

City of Sugar Hill  
Planning Staff Report  
ENVISION100

DATE: December 8, 2023  
TO: Mayor & City Council  
FROM: Planning Director  
SUBJECT: ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan

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Plan development for the ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan is complete. Our planning staff, along with the steering committee, and team members from various city departments have worked together to design and carry out an extensive community engagement program. With expert market analysis from KB Advisory Group as well as communication support and graphic design from Accent Creative Group, our project team performed thorough data analysis that we believe reflects the wide range of needs and preferences among our diverse community.

A draft of the plan was made available on the city's website Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. A public hearing was conducted at 7:30 PM on Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at city hall to brief the community on the contents of the plan and receive comments. To provide the community ample time to review and provide feedback, we accepted comments through 5:00 PM on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. Staff did not receive any new comments via email after the November 30<sup>th</sup> public hearing.

Having made final grammatical corrections and addressed all public comments, planning staff presents the updated ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan to the community and requests City Council acceptance and authorization to send it to Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Atlanta Regional Commission for regional review.

### **SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

Grammatical corrections plus the following:

Page 6 – First sentence of the third paragraph restructured for better clarity.

Page 8 – Public Hearing section updated to include information following the second public hearing as well as plan for a third hearing.

Page 9 – An additional page was added to highlight contributions of the steering committee on public involvement and outreach.

Page 17 – First sentence of “Household Income” section removed as charts only show data from 2021.

Page 18 – Chart adjusted to show industries in order from highest to lowest number of employees for ease of comprehension.

Page 22 – The home values chart was redrawn to correct the scale. A note was added to clarify the data used does not cover the recession.

Page 41 – The town center character area appropriate land uses were adjusted to better reflect goals for the area. RS72 and R36 were added as appropriate residential uses for the town center.

Page 42 – Adjustments were made to the character area description for the commercial nodes in response to public input. For recommended development patterns “[encouraging] neighborhood scale mixed use developments...” was removed. Medium density mixed residential (R36 zoning) was removed from the appropriate land uses.

Page 50 – “Implement Capital Improvement Plan” was deleted as this section was reflected throughout the community work program in better detail.

Page 50 – “Downtown Parks and Greenspace” was corrected to take place in 2024/2025.

## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **ENVISION100 Public Hearing #2 - Nov. 30, 2023, 7:30 p.m. at Sugar Hill City Hall**

- Encouraged sidewalk safety, specifically mentioning guardrails separating the street and the sidewalk. Also mentioned trees along Highway 20.
- Objected to R36 townhomes in the business designated areas on Highway 20, PIB, and Buford Highway. Objected to all of the proposed spending in the work program.
- Emphasized importance of transitions between commercial and residential, different densities. Avoid overpopulation, especially regarding downtown and apartments. Mentioned that the city should prioritize infrastructure; referenced Sugar Ridge Drive commercial rezoning and lack of sewer. City should protect neighborhoods. Consider light/medium industrial as appropriate – encourage jobs. Emphasized need for affordable housing, specifically mentioning diversity in single family housing types and new ideas in single family affordable ‘starter homes’.
- Asked for objection to apartments to be made more clear in the plan. Mentioned low turnout for the public hearing.
- Concerned by perceived rush of the plan and missing communication for the draft plan and public hearing. Expressed concern over outreach and errors in the plan draft, apartments as use in downtown, vague language in the plan, and townhomes being an appropriate use for commercial nodes.
- Mentioned youth perspective of Sugar Hill being a city for the future and future generations. Emphasized walkability, specifically referenced Suwanee Dam Road and lack of complete, safe sidewalks. Referenced unaddressed traffic problems. Emphasized importance of infrastructure maintenance/improvements. Questioned whether or not Lidl is being built, need for grocery in proximity to residents. Development that can lower the number of car trips needed. Mentioned need for commercial in the city, as places for residents and nonresidents to invest in the community as they pass through. Questioned whether 360 residential will still have a commercial component. Emphasized importance of completing the greenway and investing in schools. Mentioned 2026 microtransit connection for downtown.



# ENVISION100

SUGAR HILL 2039 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Comprehensive Plan**

## Acknowledgements

### **City Council**

Brandon Hembree, Mayor  
Marc Cohen, Mayor Pro Tem  
Mason Roszel, Post 1  
Jenn Thatcher, Post 3  
Alvin Hicks, Post 4  
Taylor Anderson, Post 5

### **Planning Commission**

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Jason Jones  
Phil Olsen  
Rosemary Walsh  
Jeremy White

### **Steering Committee**

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Bhupendra Gouri  
Chandra Brandel  
Chuck Allen  
David Williams  
Denise Hoell  
Faye Sisson  
Jack Wolfe  
Jenn Thatcher, City Council  
Jerry Oberholtzer  
Jonathan Hoover  
Kasey Jackson  
Kathryn Baskin  
Madison Gingras  
Marc Cohen, City Council  
Michelle Sullivan  
Niccolla Brown  
Nick Boyers  
Reilly Christy  
Steve Graessle  
Victoria Kesler  
Wansley Sudderth

**Without help from City staff, this  
would not have been possible!**

### **Special thanks to:**

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### **Additional thanks to:**

Paul Radford, City Manager  
Troy Besseche, Assistant City Manager

### **Planning Staff**

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Kaipo Awana, AICP

### **Prepared with the assistance of**

KB Advisory Group  
Accent Creative Group

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## **Introduction**

A comprehensive plan is a policy guide that assesses current conditions, projects future trends, establishes goals, develops strategies, and sets up a short-term work plan for a city. Local governments in Georgia are required to develop and maintain a long-range comprehensive plan in order to be able to issue permits and licenses, as well as remain eligible for various state-administered funding and incentive programs. This long-range plan is required to be updated every 5 years. Planning helps guide the city to a shared vision of the future, and for this reason, investing in city planning is important to city leadership. Having a thorough understanding of where we are going helps guide the daily decisions that will get us to the future. Our planning legacy began generations ago as families built a foundation of community with a vision of a prosperous and unique Sugar Hill. The city's planning department and Planning Commission were established in 1972 to manage the growth that was starting to take place in this area. Gwinnett County more than doubled in population size every ten years between 1970 and 1990, experiencing a similar pace of growth until 2000.

With a population of 4,557 in 1990, Sugar Hill was the seventh largest city by population in Gwinnett County, one of the fastest growing counties in the country at the time. The city prepared its first two comprehensive plans in the 1990s as a requirement of the 1989 Georgia Planning Act. The city's 1992 plan focused on ensuring that land use facilitated economic development, conservation of natural and historic resources, community facilities, and housing to protect and promote the quality of life of Sugar Hill residents. In the 1998 plan, the city was focused on continuing to capitalize on economic growth in the region, while ensuring affordable housing was provided to existing and new residents. Low and medium density housing were targeted for this growth and began to proliferate. During this time, the Sugar Hill Housing Authority was formed to help finance the Plantation Ridge apartments, now known as Renew, and provide more housing options to low-income households.

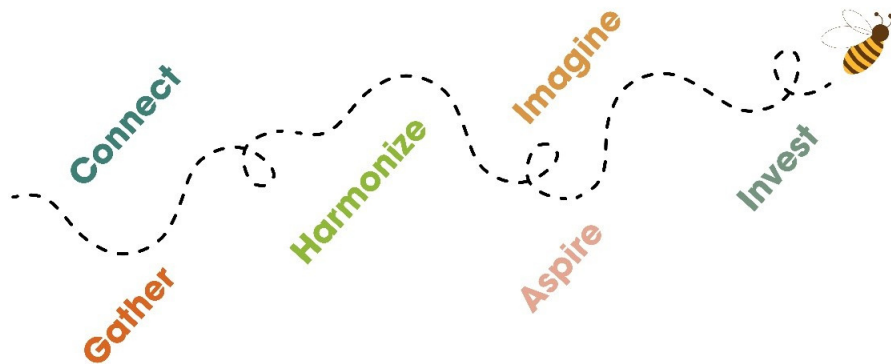
Through the year 2000, people were still moving to this area in large numbers, and our city's population doubled from the 1990 census reaching 11,700. Sugar Hill continued to grow at a fast pace for a few years into the new millennium. Growth eventually slowed as the city recovered from the throes of a recession. However, by 2010 the city had grown to a population of almost 19,000 and consumed thousands of acres of land to build homes for our growing community. In fact, until Peachtree Corners was incorporated in 2012, Sugar Hill was the third largest city by population in Gwinnett County which had almost 800,000 residents at the time. With a growing population and decreasing availability of vacant land, planning has become more and more important to encourage efficient land use and variety in the marketplace to ensure that the City of Sugar Hill continues to be a vibrant and resilient place to live, work and play.

One of the first investments in specialized local planning was with the 2005 Town Center Master Plan. Since then, Sugar Hill leaders have prioritized major planning projects focused on housing, mobility, and economic development. The Home for Life Study (2016), Buford Highway Corridor Study (2016), Aspire 20 Plan (2018), LCI Downtown Master Plan Update (2019), and Greenway Master Plan (2020) were all completed to help paint the picture of what Sugar Hill should become.



The City of Sugar Hill planning department staff worked throughout 2023 to prepare an update to our long-range plan. Planning staff completed public involvement, plan writing, and much of the data analysis in house, with subconsultants hired for expertise where staff needed additional support. Staff decided to take on the work of updating the plan in-house after receiving only one proposal in response to the published solicitation. The proposal was over budget and did not align with the city's goals for the plan. KB Advisory Group (KB) was hired to provide expert housing market analysis, and Accent Creative Group (ACG) provided communication materials for the ENVISION100 campaign, as well as the design of the final publication. The plan update was completed with guidance from a steering committee comprised of community members from a variety of backgrounds. This group provided feedback and recommendations at key points regarding the public involvement and outreach process. This group was not asked to make recommendations on policy issues, but instead focused on the public input process itself.

## Project Schedule



The planning process took place over multiple phases. In these phases, we **connected** to the community through public involvement and **gathered** data. We **harmonized** data with community conversations as we **imagined** our community in 2039 and beyond, **aspired** to a fresh vision, and chose how to **invest** in a chosen future for Sugar Hill. This process occurred over several months with multiple phases happening simultaneously.

Outlined in the following section, there were multiple opportunities for community members to be involved in the planning process. Planning staff utilized a variety of outlets to promote involvement. These efforts resulted in the city's most successful outreach program to date, with more individual connections and responses than ever before!

The final draft plan was created through analysis of public input and data collected. City staff must submit the plan for regional review following the completion of the second public hearing (held in November 2023). The plan must be accepted by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and adopted by Mayor and City Council no later than February 28th, 2024, for the city to maintain qualified local government status under the state's local planning program administered by the DCA.



# OUTREACH

## 13 Pop-ups across Sugar Hill

Kroger (Marketplace at Sugar Hill)  
Splash Night  
Historic Preservation Speaker Series  
E Center  
Sugar Hill – Buford Library  
Sugar Hill Golf Course  
Sparks in the Park  
White Oak ES Open House  
Sugar Hill ES Open House  
Splash Night  
Sugar Hill Church  
Lanier Cluster Kickoff  
All Pro Dad’s Lanier Cluster

## Yard Signs were placed across the city:

Gold Mine Park, downtown Sugar Hill, the Golf Course, Gary Pirkle Park, Cornerstone Park, the E Center, Splash Pad/Community Plaza, Community Garden and Whitehead Elementary School. Additionally, yard signs were placed strategically at multiple city events including Sparks in the Park and the Melissa Etheridge concert.

## Sweet Life Newsletter

The Sweet Life newsletter is sent out to Sugar Hill gas bill recipients quarterly. The newsletter sent out in August 2023 featured ENVISION100. Over 12,500 households receive this newsletter. This included an option for community members to call the planning department if someone is unable to access the involvement resources online.

## Social Media

The City of Sugar Hill’s Facebook and Instagram were utilized. Over 20 posts promoted involvement in the plan. These include videos made with City Council and Youth Council.

## Postcards

Postcards were posted at 25 businesses and organizations across Sugar Hill. They were handed out at all pop-ups as well as multiple city events. Postcards feature information in English and Spanish.

## City Website

The ENVISION100 comprehensive plan update had its’ own page on the city of Sugar Hill website with information available in English and Spanish.

## E-Blasts

Email was utilized throughout the outreach and public involvement process. E-blasts had the highest success rate of the outreach tactics. Emails were sent through the City of Sugar Hill subscribers list, the E Center subscribers list, and the Sugar Hill monthly Snapshot. Additionally, e-blasts were sent out through multiple religious organizations, Homeowners Associations, and apartment resident lists.

## Gwinnett Daily Post Ads

Targeted ads went through the Gwinnett Daily Post to promote involvement in the plan. These ads were active throughout the month of August.

# INVOLVEMENT

Thank you to all who participated in public involvement!

## ENVISION100 Survey

The ENVISION100 survey was open from May 10, 2023, to August 10, 2023. 825 community members completed the survey!

The survey asked multiple choice, ranked choice, and open-ended questions. One open-ended question had public responses, and respondents were able to vote in support of others' responses.

The survey was virtual, with paper versions available at City Hall, the E Center and Shiv Mandir.

## Open Houses

44 Community members attended an Open House! They highlighted results from public input and data analyzed. Four open houses were held across the city:

August 28 - Samba Steakhouse

August 29 - Community Room (City Hall)

August 30 - Waterfall Room (E Center)

August 31 - Church on the Hill

## Public Hearings

July 17, 2023 - First public hearing was held at City Hall to review the outreach and involvement campaign.

July 19, 2023 - August 2, 2023 - A virtual Input Forum was opened on the city website as a continuation of the public hearing. It featured a recorded version of the presentation with an opportunity to comment on public involvement and outreach efforts.

