

The City of Lithonia 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted 11.2.2015



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	
Yesterday and Today	12
Community Input	20
Future Development	30
Work Program	38
Appendix	
A: Community Survey Responses	48
B: Summary of Additional Actions	50

Acknowledgments

City Officials:

Deborah A. Jackson, Mayor
Al T. Franklin, Mayor Pro Tem
William "Ric" Dodd, Council Member
Darold Honore, Council Member
Shameka Reynolds, Council Member
Tracy-Ann Williams, Council Member

Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Committee:

Al Franklin, Mayor Pro Tem
Darold Honore, Council Member
Deborah A. Jackson, Mayor
Eddie J. Moody, City Administrator
Leo Morton, Resident
Flora Napper, Resident
Fred Reynolds, Civil Engineer and Resident
Eleanor Robins, Resident
John Robins, Former Mayor and Resident
Fred Stevens, DeKalb County Department of Community and Human Development
Tracy-Ann Williams, Council Member
Sonya Young, Business Owner and Resident

Atlanta Regional Commission Staff:

Dan Reiner, Division Manager
Jared Lombard, Principal Planner
Allison Duncan, Principal Planner
Courtney Verdier, Senior Program Specialist
Beth Davis, Planning Intern

Lithonia

Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

"A City of Stone with a Tender Heart" is how one resident described their community. Lithonia is one of DeKalb County's smallest cities, both in population and geography. However, it has a rich history, a strong sense of place, and a community that is determined to shape their future. Lithonia benefits from a geography that is close to Interstate 20 and surrounded by the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. This balances easy access to major employment centers and environmentally-oriented recreation opportunities. Citizens appreciate the quality of life offered in the community, while they advocate for increased opportunities for economic and community development.

To maximize these advantages, this Comprehensive Plan Update was developed with a focus on three principle areas:

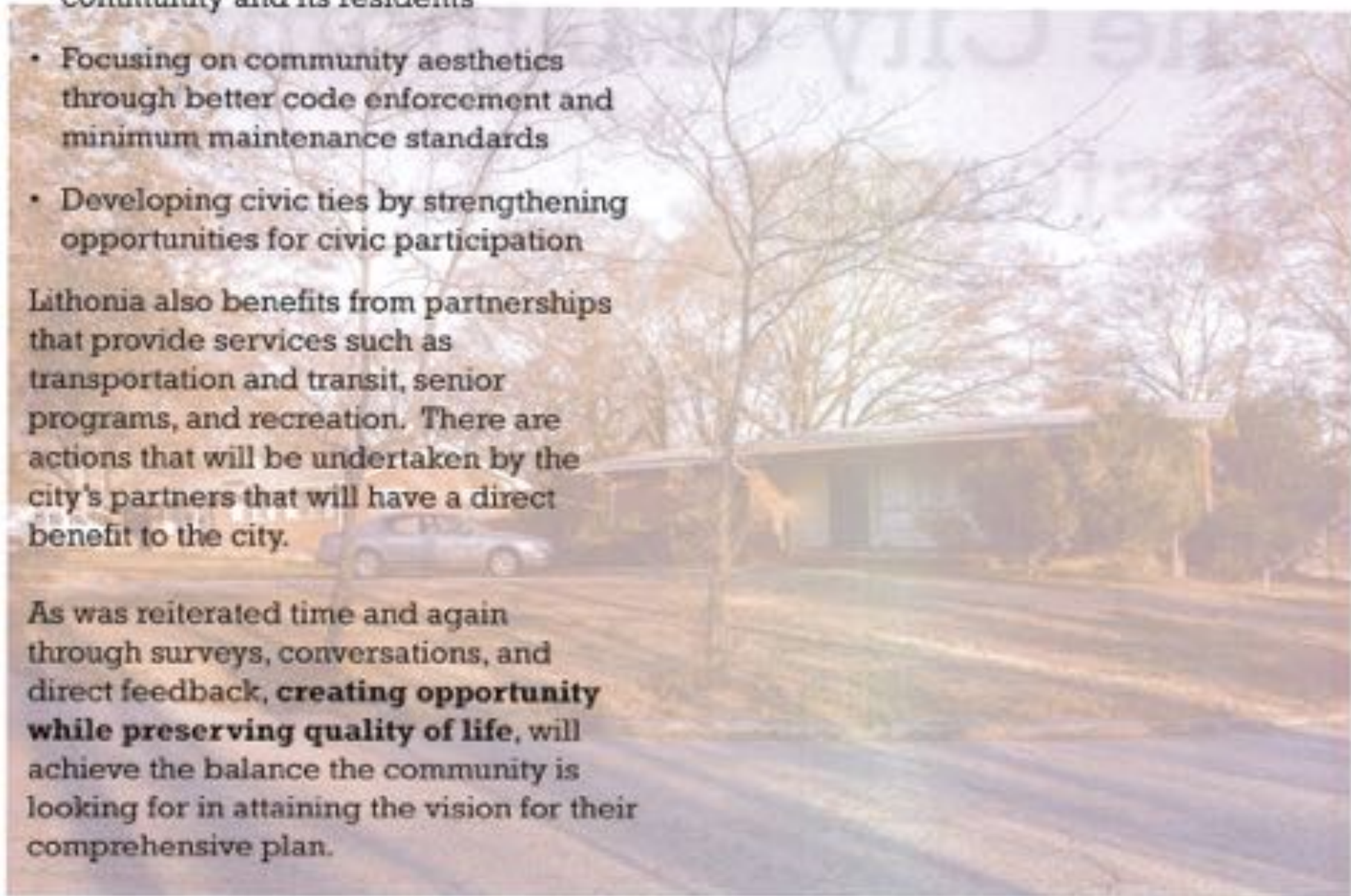


DEK-127-85

- Increasing economic prosperity for the community and its residents
- Focusing on community aesthetics through better code enforcement and minimum maintenance standards
- Developing civic ties by strengthening opportunities for civic participation

Lithonia also benefits from partnerships that provide services such as transportation and transit, senior programs, and recreation. There are actions that will be undertaken by the city's partners that will have a direct benefit to the city.

As was reiterated time and again through surveys, conversations, and direct feedback, **creating opportunity while preserving quality of life**, will achieve the balance the community is looking for in attaining the vision for their comprehensive plan.



The City of Lithonia: Yesterday

A Brief History of Lithonia

The name "Lithonia" derives from the Greek words for rock, "lithos", and place, "onia." Granite construction is a distinguishing characteristic of the city as it features prominently in buildings throughout the city. Located approximately 20 miles east of downtown Atlanta along the I-20 corridor, the city was originally a crossroads settlement. It served the trading needs of a small community of rural farmers, and it grew with the development of the Georgia Railroad (now CSX). The line, which runs southeast-to-northwest through the commercial center of town, came to Lithonia in 1845. By 1856, the town incorporated; its original boundary extended just one-half mile in circumference. At this time, there were already educational facilities, churches, and a community cemetery among the landmarks in the community.

The Civil War left its mark on Lithonia when the railroad depot was destroyed by General Sherman's troops in 1864. However, the late 19th century brought revitalized commercial industries to the community. In 1879, the first granite quarry opened near Lithonia, and in 1888, the city of Lithonia was re-chartered by the state legislature. In 1895, the Davidson Granite Company was founded and a local private school, The Seminary, opened in the community. The era after the Civil War also saw the development of African-American Church congregations, ultimately giving rise some of the first educational facilities for African-Americans in DeKalb County. In 1868, the Antioch Lithonia Baptist Church became the first black church in DeKalb County.

Another first was the Bruce Street School – first public school for African-Americans in DeKalb County. In 1938, funds were raised and six acres were purchased on Bruce Street where a school was built of stone. In 1943 the school began a high school program and held its first graduation. Bruce Street School has suffered extensive damage, but remnants of the building are still extant today.

In 1907, the first public library in DeKalb County was established in Lithonia. In 1928, the Lithonia Women's Club built their clubhouse on Wiggins Street, which eventually also contained the city's library.

Growth in Lithonia slowed during the Great Depression, but by the middle of the 20th century, construction had begun on Interstate 20, accelerating the pace of suburban development in DeKalb County. In 1963, voters in Lithonia approved the development of Lithonia Plaza as an urban renewal project, which resulted in the loss of many historic buildings including the train depot, fire station, and one of the city's first churches. The street grid of the time was also altered significantly to accommodate the development. Nonetheless, news articles of the time declared this a positive step toward the modernity of the city.



The railroad came to Lithonia in 1845. Source: ARC.



The ruins of the Bruce Street School. Source: ARC.

Timeline of Significant Events

- 1840: Cross Roads community formed
- 1845: Georgia Railroad corridor completed through Cross Roads; post office moved to Cross Roads from "Latimer's store," (est. 1832) located 2 miles outside the city
- 1846: Railroad records refer to "Lithonia"
- 1847: First school established in Lithonia
- 1848: Lithonia Baptist Church formed, first meeting held in one-room school house
- 1851: City cemetery established on land donated by J.R. George and J.M. Born
- 1856: City of Lithonia incorporated, 5 citizens named commissioners
- 1860: Lithonia Methodist Church established
- 1864: General Sherman, with the Fourteenth Corps, arrived in Lithonia, burned the railroad depot and destroyed the rail lines; troops perfect "Sherman's neckties" that cripple the rail line to the sea

- 1869: Antioch Lithonia Baptist Church, first African-American Church in Lithonia established
- 1879: First granite quarry opens near Lithonia
- 1887: First newspaper in the county, The New Era, is published by Stone Steadmen of Covington and Bob Guinn of Conyers in a store over Main Street. The paper became the DeKalb New Era and publication moved in Decatur.
- 1888: City of Lithonia re-chartered by the state legislature, changed local government to a mayor / commission. First mayor elected, Henry George
- 1895: Davidson Granite Company founded; The Seminary, a day school opens; Telephone exchange built
- 1905: Electricity established with creation of Panola Power and Light Company which had a hydro-plant on the nearby South River
- 1907: First Library in DeKalb County opened in the private home of Miss Lula Almond
- 1916: Lithonia establishes water and sewage system



Large granite deposits near Lithonia. Source: Vanishing Georgia Collection



Source: Vanishing Georgia Collection

DEK- 247-75

- 1928: Lithonia Woman's Club clubhouse built and library moved
- 1929: Stone Mountain Grit Company formed
- 1950s: City Park built during mayoral terms of Charlie Davidson
- 1950: Stone Mountain Grit plant opened at Big Ledge Quarry
- 1956: Construction of Interstate 20 begun, stimulating suburban development
- 1963: Voters approve Lithonia Plaza "urban renewal" plan, resulting in the loss of historic buildings including the train depot, fire station, one of the city's first churches; the street grid is also altered
- 2001: Stonecrest Mall opens to the south of downtown Lithonia

Source: City of Lithonia Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Lithonia's Famous Citizens

Lucius Sanders: born July 15, 1915, was raised in Lithonia and enlisted in the U.S. Army on April 7, 1941. After returning from military service during WWII, he fought for voting rights and equal services for African Americans in DeKalb County. He was a founding member of the Lithonia Civic League.

