results received up to this point. They discussed ways these goals and objectives should be amended in the current Comprehensive Plan Update. A summary of the meeting is below.

Meeting Minutes

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director

Attendance:

Jacob Lang, Property Developer, Effingham County Resident
Terry Cook, Planning Board Member, City Resident
Regina Clontz, Mars Theatre Director
Leah Perkins, Planning Board Member, City Resident
Sgt. James Woodcock, Springfield Police Department
Madisen Hipelius, Downtown Development Authority, City Resident
Adrian Webber, Downtown Development Authority, City Business Owner
Danielle Kirkland, Planning & Zoning Board, Springfield Business Owner

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm

The moderator provided everyone with an agenda listing the following items and reviewed the intent and purpose of the meeting.

I. Review of Existing Comprehensive Plan Goals on Economic Development, Tourism, and Recreation
II. Review of Survey results to date
III. Evaluation of Existing Comprehensive Plan Goals
IV. Brainstorm Updates to be included in Comprehensive Plan Update

The committee reviewed a handout of all of the items listed in the current Comprehensive Plans Visions and Goals that related to Economic Development, Tourism, and Recreation. When everyone was familiar with the existing plan goals, the results from the Online surveys and feedback were reviewed and discussed.

The committee then used the provided worksheet listing the goals, needs and opportunities. They then reviewed each area and discussed what updates were needed for the Comp Plan Update. The following were significant talking points and suggestions from the group.

The committee then used the provided worksheet listing the goals, needs and opportunities. They then reviewed each one and discussed. The following were significant talking points and suggestions from the group.

Economic Development and Tourism

- Efforts for attracting people to the downtown area need to continue. Community events, added parking, improved sidewalks and reduced vacancy rates have contributed to the revitalization of downtown and should continue to be supported.
- More variety of events was suggested.
- Better advertising for downtown should be considered to make sure both locals and tourists are aware of events, entertainment, dining, and shopping options.
- The county recreation facility on Hwy 21 host large baseball tournaments consisting of both locals and out of town visitors. The City should develop ways to attract them to downtown while they are here.
- Lodging is lacking in Springfield and Effingham in general, but populations do not currently support hotels. Should Springfield be incentivizing Bed and Breakfasts, or Short-Term Rentals? In what ways can we do this?
- Ebenezer Greenway Project is still a good way to promote and protect this natural resource. The city should focus on getting those access points to the creek that are currently within city limits accessible to the public.

Recreation

- The three main points that continued to arise when discussing what recreational needs the city has were: Shade, Water and Trails. Shaded areas to sit or picnic. Water features to play in or enjoy (splash pads, fountains, etc.). Trails to use that are different types with a variety of destinations and surfaces: boardwalks in wetlands, hard surfaces in parks, nature trails in green spaces, etc.
- Multiuse Trails and sidewalks become recreational opportunities when designed correctly with amenities such as lights, benches, bike fixing stations, trees, water fountains.
- When trails and sidewalks connect destinations, it offers more opportunities for recreational walking, biking or running and also reduces vehicular traffic.
- The multi-use trail connection between Guyton and Springfield is both a transportation and recreational opportunity.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Meeting Sign in Sheet:

Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: JUNE 6, 2024

JACOB LANG
TERRY COOK
Regina Chavez
Leah Parkins
S. Woodard
Madison Hipels
ADRIAN WEBBER
[illegible]

1.9 Section IX. Steering Committee – June 18, 2024

The Steering Committee met to discuss the suggestions provided at the June 6th Stakeholder Committee meeting. They reviewed the public comments and Stakeholder comments regarding review of the existing plan regarding Recreation, Tourism, and Economic Development. Changes to be incorporated into the new goals of the Updated Comprehensive Plan were discussed. As there was a quorum of Council present, this was a public meeting, and the minutes of the meeting are below.

Meeting Minutes

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director

Attendance: Mathew Fraizer, PE
Danielle Kirkland, Planning Board Member, City Business Owner
Dee Moncrief, Council Member
Steve Shealy, Council Member
Justin Cribbs, Council Member
Barty Alderman, Mayor
Gary Weitman, Council Member
Grant Triplett, Council Member
Jenny Denney, Council Member
Matt Morris, City Manager
Lauren Eargle, Assistant City Manager
Jennifer Smith, City Clerk
Regina Clonts, Mars Theatre Director

The Meeting was called to order by the Mayor at 6:00pm. The group reviewed the comments from the Stakeholder group regarding the current comprehensive plan goals and if they should be amended at all. The results from the survey were provided as well. After review, Mrs. Phillips lead the group in discussing various aspects of Tourism, Economic Development and Recreation. Significant points made by the group are listed below:

Downtown Springfield:

- Downtown provides an excellent opportunity for resident and visitors. The revitalization in the past years has had a positive impact on the city and it has vibrant and diverse atmosphere.
- More variety of events should be encouraged and utilizing other spaces in downtown for City Events.
- Additional pedestrian crossings should be encouraged and accepting the main street from DOT should be a goal.

Lodging Options

- Promoting Tourism is difficult without lodging available. Hotels are not an option in Springfield due to limited need.
- Short term rentals are good options when regulated, RV parks could provide a solution if design guidelines were in place.
- Bed and Breakfast should still be encouraged, but with construction and land prices as they are right now, the private sector is likely not going to support this right now.

Tourism

- Better signage to show people where downtown is when they are on Hwy 21 and 119
- Advertisements for downtown such as print media or online presence that lists business and events.

Springfield Ebenezer Greenway

- Springfield should still encourage conservation and preservation efforts along Ebenezer Creek.
- Places to access the creek while in the City are still possible, but more in-depth discussions are needed to determine where those access points should be and how to create them.

Historic Preservation

- Some form of protection for our historic structures is needed. We should consider adding design guidelines or a board review of renovations to certain areas of the Historic District.
- A Tree ordinance is probably a good idea for preserving the canopy downtown and some of the cities older trees.