November 30, 2023 - The second public hearing was held at City Hall to review the draft comprehensive plan. The draft was also available for review online and feedback via email for a total of three weeks.

February 2024 - A third public hearing is planned to provide final updates to the community regarding the submitted plan.

## Community Roundtables

44 people attended a community roundtable.

The roundtables were designed to be small group conversations, with an opportunity to create dialogue on a variety of topics. Each roundtable began with a short presentation followed by a guided activity. Roundtable dates, times, and the quantity of meetings were scheduled according to an interest form that was open for over a week. The information presented at the roundtables was made available on the website after the meetings.

7 roundtables were held in person in the Roundhouse Room.

2 roundtables were held virtually.

## Lanier Cluster Students

September 26th and September 27th, planning staff welcomed over 100 students from all five Lanier cluster schools. Students attended an informational session about local government and planning followed by a tour of downtown. Students participated in a feedback session to provide input for the plan update which included placing stickers on boards and completing a worksheet.



**HONEY,  
GET INVOLVED!**

[cityofsugarhill.com/envision100](http://cityofsugarhill.com/envision100)

¿Hablas español? Visite  
[cityofsugarhill.com/envision100-es](http://cityofsugarhill.com/envision100-es)

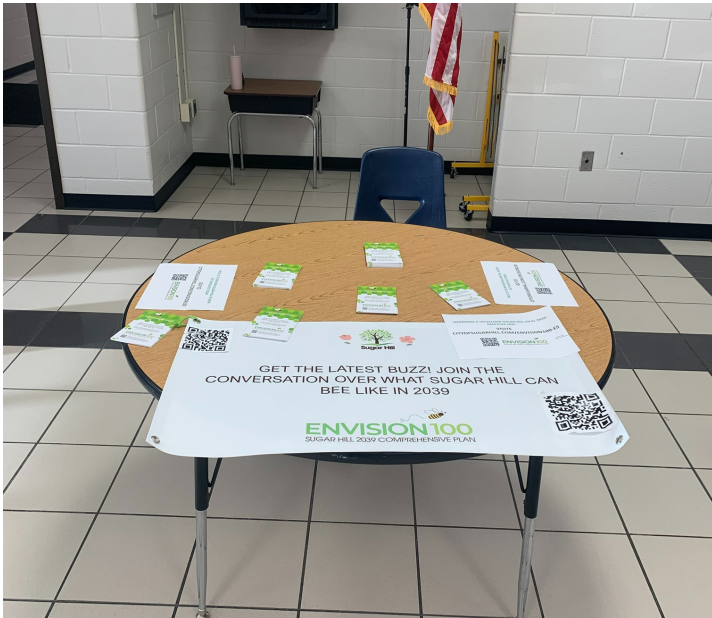
**ENVISION100**  
SUGAR HILL 2039 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



# INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH

A special thanks to our steering committee for their contributions to the involvement and outreach program! Their additions included:

- Paper versions of the survey
- Involvement with local schools:
  - Staff attended two open houses.
  - Information for the open houses was sent home in elementary school Friday folders.
  - Pop-up at All Pro Dads
  - Lanier Cluster Student Event
- Utilization of Soofa signs downtown and at parks.
- Utilization of neighborhood HOA connections.
- Promotional bulletins posted at the American Legion, Kroger, and Publix.



Join us for an **Open House!**

**Monday August 28th**  
From 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Samba Steakhouse

**Tuesday August 29th**  
From 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
The City Hall Community Room

**Wednesday August 30th**  
From 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
The E Center Waterfall Room

**Thursday August 31st**  
From 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Church on the Hill

Parents and guardians, help us to envision the future of Sugar Hill for your family and the entire community! Join us for an Open House! Drop in to give your input as we present the data and public input gathered so far. Connect and exchange your ideas on our community's values and aspirations for the future.

Samba Steakhouse: 5690 Cumming Hwy NE  
City Hall Community Room: 5039 W Broad St NE  
E Center Waterfall Room: 5019 W Broad St NE  
Church on the Hill: 4600 Nelson Brogdon Blvd

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SUGAR HILL 2039 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Sugar Hill**



# VISION

As we cast a vision for Sugar Hill in 2039, we are looking to our most important shared values as a guide to make decisions that reflect who we want to be as a community.

For generations, the people of Sugar Hill have worked hard to build community. Exceptional access to high-quality schools and a variety of greenspace has molded the tightknit neighborhoods we know and love today. Decades of persistent growth have allowed us to experience high levels of convenience and wide-spread prosperity. It has also led to challenges as we all utilize the same roads, parks, schools, shopping, and services. Our vision will seek to address those challenges as we continue to build community for current and future generations.

## **Vision Statement**

Sugar Hill, in 2039, will be a community where multiple generations choose to plant roots. Residents and business leaders work together to create a thriving hometown for living out all of life's stages. From growing up and establishing a career, to raising children and retiring, Sugar Hill will be a place where all can flourish.



# VISION

The following statements were created to supplement the vision statement to better guide our community. These statements were created through public input opportunities outlined beneath each statement.

Survey    Community Roundtable    Open Houses    Lanier Student Event  
Together, we...

## Build community.

“A true sense of community; family-oriented; business-friendly.”

Small-town feel and improved dining/shopping options were reiterated in most roundtable discussions.

“Offer ways for people to continue to meet/serve together/have fun together/work together to keep the small community feel even as we grow. Love THE BOWL and feel like so many ways it can be used as well as concerts to create community.”

“Supporting locally owned businesses”, “gathering for community events”, and “watching out for the safety of my family, friends, and neighbors” as top responses for defining small-town feel.

Students mentioned supporting local businesses, community events, and public involvement.

## Support a healthy market with quality homes suitable for all while protecting the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

“Provide more for seniors in the community that is affordable.”

Most roundtables discussed concerns about housing affordability and the ability to age in place in Sugar Hill.

“The number of apartments and prices associated are outrageous.”

Open house participants preferred market-based solutions to address inventory challenges.

While students showed a personal connection to their homes, many also mentioned concerns about affordability.

# VISION

Survey

Community Roundtable

Open Houses

Lanier Student Event

Together, we...

**Foster innovation in land use, infrastructure, and technology for safe and efficient mobility options.**

“More walkable spaces, clear up traffic congestion.”

Most discussions featured support for connectivity across the community, as well as concerns about automobile congestion and ADA accessibility.

“The traffic to get into Sugar Hill is ridiculous and nothing is being done to improve the roads.”

Just over half of respondents would walk, if possible, for daily trips. The most cited barriers to walking or biking include distance, lack of connected paths, and concern for safety.

The top choice for how students would like to travel to school is by car, van, or truck. There is also a significant number of students who would prefer to walk or bike to school if possible.

**Prioritize public greenspace to provide a variety of opportunities to experience the outdoors together or in solitude.**

“Grow smart, and consider the assets of Sugar Hill, don't follow a template that is not applicable. We have woods, a river, the lake.”

All community roundtables supported greenspace. Different parks amenities were discussed while acknowledging our community's assets.

“More spaces for running, walking, and biking in our beautiful natural setting. Expanding and connecting the Greenway would be wonderful.”

Overall, participants voted for more greenspace. “Improving sidewalks to new and existing greenspace” had the highest number of votes. “Places for gathering and recreation” was the highest rated value on the values activity.

“Provide more green space in downtown Sugar Hill - so families or kids can kick a soccer ball, throw a football or have a picnic.”

“Care for the Earth” was the most popular value. Support for more parks was one of the most frequent responses.

# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

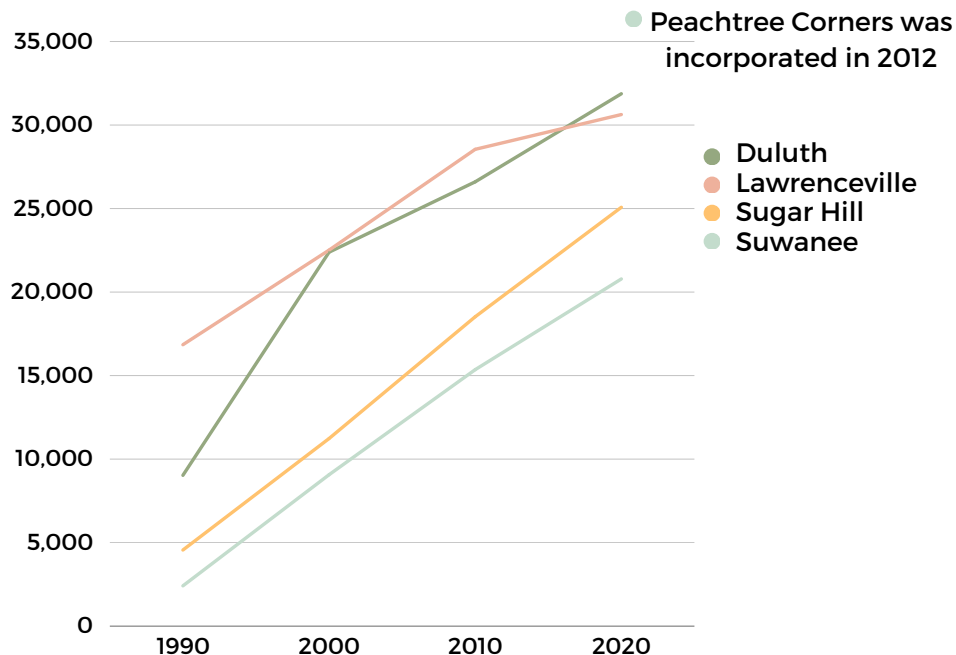
It is vital to know who makes up our community to have a well-rounded comprehensive plan that reflects the diverse families and individuals across Sugar Hill. In order to plan for the future, we must first look at where we are now. What is our community like? Where and how are we changing? There is no one-size-fits-all for community planning, so we look at our specific demographics to help us form a broad understanding of our community as we envision who we will be in 2039.

As our collective needs and preferences grow in variety and complexity, maintaining relevant plans will be important to building and maintaining a strong, vibrant, and resilient community. Sugar Hill has sustained remarkably steady growth for the past three decades. As our community continues to be a desirable place to live, this pattern of growth is anticipated to continue. Thoughtful planning is important to ensure that all residents are able to make a home and life in our community.

## Data Elements

### Consistent Population Growth as Sugar Hill is a Leading City in Gwinnett

Sugar Hill has experienced strong, linear growth over the last 30 years. Since 1990, we have added between 6500-7100 people every decade. Strong growth is mirrored in nearby communities such as Duluth and Suwanee, as well as the rest of Gwinnett County. Sugar Hill has been one of the top four cities by population in the county for the last twenty years.



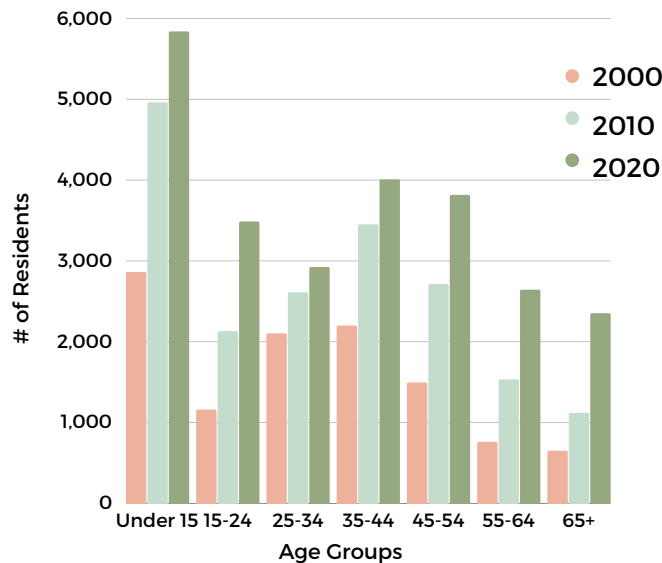
Data Source: US Census: Decennial Census (2020, 2010, 2000, 1990)

# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Data Elements

### Residents of Sugar Hill Trending Older

While our community has predominantly consisted of young families over the last several decades, we have seen significant growth in our older population since 2000. As the earlier waves of families that came to Sugar Hill in the 1990s and 2000s begin to age up, demographics have begun to skew older. Our largest age group is still the under 15 category, though this has declined as a share of the overall community in recent years.