Joseph Maxwell 'Max' Cleland: born in Atlanta in 1942, and raised in Lithonia, Cleland is a Vietnam Veteran and Silver and Bronze Star recipient. He served as Georgia's Secretary of State from 1983 to 1997, and he served as United States Senator from 1997 through 2003.

Howard Lee: born July 28, 1934 and raised in Lithonia. He attended the equalization-era "Bruce Street School" and tells of incidents of racial intimidation in his biography "The Courage to Lead: One Man's Journey in Public Service". He was elected Mayor of Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Source: City of Lithonia Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places



Commercial building in downtown Lithonia.
Source: Vanishing Georgia Collection

DEX-339-85



Special train arrival at our depot, bringing...
Atlanta to...
Source: Vanishing Georgia Collection

The City of Lithonia:

Today

Location Map



General Trends

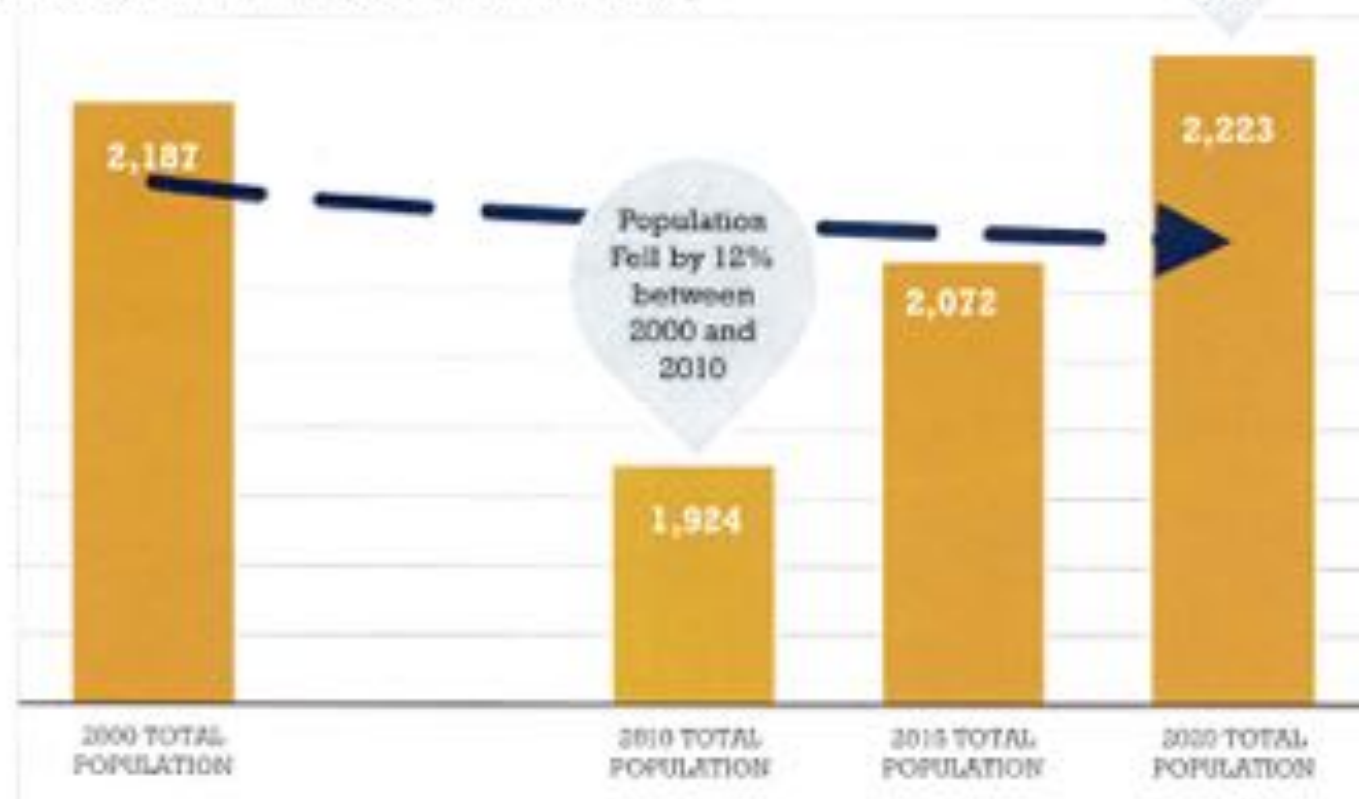
People: Growth

The City of Lithonia identifies itself as a "quintessential urban village." With a population around 2,000 individuals the city retains the benefits, and faces the challenges, of a small town. Nonetheless, its location along I-20 and in proximity to a major commercial center in southern DeKalb County can create opportunities for the city to shape its growth as population is projected to increase.

DeKalb County overall experienced a population increase of 3.9% between 2000 and 2010. This is a relatively minor increase compared with other metro communities, and the lowest population increase of all the counties in the core 10-county region of Metro Atlanta.

Lithonia's previous Comprehensive Plan noted an overall declining trend in population over last three decades from 2,637 in 1980 to 2,187 in 2000. A 2010 population of 1,924 individuals appears to be a low point, with 2015 data showing a rebound. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan was drafted at a time when communities around metro Atlanta were still struggling with the impacts of the Economic Recession and uncertainty about the course of recovery.

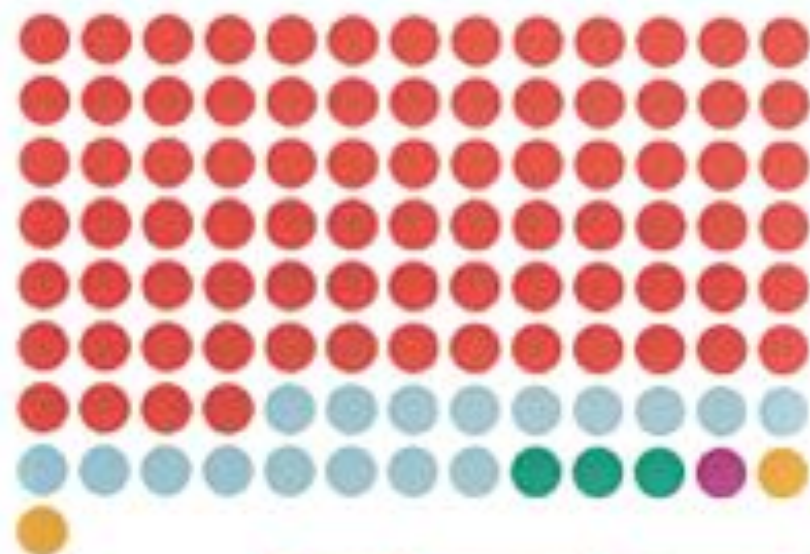
Population is expected to grow 7% between 2015 and 2020



Source: American Community Survey

Who Lives in Lithonia?

2000



2010



Black

White

Hispanic

Asian

Other

Source: US Census Bureau

By the year 2040, Metro Atlanta will become much more racially diverse than it has ever been historically. The population of Lithonia reflects a majority-minority population. Between 2000 and 2010, the racial mix of the city continued to lose its share of white residents while increasing its share of residents that identified as Hispanic or Other.

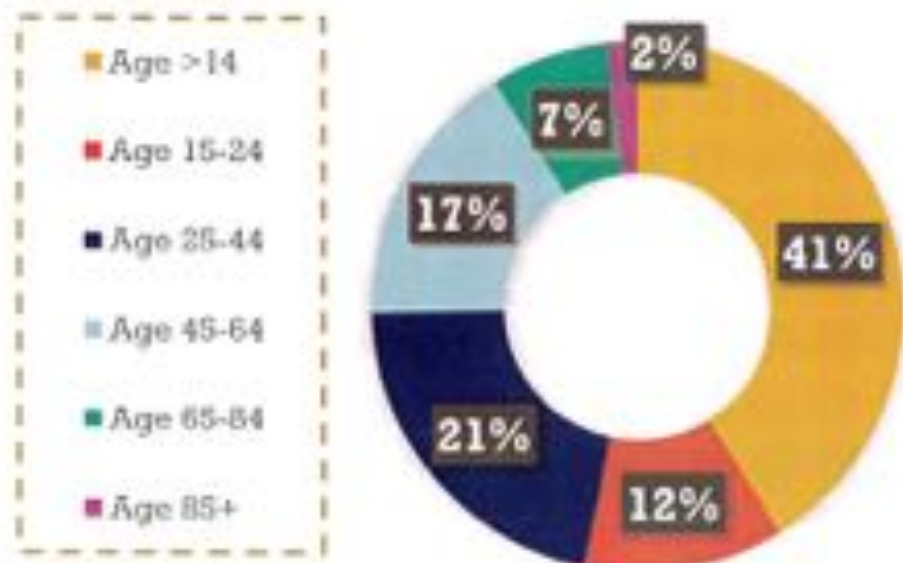
This trend is reflective of DeKalb County overall, whereby the 2010 Census reflected a decrease in white population and an increase in all other racial populations. Nonetheless, as noted in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, compared to the rest of the state of Georgia, Lithonia has a much higher proportion of black residents and a lower proportion of other ethnic groups.

