

DRAFT: 2-10-2014

CITY OF NORCROSS, GEORGIA  
2034 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



JACOBS



# CITY OF NORCROSS: 2034 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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\*Also served on Steering Committee

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Norcross Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide for making rezoning and capital investment decisions and sets policies for City officials and staff concerning the future development of Norcross. This update of the Comprehensive Plan builds upon a long city tradition of planning and community involvement. At its foundation is the 2030 Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2008, and its building blocks include the numerous planning studies undertaken over the past five years. Its preparation was guided by an extensive public outreach effort. That effort included press releases, an online survey, three public workshops, an open house, several steering committee meeting and one-on-one interviews with local leaders.

Since the last update of the plan in 2008, a number of events have occurred that created the need to once again revise and update its findings and recommendations. These events include the annexation of over 2.1 square miles of land area, a major downturn in the national economy, and the completion of several major planning studies. This update reassesses where Norcross stands today and how it intends to develop as result of these events. It presents an updated community vision and corresponding goals, an assessment of needs and opportunities that the community will address in working toward that vision, and a work program designed to make that vision a reality.



Character Area Workshop Activity



Small Group Visioning Workshop

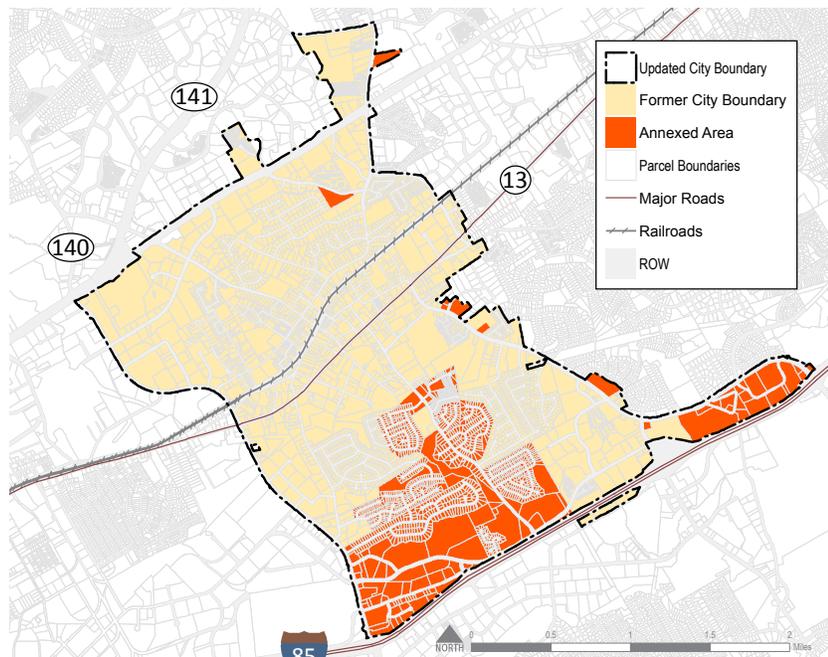


FIGURE 1-2: Annexation Map



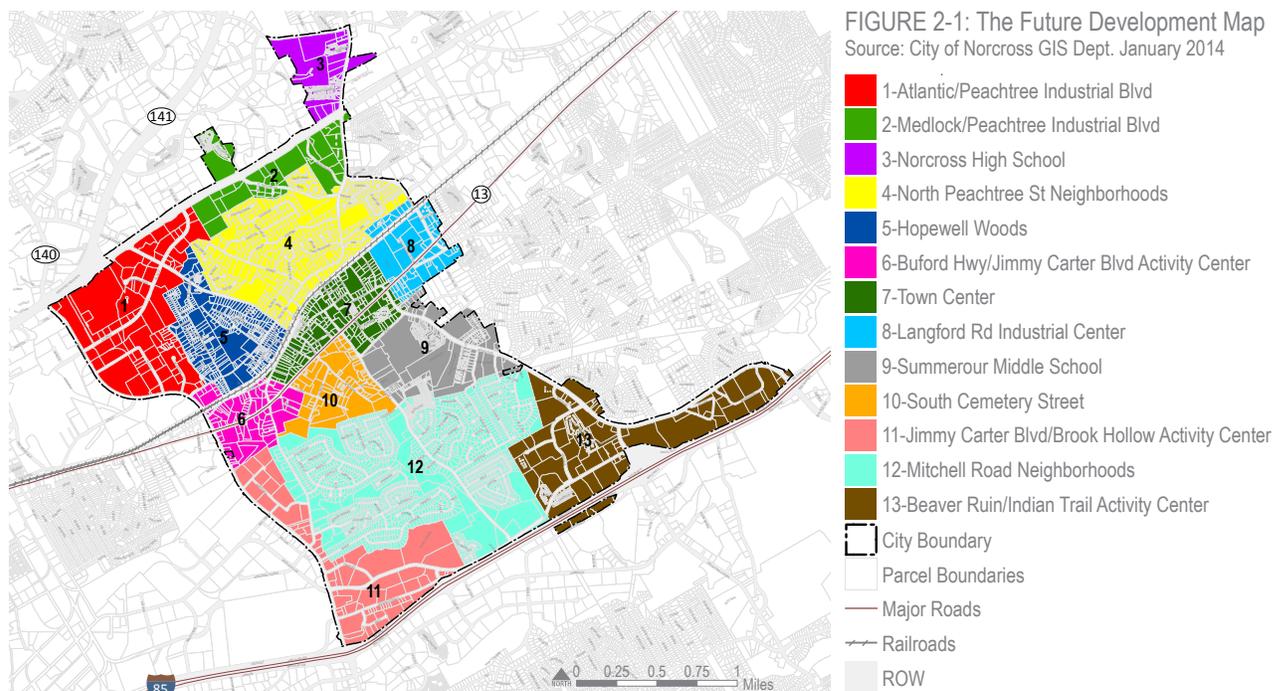
## THE VISION

*“Norcross will be a dynamic and whole community in which generations of diverse citizens can engage, create, contribute and flourish.”*