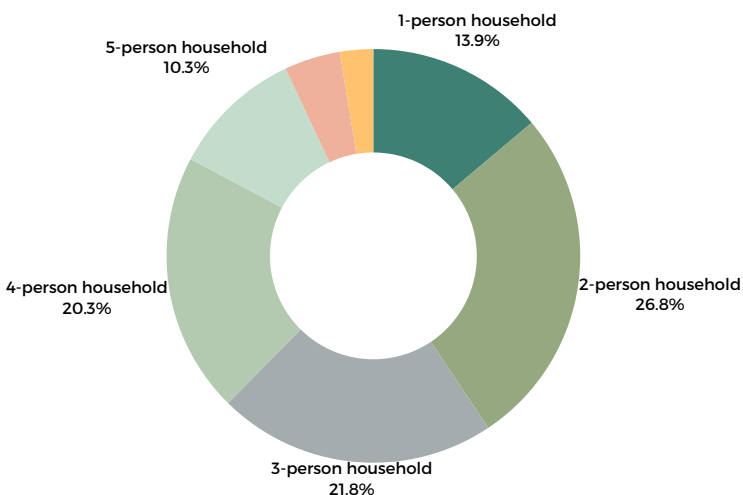


Data Source: US Census: Decennial Census (2020, 2010, 2000)

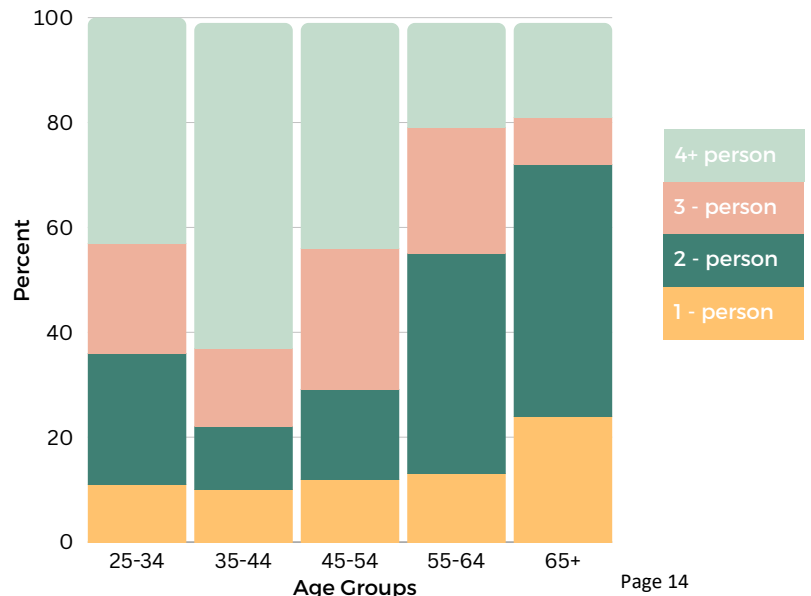
### Smaller Households for Older Community Members

While Sugar Hill continues to be home for many families, with the majority of households being three people or larger, a significant share of the community now has a smaller household. The majority of Sugar Hill residents over 55 years old live in a 1- or 2-person household.

#### Household Size



#### Household Size by Age



Data Source: US Census: US Census: Decennial Census (2020), Census PUMS Data (2021 5-year estimates)



# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Data Elements

### Racial Makeup

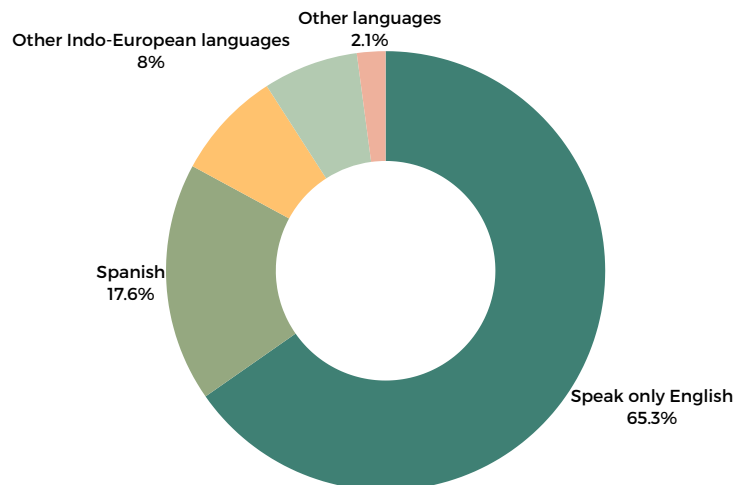
Within the last 20 years, our community has grown more diverse in many ways. While our community is still predominantly white, our community is home to more Black, Asian, and multiracial people. These groups have grown in share of the total population since 2010.



Data Source: US Census: Decennial Census (2020, 2010)

### Languages Spoken at Home

While the majority of our population speaks English, a significant minority speaks Spanish or another language as their primary.



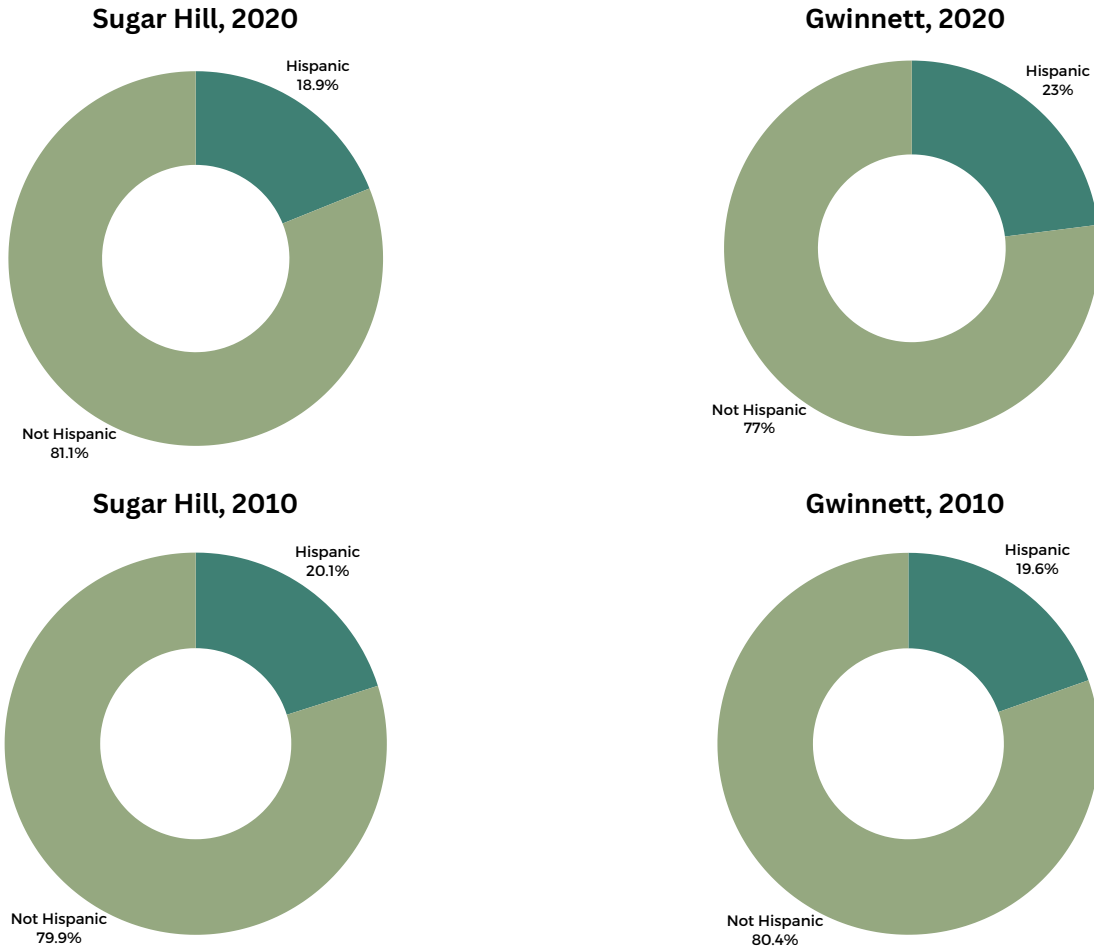
Data Source: US Census: Decennial Census (2020)

# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Data Elements

### Ethnic Makeup

Our distribution of Hispanic and non-Hispanic communities within our city is very similar to the overall makeup of the county.



Data Source: US Census: Decennial Census (2020, 2010)

### Overall High Post-Secondary Education Attainment

Just over 40% of residents have completed a four-year degree or higher.

89.4%

High school graduate or higher, ages 25+

40.9%

Bachelor's degree or higher, ages 25+

Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates (2021)

# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Data Elements

### Our Community Welcomes More Business

A 2023 ESRI Business Analyst report indicates that just over 800 businesses and 7,000 employees operate within Sugar Hill. This is a notable increase since 2019, which indicated 709 businesses and 5,700 employees, reinforcing that Sugar Hill is not only a desirable place to live, but to work and own a business as well. Unemployment rates are in line with the county's nearly historic lows of approximately 3%.

**819**  
Businesses

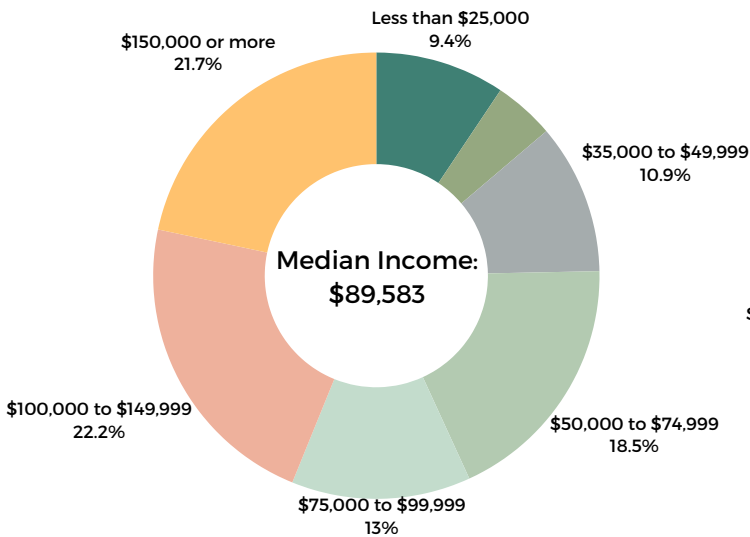
**7,073**  
Employees

Data Source: ESRI Business Analyst; 2019, 2023

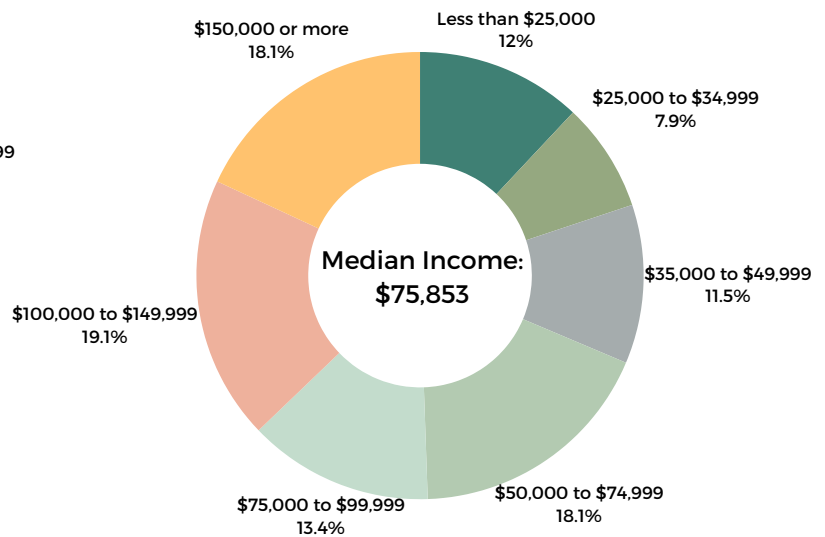
### Household Income

Our median household income is approximately \$15,000 higher than the county average, with over 40% of households earning over \$100k per year. However, almost 25% of our households are earning less than \$50k per year.

Sugar Hill 2021



Gwinnett 2021



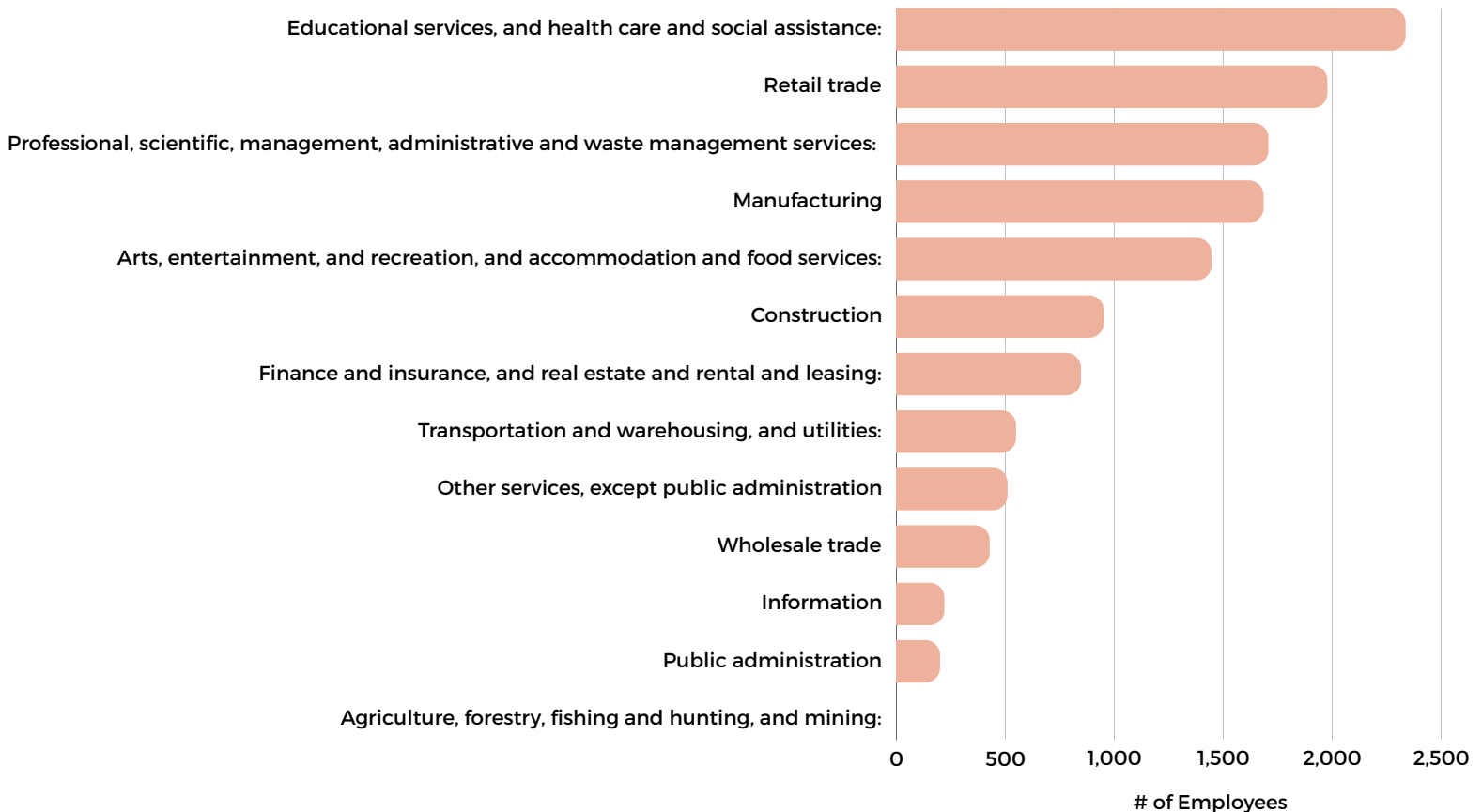
Data Source: US Census American Community Survey (2021)

# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Data Elements

### Employment Industries

Residents within our city are employed in a variety of fields, though many commute outside of city limits for work. Some of the largest categories include educational and health services, retail, professional services, and manufacturing, reinforced by the major industrial and retail centers located within just a few miles of our city. This describes a workforce that is employed at many levels, from skilled hourly workers to high-salaried professionals, adding to the diverse nature of our community.



Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

# HOUSING

For many of us, our home is one of the most important places where we spend our time, creating a highly personal connection to the built environment around us. Ideally, this is a place where we play, rest, and spend time with loved ones. In order to ensure a healthy housing market that enables our community to thrive in 2039 and beyond, we must also consider the influence of market forces and demographic shifts.

Sugar Hill's market has long been attractive to families and newer households looking to purchase a home. This is reflected in the years of significant growth which started in the late 1980s until new home production virtually halted during the 2008 financial crisis. As the economy recovered and more people were looking to buy a home, home builders slowly began producing more units. Demand continued to grow while it remained difficult to finance and build new homes, setting the stage for the supply shortage we are experiencing today.

The decade of relatively low construction of new units, plus other financial factors, has increased pressure in the housing market. Over the last five years, there has been an increase in new construction with single-family attached and multi-family units making up much of the new supply. This has led to substantial growth in Sugar Hill's housing stock following the decade-long lull in new construction. The supply of for-rent and for-sale housing is expected to increase through 2025 with several projects currently under construction.

Demand continues to outrun supply. This has driven up rental rates and for-sale prices making access to housing generally more difficult. Market-driven housing prices have outpaced average wages from the predominant employment backgrounds found in Sugar Hill, resulting in fewer housing options attainable for our local workforce. Overall cost burden is high for both homeowners and renters in our community. More than half of renters and a quarter of homeowners spend more than 30% of their household income on housing. Rentership has increased significantly across middle- and upper-income households at all ages while homeownership has become concentrated among older and wealthier households.

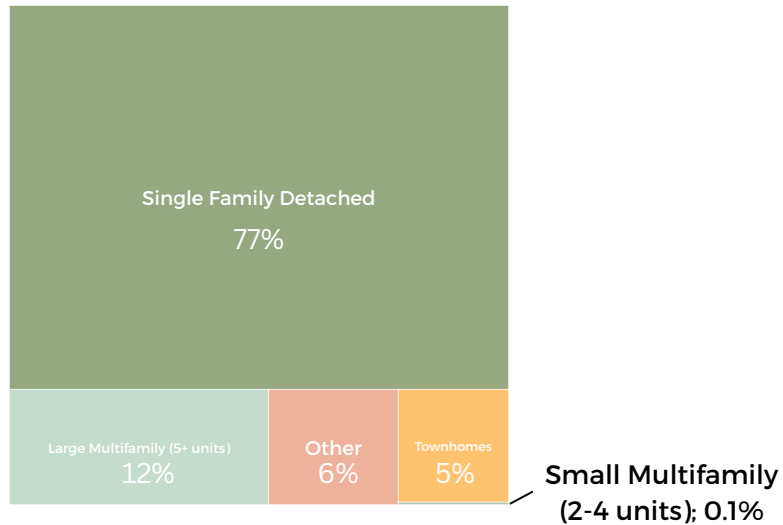
Future housing growth may be influenced and challenged by land use policies, land scarcity, and external market factors in the years to come. Sugar Hill continues to be an attractive place to live with good schools and greenspace, high-quality services, and a strong sense of community. As we look to 2039, we seek to ensure that there is housing stock to accommodate the different needs and preferences of our community.

# HOUSING

## Data Elements

### Single Family Detached Homes Dominate Inventory

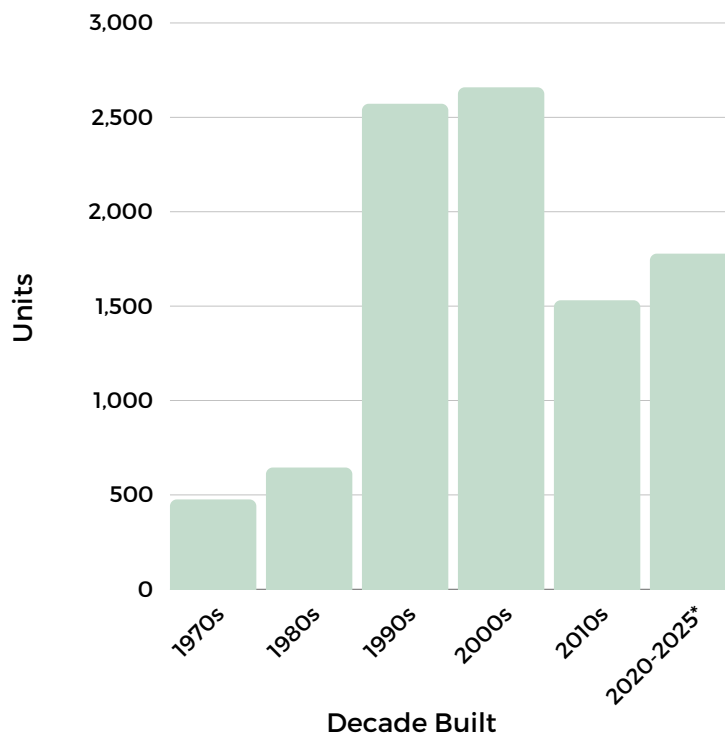
Single family detached homes make up the vast majority of housing within the city, typically with at least three bedrooms. Even when adjusted to include the new apartments and attached homes being built, this category remains a large majority.



Data Source: ACS 2021, CoStar, Claritas, Gwinnett County GIS

### Housing Age

Sugar Hill experienced significant growth during the 1990s and 2000s. Over half of all housing in the city was built during those two decades. This boom in housing development was halted through the 2008 recession and remained slow throughout the 2010s.



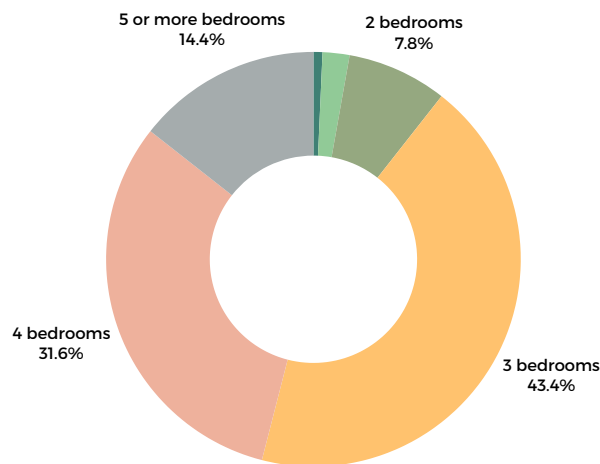
Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

# HOUSING

## Data Elements

### Gap Between Home Size and Household Size

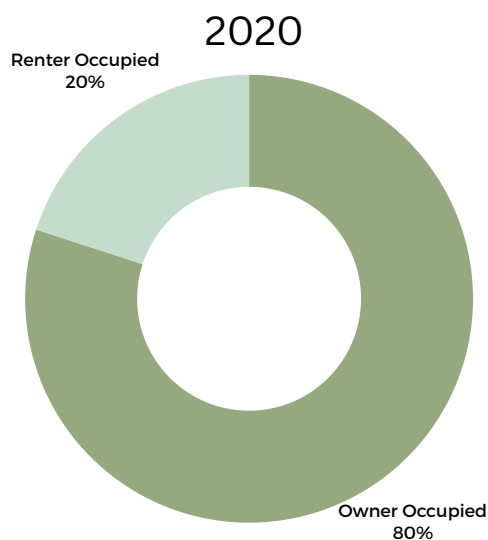
Almost 90% of all housing units in Sugar Hill have three or more bedrooms. At the same time, approximately 40% of all households in Sugar Hill are made up of one or two people creating an imbalance in our current housing stock and housing needs.



Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

### High Homeownership

Sugar Hill experiences a remarkably high rate of homeownership.



Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

# HOUSING

## Data Elements

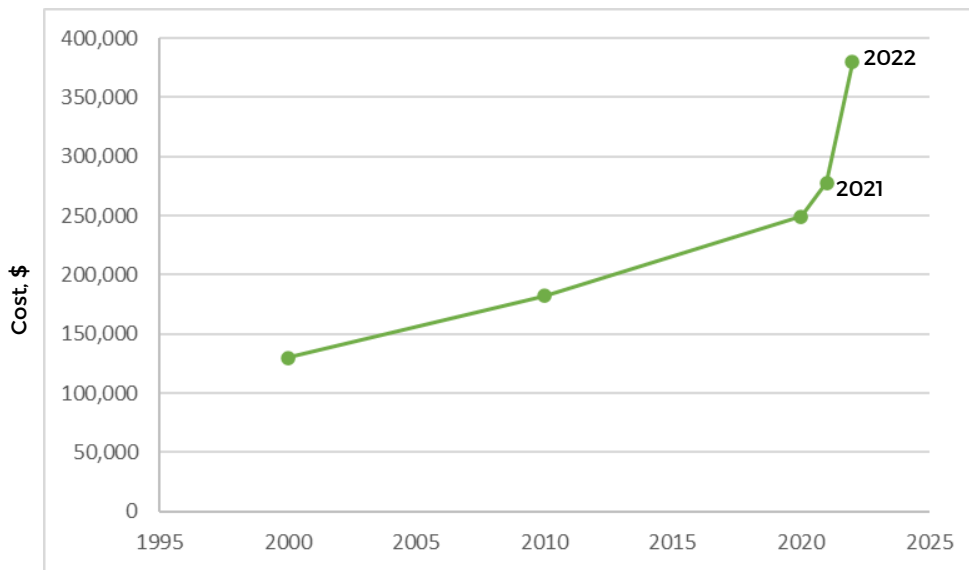
### Home Values Soar

Historically, Sugar Hill has enjoyed substantial value when it comes to housing. In the year 2000, our median home value was \$130,000. Even after experiencing a major recession, median home values rose to \$182,000 by 2010 and to \$249,300 by 2020 at an average annual growth rate of 3%-4%.

Between 2020 and 2021, we saw shocking increases in new construction prices. The average purchase price for a single-family detached home jumped by 23% and over 46% for single-family attached.

In 2022, overall home values followed the trend, soaring by over 36% over the previous year to \$379,900.

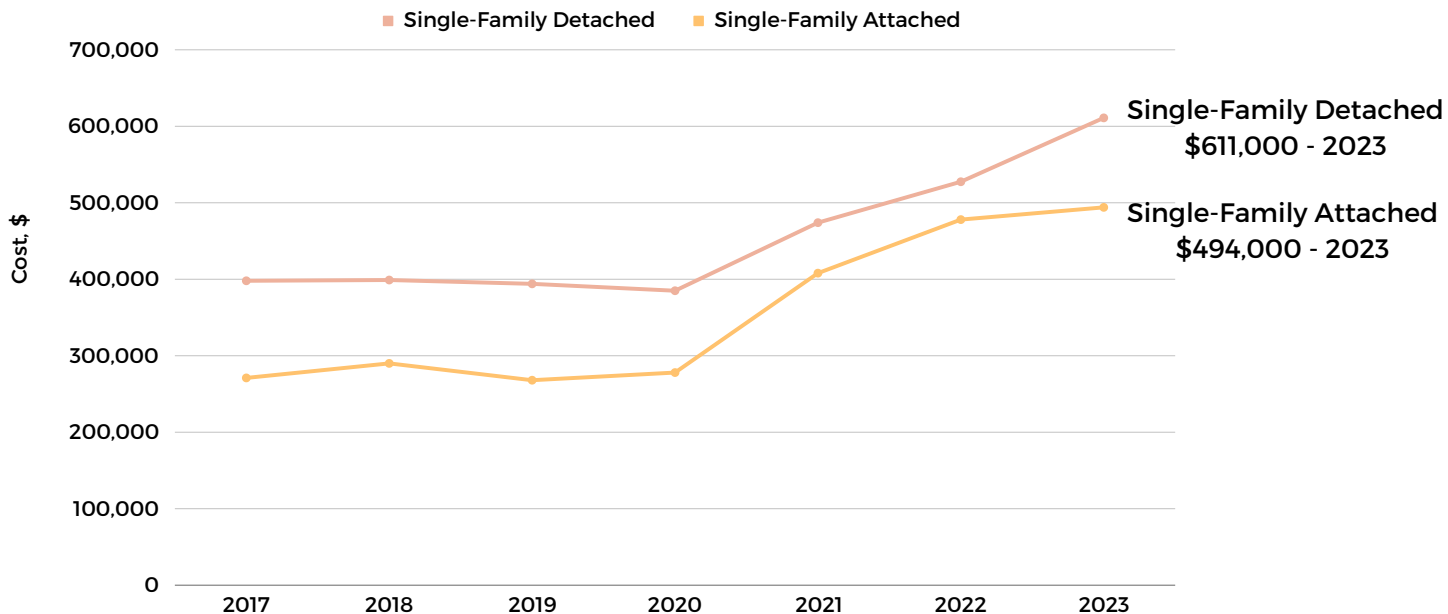
**Median Home Values**



\*This chart uses the median home values from 2000, 2010, 2020, 2021, and 2022. It does not show the recession's impact on home values.