Recreation

- Using sidewalks as recreation opportunities are a good idea
- Creating sidewalk connections inside city limits should be the priority. Other connections such as a Guyton/Springfield connector should be considered later.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Meeting Sign in sheet is below:

Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: JUNE 18 2024

Erin Phillips

MATTHEW FRAZIER

Danielle Kirkland

Demarrs Moncriet

Steve Shealy

Justin Cribbs

BARTON ALDERMAN

Gary Weitman

Grant Triplett

Jenny Denney

MATTHEW MOZES

Lauren Cargle

Regina Clark

1.10 Section X. Public Hearings – July 11, 2024 and July 18, 2024

The July Public Hearings were held to receive comments on the Updated 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan. The following notice was published in the local paper four weeks prior to the July 18th Public Hearing. It was posted on social media and posted at City Hall. These hearings were also listed on the full schedule of Comprehensive Plan public meetings and posted on the Comprehensive Plan Update page of the city website and at City Hall. Copies of the Springfield Vision and Goals to be included in the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan were made available to those in attendance.

Public Notice Posting:

Public Notice

The **City of Springfield City Council and Planning and Zoning Board** will be holding public hearings to discuss the process for updating the Springfield Comprehensive Plan and to receive feedback on the updated 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan*.

Public Hearing Dates will be **July 11 at 6:00pm** and **July 18 at 6:00pm.**

Copies of the Current 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan and full meeting schedule are available online at:

www.SpringfieldGA.org/comp-plan/

Copies of the Updated 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan will be made available online by June 30th, 2024.

All public hearings and meetings will be held in the Springfield Council Room located at 130 S. Laurel Street (located between Springfield City Hall and Springfield Police Department). A quorum of Council may be present.

Any interested parties are encouraged to attend the public hearings. Questions can be directed to the Planning Office at Springfield City Hall by calling (912) 754-7617.

*The plan will include a Land Use planning section and these public hearings will follow the same procedures as a Zoning related Public Hearing.

Public Hearing Minutes July 11, 2024

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director

Attendance: Barton Alderman, Mayor
Gary Weitman, Council Member
Terry Cook, Planning Board
Meghan Ortiz, Planning Board
Danielle Kirkland, Planning Board

Meeting summary:

Hearing was called to order at 6:15pm. There were no public in attendance and no comments were heard.

Hearing was adjourned at 6:15pm.

Public Hearing Minutes July 18, 2024

Moderator: Barty Alderman, City of Springfield Mayor

Attendance: Barton Alterman, Mayor
Jenny Denney, Council Member
Dee Moncrief, Council Member
Grant Triplett, Council Member
Meghan Ortiz, Planning Board Member
Leah Perkins, Planning Board Member
Daneille Kirkland, Planning Board Member
Kim Stalnaker, Planning Board Member
Sheila Jerome, Planning Board Member
Jennifer Smith, City Clerk
Lauren Eargle, Assistant City Manager

Meeting summary:

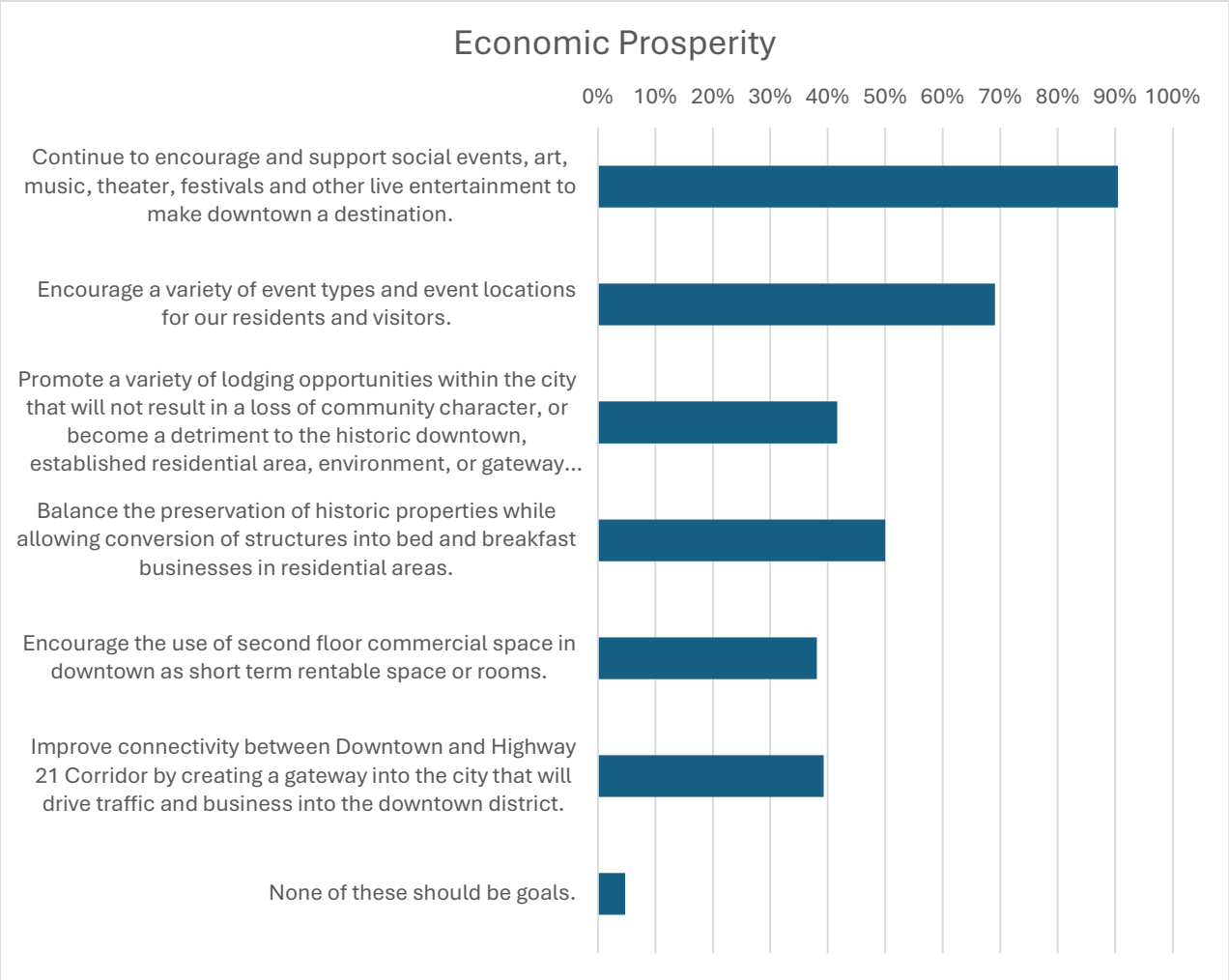
Hearing was called to order at 6:00pm. There were no public in attendance and no comments were heard.