Source: American Community Survey



Age Distribution

2010



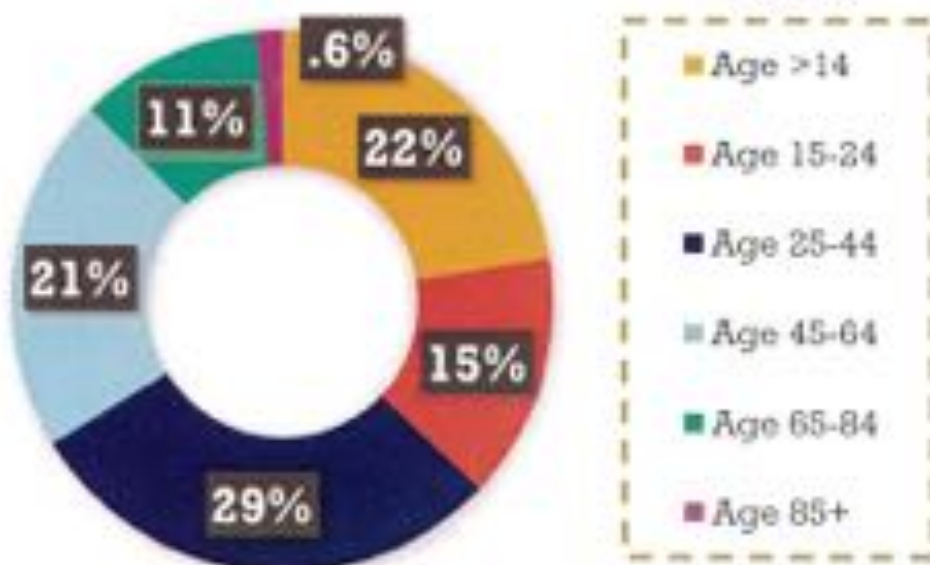
The age distribution in Lithonia continues to skew young. The median age is 29 years old. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan noted that the spread in the range of ages could continue to pose challenges for the delivery of services to the community. Achieving a mix and balance of services and activities that will be of use and appeal to such a broad cross section of the population will require consideration.

Communities with disparate proportions of children and youth may also reflect a disproportionate impact on indicators relating to relative wealth and income at the per capita and household level.



Source: American Community Survey

2020

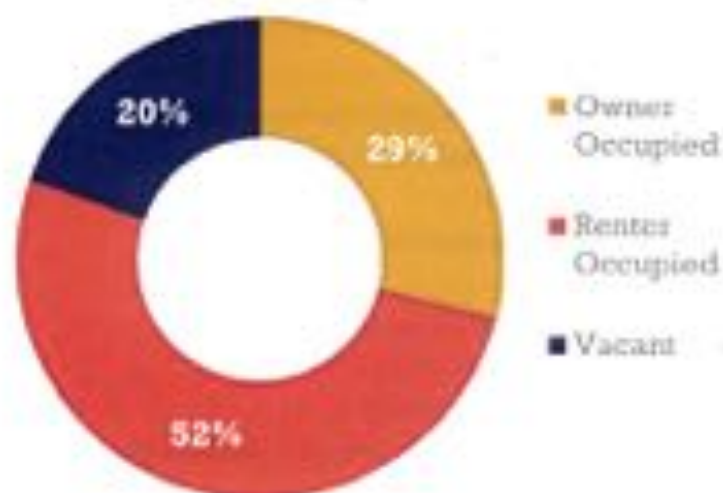


Housing Trends

With assistance from the Atlanta Regional Commission, the city of Lithonia undertook a housing inventory in 2013. 784 parcels were surveyed within the city limits. Of these 616 are classified as residential parcels. 454 residential parcels contained housing units, and 162 parcels were vacant lots. 70% of the housing units surveyed were classified as good; 21% were classified as fair; 5% were classified as deteriorated; 4% were classified as dilapidated. A significant concentration of vacant lots were identified in the Oakleaf subdivision, which was stalled during the Economic Recession.

Throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, concerns were consistently voiced about distribution of owner occupied, renter occupied and vacant houses. In comparison with the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, which identified 10% vacancy, this 2015 plan update shows that housing vacancy rates have doubled. Along with high numbers of vacant houses have come a series of code enforcement challenges for the community. Lithonia has received attention from national news media for its struggles with "underwater" home values, even as other areas of metro Atlanta have recovered to pre-recession values. The median home value for Lithonia in 2000 was identified as \$81,800; the average home value in 2013 of \$80,800 shows how much ground was lost during the recession. The average home value for the state of Georgia for the same time period was \$151,300.

Occupancy Percentage Distributions 2013



Source: American Community Survey

Median Home Value 2013

\$80,800

\$1,243
Monthly

Median Monthly Owner Costs 2013

Median Rent 2013

\$699
/month

\$8,388
/year

Jobs

Only about 3.5% of Lithonia's residents work within the city limits. Over 96% of the city's population travel outside of the city for employment. Given Lithonia's small size, this is not altogether surprising, particularly because of the city's close proximity to downtown Atlanta and other major employment centers. Nonetheless, the city continues to emphasize the importance of local business development and job creation.

Of those who travel outside of the city for work, 56% work within DeKalb County, while 44% work in a county beyond DeKalb. The largest majority of jobs within the city of Lithonia are in education, 83% of the population have attained a high school diploma or higher level of education.

Jobs in Lithonia

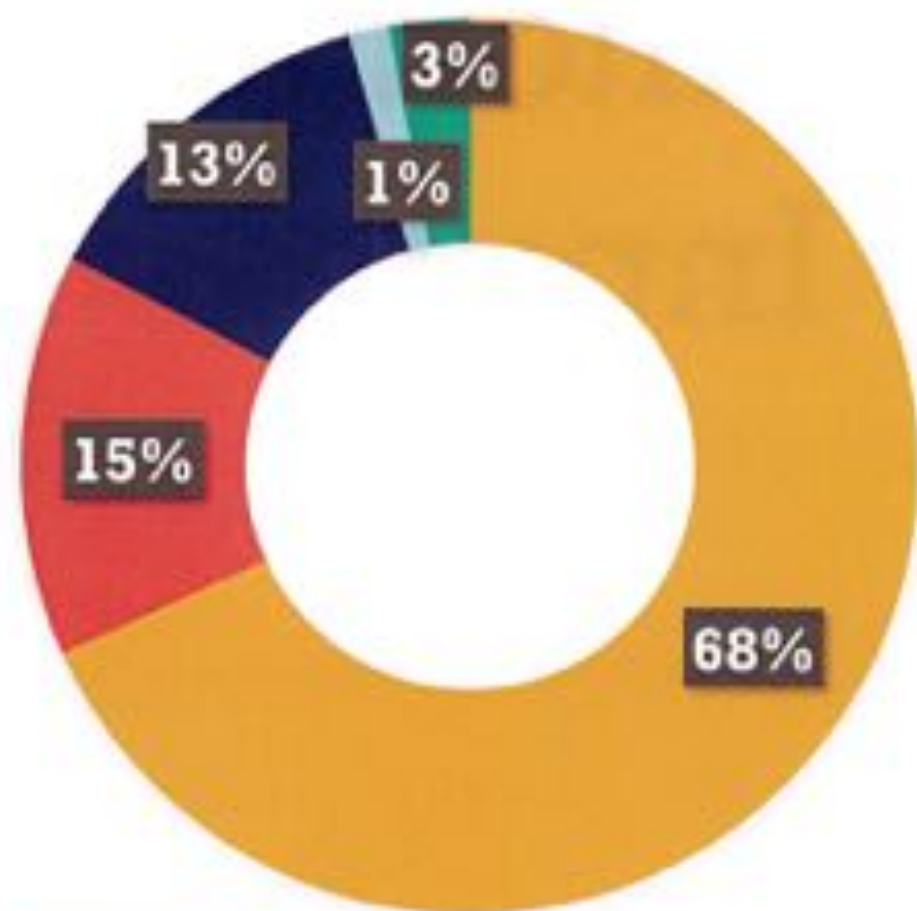


Jobs of Lithonia Residents



Source: Census On the Map

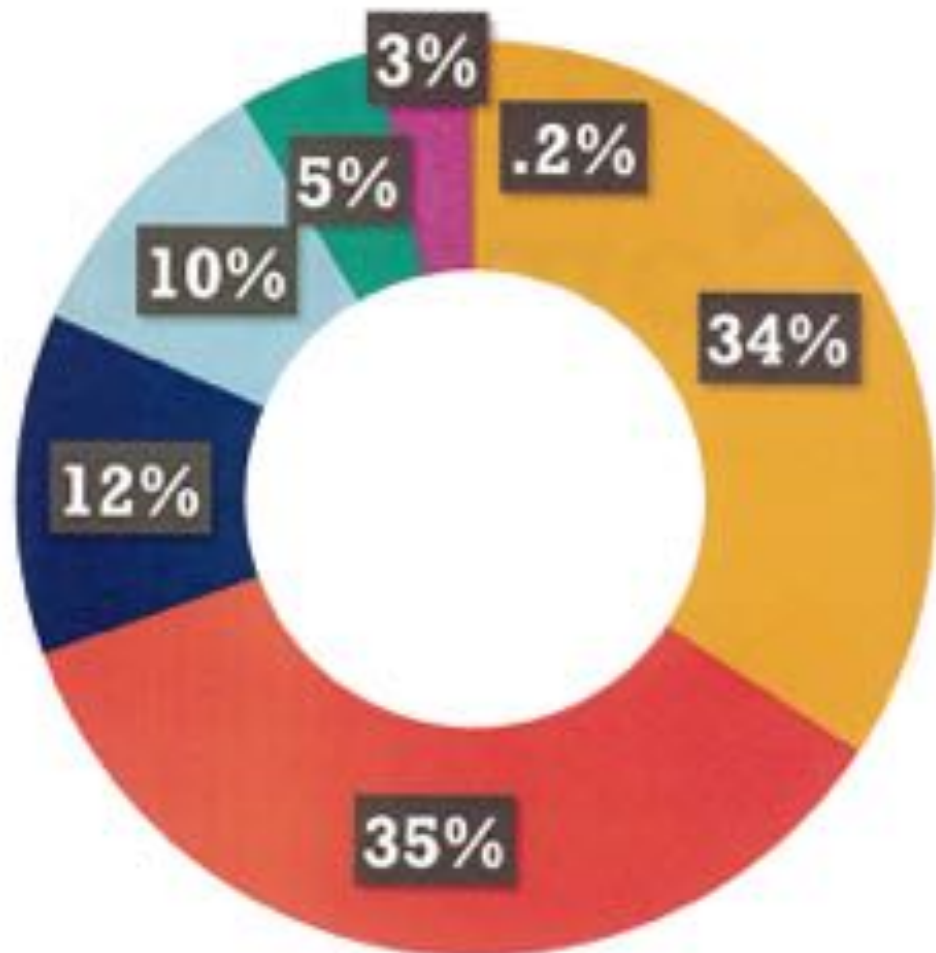
Mode of Transportation



Approximately 60% of Lithonia's population travels between 10-24 miles to work. 12% travel between 25-50 miles to work. 19% of Lithonia's population have a commute of less than 10 miles, but 8% travel a distance of more than 50 miles to work. The majority of Lithonia's population have access to a vehicle, but 20% of the population report having no vehicle available. Lithonia is served by transit through bus lines operated by MARTA.