Data Source: 2000 Decennial Census, ACS 2010, 2020, 2021 5 Year Est, ACS 2022 1 Year Est

**New Construction Prices**



Data Source: Smart RE

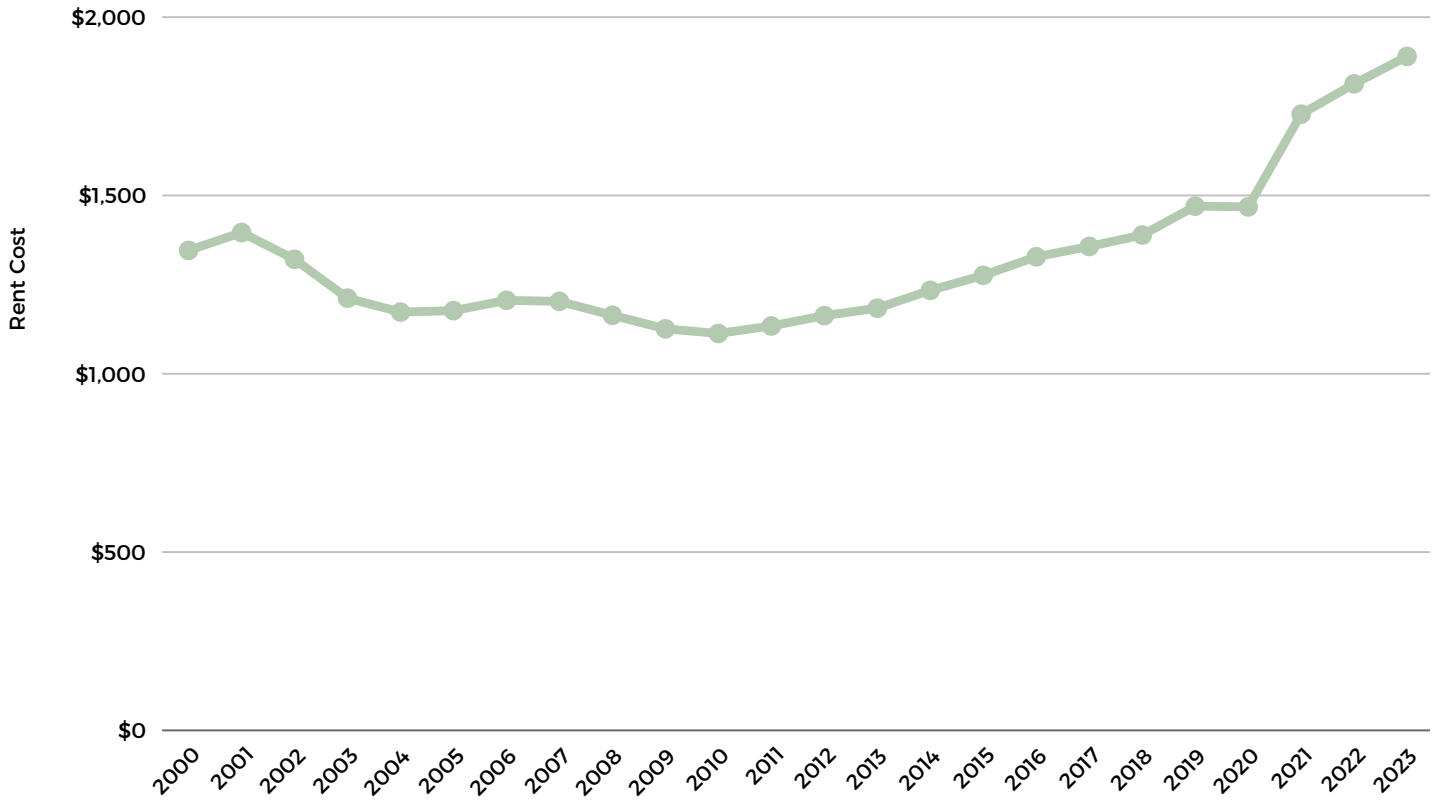


# HOUSING

## Data Elements

### Rents Keep Climbing

Multifamily rents have been relatively high and have shown consistent growth for more than a decade. Rents followed a similar pattern to home values ascending by 18% between 2020 and 2021.



Data Source: CoStar

### Institutional Investors Small Share

It is estimated that nearly 3% of all detached and attached homes within the city are owned by institutional investors. Moderately priced homes built in the 1990s and 2000s have been targeted to purchase, remodel, and then rent out. There are relatively few units like this in our community, but they tend to be clustered in specific neighborhoods.

**3%**  
of residential properties  
are owned by  
institutional investors.

Data Source: City of Sugar Hill

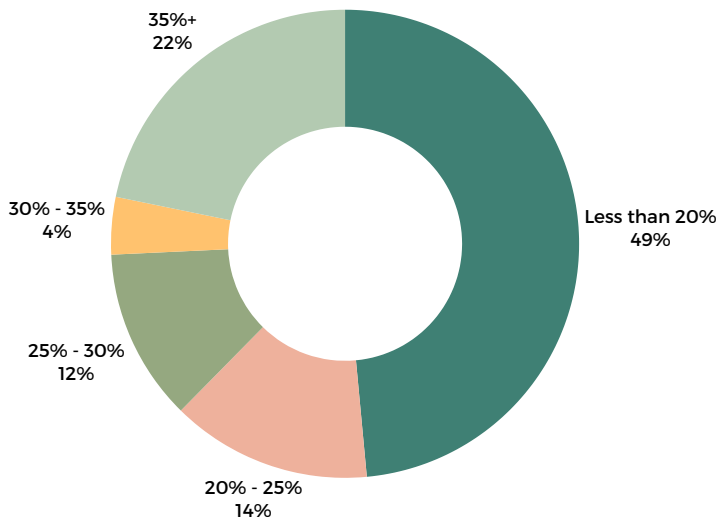
# HOUSING

## Data Elements

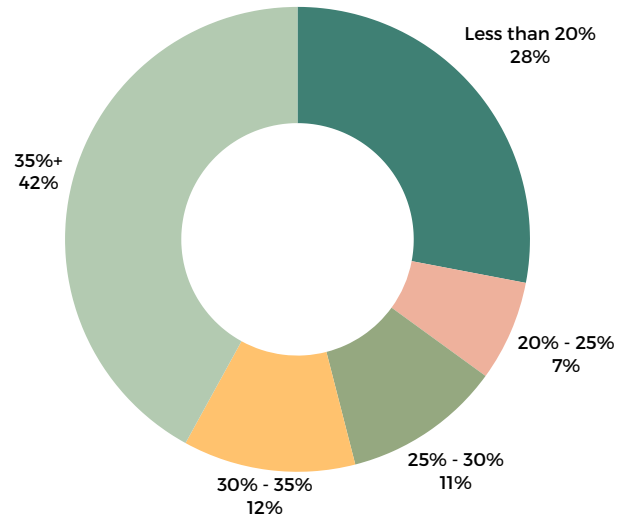
### Cost Burden

A cost burdened household is one that spends more than 30% of its gross income on housing, while a severely cost burdened household spends more than 50%. Just over half of all renters are cost burdened or severely cost burdened, while one out of every four homeowners in Sugar Hill are cost burdened. Rental households typically face a greater cost burden due to a variety of factors, with a significant factor being that renters are subject to yearly increases in rent in a volatile market. Meanwhile mortgage holders experience more stability with payment increases coming from property taxes.

Owner's Housing Costs as a % of Household Income, 2021



Renter's Housing Costs as a % of Household Income, 2021



Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

# HOUSING

## Conversations

There were two main recurring themes across public involvement activities for housing: **aging in place** and **affordability**.

### Aging in Place

#### Survey

“Ability to age in place” was a top choice when asked what is most significant about housing. Three quarters of respondents chose this option.

#### Open Houses

Aging in place was a focus of the open house activities. Respondents were asked about housing options for youth just starting out and for their personal preferences on aging in place. Most respondents would like to live on their own as long as possible. The second most popular response was a preference for living close to daily needs and activities.

#### Roundtables

Aging in place was a conversation topic in most roundtable discussions. When discussing aging in place, participants mentioned concerns over affordability of options for senior oriented housing, a lack of options for age restricted housing, multigenerational living, and community wide accessibility concerns.



### Affordability

#### Survey

“Too high housing costs” was the top choice for what participants find most significant in regard to housing. Three quarters of respondents chose this option. Affordability was referenced throughout the responses to open ended questions. Comments included perceptions that high housing costs stem from luxury apartments, institutional investors, and property taxes.

#### Open Houses

Most respondents supported encouraging market-based solutions to address inventory issues.

#### Roundtables

Concern over affordability was discussed in most roundtables. Some participants supported the city having a role in mitigating affordability concerns while some prefer that the city remain outside of the housing market. Concerns regarding affordability were focused on affordability for our aging community as well as for young people.

#### Lanier Cluster Students

Some participants listed concerns over housing affordability, and they supported public initiatives to encourage affordability.

# HOUSING

## Needs

- Identify housing characteristics that aging seniors, young singles and couples, young families, and those with disabilities might be seeking.
- Determine where gaps exist in the supply which might hinder our ability to age in place.
- Document what is preventing adequate supply of homes for those at or below the median income.
- Identify areas vulnerable to disinvestment.

## Opportunities

- Demonstrate potential for a variety of single-family housing typologies in the right places.
- Improve connections among community members from all areas.
- Guide infill housing while preserving character of existing neighborhoods.

# MOBILITY

Since the mid-1980s, people have been moving to Sugar Hill and surrounding communities for the allure of a suburban lifestyle. Sugar Hill has long been an attractive place to raise a family with great schools, parks, and a positive community feel. This suburban lifestyle has been made possible due to wide access to automobiles. Most of us drive to work, drive children to school and activities, and drive for daily errands. Many of us leave for work and school at the same time and travel using the same roads. Neighboring communities also utilize the same roads at the same times for their daily commutes. This car-centric lifestyle, combined with thousands of homes built in close proximity, has led to most of our community experiencing traffic in daily life.

With road jurisdiction spanning from local to federal, traffic mitigation is a complex problem to solve. Many who experience daily traffic, specifically on Highway 20, advocate for road widening. Instead of four lanes across, Highway 20 was designed for expansion toward the center and could be six lanes across. While this seems like an obvious solution to congested roads and may offer short term relief, in the long-term adding capacity encourages more vehicles and eventually adds to congestion. The expansion of Highway 20 in 2017 almost immediately unlocked latent demand adding over 10,000 more daily trips within 2 years. At the same time, streets which have not been widened, such as Suwanee Dam Road, have seen consistent volume in trips per day.

For many of us, we are unable to live our lives without our vehicles. This poses a unique difficulty for those who cannot drive or do not have access to a vehicle. For the majority of our community, walking, biking, and transit are currently not practical to satisfy daily needs. However, there are tools which could improve our access to non-automobile alternatives. Thoughtful land use decisions, such as clustering development in nodes, can help to improve the practicality of walking and micromobility while safety improvements, connecting paths and sidewalks, and regular maintenance of facilities can encourage more pedestrian and micromobility travel. Micromobility includes bikes, e-bikes, scooters, and other small, wheeled devices.

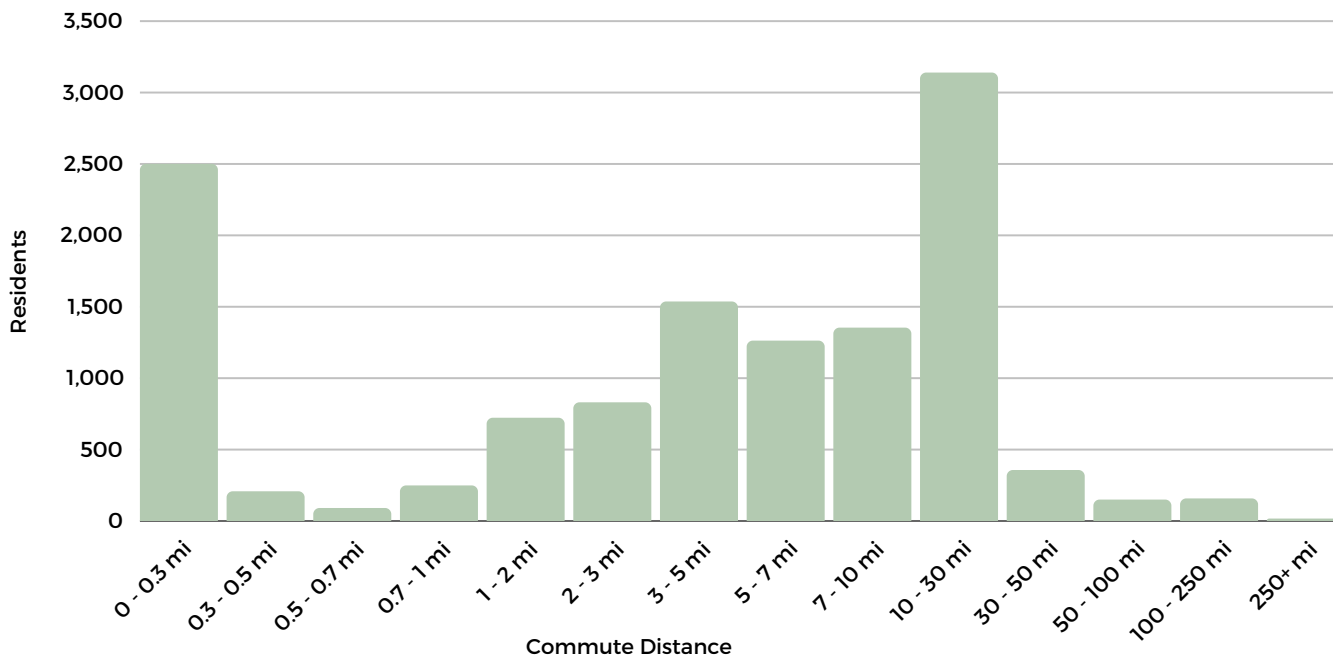
We all experience automobile congestion, and ameliorating this issue will require multi-faceted solutions. As we look to 2039, how we are able to move about is one of the most important topics that will greatly influence our daily lives. In this section we will look at the current state of mobility in Sugar Hill and prioritize how we move forward.