This vision is supported by five overarching goals that will help shape the City’s direction.

- Continue to Define Norcross’ Sense of Place
- Continue to Strengthen Norcross as a Livable and Safe Environment
- Increase Opportunities for Travel via Different Modes within and Outside Community
- Maintain a Vibrant Economy and Continue to Facilitate Job Growth
- Further the City’s Tradition of Strong Leadership and High Level of Quality Services

The community’s vision is further defined by the Future Development Map, which divides the city into thirteen unique character areas along with associated subarea visions, policies and implementation measures. The Future Development Map plays a key role in guiding Norcross’s elected officials, staff, and planning boards in future development and policy decisions. This Future Development Map is further supported by a Gateway Corridors and Structures Map, which identifies the preferred locations of gateway monuments, signs, and corridor streetscape treatments that are designed to enhance the community’s sense of place. The gateways should reflect the character of traditional downtown Norcross, or the vision and recognized design elements of the character area that they lie within.



## PRIORITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The recommendations of this plan were crafted to address a list of 30 Priority Needs and Opportunities identified through the public outreach effort and existing conditions analysis. These were organized by the six primary elements of the plan’s assessment outlined below.

### Population

1. Maintain an Environment of Multi-cultural Acceptance and Tolerance.
2. Continue to Attract the Creative Class.
3. Support Lifelong Communities Initiatives.
4. Expand Community Engagement.
5. Connect the Two Sides of Buford Highway.

### Housing

1. Encourage Desirable Residential Development.
2. Maintain Existing Housing Stock.
3. Expand Inter-parcel Connectivity and Interior Sidewalks.