Hearing was adjourned at 6:15pm.

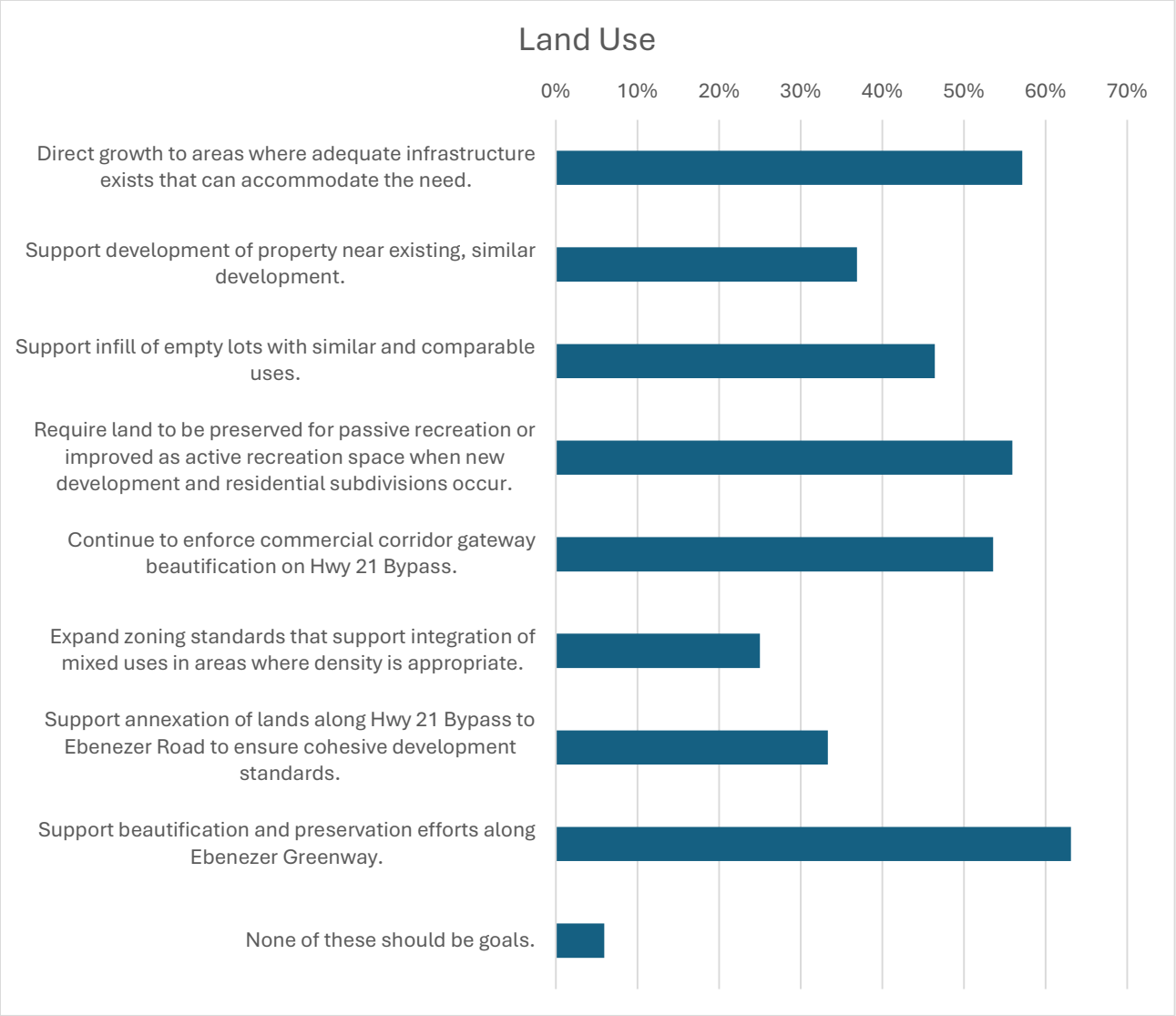
1.11 Section XII. Feedback from Goals Surveys and Draft Comp Plan

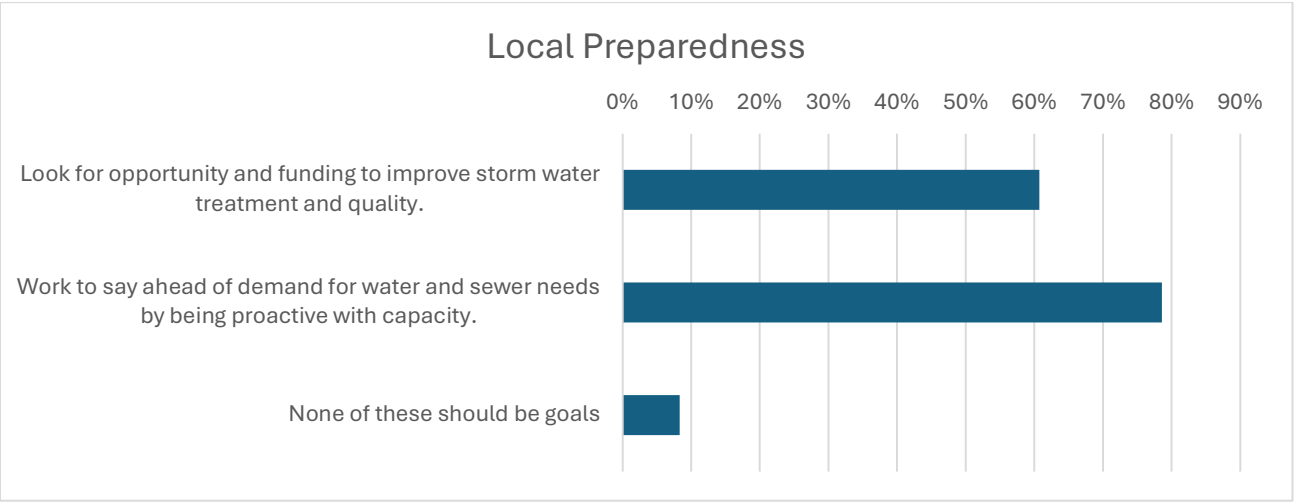
After the Goals and Need & Opportunities were reviewed and amended, a new survey was created to gather public feedback on them. The survey was posted on the City Website, emailed to all Comprehensive Plan update committee members and partners, and circulated on social media. The surveys were available online for the month of July. Results from the survey were provided to the Committees along with copies of the full draft of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan.