# MOBILITY

## Data Elements

### We Drive A Lot!

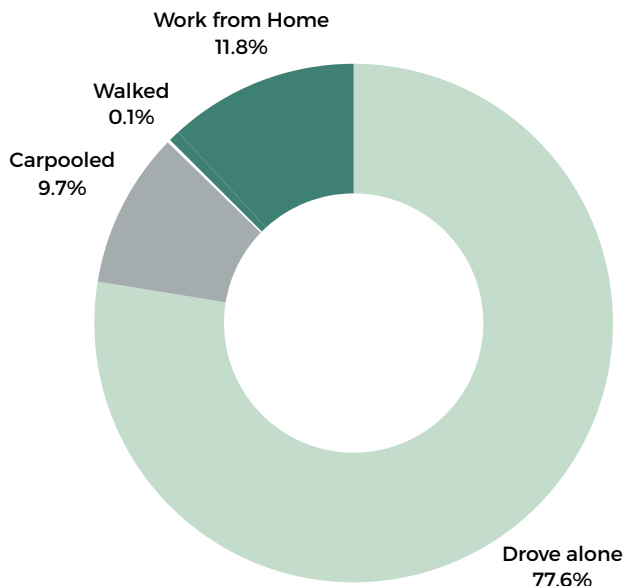
Many of us commute daily. With almost half of Sugar Hill commuting over five miles per day, and an average commute time of 32.6 minutes (2021), much of our community spends a lot of time in their vehicles.



Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021; Placer.ai Data

### Modes of Transportation

Over three quarters of our community drive alone to work.



Data Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

# MOBILITY

## Conversations

### **Congestion**

#### Survey

The majority of survey respondents drive to work and are overall not currently happy with their commute. By far the top response for significance to respondents regarding transportation is automobile congestion. Some respondents attributed congestion to higher density developments as well as some being concerned that transportation infrastructure is becoming more overcrowded.

#### Roundtables

Traffic concerns were mentioned in most of the community roundtables. The perception that increased traffic was a result of multifamily developments was mentioned by some attendees.

### **Pedestrians**

#### Survey

Pedestrian infrastructure was the second most important topic regarding transportation for respondents, although ranked much lower than traffic concerns. Support for connected sidewalks was reiterated as well as excitement for the completed greenway.

#### Roundtables

Connection of sidewalks was recurring amongst some roundtables. Participants stated enjoyment and willingness to walk when safe and able.

#### Open Houses

Most participants would walk or would consider walking for daily activities if possible. Distance, lack of connected paths, and concern for safety were the most prominent hinderances to walking (or biking) for daily activities.

#### Lanier Cluster Students

Only 3 students responded that they currently walk or bike to school compared to 26 who said they would like to walk or bike to school.

# MOBILITY

## Conversations

### **Connectivity**

Connectivity was generally supported by survey respondents and roundtable participants. The current lack of connectivity was identified as a barrier to walking.

### **Micromobility**

Micromobility includes transportation with a bike, scooter, or other small, wheeled device. While not the top priority from the survey or roundtables, micromobility generally had support. The current barriers largely include safety concerns.

### **Transit Access**

Transit access harbors mixed feelings from community members. Those in favor of transit generally preferred microtransit recognizing the potential positive impact on traffic congestion and the benefit for community members who do not drive. Some community members oppose any transit options, reasoning that those who choose to live in the suburbs willingly depend on a car for their daily needs.

## Needs

- Identify intersections and streets where additional traffic calming measures are necessary.
- Improve pedestrian and bike connectivity between activity areas, parks, schools, and neighborhoods.
- Safe infrastructure for walking and micromobility.
- Pedestrian crossings along Highway 20 between Sycamore Road and Suwanee Dam Road.

## Opportunities

- Complete the greenway including pedestrian bridges over Highway 20.
- More continuous, convenient, safe, and interesting pedestrian and micromobility facilities in key development nodes and corridors.
- More pedestrian- and micromobility-friendly commercial nodes and activity centers.
- Anticipate evolving transportation technologies (EVTOL, autonomous vehicles, ride-share, etc.).

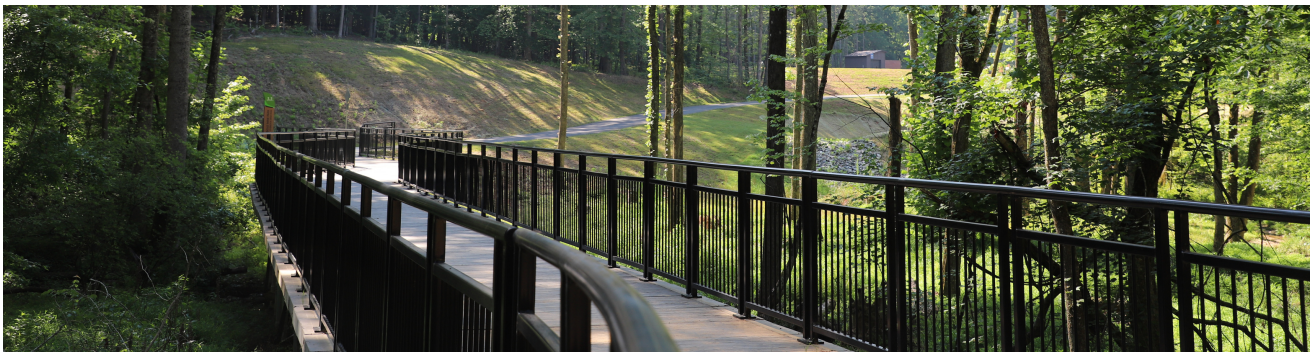


# GREENSPACE

Located close to Lake Lanier, the Chattahoochee River, and hundreds of acres of parks within a short drive, our community has extraordinary options to gather with friends, exercise, and get outdoors. Our greenspace is a shared resource as we benefit from greenspace stewarded by our city, neighboring cities, Gwinnett County, and the National Parks Service. Within a 15-minute service area, hundreds of acres of passive and active greenspace can be accessed by our residents, from sports fields and public plazas to walking trails and unpaved hiking areas.

Greenspace provides numerous benefits to our community. It provides a place for neighbors to come together at a little league game or gather together for a picnic. Our greenspace makes a healthy and active lifestyle more accessible. From playgrounds to paved trails, community members are able to move and play in a form that best suits their needs. Greenspace can be a relaxing and peaceful place to get away from the built environment. It is also home to many plants and animals that are necessary to balance the ecosystems around us. Abundant greenspace is an important investment in our health and wellbeing. In addition to its intrinsic value, greenspace increases property values and has positive effects on local economies.

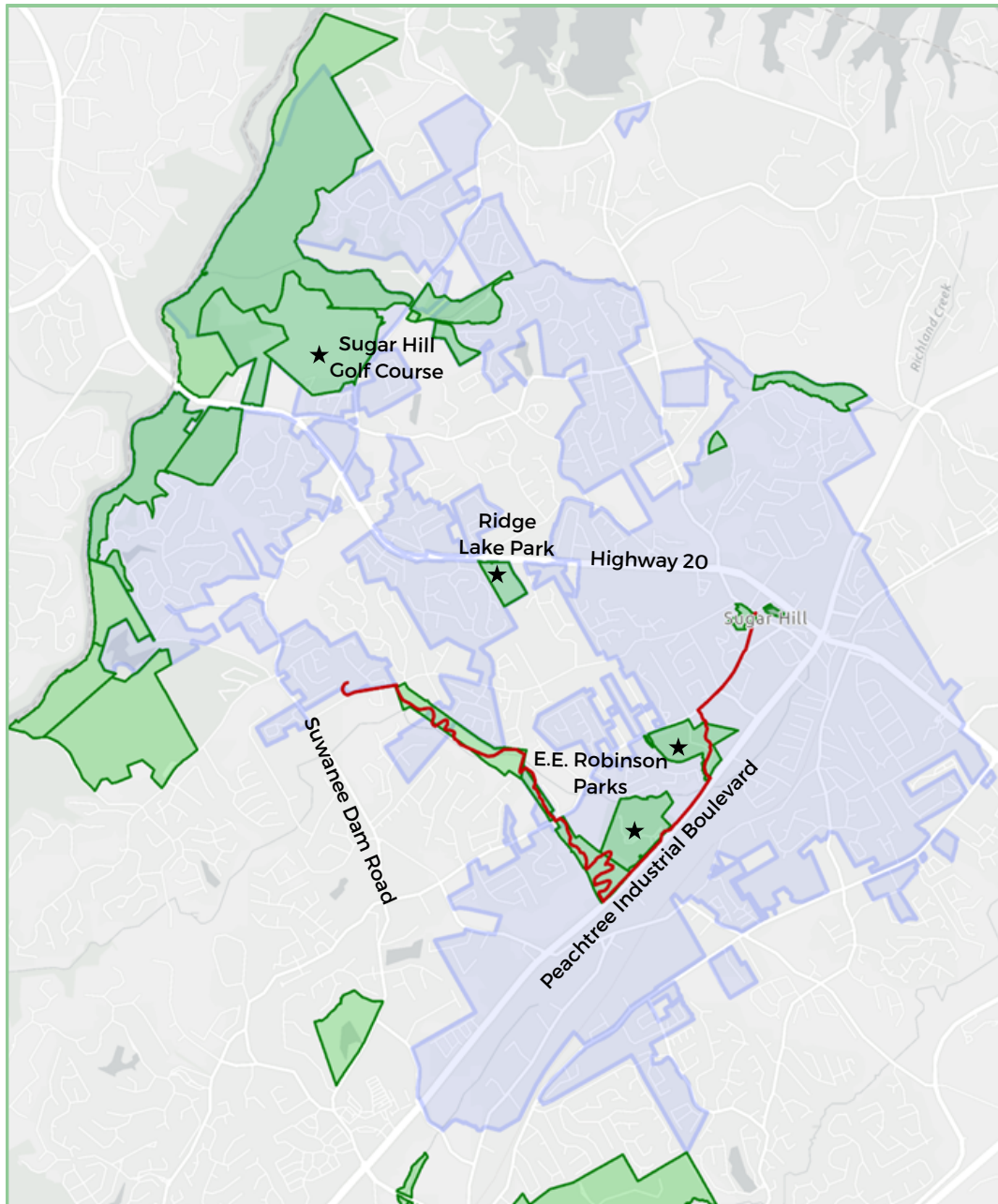
While greenspace is one of our most popular assets, there are steps that we can take in order to improve our greenspace and make it more accessible. Our trail and walkway network, while fairly robust, is a work in progress and currently lacks continuity. Hundreds of acres of land along the Chattahoochee River remain untapped for new unpaved trails and hiking activities. Many of our residents are close to parks; however, they need to use cars to safely and quickly get to them. Balancing protected greenspace with new development will become increasingly important as we run out of readily available land. By improving connections to existing assets and activating new ones, we can work to ensure that all of our residents live within a walkable or bikeable distance to a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities. Throughout this section, we will highlight our current resources and outline what we will be striving for as we look to 2039.



# GREENSPACE

## Data Elements

The map below shows Sugar Hill and surrounding areas in proximity to greenspace. Sugar Hill city limits are marked in blue. Parks, recreation, and greenspace are marked in green. The red line represents the completed portion of the greenway.



1,817 of acres of parks,  
recreation, and greenspace

# GREENSPACE

## Conversations

### **Passive Recreation**

Across all public input activities, support for passive recreation, such as trails and open fields, was evident.

#### Open Houses

Community members are supportive of passive recreation uses such as walking or jogging. The two most supported topics at the open houses in regard to greenspace were improving sidewalks to new and existing greenspace and enhancing usability of greenspace.

### **Proud of Greenspace**

A resounding theme from public input is the overall support for greenspace in our community.

#### Open Houses

Overall, participants supported more greenspace. From improving usability of existing greenspace to acquisition of new greenspace, participants largely advocate for more greenspace and champion our parks and recreation.

#### Survey

Participants reiterated that passive recreation is important. For significance of greenspace, 'trees and wildlife' was the most popular answer followed by paved paths.

#### Roundtables

Greenspace was recurring throughout all community roundtables. Most roundtables discussed support for the greenway and mentioned support for paved and unpaved paths.

#### Survey

The most loved aspect of daily life in Sugar Hill is access to parks and greenspace. While parks and greenspace are important to community members, there is support to continue to grow and improve our assets. Our community enjoys going outside on weekends and sharing our greenspace with friends and family visiting.