Source: Census On the Map (Transportation) & American Community Survey (Income)

Income 2015



The 2010 Comprehensive Plan identified the median income in 2000 at around \$29,765. Approximately 60% of the city's population earned less than \$30,000. According to the 2013 American Community Survey, the median household income for Lithonia is around \$25,239. The average household income for the state of Georgia for the same time period is around \$49,179.

58.5% of the population is participating in the labor force, while 41.5% are not participating. The unemployment rate was around 14% and 32% of families reported income in the past 12 months that was below the poverty level.

The City of Lithonia: Community Input

Lithonia: A Unique Historic City Promoting Sustainable Growth

Community Vision

Lithonia is a nurturing small town, safe for families, in harmony with the environment, preserving its history and culture, while creating opportunity for entrepreneurship, growth and economic development.

Community Engagement

The Lithonia Comprehensive Plan process was guided by a Stakeholder Committee comprised of citizens, local business owners, elected officials, and DeKalb County staff. The Stakeholder Committee met on three separate occasions, providing direction and feedback at key points in the process. There were additional opportunities for public participation at a Community Kick Off Meeting during Georgia Cities Week; an open house prior to a regularly scheduled City Council Work Session; and a meeting held with the community gathered at the Bruce Street Senior Center in Lithonia. Meetings were advertised through local media outlets and on the city's social media sites. Feedback was also gathered through print and online surveys available at all events.

What is the Best Thing About Living in Lithonia?

City Government

Convenient to I-20

Small Town Feel

City of Lithonia Library

Great Sense of Community

Convenience to Downtown Atlanta

Great People and Location

The Park

A Sense of Pending Growth & Improvement

The Granite

Friendly People

** Based on citizen feedback at the Community Kick Off Meeting*

Monday April 6 Lithonia City Council Comp Plan Kick Off	Wednesday April 22 Comp Plan Public Meeting	Tuesday May 26 Stakeholder Committee Meeting	Tuesday July 28 Stakeholder Committee Meeting	Monday August 17 Comp Plan Public Meeting	Thursday August 20 Lithonia Senior Center Community Meeting	Tuesday August 25 Stakeholder Committee Meeting	Tuesday September 8 Lithonia City Council Comp Plan Wrap Up
--	---	--	---	--	--	---	--

Community Survey Responses

FAVORITE PLACE

Main Street
City Hall
Library
Arabia Mountain Heritage Area
Parks
Oakleaf Ridge

LEAST FAVORITE PLACE

Lithonia Plaza

IN 10-20 YEARS

Lithonia will be Better Than It Is Now.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE

Top Response:
Community Development
Followed By:
Economic Development
Social Opportunities
Citizen Participation

IDENTIFY SOME BIG IDEAS FOR LITHONIA THAT COULD SPUR THE KIND OF CHANGE YOU WANT

Economic Development
Social Opportunities
Community Development
Code Enforcement
Citizen Participation
Greening Streets
Healthy Living Opportunities

LITHONIA'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS:

Community Development
Citizen Participation
Code Enforcement
Greening Streets
Healthy Living Opportunities
Code Enforcement

Lithonia's Areas Requiring Attention

Lithonia is fortunate to have many of the community assets that contribute to the quality of life its citizens have come to appreciate. The community identified its school, parks, library, and recreation center among its important assets. A community housing survey undertaken in 2013 identified 70% of the city's housing stock as in good condition, though it is generally older. There is potential for growth with the possibility of a new mixed use development, new apartments downtown, and new housing starts in a stalled subdivision.

However, the community could easily articulate all of its challenges. Some of its key assets also have had struggles. The hours of operation at the Lithonia-Davidson library have been scaled back significantly. The upkeep of local parks is lacking, and the continued operation of the Stewart Amphitheater takes significant time and resources. The facilities at the Recreation Center Complex

are in need of maintenance and upkeep, and it is anticipated that the police precinct will relocate from this facility.

Issues with vacant housing require the consistent attention of code enforcement, with very few resources to identify absentee property owners. Lithonia also finds itself in the center of several cityhood movements working their way through DeKalb County. The city continues to work with county and state leadership, as well as local property owners, to determine a sensible annexation plan. Proposed new city boundaries would completely surround Lithonia leaving no room for future expansion.

A brief survey engaged respondents with questions about Lithonia today and in the future. Questions were mostly open-ended, so respondents could share anything on their mind. Responses were categorized into broad topics, such

as Community Development (i.e. housing, aesthetics); Economic Development (i.e. new businesses, job growth); or Social Opportunities (i.e. concerts, events). The word clouds that are used to capture the frequency of responses to the questions about challenges and changes use larger words to reflect an idea that was repeated more frequently, and smaller words to reflect an idea that was repeated less frequently.

The Lithonia community has a solid understanding of itself as a community, grounded in its historic identity and a bond of a friendly, small-town neighborliness. It has aspirations to build its town center into thriving Main Street, while supporting local entrepreneurial endeavors. Lithonia has worked very hard for many years to implement a successful downtown streetscape project, relocate their City Hall, renovate the Lithonia Women's Club as a community facility, and make progress on the demolition and redevelopment of portions of The Plaza shopping center.

Moving forward, the city aspires to find ways to create greater connectivity across the railroad line that bisects town. Though an important part of Lithonia's economic history, the railroad has been both a physical and cultural barrier in dividing the town. Creating this connection will link the city's two most significant centers – the downtown core with historic Bruce Street. Many of the revitalization projects along Main Street are well along the way to implementation, so the city can also turn attention to revitalization efforts along the historic Bruce Street Corridor.

The Bruce Street Corridor is the site of several key uses to the Lithonia community. The civic complex that houses the Recreation Center, the Senior Center, and the police station are found along this corridor in an adaptively re-used school building. Bruce Street is home to Union Missionary Baptist Church, a community park, and a mix of single family homes and public housing units. The end of Bruce Street is anchored by a large parcel on which the ruins of the Bruce Street School are located – an important landmark for both the city and DeKalb County. Focusing energy and resources on a vision and development plan for the Bruce Street Corridor will begin to expand the success the community has had with the Main Street into another important city center.

Lithonia would not be able to attain many of its accomplishments without partnerships. DeKalb County, the Atlanta Regional Commission and area universities and non-profit organizations have stepped up to provide assistance to the community as they plan for their future. Though citizens appreciate the small town feel of the community, they understand that change will come, and they need to be prepared. Whether through annexation, the growth of new cities, or the influx of new development patterns, Lithonia has always kept a foot in the past and an eye to the future while taking care of the needs of today.

ISSUES

The City faces code enforcement challenges from vacant and abandoned properties.

The City is working to develop a sensible annexation plan while balancing new cityhood movements.

Maintenance and upkeep of community facilities, whether wholly owned by Lithonia or operated in partnership with DeKalb County, is an on-going issue.

The city works to foster local economic development opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES

The City continues to improve upon the early success of the newly reinvigorated Lithonia Downtown Development Authority.

The City will initiate a planning focus on the historic Bruce Street Corridor while continuing to successfully implement planning for the downtown Main Street.

There are opportunities for collaboration with potential new developments.

The City can encourage and support home-grown entrepreneurial endeavors to foster local economic development.

POLICIES

The City can increase economic prosperity for the community and its residents.

The City will focus on community aesthetics through better code enforcement and minimum maintenance standards for properties.

The City will ensure that new development is compatible with existing development within the city.

The City will work to develop civic ties by strengthening opportunities for civic participation.

The City will build partnerships that will improve infrastructure and services.

Areas Requiring Attention: **Community Assets**

- 1** Lithonia City Park **2** Lithonia Main Street **3** Lithonia Middle School **4** Stewart Amphitheater **5** Bruce Street School
- 6** Lithonia-Davidson Library **7** Lucious Sanders Recreation Center **8** Potential Institutional/Residential Mixed Use Development



Areas Requiring Attention: **Community Concerns**

1 The Plaza Needs to be Redeveloped

2 The Railroad Divides the City

3 Bruce Street Needs to be a Focus of Planning and Infill Development Opportunities

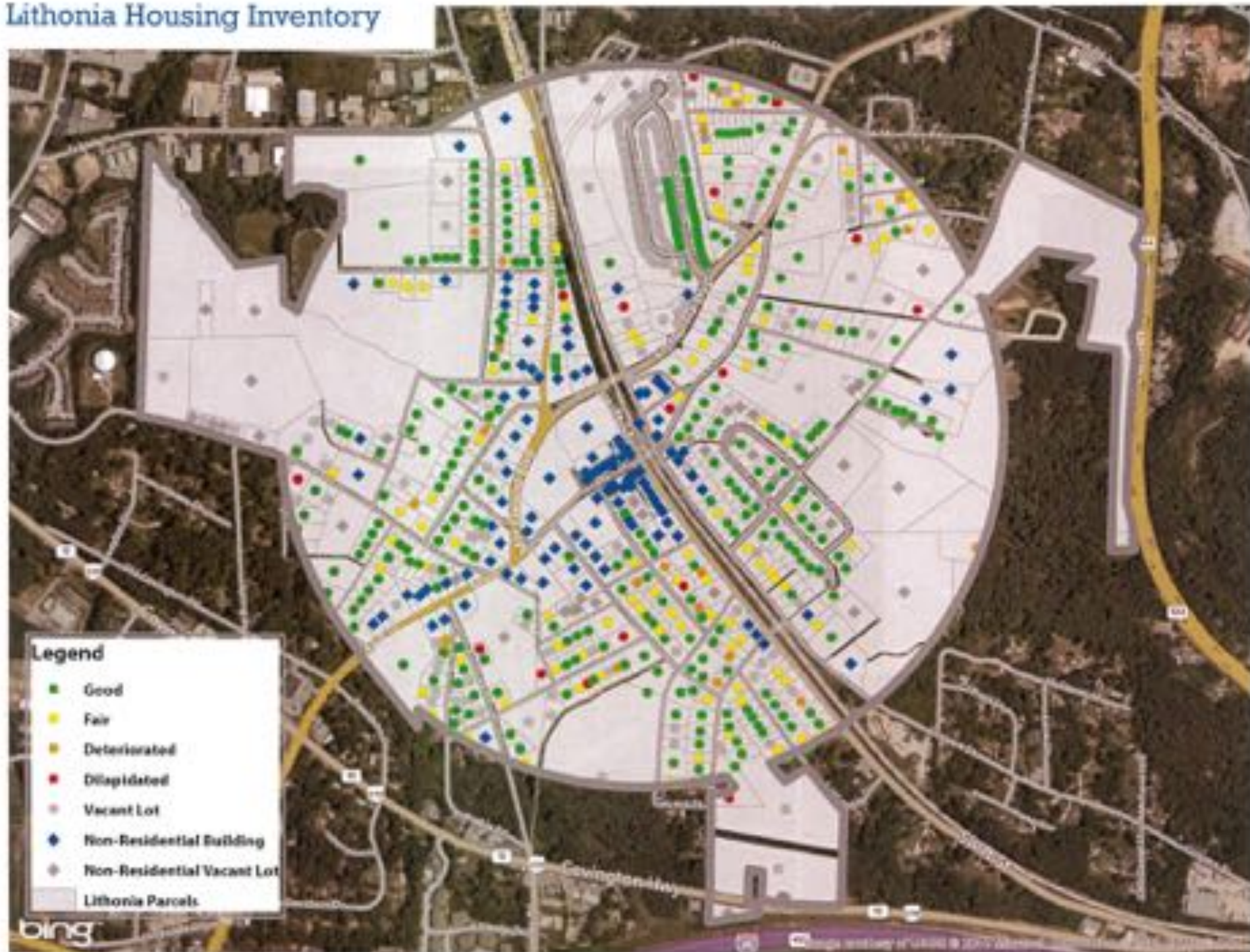
4 Buildings Beginning to Fall Into Disrepair & General Code Enforcement