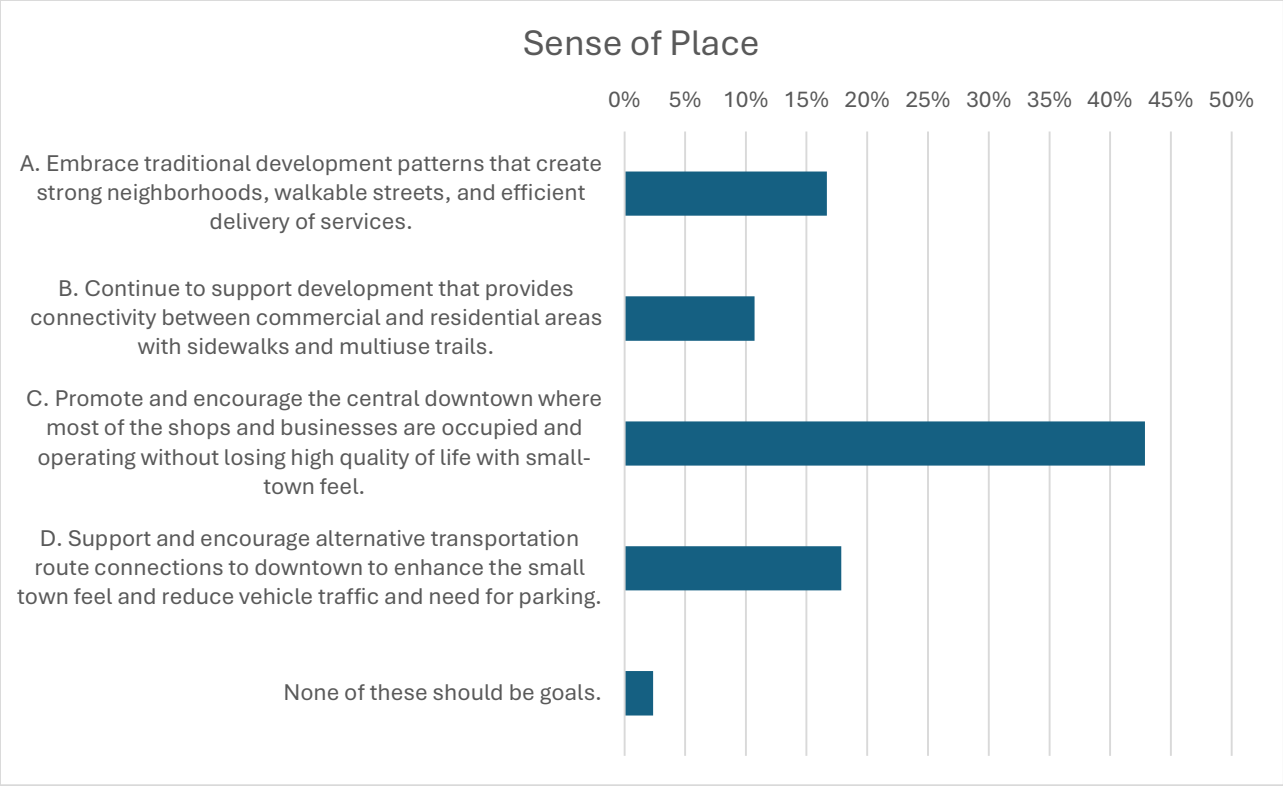
Below were the results from the survey of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Need & Opportunities. There were no general comments from the public regarding the text of the comp plan. The survey results below were used to gauge public opinion on the revised goals to be included. Goals involving downtown, recreation, greenspace and retaining the rural charm of Springfield were the most popular.