#### Roundtables

All nine roundtables discussed support for our parks and recreation, highlighting it as one of our greatest assets. Greenspace assets, such as our parks, the Chattahoochee, and Lake Lanier, were often referenced when participants shared their favorite parts of Sugar Hill.

# GREENSPACE

## Needs

- Prioritize greenspace through strategic land acquisition.
- Evaluate opportunities for conservation.
- Invest in passive recreation amenities, such as paved and unpaved trails, as well as other flexible outdoor gathering areas.
- Review policies to encourage more ecologically effective landscaping practices.

## Opportunities

- Complete the Greenway Trail throughout the community.
- Develop a strategy to activate existing greenspace holdings.
- Consider upgrading amenities at existing parks to enhance access and user experience.
- Facilitate flexible programming for gathering, community building, and events.

# BROADBAND ACCESS

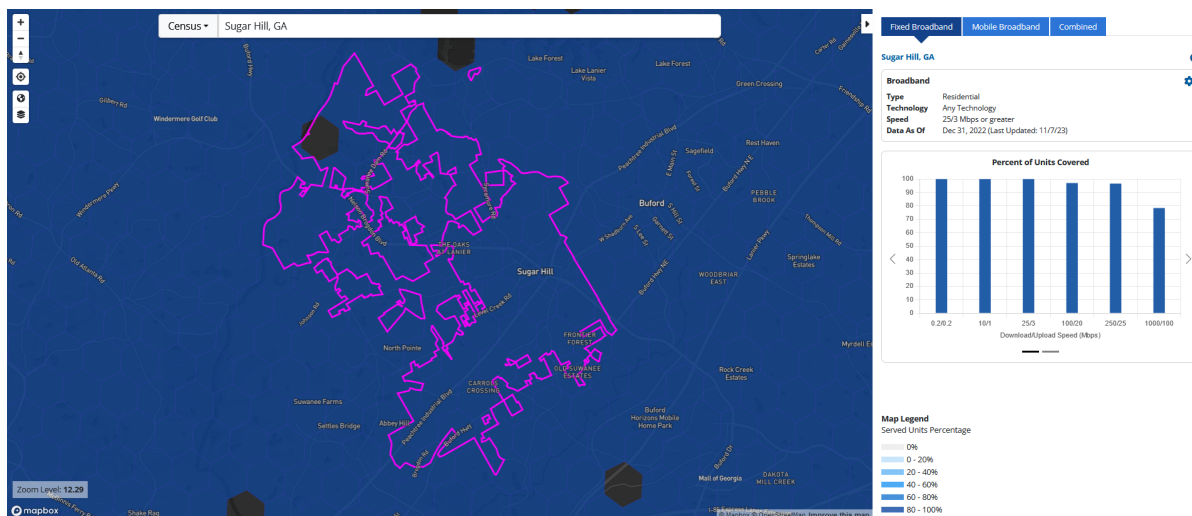
Senate Bill 402, known as the ACE Act (Achieving Connectivity Everywhere), directs local communities to address broadband availability in local comprehensive plans. The local government must make an objective determination of whether it is served by broadband service. Appropriate follow-up steps must be identified based on the community's determination of whether it is served by broadband.

As used in this section: "Broadband services" means a wired or wireless terrestrial service that consists of the capability to transmit at a rate of not less than 25 megabits per second in the downstream direction and at least 3 megabits per second in the upstream direction to end users and in combination with such service provides:

- Access to the Internet; or
- Computer processing, information storage, or protocol conversion

"Broadband services provider" means any provider of broadband services or a public utility or any other person or entity that builds or owns a broadband network project. Metro Atlanta, Gwinnett County, and the City of Sugar Hill, generally enjoy widespread access to broadband technology from at least one or two service providers. As the market for broadband technology continues to expand and improve throughout the region and the State, Sugar Hill seems positioned to ensure that access to the technology will be available in their market.

The following map identifies broadband service in the City of Sugar Hill:



Map from Federal Communications Commission

## FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use element of our comprehensive plan will guide the future character of the city as we make decisions about land use policies. This information helps us to understand where housing is, where communities gather for dining and events, and where our community can experience greenspace. An important focus of this plan update is to ensure that the future land use map best reflects the needs and preferences of our community as we look to 2039. It uses a big picture approach towards new development, suggesting general areas where uses should be located as opposed to creating a specific parcel by parcel requirement.

The majority of Sugar Hill has already been developed. Our neighborhoods will remain neighborhoods; our commercial areas will remain commercial areas. This is reflected in our updated future land use map. While there are some shifts in designations to better accommodate our vision for Sugar Hill, the map largely is unchanged from the previous plan. The former “Established Neighborhoods” and “Maturing Neighborhoods” have been combined to “Neighborhoods”. The former “Industrial” category has been renamed to “Employment Areas” area because it is more accurately characterized by a variety of existing office, warehouse, assembly, and light manufacturing uses. The Chattahoochee River District has been renamed to “Riverlands” to better align with the current planning initiative for the river corridor. “Downtown” was renamed “Town Center” for a clearer differentiation between the Central Business Overlay District (CBD) which is our core downtown area and the larger Town Center Overlay District (TCO). The TCO was not intended to develop with the same intensity as the CBD. The “Transition District” has been removed in recognition of the actual character of the underlying properties as “Employment”, “Neighborhoods”, or “Town Center”. Minor adjustments have also been made to reflect developments that have occurred in recent years, such as Ridge Lake Park. Aside from these organizational adjustments, the future land use map continues to have the same land use designations as previous plans.



## FUTURE LAND USE

As we plan for 2039, we will balance the preservation of what is already here with innovation in land use as developable properties become increasingly scarce. We recognize that most of the city is largely developed, and the overall character of the city has already been established. There are, however, significant tracts in the Town Center and Riverlands areas that still require thoughtful planning.

This framework, of balancing preservation and smart development, has guided recent development decisions. While there has been little development activity in the Riverlands area, the town center has experienced an increase in mixed use and multifamily developments in the core downtown neighborhood through public and private investment.

The properties that make up the core downtown neighborhood were zoned for uses other than single family residential prior to the creation of the central business district. In fact, every mixed use and multifamily development starting with the E Center and Eagle Theater in 2016, then the Local and Cadence in 2019, Holbrook assisted living in 2020, Solis in 2022, Novare and the Refinery in 2023 was previously zoned, at least partially, for industrial, light manufacturing, general business, highway service business, office institutional, or residential multifamily. These tracts were always going to be developed for a range of uses more intense than single family residential and many were already previously developed. Some of the previous uses include: a closed county school, car wash, body shop, and automobile salvage yard. Now these properties include a gym, community theater, art gallery, history museum, a variety of indoor and outdoor gathering spaces, portions of the Sugar Hill Greenway, public art, shops, restaurants, public and private structured parking, and a variety of Class A multifamily residential developments.

Formerly known as the Chattahoochee River District, the Riverlands are comprised of city owned land near the Chattahoochee River. Future use and stewardship of this area will focus on activating existing greenspace, as well as creation of commercial uses where applicable, while preserving the ecological and cultural integrity of these lands. The Development Authority, doing business as the Riverlands Authority, will champion and facilitate careful community planning for the Riverlands.

## FUTURE LAND USE

Sugar Hill is connected by several major transportation corridors which include a variety of commercial, office, warehouse, and light manufacturing uses. Highway 20, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, and Buford Highway tie together our neighborhoods and community resources. Many of us use these major routes for daily trips including work, school, and errands, and we experience daily automobile congestion during peak travel hours. Development along these corridors must be strategic to bring improved amenities to the community while not exacerbating congestion. Several previous planning initiatives have focused on emphasizing nodes of development in key locations within these corridors in an effort to reduce distances between neighborhoods and neighborhood shopping and other amenities.

As we plan for land use throughout the community, filling in gaps may be important as we look to fulfill our shared vision for the future. Because of the shape of Sugar Hill's city limits, the Sugar Hill community reaches beyond its' jurisdictional boundary. With more than 50,000 people living in the Greater Sugar Hill area, it is important to consider the whole community in our planning efforts. As we organize strategies to best utilize our land, this may include filling in gaps between our formal boundaries through annexation. Strategic annexation enables more cohesive planning initiatives.

This section articulates the physical qualities and recommended land use policies for each character area to guide development toward a well-organized vision for Sugar Hill in 2039.





# FUTURE LAND USE

## Conversations

Future land use was highlighted across public input activities. As we discuss greenspace, housing, and mobility, we discuss how we distribute our land across these uses, as well as others.

### More Dining Options

Survey and roundtable participants reiterated a need for more dining options, as well as more retail options. “Dining options” was the top choice for how Sugar Hill can be better, and this sentiment was reflected across all open-ended questions. Most roundtables discussed support for having more variety and quantity of dining and retail options

### Support for Greenspace

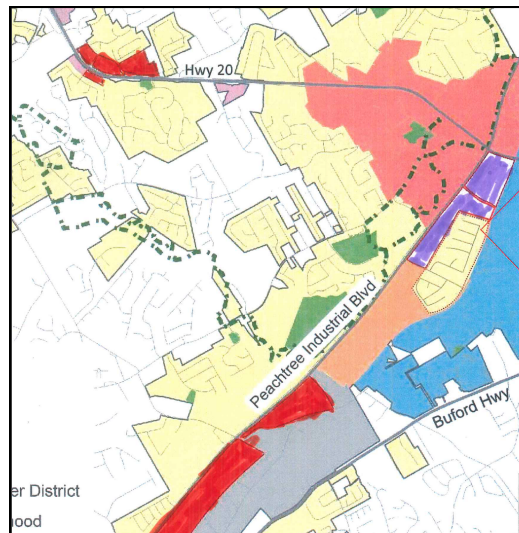
Overall support for greenspace was prevalent across all public involvement activities. Participants call for more greenspace and improved usability of existing greenspace.

### Housing

Our predominant land use is single-family detached homes, which reflects the family-oriented culture and suburban development pattern of our community. Many participants enjoy this aspect of the community and would like to see it preserved. Distaste for apartments was highlighted in the survey and in some roundtables. In the short term the city should monitor how successfully existing and under construction apartments mesh with our community. In the meantime, the city should discourage new large apartments. This ensures a land use program that encourages smart development of housing in the city center while preserving our neighborhoods across the entire community.

### Land Use Open House Activity

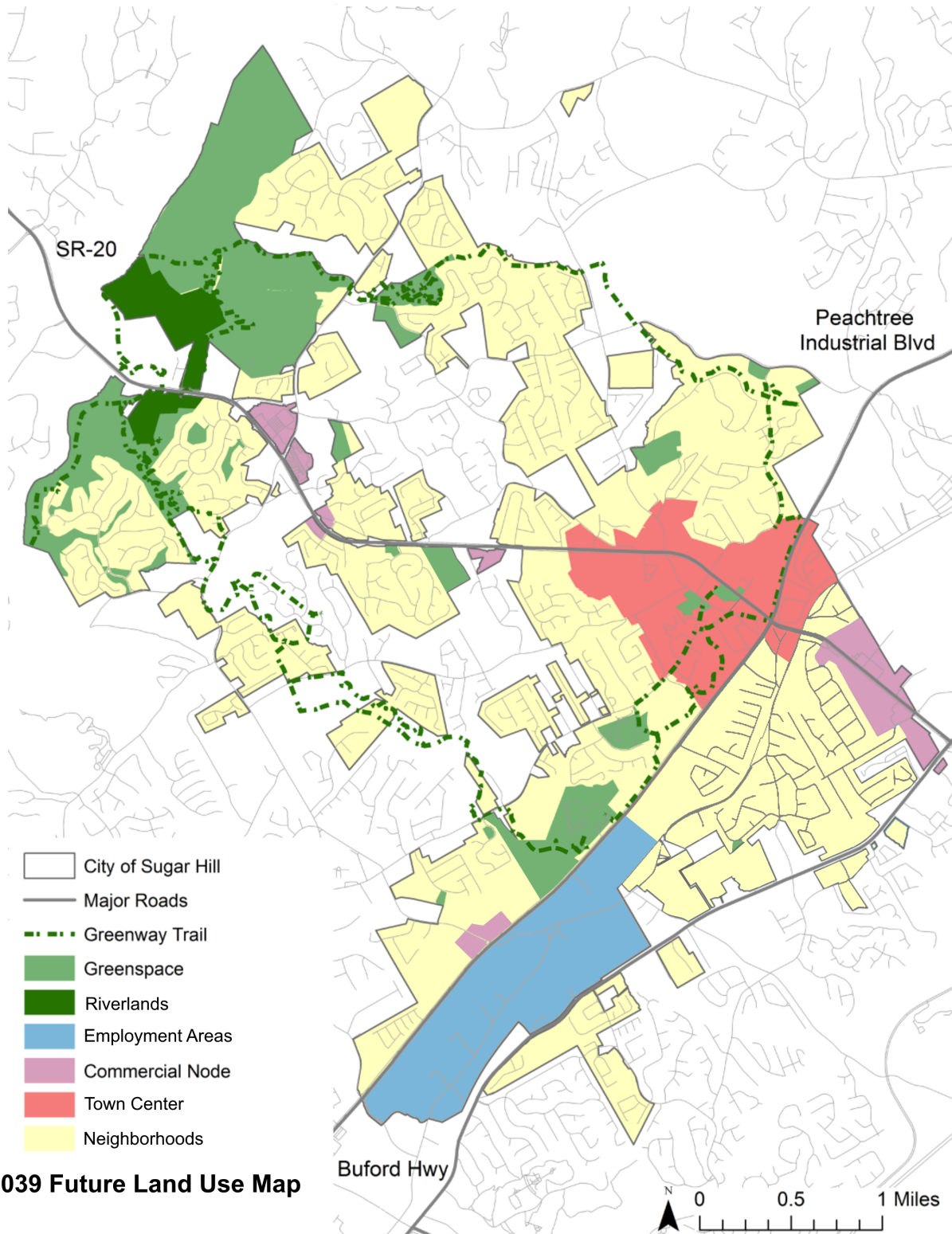
Open house participants were asked to choose land use designations for specific undeveloped properties across Sugar Hill. These properties were concentrated along Highway 20, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, and Buford Highway. Along Highway 20, participants overall prefer either commercial or residential uses. Mixed use or commercial uses were the preferred land use designations along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Greenspace had some support for use along PIB. Housing was the top preferred use for Buford Highway followed by greenspace.