5 Infrastructure Planning Needs

6 Extend MARTA to Bruce Street Community Facilities



Lithonia Housing Inventory



Lithonia Housing Inventory

ARC assisted the city of Lithonia in completing an inventory of all residential properties as a part of their participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH). This work was completed during the summer of 2013 and received an award from the Georgia Planning Association.

To complete the inventory, ARC developed a web-based tool utilizing Geographic Information Systems technology. The project has resulted in the creation of a full electronic database and interactive map of the City's existing housing conditions.

The survey was broadly divided into three main sections: general information, housing characteristics, and frontage characteristics. Each property was assigned a housing condition of either Good, Fair, Deteriorated or Dilapidated.

Good: A structure that is well maintained and exhibits few deficiencies. All major and critical components are all in good repair, with minimal minor defects.

Fair: A structure that is structurally sound and habitable, but may need minor repairs and renovations. The major and critical components should largely be well-maintained, but several minor defects may be present.

Deteriorated: A structure which exhibits several substandard critical, major, or minor defects, the unit is in a state of disrepair, but habitable and significant work is needed in order to halt further deterioration.

Dilapidated: A structure which suffers from excessive neglect, appears structurally unsound, maintenance is nonexistent, and is not fit for human habitation in its current condition. The unit exhibits numerous critical and major defects.

The survey report identifies strategies and local contacts the city can pursue to begin to remedy deficiencies with its current housing inventory. In the short term, the city is working with DeKalb County to improve its capacity for code enforcement. The Lithonia Housing Inventory is available on the city and ARC's website. Action items are incorporated as appropriate into the Work Program.

DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan was adopted in June 2014, and it identifies priority transportation projects for the County and its cities. The two most frequently cited transportation concerns for Lithonia were the need for greater sidewalk connectivity and the desire to fix potholes in the roads.

Three projects identified in the DeKalb County CTP underscore the city's emphasis on greater pedestrian opportunities, particularly the opportunity to connect to the greater Arabia Mountain PATH.

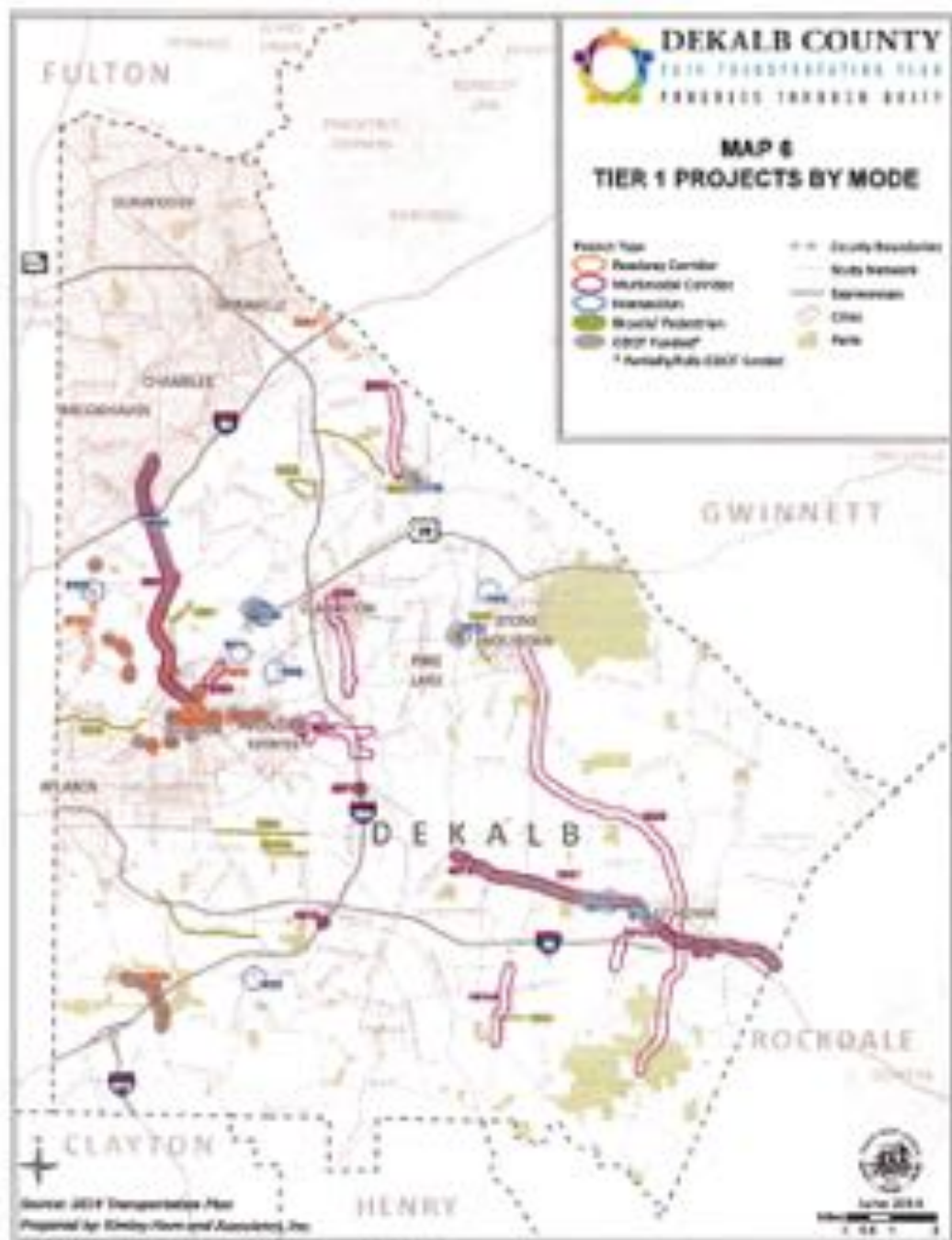
Project ID	Project Name	Project Description	Opinion of Probable Capital Cost
1001	Lithonia Downtown Greenway System - Loop A	Construct a downtown greenway system to include multi-purpose trails and pedestrian lighting (Loop A: Wiggins to Main St. to Conyers to Bruce St.)	\$1,000,000
1002	Lithonia Downtown Greenway System - Loop B	Construct a downtown greenway system to include multi-purpose trails and pedestrian lighting (Loop B: Wiggins to Main St. to Parkway Rd to Park Dr. to College Ave. to Stone Mountain to Max Orland)	\$1,000,000
1003	Lithonia Downtown Greenway System - Loop C	Construct a downtown greenway system to include multi-purpose trails and pedestrian lighting (Loop C: Main St. to extended Stone Mountain St. to Max Orland to Center St.)	\$500,000

The City has also expressed a desire to reconnect the former grid pattern that was disrupted with the construction of the Lithonia Plaza in the 1970s.

Project ID	Project Name	Project Description	Opinion of Probable Capital Cost
1004	Stone Mountain Street Multi-modal Corridor Extension	Extend Stone Mountain St from Max Orland to Main St. including sidewalks	\$1,000,000

DeKalb County has identified a countywide priority project that will impact downtown Lithonia.

Project ID	Project Name	Project Description	Opinion of Probable Capital Cost
0026	Heritage Corridor Study	Perform a multimodal corridor study that will consider roadway, bike, and pedestrian improvements throughout and connecting Stone Mountain and Lithonia downtowns, where needed, short term pedestrian improvements will be considered to improve pedestrian crossings.	\$200,000