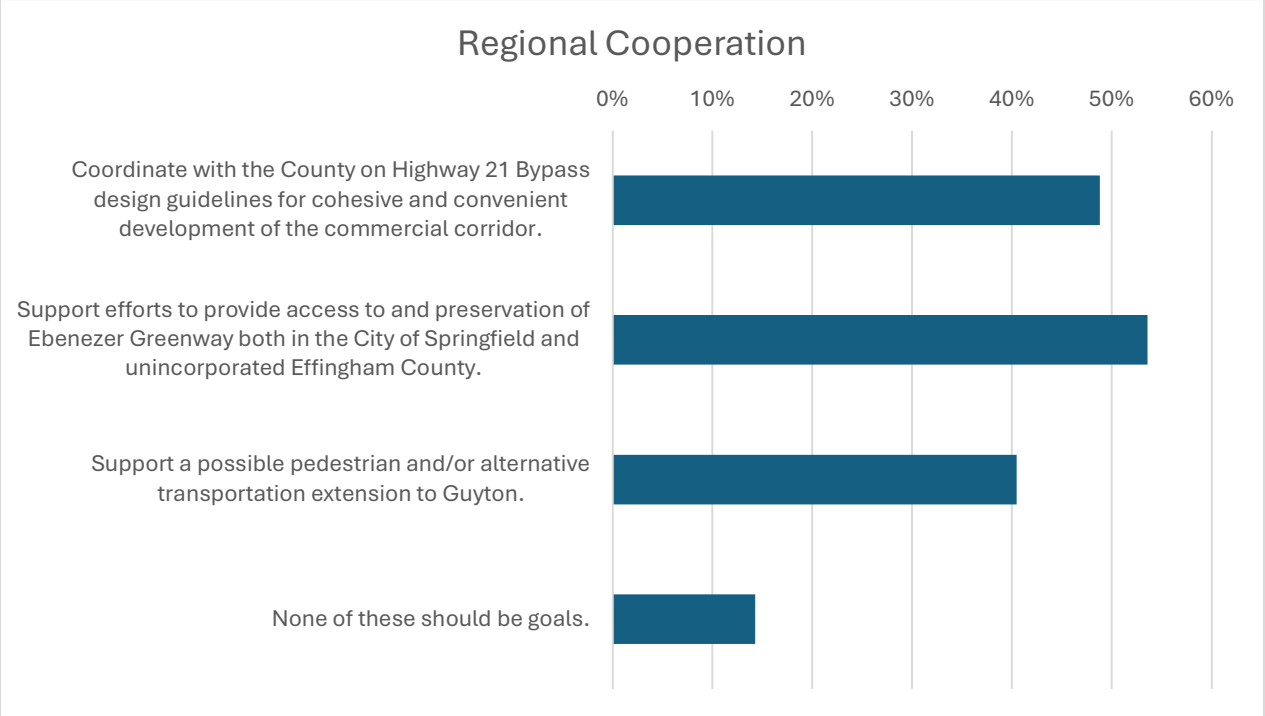


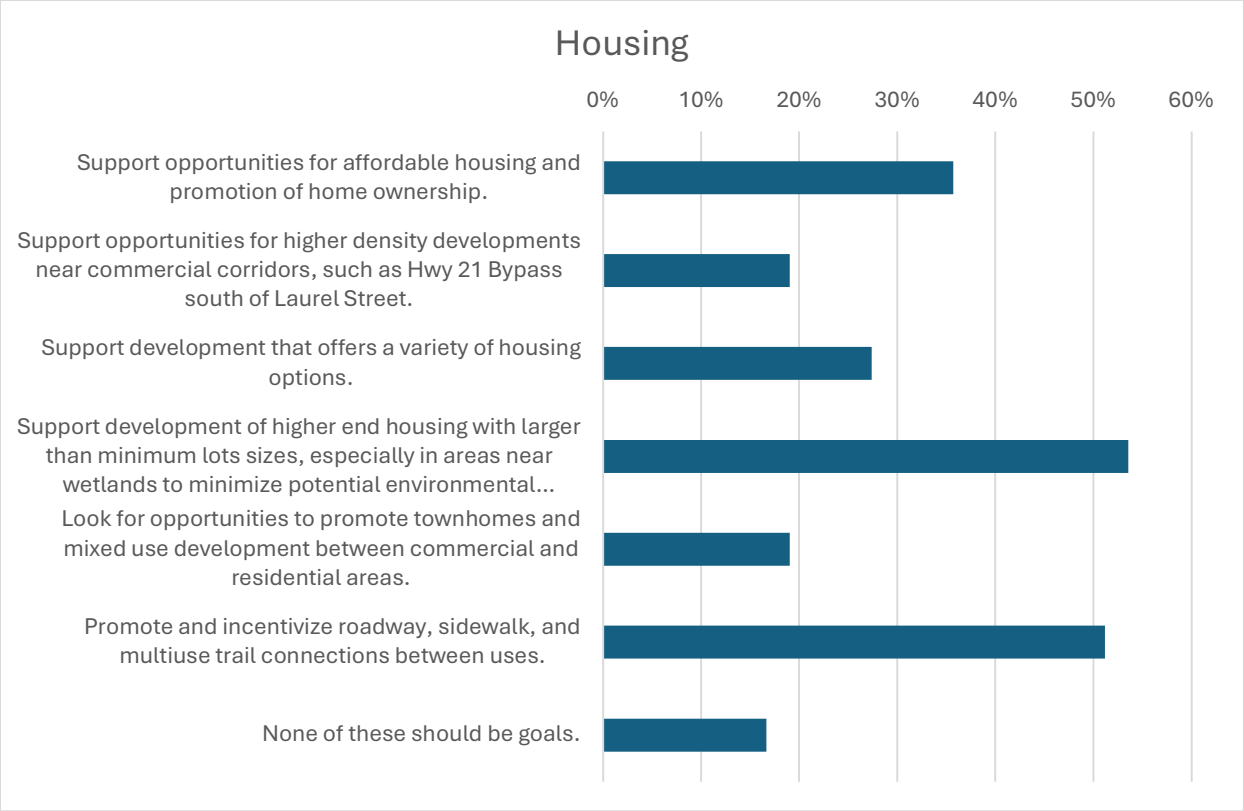

Resource Management
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Take steps to prevent the loss of community character and heritage by providing protection of historic and cultural resources, specifically structures and landmarks in the historic district.
Take steps to prevent the loss of cultural heritage by supporting conservation and education about historical and environmental aspects of Ebenezer Creek and intersecting waterways.
Expand and improve greenspace and parkland by requiring areas to be set aside for active and passive recreation when new development occurs.
Continue to hold high standards for landscaping and buffering to provide additional greenspaces/areas within commercial developments.
Maintain historic district regulations to ensure cohesive infill development in Commercial Downtown
Adopt and implement measures to regulate new construction and renovation of historic residences, especially near the Historic Courthouse.
Support incentives for preservation and reuse of historic structures.
None of these should be goals.