\*example coloring sheet from an open house participant

# FUTURE LAND USE

## Character Area Map



**2039 Future Land Use Map**

# FUTURE LAND USE

## Character Area: Town Center

Sugar Hill's Town Center is a vibrant activity center with a mix of uses including retail, service commercial, professional office, medium to high density residential, civic, and institutional uses. Community greenspaces in this area include a mix of active, programmed areas, as well as spaces that preserve opportunities for passive recreation and environmental conservation. Neighborhood gathering spaces are interconnected and easily walkable. Architectural design, landscape, and streetscape blend to create a sense of place that is both aesthetically attractive and functional.

### **Recommended Development Patterns**

- The town center should include new developments that enhance the vibrant nature of the core, including new dining, shopping, and living options.
- Maximize development potential with a mix of uses to create critical mass within a 10-minute walk.
- Ensure development patterns create a transition in scope and scale between the highest densities in the town center and surrounding suburban areas.
- Revitalize aging structures and vacant properties through redevelopment and infill strategies.
- Design controls are designed to ensure aesthetic quality for new construction.
- Continue to improve pedestrian and bike connectivity between the town center and the rest of the city.
- Incorporate a variety of active and passive greenspaces such as urban plazas, neighborhood parks, and pocket parks as a part of new development.
- Support businesses and activities that will attract and engage citizens of all ages.

### **Appropriate Land Uses**

A variety of land uses are appropriate within the town center character area, so long as they create the desired effects as listed above. Zoning classifications of the City of Sugar Hill that generally align with this area are as follows:

- General Business (BG)
- Office-Institutional (OI)
- Highway Service Business District (HSB)
- Medium Density Single-Family Residential (RS-72)
- Medium Density Mixed Residential (R36)

\*The Town Center character area describes general guidance, not to be confused with the Town Center Overlay district which describes specific development requirements for the zoning overlay district.

# FUTURE LAND USE

## Character Area: Commercial Nodes

Several commercial areas along GA Hwy 20 and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard provide commercial and service amenities to residents of Sugar Hill. The city is in close proximity to the Mall of Georgia and Cumming Marketplace, which absorb a significant share of retail activity for the area. The non-residential uses along this corridor within the city include restaurants, groceries, medical professional offices, financial institutions, and home and auto improvement stores. Institutional uses, including churches, may also be suitable for these locations. These areas generally serve the needs of the residential communities adjacent to their boundaries.

### **Recommended Development Patterns**

- Retain strong design standards for buildings, signage, site lighting and landscaping to ensure long lasting architectural compatibility and protect the visual integrity of the city.
- Incorporate design features to further expand and improve pedestrian, micromobility, and transit connectivity.
- Encourage master planning with access through shared driveways and inter-parcel connectivity to minimize impact to local traffic.

### **Appropriate Land Uses**

A variety of land uses are appropriate so long as they integrate aesthetically and functionally into the surrounding neighborhood. Zoning classifications of the City of Sugar Hill that generally align with this area are as follows:

- General Business (BG)
- Office-Institutional (OI)
- Highway Service Business District (HSB)
- Light Manufacturing (LM)

# FUTURE LAND USE

## Character Area: Neighborhoods

Sugar Hill's Neighborhoods are characterized by single-family suburban neighborhoods, largely constructed within the last 30 years with pockets of older residences throughout the city. This area represents a housing typology that makes up the majority of the city's housing stock. Much of the city's land has generally reached build-out, with limited opportunities for new development on undeveloped land. Given the age and quality of the homes, there is very limited redevelopment or infill occurring in this area. Maintaining the integrity of the city's housing inventory while integrating it into new development will be an important consideration for new development.

### **Recommended Development Patterns**

- Ensure that existing neighborhoods are afforded vehicle, pedestrian, and micromobility access to areas elsewhere in the city, particularly for older neighborhoods where connectivity may be lacking.
- Encourage compatible architectural scale and style for new and infill development to preserve community character.
- Ensure street design fosters traffic calming and safety measures within residential neighborhoods.
- Continue to integrate the Sugar Hill Greenway throughout the city to provide access to all residents.
- Provide recreational amenities, as well as passive and active greenspace, in close proximity to existing neighborhoods by leveraging land within new developments.
- Encourage area-appropriate infill on undeveloped parcels to best utilize available land within the city.

### **Appropriate Land Uses**

Existing and appropriate land uses in this area are generally low and medium density residential and align with the following zoning classifications of the City of Sugar Hill:

- Low Density Single Family Residential (RS-150; RS-175; RS-200)
- Medium Density Single-Family Residential (RS-100; RS-72)
- Medium Density Mixed Residential (R36), to allow for the development of mixed-typology housing where appropriate given the character of the surrounding area.

# FUTURE LAND USE

## Character Area: Employment Areas

Sugar Hill's Employment Areas support a variety of office, manufacturing, assembly, and processing activities where noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, or other nuisance characteristics could be present. This area is highlighted by proximity to major transportation corridors and utility infrastructure.

### **Recommended Development Patterns**

- New construction should be master planned.
- Introduce retail and service uses, as appropriate, while being mindful of adjacent industrial, office, or manufacturing uses.
- Ensure adequate infrastructure for future development, including utilities, truck access, etc.

### **Appropriate Land Uses**

Land uses appropriate in this area are generally industrial, manufacturing, or office and align with the following zoning classifications of the City of Sugar Hill:

- Office-Institutional (OI)
- Light Manufacturing (LM)
- Heavy Manufacturing (HM1)
- Heavy Industry (HM2)

# FUTURE LAND USE

## Character Area: Riverlands

This area closest to the Chattahoochee River is predominantly undeveloped and should remain largely as such, with some limited development at the first median crossing to leverage the cultural, ecological, and market value of the properties. A suitability analysis should precede any development as a limited area will be useable for commercial, institutional or outdoor recreation uses in a clustered conservation or low impact development configuration. This carefully regulated development will preserve relatively undisturbed areas but still allow for context-sensitive development that respects the natural character of the area.

The Riverlands Authority (Development Authority) was established with the primary function to guide development in the Riverlands District.

### **Recommended Development Patterns**

- Maintain the property in a natural state outside of development areas.
- Develop a network of paved and unpaved trails and enhanced greenspaces to activate the area and provide access to these natural assets.
- Improve recreational access to the Chattahoochee River.
- Require any development to be low impact and complementary to the area, as suggested by and in conjunction with the Riverlands Authority.

### **Appropriate Land Uses**

Multiple base zoning classifications exist within the Riverlands District but should be preceded by recommendations outlined by the Riverlands Authority and the City of Sugar Hill. Any development within the area must support the broader conservation area while establishing accessibility of land through pedestrian and bicycle trails, public parks, and historic or cultural sites as appropriate.

# FUTURE LAND USE

## Character Area: Greenspace

Areas of protected greenspace are established for recreation, pedestrian and micromobility options, or conservation purposes throughout the city. These areas include ecological, cultural, and recreation amenities, such as public parks, recreation areas, and the Riverlands District. The focus should be placed on land conservation while providing a natural balance between developments within the city. Promotion of greenspace areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations is encouraged.

### **Recommended Development Patterns**

- Maintain properties in as natural a state as possible, where appropriate.
- Develop a network of trails and greenspaces to integrate into the surrounding neighborhoods and the city as a whole.
- Utilize greenspace areas as possible for the infiltration and natural cycling of stormwater runoff. Minimal development and impervious surfaces appropriate for recreational development are encouraged.
- Improve recreational access to the Chattahoochee River.

### **Appropriate Land Uses**

Multiple base zoning classifications exist within Greenspace areas. Uses in these areas should support conservation. These areas may include pedestrian and bicycle trails, public parks, neighborhood conservation amenities, and appropriate historical or cultural sites.



# REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## 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, unless otherwise noted.
- 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.

Description	Status	Explanation/Comment
Economic Development		
Explore the requirements of becoming a Broadband Ready Community as more information on the program becomes available.	Postponed	
Implement recommendations from the LCI Downtown Master Plan.	Underway	The City of Sugar Hill is in the process of completing recommendations.
Housing		
Implement a program to improve the visual appearance of homes in older neighborhoods in the city.	Incomplete	
Address the need for greater diversity in housing types.	Underway	The City of Sugar Hill has updated zoning and development guidelines to include a greater diversity of housing types.
Transportation		
Identify transit-oriented development opportunities.	Complete	The City of Sugar Hill has implemented a downtown development strategy that will facilitate access to potential transit services.
Conduct inventory of pedestrian and bike facilities.	Postponed	
Implement the Sugar Hill Greenway Master Plan.	Underway	The City of Sugar Hill has completed 4.7 miles of the planned greenway.

# REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Description	Status	Explanation/Comment
Complete scheduled streetscape improvement, road widening, and road extension projects outlined in the transportation section of this plan.	Complete	
Natural and Cultural Resources		
Identify existing historic and cultural sites within the city.	Underway	
Protect existing and identify new greenspaces throughout the city, particularly in areas that are within walking distance of downtown.	Underway	
Develop a Parks & Recreation Master Plan.	Underway	The City of Sugar Hill is in the midst of creating a Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace master Plan.
Facilities and Services		
Coordinate with Gwinnett County to provide sewer system improvements.	Underway	

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Source
<b>Economic Development</b>								
Prioritize programs to retain existing local businesses.	X	X				Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Economic Development Manager	General Fund
Develop programs to attract new local businesses to vacant commercial spaces.	X	X	X	X	X	Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Economic Development Manager	General Fund
Develop program to track inventory of vacant and underused commercial spaces.	X	X	X	X	X	Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Economic Development Manager	General Fund
Downtown public parking.	X					\$5,875,000	City of Sugar Hill Economic Development Manager	SPLOST
Bowl improvements.			X	X		\$4,900,000	City of Sugar Hill Economic Development Manager	SPLOST
<b>Housing</b>								
Conduct a detailed housing needs assessment.	X	X				\$25,000	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department	General Fund
Research programs to mitigate steep rise in housing prices and encourage new workforce housing.	X	X	X	X	X	Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department	General Fund
Identify appropriate variety of housing types that support aging in place.	X	X	X	X	X	Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department	General Fund
Identify and evaluate potential programs supportive of seniors and those with disabilities.		X	X			Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department	General Fund
<b>Land Use</b>								
Inventory properties where development or redevelopment is likely to occur and work with neighbors to craft local area plans for those tracts.			X	X		Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department, Economic Development Manager	General Fund
Implement program to track inventory of developable land.		X	X			Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department	General Fund
Conduct Spatial Analysis of neighborhood proximity to community amenities.	X	X				Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department	General Fund
Identify key nodes and nodes most likely for redevelopment to develop area plans where applicable.	X					Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill Planning Department	General Fund

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Source
<b>Transportation</b>								
Complete pedestrian bridge at Stanley Street and SR20.	X	X				\$6,000,000	City of Sugar Hill Project Management Staff	General Fund/SPLOST
Complete future Greenway phases.	X	X	X	X	X	\$10,500,000	City of Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation, Assistant City Manager	SPLOST
Sidewalk projects.	X	X				\$1,600,000	City of Sugar Hill Project Management Staff	SPLOST
Traffic calming and streetscape improvements.	X	X	X			\$4,200,000	City of Sugar Hill Project Management Staff	SPLOST
Road network improvements.			X	X	X	\$3,100,000	City of Sugar Hill Project Management Staff	SPLOST
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>								
Support SHHPS historical archiving program.	X	X	X	X	X	Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill	General Fund
Invest in a public art master plan.			X	X		\$50,000	City of Sugar Hill, Arts Commission, City Manager	General Fund
Master plan Richland Creek trailhead park.			X			\$25,000	City of Sugar Hill	SPLOST/Grants
Develop a master plan for Riverlands District.	X					\$75,000	Development Authority	General Fund
Inventory, evaluate & acquire properties for greenspace acquisition.	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000,000	City of Sugar Hill, Planning Department, City Manager	General Fund
Build Richland Creek Trailhead park.				X	X	\$2,000,000	City of Sugar Hill	General Fund
Downtown parks and greenspace.	X	X				\$1,650,000	City of Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation, Assistant City Manager	SPLOST
<b>Facilities and Services</b>								
Evaluate areas for improvement at existing park facilities.	X	X				Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill	General Fund
Implement ADA Transition Plan.	X					Staff Time	City of Sugar Hill	General Fund



# ENVISION100

SUGAR HILL 2039 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**CITY OF SUGAR HILL**  
**RESOLUTION**  
**2039 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Sugar Hill has completed developing the state-required comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sugar Hill’s “ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan” document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective October 1, 2018 and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on November 30, 2023, following an extensive public engagement program designed to exceed the minimum standards set by the Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Sugar Hill have worked extensively with city staff to prepare the ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it accurately represents the needs and aspirations of the diverse Sugar Hill Community.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Sugar Hill does hereby approve transmission of the City of Sugar Hill ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Atlanta Regional Commission for review and comment.

This resolution adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor – Brandon Hembree

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk, Jane Whittington