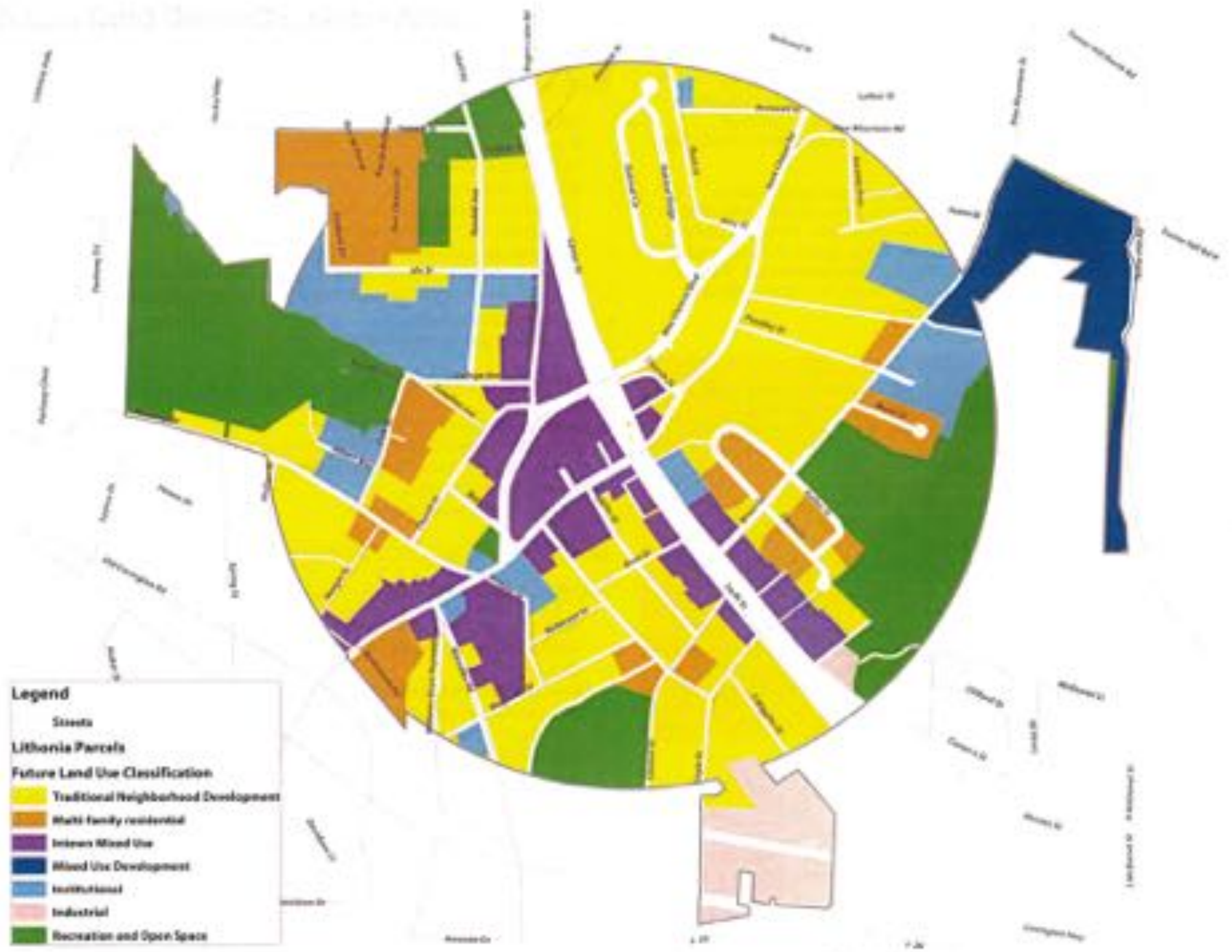


Tier 1 projects identified in the DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan include Project #6026 Heritage Corridor Study, which extends between downtown Lithonia and downtown Stone Mountain. Tier 1 projects are those of highest priority within unincorporated DeKalb County. The DeKalb County CTP can be found at www.dekalbtransportationplan2014.com.



Projects for the city of Lithonia identified in the DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan include Projects #1301, 1302 and 1303 Lithonia Downtown Greenway System. Also included is project #1304 Stone Mountain Street Multi Modal Corridor Extension. The DeKalb County CTP can be found at www.dekalbtransportationplan2014.com.

The City of Lithonia: Future Development



Traditional Neighborhoods

The **TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT** describes a neighborhood having relatively well-maintained housing, possessing a distinct identity through architectural style, lot and street design, and higher rates of homeownership. Existence of declining areas within the neighborhood may contribute to further decline over time.

The majority of the houses in Lithonia are comprised of single-family residential neighborhoods with historic building elements and styles that are the foundation of the historical character of Lithonia. Throughout these residential areas are older residences that should be preserved and restored in a fashion that is compatible with the existing historic character. There are also opportunities to construct new single family homes with similar architectural character on existing vacant properties.

The City has several **MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENCES** that serve the community. One of the major property owners in the City is Lithonia Housing Authority. Much of Lithonia's public housing consists of one-story brick duplex structures in relatively standard condition scattered throughout neighborhoods.

Chelsea Place (previously Parc Chateau) has transitioned from an income-based affordable housing option to a market based residential community with the expiration of low income housing tax credits. Villas on Main (formerly Ansley Oaks) is a market-rate property that has also recently been acquired by new management, and there is a third possibility for a new apartment complex on the site of the former Lithonia Plaza.

The economic recession has created new markets for apartment communities, however the city of Lithonia has high rates of rental vs. owner occupancy residential units. The desire for opportunities to encourage home ownership were a consistent theme through the Comprehensive Plan process.

Development Patterns for Traditional Neighborhoods & Multi-Family Developments

- Preserve existing single family homes.
- Encourage restoration of aging homes with historic character.
- Promote new single-family residential development with historic character.
- Develop new single family homes on 1/4 acre lots or less.
- Develop new multi-family homes with high quality design elements compatible with existing single-family homes.
- Have rear-oriented off-street parking.
- Ensure installation of sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian activity.
- Ensure connectivity of sidewalk network to community amenities.
- Establish pocket parks.
- Discourage gated communities.

Primary Land Uses

- Single family housing development
- Compatible two-story townhome development
- Compatible small multi-family residential development
- Passive recreation areas
- Sidewalks and/or walking trails

Implementation Strategies for Traditional Neighborhoods:

- Study the feasibility of the large undeveloped vacant properties along Center Street, Parkway Drive and Bruce Street for priority redevelopment sites.
- Reinforce neighborhood stability by encouraging homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties.
- Work with St. Paul AME Church, owner of several parcels on Magnolia and Klondike Streets, to support the development of intergenerational housing options.
- Work with Lithonia Housing Authority and other partners to develop a plan for improvements to and/or redevelopment of existing public housing units.
- Work with PATH Foundation to provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections in neighborhoods to encourage walking to community facilities and amenities.
- Adopt and implement Proposed Design Guidelines for Lithonia, Georgia developed by Georgia State University in 2012.



Early 20th-century bungalow



Mid-century diverse neighborhood



Public housing in Lithonia



Neostandard style



Examples of new construction in Lithonia

LEFT: Lithonia's strength is in its neighborhoods. Rich with historic variety, the community's traditional neighborhoods contain a variety of housing sizes and types, with options for single-family and multi-family living. TOP: New housing reflects historic precedent without copying historic styles. Compact, low maintenance housing options are attractive to both young families and retirees. BELOW: Lithonia continues to struggle with repercussions of neglect and abandonment. Code enforcement has been identified as a top priority.



Examples of distressed properties in Lithonia

Commercial and Economic Development Areas

The **Intown Mixed Use Area** has a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses that facilitate accessibility by pedestrians. It encompasses areas such as Lithonia's traditional central business districts, and the areas immediately adjacent to it.

Some structures, particularly along Stone Mountain Street and along the railroad on Swift and Center Streets, are appropriate for adaptive re-use mixed use development. These can include historic structures that have fallen into decline, where preservation and rehabilitation are desirable.

This also includes areas of residential-to-retail conversion of former single-family structures, principally those located along high-traffic corridors. Though it is recognized that the traffic may make these less desirable for residential occupancy, confining this trend to the Intown Mixed Use Area and preserving Traditional Neighborhoods is desirable.

The area in Lithonia along Turner Hill Road has potential for a new master-planned **Mixed-Use Development** on an existing vacant site of 24 acres. This development may meet a specific need for Lithonia, such as accommodating a senior housing development. The project has been in the planning phase for several years, but stalled due to the recession.

A **Light Industrial Area** is generally used for low or high manufacturing, wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation or other nuisance characteristics.

An undeveloped 17 acre parcel north of Covington Highway and south of an established single-family neighborhood was annexed into the city in 2002 and currently only contains a billboard. Due to its proximity to Covington Highway, this site has potential for light industrial/ commercial development that is non-threatening to the surrounding residential community.

Canyons Street currently contains several industrial properties that one time benefited from the railroad. Adjacent vacant property could be developed for light industrial use that contributes to the tax rolls and as an employment generator for the city.

Development Patterns for Commercial and Economic Development Areas

- Include a mix of retail, office, services, open spaces, and employment opportunities for Intown Mixed Use Areas
- Include targeted housing options to a broad range of income levels for new development
- Incorporate pedestrian-oriented walkable connections within the Intown and Mixed Use Areas to Lithonia's Traditional Neighborhoods
- Promote infill and adaptive reuse in targeted and appropriate areas
- Incorporate landscaping and site design to soften views of buildings, parking lots, and loading docks, particularly as applies to the Light Industrial Area
- Incorporate signage and lighting features to enhance the quality of the development to Intown, Mixed Use, and Light Industrial Areas

Primary Land Uses

- Mixed income housing options, with higher densities as appropriate to the context
- Retail, office, civic, and professional uses
- Sidewalk and trail connections with pocket parks
- Small/ light industry with emphasis on green/ clean industries in the Light Industrial Area

Implementation Strategies for Commercial and Economic Development Areas

- Continue redevelopment of Lithonia Plaza.
- Preserve existing structures with historical significance throughout these areas.
- Explore potential funding sources to encourage historic façade restorations and improvements of existing buildings by property owners.
- Promote infill development on vacant lots where appropriate.
- Discourage any large retail facilities in this area.
- Promote the creation of pocket parks.
- Work with property owners to explore possible funding options for the mixed use development project.
- Identify businesses that would benefit from and/ or complement the CSX Railroad.
- Improve curb appeal/ gateway into the downtown area.



The majority of Lithonia's commercial development is comprised primarily of one or two-story structures that date from the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Lithonia adopted a Form-Based Zoning Ordinance in 2014 that coincides with much of the area identified as the Intown Mixed Use Areas. The desire for this district strongly mirrors many of the elements of the existing central business district in terms of scale, massing and materials. A strong emphasis on adaptive re-use of existing historic buildings is present in the code.



Main Street Lithonia



Main Street Lithonia



Main Street Lithonia



Area adjacent to downtown Lithonia

One notable exception is the redevelopment of the Lithonia Plaza (BOTTOM RIGHT). A portion of the Plaza is owned by the city. Asbestos remediation has been completed, and the site will eventually be demolished. It is the hope of the city that redevelopment will be anchored by multi-family residential development. A portion of the Plaza that will not be redeveloped includes the Wayfield Grocery Store, and though some dissatisfaction has been expressed about the condition and prices charged, a grocery store is nonetheless an asset for this small town.



Plaza Shopping Center



Area adjacent to downtown Lithonia



Plaza Shopping Center

Institutional and Open Space Areas

Institutional Areas comprise public uses facilities including schools, community facilities, and cultural landmarks. One prominent example of Lithonia's civic infrastructure is the Lithonia Woman's Club, which is only used occasionally by some community groups.

Another potential redevelopment location is the Bruce Street School, which was the first public school for African-American students in DeKalb County. The ownership of the structure was transferred to the City sometime in the 1990s. The building's outer walls of granite remain intact but the interior and roof have deteriorated. There is strong interest in the community to refurbish the building and establish a facility for community use. Some of the suggested uses include a cultural center, museum, and a community training center.