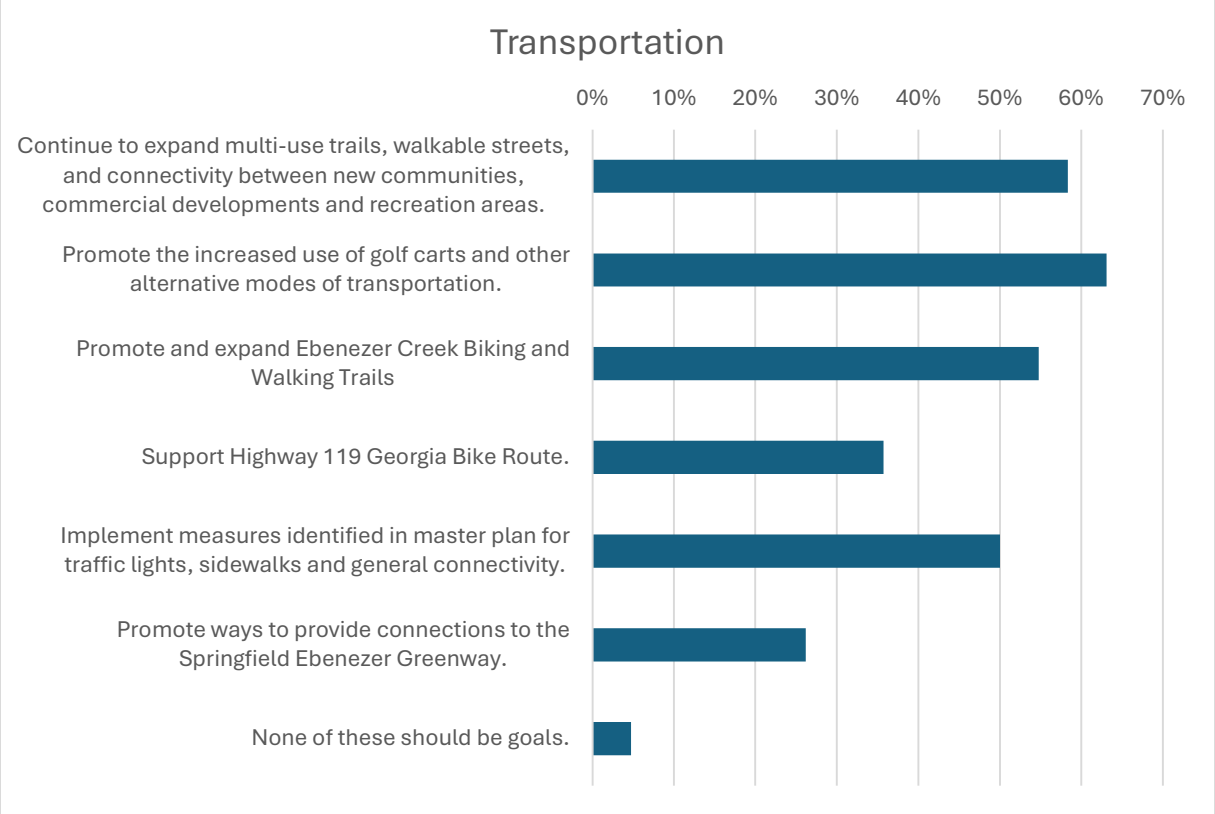

Land Use
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Direct growth to areas where adequate infrastructure exists that can accommodate the need.
Support development of property near existing, similar development.
Support infill of empty lots with similar and comparable uses.
Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space when new development and residential subdivisions occur.
Continue to enforce commercial corridor gateway beautification on Hwy 21 Bypass.
Expand zoning standards that support integration of mixed uses in areas where density is appropriate.
Support annexation of lands along Hwy 21 Bypass to Ebenezer Road to ensure cohesive development standards.
Support beautification and preservation efforts along Ebenezer Greenway.
None of these should be goals.

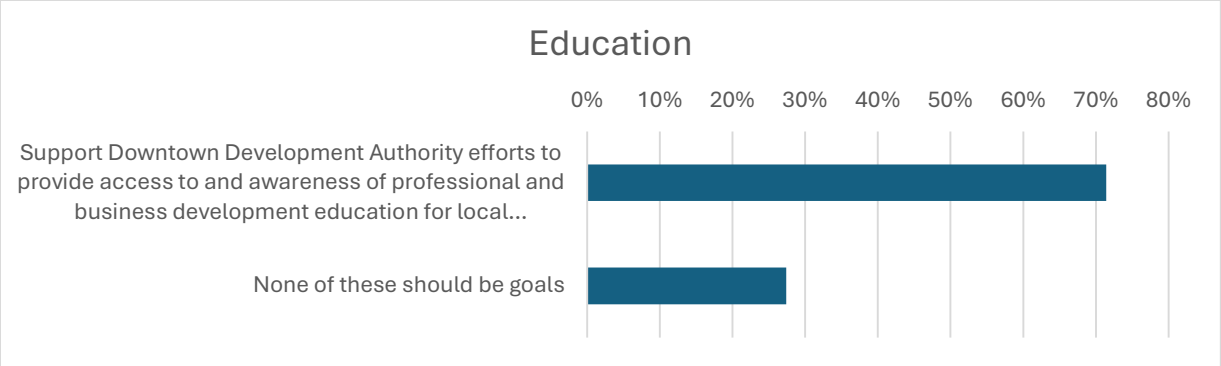

Local Preparedness
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Look for opportunity and funding to improve storm water treatment and quality.
Work to say ahead of demand for water and sewer needs by being proactive with capacity.
None of these should be goals