### Economic Development

1. Maintain and Improve Infrastructure.
2. Promote Buford Highway Redevelopment.
3. Maintain and Enhance a Business Friendly Environment.
4. Continue to Support the Arts.

### Land Use

1. Revisit Zoning and Development Regulations.
2. Promote Development of Mixed Use Nodes at Key Gateway Intersections.
3. Promote Redevelopment along City’s Principal Roadways.
4. Improve Gateways and Way Finding Signage.

### Transportation

1. Pursue Funding & Implementation Partnerships.
2. Expand Bicycle Infrastructure.
3. Improve Downtown Railroad Crossings.
4. Expand Sidewalk Infrastructure
5. Increase Local Public Transportation Options.
6. Maintain Street Resurfacing. Program
7. Manage Traffic Flow

### Community Facilities and Services

1. Improve Access to Community Facilities.
2. Continue to support the Norcross Police Department and its Presence in the Community.
3. Implement and update the Norcross Parks Master Plan, adopted in January 2011.
4. Construct Additional Parking in the Downtown Area.
5. Maintain & Improve Stormwater Infrastructure.
6. Implement High Tech Solutions in Service Provisions to Enhance the Community Image.
7. Develop a Citywide Geographic Information System (GIS).

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Over 250 action items were evaluated as part of this plan. These action items were compiled from the previous comprehensive plan, the numerous plan studies undertaken over the past five years, and the recommendations and input of the public as part of this effort. An evaluation matrix was developed based on the goals of the plan to prioritize action items and to serve as a tool for local officials in the evaluation of community projects. The matrix is part of the Community Work Program and was utilized to help update the City's five-year Short Term Work Program.

Among the many recommendations of this plan, the following items stand out as key in achieving the community's vision for the future. These projects help to achieve multiple City goals, and its long-term vision.

1. Initiate a review and revision of certain key elements of the zoning and development regulations, including the following:
  - Sign Ordinance. Amend sign ordinance to address improvements identified by sign ordinance evaluation.
  - Repurposing of old buildings to allow for loft apartments where appropriate, to maintain historic character if present, and promote redevelopment.
  - Industrial Zoning District. Revisit the M-1 zoning district to ensure appropriate users are allowed in the district.
  - Parking. Amend parking ordinance to provide for banking of parking and lower minimum parking requirements in the Town Center
  - New mixed-use zoning districts
  - Revisions to Redevelopment Area Overlay District
  - Develop streetscape standards and overlay for the Jimmy Carter Boulevard Corridor and Beaver Ruin Road corridors
  - Improve notification procedures for adjacent property owners at the time of rezoning
2. Promote Buford Highway Redevelopment. Continue to collaborate with GVCID to incentivize redevelopment of properties near Buford Hwy Highway within the CID's boundaries, and hold Regular regular Buford Highway roundtable discussions to promote business and redevelopment of the corridor.

3. Strengthen historic area regulations and consider the creation of a Historic Preservation Authority and local historic district. In the past, the City has adopted and rescinded the creation of a historic district. Interest in utilizing this regulatory tool to preserve and protect the City's historic resources has resurfaced.
4. Continue positive relationship with ethnic and international communities, such as the Latin American Association, through the support and enhancement of community programs and events.
5. Undertake a Gateway Enhancement Study to develop Gateway Design Guidelines and refine preferred locations and style of City gateway monuments.
6. Establish a Sidewalk Connectivity Program - Inventory and prioritize sidewalk improvements on an annual basis to fill gaps in existing pedestrian network
7. Construct the Beaver Ruin Road multi-use path – support the Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District (GVCID) and Gwinnett County efforts to build a multi-use path along Beaver Ruin Road.
8. Update and implement the Norcross Parks Master Plan to create a citywide recreational trail network and plan for the recreational needs of the annexed area.
9. Support efforts to extend rail transit parallel to the I-85 corridor. This will be a long term effort primarily due to funding issues, but its impact on the growth of the community will be large

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