Recreation and Open Space include existing parks such as the Fern Street Park, the Lithonia City Park, and the Stewart Amphitheater. It also includes undeveloped areas that may not be appropriate for any type of development, or would be ideal for expansion of existing recreational facilities. Several large undeveloped parcels contain granite rock that was not quarried during Lithonia's industrial growth. A parcel located behind the Fern Street Park is an abandoned city landfill. Due to unknown conditions, proximity to single family housing, and the likelihood of future residential development, this parcel should be preserved as the natural state as open space.

The City of Lithonia has several active recreational facilities within the city limits but more facilities are needed to provide options for additional youth activities. There are vacant parcels adjacent to the Bruce Street Park and the Fern Street Park that should be developed for additional programmed space.

Development Patterns for Institutional and Open Space Areas

- Protect historic properties from demolition
- Maintain properties to prevent future deterioration
- Preserve available greenspace
- Utilize facade and conservation easements to protect community character
- Link area to other community facilities and amenities

Primary Land Uses

- Civic Uses
- Park Spaces
- Walking and Biking Trail Connections

Implementation Strategies for Institutional and Open Space Areas

- Explore opportunities for funding to refurbish the historic Bruce Street School.
- Develop a plan to preserve existing undeveloped area for natural open space.
- Develop a capital improvement plan for Lithonia City Park.
- Work with DeKalb County and other partners to upgrade park facilities.
- Work with Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, PATH Foundation, DeKalb County and other entities to develop connections to the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area.



Church in Lithonia



Bruce Street School



Stewart Amphitheater



Lithonia Middle School



Lithonia Women's Club



Bruce Street Park

Though Lithonia is a small town, it has much to boast of in regard to civic infrastructure. Institutional assets include multiple churches, a middle school, a public library, two community parks, a senior center, and a recreation center. The city government recently relocated into a new City Hall facility (an adaptive re-use of an existing building), and the city promotes the former Lithonia Women's Club building for civic use. The Downtown Development Authority has been re-established after a period of inactivity, and they have taken steps to bring the Stewart Amphitheater online for commercial events and entertainment.

The site of the Bruce Street School (TOP RIGHT) has been the focus of recent development interest. It is a community landmark, and it anchors the identity of the Bruce Street Corridor. In addition to previous planning studies and small area plans, such as the Lithonia Town Center Blueprint and Livable Centers initiative, the University of Georgia College of Environment and Design is undertaking a study along the Bruce Street Corridor during the Fall of 2015.

The City of Lithonia: Work Program

Report of Accomplishments (2010 - 2015)

Project	Status	Notes
Economic Development		
Research establishment of appropriate form for development authority - e.g. Downtown, Redevelopment, and/or Joint.	Completed	
Adopt resolution to establish development authority.	Completed	
Research potential funding sources for redevelopment activities.	Postponed	Scope narrowed into other action items to specifically address Bruce Street School and Plaza. See STWP Project #CD.5.
Prepare a market and feasibility study of development opportunities.	Postponed	See STWP Project #ED.2.
Develop a business retention, recruitment, and marketing plan.	Postponed	See STWP Project #ED.3.
Partner with agencies to promote job training opportunities.	Completed	DeKalb Workforce Development, Goodwill Industries. Will be a routine operation of the city.
Housing		
Establish inventory of housing conditions, including ownership of vacant, abandoned and foreclosed properties.	Completed	See Lithonia Housing Inventory at www.atlantaregional.com
Develop and implement a plan of action to address code violations.	Completed	Lithonia participates with the Land Bank Authority. Incorporated as a routine operation of the city.
Develop strategies for new housing development.	Completed	Lithonia graduates in 2015 from GICH, which will complete the process.
Partner with Lithonia Housing Authority to explore new housing opportunities and redevelopment of existing housing stock.	Underway	Priority strategy for new housing development. Incorporated as a routine operation of the city.

Key to Terminology:

Items that are **Completed** have been finished within the 5-Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update.

Items that are **Underway** have been initiated or have had partial progress made as of the end of the 5-Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update. They have been carried over into the new 5-year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plan Update.

Items that are **Postponed** are still priorities for the community, and have been carried over into the new 5-Year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plan Update.

Items that are **Cancelled** will not be carried over into the new 5-Year reporting period for this Comprehensive Plan Update. Generally, these are items that are broad policy statements or routine city operations, and they have been identified appropriately as such.

Project	Status	Notes
Update local ordinances as needed, e.g. Building Code	Cancelled	Deleted from work program as action item is routine operation of City and/or DeKalb County
Natural and Cultural Resources		
Complete the application for designation to the National Register of Historic Places	Completed	
Develop a capital improvement plan for the Lithonia City Park, Stewart Amphitheater, and other park facilities.	Completed	
Develop an inventory of the city's natural (and historic) resources along with an educational program.	Postponed	See STWP Project #CD.9.
Develop an educational program to promote understanding of the city's natural and historic resources.	Postponed	Combined with another action item. See STWP Project #CD.9.
Research funding opportunities to restore and redevelop the Bruce Street School and other historic sites.	Postponed	See STWP Project #CD.5.
Develop a plan to promote heritage tourism.	Postponed	DeKalb CTP Project #6026.
Pursue greenspace preservation and acquisition opportunities.	Completed	
Adopt ordinances to promote and protect natural and historic resources.	Postponed	See STWP Project #CD.13.
Community Facilities and Services		
Develop and inventory of the sidewalk network.	Completed	
Expand the greenway trail system within the city to provide greater connectivity to the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Preserve Area	Underway	PATH Foundation and DeKalb County Working to Extend Trail Head to Main Street. See DeKalb County CTP Projects #1301, 1302, and 1303.
Develop a plan to increase the connectivity of sidewalk network in areas near the middle school, recreation centers, city parks, and shopping district.	Postponed	See STWP Project #CD.8.

Project	Status	Notes
Implement a maintenance plan for the city parks and facilities.	Cancelled	This is a policy statement. Incorporated as routine operation of City.
Transportation		
Develop design standards for gateway signage.	Underway	City is working in partnership with Arabia Alliance. See STWP Project #CD.4.
Develop a plan to improve signage at all city gateways.	Cancelled	Incorporated as a routine operation of the city.
Work with Georgia Department of Transportation and other agencies to improve signage on Interstate 20, Highway 124, and other major roadways.	Postponed	See STWP Project #P5.
Identify funding sources for the implementation of the sidewalk network and crosswalks plan.	Postponed	See STWP Project #CD.1.
Establish partnership with CSX railroad to improve circulation options on Main Street.	Postponed	See STWP Project #R1.
Establish partnership with MARTA to explore expansion of service and improvement options.	Postponed	Redefined to address specific need of service to Senior Center and Bruce Street. See STWP Project #P7.
Intergovernmental Coordination		
Coordinate with DeKalb County the provision of services through a new Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) agreement and intergovernmental agreements.	Underway	To be renegotiated in 2016. See STWP Project #P2.
Coordinate with DeKalb County future annexation plans.	Underway	This is a policy statement. Deleted from work program as action item is routine operation of City.
Coordinate transportation planning activities with DeKalb County and Atlanta Regional Commission.	Underway	This is a policy statement. Deleted from work program as action item is routine operation of City.

Project	Status	Notes
Work with DeKalb Municipal Association (DMA) to explore coordination of services and programs.	Underway	This is a policy statement. Deleted from work program as action item is routine operation of City.
Land Use		
Develop design standards for Main Street and other areas of the City.	Completed	
Develop plan for a town center and/or town green area; host a community design studio or workshop.	Completed	
Review and update zoning ordinances to support implementation of Community Agenda.	Completed	
Review existing sign ordinance, make necessary revisions, development plan for compliance.	Completed	
Develop a façade improvement program for Main Street.	Underway	Responsibility shifted to the Lithonia DDA. The DDA has a separate work program.
Quality of Life		
Work with partners to establish community gardens and farmers market.	Underway	Responsibility is shared by City Council and Lithonia DDA. The DDA has a separate Work Program. See STWP Project #P.3.
Work with management of supermarket to improve quality of food choices, pricing, and appearance of facility.	Underway	See STWP Project #P.4.
Support expansion of neighborhood watches safety initiatives.	Underway	Establishment of Block Captain Program and Community Councils. See STWP Project #CP.3.
Establish a Citizen Academy and Youth Leadership Program.	Postponed	See STWP Project #CP.4.

Project	Status	Notes
Expand and support the use of walking and biking trails.	Postponed	Scope narrowed into other action item. See STWP Project #CD.1 and #CD.8.
Research funding opportunities for the expansion of sidewalks and greenway trails.	Postponed	Scope narrowed into other action item. See STWP Project #CD.8 and #CD.12.
Expand recreational activities for children, teens, young adults, adults and seniors.	Cancelled	This is a policy statement. Deleted from work program as action item is routine operation of City.
Partner with agencies providing services for homelessness, mental health, drug and alcohol use, and other health issues.	Cancelled	This is a policy statement. Deleted from work program as action item is routine operation of City in partnership with the County.
Partner with agencies working on youth development and leadership.	Postponed	Combined with another action item. See STWP Project #CP.1, #CP.2 and #CP.4.
Establish cultural enrichment programs that address different age groups and interests.	Postponed	Scope narrowed into other action item. See STWP Project #CD.4 and #CP.1.
Develop inventory of services for seniors and youth.	Postponed	See STWP Project #CP.1.
Promote diversity of businesses, e.g. bookstore, internet café, art gallery, antique shops, etc.	Underway	Shifted to Lithonia Downtown Development Authority. See STWP Project #CD.6.