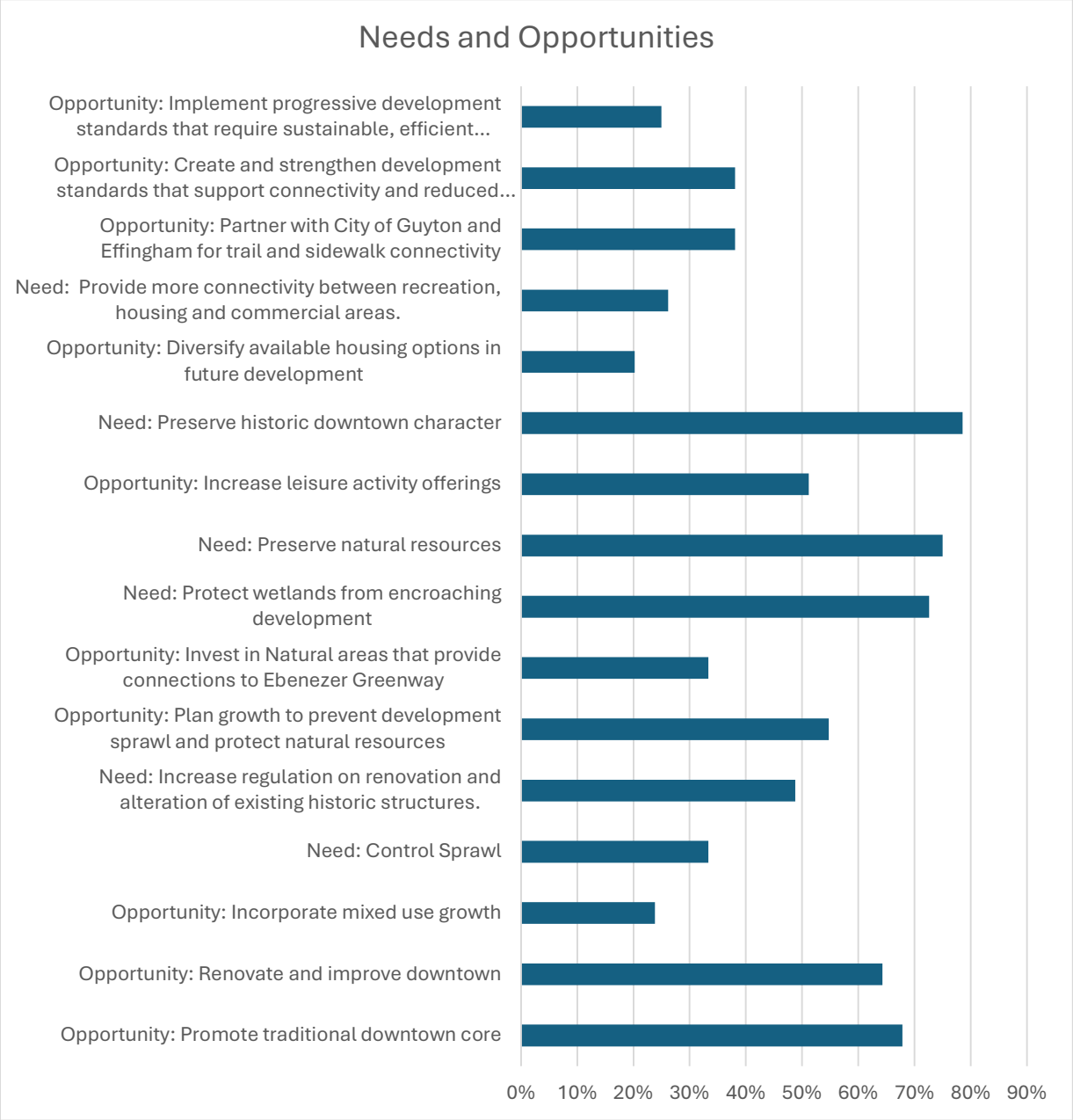

Sense of Place
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A. Embrace traditional development patterns that create strong neighborhoods, walkable streets, and efficient delivery of services.
B. Continue to support development that provides connectivity between commercial and residential areas with sidewalks and multiuse trails.
C. Promote and encourage the central downtown where most of the shops and businesses are occupied and operating without losing high quality of life with small-town feel.
D. Support and encourage alternative transportation route connections to downtown to enhance the small town feel and reduce vehicle traffic and need for parking.
None of these should be goals.


Regional Cooperation
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Coordinate with the County on Highway 21 Bypass design guidelines for cohesive and convenient development of the commercial corridor.
Support efforts to provide access to and preservation of Ebenezer Greenway both in the City of Springfield and unincorporated Effingham County.
Support a possible pedestrian and/or alternative transportation extension to Guyton.
None of these should be goals.


Housing
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Support opportunities for affordable housing and promotion of home ownership.
Support opportunities for higher density developments near commercial corridors, such as Hwy 21 Bypass south of Laurel Street.
Support development that offers a variety of housing options.
Support development of higher end housing with larger than minimum lots sizes, especially in areas near wetlands to minimize potential environmental...
Look for opportunities to promote townhomes and mixed use development between commercial and residential areas.
Promote and incentivize roadway, sidewalk, and multiuse trail connections between uses.
None of these should be goals.


Transportation
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Continue to expand multi-use trails, walkable streets, and connectivity between new communities, commercial developments and recreation areas.
Promote the increased use of golf carts and other alternative modes of transportation.
Promote and expand Ebenezer Creek Biking and Walking Trails
Support Highway 119 Georgia Bike Route.
Implement measures identified in master plan for traffic lights, sidewalks and general connectivity.
Promote ways to provide connections to the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway.
None of these should be goals.


Education
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Support Downtown Development Authority efforts to provide access to and awareness of professional and business development education for local...
None of these should be goals


Needs and Opportunities
Opportunity: Implement progressive development standards that require sustainable, efficient...
Opportunity: Create and strengthen development standards that support connectivity and reduced...
Opportunity: Partner with City of Guyton and Effingham for trail and sidewalk connectivity
Need: Provide more connectivity between recreation, housing and commercial areas.
Opportunity: Diversify available housing options in future development
Need: Preserve historic downtown character
Opportunity: Increase leisure activity offerings
Need: Preserve natural resources
Need: Protect wetlands from encroaching development
Opportunity: Invest in Natural areas that provide connections to Ebenezer Greenway
Opportunity: Plan growth to prevent development sprawl and protect natural resources
Need: Increase regulation on renovation and alteration of existing historic structures.
Need: Control Sprawl
Opportunity: Incorporate mixed use growth
Opportunity: Renovate and improve downtown
Opportunity: Promote traditional downtown core
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1.12 Section XIII. Stakeholder Meeting – July 25, 2024

The final stakeholder meeting was held to discuss the draft of the New Comprehensive Plan and to review the Survey Results from the July public comment period. The Meeting was advertised on social media, the city website, and posted at City Hall.