Short Term Work Program (2016 - 2020)

#	Project	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Responsibility	Funding and Cost
Economic Development								
ED.1	Partner with agencies to promote job training opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	DeKalb Workforce Development; Goodwill Industries	Staff Time
ED.2	Prepare a market and feasibility study of development opportunities.		X	X			City of Lithonia; Consulting Firm	Costs to be determined based upon project needs

#	Project	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Responsibility	Funding and Cost
ED.3	Develop a business retention, recruitment, and marketing plan.				X	X	City Council; Downtown Development Authority	Staff and Volunteer Time; Other costs to be determined based upon project needs
Community Development								
CD.1	Identify funding sources for the implementation of the sidewalk network and crosswalks plan.	X					City of Lithonia	Staff Time
CD.2	Undertake a review of the Lithonia Zoning Ordinance, and subsequently update, to align with the Comprehensive Plan Update.	X					City of Lithonia; ARC Community Choices Program	Staff Time
CD.3	Adopt and Implement Proposed Design Guidelines for Lithonia, Georgia* developed by Georgia State University.	X					City of Lithonia	Staff Time
CD.4	Develop design standards for gateway signage.	X	X				Arabia Alliance Partnership	Staff Time
CD.5	Research funding opportunities to restore and redevelop the Bruce Street School and Lithonia Plaza.	X	X				City of Lithonia	Staff Time
CD.6	Support Downtown Development Authority in promoting diversity of businesses, e.g. bookstore, internet café, art gallery, antique shops, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	Lithonia Downtown Development Authority; City of Lithonia	Staff and Volunteer Time
CD.7	Develop and implement a plan of action to address code violations.		X	X			Land Bank Authority; GICH Committee; DeKalb County; City of Lithonia	Staff Time

#	Project	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Responsibility	Funding and Cost
CD.8	Develop a plan to increase the connectivity of sidewalk network in areas near the middle school, recreation centers, city parks, and shopping district.			X			City of Lithonia	Costs to be determined based upon project needs.
CD.9	Develop an inventory of the city's natural (and historic) resources along with an educational plan.			X			City of Lithonia	Staff Time; costs to be determined if utilize outside source
CD.10	Develop strategies for new housing development.			X	X		GiCh Committee; UGA; DCA	Staff and Volunteer Time
CD.11	Develop a plan to promote heritage tourism			X	X		City of Lithonia; DeKalb County	Staff Time
CD.12	Expand the greenway trail system within the city to provide greater connectivity to the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Preserve Area			X	X	X	PATH Foundation	Staff Time
CD.13	Adopt ordinances to promote and protect natural and historic resources.				X		City of Lithonia	Staff Time
Partnerships								
P.1	Establish partnership with CSX railroad to improve circulation options on Main Street	X					City of Lithonia; CSX	Staff Time
P.2	Coordinate with DeKalb County the provision of services through a new Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) agreement and intergovernmental agreements.	X					City of Lithonia; DeKalb County	Staff Time
P.3	Work with partners to establish community gardens and farmers market.	X					Partnership with Project Generation Gap; City of Lithonia; Downtown Development Authority	Staff and Volunteer Time

#	Project	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Responsibility	Funding and Cost
P4	Work with management of supermarket to improve quality of food choices, pricing, and appearance of facility.	X	X				City of Lithonia	Staff Time
P5	Work with Georgia Department of Transportation and other agencies to improve signage on Interstate 20, Highway 124, and other major roadways.	X	X	X			City of Lithonia; GOOT	Staff Time
P6	Partner with Lithonia Housing Authority to explore new housing opportunities and redevelopment of existing housing stock.	X	X	X	X	X	City of Lithonia; Lithonia Housing Authority	Staff Time
P7	Work with MARTA to explore expansion of service to Senior Center and Bruce Street.		X	X			City of Lithonia; MARTA	Staff Time
Civic Participation								
CP1	Develop inventory of services for seniors and youth.	X	X				City of Lithonia; Senior Center Management;	Staff and Volunteer Time
CP2	Develop a plan to improve communication with citizens, particularly through the use of social media or other digital/online resources.	X	X				City of Lithonia; City Council; Downtown Development Authority	Staff and Volunteer Time
CP3	Support expansion of neighborhood watches safety initiatives.	X	X	X	X	X	City of Lithonia; Police Department	Staff Time
CP4	Establish a Citizen Academy and Youth Leadership Program.		X	X			Elected Officials and City Staff	Staff Time

This Page Left Blank

Appendix A

Community Survey Responses

What is your best favorite place in Lithonia?
Davidson Library
Main small quiet can be a great shopping area.
The historic house on Main (B&B) and Lithonia Park
Main St
Library and City Hall
library
park
The new City Hall
Mrs. Willie's Cleaners, Skinny Chef and Family Dollar, Brown and Young Funeral Home, Ebony Hair and Beauty Store.
The natural scenery - Arabia Mountain, Stone Mountain, Downtown.
City Hall
Arabia Mountain Trail
No answer
Oakleaf Ridge/my home
Oakleaf at Stonecrest
The park and Bruce Street Senior Center
Park Path
Parola State Park

What is your best favorite place in Lithonia?
Plaza
N/A
Wayfield and former furniture store (closed) and Main & Swift
Plaza
Wiggin St. (Born to Council)
the city-owned portion of Lithonia Plaza; the old rock school building on Bruce St.; buildings on Center St. (old Seaboard Lumber site)
plaza
I don't have one
Wayfield Grocery Store
S. Stone Mountain - Lithonia Rd.
Wayfield Plaza

What is your best favorite place in Lithonia?
Lithonia Park (needs renovation) and Lithonia Plaza
No answer
Lithonia Plaza/Wayfield
Wayfield Plaza
No answer
None
Arabia Mountain

In 10-20 years, I think Lithonia will be better than it is now.*

*This response was repeated 18 times unanimously.

Drawn Liberty some 100,000's for Lithuania that could open the kind of change that you want to see in the community.

1. physical activities offered 2. job availability 3. more businesses

1. Whole Food store or Trader Joe's 2 Bike Trail Ride 3. Shops on Main

1. Light Rail at old depot. 2. Evict Wayfield or upgrade Wayfield to make it more appealing. 3. Promote proximity to bike trails and Stonecrest Mall

1. business development 2. community development 3. city repair

More sidewalks, pedestrian crossings on Max Cleland Blvd and Main Street

restaurants, another variety store, small retail stores

Have an auction of the city steps of the abandoned properties, offer tax incentives to interested businesses, mallers

Lithonia amphitheater Lithonia Plaza Development Getting citizens more involved

New business district - new landscape - new storefront decor. New branding campaign/marketing communication campaign about the City of Lithonia to attract young professionals. Community Farmer's Market or Community Garden.

Business development. Vibrant city center. Branding/marketing campaign.

A music festival/arts festival A city sports team (possibly Little League) Creating a ghost tour centered around the cemetery

More bars and lounges and things to do. More stores downtown Lithonia. Get rid of abandon houses and lots. Fix up the amphitheater to host concerts, movie nights and events.

Restaurants Apartments Subdivisions

More shopping stores! No littering! Activities for kids!

Pick up litter. Market itself as an alternative to downtown/midtown living in order to attract higher income families. Stop settling for low income opportunities. Aim high!

Music festivals More events for children and elders

Revitalize the outdoor arena Commerce

Involve ideas of the youth, adults, and elderly. Allow/Create entrepreneurship program for all. At the change of each season, let there be an event that captures the people's attention having a conscious theme of significance.

Lithonia's Biggest Challenge is...

Mobilization of residents for any cause

Narrow minds

the transition in time; coming into the "modern" age without losing its historical appeal. Its current appearance is an obstacle to its profitable growth (ie Wayfield) Transportation: We need a light rail stop in Lithonia.

Community development as well as not as much revenue coming into the city

lack of local jobs continuous code enforcement

housing stock which meets housing code requirements

lack of retail shops and abandoned properties

Development

Lack of other small retail stores that represent national retail chains. Variety of apartments/condos/lofts/town homes - homeownership. Restaurants - new grocery store. Seasonal community events. Boys and Girls Club or YMCA site.

Lack of resources. Citizen involvement.

Community involvement - the City must find a way to excite the community and get them to participate more.

The abandoned houses that bring down property values. Also not enough community involvement. Not enough activities.

Right mix of businesses. City Plaza, "Market" rate apartments.

No answer

Settling for sub-par/mediocre. The City needs to aspire to greater goals.

The community not having enough community events!

Community unity - crossing the railroad tracks

Community resource-center to administer Lithonia's resources as opposed to the city hall. To facilitate educational, occupational and local services that can assist the residents. Competition to provide better quality food as grown fresh in the farmers market.

Appendix B

Summary of Additional Actions

The following table includes actions summarized from existing planning documents for the City of Lithonia, originally compiled as a part of the City of Lithonia Overlay Audit and Downtown Implementation Strategy, completed as a part of the 2012 Community Choices Program. It shows which documents reference each action with the with "BP" meaning the Blueprints Report and "LCI" meaning the Lithonia Livable Centers Initiative Study. Preliminary recommendations from Lithonia's Eco-District Study have been added. The projected time period for implementation is also shown with "ST" meaning short-term, "MT" as mid-term, and "LT" as long-term.

This document is included as an easy reference for actions from relevant plans as a supplement to the city's Short Term Work Program, but it is not meant to replace activities identified in the city's Short Term Work Program.

Strategies for Improving Downtown Goals						
Action	Documents			Time Period		
	BP	LCI	ED	ST	MT	LT
Marketing Programs						
Lithonia Marketing Campaign	X	X	X	X	X	
Geocaching				X		
Use a website and social media for branding, marketing, information	X			X		
Business retention, recruitment, and marketing plan			X		X	
Develop an education campaign on materials sourcing for recycled products			X		X	
Consider Zip Car, golf cart or other small vehicle rental			X			X
Distribute information and energy saving bulbs for awareness			X	X		
Explore options for local use of renewables and incentives			X		X	
Create a clean stream campaign			X			X
Land Use						
Create architectural design guidelines		X		X		
Adopt a Form Based Code	X			X		
Create a capital improvement plan for community resources			X	X		
Rick-walk-oriented Strategies						
Community Garden and Farmers Market	X		X	X		
Use false shop fronts	X			X		
Pop-Up Retail - Fill vacant retail spaces with art or space for artists	X			X		
Sidewalk Poetry	X			X		
Innovative, attractive, street furniture	X				X	
Benches, trash cans, mailboxes, light poles, etc. as artistic canvases	X				X	
Open Streets	X					X
Pavement to Plazas	X					X

Strategies for Improving City Downtown Goals

X – relevant objectives reviewed and appropriate time period for action	Documents			Time Period	
Pop-Up Cafes - seating areas on parallel parking spaces	X			X	
Pavement to Parks/Parklets (parks on parallel spaces)	X			X	
Food Carts and Trucks	X			X	
Mobile vendors	X			X	
Parkmobiles - small mobile parks	X			X	
Demolish Lithonia Plaza	X	X	X	X	
Create and extend streets through the block	X	X			X
After Plaza is demolished, build a community center	X				X
Develop Residential townhomes (and live-work up to the Street)	X	X			X
Developing new grocery store or reorient Wayfield Foods	X	X			X
Extending building frontages (townhome and retail, mixed use)	X				X
Extend retail/mixed use buildings along Main St.	X				X
Improve Signage and Gateways	X	X		X	
Fix Broken Sidewalks			X	X	
Inventory Sidewalks			X	X	
Greenway system and expansion of bike/pedestrian trails	X	X		X	
Development Programs					
Façade Improvement Programs		X		X	
Downtown Development Authority		X		X	
Improve local STEM training efforts		X			X
Increase after school options		X			X