Meeting Minutes

Moderator: Aaron Carpenter, Planning Director, Coastal Regional Commission

Attendance: Danielle Kirkland, Planning Board Member
Jennifer Smith, City Clerk
Leah Perkins, Planning Board Member
Sgt. James Woodcock, Springfield Police Department
Jacob Lang, County Resident, Developer
Alden Stranberg, Georgia HiLo Trail
Regina Clontz, Mars Theatre Director

1. **Review of Key Stakeholder Input**
   - Respondents were clearly motivated by development concerns.
   - Consider revising the language of certain goals to reduce development fears; specific suggestions in appropriate sections below.
   - The Stakeholders believe the respondents didn't completely understand every question, which raised doubts about the results.
   - Stakeholders noted the limited number of responses and advised using caution about interpreting the results. There was also discussion about the diversity of respondents possibly being limited. More information about the survey taker may be useful in the future.

2. Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Goals

Economic Prosperity:

- *Promote a variety of lodging opportunities within the city that will not result in a loss of community character, or become a detriment to the historic downtown, established residential area, environment, or gateway corridors into the city.*
  - Stakeholders recommended changing the phrasing from negative to positive.
  - Stakeholders recommended adding more specific language to describe lodging opportunities: e.g. short-term, tourist oriented.
- *Improve connectivity between Downtown and Highway 21 Corridor by creating a gateway into the city that will drive traffic and business into the downtown district.*
  - Stakeholders suggested changing the "will drive traffic" wording to be people centric, not car centric.

Resource Management:

- *Expand and improve greenspace and parkland by requiring areas to be set aside for active and passive recreation when new development occurs.*
  - Stakeholders noted how respondents reacted negatively to the phrase "new development".

Land Use:

- *Support development of property near existing, similar development.*

    - Stakeholders again noted respondents reacted negatively anytime development language was used.
- *Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space when new development and residential subdivisions occur.*
    - Stakeholders suggested revising to "Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space in new neighborhoods" or something similar.
- *Support annexation of lands along Hwy 21 Bypass to Ebenezer Road to ensure cohesive development standards.*
    - Simon from CRC noted respondents likely review the word "annexation" negatively.
- *Support beautification and preservation efforts along Ebenezer Greenway.*
    - There was some disagreement among the Stakeholders regarding the feasibility of all goals related to Ebenezer Greenway. Some noted the long-term goals are only achievable if implemented incrementally and should be included. Others believed the goals to be unattainable and time better spent elsewhere.

Local Preparedness:

- N/A

Sense of Place:

- Stakeholders noted the question allowed only one response, but there appeared to be broad support for all. They thought Goal C was worded well.

Regional Cooperation:

- One stakeholder noted that 40 percent support was encouraging for "Support a possible pedestrian and/or alternative transportation extension to Guyton."

Housing:

- Stakeholders expressed doubt about the results of the survey. There was discussion about some possibly didn't understand the goals completely and interpreted the results as anti-development.

Transportation:

- N/A

Education:

- N/A

3. Review of Needs and Opportunities

- There were concerns about the accuracy of some of the results. Some attendees felt that the quality-of-life aspects of the plan might be compromised if anti-development measures aren't effectively integrated.
- The Stakeholders noted the doubts respondents had about how to keep the community's small-town charm while accommodating necessary growth.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Meeting Sign In Sheet:



Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: JULY 25, 2024

Danielle Kirkland
Jennifer Smith
Leah Parker
L.A. Woodcock
Jacob Long
Alden Strandburg
Regina Clark

1.13 Section XIV. Council/Steering Committee – August 13, 2024

The final Steering Committee meeting was held to review the New Goals proposed for the Comprehensive Plan update and to discuss changes suggested by the Stakeholders and public. The draft Comprehensive Plan update was reviewed and discussed.

Meeting Minutes

Moderator: Erin Phillips, City of Springfield Planning & Development Director

Attendance: Danielle Kirkland
Mathew Morris
Lauren Eargle
Dee Moncrief
Barton Alderman
Gary Weitman
Jenny Denney
Justin Cribbs
Stephen Shealy
Jennifer Smith

The meeting of the Steering Committee was called to order by the Mayor at 5:00pm. The committee was provided a copy of the notes from the Stakeholder meeting and copy of the 2025 Goals as compared to the 2020 Goals.

The Committee reviewed the suggestions for changes to the goals provided by the Stakeholders and discussed the survey results. The suggested edits to the goals were accepted and will be amended in the draft plan. They agreed with the stakeholders that many of the more negative responses from the public reflected a bias against development. The general growth in the area has created changes to both the City and the County and there are many residents who feel the community is losing the rural charm it once had. They agreed that this only reaffirms the concepts stated in the goals that calculated and controlled growth is the best approach.

No changes to the overall text of the Comprehensive Plan sections were suggested. All felt the draft plan was expressive of the City's future goals and vision.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm.

Meeting sign-in Sheet:

Springfield Comprehensive Planning Update Sign in Sheet

Meeting Date: AUGUST 14, 2024



Appendix E: Regional Water Plan

The City of Springfield is dedicated to the protection of natural resources within its borders and beyond. The Springfield Ebenezer Greenway conservation efforts are one example of how these efforts have been accomplished. The following documents were reviewed in preparation of this plan:

Regional Water Plan of Coastal Georgia, dated June 2023

Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, Chapter 391-3-16 of the Rules of Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division.

City of Springfield

The heart of Effingham

September 8, 2024

Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia
1181 Coastal Drive SW
Darien, GA 31305

Re: 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

To Whom it May Concern,

The City of Springfield prepared this 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan Update and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Coastal Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs. The following documents were reviewed:

Regional Water Plan of Coastal Georgia, dated June 2023

Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, Chapter 391-3-16 of the Rules of Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division.

The City of Springfield has reviewed these documents and agrees with the standards outlined within. Compliance with these standards will be enforced in future planning documents and approvals. The City is in the process of amending the ordinances regarding Development Regulations and will include practices outlined in these documents to further address the protection of Natural Resources.

Thank you for your consideration,

Barton A. Alderman
Mayor